

The following letter was sent to my mother at one point:

Dear Sir/Madam, Payment for Billets H.M. Naval Base, Oban

Herewith are forwarded accounts in triplicate for billeting allowances due to you together with the appropriate remittance. Will you please receipt and return the original and duplicate copies, a two-penny stamp being affixed to the original if the account exceeds two pounds.

*H.M. Home
PAYMASTER COMMANDER
BASE ACCOUNTANT OFFICER*

Editors note: Names of evacuees billeted in Oban and allocated by Mrs Barbara Black may be obtained from the Editor.

A SAD STORY

by Michael Davis

Our forebears were often unswerving and terrible in their laws. The following account of a trial (transcribed and edited by John Cameron in his *Justiciary Records of Argyll and the Isles*) is told in the official language of the contemporary trial records. It is a sad story by any standards, but perhaps doubly sad in its inevitable, unswerving "doom".

On 10th April 1705 the Court at Inveraray met before Sir Colin Campbell of Ardkinglas. The assize (or jury) were all drawn from the neighbourhood of Inveraray. Jury service was clearly a residential hazard around the Duke's capital. The surnames of the good citizens summoned to sit in judgement - Walker, Murray, Brown, McNokaird, McOnlea, McNachtan, Campbell, two McNiccolls, two Clerks, two McDugalds and two McKellars - are almost all still familiar to local people today.

The accused was one Margaret Campbell alias Guinich, "persued at the instance of William Inglis procurator fiscal .. for the cryme of murder." She was "naturall daughter to the deceist Angus Campbell alias Guinich sometymes living in Kilberry". Before the jury, and before the modern reader, the story unfolds. The previous year, Margaret Campbell had:-

"fallen in fornication -with James Montgomery son to John Montgomrie of Ballimeanoch she then serving in the said John his house finding her self with

chyld upon a wicked design of concealing thereof and doubtless of murdering the birth which she thereafter cruelly and unnaturally executed she at Martiness last left the said John Montgomry his service and came to Alexander Campbell in Kilberry her uncle his house where having stayed one week thereafter she came to Kilberries own home where having feed herself and stayed a moneth hut Kilberries lady finding her with chyld and telling and challenging her thereupon she stiffly denyed yet she put her away from her service and thereafter she came to Malcolme Campbell in Leckuary his house where she stayed from Christmess till about the nynth or tenth day of March last and Elizabeth Fergusone his wife and other neighbouring women finding her with chyld challenged her thereupon she flatly denyed as formerly and having removed her 'self thence she came to Iver Campbell in Downan his house where she stayed about a fournight Dunardaries wife and the said Ivor his wife and others finding her to be great with chyld challenged and accused her thereupon which she then obstinately and tenaciously denyed as at former tymes but finding tyme of her delyvery drawing near her of her own accord without the said Iver or his wifes bidding left there house upon Saturday the twenty fourth day of March last in the evening and came to Barnagadd not far from thence and in one darned and obscure place did bring forth ane man child in the night tyme which she either stifled or left exposed in the condition he came to the world or other wayes put violent hands on him that he quickly perished and died she immediately wrapped up the chyld in a little linnin cloath and hidd or buried him in the cleft of a rock and covered him with fogg and stone where she left him and came to John M'Illelevins house in Barnagadd in the dead hour of that same very night the people being all asleep she got no entrie but lodged her self in a little goat or sheep house near thereto where she was found next morning be the said John M'Illeleven his wife and thereafter came to Angus M'Lauchlan of Barnagadd his house -where she stayed all that day being Sunday and next day went to Lerignahunsone staying there that night in M'Ilevernocks house she was there apprehended be Dunardaries servants whom he sent after her of purpose when he knew she had fledd away knowing her to be so near the tyme of her delyvery and fearing her wicked designe and hy Dunardaries servants and the countrey people she was brought to Killmichell in Glassrie and examined before the Kirk session she stiffly and tenaciously denyed that she either had ever been with chyld or brought forth a chyld till midwives and other women were brought to try her who by her breast and other natural tokens found she had lately born a chyld which she at length confessed before the said Kirk session upon the threttieth day of March last in this manner viz that the said James Montgomrie had gotten her with chyld in summer last that she concealed all alongst her being with chyld during the whole space in all the places and to all the persones above mentioned and to all others albeit frequentlie challenged thereupon except the said James Montgomry whom she gave up as father to the chyld and also confessed she

was delivered of the said man chyld in ane obscure place in Barnagadd all alone in the night tyme and that she buried or hidd the said man child so brought forth by her in the someplace and covered him with fogg and stone having wrapped him in a little linnin cloath.”

Even in our own permissive age, a repetition of Margaret's story is occasionally enacted. In her own day, religion and society dictated that those who “fell” stood to lose more than their “good name”. For a servant, moral impropriety was no more allowable in the early 18th Century than it would have been in a country house in the first half of our own Century. “The woman pays” obtained in fact, long after Thomas Hardy aimed *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* at an unsympathetic public.

Margaret left Ballimeanoch (south of Kilmartin) in evident knowledge that her lover, the son of the house, was not about to make an “honest woman” of her. In what seems like increasing desperation, she rushes hither and thither: a week with her uncle at Kilberry, a month working in Kilberry Castle, two and a half months at Leckuary (north of Kilmichael Glassary) and then a mere two weeks at Dunans (west of Cairnbaan) before the final, terrible events, alone, at Barnagad.

In the tightly packed houses of these lairds and their tenants, concealment of pregnancy was well-nigh impossible. Immediately she suspected, Mrs Campbell of Kilberry dismissed her servant. The wife of Iver Campbell at Dunans, with the help of Mrs MacTavish of Dunardy, the laird's wife, accosted Margaret and accused her. Literally hours before she gave birth, Margaret was desperately denying her condition. While Mrs Campbell and her superior were doubtless concerned with the reputation and respectability of Iver's house and the “moral welfare” of all therein, Margaret's own personal crisis was becoming a matter for public speculation. Honesty could only lead her to a downward spiral, shunned and shamed. The last resort of “harlotry” was not improbable (though, on reflection, one hesitates to speculate on the demand for harlots in early 18th Century Argyll). Like puppets, all the individuals concerned were impelled by the moral and social zeitgeist ... and in the face of accusations, Margaret continued to deny. The ultimate consequences, including the trial, verdict and sentence, were now almost pre-ordained.

The law is clear: murder, the assize is informed, “*is more wicked and atrocious when committed by parents upon their own children especially infants*”. Any sympathy was irrelevant: statute ordained that “*if any woman shall conceal her being with chyld ...and shall not call for nor make use of help or assistance in the birth the chyld being found dead or amissing the mother shall he holden and repute the murder of her own chyld ... though there be no appearance of wound or scratch upon the body ...*”. The assize found Margaret Campbell guilty by her own confession. The punishment followed unswervingly upon the verdict, designed by Act of Parliament to be “*in terror of others to*

committ the lyke in time coming” :-

“Therefore the said Justice deput be the mouth of John M'Vurich dempster of Court ordained and adjudged the above named Margaret Campbell alias Guineach the pannell to he taken upon the twenty fourth day of Apryll instant betuixt tuo and three of the clock in the afternoon and then and there to be hanged upon a gibbet till she die the death and ordained her whole moveables to be escheat which was pronounced for Doom”.

COLL REMOTE AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

by J D

The 'spy in the sky' (a.k.a. The C.R.A.P. project) is the realisation of a long-standing ambition. I have been a keen builder and flyer of radio-controlled model aircraft for a good many years now (I took up the hobby when I was twenty and I'm now just the right side of fifty - work it out for yourself). I have long wanted to have a go at aerial photography, using one of my planes to carry the camera. Until recently, cameras were a bit bulky and heavy and used film, so consequently the project never got off the ground (pun intended). Today things are different and at last I felt the time was right to have a go.

The equipment

A cheap digital camera about the size of a credit card and weighing only a few ounces is mounted in a pod, which is attached to the underside of one of the plane's wings. The camera's power is turned on by a small servo motor mounted alongside it and the same servo also operates an arm which pushes the camera's shutter button to take the picture - all controlled by me from the ground with my radio transmitter. The plane itself is purpose built for the project and is a 2.2 metre (88 inch) wingspan electric motor-powered glider. Again, the motor and the flight of the plane are all controlled by me from the ground via the same transmitter.