



Clan MacDougall Society of North America

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Wylie and Mary McDougall,
Founding Editors



The King's Brooches

The story of Bruce's brooches is one which has fascinated historians through the ages with its many twists and turns. The following article appeared in the June 1997 issue of Scottish Field Magazine and was written by Lady Mary McGrigor. Scottish Field Magazine has graciously granted permission for this article to be reprinted in The Tartan.

Bruce rose to his full height in the stirrups - light flashed from the great crystal on his shoulder and from the blade of his sword. With a blow he severed the arm of the man gripping his bridle, as another grasped his leg to unhorse him. But, spurring the animal forward, Bruce dragged him, his hand trapped by the stirrup to the flank.

He felt the horse stagger as a third man jumped from above upon its rump. Arms from behind pinioned him, clasping his cloak to his sides. Struggling to free his sword, he struck backwards with the pommel, sending the man flying. Then as his arms came free, he swung round in the saddle to fell the assailant at his side.

The men killed by the King were a father and two sons named MacIndrosser. The old man, who had leapt on the horse's back, had pulled the King's cloak with him as he fell and the brooch, holding the great crystal, has since remained an heirloom of the chiefs of the Clan MacDougall.

This battle took place on August 11, 1306, one mile south-west of Tyndrum on a stretch of ground called Dal Righ (Field of the King). It was Alexander, Lord of Lorn's army which opposed Robert the Bruce, as he had killed the "Red Comyn", Alexander, the Lord of Lorn's nephew. The Red Comyn was killed at Greyfriars

Church by Dumfries and to avenge his murder, fealty had been sworn to Edward I of England.

Witnessing the slaughter of their men, the MacDougalls withdrew. Knowing this to be but a respite, Bruce, guided by Sir Neil Campbell, headed south on foot through the hills. Reaching the east shore of Loch Lomond they crossed from Craigroyston to the west shore where they found the Earl of Lennox who escorted them to the Clyde where Sir Neil Campbell waited with a small fleet of galleys.

Bruce and his party sailed south of Bute and, it is said, landed on Arran. From there he crossed Kilbrannan Sound and landed at Ugdale on the east coast of Kintyre. Ferquhard MacKay, the possessor of the farm, saw Bruce approaching the creek below the farm. Offering Highland hospitality, he gave the King the best food and drink he could produce.

During the evening Bruce told him he wanted to cross the peninsula to find a boat on the western shore. MacKay promised to guide him. They parted by a large standing stone known as "Clachmhic-Ariah", MacKay's stone, and as they said farewell, the King took the brooch from his mantle and gave it to MacKay, asking him at the same time what he wanted most of all. MacKay replied 'to own the land that I now farm as a tenant'.

According to legend MacKay then killed a sheep, skinned it and drew the two farms of Ugdale and Arnicle upon the hide. When Bruce conquered Scotland he

kept his word to his rescuer - the grant on the sheepskin bore the words, 'I, Robert the First, give the lands of Ugdale and Arnicle to MacKay and his heirs for ever'. The charter of Bruce, dated March 31, 1329, was renewed in the reign of James IV.

The Ugdale brooch has an outer band decorated with strap-work and within, eight turrets set with coral and pearls with small round bosses. The oval ridged crystal in the middle is set on the lid of a capsule ornamented with filigree, which opens to reveal a relic container. Documentary evidence shows that the MacKays of Ugdale were crownors of north Kintyre from time immemorial and the brooch may have been a badge of office.

In 1690 Barbara, daughter and heiress of Ugdale, married Torquil MacNeil of Tirfergus, Kintyre. The brooch remained in the family but in 1745, at the time of the Jacobite Rising, it disappeared. The MacNeils then lived in the old house of Lossit, where in the 19th century the brooch was found within a wall by workmen making repairs.

The brooch of the MacDougalls of Lorn likewise has an exciting history. Experts believe it is probably of Continental craftsmanship of the early medieval period. It may have been made about 1300. The oval shaped crystal is set in silver, with eight turrets surmounted with pearls and the top of the brooch again unscrews revealing a secret cavity.

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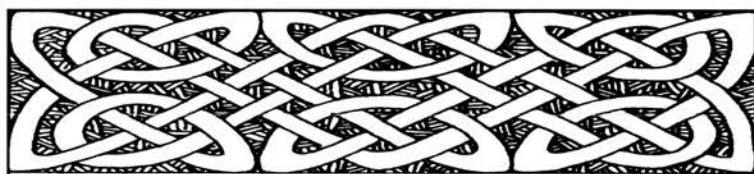


The Editor's Desk

by Pat McDougal

Winter is here and some are in the cold, dark night of ice and snow. The President of this Society wishes that all would just stop praying for

snow. We here in the south, prayed for a white Christmas. But that has passed and the New Year is here. The games and fun have started. Our new brochure for Clan MacDougall is beautiful and available through your regional commissioner. I hope you are making plans to attend the annual meeting July 10, at the Grandfather Mountain Games in Linville, North Carolina. ☺



Flowers of the Forest

Susan Anne Davis McDougall was born in Phillipsburg, New Jersey on September 14, 1950. She grew up in Silver Springs, Maryland & attended the University of Maine graduating from Wheelock College, Boston Mass. with a degree in Early Childhood Education. She married Malcolm McDougall on March 11, 1989. Susan was the Vice President of Capstone, Inc., Alexandria, VA and supervised it's Charleston, S.C. division.

Susan succumbed to cancer on November 13, 1997 after a long, valiant battle. In addition to her husband, Susan is survived by her daughter Amanda, two brothers Donald and William, a sister Nancy and her parents Arthur A. & Lillian Lewis Davis of Camp Hill, PA.

Memorial services were held at St. Andrews Episcopal Church, Mt. Pleasant, S.C. on November 17, 1997.

MacDougall elected President of Scottish Society of Charleston, SC

In December 1997, Carol McDougall was elected to the office of President of the Scottish Society of Charleston South Carolina. Although she has only lived in Charleston for six years, she has been very active with the Society at local events and games throughout the southeast.

Carol was born and raised in Roy, Ohio, and after graduating as a nurse she moved to Hamilton, Ontario. She was active in provincial, national and international Operating Room nurse organizations. She was serving as President-elect of the OR Nurses Association before moving to the U.S. She now holds a position as Coordinator for patient and family education at the Medical University of South Carolina.

Carol and her husband David are members of Clan MacDougall Society. David's aunt, Margaret McDougall, was a member of the Clan MacDougall until her death in early 1970's and introduced him to genealogy and things Scottish. David serves on the Board of Directors of the Charleston Scottish Society and is a drummer in the Charleston Police Pipes and Drums. Carol plans to increase the number and types of activities in which the Society participates. She looks forward to meeting many of you at games and functions both as a representative of the Charleston group and as a member of Clan MacDougall. ☺



David & Carol McDougall

The King's Brooches (continued)

Held by successive chiefs it remained a family treasure. In 1647, during the Covenanting wars, it was taken to Gylen Castle on the island of Kerrera for safety, but the castle was attacked and burnt on the orders of General Leslie. The brooch disappeared and remained lost to the MacDougalls until, in 1819, Major Campbell of Bragleen died. His trustees found the brooch at the bottom of his Charter Chest. Writing on old paper confirmed that it was the Brooch of Lorn, 'taken by the Campbells of Bragleen in a raid on the MacDougalls at Gylen Castle when the castle was burnt'.

Major Campbell has instructed his wife never to part with the brooch for any reason other than to pay for the education of their three daughters. However, Colonel Campbell of Lochnell, the senior trustee and a relative of Bragleen's widow, agreed to provide for them. The brooch was handed over to Captain John MacDougall, son of Patrick the 24th chief, at Inveraray Castle in October 1824.

In 1842 when Queen Victoria visited Taymouth Castle, Captain John MacDougall, the 25th chief, steered her boat down Loch Tay. He was wearing the Brooch of Lorn and took it off for her to examine. The brooch is now owned by the present chief, the 31st.

A third brooch is that of the MacLeans of Lochbuie. The crystal in the center is thought to have magical powers but it was never, as far as is known, connected with Robert the Bruce. Said to have been made by a tinker on the estate in Mull about 1500, it is almost a replica of the Brooch of Lorn. The tinkers were skilled metal workers and one of them copied the intricate moulding and design. Worked in silver gilt, it is decorated with small bosses and filigree work. Ten turrets, each 25mm high, are set with river pearls and the capsule unscrews above a secret cavity.

Given to Isabelle Maclaine of Lochbuie on her marriage to John Sprogue, it then changed hands several times before being bought by the British Museum in whose possession it remains. A copy, made in 1886, is kept by the descendants of the original owners.

One source claims that the crystal stones dated from the late iron age and come originally from China. They were certainly used to cure illness, particularly in cattle, until well into medieval times.

The theory that the stones were mounted in brooches at a much later date, probably the 15th century,

is still generally accepted. But the story of the MacDougall crystal, albeit possibly in a much older setting, being torn from the shoulder of King Robert the Bruce upon the field of Dal Righ, is famous in Scottish history. ☉



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Richard T. MacDougall

Happy New Year to all. I hope you all had a truly blessed Christmas with loved ones. I have had several inquiries from people wanting one or more MacDougall Golf clubs (for Christmas), but had no luck trying to contact the number or address in Vermont that I put in the Spring '97 issue of the Tartan. I have been in contact with Stewart MacDougall and am pleased to report that MacDougall Golf is alive and well. He has moved the company headquarters to California and reorganized it, with a partner in Scotland. You can contact them for a product brochure or price list at:



MacDougall and Co. Golf

495 Valley Club Road • Santa Barbara, CA 93108

Tel: 805-969-1818

You would have smiled to hear my self-persuasive rationalizations before I ordered my new set..."After all, the President of the Clan Society has a social obligation to be seen playing with beautiful MacDougall Golf clubs."!!

I realize that it is only January, but the people who rent facilities at some of the more popular places where we have highland games require that we make reservations way ahead. Therefore, this is the first official announcement that we will be holding our 1998 AREA meeting and gathering of the Clan Society in conjunction with the New Hampshire Highland Games at Loon Mountain in Lincoln, New Hampshire, on 18, 19, 20 September. This is a hugely popular festival with unrivaled musical (and other) entertainment, including many of the world's best pipe bands. Doug and Sandy MacDougall in New Hampshire, and I have completed arrangements for a meeting and dinner room, for Friday and have reserved a block of 10 motel rooms at The Mill at Loon Mountain for the weekend. You will need to tell us at some point of your plans to come, before we have to give them the final number for dinner. But you have to make your own room reservations. You can write, email, or call (508)478-8720 me and I will send you a reservation form. Or you can contact them directly: The Mill at Loon Mtn., PO Box 696, Lincoln, NH 03251. Tel: 1-800-654-6183. Either way be sure to tell them you are with the Clan MacDougall block. I will acquire a supply of activities brochures later when they are available. I need to apologize for my sloppy, imprecise use of the acronym "AGM" lately, which has caused some confusion. Our gathering in New Hampshire will be an AREA meeting, similar to those in Toronto and Pleasanton, California in past years. Our ANNUAL business meetings will be in conjunction with Grandfather Mtn. HG, in North Carolina, in July as in the past. I would like to see a record number of you at these meetings and highland games, because there are so many of you that I have not yet met.

I have been asking the Regional Commissioners to send me an itemized count of the number of highland games, festivals, and other activities at which we had Clan MacDougall representation in 1997. I have had to estimate for areas that are hard to communicate with; but it looks like we were represented at 56 highland games and 25 other activities. That's pretty impressive. Clan MacDougall is a presence in the North American Scottish culture! How much better we can do in 1998? All of the Regional Commissioners are stretched too thin in large geographical areas. We have a need for more volunteers to become involved in clan activities in their individual states.

Soon after you read this, you will be receiving your dues notices for 1998. Please consider including an extra contribution for the Gylen Castle Repair Fund and/or for the expenses incurred by the Clan officers in your region. I was personally very impressed with appeal that our Chief, Morag MacDougall made for the Gylen Castle Fund, in the Christmas issue of *The Tartan*.

Slainte Mhor,

Dick

Twinning with Oban

by Beacham McDougald

I just returned from Oban where Laurinburg, North Carolina and Oban became "Twins." We signed the agreement on 5 November 1997 with Allan MacAskill, chairman of the Argyll and Bute Council. After the meeting we went to the reception at the Soroba House. The agreement reads in part, "Our aims are: - To cultivate and intensify humanitarian, cultural, educational and commercial relations between our respective towns, and thereby to provide a firm foundation, for all time, for our understanding and friendship." Laurinburg now appears on the welcome or "Failte d'on Oban" signs as one enters Oban.

Also had a visit with Dr. and Mrs. Hadfield at Port na Mairt. They were most cordial and happy to know that a clan member was behind the twinning efforts. I was privileged to have dinner with a Lochaber councilor and a retired banker from Fort William. They both expressed their desire to establish an exchange program between Lochaber High School in Fort William and a community in the southeastern U.S.

I'm sharing this idea in hopes someone in Clan MacDougall is interested in having an exchange program with Lochaber High School in their community. For information on the program they can e-mail me at mcdougald@aol.com or write me: Beacham McDougald, 10502 Old Johns Road, Laurinburg, N.C. 28352. ☺



Above: Seated is Kay Bullard, chair of the Laurinburg Sister Cities Association (soon to be renamed "Twin Cities Association"), and Alan Macaskill, chairman of the Educational Committee of the Argyll and Bute Council. (Allan resides on Seil Island.) Standing is Terry Parker, a member of the Scotland County Board of Education, and Beacham McDougald, former member of the Scotland County Board of Education and coordinator of the student and teacher exchange program.



Left: Representatives of Laurinburg, North Carolina, at the council chambers in Oban, Scotland, for the formal signing of the twinning charter.

New Clan Society to be launched in the United Kingdom and Eire

By John Anderson McDougall

Following a year of research and discussion, plans are firming for the launching of the Clan MacDougall Society of the United Kingdom and Eire.

A steering group was formed last year consisting of clansfolk to assist & formulate plans for the Society. Outline plans were presented to the Clan Chief and her family for discussion and progress has been made towards launching the Society.

This coming year will be spend in finalizing recruitment plans for new members and our marketing plans will be implemented later this year. This is directed towards planning an international conference and gathering to be held in Oban, Scotland in the summer of 1999.

The outline plans for this major three day event, consist of outside attractions, a reception, personal welcome and appearance of

the Clan Chief, major conference to discuss proposals for an established Clan MacDougall Centre in the Oban area. Two hotels have been earmarked to accommodate clansfolk and special terms will be negotiated to provide an inclusive cost for clansfolk and their families. Further announcements will be made through this publication, should readers wish to contact us for further details please note the following:

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Tel/Fax + 44 (0) 1708 750871

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Happy Anniversary to the MacDougalds

December 10, 1947 was a wintery day on which to get married at Cromarty, Ontario. On December 20, 1997 nature was much more cooperative and the weather was mild in Stratford, as the young couple celebrated the 50th anniversary of their wedding.

John MacDougald and "Dolly", the former Margaret Norris, celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary at a dinner with 23 close family members. Among the guests were many who attended their wedding 50 years ago. These included the best man, the bridesmaid, and a niece who had attended as a 3 month old in a bassinet.

On Saturday December 20 John and Dolly were planning to go out for a small anniversary dinner to one of their favorite restaurants in their home of Stratford,

Ontario with sons Scott and Ray and their wives Marlene and Kathy. When John and Dolly reached the Festival Motor Inn they found their own brothers and sisters and their spouses, and two grandchildren, waiting there as a surprise to help them celebrate the occasion. The gathering was a success. The mixture of good food and family was just the way the couple wanted to celebrate!

John and Dolly's families have known each other for a long time. John's family emigrated from the Hebrides Isle of Islay in 1847 and John's sister Annie now resides on the original family farm established by their grandfather in the Cromarty area. Dolly's family emigrated to the Cromarty area from Northern Ireland a year later and established a farm

nearby where her brother Bob now resides.

John and Dolly are members of the Clan MacDougall Society and their son Scott is our Regional Commissioner for Quebec. One of the anniversary gifts presented to the couple was a lovely framed panoramic photograph of Gylen Castle taken by Scott on a visit to the Isle of Kerrera.

Another of our members in attendance was John's brother Colin with his wife Mildred of Bracebridge, Ontario. They have subsequently celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary on January 20, 1998.

Congratulations to the MacDougalds from the Clan MacDougall Society and we wish you many more Happy Anniversaries to come. ☺

A McDougall with Two Unusual Hobbies

by Scott MacDougald, Third Vice President



Dave MacDougall of Holden Hill, South Australia is a collector and spends his retirement years adding to his collections. Since 1982 he has accumulated 925 pen or pocket knives from 30 different countries and is trying to reach 1000. Most of his collection has been obtained in Australia but he has been in Scotland and England looking for them too. If you collect them too he would like to hear from you. He is especially interested in finding pocket knives from Austria and Russia to round out his varied collection.

Dave displays his collection at the local Social Club of the Highways Department where he was Secretary for 25 years. He retired from the Highways Department in 1987 and now has more time for his hobbies and family.

Dave was born in 1930 in Port Adelaide, Australia of Scottish parents but returned to Dundee, Scotland, as a baby and remained there until his family returned to North Queensland, Australia in 1950. On Christmas Day 1954 he married his fiancée from Dundee. They have 3 sons Andrew, Bruce and Robert all living in Australia. His son Andrew has two daughters Talitha and Miranda.

Dave says "If anyone would like to write to me, especially if they are a pocket knife collector, I would only be too happy to correspond with them". Dave also collects Laurel and Hardy films and memorabilia. If you are a collector like Dave you can write to him at Dave McDougall, 2 The Parade, Holden Hill 5088, South Australia. Maybe he will have a use for the stamps, he used to collect them too"! ☺



Gylen Castle

by Walter Macdougall, Milo, Maine



We had a fine but brief visit with the MacDougalls at Dunollie last November when Judy and I attended the Grand Lodge of Scotland. Exciting things are taking place at Gylen. I spent an hour at the castle looking at the progressing repairs.

Below is a photo taken by Robin MacDougall Morley of a helicopter landing materials at the castle. Robin writes that he had a chance to take part in this operation and to ride the helicopter back to the main land. ☺





Scot's Wha Hae?

by W. Troy McDougal

What do the items on the crest symbolize, and are the words written in Latin or Gaelic?
James Dougal, Clan MacDougall Forum Page, Internet

You, like many other Scots (including the author until this writing), are not using the entire name of the item pictured in figure 1. This is officially referred to as a "Crest Badge" to distinguish it from a part of the achievements, or the entire coat of arms. The crest is the upper most portion of the coat of arms (See figure 2, a coat of arms of MacDougall). When the Chief was not in battle, or any time he was at a formal occasion and not in armor, he wanted a symbol of his office that he could place on his hat. The solution to this request was to take the crest from the coat of arms, encircle it in silver, and make it a badge. It is also called a "Crest Badge" to distinguish it from the "Plant badge" which was also worn on the hat. The Clan MacDougall plant badge is the Bell Heather, although I have also seen the cypress listed as a plant badge for the Clan.

The specific meaning of the elements (or to use the proper vernacular, the ordinaries and charges) is difficult to tell. Most people believe that each element has a specific meaning. This is not true, with the exception of the helmets, caps and crowns, which do have their own specific meanings. Other than these exceptions, creating a crest is similar to creating a logo for a business; the technique is left to the artist. This is not to say that the elements have no meaning. Originally, the ordinaries and charges were listed in detail along with a meaning for each when the Coat of Arms was matriculated. So, then, the problem lies, not with finding meanings with each of the elements generally, but with finding the specific meanings associated specifically with the MacDougall crest badge.

The crest, from which the crest badge is taken, is described as: On a cap of maintenance a dexter arm in armour embowed, fessways, couped, proper, holding a cross crosslet fitchy, gules. An inexperienced reader would be able to understand the major elements of the crest without difficulty. It is, however, the words that the inexperienced readily stumbles over that create the interesting details of the crest. The "cap of maintenance," sometimes referred to as a "Chapeau," represents the status of the holder of the arms as a Barron, the lowest form of nobility. "A dexter

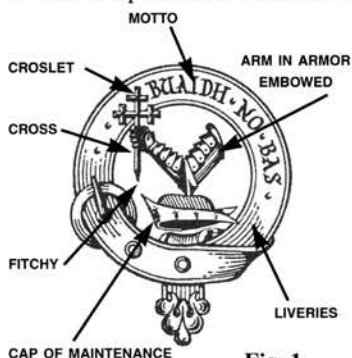


Fig. 1

arm in armour embowed" translates to "a left facing arm from shoulder to fingers, in armor, bent at the elbow. "Fessways" means the arm goes from side to side, "couped" means it is cut straight across at the end and "proper" means it is colored (or tintured as the Lord Lyon would say), in its natural coloring. Some say the fact that the arm is in armor represents an accomplishment in battle, however, I have no proof of that connection to the MacDougall crest.

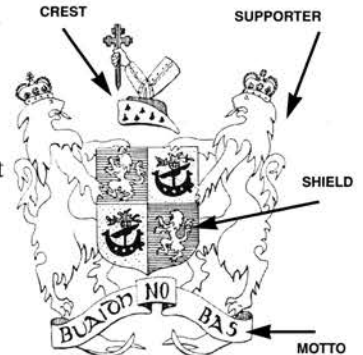


Fig. 2

The description continues by describing a cross "crosslet fitchy." These two terms, which are independent of each other, mean that the cross has an extra cross member on each arm ("crosslet") and is pointed at the bottom ("fitchy"). Walter Macdougall, in his book *Journeying Through MacDougall Country*, indicated that "[t]his symbol may have been derived from the kindred of Saint Columbia from whom Somerled was descended." Finally the description indicates that the cross is "gules," the heraldic term for the color red.

Finally, the entire badge is encircled in a belt and buckle. In the terms of heraldry, this is a "circle of livery" which means that the crest being worn is not the crest of the wearer, but rather is the crest of someone to whom the wearer is in some way connected. In ancient times, the servant or retainer was the only person entitled to wear the liveried badge. Now, however, it is perfectly acceptable, and encouraged, that the clansmember wear the liveried badge of the crest of their chief. On the livery is inscribed "Buaidh no bas" which is gaelic and means "to conquer or die." On a very few clan badges, you will see the war cry in latin, "vincere val more." This badge has to be patterned after an earlier Clan Chief, because, unlike English arms, even the words on Scottish arms cannot be altered in any way without re-matriculating (re-issuing) the arms. ☸

Sources: Bains, *The Clans and Tartans of Scotland*, 1964; Parker, *A Glossary of Terms Used in Heraldry*, 1970
Macdougall, *Journeying in MacDougall Country*, 1984.

To have your question answered in a future issue, send it to
Scots Wha Hae, 8415 Biggs Road, Ooltewah, Tennessee 37363 or
email it to 104316.365@compuserve.com.



Report on repair work at Gylen Castle, Island of Kerrera

by the Architect, Martin Hadlington
ARCH FRSA September 1997

The work is progressing very well. The archaeology is nearly complete, and we have uncovered the original roof struc-

ture positions - Easdale slates with large wrought iron pins, a coin from 1677, and the fragments of the cap house fireplace lintol. We have also discovered what appears to be either a golden eagle or Sea Eagle eirie in the North West turret, we have sent the bones for analysis to try to ascertain their age.

We have also started pointing the internal elevations and consolidating the wallheads, the new stone for the lintols is on order and the metalwork supports are currently being finalised. We will begin to clay cap the wallheads very soon and replace the turf which was carefully removed and laid aside for reuse. ☸



Childhood at Dunollie 1914-1921

The Laundry

by Jean MacDougall Hadfield

The laundry was the end room of the low white wing which is built out from the house. There is no way to it from the house without going outside, and in rough weather it was a familiar sight to see the maids, coats flung over their heads, making a dash for it. They ran past the slate-roofed game larder, the big cheese press, the narrow slit of a room known as the oil house, the old dairy (with its cool stone shelves) and then in at the laundry door.

This is a pleasant room with windows to the North and South. Like the kitchen it had the cleanness of well-kept wood and stone without the chill of modern hygienic places.

Through this room passed, every week, a plethora of bed-linen, white drapery, towels, and garments of every shape and colour. They started off in rumpled heaps, with the unattractive and frowzy aura which hangs about the unwashed, and finished up smooth and fresh smelling, neatly piled in large baskets and ready to be carried into the house.

Three wooden wash tubs stood under the south-facing window and were fitted with cold water taps and with drains at the bottom. Into them was poured the hot water, which was laboriously dipped out by buckets from the fire-heated boiler.

When the washing left the tubs it was put through an enormous mangle, it could wring out more water than any mangle that I have seen since.

The core of the laundry was the black free-standing stove in the centre, and it gave out an imposing heat. It has sloping sides all round - with a ledge on which sat the irons and heated large irons for the big articles, small ones for the more delicate ones. A long ironing table ran along the only inner wall. It was covered by white sheeting, sullied in places with scorch marks.

Over all this ruled Mrs. Sinclair, a short, thin, brisk little woman with a lined face. She had a hard life plagued as she was with a drunkard husband, and a daughter, Sarah, who was not right in the head. Sarah sometimes came to help in the laundry but she couldn't be relied upon, specially at the full moon when she was apt to have queer turns. From time to time she would threaten suicide and then disappear - causing much worry until she was found. Everyone used to say hopefully, after each crisis 'folk who threaten suicide never carry it out'. They were proved wrong many years later, when Sarah, by then a patient in Lochgilphead mental hospital, drowned herself in the Crinan Canal.

Mrs. Sinclair took a real pride in her job and allowed no shoddy work in her laundry. She was paid, my sister remembers, half a crown a day, but this was increased as the level of wages rose. My mother never let her leave without produce of some kind to take back to her home in one of the

Ganavan cottages. From here she trudged to the laundry shed in her black lace-up boots, up hill and down hill in all weathers until she was well over eighty. She had to retire, much against her will, after collapsing one day at the wash-tub.

The busyness of the laundry was convivial. On summer days the door was left open and sounds of chatter and laughter joined the heavy buzz of insects in the nearby sycamore trees. In winter, through the now closed or, muffled but still gay sounds would mingle with noise of rain and gale. It would seem on every Monday and Tuesday as if some pleasant social event was taking place.

Each Monday morning the tall wicker dirty clothes baskets were emptied. They had originally been coach baskets and were of rather an unpractical design as without abnormally long arms it was difficult to reach the bottom, and gymnastic contortions were needed in order to retrieve the clothes.

It would seem on every Monday and Tuesday as if some pleasant social event was taking place.

My mother would then issue the starch, the washing blue, and the Primrose soap. The soap was bought in long bars, kept till hard, and then cut into squares with wired, a job which was given to us children. We never knew why the soap was named Primrose, as far from having the delicate scent of primroses it smelt harsh and unpleasing.

On washing-day mornings the maids rushed through their work in the house and hurried out to help in the laundry where the fire would be alight and the room full of steam rising from the boiler. One black Monday Mrs. Sinclair discovered that the fresh water in her boiler was full of globules of grease. She accused the maids but they knew nothing about it, and were as surprised and upset as she was. Then someone remembered seeing Cameron, the gardener, coming from the laundry the previous week. He was sent for and admitted to having ('not thinking like') used the boiler to boil the bee equipment against some unpleasant bee disease. The mess caused by the wax-covered combs and frames can be imagined. Mrs. Sinclair saw red and chased the terrified Cameron out of the laundry, shouting at him rich gaelic abuse and threatening him with the heaviest iron that she could snatch up.

The work of the laundry in those days was hard. No mechanical aids dislodged the dirt and when hard rubbing was necessary it was done against a corrugated washing board. As there were then no drip-dry or minimum iron materials

everything had to be ironed and probably starched as well. Most materials needed exactly the right degree of dampness to iron them to a good finish.

Starching, as done by Mrs. Sinclair, was a skilled job. We would watch her pour boiling water on the white paste and enjoy seeing it turn, as she stirred, from a milky white to a transparent blue. If it did not 'turn' properly it was no good and was thrown away. The big tablecloths went in first as they had to be very stiff. After that because the starch became weaker and weaker, the other articles flowed in a strict order of priority.

The 'whites' were laid on a sunny patch of grass to bleach, and sprinkled with water as they dried. Having laid for some time, making a pleasant pattern on the green grass, they would become a dazzling white, save where an animal had trotted across them with muddy paws, or a passing bird fouled them from above.

Ironing day brought the thump of irons on the ironing table, a sound which could be heard some distance from the laundry. It also brought the fascinating spectacle of spraying through the teeth. A mouthful of water was taken and sprayed vigorously through the teeth in a delicate cascade on to whatever needed to be dampened. We use to practice this in the bathroom but our efforts were inartistic compared with the fine tidy display given in the laundry. This proceeding was frowned upon by authority as being unhygienic. Sprinkler bottles were provided but not used. Having perfected this effective traditional skill no one was going to abandon it.

Mrs. Sinclair was an expert with the iron and her special pride were the large damask tablecloths. These she finished to a smooth, glossy perfection. As the handles of the irons became very hot thick ironholders, made of old tweed, sacking or blanket, were necessary. She would test the heat of the iron by holding it close to her cheek. Some of the maids used the spitting method, the theory being that spittle boils fast on a hot iron and simmers on a cool one.

On wash day the room became very warm and full of steam, like the damp heat of tropical forests we children used to imagine. It must have been a cold shock on winter days, perhaps with an east wind blowing, to go from there to the washing room. This was some way from the laundry, up a stepped path with bushes and snowberry on either side. Here the washing was pegged out on long lines with simple gipsy-type wooden pegs. There were many hasty dashes to the lines in uncertain weather to rescue the clothes from sudden downpours. If the weather was consistently bad they were hung to dry on pulleys which ran the length of the laundry ceiling.

On warm days the washing green could be idyllic, with white clouds racing through blue sky, lambs playing in the field beyond and the twisted gean trees a froth of blossom. Mary the housemaid, to whom we were so devoted, used to point these things out to us. She was a great counter of blessings.

Today's wash-day helps are many - hot water at the turn of a tap, thermostatically controlled electric irons, care-free materials, washing machines and spin-driers. But I believe, for those who have the time, there is still a primeval pleasure in pummeling and rubbing clothes in soap suds, and hanging them out to blow in the fresh air. ☺

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



1998 Highland Games & Gatherings

Where are the MacDougalls?

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May 23-24	Costa Mesa, CA
May 30-31	Glasgow, KY
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June 28	Huntsville, AL
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