

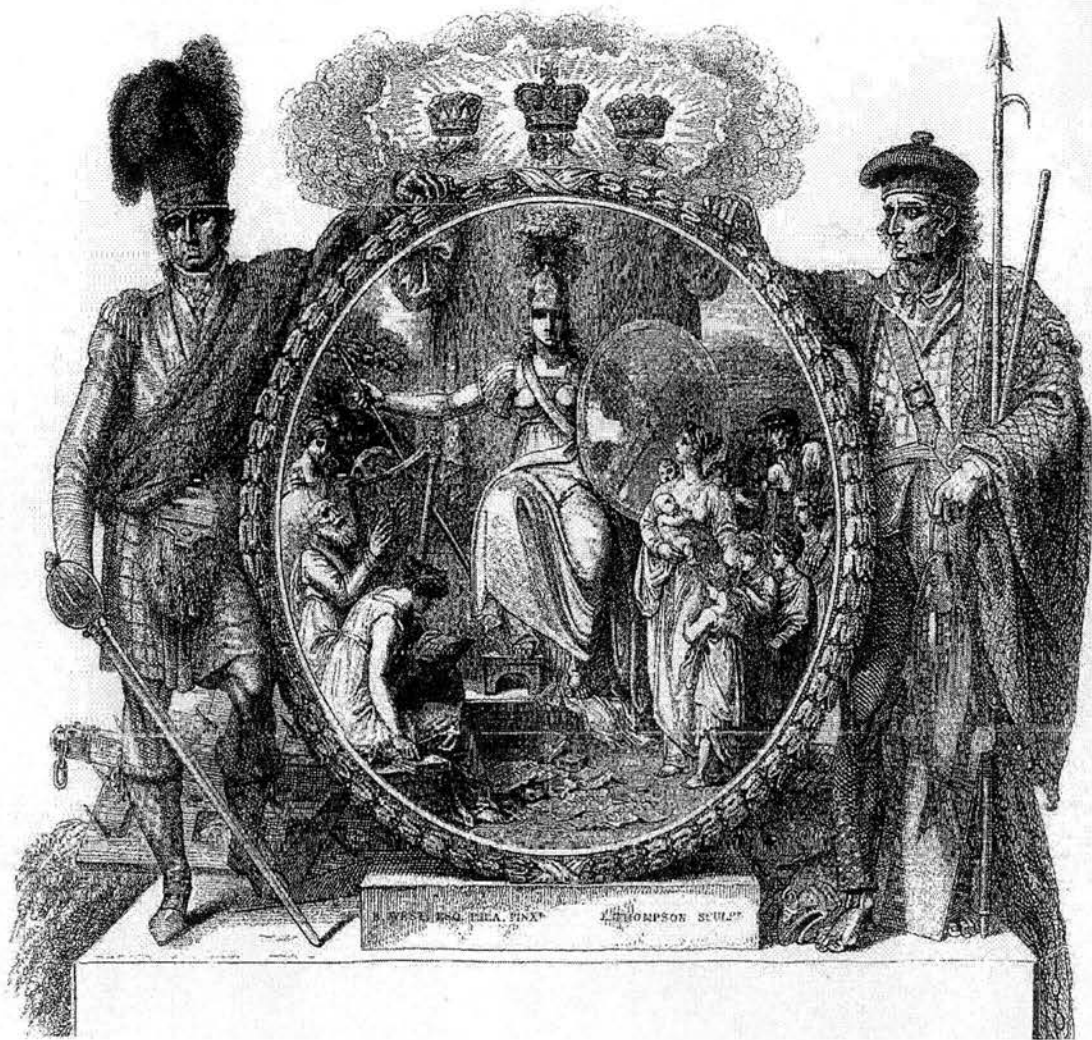
**HIGHLANDERS FROM HOME:
THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY AND THE
GAELIC SOCIETY OF LONDON TO GAELIC CULTURE
1778-1914**

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PREFACE

When the University of Edinburgh accepted me for Post Graduate Studies, I had initially planned to investigate the Highland communities in my adopted land of Canada. However, the death of my sister Ann Stuart Castle made me consider changing focus and examine the Gaelic Society of London, for Ann had served on its council for over thirty years. I wanted to do something that would honour her. I was aware that the Gaelic Society records were far from intact and was uncertain if lack of early material would cause a problem. I therefore decided to compare the achievements of the Gaelic Society of London and the Highland Society of London, two societies providing a refuge for Gaels to come together in the great metropolis. Another factor in my choice was that the two societies were reputedly established within a year of each other.

As with any study, we bring our own perceptions and our own history that entwines with the fabric of the writing and adds a dimension of our own experiences and ourselves. Therefore, I think it pertinent to share something of myself, from which the motivation for this thesis found its grounding. The Gaelic culture, which these two societies worked so hard to preserve is my culture. My parents were expatriate Scots, my father was of Argyllshire Highland stock, a Gaelic speaker, my mother was from Aberdeen, but her extraction was also Highland, and they raised their family of five children in the suburbs of Surrey, just outside the great metropolis, as Scots. The tales of Ossian were friends of our youth, Highland and Scottish

country dancing was a passion shared by myself and two other sisters, and a constant reminder of who 'we belonged to' was the constant singing of Gaelic songs by my father. From our mutual upbringing, only Ann remained true, she joined the Gaelic Society of London and it was there that she made a niche for herself, making her own contribution to Gaelic culture, including winning several Mod medals.

Her untimely death provided me with the inspiration and her memory the motivation for this thesis. Her life has also been commemorated by the Gaelic Society of London, who has established its most prestigious award 'Duais Comunn Gàidhlig Lunnainn' (The Gaelic Society of London Prize) to her memory. The Prize is awarded to individuals who have contributed in an outstanding way to preserve and maintain Gaelic language and culture. Allison Kinnaird MBE created the trophy, and it depicts a boat carrying the Gaelic tradition through the rough waves of the world.

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During my time of study here in Edinburgh I have been overwhelmed by the encouragement, guidance and assistance I have received as I have journeyed through my postgraduate studies at the University of Edinburgh. I feel that I have incurred so many debts of gratitude that no words are adequate and that no listing would be complete. However, I would like to acknowledge and thank those whose contributions have made a significant and encouraging difference to me.

Within the University community, my heartfelt thanks must go to my Supervisors Prof William Gillies and Prof Donald Meek. They have both generously shared with me their enthusiasm for Gaelic scholarship. They have guided me, encouraged me, offered valuable insights and given me their critical comments. Within the Celtic and Scottish Studies Department, I would like to thank those members of staff who have supported and encouraged me; in particular Dr Wilson McLeod for his technical assistance.

I should like to acknowledge the archivists and library staff for their ready assistance and suggestions: Special Collections Department, Edinburgh University Library; North Reading Room, National Library of Scotland; Special Collections Department, University College London; the Bushey Museum; the National Archives of Scotland; the Mitchell Library; the British Library and the National Archives.

I have received assistance and encouragement from the Gaelic Society of London through Joyce Seymour-Chalk, Chief; Iain Macleod, President; and Cliff

Castle, Hon. Vice-President; the Highland Society through Angus Nicol, Hon Secretary; John Horsford of the Royal Caledonian Schools Trust; Norman McLeod of the London Gaelic Services Committee, and Willie Johnston from the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland.

I should also like to thank Fiona Carmichael from ARTLAN for her expertise in all things related to computers, Eileen Broughton for proofreading the thesis and Amin Mahdavi for assistance with formatting.

On a more personal note, I would like to thank my husband Daniel for his patience and his unfailing belief in me; my son Calum for his wry amusement at his mum being back at 'school'; and the circle of supportive family and friends both here and in Canada. Last but not least a big thank you to 'the girls', Catriona Mackie, MaryCatherine Burgess, Stephanie Barger, Amy Norton and Emma Dymock who I meet every Thursday lunch-time for renewal, growth and mutual support.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis has been composed as a result of my own research. Any work that is not my own has been clearly referenced. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACG	An Comunn Gàidhealach
AUP	Aberdeen University Press
BL	British Library
BM	Bushey Museum
CA	Caledonian Asylum
CUP	Cambridge University Press
CMB	Council Minute Book
CTH	Club of True Highlanders
EGSS	Edinburgh Gaelic Schools Society
EUL	Edinburgh University Library
EUP	Edinburgh University Press
GSI	Gaelic Society of Inverness
GSL	Gaelic Society of London
HSG	Highland Society of Glasgow
HSL	Highland Society of London
HSS	Highland Society of Scotland
IHA	Inverness Highland Archive
LCB	London Correspondent Board
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
MB	Minute Book
ML	Mitchell Library
MP	Member of Parliament

NAS	National Archives of Scotland
OUP	Oxford University Press
PMB	Piping Minute Book
PP	Parliamentary Papers
NLS	National Library of Scotland
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
RCS	Royal Caledonian Schools
RHASS	Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland
SC	Scottish Corporation
SED	Scottish Education Department
SSPCK	Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge
STH	Society of True Highlanders
TGSI	Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness
TNA	The National Archives
UCL	University College London
ULP	University of London Press

ABSTRACT

HIGHLANDERS FROM HOME: THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY AND THE GAELIC SOCIETY OF LONDON TO GAELIC CULTURE 1778-1914

This thesis examines the contributions made to Gaelic culture by the Highland Society of London from 1778 and the Gaelic Society of London from 1830. Their members were scathingly called 'Cockney Gaels' and their roles have been essentially ignored by both other Highland societies in urban Scotland and by the academic world. Yet these expatriate London Gaels provided leadership for addressing deficiencies and key issues in the homeland. They turned recognition of problems into concerted action, with varying degrees of success. Individual members of both societies were Members of Parliament, and also enjoyed close support from their societies. By harnessing the power of central Government they were able to bolster and encourage initiatives to improve the life of the Gaels in the homeland. London was an energy centre where much was happening, and the London Gaels used 'networking' to their own advantage when they could. In so doing they kept the Gaelic flag flying high in the metropolis of London.

Through systematic evaluation of material from mainly primary sources, this thesis demonstrates how both societies responded to important concerns. Those identified by the societies were primarily education, highland development and philanthropy. The need for Gaelic worship for Highland migrants in London also had a prominent place. The need to preserve all aspects of Gaelic culture, including dress, language, literature,

music and dance, underpinned their existence. These contributions to Gaelic culture made by the HSL and the GSL paved the way for other Highland societies in Scotland to take up these challenges and to begin new initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

Gaelic Culture: an historical perspective

A great, and, in some respects, a lamentable change has been produced; and the original of the picture which I have attempted to draw is suffering daily obliterations, and is, in fact, rapidly disappearing. Much of the romance and chivalry of the Highland character is gone. The voice of the bard has long been silent; poetry, tradition, and song, are vanishing away. To adopt the words of Mrs Grant, 'The generous and characteristic spirit, the warm affection to his family, the fond attachment to his clan, the love of story and song, the contempt of danger and luxury, the mystic superstition, equally awful and tender, the inviolable fidelity to every engagement, the ardent love of his native heaths and mountains,' will soon be no longer found to exist among the Highlanders, unless the change of character which is now in rapid progress be checked.¹

David Stewart of Garth wrote that lament of a culture that was vanishing in 1822. Yet, by that time, some steps had already been taken to preserve the language and culture of the Highlander, but his concern was that these attempts might be too late. Gaelic culture had been under attack since the fall of the Lords of the Isles, but it was after the defeat of the Jacobites at the Battle of Culloden that the Government passed punitive Acts which would bring the Highlanders to heel and into step with the rest of Britain. The chiefs lost their hereditary jurisdiction and their influence, and the Highlanders lost the rights to bear arms and to wear their Highland Garb. Dr Samuel Johnson noted in 1773 that the whole nation was now 'dejected and intimidated':

¹ David Stewart of Garth, *Sketches of the Character, Institutions, and Customs of the Highlanders of Scotland*, 2 Vols, new edn. (Inverness: Mackenzie, 1885), p. 147

Their pride has been crushed by the heavy hand of a vindictive conqueror, whose severities have been followed by laws which, though they cannot be called cruel, have produced much discontent, because they operate upon the surface of life, and make every eye bear witness to subjection. To be compelled to a new dress has always been found painful.²

Although the bagpipes were not specifically mentioned in the Disarming Acts, with the loss of the hereditary piping schools the music of the pipe had effectively been silenced. Again Dr Johnson noted ‘the solace which the bagpipe can give they have long enjoyed; but among other changes, which the last revolution introduced, the use of the bagpipe begins to be forgotten’.³ The Gaelic language had been under attack since James I & VI decided that English was to be the uniting language of the newly joined countries. English was universally taught in schools and it was not until the late eighteenth century that Gaelic was again used in schools as a medium to teach English. During that period when the use and teaching of Gaelic was strongly discouraged, the English language was making inroads into the homeland through seasonal migrants who picked up some English in the lowlands. Hereditary bardic schools and piping schools had been closed and the bearers of tradition were to a great extent a dying breed.

Stewart of Garth was also of the opinion that the loss of culture was not purely the result of the various Governments’ Acts and that some blame must be apportioned to, and greatly enhanced by, the march of Presbyterianism into the Highlands and Islands. He believed that the

² Samuel Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland in 1773* (London: Findlay, 1822), p. 136

³ Johnson, p. 157-8

fundamentalist missionaries had ‘made numerous proselytes’⁴ of the Highlanders, who in many instances had ‘been converted into a gloomy and morose fanaticism’.⁵ Their superstitions, their songs and tales and music replaced by fervour ‘in religious ravings’.⁶

Nevertheless, Stewart of Garth still saw remnants of his culture still surviving:

Yet though many Highlanders are thus changed, and have lost much of their taste for the poetry and romantic amusements of their ancestors, though their attachment to superiors has decayed, and the kindness, urbanity, and respect with which all strangers were treated, have considerably abated,—notwithstanding all these, and several other changes for the worse, they still retain the inestimable virtues of integrity and charity; their morality is sufficiently proved by the records of the courts of justice; their liberality to the poor, and the independent spirit of the poor themselves, are likewise sufficiently evinced by the trifling and almost nominal amount of the public funds for their relief; and their conduct in the field, and their general qualities of firmness, spirit, and courage.⁷

As previously noted, by 1822 efforts had already been undertaken to resurrect certain qualities of the ancient Gael. The *literati* of the Scottish Enlightenment perhaps led the way to change the perception of Highlanders from barbaric savage to the descendants of a civilised and heroic society. The Enlightenment had been a time of self-improvement and a deepening of man’s understanding of himself; as Prof A. Broadie states ‘the eighteenth century was a age for the scrutiny of origins of all sorts, especially of origins which lie in the very distant past, such as the origin of language, society,

⁴ Stewart, p. 163

⁵ Stewart, p. 159

⁶ Stewart, p. 164

⁷ Stewart, p. 167

government, religion and painting'.⁸ The *literati* looked at what was of value in Scotland's past that was worth preserving and agreed that some aspects of Gaelic culture should be saved and that others should be laid to rest.⁹ They quite liked Gaelic Scotland's patrilineal system; the relationship between different classes was positively viewed, as was the belief that Scotland's martial past was worth preserving. Yet the *literati* were searching for evidence of a natural progression from a primitive society to a sophisticated one. When Jerome Stone's translation of *Albin and the Daughter of May*, appeared in the *Scots Magazine*, in 1756,¹⁰ they came to the conclusion that the evidence of the primitive society they were seeking was to be found in ancient Gaelic poetry. It was in the search for this ancient poetry that John Home met and then badgered James Macpherson to find and publish those remains of Gaelic poetry.¹¹ Macpherson's translations provided an interpretation of the past that agreed with the observations of the *literati*. Yet many questioned the authenticity of the poems, in particular Samuel Johnson led an invective against the culture and the language of such an impoverished people stating they were not conducive to producing literature and poetry. The controversy over authenticity, in some respects had a very positive effect for it led public attention to Gaelic literature, and the language became 'venerable' and accepted. As Prof Donald Meek has noted, 'in the Scottish context, Macpherson is of singular importance since he deliberately drew

⁸ Alexander Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001), p. 64

⁹ Anand C. Chitnis, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the Militia Issue* (Edinburgh: Donald, 1985), p. 80

¹⁰ Jerome Stone, *Scots Magazine* (1756), 15, quoted by Victor Durkacz, in *The Decline of the Celtic Languages* (Edinburgh: Donald, 1983), p. 193

¹¹ David Hume, letter to Thomas Grey quoted by David Raynor, 'Ossian and Hume', in *Ossian Revisited*, ed. by Howard Gaskill (Edinburgh: EUP, 1991), pp. 147-163, p. 147

attention to, and creatively utilised, the rich Gaelic ballad tradition of the Highlands'.¹²

The publication of the Ossianic poetry had awakened an interest in Gaelic culture and nationhood. The scene had been set for preservation by the end of the eighteenth century which endured and gathered pace in the nineteenth century. The time was right for those Highland gentlemen, members of the Highland Society and the Gaelic Society of London, who missed the commonplace of their lives in the homeland and became intent on saving what remained of their dying culture together with a desire to help those who still remained there.

Time Parameters

The parameters determined for this study fall between 1778, when the HSL was established, and 1914 with the commencement of the First World War. This provides a timeline of 136 years. A period when both societies were probably at their most active in achieving their desired objects chosen at their respective establishment. Although the GSL claims its establishment was in June 1777, I have not found any conclusive evidence to support this, but, as all the early records of both societies are no longer extant, this verdict may be erroneous. I have taken the year 1830 as the date for the establishment of the GSL and my reasoning is made apparent in the body of this thesis.

¹² Donald Meek, 'The Gaelic Ballads of Scotland: Creativity and Adaptation', in *Ossian Revisited*, ed. by Howard Gaskill, pp. 19-48, p. 19

Yet the timeframe covers more than just 136 years, for in those years much happened which affected Scotland and the attitudes towards Scots throughout Britain and the rest of the world. That timeframe encompasses the return of the Forfeited Estates, the reconciliation of the Jacobite rebels, the Wars of Empire and the Napoleonic Wars, where Highland Regiments won fame and glory. It was also a time of the Clearances and social unrest in the homeland. On the larger stage, Britain's power grew with its empire, which was eventually to cover three-fifths of the world. It was a time of improvements in agriculture, technology, transport infrastructure, medicine and sanitation; it encompassed the Industrial Revolution and an age that witnessed universal suffrage. It was a time of great changes. These changes affected the lives of the membership of the HSL and the GSL in many ways and in consequence the manner in which they achieved their objects of preservation and assistance.

Research Aims and Approach

Little research has been conducted on the Highlanders resident in London and Prof William Gillies identified this deficiency in 1990. During his presentation to the Gaelic Society of Inverness on the subject of his grandfather Liam MacGill'iosa, who was an active participant in Gaelic circles in London throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he states:

I do not pretend to have exhausted what could be said, either about Liam or about the London Gaels [...] as to the London Gaels, I shall content myself with the hope that what I have to say may generate interest in a corner of a currently neglected

field, whose effect on the course of Highland affairs was by no means negligible.¹³

This study is an attempt to address the lack of scholarship on the London or 'Cockney' Gaels. It concerns a group of Highlanders, who were members of either the HSL or the GSL. The membership of each society encompassed a small spectrum of class and lifestyle that was not enjoyed by the majority of the Highland population in London. The thesis has a three-fold purpose: the first purpose is an assessment of how each society set about achieving their stated objectives; the second is to appraise the contribution made by each society in the preservation and promotion of Gaelic language and culture; and the third to ascertain if their location in London was related to their attainments

Format

There were some initial presentational difficulties to overcome; and rather than merely undertaking a chronological comparison of the societies within the time parameters; it was decided to divide the chapters into broad themes which encompassed the two societies' objects. Therefore, the thesis follows a thematic plan determined by the main areas in which the Societies were active. Where possible I have attempted to present my findings chronologically within the timeframe. This has worked reasonably well for all the chapters except Chapter 8, where the different aspects of culture deemed worthy of preservation are dealt with independently, whereas in fact

¹³ William Gillies, 'Liam MacGill'Iosa: A Friend of the Gael', *TGSI* 56 (1990), 503-533, p. 503

most of these acts of preservation occurred simultaneously. I have for the most part let the records of each Society 'tell' its own story.

The thesis is divided into nine chapters, the second chapter identifies the HSL and the GSL and their stated objectives, which will provide a benchmark to assess their success. It also includes an examination of how these Gaels interacted with the main players in the great metropolis who provided assistance to them in achieving their goals. The third chapter addresses the concern about Gaelic education in both the homeland and in London. The fourth chapter assesses the practical assistance given by the London Gaels to improve the lot of those in the homeland. The fifth chapter relates the history of Gaelic worship in London. The sixth chapter deals with the preservation of Gaelic literature, but for the most part is devoted to the HSL and its relationship with James Macpherson and the events that led to it publishing *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic*. The influence that this seminal publication of the Gaelic 'originals' had on later Gaelic poetry and prose will also be addressed. The seventh chapter concerns the preservation of the Gaelic language and addresses the different manner in which the two societies tackled this object. The eighth chapter encompasses the preservation of the remaining aspects of Gaelic culture that the societies identified. It considers how both societies, but particularly, the HSL responded to preserve a culture that was close to extinction, and helped to imprint a Scottish identity based on Highland culture across the globe.

Source Material

As with many non-profit organisations without a permanent home, records are lost or destroyed with the passing of time. The GSL has fared much worse than the HSL in this regard. However, there are still enough fundamental records left, and these together with secondary sources, can shed light in various ways. The primary source material used for research purposes is dealt with individually for each society, and then a general review of secondary sources used will be given.

Highland Society of London

The National Library of Scotland (NLS) holds much of the manuscript records of the HSL. These records are reasonably complete and on the whole provide a vivid picture of the workings of the HSL. In MS.Dep.268, deposited by the HSL in 1977, are Minute Books, Correspondence, Letter Books, Account Books, Attendance Books, and volumes for Candidates for Bursaries, and Candidates for Military Pensions. (The two Subscribers Accounts Books (Dep 268/32 and 33) are currently with the GSL's records at UCL (see below)). The Minutes prior to 1783 and possibly some of the later Committee Minute Books were with James Logan at the time of his death and were lost.¹⁴ If they were returned to the HSL they were lost probably in a fire. The HSL records suffered loss due to three fires, two of them at the Scottish Corporation in 1877 and 1941, and then, when it had moved its records to St Columba Presbyterian Church, they again suffered severe damage in the London blitz of 1943. By comparing 'A

¹⁴ C.N. Macintyre North, *Leabhar Comunn nam fìor Ghaèl*, 2 Vols. (London: Smythson, 1881), I, p. x

Catalogue of Books, Documents and other properties of the Highland Society of London',¹⁵ dated 27 June 1904, with the list of the deposited material in the National Library of Scotland, it is clear that most of the records were in fact lost in the earliest fire of 1877. Yet the HSL fared better than the Scottish Corporation, which lost all its records in this fire.

Minute Books cover the years 1783 to May 1816, and then from 1870 to 1903. The gap is partially covered by the following: a 'Rough Minute Book' February 1822 to March 1829, and 'Extracts of Proceedings to the Society' February 1819-May 1824, and a 'Box of draft Minutes 1820-1840. It is possible that the Extracts of Proceedings may have been copied from damaged Minute Books. However, there is a period of thirty years when there are no extant minutes, there are also gaps in the correspondence for this time and there are no Letter Books prior to 1871. MS.Acc.10615 contains a miscellany of HSL records, and includes Minute Books, Letter Books, and Register of Bursars up to and past 1914. Worthy of note is the correspondence between the HSL and Advocates Library and the National Library of Scotland regarding its Gaelic Manuscripts, which were given to John Mackenzie by James Macpherson and sent to the Highland Society of Scotland for its investigation into the authenticity of the poems of Ossian.

However, there are other primary records, which relate to the operations of the HSL in the records of other institutions. The Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland (RHASS) has records relating to the publication of *Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic*. They were

¹⁵ NLS HSL 10615/113

probably deposited with this society on the death of Sir John Sinclair and contain extracted minutes of now lost Minute Books, correspondence, committee minutes and some of the correspondence between members of the Ossian Committee and others; they are now deposited in the NLS, Adv.MS.73.2.10 to Adv.MS.73.2.27. The RHASS's own records also provide important information regarding the interaction between the two societies. The Sederunt Books and the Piping Minute Book provide an important source of information for the Piping Competitions, which are incomplete in the extant HSL records. There is also information regarding the HSL's role in establishing the joint-stock company named the British Society for Extending the Fisheries and Improving the Sea Coasts of the Kingdom. The National Archive of Scotland holds the records of the established company in GD9. The National Archive of Scotland also provides a rich source of Family Papers which have yielded additional information on HSL ventures.

The Bushey Museum holds the Royal Caledonian Schools records. These include the HSL's committee minutes for the establishment of the Caledonian Asylum, and the Minute Books, Correspondence etc. from 1816 when it became an independent organisation. They also contain the Caledonian Asylum's Gaelic Chapel committee Minute Book for the period 1816-1817.

Gaelic Society of London

The GSL by comparison has very little of its original records. It is possible that some material may have been lost in the fire at the Scottish Corporation in 1941 if it still held its meetings there. There was a loss of records following the death of Mary Stewart, a former Chief who still had some of the Society's records. Another loss of records occurred when Stewart Bruce, secretary to the Society during 1950-51, took them to his home at a time of dissension and potential disbandment of the Society. They remained with him till his death, when his wife and sister offered them to the Mitchell Library in 1973. The records consisted of several minute books, an account book, Donald Cameron's translation of the Centenary Dinner Report, and other lesser items. It was ten years later that the GSL traced its lost records, which were retained by the Mitchell Library until 2004, when they were returned to the GSL and deposited at University College London. The Mitchell Library has retained copies of all those GSL records it had held for over thirty years.

Compared with the HSL, the GSL moved fairly frequently and did not settle at the Scottish Corporation until 1887. It did become more settled from 1870, when it rented rooms in Bedford Road from January 1871 until December 1875 and then in Adam Street from January 1876 to December 1886. It would appear from the minutes that it had cupboards or a cupboard, which housed its library and Minute Books and other records. In the report in

the Celtic Magazine for 1887,¹⁶ the early Minute Books are mentioned in such a way to imply that the Society's records from its inception to 1887 were intact. There is only one mention of a lost Council Minute Book taken from the Society's Library in the Minute for 29 October 1900.

In 1973 the GSL deposited many of its extant records with University College London, and since 2004 they have been held in University College London's Special Collections Department. With this more secure and permanent home, records that were still stored at members' homes are now being collected and are currently being unpacked and sorted by Joyce Seymour Chalk, Chief and Librarian of the Society, and there is a possibility that items thought lost may be found.

The University of London Library cleaned, repaired and re-assembled one of the scrapbooks, which contains the GSL's earliest records in 64 folios with an additional eleven items that were loose, but placed in the scrapbook. It is a miscellany of letters, a Minute of the Meeting for 3 February 1843, poems and papers presented at meetings, reports from other societies and a series of Gaelic language lessons written by William Menzies, the first President. Another scrapbook entitled 'Fingal', also in Logan's original catalogue of 1840, contains badly cut newspaper articles and other information of interest to Highlanders pasted into the book.

The Minute Books in Gaelic cover the period 1867-1869, 1871-81, 1881-89 and then 1895-1904. The earliest minute is for 3 February 1843,

¹⁶ *Celtic Magazine*, II (1887), 353-360, p. 354

It was also carried unanimously

General Meeting February 3 1843
Present 12 Mr. Mungie Chair Collected £

The Minutes of last Com. were read & confirmed
Mr. John C. McPhee presented the Com. with a copy
of W. Grant Stewart's Popular Superstitions of the Highlands
& Galloway and also with a Gaelic letter respecting
the state of the Church of Scotland by J. R. Chisholm
Mr. S. Logan stated that he had communicated
with Mr. Forbes of Fort Augustus relative to some being
subscribed for 2 copies of his book when Mr. Logan
proposed and Mr. Donaldson & Mr. Pherson seconded that
Mr. John Forbes Schoolmaster of Fort Augustus
be elected an Honorary member of our Com. which
was carried with acclamations.

Mr. Chisholm proposed and Mr. McPhee seconded
that Mr. McPhee & Mr. Pherson & Logan be appointed
a Com. to revise the catalogue and ascertain what
books are in want of purchase - Carried 12

Mr. Forbes health was mentioned and the Chairman desired
to intimate to Mr. Forbes that he had been elected an
Honorary member and his health commended.

Mr. ^{Logan} ~~Donaldson~~ proposed and Mr. Noble seconded
that a new minute book be purchased which was carried

Figure 1 The Gaelic Society of London's earliest extant minute 3 February 1843

preserved in the scrapbook fo. 58. The 1867-1869 Minute Book contains the original Gaelic rules of 1830, which had been copied from an earlier book followed by the proposed Rules and Regulations for 1867 written in English. It contains for the most part committee reports for the Gaelic Professor (Celtic Chair) and Gaelic Chapel Fund; some are written in English and others in Gaelic. The other minute books are all written in Gaelic. The Council or Committee Minutes are written in English and cover the period 1899-1910 and 1910-1929. There is an account book for the years 1831-1845; a list of names dated October 1830, written by James Logan and possibly the record of the first meeting of the Gaelic Society. A 'Roll of Members Journal', this was begun in 1873 by the English Secretary John Forbes. On the first page he had written 'Founded 1777 re-constituted 12 October 1830'; it contains membership information from 1830. Forbes must have used other sources for his membership information; another secretary T.D. MacDonald revised the journal in 1891. There is also a 'Register of Members 1868-1907', and an 'Attendance Book 1900-05'. There are manuscript copies of some of the presentations made by members in Gaelic and in English; a selection of poems to the Society by David Macdonald dated 1835, and a collection of miscellaneous items. There is no evidence of correspondence for the period of research, unless included in the minutes, and those in the preserved manuscript scrapbook.

Gaelic Manuscripts

The extant Gaelic Minute Books and Gaelic presentations provide an important source of nineteenth century vernacular Gaelic. They are

unique in that they are possibly the only Gaelic Minutes written for a Gaelic or Celtic society in the nineteenth century. There are no Gaelic Minutes for the Gaelic Club of Gentlemen, later known as the Gaelic Society of Glasgow, the Gaelic Society of Inverness, and beyond student societies at Universities during the 1870s there is not much evidence of other sources of Gaelic Minutes.

I have used verbatim all the variations in spelling and grammar found in both the manuscripts and also the secondary Gaelic sources used in my research, and have made no attempt to correct or modernise the orthography. Minor ‘mis-spellings’ occur frequently such as *smaonteachadh* instead of the correct form *smaointeachadh*; *riaghailtin* instead of *riaghailtean*; and *nochdadh* is spelt *nochach*. Of course, some of these unexpected forms, such as *bordan* instead of the more usual plural *bùird*, may be dialectal. There is often a lack of regard for accents, and this is also clearly illustrated in Appendix I in words such as *tèarmunn*, *àite*, and *dèanamh*, which are here shown with the correct spelling. Once again, we have to recognise that the Minutes were not intended for publication, so due care and attention may have been missing. All these ‘errors’ may be attributed to a lack of formal Gaelic education on the part of some or all of the secretaries.

These sources also provide evidence that the syntactical niceties of the genitive case and the construction of the conditional clauses used in the nineteenth century are sometimes at variance with strict grammatical correctness as we know it today. A few examples are as follows: the first is from Rev Dr Norman Macleod’s periodical *Cuairtear nan Gleann*, found in

Chapter 8, where there is a mixture of cases which should all be in the genitive: in the note of thanks to Donald Macpherson of Pimlico, where, for a *litir thuigsich chàirdeal*, only *thuigsich* is given strictly in the genitive case. The phrase would be technically more correct as a *litreach thuigsich chàirdeil*. In the Report concerning the Gaelic Chapel Fund (Appendix I) *Tearmun* in paragraph (6), *Iartas an Tearmun*; and in paragraph (12), *luchd-riaghlaidh an Tearmun*, should be genitive and written *Tearmuinn*. In the same report there are inconsistencies with *argiod*, more correctly spelt *airgiod*, (paragraph (7), *riadh an argiod*; paragraph (10), *an stuic argiod*; paragraph (11), *an stoc argiod*) which should be *airgid* for the genitive case. These are just a few examples from the texts, and it would appear that the genitive case was inconsistently represented in the second half of the nineteenth century. This may indicate that some of the writers came from parts of the mainland Highlands where the genitive case had been more eroded than was the case in Hebridean Gaelic. There are also examples of what appears to be a deviation in the proper use of the conditional tense, also to be found in Appendix I. In paragraphs (10) and (12), *b[h]ithidh*, the future tense of the verb 'be', is used in the phrases *bhithidh e eucomasach* and *ach bhithidh n-ar saothair*, when it is very apparent that the conditional tense '*bhitheadh*' should have been used.

There are also many examples of *bith* for *bidh* in the selected Gaelic texts. All these variations in grammar or spelling may be put down to dialectal variation, uncertainty regarding the written form, or indeed just mistakes made by the Minute-taker or by the author of a presented paper.

Allowances must also be made for the fact that the Minutes are for the most part handwritten work, not intended for publication or general release. The secretaries would appear to have written Gaelic very much as it was spoken. In that respect, they are really no different from the English-language Minutes of similar volunteer groups at this time, where the secretary was a volunteer, and not a professional minute-taker. Regardless of all these inconsistencies, the meaning is almost always abundantly clear. This is a tribute to the vitality of the Gaelic writers, transcending the obstacles presented by the written medium.

All English translations are my own and I take responsibility for them unless otherwise referenced.

Secondary Sources

Each society has had histories, however brief, written about it. Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster wrote the first history of the Highland Society in 1813, and Alasdair Campbell of Airds wrote the second in 1983. Although not entirely about the HSL, Ian I. MacInnes' MLitt thesis 'The Highland Bagpipe: the impact of the Highland Societies of London and Scotland' provides useful insights into this area of cultural preservation. The Gaelic Society had its brief history of ten years written by James Logan in 1840, and his account also relates the establishment of the HSL and other societies for Scotsmen in London. Another published history of the GSL is a brief account by Mrs Mary Stewart, Chief of the Society 1960-1966. It was presented to the Society in March 1964 and published in 1966.

Other secondary sources used in this thesis include newspapers, periodicals, published books, printed reports and programmes for the period 1777 to the end of 1914. Parliamentary Papers have also yielded useful information. Unpublished theses on related topics have provided a wider view of Highlanders in urban centres, among them R.D. Lobban, Joan Mackenzie and Charles Coventry. To these must be added the many articles and books by Prof Charles Withers. Apart from MacInnes' thesis, there has been no previous academic research on GSL and the HSL. This lack of previous research has led me to dwell extensively on the primary sources, quoting them rather fully. The secondary sources have provided a way to bridge any gaps within the primary sources to give a more thorough and complete evaluation of the achievements of the two societies and their contribution to Gaelic language and culture.

In summary this thesis will demonstrate through the surviving evidence the extent to which the HSL and the GSL contributed to the survival of Gaelic language and culture. This evidence readily illustrates that both Societies made formative contributions to the Gaelic world as we know it today.

LONDON AND THE GAELS

Introduction

Before discussing how the members of the HSL and GSL attempted to achieve their individual objectives, it is necessary to take a look at the class of men who made up the membership of these two societies. It becomes very obvious that these men had a realistic view of what life in the Highlands and Islands was really like. They were able to assess what was needed to make it a better place, and they had the ability, authority and opportunity to tap into the energy centre that was London. The great metropolis of London was the powerhouse for the United Kingdom. It was the home of the monarchy and government, the centre of the growing British Empire, and the financial heart of the country. We may therefore consider what London gave to the members of the HSL and GSL, which enabled them to achieve so much for those living in the homeland, and for the preservation of a culture that was so dear to them.

Who were the London Gaels?

It is well known that local attachment, arriving from similarity of language, customs, and manners, formed the basis of union in this Society, and that Conviviality, and Benevolence were the cements of the Institution; that the principal object of the Society, from its commencement was, that of communing together, by social intercourse the most respectable Natives of the Highlands, in & about the Metropolis, whose union, it was

naturally & supposed would have a tendency to promote the prosperity and interest of those remote districts.¹⁷

John Macarthur, a London barrister, an authority on military law, and an active member of the HSL, wrote the above words in 1808. It was included in a report that recommended ways in which the Society could raise its profile. He had joined the HSL in 1799 and was active in the Ossian committee, which he co-chaired with Sir John Sinclair. He also chaired the committee to examine the current state of the Society, served on the Caledonian Asylum committee, and continued to serve that institution when it became independent from the HSL. Even though he was writing about the HSL, the quotation could have been written equally appropriately for the GSL, for it encapsulates the ethos of both societies so well.

Charles Withers, R.D. Lobban and Joan Mackenzie have all written about the Highland population in urban centres in the Lowlands of Scotland. Their research encompasses a spectrum of the Highland population in Lowland Scottish cities, whereas this study is more limited in terms of the social group examined. It concerns the members of the HSL and the GSL, who would have made up only a small part of the total Highland population resident in London. Nevertheless, they encompassed a range of differences, in social class, in territorial background, and in migration status. There would most certainly have been an awareness of distinctions, such as the perceived differences which marked out a mainlander from an islander, or the native of one district from that of another. Yet these differences were not to the fore, and all members of the HSL and GSL exhibited a pan-Gaelic

¹⁷ NLS 268/24, p. 163

mindset, which was free from territorial focus. Some were migrants, some were raised in England, and some were in London continuing the practice of appearing at court at his majesty's pleasure, a custom that had begun when James VI and I removed himself from Edinburgh to London with the Union of the Crowns.

Although this thesis concerns only two of the Highland or Scottish societies in London, it is pertinent to mention other societies established in London for Scotsmen, and to give the HSL and GSL a chronological placement. The earliest of all was the 'Scottish Corporation' founded in 1611, which received its Royal Charter in 1665, and was re-incorporated in 1775. Its object was to help natives of Scotland, particularly the young who had travelled to London seeking employment, but it also assisted Scots who were reduced to poverty, whether due to age, injury or sickness, and who were not entitled to receive parochial relief in London.¹⁸

Rev Robert Kirk reported another society or club in existence in London at the end of the seventeenth century, while he was in London 'when the Irish Bible was printed in a small Roman letter there'. He wrote:

There is a club of Scottish presbyterian schoolmaster & uthers [sic], that meet at (.) every Saturday about (.) a'clock [sic], discoursing in Latin, and any Scottish Scholar that resorts to Town and makes address to them, they contribute money for his charge till they find out a fit place for him, & then he restores the money to their public box reserved for the likes uses.¹⁹

¹⁸ *Summary View of the Rise, Constitution and present state of the Scots Corporation in London* (London: 1738) and *A Short Statement of the Nature, Objects, and Proceedings of the Scottish Hospital in London* (London: 1812)

¹⁹ EUL La.III.545, fo. 94

The HSL was established in 1778, and initially it was known as the 'Gaelic Society'. Eight years after its establishment, another society was established on 25 December 1786 under the name of the 'Ancient Caledonian Society', and its members were most likely Highlanders. Its first meeting was held in the Globe Tavern on Titchfield Street. It was a convivial society that simply met to enjoy:

The company and conversation of those whose ancestors, place of birth, language and customs are their own; [...] in order not only to enjoy in Society the fellowship of one another as countrymen, but likewise that we maybe aiding and assisting to each other in their several situations, have entered into a friendly association.²⁰

It was obviously established to celebrate the restoration of the Highland Garb; its Office-bearers could only be elected from those who could be fully kitted out. They were particularly interested in all aspects of the dress and the symbolism of the tartan colours and patterns; and they shared the belief that by owning a kilt they were helping Highland manufacturers. These Ancient Caledonians had seven festivals to commemorate the various victories of the Celts against Britons, Saxons, Norwegians and Danes, and also St Andrew. It is unknown how long this society continued.

A London branch of Lord Rosebery's 'Society of Universal Goodwill' was founded in 1789, as were branches in Germany and America. It was a philanthropic society that had been established in Norwich in 1775, under the name of 'Scots Society'. However, it did not succeed, and at its

²⁰ NLS 6.48 Ancient Caledonian Society

dissolution, some of its funds went to the Scottish Corporation.²¹ Another ‘Gaelic Society’, according to James Logan, was founded in 1808 to raise funds for the Gaelic chapel, but this society likewise did not flourish. Then in 1815 two societies were established, ‘The Sons of Morven’ and ‘The Club of True Highlanders’. The GSL, which continues to this day, was then established in 1830. In 1837, another society was founded, at the behest of the HSL and the Club of True Highlanders, who felt there was a need for a club with the same aims and objectives as their own ‘but confined as much as possible to the class called middle’, it was called the Caledonian Society.²² Finally, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, many Highland district, clan and sporting associations were established, to such an extent that London became a hotbed for Highland or Scottish societies.

Before giving a more detailed account of some of these societies, it is necessary to discuss the history claimed by the GSL, for, from its beginning in 1830 up to the point in 1877 when it celebrated its centenary, a myth was growing which at that time became established as fact. In January 1877, the President, John Cameron Macphee, announced the society’s centenary and presented a paper on the history of the society, in which he clearly states that, ‘*s’ ann sa bhliadhna 1777 chaidh Comunn na Gaidhlig shuideachadh air thus ann an Lunuinn*’²³ (‘it is in the year 1777 that the

²¹ James Logan, *Catalogue of books, tracts, and papers, belonging to the Gaelic Society of London with a list of the literary contributions and names of members; to which is prefixed some account of societies formed for the preservation of national usages, and cultivation of the Gaëlic language and Literature* (London: 1840), p. vii; Justine Taylor, *A Cup of Kindness* (Phantassie: Tuckwell Press, 2003), p. 223

²² David Hepburn, *The Chronicles of the Caledonian Society of London, Part I, 1837-1890* (Leith: Davidson, 1923), p. 15

²³ UCL GSL MB, 10 January 1877

Gaelic Society in London was first established'). There is no extant copy of his paper, but Donald Campbell, the Gaelic secretary, later informs the GSL members that Macphee's history was published in the *Celtic Magazine*,²⁴ and it was from this published account that he made his Gaelic translation for the society.²⁵ In this account the original members are exactly the same as those who founded the HSL in 1778, which was originally designated the Gaelic Society. One can speculate that Macphee had made an honest mistake, stating 1777 instead of 1778, but, even when that is taken into account, the original Gaelic Society was not connected in any way to the 1830s society, except by nationality.

One can also speculate that it was a deliberate action on Macphee's part. The appellation of 'Gaelic Society' was no longer used by the HSL. The GSL had thus assumed some of the HSL's achievements as its own over the years, and by stating that the GSL was established in 1777, it made it the oldest cultural society for Highlanders in London. The history published in the *Celtic Magazine* is at best patchy, and in an attempt to fill in the gaps it includes the 'Gaelic Society' of 1808 and the 'Sons of Morven' of 1815 as continuations of the original Gaelic Society of 1777, which eventually was re-constituted in 1830.²⁶ The myth of the GSL had by 1877 taken a firm hold.

It would appear that Logan's history of London Scottish societies had opened up a can of worms, for some members of the current GSL

²⁴ *Celtic Magazine* II (1877), pp. 353-66

²⁵ UCL GSL, Speeches made at the Centenary Banquet, 6 June 1877, which he presented to the GSL in June 1879

²⁶ *Celtic Magazine* II (1877), p. 362

wanted to forge a connection between the old and the new Gaelic societies. The Club of True Highlanders (CTH), the only other Highland cultural society, other than the HSL, in London, became an obvious victim because of this desire. McIntyre North wrote of an attempt by others to use the CTH ‘in order to provide a pedigree for another society [,] an endeavour was made to prove that the Club was in existence under another name in 1778, and that, after various transmigrations [...] in 1815 [...] changed the name into the Club of True Highlanders’.²⁷ In 1840 Donald Currie a trustee of the CTH and a member of the GSL, took by ‘forcible possession’ the Minute Books of the CTH.²⁸ This resulted in a summons and an appearance before the Court of Exchequer before they were returned to their rightful owners. The magistrate found against Currie, stating that the books belonged to the Club of True Highlanders, ‘as the original Society’.²⁹ Currie’s new society was called the ‘Society of True Highlanders’ and its secretary was John Cameron Macphee.³⁰ In June 1841 the first article appeared detailing its activities.³¹ It is probably in this state of metamorphosis that the Subscribers of the Gaelic Chapel and the Sons of Morven were woven into the fabric of myth, for Currie was active in both. The closeness of names, club versus society – obviously caused some confusion between the CTH and the other society, for in 1844 James Logan, wrote a letter to the editor of the *Inverness Courier*, making it clear once and for all that this bogus society was not the Club of

²⁷ North, Vol. 1, p. iv

²⁸ North, Vol. I, p. vi

²⁹ North, Vol. I, p. vi

³⁰ *Inverness Courier*, 31 January 1844, p. 3

³¹ James Barron, *The Northern Highlands in the Nineteenth Century 3 Vols.* (Inverness: Carruthers, 1903-13), Vol. II, p. 304

True Highlanders.³² This letter appears to be the curtain call for Currie's and Macphee's Society of True Highlanders, for it disappears thereafter. Logan essentially scuppered their aspirations, for he knew the truth. However, the GSL openly claimed the success of the Repeal of Highland Dress and the Gaelic Chapel. From then on it appears to have been a waiting game, with John Cameron Macphee biding his time waiting for the death of James Logan. Five years after Logan's death John Cameron Macphee was able to announce the centenary of the GSL, and the myth that had been developing took root and was legitimised by the press during the centennial celebrations.

James Logan, as English secretary of the GSL and a past secretary to the HSL, knew the histories of both societies well. In 1840 he wrote on behalf of the GSL an account of all societies for Scotsmen established in London prior to that time. Of the first such society he states:

About seventy years ago, a few of the Highlanders resident in London were accustomed to meet in the evenings and spend the time in social conversation and reminiscences of youth, singing the lays of their native glens, and repeating the tales that oft enlivened the winter nights in their mountain homes. Feeling the delight and the utility of these friendly gatherings in the stranger land where their lot was cast; it was determined about 1778, to draw closer the bonds of friendship, by forming themselves into a national society for the purpose of cherishing the manners and customs, the poetry, language, and literature of the Gaël; and while, they indulged in these praiseworthy objects, it was resolved that, according to their means, the distressed among their countrymen, should obtain relief. The name was declared to be the GAËLIC SOCIETY.³³

³² North, p. vi

³³ Logan, p. iv

The name of this society gradually became known as the Highland Society and it was incorporated in 1816.³⁴

This society was essentially a dinner club for Highlanders resident in London, and although its original name was the Gaelic Society, it soon was known by a variety of different names such as the Gaelic Club, the Highland Club and the Highland Society. This is evident from correspondence and from the early journals that are all tooled in gold with the appellation of ‘Gaelic Society’. John Mackenzie, the secretary, used the name Highland Society from as early as 1780, yet it continued to be referred to as the Gaelic Society up to 1794. The language used at meeting may have originally been Gaelic as Logan states, but its extant minutes are all in English. The earliest minutes of the HSL were with Logan at the time of his death.³⁵ They had been taken to his residence when he was employed as secretary to the HSL, at the time when it was considered that he should write a history of the Society. They may have been consulted when he prepared Angus Mackay’s collection of piobaireachd for publication.³⁶

In the earliest history of the society, Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster wrote that it had been established on the 28 May 1778. He reckoned that it originally consisted of 25 Gentlemen, Natives of the Highlands of Scotland, who met at Spring Garden Coffee House “in order to form a society that

³⁴ Logan, p. iv

³⁵ North, Vol. I, p. x

³⁶ *London Scotsmen*, 13 August 1870, p. 106

might prove beneficial to that part of the Kingdom".³⁷ A committee was appointed which drew up the rules for the new society, and they were accepted on 4 June:

The formation of the Highland Society in London, was highly approved by the Natives of the Highlands resident in the metropolis. They were convinced that it would promote not only the advantage of the Highlands, but "good fellowship, and social union," among such of its Natives as inhabited the more southern part of the Island. Accordingly, at the Meeting on the 4th of June, the number of Members elected, or proposed to be admitted, was considerably increased, [...] and they were declared to be "the Original Members of the Club".³⁸

The Gaelic Society, or Club, as it was first known, provided a place and an opportunity for fellow Gaels to enjoy each other's company and recall shared memories of the good old days of their youth. These old days were portrayed as a halcyon time when the Highland Garb was worn, the bagpipe was heard, and heroic ballads, tales, and songs were constant companions during the long winter nights. But the members wanted to do more than just remember or imagine the past. They wanted to be proactive in their attempts at preserving a culture that was dear to them. Five objectives were decided which would 'do credit to the Highland Character, and to promote the Interest of the Highlands'.³⁹ They were:

For preserving the Martial Spirit, Language, Dress, Music, and Antiquities of the Ancient Caledonians; For rescuing from Oblivion, the valuable Remains of Celtic Literature; For the Establishment and Support of Gaelic Schools in the Highlands of Scotland, and in other parts of the British Empire; For relieving Distressed Highlanders, at a distance from their Native

³⁷ Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, *An Account of the Highland Society from its establishment in May 1778 to the commencement of the Year 1813* (London: McMillan, 1813), p. 4

³⁸ Sinclair, p. 5

³⁹ Sinclair, p. 6

homes; and For promoting the Improvement, and general Welfare, of the Northern Parts of the Kingdom.⁴⁰

It contained a mixture of Scottish nobility, such as the Dukes of Argyll, Gordon, Atholl, and the Earls of Eglinton and Seaforth; landed gentry, including owners of small estates, such as Honorary Secretary John Mackenzie, in addition to the owners of large estates such Archibald Fraser of Lovat, Sir Peter Grant and others of their class. Politicians were among its number, including Sir Archibald Macdonald, who was later, in 1793, appointed lord chief baron of the exchequer, Henry Dundas, Francis Humberstone Mackenzie, Sir John Sinclair and James Macpherson, the translator of Ossian. There were 'strong military overtones' among its membership, which went some way towards upholding the martial spirit of Highlanders that its members favoured. Members of the HSL raised all the Highland Regiments which saw action in the American War of Independence; and they raised their Regiments again when war broke out in Europe in 1793. In fact, HSL members raised 'all the Regular Highland Regiments which the new War called forth'.⁴¹ There were other military members as well, for example, Colonel John Small, Brigadier General Calder, Colonel Archibald Macnab, Major-General Sir Hector Munro and officers from the Royal Navy and Marines. There were 'improvers' among them too: Neil Malcolm, John Mackenzie of Bishopgate, Archibald Fraser of Lovat, the Duke of Argyll, Sir John Grant of Rothiemurches, and Sir John Sinclair. There were also men of the diplomatic service, such as Consuls James Duff and Alexander Monro, and Sir James Macpherson, Governor-

⁴⁰ Sinclair, p. 82

⁴¹ Sinclair, p. 14

General in India. There were also members of the professional upper middle classes, physicians, surgeons, artists, and authors. The HSL's membership was made up from the *crème de la crème* of those Highlanders who spent much of the year in London. It was, in short, a very distinguished Highland society.

Its first President was Simon Fraser of Lovat, a seasoned military commander who had served his country well in North America and in Europe and ended his life as a politician. He was first elected to Parliament representing Inverness-shire in 1761, but spent little time in the House, as he was involved with campaigns in France and Holland. He was promoted to Lieutenant General in August 1777, but instead of taking up a command remained in Parliament.⁴²

John Mackenzie of Arcan and Lentrán was chosen as Secretary, he was from a junior cadet branch of the Mackenzies, and closely related to the Mackenzies of Delvine and Torridon. He had studied law in Edinburgh, under the guiding hand of his cousin John Mackenzie of Delvine, WS.⁴³ In 1772 he moved to London and served as a clerk to his uncle, Colin Mackenzie, for several years, where he was involved with several petitions to the House of Lords regarding the Forfeited Estates. By 1776 he had set up his own chambers in the Temple. Then, encouraged by his relatives, he attempted to find an established solicitor with whom he could join in partnership, but with lack of experience and insufficient money, he was

⁴² Stuart Reid, 'Fraser, Simon, master of Lovat (1726-17820)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10124>]

⁴³ NLS MS 1350, fo. 43

unsuccessful.⁴⁴ In 1776, a certain Col. Murray put his name forward as a candidate for a clerkship connected with the Seaforth Highlanders,⁴⁵ but he had to wait for a year before learning the outcome of his candidacy. In the event he was not successful. During his time in London, however, he had contact with most of the resident Scottish nobility. That, coupled with his legal background in both English and Scottish law, made him an obvious candidate for the office of Secretary of the HSL. He served the HSL conscientiously and (I believe) steered the membership in achieving its objects during his lifetime. He was awarded a medal from the Society on 20 January 1794:

As a respectable testimony of the Society's Approbation, of the able and judicious manner in which he had gratuitously discharged the duties of Secretary, and of the unwearied attention which he had paid to the interests of the Society, from its commencement in 1778, to that time.⁴⁶

In 1867, *The London Scotsman* noted that, although not the first Scottish institution to be established in London, the HSL nevertheless had something special about it:

The breadth and height and distinctively national character of the Highland Society distinguish it as a blue ribbon fraternity of Scotsmen—the London Scottish Institution *superbus*—and suggest for it a front rank, which the friends and kindred institutions will not refuse to accord, for the members of the Highland society are the warm friends and supporters of other kindred societies as well as their own.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ NLS MS 1350, fo. 43, fo. 45, fo. 137, fo. 175, fo. 177

⁴⁵ NLS MS 1350, fo. 165, fo. 191, fo. 225

⁴⁶ NLS 268/23, p. 16

⁴⁷ *London Scotsman*, 17 August 1867, p. 128

The article notes that the definition of 'Highlander' a necessary qualification for membership had been 'liberally interpreted'. That was indeed so, as Sir John Sinclair had written:

The true qualification, therefore, to be required is, not so much the distinction of "Highland Birth" (though that is certainly desirable, and must always give a preference to the Candidate who enjoys that advantage), but the possession of a "Highland Spirit", which is necessarily accompanied, by all those manly virtues, those generous traits, and those noble qualities, which distinguish the Hero in war, and the Citizen in peace.⁴⁸

Those who were imbued with that 'Highland Spirit' included members of the British Royal Family and members of Europe's Royal families, such as Leopold, the King of the Belguims, Prince Teck and Prince Kolowsky. These royal personages enhanced the status of the HSL to one of eminence. From its very beginning, the HSL through its membership had prestige, money, power and authority, and used these qualities to help it achieve its goals.

The Gaelic Society of London was established in 1830, according to James Logan. In his 'Sketch of the origin and progress of Scottish Societies in London', which was written at the request of the GSL, Logan provides information regarding other attempts 'to emulate' the HSL. The first such body formed in 1808, called itself 'The Gaëlic Society'.⁴⁹ Another, established in 1815, called itself the 'Sons of Morven', but like the former it did not flourish.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Sinclair, p. 6

⁴⁹ Logan, p. vii

⁵⁰ Logan, p. viii

The 'London Society of the Sons of Morven' was a literary society for those who enjoyed Celtic literature and for Gaels in the metropolis who wanted to preserve the Gaelic language, which it believed faced extinction. Its members spoke and sang and recited poetry in Gaelic in the hope that 'they might contribute their mite towards preserving so noble and so worthy a monument of antiquity [and] have met once a-week, for the purpose of preserving and encouraging the cultivation of the Gaelic language, and promoting generally the interests of Caledonia'.⁵¹

They planned printing a cheap copy of the poems of Ossian, and wanted to collect and rescue valuable and rare Gaelic books. They also wanted to improve the orthography of the language and standardise its grammar.⁵² Lt-Col. John Macdonald of Dalchoisnich donated his collection of Gaelic books as the foundation of the society's library, 'where he and his Countrymen may have an opportunity of perusing them when at any time in London'.⁵³ In January 1816, the Society published its first transactions so 'that every word committed in writing in the Gaelic Language, that venerable monument of antiquity, should be carefully recorded and preserved'.⁵⁴ Several of its members were also members of the HSL, who perhaps joined simply to hear Gaelic spoken; but it should be noted that the Sons of Morven also had members who could not understand Gaelic at all.⁵⁵ It is uncertain

⁵¹ *Rules and Regulations of the Society of the Sons of Morven* (London: McKechnie, 1815), p. 3

⁵² *Rules...of the Sons of Morven*, p. 5

⁵³ *Rules...of the Sons of Morven*, p. 15

⁵⁴ *Transactions of the London Society of the Sons of Morven* (London: McKechnie, 1816), p. 18

⁵⁵ *Transactions . . . Sons of Morven*, pp. 26-7

how long it continued, but, according to Alexander Mackenzie, writing about the GSL in 1877, it was dissolved when a fire destroyed its meeting rooms.⁵⁶

Another society, *Comunn nam Fìor Ghaèl* (Club of True Highlanders), was also established in 1815. It proved successful, and was incorporated in 1821 and was still going strong in 1883. The preservation of Gaelic language and sports were central to its objectives. It did run Gaelic classes for a number of years. However, over time its membership became more involved with Highland sports, in particular camanachd, and less concerned with the preservation of language. The rules were amended in 1828 to allow the inclusion of English-speaking Lowland Scots as members. Two years later several of its members made the decision to establish another society. Letters were sent out in June 1830, announcing the first meeting of *Communn dileas na'n Gael* (The True Society of the Gael). One of the signatories was William Munro,⁵⁷ a member of both the HSL and the Club of True Highlanders. Logan states that it was William Menzies and Lewis MacDougal who founded the actual Gaelic Society; and that corresponds with the account in *Leabhar Comunn nam Fìor Ghaèl* (The Book of the Club of True Highlanders), which states that:

Mr W. Menzies, knowing that 'literature was not a main object of our Society', conceived the idea, in conjunction with another member (Mr Lewis McDougal), of starting an exclusively literary society for the study of Gaelic, and 'the title of Comunn Gaelig, being unappropriated by any other Society', was adopted as the fitting designation of the new society. This society may be considered as a supplementary, and not as an

⁵⁶ *Celtic Magazine* II (1877), pp. 354-5

⁵⁷ UCL GSL preserved scrapbook, fo. 6; see Figure 2

Communion dilaas na'n Gael.

Dear Sir

The friends of the above
object, have fixed on this evening
8 o'clock, at the Kings Arms
Coffee House, at No 30 Chancery Lane,
for their first meeting and to
which, the presence of your company
is most earnestly and particularly
requested; proceeding to commence
at 7 a past 8 - I have the honour
to be, very respectfully

Dear Sir
Yours obed. servant
Wm. Murray
Mr. Murray }
W. S. } William Murray
Regent Park 9th June 1830

Figure 2 An invitation to Communion dilaas na'n Gael

antagonistic society to the Club of True Highlanders: the names of Logan, Fife-Duff-Watt, Donald Currie, Wilkinson, McIan, McIntosh, McPherson, and others, shew not only that the members of the Club of True Highlanders gave the new society their hearty support, but that they also formed the backbone of the venture, which for many years devoted its energies to the preservation of the language of the Gael.⁵⁸

Logan also states that, 'none are admitted as members who are not qualified by knowledge of the Gaëlic tongue'.⁵⁹ He also noted, writing in 1840 that 'the society has been carried on these ten years, a longer period than the existence of its predecessors, and, by a careful distribution of its funds, it has achieved great part of the objects originally contemplated'.⁶⁰ It had also amassed a substantial library, catalogued by Logan.

The GSL at its establishment consisted for the most part of literary men, and James Logan provides the following information:

Among those entered as members of this society, which urges its way in the humble attempt, as descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants, to follow in the intellectual march of the age, treading a path unoccupied by any other in London, may be enumerated: Messrs. Donald MacPherson, author of 'Melodies from the Gaelic', and other works; John Mackenzie, Poet, and editor of several works; of the bards; Alexander MacConachie Ross, AM, author of some moral and instructive Gaëlic publications; Gilbert Gibson, author of an Etymological work, Translations from the French, &c; David Murphy, author of an Irish-English Dictionary, a volume of Moral Poems &c; Patrick O'Keefe, translator of Irish Records; D. MacDonald, author of many Gaëlic Poems; William Menzies, a talented professor of National Music and Dancing, and deeply versed in Philology and Gaëlic Literature; the author of 'The Scottish Gael'; William John Munro, AM, author of several papers on Gaëlic subjects; Donald Currie, author of Gaëlic Poems, &c.⁶¹

⁵⁸ North, pp. v-vi

⁵⁹ Logan, p. ix

⁶⁰ Logan, p. vii

⁶¹ Logan, p. x

Its objects were similar to those of the HSL, yet there is no mention of preservation. Rather, 'the principal objects [of the Society] shall be to accustom the members to the Language, Poetry, Music, and Dress of the Gaël'.⁶² When the objects were copied into a new Minute Book in 1867, the wording had changed slightly, stating that the society 'will be for the particular purpose that the members of the society will be celebrating Language, Poetry, Music and Scottish Highland Customs'.⁶³ In 1868, the objects were again revised and presented, and they were again amended and accepted on 15 October 1872. Then it was noted that:

The objects of the Society [shall] be, to cultivate friendship amongst Highlanders of Scotland resident in London, to uphold and facilitate the use of the Gaelic language, by writing, reading and conversing in it, to encourage its literature, poetry and music, to promote by every means the general welfare of the Highlands and secure that the Gaelic people and their language shall be treated with Justice.⁶⁴

In 1875 the objects were finally changed to become 'the preservation of language, music, poetry and literature of the Highlands of Scotland, and the cognizance of matters of special interest to Highlanders'.⁶⁵

It is strange that the objects were changed in 1875, for the 1872 objects better portray what the GSL was all about. But perhaps a more sanitised version of the objects, which we see in the final version, was more acceptable in the political climate of the day, as it was a time when clan and district societies were being established in Scottish cities and in London. It

⁶² Logan, p. xiii

⁶³ UCL GSL MB, Rules and Regulations revised 1867

⁶⁴ UCL GSL MB, 15 October 1872

⁶⁵ UCL GSL MB, 23 November 1875; *The Gaelic Society of London Annual Report 1903*, p. 3

was also at this time that momentum was building for a concerted voice from all Highland/Gaelic/Celtic societies. The objects may have been changed when these new societies burgeoned, perhaps because the GSL did not want to appear radical, as this might deter new members. Its more generalised objects were similar to those of all the new societies, and perhaps the change was an attempt to keep its own members who might be tempted to join these clans or district societies.

The membership did change over time and the monthly presentations were discontinued for a number of years. However, it remained a literary society and continued to attract men like the Rev. Nigel MacNeill and Dr H. Cameron Gillies. It also took on the role of advocate for Gaelic education. It wanted to maintain Gaelic as a living language. The *London Scotsman*, in its series of articles about the Scottish institutions in London in 1867, wrote:

[Although] The Gaelic Society, from its unassuming demeanour, may be regarded as amongst the most obscure of the Scottish institutions in London, its members have been more prominent in demonstrations of nationality than any other associations of their countrymen.⁶⁶

It was also noted that 'the Gaelic Society make no claim to being other than simply a common centre where the Highlander can meet with his brother Highlander, and have their intercourse in their native language'.⁶⁷ It is in this article that the present GSL is connected to the Gaelic Society of

⁶⁶ *London Scotsman*, 14 December 1867, p. 537

⁶⁷ *London Scotsman*, 14 December 1867, p. 537.

1778 and that some of the HSL's early accomplishments are attributed to it, in particular the Repeal of the Disarming Act (1782).

The members of the GSL, more than the HSL, had a first-hand knowledge of domestic Highland life, for many of them were sons of the croft who had done well and migrated, or been promoted, to the metropolis. Perhaps because of this, many of its members were involved in the establishment of the Highland Land Law Reform Association in London, and most of the Crofter MPs were active members. However, its members could not be called down-trodden, as they had raised themselves, often from humble beginnings, to the middle and upper middle classes, and were employed in managerial positions in mercantile or manufacturing, industry, banking and government, or the police service. They were also employed in customs and excise, as lawyers, clergymen, doctors, teachers, poets, authors and musicians, and, of course, Members of Parliament, such as Dr Roderick Macdonald, the Crofter MP for Ross and Cromarty. He was the son of a Skye crofter, who had studied Medicine at Edinburgh University before moving to London and joining the GSL. He served as president for six years during 1884-1890.

Two among many of the society's Presidents were Colin Chisholm and John Cameron Macphee. Colin Chisholm was born in Leitry, Strathglass, in 1806, and he was the eldest child in a family of sixteen. He left Scotland for Liverpool in 1835 to work in the Customs Service before moving to London in 1842, and soon joined the GSL. He served as President

from 1869 to 1876, the last two years as Honourary President and he led the Society in its campaign for a Celtic Chair and Gaelic education in the homeland. When he retired to Inverness, he became active in the newly established Gaelic Society of Inverness. He was also active in the land law reform movement, and he gave evidence at the Napier Commission in 1883 and the Deer Forest Commission at Beaully in 1893, he died two years later.⁶⁸

John Cameron Macphee joined the GSL two years earlier in 1840, at the behest of the Magistrate of Bow Street Court, who was himself a member. He had been arrested with others who were actively supporting the Carreasians against the Russians. He was at the time studying medicine, his education having generously been paid by a gentleman whom he had rescued from the River Lochy. However, he did not return to his medical studies, but found employment as an assistant to Rowland Hill, who was working on postal reforms and the introduction of the penny black. He then served as a reporter for *The Sun* and *The Morning Chronicle*. He joined the Customs Service in 1865 and was promoted through the ranks, retiring as a Surveyor. He served the GSL for many years as Secretary and Librarian, and became President in 1875, continuing in that position until his death in 1881. He was also a keen advocate for Gaelic education in the homeland.⁶⁹

The HSL, when it was established, was essentially an exclusive dinner club, with a cultural focus. Its members met monthly, to feast and drink and reminisce and be entertained by John Gow's band. However, its annual subscription of two guineas per member was not adequate to cover

⁶⁸ *Celtic Monthly*, January 1896, p. 73

⁶⁹ UCL GSL, *Compilation of Society Members*

the cost and the HSL soon became beggared by its banquets. In 1805 it introduced Life Memberships to provide capital for investments, but by the end of 1812 it was facing financial embarrassment, which came to a head in 1813. Various measures were considered, with the final decision being that Life Membership would increase from fifteen to twenty-five guineas, with annual membership remaining the same, with the addition that all members would pay their own dining expenses.⁷⁰ The number of dinners was reduced to three, held on the third Thursday in February, April and May, but the Anniversary Dinner would be retained, with the expenses covered by the price of an admission ticket. The price would be decided annually.⁷¹ When the HSL changed its venue to the Scottish Corporation Hall in the 1870s, it would appear that only the Anniversary Dinner was retained. Yet whether replete and foggy with good food, wine and whisky, members still managed to put to the forefront the needs of the homeland.

The GSL's meetings were not, like the HSL's, taken up by dinners, although that might have been the case for at least the first few years, when it met at the British Coffee House, Cockspur Street,⁷² and then in the Dolby Hotel, Paternoster Road.⁷³ By 1871 the GSL rented meeting rooms where its members could focus on linguistic and cultural interaction. At some meetings toasts were drunk, but it was not a drinking club, the minutes provide a sense of friendliness, shared memories, lively debate and the love of the Gaelic language.

⁷⁰ NLS 268/25, pp. 156-76

⁷¹ Sinclair, p. 85

⁷² Logan, p. xiii

⁷³ UCL GSL MB, 1869

There was also a difference in how the two societies achieved their objects. The HSL, on the whole, recognised the problem and then went about fixing it. This is seen in its efforts for the Celtic Chair, the lobbying undertaken for changes to the Excise Acts, and the founding of a joint-stock company for fishing villages in the homeland, and the founding of the Caledonian Asylum. The GSL had a different approach. It also recognised needs and attempted to find solutions, but, although it did lobby and act as broker, it often gave itself a low profile through its desire to encourage self-help, as it wanted to empower those in the homeland. This can clearly be seen in its efforts to establish a Celtic Chair. It believed it could raise the fiery cross by taking measures to rouse the Highlanders, but it recognised that, for success, the voice for such a movement had to come from the Highlanders themselves. This is also echoed in its attempts to ensure Gaelic education in schools, as it was only after the realisation that no concerted voice was coming from the homeland that it took action by itself. It did this by providing a grant for each student passing Grade IV, and although the GSL gave this financial incentive, it would not have been successful if a willingness to teach and learn had not come from the homeland.

There were some individuals who belonged to both societies and who enjoyed what each one had to offer. All the GSL chiefs, when the position was established from 1840 to 1891, were from the Scottish nobility, and these men, the Duke of Aboyne, the Marquis of Huntly, the Earl of Dunsmore and the Duke of Atholl, were all members of the HSL. Dr Charles Mackay, journalist and author, had been a Director of the HSL, but in 1877

decided to change his allegiance to the GSL. Dr Farquhar Matheson, from Kintail, a surgeon and a Justice of the Peace, joined both the HSL and the GSL in the 1860s. He was Vice-President of the GSL in 1871, but did not stand for office the following year, citing lack of time. He was not mentioned again in the Minute Books until 1874. He served as President of the Society on three separate occasions, which shows the high esteem in which he must have been held. He was also an active member of the HSL and acted as Honorary Secretary before retiring from that position through sickness, shortly before he died. He was a well-known Gaelic singer and made recordings of Gaelic songs for the GSL's archive.⁷⁴ He was also an active member of the Caledonian Christian Club and a member of the English Folk Song Society. Another long-term and active member of the GSL was Archdeacon Sinclair of St Paul's Cathedral. It was not until 1889 that he became associated with the HSL when he was elected as Honorary Chaplain. His grandfather, Sir John Sinclair, was president in 1796, his great grand father, Lord Macdonald, was president in 1791, and his great uncle, the second Lord Macdonald, was president in 1802. Through them he had a very close association with the HSL, yet with all that connection he did not appear interested in the HSL, until he received the appointment. Could this have been because of his love of conversing in his native language? The above mentioned were only a few among many who, if not members of both the HSL and the GSL, belonged to other Highland organisations in London, such as the clan or district societies, the Caledonian Society, the Scottish

⁷⁴ UCL GSL, *Compilation of Society Members*

Corporation, the London Scottish Rifle Volunteers, the Gaelic and Scottish choirs and the sporting associations, particularly from the 1880s.

Yet there is one thing that singles out the HSL and the GSL from the later Scottish societies established in London and those in Glasgow and Edinburgh, namely that they were non-territorial, non-parochial. They saw the ‘big picture’ of the Gaelic world, not one that was divided by county boundaries or clan loyalties. Perhaps because of this they had an enhanced sense of the key issues for the survival of Gaelic language and culture.

Although the members of the HSL and the GSL enjoyed a distinctive Highland or Gaelic social community within London, something that is clearly demonstrated by the evidence consulted during the research for this thesis is that these Highlanders were also capable of interacting with London society as a whole. Their rank, station or profession opened doors and provided easy access to all that London society had to offer—a network system which the members of the HSL and the GSL used to great advantage. They recognised the needs of those living in the homeland and were realistic in calculating what they could achieve; they acted as brokers to address those needs and, because of their interaction with the wider community of the metropolis, they were perhaps able to achieve even more.

London: the energy centre

From the second half of the sixteenth century, London had grown in size and importance, so much so that no other cities in the British Isles could match it. By 1750 it was the largest city in Europe and the fourth largest city

in the world. By 1802, it had become (according to banker-cum-economist Henry Thornton) 'the trading metropolis of Europe, and indeed, of the whole world'.⁷⁵ Charles Dupin, a French naval engineer, who made several journeys to Britain during the years of 1816-1824, shared this view; France had been left desolate after the Napoleonic Wars, whereas Britain had gone from strength to strength during the period 1793-1815.⁷⁶ For Dupin:

London is at the same time the metropolis of an empire, the centre of London's home trade and centre of its foreign trade. The concurrence of these three factors is what makes it the richest, the largest and the most populous among all the cities in the world.⁷⁷

London's wealth was due, to a large extent, to the supremacy and dominance of Britain's navy and its growing empire. The loss of the American colonies had not deterred Britain from its empire-building. Nor did it lose its transatlantic trade with those American colonies. With the growth of empire, there was a growing consumerism for 'colonial goods' from Canada, the West Indies, India and Africa, all of which were, at the time, protected markets.⁷⁸ Dr Henry Hunter viewed the impact of the empire on London not only as a matter of commerce. For him:

this great City opens an universal communication, between every Land and every People; and thereby opens a path for useful knowledge, to Nations ignorant and barbarous, more

⁷⁵ David Kynaston, *The City of London 3 Vols.* (London: Pimlico, 1995), Vol. I p. 9

⁷⁶ M. Bradley and F. Perrin in 'Charles Dupin's Study Visits to the British Isles 1816-1824', in *Technology and Culture* 32 (1991), 47-68.

⁷⁷ Charles Dupin quoted by Andrew Saint in 'The Building Art of the First Metropolis' in *London World City 1800-1840*, ed. by Celina Fox (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp. 51-76, p. 51

⁷⁸ Kynaston, Vol. I, p. 9

direct, more infallible, an infinitely more honourable than ever was attempted, or effected, by the devouring sword.⁷⁹

The Napoleonic Wars also had benefits for the City of London; for it replaced Amsterdam as the international financial centre, and ‘Threadneedle Street became the heart of the financial world of the City of London [...] here was the hub of a new empire of commercial influence, financial power and territorial authority’.⁸⁰ The Bank of England, the Stock Exchange, the Royal Exchange, the Lloyd’s Coffee House and the Baltic Coffee House all played a pivotal role aided by the various merchant banks, bill brokers, joint-stock and insurance banks etc., all of which were involved in the encouragement of home manufacture and aiding foreign-British commerce. With its wealth came benevolence, and with the growing empire came a knowledge of, and sympathy for, the ‘primitive aboriginals’ in far-away lands. The SSPCK’s Correspondent Board in London was established as a ‘powerful link’ between the parent society and London, which was seen as ‘that world within it-self, [which] presented a field of benevolence not yet cultivated, a vein of wealth not yet opened’.⁸¹ The money raised through donations collected by the Correspondent Board far outstripped those collected in Scotland.

In *The History of London and its Environs*, Dr Henry Hunter in his role as antiquarian wrote:

⁷⁹ Henry Hunter, *A Brief History of the SSPCK . . . and of the Correspondent Board in London* (London, 1795), p. 47

⁸⁰ Martin Daunton, ‘London and the World’ in *London World City 1800-1840*, ed. Celina Fox (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp. 21-38, p. 21

⁸¹ Hunter (1795), p. 48

The History of London and its Environs, though peculiarly appropriate to the inhabitants of those places, is important to readers in general, inasmuch as London is the centre to which every person, from the remotest parts of the island, is attracted at some period of life and to which unnumbered thousands annually resort, for the purpose of business or pleasure.⁸²

London was a magnet to many migrants, not only from Britain, but also from other parts of the world. London was very much a cosmopolitan city. This migration was encouraged by the centralisation in London of the nation's political and economic life, which led to massive building projects.

The 1603 Union of England and Scotland resulted in one Royal Family and in 1707 one national Parliament, and this political centralisation saw 'an influx of the landed classes', particularly that of the Scottish nobility joining its English counterpart in taking up residence near to the Court. This not only boosted population but 'inspired a great rebuilding of the city'.⁸³ With an increase in the landed classes residing for considerable periods in London, there was an increase in consumption, accommodated by the growth of merchant businesses, manufacturers and craft guilds. A unique relationship between the nobility and merchants underpinned London's growth:

London was able to play its dual role partly because the social climate was favourable. Although differences clearly existed between landed and monied interests in the capital, they were insignificant compared with many European cities and did not inhibit the developments of important links between merchant and gentry communities. In practice, the two shared the benches of the House of Commons, intermarried and [,] because of primogeniture, younger sons went into trade. The landed classes

⁸² Henry Hunter, *The History of London and its Environs* 2 Vols. (London, printed for John Stockdale, 1811), Vol. 1, p. xix

⁸³ A.L. Beier & Roger Finlay, 'The significance of the Metropolis' in eid, *The Making of the Metropolis: London 1500-1700*, pp. 1-26

also joined the merchants in supporting joint-stock trading schemes.⁸⁴

Nor did London miss out on the Industrial Revolution, as numerous series of train lines, canals and newly built roads, which served much of Britain, all led to London. However, perhaps the jewel in London's crown of achievement in the nineteenth century was the Crystal Palace and the Great Exhibition. The building itself was a marvel of British architecture and engineering excellence and also underlined the exceptional quality of British craftsmen. The exhibition was a showcase of not only British manufacturing and its new technologies, but it also included exhibits from the whole of the British Empire and other countries. It highlighted London as the centre of the world. And this drew all Highlanders, the upwardly mobile, the 'lad o' pairs' and the dispossessed from all parts of Scotland.

What did London give to our Gaels?

As London was the centre of the British Isles and the British Empire, it provided an access to the mechanisms of power. The men of HSL and the GSL were men of authority, natural leaders who were in the upper echelons, able to deal with the cut and thrust of London, men who knew how to tap into the energy of London, and did so to campaign realistically for Gaelic language and culture. As some of the members of both societies were Members of Parliament, they were able to marshal support for their aims among English Members of Parliament.

⁸⁴ Beier & Finlay, p. 14

It was through Parliament that both societies lobbied and sought legislative change in attitude and policies relating to education, religion, and ameliorating a way of life by the development of the British Fisheries Society. This lobbying was not limited to their members who were MPs, but it functioned also through deputations meeting with Chancellors of the Exchequer, Prime Ministers and Secretaries of State for Scotland. It was through Parliament that the Highland Garb was restored to the people, and security of tenure was provided through the Crofters' Act.

The Monarch was the figurehead for Britain and her empire, and the Royal Family provided a role model, for all to aspire to. Its interest and patronage were constantly sought to furnish importance and influence for philanthropic institutions. The HSL wanted a connection with the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York and Duke of Clarence, sons of Queen Victoria, and wooed them as early as 1800 with invitations to dine at the Anniversary Dinner to honour the victorious Lord Nelson.⁸⁵ In 1805, the Duke of Sussex agreed to take over the command from Lord Reay, of the Loyal North Britons, a volunteer corps raised by the HSL.⁸⁶ He became a member of the HSL at the same time and announced his intention of attending his first General Court on the 9 March, 'clad in the Garb of Old Gaul', which caused a flurry of activity to ensure that all members should attend suitably clad. The following year, the Duke of Sussex agreed to be President of the HSL.⁸⁷ He continued the Presidency the following year and then again in 1813 and

⁸⁵ NLS 268/22, p. 132

⁸⁶ NLS 10615/2, Campbell of Airds MS, 3rd draft, p. 14

⁸⁷ NLS 268/22, p. 98

1825. Other Royal princes also became Presidents, the Duke of Kent in 1814 and the Duke of York in 1815. This royal connection led to enhanced prestige, which enabled the HSL to expand its own influence in preserving Gaelic culture and language through its branch societies throughout the empire.

London was essentially the 'centre of the world' where seeing the 'grand design' or 'big picture' was normal. This ability of 'seeing' brought the members of the HSL and the GSL an added confidence, resulting in the ability to 'think big'. They became the representatives of the needs of the Gaelic world and attempted to solve them through networking. The network systems used included Parliament, the press, the Monarchy and the Scottish nobility. Through these systems they received the assistance to make the necessary changes to reshape the homeland and the lives of the people. They became brokers and lobbyists—the GSL for the Celtic Chair and Gaelic education, the HSL for the restoration of Highland dress, the Celtic Chair, the foundation of fishing villages in the Highlands and Islands, and changes to the distillery laws. They used the press to mobilise a climate of opinion on various subjects, such as the conditions in the homeland, the land laws, the Gaelic language and Gaelic education. The Rev. Nigel MacNeill, GSL member and Congregational minister, was for many years the London correspondent for the *Oban Times*. Mackenzie MacBride, another GSL member, joined him with his column 'London Highland News', which provided information on all the London Scottish societies. A little closer to home in London, GSL member, Mr T.D. Macdonald, edited *The London*

Scot during the late 1890s, and another member, Mr Mackenzie Mackay, was editor of *The London Scotsman*. Both reported GSL activities not only to London Scots but also to a wider population through the newspapers' circulation.

Although this thesis concerns the performance of two distinct groups of London Gaels, it is necessary to allude briefly to Gaels in the lowland cities of Scotland and in particular the Glasgow Gaels. This is chiefly because, to some extent, the achievements of the London Gaels has been forgotten or discounted with the passage of time. Many of the societies in Glasgow were primarily associated with a district or clan, and although they did contain a cultural element, they provided a social, interactive function. According to Joan Mackenzie's study, they were mainly from the working classes and middle classes.⁸⁸ She also notes that English was the language most frequently used at meetings, and further, when a motion was proposed at the Skye Association that Gaelic should be used at every other meeting, it was defeated.⁸⁹ Mackenzie suggests that many Gaels in Glasgow may have feared 'that their colloquial use of the language may have been grammatically unacceptable', something that the GSL with its membership spread throughout the homeland were not concerned about. Speaking it was the most important matter, and indeed it praised good colloquial Gaelic, particularly noted was the 'racy' Gaelic of Roderick Macdonald.

⁸⁸ Joan Mackenzie, *The Highland Community in Glasgow in the Nineteenth Century* unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Stirling, 1987, pp. 306-313

⁸⁹ Mackenzie, p. 322

Donald Meek has addressed the function of these Glasgow societies and their relationship to the wider social conditions in the homeland. He states:

Their intention was to provide a supportive framework for Highlanders who were initially strangers in the cities. In the longer term, they endeavoured to sustain Gaelic culture in a manner which celebrated and preserved the characteristics of the particular part of the Highlands and Islands represented in the title of the society. It is understandable that, in such contexts, there should be tensions between cultural celebration and political agitation. These tensions emerged time and time again during the 1870s, and not least when John Stuart Blackie and John Murdoch rebuked the associations for their romantic interests and their failure to take seriously the improvement of the Highlands and Islands.⁹⁰

Yet, although these Glasgow Gaels could turn out in masses to hear Murdoch or Blackie address their meetings, they did not respond. Mackenzie suggests that for most of these societies:

The fear [existed] that their close identification with the radical cause would endanger their viability. Because of their low subscription rates and perhaps also because the societies did not contain wealthy members, the generosity of the societies' patrons, who were called upon to make financial donations, was essential in order to remain solvent.⁹¹

To support this conclusion she notes that five-sixths of the income of the Skye Association came from its patrons who were mostly Highland landlords.⁹²

The GSL and HSL did not have wealthy patrons on whom they were dependent for survival. They were their own men, and with what money they

⁹⁰ Donald Meek, 'Radical Romantics: Glasgow Gaels and the Highland Agitation', (forthcoming)

⁹¹ Mackenzie, p. 336

⁹² Mackenzie, p. 336

had, they could do whatever the consensus of the society desired. Campbell of Airds, with regard to the HSL, said ‘it is worth remarking en passant that the funds of the Highland Society have never been large and what has been achieved has always been done by the exertions of the Members rather than bottomless sporrans’.⁹³

They had a freedom to do whatever they wanted, and their desire above all else was to preserve Gaelic culture and language, and to provide assistance to the homeland in any way they could. They provided leadership to the other societies in urban Scotland. As Màiri Mhòr nan Oran eloquently sang of the London Gaels in verse 16 of her song ‘*Coinneamh nan Croitearan*’:

Beannachd uainn gu muinntir Lunnainn
Sheas cho duineil air ar ceann
'S gum faod sinn labhairt le dānachd
Aig Beul-àtha-nan-tri-Allt.⁹⁴

Blessings from us to the folk of London
Who stood so manfully in the lead on our behalf
So that we are able to speak up with daring
At the Ford of the Three Burns.

Although this verse was written for the HLLRA of London⁹⁵ and not for the GSL or the HSL per se, it does express the thanks of a grateful homeland, which I believe the GSL and the HSL and other London Gaels justly deserve.

⁹³ NLS 10615, 3rd Draft, p. 21

⁹⁴ Donald Meek, ed. *Mairi Mhor Nan Oran* (Glasgow: Gairm, 1977), p. 88

⁹⁵ Most of the inaugural members of the HLLRA of London were GSL members

Conclusion

Neither the HSL nor the GSL bought into the 'bens and glens' mentality that was prevalent in the societies catering for Highlanders in Scottish cities, whose stand on homeland issues, in comparison with the London Gaels, was somewhat palliative. Rather, the London Gaels, with their realistic view of the homeland, became problem solvers with a 'can do' attitude. For that reason, they made it possible to begin initiatives to preserve Gaelic language and culture, something that was not realistically happening in Scottish cities. Yet these London Gaels lived far from their homeland, and this is what makes their achievements so much more significant.

Gaelic Education: in the Homeland and in London

Introduction

Preservation of the Gaelic language and the need for Gaelic language instruction was addressed by both the HSL and the GSL. Members of both societies would have had some experience or knowledge of the Scottish education system and the insurmountable problem revolving around Gaelic education. Church and state wanted conformity throughout the country and the extirpation of the language was seen as the only way to achieve this. However, the death of the Gaelic language was not acceptable to either the HSL or the GSL who recognised it as something worth preserving. They recognised shortcomings in the Scottish educational system. Most obvious was the fact that there was no Celtic Chair in any of the Scottish universities. They provided financial support to the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK) and the Gaelic School Societies and other organisations that provided Gaelic education and helped to improve Gaelic literacy. Yet there was room for improvement. The Royal Commission and the Education Act of 1872 essentially ignored Gaelic education. It was to address these deficiencies that the GSL set itself on a collision course with the educational practices of the Scottish Education Department and central Government. Its role in providing leadership to other Highland, Celtic or Gaelic societies in Scotland has been overlooked or ignored.

Indeed it was the London Gaels who were the ‘main movers and shakers’ responsible for changing attitudes to Gaelic education. They provided leadership for the Celtic Chair; they provided leadership in advocacy for Gaelic instruction, and leadership in resistance to features of the Education Act (1872) and its subsequent codes. This role will be discussed, as will the HSL’s foundation of the Caledonian Asylum or Gaelic school, the GSL’s book prizes and capitation grants given to encourage and financially reward schoolteachers who provided Gaelic classes, and also support to Gaelic tuition in London. This will follow a brief summary on the state of Gaelic education in the homeland.

The State of Gaelic Education

The Reformation is often regarded as a watershed in Scottish education. Although the Church’s First Book of Discipline was never ratified, it provided a system for universal state education and spiritual growth of youth, which became the cornerstone for education in Scotland. In it there was no place for the Gaelic language. The General Assembly regarded it as hindering the progress of the homeland and ‘the propagation of the English language appears to be a most effectual method of diffusing through these countries the advantages of religion and civil society’.⁹⁶ Anglicisation of the Gael was paramount.

It was not until 1766 that the SSPCK permitted their Schoolmasters to use Gaelic to teach English. Until that time even speaking the Gaelic

⁹⁶ NAS CH8/212/1, fo. 89 quoted by Charles Withers, *Gaelic Scotland: the transformation of a culture region* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 111, however the initial reference quoted by Withers is incorrect

language was forbidden at school.⁹⁷ By 1812 it was teaching Gaelic first and from 1825 it taught Gaelic as an education language. The SSPCK has received much criticism for its initial teaching practices in placing English above Gaelic. Yet, there is much to praise in the society. Rev Dr John MacInnes, a Church of Scotland minister says of the SSPCK schools:

They gave their pupils not only a tincture of literacy and solid Christian instruction, but enabled an appreciable number of the more gifted to translate currently into Gaelic from the English version of the Bible. The services of these amateur translators were greatly valued, not only in the homes of the people at diets of family worship, but also in cottage and fellowship meetings. So deeply rooted, indeed, did the habit of current translation from the English version become that, in the early nineteenth century, when an official Gaelic Bible was available, there were complaints from ministers and from inspectors of the Gaelic Schools Society that translators were often unwilling to surrender their traditional office.⁹⁸

The SSPCK was also responsible for the translation of the New Testament in the middle of the eighteenth century and the Old Testament, at first in four parts, towards the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the early nineteenth. It also translated many religious tracts.⁹⁹ Through this publication of religious texts, the SSPCK gave legitimacy to the Gaelic language. Without the SSPCK the other missionary societies who followed would not have had the Gaelic Bible.

Gaelic literacy was given another boost in 1810, with the establishment of the Edinburgh Society for the Support of Gaelic Schools. Its circulating schools were based on the Welsh model, funded by public

⁹⁷ John Lorne Campbell, *Gaelic in Scottish Education and Life* (Edinburgh: 1950), p. 68; and *London Scotsman*, 10 December 1870, p. 375

⁹⁸ John MacInnes, *The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland: 1688-1800* (Aberdeen: AUP, 1951), p. 4

⁹⁹ NAS GD95/2/10, pp. 2, 9, 14, 89, 125, 127, 128, 201, 269

subscription. The schools proved very popular and resulted in School Societies being established in Glasgow and Inverness. Most of the subscriptions came from urban Gaels, who had sufficient financial means to promote the charitable efforts, which facilitated education in the homeland.¹⁰⁰

Assembly Schools founded by the Church of Scotland, and funded by public subscriptions also encouraged Gaelic literacy. Parliament also responded by extending the parochial system to the quoad sacra parishes, the teachers' salaries being funded by the Treasury in 1838. Following the Disruption, the Free Church set up its own schools, funded in the main part by Ladies Associations in Edinburgh, Glasgow¹⁰¹ and eventually London. However, all these schools appeared to use the medium of Gaelic as an instrument for anglicisation. Charles Withers suggests that these schools helped to define Gaelic as a spiritual language and English for everything else.¹⁰²

Even with the increase in the number of schools, the children in the homeland were still in want of an education. This was highlighted by the Report of a Royal Commission (1867), chaired by the Duke of Argyll. Its mandate was to examine the state of education in Scotland, but the results relating to education in the Highlands, were damning. The geography, weather and the poverty of the Gaels made education almost impossible. The

¹⁰⁰ Mary K. Macleod, 'The Interaction of Scottish education developments and socio-economic factors on Gaelic education in Gaelic speaking areas, with particular reference to the period 1872-1918', unpublished PhD thesis University of Edinburgh 1981, p. 28

¹⁰¹ Douglas Ansdell, *The People Of The Great Faith: The Highland Church 1690-1900* (Stornoway: Acair, 1998), p 105

¹⁰² Withers (1988), pp. 145-66

School Boards were financially crippled. Many adults were illiterate, and many children of school age were not registered with a school, because their labour was needed to help the family survive.¹⁰³ The Commissioners felt that the Highlands and Islands must receive special treatment and they believed that the region had not been receiving its due share of assistance. It recommended a measure of supplying an adequate number of schools where the population was destitute. Indeed, the Report concluded that 'if some plan of this sort is not adopted, one of two consequences must follow, either the proprietors must be over-burdened with taxes, or the people must be left in ignorance'.¹⁰⁴

Regarding Gaelic language education, the majority of the Commissioners were not in favour of it: for it was seen as an obstacle for improvement and employment:

It is quite well known that infants acquire a knowledge of a language which they hear used in conversation more easily than adults, and the infant school in this respect might be an advantage, by enabling the youngest to acquire the power of speaking English with ease and accuracy, as the teachers of infant schools and all other teachers in the Highlands should encourage the scholar to use the English language in their conversation as far as possible.¹⁰⁵

This report provided the basis for the Education Act (Scotland) 1872, which amended and extended legal provisions relating to education in Scotland 'in such manner that the means of procuring efficient education for

¹⁰³ *Education Commission (Second Report) 1867* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1867), pp. lxxi-lxxiii

¹⁰⁴ *Education Commission 1867*, p. clxviii

¹⁰⁵ *Education Commission 1867*, p. lxxix

their children may be furnished and made available to the whole people of Scotland'.¹⁰⁶

However, the Education Act of 1872 made no provision for Gaelic. It would appear that once again its demise would be in the interest of everyone. By this Act all schools would come under the jurisdiction of the Government and it ushered in the demise of the missionary and church schools, the very ones that were teaching Gaelic.

Eventually, the Government did make concessions to the Gaelic language, but never really enough. The Napier Commission report of 1884 went further than the Education Act. It recommended that in Gaelic-speaking districts Gaelic should be taught and used as an aid to learn English. It also stated:

We think that the discouragement and neglect of the native language in the education of Gaelic speaking children, which hitherto so largely influenced the system practised in the Highlands, ought to cease, and that a knowledge of the language ought to be considered one of the primary qualifications of every person engaged in the carrying out of the national system of education in Gaelic-speaking districts, whether as school inspectors, teachers, or compulsory officers.¹⁰⁷

The Scottish Education Department (SED), in response to the Napier Commission and the Gaelic and Highland urban societies did make other concessions to Gaelic language education. But it was very much a case of too little too late.

¹⁰⁶ H.M. Knox, *Two hundred and fifty years of Scottish Education 1696-1946* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1953), p. 61

¹⁰⁷ Alexander Mackenzie, *An Analysis of the Report of the Crofters Royal Commission* (Inverness: Mackenzie, p. 55

The Celtic Chair

The Highland Society of London

The HSL considered various measures to improve the homeland and stop emigration throughout the 1780s. During this time in January 1786, John Mackenzie, the Secretary of the HSL brought to the attention of the members the 'great utility of preserving the Ancient Language and Manners of the Highlands'. It was decided that Mackenzie and Neil Malcolm should seek the opinion of Lord Breadalbane who had agreed to be the new President.¹⁰⁸ At the February meeting the members of the HSL acknowledged a need for Gaelic speaking clergy and this recognition provided the impetus for the Society's action in this matter. A Gaelic professor was required for proper language teaching to equip students for the ministry with the appropriate skills needed for a Highland parish. The best way of dealing with the problem, it was decided, was through one of the Scottish universities, and that by accomplishing such a measure:

It would be so very popular and pleasing in the Highlands the people might by this indulgence joined with other Gratifications of their Ideas and Dispositions be diverted for the present from falling again into their former habit of Emigration, until such time as the now solid preventatives of Fisheries, and other Improvements can be duly Established.¹⁰⁹

At this time the HSL was not really concerned with Higher Learning, but believed that the measure might divert the people from any idea of migration.

¹⁰⁸ NLS 268/21, p. 52

¹⁰⁹ NLS 268/21, p. 56

A deputation met representatives of both Houses of Parliament (the Duke of Argyll, Lord Graham, Henry Dundas, Henry Beaufoy and George Dempster), to discuss the utility of establishing a Gaelic professor. These meetings were without any apparent success; and as the Society was actively soliciting for subscriptions for the British Fisheries Society at the time, it dropped the matter temporarily.

In February 1788, the HSL showed its resolve again. This time it decided to address the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland:

Desiring that in order to preserve the recollection of the Gaelic Language to enable the Ministers to address, and to instruct their Congregation in the native language of that Country, and thereby to extend to that people the benefits of His Majesty's late Gracious Proclamation against Vice and Immorality, that the Assembly will take means to effect a knowledge of that language among the clergymen in that country and suggested that the schoolmasters shall in their parishes teach annually a Grammar of the Gaelic Tongue.¹¹⁰

However, the General Assembly did not appear interested in a Gaelic professorship. The HSL also resolved to inform the Highland Society in Edinburgh of its plan and solicit their help.¹¹¹ However, help was not forthcoming and there is no evidence that this action was completed in the extant records of either society.

On 4 March 1791 Colonel Small presented a memorial from Dr Donald Smith¹¹² in which he:

humbly proposes that if by the interest of this society or by such other means as they may judge advisable an appointment of a

¹¹⁰ NLS 268/21, pp. 87-8

¹¹¹ NLS 268/21, pp. 87-8

¹¹² NLS 268/21, p. 133

Professor of the Civil History of the Celtic Nations could be obtained within, the University of Edinburgh or Glasgow the memorialist would immediately undertake that duty either with or without any salary.¹¹³

Smith also corresponded with the antiquarian George Chalmers, and it would appear that Chalmers felt Smith would have more luck with the HSS. In response Smith replies to Chalmers on 28 June 1791 that:

You wish that I could get a copy of the memorial presented to the Gaelic Society at Edinburgh and that they could prevail on the Magistrates to join them in a recommendation to Mr Dundas.

If I found it suitable, I could effect the Business by a shorter and easier process. I have interest enough in the Town council to carry the point at once – and I have little doubt of the concurrence of the University to a measure which would hold forth an Increase to the stores of Science. – But Edinburgh would not answer my views. Glasgow was my object.

The memorial, if published in any of the periodical productions, altho' without a name, would be instantly known to the Committee of the H.[ighland] Society and the D.[uke] of Montrose – so would cease to be a secret. In truth I do not wish that either my Friends or myself should have any farther Trouble in the matter. We have all had by a great deal too much already. Periit Labor, pereat ingrata Reminiscentia.¹¹⁴

The HSL did decide that Dr Smith's proposal had merit, and a deputation met with the Duke of Montrose regarding the proposal. Montrose asked for time to pursue the matter, but the following year it was reported that his attempt had proved unsuccessful.

Victor Durkacz in *The Decline of the Celtic Languages* erroneously credits the Highland Society of Scotland (HSS) for early actions towards the erection of the Celtic Chair. Often the name 'Highland Society' without 'London' or 'Scotland' is used which can cause confusion. Therefore a re-

¹¹³ EUL La.II.474, fo. 79

¹¹⁴ EUL La.II.474, fo. 1

evaluation of some of his evidence presented regarding the HSS and the Celtic Chair was undertaken. First, he stated that the HSS took up the cause with the SSPCK in 1794 without success. Secondly, he argues that the HSS attempted to secure an endowment from the Government of the day; his third point is that Lord Seaforth received applications from candidates for the projected post.¹¹⁵

With regard to the SSPCK, there are three entries in the SSPCK Minute Book regarding the Gaelic Professorship. The first, of 2 January 1794, notes that ‘a memorial was received from the Highland Society requesting aid towards the Erection of a Gaelic Professorship in the University of Edinburgh’.¹¹⁶ In the second, dated 6 February 1794, ‘the Directors resumed Consideration of the Memorial from the Highland Society [...] and after conversing on the subject at great length, they referred the matter to the Sub Committee [...] to Consider the Compliancy and the Expediency of the measure’.¹¹⁷ On 6 March 1794 the sub-committee reported back the result of their meeting of 24 February 1794:

The Proposal from the Gaelic Society in London, together with the Letter from the Earl of Kinnoull to the Secretary, upon the subjects were read; & the Committee upon the whole were inclined to be of the opinion that to contribute towards the Erection of the proposed Professorship scarcely falls within the objects prescribed by their Patents and that they are moreover doubtful with respect to the utility & Expediency of that measure. But on account of the paucity of their number Resolved to avoid coming to a positive determination, and refer it back for decision to the Directors at large.’ The Directors

¹¹⁵ Victor Durkacz, *The Decline of the Celtic Languages* (Edinburgh: Donald, 1983), p. 201 and p. 254

¹¹⁶ NAS GD95/2/11, p. 104

¹¹⁷ NAS GD95/2/11, p. 107

approve of the Report and for the Reasons therein stated, decline interfering in the proposed establishment.¹¹⁸

The first two entries only use the name Highland Society, and this may have caused confusion. However, in the third minute, the HSL is clearly named, even though referred to as the Gaelic Society, its original name. It is this minute that Durkacz cites and wrongly attributes to the HSS. Additionally the Earl of Kinnoull wrote an accompanying letter to this application in his role as member of the HSL, and President of the London Correspondent Board of the SSPCK.

Regarding the HSS attempting to secure an endowment from Government, Durkacz uses as his source a letter from Henry Mackenzie to Sir John Sinclair, dated 5 May 1806. The letter is obviously a response to a letter from Sinclair, since the first part of the letter is taken up by advice to Sinclair on the use of citations in his dissertation on the authenticity for the soon-to-be-published, *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic* (1807). The HSL was seeking some assistance from Gaelic scholars. Henry Mackenzie in his letter states:

We are sadly crippled in the Researches here, for want of a good steady [G]aelic scholar on the Establishment of the Highland Society. Donald Smith was such a man as never will be found again; his Brother, a[nd] Mr Stewart of Luss if resident here, would be of great use; Mr Ross has considerable knowledge of Gaelic and a great deal, I believe of some Literature, but he has other Preoccupations, I couldn't spare much time to this object. If you could get a Gaelic Professorship, or a professorship of Celtic Antiquities, in Edinburgh perhaps that Encouragement might be your means of procuring such a person as with knowledge and qualifications equal to a parson, could then afford time and labour for it. For this & other Objects important

¹¹⁸ NAS GD95/2/11, pp. 114-5

to your Society. She will look to your aid, and that of her other friends in London. She owes you much gratitude for what Mr McLachlan tells me you are endeavouring to get done for her in Parl.¹¹⁹

From this letter we learn that the Gaelic professorship was an aim of the HSL and also that the HSL was using Parliament for this purpose and not the HSS.

Finally, Durkacz states that the endowment must have been given for 'Lord Seaforth even received applications from candidates for the projected post'. Durkacz cites as his evidence a letter from Rev James MacLeod, dated 5 January 1809. Durkacz places more significance on this letter and implies too much from scanty information. The letter simply informs Lord Seaforth that Rev James Macdonald has died. Further he asks if Seaforth had supported Macdonald's candidacy would he now consider him instead.¹²⁰ Seaforth was a member of the HSL and Rev James Macdonald was the HSL's candidate for the Gaelic professor.¹²¹

During 1808, the HSL underwent an evaluation of itself. The society believed that all its aims regarding preservation of language, literature and Celtic antiquities would be admirably attended to by the establishment of a Gaelic Professor in one of the Universities. But that goal was relegated to secondary significance, in part because of its new grand plan of the Caledonian Asylum and Gaelic Chapel took precedent. The other factor was that they received word that the HSS was currently promoting the idea of a

¹¹⁹ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.11, fos. 32-3

¹²⁰ NAS GD46/17/16, 5 January 1809

¹²¹ NLS 268/24, p. 179

professorship. The propriety of action was discussed. The HSL was the first to give attention to this cause; so should they co-operate with the Highland Society of Scotland for obtaining a Regius Professorship of Celtic Literature in Edinburgh or Glasgow?¹²² However, there was no cooperation and the HSS failed in its attempt.

Nevertheless, the HSL did continue its quest into the nineteenth century, which is attested by correspondence and minutes, although less enthusiastically than before. From extant sources, little action took place until 1846 when the Society was collecting names in Scotland for a new petition to Parliament. John Sobieski Stuart was obviously involved in soliciting names for the petition. He wrote to Sir Alexander Campbell of Barcaldine, on 10 May 1846, asking for his support regarding the petition for the Gaelic Professorship to be presented to the Government by the HSL. Sobieski Stuart wrote that 'all the professors of the King's College Aberdeen, have given it their names and Cluny has set the good example at the head of the list of Chiefs'.¹²³

In 1867, the Society succeeded in obtaining the approval of the Government of the day. Disraeli, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, told the HSL that:

Although he highly approved of the proposal [he] would not give any promise that the Government would make a Grant towards it but he gave us to understand that if a sum of £2000 or £3000 were subscribed and it were mentioned to him again he

¹²² NLS 268/24, p. 165

¹²³ EUL DK.6.19², Letter to Sir Alexander Campbell, 10 May 1846

would if he remained in Office give it every support in his power.¹²⁴

However, Disraeli discouraged any action at that time, feeling that the time was not right for success. The following year (1868), the HSL started its Bursary programme¹²⁵, providing £50 per annum for the most diligent student at Edinburgh University who could speak Gaelic and it was still addressing the question of the Celtic chair.¹²⁶ That was the society's last attempt to secure a Celtic chair.

The Gaelic Society of London

The Gaelic Society of London also saw the importance of a Gaelic Professorship. During the 1830s, it made three presentations to the House Parliament for establishing a Gaelic professorship in one of the Scottish universities, primarily for the instruction of Highland Divinity students. The first petition was presented to Parliament in July 1835 on behalf of the GSL by W.I. Campbell, MP for Argyllshire, supported by W.A. MacKinnon MP and Sir George Sinclair MP, and bore the signatures of Highlanders resident in London.¹²⁷ A copy of that petition was in the GSL's library.¹²⁸ James Logan also adds information regarding this petition, Sir George Sinclair urged his father Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster to obtain the corporate support of the HSL to the petition.¹²⁹ The petition was favourably received, and the following year Sir George Sinclair presented another petition on behalf of

¹²⁴ NLS 268/28, pp. 39-40

¹²⁵ NLS 268/44 University Bursaries 1890-1932

¹²⁶ *London Scotsman*, April 25, 1868, p. 391

¹²⁷ IHA Ross.1/2/5, p. 308, letter from Rev Dr Norman MacLeod read 7 March 1837. I am indebted to Prof Donald Meek for sharing this letter which he had received from Stuart G Mackenzie of Fochabers

¹²⁸ *Celtic Magazine* II (July 1877), p. 355

¹²⁹ *London Scotsman*, 2 April 1870, p. 214

the Society. Over five hundred signatures were collected for the 1836 petition from Highlanders resident in London and its suburbs.¹³⁰

In 1839, the petition presented on behalf of the GSL proved the most successful, for it resulted in a meeting with Mr Spring Rice, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1840. He became sympathetic to the cause when he was made aware that Gaelic education was essential to prepare young men who were going as ministers to Highland parishes. They were currently going into their parishes unprepared for preaching and catechising through the medium of Gaelic. Such preparation should come from a Scottish University the deputation argued. Mr Rice informed the deputation that he would recommend that the Lords of the Treasury grant a sum equal to what they could collect from fellow Scotsmen for the purpose of a Gaelic Professor.¹³¹ However, the Society could not raise the financial support needed from other Highland Societies and the quest for the Chair again fell on stony ground.

In 1848 James Logan, the GSL's English Secretary presented his own petition to Parliament for the establishment of a professorship. He suggested that the chair should be in Inverness. This was also unsuccessful.¹³² Further GSL petitions, were unsuccessfully presented to

¹³⁰ *Commons Journal*, Vol 91, 1836, p. 770; and Barron, Vol II, p. 188

¹³¹ *TGSI* III and IV (1872-73), xiii-xx, p. xv; *The London Scotsman*, 17 December 1870, p. 389

¹³² Barron, Vol. III, p. 165

Government by Mackinnon of Mackinnon, Campbell of Islay and Colonel Sykes.¹³³

However the GSL did not abandon its focus on the Professorship. At the Annual Meeting in 1868, Colin Chisholm, President, blazed the fiery cross when he called on all Gaels at home or abroad to support the Celtic Chair. He spoke very spiritedly on the lack of support and the apparent degradation of Scottish Gaelic:

Some men will say you have four universities in Scotland. True; and some of them established 450 years ago. During that period, I believe, the four universities did not spend 450 bawbees on Gaelic professorships. It is computed that about 500,000 of the population in Scotland say their prayers in Gaelic. In Ireland there are only 163,275 beholden to instruction in the Irish language, yet they have a Professor of Irish and several scholarships in Trinity College; and the Bishop of St David's will not ordain a clergyman for his diocese until he is capable of teaching in the Welsh language. The Canadians have a Gaelic Professor in Toronto. But when shall we have one?¹³⁴

The society wrote to leading supporters of the cause in Scotland. The following month responses were read from Prof John Stuart Blackie, Rev Dr Thomas MacLauchlan and Rev William Ross giving their support. Prof. Blackie wrote:

I hope yet to see chairs of Celtic literature established in the Scottish Universities, which may add something of a decidedly intellectual character to the well-known patriotism of the Scottish Celts. One thing is certain, that if we do not move in this direction now, in another generation it may be too late'.¹³⁵

Rev Dr MacLauchlan wrote:

¹³³ *London Scotsman*, 2 April 1870, p. 214

¹³⁴ *London Scotsman*, 16 January 1869, p. 37

¹³⁵ *London Scotsman*, 16 January 1869, p. 37

I notice that you have in view, so far as lies in your power, to assist in establishing Gaelic chairs in the Scottish universities [...] I am of the opinion that it would be a great boon to the country if Gaelic were systematically taught by one who could teach it in an able and masterly manner [...] this movement of yours has my best wishes, and if it should be in my power to assist you in any way I shall not be found wanting. If a sum were raised adequate to the endowment of a chair in one university, to begin with, it is my opinion that the rest would soon follow; but to do this in the handsome manner which the project deserves would require about £10,000 sterling.¹³⁶

In February 1869, Colin Chisholm, President, spoke again about the need for proper Gaelic instruction for ministerial students. He commented on a report from the General Assembly who acknowledged that there was a lack of young men for Gaelic ministry. According to Chisholm, this was because, there was nowhere for students to study theology in their own language. He noted the injustice of Parliament endowing £16,000 per annum on one hundred and five professors in the Scottish universities and yet ‘not a penny of which was apportioned to professors of Gaelic – one of the most ancient of languages’. However, he felt that momentum for a chair was now gaining ground and hoped that this would help to persuade the Government to establish a Gaelic professor in three of the Scottish universities.¹³⁷ A committee was appointed consisting of Colin Chisholm, Colin Maccallum, John Cameron Macphee, Peter Cameron, Donald Macpherson, Alexander Grant, John Grant and Donald Kennedy. Their mandate was to review actions already taken and to decide the best manner to proceed. In March:

Thug Peadar Hay Camshron air aghart an doigh a bha e
smaonteachadh a b’fhearr dol timchioll a lethid so de gnothach.
Ge be air bith cuideachadh a rachadh a dheanamh an Lunnuin

¹³⁶ *London Scotsman*, 16 January 1869, p. 37

¹³⁷ *London Scotsman*, 20 February 1869, p. 116

air son cuir air aghart gluasad mar so, gun teagamh sam bith bha e iomchaidh gun tigidh guth as an taobh tuath an toiseachd. Agus air son sluagh na duthcha mhosgladh gus am feum mor a bha an gluasad a dheanamh 'sa chuis so bith a bharrail gum bu choir a chuir mun cuairt, cha ne 'Crois tara', mur bho sheann ach Cuairtear na bu siochaile a nochadh gu grunn-dail, poncail cor na cuise agus comhlamh, ris a chuirtear so gun rachadh leth-breac Ath-chuinge a chuireabh air beul Parlamaid, nuair a cruinneachadh uiread ainmeannan agus a b'urrair sin. Chuireadh e an Cuairtear so agus Ath-chuinge a dh'ionnsuidh a h-uile ministear Gaelic 'sa Gaidhealtachd air son iad a dh'fhaotainn ainmeannan na bhithheadh am fabhur Ard-sgoilearachd Gaelic an Oilthighean Alba. Bith a bharrail gun deanamh so Impidh co laidir agus le ceartas nach e duilteadh le Tigh-na-Parlamaid. Chordadh ris an inleachd so agus shuidheachadh a leanachd.¹³⁸

Peter Hay Cameron set out the way in which he thought best to go about a matter such as this. Whatever kind of help might be given in London to bring forward an initiative like this without any doubt it was appropriate that a voice from the north should come first. And in order to rouse the people of the country to the great need for action in this matter, it was his opinion that there ought to be circulated, not a fiery cross as of old but a more peaceful messenger who would show in a down-to-earth, sensible manner the nature of the matter. And together with the circular there should go a copy of a petition that would be put in front of Parliament when as many names as possible had been gathered. He would send this circular and petition to every Gaelic Minister in the Highlands in order for them to get names of those who would be in favour of setting up an advanced Gaelic Scholarship [a Gaelic Professorship] in Scottish Universities. It was his opinion that this would make such a strong plea and with such justice that it would not be turned down by the House of Parliament. This strategy was agreed and it was decided to pursue it.

For this 'voice from the north' the people of the homeland had to be roused. In order to accomplish this, a circular letter and petition was sent to every Gaelic Minister in the Highlands and Islands, regardless of denomination, in order to identify those individuals who were in favour of establishing a Gaelic Professorship and the current state of Gaelic. The

¹³⁸ UCL GSL MB, 17 March 1869

circular asked for views on the desirability of establishing a Professorship and requested information on how much Gaelic preaching was taking place. The GSL was not a wealthy society, but it realised the importance of what it was doing and so provided the return postage to encourage a response. The results would be presented to Parliament. By the end of the year the tabulated responses showed that of the 3,395 churches of all denominations that were preaching in Gaelic, 461 one of them had daily Gaelic services. The breakdown of these churches were 235 Established, 166 Free, 36 Catholic, 3 Congregational, 12 Baptists, and 9 Episcopal churches.¹³⁹ There was still a need for approximately 500 Gaelic-speaking ministers for upwards of half-a-million people.¹⁴⁰ The GSL believed it now had all the evidence it needed to persuade the Government that there was a very real need for Gaelic professors.

However, instead of giving this information to Parliament the GSL decided to send its tabulated results to the University of Edinburgh. Professor Blackie agreed to assist the Society in its press campaign by means of letters to editors and a series of articles in January 1870. The GSL also wrote to the HSL acknowledging its past leadership and asking if the two societies could work together for the common goal. However, the HSL, which was going through a period of decline, refused the offer.

On the 19 April 1870, at the General Council of the University of Edinburgh, Mr Alexander Nicolson moved 'that it is desirable that there

¹³⁹ *London Scotsman*, 17 December 1870, p. 389

¹⁴⁰ *London Scotsman*, 25 December 1869, p. 390

should be a Chair of Celtic Literature and Antiquities in this University and that it be remitted to a Committee of the Council to consider and report on the subject'.¹⁴¹ Prof Blackie seconded the motion and a committee of twenty-seven was appointed. Initially, Sir Patrick Grant, Principal of the University, was the convener of the committee, and its first task was to prepare and make a presentation to the University Court, which it did in 1871. The University Court acknowledged the desirability of the Chair, but 'regret that in their official capacity they have no power of promoting such an object, which seems to depend for its being carried out on private munificence'.¹⁴² Principal Grant transferred the position of convener to Prof MacGregor, and the committee felt that the Scottish nobility would prove generous. A request for the Senate and Court of the University to cover expenses for obtaining subscriptions met with refusal.¹⁴³ It would appear that, although it considered it desirable, the University did not want a Celtic Chair. Little progress was made. Prof MacGregor resigned and Prof Blackie accepted the post in 1874.

Meanwhile, the GSL grew disheartened by the lack of progress by the University. The ground gained was fast disappearing. Alexander Mackenzie, who had supported the Gaelic Society through the *London Scotsman*, relocated from England to Inverness. There he read a paper on the Gaelic Professorship before the Inverness Literary Institute in November 1870. He spoke of the work undertaken by the GSL for establishing a Celtic

¹⁴¹ EUL Da.82 Minutes of the General Council of Edinburgh University 1859-1905, 19 April 1870, p. 131

¹⁴² EUL Da.23, Draft Minutes and Relative Papers of Edinburgh University Court, No. 94, 20 October 1871

¹⁴³ EUL Da.31.5, Senatus College Minutes Vol. IV (1869-1872), p. 457; Da.23, No. 106

Chair. He also suggested the establishment of a society in Inverness with the same aspirations as the GSL. His paper was printed in both the *Inverness Advertiser* and the *London Scotsman*. It provided the impetus not only for the formation of the Gaelic Society of Inverness in 1871 but also for the foundation of other Highland or Celtic societies throughout the land. All of these new societies supported the Celtic Chair.

In October 1872, the GSL wrote to the Rev Archibald Farquharson Congregational minister in Tiree, asking him join with Dr Halley to:

dol a mach feadh na [G]aidhealtachd a bhrosnachadh nan [G]aidheil gu oidheirp a dheanadh air fear-aidmheil-gailig a shuidheachadh ann an ard thaghean-foghlum Albainn, agus a g'iarraidh comain agus deagh-ghean Comunn na Gailig sa ghnothach. Rinn an Comunn o chionn fhada moran obair air son a ghnothich sin chuir air aghart agus dh'aontaich na companich gu toileach gach misnech agus cuideachadh bhitheadh nan comas thabhairt do an duine-uasal urramach ann a bhith cuir a ni sin air aghart.¹⁴⁴

go throughout the Highlands to encourage the Gaels to make an attempt to establish a Gaelic professor in the Universities of Scotland and seeking the good will and favour of the Gaelic Society in the matter. The Society a long time ago had done much work to promote that matter and the members agreed willingly to give every encouragement and support that was in their power to this honourable gentleman in promoting this matter.

The following year (1873), after discussing the new Education (Scotland) Act the GSL decided to appoint a committee to do everything they could to establish a 'Gaelic Professor' in Scotland.¹⁴⁵ The Gaelic professorship appeared to be an impossible dream. Then Prof Blackie, as already mentioned, was appointed convenor of the University of Edinburgh's

¹⁴⁴ UCL GSL MB, 15 October, 1872

¹⁴⁵ UCL GSL MB, 17 June, 1873

Celtic Chair Committee. He provided the leadership that had been lacking and the possibility turned towards reality. He was guest speaker at the GSL in May 1875 and then returned the following month for a special meeting on 22 June, for all the Scottish societies in London hosted by GSL. Large sums of money were donated at this meeting, including £200 from Queen Victoria.

Within four years, Blackie raised a fund of nearly £12,000. However, it took a few more years before the interest earned on that fund raised enough for the salary of a Professor. The election of a Professor did not take place until December 1882, when Donald Mackinnon was unanimously selected as the first incumbent. Of whom, the present incumbent, Prof W. Gillies said 'he stood as an "all-rounder" with particular strength in the "practical Gaelic" department, having an unrivalled experience of the practice and bureaucratic aspects of Gaelic education, and was also enjoying a high reputation as a Gaelic essayist on literary, historical, and philosophical subjects'.¹⁴⁶

The objects of the Chair of Celtic Languages and Literature were defined:

First, To provide for the scientific study of Celtic Comparative Philology; and for the collection and elucidation of existing literary and historical monuments of the Celtic languages.

Second, To provide for the scholarly teaching of the vernacular Celtic to students destined to pass their lives as clergymen,

¹⁴⁶ William Gillies, 'A century of Gaelic Scholarship' in *Gaelic and Scotland* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1989), p. 14

schoolmasters, lawyers, or physicians, in the Celtic districts of this country.¹⁴⁷

Essentially this embraced everything the members of the HSL and the GSL had campaigned so long for.¹⁴⁸

Scottish Attempts

It is apparent that the campaign for the chair came as a voice from the south. Apart from Dr Donald Smith's proposal, very little appears to have happened in Scotland regarding a Celtic Chair. Only two sustained attempts were made during the early years of the London Highlanders' campaign.

The first was from the HSS in 1807. It was during the time when the HSS's began its task of compiling its Gaelic Dictionary and according to Ronald Black 'Sinclair and MacGregor Murray were working for the establishment of a Chair of Celtic in Edinburgh University'.¹⁴⁹ Those two gentlemen were also members of the HSL and would have been very aware of the HSL's unsuccessful attempts. That is probably why the HSS used a different tactic in its attempt, by writing to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh. The Lord Provost and Town Council were Patrons of the University and so had influence regarding the functioning of the University. The HSS asked the Lord Provost the question, why did not Edinburgh have, like many European Universities, a chair of national literature and antiquities. The Provost forwarded the letter to the University.

¹⁴⁷ EUL, Da.23, Draft Minutes and Relative Papers of Edinburgh University Court, No. 108, 16 April 1782, p. 251

¹⁴⁸ See Janice Fairney, 'The Celtic Chair—A London View' (forthcoming), for a fuller treatment of the evidence

¹⁴⁹ Ronald I. Black, 'The Gaelic Academy: the Cultural Commitment of the Highland Society of Scotland', *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 14 (1986), p. 17

After due consideration, the University concluded that such a chair would not be fiscally viable and would prove detrimental to the University as a whole. The only way such a chair could succeed, it reasoned, was through a large endowment. Consequently, the Lord Provost sent a petition to His Majesty's Ministers to appoint a Regius Professorship of Celtic Literature and British Antiquities in Edinburgh University,¹⁵⁰ but this was unsuccessful.¹⁵¹

The second attempt took place in Ross-shire at a Police Meeting in 1836. This meeting recognised the need for Gaelic language teaching, and proposed that a Gaelic Chair be established at Aberdeen University. It appointed a committee headed by Sir Colin Mackenzie, who wrote to the Rev Dr Norman MacLeod inviting him to join. MacLeod replied, praising the ambition of the Ross-shire Committee, and he informed them of what the London Gaels were doing referring to the 1835 petition:

The petition was got up by certain Highlanders in London [...] and well received by the House, so that the ice has already been broken. The great matter I conceive is to agitate by getting up as many Petitions as possible, to forward them to the Treasury and Home Secretary, and above all to interest as many of the members of Parliament as possible in this matter.¹⁵²

MacLeod also suggested that the committee should appeal to the University of Aberdeen's Commissioners, and it would appear that the committee did achieve some level of success, for during the 1840s Aberdeen University introduced Gaelic teaching for a short time.

¹⁵⁰ EUL Da.31.5, *Senatus College Minutes Vol. II (1790-1811)*, pp. 437-53

¹⁵¹ Sir A. Grant, *The Story of the University of Edinburgh 2 Vols.* (London: Longmans, Green, 1884), p. 152

¹⁵² IHA Ross.1/2/5, p. 308.

Education in the Highlands and Islands

The only way for London Gaels to provide assistance to schools in the homeland was through financial contributions to the London branches of the incorporated missionary societies who provided education. Through these branches the SSPCK and the Gaelic Schools Societies received generous donations.¹⁵³

Highland Society of London

Many of the members of the HSL were also members of the SSPCK's London Correspondent Board, and possibly for that reason, the HSL did not make overly generous donations to the SSPCK. During 1824-1877 it gave regular donations to the Gaelic Schools Society. However, monetary assistance was unpredictable, and depended on the society's financial health. It also provided for the salary of the Gaelic schoolmaster or 'professor' at the Inverness Academy in 1788¹⁵⁴ and this support continued for many years. It also provided financial assistance in 1802 and 1803 for Gaelic teaching at a school in Corgarff, Aberdeenshire. It was 'by way of experiment, for instructing the youth of the adjacent country in the correct knowledge of the Gaelic', in an attempt to stop the decline of spoken Gaelic in the 'frontiers of the Highlands'.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ NAS GD/1/9, pp. 94-5; Eleventh annual report of the London Auxiliary to the Association for the Religious improvement of the Highlands and the Gaelic Schools Society (London: Henderson, Rai & Fenton, 1868), pp. 8-9; Janice Fairney, 'A field of benevolence not yet cultivated, a wealth not yet opened: the London branches of the Scottish Missionary Societies' (forthcoming)

¹⁵⁴ NLS 268/21, p. 80

¹⁵⁵ NLS 268/24, p. 25

Gaelic Society of London

The *raison d'être* for the GSL was the Gaelic language. In its newly constituted rules (1830) it made certain that if the Society failed, any assets would be used to benefit the language through education:

Ma bheir aobhar sam bith an Comunn gu crich gun toirear na bhuineas da de dhearas do'n Chomuinn tha chum sgoillean Gaelach a chumail suas ann an Gaeltachd as Eileanan Albainn.¹⁵⁶

That in the event of a dissolution of the society, all the property it may then possess to be given to the Society for supporting Gaelic Schools in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland¹⁵⁷.

However, apart from that philanthropic gesture there is no evidence that the GSL assisted education until 1871. From that year it began championing the Gaelic language teaching in the homeland. This was achieved by means of lobbying, advocacy, book prizes to students and capitation grants to teachers to encourage Gaelic instruction.

Advocacy and Lobbying

In May 1871, in the run up to the Education (Scotland) Act (1872), a deputation of the Society (Colin Chisholm, James Sutherland, John Forbes and R.G. Tolmie) met with Lord Advocate Young. The deputation requested that provision be made for Gaelic instruction in those districts in the homeland where Gaelic was 'the ordinary speech of the inhabitants', in the forthcoming Education Act. The deputation pointed out that it was important to recognise Gaelic as:

¹⁵⁶ Logan, p. xii

¹⁵⁷ Logan, p. xiii

an instrument of instruction indispensable among a people to the great majority of whom English is either not at all, or else very imperfectly known; and they shewed the injustice which would be inflicted on pupil teachers and ratepayers alike, if the disadvantages under which the work of elementary Education is carried on among such people were not adequately compensated by some exceptional adjustment of general rules.¹⁵⁸

Unfortunately, the meeting was unsuccessful. Although, the Lord Advocate agreed with the views presented, he felt that they could not be accomplished by an additional clause in the Bill, which would prove inflexible. He believed that what the GSL wanted could be achieved within the administrative Minute, which regulated the distribution of the Parliamentary Grant. Through this way additional money might be available.¹⁵⁹

In 1872 the GSL appointed a committee to investigate the present state of Highland schools and ascertain how it could provide assistance. This resulted in a letter being sent to the Secretary of the Board of Education for Scotland in Edinburgh in January 1873. It outlined the Society's meeting with the Lord Advocate and expressed a confidence that the Board would fully consider Gaelic instruction 'for diversity of language is a fact so distinctive that it cannot be ignored in a national system of Education for any country where it prevails'.¹⁶⁰

Education was a constant topic at GSL meetings during the passage of the Education (Scotland) Act through Parliament. At the June meeting:

¹⁵⁸ *Highlander*, 2 May 1874, p. 5

¹⁵⁹ *Highlander*, 2 May 1874, p. 5

¹⁶⁰ *Highlander*, 2 May 1874, p. 5

Thug Iain Forbais an Rùn-cleireach fa-chomhair a chomunn na riaghailtean ùr chaidh chur a mach air son sgoiltinn na h-Alba agus ciod a bhuidh a bhitheadh aig na riaghailtin sin air fòghlum na gàidhlig. An deidh beagan comhradh mu thimchioll sin; dh'aontichan Comunn 'nach eil e iomchuidh tuilleadh dheanadh ann sa ghnothach sin an drasta gus am faic iad cia mar fhreagarras na riaghailtin ùr; ach gu'm bu choir na h-uile dhichioll a dheanadh air son cathair Fearaidmheil-gaidhlig a Shuideachadh ann an Ard-thaigh-foghlum na duthaich.¹⁶¹

The secretary John Forbes brought to the attention of the Society the new regulations that had been set out for the Schools in Scotland and what effect those rules would have on Gaelic education. After a little while of talking about that, the Society decided it was not appropriate to do more in that matter at the present until they see how the new regulations fit but they ought to do their absolute utmost to establish a chair of Gaelic Professor in a University in the land.

After the usual business of the next month's meeting, the conversation focused again on the Education Act. The Society felt the Government had not gone far enough, for the children would not necessarily be taught their native tongue. It believed at the very least Gaelic should have been granted special subject status. The Act did not give any encouragement to the schoolmaster to teach Gaelic, for there was no monetary incentive. Gaelic tuition was purely voluntary, and the GSL thought that lack of reward might aid the decline of Gaelic teaching in schools.¹⁶² It was not until November 1783, following a presentation by Rev Archibald Farquharson of Tiree on 'Gaelic teaching in schools' that the GSI decided to follow the GSL's lead in advocating for Gaelic education.

In November 1873, the GSL decided to write to the Houses of Parliament. It requested that a statistical account of the number of children

¹⁶¹ UCL GSL MB, 17 June 1873

¹⁶² *Highlander*, 12 July 1873

who attended schools in the Highlands be undertaken. This would provide an analysis of the number of children who spoke Gaelic, those who were more familiar with Gaelic than English, and finally those who could read Gaelic with any amount of fluency.¹⁶³ This request was sent to Donald Cameron of Lochiel, MP and Honorary President of the GSL in January 1874.¹⁶⁴

The GSL received word from Cameron in March. He had not taken the matter to Parliament, but had spoken privately with the Education Department who were

not at present prepared to take further steps towards the promotion of Gaelic teaching in Highland Schools, nor do we see the way to obtaining such a return as is indicated in your letter. For my own part I think the Department have done well in allowing Gaelic to be the medium of examination in Section II and III. Teachers are now appointed by School Boards, and if the later do not voluntarily encourage Gaelic, it is somewhat difficult for a department in London to go out of their way to compel Highlanders to teach their own language to their own children.¹⁶⁵

The GSL was, of course disappointed by this response, and John Forbes, Hon. Secretary replied:

I can assure you the Gaelic Society neither expected nor desired that the Education Department “compel” Highlanders to teach Gaelic to their own children; but in schools where Gaelic is the spoken tongue of a considerable number of people, it is evident that a double labour is thrown on teachers and pupils, in qualifying for the Government grant, and they think it would be simply fair to recognise this double labour to the extent, at least for the present, of making official record of it. Should the School Boards in the Highlands follow the excellent example set by your own Board,¹⁶⁶ in the appointment of teachers, it would

¹⁶³ UCL GSL MB, 18 November 1873

¹⁶⁴ UCL GSL MB, 20 January 20 1874

¹⁶⁵ *Highlander*, 2 May 1874, p. 5

¹⁶⁶ Cameron had informed the GSL that ‘in my own board we never think of appointing a teacher, however good, who is not versed in Gaelic’

doubtless go far to realise the object which the Gaelic Society have at heart.¹⁶⁷

Forbes also stated that the society had not changed its opinion regarding the need for the statistical account of children in the homeland. The GSL still felt that information was essential. The GSL's concern for both teachers and pupils and how it could help began to take form. There was no financial recompense available to teachers who taught Gaelic to their pupils in addition to English. At the very least, the GSL believed that the Education Department should make an official record of those teachers who did.¹⁶⁸

In December 1874 a deputation from the GSL met with the Lord Advocate once again regarding Gaelic instruction in public schools in the Highlands, stating that:

They appeared not in the interests of the mere teaching of Gaelic, but of education generally. The society had the experience of sixty three schools in the work in which they were engaged, and the result of their observation was that education of the pupils in the Highland districts was largely aided by their being taught to read their native tongue [...] that it would serve the purposes of education largely if a certain place was to be given to the teaching of Gaelic in the national schools.¹⁶⁹

Other causes took precedence for the GSL, including the Celtic Chair. In 1878 the GSI organised a deputation to meet with the Duke of Richmond and Gordon. The deputation was led by Charles Fraser-Mackintosh, and was made up of Edinburgh clergymen and two representatives of the Gaelic Schools Society and both resident in London,

¹⁶⁷ *Highlander*, 2 May 1874, p. 5

¹⁶⁸ *Highlander*, 2 May 1874, p. 5

¹⁶⁹ *Highlander*, 19 December 1874, p. 5

Hugh Matheson and Alexander MacNicoll. The deputation requested a grant of money to pay for the instruction of Gaelic. The Duke informed them all that it was too late to grant any money for this year. Further, he stated 'it was a matter of considerable doubt whether or not the intelligence of children in the Highlands would be enhanced by the teaching of the Gaelic tongue'. The deputation was very discouraged, and it was decided that Fraser Mackintosh should bring a motion to the House of Commons.¹⁷⁰ The following week an article in *The Highlander* urged societies and communities to petition their MPs requesting Gaelic education.¹⁷¹

The GSL Council were delighted that others were joining them in the campaign:

Aig Coinneamh a chum an luchd dreuchd mun d'thainig a Chuideachd eile cruinn, thug Fear na Cathair fa'n comhair gum biodh e iomchaidh do'n Chomunn, Iarrtas a chuir a dh'ionnsuidh na Parlamaid, mar chull-taice ris na Comuinn Ghaidhleach eile a bha nis a cuir suas Iarrtais as leith Gaelig a bhi air a theagasg do'n Chloinn ann an Sgoilean nan uile Chearnan Gaidhleach, agus gun robh so gu sonraichte mar fhiachadh orra, do bhrigh's gum b'e Comunn na Gailig ann an Lunnuinn, a rinn a cheud ghluasad anns a chuis so, bu taitneach leis a radh, a bha nis a toirt suas aire nan Comuinn Ghaidhleach uile. Bhiodh e na'n cuimhne gun do chuir an Comunn so buidheann thaghta da'n aireamh gu feathamh air Tighearna Tagradh na h-Alba, anns a bhliadhna 1871, mu dheibhinn a cheart ghnathaich so.¹⁷²

At a meeting that the Office-bearers held before the other members came and assembled, the Chairman proposed that it would be appropriate for their Society, to send a Petition to Parliament, a support to the other Highland Societies, who were now submitting a Petition that Gaelic be taught to the children in the schools in all the Highland districts, and that

¹⁷⁰ *Highlander*, 2 February 1878, p. 2

¹⁷¹ *Highlander*, 9 February 1878, p. 3

¹⁷² UCL GSL MB, 13 February 1878

this was a particular obligation on them, because it was the Gaelic Society of London that had taken the first step in this matter and it was pleasing for him to say that it was now getting the attention of all the Highland Societies. They would recall that this Society had sent a group chosen from their number to wait on the Lord Advocate in the year 1871, about this same matter.

Charles Fraser Mackintosh presented a great number of petitions representing many societies, including the GSL's, to the House of Commons on 18 February 1878. The GSL's petition stated:

That while the Gaelic is only language spoken and understood by a large majority of the people in many parts of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and must therefore be the language in which the education of the young, especially in the earlier stages, would be most easily and effectively conducted, no provision is made for the teaching of it in public schools, nor adequate encouragement given for the use of it as a medium of instruction in English. That by regulating the teaching in the public schools shall be exclusively in English, the progress and efficiency of education in the said Highlands and Islands are seriously retarded, as instruction given in an unknown tongue must necessarily fail to exercise the understanding or to awaken the intelligent curiosity of pupils. That the literature of the Gaelic language, rich in elevating traditions and kindling associations, supplies valuable means of education and culture, which can be fully utilised only by giving the language itself a place among the subjects taught in the schools. Furthermore, that your petitioners are humbly of opinion that it will be to the advantage of the country at large to preserve and cherish the elements of a healthy variety in the public education of the people, which, without any undue influence, has always a natural tendency to dull uniformity. Wherefore, your petitioners humbly pray that it may please your Honourable House to make adequate provision for the use of the Gaelic as an instrument of education where it is the language of the people, and for the systematic teaching of it in the schools, by causing it to be recognised in the Education Code as a 'special subject,' or by such other means as your Honourable House may in its wisdom think right to devise.¹⁷³

¹⁷³ UCL GSL MB, 13 February 1878

However, apart from presenting the many petitions from a number of societies, School Boards and Parishes, Fraser Mackintosh withdrew his motion on Gaelic education, scheduled for the following evening. There was no real need, for the Education Department, had gone some way to address the concerns of all the petitioners through a concession. In the Code for 1878:

The Education Department have agreed to allow the time given in Gaelic instruction to be reckoned as part of the regular school curriculum. They do not go so far as to sanction its being made a special subject, but short of that they will place no bar whatever in the way of its encouragement, and local School Boards will be at liberty to devote a portion of the funds at their disposal to this purpose.¹⁷⁴

Also in that year the Federation of Celtic Societies was formed. The GSL was a founding member, and all the member societies saw the Federation as a way of bringing concerted pressure on the Education Department, and indeed the Government, for Gaelic education. Therefore during this period while the new Federation was finding its feet, no action was taken by the GSL, except for sporadic discussions.

However, by 1886, the GSL was active again. A deputation from the GSL¹⁷⁵ met with Mr Trevelyan, the Secretary of State for Scotland, and Dr Craic, Permanent Secretary of Scottish Education at Dover House on 26 March 1886. The purpose of the meeting was an attempt to make some changes to the Code for 1886. The Crofter MPs most members of the GSL,

¹⁷⁴ *Highlander*, 23 February 1878, p. 5

¹⁷⁵ Dr Cameron MP, Mr Fraser-Mackintosh MP, Dr MacDonald MP, Mr Gilbert Beith MP, Dr Gillies, Rev Mr MacNeill, Dr Farquhar Matheson, Mr Alex Ross, Mr J.G. Weir, Mr Donald Campbell, Mr John MacNab, Mr James Sutherland, Mr J.S. Stuart-Glennie and Mr John Forbes

supported its president, Dr Roderick Macdonald MP, Honorary Secretary Dr. Gillies, and other members from the Society. It believed that its proposed modifications would greatly assist Gaelic teaching. It wanted Gaelic taught as a special subject and treated in the same manner as other languages taught with 'defined examinations'. Without such a measure, it argued, the teachers and School Boards would be discouraged from teaching Gaelic. They were already discouraged by the 'antagonistic reports' of the School Inspectors, some of whom went so far as to say 'that Gaelic teaching in any shape or form would be a calamity for the Highlands'. The GSL provided a suggested content for these Gaelic examinations. Care had been taken that these examinations would not be seen as hindering or interfering with English education but only as an accommodation of learning the mother tongue.

It also addressed the Society's concern regarding higher-class education. The distribution of the population and the geography of the homeland were not suitable for this scheme. The small outlying schools unable to employ university educated teachers for its higher-classes would not qualify for the proposed higher grant, whereas, the larger schools, in more populous regions, would benefit to the detriment of the smaller schools. The GSL recommended that all schools should receive the higher grant proposed, and suggested that all students of higher-classes could be examined at the higher-class centres. The GSL also had concerns regarding the new qualification requirement:

There are many excellent and proved teachers in Highland schools, which it would be unjust and wrong to supersede by University Graduates of perhaps no experience. School Boards

are not likely to accept this uncertainty for their tried and successful men who may not be University Graduates, but have nevertheless produced valuable results. It appears to the Society only fair to suggest that any higher grade teacher, on the special report of the district Inspector, shall be competent to take charge of such higher-class schools.¹⁷⁶

The GSL proposed that the admission examination for Training Colleges should include Gaelic, believing that this would encourage Gaelic-speaking pupil-teachers to go on to become schoolteachers in their own right. It also recommended that Gaelic-speaking pupil-teachers, teaching infant grade, should be regarded as proper members of staff, paid for by the department and not, as was current, funded by the School Board at a cost of twenty to thirty pounds a year per pupil-teacher. It also recommended that schools in rural Perthshire should be eligible for the Gaelic grant.

Mr Trevelyan welcomed the recommendations and acknowledged that the department appeared to be operating a double policy. He stated that he was receptive to any proposals on teaching Gaelic-speaking children in Gaelic. Regarding the higher-class centres, his opinion was that, they were planned to provide 'something that might be called middle class education that Edinburgh enjoys to such profusion, and in other parts of the country with somewhat less profusion'. He ended the meeting by saying:

I think it would be the greatest cruelty towards children to do anything which would deprive them of the advantage of the English tongue. I fully recognise the importance of both the subjects which have been urged upon me, the importance of making this specific training as genuine a matter as can be, and I will see that any rate the special circumstances receive as liberal an interpretation as can be put upon these words, and likewise I will see whether there is any reason why the relaxation should

¹⁷⁶ *Highlander* 23 February 1878, p. 5

not be made at first. Secondly I will carefully inquire whether by any means in our power, under the limits of the expenditure allowed to us, we can improve the system under which children are taught their rudiments by means of the medium of the tongue which they understand so well.¹⁷⁷

In 1897, the GSL's Council decided that another attempt should be made to the Secretary for Scotland to address the subject of Gaelic instruction. To add more weight to the meeting it asked for input from all the Gaelic, Celtic and Highland societies in England and Scotland. A total of thirty-five societies gave their support to the GSL and delegates were either present for the deputation or were represented by the GSL.¹⁷⁸ It is worth noting that a large meeting of Highland societies was held in Glasgow to discuss whether or not it should be compulsory on the part of School Boards in the Highlands to provide Gaelic instruction in all public schools. It is possible that the meeting was a response of the GSL's letter, which was sent early February and responses were read at the 24 February meeting.

The most common concern from all the societies was the lack of enough Gaelic-speaking school inspectors; the very people who it was felt could help keep the Gaelic language alive. How could children's intelligence be properly assessed in Gaelic-speaking areas, especially in those counties

¹⁷⁷ *Oban Times*, 10 April 1886, p. 2

¹⁷⁸ The societies who had input were: the Highland Society of London, Inverness County Society of London, Ross and Cromarty Society in London, London Gaelic Athletic Association, Breadalbane Association of London, London Shinty Association, Celtic Society of Glasgow, Inverness County Society of Glasgow, Ross and Cromarty County Society of Glasgow, Sutherland Society of Glasgow, Highland Society of Glasgow, Glasgow Islay Society, Lewis Society of Glasgow, Lochaber Society of Glasgow, Mull Society of Glasgow, Glasgow University Ossian Society, Uist and Barra Society of Glasgow, Skye Society of Glasgow, Clan Societies: Cameron, MacDonald, Robertson, MacLeans, MacLeods, Menzies, MacKinnon and Clan MacKay Society, Gaelic Society of the City of Perth, Gaelic Society of Inverness, Gaelic Society of Liverpool, Scottish Association of Liverpool, and the Gaelic School Society of Edinburgh

where Gaelic was losing ground to English? They compared sending English-speaking inspectors to these regions 'to sending a non-French-speaking Englishman to examine French children who are being taught English by Englishmen who are not acquainted with the French language!' There was a consensus that southern-born and educated inspectors were 'biased against Highland sentiment and language'.¹⁷⁹ Their concerns shared by the GSL were used as the basis for the questions to be asked of Lord Balfour. The two secretaries William Martin and Alasdair Dunbar had worked hard to coordinate the correspondence and then deciding on what questions would be asked.

It had been decided that Colin Chisholm GSL President, Donald Murray and John Farquharson would be the voice of the Society at the meeting. However, at the actual meeting on the 7 March 1897, other members were present and spoke, including James Sutherland, Mackenzie Mackay, Rev Alexander Macrae, T.D. Macdonald and Rev Nigel MacNeil. The following account of the GSL's Advocacy Committee's meeting with the Secretary for Scotland was reported in the Annual Report:

Dh'fheith an comhlan so, leis a' morair Lathuirneach air an ceann, air Rùnaire na h-Alba air an 7mh là do'n Mhàirt, agus as leth a chomuinn thagair na h-uaislean Cailean Siseal (Ceann-suidhe), Domhnall Moirach, Iain MacFhearchair, agus William A. Martinn ann am briathran druighteach, an lathair a' Mhorair Balfour, cho feumail 's a bha e gu'm biodh barrachd cothroim is misneachchaidh air a thoirt do theagasg na Gàilig ann an sgoilean coitcheann na Gaidhealtachd. Ma fhreagairt rinn am Morair Balfour aideachadh air a cho-fhaireachdain fèin ris na beachdan a chuir an Còmhlán so fa chomhair, agus mar an ceudna air cho deònach 's a bha e air a' Ghailig a chuideachadh

¹⁷⁹ UCL GSL, W.A Martin's notes

far am b'urrainn e, ach a' comharrachadh a mach nach b'urrainn dòn àrd ùghdarras os ceann nan sgoilean a bhi 'g òrdachadh teagasg na Gailig an aghaidh toil an t-sluaigh agus gu'n robh teagasg na Gailig gu tric air a chumail air ais leis na pàrantan iad fèin.¹⁸⁰

This group, with Lord Lorne in the chair, met with the Secretary of State on the 7th day of March, and the gentlemen, Colin Chisholm (President), Donald Murray, John Farquharson and William Martin appealed on behalf of the Society in emphatic words in the presence of Lord Balfour, how necessary it was that more support and encouragement should be given to teaching Gaelic in public schools in the Highlands. In answer Lord Balfour acknowledged his sympathy towards the opinions presented to him by his group, and also how willing he was to help Gaelic where he could, but pointing out that the Education Department could not decree against the will of the people and that teaching Gaelic was frequently kept back by the parents themselves.

Yet, there must have been great disappointment, as the London Correspondent for the *Oban Times* wrote that Mr Balfour replied 'in terms that were anything but hopeful for the objects of the deputation':

He adopted Professor Blackie's occasional formula that he would be no party to the artificial cultivation of the Gaelic, which excluding the Bible, had no literature and no appropriate text-books for schools. And, after all, he contended that Highland School Boards did not want Gaelic taught; and that the people had the power in their own hands. He would exercise no compulsion in the matter.¹⁸¹

At the 17 March meeting of the GSL, a discussion followed the regular business as to the success of the deputation with Lord Balfour. The members were split in their opinion, and Alexander Mackenzie, the editor of the *Scottish Highlander*, who was visiting, gave his opinion. He believed that if the GSL was to succeed 'they needed the Highland parents to rise to their

¹⁸⁰ UCL GSL MB, Annual Report 1897

¹⁸¹ *Oban Times*, 13 March 1897, p. 5

side'.¹⁸² Another committee was appointed consisting of William Martin, Alasdair Dunbar, John Mackerchar and T.D. Macdonald to ascertain the best way for the society to proceed. The need to have the support of both parents and administration for success was addressed in the Annual Report:

Bidh a bhuidh a bhios aig a' ghluasad so, uime sin, an crochadh air a' cheum a bheir na Gaidheil fèin anns a' chuis, gu sonruichte na Bòrdan Sgoile 's a Ghaidhealtachd ann a bhi deanamh feum do no cothroman a tha aca cheana, agus feudaidh na buill a bhi cinnteach às gu'n dean ùr comhairle nis urrainn dhoibh ann a bhi dùsgadh gnìomh anns an rathad so.¹⁸³

The success that this movement has will depend on the step that the Gaels themselves will take in the matter, particularly the School Boards in the Highlands in use of the opportunity which they have already, and the members can be sure that a new Council will now do what they can to stimulate action in this way.

In 1889 the GSL commenced its Gaelic Education Fund, but it did not give up its role of advocating for improvements to Gaelic teaching in homeland schools. In April 1904, it sent a deputation to meet with Scottish Members of Parliament regarding amendments to the new 1904 Education Code.¹⁸⁴ This resulted from correspondence between the GSL and the Greenock Highland Society, regarding Gaelic teaching and the new Education Bill for Scotland. The president Dr John Matheson expressed concern that Gaelic instruction was being neglected and that he understood that the majority of teachers spoke only English. And if the children were

¹⁸² UCL GSL MB, March 17, 1897

¹⁸³ UCL GSL MB, Annual Report 1897

¹⁸⁴ UCL GSL Council MB, 21 April 1904: the deputation consisted of Dr John Matheson, J.M. MacKerchar, A.S. Mackenzie, Ian Mackenzie, W.C. Galbraith, Dr Farquhar Matheson, Donald Murray, W.C. Mackenzie, Ewen Cattenach, Rev A. Connell, William Grant, John Forbes, Rev Alexander Macrae and William Martin

taught Gaelic they would themselves supply teachers who could speak and teach the language. He continued:

No provision was made in the Scottish Code for the teaching of Gaelic, and this might be contrasted with the facilities that were given in Irish and Welsh schools for the teaching of the native language. The Government at present spent £30,000 a year on the training of elementary teachers, and he thought it would be a very moderate request that a certain share of this sum should be expended in educating teachers for Highland schools.¹⁸⁵

Dr Matheson also reported other suggestions that had been made to amend the Scottish Education Bill. A proposal had been made following the Educational Congress in Inverness that Gaelic should be recognised in the leaving certificate. However, on this matter, the SED said their hands were tied and that the subject would have to be raised by School Boards. The delegation reminded the MPs that the Irish bi-lingual programme was achieved through the support of the Irish members. Where was this kind of support from the Scottish MPs? The MPs responded that they recognised a need for Gaelic education. However, Mr Leveson-Gower went so far as to say that in his opinion Gaelic instruction 'would tie the people to the soil, and prevent them from going to other professions in the south'.¹⁸⁶

It was finally agreed that a committee be formed consisting of those MPs present to ascertain the practicality of amending the Bill and that the GSL should contact other Highland societies and meet with the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Lord Advocate. In May it decided to invite not only Gaelic and Highland societies but also Scottish nobility as well to form

¹⁸⁵ *Oban Times*, 30 April 1904, p. 5

¹⁸⁶ *Oban Times*, 30 April 1904, p. 5

the deputation. Three days prior to the appointed meeting the GSL decided which individuals should put the case forward, who were Dr John Matheson of the GSL, Dr Campbell of Oban, Mr. A.N. Nicolson from Greenock, Mr J.A. Mackay Dundee, Mr J.S. Ainsworth MP and Mr Robert Cameron MP.¹⁸⁷ That meeting took place on June 5, and the GSL's deputation were the Marquis of Tullibardine, Lord Lovat, Dr Patrick Mackay, Dr John Matheson and Miss Farquharson, chief of the society, representatives of kindred societies included the Greenock Highland Society, Dundee Highland Society, the Gaelic Society of Inverness, Gaelic Society of Glasgow, London Argyllshire Association, the London Inverness-shire Association, London Ross and Cromarty and Sutherland Association, London Perthshire Association. There were also several Scottish members of Parliament present.

Mr Graham Murray in response to the deputation informed them that all the matters raised were not concerned with legislation but administration. He felt that the SED had really done all it could by providing grants to school boards who used pupil-teachers to teach Gaelic. He dismissed the concern of not enough Gaelic-speaking teachers who spoke Gaelic, as in his opinion there were enough. The problem was that the teachers did not wish to remain in the Highlands. They wanted to improve their lot by moving to teaching posts in the urban towns and cities where Gaelic was not needed. He recommended that the deputation should wait and see what would happen in regard to teachers and school inspectors in the

¹⁸⁷ UCL GSL Council MB, 3 June 1904

newly expanded area School Boards. All the deputation could ask of the SED was that 'it shall not use its influence to stifle any attempt by the local authority to foster the provision of Gaelic-speaking teachers'. Neither would they go back on any provisions already made.¹⁸⁸

The response of the President of the GSL, Dr John Matheson, to the Secretary of State was published in several papers. He stated that:

Every child in the British Isles is entitled to good elementary education. Gaelic-speaking children are at a disadvantage in this respect, and one of the factors contributing to this is the neglect of the use of Gaelic as a medium of instruction. Education consists in stimulating the intelligence and promoting the capabilities, and that in the manner that best excites the interest of the child, and educationalists everywhere are agreed that can be done most effectively through the mother tongue. On the Continent of Europe, in countries with different nationalities and different languages, education is usually carried on in more than one language, except in the case of Germany where, for political reasons, unity of language is insisted on. In Belgium, for example, French and Flemish are used in the schools. In our own largest dependency—India—a Government resolution adopted last year brings out the principle we are contending for so clearly that it is worth quoting:—“Except in certain large towns as Madras, English should have no place in the scheme of primary education,” etc. This resolution is more drastic than anything we contend for, but if the principle is conceded, settlement of details becomes easy [...] Contrast the Scotch with the English, Welsh, and Irish Codes, and we see at a glance the disadvantages of Gaelic-speaking children in Scotland compared with Welsh and Irish children [...] The Welsh scheme, however, which at its inception encountered difficulties exactly similar to those we are now contending with respect to Scotch Gaelic, has been in operation for fifteen years, and I have made enquiries as to whether in the opinion of Welshmen competent to judge the concessions have been found detrimental to the interests of Welsh children, and whether in consequence there is a demand for their withdrawal. The reply is that bilingual teaching is in no way opposed to efficiency; on the contrary it is an established

¹⁸⁸ *Oban Times*, 11 June 1904, p. 5

fact, that success in life is promoted by the knowledge of two languages.¹⁸⁹

He expressed the fact that Gaelic was not being afforded the same status as Welsh and Irish had in their education codes. He also felt that Gaelic instruction would be placed on 'a better footing' if Gaelic-speaking teachers who had received training in Gaelic were appointed into Highland districts. Very often teachers were appointed who had no knowledge of the language at all. He suggested that a code might entertain the fact that the pupil and student should be able to understand each other. Teachers should not necessarily be appointed because of their knowledge of the language. He believed that more money should be applied to proper teaching of elementary Gaelic teachers than is currently being spent. He concluded by raising the subject of the objections to Gaelic instruction:

We may be told there is no demand for it among Gaelic-speaking parents. We admit there has been no organised demand, but we must take into consideration the fact that the districts where Gaelic is the principle language are thinly populated, and the people being few and poor have no opportunity of making their voices heard. But the indifference is more apparent than real. In my younger days parents deplored that there was no systematic teaching of the language, and whenever an opportunity offered such as the establishment of a Gaelic Sunday School Class advantage was immediately taken of it. The success of the scheme established by the London Gaelic Society proves that there is a real demand.¹⁹⁰

He dismissed the accusation of some Members of Parliament that the aim was to abolish the teaching of English in Highland districts arguing that surely the time spent learning French, where children were unlikely to

¹⁸⁹ *Oban Times*, 18 June 1904, p. 2

¹⁹⁰ *Oban Times*, 18 June 1904, p. 2

acquire a useful knowledge, would be more profitably spent for those children, through the proper teaching of Gaelic.¹⁹¹

The GSL was part of two further deputations, one in 1906 to the Secretary of State for Scotland regarding the training of Gaelic teachers. In 1908, ACG asked for support and a representative from the GSL to attend a deputation with Mr Struthers of the SED on 21 February 1908. Mr J. Macpherson, the Honorary Secretary, attended and reported that no ‘appreciable concession was made or is likely to be made [by the SED] until the matter is taken up by the people of the Highlands through the School Boards’.¹⁹²

The Gaelic Education Fund

In 1889 the GSL realised that if it wanted improvements in Gaelic instruction in homeland schools, it would have to do it by itself; and the Society’s ‘Gaelic Education Scheme’ was born. The fund would be raised by an annual concert and the proceeds would buy Gaelic textbooks for schools with additional prize books to the best scholars. Every year the number of applications for books increased, and to accommodate the continued draw on its fund, the GSL expanded its funding base in 1898 by receiving support from patrons, among whom HRH Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, headed the list of Scottish nobility.

In February 1900, the GSL decided that instead of awarding book prizes to the dux scholars, that every student, who passed the Gaelic

¹⁹¹ *Oban Times*, 18 June 1904, p. 2

¹⁹² UCL GSL Council MB, 19 March 1908

examination would receive a prize book. It was at this meeting that Donald MacGillivray, the Honorary Secretary, reported on the capitation grant which the Highland Education Trust was now awarding to teachers; he recommended that the GSL should consider such a measure, which might provide more success to the Society's goal than just awarding book prizes. The Highland Education Trust had been established from the accumulated funds of the SSPCK in 1889, and it provided a capitation grant for Standard V pupils.¹⁹³ The Secretary's proposed capitation grant would add weight to the Trust's scheme and encourage Gaelic instruction. The Secretary was asked to create such a scheme and present it to Council.¹⁹⁴

However, it was not until June 1901 that MacGillivray made his presentation for a scheme for 'systematic encouragement' of teachers by means of capitation grants and for students, medals. The scheme was well received and the Council decided to have it printed and circulated to all GSL members. Prior to this, in the late spring of 1901, the Council put into action a plan, which it first mused over in 1899, and sent a letter:

to every schoolmaster throughout the Highlands enquiring whether Gaelic was being taught and offering prizes as an encouragement on the good work. Replies were received from a great number of schools, and the Council is glad to report that Gaelic is now being taught in at least fifty-eight schools in the Highlands and to over 1500 children. Gaelic books to the number 570 have been sent to these schools as prizes a few English books being included when specifically asked for, together with 200 text books.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ John Percival Day, *Public Administration in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (London: ULP, 1918), p. 163

¹⁹⁴ UCL GSL Council MB, 13 February 1900

¹⁹⁵ *Oban Times*, 11 January 1902, p. 2



Comunn na Gaidhlig ann an Lunnainn.

Steidhichte 1777.

TALLA A' CHOMUINN ALBANNAICH, CUIRT
NA COERA, SRAID FLEET, E.C.

189.....

Thugadh an duais so do

John McPherson

Sgoil

Witchamare

air son foghlaim na Gailig.

John Mac Hugh

Ceannard.

Adam Dugal

Ceann-suidhe.

William McPherson

ùnaire.

Figure 3 Gaelic Society of London Book Prize label

The responses were dealt with by the appointment of a committee consisting of Ewan Cattenach, William Galbraith and William Martin; with the addition of the Treasurer and Secretary these gentlemen were to make a selection of suitable books.¹⁹⁶ However, the applications for books resulted in a further £25 being added to the budgeted £50, as the response was greater than the Society had expected. The Council also decided to delay its proposed capitation grant because of lack of money and decided to write to other Highland and Scottish societies 'with a view of consolidating the efforts now being made for the encouragement of the teaching of Gaelic'.¹⁹⁷ It wrote to these societies in Scotland, England and the British Empire on 15 January 1902. Although aware that many of these societies were encouraging Gaelic education in various ways, it needed their support. It wrote:

The question of the encouragement of the systematic teaching of the Gaelic language in the schools of the Highlands has for a number of years been engaging the attention of this Society, and it has been our custom, from year to year, to send text-books and prize books to various schools.

In the early part of last year steps were taken to ascertain in how many schools throughout the Highlands Gaelic is being taught, with the result that applications for aid were received from no less than fifty-eight, the number of pupils studying the language being over one thousand five hundred.

To these schools we sent about 200 textbooks and 570 Gaelic prize books. It was our intention, in addition to this to make a capitation grant to the schoolmasters for every child in one or more of junior standards, who should pass an examination in elementary Gaelic, in the same way as it is done by the Governors of the Highland Trust in respect of Standard V, but the funds at our disposal were not sufficient for that purpose.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ UCL GSL Council MB, 15 June 1901

¹⁹⁷ UCL GSL Council MB, 21 November 1901

¹⁹⁸ Castle, pp. 39-40; 1902 Annual Grand Scottish Concert Programme, though not as a letter

A special meeting of Council was held on 24 July 1902 to make plans for the GSL's scheme. The GSL hoped its scheme would provide both encouragement and incentive for schoolteachers to teach Gaelic. To achieve this, the GSL resolved,

To pay a grant of half-a-crown per year in respect of all scholars in Standard IV who pass a prescribed examination in Gaelic—in Highland schools—and that a similar grant be given, in the Council's discretion to classes in town schools where the Standard IV qualification would not apply.¹⁹⁹

The Trust for Education in the Highlands would be asked to administer the examinations. It also decided that:

In the discretion of the Council text-books be supplied to schools where Gaelic classes are carried on or intended to be carried on, it being understood that the property in the books is vested in the school to which they are granted. [...] that the Council continue to grant, in their discretion, book prizes to the pupils who pass an approved examination in Gaelic.²⁰⁰

The GSL's Council also decided to award annually a silver medal to the dux Gaelic scholar in each of the following counties: Aberdeen, Argyll, Arran and Bute, Caithness, Forfar, Inverness, Moray, Perth, Ross and Cromarty, and Sutherland.

Donations were received from many societies and also from colleagues and friends of the GSL members through the aid of 'collecting sheets'. The Trust for Highland Education agreed to 'undertake the examination of pupils in Standard IV when conducting their own examinations for their own Gaelic grant'.²⁰¹ In 1902 the GSL had

¹⁹⁹ UCL GSL Council MB, 24 July 1902

²⁰⁰ UCL GSL Council MB, 24 July 1902

²⁰¹ UCL GSL, Council MB, 11 December 1902

approximately £480 and decided to start the grants the following year and to encourage donations, it announced that any contributions would be acknowledged in several newspapers and periodicals.²⁰²

In 1904 it awarded capitation grants to fifty-four schools for 730 pupils, in 1905 this had risen to sixty schools and 730 pupils.²⁰³ The GSL was also considering introducing a competition for pupil-teachers 'who as a class are deserving of every encouragement'.²⁰⁴ In 1907 sixty-three schools applied for grants with the 995 pupils passing Gaelic Standard IV.

Because of the capitation grants awarded by the GSL and the Highland Trust for Education, many teachers taught Gaelic classes outside the ordinary timetable. These grants provided an impetus for teaching Gaelic and if they had not been established many children would not have received instruction of their native language. Many hundreds of children benefited through the Gaelic Education Scheme. The GSL struggled to maintain its level of support essentially by its own means, as the number of schools receiving the capitation grant increased. It did receive assistance from some of the London Scottish societies. It did seek the assistance of An Comunn Gàidhealach without success (see pp. 170-1) and from 1909 it was the only agency providing financial encouragement to maintain Gaelic education when the Highland Education Trust decided to withdraw its capitation grants in favour of bursaries for higher education.²⁰⁵ The Gaelic Education Fund

²⁰² *14th Annual Grand Scottish Concert Programme* (1902), p. 35

²⁰³ *Oban Times*, 3 February 1906, p. 8

²⁰⁴ *Oban Times*, 3 February 1909, p. 8

²⁰⁵ *Oban Times*, 24 May 1909, p. 5

dried up when the Annual Concerts could no longer be held because of the Great War and the GSL lost its main source of income.

It was not only schoolteachers who benefited from this trust and the generosity of the GSL. For it provided funds to other groups who provided Gaelic classes. In 1903 it gave a donation of £5 to the Provost of Inverness in support of the Gaelic classes he ran, and another £5 was donated to Provost Macrae of Dingwall for his Gaelic class.²⁰⁶ The Braemar Gaelic Association received several grants from the GSL the first being given in 1904.²⁰⁷

Education in London

The London Gaels were not the first Highland community to consider the education of Highland children in their new urban environment. The Highland Society of Glasgow (HSG), established in 1727 was the first philanthropic society to do so. Its members were Highlanders by birth or descent; most were from the merchant and manufacturing classes. Its main aim was to provide an education, to develop trade skills and to anglicise the great number of fellow Highlanders' children who 'though found to be of good genius, were yet lost for want of education'. In this way they would become useful members of Glaswegian society.²⁰⁸ It may have acted initially as a friendly society by providing education for children of its own members,²⁰⁹ and most of the funds for the schools came from the profits of

²⁰⁶ UCL GSL Council MB, 12 March 1903

²⁰⁷ UCL GSL Council MB, 25 February 1904

²⁰⁸ Charles Withers, *Urban Highlanders* (Phantassie: Tuckwell Press, 1998), pp. 185-7

²⁰⁹ MacKenzie, pp. 272-73

the Black Bull Hotel, which the Society owned.²¹⁰ These schools were closely linked with the Gaelic churches in the city, but it would appear that English and not Gaelic was taught at these schools, as Gaelic was for use at home. Many children were successfully educated at these schools until the Education (Scotland) Act (1872), gave control of all schools to the Government.

The earliest Scottish society in London was the Scottish Corporation (SC incorporated in 1665). It was formed by a group of Scotsmen, whose aim was to provide help for 'virtuous and deserving Scottish poor' who had no parochial settlement in England. The Letters Patent state several objects, including the establishment of a school, for the education and employment of the Scottish poor, resident in London. Nothing was done to fulfil this object until the early nineteenth century when the desire of the Governors to bring this to fruition was expressed:

By means of a School, they hope to contribute to moral and religious improvement of those who, otherwise growing up in habits of ignorance, idleness, and vice, might finally become a burden or a bane to society. And they may, under Divine Providence, lay the Foundation among the rising generation of that strict regard to religion and the laws: that persevering spirit of honest industry in business, and that virtuous independence of mind, for which the Peasantry of Scotland have been so highly and deservedly celebrated. To effect this great design, however, the finances of the Institution are still incompetent. But in a cause so truly patriotic, and so permanently beneficial, the intentions of the Committee, they trust, need only be stated to

²¹⁰ Charles Withers, 'Class, culture and migrant identity: Gaelic Highlanders in urban Scotland', in *Urbanizing Britain: Essays on class and community in the nineteenth century*, ed. by Gerry Kerns and Charles Withers (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), p. 75

the Public, in order to receive that encouragement, which they now earnestly solicit and require.²¹¹

The concern shown by the SC is similar to that of the HSG. It wanted to assist the young by giving them a greater chance in life. However, the Corporation also saw the importance of retaining a sense of 'Scottishness', which Robert Lobban feels in general helped preserve a sense of identity among the Scots and prevented their assimilation into other cultures.²¹²

The HSL and the Caledonian Asylum

However, when the time was right to emulate the Glasgow Gaels and establish a school in London there was no unity of venture. For the SC and the HSL planned individually for their own school. The Corporation had raised the matter in 1801 but did not take any action until 1810.²¹³ It is unknown if the HSL's members were aware of the SC's plans, but there was certainly some sharing of membership. However the HSL was first off the mark, and this action appears to have brought on the response from the SC that it was 'our idea', what followed can only be described as a battle of 'one-up-man-ship' in the attempt to woo the same individuals for subscriptions.

John Macarthur was chairman of the HSL's committee, whose mandate was to recommend schemes that might revitalise the Society. He presented the committee's report on 27 February 1808. The committee

²¹¹ *A Short Statement of the Nature, Objects, & Proceedings of the Scottish Hospital in London*, p. 3

²¹² Lobban, p. iv

²¹³ Taylor, p. 91

recognised the importance of the social function of the HSL and suggested that some major form of charity and benevolence should be considered. Macarthur proposed incorporation of the HSL a necessity, stating that both the HSS and the SC were incorporated, and in addition they used their funds for more altruistic causes. He therefore suggested six objects that the committee believed would provide both praise and funds. Two of those objects were the establishment of a Gaelic school and chapel. These two could be combined and achieved at the same time. The school would be named the Caledonian Asylum (CA) or 'Gaelic School', and Macarthur reminded everyone present that:

The Welsh and the Irish have their Schools in London and it has frequently excited surprise, that the Scotch, who are certainly not less numerous, and not less Zealous for the promotion of learning and morality, than their Welsh or Irish brethren, should be without a similar Establishment.²¹⁴

The SC used the very same argument in its second appeal for its school in 1812:

They are satisfied, that this appeal to the feelings of their country will not be in vain; that while IRELAND and WALES can boast respectively of their Charity Schools in the Metropolis, SCOTLAND will no longer be waiting in affording protection and education to the destitute children of her industrial Poor residents in London.²¹⁵

However, it was the HSL and not the Scottish Corporation that won the day and the founding of a school. The CA was according to the original prospectus issued by the HSL for 'the maintenance and education of the children of Scottish sailors, soldiers and mariners to be instituted under the

²¹⁴ NLS 268/24, p. 168

²¹⁵ *A short Statement . . . of the Scottish Hospital in London*, p. 3

auspices of the Highland Societies of London and Scotland'.²¹⁶ The boys should

be taught reading in Gaelic and English, Writing and Arithmetic; and [...] such additional instruction as to qualify them for the Royal Navy, Merchant's Service, or with the Fisheries, as well as for the trades connected with a sea faring life; such as Ship's Carpenters, Rope-spinners, Sail-makers, Net-makers, Coopers && to any of which Occupation, they should, from time to time be sent, when they have made their selection and obtained a suitable Age for that purpose. Such of the Boys as should possess the Military Ardour of their forefathers, might have the preparatory education to fit them for the Royal Military Asylum at Chelsea, or eventually might be recommended to the patronage of His Royal Highness the Commander in Chief.

The System of Education at this Asylum might be similar to that of Mr Lancaster's, which has met with general approbation, and has been adapted at the Royal Military Asylum at Chelsea.²¹⁷

The original HSL plan of establishing a Gaelic chapel with the Caledonian Asylum echoed to some extent that of the HSG. However, its plan was different, as it was to be one school, not several and the intake limited to children whose fathers served in the armed forces. Moreover, it would eventually be incorporated as an independent body governed by its subscribers, quite separate from its parent the HSL. The possibility of establishing another Asylum in Scotland was also considered.

Although first off the mark the HSL had to contend with the Scottish Corporation's own ambitions for a school, and it therefore modified its original prospectus. There would now be two categories of admission, boarders and day scholars, both would receive clothing. Those children whose Scottish parents were not entitled to Parochial Education or relief

²¹⁶ BM CA MB 1808-1815, p. 1

²¹⁷ NLS 268.24, pp. 168-9

would join the orphans and children from military families. Originally day scholars would be children whose parents had adequate housing, but this was expanded

for those children of such parents who from the spirit of National pride or independence might be desirous of giving to their Children the advantages of a public Seminary without being considered Paupers and who might be enabled to pay a part altho' not the whole expence of the education'.²¹⁸

Through these measures the HSL's committee addressed the objections raised by HRH the Duke of Sussex, the HSL's president, who expressed concern that by limiting admission to the children of Navy and Army personnel, it would cause parents and relatives to come to London who 'would become burdensome or exposed to a dissolute life and prostitution'.²¹⁹ Other members of the Royal Family expressed the concern that 'the whole object of the Caledonian Asylum was an interference with the public Institutions'.²²⁰

By 1810 the fight between the HSL and SC reached fever pitch when the Prince of Wales agreed to be Patron of the SC's still to be established school, and the SC boasted that in the City of London alone it had gathered subscriptions totalling £10,000. The SC's plan was to establish district day schools in London and Westminster where the children of destitute 'Scotch' parents would be educated and would receive a suit of clothes annually. Essentially it was a replication of the Welsh and Irish schools in London, and also the schools of the HSG.

²¹⁸ BM CA MB 1808-1815, p. 29

²¹⁹ BM CA MB 1808-1815, p. 29

²²⁰ BM CA MB 1808-1815, p. 29

Extracts from the Charters of the SC were examined to ascertain whether or not a school could be established and legal opinion was sought. The HSL then appointed a committee, including Sir John Sinclair and John Macarthur to meet with the President and Vice President of the SC. They were to promote the CA and to ask for the Scottish Corporation's cooperation with the HSL 'in establishing an Institution so useful in itself founded on such human principles and likely to prove so creditable to Scotland'.²²¹

In 1813 the CA committee made enquiries to the public institutions, which the Royal Family felt were 'interfered with' by the CA. It discovered that the CA could not infringe on their charity; in fact, it would be of great assistance to them. The Royal Military Asylum of Chelsea could only accept one out of twenty applicants and Highland children were applying in the ratio of three to one. The Royal Naval Asylum in Greenwich were currently building to increase its intake by up to one thousand, but stated that it 'had more applicants on the lists than could be admitted in four years'. Therefore, it was evident that the CA would not be 'exciting jealousy or occasioning interference with the Royal Military Asylum and the Naval Asylum'.

In January 1814, it applied to the Government for a grant of land in London for the CA. It believed such a grant might encourage individuals to subscribe. It was still concerned with a lack of real support. In June all the members of the CA committee resigned, its convenor Andrew Robertson, the

²²¹ BM CA MB 1808-1815, p. 30

portrait miniaturist, expressed the shared feeling that a committee of higher rank might have had better success, stating that:

It has long been a subject of deep regret in this enlightened age when the value of Education is so universally felt, when all descriptions of People, the natives of every particular country resident in London, have establishments for the education of their Poor—that no Institution has yet been found for the Children of indigent Scotsmen; as if on a subject so important Scotchmen alone were indifferent and forgetful of the blessings afforded them in their own Country by a matchless system of Public Education, were unwilling to contribute towards bestowing on the families of their indigent but industrious Brethren in the Metropolis, those advantages to which they owe their own advancement in life.²²²

The HSL's proposal of the CA was an attempt to remove this stigma, but it looked as if it would not be successful. Andrew Robertson expressed the hope that it would not 'be regretted that its establishment was ever proposed by the Highland Society'.

However, prior to this juncture and before his departure to North America in 1810, Gilbert Salton, suggested, that he should take copies of the prospectus and subscription books for the Caledonian Asylum. He had been Honorary Secretary of the HSL, and resigned when he was appointed by the Lords' Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasurer to inquire 'into Abuses connected with the Custom in the Colonies'.²²³ He would distribute the prospectus among the Scots in the Colonies and he hoped to rally support and enthusiasm for the project. However, the SC was first off the post, and contributions for its school had already been promised, so Salton met with little initial success.

²²² BM CA MB 1808-1815, p. 82

²²³ NLS 268/25, p. 102

The SC had received considerable subscriptions for its planned district schools, but James Dobie, secretary to that institution informed the HSL that as a great many schools had been established throughout London, it was doubtful if the SC would act on its plan. He indicated that an application to the SC requesting that sum of money for the CA might prove successful once the CA was established. In December 1814 it was decided that:

it was necessary to open up a Communication with the Scotch Corporation in order to ascertain how far it may be considered with their views that the subscriptions raised for a similar purpose by that Institution together with the sums remitted from abroad should be united with that of the Caledonian Asylum.²²⁴

The HSL's President, the Duke of Kent and Strathearn, had informed the society that he would use his influence on the President of the SC, his brother the Duke of Clarence and St Andrews. However, the SC used the money to assist seven of the Scottish churches in London, and paid school fees of children attending the church school at Crown Court Church of Scotland. Some of the money went for clothing and passage for London Scottish families migrating to Canada in the first years of the twentieth century. It would appear that the only benefit to the CA by the SC was when it paid the school fees for one scholar to attend the CA in 1878.²²⁵

It was not until the end of 1814 that money started to come in from North America and the West Indies for the CA. Gilbert Salton had succeeded beyond all hope in his task of gaining subscriptions. In January 1815, one of the last tasks of the CA committee was to draw up the rules and regulations

²²⁴ NLS 268/26, p. 8

²²⁵ Taylor, pp. 92-5

for the Asylum. It also set down the system by which children would be educated; it was to be the same as the other Asylums in Chelsea and Greenwich, in addition:

They will be completely instructed and brought up to Handicraft Trades, so that when they leave the Caledonian Asylum, they will enter into the World, not as Apprentices, but as experienced Workmen. A part of their Earnings will be set aside to be paid to them on that occasion; which being taken from the respective proceeds of their industry, shall belong to them as a matter of right; an Account being kept of the Earnings of every Individual. Scotland has been distinguished for Men of Genius who have risen from humble life—a small Fund will also be reserved out of the earnings of the Apprentices, in order that, when extraordinary Talent shall appear, the means may not be wanting to assist its development. This peculiar Fund will probably be enriched by Voluntary Contributions, and the Caledonian Asylum will become not only a refuge for Destitute Children, but a nursery for friendless Genius.²²⁶

On the 21 January 1815, the HSL appointed a separate Management Board for the CA, who would guide the CA through incorporation and independence. The President was the Duke of Kent and Strathearn, with the Duke of Montrose, the Earl of Breadalbane, Viscount Melville and Sir Archibald MacDonal as Vice-presidents. Her Majesty the Queen, plus all the Princesses, the Princess Charlotte of Wales, the Duchess of York and the Dukes of York and Sussex became Patrons. The Marchioness of Stafford and the Countess of Breadalbane agreed to lead other ladies in support of the institution.²²⁷

The official ceremony for the handover of books and papers was held 4 February 1815. The subscribers would now manage the affairs of the

²²⁶ BM, CA MB 1815-1830, pp. 151-2

²²⁷ NLS 268/26, pp. 25-6

CA. The Duke of Kent chaired this special meeting and made some observations regarding how such an institution for Scottish children was established in London. He then informed those present that religious toleration would be practised at the CA. The children accepted would come from various denominations of the Christian religion and as:

the object being to bring up the children of the Soldier and Sailor and of those who have no means of parochial assistance, in the manner that will best afford them that education which is most congenial and concordant with the religious principles of their fathers. I will venture to say, that there are none here who will think, that if we were not to admit a Child because he is a Catholic, or a Dissenter, a Burgher or an Anhburger, and, in short, if we were to make any exception of that kind we could be at once destroying the essence, the object, and as it were, the main spring on which the Caledonian Asylum is to be founded and for which we hold out to the world as an Institution worthy of support.²²⁸

He continued:

The great object in this Institution will be, to instruct the children in the principles of morality and virtue, and in the religious sentiments and opinions in which people of all religious persuasions agree, or such principles as will teach them respect and reverence to their Creator and loyalty to their Sovereign, but certainly not such a system of Education, as to prevent anyone of the Children from following that peculiar religious tenet professed by his parent when living.²²⁹

However, from what appeared to be a glorious beginning, the victory of the Battle of Waterloo was to have its effects on the institution. When the national Waterloo subscription was opened a loss in subscriptions occurred, due to the decision to suspend its own fundraising so as not to appear as a rival to the national fund. This resulted in a scaling down of the Asylum plans, so much so that it would not be 'opened on such a scale of

²²⁸ BM CA MB 1815-1830, p. 159

²²⁹ BM CA MB 1815-1830, p. 159

liberality as its founders were warranted to hope by the great support which it at first met with'.²³⁰ A decision was made to appeal to the Waterloo Committee for a portion of its subscriptions, but if the application was forwarded it would appear it received no success.

Although the plan for the Asylum had been magnificent, with a building estimated at £5000, when the school actually opened in 1819 it was in the house adjoining the Gaelic Chapel. However, with the passage of time, financial matters improved, in 1826 a new institution was built at Copenhagen Fields, the number of boys educated increased, but it was not until 1844 that girls were accepted for admission.

To reinforce their cultural identity the children were to be uniformly dressed in Royal Stuart tartan, the girls in dresses, the boys in kilts. The boys were taught skills which would adapt them for apprenticeship in one of the trades, or clerks, or the militia, or for more menial labour. The girls were trained in needlework and all aspects of housekeeping such as cleaning, cooking and laundry to render them fit for going into service. The boys were taught to play bagpipes and they also had their own strip of garden to tend and bought seeds from their own funds.²³¹

The HSL eventually succeeded in its long stated-desire of an Asylum of Gaelic school, and chapel. Yet, it is unclear if the HSL's desire for Gaelic to be taught was ever put into practice. Certainly the first three incumbent Secretary and Superintendents of the CA were fluent Gaelic

²³⁰ NAS GD224/653/2/4, John Galt to Buccleuch, 26 September 1815

²³¹ *London Scotsman*, 13 June 1868, pp. 551-2

speakers. They were Rev James Boyd, Rev Allan MacNaughton, and Rev John Lees. The fact that the HSL sent copies of its Gaelic version of the Poems of Ossian to the CA, also provides an indicator that Gaelic was taught. It is therefore possible that until Rev Lees' resignation in 1844, a year after the Disruption, Gaelic may very well have been taught. Charles Mackay LLD, the journalist and poet and author of a Gaelic etymology was a student of the CA. He was admitted in 1822 when he was ten years old. His father had been invalided out of the Royal Artillery with malaria and his father's friend Andrew Robertson, a member of the HSL and a director of the CA, secured the admission. It is possible that Mackay learnt his Gaelic at the CA.

However, the CA was not teaching Gaelic by 1868, which fact is attested in the *London Scotsman* of that year, when J.C. Daniel, Secretary of the CA wrote a rebuttal to a vitriolic attack on both the CA and the SC. In his letter he clearly states that 'the children receive a sound English education'.²³² If the CA did teach Gaelic, and I think it did, it was probably discontinued when the language was no longer needed in London. By 1883, the HSL exhibited its opinion that there was no usefulness in learning Gaelic in London when it refused financial assistance for Gaelic classes to be taught at the City of London College.

The secession from the Church of Scotland in 1843, not only affected Scotland; its effects were felt in England and other parts of the world. Most of the Presbyterian churches in London also seceded, and the CA did not escape the turmoil that followed it, with dissent among the

²³² *London Scotsman*, 11 July 1868, pp. 10-11

directors and governors. The Duke of Buccleuch was President at the time of Rev Lees' departure; Buccleuch, a member of the established church, made it very clear to the directors which way they should precede:

This Institution has from its commencement been in connection with the established Church of Scotland; as a public Institution it should so continue, that was the intention of the Founders, that is a desire of a very large majority of the present supporters of the Asylum—I desire to state distinctly that neither as a President nor as a subscriber towards its funds will I consent that the connection of the Caledonian Asylum with the established Church of Scotland shall be severed, or in any way impaired.²³³

The matter was discussed at two general courts,²³⁴ and although there was opposition to the Duke's views, in the end he had his way, which had consequences. A writing and whispering campaign ensued, and staff were dismissed and replaced by others who would sign the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland. The Scots (Church of Scotland) Presbytery in London had concerns about the children attending a Free Chapel, the Regent Square Church and proposed a new church close to the CA at Copenhagen Fields.²³⁵ The Scots Presbytery was pushed to move quickly when the directors decided that the children could attend a Church of England congregation if a Church of Scotland congregation was not available.²³⁶ It bought a church for £1000 in Holloway, and named it after the Asylum, the Caledonian Church, services commenced in January 1847, and

²³³ NAS GD224/501/2, 12 July 1844

²³⁴ *Times*, 6 August 1844, p. 6; *Times*, 6 September 1844, p. 6

²³⁵ NAS GD224/501/2, 8 March 1845

²³⁶ NAS GD224/501/2, 8 May 1846

the children were 'in a place near enough to be attended in all kinds of weather, and yet an agreeable walking distance from the Asylum'.²³⁷

The divisions caused by the Disruption caused financial distress and to help alleviate it a petition was presented to the Court of Chancery for the dividends from the Gaelic Chapel Fund. However, this was no more than a pittance of what was needed. Alexander Simpson, one of the treasurers wrote to Buccleuch in 1849 that:

In consequence of the introduction of the Church question; the whole of that class of subscribers, who were not members of the established Church, have withdrawn from the charity, and it is perfectly clear that the established church party cannot sustain the charity by themselves.²³⁸

Simpson asked Buccleuch to provide leadership and not take part in the religious controversy that was once again being introduced into the directors' meetings. Common ground had to be found if the Asylum was to succeed. By 1853 the CA had eaten into its capital investment, and expenses were far greater than its income. The CA had in real terms only enough money to support about 34 children. However, the committee appointed to find the best way out of the situation believed that the CA could maintain a total of 60 children, 40 boys and twenty girls, with reduced staff and salaries. By 1853 although draconian measures had to be taken to secure its future, there were signs that donations were increasing, the rift appeared to be healing. The committee believed that:

In the course of a few years the Institution will not merely be in a condition to maintain Sixty, Eighty, or a Hundred children, but

²³⁷ NAS GD224/511/25, 11 October 1847

²³⁸ NAS GD224/501/2, 2 August 1849

that the hopeful expectations of our predecessors may be fully realised, and that we may have the pleasure of seeing the Two Hundred children supported there which the present building is adapted to accommodate.²³⁹

The religious question was brought to the front again in 1868 when the Scotch Parochial Schools Act (1861) abolished the signing of the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland. The subject was again hotly debated, yet there were no major divisions this time; what had happened before must have still been fresh in the memories of many of the directors. The byelaw was retained; all schoolmasters, mistresses, the chaplain and the matron were 'to belong exclusively to the Established Church of Scotland'.²⁴⁰

In 1852 the CA's name was changed to Royal Caledonian Schools to acknowledge its Royal patronage; and in 1898 a new school was built again in the country at Bushey with an accompanying Church of Scotland. In 1947, boarders were kept who attended local schools, which continued until 1995. It now operates as an Educational Trust.

The Gaelic Society of London

The GSL also supported the CA by donating money on a yearly basis. However, it was also involved in teaching Gaelic to its members or others resident in London who were interested in learning the language. The GSL has a manuscript copy of lessons for teaching the Gaelic language written by William Menzies. This may have been used for giving lessons to individuals who wanted to learn or improve their skills during Menzies' membership. The earliest extant records of lessons were of those given to the

²³⁹ *Royal Caledonian Asylum Report*, 1853

²⁴⁰ *London Scotsman*, March 28, 1868, pp. 302-3

Chief, the Duke of Aboyne, who was instructed by Donald Macpherson, the Gaelic secretary. In 1867 the rule regarding the Gaelic language was expanded and an accommodation was made that 'none [shall] be eligible as members, who cannot speak the language, except such as may be desirous to improve their knowledge of it.'²⁴¹ The amended rules were not accepted by membership until 1872, and one may assume that Gaelic language classes may have taken place then for individuals who wanted to learn the language, as is noted in the *London Scotsman* in 1869.²⁴²

Several members of the GSL taught Gaelic classes in London independent of the Society. In 1881 the Gaelic Secretary, Donald Campbell, announced that he was going to start giving Gaelic lessons to young men and women in the west of London. In fact, he had given his first lesson that very day.²⁴³ Rev Nigel MacNeil continued Gaelic instruction until 1889 and then William Gillies from 1890.²⁴⁴ The introduction of songs into William Gillies' classes by another GSL member, Dr Cameron Gillies, resulted in the formation of the London Gaelic Choir.

It was not until October 1901 that the GSL decided to put the Gaelic classes on a more secure footing under its auspices and paid the rent for the room for the classes. William Gillies had agreed to teach the elementary section and John G MacKay the advanced section.²⁴⁵ The London Gaelic Choir also became affiliated with the GSL. However, in January 1908 the

²⁴¹ UCL GSL MB, 1867-1869

²⁴² *London Scotsman* 14 March 1868, p. 247

²⁴³ UCL GSL MB, 9 February 1881

²⁴⁴ Gillies (1990), p. 513

²⁴⁵ UCL GSL Council MB, 17 October 1901

London Gaelic Choir seceded from the GSL, and in the late 1900s took over the language classes and maintained them until 1914. Other Scottish societies in London also offered Gaelic classes. One of them was Clann na h-Alba, who advertised its classes in the programme for the GSL's Annual Concert for 1911.

Conclusion

The evidence presented makes it quite clear that both the GSL and the HSL played a significant role in furthering Gaelic education in the homeland. Both societies held great hope for Gaelic education, but that hope was peppered with frustrations and difficulties which would have seemed to the faint-hearted impenetrable. Yet it is truly amazing that both the HSL and GSL worked through the various frustrations and kept their eye on the goal. For both of them the justification for the Celtic Chair was the need for Gaelic language teaching; yet that goal was nowhere near realisation until the 1870s. That was eighty-four years after the HSL first suggested a Gaelic professorship, and forty years after the GSL joined the campaign. The 1870s saw a resurgence of interest in the Gaelic language and literature, coupled with social and political factors; and the energies of John Stuart Blackie. Without him, the Celtic Chair may have remained just a dream and not a reality. However without the continued actions of both the HSL and the GSL, there may not have been even the dream for Blackie to fulfil.

From the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the GSL in particular, provided leadership for Gaelic teaching in homeland schools. It was not satisfied with either the Argyll

Commission or the subsequent Education Act of 1872. It rallied other Highland and Gaelic societies in Scotland and England. It organised lobby groups to see Members of Parliament, the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Lord Advocate. However, the Government continually passed the buck, blaming either the Highland people themselves or the School Boards for neglecting Gaelic. What gains were made were small. In the end the GSL decided to take action into its own hands. In 1889 it started its Gaelic Education Scheme sourced by an annual concert, to provide encouragement to both teachers and students by Gaelic textbooks and prize books. In 1902 it began its capitation grant of a half-crown to teachers for each pupil who passed a Gaelic Standard IV examination, administered by the Highland Education Trust. It never wavered in its goal to help keep Gaelic alive in the homeland.

Both societies were also involved in Gaelic education in London. The HSL established the Caledonian Asylum for orphaned children or children of Scottish military personnel. It was a huge undertaking and at times looked as if it would fail. It was originally to be a Gaelic school, but although Gaelic was probably taught in the early years, it soon became an English school, although Highland cultural identity was kept to the fore, with the kilt for the boys, tartan dresses for the girls, Highland piping and dancing. The GSL gave Gaelic classes for its members and other individuals who either wanted to learn the language or improve their skills.

HOMELAND DEVELOPMENT AND ASSISTANCE

Introduction

The Minutes of both societies clearly illustrate that the London Gaels attempted through various measures to assist the lives of those in the homeland. The HSL during its early years demonstrated its desire to assist those in the Highlands and Islands by improvement of their life-style in a practical way. It shared the 'improvers'' belief that such development would discourage emigration and the effects of clearance.

In 1786, the HSL established the British Fisheries Society.²⁴⁶ The HSL's role in this enterprise has not been examined adequately. Jean Dunlop and E.D. Hyde have both written about the British Fisheries Society.²⁴⁷ However, neither of them has made use of the HSL's records, as their bibliographies contain only Sir John Sinclair's *An Account of the Highland Society from its establishment in May 1778 to the commencement of the Year 1813*. Therefore, a thorough assessment of the role played by the HSL in the establishment of the British Fisheries Society will be undertaken.

The HSL also spoke out on behalf of the small distillers whose lives were affected by changes in the Distilling Laws. These laws affected both

²⁴⁶ British Fisheries Society was the commonly used name of the society. In its Letters Patent, its appellation was 'The British Society for extending the Fisheries and improving the Sea Coasts of this Kingdom'. The name was changed officially to 'The British Fisheries Society' in 1844 at the time of its re-incorporation.

²⁴⁷ Jean Dunlop, *The British Fisheries Society 1786-1893* (Edinburgh: Donald, 1978) and E.D. Hyde, 'The British Fisheries Society: Its Settlement and the Scottish Fisheries 1750-1850' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Strathclyde, 1973)

the landowner and tenant, and many of the landlords were HSL members. Both the HSL and the GSL gave financial assistance during times of distress in the Highlands and Islands. From its inception, the HSL had provided assistance and passage to returning soldiers and sailors who passed through London.

In contrast, the GSL did not have access to the finances needed for venture capital or regular charitable support, so it looked for other ways to help those in the homeland. It was a founding member of the Federation of Celtic Societies. It believed that a larger body might prove more effective in the common goal of improvement in both life-standards and Gaelic education. At the time of the Land Agitation, it would appear that individuals from both societies acted in accordance with their conscience, but neither of the societies appears to give any clear message as to where they stood on a corporate level. However, the outrage of clearance felt by many of the GSL's members and others, resulted in the formation of the Highland Land Law Reform Association in London. Both societies provided financial support through fundraising or donations to An Comunn Gàidhealach once it was established. The key issues that will be discussed include the practical assistance given by development and lobbying and charitable assistance, and the development of agencies which could act as a potent voice to bring assistance and to empower the people to speak for them-selves.

The HSL, the British Fisheries Society, and Agricultural Development

With the loss of the American colonies, and of the considerable sums of money spent on its colonisation, the British Isles were viewed with a fresh eye. John Knox, an author and bookseller and a member of the HSL from March 1785, was one of many proponents of the belief that similar colonisation ventures could improve the lives of those living in the mountainous districts of Scotland. These improvements would change radically the decaying social structure of Highland society. Proposals for villages built for cooperative living became popular, consisting of smaller holdings that would necessitate the establishment of other sources of labour revenue.

The HSL listed as one of its objects 'promoting the improvement and general welfare of the northern parts of the Kingdom'.²⁴⁸ Was this object just a gesture to the 'improving' mood of the day?²⁴⁹ Alternatively, were the members of the HSL interested in any venture, which would improve individual members' estates and livelihood? Certainly, members were aware of the destitute situation of those in the homeland and were attuned to the improvement theories that were being touted, particularly for the Highlands of Scotland. Sir John Sinclair in his history stated that, from its inception, the Society took measures to improve the condition of the poorer classes of Highlanders, by attempting to modernize their lifestyles, and that it proposed suitable means of employment, which, if followed, might discourage

²⁴⁸ Sinclair, p. 7

²⁴⁹ Hyde, p. 15

emigration. It is obvious that the HSL was very aware of the extent of economic problems and the need for urgency in redressing these problems.

As Sinclair notes, it had power to make changes:

The zeal of the Highland Society of London in promoting useful establishments has been peculiarly distinguished, and the collective efforts of the Society in accomplishing designs, which to other Institutions might appear almost insurmountable, have been considerably aided by the rank, fortune, and influence of its Members.²⁵⁰

Many members were indeed improvers in their own right. Among the nobility and gentry were the Duke of Argyll, the Duke of Atholl, the Earl of Seaforth, Sir John Sinclair, and Sir Ilay Campbell. Among land owners and merchants were Kenneth Mackenzie of Torridon, Archibald Fraser of Lovat, Neill Malcolm and John Mackenzie of Bishopgate Street, London.

The HSL's greatest achievement in the area of homeland development was the foundation of the British Fisheries Society, or to be more exact, the British Society for extending the Fisheries and improving the Sea Coasts of this kingdom. However, its other measures of patronage, which supported improvement, will be examined first. Perhaps the most practical attempt by the HSL to encourage Highland agriculture was by the members' endorsement of the consumption of black cattle, which began importation to London in 1808. The society went as far as to recommend to the royal family a trial of Highland cattle.²⁵¹ The more usual method used by the HSL was providing financial assistance to those conducting scientific enquiry or those whose work was important for the development of the

²⁵⁰ Sinclair, p. 22

²⁵¹ NLS 268/24, p. 151

Highlands and Islands. The society gave a grant of twenty pounds for the publication of Dr Walker's *Economical History of the Highlands*. Dr Walker had been Professor of Natural History at Edinburgh University, and was recognised as an eminent agriculturist. His book, the society believed, would be of great benefit to anyone who was involved in improvement of the homeland. Dr Smith also received twenty pounds for his *Agricultural Survey of the Hebrides*. In addition, Sir John Sinclair received some money for his *Statistical Account of Scotland*. Mr R.E. Raspe received forty guineas, the largest amount given by the society. He undertook a mineralogical survey of Scotland. Raspe's survey caused so much interest that the HSL opened a private subscription. Most of the propagandists for progress singled out the fisheries as the most appropriate way of improving the lot of the Highlanders. The HSL responded to this by offering prizes for the best method of curing herring in the Dutch manner and the improvement of deep sea catches.²⁵²

John Knox was an active propagandist for homeland development. He had made sixteen journeys as an early ethnographer and 'political economist'. He collected information regarding the people and how they eked out some sort of existence. The extreme poverty, the lack of employment and the suffering of the people distressed him. He sought an answer in suitable employment for the people that might prevent emigration. There was concern that, as Canada had opened up for emigration, many Highlanders who had equipped themselves well in military service would

²⁵² NLS 10615/2, 3rd Draft, Alastair Campbell of Airds Yr., *Two Hundred Years: The Highland Society of London 1778-1978*, p. 12

quit the country. Knox, through his many visits to the homeland, came to the conclusion that fishery and its attendant industries, e.g. boat building, rope, net and sail manufacture, would best fit the bill. He soon became an advocate for the improvement of the fisheries by the foundation of coastal villages, and published his findings.²⁵³

He made his views known to the newly established Highland Society of Scotland (HSS), when he visited them in Edinburgh in December 1784, and HSS made him an honorary member. Like the HSL, the new HSS was concerned with improvements in the Highlands, but, at this time, it did not actively involve itself in them. It was, in a manner of speaking, ‘finding its feet’. It wanted its members to affiliate themselves to any Government or public boards connected with the fisheries or similar objects.²⁵⁴ It appointed a committee to review the *House of Commons Fisheries Committee Report* and make suggestions.²⁵⁵ However, the HSS in its first few months was more concerned with finding a source of capital for its own existence.²⁵⁶ Knox returned south and met with the HSL, which endorsed his plans and made them its own.²⁵⁷

Knox was not the only proponent of improving the Scottish fishery as a means of homeland development. George Dempster MP and Dr James Anderson also proposed similar improvements. Dr Anderson had been the

²⁵³ John Knox, *A View of the British Empire, more especially Scotland* (London: Walter & Sewell, 1784)

²⁵⁴ RHASS HSS Draughts Minutes 1784-1792, 2 December 1784

²⁵⁵ HSS Draught Minutes 1784-1792, 21 November 1785, 3 February 1786, April 1786

²⁵⁶ HSS Draught Minutes 1784-1792, 2 December 1784

²⁵⁷ John Knox, *A Tour through the Highlands of Scotland, and the Hebride Isles in MDCCLXXXVI* (London: Walter & Faulder, 1787), p. lxxv

choice of the Treasury to conduct a survey of the fishery industry in the northwest waters of Scotland in 1784. The improvers suggested that, instead of investing money overseas, it might prove a better investment to look a little closer to home. The most popular suggestions were the development of villages on the seacoast. There was ample evidence from both America and Canada that fishing villages developed and grew in a relatively short time. The sea around Scotland was abundant with fish. The Government needed to make changes to Fish Bounties and to Salt Laws and Coal Duties, which would encourage the development of the fishing industry. One commentator, a Mr Campbell, informed Henry Dundas, Lord Advocate and Navy Treasurer, that the main cause of emigration during the period 1766-1786 was that the people could not make a living from herring fishing because of the Bounties. The number of small boats on the west coast of Scotland had decreased by fifty per cent in the last fifty years. He believed that the fishery should be encouraged, for:

The common Fishermen undergo the Slavery of the Trade and if they are industrious should receive every possible Encouragement that will induce them to settle along the Coasts—The more Generally they are dispersed the better for them and their Familys [*sic*]. And likewise for the fisheries.²⁵⁸

In his *Tour through the Highlands of Scotland, and the Hebride Isles in 1786*, John Knox states that he was responsible for establishing the co-operation of the HSL with the Committee of the House of Commons appointed in 1785 'to enquire into the state of the British fisheries'. In this book, he states categorically that he will give the facts as they happened from

²⁵⁸ NLS MS 6602, Mr Campbell's Observations on the Fishing Trade, November 1784, p. 8

the 1764 to the present day.²⁵⁹ No historical source can be completely free from error, and all sources are partial views of a given set of events. With that in mind, some caution is necessary in accepting Knox's version. For although there is no other chronological account of the foundation of the British Fisheries Society, there are a few isolated records in the only extant minute book of the HSL for that time. It is a committee book, which deals mainly with cultural matters, but it does offer a slightly different view from Knox.

As already noted, members of the HSL were involved in improvements on their estates, including fishing villages and curing, and Knox acknowledges and praises their accomplishments in his publications. Many members of the HSL were also members of the Houses of Parliament and were involved in discussing improvements. The speed at which the fishery issue went through Parliament and the incorporation of the Joint-Stock Company was probably due in a large measure to this lobby group of members of the HSL. Archibald Fraser of Lovat is a good example. He conducted his own survey of the fisheries on the west coast of Scotland and the Hebrides, and petitioned for a repeal of salt and coal duties. He made great improvements to both arable and animal husbandry and encouraged the manufacture of coarse wool, hemp and flax.²⁶⁰ He also published pamphlets addressing these issues. Another member, A. Macauley, published a pamphlet in answer to Robert Fall of Dunbar's observations on the House of Commons Report on fisheries in 1786. He dismissed the need for giving

²⁵⁹ Knox (1787), p. lxx

²⁶⁰ *Scots Magazine*, 78 (1816), p. 316

additional land to the people living in the fishing villages, as he thought that their time should be employed all the year round in the fisheries.²⁶¹ Knox was therefore not the only voice advocating improvements in the fisheries when he became a member of the HSL during March 1785. It is important, however, not to underestimate Knox's importance and his role in the formation of the Society. He was a very enthusiastic and persuasive communicator, as is clearly illustrated in his books.

It is very possible, and indeed probable, that the HSL was actively looking at ways to improve the fisheries before Knox's membership. The fact that the society actively sought the membership of Henry Dundas in January 1785 by using its 'big guns', President Lord Breadalbane, Hon. Archibald Fraser, Col. Duncan Macpherson and Secretary John Mackenzie, suggests that it must have had a very definite motive. Dundas was the only prospective ordinary member who received such an honour. The reason for urging him to membership became evident when Henry Dundas addressed the House of Commons, and moved 'that a committee be appointed to inquire into the state of the British Fisheries':

He trusted that the matter of such national concern would be sufficient inducement to the House to accede to the motion certain regulations were necessary, and without which, that national source of British wealth would suffer not only a considerable diminution, but in a short time might run totally to decay.²⁶²

²⁶¹ *The necessity of founding villages contiguous to harbours, for the effectual Establishment of Fisheries on the West Coast of Scotland and the Hebrides by a member of the Highland Society in London* (London: Macrae, 1786)

²⁶² *Scots Magazine*, 47 (1785), p. 219

George Dempster seconded the motion, and Henry Beaufoy chaired the committee, appointed by the House of Commons, to enquire into the state of the British Fisheries.

It was a very large committee, consisting of forty-one named members plus all the Scottish members and all the English members representing coastal seats. They had 'power to send for Persons, Papers, and Records; and all who come to the Committee are to have voices'.²⁶³ The committee had a wide remit, and it made several Reports to Parliament during 1785 and 1786 covering aspects affecting the whole industry, but the Scottish herring fishery in particular.

The HSL was according to Knox, independently looking at the state of the British fisheries and had appointed a committee for this purpose, perhaps as early as 1784. John Mackenzie's obituary indicates that he was secretary for the British Society for Fisheries in 1785. This may have been referring to the HSL's committee and may in that case not be an error for 1786, for all HSL committees had their own secretaries. Knox tells us that the HSL's committee was known by the name of the 'British Society for extending the Fisheries, and Improving the Sea Coasts of the Kingdom', the name used by the petitioners for the joint stock company.

The committee met regularly; the main issues of interest being the Crinan Canal, originally recommended by Knox, and the establishment of fishing stations. Eventually, it was decided that the fishing stations would be

²⁶³ *Commons Journals* 40 (1784-1785), p. 632

the most beneficial. According to Knox, he was requested to write a paper for presentation at a meeting of the HSL, which was read at the meeting on 21 March 1786 by John Mackenzie. It was later published under the patronage of the HSL, entitled *A Discourse on the Expediency of Establishing Fishing Stations, or small towns, in the Highlands of Scotland, and the Hebride Isles*. Knox states that, the President of the HSL, the Earl of Breadalbane, presented a copy to the King and another to the House of Commons Committee. Copies were circulated to the members of the HSL and to other interested gentlemen.²⁶⁴ However, from the Minute of 9 March 1786, we learn that a sub-committee met with Lord Breadalbane and made alterations to Mr Knox's pamphlet, which 'Mr Knox undertook to have wrote out in a fine hand to be shown at Lord Breadalbanes this morning, previous to it being presented to His Majesty'.²⁶⁵

Regardless of what happened when Knox's paper was read to the HSL in March 1786, it stated that Knox's plans would eliminate the cost of war because of the 'hardy, intrepid seamen' planted through the one thousand miles of coast. The cost of building the proposed towns would be nothing in comparison with the cost of war and they would produce manufactures for sale. He went on to say that he hoped the members of the HSL and the HSS, with other noblemen and gentlemen of rank and fortune, would act as directors or trustees 'upon the business of treating with the proprietors of lands, and with workmen, for executing certain small, plain

²⁶⁴ John Knox (1787), p. lxxvii

²⁶⁵ NLS 268/21, p. 59

buildings, by contract'.²⁶⁶ This is essentially, what is recommended in the *Third Report of House of Commons on Fisheries of July 1785*. It is therefore interesting to note that, in one of the Appendices of his *Tour through the Highlands of Scotland* (1787) entitled 'Extracts from A Discourse on the Expediency of establishing Fishing Stations' delivered to the HSL in March, we find that Knox has made significant changes. He has added the following two paragraphs:

The state of national finances, and uncertainty of the sources necessary for the exigencies of Government, did not at that time afford much reason to expect immediate assistance, and these distressed countries of the Highlands have consequently remained in status quo.

In this dilemma, some gentlemen, who are members of the House of Commons, have suggested the idea of raising a fund by means of a general subscription; and, as all degrees of people in Great Britain will be more or less benefited by his maritime colony within our own island, it may be presumed, that gentlemen of affluence and public spirit will come forward upon this occasion, and merit the appellation of –THE FRIENDS OF THEIR COUNTRY.²⁶⁷

He then goes on to express his hope for the support of members of both the HSL and HSS. As already noted, many of the members of Parliament were members of the HSL: the Dukes of Argyll and Athol, the Earls of Breadalbane, Eglinton, Moray, Dunmore, Abercorn, Francis Humberstone Mackenzie (later Lord Seaforth), Sir John Sinclair and Henry Dundas to name a few. In 1787, before his book was published, four of the English Members of Parliament who were very active in the fishery cause were made honorary members: William Wilberforce, Lord Suffield, John

²⁶⁶ John Knox, *A discourse on the Expediency of Establishing Fishing Stations or small towns in the Highlands of Scotland and the Hebride Isles* (London: 1786), p. 22

²⁶⁷ Knox (1878), App I, p. 100

Call and Isaac Hawkins Browne. So it is little wonder that Knox could say that many members of the House of Commons had suggested the idea, as most of the Scottish Members of Parliament were members of the HSL.

Nevertheless, Knox's account continues with what was happening within the HSL:

In the meantime, the new association was beginning to assume the form of a regular establishment [...] a Bill of incorporation was preparing, 'to enable them, when incorporated, to subscribe a joint stock, and therewith to purchase lands, and build thereon free towns, villages, and fishing stations, in the Highlands and Islands in that part of Great Britain, called Scotland; and for other purposes'.²⁶⁸

It is evident that some of the members of the HSL and Members of Parliament worked together, particularly in the formation of the Bill to establish a joint-stock company to provide success for the Scottish fishery. Hyde states that, 'The steam which drove the Parliamentary machinery was chiefly generated by the Highland Society'.²⁶⁹ Jean Munro states: 'The British Fisheries Society developed as an offshoot from the Highland Society of London in 1786'.²⁷⁰ The Minute of February 1786, which outlines the plan for a Gaelic Professor, implies that Beaufoy and Dempster, both Members of Parliament, acted on behalf of the HSL in the matter of the fisheries. The Minute expresses the belief that these two Members of Parliament will have the same success, and secure a Gaelic Professor through Parliament for the society:

²⁶⁸ Knox (1787), p. lxxviii

²⁶⁹ Hyde, p. 17

²⁷⁰ Jean Munro, *The Founding of Tobermory* (Ely: Hereward Press, 1976), p. 3

Resolved that the deputation already appointed [...] shall also wait on Henry Beaufoy and George Dempster Esq. With the thankful acknowledgements of this committee for their very useful & really patriotic labours towards establishing extensive Fisheries on the coasts of Scotland.²⁷¹

Archibald Macdonald, the Solicitor General and member of the HSL, made the actual petition for the Joint Stock Company, which had been recommended in the *Third Report of the House of Commons Committee on the Fisheries, 4 May 1786*. The other named members of the HSL among the petitioners were the Duke of Argyll; the HSL's President the Earl of Breadalbane; the Earl of Moray; the Earl of Dunmore, past President; and Sir James Riddell a member since 1783. The other named petitioners were Sir Adam Ferguson and Messrs John Call, Henry Beaufoy and George Dempster. Although the petition was presented after the deadline for Private Acts, it nonetheless, was accepted to be heard primarily (I believe), because of whom the petitioners were. It stated:

That the Petitioners, having seen the Reports of the Committee for enquiring into the State of the British Fisheries [...] and, being satisfied from the said Reports, that it is necessary, for establishing and promoting Fisheries, and the general Improvement of the Coasts of the Highlands of Scotland, as well as the Suppression of Emigration from that Quarter of the Kingdom, that Towns, Villages, and Fishing Stations, should be built for the Purpose of purchasing Lands, and building Towns thereon, as aforesaid, and, for their greater Convenience and Encouragement in an Undertaking which they conceive to be fundamentally necessary to the Attainment of the Objects above-mentioned, are desirous of obtaining a Charter of Incorporation for themselves and others, with certain Powers necessary for the conducting of their Affairs.²⁷²

²⁷¹ NLS 268/21, p. 57

²⁷² *Journals of the House of Commons* 41 (1786), p. 869

Mr Dempster recommended to the House on 2 July that 'it will be absolutely necessary to incorporate the Subscribers into a Joint Stock Company'.²⁷³ The Bill for incorporation passed through both Houses of Parliament and received Royal Assent by the beginning of July.

The HSL was not idle during this time, after the Third Report of the Fisheries Committee, published on 4 May. It held several extraordinary meetings at the Shakespeare Tavern. On 23 May 1786, it opened up subscriptions for the proposed joint-stock company. One hundred and four names were added and 10,600 shares subscribed.²⁷⁴ John Knox informed the Society on 14 June, of his impending tour of the Highlands and Islands to gather information on the most eligible situations for the new villages, which would be useful for the new Directors. In response, the HSL asked Knox to collect subscriptions for 'the proposed society for extending the fisheries and improving the sea-coasts of the Kingdom and transmitting those names to the Secretary of the Highland Society of London'. Knox received a written commission for this task and left on his tour on 29 June.²⁷⁵ He had some success, for by November he had received 32 subscriptions and expected to achieve some £5,000 worth of shares before he returned to London.²⁷⁶

John Mackenzie, Secretary of the HSL, was also busy corresponding with the HSS. His letter dated 26 June included printed copies

²⁷³ *Journals of the House of Commons* 41 (1786), p. 878

²⁷⁴ NAS, GD9/28/2, *Plan for raising by subscription a fund for a joint stock company by the name of The British Society for extending the Fisheries and Improving the sea coasts of the Kingdom*

²⁷⁵ Knox (1787), p. lxxx

²⁷⁶ RHASS, HSS Sederunt Book 1784-1789, p. 127

of the Bill ‘depending’ on Parliament. He asked that the HSS should consider the Bill and forward any comments regarding it to him, before it passed through the House of Commons. The HSS requested that a clause be inserted ‘that subscribers not to be liable [*sic*] beyond the sum respectively subscribed by each Individual and that this should be attended to in the Progress of the Bill in Parliament’.²⁷⁷ This clause proved difficult for Sir Matthew Ridley who thought it was ‘an inlet for fraud’.²⁷⁸

At the HSS meeting of 7 July, letters from Secretary Mackenzie and the Earl of Breadalbane of the HSL were read, and they both recommended a liberal subscription to the Joint Stock Company ‘now establishing’.²⁷⁹ It was not until the 24 July 1786 that the HSS resumed the consideration of these letters and decided that the subscription papers sent from London should be lodged with the Secretary, the Royal Bank, Sir William Forbes and Sir James Hunter.²⁸⁰ How active the HSS was in securing subscriptions is unknown. However, at the 24 November meeting of the HSS another letter from John Mackenzie was read, asking for assistance from the society ‘in forwarding a subscription to the Stock Company lately constituted by Act of Parliament’, but there was not a quorum for business.²⁸¹ On 29 November, the HSS decided to run an essay competition on the ‘Plan for Carrying on the Fisheries with very accurate and sensible remarks on the proper places for having fishing Stations, Peers or Harbours over all the West & North

²⁷⁷ RHASS, HSS *Sederunt Book* 1784-1789, p. 116

²⁷⁸ *Scots Magazine* 48 (1786), p. 426

²⁷⁹ RHASS HSS *Draughts of Minutes* 1784-1792, 7 July 1786

²⁸⁰ RHASS HSS *Sederunt Book* 1784-1789, pp. 124-5

²⁸¹ RHASS HSS *Draught of Minutes* 1784-1792, 24 November 1786

Coast.²⁸² It was not until 8 January 1788 that the HSS as a corporate body bought ten shares.²⁸³

The election for the Directors of the British Society for extending the Fisheries and improving the Sea Coasts of this Kingdom was held on 12 August 1786. The Duke of Argyll was appointed Governor, the Earl of Breadalbane his deputy. There were thirteen Directors, and eight of them were Members of Parliament: the Marquis of Graham, who was President of the Board of Trade, Sir Adam Ferguson, Henry Beaufoy, Isaac Hawkins Browne, John Call, George Dempster, F.H. Mackenzie, and William Wilberforce. The other directors were the Earls of Moray, Abercorn, Gower and Suffield, and Neil Malcolm. The Secretary was John Mackenzie, who was also the Secretary of the HSL. Ten of the Board were members of the HSL, 'so it was very much a family affair'.²⁸⁴

Once incorporation took place the British Fisheries Society acted completely separately from the parent society.²⁸⁵ However, some additional perspectives are necessary. The society never had the success that John Knox had envisioned, and ceased business in 1893. It was to some extent doomed to failure by its Act of Incorporation, which prohibited any commercial enterprise. It was therefore unable to set up any manufacturing businesses that might have helped to provide financial stability to the villages, especially when fish stocks were low. All it could do was encourage.

²⁸² RHASS HSS *Sederunt Book* 1784-1789, p. 128

²⁸³ RHASS HSS *Sederunt Book* 1784-1789, p. 186

²⁸⁴ NLS 10615/2, 3rd Draft, p. 12a

²⁸⁵ For a full account of the new society, see Jean Dunlop and E.D. Hyde

The choice of the early fishing villages at Ullapool, Tobermory, and Lochbay were criticised by many, and a spate of pamphlets detailing the mistakes of the new society were published; among the authors were P. White, Rev John Lane Buchanan and L. McCulloch. The only village established which proved financially viable was that at Pulteneytown. The three western fisheries, although they showed promise in the beginning, were never successful. The British Fisheries Society, in its role of improver, had drawn up full plans for its modern villages. Although it built houses for officials and the skilled tradesmen needed for 'improvement', the other potential residents had to build their own houses on lots according to the plan and to a specific standard. However, many could not afford the expense and therefore did not have access to the society's pasture lands. According to Hyde:

Although the stations were only intended, in theory, to accommodate the two progressive classes, merchants and tradesmen, in practice a third class, the dispossessed, were found to squat in ever increasing numbers, relying on casual employment or open charity for survival. This state of affairs existed even before 1800. A cluster of 'black houses' could be seen by the river at Ullapool before that date, and at Lochbay the agents seem to have had great trouble attracting other than squatters. By a heavy irony, the Society's original inconsistency in attempting to exclude the destitute while simultaneously frowning on emigration, led to some of the grossest manifestations of urbanisation to be found along the whole West Coast.²⁸⁶

The Directors and Governors were 'improvers'; the establishment of fishing villages would provide urban living in rural districts. Moreover, the feeling of the day was 'dispossession without emigration', and this brought

²⁸⁶ Hyde, pp. 209-10

great pressure to bear on these villages. By 1804, the Society took the decision that its Agents were not to discourage emigration.²⁸⁷ As noted earlier, its success was at Pulteneytown, but the Society must also be acknowledged for the road building schemes it undertook in the Highlands and on the Isle of Mull, some of them with the help of the Treasury.²⁸⁸

The HSL, in founding the British Fisheries Society, believed, as did the many propagandists at the time, that the establishment of fishing villages and other manufactures would benefit the whole of Scotland. Although the aspirations of all the advocates for the fishing villages venture were not fulfilled, it is interesting to note that the Napier Commission advocated a very similar programme in 1884.²⁸⁹

The HSL and the Excise Acts

Another area affecting the homeland with which either individual members of the HSL or the HSL itself became involved was the passage through Parliament of Acts that affected the distillation of whisky and smuggling. Many members were proprietors of Highland estates, and many proprietors condoned smuggling. They accepted it, for their rents or a portion of them were paid through the profit of illicit distillation and smuggling. This was particularly so during bad harvests and government prohibition, when rents could not have been paid but for smuggling. Dr John Leyden illustrated this very point when he stated in 1800 that:

²⁸⁷ NAS GD9/12/260

²⁸⁸ Hyde, pp. 111, 135, 142, and L.T.C. Rolt, *Thomas Telford* (London: Penguin, 1985), p. 80

²⁸⁹ Dunlop, p. 205

The distillation of whiskey presents an irresistible temptation to the poorer classes, as the boll of barley, which costs thirty shillings, produces by this process, between five and six guineas. This distillation had a most ruinous effect in increasing the scarcity of grain last year.²⁹⁰

The practice of manufacturing spirits from surplus grain for home consumption was commonplace long before the first Excise Duty was charged on whisky.

However, there was a reprise when the Gin Act was passed in 1736. A clause was added to it that duties would not extend to ‘Spirits made or distilled from Malt, and retailed and consumed within that Part of Great Britain called Scotland, which Spirits are commonly called or known by the Name of Aquavitæ in that Part of the Kingdom’.²⁹¹ Further Acts of Parliament kept the distinction. It was only when the Scots distiller exported his Aquavitæ to England that he would be charged duties. However, smuggling must have become a problem, for in July 1779 the size of stills for private use was limited to two gallons.²⁹² Two years later, private stills were prohibited altogether,²⁹³ as smuggling and a resultant loss of revenue continued and grew.

With the agricultural reform in the Highlands came an increase in tenants’ rents, and some of those tenants began distilling for profit. With no duty tariffs to pay, home distilled whisky was a cheap drink; there was a corresponding increase in consumption during the second half of the

²⁹⁰ Dr John Leyden, *Journal of a Tour in the Highlands and Islands of Western Scotland* (1800), quoted in Gavin D. Smith, *The Secret Still* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2002), p. 7

²⁹¹ Statute 9 Geo. II c.23 (1736)

²⁹² Statute 19 Geo. III c.50 (1779)

²⁹³ Statute 21 Geo. III c.55 (1781)

eighteen-century. Later Acts of Parliament repealed this anomaly of the Act of Union, and duty for spirits distilled from malt were charged. Highland proprietors were quick to lobby for the Highland region, particularly regarding the poor quality and quantity of grain and the cost of transporting fuel. In 1786, Parliament passed an Act establishing two distinct areas, the Highland and Lowland Districts, with different rates of duty charged. The duty charged was on the cubic size of the still, and the Highland duty was ten shillings less than the Lowland rate per gallon. In return for that concession, the Highland District was prohibited from buying grain or selling spirits to the Lowlands.

In 1797, Parliament decided to sub-divide the Highlands into a Highland District with a Licence of six pounds ten shillings and Intermediate Districts with a Licence of nine pounds. However, it was only a temporary Act, destined to end in 1798.²⁹⁴ The prohibition on buying grain and selling whisky continued, and the numbers of legal stills in each of the Highland districts were limited. However, all that Parliament seemed to be achieving through its successive laws was an encouragement of illicit distillation and smuggling. As Devine states:

This legislation constituted the basic precondition for illicit distillation because it was broadly unsuited to the nature of the legal manufacture as practised in northern Scotland and the outlawing of small stills drove private household and family production underground. Previously, every person who had a still whose contents were limited to twelve gallons might by law distil for his own use and this prohibition of private stills thus represented a wholly novel form of state interference. It was small surprise therefore that for many years afterwards illicit

²⁹⁴ Statute 37 Geo. III c.102 (1797)

whisky-making was not considered a crime in many parts of the north.²⁹⁵

It was during the Parliamentary debates of 1797 and 1798 that members of the HSL began to show great interest in the issue. They did not petition Parliament (the usual method for constituents to express their concerns and opinions), but instead acted as a lobby group. The Duke of Atholl reported that, in accordance with a previous resolution, 'every circumstance which affected the welfare and interests of the Highlanders of Scotland should be communicated to this Society, in order to the more effectively enabling them to give their assistance to its prosperity'.²⁹⁶ He recommended a meeting of the principal noblemen and gentlemen to form a committee to meet with Mr Pitt. The Duke of Atholl was concerned that by increasing the excise duty in the Act that it could 'deprive the inhabitants of the enjoyment of a wholesome Spirit drawn from their own grain which otherwise they could not find a market for'.²⁹⁷ Pitt, after hearing the concerns and opinions of the committee, had 'proposed and consented to bring forward a temporary Act only, imposing such Duties as the Committee represented were the highest under existing circumstances such small Stills could afford to pay'.²⁹⁸ It was not until 8 February that the matter was raised in the House, and it was April before Pitt was added to the House of Commons Committee investigating the state of the Scots Distillery Laws. The Government's main concern was the loss of revenue it was experiencing

²⁹⁵ T. M. Devine, *Clanship to Crofters' War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 121

²⁹⁶ NLS 268/23, p. 53

²⁹⁷ NLS 268/23, p. 53

²⁹⁸ NLS 268/23, p. 54

due to the improvements in distilling equipment and technique. The final statute was a temporary Act, as Pitt had assured the HSL.

The main change from the 1798 Act was that any stocks of whisky found during the period of June 1798 to April 1799 would be charged an additional one-shilling per gallon. It also reintroduced the Survey or surveillance of distilleries, which had been repealed in 1786. Thus, through a combination of Survey and Licence, Government hoped to recoup its lost revenue, and to ensure that it would not lose revenue in the future. The Duke of Atholl was probably happy with this outcome. The legal Highland distilleries unsold stock would be small; the brunt of this additional duty would fall on the large Lowland distilleries. However, with an increase in excise-officers controlling distillery production, the potential for discovery of illegal stills increased.

Smuggling had become a way for many tenants to pay their continually increasing rents. David Stewart of Garth states this to be the case: 'Their excuse for engaging in such a traffic, is, that its aid is necessary to enable them to pay their rents and taxes'.²⁹⁹ It certainly became a lucrative trade, and the Government continually increased the number of excise-officers throughout the Highlands. Further legislation did nothing to curb the trend, and the Highland Magistrates tended to be lenient in their punishments. The landowners, proprietors and their factors had obviously turned a blind eye on this illicit trade:

²⁹⁹ Stewart, p. 193

The attitude of the landed class was of vital consequence. Not only were the gentry the basis of law enforcement in their capacity as justices of the peace, but a landlord's control over tenancies and his power to evict delinquent persons could effectively discourage illicit practices and almost certainly, therefore, illegal production could not have developed as it did if the majority of the landowning class in the relevant regions had not acquiesced in it and indeed abetted it.³⁰⁰

Alexander Fraser in a letter to Alexander Tulloch, Collector of Excise, Inverness, makes a similar point regarding proprietors and smuggling:

The Causes are evident; the Temptation of a good Price for their Spirits, the good Wishes of the Consumer, as well as the Disposer of the Grain; and I may venture to add, that the landed Interest are not their Enemies.³⁰¹

Successive legislation encouraged smuggling. Smuggling increased with the ban of legal distillation during the Napoleonic Wars, even though grain prices were very high through much of the first decade of the nineteenth century. Then, the Government through its Excise Act of 1814 prohibited forty-gallon stills in Highland distilleries; this essentially outlawed the majority of legal distillers. For only a few could continue with the prescribed five hundred gallon-stills, subsequently reduced to two hundred gallon stills. It was at this time that the subject was raised again by the HSL. However, this was due to the concern of its newly formed branch in Inverness. It forwarded a copy of its resolutions and the Petition, which it had sent to the Lords of Treasury and the Duke of York, the HSL's President. The Petition expressed concern about the tenants and the effect that successive laws had on their morals. Its framers believed that:

³⁰⁰ Stewart, p. 236

³⁰¹ *Report Regarding the Distilleries in Scotland &&, 12 July 1799, App.B3, p. 235*

The tenantry thus forced into illegal distillation, as the only means of consuming their Grain and paying their Rents, the train of consequences are not more lamentable than they have been avoidable. The character of the People is changed—their morals are undermined—their exemplary habits of industry, sobriety, Morality are fast giving way to others more consonant with their pursuits [...] That this is more to be lamented, because they are a reflecting people and have taught themselves to believe that, denied the benefits which other portions of the Kingdom possess of converting the scanty produce of their soil to the best advantage, they are entitled by any desperate means in their power to obtain that subsistence which nature requires, but the law refuses them.³⁰²

The Petition also recognised that the amount of illegal distillation greatly exceeded the consumption of the homeland, and found a ready market in the Lowlands. It further raised concerns about the state of improved arable land, which could easily revert to waste land. It made the following recommendations: the abolition of the Highland line; equalised duty rates in Scotland; and that Highland stills be reduced in size to fifty gallons, particularly in the interior regions. It also argued that because of inferior grain in the Highlands, it was impossible to achieve the amount of spirit from the wash and for that reason that fourteen rather than eighteen gallons, be accepted in the Highlands, for:

To require a greater quantity of Spirit to be extracted than the Grain of the Country is equal to, would rivet the distress of the Highlands, and render fruitless any means of alleviation conceded, for it would be necessary to import Grain from which the quantity could be extracted, and the grain cultivated in the Highlands would necessarily remain without a Market.³⁰³

The petition ended with a plea for compassion for the Highlands and its people, and with the recognition that if successful the Proprietor and his

³⁰² NLS 268/26, p. 207

³⁰³ NLS 268/26, pp. 208-9

tenant could find an honest market with a licensed distiller, or perhaps become distillers themselves, which would suppress the illegal trade.

The Inverness branch hoped that the HSL would appoint a committee to attend the new Act's passage through Parliament. The HSL resolved to arrange for a meeting of proprietors and other interested gentlemen in London, and agreed to print and circulate four hundred copies of the Inverness branch's petition. The meeting was arranged for 29 April at the British Coffee House, and was chaired by the Duke of Atholl. The meeting made various resolutions similar to the Inverness branch's petition, and appointed a committee to meet with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Apart from a few draft Minutes in the 1820s, no further mention is made until 1870.

A House of Commons' committee was appointed in 1816, chaired by Woodbine Parish, who was Chairman of the Board of Commissioners in Scotland. The committee reviewed all the petitions, including the one from the branch society in Inverness, and brought two reports to the House, on 25 April and 24 May. The reports detailed the extent of illicit distillation, and very fairly weighed the evidence from both Highland and Lowland petitions, and made recommendations. Parish's reports were discussed passionately in the House. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke on 2 June, it appeared that he had agreed with many of the points raised by the delegation from the HSL. He addressed the House saying:

The mischievous height, to which illicit distillation had been carried, was to be attributed to the bad spirits produced by the

regular distilleries: he was inclined to encourage in the Highlands the small distilleries of 40 gallons. A boundary had been established for the Highlands, within which the distillery duty was lower; but with this regulation, none of the spirit distilled within the Highland boundary should be transported to the Lowlands. But he now intended to abolish this line entirely, and to reduce the duty from 30 to 25 per cent.³⁰⁴

The resulting act in November did abolish the Highland line, cut duty by one-third and allowed stills of a minimum of forty gallons capacity. It also allowed weaker washes to improve the quality of the whisky, a point which was made in the Inverness Society's petition.

The HSL certainly played a role in the Acts affecting the Scots distillery industry for 1798 and 1816. However, there were many other petitioners and lobbyists who also had their say. The fact that so many of its members were proprietors, and that many were members of both Houses of Parliament, must have borne some weight. However, it is very clear that many proprietors continued to condone illegal distillation on their estates for payment of rent. It was not until the 1820s when the Duke of Gordon, who was also a member of the HSL, addressed the House of Lords stating that, if Government would make it easier for illicit distillers to become legitimate, he and other landowners would undertake to uphold the law and put an end to the illicit trade. Whether the HSL had any input into Gordon's action or whether he spoke independently is unknown. Obviously, the nobility and landowners in the homeland realised that they could no longer be seen to encourage an activity that denuded the Government of revenue.

³⁰⁴ *Scots Magazine*, 78 (1816), p. 777

Emigration and Clearance

Emigration and Clearance do not appear to have been pressing matters for either society, to judge from the evidence of their extant Minute Books. However, it is plausible to assign the HSL's support for improvement to the presence of Scottish landowners, for many of the members were such; while the GSL was on the side of the oppressed, in as much as many of its members were sons of the croft. There was a diversity of opinions towards clearance among individuals of both societies. However, each society will be assessed as a corporate body from their Minutes and other records.

The HSL does not appear to discuss emigration, and clearances are not mentioned at all in the extant records. It is very evident that the members of the HSL were supporters of improvement, as illustrated by the establishment of the British Fisheries Society. Like many improvers of the late eighteenth century, its land-owning members, probably believed that emigration should be discouraged, if not completely stopped. The minutes of the HSL's committee dealing with improvements in the fisheries and seacoasts are no longer extant. As a result, it is impossible to know from its remaining records exactly what the HSL's opinions were on the issue of emigration. Nevertheless, they probably mirrored those of the British Fisheries Society. Certainly, the Minutes of the incorporated British Fisheries Society illustrate an anti-emigration policy, which is clear and steadfast until almost twenty years later, when, by bitter experience, its policy on emigration changed, when it realised that promotion rather than prevention of emigration suited its membership far better.

Robert Burns also provides a contemporary record of the HSL's views and opinions on emigration. The poem 'Address to Beelzebub' is a satire, addressed to Lord Breadalbane, President of the HSL and Chairman of the Fisheries Sub-Committee. Burns in his preamble refers to the HSL's meeting on the 23 May 1786, when subscriptions were opened for the proposed British Fisheries Society. During this meeting a discussion took place regarding two large-scale emigration plans, to which the HSL members gave thought, according to Burns:

to concert ways and means to frustrate the designs of FIVE HUNDRED HIGHLANDERS who, as the Society were informed by Mr McKenzie of Applecross, were so audacious as to attempt an escape from their lawful lords and masters whose property they are by emigrating from the lands of Mr McDonald of Glengarry to the wilds of CANADA, in search of that fantastic thing—LIBERTY³⁰⁵

The HSL believed that the Government of the day should be involved in an attempt to foil the plan of 500 tenants of Glengarry to emigrate to Canada.³⁰⁶ However, according to John Knox (who does not openly mention the HSL), the emigration was successful.

The GSL appears to raise the matter of emigration only twice in the Minute Books. In 1872, Mr W. Macdonald expressed concern regarding an article in the *Inverness Courier* of July 18th respecting Mr Nicolson, editor of *An Gael*:

³⁰⁵ Robert Burns, *Complete Poems and Songs*, ed. by James Kingsley (Oxford: OUP, 1969), p. 204

³⁰⁶ For accounts of Highland Emigration to Canada see J.M. Bumstead, *The People's clearance: Highland Emigration to British North America 1770-1815* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1982) and Marianne Maclainne, *People of Glengarry: Highlanders in Transition 1745 1820* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1991) and T.M. Devine, *The Great Highland Famine* (Edinburgh: Donald, 1988)

who was there represented to have gone to the remote Highlands & Islands inducing the people to emigrate. Mr. Macdonald condemned Mr Nicolson's conduct in taking advantage of his position as the Editor of a Gaelic periodical to use the influence and confidence so acquired for such a purpose.³⁰⁷

Members at the meeting reprimanded Mr Macdonald for condemning Mr Nicolson, and the secretary was requested to write to Mr Nicolson relating the discussion and giving him an opportunity to explain himself, but no further mention was ever made.

A subsequent discussion on forced emigration took place at the November meeting in 1882. Dr Farquhar Matheson, a Council member of the GSL, raised the question about the subject presumably as a matter of some urgency, as it was not scheduled.³⁰⁸ Dr Matheson may have been reacting to a series of letters published by *The Times* containing an exchange between the Duke of Argyll and D.H. Macfarlane (who became MP for Argyllshire in 1885).³⁰⁹ However, the Highlands and Islands were in a state of distress due to poor harvests; and emigration was seen as the most expedient way of dealing with the problem. The members of the GSL discussed the pros and cons of forced emigration and the impact that emigration had in the homeland. Dr Matheson, who opened the discussion,

dilated at some length on the disadvantages, particularly to the country, of the expatriation, so to speak, of its very bone and sinew. He scouted the idea that men of such physique could have been starving at home for generations, and must have continued to starve but for emigration.³¹⁰

³⁰⁷ UCL GSL MB, 24 July, 1782

³⁰⁸ UCL GSL MB, 8 November 1882

³⁰⁹ *Times*, October 16, 21, 23 1882, pp. 10, 6, 4 respectively

³¹⁰ *Inverness Courier*, 14 November 1882, p. 2

Many papers presented at the GSL meetings examined emigration, the various causes for clearance, and the effect of the Scottish land laws. R.G. Tolmie spoke on the 'Economic results of the present system of Land tenure in Scotland', and 'The people's right to land in Celtic Scotland'. John Forbes spoke on the poverty and hardship caused by deer forests; Colin Chisholm spoke on 'Land Tenure in the Highlands'; Dr. Roderick Macdonald on 'The pros and cons of land agitation'; and James Fraser spoke about 'The ideal landlord'. However, most of these papers are lost to posterity, with the exception of a few published in such journals as the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, the *Celtic Magazine* and the *Celtic Monthly*. Although the Minutes mention lively discussions following such papers, they provide no information, only the names of those taking part.

Charitable Assistance, including the response to the Highland Famine

From its inception, the HSL provided financial assistance to the Scottish poor in London. This assistance provided passage back to the homeland for distressed Highlanders in London, clearly illustrated in its early records.

They were also generous to members of the armed forces demonstrated in the Military Pensions Journal (1799-1816), which lists the Society's military pensioners, in regimental order, listing details of service,

Shakespeare 1st April
1796

Sir

The Committee of the Highland Society will be much obliged by your providing passages for Scotland at their expense for the poor persons named below

I am Sir
(With regards)
your most obed^t
John MacKenzie

Mr Pinkerton

✓ Angus Macsueon - Inverness
 ✓ Anne Fraser alias Bayne
 ✓ David Scott, a Blind Soldier
 ✓ William Macvae - Inverness

Figure 4 Arranging for passages home

ailments, residence and the allowance given.³¹¹ There were times when the Society, lacking sufficient funds to provide assistance, asked members who also belonged to the Scottish Corporation to look for aid from that London institution. The generosity of the HSL soon became well known, and this resulted in bogus requests, so that guidelines had to be enforced to stop the drain on financial resources.

³¹¹ NLS 268/45

Members had to ensure that they had personal knowledge of any individual seeking help. As Sir John Sinclair states, the petitions received by HSL were not limited to assistance for passage home:

Some were voted to various other descriptions of persons in distress; and in apportioning, these sums, the relative characters and stations in life which the individuals filled, were considered. Highland Officers distinguished for their service, and other persons who had moved above the lower orders of society, but who, by unforeseen calamity, had been reduced to distress, with their respective widows and families, received generous donations.³¹²

An example of the HSL's generosity was an annual pension of five guineas awarded to Duncan MacIntyre, aged 91, a minor poet and tradition bearer. He had petitioned the HSL asking for some financial assistance in 1815, for most of his relatives were dead, and he was unable 'by the frailties of age to earn a livelihood [and was] doomed to suffer many privations'. MacIntyre had recited several Ossianic poems to Rev Dr Irvine at the request of the HSL, when it was preparing to publish the 'Poems of Ossian'; the generous pension reflected the services MacIntyre had rendered to Gaelic literature.³¹³

The HSL also gave donations at times of calamity, such as shipwrecks. One example was the donation of ten guineas, a sum that 'rather exceeded the usual limits in giving charity' to the eight widows, thirty-one children and four old persons bereft after a fishing disaster at Avoch in 1796.³¹⁴ The HSL also gave donations towards the erection of hospitals and churches, including the Inverness Infirmary in 1791, the Skye Hospital Fund

³¹² Sinclair, p. 26

³¹³ NLS 268/26, pp. 107-8

³¹⁴ NLS 268/22, p. 48

in 1890, and the Gaelic Churches in Inverness in 1838 and Dundee in 1840. In 1808, it opened a subscription in London to assist and help those in the Highlands and Islands who were in distress due to crop failures. When the Lord Mayor of London set up a fund in 1883 for the poor people who were facing destitution in the Western Highlands and Islands, the HSL gave generously. In May, of that year it gave its third donation of fifty guineas for this cause.³¹⁵

The GSL also raised funds for the homeland in time of crisis. During the Great Highland Famine, in 1847, it organised a Grand Celtic Ball, which raised just over £400. Lord Russell agreed to distribute the money, allotting differing amounts to others for local distribution. The Countess of Dunmore was given £50 for the Isle of Harris, Lady Riddle £50 for Ardnamurchan, Mrs McNeil £40 for Colonsay. The following were each given £25. Mr Andrew Fraser for the Relief Committee in Fort William; Rev G Davidson for the neighbourhood of Talisker; Mr Robertson for Kinlochmoidart; Mr Lillingston for the neighbourhood of Lochalsh; Mr Hugh McKenzie for Little Loch Broom; Mr Rainy for Raasay; Mr Macdonald for Glendale, and Dr McKenzie for the Scottish Patriotic Society for Improving the Condition of the lower classes. The balance of just under £40 went to Dr John Macleod for the district of Morven.³¹⁶

The GSL responded with a donation to the distress in the Isle of Lewis, when the Lord Mayor of London was campaigning on behalf of the

³¹⁵ *Times*, 23 May 1883, p. 6

³¹⁶ *Times*, 13 May 1847, p. 5

Lewis people in 1883. However, the GSL did not agree with the Lord Mayor that the Isle of Lewis was alone in needing assistance. Along with the donation, a letter was sent to the Lord Mayor with the recommendation that the fundraising campaign should be renamed the Fund for the Western Highlands and Islands.³¹⁷ The Society's annual Highland Ball became a fundraiser at the suggestion of Surgeon-General W.A. MacKinnon, president of the society, who felt that it would be 'a capital vehicle for that sympathy', one which afforded

an excellent, although regrettable, opportunity for appealing to public sympathy, on behalf of a class which has numerous sympathisers in the metropolis [...] upwards of 300 ladies and gentlemen, many of them from the highest rank of society, and all more or less personally interested in the philanthropic object in view.³¹⁸

In 1900 the GSL received a request for assistance in 'maintaining a small village library for the enlightenment of the people of his parish', from Mr W. Kerr, Schoolmaster at Planasker, Lewis. The GSL discussed the matter and decided that:

A grant of English Literature was not considered quite within the influence of the Society's Funds but considering the exceptional circumstances and necessities it was unanimously agreed to expend a sum not exceeding £3.0.0 in providing the Library with *The Celtic Monthly*, *MacTalla*, *Chambers Journal*, *Young England*, *Cassell's Saturday Magazine* and the *Daily Graphic* for one year and the balance of the £3.0.0 to be expended in Lantern Slides for lime light entertainment.³¹⁹

It is unlikely that either of the societies ignored the suffering of those in the homeland. If the full records of both societies were extant, a

³¹⁷ UCL GSL MB, 14 February 1883

³¹⁸ *Inverness Courier*, 24 February 1883, p. 2

³¹⁹ UCL GSL Council MB, 20 November 1900

more benevolent picture would, I believe, emerge. Certainly, many subscriptions were opened in London for famine relief or other distress in the homeland, not necessarily organised by the GSL or the HSL.

Both societies donated considerable sums of money for education, in fact, they equally excelled in this philanthropic endeavour. The HSL donated money for the Gaelic schoolmaster at Inverness Academy, and provided funding for Gaelic teaching in Aberdeenshire. Both societies donated to the SSPCK and its successor the Highland Trust for Education and the Gaelic Schools Society. The HSL provided bursaries for needy Gaelic-speaking young men at Scottish universities.³²⁰ The HSL established the Caledonian Asylum in London and the GSL chose to encourage Gaelic education in the homeland and through its Gaelic Education Scheme.

The Federation of Celtic Societies

The inaugural meeting of the Federation of Celtic Societies (FCS) was held in Glasgow, 28 November 1878. It was a coalition of Gaelic, Highland and Celtic societies throughout the kingdom. The GSL was one of the founding members, represented at the first meeting by its Past President, Colin Chisholm. He had served as President for eight years until he retired to Inverness in 1877. During his presidency, he had provided a radical front and leadership during the GSL's important phase of championing the Gaelic language. The GSL had hoped that this Federation would bring a concerted pressure on the Education Department, and indeed the Government, for Gaelic education and the benefit of the homeland in general. Speaking at that

³²⁰ NLS 268/44 and 10615/57

meeting, Chisholm told of his pride to represent the GSL. It was reported as follows:

It is now over forty years since he attended the first Gaelic meeting in England, and according to his view, he never saw a meeting before South or North so well calculated to prove beneficial to the Highlands as the one held that evening. Unity, goodwill, and brotherly feeling were animating the whole assembly, and if he were not mistaken these excellent sentiments were being fixed in the mind, and engraved on the hearts of every man in that assembly. He would be much surprised if success and happiness were not the outcome of such a meeting. They now had twenty-one well organised Celtic societies enrolled under the banner of organisation [...] united, and shoulder to shoulder, their well regulated and temperate but firmly expressed demands would command the respect of the Legislature, from the Queen downwards.³²¹

It would appear that either Colin Chisholm or Alexander Mackenzie represented the GSL at the Federation. Sometimes both of these men presented the opinions of the GSL at the FCS meetings. The GSL also had another member, John Mackay CE of Swansea, later of Hereford, a long-time member of the GSL, who was President of the new association. John Mackay had advised the GSL that a bond of cooperation should be made with other Gaelic societies in Scotland for this reason:

Chuins gum biodh neart air a thoirt da'n guth ann an ni sam bith bu mhiannach leo a chuir air aghaidh, a bhiodh tarbhach do'n Ghaidhealtachd agus do na Gaidheil.³²²

Since strength would be given to their voice in anything at all they desired to put forward which would be beneficial to the Highlands and the Gaels.

John Mackay by his foresight that the Gaels would only achieve ideals by cooperation was a worthy candidate for President of the Celtic

³²¹ *Celtic Magazine* 4 (1879), 115-119, p. 117

³²² UCL GSL MB, 12 December 1877

Federation. Charles Fraser Mackintosh, a Vice-President of the GSL, developed Mackay's sentiments the following year in his address 'Present Claims on Gaelic-speaking Highlanders' to the GSL on 13 March 1878. He had attended many of the FCS meetings. Therefore, the GSL believed its views and opinions were represented through these four men. However, the Celtic Federation, although becoming more politically involved, especially concerning the crofter rights and conditions, appeared to some to be running out of steam, and not fulfilling the ambitions and hopes of its supporters. John Mackay wrote to Prof Blackie on 14 April 1883 that it 'was asleep at this important crisis in crofting affairs'.³²³

The GSL and the London Highland Land Law Reform Association

The perceived failure of the FCS resulted in the establishment of Highland Land Law Reform Associations from August 1882. The first association was in Inverness, followed by one in Edinburgh in February 1883, and another in London in March 1883 and the less structured association in Sutherland in 1885. It is interesting to note that the majority of the London HLLRA executive members were also members of the GSL, and, as the HLLRA grew, the GSL's own membership expanded. It is therefore tempting to speculate that the relationship between the two groups was close. As noted above, some of the presentations given by members at GSL's meeting were on subjects relating to clearances, land tenure and land laws. It is therefore not surprising that the GSL's members played prominent roles in the run-up to the establishment of the HLLRA.

³²³ NLS, MS.2635, fō. 57

The GSL, as early as 1872, decided that 'the Reform of the Land Laws is a subject which by its important influence re the welfare of the Highlands merits the earliest consideration of the society'.³²⁴ In 1873, the GSL considered holding a public meeting to discuss the state of the Highlands. The GSL certainly hosted public meetings regarding the Gaelic Professorship. Therefore, it is not surprising that it was involved in the public meeting hosted by the London Inverness-shire Association in May 1882 to mobilise support for the crofters. Representatives from the Gaelic, Ross, Moray and Caithness societies were present; and Dr Roderick Macdonald, a member of the host society and Vice President of the Gaelic Society, acted as chairman. Prof Blackie and Prof Hunter were the guest speakers. The resolutions carried at the meeting were sent to Charles Fraser Mackintosh with the request that he should present them to Parliament.³²⁵ Everyone present felt that there was a need to reform the land laws to provide the crofters with security of tenure at fair rents.

As far as the press was concerned, the London Gaels were silent until 1 February 1883, when Lord Archibald Campbell and Dr Farquhar Matheson convened a public meeting to consider the grievances of the Skye crofters and the potential threat of military intervention. The meeting was the result of a conversation between those two gentlemen. Apart from Matheson and Campbell, no society was mentioned as organising the meeting. However, the names reported in the newspaper were mainly those of GSL, members including its president Surgeon-General Mackinnon. The

³²⁴ UCL GSL MB, 25 September 1872

³²⁵ *Oban Times*, 20 May 1882, p. 5

invitations sent out stressed that it would be a non-political meeting. Prof Blackie, Charles Fraser Mackintosh and Sir Noel Paton were unable to attend and sent their opinions, essentially recommending arbitration or a Commission. Mr Kenneth Macdonald, Town Clerk of Inverness, and a founding member of the HLLRA of Inverness, who defended the men of the Braes, attended. During the discussion, he reminded the audience that the problem at Glendale was similar to that of the Braes, namely over-reaction by the authorities and bias in press reporting. Lord Campbell had contacted the FCS, looking for support from the Glasgow societies. However, the response was not one he had expected, 'Federation having no grounds to believe that military will be sent to Skye, see no necessity for your lordship's diligence, and decline co-operation'.³²⁶

GSL's Vice-President, Dr Roderick Macdonald, acted as chairman and reminded those present that:

They had not come there to discuss whether the crofters were right or wrong in what they were doing, or whether they had grievances or not. What they had met for was to try to prevent bloodshed in Skye. They did not want to prolong the irritation, but to smooth it down if possible.³²⁷

There was heated discussion during the wording of the motions, but the evening ended with two motions unanimously carried. The first motion stated 'that this meeting is strongly of the opinion that the most satisfactory solution of the present difficulties in Skye and elsewhere in Scotland is by arbitration'. The second motion, 'that in the opinion of this meeting a Royal

³²⁶ *Oban Times*, 10 February 1883, p. 5

³²⁷ *Oban Times*, 10 February 1883, p. 5

or other Commission of Inquiry into the state of affairs in Skye and the other parts of the Highlands where the agitation exists is necessary, and should be immediately appointed'.³²⁸

It was difficult to keep the meeting free from politics, and Dr Matheson offered to arrange for a political discussion in a different venue. 'Ajax' in his *Highland Patriots*³²⁹ paints a much more vivid picture of that night. The patriot he was talking about was Donald Murray, a member of the GSL. During the heated discussion regarding the need for a commission, Mr Hedderwick proposed 'that a deputation be appointed to proceed to Skye with the object of inducing the crofters in revolt to resume law-abiding citizenship'. Murray suggested that those who were interested in this motion should meet outside following the meeting.³³⁰ That meeting did take place; the majority of those mentioned by 'Ajax' were GSL members, namely Donald and James Murray, Malcolm Macleod, Ewen Cattenach, and Malcolm Ferguson. This initial meeting resulted in a much larger meeting on 7 March 1883 at the Exeter Hall where it was decided to establish a London HLLRA. It resolved that the Government should appoint a Royal Commission that should encompass the views of the crofters as well as the landowners. There was also the need to reform the land laws to prevent any more depopulation for sporting purposes.³³¹

³²⁸ *Oban Times*, 10 February 1883, p. 5

³²⁹ 'Ajax' was a *non-de plume* of Rev Donald MacCallum. In his account he erroneously states that this meeting took place in June 1882

³³⁰ Ajax, *Highland Patriots* (Inverness: Highland News Printing and Publishing Works, 1909), p. 13

³³¹ *Oban Times*, 8 March 1883, p. 11

The progress of the London HLLRA or sister associations will not be discussed here,³³² only the identification of those members of the GSL who actively served the London HLLRA. In the honorary positions of Vice Presidents were members such as J.S. Stuart-Glennie, John Mackay of Hereford, and Angus Mackintosh of Holme, who also acted as Treasurer. Prof Blackie and Charles Fraser Mackintosh were also Vice Presidents of the GSL. On the active committee were members Ewen Cattnach, Dr H.C. Gillies, Kenneth Maclean, John Andrew Macdonald, and Malcolm Macleod. Donald Murray was the Secretary, and when he resigned the post, T.D. Macdonald took over the position. Dr Roderick Macdonald became a Crofter MP.

The closeness of the two societies is further demonstrated by the inclusion of the accounts of the GSL's monthly meetings in the HLLRA of London's organ *The Crofter*. No other society was given this privilege. We cannot ascertain the true relationship between the London HLLRA and the GSL. If the GSL's Council Minute Book for this period was still extant, a clearer understanding of the relationship might have been possible, for the Council Minutes deal with all the business of the society. The minutes for the general meetings for this period contain no business, except for the election of new members and the annual election of the Council members.

³³² See I.M.M. MacPhail, *The Crofters' War*; Ewen A. Cameron, *The Life and Times of Fraser Mackintosh and Land for the People? The British Government and the Scottish Highlands c.1880-1925*; Iain Fraser Grigor, *Mightier than a lord: the crofters' struggle for the land* and *The Radical Tradition in the Scottish North*; T.M. Devine, *Clanship to Crofters' War: The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands*; etc.

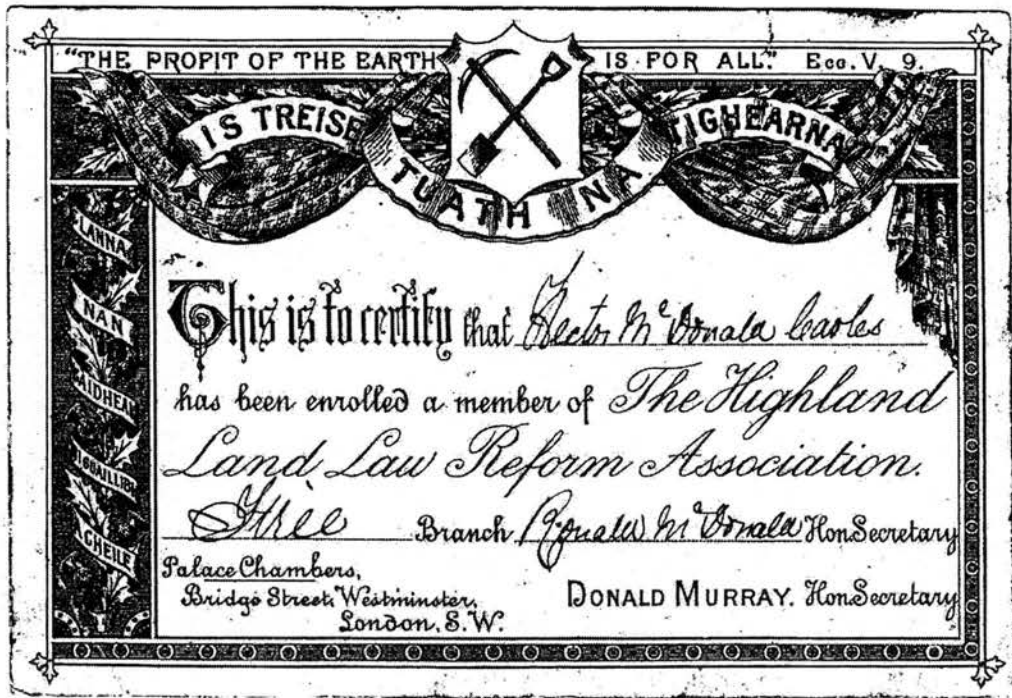


Figure 5 A membership certificate of the London HLLRA

An Comunn Gàidhealach

The next attempt to provide a central voice came from Dugald MacIsaac, John Campbell and John MacMaster Campbell in Oban during 1890. They responded to an article written by Prof Masson, who expressed the opinion that Scotland should establish an institution similar to the Welsh Eisteddfod. The three men formed a committee in the belief that a 'Highland Eisteddfod' would bring greater public awareness to Gaelic language and culture, which might help stave off any further decay. That committee eventually became *An Comunn Gàidhealach* (ACG).

In the committee's early days it sought 'counsel, countenance and support' from the Glasgow, London and Inverness Gaelic societies. Glasgow

gave its approval, but Inverness was aloof and suspicious of a possible rival.

London gave muted approval, and made its opinion known:

A spirited debate ensued within the society, in which William Gillies supported Dr H. Cameron Gillies on the losing side, voting for the minority view that the Gaelic Society of London should concentrate its efforts on securing adequate provision for Gaelic in the Elementary Schools in the Highlands, rather than patronising cultural festivals.³³³

ACG states, probably from the original response, that the GSL approved the suggestion by a majority, the minority being convinced 'that the Highlands were not ripe for this movement and that under existing circumstances and auspices the movement was not practicable and ought not to be encouraged'.³³⁴ In the series on the 'Story of An Comunn', the editor states that the GSL was the 'unwitting inspirer of the movement' for it was this London society which kept the Gaelic cause alive 'practically single-handed'.³³⁵

Both the GSL and the HSL supported ACG financially and provided prizes for the Mòd. The first Executive Council included Dr Farquhar Matheson, Secretary to the HSL, and a member of the GSL's Executive Council, and T.D. Macdonald, Secretary to the GSL. In 1893, Dr Roderick Macgregor MP, a member of the GSL, and John Mackay of Hereford, then current president of the GSL, were appointed Vice-Presidents of ACG. The following year Mackay succeeded Lord Campbell as President. The appointment for judging the 'Mr Fraser Mackintosh Prize' at the Mòd was left to the GSL. The GSL also had members who were themselves successful

³³³ Gillies (1990), p. 522

³³⁴ 'Story of An Comunn', *An Gaidheal* Vol. L (1955), p. 23

³³⁵ *An Gaidheal* Vol. L (1955), p. 23

as competitors. Some of these successful members are worth noting. Ewan Macdonald, better known as Edward Dwelly, was placed second for Gaelic Prose in 1892. William Gillies was placed second in Gaelic Prose in 1894, and Dr H. Cameron Gillies won first place for his essay on the progress of Gaelic in 1896.

ACG held a '*Fèill a Chomuinn Ghàidhealaich*' a grand bazaar, in Glasgow during 1907 to raise funds and awareness for the association. It proved very successful and achieved over £7,000 in profits. There were many stalls representing Gaeldom at home and abroad, and the GSL's Chief, the Hon. Miss Farquharson of Invercauld, was Convener of '*Bùth Lunnainn*'. This stall was a combined effort of the London and Aberdeen Gaels, but much of the planning appeared to take place in London, as reported in the *Oban Times*:

Probably nowhere does the enthusiasm reach a higher level than in the Metropolis. A fund of subscriptions has been formed and has been heartily supported. The Highland Society, the Gaelic Society, the London Argyllshire Society, the London Inverness Society, the Scottish Clans Association, Coisir Chiùil Lunnainn, and the Clan Mackinnon are heartily co-operating. A meeting was held last week with Mr R. Cameron MP in the chair; and Miss Farquharson of Invercauld, and Miss Ainslie Grant Duff are receiving great support from both London and Aberdeen.³³⁶

Although only two members of GSL, Dr Farquhar Matheson (he might also have been representing the HSL) and Mr Roderick Macleod, were on the organising committee, all the members of the GSL were involved in fundraising and collecting items for sale at the *Fèill*. The annual concert for its Gaelic Education Fund had to take second place to accommodate the

³³⁶ *Oban Times*, 19 January 1907, p. 2

Highland Ball and Scottish concert organised by the committee for *Bùth Lunnainn*. However, because of the possible detraction for the GSL's Scottish concert, a compromise was worked out that the profits from both Scottish concerts would be pooled and shared equally between the GSL and the committee of *Bùth Lunnainn*.³³⁷ The success of the *Fèill* did not hinder ACG's applications for donations from the GSL, and tension began to show in the minutes. The reason was simply a difference in their Gaelic agenda. The GSL thought that the reason for the *Fèill* was the encouragement, maintenance and extension of Gaelic. However, the ACG had an expanded vision which included developing Gaelic literature, music and arts and encouraging home industries.

At a GSL Council meeting, early in 1909, as a means to free itself from its increasing financial burden of encouraging Gaelic education the GSL unanimously decided that:

The time has now arrived when An Comunn Gaidhealach should be approached with the view of their taking over the payment of the Capitation Grants made by the Society in connection with Gaelic teaching in the Highland Schools, that the Gaelic Society of London guarantee annually until further notice a sum of at least fifty guineas to the funds of An Comunn Gaidhealach as a contribution in part payment of such grants, provided they adopt this suggestion and that the Executive of An Comunn Gaidhealach be communicated with to this effect.³³⁸

The ACG refused, with regret. Further appeals by the GSL also failed, as did requests for financial support. The GSL decided that the encouragement it gave to Gaelic teachers through its grants was too

³³⁷ UCL GSL Council MB, 7 March 1907

³³⁸ UCL GSL Council MB, 4 February 1909

important to discontinue, and continued to raise money for its Gaelic Education Fund until the First World War put an end to it. The Minute Books of the HSL do not reveal its relationship with ACG, all that is noted is the frequent requests for donations.

Conclusion

The manner in which the HSL and the GSL gave assistance to improve the lives of those in the homeland differed. Overall, the HSL demonstrated clearly, in the early years, its desire to assist the people in the Highlands and Islands by a system of improvement. Such measures could also be seen as a method of generating income and curbing emigration. One has to ask whether the HSL's motives stemmed purely from self-interest or whether they were altruistic. This is particularly so with regard to the establishment of the British Fisheries and in its initial discouragement of emigration. Certainly individual members of the HSL seemed to benefit, principally the Duke of Argyll, with the advantages bestowed on his island of Mull by the formation of a fishing village at Tobermory. However, by building roads it provided a good infrastructure for better communication and travel. Although the planned fishing villages were not successful, the Napier Commission recommended a similar scheme as a means of addressing the condition of crofters. The HSL's interest in the Excise Acts demonstrates the various dynamics associated with whisky distillation, in particular, the relationship between tenant and landlord. The HSL's lobbying for changes to the Excise Acts probably had more to do with individual members receiving their rents than concern with their tenants' well being. On

the tenants' part, production of spirits for home consumption during the long winter nights changed to increased manufacture in order to augment their income to pay their increased rents. However, the HSL did show continuing generosity to Scotland's military personnel and their dependants by paying the passage home, and it always responded to famine and distress in the Highlands.

The GSL, with its different membership base, was not in any position to compete with the HSL's role of improver. However, in times of famine, it raised money for the homeland. It recognised the importance of cooperation with other societies to provide a more concerted and central voice on Highland issues, and became a member of the Celtic Federation and supported the ACG. Through its capitation grant for teachers, it encouraged Gaelic education and continued when ACG refused assistance. It was also keenly aware of human desolation due to evictions and clearances. Many of its members were roused to take radical action, and they formed the London HLLRA, which helped to empower the crofters to take some control of their own destiny.

ESTABLISHING A GAELIC CHAPEL

Introduction

Charles Withers and Ian MacDonald have written much on the establishment of Gaelic Chapels in lowland Scotland.³³⁹ However, the spiritual need and supervision of Gaels migrating to London has been all but ignored. What has been written on the London Gaelic Chapel, or indeed Gaelic services in London, is very limited. One can speculate that the individual authors were simply not interested in Gaelic services in these churches.³⁴⁰ The records of the HSL, the HSL's Caledonian Asylum committee, the independent Caledonian Asylum (CA), and its Gaelic Chapel committee or indeed those of the GSL have not been taken into account.

The establishment of the Gaelic Chapel is claimed by both HSL and GSL. This chapter will discuss their individual roles and involvement in order to ascertain the progression of Gaelic worship in London from 1809 to the present time.³⁴¹

³³⁹ Ian MacDonald, *Aberdeen and the Highland Church 1785-1900* (Edinburgh: St Andrews Press, 2000); 'The beginning of Gaelic preaching in Scotland's Cities' *Northern Scotland* 9 (1989); *Glasgow Gaelic Churches* (Edinburgh: Knox, 1995), Charles Withers *Urban Highlanders* (Phantassie: Tuckwell Press Ltd, 1998); 'Highland Clubs and Gaelic Chapels', *Scottish Geographic Magazine* 101 (1985); 'Kirk, club and culture change; Gaelic Chapels, Highland societies and the urban Gaelic subculture in eighteenth-century Scotland', *Social History* 10 (1985)

³⁴⁰ K. Macleod Black, *The Scots Churches in England* (London: Blackwood, 1906); J.C.S. Brough, *The Centenary of Regent Square* (London: Regent Square Church, 1927); John Hair, *Regent Square: Eighty years of a London Congregation* (London: Nisbet, 1889); George Cameron, *The Scots Kirk in London* (Oxford: Becket Publications, 1979)

³⁴¹ For a much fuller treatment of the evidence see Janice Fairney, 'Gaelic worship in London 1809-1914' (forthcoming)

A London Gaelic Chapel

There is no mention of a Gaelic Chapel in the HSL's original objects. The earliest reference to the creation of a chapel is in 1801, when success looked imminent.³⁴² Then nothing until 1807, when the HSL decided that Rev Duncan Robertson's presentation regarding his proposal for a Gaelic Chapel under the 'Patronage of this Society' would be deferred.

Rev Duncan Robertson eventually made his presentation in 1808. In it he noted the increasing number of poor Highland migrants arriving in London: and the need and value of worship among all classes of Highlanders, especially those who 'may be considered as Strangers in a distant land', whose very language isolated them.³⁴³

The success of the Gaelic Chapels in Scottish urban centres could be expected for London. Robertson believed that the generosity of wealthy Highlanders resident in London would provide a chapel, and recommended that subscriptions should be opened. Robertson's proposal was referred to the HSL's Standing Committee, which was investigating ways to revitalise the Society through philanthropic ventures.

This committee, headed by John Macarthur, recommended that HSL should not only establish a Gaelic Chapel which would be 'be highly creditable to the Society', but also a school, the CA, as a joint project. The school should be the Society's first aim and the chapel would form part of it. The committee also differed from Rev Robertson's proposal that the Gaelic

³⁴² NLS 268/22, p. 158

³⁴³ NLS 268/15, *Proposal for Establishing a Gaelic Chapel*

and English services should be conducted according to the forms of the Church of Scotland; instead it believed that the English service should be Episcopal.³⁴⁴ One can assume that this was to accommodate members of the HSL.

The Gaelic Chapel was seen as very attainable.³⁴⁵ Its estimated income would far outweigh its expenses, bringing the school equally within reach. Separate subscription books for the CA and Gaelic Chapel would be opened.³⁴⁶ Three hundred copies of the plan of the CA and two hundred plans of the Gaelic and English Chapel were circulated with a letter. The scheme was to be recommended to all the London and Scottish societies and the Scottish nobility and gentry would be asked for their support.³⁴⁷

The chapel excited more interest, and because of this the HSL decided to solicit for the CA alone, 'because the chapel being a necessary appendage of that institution, the same fund will provide for the establishment of both'.³⁴⁸ Though the HSL had essentially shelved the Gaelic Chapel, it could not prevent interest in the chapel from growing. David Stewart of Garth took his copy of the plans back with him to the West Indies and had copies printed and distributed, and through his endeavours was able to send back a considerable subscription.³⁴⁹ Stewart was not alone in the membership of the HSL who wanted the Gaelic Chapel to succeed.

³⁴⁴ NLS 268/24, p. 175

³⁴⁵ NLS 268/24, p. 175

³⁴⁶ NLS 268/24, p. 182

³⁴⁷ NLS 268/25, pp. 3-4

³⁴⁸ NLS 268/25, p. 18

³⁴⁹ NAS GD1/53/112, p. 13

According to James Logan, Rev Robertson with his supporters formed a society called the 'Gaelic Society' in 1808 to raise funds for supporting a Gaelic preacher in London.³⁵⁰ No records of this society, has been found, and the name of the group connected with the chapel is always referred to as the 'Gaelic Chapel Subscribers'. It is my belief that Malcolm and Donald Currie, who were key players in the Gaelic Chapel Subscribers and the subsequent Management Committee, were Logan's informants. If indeed some of the subscribers called themselves the Gaelic Society it had no connection with the GSL of 1830 apart from name and a few shared members.

In February 1809, Robertson wrote to the HSL stating that he had found a suitable building with a reasonable rent, and that he was willing to 'officiate as Clergyman for the first half year gratuitously'.³⁵¹ The HSL encouraged his actions, so Robertson published his proposal and opened subscriptions.³⁵² The chapel was situated in Dartmouth Street, Westminster, and it opened for English and Gaelic services on 25 June 1809.³⁵³ It proved very successful. It provided a place of worship not only for its supporters, but also for those Highlanders without a home congregation in London, and for soldiers and sailors who were passing through. The result was that the congregation soon outgrew the little chapel.

³⁵⁰ Logan, p. vii

³⁵¹ NLS 268/25, p. 46

³⁵² *Report of the Proceedings of the Committee appointed to Manage the Affairs of the London Gaelic Chapel* (London: 1810), p. 4

³⁵³ *Times*, 27 June 1809, p. 4

In September 1809, a general meeting of Friends and Subscribers was held to address the situation, and a Management Committee was elected. The Highland population in London, it was reckoned, 'exceeds those who reside in Glasgow and Edinburgh in the proportion of three to one; yet in each of these Cities there are two Gaëlic Chapels'.³⁵⁴ Therefore the need for a permanent Gaelic Chapel was real. It was agreed that the minister should be an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland; that Gaelic and English services would be conducted, to accommodate those families who were becoming bilingual. Like the Gaelic churches in Scottish cities, the desire not to divide families into different congregations was paramount.³⁵⁵

The subscriptions collected proved very generous, the principal subscribers being members of the HSL. The chapel would now precede the school; but to appease those HSL members who wanted it the other way round, Sir John Macpherson, Chairman of the 1810 Management Committee and a member of the HSL, stated that:

your committee will here take the liberty of suggesting, as soon as the objects of the Gäelic Chapel has been finally accomplished, the propriety of establishing a School in Connection therewith, on a Scale proportionate to the Funds, that may at that period be either unappropriated, or expected.³⁵⁶

Stewart of Garth, an ardent supporter of the chapel also saw it 'as a beginning and a foundation for the school'.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ *Report of the Proceedings of the Committee appointed to Manage the Affairs of the London Gäelic Chapel*, p. 4

³⁵⁵ *Report of the Proceedings of the Committee appointed to Manage the Affairs of the London Gäelic Chapel*, p. 8

³⁵⁶ *Report of the Committee... of the London Gäelic Chapel*, p. 24

³⁵⁷ NAS GD1/53/112, p. 13

In 1811 the HSL committee promoting the CA decided that steps should be taken to unite the fund of the London Gaelic Chapel and the CA 'under the fostering hand of the Highland Society'. However, care was needed for any success; Rev Robertson was against any union, and the committee did not want a permanent separation. The Management Committee of the London Gaelic Chapel were proving very successful in raising funds and might in time raise enough for the school. Robertson was proving to be an unpopular minister; many of his original supporters had left the chapel. The HSL committee decided to play a waiting game, for 'by giving time, Mr Robertson may work out his own salvation, and the Chapel Subscribers will in all probability apply to the Highland Society for a successor and for Incorporation with the Caledonian Asylum'.³⁵⁸

The Gaelic Chapel Subscribers succeeded in raising enough money to purchase a chapel and house in Cross Street, Hatton Garden, in March 1813, for £4150. It paid £2790.17.3, all it had received in subscriptions.³⁵⁹ As there was little likelihood of new subscriptions, an approach was made to the HSL, as a means of alerting those members who had donated previously that the chapel needed continued support. To encourage the HSL, the Chapel Subscribers added that they 'trust that the London Gaelic Chapel will become the Foundation Stone of the Caledonian Asylum'.³⁶⁰ The HSL referred the letter and report to its CA committee, asking that the committee ascertain:

³⁵⁸ BM CA MB, 1808-1815, pp. 32-3

³⁵⁹ TNA T18/401, p. 2

³⁶⁰ NLS 268/25, p. 212

whether any means can be devised for recruiting under the Auspices of the Society the Caledonian Asylum and the London Gaelic Chapel Sister Institutions already united in principle and an actual union of which appears well adapted to promote their mutual prosperity.³⁶¹

The HSL informed the Subscribers of its action and hoped that it might 'lead to promote an object so desirable as a reunion of that Institution with the London Gaelic Chapel which formed a part of the original Plan promulgated under the auspices of the Highland Society'.³⁶²

The HSL would get its way. That was certain the moment the subscriptions started to pour in from North America and the West Indies. These were due to the exertions of Gilbert Salton, who had successfully solicited for 'the establishment of that national undertaking the Caledonian Asylum and a church opened for divine Worship where Highlanders may address their Creator in the Language of their forefathers'.³⁶³

The Caledonian Church

On the 4 January 1815 the CA became a separate corporate body from the HSL and the fate of the Gaelic Chapel was to lie in its hands. In March 1815, Mr Grant, solicitor to the CA, was asked to solicit the Gaelic Chapel Subscribers for an agreement to be incorporated as part of the Asylum establishment. In May Sir Archibald Macdonald was asked to chair the meeting at the London Gaelic Chapel for this purpose.

It is therefore surprising that Malcolm Currie, Secretary of the Gaelic Chapel Management Committee, wrote to the HSL in that same

³⁶¹ NLS 268/25, p. 213

³⁶² NLS 268/25, p. 219

³⁶³ NLS 268/25, p. 323

month, asking for its protection, for it was now without a minister.³⁶⁴ The HSL committee had been correct in its assessment of Rev Robertson. There had been dissension among the pew-holders, a loss of membership and a reduction of income. Stewart of Garth during this time of upheaval was negotiating with Rev Dr Daniel Dewar, who (it would appear) was 'willing to accept [...] the charge on being appointed sole Chaplain, and getting the allowance for five years, which we proposed for the school in the Asylum'.³⁶⁵ However, the financial state of the Gaelic Chapel had to be dealt with first. Rev Dr Dewar came to London and preached a sermon at the Gaelic Chapel in May 1815,³⁶⁶ but if his interest in becoming its minister was serious, it must have waned.

In June 1816 an agreement of union was brokered between the Gaelic Chapel and the CA:

1st That the Corporation undertake to pay the balance of the purchase money due to Mr Thompson the Vender with the interest due or which may become due thereon and all other debts affecting the chapel.

2nd That the Corporation shall provide at all times a place of worship in London for accomplishing the purposes for which the Chapel was originally established, equally commodious with the present, and that no one shall be eligible to officiate therein except a clergyman professing the Doctrine of the Church of Scotland as by Law Established and duly licensed according to the rules and practise of that church, after having been educated at one of the Scotch universities; and that such clergymen shall deliver one discourse in Gaelic and another in English on every Lord's Day and shall duly administer the sacrament of the supper on the first Lord's day in every quarter.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁴ NLS 268/26, p. 96

³⁶⁵ NAS GD1/53/112, p. 13

³⁶⁶ NLS 268/26, p. 98

³⁶⁷ BM CA MB 1815-1820, pp. 26-7

These conditions were carried into effect by an Indenture of bargain and sale dated 6 September 1816, subsequently known as the 'Trust', and the outstanding balance of the purchase price was discharged.³⁶⁸ The chapel was now the property of the CA, and a committee was appointed to superintend the Gaelic Chapel; they were all subscribers, members of the HSL, and all directors of the CA.

The union of CA and Gaelic Chapel was not a happy one. The closure of the chapel for repairs in September 1816 brought acrimony, and ended with Malcolm Currie breaking into the chapel with the aid of a locksmith.³⁶⁹ After the repairs, the next major task was to find a new minister. The London Presbytery agreed to officiate at the morning English service until a minister could be selected. Occasionally Gaelic sermons were preached in the afternoon.

The terms of the 'Trust' prevented an open election and imposed the appointment of the clergyman upon the Directors of the CA, so advice was sought from Rev Dr Daniel Dewar and Rev Duncan Grant, both of Aberdeen, who both gave their opinions.³⁷⁰ The chapel committee decided to heed their recommendations. Administrative decisions were made, and the salary agreed upon at £150 per annum with the addition of half the income from the pew rents once the salary had been deducted.

³⁶⁸ TNA TS18/401, pp. 1-2

³⁶⁹ TNA TS18/401, pp. 1-2

³⁷⁰ BM CA Gaelic Chapel MB, pp. 11-12

The Chapel would be reopened in December as the Caledonian Church. Rev Dr Nicol of the Scots Presbytery would officiate, and in the afternoon a Gaelic service would be held. The London Scots Presbytery would continue to supply clergymen until a suitable candidate was found, and suggested that each officiating minister should receive a stipend from the £150 salary for the minister.³⁷¹ Several ministers came forward for a trial and finally the Directors of the CA invited Rev James Boyd to the Ministry as the most qualified of the candidates.³⁷²

He began his duties on 18 June 1818 and, according to John Hair, Rev Boyd had some success as minister and the congregation steadily grew.³⁷³ However, he soon found the duties of Clergyman, Secretary and Superintendent of Education excessive, and in January 1819 Boyd left for another living in Scotland. Rev Allan McNaughton was appointed his successor in July 1819. It was said of McNaughton that 'his preaching was not very acceptable; the congregation gradually decreased; he lost heart, and accepted a call'. He resigned in December 1820.

The directors of the CA were faced with a problem: they were obligated by the 'Trust' to provide a Gaelic speaking clergyman to perform Divine service every Sunday to a diminished congregation of ten or twelve people, all of whom they believed understood English better than Gaelic. A successor for McNaughton had to be found.³⁷⁴ The condition of Gaelic

³⁷¹ BM CA Gaelic chapel Minute Book, p. 24

³⁷² BM CA Gaelic Chapel MB, p. 34

³⁷³ Hair, p. 25

³⁷⁴ BM CA MB 1820-1835, p. 2

preaching and the need for a bi-lingual minister was becoming a hindrance, and the Gaelic Chapel was eating into the funds of the CA. In March 1822, the directors sought legal advice; could they purchase the chapel, then securing it with a Bond that would provide funds to pay the annual stipend of a clergyman?³⁷⁵

A new Act of Parliament was the only way forward. While the Bill was going through the House of Commons, a compromise was struck between the two parties. The Gaelic Chapel Subscribers, on payment of £2,500, would not oppose the Bill; the money would be used towards Gaelic preaching. Yet they changed their minds and threatened to sabotage the Bill in the House of Lords. The CA, in an attempt to keep the Bill on course, offered the Gaelic Subscribers two propositions. The first was the transfer of the chapel to them on payment of £1,954.19s. The second was that the CA would retain possession of the chapel on payment to the Subscribers of £2,790, the sum originally given in part-payment for the chapel. The Subscribers agreed to accept the second proposal and withdraw their petition against the Bill.³⁷⁶

The Bill, 'An Act to confirm an Agreement entered into between the Trustees of the Subscribers to the Gaelic Chapel and the Caledonian Asylum', was passed on 30 July 1822. Col. David Stewart of Garth, Alexander Fraser of Lincoln Inns Field and Archibald Campbell of Regent

³⁷⁵ BM CA MB 1820-1835, p. 43

³⁷⁶ BM CA MB 1820-1835, pp. 67-8

Street were appointed by the Act as the Trustees of the Subscribers' Fund.³⁷⁷

The money was invested in Exchequer Bills.³⁷⁸

However, the subscribers of the London Gaelic Chapel were concerned about the provision of trustees in the Act of Parliament and, in 1823, asked the HSL if it would act as trustee. Because

many of the subscribers to the London Gaelic Chapel were also Members of the Corporation of the London Highland Society, instituted for, among other things, the purpose of preserving the Gaelic language and assisting the Highlanders at a Distance from their Homes, there could not be found a fitter Body in whom to confide the Trusts of the Gaelic Chapel than the said Corporation nor one so likely to promote the objects for which the money was subscribed.³⁷⁹

The HSL agreed to hold the money until a new Bill for a permanent arrangement could go before Parliament.³⁸⁰ This did not take place until 1827.³⁸¹ All the money was then put into a Fund called 'Attorney General and Stewart (Gaelic Chapel), and access to the Fund would be given to any appropriate scheme recommended and approved by the Attorney General and the Court of Chancery.³⁸²

During this time of settlement between the Gaelic Chapel Subscribers and the CA, the elders and the congregation of the Caledonian Church sought another solution. Without the consent of the CA they invited Rev Edward Irving to come to the Caledonian Church and preach for one

³⁷⁷ BM CA MB 1820-1835, p. 72

³⁷⁸ TNA TS18/401, p. 5

³⁷⁹ NLS 268/15, *Extract from the Minutes of a General Meeting of Subscribers to the London Gaelic Chapel* (26 June 1823)

³⁸⁰ NLS 268/2, 3 March 1824

³⁸¹ Statute 52 Geo III c.100 (1827)

³⁸² TNA TS18/401, p. 5

month. They knew that Irving, who came from the Borders, had no Gaelic, but they hoped that if he proved successful the directors of the CA might agree to drop the Gaelic condition. The CA would not consider this because of the terms of the 'Trust', but eventually agreed to rent the chapel to the elders of the Caledonian Church, whereupon Rev Irving became its minister.

In March 1823 Rev John Lees was appointed Secretary of the CA, and Gaelic services began to be conducted again at the Caledonian Church. It has been assumed that Rev Lees continued to deliver Gaelic services at the Caledonian Church and moved with the congregation to the newly built Regent Square Church. However, this is incorrect; during the period 1830 to c.1833 Gaelic services were being conducted at the Scotch Church in Chadwell Street and then in a room at 18 Gate Street, Lincolns Inn Field.³⁸³ It is uncertain when the services moved to Regent Square Church, but when they did they were held in the Vestry.³⁸⁴ Rev Lees was never paid from the dividends of the Gaelic Chapel Fund until 1830; either he preached gratis, or the CA paid for his services. It was not until 1830 that Alexander Fraser, one of the Trustees of the Fund, petitioned the Court of Chancery. His petition was successful. The Exchequer Bills were transferred into a dividend-paying Annuity to cover the cost of Gaelic services, for as long as Rev Lees conducted them or until a further application was made to the Court.³⁸⁵

According to John Cameron Macphee of the GSL, the size of congregation was due to the fact that Rev Lees lacked preaching ability, and

³⁸³ TNA TS18/401, p. 6; LMA MR/R/H/003/01

³⁸⁴ TNA TS18/401, p. 29

³⁸⁵ TNA TS18/401, pp. 6-7

that members of the congregation openly said that 'it was not worth while coming any distance to hear Mr Lees' dry & pitiless Sermons.³⁸⁶ Nevertheless, Lees continued his ministry to the London Gaels for a period of twenty-one years; it ceased when he accepted a new living in the Highlands, a position that became vacant as a result of the Disruption.

The Court of Chancery and the Gaelic Chapel Fund

In 1845 the Attorney General appointed James Gordon Duff and Alexander Simpson, both directors of the CA, Trustees of the Gaelic Chapel Fund. Shortly afterwards they petitioned the Court of Chancery asking that the dividends from the Gaelic Fund be paid to the CA if a suitable candidate for the Gaelic ministry could not be found. The Court found that there was no need for a Gaelic preacher³⁸⁷ and the CA was a worthy successor to the dividends of the Fund. The children in attendance were strictly educated in the religion of the Church of Scotland, and this connection with the Church of Scotland made the scheme proposed the closest to the aims of the original subscription.³⁸⁸

It would appear that no Gaelic services took place in London until the GSL decided to re-establish them during the late 1860s. At some point someone must have remembered the Gaelic Chapel Fund, and investigation proved that it had been diverted from its original purpose; and yet one has to question why the London Gaels took no action before this time. It had been forty years since the Fund had been deposited with the Court of Chancery,

³⁸⁶ TNA TS18/401, p. 14

³⁸⁷ TNA TS18/401, p. 8

³⁸⁸ TNA TS18/401, p. 10

nearly sixty years since the Subscribers to the Gaelic Chapel had raised sufficient funds for a Gaelic chapel, and over twenty years since the last weekly Gaelic service. All that could have remained of these services must have been faint memories among a few, and a belief that the GSL had an earlier stake in the fund.

The campaign for reinstatement of the Gaelic services began with the publication of an article about the GSL in the *London Scotsman* in 1867. The article charged Dr John Cumming, minister of Crown Court Church of Scotland, as the chief instigator for the CA petitioning the Court of Chancery in 1845.³⁸⁹ From 1868 the GSL arranged Gaelic services conducted by visiting Gaelic-speaking ministers.³⁹⁰ However, for this to continue on a more permanent basis a source of income was needed; so the GSL appointed a committee to enquire into the Gaelic Chapel fund. The Report from the committee was very thorough.³⁹¹ It outlined the provenance of the Fund from its inception in 1809, though it did not mention the 'Gaelic Society' of 1808, or Rev Dr John Cummings. It stated that the evidence given by the four witnesses to the CA's 1845 petition was false. It also expressed the opinion that it would 'neglect their duty to Gaelic speakers in this city unless they see to it without any delay that the Fund is brought back in order to establish Gaelic preaching again in London'.³⁹²

³⁸⁹ *London Scotsman*, 14 December 1867, p. 537

³⁹⁰ TNA TS18/401, pp. 14-15; *London Scotsman*, 14 March 1868, p. 247, 6 June 1868, p. 528, 19 December 1868, p. 402

³⁹¹ See Appendix I

³⁹² UCL GSL Gaelic Chapel Fund Report

Legal opinion was sought which concurred with that of the committee. Therefore the only option was to notify the CA directors that its use of the 'Fund' was illegal and that an appeal would be made to the Court of Chancery to reverse its decision, in order to have the dividends once again used for Gaelic services. After nearly twenty-five years of receiving benefit from the 'Fund', the CA was not willing to lose it. A letter was sent to the GSL from the CA's solicitor informing it that the Court's decision was based on substantiated fact.³⁹³

Mr Simpson, the CA's solicitor, gave his legal opinion in June 1869.

He stated that:

It appears to me that the application of the Gaelic Society is based upon two fallacies. First. They assume in the letter of Messrs Menzies & Cameron to Mr Daniel that the original fund was subscribed for the benefit of persons in London who could speak Gaelic and they enlarge upon the number of such persons, but the fact is that the subscriptions were paid for the benefit of those who could not speak English, the Number of whom at this present time must be very small in London. Secondly they assume that the Gaelic Society has some interest in or connection with the fund in question, whereas they have nothing more to do with the matter than any others of the public for the fund was not theirs or under the direction of the present or the former society.³⁹⁴

He also advised that any legal proceedings by the GSL would fail.

Nevertheless, the GSL did not waver in its belief that it had a strong case, though this belief ultimately proved false. It continued to organise Gaelic services, in some years as often as one every month, and this continued until 1872. However, in its dispute with the CA, the GSL was not

³⁹³ UCL GSL MB, 29 April 1869

³⁹⁴ BM CA MB 1854-1880, p. 395

so fortunate. The lawyers wrangled and postured, an attempt by the GSL to work out a solution to share the dividends was not even considered by the CA,³⁹⁵ and the impasse seemed impenetrable.

Eventually the GSL had no recourse but to petition the Court of Chancery. Essentially the case rested on the ability to recommend new schemes for the use of the Gaelic Chapel Fund in pursuance of Section 2 of the 'Act to provide a summary remedy in cases of abuses of Trust created for Charitable purposes (1827)'. The Petitioners were Colin Maccallum, Donald MacGregor and John Cameron Macphee, and their new scheme was 'warmly and unanimously concurred in by the members of the Gaelic Society and other Gaelic speaking people resident in London'.³⁹⁶ It suggested that the Fund would more accurately reflect its original purpose if it was spent on Gaelic services in London. Eighteen witnesses were produced to support the petition.

Evidence was produced regarding the increase in the Highland population in London; the need for Gaelic services, and also that congregations of between 270 and 400 people attended Gaelic services with little notice. This John Cameron Macphee believed clearly demonstrated the Highlanders 'earnest desire to have the Gospel ordinances dispersed in their native language'.³⁹⁷ Yet along with others he admitted the lack of attendance at Rev Lees's services.

³⁹⁵ UCL GSL MB, 19 May 1871

³⁹⁶ TNA TS18/401, p. 15

³⁹⁷ TNA TS18/401, p. 16

23
In Chancery

V. C. Malins

Friday February 16th 1872

Attorney General

— v —

Stewart

— and —

In the matter of the
Gaelic Chapel Charity
and Act of 52 Geo 5th
Cap. 101

Brief

Petition

For the Crown

W. Hemming
with you

Attorney General

V.L.M. Malins 1872
did not petition without cost
Cost of Resp. debts & c. by balance
Not a claim at of the fund
G.W. Hemming

Solr Treasury
Nathan Bradley

Agents

~~W. Hemming~~
W. Hemming

SERIES
NO

Gaelic Chapel Charity
Attorney General
Stewart 1872

TO BE PRESERVED

Figure 6 Court of Chancery, the case of Attorney General versus Stewart

The Attorney General and the CA opposed the petition, and each as respondents offered evidence. The Attorney General offered the affidavits used in support of the 1846 petition. The CA offered two witnesses; the first being Jesse Cato Daniel, secretary to the CA for the last ten years. He provided information regarding the current state of the charity and a general overview of the success of its scholars. He asserted that if the dividends were lost to the Asylum the number of children attending would have to be greatly reduced.³⁹⁸ He spoke of the number of London Scots he knew through his post of secretary and through his membership of several Scottish societies in London. He then damningly stated that most Highlanders resident in London did not see the need for Gaelic services and regarded them as 'a curiosity or luxury'. It was also his belief that:

there is a strong desire on behalf of certain persons calling themselves the Gaelic Society to prevent the Gaelic language becoming obsolete and that it is in furtherance of that desire and not from necessity which exists for Gaelic services that application is now made to reappropriate [sic] the dividends of the Gaelic Chapel fund for the purposes of Gaelic Services in London.³⁹⁹

Rev John Cumming, minister of Crown Court Scotch Church for thirty-five years, was the second witness. He expressed his belief that many would attend Gaelic services if they were permanently reintroduced, not because of a lack of English, 'but very naturally from the strong affection which Highlanders justly cherish for the language to which they have been accustomed in their Native land'.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁸ TNA TS18/104, p. 34

³⁹⁹ TNA TS18/401, p. 35

⁴⁰⁰ TNA TS18/401, p. 36

Vice Chancellor Mallins in his ruling declared that he discounted the witnesses' testimony that they could not properly understand an English service. Nor did he believe that the dividends would provide enough money for permanent Gaelic preaching. The petitioners' proposal was doomed to fail, and he questioned 'the constancy of those who desired the Gaelic service'.⁴⁰¹ The Attorney General had been strongly opposed, and taking his lead, Vice Chancellor Mullins ruled against and dismissed the petition. The CA and the Attorney General won the day; for Mullins' opinion was that the earlier decision should stand, and their costs would be paid from capital of the fund, whereas the petitioners would pay their own costs.⁴⁰²

New Beginnings and the London Gaelic Services Committee

According to one account, as a result of the ruling, the GSL formed the Gaelic Services Committee in 1872 to ensure the continuance of Gaelic preaching in London.⁴⁰³ However, I have found no corroborative evidence, although it is highly probable that the GSL would have continued to arrange as many Gaelic services as possible. In 1903, the *Oban Times* refers to Gaelic services in London and notes that Donald Murray's committee [i.e. the Gaelic Services committee] had been in existence 'for the past 25 years' thus giving a start date of 1878.⁴⁰⁴ The earliest reference found in the records of the Presbyterian Churches in London is for 1886, in the Crown Court Church Session Minutes. The minute for May states that the Minister, Rev Philips had arranged for a Gaelic service to be conducted by the Rev K. A.

⁴⁰¹ *Times*, 9 March 1872, p. 11

⁴⁰² *Times*, 9 March 1872, p. 11

⁴⁰³ Castle, p. 20

⁴⁰⁴ *Oban Times*, 21 February 1903, p. 5

Mackenzie, Minister of the Parish of Kingussie, on 16 May 1886. The Session also agreed that a year's trial of Gaelic services preached quarterly should take place.⁴⁰⁵

The Gaelic service proved successful, with a congregation of somewhere between 500 and 600 people. The Session therefore decided that a meeting regarding the continuation of Gaelic services should be arranged to schedule services for the following year. This committee consisted of many GSL members, including Donald Murray.⁴⁰⁶

During 1888 and 1889 six Gaelic services were held, conducted alternately by ministers of the Church of Scotland and the Free Church, all were very well attended.⁴⁰⁷ In 1893 two Gaelic speaking ministers were inducted in London. Rev Alexander Connel, minister of the English Presbyterian Regent Square Church and Rev Alexander Macrae, minister of Crown Court Church of Scotland. Gaelic services in London were from that time conducted by both these ministers on a regular basis, but independent of each other.

In 1903 a new joint denominational venture, the London Gaelic Services Committee, was formed to co-ordinate these services. 'The committee set a notable example among their compatriots by inviting Gaelic-speaking ministers of all Presbyterian denominations to preach at these

⁴⁰⁵ NAS CH2/852/8, 6 May 1886

⁴⁰⁶ NAS CH2/852/8, 10 February 1887

⁴⁰⁷ NAS CH2/852/8, 13 December 1889

services, which are loyally supported'.⁴⁰⁸ The first service arranged by this united committee was held on 15 February 1903, the Very Reverend Norman MacLeod D.D., ex-moderator of the Church of Scotland conducted the service. The committee wanted to raise £1,500 to ensure Gaelic services would continue:

As it was felt that the ancient and national language of Scotland should be permanently upheld and commemorated by these services in the capital of the Empire, for which so many men of Scottish blood have given their lives or their services.⁴⁰⁹

This committee continues to this day. Unfortunately its early records were destroyed during a London Blitz.

Conclusion

Unlike its sister Gaelic Chapels in the Lowlands, the London Gaelic Chapel did not receive the protection of the Church of Scotland, nor the financial support from the SSPCK, and this made it vulnerable. Perhaps because of this lack, it took much longer to come to fruition. The HSL talked about a Gaelic Chapel for seven years, but nothing was achieved. It did provide support for Rev Robertson and his ambitions, with individual members becoming the principal subscribers, and it continued to support the Gaelic Chapel in times of trouble.

Although Gaelic worship began in 1809, and the London Gaelic Chapel was created in 1813, the GSL can take no credit. It had a troubled history, which led ultimately to an unsuccessful action by the GSL against the CA over the issue of the 'Fund' for Gaelic preaching. Yet it was the

⁴⁰⁸ Black, p. 28

⁴⁰⁹ *Oban Times*, 21 February 1903, p. 5

GSL, and later individual members, who resurrected, maintained and secured Gaelic preaching in London. Through them the loyalty of the London Gaels to Gaelic services was vindicated, even if no longer in a designated Gaelic Chapel.

The function of these services changed over time. At its inception the Gaelic Chapel provided spiritual nourishments for migrants in London, with barely enough English to get by. Many of them would not have understood an English sermon. By the early twentieth century the Gaelic services were provided for a bilingual congregation whose members wanted to hear the Word of God in their native tongue.

PRESERVING GAELIC LITERATURE

Introduction

The fourth object of the Highland Society of London (HSL) was 'the rescuing from oblivion the valuable remains of Celtic Literature'. Its commitment to this object was shown by providing patronage for Gaelic scholars in the homeland. In 1778, it assisted the publication of John Clarke's translation *The Works of the Caledonian Bards*. In 1780 and 1787, it provided initial monetary support for and then subscribed to Dr John Smith's two editions of translated poems. The first *Galic Antiquities* included a dissertation on the authenticity of poems of Ossian with some examples and the later publication *Sean Dàna* contained poems ascribed to Ossian. Both were of great interest to the Society. It also purchased several copies of Gillies' edition of Gaelic poetry, *Sean Dàin agus Orain Ghaidhealach* in 1786. Other works subscribed to were Mackintosh's *Gaelic Proverbs* in 1785, William Cameron's *Gaelic Poems* in 1796, Rev Stewart's translation into Gaelic of the *Book of Common Prayer* in 1802 and Rev Mr Campbell's Gaelic poem collection in 1806.

However, most of the HSL's corporate energy for this objective was spent in its relationship with James Macpherson and in its unflagging desire to right a wrong and show to the world the original Gaelic poems of Ossian. Under the patronage of the HSL the Gaelic originals of Macpherson's published translations were eventually printed in 1807. In achieving this, the

HSL believed it had performed its greatest honour to Gaelic literature. Macpherson's English 'translations' of epic songs or poems allegedly known in Gaelic tradition were published in 1761 and 1763. Macpherson said his translations were the result of collecting the poems of Ossian (reputedly a third century bard), from both oral tradition and manuscripts. They offered 'proof' that Gaelic Scotland had an ancient civilisation and provided the Edinburgh *literati* with a truly Scottish epic, which encompassed all their ideals. This led to controversy and debate particularly during the 1760s and 1770s, and on an academic level the debate continues to this day.

The leading antagonist was Dr Samuel Johnson, the English poet, essayist and lexicographer, and his participation led to the controversy gaining ground. He believed that Macpherson was a forger and that the poems were counterfeit, and he did not believe in ancient Gaelic manuscripts. He stated that as 'far as we can find, the Erse language was never written till very lately for the purpose of religion. A nation that cannot write, or a language that was never written, has no manuscripts' and he believed it to be simply 'another proof of Scotch conspiracy in national falsehood'.⁴¹⁰

For that reason, the HSL wanted the originals of the poems published to defend the honour of their country and to prove to Johnson and his supporters that Scotland did have a corpus of ancient Gaelic literature comparable to that of Homer. The events that led to the HSL supporting

⁴¹⁰ James Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (Oxford: OUP, 1998, first pub. 1791), p. 578

Macpherson's efforts will be addressed here, rather than the poems themselves.

Macpherson, the 'originals' and the Highland Society of London

Macpherson had frequently indicated his intention to publish the originals, and his friends in Edinburgh and London who believed that this would put an end to the controversy encouraged this. An early attempt was made by Macpherson to raise the necessary subscriptions for publication of the poems in 1761. Rev James MacLagan was amongst those he wrote to:

I send, enclosed, a copy of my proposals, that if any in your neighbourhood incline to subscribe, they send their orders, by your means to me, and I shall send signed receipt, and take care to convey the book when published.⁴¹¹

This did not prove successful and he then announced that he would publish them himself when he had more free time or he might leave the originals in a public library. Instead he placed them at his London publishers for inspection. When Samuel Johnson's vitriolic attack on James Macpherson took place, Macpherson requested that Becket, his publisher, should show that the allegations made by Johnson had no foundation. This was done by an advertisement in several papers indicating that in 1762 the originals of 'Fingal' and other poems lay in his shop for inspection and this fact was common knowledge.

The controversy continued and the only way to end it was for Macpherson to publish the originals. However, it was doubtful that such an

⁴¹¹ Bailey Saunders, *The Life and Letters of James MacPherson* (London: Swan Sonnenschien, 1895), p. 154

action would have been enough to counter the attack by Johnson and his supporters who would regard any manuscripts as forgeries. There was also a problem of language. How could Macpherson's critics, without any comprehension of the Gaelic language, understand or read any of the manuscripts? Once again, Macpherson indicated to his friends that he would publish when time allowed and enough money was available to cover the cost.

Macpherson had been in London since 1761, a period of sixteen years before the HSL's formation. He also had the friendship and acquaintance of some of the future members of the HSL who were to play pivotal roles in the subsequent publication, and these links could plausibly have been formed before the Scotsmen created their society. John Mackenzie, the Secretary of the HSL, was an intimate friend. Sir John Sinclair was a frequent visitor to Macpherson's London and Putney homes, and encouraged Macpherson to print the originals.

When the HSL was eventually established in 1778, James Macpherson and his cousin John Macpherson became members at the first meeting of the newly formed HSL. Patronage of Gaelic literature began in its year of inception so it is not surprising that the HSL would wish to assist Macpherson. In April 1779, the HSL decided that a delegation should meet with Macpherson to discuss how to achieve the publication of his 'Gaelic originals'. The following month the delegation, consisting of the Hon. Archibald Fraser, Mr Duncan Stuart and Mr John Mackenzie met with

Macpherson. He informed them 'that he was ready to publish the original Gaelic of Ossian, as soon as an adequate fund was provided, for the expense of printing that work in an elegant manner'.⁴¹² Nevertheless, Macpherson changed his mind, for at the June meeting Mackenzie reported that Macpherson had asked him to report to the Society that 'he would not publish the Original Gaelic of Ossian if the Fund for that purpose was raised by any mode of Subscription whatever; but that he would publish it at his own private Expence [sic] as soon as his Conveniency [sic] would permit'.⁴¹³

Somehow John Murray, an employee of the East India Company, learnt that financial aid was needed if the poems were to be published. It is possible he learnt of this need from members of the HSL who were stationed in India, including his cousin Sir John Macpherson, or it may have been from a member of a newly established branch of the HSL in India.⁴¹⁴ Regardless of any conjecture, Murray learnt of the need, and in 1783 he printed a circular, which was distributed among his fellow Highlanders in India. In it he outlines the controversy and decries those who

have been attempting to rob ancient Caledonia of the honour which those sublime productions of human imagination reflect upon her; they have been endeavouring to prove, that the noble and heroic sentiments in Ossian's poems are incompatible with the co-temporary circumstances of that country; that the nation was at that period too barbarous to inspire them; that its language was too imperfect to express them.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹² Sinclair, pp. 16-17

⁴¹³ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.24, fo. 15

⁴¹⁴ *Rules of the Highland Society of London* (Macmillan, 1783), p. 15

⁴¹⁵ *Ossian, The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic* 3 Vols., (London: Bulmer, 1807), Vol. I, p. ccxvii

He continued to rouse the patriotic feeling of his fellow Highlanders. In his opinion it was up to them to provide the money to publish the originals for they all had

Gaelic blood in their veins and Gaelic sentiments in their hearts [they were] Men, who know, and feel, that, elegant as Ossian's modern dress is, it is not equal to his native garb; that the Gaelic, barbarous and uncouth as it is represented, has expressions peculiarly nervous and sublime for every noble and exalted idea that can enlarge and elevate the human mind.⁴¹⁶

Murray's *brosnachadh* was successful. He received promises of nearly £1000. In writing to Macpherson in October 1783, he disputed Johnson's and his friends' inference that Macpherson was the poet, when in fact he was translator of the poems of Ossian. He continued:

Can you forgive those who seek to unrobe you of a corner of the mantle with which that eminent man would clothe you, in opposition to your own senses, and to the positive knowledge of the inhabitants of two kingdoms?

Yes! You are contented to be, what you are—the preserver of the language of Fingal; and it is enough for your honest ambition, that your name shall glide down the stream of the most distant futurity, enrolled with that of the immortal Ossian.

You will see by the enclosed papers, that some men, who were so barbarous as to have been familiar with the history of Fingal before it appeared in a Saxon garb, are desirous of transmitting to prosperity its original barbarity.

Will you, the elegant annalist of a great foreign nation, foreign with respect to Fingal, gratify the wishes of your country, in giving to the public its early honours, in the character mentioned by Cæsar, and in the language in which the mighty Trenmore taught his heroes to vanquish the 'kings of the world?'⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁶ Ossian (1807), Vol. I, p. ccxviii

⁴¹⁷ Ossian (1807), Vol. I, pp. ccxviii-ccxvix

Murray also wrote to John Mackenzie, Secretary of the HSL, asking that the society should find someone who would get the poems ready for print if Mr Macpherson 'unexpectedly declines the undertaking'.⁴¹⁸

There was a delay. Perhaps the HSL was waiting for some action on Macpherson's part, for it was not until the middle of July 1784 that formal correspondence took place requesting that Macpherson receive another deputation. It was to consist of Archibald Fraser of Lovat, Major General MacNab, Major James Campbell M.P., Duncan Stewart of Ardsheil and Secretary John Mackenzie. They were all Gaelic-speakers. Their task was to discover the cause of the delay, as money was no longer an issue.⁴¹⁹ Macpherson responded:

I received the favour of your letter, dated yesterday; and I am sorry the gentlemen should think of giving themselves the trouble of waiting upon me, as a ceremony of that kind is altogether superfluous and unnecessary. I shall adhere to the promise I made, several years ago, to a deputation of the same kind; that is, to employ my first leisure time, and a considerable portion of time, it must be, to do it accurately, in arranging and printing the originals of the Poems of Ossian, as they have come to my hands. Funds having been established, for the Expense, there can be no excuse, but want of leisure, for not commencing the work in a very few months.⁴²⁰

The HSL thought the letter was of great importance and had a facsimile copy engraved.

However, the period of leisure looked for by Macpherson never occurred, as his political career and his work for the Nabob of Arcot took all his time. By the end of 1787, Macpherson had received all the subscription

⁴¹⁸ NLS 268/1, 29 October, 1783

⁴¹⁹ NLS 268/21, pp. 24-5

⁴²⁰ NLS 268/1, 4 July 1784

money; and the minutes of the HSL hint at the unease felt by its members because of Macpherson's lack of progress. A communication was sent to him expressing this concern:

The Committee being extremely anxious for the honour of their Country, as well as for Mr MacPherson's Credit, that these valuable poems may be preserved are apprehensive that the delay in laying them before the public has made impressions which they are desirous to counteract, and knowing that this may be best and most effectually done by his Ability and Zeal they beg that their solicitude on this Subject may be admitted by Mr MacPherson as an apology for repeating their earnest request that he will be pleased to publish, with as little further delay as possible the Gaelic works of Ossian. Assuring him that if he is in want of any Aid, which the Society can supply, it will be cheerfully and thankfully given.⁴²¹

The same communication was sent three years later (January 1790).

During the interval the HSL sent its bard, Peter Maclean on a tour of the Highlands in 1789. The proposal had been made by John Mackenzie in an attempt to find Macpherson's lost poems. The tour was 'for the purpose of Collecting and Writing down such Gaelic Sciallach [*sic*],⁴²² and also poems not yet published as he may think most worthy of notice'.⁴²³ Individual HSL members also gave assistance. John Mackenzie, Robert Macfarlan and Captain Morison formed a coterie to work from Macpherson's manuscripts, but their assistance may have been completely independent of the HSL. Macpherson and Secretary John Mackenzie planned in detail the steps needed for publication. Robert Macfarlan, who had been Gaelic Professor to the HSS before coming to London, was equally skilled in Gaelic and Latin.

⁴²¹ NLS 268/21, p. 79

⁴²² In modern Gaelic orthography the word would be written *sgeulaidheachd* meaning a body of tales

⁴²³ NLS 268/21, p. 99

He began translating Macpherson's Gaelic manuscripts into Latin and Captain Alexander Morison copied poems from these manuscripts. The actual task of 'arranging and printing the originals of the Poems of Ossian, as they have come to my hands'⁴²⁴ would have been considerable. The originals were for the most part fragments taken down from oral transmission or from old manuscripts, and Macpherson was experimenting with his own simplified Gaelic orthography. Macpherson believed he had to devise a definite system for transcription, as he wrote on the subject to Captain Morison:

Not only Ossian, but much more is going on; the establishing the whole language on primitive, clear, unerring and incontrovertible principles. The Gaelic, now traced to its source, has already been found to be most regular, the most simple, and the most pleasing to the ear, and almost to the eye of any language either of past or present times.⁴²⁵

Many modern scholars are of the opinion that Gaelic orthography was standardised by the publication of Rev James Stewart's Gaelic translation of the New Testament in 1767. Macpherson was not of that opinion, a view shared by some of his contemporaries. Bishop Macfarlane writing to the Antiquarian George Chalmers in May 1798 stated:

It is to be regretted that until late, and even yet, little hath been done to give strangers any access to the Gaelic tongue. It cannot yet, be properly called a Written Language. The Grammar of it is not as yet delineated. The Orthography is uncertain in very many cases.⁴²⁶

This opinion was shared by John Mackenzie, as will be seen later, and even as late as 1815, John Macdonald of Dalchoisnich, was of the view that

⁴²⁴ NLS 268/1, 4 July 1784

⁴²⁵ Patrick Graham, *Essay on the Authenticity of Ossian* (Edinburgh: Ballantyne, 1807), App. III, pp. 445-6

⁴²⁶ EUL La.474, fo. 8

authors of Gaelic works were still 'much divided' and there was a need for 'improvement or establishment of its orthography'.⁴²⁷

Apart from the question of orthography, it is clear that Macpherson was debating which type of character should be used for publishing the 'originals', and in this, he was not alone. John Murray in his letter to John Mackenzie in 1783 states that the Indian subscribers 'are of the opinion that the work ought to be printed in the original character', that is in the old Irish script. Murray's letter continues:

I often wish that some of our present Gaelic-persica scholars had lived in the days of Caesar, or even within a few centuries after him, to have been enabled to judge whether the Gaelic alphabet of later ages is exactly the same as he mentions. I am sure the arabic Letters, borrowed by the Persians, are most perfectly adapted to the Gaelic, and would render unnecessary the many consonants that crowd its orthography.⁴²⁸

Mackenzie certainly would have shared this information with Macpherson if by chance Murray had not written to him also. It is possible that Macpherson reacted positively to Murray's suggestion. For on 18 February 1793, Macpherson read aloud to his coterie, a letter from Prof Ferguson, who approved of his plan of a Latin translation and of also printing it 'in the old character'.⁴²⁹

Evidently Macpherson had changed his mind by May 1793 for he wrote to Adam Ferguson arguing that the Greek alphabet would be more suitable for transcribing Gaelic rather than the Roman character. His

⁴²⁷ *Rules and Regulations of the Society of the Sons of Morven* (London: McKechnie, 1815), p. 5

⁴²⁸ NLS 268/1, 29 October 1783

⁴²⁹ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.14, fo. 66

reasoning was that in Cæsar's Commentaries the muster roll of the Helvetians, a Celtic tribe was written in Greek. But he could not find the necessary support he felt was needed from his Edinburgh *literati* friends, who accused him of trying to keep the publication from the masses. This letter is often quoted as an example of Macpherson's conceit, yet something that is overlooked is his argument that Mr Davidson does not appear to know 'that there is scarce any manuscript to be followed, except, indeed, a very few mutilated ones in a kind of Saxon characters, which was utterly unknown to the Highlanders as either Greek or Hebrew letter'.⁴³⁰ Macpherson was, (I believe), referring to the Book of the Dean of Lismore, which he had in his possession and appears to be inferring that in his opinion James MacGregor used a phonetic system, as he had no other Gaelic orthography in Roman character to follow.

In March 1794, Macpherson attended a committee meeting of the HSL, at which time he presented a specimen of what he titled 'A Collection of Ancient Poetry'. After examination of the volume the committee resolved 'that as they do not consider this music as ancient, it cannot therefore, on account of the title, have the smallest support from the Society—but as Mr Macpherson has attended the Committee now formally. They direct one guinea to be given him for his trouble'.⁴³¹ There is one final notation regarding Macpherson and the HSL. In its Account Book for September 1794 is the following:

⁴³⁰ Saunders, p. 294

⁴³¹ NLS 268/22, p. 16

Mr Macpherson having prepared for the press a copy of the greatest part of the Originals of Ossian's poems, correct in every respect but the Orthography, which he has in view to settle on a new & better plan—and it being considered a security against all accidents that a duplicate should be taken of the said copy as was formerly done at the expence of the Society, with respect to the Gaelic poems afterwards printed by Mr Smith.⁴³²

The HSL paid a total of £13.2.6 for the expense of copying 'ten of the longer books of poems and five of the shorter books'.⁴³³ Macpherson died the following year.

John Mackenzie of the Temple, Secretary of the Highland Society of London

Macpherson's Manuscripts

According to Paul deGatigno:

When Macpherson died in 1796 he left £1,000 and exact instructions in his will for the publication of the Gaelic originals of the Poems of Ossian. His executors, however, were hard pressed to complete such a task. One trustee, John Mackenzie of the Temple, London, whose sole responsibility was to organize the manuscripts, found himself unable to begin work. No collections of ancient poems or fragments of manuscripts were to be found, and the only piece of evidence that surfaced was a bit of marginalia in a first edition of the 'Poems', where Macpherson wrote that he had sent the originals of 'Fingal' and eight lesser poems to Mackenzie.⁴³⁴

However, is what deGatigno says credible? As already noted Macpherson and his coterie had made some progress towards publication before he died. Mackenzie was certainly able, not only to begin, but also to continue the work started by Macpherson. Moreover there is well-documented evidence from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that Mackenzie did have Macpherson's collected manuscripts and in addition

⁴³² NLS 268/34, September 1794

⁴³³ NLS 268/34, September 1794

⁴³⁴ Paul J deGatigno, *James MacPherson*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989), p. 91

Macpherson's manuscript copies of the 'Gaelic originals', which he used for his translations, and other papers. Macpherson, however, informed his coterie (i.e. John Mackenzie, Robert Macfarlan and Alexander Morison) on a number of occasions the process he used to write his translations that 'he had collected [them] from scraps' and that he picked 'out all the small pieces of the Poem which he had lying loose & disjointed, in order to put them properly together'.⁴³⁵ What those originals consisted of is, of course, a different issue and will not be discussed here.⁴³⁶

The Rev Macnicol in his Remarks on Dr Johnson's 'Journey to the Hebrides' [sic], makes it very clear what Mackenzie had. He advised Dr Johnson that 'if he will but call some morning on John Mackenzie, Esq., of the Temple, Secretary to the Highland Society of London at the Shakespeare, Covent Garden, he will find in London more volumes in the Gaelic language and character than perhaps he will be pleased to look at, after what he has said'.⁴³⁷ Malcolm Laing wrote to Lord Bannatyne, President of the HSS in May 1802 about this very point, that John Mackenzie had possession of Macpherson's manuscripts. Laing was of the opinion that he could not conclude his dissertation without an examination of them. Further, the HSS itself needed access to them for its report on the authenticity of Ossian. In

⁴³⁵ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.14, fo. 66

⁴³⁶ See Howard Gaskill, 'What did James Macpherson really leave on display at his publisher's shop in 1762?', *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 16 (1990), 67-89, and, Donald T. Mackintosh, 'James Macpherson and the Book of the Dean of Lismore', *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 6 (1949) 11-26, Derick S Thomson, 'James Macpherson: The Gaelic Dimension' *From Gaelic to Romantic: Ossianic Translations*, eds. Fiona Stafford and Howard Gaskill (Amsterdam, Rodopi B.V., 1998)

⁴³⁷ Rev Donald Macnicol, *Remarks on Dr Johnson's Journey to the Hebrides* (London: T Caldwell, 1779), p. 303

this letter to Bannatyne, he reviewed what Macnicol had written on the matter:

Macnicol's knowledge of these facts must have been derived from Mr Mackenzie or more probably from Macpherson, to whom the most scurrilous part of the Remarks is ascribed by the public; and as the preface is evidently Macpherson's own composition the whole passage must have been inserted with his approbation, if not penned by himself. The Red book of Clanranold, when extorted from Mr Macpherson, was produced to the complete satisfaction of the public. The Red Rhymer, for which Johnson was referred to Mr John Mackenzie, must still remain in the possession of Mr Mackenzie, to whom Mr Macpherson bequeathed his Manuscripts and the Publication of the Earse Version of Ossian.⁴³⁸

He concluded that Mackenzie could vindicate Macpherson if he deposited the manuscripts in a Library or to the HSS for public inspection. Laing also wrote to John Mackenzie enclosing a copy of his letter to Bannatyne. He said that his latest work was dependent on Mackenzie for 'it is now in your power to alter or suppress, and prevent such a public requisition being made'.⁴³⁹ Mackenzie also received a letter from Lord Bannatyne to which he responded that if the HSL authorized him to send the manuscripts he would do so. His response to Laing was more detailed:

At the time of the controversy between Dr Johnson and Dr Macnicol, some Gaelic Manuscripts were given into my Custody as Secretary of the Highland Society of London; and as such I hold at this moment all I received except one which was returned. I have no doubt that the Society here will agree to place them in the custody of the respectable Sister Society at Edinb^r at request of the latter: I am sure my own voice will be given for that removal [...] Holding these Manuscripts officially, it would not I conceive be proper that I should enter into any particulars, until direction shall be given to transmit

⁴³⁸ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.15, fo. 11

⁴³⁹ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.15, fo. 12

them to the Highland Society of Scotland, who shall receive all the information I can give concerning them.⁴⁴⁰

The correspondence took place in May 1802, but it was not until the next Council meeting in July that Mackenzie brought the matter before the HSL. He stated that Macpherson had given him 'certain Manuscripts in the Gaelic Character, bearing evident marks of Antiquity [that] were in consequence, about the period of that Controversy placed in his custody as Secretary to the Highland Society of London, but not as a Gift to the Society [...] and had remained with him ever since'.⁴⁴¹ In January 1803 the nineteen manuscripts were sent to Edinburgh:

The Committee of the Highland Society of London having lately recommended their Meetings, I am enabled to transmit to you, in order to be deposited for the present at least with the Honorable Highland Society of Scotland, the Gaelic Manuscripts which were placed in my hands, as having the honour to act as Secretary of the former Society, for the purpose of removing the doubts which were raised several years ago by the late Doctor Samuel Johnson, in his Tour of the Highlands, whether any ancient Manuscripts in that Language really existed. They are sent by today's mail-coach, in a Box under your address, the same as, this Letter [...] and tho' they are much defaced, and part of them is in a mass of tattered leaves, yet they are all in good condition as I received them.⁴⁴²

As part of the HSS investigation Henry Mackenzie wrote to John Mackenzie as one of the executors regarding the idea of the investigation. His letter is no longer extant but John Mackenzie's response is, and he appears to welcome the idea of the inquiry, but adds:

The Executors of the late Mr Macpherson have not yet come to that part of their Trust which relates to the publication of the Original [...] for this reason, and for others which it would be

⁴⁴⁰ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.15, fo. 12

⁴⁴¹ NLS 268/24, p. 27

⁴⁴² RHASS HSS Sederunt Book No 3, p. 601

premature to mention at present, it has not been determined in what form the original shall come before the Public. The authenticity however being the object of the Society, it is obvious that such proofs as are totally independent of Mr Macpherson, and of any Individual whatever will be the most satisfactory both to those who have and those who have not entertained doubt and prejudices on the subject.⁴⁴³

Mackenzie had to remind Henry Mackenzie continuously that as an Executor of Macpherson's Estate he was not at liberty to discuss the authenticity of the poems. Further, the Executors did not like the manner in which the HSS was conducting its investigation. Because of this George Chalmers the Antiquarian, and a friend of both John and Henry Mackenzie, wrote to the HSS about its apparent lack of respect to the Executors. The HSS sent a letter informing Sir John Macpherson, one of the Executors, that the HSS's investigation was purely an attempt 'of giving Mr Macpherson's Trustees every assistance and countenance in its power, in the publication of the Poems of Ossian, which it was understood they had in view, that the Society was induced to enter upon the present investigation'.⁴⁴⁴ It enclosed a copy of its 'Queries and circular letter' for his inspection.

The HSS's 'Report' states that the HSS had asked Macpherson's Trustees for an account of any manuscripts that he had collected, particularly the ancient ones. In response Mr John Mackenzie, the literary executor, informed the Committee:

After a strict search, no such books could be found, and that the manuscripts left by Mr Macpherson were not ancient, but those of the handwriting of himself, or of others whom he had employed to take down the poetry from the recitation of

⁴⁴³ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.10, fo. 56

⁴⁴⁴ RHASS HSS Sederunt Book No. 3, pp. 167-8

Highlanders, or to copy it from the MSS. With which he had been furnished.⁴⁴⁵

This response makes no mention of the Gaelic manuscripts Macpherson had given to Mackenzie. However, after the intervention of Lord Bannatyne, Mackenzie sought permission from the Directors of the HSL to send them to Scotland. Donald T. Mackintosh believes that after having denied having any ancient manuscripts, he (Mackenzie) was 'glad to get rid of them in his capacity as Secretary of the Highland Society, thus saving face'.⁴⁴⁶ There is perhaps another interpretation. The original letter from Henry Mackenzie is not extant, nor is the full response by John Mackenzie. It is possible that John Mackenzie was simply answering the question of what he had actually received on Macpherson's death. He was a lawyer by profession and as such would not have offered information unbidden.

The Report continues that another Executor, the Rev Mr Anderson of Kingussie, informed the HSS that all Macpherson's manuscripts, collections and papers were in London. Evidence of this was provided by Macpherson's own handwriting on a copy of the first edition of *Ossian*, where he had written that the originals were with Mr John Mackenzie. John Mackenzie, in response to another letter from Henry Mackenzie, written in January 1798, stated that Rev Anderson was certainly not a co-Trustee and the information given by Anderson, was known to him. However, the main

⁴⁴⁵ Henry Mackenzie, *Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland appointed to inquire into the nature and authenticity of the Poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1805), pp. 78-9

⁴⁴⁶ Mackintosh, p. 19

thrust of the letter was an attempt to right a misunderstanding on the part of Henry Mackenzie:

I imagine you think they are Manuscripts of some antiquity. In fact they are not; but are all of the handwriting of Mr Macpherson or another Gentleman yet alive I believe. I received them all in or since the year ninety two (1792); and even since Mr Macpherson put any of them in my hands I mentioned that he had so done to such persons who understood the Gaelic and had any curiosity on the subject as I happened to meet with, in order to gratify them with his proof that he meant the original should not remain unpublished.⁴⁴⁷

Robert Macfarlan, the Latin translator, also concurred. In response to questions from Henry Mackenzie, he answered 'the original Gallick of the poems of Ossian were left by Mr Macpherson exactly as they are to appear in print except the alteration of spelling by Mr Ross'.⁴⁴⁸

Macpherson's Legacy

As Literary Executor and close friend, Mackenzie was given the charge of fulfilling Macpherson's 'long stated desire'. For this he was left £1000 to cover the expense of publication of the Poems of Ossian 'on the Plan concerted between us and for this sum he is to be accountable to none'.⁴⁴⁹ Mackenzie was left with a manuscript, which was not written according to 'the system used at present, nor according to any new self consistent System; for Mr Macpherson varied his spelling as he went along'.⁴⁵⁰ This was obviously the result of Macpherson's attempts at

⁴⁴⁷ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.13, fo. 80

⁴⁴⁸ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.12, fo. 139

⁴⁴⁹ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.13, fo. 37

⁴⁵⁰ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.13, fo. 130

simplifying Gaelic orthography. However, Macpherson had never decided which system to use. Mackenzie also knew Macpherson's

Wish of using the Greek & not the Roman Character in printing the Original; the Greek being better adapted than the Roman to the nature of the Gaelic Tongue, and having been the Character used in writing that Language in ancient times, as appears incontrovertibly from several passages in Cæsar.⁴⁵¹

Mackenzie was left to decide the question of orthography, and this was the first task he set himself, but he decided to seek advice from eminent Gaelic scholars. He consulted the antiquarian George Chalmers who suggested individuals Mackenzie should contact. At that time, Mackenzie contemplated travel to Scotland to speak to them in person.⁴⁵²

However, his health was not good and he postponed the journey. In its stead, Mackenzie sent a memorandum to Gaelic scholars and other interested parties explaining his task in 1798. He outlined his concerns and potential financial difficulties if he were to follow Macpherson's wish and use the Greek alphabet. He sent out to interested Gaelic scholars a printed sample of Macpherson's simplified Gaelic spelling in Greek characters. There are no extant responses, but there must have been some support for the Greek alphabet for John Mackenzie wrote to Henry Mackenzie that:

there are ideas in agitation for providing the necessary fund for the expence of even an Edition in the Greek character; but they are not yet sufficiently ripe, nor do I know that they ever shall. That matter depends upon others, not upon me: It is likely however to be decided in the course of the winter or spring. Of

⁴⁵¹ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.13, fo. 130

⁴⁵² NLS Adv.MS.73.2.13, fos. 134-5

this however be assured, that the original shall be printed in some shape: that is a matter of no doubt whatever.⁴⁵³

Another specimen in the Roman alphabet was printed and sent out using Macpherson's simplified orthography but,

as the Roman Character did not express the Gaelic so perfectly as the Greek the deficiency, (as well as the quiescent consonants in the Gaelic Orthography formerly in use) was supplied by points in the manner of the ancient Hebrew. The Roman type, not furnishing a sufficiency of these new ones were to have been contrived & cut for the purpose. This was the idea of Mr Macpherson.⁴⁵⁴

It should be noted that both specimens had been printed from proof sheets still in the possession of the printer which Macpherson had printed while he was toying with the prospect of publishing the originals. In the end, both of Macpherson's specimens were given up as unworkable. The Greek characters were regarded as unworkable, for it would require Highlanders to adapt to a 'new character' in order to be able to read and understand their language, and it would also limit the circulation of the poems. Mackenzie finally decided to use Roman characters, but he realised that Macpherson's manuscripts would have to be rewritten to standardise the orthography. So Mackenzie decided to await the publication of Rev Mr Alexander Stewart's Gaelic Grammar which would act as a guide to correct the spelling, for Macpherson's manuscripts were 'found extremely incorrect and irregular'.⁴⁵⁵

During this interval he arranged for Robert Macfarlan to continue translating Macpherson's manuscripts into Latin, a task begun under the auspices of Macpherson. Mackenzie hoped that, as a Gaelic scholar,

⁴⁵³ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.13, fo. 126

⁴⁵⁴ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.24, fo. 70

⁴⁵⁵ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.24, fo. 70

Macfarlan would be able 'to comprehend the numerous passages which had defied the skill of Mr Macpherson'.⁴⁵⁶ After the publication of Stewart's Grammar, Rev Thomas Ross of Edinburgh was employed to transcribe the whole work again and standardise the spelling. He used not only Macpherson's own transcription but also another draft manuscript copy,⁴⁵⁷ probably written by Captain Morrison. Ross also had access to Macfarlan's Latin translation. Macfarlan's translation and Ross' transcription were completed by the summer of 1801.

Mackenzie then had to decide on publishing. Macpherson had previously made inquiries regarding the success of such a publication. However, the London Booksellers he consulted were not very encouraging. Macpherson also offered ownership of the manuscripts as an inducement to aid publishing but no one was interested. The quality of edition that Macpherson wanted was not provided by his Legacy, and as early as 1798 Mackenzie had expressed concern that there would not be enough money available for publication.⁴⁵⁸ So at this juncture he looked towards John MacGregor Murray and the Indian Subscription. After seeking legal advice that the £1000 legacy he had been given for publication was, in fact, quite separate from the Indian Subscription, the executors were ready to pay out this money to Murray. However, Macpherson's heir opposed the action and the matter went to the Scottish Law courts. Mackenzie decided to carry on with the publication on the promise that the Judges would carry in favour of

⁴⁵⁶ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.24, fo. 70

⁴⁵⁷ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.11, fo. 50

⁴⁵⁸ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.13, fo. 130

the Subscribers. Mackenzie obtained quotes from printers in Edinburgh and London. Messrs Nicol & Bulmer, London were chosen and the work went to the press in 1803. Unfortunately, Mackenzie, who had been incapacitated by illness for the previous 12 years, died shortly after the first proofs were received.

Completing the task

The Ossian Committee

On his death, John Mackenzie's son George inherited Macpherson's papers. He was entrusted to continue the task begun by Macpherson and continued by his father. In May 1804, he informed the HSL of his immediate intention of publishing *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic*, with a verbal Latin Translation by Robert Macfarlan as soon as possible. He noted that:

as the Highland Society manifested a great interest and zeal in the publication of these ancient Remains of Celtic Literature, it was his earnest wish, as a tribute justly due to their exertions to introduce the Poems into the world under the Patronage of the Society, in full confidence of their aid to render the intentions into effect, he had given directions to place the original manuscripts of the Poems into the hands of the Secretary.⁴⁵⁹

George Mackenzie did not give up his copyright of the manuscripts when he made his proposal to the HSL. It was for this reason that he delivered all the manuscripts to the Secretary Alexander Fraser, who had agreed to act as his agent. The question of copyright was to be a continual thorn in the side of the HSL.

⁴⁵⁹ NLS 268/23, p. 121

There was also a threat that Macpherson's heirs were claiming the property of the originals on the death of John Mackenzie. However, Macpherson's heirs decided to leave the manuscripts in the hands of George Mackenzie with the HSL in charge of publication, possibly in the realisation that such an edition would not be financially profitable, for that was Macpherson's own conclusion.

Regardless of the issue of copyright, the society was delighted by the request and immediately appointed a committee consisting of Sir John Sinclair, Sir John Macpherson, Sir John Macgregor Murray and John Macarthur, assisted by Secretary Alexander Fraser and Deputy Secretary Colin Macrae. Among these six members only three had proficiency in Gaelic. Macrae was a nephew of the late John Mackenzie and was familiar with the progress made by his uncle.

The committee held their first meeting in June 1804 and decided speed was of the essence, for any further delays would add ammunition to those who doubted the poems' authenticity. An examination of the manuscripts was conducted and the committee discovered that some of the smaller poems were missing or incomplete. It decided that only the poems in their possession would be printed and an attempt would be made to find the missing ones. The HSS was asked for assistance in finding the missing originals of eleven poems in Macpherson's translation, and it was also asked for an update on the progress of its investigation on the authenticity of Ossian's poems. On behalf of the committee Colin Macrae wrote to

clergymen, scholars and Scottish nobility who might be able to provide assistance in 'rendering the said publication of Ossian's Poems in the original Gaelic as perfect as possible'.⁴⁶⁰ The committee decided further that:

every exertion be used for collecting and preserving any other Gaelic Poems which still remain unpublished; in particular, that of the Reverend Dr Smith, Minister of Campbeltown [*sic*], be written to regarding the Poem of Darthula, and the Representatives or Possessors of the papers of the late Sir James Foulis, the Rev^d Dr Macnicol and the Reverend Mr Macdermiad late minister of Comrie, and such other persons likely to have made collections, especially the Reverend Mr Campbell, Minister of Portree, respecting any poems in their possession.⁴⁶¹

Macrae also wrote to Col. Hamilton in Virginia, Duncan Macrae in South Carolina and Rev Mr Macdonnell in Canada in order to enlarge the field of inquiry to the Highland emigrants.

A plan of action was adopted. Two hundred and fifty large books and five hundred of a smaller size would be printed. Robert Macfarlan's Latin translation would be in the manner of Clarke's Homer. In the event of a new English translation being undertaken two hundred and fifty copies of it would be printed. This new English translation would be 'line for line with words closer to the Gaelic', which would provide the English reader with proof of the authenticity of the poems and display 'the merit and the splendid beauties of Ossian', which Macpherson had in instances failed to do. Sir John Sinclair and Sir John Macgregor Murray would find a suitable candidate for this task. The whole affair was to be conducted in complete secrecy, and the Printer and Publisher would be instructed that no one could

⁴⁶⁰ NLS 268/23, p. 122

⁴⁶¹ HSL 268/24, p. 74

have access to the work without the HSL's written consent. In the event that the Secretary, Mr Fraser, was away from London, Mr Macrae, the Deputy Secretary, should have access to the manuscripts to avoid any delays. This, however, did not happen. Fraser was a lawyer and defended George Mackenzie's copyright at all times, often going against the wishes of the committee.

A system of correcting proofs was set up. Colin Macrae and Rev Mr MacGregor the HSL's Chaplain, would correct them first, then after being checked by Mr Robert Macfarlan the proofs would then be sent to Scotland for a further revision by Rev Thomas Ross. Three amended copies would then be printed two copies going to the Secretary, of those, one would be sent to Rev Alexander Stewart at Moulin. Because of his 'Grammar', it was decided that he was the most competent person to correct the Gaelic orthography. The remaining copy was to be sent to Sir John Sinclair who would forward it to Sir John Murray.

Sir John Sinclair offered to write an English Dissertation and Mr Macarthur was requested to translate from the Abbè Melchior Cesarotti's edition of Ossian, his preface and his preliminary dissertation on the Caledonians and any of his notes which might strengthen the case for authenticity. These translations were to be included in the final volume of the Gaelic Edition of the Poems. Nicol the publisher was asked to place advertisements in the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Morning Post*, the *Sun*, and the *Star*, the *Edinburgh Courant*, *Mercury* and *Advertiser* and in one of the

Glasgow and Dublin newspapers, informing the public that the work was in progress. A prospectus was to be prepared by Robert Macfarlan, and when ready would be sent to all parts of the British Empire and the continent of America. It would also be printed in Italian, French and German and sent to foreign academies. Finally Sir John Sinclair, John Macarthur and Mr Fraser agreed to make up for any financial losses in the venture, in order to prevent 'so ancient a monument of genius from being lost'.⁴⁶²

Sir John Macgregor Murray soon resigned from the committee, although he continued to express his opinions on matters concerning the publication. He believed the committee's mandate went further than the trust he had been given by the Indian Subscribers. They had simply wanted the Gaelic originals published. Murray felt that the Latin and English translations and the collection of more evidence of the poems' authenticity were unnecessary. As far as the 'Indians' were concerned, the poems were genuine. However, Murray did continue at his own expense his legal action against Macpherson's heirs for the return of the money from the Indian Subscription.

The Ossian committee met infrequently, and when it did, Sir John Macpherson was usually absent. Much of the work appears to have been conducted by correspondence. There must have been a great corpus of letters between committee members and those various gentlemen who either provided evidence on authenticity or assisted the committee in achieving a publication, which would do credit to the HSL. However, little remains.

⁴⁶² HSL 268/24, p. 74

Rev Alexander Stewart of Moulin, Rev Thomas Ross and other Scots

The day after the first committee meeting, Macrae wrote to Sinclair to remind him that Rev Stewart would have to be asked and his consent given if the work was to be carried forward. Macrae also suggested that it might be appropriate as an inducement to order twenty-five copies of Stewart's Gaelic Grammar. In 1802, the HSL had decided to purchase that amount when it had sufficient funds, but no action had been taken.⁴⁶³ Sir John asked Rev Stewart if he would consider correcting the Gaelic orthography and also review Macfarlan's Latin translation and he sent a few pages of both for Stewart's perusal.⁴⁶⁴ Rev Stewart was delighted that the 'Gaelic Originals' were in the process 'of seeing the light at last'. He responded that the Gaelic orthography 'appears to me to be quite correct. I have hardly found anything to alter'. He dismissed the need for the rest to be sent to him. Regarding Macfarlan's Latin translation, he said: 'I admire the fidelity and the purity of the Latin Translation. It is well calculated to assist the Gaelic Student in acquiring a correct knowledge of the original.'⁴⁶⁵ Yet he felt the literal translation lost a great deal of the 'spirit and simplicity' of the original.⁴⁶⁶ Because of the expense that would be incurred from the numerous parcels being sent between London and Scotland, Sir John Sinclair made arrangements with the Duke of Montrose, chairman of the Board of Agriculture for free delivery. Charles Stewart, Printer to Edinburgh University suggested another cost cutting measure; 'books in the Northern

⁴⁶³ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.24, fo. 67

⁴⁶⁴ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.15, fo. 60

⁴⁶⁵ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.24, fo. 74

⁴⁶⁶ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.24, fo. 74

Languages, printed by permission of the Principal at the University Press, are exempted from the Duty on Paper'.⁴⁶⁷ With Rev Thomas Ross in Edinburgh it was decided that he could superintend the press.

Rev Alexander Stewart continued to correct the Gaelic proofs that were sent to him. He provided copious orthographic information, and asked to be considered 'as an amicable co-adjutor, not a censorious Castigator'.⁴⁶⁸ He agreed with the late John Mackenzie in thinking that

the Original ought to be given to the Public, as nearly as possible in the form in which Mr Macpherson left them; with these exceptions: that the Orthography be adapted to the Standard of the Gaelic Scriptures; that manifest corrections and emendations of the Text be adopted, when those can be obtained by collating different copies; and where the Text is evidently corrupted or unintelligible, that a slight conjectural emendation be introduced, when it extends only to a word [or] a phrase. The Orthography has been, on the whole exceedingly well corrected by Mr Ross the Transcriber. In some instances, it has been improved in the printing, in others, I think not. In two or three places, I have restored Mr Ross's spelling, where I am confident it was correct.⁴⁶⁹

There were times when correcting the proofs of Ossian's poems had to be set aside while he continued his work on revising the 'Prophetic Books of the Old Testament' for the *Gaelic Bible*. Nevertheless, the Rev Stewart continued to correct them, even after his move to Dingwall, and would have continued the task to its conclusion. However, the new Minister for the Board of Agriculture, in a cost-cutting measure, decided the Board would no longer cover the expense of 'transmitting and receiving packets free from

⁴⁶⁷ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.24, fo. 5

⁴⁶⁸ NLS 268/1, 2 October 1804

⁴⁶⁹ NLS 268/1, 2 October 1804

Postage'.⁴⁷⁰ The HSL decided the expense would be prohibitive. It decided that Mr Alexander Stewart, collector of Gaelic Poetry would continue his namesake's task, following the system that Rev Stewart 'had chalked out'.⁴⁷¹

The death of Robert Macfarlan also necessitated the need to find someone who had the ability to continue the Latin translation. The Rev Alexander Stewart of Moulin was the first choice. Because he was busy revising the 'Old Testament Prophetic Books' he refused, but he stated that he would consider revising the Latin. He was certain that the HSL would find a Latin scholar up to the task.⁴⁷² Robert Jamieson of Fort William was selected. His task was to finish the remaining arguments of Ossian and to revise any proofs of the Latin translation, which had been printed prior to Macfarlan's death. The Committee, as a form of insurance, asked Sir Frederick Eden, an eminent Latin scholar, to revise the proofs if the task could not be finished.⁴⁷³ However, once again the young collector, Alexander Stewart, finished the task.

In 1804, Rev Thomas Ross was employed to work on a new English translation. It was to be a line for line translation, something that Macpherson had envisaged. Ross was initially employed to translate the 'Book of Fingal', but he also wrote accompanying notes and a dissertation. The committee believed this new English translation would illustrate Macpherson's lack of skill as a translator. In January or February 1807 it was

⁴⁷⁰ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.11, fo. 118

⁴⁷¹ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.11, fo. 118

⁴⁷² NLS 268/1, 2 October 1804

⁴⁷³ NLS 268/24, p. 90

decided by Sinclair that Ross should arrange for thirty copies of the first book of Fingal with notes be stitched into a book⁴⁷⁴ as a 'printed manuscript' with Ross' translation on one side of the page and Macpherson's translation on the other side,⁴⁷⁵ for inspection by a selected group chosen by the committee:

who understand the Gaelic language, of judging of the fidelity with which the original Poem is now rendered into English, and of suggesting such remarks or alterations upon the present Translation as may enable the Committee to present the Poem to the world in a more perfect form.⁴⁷⁶

It is clear that it was not the committee's opinion to include a full English translation in the publication for in the preface it expressed the hope that Gaelic speakers would use the original Gaelic and non-Gaelic speakers use the Latin translation in the forthcoming publication to compare the new translation. Ross had hoped to see the comments of those reviewers. It would appear that he was uncertain of his success as translator. He wanted to receive feedback on the style of his translation. Should he continue the line-by-line translation, or should he 'attend less to the words, than to the meaning and spirit of the Gaelic Bard'.⁴⁷⁷

The comments were sent to Sir John Sinclair. Some of those commentaries are still extant as are three copies of the 'printed manuscript'. One of them, now in the British Library, had been given to Henry James Pye, a Police Inspector at Scotland Yard. The second in Special Collections,

⁴⁷⁴ NLS Adv MS 73.2.14, fo. 5

⁴⁷⁵ This was how it subsequently appeared in *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic* (1807)

⁴⁷⁶ Thomas Ross and James Macpherson, *Fingal an epic Poem* (Edinburgh: Charles Stewart, 1807), pp. iii-iv.

⁴⁷⁷ Ross and Macpherson, p. iv

University of Edinburgh Library, however it has been rebound, so it is now unknown who the recipient was. The third, now in the Library of the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland was Sir John Sinclair's own copy on which he listed the names of those individuals who were sent copies. The responses received were all favourable to Ross' translation. Nonetheless they did include some suggestions for Ross regarding his translation. Some favoured prose, and others metred verse.

However, Ross was left very much in the dark as far as Sir John Sinclair's intentions were regarding his translation. He often wrote asking the purpose for his translation. He could see no self-glory in his task. He felt he was underpaid and his work might count for nothing. In an attempt to ensure that his efforts would not be in vain, he suggested to Sinclair, that his version of Fingal and his notes should be published with the Gaelic, Latin and Macpherson's translations in a small volume by itself. He believed it would prove successful, being a much cheaper version of the HSL's contemplated work, and might excite sales.⁴⁷⁸ However, Sinclair did not want this at all for he did not have a very high opinion of Ross's translation.

Finishing touches

By 1805 the Gaelic and Latin versions had been printed, although still going through the process of revisions and corrections. The preface, Sinclair's dissertation and the translation of Cesarotti by Macarthur were still waiting the press. It had been hoped to publish early in 1806. However, the inconclusiveness of the HSS's Report on the authenticity of the poems

⁴⁷⁸ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.25, fo. 29

impelled Sinclair to provide irrefutable evidence that the poems were genuine. This insistence delayed the work. He continued writing to different scholars and universities in an attempt to get fresh evidence. Sinclair also sent Rev John Macdonald of Ferintosh as a 'Poetical Missionary' to track down evidence in the western parts of Inverness, Sutherland and Ross.⁴⁷⁹ Rev Alexander Stewart was pleased to hear of 'the missionary' and expressed his concern that, although many Ossianic poems had been collected, few had been found of Macpherson's collection.⁴⁸⁰ Sinclair also wanted the late Robert Macfarlan's book on the poems of Ossian published, as it would add weight to the authenticity.⁴⁸¹

Sinclair found the proof he sought from Bishop Cameron who informed him of a manuscript which had belonged to the Rev Mr John Farquharson, the Prefect of Studies at the Scots College of Douay. Rev James MacGillivray gave evidence that Farquharson had all the poems that were translated by Macpherson and many more.⁴⁸² This was what he wanted, and Sinclair now believed he had unquestionable evidence of authenticity. Macpherson was the translator only. Another response which he regarded as new evidence was a letter from Rev John Anderson who said Macpherson had been employed several winters at his Highland estate 'preparing and writing in his own hand, a Gaelic copy of those poems to be printed', and further that he had never heard him say that he was the author.⁴⁸³ Sinclair also

⁴⁷⁹ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.15, fo. 128

⁴⁸⁰ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.15, fo. 141

⁴⁸¹ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.15, fo. 129

⁴⁸² NLS Adv.MS.73.2.11, fos. 125-29

⁴⁸³ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.24, fos. 116-17

corresponded with Macgregor Murray regarding the impression left by Macpherson that he was the author of the poems. Macgregor Murray reminded Sinclair of Macpherson's letter that the HSL had facsimile copies made. He believed this letter provided all the evidence needed to 'destroy all your conjectures of his wishing to pass for the author', namely the letter where Macpherson stated that it was his wish to

publish the originals as they came into his hands—and the explicit assertion that no excuse but the want of leisure could be made for the delay in publishing—you will also find the strongest testimony from the late Mr Mackenzie, the most confidential friend of Mr McPherson on this subject, of his reprobation of the Sceptical nonsense that had then been belched in the face of the Society, against the authenticity.⁴⁸⁴

Sinclair was now able to write his dissertation. Macarthur completed his translations of Cesarotti and went on to prepare a conclusion for the whole work. He was of the opinion that all the evidence the committee had provided on the authenticity of Ossian's poems was as strong as 'proofs of Holy writ'.⁴⁸⁵

Ross's new English translation of the *First Book of Fingal* was included in the publication, along with his notes and a short dissertation. Sinclair noted in his dissertation, that Ross's translation proved how poor Macpherson's own translation was. It also answered some of the questions resulting from the controversy:

1. Whether Macpherson did not in many instances misconceive the meaning of the original, and consequently gave an erroneous translation?

⁴⁸⁴ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.11, fo. 151

⁴⁸⁵ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.11, fo. 64

2. Whether he did not frequently add many words or expressions not to be found in the original, which additions have been advanced as plagiarisms from other authors; and consequently as arguments against the authenticity of the poems.
3. Whether he did not leave out many beautiful words and passages to be found in the original?
4. Whether he did not pass over any words or phrases which he found it difficult to translate? and
5. Whether on the whole, he did sufficient justice to the nervous simplicity and genuine beauties of the Celtic bard?⁴⁸⁶

Sinclair believed Macpherson guilty of all these things. Indeed, he believed that:

Mr Ross's new translation, furnishes the *strongest possible internal proofs*, that the Gaelic was original, and Macpherson's prose, a loose, and in many parts, a turgid translation from the original, and it will appear, from any accurate examination of the works in question, that the plagiarisms in Macpherson's translation, exist in the English, and not in the Gaelic, and are to be ascribed to the translation, and not to the original poet.⁴⁸⁷

Sinclair also believed that his own dissertation proved beyond doubt that James Macpherson was simply the translator of these ancient poems that were now to be printed in the original Gaelic. He did give some credit to Macpherson, but observed that if Macpherson had acted more honourably, his reputation would not have been besmirched nor would the authenticity of the poems ever been doubted. Macarthur in his closing observations was kinder stating that:

Mr Macpherson is therefore entitled to great credit, for having with much industry collected, compared, and collated the several editions or copies; and it may be well supposed that he would have availed himself of that fair license granted to every collector and translator, by selecting the best editions, restoring

⁴⁸⁶ Ossian (1807), Vol. I, p. xcvi

⁴⁸⁷ Ossian (1807), Vol. I, p. clxx

passages omitted in some but preserved in others, and connecting the episodes and detached pieces so as to render his translations more worthy of the public eye.⁴⁸⁸

The Indian subscribers were also recognised, although not in the place of honour that John Macgregor Murray had wished. He expressed forcefully to Sinclair in several letters that the gentlemen of the East India Company who subscribed money to enable Macpherson to publish should not be forgotten, for he believed that without their subscription the process of publication would not have begun.⁴⁸⁹

Publication

The book was published in 1807, containing not only the original Gaelic and the Latin translation of the Poems of Ossian, but also considerable evidence of their apparent authenticity. To this was added the 'First Book of Fingal' in a new English translation, with additional notes by Rev Thomas Ross. Alexander Stewart translated two of the missing poems that that been found among Macpherson's Indian papers into Latin and English and he also wrote one of the essays on the landscape of the poems. Other topographical essays were written by the following eminent Gaelic scholars: Rev Donald Macnicol, Rev William Campbell, Rev Dr John Smith, Rev Ludovick Grant and Rev Norman Macleod. Appendices included a specimen of ancient music collected by Rev John Cameron, a list of Gaelic books published during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and a catalogue of all Gaelic and Irish manuscripts still in existence in Great

⁴⁸⁸ Ossian (1807), Vol. 3, p. 438

⁴⁸⁹ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.10, fo. 150

Britain and Ireland, including a list of the manuscripts that had been collected by Macpherson himself.

The final publication was forty years after Macpherson had stated his own desire of publishing the 'Gaelic originals', and twenty-eight years since the first official meeting with Macpherson. It had been a long task but the HSL was satisfied with the finished work. In an advertisement put out by the Society prior to the publication it was stated that:

This Publication is the most valuable and most interesting Literary Work that has appeared for many years. The Natives of Scotland in general, and more especially those who are connected with the Northern parts of that Kingdom, must rejoice to learn that the Poems of the immortal Ossian have at length appeared in their native Garb, accompanied by Documents which clearly establish their authenticity, independent of the strong internal evidence arising from the Work itself; from an examination of which it evidently appears, that even in MACPHERSON'S Translation, sufficient justice has not been done to the Beauties of the Original.⁴⁹⁰

The committee believed it had published a very valuable piece of work. It was preserving those ancient Gaelic poems. It had rescued Fingal and his worthies, men who exhibited 'heroic valour, exalted values and the most refined strain of generous and manly sentiments'⁴⁹¹ from oblivion.

Epilogue

The HSL had hoped for financial success but reaped near financial disaster, for the publication raised little interest. By 1813, the society had still not recovered the £2000 expense of the publication. The HSL appealed to Sir John Macgregor Murray for assistance from the Indian Subscription

⁴⁹⁰ *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic* (printed advertisement), NLS Adv.MS.73.2.25, fos. 165-6

⁴⁹¹ HSL 268/24, p. 122

money. However, Macgregor Murray felt that the HSL had been unwise in making it such an expensive undertaking. He had resigned from the committee because of this. The subscribers had simply wanted the Gaelic originals published, and had requested that any remaining money should be spent on encouraging the Gaelic language. For them there was no need for evidence, the poems were genuine. The Society received only £700 from those funds, which had grown and amounted to almost £3000 at the time of settlement. That was all Macgregor Murray believed the HSL was entitled to for the cost was prohibitive to many who would have wanted a copy of Ossian's poems. For the HSL had not according to Macgregor Murray, 'sent Him to his native hills' but had 'entombed Him in your magnificence! You have buried Him in Gold'.⁴⁹²

Macgregor Murray would spend the rest of the money to encourage Gaelic literacy including a donation to the HSS for its Gaelic Dictionary. He also planned to publish a cheap edition of the Gaelic poems of Ossian for Highland schools. However, he did not act immediately and in the interval Rev Daniel Dewar recommended that the HSL should print its own cheap edition of poems under his supervision. Although begun, it was quickly cancelled when Macgregor Murray informed the HSL that his edition was in progress. He generously donated some copies of his edition to the HSL, who in turn donated them as prizes to Highland gatherings.

Because there was a lack of sales, the 'Gaelic Ossian' did receive its audience mainly through philanthropic gesture. The books were given out as

⁴⁹² NLS Adv.MS.73.2.26, fo. 86

prizes at Highland Games and copies sent to the General Assembly schools and three hundred and thirteen copies were given to the CA. Copies were also sent to many of its branches in Scotland and in the Highland enclaves around the world. It was here that many young emigrant Scots learnt by heart the poems of Ossian from these very books. Rev Macdonnell in Upper Canada wrote that the poems were taught in several schools and that many youths could repeat many thousand lines by heart.⁴⁹³

Alexander Stewart's Tour at the behest of the HSL

As the publication date drew nearer the committee sent a report to Sir John Macgregor Murray, thanking him for all his assistance and praising him for all he had done to preserve Gaelic literature. It also spoke of the loss of his presence at the committee meetings – but its *raison d'être* was to try and persuade Murray that the HSL deserved a share, if not all of the Indian subscription money. The report informed Murray that the new publication was but 'one link in the chain of the committee's operations'. The next link was a new English translation of those poems, and another was to republish those Gaelic poetry collections, which were now out of print, arranged in chronological order. It also wanted to 'rescue from the grasp of perishable time' other poems in the hope that the society might add

to the existing stock some other fugitive Poems & of retrieving, although in an imperfect state, some of the Originals lost or destroyed by Mr Macpherson. Thus a body of materials may be provided for a Gaelic Dictionary, and a Store of interesting Literature furnished to excite Celtic Study, and to transmit

⁴⁹³ HSL 268/43, p. 32

unimpaired to future ages the Primitive or at least one of the Primitive Languages of the Universe.⁴⁹⁴

In the advertisement published at the time of the book launch of

Macpherson's Gaelic originals the HSL stated:

In the poems now published, some words and passages which are to be found in Mr Macpherson's translation, are wanting. These might have been supplied from other transcripts, or oral traditions; but the Committee appointed to superintend the printing of this Work, were scrupulous about making any addition to the manuscripts left by Mr Macpherson.⁴⁹⁵

The society wanted to find those missing poems. In addition it had the foresight to realise that what remained could so easily be lost forever. Two separate searches had been undertaken, the first by the Society's bard Peter Maclean (Padraig MacGh'Illeoin) in 1789, the second by Rev John Macdonald of Ferintosh in 1805. There is no record of their successes or failures. However, the Society believed that a further extensive tour was needed:

For the purpose of collecting all the remains still extant of ancient Gaelic Poetry, and Tales illustrative of the History, Manners and Customs of the ancient Caledonians (together with the ancient Music hitherto unpublished, especially those airs to which the poems of Ossian and other ancient Bards are reported to have sung;) and for ascertaining the remain of Antiquity and the Topography of the Dominions and places of Residence of Fingal and his Contemporary Heroes and Bards.⁴⁹⁶

The choice of collector was a simple one. Alexander Stewart.

The Society first met him in 1806 when he came to London to seek financial assistance for an anthology of Gaelic verse which he and his

⁴⁹⁴ HSL 268/24, p. 124

⁴⁹⁵ Ossian (1807), Vol. 1, frontispiece

⁴⁹⁶ HSL 268/24, p. 127

brother Donald had collected and compiled entitled *Cochruinneacha taoghta de shaothair nam bard gaëleach* (A choice collection of the works of Highland bards). Stewart also told of their intention of compiling a Gaelic dictionary from their collections. Unfortunately, at that time, the Society was strapped for funds and could only recommend a voluntary subscription among its members and other Highlanders in London.⁴⁹⁷ Stewart had also demonstrated to the HSL his worth and capability. He was a very good Latin and Gaelic scholar who was knowledgeable in several Gaelic dialects. In Stewart, the committee saw a young man who was capable of fulfilling its desire.

The plan for the tour began in February 1807. In April Stewart was formerly approached with the proposal. Stewart was flattered and replied:

How far I may be found capable of executing such an undertaking, I will not presume to say, but that from my knowledge of Language of the Country, its manner, & my being known to the greater part of the most respectable of its Inhabitants, I have cause to think that I might have a better chance of succeeding than those who are not possessed of these advantages; and I must confess that the Committee could not point out any object on which I would bestow my labour with greater zeal and pleasure.⁴⁹⁸

He stated that he could not give any definite opinion as to the amount of heroic poetry he would find, but:

I have reason to believe that there are scattered rays of ancient Poems still floating in the Highlands, which when carefully collected, into the proper focus will shine with native Lustre sufficient to dazzle those eyes which have hitherto regarded

⁴⁹⁷ HSL 268/24, p. 109

⁴⁹⁸ HSL 268/1, 2 May 1807

them as a pale moon swimming in the clouds with borrowed light.⁴⁹⁹

Such a task was close to his heart and his earlier publication had only whetted his appetite to find others. Even though he would be retracing his steps on this proposed tour, he hoped he would find more:

It is this innate propensity to rescue from oblivion the sweet verses which relate the noble deeds of our ancestors, & which recommend themselves, as precious relicks, to every breast, which glows with the least portion of Caledonian fire, together with my zeal to prove myself in some degree serviceable to the Society, that can alone influence me to try a second race over the same ground from which I had formerly returned vanquished.⁵⁰⁰

Stewart felt confident that he would collect all sorts of tales, which he believed would still be found in abundance and worth saving.

The HSL had budgeted one hundred guineas for the tour, but Stewart advised the Society that it would only cover expenses for a mainland tour as long as he could receive Highland hospitality. Such a sum would be inadequate if he was to travel to any of the islands, excluding Mull and Eigg.

He continued:

There is another sort of expense (besides that of travelling) incurred in obtaining information which probably did not occur to the Committee, for it is not to be supposed that a poor man who supports himself by his own industry should be deposed to sit idle for days rehearsing Tales or songs to a Stranger without some remuneration for the time he loses, and some of them are rather extravagant in their expectation, especially when not under the check of some neighbouring Gentleman of Spirit, for those who are possessed of most of Songs & Tales being generally of the lower class, are seldom actuated by patriotic

⁴⁹⁹ HSL 268/1 2 May 1807

⁵⁰⁰ HSL 268/1, 2 May 1807

principles especially when they have no idea that this Stranger has nothing beyond his own interest in view.⁵⁰¹

If the HSL would provide him with additional funds for this expense then he would gladly go on this tour before it was too late 'for the harvest is almost past, and the sooner we repair to the field the greater is the prospect of gleaning something'.⁵⁰²

The HSL was very thorough in its instructions to Stewart, even down to the pens, journals and the 1803 edition of Laurie & Whittle's pocket map that he was to take. It outlined his route and whom he was to visit, how he was to collect the material whether complete or in fragments, and what he was expected to achieve. He was to make copies of any manuscripts in the possession of the gentlemen he was to visit and to transcribe any recitations of poems he heard. The society was very interested in finding any extant versions of Macpherson translations, particularly the missing eleven poems. It also wanted Stewart to find the poems included in the collections of Smith, Kennedy, Gillies, Clark and Stone. But most of all the HSL wanted Stewart to find unpublished material.

He was also to discover what he could about the *Red Book* and any other histories and heroic tales. To write down scenic descriptions of the lands where Fingal and his warriors and bards had lived or visited, of any remains of their buildings and any burial information. Stewart was also to learn by heart the tunes of songs he collected. The society had decided to award eight premiums to individuals who gave the most valuable

⁵⁰¹ HSL 268/1, 2 May 1807

⁵⁰² HSL 268/1, 2 May 1807

information to Stewart during his tour. However, it is doubtful that any premiums were paid.

The society advertised Stewart's tour in the Scottish newspapers and he went forth on his journey armed with a Commission signed by the Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex, Earl of Inverness, Baron of Arklow, and President of the society. The HSL hoped that such a document would encourage the Scottish noblemen, landed gentry and clergymen, indeed everyone in the Highlands to provide assistance to Mr Stewart, and encourage their tenants and dependants to share with Mr Stewart any ancient music, poetry and tales.⁵⁰³

Stewart was very successful, and within a year he had amassed a great collection of verse, both ancient and modern. Many were duplicate copies, often with minor variations. Stewart believed that they needed to be edited before they could be published, or made useful for the society and indeed for posterity. He also believed this was necessary for him to be able 'to adduce the evidence that they contain in support of the Authenticity of Ossian'. He suggested that he should collate and make selections from different versions to form into a final version of each poem or tale 'free from corruption'. For this, though, he would require additional money and he estimated it would take about three months to complete the task. The committee agreed to this and voted the sum of twenty-five pounds to Mr Stewart:

⁵⁰³ HSL 268/24, pp. 140-4

For collating, arranging and copying in a fair hand & in modern orthography all the Poems which he has collected, with the Music prefixed to each; as it is likely that no other person can be found to do equal justice to the subject, and as the neglect of accomplishing it now may hereafter subject the Society to Reproach and wasteful Expenditures. That for the said sum Mr Stewart do also subjoin such Critical and Historical Remarks on the various Poems as shall occur to him, and describe the Scenes of Action Represented in the Poems as they now exist, as well as to enlarge the Report delivered to the Society, that it may embrace the various objects of his mission which have come within his knowledge.⁵⁰⁴

The HSL also decided that Mr Gow,⁵⁰⁵ the society's musician, should transcribe the tunes into a musical score from Mr Stewart's singing.

By February 1809, the HSL had received from Alexander Stewart a fair copy of the 'Ancient Poems and Tales' collected during his tour of the Highlands in 1807. Sir John Sinclair praised Stewart for obtaining the poetry 'with an ardent zeal for the preservation of the Language & Literature of our Caledonian Ancestors'⁵⁰⁶ and the success he achieved:

in a very inauspicious period, when the Highlanders were lamenting the destruction of their scanty Crop by inclement Rain and Snow, before it yet had time to ripen, when the Earth and the sea refused their usual sustenance to that unfortunate People, and they were brooding over an approaching Famine. Yet under these distressing circumstances he collected in parts of Perth, Argyle, and Inverness, principally from the oral tradition of old untutored men 7000 lines of ancient Poetry, the greater part of which bears internal evidence of being the Composition of the immortal Ossian, besides two most admirable Heroic tales.⁵⁰⁷

During his tour Stewart also amassed a large collection of 'more modern poetry' from the last three centuries, which he believed had great

⁵⁰⁴ HSL 268/25, p. 28

⁵⁰⁵ This was John Gow, second son of Neil Gow. He performed with his band regularly for the HSL, until his death in 1827. His manager was William Menzies, the first President of the GSL.

⁵⁰⁶ HSL 268/25, p. 33

⁵⁰⁷ HSL 268/25, p. 32

merit. He would edit these in the same manner as the ancient poetry if the society wished. He regretted that he had not been able to write up all the information he had received regarding the antiquity of the poems and the 'topography of the Dominions of Fingal'. He had learnt some tunes of the airs recited by Highlanders. In fact he performed two of these poems at the HSL's meeting of 21 February 1809.

Sinclair also noted that Stewart had succeeded where 'many distinguished characters had failed'. He felt that it was incumbent on the society to send Stewart on another Tour to those areas of the Highlands and Islands he had not visited to collect whatever still remained. However, the funds of the society would not cover the expense and Sinclair suggested a voluntary subscription among members and other interested gentlemen who wished to rescue 'from oblivion' the remaining Gaelic literature. This did not meet with success.

On 11 May 1809 Stewart wrote to the HSL's secretary to remind him of his collection of modern poetry which consisted for the most part of songs and satires not yet published. He continued that:

having been taken down chiefly from oral recitation in cold damp huts, where the necessary accommodations could but seldom be had, these songs, with few exceptions, are intelligible only to myself, & can in this present state be of no use to the Society.

Sensible of this, and considering that they are in general possessed of merit, & that by their preservation so much of the Language, Manners, & Customs of Caledonia is saved from the threatening ruin, I began some weeks back to write out a fair copy of my Gatherings of Modern Poetry; & believing that they will prove useful to the Society; & particularly so, if the

compiling of a Celtic Dictionary shall ever be attempted. I have already written 250 large Folio pages, which contain not the one half of the Collection, & will continue to transcribe as long as I find anything in my possession worth preserving [...] This volume may be extended (with the Committee's approbation) to 200 pages (more than the former) of matter which deserves to be preserved, & from which the Historian & Lexicographer may derive many things useful to their Systems.⁵⁰⁸

He requested payment, as he was almost destitute, but he wished to be moderate, and suggested that he would accept half the amount he received for transcribing the ancient poems. The committee decided to give him £25 to be paid out from the 'Medal Fund', but he had to wait until September. It also paid thirteen shillings and eight pence for binding Stewart's collection of ancient poetry which he delivered to the HSL the previous year.⁵⁰⁹ The Secretary took the money to Stewart personally, and although Stewart expressed satisfaction with this amount, he felt that he had not been properly compensated for 'his own time and trouble in that arduous journey'. The Secretary informed him that the society was at the moment helpless, as it lacked the necessary funds 'to reward him more liberally for the present & former collection'.⁵¹⁰

There is no mention in the Minute Books of the HSL as to whether Stewart completed his task. However, his manuscripts, which included those of his earlier tour with his brother Donald, were in the possession of Secretary Alexander Fraser in 1813. There is also a letter in January of that year from Colin Macrae to Sinclair where he discusses Stewart:

⁵⁰⁸ HSL 268/25, p. 59

⁵⁰⁹ HSL 268/34, 1809

⁵¹⁰ HSL 268/25, p. 74

I fear that the British Isles will be deprived of the Services, as a Gaelic Scholar, of Alex^r Stewart. He is out of Employ^t, & I understand preparing for a trans-atlantic voyage, mortified & chagrined by Disappointments. I do not hesitate to declare it as any deliberate opinion that he is the most complete Gaelic Scholar, whatever may be the pretensions of others, now in existence, & especially when his knowledge of that Language is combined with his critical knowledge of the learned Language & of some living dialects.⁵¹¹

Macrae also expressed his belief that Stewart was the best-qualified candidate for the Gaelic Dictionary. The HSL must have employed Stewart as a clerk for there are notations in its Account Book. Stewart received seventy-eight pounds for eighteen months service in 1812, and in 1813 six months salary of twenty-six pounds five shillings.⁵¹² However when Sinclair published his history of the Society in 1813 he refers to him as the late Mr Stewart.

Sinclair states that Stewart had collected about 8000 verses of ancient and an equal amount of 'modern' poetry that the society hoped to publish. He noted that among the ancient poetry was:

an edition of the original of Darthula, and some of the other Poems translated by Mr. Macpherson, but of which he left no trace behind him; also the original of the beautiful Epic Poem of Mordudh, translated by Mr Clark, in "The Works of the Caledonian Bards," and apparently more entire than that which fell into his hands.⁵¹³

Stewart's manuscripts remained in the possession of the Society and if it considered publication again it is not recorded in the extant minutes. After a lapse of almost a hundred years, in 1904, the society decided to undertake a careful examination of all its properties. It was feared that those ancient manuscripts, collected by Macpherson and presented by John

⁵¹¹ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.14, fo. 149

⁵¹² HSL 268/34, 1811 and 1812

⁵¹³ Sinclair, p. 21

Mackenzie to the society, were lost without trace. The manuscripts were traced to the Advocate's Library, Edinburgh and the HSL paid for them to be restored. Of the manuscripts which they held at the Society's rooms at the Scottish Corporation, it was felt that the 'very interesting collection of Gaelic Songs made by Stewart in 1803-07 [...] should be printed'.⁵¹⁴ The HSL decided that if the poems were accompanied by an English translation the book would be more valuable.⁵¹⁵ All the Gaelic manuscripts were sent to Lord Tullibardine, President of the society, who was conversant with the Gaelic language for his opinion. His letter of 6 February 1905 expressed the importance of the collection:

I have made careful enquiries amongst those who know Gaelic literature best, and the collection of poems by Alex^r Stewart does not seem to be known, though one or two of those in it are. It would, I think, be well worth publishing. Mackenzie's poem published in 1785 is very rare indeed and there is only one other copy known, i.e. Professor Mackinnon's. It might be thought advisable to publish this also as an appendix to Stewart's.⁵¹⁶

He suggested that some of the Duncan Ban Macintyre poems written about the society could also be included. He agreed that an English translation would give the edition more appeal to a wider audience. He believed that there were only one or two people who would be capable of doing such a translation. He suggested Miss Carmichael, the Editor of the *Celtic Review*, if she had the time for 'she is extremely clever at this sort of thing and keen about it'. If she undertook the task she would have had assistance from Professor Mackinnon who acted as consultant to the *Celtic Review*. If she did

⁵¹⁴ HSL 10615/114, Report 26 August 1904, p. 2

⁵¹⁵ HSL 10615/9, p. 71

⁵¹⁶ HSL 10615/118, 6 February 1905

not have the time then perhaps her father ‘who is one of the best Gaelic scholars in Scotland’ might. He did recommend that the original poems should eventually be deposited with an institution such as the Advocates Library as long as they acknowledge the ownership of the manuscripts.⁵¹⁷

There is no further mention of the Poems in the Minute Books or Letter Books of the Society and the final fate of Stewart’s manuscripts is now unknown. All that is left as a testament to Alexander Stewart’s tour are the four précised foolscap pages made by Colin Macrae from Stewart’s journal, noting the success or failures of meetings with the individuals the HSL had instructed him to visit on his tour of the Highlands.⁵¹⁸

A new English translation! Sinclair, Ross and MacLachlan

Sir John Sinclair was a man with a mission made clear from extant records; he did all he could to ensure a new English translation. His actions were probably made without the support or knowledge of the other members of the Ossian Committee. However, he was always clear on one thing the new translation should demonstrate to the world that Macpherson was not the author, just an inferior translator. His instructions to Rev Thomas Ross and later to Ewan MacLachlan illustrate this clearly.

During the first half of 1807 Sinclair was intent on publishing a new English translation and this was pledged in the advertisement for *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic*. However, rumours were spreading through London that several Gentlemen were going to prepare a new English

⁵¹⁷ NLS 10615/118, 6 February 1905

⁵¹⁸ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.14, fos. 102-3

translation from Macfarlan's Latin. So Sinclair felt that stealth and speed were necessary for the Society to gain the upper hand and publish a new English translation before anyone else.⁵¹⁹ For the complete translation of the work Ross was offered another fifty guineas and one half of the profits from the sale of the work. Ross responded that he would earn more money working as a clerk and the HSL improved its offer. Ross agreed to the terms in June 1807. He would receive two hundred guineas for the complete translation, paid in fifty guineas instalments, the first immediately, the second on completing the translation, the third following the approval of two Literary Characters, chosen by the Ossian Committee and Ross, and the final payment for superintending the printing.⁵²⁰

To keep Ross happy the society made several attempts to find him a gift of a Presentation, or indeed a living, with the assistance from the Duke of Argyle and the Secretary of State, without success. The HSL also applied to the University of Glasgow for an Honorary Degree of LLD to be conferred on Ross for 'his Zealous Ability' in translating the works of Ossian.⁵²¹ This was eventually granted in February 1808.

The society found Ross very difficult to work with, greedy and conceited, and it was not very satisfied with his translation of 'Fingal'. It was felt that it needed the 'aid of Gaelic Scholars of Classical Taste and Poetic Genius' to turn Ross' translation into something that would 'do more justice

⁵¹⁹ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.11, fos. 111-12

⁵²⁰ HSL 268/24, p. 134

⁵²¹ HSL 268/24, p. 134

to the Original than Mr Macpherson'.⁵²² Sinclair wrote to Walter Scott and informed him that the HSL was going to publish Ross' new translation of Ossian's 'Fingal'. He continued, that three eminent Gaelic scholars, Rev Dr Stuart of Luss, Rev Alexander Stewart of Dingwall and Mr MacLachlan of Aberdeen, were currently examining the translation. It was hoped that these gentlemen would turn Ross' translation into a prose translation 'in easy floury language which will furnish the reader with the full sense of the original'. Scott was requested to lend his help in achieving this, indeed 'a celebrated poet of modern times cannot employ his genius better, than in doing justice to the merits of an ancient Bard, whose powers have seldom been equalled'.⁵²³

Ross may have got wind of the Society's intention, but he may have been reacting to a scathing review of his translation in the *British Critic*. For, in January 1808 he wrote to Sinclair suggesting that a line for line translation was not the best way to go. The HSL needed to consider and reflect popular taste, if it did not, the work of the society might be all in vain. Further, printing a literal English translation would enable someone else to publish a more popular version. He continued:

It occurs to me that the present Translation ought to be printed, not in its present unnatural & forced resemblance to poetry; but in an easy, flowing, elevated, prose – that the Translator ought not to be obliged to render the original word for word, or line for line; but to be allowed the same liberties which are conceded to every other Translator of a poetical work.⁵²⁴

⁵²² HSL 268/24, p. 124

⁵²³ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.26, fo. 23

⁵²⁴ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.26, fo. 2

There was obviously a personality clash between the two men, Sinclair although always polite does not appear to have had a high opinion of Ross' ability. This may, I would conjecture, have resulted from Ross' harsh criticism on Sinclair's attempt at dramatizing some scenes from *Fingal*.⁵²⁵ (Sinclair' scenes were revised and included in the 'Gaelic Ossian' of 1807.)

Sinclair wanted Ewan MacLachlan to do it,⁵²⁶ but initially he refused the task. Regardless of the refusal, the two men continued their correspondence regarding aspects of Ossian's poetry. MacLachlan agreed to examine the *First Book of Fingal*, and reported, in January 1808, that 'were time of command, I should most willingly translate the whole poem, though with no other design than the improvement of my poetic style. I cannot be engaged in a pursuit that more perfectly accords with my inclination'.⁵²⁷ MacLachlan, found time to write a critique on the Ossianic text which Sinclair hoped the HSL would publish. He also wanted MacLachlan to receive a copy of Stewart's manuscript so that he could have access to originals of Ossian not found in Macpherson's translations. Macpherson's 'originals' were still guarded by Secretary Fraser who refused to send them to MacLachlan. Eventually Ross was instructed to deliver his translation to Sir John Macpherson who in turn would deliver it to MacLachlan in Aberdeen, for his examination, corrections and opinions.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁵ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.14, fo. 30

⁵²⁶ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.24, fo. 134

⁵²⁷ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.14, fo. 79

⁵²⁸ HSL 268/25, pp. 6-7

In July, the Ossian committee decided that MacLachlan's re-translation of the first 'Book of Fingal' was far superior to Ross's. The HSL intended to publish a new translation of the 'Book of Fingal' in November or December 1808. For this, MacLachlan was asked to continue rendering Ross' translation of Fingal 'as correct & elegant as possible', adapting it into 'prose similar to Macpherson, expunging all his bombast, and correcting all his errors'.⁵²⁹ Sinclair was asked to find another person equally competent to examine and correct MacLachlan's work. Sinclair wrote to Rev Dr Stuart of Luss, who agreed to compare this new translation with the original Gaelic and Macpherson's translation and to provide the HSL with any necessary comments. He noted that he would not be able to commence the work for at least a couple of months and agreed to the secrecy Sinclair wanted.⁵³⁰

Ross was close to completing the whole translation by August, but he had obviously heard rumours about MacLachlan refining his translation which was shown by his disquiet:

I have no objection however, to its, being examined by any competent Gaelic Scholar on the part of the Society alone, unless it shall be convenient for him to meet with a Gentleman to be named by me. But in that case, I trust that the Society will have the goodness to take care that no advantage shall be taken of that circumstance to my prejudice. Without any invidious insinuation, you will readily see how easy it will be to the individual employed in his business to make out of my Translation another which he will prefer, & then reject mine.⁵³¹

The HSL 'sketched out' a new translation of the first 'Book of Fingal' based mainly on MacLachlan's translations. A copy was sent to MacLachlan as an

⁵²⁹ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.26, fo. 16

⁵³⁰ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.14, fo. 99

⁵³¹ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.14, fo. 88

inducement to complete the whole translation and by January 1811 he had completed the second and third books of 'Fingal'.

Sinclair's lack of regard for Ross is apparent in a letter from Ross dated November 1810. Outraged Ross wanted to know what had been happening and demanded his manuscripts back 'which I may turn to some useful purpose at a future period, or at least preserve them from being employed against myself'. He felt betrayed by Sinclair and the HSL:

It was solely in the confidence that you would see justice done to me that I was prevailed with to commit my MS to the Society's Committee in its present form; and yet, after lying so long in their hands, without acknowledging my labours on it in one way or another, it is evidently made the groundwork of a Translation of which I totally disapprove. This, I am sensible, is as much without your advice as it is hurtful to my feelings.⁵³²

Because of the lack of funds a new English translation did not occur. From 1812 Sinclair attempted to enlarge his dramatic scenes of Ossian, he hoped eventually they could be adapted for the theatre. He encouraged John Galt to convert them into an opera of three acts with a yearning that it would be staged at Covent Garden.⁵³³ For the King's visit to Edinburgh Sinclair suggested to Galt that he should write a new play 'Fingal an Historical Drama' based on sections from 'Temora' and 'Fingal'.⁵³⁴

MacLachlan must have also found time between working on the HSS's Gaelic Dictionary to continue his work on the poems of Ossian until his death. Sinclair then wrote to Sir William Bannatyne in May 1830, asking for assistance in finding some of MacLachlan's translations, which Sinclair

⁵³² NLS Adv.MS.73.2.26, fo. 93

⁵³³ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.26, fo. 125

⁵³⁴ NLS Adv.MS.73.2.27, fo. 1

was missing. He was still contemplating the publication of a new English translation of Ossian. There is no extant response and nothing more indicates how far Sinclair got with preparation for the press before his own death in 1835. All that had been published of a new English version was Ross's translation in *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic*, as already noted.

The New English Translation: Patrick Macgregor

The publication of a complete English translation of Macpherson's 'originals', which the HSL recommended in 1804, had to wait until 1841, thirty-three years after Ross had completed his translation, which with the passage of time had apparently been forgotten. The translator was Patrick Macgregor, a Scottish born Canadian who was a student at Edinburgh University. He made the HSL an offer that after consideration it did not refuse. He did not want monetary gain, and in effect his manuscript was a gift; all he wanted was to be published.

Macgregor was Highland born, and had emigrated to Canada to join his uncle in 1830. According to his father he was a devotee of Ossian and his enthusiasm and appetite for Ossianic poetry, was encouraged by Bishop Macdonnell and Judge Fisher of Upper Canada. He returned to Scotland in 1837 to become a student at Edinburgh University.⁵³⁵ There is no indication if his translation and dissertation were written in Canada or Scotland, but we know that Dr McLeod of Edinburgh examined them both in 1839. McLeod was obviously impressed by the standard of the work and wrote to

⁵³⁵ HSL 268/5, 8 December 1840

Macgregor stating his pleasure, he had found the translation faithful to the original, and his only concern with the translation was that:

in some instances too close. The meaning of the original is given with great precision, & its spirit & manner preserved with remarkable felicity [...] The value of the work is much enhanced by the Dissertation and Appendices, which must have cost the author a degree of research & labour which can be appreciated only by those who have been engaged in similar compositions.⁵³⁶

He expressed his opinion that the work should be published and hoped that Macgregor would receive the patronage that he deserved. Macgregor made the corrections suggested by McLeod and removed some 'caustic remarks' from the dissertation.⁵³⁷ He then approached several publishers in Edinburgh for estimates for printing the work. One of them, Tait on Prince's Street, recommended that he should seek the patronage of the HSL. His father John contacted Sir George Murray and Sir Neil Menzies. In a letter to Murray from Menzies he states 'from Dr McLeod's opinion of the work the Society might see very little risk, and it will be most obliging if you would endeavour to intrust [*sic*] some of the Directors in its favour'.⁵³⁸ The HSL responded by appointing a committee to consider the proposal of publishing this new English translation.

Time had not diminished the impact the poems had among Gaels. Macgregor, like Sinclair before him, believed that Macpherson was a poor translator and that was the only problem. Many Gaels may have moved sideways in their belief that Ossian had actually lived, but they still believed implicitly that there was a corpus of ancient poetry traditionally assigned to

⁵³⁶ HSL 268/5, 3 November 1840

⁵³⁷ HSL 268/5, 10 February 1841

⁵³⁸ HSL 268/5, 3 January 1841

Ossian. Macgregor believed that his translation was superior to Macpherson's, which he regarded as 'loose'. His Dissertation argued strongly in support of the authenticity of Ossian's poems. He provided a systematic review of the evidence for or against by earlier scholars. He argued that the poems provided internal proofs that only one person could have written them and he used historical research to prove that Ossian was a Caledonian warrior and poet, flourishing in the third century.

He also included new evidence of the poems' authenticity that he had received from Bishop Macdonnell, which added credence to Farquharson's missing manuscripts, which Sinclair had regarded as unquestionable evidence. Bishop Macdonnell testified that he had personally seen one of the manuscripts collected by Macpherson and given to John Mackenzie:

I was myself requested by the widow of Angus Macdonell of Kyles, in Knoidart, when missionary in Badenoch, to demand from the said J. Macpherson a MS. containing a portion of Ossian's poems, which her husband, when alive, had given to him, on the word of Strathmashie; and I called upon him in Baillebhil, in Badenoch, but did not get the MS.⁵³⁹

Macgregor also told of other manuscripts Macdonnell had seen and knew the content intimately. One was a manuscript called *Am Balg Sollair*⁵⁴⁰, which contained many poems of the Ossianic heroes that belonged to the Fraser of Culbokie. His cousin Simon Fraser had taken this manuscript, to America in 1774. Moreover, when Macdonnell had read Macpherson's translations at the Scotch college of Valladolid in Spain, he recognised many of them as the

⁵³⁹ Patrick Macgregor, *Genuine Remains of Ossian* (London, Smith, Elder, 1841), p. 41

⁵⁴⁰ Macgregor has translated this as 'purveying bag' on p. 39 and a bag of fortuitous goods on p. 40

poems he knew from the Fraser manuscript.⁵⁴¹ Macdonnell also shared his opinion regarding the manuscript copies of the missing poems with Macgregor. He believed James Macpherson had destroyed them as a way of 'concealing the fallacies and infidelity of the translation, or of having it supposed that he himself was the author of the whole'.⁵⁴²

The HSL's committee recommended the publication of Macgregor's translation. It instructed Macgregor to find a printer in Edinburgh who would coordinate with Smith & Elder & Co of Cornhill, the chosen publishers of the HSL. The agreement made between the HSL and Macgregor was as follows:

1st—that the publishers are to sell the book according to the rules of the trade in the case of works sold for the authors, & to be reimbursed by the Society if the proceeds of the sale should not suffice to cover the loss;

2nd—that the Society are to be reimbursed for all their expenses, if the profits of the work shall amount to so much.

3rd—If they should exceed that sum, the surplus shall be mine, as well as the disposal of future editions, if any such there should be.⁵⁴³

Macgregor saw the work through the press and wrote to the HSL, 11 August 1841, to inform the committee that he would set sail for North America the following week, his letter ended with his 'best thanks to the society for the manner in which they have granted my request, & patronised the work'.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴¹Macgregor, pp. 40-41

⁵⁴²Macgregor, p. 40

⁵⁴³HSL 268/6, 22 June 1841

⁵⁴⁴HSL 268/6, 11 August 1841

As with its publication of the 'originals' this publication was also a financial disaster. From the one sided correspondence of Macgregor to the HSL it would appear that 750 copies were printed. There are no extant letters from Smith, Elder & Co. to report on the sale according to its agreement until 1845, when it informed the society that it had 'not sold above one or two copies'. The Publishers also asked for payment of £108 the balance due on 'McGregor's Remains of Ossian' and informed the HSL that 280 copies remained in their warehouse, of those they were instructed to give 260 copies to the CA for educational purposes. The GSL was also a recipient of the HSL largesse, 150 copies were presented for distribution as prizes for its Gaelic Education Scheme.⁵⁴⁵ Once again philanthropy was used as a way of dealing with the unwanted books.

Conclusion

In 1761 Macpherson made his first attempt to publish his origins. It is unlikely that we will ever know if he was genuine in his stated desire. Nevertheless, it is difficult to believe that members of the HSL would continue to be fooled if Macpherson was ingenious. The controversy around Macpherson's translations certainly affected Macpherson's reputation at the time and to this day. Macpherson's critics have implied that he used ploys to avoid publication, the choice of type being one of those strategies. Yet in his translation he did no more than any other collector and translator of that period. John Macarthur made that very point in his conclusion for *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic*. Macpherson himself had told his 'coterie',

⁵⁴⁵ HSL 10615/114, Committee Report 26 August 1904, p. 2

who were all members of the HSL that he had picked out and arranged 'disjointed' pieces 'in order to put them properly together'. Further, he was still preparing the work for publication of the 'originals' the year before he died.

By giving his collection of nineteen manuscripts including the Book of the Dean of Lismore, to his friend John Mackenzie, Secretary to the HSL, he gave them a chance of survival. If he had not, those manuscripts may have been lost to posterity and the loss to Gaelic scholarship would have been immeasurable. In the late eighteenth century those Gaelic manuscripts had no monetary value, attested by the publishing houses approached by Macpherson in an attempt to get the 'originals' published. Yet Macpherson knew that they needed protection. His desire to see the 'originals' published was to be honoured after his death. Macpherson left a legacy to John Mackenzie so that he would achieve what he had been impotent to do. This legacy passed from Mackenzie to his son and then to the HSL, who eventually published in 1807.

By publishing Macpherson's Gaelic 'originals' the HSL believed it was righting a wrong, and preserving honour. Little did it envisage the impact the publication would have on future generations. By printing them the HSL provided proof to those who doubted the possibility of ancient Gaelic poetry. There was no controversy around this production, as there had been with Macpherson's translations. On the whole they were accepted as genuine. None of the HSL members who worked to achieve the finished

article disbelieved the authenticity of the poems themselves. And this was generally the shared belief among Gaels the world over.

The work raised the profile of both the Gaelic language and culture. It provided legitimacy for Gaelic prose and poetry and the impact that *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic* had on Gaelic culture cannot be taken too lightly. Prof Donald Meek has illustrated the influence of the HSL's 'Gaelic Ossian' on later poets such as William Livingstone and Neil MacLeod, who used both Ossianic themes and imagery:

Because of its Gaelic garb, the 'Ossian' of 1807 became a literary quarry of great importance for Gaelic composers. For those with a mind to construct large canvases, it provided a model for making epic poems which imitated the style and metre of Gaelic versions.⁵⁴⁶

These themes and imagery were not limited to poetry, as Meek has demonstrated with reference to the prose writings of Dr Norman MacLeod, John Stuart Blackie and John Murdoch. The influence of Ossian's poems continues to the present day.

An added benefit of the publication of the Gaelic 'originals', was the impetus for collecting and analysing Gaelic tradition. The HSL had organized three tours, Peter MacLean in 1798, John Macdonald of Ferintosh in 1805, and Alexander Stewart in 1807. Stewart's tour was the most extensive and the most productive and the HSL considered sending him on another tour because of his success. It is ironic that Stewart's collection is now missing. It was not published in the nineteenth century due to lack of

⁵⁴⁶ Donald E. Meek, 'The Sublime Gael: The Impact of Macpherson's Ossian on Literacy Creativity and Cultural Perception in Gaelic Scotland' in Howard Gaskill (ed.), *The Reception of Ossian in Europe* (Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum, 2004), p. 48

funds and later due to ignorance of its existence. It languished until a housekeeping exercise discovered the manuscript in the first years of the twentieth century; unfortunately, plans to publish were not carried out. Stewart's manuscripts would have provided an important contribution to Gaelic scholarship. Stewart's tour was followed by other collectors of Gaelic tradition, the greatest among them being John Francis Campbell and Alexander Carmichael.

We cannot underestimate the importance that the publication by the HSL of *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic* had on Gaelic culture. It was a great achievement. As Sir John Sinclair said in 1813, 'If nothing else had been effected by the Highland Society of London, but the publication of the Poems of Ossian, in the original Gaelic, the Institution would have proved itself well entitled to the thanks of literature and its country'.⁵⁴⁷ Little did he know that the impact of that publication would still be felt two centuries later.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴⁷ Sinclair, p. 16

⁵⁴⁸ This chapter formed the basis for a published paper: Janice Fairney, 'Macpherson's legacy: the publication of the Gaelic originals by the Highland Society of London' in *Beyond the Anchoring Grounds: Crosscurrents in Irish and Scottish Studies*, eds. Johanna Archbold and Shane Murphy et al. (Belfast: Queens University Press, 2005)

PRESERVING THE GAELIC LANGUAGE

Introduction

Whether the Gaelic language was a living or a dying language both the HSL and the GSL had a real commitment to preserve it. The manner in which each society demonstrated this commitment, however, was quite different. The HSL regarded the language as dying and all its energies were spent on preserving it by means of publication and collection. This at least would allow scholars to study the language in a scientific manner. Certainly during its first century it generously patronised many scholars. Its publication of *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic* in 1807 was a milestone for Gaelic poetry and prose and has been covered in depth in Chapter 6. Here I will look at its patronage of those Gaelic scholars who attempted to preserve the Gaelic language, standardise grammatical rules and orthography and compile Gaelic dictionaries.

The attitude of the GSL to preserving the language was entirely different, for it saw Gaelic as a living language. *The London Scotsman* in 1867 said of the Gaelic Society that it made ‘no claim of being other than simply a common centre where Highlander can meet Highlander, and have intercourse in their native language’.⁵⁴⁹ But its members did far more than converse in their native tongue; they championed the language and were

⁵⁴⁹ *London Scotsman*, 14 December 1867, p. 537

effectively the only voice on language issues until the last thirty years of the nineteenth century.

This chapter will consider how each society aided the production of Gaelic grammars and dictionaries, Gaelic verse and prose competitions and the Gaelic language itself, whether written, spoken or sung.

Dictionaries and Grammar Books

The Highland Society of London

As with patronage of authors of literary works, the HSL provided assistance to scholars who produced Gaelic grammars and dictionaries. It purchased twenty copies of Archibald Fletcher's *Gaelic and English Dictionary* in 1798, and also twenty copies of Mr Jones' *The Tower of Babel or Confusion of Languages*, as it was felt it was an 'illustration' of the Celtic tongue. It also patronised Rev Alexander Stewart of Moulin's *Gaelic Grammar* in 1802. The publication of a Gaelic dictionary had been a long-term goal of the HSL. A subscription for such had been opened under the patronage of the society in April 1786. It had wanted the money to be available for the time 'when Specific proposals come from the Gentlemen in the Highlands, who are said to have undertaken, or are ready to undertake those works'.⁵⁵⁰ It believed that to compile a dictionary it must amass a large quantity of Gaelic literature. As a means of pursuing its dream, one of its committees decided to write to the Highland Society in Edinburgh (HSE) to act as an intermediary between the best Gaelic scholars who were attending the General Assembly and the HSL. However, this was not done as the HSL

⁵⁵⁰ NLS 268/21, p. 71

realised that a letter would not arrive in time, it therefore decided to write to Rev Mr John Stuart of Luss and Rev Mr John Smith, Minister of Campbeltown, on behalf of the HSL:

Expressive of their wish to establish an Institution for the review of Gaelic works, and requesting their Opinions of the best mode of accomplishing this object. That the Committee are particularly desirous to know whether these Gentlemen could conveniently lend their aid to such an undertaking, and beg to be furnished with the names of such Gentlemen as they think qualified, and most likely to unite in so necessary and so liberal an Institution.⁵⁵¹

There is evidence that Rev Stewart of Moulin applied himself to the task of achieving a list of names of suitable candidates. A letter addressed to Rev Stewart from Bishop Macfarlane of Inverness was obviously a response to Stewart's application for his assistance and readiness to be added to the list of Gaelic Scholars. Macfarlane wrote:

I sincerely regret Sir, that I am so little able to give you satisfaction respecting your List of Names, sent to Mr Mackenzie, and even the few queries sent to myself. My knowledge of Gaelic is but superficial, having acquired it only of late years by residing in this country.⁵⁵²

This letter and another provide clear evidence that Secretary John Mackenzie continued to toil for the HSL's desired Dictionary. Macfarlane refers to him in this letter as 'your zealous friend, Mr Mackenzie'. Stewart had also asked Macfarlane if he knew of a suitable candidate to travel through the Highlands to discover whether or not the names of places were descriptive of their surroundings and qualities. Although not explicit as to who was responsible for setting the task, in a second letter it is very apparent

⁵⁵¹ NLS 268/21, p. 77

⁵⁵² EUL La.II.474, fo. 8

that the request was made on behalf of John Mackenzie and the HSL. The first of Macfarlane's letters was in May 1798, the second July 1798, and Macfarlane mentioned that he had met several times with Mackenzie in Inverness during this period. Mackenzie owned several small estates near Inverness and often visited them during the HSL's summer recess. In the second letter Macfarlane states that 'Mr Mackenzie, who continues anxious and diligent in procuring information, gave me the Lewis List, with Mr Downie's Orthographical alterations, and some remarks along therewith'.⁵⁵³

However, other projects took precedence. It was at this time, in February 1788, that the HSL started to pay the salary of the Gaelic 'Professor' (although called a professor, the post was that of a teacher) at the Inverness Academy, as a means of 'preserving and illustrating that Ancient tongue'.⁵⁵⁴ It also supported a Gaelic teacher in Aberdeenshire, stating that:

The stability of the primitive Character of a People depends in a degree on the preservation of their Mother Tongue in its original purity, [the HSL] have at all times made it a principal object to foster & afford Encouragement to the Gaelic Language, which, from the change of manners, the inroad of the English, and from other circumstances, has been in a state of Declension for some years past—The committee, considering the importance of this general position, and at the same time fully convinced that the Society's Efforts hitherto in this Undertaking, although small, have been crowned with adequate success, are of the opinion that Encouragement, in the way of annual grants of small sums, should be offered to Schoolmasters, thoroughly conversant in the Gaelic and situated on the frontier line of the Highlands, for instruction of the rising Generation in that Tongue.⁵⁵⁵

It was not until 1804, when the HSL was requested by John Mackenzie's son George to publish Macpherson's Gaelic originals, that the

⁵⁵³ EUL La.II.474, fo. 15

⁵⁵⁴ NLS 268/21, p. 90

⁵⁵⁵ NLS 268/24, p. 19

issue of a Gaelic dictionary was raised again in the minutes. The Ossian Committee agreed that, after the work was published, the HSL should take the necessary steps for publishing a Gaelic dictionary, and that in the meantime, those gentlemen who had 'signified their intention of undertaking this arduous task' should be contacted to ascertain the reason for their delay in such an important endeavour.⁵⁵⁶ One of those Gentlemen was Rev Dr Smith of Campbeltown, who at the request of Sir John Sinclair, the Chairman of the Ossian Committee, put in writing his suggestions for a Gaelic Dictionary in 1806. He recommended that:

This Dictionary should certainly be compiled on a broad basis, & on a liberal Plan. Although it should be chiefly a Gaelic Dictionary, it ought by no means to be confined to the Gaelic Dialect only. The affinity of every word so far as it can be traced to words of a similar sound and meaning in any other Celtic dialect or in any other ancient or modern language out [sic] to be pointed out, for the root (generally a monosyllable) is often found in one Language or dialect which its relatives are found in another.⁵⁵⁷

He expressed his opinion that the Scottish Gaelic language was purer than any other of the Celtic languages and a dictionary would be of great interest to philosophers, philologists and other scholars. However, he felt that:

The time seems to be fast approaching when they shall lie no longer a distinct People, and when their Language shall no longer be known, if it be not found in the Dictionary which the Highland Society, have, with a becoming patriotism resolved to encourage and patronise.⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁶ NLS 268/24, p. 74

⁵⁵⁷ EUL La.II.474, fo. 54

⁵⁵⁸ EUL La.II.474, fo. 54

That year, the committee decided that any profits from the sale of *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic* should be used for the encouragement of Gaelic literature and music and the publication of a Gaelic dictionary. It believed the latter was worthy of national encouragement.

It was during this year that the HSL made the acquaintance of Alexander Stewart, A.M., the Gaelic scholar and collector, who informed the society of his wish to compile a Gaelic dictionary. The society employed him as a collector of Gaelic tradition in 1807. It was hoped that by saving any remaining Gaelic literature it would have enough raw data for the dictionary's compilation. The HSL now believed it could be achieved through this young man.

However, the ambition could not be fulfilled; the HSL's *Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic* was a financial disaster and the young collector close to death. The HSL's financial state was desperate, with over £5,000 of arrears. To compound the problem, the Rev Stewart of Moulin wrote in 1812 to the HSL informing it that a second and much expanded edition of his Gaelic Grammar was in the press. He hoped that the HSL's members collectively or individually would support it. The HSL decided to await its publication and review it before any decision would be made regarding the best manner in which it could assist Rev Stewart, noting that:

for promoting the sale of a work so essential to the Cultivation of the Gaelic Language and not for the sake of Mr Stewart's present labours alone, notwithstanding the work under consideration reflects upon him very high credit but as an Incitement to farther exertions in the same field, so luck must

continue ever sterile until an Etymological Gaelic Dictionary on a comprehensive scale shall be published.⁵⁵⁹

The news of Rev Stewart's second edition left a sour note with the Society. There was no hope of forwarding the compilation of the dictionary and it was put aside for the time being. However, Sir John Sinclair, an active supporter of the dictionary, and a member of both the HSL and HSE, took the proposal to the HSE, who had the finances to make it happen. It was a bitter pill when the society received a letter from Lewis Gordon, Deputy Secretary of the HSE, informing that it planned to publish a dictionary and requested subscriptions. The HSL resolved that:

A Gaelic Dictionary is a Desideratum long wished for, and it is incumbent on the Highland Society to encourage and patronize the Publication of such a Work described in the Prospectus transmitted by Mr Gordon, but that before a Subscription be entered into the Secretary do correspond with Mr Gordon on the subject and procure from him further information as to the plan, and probable expence [*sic*] of the intended publication.⁵⁶⁰

Later that year, the HSL declined assistance to the HSE in the matter of the Gaelic Dictionary, stating it had other, more pressing objects. It did eventually give assistance to its sister society. Yet when it had received the three copies to which it had subscribed to, the directors recommended that 'having granted one hundred guineas in aid of the publication it was considered unnecessary to recommend any further grant from the funds of the Corporation'.⁵⁶¹

During the time that the HSS were toiling with the preparation of its own dictionary, Robert Archibald Armstrong, deputy secretary to the HSL

⁵⁵⁹ NLS 268/25, pp. 150-51

⁵⁶⁰ NLS 268/26, p. 95

⁵⁶¹ NLS 268/27, 7 February 1829

was busy toiling on his own. What is surprising is the attitude of the HSL to Robert Armstrong, for it would appear that it gave him no encouragement or provided him with any financial assistance. One can speculate that the Society's wish for its own dictionary had essentially been dashed by the HSS and it did not care to be embroiled in another expensive venture, for its funds were still recovering from its publication of Ossian's 'Gaelic originals'. Perhaps it could not believe that one single man could produce a work that was taking the HSS so long to finish. Robert Armstrong certainly had support and patronage of some individual members from its beginning Lord Strathavon, the Duke of Hamilton, Lord Glenorchy, Sir Charles Forbes of Edinglassie and Simon MacGillivray. It is apparent that he toiled while he was at work for he states in the works preface that the great part of it had been printing when people had assumed that he was preparing it, also that:

I forbear to mention the time this work has occupied, and the labour which it has required. I might be discredited by some, and considered by others as indulging my vanity;—especially when I should add, that in the meanwhile to provide for my subsistence; and that the compilation which I now send forth to the world, is, in truth, the production of such hours as I could spare from harassing occupations, or snatch from the proper seasons of repose.⁵⁶²

His letter of resignation provides the clue that the HSL knew what he was doing for he writes:

I find that the heavy and responsible toil (enough for three men) which I encounter at present in one of the great causes which gave birth to your Institution, will wholly, prevent me during the

⁵⁶² Robert A. Armstrong, *A Gaelic Dictionary in two parts* (London: printed for Duncan, 1825), p. xii

present year from bestowing any part of my attention on the writing department of the Society's business.⁵⁶³

There is no rancour in the letter; it would appear he quit his job with no ill feeling; he may have wanted to achieve his prize by himself. His prospectus for the Gaelic Dictionary was available early in January 1826 and the Directors inspected the finished work at its May meeting; where it was unanimously resolved to give

the sum of Fifty Guineas and the Medal of the Society to Richard Archibald Armstrong as a mark of approbation of this Society for his talents, his industry and his zeal in assisting to rescue from oblivion the valuable remains of Celtic Literature by undertaking and accomplishing the publication of his Gaelic Dictionary.⁵⁶⁴

It is difficult not to speculate that Armstrong made use of John Mackenzie's word lists, and the manuscripts of Alexander Stewart and Dr Smith that would have been available to him during the preparation stages. For he only credits Rev Dr Stewart of Luss and Dr Smith of Campbeltown and the Gaelic vocabularies of Shaw, Macfarlane and Macdonald. He also gave thanks for the assistance of Rev Ross of Lochbroom, who had toiled so hard in transcribing and translating Macpherson's 'originals'. Further lexicographical study might provide the source material for his Dictionary.

In 1830, the HSL was again approached with another Gaelic dictionary. This one was the product of cooperation between Rev Dr Macleod of Campsie and Rev Dr Dewar of Glasgow. It was to be sold in fifteen monthly parts each priced at one shilling. It would be ideal for

⁵⁶³ NLS 268/2, 14 February 1824

⁵⁶⁴ NLS 268/27, 6 May 1826

schools and the Society decided to encourage its publication and subscribe for some copies to be distributed among homeland schools.⁵⁶⁵ However, nothing was done immediately because of lack of funds and the generous proposed subscription of one hundred guineas was changed to twenty-five guineas at a later meeting, yet that decision was deferred yet again. The HSL eventually purchased thirty-two copies of the Macleod and Dewar dictionary as a donation to the General Assembly Schools.⁵⁶⁶

The Gaelic Society of London

The GSL has with one exception, no extant minutes prior to 1867, and there is no hard evidence that any financial donations or contributions assisted publication of Gaelic grammars at a corporate level. Papers were presented at meetings on related topics, such as orthography, and etymology. The following papers were presented in the last quarter of the nineteenth century: Donald Campbell's paper on 'Gaelic Orthography' in 1878, and Charles Stewart Jerram MA's paper on 'Celtic Etymologies' in 1876 and 'Celtic Word Derivation' in 1877, and Dr H Cameron Gillies on 'The Mechanics of Gaelic Grammar'. However, these were just four among many. Several members went on to publish grammars, dictionaries and etymologies.

Among the manuscripts belonging to the GSL is one entitled 'Instructions for the Study of Gaelic by *Uill. Meinn, Fear comp.*' William Menzies was the first President of the society. It is very possible that he

⁵⁶⁵ NLS 268/14, 1 May 1830

⁵⁶⁶ NLS 268/4, 28 February 1832

conducted Gaelic language classes or that he was working on a grammar to be published. Dr H Cameron Gillies, another member of the society, published a grammar (based on Rev Alexander Stewart's grammar) entitled *The Elements of Gaelic Grammar* in 1896 and a second edition with an appendix in 1902. He also published *Gaelic Class Book Part I* in 1899, which may have been intended for the Gaelic classes conducted by the GSL. In the preface of his book, he states:

I have the advantage of being in touch with intelligent students of the language as their teacher, and I have made their actual difficulties guide me in everything. I hope I have been able in some degree to enlighten and smooth their way, and that of others also who may undertake the same most interesting travel.⁵⁶⁷

Another grammar was J.G. Mackay's *Easy Gaelic Syntax* popularly treated for beginners, also published in 1899. Mackay was one of the GSL's Gaelic teachers. David Nutt, another member of the society, was the publisher of the Mackay and Gillies books.

Gilbert Gibson published an early etymology of geography in 1840 and Dr Charles Mackay's *Gaelic Etymology of the languages of Western Europe* was published by subscription in 1877. It was widely advertised and received the approbation of the HSL and other Highland societies in England and Scotland. The HSL regarded it as worthy of its approval and wanted to advance Mackay £200, if he would publish his book under the 'seal and patronage' of the HSL, but Mackay declined, and the HSL subscribed to the amount of fifty guineas. Charles Mackay had been a director of the HSL but

⁵⁶⁷ H. Cameron Gillies, *The Elements of Gaelic Grammar*, 2nd ed. (London: Nutt, 1902), p. vii

had left that society and joined the GSL in 1877. David Murphy, one of the society's Irish members, published an Irish and English Dictionary.

A book whose great value has endured through the years is Ewen MacDonald's Gaelic dictionary, originally entitled *Faclair Gaidhlig air son nan sgoiltean*. It was originally published in monthly sections from 1901 to 1911 or as three volumes from 1902. It was revised and reissued in one volume in 1911 under the title *Faclair Gaidhlig agus Beurla le Dealbhan*. It was a compilation of most of the other published Gaelic dictionaries to which were added thousands of words from common speech and modern Gaelic literature. It also contained diagrams to explain words better. MacDonald is now better known as Edward Dwelly, and it was his friend William Gillies that gave him the name Ewen MacDonald sometime in the 1880s.⁵⁶⁸ Like Gillies he was a member of the GSL. He learnt his Gaelic in London, with the help of his wife, a native Gaelic speaker and others; possibly he had attended Gaelic classes in London. He recognised the need for a Gaelic dictionary, initially for his own use, but through the encouragement of fellow learners he went on to publish it in parts. In the preface of the revised edition of 1911 and all subsequent editions Dwelly talks of the difficulty of his task and states:

No one who has always spoken a language like Gaelic from the cradle can ever realize the extraordinary difficulties presented to a stranger who wishes to acquire it. First, the majority of Gaelic speakers only a very few years ago could neither read nor write it, so when one heard an unfamiliar word or phrases and the first instinct was of course to write it down lest it should be forgotten, the question was how to spell it—of course the

⁵⁶⁸ Gillies (1990), p. 515

speaker could not tell! I was baulked in this way times without number, and my progress with the language immensely retarded in consequence.⁵⁶⁹

He did receive £25 from the HSL and the GSL opened a subscription for a special fund, the proceeds of which were to be used to purchase copies of the dictionary, and the books bought were used as prizes for its Gaelic Education Scheme.⁵⁷⁰

Gaelic Poetry and Prose Competitions

Both societies held competitions, and the wish of both societies was to give 'new energy' to the Gaelic language. The HSL's competitions were for prize money and were open to anyone. They continued until the 1810s, whereas the GSL held competitions for its own members.

The HSL decided to establish an annual Gaelic poetry competition in 1784 with a purse of five guineas to the winner. However, because of the lack of members 'conversant with the language', finding a committee competent to decide on a topic and to judge the entries took a little over a year. The management committee itself decided on the topic for the poem, namely the restoration of the Forfeited Estates and the Highland dress. The HSL appointed the following as a committee: General McNab, Dr Grant, James Morrison, Angus McAulay, Captain Morison and Secretary Mackenzie 'to decide on merit and number of prizes to be awarded within two hundred merks.'⁵⁷¹ There is no further mention of the competition or winners in the extant records. However, Angus MacLeod in *The Songs of*

⁵⁶⁹ Edward Dwelly, *Illustrated Gaelic-English Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Limited, 1993), p. iv

⁵⁷⁰ UCL GSL MB, 18 March 1909

⁵⁷¹ NLS 268/21, p. 38

Duncan Ban Macintyre states that a feature of the HSL's piping competitions commencing in 1781 was that 'one item in the programme was the recitation of an original Gaelic poem, selected as the best of those submitted to the Society'.⁵⁷² Certainly Duncan Ban Macintyre composed poems for these competitions for 1781 to 1785 and a final one in 1789. I quote one verse from '*Do'n Ghaidhlig, 1785*':

Tha Lunnainn glé àrd am misneach
Le spionnadh nan Gàidheal gasda,
Fhuair urram 's gach àit an sirt' iad,
Na curaidhean calma, reachdmhor;
A tha gabhail cùram riochdail,
A chumail na rìoghachd neartmhor,
'S dh'òrdaich gu sìorraidh nach brisear,
Gàidhlig, pìobaireachd, is bratach.⁵⁷³

London is very highly encouraged
by the vigour of the gallant Gaels,
who gained respect wherever they were sought out
those stalwart, handsome champions,
who are assuming real responsibility
for keeping the kingdom powerful,
and have decreed that, for all time,
Gaelic, pipe, and flag shall be inviolate.

Most of these were composed and performed at the Piping Competition held during the Falkirk Tryst under the supervision of the Glasgow Gaelic Club, and then from 1785 in Edinburgh under the supervision of the HSS. There is no evidence that competitions took place at the GSL prior to 1895. Yet the minute of May 1895 does give the impression that these had been held for a number of years. The minute states '*gum biodh co-stri bliadhnaile measg na buill ma'n a b'abhist ma'n a bhiodh na 's lugha*

⁵⁷² Angus MacLeod, *The Songs of Duncan Ban Macintyre* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1978), p. 512

⁵⁷³ MacLeod, pp. 292-3, MacLeod's translation

na tri fir co-stri' (that there would be an annual competition amongst members as usual if there were no fewer than three competitors).⁵⁷⁴

The Spoken Word

The language used by members at meetings of the HSL at its inception was Gaelic according to James Logan and 'small fines were imposed on those who did not use their mother tongue'.⁵⁷⁵ How long Gaelic remained the language of this new society is unknown. Certainly, sometime during 1778 to 1784 the language used changed to English, and all the extant minutes dating from 1784 are in English. The extracted minutes used by the Ossian Committee dated as early as 1779 are in English. It is possible that Colin Macrae, the deputy secretary, fluent in Gaelic could have translated the minutes for the committee, but this is doubtful. The only time Gaelic appears to have been used was during the monthly dinner meetings when toasts were made and songs were sung, and annual dinners when the grace was also said in Gaelic.

Several attempts were made to re-establish a Gaelic speaking society according to James Logan.⁵⁷⁶ But it was not until 1830 when the GSL was established from some of the Gaelic-speaking members of the Club of True Highlanders that a Gaelic speaking society resumed its place in London. The rules of the society state very clearly that members must be able to speak Gaelic and that the meetings would be in Gaelic:

⁵⁷⁴ UCL GSL MB, 10 May 1895

⁵⁷⁵ Logan, p. vi

⁵⁷⁶ Logan, p. vii-x

I Nach bi aon air bith nach urrain a Ghaëlig a labhairt meast
iomchuidh mar Chompach;
II Gu'n cuirear gnothaichean a Chomuinn air adhart anns a
Ghaëlig.⁵⁷⁷

I No one will be deemed suitable as a member who cannot
speak Gaelic.
II That the affairs of the society will be conducted in Gaelic.

It is apparent that essays or lectures were part of the monthly meetings, and several specimens remain. However, they are not all in Gaelic. So it is probable that some of the lectures were presented in English. Two that remain are by James Logan on 'Moot Hills' and 'The Forests of Caledonia', but there are Gaelic essays, such as Rev John Lees' '*Tuireadh an t'Slànaighear os cionn Ierusalem*' (a translation of C. MacKay's 'The Saviour's lamentation over Jerusalem'). Rev John Lees was secretary to the CA and also conducted Gaelic services in London.

Nonetheless, English-speaking members must have been making inroads into the society for the rules were revised in 1867, although not accepted by the membership until 1872. One rule change was an accommodation to the Gaelic language; 'no one is eligible for membership who cannot speak the language, except such as may be desirous to improve their knowledge of it'.⁵⁷⁸ The new rules also stated that the meetings would be carried out in the Gaelic language, and any deviation must have the unanimous approval of all members present.

The GSL must have conducted Gaelic language classes to assist those individuals who wanted to learn the language. Language classes,

⁵⁷⁷ Logan, p. xiii

⁵⁷⁸ UCL GSL MB 1867-1869

however, are not mentioned in the minutes during that time, but are alluded to in the published reports of the society's meetings in the *London Scotsman*.⁵⁷⁹ In the same report it says that the society will accept as members any one who can master such phrases as '*cia mar tha sibh an dugh?*'—(how are you today?)—'*Tha gu math*'—(well, thank you)'. Colin Maccallum, a past President and a member of the GSL since 1832, spoke of the society in his essay, which had been transmitted at the meeting in Gaelic:

His intention was to address a few words of exhortation to all the Gaels of the metropolis to be come enrolled in an association that had for its main object the cultivation of their mother tongue. When he first joined it he found himself among many men of superior attainments; they were men learned in languages, musicians, poets, painters, and antiquarians, in whose company it was most agreeable to be; therefore they might well believe that these were pleasant reminiscences to him. Their society might be considered by the more demonstrative ones as an obscure one, but he hoped they would ever retain the same quiet, unassuming demeanour so becoming in a body with objects like themselves. The practice [*sic*] of reading essays at their gatherings must be zealously adhered to, as the study for their preparation was of the utmost advantage to better their knowledge of the language.⁵⁸⁰

However, the rule regarding the language for essays presented at the ordinary or general meetings was altered in 1875 to permit no more than three essays per year to be delivered in English.⁵⁸¹ In *The London Scotsman* it is reported that after 10.30 p.m. English might be spoken and certainly during the presidency of Colin Chisholm he would open the conversation to the use of English. One can presume that some Gaelic would have been spoken on evenings when English presentations were made, but it is not until

⁵⁷⁹ *London Scotsman*, 14 March 1868, p. 247

⁵⁸⁰ *London Scotsman*, 24 April 1869, p. 262

⁵⁸¹ UCL GSL MB, 23 November 1875

the minute for January 1900 that the practice was made clear. It states, '*Aig an aim so thug fear na cathairadh comas Beurla a'labhairt airson gun deach ceann cuir re gnothuchean a Chommun agus dh'ear e air Mr MacConnich MacBride a phaiper leugh*'.⁵⁸² (At this time the chairman gave permission to speak in English since the Society's business was over and he asked Mr Mackenzie MacBride to read his paper.) Mackenzie MacBride's essay was in English. The minute for April 1901 notes a change from the normal English speaking at meetings perhaps brought on by the topic of the presentation:

Leugh Mr Ian MacConnich paiper air 'Ar dleasnas do ar Canain' agus s' mor a thoillintinn thug e do na uile duine bha lathair. Se Chainain Gaidhlig bha air a labhairt cho fad sa bha choinneamh na' shiudhe.⁵⁸³

Mr John Mackenzie read a paper on 'Our duty to our Language' and he gave great pleasure to all the people present. The Gaelic language was spoken as long as the meeting was sitting.

Gaelic continued to be the language at the GSL, although changes in the make-up of those meetings took place, particularly in the twentieth century. At the beginning of the twentieth century some innovative measures were introduced under the presidency of Dr John Matheson in 1904. These were a series of social gatherings prior to the presentation of the essay. It was essentially to encourage new émigré Gaels to join the society. William Gillies was instrumental in arranging these gatherings. They were informal, consisting of music, song and stories, and Dr John Matheson said that, 'it gave him a very great pleasure to see that this new departure had proved so very interesting and successful, and he hoped that in addition to the ordinary

⁵⁸² UCL GSL MB, 31 January 1900

⁵⁸³ UCL GSL MB, 21 April 1901

monthly meetings of the Society, at which lectures are delivered or papers read, it would be possible in the future to have more of these social gatherings'.⁵⁸⁴ These ceilidh meetings did prove popular, and in 1910 two ceilidh meetings were scheduled into the society's annual programme alongside the two Gaelic and the two English lectures.⁵⁸⁵

As mentioned above, Gaelic classes, although obviously conducted, rarely appear in the minutes of the GSL, and have been discussed in Chapter 3. However, the Gaelic classes led by William Gillies introduced the learning of songs as an aid to learning the language. This move was at the suggestion of Dr H Cameron Gillies, who went to the classes to give instruction and to act as conductor, from which, as Cameron Gillies reported to the press at the choir's first concert:

The matter grew into the very nice choir of young people who invited their countrymen to an entertainment of Gaelic songs on Thursday evening. Everything was Gaelic—tickets, programmes, songs, speeches, all Gaelic. It may be said at once that the entertainment was [...] far beyond anything of the kind ever attempted in London, and far beyond the highest expectations of the audience.⁵⁸⁶

From its first concert, the London Gaelic Choir featured a short sketch or drama in Gaelic as part of the programme; later these dramas were written and directed by William Gillies.

Gillies, was a passionate activist for the language and he recommended a change to broaden the scope of the second rule of the society concerning the language. He believed that 'the Gaelic language should be

⁵⁸⁴ *Oban Times*, 21 May 1904, p. 2

⁵⁸⁵ UCL GSL MB, 20 January 1910

⁵⁸⁶ *Oban Times* 20 May 1893, p. 2

recognised as the national language of Scotland'. This was a very ambitious proposal, which did not win the vote. Seventeen members voted, eleven for and six against. Miss Farquharson, Chief of the Society, who was a keen supporter of the motion, was unable to attend and sent a letter, which expressed her strenuous support. The motion was lost because it did not carry the required three-quarters majority.⁵⁸⁷

However, Gillies was not alone in his passion for the language, which is clearly illustrated in the Minute Books of the GSL. The GSL as a corporate body advocated the Gaelic Chair and Gaelic education in the homeland. It did all it could to promote and encourage the Gaelic language. It funded a Gaelic Education Scheme to encourage Gaelic education in schools sourced through annual concerts. It held Gaelic classes in London, and it agitated for, and achieved a level of, Gaelic worship in London. Its records show without doubt that it pursued every measure open to it for the preservation of the 'noble language' of its members'.

The Sung Word

As already mentioned, the learning of songs was used to facilitate learning the language. Members of the GSL loved Gaelic songs as a romanticised reminder of the homeland. At the end of most meetings of the society, Gaelic songs were sung and the society's pipers played *pìobaireachd*. Songs and poetry were often topics for essays among members, and the society was involved with the publication of two books of Gaelic songs. Both books came into existence through the assistance of John

⁵⁸⁷ *Oban Times*, 5 January 1907, p. 2

Cameron Macphee. The first one is purely sheet music, but is worthy of note. It was the work of Louis Beck, the bandmaster of the London Scottish Volunteers, who arranged some of Cameron Macphee's favourite airs into quadrilles. It was published as *Tir nam beann* in 1870. The second was *Aireamh taghta dh'orain na Gaidhealtachd* (A Selection of Highland Melodies) which was published in 1876. This was the first sortie into the world of publishing undertaken by the GSL. The selection was chosen from Cameron Macphee's song collection, as the most 'worthy of preservation either for musical value or other associations'.⁵⁸⁸ The GSL had a ready friend in Prof Lois Honig of the Royal Academy of Music, who was willing to take down the melody, from the singing of John Cameron Macphee and others, and to arrange it for piano and orchestra. He said of the work:

Music Art is indebted to the Gaelic Society for placing them in this state of preservation, and they may justly be proud of the songs which bear the stamp of thorough originality, and are perfect models of expression, from simplicity and tenderness, to humour and energy. I have had no difficulty harmonising them, and as it happens in several songs that the final note leaves the ear displeased, not falling on the tonic, I have satisfied the expectation in the symphony which follows, but I must impress upon students not to look upon this kind of ending to a song as a defect, as it is consistent with the melodies of a people living in the midst of varied and romantic scenery, and accustomed to hear the mysterious sounds of nature in endless succession, to which a key note can never be discovered.⁵⁸⁹

Two past-presidents of the GSL, Colin Maccallum and Colin Chisholm provided forgotten Gaelic verses, and Miss Mary Peyton (poet), Mr J.B. Keene and Mr W.H. Burton, Vice-President of the GSL, assisted

⁵⁸⁸ Louis Honig and John Cameron Macphee, *Aireamh taghta dh'orain na Gaidhealtachd* (London: Gaelic Society of London, 1876), p. 1

⁵⁸⁹ Honig, p. 3

Cameron Macphee, in translating the songs into English. Cameron Macphee after noting that the GSL had initiated the proceedings for a Celtic Chair in 1835, said of this collection of songs that:

It will be to the Society as something more than the establishment of a Chair for Celtic Languages, that it has in a manner embalmed the remains of the sweet music of the hills, to gladden the hearts and inspire the minds of those who, whether at home or abroad, still cling with affection to the memorials of their childhood, their parents, or their ancestors.⁵⁹⁰

The society published only 250 copies, which were sold by subscription. A positive result of this publication was the formation of the London Celtic Choir under auspices of the GSL. It had about one hundred members and was conducted by Mr Latter, and it received the patronage of Lord Macduff. It gave its first Concert of Gaelic songs at St George's Hall 3 August 1876, which was promoted under the name and responsibility of the Gaelic Society.⁵⁹¹ It was later to change its name to the London Scottish Choir.

Gaelic songs continued to be a feature of meetings and the suggestion of a second Gaelic songbook was raised in December 1878. Donald Campbell, the Gaelic secretary, composed several Gaelic songs and it was suggested that his songs should be published in a new edition.⁵⁹² However, no further mention of it is made until almost twenty years later, when at the June 1897 meeting; a discussion took place regarding the profit from the Annual Concerts. Donald T. Fraser there confirmed the writing of the society's book '*Luinneagan Luaineach*'. This is the only mention of it.

⁵⁹⁰ Honig, p. 2

⁵⁹¹ UCL GSL MB, 10 May 1876

⁵⁹² UCL GSL MB, 11 December 1878

The HSL did not publish songbooks itself but patronised the works of deserving individuals through financial assistance. The first book of songs patronised by the HSL was Rev Patrick Macdonald's *A Collection of Highland Vocal Airs* in 1784, which is considered in detail in Chapter 8 (see pp. 303-306). It also wanted to publish a book of songs collected by its young collector Alexander Stewart. He had been instructed to learn the tunes of songs he collected during his tour in 1807. The HSL had planned that he would whistle the tunes to Mr Gow, who would transcribe the tune into musical notation. However, it is doubtful that any action was taken to fulfil this due to the financial embarrassment of the society. There was certainly interest in and financial assistance given to Alexander Campbell's *Albyn's Anthology*, a collection of 'Scotch Music comprising of many original Highland Airs' to which Mr Walter Scott was writing English words to several of the Gaelic songs.

Each society had poems, or more correctly songs composed about them. The HSL's bard, Padrig Macgh'illeoin (Peter Maclean), made a song to the society, expounding its greatness, called '*Oran Nuadh air na Comun Gaidhealach an Lundain*', when it was published in 1788 the title was changed to '*Oran Nuadh air na Finneachan Gaidhealach*'.⁵⁹³ The first verse, followed by my translation is as follows:

Tha n' Comun Gaidhealach an Lundain,
Laidir, urramach, ríoghail,
Mórchríodeach, ceannsalach, duinneil,
Sliochd nan curridhinn príosail;
Lion deoch slainte nan gaisgeach,

⁵⁹³ NLS 10615/84. See Appendix III.

Leinn is aite bhi ga díoladh,
Olaidh mise mo sheanndeoch,
Co aca is brandi no fion i.

The Highland Society of London is
Powerful, superior, loyal,
Magnanimous, authoritative, manly,
The descendents of the precious heroes;
Replenish the toast of the champions,
It is most joyful for us to pay it,
I will drink my old drink,
Whether it be brandy or wine.

It was a praise poem of the old style. Beathain Urachaduinn (Benjamin Urquhart) of Edinburgh wrote another praise poem for the HSL entitled '*Oran Nuadh do Chomunn Rioghail*' specifically for the HSL's Anniversary Dinner. Urquhart praises the HSL both in his poem and in the accompanying letter:

for their laudable exertions towards snatching from oblivion, while it can be done, everything connected with the Highlands, in Antiquity, Language, Poetry, Music, the History of the Gael of former times and thought worthy of preservation and handed down to posterity and generally for the liberal Patronage given to whatever, is interesting to the feelings and spirit of the Highlands.⁵⁹⁴

The GSL also had a poem made for it by Donald MacMhurich entitled '*Do Chomunn na Gaëlic*' (To the Gaelic Society) which he presented at a meeting of the society in April 1837.⁵⁹⁵ He celebrates the language and something of the GSL who supported it:

Ge do bhithinn gu tinn fo chradh-lot 's mi sgith,
Se dhaisigeadh sith dhom 'us slainte
Sinn bhi comhla 'mu na bhord, air mhire 's aig òl
'S mi 'g eisdeachd ri boi'chead bhur cainnte:
Cha chomhradh gun chli, ach ciall, tùr agus brìgh,
Ga aithris le firinn 's le cairdeas,

⁵⁹⁴ NLS 268/2, 20 March 1827

⁵⁹⁵ UCL GSL preserved scrapbook, fo.38. See Appendix II.

Cuir eolais ann an ceill air na linntean a dheug
Bhios air Comunn na Feile 's na Gaëlic.⁵⁹⁶

Although I were ill, painfully wounded, and weary,
What would restore me to peace and health
Would be to be together around the table in merriment and
drinking
And me listening to the beauty of your language:
It is not conversation lacking ability, but wisdom, genius and
substance,
Narrated with truth and with friendship,
Expressing the knowledge of past generations
That will be at the Society of the Kilt and the Gaelic.

He was better known as Donald Macpherson and there are two variants of this poem to be found among his papers in the NLS. One of the versions is called '*Do Chomunn mo chridhe, Comunn Gaelig Londuin*'. In a manuscript notebook he gives the name of a tune the song is to be sung to as '*Seoladh nan gamhna do' ro fhasaich*' and states that it was copied and altered but no date is given.⁵⁹⁷ The third version, the altered copy, is called '*Do Chomunn na Gaelic, an Londun*'.⁵⁹⁸ Macpherson's poems are different from the praise poems made for the HSL as they are of a more reflective and romantic nature and include allusions to Celtic mythology.

The Written Word

From the extant minutes of both societies we clearly see that English is the written language of the HSL and Gaelic for the most part is the written language of the GSL. The HSL's meetings were conducted in English, reflected in the written minutes. Nevertheless, whether the HSL members were literate in Gaelic or not, we must remember that it was

⁵⁹⁶ UCL GSL preserved scrapbook, fo. 38

⁵⁹⁷ NLS MS.14891, fo. 158

⁵⁹⁸ NLS MS.14894, fo. 66

strongly committed to the preservation of Gaelic literature—the written word. The society's role in the publication of *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic* has been discussed at length in Chapter 6; and its patronage was ready to be given to the right project. It had published Rev Daniel Dewar's 'elegant and impressive Sermon' preached at the Gaelic Chapel in London.⁵⁹⁹ It subscribed for 25 copies of Angus Mackenzie's *History of Scotland* written in Gaelic.⁶⁰⁰ Furthermore it gave its deputy secretary Angus Macpherson £125 in 1872 to translate *Queen Victoria's Journal* into Gaelic.⁶⁰¹

The GSL meetings appear to have been conducted through a mixture of Gaelic and English from the evidence of its minutes. Committee and Council meeting minutes were nearly always written in English, whereas the minutes for the ordinary meetings of members were in Gaelic; and this continued until the last years of the nineteenth century. Unlike the HSL, the GSL were not patrons of authors, whether members or not. The only exception was its own publication of *Aireamh taghta dh'orain na Gaidhealtachd* in 1876. Nonetheless, several members of the society did indeed publish their own works. Among them were: John Mackenzie, who was himself a poet, editor and critic and historian. His biographies ignore his time in London. He was certainly a member of the GSL.⁶⁰² His move to London was possibly after his publication of the first edition of William Ross' songs, *Orain Ghae'lach le Uilleam Ross* in 1830, or perhaps the

⁵⁹⁹ NLS 268/26, p. 98

⁶⁰⁰ NLS 268/28, pp. 29-30

⁶⁰¹ NLS 268/28, p. 15

⁶⁰² Logan, p. xv and p. x

second edition in 1833. He probably stayed in London until he attained the position of Bookkeeper in the printing office of Glasgow University in 1836. It was while in London that he received encouragement to go forward with publishing his large collection of poetry:

After having collected all the materials which I deemed necessary for the completion of the work, I met with so little encouragement, that I was on the eve of abandoning my design, when Donald McPherson, Bookseller, London, with an enthusiasm and high patriotic feeling that do honour to his heart, entered into my projects, and, by his warmly exercised influence, put me in a position in which I soon enjoyed the pleasing assurance of being able to carry my intentions into execution.⁶⁰³

The collection was first published in 1841 as *Sàr Obair nam Bard Gaelach* (Beauties of Gaelic Poetry). James Logan, fellow GSL member and the society's English secretary, contributed to this volume. Mackenzie went on to write *Eachdraidh a' Phrionnsa*, which was published in 1844. In both of these volumes he noted that he was a member of the GSL, a membership of which he must have been proud. Alexander MacConachie Ross A.M. was the 'author of some moral and instructive Gaelic publications' and translator of English Sermons into the Gaelic language, and John William Munro A.M. wrote several papers on Gaelic subjects. Donald Macpherson has already been mentioned, he was the first Gaelic secretary of the GSL.⁶⁰⁴ His first book of poetry or songs *Melodies from the Gaelic* published in 1824 was written in English and was well received.⁶⁰⁵ Macpherson received encouragement from his old commander, Maj. Gen. Swinton of the 75th, with

⁶⁰³ John Mackenzie, *Sar-Obair Nam Bard Gaelach: Or the Beauties of Gaelic Poetry and Lives of the Highland Bards* (Edinburgh: Maclachlan & Stewart, 1872), preface p. vii

⁶⁰⁴ Logan, pp. x and xiv

⁶⁰⁵ See *The Monthly Magazine* Vol LVIII, Part II, p. 169, and *Library Chronicle*, 1824, p. 584

the result that he gathered together material for a second anthology, which he hoped to publish by subscription.⁶⁰⁶ It would appear that he initially hoped that the HSL would consider his work worthy of patronage and there is a copy of his prospectus to the society. He obviously did not receive the degree of encouragement from the HSL that he had hoped for, as there is a copy of another prospectus circulated in 1849 with a number of names subscribed. His work was to be a collection of his own poetry and songs, to which he would add as many of the Gaelic works of Lachlan Macpherson whom he greatly admired. He intended the book to be printed and bound in such a way as to keep the English separate from the Gaelic so that each part could be used independently.⁶⁰⁷

There are several extant responses he received after circulating his manuscript. One is from Dr Lachlan MacLean, author of *History of the Gaelic Language*, a founding member of the 1830 GSL, who had by 1841 returned to Scotland and was living in Glasgow. He was very enthusiastic about what Macpherson had sent him and said, 'I have read your Gaëlic manuscript with exquisite delight, and it is not flattery to say, that you have shewn the flexibility, beauty and force of our noble language beyond any other'.⁶⁰⁸ Later that year Cluny Macpherson wrote in praise of his manuscript, stating that as a Gaelic Chair at Aberdeen University is imminent that 'I think you ought to publish your Gaelic works now'.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁶ NLS MS 14894, fo. 112

⁶⁰⁷ NLS MS.14895, fo. 124

⁶⁰⁸ NLS MS.14894, fo. 117

⁶⁰⁹ NLS MS.14894, fo. 122

Macpherson had sent a copy of a poem to Rev Norman Macleod's periodical *Cuairtear nan Gleann*, and it was received very warmly:

Mòran taing do'n uasal shuairce chaoimhneil "D Macpherson" ann am Pimlico, airson a litir thuigsich chàirdeal. Tha 'n dàn a chuir e d'ar n-ionnsuidh mu thobar Thearlaich an IV^{mh} 'na dhearbhadh co snasmhor ealanta 's a sgrìobhas e a' Ghàilig. Tha e ceart—'s ann am Bohemia tha 'n tobar ainmeil agus cha 'n ann san t-Suain mar a thubhairt sinn; ach carson a tha MacMhuirich a' leigeal le 'ribheid⁶¹⁰ tiormachadh? 'S mairg a chunnaic an Sasunn i, far nach 'eil mios oirre! Bidh sùil againn ri cuideachadh uaithe. Dhearbhadh e gu bheil e comasach—cha chreid sinn nach 'eil e toileach.⁶¹¹

Many thanks to the very kind gentleman 'D Macpherson' of Pimlico, for his skilful friendly letter. The poem that he sent to us on the well of Charles IV is proof that he writes elegant polished Gaelic. He is right—and the famous source is in Bohemia and not in Sweden as we have said; but why is Macpherson letting his nib dry? A pity to see it in England, where it lacks esteem! We will expect assistance from him. He has proved he is capable—we rather think he is willing.

Unfortunately, his proposed volume of poetry was never published.

Neither was his History of the Clan Chattan published, which he had worked on for many years.

It is interesting that the GSL decided to submit for publication Gaelic articles in *The London Scotsman*. Was it attempting to fulfil its role of preserver of the Gaelic language, encouraging fellow Gaels to read and not forget their native language? Certainly, Mr Mackenzie Mackay, the editor of the *London Scotsman* and member of the GSL, would have been sympathetic to allowing his paper to be used as a vehicle to achieve the GSL's aim. He

⁶¹⁰ *Ribheid* is used here in a rare and perhaps unique way, its usual meaning is a 'reed' particularly a chanter reed, and although pens were made from both reeds and quills, *ribheid* is not usually associated with pens or nibs. The author has made a clever play on words in his use of *ribheid*, for a dry and therefore cracked reed is as useless to a piper as a dry nib or pen is to a writer

⁶¹¹ *Cuairtear nan Gleann*, VIII (1840), 191

was also ready to take responsibility when criticism came regarding Gaelic orthography stating: 'it is a difficult thing to have Gaelic correctly printed in London, and one or two clerical errors have occurred, the blame of which rests with us'.⁶¹²

The first Gaelic item in the newspaper was a summary of the sermon preached by the Rev Neil Taylor, a Free Church minister, at a Gaelic service organised by the GSL. John Cameron Macphee, at that time the GSL's Gaelic secretary, wrote a summary or outline of the sermon in both Gaelic and English, which was published in the newspaper. The first paragraph of the summary states:

Thug an searmonaiche a cheun-teagaisg bho Miorbhuil sàsachadh anteluagh leis na cuig arain 's an dà iasg, mar tha e air chuir sios ann a Mata XIV. Ann a' mineachadh na h-earran so leig e ris gur e neo-lathaireachd Chrìosd a n aite a bhi na fhasaich, ann an seadh spioradail; agus a rithisd, faodaidh an t-aite is tiraile a bhi na fhasaich dhuinn mur 'eil sinn a tighinn ann fianuis Chrìosd, ach a tighinn bèo dhuinn fhein. Annsa cheart doigh chomharraich e mach ged a bhitheamaid ag ithe agus ag ol gu sòghail, faodaidh sinn a bhi acrach bochd, muir eil sinn air air sàsachadh le aran na Beatha tha a ghnàth air a thairgse dhuinn gu soar, nan deanamaid itheadh dheth. Mar so thogear anmanna agus cridhachean a luch-eisdeachd gu smuanteachadh air an fhirinn sholasach so, gum bheil Crìosd againn anns gach ceàrn, air dùthaich 's am baile, air muir 's tir, agus ma ghabhas sinn risan ged bhios sinn lag gum bheil sinn laidir annsan.⁶¹³

[The preacher gave out his text from the miracle of the satisfying of the people with the five loaves and two fishes, as is recorded in]⁶¹⁴

MatthewXIV.—In commenting on this chapter, the preacher showed that it was the absence of Christ that rendered a place

⁶¹² *London Scotsman* 7 November 1868, p. 307

⁶¹³ *London Scotsman*, 6 June 1868, p. 528

⁶¹⁴ My translation in the square brackets, was omitted in the *London Scotsman's* English translation

in the wilderness in a spiritual sense, and again that the most accessible spot may be as a wilderness to us if we do not come into the presence of Christ, but live to ourselves. In the same manner he pointed out that though we were to live sumptuously, we may be poor and hungry if we do not partake of the bread of life that is freely offered to us. In this wise he animated the minds and hearts to reflect on the glorious truth that we have Christ everywhere—in town and country, on sea and land; and if we receive Him, though we are weak, yet are we strong in him.

Perhaps because of the nature of this first article written in Gaelic, there were no letters to the editor regarding it. However, this was not the case with the two other attempts the GSL made at printing Gaelic in *The London Scotsman*. The first was an address to the Queen following the escape of the Duke of Edinburgh from a group of assassins who had captured him. Many societies had done likewise, but the GSL was the only London society to write the address in Gaelic. The Queen received the address in Gaelic with an English translation, which follows:

Gu Ard Mhoralachd na Ban-Rìgh.

Ma's ceadach le do Mhoralachd éisdeachd ruinn. Tha sinne, Comunn na Gaelic an Lunnuin, ann an coinneamh choitcheann co-chruinnichte, ag iarraidh cead tighinn gu h-iriosal dlùth ri Cathair-rìoghail do Mhoralachd, a chum ar deisinn a nochadh air an ionnsuidh mhallaichte a thugadh air beatha a Mhorachd Rìoghail, Diùc Dhùn-eidean, agus le ar n-uile chridhe dheanamaid co-ghairdeachas maille ri do Mhoralachd gun do theasraigeadh è gu freasdalach bho'n oidhirp aingidh so. Ceangailte ri do Mhoralachd leis gach deadhghean agus dilseachd neo-chaochlaidach, bu rùnach leinn aig an àm so t-iomagan a phairteachadh le co-fhulangus beothail. Ma's àill le do chaomh Mhoralachd éisdeachd ri ar n-òraid bithidh sinn a 'guidhe gu'm builich Dia saoghal fada agus moran sonuis dha do Mhoralachd agus do'n Teaghlach Rìoghail air fad.⁶¹⁵

To Her Most Excellent Majesty the Queen.

⁶¹⁵ *London Scotsman*, 13 June 1868, p. 557

May it please your Majesty. The Gaelic Society of London, in general meeting assembled, beg leave humbly to approach your Majesty's throne that we may express our abhorrence of the accursed attempt made upon the life of his Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, and we would offer our heartfelt congratulations that the wicked intention was providentially frustrated. Devoted to your Majesty by every sentiment of affection and unalterable loyalty, we would on this occasion desire to share, with cordial sympathy, your Majesty's anxiety. May it please your gracious Majesty to accept our address, and we would pray that God may bless your Majesty and the Royal Family with long life, together with every manner of happiness.

Colin Chisholm, President, and John Cameron Macphee, the Gaelic Secretary signed the address. It was probably Macphee who wrote the address and provided the translation. The style and register are formal and appropriate for addressing a sovereign. The style could be compared to the Gaelic of the Church and Bible. However, a correspondent in a letter to the editor was not impressed, and he rebuked the 'Cockney Gaelic', adding that he 'presumes the composition to be a specimen of the improvement that this young society proposes for the Gaelic language, but which to him is unintelligible both idiomatically and grammatically'.⁶¹⁶ There are two responses to the rebuke of 'Galacus', one from the Past President, Colin Mccallum and another from Rev Donald McIntyre of Kincardine, an independent observer and author of several essays on the antiquity of the Gaelic language. He states:

The composition is fine, it is idiomatic, classic, pure, though slightly laboured, and who can wonder at that, considering the destination of the address? Who could approach the Queen—and such a Queen—without faltering accents? I can detect no

⁶¹⁶ *London Scotsman*, 4 July 1868, p. 636

Cockneyism or any other flippantism, but I do detect Lochaberism in its finely-rounded sentences.⁶¹⁷

Another article in which Gaelic was used was part of a paper presented by a member of the GSL in October 1868. The paper does not identify the author, who must remain unrecognised, as there are no minutes of members' meetings for that year. Following the Gaelic passage the author notes his dislike for the increasing use of anglicising expressions, particularly when the speaker knows the Gaelic word, which is replaced by an English one. As an example he related a conversation overheard on the Oban pier, when one man asked another man about his new cart '*Co e am maker?*' He also acknowledged that this trait was not limited to the Gaelic language, but expressed his dislike of this habit. His paper was entitled 'A Trip in the Highlands' and the piece decided for publication was a description of the area above the Pass of Balmaha in Argyllshire:

Tha ur slighe nis ri taobh an loch ag bun Beinn Bhreac; tha Beinn Laomain greis astair romhainn 's gann agus gun dean sinn a mach i leis a chèo tha oirre; fothainn tha 'Ban-righ lochan Alba 'le 'cuid eileanan ag amhairc cho sgiamhach air an fheasgar bhoidheach fhogaraidh so. Tha na h-eileanan lionmhor annsa cheann so do'n loch agus air a h-uile cumadh; feadhainn cruinn, 'us feadhainn fada, feadhainn iosal 'us feadhainn ard, feadhainn lom 'us feadhainn fo choille, agus is boideach a snuadh, leis a chaorann an sud 'us an so, gu cluigeineach pluganach dearg, air a thilge n[a] mach fo uaine dhorcha an daraich; agus an drasd agus a rithist chitear air sgilp creige am fraoch dosrach badanach fo làn bhath. 'Sbinn torman nan alt a rmth [ruith] nnas [a-nuas] fo'n Bheinn Bhreac le'n uisge fionnar blasda, amar gach sruithean co glan bhuaillasach 'us gur gan nac cromadh h-aon an ceann thoirt srùbag às gach fear. 'S muladach nuair dheiris sinn an t-uchdan beag tha romhain an so gur ann air laraichean a thuiteas an t-sùil. Tha an luidhanach a cinntinn gus an stairsneach far am bathaist do chasa beaga a dheadh stàmpadh; tha an garadhcaìl

⁶¹⁷ *London Scotsman*, 11 July 1868, p. 11

air dol fo sgaoil agus chan fhaisear ann a nis ach feanndagach
'us copagach. Chuir sòc na caorach sòc a chroinn as an talladh,
agus 's iomadh achadh air Gaeltachd air am faic sibh sgap
chaorach far am bathaist do na h-adàsan a bhi aig an am sùd
do'n bhliadhna.⁶¹⁸

Your path is now beside the loch at the bottom of Ben Vraic; Ben Lomond is a fair distance before us and we can scarcely make her out through the mist that envelopes her; below us is the Queen of Scotland's lochs with her islands looking so graceful on this beautiful autumnal afternoon. Numerous islands are in this end of the loch and of every shape; some round, and some long, some low and some high, some bare and some under forest, and beautiful in appearance, with the rowan [tree] berry, here and there,[with] red hanging bunches, thrust out under the dark green of the oak; and the bushy plumes of heather are seen now and again on a rock ledge under full blossom. Musical is the murmur of the brooks running down under Ben Vraic with their cool delicious water, the channel of every small stream so purely cascading that almost anyone would bend his head to take a small drink. It is sad that when we ascend the little hillock that is in front of us here, that it is on ruins that the eye falls. The weeds growing to the threshold where small feet used to trample it well; the kailyard has been scattered and only nettles and docks are seen there now. The snout of the sheep put the blade of the plough out of the earth,⁶¹⁹ and you can see a scattering of sheep on many fields in the Highlands where the stooks used to be at this time of the year.

This passage also received criticism by someone who signed himself 'M.McL' and resulted in five weeks of lively correspondence. 'M.McL' wrote that he felt it was a 'sad botch of bad Gaelic, worse Syntax, and worst spelling, and, however, "animated" the description might appear if in proper garb, in such habiliments any ideas are sickening. In each line of the short extract there are half-a-dozen bristling errors stinging the reader's sensibilities to the quick'.⁶²⁰ The editor expressed his disapproval of the letter, and said that the author of the Highland Scenery was from Argyllshire,

⁶¹⁸ *London Scotsman*, 31 October, 1868, p. 287

⁶¹⁹ Compare with Brahan Seer's prophecy.

⁶²⁰ *London Scotsman*, 7 November 1868, p. 307

while 'M.McL' was from Ross-shire. Differences in regional orthography had to be accepted. What was needed was that a standardisation of Gaelic teaching advocated by Professor Blackie should be put in force. Alexander Mackenzie, later to be editor of both the *Celtic Magazine* and *Scottish Highlander*, but at that time living in England, joined in the correspondence. He acknowledged the spelling errors but blamed them on the compositor, and stated that 'no unbiased writer would blame the essayist for such faults'. He continued that:

I am a Ross-shire man, and never heard my father or mother speak a word of English, for the good reason that they knew none. I went to school and was obliged to master the theory of the Gaelic language before I was allowed to attempt any English. I was always given to understand that the Inverness-shire Gaelic was the standard one as used in the Bible. I am of opinion that the Gaelic used by the essayist is very near the standard, and very creditable to a London Scotsman.⁶²¹

During the next three weeks the newspaper contains the nit-picking of 'M.McL' and a response from Mackenzie, who suggests that readers should compare the Gaelic in John Mackenzie's *The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry* and Ossian's poems to the Gaelic used in the published description to see that 'M.McL' was 'entirely wrong'. These final three letters consist of debates on minor points of grammar or spelling. The Gaelic used in the description of Highland scenery is typical of Gaelic periodicals of the nineteenth century such as Rev Dr Norman Macleod's *Cuairteir nam Gleann*. The letters of 'Galgulas' and 'M.McL' are examples of pettiness; they appear narrow-minded and just an attack on London Gaels.

⁶²¹ *London Scotsman*, 14 November 1868, p. 322

It is almost as if the writer or writers believes that émigré Gaels have no right to their own language once they leave the homeland. There is a final use of Gaelic in January 1869; it is an excerpt from a letter from Rev Mr Ross, Minister of Rothesay. Once again, no criticism or judgements were made by correspondents, and one has to ask whether it was simply because the Gaelic came from Highlanders living in Scotland that they took no umbrage. Mistakes in orthography appear to be common in all the Gaelic pieces, regardless of whether they were written by Highlanders living in Scotland or Highlanders in London.

The records of the GSL show that it's Gaelic secretaries and other members were able to use several styles and registers of Gaelic, as illustrated by the Address to the Queen, the summary of the Gaelic Sermon and the papers written and presented in Gaelic. This ability to write in different registers is also illustrated by the work of Colin Chisholm and John Cameron Macphee, who were employed by the Government to translate some Acts of Parliament into Gaelic.⁶²² These gentlemen were also used as interpreters in the House of Lords, John Cameron Macphee in the Breadalbane Peerage Case and Colin Chisholm deciphered an ancient Gaelic manuscript in the Mar Case,⁶²³

The extant minute books and the remaining copies of the Gaelic papers presented at meetings provide an important source of nineteenth century vernacular Gaelic. They exhibit a creative use of Gaelic words to fit

⁶²² *London Scotsman* 24 April 1869, p. 262

⁶²³ Castle, p. 23

English business and legal terms and provide a historical and lexical source of considerable value. The earliest extant Gaelic minute is a report of the committee dated 12 April 1868 and it clearly illustrates this.

Fathunn Cuideachd Riaghlaidh Comunn na Gaelic air shuidhichadh air an 12^e-dhe'n Ghiblean 1868 air-son faicinn cor an stui argiod ris an abrar 'Argiod na h-Eaglais Ghaelic'. Bha luchd na cuideachd riaghlaidh so ri bhi nan luchd-ofig a Chomuinn air son na tiom.⁶²⁴

The Report of the Committee of the Gaelic Society appointed on the 12th of April 1868 in order to examine the condition of the fund which is known as 'The Money of the Gaelic Chapel'. The members of this committee were to be Office-bearers of the society for the time.

Fathunn is a word that has changed its meaning over the ensuing years. In the nineteenth century it meant 'news' or 'a kind of report' now it is used for 'rumour'. *Tearmun Albannach* (Caledonian Asylum) uses the Gaelic word *tearmunn*, which normally meant 'sanctuary', and here it recognises the older meaning of 'asylum'. The language is formal, as befits business of this kind.

Dr Donald Campbell, Gaelic secretary during the late 1870s, wrote another item of vernacular Gaelic which has historical importance to the GSL. It was a report of the centennial celebrations it held in 1877. Campbell had translated the report prepared by President John Cameron Macphee, and printed in the *Celtic Magazine* and other newspapers and periodicals. Cameron presented his translation to the society at its meeting in June 1879.

⁶²⁴ See Appendix I for full Report and Figure 7 for an excerpt of the original

12/27/88

Fathunna Cuideachd Riagh-
 laidh Comunn na Gaelic air shuidh
 ichadh air an 12th dhe'n Ghiblean 1868.
 air-son faicinn cor an stiuic argiod ris
 an abrar "Argiod na ^{h-Eaglais} Ghaelic" Bha
 luchd na Cuideachd riaghlaidh so
 ri bhi nan luchd-oifig a Chomuinne
 air son na tuom; agus bha ceud aca
 cuir ri'n aireamh - is e sin ri ainmeach-
 adh "Cailean Liseal (am Priomh-suidhe),
 "San Camshron Mac-a-Phi, Alasdair
 Caimbeul, Doniull Mac Griogair, Don.
 Mac Uarig, Aonghas Mac Griogair,
 "Alasdair Grand agus San Grand.

A Phriomh-suidhe, Ath-
 Phriomh-suidhe, agus a Chompan-
 aich air fad,
 Thu mhiann leis a Chuideachd
 riaghlaidh, air an cuir air leth 'us air
 an ainmeachadh mar os cionn, na
 rinn iad agus na thainig dhe a chur

Figure 7 first page of the Gaelic Society of London's Report on the Gaelic Chapel Fund

The President of the U.S.A. had been visiting Great Britain at the time of the centenary, and was invited to attend the celebration.

However, unable to attend, he was represented by his son at the centenary dinner. The excerpt chosen is Jesse Grant's response to Charles Fraser Mackintosh's toast to the visitors:

Air do Mhr. Grannd eirigh gu freagar a thoirt do'n Deoch Slainte bha e air fhailteachadh gu criodail Thoirt e gun d'thug e moran toileachais dha a bhi lathair aig a leithid so do chruinneachadh Ghaidheal a bha cho dealbhasach. Bha cairdeas baigheal daonnan eadar a luchd duchadh agus na h-Albanaich, ach bha e gu h-araidh mar sin na chuis fein agus a theaghlach, oir rinn iad uail as a cheangal a bha aca ri Albainn, agus gun do ghiulain iad, mar a rinn iad, ainm Gaidhleach (aiteas). Dhaidich athair cheana, anns an litir a chaidh a leughadh, an cinneadas sin le taitneas, agus bha e na aobhar mor-cuis leo, gun do tharmaich iad o theaghlach Gaidhealach (onar mholadh). Bhiodh athair leo air an fheasgar so, ach ghabh e ri cuireadh eile mun d'fhuair e cuireadh a Chomuinn ach rinn e an ath ni a b'fhearr a bha na chomas chuir e mhac na aite (aiteas) –Chan eil e na dheagh fhear-labhairt, ach airson na doigh choimhneal air an d'rinn iad gabhail ris anns na h-uile aite, thug e buidheachas da reultan-sona, gum bu mhac e da athair fein (aiteas agus gaireachdaich).⁶²⁵

Mr Jesse Grant, who was very heartily greeted, replied and expressed his great pleasure at being present at such an enthusiastic Highland gathering. There always had been a friendly feeling between his countrymen and the Scots, but it was peculiarly so in his case and that of his family, for they were proud of their connection with Scotland, bearing as they did a Highland name (Cheers). His father, in the letter which had been read, had already acknowledged the kinship with pleasure, and they were all proud of their Highland origin (Great applause). His father would have been with them that evening had he not made another engagement before receiving the Society's invitation, but he did the next best thing he could, he sent his son to represent him (cheers). He was not a speaker, and for the reception he was everywhere receiving, he 'had to

⁶²⁵ UCL GSL 'Speeches made at the Centenary banquet of the Gaelic Society of London 6 June 1877', p. 16; see also Fig. 8 for MS copy of this page of Donald Campbell's translation

thank his lucky stars that he was the son of his own father'.
(Cheers and laughter).⁶²⁶

Conclusion

Both societies state among their objectives the preservation of the Gaelic language. Each in its own way exhibited a real commitment to that language. The HSL, a very wealthy society in comparison to the GSL, had the financial resources to patronise scholars and poets as a means of preserving the language. This patronage was accorded through the Society as a corporate body.

Its long term goal of publishing a Gaelic Dictionary was not fulfilled, and it had to endure the humiliation of it eventually being accomplished by its sister society, the HSS. The HSL held poetry competitions to give 'new energy' to the language. This it did, even though the majority of its members were not conversant in Gaelic. Toasts, songs and grace were all conducted in Gaelic at anniversary dinners, but this was probably the only time Gaelic was used. It was through its patronage that many Gaelic books were printed. Its jewel in the crown or perhaps its Achilles' heel was its publication of *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic* (1807).

The GSL did not have the financial means to compete with the HSL's preservation work. However, what it did was perhaps all the more important, for it did all it could with limited resources to promote and

⁶²⁶ *Celtic Magazine* II (July 1877), 360-366, p. 364 this was written by John Cameron Macphee and used by Campbell for his Gaelic translation

preserve the language. It focused its energy on keeping the language alive as a spoken and written medium. Individual members published Gaelic grammars and etymologies and dictionaries, and translated sermons and moral tracts into Gaelic. Other members published Gaelic poetry; the only corporate publication was a songbook with musical accompaniment. Poetry and prose competitions were annual events among members. As a corporate body it did all it could to re-establish regular Gaelic church services in London. It advocated a Gaelic chair at a Scottish University and Gaelic education in the homeland schools, and for that purpose it set up a Gaelic Education Scheme. It also ran Gaelic classes in London, to teach and improve the Gaelic skills of London Gaels and supporters, and it encouraged Gaelic choirs. It even acknowledged the importance of the Gaelic language and its role in the Scottish nation. Its written minutes and the surviving papers presented by members provide an important source of nineteenth century vernacular Gaelic. In its own way, just as important as the HSL's 'Gaelic Ossian'.

PRESERVING GAELIC CULTURE

Introduction

Both Societies took steps to preserve Gaelic culture. Those aspects which they did encourage, excluding language and literature, were Highland dress, music, song and dance, athletics or sports. Unlike Trevor Roper, I do not believe that these cultural elements were the invention of Highland Societies in the nineteenth century,⁶²⁷ but that systems used by societies perhaps led to the preservation and standardisation of some of these aspects of Gaelic culture.

The HSL led the way and with its wealthy membership attained much. This society's first two founding objectives were: 'the restoration of the Highland Dress' and 'the preservation of the Ancient Music of the Highlands'.⁶²⁸ It led a successful campaign to achieve the repeal (1782) of the Disarming Act of 1746. It then went on to encourage wearing 'Highland Garb' and collected and authenticated clan tartans. It also provided prizes at its Bagpipe competitions for the best-dressed performers. Although Highland bagpipes were not specifically banned by that Act, the prosecution of John Reid, a Jacobite piper captured and executed in England, may have led to

⁶²⁷ Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland' in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. By Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: CUP, 1988), pp. 15- 41

⁶²⁸ Sinclair (1813), p. 6

some fear on the part of pipers'.⁶²⁹ The decline in playing the pipe was more probably due to the breakdown of traditional clanship and all its attendant hereditary systems. The bagpipe was regarded as 'a military instrument, and its special use to congregate vassals for attendance on their chief in warfare'.⁶³⁰ Several members of the HSL who had their own regiments would certainly have encouraged the martial aspect of piping. Also, we cannot know for certain the reason for the HSL's desire to preserve the music of the Great Highland Pipe; only that it wished to preserve that music, and the best way to achieve this was to have piping competitions. These were held initially at the Falkirk Tryst⁶³¹ and then in Edinburgh. It continued to encourage the playing of *piobaireachd* at the Northern Meeting in Inverness on an annual basis from 1859 and the Argyllshire meeting in Oban from 1875, which it continues to this day. The HSL also made several attempts to establish a piping school to teach young men to become army pipers, and encouraged the development of musical notation for ease in learning to play the pipes.

Both HSL and GSL had their own pipers to perform at their meetings; often it was the same piper officiating at both societies. Songs and dances were encouraged by each society and several publications were made to stimulate that element of Gaelic culture, which was reinforced by the GSL's ceilidhs and concerts and the HSL's general courts and anniversary

⁶²⁹ *Scots Magazine* 9 (746), p. 543 quoted in MacInnes p. 14

⁶³⁰ Sir John Graham Dalyell, *Musical Memoirs of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Stevenson, 1849), p. 88

⁶³¹ The Falkirk Tryst was a very important cattle market and it would bring together people from the Highlands, Lowlands and England. For the importance of the Falkirk Tryst see ARB Haldane in *The Drove Roads of Scotland* (London: Nelson, 1952)

dinners. Several of the other Scottish societies in London joined with the HSL and GSL to sponsor the London Highland Gatherings. It would appear that they were all merely attempting to have a little bit of Scotland in London, to transplant the Highland games from their native glens.⁶³² Yet the HSL went further and encouraged the development of branch societies throughout the world, wherever Scotsmen were, sharing the same objectives with its parent—to promote the Language, Literature and the Music of the Gael.

Highland Music

The collector, the fiddler, and the would-be harpist

Although songs have been considered previously in Chapter 7, one early collection of songs will be discussed more fully here. The HSL generously supported the publication in 1784 of Rev Patrick Macdonald's work, for it encompassed many aspects of ancient Highland music which it was anxious to preserve. Macdonald's work was entitled *A Collection of Highland Vocal Airs, Never hitherto published. To which has been added a few of the most lively Country Dances and Reels of the North Highlands, and Western Isles: and some Specimens of Bagpipe Music*. It included a dissertation to illustrate the influence that poetry and music had upon the lives of Highlanders. Macdonald dedicated his book to the HSL, in gratitude for the financial support. As a corporate body it provided both a grant and a subscription for sixty copies and encouraged its members to subscribe. The

⁶³² Highland Games or Gatherings began with the HSL's Piping Competition in Falkirk 1781 but by the 1820s these gatherings were including the athletic events, dancing and piping which continues to this day.

book was the first Gaelic songbook to provide musical accompaniment, for violin or German flute and with some pieces for piano and bagpipe.

Macdonald's brother, Joseph, who was the author of the posthumously published *Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe*, had undertaken much of the collection, prior to joining the East India Company. It had been his wish to publish his collections, but an early death put an end to it, and his wish saw fruition through the persistence of his brother Patrick. In a letter to his father, Joseph regretting that his collecting had not been more thorough wrote:

It would have augmented my collection of Highland music and poetry, which I have formed a system of, in my voyage to India, and propose to send soon home [...] in order that those sweet, noble, and expressive sentiments of nature, may not be allowed to sink and die away: and to shew, that our poor remote corner, even without the advantages of learning and cultivation, abounded in works of taste and genius.⁶³³

In that same letter he lists three gentlemen whom he thinks might help to publish the work, but also suggests 'a society of our Highland gentlemen of best figure and taste, to preserve as a monument of antiquity, or publish, as they see proper'; and it was to such a society that his brother Patrick went to for assistance with the publishing. A copy of some of Joseph's collection, which had been obtained from Sutherland and Ross, had been left with his sister. As a means to encompass all the Highlands, Patrick collected in Argyll and Perthshire and the Western Isles. Joseph had also left musical notation for his collected songs; and through his notation he had

⁶³³ Rev Patrick Macdonald, *A Collection of Highland Vocal Airs, Never hitherto published* (Edinburgh: 1784), p. 1

attempted 'to copy and express the wild irregular manner in which they are sung'. Patrick, in an attempt to make them more palatable for a wider audience, altered the music to regular time.

Patrick believed that many of the pieces were the genuine remains of harp music that had survived as sung songs; and that by transforming them into regular time the result was probably closer to the original harp music. The collection also included '*luinegs*' [*sic*]⁶³⁴ or work songs and country-dance tunes. Macdonald took down these dance tunes from individuals playing the bagpipes, the violin or from singing. He was aware that some of the pieces would not excite the general public, but he had included them to rescue them from oblivion. The collection ends with some pieces for the Great Highland Bagpipe, which he had collected at the encouragement of some of the subscribers. He collected the tunes from an eminent piper, a relative from Lochaber. These bagpipe tunes are the earliest recorded pipe music using stave notation, and have in the past been ignored. He provided an early example of something that the HSL would strive to obtain as an easier method of teaching piping than the ancient method of *canntaireachd* of the now disbanded piping schools. It is interesting that Patrick Macdonald stated in regard to producing the pipe music on the stave that:

Whoever has attempted to execute such a task, and has had experience of the difficulty of it, will readily excuse any imperfections that may be found in the notation of those pieces [...] In performing these upon the bagpipe, it is usual to introduce certain graces and flourishes, which are peculiar to

⁶³⁴ *luinneagan*

that instrument, and to that species of music; and what can hardly be expressed in notes, or executed, at least, with the same effect upon another instrument. The publisher, however, has made as near an approach, as he could, to the notes, that were expressed by the performer.⁶³⁵

The pipe tunes were '*Cha till mi tuille*' and '*Cumha Mhic a h Ar[a]saig*', and he also provided the music for these tunes for violin.⁶³⁶ In his notation Macdonald does not add grace notes or other embellishments that are included in musical notation now. He simply wrote the notes to play. Pipe tunes had not been standardised at this time and individual pipers would embellish any tune to their own fancy and individual interpretation. Macdonald had expressed the opinion that a complete collection of pipe music would make a large work, but it would take many years before this was accomplished. He commented on the possible patron of such a work: 'If such a person shall ever be found, it is not doubted, that the Highland Society of London, who have discovered such a laudable zeal for the preservation of music, will give him fruitful encouragement'.⁶³⁷

The HSL was also interested in encouraging Scottish fiddle music. It patronised the publication of Captain Simon Fraser's *Highland Airs and Melodies* in 1816.⁶³⁸ It also considered assisting the good Captain in publishing his revised and enlarged collection of fiddle tunes to be called *Highland Melodies* in 1841, but eventually did not, having decided instead to support Patrick Macgregor's new English translation of Ossian's poetry. The

⁶³⁵ Patrick Macdonald, p. 7

⁶³⁶ Patrick Macdonald, pp. 38-41

⁶³⁷ Patrick Macdonald, p. 7

⁶³⁸ NLS 268/26, pp. 199-200, it should be noted that the name 'Thomas' is used instead of 'Simon' in the records

HSL did make suggestions to Fraser as to how he should proceed to get the work published.⁶³⁹ However, nothing came of it. His son Angus unsuccessfully attempted to prepare the collection for the press, following the death of his father. He eventually gave the manuscript to Dr Alexander Halley, an Honorary President of the GSL. Halley in turn gave access to William Mackay who published it in 1874 using the same title as the original 1816 edition.⁶⁴⁰

The music of the Highland Harp was regarded by the HSL as worthy of restoration. It had disappeared as the Highland bagpipe took a place of prominence. Murdoch Macdonald (*Murchadh Clàrsair*) is reputed to be the last professional Scottish-born harper, performing for Maclean of Coll until 1734,⁶⁴¹ and the Macleods of Dunvegan had pipers until the mid eighteenth century. So it was not beyond the realm of possibility to revive the art. It is obvious that the HSL had made enquiries regarding that possibility when an offer from Gwynne of Glenbrain was received in November 1783. He was willing to instruct a young highlander on a welch [*sic*] or triple harp in November 1783.⁶⁴² By January 1874 the society had found a suitable candidate, Christopher Macrae, Ensign in the 42nd. Regiment, a young Gaelic-speaking Highlander. He was indented to the Secretary for a period of five years, so that:

⁶³⁹ HSL 268/5, various letters

⁶⁴⁰ Captain Simon Fraser, *The Airs and Melodies peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland and the Isles*, 1982 reprint (Sydney, Nova Scotia: City Printer Limited, 1982), p. iv

⁶⁴¹ John Gunn, *An Historical enquirey respecting the performance of the Harp in the Highlands of Scotland* (Edinburgh: 1807), pp. 100-1

⁶⁴² NLS 268/21, p. 5

at the Expiration of his Indenture, he shall be obliged to teach another according to the Directions of the Secretary. That when the term of his Indenture is expired he shall, and also, any other Indented Professor of the Harp be obliged to return to reside in Scotland Two years at least. That, from the period of Macrae's arrival in London, he shall, according to his own good behaviour, be entirely at the expence of the Society unless contrary to their most Sanguine Expectations he be disapproved of by the Society.⁶⁴³

Macrae duly arrived in London in May 1784, and the secretary wrote to inform Mr Gwynne that he was ready to begin his training. However, on the 30th December, the Secretary informed the committee that Gwynne had reneged. It stated that he did not offer to train a student, but would send 'a young welch man thoroughly instructed in playing the harp' whom the HSL could send to the Highlands of Scotland.⁶⁴⁴ The HSL were not interested in a Welsh harper and looked to other ways to train Macrae. It investigated other teaching sources and decided to maintain him for one year. Nonetheless, by March 1785, the HSL decided to send Macrae home at the society's expense or to recommend him to some station in the West Indies. It also considered taking up Gwynne's offer of the young Welsh harper, but on reflection decided that the society's funds were too low. Macrae, however, was not sent home, for in July 1785 he was in Wales taking instruction from Sir Watkin Williams of Wynn's Harper. It is unknown if he had any success in learning the harp by the time that the HSL decided it could no longer afford the expense, and resolved that:

Christopher McRae be immediately recalled from Wales, that he be sent out to Jamaica at the Expence of the Club, with the earliest opportunity, and that the members of this Committee

⁶⁴³ NLS 268/21, p. 11

⁶⁴⁴ NLS 268/21, p. 27

will recommend him to the protection of their Friends in that Island under whose patronage there is no doubt of his success, fully proportioned to his own deserving. And that his parents be made acquainted with the resolution.⁶⁴⁵

The expenses incurred by the HSL were in excess of £140. This amount included clothing, board and lodging, travel to Wales and his passage to Jamaica and pocket money. It is indicated that Macrae was sent to the Piping Competition in Edinburgh 1785 in the professional capacity of Harper.⁶⁴⁶ He also received some violin lessons from John Gow, possibly to help pass the time before going to Wales but more likely between his recall from Wales and his passage to the West Indies.⁶⁴⁷

Piping Competitions

According to Sir John Sinclair, it was the concern that the great Highland Pipe was 'fast hastening into oblivion' which caused the resolution of 12 July 1781 'that a Pipe and flag be given annually by this Society to the best Performer on the Highland Bag-pipe, at the October Falkirk Tryste'.⁶⁴⁸ The desire to preserve the music of the bagpipe may have been coupled with the need to increase the supply of army pipers as more Highland Regiments were raised. The HSL quickly put its resolution into action, deciding that 'the Black Cattle Fairs held annually at Falkirk', considering the numerous Highlanders who were associated with them, would be the most suitable place for such a competition.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁵ NLS 268/21, pp. 51-2

⁶⁴⁶ NLS 268/34, 29 August 1785

⁶⁴⁷ NLS 268/34, 12 August 1786

⁶⁴⁸ Sinclair (1813), p. 13

⁶⁴⁹ NLS 268/25 p. 100

It was reasoned that gentlemen qualified to judge such a competition would be conducting business at Falkirk. The newly formed Glasgow Branch, the Gaelic Club of Gentlemen, was seconded to superintend the competition. Accounts of these competitions, the individual pipers and the tunes that they played have been written by Iain MacInnes, Angus Mackay and John Graham Dalyell⁶⁵⁰ and will not be discussed here. However, the evidence which best reflects what the HSL wanted to achieve through these competitions will be considered. The HSL wanted the competitions to provide an avenue, which would not only encourage piping but also act as an impetus to improve the quality of the playing and preserve the ancient pipe music.

It is obvious from the records of the HSL, the HSS and the Glasgow branch that the HSL was in charge of all aspects of the competition and that it carried financial liability. The other societies, although bearing the brunt of the work in actually running the competition, followed the wishes of the HSL. This is illustrated in a letter of the Glasgow Branch; it hoped that it would be 'a sufficient testimony of our zeal to second the laudable and patriotic views of your Society, and to carry their [HSL] commands into Execution'.⁶⁵¹ This is illustrated further in the suggestions regarding the competition in correspondence by the HSS. The Glasgow Branch ran the competition for three years. In the first three years of competition 1781 to

⁶⁵⁰ Iain MacInnes, 'The Highland Bagpipe: the impact of the Highland Societies of London and Scotland', unpublished MLitt thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1989; Angus Mackay, *A Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd or Highland Pipe Music* (Wakefield: EP Publishing Ltd, 1972), first published in 1838; Sir John Graham Dalyell, *Musical Memoirs of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Stevenson, 1849)

⁶⁵¹ NLS 268/1, 29 October 1781

1783 a mixed audience enjoyed the competition. It is reported that for the first two competitions the judges and the pipers were not in the same room for fairer judging. Each piper had to play a salute, a march or gathering, a lament and then a 'Port Piobrochd' (pipe tune). The judges were to select the pieces to be played. However, where there was a lack of knowledge of the tunes selected, the judges allowed substitution.⁶⁵² As well as the money provided by the HSL a collection was taken up to cover the expenses of each piper and perhaps to provide an incentive to come back next year.⁶⁵³ The 1782 competition ended with a procession of the prize pipe winners of 1781 and 1782; Peter Macgrigor and John McAlister played their prize pipes around the church yard in Falkirk, marching around the monuments of Sir John Graham, Sir John Stuart and Sir Robert Munro.⁶⁵⁴

The 1783 competition ended in uproar. The competitors accused the judges of favouritism, as did some of the audience; and questions were raised about the suitability of 'arrogant Tradesmen' running the competition.⁶⁵⁵ The pipers expressed their displeasure and stated that they would not compete at another competition run by the Glasgow committee. To appease the pipers the Captain of Clanranald, a member of the HSL who was present at the competition, announced that Captain Clark of Loanhead, Sir George Clarke of Penicuik and John Clarke of Elden:

would redress the grievances of the Pipers and not only give their aid to encourage these Musicians but to promote the good intentions of the London Highland Society and ordered me [i.e.

⁶⁵² NLS 268/14, 15 October 1782

⁶⁵³ *The Scots Magazine*, 1781 (43) 553; *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 29 October 1782

⁶⁵⁴ NLS 268/14, 15 October 1782

⁶⁵⁵ NLS 268/1, 29 October 1783

David Trigge, agent of the HSL] to invite the Competitors to Edinburgh where they should be treated in the most friendly manner and amply rewarded but nothing would do unless I would assure them that the Glasgow People were not to be there and the Seat of the Competition would in future be moved at length.⁶⁵⁶

An exhibition was held with great success with the nobility in Edinburgh at the time attending. After the exhibition was finished, all the pipers marched round St Andrew's Square playing 'Clanranald's March'.

From 1784 the competition, originally planned to be held at Falkirk was moved at the last minute to Edinburgh by the HSE, under the direction of John Clerk of Eldon. This competition was held in Dunn's Assembly Hall. However, all subsequent competitions were held in the Theatre Royal. It followed the same formula as the exhibition of the previous year, consisting of three acts in which the pipers performed, interspersed by Highland dances.

Duncan Ban Macintyre opened the competition with his annual Gaelic poem praising the bagpipe. The piping competitions were continued annually in this way until 1826, when at the recommendation of the HSS, it was decided to hold the competition every three years. There had been a decline in audiences at the competition, and in 1826 the competition expenses resulted in a deficit of £2.12.7. It was felt that the provincial Highland Gatherings might have tempted audiences away.

It had always been the desire of the HSL that encouragement should be given to new pipers, and that the number and names of tunes known by the competitors should be collected and that musical notation should be

⁶⁵⁶ NLS 268/1, 29 October 1783

IN DUNN'S ASSEMBLY ROOM.
ANCIENT MARTIAL MUSIC.

PLAN of the COMPETITION for PRIZES,
TO BEST PERFORMERS ON THE
GREAT HIGHLAND PIPE.

To begin at Eleven o'Clock forenoon, of TUESDAY the 30th August, 1785.

ACT I.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p><i>Fires.</i></p> <p>2. Cean Drochaid Begg</p> | <p><i>English Translations.</i></p> <p>1. A Salute by Professor M'ARTHUR.
 <i>Head of the Little Bridge, or the
 Cameron's Gathering.</i></p> <p>3. A Piece by Peter M'Gregor, who won the first Prize at Falkirk Competition.</p> | <p><i>Contestants names and Genesys.</i></p> <p>To be played by John M'Gregor, son, from Fortingal, who won the first Prize at Edinburgh last year.</p> |
|---|--|---|

ACT II.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>1. Faidhe a' Phrionfaid',
 2. Faidhe Shìr Sheumain,
 3. Cumbadh Mhìc an Leathain,
 4. Faidhe a' Phrionfaid',
 5. The fane,
 6. Glais-mheur,
 7. Moladh Mharai',
 8. Faidhe a' Phrionfaid',
 9. The fane,
 10. Cumbadh Mhìc Chruimean,</p> | <p><i>The arrival or welcome - A Salute,
 Sir James M'Donald's welcome,
 The M'Lean's Lament,
 A Favorite Piece,
 A Piece in praise of Mary, or the
 Laird of M'Lochlan's March,
 The Lamentation of Patrick Alore
 M'Creighton,</i></p> | <p>John Cumming, Piper to Sir James Grant of Grant, Bart.
 Robert M'Inyre, Piper to John M'Donald, Esq; of Clarendon.
 John Cumming,
 Robert M'Inyre,
 Alexander Lamont, Piper to John Lamont, Esq; of Lamont
 Colin M'Nab, Piper to Francis M'Nab, Esq; of M'Nab.
 Alexander Lamont.
 Colin M'Nab,
 Donald Gun, Piper to Sir John Clark of Penayueich, Bart.
 Donald M'Inyre, son, from Rannach.</p> |
|--|--|---|

A HIGHLAND DANCE after Act II.

ACT III.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>11. The Grants March,
 12. Faidhe a' Phrionfaid',
 13. The fane,
 14. P'obrachd Eranach,
 15. Faidhe Shìr Dheutsa,
 16. Faidhe a' Phrionfaid',
 17. 'Teacul an Phrionfaid' gu Moidayd,
 18. Faidhe a' Phrionfaid',
 19. The fane,
 20. Glais-mheur,</p> | <p><i>An Irish Pibroch,
 In praise of the Laird of Callander,
 The Landing in Moydart,</i></p> | <p>Donald Gun,
 Donald M'Inyre, son,
 Dougald M'Dougal, Piper to Allan M'Dougal, Esq; of Hayfield.
 John M'Pherson from Badenoch, Piper to Colonel Duncan M'Pherson of Cluny.
 Dougald M'Dougal,
 John M'Pherson,
 Hugh M'Gregor, from the stewarty of Montross.
 Malcolm M'Pherson, from Breadalbane.
 Hugh M'Gregor,
 Malcolm M'Pherson.</p> |
|--|--|--|

A HIGHLAND DANCE after Act III.

ACT IV.

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|--|--|--|
| <p>21. Leanna Dìonail Chruimeich,
 22. Faidhe a' Phrionfaid',
 23. The fane,
 24. Leanna Ghìoll Chruimeich,
 25. Faidhe a' Phrionfaid',
 26. Cean Drochaid Mhoir,
 27. Shìffnach Strath Ghàis,
 28. Faidhe a' Phrionfaid',
 29. P'obrachd Shìabhian a' Sioba',
 30. Faidhe a' Phrionfaid',</p> | <p><i>Donald's Love,
 The Stern Lad's Sweetheart,
 Great Bridge,
 Chiffin's March,
 Sherriffmuir, a Pibroch,</i></p> | <p>Donald Fisher from Breadalbane, who won the second prize last year.
 Archibald M'Grigor from Fortingal.
 Donald Fisher,
 Archibald Macgrigor,
 Alexander M'Grigor, from Fortingal.
 John M'Grigor, from Glenlyon,
 Alexander M'Grigor,
 John M'Grigor.
 John M'Grigor jun. a boy of twelve years of age, son to the above John M'Grigor from Fortingal, who won the prize last year.
 Donald M'Lean of Edinburgh.</p> |
|--|--|--|

A HIGHLAND DANCE after Act IV.

ACT V.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>31. Faidhe a' Phrionfaid',
 32. Cumbadh Eoin Ghairth,
 33. Sìubhal Mhìc Allain,
 34. P'obrachd Mhìc Dìonail Dhùibh,
 35. Faidhe a' Phrionfaid',
 36. The fane,
 37. Sìubhal Mhìc Allain,
 38. Faidhe a' Phrionfaid',
 39. The fane,
 40. Cumbadh an Aoin Mhìc,
 41. Glais-mheur,
 42. Faidhe a' Phrionfaid',
 43. The fane,
 44. Cean Drochaid Mhoir,
 45. Sìabh an a' Sioba',
 46. Faidhe a' Phrionfaid',
 47. The fane,
 48. Moladh Mharai',</p> | <p><i>Lamentation of Rung John,
 Clanranald's March,
 Cameron's Gathering,
 Clanranald's March,
 Lamentation for an only Son,
 Head of the Great Bridge - a Pibroch,
 Sherriffmuir,
 In praise of Mary,</i></p> | <p>The boy John M'Grigor.
 Donald M'Lean.
 Donald M'Inyre jun from the estate of Sir Robert Menzies of that ilk, in Rannach, Perthshire.
 Paul M'Innes from Lochabar, Piper to John Cameron, Esq; of Colliest.
 Donald M'Inyre jun.
 Paul M'Innes,
 Allan M'Inyre of Edinburgh.
 John M'Pherson from Strathfipsey, late Piper to the Atholl Highlanders.
 Allan M'Inyre.
 John M'Pherson,
 Duncan Stewart from Rannach.
 John Dewar from the estate of Sir Robert Menzies.
 Duncan Stewart.
 John Dewar.
 Ronald M'Donald, from Colliesten.
 Robert M'Dougal from Fortingal, Perthshire.
 Ronald M'Donald.
 Robert M'Dougal.</p> |
|---|---|--|

A HIGHLAND DANCE after Act V.

The whole to conclude with a Piece by Professor M'ARTHUR.

Figure 9 The Advertisement for the 1785 Piping Competition

encouraged. These desires are illustrated by the alteration of regulations for competitions. From 1805, premiums were awarded to pipers who showed the judges examples of musical notation, as a way of preserving *piobaireachd*. Prizes were awarded to Donald MacDonald in 1806 for his pipe tunes and two years later to his son John, and to Angus Mackay in 1825. 'A total of sixteen awards were made to nine individuals'.⁶⁵⁷ However, in 1829 the HSS committee decided unilaterally to shorten the advertisement for the competition and to leave out that 'part which relates to the notation of Pipe Music'.⁶⁵⁸

In 1809 the HSL increased the number of prizes to five as a means to encourage participation, and five guineas for the recitation of Gaelic poetry.⁶⁵⁹ No one came forward to recite, and the HSS committee eventually used the money to subscribe to twelve copies of Robert MacKay's Gaelic poems to assist the publication.⁶⁶⁰ In 1823 the HSL informed the HSS that each piper was to submit to the judges a list of at least twelve pieces of *piobaireachd*.⁶⁶¹ The judges would then call upon each piper to perform one of the pieces from his list. It is also noted in this minute that previous to this the requirement was for six. There must have been some concern regarding the actions of the judges appointed by the HSS, for the HSL stated that: 'in performing any *piobaireachd*, each Piper is to be left entirely to himself, and is not to be directed to play short'. It also ruled that dissatisfied competitors

⁶⁵⁷ MacInnes, p. 215

⁶⁵⁸ RHASS, PMB p. 64

⁶⁵⁹ HSL 268/25 p. 37

⁶⁶⁰ NLS, MS DEP 268/5, 27 May 1839

⁶⁶¹ See Appendix IV

could never compete again.⁶⁶² For the first Triennial Competition the HSL recommended the following to be adopted by the HSS:

In order to prevent pipers not properly qualified from appearing at this great triennial competition, and at the same time with a view of encouraging the competitions at the Provincial or District Highland Societies, and generally to promote the acquirement of perfection in Pipe Music, the Competitors for the Prizes of this Society be in future limited to those Pipers who shall have already obtained Prizes at some of the local meetings, of which they shall be required to produce Certificates from the President or Secretary of the Provincial Highland Societies by whom the Prizes may have been awarded. Regimental Pipers producing a proper Certificate of qualification from their Commanding Officer, or any pipers resident in a District where no local Highland Society is established, producing testimonials from three neighbouring Highland Gentlemen of their being properly qualified to compete for the Prizes of this Society.⁶⁶³

In the run-up to the 1835 competition, the HSS recommended that some of the 'ancient pipers' should appear at the competition. However, the HSL felt that it would be more appropriate to hold a competition for all the previous winners of the prize pipes with a Gold Medal presented to the Champion. The HSS made numerous suggestions to the HSL regarding the playing of reels and strathspeys on both the pipe and the violin from 1835 until 1844. However, the HSL were not interested in this, as Dalyell, one of the HSS committee, said 'The Highland Society of London did not listen to these proposals [...] they replied that one named McKerracher from Pitrothis [*sic*] and another Duff at Aberdeen were the best players of reels'.⁶⁶⁴ The HSL refused to be drawn away from its goal of preserving *piobaireachd* and believed that the Provincial Games were a better venue for reels and

⁶⁶² RHASS, PMB p. 10

⁶⁶³ RHASS PMB, p. 61

⁶⁶⁴ EUL GEN369D, p. 42

strathspeys. The last competition run by the HSS for the HSL took place in 1844. The HSS decided it no longer wanted to supervise the competition and suggested that the Celtic Society of Edinburgh might be willing to take its place.⁶⁶⁵

However, the HSL decided to support the Northern Meeting at Inverness as a means of maintaining its initial objective. Several members of the HSL were involved with the Northern Meeting, an agricultural show that introduced a dance and pipe competition from 1839. According to Angus Fairrie:

There seems to have been no formal exchange of credentials. It was simply assumed by the Highland Society that the setting for its historic competition had been transferred from Edinburgh to Inverness. Meanwhile the Northern Meeting, being at this time eager to reinforce the success of its newly established public Games, was happy to accept the addition of the Piping, almost certainly without realising the significance of the move.⁶⁶⁶

The Northern Meeting did have a competition for the popular Marches and Stathspeys, but it was only the *piobaireachd* competition that the HSL was involved with. The HSL gave its first gold medal for the 1849 competition. It was not until 1859 that the HSL gave another medal, after its resolution to give an annual award of a 'Champion Gold Medal' for previous winners of the Prize Pipes. In 1887 awarding the Prize Pipes was discontinued at the Northern Meeting, because the HSL's medal had in fact become the most revered prize of the competition for *piobaireachd*. In 1875, the HSL also began to give the same award to the Argyllshire Gathering in

⁶⁶⁵ RHASS Sed. Book Vol. 20, p. 531

⁶⁶⁶ Angus Fairrie, *The Northern Meeting 1788-1988* (Edinburgh: Pentland Press Ltd, 1988), p. 162

Oban. These Gold Medals are still regarded as the pinnacle of piping achievement.

Dance Competitions

Highland dancing was first exhibited at the Exhibition held in Edinburgh in 1783, where, as a means of enlivening the programme of *piobaireachd* 'at the desire of the company, several of the pipers afforded no small entertainment by giving a specimen of their agility and spirit in Highland dancing'.⁶⁶⁷ When the HSS took over the superintendence of the Piping Competition for the HSL in 1784, Highland dances became an integral part of the competition. As one of the members of the HSS committee stated:

Certainly, the tedium of the competition—indispensably long for doing justice to the competitors—is much relieved by the intermixture of that kind of dancing peculiar to the Highlanders. But whatever be its merits, whether real or imaginary, it is distinguished less by grace than agility.⁶⁶⁸

These dances interspersed between the pipers were only for display and were very popular with the audiences. The HSS felt there was a fall in the standard of dancing. Dalyell a member of the HSS's organising committee wrote in his notebook:

The dancing in particular was [so] much inferior to what has been exhibited for several competitions that in the Sword Dance no quick steps were attempted on account of the peril of touching the Swords—that it had scarcely sufficient effect.⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶⁷ *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 27 October 1783

⁶⁶⁸ Dalyell, p. 103

⁶⁶⁹ EUL GEN 379D, p. 12

In 1825 the HSS wrote to the HSL that there was a need to encourage the Highland dances which ‘altho’ annually increasing in number are getting worse and worse every year and in attempting real Highland dancing are infinitely offensive’.⁶⁷⁰ In 1828, it suggested to the HSL that it should give prizes to encourage a better quality of competition. Charles Gordon, deputy secretary of the HSS, wrote to the HSL that:

The dancing particularly if not encouraged is in danger of becoming neglected and forgot, it is much fallen off even within my own recollections, and it is only by the offer of some liberal rewards that young men will come from a distance.⁶⁷¹

The HSL agreed with the HSS and decided to provide funding for the dancers. However, the prize money came with the proviso: ‘in order to prevent unqualified Dancers from competing for Prizes given by Society no persons shall be allowed to exhibit in public, unless they shall be possessed of a Certificate of sufficient proficiency in the Art from some professional man resident in Edinburgh being a Highlander to be named for that purpose by HSS’.⁶⁷² The response of the HSS committee to this request was that it could not be acted on ‘as they understand that no teacher of dancing answering the description is resident in Edinburgh’.⁶⁷³ However, there must have been some compliance to the wishes of the London society. Certainly the HSS had paid out monies of the revenue to improve the dance competition, and in 1808 it paid five pounds and seven shillings ‘to teach the ancient war dances of the country’.⁶⁷⁴ However, in 1832 the HSS committee

⁶⁷⁰ NLS 268/2, 27 Oct 1825

⁶⁷¹ RHAS, PMB p. 59 and NLS 268/3, 16 April 1828

⁶⁷² NLS 268/27, 3 May 1828

⁶⁷³ RHAS PMB, p. 66

⁶⁷⁴ NLS 268/5, 27 May 1839

decide to do away with the assistance of professional dancers.⁶⁷⁵ The HSS suggested medals as prizes, but the HSL, in a letter to Charles Gordon of the HSS, stated:

in regard to his suggestion of giving medals as Prizes to Dancers, the Directors feel so well assured of the great interest taken by him and the committee in the management of the Competition, that although they highly approve of his suggestion they will still leave it entirely in the hands of the committee to fix what prizes may be given as well as their number, it being the intention of the Directors to propose to General Court to place at the disposal of the Committee of Highland Society of Scotland appointed to conduct the Competition a sum of money for that purpose.⁶⁷⁶

For the 1829 competition the committee decided to award the following prizes: 1st place, eighteen yards of Royal Stuart tartan for a Highland dress and two sovereigns; 2nd place, a plaid in the same tartan and twelve yards to make a plaid dress if wished and two sovereigns; 3rd place, two sovereigns; 4th place, one sovereign. The actual dance competition was conducted on the day between the rehearsal and the Public Exhibition.⁶⁷⁷ The dances performed at the competitions consisted of the Sword Dance, Strathspeys and Reels, the Broadsword Dance, and the prizes doubtless contributed to the improvement of the dancing.

The piping academy

It is not known if the HSL considered the possibility of a piping college to train pipers for the army prior to its competitions. However, at the exhibition in Edinburgh a few days after the Falkirk competition of 1783, Clanranald, a member of the HSL acted as president of the exhibition,

⁶⁷⁵ RHAS PMB, p. 84

⁶⁷⁶ NLS 268/27, 7 Feb 1829

⁶⁷⁷ RHAS PMB, pp. 66-7

presented John MacArthur, also known as Professor MacArthur, with a set of bagpipes. With the bagpipes was a signed declaration from all involved with the exhibition, the committee of management and the other competitors, as an encouragement ‘to establish a college for the instruction of such young men as may be sent to be bred to that ancient music, the utility of which in recruiting his Majesty’s army, and the military ardour with which it inspires highland regiments, are too well known to say anything further’.⁶⁷⁸ It is doubtful whether he did start a school. If he did, it did not flourish.⁶⁷⁹ At all events, five years later the idea of a piping college arose again.

It can be noted that Lieutenant Donald Ruadh MacCrimmon, the individual who would later be selected as the Professor, joined the society in March 1788, and his membership may have acted as a catalyst in the society’s promotion of a Piping Academy. He was a member of the MacCrimmon hereditary piping family and had received much of his early training from Patrick Óg.⁶⁸⁰ It is highly possible that conversations regarding the piping seminary run by the MacCrimmon family provided the impetus for Murchison’s report on the need of a piping academy. In July 1789, ‘Mr Murchison produced and read a plan for Establishing a Professor of the Great Highland Pipe’.⁶⁸¹ His suggestion met with support from the members and he was

⁶⁷⁸ *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 27 October 1783

⁶⁷⁹ MacInnes, p. 118

⁶⁸⁰ The MacCrimmons were hereditary pipers to Macleod of Dunvegan, who had run a piping seminary for many centuries. Patrick Óg was reputedly the last composer of note from that family.

⁶⁸¹ NLS 268/21, p. 91

empowered to correspond with Mr Grant of Corrymonie, or such Gentlemen in Scotland, as he may judge proper for the purpose of obtaining all possible information, together with Estimates and Statements of the real expence that may be necessary for the completion of this undertaking.⁶⁸²

Donald MacCrimmon had moved to London to find suitable employment, but his fortunes continued to spiral downwards. He had lost his home and lands during the American War of Independence and while in London became financially destitute and ended up in Newgate Prison for debt. He petitioned the HSL through the auspices of Allan Cameron of Erracht on 11 April 1789. Several members of the society supported the petition and the HSL gave MacCrimmon twenty guineas from its funds. This was an unprecedented amount for charitable assistance, and the society noted in the minutes that by doing so it had not established a precedent for future applications.⁶⁸³ On the 16 April, the HSL also provided passage for MacCrimmon, his wife and three children, back to Scotland.

Mr Kenneth Murchison gave a further report to the HSL, and after discussion it was decided that the most expedient way to raise money for 'preserving the Ancient purity of the Music of the Highland Bagpipe' was to open a general subscription.⁶⁸⁴ It is obvious from subsequent minutes that a General Court meeting of 20 May 1789 had decided that MacCrimmon would become the Professor of the Piping Academy. It detailed what was expected of him in that role and what he was to report back annually to the

⁶⁸² NLS 268/21, p. 91

⁶⁸³ NLS 268/21 pp. 96-7

⁶⁸⁴ NLS 268/21, p. 99

Society.⁶⁸⁵ Although, the General Court Minute Book is no longer extant, the minute of 4 June 1790 reported on that resolution of the General Court.

MacCrimmon had been nominated to be Professor of the Great Highland Bagpipe, at the Barracks in Glenelg, by Col. Macleod of Macleod. The society had given MacCrimmon his salary for one year in advance with an additional thirty pounds for relocation expenses, but the thirty pounds would be paid in instalments, the last to be paid out during March 1791.⁶⁸⁶ Although this was done, the HSL was not successful in securing the use of the Glenelg Barracks for MacCrimmon and his students. Col. Macleod of Macleod presented the first petition to Lord Adam Gordon, the Commander in Chief in Scotland and also a member of the HSL. The Marquis of Huntly made a second appeal. By the end of December the HSL was informed that the Glenelg Barracks could not be used for its desired purpose. It was then suggested that Col. Small should make Col. Macleod of Macleod aware: ‘of the great disappointment the Committee feel on this occasion as it may prove fatal to the favourite object of the Society in preserving and promoting the Gaelic music’ and to ask Macleod’s assistance for overcoming the disappointment.⁶⁸⁷

Macleod provided a farm on his estate for Mr MacCrimmon. It was then made clear that the HSL had informed MacCrimmon on how he was to instruct the pupils in the (now lost) minute of May 20 1790.⁶⁸⁸ MacCrimmon

⁶⁸⁵ NLS 268/21, p. 148

⁶⁸⁶ NLS 268/21, p. 115

⁶⁸⁷ NLS 268/21, p. 126

⁶⁸⁸ NLS 268/21, p. 147

was reminded of his commitments to the HSL and told to provide annual reports on his teaching. However, the June minute notes that he had not complied, and a letter was written to MacCrimmon:

informing him that as the object of the Society, has totally failed, the salary to Mr Maccremmon [*sic*], is to be discontinued but declaring, that if he will fix himself, in any situation in Glenelg or near Fort Augustus, and carry the Society's original intentions into execution, his Salary will be continued provided he reports his having made progress towards that settlement, on or before the first day of November next.⁶⁸⁹

A letter was received from MacCrimmon's daughter Marion Mackinnon dated 11 December 1793, stating that her father was 'now ready to instruct pupils as proposed by the Society'. A letter was sent to her informing her that the Society will receive no communication regarding the piping academy except from MacCrimmon himself.⁶⁹⁰

The HSL's plan had not worked and the real cause for failure is unknown, but one must assume that the fault did not lie with MacCrimmon, for in 1808, after eighteen months of living in London, he again petitioned the HSL.⁶⁹¹ Once more the HSL came to his aid and sent a deputation to His Royal Highness the Duke of York and Albany, who was now the Commander in Chief, on his behalf for promotion in rank and further informed him:

That notwithstanding the success with which the efforts of the Society have been attended for the preservation and cultivation of Pipe Music for the Highland Corps in the Army, their endeavour may ultimately prove ineffectual without establishment of a National Academy in the Highlands of

⁶⁸⁹ NLS 268/21, p. 152

⁶⁹⁰ NLS 268/22, p. 15

⁶⁹¹ NLS 268/1, petition 8 August 1808

Scotland, where students shall be instructed in every branch of Pipe Music. And that the said Deputation do express to His Royal Highness the earnest wish of the Society that His Royal Highness would be pleased to promote Lieutenant Donald MacCrimmon of the 10th Veteran Battalion to permanent Rank in the Garrison of Fort William or Fort Augustus with such provision for the support of the Establishment.⁶⁹²

The HSL advanced MacCrimmon as the only suitably qualified candidate, the last of the hereditary family who for five centuries had presided over a similar institution, and emphasised the necessity of doing something before he died, when a whole corpus of pipe music known only by him would be lost forever. That deputation consisted of the Marquis of Huntly, Maj. Gen. T.R. Mackenzie, Lieut. Col. The Hon. Godfrey Macdonald, Sir John Sinclair, Sir John Macpherson and Sir John Macgregor Murray. The Duke of York intimated that he was in favour, but more pressing business occupied him before he could consider the Society's proposal.⁶⁹³ MacCrimmon was at that time on Leave of Absence from his regiment. That leave was quickly running out and he would soon have to embark for Nova Scotia. The HSL decided then to ask its President, the Duke of Sussex, to ask his brother, the Duke of York, to extend MacCrimmon's Leave of Absence until he could consider the HSL's proposal. It outlined its position in a letter to the President, stating that it wanted MacCrimmon to be given a Captain's Commission, and that if the barracks were not being used by the army what better purpose could they be put to, 'than to be a Repository for the Cultivation of a branch of Music which is known to animate and preserve the Military spirit of the

⁶⁹² NLS 268/25, pp. 4-5

⁶⁹³ NLS 268/25, p. 18

Highlanders'.⁶⁹⁴ It further suggested that as a means of making the proposal successful the different regiments could by enlistment select suitable candidates for students of the pipe. The Duke of Sussex expressed his compliance with the request to approach his brother.

Another period of five years elapsed before the Academy for Pipe music was raised again. MacInnes reported that MacCrimmon had not been sent to Canada but was stationed at Fort George and that the Duke of Kent expressed an interest in having MacCrimmon as pipe instructor for his own Regiment.⁶⁹⁵ That was in 1813. However, by 1816, Col. Macdonnel of Glengarry was agitating for the Piping Academy to succeed. He had been a member of the HSL for many years, but it was in his role as founder and President of the Society of True Highlanders (STH) that he addressed the society. He asked for extracts of the minutes regarding the Piping College at Fort William or Fort Augustus and the reasons for its failure. He hoped that his society might be able to further the HSL plans.⁶⁹⁶ The HSL obliged, but stated that it would soon be in a financial situation to continue its plan for an Academy for Pipe Music. It was indicated in the correspondence between the HSL and Macdonnel that the HSL was considering Angus McArthur,⁶⁹⁷ who was brought to London by Lord Macdonald, and was related to a past HSL piper, Charles MacArthur. However, Macdonnel disagreed, arguing that:

The person best qualified by much to fill the situation with respectability and efficacy, unless he has committed some unpardonable offence is Lieutenant McCrummon [*sic*], noticed

⁶⁹⁴ NLS 268/25, pp. 24-26

⁶⁹⁵ NLS MS 19553, fo. 9, quoted in MacInnes, pp. 121-2

⁶⁹⁶ NLS 268/26, p. 131

⁶⁹⁷ NLS 268/26, p. 162

so properly in the extracts with which you have just favoured me [...] but from the estimation in which Mr McArthur stands, and considering McCrumons [*sic*] time of life, if he come forward as assistant [...] I have not the smallest doubt but that he would be well qualified to fill the vacancy Lieutenant McCrummon must in course of nature give room for another.⁶⁹⁸

The final mention of the Piping Academy was on 5 April 1816 with the usual resolutions regarding the need for one and the suitability of MacCrimmon 'from his high reputation as a Performer, and being one of the few remaining Descendants of the Real McCrimmon Race the ancient and renowned Professors of the National Instrument'.⁶⁹⁹ A vacancy was expected at Fort William in the near future and it is decided to solicit the Lords of the Treasury to appoint MacCrimmon to the vacancy and to allow him to teach students on the pipes. Whether the HSL realised it was flogging a dead horse, or whether more important issues such as the society's incorporation took precedence, the Academy for Piping became a dead issue.

Musical Notation

The HSL was very interested in proper musical notation for pipe music, as a way to preserve the music and to assist teaching the instrument. The first attempt at achieving this was through the patronage of Patrick Macdonald's songbook. The second was Joseph Macdonad's *Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe*, which John Macgregor Murray found in Bengal in 1784. Murray sent it to the HSL, and it was reported at the 28 April 1785 meeting that 'the plan of publication of the Treatise on the Highland Pipe, now under consideration to Mr George Mackenzie and Mr

⁶⁹⁸ NLS 268/26, pp. 143-4

⁶⁹⁹ NLS 268/26, p. 200

James Morison to report their opinion to the committee'.⁷⁰⁰ However, there is no further mention of it, and in 1803 Patrick Macdonald himself published the book by subscription and dedicated it to Sir John Macgregor Murray. In 1804, at the suggestion of Sir John Sinclair, copies of the book were given to those competitors at the Competition of Pipers who had made the greatest improvement.⁷⁰¹ It might also have been given as an encouragement for more pipers to employ musical notation. From 1805 the advertisement for the pipe competition stated that premiums would be given for pipe music on the stave. This was reinforced in 1815 when John Macgregor Murray suggested that premiums should be given to pipers who brought in written pipe music and 'playing from the Book, to facilitate the instruction of performers, and as a means of fixing and improving the music of the national instrument'.⁷⁰² Another early work also dedicated to Sir John Macgregor Murray was A. Menzies' *The Bagpipe Preceptor* (1818). In it Menzies says 'when you are master of the instrument I shall recommend you to attend the competition of pipers in Edinburgh [...] and who knows but you may one of these days "scorn the shepherd's slothful life" and launch into the service of your King and Country in the capacity of a piper'.⁷⁰³

In 1819, Mr Andrew Robertson addressed the HSL committee stating that:

⁷⁰⁰ NLS 268/21, p. 43

⁷⁰¹ Angus Mackay, *A Collection of Ancient Piobaireachd or Highland Pipe Music* (Wakefield, EP Publishing Ltd, 1972), p. 17

⁷⁰² NLS 268/26, p. 112

⁷⁰³ A Menzies, *The Bagpipe Perceptor* (Edinburgh, 1818), p. 34, quoted in Iain MacInnes pp. 124-5

One of the principal objects of the Society being the preservation of the ancient Music of Scotland it was desirable that some attention should be paid to a Plan lately adopted for simplifying the process of learning and teaching Bagpipe Music, it was generally understood that the Piobrachds [*sic*] could be communicated to Paper with the same facility as the music of the Violin and Piano, and it was the utmost importance that these valuable pieces of ancient Music should be forthwith put down so as to be rendered legible to every Musician.⁷⁰⁴

Robertson proposed John MacGregor, the society's piper, for such a task, but the society decided that MacGregor would be employed to 'write and arrange for Bagpipe playing from the information and subject to the approbation of Angus McArthur'. MacGregor was to be paid one guinea for each of the requested twenty-four pieces of music.⁷⁰⁵

However, the HSL requested a further twenty-six 'well selected additional Piobrachs [were to] be taken down by John McGregor from the recitation of Angus McArthur upon the same terms and in the same manner as those formerly ordered'.⁷⁰⁶ The manuscript was written during July and August 1820 from 'the whistling of Angus McArthur'.⁷⁰⁷ MacInnes believes that McArthur actually used a practice chanter for this.⁷⁰⁸ Nearly four years later, the Secretary, John Wedderburn suggested that John Gow should inspect and give an estimate of the cost of publishing the manuscript.⁷⁰⁹

Gow's estimate for forty three-pounds and eighteen shillings was duly received and a committee appointed to see the manuscript through

⁷⁰⁴ NLS 268/43, p. 2

⁷⁰⁵ NLS 268/43, p. 6

⁷⁰⁶ NLS 268/43, p. 9

⁷⁰⁷ NLS 268/17, 1 July 1820

⁷⁰⁸ MacInnes, p. 223

⁷⁰⁹ NLS 268/27, 6 Mar 1824

No. 24 *Lady MacDonald's Lament, composed in the year 1791 by Angus MacAr*

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Figure 10 One of Angus MacArthur's Piobaireachd

publication.⁷¹⁰ It obviously decided to expand the production, and then wrote to the HSS for tunes left with the judges of the competition. Charles Gordon, the deputy secretary, on forwarding the sheets of music, acknowledged they were the property of the HSL, he stated further that:

The very few Pipers who were qualified to note the piobrachd, had generally but one copy of the Tunes committed to writing, and which copy they declined to leave with the Committee altho' they promised to produce a transcript at some time after the Competition and were promised a reward upon their doing it, in nearly every instance the promises of the Piper were made only to be forgotten.⁷¹¹

He also noted that until recently only Military Pipers could make use of notation, and most still learnt the tunes in the old way by ear. He stated that the publication the HSL had in view 'will also do much to music and fix the proper standard for each tune for at present scarcely two pipers play exactly the same set of any piobrachd'. He also reminded the HSL of Angus Mackay's very large collection of Pipe Music, which the judges had seen at the last competition.⁷¹² The HSL committee was also requested to assess Mr Macrae's collection of *piobaireachd*.⁷¹³ The committee's report was read and accepted on the 4 February 1826.⁷¹⁴ However, Angus McArthur's collection was never published. In November 1833, Robert Edmonstone, a member of the HSL, requested the manuscript for two or three months, explaining that some Highland pipers were anxious to get their own collection published and wanted access to the manuscript which 'altho'

⁷¹⁰ NLS 268/27, 1 May 1824

⁷¹¹ NLS 268/2, 16 Nov 1825

⁷¹² NLS 268/2, 16 Nov 1825

⁷¹³ NLS 268/27 5 Mar 1825

⁷¹⁴ NLS 268/27 4 Feb 1826

not on the scale of the Pipes they may be of use'.⁷¹⁵ The manuscript was sent, and one of the pipers requesting access to it was probably Michael Macfarlane, for it was his widow who sold it to Charles Bannatyne. The Piobaireachd Society purchased it on his death and deposited it with the NLS.⁷¹⁶

The HSL supported Captain Macleod of Gesto's collection at the recommendation of the HSS. It was called *A Collection of Piobaireachds or Pipe Tunes as verbally taught by the McCrummen Pipers in the Isle of Skye to their Apprentices now published, as taken from John McCrummen, piper to the old Laird of Macleod and his Grandson The Late General Macleod of Macleod.*

It was not what the society had expected, for it would appear that none of its members had seen *canntaireachd* before; this was illustrated by the correspondence between the HSS and HSL. The HSL wanted to know if the HSS had given Macleod any encouragement and how far 'the work may be considered as a means of cultivating the knowledge of Pipe Music or of enabling a Piper without a previous acquaintance with the Tunes to play the piobaireachd'.⁷¹⁷ The HSS responded 'that it is a great curiosity in its way',⁷¹⁸ and that the HSS 'have always abstained from any direct patronage of the Bagpipe or its music which have been so long and so successfully patronised

⁷¹⁵ NLS 268/4, 18 November 1833

⁷¹⁶ NLS, MS 1679, a new edition of the manuscript has been published jointly by Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities in 2001, Frans Buisman & Roderick D Cannon, eds., *The Music of Scotland: Volume I: The MacArthur-MacGregor Manuscript of Piobaireachd (1820)*

⁷¹⁷ NLS 268/27, 7 Feb 1829

⁷¹⁸ NLS 268/3, 26 July 1828

by the Highland Society of London'.⁷¹⁹ Eventually the HSL paid the ten guineas promised to Macleod.⁷²⁰ He dedicated his collection to the HSL.

The collection of *pìobaireachd* that the HSL eventually sponsored, and which greatly influenced and helped to standardise pipe music, was that of Angus Mackay, published in 1838. He was the HSL's piper, as well as being piper to Queen Victoria, the GSL and the London Club of True Highlanders. The work was begun in 1835 but it had taken him longer to compile than he had anticipated. He dedicated it to the HSL stating in his preface that:

It is with feeling of pride that he now dedicates his labours to the Highland Society of London, whose patriotic encouragement of Gaëlic manners and customs is so well known, and whose patronage, so generously bestowed on his work, confers so much honour, and is so gratifying to the Editor.⁷²¹

MacInnes believed that James Logan, was involved with Mackay's publication and cites as evidence a letter written by Logan to the Secretary of the HSL. In that letter he makes reference to copies of Mackay's *pìobaireachd* still in his possession.⁷²² MacInnes states that he is not sure of the extent of the HSL involvement but feels that it might have been involved with the editing.⁷²³ He was indeed correct in his assumption, for James Logan in a letter to the editor of the *London Scotsman* in response to an article he read concerning a new 'Collection of Pipe Music' by William Ross, piper to the Queen, the HSL and also the GSL. Logan corrects the erroneous

⁷¹⁹ NLS 268/3, 28 April 1829

⁷²⁰ NLS 268/14, 2 May 1829

⁷²¹ MacKay, p. 5

⁷²² NLS 268/5, 24 April 1840

⁷²³ MacInnes, p. 253

statement given in the paper that this is the first published collection, stating that Mackay had:

published a collection of sixty-one genuine old piobaireachdan, with curious traditional and historical accounts of the composers, the occasions on which they were composed, anecdotes, and other appropriate memoranda, which I had the pleasure of arranging for the press.⁷²⁴

Music at society meetings, Highland Balls and Concerts

The HSL had no difficulty in preserving or enjoying one branch of Highland music. As Sir John Sinclair said: ‘the dancing music of that country is universally preferred, for quick steps, in almost every part of the world, and it is highly exhilarating to the spirits when played in the same perfection in which it is now executed by the celebrated Gow family.’⁷²⁵ The HSL was able to enjoy the music of John Gow at its general courts and anniversary dinners. It is very probable that the HSL enjoyed his music from its inception; the earliest extant record of his playing is 20 January 1783.⁷²⁶ John Gow was the second son of Neil Gow, the famous Scottish fiddler. John with his brother Andrew, Neil’s third son, together ran a music publishing company in London.⁷²⁷ John Gow, like his father before him and his younger brother Nathaniel, was a composer.⁷²⁸ From the receipts found in the ‘Debit and Credit Account Book, with the Treasurer, Gaelic Society 1783’ (MS.268/34) he appears initially to have played by himself; later he was joined by his brother Andrew, and then by a group of other musicians to

⁷²⁴ *London Scotsman*, 13 August 1870, p. 106

⁷²⁵ Sinclair, (1813), pp. 12-3

⁷²⁶ NLS 268/34, 20 January 1783

⁷²⁷ Mary Anne Alburgher, *Scottish Fiddlers and their music* (London: Gollancz, 1983), p. 115

⁷²⁸ Alburgher, p. 146

form a band like that of his father. At times, in 1792 and 1793 his brother Andrew appears to have taken his place as bandleader. His brother Nathaniel made two guest appearances with the band when he was in London in 1793 and 1799. The receipts show that the band eventually consisted of at least two violins, a bass, a cello, sometimes a harp and occasionally a horn or trumpet.⁷²⁹ For his services to the HSL, John Gow received a medal, and on its front was the following inscription:

Clan nan Gadheal ann guailibh à cheile. Presented to Mr John Gow by the Highland Society of London in testimony of their approbation of his long services, and of the delight which his eminent and hereditary Musical Talents have never failed to inspire at the Meetings of the Society. 1822⁷³⁰

The reverse showed the armorial bearings of the President, the Duke of Atholl. John Gow died in 1827 and his son, known only as I.H. Gow in the records, continued to play in his father's stead. However, in 1828 he resigned and Mr Menzies, one of the musicians, took over as leader with the usual band of musicians.⁷³¹ It should also be noted that at the general courts and anniversary meetings, apart from Mr Gow playing Scottish airs and dance tunes, the HSL also employed the services of an Irish piper during the period of 1788 to 1822. John Macgregor, who was one of the society's pipers, and Malcolm Macgregor, pipe maker to the society, played the union pipe together for eleven years, 1810-21. It is not known if the Irish or union pipes were played with the band, as was quite common at that time, or as a solo instrument. At the early meetings of the HSL, dancing exhibitions were

⁷²⁹ NLS 268/34, various entries

⁷³⁰ NLS 268/43, 2 March 1822

⁷³¹ NLS 268/27, 5 April, 1828

often provided by young boys, or visiting Highlanders, especially at its anniversary dinners, but by the mid-nineteenth century many of its members would perform reels to the accompaniment of the society piper.⁷³² The HSL also employed soloists to perform Scottish ballads at its meetings and occasionally members would perform.

The GSL did not have the funds to employ professional musicians but at almost every meeting the piper played some tunes and songs were sung. Every minute of its members' meetings concludes each meeting in this way. For example: '*Cluich am piobare an sin, "Cumha Mhic an Toisich" agus shein Dr Eoghan Mac Dhonaill na Ceipich, oran ann an Gailig*',⁷³³ (the piper then played Mackintosh's Lament and Dr Ewen Macdonnell of Keppoch sang a song in Gaelic); and '*cluich Mr Iain Mac Connich an sin puirt air a phiob, a chuir cuid de na gillean og gu dannsa*'.⁷³⁴ (Mr John Mackenzie played tunes on his pipes which caused some of the young lads to dance). Members of the GSL who were also members of the Celtic Choir, later known as the Scottish Choir, often sang duets and quartets at the meetings. W. Macgregor Stoddart, a member of the GSL and its London Gaelic Choir, both arranged and harmonised many of the songs sung by the Scottish Choir, and he was often a soloist at meetings.

As already noted, both societies had their own pipers, who performed at general and anniversary meetings. The HSL's first two pipers however, did not live in London, but they acted as representatives of the

⁷³² *Times*, 23 April 1844, p. 7

⁷³³ UCL GSL MB, 12 October 1881

⁷³⁴ UCL GSL MB, 9 January 1884

Society at the piping competitions. They were Peter Macgregor in 1782 and then John MacGregor in 1783. From 1785 to 1891 the Society had its own succession of pipers playing at meetings, but after that date it no longer retained a permanent piper. It would appear from the records that pipers were outside the door when playing, except when the whisky was sent round the table, 'when it is permitted to play once or twice around the room'.⁷³⁵ The HSL regularly paid for a second piper to play along side its own piper, and frequently paid for new pipes and Highland dress for its pipers and the boy dancers. The GSL, as already noted, often had as its piper the same man as served the HSL, who in addition was the piper for individual members of the Royal Family. There was however, a difference in status for the piper in each society. The HSL's piper was a musician who was paid an annual retainer for his services. The GSL's piper was a member of the Society; he was probably paid some sort of allowance for his services, though no mention is made in the Minute Books. He was not banished to the hall except when whisky was being drunk, for according to the minutes he would perform among the members.

Most of the London Scottish Societies opened their own Highland Balls to members of all fellow societies. These Balls were an overblown expression of Scottishness, and were often used as a method of fundraising. For example, the Grand Celtic Ball of 1847 was held for relief of Highland destitution. The GSL's 'Annual Scottish Concert', was a celebration of Gaelic culture consisting of a programme of piping, fiddle music, Highland

⁷³⁵ NLS 268/21, p. 145

dancing, Gaelic and other patriotic songs. It was the fund-raising tool for the GSL's Gaelic Education Fund. These concerts ran from 1889 until the First World War. They included a mixture of London Scottish talent, such as Mr Roderick Macleod from the GSL and Miss Jessie MacLachlan. The latter would lead the audience in singing before the intermission, and also led with 'Suas leis a' Ghàidhlig', the last song of the evening. Members of *Comunn Phiobairean Lunnainn* and the London Highland Strathspey and Reel Society joined them. Popular Scottish artistes such as, Màiri Matheson, Mòd Gold Medallist, and the fiddle player James Scott Skinner, were usually part of the programme.

The Highland Garb

The first objective of the constituted HSL was the restoration of the Highland Garb. However, it took second place to the preservation of music in the actual scheme of things. The proscription of all things tartan was accomplished by the Disarming Act, Statute 19 Geo. II (1746) which was an attempt to bring the Jacobite supporters to heel, and it affected every Highlander in Scotland, except those in military service. The Statute was re-enacted in 1748, thus rubbing salt on a sore wound with the continuation of making it illegal to:

wear or put on the Clothes commonly called Highland Clothes; that is to say the Plaid, Philibeag or Little Kilt, Trowse, Shoulder Belts, or any Part whatsoever of what peculiarly belongs to the Highland Garb; and that no Tartan or parti-coloured Plaid or Stuff should be used for Great Coats, or for Upper Coats under the penalties therein mentioned.⁷³⁶

⁷³⁶ Statute 21 Geo. II c.34 (1748)

The penalty for wearing Highland dress was harsh, six months imprisonment for a first offence, and a subsequent conviction led to transportation. David Stewart of Garth, writing forty years after the repeal notes that 'it is impossible to read this latter Act without considering it rather as an ignorant wantonness of power, than the proceeding of a wise and a beneficent legislature'.⁷³⁷ It was because of that oppressive nature of the Act that the HSL decided to do all in its power to have it repealed and a committee was appointed on 9 May 1782 for that purpose.

Repeal of Act in 1782

This committee consisted of Lord Adam Gordon, as president, the Marquis of Graham, who had been president in 1780, Allan Cameron of Erracht, Archibald Macdonald, the Chief Baron, Archibald Fraser of Lovat and secretary John Mackenzie. The Disarming Acts had long since expired and 'breeches' had taken the place of the kilt for about thirty-five years. The HSL wanted to call a halt to that change, and to ensure that the kilt and plaid would once again become the normal dress for the Gaels. The Marquis of Graham moved the motion to repeal the laws respecting the Highland dress in the House of Commons. He argued that the reasons for the act were no longer an issue, indeed:

the Scotch had manifested their loyalty, and firm attachment to the present government by numberless exertions in its favour, both by sea and land; and therefore he hoped that the cause having ceased, the effect would cease of course; and that the House would not think it improper that the Scotch should wish to remove an odious distinction, which had been put upon their

⁷³⁷ Stewart, p. 141

ancestors, on account of principles which were no longer entertained.⁷³⁸

Archibald Fraser of Lovat seconded the motion, and claimed to speak on behalf of all Highlanders, many of whom had:

bled so freely, so loyally, and so usefully to this empire, in the course of two successive wars, that they, of themselves, have construed their services a sufficient toleration, even under legal prohibition, for wearing a dress, the best calculated, in point of utility and frugality, for the hilly situations they live in; and the fact is, that for many years past the dress is universally known. Their prayer therefore, Sir, is to be freed from all their apprehensions on this subject, and to be allowed legally to wear the striped party-coloured woollen manufacture of their own country, cut in the fashion the best suited to their fancy and predilection.⁷³⁹

He reminded the House that it intended to introduce laws to curb emigration and stated that the repeal of the Act would indeed 'keep them happy at home'. After its second reading, the Marquis of Graham's Bill was successfully passed on 19 June 1782.

Encouragement of wearing garb

Although the repeal was achieved by the HSL it is obvious that its members were not necessarily keen to wear the Highland Garb. Perhaps there was a concern of criticism, for the Bill had been opposed by Sir P.J. Clerk, who felt that 'if the Scotch dress was best calculated for the Highlands, it should be restricted to the Scotch, who should be restrained from wearing it in England'.⁷⁴⁰ He believed such a clause would act as a means of protecting English women from being compromised by hordes of Scotsmen. Sir John Graham Dalrymple, one of the HSS's committee for the

⁷³⁸ *Parliamentary History of England* Vol. XXIII (1814), p. 113

⁷³⁹ *Parliamentary History of England* Vol. XXIII (1814), pp. 113-4

⁷⁴⁰ *Parliamentary History of England* Vol. XXIII (1814), p. 115

piping competition, did not really favour the Highland dress. He wrote in 1849 about the opinion of Highland dress worn in Edinburgh, and the London population, probably to a much greater extent, must have shared such views:

Thirty or forty years ago no reputable gentlemen would have appeared in a kilt in the streets of Edinburgh [...] neither, unless on special occasions, do respectable gentlemen yet traverse the city so attired... whole societies, no doubt, as well as individuals, have been certainly seen affecting the Highland garb, and, if I mistake not, arming themselves with what are believed the semblance of warlike accoutrements, in traversing the city; but I have not heard that such peculiarities enjoy much public favour, though innocently enough displayed.⁷⁴¹

So the HSL moved slowly in its quest for popularising the garb. On 8 March 1784, a resolution was made that members should wear Highland dress on the occasion of the Queen's birthday and as a 'mark of respect to the Garb of their Ancestors'.⁷⁴² Whether more members took to wearing the kilt is unknown. However, in May 1804 another resolution was made recommending that all members should wear their ancient dress 'as a proper mark of respect to those great and distinguished Characters who formerly wore the Garb, and tending to excite and preserve the national Spirit of the Highlanders, so conspicuously distinguished in all parts of the world'.⁷⁴³ Sir John Sinclair wrote his *Observations on the Propriety of Preserving the Dress* after that meeting, and that resolution was included in the publication. It was addressed to both the HSL and the HSS, and Sinclair observed that it would be proper for members to wear the garb and use the Gaelic language

⁷⁴¹ Dalyell, pp. 109-10

⁷⁴² NLS 268/21 p. 13

⁷⁴³ NLS 268/23 p. 122

when they were in the Highlands. He did, however, recognise that not everyone would feel comfortable in the attire and suggested that members could wear any part of it that they would feel comfortable with, stating:

It is unnecessary to tie down all who may attend on such occasions, to one particular uniform, as persons in an advanced period of life, or who are engaged in grave professions, may not think it proper to appear wholly in so unusual a dress, though they may have no objection to wear some particular parts of it; but the generality of the members may feel both a pride and a pleasure in putting on that garb, as it would recall to their remembrance, the high character, and renowned achievements of their ancestors.⁷⁴⁴

Sinclair provided a description of the elements of Highland dress which consisted of: a bonnet decorated with eagle feathers for a chief, or a sprig of the shrub or tree, the emblem of the clan for all others; a short coat with skirts, in dark blue, green or black with silver buttons or tartan with gold buttons, trews or belted plaid, or kilt and plaid in the clan or family tartan; hose and brogues. He added that the dress was:

Considered to be complete, when the person who wore it had a purse and a durk [*sic*], and sometimes a sword and pistol; for it was not unusual, in those martial ages, to appear at all times, with the instrument of war, [...] and preserved a manly and warlike spirit even in peace.⁷⁴⁵

What affect the resolution and the encouragement of Sir John Sinclair had on the membership is unknown, but it is apparent that by 1820 the wearing of Highland dress had decreased. A petition was sent signed by forty-four members stating:

As the preservation of the Garb of the ancient Caledonians is one of the original objects of the Highland Society of London,

⁷⁴⁴ Sir John Sinclair, *Observations on the Propriety of Preserving the Dress* (London: W Bulmer, 1804), p. 8

⁷⁴⁵ Sinclair (1804), p. 11

and as the general adoption thereof at Public Meetings, would essentially tend to excite and preserve the national spirit of the Highlands, which has been so conspicuously and so honourably displayed on all occasions and in all parts of the world.

We the undersigned members of the said Society, anxious for the general welfare of the Association, attached to the distinguishing Garb of our ancestors, and earnestly desiring that a Dress allied to all our best feelings by every national and honourable recollection, should not fall into oblivion, have determined to appear at all the General Councils in the Highland Garb.⁷⁴⁶

There is no mention in the minutes of the GSL regarding the Highland dress, and it is not mentioned in its objects. However, Donald Macpherson, secretary and bard to the GSL in a song addressed to the members of the society ended each verse with ‘*Comunn na Feile ’s na Gaëlig*’ (the Society of the Kilt and the Gaelic).⁷⁴⁷ Macpherson wrote and presented his song to the GSL in 1837 and it provided evidence that the GSL’s members wore Highland dress. In 1870, it is recorded that the GSL along with its ‘leal sister Scottish societies in London’ was preserving ‘the garb of the old Gaul’.⁷⁴⁸ An early mention of the GSL and Highland dress is at the Grand Celtic Fancy Ball organised by the society in 1847. It was a Celtic extravaganza and the journalist for the *Times* newspaper remarked that: ‘The Garb of the Old Gael will for once be put to a good modern purpose of the occasion’.⁷⁴⁹ Certainly, at the Anniversary Balls for both societies, the gentlemen would wear the Highland dress, and the ladies

⁷⁴⁶ NLS 268/43, pp. 14-5

⁷⁴⁷ UCL GSL preserved scrapbook, fo. 38

⁷⁴⁸ *London Scotsman*, 15 January 1870, p. 39; ‘leal’ is an old Scots word meaning loyal, faithful or adhering to one’s allegiance

⁷⁴⁹ *Times*, 9 March 1847, p. 7

would in some way indicate 'the clan of their hearts'. The halls would be decorated with tartan and antlers and greenery.

Dress Competitions—Edinburgh and Fort William

Another way to encourage the wearing of Highland dress was by the piping competitions for the HSL's prizes. It is obvious that the competitors in the first few years of competition did not appear in Highland Dress. On the occasion of the first competition, the Highland garb was still (before 1782) regarded as outlawed. The pipers who appeared for the competition would not have dressed up for the occasion. As the Falkirk Tryste was a cattle market, the competing pipers might have participated in bringing the cattle to market and would be wearing droving clothes. Certainly at the competition in 1782, the bard Duncan Macintyre appeared in Highland dress, and his poem reflected the HSL's successful repeal of the Act.⁷⁵⁰ At the 'Piping Exhibition' of 1783 the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* states:

On the part of the performers, on this occasion, it is intimated that the public will pardon what might be wanting in point of dress, etc., as they, without any previous intimation of appearing before so magnificent and great a company, had left their homes at a great distance, having in view only of appearing at the Falkirk competition, where, from the business of most people of that meeting, it was to be supposed that nothing more could be attended to than the simple spirit of the competitors.⁷⁵¹

Clanranald, president of the management committee, awarded the first prize—a set of pipes and for both the second and third prizes—a complete Highland costume,⁷⁵² obviously as an example of what the pipers

⁷⁵⁰ NLS 268/15, Minute of the Proceeding at the Competition for prizes of the Piping at Falkirk, 15 October 1872

⁷⁵¹ *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 27 October 1783

⁷⁵² *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 27 October 1783

should wear for future competitions. Dalyell states that: 'previous to the competition of 1785, the candidates were warned to appear properly dressed in "the Highland habit"; and from thenceforward the originating custom has continued'.⁷⁵³ As with the dance and piping competitors, anyone who came solely for the dress competition would receive their expenses from the revenue of the competition. It was not until 1818 that the HSL, on the recommendation of the HSS's committee, decided to award six guineas as prizes, three guineas to the winner, two guineas for second place and one guinea for third place. The judges were to choose from the competitors those who were 'most correctly dressed in the ancient garb of Caledonia'.⁷⁵⁴

The HSL also recommended that no one should judge at the competition unless he appeared in Highland garb.⁷⁵⁵ Not all the judges were happy with this decision, including Dalyell. However, at a HSL meeting the following year after this decision, the members congratulated themselves on the role the society had played in preserving pipe music and on the improvements seen in the dress competition. Several of the judges had appeared in Highland garb.⁷⁵⁶ The prize money was increased for the first Triennial Competition to ten guineas, but instead of awarding money prizes, the HSS committee used some of the money to purchase items for the first and second places. The following prizes were awarded: 1st place, a silver mounted snuff mill and one sovereign; 2nd place, a silver broach and one

⁷⁵³ Dalyell, p. 107

⁷⁵⁴ RHASS PMB, p. 9

⁷⁵⁵ NLS 268/27, 10 Feb 1823

⁷⁵⁶ NLS 268/27, 7 Feb 1824

sovereign; 3rd place, two sovereigns and 4th place, one sovereign.⁷⁵⁷ For the 1835 Triennial Competition the prize money was again increased and the categories for the competition were divided into three; two prizes for Highlanders who were dressed by their master; three prizes for Highlanders dressed at their own expense; and three prizes for those Highlanders dressed in home-made tartan. The last dress competition in Edinburgh was held in 1844. But the HSL decided to continue its encouragement of Highland dress and provided prizes for dress at the Fort William 'Highland Dress and Piping Competition', in August 1846. The HSL decided that Newspaper advertisements would inform readers that it was:

anxious to encourage the Natives of the Highlands, to wear the ancient Garb of the Country continually; and feeling a conviction of its superiority over any other dress, for Natives of a Mountainous district, of its economy and durability, as well as of its National importance.⁷⁵⁸

The society awarded £15 to be divided among three categories: between sixteen and twenty years of age; between twenty and forty years of age; and forty years and upwards. It also noted that by best dressed it meant dressed properly for the country 'a strong cheap and durable dress, consisting of Jacket, Vest, Kilt, Hose, Shoes or Brogues, Sporrans, Bonnet and Plaid'. It did not regard ornaments as necessary, but considered that 'the character of the Competitors will have the greatest weight with the Judges'.⁷⁵⁹ The Fort William competition is the last recorded in the extant minutes, but the HSL may have continued to support it.

⁷⁵⁷ RHASS PMB, p. 66

⁷⁵⁸ NLS 268/19, 13 May 1846

⁷⁵⁹ NLS 268/19, 13 May 1846

Tartan Authentication

Following the Repeal Act, the HSL was occasionally requested to give advice regarding correct Highland garb, and soon saw itself an authority on the subject. According to the HSL minutes of 1815, the idea of collecting and authenticating the different setts of family and clan tartans came from David Stewart of Garth.⁷⁶⁰ Andrew Robertson, however, had originally raised the idea with Stewart of Garth the year earlier. Robertson was the fashionable painter of miniatures, and a member of the HSL. In response to Robertson's suggestion he wrote:

there are several heads of families who are not chiefs, but who have distinguishing marks and plaids and banners, such as Lord Breadalbane, head of a powerful branch of the Campbells, Glengarry, Glencoe and Keppoch of the Macdonalds and so on [...] besides the Tartans of chiefs, and heads of families, there are country and district Tartans, such as the Athole Tartan (of which there are two kinds both very beautiful, one for the Plaid and Coat, and Kilt, and one for the Hose and trouser). These are considered as the Tartans of the Country, of Breadalbane, Lochaber, Badenoch, and many others'.⁷⁶¹

Andrew Robertson wrote to the Secretary, who introduced the letter to the Management Committee, and it brought the idea into action. Robertson's letter reflected the concern of Stewart of Garth—that efforts should be made to preserve all the clan tartans, before some of these setts were completely lost. It was recommended that, during the summer, letters should be sent to all the Clan chiefs requesting a yard of 'their particular Tartan with their seal and signature affixed'.⁷⁶² In his letter, Robertson stated

⁷⁶⁰ NLS 268/26, pp. 158-9

⁷⁶¹ NAS GD1/53/112, p. 13, 22 January 1816

⁷⁶² NLS 268/26 p. 104

that he and Col. Stewart were of the same opinion that collecting the tartans might:

Lead to more important consequences as regards the feudal feeling in the Highlands for those who reside on the spot having everything Highland around them [but] see nothing particular in their character and history and are little aware how we at a distance view those things, and in what estimation the Highland feeling and character are held by the World, an application to the Chiefs on any subject whatever will remind them of who they are and what their Forefathers were and did—It may induce them to hold in greater estimation that costume which has been so long laid aside.⁷⁶³

Robertson believed that the letter to the Chiefs should be in Gaelic and signed by the President stating ‘a Royal Signature may do as much to restore the Highland Dress in 1815 as a Royal Decree did to destroy it in 1746’.⁷⁶⁴

Secretary James Hamilton did write to all the Chiefs and Chieftains requesting a piece of tartan, of sufficient size to show the pattern clearly. Further, he asked that the clan chief should attach a card bearing an impression of the clan’s Coat of Arms or seal as authentication.⁷⁶⁵ It is obvious that Hamilton felt there would be disinclination by some of the Chiefs towards this request. In his letter to Macdonnell of Glengarry he stated that: ‘I am sorry to say that all the Cean Cinne do not feel by much the Highland Spirit by which you were animated and in a few years it is to be feared that the distinguishing Tartans of some Clan will not be known’.⁷⁶⁶

There was certainly some difficulty in collecting the setts, for even the largest and most influential clans for Chiefs were ‘at a loss to ascertain

⁷⁶³ NLS 268/26, pp. 104-5

⁷⁶⁴ NLS 268/26, pp. 105-6

⁷⁶⁵ NLS 268/26, p. 127

⁷⁶⁶ NLS 268/26, p. 127.

with accuracy the pattern appropriate to their Clans'.⁷⁶⁷ Stewart of Garth was active in contacting Chiefs in Perthshire and area. A response from Col. Alexander Robertson of Struan explained a common problem. He had attempted to ascertain the Clandonachy tartan twenty years earlier, but none of the old men he asked gave him the same answer, and all descriptions were 'very vulgar and gaudy'.⁷⁶⁸ Stewart wrote to Andrew Robertson that: 'a few more years as you justly observe and the memory of such things will be lost, and the truth of this cannot be a stronger proof than that Strowan [*sic*] does not properly know what his own Tartan is'.⁷⁶⁹ The society did have some success in collecting tartans with the help of Macdonnell of Glengary and Stewart of Garth, who collected samples from other chiefs, and a Report was to be produced.⁷⁷⁰ It was contemplated that a facsimile colour copy of each tartan should be engraved and published as a way of preserving and perpetuating them.⁷⁷¹

However, such a publication was not undertaken by the HSL. In 1829, it was decided that action should be taken to preserve the tartan collection. The samples were to be pasted into a book, which would note the name of the clan and by whom the tartan was authenticated.⁷⁷² James Logan requested that book in 1829 when he was actively working on his book *The Scottish Gael*. The society acquiesced but decided that the book should not leave the custody of the HSL; instead, Logan could have access to the

⁷⁶⁷ NLS 10615/114, Account of proceedings from 1813, p. 2

⁷⁶⁸ James Robertson, *The First Highlander* (Phantassie: Tuckwell Press, 1998), p. 75

⁷⁶⁹ NAS GD1/53/112, p. 12, 22 January 1815

⁷⁷⁰ NLS 268/26, p. 158

⁷⁷¹ NLS 10615/114, Account of proceedings from 1813, p. 2

⁷⁷² NLS 268/27, 3 Feb 1827

book.⁷⁷³ James Logan used that collection again for another book *The Clans of the Scottish Highlands*, the illustrations were by another GSL member R.R. MacIan. It was published through the patronage of the HSL for the benefit of all Gaels; another book of similar strain patronised by the HSL was W.F. Skene's *Gael Albanich* in 1834.

Nothing is mentioned of the 'Tartan Book' until a housekeeping measure in 1904 by the HSL led to a committee being appointed to examine all its manuscripts and books. The committee reported that the 'Tartan Book' was in need of 'care-taking', and that some of the tartans were missing. The book had been in the possession of 'one Mackay, the late officer', for the use of tartan manufacturers and other interested persons. The tartans now lost could not be replaced. Further as a means of limiting the loss of tartan samples, the 'Tartan Book' should not be displayed at the annual reception. The committee reminded members of the loss of the priceless war trophy, the French flag, captured by the 42nd Regiment at the Battle of Alexandria, which had gone missing after an anniversary dinner. It further stated that:

This collection of undoubtedly old tartans was made with great care and trouble by some of the most expert members of this Society. Though some of them may not be the same as the set now worn, they were doubtless thought correct by the men who wore them. This collection is considered authoritative, and is referred to in all books on Clan tartans. Any additions now made must necessarily be modern (old tartans are not to be got) and would tend to alter its unique and historic character and make it a patch-work of old and new.⁷⁷⁴

⁷⁷³ NLS 268/14, 2 May 1829

⁷⁷⁴ NLS 10615/113-4, 24 August 1904 Report, p. 4

The committee recommended that a new collection should be undertaken of the tartans now worn. As with the previous collection, Clan Chiefs would be asked to authenticate a sample of the modern tartan. Such an action would keep the original and now unique collection intact. To protect the 'Tartan Book', a strong box was made to house it, and the society's Treasurers would have possession of the keys. A circular letter to 'the Chief of Clans and Heads of Houses entitled to wear tartans' signed by the President, Lord Tullibardine, requested a sample of the present sett. A book was purchased in which to place the tartans when they arrived. Each tartan would have a short historical sketch with it.⁷⁷⁵ The HSL also made an authenticated list of the clan badges the emblematic tree or shrub worn by Highlanders other than chiefs. Most Highland outfitters carried this list. It went further than Sinclair in as far as it specified that the Chief of a clan would also wear the badge of the clan with his eagle feathers, e.g. the Chief of the Munro clan would wear his clan emblem of pinion feathers with the four tail feathers of the eagle.⁷⁷⁶

The Martial Spirit

The HSL believed that preserving the martial spirit of the Highlanders was paramount; this martial spirit had also been praised and seen as worthy of preserving by the *literati* of Scotland's Enlightenment. However, it could not be treated in the same way as other objects such as piping or dancing, for it was a characteristic of a people and a legacy of the

⁷⁷⁵ NLS 10615/113-4, March 1906 Report

⁷⁷⁶ List of the Badge of Distinction used by the Clans of Scotland as sanctioned by the Highland Society of London

clan system rather than an element of culture. Many of the members of the HSL raised their own Highland Regiments⁷⁷⁷ that were praised for their fighting ability, bravery and loyalty; as illustrated by the words of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham when he addressed Parliament on 14 January 1766:

It is my boast, that I was the first Minister who looking for [Military] Merit found it in the Mountains of the North. I called forth, and drew into your service, an hardy and intrepid race of men! [...] These men, in the last war, were brought to combat on your side; they served with fidelity, as they fought with valour, and conquered for you in every part of the world.⁷⁷⁸

As a corporate body the HSL felt it a patriotic duty to try to raise its own regiment. Such an attempt to raise a Scottish Corps of Volunteers in London had been made in 1782,⁷⁷⁹ but it is unknown if the HSL was involved in this effort. Whether involved or not, it would appear that nothing came of it. It was not until the Napoleonic Wars were threatening in 1793, that Mr William Ogilvie proposed the raising of ‘a Corps of volunteers in the Highland Uniform from Highlanders and other natives of Scotland residing in London under the patronage and direction of the Society’.⁷⁸⁰ The Highland Armed Association or Royal Highland Volunteers was formed and they continued in service until the Peace of Amiens in 1802. Its uniform ‘consisted of the Feather Bonnet with a green hackle, scarlet coat with yellow facings and silver lace cut away to show a scarlet laced waistcoat, a belted plaid of Government Tartan with a dark sporran with eleven white

⁷⁷⁷ For a good account of the regimental flavour of the HSL see Cameron of Airs, *Two Hundred Years: The Highland Society of London 1778-1978* (London: 1983)

⁷⁷⁸ NLS 10615/98, 1 July 1919

⁷⁷⁹ *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 1 July 1782

⁷⁸⁰ NLS 268/22, p. 162

tassels, diced hose and buckled shoes'.⁷⁸¹ The HSL had hoped to raise 800 men but only managed to raise fewer than a hundred; it was thought that the Highland dress might have discouraged lowland men from joining. The Peace of Amiens did not last long and in 1802 the HSL raised another regiment, this time with a more inclusive name of the Loyal North Britons in the hope of appealing to the wider Scottish population in London. The Highland dress was discarded:

The uniform for the Battalion and Flank companies being a scarlet jacket with yellow facings, light grey pantaloons and Hussar boots with a Highland bonnet and a short tartan cloak to hang behind from the shoulder or in other words a plaid. There was one exotic innovation, a Rifle Company clad in black shako with green plumes, a jacket and plaid of Government tartan with green laces, dark green pantaloons and black gaiters. The Officers, however, all wore the kilt and full Highland dress.⁷⁸²

From 1805, the Duke of Sussex took over as Commander of the Loyal North Britons. Campbell of Airds states that this Corps was more successful, at its peak numbering 300. It was disbanded following the Volunteer Review held by the Prince of Wales in June 1814 and 'its colours laid up in the Gaelic chapel'.⁷⁸³

Forty-five years later the HSL assisted by the Caledonian Society decided to raise another Volunteer Corp for the impending war with France. By July 1859 the London Scottish Rifle Volunteers had been raised under the command of Lord Elcho, and later the Earl of Wemyss and March. Elcho decided to cloth the men in Hodden Gray homespun cloth, to avoid any

⁷⁸¹ NLS 10615/2, 3rd Draft, p. 14

⁷⁸² NLS 10615/2, 3rd Draft, p. 14

⁷⁸³ NLS 10615/2, 3rd Draft, p. 15

territorial feelings saying that 'a soldier is a man hunter. As a deerstalker chooses the least visible colours, so ought a soldier'. They served in the South African War 1899-1902 with the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Gordon Highlanders and were present at the engagements at Houtnek, Doomkop and the battle of Diamond Hill, where they gained renown as the 'London Scottish'. They also saw action in the Messines in 1914, and continue to this day as a company of the 51st Highland Volunteers.

The HSL's last attempt at raising men for battle was in 1901 at the request of Lord Tullibardine, the immediate past-president, who sent the Society a telegram from Capetown:

Can you raise for me 250 men, Scotsmen preferred, for Scottish Horse. Must ride and shoot. Suggest consult Provosts of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Lord Wemyss. No use if less than 150. So try and get promises and wire result. Must start within 3 weeks.⁷⁸⁴

A deputation from the HSL met with Lord Raglan of the War Office, the Society's proposals to obtain recruits for Tullibardine were discussed and accepted. The Scottish Horse would be a distinct corps, but part of the Imperial Yeomanry. The HSL then went about recruiting and from over 700 applications, selected four Officers and 332 men comprising of 234 Scots, 49 English and 45 transfers, who were all sent out to South Africa to fight under the command of Lord Tullibardine.⁷⁸⁵

When not raising regiments, the HSL involved itself in other military matters. In 1801 it decided to recognise the 42nd Highland

⁷⁸⁴ NLS 10615/97, copy of Tullibardine's telegram 22 December 1900

⁷⁸⁵ NLS 10615/97, Sub-Committee Report 21 March 1901

Regiment's glorious victory at Alexandria, by presenting each man who had served in that battle, with a silver medal, and a silver Cup for the Regiment's Mess. The funds for the endeavour would be raised by subscriptions. However, the plan did not receive the approbation needed, the money was hard to raise; there was an argument concerning the French Flag captured by the Regiment at the battle, but now possessed by the HSL. Further the soldiers themselves saw the lack of a promised medal as an insult and stated openly that they would not receive it. The situation was brought to an end through the ministrations of Stewart of Garth who calmed the troubled waters. The 42nd Regiment received their HSL honours from the Prince of Wales in 1807.

In 1881, the HSL successfully blocked a decision to merge the 79th Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders into 3rd Battalion of the Scots Guards.⁷⁸⁶ It also provided leadership to the other London Scottish societies including the GSL when the Secretary of State for War wanted to standardise the Highland Regiments with a universal tartan in 1881, and again in 1884 when the War Office attempted to do away with the Highland feather bonnet.

Highland Games

HSL support of Highland regional and provincial games

Some of the members of the HSL encouraged annual gatherings or games in or near their own estates in Scotland; and because of their connection with the HSL, they looked to it to assist in providing prizes. Col. Macdonnell of Glengarry was the first member to do this. When he

⁷⁸⁶ NLS 10615/2, p. 29

organised a competition at the June Market at Inverlochty in 1816, the HSL decided to give fifteen guineas for the piping competition, which would be supervised by Glengarry's newly formed STH.⁷⁸⁷ The HSL sponsored this event until 1819. It is uncertain why the HSL decided to stop its premiums as the 'Letter Book page 262' containing the resolution is no longer extant. Glengarry asked for a renewal of the premium for the piping competition in 1822. However, the General Court decided it would not alter the resolution passed in May 1819.⁷⁸⁸ However, after a lapse of thirty years the HSL renewed its patronage during the years 1849 to 1855.⁷⁸⁹

The St. Fillans Highland Society, through David Stewart of Garth, requested prizes for their annual meeting, which was a combination of piping and dance with the addition of Gaelic recitation and traditional games, such as throwing the hammer, putting the stone, tossing the caber and races. The St Fillans Gathering had been held since 1819 under the auspices of Lord Gwydir at Loch Earn Foot. The HSL sent copies of John Macgregor Murray's edition of *The Poems of Ossian* for each successful candidate.⁷⁹⁰ The following year it sent ten guineas for prizes.⁷⁹¹ In 1825 it sent four copies of *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic*, properly bound, for prizes.⁷⁹² David Stewart of Garth was involved with a number of societies and he initially requested the support of the HSL for their games. In 1826 the society awarded five guineas to each of the following Highland societies: St

⁷⁸⁷ NLS 268/26, p. 201

⁷⁸⁸ NLS 268/27, 6 April 1822

⁷⁸⁹ MacInnes, p. 306

⁷⁹⁰ NLS 268/27, 3 May 1823

⁷⁹¹ NLS 268/27, 6 March 1824

⁷⁹² NLS 268/27, 7 May 1825

Fillans, Strathearn, Dunfield.⁷⁹³ This support continued for many years. In addition prizes were given to Dunkeld Highland Society and Atholl Highland Society from 1827. The HSL also began to support the Braemar Royal Highland Society's gathering from circa 1855, and was still contributing ten guineas in 1870.⁷⁹⁴

Highland gatherings in London

In May 1849 a society, composed of members of most, if not all, of the Scottish societies in London, was established. Its inaugural meeting was held at the Hanover Park clubhouse. The Marquis of Breadalbane was President; and from the names of some of those present the HSL was well represented. The object of this Scottish Society of London was to provide an avenue for practising and competing in the national games and pastimes, especially archery.⁷⁹⁵ In June it held its first grand fête in Holland Park, Kensington. It was to raise funds for the Scottish institutions in London which provided relief to distressed Scotsmen; and also to introduce the English public to Scotland's national pastimes. As reported in the *Times*:

The most active members of the society were dressed in Celtic garb. The competitors for the strictly national games were also arrayed in tartan. A band of twelve pipers marched round the enclosed space, playing as they went [...] the juvenile band of the Caledonian Asylum also did good service.⁷⁹⁶

The games included all those athletic events to be found at the Highland games in Scotland, and all the dances of Scotland, including the sword dance. The following day the Queen, Prince Albert and other royal

⁷⁹³ NLS 268/27, 6 May 1826

⁷⁹⁴ NLS 268/28, p. 19

⁷⁹⁵ *Times*, 14 May 1849, p. 5

⁷⁹⁶ *Times*, 21 June 1849, p. 8

members appeared to see the games, accompanied by the Duke of Wellington. This sign of royal approval resulted in an attendance of nearly eight thousand people. Once again the *Times* reported on the event that:

Dancing and pipe music succeeded the hammer, and gave the greatest delight. The Terpsichorean art in the Highlands is a very different thing from what fashion has recognised in England. The reel is a wild striking performance—full of animation, of a rapid movement, of violent though not ungraceful exercise, and which the hands, the fingers and the voice take part equally with the feet.⁷⁹⁷

The gathering was held the following year, and the London correspondent of the *Inverness Courier*, describing the Royal Family and large number of Highland chiefs and others all in Highland dress, noted that ‘the fête might be called “the field of the cloth of Tartan”’.⁷⁹⁸ That fête was honoured with the presence of the Queen, Prince Albert, the Prince of Wales and the Princess Royal, the King of Prussia and the ‘Nepaulese [*sic*] Princes’.⁷⁹⁹ When it became known that the Scottish Society was not going to hold a fête in 1851, the HSL decided to hold its own gathering with the funds going to the Caledonian Asylum (CA).⁸⁰⁰ However, it came to the society’s attention that:

an opposition Gathering having recently been formed by parties who are adverse to the proceedings of the Highland Society, and advertisements to it having been published, the committee deem that it would be undignified and unbecoming to the Highland Society to enter the lists of the competition in a matter which would endanger the cause of the charity; and might tend to encourage feuds amongst fellow countrymen.⁸⁰¹

⁷⁹⁷ *Times*, 22 June 1849, p. 8

⁷⁹⁸ Barron, Vol. III, p. 209

⁷⁹⁹ *London Scotsman* 14 December 1867, p. 537

⁸⁰⁰ NLS 10615/84, Notice to members of the HSL, 1 July 1851

⁸⁰¹ NLS 10615/84, Notice to members of the HSL, 1 July 1851

One has to question the HSL's motive? Could it be that members of the HLS were no longer active in the Scottish Society? The 'opposition Gathering' certainly involved the Scottish Society, including John Boucher, Secretary to the Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, and the mastermind of the fêtes. Equally it is certain that some of the GSL were members of the Scottish Society.⁸⁰² Among the GSL members involved with the administration of those games were William Menzies and John Cameron Macphee, who acted as Judges for the competitions.⁸⁰³ One can speculate that there had been a 'falling out' among members of the Scottish Society. Perhaps the revenue of the fêtes went in large part to the Scottish Corporation and the Caledonian Society, two very philanthropic societies, and not to the CA, the HSL's creation. Regardless, the HSL resolved that it should abandon its own proposals for a gathering in London, and would not participate at the gathering.

The games did go ahead, under the direction of the Scottish Society; but they were marred by rain on the first day. There was also a change from the usual Highland sports. Other games and dances were included, perhaps to provide interest for a more cosmopolitan audience, for the National Exhibition was taking place at Crystal Palace.

Archery was dispensed with as an effete art and not very interesting in practice. In its stead came wrestling, quarterstaff exercise, morris dancing, sack races, jingling matches and several other English and French sports'.⁸⁰⁴

⁸⁰² *London Scotsman*, 14 December 1867, p. 537

⁸⁰³ *Celtic Magazine*, II (1877), p. 356

⁸⁰⁴ *Times*, 11 July 1851, p. 8

ANNUAL GATHERING
AND
FÊTE CHAMPÊTRE
OF
THE SCOTTISH SOCIETY,
AND
HANOVER PARK CLUB.

PATRONIZED IN PERSON BY HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY

The Queen,
AND HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
Prince Albert;

His Royal Highness the Prince of Prussia; His Grace the Duke of Wellington; &c. &c.

THE RIGHT HONORABLE LORD HOLLAND

Having in the kindest manner granted the use of his assembly Park at NOTTING HILLS:

A GRAND COMPETITION IN ATHLETIC GAMES, SPORTS, AND PASTIMES,
OPEN TO ALL NATIONS.

Will take place there on **THURSDAY** the 10th, and **FRIDAY** the 11th of JULY, when Prizes will be awarded to the successful Competitors in the following Games:—

- FOOT RACE**—Three-quarters of a Mile, (Males.) Two Trials.
- SECOND FOOT RACE**—Three-quarters of a Mile, (Males.) In which the successful Competitors in the first Race will not contend; two Prizes. One Medal in each of the above Races will be run the first day, leaving the others to be decided on the second.
- HURDLED HIGH LEAP**—Over a half-inch horizontal Bar; Trials till three failures to clear the Bar without knocking it down.
- HURDLED LONG LEAP**—Three Trials.
- THROWING THE HAMMER**—(Males.) three Trials.
- PUTTING THE STONE**—(Males.) three Trials.
- CASTING THE BOWS**—(Males.) three Trials.
- TWELFING THE HAMS**—Commencing with the Rightist.
- WRESTLING**—One case, in pairs, chosen by lot, at the first meeting; and the contest between the best pair of Competitors, to be the best of three only. First, Second, Third, and Fourth Prizes, and a Medal.
- SWORD RANCE, HIGHLAND FENCING, STRATHSAY and REEL, and REEL of TULLOCH, ENGLISH HORNPIPE, and IRISH JIG, ROAD SWING, KICKING, and SWORD and TARGET OFFERED TO THE PATRONS.**
- PERFORMANCE ON THE GREAT HIGHLAND BAGPIPER.**

Qualifications who have gained Prizes in the SCOTTISH NATIONAL GAMES, at Inverness, Brechin, Perth, Nis, Ayr, Glasgow (in presence of Her Majesty), Dumfries, St.irling, Edinburgh, Perth, and in Holland Park (in presence of Her Majesty), have been entitled to compete for the CHAMPIONSHIP in Wrestling, Longing, Throwing the Hammer, Putting the Stone, Casting the Club, Second Hand Bow, Strathsay, &c.; but as the Society is established to encourage, more especially, the practice of athletic exercises amongst those who reside in and about London, a Prize, in each of the classes, will be given to such Competitors as shall be highest on the list, but who may not be successful in competing with those from the country.

A SILVER MEDAL, in addition to the ordinary Prizes, will be given, in each of the Games, to the Competitors who shall be victorious on both days.

In accordance with the wishes of many who honored the late Gathering with their presence, the following highly interesting and English Sports will also be introduced, namely:—

- BACK RACE**—Once across the Flag, or 66 yards; places to be taken by lot.
- WHEELBARROW RACE**—Hundred yards; places to be taken by lot.
- JINGLING MATONES**—All but the Jangler to be intimidated; time, 30 minutes.
- RAY-POLE DANCE, and MORRIS DANCE**. Thirty Ladies and Gentlemen, in appropriate costume, as described in STRAUCH'S "Sports and Pastimes," will be engaged in the performance of these Dances.

Remarks on the above Games, extracted from Strauch's "Sports and Pastimes of the People of England."

HURDLED HIGH LEAP.—This is a sport the performance in which acts more for the amusement of the spectators than for their gain; and where the competitors are numerous, the success is undeniably uncertain. The competitor is required from the bottom of the bar to the peak in such a manner, that the hands are not allowed to touch the ground, and the feet are not allowed to touch the bar. The competitor is required to clear the bar with all their strength and efforts to advance, without jumping and striving without making a single step, or even a single inch, beyond the bar. The competitor is required to clear the bar with all their strength and efforts to advance, without jumping and striving without making a single step, or even a single inch, beyond the bar. The competitor is required to clear the bar with all their strength and efforts to advance, without jumping and striving without making a single step, or even a single inch, beyond the bar.

BY PERMISSION OF THE OFFICERS COMMANDING THE REGIMENT, TWO MILITARY BANDS WILL ATTEND ON BOTH DAYS OF THE FÊTE.

Mr. JOHN MACARTHUR, Pipes to the Society, and other first-rate Pipes, will perform one the Highland Dances.

Tickets may be had, previous to the Fête, at the Principal Book Sellers, at the following rates:—For the Park, 2s. 6d. each day; for the Ground, with the privilege of passing to any part of the Park, 4s. each day; for the Grand Stand and Memorial Seat, with the privilege of passing to the other stands, or to any part of the Park, 7s. 6d. each day. One Ticket of any class, to admit two Children. Tickets may also be had, on the days of the Fête, at the Office of the Park, but at an advanced price.

For the better accommodation of the Nobility and Gentry resorting to the Ground, a Gateway will be made on the Notting Hill Road, opposite Scotland Square, where Carriages may be drawn within a few yards of the Stand. Parties with Hackney for the Park will cross by the Gate opposite Horse Terrace on the rear Road.

The Competitors have entered into arrangements with a first-rate Coachman, who will provide a liberal supply of Refreshments, at moderate charges, according to a printed scale of prices.

The Gates will open at 11, and the Sports will terminate at 1 o'clock.

The Preliminary Examination of the Spectators and Visitors will take place (such as the CHIEF CLERK, HANOVER PARK, &c.) on Wednesday, the 9th of July, at 12 o'clock.

JOHN HOUGHTON, Honorary Secretary.

Figure 11 A poster for the 1851 Gathering shunned by the Royal Family

The advertisements for the event stated that the Queen and other Royals would be present (see Figure 11). Although the inclement weather dampened the festivities, the biggest slight was the non-appearance of Royal personages who had appeared in the previous two years. There was also a lack of Scottish nobility. Could this have occurred because of the HSL's displeasure? Prince Albert was Chief of the HSL, and Queen Victoria its Patron.

In 1880 the GSL decided to hold a Highland Games at Lillie Bridge (see Figure 12). It had the patronage of the Earl of Fife, Lord Reay, Lord Stratheden and Campbell, the Mackintosh, Sir Patrick Colquhoun, Mr Fraser Mackintosh MP (who was an Hon. Vice-president of the GSL), Col. McPherson of the 42nd Highlanders and Col. Moncrief of the Scots Guards. The society's chief, the Marquis of Huntly, who acted as president for the gathering probably assembled these gentlemen. The games were restricted to amateurs in all but dancing and piping so that 'the accustomed spectacle of one competitor walking off with the bulk of the prizes will not be witnessed on this occasion at least'.⁸⁰⁵ Mr A. P. Matheson, Dr Farquhar Matheson and Mr Walter Hally-Burton were the members of the GSL committee promoting the sports. It was decided that, like the Holland Park Gatherings, the proceeds would be divided among the various Scottish charities in London. The event was a great success, and other societies wanted to be involved if the event was to be held annually.

⁸⁰⁵ *Times*, 17 May 1880, p. 10

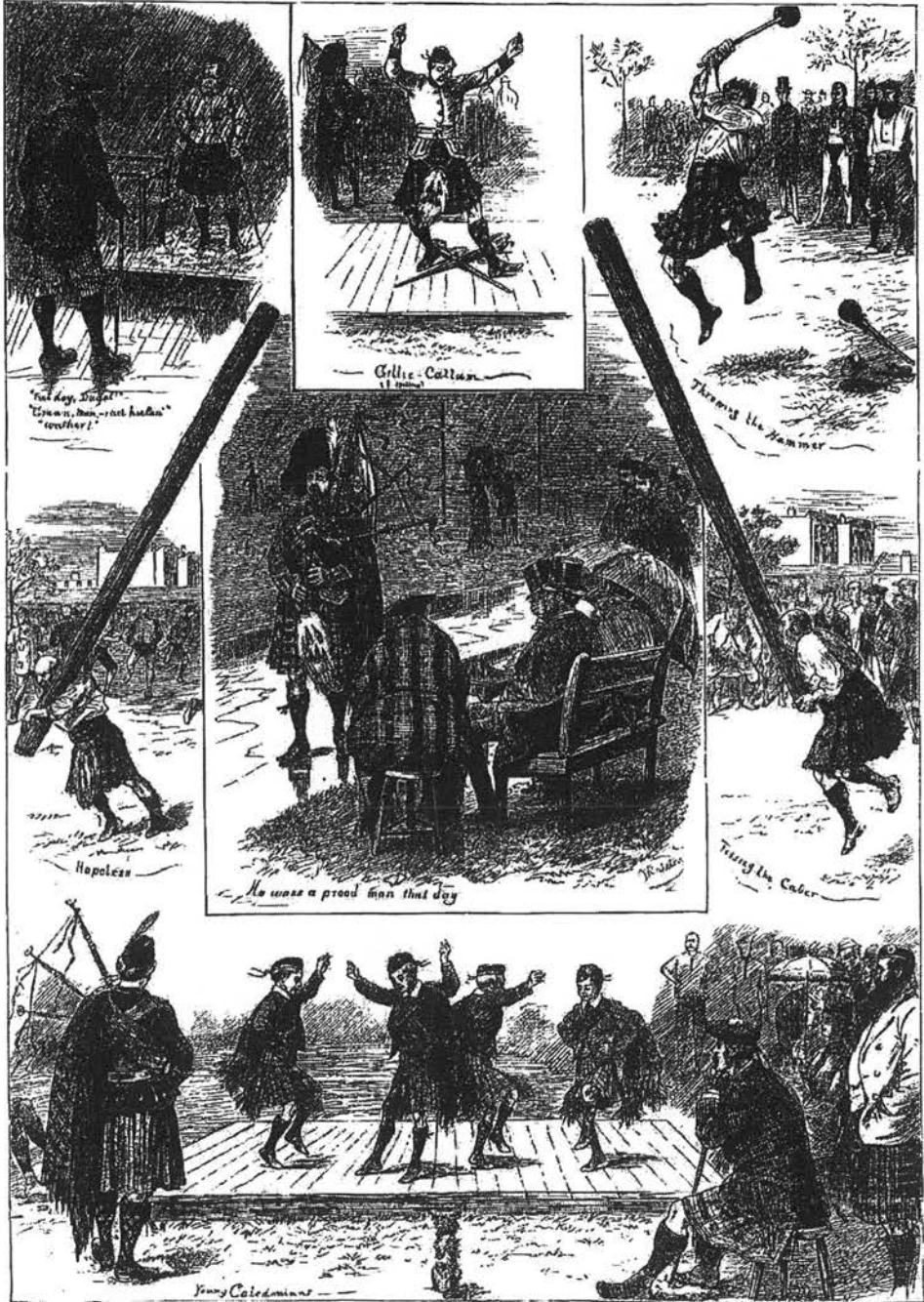
THE GRAPHIC

AN ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

No. 557.—Vol. XXII.
Kept at General Post Office as a Newspaper.

SATURDAY, JULY 31, 1880

PRICE SIXPENCE
Or by Post Sixpence Halfpenny



SCOTTISH GAMES AT LILLIE BRIDGE

Figure 12 The Gaelic Society's Highland Games at Lillie Bridge 1880

A meeting was convened for 20 January 1881, when it was resolved ‘that an Association be formed to carry on the Games annually’, and Messrs. A.P. Matheson, John Forbes and Dr Farquhar Matheson were appointed to draw up the rules.⁸⁰⁶ A General Meeting was held on the 3 March 1881 to adopt the rules and elect the office-bearers and committee. The Duke of Atholl became President, and each individual society that became involved with the gathering was deemed an honorary ex-officio member. These societies were the GSL, the HSL, the Liddesdale Society, the Club of True Highlanders, the Scottish Social Society and the London Scottish Volunteers. At the annual election it was always ‘kept in view that the members should be as far as possible representative of the various societies belonging to the association’.⁸⁰⁷

Regardless of administrative policies, the gatherings were held from 1881 at Stamford Bridge Grounds with great success for many years. *The Highlander* reported on the gathering of 1885 and noted that ‘it was more of a fête than an athletic meeting. Highland games, pipe music and dancing was prominent’.⁸⁰⁸ Perhaps the most animated review of one of the gatherings came from the Earl of Rosslyn’s magazine *Scottish Life*:

A scorching sun beat down upon the gay dresses and bright coloured kilts that turned the Athletics Ground at Stamford Bridge into a veritable human flower-bed on the occasion of the 18th Annual Scottish Gathering on Saturday last. Many Scotsmen and Scotswomen of note were there and the scene was a brilliant one [...] It was in the fullest sense of the word a

⁸⁰⁶ *The Scottish Gathering Report* 1881, p. 3

⁸⁰⁷ *Oban Times*, 2 December 1882

⁸⁰⁸ *Highlander*, 4 July 1885, p. 2

Scottish Gathering—a national garden party at which the sports formed one of the principal attractions; a reuniting of fellow-countrymen, with athletics as a characteristic excuse. Almost every tartan was represented somewhere on the ground, whilst the skirl of the pipes in Piobaireachd, marches, and strathspeys and reels, thrilled the enthusiasm of those whose work lies far from their native heath, and seemed to waft with the scent of the heather and the peat reek. A Gaelic air pervaded everything and everyone, and the universal opinion was that it was an unusually pleasant day.⁸⁰⁹

Branch Societies

Within two years of its establishment the HSL had a branch society in Glasgow (1780), and then four years later another in Edinburgh (1784). Neither of them provided monetary support to the parent Society; as time went on, both these branches went their own way. It was not until May of 1804 that it was resolved that:

for the general union of Highlanders, and for the more ready cooperation of support to measures of national utility which may hereafter be brought forward, Branches of the Society be established in all parts abroad where Highlanders are settled; and that it be referred to the Standing Committee to make Arrangements for the same'.⁸¹⁰

Four years later in 1808, the possibility of collateral branches was addressed again; not least as a way of increasing the Society's funds.⁸¹¹ John Macarthur, who proposed the measure, stated that by this action the HSL would encourage 'a more extensive cultivation and diffusion of the Gaelic Language'.⁸¹² He suggested that branches might be established in the East Indies where at least one hundred HSL members either lived or were employed. Members of the society were also resident in the West Indies and

⁸⁰⁹ *Scottish Life*, 25 June 1898, p. 163

⁸¹⁰ NLS 268/23, pp. 122-3

⁸¹¹ NLS 268/24, p. 165

⁸¹² NLS 268/24, p. 167

America, where further branches might be established. The city of Liverpool was also a possibility, for it 'abounds with Highlanders of every description'.⁸¹³ In Scotland, Inverness was considered:

a most eligible situation for the Northern District. There are upwards of twenty-five Members of this Society in that Town & its neighbourhood [...] the country being also very populous in resident Gentlemen, and many officers constantly employed on the Recruiting Service, there is every reason that this establishment would rapidly increase.⁸¹⁴

Macarthur also noted that the gentlemen in those parts of the country recognised the distinct difference between the HSS and the HSL, and appreciated the efforts made by the HSL in preserving language, literature, music and dress. These gentlemen were also of the opinion and desire that, since one of the Royal Princes had become a Member of the HSL, perhaps 'the Earl of Inverness would have the goodness to become the Patron of their local Institution'.⁸¹⁵

Macarthur recommended that attempts should be made by the HSL to renew its relationship with the Glasgow Branch, now called the Gaelic Society of Glasgow, which was 'severed from its parent root', and was in a state of decline. Macarthur expressed the opinion that, if the Duke of Hamilton, Duke of Argyll or Duke of Montrose became its Patron, it might flourish again for 'it is well known, that this City and its vicinity abound in affluence and public spirit, so that a most respectable Institution, by a little

⁸¹³ NLS 268/24, p. 167

⁸¹⁴ NLS 268/24, p. 167

⁸¹⁵ NLS 268/24, p. 167

exertion, might be expected'.⁸¹⁶ The income received from both these branches might:

with great propriety, be applied in Premiums to Schoolmasters, and for providing the Scholars at a cheap rate, or gratuitously in some cases, with Gaelic Books in the Northern District, a measure thitherto wholly neglected, excepting a slender supply of Bible and Catechism distributed by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge [and] the Funds of the Glasgow establishment might be applied to a similar purpose in the Western Highlands.⁸¹⁷

The branches of the HSL all received a Commission and regular reports from the HSL, and they in their turn reported back. By this measure the HSL promoted 'a social and friendly intercourse amongst the sons of Caledonia and of cherishing and maintaining that bond of national unity and feeling for which it is be hoped they will ever be distinguished'.⁸¹⁸

Developments at home

As stated above, the HSL two years after its own establishment had a branch society in Glasgow. The Glasgow branch called itself the Gaelic Club of Gentlemen; its members were merchants and manufacturers—Glasgow's Highland *nouveaux riches*. Army officers and clergymen also became members. The sole qualification was that they all spoke Gaelic. Their President was George Macintosh of Dunchattan. Hugh McDiarmid, 'the first Gaelic minister in Glasgow', was Secretary.⁸¹⁹ They had been informed by someone (the informant is not named), that the HSL 'gave charters to other Societies instituted with the same designs', and the club had

⁸¹⁶ NLS 268/24, p. 168

⁸¹⁷ NLS 268/24, pp. 167-8

⁸¹⁸ NLS 10615/114, Account of proceedings from 1813, p. 29

⁸¹⁹ He was also a collector of Gaelic tradition, see Derick Thomson *The Macdiarmid MS Anthology* (Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 1992)

decided to write to London for a charter. The 'chief intention in applying to it [= HSL] was, to extend, as far as in us lay, the bond of Patriot union to all that own and glory in the name of Caledonian'.⁸²⁰ The HSL was delighted, and the secretary wrote to its new Glasgow branch:

Your attention as a member of this Club was much applauded, and the proposal of the Highland Gentlemen at Glasgow received with respect and kindness, as both they and the Gentlemen here are warmed with the same sentiment and attention of enjoying native company occasionally and promoting whatever shall do honour to the name of Highlander in general or benefit any individual Gael.⁸²¹

The Gaelic Club of Gentlemen was extremely pleased to receive its framed charter, and felt honoured that the HSL as the 'Parent Society' had made them a 'branch or a colony' of itself. They adopted the HSL regulations, and had resolved to establish a fund for 'the purposes of promoting the Gaelic Language, and relieving the most necessitous of those who speak it'. They were anxious that the fund would receive 'endless solicitations, beyond what we could answer', but they would do the best they could. At very short notice the branch supervised the piping competition at Falkirk in 1781. The letter from the HSL was written on the 20th of September, but it was not until early October that the club had the opportunity to discuss the implications. The HSL had planned the competition, advertisements for it had appeared in several newspapers, and the prize bagpipe had been made; but it would appear that finding the judges, and the people to superintend the competition, had not been given much thought. Dr McLeod, a member of the Glasgow branch, had been in London,

⁸²⁰ ML TD746/1, MB, letter dated 8 November 1780

⁸²¹ ML TD746/1, MB, letter dated 20 April 1780

and he possibly informed Secretary Mackenzie that his club would be happy to undertake the supervision. Mackenzie's cousin Kenneth, a Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh, would be at hand at the competition representing the HSL. The competition was very successful, and the HSL asked the Glasgow branch to hold the competition for the next two years.

The third year was not successful, as the competitors and audience did not agree with the judges' decision. The HSL's representative for this year, David Trigge from Edinburgh, further inflamed the situation. For the 1784 competition, the HSL informed its Glasgow branch that the newly formed branch in Edinburgh would conduct the competition. From then on it was envisaged that the two branches would take turns annually in superintending the competition. However, the competition removed to Edinburgh and stayed there. The 'affectionate respects of the Mother Society in London'⁸²² were no longer received. There was no more communication with its Glasgow branch. At the Gaelic Club of Gentlemen's Anniversary Dinner of the 7 March 1798, it was resolved that the relationship with the HSL should be:

Dissolved with the unanimous consent of all present except one dissenting voice with the view and intention of forming a new Club or Society under new rules and regulations to be more strictly adhered to than those formerly belonging to the Old Club for which purpose the following Gentlemen were named a Committee; Col. James Campbell, President, Mr Colin Campbell, Secretary, Dr Macleod, Chaplain, Messrs. Professor Richardson, Malcolm McGilvra, George Macintosh and John Robertson.⁸²³

⁸²² ML TD746/1 MB, letter 26 September 1782

⁸²³ ML TD746/1, in the back page of the MB

Under the new regulations members were to also be members of the Highland Society of Glasgow. Apart from the change of affiliation, the ability to speak Gaelic was necessary for membership and its objects remained very similar to those of HSL.

The creation of the society in Edinburgh occurred from the fiasco of the 1783 piping competition. A meeting was quickly convened to hold an exhibition of the competitors, and it was then decided that:

A committee should be immediately formed, who might, as soon as possible, set about erecting a Highland Society at Edinburgh, who in imitation of that at London, might have it in their power to give the necessary assistance and encouragement to the numerous body of people from the Highlands residing in the city and neighbourhood, to whose labours we are so much indebted in every branch of manufacture and agriculture; and, should such humane and laudable intentions take effect, by the attempt of such a society, there is no doubt that every Citizen, Gentlemen and Farmer in the neighbourhood, as well as Gentlemen from the Highlands, will most generously contribute.⁸²⁴

Certainly, Clanranald, a member of the HSL, chaired a committee to establish a society, and the committee called itself a Highland Society. Also the Earl of Eglinton, a past president of the HSL, stated that he would do everything in his power to promote a society in Edinburgh.⁸²⁵ Following the HSL meeting on 19 November 1783, the Secretary was requested to send a letter to its representative in Edinburgh, David Trigge. The letter makes it clear that the HSL believed that the new society would be a branch of itself:

In the meantime the committee desires me to present their compliments to Clanranald and the other Gentlemen whom you mention, that they are very happy at the thoughts of so

⁸²⁴ *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 27 October 1783

⁸²⁵ NLS 268/1, 4 November 1783

considerable an acquisition to the Society; and that if Mr Seaton's private affairs should prevent his making the application in person, agreeable to the rules of the Society we shall be glad to have the application signed by the Gentlemen who propose what you have mentioned, as our regulations require it, upon which our Committee authorize me to say, that [it] will most readily communicate to every information and sanction that so respectable an accession merits.⁸²⁶

Further correspondence reinforces this belief.⁸²⁷ However, the HSS, with its more diverse membership, soon developed an interest in the improvement of the Highlands. In 1786 a special meeting of the HSL was called when the HSS was applying for a Charter of Incorporation to better institute their objectives. The Earl of Moray, who chaired the meeting, suggested that 'it might be advisable in this Society of London to unite with their Friends at Edinburgh and form one Society Incorporated by the same Charter and for the same beneficial purposes'.⁸²⁸ It was decided that a committee consisting of the Duke of Argyll, the Earl of Breadalbane, the Earl of Moray, the Earl of Dunmore, Lord Macdonald, George Dempster, John Knox and the standing committee, 'do draw out a plan of Union and Incorporation of the two Societies upon the most agreeable and beneficial footing in order to be proposed at a General Meeting of this Society'.⁸²⁹ However, the committee eventually decided against this action, and the Duke of Argyll as President of the HSS, and the Earl of Moray, as President of the HSL and Vice President of the HSS, were asked to inform the HSS that:

it is the wish of this Society to have a more intimate Communication between the two societies and for that purpose, propose that members of the Highland Society at Edinburgh be

⁸²⁶ NLS 268/19, 1846 Examination of Papers (19 November 1783)

⁸²⁷ NLS 268/19, 1846 Examination of Papers (19 November 1783).

⁸²⁸ NLS 268/19, 1846 Examination of Papers (16 May 1786)

⁸²⁹ NLS 268/19, 1846 Examination of Papers (16 May 1786)

admitted Honorary members of this Society and are desirous of having the same honour conferred on them, when the members of the Highland Society of London shall happen to be in Edinburgh.⁸³⁰

The committee also declared that it was keen to promote improvements in agriculture, fisheries and manufactures, and it informed the HSS of its decision that it would give any surplus funds to the HSS for such improvements.

The two societies had a reasonable relationship with one another for the most part. However, Charles Gordon, deputy secretary of HSS, wrote to the HSL June 1844, expressing his fury on having discovered that the secretary of the HSL had written to Secretary of State for the Colonial Department claiming that the HSS 'had originally emanated from the Highland Society of London'.⁸³¹ George Bain, who was HSL Secretary at that time, replied that the letter of 19 November 1783 stated that Mr Seton of Touch, a member of the HSL was to receive a Commission for the HSE from the HSL similar to the one granted in Glasgow. However, it would appear from 1786 that the two societies were indeed separate.⁸³²

The HS of Inverness was the next branch to be established and the first after John Macarthur's report of 1808. A commission was sent to the Hon. Archibald Fraser of Lovat 'requesting and empowering him' to call suitable gentlemen to form a branch. The President, the Duke of Kent, signed the commission. However, it was not established until 1815. Fraser was the

⁸³⁰ NLS 268/19, 1846 Examination of Papers (19 May 1786)

⁸³¹ NLS 268/6, 10 June 1844

⁸³² NLS 268/19, April 1846

President, and the Lords-Lieutenant of the Northern Counties were the Vice-Presidents. Its objects were the same as the HSL's, and it was active for a number of years. It provided initial leadership in the conflict between the Lowland and Highland distillers and protested ardently against the Distillery Acts and their impact on the Highlands. It also established an annual sheep and wool market in Inverness. The success of the branch in Inverness led the HSL to consider other branches, and duly dispatched commissions, signed by its President, the Duke of York, to Glengarry, the Duke of Atholl and the Marquis of Huntly, members of the Scottish nobility who might take steps to establish a new branch in their own districts.⁸³³

The HSL also wrote to Charles Gordon, of the HSS, asking for a list of names and objects of the various societies throughout the Highlands. The Duke of Atholl apparently solicited the help of David Stewart of Garth to investigate some of the societies near Perth; for Stewart contacted the Gaelic Society of Perth 1816 in an attempt to persuade them to become a branch of the HSL. However, the President of the Perth Society responded that, while it expected 'to turn out to an useful respectable and important institution', it would do so by itself. For although honoured by HSL's approach it could not afford a charter or pay the annual fees that branch membership would entail.⁸³⁴ Stewart was luckier in his overtures to the HS of Dundee in 1816, for its response acknowledged the HSL as the 'original institution'. The newly formed society consisted of Gaelic-speaking Highlanders whose objectives were very similar to the HSL's; and the members were 'desirous

⁸³³ NLS 268/26, p. 125

⁸³⁴ NLS 268/26, p. 223

that this our Infant Institution should be directed and governed upon such principles as may be recommended from and by the Regulations of the original Institution'.⁸³⁵ The HSL also tried to persuade Macdonnell of Glengarry to make his Society of True Highlanders a branch member. He was assured that the HSL would not

presume to interfere with the internal parts of the same Body [.] [A] more ready cooperation would exist [.] and a more extensive one in promoting the Improvement of the Highlands and preserving that Language, and those customs and manners, which have tended to form the character of the Gael, the pride of the United Kingdom and the admiration of surrounding Nations.⁸³⁶

He was obviously flattered, but did not take up the offer, stating that:

at the same time I beg permission to state, that under a liberal understanding between both Institutions the Highland Society of London and the Society of True Highlanders might be reciprocally more advantageous to each other, than any branch that either of them can set off. And I shall be happy if your Society view matters in that light.⁸³⁷

It must be remembered that Glengarry's society already had an affiliation in London with the Club of True Highlanders. The Marquis of Huntly had success in establishing a branch in Aberdeen 1820. As an acknowledgement to its branch societies, the HSL presented each with ten copies of *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic*, and suggested that they might be awarded to the most zealous members.⁸³⁸

⁸³⁵ NLS 268/26 pp. 159-160

⁸³⁶ NLS 268/26, pp. 132-3

⁸³⁷ NLS 268/26, p. 130

⁸³⁸ NLS 268/27, 3 May 1828

Developments abroad

The HSL was more successful with its branches overseas than at home. In Asia it had instituted branches in Bombay, Bengal, Calcutta and Madras. Their annual reports include nothing more interesting than lists of names and the subscriptions to the parent society. Other branch societies were established in Cape of Good Hope, Melbourne, Australia and New Zealand and the West Indies. In 1813 the HSL gave a commission to General Downie and its authorisation 'to establish a branch or branches of the Society in such part of Spain and Portugal as they may find eligible and in such manner as is prescribed by the Rules of the Society'.⁸³⁹ Apart from the Indian branches, there are no extant records of any of these other branches among the HSL records. However, there are quite a few records for the branches established in Canada.

The first branch in that country was the Highland Society of Canada, founded in 1818. The Rev Alexander Macdonnell was influential in its establishment and had already proved useful to the HSL. Simon MacGillivray, one of the Vice-Presidents of the HSL, was travelling to Canada, and personally delivered the commission. He reported that 'every one could speak the Gaelic in its genuine purity and most of them in Highland dress'.⁸⁴⁰ Its objects were the same as those of its parent, namely to preserve all aspects of Gaelic culture, and to rescue any remains of Gaelic literature transported to Canada. It was to help establish Gaelic schools at

⁸³⁹ NLS 268/25, p. 223

⁸⁴⁰ NLS 268/43, p. 1

‘home’ and in other parts of the British Empire. Finally, it was to provide relief to needy Highlanders, and to work for improvement and general welfare, not only of the Highland Settlements in Canada, but also of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.⁸⁴¹ The Rev Macdonnell remained active, even after being made the Roman Catholic Bishop of Rhosina, and continued to send reports on the progress of the Highland Society of Canada.⁸⁴² The HSL was especially magnanimous to this society: it sent a box of fifty copies of *The Poems of Ossian in the Original Gaelic* in 1820. Bishop Macdonnell in response wrote to thank the HSL, stating that ‘the original Poems of our immortal Bard whose memory and genius will [...] long live on the Banks of Ottawa and the St Lawrence’.⁸⁴³ By 1824 Bishop Macdonnell was obliged to report to the HSL that the HSC was having some difficulty in promoting its objects. However:

A Gaelic School having been founded in the Highland Settlements. Premiums have been bestowed to the best Gaelic Scholars; and the proficiency that some youths have already made in the Gaelic indulges the pleasing hope that the language of our Ancestors may in this remote quarter be long preserved in its purity.⁸⁴⁴

In the letter accompanying the report he states that, although the report only mentions one school, there are actually several schools and the children learn the poems of Ossian and ‘to the parents nothing can be more

⁸⁴¹ NLS 268/6 Report Highland Society of Canada

⁸⁴² NLS 268/27, 6 March 1824

⁸⁴³ NLS 268/43, p. 10

⁸⁴⁴ NLS 268/43, p. 32

gratifying than to see the feelings and passions of their children kindled by the divine fire of their immortal Bard'.⁸⁴⁵

The Canadian Society purchased Gaelic dictionaries and Gaelic grammars and gave copies of the poems of Ossian to assist in the object of preserving the language at these schools. It also awarded premiums for poetry and song competitions that the Bishop found 'tolerably fair specimens', and also gave prizes to boys who could recite properly the poems of Ossian. Macdonnell reported also:

some valuable remains of Gaelic Compositions which have found their way to this country and never yet appeared in Print, and [being] only known to a few aged persons must inevitably have been for lost, [but] have been rescued from oblivion.⁸⁴⁶

Several manuscripts of unpublished poems were in the possession of a member, W.D. Robertson, and the Bishop asked if they should perhaps be published. The Society was also doing what it could in regard to Highland dress and the bagpipe music. Annual premiums were given to the best piper, and premiums were offered to encourage the manufacture of tartan in the hope that the dress would become more popular in this northern climate. The society also provided premiums for agricultural improvements, including cultivation and animal husbandry. Finally, a significant amount of its funds went to assist Highlanders arriving in Canada. The Highland Society of Canada was certainly a model branch of the HSL. It flourished successfully until 1828. After that a difficult period ensued; but its report of 1843, states that the society has recovered and was once again in fine fettle with renewed

⁸⁴⁵ NLS 268/43, p. 34

⁸⁴⁶ NLS 268/43, pp. 33-4

vigour and it now had its own branch societies at Quebec, Montreal, Toronto, Niagara, Hamilton, Amherstburg, Bytown (Ottawa), Goderich, Johnston District and Kingston.⁸⁴⁷

Two branches were established in 1838, one in Prince Edward Island on 1 March and another in Halifax, Nova Scotia on 31 May. By 1841 the Prince Edward Island branch had its own branch in the South West District, and it had decided to use surplus funds to purchase prizes for 'the most meritorious Scholars in the various Schools throughout the island'.⁸⁴⁸ The Society in Halifax clearly looked at the needs affecting the whole of Nova Scotia before asking the HSL for help. The letter from this new society was addressed to the Duke of Sutherland, as President of HSL. It stated:

It is perhaps sufficient to state that from the want of schoolbooks and teachers and the deficiency of funds notwithstanding the liberal grants of our own legislature, there cannot be less than seven thousand children of Scottish descent in this Province who are growing up in absolute ignorance of the first rudiments of learning. These are chiefly to be found in the New Settlements and in Cape Breton, and there are about three thousand who are partially but inadequately instructed. His Excellency, Sir Colin Campbell who enters warmly into our views has addressed the Noble President of the Parent Society in our behalf and we are not without hopes that the means of Education which in this Capital of the Province are accessible to all, will be gradually extended to the remotest districts and shed abroad in this young country some portion of the intellectual and moral radiance which illuminates our Fatherland.⁸⁴⁹

A special meeting of the Management committee was convened as soon as the letter was received, and decided that the matter should be brought to the next general court 'to consider the best mode of endeavouring to aid

⁸⁴⁷ NLS 268/6, Report of the Highland Society of Canada 1843

⁸⁴⁸ NLS 268/19, Records of the Highland Society of Prince Edward Island July 1840-December 1841

⁸⁴⁹ NLS 268/19, 19 July 1838

the Branch of this Society in Nova Scotia'.⁸⁵⁰ There is no record of the next general court meeting, though there is evidence that shows that 'two cases of books were shipped to Nova Scotia on the good ship called John Romilly', four years later.⁸⁵¹ It is very possible that other assistance had been given by the HSL before that shipment. Conceivably it may have been forced into action after the receipt of R.C. MacDonald's letter informing the HSL the setting up of another branch in Nova Scotia.⁸⁵² For he wrote again the following year from Saint John, New Brunswick, and signed himself as the Chief of the Highland Society of Nova Scotia. He had just established a branch in the town of Saint John, the commercial centre for New Brunswick. The letter was mainly a promotion of the Province. MacDonald hoped that the HSL would share the information with any societies interested in emigration. He stated very emphatically that all the Maritime Provinces were in desperate need of both teachers and British books; for he had a reluctance to use 'Republican publications from our neighbour'. He also stated that he was personally responsible for the formation of 'seven respectable branches of the Highland Society of London, in different parts of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island'. Through these he argued that 'the name of the venerable Parent Society is becoming known in these Provinces'. He further stated that there were one hundred and fifteen thousand Scotsmen or men of Scots descent living in the same provinces.⁸⁵³

⁸⁵⁰ NLS 268/19, 13 September 1838

⁸⁵¹ NLS 268/19, 12 September 1842

⁸⁵² NLS 268/6, 12 May 1842

⁸⁵³ NLS 268/6, 28 February 1843

The provincial Highland Society of New Brunswick was established in March 1844; through the assistance of John Macdonald, who was secretary of the HSL for fourteen years, but who had retired to emigrate to Canada and work for the Governor General. He apologised to George Bain, who had taken his place as secretary, that 'the Governor General's health had delayed his action in setting up a branch here'.⁸⁵⁴ He was talking about the town of Miramichi, and the newest branch of the HSL, which was incorporated in April 1846⁸⁵⁵ and has remained in existence to this day, although no longer connected with the HSL.

Conclusion

Although the different elements of Gaelic culture and their preservation have been presented separately, they were all inter-related and occurred in the same time frame. The HSL, more than the GSL, led the way in preserving Gaelic culture. This was simply because it had more money, more prestige, and more authority. So the manner in which they both encompassed this preservation of culture differed. The members of the GSL lived and breathed their Gaelic culture. It would appear that Highland dress was *de rigueur* for its meetings, for Donald Macpherson in his song in praise of the GSL calls it 'the Society of the Kilt and the Gaelic'. Every meeting ended with Gaelic songs and a tune or two on the pipes and its frequent ceilidh evenings included dancing. It did publish a selection of Gaelic songs *Aireamh taghta dh'orain na Gaidhealtachd* and through its Annual Grand

⁸⁵⁴ NLS 268/6, 23 January 1843

⁸⁵⁵ NLS 268/19, Highland Society of New Brunswick

Scottish Concerts (1889-1913), it celebrated Gaelic culture with songs, pipe and fiddle music and dancing.

As noted above the HSL was a society of prestige, its membership included Scottish nobility and members of the Royal Family. Queen Victoria was its Patron. The HSL had very definite goals from its beginning that would rekindle Gaelic culture. The first object was to eradicate the humiliation inflicted on all Highlanders by the Disarming Acts of 1746. This was achieved by the repeal of that Act in 1782 and the encouragement of wearing Highland dress. The HSL was also successful in reviving and rescuing the various forms of Highland music, in particular the martial music of the bagpipe. Its piping competitions were the genesis for larger gatherings, which expanded to include Highland dancing and athletic events. These were established throughout Scotland and then around the world. The HSL by all its actions attempted to recapture national pride.

The official visit of King George IV to Edinburgh in 1822 gave a final legitimacy for the kilt with its Royal approval and endorsement of one of the HSL's objectives. But this Royal patronage for Gaelic culture had begun with Queen Victoria, her husband Prince Albert, and their children. This Royal Family was enthralled by Gaelic culture, and encompassed and patronised elements of it in their daily life. It was because of this Royal patronage that the HSL was able to develop branch societies in Scotland and in the Scottish enclaves around the world. Through its branches it was able 'to carry more extensively into effect the important objects for which it was

instituted, and of stimulating and preserving a friendly and social intercourse amongst Highlanders'.⁸⁵⁶ The Highland Diaspora encompassed the HSL's objectives and instilled a pride for all aspects of Gaelic culture that continues throughout the world to this day.

⁸⁵⁶ NLS 268/26 p. 124-5

CONCLUSION

Realisation of research aims

The thesis has examined the ways in which the members of the HSL and the GSL have contributed to the welfare and survival of Gaelic language and culture. It has demonstrated that both societies made formative contributions to the Gaelic world, as we know it today. It has illustrated the manner in which they led the campaign for Gaelic on many different levels, provided leadership on issues that affected the homeland, and offered models by which other societies could operate. It is noteworthy that the aims of the two societies were addressed, and in many cases successfully accomplished, by Gaels far away from their homeland.

The HSL was the first society with a Gaelic cultural remit in either England or Scotland, and perhaps from its beginning it stamped its own view of Gaelic culture on the world. The GSL celebrated its Gaelic culture and, like other later societies, reaped the benefits of the cultural revival led by the HSL. It was founded fifty-two years after the HSL and, instead of having a wide cultural remit; it concentrated all its energy on keeping the Gaelic language alive.

Prof. John Stuart Blackie used to complain that it was difficult to motivate the Glasgow Gaels to take action. This was not the case with the London Gaels, members of the HSL and GSL. They were not of the 'bens

and glens' mentality of many later societies, nor did they wallow in sentimentality, but held a realistic view of what the homeland was really like and what was needed to make it a better place in which to live.

The evidence reveals them as very practical men, who had a 'hands-on' approach and who could roll up their sleeves to get the job done. A possible reason for the London Gaels' success was that they had a pan-Gaelic or a non-territorially based vision of the homeland, and that they were not hindered by territorial or clan loyalties. This allowed them to view dispassionately the key issues needed for the survival of a culture. They were also realistic in calculating what they could achieve, and by networking with significant supporters they were able to claim various degrees of success in their stated objects.

Their location in London was crucial to their success. London was the energy centre, the centre of the British world, and residence in London allowed access to the mechanisms of power, which the members of both societies engaged to their own advantage whenever they could. Individual members of the HSL and GSL were Members of Parliament, some holding ministerial posts, and through them the two societies harnessed the power of Central Government to bolster and encourage initiatives to improve the life of Gaels in the homeland. The members of the GSL and the HSL were active brokers and lobbyists, and they networked to their own advantage whenever they could. Through these means they achieved much, including the Celtic Chair, Gaelic education, and restoration of Highland dress, fishing villages,

changes to excise laws, and a school for Scots in London. They utilised the power of the press to mobilise a climate of opinion on such topics as conditions in the homeland, the land laws, the Gaelic language, Gaelic education and Gaelic services. The HSL successfully wooed the Royal Family, and it was through this connection that the HSL was able to spread a significant portion of Gaelic culture throughout the British Empire.

How successful were the HSL and the GSL in contributing to the preservation of Gaelic language and culture? The HSL realised its stated objects with varying degrees of success and some degrees of failure. The HSL believed that Gaelic was a dying language, and so it did all that was possible to save what it could for future study. It patronised Gaelic scholars and song collections. It encouraged Macpherson to publish his 'originals' and eventually went on to publish them itself in 1807. The publication led to an interest in collecting and analysing Gaelic tradition. The HSL also played a leading role in, and was the first society to work actively towards, establishing a Celtic Chair. Through the restoration of Highland dress in 1782, it gave the Highlanders back their native garb, and actively encouraged its wearing. It attempted to collect all the clan tartans before setts were lost to posterity. The collected setts are still recognised by tartan manufacturers in their catalogues.

The HSL is probably best known for its aim of preserving the martial music of the Highlands played on the great Highland Pipe. It organised the first competition for pipers at Falkirk in 1781, and it continued

to hold the competition annually with assistance from its Glasgow branch and then the Highland Society of Scotland until 1844. The competitions were soon enlarged to include dress and dance. These competitions were the genesis of the district Highlands Games run by members of the HSL, which eventually developed into the worldwide phenomenon of the Highland Games that we know today. With the end of the piping competitions in 1844, the HSL went on to award the HSL Gold Medal at the Northern Meeting and the Argyllshire Gathering. This prestigious award is the most coveted prize for *pìobaireachd* in the world. The Society's only real failure was not establishing a Piping Academy to train young men as Army pipers. It had more success in standardising pipe tunes by the encouragement of the use of staff notation, a process begun in 1784. This had a dual purpose, of preserving the *pìobaireachd* before they were lost, and of simplifying bagpipe instruction, as a way of addressing the shortage of army pipers. This process led to the standardisation of *pìobaireachd* as we are now accustomed to hear it.

The GSL's main contribution was in keeping the Gaelic language alive. Gaelic language was its *raison d'être*. Education was always at the forefront, whether the Celtic Chair in a Scottish university or Gaelic education in homeland schools. Through petitions to the House of Commons, meetings with the Lord Advocate, Secretaries of State for Scotland and Education Ministers, and through newspaper articles, the Society kept the question of Gaelic language and education in the forefront of the public arena. An Comunn Gàidhealach, speaking of the GSL, said it was the

‘unwitting inspirer’ of An Comunn’s formation, and that it kept the cause of Gaelic education alive ‘practically single-handed’.

In the field of education, the GSL organised large deputations representing other societies in London and, from Scotland and also Scottish school boards. It established links with Government Ministers and MPs, but without any real practical success. Finally, it decided to take matters into its own hands, and established its Gaelic Education Scheme. Initially it provided book prizes and schoolbooks to encourage Gaelic teaching, and then expanded its scheme to include financial recognition for teachers who taught Gaelic. The number of capitation grants continued to grow, and the whole focus of the GSL’s Council business related to raising money, to the detriment of the Society as a whole. It continued single-handedly until the beginning of the First World War. By the time the education scheme ended, changes had taken place regarding Gaelic education, and the survival of Gaelic teaching looked fairly healthy. However, for those twenty-five years that the GSL ran its Education Scheme, it acted essentially as the forerunner of An Comunn Gàidhealach in encouraging Gaelic education in the homeland.

Future Research Directions

This has been essentially a pioneering study. The London Gaels were reckoned in the early nineteenth century to be greater in number than the Gaels living in Edinburgh and Glasgow in the proportion of three to

one.⁸⁵⁷ Yet they have been all but ignored in modern evaluations of city-based Gaels. This study is but the tip of the iceberg, and much further research remains to be conducted concerning these Gaels resident in London.

Within the parameters of the Highland and Gaelic Societies of London, a more in-depth and detailed study of themes covered in the chapters of this thesis should be undertaken. The Gaelic manuscripts of minutes and presentations of the Gaelic Society of London provide an important source of nineteenth century vernacular Gaelic which deserves a proper linguistic study and comparison with Gaelic texts of the same period.

Neither time nor space has allowed me to dwell on the relationships or interaction that occurred between the HSL, the GSL and all the other Highland district or clan affiliated societies established in London from the late 1870s, or indeed the relationship between the HSL and GSL with Irish groups in London and Ireland.

Another area for further study is the HSL's branch societies. This would assess how effective they were in spreading Gaelic culture around the world.

As the 'Cockney Gael' Edward Dwelly said when he completed his remarkable dictionary '*is obair là tòiseachadh, ach is obair beatha crìochnachadh*' (beginning is a day's work, but finishing is the work of a

⁸⁵⁷ *Report of the Committee of the London Gaelic chapel (1810)*, p. 4

lifetime),⁸⁵⁸ I hope that this thesis will act as a catalyst for further research in what has been hitherto a 'neglected field'.

⁸⁵⁸ Dwelly, p. 1034

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Appendix I

Fathunn Cuideachd Riaghlaidh Comunn na Gaelic air shuidhichadh air an 12^g dhe'n Ghiblean 1868 air-son faicinn cor an stuic argiod ris an abrar 'Argiod na h-Eaglais Ghaelic'. Bha luchd na cuideachd riaghlaidh so ri bhi nan luchd-oifig a Chomuinn air son na tiom; agus bha ceud aca cuir ri 'n aireamh—'s e sin ri ainmeachadh 'Cailean Siseal (am Priomh-suidhe), Ian Camshron Mac-a-phi, Alasdair Caimbeul, Donull MacGriogair, Don. MacUarig, Aonghas MacGriogair, Alasdair Grandd agus Ian Grandd'.

A Phriomh-suidhe, Ath-Phriomh-suidhe, agus a Chompanaich air fad, Bu mhiann leis a Chuideachd riaghlaidh, air an cuir air leth 'us air an ainmeachadh mar os cion, na rinn iad agus na thàinig dhe a chuir an céill. Bho'n rannsachadh a thug iad do'n chuis fhuaras a mach.

- (1) Gu bheil a lethid so de stoc a lathair, a tighinn uile gu leir gu £3400—a tilge riadh co mhath ri £(.), sa bhliadhna; agus a bharrachd gu do thogadh an t-suim so sa bh. 1809, a dhaon obair air son paidh, na cuideachadh paidh, costas searmonachadh Gaelic an Lunnuinn.
- (2) G'um bheil an stoc airgiod so an earbsa ri Cuirt Chancery. Bha e air a thoirt thairis do'n Chuir so sa bh. 1827 air son gum bithidh e na bu tèaruinte agus gun rachadh aire thoirt gum bithidh e air a bhuilichadh air a chrìoch dhligheach.
- (3) Gun robh riadh an airgiod so, bho na chruinniche e, dol bho am gu am, a phaidh searmonachadh Gaelic. Chomhlion an t-urramach Mr Lees an oifig so bho 1823 gu 1843.
- (4) Gun do leig Mr Lees aite dhe sa bhliadhna ma dheireadh, agus gum d'rinn so bristeadh ann an searmonachadh na Gaelic a lean gus a nis.
- (5) Gun do chuir h-aon do luchd-gnothuich an Tearmuinn Albannaich, Duff-Gordon (am fear-lagha) agus Seumas Alasdair Simpson Ath-chuinge suas sa bh. 1844 mu choinne Cuirt Chancery ag iarradh gun rachadh riadh an stuic thoirt dhoibhsan, bho nach robh feum ga dheanamh dheth, chum meudachadh tighinn a stigh na Tearmun, a thaobh gum robh a chrìoch a bh'aige na bu dluthaidh na ni eile air an rùn air son an deachadh a t-airgiod so a chruinnichadh.
- (6) Gun robh Iartas an Tearmun Albannaich air taic a chumail ris le mionnan ceathrar d'ann b'ainm, fa leth, Hore, Hamilton, Elder agus MacCoinnich, a chuir an ceil am brigh, "An neo-tharbhachd a bhi cumail suas searmonachadh Gaelic an Lunnuinn, ri linn Mhr Lees nach d'thàinig am bi-chiontas thar trìuir ga éisdeachd".
- (7) Gun do comh-aontaich a Chuir, aig earbsa ri firinn na dh'aithris a cheathrar so air am mionnan, riadh an argiod a dheanamh

thairis do'n Teàrmunn Albannach, "gus an tigadh ordugh eile". A reir a chumhachd a fhuaras mar so, tha luchd riaghlaidh an ionad so a tarruing bho'n am sin gus an latha diugh—ré 25 b. suim a thig gu h-iomlan uiread ris a chalpa fèin.

- (8) Chan-urrainn do bhur Cuideachd riaghlaidh a cheil, gu dearbh cha bhithidh e ceart dhoibh gun thoirt mu choinneamh Comunn na Gaelic, nach buineadh a h-aon de'n cheathrar a chuir an ainm ris an teistas so, do'n Chomhtheanal Ghaelach, chan e so air fad, ach cha robh na measg ach aon fhear, MacCoinnich, d'ann b'aithne dad idir mu Ghaelic Fhreasdail Elder mar dhorsair aig Eaglais Regent Square, agus air son na dithis eile Hore agus Hamilton, chan e mhain gun robh iad nan coigrich do chomhtheanal Mhr Lees, agus ain-eolach air a chanain Ghaelic, ach feumadh gun robh iad mar an ceudna ain-eolach air suidicheach na cuise, 'so firinn a thuaras a mach agus a gabhas daignichadh le feadhainn do'n Chomh-theanal tha fhathast a chomhuidh an Lunnuinn.
- (9) Ged ma-dhaohte nach atharraich e a chuis sgrudaidh tha fa bhur comhair, bu mhath le bhur cuideachd riaghlaidh innse gun robh am fear tagairt air a phaidh £175 air son an Iartas a rinn e do'n Chuir. Thainig so as am Stoc, agus ro-mhor agus mar bha e chaidh a phaidh gun dragh a chuir air Maighstir na Cis.
- (10) Thoirt comas do'r cuideachd riaghlaidh tighinn chum eachdraidh dhiongmhalta an stuic argiod tha'n so, 's an am tha seachad agus 's am tha lathair dh'fheum iad cuideachadh, agus bha iad fìor fhortunach so fhaotainn, gun dol taobh mach do'n chomunn, ann an Mr Camshron de thigh-lagha Mhein agus Camshron an sràid Leadenhall. As eugmhais an rannsachadh mhionn a thug an duine-usal so—rannsachadh ris nach b'urrainn fiuthair a bhi ach bho chompanach—bhithidh e eucomasach an Fathunn so chuir mar coinneamh, agus chan eil ann ach faoneas lamh ris a chuntas phoncail a chruinnich agus a chuir Mr Camshron a sios.
- (11) Chomhrichadh bhur cuideachd riaghlaidh a mach an comh-chruinneachadh mòr a bha 'g éisdeachd searmonachadh Gaelic ré na bhliadhna 'n uire, agus sin nùeir nach eil fiuthair ris, a thaobh nach eil a lethid socruichte, agus gun ach beagan uine air son rabhadh thoirt seachad. Tha so a nochadh an déigh th' aig Gaedhael an Lunnuinn air facal Dhe chluinntinn nan canain féin; agus bithidh Comunn na Gaelic a deanamh dearmad air an dleasannas do luchd-braidhinn na Gaelic 'sa bhaile mhòr so, na' s lugha na chi iad gun dail sam bith gum teid an stoc argiod so thoirt air ais chum searmonachadh Gaelic a chuir air chuis a rithist an Lunnuinn, air son leas ar luchd dutcha, agus a chomh-chordadh ri beachd agus rùn nan daoine fiùghanta seirceil thug seachad e.
- (12) Ach bhithidh n-ar saothair a nasgadh mar rachadh sinn na b'fhada agus fhiosrachadh, co-dhiù a dheanamh na nach deanamh an tiom tha'n Tearmunn Albannach a mealtuin na

cuibhrionn so a chuis laghail. Uime sin, tha sinn toirt ceud do Mhr Camshron barail Comhairle a ghabhail air a ghnothuich, agus ma dh'aomas a bheachd am fàbhur Comunn na Gaelic dh'iarradh a chuideachd riaghlaidh comh-aontachd a Chomuinn chum fios a thoirt do luchd-riaghlaidh an Tearmunn Albannaich gum bheil Comunn na Gaelic a cuir rompa Iarradh a dheanamh aig Cuirte Chancery air-son toirt air ais riadh 'us calpa gu shean nis 's e sin ri radh, a phaidh searmonachadh Gaelic an Lunnuinn.

Ian Camshron Mac-a-phi,
Fear na Cathair

Report of the Committee of the Gaelic Society appointed on April 12th 1868 in order to examine the condition of the Fund which is known as 'The Gaelic Chapel Fund'. The members of this committee were to be Office-bearers of the Society for that time and they had permission to add to their number. That is to say 'Colin Chisholm (the President), John Cameron Macphee, Alexander Campbell, Donald Macgregor, Donald Kennedy, Angus Macgregor, Alexander Grant, John Grant'.

*To the President, Vice President and all Members,
The committee of Directors who are named above would like to put before you what they have done and what has come of it. From the research that they did, it was discovered:*

- (1) *That there is this amount of capital present coming all together in total to £3400 giving an interest also of £() per annum and in addition that this sum of money was raised in the year 1809 for the express purpose of paying or helping to pay the cost of Gaelic preaching in London.*
- (2) *That this fund is in trust to the Court of Chancery. It was given over to this Court in the year 1827 so that it would be safer and attention would be given that it would be applied to its lawful purpose.*
- (3) *That the interest on this money from the time that it was collected was going from time to time to pay for Gaelic preaching. The Rev. Mr Lees fulfilled this office from 1823 to 1843.*
- (4) *That in the last year Mr Lees resigned his place and this caused a break in the preaching of Gaelic which has continued until now.*
- (5) *That one of the businessmen of the Caledonian Society Duff Gordon (the lawyer) and James Alexander Simpson placed a petition in the year 1844 before the Court of Chancery asking that the interest on the Fund should be given to them because there was no use being made of it, in order to increase the income of the Asylum since its purpose was closer than anything*

- else to the purpose for which this money was gathered.
- (6) That the petition of the Caledonian Asylum was supported by the oaths of four named individuals, Hore, Hamilton, Elder and Mackenzie, who expressed their opinion "the unproductiveness of keeping up (maintaining) Gaelic preaching in London, [and that] during Mr Lees' time no more than three usually (came to) listen to him".
 - (7) That the court decided, trusting to the truth of what that these four had said on oath, to make over the interest of the money to the Caledonian Asylum "until another order should come". According to the power that was obtained in that way the Governors of this Institution are drawing from that time to the present day for the duration of twenty five years a sum which comes in total to as much as the capital itself.
 - (8) Your Committee cannot conceal, indeed it would not be right of them not to bring it to the notice of the Gaelic Society, that not one of the four who put their names to that testimony belonged to the Gaelic congregation. That is not all, there was only one among them, Mackenzie, that knew anything about Gaelic. Elder served as a doorman at Regent Square Church, and as for the other two Hore and Hamilton not only were they strangers to Mr Lees's congregation and ignorant of the Gaelic language, but they must also have been ignorant of the circumstances of the matter. This was a truth that had been found out and can be confirmed by some of the congregation who still live in London.
 - (9) Although it may not change the matter which is under your scrutiny your committee would like to report that the barrister was paid £175 for the petition that he made to the Court. This came from the capital and even though this was a great sum it was paid out causing any trouble to the master of tax.
 - (10) To enable your committee to arrive at a reliable history of this Fund, in the past and at the present time they needed help, and they were very fortunate to get this without going outside the Society in Mr Cameron of the law firm of Menzies and Cameron of Leadenhall Street. Without the detailed investigation that this gentleman made—research which one could not expect from a member—it would have been impossible to put this report before you and it is but a trivial thing compared with the detailed account that Mr Cameron gathered and put together.
 - (11) Your committee would point to the great gathering that listened to the Gaelic preaching last year and that when there is no (general) arrangement for such a thing and there was only a little time to give notice. This shows the enthusiasm that the Gaels of London have to hear the word of God in their own language; and the Gaelic Society will neglect their duty to the speakers of Gaelic in this city unless they see to it without any delay that the Fund is brought back (rededicated) in order to establish Gaelic preaching again in London for the benefit of

our countrymen, and to be consistent with the opinion and the desire of the worthy fine people who gave it.

- (12) *But our work would be in vain if we were not to go further and to enquire whether the time that the Caledonian Asylum was enjoying this portion was or was not legal. Therefore we give permission to Mr Cameron to take Counsel's opinion on the matter and if the opinion inclines in favour of the Gaelic Society the committee would request the agreement of the Society in order to give notice to the Directors of the Caledonian Asylum that the Gaelic Society are intend to make a petition to the Court of Chancery for the return of the interest and the capital for its former use, that is to say to pay for Gaelic preaching in London.*

*John Cameron Macphee,
Chairman*

Appendix II

DO CHOMUNN NA GAÈLIC – TO THE GAELIC SOCIETY

Donald Macpherson (1837)

Togsa suas gu grin; a sheana chlarsach a ghlinn,
Guth fonnmhor binn, mar a b'abhaist
Nuair a bhuail mise an tòs do chlath chiuil' us mi òg,
Ann an duthaich nam mor-bheann 's nam fasach:
Tha smuaintean ro eibhinn 'am aigneath aig eiridh
Tha beothachadh gleus agus cail domh
Chuir cliu ann an leud air na cairdean nach treig mi,
Air Comunn na Feile 's na Gaèlig.

O ancient harp of the glen raise up elegantly,
A sweet melodious voice, as it used to be
When I first struck thy musical strings when I was young,
In the country of the high mountains and wilderness:
There are very delightful thoughts rising in my mind
Rekindling readiness and desire in me
To spread the fame of the friends who will not forsake me,
In the Society of the Kilt and the Gaelic.

Ge do bhithinn gu tinn fo chradh-lot 's mi sgith,
Se dhaisigeadh sith dhom 'us slainte
Sinn bhi comhla 'mu na bhord, air mhire 's aig òl
'S mi 'g eisdeachd ri boi'chead bhur cainnte:
Cha chomhradh gun chli, ach ciall, tùr agus brigh,
Ga aithris le firinn 's le cairdeas,
Cuir eolais ann an ceill air na linntean a dheug
Bhios aig Comunn na Feile 's na Gaèlic.

Although I were ill, painfully wounded, and weary,
What would restore me to peace and health
Would be to be together around the table in merriment and
drinking
And me listening to the beauty of your language:
It is not conversation lacking ability, but wisdom, genius and
substance,
Narrated with truth and with friendship,
Expressing the knowledge of past generations
That will be at the Society of the Kilt and the Gaelic.

Co 'm banal tha beo ann an tabhachd san teomachd,
An gliocas 's an eolas thug barr dhiu?

Co 'n dichìoll 's an durachd thoirt cian-fhios an ducha
Bho n' cheò 's fada chum e fo sgaile?
Le 'n tuigse, le 'n leursinn, le 'm foghlum, le 'n geire
Chuir eachraidh ri cheil' agus danachd
Bi na h-ail thug nan deigh deanamh uail trid gach rè
A Comunn na Feile 's na Gaelig.

Where is the gathering that is alive in quantity and in ability,
In wisdom and in knowledge that has surpassed the others?
Who in diligence and in earnestness to bring the vast
knowledge of the land
From the mist that has long kept it under shadow?
With their intellect, with their vision, with their learning, with
their discernment
Who put history and poetry together
The generations following them will show pride throughout all
time
In the Society of the Kilt and the Gaelic.

S' iad a leanas gu dileas ri feartan an sinnsridh,
Luchd chorp agus inntinnean laidir,
Dh'fhag saors mar dhileab do 'n sliochd, dhain-deoin mi-ruin
'Us foirneart us diochioll an namhad:
S' iad fein a chumas suas gach deagh chleachadh bu dual a
daibh
S' i 'n canan thug Buaidh air gach canan,
S' i chainnt bha aig an Fheinn 's bh'aig Oisín nan deigh
Ta aig Comunn na Feile 's na Gaelic.

It is they who follow faithfully the virtues of their ancestors,
Men of strong body and minds,
[who] rendered freedom as a legacy to their descendents, in
spite of ill-will
And the oppression and diligence of the enemy:
They themselves are the ones to maintain every good tradition
that was their birthright
She is the language that conquered every language,
It is the language of the Feinn and Ossian after them
That is possessed by the Society of the Kilt and the Gaelic.

Guidheam freumhachd us fàs mar an darag as aille
Do Chomunn mo graidh gu la bratha,
'S nuair a sgathas am bas di na geugan tha lathair
Meoir ur bhi gach la uimpe fasmhor:
I bhi scorruith mar shuaicheanntas dlu-bharrach uaine
Mu 'n cruinnichear sluagh na tìr arda!—
Bi 'n deoch so mu 'n cuairt-lionar dearlan gach cuach—
Luchd nam breacan 's na cruaidh-lann 's na Gaelic!!

I pray for the rootedness and growth like the stateliest oak
To my beloved Society for ever,
And when death destroys her present branches
That new branches will each day grow around her:
That She will be eternal like an emblem of green brushwood
Around which will be gathered the people of the high land!—
This drink will be circulated [and] every drinking cup shall be
filled full—
The people of the tartans and the steel blades and the Gaelic!!

Appendix III

ORAN NUADH, AIR NA FINNEACHAN GAIDHEALACH

A New Song, on the Gaelic Clans

(Padrig MacGh'illeoin, 1788)

Tha n' Comun Gaidhealach an Lundain,
Laidir, urramach, rìoghail,
Mórhriodheach, ceannsalach, duinneil,
Sliochd nan curridhnin prìosail;
Lion deoch slainte nan gaisgeach,
Leinn is aite bhi ga dìoladh,
Olaidh mise mo sheanndeoch,
Co aca is brandi no fion i.

*The Highland Society of London is
Powerful, superior, loyal,
Magnanimous, authoritative, manly,
The descendents of the precious heroes;
Replenish the toast of the champions,
It is most joyful for us to pay it,
I will drink my old drink,
Whether it be brandy or wine.*

- I. Tha na Finneachan uasal,
A cur an guailibh ri cheile,
A chunnbhail Chlannan nan Gaidheal,
Gu duinneil, laidir, nan ceutfadh,
Gu h'usal, urramach, stàtail,
Criodhail, brathaireil, deas treubhach,
A gleidheadh urram don Ghàlic
A dhaindeoin tàir luchd na Beurla.

*The noble clans are,
Putting shoulder to shoulder,
To maintain the Children of the Gael,
Manly, strong in their good judgement,
Well-born, distinguished, proud,
Courageous, brotherly, very gallant,
In preserving honour for the Gaelic
Despite the contempt of the English speaking people.*

- II. Tha Marcas uasal nan GRAHAMACH
Gu prìosail, stàtail, fìor sgairteil,
Sliochd nan curridhnin meamnach,

Is cian on dearbh aid bhi gaisgeil,
An leoghan, smachdail, mor greadhnach,
A thuair bhur n'Eidigh air ais dhuinn,
Sa chuir casg air gach eucoir
Bha n'agaidh Eilidh is Brecaìn.

*The noble Marquis of Graham is
Princely, proud, very active,
The progeny of the courageous heroes,
It is long since they proved themselves to be heroic
The lion, lordly, greatly magnificent,
Who got your Highland Garb back to us,
And put a stop to every injustice
That was against Kilt and Tartan.*

- III. Tha na CAIMPBEULAICH phríosail,
Cliúteach, firrineach, gleusta,
Gur dainncean, calgara, díleas
Na seoid nach strìochdadh san eucoir,
Uailslin gasta glan ríomhach,
Laidir, lionmhor, mor euchdach,
An cúis a chrididh sna ríoghachd
Is tric a chíosnuich aid Eucoir.

*The Campbells are more noble,
Celebrated, righteous, active,
Sturdy, fierce, loyal
[are] the heroes that would not yield in [a case of] injustice
Fine handsome pure nobles,
Powerful, numerous, of great exploits,
In the cause of the faith and of the kingdom
Often they conquered injustice.*

- IV. Is lionmhor gaisgeach glan cruadalach
Do uailslin CLANN-CHAOINICH,
Morchrìodhach, ceannlaidir, sluaghail,
Armuin uasal, ghlan shoileir;
Laidir, fathrumach, ruainneach,
Na seoid bu dual a bhi loineil,
Is tric le deannal nan cruaidhlann
A chuir aid ruaig air pairt eile.

*Plentiful are grand hardy heroes
Of the Mackenzie nobles
Generous, headstrong, numerous,
Noble heroes, completely discernible;
Strong, rambunctious, fierce,
Whose natural custom was to be generous,
And often with conflict of the steel blades
They did chase their opponents.*

- V. S' aid CLANN-DOMHNUIL a chruadail,
 Gam bu dual a bhi gailleadhach,
 Bu sheann eireachdas riamh leo,
 Buaigh nan sliabh measg nan garrabhchath,
 Nuair a dh'eiridh aid cómhluath
 Cinneach mor nan sról-ballabhreac,
 Bu ghaisgeil calgara 'n coltas,
 Nuair a nochte n'lamh dhearg leo.

*It is the Macdonalds of hardiness,
 To whom it was birthright to be tempestuous,
 pride always with them
 To win battlefields in the midst of rough battles.
 When they would rise together
 Mighty people of the chequered banners,
 Warlike was their appearance,
 When the red hand would be revealed by them.*

- VI. Sann leinn is eibhin CLANN-CHAMROIN
 A bhi co meamnach a g'eirdh,
 Fhir uasal, fhilathail, nan' fearraghleus,
 Is tric a dearbh aid bhi euchdach,
 Buidhean cheanlaidir ainmeil,
 Seoid neoleannabail, nach géilidh,
 Is tric a dhearbh aid an cruadal
 An am bhualadh nan geurlann.

*We take delight in the Camerons
 To be so courageous in rising,
 Noble men, eager in their bold action,
 Often they have proved themselves heroic,
 A headstrong renowned company,
 Manly heroes, who would not yield,
 Often they have proved their bravery
 At the time of smiting of sharp blades.*

- VII. Tha na STIUARTAICH ríoghail,
 Uasal, ríomhach, na'm beusan,
 Buaghail, caithreamach, príosail,
 Calgail dileas, fíor euchdach,
 Sann fu'r brattaichin síoda
 A dheanadh míltan grad eiridh,
 Sann le'r deannalan mílteach
 A bhíodh luchd bhuir míruin fu chreuchdan.

*The Stuarts are handsome,
 Noble, elegant in their conduct,
 Triumphant, victorious, precious,
 Lively, faithful, very brave,
 It is under your silk flags*

*Thousands would rise rapidly,
It is with your destructive onsets
That your enemies would be wounded.*

- VIII. Gur ordail, mórdhalach, ceathearnail,
CLANN-GH'ILLEOIN, nan róishal,
Is lionmhor ármun deas gaisgeil
A theid fu'r brattaich an órdadh,
Na fhir uasal dheas fhathail
A bhuaileadh sprainghe san tórachd,
Is tric a bhuaileadh an árach
Le buaigh-lárach na mórfhear.

*Dignified, magnificent, warrior-like
Are the Macleans, in their assault,
Plentiful are the skilful brave heroes
Who will rise under the flag in battle,
The ready princely noblemen
Who would be explosive in the pursuit
Often the battlefield was won
By the complete victory of the great men.*

- IX. Tha LEODAICH fathrumach, ainmeil,
Ann an Albain, sliochd Lochlun,
Na fhir ghasa dheas chalma,
Bu neo chearabach an coltas,
Seoid theid cruaiigh air an armaibh
Gu luathamlach, fearraghleusach, toirteil,
Gu reachdmhor, caithreamach, garg aid,
Ri uair an armadh a nochdadh.

*The energetic Macleods, famous
In Scotland descendants of Scandinavia,
The brave accomplished resolute men
Trim in appearance,
Heroes who will go firm on their weapons
Quick-handed, manly in mien, substantial,
Robustly, triumphant, wrathful they,
At the time of baring their weaponry.*

- X. Tha CLANN-A-PHEARSAIN, S'CLANN-MHUIRICH,
Gu cruaiigh curanta dáicheil,
Laochridh chruadalach, ghuinneach,
A thuair urram sna bláraibh,
An am bhualadh na'm buillean
Ann a muineal na námhad;
Comhlan [,] colgara, fuileach,
Ualach, ullamh, gun fháilin.

The Macphersons and the Clan Chattan are

*Steadfast brave, strong,
Warriors, courageous, eager,
Who got respect on the battlefield
At the time of the striking of the blows
In the throat of the enemy;
A fierce, bloody group,
Noble, prepared without failing.*

- XXIV. Tha na DRUMADAICH bhuaghar
Státail, uasal gun athadh,
Gur a ceannlaidir ruaineach
Na seod bu chruadalach gabhail;
Tha MORAICH airgeadach, ríomhach,
Cinnidh líonmhor DHIUBHC Athail
Ann sna cathanan mílteach
Bu neo dhíbli bhur gabhail.

*The Drummonds are victorious
Proud, noble without fear,
How headstrong, and fierce
Are the heroes hardy in conquest;
The Murrays are rich, showy,
The populous clan of the Duke of Atholl
In the destructive battles
It would not be abject to take you.*

- XXV. Tha na SUTHERLANICH foirmeíl,
Laidir, colgail, san ríoghachd;
S'tha CLANN-A-CEAIRDE n'Gauladh,
Státail, ceannlaidir, líonmhor,
Thuair aid urram, is dhearbhadh aid
A bhi gu calgarra díleas,
Buidhean smachdail, mhor ainmeil,
Stochdail, airgideach, líonmhor.

*The Sutherlands are lively,
Powerful, martial, in the realm;
And the Sinclairs in Caithness
Magisterial, headstrong, numerous,
They got respect, and they proved
To be fierce and loyal,
A band, authoritative, much celebrated,
Having much stock, rich, numerous.*

- XXVI. Thanig sgeul o'pharlamaid Shasgan,
Sann leinn is aite bhi ga eisdeachd,
Na cinnfheadhna tighin dhachidh,
Gu greadhnach, tartarach, éibhin,
Gu hórdail, solasach, beachdail,
Thuair coir, is ceartas cead éiridh,

Is tuitidh foirneart a fasan,
Le mór ghaisgidh nan tréunfhear.

*A word came from the English Parliament,
Which makes us joyous in listening to it.
That the chiefs are coming home,
Joyfully, noisy, delightful,
Orderly, rejoicing, authoritative,
Who got justice, and just permission to rise
And oppression will fall from fashion,
Through the great heroism of the champions.*

Appendix IV

(For the Rehearsal.—Proof, not corrected.)

TRIENNIAL GENERAL COMPETITION. 1838.

LIST of PIPERS, who have entered in conformity to
the Regulations, with the Tunes lodged by each
Piper.

1. — ALEXANDER MACLEOD, Piper to the LONACH
HIGHLAND SOCIETY.

Peace or War, - - - -	Cogadh no Sith.
Abercairney's Salute, - - - -	Failte Abercharnaig.
Isobel Mackay, - - - -	Isabal Nic-Aoidh.
Clanranald's Salute, - - - -	Failte a Chlann Raonail.
The Prince's Landing at Moidart,	Thainig mo Rìgh's air Tir a' Muidort.
Lord Breadalbane's March, - -	Bodaich nam Briogais.
M'Intosh's Lament, - - - -	Cumha Mhic-an-Toisich.
The Cameron's Gathering, - -	Chruinneachadh nan Camshronach.
Forbes' Salute, - - - -	Failte nan Fairbeasach.
Mackenzie's Salute, - - - -	Failte Mhic-Choinnich.
M'Crummen's Lament, - - - -	Cumha Mhic-Chruimean.
Black Donald's Piobrach, - - -	Piobaireachd Dhomhnuil Dhubh.

2. — PETER MACLAREN, Piper to JOHN STIRLING, Esq. of
Kippendavie; gained 1st prize for Dancing, 1835; and the
2d for Dress, same year.

The Prince's Salute, - - - -	Failte a Phrionnsa.
Macleod of Rasay's Salute, - - -	Failte Mhic-Ghille-Challum.
M'Donald's Salute, - - - -	Failte Chlann Dòmhnail.
Earl of Seaforth's Salute, - - -	Failte Uilleam dhubh Mhic-Choinnich.
M'Nab's Salute, - - - -	Failte Chlann an Aba.
Sir James M'Donald of the Isles' Salute,	Failte Ridir Shemas nan Eilean.
Bells of Perth, - - - -	Cluig Pheairt.
Kintail's White Flag, - - - -	Bratach Bhan Cheann Tail.
Massacre of Glenco, - - - -	Murt Ghlinne a Comhann.
Sir Hector Mackenzie of Gairloch's Lament, - - - -	} Cumha Ridir Eachann Ghearloch.
M'Intosh's Lament, - - - -	
Grim Donald's March, - - - -	Spaidsearachd Dòmhnail Ghruamaich.

3. — JOHN MACBETH, Piper to the HIGHLAND SOCIETY of
LONDON; gained the 3d prize as Piper in 1832, and the 1st
prize for Dress, 1829.

The Prince's Salute, - - - -	Failte a Phrionnsa.
M'Intosh's Lament, - - - -	Cumha Mhic-an-Toisich.
The Chisholm's Salute, - - - -	Failte an t-Shiosalaich.
The Battle of Waternish, - - -	Blar Bhatarnis.

Sir Hector Mackenzie of Gairloch's Lament,	-	-	Cumha Ridir Eachinn Ghearloch.
The Highland Society of Scotland's Salute,	-	-	Failte Cho-chomuinn Ghaidhealach.
Lord Macdonald's Tutor's Salute,	-	-	Failte
Battle of Sheriffmuir,	-	-	Blar Sliabh an t-Shiorraidh.
Bells of Perth,	-	-	Cluig Pheairt.
Somerled's Lament,	-	-	Cumha Somhairle.
Macleod of Rasay's Salute,	-	-	Failte Mhic-Ghille-Challum.
The Finger Lock,	-	-	Ghlas Mheur.

4. — WILLIAM SMITH, Piper, 92d Highlanders; gained 4th prize, 1825.

Earl of Seaforth's Salute,	-	-	Failte Iarla Shithphorth.
The Glen's my own,	-	-	'S leam fhein an Gleann.
Prince Charles' Salute,	-	-	Failte a Phrionnsa.
White Flag,	-	-	Bratach Bhan.
M'Intosh's Lament,	-	-	Cumha Mhic-an-Toisich.
Macdonald of Clanranald's Salute,	-	-	Failte a Chlann Raonail.
The Grant's Gathering,	-	-	Craigellachie.
Glengarry's March,	-	-	Cille Criosd.
Rough John's Lament,	-	-	Cumha Ian Gairbh.
The Battle of Waternish,	-	-	Blar Bhatarnis.
Maclachlan's March,	-	-	Moladh Mairi.
I received a Kiss from the King's hand,	-	-	Fhuair mi pog o laimh an Righ.

5. — WILLIAM GUNN, Pipe-maker, Glasgow; gained 5th prize as Piper, and 2d prize as best dressed.

Campbell of Lochnell's Lament,	-	-	Cumha Fear Ceann Loch n' Eall.
Prince's Salute,	-	-	Failte a Phrionnsa.
Maclachlan's March,	-	-	Moladh Mairi.
The Battle of Glentarff,	-	-	Blar Ghleantarbh.
Retreat of Bendoig,	-	-	Ruaig Bendoig.
Sir Hector Mackenzie of Gairloch's Lament,	-	-	Cumha Sir Eachinn Ghearloch.
Fraser of Lovat's Lament,	-	-	Cumha Mhic-Shimidh.
Red Hector Maclean's Lament,	-	-	Cumha Eachinn Ruaidh nan Chatb.
Sandaig's Lament,	-	-	Cumha Fear Shandaig.
Boisdale's Salute,	-	-	Failte Fhir Bhoisdail.
Battle of Auldearn,	-	-	Blar Allterin.
Sir James M'Donald of the Isles' Salute,	-	-	Failte Ridir Sheumais nan Eilean.

6. — DUNCAN CAMPBELL, from Foss.

M'Intosh's Lament,	-	-	Cumha Mhic-an-Toisich.
Grim Donald's March,	-	-	Spaidsearachd Dhomhnuil Ghruamaich.
Maclachlan's March,	-	-	Moladh Mairi.
Black Donald's Piobrach,	-	-	Piobaireachd Dhomhnuil Dhuibh.
The Prince's Salute,	-	-	Failte a Phrionnsa.
The Young Prince's Salute,	-	-	Failte Phrionnsa Oig.
Kintail's Flag,	-	-	Bratach Cheanntaile.
The Glen is mine,	-	-	'S leam Fhein an Gleann.
Turn the Cattle, Duncan,	-	-	Phill an Crobh, Dhonnachaidh.
Macdonald's Salute,	-	-	Failte Mhic-Dhomhnuil.
The Gathering of Shells,	-	-	Bodach nan Sligachan.
The Blue Ribbon,	-	-	An Ruiban Gorm.

7. — JOHN MACALISTER, Piper to DUNCAN DAVIDSON, Esq.
of Tulloch.

Young George's Salute,	- - -	Failte Dheors Oig.
The Battle of Auldearn,	- - -	Blar Aulterin.
The Battle of Waternish,	- - -	Blar Bhatarnis.
The Earl of Seaforth's Salute,	- - -	Failte Iarla Shithphorth.
Macdonald of Moidart's Salute,	- - -	Failte Mhic-Dhomhnuil Muideart.
Macleod of Rasay's Salute,	- - -	Failte Mhic-Ghille-Challum.
M'Intosh's Lament,	- - -	Cumha Mhic-an-Toisich.
The Glen is mine,	- - -	'S leam fhein an Gleann.
Lord Lovat's Lament,	- - -	Cumha Mhic-Shimidh.
Scarce of Fishing,	- - -	Tha an Iasgaireachd neo-phailte.
The Blue Ribbon,	- - -	An Ruiban Gorm.
The Prince's Salute,	- - -	Failte a Phrionnsa.

8. — DONALD CAMERON Piper to J. J. R. MACKENZIE, Esq.
of Scatwell.

Scarce of Fishing,	- - -	Tha an Iasgaireachd neo-phailte.
The Glen is mine,	- - -	'S leam fhein an Gleann.
Earl of Seaforth's Salute,	- - -	Failte Iarla Shithphorth.
White Flag,	- - -	Bhratach Bhan.
The Massacre of Glenco,	- - -	Muirt Ghlincomha.
Macleod's Salute,	- - -	Failte Mhic-Leoid.
Mackenzie of Gairloch's Lament,	- - -	Cumha Shir Eachain Ghearloch.
The Battle of Beallach na Fradh,	- - -	Blar Beallach na Fradh.
The Laird of Annapuil's Lament,	- - -	Cumha Thigherna Annapuil.
The Chisholm's Salute,	- - -	Failte an t-Shiosalaich.
The Battle of Sheriffmuir,	- - -	Blar Sliabh an t-Shiorreadh.
The Battle of Glenfroof,	- - -	Blar Glenfhroin.

9. — ANGUS CAMERON, from Rannoch ; gained 1st, 2d, and
3d Prizes for Dress,

The Finger Lock,	- - -	Ghlas Mheur.
Macdonald's Salute,	- - -	Failte Chlann Dhomhnuil.
The Bells of Perth,	- - -	Cluig Pheairt.
The Battle of Waternish,	- - -	Blar Bhatarnis
Glengary's Gathering,	- - -	Cruinneachadh Mhac-Mhic-Alastair.
The Blue Ribbon,	- - -	An Ruiban Gorm.
Glengarry's March,	- - -	Cille Chrìosd
Gordon's Salute,	- - -	Failte nan Gordonnach.
Scarce of Fishing,	- - -	Tha an Iasgaireachd neo-phailte.
The Macdonald's,	- - -	Chlann Dhomhnuil.
M'Intosh's Lament,	- - -	Cumha Mhic-an-Toisich.
White Flag,	- - -	Bratach Bhan.

10. — MALCOLM MACPHERSON, from Breadalbane ; gained
1st and 2d Prizes for Dress.

The Prince's Salute,	- - -	Failte a Phrionnsa.
Macdonald's Salute,	- - -	Failte Chlann Dhomhnuil.
Battle of Waternish,	- - -	Blar Bhatarnis.
The Prince's Landing in Moidart,	- - -	Teachd a Phrionnsa gu Mhuideart.
Battle of Erin Water,	- - -	Blar Erin.
Finger Lock,	- - -	Ghlas Mheur.
The City of Edinburgh's Salute,	- - -	Failte Baile Dhuneidinn.
M'Intosh's Lament,	- - -	Cumha Mhic-an-Toisich.
The Bells of Perth,	- - -	Cluig Pheairt.
The Piper's Warning to his Master,	- - -	Cholla mo Run.
Young George's Salute,	- - -	Failte Dheors Oig.
The Stewart's Salute,	- - -	Failte an t-Stuibhartach.

11. — JAMES MACPHERSON, Piper to A. CAMPBELL, Esq. of Monzie; gained 5th Prize as a Piper, 1835, and the 1st Prize for Dress at his own expense.

M'Intosh's Lament,	-	-	Cumha Mhic-an-Toisich.
King George the Third's Lament,	-	-	Cumha Righe Dheors an Treas.
Lord Lovat's Lament,	-	-	Cumha Mhic-Shimidh.
The Prince's Landing at Moidart,	-	-	Teachd a Phrionnsa gu Muideart.
Stewart's White Flag,	-	-	Bratach Bhan An t-Stuibhartach.
Mackay's White Flag,	-	-	Bratach Bhan An M'Aoidh.
Macpherson's Gathering,	-	-	Ceann na Drochaide Bhige.
The Bells of Perth,	-	-	Cluig Pheairt.
The Prince's Salute,	-	-	Failte a Phrionnsa.
The Glen is mine,	-	-	'S leim fhein an Gleann.
Sir James M'Donald of the Isles Salute,	-	-	Failte Ridir Shemais nan Eilean.
Clanranald's March,	-	-	Spaidsearachd Mac-Mhic-Allain.

12. — ANGUS MACINNES, Piper to the Most Noble the Marquis of HUNTLY.

The Earl of Aboyne's March,	-	-	Spaidsearachd Iarla Aboyne.
The Marquis of Huntly's Salute,	-	-	Failte Mhorair Huntain.
Grim Donald's March,	-	-	Spaidsearachd Dhomhnuil Ghruamaich.
Macdonald's Salute,	-	-	Failte Chlann Mhic-Dhomhnuil.
The Bells of Perth,	-	-	Cluig Pheairt.
The Gathering of the Clans,	-	-	Ceann na Drochaide Mhoir.
The Battle of Sheriffmuir,	-	-	Blar Sliabh an t-Shiorradh.
MacIachlan's March,	-	-	Moladh Mairi.
Cluny Macpherson's Salute,	-	-	Failte Thigherna Chluaine.
Prince's Salute,	-	-	Failte a Phrionnsa.
Glengarry's March,	-	-	Cille Chriosd.
Macleod's Salute,	-	-	Failte Mhic-Leoid.

13. — JOHN STEWART, Piper-Major, 79th Regiment; gained 2d Prize, 1835.

Sir Hector Mackenzie of Gairloch's Lament,	-	-	-	Cumha Ridir Eachann Ghearloch.
Battle of Auldearn,	-	-	-	Blar Aulterin.
Queen Anne's Lament,	-	-	-	Cumha Bhanrigh Anna.
Chisholm's Salute,	-	-	-	Failte an t-Siosalaich.
Clanranald's Salute,	-	-	-	Failte Chlan Raonuill, or Failte Mhic-Allain.
The Glen is mine,	-	-	-	'S leam fein an Gleann.
The Earl of Seaforth's Salute,	-	-	-	Failte Uilleam Dhubh Mhic-Coinnich.
My King has landed in Moidart,	-	-	-	Thainig mo Righ-sa air tir am 'Muideart.
Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel's Salute,	-	-	-	Failte Ridir Eoghann Lochiall.
Head of Inchberry Bridge,	-	-	-	Ceann Drochuid Ishberrie.
The M'Kay's White Banner,	-	-	-	Bratach Bhan Chlann Aoidh.
Donald Dual M'Kay's Lament,	-	-	-	Cumha Dhomhuill Dhual Mhic-Aoidh.

14. — ALEXANDER STEWART, from Kinlochranoch.

The Stewart's Salute,	-	-	-	Failte an t-Stuibhartach.
The Prince's Salute,	-	-	-	Failte a Phrionnsa.
Chisholm's Salute,	-	-	-	Failte an t-Shiosalaich.
Macdonald of Kinlochmoidart's Salute,	-	-	-	Failte Cheannloch Mhuideart.
The King's Landing in Moidart,	-	-	-	Teachd a Phrionnsa gu Mhuideart.
Lord Breadalbane's March,	-	-	-	Bodaich nam Briogais.
M'Intosh's Lament,	-	-	-	Cumha Mhic-an-Toisich.
The Battle of Sheriffmuir,	-	-	-	Blar Sliabh an t-Shiorradh.

Black Donald's Piobrach, - - -	Piobaireachd Dhomhnuil Dhuibh.
Mary's Gift, - - - - -	Moladh Mairi.
The Finger Lock, - - - - -	Ghlas Mheur.
M'Crummen will never Return,	Cha till MacCruiminn.

15.—ARCHIBALD STEWART, from Rannoch.

The Prince's Salute, - - - - -	Failte a Phrionnsa.
White Flag, - - - - -	Bratach Bhan.
Macleod's Salute, - - - - -	Failte Mhic-Leoid.
Boisdale's Salute, - - - - -	Failte Fhir Bhoisdail.
The Duke of Hamilton's Lament,	Cumha Dhuic Hamilton.
The M'Intosh's Lament, - - -	Cumha Mhic-an-Toisich.
The Young George's Salute, - -	Failte Dheors Oig.
Mhaldonn - - - - -	Mhaldonn.
The Finger Lock, - - - - -	Ghlas Mheur.
The Battle of Waternish, - - -	Blar Bhatarnis.
The Maclachlan's Salute, - - -	Moladh Mairi.
The Blue Ribbon, - - - - -	An Ruiban Gorm.

16.—EVAN CAMERON, Piper to the 78th Regiment of Highlanders.

The Prince's Salute, - - - - -	Failte a Phrionnsa.
A favourite Piobrach, - - - - -	Ghlas Mheur.
Glengarry's March, - - - - -	Cille Chrìosd.
Boisdale's Salute, - - - - -	Failte Fhir Bhoisdail.
Maclachlan's March, - - - - -	Moladh Mairi.
Seaforth's Salute, - - - - -	Failte Iarla Shithphorth.
Sir Hector Mackenzie of Gairloch's Lament, - - - - -	Cumha Shir Eachainn Ghearloch.
An Ancient Piobrach, - - - - -	Mholich.
The Man with the Black Plaid, - -	Fir a Bhreachdan Dhuibh.
Sir James Macdonald's Salute, - -	Failte Ridir Shemais Mhic-Dhomhnuil.
Young George's Salute, - - - - -	Failte Dheors Oig.
M'Intosh's Lament, - - - - -	Cumha Mhic-an-Toisich.

17.—RODERICK MACDONALD, from Ross-shire; gained 4th Prize as a Piper in 1829; also 3d and 5th Prizes for Dress.

Lament for Sir Reginald Macdonald of Staffa, - - - - -	Cumha Ridir R. Mhic-Dhomhnuil, Staffa.
Glengarry's Lament, - - - - -	Cumha Mhac Mhic-Allain.
Rough John's Lament, - - - - -	Cumha Ian Ghairbh.
White Flag, - - - - -	Bratach Bhan.
M'Intosh's Lament, - - - - -	Cumha Mhic-an-Toisich.
The Glen is our own, - - - - -	'S leam fhein a Ghleann.
Maclachlan's March, - - - - -	Moladh Mairi.
The Blue Ribbon, - - - - -	An Ruiban Gorm.
Macdonald's Favourite, - - - - -	Leannamh Mhic-Dhomhnuil.
The Battle of Erin Water, - - - -	Blar Eirin.
Head of Inchberry Bridge, - - - -	Ceann Drochuid Ishberrie.
The Prince's Salute, - - - - -	Failte a Phrionnsa.

18.—JOHN BRUCE, from the Isle of Skye.

Lord Breadalbane's March, - - -	Bodach nam Briogais.
The Battle of Sheriffmuir, - - -	Blar Sliabh an t-Shiorradh.
Fraser's Salute, - - - - -	Muinntir a Chail-Chaail.
Prince's Salute, - - - - -	Failte a Phrionnsa.
Menzies' Salute, - - - - -	Piobaireachd Uaidh.
The Finger Lock, - - - - -	Ghlas Mheur.

B

Grim Donald's March,	-	Spaidsearachd Dhomhnuil Ghruamaich.
Maclachlan's March,	-	Moladh Mairi.
Battle of Waternish,	- -	Blar Bhatarnis.
The White Flag,	- -	Bratach Bhan.
Boisdale's Salute,	- - -	Failte Fhir Bhoisdail,
Peace or War,	- - -	Cogadh no Sith.

19.—JOHN ROBERTSON, from Fincastle, Piper to Sir JOHN
P. W. M. MACKENZIE of Delvin, Bart.

The Finger Lock,	- - -	Ghlas Mheur.
M'Intosh's Lament,	- - -	Cumha Mhic-an-Toisich.
The Prince's Salute,	- - -	Failte a Phrionnsa.
Glengarry's March,	- - -	Cille Chriosd.
M clachlan's March,	- - -	Moladh Mairi.
Grim Donald's Sweetheart,	- - -	Leannan Dhomhnuil Ghruamaich.
The Blue Ribbon,	- - -	An Ruiban Gorm.
The MacDonald's Salute,	- - -	Failte Chlann Dhomhnuil
A Fishing Excursion,	- - -	Iasgach Correlaban.
Town of Edinburgh's Salute,	- - -	Failte Baile Dhuneidin.
The Cameron's Gathering,	- - -	Cruinneachadh nan Camshronach.
King James' Salute,	- - -	Failte Rìgh Sheumais.

20.—PETER BRUCE, from Glenelg, Inverness-shire.

The Bells of Perth,	- - -	Cluig Pheairt.
The Prince's Salute,	- - -	Failte a Phrionnsa.
Glengarry's March,	- - -	Cille Chriosd.
Donald Bain M'Crummen's Lament,	- - -	Cumha Dhomhnuil Bain Mhic Cruimmen.
Battle of Waternish,	- - -	Blar Bhatarnis.
The Carle with the Shells,	- - -	Piobaireachd Bennaomhaig.
The Mackenzie's Gathering,	- - -	Tulloch Ard.
The Macdonald's Salute,	- - -	Failte Chlann Dhomhnuil.
The Finger Lock,	- - -	Ghlas Mheur.
Black William Mackenzie's Salute,	- - -	Failte Uilleam Dhuhb Mhic-Choinnich.
Lament for the Union,	- - -	An Co-aontachadh.
M'Intosh's Lament,	- - -	Cumha Mhic-an-Toisich.

21.—KENNETH STEWART, from the Isle of Skye.

Lament for the Battle of Waternish,	- - -	Cumha Blar Bhatarnis.
Glengarry's Lament,	- - -	Cille Chriosd.
Donald Gruamach's Lament,	- - -	Spaidseareachd Dhonuill Ghruamaich.
Maclachlan's Salute,	- - -	Failte Chloinn Lachlain.
Macleod's Gathering,	- - -	{ Co-chruinneachadh Chloinn Mhic-Thormaid.
War or Peace, or Clan's Gathering,	- - -	Cogadh no Sith.
The Prince's Salute,	- - -	Failte a Phrionnsa.
The Finger Lock,	- - -	A Ghlas-mheur.
M'Intosh's Lament,	- - -	Cumha Mhic-an-Toisich.
Donald M'Leod of Grisherrnish's Lament,	- - -	Cumha Dhomhnuil Ghrisirnish.
The Macgregor's Salute,	- - -	Failte nan Griogarach.
The Bells of Perth,	- - -	Cluig Pheairt.

22.—DUNCAN MACKAY, Piper to CLUNY MACPHERSON.

The Prince's Salute,	- - -	Failte a Phrionnsa.
The Prince's Landing at Moidart,	- - -	Teachd a Phrionnsa gu Muideart.
The Earl of Seaforth's Salute,	- - -	Failte Iarla Shithphorth.
The Glen is mine,	- - -	'S leam fhein an Gleann.
The Grant's Gathering,	- - -	Craigellachie.

Maclachlan's March, - - -	Moladh Mairi.
The Blue Ribbon, - - -	An Ruiban Gorm.
Macdonald of Moidart's Salute,	Failte Mhic Dhomhnuil Mhuideart.
White Flag, - - -	Bratach Bhan.
Glengarry's March, - - -	Cille Chriosd.
Lord Breadalbane's March, - -	Bodaich nam Briogais.
Lochiel's March, - - -	Spaidsearachd Lochiall.

DANCERS. — COMPETITION 1838.

1. WILLIAM SMITH, Piper to the 92d Regiment.
2. ALEXANDER ROBERTSON, from Blair-Atholl.
3. ROBERT ROBERTSON, from Glenfin Castle, Blair-Atholl.
4. JOHN ROBERTSON, from Glenfin Castle, Blair-Atholl.
5. THOMAS M'INTYRE, from Perth.
6. JOHN DUNBAR, from Strathdon, Aberdeenshire.
7. DUNCAN SINCLAIR, from Islay — Gained the 3d Prize as a Dancer last year.
8. ALEXANDER STEWART, from Foss.
9. HUGH MACKAY, from Sutherlandshire.
10. JOHN M'BETH, Piper to the Highland Society of London.
11. DANIEL MUNRO, from Ross-shire.
12. DONALD ROBERTSON, from Atholl.
13. JOHN ROBERTSON, from Atholl.
14. PETER MACINTOSH, from Breadalbane.
15. DUNCAN CAMPBELL, Piper, from Foss.
16. DONALD ROBERTSON, from Foss.
17. GEORGE MACKAY, from Badenoch.
18. JOHN MACALISTER, Piper to Duncan Davidson, Esq. of Tulloch.
19. JAMES MACPHERSON, Piper to A. Campbell, Esq. of Monzie.

20. ANGUS CAMERON, Piper, from Rannoch.
21. MALCOLM MACPHERSON, Piper, from Breadalbane.
22. ANGUS M'INNES, Piper to the Marquis of Huntly.
23. JOHN MACBEAN, from Strathspey.
24. JOHN LOUDON, from Laggan, Inverness-shire.
25. THOMAS MACDONALD, from Blair-Atholl — Gained 2d Prize for
Dress, Home-made Tartan ; also, Sword Dance.
26. ALEXANDER STEWART, Kinlochranoch ; also Sword Dance.
27. THOMAS JAMES, Edinburgh.
28. WILLIAM STEWART, Dalguise ; also Sword Dance.
29. ALEXANDER ROBERTSON, from Blair-Atholl.
30. JOHN STEWART, from Rannoch.
31. DONALD REID, from Dalguise.

COMPETITOR FOR DRESS ONLY.

FRANCIS HIGGINS, Pipe-maker, Edinburgh.