Fig.2.1 Moray.

MAN IN MORAY
5,000 years of history

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Synopsis

The extent of Moray is defined and the physical conditions briefly described. Traces of Mesolithic man have been found in the Culbin, and later Neolithic peoples found Moray an attractive place to settle. As metal working became established, trades routes followed and Moray flourished. As the climate deteriorated, so, apparently, did the political situation and defensive sites became necessary. The Romans came and went and the Picts rose and fell. The Vikings did not linger on these shores and MacBeth never met any witches near Forres. The Kings of Scots divided and ruled until they themselves set a pattern, which still continues, that if you want to get on you must go south to London. In distant Moray, brave men like Montrose and foolish men like Prince Charles Edward, fought for their rightful king. The Stuarts, however, ill rewarded their followers. Road makers and bridge builders half tamed the rivers, and the railways completed the process. With wars came boom years for the farmers, but even feather beds wear out and Moray is once more in apparent decline. However, all declines are relative and the old adage still has relevance: 'Speak weel o the Hielans but live in the Laich.'

Physical

The name Moray is now applied to a local authority administrative District extending from west of Forres and the Findhorn to Cullen and stretching down in an irregular triangle into the highlands of the Cairngorms (Fig.2.1). In Medieval times, Moray reached as far as Lochalsh on the west coast and there has always been some difficulty in defining the boundaries of the province. Professor Barrow suggests that since river valleys tend to possess an historic unity, then a narrower but more acceptable definition of Moray would be the lands of Strathnairn, Strathdearn and Strathspey.[1] This is the Moray of this article.

Moray consists of two main different topographical regions. The major part is highland, once heavily forested but now mainly moorland. Due to extensive soil degradation it is now capable of supporting only a few people, but in the gentler climate of 3,000 years ago, pastoralists lived the year round up to the 600m contour and until recent times transhumance to the summer sheiling was a feature of highland livestock management. The Laigh of Moray, that is land below 75m above datum, is, by comparison with the inland highlands, a land flowing with milk and honey (Fig.2.2). Long term average rainfall is less than 800mm, with sheltered

parts reaching as low as 650mm.[2] However, these averages hide wide annual variations. The summer of 1985 was exceptionally wet; some months having twice the usual amount of rain.

The influence of the mass of water in the Moray Firth is quite considerable. By August the water temperature can reach $+13°C$ and although this falls to around $+4°C$ in February the moderating effect is to delay the onset of winter and mitigate its harshness when it eventually arrives.[3] There are about 1,300 hours of annual sunshine and, as Ross points out, 'seasonally the Moray coast has more sunshine in the winter months of November to March, than does London, but is reversed in the summer period in spite of there being some two hours more daylight in the north at midsummer.'[4] With a low rainfall and reasonable amounts of sunshine, lowland Moray, with its predominantly light sandy soils, is ideally suited for grain growing, despite the fact that it lies further north than Moscow.

From the Spey to the Nairn there is a coastal band of sedimentary rocks of various ages, while the higher inland is underlain with metamorphic schists. The drainage is substantially north-east in direction. The main river is the Spey which is turbulent and fast flowing, rising far south in the Monadliath mountains and nourished on its way to the sea by streams like the Feshie and the Avon (pronounced A'an) which are fed by the long

Fig.2.2   Elgin with the rich Laigh of Moray stretching down to the sea.

lasting snows of the Cairngorms. The Findhorn, which enters the sea near Forres, and the Nairn also rise in the Monadliaths and, like the Spey, are liable to produce flash floods.

The longshore drift from east to west is continually pushing the mouths of the Spey and Findhorn westward. Long sandy or gravel spits build up and these are eventually punched through by the river or have to be cut by bulldozers. 5,000 years ago sea level was some five metres higher than at present, and falling. About 2,000 years ago, sea level was possibly about the same as present but there was a salt water channel running from about Burghead to Lossiemouth. According to Peacock, 'the harbour area of Burghead was once an island and is now connected by a 10m storm beach to the mainland at Clarkly Hill.'[5] The Findhorn entered the sea to the west of its present course while the Spey probably emptied into an estuary, partially enclosed by a long spit of gravel, reaching out from the eastern bank of the river.

Earlier, during successive ice ages, Moray was encased in ice. With the final melting the lowlands were left covered with fluvio-glacial outwash sands and gravels. The light soils produced on the low ridges and drumlins proved very attractive to early farmers and remain attractive to their descendants to this day. 'The contrast between the intensively farmed coastal plain and the forest and moorland of the greater part of the uplands bears witness to the difference in productivity of the soils, resulting from the combined effect of those inter-related factors; parent material, relief and climate.'[6]

Early Peoples

Lacaille found no trace of Palaeolithic man in Scotland,[7] although the insufficiently investigated caves at Allt nan Uamh near Inchnadamph in Sutherland, may have revealed some evidence. Now, alas, the boots of countless pot-holers have destroyed what little remained of possible ice-age man.

About 5,000 years BC, hunter gatherers, conveniently labelled Mesolithic, hunted and gathered food in the area west of Forres known as the Culbin. The living sites of the early Culbin inhabitants have not been extensively studied, but by analogy with similar sites elsewhere in Britain and Europe there is evidence that the Mesolithic peoples hunted red deer, wild boar, and aurochs, while fish and plant material were also a significant part of their diet.[8] These hunter-gatherers were early destroyers of the environment, for evidence from Yorkshire shows that the North York moors were once forested and that the process of deforestation was initiated by hunting communities long before agriculture was introduced into Britain.[9]

Agriculture was introduced by the Neolithic or new stone age people. The ancestry of their animals and grain lay in the Middle East, probably

in that once fertile land lying between the Tigris and Euphrates, but by what route and wanderings and how many millenia passed before small groups jumped ashore in Britain, archaeology remains silent. Case postulates that the boats used could carry as many as eight or nine people, along with three to four cattle or up to twenty five sheep and goats.[10] There is no reason to suppose that the Neolithic invaders exterminated the Mesolithic inhabitants and Kinnes argues that there was an 'incorporation of existing, formally Mesolithic communities.'[11] Whatever happened, the available carbon 14 dates show that Neolithic culture was well established throughout Scotland by the last quarter of the fourth millenium BC.

The Neolithic farmers used polished stone axes and well fired round based pottery. Efforts have been made to associate this pottery with standard models from Grimston-Lyles Hill (Yorkshire) and Ballymarlagh (Ireland) but Kinnes rightly points out 'A determination to find external origins for each new idea has severely restricted the possibilities for processual understanding ... For example, the quantity and contextual integrity of early pottery in north-east Scotland exceeds those in Yorkshire, yet constant resort is made to this perceived fount for explanation.'[12] The site at Boghead (Fochabers) has produced some fine pottery associated with a radiocarbon date of 3,000 BC while the now lost site of Roseisle, near Burghead, must have been of a similar age. Scattered early Neolithic pottery, unassociated with any site has also been discovered at Culbin and Urquhart near Elgin.

Stone circles and cairns are associated with the later Neolithic, and the great chambered tombs at Clava in the valley of the Nairn have analogues, though much more dilapidated, on the banks of the Avon just before it joins the Spey at Ballindalloch. However, as the Neolithic farmers herded their cattle and sowed their wheat and barley and raised great monuments to their dead, a development elsewhere was to revolutionise their society. That development was the ability to smelt and alloy metals.

Early Metal in Moray

Modern society is so used to metal tools that it is difficult to imagine life without iron and steel, copper and zinc. Yet within living memory, tribes in New Guinea existed without any knowledge of metal, and until 150 years ago the Maoris of New Zealand led a complex social life and produced intricate wood work and other consumer goods with only stone, wood, bone, feather and vegetable fibre as the source of their materials and tools.

Metal is believed to have been first smelted in the Middle East, and Cyprus is traditionally and etymologically associated with copper. In its elemental state, copper is too soft to be useful, so from an early age it has been alloyed with other metals in order to increase its hardness and durability. The first alloy appears to have been with lead, followed by tin

and then, much later, with zinc. Today, copper is commonly alloyed with nickel to produce the common 'silver' coins rattling valuelessly in our pockets. Moray has no copper deposits, but *galena* (lead ore) is found near Lossiemouth and if the theory of cup and ring markings being associated with metallic ores is accepted,[13] then the finely marked rocks at Inverugie fit neatly into the pattern.

Early metal use is associated with the beaker people; an allegedly round headed (ba heided) race, still believed to be identifiable today in north-east Scotland. They are called the beaker people because they buried their crouched dead in a kist made of stone slabs and placed alongside the deceased a beaker presumably containing a drink which hopefully reached parts that other drinks could not. Many of the beakers found around the shores of the Moray Firth are of the type known as the British-North Rhine group (N/NR)[14] and it is thus reasonable to assume that the people who introduced the beakers to Moray crossed the North Sea by boat.

Circular ditched enclosures or henges are associated with the beaker people and there is a fine henge in Quarry Wood, some three kilometres north-west of Elgin. Shepherd casts doubts on the acceptability of this henge,[15] but a flat axe mould was discovered there in 1956. This would appear to link the site to the known axe cult of Scandinavia and, in conjunction with the non-defensive nature of the site (it is not on the highest ground and remote from water) would indicate that its use must have been mainly ceremonial.

The number of bronze flat axes found in Moray indicates that in the days of early metal working Moray must have enjoyed a period of prosperity. A thousand years later, perhaps as a result of climatic deterioration, the wealth of Moray as judged by the material remains had decreased. With the deterioration of the climate came a marked deterioration in the political situation as iron supplanted bronze as the preferred metal for tool making.

Iron, which requires a much higher temperature than copper to smelt, was first worked in Asia Minor in the second millenium BC and the technology reached Britain about 700 BC. The chronology is imperfectly understood and there is no certainty that the metal was originally introduced by new people. However, about the time that iron was being worked in Britain, it is believed that Celtic peoples came into Moray, and the hill forts and defended homesteads are associated with this period. It is not clear whether the forts were designed to shelter the existing inhabitants, or provide a refuge for the new. Perhaps they were ostentatious follies, built by chiefs to impress the tribe as well as the neighbours. No doubt in the hurly burly of these unsettled times the forts served many purposes. Some are unfinished. It was once fashionable to blame the arrival of the Romans for this lack of application, but perhaps it could be put down to the indolence of the builders.

Some of the forts are vitrified and for over a hundred years argument

has raged as to whether the burning was deliberately initiated by the builders as a means of strengthening the structure, or by an enemy intent upon slighting the fortification.[16] Without in any way disparaging the excellent experimental work carried out by latter distinguished investigators, the words of James Macdonald, written a hundred years ago are worthy of quotation: 'From these observations I infer that the vitrification is not of design, and formed no part of the original purpose in construction. If it was the intention to bind the material together, even on the surface, except to a very limited extent it thoroughly failed. The action of the fire has split up the unfused stone, and these have in course of time fallen down, undermining the fused masses, which have slipped from their original position, and now appear here and there on the sides of the ramparts ... It seems to me hard to believe that they began to vitrify, and were unable or unwilling to continue the work, unless we can imagine that all the builders of vitrified forts throughout Scotland tried the same experiment and failed.'[17] Macdonald was writing about Tap o Noth, but, as his own words make clear, his observations are applicable to all vitrified forts.

Picts and Romans
Recent aerial archaeological surveys have revealed in Moray small square ditched enclosures without corners, which, although not yet excavated, are thought to be burial sites dated to around 100 AD. There are enclosures near Pitairlie and in a field to the west of Forres and also to the southwest of Nairn. Pitairlie, despite its attractively Pictish sounding name, is not of ancient origin, but a modern introduced name, dating back about a hundred years. The earliest literary reference to the Picts is in 297 AD, contemporary with Roman activity in Britain.[18] Who the Picts were and what language they spoke have excessively exercised the minds of scholars over many years.[19] A simple view, not at variance with the facts, is that the Picts were the Iron Age people who were living in Moray and most of Scotland at the time and that they spoke a P-Celtic language akin to Welsh. However, there are suggestions that the Picts spoke two languages.[20]

The Picts were accomplished workers in metal and carvers in stone. The boar's head in bronze, part of a war trumpet found at Deskford, testifies to their talents with metal, while the many carved stones bear witness to their masonic skills. Pictish stones are divided into three classes. Class I stones, traditionally considered the oldest, consist of boulders carved with incised abstract symbols or animals. The famous bulls of Burghead are fine examples of this genre. Class I stones probably pre-date the introduction of Christianity to Moray while Class II and Class III stones, with their crosses carved in relief on dressed blocks, testify to the widespread adoption of Christianity.

Two hundred years before the name Pict appeared in Roman literature, the people of Moray must have seen the Roman fleet sail along the coast

in the Autumn of 84 AD while others may have died in the battle of Mons Graupius or, sullenly, post battle, surrendered their grain and livestock to the requisitioning quartermasters of the Roman army. Thirty years ago, aerial photography revealed two Roman marching camps near Keith[21] while, in the last few years, what appear to be two Roman fort sites have been discovered west of the Spey. There is the documented site at Thomshill[22] (Fig.2.3) near Birnie and the remains of a site at Easter Galcantray near Croy. Jones[23] and Keillar[24] argue that the latter is indubitably Roman. Four seasons of excavation have revealed a site which has the morphology of a Roman auxiliary fort, but has yielded disappointingly few artifacts. The C14 date of 100 AD is however very encouraging.

While the Picts may have lost the occasional battle with the Romans they did win the war and Moray was neither colonised nor made a client state of Rome. Pictish civilisation succumbed to attack, not always military, from the Scots, a Northern Irish tribe of shinty hooligans, swarming across to Dalriada (Argyll) and from there all over Pictland. The Scots may well have allied themselves with the Norse so that Moray was squeezed between the Norse advancing from the north and the Scots sweeping up

Fig.2.3   Possible Roman fort site at Thomshill near Elgin, adjacent to two distilleries.

from the south. Sueno's Stone at Forres may represent a Scottish victory over the Picts with a pictorial representation of what happened to the vanquished and a none too subtle warning of what will happen to any other Pict who dares revolt against his new master. By about 844 AD, Kenneth MacAlpine was ruler of both Picts and Scots and the Pictish language or languages went into a swift decline. The language of the court tends to become that of the people and all that is left of the Picts are their incomparable carved stones, a little fine metalwork and a few place names containing elements such as Pit, Aber and Carden.

Christianity
Popular mythology has it that Saint Columba single-handedly converted Scotland to Christ. Columba was of a prominent Irish (Scottish) family and 'we are the greatest' has always been the cry of the victors. Columba, that hot headed temporal and spiritual prince, crossed the North Channel and landed in Iona, circa 563 AD. He died in 597 AD having, according to his biographer,[25] converted all the Picts and Scots and, in his spare moments, written 300 books.

Yet 150 years before Columba was born, St. Ninian of Whithorn carried the Cross north into Pictland, and while Simpson may be a bit too opti-

Fig.2.4   Burghead with remains of Dark Age fort behind modern harbour.

mistic in his attribution of so many sites to Ninian,[26] yet Ninian and other missionaries must have been working in Alba (Scotland) before civilisation, such as it was, collapsed all over Britain in the wake of the Roman withdrawal. When it was reasonably safe for missionaries to return, one who evangelised in Moray was St Brendan of Clonfert. Born in Kerry about 484 AD he travelled to the Faroe islands and allegedly voyaged safely to and from what is now known as North America.[27] He landed in Iona some twenty years before Columba. Brendan is associated with Aberbrandely,[28] while the foundation of Birnie may also be attributed to the same far travelled saint.[29] St Moluag of Bangor, who based himself on Lismore, founded the church at Mortlach and died at Rosemarkie in 592 AD. A hundred years later, St Maelrubha, also from Bangor, established his Scottish base at Applecross (*Aporcrosan*) and is associated with Christian Celtic foundations at Keith, Fordyce, Forres and Rafford. St. Maelrubha died in 722 AD. Other early missionaries associated with Moray are Morgan and, possibly, Bridget. However, there are many saints with the name of Bridget, so it may be that Lhanbryde is named after a latter Medieval saint.

Celtic Christianity survived until the Scots had the misfortune to lose their queen, Ingibjorg, wife of Malcolm III, nicknamed Canmore or Bighead. For his second wife he chose the English refugee, Margaret; a strong willed dynastically determined woman, whose baneful dislike of most things Scottish released a vial of poison of such virulence that its effects continue to this day. The democratic and somewhat disorganised Celtic religion was suppressed by the centralised and dogmatic Roman Catholic church. However, Margaret cannot be blamed for introducing the rule of Rome. As early as 710 AD, Nechtan, king of the Picts, accepted Roman Catholicism and he expelled the Celtic clergy from his lands, but it was only during the reigns of Margaret's numerous progeny that the Roman Church became firmly established.

By 1080 AD there were Roman bishops in Scotland[30] while the first recorded Bishop of Moray sat at Birnie from 1107 to 1115. Simon de Toeny, the fourth bishop (1171-89), lies buried at Birnie. From Birnie the bishops appear to have moved their chair to Kinneddar from where they moved to Spynie in the early 13th century. About 1220 AD Bishop Brice Douglas petitioned the Pope to translate the Cathedral of Moray from Spynie to Elgin and in July 1224 the impressive service of dedication was performed by Bishop Gilbert of Caithness and the Church of the Holy Trinity '*juxta Elgyn*' was transformed into the Cathedral church of the diocese of Moray.

The sons and descendants of Margaret granted large areas of land to the church. David I, that 'sair sanct for the croon', founded the Benedictine Priory of Urquhart in 1136 AD and the Cistercian Abbey of Kinloss in 1150. Alexander II sent to France for monks from Val des Choux in

Burgundy and granted them land for a priory at Pluscarden. He also brought Franciscans or Grey Friars to Elgin and introduced Dominicans or Black Friars to the haughland just to the north of the royal castle.

Divide and Rule

Controlling Moray with its easy access to and from the Highlands and its remoteness from central Scotland was difficult for the crown. Emulating the new feudal system, introduced by William the Bastard, alias Conquerer, south of the border, the King of Scots gave large tracts of land to foreign barons. Whatever their nominal feudal duties the barons' main function was to keep the natives under control. However, if barons were allowed to amalgamate their holdings either through marriage or conquest, they could become too powerful and could present a threat to the crown. To minimise this threat the canny Scots kings gave land to the Church, so that the ecclesiastical holdings formed buffers between the barons. In the early Middle Ages, no baron would dream of annexing Church lands. It was to be a different story four hundred years later.

Just in case the local temporal and spiritual magnates plotted together, the king established castles in the royal burghs. The constables of these castles reported directly to the crown so that the king had an independent source of information and a garrison of soldiers who were not answerable to a local baron for their pay and rations. Royal castles were established at Cullen, Elgin, Forres, Auldearn, Nairn and Inverness, while there were early baronial fortifications at Fochabers, Innes, Duffus and Rait, with many more being built as the centuries progressed.

Burghs grew up where the needs of marketing coincided with convenient means of communication.[31] Elgin, Forres and Nairn had access to the sea and a hinterland which could supply salmon, grain and wool. Since buying and selling was the prime reason for the establishment of the burgh then the important place was the market, usually positioned in the middle of the town. This happenstance was not due to any clever town planning but because population naturally aggregated round the market. Early burghs received royal charters detailing their rights and responsibilities. Rights usually included the privilege of raising revenue by means of customs duties or tolls and so the gates or ports where merchandise came in and left were important features in the history of any burgh. There was sometimes a palisade or fail (turf) dyke surrounding the burgh.[32] This was not so much for defence as a delimiting boundary to mark out the territory within which the rights and privileges of the burghers were exercised. It was also useful for keeping out strangers in time of pestilence.

Little is known of the life of the burgher or peasant during the Middle Ages, although as Duncan felicitously points out 'the church was ever solicitous lest the peasant imperil his soul through failure to pay teind, and that to the right kirk.'[33] Peasants were not allowed to grind their own

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grain but were thirled to a particular mill. In Moray many of the mills were owned by the church and were valuable assets, prominent in many charters.[34] Arable land was probably assessed by the davach, a Celtic measure of indeterminate size and related in some way to the amount of grain that could be held in a large tub or vat.[35]

When Alexander III became King of Scots at the age of eight in 1249, both Scotland and Moray were at peace. The dynastic struggles of earlier years when the Men of Moray fought to restore the descendants of Malcolm III by his first wife, Ingibjorg, had ended in 1230 when an infant MacWilliam had her brains dashed out against the market cross of Forfar.[36] The victory of the Scots over the Norse at the battle of Largs in 1263 further consolidated the nation, and unpublished archaeological evidence shows that at this time Elgin was trading with the continent and that there was stained glass in the windows of the cathedral.[37]

Times of Trouble

This increasing prosperity died with Alexander III in 1286. His son had predeceased him and his daughter, married to Eric II of Norway was also dead, leaving Eric's daughter, Margaret, as heir to the throne of Scotland. Into this scene slithered the ambitious expansionist Edward I of England. Like so many English he disguised imperialism as bringing 'law and order' to the somewhat unruly inhabitants of the lands on his borders. Wales was conquered and then held down by garrisons quartered in the latest high technology castles. Dispossessed Welshmen, handy with the long-bow, were recruited into the English army and sent to fight in France. Having dealt with Wales, Edward now turned his attention to Scotland.

The death of Margaret in 1290 gave Edward his opportunity. The naive Scots invited their powerful neighbour to adjudicate amongst the claimants to the vacant Scottish throne. There was no shortage of applicants. Thirteen applied and John Balliol had the strongest claim to the crown and, quite properly, Edward awarded him the prize, but, quite illegally, Balliol had to swear fealty to Edward as the feudal superior of Scotland.[38] This and other happenings were not popular in Scotland and by 1296 matters were drifting from bad to worse. Edward moved north, sacked Berwick with a cruelty which was extreme even by medieval standards. He caught up with Balliol near Montrose and ceremoniously stripped him of all his regalia and, metaphorically, put the crown on his own head. On 26th July 1296, Edward I entered Elgin by the east port and was welcomed by the town band. He took up residence in the castle on Lady Hill while his army of 35,000 lay encamped on the plain to the south, devouring the stock and crops of the terrified locals.[39]

Next day the burgesses of Elgin swore an oath of fealty to Edward referring to him as 'our Lord, the King of England'.[40] Fortunately, the clergy were made of sterner stuff and some years later Bishop David of

Moray preached 'that it was no less meritorious to rise in arms to support the Bruce, than to engage in a crusade against the Saracens.'[41] Edward left Elgin on Sunday 29th to return south via Rothes, Balvenie and the Mounth. He stopped at Scone long enough to ransack the abbey archives and steal what he and his entourage believed was the Stone of Destiny. Behind him in Elgin he left Reginald de Chen of Duffus in charge of the English garrison at Elgin castle.

During the winter of 1296/97 the Scots smouldered and by the summer of 1297 the revolt burst into flames. In the south, William Wallace led the patriots, while in Moray, Andrew Murray regained the castles of Elgin and Forres which he then demolished. His men also destroyed de Chen's castle and church at Duffus. By late summer the English had been cleared out of the north and in September Wallace and Murray joined forces to oppose an English army at Stirling. The outcome of the battle was a great tactical victory for the Scots but a sore strategical setback. Andrew Murray was fatally wounded and although he lingered for some time, his death was a severe blow to Scotland and to Moray. By 1303, Edward, now old and ailing, felt that he had to return to Scotland to grind its people into the dust once more. Making peace with France he transferred his army north and again entered Elgin at the head of a great force. He moved on from Elgin to Kinloss, moving south later in the year to spend the winter at Dunfermline.

With the betrayal of Wallace in 1305 and his disgraceful and illegal trial, followed by his savage mutilation and death, Edward must have thought that he had imposed a final solution on the vexed Scottish question. But even before Wallace's final agony at Smithfield, Robert Bruce, grandson of one of the 1292 contenders to the throne, had started plotting against the occupying English. In 1306 Bruce was crowned at Scone by Isabel Countess of Buchan. Bruce and the Countess were both to pay dearly for what Edward construed as treason. In that same year, Nigel Bruce, brother of Robert, was hanged along with many others, after trials in which they were not allowed to speak in their defence. The Countess of Buchan was kept in a cage in Berwick castle and no Scotsman or Scotswoman was allowed to speak to her. It was to be four years before her confinement was made less rigorous. Fortunately, Bruce evaded capture and in 1307 he was in Moray, attacking the English and their collaborators where they were weakest. He destroyed the castles of Inverness and Nairn and on Christmas day at Slioch near Huntly he committed his tiny force of seven hundred to an indecisive battle with John Comyn, Earl of Buchan. Next year Bruce attacked the castles of Balvenie, Tarradale, Skelbo and Elgin. Then with his rear more or less secure in Moray he moved south to his ultimate victory over the Engish at Bannockburn on 24th June 1314.

Despite Bruce's great victory, the English would not leave the Scots in peace. Bickering and warfare continued. Cultural ties with England were

loosened and links with France and the Continent strengthened. In 1313 Bishop David of Moray proposed that four poor scholars from his diocese be sent to the university of Paris and in 1325 he provided an endowment to make the scheme possible. By 1336 there were so many Scots at the university of Orleans that they constituted a separate 'nation' or student association.[42]

Edward I (hammerer of the Scots) died in 1307 and his son, also named Edward, met an untimely and very unpleasant end at the hands of his nearest, but not exactly dearest. It was left to Edward I's grandson, another Edward, to continue hammering the Scots during the intervals of mutual hammering with France in what was to drag on into the Hundred Year's War. Edward III tried to settle the Scottish problem before turning his attention to France, and in 1336 he dashed into Moray to lift a siege of his supporters in the castle of Lochindorb. He then descended into the Laich of Moray and burnt Forres, Kinloss, Elgin and Aberdeen before returning south to prepare for France, leaving garrisons behind him. The uncaptured leader of the resistance fighters in Moray, Sir Andrew Murray, posthumous son of Wallace's friend, gradually cleared the English from their strongholds in the north, as his father had done before him.

With all this warfare, civil and external, sweeping the land it is not surprising that the most popular residence for a major laird was a tower house. This type of building was still being built in the first half of the 17th century, although gunpowder had made it useless against a well-armed foe. As the years went past the plan of the tower became more elaborate. A fine example of a late simple tower is at Coxton, while Burgie was once a fine example of a Z-plan but only one of its towers now stands. Blairfindy and Easter Elchies, both conveniently near distilleries, are good examples of L-plan towers. The peasants in their turf hovels were expendable and town burghers were usually quick enough to swear allegiance to the most recently arrived military force and pay any reasonable ransom in order to avoid pillage and rape. In this they were not always successful, for many armies relied on loot in lieu of pay.

The Reformation and After

As the years of what we call the Middle Ages passed the attitude of the barons to the Church changed from that of benefaction to exploitation. As early as 1390, the Earl of Buchan, alias the Wolf of Badenoch, fourth son of King Robert II, somewhat incensed by the Pope and Bishop of Moray disapproving of his extra-marital liaison with a lady by the name of Mariette, swooped down and burnt Forres.[43] The Church was not sufficiently intimidated, so a month later, his henchmen returned and burnt Elgin including the church of St. Giles, eighteen manses of the canons and the cathedral church of Moray "with all the books, charters and other valuable things of the country therein kept."[44]

As the barons gradually appreciated that the reformation of the Catholic Church could well result in good pickings for themselves, so their enthusiasm for the doctrines of Luther increased. In this they were but following the example set by James V who in 1531 obtained a Papal bull allowing him to tax church lands. These taxes soon reached such a level that the only way they could be paid was for the land to be let or feued to laymen. Once the practice was established of alienating church lands the prelates were not slow to appreciate how they could improve their own pension prospects by the judicious disposal of church lands. Patrick Hepburn, the last Roman Catholic Bishop of Moray alienated to his numerous relatives much of the church lands in his care.[45] When the storm of the Reformation burst upon Moray, the commercially astute Bishop shut himself inside his palace at Spynie, charged with powder and shot the two brass cannon covering the main gate, and continued with his dissolute life.

With the Reformation, while the mob was diverted into destruction, the lairds attended to the more profitable business of securing the land once owned by the Church. Many a Moray estate started off as stolen property; but time sanctifies theft. For almost two hundred years after 1560, many Moray lairds sitting on reset goods, were apprehensive that prelates might be introduced;[46] prelates who would need the produce from many acres to keep them in the style to which they felt entitled. When Charles I wished to introduce prelacy, the Moray lairds, almost to a man, became Covenanters. Never were men so simultaneously devoted to the 'True Faith' and to their own interests. God and Mammon reconciled.

The barons had also no wish to see their power in Parliament diluted by the admission of religious magnates and in 1637 they protested about the 'price and avarice of the prelates seeking to overrule the haill kingdom.'[47] When a National Covenant, protesting at what was happening, was tabled on 28th February 1638 at Greyfriars in Edinburgh, one of the first to sign was James Graham, Earl of Montrose. War between Charles and his revolting Scottish subjects broke out in 1639. James Graham was a leader of the Covenant but within a year he was disillusioned. Tolerant and pragmatic and by no means a fanatic he was particularly disturbed by the actions of the Earl of Argyll with his policy of private aggrandisement. By 1644 Montrose was on the side of the King and with two companions made his way into the Highlands to rendezvous with Alasdair MacDonald whose Irish fighters were to ensure victory for Montrose in many battles. Montrose knew, as had generals before him, that he had to secure Moray before he could gain Scotland. On September 1st 1644 he gained his first victory at Tippermuir near Perth, but instead of heading south to Edinburgh he turned north to Aberdeen. Incensed by the murder of a drummer boy under a flag of truce, Montrose allowed his men to sack the city. He was victorious at a skirmish at Fyvie and then in the depths of winter he led his men over the mountains to attack Argyll

at Inverlochy on 2nd February 1645. Argyll escaped ignominiously in his galley while better Campbells died fighting. Montrose diverted to Dundee and narrowly escaped from disaster. In May he returned north to defeat another Army of the Covenant at Auldearn. On 2nd July he won a victory at Alford and with Moray secured he then turned south to his final and greatest victory at Kilsyth on 15th August. All Scotland was now nominally under the control of Montrose acting on behalf of Charles I.

The subsequent defeat of Montrose, the massacre of his troops' women and children 'the better the day the better the deed', Montrose's refusal to take reprisals on the prisoners he held, his adventures in Gothenburg and his subsequent return to Scotland and betrayal at the hands of MacLeod of Assynt is not part of the story of Moray. But Moray was to see this great leader once more when, on his way to execution, mounted on a sheltie with his feet tied round the belly of the beast, he was led through the towns while the populace were encouraged to pelt him with rubbish. At Keith, the fanatical Mr. William Kinninmonth, preached a special sermon on the iniquities of the wretched prisoner in his congregation. 'Rail on', said the condemned man as the minister continued with his spiteful oration.[48]

Within a month of Montrose's judicial murder in Edinburgh, watched over in secret by a gloating Argyll, King Charles II landed at Spey Mouth on 23rd June 1650. He disembarked from a Dutch frigate commanded by Cornelis Maartenzoon Tromp, son of the famous admiral who carried a broom at his masthead as a sign of his ability to sweep the English from the sea.[49] There is a story that to avoid Charles getting his feet wet the local ferryman presented his back and shouted 'Loup on yer Majesty: I've cairried mony a heavier wecht.'

Charles disappeared south to defeat and further exile while Scotland suffered invasion by Cromwell, whose troops were quartered in the cathedral at Elgin and whose vandalistic bullet holes can still be seen in the fabric. During this time the stones of Kinloss Abbey were taken to Inverness to be used in the making of Cromwell's citadel. The reformed kirk was mightily concerned with sexual morality and later with witchcraft.[50] In Auldearn in 1662 some forty persons from the village or therabouts were accused of being witches and many were strangled and burnt. A year later, Brodie of Brodie noted with satisfaction that 'Isobel Elder and Isabel Simson were burnt at Forres: died obstinat.'[51]

During the final years of the 17th century, famine stalked the land. In upland Banff people died in their hundreds and others struggled to the coast to eat buckies and seaweed. In Moray there was barely enough food for the locals and nothing to spare for the starving beggars who had struggled from as far away as south of the Mounth. What little free capital was available was not spent on improving conditions at home but was invested in the disastrous Darien adventure. As the 18th century dawned,

Moray was poor but viable; but Scotland was ruined. The aristocracy and merchants sought their salvation in a union with the Auld Enemy. England was willing to help. With Scotland under control and with her rear secure, England could now confidently engage in world wide piracy and colonisation.[52]

Some Scots were not too happy about this new order, though, for once, Moray was on the side of the establishment. In 1715, 1719 and in 1745 the Highlanders drew their broadswords in the defence of the indefensible. In 1745, the handsome but not overtly intelligent Charles Edward Stuart, Bonnie Prince Charlie of myth, landed in Scotland in an effort to gain the throne of Britain for his father. After initial success he retreated through Moray and spent most of March 1746 in bed in Thunderton House in Elgin. Detractors say that he was prostrate with the pox; modern apologists say that it was all due to lack of vitamin C. Charles fell back with his army to Inverness and, always well fed himself, he neglected to ensure that his soldiers had adequate rations. With an excess of incompetence he lined up his starving irregulars against men well fed on bread, beer and cheese who were also supplied with plenty of cannon which they knew how to use. What happened on Drumossie Moor on the 16th of April 1746 was not a battle. It was a massacre and the massacring continued, on and off, for a long time afterwards.

The Recent Years
The old ways died along with the Highlanders on that chill April day. The people of Moray were either delighted, or appeared delighted, with the result. The town council of Elgin sent an obsequious message to the king on 19th May 1746[53] while the parish ministers enthusiastically compiled lists of persons concerned in the rebellion, or even those just disaffected. Lists of Episcopalians and Roman Catholics were also drawn up.[54] A minor Moray landowner, a staunch Presbyterian, who had moved to Perthshire, came out for the Prince: William Harrold died in one of the stinking hulks used as prison ships while his wife and children were brutally evicted from their comfortable home. One of the daughers, Anne, came to an aunt in Elgin and became the mother of Isaac Forsyth, the founder of the Moray Farmer Club and the Elgin Museum.

The lairds' power of pit and gallows was abolished in 1747 and so Sir Robert Gordon and his kind could no longer 'incarcerate (Margaret Collie) without any warrant, for taking the head of a ling out of a midden or dunghill, which the woman thought was good for curing the gout.'[55] As peaceful times brought prosperity there was need for better communications to help increase trade and expand markets. Bridges were built over the lower Spey at Fochabers in 1804 and at Craigellachie in 1814. The Findhorn was spanned in 1800 and a network of turnpikes replaced the old pack tracks and inadequate military roads. To accommodate the

rising population lairds laid out new towns in the hopeful belief, not always realised, that their tenants would lead active and useful lives in spinning and weaving. Tomintoul, proposed in 1750 but not actually built until 1775, was described in 1793 as 'inhabited by 37 families, without a single manufacture.... All of them sell whisky, and all of them drink it.'[56] Books were written about local history and problems.[57] Parish ministers, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, sent in their answers to John Sinclair's questionnaire.[58] Societies were formed, museums opened and railways encouraged by the merchant classes, though not always by the aristocracy.

Peace, prosperity and progress were not necessarily the smooth process which memory and myth perpetuate. In 1820 a general election was held. The voters were few in number and expected to be bribed, in some cases quite lavishly.[59] The Earl of Fife was handing out dresses, shawls, bonnets and one pound notes on behalf of his brother, while in Strathspey the chiefs of Grant supported a Mr Farquharson. As the Grants could not outbid the Duffs (Fife), Lady Ann Grant sent to Strathspey for a contingent of Highlanders to come to Elgin. Great was the alarm of the burgesses when some 700 Highlanders assembled in front of Grant Lodge. As one writer delicately put it 'if the Highlanders ... got drink ... a battle would certainly ensure'.[60] Food was provided but no drink and the Highlanders were persuaded to go home. After much legal argument, Mr Farquharson was declared the winner. In 1827 the first Moray newspaper, 'The Elgin Courier' was published. This failed but 'The Courant' started up and was able to carry the news about the Moray meal riots. In 1846 the potato crop substantially failed and the price of meal rose beyond the means of even the working poor. However, grain was still being exported from Burghead, Findhorn and Lossiemouth so the lower orders, their natural subservience overcome by their empty bellies, tried to prevent the ships from loading.[61] The Moray bourgeoisie were terrified, troops were summoned from Edinburgh and the ringleaders, mainly women, were arrested and savagely dealt with, to the exultation of the press and the relief of those who did not know what it was to go hungry.

Whisky had been distilled for years in Strathspey and adjacent glens, but in 1824 an act came into force which lowered the price of a distilling licence and savagely increased the penalty for unlicensed distillation. Many poor people were unaware of the new act and the Justices in Moray were moved to write to the Controller of Customs quoting the most pathetic cases and pleading to be allowed to set a lower penalty than the statutory £20.[62] The legalised distilleries prospered and despite some recent setbacks, the distillation of fine malt whisky is still a major industry in Moray. Despite recent health education, the drinking of fine malt whisky is also a well established industry in Moray.

As mechanisation reduced the need for labour on the farms there was emigration from the land to the cities of the south and to the colonies.

Some of the emigrants who left Moray in the early years of this century returned within a few years wearing bush hats or carrying Ross rifles; only to disappear, never to return, into the mud of Flanders. The Second War introduced far more material and social changes than the First. Although fewer died, more were involved. Every few miles along the Moray littoral there was an airfield. In the hills there were Canadians, like their fathers before them, cutting down the trees which had been too young to die for freedom in the previous struggle. In the summer of 1940 there was a great fear of invasion and defences were erected on the shore and far inland. Home Guards poured candle wax into their shotgun cartridges and those lucky enough to have a P17 rifle, counted and recounted their five rounds, painfully aware that their machine gun needed a different size of ammunition. As the war progressed and prisoners helped out on the land, fraternisation, officially illegal, like most things illegal in wartime, flourished undercover.

Changes came even more rapidly after the war. Bus services increased and killed the railways, but it was not long before the car killed the bus. Opportunities for manual labour decreased while the provision of administrative work increased. As workers left the land, rural communities declined, schools closed, kirks amalgamated, young people left, the old remained and the graveyards became overgrown. But the incomparable land remains. The forests sweep down to the fields and the fields to the sea and beyond the sea the mountains of Sutherland arise blue and remote. 'Speak weel o the Hielans, but live in the Laich.

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Appendix

Places within Moray mentioned in the text

(OS number refers to the Ordnance Survey map number in the 1/50,000 series)

Physical

MORAY	OS 1/50,000 Nos 27 & 28 Now a District of Grampian Region.
FORRES	OS No 27 NJ040590 Royal burgh with royal castle site.
FINDHORN	OS No 27 North flowing turbulent river. Village at mouth.
STRATHNAIRN	OS No 27 Broad, reasonably fertile valley.
STRATHDEARN	OS No 27 The Strath of the Findhorn river. Narrow in places.
STRATHSPEY	OS No 28 Long and usually broad strath of the river Spey.
FESHIE	OS No 35 Tributary of the Spey. Joins Spey near Kincraig.
AVON	OS No 28 Tributary of the Spey. Joins Spey at Ballindalloch.

MONADHLIATHS	OS No 35 Hills to the north of Kingussie.
BURGHEAD	OS No 28 NJ109692 Promontory with fort and enigmatic well.
LOSSIEMOUTH	OS No 28 NJ 235705 Fishing port, 8km north of Elgin.

Early Peoples

CULBIN	OS No 27 Forested coastal area to west of river Findhorn.
BOGHEAD	OS No 28 NJ 359592 In forest land, north of A98.
ROSEISLE	OS No 28 NJ149651 Easterton. Site now lost.
URQUHART	OS No 28 NJ 285626 Village, 8km east of Elgin.
BALLINDALLOCH	OS No 28 NJ165359 Easter Lagmore, dilapidated cairn.

Early Metal in Moray

QUARRY WOOD	OS No 28 NJ185630 Henge, 3km west of Elgin.
ELGIN	OS No 28 NJ215626 Royal burgh with royal castle site.
TAP O NOTH	OS No 37 NJ484293 Magnificent vitrified fort.

Picts and Romans

PITAIRLIE	OS No 28 NJ256654 Farm, 4km north east of Elgin.
DESKFORD	OS No 29 NJ505615 Village, 6km south of Cullen.
KEITH	OS No 28 NJ430507 Roman camps are 5km east on the A95.
THOMSHILL	OS No 28 NJ210574 5km due south of Elgin.
BIRNIE	OS No 28 NJ207587 Cathedral site, 3km south of Elgin.
EASTER GALCANTRAY	OS No 27 NH 811483 Site on south east bank of river Nairn.
CROY	OS No 27 NH796496 Village, 15km south west of Nairn.
SUENO'S STONE	OS No 27 NJ046595 Stone on eastern outskirts of Forres.

Christianity

ABERBRANDELY	OS No 28 NJ190418 Old (prior to 1550) name for Knockando.
KNOCKANDO	OS No 28 NJ186428 Scattered community to north of Spey.
MORTLACH	OS No 28 NJ324392 Now part of Dufftown.
ELGIN CATHEDRAL	OS No 28 NJ221630 At east end of Elgin.
FORDYCE	OS No 29 NJ556637 Village, 5km south east of Cullen.
RAFFORD	OS No 27 NJ060567 Village, 5km south east of Forres.

LHANBRYDE	OS No 28 NJ273612 Village, 7km east of Elgin on A96 road.
KINNEDDAR	OS No 28 NJ222695 Kirkyard with cross.
SPYNIE	OS No 28 NJ231659 & NJ228654 Palace and graveyard.
URQUHART	OS No 28 NJ295629 Site of Benedictine priory.
KINLOSS	OS No 27 NJ065615 Cistercian Abbey, now very ruinous.
PLUSCARDEN	OS No 28 NJ142576 Valliscaulian priory, now Benedictine Abbey.

Divide and Rule
CULLEN	OS No 29 NJ515670 Royal burgh on coast.
AULDEARN	OS No 27 NH917556 Site of castle and 1645 Montrose victory.
FOCHABERS	OS No 28 NJ345588 Planned village on A96, 13km east of Elgin.
INNES	OS No 28 NJ283651 Motte, somewhat inaccessible.
DUFFUS	OS No 28 NJ189672 Magnificent motte and bailey castle.
RAIT	OS No 27 NH893525 Unique 13th century hall house.

Times of Trouble
LADY HILL	OS No 28 NJ212628 Castle Hill, towards west end of Elgin.
ROTHES	OS No 28 NJ278495 Castle town some 15km south of Elgin.
BALVENIE	OS No 28 NJ326408 Great castle at Dufftown.
SLIOCH	OS No 29 NJ554390 Battle site, 2km south east from Huntly.
COXTON	OS No 28 NJ261607 Anachronistic stone tower from the 1640's.
BURGIE	OS No 27 NJ093593 Castle ruin, 6km east of Forres.
BLAIRFINDY	OS No 36 NJ199286 Castle, near Glenlivet Distillery.
EASTER ELCHIES	OS No 28 NJ280444 Restored tower house at Macallan.

The Reformation and After
SPEY MOUTH	OS No 28 NJ342647 Alleged site of Charles II's landing.

The Recent Years
CRAIGELLACHIE	OS No 28 NJ345588 On A96, east of Elgin.
TOMINTOUL	OS No 36 NJ166190 In Strathavon on A939.