

# SCOTTISH TRADITION

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**SECTION 1: FAMILY HISTORY SPECIAL SECTION**

**INTRODUCTION:**

**FINDING THE FAMILY**

**IN HISTORICAL SCOTLAND**



he history of the family, and of child upbringing and the place of women within and without the home, is so neglected in Scotland as to verge on becoming a historiographical disgrace.”<sup>1</sup> T.C. Smout wrote these words in 1986 and his concerns were echoed by historians throughout the early 1990’s.<sup>2</sup> As families were the basic building blocks of communities, social historians recognized the centrality of understanding family life in Scotland, to understanding Scottish society. Recent studies have begun the mammoth task of finding the family in historic Scotland. This issue of *Scottish Tradition* seeks to contribute to this process by bringing together some of the recent work done by scholars engaged in the study of the historical family.

The advancement of family history has been most successful in work done on the modern era. Family studies began slowly with publications on women such as *Uncharted Lives* by the Glasgow Women’s Group, as well as *Out of Bounds* and *World is Ill Divided* edited by Esther Breitenbach and Eleanor Gordon. These early works influenced the development of family history in Scotland and historians such as Leah Leneman realized the large gap in knowledge and began to publish prolifically.<sup>3</sup> Recently family historians of the modern era have been able to build upon these earlier works and they have expanded their frameworks to include aspects of gender and class which bring a level of sophistication to studies of the modern family in Scotland.<sup>4</sup> The articles in this issue by Andrew Blaikie, Lynn Abrams, and Ann-Marie Hughes are excellent examples of this sophisticated approach to the modern family. These articles also illustrate how much work still needs to be done to create a more comprehensive understanding of the family in modern Scotland.

In contrast to the successfully developing area of family history in the modern era, the study of the family in pre-industrial Scotland has been particularly neglected. As illustrated by Lauren Martin in her article on “Witchcraft and Family”, family historians of the early modern period are still struggling to identify relevant sources for this topic which indicates that the development of family history has been limited. Even in studies where family does appear, the focus is often on other topics such as demography.<sup>5</sup> Legal studies have also fleshed out pre-industrial familial law, but the findings are limited as there is little discussion of family life.<sup>6</sup> However, the topic has recently received new attention as a scattering of articles and chapters have begun to appear.<sup>7</sup>

Understanding how families were formed, how they functioned, and what life was like for its members is important to advancing our knowledge of Scotland’s economic, social, cultural, legal and political history. This area of study has had a slow start, but historians have recently begun to recognize the valuable contribution that family history makes to our understanding of the Scottish past. Scholars such as those included in this volume, have begun to move the topic forward. Interest in Scottish family history among new scholars is a particularly welcome development. Examples of work currently in progress include Lauren Martin’s research on marriage and the demonic in the early modern period, Kimm Perkins’ work on medieval religious women includes the compilation of a database showing family connections, Irene Furneux works on late medieval marriage dispensations, Linda Fleming’s study of Jewish women explores aspects of ethnic families in modern Glasgow, and my work explores marriage in the Lowlands from 1560-1650. The Scottish Women’s History Network Conference is also committed to promoting the development of family history by sponsoring a family history conference to be held at the University of Edinburgh in December, 2002. This edition of *Scottish Tradition* seeks to cultivate awareness and interest in family history and to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the topic.

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Endnotes


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2. A. Blaikie, *Illegitimacy, Sex, and Society: Northeast Scotland, 1750-1900* (Oxford, 1993), p.9.; E. Breitenbach and E. Gordon (eds.), "Introduction," in Breitenbach and Gordon, *Out of Bounds: Women in Scottish Society 1800-1945* (Edinburgh, 1992), p.2.; T.M. Devine, "Whither Scottish History: Preface," *Scottish Historical Review [SHR]* LXXIII [195] (1994), p.3.; I. Donnachie and C. Whatley, "Introduction," in Donnachie and Whatley, *The Manufacture of Scottish History* (Edinburgh, 1992), p.10.
3. L. Leneman, *Alienated Affections: The Scottish Experience of Divorce and Separation 1684- 1830* (Edinburgh, 1998); "Seduction in Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Century Scotland," *SHR* LXXVIII [205] (April, 1999); "Marriage as Interpreted by Church and State in Eighteenth- Century Scotland," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* XXX (2000); "Marriage North of the Border," *History Today* 1 (April, 2000); "A Natural Foundation in Equity': Marriage and Divorce in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Scotland," *Scottish Economic and Social History* XX [Pt 2] (2000); "Legitimacy and Bastardy in Scotland, 1694-1830," *SHR* LXXX [209] (April, 2001).
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- 1850-1920,” in A.J. Kidd and B. Nicholls, *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940* (Manchester, 1999).
5. See M. Flinn (ed.), *Scottish Population History: From the 17<sup>th</sup> Century to the 1930s* (Cambridge, 1977); R. Houston, *The Population History of Britain and Ireland 1550-1750* (Cambridge, 1992); I. Whyte, “Population Mobility in Early Modern Scotland,” in Houston and Whyte (eds.), *Scottish Society, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, 1989).
  6. See A.D.M. Forte, “Some Aspects of the Law of Marriage in Scotland: 1500-1700,” in E.M. Craik (ed.), *Marriage and Property* (Aberdeen, 1984); W. H. D. Sellar, “Marriage, Divorce and the Forbidden Degrees: Canon Law and Scots Law,” in W.N. Osborough (ed.), *Explorations in Law and History: Irish Legal History Society Discourses, 1988-1994* (Dublin, 1995); T.C. Smout, “Scottish Marriage, Regular and Irregular 1500-1940,” in R.B. Outhwaite (ed.), *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage* (New York, 1981).
  7. See K. M. Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland: Wealth, Family and Culture, from Reformation to Revolution* (Edinburgh, 2000); W. Coutts, “Wife and Widow: The Evidence of Testaments and Marriage Contracts c.1600,” in E. Ewan and M. Meikle (eds.), *Women in Scotland c.1100- 1750* (East Linton, 1999) and “Women, Children and Domestic Servants in Dumfries in the 17th Century,” *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society* third series, vol. LXI. (1986); G. DesBrisay, “Wet Nurses: Unwed Mothers in Seventeenth-Century Aberdeen,” in *Women in Scotland*; aspects of H. Dingwall, *Late Seventeenth-Century Edinburgh: A Demographic Study* (England, 1994); L. Leneman, *Alienated Affections: The Scottish Experience of Divorce and Separation 1684-1830* (Edinburgh, 1998); Leneman and R. Mitchison, *Girls in Trouble: Sexuality and Social Control in Rural Scotland 1660-1780* (Edinburgh, 1998) and *Sin in the City: Sexuality and Social Control in Urban Scotland 1660-1780* (Edinburgh, 1998); L. Martin, “Witchcraft and Family: What can Witchcraft Documents Tell us About Early Modern Scottish Family Life?” *Scottish Tradition* 27 (2002); R. Reddington-White, “A Woman’s Place: Birth Order, Gender and Social Status in Highland Houses,” in *Women in Scotland*; D.A. Symonds, *Weep Not For Me: Women, Ballads, and Infanticide in Early Modern Scotland* (Pennsylvania, 1997); Chapter 6 “Church and Family” in M. Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven, 2002); I. Whyte and K. Whyte, “Wed to the Manse: The Wives of Scottish Ministers, c.1560-c.1800,” in *Women in Scotland*.



## **WITCHCRAFT AND FAMILY: WHAT CAN WITCHCRAFT DOCUMENTS TELL US ABOUT EARLY MODERN SCOTTISH FAMILY LIFE?**

[T]o detect the signs and gestures which disclose their [families] interior emotional life, we must attend very closely indeed to “economics” – or to that daily occupation (farming, fishing, weaving, begging) which gives us their way of living: a way of living which was not merely a way of surviving but also a way of relating and valuing . . . for the vast majority throughout history, familial relations have been intermeshed with the structures of work.<sup>1</sup>

 It is difficult to document family life for the average early modern Scot. Diaries, letters and other personal and business correspondence relating to family life survives for high ranking members of Scottish society such as kings, queens, nobles and merchants.<sup>2</sup> Ministers and other religious figures have left us some writings about their faith that may be fruitfully used for understanding how families worked and what people thought about them.<sup>3</sup> But these sources were usually written by educated men and may not reflect the bulk of society, including most women, who could not write. Wills, testaments, deeds, sasines, estate management, baronial, and burgh court records provide much concrete detail about land holdings and the physical make-up of communities, but they can be barren on cultural detail and emotional life. They too are skewed towards men. The commissariat records have been used to good effect to study divorce, but the documents do not survive for most of the early modern period.<sup>4</sup> The processes of Kirk Session and Presbytery investigations of ‘disciplinary’ infractions (including adultery, fornication, speech crimes, marital discord, popular

festivals and rituals, penny-weddings and lyck-wakes) tell us about normative rules. The frequency of punishment, fines and penance suggests that people's everyday behaviour usually fell short of those rules.<sup>5</sup> Although their survival is patchy for the early part of the early modern period, they record some of the daily chatter of everyday life, and as such are an invaluable source for family studies.

A wide range of document-types survive for the early modern period. But random survival rates of potentially detailed documents coupled with their often significant lack of detail about women and the lower orders means that at this stage we do not know even the very basics about family life, let alone people's subjective thoughts and experiences of family. Without a picture of women's lives half of the family remains shrouded. Without information about non-elite families our understanding is biased. Without some documentation of the culture of family life we are left with a bland, skeletal outline. Research by the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft can help. It has turned up a wealth of detail about families, households and community life for middling and lower status men and women - potentially helping to fill some gaps.<sup>6</sup> And, the substance of witch belief and the processes of witchcraft denunciation, investigation and trial documented people's thoughts, fears and subjective experiences of their families.<sup>7</sup>

Witchcraft documents have two inherent weaknesses that need to be overcome to present an accurate portrayal of early modern life. First, the communities documented by witchcraft accusations may be anomalous. Most people in early modern Scotland did not live through a witchcraft accusation, and most communities did not formally accuse one or more of their members of witchcraft. So, witchcraft documents do not concern 'normal' community relations; they need to be placed alongside families from other sources, possibly Kirk Session, Presbytery and burgh court minutes. But, they do give us a window into some communities during the development and fruition of a crisis. Second, the testimony recorded in witchcraft documents about family life, households, land holding and community needs to be cross checked in other documents because witness testimony was constructed from memory. Memory can sometimes exaggerate or diminish people's wealth, suffering or importance under the shadow of witchcraft suspicions.

I

It is no surprise to witchcraft scholars that witchcraft documents provide unexpected flashes of insight about family life. Most witchcraft accusations grew out of decades of quarrels and curses between neighbours.<sup>8</sup> The quarrels usually concerned women's work, household boundaries and community tensions. Thus as a community turned against one of its members, they left us documents that reveal a great deal about the social backdrop to family life (household, community, work); the emotional ties between family members and neighbours; the lines of community love and distrust, alliance and feud, quarrels and cooperation. Witchcraft documents are essentially a community talking about how things went wrong (i.e. bad luck, animals dying, poor harvests, sick family members, quarrels and contentions and failed magical healing attempts) and how to fix them.

Witches were accused in Scotland through one of two ways. An accusation started with the 'neighbourhood witch'. The neighbourhood witch was denounced by neighbours for causing magical harm to community members, usually after quarrels that led to verbal abuse and curses. It usually took decades for a witchcraft reputation of this kind to develop and lead to an official denunciation to the church or magistrates. Sources from this type of accusation often provide rich documentation of family and community life. Sometimes, the investigation into a neighbourhood witch led to a larger panic – either the neighbourhood witch confessed and denounced others or local authorities panicked and sought more suspects. Roughly half of the people accused of witchcraft in Scotland were prosecuted during panics that were local, regional, or semi-national in scope. Panic cases, however, do not usually provide detailed social or economic information. They usually concern demonic witchcraft, witches' meetings, or else contain very little information at all.

Witchcraft documents suggest that 'family', seen solely in terms of kin relations and emotional ties, is not really wide enough to grasp the full range of experiences of early modern families in Scotland. Families organised inheritance (i.e. access to land, craft tools, burgess status, etc.) and work (i.e. the labour of husbands, wives, children and servants). Witchcraft documents show that families did not function in isolation. Work happened within households,<sup>9</sup> which were constrained and shaped by

community decisions, competition and co-operation.<sup>10</sup> Following a large body of work on the family, witchcraft documents also caution against viewing the family through the dichotomy of either organising work or structuring emotional ties.<sup>11</sup>

## II

Whose families can witchcraft documents tell us about? The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft has begun to piece together a comprehensive picture of the range of people that witchcraft documents concern. Thus far the Survey has documented 3085 people accused of witchcraft in Scotland between 1563 and 1736.<sup>12</sup> Most of these cases record very little information beyond name and date. However a core of roughly 100 cases provides solid and compelling social and cultural information about family, household and community relations surrounding the accused witch. Approximately 200 additional cases contain partial, supplemental information.<sup>13</sup>

The cases documented in the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft can yield some quantitative information about the accused witch and her (or his) life, including: sex, marital status, socio-economic status, occupation (of the witch or the accused witch's spouse), and residence (burgh, rural, region, etc.). But, their main strength for family and other social studies is their qualitative detail.

Women, at roughly 80 per cent of accused witches, are the largest single group covered by witchcraft documents. But this does not mean that witchcraft documents say nothing about men. Quite the contrary, they tell us about male witches, the male family members of accused witches, and male witch-hunters.<sup>14</sup> So far the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft has found details on 281 husbands, 49 sons, 42 fathers and 22 brothers of accused witches. Interestingly witchcraft documents tell far less about the female relatives of female accused witches. The Survey has also found over 1000 men who were involved as witchcraft investigators and prosecutors – some of whom were very active in hunting large numbers of witches. Witch hunters were almost always men and they were usually local lairds and their assistants or ministers. These were the men who orchestrated and shepherded the investigation and trial of accused witches in their localities.

Most suspected witches were married.<sup>15</sup> Marital status may not seem like compelling information for family studies, but for

married women, marital status and a husband's name are crucial for building a family picture from a variety of documents. Without a husband's name, it is very difficult to find married women in other sources because women kept their maiden names after marriage and most sources pertain to men. Even the simple matter of identifying the children of married women is difficult without her husband's surname. A small detail, such as the name of an accused witch's husband, can open up other sources and make it possible to reconstruct a family's way of living and social status.

The Survey of Scottish Witchcraft has made an attempt to provide socio-economic classifications of accused witches where possible.<sup>16</sup> Status and ranking of people below the nobility, in early modern Scotland, is notoriously difficult to work out. For example, someone labelled 'servant' could be a poor day-labouring farm worker, or a Lord's factor. But, witchcraft documents can help us understand some early modern social categories because they often list the household's occupation (or the husband's) in combination with detailed descriptions of people's daily working habits and their possessions. Preliminary analysis of the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft database shows that most people accused of witchcraft were of middling and lower status – they were the integral members of their local communities.<sup>17</sup> High status people either avoided denunciation or fought off charges at an early stage.<sup>18</sup> Sometimes vagabonds and beggars were accused of witchcraft but this was usually during panics. These social groups were not prime targets when a community turned against one of its own with an accusation of witchcraft.

Witchcraft documents tell us about women from eight different personal occupations including, henwife, midwife, nurse, schoolteacher, schoolmaster, servant, shop-keeper and vagabond. The marital status of women in occupations is not usually known, but the main exceptions were the schoolteacher who was single and a few married midwives and servants. Most married women were designated with the occupations of their husbands, rather than their own. Husbands of suspected witches ranged in 38 different occupations – covering a wide cross-section of early modern Scottish society.<sup>19</sup> Married female witchcraft suspects, like most married women, laboured as partners to their husbands. Witchcraft documents show husband and

wife living and working as a social and economic team, as will be made clear below.

While most witches were from rural backgrounds, a sizeable minority were from towns. Witchcraft documents reflect regional variations in settlement types, work patterns and cultural traditions. Documents survive for suspects from coastal and inland areas; rural and town; and east, west, north and south (including Orkney and Shetland) providing information about families from all over Scotland. Unfortunately, there are very few accused witches that we know about from the Highlands, leaving a sizeable gap in our knowledge.

The marital status, socio-economic status, occupation and residence of accused witches represents a sizeable body of information about early modern families. In terms of family, the main strength of witchcraft documents does not lie in counting, but in the wallpaper of detail behind accusations of magical harm.

### III

What do witchcraft documents tell us about families? To understand the early modern family, we need to know who counted as 'family', how people in 'families' related to one another and their communities, and what people thought about their families. Witchcraft documents, unfortunately, do not tell us very much about how people reckoned kinship beyond the obvious and what is already known from other sources.<sup>20</sup> But, witchcraft documents do provide provocative hints about how family members related to one another and how families sat (sometimes uneasily) within their households and communities. The idea of one static, uniform, early modern family is shattered by the sheer variety of families described in witchcraft documents. Witchcraft families show variation by region, social status, temperament and the particular place in the life cycle of any given household.

The witchcraft case against Isabel Young, from East Barns, Dunbar (along with other supporting examples in footnotes) will be used to demonstrate the kinds of information about families contained in witchcraft documents.<sup>21</sup> Isabel Young was probably near 70 years of age when she was tried for witchcraft, but the documentation provides 40 years of community commentary on her and her family.

Isabel Young was married with four married sons at the time of her trial. Her husband's name was George Smith.<sup>22</sup> Knowing George's name opened up a variety of sources that document their family and household. Thus, it has been possible to cross-check and add substantive detail to the information contained in the nearly 20 lengthy and detailed witchcraft documents. Isabel and George owned animals, barns, and outbuildings, they employed at least five servants and Isabel engaged in a variety of work experiences including bartering, money lending, and the usual work of the household.<sup>23</sup> Isabel was first accused of witchcraft in 1619 and was eventually tried and executed for witchcraft in 1629.<sup>24</sup>

George Smith was described in many documents as a portioner.<sup>25</sup> This could indicate a wide range of socio-economic positions, but through a combination of witchcraft and other documents we know that in this case 'portioner' meant that they occupied (at least) one sixteenth of the estate of East Barns and were on the bottom rung of the local elite.<sup>26</sup> Many of Isabel's accusers and victims also appear in other documents, so it is possible to see the social background of her accusers and how they interacted with her and her family. Unluckily for Isabel, about half of the other portioners' households turned against her, including Thomas Home, the richest man in the East Barns community. The documents suggest that Isabel's family and household were deeply intertwined in the business and emotional life of other families in East Barns and beyond. As we shall see, families like Smith-Young and their neighbours were usually tied together in webs of debt, renting, borrowing and quarrelling.

These documents allow for the creation of a picture of the material conditions in which the Smith-Young family lived. We know that they had a barn and many cattle because Isabel was accused of conducting a protective magic ritual on her cattle in front of their barn.<sup>27</sup> A quarrel with Thomas Home, the man to whom Smith paid some of his rents, tells us that Isabel and her husband had the use of two cottar's dwellings and one rig of land from Home.<sup>28</sup> The *Great Seal* tells us that they were feuars with a potentially heritable stake in at least some of their occupied lands. Witchcraft documents tell us Smith farmed his own land using a plough he shared with neighbours.<sup>29</sup> By 1622, Young and Smith were provided for with life rent from one of their married

sons who consolidated their land holding and rented lands.<sup>30</sup> It is unclear how much physical labour Smith and Young did after this point because they would have been between 60 and 70 years old. Documents suggest that by about mid-way through the life-cycle of the Smith-Young household, they rented and occupied lands slightly beyond their means for a time as a strategy to accumulate more land to pass on to their married sons.<sup>31</sup>

Smith-Young's livelihood was well above most families in East Barns, but as stated earlier their social level was the lowest of the well-off group. Witchcraft documents tell us how they felt about this position. While attending a baptism, Isabel's neighbour Margaret Ogill called her 'Lady Young'. In reply, Isabel reportedly said that she should be called 'Lady Home' because her husband 'hes gottin [Thomas] Homeis landis and will get moir.'<sup>32</sup> This exchange carried a long history of neighbourly discord and co-operation. The two households had been embroiled in Kirk Session denunciations about adultery, raising a bastard son, folk healing and excessive quarrelling; while at the same time they shared oxen, a chair-rig, labour power, ready cash and produce. John Nisbet, Ogill's husband, had just recently outbid George Smith for the use of Thomas Home's land, using cash he had borrowed from Smith-Young. At the baptism, Isabel told the whole community who she thought should be occupying Home's land.

Smith-Young also had long-standing disputes with Thomas Home and his family spanning 30 years and three of his wives. Neighbours testified that in revenge for a land dispute Isabel magically battered the Home household, eventually destroying it.<sup>33</sup> She supposedly magically destroyed Thomas Home's dovecote, a source of poultry and a status symbol.<sup>34</sup> After this the Home's cows died, Thomas Home himself died and his house burned down leaving his widow and children homeless. It was as if once the dovecote, a symbol of his wealth and power, was drained the rest of his household was thought vulnerable. After his death, Isabel's son took possession of Home's land, seen by many as a fulfilment of the words she spoke at the baptism. The Smith-Young household was on the property ladder and fighting to get higher.

Beyond giving us the outlines of their material lives, the documents also hint at Smith-Young's emotional family space.



Two separate indictments and the supporting witness testimony of 11 people tell us that the relationship between Isabel and George was sometimes violent.<sup>35</sup> So much so that members of the community believed that she had tried to kill him with harmful magic while he worked their fields. George Smith must have also believed his wife tried to kill him because he gave evidence against her.<sup>36</sup> In this she was not alone, other accused witches were believed to have tried to kill their husbands.<sup>37</sup> The defence stated that Isabel was not the violent one in their relationship because George had at one time tried to kill Isabel with a sword and left a scar. Not all accused witches had such difficult relationships with their spouses.<sup>38</sup>

Three of her married sons supported her throughout her trial as prolocutors in her defence, alongside two paid advocates. Other cases demonstrate that it was not unique for children to support their mothers (and fathers) through a witchcraft accusation,<sup>39</sup> but the few cases where children did testify against their parents make painful reading.<sup>40</sup> The testimony of community members and her family show that Isabel reciprocated the strong emotional attachment of her children. She was very protective of both her sons and her younger brother, even after they were married.<sup>41</sup> She instigated verbal quarrels that later led to witchcraft accusations while advocating for jobs and respect for her married male family members. Indeed, many witchcraft documents show mothers - both married and widowed - maintaining very close relationships with their married children.<sup>42</sup> Disappointingly, the documents say very little about infants or young, unmarried children and in general information about children is anecdotal.<sup>43</sup>

Infants were discussed in witchcraft documents only when they were the perceived victims of witchcraft attacks. The frequency with which infants were pawns in magical struggles could mean that they were deemed important to household survival or that they were seen as a household's weakest point by being dependent. Many families who saw themselves as witchcraft victims described episodes where an infant's body became the battleground between the suspected witch and her chosen victim. A few adolescents were accused of witchcraft including Jean Rob aged 14, James Welch aged 15, and Anabell Stewart aged 14. While their testimony was used, they were usually

deemed too young for trial. Sometimes child witches accused their parents, but more work needs to be done to understand this phenomena. Adolescents were also mentioned in the two Scottish episodes of demonic possession from 1697 and 1699-1700, leading to the trials of 48 people. The main 'victims' of possession were adolescent girls who denounced upwards of 50 people for causing their demonic possession. Again, much more work needs to be done to understand the family dynamics of demonic possession.

In-law relationships are particularly difficult to document in witchcraft sources.<sup>44</sup> Most of the evidence in witchcraft documents present bad in-law relationships.<sup>45</sup> This was certainly the case with what can be pieced together about Isabel's in-laws. Isabel's son John Smith married Margaret Bryson. Isabel had a history of quarrelling with the Bryson family about unruly children, factional neighbourhood alliances and daily farm work. Isabel and Patrick Bryson (Margaret's uncle) had a particularly bitter argument about Isabel's swine tether that led to accusations of witchcraft. Patrick Bryson occupied twice as much land as Smith-Young.<sup>46</sup> Although Smith-Young had married their son up the social ladder, Isabel was jealous of her in-laws. She said in a threatening manner that Elspeth Bryson (Patrick's daughter) 'was becoming ane wealthie woman haifing abundance of geir'.<sup>47</sup> The East and West Barns community interpreted this statement as a 'feirfull and devilische salutation' that caused the Bryson house and crops to burn.<sup>48</sup> Despite all of this, their children were married. It is not clear if they married against their parent's wishes or to the contrary as an attempt to repair the damaged relationship.

Family life was not lived only with kin as households incorporated servants. Isabel seems to have been close to Alison Lummsiden, one of her servants who witnessed part of a protective magic ritual involving a cat, some salt and a live ox.<sup>49</sup> Alison testified that Isabel was a virtuous and honest woman. This was potentially dangerous as some servants were charged with witchcraft along with their employers.<sup>50</sup>

This very brief discussion of Isabel Young's case demonstrates the kind of information witchcraft documents can provide about the family relations of ordinary Scots women and men.<sup>51</sup> The accumulated body of evidence about witchcraft trials

contains many more cases like Isabel Young's that could be used to reconstruct other families and households.

#### IV

Witchcraft accusations concern misfortunes, discord and quarrels. There are few descriptions of fun events and happy times. Therefore, on their own witchcraft documents could lead to a skewed picture of early modern life as unhappy and difficult. Some documents and testimony in witchcraft trials provide rare glimpses of people enjoying life, going to parties, joking, and sticking together. But, the negative bias inherent in witchcraft documents must be born in mind when used as a source for family life and other sources are necessary to provide balance.

In Isabel Young's case and those of other accused witches, we have a potentially rich body of documentation that, when supplemented by other existing sources, can provide new information about families and fill gaps in currently used documents. If read for their social, cultural and economic subtext, witchcraft documents can provide qualitative texture to our understanding of how ordinary people lived their lives in Scotland's past.

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#### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> E.P. Thompson, 'Happy Families,' *New Society* (8 Sept. 1977), pp.499-501, review of Stone, *The Family*. Quoted in H. Medick and D.W. Sabeau (eds.), *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship* (Cambridge, 1984), p.22.
- <sup>2</sup> For example, see R.K. Marshall, *The Days of Duchess Anne: Life in the Household of the Duchess of Hamilton 1656-1716* (East Linton, 2000); K.M. Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland: Wealth, Family and Culture, From Reformation to Revolution* (Edinburgh, 2000); M. Sanderson, *Mary Stewart's People: Life in Mary Stewart's Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1987); J.G. Fyfe (ed.), *Scottish Diaries and Memoirs 1550-1746* (Stirling, 1928).
- <sup>3</sup> L.E. Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communion and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton, 1989); L. A. Yeoman, 'Heart-Work: Emotion, Empowerment and Authority in Covenanting Times,' (PhD thesis, University of St. Andrews, 1991).

- <sup>4</sup> L. Leneman, *Alienated Affections: The Scottish Experience of Divorce and Separation, 1684-1830* (Edinburgh, 1998).
- <sup>5</sup> See, R. Mitchison and L. Leneman, *Girls in Trouble: Sexuality and Social Control in Rural Scotland, 1660-1780* (Edinburgh, 1998); M. Graham, *The Uses of Reform: 'Godly Discipline' and Popular Behaviour in Scotland and Beyond, 1560-1610* (Leiden, 1996).
- <sup>6</sup> See C. Larner, *Enemies of God: The Witch-Hunt in Scotland* (London, 1981). Survey of Scottish Witchcraft (SSW) ([www.arts.ed.ac.uk/witches](http://www.arts.ed.ac.uk/witches)) is an online, searchable comprehensive database of accused witches and cultural, social and trial information about them. The database is accompanied by a detailed description of the contours of Scottish witchcraft persecution and belief. All citations to cases below refer to their case number in the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft database. All further references and details can be found on the website after 31 January 2003 using either the case number or the name and date. The project is funded by a British Government research grant from the Economic and Social Research Council.
- <sup>7</sup> N.Z. Davis has shown how criminal records can be used for social history from below in *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, 1988). C. Ginzburg demonstrates the importance of witchcraft documents for social history, *Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Baltimore, 1983).
- <sup>8</sup> See, Larner, *Enemies of God*; R. Briggs *Witches and Neighbours* (London, 1996); L. Martin, 'The Devil and the Domestic: Witchcraft, Quarrels and Women's Work in Scotland,' in J. Goodare (ed.), *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context* (Manchester, 2002).
- <sup>9</sup> We must be careful not to assume that families are 'natural' and that family and household are synonymous. See O. Harris, 'Households as Natural Units,' in K. Young and C. Woldowitz (eds.), *Of Marriage and the Market* (London, 1981); O. Harris, 'Households and Their Boundaries,' in *History Workshop Journal* 13 (1982), pp.143-52; W. Roseberry, 'The Ideology of Domestic Production,' in *Labour, Capital and Society* 19 [1] (April, 1986). H. Moore, *Feminist and Anthropology* (Minneapolis, 1988) provides a good review of women, work and family in anthropological literature and feminist revisions and critiques.
- <sup>10</sup> In his consideration of how historians and anthropologists have thought about family, household and the domestic mode of production, W. Roseberry wrote: '... [E]ven where households may have been central units of production, basic production decisions, as well as room for individual maneuver on the short term, were mediated by communities. . . Although production was not communal,

the community constituted an important relation of production' in 'The Ideology of Domestic Production,' p.79.

- <sup>11</sup> See, Medick and Sabeau (eds.), *Interest and Emotion*, 1984. They critique the tendency of anthropologists and social historians to operate through the oppositions – structure and agency, material interest and emotional attachment, objective and subjective - when examining family and kinship. They wrote: '[R]ather than carefully sorting out the nature of rights and duties, claims and counter-claims within families in different social and cultural contexts and delineating the corresponding specific territories in which emotion, trust, and sentiment are structured, emotions and interest are often treated as opposites which cancel each other out. In addition there is an attempt to legitimate such a view by means of evolutionary or ideological perspectives, which contrast a 'modern' emotional-laden nuclear family to 'traditional' family relations based on a different structure of motives altogether.' (p.10).
- <sup>12</sup> The statistics presented here are preliminary figures from the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft Database. The figures were current at the time of writing. The project is likely to find at least 300 more cases by the end of the project. Therefore, the figures presented here are not final and should not be quoted. Final figures will be made available on the SSW website after 31 January 2003 (see, [www.arts.ed.ac.uk/witches](http://www.arts.ed.ac.uk/witches)).
- <sup>13</sup> A 'case' is the information surrounding an accused witch. There are three categories of detail for cases. The first category can be eliminated from a social analysis. These are cases with almost no social information - nearly half the cases (1659). Many of these were prosecuted during panics. The second category is a pool of cases with at least some useful information. It is estimated that roughly 300 fit this category (277 for sure). The third category is a detailed core of cases drawn from category two, about 100 extremely rich cases. It is currently unknown where the remaining 1000 cases fit. It is likely that some of them might be useful for family studies, but that most will not.
- <sup>14</sup> See, SSW website.
- <sup>15</sup> Marital status is known for only one-fifth of accused witches, of those a large majority were married (78 per cent), some were widowed (20 per cent) and very few were single (2 per cent).
- <sup>16</sup> For a comprehensive breakdown of socio-economic status and occupation of accused witches and their families, see SSW website.
- <sup>17</sup> It is usually too difficult to ascertain socio-economic status and most cases do not contain enough information to make such a categorisation. So, socio-economic status has been assigned to only one-tenth of the accused witches in the database. Of them, 64 per

cent were middling and 21 per cent were lower status – a total of 85 per cent. The rest were mostly of very low status, such as beggars, vagabonds or other social outcasts. One-tenth may seem low, but it represents nearly 300 people (mostly women) with enough information to aid in the reconstruction of family, household and community. Nearly all of the very well documented cases had enough information to assign socio-economic status. For definitions of these categories see the SSW website.

- <sup>18</sup> High status people were only six per cent of accused witches with known socio-economic status. This is probably an accurate count because a clerk would not fail to mention lord, laird or very high status. With this in mind, there are not likely to be very many uncounted high status people lurking in the vast majority of cases for which socio-economic status is not known. Therefore, the 18 high status accused witches represent only .006 per cent of known witches.
- <sup>19</sup> Some of the occupations of female witchcraft suspects included servants, midwives, colliers, vagabonds, shopkeepers, teachers and more. The occupations of male witches and husbands of female witchcraft suspects include farmers, sailors, skippers, millers, maltmen, all manner of craftsmen (weavers, tailors, cordiners, candlemakers, etc.), colliers, cottars, and more. For a complete occupation breakdown see the SSW.
- <sup>20</sup> Early modern Scots recognised both cognatic and agnatic kinship networks that created bonds of responsibility and support. Married women kept their maiden names and inheritance was primarily patrilineal and secondarily matrilineal. Marriage and incest were regulated by degrees of kinship that were reckoned through both cognatic and agnatic lines. See W. H. D. Sellar, 'Marriage, Divorce and the Forbidden Degrees: Canon Law and Scots Law,' in W. N. Osborough (ed.), *Explorations in Law and History: Irish Legal History Society Discourses, 1988-1994* (Dublin, 1995).
- <sup>21</sup> Isabel Young, 1629 (c/egd/160).
- <sup>22</sup> The phrase 'Smith-Young' will be used when referring to their family and household.
- <sup>23</sup> She was responsible for a wide range of tasks, including taking crops to the mill, supervising at least five servants, buying produce (such as wheat, butter and ale), the care of animals and all the other jobs a female head of household did (cooking, cleaning, mending, peat, wood and water gathering, and child rearing). In National Archives of Scotland (NAS) JC26/9/1 references to her work are scattered throughout the 21 indictments against her.
- <sup>24</sup> She was investigated by the Kirk Session of Dunc. Alexander Fortune, described as a healer, gave testimony regarding a sore


- under Isabel's left breast that he was unable to heal. He claimed that gossip called it a Devil's mark.
- 25 Many witchcraft documents tell us about the occupations of the husband of accused witches. These men could potentially be detailed in other types of documents.
- 26 Much of the reconstruction of East Barns, c.1580-c.1630 was possible with references from *The Register of the Great Seal* (*GS*, v.5, #355, 360, 362, 364-367, 369, 370, 373, 374; *GS* v.6, #908, 910, 1097; *GS*, v.7, #2160; *GS*, v.8, #300; and others). The register of sasines, wills and testaments were also consulted. See, L. Martin, 'The Devil and the Domestic: Women's Work, Marriage and Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland,' PhD thesis, Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research (forthcoming) for full citations.
- 27 NAS JC26/9/1.
- 28 NAS JC26/9/9.
- 29 NAS JC26/9/1.
- 30 *GS* v.8, #300, page 101. The family worked one rig as feuars and rented more lands from neighbours, for which they seem to have eventually obtained some form of secure tenure.
- 31 *GS* v. 6, #908, 1097; NAS JC26/9/9.
- 32 NAS JC26/9/1, NAS JC26/9/5, NAS JC26/9/6.
- 33 Different piece of land than the one in question between Smith-Young and Nisbet-Ogill, NAS JC26/9/1.
- 34 NAS JC26/9/1.
- 35 NAS JC26/9/1, NAS JC26/9/5.
- 36 NAS JC26/9/1, *Selected Justiciary Cases* (*SJC*), vol. I (The Stair Society, 1953), pp.102-103.
- 37 Helen Laying, 1678 (c/egd/692) was convicted of having murdered her husband with witchcraft. Geilles Burnet, 1671 (c/egd/584) was accused of killing two successive husbands with witchcraft.
- 38 For example, when Elizabeth Bathgate, 1634 (c/egd/173) was accused of witchcraft in 1634 her husband Alexander Pae stood by her and orchestrated her defence. John Hog, 1629 (c/egd/1153) and his wife Margaret Nicholson, 1629 (c/la/2636) were both denounced for witchcraft by Alexander Hammilton, a notorious witch who denounced upwards of 50 other people. In this circumstance many husbands turned against their wives to save themselves. Hog and Nicholson stuck together, put their 'good' reputation as respectable heads of house on the line, and proved their innocence, this despite charges that Hog had unsuccessfully attempted to enter into an adulterous affair with a neighbour's wife.
- 39 Katherine Crystie's, 1630 (c/egd/1005) son petitioned Privy Council on her behalf for her release from prison. Widowed mothers retained close relationships with their married children. Documents

- from Janet Cock's case, 1661 (c/egd/409) show that parent/child relationships could be both strong and difficult. Accusations against Janet allege that she was angry with her two daughters when they bought curds and whey without her permission. But after her arrest and first trial, Janet Cock's two daughters wrote an impassioned plea to the Privy Council for the life of their mother (which survives NAS JC26/27/9 item 20).
- 40 Alexander Lyle, 1700 (c/egd/735) testified that his mother brought him to the Devil.
- 41 She cursed a man who occupied land she wanted for her son. Also, a quarrel with her cottars occurred because they were given the head shepherd job over her younger brother and this led to witchcraft accusations (NAS JC26/9/1).
- 42 Neighbourhood testimony shows that Agnes Finnie, 1645 (c/egd/183), accused of witchcraft in 1644, was very close to her daughter and that their close relationship was widely acknowledged. Finnie was a self-sufficient shopkeeper in the Potterrow just outside of Edinburgh. Her community believed that she magically harmed people in revenge for social and economic slights against her daughter and her daughter's husband. This case shows a mother closely involved in her daughter's life, even after she had left home. Likewise, Agnes' daughter had numerous quarrels with neighbours in an effort to defend her mother. This was a significant personal risk because witchcraft reputations sometimes spread from quarrelsome mothers to quarrelsome daughters.
- 43 Jean Rob, 1643 (c/egd/1291), James Welch, 1662 (c/egd/435), and Anabell Stewart, 1677 (c/egd/1747).
- 44 For a detailed reconstruction of family relationships and in-law tensions between high status accused witches and their kin accusers, see L. Yeoman, 'Hunting the Rich Witch in Scotland: High-Status Witchcraft Suspects and Their Prosecutors, 1690-1650,' in J. Goodare (ed.), *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context* (Manchester, 2002).
- 45 Jean Thompsone, 1630 (c/egd/1154) was accused of killing her in-laws with magic.
- 46 *GS* v.5 #370.
- 47 NAS JC26/9/1.
- 48 NAS JC26/9/1.
- 49 *SJC*, v. I, p.117.
- 50 See for example, Sarah Cranstoun, 1678 (c/egd/618) and her servant Jennet Burton, 1678 (c/egd/620).
- 51 Her trial transcripts are printed in *SJC*, vol. I, pp.96-120. See L. Martin, 'The Devil and the Domestic,' PhD thesis (forthcoming) for a full discussion of Isabel Young's case.



## **HOUSEHOLD MOBILITY IN RURAL SCOTLAND: THE IMPACT OF THE POOR LAW AFTER 1845<sup>1</sup>**

### **Introduction**

 Studies of the Poor Law in Scotland have tended to the general. Whilst overviews of the system's administration have drawn on both primary and secondary sources in some depth, there has been little systematic examination of the movements of those who were affected by its operation as applicants and claimants. Consequently, although Mitchison tells us a great deal about the absence of fit between what the Old Poor Law aimed to do and what actually happened in the parishes, individual paupers are only encountered as illustrations.<sup>2</sup> Likewise with, say, Devine's analyses of emigration, or Levitt and Smout's multi-faceted mapping based on data derived from the 1844 Royal Commission.<sup>3</sup> These and other studies provide clues to the impact of the welfare system on Scottish mobility patterns in the aggregate, but they do not unearth the precise dynamics of interaction between individuals, families and the local bureaucracy in ways that explain why and how people moved.<sup>4</sup> To do this, I will argue, requires, first an evaluation of how welfare legislation was operationalised, second an assessment of the utility of the sources produced by the system and third an analysis of the interaction between the authorities and the claimants. This last entails enquiry at the micro-level of the household.<sup>5</sup>

### **The New Poor Law in Scotland: rigid legislation, flexible operation**

While 'much of the development of the Poor Law between 1700 and 1780 had been designed to make it an effective instrument to cope with the problems of harvest shortfall or other general emergencies' and thus expand the scope for relief, the early nineteenth century saw the gradual creation of the rule

whereby 'disablement' as well as 'destitution' became a necessary qualification for relief.<sup>6</sup> On the face of it, the Scottish Poor Law, particularly in its secular guise after 1845, was harsher and more constraining than its English equivalent. The stringent New Poor Law affirmed the principle 'under which, unlike under the English New Poor Law, no person who was fit to work had any entitlement to receive relief of any kind even for a short period of time'.<sup>7</sup> There were poorhouses in Scotland, but since paupers had to be both disabled and destitute 'there was no tradition of "setting the poor on work" ', thus no equivalent to the organised system of the English workhouses.<sup>8</sup> A central body, the Board of Supervision, legislated for and monitored the operation of local Parochial Boards (later Parish Councils) who levied rates, and each of these appointed an Inspector as the primary official channel through which all applications filtered.

At this local level the apparent rigidity of the Scottish system rather collapsed. The Inspector and his Board were granted full discretion in decision-making, and in practice disability and destitution were 'two very elastic terms', capable of a great deal of variation across parishes. There was no one procedure for any one category of pauper and applications were treated according to individual circumstances and local tradition. Uniform strategies across districts were impossible since no consensus existed as to what exactly constituted 'respectable', whilst 'destitution' was not an absolute requirement and 'disability' might be interpreted to include social and economic deprivation. These designations 'were often applied differently at different times within a single parish'.<sup>9</sup> For example, with regard to widowhood in Victorian Scotland, Winter has remarked that because of the low wages single women with children might earn, 'a widow could be fully employed and still destitute, healthy and still disabled, an able-bodied pauper and still one of the deserving poor'. The fact of notional 'undeservingness' militated against similar sympathy for the unmarried mother, yet her offspring were less easily marked out.<sup>10</sup>

Outdoor relief persisted in practice rather than the divisive regimen of the workhouse, and if dependence on the collectivity represented family failure, it was also true that, 'the Poor Law authorities pursued a consistent policy of keeping these dependent households in being rather than disbanding them and

putting their members in institutions'.<sup>11</sup> Despite this, Scottish Poor Law policy concerning the family was fraught with contradictions. Clearly the ideology of pauperism affected decisions regarding need, and here a key tension existed between official policy, which aimed at maintaining the nuclear family ideal, and the local administration of relief, which effectively led applicants to modify actual family arrangements to the point of attenuation. In theory, the welfare system operated to assert the moral obligations of kin by refusing relief wherever family members could be found to provide succour. In this sense it was non-interventionist. However, according to directives from the central Board of Supervision, and especially those after the late 1860s, those living outside the confines of the ideal family - unmarried mothers and deserted wives - were to be offered only indoor relief in the poorhouse. Other categories of claimant - orphans and lunatics - were to be boarded out with respectable families who would be given resources, or incarcerated in asylums and industrial schools. A 'distinctive ideology of pauperism - adequate but discriminatory relief' - had been created.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, practice varied from place to place and many succeeded in obtaining interim outdoor relief despite not matching up to the desiderata of 'deservingness'.

Morals made a difference, but the Poor Law operated in a pragmatic manner. To satisfy themselves that they were being suitably sympathetic while appropriately pious, Parochial Boards often sought compromises. Thus, for example, in a Dumfriesshire case, Agnes Thorburn, 86, and her daughter, a rather weakly widow subsisted on very scant resources, with occasional family help. The local Inspector saw them as a fit case for support, but limited the aliment to a weekly 2/- 'as son and grand-children often loaf about the house, work as little as they can help, and drink nearly all they make'.<sup>13</sup> Boards were keen to reconstitute nuclear families wherever they could. Nevertheless, for all their apparent powers the ability to affect such changes was limited. Mary Fraser looked after her grandson Richard, aged 5, who was provided with 'a little help from family'. But when her husband became ill and had to go into the infirmary she asked for support on grounds of age and infirmity. It was refused because 'she is keeping a grandson, who should be with his parents, and her family should be able to maintain her'.<sup>14</sup>

### Sources

Such a system, if we may call it that, becomes particularly interesting when its geographical implications are considered. In Scotland the movements of Poor Law claimants throughout the country were documented in the parish of settlement. Thus, the impact of relief decisions upon mobility can be assessed from local records. Until 1845, the (Old) Poor Law was administered by the parish kirk, but its session minutes rarely divulge information about requests for support. Although payments were minuted, individual cases are seldom monitored in any detail and in some years names do not appear at all, only the date and total distribution being given. Reasons for admission to the parish roll tend not to be documented while age and status are similarly absent. Furthermore, in recording those enumerated as 'pauper' or 'parochial dependant' the church was simply registering those who were on the permanent Poor Roll, in other words those effectively accorded the status of pensioner since they had reached an age and physical status beyond which they were able to earn a living. But most poverty was episodic and the majority of people who obtained only temporary and sporadic relief were not enumerated.

However, the administration of the Scottish Poor Law was transformed under the New Poor Law, when secular parochial boards took over the work of the kirk sessions, recording their deliberations in standardised General Registers of Poor. Since the assessment of need depended upon setting each claim against the possibilities of alternative means of support, the details of every applicant's genealogy and extended family circumstances had to be discerned and documented by the Inspector before the local Parochial Board would make a decision. The New Poor Law required that 'all the particulars relating to each registered pauper must be entered consecutively so that it may contain the whole history of the case'.<sup>15</sup> Records were thus maintained at parish level, with all claimants initially being assessed according to whether or not they, or their spouse, had been born in the parish (birth settlement) or resided there for five years or longer (residential settlement). Married women or widows could also claim according to their husband's settlement, while children under 14 years had liability determined through parents' settlement (that of the mother in the case of bastards). Once settlement had

been established they became chargeable to that parish; if not, their case would be referred to their appropriate parish of settlement, though while an individual's settlement was being debated he or she would be relieved by the parish where the claim had been made. From the records of that system, the General Registers of Poor and Applications for poor relief, we can glean a sizeable amount of biographical material that is unavailable elsewhere. In particular, it is possible to trace movements of individuals over space, which are precluded by all other forms of parish-based data. This is because any person with a settlement in the parish could apply to the Parochial Board for support in time of need, *wherever* they happened to be living at the time. Moreover, help could not legally be refused simply because the applicant had no settlement in the parish. And while the granting of temporary relief to all-comers was discretionary, nevertheless all details still had to be recorded and the applicant's information relayed to their 'home' parish. Although the English system at the time was not markedly dissimilar, comparable records do not appear to have survived. In Scotland, therefore, we have a valuable and unique database from which to analyse the movements over time of a distinctive sub-population. Once successive entries have been collated among the Applications and related to the Registers, personal narratives - albeit abbreviated in form - can be linked with census schedules and civil registration certificates of births, marriages and deaths to generate interconnected sets of information about individuals, households and the wider family membership in the context of their dealings with the welfare system.

#### **Who were the movers?**

This paper relates to an ongoing project based on community reconstructions in two Scottish rural regions, the south-west and the north-east, between 1855 and 1955. Using longitudinal data, the analysis explores the connections between Poor Law administration and family arrangements. My contention is that the coherence of simple family households was rather less significant, or workable, than building networks that drew on combinations of collective welfare provision and extended family resources. Such interdependence questions both the dependency of supposedly passive claimants and the independence of the household unit.

The Scottish system of poor relief was both enabling and controlling. In England, it has been argued that household nuclearity created a need for poor relief while, owing to their institutional dependence, unmarried mothers were more likely to remain in a parish than others.<sup>16</sup> However, in the rural lowlands of both south-west and north-east Scotland, the availability of extensive kin links and the nature of settlement regulation facilitated considerable flexibility and mobility. Mothers chargeable on the parish because of their birth, or that of the father or child, could apply for relief from the parish despite sometimes living far away. Against such apparent freedom of movement, the local Parochial Board was empowered to assess their claims and could thus deny support unless specified conditions were met. Not only this, but it could disband or redistribute families, by, for instance, segregating children from 'dissolute' mothers or offering the poorhouse as the only alternative to destitution.

Who, then, was most affected? Who were the movers, and who the stayers? And, as a consequence, can we discern the types of family arrangement most likely to result in - or, indeed, from - residential mobility? It may be argued that recourse to relief rescued the more vulnerable and it was those on the margin of poverty, who did not receive support either from the collectivity or their families, who were most likely to suffer. Or again, we might expect individuals in particular life-course predicaments to appear as claimants - unmarried mothers, older people, and persons with physical or mental disabilities - but not married couples in employment. Certainly, welfare was highly feminised: mothers were central figures in most family networks, and grandmothers, often widows, were crucial to extended household support. By dint of their nurturing responsibilities, and expectations governing the care of relatives during critical life situations, they became gatekeepers as well as 'kin-keepers'. They held together kin networks, but were also the locus of Poor Law intervention.

Frequently the absence of husbands rendered unmarried women dependent upon relatives and the Poor Law for the care and upbringing of their children, and their residential dispositions in turn generated support for their parents. Against this, the prevalence of married offspring with their own families to support frequently meant that ageing parents were left alone to

seek parish support, hence the high proportions of solitary old women among the permanent pauper population.

Children whose mothers had died frequently found that their fathers had others to maintain and were 'unable to support this one', whilst unmarried mothers who died in the poorhouse or infirmary left children wholly destitute since all traces of their fathers had long been lost. In such circumstances, the orphaned and deserted children were boarded out with 'respectable' guardians in the locality. Instances where children had become separated from mothers due to ill health, alcoholism or insanity of the latter all occurred. While boarding out could function here as a means of segregating children from 'undesirable' parents and thus represent an attempt to minimise the imputed 'hereditary taint of immorality', local boards were legally bound not to 'violently sever domestic relationships' without the mother's express consent.

Often siblings became separated from one another. However, as cases from the north-east demonstrate, redistribution of offspring was often a consequence of independent family adaptations using the kin network. One could cite the instance of a woman who claimed in Marnoch but lived in Aberdeen, 40 miles away, with her youngest child (for whom the father paid alimony) while one of her daughters stayed with her grandmother in Aberchirder and the other was 'kept by W. Walker, Carter, Rubislaw'.<sup>17</sup> Or consider Anne Mitchel, who gave birth to three bastards in Rothiemay between 1864 and 1867. The Register entry for 8 November 1870 reads: 'This pauper's child, Elizabeth Anne, whose father is now dead, is boarded with her maternal aunt, Widow Simpson, Coldhome and receives direct from the Inspector 2s.6d. weekly.... The mother is in service and pays her aunt for the keep of her child Jane. The other twin is kept by the paternal grandfather in the parish of Skene - the father is now in America.'<sup>18</sup> The Children's Separate Register indicates several instances of boarding out. In June 1870 a deserted illegitimate whose mother subsequently married but left the country was sent to live with a crofter in Alvah. Two years later he was returned to Rothiemay, lodged with another crofter and sent to the Parish School. The next year he became an apprentice seaman in Banff.<sup>19</sup> The Board could exercise considerable influence in such affairs since they provided all funding. Thus

a deserted child boarded in Turriff whose 'guardian refused to allow the child to be removed to Aberchirder' had his relief summarily terminated.<sup>20</sup> They seldom placed children in institutions, preferring to settle them in domestic homes at the lowest possible cost to the parish.<sup>21</sup> When the mother was institutionalised, distribution of her dependants among extended kin networks was common.

### Case histories

The following sample cases, taken from an analysis of the parish of Torthorwald in south-west Scotland, reveal that interaction between the Poor Law and the family could produce both centripetal and centrifugal tendencies. On the one hand, some individuals provided the fulcrum around which household survival was secured. This was the case with Elizabeth Irving, whom the local inspector noted 'keeps house for her father and has charge of four children, one belonging to a married sister who is living in service and separate from her husband, the other three are illegitimate children belonging to her niece who is at harvest'. Her initial claim was rejected on grounds that she was able to support herself. However, when she fell ill she was granted temporary sums to tide her through.<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth was the pivot on which the coherence of the household turned: between 1861 and 1891 at least twelve grand- and great-grandchildren lived in the house, and at any one time over those thirty years, the household consisted of at least a parent, children and grandchildren, with Elizabeth fulfilling the key 'housekeeper' role throughout. She appears to have provided the locus of support for the extended Irving family, with the authorities supplementing her on occasion as they saw fit.

On the other hand, although mothers were central to most family arrangements, it is important to recognise that this dominance did not necessarily require their presence within the household. In many cases where single or widowed grandmothers co-resided with their grandchildren, the situation was clearly one of mutual dependence upon the mother, or mothers, who worked elsewhere to provide an income to support both. Observations like 'while she was in service, children were left with applicant's parents' are common and apply to single women, widows and deserted wives alike. In such instances most claims



were for supplementary relief on grounds of partial destitution or disability on the grandmother's part. For example, Christina Gibson, aged 71, and sometime farm labourer, was granted 2/6 weekly on grounds of 'old age and infirmity', the inspector remarking that 'an illegitimate grand-daughter resides with her whose mother is at service'. The daughter was a cook working in England who sent remittances and paid her mother's house rent. The Board was clearly comfortable with this joint set up since they continued to supply aliment until the old woman died, some eleven years later.

When biographies are reconstructed over a longer time-frame, the complex dialectics of household change reflect rather less clear distinctions between movers and stayers, since the same personnel are at times critical to household persistence, but at others are the instigators or subjects of its dissolution. The 1881 census records a seamstress, Janet Jardine aged 58, living with her daughter Jane Ann, unmarried, 27 and a dairymaid, and Jane Ann's son James.<sup>23</sup> In February 1883, having 'been unwell for a considerable time, Medical Officer attending' Janet Jardine claimed relief. The inspector's assessment revealed that:

She has been deserted by her husband for over 26 years. She has 2 daughters, 1 married to William Kae, a ploughman, they have 9 young children; Jane Ann aged 30, has one illegitimate child aged 7 (father not known) who is with her mother; and 2 sons, William who learned to be a smith. When last heard of about 2 years ago he had gone to New Zealand as a fireman on board a steamer; James, a mason and 26 years of age.<sup>24</sup>

A deserted wife and her daughter, a single parent, have co-resided to support one another and a child, but Janet's illness has reduced the household income such that they require outside support. At this juncture it becomes clear that her other children's circumstances are such that they cannot be expected to provide help, partly because of their own hardship but also due to their wide geographical distribution. Dependency upon the parish of settlement effectively ties Jane Ann to the locality. Janet died on 5<sup>th</sup> March, and a month later the Medical Officer noted that Jane Ann's child was seriously ill. He bluntly recorded that

‘there is no hope of his recovery’, adding that this prevented his mother from earning a living ‘as she has no person to take charge of the child she cannot get out of the house to her work’.<sup>25</sup> The Board granted 7/-, but withdrew support immediately when the child died four weeks later. Jane Ann then supported herself for a while, but within two years gave birth to a bastard child who only lived for ten months, and then married George Rae, a widower aged 60, before bearing a third child, William. Throughout this period she remained within the parish, maintained by her husband’s income. But, when her son was just two months old, Rae assaulted her then deserted, leaving wife and child destitute.<sup>26</sup> The parish gave them a one-off sum of 2/.<sup>27</sup> However, without the cushioning provided by her mother and unable to earn a wage herself Jane Ann was soon forced to accept relief in the poorhouse while a daughter Mary was boarded out. The viability of the family unit had been precarious, but it was the actions of the Parochial Board, on whom they were finally dependent, that effected the decision to disband it. This move brought about further dispersal, then return, with Mary and her own daughter Agnes being removed from the poorhouse in Kendal - some 80 miles away in another country - to Dumfries Poorhouse in 1892, shuttling back and forth between there and the parish, as and when her husband saw fit to desert.<sup>28</sup> By 1902 the now orphaned daughter Agnes was again living in Kendal.<sup>29</sup> However, having established her settlement in Torthorwald, the Board admitted her to the permanent roll until she was 14 and was found both work and a good home. She was the first and only member of her family to be given such support.

This bleak tale affords a tantalising glimpse into the fluidity of household circumstances over just twenty years. Had we been reliant upon persons being recorded as ‘pauper’ in the census enumerators’ books we would have entirely missed these household histories, and indeed those of the great majority of claimants, whose appeals were either rejected or temporarily accepted. However, it was just such applications and their outcomes that either sustained or broke up families during crisis. In the above narrative, the actions of the Parochial Board sometimes forced inertia upon the household, at others times caused disbandment and dispersal, and at others still enabled the family

to make its own decisions. The sphere of circulation encompassed temporary moves relatively far afield, but the nature of settlement legislation was such that individuals found themselves returned to their home parish at intervals, as though attached by reins. Such was the surveillance of the local welfare state.

### **The regional geography of relief**

These narratives reveal the role of Poor Law decisions in the patterning of households and kin, but it is important to recognise too the linkage between relief dependency and the social relations of production. Analysis of the moves made by Poor Law applicants in sample parishes in north-east Scotland illustrates how the welfare system effectively buoyed up a system of social relations that required intense local mobility to maintain it. In this region, single farm and domestic servants were hired on six-monthly contracts, and were thus required to be mobile. They moved regularly between farms, being accommodated in the farm buildings rather than in family homes.

Thus was set in train a remarkably gender-biased pattern of poverty. A consequence of the absence of parental, or quasi-parental supervision of these youngsters was a high incidence both of illegitimacy and of desertion by the male partners who could abscond with relative ease. Police were empowered under the Civil Imprisonment Act of 1882 to apprehend and gaol men neglecting to pay alimony but paternity was often denied, obliging mothers to sue at law with costly and often unsatisfactory results. Meanwhile, Laws of Affiliation tended not to favour women, with low allowances being provided. Few were willing to take legal proceedings: in 1858, 295 illegitimate births were recorded in Banffshire; in the 211 cases where paternity was not acknowledged at registration, it was found by decree of court in just twenty instances.<sup>30</sup> In such circumstances, it was normal for the expectant mother to return to her parents to bear the child, but thereafter to return to work elsewhere whilst the grandparents reared her offspring. In some instances this required no recourse to poor relief, but the absence of regular financial support during the period of confinement and weaning was frequently crippling, and here it was considered, 'better for the parish to support the family, than incur the expense of prosecuting the parent who deserts his offspring'.<sup>31</sup>

At certain life-course stages, particularly confinement and old age, women could not be expected to earn an independent living. Importantly, these stages differ greatly in length, confinement periods frequently being very short because in this region young women could easily return to service (especially where wet-nurses were sought and grandmothers took on childcare responsibilities from very early on) whereas old age dependency was generally long-term. Thus, although single mothers may have applied for and obtained short-term relief to cover the immediate parturition and weaning period, their older children were more likely to appear in the Poor Law records as inhabitants of households from which their grandmothers claimed relief, intermittently or for longer periods, both because of the children's needs and due to their own disabilities.

In wholly rural parishes where landlords favoured the 'small crofter system' of tenancy rather than large farms, such a pattern was commonplace. However, some mothers, particularly older mothers whose own parents were no longer alive or who were too aged to lend support, were forced to seek cheap accommodation in local towns. Thus the Huntly Inspector remarked, 'it often happens that girls who have had illegitimate children in the country, and cannot get support from the father of the child, come into the town and throw themselves upon the rates'.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Keith was 'said to be a centre for rearing farm servants, and hither the females return at a certain stage'.<sup>33</sup>

While this suggests parallels with the English pattern of 'open' and 'close' parishes, the actual locations of claimants disguise their connections to supporting parishes that could be many miles distant. An analysis of the recorded birthplaces of all applicants obtaining relief in the two adjacent parishes of Marnoch and Rothiemay between 1845 and 1900 indicates that only a small majority - 57% - were natives. Meanwhile, when the parishes of residence of paupers chargeable to the two parishes - that is, having a settlement but not necessarily residing there - are studied, 44% are seen to be living outside the district. Most incomers to Rothiemay had been born in the immediate rural sub-region of Lowland Banff, but the more distant towns of Aberdeen, Elgin, Peterhead, Turriff and isolated locations throughout a wide area contributed paupers to Marnoch, a fact largely attributable to the parish containing the village of

Aberchirder, which was known for its cheap available accommodation. Amongst those with settlements in Marnoch and Rothiemay but living elsewhere, concentration on Aberdeen City was significant, while the Buchan Combination Poorhouse at New Maud was the locus for a secondary, far smaller cluster (committals to lunatic asylums, the vast majority of which were to Aberdeen and Banff were omitted from the calculations).

The demonstration of continuities and discontinuities in policy depends to a degree on the specific parishes selected, and in both Rothiemay and Marnoch welfare arrangements were initially rather sympathetic. Of 88 persons applying for relief in Rothiemay between 1855 and 1869 only 12 were refused help, and then for strong reasons - two, for example, are recorded as being 'Imposters'.<sup>34</sup> Thirty-nine were admitted temporarily and 37 permanently. Between 1851 and 1900, the majority of unmarried mothers claiming support in Rothiemay - over 60% - were natives, but only a minority of women chargeable - two-fifths - were actually resident there. Similarly, in Marnoch 55% of successful claims came from mothers with settlements living outside the parish, half of these living in the urban parishes of Aberdeen. These totals imply that it was relatively easy for unmarried mothers to obtain relief from the home parish when residing elsewhere. However, when the figures are disaggregated to take account of the implementation of the poorhouse test, clear distinctions become evident. After 1868, only 15% of out-relief recipients were outsiders who had come to Rothiemay - a drop of fully 27% on the 1845-67 proportion. Such was the impact of a new and harsher code being adopted against claimants without a birth settlement there.<sup>35</sup>

Since only four incomers obtained relief over the 32 years from 1868 to 1900 in Rothiemay, whereas 17 did so in the 22 years before 1868 it is reasonable to assume that these discrepancies were caused by changes in relief policy. In fact, the real effect began ten years later. In January 1878, immediately following the local Inspector's dismissal for bankruptcy, the case of each pauper on the list was re-assessed, in keeping with a Board of Supervision circular, with comments 'Not on Roll at this date' and 'Allowance reduced' appearing frequently. In the same month the Rothiemay board resolved to rent two beds in the Buchan Combination Poorhouse, 'to be used as a test'.<sup>36</sup>

From this date onwards it became procedure to make offers of the poorhouse to mothers with illegitimate children who requested relief. As indicated, this change in policy, effected in part through the replacement of such a key official, had considerable impact on those already enlisted on the roll. Yet although only 36% of recipients were immigrants, 77% of claims on the parish came from Rothiemay women living extra-parochially.<sup>37</sup> Ironically, it seems that the Poor Law facilitated considerable mobility among bastardbearers and it was these women who buoyed up the overall numbers of paupers for which each parish was responsible.

With opportunities increasing in the cities, an exodus of female domestic servants from the countryside had begun in the 1870s. The comment of a Banffshire clergyman, in 1888, that: 'Many who are now in service ... are the illegitimates of the country' implies that those remaining were somehow trapped by their status.<sup>38</sup> They were probably the offspring of women with settlements there who had grown up with their grandparents, but the evidence suggests that many of their mothers had themselves resided elsewhere. The substantial number of young women, some still in their teens, who gave birth to bastards in Aberdeen City but had settlements in Marnoch, and to a lesser extent Rothiemay would certainly indicate this.

Therefore, in the case of unmarried mothers - and this group formed a goodly proportion of applicants in areas of high illegitimacy like the north-east and south-west - the very nature of settlement regulation facilitated the mobility of mothers outside the parish. The high persistence rates found among unmarried mothers in English parishes owing to their institutional dependence simply do not occur. Indeed, the practice of unmarried women working elsewhere while boarding their children with relatives was sufficiently common in the general population as to merit consideration as customary behaviour. Thus, it could be argued that rather than itself creating a particular pattern of mobility, the Poor Law simply allowed it to continue when families fell on hard times.

#### **Implications for further research**

What impact did Poor Law practice have on the family's ability to sustain its particular household pattern? Recent demo-

graphic research into the relationships between individuals, households and community has focused on the historically shifting balance between family and parish support for the impoverished, Laslett's 'nuclear-hardship' hypothesis stating, for example, that 'the more dominant simple-family households are ... the more important will be support for such individuals from the collectivity'<sup>39</sup>. This presupposes a distinction between family and community that was in practice unlikely to have been so rigid, for degrees of nuclearity or extension can only be measured superficially where household structures disguise shifting interdependencies *between* households and over space.<sup>40</sup> If dysfunctional families were sometimes disbanded through institutionalisation and boarding out, the Poor Law authorities maintained a material as well as moral interest in holding together dependent households. Yet, since many households were characterised by instability, disharmony and fragmentation it would be fallacious to talk of consensual 'family strategies' on the part of those affected. The case studies suggest that individuals and family groups were enabled by resource inputs from the Poor Law, however meagre or temporary, to hold together something like workable domestic units. Nevertheless, the fact that many of these fell apart again over time indicates the absolute constraints that poverty itself ultimately placed upon their viability.

In Scotland, the containment and monitoring of mobility via the laws of settlement and the poorhouse test were axes of the system of administration, and relief decisions played a significant role in redirecting household arrangements. But the nature of relief, and crucially its openness to geographical dispersal of families, did not create parish populations composed of isolated poor individuals (the welfare dependants) and stable nuclear families. As the frequency of desertion among the examples above illustrates, marital discord did much to disrupt household cohesion and independence. Many partners had relationships that were either fleeting sexual encounters or unstable marriages. Meanwhile, women's employment, though always poorly paid was clearly significant, at least in the rural lowlands, and 'the concept of a family as dependants on an active male worker does not appear to have had currency, understandably, for family resources were often the result of input from every member'.<sup>41</sup>

The fact that many unmarried mothers worked in service while their parents looked after their offspring is evidence that mature single women were expected to find outdoor labouring. The centrality of mothers to webs of dependency weakens the case for the household as the key object of study because although some women provided a pivotal role in heading households, just as many, if not more, held together their families by moving between households. Thus, the pattern of kin support can only be detected if one considers the family network both within and *beyond* the household.

This paper has focused to a degree on patterns of return migration and mobility within a restricted geographical range. The sample study has, of course, only considered negotiation between the Poor Law and the people in two rural regions, and there is no reason to believe that patterns in north-east and south-west Scotland were typical of the country as a whole. On the contrary, the diversity of population patterns, social processes and levels of poverty across Highland/Lowland, mainland/insular and rural/urban divides suggest that rather different outcomes would emerge in other areas. It would therefore be highly instructive to know how the dialectic between poverty and mobility was managed in such differing contexts, not least because discerning how circuits of mobility operated regionally has clear implications for the interpretation of permanent migration and emigration farther afield. This will require a biographical, life-course approach to the family as process which, from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, the case-records of the New Poor Law in Scotland uniquely allow.

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### Endnotes

- 1 Parts of this paper were presented to an Ethnicity and Migration Network session at the European Social Science History Conference, The Hague, The Netherlands, February 2002. The author is grateful to the audience and fellow panellists for comments and to the British Academy for funding support.
- 2 R. Mitchison, *The Old Poor Law in Scotland: The Experience of Poverty*,




- 1574-1845, (Edinburgh, 2000); see also R.A. Cage, *The Scottish Poor Law, 1745-1845*, (Edinburgh, 1981). By contrast, local studies are ripe with anecdotes but thin on analysis - see, for example, J.M. McPherson, *The Kirk's Care of the Poor with Special Reference to the North-East of Scotland*, (Aberdeen, 1941).
- 3 T. Devine, *Clanship to Crofters' War: The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands*, (Manchester, 1994); I. Levitt and C. Smout, *The State of the Scottish Working Class in 1843*, (Edinburgh, 1979).
  - 4 Two exceptions are C.W.J. Withers, *Urban Highlanders: Highland-Lowland Migration and Urban Gaelic Culture, 1700-1900*, (East Linton, 1998) pp.76-7, which uses 'particulars of settlement' details in the General Registers of Poor [GRP] for Glasgow parishes to illustrate intermediate locations and duration of stay in the stepped migration of three Highlanders to the city, but does not develop a more systematic study using this source, and H. Macdonald, 'Boarding-Out and the Scottish Poor Law, 1845-1914', *Scottish Historical Review*, LXXV (1996), pp.197-220, which again uses local GRP material but for one specific group of children only.
  - 5 This paper draws on research that has been ongoing for some time, see particularly: A. Blaikie, *Illegitimacy, Sex and Society: Northeast Scotland, 1750-1900*, (Oxford, 1994) pp.158-84; A. Blaikie, 'Unhappy After Their Own Fashion: Infant Lives and Family Biographies in Southwest Scotland, 1855- 1939', *Scottish Economic and Social History*, 18 [2] (1998) pp.95-113; and A. Blaikie, 'Lost in Translation: Adaptive Family Networks and the Ironies of the Scottish Poor Law', paper presented to Social Science History Association annual conference, Pittsburgh, 27 October 2000.
  - 6 R. Mitchison, 'The Creation of the Disablement Rule in the Scottish Poor Law', in T.C. Smout, ed., *The Search for Wealth and Stability*, (London, 1979) pp.199-217 (p.200).
  - 7 M. Anderson (unpublished MS). He continues: 'This further increased the pressure for out-migration to somewhere where work might be available [and] it also provided a major disincentive to marriage. Even where housing was available, a couple, before they married and had children, had still to consider whether there were likely to be suitable ongoing opportunities available to them to be able to support a family'. Meanwhile, 'compared with most of England, housing was in short supply [and in a country with low real wages] expensive'.
  - 8 A. Paterson, 'The New Poor Law in Nineteenth Century Scotland', in *The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. D. Fraser (London, 1976) pp.171-93 (p.178).
  - 9 Paterson, p.185. Until 1859 local boards could exercise discretion in giving aid to the able-bodied (p.178), whilst even the Board of Supervision began to encourage it, recognising in 1878, that: 'It is

- obvious that if a person is really destitute no long period would elapse before he also became disabled from want of food' (R. Mitchison, *A History of Scotland*, 2nd edition (London, 1982) p.389).
- 10 J. Winter, 'Widowed Mothers and Mutual Aid in Early Victorian Britain', *Journal of Social History*, 17 [1] (Fall, 1983) pp.115-25 (p.116).
  - 11 P. Laslett, 'The family as a Knot of Individual Interests', in R. McC. Netting, R.R. Wilk and E.J. Arould eds., *Households: Comparative and Historical Studies of the Domestic Group*, (Berkeley, 1984) pp.353-79 (p.372).
  - 12 I. Levitt, *Poverty and Welfare in Scotland, 1890-1948*, (Edinburgh, 1988) p.7.
  - 13 Torthorwald General Register of Poor [GRP] 228, 19/8/08. Two years previously another son, whose address was a mystery, had been reported as 'a drunken wastrel who has done nothing for some time to support his mother' (Torthorwald Applications [Apps.] 184, 26/6/08).
  - 14 Torthorwald GRP 218, 9/1/2/05.
  - 15 W. S. Walker, *Rules Relating to a New Register of Poor to be Called 'The General Register of Poor'*, (Edinburgh, 1865).
  - 16 P. Laslett, 'The Significance of the Past in the Study of Ageing', *Ageing and Society*, 4 [4] (1984), pp.379-389, p.385; K. Oosterveen, R.M. Smith, and S. Stewart, 'Family Reconstitution and the Study of Bastardy from Certain English Parishes', in P. Laslett, K. Oosterveen and R.M. Smith, eds., *Bastardy and Its Comparative History*, (London, 1980) pp.86-140 (p.92).
  - 17 Marnoch GRP, 18 (1880).
  - 18 Rothiemay GRP, 69 (8/11/70).
  - 19 Rothiemay Children's Separate Register, 5 (8/11/70, 26/10/72, 30/7/73) - mother in Adelaide, Australia.
  - 20 Marnoch GRP, 574 (1899).
  - 21 Levitt, *Poverty and Welfare*, p.30; see also Marnoch GRP, 575 (13/11/99, 2/8/1900) where a hawker's widow residing in Elgin Poorhouse had one child taken from her and boarded in Aberchirder whilst another was incarcerated in Nazareth House, Aberdeen.
  - 22 Torthorwald Apps. 194, 5/8/80; 195, 17/9/80.
  - 23 Torthorwald Census Enumerators' Books [CEN] 850.
  - 24 Torthorwald Apps. 221, 12/2/83.
  - 25 Torthorwald Apps. 223, 19/4/83.
  - 26 Torthorwald Apps. 248, 10/10/85.
  - 27 Torthorwald Apps. 169, 16/12/87; 178, 21/11/88.
  - 28 Torthorwald GRP 167 and 182, 2/5/88, 4/6/88, 7/1/92, 22/3/92, 5/4/92, 22/4/92, 22/2/93.
  - 29 Torthorwald GRP 215, 31/5/02, 26/7/02, 23/8/02, 22/12/05.

- 30 G. Seton, *The Causes of Illegitimacy Particularly in Scotland, with relative Appendices*, (Edinburgh, 1860) Appendix VII.
- 31 Royal Commission on the Poor Laws in Scotland. Appendix. Part I. British Parliamentary Papers [PP] 1844, [557] XX; Part II [564], XXI; Part III [565]; Part IV [597] XXIII; Part V [598] XXIV; Part VI [543] XXV, Appendix, Pt. III, p.102, Qs. 631-2.
- 32 Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture, Fourth Report, Appendix Part II, PP 1870 [C221-1], Vol. XIII, p.9.
- 33 W. Cramond, *Illegitimacy in Banffshire: Facts, Figures and Opinions*, (reprinted from *Banffshire Journals* of 10, 17, 24, 31 Jan. and 7, 14 Feb. 1888) (Banff, 1888), p.73; PP 1870, Vol. XIII, pp.17, 9.
- 34 Rothiemay Apps., 70 (28/6/65).
- 35 The local Sheriff, concerned that the poorhouse test encouraged vagrancy, advocated outdoor relief for single mothers since many women by refusing to enter or remain in the poorhouse not only deprived themselves of all means of support, but putative fathers were 'enabled with impunity to neglect their children', because Parochial Boards would not prosecute them (W. Watson, 'The Poor Law from the Poor Man's Standpoint', in T. Ivory, ed., *Pauperism and the Poor Laws*, (Edinburgh, 1870) separately paginated, 24 pp (p.13).)
- 36 Rothiemay Parochial Board Minute Book 29/1/78, 4/5/78 (List of Registered Poor).
- 37 Absolute figures are not directly comparable since birthplace calculations refer to individuals whereas chargeability indicates place of residence and, over time, one person might claim from several sequential locations.
- 38 Cramond (1888), p.43.
- 39 P. Laslett, 'Family, Kinship and Collectivity as Systems of Support in Pre-Industrial Europe: A Consideration of the "Nuclear-Hardship" Hypothesis', *Continuity and Change*, 3 [2] (1988), pp.153-175 (p.156).
- 40 B. Reay, 'Kinship and Neighborhood in Nineteenth-Century Rural England: The Myth of the Autonomous Nuclear Family', *Journal of Family History*, 21 (1996), pp.87-104.
- 41 Mitchison, *Old Poor Law*, p.110.

## **FAMILIES OF THE IMAGINATION: MYTHS OF SCOTTISH FAMILY LIFE IN SCOTTISH CHILD WELFARE POLICY**

These children look upon the heads of the family as their parents and the younger branches as brothers and sisters; the best feelings of the heart are engaged, the affections are cherished and drawn out, not smothered in the child's breast as if among strangers. The endearing terms 'father' and 'mother' are used and believed in by the younger ones, and though as they grow older this relationship is better understood, yet the attachment is formed, and has a beneficial effect in after life ... they appear with a buoyancy of spirit, a confidence of manner, and happiness of countenance which shows that they are at home, are happy and well cared for.<sup>1</sup>

 In 1864 Glasgow city parish parochial board celebrated 100 years of 'boarding-out' children who had been made homeless. There was no equivocation in the policy for another 100 years. On the eve of the First World War almost 90% of Scotland's pauper children were placed in foster homes; in 1945 this proportion had not changed. Placing a child with a foster family was always deemed preferable to institutional care, for the family occupied a central place in the worldview of the new middle classes who populated the public and private child welfare agencies. But, the family of the child savers' imagination was not the family experienced by the majority of working-class children who passed through the care system. This article examines the ways in which ideas about the 'Scottish family' influenced child welfare policy in Scotland in the period before 1945.

The nineteenth-century family, according to the Swedish novelist and dramatist August Strindberg, was 'home of all social evils, a charitable institution for indolent women, a prison workshop for the slaving breadwinner and a *hell for children*.' Strindberg was a fierce critic of the patriarchal bourgeois family which, by 1900, had become the ideal model of family life across Western Europe, not only for the professional and commercial middle classes but for countless individuals and institutions who sought to reform and restructure social life. And it is especially interesting that children featured in Strindberg's critique since middle-class family models invariably centred on the child.<sup>2</sup> The family was a child-focused unit. Children 'were now central to all those occasions on which the family represented itself to itself'; that is on ritual occasions such as birthdays and religious ceremonies. According to John Gillis, 'children were never allowed to leave the mental worlds that families now inhabited', so much so that by the twentieth century 'middle-class families could no longer imagine themselves without children'.<sup>3</sup>

It is this tension between the idea of the child as the jewel at the heart of the family and the family as a 'hell for children' that forms the focus of this discussion of social policy and practice in the field of child welfare in Scotland before the Second World War. Families are places of the imagination as well as concrete collections of individuals. They have become one of the main ways by which people experience and understand their world and as a result, at least since the early nineteenth century, the family has functioned both as an indicator of social stability or tensions and as the key institution by which society might be reformed. Indeed, during the Victorian age, tremendous symbolic weight was placed on the family, since the home and domestic intimacy were regarded as key sources of strength for the nation and the empire. The result was a tension between 'the way families are and the way we would like them to be'.<sup>4</sup> Because the family 'we live with' so rarely lives up to the ideals of the 'family we live by', which takes on the characteristics of a timeless or mythic ideal, ordinary families and homes become the focus of anxiety and attempts at reform.<sup>5</sup> Children are the linchpins in both of these ways of thinking. They were both the victims of so-called dysfunctional or broken families and the promise of

the future. Children were the key to the breaking and making of families in modern Scotland.

Child welfare policy in nineteenth century Scotland was informed by a number of familial discourses. These discourses - on the rural family, the urban working-class family and the middle-class family - were used to legitimise invasive and disciplinary strategies in respect of poor communities.<sup>6</sup> Scottish policy on homeless children - that is children who were orphans, had been deserted by or separated from their parents by poor law boards - was to remove those children from their environment and to place them with substitute families, either elsewhere in Scotland or overseas. By 1900 around 10,000 Scottish children at any one time were being cared for outwith their natural families.<sup>7</sup> The vast majority, never fewer than 75%, were boarded out with foster families. The rest were housed in children's homes and up to 10,000 of these were emigrated overseas between 1870 and 1930, mainly to Canada. The overwhelming majority of children placed in the care system were not orphans in the strictest sense of the word; that is they still possessed one or sometimes both parents. This was particularly the case after 1885 when parish authorities were given greater powers to separate children from parents reliant on poor relief 'in the case of children whose parents or other near relatives are of the depraved or criminal classes, and where the contact of the relatives with the children would be manifestly injurious to the latter...'<sup>8</sup> The term 'orphan' was an emotive one however, used to good effect by child welfare workers and 'child savers' to elicit sympathy and support for their actions. Thus in many cases where a child was 'rescued' and removed into care by the local authority or one of the child saving charities a surviving, if fragile, family was torn apart.

The key to understanding policy and practice in the field of child welfare at this time is to imagine a competing set of family models. The middle-class domestic ideal, encompassing the maternal mother, the breadwinner father and dependent children, represented an idealised 'imaginary family' for those working in the field - poor law officers, local authority welfare agencies and child savers belonging to a range of charitable organisations like the Royal Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The characteristics of this bourgeois

ideal were used as measuring sticks by which to judge those families which attracted the attention of the state or voluntary sector on account of poverty, unemployment, drink, child cruelty and so on. This idealised model of the bourgeois family was centred upon the notion of a community of parents and children, based on affection and intimacy, the sexual division of labour and, at its heart, the private, sacrosanct world of the home.<sup>9</sup> Thus, this middle-class family was distinguished from the notion of 'household' which encompassed production as well as reproduction and, it was believed, a different set of relationships governed more by economic than emotional considerations. However, in Scotland, and particularly in the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, these middle-class family values were certainly aspired to but not necessarily attained.<sup>10</sup> In Glasgow, for instance, more than a quarter of households in some well-to-do neighbourhoods were headed by unmarried or widowed females and in many professional homes the separation of home and work was difficult.<sup>11</sup> Notwithstanding the realities of middle-class family life, the Glasgow city authorities, long opposed to institutional care and committed to boarding-out homeless children with foster families, demonstrated their adherence to this romantic, intimate concept of the family. In 1872 one of their visitation superintendents commented in his report:

Indeed, it would be highly gratifying to any philanthropic and rightly constituted mind to witness the strong love and mutual attachment that subsists between the great mass of these children and their foster parents. The state of affairs must be very gratifying to the [Children's] Committee ... in as much as they all have fostered and encouraged the engraftment of the outdoor nursing system on the domestic tree which has hitherto proved so eminently successful.<sup>12</sup>

Constructed in contrast to the middle-class ideal was the urban working-class family and, to a lesser extent, the poor rural family. Social reformers, local authority officials and philanthropists universally characterised the poor working-class family as dysfunctional requiring surveillance and discipline if it was to be prevented from destabilising society through

its reproduction of 'racial, sexual and social degenerates'.<sup>13</sup>

Underpinning this analysis were the undeniably awful social conditions for the industrial urban working class and its rural counterpart. Scotland was a country in which the social consequences of industrialisation, urbanisation, rural depopulation and poverty were of unparalleled intensity. This was a low-wage and seasonal economy, experiencing high mortality rates, and intense overcrowding. By the 1840s the speed of urban expansion and the failure to provide the most basic of civic amenities combined to herald an unprecedented social crisis in Scottish towns and cities. By 1850 almost one third of Scots lived in towns with 10,000 inhabitants or more and by 1911 the four cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen contained 30% of the Scottish population.

One of the most distinctive features of Scotland's transition to an industrial economy was the level of overcrowding experienced by the urban working-class population. In 1901 around half of Scots were housed in dwellings of one or two rooms and 11% lived in just one room. The notorious 'single-end' - one small room in a four-storey tenement containing kitchen and sleeping accommodation - was roundly condemned as a breeding ground for immoral conduct and ill health, but continued to house a large proportion of Glasgow families. Twenty per cent of these single-ends were occupied by five or more persons in 1911 and the vast majority of their inhabitants shared sanitary facilities.<sup>14</sup> In Scotland as a whole 45% of the population lived in overcrowded housing which was five times the proportion of in England where 9% suffered similar conditions.<sup>15</sup> Tenement living typically provided less space than the standard English terraced house, especially for activities such as washing, drying, working and playing.<sup>16</sup> Tenements facilitated close communities and neighbourliness but they were crowded, dark and unhealthy. Rural areas were similarly beset by poverty, poor housing, overcrowding and ill-health. Housing in the Highlands and Islands after the Clearances was frequently insanitary and tuberculosis was a common cause of death attributed to appalling domestic conditions.

Such low standards of housing in Scotland inevitably had a deleterious effect on child health and development. Overcrowded accommodation with deficient lighting, ventilation and



sanitation produced children more prone to ear, nose and throat defects, respiratory diseases, visual impairments and specific urban conditions such as rickets; indeed a whole series of acquired as opposed to congenital deformities were ascribed to poor housing quality. The infant mortality rate was also highest in overcrowded housing conditions. Thirty-two per cent of all infant deaths in Glasgow in 1905 were of babies in 'single-ends'. Even as late as 1935 in Glasgow the areas with the highest concentration of overcrowded housing had correspondingly high infant-mortality rates which saw little improvement until after World War Two.<sup>17</sup> The worst general mortality rates in Scotland were to be found in Glasgow too, with deaths from cholera and typhus, for instance, far higher than in comparable English cities. And all the attendant ills of the industrial city: drunkenness, gambling, violence and crime, affected not only Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee but many of the smaller 'frontier' towns such as the steel centres of Airdrie and Coatbridge, Greenock and Port Glasgow on the Clyde, and colliery towns such as Methil in Fife. By the 1870s and 1880s such urban 'vices' were being explicitly linked to family disintegration, indigence and inevitably child neglect and headline cases of individuals prosecuted in the courts - such as a Govan metal worker who appeared in court for drinking on credit when his children were barefoot - served to amplify the apparent connection between urban conditions, moral decline and the fate of children.<sup>18</sup>

Contemporary commentators' descriptions of squalor, overcrowding and insanitary conditions were a powerful argument legitimating the removal of children from their homes at a time when arguments that linked social behaviour with environmental circumstances were widely accepted. Measured against the middle-class ideology of domesticity which emphasised the safety and cosiness of the hearth, the sight of working-class children of both sexes sleeping several to a bed and roaming out of doors in the courts, wynds and closes because there was no room for them indoors, appeared 'demoralising' and corrupting. These children, it was thought, could not be said to experience family life in any real sense of the word. However, historians have contributed to the acceptance of this argument by reifying contemporary observations with statistics on overcrowding, infant mortality, deaths from infectious disease and wage levels, hence

serving - if unconsciously - to bolster the impression that poor social conditions have a direct impact upon the nature of family relationships.

Few labouring families conformed to the bourgeois family model at this time but the reasons are not necessarily to be found in adverse social conditions. The critical discourse on the poor working-class family was not a discourse constructed from within, and it was not at all sensitive to the economic and cultural differences that informed the structure and functioning of working-class family life. Historians who have studied so-called 'deviant' or alternative family structures and practices in France and Germany have concluded that flexible family forms, and in particular the acceptance of cohabitation and illegitimacy point to working-class men and women adopting functional strategies for emotional and economic survival.<sup>19</sup> In Scotland, too, there is evidence to point to alternative strategies for the care of children outwith the nuclear or conventional family form. In rural Aberdeenshire, for instance, illegitimate children were regularly cared for by maternal grandparents which benefited the mother, who was able to return to paid employment, and the grandparents who obtained help around the house and on the farm once the children were old enough to be useful.<sup>20</sup> In the towns, though, the extended family was less likely to be present to care for children at moments of crisis, and the employment market did not cater to lone working mothers or fathers.<sup>21</sup> When death, debilitating illness or unemployment struck a family, the children were the most noticeable victims: boarded out to relatives or neighbours, placed in institutions for short periods, or, in extremes, removed by child savers or the state.

It is this removal of children from families that constitutes the point of departure in both Scottish welfare policy and family policy. This is not to say that before the onset of industrialisation and urbanisation that children were not cared for outwith their natural families - of course they were and families continued to be permeable, to adopt flexible living conditions in order to deal with crises. But it is noticeable that as the middle class family increasingly became sacrosanct and impermeable to outside interference, the working class family became the subject of legitimate inquiry and intervention by voluntary and state agencies: poor law inspectors, health visitors, education officials

and, as a result of the emphasis on the child at the heart of the family, multiple organisations and individuals concerned with the welfare of the child. Public health officials, school attendance officers and child savers gained entrance to working class homes to enforce vaccination, school attendance and 'children's rights'. The nineteenth century saw increasing regulation of working-class children's lives as an idea of childhood which centred upon domesticity and the safety of the home was disseminated. The 'proper' place for a child was deemed to be within a 'family', protected and dependent. Families not seen as capable of providing sufficient protection or able to shelter their children from the labour market were marked out as unable or unwilling to discharge their familial responsibilities and thus might be relieved of their charges.

At the same time those parents who found themselves in genuine difficulties were encouraged to give up their children to others who might provide 'better' homes. Lone mothers and fathers were especially vulnerable. Widowers left to care for small children were not expected to be able to cope since they were deemed to lack 'mothering' skills. A family could not exist without a mother. By the nineteenth century children became part of the female domain and fatherhood became associated with financial provision and the maintenance of order and discipline within the home. Lone fathers were encouraged to place their children in an orphanage in the absence of female relatives to fill the gap. 'Motherless bairns have a special claim upon us' remarked the director of a small children's home in Stirling. 'A widower is perfectly helpless with children. He cannot mother the bairns and be the breadwinner too; while he tries to do a *father's part*, the children miss their mother. In helping such cases we have not only rescued the children, but raised the father, and kept him from sinking under his great burden and heavy loss.'<sup>22</sup> Lone fathers were treated with sympathy but lone mothers were a different matter. Mothers were especially vulnerable to being judged against the middle-class domestic ideal. In this model the moral wife and mother occupied the heart of the family, spreading her moral influence through her nurture of her children and her creation of a private haven to counter the vice and immorality of the city. The most vulnerable woman in this scenario was the mother of the illegitimate child. Usually alone,

tainted by her status, she had difficulty fulfilling her responsibilities to her children as well as providing for them financially. By 1884 parishes were permitted to forcibly separate illegitimate children from their mothers and place them in foster care 'in the interests of both parties' according to the authorities. The child would be removed from a pauper's environment and the mother would be free to search for stable employment. This separation was most often a permanent arrangement since the aim was to sever contact between mother and child. The consequence of these judgements was, in Scotland at least, a massive experiment in social engineering whereby thousands of children were removed to the countryside to live as boarders in foster families, or were placed in orphanages often to be emigrated to one of the overseas Dominions.

The imaginary, idealised bourgeois family was used as a benchmark for intervening in working class families, yet it was not the model used for their reform. The rural family was considered the most appropriate place for a child removed from urban squalor. By removing children from what were regarded as unstable or dissolute families and using them to create new families - whether in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland or the prairies of Canada - social practitioners in the fields of poverty and child welfare consciously attempted to create idealised families founded upon evangelical ideals of hard, honest labour, thrift, temperance and God-fearing respectability. Areas of Scotland most favoured for these qualities were the crofting, farming and fishing counties where fresh air and healthy food was in abundance and where children who were the 'offspring of profligate and abandoned parents' and who were 'full of disease' could benefit from 'the salt water air to breathe, sweet milk to drink and the heathery hill to romp upon.'<sup>23</sup> Moreover, children boarded in the country, it was said:

acquire the habits and feelings of the persons amongst whom they are brought up; they see the struggles of the family to maintain their own independence; they see the kind of feeling that is entertained in reference to paupers ... they are well educated and ultimately they melt into the population, so that you cannot find a trace of them, and

they are not distinguishable from the people who have been brought up in independence.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, it was believed such children would cast off the taint of the working class. In contrast, mining areas were avoided as potential homes for pauper children on account of the colliers working night shifts resulting in men being at home and in bed during the day.<sup>25</sup> An inspector's report on the condition of boarded out child Alex Keith in the mining village of Cowdenbeath in 1889 commented, 'This is a collier's house, and like all the others of its class it is neither clean nor comfortable ... Fife colliers [are] notoriously a class apart, and stand very low in the scale of civilisation.'<sup>26</sup> Indeed, manufacturing towns and the suburbs of cities were also regarded as problematic since children were exposed to temptation to loaf and 'contamination of low associates'.<sup>27</sup> Certainly it was widely concurred that 'the house of a crofter with his bit of land and cow is the best place for a child.'<sup>28</sup> It was a view summed up by one inspector after a visit to children residing in the city north of the Clyde in 1883:

Altogether we cannot report so favourably as to the general appearance of the children here as compared with those boarded with strangers in the country... a few of the children are boarded with grandparents who are aged and infirm, and consequently unfit to take proper care of those under their charge. They are also exposed to the many evil influences and examples seen in a large city like this, and more especially in the crowded localities. The same healthy, robust, and cheery looks of the children boarded in the country is here absent, and a few of the children wore that peevish, languid look which plainly told the rearing up in a polluted and confined atmosphere, and the evil of too much tea drinking...<sup>29</sup>

The emphasis on the physical environment and children's physical condition was indicative of a romanticised view of the Highlands which contrasted with the image of the wicked and disease-ridden city. This anti-urban rhetoric owed much to nineteenth-century evangelical preaching on the immorality of

the industrial city. Thomas Chalmers, the inspiration behind the Free Church, was the leading proponent of this view in Britain. For Chalmers the city, with its culture of dependence (on poor relief), its profligacy and heathenism, stood in stark contrast to the pre-industrial rural community based on the ecclesiastical and moral unity of the parish.<sup>30</sup> The countryside of course, and especially the Highlands, was almost free of temptation. Public houses were few and far between and the strict presbyterianism of the Free Church which dominated in many Highland communities ensured that children would be reared to be hard-working, God-fearing citizens, lessening the possibility that they would become paupers in later life.

Children were believed to be in safe hands with these uncomplicated, hard-working, righteous, law-abiding, God-fearing folk who would take the children into their hearts and their homes. By the early nineteenth century the crofter had been rehabilitated in the eyes of the Lowland Scots. The image of the rough, papist Highlander had been replaced by the sympathetic victim of the Clearances and famine, and a strict Presbyterian to boot.<sup>31</sup> In hailing the advantages of boarding with crofting families, the oatmeal-eating inhabitants of the Highlands were favourably contrasted with their Lowland and especially English cousins. 'The frugal and provident habits of the northern parts is a household word' opined J.J. Henley in 1870. 'Education has also made the northerner, if not a better man, at least a more intelligent being.'<sup>32</sup> It was said that such a class of people was virtually unknown in England.

Instead of making families in the middle-class image, child welfare workers used 'rescued' children to help create or sustain families which accorded with an idealised image of the rural labouring household. Rural foster families were rarely vetted for suitability by impartial observers and ironically, single females - unmarried or widowed - were welcomed as potential guardians, even for children who had been removed from a lone mother in the city. It was not unknown for a black taxi full of children from one of the cities to arrive in a village and announce that homes were required for the children inside. One woman sent to Tiree from Glasgow recalled how 'people just came out and shook their heads and went away again' as the taxi toured the island.<sup>33</sup> The local authority inspection system was inadequate and hap-

hazard. There was no person in the parish where the child had been placed to take responsibility for his or her welfare. Instead, inspectors would travel from the child's parish of settlement or local authority and this was supplemented by a reliance on community self-policing. 'It is very improbable that any harsh treatment of any child should occur without being well known to the entire district' commented William Peterkin in his report on the boarding out system in 1863.<sup>34</sup> Sadly, this naïve belief in the inherent safety of rural communities was misplaced.<sup>35</sup>

The same policy was pursued overseas, and especially in Canada where, it was said, the honest, rural way of life was founded upon the same principles of sobriety, hard work, and presbyterian morality. Canadian society was idealised in ways reminiscent of the romanticisation of crofting communities and thus it took no great leap of the imagination to believe that Scottish children could be successfully transplanted to a country where so many Scots 'kith and kin' had already made their home. Canada, and to a lesser extent South Africa and Australia, was represented as an unspoiled version of Scotland before industrialisation and urbanisation created the vice and degeneration evident in the histories of the homeless children.

Of course, the imagined rural family - whether in the Scottish Highlands or Canada - was as much a myth as the idealised bourgeois family or the degenerate working-class family. Poverty in the crofting counties was endemic and, following the famine years 1846-7 and the Clearances, crofting communities became depopulated owing to seasonal and permanent migration. For all the talk of the benefits of fresh air and wholesome food, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the boarding out of children to the Highlands and Islands met another objective: repopulation and the provision of labour and an additional income for crofters from the allowance paid for each child. In the case of the considerable number of children boarded on the island of Arran it was noted in 1862 that 'the crofters and small farmers in Arran are not only benefited by the cash payments on [the children's] account, and enabled to pay their rents more easily than they could do without them, but have also a present and prospective supply of servants and labourers, whose wages are at the lowest.'<sup>36</sup> Guardians were instructed that 'the children who had been deserted by 'worthless parents should be taught to cultivate

industrious habits' while not being overtaxed with labour.<sup>37</sup> Officials recognised that guardians did not take in children for purely philanthropic reasons. 'You see', commented one observer, 'the possession of a family is a valuable thing for a working man; [the children] become wage earners very early; and so long as they remain under his roof it all adds to the family income.'<sup>38</sup> It is clear to see that the standards applied to boarded out children were somewhat at variance with the dominant construction of childhood as dependent and engaged in full time education.

In Canada the terms of the relationship between guardians and children were weighted even more towards economic rather than welfare concerns. The superficial resemblance between rural Scotland and rural Canada promoted by the advocates of child emigration like William Quarrier, founder of one of the largest Scottish children's homes, carried little weight with those child migrants who became indentured labourers on farms.<sup>39</sup> Denied the protection of British legislation aimed at extending and safeguarding childhood - such as the Education Acts, factory legislation and the 1908 Children Act - the child migrants over the age of twelve quickly became adults on Canadian soil, subject to demands that would not have been tolerated in their former home. Farmers who applied to take a child were obliged to pay the child a regular wage, provide board and lodgings and ensure he or she attended church and Sunday School. However, there was no requirement for these children to attend school and for many their arrival in Canada marked the end of formal education. 'When I was in the fields working' recalled one man who arrived in Canada as a young boy, 'I could see all the children going to school with their lunch pails. The feeling of utter loneliness would be hard to describe. Actually, I ceased to be a child at the age of ten.'<sup>40</sup> Once more, safeguards to protect children from exploitation and abuse were inadequate. Those responsible for the children's welfare were loathe to question the system in which they had placed so much faith and in some cases were more likely to blame failures on the 'wilfulness' of the children themselves.<sup>41</sup>

For most of the last two centuries in Britain, family policy has been guided by the objective of achieving a balance between parental rights and children's rights. In the nineteenth century



the balance shifted firmly in favour of the latter if one listens to the discourse of the child savers. In Scotland the wholehearted endorsement of the middle class child-centred family ideal found expression in the solutions to the problem of the homeless child. And yet, rejection of institutional care and endorsement of boarding out and emigration, two policies which aimed to place children in families, only appeared to be child-centred. In fact there was never any intention to give working-class children the same rights and protection as middle class children. Evangelical philanthropists assisted by municipal authorities used boarding out and emigration schemes as efficient means to pursue the permanent destruction of thousands of Scottish working-class families. Child savers and welfare workers were intolerant of the models of family life which predominated in working-class communities. It was at this point in the process that the middle-class family model was brought into play and used to justify condemnation of alternative family styles. Once the child had been removed or 'rescued' then his or her sponsor often lost sight of the child's interests and rights which could result in a catalogue of physical and psychological mistreatment and longer term difficulties in seeking to understand their experiences.<sup>42</sup> The social experiment encompassing the movement of children from their blood relatives and own cultures and religions to alien environments, either at home or overseas, was carried out in the name of anti-urbanism and the idealisation of the rural family masquerading as the protection of children. The rights of homeless children to protection from exploitation and to an education were subordinated to a broader project which aimed to maintain class and racial hierarchies. The way working-class families were in nineteenth century Scotland bore little relation to the way social reformers wanted them to be - which was industrious, sober, God-fearing, moral and independent, modelled not on the domestic middle-class family but the 'classless' rural crofting or farming family; a family of the imagination.

It was not until 1946 and the findings of the Clyde Committee on Homeless Children that there was any fundamental critique of boarding out:

We strongly deprecate the boarding out of city children on crofts in very remote areas where they

have no real contact with other children, where they have no facilities for learning a trade ... or where the living conditions are bad. Investigation of conditions in Highland crofts has shown that the lack of sanitation and the absence of facilities for training the children in cleanliness and personal habits make it inadvisable to board out children in remote crofts in the Highlands, where economic conditions are such that the practice of taking in children is regarded as an industry, and the labour obtained therefrom often enables the guardians to maintain their crofts.<sup>43</sup>

There had been a sea-change in attitudes by this time. Now, the health benefits of rural life and the desire to erase a child's background were deemed less important for children's development than a good education and a range of work opportunities suitable to an individual's interests and abilities. Perhaps most important was the recognition amongst child-care professionals of the parent-child bond and the psychological needs of children who had been separated from parents. By 1945 the commitment to foster care was as strong as ever but welfare agencies were beginning to apply to homeless children the standards, privileges and rights they expected for their own.

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### Endnotes

- 1 British Parliamentary Papers (BPP) 1870, Vol. LVIII: J.J. Henley, *Report on the Boarding Out of Pauper Children in Scotland*, p.10.
- 2 M. Segalen, 'The Industrial Revolution: from Proletariat to Bourgeoisie', in A. Burguière et al (eds.), *A History of the Family, Vol.II: the Impact of Modernity*, (Cambridge, 1996) p.399.
- 3 John Gillis, *A World of their Own Making. A History of Myth and Ritual in Family Life*, (Oxford, 1997) pp.72-3.
- 4 Ibid., p.xviii.
- 5 George Behlmer, *Friends of the Family*, (Stanford, 1998) p.28.


- 6 On the notion of disciplining or policing of families see Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, (London, 1979) and Linda Mahood, *Policing Gender, Class and Family: Britain, 1850-1940*, (London, 1995).
- 7 Lynn Abrams, *The Orphan Country: Children of Scotland's Broken Homes, 1845 to the Present Day*, (Edinburgh, 1998).
- 8 BPP (1884-5), Cmd.4559: *40th Annual Report of the Board of Supervision*, p.260.
- 9 See Segalen, 'The Industrial Revolution', pp.393-6; Gillis, *A World of their own Making*, pp.109-29; Lee Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, (London, 1987) pp.321-96.
- 10 Stana Nenadic, 'The Rise of the Urban Middle Class' in T.M. Devine and R. Mitchison (eds), *People and Society in Scotland, Volume I, 1760-1830*, (Edinburgh, 1988) p.121. Research on the Scottish bourgeois family is still very limited.
- 11 Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair, 'The Economic Role of Middle-class Women in Victorian Glasgow', *Women's History Review*, 9 (2000), pp.791-813.
- 12 Glasgow City Archives (GCA), D-CH 1/2: Glasgow City Parish Children's Committee Minute Book No.2, 21 August 1872.
- 13 See Mahood, *Policing Gender, Class and Family*, pp.5-11.
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- 15 R. Rodger, *Housing in Urban Britain 1780-1914*, (Cambridge, 1989) p.37.
- 16 See F. Worsdall, *The Glasgow Tenement: A Way of Life*, (Glasgow, 1989) and J. Faley, *Up Oor Close: Memories of Domestic Life in Glasgow Tenements, 1910-1945*, (Glasgow, 1990).
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- 19 See Lynn Abrams, 'Concubinage, Cohabitation and the Law: Class and Gender Relations in Nineteenth Century Germany', *Gender & History*, 5 (1993) pp.81-100; Stefan Bajohr, 'Illegitimacy and the Working Class: Illegitimate Mothers in Brunswick, 1900-1933', in

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- 21 On the problems encountered by lone fathers see Lynn Abrams, "There was Nobody like my Daddy": Fathers, the Family and the Marginalisation of Men in Modern Scotland', *Scottish Historical Review*, LXXVIII (1999) pp.219-42.
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- 24 BPP, (1870) Vol. LVIII: J. McNeill, evidence to the House of Commons Committee, p.10.
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- 30 See Callum G. Brown, "To be Aglow with Civic Ardours": the "Godly Commonwealth" in Glasgow 1843-1914', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, XXVI (1996) pp.171-5.
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- 33 Scottish Oral History Centre Archive, University of Strathclyde: interview with Betty.
- 34 BPP, (1863) Vol.XXII App (A) No.4: W.A. Peterkin, *Report on Pauper Children Boarded in the Island of Arran*, p.650.
- 35 On cases of mistreatment and abuse see Abrams, *Orphan Country*, pp.60-66 and 198-200.
- 36 BPP, (1863) Vol. XXII App (A) No.4, p.651.
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- 39 See Joy Parr, *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada 1869-1924*, (Toronto, 1994).
- 40 Quoted in P.Harrison, *The Home Children*, (Winnipeg, 1979) p.101.
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- 42 On the psychological impact on former 'boarded-outs' see Lynn Abrams, "Blood is Thicker than Water": Family, Fantasy and Identity in the Lives of Scottish Foster Children', in J. Lawrence and P.Starkey (eds), *Child Welfare and Social Action in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: International Perspectives* (Liverpool, 2001), pp.195-215.
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## **WORKING CLASS CULTURE, FAMILY LIFE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CLYDESIDE, c 1918-1939: A VIEW FROM BELOW.**

*'People have no idea how the poor lived in those days.  
They seemed to be at loggerheads all the time.'*<sup>1</sup>

he inter-war years were distinguished by marked changes that affected the lives and neighbourhoods of many working class men and women. These changes would prove to have positive and negative implications for working-class family life. New employment opportunities extended the breadth of jobs open to working class people, especially in the new consumer industries that employed significant numbers of women. Correspondingly, the commercialisation of leisure expanded the possibilities of pleasure. Information on birth control and the greater ease of availability of contraceptives also offered a better potential to postpone marriage and reduce family size. Yet, the new employment opportunities did little to alter the 'pin money' wages of women and women's economic dependency on marriage. Marriage was still seen as an attractive alternative to employment in the longer term.<sup>2</sup> Marriage and motherhood were actively promoted as the natural and fulfilling aspirations for women by the state, state agencies, the clergy, religious organisations and the media. Adding to the appeal was the ideal of the 'companionate marriage' in which husbands were expected to share chores, child-care, leisure and provide love and companionship. It seems that this was a 'fairly normative' aspiration amongst many sectors of the working class between the wars, at least amongst women. Change, however, was not just ideological.<sup>3</sup> After World War I, the building of 'homes fit for heroes' and the growth of 'new garden cities', were linked with ideals of the companionate marriage, maternalism, privacy, respectable domesticity and the growth of male home-centred pastimes. This was to be a new way of life in which

women's roles of homemaker and mother, at least in theory, were to be glorified. However, on Clydeside, continuity was as evident, if not more pervasive, than change and this ensured that there were many marriages marked by conflict in which women experienced immense oppression.

The penetration of new industries on the Clyde was less marked than it was in other regions of Britain. Male employment in heavy industries continued to predominate. The isolated nature of many of the jobs women undertook, in combination with the types of employment undertaken by their husbands proved an impediment against the subjectification of the companionate marital ideal. Couples in such unions tended to replicate the traditional normative family ideal as defined by their parents and their peers. Their relationships were also those most likely to be characterised by the absence of a glorification of domesticity. In fact men and women tended to participate in separate tight knit social groups. In addition, such unions were also those in which women were more likely to face real cruelty.<sup>4</sup>

The persistence of marriages of conflict was also sustained by relative continuities in housing tenure on the Clyde. 230,000 houses were built in Scotland by local authorities between the wars, 50,000 in Glasgow. Although this was an impressive number of homes 'housing needs were far greater and conditions far worse' in Scotland than Britain in general. Home ownership was also impeded by structural factors on Clydeside. Disincentives to private building included high levels of unemployment and the effects of the Rent Restriction Act (1915). In 1911 house ownership on the Clyde represented two per cent of total housing tenure and house ownership in Scotland remained lower than the British average throughout the inter-war years and beyond.<sup>5</sup> Intensifying these obstacles was the sharp fall in wages that occurred in the immediate post-war years.<sup>6</sup> Although wages generally stabilised, high levels of unemployment continued to mark the Clyde throughout the period, especially in the 1930s. For the majority of working-class families the price of municipal housing was prohibitive. By 1922 many were already unable to afford the relatively low rents of the poorer private accommodation. A demonstration took place in October 1922 to urge Glasgow City Council to petition Parliament to prohibit evictions. It was 300 strong with women accompanied at the rear by unemployed

men. 2168 cases of rent arrears had been brought before the Summary Ejectment Court in February 1922.<sup>7</sup> By October 1922, unpaid rent in the city stood at £250,000.<sup>8</sup> Tebbutt also provides an indication of the levels of acute poverty experienced on Clydeside. She demonstrates that the high point of pawnbroking in Britain was between 1900-1913 with the exception of London and Glasgow. In these cities by 1938 licence figures exceeded those for 1903 and 1913/14. Furthermore, while clothing declined in significance as pledge items in Britain, indicating growing prosperity, clothing as a pledge continued to be used more frequently in the North, where low value pledges were of greater relative importance. She states, 'chronic unemployment brought grinding pressures which many families had rarely experienced before'.<sup>9</sup> Thus, where municipal housing became available in the 1920s in Glasgow it was let primarily to people employed as teachers, draughtsmen and foremen.<sup>10</sup> Yet, even teachers could find the new housing estates out of their reach in some regions of Clydeside. Mr Graham, a teacher, declared that he was unable to afford a council house in Greenock in the 1930s.<sup>11</sup> Inability to procure such accommodation moderated access to the ideals of privacy, domestic respectability and male home-centred leisure.

However, although access to municipal housing was initially restricted by poverty, low wages and unemployment, government housing policy in the 1930s ensured that slum clearance took precedence. This permitted some mobility and improved living conditions for working-class families. Yet, slum clearance did not necessarily give rise to transformations of culture in all new working-class neighbourhoods. The Glasgow Housing and General Town Improvement Committee agreed to the erection of Possil in Glasgow to clear a nearby slum.<sup>12</sup> Houses were erected, as they were in Possil, to transplant entire neighbourhoods into what were often a reproduction of the tenements they replaced rather than 'garden suburbs' which facilitated distance, thus privacy. In fact, as early as 1922, Mrs Laird, President of the Glasgow Labour Party Housing Association, complained that 'Scotland should not be content with a lower standard of housing than that aimed at in England where demand for cottages were common'.<sup>13</sup> But it was not just building structure that guaranteed that neighbourhood cultures would be transplanted into the new



estates. The policy of a given council and the attitudes towards the people re-housed could contribute. In 1932, at a Conference on Housing and Town Planning, it was noted by the women of the Labour Party that there was a need, 'to co-opt women on to housing sub-committees'. Labour women felt that, 'it is evident that men do not understand . . . that when slum clearing, the people should be scattered, so that they really get away from their old associations'.<sup>14</sup>

These conditions held the potential to mediate access to the ideals of respectable domesticity, privacy and home-centred leisure. Where this occurred, pre-existing forms of the gender division of leisure that often contributed to marital tensions prevailed. Although such conflict was often based on poverty and the capacity for men's spending to push a family below the poverty line, these tensions were not merely the product of poverty. Studies of the impact of poverty fail to consider the effects on women whose expectations were rising due to the potential for better standards of living between the wars, those whose spouses were in secure and sheltered employment which was relatively well paid. Governments were committed to deflationary policies between the wars and this pushed down the price of food, home ownership and consumer goods. A secure wage could provide access to improved standards of living and the better housing accommodation that was expanding between the wars. This allowed women, and men, privacy, dignity, and enhanced life chances. Economic security was also vital in providing greater access to the ideals of respectable domesticity and companionate marriages. Thus expenditure on male pursuits, especially gambling and drinking, could prove detrimental to both the poorer and more affluent families on the Clyde and elsewhere in Britain, causing tension in homes across a wide spectrum of income groups.

These tensions were evident on Clydeside. Leisure remained gendered and male leisure was rarely home-centred. There is little indication that the companionate marital ideal gave rise to shared leisure pursuits. Furthermore, poverty did not necessarily regulate men's access to spending on leisure. Access to leisure on Clydeside as will become evident was very much determined by gender in many working-class neighbourhoods, creating conflict between couples and contributing to

an extremely high incidence of domestic violence.

The ruptures created by World War I also dramatically affected gender identities and gender relations between the wars in Britain. Concern over the quality and quantity of the race was linked to its capacity to service industry and Empire and clashed with the force of the pre-war feminist agenda and the potentially liberating political, social, sexual and economic forces opening to women at this time. In an attempt to undermine women's potential emancipation and promote traditional gender identities the new companionate marital ideal emerged. However, this ideal had to compete with the structural forces affecting working-class life. The gender discourses of the inter-war period were largely incompatible with the economic realities and the imaginative boundaries of many working-class people's lives. Nevertheless, many Clydeside women aspired to the ideal of glorified domesticity and motherhood being disseminated taking the view that:

A man was brought into this world to be the breadwinner. No wife unless it's necessary should be out working. She should be at home attending to him and the children.<sup>15</sup>

Evidence from oral history indicates that women's expectations of a 'good husband', although continuing to be based on provision, increasingly included the desire to marry 'a caring sharing' man, not one who abused the wage or his wife. They wanted help with child-care and shared leisure, a companion, and not merely a provider. Women stated, 'I'd say a good husband was a man that didn't drink and considered his wife and family'.<sup>16</sup> A 'good man' was 'someone that handed in the pay-packet and took them to the pictures on a Saturday night'.<sup>17</sup>

Men were equally aware of what was expected of the ideal husband. To be a good husband, 'you'd have to be loyal first of all and true and loving and caring. Ma wife used one word, together. Togetherness was our motto right through our lives'. Mr Jamieson defined a 'caring sharing husband'. 'Well a good husband was a man that gave his wife a good allowance, took her out . . . now and again and gave her a holiday.' These men had the financial security to endeavour to be 'companionate husbands'. Yet, even these men did not define a good husband as

one who assisted with household chores or childcare. For many women the ideal was no where near their reality. Mr Davidson felt that a good husband was, 'a bloke that's doing the best he can to keep the house together, the family together. I don't see how you could look for anything better'. Mr Logan stated, 'there were plenty of good husbands. Them that didn't abuse their wives were good husbands.'<sup>18</sup> Few men were prepared to treat their wives' roles as different, but equal in status to their own. Thus, women's expectations were frequently disappointed and marriages of conflict and domestic violence remained highly visible and virulent.

Fundamental to the unfulfilled promise of a companionate husband was male inability or unwillingness to aspire to the ideal, materially and ideologically. For many working-class men, work, masculinity and respectability were interwoven with the 'breadwinner' ideal and the notion of men's ability to 'provide'. This 'placed an immense burden on them'.<sup>19</sup> The burden of respectability was not a male preserve. Women were responsible for keeping up the image of a respectable home life. Such a situation ensured that the economic and social priorities of both sexes could converge. It also guaranteed that under particular economic circumstances, especially when the ability to provide was vulnerable, as it was between the wars, that male identity could become fragile. Male insecurity was exacerbated when wives became a 'reserve army of labour' because women not only competed with male labour, threatening masculinity bound to the 'provider ideal', but they also impinged upon male respectability linked to maintaining women in the home. Such conditions contributed to male insecurity and strengthened the sense of men's inability to combat social injustice because in these circumstances 'respectability', contrary to Crossick's assertion, could not act as an alternative to wealth.<sup>20</sup>

Structural impediments inhibited the potential for men to unconditionally act as providers and many men experienced vulnerability and guilt. The reformulated marital ideal was a difficult aspiration because it reinforced the symbolism of protector and provider in a period of adverse economic conditions. Work and its associated privileges were being challenged by unemployment, real and potential, deskilling and structural change. Peterson insists that under similar conditions in America

in the 1960s women were seen to be 'usurping male privilege' with the result that paternalistic sentiment towards women declined and levels of wife beating rose.<sup>21</sup> Impressionistic evidence suggests that this occurred between the wars. Many of my respondents compared their husbands unfavourably with their fathers when discussing knowledge of men's wage levels, the handing over of unbroken pay packets, abusive expenditure of family resources and levels of domestic violence. On Clydeside paternalistic sentiment towards women abated. Women were seen as a threat to men and this resulted in attempts by a number of men to reassert masculinity. Using aspects of male popular culture to achieve this, pastimes thus operated as defensive strategies resisting a 'process of acculturation', strategies which also entailed an assertion of control over the resources of the family unit.

Working-class men's resort into 'tradition, instinct and orthodoxy' was a pragmatic narcotic in the face of a lost opportunity, engendered by the prevailing 'rehabilitation of labour' and the possibility that monopoly capitalism might penetrate the Clyde and further undermine their position in the work-place. What many of them could not, or were not prepared to accept, however, was the vulnerability of a male-dominance compelled to accommodate and concede compromises to women. These forces ensured that the construction of a working-class society centred on gender conflict permeated the Clyde during the inter-war years. There existed a clear sexual division of labour and leisure and little demonstration of compromise or the companionate marriage. The majority of the men interviewed perceived their wives not as exalted mothers and homemakers, but as a jailer, who would, 'keep a good clean home and look after you and gave you proper food'. Home comforts were an expectation. Mr Ewart lamented, 'she didn't like housework. I said, you're late in the day telling me that now. That's what you're supposed to be isn't it, to be a real one'.<sup>22</sup>

Women's definition although similar, differed in complexion. A good wife was, 'a person that kept the house clean, looked after the food, looked after the children, and looked after the money, because she was always the poor soul that was left with the money'. To fulfil this role, and command respect, women needed to control the family income. Therefore, where men

failed to live up to women's expectations, and this was fairly normative, the struggle for control of the family, and family finances, marked gender relations.

This was not the first time that Clydeside women had experienced radical change in their relations with men. Eighteenth-century Clydeside witnessed a period of industrial transition for male employees, one in which competition for employment between the sexes was framed in the usurper imagery, the 'struggle for the breeches'. This period was impressed by marriages of conflict resulting from the gender-specific, 'social and economic priorities' of spouses.<sup>23</sup> Such marriages came under increasing criticism from the newly emerging middle class who defined and differentiated themselves from plebeian culture, not only materially, but also ideologically. Principal features of this differentiation were the ideas of domesticity, the 'angel in the home' and her concomitant, the male provider, and the concept of respectability. However, under challenge from early feminists, physical conflict between spouses was increasingly condemned and associated with the 'animality' of the lower orders. Yet, some level of 'correcting' fractious wives was perceived as acceptable, and thus women who were victims of such abuse came to be stigmatised by the concept of 'recalcitrance and animality'. Thus, the new ideals may have placed a break on domestic violence, but they also led to invisible crime.<sup>24</sup>

Working-class men were expected to emulate these ideals. Over time, some groups of workers on Clydeside may have embraced the paternalist ideal and other families probably tried to hide the 'shame' of family violence. However, the ideological and socio-economic environment of pre-war Clydeside did little to encourage the emulation of these ideals, structurally or ideologically. Working men in general, subject to the insecurity wrought by the trade cycle, were materially inhibited from absorbing this masculine identity. World War I did little to alter this situation. Many working-class women entered employment during World War I and gained greater economic and social freedom. Mrs Stewart stated, 'I'll tell you what changed lives more in my lifetime than any other thing was the first war. Women came out of the kitchen then'.<sup>25</sup> These conditions corresponded with the growth of jobs classified as 'women's work' and an economic environment which was compelling women to

work at a time when the employment of the 'breadwinner' was precarious. Combined, this was unlikely to stimulate aspirations to be 'new' men.

However, such gender relations were not confined to Clydeside. In Liverpool gender conflict revolved around a wife's 'good housekeeping skills' and a husband's 'stinginess' to pursue leisure'.<sup>26</sup> It seems wives did not contest this, but they did not have to, to cause conflict. Inability to cope was perceived as sufficient grounds for antagonism, just as objecting to male expenditure in Manchester was regarded as 'recalcitrance'.<sup>27</sup> Ross also demonstrates that it was not until after 1914 that London's pub culture became 'poisonously misogynist',<sup>28</sup> denying working-class women shared leisure with their partners. By contrast, in Lancashire, where a culture of two income families existed, wives shared their spouse's leisure. Apparently, marriages of conflict were less common in this region.<sup>29</sup>

The pursuit of recreations from which women were culturally excluded remained of immense consequence to many British males between the wars. This entailed spending money. Davies notes how poverty and unemployment did regulate men's access to leisure. Yet, he also indicates that it is difficult to measure how much money was spent in this way because men's expenditure created conflict within working-class marriages and thus the amount of money spent was 'a jealously guarded secret from wives'.<sup>30</sup> This was consistent with tradition rather than the ideals embedded in the companionship marriage.

Male pastimes and spending had long been used as a retreat to mediate challenges to male domination, a means of male bonding through combination in leisure and control of money used to strengthen the power of males in the family.<sup>31</sup> Men's expenditure on leisure continued to be an expression of masculinity, and between the wars when the foundations of masculinity became insecure, this became more significant, symbolically, if not quantitatively. Yet, because it impinged upon women's gender roles as household managers and guardians of the family, such expenditure was often contested.

On Clydeside, this was the basic economic and recreational structure, which caused conflict between the wars. Inability to aspire to the new ideal man, when the foundations of that masculinity were precarious, combined with economic insecurity and

the perceived challenge from women to create intense sexual antagonism, ensured that, 'it was a normal thing for a man to abuse his wife'. On Clydeside, 'there really was a lot of wife-battering'.<sup>32</sup> So common was sexual antagonism at this time that respondents openly discussed such experiences in the 1990s and often without resort to direct questioning. Wife assault was an everyday fact of life. Recollections indicate as much. 'All the people would have a singsong. There were many people that fought and men that were bad to their wives. One man, he was awful bad to his wife. He'd take this stick and near kill her. That didn't make any difference to us. We'd take her in and watch her.'<sup>33</sup> Moreover, displays of defiance from women or any suggestion of 'greater social freedom' could exacerbate this.

Some of them went too far. We didn't see anybody smoking in our days. If you smoked in the street you were a tart, and maybe the women were smoking and the men didn't like it and then there'd be a barnie. Oh there were plenty of barnies about men coming in drunk and different things, spending money, most of it would be money ah suppose.<sup>34</sup>

Women's defiance, their attempt to express greater 'social freedom', along with poverty and sexual conflicts, resulted in a high incidence of wife beating. The age group representing inter-war offspring corroborated this. Mr Agnew's father beat his mother. Asked if he knew of neighbours behaving similarly he replied, 'No, bar you saw them with a black eye. I've seen scuffles with the neighbours. The man was law'.<sup>35</sup> Inter-war Clydeside spawned a climate in which wife-assault was common and extremely visible. If unsavoury, this was an accepted aspect of family life.<sup>36</sup>

Ma mum had a next door neighbour and he used to knock hell out his wife and she accepted that. Ma father didn't do it but then that's what they did and people, never bothered about it. If she'd been getting really murdered people would've interfered.<sup>37</sup>

As with women throughout Britain, dependence on a male breadwinner, necessity and the power of religion fused to ensure that Clydeside women were ill equipped to leave an abusive relationship.<sup>38</sup>

Lest such behaviour should be regarded as unrepresentative, Glasgow wives are cited in inter-war publications highlighting poverty, deprivation and the perceived family violence associated with the latter.<sup>39</sup> Dr. Robertson depicted wife beating in Glasgow. A resident of Glasgow's Gorbals, he went on to become the local general practitioner and was well acquainted with this area's inhabitants. In response to the Gorbals' 'No Mean City' image and in collaboration with the local beat policeman for the Gorbals between 1923-1930, he wrote *Gorbals Doctor*. In this they argue:

The most common kind of violence was wife-assault, particularly on a Friday or a Saturday night between 11pm and 1am. Normally a child of between eight and fourteen years of age would come rushing into the Southern Division Police Station shouting: 'Ma faither's killin' ma mither'.<sup>40</sup>

The *Govan Press* too, is littered with stories of wife-assault, which included the woman viciously beaten as a result of a conflict with her spouse over 'his' unemployment benefit.<sup>41</sup>

High levels of wife beating between the wars were exacerbated by various social determinants, which operated as constraints to married women. Mrs Parsonage identified a major factor: 'the police were never anxious to deal with domestic trouble'.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps the police understood that the penalties incurred by prosecuted abusers often reflected back on their victims in the form of further violence or a loss of income if the 'breadwinner' was prosecuted or fined. However, it is also the case that the agencies of social welfare increasingly acted as 'marriage menders' and were reluctant to take any course of action which might cause a family breakdown. Conflict in the family was officially hidden.

That such conflict did exist highlights the fact that both sexes had very different social and economic concerns, which, when they were disputed, caused conflict that could erupt into violence. Respondents were asked what caused discord between married couples. They answered, 'the only thing I could think about would be maybe the man getting over-loaded with drink'. Others maintained, 'Money. It was always money, you see, money was tight then. There wasn't many men worked'. 'Money it was



the one thing, because they didn't have it.'<sup>43</sup> These interviews were conducted during the zero tolerance campaign against domestic violence in 1996 and men's responses reflect this. Their answers tended to be less composed when detailing the conflict that resulted in domestic violence. Yet, their responses support the more composed answers given by women:

In Clydebank, a lot of men didn't give their wife the wages that they should have, course that would make arguments. They wanted money to run the house and they'd not the money to do it, while they're away drinking and gambling. These were some of the wrong things and, I'm not trying to make out I'm a great person. I've got faults like all the rest.<sup>44</sup>

In fact, the lack of composure and the assertion, 'I'm not trying to make out I'm a great person. I've got faults like all the rest —', is, in the local dialect, indicative of an admission, if qualified, of complicity in such behaviour. Thus conflict over the wage ensured that a good husband was equally defined as, 'a man who brought his pay home and didn't spend it in the pub on the road'.<sup>45</sup> But many men did, so that disputes over money and especially male expenditure on leisure was a major source of tension between couples. The depression heightened the struggle for scarce resources, but other catalysts contributed. World War I and the post-war economic climate threatened the foundations of male identity, intensified by the expectations placed upon males to be 'ideal husbands'.

Prior to the war the vast number of Clydeside men worked in heavy industry. Many were regarded as skilled workers and most took pride in their ability to endure hard physical toil. Men's self-image was linked to masculine aggressiveness, synonymous with violence. Davies notes how hardness and masculine status permeated working-class culture in Manchester. It was seen as a virtue. Through the role models of the family man who often embarked on family violence and the alternative model of the hard drinking man this status was re-enforced resulting in a masculine self-assertiveness which legitimised violence.<sup>46</sup>

Correspondingly, employment was an important medium from which men gained status, respect and a masculine identity

through the 'breadwinner' ideal. They also accrued privileges as household heads, especially pocket money, formal and informal leisure and freedom from family and household responsibilities. 1914 heralded a new era. The war introduced dilution schemes. Women were seen as a real threat to hitherto male preserves. Exacerbating the situation was the expansion of 'women's work' and the necessity, which compelled women to supplement their spouses' income. Intensification, deskilling and the threat and incidence of unemployment reinforced the notion of women as a threat to masculinity. Furthermore, many men had to accept that they were not the sole breadwinners regardless of the identification of masculinity, which deemed otherwise. Mr Ewart recalled, 'women kept half the houses going'. They were cleaning tram-cars out tae all hours in the morning'. Likewise,

The women worked at scrubbing the boats. They all had part-time jobs scrubbing the boats, but they had to because labourers were only getting £2 a week and a tradesman was £3 6s.<sup>47</sup>

Fluctuating wage levels and the government's monetary policy of the 1930s did little to alleviate male vulnerability. Benefits were cut by 10 per cent and a means test was introduced with 'benefits often dispensed not as a right but as an act of charity'.<sup>48</sup> Unemployed people were humiliated frequently by public assistance employees at labour exchanges. The *Govan Press* reported allegations by the Govan Ward Committee against such employees. They cited incidences of public assistants, who asked claimants, 'are you not ashamed of yourself?'<sup>49</sup> To make matters worse, the children of the unemployed in receipt of clothing, were frequently humiliated, 'The kids at school used tae say, Oh she's Parish don't talk to her. I mean it was really, it was cruel'.<sup>50</sup> Smout stated of this unemployment that, 'its devastating quality lay in the fact that it became an expectation, a way of life, not a singular misfortune'.<sup>51</sup> Mrs Johnson recalled how,

When they weren't working they just didn't bother; they just lay in bed half the day and played cards half the night, anybody that I knew. They were just idle so they just took it for granted the longer it went on.<sup>52</sup>

However, during World War I and thereafter there was a relative social levelling between the different occupational groups of the working class. This permitted the semi-skilled and unskilled men of the Clyde greater opportunity to express masculinity in terms of the provider ideal. The gains accrued may have been short-lived or precarious due to the specialised nature of the Clydeside economy which ensured that a downturn in the major sectors could send ripples throughout the economy, but they were there.

The status, and its associated privileges that men accrued from employment were comparatively secure until war broke out and this had shored up the breadwinner ideal. Thus a multiplicity of male privileges depended upon the breadwinner philosophy. There had to be a wage packet. This was no longer guaranteed between the wars because of the severity of unemployment. The corporation of Glasgow's Public Assistance Department's Abstract of Cases show that in May 1932, among 'Heads of Households', there were 874 engineers out of work, 762 semi-skilled engineers and 644 transport workers, along with 5688 general workers out of a total of 10,914 unemployed men seeking assistance.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, as the 1930s progressed wages in the sheltered industries were curbed and brought into line to some extent with those of other occupations. Thus, even many of the workers who found secure employment often had to accept that their wages were often insufficient to maintain the family unit. Incomes had to be supplemented so that the masculine status based upon sole provision was diminished. This applied to the skilled and unskilled workers alike.

Women on Clydeside, however, had a tradition of supplementing their husband's incomes, a tradition which was not the preserve of unskilled workers. The image of the female usurper, therefore, indicates that it was the context that changed, rather than the economic structure of the family unit. Thus, it was a combination of economic insecurity; the force of the re-assertion of masculinity as defined by the breadwinner ideal and new opportunities for women in the workplace, rather than men's ability to provide for and maintain a wife at home, which caused male insecurity and hostility to women.

Masculinity was not only challenged economically. It was also endangered to some extent by the female sexual revolution

between the wars. Adams argues that the public debate over female sexuality resulted in men internalising fears over their own sexuality. This corresponded with the introduction of contraception and the greater freedoms afforded middle-class women. Combined with the coverage given to the notion of the sexually liberated woman by the clergy and the media, female sexuality was to gain widespread attention.<sup>54</sup> However, working-class women remained relatively ignorant of the availability of contraceptives although knowledge and availability were increasing. Nevertheless, the debate over birth control and the possibility that more working-class women chose to limit family size could have contributed to a crisis in masculinity. For many working-class women the only secure contraceptive or form of family limitation that gave them any control entailed, 'having no more fun'.<sup>55</sup>

The claim that easier access to divorce threatened male dominance is equally contentious. Divorce was extremely costly, exacerbated by women's dependency on male incomes. Women's wages continued to be substantially lower than male incomes.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, divorces could be obtained with greater ease in Scotland. That aside, the divorce rate for Scotland fell for most of the inter-war years. 776 couples divorced in Scotland in 1920, 451 in 1925 and 498 in 1935.<sup>57</sup> Any possibility that divorce was more accessible was mitigated by the fact that, 'no factor would give a single woman a house. It didn't matter what happened it was the women to blame all the time'. Correspondingly, 'you'd nowhere to go. Your mother couldn't take you in because they all had big families, so it was impossible to run back to your people'. And, 'your mother taught you if you made your bed you lie in it. Your mother had a family there, you'd made your bed and you'd just tae lie in it. We were all told that'.<sup>58</sup>

These social impediments were reinforced by the narrowness of women's lives. Many gained an identity from being a victim of domestic abuse. It was a shared experience with other women and a talking point. Other women, however, placed a new emphasis upon masculinity. Apparently, this was because the Boer War was followed in quick succession by World War I creating an imbalance of the sexes, compounded by 'ex-soldiers in bad shape mentally and physically'.<sup>59</sup> In Glasgow there were 'ex-soldiers' who 'dragged themselves about, some on crutches

with an empty trouser leg, or a sleeve crudely sewn up swinging in the wind'.<sup>60</sup> In addition, by 1921, females of fifteen years of age and over out-numbered males in this city by 25,770.<sup>61</sup> This was not merely the result of war. With the exception of the inter-war years, Scotland was characterised by high levels of emigration. Between 1920-1922, 390,000 more people left Scotland than entered it. The majority of emigrants were young single men.<sup>62</sup> Clydeside also had a relatively high male mortality rate, a feature of heavy industrial occupations.<sup>63</sup> Young widowhood was an ever-present possibility. This helps explain Mrs Nicol's sentiments. She had a 'good husband', who was, 'rough and ready', one whom she remained, 'a wee bit frightened of' throughout her marriage.<sup>64</sup> In such an environment working class women were attracted to an exaggerated masculinity just as the foundations of working-class masculinity were being undermined by structural and ideological change. At the same time men felt concern over their 'manliness' and their ability to 'provide and protect'. Naturally, this acted as an impediment to men's subjectification of the readapted 'ideal' husband. It was in this context that recreations acted as a retreat into culture. They provided a means of symbolically expressing masculinity as well as an arena from which to absorb male identity. Thus it was not poverty that caused conflict, but rather insecurity that men resolved via the pursuit of time honoured masculine pastimes. This not only intensified levels of poverty but it undermined the aspirations of more affluent women. The ensuing gender conflict and wife beating were thus representations of extreme physical manifestations of masculine insecurity.

Male insecurity stemmed largely from the ruptures wrought by war, especially in the employment sphere. In turn, alternative arenas from which men drew a sense of male identity, including gambling, alcohol consumption and football were used to facilitate, 'the absorption of manly identity and male affiliation'. They provided a sense of security in adverse economic conditions and at a time when 'male identities cohering around a notion of toughness associated with the qualities deemed necessary to master heavy industrial work', were being rendered defunct. Certainly, job security, better housing accommodation and rising living standards caused some relaxation of the sexual division of leisure. Pastimes also became more home-centred.<sup>65</sup> However on

Clydeside, like Liverpool, London and Manchester, the pub, football and gambling remained 'central to men's networks'. They were aspects of popular culture which were 'used to carve out terrain which were exclusively masculine republics'.<sup>66</sup> These 'masculine republics' moderated male insecurity, but they were also a prime contributory to a high incidence of marital conflict. Male expenditure of the 'family wage' heightened the different gender priorities of both sexes and the home was the arena where the struggle for resources took place.

Not all men behaved this way. There were alternative masculinities to identify with and also different 'propensities for male bonding and aggression' which were influenced by different 'socialisation'.<sup>67</sup> Recreations, however, can be vehicles of socialisation, which reflect and reinforce the wider society, and hold significance and meanings for the participants. The pub was significant to many Clydeside men. It was also a source of sexual antagonism. The gender-specific social and economic priorities of each sex, the number of families on low incomes, insecure employment, unemployment and the potential for men's spending to threaten the standards of living of the more economically secure families ensured this. Respondents were asked,

Q: What kind of things caused wife beating?

A: Oh, maybe money matters or too much drink.

The man would come in drunk and you would say something and that was it, it had started a barnie . . .

They were masters. What they said was law, that's as sure as God!<sup>68</sup>

The majority of my respondents maintained that wife-assault, 'was common, but drink was at the bottom of it'. It was not drunkenness which caused aggression. It was 'an expectation of aggressive behaviour' or the 'provocation to aggress'.<sup>69</sup> Between the wars, because the home was the terrain in which the struggle over resources took place, then the expectation and provocation to behave aggressively, as perceived by many husbands, was a wife's challenge to his 'right' to expenditure. And there were many women who did challenge such expenditure through their expectations of a good husband and directly because this limited what little power they had if they did not. Mrs Campbell, a rag-trader, remembered,

If the man got his pay he would go in for a couple of pints on a Friday night and there was the woman waiting on her pay. See that's how I was busy paying out for rags, because if they waited until he came in, the father, they have to carry out food, but they could get a pound a mince for a shilling at that time. But that was it, the cause of arguments, any agro that was the drink.<sup>70</sup>

Mr Agnew was asked:

Q: What was your father like with a drink in him?

A: I'd say him and the mother was always rowing about it. As soon as he came in the door she would be, 'Look at the state of you coming in!'<sup>71</sup>

Thus, there were women who determined that 'if a man came into me drunk, by God he would have went out quicker than he came in!'<sup>72</sup>

The identification of the poor husband with drunkenness and violence ensured that men's guilt compounded the situation because they knew what was expected of a good husband. 'She'd be talking about a man that was quite a nice man in his ways and he looked after her n' her children. He done his best in every way to justify them getting married, and never at any time could he do things like striking her.' But he was also, 'a man that went home and took out his pay poke unopened, "Here you are darling. There you are." Then she would open it and give him his pocket money'.<sup>73</sup> Yet, like many localities in Britain, on the Clyde, 'disputes over male spending on beer and the innocent flutter were the most common source of discord'.<sup>74</sup> Davies attributed this to the fact that such expenditure could push a family below the poverty line, but he says little of how this expenditure could be a source of male domination and identity.<sup>75</sup> 'Behaviour during alcohol consumption is situational. Violence occurs without it, but drunkenness allows disavowal.'<sup>76</sup>

Q: Did your father hit your mother?

A: Yes when he was drunk.

Q: What was he like sober?

A: What was he like sober! He was talking in his sleep, you know, 'What was I like last night'.<sup>77</sup>

This was not an unusual occurrence and these attitudes were not unique. After stating, 'I haven't had a drink of whisky for years, cut it out when ah saw the damage it was doing to my family', Mr McKenzie responded rather vaguely to the question, did you hit your wife, by answering, 'to the best of my knowledge, no'.<sup>78</sup> The need for interview composure contributed to this response, but this was a form of disavowal practised by many husbands. Rather than acknowledging abusive and aberrant behaviour, disavowal under the guise of impaired memory, due to excessive alcohol consumption, allowed many men the power of expenditure during a period of depression regardless of the consequences to their families, reinforced by the threat and incidence of violence. This shored up the power and masculine identity of significant numbers of men.

Male working-class leisure had a long tradition as a source of men's power, privilege and identity, a tradition which swelled in importance between the wars, if not always quantitatively at least symbolically. These pursuits mediated men's sense of insecurity and vulnerability stemming from the precarious economic climate, perceptions of a female usurper and the concessions to women embedded in the re-formulation of the dominant gender discourse. Thus they were a form of resistance to the transformations taking place in men's lives, but they were also a catalyst of gender antagonism because of the expenditure such pleasures entailed. For many women such expenditure represented a loss of control of an area of family life identified as feminine, household management. More significantly, when the breadwinner abused the family wages in this manner it caused real economic problems for families. However, for families hoping to take advantage of the opportunities opening to those in secure employment between the wars such expenditure was equally detrimental. It was an impediment to better housing, an improved standard of living and the possibility of effecting privacy and respectable domesticity. Thus such expenditure was a conduct for antagonism.

Between the wars poverty did constrain some men's access to 'masculine republics' while transformations occurred in male culture ensuring that home-centred pleasures became more significant to many men. The consumption of alcohol declined between the wars. Convictions for drunkenness fell along with



the consumption of spirits and the licensing of public houses.<sup>79</sup> However, statistics do not inevitably indicate that Clydeside's pub culture declined in significance for men, or that poverty and transformations in working-class culture moderated male spending in 'masculine republics'. By this time few women on the Clyde consumed alcohol. This contributed to the declining levels of alcohol consumption. Of 25 women interviewed only one stated that she consumed alcohol at this time. The male respondents reinforced this. Mr Davidson actually believed, 'women were barred. They must have been barred because I never mind of seeing a woman'.<sup>80</sup> Women were never legally barred from public houses. It was publicans who created these 'masculine republics' because their male customers expected it of them.

In addition to the declining numbers of women drinking, legislation made it difficult for adolescents to consume alcohol. Furthermore, the statistics give no regional breakdowns for alcohol consumption, but 'working-class inner-city areas continued to hold the most licenses and had the worst drink problems'. In Glasgow there were 1,534 licensed premises in 1921, and 1,511 in 1929. By the 1930s this declined slightly. In 1932 there were 1,480.<sup>81</sup> The public house remained of great significance in cities like Glasgow. Mr Agnew recalled, 'my dad spent most of his life in the pub. It was maybe half nine before you saw him. He would be away after his tea'.<sup>82</sup> In addition to this, many respondents remembered the persistence of illicit drinking in shebeens on Clydeside. Furthermore, poverty may have regulated spending in public houses, but it did not ensure sobriety. Mrs Jackson remembered, 'there was a pub on the corner and the unemployed used tae go into it and it was Jungle Juice they called it. See when they got a glass of Jungle Juice, God they were in the Jungle'.<sup>83</sup> Correspondingly, price rises did not prove a deterrent because many 'men drunk greater quantities of beer to supplement the more expensive spirits'. The Amulree Report stressed that this was often at the expense of family necessities.<sup>84</sup> Mr Gordon's recollections indicate the means by which this was accomplished.

Q: Did men let their wives know how much they earned?

A: Oh no! That'd have been terrible, your wife knowing it!

Q: What kind of pocket money did men get?

A: As much as they could, I think. I think that's a fair answer.<sup>85</sup>

This inhibited women from identifying with the dominant worldview on womanhood that entailed good housekeeping skills.

Q: How much did your husband earn?

A: Nobody told you that wee bit of the story hen, you never knew what your man earned. You got your money and that was it. You had £2 10s. You had to pay your factor, your gas and whatever, but he never asked you what you did with it. He never asked that once, what about his rent book, but there were people that couldn't pay the rents. People hadn't the coppers.<sup>86</sup>

Men's spending exacerbated this situation. Mr Davidson, rather vaguely and with little composure, recollected, 'some men would just kind of, they get their pay-packet, they'll take out what their, he'll leave in and give the wife the rest. Maybe he'd have as much in his pocket'.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, 'I never seen a pay packet in my life hen, never, never. I had eleven of us to keep on two pounds ten a week'.<sup>88</sup> Mrs O Neil stated that her husband, a skilled tradesman, 'went off the rails sometimes'. She also recalled, 'well his wages were three pounds. I got two pounds and he got one pound, but then I couldn't tell you how much he earned when the wages got bigger. They varied ah suppose'. Describing the difficulties of being a wife she stated, 'money was a big problem. We used to say to ourselves, how can I make ends meet with this money. Ma husband was a tradesman and still the biggest wage he came home with was three pounds'.<sup>89</sup> There were even greater excesses:

I never got a penny off him from the day I got married. I had a good wage. I had worked at a factory. I didn't need him. He wouldn't part with anything. I know when my first lassie was getting baptised and we had no gas to make tea and this man came in and

turned the gas on outside. That's how I lived.<sup>90</sup>

Concealing the true level of the wage was an important trend. It was integral to the pursuit of masculinity, allowing secret spending on masculine recreations, more so because, 'cultural constraints restricted male affiliation'. Alcohol was significant in allowing the manifestation of male bonding, particularly in Scotland, where, there is a 'strong correlation between manliness and the ability to consume a great deal of alcohol'.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, while the pub environment provided an avenue to express male identity, disavowal justified abhorrent behaviour during drunkenness allowing its continuance. The pub was an 'institution where men increasingly had their masculinity recognised and reinforced', where they 'learned they were entitled to power', and 'how to keep it'.<sup>92</sup>

Q: What did men do if their wives came into the pub?

A: He wouldn't be very happy, he wouldn't do nothing then, but I would imagine there would be a bit of a scuffle outside if he couldn't control his temper.<sup>93</sup>

Not only were women culturally barred from public houses, but few women were employed there either. By 1931 entertainment and leisure were the fastest growing industries on Clydeside. At this time there were 238 barmaids in Glasgow and 3173 barmen. The situation prevailed throughout Clydeside. Paisley had 18 barmaids, 150 barmen and Greenock had 6 barmaids and 164 barmen.<sup>94</sup> Mr Ewart worked as a barman and he said, 'oh you couldn't turn round and say, "Get the hell out of here." You would say, "Excuse me, you're not allowed to sell drink to a woman"'.<sup>95</sup>

Clydeside's pub culture was associated with manliness. It acted as a consolation when masculine identity was insecure because it permitted an alternative means of expression and absorption. Therefore while conflict over the distribution of the wage may have pre-dated the inter-war insecurity experienced by men, the re-assertion of masculinity, as defined between the wars potentially exacerbated male guilt. Although men justified sexual conflict through denial, excused it as drunken behaviour, conflict was amplified because of their inability to aspire to the 'ideal companionate husband' and

this could only lead to guilt. Thus a vicious cycle was created.

Street gambling was also catalytic to the incidence of gender conflict. Gambling has been widely debated. Victorian moralists perceived gambling as an excessive vice, contributing to the poverty, misery and brutality of working-class family life. These views contributed to legislation culminating with the Gambling Act of 1906. The legislation theoretically prohibited working-class gambling, but allowed the upper classes to continue with it unabated. That it did, detracts from a predilection to view gambling as a symptom of poverty. What it does imply is that although gambling is synonymous with a dream of instant wealth, it is also much more. In fact, the rise in the propensity to gamble between the wars might indicate that 'a belief in luck, chance and fate', had replaced previous beliefs in 'progress, solidarity and religious faith', reflecting a process of 'individuation, atomisation or anomie'.<sup>96</sup>

On the Clyde, the adverse economic climate undermined notions of progress and moderated solidarity amongst working-class people, while men were, to a greater extent than women, turning from the churches and chapels. However, the lure of gambling was also its capacity to provide a means of establishing character, the 'principal attributes of which are 'gameness, gallantry, courage, integrity, composure and presence of mind', many of the attributes associated with employment under threat between the wars. Gambling offered 'the possibility of effecting reputation in a society which had all but arranged action out of everyday life',<sup>97</sup> enhanced by the element of deviance, offering the status of rebel, winner and even a good loser.

Q: Did your husband bet?

A: Oh he loved to, in fact that was his only vice. His whole pocket money went back, although somebody told me he was quite a lucky winner.<sup>98</sup>

Mrs McQueen recalled, 'he'd have emptied your purse in a minute. I had to hide all my money. He was a good loser right enough and he didn't win very often'. Likewise,

A: Oh my man, aye! He would have pawned the shirt off his back.

Q: Have you any idea how much they put on a line?

A: Oh he put a lot of money on, because I mean when he won he won.<sup>99</sup>

Men recalled how a win felt, 'oh you felt like a millionaire. A couple a bob was a lot of money too. Ah pint of beer cost you 4d . . . at that time'. It was, 'a time of elation', which, 'felt champion'. Mr Ewart maintained, 'when you win you were over the moon'.<sup>100</sup> However, women did not necessarily share their enthusiasm because, 'it was just a done thing, I mean they would do without food to keep the money for gambling'. Mrs Macintosh worked to supplement her husband's unemployment benefit. She remembered, 'it was with him at this corner. I passed and they'd all a drink in them. I turned and said, "what's left for eating, have you had your pals up?" He came up later and was annoyed at me saying this in front of his pals, and they used to say, "I wouldn't take that off of her"'.<sup>101</sup>

Gambling was also linked with the pub culture:

I took a line for my father. You used to get the *Topical Times*, and he picked some horse. He had five horses and they all won. He sent me along with the line. He said, 'You will maybe not get paid that. It comes to nearly £2 10s'. So I went along and brought the money back. He gave me a dollar. And oh, he was down the pub with all his mates and they were all drunk for days.<sup>102</sup>

This link between the pub and gambling heightened gambling's potential to contribute to gender conflict. It was a focus of contested terrain between couples, safeguarded by the violence which was 'ever present if not indulged', which Hammerton argues characterised marriages of conflict rather than those of companionship.<sup>103</sup>

However, Chapman insists that working class gambling was relative to incomes with stakes ranging from 6d to 2/6d.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, there exists a substantial body of evidence to refute his assertion. Street gambling escalated phenomenally between the wars in Scotland, particularly in working-class communities where it was associated with sport.<sup>105</sup> The amount spent at dog tracks in Britain alone rose from £10,000,000 per annum to £75,300,000 between 1927-1938.<sup>106</sup> Apparently, the working-

class were 'running after the bookies'. Mr McKenna lived in Croy, Lanarkshire with a population of around 'two hundred people'. It had 'three bookies'.<sup>107</sup> Correspondingly,

Q: Do you remember the bookies?

A: Oh aye. They used to shout - in fact the lady across the road from us they had a parrot and it used to shout, 'Get the money in, the police are coming.'<sup>108</sup>

In 1929 *Forward* reported that a bookie responsible for 148 closes in Plantation St. [Kinning Park, Glasgow] took £35 per day prior to 1914. By 1923 he made an estimated £300 daily in the flat season. The *Govan Press* is littered with accounts of bookies' arrests. In 1926 it reported on a raid in which 6,000 betting lines and several football coupons were appropriated from a bookie in the Govan area of Glasgow.<sup>109</sup> Therefore gambling held the capacity to push many families to the margins or below the poverty line or to erode their potential to enjoy improved living standards. It was not necessarily relative to income.

Chapman also failed to acknowledge the propensity to gamble in different ways and the large number of men who placed a daily wager. Respondents noted wagers placed on horses, dogs, football coupons, pitch and toss and card playing as among the variety of ways to gamble.

Q: Did your father gamble?

A: He took horse bets, dog bets, football bets and boxing bets, but when he got that done he would drink the winnings. He didn't know when to stop because it went to his head.<sup>110</sup>

Rather than being relative to income, gambling was intrinsically linked to the pursuit of masculinity, exacerbating marital tension.

Women also gambled, but they did not do so with the same frequency as their male counter-parts. Moreover, it was women's perceptions of gambling that most correlated to the idea of gambling as a form of working class saving or the 'dream of instant wealth' and this wealth could exclude the 'breadwinner'.

Q: Was there a lot of women that gambled?

A: They used to try but they hadn't much money. If they had a shilling: try your luck and see if you can win something out of it. If you could get half a crown you could take all your weans to the pictures, five weans and yourself to the pictures.<sup>111</sup>

Male gambling, however, like the pub was a source of establishing male dominance, and between the wars a source when masculine identity itself was insecure.

The final area of Clydeside's 'three cornerstones' of male working-class culture was football. Many men 'ate, slept, drank and lived football seven days a week'.<sup>112</sup> Football, the game, spectating and discussion, facilitated male bonding, and was tied to gambling and the pub. Murray suggests of Glasgow's Celtic and Rangers Football clubs that they represent a microcosm of Scottish society and that they expanded at a phenomenal rate from 1914.<sup>113</sup> The growth of Rangers Football Club, initially spurred by rising incomes, increased leisure time and technological developments allowing access to commercial leisure, may also reflect inter-war perceptions of relative deprivation. It was the employment notably associated with skilled Protestant workers, as the football club was, which were most susceptible to the economic climate, whilst sheltered employment, such as municipal work, was often undertaken by Catholic workers. In this environment support provided an outlet for the expression of masculine and religious identity just as employment had done. Correspondingly, the growth of Celtic Football Club may highlight a Catholic counter-response, but it might also demonstrate greater access to commercial leisure being enjoyed by workers benefiting from the inter-war deflationary policies, workers less susceptible to the unemployment affecting the heavy industries.

The inter-war years were also the period of the North/South divide and of the myth of the working-class hero, the poor tenement boy who overcomes the obstacles of poverty to make good through footballing skills. Moorhouse argues that this myth is endemic of the fatalism engendered by relative deprivation. This myth, moreover, was the allegorical equivalent of the Clydeside crafts, encompassing, 'skills of precision, quality and expertise - rare craftsmanship passed in the blood'.<sup>114</sup> Hence when the status from employment diminished men may have

found a new outlet, one also providing the vicarious qualities of 'competitiveness, aggression and instrumentality'.<sup>115</sup> In such a context a team's defeat was possibly internalised as a personal challenge to masculine identity. Mr Beattie 'didn't feel very well when Celtic were defeated', because being a Celtic 'man' meant 'something worthwhile'.<sup>116</sup>

Q: What did a man's football team mean to him personally?

A: Oh I think quite a lot, quite a lot. It gives them all an interest.

Q: So how did you feel when your team got beat?

A: Ready for crying.<sup>117</sup>

The bigotry manifest in Rangers and Celtic football support was not restricted to these teams or Glasgow. Brown highlights that a similar bigotry existed between the rival teams of Port Glasgow and Greenock.<sup>118</sup> On the other hand, Mr Ewart maintained that a man's football team meant, 'the pub. It can lead you to it'.<sup>119</sup> Thus, 'many a poor woman was frightened for the match being finished and the man coming home'.<sup>120</sup> As masculinity was drawn from such identification, football and its links with gambling and the pub culture often proved volatile when contested by wives.

The pillars of male working-class leisure had a long tradition as centres of male power, privilege and identity, but this was amplified between the wars, if not always quantitatively at least symbolically. These pursuits mediated men's sense of insecurity and vulnerability stemming from the precarious economic climate, perceptions of a female usurper and the concessions to women embedded in the re-assertion of the dominant gender discourse. These compromises included glorifying mothers and homemakers and conceding equality to women within the family and the neighbourhood. They also included the expectation of love, respect and provision. These expectations were not inconsistent with the traditional ideals of masculinity, but many working-class men had been impeded structurally from assimilating the ideal of a paternalistic 'breadwinner', and, therefore, the 'companionate husband' was an equally difficult aspiration. The relative subjectification of the dominant discourse by women, whilst working-class men



could not or would not aspire to be 'companionate providers' ensured that intense gender antagonism continued to mark gender relations. Men thus continued to resort to popular culture as a means of expressing and developing a masculine identity and as a form of resistance to acculturation. This put pressure on marriage. Thus women's expectations were disappointed. The 'new man' of the inter-war period remained a myth. Gender antagonism and marriages of conflict, which had marked Clydeside from at least the eighteenth century, prevailed, and were exacerbated by the ruptures wrought by war.

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#### **Glossary of Terms and Phrases:**

4d: is four pennies.

Agro: a form of conflict.

A line: refers to the accumulated number of horses, dogs or football teams the individual is gambling on.

Barnie: conflict verbal and physical.

Bloke: man/male.

Breeches: trousers.

Clydeside was the most highly populated and industrial region of west central Scotland.

Coppers: is small sums of money, usually pennies.

Factors: were landlords or intermediates for landlords.

Govan: a region of Glasgow, a city at the heart of Clydeside. The Govan Press was its local newspaper.

Half a crown: was 12 ½ pennies.

Hen: is a term of endearment.

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It went to his head or 'heid': is a colloquialism for being overwhelmed.

Jungle juice: refers to cheap and potent alcohol.

Loggerheads: forms of conflict, verbal and physical.

'Ma faither's killin' ma mither': My father is killing my mother, referring to extreme physical violence being inflicted on a wife by her husband.

Parish: within a certain context is a reference to children whose parents were in receipt of means tested benefits and clothing entitlements for their children. The clothing was distinctive and clearly marked out the poverty of the family.

Paying out for rags: refers to the Rag trade in old clothing used by the poor as a strategy to cope with poverty.

Pay-packet or pay poke: refers to a daily or weekly wage.

Pictures: cinema-house.

Pocket money: refers to the sum given to a male 'breadwinner' for his sole use.

Rangers and Celtic: Are the two main football clubs in the City of Glasgow renowned for their sectarian rivalry.

Rough and ready: refers to manliness.

Scuffles: physical conflict, generally of a minor nature.

Shilling: was five pennies.

The *Topical Times*: was a paper which covered horse races and provided information on form.

'Turned the gas on outside': means bypassing the system that ensured payment for services.

'Went off the rails sometimes': refers to occasional bad behaviour.

Endnotes

- 1 All interviews were conducted with author between 1996-2000. All identities have been changed and transcripts/tapes will be lodged in the Scottish Oral History Centre, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. SOHCA/019/042/MrGU, b.1915, Anderson, Glasgow.
- 2 D. Gittins, *Fair Sex, Family Size and Structure 1900-39* (London), p.123.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p.145.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp.79-80 and 141-143.
- 5 For data on local authority housing in Glasgow, see M. Keating, *The City That Refused To Die* (Aberdeen, 1988), p.17. For Scotland see, S. Pollard, *The Development of the British Economy 1914-1967* (London, 1968), p.260, and for private building see, J. Butt, "Working-Class Housing in Glasgow 1900-1939," in I. MacDougall (ed.), *Essays in Scottish Labour History* (Edinburgh, 1978), pp.143-169. See also A. Gibb, *The Making of Glasgow* (London, 1983).
- 6 *Glasgow Herald*, 11th October 1922.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 11th October and 5th February 1922.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 11th and 21st October 1922.
- 9 M. Tebbutt, *Making Ends Meet: Pawnbroking and Working Class Credit* (Leicester, 1983), pp.137,151 and 195.
- 10 *Glasgow Herald*, 11th October 1922.
- 11 SOHCA/019/046/MrGRA, b.1904, Greenock, Renfrewshire.
- 12 *Glasgow Herald*, 27th March 1922.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 23rd March 1922.
- 14 *Labour Women*, June 1932, p.94.
- 15 SOHCA/019/06/MrsGE, b.1907, Gorbals, Glasgow.
- 16 SOH/CA/019/02/MrsGRA, b.1919, Greenock, Renfrewshire.
- 17 SOHCA/019/010/MrsGI, b.1907, Dennistoun, Glasgow and SOHCA/019/011/MrsGJ, b.1917, Cowcaddens, Glasgow, respectively.
- 18 SOHCA/019/046/MrGRA, b.1906, Greenock, Renfrewshire; SOHCA/019/036/MrAJ, b.1899, Townhead, Glasgow; SOHCA/019/030/MrAD, b.1900, Bridgeton, Glasgow and SOHCA/019/044/MrLA, b.1900, Croy, Lanarkshire, respectively.
- 19 Gareth Stedman Jones as quoted in S.O. Rose, "Gender Antagonism and Class Conflict: Exclusionary Strategies of Male Trade

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- Unionists in Nineteenth Century Britain,” *Social History* Vol.13, No.2, (1988), p.205.
- 20 As quoted in *ibid.*, p.205.
  - 21 D. Peterson, ‘Wife-Beating: An American Tradition’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23 (1992), pp.97-118.
  - 22 SOHCA/019/044/MrLA, b.1900, Croy, Lanarkshire and SOHCA/019/030/MrAD, b.1900, Bridgeton, Glasgow, respectively.
  - 23 See A.Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches and the Making of the British Working Class* (London, 1997), pp.3-7, 18 and *passim*.
  - 24 See, P.Haag, ‘The Ill-Use of A Wife: Patterns of Working-Class Violence in Domestic And Public New York City, 1860-1880,’ *Journal of Social History* 25 (1992), pp.447-477; M.Hunt, ‘Wife-Beating Domesticity and Women’s Independence in 18th Century Victorian England,’ *Gender and History* 3 (1991), pp.10-33; J. Hammerton, ‘The Targets of Rough Music: Respectability and Domestic Violence in Victorian England,’ *Gender and History* 3, No.1 (1991), pp.23-44; A.Clark, ‘Humanity or Justice,’ in C. Smart (ed.), *Regulating Womanhood: Historical Essays on Marriage, Motherhood and Sexuality* (London, 1992), pp.187-206; C. Bauer & L. Ritt, ‘A Husband is a Beating Animal: Francis Power Cobbe Confronts the Wife Abuse Problem in Victorian England,’ *International Journal of Women’s Studies* (1983), pp.99-118.
  - 25 SOHCA/019/020/MrsGS, b.1895, Pollockshields, Glasgow.
  - 26 P. Ayers & J.Lambertz, ‘Marriage Relations, Money and Domestic Violence in Working Class Liverpool 1919-39,’ in J Lewis (ed.), *Labour and Love: Women’s Experience of Home and family, 1850-1940* (Oxford, 1986), pp.195-210.
  - 27 M.Tebbutt, ‘Women’s Talk? Gossip and Women’s Words in Working-Class Communities 1880-1939,’ in A. Davies & J. Fielding (eds.), *Workers’ Worlds: Culture and Communities in Manchester and Salford 1880-1939* (Manchester, 1992), p.53.
  - 28 E. Ross, ‘Fierce Questions and Taunts: Married Life in Working Class London 1870-1914,’ *Feminist Studies* 8, No.3 (1982), p.596.
  - 29 E.Roberts, *A Woman’s Place: An Oral History of Working-Class Women 1890-1940* (Oxford 1984), pp.82-122, especially 110-121.
  - 30 A. Davies, ‘Leisure in the ‘Classic Slum’,’ in A. Davies & J. Fielding (eds.), *Workers’ Worlds*, p.105.
  - 31 A. Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*, pp.29-30.
  - 32 SOHCA/019/014MrsGM, b.1911, Springburn, Glasgow and SOHCA/019/MrsGJ, b.1917, Cowcaddens, Glasgow, respectively.
  - 33 SOHCA/019/015MrsGN, b.1909, Bridgeton, Glasgow.

- 34 SOHCA/019/05MrsGD, b.1912, Govan, Glasgow.
- 35 SOHCA/019/047/MrGAA, b.1929, Townhead, Glasgow.
- 36 See A. Hughes, *Popular Pastimes and Wife-Assault* (University of Strathclyde, Dissertation, 1996), especially pp.1-9. See also, A. Hughes, "‘A Rough Kind of Feminism’: The Formation of Working-Class Women’s Political Identities, Clydeside c.1919-1936 (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Strathclyde, 2001), especially chapter four.
- 37 SOHCA/019/026MrsGZ, b.1917, Govan, Glasgow.
- 38 Tebbutt, *Making Ends Meet*, p.38.
- 39 M.Spring-Rice, *Working Class Wives Their Health and Condition* (London, 1981), pp.115-116, 141-142. See also E. Rathbone, *The Disinherited Family* (London, 1927), index.
- 40 G.G. Robertson, *Gorbals Doctor* (London, 1975), pp.130-135 & passim.
- 41 Govan Press, 12th February 1932.
- 42 SOHCA/019/026/MrsGZ, b.1917, Govan, Glasgow.
- 43 SOHCA/019/03/MrsGB, b.1907, Calton, Glasgow, SOHCA/019/018/MrsGQ, b.1909, Camlachie, Glasgow, and SOHCA/019/08/MrsGG, b.1916, Townhead, Glasgow, respectively.
- 44 SOHCA/019/043/MrCA, b.1920, Clydebank, Dumbartonshire.
- 45 SOHCA/019/020MrsGS, b.1895, Pollockshields, Glasgow.
- 46 A. Davies, "Youth Gangs, Masculinity and Violence in Late Victorian Manchester and Salford," *Journal of Social History* Vol.32, No.2 (1998), pp.349-370.
- 47 SOHCA/019/031/MrGE, b.1908, Partick, Glasgow, and SOHCA/019/04MrsGC, b.1910, Bridgeton, Glasgow, respectively.
- 48 T.C.Smout, *A History of the Scottish People 1830-1950* (Glasgow, 1990), pp.67-68.
- 49 Govan Press, 15th January 1932.
- 50 SOHCA/019/025MrsPA, b.1914 Paisley, Renfrewshire.
- 51 Smout, *Scottish People*, p.117.
- 52 SOHCA/019/025/MrsPA, b.1914 Paisley, Renfrewshire.
- 53 GRA/TD 1207/1-3 [170/1067E], Corporation Of Glasgow Public Assistance Department Statistics: Abstracts of Cases [Heads of Households] Chargeable at 31st May 1932.
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**SECTION 2: RESEARCH PAPER**

**TORTURE AND THE  
SCOTTISH WITCH-HUNT:  
A RE-EXAMINATION<sup>1</sup>**

orture is generally considered one of the key features of the Scottish witch-hunt. The application or use of torture as part of the legal process is regularly contrasted with the system found in England, where torture was not permitted as part of the legal process. For example, Joseph Klaits in his discussion of the witch-hunt in Europe has commented on this unique feature of the English witch-hunt and has suggested that in England we see how “witch trials might have been conducted everywhere had torture not been introduced.”<sup>2</sup> Elliot P. Currie made the distinction between the inquisitorial system common to Europe and the more “restrained control” in England.<sup>3</sup> Scotland, in contrast, is considered to follow the continental model where the use of torture in questioning suspects led to fiercer witch-hunts. This idea has become a standard interpretation in English language writings on the European witch-hunts. The literature has, until very recently, distinguished clearly between England (no torture) and Scotland (torture), and seen this difference in legal systems as one of the key factors in the resulting severity of witch-hunting in Scotland. Only recently has this clear differentiation between the English and Scottish experience of witch-hunting begun to break down.<sup>4</sup> Still, the traditional view is well captured in the picture painted by historian Geoff Quaife:

In Scotland, an often insensible victim had his confession mumbled to him by an inarticulate clerk and the sagging of the former’s head was taken as an indication that such a confession was now offered freely.<sup>5</sup>

Christina Larnar, while cautious about the uniqueness of the

English witch-hunt, stressed the role of torture in Scotland within her major work *Enemies of God: The Witch-hunt in Scotland* (1981). Lerner included a major discussion on the various forms of torture used within Scotland, and included it as a key aspect of the process by which the suspect moved from accusation to execution.<sup>6</sup> Recent research has begun to raise questions as to the forces driving the witch-hunt in Scotland. In particular, work understanding the chronological and geographical shape of the Scottish witch-hunt has raised some important first questions. Based upon this research, an intensive case study was done of the witch-hunt in one region of Scotland, Fife, which raised even further cautions about the role played by torture in the judicial process in Scotland during the witch-hunts.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, the research in Fife involved looking beyond the geographical and chronological information to the specific details in the 420 known cases involving suspicion of witches which occurred in Fife between 1560-1710. This paper will argue that while torture clearly was used in Scotland during the witch-hunts, the role judicial torture played as a motivating factor in the intensity of the witch-hunt has been exaggerated.

One of the factors which has led to this confusion has been the simple fact that the word "torture" has been used in a variety of ways. The term "torture" has been used to cover everything from brutal treatment to sleep deprivation, from "swimming" a witch to an inquisitorial procedure in which physical harm was used to extract a confession. For example, in his article "Torture" within the *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* Russell Hope Robbins contrasts Scotland, where witches were tortured, with England where they were not. Yet a few pages later he uses the phrase "commonest tortures" in reference to England, then modifies it with the interjection – "perhaps indignities is a better word" – before cataloguing these as pricking, "walking" (sleep deprivation, more generally referred to in Scotland as waking) and sitting. This is followed by the comment that sleep deprivation should be considered "real torture."<sup>8</sup> Robbins' is a notable, though by no means unique, example of this imprecision. Even a normally careful historian such as Lerner succumbs to the confusion. In her discussion she distinguishes between "direct torture" and sleep deprivation. In the midst of a discussion of direct torture, however, she cites an example of the brutal treatment of

Marion Hardie. Yet this treatment was, as Larner noted, an instance of brutality at the hands of a mob intent on inflicting pain, not a judge intent on extracting a confession. That this incident should be preceded by a discussion of the devices used in attempts to extract confession and followed by the particularly infamous case of Alison Balfour, where brutal methods were used to extract a confession only heightens the confusion.<sup>9</sup>

Precise definitions are crucial. We need to distinguish between six elements:

1. judicial torture (Larner refers to this as direct torture) - that is the application of physical coercion as part of the broadly understood legal process in order to extract a confession
2. searches for a witch-mark (witch-pricking)
3. sleep deprivation (waking and watching)
4. harsh jail conditions, including cold, poor treatment by guards, and lack of food
5. mob violence
6. the method of execution, however cruel.

Judicial torture may be the most difficult for us to imagine of these six. It would involve the use of instruments of torture - hot brands, thumb-screws - or even the showing to the suspect of these instruments, with the expectation that unless and until they confessed to the suspected behaviour, they would be tortured with these or similar instruments. Distinguishing between these various acts is not intended to in any way downplay the brutality of the treatment which these women experienced, but these distinctions must be made if we are to make a fair comparison between the Scottish witch-hunt and those in other parts of Europe.

The assumption has been that judicial torture was widely used in Scotland. A related argument has been that this explains why Scotland produced so many witches. As the process is imagined, Scotland would have experienced a series of witch-hunts, which can be referred to as chain witch-hunts or serial witch-hunts. In these serial witch-hunts, an accused witch was tortured to try to extract a confession from her and to get her to name who else in the community was also a witch. These women were also interrogated under torture, leading to the accusations of others, and the spread of the hunt until dozens of women could

be accused and executed. Clearly these kinds of serial hunts were experienced in Scotland. The North Berwick trials of 1590 are a famous example.<sup>10</sup> The question remains, how extensive were they? To put it in another way, if this was how witch-hunting occurred in Scotland, what we should expect to see when we examine the patterns of witchcraft accusations is a concentration of cases in a few years and a specific geographic area.

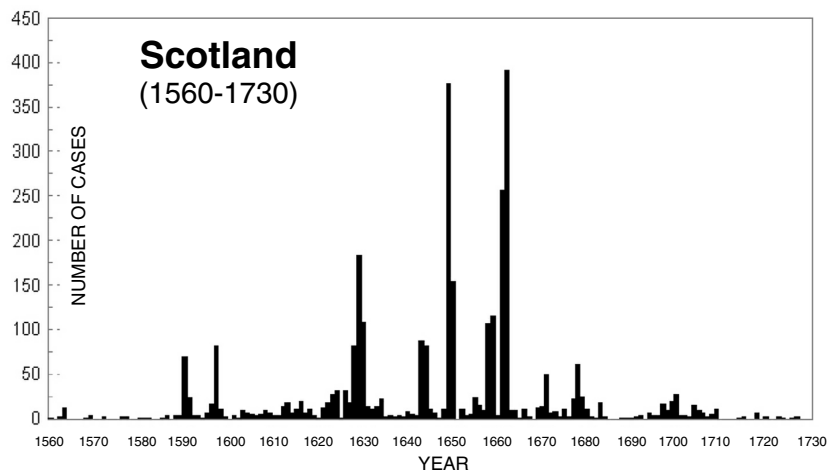


Figure 1 - Cases of Witchcraft in Scotland, 1560-1730.  
Source: Scottish Witch-hunt Data Base (SWHDB)

What is apparent from the graph of the known cases of the Scottish witch-hunt (Figure 1) is that witch-hunting was an ongoing process with scattered accusations over many years, as well as peak years when witch-hunting seems to have gripped the entire nation. Even here it is important to recognize that the peak years often are indications of a national hunt with cases coming from throughout Scotland, not just from a specific geographic area. For example, the major hunt which took place in 1649 involved cases from seventeen different counties or sheriffdoms. Haddington had the most cases (110), but there were many areas where only a handful of individuals were accused. When we move from the national scene to consider the shape of the hunt in a region such as Fife, these misgivings multiply. The graph of the witch-hunt in Fife (Figure 2) illustrates the number of isolated witches and the years in which cases were infrequent, as well as

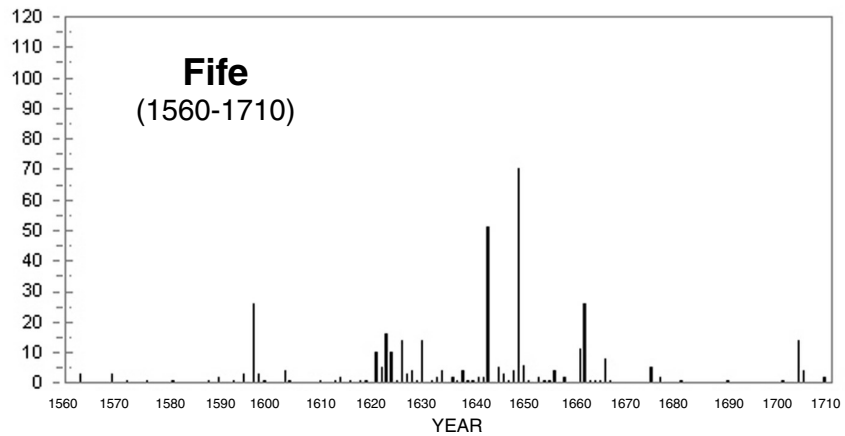


Figure 2 - Cases of Witchcraft in Fife, 1560-1710. Source: (SWHDB)

the years when significant numbers of accusations were made. This pattern does not support the kind of scenario usually portrayed where one accusation spirals into a major hunt once judicial torture has been applied to the suspect. How would we explain the scattered cases which appear in the period from 1600 to 1610, or in the 1630's? And if we look at where witch-hunting occurred each year, we see again isolated cases that are seemingly

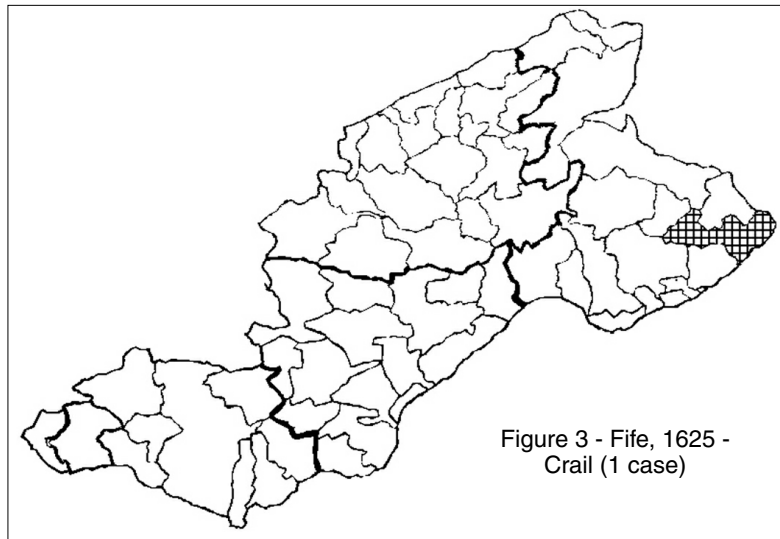
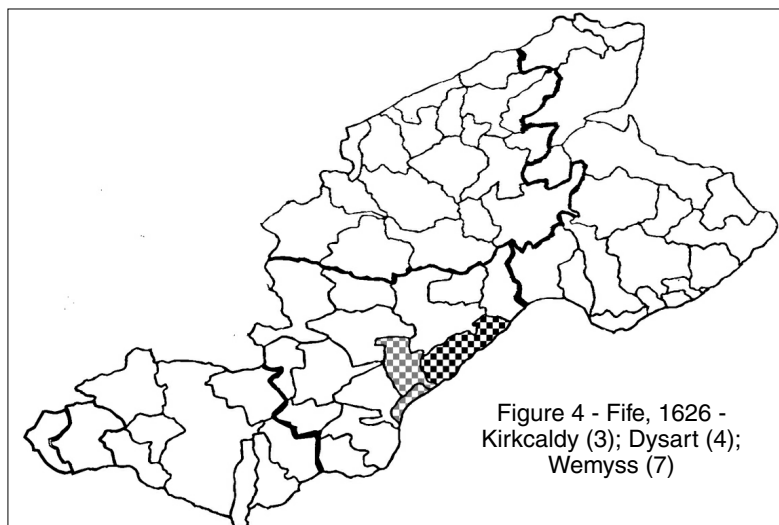


Figure 3 - Fife, 1625 - Crail (1 case)



unrelated. For example, when we look at two years from the 1620's, it is difficult to see the relationship between the case in 1625 in Crail (Figure 3), and the fourteen cases which occurred the next year in the parishes surrounding Kirkcaldy (Figure 4). Even here, the cases are spread over three parishes. There are situations where torture may have been a factor, however the shape of the Scottish witch-hunt suggests that the role of torture, at least as traditionally conceived, needs to be reconsidered.

When we turn from the patterns of the witch-hunt to specific cases, the data from Fife does not support the current contention that torture was a major feature of the Scottish witch-hunt. Again it is important that we keep our definitions of the various kinds of torture very clear. There is considerable evidence of brutal treatment, of harsh jail conditions, and also harsh methods of execution in Fife. There was a lynching in Pittenweem in 1704, when a woman by the name of Janet Cornfoot was dragged from her home, beaten, and eventually murdered by a mob.<sup>11</sup> Brutality was a feature of the witch-hunt in Fife. However, when we consider judicial torture and the role it played, the result is quite startling. There is no clear evidence in all of the 420 known cases from Fife of direct torture or judicial torture ever being used. It is tempting to fall back on issues such as the silence of the records and the paucity of sources. And it is true that the records for two

of the major panics, the one which afflicted Inverkeithing in 1649 and the one which spread through Cupar Presbytery in 1662 are missing key elements and are woefully inadequate. Yet, this should not prevent us from facing the fact that judicial torture was not needed. Other mechanisms, witch-pricking and in particular sleep deprivation, were adequate to drive the witch-hunt. The only case of torture of which we are aware, that of Geillis Gray of Crail, happened outside of the legal process and was seen as brutal at the time.<sup>12</sup>

Searches for the witches mark, or witch-pricking, did occur in Fife. Margaret Atkin, the witch of Balweary, claimed to be able to detect a witch by looking into her eyes. Her career came to a halt in the summer of 1597 when she was proven to be a fraud and was brought back to Fife for execution.<sup>13</sup> The other cases which involved witch-finders fell within the period 1630 to 1670, the greatest years of the hunt in Fife. For example, John Kincaid, the famous witch-pricker, was in Dunfermline parish in 1649. The session minutes not only note the execution of Bessie Mortoun, one of the nine accused of witchcraft in the parish that year, but include the record of a payment of 20 merks to John Kincaid in Tranent who had come and “tried the witch mark on Bessie Mortoun.”<sup>14</sup> There is a further notation of a payment to Andrew Thomson for lodging the witch “triers” (plural).<sup>15</sup> John Kincaid also made another £6 Scots that year for “brodding” Margaret Dunhome outside of Fife in Burntcastle.<sup>16</sup> The final evidence of witch-finders active in Fife comes again during a period of major persecution during the witch-hunt of 1662, and included the cases of Margaret Carvie and Barbara Horniman from Falkland.

While there clearly was a witch-finder present in these cases, one should be cautious in attributing to him or her the outbreak of persecution. In fact, the witch-pricker in Fife tended to fill the role of maintaining an existing hunt. For example, in April 1649 five cases of witch-craft were noted before any reference to a witch finder is noted. Indeed, the origin of this hunt was the accusation made by a suspected male witch in Dalgetty who was warded and watched.<sup>17</sup> Again in 1662 a witch-hunt was well underway in Aberdour before a witch-finder was brought in to confirm that Janet Bell, a woman of some social stature who had been accused by other suspects, was indeed a witch.<sup>18</sup>

The evidence suggests that sleep deprivation was the most prevalent form of torture used in Fife. Depriving a person of their sleep for days on end, a form of torture which we now know can lead to hallucinations, was referred to in church court and burgh records as “warding” or “watching”. Church courts could be very precise in how they wanted this to occur, where they thought this should occur, and in making sure the individual was isolated from anyone but the warders and the presbytery ministers. For example, the records of Pittenweem record these instructions during a hunt for witches which took place in 1643:

The quhilk day, for the better tryal of the witches presently apprehended, to the effect they may be better the watchit and preservit from information of their friends, it is ordainit that ane of the bailies or counsell sall ever be present at the taking off and putting on of the watches, three several times in the 24 hours, and sall injoyn the watches silence; and sall appoint the ablest man of the watch to command the watch until his return. The same day the bailies and clerk, or any twa of them, with concurrence of the minister, are ordainit to try and examine ye witches privately, and to keep their depositions secret, because heretofore, so soon as ever they did dilait any, presently the partie dilaitit got knowledge thereof, and thereby was presently obdurate, at least armit, for defense.<sup>19</sup>

Why the twenty-four hour watch? Why the careful separation of the suspected witches from any outside contact? The details point to “waking” of these individuals – sleep deprivation.<sup>20</sup>

Careful examinations such as the one described resulted in confessions. Janet Robertson, Agnes Quarrier, Helen Cummyng, Alesoune Hutchesone, and Agnes Robertson were all implicated in the “foull and detestable crymes of witchcraft”, in particular the murder by sorcery of Jhone Bell, and after being apprehended by the bailies of Aberdour “and verie cairfullie truit and examenit be thame upon thair guylteness of the saidis crymes, they frelie and of thair awne accord grantit and confest the said marthour and thair conversing with the devill.”<sup>21</sup> In Crail in 1643 during the hunt that swept the Presbytery of St. Andrews,



Agnes Wallace confessed to being a witch after being warded.<sup>22</sup>

A different way of assessing the effectiveness of “waking” suspected witches is to note what occurred when this method was not or could not be used. One such case occurred in Balmerino on the North coast of Fife, in 1649 and 1650 and gives some fascinating evidence. Elspeth Seath was accused of witchcraft in December 1648 by a dying woman. The Presbytery of Cupar spent a great deal of time collecting evidence about Elspeth but was never able to ward her according to their wishes. By June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1649 the presbytery had received a warrant from the Justice in Edinburgh to incarcerate and further examine Elspeth.<sup>23</sup> The Magistrates in Cupar would not put Elspeth in prison. They were not convinced, despite assurances, that the parish of Balmerino was going to pay the costs. Instead, they offered to incarcerate Elspeth Seath in the thieves’ hole. This was not acceptable to the presbytery. They wanted her kept in close confinement, with no one able to harm her or see her but the presbytery.<sup>24</sup>

The presbytery continued to interrogate Elspeth in order to bring her to a confession. She maintained her innocence. The presbytery also continued in their efforts to persuade the officials in Cupar to incarcerate Elspeth. The presbytery promised that they would appoint some people to watch her at their own expense. Again, they were offered the thieves’ hole. The presbytery tried to get the central government to force the officials in Cupar to give way, but they failed. On December 6<sup>th</sup>, Elspeth appeared for the last time before the presbytery. Because the town of Cupar “wold not assist in warding and watching the said Elspeth,” she could not be tried. She was told to appear again, if called.<sup>25</sup>

The lack of confession in this case was vital. The inability of the clergy and magistrates in Balmerino, a small parish on the Tay Coast, to force the magistrates in the nearest major centre, Cupar, to incarcerate Elspeth Seath in circumstances acceptable to them made the difference. Why did the presbytery continually refuse the offer of the thieve’s hole? Why was the town of Cupar so concerned about the expenses of incarcerating Elspeth Seath in the manner demanded by the presbytery? The presbytery was attempting to “ward and watch” Elspeth and for this, as they themselves stated, particular conditions were required, not only

in terms of space, but the necessity of keeping her in close confinement: "... and put hir in a close prison, wher none might have accesse to hir, and that they wold appoint some to watch hir upon hir [their?] own expense."<sup>26</sup> Without this ability to confine Elspeth under these conditions which are highly suggestive of sleep deprivation, no confession was possible. Without a confession it was more difficult to prove she was a witch.

Of the three methods (judicial torture, witch-pricking, sleep-deprivation) which might be used to gain confessions, sleep deprivation seems to have been the most commonly used. Judicial torture, at least according to current evidence, was not a factor in Fife. This situation raises another question – when would judicial torture have been applied within the legal process? Despite the chart on “Processing a Witch” in *Enemies of God* which places “torture” prior to the granting of a commission to put the witch to trial, the assumption has always been that this would have been done as part of the legal trial – otherwise, the distinction between Roman law in Scotland and English common law makes no sense.<sup>27</sup> Yet in many cases the preliminary investigation which resulted in a confession took place before a church court where judicial torture was not sanctioned. After 1597 a commission was required to put the suspect to trial. Many of the documents granting the commissions state that the accused had already confessed. Judicial torture would thus not be required at her trial to extract this confession. Perhaps, one might argue as the diagram in *Enemies of God* suggests, she had already been tortured before the commission was granted. Yet if this was so, this would have been outside of the formal trial and illegal. We need to recognize that the steps of investigation which took place prior to the commission being granted were key. In most cases in Fife this occurred before church courts. While church courts did not have the right to use direct or judicial torture they could - and they did - ward and watch the suspects. One final note: other cases in the Justiciary court records where judicial torture was used in the trial include explicit permission. For example, in one case of adultery permission is granted in the following terms: “and for torturing thame to mak thame confess.”<sup>28</sup> No such phrase has been found pertaining to any suspected witchcraft from Fife.

Was Fife unique in this regard? It is tempting to say that it

was not, but the simple fact is that we do not know. Within individual shires torture may have been a factor, either in the case of individuals or as the impetus behind serial witch-hunts. We know this to be true of Haddington where the royal witch-hunt of 1590 originated. Many of the North Berwick witches were brutally tortured in order to extract confessions. Amazingly enough, John Cunningham or Fian held up under this torture.<sup>29</sup> Brian Levack, who has studied the extensive hunt which occurred in 1661 and 1662 in Haddington suggests that torture played a role here. Unfortunately, his article does not detail or describe any specific instances occurring.<sup>30</sup> When these cases in Haddington are charted the large number of cases in a relatively few years does suggest that serial witch-hunts, driven by either judicial torture or witch-prickers, predominated. More case studies of the situation in Haddington, in particular the massive hunt in 1649, may shed further light on this subject.

While the extent of judicial torture in Haddington may remain unclear, it does seem appropriate to reconsider how extensive our knowledge of the use of torture in Scottish witchcraft cases is. Or to phrase it as a question, where and when did judicial torture play a role? Surprisingly few cases are ever cited in the literature dealing with the Scottish witch-hunt and they include the North Berwick witches, Alison Balfour of Orkney, and an incident during the Cromwellian occupation.<sup>31</sup> G.F. Black's *Calendar of Witchcraft Cases* notes the cases of John Feanne (one of the N. Berwick witches), that of Alison Balfour, the illegal torture of Geillis Gray in Crail, and only five other situations where torture was used.<sup>32</sup> In three of those five cases it is clear that the torture was illegal, and seen to be such at the time. In the other two instances, it is unclear.<sup>33</sup> There is no doubt, as Edward Cowan has suggested, that the use of judicial torture in the trials of the North Berwick witches coupled with the introduction of continental witch theory profoundly affected the witch-hunts which subsequently occurred in Scotland.<sup>34</sup> The "reality" of witches had been confirmed in the minds of the elite, allowing them to cooperate in or become the driving force behind future hunts. What is surprising is the lack of cases after this date which mention that torture was used to extract confessions.

The cases which occurred during the Cromwellian occupa-

tion deserve some special discussion. Christina Larner makes reference to them in *Enemies of God* in her discussion of the shape of the Scottish witch-hunt:

The Cromwellian Commissioners for Administration of Justice in Scotland, in 1652, had sixty men and women before them accused of witchcraft, 'but they found so much Malice and so little proof against them that none were condemned'. Later in the year they dealt with cases which had been pending at the time the armies came into Scotland. They were horrified by the description of torture, and it was stated that 'The judges are resolved to enquire into the business, and have appointed the sheriff, ministers, and tormentors to be found out, and to have an account of the ground of this cruelty'.<sup>35</sup>

Larner then details a "further account" which goes into the methods of torture used. Three sources are cited in the references.<sup>36</sup> What is not apparent is that all of this information ultimately goes back to one source which has appeared in various publications, nor is it apparent that an error in one of these publications has crept into Larner's account. There were not 60 individuals accused of witchcraft in 1652, but seven.

The original source of the events of 1652 is the English newspaper *Mercurius Politicus* and its account of the meeting of the English judicial officials in Edinburgh. The account is dated "from Leith, October 23" 1652:

On Wednesday last, the English Commissioners for Administration of Justice, sat upon Criminall matters at Edinburgh. The first day was spent in reading their Commission from the Commissioners at Dalkeith, calling the Sheriffs of these severall Counties on this side of the *Firth*, viz. *Barwick*, *Selkerke*, *Peebles*, *Louthian*, *Linlithgewe*, *Haddington*, and *Roxburgh*, and those Sheriffs that appeared not were fined ... Since that, these 3 days have bin spent in the Tryall and Fining of severall persons for Adultery, Incest and Fornication, for which there were above 60 persons brought before the Judges in a day;

and its observable, That such is the malice of these people, that most of them were accused for facts don divers yeares since, and the chief proof against them was their own confession before the Kirk, who are in this worse then those of the Roman Religion, ... But that which is most observable is, that some were brought before them for Witches, 2 wherof had bin brought before the Kirk, about the time of the Armies coming in to Scotland, and having confessed it, were turn'd over to the Civil Magistrate; The Court demanding how they came to be proved Witches, they declared that they were forced to it, by the exceeding torture they were put to, which was by tying their Thumbs behind them, and then hanging them up by them, 2 Highlanders whipt them; after which they set lighted Candles to the Soles of their Feet, and between their Toes; then burnt them by putting lighted Candles into their Mouths, and then burning them in the head. There were 6 of them accused in all, 4 whereof dyed of the torture. The Judges are resolved to inquire into the business, and have appointed the Sheriff, Ministers, and tormentors to be found out, and to have an account of the grounds of this Cruelty.

Another Woman that was suspected according to their thoughts to be a Witch, was 28 days and nights with Bread and Water, being stript stark naked and laid upon a cold stone, with only an hair Cloath over her; Others had Hair shirts dipp'd in Vinegar put on them to fetch off their skin. Its probable there will be more discoveries shortly of this kind of *Amboyna* usage; but here is enough for reasonable Men to lament upon.<sup>37</sup>

The account is quoted at length so we can see both the facts as they are given and the commentary which runs throughout.

This is an extremely important passage, one that functions within *Enemies of God* to emphasize both the differences between the Scottish and English legal systems, and to emphasize the role of torture in the Scottish system. What is clear from the account

is that there were not sixty witches accused. The writer specifically refers to two instances, one involving two individuals (four having already died under the torture) and the other involving a solitary witch who appeared before the English justices. These seven cases need to be placed in context of the 180 cases (60 a day for three days) which appeared before the commissioners in Edinburgh. The belief that there were 60 witches comes from one of the sources used in both *Enemies of God* and the *Source Book of Scottish Witchcraft*, Bulstrode Whitelocke, *Memorials of the English Affairs*. Whitelocke summarizes the account in the following words:

Letters that 60 persons, men and women, were accused before the commissioners for administration of justice in Scotland at the last circuit for witches; but they found so much malice, and so little proof against them, that none were condemned.<sup>38</sup>

The examples of torture have been added to this inaccurate account to give us the picture of large numbers of accused being tortured and brought before the English officials during the Commonwealth. It is also important that we note that the details in the account found in the *Mercurius Politicus* do not give us a description of judicial torture during the trial but of illegal torture which took place prior to the trial. This brutal treatment took place in front of a church court, which had no right to use torture to extract confessions. As the document states, “2 whereof had bin brought before the Kirk about the time of the Armies coming in to Scotland, and having confessed it, were turned over to the Civil Magistrates”.<sup>39</sup> It was not the civil magistrates who used torture to carefully extract a confession, but the church courts.

The commentary within the document raises the question of the impartiality of the source, an English newspaper, in how it reported on Scottish justice in general and on witch accusations specifically. It is noteworthy that the account attacks the “malice” of the Scots and suggests that Scottish church courts are even worse than those of the Roman Catholics even before cases of witchcraft are mentioned. The re-telling of the barbarous treatment suffered by the suspected witches serves not only “enough for reasonable Men to lament upon” but makes the English audience aware of the differences between the Scots and themselves.

A later account recorded in the *Mercurius Politicus*, dated from Edinburgh November 2, 1652 tells the tale of a man, “a very simple Fellow” who was condemned as a witch, then reprieved. Details of the accusation are brought forward. The man’s ability to curse livestock and his meetings with the Devil are described, including supposed sexual encounters when he “lay with the Devill in the likenes of a woman”.<sup>40</sup> The concluding comments of the account are worth repeating:

The Trueth is, he lived in so poor a condition, and was (through his simplicity) so unable to get a livelyhood, that he confessed, or rather said any thing that was put into his head by some that first accused him, upon the confession of some who have died for witches. By this you may guess upon what Ground many hundreds have heretofore been burnt in this Country [Scotland] for *Witches*.<sup>41</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this paper to do an intensive study of the way in which Scots and Scottish justice were portrayed in English newspapers of this period. What does seem clear, however, is that these were not impartial sources but sources which had a viewpoint towards Scots and Scottish justice.<sup>42</sup> We need to use these sources with care. We also need to recognize that the large witch-hunt which we had assumed took place in 1652 did not, and that the harsh treatment and torture described were not part of the Scottish legal system.

The role of torture, specifically judicial torture, within the Scottish witch-hunt needs to be carefully reexamined. How prevalent was it? When and where was it used? The few cases where torture was used to extract a confession for trial are always cited in discussions, but was torture used beyond these cases? And are we consistent in our discussion, so that we are always discussing the same things, not confusing brutal conditions with an inquisitorial judicial system? Explanations which attempt to explain the severity of the Scottish witch-hunt based upon a legal system which allowed for judicial torture need to take Fife into account. Simple answers will not work. The evidence from Fife suggests that sleep deprivation and the use of professional witchfinders were factors. Sleep deprivation in particular was an effective way of obtaining confessions. More than judicial torture (the

threat or actual application of physical pain in order to make the individual tell the truth, or admit to the charges against her) or the professional witch-pricker, “watching and waking” the accused suspects seems to have been the driving force behind the witch-hunt in Fife. But even here, we need to be cautious. This is not the explanation which will answer the question, why was the witch-hunt so severe? Too often our attempts to answer this question have focused on the “technology” - the legal system, or the possibility of torture. The answer may lie, not in the “technology”, but in the motives of the witch-hunters. Why were people interested in finding witches? What was their motivation? I have argued elsewhere that the motivation was the creation of a godly society, a positive vision which led individuals (specifically in the church) to attempt to remove all barriers or opponents to the creation of that godly society.<sup>43</sup>

When we look at persecution – and witch-hunting needs to be seen as a particular kind of persecution – it is important that we be careful to avoid easy answers which blame the victim or which allow us to say that “it couldn’t happen here”. There has been a certain smugness, conscious or unconscious, in the way in which English language historians have until recently dismissed the European witch-hunt as being more extreme because of the different judicial system, specifically the use of torture. Scotland has proven a convenient proof of the supposedly continental system at work. What this paper has argued is that the forms of torture used in Fife were exactly those which could be used in England, namely sleep deprivation and witch-pricking. In Scotland it was possible to use torture as part of a trial process in order to get the suspect to confess, yet few cases of where this was actually done have been described. In Fife, where we have evidence of 420 cases of suspected witches, no evidence has been found of judicial torture. What has become clear is that the church courts played a significant role in the imposition of discipline, including attacks on popular belief and folk magic. We need to continue to explore whether it was this factor, rather than the legal system, which accounts for the severity of the Scottish witch-hunt.

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Endnotes

1. The author would like to thank the organizers of the University of Guelph Scottish Studies Fall Colloquium for allowing the presentation of this paper in 1998, and for their patience during its revision. Much of this material is adapted from the thesis *Threats to a Godly Society*. For a fuller description of all aspects of the witch-hunt in Fife, please see the author's *The Witches of Fife*. Thanks to the Aberdeen and North East Scotland Family History Society for permission to use their map of Fife parishes and adapt it for my research.

As this article was moving to publication several important books on the subject of the Scottish witch-hunt have appeared. These include P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Satan's Conspiracy: Magic and Witchcraft in Sixteenth-Century Scotland* (Tuckwell, 2001), Lizanne Henderson and Edward J. Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief* (Tuckwell, 2001), and a collection of articles edited by Julian Goodare, *The Scottish Witch-hunt in Context* (Manchester University Press, 2002).

2. Joseph Klaitis, *Servants of Satan: The Age of the Witch Hunts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), pp.135-137.
3. Elliot P. Currie, "The Control of Witchcraft in Renaissance Europe" in Donald Black (ed.), *The Social Organization of Law* (New York: Seminar Press, 1973), pp.345, 352.
4. Examples of the traditional interpretation include: Alan Anderson & Raymond Gordon, "The Uniqueness of English Witchcraft: A Matter of Numbers?" *British Journal of Sociology* 30[3] (1979) p.361; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (1971), pp.536, 615; Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1970), p.6; Klaitis, *Servants of Satan*, pp.135-137; Geoffrey Quaife, *Godly Zeal and Furious Rage: The Witch in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 1987), p.138; Christina Larner, *Enemies of God: The Witch-hunt in Scotland* (London, 1981), pp.107-109; Larner, "Witch Beliefs and Witch-Hunting in England and Scotland" *History Today* (February 1981). The discussion in Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (New York, 1996), pp.332-333, indicates the growing caution on the part of historians when discussing the subject of torture and also the place of the English experience within the overall European context. For a discussion on the latter, Peter Burke "The Comparative Approach to European Witchcraft" in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford, 1990), pp.435-441 remains an important discussion. The one article which went against the historiographical grain was R.D. Melville, "Judicial Torture in England

- and Scotland”, *Scottish Historical Review* (1905). W.N. Neill, “The Professional Pricker and His Test for Witchcraft”, *Scottish Historical Review* (1922) remains a valuable article.
5. Quaife, *Godly Zeal*, p.138. The distinction between European and English witchcraft is discussed briefly on pp.135-136.
  6. Larner, *Enemies of God*, specifically pp.107-109; also p.114, the chart on “Processing a Witch”, includes a clear reference to the role torture played.
  7. The results of this research have recently been published. Stuart Macdonald, *The Witches of Fife: Witch-Hunting in a Scottish Shire, 1560-1710* (East Linton, 2002). *The Scottish Witch Hunt Data Base* has also been published on CD-ROM (Stuart Macdonald, 2001).
  8. Russell Hope Robbins, “Torture”, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (London, 1959), pp.505, 509.
  9. Larner, *Enemies of God*, pp.107-109. Edward Cowan, in the popular article “The Royal Witch-Hunt” in *Sunday Mail Story of Scotland*, Vol. 2, pt. 15, (1988): p.406, speaks of method of execution, judicial torture and witch-hunting without making a precise enough distinction between these various activities.
  10. The North Berwick hunt has developed a considerable literature of its own, as well as playing a prominent part in most discussions of the Scottish witch-hunt. The fact that there was a political aspect and it included King James sheds a particular spotlight on this event. Christina Larner, “James VI and I and Witchcraft”, in Alan G.R. Smith, *The Reign of James VI and I* (London, 1973); Margaret Murray, “The ‘Devil’ of North Berwick”, *Scottish Historical Review* 15 (1918); and Edward J. Cowan, “The Royal Witch-Hunt” are some examples.
  11. This case was the subject of several anonymous pamphlets written contemporaneously: *A Just Reproof to the False Reports and Unjust Calumnies in the Foregoing Letters; A True and Full Relation of the Witches at Pittenweem....; An Answer of a Letter from a Gentleman in Fife to a Nobleman, CONTAINING A Brief Account of the Barbarous and illegal Treatment, these poor Women accused of Witchcraft....* These pamphlets are collected in D. Webster, *A Collection of Rare and Curious Tracts on Witchcraft and the Second Sight* (Edinburgh, 1820).
  12. George F. Black, *A Calendar of Cases of Witchcraft in Scotland 1510-1727* (New York, 1938); Mark C. Smith, *A Study and Annotated edition of the Register of the Minutes of the Presbytery of St. Andrew’s, volume 1*, Ph.D. diss, University of St. Andrews, 1985, f.95r.
  13. Larner, *Enemies of God*, pp.70-71; Spottishwoode, *History of the Church of Scotland* (1655), pp.66-67.


14. Dunfermline Kirk Session records, National Archives of Scotland (NAS), CH2/592/1, f.104; Richard A. Benson, *South-West Fife and the Scottish Revolution: The Presbytery of Dunfermline, 1633-1652*, M.Litt diss., University of Edinburgh, 1938, p.274.
15. Dunfermline Kirk Session records, January 29, 1650. NAS, CH2/592/1, f.106.
16. Hugo Arnot, *A Collection and Abridgement of Celebrated Criminal Trials in Scotland from A.D. 1536, to 1784 with Historical and Critical Remarks* (Edinburgh, 1785; Reprint, 1885), p.433.
17. Dunfermline Kirk Session, NAS, CH2/592/1, f.89, 90. Ebenezer Henderson (ed.), *Extracts from the Kirk-Session Records of Dunfermline (1640-1689)* (Edinburgh, 1865), p.31.
18. William Ross, *Aberdour and Inchcolm: Being Historical Notices of the Parish and Monastery in Twelve Lectures* (Edinburgh, 1885), pp.329-330.
19. David Cook, *Annals of Pittenweem: Being Notes and Extracts From the Ancient Records of That Burgh* (Anstruther, 1867), p.49.
20. Cook, *Annals of Pittenweem*, pp.49-50.
21. *Registers of the Privy Council of Scotland* vol. 13, pp.49-50.
22. G.R. Kinloch (ed.), *The Diary of Mr John Lamont of Newton, 1649-1671* (Maitland Club, 1830), p.6.
23. G.R. Kinloch (ed.), *Selections from the Minutes of the Presbyteries of St. Andrews and Cupar 1641-1698* (Abbotsford Club, 1837), pp.143, 144.
24. *Ibid.*, pp.144, 146, 150.
25. *Ibid.*, p.150.
26. *Ibid.*, p.150.
27. Larner, *Enemies of God*, p.114.
28. J. Irvine Smith, *Selected Justiciary Cases, 1624-1650*, Vol. II, p.536.
29. Edward J. Cowan, "The darker vision of the Scottish Renaissance" in Ian B. Cowan and D. Shaw (eds.), *The Renaissance and Reformation in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1983), pp.127-129.
30. Brian P. Levack, "The Great Scottish Witch Hunt of 1661-1662", *Journal of British Studies* 20 (1984), p.106. It is not clear whether or not Levack includes witch-pricking under the category of torture. In the discussion on p.105 it is witch-prickers who are mentioned.
31. Robbins includes individual articles such as "North Berwick Witches" and "Torture", in his *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*. Larner, *Enemies of God*, pp.107-109, 119. Melville, "Judicial Torture".
32. Black, *A Calendar of Cases of Witchcraft*, pp.24, 25, 30, 34, 48, 63, 71, 79.
33. *Ibid.* The torture of Geillis Gray in Crail in 1599 was done by the Laird of Lathocker who did not have any authority to act in this

- way, p.30. Janet Love brought a complaint in 1632 against the minister of Inverkip for his illegal torture of her, p.48. In what appears to be an attempt to steal land in Strathglass, torture was used in 1662, p.71. Katherine Liddell of Prestonpans complained against her imprisonment in 1678, p.79. Margaret Barclay, tortured in Irvine in 1618, may be an incidence of judicial torture, p.34. These cases and some others listed in Black merit further investigation.
34. Edward J. Cowan, "The Royal Witch-Hunt", pp.406, 409.
  35. Lerner, *Enemies of God*, p.75.
  36. Ibid, p. 219, notes 30, 31, and 32.
  37. *Mercurius Politicus* edition of October 28 to November 4, 1652. The dateline is Leith, October 23, 1652. Joad Raymond (ed.), *Making the News: An Anthology of the Newsbooks of Revolutionary England 1641-1660* (New York, 1993), pp.309-310, includes this famous account.
  38. Bulstrode Whitelock, *Memorials of the English Affairs* (London, 1732; 1853 edition), p.458.
  39. *Mercurius Politicus*, Leith, October 23, 1652. Account taken from Raymond, *Making the News*, pp.309-310.
  40. Raymond, *Making the News*, p.310.
  41. Ibid, p.311
  42. Ibid. The editorial comments throughout *Making the News* are very helpful. It is also interesting to see some of the other attitudes towards Scots, for example the description of the English victory of the Scots army at Worcester which appeared in the September 4-11, 1651 edition of *Mercurius Politicus*.
  43. Stuart Macdonald, *Threats to a Godly Society: The Witch-Hunt in Fife, Scotland 1560-1710*, Ph.D. diss., University of Guelph, 1997; *The Witches of Fife*.

**SECTION 3: SOURCES AND DOCUMENTS**

**SCRIPT LETTERING ON  
SCOTTISH TOMBSTONES:  
ORIGINS AND INFLUENCES**

**Introduction**

 Scottish tombstones of the eighteenth century and before are a significant part of the nation's cultural heritage. Of particular interest are the less formal memorials sculpted by local masons and their assistants who expressed their own creative notions within a framework of contemporary fashion and traditional iconography. This extensive record of folk art and craft is, arguably, the most extensive and varied anywhere in the world. The textual information in tombstone inscriptions is of great value to historians and genealogists, but there are other aspects that tell us about the past including the form of the slabs and headstones, the choice and use of graphic images and, not least, the lettering styles and their interpretation by the masons. The letterforms that were used on Scottish tombstones altered and evolved through time as fashion and other cultural influences had their effect. These changes were complex and followed both geographical and temporal patterns that recently have been studied and analysed in some considerable detail by the author.<sup>2, 3</sup>

This research is based on a survey of a representative sample of 132 mainland kirkyard sites and 13,016 inscriptions. The sites were grouped into broad geographical regions - south-west Scotland, south-east Scotland, Fife, central Scotland, west Scotland, north-east Scotland and north Scotland. A study was made of all legible tombstones dated up to and including 1855. Letterform attributes were recorded and analysed from digital photographic records. A number of additional sites have been included in the present study of script forms. Full details of research methodology are given in previous papers by the author.

### Background

Roman style inscriptions, in a variety of forms, were predominantly used for two hundred years from the latter part of the fifteenth century. Towards the end of the seventeenth century a new form began to appear, a lettering style that can be generically classified as 'script'. This form differs in a number of key attributes from italic with which it can be confused. Italic capitals are sloped versions of the roman style and the lowercase letters retain their serifs. Script capitals are cursive and the lowercase letters, rather than having serifs, generally begin and end with a curved line. The origin of script has been attributed to the influence of calligraphic styles and the masons' attempts to emulate the penmanship of writing masters such as Cocker and Bickham.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps this can be argued in the case of English memorials. However, there is good evidence that the development of script on Scottish tombstones was an evolutionary process, initially quite independent of writing styles, and that pen forms were copied only several decades after the establishment of a cursive tradition.

Up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, little if anything survives that informs us why masons selected and used particular inscriptional letterforms on Scottish tombstones. With the exception of the small minority of formal memorials, mostly in major city churchyards, much of the lettering on tombstones of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was probably cut by assistants who may or may not have been guided by the master mason who himself would be the local parish craftsman.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, even if we knew the identity of the master mason, we would not necessarily know that of the letter-cutter. In many parts of England the names of the masons and their 'schools' are known, even as early as the medieval period. Early American gravestones frequently carried the name of the mason and many of these individuals are catalogued by Duval and Rigby.<sup>6</sup> In Scotland, few masons left any mark to record their names for posterity and there is virtually nothing on paper that survives to provide us with direct and firm evidence of the sources of their ideas.

Another difficulty with this aspect of palaeography is that masons, not surprisingly, put their own interpretation of any lettering used as a source or from which they copied.

The distinctive treatment of the capitals 'S' and 'C' on a 1780 stone in Kirkcudbright Cemetery, Kirkcudbrightshire (Figure 1) and the unusual capitals 'K' and 'R' on a stone of the same date in Kirkconnel Kirkyard, Dumfriesshire (Figure 2)

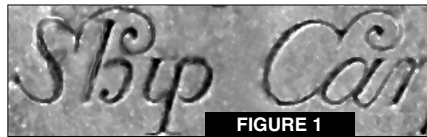


FIGURE 1

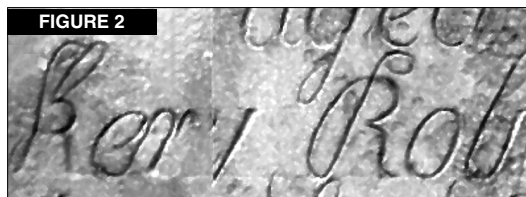


FIGURE 2

demonstrate the masons' individuality. Duval and Rigby suggest that the lettering on the earliest New England gravestones were derived from alphabets in seventeenth century books imported from Europe and that later inscriptions were influenced by the typography of printed ephemera.<sup>7</sup> It is, however, rather simplistic to suggest this association with what were generic roman forms that were used widely and interpreted in a variety of media. Treatment of some letters unique to gravestone lettering, such as some forms of capitals 'A', 'B' and 'M', is evidence of the adoption of a distinctive inscripational artform.

Today, we are bombarded with lettering everywhere we go and our visual sensitivity to what we see is quite different from that of our forefathers. It is virtually impossible to identify and far less to understand the precise external influences on tombstone lettering style other than through study of the patterns of development relative to contemporary use in other media.

### **Basic characteristics of Scottish tombstone script lettering**

Letterforms with cursive characteristics were found from 1643. Of all inscriptions recorded throughout Scotland for the period 1643 to 1855, 8.0% were script in one of its variants. Script lettering was most commonly used in the north-east (16.2%) and least common in central Scotland (2.7%). The percentages used in the other regions were: south-west Scotland 9.1%, north Scotland 5.0%, south-west Scotland 9.1%, south-east Scotland 8.1% and Fife 3.1%. Almost all script lettering on tombstones in Scotland was incised. Raised script, usually in the form of monogram capitals, accounted for only just over one percent of the total and was found most frequently in central Scotland

and Fife. The occurrence of mixed styles in the same inscription, usually script with roman, increased northwards in Scotland, from about a quarter in the south to a little over three quarters in the north. However, the frequency of mixed styles in the north east corresponded with that in southern Scotland. Almost invariably, the letters were taller than broad, often significantly so. In the north and east of Scotland, about half the scripts were formed of a thin line, corresponding with a 'light' variant in typography, but elsewhere more than three quarters were of this weight. The size of the capital letters varied considerably and were more than, equal to, or less than twice the lowercase letter height, each approach being equally common.

The earliest fully developed script found in this survey was on a stone dated 1708 in Foulis Easter Kirkyard, Angus. The mean date for the use of script throughout Scotland was 1787 and regional mean dates were similar, with the exception of north Scotland where the mean date was 1810.

Many of the inscriptions in script lettering from about the middle of the eighteenth century were not incised as deeply as contemporary roman forms and, through the ravages of time, these memorials have become some of the most difficult to read. Emulation of a thinner pen-like line required a much shallower cut and the cutting of curvilinear shapes to greater depth was probably more difficult.

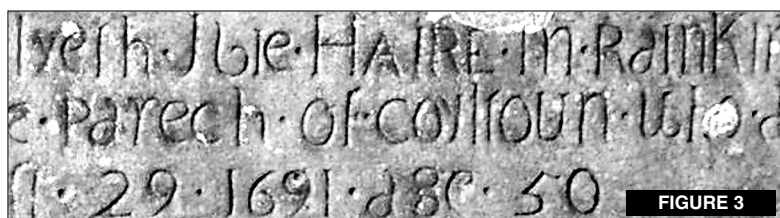
#### **The development of script**

To examine the changes in letterform from the earliest suggestion of cursiveness through to the most pen-like forms, inscriptions were classified into six categories.

1. roman with hints of cursiveness
2. primitive script
3. hybrid script/roman
4. script
5. near pen form (ie with some pen influences)
6. pen form

The first three categories were grouped as 'pre-script' and are forms that show only some slight traces of cursiveness. Script forms (category four) are those of uniform line thickness with the start and finish of the letters curved rather than having serifs. Lettering classed as 'near pen' and 'pen' forms are those that





have clear characteristics of writing such as the use of 'looped' ascenders or descenders, the continuous joining of letters and the thicks and thins of pen strokes (Figure 3).

From the inscriptional record, the occurrence of each category as a percentage of all script forms for ten-year periods from 1641 to 1850 was calculated. Figure 4 shows very clearly that the

FIGURE 4

<i>date</i>	<i>pre-script</i>	<i>script</i>	<i>near pen</i>	<i>pen</i>
1641-1650	100			
1651-1669				
1671-1680	100			
1681-1690	100			
1691-1700	100			
1701-1710	33.3	66.6		
1711-1720	33.3	66.6		
1721-1730	37.55	62.5		
1731-1740	15	85		
1741-1750	10.53	86.84		2.63
1751-1760	4.26	89.36	6.38	
1761-1770	6.25	93.75		
1771-1780	5.17	94.83		
1781-1790	5.26	68.42	21.05	5.26
1791-1800	3.33	43.33	33.33	20
1801-1810		15	45	40
1811-1820	3.85	11.54	23.08	61.54
1821-1830		35.71	14.29	50
1831-1840		28.57	14.29	57.14
1841-1850		50		50

development of script form from pre-script to pen form was a gradual evolutionary process. Script lettering not showing the influence of pen-written forms was recorded almost exclusively from 1731-1780. The first use of true pen forms was between

1741-1750. There was a gradual slow increase in near pen and pen forms to 1791-1800 when just over half the script inscriptions were pen forms. By 1850 the frequency of the use of script and pen forms was identical.

Hybrid forms between roman and script can be seen as early as 1643 on a tombstone in Brechin Cathedral Kirkyard, Angus but a 'pure' script form is not found until the beginning of the eighteenth century. The first truly pen-influenced inscription was noted on a stone in Southend Kirkyard, Argyll dated 1742. Why this development should be first noted in what could now be seen as a peripheral region of Scotland is not as surprising as it might at first appear. Early pen-influenced scripts in other parts of the country could well be found by more extensive sampling. Also, the plantation of the lairds in the second half of the seventeenth century could well have brought central Scottish cultural influences to south Kintyre.<sup>8</sup> It was not until the 1790s that the pen form predominated. Before 1740 there was nothing in the construction of the letterforms that would provide evidence of the direct influence of writing. The first hints of cursiveness can be seen in some lowercase letters especially 'e' and 'r' and a general rounding of letters that in the roman style are classical in construction. The slope in these early primitive and hybrid forms is not much off the vertical. Later developments in the direction of script are evident in the extended curvature of the descenders, lowercase 'a', 'b' and 'f' and the form of capitals.

When true script evolved, the slope was significantly greater and new forms of lowercase 'w' and 's' appeared (Figure 5). The final change to forms based on pen-written specimens is clearly identified by the variation in line thickness



that parallels the pressures of a pen on paper resulting in the distinctive 'thicks' and 'thins'. The influence of the pen is also evident in scripts where letters are linked by fine lines as in writing, initially only some letters were joined, but later the lettering is continuous (Figure 3f). Not only did the lettering itself emulate penmanship in the later inscriptions, but words with decorative flourishes around words such as 'IN MEMORY OF' or the deceased's name became frequent in pen-script forms

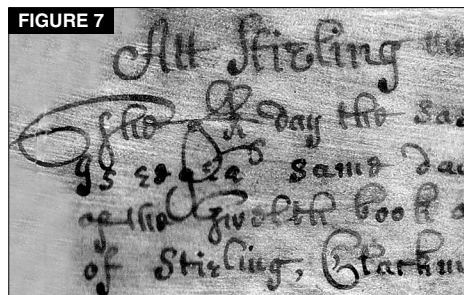


and also in gothic, where the pen influence was often equally evident. In some examples the decoration is virtually identical to that illustrated in eighteenth century copy-books such as that of Bickham.<sup>9</sup> A headstone in Brechin Cathedral burial ground even reproduces the exact pen strokes in the lettering that are illustrated by Bickham (Figure 6). By the end of the eighteenth century,



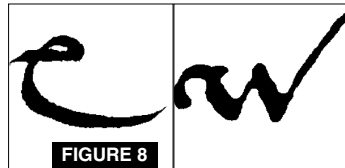
type specimen sheets and printers manuals became available to the masons and these were a further source for them to use.

It is significant that there does not appear to be parallel letterform developments in documents such as legal manuscripts and church records. In England, 'copper plate', 'running-hand' or 'Anglaise' was much more firmly established by the beginning of the eighteenth century than in Scotland where the use of variants of 'secretary' hands continued in use for almost another 100 years in more formal documents, although not exclusively.<sup>10</sup> Here, vernacular writing from the late sixteenth, seventeenth and throughout much of the eighteenth century was often of a much simpler form that appears to have derived from the secretary hand, with the ascenders and descenders frequently looped (Figure 7). Some of the incised script letters are very characteristic of this period of tombstone lettering, for example the unique counter-rotated



ampersand and distinctive lowercase 'w' (Figure 8).

It is curious that inscriptional script lettering on stone followed a different pattern of development from other engraved, cut or drawn



lettering. Engraved script on medallions and silverware is invariably 'copper-plate'. Some dated Scottish communion tokens show a rather crude interpretation of script and none could really be termed pen forms. Examples of script lettering can be seen on tokens from Inch (1685), Hamilton (1705), Sorbie (1726), Methven (1788) and Gartmore (1796).

#### Discussion

The gradual change from roman forms from the 1640s and letterform development for more than 100 years before there was any identifiable influence of the pen has been demonstrated. This suggests that the initiation of script inscriptions was not through an attempt to copy written forms. Why the masons began to make their inscriptions more cursive, a pattern of development that took place throughout Scotland, is difficult to say. While roman lettering, especially capitals, gives an impression of formality, cursiveness tends to indicate informality, freedom and a more personal touch. Perhaps the use of sloping forms and more curved shapes was simply a reaction against that austerity of the roman forms. The similarity of some of the characteristics of the earlier script forms to written forms is probably coincidental. This similarity would have been recognised by the masons who then looked to pen forms and copy-books for inscriptional sources. The fact that none of the commonly used 'secretary' writing styles of the later part of the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries are to be found on Scottish tombstones of that period further supports this hypothesis.

The first occurrence of true pen forms in the 1740s coincided with the publication, in parts, of Bickham's writing manual and it is tempting to suggest that this was no coincidence. There were several British writing manuals and copy-books long before that of Bickham, including those of Billingsley (1641), Gery (c.1670) and Elder (c.1680).<sup>11, 12, 13</sup> However, the writing in these publications, especially the terminally thickened ascender, are not

echoed in Scottish inscriptional lettering, nor are the more exuberant flourishes in the well-known manual of Cocker published in 1671.<sup>14</sup> One of the best known books of this period was that of John Ayres (1698), a most successful penman who was cited with some admiration by later writing masters.<sup>15</sup> This, the work of Shelley (1709) and the classic work of Bickham, are possible candidates as sources used by the masons for the later pen forms.<sup>16</sup> It is more likely, however, copies from these great works by little known scribes were the day to day work-books. Heal lists over 450 calligraphers who published 'English' (i.e. British) copy-books, only two of which were printed in Scotland.<sup>17</sup> Browne's *Calligraphia* was a very early copy-book published in St. Andrews in 1622.<sup>18</sup> This was followed in 1638 by another, probably printed in London, that in spite of its title, *The Introduction to the true understanding of the Whole Arte of Expedition in teaching to write*, has little to do with writing.<sup>19</sup> In this work Browne denounces those who consider the Scots inferior.

[there remains] ... a vulgare opinion against his native country of Scotland ... He sheweth that it hath mo[r]e excellent Prerogatives than any other Kingdome ... whereby it will rather follow that a Scottishman is so much the more able to prosecute whatsoever hee undertaketh, and therefore so much the more to be respected, by how so much he is more ingenious than one of another nation.

The only other Scottish copy-book is a much later offering by Buchanan published in 1798.<sup>20</sup> It is unlikely that any of these would have been as widely distributed as the works of the better-known writing masters and probably would not have had any influence on tombstone lettering.

The distinct history of Scottish tombstone art is therefore further evidenced by the development of script lettering. There are a few instances of superficially similar early script forms on English memorials, for example on a large tombstone at St. Kew, Cornwall dated 1702 and the 1726 memorial to the Goswells in Winchester Cathedral, but these differ in important detail. The script lettering frequently seen on English memorials are usually of the later style clearly influenced by or emulating writing by pen. Curiously, in North America script of any sort was very

rarely used in early gravestones, roman capitals and lowercase being the favoured form.

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### Endnotes

- 1 This research is supported by Cumbria Institute of the Arts and a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Board.
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- 14 Edward Cocker, *The Pens Transcendencie; or, faire writings labyrinth*, (London, 1657).
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- 16 John Seddon, *The Penman's Magazine, or a New Copy Book of the English, French, and Italian hands ... adorn'd with ... figures and fancies ... after the originals of ... J. S. perform'd by G. Shelley*, (London, 1705).
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- 18 David Browne, *The New Invention, Intituled Calligraphia: or, the arte of faire writing, etc.*, (St. Andrews, 1622).
- 19 David Browne, *The Introduction to the True Understanding of the Whole Arte of Expedition in Learning to Write. Intermixed with rare discourses of other matters, etc.*, (London, 1638).
- 20 C. Buchanan, *The Writing Master and Accountant's Assistant, Contain- ing an Extensive System of Practical Arithmetic. With ... engravings of business writing, etc.*, (Glasgow, 1798).

#### SECTION FOUR: BOOK REVIEWS

David Ditchburn. *Scotland and Europe: The Medieval Kingdom and its Contacts with Christendom, 1214-1560*. (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000). 335 pp. \$39.95. (Paperback)

The question of Scotland's relationship to the rest of Europe is not a new one, and numerous articles and books have appeared in recent years which explore the connections between medieval and early modern Scotland and its European neighbours. David Ditchburn's latest book contributes a great deal to this discussion, and succeeds in overturning any impression that later medieval Scotland was an isolated and backwards kingdom clinging precariously onto the very edge of Europe.

The time frame of this book, as indicated in the title, reveals a great deal both about Ditchburn's approach and about the status of the question of Scotland's proper place in European civilization. The dates given in the subtitle on the front cover and spine of the book are 1214 and 1560. These correspond to a conventional dating of Scottish history, with 1214 marking the beginning of Alexander II's reign and 1560 being one of the traditional dates for the Scottish Protestant Reformation. By contrast, the dates given with the subtitle on the title page are 1215 and 1545. Ditchburn states in his Preface that it is this second set of dates which properly delineates the temporal boundaries of the book, so these are presumably the ones he meant to have on the cover. The choice of the years 1215 and 1545 as the beginning and end points of the study rather than the more traditionally Scottish 1214 and 1560 indicates a conscious avoidance of the boundaries of traditional national histories: the year 1215 was the year of the Fourth Lateran Council, and 1545 was the convening of the Council of Trent, neither event being situated in Scotland. By highlighting the importance to Scotland of these events which took place outside of the country, Ditchburn is insisting that Scotland be considered as part of a larger picture. By choosing dates associated not only with places outside of Scotland but also with religious events, Ditchburn is also connecting Scotland not only to the modern and geographically defined continent of Europe, but more generally with the medieval identity of Christendom.



Perhaps the (accidental?) inclusion of the more 'Scottish' dates on the cover betrays some unwillingness on the part of the publisher to abandon completely the more traditional system of dating.

Ditchburn's choice of the more 'European' dates is consistent with the guiding theory of the book, which is that Scotland was a full participant in European society. This theory, trans-national as it is, has not precluded a Scotland-centred approach. Unlike many European histories, which consider Scotland to be peripheral and which, when confronted with any aspects of Scottish society which differ from those in the more central regions like France and Italy, pronounce Scotland to be the exception to the European trend, Ditchburn's book looks at the Scottish experience as being as normative as any other country's. Scotland is taken as the starting point for each subject being investigated, and comparisons with other regions of Europe are drawn not to show how similar to or different from the European norm Scotland was, but to explore the ways in which Scotland was linked with other countries. There is no norm presupposed here: each region is different and deserves to be considered in its own terms.

The book is organized along thematic lines, with chapters covering Transport and Travel, The Religious Bonds, The Cultural Bonds, The Economic Bonds, and Perceptions of Scotland by others in medieval Christendom. In some ways, it would make sense to read this final chapter first, for it provides the reader with a survey of how late medieval and early modern Scots presented themselves to others, and of how others perceived the Scots. Readers would probably find it interesting to note how similar these perceptions were to what modern perceptions are concerning Scotland's place in European society: Scotland was remote, poor, and suffering from conflict with its hostile neighbour to the south. On the other hand, if the reader reads the chapters in sequence he or she will know by the time that last chapter is reached that those perceptions are largely untrue.

A particular strength of this book is that it takes account not only of recent Scottish scholarship, but also of work concentrating on other areas of Europe such as the Low Countries, Germany, and France. Each work consulted is carefully noted in the footnotes, so that those interested in pursuing more detailed study into any area covered by Ditchburn can easily discover how to learn more. The bibliography is also extensive and of

great use to anyone wishing to read further. The obvious display of scholarship should not, however, in any way discourage the more casual reader or the reader not well acquainted with later medieval and early modern Scottish history from picking up *Scotland and Europe*. Ditchburn does a good job of providing a short but adequate introduction to every subject he covers, and avoids using scholarly jargon of historians without explaining his terms. He also does a very good job of humanizing the evidence he presents, often presenting humorous anecdotes from the past. The chapter on The Economic Bonds for example, the very title of which may deter readers not yet convinced that a chapter on economic history promises anything interesting, opens with a description of a meal eaten in 1450 by William, earl of Douglas, while visiting the duke of Burgundy:

The menu included beef, veal, mutton, pork, two hares, ten pheasant, one heron, four bittern, 156 rabbits, seventy-two partridge, ten geese, twelve water birds, thirty-four dozen lark, twenty-two capons, 231 chickens and fifty-six brace of pigeon. The selection of vegetables was more limited: cabbage, though cheese and patisserie were also served. There were a further loaves and 120 rolls (both brown and white) to accompany the meal, which was garnished with mustard, onion, parsley, milk, cream, butter, salt, pepper, verjuice, vinegar and aspic jelly. Presumably too there was much drink: the ingredients of the aspic jelly alone included a liberal dose of white wine. (p. 138)

From here Ditchburn launches into a discussion of the development of a pan-European aristocratic palate; cultural and religious factors which shaped eating and drinking habits; aspects of climate and war, politics and disease which affected the availability of food; and the trade links established between Scotland and the rest of Europe which facilitated the exchange of fish, wine, spices, and the non-foodstuffs. Readers are introduced to the topics under consideration throughout the book in a similar manner, with Ditchburn presenting interesting anecdotes from Scotland, and working outwards to explain the wider forces at work. This is consistently accomplished through a writing style which is much more lively and altogether readable than one

often finds in such rigorously academic work.

In addition to surveying and synthesizing an impressively wide array of scholarship, Ditchburn also presents some of his own original interpretations of current historical issues. By examining the 'cosmopolitan' trend in late medieval Scottish devotional practices, for example, he questions the extent to which the fifteenth century witnessed in Scotland a 'nationalistic' trend in religion and concludes that the supposed effects of nationalism on piety have been exaggerated. Even more significantly, Ditchburn's argument that late medieval Scotland was *not* severely economically depressed flies in the face of the commonly unquestioned assumption that the later Middle Ages were overall a particularly unfortunate time for Scotland.

Some might feel that Ditchburn underestimates somewhat the distinctiveness of different regions within Scotland itself in his efforts to demonstrate the strength of the ties between Scotland and other countries in Europe. "Arguably it was little more difficult for a student from Aberdeenshire to reach Leuven than it was to reach St Andrews", he tells us (p. 236), and of course he is correct. He does not take much account, however, of the fact that someone living in Skye could probably have conversed more easily with someone in Ireland than with an Edinburgh burgher, or that parishioners in a remote Highland parish who rarely saw a priest would likely have had a very different interaction with the universal Church than a person living in a cathedral town. One's status as literate or illiterate, Gaelic or English-speaker, burgher or country-dweller would have informed many aspects of a medieval or early-modern Scot's life, and perhaps not enough is made of this in *Scotland and Europe*. The book would also benefit from a brief conclusion summarizing the findings of all the chapters and advancing some general thoughts on to what extent and in what ways Scotland contributed to European civilization and how in turn Scotland was most influenced by other parts of Christendom. This last bit of criticism is perhaps premature, however, since a general conclusion is planned for the forthcoming second volume which will cover Scotland's political ties with Europe. Based on the many strengths of the present volume, its companion is eagerly awaited.

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R.R. Davies, *The First English Empire. Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093-1343*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). pp x,213, hardback £15.99

This excellent book should be required reading for all those interested in the inter-relationship of the various parts of the United Kingdom and Ireland, not just in the past, but also in the present. The book is based on the author's Ford Lectures to the University of Oxford in 1998, with an added chapter. Davies takes as his subject the expansion and decline of English power and influence over the rest of the British Isles in the two and a half centuries after 1093, a year which marked the death of Malcolm Canmore king of Scots and Rhys ap Tewdwr, king of South Wales, and was far more significant for the Celtic-speaking peoples than 1066. He argues that the events of the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries are crucial to an understanding of why the British Isles have remained divided into four separate societies. The nature of English expansion and English perceptions of the other peoples with whom they shared the islands militated against the type of accommodation, tolerance of difference and flexibility which might have led to a truly united kingdom. This period, which saw the most sustained contact between England and her Celtic neighbours, also witnessed the birth of a powerful sense of English identity, uniqueness, and superiority to other cultures. Even at the highpoint of English power c.1300, when Edward I exercised effective political power over almost all of the British Isles, he remained king of England and lord of Ireland, not king of Britain. As an English chronicler was to comment thirty years later, Merlin's prophecy that a new Arthur would arise as king of Britain had not come true.

There is not room to cover all the insights offered in this book, so only a few will be highlighted. Of particular interest to readers of this journal is the discussion of Scotland. As the only other regnal kingdom in the British Isles, it is used by Davies to provide an interesting comparison to English expansionist policies. He contrasts the extension of English power over Wales and Ireland, with the extension of Scottish royal authority over the west of what is now Scotland. He argues that the Scottish model, which allowed for tolerance of local traditions and culture was in the end more successful than the English one,

which required conformity to English models of society, economy and government. He also points out the paradox that Scotland, the only region of the British Isles not to be conquered, was the area which became the most Anglicised in terms of governance, law, and society. This leaves the reader to wonder if Anglicisation is far more likely to be accepted when it is *not* imposed as a result of conquest.

The conflict and lack of understanding between English society and those of the rest of the British Isles is especially well-brought out in Chapter 5, “‘Sweet civility’ and ‘barbarous rudeness’”, which traces the development of English perceptions of the other peoples of the Isles. In a discussion which will resonate with readers familiar with the history of other empires, Davies shows how English expansionism was justified as bringing “civilization” to “backward peoples”. The descriptions of native societies by English writers stressed the barbarity of their practices and beliefs. (Such attitudes were not confined to English commentators, as the fourteenth-century Scottish historian John of Fordun’s comments on Highland society make clear). Civilization as defined in English terms, and indeed more specifically in southern and eastern English terms, involved the rule of centrally-administered law and order, the accumulation of wealth especially in terms of land so that one had a stake in peace, the development of trade and permanent settlements. The gap with kin-based societies, where cattle and people were the main source of power, and war a way of life for the elite, was huge and ultimately unbridgeable. As a result, English expansionism resulted in an intermediate zone of English settlement in Wales and Ireland, with communities isolated from the native society surrounding them. From the late thirteenth century, the differences between these communities and the societies surrounding them would be enshrined in laws which separated English and Welsh and English and Irish.

Of particular value to historians from national historiography traditions is the book’s demonstration of the new insights which can be gained from looking at the British Isles as a whole. Here Davies follows in the tradition pioneered by Robin Frame in his study of the medieval British aristocracy. For example, the impact of the great expansion of English settlement can only be fully understood when it is looked at as a pan-British

phenomenon. This approach allows Davies to make a convincing case that it was English settlers, even more than English lordship or military power, which were the backbone of English expansionism and whose legacy would be the most long-lasting in the history of the islands. In chapter 3, Davies suggests a new way of looking at the Isles, with three zones of power, a southern one dominated by England, a northern one dominated by lowland Scotland, and a third western zone centred on the Irish Sea, where dominance would be sought by both England and Scotland.

The focus of the book is on the rise of English expansionism and its failure to lead to a high kingship of Britain which would incorporate all peoples under its rule. The decline of this expansionism from c.1300 is treated rather more briefly in chapter 7, "The Ebb Tide of the English Empire, 1304-43", which is the shortest in the book. The end date of 1343 puzzled this reader, who was relieved to find that it had no particular significance, apart from being 250 years after the start of the period, and the year the Black Prince was made Prince of Wales. The processes which Davies examines in this book cannot be assigned precise dates, and the choice of 1343 rather nicely underlines this point.

Fittingly, given the topic of this book, the title of the Ford Lectures in English History has now been changed to the Ford Lectures in British History. *The First English Empire* is an outstanding example of how a "British" approach, as opposed to a four nations approach, can deepen our understanding of the history of the Atlantic Archipelago.

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Elizabeth Ewan and Maureen Meickle (eds.), *Women in Scotland, c.1100-c.1750* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999) xxx, 272pp. ISBN: 1 86232 046 2 £14.99 (paperback)

This recent study underscores the invaluable contribution women made to Scottish society between 1100 and 1750 while highlighting some of the common perceptions and attitudes directed towards women during this period. Emerging from a one-day conference held in May 1996 at the University of Edinburgh, *Women in Scotland* is comprised of twenty essays which focus on a variety of topics ranging from economics to religion and literature to politics. Each of the essays in *Women in Scotland*, contribute in some way to dispelling the notion that women in Scotland during the middle ages and the early modern period were, as Rosalind Marshall indicates in her forward to the book, “held down by the law and by their husbands, forced into a submissive, secondary role which they were unable to challenge.” (xi) In particular, the essays by Helen Dingwall and Elizabeth Ewan demonstrate that women played a significant role in Scotland’s economy during the middle ages. Both argue that this was to a large extent influenced by their lack of formal participation in the political realm. Ewan, in her study of female brewers, suggests that as women were barred from holding political office they could not lead their own craft guild. Dingwall, emphasises this fact by arguing that the shift from the late middle ages to the early modern period, wherein women began to play a lesser role in the economy, was influenced by the organisation of craft and merchant guilds and by the development of new skills acquired by men. This, Dingwall states, is a far better explanation than simply “the apparent economic subjugation of women in a male-dominated society.” (153)

Despite efforts to avoid the temptation to fall back on tried methods of explaining the role of women in a society dominated by men, by retaining the belief that the limited available sources reveal little or nothing about the role of women some of the contributions to *Women in Scotland* continue to reflect historical reconstructions (usually undertaken by men) that tell us little or nothing of women’s activities beyond that of the wife or daughter. This comes across most in the essay by Andrew McDonald who acknowledges that his findings can be taken at

best as tentative but whose present work does little to elucidate religious roles of women in the middle ages. Rather, we hear more about the founding of nunneries by Scottish noblemen with a slight glimpse towards associated women in a secondary role; women such as Bethag, daughter of Somerled, a religious woman associated with Iona and Deirdre, wife of Earl Gospatrick III, who may have played a role in the foundation of a nunnery associated with the Cistercian priory of Coldstream. McDonald, echoing Sally Thompson, argues that “where a nunnery was established by a husband and wife, the role of the wife can be subsequently obscured.” (6) This is somewhat ironic given that for the most part the role of women are obscured by the men who dominate McDonald’s history of religious patronage in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Scotland. While McDonald should not bear the brunt of such criticism, his essay reveals the difficulties historians encounter as they try to recoup voices often lost or hidden within the historical record.

Perhaps, of greater interest to readers concerned with finding out more about women in Scotland is Audrey Beth Fitch’s essay on Virgin Martyrs and Women’s Salvation in pre-Reformation Scotland. Fitch argues that art and literature echoed the contemporary belief that “Scottish women’s best hope was to model themselves on the virgin martyrs, who had rejected the overt sexuality of Eve, followed the lead of the Blessed virgin Mary in embracing sexual purity, and suffered physically in *imitatio Christi*.” (24) Using the writings of Dunbar and Lyndsay, as well as Catholic iconography, Fitch demonstrates that preservation of female sexual purity and salvation went hand in hand in pre-Reformation Scotland. Likewise, David Mullen’s contribution to this collection attempts to offer a balanced assessment of gender roles as they were conceived in Scottish divinity. Mullen draws the conclusion that “if men were the highest authority in the home, they were not to be tyrants or even disciplinarians over their wives.” (37) He suggests that as Elect men and women belonged to the same church, both possessed the same corrupt nature, and both possessed souls in need of saving. While traditional views of women as the weaker sex dominated, and ideas of subjugation to their husbands were clear in marriage ceremonies, Mullen argues that there was a desire to maintain mutual dignity and respect between the sexes.



Evelyn Newlyn's essay on images of women in sixteenth-century Scottish literary manuscripts stands out for its attempt to address the lack of women's voices in contemporary literature. Often, if they are found at all, women are depicted through the voice of contemporary men. As such, "while many poems include or even focus upon women....they often further the prevailing culture of male experiences, values and epistemologies." (56) Newlyn argues that the main images of women in such art forms were of the evil wife, the unkind mistress, the unmarried yet sexual woman, the idealised love object or the personification of virtue. Thus, Newlyn concludes that such literature offers a limited account of the role of women as icon or stereotype. More importantly, "these poems in aggregate manifest the importance of those prescribed images of women and their direct relationship to the maintenance of the prevailing social system." (64) Andrea Thomas echoed many of the concerns found in Newlyn's essay, arguing that at the court of James V women experienced much of what contemporary sixteenth-century women (outside the court) experienced. "In this they were expected to operate within their limited spheres," (91) while frequently being exhorted to emulate idealised icons or chastised for not conforming to social conventions.

Although limited space prevents a full review of each of the twenty essays contained in this collection, it should be clear to the readers of this journal from those essays mentioned above that *Women in Scotland* adds a much needed dimension to the study of Scottish history and is a welcome addition to any library. More over, the contributions it makes to national history are equaled by its contributions to the study of women's roles throughout European history. Ewan and Meikle should be applauded for this effort. Likewise, Tuckwell Press should be commended for once again delivering a fine product at a reasonable price. This book anticipates many of the studies now being undertaken on women in Scotland and is a great start at filling a significant historiographical void.

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Lizanne Henderson and Edward J. Cowan. *Scottish Fairy Belief* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001) pp. 233 £14.99 (Paperback)

*Scottish Fairy Belief* is an enticing topic, and Lizanne Henderson and Ted Cowan do not disappoint. The tone of the discussion is lively and the book is filled with charming examples, but this is not what is most impressive. The true accomplishment of this book rests in the success of the authors in “present[ing] a reasonably vivid picture of what fairy belief once was and meant to the believers.” (5)

Henderson and Cowan explore countless witchcraft cases and ballads in search of fairies. It is these sources that they use as a guide for deciphering fairy belief. In the witchcraft cases they employ the framework of Carlo Ginzburg and explore the testimony of accused witches.<sup>1</sup> Ginzburg argues that we must not discard the testimony of accused witches as forced testimony or the ramblings of the mentally ill, but that the testimonies are significant historical sources because they offer much insight into what was believed by the accused. Therefore, the focus of the discussion is not whether the testimonies were accurate, rather they serve as a springboard for discussion of why these stories were plausible. The answer quickly emerges that fairies existed everywhere for the people of Scotland between 1450-1750; it is belief in these ‘friendly neighbours’ that offers historians a way to begin sketching a picture of popular Scottish beliefs the way in which they understood the world around them (which the authors refer to as *mentalité*).

The study begins with a historiographical survey of what has been gathered on fairy belief during the early modern period. In the second chapter the authors quickly move into the realm of belief in early modern Scotland. Popular beliefs of where fairies lived, what they looked like, their magical powers and connection with the dead, as well as their pastimes, and the political and social infrastructure of their communities are illustrated with numerous examples. Exploration through the contemporary belief structure continues through the third chapter which discusses perceived fairy powers over humans through enchantment and methods of disenchantment. Chapter four traces the changing image of fairies as they underwent the demonization process that was occurring throughout Scottish popular culture. The fifth chapter explores the re-ignition of fairy belief at the end of the

seventeenth century, and how their image and experience was changed forever when recorded by pen. Robert Kirk, a minister who was closely associated with fairy belief is the main subject of the sixth chapter. Kirk, a minister of Balquhidder and then Aberfoyle, revived fairy belief as he was a strong proponent of combining Christian and fairy belief to suppress atheism. The story of this exceptional character embodied many of the characteristics of Christian and supernatural belief. The final chapter explores the legacy of fairies in the literature of the modern era.

*Fairy Belief in Scotland* is a timely publication. Scholars have recently given a great deal of attention to the study of Scottish witchcraft and the witch-hunts. By illuminating how Scots viewed the supernatural world and how this world was intertwined with their own, Cowan and Henderson make a significant contribution to understanding the *mentalité* in which beliefs in witchcraft developed.<sup>2</sup> Ecclesiastical pressure to remodel this world led to a process of demonizing elements of popular culture which had disastrous results closely connected to the events of the witch-hunts. Beyond the significant contributions that this work makes to the study of witchcraft in Scotland, it also makes a substantial contribution to understanding popular culture. Although fairies were only one aspect of popular belief, the success in which the authors had in teasing out the complex integration of the supernatural world into the temporal Christian world offers a solid basis in which to understand popular perceptions and beliefs in Scotland. By putting forward an 'experience-centred' framework and methodology, this study provides a basis from which to study popular Scottish *mentalité* within its own cultural context.

The topic is challenging, and in many ways it is fraught with difficulties which the authors readily recognize. They state that "[b]elief is not the easiest of subjects to study" as it is very difficult to shed modern perceptions and reactions to the events studied and to know how those of the early modern world would have responded. The sources are also a challenge. Both the witchcraft trials and ballads were recorded by intermediaries who inevitably gave a distorted version of the events. This is further complicated by the fact that these sources offer some of the most comprehensive and insightful evidence of fairy belief (and popular culture) that has survived to the modern day. Despite these challenges, which are not new to folklorists, the authors recognize the

problems and persistently probe the sources in an attempt to understand the *mentalité* of those who lived in early modern Scotland. The study has been fairly successfully in reaching these goals within the context of fairy belief. It is in the broader goal set out on the first page where more explicit discussion would have been welcome. The authors sought “to reach some conclusions about the role of fairies as a cultural phenomenon”, yet there is very little discussion on this issue or on the wider significance of this study. For example, how does the study of fairies fit into our understanding of popular culture and everyday life during the period? How widely can this discussion be applied within the context of geography or economic and social status? How does this glimpse into the beliefs of the Scottish people contribute to our understanding of Scottish society and culture, and where should studies of popular culture go from here?

Cowan and Henderson have produced a creatively researched and compelling study of a significant aspect of popular culture in early modern Scotland and it provides a significant foundation on which to expand discussions and research of popular culture in early modern Scotland. The work is accessible to both academic and general audiences and offers a fascinating foray into the *mentalité* of early modern Scotland.

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#### Endnotes

1. Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, 1st edition (New York: 1991).
2. The most recent publications include work done by the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft. This project has four scholars who are currently creating a database of witchcraft cases and trials recorded in Scotland between 1563-1736. See Julian Goodare (ed.), *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context* (Manchester, 2002); see also the work of Stuart MacDonald published in this journal and his book *The Witches of Fife* (East Lothian, 2002).

Jeanette Brock, *The Mobile Scot, A Study of Emigration and Migration 1861-1911* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1999).

Marjorie Harper, *Emigration from Scotland Between the Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

Colin Pooley and Jean Turnbull, *Migration and Mobility in Britain Since the 18<sup>th</sup> Century* (London: UCL Press, 1998).

Charles Withers, *Urban Highlanders: Highland-Lowland Migration and Urban Culture, 1700-1900* (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 1998).

The appearance of four good monographs on migration within and from Scotland is a welcome demonstration of the power and diversity of scholarship on this important topic. Jeanette Brock delineates quantitatively the broad outlines of migration within Scotland using the evidence of successive census snapshots. Colin Pooley and Jean Turnbull draw heavily on a different source, a database of residential histories drawn from genealogical or family histories, in order to identify and analyze the broad patterns of mobility within Britain. The narrower focus of his study allows Charles Withers to weave together an exceptionally broad range of kinds of information that document highland migrants in lowland life, the importance of lowland cities and especially Glasgow to Gaelic culture and the process of migration itself. Marjorie Harper's focus on emigration within a shorter period also allows a greater range of sources to be consulted and a more intensive interpretation of these sources.

Brock identifies and contrasts the experience of four regions within Scotland: the Highlands, the Borders, the central lowlands and a more eclectic collection of peripheral districts of which the largest bloc is the northeast. Pooley and Turnbull also identify distinctive regional patterns to the extent that small samples at the regional level will sustain generalization. Most of their analysis contrasts 14 regions of which two are Scottish (nothern and southern) although some tables (eg. pp.87-88) distinguish separately six subregions within Scotland. Withers examines separately nine towns and cities, although not surprisingly

Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen receive the greatest attention. Harper considers people moving from all of Scotland to all overseas destinations although the records of people moving to Canada turn out to be particularly rich.

The studies differ as well in their origins. *The Mobile Scot* is an impressive first book, in fact a revised dissertation. The other studies are defining works by mid-career historians who already have established strong reputations and who are summarizing the results of major research projects. Each of the monographs has a highly useful literature survey albeit with particular emphases. Brock does justice to the quantitative-based literature more persuasively than the other scholars. Pooley and Turnbull are especially good on the discussion of sources. Withers situates Scotland in a European context and is more sensitive than the others to cultural and linguistic dimensions of the migration process. Harper's literature review is particularly informative about organized colonization schemes and the relationship among emigration, immigration and return migration.

The core evidence of the Brock study is an estimation of net migration through identification in each of several censuses of the number of people of specific ages and sex in a district. Assumption of a probable ten year mortality rate allows the author to predict how many people in each age and sex category ought to be living in the same district at the next decennial census. The difference between predicted and enumerated population ten years later is interpreted as net immigration to the district or net emigration from the district. Of course, there is no way of knowing if people moved once or several times during the census interval. Indeed, if everyone left a district and then returned within the census interval the measure would show no movement at all. Large-scale emigration which is offset by equally heavy immigration cannot be distinguished from a situation in which people moved very little. Nevertheless, the summary measure of 'net' migration is a commonly-used and valuable barometer of the overall pattern of movement.

Net migration estimates based on Scottish and English census data are especially valuable because enumerators from as early as 1851 reported the parish/district of birth. A migrant, therefore, is anyone not living in the parish/district of birth. The North American censuses typically did not return birthplace at

such a detailed level. Moreover, the evidence of mortality on which the migration estimate is based is more precise for post-1855 Scotland and post-1837 England than anywhere else in the nineteenth-century world. The result is an excellent basis for estimating net migration.

Brock examines migrants through published tabulations from each of the Scottish censuses 1861-1911 and two manuscript samples of individual migrants drawn from the 1861 (19,000 people) and 1891 (40,000 people) censuses. These data permit an exceptionally rich profile of the regional patterns of population movement. There can be no criticism of Brock's handling of the data; her quantitative methodology is sensitive and careful.

Admittedly, Brock tells us more about migrant departures than arrivals. In part this is because so many Scots went to England and overseas. Brock does not consult the English and North American censuses because they do not distinguish regions or districts of birth within Scotland. The local description of birth place within Scotland is returned only in the Scottish census. The result is that while we can examine in detail migration to Edinburgh and Glasgow from, say, Berwickshire, we can say nothing about migration from the same shire to Newcastle and Liverpool. The underlying problem is that after they leave Scotland those born in Berwickshire cannot be distinguished separately from all other Scots-born. Similarly, we may estimate the number of people who left Berwickshire for non-Scottish destinations, but those who went to Australasia cannot be distinguished from those who simply shifted to a new parish on the other side of the Tweed. Brock recognizes this limitation of the English census and, presumably for this reason, works with Scottish data only.

Pooley and Turnbull work with a very different source, an innovative database of the residential histories of 16,000 people born 1750-1930 who undertook 74,000 moves during their lifetimes. Genealogists and family historians have supplied the basic data. This evidence of residential histories is supplemented with diaries and other information about specific families and particular communities. The ability to track individuals over a lifetime is an unusual and exceptionally valuable complement to the census snapshots of the sort analyzed by Brock.

Again, there is a weakness originating in the nature of the

source rather than the methodology with which it is used. Pooley and Turnbull demonstrate that the age structure of their genealogy-based sample is similar to that of the population as documented in the relevant censuses (after allowing infant mortality). More worrisome is the revelation that their sample understates the importance of people who never married, people in the larger cities, the poor and women. The biases arise because genealogists most often trace through the male line, because the never-married have few descendents to reconstruct their lives and because the poor and the city-dwellers are difficult to trace (especially so for the big-city poor).

The authors are admirably forthright on the existence of these limitations, although the implications for various analytical purposes remain unknowable. Readers of this journal will take particular note that the data used in *Migration and Mobility* show no obvious differences in migration that can be attributed to a distinctive 'Scottish effect'. People in southern Scotland and northern England, for example, have similar profiles in the number of their moves, length of residence, distance of moves, etc (pp.87-88). Admittedly, there is no explicit testing of a Scottish effect, perhaps in part because of the difficulty of introducing religion as an analytical category with these data.

The studies by Harper and Withers are more comprehensive insofar as they direct a range of sources at a well-defined topic, rather than addressing a broader topic with a single innovative source. The first part of *Urban Highlanders* examines the circumstances of Highland society that prompted so many to depart. This discussion is set in the context of the wider literature on migration within Europe. The second part examines the process of migration in a way that separately identifies and considers the inter-relationships among temporary, seasonal and permanent migration. The third part of the book is a rich portrait of Gaelic culture in the cities. The Highlands here are defined as Argyll, Bute, Inverness, Sutherland and Ross and Cromarty together with any other parishes where 25 per cent or more of the population spoke Gaelic in 1891 (according to the valuable enumeration of language in that census).

Harper provides the first comprehensive examination of Scottish emigration during the 1920s and 1930s. The author has rather more to say about the first of the interwar decades, in part



because emigration was much reduced during the international economic depression of the 1930s. Government encouragement of emigration especially during the 1920s generated large collections of government records in Britain and Canada that have been examined by the author. Indeed, one of the attractions of *Emigration from Scotland* is its sophisticated examination of an area of government (and church) policy that was controversial on both sides of the Atlantic. Harper's examination of contemporary Scottish newspapers provides exceptionally rich material to complement the government records and secondary literature. There is some interviewing of people with personal knowledge or experience of emigration, but not as much as might be expected given the very recent period under investigation.

*Emigration from Scotland* is an unusually rich and multi-faceted study that provides valuable insight into social and economic circumstances in the Scottish Highlands and rural lowlands, the Canadian west and several other overseas regions, as well as government and church responses to rural poverty, and of course the process of migration itself. It is likely to remain the definitive study of Scottish emigration to Canada in the 1920s. *Urban Highlanders* is a comparably definitive examination of the nature, importance and origins of Gaelic culture in urban Scotland. *The Mobile Scot* and *Migration and Mobility* pioneer the use of particular sources which, as the authors demonstrate, have the capacity to describe and contextualize the patterns of migration. Each monograph will be of considerable interest to students of Scottish history and to students of migration. Collectively, they represent a major advance in our understanding of the history of the Scots both in and outside of Scotland.

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Arthur Herman. *How the Scots Invented the Modern World: The True Story of How Western Europe's Poorest Nation Created our World and Everything in it.* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2001). \$38.95 Cnd

The American scholar Arthur Herman has taken on the daunting task of arguing that Scots culture and society is responsible for the success and wealth of the Modern World. In the preface, Herman states rather boldly that, "being Scottish is more than just a matter of nationality or place of origin or clan or even culture. It is also a state of mind, a way of viewing the world and our place in it." The pinnacle of his argument is that, "a large part of the world turns out to be 'Scottish' without realizing it." (p. vii) If nothing else, Herman's bold and broad assumption merits attention. His argument is broken up into several categories in which he finds Scottish genius behind nearly every university, philosophy, diaspora, and literary achievement in the Modern World. While going beyond the traditional Scots heroes like Wallace, Fleming, Watt, Burns and Robert the Bruce, he also reveals the many other inventors, thinkers, and scholars from North Britain who have made an indelible mark on the Modern World. The reader should be cautious though, in that most of Herman's sources are in fact already celebratory of Scotland in the first place. This seems to be the most critical influence on Herman's writing.

"Part one: epiphany" (pp. 13-191) is laced with interesting anecdotes from the annals of Scotland's philosophical, religious and political histories. These anecdotes serve as the basis of Herman's argument that those aspects of Modern society are intimately drawn from a wealth of Scottish heritage. So many anecdotes and 'connections' are made so as to convince the reader that this influence is more than just mere coincidence, but in fact, we are all directly influenced by the Scots.

Herman argues that the three centres of "civilizing and modernizing activity" were Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Yet, it was the latter two that became the "twin cities' of enlightenment and change" in the late 1700s. Glasgow was the "more innovative and practical" of the two while Edinburgh was the "more artistic and literary, more intellectual in the abstract sense." (p. 161) It seems as though Adam Smith is the hero of the day and from this point in the book forward, as the rest of Herman's argument builds upon several quotations from *Wealth of Nations* (pp. 195-6). This is most noticeable in his argument

that the New World was in fact a Scots creation (see chapter nine, "That Great Design" - Scots in America).

Part Two - Diaspora (pp. 194-361) is where Herman illustrates the Scots legacy in the New World. Herman spends a majority of his argument on diaspora in America. Other areas of settlement, including Canada and India are given attention, but it seems unbalanced compared to his treatment of the United States. This is most clearly revealed in the lack of sources used for the Canadian section of this study. Relying upon an outdated Canadian history text, his understanding of Scots identity in Canada seems shadowed by his willingness to trumpet the achievements of the Scots in the United States, particularly their part in the establishment of various Ivy League colleges and in American Revolution (see Sources, pp. 369-371, 374-376.)

Herman's sources reveal a varied assortment of secondary literature, but also reveal little to no primary research. More often than not, Herman relies upon T.M. Devine (*The Scottish Nation*, 1999) for general history, and neglects to mention any of the other Scottish History masters who have put forth wonderful general histories, such as Michael Lynch's *Scotland: a New History* (1991). In particular, his research into the Scots in Canada is somewhat dated and cites only the late Stanford Reid as a source for the subject. While the work of Reid is invaluable to the study of Scots diaspora in Canada, other sources abound and should also be relied upon. Much has been written since the 1970s on the Scots in Canada and a wealth of information is available on more specific settlement in Canada; for example, J.I. Little's treatment of the Scots in Lower Canada.

Herman's attempt at proving that we are all affected by Scots culture, intellectual life and society is noted. While the claims and arguments are at first impressive, they lack any kind of primary evidence and rely largely on outdated secondary literature. Reliance upon celebratory histories can only result in fantastic and enthusiastic support that the Scots did in fact invent the Modern World! Segments of this work might prove useful in a historiography class to study Whig history. However, it should not serve as a tool of the academic. An enjoyable read, highly entertaining and engaging, this is an excellent read for anyone who has a love of Scots culture, history and philosophy.

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## **THE FRANK WATSON PRIZE IN SCOTTISH HISTORY**

The Frank Watson Scottish History Book Prize will be awarded in Autumn 2003 to the best book, monograph, dissertation or edited set of papers on Scottish history published between 2001-2002. Preference will be given to original work on a topic in early Scottish history or in any area of Scottish History which has been largely unexplored. Three copies of books for consideration should be submitted by authors, publishers, or any other sponsor by June 15, 2003 to:

Dr. Kevin James  
Chair  
Scottish Studies Programme  
University of Guelph  
Guelph, ON  
N1G 2W1

The prize will be awarded at the University of Guelph at its 2003 Autumn Colloquium, held in late September or early October. The recipient is expected to receive the award in person and to present a lecture and a seminar while visiting Guelph. Transportation and accommodation will be provided. Further information may be obtained by writing to the above address or by e-mail from: [kjames@uoguelph.ca](mailto:kjames@uoguelph.ca)

The 1999-2000 Frank Watson Prize in Scottish History was awarded to Professor Keith Brown of the University of Saint Andrews for his book *Noble Society in Scotland: Wealth, Family and Culture from Reformation to Revolution* (Edinburgh University Press, 2000).