

Scourged by the hand of the hangman

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Crime never paid for the daughter of Kilninver man Patrick MacNokaird. Whilst searching the excellent online catalogue of the National Archives I was sidetracked by a case record in 1707 of Margaret MacNokaird. She had been found guilty of theft and frequent pickeries and thereafter scourged through Inverary.

To find out more I knew that Oban library had two volumes of the Argyll Justiciary Records. Scourging had been common and often used preliminary to banishments and sometimes in cases of pickery and adultery. In June 1707 Margaret had entered the house of John Munro in Carnross, stolen coats and linen. The Justice General Depute ordered her to be taken from the Tollbooth *“and to be scourged by the hand of the hangman through the town of Inverary”*. She received three whips each at the houses of Alex Lambie and Donald McNaughton followed by three more at the cross then dismissed from the town.

Later in July of that year she entered the house of Alexander McIlbreid at Anacra, stole money and a knife kept in a reid purse from within a bed as well as food from *“a chist”* and then further stealing happened at Torranmore. This time justice was harder, *“thirty stripes”* were given out. On the 14th of August five stripes were dealt out at each of the houses of McConechy John, Donald Clerk, Finlay McNicoll, Violet Young, Baily Brown and lastly Provost Fishers. It wasn't over yet, she was taken to the cross once again where the palm of her left hand was burnt *“with an iron marked T and then dismissed”*.

In these times punishments were dealt harshly and the authorities had no desire for long jail sentences due to the added expense of longer term prisoners. Unfamiliar with the locations mentioned I have so far only come up with Torranmor township near the bottom of Loch Awe on Roy's Military Survey map 1747-55.

References

Oban Library. *Argyll Justiciary Records 1705-1742*, 2, Pages 209 & 217.
www.nas.gov.uk .Online Catalogue.