

THE SCOTS CANADIAN

Issue X

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Summer 2001

Tenth Tall Ship Cruise planned for September 2

For the tenth year in a row, the crew of Canada's tallest sailing ship the *Empire Sandy* will be hoisting the mainsails and unfurling the jibs to get the Scottish Studies Society's annual cruise underway on Sunday September 2.

As in the past, the event has been organized to commemorate the arrival of the Scots pioneers who arrived in Pictou, Nova Scotia back in 1773 on the old ship *Hector*. We don't ever want to forget those intrepid emigrants who made that historic and difficult voyage. These hardy souls encouraged their fellow clansmen to follow and help change Canada from a backwoods colony into a nation that is now the envy of the world.

So dig out your old tartan or plaid clothing or anything that might look a bit pioneerlike and come down to Harbourfront in Toronto to help recreate the pioneer spirit! This is an

event for all age groups. And don't forget to tell your friends!

We have arranged to give you a taste of the Scots experience with the pipes, fiddle music and Scottish Country Dancing on board the ship. It's a great time to be out on Lake Ontario and if you are looking for a photo opportunity this is it!

There will actually be two cruises, one boarding at 11:00 a.m., departing at 11:30 a.m., the other boarding at 2:00 p.m., departing at 2:30 p.m.

For those of you who have been attending this event in the past, please note that the *Empire Sandy* will be docked at a different location from previous years. It leaves from Pier 6 at Marina Quay West, between Portland St. and Lower Spadina.



Looking forward to seeing you on board!

Scots Wha Hae

*a desire to nurture and preserve
their heritage in Canada
are invited to join*



THE SCOTTISH STUDIES FOUNDATION

*a charitable organization
dedicated to actively supporting the
Scottish Studies Program
at*

The University of Guelph

Charitable registration
No. 119253490 RR0001
Website: <http://www.scottishstudies.ca>

SCOTTISH SAILING CRUISE

Ticket Prices

Adults: \$15 in advance
\$20 at dockside
Children age 10 and under: \$8

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The *Empire Sandy* offers a unique blend of adventure under sail along with the comfort and elegance of a bygone era. Driven by a cloud of billowing white canvas on three lofty masts, you'll glide effortlessly along Toronto's spectacular waterfront.

Letter from the Chair

Dear Fellow Members,

As this is my first letter to you as Chair of the Foundation, I want to let you know that I consider it a great honour for me to have been considered for this position.

I would like to start by thanking each and every one of you for your support and for your generosity in supporting our cause. Our membership now includes people from all provinces in Canada as well as from the USA, the UK, Europe and Australia. And I am especially delighted to note that a very high percentage of membership renewals have been accompanied by donations far in excess of the basic membership fee. Indeed our membership at the patron level is at an all-time high.

I would like to thank our immediate Past Chair, Ed Stewart, for the tremendous effort he has put in during his terms of office. Ed is a very modest individual and has been a great encouragement to us all and I wish him all the best for the future.

I believe that all of us involved with the Foundation have a wonderful opportunity placed before us, a unique opportunity to create something that didn't exist before -- a Chair of Scottish Studies at the University of Guelph.

Others have had similar dreams. In Canada we can look at the Stratford Festival, the Trans-Canada Trail or the Calgary Stampede -- all started by a small group of visionaries who had the dedication, staying power and the gift of persuasion to see their dreams fulfilled.

Of course, there are lots of people in Canada involved in Scottish cultural activities in one way or another. But the beauty of our cause is that we are not competing with other Scots-Canadian organizations. On the contrary, by solidifying Guelph's position as the major centre for Scots and Scots-Canadian culture in Canada we are in the business of providing an academic infrastructure that can be in place for generations to come.

So what do we actually have to do? We all know we have one big overall goal: the Chair and the business of raising funds to establish it. Therefore, we have to provide donors with compelling reasons to donate. We have to look for innovative ways to raise funds by tapping into the skill-sets of our members and be on the lookout for opportunities. We have to work closely with the University of Guelph -- in particular, the University's Development Office to coordinate our fundraising activities. We

have to work to maximize the return on our present capital.

We also have to give members a reason to stay with us and encourage new members to join. When you think about it, our membership level is an indication of support from the community at large -- an important factor in enticing donor support.

The role of the Scottish Studies Society will be crucial here. It can raise the profile of our cause by way of events, publicity and by recognizing the contribution of Scots in Canada.

Our Newsletter and Website can be vehicles to showcase the talents of students and faculty at Guelph, our members and the Scots-Canadian community at large. And finally, we have to ensure that every contribution, big or small, is acknowledged.

Those of us who have volunteered to serve on the Board also have some administrative work to do. Since the Foundation was established back in 1986 we have been so focussed on membership drives and fundraising activities that there has been little time left to review our procedures to ensure that they reflect current reality. Indeed, we have recently come under some criticism to the effect that our enthusiasm has got in the way of our following the rules!

To address this situation, in the next few months we will be undertaking a thorough review of our structure, documentation and procedures and will be recommending steps to ensure that our organization is on a sound administrative footing.

On the topic of volunteer effort, when I have had a chance to speak to our members, the most popular question I am asked is "How can I help?" This is especially frustrating for members who live far away from the Toronto-Guelph area. So the answer really boils down to the amount of time and type of skills that members can donate.

Keep in mind that the newsletter is a great outlet for those of you with stories to tell, photographs to show, or trivia to share! Those of you good at organizing events are welcome to contact us or, if you have any other ideas, let us know. We are open to suggestions!

Now I know all of this is a very exciting challenge but as we all know -- if we don't do it nobody else will! So thank you very much for your endorsement. I'm looking forward to working with you all.

Sincerely,
David M. Hunter

Major Campaign for Scottish Studies launched

The following is an excerpt from the University of Guelph's literature targeted to attract sponsor support for the "Chair in Scottish Studies" project.

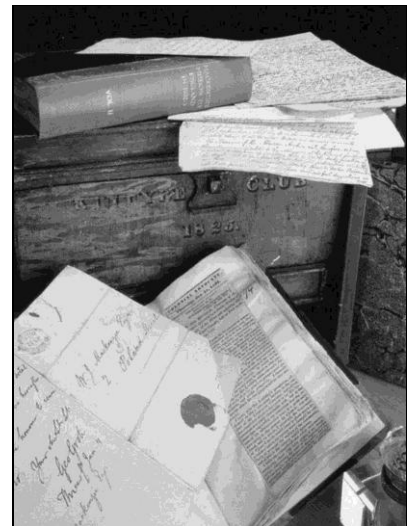
More than two million Canadians trace their ancestry to the rugged shores of Scotland, but their Scottish heritage belongs to all of us - so important are the contributions that Scots have made to the history and culture of Canada, from its earliest beginnings to today's ever-changing society.

Scots in Canada have made tremendous contributions as explorers, political leaders, scientists, teachers, doctors, inventors, writers and more. Indeed, virtually every facet of Canadian life has benefited - and continues to benefit - from the leadership of the hearty and colourful Scots.

There is a growing need to preserve and understand our Scottish heritage if we are to fully appreciate the history that has brought us to the 21st century.

The University of Guelph and the Scottish Studies Foundation invite you to join them in celebrating the contributions of Canadian Scots by preserving our Scottish traditions and supporting North America's most prestigious educational program in Scottish Studies.

The University of Guelph is the best place



The original 1832 scrapbooks of William Lyon Mackenzie offer rare insights into Canada's early political history. They were purchased by the Scottish Studies Foundation and are on permanent loan to the University of Guelph Library.



A selection of books from the Scottish Collection in the rare book section of the University of Guelph Library

in North America to pursue Scottish studies: Guelph's is a first-class interdisciplinary program, supported by the best Scottish collection outside the United Kingdom, excellent teaching and research, and unique community outreach.

The Scottish Studies Program at Guelph is unique in the world for its treatment of the Scots as a separate people in general studies of immigration, settlement and ethnicity, and in making the Scottish contribution to the culture and history of Canada relevant to contemporary Canadian students and community leaders. Guelph's Scottish Studies Program celebrates Scotland's most enduring contribution to western civilization: the tradition of excellence in and accessibility to education.

To ensure that Scottish Studies at Guelph remains the leader in its field, the University and the Scottish Studies Foundation, a charitable organization dedicated to supporting the Scottish Studies Program, are working together to endow a Chair in Scottish Studies -- the first in North America.

The creation of an endowed Chair is part of an initiative to expand the horizons of intellectual inquiry in the Scottish Studies Program. As well as providing dynamic academic leadership in the form of the Chair, the initiative will put resources in place to enhance the Scottish Collection and make it more accessible to international researchers and collaborative projects. It will support the

next generation of Scottish Studies scholars by providing graduate student scholarships and research support. It will also expand the Program's unique community outreach activities to promote the ongoing study of Scottish and Scottish-Canadian history and create even greater awareness of and appreciation for the impact of the Scots in Canada.

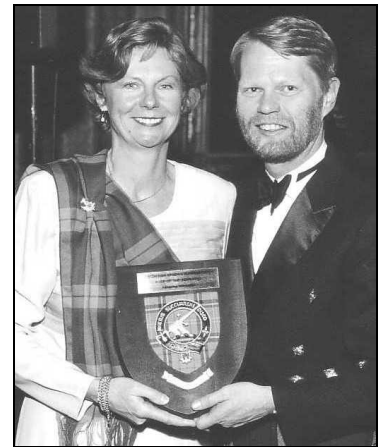
The endowment of the Chair is critical to building Guelph's excellence in teaching and research, in keeping with the traditions of Scottish Studies at Guelph and with the priorities of the University's Strategic Plan.

In particular, the Chair in Scottish Studies at Guelph will make Scottish and Scottish-Canadian studies relevant for a new generation of Canadian business and community leaders, while providing a cultural focus for Canada's Scottish community as it responds to the challenges of defining a place for itself in contemporary Canada.

Income from the endowment will support the teaching, research and outreach of an outstanding scholar who will assume a faculty position in Guelph's College of Arts. The scholar in the new position will travel and lecture widely to encourage new educational and cultural activities in Scottish studies programs nationally and internationally, while enhancing Guelph's reputation and influence as an internationally acclaimed centre in the field.

Endowed Chairs, among them Guelph's proposed Chair in Scottish Studies, are successful at:

- focusing research efforts by strengthening the body of work, attracting and engaging interested participants, generating more knowledge and expanding research perspectives
- integrating research and teaching by expanding the curriculum, attracting students to the program, and imbuing the enhancements to the program with creative and reflective energies
- creating and developing links with the community, by initiating dialogue with a wider audience and attracting new resources to the program ■



The 2001 Scot of the Year Award being presented to Kathy Macmillan by Michael Macmillan

Award Features Clan Motto

A number of readers have asked to learn more about the actual *Scot of the Year Award* and where it came from.

As in the past, this year's award was a plaque in the form of a shield and this time featured the Macmillan tartan and clan crest along with the clan motto... "Miseris Succerrere Disco," which in English means "I learn to succour the distressed."

The motto is a quotation from *Aenid*, the epic by Virgil the Latin poet who lived from 70 to 19 B.C. The complete quote is actually... "Non ignara mali, miseris succerrere disco," meaning... "Not myself being unacquainted with difficulty, I learn to succour the distressed." This famous quotation has been an inspiration to many including French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau who stated that ... "I know no line so beautiful, so profound, so touching, so true."

The actual award was donated by Hector Russell Scottish Imports in Toronto, one of the Foundation's Corporate Sponsors and one which has been an active supporter of the Society's Tartan Day Dinner, the Annual Tall Ship Cruise and other events.



The Clan MacMillan Crest

Scottish Studies Program News

by M. Cameron and R. Falconer, University of Guelph Scottish Studies Office

The Scottish Studies Program was started in 1967 and has since garnered a reputation for academic excellence. The Scottish Studies Program is generously supported by the Scottish Studies Foundation. Considered the most comprehensive of its kind outside of Scotland, the Scottish Studies Program at the University of Guelph produces a host of talented and successful graduates. Currently, there are eleven History graduate students in the Scottish Studies Program at the University of Guelph. The program offers two graduate degrees, the MA and the PhD. James Davies and Natasha Kuran, the two most recent graduates of the program, are profiled below.

JAMES DAVIES, M.A. HISTORY/SCOTTISH STUDIES

Age: 23

Home: Calgary, Alberta

James came directly to Guelph after receiving his first degree in History (AB) from McGill University in Montreal.

Major Paper:

"Tobias Smollett, Principal Personage: An Example of a Scottish Intellectual's Response to the Issue of National Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain."

Abstract:

The works of Dumbarton-born author Tobias Smollett (1721-1771) are examined in an 18th-century British historical context taking into account intellectual immigration, Scottophobic prejudice, and debates concerning national identity that preceded the Union of Great Britain (1707). Smollett, more so than fellow Scottish writers in London like David Hume and James Boswell, is revealed to be a writer concerned with the position of Scots vis-à-vis their English and Welsh brethren as he argued that a true union of the people of Great Britain, rather than their assimilation by the English, would build a commercially successful and morally superior nation.

Future plans:

Open

NATASHA KURAN, M.A. HISTORY/SCOTTISH STUDIES

Age: 27

Home: Hudson Heights, Quebec

Natasha worked for McNeil Consumer Healthcare after receiving her first degree in Biology at the University of Guelph, but "chose to return to school to pursue a topic which interested me immensely."

Thesis:

Medical Practitioners and the Treatment of Disease in Eighteenth-Century Scotland

Abstract:

An analysis of the apothecaries and folk medicine practitioners who provided healthcare to the majority of the Scottish public. The thesis also investigated the types of herbal medications used in Scotland in the eighteenth century and their perceived use. The results of the thesis broadened the category of culturally-acceptable medical practitioners to include more than physicians, and identified that the majority of healing plants used at the time continue to be recognized for similar properties today.

Future Plans: Natasha has been accepted to pursue doctoral studies at the University of Stirling in Scotland but has chosen to defer for one year while she takes a job as a technical writer in Ottawa.

Students currently enrolled in the Scottish Studies program and their prospective thesis topics:

MA:

Susan Banks, 2nd year

Education and Heritage in Nineteenth-century Scotland.

Morna Cowan, 2nd year

The Labouring Poor in late Nineteenth-century Scotland.

Michelle Lambe, 1st year

Bastardy in Nineteenth-century Scotland.

Heather MacDonald, 2nd year

Cáin Adomnáin: The Familia Columbae and the Politics of Piety.

Samantha Miller, 1st year

Scottish Emigration to Canada.

Suzanne Thill, 1st year.

The Act of Union, 1707.

PhD:

Mairi Cowan, 3rd year

Popular piety in Medieval Scotland.

Shannon Creps, 3rd year

Women and the Scottish Reformation.

Rob Falconer, 1st year

For King or Kirk: Scottish Identities during the Long Sixteenth Century.

Scott Moir, 5th year

The Justice of the Peace in Seventeenth-century Scotland.

Janay Nugent, 2nd year

The Family in Early Modern Scotland.

For a full list of those graduates, visit the Scottish Studies Program website at: [http://www.uoguelph.ca/history/scotstudy/pages/academic info.htm](http://www.uoguelph.ca/history/scotstudy/pages/academic%20info.htm)

Fall Colloquium to be held on October 13

The Scottish Studies Foundation and the Scottish Studies Program at the University of Guelph will be holding the annual Fall Colloquium at the University of Guelph on October 13, 2001.

As usual, this conference is open to the public and all members and friends are encouraged to attend. More details will be made available closer to the event

The theme for this year's colloquium is *Regulating Culture and Society in Scotland*. Researchers from across Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom will present papers on all aspects of social, political, economic, religious, legal and domestic regulation within Scotland.

The Scottish Studies Program at the University of Guelph is an interdepartmental group established to co-ordinate graduate studies in the history, literature and culture of Scotland and Scottish settlements in Canada.

As such, we have strongly encouraged participation from both graduate students and faculty members.

At this year's colloquium, the Scottish Studies Foundation will be presenting the Frank Watson Prize in Scottish History honouring the best book, monograph, dissertation or edited set of papers on Scottish history published between 1999-2000.

For more information please contact:

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The Slaying of Lady Mondegreen

by David Hunter

Way back in the last century, about the mid-1950s to be more precise, there was a rise in the popularity of traditional folk music throughout the English-speaking world. At that time, columnist Sylvia Wright became aware of an embarrassing revelation. As a child she had heard the Scottish ballad *The Bonny Earl of Moray* and for the longest time believed that the opening stanza went like this:

Ye Hielands and ye Lowlands
Oh whaur hae ye been?
They hae slain the Earl of Moray,
And Lady Mondegreen.

"Poor Lady Mondegreen," thought Sylvia Wright. A tragic heroine dying with her liege, "how poetic!" When she discovered some years later that what they had actually done was slay the Earl of Moray and lay him on the green, Wright was so distraught by the sudden disappearance of her heroine that she

THE BONNY EARL O' MORAY

Ye Hielands and ye Lowlands,
O, whaur hae ye been?
They hae slain the Earl o' Moray,
And laid him on the green.

Now wae be tae ye, Huntly,
And whairfore did ye sae!
I bade ye bring him wi' ye,
But forbade ye him to slay.

He was a braw gallant,
And he rid at the ring;
And the bonny Earl o' Moray,
He micht hae been a king!

He was a braw gallant,
And he play'd at the ba';
And the bonny Earl o' Moray --
The flower among them a'!

He was a braw gallant,
And he played at the glove;
And the bonny Earl o' Moray,
He was the Queen's true love.

O lang will his lady
Look frae the Castle Doune
Ere she see the Earl o' Moray
Come soondin through the toon!

Anon.

memorialized her in one of her columns with a neologism. From then on, her newly coined word "mondegreen" became synonymous with a lyric heard or misinterpreted incorrectly.

This reminds us of the child who came home after Sunday School and told his mother that he had learned a new song about a cross-eyed bear named Gladly. It took the mother a while to realize he was talking about the hymn "Gladly The Cross I'd Bear!"

Or how about the wee girl who thought that the Battle Hymn of the Republic included the famous line "He is tramping out the vintage where the great giraffes are stored!"

And I'm sure you absolutely do not want to hear about the Scotsman who thought that Nat King Cole's famous song was "Fly me to Dunoon" and that the Beatles had a song called "Lucy in disguise with diamonds!"

OK. I can hear the groans! I'm hoping that the only saving grace might be that our readers have a few closet "mondegreens" of their own up their sleeves!

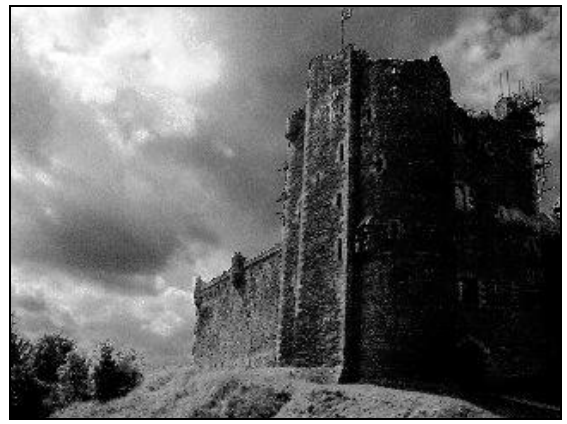
But getting back to the ballad of *The Bonny Earl of Moray*, the story is actually based on a historical incident going back to 1592. At that time, the Earl of Moray was married to Elizabeth, the cousin of King James VI of Scotland. The king suspected that Moray had previously made an attempt on his life along with the Earl of Bothwell.

Because of this, King James issued a warrant for Moray's detainment in 1592, and ordered George Gordon, the Earl of Huntly, to hunt him down and carry out the arrest.

However, a long-standing feud existed between the two of them and rather than arrest him, Huntly killed Moray outside Moray's castle in Fife.

Legend has it that Moray's mother took the corpse to Holyrood Palace where it lay uninterred for months. So it would indeed be a long time before the Earl's lady would hear the sound of him coming through the town!

The castle that she would be looking down from was Castle Doune just north of Stirling. Dating back to the 11th century it was the hereditary home of the Moray family. However, in more recent times, the castle has achieved fame of another kind. It was used as a film set in the irreverent comedy *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* and in the BBC/A&E television miniseries based on Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*.



Castle Doune in Perthshire near Stirling from where Lady Moray would look in vain for the return of her slain husband. The Morays were the hereditary keepers of the castle.

The one she would not be looking down from is the Castle Doune we have here in Canada! (We have at least one.) Most likely familiar to residents of the Hamilton, this one was once part of the Dundurn Castle estate, believed to be the old dower house or gate lodge.

Back in 1988, the castle was purchased by Carl Koprivas and his wife Pat who proceeded with extensive renovations.

Once the property of Sir Allan MacNab, the prominent Hamilton resident who became joint premier of United Canada in 1854, it was one of the buildings designed and built by architect Robert Wetherell between 1835 and 1840.

The Hamilton Castle Doune was enlarged in 1908 to include a turret and rounded bay corner.

Apparently there was a mysterious tunnel which once connected it with Dundurn Castle and which by 1988 had collapsed.

So if any of our Hamilton readers happen to be in the vicinity of Locke St. North and Tecumseh St. with a camera, how about sending us a photo? ■

Thanks to Barbara Brown of the Hamilton Spectator and Charlene Sardo of the Hamilton Public Library for their help with this article.



Castle Doune featured in the TV miniseries "Ivanhoe"

James the Serf

by Kenneth McNeill

A professor looking for his roots finds they're a little more down to earth than he'd imagined

My great, great, great, great grandfather was a serf, a person tied to a particular coal company for life. Of course, 200 years ago, it wasn't so unusual for people to be slaves. The West Indies was full of them before 1833 when slavery was abolished in the British Empire. But this wasn't in the west, but in the east, East Lothian in Scotland to be more precise, and the person in question, James McNeill, was not transported but Scottish born, bred and domiciled.

Serfdom was one of the facts that emerged when I started a retirement project, investigating my forebears. I knew that traditionally the McNeills came from the Hebrides, islands off the West Coast of Scotland, whereas my own grandfather came from near Edinburgh. How and when did my McNeills come to the Lowlands, I wondered? One romantic, though perhaps not heroic, idea was that they came with, or deserted from, the army of Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1745. But I found the truth was more down to earth: for all of the 18th and 19th centuries, my family worked in the coal pits not far from Edinburgh.

My serf ancestors weren't just tied to a particular job, they were bound to a particular pit for the rest of their lives unless the coalmaster who owned them decided to sell them or trade them to another owner. And if the mine were sold, they would be part of the assets of the mine, just as with a piece of machinery. Of course nowadays when a company is sold very often it is part of the agreement that all employees are kept on - but if the workers don't like it they can leave. The serfs couldn't.

Not only were the colliers bound but their children were as well. Maybe that wasn't

exactly what the law said, maybe a child working in the mine with his or her father wasn't legally bound until the child had worked for more than a year post-puberty. But generally the pit owner put his bid in right at the beginning by giving a child or its family a gift at baptism, acceptance of which could later be interpreted as agreement of the child being part of the mine. There could of course be a definite agreement binding the children. And what else were the children to do? The education system didn't work well for children down a mine and other job opportunities were limited.

The wife of a collier was also effectively bound, as she would normally act as the "bearer" of the coal cut by her husband, carrying it either to the bottom of the hoist or all the way up to the surface. Considering the size of the normal family of those days, this coal bearing would normally take place when she was also bearing a child.

This all sounded very medieval, but far from being a hangover from the Middle Ages, I found it was a result of deliberate action of the Scottish parliaments. In 1579 and 1597 Poor Laws allowed vagrants to bind themselves to employers for life -- to give up freedom for an at least partially filled stomach.

In 1606 coal owners were given even more powers over their workers -- colliers could not take another job unless they had a testimonial from their previous employer saying that they could seek other work; by withholding such a testimony the owner could ensure the collier was fixed to the coalmaster.

What could happen if a miner just upped and left? Then a new employer had to return the collier within a day. Serfs could even be brought back from the army or navy -- though if the collier managed to avoid recapture within a year and a day he was free, a situation that appears to have held at the time of the Norman Conquest of England.

So escape wasn't easy and recapture could mean physical punishment. Lashing was one possibility but another forebear, Peter McNeill, wrote some years later of even more cruel and unusual methods. McNeill writes that his great grandfather James spoke of three favourite means of punishment -- placing an iron collar on the neck and nailing it to a wooden post at the top or at the bottom of the pit shaft for a day or... "tying his hands in front of the gin-horse and compelling him to run round the gin-gang, back foremost, before the horse, when



Women mineworkers in the early 1800s

winding the coal to the pit-head," or if there were a number of defaulters, to use them instead of the gin-horse (the gin, or engine, was the non-human motive power for the mine). One hopes these were extreme punishments, not the norm; and doubtless some owners would think it easier to let the most recalcitrant go.

Why was this bondage permitted? Apparently for the economic reason that, with few colliers in an expanding market for coal needed to fuel the Industrial Revolution, a free market would result in high wages and lower profits. Serfdom could keep the wages down, as miners couldn't sell their labour elsewhere -- and thus, possibly, result in a faster growing economy. Viscount Stair said that vestiges of slavery were justified as their services (those of the collier) were necessary for the kingdom.

The word "slavery" was used by Stair. It was also used in court. In the 1746 case of Clark vs. Ker and Penman, the court accepted that... "a boy who enters into coal-work where his father is a bondsman becomes a slave, not by consent, but from the nature of slavery which extends from father to son." True, an anti-slavery lobby was gaining strength in Britain. In 1772 England's Mansfield Declaration established... "No master ever was allowed here to take a slave by force to be sold abroad because he deserted from his service, or for any other reason whatsoever."

This didn't stop slavery in Britain, however. Even the declaration's drafter, Lord Mansfield, had a slave, Elizabeth Dido Lindsay, who was not freed until Mansfield's death in 1793 -- in his will he gave her freedom and an annuity. A declaration similar to Mansfield's was made in Scotland in 1778.

Change only came when economic factors

*"The mark of a Scot of all classes [is that] he ... remembers and cherishes the memory of his forebears, good or bad; and there burns alive in him a sense of identity with the dead even to the twentieth generation."
- Robert Louis Stevenson*



Mining families in Prestonpans

Dark as a Dungeon

by Merl Travis, Aug 8, 1946

Come all ye young fellows,
So young and so fine,
And seek not your fortune
Way down in the mine.
It'll form like a habit,
And seep in your soul,
Till the stream of your blood,
Flows as black as the coal.

It's dark as a dungeon,
And damp as the dew.
The danger is doubled,
And the pleasures are few.
Where the rain never falls,
And the sun never shines.
It's dark as a dungeon,
Way down in the mine.

There's many a man,
I have seen in my day,
Who lived just to labour
His whole life away.
Like the fiend with his dope,
And the drunkard his wine,
A man can have lust,
For the lure of the mine.

Oh when I am dead
And the ages shall roll.
My body will blacken
And turn into coal.
Then I'll look from the door,
Of my heavenly home,
And pity the miner,
A-digging my bones.

as well as humanitarian ones began to be on the side of the miners. Remarkably, the costs of employing serfs in Scottish pits were higher than in the (free) English ones, probably because owners were increasingly unable to entice new people into serfdom, even despite the bondage of children. Many pit owners began to urge emancipation possibly so they could lower what they paid for their workers. In 1775 the Westminster Parliament passed a bill that said all new members of the coal industry labour force would be free and that current members would be freed over the next 10 years. Wives and children were to be freed on the same day as their menfolk. Peter McNeill tells how the miners of the town of Pinkie not unnaturally kept July 3 as a holiday since it was on that day in 1775 that they became free. Presumably Abercorn, their owner,

freed them all rather than have the hassle of gradually releasing them.

The Act of 1799 freed all remaining collier bondsmen. Realizing that if miners owed money to the coalmasters (for goods bought in a company store, for instance) they were still bound, the act made incompetent actions for recovery of debts.

It would be nice to think the 1799 Act cured all ills. It didn't. It required 40 or 50 years more to prohibit women and boys working underground.

It is fair to say that genuine surprise was my reaction at discovering that my ancestors had not been the gallant Highlanders I had once imagined. Perhaps because he himself had not known, my father never spoke of our ties to the Scottish coal mines, but indeed many of his generation preferred to forget anything before 1918 -- so many of their friends had been killed in the war.

In my search, however, I did learn that James McNeill was eventually freed but continued working as a collier; in 1841, at the age of 80, he was living in Tranent, 10 miles east of Edinburgh and site of the battle of Prestonpans in 1745.

His great-grandson Peter, the author, was born in 1839 and became a pit-boy himself. He attended night school for a couple of years, left the mine in 1859 after 10 years in it and then for five decades ran a bookstore in Tranent. Peter's brother David lived nearby in Newtongrange in a two-room house with his wife and eight children. David's eldest boy, also David, took some accounting courses and ended as managing director of an Edinburgh brewery.

In the next generation were a provost of a Scottish town and the mayor of an English town, while the next generation after that produced a Queen's Bench judge and a Toronto professor.

What, I have sometimes wondered, would James and his descendents have done if he had had some education? With a greater mind, would the family have had a greater future? Yes, many would insist, of course. A good friend, however, reminded me of Somerset Maugham's story *The Verger*, who succeeds in business and becomes rich after being fired from his post at St. Peter's church because he couldn't read or write. With that in mind, my friend says, there is a good chance we would all still be working down the pit! ■

Professor Emeritus Kenneth McNeill retired from the University of Toronto's Physics Department in 1992 but still teaches Physics for the Life Sciences. This article was originally published in the University of Toronto Bulletin.

From the Mailbox

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Back in Touch

I have been out of the country and just returned June 19th. I do enjoy the *Scots Canadian* – keeps me in touch with my heritage. Thanks for keeping in touch.
*Constance Stewart Gordon
Toronto, Ontario*

Ed: Thanks for the compliment! Great Scots name by the way!

Mac or Mc?

Recently my daughter-in-law returned from Scotland with the information that Mc s are Irish and Macs are Scottish and that if our family is indeed Scottish we should put back the "a" in Mac. Any Comments?

*William R McLean
Lac Ste. Marie, Quebec*

Ed: You really do not need to worry about putting the "a" back in. Experts assure us that it is a fallacy that Mc is Irish and Mac is Scottish. Mc is simply an abbreviation of Mac. (In gaelic: mhic.) Many years ago, people used M'c and sometimes even M'

Keeping the Tradition Alive

I happened to be in Canada last May on holiday from the Birmingham area in England and a relative of mine passed me a copy of the *Scots Canadian*. As I am originally from Scotland I was most interested to learn things about my native land from a source so far away! I was also pleased to see that the Scottish heritage is being kept alive so well in Canada. On my tour around the Ottawa area both in Ontario and Quebec I was constantly reminded of the Scottish influence. The best of luck in your attempt to get the University position established.

*Michael Campbell
Brownhills, UK*

Ed: Thanks for your kind words of support.



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