



CAIRT

Issue 3
June 2003

Newsletter of the Scottish Maps Forum

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SCOTTISH MAPS FORUM

The Forum was initiated by the National Library of Scotland in January 2002:

- ◆ To stimulate and to encourage multi-disciplinary map use, study and research, particularly relating to Scottish maps and mapmakers
- ◆ To disseminate information on Scottish maps and map collections
- ◆ To record information on maps and mapmaking, particularly in a Scottish context
- ◆ To liaise with other groups and individuals with map related interests
- ◆ To build on, and to continue, the work of Project Pont

CAIRT

The newsletter is issued twice a year. "Cairt" is Gaelic & 17th century Scots for map.

For further information, or to be added to the mailing list, please contact:

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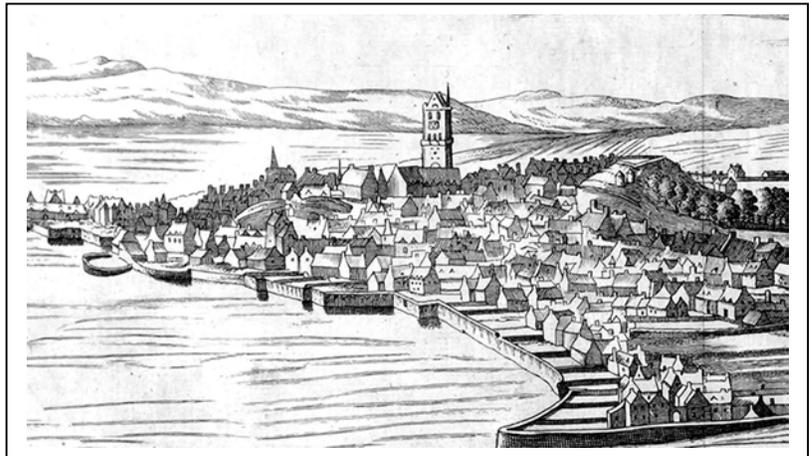
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SCOTLAND ILLUSTRATED

Mapping and picturing the nation 1680-1720

**SEMINAR - SATURDAY 4 OCTOBER 2003
DUNDEE UNIVERSITY**

The 1680s saw a surge of interest in describing and mapping Scotland, and this seminar will explore some of the characters and events surrounding this period. Prof Chris Whatley of Dundee University sets the scene with the historical context, while other speakers introduce the disparate - and often disputatious - personalities, their achievements and failures.



Slezer, *The Prospect of the Town of Dundee from the east*. 1693 (detail)

Sir Robert Sibbald, physician, botanist and antiquarian, planned a geographical description of Scotland, given royal approval by his appointment in 1682 as 'His Majesty's Geographer for Scotland'. Sibbald's great project included *The Scottish Atlas* [sic] to include modern and historical maps, and descriptions of many aspects of Scotland - geography, history, natural history, antiquities.

In the event, Sibbald succeeded in publishing only one part of his great work, the volume on natural history entitled *Scotia illustrata, sive Prodrromus historiae naturalis*, from which the title of this seminar is taken. Prof Charles Withers discusses Sibbald and other geographers of the day.

Continued on page 2

SCOTLAND ILLUSTRATED *contd.*

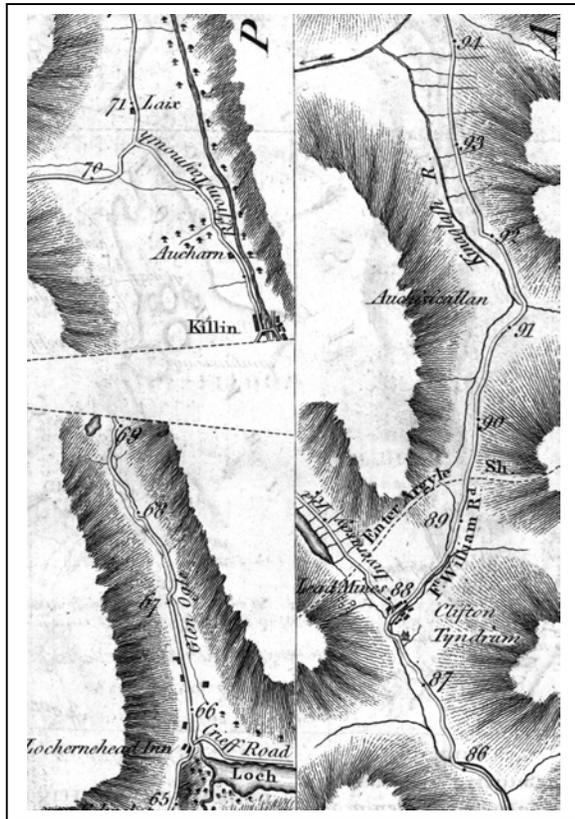
John Adair, already authorised by the Scottish Privy Council to make fresh surveys which he had begun with West Lothian in 1681, soon joined Sibbald. Adair accompanied Martin Martin in his travels to the Western Isles (published in 1703). John Moore and Dr Domnall Uilleam Stiubhart will enlarge (respectively) upon the activities of Adair and Martin.

Sibbald was also working with Captain John Slezer, a military engineer from the Low Countries, who published the well-known 'prospects' or views of Scotland's important towns and buildings in *Theatrum Scotiae* in 1693. Prof Charles McKean reveals 'the hidden messages of Slezer'.

Until the late 17th century most, if not all, Scottish maps were engraved and printed abroad. David Bryden, formerly of the National Museums of Scotland, introduces the engravers who came to Scotland to (literally) make money...

The last two seminars have been oversubscribed, so do book early - reservations close on 19 September.

For further information and a booking form, contact the Map Library at the address on the front cover.



Detail from *Taylor & Skinner's Survey and Maps of the Roads of North Britain or Scotland*, 1776 (Plate 15: *The Road from Edinburgh to Inverness via Fort William*), one of the items on display in 'Wish You Were Here!'

EXHIBITIONS

WISH YOU WERE HERE!

Travellers' tales of Scotland 1540-1960
National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge
1 June -31 October 2003

The publicity states: *...For hundreds of years, visitors to Scotland have recorded their impressions of the people they met and the things they saw. The changing face of Scotland, seen through the eyes of some of these visitors, is revealed in the Library's summer exhibition this year, 'Wish You Were Here'.*

Using everything from 18th-century travellers' notebooks to 20th-century home movies, it paints a vivid picture of a country and her people...

The exhibition focuses on fourteen manuscript journals of travellers to Scotland, from a 16th century bishop exploring his territory, to a 19th century servant in Sutherland, to the early 20th century with a caravan holiday around Loch Lomond or motorcycling around youth hostels in the 1930s. Olive Geddes of NLS's Department of Manuscripts has selected a fascinating and entertaining array of illustrative material to accompany the journals.

But for lovers of maps, the exhibition offers even more - an opportunity to see around 30 original maps and detailed scanned images of maps, covering some 400 years of Scottish mapping. The earliest and latest are seacharts, from the 16th-20th centuries, and on the way are maps of Scotland, town plans, road maps - a whole range of mapping, brought to life by the human descriptions and illustrations of the travellers.

COLDSTREAM ON THE MAP

Coldstream Museum
mid June to mid August 2003

Original maps and copies of maps illustrating the development of Coldstream are on display in Coldstream Museum.

For information contact:

Judy Thompson, Assistant Curator, Scottish Borders Council Museums Service, 49 Newtown St, Duns, Berwickshire TD11 3AU.
Tel. 01361 884114

MAPPING THE REALM

Timothy Pont's Portrait of Renaissance Scotland
Travelling exhibition venues:

July 2003
Aug-Sept 2003
Oct-Nov 2003
Jan 2004

Dunbeath Heritage Centre
Mallaig Heritage Centre
St Andrews Museum
Aberdeen Central Library

TWO EMINENT SCOTTISH CARTOGRAPHERS : THE JOHNSTONS

James McCarthy, formerly Deputy Director of the Nature Conservancy Council, became embroiled accidentally in 2000 in the world of cartography and 19th century exploration...

The story starts with the finding of an unpublished expedition diary in the offices of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, which I was invited to 'look at' because of my work as a forestry officer in Tanganyika some years ago. After several months of patient work with a large magnifying glass, greatly assisted by the temporary relocation of the diary to the NLS Map Library in Edinburgh for my convenience, I had transcribed the diary of Keith Johnston on his final expedition into the interior of Africa.

The diary is relatively prosaic and provided no insight into the character and personality of its author - but I wanted to find out more. With the help of a professional genealogist I was successful in tracking down his great-niece, a surviving relative (living a few minutes walk from my home in Edinburgh) who kindly allowed me access to the unpublished *Recollections of the Johnston Family* written by Keith's sister, Grace.

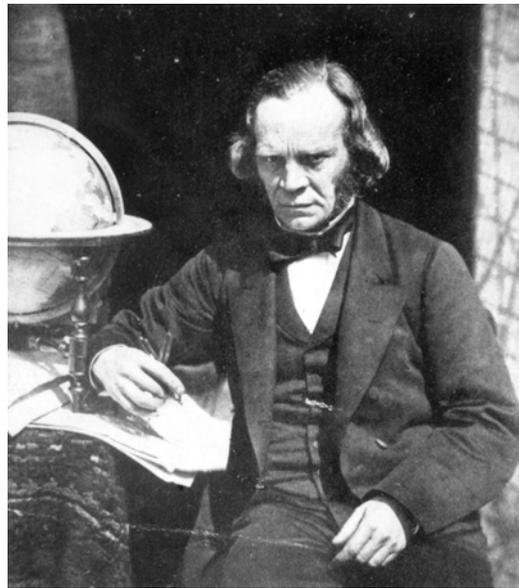
These *Recollections* not only provided an insight into the life of a Victorian middle-class life family in Scotland's capital, but also the remarkable coincidence of the personality and careers of Keith Johnston (1844-79) and his father, Alexander Keith Johnston (1804 -71).

Following closely in his father's footsteps, Keith became an accomplished cartographer, and like his father, who was a friend of David Livingstone, was deeply involved in research into the geography of East and Central Africa, and the great controversies over the source of the Nile.



Above: Alexander Keith Johnston jnr. (c.1878)
London Illustrated News, Aug 23, 1879

Both father and son studied under the distinguished German geographers and introduced new concepts of cartography and geography into Britain, for which Alexander, as the pre-eminent cartographer in the renowned Edinburgh firm of W and A K Johnston, was crowned with honours towards the end of his life.



Above: Alexander Keith Johnston snr. (c.1860)
Photographer unknown
Source: *An Edinburgh Centenary – 100 years of Mapmaking*. W & AK Johnston 1925

Johnston senior was a leader in the development of thematic atlases, his outstanding achievement being the *Atlas of Natural Phenomena*, a work of immense complexity which took 10 years of patient toil and incorporated a huge amount of scientific information on everything from animal life to hydrography. He was an acknowledged leader in the field of physical geography and mapping, his great physical globe of the world gaining a gold medal prize at the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 and which, recently refurbished, graces the headquarters of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) in London.

Both father and son brought a new approach to cartography and geography, integrating many aspects of what is now recognized as environmental science. Both were highly innovative and well in advance of their time.

Continued on page 4

Keith himself, after a short period working for Stanford's, subsequently as head of the London Office of W & A K Johnston, then became the assistant map curator for the RGS with which he and his father were intimately associated. (Keith became a Fellow at the remarkably early age of 24). But Keith was disenchanted with desk work and went off to conduct a boundary survey of Paraguay, which despite interminable delays on the part of its government, and several hair-raising adventures, he carried out very competently.

On his return, Keith was appointed leader of the RGS 1878-80 Expedition to East Africa, their task being to explore a feasible trade route to the Central African Lakes Nyassa (now Malawi) and Tanganyika. Keith was to be accompanied by a naturalist and geologist, the young Joseph Thomson (1858-95) who was subsequently to make his name as one of the greatest of African explorers. In Zanzibar he also met the 'rescuer' of Livingstone, the famed H.M. Stanley, who hinted that he might steal a march on Keith. With his increasing distaste for the bumptious Thomson, this merely compounded his anxieties.

Within a short time of the start of the expedition, Keith contracted severe dysentery and was obliged to be carried in a litter in great distress for a fortnight to the village of Behobeho where he died. (The village lies in what is now the vast Selous Game Reserve where I was responsible for forest exploration in the early 1960's). After burying his leader, at the age of 21, the totally inexperienced Thomson made the courageous decision to carry on the expedition, which he did with remarkable success.



In 2001, together with Mike Shand, Senior Cartographer at Glasgow University, we retraced Keith's footsteps in an attempt – unfortunately unsuccessful – to locate the explorer's gravesite.

The whole story, liberally illustrated, is told in *Journey into Africa: The Life and Death of Keith Johnston, Scottish Cartographer and Explorer (1844-79)*.

A further attempt to find this by Mike with a better organised expedition in October 2002 ended with the same result, but another is planned later this year.

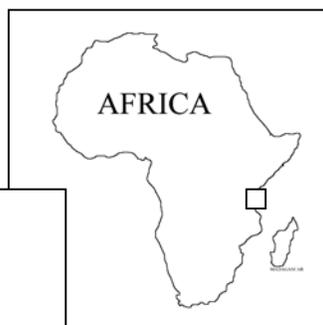
James McCarthy

A microfilm of Keith Johnston's expedition diary is available for consultation in the Manuscripts Division of the National Library of Scotland. The Library also holds the records of the firm of W and A K Johnston.

To be published in July/August 2003:

J McCarthy. *Journey into Africa: The Life and Death of Keith Johnston, Scottish Cartographer and Explorer (1844-79)*.

ISBN 1-904445-01-2. £35
Whittles Publishing, Latheronwheel, Caithness, KW5 6DW. Tel: 1593 741240



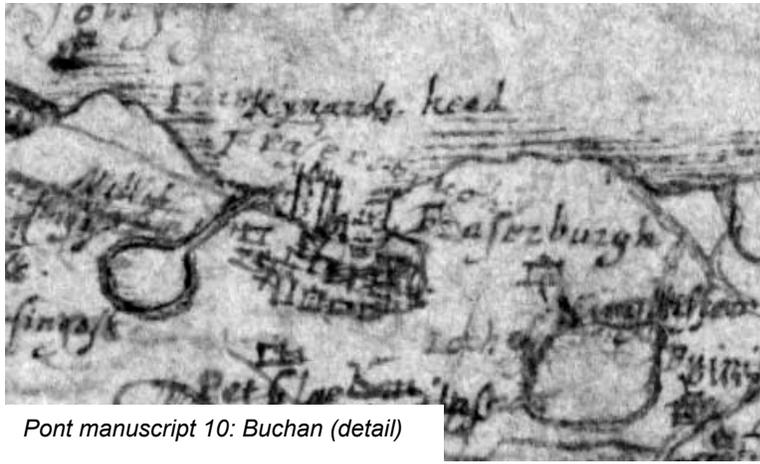
Left: Overview map of Africa, showing area enlarged below left.

Below left: Route of the RGS East Africa Expedition 1879 (up to the death of Keith Johnston).

Below: Keith Johnston's grave, Behobeho Village, Tanganyika. Sketch by William Beardall reproduced in Illustrated London News.



PONT AND FRASER'S BROCH



Pont manuscript 10: Buchan (detail)

Fraser received authority to rename his burgh as Fraserburgh.

Pont's use of 'Fraser's Broch' therefore means that he cannot have been there before 1592 - but not too much later either since he evidently first wrote Faithlie before scoring it out for the new name. Further, knowing his penchant for using local names and pronunciation, he did not write Fraserburgh, but Fraser's broch, implying that that was what the inhabitants called it. And they still do: it remains *The Broch*.

The little drawing of Fraserburgh on Pont's map of the north east Buchan coast contributes something to two aspects of the maps as a whole: dating and roads.

Dating Pont's maps has been accepted as a problem. For example, there is good reason to believe, on visual evidence, that the map of Angus was drawn before 1588. Pont depicts the circular corner towers of Claypotts as either unfinished or being recapped; and they were capped and dated in 1588. On the other hand, J S Dobie made a convincing case that Pont's topography of Cunninghame must have been prepared in c. 1605-8 by virtue of the noblemen he named. Only Clydesdale is dated, at 1596. His great project could have lasted from c. 1585 to 1607, but we do not know in what sequence he travelled round Scotland.

Above his drawing of Fraserburgh, three names are inscribed: '*Fraserburgh*' (which Chris Fleet has attributed to the hand of Robert Gordon of Straloch); '*Fraser's broch*'; and - becoming very indistinct - '*Faithl*' (under 'Kynards head').

In the course of participating in Historic Scotland's Burgh Survey project for Fraserburgh,¹ much of the unusually interesting history of that town has emerged. '*Faithl*' clearly refers to the original fishing community of Faithlie, which lay (and part still lies) along the east-facing shore. Although Alexander Fraser began improvements to his town in 1546, adding a new church up on the plateau c.1572; it was still called Faithlie. However, in 1592, to coincide with the foundation of his University and the laying out of an exceptional grid-iron suburb to the south-west,

¹ I am indebted to my colleagues Ali Cathcart, Richard Oram and Paula Martin for a mutual understanding of the town.

The other curious aspect of the Fraserburgh map is a straight line leading from Fraserburgh west. The lines on Pont's maps have not yet been fully decided, but they are generally thought to be watercourses. This line cannot be: for it goes against the natural declivity of the land and climbs up and over the dominant ridge.

It is, in fact, aligned with Fraserburgh's High Street, and is the original route from Fraserburgh south of Pittullie to Pitsligo and places west. Could it be a road? If that line is a road, how many others likewise represent routes? Certainly some of the myriad such lines in the Carse of Gowrie (Angus and Perthshire maps) look as though they represent roads, although this has not yet been proved conclusively.

Charles McKean

RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON SCOTTISH MAPS

The following two papers, from *the Maps for Local History* seminar in October 2002, were published in issue 57 (Spring 2003) of *Scottish Local History*, the journal of the Scottish Local History Forum.

Tristram Clarke. 'Estate plans hold appeal for historians', pp 27-31.

John Moore. 'Maps of the Scottish counties: the example of Renfrewshire', pp.18-22.

Diana Webster. 'Curator's choice: The age of sail and steam.' *Quarto: Newsletter of the National Library of Scotland*, 13, Winter 2002/3, p.3. [About an Anchor Line poster-map of Atlantic and North America].

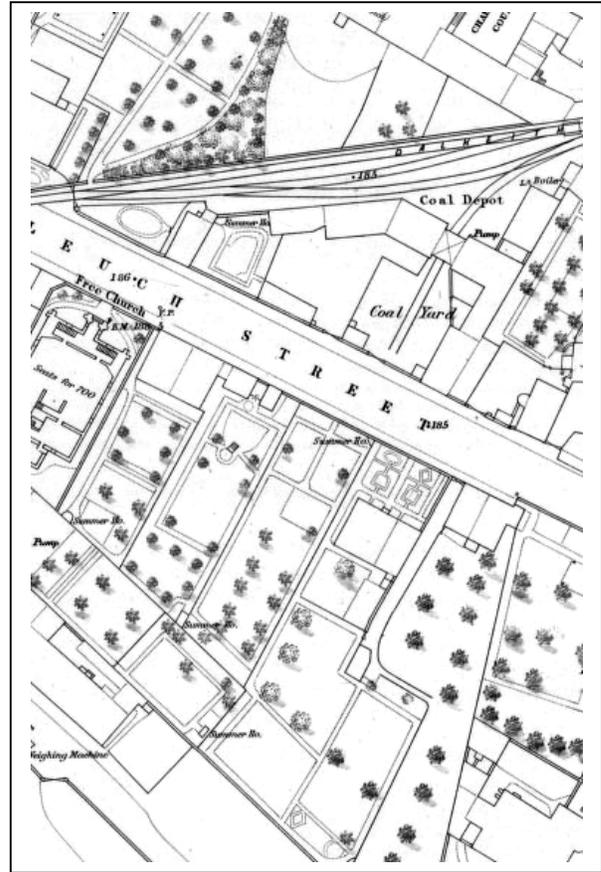
ORDNANCE SURVEY TOWN PLANS

www.nls.uk/maps

The National Library of Scotland is launching a new website of scanned images of Ordnance Survey town plans of Scotland 1847-1895, to join the existing 1200 map images already online.

Around 1900 high resolution, zoomable images of 62* towns will be displayed, at the largest scales ever published - 1:500 or 1:528 (10 feet to 1 mile) and 1:1056 (5 feet to 1 mile).

Most plans concentrate on towns with a population of 4000 or more, surveyed as a public health measure to identify water sources and drainage, following cholera and typhoid epidemics, but some smaller towns were also included, particularly when town councils recognised the usefulness of the maps for planning new developments. There was also an element of 'keeping up with the Jones', to maintain a town's status. Oban, for example, paid to be included in the survey.



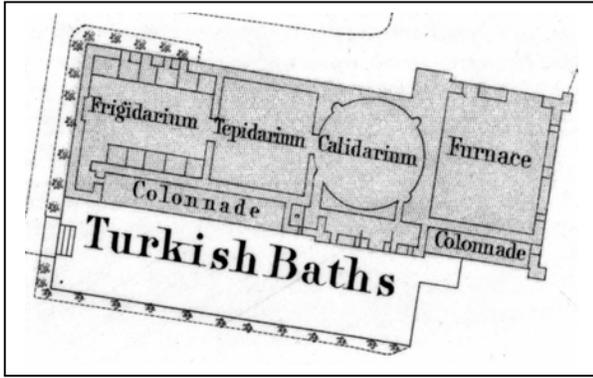
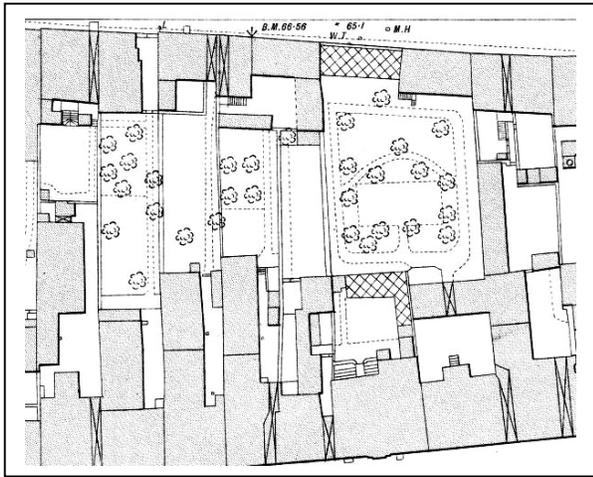
The maps show great detail, identifying features such as glasshouses and sundials; factory premises; the interiors of public buildings - schools, workhouses, hospitals (and Turkish baths!); the seating capacity of churches; and a range of information useful for all aspects of social, industrial, urban, transport and landscape history.

At this stage the main access will be through an index map - unfortunately there are no street indexes. The project was part of *Resources for Learning in Scotland*, funded by the New Opportunities Fund, and a brief essay on each town has been prepared by RLS staff.

National Library staff have been working flat out to meet the deadlines - approval for the project was given only at the end of January 2003, with scanning done in March-April, and the website launched by July. Improvements to the site will be introduced after feedback from users (contact maps@nls.uk).

All images on the website can be provided as high-quality full-size colour printouts or as digital images.

* The 62nd town is Berwick - included as an example of a medieval Scottish burgh.



Above right: Dalkeith 1:1056, sheet 2, 1852 (detail)
Top: St Andrews 1:500, sheet IX.10.17, 1893 (detail)
Above: Aberdeen 1:500, sheet LXXV.11.1, 1866-7 (detail)

PONT TEXTS www.nls.uk/pont

In June the National Library of Scotland made a substantial addition of textual notes deriving from Pont to the *Pont maps website*. This material amounts to nearly 100 pages of handwritten geographic information from the *Topographical Notices of Scotland* (Adv.MS.34.2.8), which have been carefully and freshly transcribed by Dr Jean Munro. Originally, these notes were retranscribed twice over before appearing in print within *Macfarlane's Geographical Collections*, vol ii (1907), and therefore this published form contains many errors when compared to the original.

Although the notes are in the handwriting of Robert Gordon of Straloch, there are good grounds for arguing that the author of a large share of them was Timothy Pont. The texts support some of Pont's cartographic information, they provide clues to his working methods, and cover areas not represented in surviving manuscript maps, collectively reaffirming Pont's chorographic role.

The website includes a number of search methods for the texts, including a detailed gazetteer of significant names, full transcriptions of the texts themselves, and zoomable images of the original pages of handwritten text. We are very grateful for Dr Jean Munro for all her expertise and hard work, in allowing us to make this material publicly accessible.

Chris Fleet

BLAEU ATLAS TEXTS www.nls.uk/maps

Ian Cunningham, formerly Keeper of Manuscripts, Maps and Music in NLS, has spent part of his retirement translating into English the Latin texts in the Scottish volume of Blaeu's atlas (1654). It is planned to mount these on the NLS website in Autumn 2003, to complement the maps which are already displayed. A couple of examples are given here; a fuller account of the different contributors of information for Blaeu's atlas texts will be given in the next issue of Cairt.

Robert Gordon's account from page 103 eulogises Moray, which seems to have but one drawback! ...

'Being about to describe Moray, let me say this most truly as preface: second to none in its healthy climate, in tenderness and goodness of the earth it far exceeds all other of our northern provinces... Hence we find entirely true the boast of the inhabitants, that each year they experience forty more bright days than all their neighbours. Nothing grows anywhere in the whole kingdom, which does not flourish abundantly here, or if it is lacking, that is to be ascribed to the sloth of the inhabitants, not to a fault in climate or soil...

'When autumn has scarcely begun elsewhere, here everything is ripe, cut and conveyed to open threshing areas (as is the custom of the people); and if we compare this region to the others, winter is scarcely felt: the land is almost always uncovered, the seas are open, nor are roads blocked. ...there is less grass: for this whole region is given over to crop and cultivation. But pasture does not need to be sought at a great distance: for above in the interior a few miles away there is enough and more than enough, to which each year in full summer the cattle may be removed when the farming toils are over.

'Nowhere will you find a better provided meat-market than here, nowhere grain at a cheaper

price; and this not from lack of money, but from abundance.

'The inhabitants too, though lazy in many ways (as often in fruitful soil), exert themselves in fishing at sea and in that outdo their neighbours.

'In the lower-lying places on the coast there is a problem with lack of bituminous clods for the purpose of fire, and this is the only inconvenience felt by the fortunate region, but that occurs in few places, and they are relieved by strenuous drinking...'

George Buchanan describes Hirta (St Kilda) on page 130...

'About sixty miles beyond this to the north west is Hirta, productive of crops, cattle and especially sheep, and it gives birth to larger ones than any of the other islands. The inhabitants are ignorant of almost all arts and especially religion. To it after the summer solstice the lord of the island sends his procurator to collect the taxes, and along with him a priest to baptise the children born in the previous year; should he be unable to go, each man baptises his own children. They pay to the lord a certain number of seals, of sun-dried wethers, and of sea-birds...

...There are sheep of outstanding beauty; but because of the violence of the tide of the sea hardly anyone can approach them.'

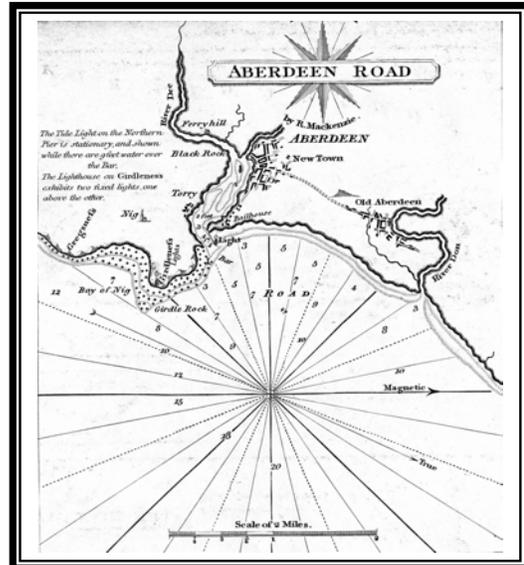
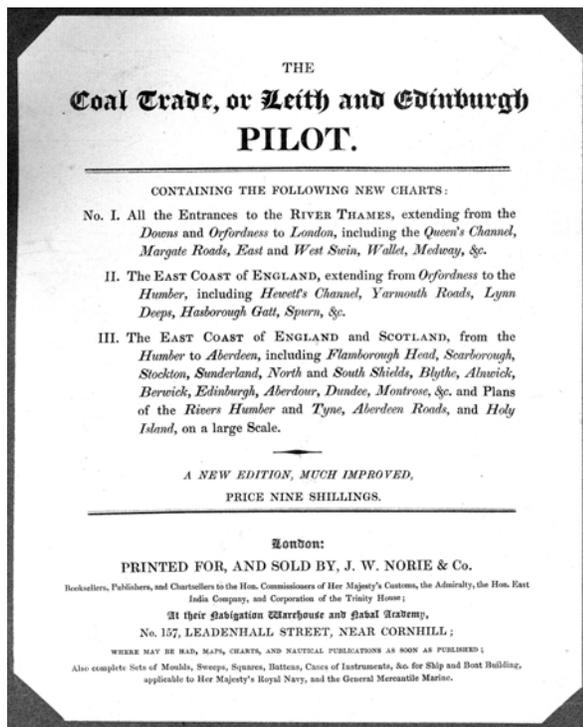
RECENT ACQUISITION (National Library of Scotland)

NORIE, John William

The coal trade, or Edinburgh and Leith pilot: containing the following new charts:

- I. *All the entrances to the River Thames...additions to 1841.*
 - II. *The east coast of England...from Orfordness to the Humber...a new edition 1840.*
 - III. *The east coast of England and Scotland, from the Humber to Aberdeen...additions to 1840.*
- London: J.W. Norie & Co., [1841?]. 1 atlas : 3 maps ; 61 x 44 cm. EMGB.s.31

This is a splendid example of 'niche marketing'. These three sea charts were formerly included among the sixteen charts in Norie's earlier work, *The complete British and Irish coasting pilot*, of which the National Library already has the New Edition, revised and corrected to 1832. John Norie (1772-1843) had returned to his Scottish roots in 1839, living in Edinburgh, and although recently retired, no doubt saw a business opportunity to promote a limited selection of charts for the east coast coal trade serving London.



Inset of Aberdeen Road

Norie worked for William Heather, a private chartmaker in London from 1795, compiling charts and teaching navigation in his Nautical Academy. When Heather died in 1812, Norie took over a part share of the business. Although the Admiralty Hydrographic Service was established in 1795, the bulk of charts sold to merchant shipping in the early 19th century were made by private chartmakers such as Heather and Norie. These charts were popularly known as 'blue back charts' because they were often mounted on blue manilla paper for strength.

Diana Webster

Further reading:

Susanna Fisher. *The makers of the blueback charts: a history of Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson Ltd.* St Ives: Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson 2001.

TALKS – 2003

23 July 2003

Dunbeath Heritage Centre, Dunbeath, Caithness
Jeff Stone. *The Nation Surveyed by Timothy Pont: Context and Content*

11-13 Sept. 2003

Stornoway: Islands Book Trust (enquiries: 01851 810681)

Conference on **Martin Martin 1703-2003**, includes:
John Moore. *Martin Martin and John Adair: two approaches to landscape recording at the end of the seventeenth century.*

6 Nov. 2003

Killin Heritage Society
Chris Fleet. *Early maps of Killin and beyond.*

17 Nov. 2003

Glasgow & West of Scotland Family History Society
Diana Webster. *Planting your roots on the map.*

We welcome
information on
forthcoming talks and
events relating to maps
– please contact us at
the address on front
cover.