



THE BELFRY

Number FORTY TWO

Summer 2011

The MAD MAJOR of ARDVORLICH



Ardvorlich House

From the Manse

There was a great opportunity to showcase local talent at a concert held in the church towards the end of June. Charlie Hunter was the MC (or should I say "*fear an taighe*") and we heard from some very young musicians, and some not so young! We were treated to a mixture of classical and traditional music. The whole event was enjoyed by all, everyone enjoyed the concert and we have a happy treasurer too.

The following Sunday I thought we could continue the traditional theme, and all the hymns were sung to Scottish tunes ranging from "*The flower o' the quern*" to "*The Rowan Tree*". These new settings can be found in the new fourth edition of the Church Hymnary which the Friends had agreed to purchase for the church earlier this year.

The old hymn books are still being used for communion services and those Sundays when we expect a larger congregation - so we'll be using them on "*Games Sunday*" - July 24th at midday. See you there!

For those who enjoy classical music, the season this year runs from Sunday 10th July to Sunday 7th August. We are seeking a new organiser for these concerts as Alan Clarke is stepping down. He has done sterling work and we are all grateful to him for his work over these past few years. As most of you already know, the founder of Balquhiddel Summer Music, the Revd Jim Benson, my predecessor, passed away earlier this year. Our thoughts and prayers are with Maureen and the family.

With all this talk of music, I had a quick look at the Bible to see what is there - and almost everything is positive. David the Psalmist even speaks of the Lord as a composer when he writes that it was God who "put a new song in my mouth". Singing is one way we can all actively take part in worship. The Bible speaks of many forms of music - from a list of praise instruments given in the last Psalm to the trumpets spoken of in the last book of the Bible. References to the harp abound, and in the last book of the Bible depict an otherworldly atmosphere to the picture of heavenly realms. But above all it is the singing of the saints in heaven in their worship of the most high God that predominates.

Join with your local church on the Lord's day, and take courage that even the most feeble voice is true music to the one we worship ...

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.
Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving
thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our
Lord Jesus Christ.

(Ephesians 5:19-20 NIV)

Wishing you all every blessing

The Revd. John Lincoln

CHURCH SERVICES
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Balquhiddel Parish Kirk
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Minister: Rev John Lincoln
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Dear Friends

In this edition we continue the story 'Murder in the Glen' by Eileen Townsend, of the Stewarts and the MacGregors.

Also Polly Perkins has issued a challenge to you as follows:

'We are looking for a new picture, photo, painting, sketch, winterish in nature, to have printed as Christmas Cards that we can sell to raise funds to keep our church going. There will be a small prize for the best and selected picture. You can enhance it in any way; maybe the computer could be used to assist. We would like a bit of colour and imagination. Entries must be sent by the end of July/August this year! Make sure you sign it.

All originals will be returned. So come on, dig out some super photos and do something to them. (Nothing bigger than A4 in size please!)

Please either send them to :

Polly Perkins
1 Auchtubh,
Balquhidder
Lochearnhead
Stirlingshire
FK19 8NZ

Or email your fabulous art work to

Pollyp1@btinternet.com

I so look forward to hearing from all you artists out there!

Polly Perkins
Committee Member
'Friends of Balquhidder Church'

We do hope you respond to this challenge and give Polly a huge job in sorting out the best designs. I think possibly we should consider doing a mixed pack of the best of your designs, since I'm sure it's going to be a very difficult task to choose the best of the entries. I for one will be submitting an entry myself.

Our thanks also to Jean Edwards for organising the Midsummer Concert which was held on June 24th, as a special fundraising event. Also Jean sent £119 to Christian Aid week in response to the End Poverty campaign, thanks to all who donated to this annual appeal.

Again please let us know anything you wish to contribute to The Belfry.

Mal Dingle
Editor, See back page for contact details

OBITUARY

The Reverend Jim Benson

21.03.1932 – 8.04.2011

Born to Robert and Edna Benson in Preston, Lancashire, Jim and sister Elizabeth soon moved with them to Morecambe.

During his teens Jim excelled at cricket and singing also played an important part in his life. He became a member of the Methodist church and here he signed the pledge to be tee-total and remained so throughout his life.

Study at Bristol University followed, from 1950 – 53 and Jim gained his BA in English. During this time he was vice-president of the Students Union, secretary to the Overseas Drama Group and enjoyed playing cricket and badminton. After graduating he joined the RAF Education Branch, teaching mainly English, and was stationed in Singapore.

Jim and his first wife Ruth, were married in 1956 by which time Jim was at Exeter University studying for his Diploma in English. He re-joined the RAF in 1959 and had many postings abroad. They had three daughters, Julia, Rachel and Grace.

By 1962 Jim was stationed in Aden – here music became even more important to him and he produced performances of *The Messiah* and *Iolanthe*.

After training as a reader in the church, Jim attended Aberdeen University where he gained his BD New Testament Honours Degree. His first ministry was at Rothiemurchas and then in 1982 he moved to Balquhider.

Jim was parish Minister here and Hospital Chaplain in Stirling until his retiral in 1996 during which time he set up Friends of Balquhider Church Association together with Nisbet Cunningham (sadly now deceased) and also started the now famous *Summer Music* concert series which still continues. Friday nights were music nights at the Manse and very enjoyable they were too.

Jim's first marriage had failed and he and Ruth divorced in 1986; and in 1988 he married Maureen. Following his retirement they moved to Dunblane and he was called upon to carry out locum duties at Dunblane Cathedral, Cambusbarron and other churches.

Gradually Jim's health deteriorated and in 2009 Jim and Maureen moved to a single storey property at Auchtermuchty. When health permitted Jim still took some services and in June 2010 he took the last service at Gateside village. Although he lived there such a short time he managed to set up and run a local music appreciation group and also worked for U3A (the University of the Third Age) running both music and poetry sessions.

Jim brightened up a lot of people's lives being a generally very jolly chap. He helped a lot of people along the way and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Our sincere condolences go to Maureen and all the family.

Pauline Perkins

Balquhider Parish Church (Beadle)

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THE MAD MAJOR OF ARDVORLICH

Major James "Beag" Stewart, the second Laird of Ardvorlich on Loch Earn, is perhaps, one of the most misrepresented characters in Scottish history. Much of the guilt for this we must lay at the door of none other than Sir Walter Scott. Scott was without doubt the most widely read and popular writer of his day when he wrote the story of James Stewart's life under the title of "The Legend of Montrose". In the book he named the hero, based on James Stewart, Allan McAulay and changed the name of his family castle on Loch Earn from Ardvorlich to Darnlinvarach, but made no secret of the fact that both were based on James Stewart and his family home Ardvorlich. To this day, if you look inside the old ruined kirk at Dundurn, St. Fillans, you will see the name Allan McAulay carved at the foot of Major James Stewart's memorial plaque on the old stone wall. The Stewart family obviously did not take too unkindly to their relative being portrayed as – to borrow the Byronic epithet – "mad, bad and dangerous to know"; presumably taking the view that all publicity is good publicity and assuring Major James Stewart more than a mere footnote in the turbulent annals of Scottish history.

What is true, if modern medical theorists are to be believed, is that any trauma or stress suffered by the mother whilst pregnant may well adversely affect the mental state of her child after birth. If that is indeed the case, then the horrific event that Margaret, James Stewart's mother and the Lady of Ardvorlich, was forced to endure would produce a child with more mental problems than most.

Born Margaret Drummond-Ernock, in the parish of Comrie, Margaret Stewart's brother John was the hereditary Keeper of the King's Forest of Glenartney and in October 1589 was charged with the task of producing enough venison for the forthcoming wedding feast of King James VI and his new Danish queen Anne.



Plagued by marauding bands of MacGregors from the Braes of Balquhiddy poaching the best hinds and ignoring his pleas to desist, John Drummond-Ernock had decided to teach the thieves a lesson one day by capturing several of the brigands and cutting off their ears before sending them packing back to the Braes of Balquhiddy. Not being a Clan to take such a humiliation lightly, the MacGregors vowed vengeance and it was not long before they made their way back to Glenartney intent on making Drummond-Ernock pay the ultimate price for daring to humiliate the Clan Gregor. He may have cut off their ears but he would pay with his entire head.

No one insulted a MacGregor and got away with it. The unsuspecting Keeper was subsequently ambushed in the forest and then ceremoniously beheaded with a Clan Gregor claymore.

Their bloodlust satisfied, they wrapped the bloodied head of the luckless Keeper in a plaid and made their way back to Balquhiddy where the MacGregor clansmen were quickly rallied, under their young Chief Alasdair MacGregor of Glenstra.

In the little kirk at Balquhiddy the severed head of John Drummond-Ernock was placed on the altar. Solemnly the young Chief walked up to it and, placing his right hand on the blood-matted hair of the dead Keeper's head, he swore to protect the murderers with his own life and take their

guilt upon himself and the entire Clan. The other Clansmen gathered for this gruesome ceremony had no option but to follow suit.

Not content with this atrocity, the murderous gang decided to wreak their vengeance on the Keeper's sister who was married to Alexander Stewart, the Laird of Ardvorlich on Loch Earn. The Stewarts of Ardvorlich had long been bitter adversaries of the Balquhider MacGregors who now hatched a cruel plan in their quest for further revenge. With the bloodied head of her brother wrapped in plaid, and knowing that her husband Alexander Stewart himself was away from home, in the shadow of darkness they made for the castle, to bang on the door and demand hospitality of the unsuspecting young woman.

The Laird's heavily pregnant wife Margaret was home alone, sitting at the large table in the dining hall finishing a supper of bread and cheese when, startled by the banging on the door, she rose to see who was there at that ungodly time of night. No doubt petrified at the sight of the rough gang that confronted her, Highland hospitality being what it is, she had no choice but ask them to step inside. As they made themselves comfortable round the dining table, she hurried down to the kitchens to fetch more food and drink for the unwelcome guests. Nothing could have prepared her for what awaited her on her return. There on the large ashet in the middle of the dining table lay the bloodied, severed head of her brother John with the remnants of her own supper of bread and cheese stuffed into his gaping mouth.

Letting out a shriek of horror, she made for the door and fled the castle, running in a blind panic towards the wooded slopes of Ben Vorlich looming out of the darkness behind. Half demented with the horror of the scene she had just witnessed, the petrified young woman hid in the woods over the next few days, too terrified to return, until eventually she was found by her distraught husband and taken back to the castle. Legend has it that she gave

birth to her son alone on that terrible night by the edge of the nearby little loch known to this day as the Lady's Loch. She never fully recovered her sanity and her young son who grew up to be the famous Major James Stewart of the Covenanting Wars vowed from childhood that he would get even with the Clan that had caused his beloved mother and family such suffering. It was said that for the rest of his life Jamie, as he was known, "never spared a MacGregor, and his mother's sufferings always came before him like blood into the eyes".

James Stewart grew into manhood as an exceptionally tall, well-built young man, "with such a power in the grasp of his hand as could force the blood from beneath the nails of the persons who contended with him in a feat of strength". His temper was said to be volatile and he took any perceived hurt against his family or their dependents as a personal insult to be avenged as fiercely and quickly as possible.

From childhood his great friend was his cousin John, Lord Kilpont, the eldest son of the William Graham, Earl of Airth and Menteith. When what became known as the Covenanting Wars broke out between the Stewart King Charles I and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland over the refusal of the Kirk to countenance the restoration of Bishops or the divine right of Kings to meddle in Kirk affairs, Ardvorlich, being himself a direct descendant of the Stewart King Robert II, naturally joined the Royalist forces under James Graham, the Marquis of Montrose, along with his cousin and best friend John Graham, Lord Kilpont. It is said that it was Jamie Stewart who had persuaded his friend to join the Royalist cause once Kilpont's cousin James Graham, the Marquis of Montrose himself had defected from the Covenanting side.

On 31st August 1644, Ardvorlich and Kilpont decided to throw in their lot with the Royalist forces under Montrose at Buchanty Hill. They were accompanied by Sir John Drummond, the younger son of the Earl of Perth and a relation on his

mother's side, the Master of Madderty who was Montrose's brother-in-law and others of the local Perthshire gentry.

In their first foray under the King's colours Ardvorlich was accompanied by two of his sons, John "Iain Dubh Mhor" Stewart and his younger son Henry. Although family ties had at first made them sympathetic to the Stewart King, like Montrose himself they had initially backed the Covenant and still held a strong belief in the Presbyterian Kirk as the Established Church of Scotland. Like most Scotsmen they felt the basic tenet of the Presbyterianism where the congregation chose their own Minister to be closest to the egalitarian Scottish character and they deeply resented King Charles I's avowed intent to impose English Episcopalianism on their country. This form of worship they regarded as little better than a watered down version of Roman Catholicism and the imposition of Bishops who would be chosen by the King and who would then in turn appoint their Ministers was too much to accept. In short, the Covenant drawn up by the Scots which refused to accept this form of worship thrust upon an unwilling country was a cause worth fighting for. Great moral certitudes, however, did not take account of the clash of personalities that ensued and Montrose's increasing disillusionment with the growing power of the Campbells under the strong personality of the Marquis of Argyll, who led the Covenanting Army, had probably more to do with his changing sides than anything else. Montrose was also uncomfortable with the hardening of Covenanting attitudes towards the recalcitrant King so when it was known that he had changed allegiance and joined the Royalist cause it helped persuade Ardvorlich and others of the Perthshire gentry to follow suit.

After joining up with Montrose and his men at Buchanty Hill, the morning of Sunday, 1st September, 1644 found the Royalist Army advancing into what was home territory for Ardvorlich and Kilpont. Aware that the Covenanters under

General Sir David Leslie and Lord Elcho were not far behind them, the Marquis and his men had crossed the River Almond and entered the fertile valley of Strathearn in preparation for the confrontation with the enemy which they knew could not be far off. They seemed a raggle-taggle collection of men and a poor match for the well-disciplined Covenanters under David, Lord Elcho, who were now mustering on the moorland between Tippermuir and Cultmalindy, just outside of Perth. Leslie, the Covenanter General had won great honours as a supreme Army Commander on the Continent and was a far more experienced soldier than the much younger Montrose. Although fearsome looking with their claymores and Lochaber axes, the Royalists were a sadly depleted force composed mainly of Highlanders, loyal to the Stewarts but neither as well drilled nor as well-equipped as the enemy. Their numbers had, however, just been augmented by a contingent of wild Irish mercenaries recruited by Alastair MacDonald of Keppoch.

These Irishmen, led by MacDonald, had arrived on the scene from the West via Ardvorlich lands around Loch Earn and their reputation had preceded them. It was not long before word got to Jamie Stewart that these men whom he now had to regard as comrades in arms had recently laid waste to his own estates and left rape and pillage in their wake. Ardvorlich lands had been burned and plundered, the cattle slaughtered, the women raped and many Stewart clansmen put to the sword. He was beside himself with rage and found it difficult to contain his ire as he was forced to fight cheek by jowl with these savages. The ensuing battle on the flat, boggy moorland of Tippermuir and the subsequent victory of the 2000 Royalists over the 6000 Covenanter Army was against all the odds, thanks in main to the newly-arrived Irish contingent. This victory, however, did nothing to temper Ardvorlich's rage.

James Stewart shared a tent with his cousin and best friend John Graham, Lord

Kilpont, and, as MacDonald and the Irish were under Kilpont's command, Ardvorlich lost no time in venting his anger to his friend about the atrocities carried out by them on Loch Earn. Kilpont promised to take the matter up with Montrose but was well aware that the Marquis now needed the Irish on side more than ever. Their worth had been proved at Tippermuir.

By the time they made camp a few days later at the foot of Dunsinane Hill near the old kirk of Collace not far from Coupar Angus, Stewart could not let the matter lie any longer. How could he rest knowing that the murderers of his people were in his midst and both his Commander and his best friend were letting them get away with it?

On the night of Thursday 5th September, the battle weary men bedded down for the night by the banks of a small burn and the wounded were taken into the kirk to be tended to. In the early hours of the morning, after several drinks, things in the Ardvorlich/Kilpont tent began to get more than a little heated. Jamie Stewart demanded that now the battle was over his friend immediately discipline MacDonald and the Irish. How could he allow the devils who had carried out these foul deeds on his people and lands go unpunished for one day longer? No retribution could be too harsh for such savages. To his consternation and disbelief, Stewart found Kilpont declare himself in an impossible position. Whilst professing total sympathy with his friend for what had happened on the Ardvorlich lands, Kilpont had spoken with his cousin Montrose and they both agreed they had been totally reliant on MacDonald and the Irish for the victory at Tippermuir. If they were to have any chance of future victories against the might of Argyll and his men it was imperative they be kept on side.

On the instructions of Montrose, Kilpont attempted to play the peacemaker. He called for Alastair MacDonald, who was in charge of the Irishmen, and made him proffer his hand by way of apology to Ardvorlich. This meaningless gesture was

too much for Jamie Stewart, who, grasping it in fury, squeezed so hard that it made the blood ooze from under Alastair MacDonald's fingernails.

Kilpont was furious. He had instructions from Montrose to calm matters down but now tempers were flaring out of control. A drunken brawl ensued in which Stewart, in a blind rage, took his dirk and stabbed his friend through the heart. As his mother sufferings had "come before him like blood into his eyes" so the sufferings of his people had driven him to this – the killing of his best friend and kinsman, John Graham.

With Kilpont lying dead at his feet, and the rest of the camp now alerted to the shouting and disruption within the tent, in the melee that ensued Ardvorlich fought off two of the Irish who had joined in the fracas and, leaving them dying in his wake next to their dead officer, made his escape. Within minutes he had disappeared into the thick mist that covered the foot of Dunsinane hill where the rest of the exhausted army lay sleeping. One can only imagine what went through his mind as behind him he left not only three men dead but also his teenage son Harry lying dying in Collace Kirk of wounds sustained on the battlefield at Tippermuir.

To the consternation of Montrose, Ardvorlich also took with him all the men he had mustered from his Loch Earn estates as he rode hell for leather for the opposing Covenanting side. The only close comrade missing in his flight was his own eldest son John Stewart – "Iain Dubh Mhor". Iain Dhu was obviously cut from the same cloth as his father, with very much a mind of his own, as after his father's defection he remained with the Royalists, joined the Atholl Regiment and continued to fight for the King. John Murray, the 1st Marquis of Atholl was a close friend of Iain's, probably through the Murrays of Atholl holding the superiority of the lands of Dalveich and Carnlea on Loch Earn and the family were old friends of the Stewarts of Ardvorlich.

Argyll was delighted with the defection of so well-regarded an officer and his men and, proving himself a competent soldier on the field of battle, Jamie Stewart was promoted from his previous rank of Captain in the Royalist cause to a Major on the Covenanter side by 1648. Much anti-Royalist propaganda was engendered throughout Scotland by the Kilpont incident and Ardvorlich found himself a hero in the eyes of many.

Major James Stewart became a highly regarded officer throughout the remaining years of the Covenanting Wars and was frequently mentioned in the battles of his commanding officer General Sir David Leslie. He is also on record as having saved the lives of several of his former Royalist friends through his close connection with Leslie when the King's cause became hopeless and the gallows awaited most of the high-ranking officers.

A few months after the incident at Collace, in March 1645, the government ratified Ardvorlich's pardon and stated that he and his friends had joined up with Montrose at the same time as Kilpont but that: "...heartily thereafter repenting of this error in joining with the said rebels and abhorring their cruelty, (Ardvorlich) resolves with his said friends to forsake their wicked company and imparted this resolution to the said umquhile Lord Kilpont. But he, out of his malignant dispositions, opposed the same, and fell in struggling with the said James (Stewart) who, for his own relief was forced to kill him at the Kirk of Collace, with two Irish rebels who resisted his escape, and so removed happily with his said friends and came straight to the Marquis of Argyll and offered their service to their country. Whose carriage in this particular being considered by the Committee of Estates, they by their act of 10 December last, find and declare that the said Stewart did good service to the Kingdom in killing the said Lord Kilpont and two Irish rebels aforesaid being in actual rebellion against the country, and approved of what he did therein".

For Argyll, the defection of Ardvorlich and his friends and vassals to the Covenanters' side was a great coup. Buoyed up by this he reissued the reward of £20,000 bounty for anyone who would succeed in killing the Royalist leader Montrose himself. James Graham, the Marquis of Montrose, was not so easily caught, however, and in April of that year, in revenge for his cousin Lord Kilpont's death, on his way to the Trossachs he deliberately marched his men along the southern shore of Loch Earn destroying what remained of the Ardvorlich estate that had survived the initial Irish onslaught. This callous act found great favour with the outlawed Clan MacGregor of Balquhider, many of whom as a consequence rushed to join the Royalist colours.

Major James Stewart went on to see the Covenanters' cause prevail and watch, with undoubted mixed emotions, as his kinsman James Graham, the young Marquis of Montrose, was led to the scaffold at the Mercat Cross in Edinburgh on the 21st May 1650. The Stewart King Charles I for whom so many had paid with their lives also lost his head and the divine right of kings died with him. To the end Montrose vowed his loyalty to the first Covenant and the tenets of Presbyterianism it represented but declared it was only the later strictures of the Solemn League that he could not support. In truth he had joined the fray as much against the powerful Campbells who, from their stronghold of Inverary Castle in Argyll, he had seen as much a threat to the country as the Stewarts adherence to the divine right of kings. In doing so he had backed the wrong horse and paid with his life. Thousands of young men – "the flower of Scotland" lay dead in his wake and old family loyalties had been torn apart. His cousin John Graham, Lord Kilpont, lay dead and buried, killed in the heat of the moment by his kinsman and best friend James Stewart of Ardvorlich who went on to help lead the Covenanting Army to its ultimate victory.

In 1654, after hostilities had ceased, James, alongside the heads of all the other Stewart houses in Balquhiddy, Athol and Appin, signed the Bond of Keltney Burn. In this they promised their future allegiance to the beheaded king's son King Charles II. Given that this Bond was signed during the era of Cromwell's Commonwealth and only five years after the beheading of Charles I, it would appear that the extended Royal Stewart family still had the greatest difficulty denying their blood ties and loyalty to the dynasty from which they all sprang.

A few years later James was approached by the Earl of Moray for his help in expelling the outlawed Clan Gregor from Glen Finglas. It was well-known that the MacGregors had no greater enemy in all Scotland and that few, if any, was better qualified for the task than the Major. The MacGregor Chief was subsequently captured and marched off the Doune Castle, the great fortress, built centuries before by James Stewart's own ancestor, the Duke of Albany. In recognition for his services James was granted significant lands in Glen Finglas.

He married twice, firstly to Barbara Murray of Buchanty by whom he had four children and secondly to the widow Janet Buchanan with whom there was no issue. Interestingly, the son to whom he remained closest was John Stewart 'Iain Dubh Mhor' – a natural child of whose mother we have no record.

Jamie Stewart, through his exploits in the Covenanting Wars and larger than life personality, went on to become both a legend in his own lifetime and far beyond – receiving the ultimate accolade when Sir Walter Scott wrote a best-selling book about him. When the war was over Stewart returned to Ardvorlich to pick up the pieces and attempt to resurrect the fortunes of the estate after the ravages of war. To the end of his days he vowed vengeance against the MacGregors who had wreaked so much misery of his own family and others around Loch Earn. He did as much as anyone to persuade the King and parliament to continue to outlaw

the Clan by "letters of fire and sword", depriving them of their name and lands. So great was the animosity between the MacGregors of Balquhiddy and the Stewarts of Ardvorlich that when the Major eventually died peacefully in his bed the former concocted a gruesome plan to disrupt the funeral procession and desecrate the body.

Hearing that their sworn enemy had died and knowing that, according to tradition, his body would be carried by his retainers from his home at Ardvorlich along the shores of Loch Earn to be buried in the family vault in the kirk at Dundurn, the MacGregors vowed to carry out the ultimate insult. They laid a plan to intercept the funeral party and capture James Stewart's body which would then be beheaded and denied the final respect of a proper funeral.

To the fury of the MacGregors, however, their cruel plan was betrayed to the Stewarts who secretly buried their Laird by the lochside before the Clan Gregor could get their hands on his body. The corpse of James Stewart lay there for several years and was only disinterred in during more peaceful times when they could safely carry out the official burial in the kirk at Dundurn without fear of interruption. To this day a stone marks the spot near the shore of Loch Earn where the Major was temporarily laid to rest. It reads, "This stone marks the place of the interment of Major James Stewart afterwards removed to the family vault at Dundurn. Died about 1660".

Another commemorative stone is still visible nearby. Reading "Near this spot we re interred the bodies of 7 MacDonalds of Glencoe killed when attempting to harry Ardvorlich. Anno Domini 1620", it stands testament to a raid on Ardvorlich by seven MacDonalds, led by a MacGregor, who descended on Loch Earn with the intention of laying waste to the Stewart home. Again the Stewarts succeeded in thwarting their enemies, fighting off and killing the potential raiders and burying their bodies by the side of the loch. Interestingly,

many years later during the building of the present road on the south side of Loch Earn seven skeletons were unearthed.

One mile east of the bridge over the River Earn is a small settlement around the old railway bridge and it was here in 1803 that road builders uncovered a large number of skeletons, complete with decaying rags of clothing and metal buttons. Local tradition had it that these were some of the countless MacGregors and their cohorts the MacDonalds that James Stewart had slaughtered in his lifetime as Laird of Ardvorlich. Certainly on one occasion James Beag took a dozen MacGregors prisoner and hanged them himself rather than turn them over to the Crown for prosecution. Little wonder when he died there were those only too willing to desecrate his corpse.

"The Mad Major", as he was sometimes known, was certainly a larger than life figure and his memory and exploits have endured down the centuries. His son John "Iain Dhu Mhor", for his part became just as larger than life a character. He is recorded as being an exceptionally tall, fine-looking man as the Gaelic nickname "Iain Dhu Mhor" _ Big Black John _ indicates. He is said to have been "a very fine looking Highlander and a good soldier". He became a great favourite with John Murray, the first Marquis of Atholl, and his wife the former Lady Amelia Stanley, Countess of Derby, and was a frequent visitor to their home Blair Castle. In fact when the Marquis first brought his young English wife to Scotland, Iain Dhu Mhor Stewart, clad in his full Highland regalia, was invited specially to be introduced to her as the finest possible specimen of Highland manhood. He consequently became a great favourite of the pair and spent a lot of his time at Blair Castle. So great was the friendship between the Murrays and Iain Dhu that the Marquis actually granted the lands of Dalveich and Carnlea and Lechine of Auchraw to him. He lived to be a great age, dying – so family tradition has it – at over one hundred years. Active through the Covenanting Wars of the mid 1600s, he lived to experience the Jacobite

Uprising of 1715 and to see his great grandchildren into adulthood. It is thought that he died in late 1732 and is almost certainly buried in the family vault at Dundurn. His family farmed the lands of Dalveich, Auchleskine, Ardveich, Carnlea, Lechine and Keip.

Iain Dhu Mhor's son and Major James Stewart's grandson, was Alexander Stewart born in Dalveich in 1665 and named after Iain Dhu's grandfather Alexander Stewart, the first¹ Laird of Ardvorlich. Alexander, who was known as Sandy, married a cousin Janet Stewart, whose mother was a MacLaren.

Their son Donald, who was born on 4th September 1720 in Auchleskine of Ardveich and Keip, Balquhidder, was a tacksman and farmed at Ardveich and Keip. He married Isabella MacGregor, on 10th April 1756 at Balquhidder – thereby, within two generations, uniting the two local warring Clans at last. She was the daughter of Alexander MacGregor and a MacLaren. Alexander was the son of Sir Gregor MacGregor of Clan Dughail Chair, the great Clan Chief.

Donald Stewart and Isabella MacGregor's son John Stewart was christened on 23rd March 1760 in Dalveich. He married a second cousin Anne Stewart, daughter of James "Og" Stewart. They had six children. Their youngest son the Reverend Alexander Stewart was a great Gaelic scholar and became Minister at Killin. Their second son Robert, baptised on 18th March 1798, at Dalveich, was my own great great grandfather.

The descendants of James Stewart, the mad Major of Ardvorlich, are now scattered throughout the world but they can claim descent from some of the most colourful characters ever to have strode the pages of Scottish history and there are few places witness to so much of that history than the lands of Loch Earn and Balquhidder. Those of us with the good fortune to live here are blessed indeed.

Eileen Townsend

March 2011

Clachan Cottage Hotel
Spectacular Lochside Setting
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Serving finest Scottish cuisine
With two rosette experienced chef
Also fresh Scottish Food
In public and Bistro Bar
Centrally located for touring
Excellent Terms
Family run, guaranteeing
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Lochearnhead, Perthshire, FK19 8PU
Tel; 0156 7830 247
www.clachancottagehotel.co.uk
Email: info@clachancottagehotel.co.uk



Ben Sheann Hotel

Scottish

We are a family run Hotel open all year round
Autumn / winter specials now available.

Relax in our comfortable Lounge with a log burning fire.
Public bar with pool or darts, even try your hand at
Dominoes

Our Restaurant is open for Lunches/Evening meals
With our extensive menu made fresh for you.

Entertainment every Friday and Saturday nights
We are sure you will have a very pleasant and
Enjoyable time

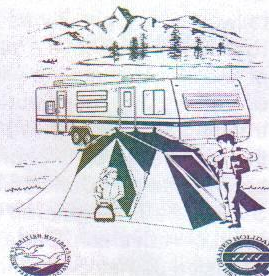
www.bensheannahotel.co.uk
bensheannahotel@btconnect.com
Tele: 08452264922

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CARAVAN &
CAMPING PARK

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FK18 8NJ

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ON THE A84
HIGHWAY TO THE HIGHLANDS



ROMAN CAMP COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL

A 17th century baronial hunting lodge built for the Dukes of Perth, set in 20 acres of gardens

combining the grace of a French chateau with the intimacy of a country cottage.

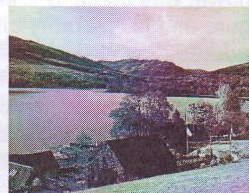
A "country home" atmosphere, antique furnishings, and each room full of character - be it
the library with its ornate plaster ceiling and "secret" chapel, or the tapestry-hung
restaurant.

Bedrooms are all distinctive and are equipped with those thoughtful little extras to
make your stay as comfortable as possible. Private fishing on the adjacent River
and interesting scenic walks all around.

The Roman Camp Country House Hotel



Briar Cottages
Self Catering Holidays on
Loch Earn

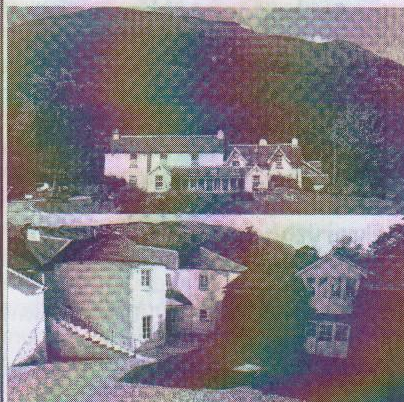


South facing loch views
3 acre ornamental gardens
Free fishing and mooring
Use of Hot Tub

Tel: 00 44 (0)1567830443
www.stayatbriar.co.uk

Monachyle Mhor Hotel

Which Good Food Guide Out of Town Restaurant Scotland the Best 2006



Small Hotel of the Year 2005 AA 2Rosettes
Macallan Taste of Scotland Winner 2001

The Hotel is set in its own 2000 acres overlooking
the beautiful lochs Voil and Doine.

Our 14 rooms are all en-suite, contemporary and
chic. The award winning restaurant has a daily
changing menu using fresh local produce. We
also have a Conference Suite. Non-residents and
walkers welcome. Morning and afternoon tea
and homemade scones, soup and sandwiches.

Lunch 12 noon - 1.45 pm

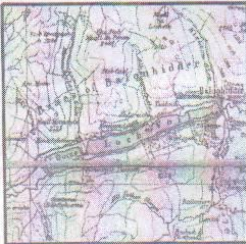
Dinner 7.00 - 8.30 pm Booking advisable

Balquhidder, Lochearnhead
Perthshire FK19 8PQ

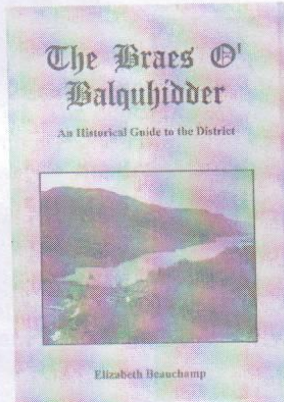
01877 384 622

ITEMS FOR SALE

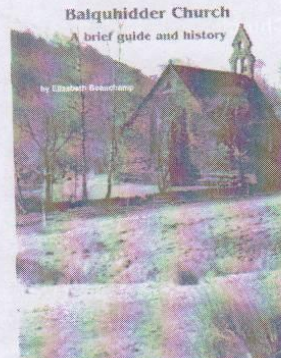
A GAELIC TOPOGRAPHY OF BALQUHIDDER PARISH



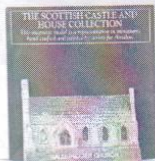
**A Gaelic Topography of
Balquhiddier Parish**
Price £2.50



The Braes o' Balquhiddier
An Historical Guide to the District
By Elizabeth Beauchamp
Price £7.50



Balquhiddier Church
A brief guide and history
By Elizabeth Beauchamp
Price £2.00



Fridge Magnet
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**Balquhiddier
Church Mug**
Celebrating 150th
anniversary
£5.00 now £4



**The
Four
Seasons**
hotel

**The finest setting in the Southern Highlands
overlooking Loch Earn.**

Contemporary Scottish cuisine using local produce. Fine
dining with emphasis on high quality food
at two Red AA Rosettes
or more informal Bar Meals.
Bar Meals for Lunch or Supper,
Afternoon Tea, and Fine Dining.
Individually decorated Hotel bedrooms,
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Family Bar with Food

Real Ales

Bistro Dining

Accommodation

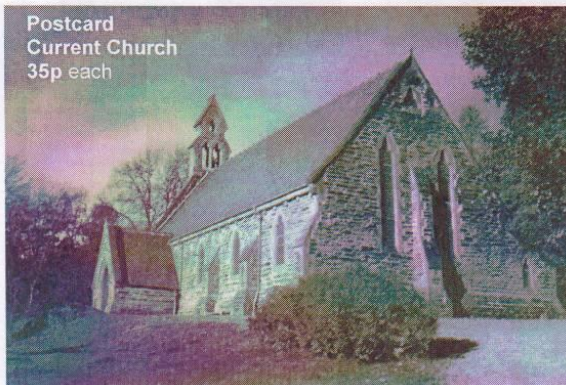
Terraced Beer Garden

Jill and Stephen Nixon

The Inn and Bistro

Strathyre

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Postcard
Current Church
35p each



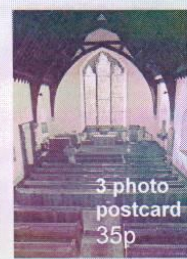
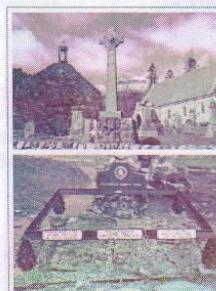
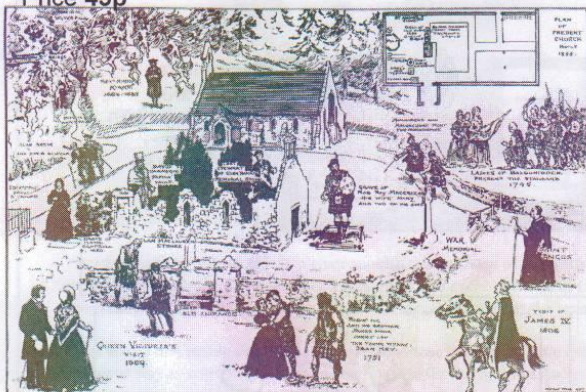
Pack of 2 notelets
95p with envelopes
They show drawings of

- 1- The Old Church
&
- 2- Balquhiddie Church



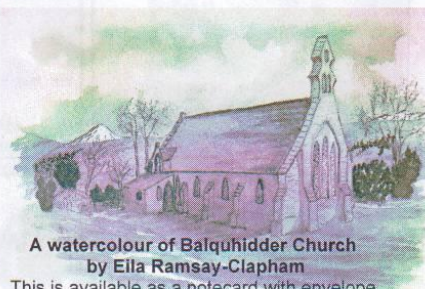
Also as mounted
prints £3.95 each

Large Postcard (12 x 17cm)
Depicting historical events in Balquhiddie Churchyard
Price 45p



3 photo
postcard
35p

Balquhiddie Church



A watercolour of Balquhiddie Church
by Ella Ramsay-Clapham

This is available as a notecard with envelope
at 45p or a pack of 10 for £4

ORDER FORM

By Post Rosphilda Crafts, Tannoch Taigh, Balquhiddie, Perthshire FK19 8PB
OR

Enquire/Order by email :- rosemary.whittemore@yahoo.co.uk
Telephone—01877 384359

Qty	Description of Item	Price	Total
	Postage and Packing (50p only for a postcard)	£2.50	£2.50
	Total Payable		

I wish to pay by Paypal/cheque/postal order my email address.....

BALQUHIDDER SUMMER MUSIC

Now in its 26th year, this concert series promotes the enjoyment of classical music in this rural community and provides a platform for young musicians starting out on their careers. The concerts are performed in the historic Balquhiddar Parish Church designed by David Bryce, in a beautiful venue set among the stunning scenery of the Braes o' Balquhiddar.

Have a look at our video clip taken during one of the 2010 concerts, showing the interior and exterior of the church and the beautiful surroundings.

All concerts take place at 7pm, giving time to return to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, and all parts of Central Scotland. There is adequate parking around the church.

Ticket prices: standard £8, concessions £7, under 15s free. The church has more than 200 seats, and average audience size is about 100, so there is no need to pre-book, but for peace of mind you may reserve individual tickets for collection and payment at the door.

Pre-paid season tickets are available at £30 for all 5 concerts.

We rely on the generosity of local individuals and organisations. If you are interested in supporting us, please have a look at our sponsorship page.

We have a facility for you to join our mailing list or contact us on any relevant topic.

CONCERT DATES

10 July Djordje Gajic (virtuoso accordion)

17 July Camerata Ritmata (guitar, piano, bass, percussion)

24 July Tim Dean and singers from the RSAMD

31 July Alba Quartet (string quartet)

7 August Bella Tromba (trumpet quartet)

For further information and concert details please see the website

<http://www.balquhiddersummermusic.org.uk>

Friends of Balquhiddar Church



Annual General Meeting

All members of The Friends of Balquhiddar Church are cordially invited to the Annual General Meeting to be held on Wednesday the 10 August 2011 in the Friendship Room of the Church at 7.00 pm.

Light Refreshments will be provided.

The meeting will be preceded by the St Angus Day Service at 6 pm.

Please complete & return the below portion **only** if you are able to attend, thank you

Friends of Balquhiddar Church Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 10th August - 7.00 pm in the Friendship Room in the church.

Name _____

I / we - will be attending

Please return to :

Miss Rosemary Whittemore
Tannoch Taigh
Balquhiddar
Lochearnhead
Perthshire
FK19 8PB

Tel - 01877 384359

Email : rosemary.whittemore@yahoo.co.uk