

THE SCOTS CANADIAN

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Scottish Studies Digital Archive Centre nearing completion

For the last few years, the Foundation's major objective has been the funding of a digital archive facility as part of the University of Guelph's library renovation program. Thanks to donations received from our members and other supporters, we have been successful in securing close to \$95,000 of the \$150,000 cost of the project.

Despite the fact that we still have to come up with the balance of \$55,000 we were delighted to find out that the university has enough confidence that we will be able to achieve this and has let us know that the facility is due to be commissioned and will be up and running soon.

During the course of last year, construction has been taking place and a room within the library complex has been completely renovated to accommodate the installation. The work included installation



Bruce Simpson (left) receives the 2017 Scot of the Year Award from Robert McEwen, CM, the 2016 recipient, at last year's Tartan Day Dinner. At the event, we were delighted to present to the University of Guelph, a cheque in the amount of \$34,280 to go towards the University's Digital Archive project.



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of a hard-surface vinyl floor, LED lighting fixtures, freshly painted walls, ceiling treatment, and custom-built shelving. Contractors are currently installing additional electrical infrastructure and once that work is complete furniture and equipment will be arranged in the room.

The digitization space is situated across from the library's donations receiving room and is connected to the existing archival storage area. All materials will remain in a secure environment while they're being digitized.

State-of-the-art archiving equipment will include three scanning stations including a special planetary scanner which has been designed specifically to scan rare books, manuscripts and other easily damaged documents.

All of the remaining work will be completed over the coming weeks and the room should be functional when the archives department re-opens early in 2018. When completed it will provide the optimal environment for digitizing materials and as last work can begin on scanning the library's unique collection of rare and unique Scottish books and manuscripts which then will be placed online for the benefit of all.

Scottish Studies Annual Tall Ship Cruise

Once again, the crew of the Canada's tallest sailing ship *Empire Sandy* will be hoisting the sails to get the Scottish Studies Foundation's annual cruise underway on Sunday, September 2, 2018 (Labour Day Weekend).

As well as providing an opportunity to have a great time with Highland dancers, folk music and the pipes, the cruise commemorates the arrival of the Scots pioneers in Pictou, Nova Scotia, back in 1773 on board the old ship *Hector*. The intrepid emigrants who made that historic and difficult voyage are a major part of Canada's pioneer heritage. They encouraged their fellow clansfolk to follow and help change Canada from a backwoods colony into a nation that is now the envy of the world. So let's not forget them!

The *Empire Sandy* gives you a great sense of fun and adventure as you sail beyond Toronto Island and out into Lake Ontario. Tickets will be on sale soon so please visit our website for details.

Scottish Rugby Cap presented to Eric Liddell's daughter

Last October we were pleased to have as our guest speakers at the Oor Club, Patricia and Mervyn Russell. Patricia was born in China, the eldest daughter of Eric and Florence Liddell. She came to Canada in 1941 with her pregnant mother and her sister Heather, while her father, missionary and 1924 Olympics runner of Chariots of Fire fame, stayed on in China where he died in a Japanese internment camp in 1945. Patricia trained as a nurse at the Wellesley General Hospital and is married to Mervyn who has a wonderful voice and treated us to some of his favourite Scottish songs at the Oor Club event.

We were therefore delighted to learn that Patricia had been invited to Scotland to accept an award in honour of her father at the *Eric Liddell Centre "Going for Gold Fundraising Dinner"* at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Edinburgh, an event that took place on December 5, 2017.

The Eric Liddell Centre is a registered care charity and major community hub which provides a wide range of services for the capital's community groups with the aim of inspiring, empowering and supporting people of all ages.



Eric Liddell in the 1920s

"A man is composed of three parts: body, mind and soul, and it is only when each is educated and harmony that you get the best and truest graduates." Eric Liddell, University of Edinburgh Graduation Ceremony, July 1924



L-R: Alexander McCall Smith, Patricia Liddell Russell, John MacMillan and Chris Paterson

Founded in 1980, the Centre was renamed in 1992 in memory of the 1924 Olympic 400m gold medalist, Eric Liddell who was the central character of the highly successful film *Chariots of Fire*. The Centre remains true to the beliefs of his inspiring life and Lord David Puttnam CBE, FRSA, the Oscar-winning producer of *Chariots of Fire* is one of the Centre's patrons as is Eric Liddell's niece Sue Liddell Caton and award-winning author Professor Alexander McCall Smith CBE, FRSA.

Located in a large, repurposed historic former church in Edinburgh, The Centre specializes in care for the elderly and dementia services with the aim of supporting people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. It provides a person-centered day care service to 70 clients per week with a diagnosis of dementia by a dedicated team of highly qualified staff and experienced and skilled volunteers which aims to reduce social isolation and promote independence.

The day care service provides respite for carers and the centre offers befriending and wellness classes that also aim to reduce stress and provide a break from this challenging role. The centre supports an average of 2000 weekly visitors to wide range of community based activities including respite for carers, yoga, pilates, martial arts and music and gymnastics for toddlers.

The actual award was a replica one of the many Scottish rugby caps that Eric Liddell received during his time as a rugby international, playing seven times for Scotland between 1921 and 1923. It is believed all of Liddell's original Scotland rugby caps are lost and the Scottish Rugby

Union took the unusual step of re-issuing one to be presented to his daughter at the event. His daughter Patricia said it was an "extraordinary honour."

Eric Liddell is most famous for his gold medal in the 400m at the 1924 Olympics - after he refused to run the 100m because it took place on a Sunday.

Patricia was just 10 years old when her father died in a prisoner-of-war camp in China in 1945.

The eldest of three children, she had not seen her father for four years when he died, having left for Canada with her mother when China became too dangerous.

Liddell was interned by the Japanese authorities in a camp at Weihhsien and died of a brain tumour shortly before the end of the war, at the age of 43.

Patricia said she remembered her father being "lots of fun but quite strict." She said that growing up in Canada she had not been aware of the extent of his achievements.

Liddell, the son of Christian missionaries, had been born in China in 1902 and lived there until he was five when he returned to Britain to be educated.

While he was at Edinburgh University, Liddell excelled at athletics and also played rugby for the Scottish national team — as well as being a noted evangelist preacher.

His first rugby cap was won against France at the same stadium in Paris in which he would race in the Olympics.

At the 1924 Olympics, he famously refused to run on a Sunday, ruling him out of the 100m race to which he was best suited.

Instead, he took part in the 400m race and, against the odds, still won a gold medal.

His actions were immortalized in the 1981 film *Chariots of Fire*, which won four Academy Awards including best picture.

Patricia said: "I tell young people today what my father left to me was that you do not give up your principles just for a gold medal. I think that is what made him extra special because the principles were more important than winning the gold."

Soon after his Olympic triumph, Liddell finished his studies and returned to China to become a missionary.

Patricia said she was "touched" by the gesture. She said: "The Liddell family did not put a lot of stock on fame and fortune. You lived your life in the way you thought you should."

At the event, John MacMillan, CEO of The Eric Liddell Centre, said: "What an evening! I can't thank everyone enough for their outstanding generosity and support in

On Running, and Trying to Run

*in memory of Eric Liddell
by Alexander McCall Smith*



How the human machine works,
How one force contends against another –
Or with it – how effort in the mind,
How determinations, translates
Into movement and into speed,
How one may move faster than another,
How the finishing line seems distant to
me,
But so very close to you –
These are all matters well understood
By those who know about those things.

But one part of the process
Remains a mystery, defies
Simple mechanical explanation;
How those who excel,
Who seem to try harder
Than those around them,
Find within themselves
Some deep well of inspiration
To do what they do, this is not a matter
Of simple physiology.
This is more elusive than that -
Human spirit? Human belief?
That curious shadowy thing
We call the human will?
All of these are possible explanations.

what was a fantastic event.

"The demand for our services has gone up by 24 per cent in the past year alone so we are delighted for the boost which will enable us to continue the great work we do throughout Edinburgh's communities.

"I'd like to extend a thank you to all involved, especially Patricia for coming all the way from Canada to accept Eric's reissued cap, and look forward to welcoming everyone along to our next dinner for what I hope will be an even bigger success."

More than 160 guests enjoyed the evening which included speeches from Scottish Rugby's points-record holder Chris Paterson MBE and award-winning author Alexander McCall Smith, while comedian and columnist Susan Morrison compered the evening and live auction. Music was provided by pupils from St Mary's Music School.

Patricia said: "The Going for Gold dinner was just fantastic. It was great to see so much support for the centre which does such tremendous work in my father's name.

"Being able to accept the cap on my father's behalf was also an extremely special honour and something I will treasure forever.

"I know he would be so proud of the work the centre continues to do and hopefully it will go from strength to strength, helping the people of this beautiful city."

Chris Paterson said, "Being part of the Eric Liddell Centre's inaugural fundraising gala is a privilege. Eric Liddell was an Olympic hero, as well as winning seven international caps for Scotland, so to be able to keep his name alive and be part of an evening where we can raise money to keep it going, is fantastic."

Ian Rankin, a past president of Scottish Rugby and chairman of The Murrayfield Injured Players Foundation, presented Patricia with Eric's cap, to a standing ovation from guests. The foundation focuses on providing support and assistance to injured Scottish rugby players. ■



*The cap that was presented to Patricia
(photo by John B. McMillan)*

University of Guelph Names New Dean of Arts

Samantha Brennan, an award-winning professor, researcher and arts and humanities advocate has been named the next dean of the University of Guelph's College of Arts and began a five-year term on January 1, 2018.

The decision follows an extensive international search by a hiring committee composed of faculty, students and staff, and chaired by Charlotte Yates, provost and vice-president (academic).

"Professor Brennan is an exceptional leader and strong researcher who understands and promotes the value of a liberal education," Yates said.

"Samantha brings with her 24 years of experience in academia, along with passion, enthusiasm, and new and innovative ideas. She will be a champion for our unique College and help build its reputation, nationally and internationally."

Prior to her appointment at Guelph, Brennan was professor of women's studies and feminist research at Western University, researching moral and political philosophy, especially contemporary normative ethics and feminist ethics. She served as chair of Western's Department of Philosophy for eight years and was a founding member of the Rotman Institute of Philosophy.

Brennan said she's "honoured and humbled" to join the College of Arts, with its warm collegial environment and talented and creative students, faculty, staff and researchers.

"It's an exciting opportunity to build new relationships, explore new possibilities, and provide strategic leadership," she said.

"It will be my privilege to collaborate with a vibrant community that includes both fine and performing arts, which bring vital insights to the greater conversations on culture and ideas that we have in the humanities."

Brennan joined Western in 1993 as an assistant professor of philosophy. She has been teaching in the women's studies program since 2015, and has taught in the digital humanities program and School for Advanced Studies in the Arts and Humanities.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Dalhousie University and a PhD in philosophy from the University of Illinois at Chicago

The author of dozens of journal articles, book chapters and book reviews and co-editor of numerous scholarly volumes she is president of the Canadian Philosophical Association and co-founder of *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly*. ■

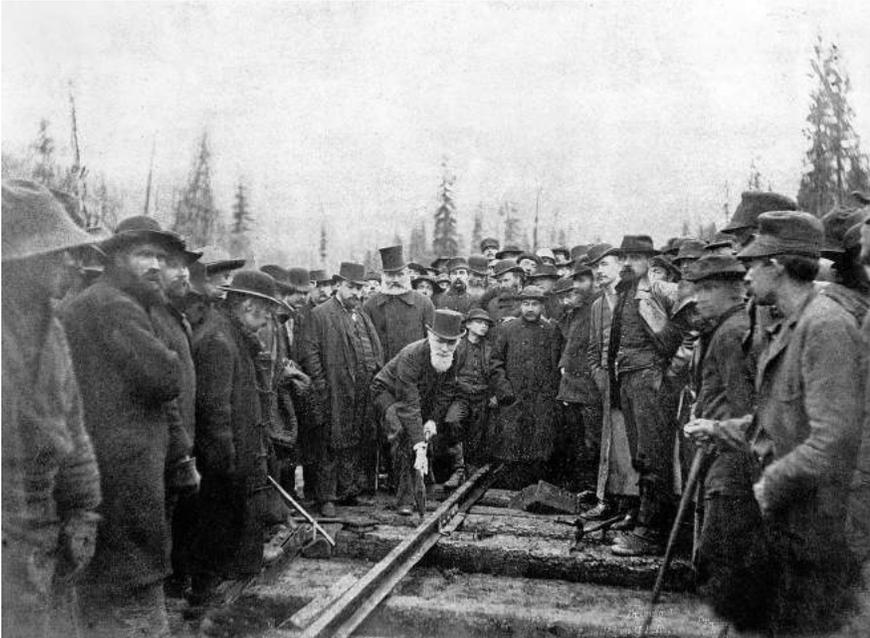
Canadian Connections at Glencoe

Special report from David Hunter

Since August last year I have been based in the Highlands of Scotland and so I thought it might be worthwhile to keep an eye out for any Canadian connections that I might be able to share with you. And so it was in the Lochaber region, not far from Glencoe, that a couple of such connections caught my attention.

Glencoe is an area of outstanding scenic beauty. In recent times it has been the location of choice for film producers working in Scotland and movies such as *Braveheart*, *Rob Roy*, *Harry Potter* and *Skyfall* to name but a few, have all included scenes from the Glencoe area. However, it is an area that cannot escape its troubled and treacherous past and forever will be associated with the massacre of the Clan MacDonald by government soldiers under the command of the Earl of Argyll in 1692. Therefore, I am so glad to confirm that the more recent Canadian connections I came across are much more benign!

One of the most instantly recognizable historical photographs in the Canadian narrative is the one taken in 1885 where Donald Alexander Smith can be seen driving the last spike into the ties holding the rail on the final stretch of the Canadian Pacific Railway.



The Last Spike of the Canadian Pacific Railway being driven in by CPR railroad financier Donald Alexander Smith at Craigellachie, British Columbia in 1885. On his appointment to the British House of Lords, Smith initially chose the title Lord Glencoe, but eventually settled on Lord Strathcona – a variation on the Glencoe name but without the negative associations of the massacre which took place there in 1692.



The historic mansion of Glencoe, the former home of Lord Strathcona, is now a hotel and currently is the only UK member hotel of the exclusive Romantik Hotels & Restaurants International network.

Born in Moray in north-east Scotland, Smith emigrated to Canada in 1838 to work for the Hudson's Bay Company and by 1889 had become its governor. He played a leading role in railway development in Canada and was one of the financiers of the Canadian Pacific Railway. His career in Canadian politics eventually led to his appointment as Canada's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and it was around this time that an opportunity cropped up that allowed him to purchase the Glencoe Estate – a large area of land that was owned by Archibald Burns McDonald (his spelling) until 1894, when the land was

put up for sale.

It has been said that Smith heard about the sale of the Glencoe estate from a MacDonald of Glencoe, whom he had met while on a ship sailing across the Atlantic. A more likely theory is that he was interested in Glencoe long before the sale, as he had worked closely during his time at the Hudson's Bay Company with a son of Archibald McDonald of Glencoe. Archibald himself had emigrated with a hundred others during 1815 and many stories of their Glencoe homeland would certainly have been passed on.

Upon taking possession of the Glencoe Estate in 1895, Smith moved from Canada to Scotland with his wife Isabella Sophia Hardisty and commissioned the building of Glencoe House, a magnificent mansion with stunning views to Loch Leven and the Isles of Glencoe. However, Isabella, whose grandmother was a Native American, never took to Scotland even although Smith had recreated a Canadian forest environment in order for her to feel more at home there.

It is not clear how much time he and Isabella actually spent in Glencoe, after all he was in his mid-70s when he acquired the estate and he was a very busy man, but fortunately for us he has left a legacy for everyone to enjoy – a little bit of Canada in the Scottish Highlands which is now free and open to all.

In recent times, Lochaber has laid claim to being the outdoor capital of the UK – a claim that would be hard to dispute – and in the 1950s Glencoe was one of the first places in Scotland to establish downhill skiing and over the years all of the paraphernalia associated with this has been installed. It is here that we find our next Canadian connection, for it was an incidental comment by a Canadian doctor that was instrumental in getting that sport established.



Lord Strathcona's legacy: The picturesque and serene Glencoe Lochan contrasting with the wild and dramatic mountains of the glen. The area is open to the public and is a gem of trails through ornamental woodland at the foot of Glencoe.

The genesis of Scotland's multi-million pound ski industry can be traced back to a German anti-aircraft gunner's attack on an exhausted RAF airman heading home during the Second World War.

A long mission had taken its toll on Mosquito pilot Philip Rankin and, too tired to remember all his instructions, he omitted to follow warnings to fly at an altitude high enough to avoid the flak known to burst from the Walcheren island area. As a result he took a hit and came down in the English Channel.

On impact he was propelled out through the aircraft's canopy, badly injuring his back. Later, during treatment at Stoke Mandeville hospital in Aylesbury, England, a Canadian doctor advised him that, with the right type of exercise, he could make a full recovery and casually mentioned that the best results he had seen had been achieved by patients walking uphill on skis or snowshoes.

When he returned home to Glasgow, Rankin set about identifying the best place to put this advice into action. As a native of the west of Scotland, he knew the hills there well and quickly pinpointed the mountain known as Meall a' Bhuiridh near



Philip Rankin (1917-2017)

Glencoe as an ideal spot.

He had first skied on Meall a' Bhuiridh in 1951 and picked out the perfect line for a ski tow. His first move was to contact the local landowner, Philip Fleming of Blackmount Estate. The Fleming family readily gave permission for the erection of the proposed tow and it marked the beginning of a lifelong friendship with the estate owner and his son Robin. It is worth pointing out that the Fleming family included in its members the author Ian Fleming, creator of James Bond, but more on that later.

For Rankin, the creation of Britain's first overhead ski lift was initially a hobby that ultimately occupied his every waking hour. Nothing like it had ever been attempted on the Scottish hills and many doubted its potential success, particularly given the country's erratic weather and snow conditions, coupled with the difficulty of access and erection. However his small, amateur weekend club was persuaded to follow his lead, accept his plans and his assurances of the public support that he was convinced would follow. He had chosen his site judiciously. Writing in the Scottish Ski Club journal of 1952/53 he described: "An ample corrie deeply scored with ravines which collect such a mass of snow as to be virtually impervious to even weeks of thaw." The boulder scree on the corrie floor would be a "draining board," he said, "for any rain or thawed snow preventing the snow from rotting underneath." But he was something of a lone voice and admitted he had seen the project "rather wistfully" in his mind's eye, offering a magnificent expanse of run. "Here indeed do we see the key we seek to put Scottish skiing on a new plane as a major

British field sport." It was a romantic prediction that he turned into a thrilling success story, entailing four years of stubborn determination, raising cash, marshalling volunteers and transporting metal plate and steel cable up the hill. Dedicated workers from the Creag Dhu Mountaineering club, many of whom worked in the Clyde shipyards, and the Scottish Ski Club brought the scheme to fruition. The lift opened in the mid-1950s with a date stamp on the hand sufficing for a ticket.

After retiring in the early 1990s Rankin, who maintained a keen interest in the venture, was nominated for a UK Honour as a result of his visionary and ground-breaking work. The plea fell on deaf ears. A second attempt in 2017 failed as he was no longer active in the industry and his vast contribution continued to go largely unrecognized in the wider community, save for a Snowsport Scotland Lifetime Achievement award in November 2016.

Now earlier, I briefly mentioned James Bond and his creator Ian Fleming, and it turns out there's a Canadian connection there too. In 1942, during the Second World War, Fleming spent a few weeks in Toronto while working at Camp X, the unofficial name of Secret Special Training School No. 103, a Second World War paramilitary installation used to train covert agents in the methods required for success in clandestine operations. It was located on the northwestern shore of Lake Ontario between Whitby and Oshawa. At that time, Fleming was stationed in Toronto not far from the St. James-Bond United Church in Avenue Road and would have passed by it every day. The church building was torn down in the summer of 2006 and the site is now a senior's centre but as we know – the James Bond name lives on! ■



Erecting the first ski tow in Glencoe

Unlocking secrets of the Book of Deer

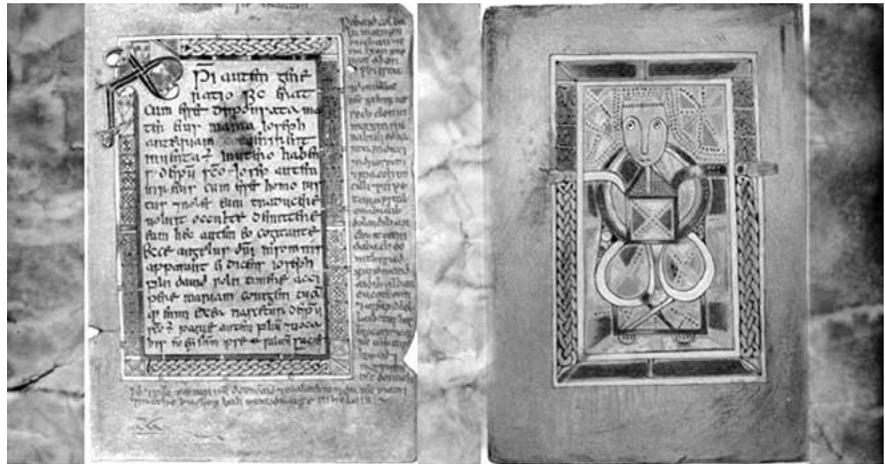
Adapted from an article in *The National* by Hamish MacPherson

One of the best known medieval documents is the Book of Kells, an illuminated manuscript Gospel book in Latin containing the four Gospels of the New Testament. Presently located in Trinity College Library, Dublin, the manuscript takes its name from the Abbey of Kells in County Meath, Ireland which was its home for centuries. It is thought that the original artists were monks from the monastery founded by Saint Columba in the 6th century on the Scottish island of Iona.

Not so well known is the Book of Deer which is thought to be the oldest extant Scottish manuscript and certainly the oldest to contain written Scots Gaelic. Although the book may have been written at various times and places, it is generally assumed that it was produced at Deer Monastery in the days before Saint Margaret and her century-long “Romanization” of Scottish Christianity.

According to Dr. Michelle MacLeod, Senior Lecturer in Gaelic at Aberdeen University: “The Gaelic notes in the book are the first written examples of Scottish Gaelic. There are some deviations in the language from the shared common Gaelic of Scotland and Ireland which had been used in earlier manuscripts.

“These deviations, of which there are



Pages from the Book of Deer. The page on the left contains text from the Gospel of Matthew. The margins contain Gaelic text.

several, are the first written indication that the languages were separating and would be an indication of what people were likely saying.

“The Book of Deer is a tiny book but it has left a huge legacy for the whole of Scotland. We had to wait another 200-300 years after the Book of Deer to find any more evidence of written Scottish Gaelic.”

So what happened to the monastery and to the book between it being written and turning up in England nearly 800 years later?

It has always been known that Deer Abbey was built by William Comyn, Lord of Badenoch and Earl of Buchan, for the Cistercian order in the years 1213 to 1219, after which the 600-year-old Deer Monastery fell into disuse and disrepair before vanishing from the records. Yet that old monastery

bequeathed something magical to the abbey and to us.

The Book of Deer is hardly known in Scotland and that is a massive shame, because in a real sense it is the Scottish Book of Kells. It does not have the extraordinary illuminated text of Kells, and the calligraphy of Deer is plain compared to that of Kells, but both come from the same tradition of “pocket gospels” in Columban or “Celtic” Christianity that was the dominant religion in Scotland and Ireland in the latter part of the first millennium – Kells pre-dates Deer which was most probably written in the 10th century AD.

It is not the original writing which is the key to the Book of Deer, however. It is the notes made in margins and in breaks of text by the monks of Deer monastery that marks out the Book as utterly historic.

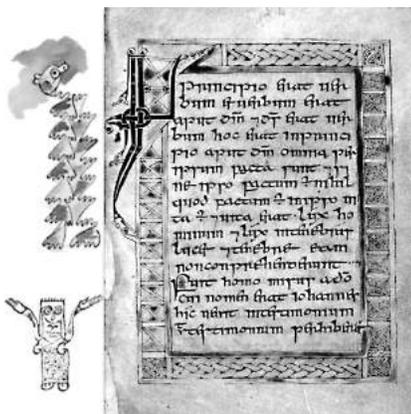
For those notes – seven of them, written by five different hands – are the first written examples of Scottish Gaelic to be found anywhere in the world. They include notes about the foundation of Deer Monastery by St Columba’s follower St Drostán around 600 AD.

Legend has it that Drostán became the founding abbot of Deer when St Columba moved to the Buchan area on his mission to convert the Picts to Christianity. The local Pictish chief gave them land after Columba cured the illness of one of his sons, and Columba left Drostán, who had come over from Ireland with him, to run the new foundation.

We do not know when exactly the monks at Deer wrote the manuscript, but somewhere around 900 AD would fit the bill. They obviously knew the legend, and one of the monks clearly decided to make it written history, for the margin note about Columba translates as follows: “Columba and Drostán son of Coserach, his disciple, came from Iona, as God guided them, to Aberdour; and



The ruins of Deer Abbey which was founded in 1219 by William Comyn, the Earl of Buchan, who invited the Cistercians at Kinloss Abbey in Moray to set up a daughter house there. Comyn chose to found Deer Abbey because of the strong religious traditions of the area.



Bede the Pict was mormaer (earl) of Buchan on their arrival; and it was he who bestowed on them that monastery, in freedom till Domesday from mormaer and toisech (chief).

“They came after that to the other monastery [Deer], and it pleased Columba, for it was full of the grace of God. And he begged the mormaer, that is, Bede, that he should give it to them, and he did not. And a son of his took a sickness, after the clerics had been refused, and was all but dead. Thereupon the mormaer went to beseech the clerics that they should make a prayer on behalf of the boy, that health might come to him; and he gave them [land] as a grant from Cloch in Tiprat as far as Cloch Peitte Meic-Gartnait.

“They made the prayer, and health came to him. Thereupon Columba gave Drostan that monastery, and blessed it, and left the curse that whoever should go against it should not be full of years or success. Drostan’s tears came as he was parting from Columba. Columba said, ‘Let Deer be its name from this on.’”

It follows, therefore, that finding the monastery’s exact location would be phenomenal as it would be a direct link to St Columba – and we have so very few of them outside Iona.

According to a recent documentary on BBC Alba on the decade-long archaeological excavation of the site, the site of the lost-but-possibly-found Deer Monastery can actually be seen from the ruined Deer Abbey, which at one time played a vital role in the life of the north-east of Scotland before the Reformation put it out of action.

The Cistercian monks had to abandon Deer Abbey before or during the Reformation, and no one at all knew what happened to the ancient monastery which was presumably in ruins even then.

Did the Book of Deer go with them? Probably not, as the abbey had lost its final abbot in 1543 and was then overseen by Robert Keith when he and his family protected the property after the Reformation.

The abbey ruins survive, so has the monastery now turned up? The proximity of

the finds near the remains of the abbey are very exciting for the archaeologists on the dig and also for the historians involved in the Deer Book Project, one of whose aims is to return the manuscript to Scotland for a year from its current home in Cambridge University Library.

You read that correctly – one of Scotland’s earliest and greatest treasures now resides in Cambridge University Library, which has owned the manuscript since 1715.

The Book of Deer website tells us how it got there: “The Book of Deer came into the ownership of Cambridge University Library in 1715, when the library of the Bishop of Ely and Norwich was presented to the former by George I. Before that, the Book of Deer may have been in the possession of Dr Gale, high master of St Paul’s School (1672-97).

“The stages by which it moved from the North East of Scotland to the South of England are by no means clear. Even Cambridge University Library was unaware of its significance until it was discovered in 1860 by Henry Bradshaw, the librarian at that time.”

The key figure in that provenance list is Dr Thomas Gale, a voracious collector of ancient manuscripts and other antiquities, a passion he instilled in his sons Roger and Samuel – it is no exaggeration to say that our knowledge of ancient British history, especially that of England, would have been quite incomplete without their collecting habits.

Thomas Gale was a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and left some of his books to the university library, including the Book of Deer.

How did he get hold of it? The likelihood is that Gale obtained it from the successful plundering by Oliver Cromwell and his New Model Army in Scotland in the 1650s following the disastrous Battle of Dunbar.

It is known that many valuable items made their way south from Scotland along with General George Monck and his large retinue when they returned to England at the time of the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660.

It is all too easy to see that Monck or someone else from Cromwell’s army who had spent time in Aberdeenshire brought the Book of Deer with them and sold it to a collector like Gale.

Should it be returned to Scotland? Cambridge University Library has indicated its willingness to loan the Book of Deer to the project for a year and that might just be a first step. ■



The bridge over the River Ugie at Old Deer

The picturesque village of Old Deer lies in the centre of Buchan, a district of Aberdeenshire. The village is about equidistant from the coastal towns of Peterhead to the east, Fraserburgh to the north east, Banff to the north west, and the country town of Turriff about due west. Nestled in a beautiful wooded location on a bend of the River Ugie and close to Aden Country Park, this unique spot, a gentle landscape in an otherwise exposed part of North East Scotland, was where the early Pictish Monastery of “Deir” provided a focal point of Christianity in this corner of Scotland.

The early Monastery, which was in all probability constructed with local timber and thatch, leaves no trace today. It was, however, like all Christian Monasteries of this period, a place of learning and a place of refuge. Manuscripts brought from Iona and Ireland would have been studied and copied between the 9th and 12th centuries. During the 12th century a Cistercian Monastery, whose ruins we know today as the Abbey of Deer, gradually replaced the Pictish Monastery.

The people of Old Deer are justly proud of their beautiful village, described as follows in 1858 by Rev. Dr John B. Pratt:

And here we come upon the rich and fertile Valley of Deer, beautified by the numerous woods and plantations of Aden and Pitfour, and the properties of Knock and Crichtie. From this point to the Abbey Bridge—a distance of three miles—the scenery is strikingly pleasing. Gentle undulations here and there swelling into hills, the ever-varying course of the stream, with the broad and massive features of the thick hanging woods, delight and satisfy the eye. In the centre of this scene, softly embosomed in trees, lies the ancient village of Deer, with its houses and churches, exhibiting all the varied hues and colours which slate, tile and thatch can produce, and skirted by the grounds of Pitfour and Aden; farther on we come upon the crumbling ruins of the old Cistercian Abbey; and on the left, looking back as it were, is the quiet low-lying village of Stuartfield, with the old mansion house of Crichtie among the woods on the rising ground beyond it.

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