

Judy McCutcheon  
120/57 Cadbury Road  
Claremont Tasmania 7011  
03 6249 9257  
judymcc@aapt.net.au

# **THE SPIRIT OF BADENOCH**

Judy McCutcheon

DRAFT

## Chapter 1

# The First Footprint

Through the mists of time stride the men and women who were, who are, the heart, the soul of Badenoch, their imprint on their world gentle; their imprint on the world immense.

Ten thousand years ago, the Ice Age was in its last throes, the ice was receding and life was returning to Scotland. There was still a land bridge between Europe and Scotland<sup>1</sup>. Tribal groups, hunter gatherers living on the Iberian Peninsula and in the south of France, were on the move. Many used that land bridge to reach what is now Scotland and settle, following the bear, boar and reindeer, the latter being much prized<sup>2</sup>. Wolves abounded, with some being domesticated. These people were the Celts.<sup>3</sup>

Life for the nomadic Celt continued much as it had for aeons. Scotland, covered by vast forests from the end of the Ice Age to about 7,000 BC, was ideal for the Mesolithic Hunter Gatherer<sup>4</sup>. There were forests of Juniper, Scots-Pine, Rowan, Birch, Oak, Elm, Alder and Hazel that stretched from what is now Caithness to the Borders.<sup>5</sup> Transport was by foot or canoe and, if the latter, were huge, remnants of one being found near Kirkcudbright in recent years 13 metres long

---

<sup>1</sup> Ash, Patricia, 'Ancestors on the Beach', Open University, Sept 2006. There had been people living in what is now the UK from around 60,000 years BC; those people fled to more equable climes during the Ice Ages.

<sup>2</sup> McCormick and Buckland in Edwards, Ralston 'Scotland After the Ice Age; in quoting the research of Grigson argue that the combined spread of pine forests and the impact of man led to the demise of many of these creatures.

<sup>3</sup> Sykes, Bryan, 'Blood of the Isles: Exploring the Genetic Roots of our Tribal History, Corgi, London, 2006. Sykes proved that the genetic make-up of Britain is the same as what it was in Neolithic times; a mixture of Mesolithic and Neolithic inhabitants. There were never five separate nations (Britons, Saxons, Romans, Picts and Celts) comprising the population that made up what is now the UK. The inhabitants of Scotland were and are genetically Celts, originally from the Iberian Peninsula and the Eastern Mediterranean.

<sup>4</sup> Worked flint has been found in the Cairngorms that is dated to at least 5,000 BC. Dr Shannon Fraser, in an interview with the BBC 30 March 2004, said that it was proof of people moving through the region in a constant search for food. See also Ash, Patricia 'Ancestors on the Beach' where a midden, with a rock shelter nearby, has been discovered at Applecross in what is now Ross-shire dating to at least 8,000 years ago.

<sup>5</sup> Smout, T. C, Ed; 'People and Woods in Scotland', Tipping Richard, 'Living in the Past, Woods and People in Pre-History to 1,000 B.C', Edinburgh Press, Edinburgh, 2003

and 1.5 metres across at the stern.<sup>6 7</sup> Canoes were the only mode of transport other than Shanks Pony; there were no roads, only tracks, these often impassable. Canoes of this size suggests one reason for the beginning of the deforestation of Scotland. Slowly the topography changed, as the climate continued to warm and man impacted on the eco system.<sup>8</sup>

Forests were cleared for shelters<sup>9</sup>. Settlements became permanent, rawhide tents were no longer adequate for shelter; wood was needed for building, which led to the development of coppicing.<sup>10</sup> This produced trees with limbs that were relatively straight and strong, providing good frameworks and supports for houses; another reason for the gradual deforestation of Scotland.

Ideal conditions were created for the growth of grasses, including wild wheat, with the gradual clearance of forests and the warmer climate<sup>11</sup>. What made one farmer experiment with seed heads of the wild grass, probably Rye, to produce flour in order to make bread is another fascinating question crying out for investigation. What we do know is that wild wheat seed scatters easily, thus allowing part of the crop to be used as a seed crop. Wheat had to be harvested before the head burst, thus necessitating the establishment of permanent villages in

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid; Armit, Ian & Ralston, Ian 'The Coming of Iron, 1,000BC to AD 500,' P53

<sup>7</sup> A number of log boats were found in Loch Laggan, one of which was over 11 metres in length, but they were never properly surveyed and are now lost. See Lelong (2002). What it does show is that there was settlement in Badenoch from at least the Neolithic age and possibly earlier.

<sup>8</sup> There is general agreement amongst scholars that the climate in Scotland, between 7,500 and 5,000 years before the present (BP) was at least 2 - 3 degrees warmer than the present day, with winters being mild and having a higher rainfall than today. Prior to this, because the tilt of the earth's axis was greater than at present, winters were colder, but summers would still have been warmer(see Edwards, Kevin J, Ralston, Ian, B M (Ed;) 'Scotland After the Ice Age: Environment, Archaeology and History, 8,000 BC – AD 1000', Whittington, G & Edwards, K Climate Change, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2003, pages 13-19.

<sup>9</sup> Edmonds, Mark, Sheridan, Alison and Tipping Richard, 'Survey and Excavation at Creag na Caillich, Killin, Perthshire', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquities, Scotland*, 122 (1992), page 105. Tippings' work shows that in 5,500 BP the region of Creag na Caillich, near Killin, Perthshire, was covered in dense forests of Hazel, Rowan, Alder, Birch and Elm trees. Some 500 years later the trees consisted of an open Hazel forest, with limited Elms. Within 2,000 years, the forest had been thinned to what one sees today, with grazing or fire having led to anthropogenic grasslands; man was controlling his environment.

<sup>10</sup> Coppicing is when a tree is cut down to ground level, thus promoting strong shoots that can be controlled. Modern experiments show that the resultant shoots should be cut down every three years for optimum straightness and strength. (see 'Ancient Art of Coppicing' [www.coppicing.com](http://www.coppicing.com)). The house walls, utilizing coppiced wood would have been daubed with a straw and clay mix.

<sup>11</sup> Whittington, G & Edwards, K, 'Climate Change', Op Cit;

order to watch the growth of the wheat and to keep away birds.<sup>12</sup> Farming was by the slash and burn method; the soil remaining fertile for some years, producing bumper crops. Agriculture supplanted hunting and gathering as the basis for wealth, because not only did it produce a ready supply of food that kept well, but there were by-products, including beer (usually a wheat and barley mix) and thatch for roofing. Development of wheat as food meant technological development of grinding tools, which consisted initially of pounding wheat between two rocks, virtually a primitive mortar and pestle<sup>13</sup>. Interestingly, whilst the bones of Neolithic Man show no tooth decay, they do show ground down teeth caused by bits of stone and other matter left in ground down flour.<sup>14</sup> This led to the development of the Hand Mill or Saddle Quern (so called because of its shape)<sup>15</sup>; both methods were extremely labour intensive. The Neolithic Age had arrived.

There were settlements dotted around the far north of Scotland and along the eastern seaboard by about 5,000 BC. Barley and Oat crops were grown from imported seed, thus necessitating the invention or development of new technologies, such as the Ard, which was a hand held plough.<sup>16</sup>



(Courtesy BBC History)

<sup>12</sup> Ritchie, Carson I.A 'Food in Civilization', Methuen Australia, Sydney, 1981, page 23

<sup>13</sup> Flint quarries have been found at Creag na Caillich at the western end of Loch Tay near Killin, Perthshire and at Boddam Den, near Peterhead in Aberdeenshire. Edmonds, Sheridan, et al, argue that these quarries were for the manufacture of axes and that the axes produced were of differing quality and size, suggesting division of labour, identity and status (Edmonds, et al page 78). They were also dispersed, with two axes from the Creag na Caillich quarry being found in Buckinghamshire, England. (Edmonds, et al page 81)

<sup>14</sup> [www.nature.com](http://www.nature.com). Economic Journal of Clinical Nutrition, December 2002, Volume 56, Number 12, Pages 1270-1278, Roberts, M.P. *A Brief Review of the Archaeological Evidence for Palaeolithic and Neolithic Subsistence*.

<sup>15</sup> Curwen, 1937 said that the Saddle Querns were typical of the Neolithic Age. Rotary Querns would replace Saddle Querns by the Bronze Age. (See Scarr, Chris, Ed; *Antiquity*, Volume: 11 Number: 42 Page: 133–151, Antiquity Publications, 1937, Curwen, E Cecil, Quern)

<sup>16</sup> Smout, Op Cit; p53

The Ard was an amazingly efficient tool, leaving little more than a four inch deep furrow, and cutting off weeds just below the surface. These were left to lie on the ground, thus protecting the earth and minimizing erosion.<sup>17</sup>

Man was not fed by grain alone. Whilst Wolves had already been domesticated and were protectors of Clachans,<sup>18</sup> they were not popular as a food source (would you like to eat your pet?); people needed meat for protein and carbohydrates, milk and blood for drink, hides for clothing, and sinews for sewing; domestication of animals, such as cattle, sheep, boar and reindeer became essential for survival, both physical and economic.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, an argument could be made for man following reindeer at the cessation of the last Ice Age from Europe.<sup>20</sup>

Because food was assured, the population exploded, with the land eventually declining in fertility through overuse. There was intense competition for the limited resources available. People began to move once more, with some moving south from what is now Caithness into the region we now know as Badenoch, driving their cattle and sheep, which provided milk, meat, clothing and utensils, before them. Other tribes, settled around the Inverness region, opted to paddle up and walk beside the river we now know as the Spey<sup>21</sup>. They may also have come overland from what is now Perthshire as, for generations, men had followed the deer trails in a never ending search for food.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> The Butser Ancient Farm in Hampshire has been doing experiments for many years utilizing ancient technologies

<sup>18</sup> Clachan is the accepted term for townships in the Highlands of Scotland and indeed Ireland; from the Gaelic *Clach* meaning stone.

<sup>19</sup> Ritchie, Carson, I. A 'Food in Civilization: How History Has Been Affected By Human Tastes', Methuen Australia, Sydney, 1981.

<sup>20</sup> Archaeological excavations at Howburn Farm in South Lanarkshire have produced evidence of permanent settlements and deer being hunted in around 12,000 BC (see Current Archaeology, June 2010 [www.archaeology.co.uk](http://www.archaeology.co.uk)). Further, the flint tools found at the site are identical to those found in Germany. This would suggest that the inhabitants came from there.

<sup>21</sup> As late as 1300, there were vast tracts of forest, wolves, bear and wild boar abounded; there were few roads, mainly tracks, impassable in winter; transportation was by foot, horse or river.

<sup>22</sup> A Mesolithic camp was discovered in 2001, half way up the 3984ft Ben Lawers, on the route between Glen Tay and Glen Lyon to the north, near Aberfeldy. Archaeologist, Dr John A Atkinson of Glasgow University's field unit (GUARD), said the route is still used today by herds of deer, and the site is likely to have been an ideal location for picking off stragglers on their journey over the mountain range some 9,000 years ago. (British Archaeology Magazine, Issue 57, February 2001). This is also the direct route from what is now Perthshire through the glens and passes to Badenoch.

Badenoch suited these first Neolithic settlers; the valleys were long, the region protected by mountains on either side; there were fast flowing rivers and gentle streams; lochs abounded, brimming with fish; there were wild sheep, bear, boar and reindeer in the vast forests; mushrooms abounded that could be gathered from the forest floor and used as a vegetable. Acorns from the Oak Tree were gathered and fed to domesticated pigs. River flats, once slashed and burnt, allowed the planting of seed, thus assuring an ample food supply. Rocks abounded; the stone probably used for house foundations<sup>23</sup>, with turf abundant for walls. There were shale deposits, the remnants of glacial activity in Badenoch, essential for the manufacture of spear heads and tools for the everyday needs of life. Badenoch suited very well.

The impact of Neolithic man on Badenoch was limited to some degree by the nature of the land itself. Farming was contained by the mountains of Monadhliath on the northern side and the Grampians on the southern side of the Spey Valley, with the Cairngorms on the east. The population of Badenoch could not spread in the same manner as had the population in other regions of Scotland. Initially, people farmed along the ridges and higher glens until the forest was cleared along the valley floor, through which the Spey runs, as the natural tree line<sup>24</sup> in Badenoch varies. For example, in the east it occurs at Creag Fhiaclach in the Cairngorms at a height of 650 metres above sea level,<sup>25</sup> where Scots Pine and Juniper (stunted) grow, whilst in the west in Laggan in the Creag Meagaidh Reserve, the height is 600 metres.<sup>26</sup> People learnt to live with the land, rather than dominate the land, as had occurred elsewhere.

Nothing much is known of the religious beliefs of the Badenoch settlers, but there are instances of standing stones in Badenoch that are reputedly older than Stonehenge, such as those found at

---

<sup>23</sup>Whilst there is no extant evidence for pre-history stone foundation buildings in Badenoch, nevertheless, Standing Stones have existed in Badenoch and other parts of Scotland for aeons. Given they were undoubtedly hand tooled, it is not unreasonable to hypothesize that the people of the day used the abundance of rock and stones to make their habitations more habitable.

<sup>24</sup>The natural tree line is the height at which the level of exposure and climatic conditions prevent regeneration.

<sup>25</sup> Smout, *Op Cit*; page 32

<sup>26</sup>See 'The Story of Craig Meagaidh National Nature Reserve', Scottish National Heritage, 2011. Craig Meagaidh stretches from the shores of Loch Laggan to the tops of the Creag Meagaidh ridge (1,130 metres or 3,800 feet) and gives one an excellent idea of the glacial impact on Badenoch. (For a more in depth explanation, see 'A Revised Correlation of Precambrian Rocks in the British Isles', Issue 22, Anthony Leonard Harris, Wes Gibbons, Ed; Geological Society of London, 1994. Chapter 4, page 33.

Grenish, Aviemore and Delfour, near Alvie.<sup>2728</sup> The stones may have been used for religious rites, particularly given the following story recounted in 1906 with regard to the removal of one of the stones that was then used as the lintel in a cattle byre<sup>29</sup>. The cattle just refused to enter the byre and seemed overcome with fear. The farmer called in another farmer who, after “religious exercises,” informed him that it was the presence of the stone being used as the lintel that was causing the problem. The stone was removed<sup>30</sup>, another ordinary stone taking its place, the cattle thereafter happily entering and leaving the byre. No one really knows the purpose of the standing stones, but given their alignment it may be argued that they were used to observe the sun and the moon. The people of Badenoch had no written language, so far as we know, therefore their observance of the sun and moon would have been essential to know when to plant crops, when to harvest and the rites associated in order to celebrate the continuation of life. The standing stones, it could be argued, were their calendar, as movement of the sun could be followed across the sky into the solstice and equinox divisions and into the seasons of summer, autumn, winter and spring.<sup>31</sup>

This intimate relationship with the sun and moon was still very much a part of people’s lives in 1703 when Martin Martin, a native of Skye, wrote of the people of the Western Isles, “They know the time of day by the motion of the sun from one hill or rock to another; upon either of these the sun is observed to appear at different times; and when the sun doth not appear, they measure the day by the ebbing and flowing of the sea, which they can tell exactly, though they

---

<sup>27</sup> Cash, C.G FRSCS ‘Stone-Circles at Grenish, Aviemore, and Delfour, Strathspey’, The Proceedings of the Society of Antiquities, 12 March 1906, P248 -249

<sup>28</sup> There were also Standing Stones at Kingussie, but these were removed when St Columba’s Church was built in 1792. There is a Moot Stone Circle just outside of Kingussie (see Canmore Map Site Number NH70SE 4, the report of which states The Rath of Kingussie, a circle of standing stones used for judicial purposes. In 1380 Alexander Stewart, Lord of Badenoch held a court of regality here. "The Raich is still known, but the stones are gone". Henshall (A S Henshall 1963) suggests that the stones "may be the remains of a chambered cairn."

<sup>29</sup> Cash, Ibid;

<sup>30</sup>Cash, Op Cit; P248 -249, states that some of the standing stones that were removed now form the foundations of the threshing mill at Aviemore House.

<sup>31</sup> Pollock, Robert ‘Stones of Wonder’, The Delfour Ring Cairn near Aviemore & the Grenish Circle, near Aviemore Station, near the main road, on the south side of the Little Lochan nan Carraigan (Loch of the Standing Stones) from Cash, C.G FRSCS ‘Stone-Circles at Grenish, Aviemore, and Delfour, Strathspey’, The Proceedings of the Society of Antiquities, 12 March 1906, page 246

should not see the shoar (sic) for some days together; their knowledge of the tides pends (sic) on the changes of the moon, which they likewise observe, and are very nice [i.e. accurate] in it..<sup>32</sup>

Badenoch proved a fertile home for the settlers; the land along the river valleys was cleared, the main crop being barley, but even wheat was grown in the early days of settlement because the climate was warmer than today, with less rainfall.<sup>33</sup> Unlike many other regions of Scotland, the fertility of the valley remained, due to the silt washed down by the annual flooding of the Spey.

One of the early settlements in Badenoch was Raitts or Raitts, not far from modern day Kingussie. The land was very productive, producing more than the settlers needed. The grain was first harvested and then dried in kilns before grinding<sup>34,35</sup>. Excess grain was stored in souterrains; these were artificial cavities dug out with whatever means was available, and lined with rock<sup>36</sup>. One such souterrain is still extant at Raitts and has been dated to 2,000 years ago, although there is also archaeological evidence of human habitation in the area from at least 5,000 years ago and probably more<sup>37</sup>.

The Reverend William Blair, who served the Kingussie community from 1724-1780, kept a diary which fell into the possession of Alexander Macpherson, author of 'Glimpses of Church and Social Life in the Highlands in Olden Times'. Alexander wrote that "...in a quaint diary in

<sup>32</sup> Martin, Martin, "A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland," in *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland Circa 1695*, ed. Donald J. Macleod, Edinburgh, Birlinn, 1994 from Pollock, Robert – 'Stones of Wonder'

<sup>33</sup> Whilst some people shake their heads at the thought of wheat growing in Badenoch, one has only look to Afghanistan, where wheat is grown today, and indeed has been for aeons. The land is subject to drought (most of the precipitation comes from snow fed streams), extreme cold in winter and very hot summers.

<sup>34</sup> Whilst no carbon dated kiln has been excavated in Badenoch dated to BP to date, kilns have now been excavated in Ireland that date to pre Bronze age at Knockgraffon in Tipperary (see McQuade M, Molloy, M & Moriarty C, 'In the Shadow of the Galtees; Archaeological Excavations Along the N8 Cashel to Mitchelstown Road Scheme', National Road Authority, Dublin, Ireland, 2009, p 16-18).

<sup>35</sup> Drying grain in a kiln is quite complex. John Leslie, a Crofter in the Shetlands, who used this method of drying his grain in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, explained in an interview with Eric Meadows. He said that the fire has to be kept low till the steam comes off the grain, then it can be eased up. If not dried properly, the grain won't grind properly. If it is too raw, it clags [sticks] up on the stone and won't grind. If too dry, it has a burnt taste. (<http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/play/59180>)

<sup>36</sup> Locals call the Souterrain An Uaimh Mhor (the Great Cave)

<sup>37</sup> The Rev. Gordon in the Old Statistical Account of Scotland for Alvie (Vol 13. P 383) also makes mention of the local gentlemen excavating the area at Raitts and finding human bones covered by deer antler. This method of burial was common to the Mesolithic period, thus suggesting habitation of the region around 7,000 BC.



my possession, which belonged to the Rev. William Blair, who was Minister of Kingussie from 1724 to 1786 (sic)." The Reverend visited the cave at Raitts noting: "We visited the cave of Clan Ichelnew, which is not far from the side of the high road. We descended into it and found the greater part of it fallen in, and could only perceive a dark hole through which we could not see the farther end. The stones that support the roof are of an enormous size - in length about twelve feet. The accounts given of this subterranean mansion are various. The people there give this account: That in primitive ages, when anarchy prevailed throughout the island, the country was infested with men of a gigantic stature who often made fruitless attempts to conquer the island. Being repulsed at the time when they made their last and most formidable attack, such as were not killed in the flight, or escaped by sea, fled into the mountains, and being closely pursued by the enemy, until night stopped the pursuit. They advanced as far as the Spey and in a nights time finished the said cave and lived there for some time, till by the continual searches of the conquerors, they were at last discovered and every man killed."



Entrance to Souterrain, Raitts 1 Oct 2006 (author)

The Rev. John Gordon noted in his report for the Statistical Account of Scotland in 1793 that the cave was 60 feet long, 9 feet in width and 7 feet high, the sides paved with large flags or flat stones, as was the roof. He said that originally a house had covered the cave or Souterrain; entry to the cave was in the centre of the house and achieved by lifting one of the flagstones<sup>38</sup>.

The souterrains gave year round protection for grain and indeed people, having an even temperature and being waterproof. Because grain and other produce could be stored safely, with the excess being sold or exchanged for other goods, the settlement of Raitts prospered and grew, as did like settlements.

---

<sup>38</sup> Account of 1791-99 vol.13 p.383 : Alvie, County of Inverness



Remnants of Raitts Township, 1 October 2006 (Photo taken by author)

The houses in which people lived were usually adjacent to, or sometimes on top of, the souterrains. Houses at Raitts, for example, were either round or long, made of wood, with a stone foundation and a thatched roof. Unfortunately, because of the materials used in the main structure, and the removal of stone over the ages, none have survived in their entirety.<sup>39</sup> The current ruins at Raitts, apart from the souterrain, date from the late medieval era to the 19th century, but given the discovery of human bones covered by antlers inside one of the Tumuli that were extant in the late 18th century near the Alvie manse, it can be argued that there has been continual habitation in the region since at least the Mesolithic era.<sup>40</sup>

Townships, such as Raitts, continued to prosper until the Bronze Age, between 2,500 and 2,000 BC, when two things occurred that caused dramatic changes to the lifestyle of the people of Raitts and other communities in Badenoch.

The Bronze Age brought the Beaker people to Britain from Holland; these peaceful people not only brought with them their distinctive pottery the decoration of which was achieved by pressing a rope or braid into the clay, but also the technology to make bronze, mixing three parts copper with one part tin. Bronze was much stronger than tin, yet a beautiful material, so not only weapons were now manufactured, but also jewelry. We do not know when the Beaker people

---

<sup>39</sup> Although from the excavations by Archaeologists, dwellings have been reconstructed at the Highland Folk Park in Newtonmore

<sup>40</sup> This burial practice was common to the Mesolithic period and would suggest habitation of the region around 7,000 BC.

arrived in Badenoch<sup>41</sup>, but their willingness to share their technology meant that communities became more sophisticated and the division of labour changed, as there was a need for skilled artisans to create the finely honed weapons, the pottery and jewelry that Bronze Age technology made possible. Inherent skills were honed and marketed; wealth was created. Communities became more individualistic, as the community no longer depended solely on the output of agriculture for income.

The population grew, with land ownership becoming a bone of contention; the idea of individuals just taking ownership of land by squatting was no longer possible; might became right, thus leading to internecine wars and the necessity to build forts to shelter communities during such periods.

The wars between communities at the end of the Bronze Age did lead to technological innovation, particularly in the development of weaponry, but also in engineering, such as the building of forts.

There were at least two forts built in Badenoch at this time, one a vitrified fort, Dun Da Lamh, between the rivers Spey and Mashie in the Parish of Laggan, with walls of stone that are 500 feet in length, the walls having no mortar.<sup>42</sup> The 1790 Survey of the Province of Moray described the fort as being situated on a perpendicular rock some 300 feet high, the area of the fort being some 500 feet by 250 feet, with walls 9 feet thick<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> When Archaeologists explore the burial cairns in Glen Banchor and other places in Badenoch, we may be able to date the arrival of the technology with more confidence.

<sup>42</sup> Vitrified forts were forts built with stone, but fired so that the rocks became molten and thus fused like glass. This would have taken a tremendous amount of wood and must be counted as another reason for the gradual deforestation of Scotland.

<sup>43</sup> Grant, John & Leslie, William 'A Survey of the Province of Moray: Historical, Geographical and Political' I. Forsyth, 1798 (Book digitized by Google from the library of the New York Public Library), p255



Dun Da Lamh, Laggan - Courtesy Jessie McKillop, May 2009

Sidhean Mor Dail A' Chaorainn, March 2006 (Courtesy Mary Mackenzie, Kingussie)



The other fort still extant is located in Glen Banchor at Sidhean

Mor Dail A' Chaorainn (The Fairy Knoll of the Glen of the Rowan Trees), a steep-sided glacial knoll with a level oval summit, commanding extensive views over Glen Banchor and Badenoch; the latter was a double palisade fort, rather than vitrified.<sup>44</sup> Whilst one would think that a palisade fort would use more wood than a vitrified fort, this is not so, as the vitrified fort required basically a vast skeleton of wood, surrounded by rock. This was then covered in wood of a high burn temperature variety, such as the Caledonian Pine and Oak, which abounded in the region, and set alight. There has been considerable debate over the years as to whether this would be

<sup>44</sup> Archaeological Report to the Royal Commission into Historic Monuments, Scotland

enough heat for vitrification and whether the vitrification occurred after a defeat, rather than in the building process.<sup>45</sup>

These forts took tremendous skill to build. The forts are situated where there is a clear view of the surrounding countryside and were probably used as Signal Stations (the Fiery Cross of later years) to warn of invasion. Settlements abounded below the forts, so the forts were probably only meant to be used for short term protection as the water source was below the forts.<sup>46</sup>

Whilst there is no definitive evidence of Mesolithic settlement in Badenoch<sup>47</sup>, due to their nomadic lifestyle, there is evidence in the glens of settlements from at least the Bronze Age and possibly Neolithic. Settlements were at a higher altitude, arguably because the climate was warmer.



Ancient site beside the River Calder, Glen Banchor (Author October 2006)

---

<sup>45</sup> V Gordon Childe and Wallace Thorneycroft experimented with vitrification in 1934, with some success. (Archaeology Data Service, Proceedings of the Society of Ancient Scotland, Dec 13 1937). Interestingly, the wall that Childe and Thorneycroft built, 12 feet in height, 6 feet long and 3 feet thick, was set alight during a snow storm! All was ablaze within half an hour. Next morning the two bottom layers of basalt, 22 inches thick, were fused. Dun da Lamh was impregnable, unlike Sidhean Mor Dail A' Chaorainn, simply because of the materials used. Given their position, they may also have been used as Signal Stations warning of invasion.

<sup>46</sup> Given the sophistication of the sites, they may well have had some other form of water collection, such as stone tanks.

<sup>47</sup> Although the discovery of a body covered by deer antler in the 18<sup>th</sup> century would certainly suggest a Mesolithic burial and show that Mesolithic people were already travelling through Badenoch.

All were sited beside a permanent water supply. There is a burial cairn in Glen Banchor that is 13 metres in diameter but has been reduced to 30 centimetres in height, due to stone robbing. There has been no excavation of the site, although a survey has been done. There is also evidence of hut circles dating back to the Iron Age<sup>48</sup>.

The second impact on the people of Scotland generally, but in particular the people of Badenoch, was climate change, arguably caused by the eruption of Hekla, a volcano in Iceland in 1156 BC.<sup>49</sup> The dust came initially, coating houses, crops and fouling rivers. The dust caused, at least in the short term, crop failure through crops being covered in ash, a decrease in sunlight, a marked drop in temperature and the devastation of villages through ash coverage; this at a time when the population was expanding. Acid rain followed, caused by the explosive output of volcanic gases into the stratosphere.<sup>50</sup> What trees that had survived the ash died; water was polluted, fish died in their millions; livestock starved and died. The social and economic impact on Badenoch and other regions would have been immense, but particularly so in Badenoch because of its limited arable land and the fine line between good and bad weather patterns to sustain agriculture. This led to war as communities fought to keep what little resources they had; it was a fight for survival. Life in Badenoch would never be the same again.

An argument can be made that it was during the late Bronze Age that the existing tribalism began to develop into clanship, very likely because of the devastation caused by the eruption of Hekla. Life would have been rather brutal, with the resultant deaths, whether from starvation or warfare, causing the kinship system, on which Tribalism was based, to collapse. Clans did not and do not require kinship. Clann in Gaelic means family or child; Membership of a clan did not

---

<sup>48</sup> I went for a walk through Glen Banchor in October 2006 with Mary Mackenzie, a noted local Historian and amateur Archaeologist, and Morag Hunter-Carsch, the Curator of the Macpherson Museum at Newtonmore at that time. Mary conveyed to me that Harvey Macpherson was responsible for much of the material finds in Glen Banchor during the 1960's. The area was surveyed by Ordinance Survey 28 September 1965, followed by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (R.C.A.H.M.S) 21 November 1995. The R.C.A.H.M.S relied on the earlier Ordinance Survey and the Duke of Gordons' Estate Map of 1771. The latter may well have derived from the survey carried out on the Duke of Gordons' land by John Williams in 1769, then in 1770 by William Taylor.

<sup>49</sup> Hekla is still active today

<sup>50</sup> Gratton, J P & Gilbertson, D D, Pre-historic Settlement Crisis, Environmental Changes in the British Isles and Volcanic Eruptions in Iceland: An Exploration of Plausible Linkages, from McCoy, Floyd W & Heiken, Grant, Ed; 'Volcanic Hazards & Disasters in Human Antiquity', Geological Society of America, 2000

and does not require the same family name as the Chief or head of the clan, with some newcomers to a clan taking on the name of the clan because their own name was likely to prove hazardous to their health or just out of gratitude.<sup>51</sup> An example of this occurred in 1699 when kinsmen of Duncan Macpherson of Cluny nominated Duncan Campbell, Tutor, to act in place of Duncan Macpherson provided “the said Duncan Campbell assumed the name and arms of Macpherson.”<sup>52</sup>

Any person or family could ask for protection and be given entrée into a clan, provided absolute loyalty was given to the chief. Laws, laid down by that particular chief (the chief literally had the power of life and death over his clan) were obeyed unquestionably and military assistance was provided by the clan member as and when required. These external families became Septs of a clan.<sup>53</sup>

Septs were political alliances that gave those clans with fewer numbers, but often with their own lands, some protection from larger clans. The arrangement was reciprocal, the chief providing shelter, even food for a family in times of economic distress or disaster. He was the arbiter of disputes and collected rent from the lands he held, often in kind. A Sept of the clan could call upon the Chief to protect them. Children of chiefs were brought up by other members of the clan, usually a relation of the mother of the child. A good example of how the system, the reciprocity, of clanship worked was in the case of John, the son of Ewen Cameron, Baronet, and his wife, Lucy Campbell. John was nursed by Mrs MacMillan, the wife of one of his father's tenants<sup>54</sup>, whose son, Ewen MacMillan, the foster-brother, attended John, following him faithfully until both were killed at Quatre Bras 15 June 1815.<sup>55</sup> This method of child rearing gave

---

<sup>51</sup> An example of the latter is Ann Campbell, who married James Macpherson in 1816 at Newtonmore. Ann's Great Grandfather was Donald MacPhail, who changed his name to Cameron in gratitude to Cameron of Lochiel, with whom he had served in the Black Watch.

<sup>52</sup> NAS GD80/326

<sup>53</sup> Septs could also be families descended from the Chief through a female line.

<sup>54</sup> When the Cameron family moved from Inverscadale to Fassifern, Kilmallie, the MacMillan's were given a cottage in Glendessarie, at the head of Loch Arkaig, in Lochaber

<sup>55</sup> Clerk, Archibald, 'Memoir of Colonel John Cameron, Fassifern, K.T.S., Lieutenant-Colonel of the Gordon Highlanders, or 92d Regiment of Foot', T Murray & Son, Glasgow, 1859, page 16



clans social cohesion and hence a greater sense of unity to disparate groups, rather than tribalism, which was based on kinship<sup>56</sup>.

The aftermath of Hekla not only saw the development of clans in Badenoch, but also a technological leap, with the introduction of the Iron Age, commencing in about 1,000 BC. Itinerant Iron Smiths from Europe brought the skills of working iron into useable weapons and tools. Whilst iron was imported from England into Scotland, the majority of people used bog iron obtained, as the name suggests, from bogs, usually about 8 feet below the surface.<sup>57</sup>

Smelting of iron was by the process known as the 'Bloomery' method in which alternate layers of iron ore and charcoal were built up, set alight and then covered with clay to form a primitive oven<sup>58</sup>. There were plentiful forests, during this period, from which to obtain the required charcoal. The iron extracted was then beaten into the shape required. Interestingly, ploughs were not made entirely of iron in Scotland until the 18th century, farmers still using the Cas Chrom, which was a foot plough, consisting of a long wooden handle, with a wooden clasp and an iron toe; the latter was pushed into the ground and the soil turned over using a twisting motion.<sup>59</sup>



Courtesy National Museum of Scotland (W.PA36)

<sup>56</sup> Alison Cathcart, in 'Kinship & Clientage', states that Septs would have their own chiefs but give ultimate loyalty to the Chief who had given the clan protection.

<sup>57</sup> MacDonald, Rev. John, Ed; 'New Statistical Account of Scotland', volume 14. 1845, University of Glasgow. The iron had been washed down into the bogs over time

<sup>58</sup> [www.kurg.org.uk/sites/iron.htm](http://www.kurg.org.uk/sites/iron.htm)

<sup>59</sup> The Rev. Alexander MacGregor said that the Cas Chrom was a crooked lever in which the power is to the weight of 1:3½. He also said that the Cas Chrom was more expeditious in tilling than the common spade. Cottars would create ridges to ensure water run-off (*Quarterly Journal of Agriculture*, Vol.9, June 1838 – March 1839, William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh, 1839, page 175)

Prior to the Iron Age, ploughs and other farming implements were made entirely of wood.<sup>60</sup> The wood used was often Ash, a common name for the species being Husbandman's Tree.<sup>61</sup> Thus, the addition of the iron foot was a giant innovative step for the Badenoch farmer, with twelve men being able to plough an acre a day.<sup>62</sup>

The Iron Age began in Scotland around 700 BC. This not only introduced new technology to Badenoch; it is also likely that it is in this period that the first cultural exchanges occurred between the Kingdom of Dalriada in Northern Ireland and what is modern day Argyll and Lochaber.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Barclay, Gordon J, The Neolithic, Edwards, Kevin J & Ralston, Ian B M (Ed;) 'Scotland After the Ice Age: Environment, Archaeology and History, 8,000 BC – AD 1000, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2003, also Armit, Ian & Ralston, B M 'The Iron Age', ) 'Scotland After the Ice Age: Environment, Archaeology and History, 8,000 BC – AD 1000, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2003

<sup>61</sup> Smout, T. C, Ed; 'Using the Woods', Stewart, Mairi, 'Living in the Past, Woods and People in Pre-History to 1,000 B.C', Edinburgh Press, Edinburgh, 2003 p 91

<sup>62</sup> Ibid;

<sup>63</sup>Archaeologists and Historians differ over whether the Irish invaded what is now Argyll and Lochaber in the Iron Age. Ewan Campbell suggests that as there is no archaeological evidence, it did not occur (See Antiquity Vol 75, Number 288, P 285-292).

## Chapter 2.

# Clan of the Cat

There has always been relatively easy egress from Badenoch to Lochaber and what is now Argyll through the Corrieyairack Pass in summer. There is also an all year route by turning off just below the Corrieyairack Pass through Glen Roy, thence to modern day Spean Bridge and then down into Corpach and Lochaber.



The Road just below Corrieyairack Pass, Badenoch. October 2006



The way south to Spean Bridge from Drummin, Badenoch 2006

A new wave of migration occurred in 503 AD when Gaelic people from Dalriada in what is now Antrim, Northern Ireland, arrived in Argyll. The first Chief of Dalriada in Argyll was Fergus, whilst the last, in 834 AD, was Kenneth MacAlpin who, in 843 AD, became King of all Scotland, having defeated an already weakened Pict nation decimated by the Vikings. The grandson of Kenneth, Constantine mac Aed, defeated the Vikings at Strathcarron in 904 AD. He married his daughter to Olaf Guthfrithsson, the Viking ruler of Dublin and of Northumbria<sup>64</sup>. This strategy, along with his alliance with Eógan of Strathclyde, created a power bloc that, over time, effectively welded Picts and Gaels into one nation, Scotland<sup>65</sup>.

The invaders from Ireland in 503 AD were Irish Gaels (called Scotti by the Romans). These Irish Gaels settled on Jura, an island of the Inner Hebrides and Arran, in the Firth of Clyde between Ayrshire and Kintyre, on the west coast of Scotland, then migrated to the mainland to what is now Argyll, but was called the Kingdom of Dalriada. Arguably, the most enduringly famous of these people was Columba (Colum Cille) who arrived in Scotland in 563 AD, determined to spread Christianity to all inhabitants of Scotland. His biographer, Abbot Adamnan, who followed Columba as Abbot of Iona, stated that Columba required an interpreter when he preached to the Northern Picts.<sup>66</sup> Many scholars have taken this to mean that the Picts were neither Gaels nor Celts. Given the findings of Bryan Sykes systematic genetic survey of Britons between 1996 and 2006, however, and in particular Scotland, a case can be made that the language spoken by the the Picts was Celtic and probably not too dissimilar to the Gaelic spoken by the people of Dalriada. Probably, it suited Columba strategically to have an interpreter, so there could be no misunderstandings.

---

<sup>64</sup> Olaf Guthfrithsson ruled Dublin from 934 AD until his death in 941. He may also have ruled York, although there is some debate about this. Bones were discovered in a furnished burial at Auldham in East Lothian in 2005, along with some artefacts, including a belt buckle that is typical of those made in Dublin around this period. Certainly Olaf is believed to have died in 941 and to be in East Lothian at the time of his death. (See Culture 24. Org.UK – ‘Have archaeologists found the remains of Viking King Olaf Guthfrithsson?’ , Richard Moss, 2 June 2014)

<sup>65</sup> Wikipedia contributors. Constantine II of Scotland [Internet]. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopaedia. See also Ritson, Joseph ‘‘Annals of the Caledonians, Picts and Scots, and of Strathclyde, Cumberland, Galloway and Murray,’ Vol. 2. Laing, Edinburgh, 1828 from original Latin documents translated by Ritson.

<sup>66</sup> Keltie, John S. F.S.A (Scot.) Ed; ‘History of the Scottish Highlands, Highland Clans & Regiments, Fullarton, London, 1875

T. F. O'Rahilly, a Celtic scholar, asserted that the early inhabitants of Ireland, the Pretini (also known as the Cruithin) were the Picts of Scotland, having invaded both Ireland and Scotland in circa 800 BC.<sup>67</sup> Whatever the truth of the matter, the Scotti and the Picts certainly intermarried, which would suggest that apart from political alliances, the cultures must have felt reasonably comfortable with each other, with the Dalriadic Celts finally becoming dominant. Certainly the original Pict language had been subsumed within 500 years of the arrival of the Gaelic speaking Celts from Ireland, the only evidence still extant in Badenoch are names such as Pitmean, Pitgown, Pitchurn and Pitowrie.

Specifically when the people of Dalriada first visited Badenoch is lost in the mists of time, although it is said that St Columba established a church in what is now Kingussie in the 6th century<sup>68</sup>. This is quite likely as the route east to what is now Moray, and south-east to what is now Perth, from Lochaber was easiest through Badenoch and, in fact, has never ceased to be used even in modern day 21st century Scotland.

Both Picts and the Gaelic speaking Celts from Ireland social structure was based on clans, with those clans using animal symbols, such as the cat, which was considered a potent totem animal<sup>69</sup>. Badenoch was home to, and still is home to, the Wild Cat of Scotland. The wild cat is on the crest of Clan Chattan and is the symbol for families such as Cattanach, Macpherson, Mackintosh, Carson, Clark, Clarke, Clarkson, Clerk, Cluny, Davidson, Farquharson, Ferson, Gillespie, Gillies, Goudie, Gow, Lees, MacCunn, MacCurrach, MacFall, MacGowan, MacKeith, MacLeish, MacMurdo, MacMurdoch, Murdoch, Pearson, and Smith; the motto being “Touch not the cat without the glove” (Na Bean Do'n Chat Gun Lamhainn)<sup>69</sup>.

---

<sup>67</sup>O'Rahilly, T. F. 'Early Irish History and Mythology', Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, Dublin, 1946. (reprinted 1964, 1971, 1984)

<sup>68</sup> Professor Alan G Macpherson, scholar and author, who has spent a lifetime researching Clan Chattan, suspects the Macphersons settled in Badenoch around 1200, but I would argue that it was probably much earlier given the travels of the Dalriadic missionaries and the resultant migration pattern of the Dalriadic Celts

<sup>69</sup> Many of the clans in Ireland used cats as their totem. For instance, Caitchenn, King of the Men of the Cat-Heads, (one of the sons of the King of Ruadleith) From Gregory, Lady Augusta, 'Gods and Fighting Men', 1st published 1904, republished by Forgotten Books, 2007, [www.forgottenbooks.org](http://www.forgottenbooks.org)

There were two major families of Clan Chattan in Badenoch, Macpherson and Mackintosh, with Mackintosh and Macpherson arguing down the centuries as to which family was the senior member of the clan, given that both Macpherson and Mackintosh families were descended from Muriach (Murdoch), Parson of Kingussie. Muriach had five sons, one of whom was Ewan Ban<sup>70</sup>, son of the Parson, thus becoming Ewan Macpherson and hence the first of the line to bear the name Macpherson. The other sons were Gillichattan Patrick, Neil Crom<sup>71</sup> (reputedly a great Iron Smith, who thus perpetuated the name of Smith in Badenoch), Farquhar (Farquharson) Gilleriabhach<sup>72</sup>, from whom the MacGillivrays are descended, and David Dubh of Invernahavon (Davidson). Mackintosh married into the Macpherson family when Eva Macpherson, great granddaughter of Muriach, married Angus Mackintosh in 1291, the mantle of Clan Chief passing to Kenneth Macpherson of Clune (married to Isobel Mackintosh), the son of Ewan Ban Macpherson, with Macphersons settled in Tullochiero, Glen Banchor, by 1300.<sup>73</sup>

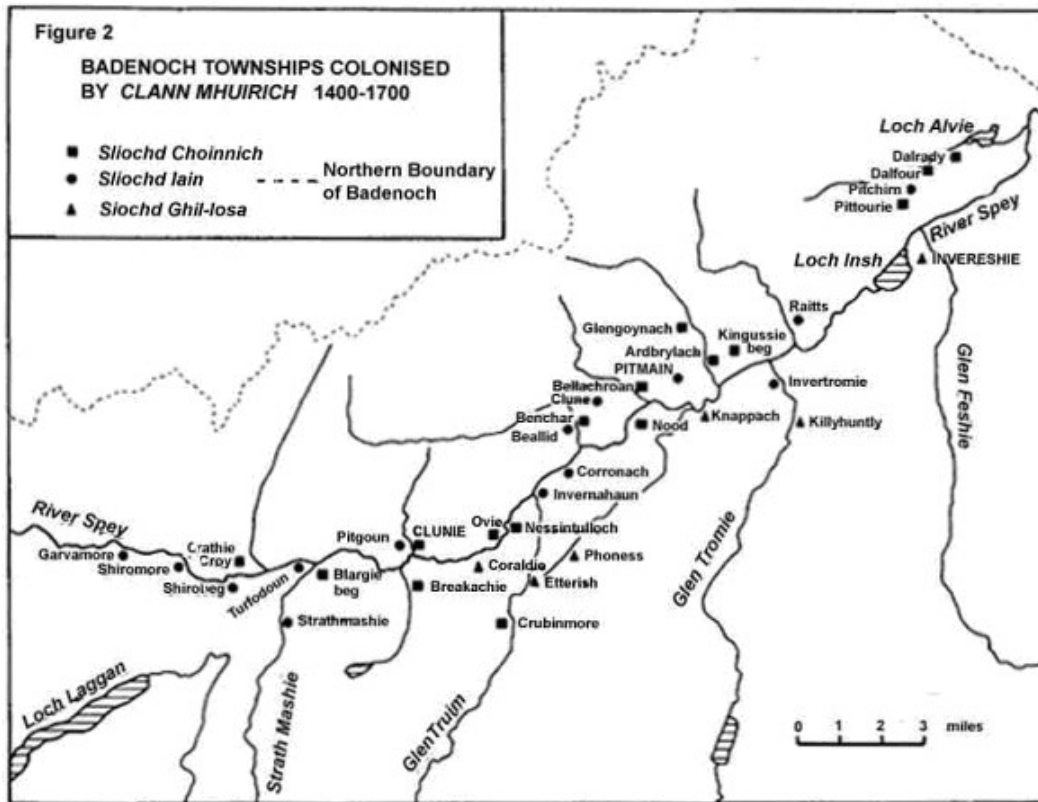
---

<sup>70</sup> Ban means fair headed in Gaelic

<sup>71</sup> Crom means “bent” in Gaelic

<sup>72</sup> Gilleriabhach means Grizzly lad” in Gaelic

<sup>73</sup> See my earlier comments given the travels of the Dalriadic missionaries and the resultant migration pattern of the Dalriadic Celts.



Map of Badenoch courtesy Alan G Macpherson from 'An Old Highland Genealogy and the Evolution of a Scottish Clan'.

Although the Mackintoshes claimed chieftainship, the Macpherson's led the clan until 10 September 1672 when the Privy Council and the Lord Lyon, King of Arms, Sir Charles Erskine, ruled in favour of William Mackintosh, with Duncan Macpherson, the tenth chief, losing his claim to lead Clan Chattan. Sir Charles was very particular when he referred to Duncan, saying that he had given Duncan Macpherson of Cluny a coat of arms as a cadet of the said family Mackintosh.<sup>74</sup>

Clan Chattan and their septs, in the main, prospered in Badenoch. They were little affected, if at all by epidemiological disasters, such as the Plague, that affected all of England and most of

<sup>74</sup> Declaration by Sir Charles Erskine of Cambo, Lyon King of Arms, that the Laird of Mackintosh [McIntosh] is the only undoubted Chief of the name of Mackintosh [McIntosh] and of the Clan Chattan, comprehending the Macphersons [McPhersons], M'Gilvrays [McGillivrays], Farquharsons, M'Queens [McQueens], M'Beans [McBeans], and others, and that he will give none of these families any arms but as cadets of M'Intosh [McIntosh]'s family, whose predecessor married the heretrix of Clan Chattan in anno 1291. And in particular that he has given Duncan M'Pherson [McPherson] of Cluny a coat of arms as a cadet of the said family; dated at Edinburgh, 10th September 1672. He has caused append his seal of office thereto. (GD176/549)

Europe in the 1340's, because of their isolation. The greatest threat to the clan was natural disasters and loss of land through war.<sup>75</sup>

DRAFT

---

<sup>75</sup> Mitchison, Rosalind 'A History of Scotland', Routledge, London, 1993. P.56



## Chapter 3

# Land of the Cats

Land possession in Scotland consisted of two distinct types of land possession. There was land ownership by right of possession, known as Dùthchas or entitlement, where families would develop land and maintain it over generations; townships or Clachans would be established, with those communities recognizing the right of possession of the Laird who was, in many cases, the Tacksman for the Clan Chief.<sup>76</sup>

The second type of land ownership was Oighreach, in which the land was held by legal tenure, the possessor recognized as being the sole owner. This led to friction, particularly when a clan thought it possessed the land through Dùthchas, but a Chief of another clan held that land in Oighreach.<sup>77</sup> They did not have to live on the land and many did not, for instance the Mackintoshes and the lands of Glen Loy and Loch Arkaig in Lochaber, granted to them by the Lord of the Isles in 1336, confirmed by David, the 2nd; in 1359.<sup>78</sup> Possession had long been held by the Cameron's and the resulting feud continued on through centuries, with Cameron's refusing

<sup>76</sup> A similar concept to Squatters in Australia, during the 19th Century, when men and their families would find a parcel of land and develop that over time without possessing a license or lease from the government of the day. Just as in Badenoch, townships developed wherever Squatters settled; in the end, governments recognizing their tenure through right of possession.

<sup>77</sup> Cathcart, Alison 'Kinship and Clientage', Bill Leiden, Boston, 2006, page 145 where Cathcart uses the feud between the Mackintoshes (Clan Chattan) and Clan Cameron regarding lands in Lochaber, Glen Loy and Loch Arkaig, wherein Angus Mackintosh, who married Eva MacGilliecattan, daughter of the Chief of Clan Chattan, in 1291. The couple lived at Glen Loy for several years before Angus fled to Badenoch after a dispute with Angus Donald, Lord of Islay, after which Clan Cameron lived at Glen Loy and Loch Arkaig for hundreds of years, refusing to pay Mackintosh rent for the land on which they lived and which Mackintosh regarded as his by Oighreach (that is legally held), whilst Clan Cameron believed they owned it through Dùthchas (right of entitlement through possession). The dispute lasted 360 years and was not settled until 20 September 1665 when Lachlan Mackintosh and Ewen Cameron of Lochiel signed a contract wherein Cameron would pay Lachlan Mackintosh the sum of 72,000 Merks, imposed by the Privy Council, for the purchase of the land. The agreement was ratified at Edinburgh 20 March 1666 (see National Archives of Scotland GD176/497)

<sup>78</sup> There is no existing Charter, but there must be veracity to their case or the Crown would have stepped in, and clearly they did not do so.

to pay rent and give service to Mackintosh. The feud was not resolved until 28 February 1666 when Lachlan Mackintosh, the 20th Chief, sold the land to the Cameron's after very nearly going to war.<sup>79</sup> The bond between clansmen was not only through kinship, but also through the land. Control over land and resources were fundamental in maintaining social relationships.<sup>80</sup> This bond was also reinforced through the practice of fostering of a child of the Clan Chief or Laird. Once a baby of the Chief or Laird was weaned, that child was then fostered by a family, usually one of the Tacksmen and often related to the Mother of the child. Any son of the foster family was given the same education as the son of the Laird, thus creating a further bond that was rarely broken, the foster family being considered part of the Lairds family in perpetuity.<sup>81</sup>

When the Normans invaded England in 1066, they developed a set of laws that pertained to land ownership; these laws also pertained to Scotland and gave whoever had possession of forests absolute control of everything in the forest above and below ground.<sup>82</sup> Unlike owners of land in England, those who possessed land in the Highlands of Scotland allowed generous access to their lands, their tenants allowed to graze cattle, take fish from lochs and timber from the forests, because their way of life was built on a clanship system, based on mutual obligation.<sup>83</sup>

A clan chief would allocate land to his sons or to cadet branches. Occupancy of land was legitimized after three generations of a family had maintained and improved it, thus establishing a dùthchas or hereditary right of ancient possession which was generally recognized by the

---

<sup>79</sup> NAS/GD176/498 Contract between Archibald, Earl of Argyll, and Lachlan Mackintosh of Torcastle, dated at Roseneath and Edinburgh, 23d March and 10th May 1666, narrating the Contract between Mackintosh and Lochiel about the lands of Glen Loy and Locharkaig. See also NAS/GD176/497 - Discharge by Ewan Cameron of Lochiel to Lachlan Mackintosh of Torcastle, granting that the latter has discharged to him and his kindred and inhabitants of Glen Loy and Loch Arkaig all legal compulsitors obtained by him against them; and so he acquits him of his obligation to do so; dated at Edinburgh, 20th March 1666.

<sup>80</sup> Dalgliesh, Chris 'Rural Society in the Age of Reason', Springer, Edinburgh, 2003, page 155

<sup>81</sup> Edmund Burt in his letters to a friend in London, covering the period 1727 – 1737, and dealing most with his travels through the Highlands of Scotland, was a keen observer of social mores of the time and relates in great detail this practice along with many others. See Burt, Edmund 'Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland', Birlinn, Ltd; Edinburgh, 1998, 1st published 1754 by S Burt, London, p 217 - 225

<sup>82</sup> Smout, TC Op Cit; p69

<sup>83</sup> Land in England was based on feudalism, not clanship, with access to the land or resources on the land by villagers being extremely restricted, with taking of fish or game being regarded as Poaching. There were heavy legal sanctions for this.

whole community.<sup>84</sup> They, in turn, would proceed to populate the land with their kinsmen, thus Clan Chattan in Badenoch gained in strength and gained in land, eventually taking over Macdonald lands in Laggan and Lochaber.<sup>85</sup> Much of this achieved through bonds between the head of the clan and various septs of that clan, including some who were not members of the clan. The Huntly Bond (15 May 1591) is an example of this. The signatories, Andrew Macpherson in Cluny, John Macpherson in Breakachy, James Macpherson, Paul Macpherson, Donald McAllister Roy, William MacDonald and Alastair MacFarquhar, promised to “bind and swear themselves” to serve Lord George, Earl of Huntly, Lord Gordon and of Badenoch. If they failed in that service, then their lands, houses, indeed all their riches would be confiscated.<sup>86</sup> Similarly in 1703, when the Deans and Davidson’s gave their bond to Lachlan Mackintosh that they were the followers, dependants and kinsmen under and to the Lairds of Mackintosh. Because of favours and acts of kindness from Mackintosh, they “renew the former and bound league lying upon them, and for themselves and male children and successors to own, follow, assist and defend the honourable person of Lachlan M’Intoshe of that Ilk as their true and lawful chieftain in all his lawful affairs, civil and military, and also his successors, with their lives, persons and fortunes, against all deadly, the lawful authority excepted, the said Laird being also bound to maintain and protect them.”<sup>87</sup>

There were also political alliances made that protected the land so hard won and allowed further expansion of territory, an example of which was in 1548 when William Mackintosh of Dunachton, Captain of Clan Chattan, signed a contract between himself and his cousin, Lachlan Malcolmson, along with George Munro of Davochgartie, James Dunbar of Tarbert and Robert

<sup>84</sup> Cathcart, Alison ‘Kinship and Clientage, Brill Leiden, Boston, 2006. Page 145

<sup>85</sup> Professor Alan Macpherson in his study of the Laggan Parochial Registers, 1753-1854, shows that the Macphersons “intermarried with virtually all the other clans and families in the community, besides marrying individuals from outside the parish.” He argues that generally people of a particular clan within the community married endogamously, but when they did marry into another clan, “then exogamy must in fact have been directed towards establishing and maintaining relationships of kinship between them and the dominant clans of the community, viz. the Macphersons and MacDonald’s.” Professor Macpherson argues that successful acquisition of rights to possession of land by one clan replacing another as achieved mainly by marriage to the women of the outgoing clan.” For further reading, *Macpherson, Alan G. ‘Survivals of Clanship and Social Change in Laggan, Inverness-shire, 1773- 1854, An Old Highland Parish Register, offprint from Scottish Studies Volume 12, 1968*

<sup>86</sup> National Archives of Scotland [GD176/13](#) Interestingly, it would appear that most of the signatories to the Bond could not write. John Macpherson held the pen and guided the signatories.

<sup>87</sup> NAS GD176/678 23 Apr 1703

Dunbar of Dores, who were friends of Lachlan Malcolmson, in which he granted to them in succession the lands of Glen Roy in Lochaber and Moy, provided they did not take possession of the lands or collect rents, unless William, or any in his name offered, “them and theirs violence”.<sup>88</sup> The contract also gave William access to “the lands of Dores, property and tenantry, the lands of Davochgartie and mill thereof, and the lands of Tarbert in the Sheriffdom of Inverness.”<sup>89</sup> Most interesting was the clause in which Lachlan was forbidden to marry Katherine Cameron,<sup>90</sup> or indeed any other woman, without the express permission of William. Thus the lands were protected.

William Mackintosh’s son, Lachlan, signed a Bond of Maintenance with George, Earl of Huntly, Lord Gordon and Badenoch, on the 27th June 1568, in which he was described by Lord Gordon as “his beloved friend and servitor, Lachlan McIntosh of Dunachton, chief and principal of Clan Chattan.” The bond of maintenance included Lachlan’s heirs and successors, kin and friends of Clan Chattan, tenants, servants and adherents whatsoever assisting him in the Earl's service; and that in return for the said Lachlan's heritable bond of Manrent<sup>91</sup> and service in terms of the contract made between them, the Earl promised that the bond would be respected by him and his successors on the receipt of the bond of every heir of Lachlan succeeding to the lands of Banchor, Clune, Kincaig, Schipin, Essich, Bochrubin, Duntelchaig and Tordarroch.<sup>92</sup>

Lachlan also made a fine marriage for his daughter, Isobel, who married Sir Robert Campbell of Glenfalloch in Perthshire, 3rd Bart; on the 16th December 1605. They had an extensive family of eight sons and nine daughters.<sup>93</sup> This gave Lachlan and his heir’s family links to one of the strongest families in Perth who held land from Perth to Argyll and is a good example of how political and familial alliances were formed.

<sup>88</sup> NAS GD176/57 26 Feb 1548

<sup>89</sup> Ibid;

<sup>90</sup> This is almost certainly the daughter of Allan Cameron of Lochiel, head of Clan Cameron, as in 1558, Allan gave a Bond of Assurance to Mackintosh [GD176/74](#).

<sup>91</sup> Manrent was essentially a contract whereby the chief of a clan would offer protection to particular persons in return for their labour at given times of the year and their agreement to take up arms whenever called upon by the chief.

<sup>92</sup> NAS GD176/89

<sup>93</sup> NAS GD112/25/83

Timothy Pont, a Cartographer, who travelled throughout Badenoch around 1590, noted that the land was, “.... a most rich and fertile valey in cornis and riche medow pasturis, with manie pleasant and commodious situations. The cornis ar abowndant and soon rypened wherby they never lack plentie, and furnish all the neighbour cowntreys (wherof many ar scars of cornis altho plentiful in pasturis) abowndantlie every year, they have stoar of cattell, and riche pasturis among the hills and glennis. They have abowndance of freshe water fishe, specially salmon and no lack of wood, so that they lack litle whiche an inland cowntrey can require. Altho they be of all the provinces of Scotland furthest of from seas, and seated as it wer in a verie hie cowntrey, no other cowntrey be dwellings or corneland being neer them except Strath-Spey, whiche lyeth beneth them alongst the river.”<sup>94</sup> Whilst Pont mapped Badenoch and was fullsome in his description, he must have seen it in an exceptionally good season, as whilst there are patches of good land in Badenoch, much of the soil today is thin and poor, with much of the land being peaty.<sup>95</sup>

Whilst the first written reference to a place called Badenoch is only in November 1299 when John Comyn, the Younger of Badenoch, is noted, along with others, petitioning Edward 1 of England for a cessation of hostilities between England and Scotland, on behalf of King John Balliol of Scotland<sup>96</sup>, townships had been in existence for many hundreds of years, if not over a thousand years.<sup>97</sup> Pont named and located these “towns”, most of which survive to this day; Laggan, Crathie Beg, Crathie Moor, Sherrobeg, Sherramore, Catlodge, Gaskinloan, Breakachy,

---

<sup>94</sup> National Library of Scotland, Maps and Text of Scotland by Timothy Pont, 1583 -1596; transcribed by Jean Munro

<sup>95</sup> Modern Badenoch Farmers do not agree with Pont and do not describe the land as fertile and abundant. When Pont travelled through Badenoch, however, it could be argued that the land would have been much more productive as lowland sheep had not been introduced and sections of the Caledonian Forest still existed. Williams, the Surveyor, hired by the Duke of Gordon in 1770 noted that there was an extensive Birch Wood on Biallidmore (near modern day Newtonmore) that was situated on very good soil but goats, sheep and men were having a devastating impact on them.

<sup>96</sup> Non Parliamentary Record, NAS APS I 454 Feodera 1 11 915 [A/1299/1] Balliol was crowned King of Scotland at Scone Abbey, Perthshire 30 November 1292. Edward 1 of England imprisoned King John before banishing him to Normanby where he died. The Stone of Scone on which John was crowned was taken by Edward to England, to Westminster and remained there for 700 years, being returned to Scotland in 1996, its new home Edinburgh Castle.

<sup>97</sup> There has been a settlement at Raitts and in the surrounding region for at least 7,000 years, but the remains currently extant date from Medieval Scotland, with the exception of the Souterrain at Raitts, which is at least 2,000 years old.

Coraldie, Nessintulloch and Ovie.<sup>98</sup> He described Carn Dearg<sup>99</sup> near Glenfeshie, and Bin-Aillhoir<sup>100</sup> as “being the two principal hunting places in Badenoch.” He went on to locate “Kayllie-Whundenie” (Killiehuntly) two miles to the east of Glentromie; Other townships noted were Balnespic<sup>101</sup>, Invereshie, the Kirk of Insh, Corarnstilmore and Corarnstilbeg, with Pont noting that there were no dwellings above Corarnstilmore.<sup>102</sup> Other possessions still extant were Invernahavon “at the mouth of the Truim”, Pressmuckraich, Crubenmore, Crubenbeg and one mile from the Spey, on the south side, Phones. He described Noidmore on the Spey as having a “little burn”, then there was Noid Beg, a quarter of a mile away, then half a mile to Ruthven Castle<sup>103</sup>, described as “...the onlie and principall dwelling of the lord of the cowntrey, weell seated up-on a green bank, about a bowshot from the river.”<sup>104</sup>

The valuation of properties in Badenoch, according to the Gordon Rent Roll in 1603<sup>105</sup> clearly show that most of the properties then extant are ones still familiar today and include Kinrara, Delfour and Pitchurn near Alvie, Dalraddy, Kinraig, Easter Raitts (located near Chapel Park just outside Kingussie), Wester Raitts, Kingussie Moor, Mill of Kingussie, Pitmain (near Kingussie), Ballachroan, Strone, Clune, Banchor, along with its mills and crofts; indeed all of those “towns” as mentioned by Pont some years earlier. They were productive farms and possessions yielding

---

<sup>98</sup> Munro, Op Cit;

<sup>99</sup> There is more than one possibility for the location of Carn Dearg, the other could be at the top of Glen Markie, near Glen Banchor

<sup>100</sup> Ben Alder

<sup>101</sup> Balnespic had formerly been known as Ardinch (See

<sup>102</sup> This is still the case. There is certainly a Sheep Fank at Corarnstilmore, but the old house has since gone, the nearest house being at Corarnstilbeg, still associated with the Bell family who have been associated with the Glenfeshie area for hundreds of years.

<sup>103</sup> Ruthven Castle was built around 1200 for the Comyn family who had the Lordship of Badenoch. There was at least one family in Badenoch who could trace back their lineage to when an ancestor worked for Walter Comyn, the Grandfather of John Comyn; this was the family of James Gordon, who was Head Officer for the Duke of Gordon in Badenoch in 1769 when he sought the Tack of Raits (See NAS GD44-27-10-13) stating that whilst his family had been in Badenoch since Walter Cumming had the Lordship of Badenoch, some 15 generations, James and his family had served the Duke of Gordon since 1451 when the Duke was granted Lordship of Badenoch. He provides evidence in his submission of the services provided by him and his ancestors, including his Great Grandfather who saved the life of the Duke of Gordon and, in doing so, gave his life.

<sup>104</sup> Munro, Jean, Op Cit;

<sup>105</sup> From the original document in the Charter-Room at Gordon Castle reprinted in *The Miscellany of the Spalding Club, ii*, 87-89. Reprinted on pp 503 - 515 of Alexander Macpherson's *Glimpses*

the Duke of Gordon a significant sum in rentals and in personal duties by his tenants. The rental rolls reveal that whilst a small sum of money (maill) was paid, the majority of the rent was realized in farm produce, such as lambs, pigs and poultry.<sup>106</sup>

The main source of meat, milk, hides and household implements were the Highland cattle. Every part of the beast was utilized, including their horns, which were shaped and used as spoons.<sup>107</sup> Their grazing did little damage to the soil, the Highlands in 1603 arguably being more productive and certainly more ecologically sound than after the introduction of lowland sheep in the 18th century.

The land had to be protected. Clan Chattan, because of its relatively small size, had joined with other small clans during the 1400's, clans such as MacAndrew and Clerich (Clark). These alliances were formalized on the 4th April 1609 when a bond was signed at Termet that bound the signatories, their heirs and successors to come to each other's aid in perpetuity, "to assist, maintain and defend against all and whatsoever."<sup>108</sup>

Lairds awarded Tacks or Leases to ensure the maintenance and improvement of land; most tacks specifying reciprocal rights and obligations. The tack granted to Andrew Macpherson, Cluny, his heirs and sub-tenants, 11 August 1618 by James, Earl of Murray is an example. James and Andrew agreed "the town and lands of Dulcrombie, for yearly payment of £40 silver and faithful service viz., south of the water of Spey" would be at the expense of James. The said water to the North Sea bank, on the other hand, would be at the expense of Andrew, and from the North Sea bank at the expense of James.<sup>109</sup> Should the Tack not specify exactly the rights and obligations of

<sup>106</sup> NAS/GD44/40/1 and NAS/ GD44/51/732 The Rental of the Lordship of Badenoch, 1603 – Kingussie Beg for instance, gave one kid, one lamb and provided a carriage service for the laird, along with other due service.

<sup>107</sup> Grant, Elizabeth 'Memoirs of a Highland Lady', Canongate Press, Edinburgh, 1993, p 194

<sup>108</sup> Signatories included Lachlan Mackintosh of Gask, William Mackintosh of Raits, Andrew Macpherson of Cluny, Evan (Ewen) Macpherson in Brin, John Macpherson in Breakachy, Thomas Vic Allister, Vic Thomas, in Pitmean (Pitmain) Donald vic Allister Roy in Phones, William vic Ian, vic William in Invereshie, Donald MacQueen of Corrybrough, John MacQueen in Little Corrybrough, Sween Macqueen in Raigbeg, Angus MacPhaill in Kinchyle (Clan Vean) – Alexander vic Coil, vic Farquhar of Davochgarroch (Clan Tearlach – Malcolm vic Bean in Dalcrombie, Ewen vic Ewen in Aberchalder (over the Monadhliath Mountains on the southern shore of Loch Mhòr, about 67 miles from Aviemore or 49 miles from Laggan, closest town is Fort Augustus) ), Duncan vic Farquhar in Dunmaglass (Clan MacGillivray ) vic Robert of Tordarroch (Clan Ay) Gillicallum of Ovie.

<sup>109</sup> NAS GD80/3

the tenant, then that tenant would often withdraw his services. James Gordon, the Factor for the Duke of Gordon, in a memorial to the Duke of Gordon in 1769, wrote, “*The Daugh<sup>110</sup> of Ballachroan which was in use to perform seven Long Carriages a day service of all their men and horses in the woods when required, but being omitted in the last Tacks would not perform, although Cullinleen was bound by the minue of Tack, but finding that it was neglected in the Inch, so refused to perform the said service. Likewise, the Muler of the Miller of Kingussie to the Gordonhall, which they refused by cause it’s not expressed in the body of the Tack. The Daugh of Strone was in use to perform four long Carriages yearly, a day’s service in the woods with their men and horses when required, but since the last Tack they performed neither because they were not ...in the Tack. The Daugh of Nessintully and half Daugh of Dallanach, neither of them have performed any Long Carriage service.*”<sup>111</sup> Other possessions mentioned are Kinrara, Easter Lynvuilg, Dalfour (Delfour), Pitchurin and Pitourie, so it was not an isolated incident, but quite commonplace. James Gordon finished off his memorial saying, “*They are such stuffnecked (sic) and headstrong people that they will do nothing but what is pointed by expression in the Tacks.*”<sup>112</sup>

There was a cost to protecting the land asset; that cost being exacerbated by the increased cost of attending Court, with all the attendant costs. The means of financing this way of life was through Wadsets<sup>113</sup> or mortgages. Wadsets had become common by the mid-16th century, with Heritable Bonds<sup>114</sup> becoming common by the end of the 17th century. Duncan Macpherson of Cluny, who had married Isobel Rose in 1668, was no exception, being forced to mortgage some of his land, with the permission of his wife, for 1500 Merks in 1687 to John Macpherson of Strone and his brother, William Macpherson of Nuide. There was a clause of revision, which meant that once

---

<sup>110</sup> Daugh was the area of arable land of a particular township or clachan, peculiar to Scotland from Inverness-shire north to Caithness. James Robertson, D.D; in his ‘Agricultural Surveys, Inverness-shire, 1808 (page 75) reported to Sir John Sinclair, President of the Board of Agriculture, that “daugh’s and bolls are unknown anywhere south of Inverness Shire. Every daugh seems to have consisted of forty-eight bolls, which comprehended a greater or smaller district of country *according to the quality of the soil*” (my emphasis)

<sup>111</sup> NAS/GD44/27-10-10

<sup>112</sup> Ibid;

<sup>113</sup> The wadset was usually worded in such a way that the mortgagee agreed to the right of reversion. That is, that the lands would revert to the owner when the principal sum was repaid.

<sup>114</sup> Unlike Wadsets, Heritable Bonds only gave the creditor security against the land, not the rents from those lands.



Duncan had repaid the principal, the land reverted to him, but until then the land was effectively John and William Macpherson.<sup>115</sup> The benefits were two fold; with John and William Macpherson gaining access to good agricultural land and Duncan being given financial relief.<sup>116</sup>

Another cost that impacted not just on the Duncan of Cluny (The Cluny), but also on his tenants and the Cottars, was the demands made upon him to supply the army with provisions. A letter, still extant, from General Hugh Mackay to Duncan Macpherson, the Cluny, written 27 June 1690, shows the pressure placed on clan chiefs, “*Sir, Sir Thomas Livingstone, having already acquainted you that I was to call for Sheep and Cowes, for the use of the army, when I encamp in Badenough (sic). I doubt not but they are already provided, so I desyre that you may have two hundred Cowes and six hundred Sheep at Rivan<sup>117</sup> in Badenough again Sunday at twelve o'clock being the ....., and you shall have reddy (sic) money for them. If you fail in this, I assure you, I will turne the army loose upon the country, who will not spare neither houses nor cowes. Take this advertisement from, Sir, your assured friend at the Camp of Coulnakyle, H. Mackay.*”<sup>118</sup> Such a friend, who would need enemies!

The land of Badenoch was chartered to George, Duke of Gordon; his Charter approved by the Parliament of Scotland in 1685 and giving him the whole rights, privileges, profits and casualties belonging to any forest within the said kingdom.<sup>119</sup> The lands included woods, parks, forests, grassings, shielings, mills and others after-mentioned, namely the lands of Garvamore, the

---

<sup>115</sup> NAS GD80/190

<sup>116</sup> Wadsets for large amounts, could last generations, with some Wadsetters “living like Lairds and the poor sub-tenants and Cottars living almost like slaves.” (William Lorimer, Tutor to Sir James Grant at Castle Grant, 1763 – see Fraser, William, LLD; ‘The Chiefs of Grant, Vol. 1 Memoirs, Edinburgh, 1883)

<sup>117</sup> Almost certainly Ruthven

<sup>118</sup> General Hugh Mackay was a Major-General in the Scots Brigade of the Dutch Army when he landed with William of Orange in 1688. He was sent by William in the hunt for John Graham of Claverhouse, 1st Viscount of Dundee. After the death of Graham at Killiecrankie 27 July 1689, and realizing he had little hope of bringing the mainly Jacobite Highland Clans to heel, he was instrumental in making a stronghold of Fort William, thus allowing the rapid movement of troops into the Highlands from both west and east. John Graham was related to Magdalene Graham, wife of William Mackintosh of Torcastle and was quite at home in Badenoch, being at Breakachy, in Laggan, (the home of Malcolm Macpherson) the day prior to his last battle. (See ‘Letters of Two Centuries’, page 107)

<sup>119</sup> Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707 NAS/1685/4/92

grassing of Drummin at the head of the Spey, Garvabeg, Sherramore, Sherrobeg, Crachymoir and mill thereof, Crathiecroy, Tirfadoun, Druminourd, Strathmashie, Blairgymore, Blairgiebeg, Gallovie, Gaskalone, Gergask, Gaskmoir, Pittagown, Killrosie, Clunes, Uvie, Crubenmore, Crubenbeg, Breakachy, Nessintulloch, Kyllerochille, lying within the parish of Laggan; the towns and lands of Bealachbeg,<sup>120</sup> Bealachmore,<sup>121</sup> Coronach, Banchor, Cluny, Glen Banchor, Tullochiero, Delnashellag<sup>122</sup>, Strone, Glen Banchor, Ballachroan and Pitmain, with the advocation, donation and right of patronage of the parish kirk and parish of Kingussie, Kingussiebeg, with the burgh of barony of Ruthven, and weekly market there on Friday, with the whole privileges and profits of the said burgh and weekly market, Ardbrylach, Invertruim, Nuidemore and Nuidebeg, the mill and mill-lands thereof, with the multures<sup>123</sup> and sequels, the lands of Phones, Ericht, the mill of Glentrium, Dallenach, Invernahavon, Invereshie, Killiehuntly and [---], lying within the parish of Kingussie; the lands of Wester Raitts, Middle Raitts and Easter Raitts, Dunachtonbeg, Dunachtonmore, lying within the parishes of Kingussie and Alvie and sheriffdom of Inverness, with castles, towers, fortalices, manor places, houses, biggings<sup>124</sup>, yards, orchards, woods, parks, forests, shielings, grassings, fishings, mill, mill-lands, multures and sequels, parts, pendicles and pertinents; all and entire the lands of Pittowry, Pittrichie, Delfour with the advocation, donation and right of patronage of the parish kirk and parish of Alvie, Dalraddy, mill, mill-lands and multures thereof, Wester Lynwilg, Lynchurn, Easter Lynwilg, Dellichaggin, Kinraramore, Kinrarabeg, Kinraranachyll, Dalnavert, and Shiffin,<sup>125</sup> with forests, grassings, shielings, woods, parks and fishings thereof, parts, pendicles<sup>126</sup> and pertinents of the same; and the lands of Gartenmore, Remore, Curr, Clury, Tullochgorum, Easter and Wester Tulloch, lying within the parish of Alvie and sheriffdom of Inverness, with the teinds<sup>127</sup> both parsonage and vicarage of the said lands; as also, the forests of Badenoch underwritten, namely the Forest of Ben Alder, the Forest of Drumochter, the Forest of Gaick and Forest of

---

<sup>120</sup> Biallidbeg

<sup>121</sup> Biallidmore

<sup>122</sup> Dalnashalg

<sup>123</sup> Payment in grain and money for having corn ground

<sup>124</sup> Buildings

<sup>125</sup> I am unable to identify Shiffen

<sup>126</sup> Small portion of land

<sup>127</sup> Grain Tithe

Glen Feshie, with the whole rights, privileges, profits and casualties belonging to any forest within the said kingdom.

The return from these lands would have been immense.

Another impact on the land was Government Decree, in particular, two Parliamentary Acts of 1695; the Run Rig Lands Act and the Commonties Act. These Acts had the end result of the concentration of land in fewer and fewer hands and people being forced off the land because they no longer had access to the resources of the land.

The first was the Run Rig Lands Act, 1695 which allowed land owners to apply for consolidation of their land. Run Rigs were long, narrow raised strips of land that were, up until this time, communally farmed. Many Run Rigs were held by two or more land owners. The Act meant that if an owner of land wished, he/she could apply to the courts for his/her area of land to be hived off from that of the community, the first step toward enclosure<sup>128</sup>.

The second Act was the Division of Commonties, 1695. A person purporting to own land had to be able to prove that he owned the land. Dùthchas or hereditary right of ancient possession, in which a community legitimized the right of a Laird to the land no longer applied. Rather, Oighreach was the legally recognized tenure of the land held by the owner of the land.<sup>129</sup> Further, wet areas called Mosses were subject to division. These areas were where crofters had obtained their peat freely throughout time; they could now be denied access to what had been considered a communal resource for generations.

---

<sup>128</sup> When division of land was allowed, the Sheilings were relatively safe from consolidation as whilst good for summer grazing, they were no good for crop production.

<sup>129</sup> Cathcart, Op Cit; Page 145

## Chapter 4.

## Pounds, Merks and Pennies

Scotland had few exports during the 16th century and imported the majority of her food needs and luxury items. Scotland wanted to expand economically, but the majority of her exports, mainly cattle, went to England. The Exchequer of Scotland was, of necessity, subsidized between 1585 and the Union of Crowns in 1603, when the Scots pound was tied to the sterling at a ratio of 12:1.<sup>130</sup> The exchange rate between the English and Scottish pounds, up until 1603, depended upon the amount of bullion in each currency; thereafter the Scots pound was fixed at one-twelfth of the pound sterling.

Scotland wanted to be on par economically with England, but with limited exports, no East India Company and little likelihood of that position changing, politicians and intellectuals of the day thought that if they could establish a foothold in the Americas, Scotland could become a trading giant.

William Paterson, a native Scotsman, founder of the Bank of England, persuaded Scottish politicians of the day, aristocrats, merchants, and indeed anyone with money to spare, to invest in a scheme, under the umbrella of the 'Company of Scotland trading to Africa and the Indies', founded in 1695. The proposal was that Darien, on the Panama Isthmus, would be settled free of religious or racial bigotry; its deep harbour a safe haven for all nations or individuals. The success of the venture depended on everyone using the facility paying a fee to the company. Scotland, it was thought, would be awash with money and no longer have to play an inferior role, either economically or politically, to England. Scots flocked to invest and by 14 July 1698, when the first 2,500 settlers, of what was expected to be many more, departed from Leith, had raised

---

<sup>130</sup> Gemmell, Elizabeth, Mayhew, N.J. Ibid;

over £400,000 pounds, nearly a fifth of the total of the Scottish economy, to bankroll the venture.<sup>131</sup> The venture failed spectacularly because of the hot, oppressive climate, disease carrying mosquitoes, a lack of assured supplies and the fact that Spain had claimed part of the Isthmus and King William, not willing to upset Spain, instructed English colonies in America not to supply the infant colony. These combined factors led to the deaths of over 2,000 people and the bankruptcy of Scotland; indeed, it could be argued that it was this factor that gave the final push toward political union between Scotland and England, and 1707 when the pound sterling became the only recognized form of currency in the United Kingdom.

Despite this, decades were to pass before Scots, particularly in the Highlands, recognized, and therefore legitimized, the use of the English sterling pound.<sup>132</sup>

The impact of the failure of the Darien venture and the bankruptcy of Scotland, along with the severe crop failures between 1695 and 1700, caused by severe weather and the fallout from the eruption of Hekla in Iceland in 1693, which resulted in famine, affected even Badenoch.

Prices spiralled as crops failed, despite the fact that the price of food or drink had been controlled for centuries in Scotland, the formula generally being the current cost of the raw materials, an allowance to cover costs and a small profit to the manufacturer; the burghs stating at what price it was to be sold, using the above formula. The market price for grain in each of the counties was set annually, between the 2nd (Candlemas) and 20th February, in Sheriffs' Courts and differed from county to county.<sup>133</sup> The men who made the decision on price consisted of "a jury of fifteen men of knowledge and skill, of whom no fewer than eight should be Heritors."<sup>134</sup> The exception to this rule was oatmeal, the basis of the diet of every Scot at this time, because although the oatmeal price was supposedly set by the Sheriff's Court, the reality was that some estates would

---

<sup>131</sup> 'The Guardian' Tuesday, 11 Sept 2007 Carroll, Rory. 'The Sorry Story of How Scotland Lost Its 17th Century Empire.'

<sup>132</sup> Gibson, A. J. S & Smout, T. C Ibid; P xv. Divide the Scottish figure by 12 to arrive at the sterling price.

<sup>133</sup> Gibson, Smout, Op Cit; P66 Prices had to be published by 1 March & were calculated on the prices bought and sold, within the county, since November of the preceding year; thus, the disparity of prices between counties.

<sup>134</sup> Gibson, Smout, Op Cit; P 69

totally ignore the set fee and charge inflated prices to their tenants for the supply of seed.<sup>135</sup> If the oatmeal crop failed, Scotland starved and Badenoch, at this time, was no exception. The oatmeal crop failed every year for four years. The famine was so bad that collectors of taxes, endeavouring to collect the poll tax, found it nigh impossible, with some collectors seeking cancellation of their contracts from Treasury.<sup>136</sup>

The Minister of Kingussie, during the period of 1690 – 1701, was the Reverend Donald Taylor.<sup>137</sup> Kirk Session Minutes for Badenoch do not exist for this period. Some Kingussie Kirk Session Minutes were lost in a fire, whilst others have just disappeared or were not taken during this starving time.<sup>138</sup> There is evidence of what life was like in this period as Heritors, Wadsetters and Liferenters in Badenoch were among those who signed a petition to James Douglas, Duke of Queensberry, High Commissioner to the Parliament of Scotland on the 9th January 1701 in which the petitioners argued that they received no support from government in a world where signatories, such as Lachlan Macpherson of Torcastle, Malcolm Macpherson of Breakachy, John Macpherson of Invereshie, Macpherson of Pitmain and others, all found external factors having a huge economic impact on life in Badenoch.<sup>139</sup>

There was a further complication to the economic success of Scotland and this was the fact that Scots were required to contribute to the maintenance and defence of the realm. Thus, the Parliament of Scotland would meet and vote a particular sum that usually meant that Lairds would be required to raise their rents in order to raise the money.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Gibson, Smout, Op Cit; P 77

<sup>136</sup> NAS/ GD3/10/4/1 also GD26/7/439

<sup>137</sup> NAS/GD80/30 also Glimpses Part 3, Sketches of the Protestant Ministers of Badenoch since the Reformation, p 195

<sup>138</sup> For instance, Alvie only commences in 1713 and although conjoined with Laggan between 1672 and 1708, there are few extant Kirk records. Records can be found in the National Archives of Scotland at NA13558, but I have not examined them. Kingussie Kirk records have survived from 1724, there being no Minister between 1719 when the Rev. Shaw left and 1724 when William Blair became the incumbent. Other existing Kirk records date from Laggan 1775; Rothiemurchus 1766 and Abernethy from 1730. War, famine, no Minister all impacted on records kept in Badenoch. Other impacts would have been the Hearth and Poll taxes of the period.

<sup>139</sup> The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707, K.M. Brown et al Eds; (St Andrews, 2007-2009), A1700/10/30.

<sup>140</sup> Approximately £2,500 pounds sterling was raised by Inverness-shire 26 June 1678. The total “voluntary” payment was £1,800,000 Scots. For the Shire of Inverness: [George Gordon], Marquis of Huntly, [James Stewart],

William the 2nd of England died in 1702 and was succeeded by Anne, the daughter of James VI of Scotland and his first wife, Anne Hyde. Having a Scot on the throne did not help the economic woes of Scotland. Anne required funds from Scotland to assist her in the defence of the realm, the Scottish Parliament having to find £435,000 sterling to that end in 1704.<sup>141</sup> A huge sum, even for those days, that was achieved by Lairds raising the rents on their lands.<sup>142</sup> Thus, making it harder and harder for people to survive.

The economic impact on Badenoch during and after the Jacobite rebellion of 1715 is not well documented, but given that when Huntly called for his Tacksmen to follow him, they did, enlisting the most able bodied Crofters in their various parishes, life became extremely difficult for those who remained; the old, the women, the children and the disabled.<sup>143</sup> Troops from either side laid waste to the country and when it was all over, there was still the problem of bringing home those who had been captured or exiled.

The economic impact was still being felt in 1729, when James Mackintosh of Borlum wrote, "For half the year in many towns of Scotland there is no beef or mutton to be seen in the shambles, and, if any, it is like carrion meat yet dearer than any I saw in England."<sup>144</sup>

There were light harvests in Badenoch in 1739 and 1740, followed by bitter winters which decimated the cattle population, thereby causing a shortage of cash with which people could buy grain, thus another year with little food. The price set for Inverness was 6 guineas per boll in

---

Lord Doune, [Angus MacDonald], Lord MacDonnell, John MacLeod of Dunvegan, Sir Donald MacDonald of Sleat, Hugh Fraser of Belladrum (Beauly), Lauchlan MacIntosh of Torcastle, Donald MacIntosh of Kyllachy, the Laird of Moidart, John Forbes of Culloden, the Laird of Strichen, Hugh Fraser of Kinneries, Lauchlan MacIntosh of Aberader, Duncan MacPherson of Cluny, [...] MacIntosh of Borlum, Alexander Baillie of Dunain, Sir Hugh Campbell of Cawdor, Thomas Fraser of Beaufort and the sheriff principal of Inverness or sheriff depute convener. (See Records of the Scottish Parliament, St Andrews University, 1678/6/22 NAS PAB/1 F182-190)

<sup>141</sup> This equated in 1704 to 36,250 pounds Scots

<sup>142</sup> Every shire in Scotland contributed, with every Laird named in each shire, so in Badenoch in 1704, it was Macpherson, Laird of Cluny, John Macpherson of Dalraddy, John Macpherson of Invereshie, Lachlan Mackintosh of Strone etc. (See University of St Andrews, 'Records of the Parliament of Scotland to 1707', [1704/7/69] NAS PA2/38 F181-197V)

<sup>143</sup> Szechi, Daniel '1715, The Great Jacobite Rebellion', Yale University Press, Boston, 2006, Page 110

<sup>144</sup> Houston, Robert Allan & Whyte, Ian D. Ed; 'Scottish Society, 1500-1800', Cambridge University Press, 2005 - from J Mackintosh of Borlum, 'An Essay of Ways & Means of Enclosing', 1729, Page 131.

1756, declining to as little as £4.13.4 in the years 1758 – 1761 inclusive, with the years 1771 – 1772 reaching a price of £9 per boll.<sup>145</sup>

Crop Year	Inverness Fair Price	Crop Year	Inverness Fair Price	Crop Year	Inverness Fair Price	Crop Year	Inverness Fair Price
1756	£6. 6. 6	1759	£4.13. 4	1762	£8	1765	£8
1757	£6.19.10	1760	£4.13. 4	1763	£6	1766	£8
1758	£4.13. 4	1761	£4.13. 4	1764	£7. 4. 0	1767	£6.13. 4
Crop Year	Inverness Fair Price	Crop Year	Inverness Fair Price	Crop Year	Inverness Fair Price	Crop Year	Inverness Fair Price
1768	£6	1770	£7. 4. 0	1772	£9	1774	£8
1769	£6. 6. 0	1771	£9	1773	£7. 4. 0	1775	£8

<sup>145</sup> Gibson, A J S & Smout, T.C 'Prices, Food, and Wages in Scotland, 1550-1780,' 2nd Edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, Page 91



177 6	£6
----------	----

Source: Gibson, A. J. S & Smout, T.C. 'Prices, Food and Wages in Scotland, 1550 – 1780', Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995. P100. Table derived from figures obtained from Bald, A 'The Farmer & Corn Dealers' Assistant', Edinburgh 1780

The table above would suggest, if one were looking purely at supply and demand, that there was heavy crop production in the years 1769 – 1770 inclusive and a scarcity in 1771 – 1772, the latter probably due to flooding, which occurred more often than not. Given the above, the prices set were not purely supply and demand, but rather, as Gibson and Smout have asserted, as a means of ensuring Heritors (there were three resident Heritors in Kingussie in 1791) received the maximum income possible from their lands, with the least outlay.

John Williams, who surveyed Kingussie and Lochaber in 1769 wrote to the Duke of Gordon on 14 August 1769 saying, "It must grieve any man that goes much through the Highlands to see such a general want of bread in all parts of it, and at the same time to see such numbers of able bodied, idle men pining with hunger, while there is thousands of acres round them capable of improvement with moderate expense and labour."<sup>146</sup> This would suggest that what arable land existed was under-utilized.<sup>147</sup> Crops grown in Badenoch were, in the main, oats and bear, which is a type of Barley and believed to be one of the earliest domesticated grains.<sup>148</sup> The yield per acre

<sup>146</sup> NAS02023 GD44-28-34-100 – John Williams in a letter to the Duke of Gordon making out a case for improving the returns on the lands of the Duke of Gordon through some capital expenditure, an investment in technology and the employment of many of the destitute in projects such as draining areas of land. Williams was most observant and never just wrote a report, but sent in reams of paper providing examples of what could be done given the support of the Duke and the returns to the Duke through value added agriculture, forestry and fishing.

<sup>147</sup> John Knox travelled through the Highlands in 1764 and, whilst he admired their beauty, commented on the barrier that the Grampians, in particular, posed to decent communications and hence a means to move produce economically between the lowlands and highlands of Scotland. He suggested that Inverness could become the "emporium of the north" if three canals could be built that, in effect, crossed Scotland from west to east, beginning at Fort William and finishing in Inverness. He suggested the Great Glen to the north of Badenoch, being the easiest and most direct route that only required a limited amount of artificial canals between lochs. The result, many years later, was the Caledonian Canal. (See Knox, John. 'A View of the British Empire: More Especially Scotland; with Some Proposals for the Improvement of that Country, the Extension of Its Fisheries, and the Relief of the People', Volume 2, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, London, 1790. Page 420

<sup>148</sup> Bear or Barley was first grown in Iraq from at least 5,000 BC and possibly earlier. Wheat did not grow well in Badenoch due to the height of the terrain and the weather.

was poor, but not only was it nourishing, it was used as feed for stock and fermented extremely well, providing the Crofter with a ready access to cheap alcohol.

A survey of the Province of Moray was carried out in 1791, Ministers in each parish submitting an in-depth analysis of each parish. Prior to this, there were few records that provided a snapshot of 18th century Badenoch at a time when huge changes to its economic base were occurring. Travelling from the western end of Badenoch to the east, the parishes are Laggan, Kingussie and Insh, and Alvie.

Laggan, the most remote part of the region, had less available river flats for cropping. Thus, it was ideal for the first tentative investment in sheep and the move away from cattle. By 1791 there were 5 sheep farms on the Cluny Estate, with 12,000 sheep on those farms, whilst other farms in the district were still mixed, with some 1600 cattle, a number of goats and sheep. Prices for sheep varied, with widders being sold for between 12 and 16 shillings each, whilst the wool fetched up to 8 shillings a stone. With the expansion of sheep farming, rents had gone up exponentially. Meal produced in the Parish was about 2,450 bolls, up significantly from 1782,<sup>149</sup> although the survey noted that the produce was still not sufficient to feed all the inhabitants, nor were there enough horses to allow easier working of the land.<sup>150</sup> Further, despite the richness of the alluvial flats, cropping was limited by mildew and frost, with the land around Loch Laggan having the further problem of a base of limestone rock.<sup>151</sup> The Spey gradually widens, as does the valley as it traverses the Parish of Kingussie, the Rev. John Anderson noting in 1791 that the district was not overly suitable to growing grain, and suffered storms at all seasons. There were intense frosts and heavy rains during cropping which meant that it really was the luck of the draw if a heavy grain crop was realized.<sup>152</sup> He noted that Oatmeal, in the Parish of Kingussie, on an average of years, “sells at 20 shillings the boll of 9 stone; oats for feed fluctuated between 16 shillings and 20 shillings, whilst bear and rye sold frequently for 21 shillings.” He noted that beef and mutton could be valued by the pound, “as there is no market for butcher-meat; but both in

<sup>149</sup> Grant & Williams ‘ A Survey of the Province of Moray’, Op Cit; P 254

<sup>150</sup> Grant and Williams, Op Cit; Page 254

<sup>151</sup> Ibid; P253

<sup>152</sup> <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-9/Inverness/Kingussie/3/36/>

general are dear.” Ducks and hens sold for 6 pence; chickens 2 pence, with eggs 1½ pence per dozen. Cheese was 5 shillings the stone of 24 pounds when green; butter 12 shillings the stone when salted; milk was 2 pence a Scottish pint when warm; potatoes 6 pence per peck, rising to 1 shilling sometimes in Spring when sold for feed, particularly after flooding.<sup>153</sup>

The Parish of Alvie, on the other hand, was arguably more blessed and supported a reasonably large population and had done so for many years. The parish comprised the same properties for hundreds of years, many of those still extant, such as Kinrara, Delfour, Kinraig, Raits, Lynwilg, Dalnavert and Dunachton, the latter known traditionally as Nectans Fort and associated with the Picts.<sup>154</sup> Rent Rolls for 1635 show that the principal tenant of Dunachton was Angus MacQueen; other tenants were:

John Mac Coil vic William; Angus Mac Conchie; John Roy Mac Allister vic Fionlay; William Roy Mac Huistean; Donald Mac Coil vic Iain Dhu; Andrew Miller; Donald Mac Conchie vic Gorrie; Allister Mac Fionlay vic Ewen; Mac Fionlay Dhu; Kenneth Mac Fionlay Mor; James Gow; Duncan Mac Gorrie Ferquhar Dhu; Donald Dhu Mac Gorrie; James Shaw in Dunachton beg; Soirle Mac Fionlay vic Ewen; Finlay Mac Allister vic Fionlay vic Ewen; Katharine nin Donald Roy; William Mac Allan Roy; Gillespie Mac Coil vic Gorrie and John Mac Hamish vic Aeneas.<sup>155</sup>

There would have been the Cottars who worked for the above men. Given Dunachton is just one property, this would suggest that Alvie supported quite a large population. Indeed, a market was established at Dunachton in 1669 after a successful appeal to the Scottish Parliament by Lachlan Mackintosh, the Laird, seeking permission to establish a market and fair at Dunachton because “there are no markets in Strathearn, Badenoch or Lochaber, and seeing the petitioner has a considerable interest in all of them and that markets and public fairs are very profitable for the subjects, may it therefore please your grace and lords to confer three markets on the petitioner,

---

<sup>153</sup> <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-1799/Inverness/Kingussie> page 40

<sup>154</sup> MacBain, Alexander, Place names Highlands & Islands of Scotland Highland Monthly, John Menzies & Co; Inverness, Vol 2, 1891, P 194

<sup>155</sup> Fraser-Mackintosh, Charles 'Antiquarian Notes, Historical, Genealogical and Social', 2nd Series, Inverness, 1865, page 395

the one upon the first Tuesday of May to be kept at the kirk of Moybeg in Strathearn, the second to be kept at Dunachton in Badenoch upon the first Tuesday of July, and the third to be kept at Inverroy Moor in Brae Lochaber the first Tuesday of November, and either of the said markets to continue for four days.<sup>156</sup> The petition was granted. The fair was still running in 1690, the Parliament agreeing to its being held a weekly market at the town of Dunachton in Badenoch each Wednesday.<sup>157</sup> When one looks at the farm today, it is hard to imagine that there was once a substantial house, if not a castle, that was old in 1689, but was burnt to the ground by Colonel Ranald Macdonald of Keppoch, along with offices and furniture in 1689.<sup>158</sup> Lachlan Mackintosh petitioned the Parliament of Scotland stating in July 1690, “....did carry away all the portable goods thereupon, worth at least 40,000 merks, so that the whole tenants and possessors thereof were forced to flee and are now with their wives and children begging their bread and living upon charity, not daring (for fear of their lives) to return to the ground, albeit the petitioner were in a condition to build houses to them.”<sup>159</sup> Lachlan Mackintosh never rebuilt his home, but Dunachton remained the home of his tenants.

A little over 100 years later, the Rev. John Grant noted in 1793 that the price of meal was 18 shillings to £1 per boll or 9 stone when weighed, the price being stable for several years.<sup>160</sup>

Wages, in the late 1700's, were quite good for the day, with men averaging 1 shilling and 5 pence per day, but with women receiving as little as 6 pence per day.<sup>161</sup> Whilst Badenoch was generally fertile, the land could only support large numbers of people on the limited amount of arable land when there were good seasons. William Mackintosh of Balnespig noted in his account books that he supported 240 people, 60 of whom were capable of bearing arms, with

---

<sup>156</sup> Records of the Scottish Parliament, St Andrews University, NAS PA6/17, 'Appendix, December 23 1669 (A1669/10/7)

<sup>157</sup> Scottish Records of Parliament, St Andrews University, NAS 15 April 1690 [1690/4/133]

<sup>158</sup> Some NAS papers refer to Dunachton as Dunachton Castle in the mid 1660's before it was burnt to the ground by Macdonald of Keppoch; the earliest mention of Dunachton Castle is in 1380.

<sup>159</sup> NAS 15 April 1690 PA2/34 [1690/4/103]

<sup>160</sup> <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-1799/Inverness/Alvie> page 381

<sup>161</sup> <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-1799/Inverness/Kingussie> page 39

each tenant of his sowing 17 bolls of grain.<sup>162</sup> This position would not last. The following year would see dreadful floods in Badenoch, William of Balnespich recording a deficit of crops on Dunachton in the Parish of Alvie.<sup>163</sup>

After the terrible flooding year of 1770, the seasons were a little kinder, with production peaking in 1775 before there was another adverse season.

Families usually kept two cows, some native sheep and the Garron (Highland Pony).<sup>164</sup> Flocks and herds supplied not only food, but fleece for clothing, blankets and carpets, horns for spoons, dressed leather, hair for the masons. Lint seed was sown to grow into sheeting, shirting, sacking and table linen. People made their own candles and made their own bread. Their diet was plain, consisting of, in the main, oaten bread and cheese,<sup>165</sup> the latter being made from a mixture of ewe and cow milk. The drink of preference was whisky; a bottle of whisky per day was the allowance. Indeed, whisky was consumed by everyone, including tots! Whisky was offered at every house, and had to be taken or offence was given. Even in the Lairds house, a bottle of whisky was placed on the side table with cold meat every morning. People drank it three times a day or more, and spiced or sweetened whisky was given to children.<sup>166</sup>

---

<sup>162</sup> Mackintosh of Mackintosh, Alfred Donald, Ed; from Mackintosh, Sir Aeneas, Bart; 'Notes Descriptive and Historical, Principally Relating to the Parish of Moy in Strathdearn and the Town and Neighbourhood of Inverness', privately published Edinburgh 1892 P37

<sup>163</sup> Economic Journal Vol. 34, No 33, March 1924, Pages 83-89, JSTOR, Grant, I.F 'The Income of Tenants on a Scotch Openfield Farm in the 18th Century'

<sup>164</sup> Balnespich in his accounts states that the Garron would carry 1 ½ bolls , which equals around 260 lbs Imp; or 15 stone

<sup>165</sup> Kebbock (Gaelic: Càbag)

<sup>166</sup> Grant, Elizabeth 'Memoirs of a Highland Lady', John Murray, Albermarle Street, London, 1911, page 198

Once a year, men would arrive at a designated point to provide carriage service to the Laird.<sup>167</sup> This took men away from home for weeks, as they utilized the Garron, the small, but extremely strong, Highland pony, to carry peat, produce, bark and logs, peas and corn to distant Inverness. There was no financial recompense for this service; it was part of their obligations to the Laird.

Crofters stood some chance of making their own money, or at least enough to carry them through the hard winters, through their cattle. The cattle were sold on to a Drover, who was usually a neighbour; these Drovers drove the cattle en-masse from Badenoch, Lochaber and the Western Isles to the great markets at Falkirk in Stirling or Crieff in Perthshire. The Drovers travelled through Badenoch, via the Killin Valley, south of Loch Ness, then through the Corrieyairack Pass to Laggan and then south through Drumochter. Records show that it was a profitable business; the cattle, whilst quite small, usually weighing only around 310 pounds, gave a nice return to those willing to make the often hazardous journey. Drovers slept in the open, wrapped in their plaid, protecting their investment from the predatory Reivers, the old Scottish name for Cattle Duffers.

Cattle, stolen by Reivers, were driven 100 miles or more, either to Badenoch or more often, Lochaber. William Ban Macpherson, who died in 1777 at the ripe old age of 100, recorded that in 1689, whilst working as a Herd Boy at Biallid, near Dalwhinnie, noted Lochaber men driving stolen cattle from Aberdeen. The men told him they were a day's journey from home and had not been chased to date. The Reivers went on their way only to be followed by troops several hours later.<sup>168</sup> Reivers were generally protected by their lairds, who used them to settle Clan

<sup>167</sup> Carriage Service was an obligation of the part of those who rented land from a Laird to provide their service up to four times a year to take goods to market and also to provide their labour at either seed or harvest time. Sometimes people refused to do the service or lessees refused to provide people to do the service, usually over an argument about a Tack, but it could also be because of competing priorities, for instance in the case of Alexander Macpherson, who had possession (Tack) of Biallidmore and was desperately trying to dig ditches to contain the flooding of the River Calder, whilst at the same time meet his obligations and farm. He got the Duke of Gordon's Factor to agree to gathering money from those who would normally provide the labour, thus allowing him to hire labour for the channel project and yet keep his farm going at a crucial time of year. The Ground Officer only managed to collect 2 pounds 16 shillings. The slack was taken up by neighbours. He said that "I have been greatly obliged to Banchor & Mr McLean. The former, with his tenants, attended every day I required and the other, by his direction, was worth several labouring hands." (NAS GD44-27-10-12)

<sup>168</sup> 'Glimpses of Church and Social Life in the Highlands in Olden Times', Clan Macpherson, Canada, 1975, originally published in 1893, page 20

grudges or personal scores. There is an interesting letter from William Robertson of Inshes to his cousin, Lachlan Mackintosh of Balnespick, written in 1687 in which he complains of seven cattle being lifted on the Sabbath and taken to the Davoch of Laggan in Badenoch. There were two men and a boy in the raiding party and were identified as Sorle-Dow-vic Finlay-Vic Allister, in Laggan and John Dow-vic-Sorle vic-Ian-Mor. The boy was not named, but it may be that he was the son of either one of the two men named.<sup>169</sup>

*Inshes, 3rd September, 1687.*

*Sir and Loving Cousin, These are showing you that upon Sabbath was eight days, the 25th of August last, there was stolen out of my field seven head of cattle, of which there was one gotten back that straggled from the thieves, which my men took home, who were in pursuit of them. The other six, I am informed, were carried to Badenoch, to the Davoch of Laggan. There was but three in company, as I am informed, took them away, viz., two men and one boy. The men's names, as I am informed, were Sorle-Dow-vic Finlay-Vic Allister, in Laggan, John Dow-vic-Sorle vic-Ian-Mor, the boy's name I got not. These men dined in Altanaslanach<sup>170</sup> on Sabbath day with Mackintosh, his bowman, and the said Sabbath by ten o'clock at night, as I am informed, carried away the said oxen and cows. Their colours and marks are as follows, viz., one dun ox and one dun bull, one black ox, and one brown young ox, with a white ball in his forehead, one gaird or spranged cow, red and black, and her horns little and cross, and one large black. I entreat you make all the search ye can, to know if they came to Badenoch, and acquaint me thereof, how soon ye can, and send me your advice what to do thereanent, which is all at present from, sir, your affectionate cousin and servant.*

*(Signed) W. ROBERTSON.*

*Let this present my service to your bedfellow and children.*

*Addressed" For his much respected and affectionate cousin, Lachlan Mackintosh of Balnespick.*

*These."*

<sup>169</sup> Fraser-Mackintosh, Charles, 'Letters of Two Centuries', A & W Mackenzie, Inverness, 1890, page 117.

<sup>170</sup> Location identified by Graham as being somewhere near Altanaslanach Bridge, near Moy, just beside the old A9

Cattle prices rose marginally over the years, with the exception of the twenty five year period following the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 when cattle reached a peak price per head of £48 in 1769 due to lack of availability compounded with the problem of a disease outbreak in the cattle of England.<sup>171</sup>

Life was tough for the small tenant farmer. Sir John Sinclair, in his 'Report on the Northern Counties and Islands of Scotland,' in 1795, describes the diet of the small tenant farmer as consisting of meal and milk in the main, stating "There is not 5lb of meat consumed within the family throughout the year; an egg is a luxury that is seldom or ever indulged in, far less a fowl." Sir John estimated that a family consisting of two men, two women, three children and a grown girl subsisted on £15/4/- per annum. Women did the bulk of the work, gathering the manure of their beasts and then spreading it by hand on the Run Rigs. They also looked after the cattle and sheep at the Sheilings during the summer and spent their spare moments gathering lichen with which to dye clothes and herbs to use for medicinal purposes.

Famine came to Badenoch in 1783 through 1786 when crops failed and the winters were especially severe. The trouble started in 1782 when summer was very late, causing a minimum of crop production. This was followed by an eruption in Iceland in January 1783 of the volcano, Skaptar Jökull. The cinders were blown for thousands of miles, covering trees, crops and polluting streams. Dry fog or blue haze was recorded over the entire northern hemisphere. Scientists believe this to be a sulphuric acid layer in the lower stratosphere.<sup>172</sup> An Icelandic eye witness, the Rev. Jón Steingrímsson, wrote an account of the catastrophe, reporting, "This said week, and the two prior to it, more poison fell from the sky than words can describe: ash, volcanic hairs, rain full of sulphur and salt peter, all of it mixed with sand. The snouts, nostrils

<sup>171</sup> Gibson, A.J. S & Smout, T. C 'Prices, Food and Wages in Scotland, 1550 -1780, Cambridge Uni Press, Cambridge, 1995. P 197. The outbreak was Rinderpest or Cattle Plague, a highly contagious virus, which regularly decimated cattle herds. Interestingly, the disease was often traced to imported cattle. (See 'Report from the Commissioners', Parliament, House of Commons, 29 September 1865, page viii). The disease outbreak in 1769 came from two cattle imported from Holland; the mortality rate was 50%. (See Spinage, Clive A. Cattle Plague, a History', New York; London: Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers, 2003, page 138). The disease was finally eradicated in 2001.

<sup>172</sup> Stevenson, David, University of Edinburgh in a presentation 'Atmospheric Impact of the 1783-1784 Laki Volcanic Eruption, Leeds 2004



and feet of livestock grazing or walking on the grass turned bright yellow and raw. All water went tepid and light blue in colour and gravel slides turned grey. All the earth's plants burned, withered and turned grey, one after another, as the fire increases and neared the settlements."<sup>173</sup>

The dust and ash drifted over Scotland creating a catastrophic famine. Sir John Sinclair noted that many in Scotland were obliged to kill their cattle, and eat the flesh without bread; many who had no such resource lived on soup made of nettles, and snails, which were salted for winter sustenance.<sup>174</sup>

The situation had worsened by 1 October 1783, the Parish Minister, John Anderson, writing, "At this time the distresses of the poor being uncommonly great, and many in danger of perishing for want, a supply of victual ordered by the Government for their relief, arrived. This, though by far too small, was however of very essential service; and by being properly distributed by the Elders and Heritors of the Parish, among the most necessary and indigent, was the means of preserving many who must otherwise have been in danger of perishing through famine."<sup>175</sup> Whilst famines were reasonably commonplace in the Highlands, what was different this time was the length of the famine that was caused, arguably, by the late summer and crop failure, the eruptions in Iceland and the unstable weather patterns that followed.

The new incumbent of the Kingussie & Insh Parish, the Rev. John Anderson, noted that by July of 1783, people were in real distress and needed assistance, many were in danger of perishing, with the day being saved by the fortunate arrival of victuals supplied by the Government for relief.<sup>176</sup> Parishioners, caught by the effects of the late summer and the fallout from Skaptar Jökull, covered the gamut of the community and included the Kirk Officer, John Macpherson, who was caring not only for himself but also for his grandchildren. Others who received help were Elspet Maclean, Brae Ruthven; Elspet Macpherson, Noid; Janet Macpherson, Noid;

<sup>173</sup> McCoy, Floyd W, Heiken, Grant, Ed; 'Volcanic Hazards and Disasters in Human Antiquity', Pre-historic "Settlement crisis", environmental changes in the British Isles, and volcanic eruptions in Iceland: an exploration of plausible linkages', Grattan, J.P & Gilbertson, D.D; Special Paper 345, Geological Society of America, 2000. There has also been some debate as to whether sunspots would have had some impact on climatic change.

<sup>174</sup> Stevenson, David, University of Edinburgh in a presentation 'Atmospheric Impact of the 1783-1784 Laki Volcanic Eruption, Leeds 2004

<sup>175</sup> Kingussie & Insh Kirk Session Minutes 1 Oct 1783 (NAS/Ch2/1419/1/27)

<sup>176</sup> Kingussie Kirk Session Minutes, 5 July 1783 (NAS/Ch2/1419/1/27)

Alexander Macpherson, Croft Bain; Janet Cumming, Raich; Helen Macpherson, Kerrowmiach; Isabel Macpherson, Ettridge; Jean Maclean, Kingussie; Katharine Stuart, Lynabrach; Christian Stuart, Killiehuntly; Christian Cattanach, Dell; Elspet Macpherson, Biallidbeg; John Maclean, Drumgalveg; Katharine Cattanach, Clune; Margaret Maclean, Drumgalbeg; Janet Cattanach, Croft of Killiehuntly; Angus Macpherson, Noidmore; John Macpherson, a blind boy in Ettridge; Elspet Macpherson, Ettridge; Anne Kennedy, a cripple; Janet MacIntosh, Strone; Janet Cameron, Milntown of Banchor; Anne Macpherson, Raich; Janet Stuart, Killiehuntly; Isabel MacIntyre, Laggan Lea and Jannet Grant in Strone.<sup>177</sup> The sums designated were dispensed on 5 July 1783, a few weeks after the eruption of Laki on 8 June 1783. Many more were to need help over the coming months. The year became known as “bliadhna na peasrach” (pease meal year).<sup>178</sup>

The situation was not in any way helped by the imposition of a three pence tax on births, deaths and marriages and six pence on burials on 1 October 1783. The Session decided to put it all in the hands of the Session Clerk, James Maclean who, on 14 Dec 1783, appointed the following persons to collect the Duty – John Macpherson, Kirk Officer, responsible for the Churchyard of Kingussie and that of Invertromie; Donald Macpherson in Biallid, responsible for Banchor and Noid and John Shaw of Wester Gate of Invereshie responsible for Insh.<sup>179</sup> The tax was a huge impost for most members of Badenoch communities and resulted in general community resistance, with many people refusing to baptize their children and indeed taking up what had been a common Scottish custom of living together without the benefit of Clergy.<sup>180</sup> When people died, they were buried where they died, no longer in the Churchyards. This is shown graphically in the Inventory of the Kingussie & Insh Parochial Register in 1786 when only forty two children were baptized at three pence each and ten marriages were performed at three pence each. There were no burials recorded. Given that the population, at that time, was approximately 1900, it is an extraordinary example of civil disobedience that was to continue for some years despite the

---

<sup>177</sup> Ibid; (NAS/Ch2/1419/1/25)

<sup>178</sup> The Quarterly Journal of Agriculture, Vol 9, page 178, William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh, 1839

<sup>179</sup> Kingussie & Insh Kirk Session Minutes 14 Dec 1783 (NAS/Ch2/1419/1/29)

<sup>180</sup> Another form of marriage up until the 1940's was an irregular marriage, where a couple would go to a Solicitor and make their declaration of marriage in front of witnesses. They would then appear, with the Solicitor, before a Sheriff and confess. The Sheriff would fine them a small sum and write out a warrant, after which they would take the warrant to the Registrar who would then register the marriage, thus making it legal. This was the cheapest way of marriage from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the 1940's and appears again and again in the registers.

withdrawal of the tax a few years later. James Stark, in an address to the Statistical Society in 1851, said that only a third of all births were registered in Scotland post 1794, after the iniquitous tax of 1783 had been lifted. There was mass civil disobedience with people refusing to register births and deaths. This is one of the reasons for the huge gaps in Parochial Registers. Not even after the tax was lifted, did all register births or deaths.<sup>181</sup>

The statistical account taken between 1791 and 1795 shows a drop in population in the parishes of Badenoch, with Alvie's population down from 1021 in 1755 to 1011 in 1792. The Rev. John Grant noted, in 1792, that whilst the soil was generally fertile, the land was often flooded, late frosts damaged much of the produce, peas were only sown by those who limed and mildews frequently affected the oats bear, whilst turnip was rarely grown beyond the garden.<sup>182</sup> He also noted that Alvie had no Surgeon, Public Writer, Officer of Excise, Messenger, Mason, Carpenter, Baker or Butcher in the parish, and no gaol. There was one Justice of the Peace, 2 Shopkeepers, 2 Smiths, 6 Weavers, 4 Tailors and 2 Brogmakers; the Rev. Gordon noting that "these handicraftsmen are fit only for the coarsest work."<sup>183</sup> Ploughing was still done by the old Scots plough, the Cas Chrom, by most tenants, with the well-off utilizing the English Plough, the latter much more efficient.<sup>184</sup> The small land holdings for most tenants were precarious at best, with leases being generally short, thus not encouraging the use of more modern methods of farming.

The prices for staples had, by 1793, increased significantly in Badenoch, in some cases, doubling, due to shortages.<sup>185</sup> Families found it increasingly difficult to survive, although the Rev. Patrick Grant suggested that 1 shilling was sufficient to maintain a family.<sup>186</sup> One could argue the shortage of staples was due to the weather patterns post 1783 contributing largely to

---

<sup>181</sup> Stark, James Contributions to the Vital Statistics of Scotland, Journal of the Statistical Society of London, Vol 14, No1, March 1851, pp 48-87

<sup>182</sup> Ibid; p376

<sup>183</sup> <http://stat-acc.sct.edina.uk/link/1791-1799/Inverness/Alvie>, Page 378

<sup>184</sup> Although, it must be said, that the Cas Chrom came into its own on rock strewn ground and could till ground that would destroy an English plough that made deep furrows. The problem was not solved until the Smith brothers in South Australia invented the Stump Jump Plough in 1876.

<sup>185</sup> <http://stat-acc-sct.edina.uk/link/1791-1799/Inverness/Duthil> page 312

<sup>186</sup> Ibid;

the increased prices of staples, with abnormally long frosts in 1788 and 1789 and terrible winters up until the turn of the century.<sup>187</sup>

David Brewster of Belleville, who kept meteorological records, noted in 1834 the mean temperature in that year had been 45 degrees. There had been a frost in May, mildew in August and late harvests. Whilst this demonstrates that Badenoch often suffers from adverse weather conditions in what should be peak harvesting times, the difference when one looks at the late 1700 weather patterns is that there were late, heavy snows and flooding in 1782 that caused an initial famine, followed by the volcanic eruption of Laki in Iceland, the negative impact of which continued on for years in various parts of Europe and the United Kingdom. Meteorology records attesting that the period between 1782 and 1800 experienced prolonged climatic variations.<sup>188</sup> Badenoch bore its share, but because the economy of Badenoch was agrarian based and the very topography of the region and, hence, its isolation, dictated a very limited economy meant that the impact was far worse.

---

<sup>187</sup> Fauvell, D & Simpson, I 'The History of British Winters', Netweather TV

<sup>188</sup> Travellers reported permanent snow cover over the Cairngorm Mountains in Badenoch at an altitude of about 1200 feet.

## Chapter 5

# Farming Badenoch



The land of Badenoch has been farmed for aeons along its rich river flats, with cattle and sheep foraging along its hillsides. Every year, the Spey floods, as tributaries pour into the Spey, carrying debris from glens near and far. Consequently, by the 18th century, there were major drainage problems in Badenoch.

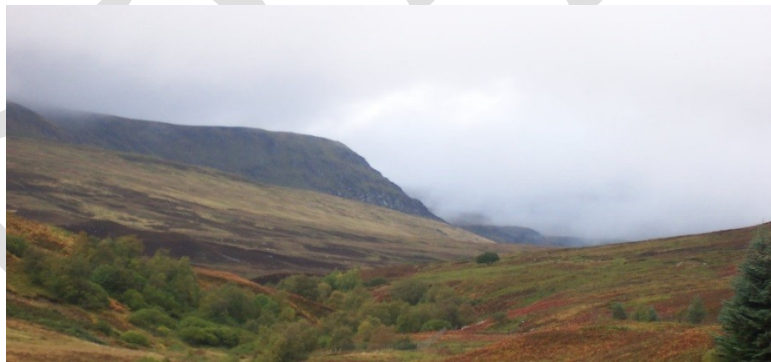
Despite the annual inundation, the Crofters still farmed as they had done since Badenoch man first took up the plough. Cattle, along with sheep and sometimes goats were driven up to the Sheilings in summer to take advantage of the lush highland pastures. The men, once they had settled their families at the Sheilings, would return to their townships to tend to and harvest the crops, whilst the women and children collected herbs for their medicinal and food value and lichen for dyeing cloth that was spun during this summer sojourn.



Lichen used in dyeing cloth, Glen Banchor, Badenoch (Author, Glen Banchor Oct 2006)

Food for the family generally consisted of Brose, which was oatmeal mixed with boiling water when sustenance was required. The Brose, if allowed to cool, could be cut into squares and carried by Shepherds, or indeed any traveller, as a nourishing snack.

The accommodation on the Sheilings was rudimentary, but traces of them can still be seen, particularly in the hills to the north of the River Calder.



Glenbanchor Sheiling Country October 2006 (Taken by the Author)

Crofters also made cheese and butter, not necessarily for their own consumption, but rather as part of their rental agreement.<sup>189</sup> Vegetables eaten were Potatoes, Kale and Turnip. Meat was mainly eaten at Baptisms, Weddings, Christmas and New Year.

---

<sup>189</sup> Sheiling grazing meant that cattle would be in prime condition when driven to the autumn sales at Falkirk and like places.

Farming was communal, with farmers drawing lots for available land annually. This, combined with short leases, proved a disaster over time, because there was no incentive to improve the land. Crops grown were Oats and Bear (a type of Barley).<sup>190</sup> The farms were generally beside a source of water with communal dykes built to protect the township. The entire settlement of Westerton in Glen Banchor was surrounded by a dyke. The head dyke was the township dyke; in other words, the dyke was communal.



Westerton, Glen Banchor 6 October 2006 – Looking toward Lurgin (Author, October 2006)

Glen Banchor once consisted of eight townships, Easterton, Westerton, Dalvalloch, Dail a' Charoranin (Dalchurn), Lurgin, Milton, Luib, plus Croftcarnoch and Croft Bain. The area had been settled for hundreds, if not thousands of years<sup>191</sup> being on a path that took people to Laggan and on to Lochaber at a time when there were no bridges over the Spey. The census of 1841 showed there were 90 inhabitants and 21 households, with five families living at Easterton, four families at Westerton, two families at Dalvalloch, two families at Dalchurn, three families at Lurgin, three families at Milton and two families at Luib. Milton, Lurgin and Dalchurnbeg were

---

<sup>190</sup> Rental agreements often stipulated that the Crofter not only pay in cash, but also in produce. Indeed, the money aspect was not great, it was the amount of produce that had to be supplied to the Laird that made the largest impact on the Crofter.

<sup>191</sup> There is a Bronze Age Cairn in Glen Banchor, still to be archaeologically investigated.

incorporated into Banchor Mains in 1842; so from that time, there were no tenant farmers, but rather just shepherds and drovers.



Glen Banchor 6 October 2006 (Photo taken by author)



Examples of Dykes, Glen Banchor, Badenoch October 2006 (Photo taken by Author)

Today, when one looks at the ruins, the immediate impression is that the Townships or Clachans were quite large, but this is not necessarily so. People would abandon houses as the dwellings started to deteriorate and just build another. Over time, all that would remain would be a rock base, thus erroneously giving a picture of a much larger community. Rock was also the basis for hay ricks ensuring the hay did not rot.





Remains of a croft, Glen Banchor (Photo taken by Author October 2006)

Another example of false impressions is when you look at the common grazing of Craggan in Glen Banchor. The area is huge, but the land on which animals grazed is poor and never carried a lot of stock. Crofters would often include their portion of common grazing as “their acreage”.

The townships of Glen Banchor had been cleared by 1876, the whole of the land being let to Mr Allan MacGillivray for the purpose of grazing at an annual rent for 1876 of 110 pounds sterling. The Clearances were to continue until the Crofters were given tenure after the findings of the Napier Commission in 1883.

The Napier Commission or the Royal Commission into the Conditions of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, met in Kingussie in 1883<sup>192</sup>, too late for the Crofters and Cottars of Glen Banchor, but in time for other Badenoch residents, particularly those who lived in Strone. Appearing before the commission were the lairds, such as Sir John W Ramsden of Ardverickie, who gave a glowing testimonial to his head Forester, James Cattanach,<sup>193</sup> who had died in that very year. Interestingly, Sir John's first interest in Badenoch occurred when he leased Glenfeshie from Sir George Macpherson Grant.<sup>194</sup> Following Sir John's

<sup>192</sup> Chairman was Lord Napier and Ettrick, K.T; members were Sir Kenneth S Mackenzie, Bart; Donald Cameron, Esquire of Lochiel, M.P; C Fraser Mackintosh, Esq; M.P; Sheriff Nicolson, LLD; and Professor Mackinnon, M.A.

<sup>193</sup> Several of the Cattanach children migrated to Australia and will be discussed in the chapter on immigrants and emigration

<sup>194</sup> Napier Commission, Vol. 4 Page 2962

appearance at the commission, Alexander Stewart, a Crofter at Strone, took the witness stand, stating that he was a delegate for the Township of Strone, the inhabitants of which were “too scared”, for fear of retribution,<sup>195</sup> to appear before the commission. There were 11 Crofters in Strone. They had been there for many generations and claimed Dùthchas, which was the right of possession.<sup>196</sup> Stewart said that the place was “too dear” and carried far too many sheep and cattle.<sup>197</sup> He also said that their low hill pasture had been planted with trees which had proved most detrimental to the community. Rents had gone up considerably over the years, sometimes by up to fifty percent, (Stewart paid £21. 5s. per annum) impossible to meet for the typical Crofter who would have 9 arable acres and possess 110 sheep, 4 cows, 1 stirk (a year old bullock) and one horse.<sup>198</sup> Alexander Stewart complained that they were taxed for a road that was never repaired, unlike Glen Banchor, which was held by John MacArthur<sup>199</sup> and whose land abutted that of Sir George Macpherson Grant. MacArthur had some 1,000 sheep on extensive acreage and grazed his sheep on the common ground along with those of the Crofters and Macpherson of Belleville, leading to overgrazing and land degradation; the situation was untenable. Alexander Stewart did concede, when pushed by the commission, that if their rents were lowered, in his case from £21. 5s. to £15, and the number of sheep and cattle allowed to graze on the common land each reduced by one third, the Crofters would be able to make a living.

When Charles J Brewster Macpherson of Belleville appeared before the commission, he said the he did not consider Alexander Stewart a delegate for his tenants and disputed some of Stewart's evidence. Whilst he agreed that land had been taken from the crofters' low pastures for the

---

<sup>195</sup> Ibid;

<sup>196</sup> Interestingly, the Board of Commissioners in 1772 found that Forest of Gaick was owned by Alexander, Duke of Gordon, through right of possession (NAS GD44 28-34-60)

<sup>197</sup> Napier Commission, Op Cit; p 2693 At which time, Alexander was the only one who held a lease at Strone, which cost him 3 pounds 10 shillings a year; a sum he thought exorbitant, given that he was required to “build a house and steading”.

<sup>198</sup> Napier Commission, Ibid;

<sup>199</sup> Napier Commission, Ibid; MacArthur also had extensive holdings in Clune and Newtonmore

purpose of plantation; he disputed the land was good pasture<sup>200</sup> and stated that the plantation was built solely with the view of providing a protection belt for the crofts and village.

Run Rig was the system of agriculture practiced in Badenoch at the time of the Napier Commission and had been the method of agriculture for hundreds of years. The ground was usually held in joint tenancy, with the ground closest to the houses called the in-bye land. Long, narrow, raised strips of ground called Rigs were used to grow oats and barley, which were grown for six months of the year, whilst the ground furthest away was utilized for pasture.

The land itself was broken up into Ploughgates (52 acres) and these would then be sub-divided into Oxgates (13 acres). Tacksmen would provide the grain, 595 lbs of grain being sown per Oxgate. The Garron (the Highland Pony) was used to transport harvested crops or other material to the Laird or market.

Ultimately, the Spey was the decider as to whether the inhabitants of Badenoch flourished or floundered.

John Williams, Surveyor, surveyed the lands of the Duke of Gordon stretching from Strathspey through Badenoch to Lochaber from 1769 through 1770. He was a keen observer and a good listener. When exploring Loch Erricht on the 28th July 1769, he noted that it was some 12 miles in length and was once much smaller, locals advising that it was once the Parish of St Peters and heavily populated, but the river flowing out of Loch Erricht had choked up, causing the land to become drowned and the people displaced.<sup>201</sup>

Williams was a prolific letter writer, determined to persuade the Duke of Gordon, his vassals and their tenants to change their farming practices. He used the example of Dean Swift in a letter of 31 July 1769, stating, “...*that by genius and indefatigable perseverance, he brought the people of Ireland to consider the true interest of their country and greatly to increase their wealth by improving their land and manufactures.*” He said leadership should come from the top and he

---

<sup>200</sup> Napier Commission, Op Cit; page 3016

<sup>201</sup> NAS-GD44-28-34-49 - John Williams' Diary of his journey throughout the lands of the Duke of Gordon.

had seen little enough of that in the Highlands. Williams had spent about 6 years at this time in the Highlands looking at how improvements could be made. He noted that the Sheilings were always in the same spot and suggested that by removing their Sheil-Booths onto heathery spots every two or three summers would be sufficient to improve the grass. He said that only one man, to his knowledge, had taken up his suggestion.<sup>202</sup> He hammered home the message to the Duke and his tenants that provided they had lime, or access to it, which, in most cases they did, it did not matter if they had little dung to fertilize their crops.

Williams believed that farming would receive a huge boost if “*their shallow lakes, their numerous bogs, boggie hillsides and marshy hauchs or meadows were drained.*” He believed that if this could be achieved, then crops could be planted a fortnight sooner and harvested up to three weeks earlier, thus ensuring greater crop production, as there would be less chance of frost damage. Williams wrote to James Ross, Factor for the Duke of Gordon in Badenoch, 20 May 1770, when referring to Loch Insh. “*The outlet of this Loch is too shallow and confined to receive such a vast body of water as a spate pours down here, so that when it descends, the lake immediately swells up and the ground being perfectly level, the water gorges back the whole length and covers all the bottom to such a degree that looks like a branch of the sea; it continues in this condition most of the winter and spring, which sours & spoils the finest thing perhaps in the Highlands, & might be made the best; and it is very often so part of the Summer Harvest, to the spoiling of the grass, & total loss of the corn and hay they will have on the driest spots near the river.*”<sup>203</sup> The Spey, Williams noted, was often choked with debris, compounded by the inflow of fast running rivers like the Tromie, “*and every year destroys some, and very often all, the corn that they have near the river, besides constantly hurting the grass.*”<sup>204</sup> Williams argued that whilst the expense of drainage would be considerable, the benefits would far outweigh the expenditure.

---

<sup>202</sup> The man referred to was Captain John Macpherson of Ballachroan, known locally as the Black Officer. The Black Officer adopted, what was for the local community, rather peculiar farming practices, including mixing lime with the peaty soil and then mixing it with sand, all of which caused bumper crops. Not only this, he practiced crop rotation, thus ensuring the soil remained rich and his produce bountiful. Some people swore he must have made a pact with the Devil.

<sup>203</sup> NAS GD44/27-10-172

<sup>204</sup> Ibid;

Williams noted that there was an extensive Birch Wood on Biallidmore (near modern day Newtonmore) that was situated on very good soil but goats, sheep and men were having a devastating impact on them. He suggested that no pasturing should be allowed in summer so that the plants would have a chance to reach a height where cattle, goats or sheep could not reach the tender top shoots.<sup>205</sup> No woods would be properly improved whilst tenants were allowed to use an axe or knife in them. Williams, noting that the current method to build a sheepcote used perhaps 20 dozen of Cassens,<sup>206</sup> argued that if tenants built dry stone barns and byres, there would be a vast saving of timber.

The weather was a major impediment to crop production in Badenoch. Alexander Macpherson of Biallidmore wrote to William Tod, Factor for Badenoch and Lochaber, 3 July 1769 and then 3 July 1770 pleading with him to intervene on his behalf to the Duke of Gordon, as despite the help with drainage already given, it was not enough and begged Tod to speak with the Duke again because at the end of the day, it would be the Duke who suffered as it was his land.<sup>207</sup> Alexander thought the situation serious enough to also travel to London to see the Duke of Gordon and present a memorial himself.<sup>208</sup> Tod wrote from Gordonhall, “*You have enclosed a letter from Alexander Macpherson about the damage done to his possession of Biallidmor (sic) by the River of Callader (sic). Mr Taylor (William Taylor, Surveyor) & I have looked at this and he is of the opinion about thirty pounds laid out at his direction would effectively prevent any further damage if the tenant was taken bound to give it the necessary repairs from time to time. I think £30, or even a much greater sum would be vry well laid out if it will answere the purpose – as the river is at present destroying a very fine field which, in a few years, will be good for nothing if it is not taken care of. It is likeways possible it might sometime or other render the new bridge of Spey useless, as its present direction is alright on the west end of it. I don’t think, however, the Long Carriages should just now be applied that way as the bulwark on Cullinleans’ Farmlands more immediately in need of our attention. Mr Taylor agrees with me in thinking the*

---

<sup>205</sup> NAS GD44/28-34-50-00006

<sup>206</sup> Ibid; Cassens were sticks standing upright, the one end at the ground and the other reaching up to the easing

<sup>207</sup> NAS GD44/27-10-21

<sup>208</sup> Ibid; apparently, there was the added impediment of the Kings Road and a Bridge over the Calder when it came to creating channels that would help drain the land of Biallidmore.

*farm ....with Cullinlean, and Mr Maclean's, (the latter is Pitmain) both in danger of being ruined by first high water – at any rate- the longer Spey is allowed to run in her present direction, it will be more difficult to remove her, and it must be done sometime. I could wish the Duke would think proper to give Orders about it now. Mr Taylor thinks it may either be done with stones in the common way or by another method he has seen followed with success in Strath Spey, that is, a large box of pretty strong Deals, six foot broad at the bottom, and two at the top, placed from side to side of the river, and then filled with stones and gravel. Whichever of these schemes is followed, the services of the tenants will be of use in leading the stones, or in dragging the wood farther from the forest – but in either case, would need hands from the low country for the nicer parts of the work. I refer you to Mr Taylors' letter for an account of his survey. I will be glad to have an answer to this and the two Letters I sent you under the Dukes cover last week by first Post. I am Sir, etc; <sup>209</sup>”*

William Tod of Gordonhall wrote to the Duke of Gordon on 10 July 1770 stating that flooding was a constant problem. Writing to James Ross, Factor to the Duke of Gordon, 15 October 1772, accompanying a list of rentals for Badenoch,<sup>210</sup> Tod advised Ross to check the figures as, “having been hurried with my harvest, which the perpetual rain they have had here has very much retarded.”<sup>211</sup> Tod was extremely busy building dykes at Gordonhall during the summer of 1772.

Flooding was still a problem nearly 100 years later when the Kingussie Kirk Session noted on 31 October 1852 that the Spey rose eight feet in a few hours, and bore on its waters evidences of its devastating powers<sup>212</sup>.

There was further severe flooding during the 1860's, with the 'Edinburgh Courant' commenting in January 1865 that "*The Spey is in full flood, and is a most magnificent sight.*" with W M Duncan of Grantown, Strathspey writing to the Symons' Monthly Meteorological Magazine in

---

<sup>209</sup> NAS GD44/27-10-21 Op Cit;

<sup>210</sup> See Appendix for list of rentals in 1772

<sup>211</sup> NAS GD44/28-34-6569

<sup>212</sup> NAS CH2/1419

the 1 February 1868 edition, "... during the latter part of January there had been hard frost, and much snow collected on the mountains. Between 9 p.m. January 30th, and 9 am 31st, 0.48 inches of rain fell; 1.00 inches followed in the next 12 hours, and .44 in the next: so that the total in 36 hours was 1.92. This rainfall was preceded by a stiff breeze from the west, which melted the snow on the Cairngorm range, and on Friday, January 31st, the Spey came down with all the suddenness of a dam let off with the speed of a race-horse, spreading far beyond her usual flood marks. The embankments gave way in many places, and from Ballifurth to the Boat of Gordon [sic, actually Boat of Garten], a distance of six miles, a fleet of steamers might have plied, without once entering the channel of the river. Looking westward from Ballifurth (where the valley of the Spey is about a mile in breadth) all was one unbroken sea, and appeared as navigable as the Firth of Forth. On Saturday, February 1st, the river rose within 19 inches of memorable flood of August, 1829, so graphically described by the late Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, of Fountainhall. The rainfall on that occasion (as registered by the gardener at Huntly Lodge) was, however, 3¾ inches in 24 hours. Since the spate of February 1st we have had heavy rainfalls: 0.89 inch was registered on the morning of February 28th, and the river has several times overflowed the injured embankment. While I write several hundred acres are under water, and fears are entertained lest the ground must remain fallow during the ensuing season."<sup>213</sup>

The Spey, through time immemorial, has brought both wealth and famine to the families of Badenoch.

George Brown surveyed Badenoch in 1771, noting that there had been attempts to drain the land on Kerrowmeanach, situated on the east by the small farm of Laggan<sup>214</sup> and on the west by the small farm of Garline, noting "The meadow ground lying along the Riverside is at present in bad order, mostly all turned into a morass for want of draining properly, there has indeed been a kind of drains made but they are in a wrong direction and are now all filled up. The ground betwixt the River and the meadow is higher than the meadow, and when the water is in speat the

---

<sup>213</sup> Symons' Monthly Meteorological Magazine (1868) p64 courtesy Frank Law [fmlaw@onetel.net.uk](mailto:fmlaw@onetel.net.uk)

<sup>214</sup> Parish of Kingussie, not Parish of Laggan

*water stands on the meadow and cannot get away, but if proper drains were made thorrow the ground betwixt the meadow and the River that would be remedied.*<sup>215</sup>

The property to the east of Kerrowmeanach, Raich, also suffered from the tyranny of the Spey, Brown noting, *“The other part of it which is the high ground lying betwixt the Bank and the River, is of a fine rich quality, but often flooded with the river when in Speats, which makes the Crops of Corn rather uncertain, and even the hay, as they are obliged to carry it off whenever it is cutt, otherwise they are in danger of losing it. There is a very narrow turn or bend in the River, which juts*

National Library of Scotland, Badenoch c1700<sup>216</sup>



<sup>215</sup> NAS 02023 CR8-195-27 Fochaber Estate Papers (Transcription courtesy Mary Mackenzie July 2009)

<sup>216</sup> The map by Herman Moll gives a good indication as to why Farmers in Badenoch had to accommodate, the Spey, its tributaries and the topography of the region when trying to make a living.



*into the farm of Gordonhall, and which should be cutt, which would add about Six acres of this to Gordon hall. This could be done for ten or twelve pounds sterling and it would prevent the overflowing of the River on both sides a good deal.*<sup>217</sup>

Ardbrylach, bounded on the east by Garline and Raich and on the north and west by River Gynack, was possessed by the Reverend William Blair<sup>218</sup> and his son-in-law, James Stuart. He noted that whilst the soil and situation was excellent, neither Blair, nor Stuart, had looked after the property, noting that the Mill of Kingussie had been allowed to fall into ruin and the crofters' homes were hovels.<sup>219</sup> Brown stated that the land of Ardbrylach consisted of 40 arable acres, 22 of pasture and 1,277 sheilings, the latter situated at the head of the Gynack River, which flows into the Spey at modern day Kingussie, at Corrowar, which is described as "Lying north of the cornlands and along the waterside."<sup>220</sup>

There was no town of Kingussie in 1771, but George Brown believed that the Haugh (meadow) of Kingussie would make an ideal site, given its good soil and good access to water. The only fly in the ointment was the fact that the Glebe<sup>221</sup> was situated there, right in the centre. Should this problem be overcome, then there was plenty of wood with which to commence building and lime aplenty found at Dunachton in the neighbouring Parish of Alvie. He also suggested that it was ideal for the development of a flax industry.<sup>222</sup>

The region of Kingussie and its neighbour, Pitmain, separated by Gynack from Ardbrylach, the Davoch of Ballachroan to the west and the lands of Ruthven on other side of Spey was occupied by John Maclean who, like George Brown, was eager for the Duke of Gordon to establish the growing of flax, writing on 14 January 1771 to the Factor arguing that it would provide security of rent for the Duke. Until the industry was established, flax would have to be imported from Holland.<sup>223</sup> Maclean was far ahead of his time, encouraging the Duke of Gordons brother to learn the art of Bleaching, along with a Mr MacVeigh "*he would have the knowledge of weaving and*

<sup>217</sup> NAS02023 CR8-195-29 Fochaber Estate Papers

<sup>218</sup> William Blair, ordained in 1721, served the Parish of Kingussie from 1724 until his death in 1780.

<sup>219</sup> NAS02023 CR8-195-29

<sup>220</sup> NAS02023 CRS8-195-30

<sup>221</sup> A Glebe was the land surrounding a Manse and it was the produce of this land that supported a Minister.

<sup>222</sup> NAS02023 CRS-195-30

*bleaching and my own acquaintance with the other two branches of heckling and the yarn trade might be of great service to the Duke.*"<sup>224</sup> Unfortunately, no manufacturing industry was established successfully in the region, but the push for one ensured the building and expansion of the town we now know as Kingussie. Other sites in Badenoch that were recommended by James MacHardy, Weaver and Bleacher, were Gaskbeg, Dalchully and Crathiecroy, all in the Parish of Laggan.

Pitmain, like the majority of properties along the Spey and its tributaries, suffered from the effects of flooding. George Brown noted that MacLean had made enclosures on the property of a substantial kind, but felt they could be improved. He also thought that if Maclean built a bank or dyke between his property and that of the Davoch of Ballachroan, as Maclean was want to do, it would be a disaster, as it would "*ruin the haugh of Ballachroan, as it will stop the speat water, whereas when a speat happens the water has no other way of getting off but over the haugh of Pitmain, which such a dyke or Bank would prevent.*" Instead, Brown suggested that a bank be built, starting at Aultlarie, "*along the river about 100 yards from it. 10-18 feet broad at the bottom; 3-3.5 feet high. ...The turf beat hard with the grasside uppermost so as to make them grow, on both sides of this bank could be planted Allers<sup>225</sup> and Saughs<sup>226</sup> which would soon come up and prevent the river from breaking down the banks.*"<sup>227</sup>

Another problem that affected farming in Badenoch was the number of foxes, wild cats and eagles that preyed on lambs and hens, Burt noting when conversing with Highlanders, that from the year 1725 when arms were no longer allowed, these creatures had increased exponentially with disastrous effects on farming and indeed the means of existence.<sup>228</sup>

---

<sup>223</sup> NAS02023 GD44-27-10-114-00001. MacLean said that the current practice for those who spun was to bring in the lint from either Inverness, Huntly or Perth. He said that the Spinners were then obliged to send the spun cloth back to one of the aforementioned centres for weaving and bleaching.

<sup>224</sup> NAS02023 GD44-27-10-114-00001 Ibid;

<sup>225</sup> Alder. This tree can flourish in or out of water and has a wonderful timber that is impervious to rot, and is most useful in buildings, as a fuel source and in fencing.

<sup>226</sup> Willow Tree (Salix Alba)

<sup>227</sup> NAS02023 CR8-195-33

<sup>228</sup> Burt, Edmund 'Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland', Birlinn, Ltd; Edinburgh, 1998, 1st published 1754 by S Burt, London. P 224

Poverty and famine was always a threat to the districts of Kingussie and Laggan. The Kirk Session of 31 Aug 1840 noted that, “Owing to the great poverty of the people arising from the failure of the Crop for the last three years, only six pounds could be collected during the past year for the General Assemblys’ Schemes; three of which was given to the Committee for Church extension, and the other three for the behoof of the Highland Schools.”

The seasons had been out of kilter for several years, with late sowing caused by late Springs, and this was to culminate 1846 when there was a total failure of the Potato crop, followed by the high cost of provisions and the severity of the following winter.<sup>229</sup>

---

<sup>229</sup> Charles Grant, Moderator of the Kingussie Parish noted this in the Kirk Session Minutes for 5 August 1847. People from as far away as Malta, with connections to Badenoch, sent money. Over 50 pounds was needed from the parish coffers to buy Meal for the poor, not just for one season, but over the entire year. Three tons of coal was bought courtesy of a bequest of 35 pounds sterling, along with Meal by a Mrs Anderson. (This was the widow of the Rev. John Anderson, Elizabeth Macpherson, daughter of Lewis Macpherson of Dalraddy, who died 22 October 1846 at Speymouth Manse whilst visiting her niece, Elizabeth Maclean, who was married to the Rev. John Gordon (1798-1848). Interestingly, the actual bequest was 100 pounds sterling)

Chapter 6.

# **Wars, Aftermaths, People and Land**

Wars, especially the aftermath, have a dreadful effect on people wherever they live, but for those who depend on the land or their access to it, life can become quite a squeeze and a bit of a balancing act.

Following the 2<sup>nd</sup> Jacobite uprising or rebellion in 1745, land possessed by lairds who followed Princes Charles was forfeited to the Crown. A Factor was appointed and it was to this man that a Tenant would pay his or her rent, but if the wife or relative of the attained person was present, then the Crofters still paid rent to those and thus, this was the case of Cluny, in Laggan. The Tenants noted that after the 45, Lady Cluny (daughter of Lord Lovat) continued to stay in her house (Catlodge, as Cluny Castle had been burnt to the ground). They further noted that Lady Cluny began to rebuild houses on the property leading the tenants to believe that this was being done under the imprimatur of the Duke of Gordon and the Crown. Therefore, when Lady Cluny asked for the payment of rent to her, they did so.

This went on for some years until the Duke of Gordon took out a Decreet against the Tenants seeking back payment of rent. The Tenants fought back and wrote the following letter to the Court of Exchequer.

February 21, 1757. Unto the Right Honourable, The Lord Chief Baron, and remanent (remaining) Barons of his Majesty's Court of Exchequer in Scotland.

The humble PETITION of Paul Macpherson in Kylarchiln (*located just north of Easterton on the west bank of the Alt Chearnin, facing Lurgin on the west bank, where Sir Tommy Macpherson's Great Grandfather was a boy before going down to Strone – from a letter from Sir Tommy to me dated 15 Feb 2007*), John Catanach there, Peter Macpherson in the Mains of Cluny, William Macpherson there, Donald Macpherson in Breakachie, Malcolm Macpherson in Milton of Clunie, Donald MacGilloge there, John Mackay in Cluny, Samuel Macpherson, Smith there, Benjamin MacGillivray there, Lauchlan Macpherson there, Donald MacGillivray there, Katharine Macintosh there, Murdoch Macpherson in the Aird of Cluny, Thomas Robertson in Cluny, James Lesly there, Peter Lesly there, Duncan Bain Robertson there, Angus Bain Robertson there, Donald Macpherson in Biallidbeg, Elspet Macpherson Relict of, and as representing the deceast John Macpherson in Biallidbeg, Murdoch Macpherson there, John Macpherson in Biallidmore, John Macpherson in Catlag, John Macpherson in Tynrich, James Macpherson there, Katharine Macpherson in Midtoun of Gaskinloan, John Macdonald in Drumgaskinloan, Lauchlan Macpherson there, John Macpherson Weaver there, Duncan Macdonald in Midtoun of Gaskinloan, Angus Macdonald there, Thomas Macpherson in Drumgaskinloan, Andrew Clark in Midtoun of Drumgaskinloan, John Macdonald there, James Macpherson there, Evan Macpherson in Laggan, Donald Macpherson in Drumaninack, Donald Kennedy there, Alexander Guthry in Noidbeg, William Macpherson there, Janet Rattray there, and John Macpherson in Millhouse, all Tenants and Possessors of Parts of the Lands and Estate of Cluny, forfeited to the Crown by the Attainder of Evan Macpherson late of Cluny.

Sheweth, THAT Evan Macpherson of Cluny having, in the Year 1745, obtained a Commission from his Majesty, appointing him a Captain in the Regiment then commanded by the Right Honourable the Earl of Loudon, did, upon the 2nd of July of that Year, grant a Factory and Commission to his Wife, Mrs. Janet Fraser, Sister to Simon Fraser, Esq.; Lieutenant Colonel of a Regiment now levying in the Highlands of Scotland, to uplift, receive and discharge all Rents

due out of his Estate, and which Commission proceeds upon the Narrative of his being called by his Duty from Home, and thereby unable to attend to his private Affairs.

That the said Evan Macpherson being instigated by bad Advice, did return the Commission he had received from the King, and did join in the unnatural Rebellion, which sprung up in this Country in the Autumn 1745; in consequence of which, he was, with others, attainted by an Act of Parliament in the 17<sup>th</sup> Year of his present Majesty.

The Petitioners, who are illiterate Country People, knowing nothing of the legal Effect of such Attainder, and believing Mrs. Macpherson to have a just Title by her Factory to uplift their Rents, did pay them to her, and received Discharges thereof.

That in the year 1748, your Lordships having ordered the Estate of Cluny to be surveyed, we were called upon by the Persons employed in that Service, to give up a just Account of the Rents payable by each of us; and, upon which Occasion, Appearance was made on Behalf of his Grace the Duke of Gordon, for whom it was represented. That as Superior of the Estate of Cluny, he came to have a Right to the Rents thereof, upon the Attainder of Evan Macpherson, and for which he had taken Decreet against your Petitioners.

That for some Years the Petitioners heard no more of this Matter; Mrs. Macpherson was allowed to continue in the Possession of the Houses and whole Lands her Husband had formerly been in the natural Possession of; and as she proceeded to repair and rebuild some Houses upon her Farm that had been burnt or destroyed in the Year 1745, so the Petitioners had Reason to believe that it was meant both by the Crown, and the Duke of Gordon, that she should continue to uplift the Rents, and as she made pressing Demands upon the Petitioners for Payment of their Rents, and that they observed her in very deplorable Circumstances, and that she continued to importune them, so they made Payment of the Rents to her from time to time as they became due, she giving Allowances to the Petitioners of the Expense they had been put to in repairing or rebuilding their Houses, which had been hurt or destroyed, either by the Injuries of Time, or during the Rebellion.

The Petitioners have been informed, that the Duke of Gordon having entered his Claim to the Estate of Cluny, as Superior, before the Court of Session, he did obtain a Decree of that Court,

sustaining his Claim and Right to the Estate; but against which Decree an Appeal has been lodged on behalf of his Majesty, some Years ago; yet no Step has been taken to have the same heard or discussed.

That in the Year 1752, and no sooner, William Ramsay, Factor, appointed by your Lordships upon the Estate of Cluny, brought an Action against the Petitioners and the said Mrs. Macpherson, before the Sheriff of Inverness, concluding for Payment of the Rents of the Petitioners, their respective Possessions, from the Time of Evan Macpherson's Attainder down till Martinmas 1751, and he accordingly obtained a Decree, not only decerning the Petitioners, and the said Mrs. Macpherson, so far as she had intromitted, to pay these Rents, but also prohibiting and discharging her from uplifting or intromitting with any Part of them in Time coming.

That in Obedience to this Decree, the Petitioners stopt in making any further Payments to Mrs. Macpherson, but have regularly paid the Rents becoming due since Martinmas 1751, to the Factors appointed for collecting and receiving their Rents; but the Rents due preceeding Martinmas 1751, were all uplifted and discharged by the said Mrs. Macpherson. And,

The Petitioners are informed, that Mrs. Macpherson being called upon to account for these Rents uplifted by her, she has exhibited before your Lordships certain Accounts of her Intromissions and Debursements as to these Rents; but what has been done thereupon, your Petitioners have not had Access to know.

That James Small, the present Factor upon the Estate of Cluny, having raised a Horning upon the above mentioned Decreet, and caused lately charge your Petitioners for Payment of the Rents preceeding Martinmas 1751, he is now, in prosecution of his Office, to imprison our Persons, or poind<sup>230</sup> our Effects, unless we again make Payment of these Rents to him, which we had formerly paid to Mrs. Macpherson, in the Manner above set forth.

That the Petitioners are at no time able, or in Condition to pay, at once, so large a Sum as the Six Years Rents contained in the said Decreet, do amount to; and least of all can it be expected of

---

<sup>230</sup> Old term for impound

them, in the present calamitous Situation the Country is in, they having scarcely wherewithal to support themselves and their Families.

That if Diligence was to be carried into Execution either against their Persons or Effects, the only Consequence, as Things stand at present, Would be the laying the Estate waste, and the exposing the Petitioners, with their Wives and Families, to the Miseries of Famine.

That, in these Circumstances, they have been advised to lay their Case before your Lordships, whose known Humanity and Compassion are the Sources from whence they are most likely to obtain Relief.

And, in the first Place, your Lordships will please observe, that it was very natural for your Petitioners, who are altogether unacquainted with the Effects of Attainders, or Nature of Surveys, to pay their Rents to Mrs. Macpherson, who originally was vested with a lawful Authority for receiving them, and who, notwithstanding of either the Forfeiture of her Husband, or the surveying of his Estate, was allowed to continue not only in the natural Possession of a Farm of the Estate, but to build and repair the Houses thereon, in the same Manner as might have been expected of a Person vested with a lawful Authority for managing of the Estate, and to which Purposes Part of the Money received from the Petitioners was applied.

Your Lordships will observe, that how soon the Petitioners were interpellated by the Sheriff's Decreet from paying further to Mrs. Macpherson, they immediately stopt, and since Martinmas 1751, have paid their Rents to the Factors appointed for receiving them; and therefore, it is hoped the honourable Court will not believe that their paying their Rents formerly to Mrs. Macpherson, was owing to any other Cause than to their Belief that she had a Title to receive them, joined to her constant Importunity, since no Person, either on Behalf of the Crown or the Duke of Gordon, interpellated her from receiving, nor the Petitioners from paying, nor made any Demand upon them for these Rents, prior to the 1752. And,

It will be particularly attended to, that the distressing the Petitioners for Payment of these Rents, would be a very great Hardship; for as the Duke of Gordon's Claim to the Property of the Estate of Cluny, has been sustained by the Court of Session, the Right to the Rents is thereby vested in him, and although it may be true that the Effect of the Judgment of the Court of Session is



suspended by an Appeal being lodged, yet the Presumption is, that the Decree will rather be affirmed as reversed. And if the first, then the Petitioners are not only intitled to an Allowance from the Duke of Gordon of two Years Rents of their Possession, agreeable to Act 20th, *anno primo Georgii primi*, but they would be entitled in Law to plead in Defence against Payment of the other Rents to him, that he had not exercised his Right in due Time, but having allowed a Person once vested with a lawful Authority to uplift these Rents, he could only sue that Person for Payment of such.... That his Forbearance must be interpreted a Homologation or Approbation of what Mrs. Macpherson did; and therefore no Action competent against them for what Money she received.<sup>231</sup>

The Petitioners were really in a bind, having paid their rent to Lady Cluny in good faith, with little hope of repaying what had been paid after also having rebuilt the houses on Cluny. They argued that the houses that were rebuilt were of benefit to the Commission and to whoever held the land and should they be directed to destroy their homes or have them destroyed, it would not only be detrimental to themselves, but also to the Commission. The Commissioners directed that at least three of the Petitioners, who were better off than the others, should be prosecuted, thus sending a message to the whole. This did not eventuate, as Donald Macpherson (Breakachy), one of the Petitioners and Factor to Lady Cluny, came up with some of the money, in addition to a small amount from the tenants. The remainder of the debt of Lady Cluny was discharged, after taking into account the monies spent on rehabilitating Cluny.<sup>232</sup>

---

<sup>231</sup> Creag Dubh, No 18, Vol 3, No 2, 1966 A. Fraser Macpherson, 'Further Gleanings from the Forfeited Estates Papers'

<sup>232</sup> NAS E745/39/1-5. The Factor had only been able to extract a very small amount from the Crofters

Chapter 7.

## **The Sheep Man Cometh**

The mid 1700's were to bring a revolution to Badenoch, one in which many a family would be torn apart and dispersed to the four corners of the world, never to see their homes again. A revolution that would see fortunes made for a few, whilst many communities would struggle to survive, their very fabric torn asunder. This revolution was never a declared war, no armies of men had to be raised, but land had to be sacrificed and homes lost when the army of sheep arrived in Badenoch. This was an era when native sheep were still farmed; they were small, white brown, russet or

black in colour.<sup>233</sup> A commentator from the 18th century described them as having fur like down, overtopped with long, straight, rigid hair, similar to a beaver. Their tails were, unlike other breeds, short, tapering and covered with fine silver hair.<sup>234</sup> They had fine scanty fleeces that produced fine wool. Indeed, the wool of the native Highland Sheep was renowned and there was a healthy export to England and Europe, in particular through the port of Veere in the Netherlands, which was a Staple Port.<sup>235</sup> The problem was they were never farmed in great numbers, their main purpose being to provide wool for clothing and, at times, to supplement the diet of oatmeal, with milk and cheese. They were generally kept indoors during winter, which was another reason they could not be raised in numbers sufficient on which to base an economy. Further, many landlords discouraged the keeping of a flock larger than was required for a family's needs, as they provided no means of paying the rent.

A child was born on the 19th December 1731 to John Macpherson of Banchor and his wife, Christian Macpherson of Dalraddy. They named their son, Robert; he was to have a short, but distinguished career in the Army, as Chaplain to the 78th Foot or Fraser Highlanders, being appointed 12 January 1757.<sup>236</sup> He was very tall and a solid man, the men of his regiment calling him "Caipal Mhor" (the big Chaplain).<sup>237</sup> Robert was also a Freemason and served as Chaplain to the Quebec Select Lodge, which was comprised of officers serving in the garrison.<sup>238</sup> He was

<sup>233</sup> Conversation with Mary Mackenzie, local historian of Badenoch, with an extensive knowledge of the social history of the region, with whom I went for a walk in Glen Banchor, along with Morag Hunter-Carsch in October 2006.

<sup>234</sup> Archibald, David. *The Blackfaced Breed of Sheep*, 'Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland', Awamoa, Otago, New Zealand, 1884.

<sup>235</sup> A Staple Port was one in which Merchants could export particular goods to and not have to pay Duties on those goods. Veere was a Staple Port for Scottish Wool from 1541 until 1749

<sup>236</sup> Military service was common in highland families, particularly for those of the gentry. Nenadic in his article, 'The Impact of the Military Profession on Highland Gentry Families', *Scottish Historical Review*, Volume 85, Number 1: No. 219, April 2006, pp. 75-99, states that between the mid and end of the 18th century, between one third and a quarter of the officers in British regiments were the sons of Scottish Gentry and that their numbers were disproportionate to the whole.

<sup>237</sup> Fraser, Marie, Ed; 'Officers of the Old 78th Regiment of Foot, [Fraser's Highlanders]' *Clan Fraser Society of Canada Genealogy Newsletter*, 2 Jan 2006

<sup>238</sup> MacPherson, Ewen S L 'The Caipal Mor and St Andrew's Church, Quebec City', *Creag Dhubh*, Number 60, 2008. Robert was appointed, on his return to Badenoch, the Royal Bounty Missionary for Brae-Badenoch and Brae-Lochaber.

popular with the men and was not, apparently, adverse in joining in the odd battle or two. The unit was disbanded in 1763 and Robert returned home to Badenoch on half pay, where he petitioned the Factor of the forfeited estates of Aberader and Tullochrom in 1766. He argued that he had served in America for seven years, and was on half-pay. Because he was a half-pay chaplain, he was prevented by an Act of Parliament from holding an ecclesiastical position. Robert said that he wanted to try his hand at farming having noted, whilst serving abroad, farming methods that he expected would make him a better farmer than most.<sup>239</sup> The estates of Aberader and Tullochrom were, at the time, possessed by Ronald and Alexander Macdonald or MacDonnell who, at Martinmas 1769, were in arrears £2/15/5.<sup>240</sup> The Duke gave possession of Aberader and Tullochrom to Robert Macpherson at Martinmas 1770 for a rent of £40 and £30 sterling respectively.<sup>241</sup> The Macdonald's were dispossessed, as were sub-tenants and 80 Cottars.<sup>242</sup> Whilst his argument was persuasive, another reason for the dispossession of Ronald Macdonell and his brother, Alexander, may well have been because they were Catholics; they certainly believed so, stating so explicitly in their memorial to the Duke of Norfolk in 1771, the Uncle of the Duke of Gordon, as the rent that was asked of Robert Macpherson was less than that asked of the Macdonald's.<sup>243</sup> Their case would seem to have merit; certainly the Duke of Norfolk thought so and ordered John Gordon to remit "a very handsome Gratuity in money to the two Brothers, McDonald, to alleviate their present distress a little."<sup>244</sup> He also asked the Duke of Gordon to give assistance to the sub-tenants and Cottars who were so distressed.

Robert was not long at Aberader before he introduced lowland sheep to Badenoch and also brought in Border Shepherds to manage the flocks. The breed was the Linton, or black faced sheep, with the stamina to survive the Highland winters outside. This meant, by itself, that larger

---

<sup>239</sup> McCulloch, Ian 'An Unbounded Ascendency, Highland Chaplaincy in the French & Indian Wars, 1756 – 1763'. Also 'Sketches of the Old Seats of Families and Distinguished Soldiers', Chapter 3, Parish of Laggan, p335

<sup>240</sup> NAS02023 GD44-27-10-197. Macdonald Petition to the Duke of Norfolk of 29 Aug 1771. The Macdonell or Macdonald brothers did not take their loss lightly but appealed, reminding the Duke that they had held possession of Aberader and Tullochrom for upwards of a 100 years.

<sup>241</sup> NAS GD44-27-10-177

<sup>242</sup> NAS GD44-27-10-197 the petition stated "these are now in great distress"

<sup>243</sup> NAS GD44-27-10-197 Ibid;

<sup>244</sup> NAS GD44-27-10-197 Ibid;

flocks could be raised, because up until this time, the Highland sheep were kept indoors during winter. Another breed tried was the Cheviot, having much finer wool than the Blackface, but this proved only useful in the low lying parks on the flood plain of the Spey, as they could not survive the winters at higher elevations.<sup>245</sup>

With the coming of the sheep man and the modernization of sheep farming in Badenoch came the disruption of entire communities and the clearance of many of its people from the land. A petition bemoaning the eviction of the Macdonell's (or Macdonald's) from Aberader and Tullochrom stated that Robert Macpherson had evicted "...every Sub-Tenant and Cottar to the number of 80", people who were dependent upon the landlord for their support.<sup>246</sup>

Robert would prove not to be the best Sheep Farmer the country had known, but he was very articulate in expressing a point of view and pointing out facts that would assist him in achieving his goals. A case in point is when Alexander Macdonell or Macdonald of Tullochrom, after removal in 1770, trespassed on Aberader land, taking his cattle to graze on the shieling at Innisnagaul, even building houses there. Given it was winter, he and his Cottars had to live somewhere and, arguably, the sheilings were the best short term solution to the problem. Robert Macpherson ordered that some of Macdonald's horses be impounded, only to be released if a fine was paid. The little Highland Pony, the Garron was essential to the survival of anyone living in the Highlands. Consequently, Macdonald sent two men, also Macdonald's, to retrieve the horses. They were armed at a time when it was forbidden for anyone in the Highlands to bear arms unless they were in the military. This edict was blatantly ignored as it would have led to large scale starvation at the very least. Robert Macpherson knew this as the following letter with regard to the criminal summons against the Macdonald's attests, but he would use the

---

<sup>245</sup> The sheep was described by a Dr Keith from Aberdeenshire, in an article by David Archibald of Awamoa, Otago, New Zealand in the Journal 'Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland' Vol 16, 1884 as being "deficient in point of length and quantity, was of most excellent quality, and not inferior to any Spanish wool. Stockings made from it were worn by persons of the first rank in Britain, and exported to the Continent at very high prices. One lady belonging to this county knitted them of so fine texture that they were sold at three guineas a pair, and several of them were commissioned for by the Empress of Russia. They were so fine that a pair of them could have been drawn through a ring that was taken off the finger of the fair manufacturer."

<sup>246</sup> NAS02023 GD44-27-10-197 Op Cit;

Disarming Act for his own purposes, in this case control and eviction of the Catholic Macdonald's of Badenoch.<sup>247</sup>

Following is a letter written by Robert Macpherson 19 July 1771 to the Signet.<sup>248249</sup> Worth quoting in full, it provides a very good picture of a man who used his knowledge of the law, even though protesting he knew little, in order to achieve his own ends. He was most concerned about being considered an informer, particularly with regard to the weapons issue and suggested that a copy of the charges should not be issued to all interested parties. He needed the Macdonell's punished as an example to the community, but not in such a way that rendered him a pariah in Badenoch.

Gentlemen, " I had the favour of yours, enclosing the criminal summons. It is extremely well, nor have I the least doubt but every article in it will prove. I have two witnesses who will swear to the cattle being pointed upon my best grass, and I have another two who can depone as to the deforcement and the actors of it, with every circumstance mentioned on that head in the libel. I propose to summon two others with whom I have reason to believe the two deforcers were till they set out upon this midnight expedition. In my own opinion this will be sufficient to establish the fact without further evidence. The others formerly mentioned have, I find, very little to say, unless you think it material to prove that the horses were seen early next morning at Garvamore. But this, in my opinion, is a fact they will not attempt to deny, and I would be loath to call more witness than are thought necessary. There is one thing insisted on, in the libel, which, though it may be very proper, and you had all the reason in the world to include it, yet I am by no means fond of it, and that is your referring to the Disarming Acts and requiring Donald Macdonell to be found liable for the penalty of carrying arms. As all the facts and requisitions in that libel must be supposed to proceed from me, this particular one subjects me to the imputation of being an informer. I do not, anyhow, like it. That law is in thorough desuetude now in the Highlands, and though I am sorry for it, and think it a general misfortune to the country, yet the practice is too

---

<sup>247</sup> His eldest son, John, married Christian Macdonald, daughter of Angus Macdonald and Isobel Macpherson, in 1803. He settled in Inverness after living at Beauuly, following his departure from Badenoch.

<sup>248</sup> The Signet had to authorize all criminal summonses, amongst many other duties.

<sup>249</sup> Fraser-Mackintosh, Charles, 'Letters of Two Centuries', A& W Mackenzie, Inverness, 1890, pages 275-276.

universal for a private individual to take any notice of it. I would have scored it out of the libel here, but I am so ignorant of law and its formalities that I thought it more prudent to send it to yourselves to receive this amendment. We have the Sacrament this week in this parish, which prevents my attending to any other business ; and it will take some time before the several copies can be made out. Will you mention in your next what day towards the middle or end of September your Court will sit, and most proper for me to get my business discussed.

You will please also give me your real genuine opinion how far you think the defenders can be affected upon full proof of the facts, and whether Tullochchrom<sup>250</sup> can be rendered in any measure liable. My situation would be far from pleasant if, after insisting in this process, I could make nothing of it. My neighbours would become more insolent and outrageous, and the law which helps to restrain them would be no longer a bugbear to them. Full copies of the libelled summons need only be given to the defenders. Common citation is enough for the witnesses. As this is the first process that ever I had to manage, and that my life has hitherto been in a very different line from the present one, and where I had no access to know legal forms, I must beg that you will be as particular, as possible in all your directions. I will certainly be with you at Inverness by the time of compearance.

But you will trouble none of my friends to attend me. We will do the best we can and stand on our bottoms. This goes by John Kennedy, a servant of mine; he and John Macpherson, one of my tenants, are summoned in a process at the instance of Angus Macpherson, Tirlfadow. <sup>251</sup> Lieut. John Macpherson tells me Mr. Bean has the direction of it. It will be obliging if he examine these men amongst the first, and dismiss them as soon as possible.

Signed Robert Macpherson

The matter did not end with there, people remembered and some sixteen years later, Robert Macpherson wrote to a lawyer in Inverness asking him to defend Angus Macphilp (Mackillop),

---

<sup>250</sup> Alexander Macdonell or Macdonald

<sup>251</sup> The witnesses called were John Macpherson, Student in Dalchurnbeg, John Kennedy and Donald Macpherson, Tenants, Samuel Macdonell, Tenant in Tullochchrom, Mor or Marion Stewart, his wife; Donald Macphilp (another version of the name MacKillop), tenant in Moy, Elspet Macdonell, spouse to Donald Macdonell, Tenant in Knock of Strathcruinachan, Archibald Macphilp, in Torgulbin, and John Macpherson, tenant in Garvamore.

son of Archibald from what he said was “an unfounded charge, prompted by revenge for supposed injuries very foreign to the crime now alleged against him ; and the resentment against Angus is owing to services his father and he had done me many years ago, or were supposed to have done to me.”<sup>252</sup>

Robert the Parson Macpherson was not a successful, large scale, Sheep Farmer, but he was the first in Badenoch and paved the way for all who followed.

Whilst the following list is not definitive, some of the Tacksmen and Tenants of Badenoch in 1770 were:

Robert Macpherson <sup>253</sup>	Aberader
Alexander Mackintosh	Breakachy
Lachlan Mackintosh	Crubinbeg
Donald Macpherson	Crubinbeg
Captain Mackintosh	Gaskmore, Blairgymore, Crathymore and Miln
Lieutenant Alexander Macpherson	Strathmashie
Alexander Macdonald, Strathmashie	Croftcarnoch

---

<sup>252</sup> Fraser-Mackintosh, Charles, ‘Letters of Two Centuries’ p276

<sup>253</sup> By 1779, Robert Macpherson would also have the Tack of Kinlochlaggan for 19 years, previously held by Lieutenant John Macpherson (NAS GD80/675)



Lieutenant John Macpherson	Pitgown
Thomas Macpherson	Nessintully
John Macpherson the eldest son of Thomas Macpherson	Garline
Alexander Macpherson	Biallidmore and Coronach
Andrew Macpherson	Banchor and Strone
Malcolm Macpherson	Dallanach
Lachlan Macpherson	Dalchully
Ensign John Macpherson	Blargymore
Duncan Macpherson	Cluny
John Macpherson	Inverhall
Lachlan Macpherson	Ralia
Angus Macpherson	Etteridge and Phones
William Blair Minister of Kingussie	Ardbrylach
James Stuart Son-in-Law of William Blair	Ardbrylach

John Maclean	Pitmain
Edward Shaw Mackintosh Borlum	Raits
Alexander Macpherson in Ruthven	Black Park, Wester Raits
Donald Robertson, late Tenant, Dalvalloch	Wester Raits
Lieutenant John Macpherson	Ballachroan
Captain Macpherson	Dalwhinnie
Lieutenant John Macpherson	Phones
Donald Macpherson	Cullinlian, also spelt Cullinlean and Cullinleen
James Ossian Macpherson	Belleville
James Macpherson	Killiehuntly
Alexander Mackintosh	Kerrowmeanach
John Macpherson	Invernahavon
Captain Lachlan Mackintosh	Balnespic

Evan Macpherson	Easter Lynwilg
Lewis Macpherson	Wester Lynwilg
John Inverhall Macpherson	Knappach
George Macpherson Invereshie	Glenfeshie
Patrick Grant Rothiemurchus	Kinrara, Dalraddy and Delfour
Peter Macdonald, Tenant Achnabechan, Alvie	Wester Raits, Alvie

The above list demonstrates the overwhelming number of Macphersons who were land holders in Badenoch, thus controlling land and resources, firming bonds and maintaining social cohesion. They did not necessarily live on these properties, an example would be Edward Shaw Mackintosh, who lived at Borlum outside Inverness. The 1790 statistical account of Alvie reported that “the non-residence of the proprietors is exceedingly against its improvements in many respects.”<sup>254</sup>

By 1790, the original native breed of sheep that had produced fine wool of such quality, revered as far away as Russia, was disappearing. The Rev. John Gordon who reported on the Parish of Alvie for the Statistical Account (1791-1799), noted that whilst in that Parish white faced sheep still prevailed, nevertheless, black faced Linton tup<sup>255</sup> had been introduced and was being cross-bred with the white face. The problem was that the wool was coarser than the white faced pure bred produced. This contemporary account reinforces late 19th century arguments as to the

---

<sup>254</sup> Old Statistical Account of Scotland, Alvie, Vol 13. P 379.

<sup>255</sup> Ram

reason for the disappearance of the white faced native sheep of Scotland.<sup>256</sup> The end result was that sheep displaced the Highlander and Clearances became the norm in the constant quest to increase the production of sheep farms.

The Rev. John Anderson in his report on the region for the Old Statistical Account (1791 -1799) noted that sheep farming in Kingussie or Insh had yet to make a noticeable impact, with numbers not exceeding 7,000, the people still largely reliant on cattle for their economic support.<sup>257</sup> The Rev. Anderson suggested that the reason for this was that the wool had to be transported some 40 miles away for sale.<sup>258</sup> The Rev. James Grant, on the other hand, who wrote the report on Laggan, noted that while there were only four or five large sheep farms in the district, there were upwards of 12,000 sheep on them, whilst other farms were mixed and there were not more than 2,000 sheep on those farms, with approximately 20,000 sheep in the Parish.<sup>259</sup> He noted that there was a general move to decrease the cattle stock and increase sheep stock and that rents for sheep farms were quite good realizing between 100 and 300 pounds sterling;<sup>260</sup> the Duke of Gordon, who owned the land, would have been most pleased.

The survey of the Province of Moray, published in 1798, argued that Enclosures meant “commodious habitations”, with tenants, on removal, receiving the value of dykes and buildings on their farms.<sup>261</sup> Men came from Sutherland in the north, the Border counties and Ireland to enclose what had been open moors.

The first Clearance in Badenoch occurred when Robert, the Parson, Macpherson evicted over 80 people from the lands of Aberader and Tullochrom in Laggan.

---

<sup>256</sup> Archibald, Op Cit;

<sup>257</sup> Old Statistical Account of Scotland, Kingussie, Vol 3. P37

<sup>258</sup> Grant, John & Leslie William ‘A Survey of the Province of Moray: Historical, Geographical and Political’ I. Forsyth, 1798 (Book digitized by Google from the library of the New York Public Library), Page 257

<sup>259</sup> The Old Statistical Account of Scotland, Laggan, Vol 3, Page 147

<sup>260</sup> Ibid;

<sup>261</sup> Grant, John & Leslie William, Op Cit; Page 256



Example of stone walling, courtesy Mary Mackenzie

DRAFT



Shearing Stool Breakachy, Laggan (Photo taken by Author October 2006)



Smearing Hut, Loch Erricht, Laggan, 1913. Courtesy Sheena Carter, from Donald Robertson



Glentruim Fank: Traditional Sheep Shearing (Photo taken by Author Oct 2006)

DRAFT

## Chapter 8.

## Tidbits, Facts and Figures

Life for the people of Badenoch was very much dependent upon the Landlord; when the seasons were good, there was food aplenty and life followed the seasons, as it had for aeons. Contemporary commentators, such as Burt in the late 1720's and 1730's and Francois and Alexander de La Rochefoucauld, who, along with a companion, Maximillian Lazowski, travelled through the Highlands in 1786, noted that Highland people were generally tall, strong and well-built, were very proud of their heritage, with the majority of Highlanders either not speaking English or very little.<sup>262</sup> They noted that the diet of the Highlander during summer was oatcake and potatoes, milk and butter; and a kind of gruel was drunk, which comprised oatmeal in hot water, "like a kind of tea".<sup>263</sup> The clothing of Highlanders were described thus, "...dress in little petticoats, barely covering their thighs, usually in a material made in red and blue stripes. Their stockings are in the same colours, but in squares, coming up over the calf, so that the knees and part of the thigh are bare, which seem very indecent to us. Their only other clothes are sleeved coats, generally blue and a blue cloth bonnet this shape, the lower part firm and red, but the bobble is blue. The women work very hard and dress like the others. .... When they go from one place to another, the men always wear a cloak of the same material as the kilt; this is just a very big piece of light material that they wear in cold weather. In fine weather they wear, crossing the body from one shoulder, a sort of pleated bandolier. The cloaks are of different colours."<sup>264</sup> The travellers found that food was plentiful, but that accommodation left a little to be desired. They

---

<sup>262</sup> Scarfe, Norman 'To the Highlands in 1786', Boydell Press, Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2001, Pages 161-162

<sup>263</sup> Scarfe, Ibid; Page 172

<sup>264</sup> Scarfe, Ibid; P 162



described their accommodation as “the house was well enough built, but the kitchen, which is separate from the main part of the building, is at the same time the family’s parlour and bedroom. The hearth is in the middle of the room and made with three or four stones without mortar. The whole family warms itself round a turf-fire; the smoke finds its way out through the door (better to sit below the fire). The beds are only rough bits of wood nailed together, with straw for warmth. Chairs are tree stumps.<sup>265</sup>



Courtesy Highland Museum, Newtonmore

The light gets in only through a door which serves as door, chimney and window. The straw roof-thatch is full of holes and used as a hen-roost.<sup>266</sup> The French were horrified to find that their hosts were all stricken with scabies and declined the oatcakes, but ate the fresh eggs. The men noted that everyone drank unbelievable quantities of liquor, in particular whisky, but also rum and brandy.<sup>267</sup>

### **Population:**

The first limited census in Scotland was conducted in 1296 on the orders of Edward 1 of England (“Longshanks”). This was called the Ragman Roll and was limited to landowners, churchmen

---

<sup>265</sup> Whilst their description of that accommodation was ‘The General’s Hut’, located on the south side of Loch Ness, on the road to Fort Augustus and therefore not in Badenoch, their description of inns and the living conditions of Crofters was probably a reasonable indicator of Badenoch conditions at the time.

<sup>266</sup> Scarfe, Ibid;

<sup>267</sup> Scarfe, Ibid; P xix. Burt had also noted this in 1730 during his travels through the Highlands, as did Elizabeth Grant in ‘Memoirs of a Highland Lady’, originally published in 1898, recalling her years spent at ‘Doune’ in Rothiemurchus, Badenoch, and as did the Old Statistical Accounts of Badenoch.

and burgesses.<sup>268</sup> The census returns were handed to Edward 1 at Berwick in 1297.<sup>269</sup> The next attempt was in the 1600's, but it was not until 1755 when Dr Alexander Webster, a Minister from Edinburgh, utilized all the Ministers of the Parishes of Scotland to conduct what was the first true census of Scotland, although unofficial. He had been influenced by the work of a colleague, the Rev. Robert Wallace, who had conducted a survey in 1743. The Webster census was of limited success as many Ministers either did not conduct the survey or did not get the results back to Dr Webster in time. Dr Webster had studied Mathematics at university and it was this skill that stood him in good stead when collating the data he received. The tables he created were based on a methodology later followed by insurance companies in calculating longevity.<sup>270</sup> Webster estimated the Highland population as 257,153.<sup>271</sup> Despite its limitations, the 1755 Census was the basis on which Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, Member for Caithness, made his survey of Scotland between 1791 and 1799. Like Webster, he utilized the services of the Ministers of the Church of Scotland, but the parameters were far wider; the survey becoming the first geographical survey of Scotland. Unlike modern censuses, the survey was conducted over several years, the Ministers of each parish responding to 160 set questions. When the project was finished, it proved a monumental work that, whilst not perfect, gave the most accurate picture of Scotland in the late 18th century.

The survey in Badenoch in 1790 was carried out by the Rev. James Grant (Laggan); the Rev. John Anderson (Kingussie) and the Rev. John Gordon (Alvie). All referred back to the survey results of Dr Webster.

---

<sup>268</sup> [http://www.scan.org.uk/knowledgebase/topics/census\\_topic.htm](http://www.scan.org.uk/knowledgebase/topics/census_topic.htm) see also Room, Adrian, 'Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase & Fable', 16th Ed; Harpers, New York, 1999, p 970 "Their colloquial name is apparently from their ragged appearance, which is the result of their numerous pendant seals, from a game called 'ragman' involving a roll with strings attached."

<sup>269</sup> 'Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase & Fable', Ibid; see also National Archives of Scotland GD3/11/1/9

<sup>270</sup> 'Scotland's Population 2009: The Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends', 155th Edition, Edinburgh. Ch. 10. from the GROS Website:  
<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/files2/stats/annual-review-09/j1201511.htm>

<sup>271</sup> Grant, I F 'Highland Folk Ways', Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1961. P.53

Looking at Laggan first; the Parish of Laggan extended for some 45 miles from north-east to south-east and is 19 miles in breadth at its widest, although the bulk of the population lived in a corridor of some 20 miles in length and 3 miles in breadth due to the topography.<sup>272</sup> The population in 1755 was 1,521 persons and in 1790, 1,512 persons. There is no breakdown of male and female in the 1790 survey, but of that 1,512 people, at least 250 were Catholic.<sup>273</sup> This meant that the Rev. James Grant had absolutely no idea of the number of baptisms, nor marriages and deaths in that community. There were only two Heritors in Laggan in 1790, these being the Duke of Gordon and Colonel Macpherson of Cluny. The Rev. Grant noted that there were no Shoemakers in the district, the common people making their own shoes, but there were 3 or 4 Brogue makers, 3 House Carpenters, 7 Tailors, 1 Blacksmith, 1 Mason with 2 Apprentices and 5 or 6 Weavers, which included Waulkers, who were integral in finishing cloth. Waulkers had their own guild, which meant that people were apprenticed and trained.<sup>274</sup>

There had been a Walker employed on Cluny since at least 1741, when John Mackay was granted the right to the only Walk Mill in Badenoch.<sup>275</sup> You would think that having the only means of making cloth in the region would make one, if not a rich man, then at least comfortable, but this was not so. Whilst John Mackay was charged rent of 12 merks for his right to work the mill at Cluny, there was an obligation on the part of Cluny or the Forfeited Estates Commission to maintain the mill. This obligation unmet, lead Mackay to write to James Small, Factor for the Estate of Cluny 17 December 1756. He said, “as it has not been repaired for these fifteen years, the whole of it has gone to absolute ruin, and for this year past has done no sort of work, to the great prejudice of the Contry, as it takes up so much of their time in walking their Cloaths with their feet upon a board.

---

<sup>272</sup> Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland: A Survey of Scottish Topography, Statistical, Biographical and Historical, edited by Francis H. Groome and originally published in parts by Thomas C. Jack, Grange Publishing Works, Edinburgh between 1882 and 1885.

<sup>273</sup> Statistical Account Scotland, Volume 3, Account of 1791-99, page 145

<sup>274</sup> A Waulker was one who worked with cloth, cleaning and thickening it by wetting and walking over it. The task employed many women, who pounded the material against a board, singing as they went. (See ‘The Convenery of the Trades of Edinburgh’, <http://www.edinburgh-trades.org>)

<sup>275</sup> NAS – E745-20-2

As therefore your petitioner henceforth can pay no more yearly Rent for the said miln unless he is allowed some money to help to put the said miln in repair, and the least he expects to receive for that purpose is three pounds sterling, and your petitioner will add to that sum, what will be sufficient for putting the miln in good repair and he obliges himself to keep the miln in repair for nine years. May it therefore please you to order an Estimate to be made or allow the three pounds sterling to be laid out as above that the proper repairs may be made.” Fortunately, the petition was not ignored and there is an annotation on the back of the document dated 24 June 1757 that states, “Read the within Petition. Ordered to remit the same to the Factor to consider of what is therein set forth and make an allowance accordingly.”<sup>276</sup>Waulkers would continue employed in the district, but census information shows that by 1851 there were only 26 Weavers and, by implication, Waulkers, left in Badenoch. These numbers had declined to 16 by 1861, then to 10 in 1871 and 3 in 1881, with only two remaining in 1891<sup>277</sup>.

There were also Dykers and Ditchers employed in the district, having come from the north of the parish, the region unspecified, who earned 1 shilling to 2/6 per day.<sup>278</sup>

The Blacksmith to whom he referred was John Anderson, married to Katherine Macdonald, who resided at Gaskinloan.<sup>279</sup> They had twelve children, of whom George and John also became Blacksmiths, whilst the other boys grew up to be Farmers.

The Tailors in Laggan in 1790 included Finlay Catanach, son of Alexander Catanach and Ann Gordon, who married Ann Macpherson of Biallidmore, daughter of Lieutenant Alexander Macpherson and Anne Macpherson, on 24 August 1784. Finlay was residing at Gaskmore at the time of his marriage and, with the exception of a couple of years when the family could be found at Alvie and Invernahavon, the latter near what is now Newtonmore, lived the remainder of his life around Gaskmore and Gergask in Laggan. He died in 1819 and buried in the Cluny burial

---

<sup>276</sup> NAS E745-20-2

<sup>277</sup> I have not counted Stocking Weavers in any of the censuses. The last Guild for Waulkers was closed by 1895.

<sup>278</sup> Farmers can generally tell from whence a Stonedyker hailed by the style of his dyke. This is still true today.

<sup>279</sup> Sometimes spelt Gaskinlone

ground. Another Tailor in Laggan at the time was Paul Kennedy, who married Catherine Macpherson, daughter of Donald Macpherson and Anne MacKillop.<sup>280</sup>

There were three schools in the Parish of Laggan in 1790, comprising a Parochial School, with 50-80 students attending at various times of the year and two other schools in the western part of the Parish, run by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge.<sup>281</sup>

Agriculture in Laggan consisted of Oats, Rye, Barley and Potatoes. There were not enough vegetables produced to sustain the population.

The Reverend John Anderson, noted that Kingussie, 17 miles in length and 10 miles in width, was the most arable of the Badenoch parishes in 1790, being dissected by the Spey and having several rivers (Truim, Feshie, Calder, Gynack and Tromie) flow into it along the wide valley. Because of the inundation of the land, there was much swamp and not conducive to good health. The Rev. Anderson wrote that “rheumatisms, consumption and other complaints of a similar kind” were very frequent.<sup>282</sup>

There was no town of Kingussie as such, but there were 1,803 inhabitants, none of whom was Roman Catholic, unlike the neighbouring parish of Laggan. The population had decreased by nearly 100 persons since the 1753 census by Dr Webster, but there was a slight increase overall since 1783.<sup>283</sup> There were 645 males above 10 years of age and 693 females. There were 645 children under the age of 10. Unfortunately, with rare exceptions, there were no burial records, nor causes of death.<sup>284</sup>

---

<sup>280</sup> I have not been able to identify the others.

<sup>281</sup> Grant & Williams Op Cit; P 256. Children attended when they could be spared from helping their parents on the crofts.

<sup>282</sup> [Htp://acc.scot.edina.ac.uk.link/1791-99/Inverness/Kingussie/3/35](http://acc.scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-99/Inverness/Kingussie/3/35)

<sup>283</sup> There were 16 males and 15 females baptized in 1783, with a peak in 1788 of 33 males and 19 females. By 1790 baptisms were 18 males and 20 females. Overall in the years 1783-1790 there were 312 baptisms and 93 marriages.

<sup>284</sup> There are records available for cities; for instance, three parishes of Edinburgh, for the month of December 1793 when 159 deaths were recorded, with the following statistics recorded: 75 males and 84 females died. Of those, 47 were under 2, there were 6 deaths between the ages of 5 and 10; four deaths between 10 and 20; ten deaths between 20 and 30; fourteen deaths between 30 and 40; eleven deaths between 40 and 50; seventeen deaths between 50 and 60; thirteen deaths between 60 and 70; fourteen deaths between 70 and 80; four deaths between 80 and 90 and one death between 90 and 100. The causes of death were as follows: Aged 19; Asthma 2; Bowelhive 13; Childbed 3;

Gaelic was the main language spoken, although English was understood. The Rev. Anderson noted that the people were brave, hospitable and polite, but that drunkenness was rife.

Six men, namely William Macpherson of Invereshie, Cluny Macpherson, James Macpherson of Belleville, William Mackintosh of Balnespic, George Gordon of Invertromie and the Duke of Gordon, were the Heritors in 1790. There were also several military officers in the district retired on half pay.

Life was hard for the people of Kingussie, with the Rev. Anderson noting that with the exception of Blacksmiths and Weavers, other trades were unknown in the region. Despite this, he noted that people generally lived a long life, as indeed was noticed by other Ministers of the Parishes of Badenoch. There were 74 people on the Parish Poor Roll for the period November 1789 to January 1791 and included the past Kirk Officer, John Macpherson and the current Kirk Officer, James Robertson.<sup>285</sup> Wages in 1790 in Kingussie for males averaged 15 to 18 pennies a day. Women received 8 pennies a day during harvest and 6 pence a day at other times.<sup>286</sup>

The children of Badenoch could attend school from at least 1652 when Alexander Clark, previously Minister of Laggan, became Master of the Grammar School at Kingussie, followed by Gilbert Hannay in 1655.<sup>287</sup> Hannay was given a half Davoch of Kingussie by George, Duke of Gordon, in 1658, the rent of which, some 2,000 merks, was invested, the interest his salary until his death in 1705, when his widow, Jean Livingstone, sought 40 pounds Scots for the half year from the fund.<sup>288</sup> Children came from all over the Highlands and the Western Isles to gain an

---

Chincough 5; Consumption 40; Cramp 1; Croup 3; Dropsy 1; Fever 16; Gravel 1; Killed 1; Measles 1; Palsy 2; Scalded 1; Smallpox 29; Stillborn 5; Suddenly 2; Teething 12 and Water in Head 2. (Source: Scots Magazine, 1793. Vol 55. Page 632 'Affairs in Scotland').

<sup>285</sup> Grant, John & Leslie, William 'A Survey of the Province of Moray: Historical, Geographical and Political' I. Forsyth, 1798 (Book digitized by Google from the library of the New York Public Library) p 257

<sup>286</sup> [Http://acc.scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-99/Inverness/Kingussie/3/39](http://acc.scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-99/Inverness/Kingussie/3/39)

<sup>287</sup> Deposed by the Commission of Assembly at Aberdeen before 5th October 1647 (Glimpses Part 3 'Sketches of the Protestant Ministers of Badenoch since the Reformation'). NAS/GD176/655 Gilbert Hannay was noted as Schoolmaster in Badenoch when he was witness to a Deed in 1655. Hannay was still alive in 22 Feb 1705 as he is mentioned in a Precept of Poinding against James Macpherson of Ballachroan by the Factor for the Duke of Gordon (GD80/400)

<sup>288</sup> NAS/GD80/332 See also GD80/337 There were two Discharges 21 October 1700 by James Gordon in Kerinmeanach (Kerrowmeanach) [described in second discharge "of Suelton"], factor to Duke of Gordon, as

education, boarding with Kingussie families. John Cumming was the Schoolmaster in 1706 followed by Alexander Brodie in 1709.<sup>289</sup> There was a constant battle by Schoolmasters to obtain their salaries and to maintain the school over time. John Kennedy and Ewen Macpherson were Schoolmasters at Ruthven in 1775.<sup>290</sup>

The school in Kingussie catered for 20-50 scholars in 1790, with there being little consistency due to children being required to tend cattle and help at harvest. The Heritors and the Kirk Session were the educational authority until the establishment of school boards in 1872.

Mr George Shepherd, the Parochial Schoolmaster for Kingussie, conducted a Census of the Parish on 27 May and 10 June 1811, the population of which was 1,981 of which 808 were males and 1,093 were females. The number of inhabited houses was 430, occupied by 440 families. There were 14 houses uninhabited, with three new houses in the process of building. There were 235 families chiefly employed in agriculture; 69 families employed in manufacturing and handicrafts. There were 144 families with no occupation. John Robertson, Minister for Kingussie, signed off the Census.<sup>291</sup>

The next census of the Parish of Kingussie, conducted by Andrew Rutherford, Parish Schoolmaster, took place between 28 May and 30 June 1821. Andrew, the son of William Rutherford and Margaret Brown, was born in Epplestone, Peebleshire 24 May 1788. He graduated M.A from the University of Glasgow in 1818 and served the community of Kingussie as their Parochial Schoolmaster from 1821-1844. He was ordained 4 April 1844 and served the

---

assignee of Gilbert Hannay, schoolmaster at Kingussie, for the sums of £80 Scots as the interest of the mortified sum of 2000 merks Scots for the years 1698 and 1699

<sup>289</sup> NAS/GD80/420. Fund kept to cover the costs of running the Grammar School, with John Cumming, the Badenoch Schoolmaster, applying to William Macpherson of Nuide in October 1706 for access to those funds. The stipend for the Minister also came from this fund, the Rev. Daniel Mackenzie applying to William and Lachlan Macpherson of Nuide for his money. (GD80/446, also 447)

<sup>290</sup> NAS/234/E745/50 There are at least two areas called Ruthven in Scotland, but I have only used data for Ruthven when it is clearly identified as Ruthven of Badenoch.

<sup>291</sup> Interestingly, George Shepherd, had a change of occupation shortly after the census, graduating MA in Aberdeen in 1812. He was a Missionary at Fort George in 1817 before being given the Parish of Laggan in 1818. George served there until 1825 when he became the incumbent for Kingussie. He married Katherine, the daughter of John Robertson, his predecessor, 9 April 1819. He died at Aberdeen 20 July 1853. Katherine died in 6 Jan 1872, at Elgin.

Parish of Rothiemurchus until 28 November 1854 when he died.<sup>292</sup> Andrew married Helen Macdonald, daughter of Angus Macdonald and Ann Macdonald of Gergask in the Parish of Laggan.<sup>293</sup> Helen was the granddaughter of Allan Macdonald, Tacksman of Gallovie and the Great Granddaughter of John Macdonald of Aberader.

The 1821 census showed that the population had increased slightly since the previous census in 1811, there being 2004 inhabitants, of which 1,078 were females and 926 males. The significant increase in the number of males may well be partly attributable to soldiers released from service after the Napoleonic Wars. The number employed in agriculture was 212, a drop since the previous census.

Alvie, about 10 miles in length and between 1 and 2 miles in breadth lies along the River Spey, with the majority of the population in 1790, living on the north side of the Spey.<sup>294</sup> The Rev. Gordon described it as “delightful in summer, but very cold in winter.”<sup>295</sup>

The population of Alvie in 1790 was 1,011, a slight drop since 1753 when the population was 1,021 persons. The Rev. Gordon noted in 1790 that there were 378 households in Alvie, with 552 children living with their parents and 81 in service. The church was in a ruinous state and the Manse, built in 1730, was condemned. The Manse was re-built in 1881.

Whilst there were a set of questions asked by Sinclair, each Parish Minister provided his own interpretation of what response was required. Further, not all Parishes kept statistical data on deaths, nor causes of death; Alvie being the exception and then only for a very limited time. The Rev. Gordon noting that there had been 16 deaths between February 1792 and February 1793, comprising 6 from Fevers, 3 from Consumption, 2 suddenly, 1 Chincough (Whooping Cough), 1

---

<sup>292</sup> Scott, Hew. D.D; ‘Fasti Ecclesiasticae’ Oliver & Boyd, Tweeddale Court, Edinburgh, 1928. Vol 6, Synods of Aberdeen and Moray, Page 372 and Rothiemurchus Cemetery.

<sup>293</sup> General Record Office, Edinburgh, Scotland 1821/104/00 0020 062 Entry reads: 30 Jan 1821, Andrew Rutherford, A.M; Schoolmaster, Laggan, to Hellen Macdonald, Gergask.

<sup>294</sup> <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-99/Inverness/Alvie/13/375>

<sup>295</sup> Ibid;



Inward Inflammation (possibly Kidney Disease), 1 Age, 1 Hives and 1 from Scurvy. The ages of the deceased were:

Two under the age of one

One between the age of 1 and 10

Two between the age of 10 and 20

One between the age of 30 and 40

Three between the age of 40 and 50

One between 50 and 60

Two between 60 and 70

Two between 70 and 80, and

Two between 80 and 90.

Unfortunately, the disease was unlinked with the age of the deceased.

The Rev. John Macdonald, the incumbent since 1806, conducted the statistical survey in 1833, taking umbrage with the 1794 Statistical Account saying that the name Alvie actually means “Island of Swans”. He noted that his Parish covered 84 square miles, with the cost of farming having gone up, but the return in decline since the end of the Napoleonic Wars. He said that Crofters did not rest their ground; crop rotation did not occur; good land management was not encouraged by the proprietors and there was no security of tenure.<sup>296</sup> The Reverend argued that there was an urgent need for long leases and a need to lime the land.<sup>297</sup>

The Reverend Macdonald conducted another census in 1835. He noted the most prevalent diseases in the parish were Scrofula,<sup>298</sup> Dropsy<sup>299</sup> and Palsy<sup>300</sup>, which he put down to a poor,

---

<sup>296</sup> Leases were usually from 7-11 years, with no security of tenure. Indeed, you could argue that when leases were due to expire, there was a bidding war. Therefore, it made no financial sense to invest in improvements to land that might well be taken away from you at the expiration of your lease.

<sup>297</sup> <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1834-45/Inverness/Alvie/> Vol 14, page 92.

<sup>298</sup> Tubercule infection of the neck lymph nodes

<sup>299</sup> Oedema, usually, but not always, congestive heart failure or kidney failure

<sup>300</sup> Paralysis of parts of the body

watery diet<sup>301</sup>, consisting of Potato and Milk, with some Kale. Butter and cheese produced sold to pay the rent.<sup>302</sup> The average number of births, over a period of 7 years was 90, with 15 deaths and 8 marriages.<sup>303</sup> The Reverend Macdonald noted that the inhabitants were very hardy, small people, whose first language was Gaelic, but most understood some English. He said Parish Registers, whilst kept since 1713, were “very irregularly kept.....filled up with disagreeable narratives of sexual immoralities and public exhibitions of feigned repentance on the cutty stool.”<sup>304</sup>

### **Education:**

The Statistical Survey of Alvie in 1833 noted there were two permanent schools; the Parochial School, supported by the Commission of General Assembly and a private school at Raitts. The latter only taught students in winter, whilst the former had a curriculum of Latin, English Reading, Grammar, Writing, Arithmetic, Book keeping and Geography. The school fee was set at 20 shillings per annum, which meant that the majority of children in the parish could not afford to attend school. The survey noted that there were 342 children above the age of 6 years unable to read in 1833.<sup>305</sup>

There were five schools in the Parish of Kingussie 9 May 1838, four of which were permanent. The Parish School of Kingussie, taught by Andrew Rutherford, had 107 students attending on the day of the examinations for 1838.<sup>306</sup>

The Female School, taught by Isabella Scott in Kingussie, was the daughter of Donald Macpherson and Elizabeth Macpherson, the family farming Aultlarie at Newtonmore in 1851.

---

<sup>301</sup> The Reverend Macdonald was sure it was diet based given that folk from the cities came to the region, pale and wan, but within a short time were rosy cheeked, fit and healthy. He noted that the diet of visitors were much more balanced and substantial than the peasantry.

<sup>302</sup> <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1834-45/Inverness/Alvie/> Vol 14, page 90.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid; page 90

<sup>304</sup> Ibid; page 87. The cutty stool was a 3 legged wooden stool, used in dairying, but in this instance, a person accused of adultery or fornication was made to stand on the stool in church and admit to their sins. I would have thought it would have been very hard to balance; perhaps the public humiliation was more to the point.

<sup>305</sup> <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1834-45/Inverness/Alvie/> Vol 14. Page 95

<sup>306</sup> Kingussie & Insh Kirk Session Minutes, 1782 -1871 (NAS/CH 2/1419/1)

Isabella related to General Kenneth Macpherson of the Hon. East India Company through her Mother.<sup>307</sup> Isabella's husband was William Scott of Forfar. Isabella, widowed in 1833, returned to Kingussie to raise her son, Ewan, who had been born in 1830. The school, at which Isabella taught, which was established by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, had 36 students present on the day of examination in 1838. Isabella, retired by the 1851 Census, died at the family home, Aultlarie, 28 May 1860, having suffered from Chronic Bronchitis and Heart Disease for years.

Miss Mary Robertson taught the Infant School of Kingussie, which had been established by subscription. There were 60 students enrolled in 1838.

Gordon Meldrum taught at the school at Newtonmore, established by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, from at least 1838 until his death in 1863.

There was an Aid School (not permanent) at Nuide, with 20 scholars attending in 1838. Children at Gordonhall and Invertromie attended the school at Insh, thus totalling 363 children attending school out of a population of 1,700. There were also schools held in Crofts with only Gaelic spoken. The Minister, George Shepherd, stated that students attending school since his inception in 1825, in any given year, had never exceeded 500.<sup>308</sup>

There were flourishing Sunday Schools at both Kingussie, where 150 children attended and Newtonmore, where 200 children attended.

The Kingussie School needed urgent additions by 1870. The Heritors met to discuss a strategy. (These were Ewen Macpherson (the Cluny); Colonel Macpherson of Belleville, John Fleming representing Sir George Macpherson Grant, Bart, of Ballindalloch and William Cumming representing Evan Baillie, Esquire, Laird of Dochfour). The Heritors had to decide whether to

---

<sup>307</sup> (SC29/44/9 Inverness Sheriff Court)...appoint Donald Macpherson, my son, residing at Aultlarie, Parish of Kingussie, etc.; my sole Executor and Legatory, leaving and bequeathing to him the whole of my Estate, including my share of the Estate of the late General Kenneth Macpherson of the East India Company Service, now deceased, as one of the next of kin, etc.;

<sup>308</sup> Kingussie Kirk Session Minutes, Op Cit;

accept the offer of Father Alexander Campbell of St Michael, Laggan of "House on the Fen, used by him as a chapel and Laid House, would be given to the Heritors of Kingussie for School purposes for the sum of 100 pounds sterling." Consideration of the offer deferred until 1 August when declined in favour of building new additions to the school. The cost of those additions were £192/13/-. The successful tenderers were J Mackenzie & Brother, Masons, Donald Cattanach, Slater, Angus Macpherson, Plasterer and Carpenter's Mackay & Ross.

Mr Alexander Chalmers, Teacher of the Meadowside Sessional School, Dundee, was elected unanimously Parish Schoolmaster of Kingussie, 28 September 1870. His salary of £60 per annum, with the usual allowance for a house and garden until a dwelling house could be erected, was on the provision that the Minister of the Parish (the Rev. Kenneth A Mackenzie) would teach a Gaelic class in the school. The appointment of Mr Chalmers was contingent on his passing his university exams as required by Act of Parliament. A further £10 per annum was allocated for a certificated Female Teacher to teach industrial work and junior classes in the Parish School. Should Mr Chalmers not take up the appointment, then the female teacher would receive a further £20 per annum for the extra workload. The appointment of Chalmers was not of long duration as the Kirk was advised 24 August 1871 that Mr Chalmers, Parish Schoolmaster of Kingussie, had died 30 July of that year and a replacement was required.<sup>309</sup>

The Heritors & Parish Minister met 12 September 1871 and duly appointed John B Jeffrey, Parish Teacher, at the rate of the deceased Alexander Chalmers. The dissenter to the appointment was The Cluny, who was dissatisfied with the applicant not knowing the Gaelic language, although Mr Jeffrey did state that he hoped to acquire the language in time.<sup>310</sup>

### **Teaching of Gaelic:**

Gaelic, in 1800, was still the first language for the majority of people in the Highlands and, in particular, Badenoch. This was changing, however, particularly with the importation of Ministers to serve the Parishes who could not speak Gaelic. This was of increasing concern to

---

<sup>309</sup> Kingussie Kirk Session Minutes, 28 Sep 1870 Op Cit;

<sup>310</sup> Kingussie Kirk Session Minutes, 12 Sep 1871

the general populace and to the various societies that sought to promote all things Scottish, but in particular language, recognizing that language is the glue of any culture.

The Gaelic Society of London, which had been founded in 1777 and remains the oldest Gaelic Society in the world, decided in 1869 to ascertain the extent of the perceived problem by conducting a survey of all denominations in Scotland asking the number of churches in which Gaelic was preached. The results were startling. Out of 3,395 places of worship of all denominations in Scotland, only 461 had Gaelic services once a day in the following proportions: “Established Church, 235; Free Church, 166; Catholic Chapels, 36; Baptists, 12; Episcopalians, 9 and Congregationalists, 3.”<sup>311</sup>

The above statistics were borne out by later official censuses, where the decline in Gaelic speaking people in Inverness-shire was marked.<sup>312</sup>

	County	Total Population	Gaelic Only	Gaelic & English
1901	Inverness	67700	11623	37537
1921	Inverness	82,446	4,660	35,577
1931	Inverness	Not stated.	3,123	31,474

<sup>311</sup> Mackenzie, A, MacGregor, A & MacBain, A. (Ed;) Celtic Magazine, ‘Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness’. Vols. III. and IV., 1875 (Courtesy Project Gutenberg)

<sup>312</sup> With the current rise in Scottish Nationalism, the number of Gaelic speaking Scots has increased, with Gaelic being taught in most schools in Scotland.

(Courtesy Adam, Frank 'The Clans, Septs & Regiments of Scotland, 8th Ed; Johnston & Bacon, Edinburgh & London, 1970. Appendix XX11 and XX111, page 601-602)

## Health and Occupations

Badenoch, for those working the land, was a reasonably healthy place in which to live, given the era. This could be argued of most rural areas, indeed Beard, quoting from Dr Farr, Registrar of England in 1851, stated that those most likely to live a decent lifespan were Farmers, whilst Miners, Bakers, Butchers and Innkeepers suffered the heaviest mortality.<sup>313</sup>

Life was tough for those on the lower end of the economic scale. Common causes of death in Badenoch were Phthisis (Consumption), Bronchitis, Influenza, Typhoid, Pyemia (Septicaemia) and Diphtheria. Consumption was caused by infected cows passing on bacilli in milk and families living in overcrowded conditions. Lack of hygiene was another reason, as water was rarely boiled.

The statistics, for much of the 19th century are flawed as there were problems with misdiagnosis and incorrect causes of death were often given. For instance, when John Macpherson, illegitimate son of Duncan Macpherson, Gamekeeper, and Christy Macpherson, died, age 2 years on 28 March 1863, at Crathy in the Parish of Laggan, the cause of death was given as Hives, accompanied by convulsions. Modern investigations may well have found that it was Measles, rather than Hives.

When one looks at Badenoch, the Kingussie Kirk Session of 29 Nov 1816 noted that the Session was having extreme difficulty in extracting monies due from the fathers of illegitimate children. Consequently, the Session resolved, "that from this date, no illegitimate Child shall be baptized till the parents have satisfied Discipline and paid their penalty agreeably to the Rules of the Church." This would account for children of whom we know were born not being registered, such as the child of Captain John Cattanach, Strone and Marjory Cattanach in 1816.

---

<sup>313</sup> Beard, George Miller 'Our Home Physician', W Ward, New York, 2nd Edition, 1880, Page 342

Deaths were rarely noted in the Parochial Registers pre-modern registration that commenced in 1855, so it is difficult, nigh near impossible to extrapolate any meaningful data prior to 1854. What is apparent when the data post 1854 is examined is the amazing number of people who lived to a great age across the Parishes of Laggan, Kingussie and Alvie. Six thousand nine hundred and eighteen people (6,918) died in the Parishes of Alvie, Kingussie and Laggan over the period 1855 – 1955. Statistically, the Causes of Death are skewed over the 20<sup>th</sup> century period because of the founding of the Grampian Sanatorium in 1901, following which people travelled from all over the UK in order to seek outdoor treatment for TB. Given this, the sample period chosen was 1855-1900.

There were 3,288 deaths across the Parishes of Alvie, Kingussie and Laggan during the period 1855-1900. There were 840 deaths in the ten year period 1855-1865. Eighty six people died of Old Age out of a sample of 582 persons across the three parishes between 1855 and 1865. The average age was 80 years, an extraordinary life average for the time, given that in urban areas of Scotland, the average age at death was 40 years.<sup>314</sup> The average would possibly be even higher if one made assumptions and included the unknown causes of death. Longevity in Badenoch, seemingly, was not affected by ones occupation, the data from 1855-1865 covering every occupation from being a Laird to that of Pauper.

Some would argue that people were not as aware of their ages as we are today and, therefore, the age at marriage and death (the latter notorious for misinformation) is often suspect. Having said that, despite some variation, census information does provide a reasonably reliable indication of a person's age in Badenoch during this period. An example of which would be Janet Kennedy, daughter of John Kennedy and Janet Cattanach, who married Somhairle Macpherson (sometimes called Samuel in records of the day) at Laggan 5 April 1782.<sup>315</sup> There were three children from the marriage, Ann, the eldest, James and John. The two eldest were born at Kylachil, which no

---

<sup>314</sup> Actuarial Tables from the Government Actuary Department of Scotland for the years 1861-2011 give average death for males in 1861 as 40 years with females 43 years, with only 10 percent of the male population reaching 65 years or over and only 11 percent of females. See Table in Appendix, courtesy Register House, Scotland and Kirsty MacLachlan, Senior Statistician, National Records of Scotland.

<sup>315</sup> Laggan Parochial Registers, the entry reading: Samuel Macpherson in Crathy Croy and Janet Kennedy, daughter to John Kennedy in Kylachill, were this day married 5 April 1782.

longer exists, in the Parish of Laggan; the property situated beside Crathy Croy and adjacent to Sherramore.<sup>316</sup> The family moved to Easterton in Glen Banchor in the Parish of Kingussie sometime after 1785. Somhairle died at Glen Banchor in 1810.<sup>317</sup> The move possibly because the Kennedy's, into which family Somhairle had married, also moved to Glen Banchor.



1733 Map of Laggan, Badenoch, with Kylachil emphasized in black. Courtesy National Archives Scotland

Janet lived until 1859, her death registration stating that her age at death was 96, which would give a birth date of 1763 and age at marriage 19. The occupation at death was that of Pauper. James was the main breadwinner and remained so the rest of his life, whilst his younger brother, John, served with the Hon. East India Company.<sup>318</sup> Census records give an age of 90 for Janet in 1851 and 75 in 1841.<sup>319</sup> Also present at the 1841 census was her daughter, Ann Macpherson,

<sup>316</sup> See 1733 Map of Laggan

<sup>317</sup> Courtesy the family papers of Sir Tommy Macpherson

<sup>318</sup> Anecdotal from family: I am still trying to find proof of service in the H.E.I.C. Documentary evidence has been found of several other Macphersons from the Parish who served as officers in the H.E.I.C; including the death in 1799 of Lieutenant John Macpherson, clearly identified as the son of Donald Macpherson of Phones, who inherited his sons Estate of 300 pounds. I have included a list of those Macpherson officers in the Appendix.

<sup>319</sup> Everyone over the age of 15 at the 1841 census had their ages rounded down to the nearest five years, so Janet, as enumerated, was actually age 80 when the census was held.



whilst present at the 1851 census was her granddaughter, Anne Davidson, clearly identified, who was the natural child of Samuel Davidson of Dunachton, Alvie and Ann Macpherson.<sup>320</sup>

Another example where cross referencing with other records can provide the correct age, was Alexander Macpherson, who died at Achnabechan, Alvie in 1865. The informant at his death was his daughter, Margaret, who gave her father's age as 92, but this does not gel with census records or indeed his birth record. Alexander was born at Strone 13 May 1777,<sup>321</sup> the son of James Macpherson, Crofter, and Isobel Kennedy. After his marriage, the couple moved to Alvie and worked on Raits, where their daughter, Margaret, was born in 1815, and Achnabechan on Dunachton.<sup>322</sup> The census return of Alvie for 1851 shows Alexander and Isabella, along with their daughter, Margaret and two grandchildren present.<sup>323</sup> Useful data, including age and familial relationships can be extrapolated from death registrations, particularly when cross referenced with other data, such as census material.

The causes of death in Badenoch over the period 1855-1865, apart from old age are most interesting. There were only 6 deaths from Cancer. There were two cases of Stomach Cancer – the occupations being Gamekeeper and Agricultural Labourer, the ages being 59 and 66 respectively.<sup>324</sup> The duration from diagnosis to death was 1 year and 6 months. A Weaver, Alexander Cattanach, aged 67, had Cancer of the Eye for several years before death. There was one case of Cancer of the Face and Neck, the deceased being 79 and one unspecified Cancer, the

<sup>320</sup> General Register Office, Scotland 1815/090/0B 0010 0130. Status clearly stated in the Alvie Parochial Register

<sup>321</sup> General Register Office, Scotland 1777/102/00 0010 0127. The entry reads: Alexander, son to James Macpherson in Strone and Isobel Kennedy, his wife, was born 13th and baptized 16th May 1777.

<sup>322</sup> Margaret never married and died at Kingussie 11 Feb 1901. Informant Alexander Cattanach, cousin. (1901/102/00 0002)

<sup>323</sup> The grandchildren are Mary Rose, age 3, born Forres, Morayshire and John MacGregor, age 7, born Aberdeen. Mary Rose, born 15 November 1847 at Forres, was the daughter of William Rose, a Farm Overseer and Elizabeth Macpherson and was living with her father and siblings at Bogs of Bardsyards, Forres when the 1861 Census was held.

<sup>324</sup> Stomach Cancer is more prevalent in men, even today, and is often a cancer of old age. The men who succumbed to the disease in our sample would have been considered old by the standards of the day. The other risk factor for Stomach Cancer is a high intake of salt, with Scots always liking a more than healthy dash of salt on their food, including Porridge. Another factor could be a bacterial infection of *Helicobacter Pylori*. For a more detailed explanation, see <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org>

deceased being a Pauper, aged 69. Only one woman died from Cancer during the specified period. This was a widow of a Farmer who suffered Cancer affecting the face, age 75 at death. There was possibly one other Cancer cause of death as the death registration for Alexander Mackintosh, married to Agnes Duff, Carter, age 64, who died at Lynchat, Alvie in 1865 states that he had suffered from “Ulceration of the Throat for several years.”<sup>325</sup>

There were only 5 cases attributed to Typhoid in the period 1855-1865 across the three parishes, one of which was a child of three years in Glentruim, Laggan. There were two deaths at Lynchat, Alvie, one at Glen Banchor in the Parish of Kingussie and one other at Glentruim. The cases at Glentruim are interesting in that there was and is a good water supply. The deaths were that of a Farrier from the Lowlands, Richard Green, age 53 and a 3 year old, Alex McDonald, son of William McDonald, Gamekeeper and his wife, Margaret Robertson. Neither lived on the same property. Given that Typhoid is a bacterial infection, usually from a bad water source or a lack of personal hygiene, one would expect more deaths.

There were 22 deaths from Phthisis (Tuberculosis). Once again, your position in society was no protector from the disease. The causation was usually milk from infected cows and milk was drunk by everyone, even if it was laced with whisky, from the highest to the lowest.<sup>326</sup> The difference between whether you contracted Tuberculosis or not could be as simple as the farm from which one purchased the family milk. Occupations of those who died ranged from Farmer, Toll Booth Collector, General Merchant, Policeman, Ministers son, to Jessie, daughter of Lachlan Ralia Macpherson and Grace Macpherson, who died of Phthisis at the ripe old age of 86 at Falls of Truim, Laggan.

---

<sup>325</sup> General Register House, Edinburgh Scotland 1865/090/00 0012

<sup>326</sup> Whisky consumption per every man, woman and child in Scotland in 1861 was deemed to be 1.65 gallons a year, although this was probably vastly underestimated, particularly given the well documented Highland consumption. (Knox, WW 'A History of the Scottish People – Health in Scotland 1840-1940', Chapter 3, [http://www.scran.ac.uk/scotland/pdf/SP2\\_3Health.pdf](http://www.scran.ac.uk/scotland/pdf/SP2_3Health.pdf) see also ‘Memoirs of a Highland Lady’, Canongate Press, Edinburgh, 1992, page 198 where normal fare was Bread, Cheese and Whisky and, if one was entertaining, at whatever level in society, Whisky Punch was the favoured drink.

There were 3,288 deaths over the Parishes of Alvie, Kingussie and Laggan for the period 1855-1900, with 695 deaths in Alvie. I sampled 1,681. Looking at adults, that is those persons above the age of 15, the following was extrapolated:

- Decay of Nature or Old Age – 279 deaths, the average age at death was 82 years.<sup>327</sup>
- Heart Disease - 59 deaths, the average age at death was 62 years.
- Stroke – 31 deaths, the average age at death was 67 years.
- Phthisis (Consumption) – 105 deaths, the average age at death 33 years
- Asthma – 21 deaths, the average age at death 65 years
- Bronchitis – 155 deaths, the average age at death 63 years
- Inflammation of the Lungs/Pneumonia – 44 deaths, the average age at death 44 years
- Nephritis (Kidney Disease, Bright's Disease) – 23 deaths, the average age at death 58 years
- Dropsy – 18 deaths, the average age at death 65 years
- Rheumatism – 8 deaths, the average age at death 68 years
- Ulceration of Bowel – 12 deaths, the average age at death 67 years
- Bowel Obstruction – 8 deaths, the average age at death 67 years
- Gall Bladder – 1 death age 67
- Obstruction of the Gullet – 1 death age 78 (possibly Cancer of the Throat, as the deceased had suffered for 6 months)

---

<sup>327</sup> Many died from unknown causes or not certified, and at a great age. So possibly they did just die of Old Age or, as the Scots delightfully put it, Decay of Nature, an example of which would be Alexander Dallas, son of James Dallas and Margaret Macpherson, married to Ann MacGregor 17 November 1791, and who died at age 95 at Shanval, Laggan, 17 March 1855. This would push the average age of death even higher. Another example is Thomas Sinton, who also died in 1855, age 88, or Marjory Macdonald, daughter of Thomas Macpherson and Janet MacIntosh, who died, age 96, in 1855. The beauty of the 1855 registrations is that they give not only the basic information, but also where the couple were married, the names and ages of any children, if they are alive and if not, then the age of the children deceased. The registration also states how long the family has been in the parish.

- Cancer – 29 deaths; average age at death 67 years (Cancers included Facial Cancer, Cancer of the Eye, Cancer of the Stomach, Cancer of the Liver, Cancer of the Chin; the most predominant named Cancer was Cancer of the Stomach)
- Meningitis – 4 deaths, average age 23
- Smallpox – 1 death, age 29
- Diphtheria – 1 death, age 25

Childhood in Badenoch was limited, with most children working on the land as Agricultural Labourer's or responsible for care of livestock from a very young age. Given this, for the purposes of examination of statistical data, I have defined childhood as birth to 15 years inclusive.<sup>328</sup>

Childhood diseases, such as Whooping Cough and Diphtheria, were no respecter of class or position, even the local Doctor losing a child to Bronchitis and a local Minister losing several children to Diphtheria.

Our sample of 480 persons dying across the three parishes between 1855-1865 include 80 children as defined, with 22 of those children dying from unknown causes. There was one death from Dry Gangrene of the left leg, which would suggest Diabetes. One due to a Congenital Umbilical Hernia, one congenital Heart Disease, one death from Apoplexy at birth, three cases of Hydrocephalus and one Inflammation of the Brain (possibly Meningitis and or Viral Encephalitis); two cases of Variola (Smallpox), but as these were in the same family and the father was a Cow Herd, this was an isolated incident; three cases of Phthisis Pulmonalis, one of Tabes Mesenterica and one of Abscess on the side of the face; Scrofula (all varieties of Tuberculosis) and one Disease of the Skin since birth (possibly Tuberculosis, as the baby was 11 months old at death; one case of Epistaxis (nosebleed); one case of Hives, with Convulsions; five cases of Typhoid Fever; two of Whooping Cough; eight of Diphtheria and two of Malignant Sore Throat (possibly Diphtheria); one case of Colic (given the child was 14, it was probably some type of Cancer); one case of Drowning; eight cases of Bronchitis and Croup; one case of Influenza; two cases of Inflammation of the Bowel (possibly Necrotizing Enterocolitis); and

---

<sup>328</sup> Many children worked in the fields from the age of seven, but as the access to education increased, children attended school more often, although at harvest time they were often absent.

nineteen cases of Scarlet Fever. There were twenty three deaths where the cause was unknown. Given these occurred at a time when the district was experiencing an epidemic in Scarlet Fever (1858) and the ages of the deceased children ranged from 1 year 9 months to 8, there is the likelihood that the cause of death was from the highly infectious Scarlet Fever. Laggan, in 1858, registered the most deaths from unknown causes.

There were 15 deaths overall in Alvie in 1861 and 35 deaths in Kingussie and Laggan, some of which can be attributed to Diphtheria, a highly communicable bacterial disease that kills both children and adults. There was a Diphtheria epidemic in 1861 and 1863 in the Parishes of Alvie, Kingussie and Laggan. James Mackintosh, age 8, son of Donald Mackintosh, Carpenter, and Isabella Macpherson, died at Druimloch, Alvie from the disease, as did his brother, Alexander, just four days later, aged 6. Daniel Munro, aged 7 years and 5 months, son of the Daniel Munro, Minister of the Established Church and his wife, Elizabeth Gardiner, died at the Manse of Insh, followed just a week later by their daughter, Isabella. Whilst the majority of deaths from Diphtheria were children; adults too succumbed. These included Ewen Macpherson, age 25, a Farm Servant, son of Finlay and Catherine Macpherson, who died from Diphtheria at Dell around the same time in 1861. Given that Ewen was a Farm Servant, it is likely that the bacteria was *Corynebacterium Ulcerans* (C. Ulcerans) and was transferred from animal to human (cattle sneeze) due to his working in close proximity to cattle.<sup>329</sup> Whereas, the bacteria that the children died from was almost certainly *Corynebacterium Diphtheriae* (C. Diphtheriae) found in the ground (children love to play in and eat dirt) and transmitted human to human, usually by sneezing.

There were 77 deaths overall in the Parish of Kingussie and Laggan in 1863 and 23 deaths in Alvie. There was an outbreak of Diphtheria in April and November of that year. The Kingussie Doctor, John Orchard, lost his daughter, Ann Macpherson Orchard, aged 2, to the disease. Charles Stewart, son of John Stewart, Stone Dyker, and Margaret Rettie, was only 21 years of

---

<sup>329</sup> Cattle carry the bacteria in their noses and throats. Interestingly, the literature suggests that there has been an increase in recent years of *Corynebacterium Ulcerans* (C. Ulcerans) in both Europe, United States and Asia. (See Oxford Journals, Medicine, Clinical Infectious Diseases, Vol 40, Issue 2, Pp 325-326, 2005). Diagnosed, it can be treated successfully and rapidly with antibiotics, treatment not available in the 19th century.

age when he died at Newtonmore 21 April 1863. Another death that may well be attributed to Diphtheria and that is George Shepherd Meldrum, the son of the deceased Schoolmaster, George Meldrum, who also died at Newtonmore just five days later after suffering a fever for fourteen days. James Farquharson Cattnach, a Gamekeeper, was 43, his son, John, aged just 2, when Diphtheria killed them in November 1863 at Invereshie House, where his wife, Ann, was Housekeeper.<sup>330</sup> Robert Murray, aged 5 years and 5 months, son of John Murray, Gamekeeper, and Margaret Clark, died from Diphtheria at Kingussie in November. The disease was no respecter of class or position.

Badenoch is unusual in that because of its isolation until relatively modern times, there was much intermarrying, that is to say that many marriages were endogamous. Cousins married cousins over generations; relationships so intricate that Professor Allan Macpherson avers, and indeed has been able to trace, ancestry from one person back to the Three Brethren in quite a number of instances. The gene pool must have been very strong, as when one looks at the causes of death in recorded times, over a century, there seems few congenital disorders in families.

One aspect that has proved of interest is Mental Health issues down through generations. Given the intermarrying, one would have thought there would have been more issues of Mental disorders, but an examination of available medical records in various Scottish asylums would suggest otherwise.

The Doctors who served the people of Badenoch were heroic, traversing the extremely rough landscape to reach their patients, in all weathers.

Donald Alexander Kennedy was one such Doctor, who served the community from 1852 until his death at Ruthven, Kingussie in 1859 of not stated cause. Donald, born in Snizort, was the son of Donald Kennedy, Surgeon, RN (died 30 Jan 1855) and Catherine Pirie. Donald married Henrietta Macpherson, daughter of Malcolm Macpherson, Tacksman of Killiehuntly, and Isabella Campbell. Donald and Henrietta had two children, Donald Macpherson Kennedy and

---

<sup>330</sup> Ann Farquharson Stewart served the Macpherson Grants at Invereshie for 50 years; the family held her in such esteem that they paid for a memorial headstone on her death in 1912.

Isabella. Given the year, his occupation and the fact that he was the only Doctor in Kingussie at the time, it is likely that he died from one of the communicable diseases that he treated.

Another Doctor who served the Badenoch community from 1860 until his death in 1896, was John Crawford Orchard<sup>331</sup>. The Orchards became a medical dynasty associated with Kingussie. John Crawford Orchard was followed by his son, Edward Russell Orchard and, on his retirement, by his son, Edward George Orchard.

Doctor John MacRae, who served Laggan from 1871 until 1895, had strong family connections to Badenoch. He was the son of Kenneth MacRae, who was born in Glen Banchor to Donald MacRae and Helen Macpherson in 1809. Kenneth moved to Edinburgh and was a Spirit Merchant. He married Jessie Macpherson, (daughter of Farquhar Macpherson, Farmer of Ardbrylach, and Elder of the church at Kingussie and Janet MacRae), at St Cuthbert's 7 May 1840. John, the eldest child, was born at 48 Potter Row, St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, 29 April 1843.<sup>332</sup> Jessie Macpherson, his Mother, died late 1849 or early 1851. John was sent to Kingussie, where he stayed with Duncan Cameron and his wife, Jessie MacEdward, daughter of Donald MacEdward and Margaret Mackintosh. The friendship made then was enduring. Jessie, who died in 1895, left him her home, which had been the MacEdwards' Inn, located on the north side of High Street, Kingussie that included offices and other buildings.<sup>333</sup>

The Upper Spey, because of its climate, was believed to be beneficial to Consumptives. People had sent their loved ones to Kingussie for many years in the hope that the climate would, at the very least, make their lives more bearable, but there was no sanatorium. Dr Walter de Watteville believed in open air treatment for Tuberculosis and opened the Grampian Sanatorium in Kingussie in 1901, the only private sanatorium in Britain, at that time, dedicated to the treatment of patients with Pulmonary Tuberculosis.<sup>334</sup> Walter, born 1860 in Berne, Switzerland, made

<sup>331</sup> John Crawford Orchard was licenced to practice as a Surgeon 1 September 1837 (Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal, Volume 48, page 565)

<sup>332</sup> St Cuthbert's Parochial Register, Edinburgh, Scotland's People, General Register House 685/02/0360 0104

<sup>333</sup> SC29/44/30 Inverness Sheriff Court

<sup>334</sup> The sanatorium continued functioning as that until at least 1953 when Dr Donald Campbell was the Medical Administrator. Even George Orwell sought admission to the establishment without success; it is now St Vincent's Hospital, a home for the elderly. Walter also gathered meteorological data for the Scottish weather bureau from

Kingussie and the people his, marrying a local girl, Mary Flora Mackenzie, daughter of the Kingussie Church of Scotland Minister, Kenneth Alexander Mackenzie and Mary Isabella Macdonald, 17 April 1889. He served the community of Kingussie until his death in 1918.

Whilst one can understand someone born locally, or having relatives in the region, such as Dr Neil MacFadyen, being drawn to or back, one wonders what held these men in Badenoch for, in most cases, so long; it certainly wasn't for the money as, in Dr Orchard's case, in 1864 he owed the Estate of William Mackintosh over £17 a not inconsiderable sum<sup>335</sup>. He also had to find 25 pounds in annual rent and this in a community where one was often paid in kind and those who could afford to pay were often slow in doing so, as nearly every contemporary Will attests.

### **The Mail Must Always Get Through**

The position of Postmaster is an important one in every community. The position of Postmaster throughout the United Kingdom has been extant since 1649. Prior to that, the people who held that position were called Masters of the Kings Post.<sup>336</sup> Mail was not carried by rail in the United Kingdom until 1830 and then was very limited. Horse or men, the latter being called Post Runners, were the carriers of mail until the mid-19th century. Ewen Davidson was one such runner, as was Alexander Cattanach, son of Donald Cattanach, Ground Officer, and Jean Mackintosh, along with James Kennedy, all of Kingussie. The opening of the Highland Railway in 1863 spelt the doom of Post Runners.

The first Postmaster, of which I have found evidence, is John Macpherson, Merchant and Postmaster at Ruthven in March 1755, when he was a witness to a Petition addressed to William Mackintosh of Balnespick, by Angus Macdonald, son of Alexander Macdonald in Laggan,

---

1896 until his death in 1918 (See also Mill, Hugh and Salter, M de Carle, 'British Rainfall, 1918', 58th Annual Volume, Edward Stanford, Ltd; Long Acre, WC; London, 1919)

<sup>335</sup> Inverness Sheriff Court SC29/44/12 Will of William Mackintosh, Merchant, of Kingussie who died there 8 May 1864

<sup>336</sup> Brewer, J.S; Brewer, John Sherren; Brodie, Robert Henry; Gairdner, James, 'Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry V111, Longman, Green, Longman & Roberts, London, 1864, Digitized by Google 2007



seeking prosecution of the alleged perpetrators involved in the death of his Father, 7 March 1755.<sup>337</sup>

Donald MacKinnon came to Kingussie toward the end of the 18th century and was Postmaster of Kingussie when he married Elizabeth Campbell from Rannoch, Perthshire, 8 November 1803. Donald and Elizabeth had seven children, one of whom, Georgina, married the next Postmaster of Kingussie, Duncan Macpherson.

Duncan was a Merchant who either held an interest in, or owned the 'Kingussie Inn', 2 March 1821, when he advertised it to be let at Whitsunday 1821 for a number of years to be agreed. This would have provided him with a steady income. When Duncan and Georgina married, the following was entered in the Kingussie Parochial Register: Mr Duncan Macpherson, Merchant, Kingussie and Miss Georgina MacKinnon, also residing there, were married 27 Dec 1825. Duncan remained a Merchant until 1828 when he took over as Post Master for Kingussie. Duncan is noted as being legally allowed to sell stamps for Badenoch 11 April 1828.<sup>338</sup>

Financially, Duncan was in trouble by 2 Feb 1844. Indeed, he was bankrupt; the 'Edinburgh Gazette', 29 Jan 1844, calling for a meeting of creditors to be held at the Duke of Gordon Hotel, Kingussie on the 5th and 26th February 1844. He lived at Pitmain at the time. Unable to work or trade his way out of Bankruptcy, all his possessions were up for sale at a Public Roup that was held in the Duke of Gordon Hotel, Kingussie 10 Apr 1847.<sup>339</sup>

The family emigrated to Port Phillip, Melbourne, Australia aboard the 'Courier' in 1849, Duncan having, in all probability, managed to hide some of his assets. Duncan, Georgina and their family settled on Sawyers Creek, now called Macpherson's Creek, in the Casterton region of Victoria where the family prospered<sup>340</sup>.

<sup>337</sup> Whilst there are at least two Ruthven's in Scotland, I have only referred to persons in Ruthven if they are identified as Ruthven in Badenoch.

<sup>338</sup> 'Inverness Courier', 11 Apr 1828

<sup>339</sup> 'Inverness Courier', 11 Apr 1828

<sup>340</sup> What happened with this family in Australia will be addressed in the chapter dealing with immigration.

DRAFT

## Chapter 9

### Churches, Lands & Families

The Church of Scotland has existed for over a thousand years and, until the Reformation, followed the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church. Following the rise of Calvinism in Switzerland, and the missionary work of John Knox, the Church of Scotland followed the tenets of Presbyterianism from 1560. The service was plain and it was governed by a General Assembly, the head of which was the Moderator and, at a local parish level, Minister and Elders met at a monthly Kirk Session.

The Badenoch communities have been served by Ministers since at least 1200 and possibly earlier as the Monks from Dalriada spread throughout Scotland, proselytizing from 563 AD. Unfortunately, we only have records from the commencement of the Reformation in 1542, the first one of which I have found was not until 1567 when John Glass ministered to the inhabitants of Badenoch until 1572, then Rothiemurchus until his death in 1579, described as “exhorter in the Irish brogue”.<sup>341</sup> He was followed by Archibald Henderson, Andrew Colt, Archibald Lindsay and Andrew MacPhail.<sup>342</sup>

The next Minister was Angus Mackintosh. According to the *Fasti Ecclesiarum*, Angus was the son of Angus M. “Williamson” of Termit (ancestor of the Kyllachy family and a leading man in Clan Chattan) by his second wife, Agnes Mackenzie of Suddie in 1590<sup>343</sup>. Angus was given the

---

<sup>341</sup> Scott, Hew. D.D. ‘*Fasti Ecclesiarum* Scoticanæ’, Vol 6, Page 351 and page 355.

<sup>342</sup> Scott, Hew. D.D. *Op Cit*; Page 364

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid*; Angus Mackintosh died in 1644.

Parishes of Laggan and Kingussie in 1614. During his tenure, John Spotiswood, Archbishop of St Andrews and Primate of Scotland wrote to the Laird of Grant 16 July 1616 that “all exercise of religion” was wanting and that “atheism, idolatrie and every sort of wickedness” prevailed<sup>344</sup>. The situation had, it would seem, not changed much for the better over 100 years later when the Revd. William Blair wrote to the Presbytery of Abernethy, complaining that his parishioners, at his entry to the parish, were in general “in gross indolence, ignorance and superstition, the most of their religion consisting in charms and enchantments.” He sought the assistance of a Catechist in overcoming what he saw as the moral turpitude of his parishioners.<sup>345</sup>

Lachlan Grant was the next Minister for Badenoch. Born in 1606, he was ordained 30 October 1627 and died 6 April 1670<sup>346</sup>. The long familial links with Badenoch are clearly demonstrated with the marriage of Lachlan to Elizabeth Mackintosh, daughter of John Mackintosh in Dundelchack (Dun na Seilcheig, a loch on the mutual border of Daviot and Dores parishes, south-west of Inverness). Their daughter, Anne, married Donald Macpherson, the 7th Laird of Strathmashie. Lachlan married again after the death of Elizabeth, this time to Mary Robertson, the widow of Duncan Mackintosh of Aberader and the Mother of Lachlan Mackintosh of Balnespick<sup>347</sup>. Mary Robertson and Lachlan Grant had a son, James,<sup>348</sup> who would marry Ann Macpherson, daughter of John Macpherson of Invereshie and Ann Stewart.<sup>349</sup>

There were some great characters who ministered to the needs of parishioners in Badenoch, one of which was Duncan Mor Macpherson, who served the Parish of Laggan from 1737 until his death in 1757. The Rev. Duncan Mor recognized that if he wanted parishioners attending of a

---

<sup>344</sup> Forsyth, Rev. W, ‘In the Shadow of Cairngorm’, The Northern Counties Publishing Company Ltd. 1900 , page 90

<sup>345</sup> NAS CH1/2/118 General Assembly Papers, Main Series 1776 (ff.345-6)

<sup>346</sup> Scott, Hew, D.D; ‘Fasti Ecclesiasticae Scoticae’, Vol VI, Synods of Aberdeen and Moray, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1926, Page 365

<sup>347</sup> Duncan Mackintosh of Aberader was married 3 times; firstly to Miss Dunbar of Grangehill, no issue; then Beatrice Mackintosh, daughter of Angus Mackintosh of Termit from whom one son was born, William Mackintosh of Aberader, the ‘Black Baillie’, and then finally, Mary Robertson, whose son by her former marriage was Lachlan Mackintosh of Balnespic.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid;

<sup>349</sup> Ann’s sister, Janet, married David Cumming, son of the Rev. Alexander Cumming of Moy. Ann Stewart, their Mother, was the daughter of Robert Stewart of Wester Lethendy in Perthshire.

Sunday then he had to recognize that Church was secondary to Shinty (still the case)<sup>350</sup>. He gained much credit in the community by energetically joining in before church, then making his sermon short. He was assured of a continuing, indeed packed congregation, when he joined the parishioners for another game after church. There is no mention that the good Reverend joined his parishioners in local inns for a wee dram or two after Shinty.<sup>351</sup>

Ministers were extremely poorly paid and it behooved them to marry well and have access to land in order to survive. Indeed, Lachlan Shaw, in his History of Moray (1770) noted in the year 1650 the country of Lochaber was totally destitute.<sup>352</sup> “Through want of Schools, few had any literary education; and they who had would not dedicate themselves to the ministry when the livings were so poor as not afford bread.”<sup>353</sup>The same could be said of Badenoch.

A case in point was Thomas Macpherson, the third son of John Oig Macpherson of Invereshie, who served the parishes of Laggan and Alvie from 1662 until his death in early 1708<sup>354</sup>, although he had been preaching prior to that and ordered before the Lorn Presbytery to explain himself.<sup>355</sup><sup>356</sup> He apologized to the Presbytery and was duly ordained that very year.<sup>357</sup> This was a period of intense religious fervour in Scotland, the year 1662 when Charles 11 attempted to "interpose his royal authority for restoring the Church of Scotland to its right government of

<sup>350</sup> Originally derived from the Irish game of Hurling, Shinty can be compared with Field Hockey, except it is far more physical. The game is now played around the world. The modern form of Shinty was developed in Kingussie, the governing body or ‘Comann na Camanachd’ being formed in Kingussie in 1893.

<sup>351</sup> 'Glimpses of Church and Social Life in the Highlands', Part 3, Sketches of the Protestant Ministers of Badenoch Since the Reformation.

<sup>352</sup> Gordon, James Frederick Skinner, Ed; 'History of the Province of Moray', New Ed; 3 Vols. Hamilton & Adams, London, 1882 (Vol 3, Page 339)

<sup>353</sup> Forsyth, Rev. W, 'In the Shadow of Cairngorm', the Northern Counties Publishing Company Ltd. 1900, pages 91-92

<sup>354</sup> Elias, son of Thomas and Bethia, was writing to his Solicitor, Mr James Brisbane, 5<sup>th</sup> June 1708 on legal matters, so it is reasonable to assume that Thomas had died shortly before this. GD80/869

<sup>355</sup> The year in which Thomas Macpherson was ordained was the in which the modern Common Book of Prayer was introduced and that was the cause of much dissent between Presbyterians and the Episcopal Church.

<sup>356</sup> Stephen, Thomas, 'The Life and Times of Archbishop Sharp', Joseph Rickerby, Sherbourn Lane, London, 1839, page 275

<sup>357</sup> Fasti Ecclesiastae, Vol 6, page 355-356

bishops, as it was before the late troubles." Many Ministers who disagreed with the restoration of the Church of Scotland lost their parishes and were told to vacate their livings and not come within twenty miles of their parish, nor within six miles of Edinburgh. Given this, Laggan was probably in need of an enthusiastic Minister; Thomas was their man.<sup>358</sup> Thomas married Bethia Maxwell, youngest daughter of John Maxwell, the Bishop of Ross, afterward the Bishop of Killala and Achonry in Ireland. This marriage was advantageous to Thomas as his father-in-law certainly had the right connections at Court, being a Privy Councillor and a Lord of the Sessions.<sup>359</sup> Thomas and Bethia had three children, Elias, Aeneas and Isobel.<sup>360</sup> <sup>361</sup>Thomas Macpherson was in Gaskinloan in 1679 and had possession of Pitgown in 1699 when he acknowledged in a letter to the Duke of Gordon that Duncan Macpherson of Cluny had kindly allowed him access to his peat lands as "... could not get sufficient from within the marches of Pittirn (Pitchurn)."<sup>362</sup> He was involved in a dispute over the lands of Garvamore in 1703 against Andrew Macpherson, son of William Macpherson of Noid.<sup>363</sup> The possession of land, along with a good marriage that strengthened alliances, was paramount even in the religious world.

---

<sup>358</sup> Thomas, the half-brother of Angus Macpherson of Invereshie, would have been very much aware of the battle between Covenanters and the traditionalists of the Church of Scotland, as it was Angus Macpherson of Invereshie, his family and his followers who were pardoned after "the late rebellion" 10 May 1648 (Scottish Records of Parliament, St Andrews University, 1648/3/157). The year of his ordination (1662) also saw Macpherson, Tutor to Invereshie, be fined 600 pounds, along with Macpherson, Tutor to Cluny, for indemnity following the overthrow of Charles 1 in 1648. (John Tutor Macpherson was also a Justice of the Peace from 1663).

<sup>359</sup> John Maxwell was granted, by Act of Parliament at Edinburgh, 18 June 1633, the Abbacy of Fearn by Charles 1. He was Royal Chaplain to Charles 1 and argued for the concept of Royal Authority. Archbishop of Tuam, in the Church of Ireland, John Maxwell died in Dublin 14 February 1647

<sup>360</sup> Fasti, Vol 6, Op Cit;

<sup>361</sup> Elias died without issue after 1711 and before 1722 when James Macpherson of Killiehuntly made a claim with regard to some Deeds executed by Elias between 1693 and 1696 against John Macpherson of Dalraddy. James argued that his father (Donald Macpherson of Culinlean or Culinline) had held a Wadset on the Estate of Elias and on the 7<sup>th</sup> February 1696, Elias conveyed his right of reversion of the Wadset to a trustee of James Macpherson's father, John Macpherson of Dalraddy, who had taken steps for the redemption of the Wadset which now belonged to James Macpherson. The courts ruled in favour of John Macpherson of Dalraddy (Robertson, David, Reports of Cases of Appeal from Scotland: Decided in the House of Peers, Vol.1. London, 1807, page 435). Elias certainly wrote to William Macpherson in Edinburgh 26 Jan 1711 saying, "Borlum and I have taken up that affair and satled freendlie' and on legal matters." (NAS GD80/874).

<sup>362</sup> NAS/GD80/319

<sup>363</sup> NAS GD80/381 Other people involved were Alexander Macpherson of Strathmashie, John Macpherson of Tinfodoun, Murdoch Macpherson of Sherramore, Lachlan Macpherson in Cluny, and John and Evan Macpherson, possessors of Garriemore

Following Thomas was John Mackenzie, Daniel Mackenzie and then Lachlan Shaw, the latter ministering to his flock at Kingussie for just three years (1716-1719), after which there was no Minister for 5 years, although John Mackenzie, Minister of Laggan, would have been available to parishioners in need.

The next Minister was William Blair. Born in 1697, son of David Blair of Strathspey, William was ordained 15 April 1721 and was the incumbent Minister of Kingussie and Insh from 1724 until his death 25 December 1780, an extraordinary length of service. He married Lucy Gray who died 14 December 1788.<sup>364</sup>

William lived through the 2<sup>nd</sup> Jacobite Rising in 1745 when the last attempt was made to put Bonnie Prince Charles Stuart on the thrones of England and Scotland. The fort at Ruthven, the ruins of which are still extant, was built in 1719 replacing an earlier fort<sup>365</sup>. The Ruthven Barracks there could house 120 men and William was paid an allowance to minister to these men.<sup>366</sup> William wrote to the Duke of Cumberland “.....the military cannot attend service in the parish church, as they do not understand the Irish language and besides the impetuous river of Spey being interjected betwixt the church and the garrison they cannot come to church in seasons of speats and storms when the water overflows and makes a small ocean betwixt the church and the barrack.”<sup>367</sup>

There was a further threat to this allowance after 200 Jacobite's destroyed Ruthven in 1746. William wrote to the Duke of Cumberland pleading his case and delighted with the Dukes' response, then wrote to the Reverend Patrick Cuming, Professor of Church History, 1 May 1747, quoting the Duke, “your dutifull behaviour in a nest of rebellion”, and his promise that he would order the writer's salary for Ruthven Barrack to be continued though it was burnt.<sup>368</sup>

<sup>364</sup> Scott, Hew, D.D; 'Fasti Ecclesiasticae Scoticae', Vol VI, Synods of Aberdeen and Moray, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1926, Page 365

<sup>365</sup> There has been a fort on the Ruthven site since the 13<sup>th</sup> century when the Comyns built the first.

<sup>366</sup> Prior to 1745 and the Jacobite Uprising, Ruthven had been manned by 120 Infantry and a Horse Troop.

<sup>367</sup> CH/2/85 ff307-308. General Assembly Papers, National Archives of Scotland (NAS)”

<sup>368</sup> General Assembly Papers, *Ibid*; the pages from the Kingussie Parochial Register & Kirk Session Minutes are missing from Nov 1737 through 1746. The Minister, William Blair, noting in Nov 1737, “This year the Schoolmaster dyed (sic) at Aberdeen & his Minutes of Session were lost. Signed William Blair.

The good Reverend Blair carried on administering to his often less than perfect Kingussie flock, and by 1775 was much in need of a Catechist. He wrote to the Presbytery of Abernethy 8 July 1775, giving a précis of his work with parishioners since his arrival in the parish in 1724. He said that people were in general “...in gross indolence, ignorance and superstition, the most of their religion consisting in charms and enchantments.” He was most concerned about “the customary practice of buying selling and baking their bread on the Sabbath day and keeping the heathenish practice of having fiddlers at like wakes.”<sup>369</sup>

Marriages between the daughters of the landed gentry and those who ministered to spiritual needs certainly proved advantageous to those thus joined, providing entrée to political and economic circles that might not otherwise be theirs. Sometimes if the Minister was the second or third son of a laird, he would be found a position as a Minister; either way it was a guarantee for security. The Blair family had strong familial links with the Macphersons of Breakachy, Laggan, as his daughter, Anne, married Angus Macpherson of Flichity (Wester Aberchalder, Highlands and brother of Hugh Macpherson of Ovie), the second son of John Macpherson of Breakachy.<sup>370</sup>

The next Minister to serve Kingussie was John Anderson, born in 1759. The Reverend Anderson served Kingussie from 15 July 1782 until 1809. He died 22 April 1839 at Fochabers, which is in the Parish of Bellie, Morayshire, Scotland. He married twice; his first wife, Grace, was the daughter of John Maclean of Pitmain, known locally as the “Father of Confusion”, because of his numerous marriages, some of his various wives being related to each other. Grace died in 1826, after which the Reverend Anderson married Elizabeth Macpherson, the youngest daughter of Lewis Macpherson of Dalraddy, the latter being married to Una Macpherson, the daughter of Lachlan Macpherson of Cluny and Jean Cameron. These marriages did not hurt the fortunes of the Reverend Anderson.

John Anderson did not take over the Parish in a time of plenty, indeed the Parish was suffering from a famine that was so bad that in 1783, he wrote, "At this time the distresses of the poor

---

<sup>369</sup> CH1/2/85 General Assembly Papers NAS (ff.345-6)

<sup>370</sup> Anne was the second wife of Angus Macpherson of Flichity.



being uncommonly great, and many in danger of perishing for want, a supply of victual ordered by the Government for their relief, arrived. This, though by far too small, was however of very essential service; and by being properly distributed by the Elders and Heritors of the Parish, among the most necessary and indigent, was the means of preserving many who must otherwise have been in danger of perishing through famine."<sup>371</sup>

The Rev Anderson was an unusual man in that by 1806 he was also the Factor for the Duke of Gordon. This brought him in dispute with church authorities and, in 1809, he resigned his post as Minister for Kingussie.<sup>372</sup>

The Rev. Anderson was followed by the Rev. John Robertson, born in 1757, who served the Parish of Kingussie from 1810 until his death, the Kirk Session copied his obituary as it appeared in the newspapers soon after his death – Died at the Manse, Kingussie on the 4th March 1825, after a long and lingering illness, Reverend John Robertson, Minister of Kingussie in the 68th year of his age and the 38th of his Ministry. In Mr Robertson, the Church of Scotland has lost a distinguished ornament and his family and Parish have sustained an incalculable loss. In his Character there was a happy mix of great Intellect, fervent and rational Di., unswerving fidelity to his Masters' Cause and... tempered by Wisdom and controlled by discriminatory prudence. As a preacher, his talents were of no common order. Possessed of a clear and comprehensive understanding, he made the most intricate subjects intelligible to the meanest capacity. His reasoning was always close, cogent and.... illustrations rich and varied, his similes in the highest degree chaste... his appeals to the heart powerful and persuasive. Etc.<sup>373</sup>

The next Minister was the Reverend George Shepherd, born in 1793 at Rathven, Banffshire, who married Catherine Robertson, the daughter of the Reverend John Robertson, who had previously

---

<sup>371</sup> NAS CH2/1419/1/27 (This was also the same year that the Government imposed a tax on all births, deaths and marriages).

<sup>372</sup> The Rev. Anderson continued to minister to his Bellie flock as well as serve the Duke of Gordon in the capacity of Commissioner and Factor. The Synod of Moray told him in 1818 that he could only serve one Master, either God or Alexander, Duke of Gordon (see NAS/GD44/37/18/3) and to make a choice. "...it is impossible that they should not highly disapprove of the Parish Ministers of this church engaging in such secular employments and give faithful discharge of their spiritual functions." (See also *Fasti Ecclesiastae* Vol. 6. Page 300)

<sup>373</sup> 'Inverness Courier', 17 March 1825. See also 'Scots Magazine', 1 Apr 1825, page 127.

served Kingussie. The Rev. Shepherd would serve Badenoch from 1818 until 1852, dying from Apoplexy whilst on a visit to Aberdeen 20 July 1853. There was a lengthy obituary to him in the 'Elgin Courier', 22 July 1853, in which the paper noted that at the tender age of 17, George had been made Tutor to a Kingussie family before becoming the Parochial Schoolmaster. Initially he served the Parish of Laggan before taking over Kingussie in 1825 upon the death of his father-in-law, the Rev. John Robertson.

The Established Church of Scotland, to which George belonged, and the community of Kingussie that he served, would be torn apart 18 May 1843 over the right of Heritors to appoint the Minister of their choice to the parish in which they lived.

Auchterarder in Perthshire was the catalyst for the schism, following the refusal of the parish to instate the Reverend Robert Young. He appealed, in 1838, to the Court of Sessions which ruled that the parish had erred and that the Heritors had every right to appoint Ministers, as the Established Church was a creation of the State and derived its legitimacy from an Act of Parliament.

The Reverend George Shepherd believed that the head of the Church was Jesus Christ and the State had no role in which to play in the administration of the church. Given this, after the split on 18 May 1843, he and his family left their home and joined the Free Church. Many of their congregation followed him, including the Catechist, George Urquhart. He was the only Minister in Upper Spey to leave the Established Church, and indeed was the only Minister of the Free Church to meet the pastoral needs of his flock from Duthil to Lochaber for quite some time.<sup>374</sup> People would meet in open fields, subject to the vagaries of the climate, because the Heritors would not give them a site to build a church. The Reverend Shepherd drove a total of 40 miles in 1846 during a severe snow storm to meet the needs of his flock at Duthil. He said that there were only about 200 people on his arrival and that the snow had to be cleared from the pulpit, the Precentors' desk and the seats on which they were required to sit.<sup>375</sup> One of the congregation on that day, a Mr MacGregor, was later asked if he had suffered, to which he replied, "I can hardly

<sup>374</sup> Brown, Thomas, 'Annals of the Disruption', MacNiven and Wallace, Edinburgh, 1893. page 414.

<sup>375</sup> Brown, Thomas. Op Cit. Page 415.

say," he replied, " that I suffered, but I was that cold that I could hardly stand."<sup>376</sup> The Reverend Shepherd was obviously made of stern stuff!

Parishes depended on the largesse of the better off to keep their poor going, with some even leaving legacies to the parish long after benefactor had left, as in the case of the widow of the Rev. John Anderson, Elizabeth Macpherson (daughter of Lewis Macpherson of Dalraddy and Unah Macpherson), who left not only 50 pounds to Margaret Shepherd, sister of the Reverend George Shepherd, but also left £100 sterling to the Kingussie Parish poor, 30 pounds of which was spent on coal and meal in 1846.

Another example of philanthropy in Badenoch is that of Allan Macpherson, whose nephew was Duncan Macpherson, Junior, Banker for the British Linen Company in Kingussie. The ramifications of his philanthropy was to have quite an impact on the community because of the schism in 1843.

Allan Macpherson decided to do something for those with the name of Macpherson, or those related to him but not bearing the name Macpherson. Accordingly on 1 March 1839, Allan, despite being blind and paralyzed, with the help of his nephew, Duncan, made a donation of £100 sterling to the Kirk Session. That day, a promissory note to the effect was signed by Duncan Macpherson, Junior— to wit – “Twelve months after date, I promise to pay to the Rev George Shepherd on order for behoof of the poor of the Parish of Kingussie the sum of One Hundred Pounds sterling to be applied in terms of the Donors directions, Allan Macpherson of this place, as given to the said Rev George Shepherd for value.<sup>377</sup>

The proceeds of the foresaid Bill when paid on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1840 to be applied in terms of the following directions given this day to me by Allan Macpherson, Esquire, the Donor, he himself being blind and unable to sign his name.

The money to be either lodged in the Bank or vested in any other safe manner that may bear higher Interest.

---

<sup>376</sup> Brown, Op Cit. Page 446

<sup>377</sup> NAS CH2/1419/2/99 Page 98 Kingussie Kirk Session Records

That the Principal of One Hundred Pounds is not to be touched, but the Interest of the said sum only to be given to the poor.

That if the Principal be deposited in the Bank, the Bankers' receipt for the same shall be lodged either with the Moderator of the Kirk Session or the Proprietor of the Lands of Kingussie as the said Kirk Session shall determine.

That should it be resolved upon to invest the money in any other safe way which may bear higher Interest, the same shall not be done without the consent of a majority of the Heritors of the Parish and the said Kirk Session; and that it shall be competent for the said Heritors and Kirk Session to require that the Bank receipt be produced to them at any time and that the Principal shall on no Account be uplifted from the Bank in any way without their concurrence.

That the Interest of the said Principal shall be distributed once every year to those objects in the Parish, whom the Session shall consider the most necessitous; it is recommended that those of the name of Macpherson if as indigent as others be preferred.

That none shall receive the benefit of this Interest but those who have resided for eight years previously in the Parish and who have never been liable in any way to Church censure.

And lastly, That the following individuals be this day paid the Interest on the foresaid sum up to the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1840 and in the undermentioned proportions, at the request of the Donor.

Widow Chisholm, alias Macpherson <sup>378</sup> , Newtonmore	15/-
Widow Alexander Macpherson, Kingussie	10/-
Widow A Macpherson, Ralia	5/-
Elizabeth Macpherson, Milehouse	5/-
Marsly Cattanach, Kingussie	5/- <sup>c</sup>

25 March 1839 – The Kirk Session met again – Present were the Rev. George Shepherd, Moderator, Hugh MacKay, Farquhar Macpherson and George Urquhart, Elders. Present also were Angus Macpherson, Brae Ruthven; and John Macpherson, Nuide, Assessors. The foresaid Bill and rules, relative to the proceeds of the Bill having been submitted to the Session, they

<sup>378</sup> Mary Macpherson, widow of Alexander Chisolm

highly approve of the same and request their Moderator to return All Macpherson, Esq; the Donor of the aforementioned One Hundred Pounds their best thanks for this donation; the interest of which this year has afforded very seasonable relief to several indigent individuals.

15 March 1841 – The interest on the above amounted to £3 and this was disbursed as follows:-

Widow Chisholm, alias Macpherson, Newtonmore	12/6
Widow Alexander Macpherson, Kingussie	12/6
To a person in distress per Hugh Mackay	10/-
Widow A Macpherson, Ralia	5/-
Widow Macpherson (Clark), Glenbanchor	5/-
Elizabeth Macpherson, Milehouse	5/-
Ann Macpherson, Newtonmore	5/-
Marsly Cattanach, Kingussie	5/-

12 Nov 1846 – The Heritors & the Kirk Session of the Established Church, was still endeavouring to obtain the £100 sterling & the derived interest from the Rev. George Shepherd to pass to the poor of the parish. David Bruce, the Session Clerk wrote to the Reverend Shepherd saying, “The Session expresses the hope that, owing to the extreme distress among the people this season from the failure of the potato crop, without reference to other questions, there may be no further difficulty in the way of appropriating the proceeds of this Bill among the parties for whom it was originally intended. Shepherd wrote back intimating that it was the Kirk Session that had prevented the interest from being distributed. The letter suggests that the Session had not followed the instructions of Allan Macpherson and that people rightfully entitled to assistance had had to ask the Reverend Shepherd for assistance until the matter could be put to

rest. Shepherd said that he had a meeting arranged with the Cluny on the night of the 17<sup>th</sup> Nov 1846 and “shall be guided by his opinion.”<sup>379</sup>

The Kirk Session met 30 November 1846 and agreed to the following resolution:-

That the said Bill of £100 Sterling, though repeatedly demanded from the Reverend George Shepherd by this Session, is still retained, upon various pretences, by the said Reverend Gentleman.

That the paupers who are entitled to receive of the proceeds of said Bill are deprived of their just rights in consequence of the withholding of the Bill from the Session of the Established Church to whom it was originally Disposed.

That it has been ascertained upon competent authority that this Kirk Session will in law be held liable for its amount should the said Bill be lost or destroyed. And

That, in order to prevent any detriment in any way to this Session by this affair, legal steps be forthwith taken for the recovery of the said Bill of £100 Sterling; it being resolved that it shall, as soon as recovered, be deposited with the Moderator of this Kirk Session.<sup>380</sup>

A copy of the above was sent to the Revd. George Shepherd and must have had some impact, as on the 14 Jan 1847, the Kirk Session met stating that the Reverend Shepherd had handed over the interest on the £100 Sterling for the previous two years. The principle must have also been handed over, as the Session voted to ask the Parochial Board to invest the capital in a different manner. The interest of £5 was then paid, according to the Bequest of Allan Macpherson, to those with the name of Macpherson or kinsmen of him.

A Minister really was the anchor point of a community unlike today in our very secular world. The Kirk Session was very much a part of highland life, dispensing money to the poor and needy and also keeping an eye on the morals of the community and who was responsible for any child born out of wedlock. Sometimes, the person or persons commanded to appear before the Kirk would refuse or prevaricate until the Kirk virtually gave up.

---

<sup>379</sup> Ch2/1419/3/74

<sup>380</sup> Ch2/1419/3/74 Op Cit;

A case in point was that of late 1752 during the incumbency of the Rev. William Blair, when Isobel McLean of Drumgallovie stated, along with Ann Cattanach, that a Donald McPherson was the father of their child and others. Isobel initially had blamed her condition and the resultant child on her liaison with a soldier at Ruthven Barracks, conveniently serving elsewhere when the child was born.

The Kirk Session said that Isobel McLean had acknowledged to the Kirk Officer and several others that Donald McPherson had used her at Cullenline and that Isobel had resolved to come thither and tell the Truth.

The Session summoned both parties to appear before it to determine who would pay for the maintenance of the child and duly recorded on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1752, "After prayer, the Session found that Isobel McLean in Drumgallovie had brought forth several children in fornication with Donald McPherson of Cullenline. The last child "...was now nursing in the House of Donald McPherson alias McAlister of Noid, a tenant of his own."

The Kirk Session found that this was apparently the third time that Donald McPherson had persuaded three different women for him to be the father of their children and that this was the belief and opinion of the neighbourhood (besides the Declaration of Ann Cattanach, one of those three women before the Session Presbytery). The record is rather hard to read in parts but it would seem that Donald "falls upon this wicked artifice to screen him from the discipline of the Kirk Session of the Church." The outcome of the matter was that Isobel failed to appear before the Kirk Session and the matter was then brought to a close. Unfortunately, the child was not named. I have found no record of the child of Ann Cattanach to date, but as there are huge gaps in the Parochial Registers, this is not to be wondered.

There were numerous people ordered to appear before the Kirk Sessions for fornication. Whilst most attended, it sometimes took more than a year for a man to admit to being the father of a child and acknowledging his responsibility to support the child or children. Sometimes, both parties refused to appear. The Kirk Session would order them to comply but if they did not, the norm was to excommunicate the woman and order the man arrested, or forbidden from leaving the parish. This was true in the case of Angus Falconer of Inveruglas who was purported to be

the father of at least three children, the mothers being Ann Anderson of Knappach, Christian Macdonald in Ralia and Janet Kennedy in Inveruglas. The case dragged on for two years from the 18<sup>th</sup> April 1784 until 4<sup>th</sup> March 1786, until the Justices were written to asking for Falconer's arrest. The Kirk Session of 4 March 1786 reporting, "The Session then taking into consideration the said Angus Falconer's contempt of them in not answering their citations or otheways submitting to the regulations of the Church, made out a Petition addressed to the Justices of the Peace of this County shewing that Ann Anderson in Knappach and Janet Kennedy in Inveruglas were dilated to Session as with Child in fornication – that having been regularly summoned, both compeared and judicially gave up Angus Falconer in Inveruglas as father of their Children – that the said Angus Falconer had been repeatedly summoned to attend, but refuses to compear, either to acknowledge or clear himself of Guilt, and therefore craving warrant to incarcerate the Body of the said Angus Falconer till such time as he should find Caution for not leaving the County and security for the maintenance of the Children laid to his Charge in terms of law." Interestingly, the parish register shows that the relationship between Ann and Angus had been of reasonably long standing, a daughter, Catherine, born to the couple in 14 Feb 1782.



# The Emigrants

## Chapter 9.

Push or pull, the age old question as to why an individual or family emigrate to an often strange land, with few or limited services. Push factors in Scotland included Clearances, Famine, Unemployment or Under-employment. Pull factors included the promise of being able to obtain land, employment, extended family or friends already established, sending glowing reports and religious freedom.

Many of those who emigrated from Badenoch did so because there was little prospect of their obtaining enough land on which to prosper. Cities attracted some, but the majority had only ever worked on the land and cities were anathema.

Unlike other areas of Scotland, Badenoch was not subject to major clearances; the first occurring in 1770 and 1771 when Robert “The Parson” Macpherson evicted over 80 people from his lands of Aberarder and Tullochrom. All are believed to have emigrated to America<sup>381382</sup>. The Factor for the Cluny Estate, at the time, was Henry Butter. The Factor for Kingussie was William Tod. By 1775, James ‘Ossian’ Macpherson had evicted those living at Raitts<sup>383</sup> and changed the name to Belleville, after which things settled down in Badenoch for a while. People still left the parish and sent back reports of the far flung places to which they travelled.

---

<sup>381</sup> The irony of the Aberarder Clearance is that Robert the Parson Macpherson, whilst being the first to introduce large scale sheep farming to Badenoch, was a failure as a Sheep Farmer.

<sup>382</sup> Graham, Ian C, ‘Colonists from Scotland: Emigration to North America, 1707-1783, Genealogical Publishing Company, Boston, 1956, page 59. See also Fraser-Mackintosh, Charles, ‘The De-Population of Aberarder in Badenoch, 1770’ Celtic Magazine 11 (1877), pages 418-426

<sup>383</sup> 117 souls were evicted from Raitts, on par with Robert the Parson Macpherson

The next major clearance for many Badenoch folk occurred in 1838 emigrated to Australia from the port of Oban, Argyll in 1838 aboard the 'St George', arriving in Sydney 15<sup>th</sup> November 1838. There were 326 passengers, of whom 121 were children under the age of 14. They were Bounty Immigrants, sourced by the Colony of New South Wales, through Emigration Commissioners in Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales, as skilled migrants.

DRAFT