THE SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND FOR PROPAGATING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE

Education, Language & Governance in the British State and Empire, *c.*1690–*c.*1735

Jamie J. Kelly

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of PhD

Department of History
School of Humanities
College of Arts
University of Glasgow
August 2020

Abstract

This is the first dedicated study of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK) from its foundation in 1709 down to the outbreak of the 1745 Jacobite Rising. The Society's founding mission was to set up and maintain schools in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland in order to secure the political and ecclesiastical settlement brought about in the wake of the Williamite revolution of 1689–90. In an era when an overwhelming majority of the region's inhabitants adhered to Catholicism and Episcopalianism, and gave crucial military support to the Jacobite cause, the Society believed that schooling, in English literacy and Presbyterian doctrine, was the means by which hearts and minds would be won for the post-1690 Revolution settlement and, latterly, the British imperial project.

Many scholars have acknowledged the historical importance of the SSPCK. However, present knowledge of the organisation is slanted and partial. The main scholarly treatments in the last generation—by Victor Durkacz and Charles Withers—concentrate upon the SSPCK's role as an agent of Anglicisation due to its insistence on prioritising English, rather than Gaelic, literacy. This thesis instead approaches the Society from the perspectives of the history of education in Highlands, and governance in the fledgling British state and empire. The aims are twofold – first to come to a better understanding of how the Society operated 'on the ground', giving centre stage to its relationship with the Highland communities it sought to affect; second to establish how the SSPCK navigated, and was shaped by, the governing structures of the nascent British state and empire.

It begins by examining the extent and nature of schooling in the Highlands prior to the SSPCK's intervention, to provide context for how Highland communities would eventually respond to the Society and its schools. It then examines the origins of the Society, tracing developments in the Highlands as well as the Lowlands that led an influential core of Scottish Presbyterians to advocate a national charitable corporation to support Highland education. It then looks closely at the central management and finances of the Society up to 1731, a key juncture that saw the launch of its first American mission and the death of the influential SSPCK secretary John Dundas. Chapters four and five examine the growth and development of Society's schools from 1709 up to *c.*1730. Finally, the thesis reconstructs the processes and motivations behind the SSPCK's earliest missionary endeavours in British North America, gauging its successes and failures, before turning back to the Highlands to consider the perception and impact of the colonial mission on the home front.

Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature: (Jamie J. Kelly)

Date: 31/08/2020

Maps, Figures and Tables

Maps

Map 1. Highland synods and presbyteries, c.1727 viii
Map 2. Highland parishes where SSPCK schools were established ix
Map 3. Schools identified in Highland and bordering parishes before 1716 35
Map 4. Scope of the SSPCK's 1710 Highland Synod Survey 98
Map 5. Highland districts with a reported Catholic presence c. 1711 101
Map 6. Locations of the first SSPCK schools proposed in 1711 105
Map 7. Schools maintained by the SSPCK in 1715 139
Map 8. Scope of the SSPCK's 1716 Presbytery Survey 151
Map 9. Schools proposed in 1716 Royal Commission report 153
Map 10. SSPCK schools and their movements, 1716–18 168
Map 11. SSPCK schools in 1724 175
Map 12. SSPCK schools in 1729 192
Map 13. SSPCK schools in 1732 193

Figures

Figure 1. SSPCK Directors by profession, 1709–1731 78
Figure 2. SSPCK finances, 1711–1719 154
Figure 3. SSPCK finances, 1719–1725 173

Tables

Table 1. Key managers of the SSPCK, 1709–c.1730 76
Table 2. SSPCK lay correspondents and supporters in localities, 1709–1715 109
Table 3. SSPCK schools and schoolmasters outwith Orkney and Shetland, 1709–1714 ..111
Table 4. SSPCK school attendances, 1711–15 138
Table 5. Small schools and teachers sponsored by the SSPCK, 1714–15 139
Table 6. SSPCK school attendances and salaries, 1719 171
Table 7. Report concerning the number of bursars in 1726 179
Table 8. Bursars who went on to serve as SSPCK schoolmasters, 1720–45 180
Table 9. SSPCK correspondents, 1724–45 188

Table of Contents

Abstract ..... **i**
Author's Declaration ..... **ii**
Maps, Figures and Tables ..... **iii**
Acknowledgements ..... **v**
Abbreviations and Conventions ..... **vi**
Introduction **1**
1. Highland Education and Language Use, *c.*1660–*c.*1709 ..... **18**
2. The Making of the SSPCK, 1690–1709 ..... **49**
3. Central Management, 1709–*c.*1731 ..... **72**
4. Early Schools, 1709–1715 ..... **92**
5. The '15 to the Era of General Wade, 1715–*c.*1730 ..... **143**
6. The Missions at Home and Abroad, *c.*1730–*c.*1735 ..... **196**
Conclusion **216**
Bibliography **227**

Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the help of many people to whom I would like to express my gratitude. First and foremost, thanks to my supervisors for their diligent support, insightful comments and seemingly inexhaustible patience. Martin MacGregor has been a perpetual source of support throughout my university career and I certainly would not be where I am now without him. Scott Spurlock deserves particular thanks for agreeing to be my supervisor before we had even met in person. If memory serves, our first face-to-face encounter was over a pint in Tennent's to celebrate the news that I had received funding. Scott's encouragement and cheery demeanour were a boon throughout the PhD, keeping me on course on the many occasions I felt I had lost all perspective.

My sincerest thanks to the staff of the National Records of Scotland for their patience, humour and supportive attitude in dealing with my almost proprietorial attitude towards the SSPCK's archive. Robin Urquhart and Samantha Smart deserve special thanks for taking the time to guide me through an internship at the NRS, almost matching my enthusiasm for the records.

Special thanks to my officemates in 9 University Gardens—Edwin Sheffield, Rebecca Mason, Andrew Lind, Craig Conner, James Gallagher, Paul Goatman, Niall Bartlett, and Miles Kerr-Peterson—for much needed moral support, which I can only hope was offered back to them in equal measure. The support and expertise from keen friends and colleagues, especially Andrew MacKillop and Aonghas MacCoinnich have been indispensable. I have been very fortunate in the kind comments and research pointers from many accomplished Gaelic scholars: Dòmhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart, Hugh Cheape, Donald Meek and Michael Newton, just to name a few. Beannachd leibh!

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank my family. My mother and father never quite grasped what a PhD was, but were always encouraging nonetheless. My partner Karien didn't realise what she was getting herself into when we first met in summer 2019. Since then, much of my inspiration has been drawn from her example. She undertook the onerous task of serving as the unofficial editor of my thesis, for which I will forever be indebted. I thank them all for their many acts of kindness, some of which I will no doubt have been unaware of, and for having faith in me at times when I had lost faith in myself.

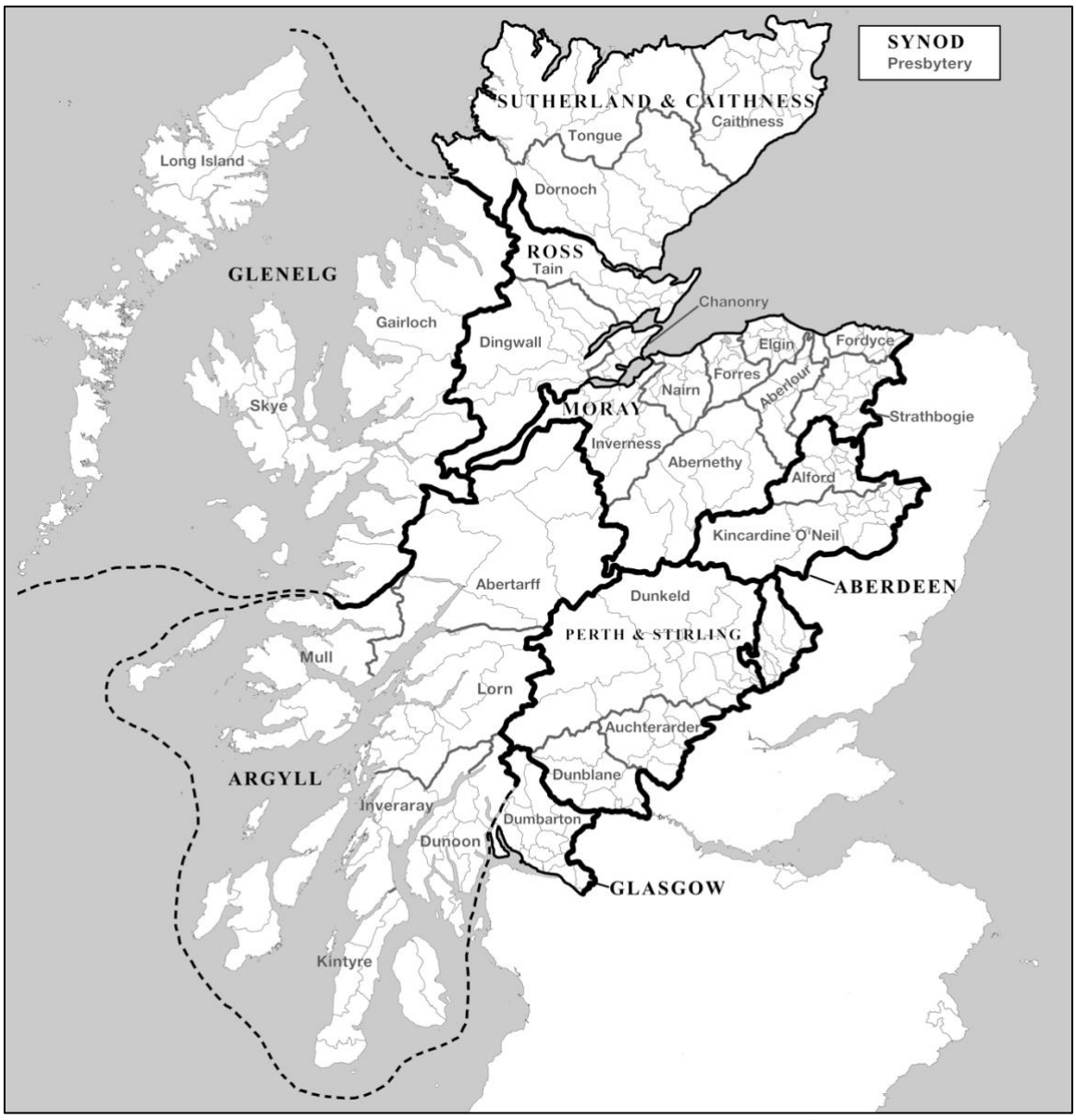
Abbreviations and Conventions

BC	Blair Castle
Fasti	Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae: The Succession of Minister in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation*, rev. edn, 8 vols (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1915-50)
General Assembly Acts	*Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1638-1842*, ed. Church Law Society (Edinburgh, 1843), URL: http://british-history.ac.uk/church-scotland-records/acts/1638-1842
ICA	Inveraray Castle Archive
IR	*Innes Review*
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NRS	National Records of Scotland
ODNB	H. C. G Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, URL: http://www.oxforddnb.com/
RSCHS	*Records of the Scottish Church History Society*
RPS	Keith M. Brown et al. (eds), *Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, URL: http://www.rps.ac.uk/
SHR	*Scottish Historical Review*
SGS	*Scottish Gaelic Studies*
TGSI	*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*
Wodrow, *Analecta*	Robert Wodrow, *Analecta, or Materials for a Story of Remarkable Providence, Mostly Relating to Scotch Ministers and Christians*, 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1842-43)
Wodrow, *Correspondence*	Robert Wodrow, *The Correspondence of the Reverend Robert Wodrow*, ed. Thomas M'Crie, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1842-43)

All quotations retain the original spelling and punctuation, except where abbreviations have been expanded for clarity. Sums of money are given in both sterling and Scots in accordance with the source material. Conversions into sterling are given below for £ Scots. £1 sterling was equal to £12 Scots. One merk was worth 13s.4d. Scots. All dates are in Old Style.

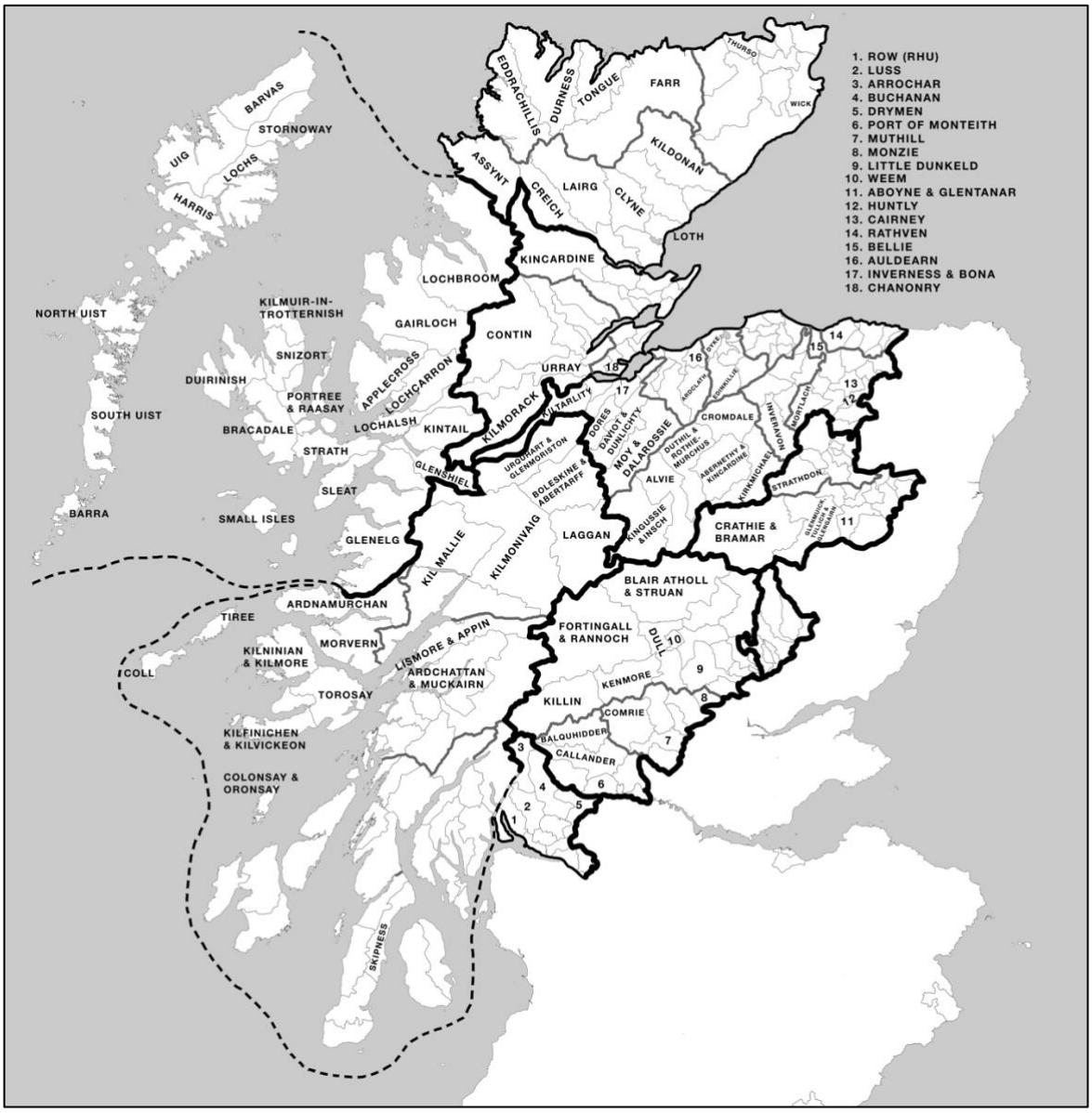
SCOTS	**STERLING**
£1 Scots	£0/1/8
£12 Scots	£1 20 Shillings 240 Pence
20 Merks	£1/1/6
40 Merks	£2/3/1
100 Merks	£5/16/8
200 Merks	£11/3/4
£200 Scots	£16/13/4
300 Merks	£17/10/0
£460 Scots	£20
1000 Merks	£58/6/8
120,000 Merks	£7000
£240,000 Scots	£20,000

Maps



Map 1. Highland synods and presbyteries, c.1727

In the 1720s the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland reorganised the ecclesiastical structure in the Highlands, erecting new parishes, presbyteries and the Synod of Glenelg. The Synod of Glenelg was created in 1724 from parishes previously overseen by the Synods of Argyll and Ross. The Presbyteries of Long Island, Gairloch and Abertarff were constituted in the same year. The Presbytery of Caithness was created in 1725 and the Presbyteries of Tongue and Mull in 1726.



Map 2. Highland parishes where SSPCK schools were established (exc. Orkney and Shetland), 1711-45.

INTRODUCTION

The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK) was established by royal letters patent in 1709.[1] A joint stock charitable organisation based in Edinburgh, its founding mission was to set up and maintain schools in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland in order to secure the political and ecclesiastical settlement brought about in the wake of the Williamite Revolution of 1689–90. Its early history overlaps with the formation and uneven consolidation of the British union state. As such the Society provides a means of exploring wider conceptions of 'fiscal-military state' development and the extent to which the new style state exercised authority in consistent ways in a region that posed particular challenges. The Society's foundation was the result of prolonged campaigns within the Church of Scotland and on the part of private individuals to bolster Presbyterianism in the Highlands. In an era when much of the region still adhered to Episcopalianism or Catholicism, and gave crucial military support to Jacobitism, the SSPCK also sought to compensate for the sovereign Westminster parliament's shortcomings and lack of commitment with respect to the integration of the region into the British state. The inconsistencies of governance in early eighteenth-century Britain have been noted by several scholars; what emerges from the historiography is a picture of a central state which was from the outset disengaged from the traditional duties and machinery of domestic governance.[2] The union of 1707 was followed shortly thereafter with the abolition of the Scottish Privy Council in 1708, hitherto the central intelligence agency and chief executive organ of government in Scotland. This left a considerable gap in executive power, one which was never properly filled. This had particular bearing in the Highlands, where consequently clan chiefs and gentry largely lost the means and inclination to act as *de facto* agents of government. The 'government problem' in the Highlands meant chiefs were left either without effective means to embed British authority or were driven to consider Jacobite

[1] The SSPCK still exists today as a religious education charity, offering support to schools and sponsoring missionary work abroad.

[2] For the themes of disengagement and the inconsistencies of domestic governance in the eighteenth-century British state see John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War Money and the British State, 1688–1788*, (London, 2014), xviii–xix, 13–14, ch. 4; idem, 'Revisiting the Sinews of Power', in Aaron Graham and Patrick Walsh (eds) *British Fiscal-Military States, 1660–1783* (Abingdon & NY: Routledge, 2016), 27–34; Joanna Innes, 'The Domestic Face of the Military-Fiscal State: Government and society in eighteenth-century Britain', in Lawrence Stone (ed.), *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689-1815* (London, 1994), 96–127.

alternatives. It was in this context—of a vacuum of central government in the Highlands, both secular and ecclesiastical—that the SSPCK came into being. Its stated purpose was:

> to erect and maintain schools especially in the Highlands and Islands as shall be found to need them most, where Papists as well as Protestants of all denominations and all persons whatsoever shall be received and taught by fitt and well-qualified schoolmasters appointed by the Societie to read the Holy Scriptures and other good and pious books and shall be taught writting and arithmetick and such other things as shall also be suteable to their circumstances.[3]

The approach was to establish a loose network of charity schools to supplement the pre-existing but largely inadequate system of parochial and grammar schools in the region. These schools the Society hoped would convert Catholics and Episcopalians, confirm Presbyterians where they already existed, and convince Jacobites of the errors of their ways. Schools, the Society argued, would also inculcate values of thrift and industry, and further promote literacy and fluency in English in the Highlands, thereby facilitating its integration into the British state and enabling the systematic commercial exploitation of the region. Beginning with only 11 schools set up in 1712–13, the Society supported over 140 establishments across the Highlands and Islands by 1745. Framed within debates over a fiscal-military state's tendency towards 'domestic disengagement', the Society provides a means of exploring how an alliance of Edinburgh urban elites, Church of Scotland ministers and local government in the Highlands responded to the problem of an 'absent' or 'reactive' British state.

Scholars investigating eighteenth-century Scotland from multiple perspectives—the Highlands, Jacobitism, religion, education and language—all acknowledge the significance of the SSPCK. However, present knowledge of the organisation is slanted and partial, dominated by polemical controversy over its attitude towards the Gaelic language. The wider parameters of the debate were set in 1945 by Gaelic scholar and language activist Dr John Lorne Campbell.[4] Perhaps the SSPCK's fiercest critic, Campbell blamed an ill-conceived cultural and religious bias on the part of the Scottish and British establishments for the weakness of Gaelic language and culture. He presented the SSPCK as one of the most egregious perpetrators of 'a calculated, well-financed attempt, backed by constant political pressure, to destroy their [Gaelic] language and their religion', which Gaels 'rebell[ed] against in 1715 and again in 1745'. Campbell went so far to state that, since the SSPCK's minutes were placed in the National Records of Scotland in 1933, 'no Historical Society has

[3] NRS, GD95/1/1, 31 (5 Jan 1710).
[4] John L. Campbell, *Gaelic in Scottish Education and Life: Past, Present and Future* (Edinburgh, 1945).

ventured to publish them; presumably they are still politically too embarrassing.'[5] The main scholarly treatments in the last generation—by the social scientist Victor Durkacz in 1983, and the historical geographer Charles Withers in both 1984 and 1988—concentrate upon the SSPCK's role as an agent of Anglicisation due to its insistence on prioritising English, rather than Gaelic, literacy, and the bombastic anti-Gaelic rhetoric adopted in SSPCK publications and policy statements.[6] However, historians have yet to produce a dedicated study of the organisation, rooted in primary evidence from the Society's own extensive archive.

What follows is fundamental reappraisal of the SSPCK from its foundation in 1709 up to the outbreak of the 1745 Jacobite rising. It draws on the Society's archive, as well as a variety of local church court records, and private and state papers. The aims are threefold – first to come to a better understanding of how the Society operated 'on the ground', giving centre stage to its relationship with the Highland communities it sought to affect; second to establish how the SSPCK navigated and was shaped by the governing structures of the nascent British state and empire; and third to provide a window on the modes, quality and consistency of governance in post-union Scotland. Aside from considerations of space, the '45 provides a natural terminus, as the aftermath saw the Society attempt to justify its Highland mission in the wake of its apparent failure to a suspicious, if not hostile, British public. Meanwhile the British government backed a series of punitive measures, including the Act of Proscription (1746) and the abolition of heritable jurisdictions (1746), designed to forcibly assimilate the region with the rest of Great Britain. From 1755, the estates confiscated from attainted Jacobites were administered by the government-appointed Commissioners of the Annexed Estates, a body that aimed to advance the social and economic development of the Highlands as a whole. This new wave of government involvement in the region altered the context in which the Society operated.

Although the Society included the Northern Isles within its remit, supporting 28 schools there by 1745, this study deals primarily with the Gaelic-speaking Highlands and Islands. While the SSPCK's activities in English-speaking Orkney and Shetland provide a salient, readymade counterpoint to the Anglicisation thesis, this study's aim is—*pace* Withers and Durkacz—to re-evaluate the Society's role and impact in Gaelic-speaking Scotland, where Gaelic and English modes of communication coexisted from the early modern period.

---

[5] Idem, *Canna: The Story of a Hebridean Island* (Oxford, 1984), 91. Cf. Idem, *Highland Songs of the Forty-Five*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh 1984), xiii–xiv.

[6] Victor E. Durkacz, *The Decline of the Celtic Languages: A Study of Linguistic and Cultural Conflict in Scotland, Wales and Ireland from the Reformation to the Twentieth century* (Edinburgh, 1983), 45–88; Charles W. J. Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland 1698–1981: The Geographical History of a Language* (Edinburgh, 1984), 116–136; Idem, *Gaelic Scotland: The Transformation of a Culture Region* (London, 1988).

By shedding more light on the SSPCK—an organisation hitherto presented as a background actor in the relationship between Highlands, Lowlands and British state—this study seeks to enhance historical understanding of the factors that contributed to the major political, social and religious developments specific to the Highlands that would have profound implications for the course of British history. The SSPCK's unique placement between the Highlands and the British state meant that it was well placed to observe changing social and economic conditions in the region, the factors affecting support for Jacobitism versus Hanoverian monarchy, and the British state's capacity to address the perceived governmental needs of post-union Scotland. The Society was meticulous in its record-keeping practices, maintaining detailed minute books and archiving letters which contain, among other things, reports from schools and correspondences with schoolmasters, ministers and local landowners. Together these sources provide an unrivalled glimpse of Highland life in the early eighteenth century, and indeed of schooling generally in this period. This prompted Donald Withrington in 1988 to remark that, 'Surprisingly perhaps, there is actually more easily accessible evidence about schooling in the Highlands and Islands than in the Lowlands in the mid-eighteenth century'.[7]

A dedicated study of the SSPCK and its records has the potential to offer fresh perspectives on education, culture, and language use and governance in the eighteenth-century Highlands. It also offers crucial context for scholars considering the themes of improvement, emigration and the eventual channelling of the region's military capacity into the imperial project in the second half of the eighteenth century. This thesis will contribute to similar new work evident elsewhere in the historiography of the Highlands, which demonstrates beyond serious doubt that far from resisting improvement, commercialisation, colonialism and the development of the British fiscal-military state, Gaels were often active and willing participants eager to exploit whatever opportunities were made available—through public, private or imperial channels—to advance their own agendas, improve access to education, and integrate their respective countries with the rest of the United Kingdom.[8] In turn, this thesis evaluates the effectiveness of the British government in meeting and harnessing the aspirations of Gaels not just for more schools, but for greater inclusion and

[7] Donald J. Withrington, 'Schooling, Literacy and Society' in T.M Devine and Rosalind Mitchison (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland* (Edinburgh 1988), 164.

[8] For example Allan Kennedy, *Governing Gaeldom: The Scottish Highlands and the Restoration State, 1660-1688* (Leiden, 2014), ch. 1; Macinnes, *Clanship* (East Linton, 1996); Andrew MacKillop, *'More Fruitful than the Soil': Army, Empire and the Scottish Highlands, 1715-1815* (East Linton, 2000); Matthew Dziennek, 'The Fatal Land: War, Empire, and the Highland Soldier in British America, 1756-1783' (University of Edinburgh PhD Thesis, 2011); Martin MacGregor, 'The Statutes of Iona: Text and Context', *Innes Review* (2006), 111–181; Aonghas MacCoinnich, *Plantation and Civility in the North Atlantic World: The Case of the Northern Hebrides, 1570-1639* (Leiden, 2015).

participatory rights, as well as more consistent government support for the Highlands as a whole.

Historiography

One aspect of the SSPCK's mission has overshadowed all others in the historiography: its attitude towards Gaelic and, in turn, its role in the language's decline. It is true that from the outset the SSPCK prioritised English over Gaelic literacy in its schools. Nor was it until 1766, shortly before the publication of the Gaelic New Testament, that the teaching of Gaelic books was formally permitted in SSPCK schools. Furthermore, the Society frequently expressed its desire to eliminate Gaelic in memorials and publications. By focusing on SSPCK policies and 'mission statements', scholars have tended to overlook how the organisation actually functioned, instead concentrating on the harm that they believe was inflicted by the Society by alienating Gaelic from literacy and nurturing a negative attitude towards Gaelic in formal education. The SSPCK is presented as the natural successor of an anti-Gaelic establishment in Scotland which, beginning with the Statutes of Iona in 1609, had attempted with varying degrees of success to remove the distinctive elements of Gaelic society. Durkacz wrote that:

> literacy, when it entered the Highlands in the eighteenth century through the [SSPCK's] charity schools, made the English language its medium. The resulting alienation of the mother tongue from education did incalculable harm to the Gaelic language, destroying the people's confidence in themselves and in their culture.[9]

Withers describes the Society as the 'single most important instrument of Anglicization in the 1700s', arguing that its prohibitive language policy succeeded in 'devaluing Gaelic in the Highland mind'.[10] While these studies provide a sophisticated reading of the processes of Anglicisation in Gaelic Scotland, they present the impact of the Society in terms of a linear, deterministic process whereby Lowland norms and language were ruthlessly imposed on a hitherto distinct, unintegrated and exceptional region. The narrative set down by Durkacz and Withers—of Lowlanders 'impos[ing] Lowland understandings of culture on the Scottish Highlands'—continues to permeate recent writing on the SSPCK.[11] According to Matthew Dziennik, such studies have served largely to re-entrench 'the place of the Gaels

[9] Durkacz, *Decline*, 23.
[10] Withers, *Gaelic Scotland*, 122–36.
[11] Ibid., 405; Macinnes, *Clanship*, 178–9; Clotilde Prunier, *Anti-Catholic Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Frankfurt, 2004), passim; Margaret C. Szasz, *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans: Indigenous Education in the Eighteenth Century Atlantic World* (Norman OK, 2007), 3.

[in Scottish history] as victims of larger historical forces to which they could offer no reciprocal response'.[12] In turn, historians risk overstating the Society's impact by overlooking the practical limits of both its reach and its resources. They also risk losing sight of the precise historical context, not only in the Highlands and the Lowlands, but in Britain and Europe that gave rise to the SSPCK and shaped its development and growth.

Writing in the 1930s, Mary G. Jones presented the Society as a constituent part of the British charity school movement, which saw the puritan impulses of the middle classes channelled into charitable support for education at the turn of the eighteenth century in order to tackle contemporary social problems left unaddressed by the government.[13] Jones's approach manages to capture something that is lost to the commentators of the 1980s, particularly the wider charitable and religious milieu in which the Society operated. Crucially, Jones attempted to portray the SSPCK in the context of its own time: a religiously motivated charitable organisation, which sought to improve educational facilities in the Highlands in an era characterised by government indifference – not simply an agent of cultural and linguistic change. She also noted that the SSPCK remained 'a poor society, whose work was narrowly circumscribed by inadequate funds'.[14] For Jones, the Society's true impact lay in the precedent it set for future charitable organisations seeking to evangelise the Highlands.[15] Nevertheless, the author only provides an account of the Society from the perspective of the centre; one that largely ignores the attitudes of the Highland communities that the Society sought to affect. Jones presumes that the Society's success was limited further by the 'hostility of the clansmen', as well as its refusal to teach Gaelic literacy, 'an obstacle of the Society's own making'.[16]

John MacInnes viewed the SSPCK as a significant agent in the development of Highland evangelicalism.[17] As MacInnes regarded Highland evangelicalism as a positive development—supporting and consoling the Gaelic population in a time of sweeping social, political and economic change—he presented the organisation in a relatively positive light, perhaps responding to Campbell's condemnatory approach. He came to a similar conclusion as Jones regarding the importance of the organisation in setting a precedent for future missionary endeavours in the region. Like Jones, MacInnes notes that the 'the number of schools planted each year was strictly limited' by the Society's modest revenues.[18] MacInnes

[12] Dziennik, 'Fatal Land War', 11–20.
[13] M. G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement: A Study of Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action* (Cambridge, 1938), 165–214.
[14] Ibid., 178–9.
[15] Ibid, 209.
[16] Ibid, 192–194.
[17] John MacInnes, *The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland, 1688–1800* (Aberdeen, 1951), 236–252.
[18] Ibid., 239.

also emphasised that the Society, despite failing in its mission to gain converts from Catholicism, was instrumental in strengthening Protestantism where it already existed. For MacInnes, the Society's emphasis on using persuasive means when dealing with Catholics, rather than coercion, paved the way for future religious pluralism and toleration in the Highlands.[19]

Clotilde Prunier's 2004 study of anti-Catholic strategies in eighteenth century Scotland sheds light on how Highland Catholics—priests, landowners and communities—responded to the SSPCK's mission, and other parts of the wider arsenal of efforts to eradicate Catholicism in the region. Prunier demonstrated that in many regions with a substantial Catholic presence Catholic parents were able to come to an agreement with local SSPCK schoolmasters, whereby their children would receive literary instruction without requiring their attendance at Protestant worship, contrary to the Society's initial rules.[20] Furthermore, Catholics proved just as eager as Protestants to seek out schooling for their children, hoping to provide them with opportunities for social and material advancement.[21] When considering these developments in 1730, the Society took a decidedly accommodating line, ruling 'That all', even Catholics, 'should have the means of Knowledge, & the benefite of Instruction'.[22] This casts into question Dr Campbell's assertion that Highlanders in 1715 and 1745 were rebelling against 'a calculated, well-financed attempt […] to destroy their language and religion.'[23] Many Catholics were eager to utilise schools when made available. Furthermore, this demonstrates that at a local level SSPCK schools could operate with a degree of flexibility and tolerance not reflected in the uncompromising anti-Catholic rhetoric of Society publications, and indeed local developments could eventually influence policy decisions at a central level.

In 2003 Dòmhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart published a very detailed article concerning the origins and operation of the Church of Scotland's Royal Bounty scheme.[24] In the mid-1720s, the British government launched a series of political, military, commercial, ecclesiastical and educational initiatives in order to integrate the Highlands with the rest of the country. One of these measures, the Royal Bounty scheme, saw £1000 from the civil list gifted yearly to the Church of Scotland to fund missionaries and catechists in the region. Stiùbhart points out that SSPCK members were among the most assiduous attenders of the meeting of the

[19] Ibid, 242.
[20] Prunier, *Anti-Catholic Strategies*, 98–101, 138–9.
[21] Ibid, 139, 144. See also Prunier, '"They Must Have Their Children Educated Some way": The Education of Catholics in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *IR*, 60 (2009), 22–40.
[22] NRS, GD95/1/3, (5 Nov 1730).
[23] Campbell, *Canna*, 91.
[24] Dòmhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart, 'The Genesis and Operation of the Royal Bounty Scheme 1725-30', *RSCHS*, 33 (2003), 63–141.

Royal Bounty Committee, blurring the lines between the two institutions from the outset.[25] By the end of the decade Jacobitism appeared to be in terminal decline, and the Society had co-opted a substantial portion of the £1000 to fund its own scheme of joint catechist-schoolmasters.[26] The subsequent alliance between government-funded church committee and private charitable society lasted a generation, allowing the Society to extend its influence far beyond what would have been possible had it relied solely on its own resources.[27] While the article does not focus on the SSPCK alone, Stiùbhart's skilful cross-fertilisation of sources from the records of the Kirk, the SSPCK and Scottish Catholic Archives provides a lucid picture of the religious and political situation in the Highlands during the 1720s. The Society is presented as one agency among many in a fragmented yet increasingly polarised ideological struggle to win hearts and minds. It confronted Catholic and Episcopalian missionaries who were determined to counteract the Society, as well as disputatious Church of Scotland ministers who were critical of the SSPCK's approach and sought to change it. At a national level, the Society is again presented as one of many actors operating within the framework of the British state, endeavouring to obtain government support for its mission and ensure the Highlands remained on the government's agenda. By illustrating the politics and resources involved in dealing with the so-called Highland problem, Stiùbhart problematises the more deterministic views of Withers and Durkacz, both of whom view the progress of the Society with the benefit of hindsight and assume the organisation had the wholehearted support of the political and religious establishment. Moreover, Stiùbhart's article raises important questions regarding the consistency and quality of governance in the eighteenth-century British state: if the 1720s marked a high point for government intervention in the Highlands, and a low point for the Jacobite cause, how did government action, or indeed inaction, factor into the population's increasing receptiveness to Jacobitism in the decades that followed, culminating in the 1745 rising?

Nathan Gray's thesis, the most recent dedicated study of the SSPCK and in many ways the launchpad for this thesis, looks at the religious and charitable origins of the organisation, as well as its early operations up to 1716. Rather than focusing on the SSPCK as part of the lineage of an anti-Gaelic establishment, Gray's analysis adds vital historical context to our understanding of the organisation, which emerged and operated in response to the perceived social and religious needs of Scotland at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Gray presents the Society as a partnership of common interest between the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, which sought to consolidate its position and extend its reach throughout the

[25] Ibid., 91–2.
[26] Ibid., 128–9.
[27] Ibid., 137.

country, and the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, voluntary societies which aimed to encourage moral behaviour and cultivate piety in order to recover providential favour for the nation. For Gray, the Highlands—where the Presbyterian church was weak, immorality widespread, religious practice notoriously fluid, and Catholicism apparently thriving—provided the ideal mission zone. To fund the mission, the Society extended charitable donations beyond the landed nobility down to parish-level, enabling ordinary Scots to contribute towards both the improvement of the Highlands and the redemption of the nation.[28] Gray's study also demonstrates that the cooperation of local agents—ministers, landowners and ordinary tenants—was crucial in the management of schools, particularly in determining locations and ensuring that parents sent their children to them. Indeed, Highland heritors were often improvement-minded, and from their perspective the SSPCK was offering discounted improvements to their parishes that could not go ignored.[29] This adds a crucial corrective to the arguments put forth by Durkacz and Withers, where the Highlands and Lowlands are presented as two distinct culture regions, with SSPCK schools as an almost alien presence imposed from outside by an Edinburgh-based elite.

Gray's treatment of language policy is perhaps his most significant contribution. While Durkacz and Withers presented the SSPCK's policies towards Gaelic purely in terms of an unyielding drive to eliminate the language, Gray raises the possibility that the initial proscription of Gaelic books in schools might have been a practical measure given the contemporary prevalence of English literacy among educated Gaels and the absence of a pre-established literary standard for vernacular Scottish Gaelic.[30] Gray also provides a nuanced analysis of the Society's first official pronouncement against Gaelic, namely the 1716 memorial to the Commission of Police:

> Nothing can be more effectual for reducing these countries to order, and making them usefull to the Commonwealth than teaching them their duty to God, their King and Countrey and rooting out their Irish language, and this has been the case of the Society so far as they could, For all the Schollars are taught in English.[31]

While Durkacz, Withers and Campbell cite this as evidence of the Society's definitive attitude towards Gaelic, Gray points out that the document containing it was not intended as a policy statement. Rather it was a petition to a government agency which called for government support to expand the school system in the Highlands. Nor did the terms of the

[28] Nathan P. Gray, '"A Publick Benefite to the Nation": The Charitable and Religious Origins of the SSPCK, 1690-1715' (University of Glasgow PhD Thesis, 2012), 133.
[29] Ibid., 175–6, 189–91.
[30] Ibid., 13.
[31] NRS, GD95/1/1, 294 (7 Jun 1716).

petition accurately reflect practice in early SSPCK schools: Gaelic was not excluded, and many schoolmasters were encouraged by the Society to catechise and pray with their pupils in the language.[32] This reveals the ambiguities at the heart of Society's language policy. Even if the elimination of Gaelic was a priority, achieving this end was no simple task, particularly among a largely non-literate, monoglot Gaelic-speaking population. The Society had to make concessions to facilitate the teaching of English, but these were not reflected in the bombastic rhetoric of early publications and memorials. These concessions and ambiguities were recognised by Withers and Durkacz, but their historical approach—which seeks in hindsight to analyse the decline of Gaelic—fails to account for the historical context of the Society's decisions. Gray's study gives more weight to context, offering a much clearer indication of the motivations at work, without assuming the organisation was bent on imposing the English language at whatever cost.

Research Questions

This study interrogates several key assumptions throughout that have hitherto dictated historical understanding of Highland education in general, and the SSPCK in particular. The first is the tendency, in Withrington's words, to:

> virtually write off the Highlands as all-but unschooled in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, even to claim that these areas would latterly depend almost entirely for what little schooling they could obtain on an outside agency, namely the [SSPCK].[33]

Durkacz, for instance, wrote that:

> on the whole the system of parochial schooling failed to answer the educational needs of the Highlands. It was this failure, and the educational vacuum which followed in its wake, which made the charity school movement so strategically important to highland education in the eighteenth century.[34]

Other scholars follow a similar line, presuming that educational legislation was widely disregarded in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Highlands, and that consequently only a negligible portion of the region had any pre-existing tradition of schooling. However, Rev. Donald MacKinnon's study of schools in Argyll and the Isles published in 1936 demonstrated that in the seventeenth century the majority of parishes on the Argyll mainland

[32] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 120.
[33] Withrington, 'Schooling, Literacy and Society', 164–5.
[34] Durkacz, *Decline*, 46.

and in the Western Isles were provided with schools.[35] Moreover, Donald Withrington's 1986 study of education in the Highlands concluded that 'it does begin to look as though there was more schooling, available in the 17th century Highlands and Islands than has usually been credited to them'.[36] Withrington has also demonstrated that as the eighteenth century progressed, there was no shortage of local initiatives to set up and maintain schools in Highland parishes, but these efforts were often lost on the Kirk and the SSPCK – both of whom struggled to see past the fact that many of these institutions did not match the strict legal definition of a parochial school.[37] However, despite being questioned and indeed corrected by MacKinnon and Withrington, this stereotypical view of Highland education has been perpetuated by other scholars who frequently presume that Gaels were actively hostile towards schooling in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[38] Historians have yet to contend properly with the likelihood that a substantial number of Highland communities in the eighteenth century had prior experience of formal schooling. These communities probably had certain expectations with regard to the standard and content of teaching; expectations that could either align or clash with the Society's agenda and approach.

Related to this point, in the historiography, there is a marked lack of appreciation for the role of English in Gaelic society prior to the SSPCK's foundation. The image evoked by Withers and Durkacz suggests that Gaelic society constituted an entirely separate cultural region that did not appreciate, nor have any immediate use for, English literacy.[39] However, the dominance of Lowland governance and trade had resulted in the prevalence of the written Scots language for the purposes of commerce and administration in much of the Highlands, by the sixteenth century if not earlier. This supplanted the earlier reliance on Latin, and after 1603 English increasingly began to supplant Scots.[40] This is evidenced in Jane Dawson's work on the Campbell Letters, which reveals that the sixteenth century Highland elite were comfortable, and even thrived, operating and communicating in and between Gaelic, Scots, English and continental milieus.[41] Aonghas MacCoinnich has suggested that literacy in Scots

---

[35] Donald MacKinnon, 'Education in Argyll and the Isles, 1638-1709', *RSCHS*, 6 (1938), 46–54.
[36] Donald J. Withrington, 'Education in the 17th Century Highlands', in *The Seventeenth Century in the Highlands* (Inverness, 1986), 60–9.
[37] Donald J. Withrington, 'The SPCK and Highland Schools in Mid-Eighteenth Century', *SHR*, 41 (1962), 89–99.
[38] R. A. Houston, *Scottish Literacy and Scottish Identity: Illiteracy and Society in Scotland and Northern England* (Cambridge, 1985), 74, 82; John MacKay, *The Church in the Highlands, or, The Progress of Evangelical Religion in Gaelic Scotland, 563-1843* (London, 1914), 198; Szasz, *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans*, 56, 60; Jones, *Charity School Movement*, 165-176; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 165; Durkacz, *Decline*, 50.
[39] Ibid., 23, 46; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 121.
[40] Aonghas MacCoinnich, 'Where and How Was Gaelic Written in Late Medieval and Early Modern Scotland? Orthographic Practices and Cultural Identities', *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, Vol. 24 (2008), 321–333; Idem, *Plantation and Civility*, 6.
[41] Jane Dawson (ed.), *Clan Campbell Letters, 1559-1583* (Edinburgh, 1997).

and English may have been more widespread than was once thought amongst the middling gentry, or *daoine-uaisle*, by the sixteenth century.[42] Church courts in the Highlands also played a substantial role in introducing English literacy on a wider scale in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, despite being largely run by Gaelic-speakers. Parochial schools emphasised the learning of English and Latin.[43] The prevalence of English literacy in early formal education in the Highlands, alongside the historic roles of Scots, English and Latin literacy in Gaelic society, illustrate that the SSPCK was not operating in a vacuum. Therefore, the Society's approach might simply have reflected patterns of education and literacy already rooted in the Highlands prior to the Society's foundation. This degree of local perspective significantly alters the standpoint from which we view the Society; even if it did harbour anti-Gaelic sentiment, which did in turn translate into educational policy, this may not necessarily have been understood as such by the communities who utilised schools. Furthermore, if it is accepted that Gaels were disadvantaged by the absence of Gaelic literacy in SSPCK schools, we should nonetheless ask how they responded to this state of affairs, rather than assuming passive acquiescence to SSPCK language policy followed by the deterministic decline of the language.

Due to the linguistic focus of Withers and Durkacz's studies, there is little appreciation of the limits to the Society's reach and resources. Both remark on the Society's success in perpetrating an 'educational conspiracy' in order to 'devalu[e] Gaelic in the Highland mind'.[44] However, this gives the false impression that the Society's resources were effectively limitless, and suggests its success was hindered only by its refusal to allow schools to teach Gaelic literacy. Several scholars have acknowledged that the organisation was severely and chronically restricted by a shortage of funds.[45] The SSPCK was funded mainly by private subscriptions, donations and collections carried out by the church from national to parish level. Contributions were added directly to the Society's stock, but the terms of its patent expressly forbade the organisation from encroaching upon this stock: only the interest gained on its funds was to be expended on schools. Chapter three offers a closer look at the factors which limited the Society's operations and how the organisation attempted to circumvent these difficulties.

A comprehensive study of education in the Highlands remains a desideratum. In light of the available scholarship, any historian seeking a working knowledge of the SSPCK has little choice but to view the organisation through the eyes of a social scientist and a historical

[42] MacCoinnich, 'Where and How Was Gaelic Written?', 320, 331.
[43] MacKinnon, 'Education in Argyll and the Isles', 52.
[44] Durkacz, *Decline of Celtic Languages*, 64; Withers, *Gaelic Scotland*, 15.
[45] Jones, *Charity School Movement*, 178–9; MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, 239; Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 120–166.

geographer, both of whom were concerned with tracing linguistic and cultural change. More recent studies—by Stiùbhart, Prunier and Gray—have challenged such narratives, establishing the wider context in which Society operated, and shedding light on the religious and charitable roots of the Society and the extent of local influence on its schools. However, the history of the SSPCK, and of Highland education in general, remains fragmented and partial, still to some degree dominated by polemical controversy. In the studies of Withers and Durkacz, there is a lack of appreciation for the ways in which policies were altered, tempered or limited by social, political, and religious developments in the Highlands, Scotland, Britain and further afield. Readers are left with a one-sided and largely centralised perspective of Highland education as a one-way colonial dynamic, moving from a monolithic centre to a passive and acquiescent periphery. When evidence of local agency is acknowledged in earlier studies of the SSPCK—be it an example of dialogue, cooperation or resistance—this invariably relates to local attitudes towards language policy. However, as demonstrated by more recent studies, this was far from the only issue communicated to the Society in Edinburgh; local agency played a much greater role in the shape and operation of SSPCK schools than has hitherto been recognised. While the Directors' Committee in Edinburgh claimed to assert a great degree of control over its schools, contemporary limitations in access, infrastructure and communications led many local agents for better or worse to innovate and adapt to better address what they perceived to be local needs and demands. Reviewing the literature, we find no real genealogy of understanding, nor do we find any real consensus. This is something this thesis seeks to address through a dedicated study of the SSPCK which—building on and consolidating the studies of Stiùbhart, Prunier, and Gray—traces developments in Edinburgh, the Highlands and elsewhere with an eye to telling the whole story.

Finally, few historians have considered the Society's missionary endeavours in the colonies of British North America. The handful of treatments that we do have tend to present the overseas mission in isolation, largely removed from the Society's activities at home.[46] More recent studies have attempted to bridge this gap, notably Rusty Roberson's analysis of the SSPCK's role in the transatlantic religious Enlightenment, Margaret Connell Szasz's comparative study of Highland and Native American education in the eighteenth century, and Clare Loughlin's recent article on the theological underpinnings of the SSPCK's American mission.[47] Roberson's thesis focuses primarily on the development of American

[46] Frederick V. Mills, 'The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge in British North America, 1730-1775', *Church History*, 63 (1994), 15–30; John A. Grigg, '"How This Shall Be Brought About": The Development of the SSPCK's American Policy', *Itinerario*, 32 (2008), 43–60.
[47] Rusty Roberson, 'Scottish Missions and Religious Enlightenment in Colonial America: the SSPCK in Transatlantic Context' (University of Edinburgh PhD Thesis, 2012); Szasz, *Scottish Highlanders and Native*

evangelicalism, a process galvanised by the SSPCK's involvement, rather than the ideology of the SSPCK itself. Szasz, who does not specialise in Scottish or Highland history, often relies on the stereotypes of Gaelic society—isolation, distinctiveness and helplessness—found in the work of Withers and Durkacz, to highlight broad, but significant, similarities between the Gaelic and Native American experience.[48] Loughlin's study adds crucial context to the American mission, arguing that the SSPCK came to focus its attention on America in the 1730s when its activism against Highland Catholics was waning.[49] This study aims to build on these treatments, tracing the ways in which the early Scottish missions at home and abroad fit together ideologically and financially in the mind of the SSPCK. In a short article published in 1989, Donald Meek suggested that the SSPCK's missions constituted part of a wider 'North-Atlantic circuit', which drew uncivilised and unevangelised peoples in the Highlands and Americas together in the public mind.[50] However, we are yet to understand fully the ways in which the mission abroad affected or impinged upon the mission at home. How did the organisation balance its commitments in Scotland with those overseas, and did this prompt any response from agents in the Highlands?

Approaching the Evidence

This thesis approaches the SSPCK from both local and central perspectives. At a local level the Society is placed within the broader context of the history of education in the Highlands. It seeks to provide context for the Society's policy decisions and establish the extent to which the body's intervention in the region represented a marked break from what came before. From a central perspective, the Society is placed within the broader context of governance in the post-1707 British state and empire. By placing the Society in the context of the nexus of official and private institutions that were operating in the same period, it seeks to shed light on the nature and quality of governance in eighteenth century Britain, and contextualise further the development of British identities in Scotland that would contribute to British imperial expansion.

Those seeking to reconstruct the early history of education in the Highlands face undeniable difficulties, foremost among them being the sparsity of source evidence. It should

Americans; Clare Loughlin, 'Concepts of Mission in Scottish Presbyterianism: The SSPCK, the Highlands and Britain's American Colonies, 1709–40', *Studies in Church History*, 54 (2018), 190–207.

[48] Szasz, *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans*, 56, 60.

[49] Loughlin, 'Concepts of Mission', 193.

[50] Donald Meek, 'Scottish Highlanders, North American Indians and the SSPCK: Some Cultural Perspectives', *RSCHS*, 23 (1989), 378–96, 387.

be noted, however, that historians face the same difficulties when looking at the Lowlands. As Donald Withrington pointed out:

> individual schools in Scotland rarely if ever gather together and leave to posterity groups of records of their own making, at least before the mid-19th century. Comments about Scottish schools in earlier periods have to be picked up, as and when these are come across, scattered as they are in the records of those agencies which had responsibility for education — in church records above all (kirk session, presbytery, synod and general assembly), in the records of heritors or landowners (policy-making in formal heritors' meetings, receipts for salary-payments to local masters in the families' estate papers), and in the records of town councils for the burgh schools.[51]

Chapter one of this thesis follows up on Withrington's preliminary study of Highland education in the seventeenth century Highlands, as well as Donald MacKinnon's article on schools in the Synod of Argyll in the same period. Drawing on a wide range of local church records, private and legal papers, edited primary sources and compendia, it investigates which localities had experienced formal schooling prior to the SSPCK's intervention and sheds more light on the nature and purpose of Highland schools in the seventeenth century.[52]

The SSPCK records contain a variety of manuscript sources which allow historians to piece together the Society's educational activities in the Highlands and place it in the broader context of Highland education. Minute and letter books contain detailed reports from local agents such as ministers and landowners, communicating local conditions—social, economic, educational, religious and political—as well as the behaviour and progress of pupils and the issues confronted by schoolmasters. They reveal which localities petitioned for schools, the rhetoric they adopted to maximise their chances of obtaining them, and how schools were received and exploited by their communities. They can also shed light on the role that local agents envisioned for the SSPCK, the social backgrounds of those who utilised charity schools, and which localities had pre-established schools. With regard to limitations, much of the richer evidence tends to deal mainly with the Society's relationship with the gentry, at best the minor gentry, while those lower down the social ladder are largely overlooked.

For the Highland evidence, the minute books up to 1723 are the richest in detail, including near complete transcriptions of correspondences, petitions and school reports. From 1723, as part of a wider programme of streamlining Society business, the Committee and General Meeting agreed to shorten their minutes by summarising letters and reports

[51] Withrington, 'Education in the 17th Century Highlands', 62-3.
[52] MacKinnon, 'Education in Argyll and the Isles', 46–54.

rather than transcribing them in full 'to prevent swelling volumes'.[53] In 1730, a time when the Society was supporting over 100 schools, Committee minutes were shortened further, only referencing letters and reports without providing summaries. In 1731, shortly after the SSPCK had launched its American mission, it was agreed that henceforth only 'matters of greatest moment' were to be remitted to the General Meeting.[54] This is reflected in the structure of the thesis. The relatively rich material for the Highlands up to 1730 forms the bases of chapters four and five, which deal with the SSPCK from its foundation up to the launch of its American mission. For chapter six the thesis turns to America, synthesising SSPCK and colonial records in an attempt to reconstruct the motivations and processes behind the American mission, before bringing in publications, private papers and Society correspondence to shed light on how Highland agents might have perceived and responded to it.

With regard to central management, the SSPCK records along with Scottish State Papers held in The National Archives in Kew allow historians to reconstruct the members' varied intentions, activities, and accomplishments. The minutes provide a window into who the most active members were, since a sederunt of members is usually listed for committee meetings. Together these records document the Society's interactions with other official and private bodies which were operating within the British state and empire. They contain petitions and memorials to various individuals and authorities—church, crown and parliament—soliciting donations and calling for government support for Highland schooling. In 1728 the Society established a board of correspondents in London which coordinated the Society's American mission. It identified opportunities for the Society to participate in British imperial affairs and returned regular reports to Edinburgh concerning the progress of missionaries. Hitherto an associational approach to uncovering the SSPCK's activities and institutional framework has not been undertaken; doing so provides an opportunity to use these collections in new ways. This material forms the basis of chapters three on central management and finance and six on America, as well informing sections in chapters four and five which deal with the SSPCK at its centre.

Chapter Structure

Chapter one examines the extent and nature of schooling in the Highlands prior to the SSPCK's intervention. Establishing a baseline for educational provision in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries provides crucial context for later chapters which analyse how

[53] NRS, GD95/1/2, 230 (3 Jan 1723).
[54] NRS, GD95/2/4, 250–1 (15 Jan 1730); GD95/1/3, 228–32 (7 Jan 1731).

Highland communities responded to the Society and its schools. Chapter two focuses on the origins of the organisation, tracing developments in the Highlands as well as the Lowlands that led an influential core of Scottish Presbyterians to advocate a national charitable corporation to support Highland education. It also considers the factors that led a substantial portion of Scots to contribute in order to make the Society's mission possible. Chapter three looks closely at the central management and finances of the Society up to 1731 – when the Society witnessed both the launch of its American mission and the death of its first secretary and a key administrator, John Dundas. It outlines the management structure, and identifies and provides biographical sketches of the most influential members, before examining the Society's finances, particularly the ways that the organisation attempted to circumvent the difficulties stemming from its limited funds. Chapter four turns to the localities and examines the establishment and operation of early SSPCK schools up to the 1715 Jacobite rising. It traces the personalities and processes behind the Society's first scheme of schools, provides biographical sketches of the first generation of schoolmasters, and examines the operation and local reception of each school, outwith the Northern Isles. Chapter five considers the Society in the aftermath of the '15 up to *c.*1730. It gauges the impact of the rising in localities with SSPCK schools, reconstructs the Society's campaign for government support in the rising's aftermath, and traces the growth and development of schools up to around 1730, when the Society was becoming increasingly occupied with its nascent American mission. Chapter six, the final chapter, reconstructs the processes and motivations behind the SSPCK's earliest missionary endeavours in British North America, gauging its successes and failures, before turning back to the Highlands to consider the perception and impact of the colonial mission on the home front. The conclusion will draw upon the chapter discussions to revisit the primary research questions raised in the introduction, namely on the educational legacy of the seventeenth-century Highlands, the question of language use in SSPCK schools, the issues of the Society's scope and resources, and the historiographical implications of a more holistic approach to the SSPCK which takes in the perspectives of the Highlands, Edinburgh, London and the wider British imperial context.

1

HIGHLAND EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE USE, *c.*1660–*c.*1709

Much of the scholarship concerned with Highland education portrays the region as a contained and homogenous geographical unit where schooling was inhibited in all eras by the vastness of parishes, topographical obstacles, distance from central authorities and, most controversially, a cultural predisposition to resist the introduction of schools that taught English literacy.[1] However, numerous studies have demonstrated beyond any serious doubt that throughout the seventeenth century the Highlands were increasingly integrating into the social, political and economic norms of the rest of Scotland.[2] For example, Allan Kennedy's recent study of government policy in the Highlands during the Restoration interprets integration not as a centrally mandated, one-way process, but as a 'project shared between central government and [Highland] elites'.[3] Furthermore, several studies have ably challenged the perspectives of Withers and Durkacz, painting a more optimistic picture of Highland education in the seventeenth century.[4] In order to gain a greater understanding of local attitudes towards the SSPCK it is therefore necessary to gauge the extent and nature of schooling in the region before the Society entered the field. Through a discussion of the scholarship and sources for schooling for different regions of the Highlands from the Restoration onwards, this chapter will begin by gauging the extent of provision on a more localised basis. It will also determine the most significant factors, both long- and short-term, that impeded the establishment and support of schools. This will allow us to interrogate the premise advanced by historians such as Withers and Durkacz, that the SSPCK was entering an educational vacuum in 1709, thereby improving our understanding of the Society's initial purpose and local responses to SSPCK schools.

---

[1] Jones, *Charity School Movement*, 165-176; Durkacz, *Decline*, 46; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 30, 120.
[2] John Bannerman, 'The Scots Language and the Kin-based Society', in *Gaelic and Scots in Harmony: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on the Languages of Scotland, University of Glasgow 1988*, ed. Derick S. Thomson (Glasgow, 1990), 1–19; W. D. H. Sellar, 'Celtic Law and Scots Law: Survival and Integration', *Scottish Studies* 29 (1989), 1–27. For more recent examples see Kennedy, *Governing Gaeldom*, ch. 1; Macinnes *Clanship*; Dziennik, 'Fatal Land War'; MacGregor, 'The Statutes of Iona'; MacCoinnich, *Plantation and Civility*.
[3] Kennedy, *Governing Gaeldom*, 252.
[4] MacKinnon, 'Education in Argyll and the Isles', 46–54; F. J. Shaw, *The Northern and Western Islands of Scotland: Their Economy and Society in the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1980); Withrington, 'Education in the 17th Century Highlands', 60–69; Macinnes, *Clanship*, 176–179; Helen Louise Young, 'The Small Rural School and Community Relations in Scotland, 1872-2000: An Interdisciplinary History' (University of Stirling, PhD Thesis), ch. 2.

This chapter also considers the patterns of language use in the Highlands, particularly in the context of formal literary education. Scots and English had long served as languages of record in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands alongside Latin, for the purposes of business, law, formal education, and interaction with church and state. A closer look at Highland attitudes towards language status and roles allows us to cross-examine the established notion that the SSPCK's efforts to introduce English literacy through its schools were unprecedented, unnecessary and traumatic. Furthermore, shedding more light on Highland perspectives may offer a more nuanced understanding of the Society's decision to prioritise English over Gaelic.

Highland Education before the SSPCK: Issues and Evidence

The most substantial studies concerned with education in the Highlands have come from scholars seeking to trace the decline of the Gaelic language. It has been argued by Withers and Durkacz, among others, that the region was all but devoid of schooling in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries until outside agencies such as the SSPCK entered the scene. Vast parishes, scattered population settlement and topographical obstacles are all cited as factors obstructing the support of schools in the region.[5] Durkacz concludes that

> Obviously the various education acts passed by the Scottish parliament between 1616 and 1696 had little impact on the massive educational problems of the Highlands […] the parochial school system never came close to meeting the educational and cultural needs of the Highlands […] Perhaps even in a few, favoured highland parishes where heritors took a personal interest (those bordering the Lowlands in particular), the parochial schools gave a sound elementary education to the local children. But on the whole the system of parochial schooling failed to answer the educational needs of the Highlands. It was this failure, and the educational vacuum which followed in its wake, which made the charity school movement so strategically important to highland education in the eighteenth century.[6]

Both Durkacz and Withers maintain that cultural distinctiveness played a substantial, if not the most significant role.[7] As the Education Acts of 1616, 1633 and 1696 illustrate a desire on the part of the civil and ecclesiastical establishment to remove Gaelic through English schooling, these scholars have presumed that there must have been widespread hostility to formal education on the part of the inhabitants of the Highlands. It should be noted, however,

[5] Durkacz, *Decline*; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 30; Houston, *Scottish Literacy and Scottish Identity*, 74, 82.
[6] Durkacz, *Decline*, 46.
[7] Ibid., 4–5, 50; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 30.

that the arguments of Withers and Durkacz reflect the official line taken by the SSPCK from its foundation, that to keep ordinary Highlanders:

> in those wretched dependencies, the propagation of true Christian Knowledge, and of the English Tongue, has all along been opposed by Popish Heads of Clans.[8]

Of course, it benefitted the SSPCK to an extent to paint such a bleak picture of the spiritual and educational state of Highlands. By reinforcing the perception of the region as one alienated from the rest of the kingdom and continued in ignorance by a domineering Catholic elite, the Society's mission gained credibility, thus attracting further donations and subscriptions. It is a great irony that the SSPCK itself carried out surveys in 1710 and 1716, which together illustrated the considerable number of schools already established in the region. The 1696 Education Act required the establishment of a school and the appointment of a schoolmaster 'in every paroch not already provided', with a salary above 100 merks, but not exceeding 200 merks. For a variety of reasons that will be discussed below, many Highland parishes struggled to meet the legal minimum salary requirement, but this did not necessarily mean that no schooling was available. Even as the eighteenth century progressed the SSPCK found little issue with disregarding a multitude of local schooling initiatives—mainly as these did not fit the rigid definition of 'legal parochial schools' contained in the 1696 Act—as it aimed to highlight the continued barbarity and ignorance of the Highlands.[9] We should therefore be cautious about taking these claims at face value as Withers and Durkacz have done. Both scholars maintain a view of Highland-Lowland interaction that focuses primarily on differences between the regions, glossing over any similarities and ambiguities to highlight the role of Lowland 'cultural intrusion' in the decline of Highland exceptionalism.[10]

In 1986, Donald Withrington warned historians to be more cautious when asserting that distinctions in language and culture necessarily inhibited schooling in the region. While acknowledging that the several education acts contain an undeniable attack on Gaelic, he argues that this was but 'one element in a generalised policy aimed at political and social stability', which at several junctures corresponding neatly to the dating of each of the education acts was being disrupted in the Highlands.[11] Withrington argues that we should pay more attention to the ways in which 'economic or social (perhaps religious or political)

[8] *Account of the SSPCK* (1714), 6.
[9] Withrington, 'S.P.C.K. and Highland Schools in Mid-Eighteenth Century', 89–99; Ansdell, *People of the Great Faith*, 91–2.
[10] Dziennik, 'Fatal Land War', 19.
[11] Withrington, 'Education in the 17th Century Highlands', 61.

pressures', shared throughout Scotland, and which certainly did affect the ability of communities to support schools and schoolmasters, could be 'exacerbated [in the Highlands] by greater poverty or remoteness.'[12] In light of recent scholarship, it is entirely feasible that despite the 'insulting terms' of the education acts the Highland elite shared central government's primary ambition of attaining greater stability, prosperity and integration for the region. This perspective raises the possibility that the educational problems in the Highlands at the turn of the century were not necessarily related to demand, but rather to issues of supply. To follow up on this hypothesis, however, historians face undeniable difficulties, especially considering the sparse and scattered nature of the evidence.

It is often presumed that the paucity of source material for schooling in the Highlands is, in its own right, adequately revealing of its poor state. It cannot be denied that for most Highland regions the quantity and quality of records is much worse than for most areas of the Lowlands, and the further north and west we cast our eyes the worse the situation tends to become. However, Scottish parochial schools, both Highland and Lowland, were not centrally managed, nor did schoolmasters tend to adopt the sort of record-keeping practices that would have produced contained collections for individual schools. While evidence can certainly be gleaned from the records of the agencies responsible for parochial education—above all in the records of local church courts—references to schools are generally scattered unevenly. Indeed, these difficulties are testified in the studies of Withrington, Beale and Boyd, who explore the history of education Haddington, Fife and Ayrshire, respectively, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[13] In this respect, we could argue that the evidence for schools in many Lowland parishes can be equally lacking. We must, therefore, allow the possibility that, even if more church court records for Highland regions were accessible, they might not yield enough information to indicate satisfactorily the extent and consistency of schooling over time, as is also the case with much of the Lowland record. By supplementing church courts records, where possible, with other sources—such as estate chartularies, accounts, legal documents, and private correspondences—several scholars have managed to piece together a more detailed picture of schooling in several Highland regions. Donald Withrington made use of these studies in his preliminary survey of Highland schooling in the seventeenth century, drawing the tentative conclusion that 'It does begin to look as though there was more schooling available in the […] Highlands and Islands than has usually

[12] Ibid., 62. See also Evan MacLeod Barron, *Scottish War of Independence* (Inverness, 1934), xxxvii–xxxviii, xlvi–l.

[13] Donald Withrington, 'Schools in the Presbytery of Haddington in the 17th century', *Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society*, 9 (1963), 90–111; idem (ed.), 'Lists of Schoolmasters Teaching Latin, 1690', in *Miscellany of the Scottish History Society*, x (Edinburgh, 1965), 121–142; idem, *Going to School* (Edinburgh, 1997), 16; J. M. Beale, *A History of the Burgh and Parochial Schools of Fife* (Edinburgh, 1983): W. Boyd, *Education in Ayrshire over Seven Centuries* (London, 1961).

been credited to them'. By collating references to schools and schoolmasters from existing studies and edited compendia—such as the *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae*, which contain lists of ministers of the Church of Scotland—and supplementing this with information found across a variety of local church and estate archives, we can begin to visualise the extent of schooling in the Highlands prior to the SSPCK's intervention.[14] While, for many places, we cannot be certain of how well sustained this schooling was, we can at least identify which parishes had some direct experience of schooling and in which parishes there were attempts to establish schools.

Synod of Argyll

One relatively rich source for Highland education comes from the records of the Synod of Argyll. This undeniably energetic church court demonstrated particular concern with education in the seventeenth century, and maintained detailed records which remain extant and in a good condition today.[15] It should be noted, however, that there is a substantial gap in the record between 1661 and 1687, from the restoration of episcopacy in the church up to James VII's indulgence.[16] The surviving manuscripts were the subject of an article published by Rev. Donald MacKinnon in 1936, which examines the extent of schooling in the region between 1638 and 1709. By parliamentary acts of 1644 and 1690, respectively, the vacant stipends within the bounds of the synod were made available for educational purposes, facilitating large-scale expansion of the schooling system on the western mainland and in the Hebrides as a means of advancing Presbyterianism in the region.[17] For the post-Revolution period, MacKinnon traces no less than 25 schools established by 1698 with these funds in various locations between Kintyre and Lewis, with an additional 14 itinerant ambulatory schools and 5 grammar schools.[18] He locates fixed schools in Campbeltown, Dunoon, Kilmallie in Lochaber, Skye, Raasay, Islay, Jura, Arran, Iona and Bute, among other places.[19] It is noteworthy that these schools were dedicated to teaching English and Latin and not, as far as the records indicate, any Gaelic.[20] As we shall see in the following

[14] Sources include presbytery and synod minutes (NRS CH2), SSPCK records (NRS, GD95), and private estate records, including the Mar and Kellie papers (NRS, GD124), the Atholl muniments held at Blair Castle in Highland Perthshire (BC) and the Argyll Papers held in Inveraray (ICA). The database which informs this study is accessible online at: https://airtable.com/shrbhVYfdOUHvJxLd.
[15] NRS, CH2/557, Synod of Argyll Minutes (1639-1661, 1687-1892); See also the printed editions, Duncan MacTavish (ed.), *Minutes of the Synod of Argyll, 1639-1661*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1943-1944).
[16] According to the editor of the synod's minutes, Duncan MacTavish, we are very fortunate that the pre-1661 record survived. Ibid., vii–x.
[17] Ibid., xvi; MacKinnon, 'Education in Argyll and the Isles'; NRS, CH2/557/3, Synod of Argyll Minutes, 1687-1700, 20 (9 Jan 1690).
[18] MacKinnon, 'Education in Argyll and the Isles', 52.
[19] Ibid., 53–4; MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, 222–223; Withrington, 'Education in the 17th Century Highlands', 63.
[20] Withrington, 'Education in 17th Century Highlands', 61.

chapters, after 1709 the Society's refusal to incorporate Latin instruction bemused several communities across the Highlands, many of which considered schools as a natural route to university education, for which knowledge of Latin was requisite.

Withrington identified a further three schools in the Western Isles—in Mull, Lismore and Appin, and Colonsay—all of which operated from as early as 1649, as well as a school operating at Rodel in Harris by 1701.[21] A 1699 petition to the Synod of Argyll from the heritors and elders of Harris reveals that the schoolmaster Mr John Laing was appointed in 1699 to instruct their children in the 'Latin and Scots tongue'.[22] Several sources reference a school in Orbost near Dunvegan which was renowned for 'the quality of its classical teaching', meaning instruction in Latin and Greek. Schoolmasters at Orbost included Mr John MacPherson, son of the last Episcopal incumbent at Duirnish (1705–1711), Mr Kenneth Beaton, son to John Beaton, minister of Bracadale (1711–1716), and Donald MacLeod, brother to the minister of Glenelg (1716–1717).[23] Significantly, each of the aforementioned teachers went on to serve as SSPCK teachers.

It should be noted that teachers' salaries within the synod often fell below the legal minimum of 100 merks as set by the 1696 act of parliament. As will be discussed below, this was common not only in the Highlands, but also in the Lowlands in the early eighteenth century. In lieu of cash payment, up until 1705 Mr John Laing, schoolmaster in Harris, was granted a tack of land at a discount (in 1701 a 'kianog' for five merks). Subsequently, he and his successor were only allowed 60 merks cash.[24] In a minute from July 1707, it is noted that the schoolmaster for Jura and Gigha was granted only 20 merks yearly from the synod, although it is possible that this served only to supplement the salary that heritors were liable to pay. It also appears that individuals deemed politically suspect—such as Donald MacDonald of Sleat, Robert Stewart of Appin and Ewen Cameron of Lochiel—were involved in the process of planting and supporting schools.[25] Nevertheless, drawing on this evidence we can confirm MacKinnon's conclusion that the work of the SSPCK in the region after 1709 'was largely auxiliary to that of the synod and much more limited in scope.'[26]

[21] Ibid., 66; Alick Morison, 'The Contullich Papers, 1706-1720', *TGSI*, 44 (1967), 310–348; idem, 'Early Harris Estate Papers, 1679-1703', *TGSI*, 51 (1978), 8–172.
[22] ICA, Bundle 539. I am grateful to Dr. Aonghas MacCoinnich for this reference.
[23] *Fasti*, vii, 168; MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, 228; Withrington, 'Education in the 17th Century Highlands', 66. It should be noted that each of these schoolmasters also taught SSPCK schools, and each objected to the Society's refusal to allow the teaching of Latin. Beaton and MacLeod were previously bursars of the Synod of Argyll at the University of Glasgow, cf. ICA, Bundle 571.
[24] Morison, 'Early Harris Estate Papers', 141, 144, 147.
[25] NRS, CH2/557/3, 248 (23 Oct 1699).
[26] MacKinnon, 'Education in Argyll and the Isles', 53.

Further expansion would be facilitated after 1705, when Queen Anne granted the synod access to the rents of the former Bishopric of Argyll and the Isles.[27]

When considering the gap in the record for the Restoration period, MacKinnon concludes that 'the cause of education in Argyll and the Isles had been crippled by the appropriation of the vacant stipends' for the maintenance of the restored Episcopalian clergy.[28] However, this assertion can be qualified. Education was necessary to produce qualified ministers regardless of church polity and providing a Gaelic-speaking ministry remained a major preoccupation in the Restoration era. In 1663, parliament ordered that all vacant stipends in Argyll and the Isles be applied for the support of eight Gaelic-speaking students destined to 'serve in the ministrie […] wherby the Ghospell may be the more propogat and pietie abound amongst them.'[29] Support for schools also remained on the agenda. Between 1661 and 1689 at least six parochial and five grammar schools continued to operate in the locations named by MacKinnon – the latter in Skye, Islay, Dunoon, Rothesay and Campbeltown.[30]

There was a grammar school at Stornoway in Lewis that was planted by the Earl of Seaforth in the seventeenth century, and which attracted scholars from the mainland and adjacent islands. Evidence suggests that the grammar school enjoyed a steady succession of university-educated schoolmasters. Mr John Beagrie, who appears as a witness to a deed in 1655, is the earliest schoolmaster that has been identified to date; he was followed by Mr Rorie MacKenzie (1676) and Mr Lachlan MacAulay (1691).[31] Martin Martin, who toured the Hebrides in the late 1690s informs us that 'in this school Latin and English are taught'. An earlier commentator from 1680 indicates that the school was intended for 'the gentlemen's sons and daughters […] so that there are few families but at least the maister can read and write'.[32] While a shortage of funds may have precluded expansion on the scale carried out between 1690 and 1698, Withrington shows that the spell of Episcopalian control did not lead to a decline in local interest in education. This suggests that the period saw more

[27] NRS, E424/1, Bishop's Rents: Argyll, General Account (1705-1729); Richard H. Scott, 'The Politics and Administration of Scotland, 1725-1748' (University of Edinburgh Ph.D Thesis, 1982), 131n.
[28] MacKinnon, 'Education in Argyll and the Isles', 50–51. The Presbyterian sympathies of Donald MacKinnon may have played a role in this analysis. Indeed, it was a common view up until the 1960s that schooling was nurtured in periods of Presbyterian ascendancy in the seventeenth-century church only to decline in times of episcopacy. Indeed, MacKinnon portrays the network of schools established in this year as a resurrection of the system put in place by the Presbyterian synod from 1639 onwards.
[29] Allan Kennedy, 'The Condition of the Restoration Church of Scotland in the Highlands', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 65 (2014), 315–316; RPS, 1663/6/58; 1663/6/59.
[30] Withrington, 'Education in the 17th Century Highlands', 63.
[31] NRS, RD4/7/418, Register of Deeds Second Series, MacKenzie's office; MacCoinnich, *Plantation and Civility*, 238; NRS, SC34/19/1/2, fo, 169v, Tain Sherriff Court, Register of Deeds (1679-1695). I am grateful to Dr Aonghas MacCoinnich for each of these references.
[32] Martin, *Description of the Western Isles*, 30; Walter MacFarlane, *Geographical Collections Relating to Scotland*, ii (Edinburgh, 1907), 215; MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, 229.

continuity than disruption. Indeed, Alan Macinnes has since argued that the Episcopalian clergy 'approved and furthered the Presbyterian endeavours of the 1640s to extend schooling in Highland parishes.'[33]

Highland Perthshire

Support for education in the Highlands was not confined to Argyll and the Isles.[34] In 1918, John Hunter, minister of Rattray in Perthshire, published two hefty volumes on *The Diocese and Presbytery of Dunkeld, 1660-1689,* the second of which includes an overview of education in the region and exhaustive list of schoolmasters.[35] This source offers us evidence not only of the extent of schooling before 1709, but also of initiatives to extend schooling in the region during the Restoration era. As Hunter points out:

> The Episcopal church, 1661–1689, also endeavoured to promote the interests of education. The Archbishop and Synod of St Andrews, in October 1665, appointed 'that the brethren walk [sic] according to the Act of Parliament in King James' tym for the setling of scools in their several parishes' and, in October 1669, resolved to ask Parliament to ratify 'the old Act for planting of schools in each parish.'[36]

The 'old Act' referred to is almost certainly the 1646 act introduced by the covenanting regime 'for founding schools in every parish'.[37] This highlights the continuity in attitudes towards education, and further challenges the view that schooling withered in the period of Episcopalian control. By using Hunter's study in conjunction with Withers' list of Gaelic-speaking parishes, Withrington traces a steady growth in provision from 1636 onwards, continuing through the Restoration into the post-Revolution period. While in 1635 only one or two of the 21 Gaelic-speaking parishes (5%) had schools, between 1636 and 1670, 15 parishes (71%) were provided at some time, with some operating continuously throughout the period. Between 1671 and 1700, at least 18 out of the 21 Gaelic-speaking parishes in

---

[33] Macinnes, *Clanship*, 176.

[34] There has a been a tendency among commentators to present the Synod of Argyll as an anomaly. Gray cites only the bounds of the Synod of Argyll as a region 'where [education] was comparatively thriving throughout the seventeenth century' (p. 42) but stops short of discussing the other regions where the Society would come to establish schools. MacKinnon, too, asserts that 'educationally the bounds of Argyll were on the whole in advance of any other Highland Synod' (p. 53). As a result, both scholars risk misleading readers into the believing that other Highland regions had no prior experience of formal education.

[35] John Hunter, *The Diocese and Presbytery of Dunkeld, 1660-1689*, ii (Edinburgh, 1918), 87–101.

[36] Ibid., 89.

[37] RPS, 1645/11/185. While 'the old Act' may refer to the 1633 act passed during the reign of James VI, which ratified and added to the 1616 act of the Privy Council ordering the establishment of schools in 'everie parroch of this kingdome whair convenient meanes may be had for interteyning a scoole', the wording suggests otherwise. The act of 1633 (RPS, 1633/6/20), entitled 'Ratification of the act of council regarding plantation of schools', requires schools only 'where convenient meanes may be had', while the 1646 act, entitled 'Act for founding of schools in every parish' removes any ambiguity, ordering that schools be set up 'in every parish (not already provided)'.

Perthshire (86%) were supplied with both school and schoolmaster.[38] Moreover, these were not simply the Lowland-adjacent parishes which Durkacz maintained were more likely to provide schools.[39] Moulin, Weem, Kenmore, Logierait, Blair Atholl, Dull and Fortingall all contained at least one parochial school during this period.[40] These institutions were supported financially, in varying proportions, by local subscriptions, church court funds, and a local tax, or stent, levied from the landowners and tenants by the Bishop or, after 1690, the presbytery.[41]

With regard to schoolmasters in Highland Perthshire, many were university graduates who would have instructed children not only in English, but also in Latin grammar, reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematics. Dunkeld grammar school, for example, enjoyed an unbroken succession of university graduate schoolmasters from 1659: Andrew Malloch (1659), James Darling (1662), John Hardie (1668), James Ross (1679), Alexander Robertson (1682), Gilbert Grugh (1685), Alexander Christie (1687), Charles Duff (1690), and John Stewart (1707).[42] Furthermore, the curriculum in the parochial schools was not determined purely by the schoolmasters, but often in accordance with local demands for specific subjects. Rev. Adam Fergusson, father and namesake of the philosopher and historian Dr Adam Ferguson, left the school of Moulin after some years because the schoolmaster was deficient in his knowledge of Latin. He returned, however, in 1683, when the minister recruited a more qualified schoolmaster: a recent graduate from King's College, Aberdeen, Duncan Menzies.[43] Withrington even managed to uncover an example from the 1690s of children in the parish of Muthill being taught French by the local minister, while the schoolmaster filled in for his clerical duties.[44] While the SSPCK offered free instruction to those unable to pay fees, in several cases, kirk sessions took steps to support poorer scholars. In 1688, the kirk session of Rattray, in an attempt to convince parents to send their children to school, promised that for 'such as were unable to maintain [their children] at school', the kirk session 'would pay the schoolmaster for them so farr as the [donation] box would reach.'[45] Following the Revolution, when the need to improve educational facilities in the Highlands became more politically expedient, and in order to assist with the spread of

[38] Withrington, 'Education in 17th Century Highlands', 64–65; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 56.
[39] Durkacz, *Decline*, 46.
[40] Withrington, 'Education in 17th Century Highlands', 65.
[41] Hunter, *Diocese and Presbytery of Dunkeld*, ii, 88-90; William Gillies, *In Famed Breadalbane: The Story of the Antiquities, Lands and People of a Highland District* (Perth, 1938), 326–329.
[42] Hunter, *Diocese and Presbytery of Dunkeld*, ii, 97–98; *Fasti*, iv, 194; BC, Atholl Estate Cartulary vol. 1, 6, 21.
[43] Jane B. Fagg, '"Complaints and Clamours": The Ministry of Adam Fergusson, 1700-1754', *RSCHS*, 25 (1994), 288–9.
[44] Withrington, 'Education in the 17th Century Highlands', 65.
[45] Hunter, *Diocese and Presbytery of Dunkeld*, 90.

Presbyterianism, King William arranged a gift of £150 Sterling to be paid out yearly from the Bishopric of Dunkeld for the use of Highland schools in the shires of Perth, Dumbarton and Stirling.[46] In 1713 'there were three Schools erected in the Parish of Comrie [at the east end of Lochearn] upon a private charity for one year past', indicating that communities pursued their own charitable educational initiatives to supplement the insufficient legal parochial system.[47]

There were, however, frequent difficulties with providing an adequate living for schoolmasters, particularly in terms of the 1696 act stipulating a minimum salary of 100 merks. An exceptional, but nonetheless illustrative, case comes from Comrie. In 1707, the Presbytery of Auchterarder reported 'that the schoolmaster of Comrie hath been abused and beaten by some in that parish for using Legal dilligence to get his sellary [sic] so that he and his family are forced to leave that place'.[48] Schoolmasters in Balquhidder, Bonrannoch, Mullen and Glenalmond were more fortunate. In 1706, the Duke of Atholl appears to have compensated each for outstanding salaries due to them by other heritors.[49] Despite ongoing issues with schoolmaster's salaries, however, it appears that, as with Argyll, educational facilities were already well-established in much of the region by 1709, as was local demand for schooling. When the SSPCK entered Perthshire its work there would also be largely auxiliary to the pre-established system, and much more limited in scope.

Border Regions in Banffshire, Nairn, Angus, Stirling and Dumbarton

Across the seventeenth century, we also see an improvement in school provision in the Gaelic-speaking areas of Banffshire, Nairn and Angus in the northeast, and Dumbarton and Stirlingshire in the southwest.[50] In Banffshire, at least 15 of the 17 Gaelic-speaking parishes identified by Withers had schools between 1671 and 1700, in addition to the school established in Inveraven in 1633.[51] This is matched in Nairnshire where, from 1650 onwards, there were schoolmasters appointed for all four Gaelic-speaking parishes – Auldearn, Ardclach, Cawdor and Nairn.[52] In Angus, all three Gaelic-speaking parishes—Clova, Cortachy and Lochlee—had schoolmasters teaching Latin grammar by 1690.[53] In

[46] Leah Leneman, 'A Social History of the Atholl Estates 1685-1785' (University of Edinburgh Ph.D Thesis, 1982), 154–155. For more information see NRS, GD95/1/2, 16–17 (7 Aug 1718). It appears from a letter in the Atholl muniments that this fund was all but exhausted by 1711: BC, Box 45/9/124.
[47] NRS, GD95/2/1, 362 (1 Mar 1714).
[48] NRS, CH2/619/26, Presbytery of Auchterarder Minutes, 151–2 (22 Oct 1707).
[49] BC, Box 62/5/1/116, /118; Leneman, 'Social History of the Atholl Estates', 153.
[50] Withrington, 'Education in the 17th Century Highlands', 64–6.
[51] Ibid., 65; William Barclay, *The Schools and Schoolmasters of Banffshire* (Banff, 1925).
[52] Withrington, 'Education in the 17th Century Highlands', 65.
[53] Ibid.; 'Lists of Schoolmasters Teaching Latin, 1690', 139–140; J. C. Jessop, *Education in Angus* (London, 1731).

Dumbarton- and Stirlingshire, information has been found for schools in Buchanan (1663, 1667, 1669, 1688), Drymen (1663, 1665, 1668, 1691) and Luss (1682).[54]

Highland Aberdeenshire

In the parishes of Aberdeenshire identified by Withers as Gaelic-speaking, Withrington notes schools in the parishes of Glenmuick, Tullich and Glengairn (in 1696 and 1699); Kildrummy (1646, 1676 and 1680); Glenbuchat (1687); and Strathdon (in 1667, 1675, 1683 and 1686).[55] Another school was settled in Aboyne and Glentanar by 1700 at the latest, with James Smith, student in Divinity, appointed as schoolmaster in the same year.[56] The minutes of the Synod of Aberdeen note in 1699 that in the 'parishes of Kindrought [Braemar], Crathie, Glenmuick, Glendardne & Tulligh there are no schoolls nor any fond for mantaining schoolmasters'.[57] However, in September 1699 Mr John Fraser was appointed schoolmaster at Glenmuick, and by 1711 there were two teachers settled at Crathie and Braemar respectively.[58]

There were, however, difficulties with maintaining fixed schools in Crathie-Braemar. This is confirmed in a letter from 1712 to Lord Grange from Kenneth MacKenzie of Dalmore and Lewis Farquharson of Auchindryne—notably a Catholic gentleman—expressing their eagerness to have an SSPCK school established at Castleton in Braemar, 'Since we are obleidged to send our Children to the Low country to Learn the English'.[59] Furthermore, when Adam Fergusson, the alumnus of the Moulin school whom we met earlier, was settled as minister of Crathie-Braemar in 1700 he bemoaned the absence of a school, believing the rise of Catholicism in the area to be a direct consequence of this. He even blamed the government for its failure to assist in building schools to remedy the 'profound ignorance' there.[60] This refers to a petition sent by the Synod of Aberdeen to the government in 1699, via the commission of the General Assembly, 'for obtaining the benefite of his majesties gift for encouraging schoolmasters in Highland parishes' within their bounds. However, unlike Argyll and Perthshire, government assistance was not forthcoming, perhaps owing to Aberdeenshire's reputation as a heartland of Jacobitism and Catholic recusancy.[61] Fergusson did manage to persuade the heritors in 1702 to stent themselves 100 merks to pay a

[54] Withrington, 'Education in the 17th Century Highlands', 66; Andrew Bain, *Education in Stirlingshire from the Reformation to the Act of 1872* (London, 1965), 57, 65, 73, 104.
[55] Withrington, 'Education in the 17th Century Highlands', 65.
[56] NRS, CH2/602/1, Presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil Minutes, 5 (1 May 1700).
[57] NRS, CH2/840/11, Synod of Aberdeen Minutes, 126 (3 Oct 1699).
[58] Ian J. Simpson, *Education in Aberdeenshire before 1872* (London, 1947), 15–17; NRS, GD124/20/18/6, Mar and Kellie Papers concerning the SSPCK (1711).
[59] NRS, GD124/15/1056, Letter to Lord Grange from Kenneth McKenzie of Dalmore and Lewis Farquharsone [Farquharson] of Auchindryne (22 Jan 1712).
[60] Fagg, '"Complaints and Clamours"', 295.
[61] NRS, CH2/840/11, Synod of Aberdeen Minutes, 126 (3 Oct 1699).

schoolmaster's salary and maintain a building at Castleton, but the matter dragged on into 1712.[62]

These difficulties are all the more striking when we consider that there were qualified teachers in the parish at the time. Mr John Hunter, a graduate of King's College referred to as 'present School Master in Braemar', was recommended to the SSPCK by Adam Fergusson, Lord Grange and the Laird of Abergeldie in 1712.[63] The letter from Dalmore and Auchindryne to Grange suggests that, while Hunter was certainly serving as a schoolmaster in Braemar, he had no fixed salary, nor was there a dedicated schoolhouse out of which he could operate. It is notable that, in the same year, the laird of Abergeldie informed Fergusson of the real reason why a legal school had not yet been settled. It appears that some inhabitants were unwilling to pay their quota of meal for the schoolmaster 'unless they could expect to benefite by haveing a school near [the]m'.[64] We must bear in mind that the united parishes of Crathie and Braemar were around 40 miles in length, east to west, and 20 miles in breadth, yet the legal requirement was one school per parish.[65] As expected, parishioners would be quite reasonably more reluctant to dispense with a portion of their harvest if they did not stand to benefit personally from the school.

With no straightforward way of pleasing all parishioners concerned, it may have been easier for heritors in large and united parishes simply to shirk their legal obligation, particularly if, as with Auchindryne and Dalmore, they could afford to employ a private schoolmaster or have their children educated elsewhere. The perennial problem in Highland Aberdeenshire seems to have been that funds for maintaining schools could not stretch to meet the needs of all those in the parish. This process dragged on until 1728, when the heritors within the bounds of Kincardine O'Neil finally allotted 100 merks for the schoolmaster's salary. Crathie and Braemar were relatively fortunate, as some smaller parishes within the presbytery's bounds were allowed as little as £50 Scots.[66] Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that attempts were being made to rectify deficiencies, whether or not these were successful.

Inverness, Ross-shire and Sutherland

In Inverness-shire and Easter Ross, there were schools in the lower-lying parishes of Kirkhill and Wardlaw (1672), Croy (1680), Cromartie (1669, 1686, 1688, 1676, 1706), Tain (1646,

[62] NRS, CH2/602/1, Presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil Minutes, 53 (24 Sep 1701).
[63] NRS, GD95/2/1, 248 (4 Feb 1712).
[64] NRS, GD124/15/1051/1–2, Letters to Lord Grange from Adam Fergusson, minister of Braemar (19 Jan 1712, 22 Apr 1712); Fagg, '"Complaints and Clamours"', 300–301.
[65] *OSA* xiv, County of Aberdeen: Crathie (1795), 334.
[66] NRS, GD95/1/3, 76–7 (6 Aug 1728); Simpson, *Education in Aberdeenshire*, 109.

1689, 1693, 1710), Resolis (1671), Kilmuir-Easter (by 1715), Logie-Easter (by 1716), and Urquhart of Ferintosh (1649 and 1716). Schools were also established in the more upland western parishes of Inverness-shire. Examples include Daviot (1672), Kilmorack (1649), Boleskine (before 1630), Kiltarlity and Convith (in 1630-33, 1671-74, 1681, and 1684-87).[67] This is paralleled in Easter Ross, where there is evidence for schools in the upland parishes of Alness (c.1630, 1649), Kincardine (1649), Kiltearn (1649) and Rosskeen (1698).[68] Indeed, in a letter of 1716, the Presbytery of Dingwall informed the SSPCK that all parishes within its bounds were provided with schools, except Kilmorack, Kintail, Lochalsh, Lochcarron, Gairloch, and Lochbroom.[69] However, it should be noted that most of these parishes were still occupied by Episcopalian incumbents at this point, so it is unclear whether they lacked schools altogether, or there were schools that were considered politically and morally suspect.

Grammar schools were settled in Inverness, Petty, Dingwall, Fortrose in the parish of Rosemarkie, and Kingussie in Badenoch. These institutions were so successful that they often competed with one another, with particular regard for their schoolmasters' knowledge of Latin, Greek and other classical subjects.[70] By the late seventeenth century, Fortrose grammar was maintained in part by a mortification from the MacKenzies of Seaforth. It appears to have operated with relative consistency from the late-sixteenth century onwards, with five schoolmasters being identified between 1597 and 1708: John MacGillechalum (1597), James Wallace (1659), Mr John Graham (1661), Mr Bernard MacKenzie (c.1670-1678), and Mr Kenneth MacKenzie (c.1700-1708). In 1770, the magistrates lodged an appeal with the Commissioners for the Forfeited Estates for financial support, which revealed that there were 70-80 boys in attendance, some of them gentlemen's sons.[71] The same source also reveals several details regarding the longevity of the school and the subjects taught there:

> The town is and has always been resorted to by numbers of young people from distant places, many of whom have been and are now here taught Greek, Latin,

[67] William MacKay (ed.), *Records of the Presbyteries of Inverness and Dingwall, 1643-1688* (Edinburgh, 1896), xlvii–li; idem, *Education in the Highlands in the Olden Times* (Inverness, 1921), 14–17; W. MacGill, W. MacGill (ed.), *Old Ross-shire and Scotland as seen in the Tain and Balnagown Documents* (Inverness, 1909), 59–62; *Fasti*, vii, 75, 80, 104, 160; Colin MacNaughton, *Church Life in Ross and Sutherland from the revolution to the present time* (Inverness, 1915), 78.
[68] MacKay, *Education in the Highlands*, 11; idem, *Inverness and Dingwall*, 164; *Fasti*, vii, 101; MacGill, *Old Ross-shire*, 131.
[69] NRS, CH2/92/4, Presbytery of Dingwall Minutes, 4 (1 Sep 1716).
[70] MacKay, *Inverness and Dingwall*, l–li; MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, 223.
[71] Ibid., 227; NRS, RD1/65 fol. 202v, Register of Deeds First Series, Hay's Office (1598); *Fasti*, vii, 222; MacLeod Barron, *Scottish War of Independence*, xliv; MacGill, *Old Ross-shire*, 65–66. The school is also referred to as Chanonry, or Rosemarkie, the name of the parish in which it was situated. Macinnes (p. 227) points out that in 1708 'the magistrates [of Fortrose] appealed to William, Earl of Seaforth, who was withholding the interest on an old family mortification of 4000 merks, 'to prevent the ruine of the said schoole'.

> French, English, Writing, Arithmetic, Bookkeeping, Mathematics etc., so as to be fully qualified for the university, the counting house, etc.[72]

The grammar school in Kingussie was established by 1642 and, despite recurring problems with an endowment which continued into the eighteenth century, the school enjoyed a steady succession of schoolmasters from 1642 onwards.[73] In 1696, the government stepped in temporarily to support a grammar school at Maryburgh, near Fort William in Lochaber, with the generous salary of £30 Sterling. In 1690, Colonel John Hill wrote to the Duke of Queensbury, indicating that 'the people are very glad of the chartour for Marybarrow [Maryburgh], and of the expectation of a school for their children'.[74] Unfortunately, this fund was withdrawn by the turn of the century, although the SSPCK would later strive to have it restored.[75] The *Fasti* produce two further names for schoolmasters in Lochaber – Thomas MacPherson, who served as 'schoolmaster in Lochaber' in 1660 before entering the ministry, and James Gettie, 'sometime schoolmaster of Kilmallie' before his ordination as minister of Inveraray in 1711. In 1698, Donald MacMarcus, a descendant of the Kintyre learned kindred, was appointed catechist-schoolmaster for Lochaber, anticipating the Royal Bounty-SSPCK scheme of joint-catechist schoolmasters by three decades.[76]

Again, deficient funds were the primary obstacle to the establishment and support of schools. Although we cannot be certain when the school at Croy was set up, we find in 1685 that it was without a schoolmaster, the reason being that there was 'no fixed salary for one'.[77] Although the people of Daviot had constructed a schoolhouse by 1672, 'the schoolmaster was forced to leave them for want of sustenance'.[78] Even schoolmasters who did receive maintenance generally relied on a mixture of in-kind payment and a small cash sum gathered from whatever public funds were available. Mr Thomas Fraser, schoolmaster at Kirkhill in the 1670s and later minister of Dores, was paid only 'a chalder of victuall with £20 [Scots—equal to £1 13s 4d sterling] out of the box, and also the baptisme and marriage money', and this was in part for his role as precentor and clerk of the local church.[79]

There were attempts to set up a school in Urquhart and Glenmoriston from as early as 1627, but these came to very little. Efforts were renewed in 1677, when the Presbytery of Inverness resolved 'quhen the Laird of Grant cam to the countrey that they were to require

[72] MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, 227; MacGill, *Old Ross-shire and Scotland*, 66–67.
[73] Withrington, 'Education in the 17th Century Highlands', 66; *Fasti*, iv, 11; vi, 356.
[74] William Fraser (ed.), *The Earls of Cromartie, Their Kindred and Correspondence*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1876), 73.
[75] MacKay, *Education in the Highlands in the Olden Times*, 18.
[76] NRS, CH2/557/3, 227 (14 Jun 1698); Derick S. Thomson, 'The Gaelic Learned Orders and Literati in Medieval Scotland', *Scottish Studies*, 12 (1968), 73.
[77] MacKay, *Education in the Highlands*, 17.
[78] Ibid., 16.
[79] MacKay, *Education in the Highlands*, 15.

his helpe and assistance how to get some victuall to mantean an schoolmaster', but this support was not forthcoming.[80] The indebtedness of heritors certainly played a role in this sort of evasiveness. When appealing for an SSPCK school in 1719, a time of acute famine, the kirk session of Moy and Dalarossie admitted that:

> the parish is so poor, that mr Leslie minister there cannot get bread amongst them, and *if the factor of the presbytery for uplifting the vacant stipends in that place, should vigorously pursue the persons Lyable in payment, it would ruine them*, yet it's hoped that in a few years, they may recover, and be in a condition to set up a school of their own but in the mean time it is Impracticable.[81]

Nevertheless, some heritors, though eager to have their own children educated locally, were unwilling to lay out for the expense of a school for the benefit of the wider population. While Dores lacked a parochial school in 1675, the minister and elders of the Presbytery of Inverness reported that:

> severall gentlmen had schooles in their own houses for educating and training up of their children, and they were upon a feasible way, if this deare year were by, to convene and stent themselves for an publict school for the common good of the whole parish.[82]

Several sources indicate that it was common practice for wealthier families, especially among the gentry, to pay to board their children at schools at a distance from their residence, in both Highland and Lowland burghs. This was often beyond the means of many poorer families, and many could not dispense with their children for long periods as their labour was required in the fields at home. Indeed, William Mackay, an historian of the Highlands with a detailed knowledge of the existing records, claimed of the region towards the turn of the century:

> The chiefs and lairds and better class of tacksmen sent their sons […] to the grammar schools of Inverness, Fortrose, and other burghs, and the children of some of the more pronounced Jacobites received their education in France; but the poorer classes were neglected.[83]

The size and shape of several parishes in Inverness-shire often proved an insurmountable obstacle, as evidenced by the united parishes of Moy and Dalarossie, Boleskine and Abertarff, and Daviot and Dunlichty. In 1672, the reason given for the absence of a school

[80] William MacKay, *Urquhart and Glenmoriston: Olden Times in a Highland Parish* (Inverness, 1914), 395.
[81] NRS, GD95/1/2, 55–6 (4 Jun 1719). Emphasis mine.
[82] MacKay, *Inverness and Dingwall*, 56–57.
[83] MacKay, *Education in the Highlands*, 18.

in Moy was that 'the townes within the parochin were far distant one from the other'. In the same year in Boleskine and Abertarff, there was no school 'in regard the townes in the parish were remote the one from the other, and they had no convenience of boarding children'. In a large united parish, facilities for boarding would have been necessary so that scholars did not have to travel long distances daily. In Daviot, despite earlier successes in erecting a schoolhouse, by 1682 the minister reported 'that they could not [maintain] nor had any schoolmaster because there was no encouragement for ane, nor no mediat centricall place quhere they could fix a schoole to the satisfactione of all concerned'.[84] Although in the 1660s, heritors in Dingwall proposed the union of their parish with Foddertie to better support a school, it appears to have only caused headaches for others regarding the ideal location of the school, the source of the schoolmaster's salary, and the individuals liable for its maintenance.[85] Indeed, as we shall see, this would also prove the undoing of the school established at Abertarff by the Edinburgh Societies for the Reformation of Manners in 1701; it was removed due to 'divisions that arose among principal persons in the countrey and some debates among them about the situation of the schoolhouse'.[86]

The situation is less clear in Sutherland and Wester Ross due to a lack of surviving records. Nevertheless, we can be certain that there was a grammar school at Dornoch, while additional schools can be traced in Sutherland in Creich and Strathnaver from the 1630s and 1620 respectively.[87] In 1707 the newly erected Synod of Ross, containing the most northerly mainland parishes, claimed that the main obstacle to schooling in the region was the lack of qualified men, or problems with attracting sufficiently qualified schoolmasters:

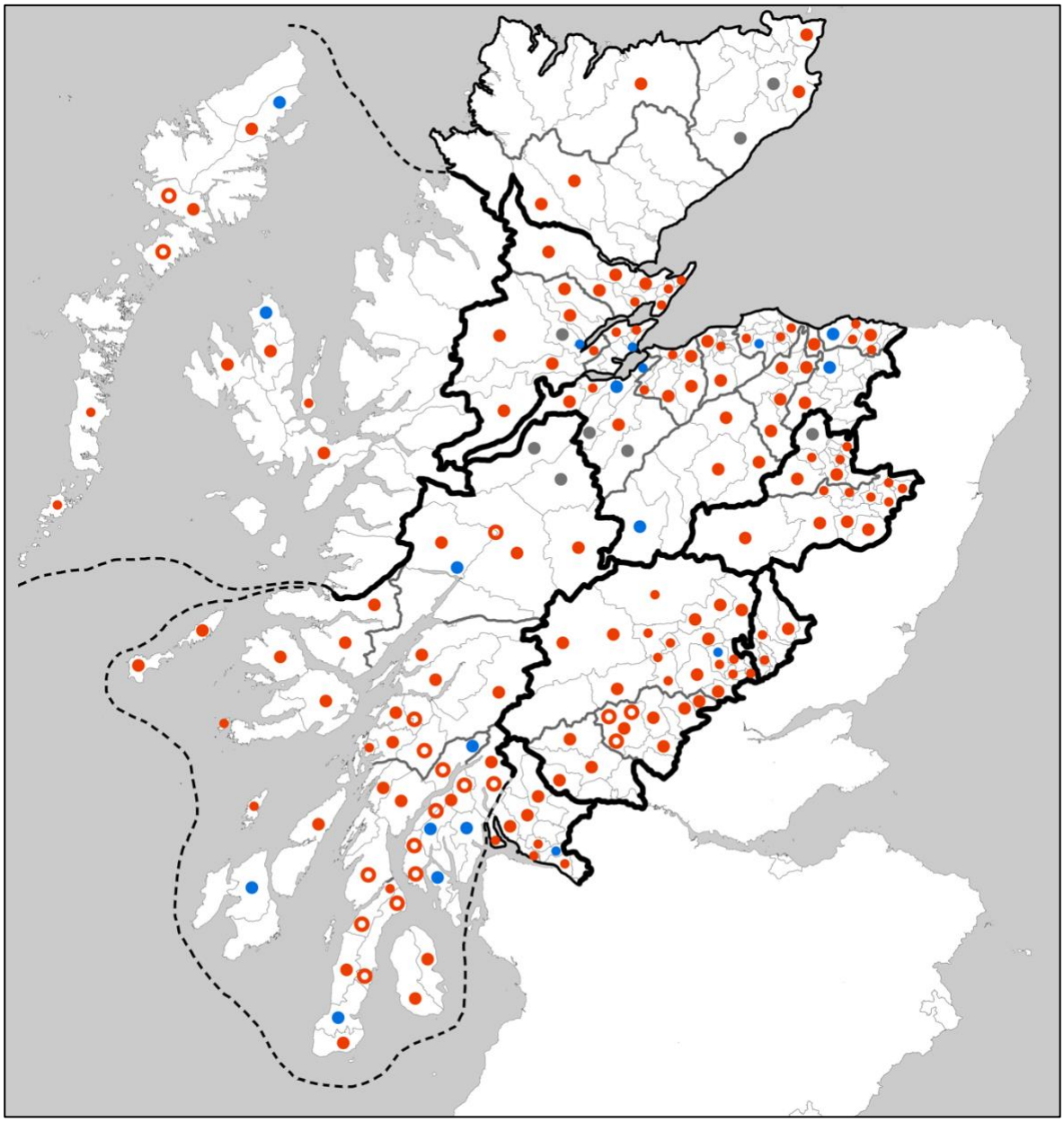
> In regard the want of schools in great measure proceeds from the scarcity of young men fit to teach, therefore the Synod recommends to the several presbyteries not to give recommendations to young men for burses at the profession until they pass some time in the bounds, after their graduation, as chaplains or schoolmasters: as also that they correspond with the Synods of Argyll and Moray to see if they can spare any young men fit for teaching schools.[88]

While, at first glance, this appears to offer a bleak impression of education in the region, a closer reading suggests that the synod had certain pre-established expectations regarding what constituted a 'sufficient' schoolmaster. Indeed, the synod was proposing that

[84] Ibid., 16.
[85] Ibid., 13–14.
[86] NRS, GD95/1/1, *A short narrative of the rise and progress of the undertaking in Scotland for propagating Christian knowledge before the Establishing of the Societie* (1709), unnumbered.
[87] Withrington, 'Education in the 17th Century Highlands', 66; Andrew Bain, *Education in Stirlingshire from the Reformation to the Act of 1872* (London, 1965), 57, 65, 73, 104.
[88] NRS, CH2/312/1, Synod of Ross Minutes, 26–7 (8 Oct 1707).

presbyteries forego the granting of bursaries to university students entering the ministry, until they had employed their skills, such as knowledge of the classical languages, for some time as schoolmasters.[89] Withrington observed that 'most parishes sought, and expected to have, a graduate as a schoolmaster, or at least a young man who had been at a college and was suitably versed in languages'. Indeed, the absence of a school teaching Latin, and perhaps also Greek, was considered discreditable in some Highland parishes.[90] As the SSPCK would discover, the exclusion of Latin from the curriculum was enough to lead several schoolmasters to demit their posts.[91] The problem, then, was not that there were no men qualified to be schoolmasters, but that most of those who were considered sufficiently qualified were being fast-tracked into the ministry to fill vacant pulpits in Gaelic-speaking parishes.

[89] Withrington, 'SPCK and Highland Schools', 96–97.
[90] Ibid., 96n–97n.
[91] See chs 4–5.



Map 3. Schools identified in Highland and bordering parishes before 1716. Schools identified in red are standard parochial schools, while red rings are smaller schools, often operating on an itinerant basis. Blue schools were more prestigious institutions referred to as grammar schools. Grey dots represent parishes where efforts were taken to establish schools which were unsuccessful.

Conclusions

Drawing on this evidence we can come to several conclusions regarding the extent of schooling in the Highlands prior to the SSPCK. Far from being an educational vacuum, it seems that by the end of the seventeenth century, the Highlands were better provided with schools and the people far more familiar with schooling than has been realised. Regions such as Perthshire and Argyll and the Isles demonstrated a keen awareness of the limitations of the legal parochial school system envisioned in the 1696 act, often pursuing their own auxiliary or supplementary measures and soliciting government funds which enabled them to match, if not exceed, the schooling standards of many Lowland parishes. It has also been established that the Restoration period saw plenty of initiatives to improve schooling in the

region. That education came more clearly to the fore in the eyes of the government after the Revolution can be put down to the fact that improving educational facilities in the Highlands became regarded as more politically expedient given suspicions of Jacobitism in the region. Argyll and Perthshire—both of which provided easy access to and from the Lowlands—were granted royal gifts to bolster schooling, while King William set aside money for a school at Maryburgh. However, other, perhaps less strategic, regions, such as Inverness-, Ross- and Highland Aberdeenshire, which did not provide convenient access to the seat of political power in Edinburgh, were not as fortunate in their efforts to solicit government assistance, but local agents continued the uphill battle to have schools established where and when possible. This is not to argue that schooling in the region was entirely sufficient. There were certainly noble efforts on the part of presbyteries and kirk sessions to maintain at least one school per parish, while it was usually within the means of the gentry class to employ a private tutor or board their children at grammar schools in lower-lying districts. Nevertheless, the unique problems facing the region—of large, disjointed parishes, mountainous terrain, scattered settlements and the division of land by water—meant that countless children at a distance from parish churches went without schooling.

The most common reason given for a lack of schools was 'no maintenance' or 'no settled maintenance', but problems determining the location of schools and finding qualified schoolmasters also loom large. We have seen that, even in cases where there was no settled fund, there were often still local individuals qualified to serve as schoolmasters. Yet they were probably unwilling to carry out the duty with no guaranteed income. It may also be that, in some regions, the extent of the problem of maintaining schoolmasters was a relatively recent development. A period of nationwide famine in the 1690s—also known as King William's Ill Years—hindered the support of schools in Highlands and Lowlands alike. Several scholars have demonstrated that during periods of famine schooling declined throughout Scotland, as a schoolmaster's salary came to be seen, at least temporarily, as an unnecessary luxury to both cash-strapped landlords and starving tenants.[92] It has also been demonstrated that the levels of social devastation were much more severe in the Highlands and the north east. Multiple crop failures led to widespread destitution and, in turn, large areas were depopulated and poverty-related crimes such as theft and robbery increased exponentially.[93] This is illustrated in a letter from 1711 to Lord Grange regarding the

[92] Withrington, 'Schools in Haddington in the 17th century'; idem, 'Schoolmasters Teaching Latin, 1690'; idem, *Going to School*, 16; Beale, *History of the Burgh and Parochial Schools of Fife*; Boyd, *Education in Ayrshire*.

[93] Hugh Cheape and I. F. Grant, *Periods in Highland History* (London, 1987), 164; Karen J. Cullen, *Famine in Scotland: the 'Ill Years' of the 1690s* (Edinburgh, 2010), 90–91, 132, 161–2; Allan Kennedy, 'Managing the Early Modern Periphery: Highland Policy and the Highland Judicial Commission, C. 1692– C. 1705', *SHR*, 96 (2017), 37–38; Paul Hopkins, *Glencoe and the End of the Highland War* (Edinburgh, 1986), 439.

settlement of SSPCK schools. John Innes of Sinnahard, a chamberlain to the Earl of Mar, proposed Corgarff in the parish of Strathdon, 'much reduced in population by the late famine and dearth', for a charity school.[94]

Highland education, then, certainly suffered from some fundamental obstacles, but a predisposition on the part of the inhabitants against schooling in English was not among them. Instead, problems of finance and the insufficiency of the legal parochial system loomed largest. We must, however, acknowledge that efforts were being made at a local level to overcome them. We must also be careful to put these difficulties into perspective. Lowland areas, such as Fife, Ayrshire, Galloway and the Borders, were experiencing similar issues with providing schoolmasters' salaries up until the 1730s, particularly in meeting the terms of the 1696 Act.[95] A note of 'returns by presbyteries regarding schools within their bounds' from 1714, found in the SSPCK collection, illustrates this further, identifying the many Lowland presbyteries deficient in terms of number of schools and the value of schoolmasters' salaries.[96] It was the relatively short-term crisis of the 'ill years' that occasioned increasingly loud pleas for assistance for schooling across Scotland; pleas which, in conjunction with fears related to Jacobitism and the 'growth of Popery' in the Highlands, would eventually galvanise Lowland support for additional schooling in the region. Local agents championed schooling as an effective remedy for social and political instability in their respective localities and a means of advancing Presbyterianism. In light of this, it can be readily argued that after 1709, the SSPCK was coming to a region that not only wanted more schools, but had already been taking steps to get them, was alert to the most effective strategies for acquiring them—for instance communicating the threat of Jacobitism to authorities in Edinburgh—and was not ideologically predisposed on the question of language.

The Language Issue in Highland Education

The presentation of the Highlands as something of an educational vacuum prior to 1709 has perpetuated a negative view of the SSPCK. Withers and Durkacz argue that the body's attempts to introduce English literacy through its schools were unprecedented, unnecessary, ideologically motivated, short-sighted, and traumatic. They suggest that Gaelic society did

[94] NRS, GD124/15/1033/1, Letter to Lord Grange from Mr John Innes of Sinnahard (25 Jun 1711).
[95] Henry G. Graham, *Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1901), 420; Boyd, *Education in Ayrshire*, 39–45. The 1699 General Assembly introduced a 'Recommendation to Presbyteries and Synods anent Schools', which stated that 'there are several parishes, even in the Lowlands, that want schools'. Boyd points out that in Ayrshire 'there were still parishes without a schoolhouse at the end of the [eighteenth] century'.
[96] NRS, GD95/10/51, Returns by presbyteries regarding schools within their bounds (1714).

not appreciate, nor did it have any immediate use for, English literacy. They go on to propose that its spread was detrimental to the very substance of Highland life. Durkacz writes that 'when [literacy] entered the Highlands in the eighteenth century through the charity schools' using English as the medium 'the resulting alienation of the mother tongue from education did incalculable harm to the Gaelic language, destroying the people's confidence in themselves and in their culture'.[97] Withers argues that through its initial insistence on teaching children to read and write only in English, the Society succeeded in 'devaluing Gaelic in the Highland mind'. This was paralleled and exacerbated by the Society's unwillingness to countenance the teaching of Gaelic literacy in its schools: something that Durkacz claims was 'in effect casting away the key to the Highlanders' loyalty', essentially an obstacle of the Society's own making.[98] He writes that:

> The inescapable conclusion is that the key figures in the Scottish charity school movement, because of their political prejudices against the Gaelic language, set out deliberately to alienate it from literacy.[99]

The choice which faced the SSPCK, however, was far more complex than either scholar suggests. The linguistic situation in the Gàidhealtachd at the beginning of the eighteenth century was fraught with complexities, one of which was the non-survival of Classical Gaelic: the literary dialect which had previously enabled written communication between the literati of the Gaelic-speaking world. The cause of Gaelic literacy was complicated further by regional variations in the dialects of Gaelic spoken, which could compromise the ability of Gaels from different parts of Gàidhealtachd to comprehend one another, raising the issue of how to agree on a literary standard. These issues, among others, resulted in doubts stemming from the Gàidhealtachd as well as the Anglophone Lowlands regarding the utility and necessity of Gaelic literacy.[100] In the studies of Withers and Durkacz, however, Gaelic perspectives are notable by their absence. Just as they underestimate the extent of schooling in the region, both scholars gloss over the roles of Latin, Scots and English as languages of record in the Gàidhealtachd centuries prior to 1709. Indeed, contrary to Durkacz' claim, Latin and Scots were the official languages of written communication in Gaelic Scotland from the late middle ages, not only for those engaging with the government

[97] Durkacz, *Decline*, 23.
[98] Ibid., 23–30, 52–72, quote at 62; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 120–37; idem, *Gaelic Scotland*, 110–145, quote at 405.
[99] Durkacz, *Decline*, 30.
[100] For a brief summary of the Lowland perspective, see Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 13, 204–5.

of the Scottish kingdom, but also between individual Gaelic-speakers.[101] As with the extent of schooling, establishing a baseline for language use in the Gàidhealtachd before the advent of SSPCK is essential to understanding the reception of SSPCK schools in localities and the extent to which the Society's early policy decisions, which excluded Gaelic, represented a continuity with convention.

From the twelfth century, the Gaelic literati of Scotland and Ireland composed texts in a high register literary dialect of the language, denoted by modern scholars as Classical Common Gaelic, or in the Irish context Early Modern Irish or Classical Irish. This was an artificial language: its grammar and vocabulary, along with the strict metrical requirements for the composition of poetry in it, remained largely unchanged, resistant to vernacular developments, for 500 years. Formulated in Ireland, the language served as a vehicle for high Gaelic culture across a singular cultural province which, in theory, extended from Cork to Cape Wrath. This environment privileged the pursuit of activities such as poetry, history, law, music and medicine. The agents inhabiting this cultural world were the learned orders, or *aos dàna* (folk of gifts): families such as the MacMhuirichs and Beatons which pursued these disciplines and provided services for their patrons on a formal, professional, and hereditary basis. Classical Gaelic gave formal structural unity to the late medieval and early modern Gaelic-speaking world, connecting the learned orders and the aristocracy of Ireland to their counterparts in Scotland. Knowledge of the language enabled the learned orders to move with ease throughout this world, gravitating to the centres of patronage, namely the courts of the Gaelic aristocracy and the schools run by the various classical professions.

However, Gaelic Scotland did not simply emulate the cultural practices of Gaelic Ireland. Unlike Ireland, Scotland was until 1707 an independent kingdom under its own crown and common law, wherein Latin and then Scots served as official written languages. Moreover, the number of extant Classical Gaelic manuscripts in Scotland is miniscule compared to Ireland. Irish classical norms were most prevalent in Argyll and the Isles, and it is from this region of Gaelic Scotland alone that evidence survives for the use of orthographically orthodox Classical Gaelic as a written language.[102] This has recently led

[101] Martin MacGregor, 'Creation and Compilation: The Book of the Dean of Lismore and Literary Culture in Late-Medieval Gaelic Scotland' in I. Brown, T. Clancy and M. Pittock (eds.), *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature, Volume 1* (Edinburgh, 2007), 214–5; Dawson, *Campbell Letters*, 6–11.
[102] MacCoinnich, 'Where and How Was Gaelic Written', 309–313; Wilson McLeod, *Divided Gaels: Gaelic Cultural Identities in Scotland and Ireland, c. 1200–c.1650* (Oxford, 2004), ch. 1; John Bannerman, 'Literacy in the Highlands' in *The Renaissance and Reformation in Scotland: Essays in Honour of Gordon Donaldson*, eds. I.B. Cowan & D. Shaw (Edinburgh, 1983), 214–35; idem, *The Beatons: a Medical Kindred in the Classical Gaelic Tradition* (Edinburgh, 1998); MacGregor, 'Campbells: Lordship, Literature and Liminality', 123–133; Thomson, 'Gaelic Learned Orders', 57–78; Donald Meek, 'The Scoto-Gaelic scribes of Late Medieval Perth-shire' in *Bryght Lanternis. Essays on the Language and Literature of Medieval and Renaissance Scotland*, eds. J. Derrick McClure & M.R.G. Spiller (Aberdeen, 1989), 387–404; John Bannerman & Ronald Black. 'A Sixteenth Century Gaelic Letter', *SGS*, 13 (1978) 56–65.

Aonghas MacCoinnich to suggest that the Classical revolution of the twelfth century may only have affected Argyll and the Isles, where Irish influence was strongest.[103] While this may seem true based on scribal practices alone, we can be certain that knowledge of Classical Gaelic, and indeed the ability to compose poetry in the language, extended beyond this frontier. For example, the famous sixteenth century miscellany the Book of the Dean of Lismore—compiled and maintained in Fortingall, Perthshire between 1512 and 1542—contains specimens of Classical Gaelic poetry composed in both Scotland and Ireland from *c.*1200 to *c.*1520. It is significant that the scribes—Seamus MacGregor, Dean of Lismore, and his brother, Donnchadh—recorded this poetry in a secretary hand using a spelling system based on Middle Scots. However, Donnchadh was himself the composer of several Classical Gaelic poems represented in The Book of the Dean, demonstrating that he was nonetheless capable of working from exemplars written in classical orthography and script. He nevertheless chose to convert these into his own preferred scribal system based on Scots, demonstrating the pull of Scots in a written context outwith Argyll and the Isles.[104]

With regard to language applications, it is instructive that while the poetry contained in The Book of the Dean is overwhelmingly Gaelic—albeit rendered in Scots-based orthography—the prose is monopolised by Latin and Scots.[105] Martin MacGregor suggests that this reflected the degree to which Latin and Scots had come to be established as normative languages of written prose throughout the Scottish kingdom because of their official status within church and government. A modus operandi emerged whereby Gaelic speakers embraced Scots (later English) and Latin as basic languages of written communication, whilst Gaelic was preferred for oral contexts. According to MacGregor, this process 'was governed not by diktat but rather pragmatic and widespread acceptance of language status and roles'.[106] As Latin was superseded by Scots as the language of government in the sixteenth century, the learned orders, who often represented their noble patrons as scribes and servitors, were required to add literacy in Scots to their repertoire of skills, lest they lose access to these lucrative areas of employment.[107]

With regard to the lay elite, recent scholarship suggests that by the end of the sixteenth century Scots literacy among the Gaelic aristocracy and gentry was the norm, even in areas where the classical tradition retained influence. The MacLeods of Lewis, a kindred that

[103] MacCoinnich, 'Where and How Was Gaelic Written', 311–12
[104] MacGregor, 'Campbells: Lordship, Literature and Liminality', 128.
[105] MacCoinnich, 'Where and How Was Gaelic Written?', 311–6; Donald Meek, 'Gàidhlig is Gaylick anns na Meadhan Aoisean' in W. Gillies ed., *Gaelic and Scotland: Alba agus a' Ghàidhlig*, (Edinburgh, 1989), 131–45; 'Gaelic Bible', 9; MacGregor, 'Campbells: Lordship, Literature and Liminality', 127–32. The *Book* does contain a few excerpts of poetry in Latin and Scots.
[106] Ibid., 132.
[107] Bannerman, 'Literacy in the Highlands', 217–8.

sustained strong links with Ireland and came to be considered as the epitome of Irish-influenced incivility, demonstrate a familiarity with Scots legal forms and practice throughout the sixteenth century. As MacCoinnich points out, since the MacLeods had to operate within the framework of the Scottish kingdom, this familiarity was born out of necessity. In Argyll and the Isles, Classical Gaelic appears to have only been adopted for a few select purposes when written, such as for poetry and medical tracts, while the surviving records of the business of clan chiefs are overwhelmingly in Scots or Latin. Here, John Carswell Bishop of Argyll and the Isles serves as an exception that proves the rule. His *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh* (1567)—a reworking of John Knox's *Form of Prayers* and the first book, in Ireland or Scotland, to be published in Gaelic—stands out as a landmark, particularly as the momentum of Gaelic printing came to a halt following its publication. It is notable that Carswell adopted a font based on Roman rather than Irish script for the *Foirm*, representing a different orthographic baseline for printed Gaelic texts in Scotland vis-à-vis Ireland. Nevertheless, despite Carswell's proficiency in Classical Gaelic, his own letters, even those addressed to fellow Gaels, are written in Scots. Jane Dawson suggests that this 'reflected the assumption that it was the appropriate language for this type of communication'.[108] Here the paradigm of different languages for different purposes rings true. While the Statutes of Iona of 1609 have been widely regarded as a starting point for the penetration of Scots/English literacy among the upper social strata of Gaelic Scotland—due to their requirement that clan chiefs educate their children in English—it may well have been the case that Scots literacy was already widespread among the elite of Gaelic Scotland before their formulation.[109] Moreover, this led to a greater impetus in the Highlands for the establishment of schools dedicated to teaching literacy in Scots (then English) and Latin from the early seventeenth century onwards.

Classical Gaelic never made a smooth transition to print, and in Scotland largely fell out of use by 1700. The written language remained the preserve of the learned orders, many of whom were dying out in the seventeenth century. Connected to this, it is possible that in Scotland the oral expression, performance and transmission of Gaelic culture assumed an importance that was not matched in Ireland, providing some explanation for the limited manuscript profile of Classical Gaelic in the former. As Latin and then Scots/English continued to be accepted as the main languages of written record, and Gaelic continued to inhabit a primarily oral sphere, strategies like simultaneous translation of texts from Latin

[108] Dawson, *Campbell Letters*, 7.
[109] Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 28–9; Durkacz, *Decline*, 2–6; MacCoinnich, 'Where and How Was Gaelic Written?', 310, 314–320; Martin MacGregor, '"Làn-mara 's mìle seòl" ("Floodtide and a thousand sails"): Gaelic Scotland and Gaelic Ireland in the Later Middle Ages', in *A' Chòmhdhail Cheilteach Eadarnàiseanta: Congress 99: Cultural Contacts Within the Celtic Community* (North Kessock, 2000), 82, 94.

or English into Gaelic may have made a Gaelic literary standard for use in print largely unnecessary in the early modern Highlands. Following the Union of Crowns in 1603, English began gaining ground on Scots. The removal of the court to London, and subsequent tumults which defined the course of the seventeenth century, served only to draw the Highland gentry southwards. This made literacy in English all the more necessary, but also precipitated a shift in elite identity which brought with it the need for new forms of validation and cultural self-expression. The clan history genre which flourished from the seventeenth century onwards is a case in point: overwhelmingly composed in English, these histories represented an attempt on the part of the Highland elite to restate their aristocratic position alongside their Lowland Scottish and English counterparts.[110] One corollary of this shift in priorities was the steady decline in patronage in Scotland for those involved in the Classical tradition. Without patronage, knowledge of the language withered or went underground. [111] Although the Synod of Argyll made progress towards a translation of the scriptures into vernacular Scottish Gaelic in the seventeenth century, the project never bore fruit, the manuscripts being lost or destroyed.[112]

The litmus test for the vitality of Classical Gaelic, and literacy in Gaelic, in late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century Scotland was the reception of the so-called Irish Bible. Much of the debate surrounding the SSPCK's attitude towards Gaelic centres around its failure to use this version of the Bible in its schools. An amalgamation of earlier translations carried out by William O'Donnell archbishop of Tuam and William Bedell bishop of Kilmore and Ardagh, the Irish Bible was published in 1685 under the patronage of the philanthropist Sir Robert Boyle.[113] Intended first and foremost for use in Ireland, its language was Classical Gaelic and, unlike Carswell's *Foirm*, its font was based on Irish script.[114] Shortly after publication, James Kirkwood, an exiled Episcopalian minister and Scottish correspondent for the English SPCK, contacted Boyle to secure leftover copies, believing that these could be used by the Highland clergy in the absence of a version developed in Scotland. He also hoped that these would be accessible to ordinary worshippers and provide a basis for literacy in Gaelic.[115] The font proved to be the first obstacle, as Gaelic-speaking ministers were much more accustomed to reading Roman script. In response, Kirkwood arranged to have Robert Kirk, the Episcopalian minister of Aberfoyle,

[110] Martin MacGregor, 'The Genealogical Histories of Gaelic Scotland' in *The Spoken Word, Oral Culture in Britain, 1500–1850* eds. Adam Fox and Daniel Woolf (Manchester, 2002), 221–2, 236.
[111] Ibid., 221–2; MacCoinnich, 'Where and How Was Gaelic Written?', 321–322; Bannerman *Beatons*, 120–7; *Minutes of the Synod of Argyll*, ii, 224.
[112] Meek, 'Gaelic Bible', 10–12.
[113] Ibid., 10.
[114] Colm Ò Baoill, 'A History of Gaelic to 1800', in *The Edinburgh Companion to the Gaelic Language*, eds. M. Watson & M. Macleod (Edinburgh, 2010), 17.
[115] Durkacz, *Decline*, 17–23.

transliterate the text into a Roman script and provide a glossary for less familiar linguistic terms. Kirkwood believed that this impression would be more accessible to Gaelic-speaking ministers, and as the campaign for charity schools in the Highlands increased in momentum he was insistent on the merits of using these Bibles as a basis for scriptural instruction through Gaelic.[116]

Durkacz and Withers both maintain that a workable solution could have been formulated by the Kirk and the SSPCK which incorporated extant Gaelic texts into religious instruction. Indeed, Durkacz argued that while 'the Irish scriptures were not the best foundation for Scottish Gaelic literacy […] in the absence of a proper vernacular translation they were the next best thing'.[117] However, while more research is undoubtedly required into the distribution and reception of Kirk's Bible, the available evidence suggests that the Gaelic-speaking ministry was not competent to use this version of the Bible for leading worship.[118] This is testified for Ross-shire in 1713 in a letter from Aeneas Morison (Aonghas Dubh) episcopal minister of Contin, to the Earl Marischal's chaplain, Patrick Dunbreck. Morison advises against the printing of a second edition of Kirk's Bible, stating:

> It seems that manny think [that] the generality of the highlanders can read the Irish or at least easily acquire it, believe me few Ministers can read it skillfully & to read it unskillfully seldome fails to confound the Subject. I hade my first charge at Arran in the mouth of Clyde which is the extreme of the highlands to that hand, & since the Revolution am in this Diocess which (with a part of the next) makes the other extreme soe I hade occassion of generall enough acquaintance in the highlands, & yett I know not six that can read the Irish without loss & perhaps not twenty in all Scotland, nor do I know, except only one, that can read the Irish, but can read the English farr better. You may observe from this beyond what I write.[119]

Elsewhere in the letter Morison described 'the reading of it [Gaelic]' to be 'more difficult than that of any other language that I know'.[120] It should be noted that Morison was far from an outsider in Gaelic society. Morison was a native of Lewis and alumnus of the Inverness grammar school, where the curriculum was focused on English and Latin. Yet he was a fluent Gaelic speaker, son to John Morison the chief tacksman in Bragar, and brother to the

[116] Durkacz, 'Language Problem in Scottish Education', 31.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Donald Meek, 'Language and Style in the Scottish Gaelic Bible (1767–1807)', *Scottish Language*, 9 (1990), 3.
[119] NRS, CH12/12/817, A letter from Aeneas Morison, Contin, to Patrick Dunbreck concerning the state of the highlands and liturgy in Gaelic (September 1713). This is interesting as it is commonly held that the Irish Bible's links with Episcopalianism—i.e. that it was published, promoted and revised mainly by Episcopalians—contributed to its limited circulation, due to Presbyterian mistrust. However, this statement from a staunch Episcopalian suggests that proficiency in reading Gaelic simply was not common enough among the ministry to warrant the expense of a second edition, cf. Durkacz, *Decline*, 19; Ó Baoill, 'A History of Gaelic to 1800', 17.
[120] NRS, CH12/12/817.

famed Gaelic poet and musician Roderick Morison, *An Clàrsair Dail* (the Blind Harper). Aeneas was also a composer of Gaelic verse, a dedicated Jacobite, and identified strongly as 'of the Highland blood'.[121] Nevertheless, he believed that the Classical Gaelic could not be competently read by the overwhelming majority of Scottish Gaelic-speaking ministers, far less their parishioners. This is reflected in Donnchadh MacRath's Gaelic verse in the Fernaig Manuscript, for which he adopted an English orthography due to his unfamiliarity with Classical Gaelic orthography. Episcopalianism had enjoyed a period of uninterrupted hegemony in the Highlands between the Restoration and the Revolution, and accordingly many Episcopalian ministers were better placed to understand the situation on the ground than the incoming Presbyterians or James Kirkwood.[122] In 1737, Colin MacKenzie of Coul, the most influential Ross-shire heritor at the time, expressed a similar sentiment with regard to the Irish Bible:

> had the Charitable worthy Sir Robert Boyle, bestowed the Money he laid out for giving in Irish a yet far worse Translation of the Scriptures than we have in English, upon setting up Schools for reading English, his godly Intentions had done more good.[123]

For all of Kirkwood's good will, tolerance and evangelical fervour—much commended by Withers and Durkacz—in supporting the use of Irish Bibles in charity schools, the fact that ordained ministers struggled to read the text did not bode well for the ability of schoolmasters to teach it.[124] Gaels who were literate in English simply could not read the book with ease nor understanding.[125] The only other Gaelic texts available in 1709 were those printed under the auspices of the Synod of Argyll: *The Westminster Short Catechism* and Gaelic Psalter. While these better reflected the language spoken by ordinary Gaels and adopted a more familiar Roman script, the orthography and language were still largely influenced by Classical Gaelic and thus would still have presented problems to Gaels literate in English.[126] Over time this may have contributed to the widespread belief in the Lowlands that Gaelic simply could not be reduced to written letters. Dr John Walker for example stated in 1765 that 'the people of the Highlands cannot be taught to read in their native tongue', asserting

---

[121] *Fasti*, vii, 30; NLS, MS 1401, fol. 16. My thanks to Dr Aonghas MacCoinnich for this reference.
[122] See Kennedy, 'Condition of the Restoration Church in the Highlands', 309–326.
[123] *The Highland Complaint*, 24.
[124] cf. Durkacz, *Decline*, 18–30; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 43–5.
[125] Aeneas' letter also offers important context for the eventual destinations of the bulk of the copies of Kirk's Bible. Much to the dismay of James Kirkwood, who envisioned employing Irish Bibles as a basis for popular literacy in the Highlands, most copies were sent to the relatively well-established and deep-pocketed Synod of Argyll—where ministers were more likely to be able to read them—and the universities—where they could be accessed by divinity students, cf. Durkacz, *Decline*, 21; Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 100.
[126] Durkacz, *Decline*, 15; Meek, 'The Pulpit and the Pen: Clergy, Orality and Print in the Scottish Gaelic World' in *The Spoken Word, Oral Culture in Britain, 1500–1850* (Manchester, 2002), 91.

that the access to the scriptures was entirely dependent on the progress of English.[127] Even some Gaelic speakers believed that the language could not be written or printed in a comprehensible manner, among them Colin MacKenzie of Coul who asserted that:

> Their very Language is an everlasting Bar against all Instruction […] This Language is irreducible to any Letters that were ever devis'd. In Greek and Roman Letters, it is yet more unquoth than it is in itself. In short, 'tis a Language only fit for Cloysters.[128]

Nevertheless, spoken vernacular Gaelic became entrenched as the language of Protestant worship in Gaelic Scotland, with the English Bible as the standard printed text which the clergy then translated orally into Gaelic as the needs of worship dictated. Gaelic ministers became accustomed to preaching through *ex tempore* translation of the English Bible.[129] The English Bible provided a single, definitive text from which the gospel message could be orally rendered, a process which could carry the further potential advantage of adaptation to the local dialect in cases where this was shared between minister and parishioners. As a consequence, it seems likely that scripture existed orally in Gaelic as a virtual, oral, Gaelic Bible. The ability of Scottish Gaelic-speaking clergy to read English and the clear blue water between the two languages may have made translation and adaptation easier. Combined, these literary and oral resources could have served to circumvent the issue of dialectal differences across the Gàidhealtachd, differences that later prevented many Highland ministers from using the SSPCK's Gaelic New Testament due to its being based largely on the Gaelic spoken in the shires of Perth and Argyll.[130] Although Lowland authorities often failed to acknowledge this prevailing modus operandi, the Highland clergy may have seen little reason to alter established modes of transmitting the gospel, based upon oral translation of the English Bible.[131]

Turning from the church to language practice in schools in Gaelic-speaking Scotland before the advent of the SSPCK, it appears that a similar method of instantaneous translation was used to aid the learning of English and develop the ability to translate *ex tempore*. In

---

[127] Quoted in MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, 245. Indeed, it may have been in response to John Walker's statement that famed English writer and lexicographer Samuel Johnson wrote in 1766: 'I did not expect to hear, that it could be, in an assembly conveened for the propagation of Christian knowledge, a question, Whether any nation uninstructed in religion should receive instruction? Or, Whether that instruction should be imparted to them by a translation of the holy books into their own language?'. Printed in *The Edinburgh Magazine* (March 1785), 219.
[128] *The Highland Complaint*, 23–4.
[129] Ansdell, *People of the Great Faith*, 111–112; Hugh Cheape, 'Gaelic Genesis', *Scottish Book Collector*, 7 (2004), 19.
[130] Meek, 'Pulpit and the Pen', 96; Ansdell, *People of the Great Faith*, 112. Thanks to Dr Martin MacGregor for this point on the virtual oral Bible.
[131] Donald W. MacKenzie, 'The Worthy Translator – How the Gaels Got the Scriptures in Their Own Tongue', *TGSI*, 57 (1990–2), 172.

1721, the ministers of Glenelg, Kilmuir Easter and Lairg wrote collectively to the SSPCK, seeking to clarify the organisation's stance on the use of Gaelic in the classroom:

> shewing that through a defect of the present method of teaching in some of the Societies Schools in their Highland bounds, these good ends proposed are much frustrate, for in places where nothing of the English tongue is understood, the Children are taught to read only in English which they understand not, and are denied the benefite of expounding and translateing the same by the help of their masters into their mother tongue as is the ordinar fashion and practice of the Gramar Schools.[132]

However, the approach may have differed in schools which existed in proximity to the linguistic frontier between Highlands and Lowlands, going by evidence from Gaelic-speaking Aberdeenshire. In a letter to Lord Grange in 1712, Rev. Adam Fergusson of Braemar stated of the prospective SSPCK schoolmaster, Mr John Hunter, that:

> he informs me that the method of teaching in these countrys is to teach them to read English first, even tho' they do not understand it.[133]

Hunter was not a Gaelic-speaker and therefore expected to teach wholly through the medium of English. Fergusson's wording, however, implies that this differed from his own experience of schooling, which probably involved the rendering of English texts into spoken Gaelic. It may be that John Hunter and his supporters were willing to bend the truth to improve his chances of getting the job as SSPCK schoolmaster despite his lack of Gaelic. In another, slightly later letter to Grange shortly after, MacKenzie of Dalmore and Farquharson of Auchindryne reinforced the recommendation in favour of Hunter, adding:

> as for his want of the Irish language […] he can in a short tyme attain to it, but it is more advantageous for this place that he want it Since we are obleidged to send our Children to the Low country to Learn ye English.[134]

In Highland Aberdeenshire at least, there were individuals among the gentry who believed that for Gaelic-speaking children the process of learning English could be expedited by appointing non-Gaelic speaking schoolmasters.

---

[132] NRS, GD95/1/2, 170 (1 Jun 1721). It should be noted that this was only the case in some schools. As we shall see in the following chapters, the SSPCK was much more ambivalent about the use of spoken Gaelic in the classroom than is generally acknowledged, and after 1723 enacted it as a rule that schoolmasters should encourage children to translate the Bible from English into Gaelic to aid comprehension.
[133] NRS, GD124/15/1051/1 (19 Jan 1712).
[134] NRS, GD124/15/1056 (22 Jan 1712).

When the prospect of teaching Gaelic literacy in Episcopalian charity schools was raised to Rev. Aeneas Morison of Contin in Ross-shire, he argued that schools would also need to:

> allow a Doctor for the Latine Gramer & English […] for without a Doctor for the other languages, the youth would not come in, for noe man in his right senses, would bestow on his son meerly for the Irish...[135]

This is a reflection of the established purpose of formal education in the Highlands by the time of the Society's inception. The imparting of literacy in English and Latin, it seems, was considered paramount, while literacy in Gaelic was yet to be considered a priority. For Durkacz, the SSPCK was liable for the deliberate 'alienation' of Gaelic from literacy.[136] However, this evidence suggests that rather than proactively pursuing the alienation of Gaelic from education the SSPCK may have been operating within the framework of contemporary understanding concerning language use in formal education. Through pragmatic processes of very long standing, rather than ideologically driven language policies, English and Latin had become established as languages of literacy in the Highlands – of formal education and of written and printed texts. Gaelic on the other hand had come to function and indeed thrive in the oral sphere rather than as a language of literacy, although it retained a place in schools as a medium of communication and for the translation of texts into spoken Gaelic. This was the inheritance of the SSPCK, not its creation.

Conclusion

The Highlands of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries were far from the educational vacuum claimed for them by some scholars. Regions such as Argyll and the Isles, Inverness, and Perthshire possessed a long and rich legacy of formal schooling throughout the seventeenth century in times of presbytery and episcopacy alike. The nature of education in these schools often extended beyond what could be considered 'elementary education'. Schools offered instruction not only in English and Arithmetic, but also in Latin, French, Greek and Mathematics, these subjects being taught in accordance with local demand and their perceived value to local inhabitants. Individuals like Adam Fergusson even withdrew from schools when the standard of instruction in Latin was deemed insufficient, only to return once a more qualified schoolmaster was appointed. Furthermore, many local agents were well aware of the limits of the parochial school system—one school per parish,

[135] NRS, CH12/12/817.
[136] Durkacz, *Decline*, 23.

even in large, disjointed Highland parishes—and took steps to bridge gaps in the existing system. This is evidenced by the operation of both mobile ambulatory schools and smaller supplementary schools in these regions prior to the establishment of the SSPCK.

While the evidence is less rich for other Gaelic-speaking areas, enough information has been gleaned to argue that very few were entirely devoid of schools. For the parishes where we find no evidence of schools, we often find that beneath the surface there was an ongoing struggle on the part of local ministers and other agents to have schools established. The most common reasons given for the absence of schools were insufficient funds, no fixed fund, or logistical difficulties in determining an ideal location for schools in large, disjointed parishes, with multiple townships and settlements hoping to benefit. The negligence of many heritors in setting up local schools also played a role, with many happy and able to send their children far from their residence, or to employ a personal tutor to educate them locally. These issues would be complicated further in the 1690s with the onset of famine. Some areas were entirely depopulated, while others suffered an influx of destitute people seeking relief. The increase in poverty would further limit the ability of ordinary families to pay for an education for their children in the Highlands and Lowlands alike. The spike in poverty-related crime in the Highlands meant that schools were on a less certain footing, with parents less likely to hazard parting with their children, and schoolmasters themselves at risk of depredations. Nevertheless, such conditions were being communicated with increased urgency to those in power locally and in Edinburgh in the hope of assisting those without access to education.

2

THE MAKING OF THE SSPCK, 1690–1709

Any discussion of the SSPCK's origins must begin with the scholarship of Nathan Gray. Gray presents the SSPCK as a partnership of common interest between the Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the Edinburgh Societies for the Reformation of Manners, galvanised by the influence of the London-based Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) with the exiled Scottish Episcopalian minister, James Kirkwood, serving as a lynchpin.[1] This chapter does not set out to challenge Gray's key arguments, but rather to build on the firm foundations that he sets down by exploring further the religious, social, economic and political factors, in the Highlands as well as the Lowlands, that contributed to the Society's foundation and shaped its earliest educational endeavours. This chapter will explore the developments at a national-state level, both Scottish and British, which influenced contemporary attitudes towards the Highlands – specifically, the factors that led a prominent section of Scottish society to advocate first a dedicated fund for Highland education, then a national charitable corporation to manage and distribute that fund.

Gray's first two chapters offer us valuable insight into the *mentalités* of Scottish Presbyterians at the turn of the eighteenth century. He demonstrates how continued instability and calamities, such as crop failures and the imminent collapse of the Scottish colony at Darien, were understood by Scottish Presbyterians as divine punishment for the nation's failure to curb sinfulness. This consequently motivated prominent Presbyterians to pursue auxiliary measures to remedy this state of affairs. One outcome was the formation of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners: local organisations, based on an English equivalent, which aimed to combat moral decay and impiety on the streets of Edinburgh and other towns. They operated by urging and supporting the authorities in 'the restraining and punishing of Vice' through the enforcement of existing laws against immorality and profanity.[2] This small but influential caucus of Presbyterians would prove instrumental in the formation of the SSPCK. Indeed, those involved in the societies would provide a dedicated and influential core of the SSPCK's membership, for example constituting a

[1] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', chs 2–5.
[2] Ibid., Chs 1–3; idem (ed)., 'Sir David Home, Lord Crossrig, "A Narrative of the Rise, Progress and Success of the Societies of Edinburgh for Reformation of Manners", 1701', *Miscellany of the Scottish History Society*, xiv (2010), 111–138. For background on the English societies, see Craig Rose, 'Providence, Protestant Union and Godly Reformation in the 1690s', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 3 (1993), 151–69.

substantial proportion of the first Directors' Committee (six of 15 Directors). Three further members of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, Hugh Cunninghame of Craigend, John Dundas of Philpstoun and Nicol Spence, served respectively as treasurer, secretary and clerk.[3] Furthermore, in 1701 one of the societies set a precedent for Edinburgh-based charitable support for Highland education by raising subscriptions in partnership with Edinburgh town council to establish a charity school at Abertarff, near modern day Fort Augustus.[4]

However, scholars have yet to investigate fully how individuals in these groups, and a prominent section of Scottish society, came to advocate a more concerted approach to the cause of Highland education. Gray for example states only that charity schools 'may have given the [Reformation] societies a new sense of purpose' when their initial mission of urban reformation faltered.[5] Earlier in Gray's thesis he follows the lead of other historians, arguing that Presbyterians were spurred on by insecurities regarding the fragility of the revolution settlement of 1690, and the threat of an armed Jacobite insurrection stemming from the north of Scotland.[6] Both Durkacz and Withers present James Kirkwood as the catalyst who spurred an indifferent if not downright hostile Presbyterian establishment into action.[7] While these arguments may be valid, they stop short of explaining the process whereby this particular group of Scottish Presbyterians came to advocate a policy of education, and indeed missionary-style evangelisation, to deal with the so-called 'Highland Problem'.

Presbyterians, Providence and the Highlands

Despite King William's lofty rhetorical commitment to effecting a real reformation in the Highlands, the authorities' policy towards the region in the early 1690s was characterised by mistrust, military containment and repression – as well as the offer of various incentives to cajole rebellious Highland chiefs into submitting to King William's government.[8] This approach was in large part supported by Scottish Presbyterians, many of whom maintained a hostile attitude towards Highlanders. The havoc wreaked by the Highland Host of 1678 on

[3] Durkacz, *Decline*, 26. The names of the six: Lieutenant Colonel John Erskine, Sir Walter Pringle (later Lord Newhall), James Gellie, Dr. Alexander Dundas, William Brodie and Robert Alexander. It should be noted that Nicol Spence served as agent and sub-clerk to the Kirk, as well as clerk to the SSPCK, from 1695 up until his death in 1743.
[4] Helen Armet, (ed.), *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1689-1701* (Edinburgh, 1962), 290.
[5] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 82–87, quote at 82.
[6] Ibid., 1–2; Macinnes, *Clanship*, 177–179; Jones, *Charity School Movement*, 177–178; Ansdell, *People of the Great Faith*, 90–91; Donald Meek, 'Scottish Highlanders, North American Indians and the SSPCK', 380–382.
[7] Durkacz, *Decline*, 17–27; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 117–121.
[8] Kennedy, 'Managing the Early Modern Periphery', 35–36.

non-conformist Presbyterian communities in the south-west was still fresh in the Presbyterian psyche. These events had served to strengthen stereotypes of Highland barbarity and incivility and this is reflected in the Presbyterian historiographical tradition, much of which follows Wodrow's lead in portraying Highlanders as 'a barbarous savage people, accustomed to rapine and spoil'.[9] The alarmist account of the Highland Host written by Presbyterian Alexander Shields in the 1680s is perhaps the most notorious example of this:

> But all this is nothing to what followed: when, thinking these bloodhounds were too favourable, they brought doun from the Wild Highlands a host of Savages upon the western Shires, more terrible than Turks or Turtars, men who feared not God nor regarded man; And being also poor pitiful, they thought they had come to a brave world, to waste [and] destroy a plentiful Country, which they resolved before they left it to make as bare as their oun.[10]

The increase in banditry and theft in Highland-Lowland border areas in the 1690s served only to reaffirm this negative and fearful attitude. In 1691 the Presbyterians then in control of the Edinburgh government received numerous petitions regarding such depredations, which strengthened their resolve to oppose any scheme for securing the peace of rebellious clans by way of cash bribes.[11] Moreover, Presbyterians were well aware that there was a sizeable Catholic population in the region, and that some chiefs were supporting the work of Catholic missionaries.[12] Highland 'popery' would assume a greater significance in the early eighteenth century, as the Highland Catholic population's support for the exiled Stewart monarchy dovetailed neatly with Scottish Protestant polemics which set forth a narrative of an apocalyptic struggle between the true faith and the forces of the Roman Antichrist.[13]

At the Revolution, Presbyterianism had a slender footing in southern Argyll, Easter Ross, and parts of Sutherland and Caithness, but the majority of the population continued to adhere to Episcopalianism, while a sizeable minority of Catholics inhabited parts of the north-east and western Highlands and Islands.[14] Before the Revolution, Presbyterian discourse tended to present ecclesiastical reform along Presbyterian lines as a prospective

---

[9] Robert Wodrow, *The History of the Sufferings of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution*, ii, 375; Allan Macinnes, 'Repression and Conciliation: The Highland Dimension 1660-1688', *SHR*, 65 (1986), 185; Hopkins, *Glencoe*, 270–272, 314, 330.
[10] Alexander Shields, *A Hind Let Loose, or, An historical representation of the testimonies of the Church of Scotland, for the interest of Christ: with the true state thereof in all its periods* (Edinburgh, 1867), 190, quoted in Kennedy, *Governing Gaeldom*, 27.
[11] Hopkins, *Glencoe*, 252.
[12] Ibid., 25, 395, 398, 416; Macinnes, *Clanship*, 143–135; Wodrow, *Analecta*, ii, 319.
[13] Alasdair Raffe, *The Culture of Controversy: Religious Arguments in Scotland, 1660-1714* (Woodbridge, 2012), 38; Allan Macinnes, 'Catholic Recusancy and the Penal Laws, 1603–1707', *RSCHS*, 23 (1987), 27–63; Arthur H. Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI: the Apocalypse, the Union and the Shaping of Scotland's Public Culture* (Edinburgh, 1979).
[14] Ferguson, 'Problems of the Established Church', 16.

panacea for immorality and other national ills. In other words, re-establishing Presbyterian governance and discipline, planting orthodox ministers, and purging the church of scandalous Episcopalian ministers were considered the most effective means for enacting a thorough moral reformation in Scottish society. In turn this may have, at least initially, limited the re-established Kirk's ideological capacity for dealing with the extent of religious non-conformity in the Highlands, particularly given the dire shortage of Gaelic-speaking ministers and sheer scale of many Highland parishes.[15] Indeed it could be argued in line with William Ferguson that in 1690 many in the Church of Scotland did consider the Highlands 'something of a *damnosa hereditas*'—a tainted inheritance—if they considered the region at all.[16]

Only after the inquiry into the Massacre of Glencoe carried out between 1694 and 1696 did Presbyterian opinion begin to soften towards the region. For some this was largely a matter of political expediency, given the role played by the so-called 'Episcopalian ministry' and individuals such as John Dalrymple first earl of Stair in orchestrating the atrocity. Nevertheless, others were genuinely horrified by the blatant treachery of the Massacre and the stain it was seen to put on Scottish good faith. The outcome of the inquiry saw Highlanders, and in particular the MacDonalds of Glencoe, judged by the same standards which applied to their fellow Scots, rather than being identified solely with the crimes and disorders of the region.[17] In 1700, when considering the providential cause of the Darien failure in a letter to the Countess of Tullibardine, the Duchess of Hamilton wrote 'I think the murder of Glencoo Is a crying sin that aught publickly to be mourned for'.[18] As Hopkins concludes, 'probably many of the western Presbyterians for whom she was spokeswoman, who had previously considered the clansmen only as the sub-human plunderers of the Highland Host memories, now shared her views.'[19] Of course, negative perception would not disappear immediately. Indeed, it was to return with a vengeance in the aftermath of the 1715 and 1745 Jacobite rebellions, but this subtle shift in attitudes would facilitate and make politically possible a more positive and proactive approach to the Highlands.

This shift in opinion is evident in Presbyterian writings in the 1690s. David Williamson took the opportunity of his sermon before parliament and the King's commissioner in 1690 to remind his listeners of 'the *Barbarous Highland Host*', and in 1691 Gilbert Rule warned of the '*Inclinations of the North* where Papists […] abound more than

[15] Alasdair Raffe, 'Religious Controversy and Scottish Society, c.1679-1714' (University of Edinburgh PhD Thesis, 2007), 98–99.
[16] William Ferguson, 'The Problems of the Established Church in the West Highlands and Islands in the Eighteenth Century', *RSCHS*, 17 (1972), 16.
[17] Hopkins, *Glencoe*, 360, 495.
[18] BC, Box 45/1/75, Duchess of Hamilton to Countess of Tullibardine (26 Feb 1700).
[19] Hopkins, *Glencoe*, 497.

elsewere in this Nation, and there is the strength of the Highland-Army' to oppose the re-established church. More fantastical narratives appear in Wodrow's *Analecta*. In an entry for 1707, Wodrow recalled a story told to him in 1698 of a minister, William Lesley, then chaplain to the Earl of Tullibardine, who was confronted by an evil spirit 'come to warn the Nation to repent'. The spirit apparently targeted a large pile of Irish Bibles on a shelf, intended for Tullibardine's servants and tenants, exclaiming 'this will render them [presumably the nation] more inexcusable!', before throwing 'them all down upon the floor, and scattering them through the room'.[20] More positive perspectives on Highlanders are largely absent in Presbyterian writings until the middle of the decade.[21] In 1694, Gilbert Rule delivered a sermon at a meeting of the council of George Heriot's hospital at Edinburgh, in which he called for a more charitable approach towards the Highlands, citing the example of James Kirkwood:

> We should mind that Charitable bestowing that contributeth to the good of peoples Souls, such as giving somewhat for the propagation of the Gospel in places of Ignorance and Barbarity. As great Men might contribute much to the Propagation of the Gospel in the Heathen and Turkish parts of the World, so Mean Men might do somewhat towards advancing Religion among our Highlanders: An excellent and worthy person in our Neighbour Nation, hath lately caused print the Bible in the Highland Language, and sent a great quantity of them to be distributed among that people O! That some among our Selves would imitate so worthy a Pattern.[22]

This demonstrates not only Rule's concern for the Highlands, but also that he envisioned the region as a constituent part of the broader Protestant missionary movement, albeit requiring men of only modest abilities on a correspondingly modest budget who could 'advance religion' in the region, compared to those in mission fields abroad who were 'propagating the gospel'. The SSPCK was to include within its remit not only the education of Highlanders, but also the spreading of the gospel 'in popish and infidel parts of the world': what Donald Meek has referred to as the 'North Atlantic circuit'.[23]

As Jeffrey Stephen rightly points out, the Scottish missionary impulse which contributed to the foundation of the SSPCK had hitherto lacked any effective outlet. This impulse was rooted in post-millennial eschatology, which envisioned that missionary work would hasten the day when knowledge of God would come to cover the earth 'as the waters

---

[20] Wodrow, *Analecta*, i, 113.
[21] David Williamson, *A sermon preached before his Grace the King's commissioner, and the three estates of Parliament: June the 15th. 1690* (Edinburgh, 1690), 17; Gilbert Rule, *A Vindication of the Church of Scotland, being an Answer to Five Pamphlets* (Edinburgh, 1691).
[22] Gilbert Rule and George Meldrum, *Two sermons preached at the meeting of the council of George Heriot's hospital at Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1695), 12.
[23] Meek, 'Scottish Highlanders, North American Indians and the SSPCK', 387.

covered the sea'. The first practical expression of this impulse came with the ill-fated colonisation project at Darien, when the General Assembly dispatched several ministers to the colony to provide pastoral care for colonists and evangelise the natives.[24] The eventual failure of the colony was widely regarded as a defeat at the hands of providence. The deaths of the first two ministers, Thomas James and Adam Scott, en route to Darien were seen by Francis Borland, a minister dispatched to the colony in 1699, as a manifestation of the displeasure of a:

> holy and sovereign God, signally appearing and fighting against this undertaking. As if men should say, This design shall succeed and God say, It shall not prosper.[25]

He goes on to write:

> We did not honour him in our design and way; but many ways dishonoured, contemned and rebelled against him. Therefore he hath exposed us to contempt and reproach among strangers.[26]

In 1700 the General Assembly dispatched a letter to the ministers in the colony, describing its failure as a 'manifestation of the displeasure of the righteous Lord, justly gone forth against them [the colonists] and us, for our and their iniquities'.[27] Preaching before the raucous parliament sitting in December 1700, William Wishart reminded his listeners that it was God's judgement that led to the collapse of the enterprise and requested that the 'hand of God were more look'd into in this and that all would search their hearts and lives, to find out the sinful procuring causes of that sad Judgement'.[28] It may be that this forced Scottish Presbyterians to look closer to home in search of possible reasons behind God's prolonged ill will. This certainly provides some explanation for the greatest irony of the Scottish Societies for the Reformation of Manners, as pointed out by Gray: that they appeared at the turn of the century, just as the English societies were falling out of favour amidst concerns that they were addressing the symptoms rather than the causes of immorality.[29] It is interesting to find that some of the more active directors of the Company of Scotland would later become founding members of the SSPCK, for example Hugh Cunningham of Craigend,

---

[24] Stephen, *Defending the Revolution*, 259–263, 298.
[25] Ibid., 264; Francis Borland, *The History of Darien. Giving a short description of that Country, an account of the attempts of the Scotch Nation to settle a colony in that place, a relation of the many tragical disasters which attended that design; with some practical reflections upon the whole* (Glasgow, 1779), 22.
[26] Ibid., 87.
[27] Letter of the General Assembly to Mr Alexander Shields, Mr Francis Borland, Mr Archibald Stobo, and Mr Alexander Dalgleish, in *The Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638-1843* (Edinburgh, 1843), 292; 1700 General Assembly Act VI.
[28] Stephen, *Defending the Revolution*, 268–269.
[29] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 82–83.

its first treasurer; Sir Hugh Dalrymple of North Berwick, its first presiding officer; James MacLurg of Vogrie, Sir John Maxwell of Pollock and Francis Montgomery of Giffen.[30] Some may have seen a mission to the Highlands as a saving grace for the Scottish nation, one that came without the same political, logistical and financial complications as a foreign mission like Darien. For example, in January 1710, shortly after the foundation of the SSPCK, when Wodrow enquired of his correspondent, Jonet Pollock, 'if shee feared that God was about to leave Scotland', she responded:

> Not [as] God had sent the Gospell of late to the Highlands and the North, and that was more than ever was, in soe great a measure as nou, in this Church, and shee could not think God was going to leave us, when doing thus [sic].[31]

With regard to the church proper, the attention given to the Highlands in the aftermath of the Presbyterian settlement of 1690 was negligible at best.[32] Indeed, consolidating the church's presence in Lowland areas and dealing with internal logistical affairs took precedence over what were considered to be more peripheral Highland matters. It was not until 1704 that the assembly could declare that 'most of the Lowland Presbyteries be-South Tay are competently planted'.[33] The Kirk was also taken up with purging the universities of Episcopalians, consolidating the authority of the General Assembly, asserting the intrinsic right of the church against King William's erastian encroachments, resisting schemes for the comprehension of Episcopalian clergy into the established church, and establishing a close relationship with the parliament and Privy Council.[34] There was also the threat of Presbyterian schism stemming from the southwest over the General Assembly's failure to renew the covenants of 1638 and 1643. This came to a head in 1704 when ministers such as John Hepburn and John McMillan were officially deposed.[35]

While a missionary tone was undeniably set early on in 1690, when the General Assembly expressed its commitment to the 'propagation of religion, and the knowledge of God, in the most barbarous places of the Highlands', there was no attempt to substantiate

[30] Many other subscribers to the Company would also become influential members, and even directors of the SSPCK e.g. the 1st Duke of Atholl, Lt. Col. John Erskine of Carnock, James Baillie of Hardington, Duncan Campbell of Monzie, Sir Francis Grant, Robert Inglis (goldsmith), John Knox (surgeon), and Sir Walter Pringle. *A List of the Subscribers to the Company of Scotland, Trading to Africa and the Indies* (Edinburgh, 1696); See Douglas Watt, *The Price of Scotland: Darien, Union and the Wealth of Nations* (Edinburgh, 2007), ch. 6.
[31] Wodrow, *Analecta*, i, 225.
[32] For a more optimistic appraisal, see Stephen, *Defending the Revolution*, 247–254.
[33] 1704 General Assembly Acts XIII and XVIII.
[34] Jeffrey Stephen, 'Defending the Revolution: The Church of Scotland and the Scottish Parliament, 1689–95', *SHR*, 89 (2010), 19–53; idem, *Defending the Revolution*, ch. 2.
[35] Ibid., 95–99.

this with active policy measures until 1699.[36] There were certainly acts passed which concerned the Highlands before this date, but these were a mixture of what can be considered stopgap measures, decisions relating to the Irish Bible project, and simple approbation of initiatives being carried out already by the Synod of Argyll. In 1694 for example, the Assembly approved the Synod's Gaelic translation of the psalms for use in worship, and passed an act recommending but not mandating that lowland presbyteries forego settling Gaelic-speaking ministers in their bounds without the permission of the said minister's home presbytery.[37] In 1696, the assembly determined that probationers from Argyll be sent to supply vacancies in Ross, Sutherland and Caithness.[38]

In response to the King's letter to the assembly in 1698, it was resolved that the church would take more care to 'provide for the remote Highland parishes', and this was followed up in 1699 with the 'Act anent Planting of the Highlands'. This legislation strictly prohibited the settlement of Gaelic-speaking ministers in lowland parishes until the Highlands were fully provided for. It appointed Gaelic-speaking ministers to carry out parochial visitations, insisted that 'English schoolmasters be erected in all Highland parishes', and agreed to address crown and parliament in favour of freeing up vacant stipends to pay for schools. Finally, it recommended that universities and presbyteries 'have a special regard in the disposal of their bursaries for educating such as it is hoped may be useful to preach the Gospel in the Highlands'.[39] Subsequent assemblies would add to this core legislation. However, the repetitive nature of the assembly's legislation following the planting act of 1699 suggests that the General Assembly was running out of ideas and had exhausted all available resources.[40] By the turn of the century the Kirk's influence was still exceptionally weak in the Highlands, with no clear long-term strategy for improving its position there, nor any fresh funds for new initiatives to evangelise the region. The shortage of qualified and suitably Presbyterian Gaelic-speaking personnel remained a perennial problem, while the sheer size of many Highland parishes ensured that the Kirk's coverage was patchy at best. In turn the Kirk became more receptive to auxiliary initiatives for bridging gaps in provision in the Highlands.

[36] 1690 General Assembly, The Assembly's Letter to his Majesty. As noted on p. 5, in 1690 the Synod of Argyll successfully petitioned parliament for access to vacant stipends for educating Gaelic-speakers destined for the ministry.
[37] 1694 General Assembly Acts XX and XXI.
[38] 1696 General Assembly Act XIV.
[39] 1699 General Assembly Act IX.
[40] Acts from 1701 and 1707 reiterate the bursary act of 1699. Acts from 1703 through to 1708 reiterate the 1699 planting act. All other legislation relating to the Highlands in this period concern the Highland libraries scheme.

The Making of the SSPCK

The making of the SSPCK as an institution begins in 1701, with the establishment of the first subscription-funded Highland charity school at Abertarff. Philanthropic public improvement projects had taken off in Edinburgh in the 1690s, largely in response to extant social problems in the capital. For instance, in 1694, the Merchant Maiden Hospital was established by Mary Erskine and the Company of Merchants to house and educate the daughters of destitute merchants. In 1706, the hospital's constitution was ratified by parliament.[41] At a town council meeting in February 1699, Baillie Hugh Cunningham, later the first treasurer of the SSPCK, proposed 'that there be a frie school furthewith set up in Edinburgh', to teach the:

> many children in Edinburgh whose parents and relations are not able in these hard tymes to pay quarter payments to schoolmaisters for their childrens education at schools.[42]

At the same meeting, a George Clark, precentor at the Tollbooth kirk, was appointed schoolmaster with a salary of £10 sterling, and ordered to:

> take in as many of the said children of both sex as possible one man can teach Secondly That the said George faithfullie teach these children to read Inglish wryteing common tunes of musick, some Arithmetick.[43]

It was in following this vein of establishing 'free schools', to assist those who could not afford to pay fees and would otherwise be deprived of an education, that the Abertarff school was set up. The intention was that this would be the first of many schools, funded by private subscriptions, and managed by the members of a reformation society in partnership with the town council.

Abertarff, referred to by the council as the 'most barbarous and wild part in all the Highlands', is located near modern-day Fort Augustus. It is situated in the centre of the Great Glen, roughly at an equal distance from Fort William to its southwest and Fort George by Inverness to its northeast.[44] The southern portion of the parish fell within the Fraser of Lovat jurisdiction of Stratherrick in the Great Glen. Throughout the seventeenth century this relatively inaccessible and large area—30 miles long and 10 miles wide—served as pastoral country where chiefs went to hunt, but by the eighteenth century it was portioned out to

---

[41] *Statutes of the Maiden Hospital: founded by the company of merchants of Edinburgh, and Mary Erskine* (Edinburgh, 1783).
[42] Armet, *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1689-1701* (Edinburgh, 1962), 242.
[43] Ibid., 242–243.
[44] Ibid., 290.

numerous tacksmen, feuars and wadsetters. There is evidence of a small, albeit stubborn, Catholic presence in the parish from the 1670s onwards, occasioned by the incursions of the Catholic Clan Chisholm into the Aird of Inverness. Moreover, the size of the parish, and the overlapping and contested jurisdictions it contained hindered the settlement of a school there in the 1670s when Catholicism first became an issue. The settlement of a school became less likely following the social dislocation occasioned by warfare between 1688 and 1692, the famine in the 1690s, and the *de jure* MacKenzie takeover of the Lovat estates and chiefdom in 1702.[45] Combined these factors led prominent persons in Edinburgh to advocate a school in this strategic location, referred to as the 'Center of the Highlands' as well as the 'Center of a Countrey where popery and Ignorance did much abound'.[46] The 'short narrative of the rise and Progress' of the SSPCK, handwritten by John Dundas of Philpstoun—procurator for the Kirk (1703–*d.*1731) and the first secretary to the Society (1709–*d.*1731)—suggests that local opinion was sought out for fixing the school, and that local tenants were both grateful and eager to cooperate:

> they sent one of the undertakers of that Countrey to commune with the Inhabitants and prepare them for receaving and entertaining this design who returned a very encourageing account of the peoples good Disposition and brought back Letters of Thanks to the undertakers.[47]

In October 1701, the council appointed Daniel Cameron, a Gaelic-speaking precentor in Greyfriar's kirk, to teach the school and, after some cajoling from 'many honourable and worthy persones', and a promise that he would keep his job as a precentor, he reluctantly agreed to travel to Abertarff for half a year with the unnamed 'undertaker'.[48] He was dispatched to the Highlands with half a year's salary, an additional allowance for defraying his travel expenses, a supply of books, and letters for the principal heritors in the region, seeking their assistance with the project. It appears that the schoolhouse and accommodation for the schoolmaster were built with unwonted efficiency, and in 1702 the society reported with optimism that Daniel Cameron:

> has begun a school amongst the Wild Highlanders for teaching them the English language. These letters contain very comfortable accounts of the

[45] Bruce Lenman, *Jacobite Clans of the Great Glen, 1650-1789* (Methven, 1984), 12; Kennedy, 'Condition of the Restoration Church', 325.
[46] NRS, GD95/1/1, *A Short Narrative*; Lenman, *Jacobite Clans*, 68.
[47] Ibid. It is uncertain who these 'undertakers' were, but latter efforts to establish a school at Abertarff involved correspondence with Roderick MacKenzie, Lord Prestongrange, his son MacKenzie of Fraserdale, and Alexander MacLeod, Advocate.
[48] Armet, *Extracts, 1689-1701*, 290.

> wonderful success thereof. All present subscribed to give what everyone thought fitting towards the encouragement of that undertaking.[49]

Nevertheless, after half a year Daniel Cameron demitted his post. The managers of the fund did manage to find another candidate to travel north and serve as a 'fixed School Master', yet, by the end of 1702, the school was abandoned due to 'divisions that arose among principal persons in the Countrey', more specifically 'some debates among them about the situation of the School House'.[50] John MacInnes has maintained that these disagreements were the machinations of recalcitrant local elites who 'disliked an innovation', but bearing in mind the earlier efforts to establish a school in the region and the evidence that local inhabitants were eager about the prospect of the school, this seems unlikely. Indeed, it is telling that the issues which prevented the establishment of a parochial school in Boleskine and Abertarff also hindered the support of a free school – disagreements regarding location of the school, the liability for its maintenance, and who should benefit most from having the school settled nearby.[51]

In 1703, James Kirkwood was appointed Scottish correspondent for the English SPCK. His mission, first and foremost, was to facilitate and oversee the distribution of Highland libraries, which were collected by the SPCK in England and distributed by a committee of the General Assembly for the use of the Highland clergy.[52] While the exact interactions between Kirkwood, the Kirk, and members of the reformation societies are difficult to trace, we can be confident about several things. The Commission of the General Assembly was appointed to liaise with Kirkwood regarding the rules for the distribution of the libraries.[53] That year, the Commission included Nicol Spence, recently appointed legal agent to the Church of Scotland; John Dundas of Philpstoun, recently appointed procurator to church; David Home of Crossrig, Lord of Session; Lieutenant Colonel John Erskine of Carnock; Sir Francis Grant and Sir Hugh Cunningham of Craigend – all of whom were influential members of the Edinburgh Societies of the Reformation of Manners. Notably, each of these individuals would become founding members of the SSPCK.[54] It is almost

[49] NLS, MS 1954, Journal of the Proposalls made to, and the Resolutions taken by, the Society for endeavouring Reformation of Manners, in Ed[inburgh] (4 Apr 1702), 23.
[50] Ibid.
[51] MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, 237.
[52] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 104–14.
[53] 1703 General Assembly Act IX, Act approving some Overtures concerning the Planting of Vacant Churches in the North, the Highlands and Islands, and supplying thereof with Ministers and Probationers, and promoting Religion and the Knowledge of God in these places.
[54] *The principal acts of the General Assembly, of the Church of Scotland; conveened at Edinburgh, March the 10th. 1703* (Edinburgh, 1703), 9–12.. Other members of the Commission that become founding members of the SSPCK include ministers Neil MacVicar, formerly of Fort William now Gaelic minister at the West Kirk, George Meldrum, Professor of Divinity at Edinburgh, and Thomas Blackwell, Professor of Divinity at Aberdeen. Elders included Sir James Stewart of Goodtrees, Lord Advocate; Sir James Campbell of

certain that these individuals immediately began to liaise with Kirkwood, discussing ideas for dealing with the Highlands. In 1707, Sir Francis Grant complimented Kirkwood on his crucial role in putting into motion plans for establishing a fund for schooling and evangelisation in the region:

> You, Sir, did give birth, some time ago, to this designe, and the prints wherewith you did accomodat se[ver]alls in Edinburgh, did serve to excite their diligence, and keep up their hopes, that sometime or other in good providence such ane attempt would prove successful.[55]

The 'prints' referred to by Grant were both published in Edinburgh in 1703, the same year that Kirkwood arrived in the town. The first was entitled *A Memorial Concerning the Disorders on the Highlands*, the second *An Overture of an Act in Favours of the Highlands and Isles*. Numerous scholars have claimed that Kirkwood was sole author of these texts, but the *Short Narrative* of the Society, whether reliable or not, suggests otherwise. The text presents the SSPCK as a direct continuation of the earlier society that set up the school at Abertarff. Indeed, the amount of detail included and the author's knowledge of the failed charity school at Abertarff suggest that members of the reformation societies had at least some input.[56]

The first document, the *Memorial*, reflects on perceived problems in the Highlands, such as the 'Industrie of Popish Priests and Jesuits' and endemic 'Thift and Robbery', which were seen to stem from many in the region being 'utterly ignorant of the very first Principles of the Christian Religion'.[57] Nevertheless, the memorial argues unequivocally for the improvability—religious, social and economic—of Highlanders. Possibly taking its cue from, or at least in the same mould as, Martin Martin's *Description of the Western Isles of Scotland* published in the same year, the memorial extols the untapped economic potential of the region:

> the Countrey might be improven to vast Advantages; For there are to be found large Fields both for Corn and Cattle, and very convenient Situations for Harbours, that might encourage Trade, and building Cities, to which Manufacture being added, there might be a great Product from Beeff, Hides, Tallow, Wool, Linnen and Woollen Cloath, Improvement of Woods, Herring

---

Aberuchill, Advocate; Sir Hugh Dalrymple of North Berwick; Walter Stewart of Pardovan, Advocate; the Marquess of Tullibardine, later Duke of Atholl; and Robert Inglis, Goldsmith.

[55] NLS, MS 821/279, Francis Grant to James Kirkwood, Edinburgh (20 Oct 1707), quoted in Durkacz, *Decline*, 27.

[56] MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, 236; Stephen, *Defending the Revolution*, 256–257.

[57] *A Memorial Concerning the Disorders of the Highlands, especially the northern parts thereof, and Isles of Scotland, with an account of some means, by which the same may be redressed and prevented and vertue may be promoted in these parts* (Edinburgh, 1703), 3.

> and White-Fishing, Mines, Iron Milles, &c which, and many other things lie dormant.[58]

To this, the author adds a subtle critique of past and present government approaches to the region, advocating a more proactive and considered approach in peacetime:

> Neither is it strange it is thus; for there is little or no Nottice taken of that Vast Countrey by the Government, save appointing a Commission of Justiciary, and keeping Garrisons in some places, which however necessar it may be for helping to keep the Peace, now in time of Peace; yet that is not the only Way to promote Vertue and the Knowledge of GOD among the Highlanders. And certain it is, there hath been an Error or Defect in the first Concoction of any Means, that hath hitherto been used for Reducing the Highlanders; for these have acted only upon the outward-Man, whereas they are to be gained rather by Human than Violent Measures.[59]

The author argues that 'the most effectual Methods for remeding of these Evils is *Instruction*, since Coercive Laws, and sending of Colonies have much miscarried'. The author cites the precedents of 'the Families of Argyle, Athol, Macleod, Grant, and others', who had promoted education among their populations to good effect, but notes that many in the region struggle to pay for an education.[60] Much of the text warns its readers to take heed of what may happen if the Highlands remain neglected. The author points out, for instance, the military capacity of the Highlands and the likelihood that, if the region is not improved, it would continue to provide an ideal launchpad for a Jacobite invasion. He also mentions the 'Idle mouths' in the region which may 'consume the Stock of provision' in times of war. It is even argued that education is necessary because 'if Creditors to Highland Debitors would be helped, they would thereby have access to make legal Executions', suggesting that education was seen as a means of facilitating legal access to the region. Finally, and significantly, the education of Highlanders is presented as a potential means of 'prevent[ing] a National Curse, for Tolerating […] Error and Vice'.[61] It is proposed that a fund be raised for bursaries for supplementing the stipends of ministers in poorer Highland regions, and for setting up boarding schools on the Highland line,

> whereby there may be Seminaries of many returning home, with Knowledge and [English] Language to their own Country, and of others fit for Learning,

[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., 4.
[61] Ibid., 5.

> who are further to be improved, in order to Teach of Schools, or the Ministry, of whom there is a lamentable want at present.[62]

The remainder of the memorial lays out a blueprint for financing the project and managing the fund. It is proposed that vacant stipends from Highland and adjacent parishes be appropriated; that a general voluntary contribution be carried out throughout the country by authority of parliament; and that church and government authorities publicly support the project so that the public have fewer reservations about donating or leaving legacies and mortifications towards this end. Application to Queen Anne for access to the Bishops' Rents is also recommended. Reflecting the SSPCK's eventual approach, it is proposed that these funds be kept as a single stock, with only the interest garnered to be expended. With regard to the management of the fund, there was to be a central administration in Edinburgh appointed yearly by the Privy Council, comprising 'a certain Number of Ministers and others'.[63] The original intention, then, was that this body would be a quasi-governmental charitable body. Towards the end of the document, a provisional plan is set forth for how the fund might be expended, which includes some interesting and ambitious suggestions:

> It is Humbly proposed that at the First Setting up, there may be but two Setlements for Bursaries, one at Inverness and another at Perth for maintaining Six Schoolars, in each yearly, on the Annualrent [interest] of 20000 merks [approx. £1,000 sterling] Stock, and seeing its the Children of the more Substantial Tennants in the Highlands, who will fall to come to the Schools, the Parents or their Friends, before admission, are to find Caution, that after five, more or fewer years, they shall furnish to their Sons a Stock of Cattle, for setting up in a Particular Heretors Land (who will thereby by induced to forward the Executions) at Returning to the Country, which is a Patrimony that will encourage their return, and the Value of the Stock should be proportionable to the Expence laid out on the Childrens Education.[64]

It appears that the plan was to assist wealthier tenants with the education of the children, and provide an incentive to those children, in this case cattle, to encourage their return to the region to serve as teachers and ministers. Population retention, or at least retention of wealthier inhabitants, was a priority as those involved were looking for a return on their investment. This may also have come in response to the large influx of impoverished Gaelic speakers into the urban Lowlands, particularly Edinburgh, at the turn of the century.[65] The

[62] Ibid., 6.
[63] Ibid., 7. It is worth noting that a relationship with the Privy Council was sought out, but after 1708 the council was abolished.
[64] Ibid., 8.
[65] See Charles Withers, 'Kirk, Club and Culture Change: Gaelic Chapels, Highland Societies and the Urban Gaelic Subculture in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *Social History*, 10 (1985), 177.

memorial concludes by requesting the consideration of the Queen's Commissioner and members of parliament.[66]

In July 1703, copies of this memorial were distributed amongst the members of parliament then sitting, together with a second document: the *Overture of an Act in Favours of the Highlands and Isles*.[67] This was a direct appeal to the government, proposing in line with the memorial that a central fund be established for the purpose of Highland education, and a central commission be appointed to manage and distribute this fund. Attached to the *Overture* was another shorter memorial. This document cites the precedents for such a scheme, including English and Dutch missionary endeavours; it reminds its readers of the potential commercial benefits, and sets forth a practical framework for how this scheme might be implemented in Scotland.[68] The hypothetical stock is increased to 120,000 merks (approx. £7,000 sterling), the interest of which it was calculated could fund a three-pronged strategy of directly sponsoring 100 scholars yearly at schools 'for learning to Read, Write, and speak tollerably in the low Countrey Tongue', erecting schoolhouses throughout the Highlands, and for funding bursaries for Gaelic-speaking students bound for the ministry.[69] Returning to the *Overture*, adding to the earlier memorial it is proposed that the managers of the fund should 'be a Commission incorporat, with all the Power and Priviledges of purchasing and disposing and using a common Seal that belong to any incorporate Body'.[70] This demonstrates that the model of the joint-stock charitable corporation, which the SSPCK would adopt from its foundation, was from 1703 already well-established in the minds of those who became its founders, contrary to Gray's assertion that the idea arose in a meeting of the Lords of Session in 1708. The decision taken in 1708 to pursue a royal charter, rather than a parliamentary statute of incorporation, was undoubtedly expedited by the dissolution of the Scottish parliament in 1707.[71] Indeed, this was the route taken by the English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), which was incorporated by royal charter in 1701. This society included within its remit the improvement of Anglican church organisation in the American colonies, the deployment of schoolmasters and priests to assist with administering to colonists and, perhaps most significantly, facilitating the assimilation of non-English white settlers into mainstream British colonial society.[72] Modifying the

[66] *Memorial Concerning Disorders*, 8–9.
[67] *Overture of an Act in Favours of the Highlands and Isles* (Edinburgh, 1703); NRS, GD95/1/1, *A Short Narrative*; MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, 237.
[68] *Memorial Concerning the Overture of this Act* (Edinburgh, 1703).
[69] Ibid.
[70] *Overture of an Act*.
[71] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 16.
[72] C. F. Pascoe, *Two Hundred Years of the SPG: An Historical Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1900*, vol. 1 (London, 1901), 1–12; Anne Polk Diffendal, 'The Society for

arguments of Gray and Jones slightly, it may be that the SSPCK's founding members were more closely adhering to the model of the SPG rather than the SPCK. Indeed, Lowther Clarke, an historian of the SPCK has argued that the SPG arose out of the belief that the 'voluntaryism', which characterised both the SPCK and the reformation societies, 'was inadequate for the needs of America'. Such an ambitious project, he argues, 'required the prestige of a chartered society under royal patronage'.[73] The same could easily have been said by Scottish Presbyterians of the Highlands at this time. Gray suggests in a similar vein that 'the need for a charter may have arisen from awareness of the social and political vulnerabilities of a voluntary society, as experienced by the SPCK in England and the reformation societies in Scotland', more specifically that 'a charter would tie the fortunes of the SSPCK to the monarch, giving it a permanence and an inherent expression of support which could override political considerations'.[74]

However, despite the efforts and optimism of the memorialists, the rumbustious parliament that sat in 1703 took little notice of these documents.[75] Fortunately, in the same year the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr responded enthusiastically to their proposals, distributing them among ministers and taking matters into its own hands. Responding to Kirkwood's library project, and reflecting on the state of the Highlands, the synod judged that:

> there are some things previously necessary [if libraries are to succeed] such as the Erecting of and encouraging Schools, and the Training up of Highland Youths at Universities in Philosophy and Divinity, in order to their being fitted to be School-Masters, Catechists and Ministers in their own Countrey; a Design of the greatest Necessity.[76]

The synod resolved to earmark all presbyterial bursaries within its bounds for 'the Training of Highland-Youths' for two years and put pressure on the General Assembly to 'establish a common Course therein' for all Lowland presbyteries. Subscriptions were to be raised by each presbytery within the synod. Each minister was required to contribute at least 'the Two hundred part of his yearly Stipend', while lay individuals were invited to contribute according to their ability. Finally, ministers were required to 'gather up by subscription or

---

the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts and the Assimilation of Foreign Protestants in British North America' (University of Nebraska-Lincoln PhD Thesis, 1974), *passim*.

[73] W. K. Lowther Clarke, *A Short History of the SPCK* (London, 1919), 26–27.

[74] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 16.

[75] *Overture of an Act in Favours of the Highlands and Isles*; NRS, GD95/1/1, *A Short Narrative*; MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, 237. See P. W. J. Riley, 'The Scottish Parliament of 1703', *SHR*, 47 (1968), 129–150.

[76] *Recommendation of a Charitable Contribution: for the promoting Religion and the Knowledge of God in the Highlands: With an account of the Resolutions of the Synod of Glasgow for that End, and of the Desolate State of those Parts* (Edinburgh, 1703). A hard copy is available in the SSPCK collection, NRS, GD95/10/39.

otherways from Noblemen, Gentlemen, and charitably disposed Persons, within their respective Parishes [...] an account of what may be expected' for training up Gaelic-speakers to be ministers and schoolmasters.[77] That the impetus came from Glasgow makes sense considering the long established and deep-rooted links between the town, the university and the Synod of Argyll.[78] However, more temporal concerns also had some bearing. The synod complained that in times of dearth the Highlands sent 'out swarms of idle mouths to consume the stock of the nations provisions while their country lies uncultivated and their advantages for fishing and other trade disregarded, which if duely improven might turn to a great account both to themselves and to this whole nation'.[79]

Responding to pressure, the 1704 General Assembly introduced further legislation for the Highlands. Despite the planting act of 1699, it had become clear that Highland presbyteries were far too impoverished to support an adequate number of bursaries. Therefore, the assembly resolved that half of the bursaries from several lowland presbyteries were to be appropriated for the education of Gaelic-speaking students.[80] The assembly enacted one further measure: an 'Act anent Erecting Schools in the Highlands'. Considering 'that the planting and propagating of religion in the Highlands is a work of charity to perishing souls there, and of great importance to this Church and nation', it was ordered that subscriptions be gathered throughout Scotland for setting up schools in the Highlands, and recommended that Highland synods and presbyteries send the assembly's commission 'an account of what parishes have or want schools, and the reasons of their wanting thereof, and what places do most need, and are most convenient for erecting schools in'.[81]

In 1705, a memorial was presented to the reformation societies by James Kirkwood concerning the erection of a 'Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, after the example of England' and by February 1706 a charter had been drafted.[82] At the General Assembly that followed in April, the Commission was appointed to:

> inquire into the state of the Highlands and Islands, how they are planted with ministers, and of the remaining Paganish customs among them, and of the increase of Popery and how they are provided with schools.

Calls for presbyteries to send in reports regarding the state of schooling were renewed and, most significantly, commissioners were appointed to enquire 'what encouragement these

[77] Ibid.
[78] See https://sgeulnagaidhlig.ac.uk/, esp. the page relating to Gaelic-speaking students at the University of Glasgow: https://sgeulnagaidhlig.ac.uk/17thc-argyll-the-synod/.
[79] *Recommendation of a Charitable Contribution*.
[80] 1704 General Assembly Act XIII.
[81] 1704 General Assembly Act XIV.
[82] NLS, MS 1954 (8 Dec 1705 and 2 Feb 1706), 23, 62.

may expect who incline to enter into a society for erecting and maintaining charity schools, for educating poor and indigent children'.[83] Once again, the overlap between the commissioners, the members of the reformation societies, and those who later constituted the founding membership of the SSPCK is striking, even more so considering that many of these individuals would be influential in the SSPCK's Directors' Committee.[84] John Dundas of Philpstoun, procurator of the Kirk, and Nicol Spence, legal agent to the Kirk, were involved. Rather than applying *to* the General Assembly, it appears that the would-be members of the SSPCK were operating *within* the Assembly, as a crucial part of the church's administrative machinery.[85]

In 1707 the assembly ratified an 'Act anent Schools in every Parish, and a Contribution thereanent'. This renewed the act of 1704 recommending a charitable collection for Highland schools, and set forth directions for presbyteries to have schools established where absent, and giving encouragement to those:

> Who incline to enter into societies for erecting and maintaining of charity schools for educating of poor and indigent children, and to use their utmost endeavours to get such societies erected in the several corners of the country.[86]

Finally, the act appointed that the Commission nominate a select committee to handle the responses of Highland presbyteries to earlier enquiries regarding the distribution of libraries, the presence of Catholicism and lingering 'paganish' customs, and the extent of schooling. Its remit also included evaluating the threat of Catholicism to the church and considering proposals 'for propagateing Christian knowledge in the Highlands and Islands & Forreigne parts of the world'.[87] The first meeting was held in Edinburgh on 18 September 1707 and by 1708, the committee's remit expanded to include all matters relating to Highland education, including gauging the progress of collecting subscriptions and 'propagateing Christian knowledge, Suppressing popery & Erecting Schools'.[88]

---

[83] 1706 General Assembly Act XVIII.
[84] Ministers: Neil MacVicar, George Meldrum, John Law, William Carstares, Thomas Blackwell, Robert Baillie, and James Grierson. Elders: Sir Hugh Dalrymple of North Berwick, James Stewart of Goodtrees, the Duke of Atholl, Lord Islay, Lord Crossrig, Sir John Maxwell of Pollock, the Earl of Glasgow, Col. John Erskine of Carnock, William Brodie, Walter Pringle, Walter Stewart of Pardovan, John Hamilton of Pencaitland, and James Gellie. *The principal acts of the General Assembly, of the Church of Scotland; conveened at Edinburgh, the 4th April 1706* (Edinburgh, 1706), 14–17.
[85] cf. Stephen, *Defending the Revolution*, 258; MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, 237.
[86] 1707 General Assembly Act V.
[87] NRS, CH1/1/18, Register of the General Assembly (Apr 1707) 454, quoted in Gray, 'Religious and Charitable Origins', 123; NRS, GD95/10/7, Form of letter sent by the General Assembly to members of the Committee for propagating Christian knowledge (27 Aug 1707).
[88] Ibid.; GD95/10/10 (20 Apr 1708). Ministers: William Carstares, George Meldrum, George Hamilton, William Wishart, John Stirling, James Ramsay (Kelso), James Haddo, John Bonar, John Moncrief, Thomas Wilkie (Canongate), William Mitchell (Canongate), Neil McVicar, John Anderson (St Andrews), George Barclay, David Blair, Patrick Cuming, James Hart, Robert Horsburgh, George Turnbull, William Moncrieff

Gray's thesis provides a detailed account of the proceedings of the Christian Knowledge committee, and the problems it experienced garnering support from across the country.[89] It will thus suffice here to summarise how the committee developed into the SSPCK. Most of the ministers and elders in the committee would become founding members of the Society. Very quickly, the committee became the first port of call for agents in several localities to communicate issues concerning local social and economic conditions, the state of schooling and the presence of Catholicism. Indeed, it was included within the committee's portfolio that it was not only to consider effective means of combatting Catholicism and establishing schools, but also to receive reports from presbyteries regarding these issues.[90] Previously, such matters would have been the preserve of the Scottish Privy Council or the General Assembly. After 1708, however, the Privy Council was abolished.[91] It may even be that the General Assembly's decision to establish a separate Christian Knowledge committee was a concerted attempt to delegate Highland issues to a dedicated agency. From its establishment, the committee would meet at least once a month, but often much more frequently.[92]

Early requests for support came from Ross-shire. In October 1707, the newly erected Synod of Ross responded by appointing ministers to transmit 'accounts of their respective parishes as to schools and whair more than one is requisite' it then recommended them to 'apply to noblemen and gentlemen for getting subscriptions for funds to encourage schools'.[93] In May 1708, a Mr John Fraser proposed to the committee that 'some honest Godly young men' might be found for 'Large & Spacious paroches in the remote Highlands to travell amongst the people as Catechists'. The committee expressed its willingness to countenance such a scheme, but 'not having any fond for prosecuting' this, they 'could not proceed [thereon] at present'. [94] The committee had been in touch with the earl of Cromartie at an earlier date to discuss his 'designe of giveing some fonds for maintainance of Catechists to travell throught Large parishes', and a mortification he had set aside for this end.[95]

(Largo) and John Brown. Elders: Sir Hugh Dalrymple of North Berwick, Adam Cockburn of Ormiston, Lord Pollock, Lord Tillicoultry, Lord Minto, Lord Forglen, Lord Bowhill, Sir James Stewart of Goodtrees the elder, Sir Samuel Maclellan, Sir James Campbell of Aberuchill, Lieutenant Colonel John Erskine of Carnock, Sir Walter Pringle, William Brodie, Walter Stewart, James Gellie, Sir James Smollet of Bonhill, Sir George Home of Kelso, Sir Hugh Cunningham of Craigend, Walter Stewart of Pardovan, and John Alexander of Blackhouse.

[89] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 122–130.
[90] NRS, GD95/10/10 (20 Apr 1708).
[91] Stephen, *Defending the Revolution*, 160–165.
[92] NRS, GD95/10/10–18.
[93] NRS, CH2/312/1 (8 Oct 1707), 26–27.
[94] NRS, GD95/10/10 (27 May 1708).
[95] Ibid. (27 May 1708, 17 Jun 1708 and 28 Sep 1708).

In May 1708, the Lords of the Session on the committee were appointed to form a subcommittee specifically to discuss the ways that funds might be raised 'for propagating Christian knowledge, Suppressing popery and Erecting Schools'.[96] As Gray points out, the details of the scheme as agreed to by the Lords of Session are not recorded, but their agreement to support it was based on three conditions: that the managers of the fund be elected from the total body of subscribers, to be named in the first instance by the lords themselves; that a Royal letters patent be obtained, forming the managing body into a corporation, and that the lords' subscriptions would become payable once £1,000 sterling was subscribed in total.[97]

A petition was sent to Queen Anne and on 18 August 1708 she issued a proclamation of support, appointing a collection of subscriptions to be carried out in Edinburgh on 8 November, and stating her intention to grant a letters patent forming the managers of the fund into a corporation.[98] On the same day the collection was held, it was announced that upwards of £1000 sterling had been collected. However, it was noted that subscriptions had come 'only from a few hands in and near to [Edinburgh] and presbyteries of Hadington, Dunbar, Linlithgow and Dalkeith', while a further 500 merks was pledged by a 'mr Campbell at London'[99] This was despite the proclamation's stated expectation that subscriptions would come from throughout Scotland. Indeed, as Gray has convincingly argued, the intention was that the SSPCK would be 'a truly national organisation', and the General Assembly tried to garner the support of 'all the people of this National Church'.[100]

By September 1708, several presbyteries had gathered subscriptions, but even then the subscribers were 'desireous to hear what is done at [Edinburgh]' before sending any money.[101] Such concerns were expressed from very early on, as evidenced in a letter to synods and presbyteries, possibly written by George Meldrum, which lambasts those hesitant to contribute:

> We were sorry to hear [tha]t some with you do propose objections against this Laudable project, and when so many Charitable persons in this land, and else where, have shewing [thei]r readyness to Contribute [thei]r money, & other wayes, for carrying on this Designe; It will be a reflection on our Church if the

[96] NRS, GD95/10/10 (27 May 1708).
[97] Ibid.; Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 124.
[98] *A Proclamation for Encouraging the Design of Erecting Schools for Propagating the Knowledge of Christ in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (London, 1708); NRS, GD95/10/1, /10 (28 Sep 1708).
[99] NRS, GD95/10/10 (27 Jun 1708).
[100] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 126; 1709 General Assembly Act VI.
[101] NRS, GD95/10/10 (28 Sep 1708).

> same shall stop at the Ministers thereof. You know It is verie easy to muster up Difficulties.[102]

By June 1708, it had become clear why some were hesitant to pledge their support:

> It being represented that some persons who seem to be well inclined to this designe do propose some difficulties as to the management of this fund & disposall [there]of.[103]

Indeed, Adam Fergusson, minister in Crathie-Braemar, informed George Meldrum that '[th]e half of [th]e min[iste]rs did not subscribe for any thing pretending they never saw Scotch projectors framewell [sic]'.[104] As Gray argues, Darien still loomed large in the national psyche, so people were more likely to think twice before pledging their support for a similarly ambitious and unprecedented project. However, members of the committee and those who composed the earlier memorials were very much aware of this, and through their proposals sought to reassure would-be contributors that the managers of the fund would be both accountable and transparent.[105] It was for this reason that the Lords of Session were consulted and subsequently asked to come up with a scheme for raising contributions. Subscriptions would later come in from the presbyteries of Aberdeen and Kincardine O'Neil, but most areas outside Edinburgh were much slower or negligent in raising them. Indeed, this would be a recurring problem for the SSPCK in coming years. In July 1709, after the incorporation of the Society but before its first official meeting, the committee recorded with regret that subscriptions had come from such a limited geographical area.[106] Furthermore, many subscriptions that had been pledged did not come in until long after the incorporation, and even then the onus was on the Society to pursue these payments. Multiple memorials were transmitted to the General Assembly into the 1720s complaining that many parishes and presbyteries were still yet to contribute.

Nevertheless, once the initial £1,000 had been raised, the committee began to work on a patent for erecting a society. This was drawn up with the advice of lawyers and those who had already subscribed. A draft was then transmitted to the Lords of Session for revision.[107] The Earl of Mar, then Secretary of State for Scotland, was consulted for his opinion on the charter. By February 1709 the final terms had been agreed upon, and it was resolved to apply

[102] NRS, GD95/10/22, Scroll of letter from the Committee for propagating Christian knowledge to synods and presbyteries anent subscriptions. Edinburgh (27 May 1708).
[103] NRS, GD95/10/10 (17 Jun 1708).
[104] NRS, GD95/10/23. 'Framewell' here means prosper or succeed.
[105] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 128–130.
[106] NRS, GD95/10/17 (18 Jul 1709).
[107] NRS, GD95/10/10 (11 Nov 1709).

to Queen for her royal letters patent.[108] On 25 May, two months before the first nomination of members, a warrant was duly granted for the erection of the SSPCK.[109]

Conclusion

At the Revolution, of those Presbyterians that considered the Highlands at all, many reckoned the region's inhabitants to be outwith the pale of Scottish society. The depredations carried out by Highland Host of 1678 remained etched in the Presbyterian psyche, and all Highland inhabitants were tarred with the same brush. Highlanders were 'more terrible than Turks or Turtars […] who feared not God nor regarded man'.[110] The acceleration in poverty, crime and disorder which spilled into the Lowlands in the 1690s would further entrench this narrative. However, the investigation following the Massacre of Glencoe served to soften attitudes temporarily, as Highlanders came to be regarded with a degree of sympathy as fellow Scots who had fallen victim to the intrigues of a corrupt and self-serving ministry. The failure of the first Scottish colonial and missionary endeavour at Darien focused minds further. The Presbyterians involved in the reformation societies, when considering the reasons for such a flagrant display of divine displeasure with the Scottish nation, would see in the Highlands a mission field that had hitherto been neglected.

The making of the SSPCK itself can largely be put down to the initiatives of the Edinburgh reformation societies working in partnership with James Kirkwood. It must be noted, however, that the societies were composed of individuals already deeply involved in the management of the Church of Scotland. One reformation society set a precedent by raising subscriptions for the school at Abertarff, but its eventual failure made it clear that a more ambitious and dedicated approach was required. John Dundas of Philpstoun and Nicol Spence, procurator and legal agent of Kirk and General Assembly, were to play perhaps the most important roles in steering the agenda towards the establishment of a dedicated fund and agency for Highland education, just as they would influence the Society post-foundation. From as early as 1703, the same year that Kirkwood arrived in Scotland, there was a campaign in motion in Edinburgh for securing official support towards Highland education. This manifested itself in the Kirk in 1707, in the shape of a dedicated committee for propagating Christian knowledge. By May 1709, this had developed into the SSPCK: a

[108] Ibid. (27 Jan 1709 and 3 Feb 1709).
[109] NRS, GD95/10/1, Petition to the Queen desiring letters patent (1709); The National Archives [TNA], SP54/12/234B, Her Majesty's Royal Letters Patent, Erecting a Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. For a list of the first nomination see *An Account of the Rise* (Edinburgh, 1714), 32–34.
[110] Shields, *A Hind Let Loose*, 190.

national charitable corporation, albeit without nationwide support, dedicated to Highland education.

3

CENTRAL MANAGEMENT, 1709–*c.*1731

This chapter examines the central management of the SSPCK during its first two decades of operation. It will begin by outlining the Society's management structure and defining the formal powers and responsibilities of its constituent assemblies and offices. While previous studies have tended to portray the Society as a largely faceless, monolithic body, unwavering in its pursuit of well-defined ideological outcomes—foremost among them being the removal of Catholicism and Gaelic—this view underplays the variety of interests that were represented by the Society and its correspondents.[1] This view also overlooks key individuals in upper-management, including the secretary John Dundas of Philpstoun, clerk Nicol Spence and several long-serving Directors who exercised a profound influence in conducting affairs and determining policy in the early decades of the Society's operation. By introducing these key figures, some of whom were a constant presence in the Society's management up until the 1730s, we can shed more light on what shaped the Society's agenda and better understand the strategies it adopted to achieve its objectives.

Several studies have touched on the Society's financial resources, suggesting that a shortage of funds inhibited the scale of its operation throughout the eighteenth century. Before the Society could begin to establish schools, it had first to bring in the money pledged by subscribers, canvas to obtain new subscriptions, and invest its stock to raise enough funds. This chapter examines the Society's strategies for increasing its financial resources and outlines the problems it encountered in doing so.

Central Management

Management Structure

The election of the SSPCK's founding membership took place in July 1709. The Lords of Session, empowered by the royal letters patent, nominated a total of 81 subscribers to form the Society. This included all 14 Lords of Session, 23 ministers, 12 landowners and nine nobles, the majority of whom were based in, or in close proximity to, Edinburgh. The

[1] Campbell, *Gaelic in Scottish Education*, 51; idem, *Canna*, 91; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 122, 135; Durkacz, *Decline*, 30.

remainder comprised Edinburgh-based merchants, tradesmen, and magistrates.[2] Henceforth this body of individuals was to be considered 'an Incorporation, Society and Body Politick', responsible for representing itself in court. The patent empowered the Society to receive subscriptions, donations, mortifications, legacies and 'Lands, Goods and Gear', in order to:

> Erect and Maintain Schools, to Teach to Read, especially the Holy Scriptures, and other good and pious Books; As also to Teach Writing, Arithmetick, and such like Degrees of Knowledge in the Highlands, Islands and remote Corners of Scotland, and In other Parts [of the world].[3]

The patent gave the Society the right to use income derived from property for the aforementioned purposes. While the first nomination was carried out by the Lords of Session, following incorporation the Society became responsible for selecting its own membership from among its subscribers. The limit was initially set at 100 members, but this was increased on several occasions throughout the eighteenth century.[4] However, not all members were directly involved in the management of the Society. As the whole membership could not govern the Society effectively, powers and responsibilities were delegated to several officers and the Committee of Directors.

The letters patent served as a constitution for the Society: they defined its administrative structure, fixed the timeframe for the election of officers, and outlined the respective powers and responsibilities of the Society's constituent assemblies, namely the General Meeting and the Directors' Committee (henceforth referred to as the Committee). The General Meeting was to meet quarterly, on the first Thursdays of January, March, June and November. While representing the Society as a whole, only nine members were required to attend to form a quorum. The Committee on the other hand, was required to meet at least monthly, with a quorum of three members. The General Meeting functioned in theory as the executive body: it retained the right to adjust the Society's rules as it saw fit, and had the final say on the appointment of officers, matters of governance, finance and policy for schools. For instance, the decision to ban Gaelic texts from the classroom was enacted by the General Meeting in 1720 against the advice of the Committee.[5] On the other hand, the Committee tended to take a harder line on Catholics. In the late-1720s, for example, the Committee made several calls to prohibit teachers from instructing Catholics to read unless they observed the Society's rules, namely that they agree to learn the General Assembly's

[2] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 131.
[3] NRS, GD95/1/1, Royal Letters Patent, [1].
[4] NRS, GD95/1/1, 90 (5 Jan 1711). The limit was raised to 110 in 1715, and in 1724 it was increased to 120 to make room for Highland gentlemen. Ibid., 277 (2 Jun 1715), GD95/2/3, 255-6 (7 May 1724).
[5] NRS, GD95/1/2, 103–4 (3 Mar 1720).

catechism and attend Protestant worship. The General Meeting consistently overruled the Committee on the matter, 'being desireous That none who seek to be taught the Holy Scriptures of Truth be excluded', despite the Committee's concern that teaching Catholics to read 'puts them in the better Capacitie to be taught by Priests […] the damnable Errors of that Idolatrous church'.[6] The General Meeting was also authorised to assume new members from among the Society's contributors on the condition that they were Protestant and appoint 'fit persons in any Places of Our Dominions, or elsewhere' to serve as correspondents and receive subscriptions and money on the Society's behalf. The General Meeting was empowered to punish negligent and scandalous officers by removing them from office or issuing fines 'not exceeding Ten Pounds Sterling for Malversation, beside Damages to the Society and others concerned'. Each year the General Meeting was responsible for electing the Directors' Committee as well as the Society's various officers, including the president, secretary, clerk and treasurer.[7]

On paper the Committee was responsible for routine administration, which included auditing the treasurer's accounts, preparing policy proposals, and providing advice to and prosecuting the orders of the General Meeting.[8] However, in practice the Committee and its subcommittees operated as the ideological and administrative engines of the Society.[9] While the General Meeting met on eight occasions in 1710 and seven in 1714, in every other year in this period it was only required to meet on four occasions. The Committee on the other hand met at least once a week, but often more frequently. When lobbying for funds from the church and government, the regular meetings of the Committee were invariably cited to support the Society's application. For example, a 1719 petition to the General Assembly advertised that:

> Their committee of fifteen, which by their patent is obliged to meet monthly, meets for the most part every week; and matters are so ordered by the Society, that this committee, upon any necessary emergency, is always convened upon half an hour's advertisement; so that the Society and their committees have more frequent occasions to inquire into the state of their schools, and diligence of their schoolmasters, than any Church judicatory can have to oversee their catechists.[10]

[6] NRS, GD95/1/3, 27 (2 Nov 1727), 137 (5 Jun 1729), 148 (7 Aug 1729), 201–2 (6 Aug 1730).
[7] NRS, GD95/1/1, Royal Letters Patent, [1–2].
[8] Ibid.
[9] Subcommittees were initially appointed on a relatively informal basis, as matters requiring deeper consideration arose. Following a management overhaul in 1723, formal subcommittees were appointed annually to handle matters relating to the law, schools and other present matters.
[10] 1719 General Assembly Act V. cf. NRS, GD95/1/2, 16–17 (7 Aug 1718); GD95/10/43–4, /56, /62–3, /70, /77.

Moreover, due to its more frequent meetings the Committee was much better positioned to make decisions and, accordingly, the General Meeting tended to assent to the Committee's proposals, sometimes with very slight adjustments.

While the General Meeting held executive power, the Committee quickly recognised that requiring the assent of a body which was only required to meet quarterly could impede the efficient conduct of the Society's affairs. In December 1709, the Committee proposed that the General Meeting convene at least monthly, as the Committee required its authority more frequently 'in the Beginning of their constitution', to raise money, undertake investments and appoint correspondents. The Committee asked the General Meeting to 'consider how far by their patent they can remitt any of these matters to the Committee'.[11] As time progressed, the Committee's power and duties were gradually augmented, enabling it to make decisions regarding schools and to appoint correspondents without consulting the General Meeting. In 1719, the Committee was authorised to invest the Society's stock without consulting the General Meeting.[12] In 1722 and 1723 the General Meeting empowered the Committee to move schools as it saw fit, and a dedicated subcommittee was entrusted with all correspondence concerning schools.[13] While the Committee was required by the letters patent to provide a summarised account of all of their transactions at each quarterly General Meeting, it was the Committee that was responsible for setting the agenda, thus allowing it to exercise a profound influence on the Society's policy direction and business conduct.[14] This was formalised in 1731, when the Committee was empowered to make all decisions concerning the Society's management, while only 'matters of greatest moment' were to be referred to the General Meeting.[15] The influence of the Committee is of particular importance when we consider the personnel that sat on it, particularly those who served for an extended period of time.

Personnel

While the letters patent established the SSPCK as a national corporation with membership theoretically open to all subscribers, the first Committee and the Society's officers—the main driving forces behind the Society—exhibit a striking continuity in personnel from the campaigns and institutions leading up to the Society's foundation, including the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, the Highland Library Committee and the General Assembly's Christian Knowledge committee. While the Society as a whole represented a

[11] NRS, GD95/2/1, 51–2 (13 Dec 1709).
[12] NRS, GD95/2/2, 323 (29 Oct 1719)
[13] NRS, GD95/2/3, 141 (2 Nov 1722), 187 (5 Apr 1723).
[14] Ibid.
[15] NRS, GD95/1/3, 228–32 (7 Jan 1731). Quote at 230.

broad cross-section of middle- and upper-class Lowland society, including Episcopalians such as the Earl of Mar and James Kirkwood, the first Committee was much more particular in its composition. Of the 15 original Committee members, seven were legal professionals. These were Robert Alexander, a principal clerk of session; James Gellie and Walter Stewart, advocates; William Brodie, advocate and Commissar of Edinburgh; Alexander MacLeod, advocate, legal manager of the MacLeod estates between 1685 and 1726, and brother to John MacLeod of Contullich, the Tutor of MacLeod; Sir Walter Pringle, advocate, and James Hamilton of Pencaitland, both of whom later became Senators of the College of Justice. There were three ministers: William Carstares, royal chaplain and principal of the University of Edinburgh; Neil MacVicar, a Gaelic-speaking minister recently called to Edinburgh's West Kirk from Fort William; and William Wishart, minister in Edinburgh and eventual successor to Carstares as principal of the University of Edinburgh. The remainder of the Directors' Committee comprised Lt. Colonel John Erskine of Carnock, governor of Stirling Castle; Dr Alexander Dundas, doctor of medicine and later His Majesty's Physician; and two merchants who served as magistrates in Edinburgh, John Campbell and Adam Brown.[16]

Table 1. Key Managers of the SSPCK, 1709–c.1730

NAME	PLACE OF ORIGIN	PROFESSION	POSITION(S)	YEARS SERVED
Secretary				
John Dundas of Philpstoun	Linlithgow	Advocate	Procurator of the Kirk	1709–1731
Clerk				
Nicol Spence	Edinburgh?	Writer	Agent of the Kirk	1709–1739
Treasurers				
Hugh Cunninghame of Craigend (Bonnington)	Edinburgh	Merchant	Baillie of Edinburgh	1709–1710
George Watson	Edinburgh	Accountant	Chief Accountant to the Bank of Scotland	1711–1722
Joseph Cave	Edinburgh	Merchant	Engraver to the Mint	1722–1736

[16] Justine Atkinson, 'The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge: Establishing Identity Under the Union' (University of Newcastle MA Thesis, 2010), 50–1; Alick Morison, 'The Accounts of a Doer: Alexander MacLeod the "Advocate"', *TGSI*, 50 (1977), 120–21; A. H. Millar, 'Pringle, Sir Walter, Lord Newhall', *ODNB*. URL: https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/22809; *Fasti*, i, 101; John Erskine, *Journal of the Hon. John Erskine of Carnock, 1683-1687*, ed. Walter MacLeod (Edinburgh, 1983), xxviii; NRS, GD124/15/970; Armet, *Extracts, 1689-1701*, 142 177, 378.

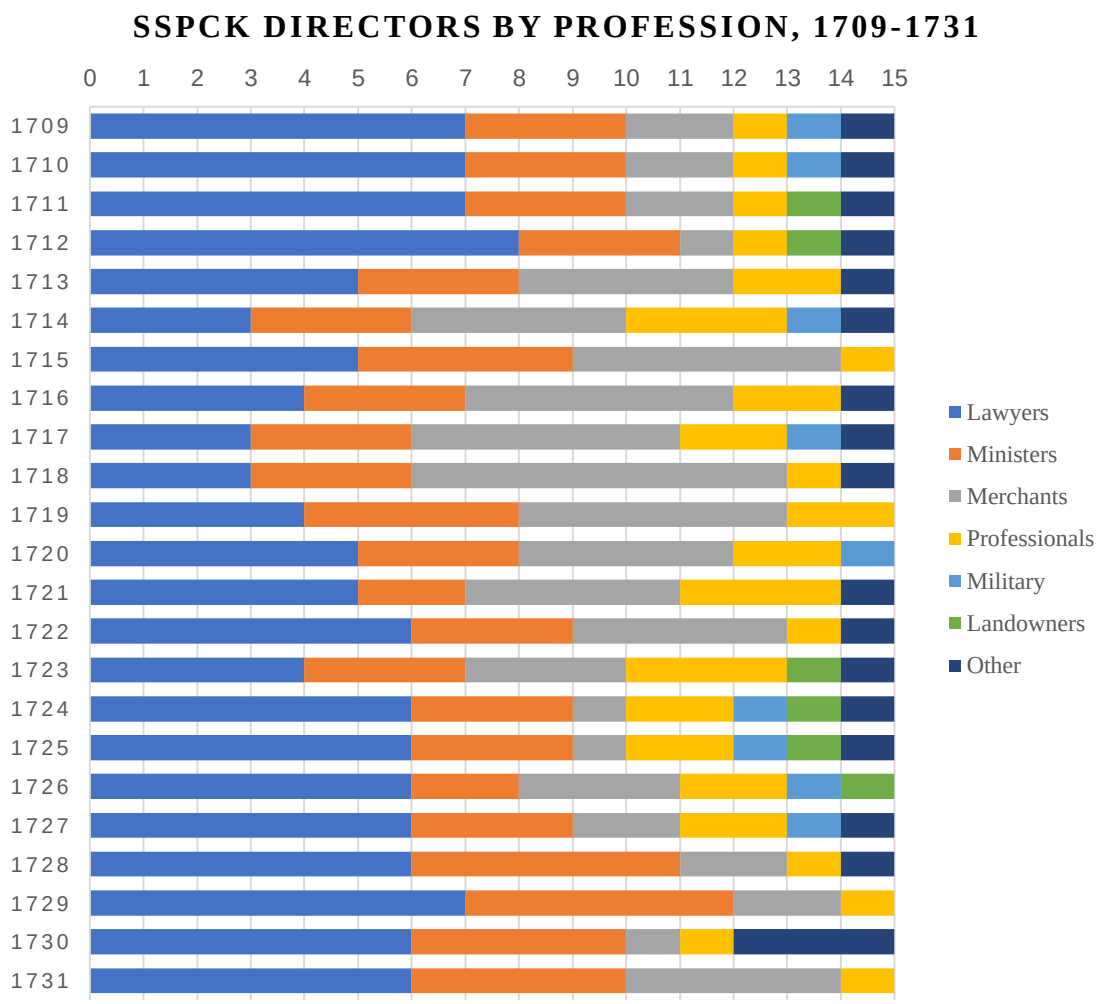
Key Committee Members				
Alexander MacLeod	Harris	Advocate	Legal agent for the Chief of MacLeod	1709–1732
Dr Alexander Dundas	Edinburgh	Doctor of Medicine	His Majesty's Physician	1709–1727
Dr John Riddell	Edinburgh	Physician		1713–1740
Robert Hepburn of Baads	Edinburgh	Writer		1711–1731
Robert Inglis of Maulsly	Edinburgh	Writer		1711–1734
Rev. William Mitchell	Edinburgh	Minister	His Majesty's Chaplain	1711–1726
Rev. William Hamilton	Edinburgh	Minister	Principal of Edinburgh University	1713–1732
Rev. Neil M'Vicar	Lochaber?	Minister	His Majesty's Almoner; Minister of West Kirk	1709–1738

Of these members, Robert Alexander and William Brodie sat on the Committee until 1716, while Dr Alexander Dundas and Alexander MacLeod maintained a constant presence on the Directors' Committee until 1727 and 1732 respectively. MacLeod provided a point of contact between the Society and the elite of his clan, for example facilitating the settlement of two early schools in Glenelg and Skye, within the MacLeods' sphere of influence. Six of those sitting on the first Committee were active members of the Edinburgh Societies for the Reformation of Manners: lawyers Robert Alexander, William Brodie, James Gellie, Walter Pringle, military officer Lt. Colonel John Erskine of Carnock, and doctor of medicine Alexander Dundas. If we include the Society's secretary, clerk and treasurer—John Dundas of Philpstoun, Nicol Spence and Sir Hugh Cunningham—this number increases to nine.[17] As figure 1 demonstrates, lawyers were by far the most highly represented on the Committee, especially in the first five years of operations and then again from 1724 onwards. In the intervening years, Edinburgh-based merchants and professionals dominated the Committee. Ministers retained a consistent presence, with an average of three ministers elected each year. As might be expected, the Committee comprised a broad cross-section of Edinburgh's urban elite, reflecting the composition of the Societies of the Reformation of Manners from which the Society originated. Many individuals fall into the numerically important category of Scottish Whig identified by Chris Whatley, namely politicians of lesser rank: 'untitled landowners and lairds of varying degrees of substance, often with legal and mercantile skills and all upwardly mobile'.[18] However, when gauging the influence of individuals on the

[17] NRS, GD95/1/1, 21 (31 Nov 1709); Sir David Home, Lord Crossrig, 'A Narrative of the Rise, Progress and Success of the Societies of Edinburgh for Reformation of Manners, 1701', ed. Nathan Gray, *Miscellany of the Scottish History Society*, Vol. 14 (Suffolk, 2013), 133; Wodrow, *Analecta*, iv, 235.
[18] Christopher Whatley, 'Reformed Religion, Regime Change, Scottish Whigs and the Struggle for the 'Soul' of Scotland, c. 1688-c.1788, *SHR*, 92 (2013), 89.

Committee these figures can be misleading. Committee meetings frequently consisted of less than six people, most often those included in table 1 above. As with Daniel Brunner's observation concerning the English SPCK, it would not be an overstatement to argue that such individuals 'were able by their regular attendance to dominate the Society'.[19]

Figure 1. SSPCK Directors by Profession, 1709–1731



Perhaps the most important figures in the management of the SSPCK were the secretary, John Dundas of Philpstoun, and the clerk, Nicol Spence. It was through Dundas and Spence that the majority of business was laid before the Committee and it was from their hands that the majority of letters were dispatched. They were responsible for drafting memorials and petitions to the General Assembly, the crown and government agencies such as the Commission of Police. They were responsible for corresponding with church courts and collating the information received from Highland church courts. Consequently, their handwriting and signatures are by far the most ubiquitous in the SSPCK records up until the 1730s. Dundas and Spence functioned as the main point of contact between the Committee

[19] Daniel L. Brunner, *Halle Pietists in England: Anthony William Boehm and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* (Göttingen, 1993), 27.

and the General Meeting, attending both when possible.[20] A closer examination of these individuals can shed some light on what shaped the Committee's agenda, and how it pursued its objectives.

Both Dundas and Spence were members of the Societies of the Reformation of Manners and sat on the General Assembly's Christian Knowledge committee. However, both men were also employed as legal officers of the Church of Scotland after 1700. In these positions, they played a crucial role in the Kirk's management in the early decades of the eighteenth century, conducting correspondence on behalf of the General Assembly, organising and inspecting General Assembly and church court registers, and assisting ministers in legal processes for obtaining their stipends before the Lords of Plantation.[21] Writing shortly after the death of Dundas in 1731, Robert Wodrow, a leading authority on the inner workings of the Kirk in this period and a regular correspondent of Dundas's, affirmed their importance:

> to return to Mr Dundas of Philpston, he and Niccol Spence have, indeed, had in their hand the current affairs of this Church these twenty-eight years, and have most faithfully and regularly managed them.[22]

Following Dundas's death Wodrow wrote: 'I have enjoyed his freindship and much intimacy with him nou these twenty-six years. He was a pious man, and still[23] on the side of truth'.[24] While many details of Dundas's career are obscure, it is certain that he trained as a lawyer, possibly matriculating at Utrecht in 1695 before his admission to the Faculty of Advocates in June 1698. He became procurator and principal clerk of the Church of Scotland in 1706.[25] From 1709, he carried out this duty in parallel with his role as SSPCK secretary, until his death in 1731. In 1709, Dundas published *The Method of Procedure by Presbyteries in Settling of Schools in any Parish*: a handbook for ministers and presbyteries with legal directions for establishing parochial schools and appointing schoolmasters in accordance with the 1696 Education Act, as well as 'Providing Ministers with Manses, Glebe and Grass' and 'Repairing Ruinous Churches'.[26] Dundas' aspiration was that this would help formalise

[20] NRS, GD95/10/36, /52, /54, /55, /63, /64. For letters addressed to and sent by Spence and Dundas, see GD95/2/1, 42–3 (9 Dec 1709), 92–3 (20-27 Mar 1711), 149 (23 Aug 1710), 196 (7 Jun 1711), 198 (15 Jun 1711); GD95/10/30; /45; /46; /88; /158; GD95/2/1, 15 (7 Nov 1709); 47 (16 Dec 1709).
[21] Wodrow, *Analecta*, iv, 236. cf. Stiùbhart, 'Genesis and Operation of the Royal Bounty Scheme', 129–30. The Lords of Plantation were the ultimate arbiters of civil parish boundaries and determined the legal obligations of landowners with regard to the maintenance of ministers and church infrastructure.
[22] Wodrow, *Analecta*, iv, 235.
[23] 'Still' meaning always or uniformly.
[24] Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 120–121; Wodrow, *Analecta*, iii, 288–9, 301, 317, 356–7 431.
[25] W. D. H. Sellar, 'John Dundas', *ODNB*, URL: https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/67528; F. J. Grant, (ed.), *The Faculty of Advocates in Scotland, 1532–1943* (Edinburgh, 1994), 145.
[26] John Dundas, *The Method of Procedure by Presbyteries in Settling of Schools in every Parish* (Edinburgh, 1709).

the contractual obligations of the various parties responsible for the maintenance of Church infrastructure—including heritors, parishioners and clergy—by providing a definitive explanation of these obligations in print. In this light, it was an attempt to supplant the established pattern in many localities of relying on visual and oral agreement processes. In other words, Dundas sought to transfer intangible oral agreements into more manageable written agreements, amenable to legal process.[27] In conjunction with the disproportionate number of lawyers on the SSPCK Committee, this demonstrates the legalistic orientation of the Society, and provides an explanation for the Society's constant preoccupation with documenting which Highland parishes had schools, and its decision to limit the assistance it gave to parishes without them.

It appears, then, to be no coincidence that Dundas later authored *An Abridgement of the Acts of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, 1638–1720* in 1721, nor that Wodrow informs us that he 'brought the Registers of the Assembly, since the Revolution, to an excellent bearing' by the time of his death.[28] This managerialism was reflected in the way the SSPCK conducted its business. It put great store in printed formulae for subscriptions, certificates and commissions for schoolmasters and correspondents, and had a prescribed template for school reports. Indeed, on many occasions, the Society expressed frustration with presbyteries, ministers and schoolmasters for not adhering to such formalities, for example in the Committee's 1712 Representation to the General Assembly. In this document, the Society lamented the negligence of several presbyteries in following prescribed procedure for collecting subscriptions, representing that:

> the society cannot possibly get the names of subscribers and contributors, with their sums subscribed for and contributed, so exactly and regularly booked and recorded, as they proposed at first to do; nor can they for the most part know what parishes and persons in parishes have contributed, which deprives them of the means of dealing with persons of note and others that are deficient.[29]

Furthermore, the Committee often criticised the visitors of schools, both ministers and local elites, for not adhering to the formal guidelines for school reports, which required the signature of both minister and schoolmaster, as well as specific details regarding the progress of scholars.[30]

---

[27] Atkinson, 'SSPCK: Establishing Identity Under the Union', 61–2; Houston, *Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity*, 207–8.
[28] Wodrow, *Analecta*, iv, 236.
[29] 1712 General Assembly Act V.
[30] See for example NRS, GD95/10/106 and GD95/2/5, 88–90 (28 Mar 1733), where school reports are defined as either 'formal' or 'informal'.

While less is known about Spence, his name and signature are ubiquitous in the registers of Scotland's church courts. It is clear that he and Dundas worked closely in managing the affairs of the Kirk. According to Wodrow:

> He [John Dundas] and Mr Spence, yet alive, had much of the burdensom work in all these great matters; and, by their diligent application and continouall attendance upon these purposes, with the advice and influence of the rest, many of whom are nou pot to heaven, helped on these great designes in Scotland.

He added that both were crucial in 'doing things of publick use as to ecclesiasticall affairs', in reference to their role in placing legal pressure on heritors to pay ministerial stipends, and in managing the SSPCK. Wodrow claims that it was Spence and Dundas who gathered subscriptions and 'formed the charter' of the Society, before it was transmitted to Queen Anne. On the death of Dundas, Wodrow expressed gratitude that Spence was still active, allowing for a degree of continuity in the management of the Kirk:

> As the Church has a very great loss in his death, so it's a great mercy he has been spared so long, a faithfull, zealouse, and laboriouse servant in all our publick affair; and it's a favour Mr Spence outlives him, and will be in case to let in his successor to the state of publick bussines, and the thread of managing our affairs. [31]

This degree of influence is also reflected in the operation of the Royal Bounty Committee in the 1720s, which was responsible for administering a royal grant of £1000 for the support of missionaries and catechists in the Highlands. According to Wodrow, a member of this committee in 1726: 'all is managed by the Sub-committy, who are a feu in and about Edinburgh, and the Committy only meets to approve what they do, and read letters'. Wodrow adds: 'the great weight, I see, lyes upon Philpstoun and Mr Spence, who fully understand the state of these bounds, and the methods of doing'.[32] We can be certain, therefore, that they not only played a crucial role in the management of the SSPCK, but also ecclesiastical affairs in general from the beginning of the century until the 1730s – something that has hitherto gone unacknowledged in the general historiography of the Kirk in this period.

Funding and Support

The element of the charter that had perhaps the most significant bearing on the Society was the provision against expending any of its the capital stock:

---

[31] Wodrow, *Analecta*, iv, 236.
[32] Wodrow, *Analecta*, iii, 356–7. cf. Stiùbhart, 'Royal Bounty Scheme', 91.

> that it shall not be Lawful to the said Society, or Managers, to diminish the Capital Stock that is or shall be subscribed for, or mortified, but only to apply the Rents, Annual Rents Profits and Emoluments, arising from the same.[33]

John MacInnes points out that this enabled the Society to build up a 'permanent organisation' which could continue to operate schools 'relatively independent of the annual donations'.[34] As Gray suggests, this decision was also intended to garner the trust of donors, giving assurance that money would be handled with care and consideration.[35] Most scholars agree that this provision strictly limited the number of schools the Society could establish each year. However, following incorporation the Society struggled to raise adequate funds and, in turn, the first schools were not set up until late in 1711.

Subscriptions

In the long term, the SSPCK was relatively successful in bringing in pre-incorporation subscriptions. As Gray has pointed out, of the first 155 subscribers, 121 contributed at least part of the money pledged by the end of 1710, while only five subscribers gave in their contributions in 1720 or later.[36] We must bear in mind, however, that the pre-incorporation pledges only amounted to around £1000 sterling. Even if the Society succeeded in investing the entirety of its stock, at an interest rate of 6% it stood only to raise £60 sterling. Its success, therefore, was largely dependent on obtaining new subscriptions. In its early years, the Society experienced problems obtaining subscriptions outwith Edinburgh, stemming in part from mistrust among potential donors. The strength of Episcopalianism, particularly in the north of Scotland, provides one explanation for the unwillingness of many to contribute to the Society. While some Episcopalian ministers commended the promotion of Christian knowledge as a noble project, they argued that the Society's work was 'a pious design if not misapplyed'. Aware of the Society's Presbyterian agenda, Angus Morison, episcopal incumbent in Contin, argued that schools were intended to 'to ground [children] in an aversion to Episcopacy, and you know men are tenacious of their first impressions.'[37] In a letter from 1713, he maintained that 'the admi[ni]strators of that fond collected under designation for propagateing Christian knowledge in the highlands, are fill'd with whiggish zelots'.[38] In October 1710, upon receiving returns from several presbyteries in the north of

[33] NRS, GD95/1/1, Royal Letters Patent, [2].
[34] MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, 239. Cf. Jones, *Charity School Movement*, 178–9. Jones writes that 'It remained for all these contributions a poor Society, whose work was narrowly circumscribed by inadequate funds'.
[35] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 121.
[36] Ibid., 134.
[37] NRS, CH12/12/816, Angus Morison to Archibald Campbell (1712).
[38] NRS, CH12/12/817.

Scotland, Nicol Spence informed the Committee that 'Litle can be expected there Except from the town of Aberdeen and [Presbyterian] ministers'.[39] Due to the continued influence of Episcopalian ministers and teachers in Angus and the Mearns, the Presbytery of Meigle reported in 1713 that 'litle can be done in their parishes, in regaird of the present state of the bounds'. Similarly, the Presbytery of Alford reported in 1710 that, while ministers had pledged money, they had 'litle hopes of rousing much among [their] people'.[40] It appears that the tenuous situation that many ministers in the north felt themselves to be in deterred them from promoting the Society or attempting to raise money on its behalf. An exception can be found for the Presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil in the north-east, where Braemar minister and SSPCK correspondent Adam Fergusson managed to secure subscriptions worth £15 sterling from the gentry and tenantry, increasing to £16/10/7 by the time the funds were transmitted in 1713.[41]

Mistrust, however, was not limited to Episcopalians; many Presbyterian ministers and church courts were also unwilling to pledge their support. As Rev. Adam Fergusson of Braemar had informed George Meldrum prior to the SSPCK's foundation in June 1708:

> I fear some [presbyteries] never laid it to heart. Many seek [their] own advantages and have no inclination to forward a publick work; And in some [presbyteries] where the affair was seriously considered, I know the half of the [ministers] did not subscribe for any thing pretending they never saw Scotch projects framewell [sic].[42]

Reflecting the profound impact of the Darien disaster on the Scottish public, this attitude persisted after the Society's incorporation. Many presbyteries were slow to act on directives to raise collections, and a degree of mutual suspicion continued to characterise the relationship between the Society and some presbyteries in this period, as evidenced in the Society's several addresses to the General Assembly. While the sixth act of the 1709 General Assembly required that all presbyteries publicise the SSPCK and gather subscriptions, successive petitions to the Assembly demonstrate increased frustration with presbyterial negligence on the part of the Society. In 1710, the Society represented that 'though some reverend Presbyteries and ministers have showed a commendable concern in this matter, yet there is no account of any diligence from others, which, it is like, has fallen out through

[39] NRS, GD95/2/1, 163 (26 Oct 1710). It is noteworthy, however, that the Presbytery of Kincardine O' Neil did attempt to solicit the support of Episcopalian ministers within their bounds. NRS, CH2/601/1, 370 (8 Sep 1709).
[40] NRS, GD95/10/49, Note of contributions made by presbyteries (1714); Jessop, *Education in Angus*, 74–7. For Episcopalian and Jacobite sympathies in the Presbyteries of Forres and Alford, see James Allardyce (ed.), *Historical Papers Relating to the Jacobite Period, 1699-1750*, i (Aberdeen, 1895), 33–7, 91.
[41] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 126–7; Fagg, 'Complaints and Clamours', 297; NRS, GD95/2/1, 349 (25 Dec 1713).
[42] NRS, GD95/10/23. 'Framewell' here means to succeed.

forgetfulness or some mistakes'. In 1712, the Society accused ministers of neglecting to publicise the scheme due to 'prejudices and mistakes arising from misrepresentations, which some who are no friends to this undertaking do very industriously propagate'.[43] One such 'misrepresentation' is revealed in a letter from Rev. Fergusson of Braemar, which urged the Society to establish a school in his parish as soon as possible 'to stop the mouths of the enemies of that great designe', who had proclaimed that the promise of sending a teacher was but a 'meer amusement'.[44] Even as late as 1714, the Society reported that several presbyteries had not yet made any return to the several acts in its favour, nor had their ministers advertised the existence of the SSPCK from their pulpits, 'so that in some places the pious design of the said Society is wholly concealed and unknown'.[45]

However, it should be noted that the poverty of many parishes was a key factor inhibiting support for the Society. Writing in November 1709, Robert Wodrow apologised to SSPCK secretary John Dundas for the few subscriptions raised by the Presbytery of Paisley, informing him that:

> the strait of this part of the country is so great, through the dearth of victual, that our collections are very far from maintaining our poor, and people will give nothing to [their] collections […] As for your Society for Propagation of Knowledge, we are dealing among our people and gentry, but to little purpose; and you need expect but very little, I suspect, from most of our congregations. The public spirit and zeal for any good designs is much away from the generality here.[46]

In 1712, the minister of Aberlady in East Lothian confessed to the Society that subscriptions had been appropriated for poor relief in his parish.[47] The Presbyteries of Forres and Fordyce reported in 1710 that, while they endeavoured to obtain subscriptions, it had had little success 'by reason on the generall scarcity of money in [that] Countrey'.[48] In a climate of economic uncertainty, when ministers were struggling to raise adequate funds to meet the needs of their own parishioners, it is unsurprising that people were less forthcoming in supporting a national charitable endeavour such as the SSPCK.

Even when subscriptions were forthcoming, securing their payment could prove problematic for the Society. On several occasions, the Society availed itself of its links with the General Assembly to compel presbyteries to send in the subscriptions they had

[43] 1709 General Assembly Act VI; 1710 General Assembly Act XI; 1712 General Assembly Act V.
[44] NRS, GD124/15/1051/3, Adam Fergusson to the Lord Grange (22 Oct 1712).
[45] 1714 General Assembly Act XIII.
[46] Wodrow, *Correspondence*, i, 72–4.
[47] NRS, GD95/10/49; Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 137.
[48] NRS, GD95/10/49.

received.[49] Sensing that it had made little progress, by June 1711 the Society appointed a committee to draw up a 'list of deficients', by comparing its list of subscribers with the treasurer's accounts of cash received.[50] The lists were then circulated among the Committee's members, in the expectation that they would engage their acquaintances who were among the 'deficients' to send in their contributions. The lists for Edinburgh were sent to parish elders for the same purpose.[51] In June 1713, the Committee resolved to send the lists of deficients to the next sitting of the General Assembly. By November 1713, the Committee had taken out decreets against those who were still deficient in paying their subscriptions.[52]

The Society also experienced purely logistical problems in securing subscriptions. In December 1709 John Stirling, Principal of Glasgow University, informed the Committee that there 'was no prospect of getting the money raised' unless the Society would first appoint a local trustee to receive the funds and grant receipts. The Committee, on the other hand, believed that it would be able to rely on local ministers and elders to receive and transmit subscriptions.[53] The problem appears to have been a lack of trust on the part of potential donors.[54] In response, the Society resolved to appoint correspondent boards for each burgh, which, it was hoped, would serve the dual purpose of increasing the Society's membership outwith Edinburgh and nurturing trust in localities, thereby attracting more donations.[55] While this appears to have worked well in the case of Glasgow—the Society receiving nearly £550 in donations within three months of the board being set up—efforts to set up correspondent boards elsewhere failed. Moreover, as the Society's tendency was to rely on presbyteries in most parts of the country, correspondent boards appear to have fallen into disuse, with no further mention of them until 1725, when Thomas Blackwell, principal of Marischal College in Aberdeen, proposed reviving them.[56]

Contributions outwith Scotland

The Society's campaigns were not restricted to Scotland. Rev. Patrick Cuming of Ormiston received donations from Dublin via his brother Duncan, a physician there. Among these, Duncan Cuming conveyed a £100 mortification from Mr Alexander Brodie, a deceased teacher in Dublin, towards schools in the parishes of Auldearn and Dyke where Brodie was

[49] 1709 General Assembly Act VI; 1710 General Assembly Act XI; 1712 General Assembly Act V; 1714 General Assembly Act XIII.
[50] NRS, GD95/2/1, 200–3 (2 Jun 1711).
[51] Ibid., 210 (31 Jul 1711).
[52] NRS, GD95/1/1, 188 (4 Jun 1714) 205 (5 Nov 1715).
[53] NRS, GD95/2/1, 47–8 (6 Dec 1709).
[54] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 141.
[55] NRS, GD95/2/1, 46–8 (16 Dec 1709), 60 (13 Jan 1710).
[56] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 141–3; NRS, GD95/2/3, 303 (18 Mar 1725).

born.[57] Alexander Dundas, nephew and namesake of SSPCK director Dr Alexander Dundas, served as a correspondent in Bristol.[58] Steps were taken to settle a correspondence in the United Provinces early in 1710.[59] However, the main focus was on London. Even before the incorporation of the SSPCK, William Carstares and John Stirling were present in London, attempting to promote the cause of charitable education for the Highlands in the British metropole.[60] After incorporation, however, the Society struggled to establish a steady correspondence in the city and the SSPCK's formal relationship with the English SPCK proved problematic from the beginning, although informal contact between members continued.[61] Between January and April 1710, SSPCK secretary John Dundas was stationed in London, tasked with raising awareness and compiling lists of potential correspondents.[62] In February, Dundas reported that he had identified 60 such individuals, and would shortly transmit a list of their names to clerk Nicol Spence.[63] However, when Dundas returned to Edinburgh in April, the list had not yet arrived, nor had Dundas managed to bring his own copy due to the 'the Confusions that hapened of Late in that City' following the impeachment of Dr Henry Sacheverell, an Anglican minister who had preached on the dangers of religious tolerance. In the aftermath of Sacheverell's impeachment, Presbyterian and dissenting places of worship in the capital were targeting by rioters, suggesting that Dundas's list of correspondents may have been lost or destroyed.[64]

In addition to the efforts of John Dundas, Dr Daniel Williams, a Dissenting minister in London, also committed himself to establishing a formal correspondence for the SSPCK in England, reporting in December 1709 that he had held a meeting composed of 'Seven Presbyterian Ministers two anabaptists and three other Gentlemen whom I had invited'.[65] His death in 1716, however, removed a vital formal point of contact between the Society and the metropole; an official correspondence board was not established in London until 1729.[66]

Nevertheless, the Society enjoyed some success in procuring support from England. The aforementioned Dr Williams donated over £200 in total between 1711 and 1715, and bequeathed his estate in Catworth, Huntingdonshire, to the Society on his death in 1716.[67] In

[57] NRS, GD95/2/1, 63 (20 Jan 1710).
[58] NRS, GD95/1/1, 207 (5 Nov 1713), 248 (4 Nov 1714), 279 (2 Aug 1715).
[59] NRS, GD95/2/1, 74 (2 Feb 1710).
[60] NRS, GD95/10/10 (8 Nov 1708).
[61] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 145–6.
[62] NRS, GD95/2/1, 67–8 (27 Jan 1710).
[63] Ibid., 81 (16 Feb 1710).
[64] NRS, GD95/2/1, 107, 118 (24 Apr 1710, 31 May 1710); W. A. Speck, 'Henry Sacheverell', *ODNB*, URL: https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/24440.
[65] NRS, GD95/2/1, 55 (30 Dec 1709).
[66] NRS, GD95/1/3, 99–100 (2 Jan 1729).
[67] NRS, GD95/2/1, 195 (6 Jun 1711); GD95/1/1, 255 (6 Jan 1715) 343–4 (7 Nov 1717).

1710, the Society received a £40 bequest from Lady Henly of York, through Richard Straiton, Presbyterian minister in London, and Sir Patrick Johnston.[68] John Campbell, a goldsmith in London and an agent for the SSPCK, bequeathed £20 in 1713.[69] James Fraser, secretary and register of the Royal Chelsea Hospital, a native of Petty, and brother of Hugh Fraser, the deceased Episcopalian minister of Kiltarlity, pledged a donation of £5 per annum in September 1711. This was superseded, however, in 1713, when he donated £100 for the purpose of establishing schools in the Aird of Inverness where, according to Robert Baillie, minister of Inverness, 'popery gets footing since the death of his brother mr Hugh Frazer late minister at Kiltarlaty'.[70] In general, the donations from England tended to be more generous than those received in Scotland but, in the absence of a settled formal correspondence in London, support from England did not reach the levels originally anticipated.

Investments

Once contributions were secured, the Society sought to raise interest on its stock through several kinds of investment. At first, the Society hoped to invest in property, ideally a 'piece of convenient land lying in the three Lothians, Fife, Merse or Teviotdale'.[71] Property investments were preferred as they were guaranteed to raise funds as security for loans, and they would allow the Society to concentrate a larger proportion of its funds in a single investment. Most of the deals that came under consideration involved mortgaging land, whereby the property owner would borrow money from the Society in exchange for granting it certain rights and responsibilities over the property, or paying interest on the borrowed sum. The revenue and interest garnered would then be used for the establishment of schools and schoolmasters' salaries. Over the course of 1710, the Society had 12 property investments under consideration, including estates in Newton, Scotscraig, Rosyth and Drumcross. However, these all fell through, mainly due to the estates being overburdened with debts, which would put the Society at risk of losing their investments.[72] It was not until 1714 that the Society invested in two estates, including a mortgage worth 20,000 merks on the estate of Ednam, near Kelso.[73]

[68] NRS, GD95/2/1, 157 (25 Sep 1710).
[69] Ibid., 322 (14 Jun 1713).
[70] Ibid,, 195 (6 Jun 1711); GD95/1/1, 203–4 (31 Jul 1713); *Fasti*, vi, 469.
[71] Ibid., 159 (5 Jun 1712).
[72] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 153.
[73] NRS, GD95/1/1, 241 (13 Aug 1714).

Loans

Lending was another investment option pursued by the Society. While it was hoped initially that the burghs would borrow from the Society, this proved overly optimistic; the magistrates of Edinburgh declined due to their council's already shaky finances, while Glasgow and Aberdeen neglected to respond to the offer entirely.[74] Failure in this respect led the Society to seek out private individuals willing to borrow the Society's stock. While this was considered far from ideal, the Society was willing to grant personal loans as a temporary measure to bring in enough money to establish schools.[75] Even then, investment opportunities were difficult to come by. In October 1710, Dr Alexander Dundas reported that loans would have to paid out under the name of the name of the treasurer, Hugh Cunningham, 'because people are not so ready to borrow from a Societie as from a privat person'.[76] This was reiterated by Robert Hepburn of Baads at the following meeting, when he informed the Committee that, while several individuals had enquired about loans, 'if it be known to be the Societies money persons will not be so readie to borrow it'.[77] Indeed, the slow rate of investment in Scotland led the Society to explore the possibility of lending money in London. In November 1710, the Society accepted a proposal to lend £1000 to a group of gentlemen in the metropole. This came to nothing, however, as the Society did not have enough available stock until the following year, by which point the opportunity had passed.[78] Once borrowers were found, while enjoying some successes, the Society experienced problems in securing interest payments, which inhibited its ability to lay out money for establishing schools. In February 1715, the treasurer, George Watson, who replaced Hugh Cunningham following his death in late 1710, reported that many debtors were still extremely deficient in paying interest.[79]

Mortifications and Bequests

The Society did enjoy some success in receiving mortifications, the most lucrative of which came from Jean Weem, the dowager Countess of Sutherland in 1710. The Countess assigned to the Society a 5000-merk stake in her estate, with the conditions that she maintain the right to uplift the interest on the fund for her own purposes if necessary, and that 1000 merks be

[74] NRS, GD95/2/1, 43 (9 Dec 1709), 64–5 (27 Jan 1710).
[75] In June 1711, the Committee recommended that members continue looking for potential property investments as 'the continuing the money upon personall securitie, will prove both troublesome and uncertain'. Ibid., 200 (2 Jun 1711).
[76] Ibid., 161 (12 Oct 1710).
[77] Ibid., 163 (26 Oct 1710).
[78] NRS, GD95/2/1, 167, 171–2 (9 Nov 1710, 30 Nov 1710); Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 160–2.
[79] NRS, GD95/2/2, 58 (18 Feb 1715).

earmarked for legacies after her death.[80] In October 1711, the Countess assigned all interest raised on the 5000 merks to the establishment of charity schools in Sutherland and Strathnaver.[81] Following the Countess's death, aside from the value of the mortification dropping to 4000 merks due to the 1000 set aside for legacies, the Society had difficulty securing prompt payment of the interest from the Countess's son, now Earl of Sutherland. While payment of the interest is hard to follow with any exactness, by October 1716 the Committee felt it necessary to warn the earl's agent, Alexander Ross, that legal steps would be taken to secure payment if the overdue interest was not settled promptly.[82] The Earl of Mar donated 100 Bibles and 200 Psalm Books for schools in and around Braemar.[83] A further mortification came from John Farquharson of Invercauld. In March 1715, shortly before he joined the Jacobite rebellion, he assigned a 2,500-merk mortification 'for maintainance in meat drink & cloaths of five poor boys yearly' at the SSPCK school in Braemar.[84]

Government Sponsorship

The most promising opportunity for increasing revenue came with the prospect of British government support for Highland schooling. As discussed in chapter one, in the 1690s crown and parliament came to appreciate the need to improve educational facilities in the region in an effort to advance Presbyterianism, while simultaneously resisting Jacobitism. As a result of a parliamentary act of 1690, the Synod of Argyll was permitted to use vacant stipends to establish schools and pay teachers' salaries. In 1705 Queen Anne gifted the synod the revenues from the Bishopric of Argyll and the Isles for establishing schools 'and other pious purposes'.[85] In 1696 King William arranged a gift of £150 yearly, payable out of the Bishopric of Dunkeld, to erect and maintain schools in the Highland parishes of Perthshire, Dumbartonshire and Stirlingshire.[86] As early as 1703, the Society's progenitors were lobbying the Scottish Parliament to appropriate the remaining vacant stipends and Bishops' rents to create a dedicated government fund for Highland education. Indeed, both of the documents submitted to parliament in 1703—the *Memorial Anent Disorders in the Highlands* and *Overture of an Act in Favour of the Highlands and Isles*—anticipated that government support would provide the core of such a fund. The Society resumed the campaign for official support swiftly after its foundation, albeit now operating in the

[80] NRS, GD95/2/1, 134-5 (5 Jul 1710), 137–41 (21 Jul 1710), 145-6 (14 Aug 1710), 153 (7 Sep 1710); GD95/1/1, 129 (1 Nov 1711).
[81] Ibid., 227 (19 Oct 1711).
[82] NRS, GD95/2/2, 139 (4 Oct 1716).
[83] NRS, GD95/2/1, 308 (17 Apr 1713).
[84] NRS, GD95/1/1, 269 (3 Mar 1715).
[85] MacKinnon, 'Education in Argyll and the Isles', 51; NRS, E424/1, Bishop's Rents: Argyll, General Account (1705-1729); Scott, 'Politics and Administration of Scotland', 131n.
[86] Leneman, 'Social History of the Atholl Estates', 154–55.

context of the British state. In 1711, the Society petitioned Queen Anne 'to bestow a certain sum yearly [out of her Royal Bounty] to be Laid out by the said society For maintaining some mo[r]e schools to be Erected in these remoter Highlands and Islands', arguing that:

> This would tend much to promoting the glory of God, the Good of soules, and be a real advantage to her Ma[jes]ties Dominions, nothing being greater a hinderance than [the highlanders] Ignorance of their duty to God.[87]

Again in 1714, on the accession of King George I, the Society judged it 'to be a proper season to Address his Majesty […] for some bounty to the Society'. Anticipating that 'a gift of some part of the Bishops rents might be beg'd from His Majesty', the Committee appointed Rev. William Mitchell, William Carstares' successor as royal chaplain, to deliver its petition to the king.[88] Neither of these efforts were successful, yet the Society was undeterred. In the wake of the 1715 Jacobite rising the Society was to relaunch its appeal for government support, arguing that education was the key to preventing future insurrections. The government's response to the appeal, however, would provide an instructive perspective on the efficacy, consistency and limits of governance in the British state.

Conclusion

By treating the SSPCK as a largely faceless, monolithic, organisation with fixed ideological goals, scholars have obscured a more complex reality at the heart of the Society's management. While, in theory, it was the General Meeting of the Society that held executive power, it was the Committee, with its more frequent meetings and dedicated core of long-serving members, which proved the more willing and suitable body for managing the Society's affairs. The example of Alexander MacLeod, legal agent of the Clan MacLeod, demonstrates that clan interests could be and were represented within the Committee. The bulk of the Committee, however, represented the upper-echelons of Edinburgh society: ministers, lawyers, professionals and merchants of Edinburgh origin, many of whom had been active in the town's reformation societies, and in the SSPCK saw their natural successor. The Committee's efficacy for management was acknowledged from very early on, prompting the General Meeting on several occasions to augment the powers of the Committee so that it could manage schools and explore investments without recourse to the General Meeting. As a consequence, the Committee played a much greater role in shaping

[87] NRS, GD95/10/36.
[88] NRS, GD95/10/36 (26 Oct 1714).

the Society's agenda and approach over time. In acknowledgement of this reality, in 1731 the Committee was empowered to deal with all matters of management, while only 'matters of greatest moment' would require the assent of the General Meeting. It is important to note, however, that the General Meeting did overrule the Committee at some key junctures, ruling in 1720 against the use of Gaelic texts in the classroom and in 1730 against stricter rules for the Catholic children in Society schools.

The lynchpins of the Society were John Dundas of Philpstoun and Nicol Spence. Together, as secretary and clerk, they bore the brunt of the duties of the Society's management. This was in addition to their duties to the church, as Procurator and Agent respectively, where they took on the onerous duty of managing legal processes for obtaining ministerial stipends. They demonstrated an admirable dedication to the cause of Highland education in their lifetimes, and their 'diligent application and continouall attendance upon these purposes', as attested by Wodrow, provided the SSPCK with an indispensable level of stability and consistency in its first generation of existence.[89]

The Society would only be as successful as its schools, however. And before it could establish schools it had first to obtain subscriptions and raise revenue on its stock. The country was still recovering from economic uncertainty in the wake of Darien. The 'ill years' of the 1690s were still a recent memory, and famine conditions continued to affect much of the country well into the 1710s. In many places, even those who supported the Society's mission were sceptical about contributing money to another 'national project', while others simply could not afford to. On the other hand, the parishioners and heritors of Highland Aberdeenshire, which was to prove itself a Jacobite heartland in 1715, were among the Society's earliest and most eager donors. The Society struggled in this period to extend its support beyond Scotland, although it had two regular London correspondents in James Fraser and Dr Daniel Williams, both of whom also donated generously.

The Society faced numerous logistical issues when drawing money to Edinburgh, but ultimately succeeded in bringing in subscriptions and payments of debt. When considering investments, heritable securities on land—mortgages—were preferred to short-term investments like loans. However, in the absence of suitable land investments, the Society was willing to lend its stock to private individuals. Fundamentally the Society hoped for a generous crown grant and campaigned earnestly to obtain one. Government support was a panacea for the Society: it would at once increase the number of schools in the Highlands and enhance the authority of the SSPCK, transforming it from a charitable corporation into an official crown agent with Highland education as its remit.

[89] Wodrow, *Analecta*, iv, 236.

4

EARLY SCHOOLS, 1709–1715

Studies to date have not only represented the SSPCK as faceless and monolithic, they have also approached the Society from a mostly centralist, metropolitan perspective. Consequently, the Society's mission has been generally understood to be a one-way process, whereby an Edinburgh-based organisation imposed its deterministic religious and educational agenda on a largely passive, equally faceless Highland population. However, as an institution which funded schools distant from its administrative centre in Edinburgh, the Society had to depend on the cooperation of localities to set up and maintain schools. This chapter addresses both centre and locality, examining the Society's relationship with local agents and the communities it sought to affect to provide a local perspective on the SSPCK, and determine the extent of local influence on its earliest operations.

In 1711, the Society resolved to establish 11 schools spread evenly across the several regions of the Highlands and Islands. Referred to as 'itinerant free schools', these were to be relocated at regular intervals—two or more years—in order to achieve a wider catchment than would be possible with fixed schools. This was not the only option considered, however. 'Hospitals' were also discussed: essentially boarding schools fixed in strategic locations under the supervision of a minister, which were to house, maintain and educate the children of poor and Catholic inhabitants. This chapter examines the factors that shaped the Society's first scheme of schools, gauging the influence of local agents and the importance of local conditions in determining both the format and locations of schools. It then considers the Society's teacher recruitment strategy, examining the criteria that were set down for schoolmasters. The chapter provides biographical sketches of the first generation of teachers, which establish who they were, their places of origin, their linguistic background, their qualifications, and by whom they were recommended. Given the pre-existing framework of schools in the Highlands, this will allow us to trace any continuities and changes in personnel at a local level, thereby testing the validity of the assertion advanced by Allan Macinnes and Margaret Connell Szasz that schoolmasters served as intrusive cultural and religious 'shocktroops' in their communities.[1]

[1] Macinnes, *Clanship*, 178; Szasz, *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans*, 80.

As chapter two has shown, when the Society began operating in 1709 most Highland regions demonstrated a strong demand for more schooling. Most parishes were simply too large and disjointed to be served adequately by one school as required by law. Where parishes lacked legal schools, there is usually evidence of local efforts to have schools established. Other parishes went above and beyond the legal requirement, supporting additional schools at a distance from the parish church. With this in mind, the chapter reconsiders the operation and local reception of the early SSPCK schools, outwith Orkney and Shetland. Letters from ministers and schoolmasters reveal attendance levels, the stages of learning that scholars had reached, and the social background of those who attended the schools. This correspondence also indicates the role that local agents envisaged for SSPCK schools, the subjects that communities expected to be taught in them, and the factors that could determine a school's success or failure. By examining the SSPCK's responses, this chapter gauges the Society's receptiveness and responsiveness to recommendations from local agents and determines the scope these agents had to affect school policy and practice at this early stage of operations.

Beginnings

The impetus for the Society's earliest initiatives came not from the Society itself but from agents in Highland localities. The first official request for the Society's assistance came in February 1710 from Alexander Buchan, a catechist on St Kilda. A retired soldier turned schoolteacher, Buchan was sent to St Kilda by the Commission of the General Assembly in 1705.[2] Buchan's salary was halted following the death of the island's proprietor Norman MacLeod of MacLeod in 1706, and the succession of his infant son to the chiefdom. Appearing before the Society in Edinburgh, the catechist refused to return to St Kilda without a guaranteed salary.[3] Sponsoring a catechist in St Kilda, the furthest inhabited western point of Scotland, was if nothing else an eye-catching piece of public relations, signifying that no community was too distant or remote for the SSPCK. Nevertheless, the Society was at first obliged to refuse as it had not yet accumulated any interest on its stock.[4] Nicol Spence wrote to the infant chief's guardian, John MacLeod of Contullich the Tutor of MacLeod, to arrange for a salary until the Society's was able to support Buchan.[5]

[2] *Fasti*, vii, 193. Buchan was a Gaelic-speaker and a native of Highland Aberdeenshire. Before St Kilda, Buchan had found employment as schoolmaster for the Synod of Argyll. He is designated as the schoolmaster at Ederline in Glassary in 1699, and of Jura between 1700 and 1702 cf. Mackinnon, 'Education in Argyll and the Isles', 53.
[3] Morison, 'Alexander MacLeod', 120–21. NRS, GD95/2/1, 86 (28 Feb 1710), 88–9 (13 Mar 1710).
[4] Ibid, 86 (28 Feb 1710).
[5] Ibid, 88–9 (13 Mar 1710).

Contullich's brother and SSPCK member Alexander MacLeod was tasked with formulating Buchan's instructions, which were to provide the template for the instructions given to subsequent schoolmasters.[6] On 15 March 1710, Buchan was ordained by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, which entitled him to the stipend of St Kilda. The following month he returned to St Kilda with an annual salary of 300 merks (£17/10/0 sterling) from the Society in exchange for his also serving as a schoolmaster. Buchan's instructions required that he instruct children 'in the principles of Religion according to the word of God the Confession of faith Larger and Shorter Catechisms of this Church', while suppressing 'Lying, Curseing, Swearing and other Immorality' as well as 'charming and other superstitious Customs'. Buchan was also entrusted with the care of two young St. Kildan boys, Murdo Campbell and Finlay McDonald, who the Society hoped would be 'usefull in the said Island'.[7] Buchan remained on the island until his death in 1729 with a salary from the SSPCK.[8]

The first discussions concerning the format of schools were initiated by two Gaelic-speaking ministers in the largest parishes of Highland Aberdeenshire: Revs Adam Fergusson of Crathie and Braemar, and James Robertson of Glenmuick, Tullich and Glengairn. In June 1708, shortly before the SSPCK's incorporation, Adam Fergusson wrote to George Meldrum of the General Assembly's Christian Knowledge Committee to propose the establishment of five hospital schools: at Inveraray, Inverlochy (Fort William), Inverness, Dunkeld and Cromar.[9] Fergusson's opinion was formed following consultation with neighbouring ministers, heritors and tenants. The primary reason for preferring hospital schools concerned the reputation of country schoolmasters and their methods of teaching:

> Many do not love [that] parochial schools should be resolved on Because countrey schoolmasters are debauched & carless. And tho they teach to read they never teach any thing of the fundamentals of Christianity.[10]

A select few hospitals, he argued, were preferable to numerous, diffuse parochial schools, as this would make it more practical for a minister to supervise the conduct of the schoolmaster and, through daily catechising of the scholars, ensure that the religious component of education was being delivered properly.[11]

At the first SSPCK Committee meeting of 7 November 1709, Rev. James Robertson submitted a paper which built on Fergusson's preliminary proposals. Entitled 'Some thoughts humblie offered to the consideration of the Reverend and Honourable Societie […]

[6] Ibid, 101–4 (13 Apr 1710).
[7] Ibid, 102–4 (13 Apr 1710).
[8] NRS, GD95/2/4, 260 (7 Feb 1730).
[9] NRS, GD95/10/23.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

by some persons who understand the case of that Countrey', this paper was composed in consultation with local gentry and primary tenants.[12] It outlined three ways of 'propagating the Knowledge of God among Highlanders and Islanders', besides planting ministers. The first step was to determine measures to oblige heritors and tenants to set up schools according to the law, thus alleviating the burden from overworked Highland ministers who already 'Labour[ed] under manifold Discouragements unknowen in other places of the Land'. The second method was to increase the number of probationers and catechists who were assisting ministers. The third method was to erect hospital schools 'for educating the Children of such parents as are poor or popish'.[13] The gentry of Highland Aberdeenshire who had subscribed to the Society—among them Lord James Erskine of Grange, Charles Gordon of Abergeldie and John Farquharson of Invercauld—were particularly eager to see hospitals set up, pledging that they would 'sign [i.e. subscribe] for as much again' if this method were adopted.[14]

Hospital schools would be established at several key locations—Fort William, Inverness, Tarland in Cromar, and either Logierait or Dunkeld—where they would provide free instruction and maintenance for poor and Catholic children drawn from the surrounding countries. Argyllshire, Robertson argued, could be disregarded, as it was considered to be 'tollerablie provided for already haveing the use of the Bishops rents for that purpose'.[15] Potential scholars would be recommended for admittance to these schools by their home presbyteries, while the appointment of schoolmasters would be left to the Society. Echoing Adam Fergusson's concerns about the moral reputation of country schoolmasters, Robertson added that:

> it is very well knowen that these who serve at Countrey schools where the sallarie is small are commonly the very weakest and meanest of persons who take no further care of young ones than to teach them some reading and Languages.[16]

It is notable that both Fergusson and Robertson demonstrated a greater deal of anxiety regarding the standard and content of established schools, than with the availability of schooling. Both ministers suggest that the curriculum in country schools was typically focused on teaching languages—presumably English and Latin—while religious and moral instruction was largely neglected. While such a curriculum was a cause for concern among

[12] NRS, GD95/2/1, 15–24 (7 Nov 1709).
[13] Ibid., 16.
[14] Ibid., 17, 22.
[15] Ibid., 17.
[16] Ibid., 18.

Presbyterian ministers, it may have reflected the kind of instruction that had come to be expected by Highland communities. As discussed in chapter one, Adam Fergusson himself considered instruction in Latin to be important enough to warrant his absence from the school at Moulin when he considered the incumbent schoolmaster to be deficient in his knowledge of the language.[17] It is possible that, prior to the Revolution, schools in the Highlands were not seen to serve a particularly religious or ideological function. Rather they were intended to give scholars a firm footing in languages, specifically Scots/English and Latin. This provides some explanation for the positive reception of SSPCK schools in Jacobite, Episcopalian and Catholic regions, and the absence of evidence for local resistance to Society schoolmasters. Indeed, there was perhaps no expectation that schools would come with a religious or political mission. It seems likely that the main and universal purpose of schooling, in Highlands and Lowlands alike, was to impart literacy with the English Bible as the definitive text.

Robertson was also concerned with maintaining high attendances. Hospitals, Robertson argued, would enable students to focus on their studies without being caught up in the rhythms of Highland agricultural life. Regular supervision and consistent attendance would ensure that children 'may be brought to some measure of Knowledge', after which it was hoped that children would return to their communities and impart their knowledge to their families.[18] Hospitals would also facilitate the execution of the parliamentary act of 1700, which required that children be removed from their Catholic parents and educated as Protestants.[19] Furthermore, by focusing the Society's resources in a few key locations, schools would be more efficient and produce more demonstrable results, thereby attracting further donations.[20] Robertson proposed that a minimum of £2000 sterling be allocated for each school. Of this fund, 2,000 merks (£116/13/4 sterling) would be allocated 'for building a house for Lodgeing Masters and Schoolars and other necessary conveniencies as Kitching gardins [etc.]'. The interest garnered on the remainder, which Robertson estimated would amount to 2,000 merks yearly, would allow for a 500 merk salary for the schoolmaster and a 1,200 merk fund for maintaining the fabric of the schoolhouse, and for paying for servants, accommodation and fuel.[21]

A possible objection identified by Robertson was the argument that 'free schools in many parishes will teach more Children'. In answer to this Robertson reiterated that schools established on a parochial basis would be open to exploitation by heritors and tenants 'who

[17] See p. 26.
[18] Ibid., 18.
[19] RPS, 1700/10/73, Act for Preventing the Growth of Popery.
[20] NRS, GD95/2/1, 19.
[21] Ibid.

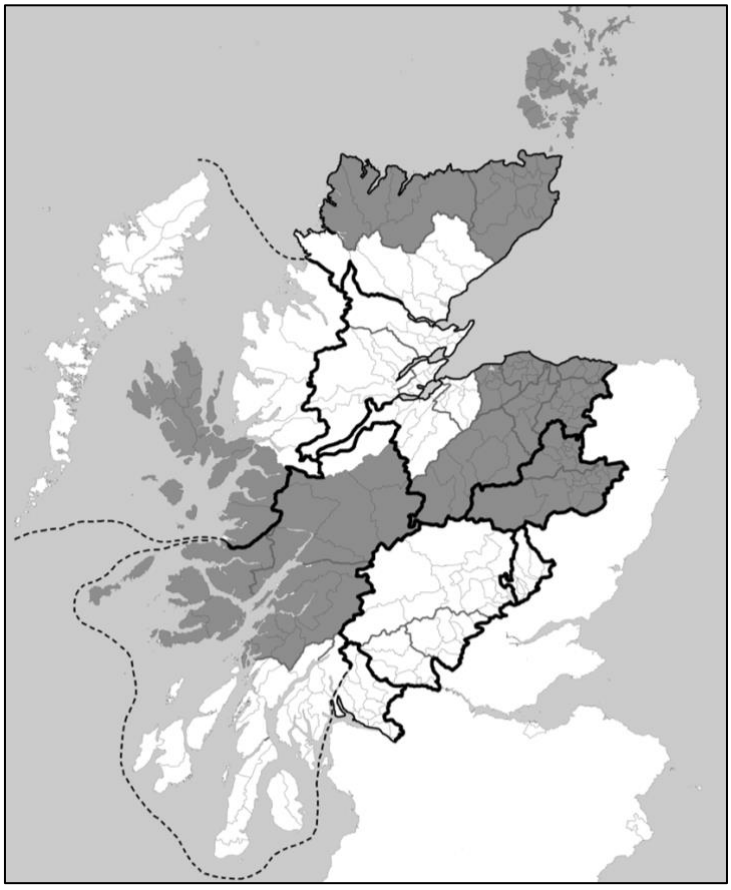
in law are obliged and should be made to pay the schoolmasters Sallary'. Moreover, these schools would tend only to benefit the rich who already lived nearby or who could afford to board their children, whereas for 'the poor that Live at a distance from the school or are not able to maintain their Children unless they [walk] to them, it would be of no Benefite'. This foreshadows later disputes between the SSPCK and heritors, which contributed in part to the Society's decision to withhold charitable assistance from parishes that lacked parochial schools. Robertson's final point was that parochial schools 'would be of very Litle use for the Conversion of popish Children', as they would remain under the influence of their parents and Catholic priests.[22] Following consideration by a dedicated subcommittee, further discussion of these proposals was delayed until funds increased and the educational situation elsewhere in the Highlands was better understood by the Society.[23] In January 1710, the SSPCK published a list of *Proposals*, intended first and foremost to attract further donations. The document pledged that the Society would establish schools 'in such Places of Scotland, especially the Highlands and Islands, as shall be found to need them most', where those who were unable to pay would not only receive instruction for free, but would also receive 'further Encouragement as the Society shall think fit'.[24]

While the financial situation of the Society was still being ascertained, in March 1710 the Committee was tasked with finding 'fitt Wayes of getting true information concerning the State of the Highlands and Islands and where it is most needful first to settle schools'.[25] At the Committee meeting which followed, it was resolved that the matter should be laid before the next meeting of the General Assembly. In his capacity as both SSPCK clerk and agent to the Church of Scotland, Nicol Spence was appointed to draft the petition with the advice of the ministers on the Committee, namely William Carstares, Neil MacVicar and William Wishart.[26] The petition asked Highland synods to send reports to the SSPCK Secretary John Dundas concerning the state of their bounds, detailing which parishes required more than one school and their length and breadth; which parishes had more than one place of public worship and whether these stood on different islands; whether there was a school for each kirk or island, or any person teaching children to read; whether there were any catechists and, if not, where catechists would be required; and in which parishes there was a Catholic presence.[27] The broad range of questions suggests that this enquiry was not simply an attempt to find suitable locations for schools, but also a potentially unprecedented

[22] Ibid., 21.
[23] Ibid, 29–30 (11 Nov 1709).
[24] NRS, GD95/10/40.
[25] NRS, GD95/1/1, 59 (16 Mar 1710).
[26] NRS, GD95/2/1, 93 (20 Mar 1710), 94 (4 Apr 1710).
[27] NRS, GD95/1/1, 66–7 (13 Apr 1710).

project to collate geographical and religious information in one place, in order to better visualise the conditions and ecclesiastical situation in the Highlands. The issue of Gaelic is notable by its absence, but some responses did draw attention towards parishes where Gaelic was spoken by a majority.

Map 4. Scope of the 1710 Highland Synod Survey and Schools Requested



SYNOD	PRESBYTERY	# SCHOOLS
Aberdeen	Kincardine O'Neil	6
Aberdeen	Alford	4
Argyll	Skye	22
Argyll	Lorn	26
Moray	Elgin	5
Moray	Abernethy	5
Moray	Aberlour	7
Moray	Strathbogie	4
Moray	Forres	2
Orkney	North Isles	10
Orkney	Kirkwall	20
Sutherland & Caithness	Caithness	21

Sources: NRS, CH2/449/5, 100; CH2/312/1, 137; CH2/557/5, 121; CH2/840/2, 220–1; CH2/271/4, 278–80; NRS, CH2/1080/1, 91–3; CH2/345/1, 146–9.

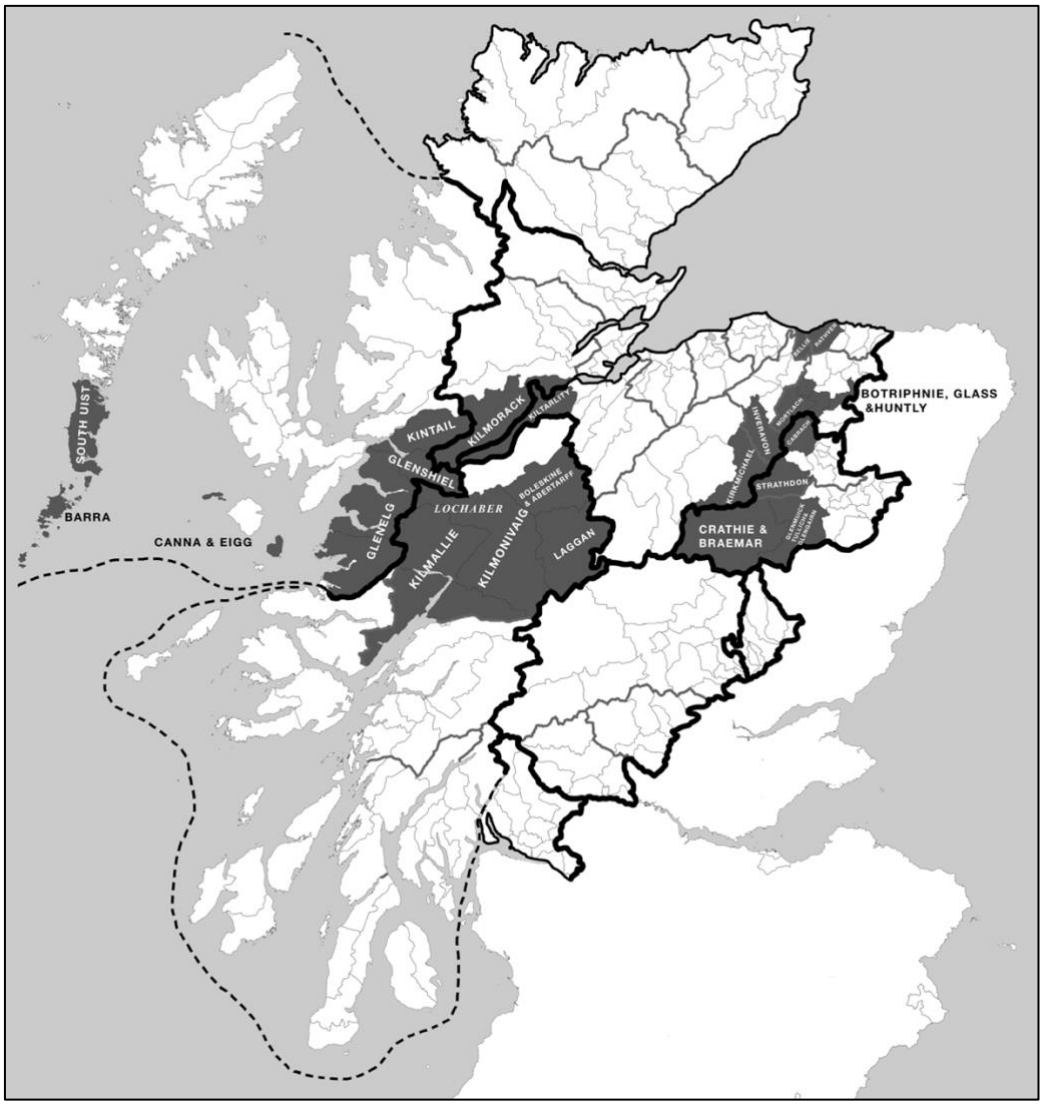
On 10 May 1710 the General Assembly ordered Highland synods to send reports to John Dundas by 1 April 1711.[28] While the copies that were sent to Dundas have not yet come to light, fully transcribed returns have been found in the registers of the Synods of Moray (excluding the Presbytery of Inverness), Aberdeen, Sutherland and Caithness, and Orkney. While the registers of the Synods of Argyll, and Perth and Stirling refer to the composition of their reports, they do not contain full transcriptions.[29] The returns not only reveal the contemporary concerns of ministers in different parts of the Highlands, but also how these ministers understood the Society's remit before any schools were settled. As space does not permit a comprehensive discussion of these detailed reports, it will suffice here to focus specifically on requests for schools. The Synod of Argyll, which was relatively well provided for schools, ordered reports only from the Presbyteries of Skye and Lorne, where there was a substantial Catholic presence. However, while the Catholic population was concentrated mainly in Knoydart and Lochaber, the reports named a total of 48 locations unconfined to the 'popish bounds'.[30] The Synod of Aberdeen named six locations across five parishes. Reflecting the influence of Revs Fergusson and Robertson, the most prominent among these were the united parishes of Crathie and Braemar, and Glenmuick, Tullich and Glengairn, which required two schools each, due to both the size of the parishes and the presence of Catholic priests. The return also stated that 'these five parishes are Highland, & the Irish language prevails most in them'.[31] The Synod of Moray requested 23 schools in total, mainly to increase coverage in its larger parishes, but also to combat Catholicism in the parishes of Bellie, Kirkmichael and Inveravon in the estates of the Catholic Dukes of Gordon.[32] The language spoken in these parishes is not mentioned. The Synod of Orkney and the Synod of Sutherland and Caithness met together at Kirkwall on 24 July 1710 to compile their report. While the threat of Catholicism does not factor in any of the presbyterial returns, the Synods' report demonstrates a strong demand for schools on the part of ministers. Perhaps rather brazenly, the report identified 51 locations in need of schools across 33 parishes – 21 for the Presbytery of Caithness, 20 for the Presbytery of Kirkwall, and 10 for the Presbytery of North Isles.[33] The report from Caithness mentioned that the

[28] 1710 General Assembly Act XI.
[29] While the Synod of Perth and Stirling ordered presbyteries to complete reports on 11th October 1710, no reference has been found after this date. The Synod of Ross reported in April 1711 that it had not yet received any reports from presbyteries. NRS, CH2/449/5, Synod of Perth and Stirling Minutes, 100; CH2/312/1, 137.
[30] NRS, CH2/557/5, 121 (3 Aug 1711); ICA, Bundle 753.
[31] NRS, CH2/840/2, 220–1 (28 Oct 1710).
[32] NRS, CH2/271/4, Synod of Moray Minutes, 278–81 (1 Nov 1710). The Presbytery of Forres did not respond as it communicated directly with the SSPCK via its correspondents' board.
[33] NRS, CH2/1080/1, Synod of Orkney Minutes, 91–3 (24 Jul 1710); CH2/345/1, Synod of Sutherland and Caithness Minutes, 146–9 (24 Jul 1710).

inhabitants in the parishes of Durness and Farr were 'all Irish'. It is also stated that there was a mortification for a school on the island of Burray, and it was proposed that, if the Society could make this effectual, the island would not require a charity school.[34]

Of course, the Society was not in a financial position to answer these demands, nor would it be for most of the eighteenth century. In 1711 the Society had only raised £51 sterling (£612 Scots) of revenue.[35] This again raises questions regarding the ultimate purpose of the enquiry. The information was to prove useful to the SSPCK as its operations expanded, but it is almost certain that the Society was anticipating some form of government support for Highland education in the near future. Indeed, as will be discussed in chapter 5, when King George I appointed a Royal Commission in 1716 to enquire into the state of Highland education, the 1710 survey provided a convenient starting point for composing the commission's report. What the details of the survey do suggest is that several factors were taken into consideration by the SSPCK when determining locations for schools. While Gaelic-speaking areas may have been an implicit target, as Durkacz suggests, the enquiry demonstrates that parish size, distance from the parish church, parishes with multiple places of worship, and the presence of Catholicism were equally, if not more, important.[36]

[34] Ibid., 146.
[35] NRS, GD95/8/3, 1.
[36] Durkacz, 'Source of the Language Problem', 36.



Map 5. Highland districts with a reported Catholic presence c. 1711

In late-1710 the Society was suffering from donor fatigue, with new subscriptions slowing precipitously from nearly £800 in May to just £10 in October.[37] The General Meeting of 8 March 1711 urged the Committee to prepare proposals for settling schools, emphasising that this was necessary to attract further subscriptions at a time when they had nearly slowed to a halt: 'laying a right foundation and such as will be generally acceptable will much determine the success of this charitable undertaking'.[38] A dedicated subcommittee for schools was appointed to consider the Society's options and 'prepare distinct overtures about this to the Committee as soon as they can'.[39] The subcommittee's report was presented to the following General Meeting of 7 June 1711. The influence of Nicol Spence, the Society's clerk, underpinned the report's composition. On 26 March Spence wrote to Alexander MacLeod and John Campbell, both members of the schools' subcommittee, setting forth his own proposals in light of the Society's current financial position. Spence stated plainly that

[37] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 134–5.
[38] NRS, GD95/1/1, 110 (8 Mar 1711)
[39] NRS, GD95/2/1, 187 (9 Mar 1711).

'the Societies funds will not as yet answer so far as to Erect fixed schools in many places'.[40] The 1710 survey had made it clear that the demand for additional schools, even in the limited portion of the Highlands represented in the survey, far exceeded the Society's ability to supply. At the start of 1711 the Society's stock stood at £3093/12/2, which according to the Rev. James Robertson's calculations was enough to fund only one hospital school. Spence, however, believed 'it would be disobliging & discourageing to many if any one Corner should get the whole advantage of the money Contributed', and argued:

> that it may tend much to the procureing of more Contributions, to make this designe as extensive as the Societie can, even at the beginning. It is proposed that the Societie Declare they resolve to begin yr work very soon.[41]

Eager to maintain the support of the Highland church courts which had already engaged with the Society, Spence proposed setting up 13 schools distributed evenly among them: two between the Synods of Ross and Sutherland; two each for the Synods of Moray, Aberdeen and Perth; one for Abertarff; two for the Presbyteries of Skye and Lorne; and one each for Orkney and Shetland. Spence also argued that initially teachers should only be employed for a year at a time, which would allow the Society to assess their reliability and move schools that did not meet expectations. Each teacher was to have a salary of 200 merks, coming to a total of 2400 merks (£140 sterling) yearly. By this method, Spence argued, 'the Societie will in a short time know what places of the Countrey [their] designe is lyke to meet with the best encouragement'.[42] While acknowledging that these proposals did not adhere fully to the promises made in the Society's letters patent or the *Proposals* of 1710, Spence admitted that:

> neither will the societies present fond answer any further; the long delaying to do something towards the beginning the work, does very much stop the monies coming in, whereas if there be some essays made of beginning, it will stop the mouths of some who spread false reports about this fond, and will remove the fears of friends and [there]by encourage many to contribute.[43]

While the content of these 'false reports' is not stated, a letter from Rev. Adam Fergusson of Braemar shows that his parishioners, drawing on past experiences, were worried that their donations might be embezzled:

> all refuse to advance [their donations] untill they see the funds already brought in applyed, it being [their] honour to disbelieve what they hear by report only,

[40] NRS, GD95/10/34, Proposals relative to carrying out the designs of the Society (26 Mar 1711).
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

> and [being] frequently deceived by the misapplying of some collections made already for bridges & other pious works.[44]

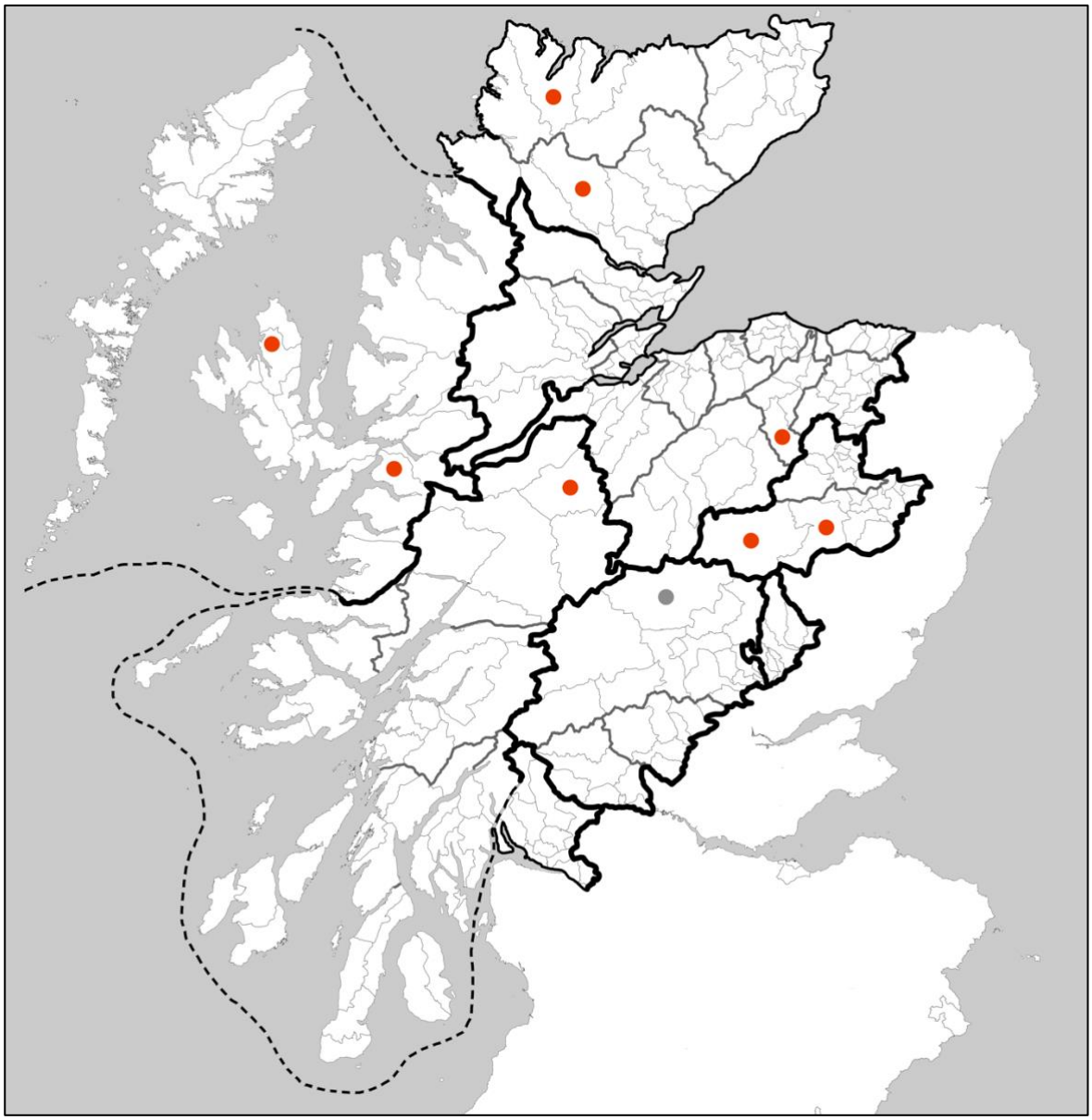
In this respect, Spence was probably steering the Committee away from more ambitious and potentially risky proposals, such as establishing hospital schools, in favour of a more realistic scheme that would ensure the continued support of the localities which had already engaged with the Society. As we shall see, the scheme of schools eventually agreed to by the General Meeting bore a striking resemblance to Spence's proposals.

When the Committee's report was tabled at the General Meeting of 7 June 1711, members were presented with two options then considered to be within the Society's means. The first option was to establish two hospital schools in the borders of the 'Countreys where papists do most abound'. These were each to have a fund of £1000 Scots (£83/6/8 sterling) per annum, including 500 merks (£29/3/4 sterling) for the teacher's salary and 1000 merks (£58/6/8 sterling) for maintaining ten Catholic children at the schools. When funds increased the Society could elect either to maintain more students or settle more schools. The report warned, however, that the Society would be unable to pay for the materials and construction of hospital schools under this scheme. A suggested solution was to reduce the teacher's salary to £20 sterling (£240 Scots), freeing up the remainder to rent a schoolhouse. The alternative proposal, if hospitals 'shall be thought improper at this time, Considering the smallness of the Societies stock', was that the Society fund as many free parochial schools as its revenue would allow, with schoolmasters receiving salaries of 400 to 500 merks (£23/6/8 to £29/3/4 sterling). Because of Nicol Spence's influence, not to mention the careful wording of the proposals which emphasised the Society's limited resources, the General Meeting voted in favour of establishing free parochial schools. This provides a corrective to Durkacz's language-centric presumption that, by pursuing parochial schools, 'the directors were looking to the greater chance which they hoped the local school teachers would have in introducing the English language to the Highlands.'[45] While Gaelic may have been one factor, local demand was far more important; there was a felt need to be seen to be doing something in as many localities as possible, both to reassure these localities and to attract more donations. To obviate the problems of Catholic attendance and the inability of many families to afford boarding, the Committee was appointed to discuss 'What encouragements ought to be given to the masters and schoolars or otherwayes to be bestowed for supporting of the same […] by takeing the whole burden of cloathing and maintainance of them'.[46]

[44] NRS, GD124/20/18/6.
[45] Durkacz, *Decline*, 54.
[46] NRS, GD95/1/1, 112–4 (7 Jun 1711).

In June 1711, the Committee provisionally determined that the Society could afford to maintain nine schools – seven between the mainland and the Western Isles, each with a salary of 400 merks, and one each for Orkney and Shetland with salaries of £100 Scots (£8/6/8 sterling).[47] The scheme was finalised on 31 July. By reducing the ordinary salary from 400 to 300 merks (£17/10/0 sterling), the total number of schools could be increased to 11 – one each for Skye, Glenelg, Abertarff, and Perthshire; two each for Sutherland and Aberdeenshire; and three between Orkney and Shetland.[48] Despite more ambitious proposals early on, of building and furnishing schoolhouses and paying maintenance to scholars, at this juncture the Society could only afford to undertake the duty of 'appoint[ing] fit schoolmasters to the several schools'.[49] The responsibility for building schoolhouses was put on local heritors, and the Committee was asked to 'deal with the Heritors in those bounds to provide convenient houses'.[50] Presbyteries were tasked with the oversight of schools: they were to conduct regular inspections and return reports concerning the schoolmaster's conduct and the progress of scholars.[51] The Society determined that schools were to remain in their stations for a minimum of two years, presumably to ensure that scholars were allowed to make adequate progress. After two years, they were to be moved to another station based on advice from presbyteries and local correspondents (see table 3). However, the Society reserved the right to relocate and remove schools at its own discretion and required that schools were not to be relocated without the Society's consent.[52] The Society sought to maintain strict control over the locations of its schools and, as discussed further below, this would be tested on several occasions between 1711 and 1715.

[47] NRS, GD95/2/1, (8 Jun 1711), 196–7.
[48] Ibid., 208 (31 Jul 1711).
[49] Ibid., 209 (2 Aug 1711)
[50] Ibid.
[51] NRS, GD95/2/1, 205–6 (20 Jul 1711).
[52] NRS, GD95/1/1, 120 (31 July 1711)



Map 6. Locations of the first SSPCK schools proposed in 1711 (from north to south: Durness, Lairg, Earlish in Skye, Glenlivet in Inveravon, Glenelg, Abertarff, Auchintoull in Glengairn, Castleton of Braemar, and Blair Atholl). They grey marker represents Blair Atholl, where local difficulties delayed the settlement of a school until 1716.

Locations

This chapter now turns to the localities. The influence of local agents, particularly those who had already engaged with the Society, played the most significant role in determining the locations of the first 11 schools. The Duke of Atholl's position as a founding member—although largely symbolic, as he played no role in the Society's management—secured the settlement of a school 'for his Highland Countrey'.[53] Indeed, when the first list of locations was tabled, it was specified that the school in Perthshire was to be set up 'in some part of the duke of Athole's Highlands'.[54] Jean Weem, the dowager Countess of Sutherland, had

[53] NRS, GD95/2/1, 196–7 (8 Jun 1711), 210 (31 Jul 1711)
[54] Ibid., 197.

entrusted the SSPCK with a mortification of 5000 merks (£291/13/4 sterling) specifically for maintaining schools in the 'Shirrifdome of Sutherland and country of Strathnaver'.[55] The presence of Alexander MacLeod on the Committee was a key determinant in the allocation of schools for Glenelg and Skye, both areas of MacLeod influence. As a legal agent of the clan, Alexander provided a reliable point of contact between the Society in Edinburgh and the MacLeod gentry, particularly through the influence of his brother John, the Tutor of MacLeod. As will be discussed further below, MacLeod involvement became more apparent in 1713 when the Committee met with members of the MacLeod gentry to discuss the state of schools in the Presbytery of Skye.[56] The influence of the clan was attested further in 1716, when Rev. Archibald MacQueen of Snizort proposed the transplantation of the then faltering Glenelg school to 'some [other] part of the McLeods interest'.[57] Of course, the Clan MacLeod's support for the established Church of Scotland also mattered, as did the presence of Presbyterian ministers of local origin in Skye and Glenelg shortly after the Revolution.[58]

There was a documented Catholic presence in the parish of Abertarff from the 1670s. In the same decade, local efforts to establish a parochial school failed, 'in regard the townes in the parishe were remote from one from the other, and that they had no convenience of boarding children'.[59] The school established in 1701 under the town council and reformation societies of Edinburgh ultimately foundered, once again due to disagreements between local gentry concerning the location of the schoolhouse.[60] On 21 May 1711 Rev. George Monro of Nigg in Ross-shire appealed to the Committee to settle another school in Abertarff, or elsewhere in the Aird of Inverness, to remedy the Catholic presence in the region.[61] At the time, the principal heritor in Abertarff was Roderick MacKenzie, Lord Prestonhall, who had recently conveyed the Lovat estates to himself following the departure of the former heir, Simon Fraser, in 1702.[62] After meeting with SSPCK Committee member Alexander MacLeod, Prestonhall engaged to build both a bridge and a schoolhouse near the church of Abertarff, to serve both the Protestants on the north side of the Tarff water and the Catholics to the south.[63] The settlement was complicated in January 1712 by the death of Prestonhall. Afterwards, his heir, Alexander MacKenzie of Fraserdale, took responsibility for the parish.

---

[55] Ibid., 134-5 (5 Jul 1710)
[56] NRS, GD95/2/1, 343 (16 Oct 1713).
[57] NRS, GD95/2/2, 107 (3 May 1716).
[58] MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, 20.
[59] Kennedy, 'Condition of the Restoration Church', 325; Donald MacLean, *The Counter-Reformation in Scotland, 1560–1930* (London, 1931), 196; 'Lists of Popish Parents and their Children in Various Districts of Scotland, 1701–1705' in *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*, iii, 387–441; MacKay, *Education in the Highlands*, 16.
[60] NLS, MS 1954, 23.
[61] NRS, GD95/2/1, 194 (21 May 1711).
[62] Lenman, *Jacobite Clans*, 68.
[63] NRS, GD95/2/1, 229 (30 Oct 1711); GD95/1/1, 127 (11 Nov 1711).

However, Fraserdale was then in London serving as MP for Inverness-shire and was thus unable to govern affairs effectively in Abertarff. A teacher was eventually sent to Abertarff in October 1712, following a reassurance from Fraserdale that both schoolhouse and bridge had been built.[64] However, when the teacher arrived in his post, he found that neither structure was in place.[65]

The influence of the ministers and gentry of Highland Aberdeenshire is perhaps the most well-documented. Revs Fergusson and Robertson, ministers in Braemar and Glenmuick, were early engagers who corresponded with the Society and its antecedent body, the General Assembly's Christian Knowledge Committee. Both men campaigned fervently, in their parishes and among their personal connections, to raise funds and awareness for the Society in the hope of securing schools for their localities. In collaboration with Fergusson and Robertson, early in 1711 Lord James Erskine of Grange—Lord Justice Clerk and brother to the earl of Mar—carried out an enquiry amongst the gentry of Highland Aberdeenshire regarding SSPCK schools.[66] Grange received returns from both ministers, and the earl of Mar's three chamberlains, John Sinnehard, James Gordon of Glenbucket and Charles Gordon of Abergeldie.[67] Drawing on these returns, Grange sent his own memorial to SSPCK secretary John Dundas, which argued that at least two schools were needed for Aberdeenshire:

> to serve Kindrochat [Braemar], Crathie, Glengarden, Corgarff, & Strathaven […] being certainly the places in the extreamest necessity of any in […] the highlands of Scotland, both on account of the Ignorance of the people & the great growth of Popery among them.[68]

The ministers and gentry of Aberdeenshire wrote in favour of operating schools on an ambulatory basis, at least until the Society's funds increased, and recommended that schools be relocated yearly. However, considering that many pupils at the schools would be monoglot Gaels who would 'in effect have our [English] Language to learn […] so must make slower progress' and may forget what they learn, Grange suggested that schoolmasters should return to their previous location for 'a month or 6 weeks in it each year thereafter'.[69] Grange signed off his letter by drawing attention to the enthusiastic support the Society had received in Highland Aberdeenshire:

---

[64] Ibid., 279 (3 Oct 1712).
[65] Ibid., 223 (30 Oct 1711), 254 (18 Mar 1712); 301 (2 Mar 1713).
[66] NRS, GD95/2/1, 208 (31 Jul 1711); GD124/20/18, Papers concerning the SSPCK and their power to erect and maintain schools (1711).
[67] NRS, GD124/20/18/5–10.
[68] NRS, GD124/20/18/4, /11.
[69] NRS, GD124/20/18/4.

> Next [to] no comonality in the highlands contributed so chearfully for this good Work as many there did; it being informed that severals of the tenants & Country people gave in, some ten shillings, some a Crown, some half a Crown, according as they were able; & it were a pity not to encourage them, & make them reap the benefit peculiarly of their charitable disposition.[70]

Grange's appeal was successful, moving the Society to add a second school for Aberdeenshire when the scheme was finalised on 31 July 1711.[71]

One corollary of local influence was that schools tended to be settled in predominantly Protestant districts.[72] As the 1710 survey had confirmed, Catholicism was not an issue in Sutherland, Caithness or the Northern Isles. Nor was it an issue in the Duke of Atholl's estates in Highland Perthshire. Yet, even in parishes which contained a sizeable Catholic population, the earliest SSPCK schools tended to be situated in areas where Protestants were a majority. In Skye, while the only parish with a notable Catholic presence, Kilmuir-in-Trotternish, contained between 11 and 50 Catholic families, the first SSPCK school on the island was settled at Earlish in the parish of Snizort, and catered only for Protestants.[73] In 1705 the districts of Knoydart and Morar, in the southern portion of Glenelg parish, contained approximately 700 Catholics, and only four Protestants, but the SSPCK school was settled at the church of Glenelg in the MacLeod-dominated, Protestant north of the parish. The proportion of Catholics in Abertarff was much smaller, yet the school was settled to the north of the water of Tarff, which was inaccessible to the Catholics to the south without a bridge. Of the 1600 persons in Crathie and Braemar, 400 (25%) were Catholics, yet the first school was settled near the parish church in Castleton on the estate of the Protestant John Farquharson of Invercauld.[74]

---

[70] Ibid.
[71] NRS, GD95/2/1, 208 (31 Jul 1711).
[72] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 175.
[73] Alasdair Roberts, 'Roman Catholicism in the Highlands' in James Kirk (ed.) *The Church in the Highlands* (Edinburgh, 1998), 74–7; Peter McNeill and Hector MacQueen (eds), *Atlas of Scottish History to 1707* (Edinburgh, 1996), 410.
[74] 'Lists of Popish Parents and their Children, 1701–1705', 425, 431; MacLean, *Counter-Reformation in Scotland*, 196; Fiona MacDonald, *Missions to the Gaels: Reformation and Counter-reformation in Ulster and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, 1560–1760* (Edinburgh, 2006), 172, 262; NRS, GD95/2/1, 301 (2 Mar 1713); NRS, GD95/124/20/18.

Table 2. SSPCK Lay Correspondents and Supporters in Localities, 1709–1715

PLACE	CORRESPONDENTS
Highland Aberdeenshire	James Erskine, Lord Grange
	John Farquharson of Invercauld
	Kenneth MacKenzie of Dalmore
	Lewis Farquharson of Auchindryne
	William MacDonald of Renatton
	Charles Gordon of Abergeldie
	James Gordon of Glenbucket
Highland Perthshire	John Murray, Duke of Atholl
Sutherland & Caithness	Jean Weem, Dowager Countess of Sutherland
	William Gordon, Lord Strathnaver
	George MacKay, Lord Reay
Gairloch	Colin MacKenzie of Findon, Tutor of Gairloch
	'Gentlemen and heritors of Gairloch'
Presbytery of Skye	John MacLeod of Contullich, Tutor of MacLeod
	Roderick MacLeod 'of Einzie'
	Donald MacLeod of Sandwick
	Donald MacLeod of Ullinish
	'Other gentlemen in the Presbytery'
Abertarff	Roderick MacKenzie, Lord Prestonhall
	Alexander MacKenzie of Fraserdale
Glenlivet	John Stewart of Drumin
	Alexander Gordon, Marquess of Huntly
	John Grant of Tomnavoulin

Sources: NRS, GD95/1/1; GD95/2/1–2.

At this point the main priority of local agents—and indeed that of the SSPCK—was to improve educational facilities to confirm Protestants where they already existed, particularly in areas where there was a neighbouring Catholic population or a missionary presence. This is significant, given the Society's publicised commitment to eliminating 'popery' in the Highlands. From the perspective of local ministers and heritors, anti-Catholic rhetoric could serve as an expedient to attract support from the SSPCK, thereby securing highly qualified, university-educated schoolmasters for parishes which had previously struggled to attract or afford such individuals. However, the large-scale conversion of Catholic was not a practical priority at this point. From the Society's point of view, the successful settlement and positive reception of the early schools was of utmost importance, as it would play a large part in determining the future course of the Society. By taking the interests of early engagers and prominent members into account, the SSPCK stood to benefit from the civil support and influence they could offer in their respective localities. Local agents proved crucial for settling schools and encouraging parents to send their children to them, and the Society could not afford to disappoint local agents, gentry or clergy, who were supportive of its project.

Schoolmasters

The Society began its search for teachers in June 1711. The Committee was asked to find:

> fit persons to teach these schools viz. men of piety, prudence and gravity, who understand and can speak, read and write both English and Irish languages, and who can write a fair hand and do understand the rules of arithmetick, and can cipher exactly and readily.[75]

The first ports of call were the universities and Highland presbyteries. John Dundas wrote to presbyteries and to the principals of the University of Glasgow, and Kings College and Marischal College in Aberdeen requesting recommendations.[76] Students and recent graduates from the College of Edinburgh were recommended by Rev. Neil MacVicar and Prof. William Hamilton, minister of Edinburgh's West Kirk and professor of divinity at the college respectively.[77] Advertisements were also printed in newspapers, such as Edinburgh's *The Scots Courant*.[78] Over 30 candidates had been put forward by 1712, demonstrating that teaching positions were in high demand early on – the Society had more applicants than it could afford to employ. However, most were university-educated Gaels ultimately bound for the ministry, a fact that raised obvious issues with regard to employee retention. Other candidates were underpaid or underemployed teachers, drawn by the promise of steady employment and the relatively generous salary of 300 merks (£17/10/0 sterling). Most of these, like John MacPherson in Skye, John Hunter in Aberdeenshire and William Gordon in Sutherland, were career schoolmasters already operating in the locations they were intending to serve on the Society's payroll. Adam Marjorybanks and William Drummond, on the other hand, were Lowland schoolmasters, from Fife and Berwickshire respectively, simply looking for employment.[79]

Initially, candidates were required to travel to Edinburgh for examination before the Committee, bringing with them certificates from their home presbyteries attesting to their qualifications and moral character.[80] Once settled in their stations it was expected that presbyteries would ensure that schoolmasters signed the Confession of Faith, a legal requirement for teachers after 1690.[81] In June 1712 the Committee was empowered to appoint schoolmasters without requiring their presence in Edinburgh. Presbyteries were

[75] NRS, GD95/2/1, 197 (8 Jun 1711).
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., 241 (21 Dec 1711), 281 (25 Oct 1712).
[78] *Scots Courant* (11 Sep 1711, 5 Oct 1711, 9 Nov 1711).
[79] NRS, GD95/2/1, 291 (2 Jan 1713), 294 (23 Jan 1713), 237 (30 Nov 1711), 257 (14 Apr 1712), 267 (13 Jun 1712); B12/5/1, Culross Burgh Register of Deeds, 10–12 (12 Nov 1713). The deed describes 'Mr William Drummond, schoolmaster at Comrie'. Adam Marjoribanks was the SSPCK schoolmaster in Shetland. William Drummond was a candidate for the school at Lairg. See *Cowper*, 78.
[80] NRS, GD95/2/1, 198 (15 Jun 1711)
[81] RPS, 1690/4/80.

required only to send specimens of the candidate's handwriting and arithmetic. While this policy was introduced to expedite the settlement of schools and avoid unnecessary travel costs for schoolmasters already *in situ*, it may have initially been intended only for schoolmasters in areas deemed less politically suspect. The minutes specify that 'it would be inconvenient to require persons in Orkney, Strathnaver and Dornoch who are already examined and attested by their own Presbyteries to come to Edinburgh'.[82] Before this policy was introduced, Donald MacLeod and John MacPherson from Skye had to make the long journey to the capital.[83] Nevertheless, the Committee's concurrence with local appointments became the norm after 1712.

Table 3. SSPCK Schools and Schoolmasters outwith Orkney and Shetland, 1709–1714

	LOCATION	TEACHER	PLACE OF ORIGIN	PLACE OF OPERATION
1711	Braemar	Mr. John Hunter[a]	Aberdeenshire	Aberdeenshire
	Blair Atholl[b]	Mr. John Clow*	Perthshire	Perthshire
1712	Glengairn	Mr. John Clow*	Perthshire	Aberdeenshire
		Mr. James Jamieson	Lanarkshire	Aberdeenshire
	Lairg	Mr. William Gordon*	Sutherland	Sutherland
	Durness	William MacKay*	Sutherland	Sutherland
	Skye	Mr. John MacPherson*	Skye	Skye
		Mr. Kenneth Bethune*	Skye	Skye
		Mr. John McIver*	Lewis	Skye
	Glenelg	Mr. Donald MacLeod*	Skye	Skye
	Abertarff	Mr. Patrick Nicolson*	Skye	Abertarff
1713	Braemar	Mr. Alexander Glass*	Argyll	Aberdeenshire
		Mr. John Clow*	Perthshire	Aberdeenshire
	Glenlivet (Inveravon)	Mr. David Strang*	Angus	Aberlour
1714	Gairloch	John Robertson*	Sutherland	Ross-shire
	Kildonan	George Henderson*	Sutherland	Sutherland

Sources: Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 178; NRS, GD95/1/1; GD95/2/1–2. Schoolmasters' locations of origin are based on presbyterial certificates and references in the SSPCK minutes. The title 'Mr' indicates that schoolmasters held a university degree. * Indicates schoolmasters confirmed to have had Gaelic. [a]The school at Braemar was not operational until 1713 as John Hunter was not employed by the Society. [b]The school at Blair Atholl was not operational until 1716 as John Clow refused to serve under the episcopal incumbent there.

This chapter now turns to the teachers themselves, examining their backgrounds, their qualifications, how they came to be employed by the Society, how long they served in their respective stations, and what they went on to achieve. The first candidate for the school at Braemar was John Hunter, recommended to the Society in February 1712 by Lord Grange, Rev. Adam Fergusson and Charles Gordon of Abergeldie, the earl of Mar's chamberlain.[84]

[82] NRS, GD95/1/1, 160–1 (5 Jun 1712); GD95/2/1, 267 (13 Jun 1712).
[83] Ibid., 265 (16 May 1712), 250 (4 Jul 1712).
[84] Ibid., 248 (4 Feb 1712).

Hunter already served as the parochial schoolmaster of Braemar, and the heritors in the parish were eager to ensure his continued work under the auspices of the SSPCK.[85] Before his recommendation to the SSPCK, Hunter appeared before the Lord Grange bearing a letter from Kenneth MacKenzie of Dalmore and Lewis MacKenzie of Auchindryne, which requested that:

> Mr John Hunter who is our present Schoolmaster might be preferred before [others] because we think him not only qualified for it, but he is of such a good compleasant humour and waits so well upon his duty, [and that] he is well beloved by the whole countrie.[86]

He was a university graduate; however, he was not a fluent Gaelic-speaker, which was a cause for concern for the Society. It prompted a letter to the Presbytery of Kincardine O' Neil to ensure that Hunter was suitable for the post.[87] As noted in chapter one, local agents were unconcerned with his lack of Gaelic. Dalmore and Auchindryne wrote:

> as for his want of the Irish language, if it be necessary, he can in a short time attain to it: but it is more advantageous for this place [that] he want it Since we are obleidged to send our Children to ye Low country to Learn ye English.[88]

Rev. Fergusson remarked of Braemar 'that the method of teaching in these countrys is to teach them to read English first, even tho' they do not understand it'.[89] The problem, however, was that Hunter refused to sign the Confession of Faith; this led both Grange and Fergusson to decide he was unsuited to the task.[90] Consequently, at Rev. Fergusson's urging the Lord Grange wrote to the Society specifically requesting that a Gaelic-speaking schoolmaster be sent in Hunter's place.[91]

John MacPherson was the first SSPCK teacher in Skye, taking up his station at Earlish in Snizort in May 1712.[92] His father, Dugald MacPherson (1648–1717) was the last Episcopal incumbent of Duirnish in Skye.[93] Before entering the Society's employment, John MacPherson had already established himself as reputable teacher on the island. He had taught at the grammar school of Dunvegan from 1705, where he gained a reputation for his

[85] NRS, GD124/15/1056.
[86] Ibid. It is worth noting that the Farquharsons of Auchindryne, a known Jacobite family, sponsored the Jesuit mission in Upper-Deeside. See Alasdair Roberts, 'Gregor MacGregor (1681–1740) and the Highland Problem in the Scottish Mission', *IR*, 39 (1988), 84.
[87] NRS, GD124/15/1056.
[88] Ibid.
[89] NRS, GD124/15/1051/1.
[90] Fagg, 'Complaints and Clamours', 301.
[91] NRS, GD124/15/1051/2.
[92] NRS, GD95/2/1 265 (16 May 1712).
[93] *Fasti*, vii, 168.

high standard of teaching and keen knowledge of classical languages. His high repute resulted in his recommendation to the SSPCK by the Presbytery of Skye in 1711.[94] The papers of the MacLeods of Contullich reveal that MacPherson received only 75 merks per year teaching at Dunvegan, whereas the Society promised a much more generous salary of 300 merks.[95] In this respect, MacPherson may simply have been responding to the Society's more lucrative offer. Nonetheless, only a year after his appointment in May 1713, MacPherson resigned his post, having other business to attend to, including 'the duty to his [presumably deceased] Brother's family which lyes upon him'.[96] He was employed again by the SSPCK in 1717, when the Skye school was stationed in Bracadale, until he once again resigned in 1723.[97]

The first two Sutherland schoolmasters, William MacKay and William Gordon, were also both working as teachers when they were recommended to the Society.[98] MacKay was recommended by Lord Reay in January 1712 for the school at Durness in Strathnaver, and had a certificate from the Presbytery of Caithness.[99] Although MacKay had not received a university degree, he was the only SSPCK teacher confirmed to be able to read Kirk's Bible and, as discussed below, he was the first to confront the Society with the issue of Gaelic books in 1713.[100] In January 1715, he reported to the Society regarding the nearby school at Eriboll, which was run by his daughter, where many scholars 'read in the Bible, and can turn the Irish Bible into English', which did not prompt questioning from the Society.[101] As Ellen Beard has pointed out, the school at Eriboll was where the Gaelic poet Rob Donn MacKay (1714–1778) received the rudiments of formal education under the supervision of William's son, John MacKay.[102] William Mackay continued working for the SSPCK in Strathnaver until his death in 1722.[103] William Gordon, teacher at Lairg, was certified by the Presbytery of Dornoch and recommended by Lord Strathnaver. He secured the post in June 1712 when the original candidate, William Drummond from Fife, stopped responding to the Society.[104] Gordon was university-educated, although his alma mater is uncertain. Lord Strathnaver, the sole heritor in Lairg, appears to have been a regular patron of William Gordon's and possibly a kinsman of his. In 1717 for example, Strathnaver attempted—unsuccessfully as it turned

[94] MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, 228; NRS, GD95/2/1, 228 (19 Oct 1711).
[95] Morison, 'Contullich Papers', 310–46. cf. Withrington 'Education in the 17th Century Highlands', 66.
[96] NRS, GD95/2/1, 301 (2 Mar 1713).
[97] Cowper, *SSPCK Schoolmasters*, 75.
[98] NRS, GD95/2/1, (13 Jun 1712), 51 (21 Jan 1715), 267 (13 Jun 1712).
[99] Ibid., 244 (11 Jan 1712).
[100] NRS, GD95/1/1, 183–4 (12 Mar 1713).
[101] NRS, GD95/2/2, 51 (21 Jan 1715).
[102] Ellen L. Beard, 'Satire and Social Change: The Bard, the Schoolmaster and the Drover', *Northern Scotland*, 8 (2016), 3.
[103] Cowper, *SSPCK Schoolmasters*, 63.
[104] NRS, GD95/2/1, 267 (13 Jun 1712).

out—to install Gordon as schoolmaster of Dornoch grammar school against the wishes of the kirk session.[105] The Presbytery of Dornoch and Lord Strathnaver recommended two more local teachers in 1714: George Henderson and John Robertson, who became schoolmasters at Kildonan and Gairloch respectively.[106] Neither of these teachers had university qualifications, yet both were native Gaelic-speakers who appear to have served the Society faithfully until their deaths in 1728 and 1756, respectively.[107]

Patrick Nicolson was the first SSPCK schoolmaster in Abertarff. He was born in Skye in 1692, the son of Donald Nicolson, the last Episcopalian minister of Kilmuir-in-Trotternish. Donald was ousted in 1696 and Patrick's brother, Alexander Nicolson, became the Episcopalian intruder in Kilmuir in 1715. Patrick graduated from Edinburgh College in February 1710. The following year, Prof. William Hamilton recommended him to the SSPCK. He was certified by the Presbytery of Edinburgh before his appointment to Abertarff in October 1712. He left the Society in the Autumn of 1715, having answered a call to the ministry of Kiltarlity, a post he would continue in until his death in 1761.[108]

Appointed in May 1712 when still studying for his degree at King's College, Donald MacLeod was the first SSPCK schoolmaster of Glenelg. His elder brother, Murdo MacLeod, was the minister of Glenelg from 1707 to 1755.[109] Donald was recommended to the Society by the Presbytery of Skye alongside John MacPherson. However, the influence of Clan MacLeod correspondents may have played a role in his appointment alongside his brother.[110] He left the Society in 1715 to complete his studies and undertake ministerial trials, eventually answering a call to the parish of Contin in 1720.[111]

Kenneth Bethune (Beaton) succeeded the first Skye schoolmaster, John MacPherson, in October 1713. Born at Bracadale in Skye in 1693, Kenneth graduated from the College of Glasgow in Autumn 1710 at the age of 17.[112] His grandfather was Angus Bethune of Husabost, a Doctor of Medicine in the Classical Gaelic tradition. Kenneth's father was Rev. John Bethune of Bracadale (*c.*1642–1708), a minister who had conformed to Presbyterianism in 1692.[113] Despite family links to the Classical literary and medical traditions, neither John nor Kenneth were able to read the Gaelic manuscripts left to them

[105] Charles D. Bentinck, *Dornoch Cathedral and Parish* (Inverness, 1926), 265.
[106] NRS, GD95/2/2, 12 (4 May 1714)
[107] Cowper, *SSPCK Schoolmasters*, 38, 89.
[108] *Fasti*, vii, 171; vi, 469; vii, 684; NRS, GD95/2/1, 230 (30 Oct 1711), 281 (25 Oct 1712); GD95/2/2, 48 (3 Jan 1715).
[109] NRS, GD95/2/1, 265 (16 May 1712); GD95/10/45; *Fasti*, vii, 168, 149.
[110] NRS, GD95/2/1, 228 (19 Oct 1711).
[111] NRS, GD95/2/2, 82 (5 Oct 1715), 102 (5 Apr 1716).
[112] ICA, Bundle 571.
[113] Bannerman, *Beatons*, 127; *Fasti*, vii, 166.

by Angus 'without the aid of one from Ireland'.[114] Kenneth's university education was paid for with the help of a bursary from the Synod of Argyll, and he was thus bound for the ministry.[115] When he graduated he worked as a teacher in Dunvegan, before the Presbytery of Skye selected him to replace John MacPherson at the SSPCK school in October 1713 – a *fait accompli* that the Society ultimately accepted.[116] Bethune had only been in his post seven months when the presbytery reported that he was undertaking ministerial trials. While the presbytery hoped that Kenneth would be able to retain his post and salary until he received a call from a parish, the Society assumed his success and began looking for his replacement.[117] Bethune was succeeded by John McIver, a Lewisman and Edinburgh graduate recommended by Prof. William Hamilton.[118]

A native of Perthshire, John Clow, offered his services to the Society in October 1711, with a certificate from the Presbytery of Auchterarder. Clow received a commission to the school of Blair Atholl in November 1711, with regard to his being 'one of that Countrey'. However, when he scrupled at serving under Blair Atholl's Episcopalian minister, he was quickly reassigned to Auchintoull in Glengairn, Aberdeenshire.[119] Clow was a university graduate, although the institution he attended is not stated. He was a Gaelic-speaker and used both English and Gaelic for instruction.[120] A dedicated teacher, Clow was full of ideas for improving the conduct of schools, for example advocating the translation of Allan's Catechism into Gaelic, recommending books to the Society, and penning a 'small plain and easie book concerning spelling, reading, writing, arithmetick, Music and other things he sees needfull to accomplish them'.[121] Clow's career with the Society was cut short in 1715, when his involvement in the Jacobite rising made his position untenable. He nevertheless continued to work as a teacher, appearing again in the Society's minutes in 1726 when he was briefly considered for a post at Rannoch.[122]

Alexander Glass, the first SSPCK schoolmaster at Braemar, applied to the Society in March 1713.[123] He was a university graduate and former bursar to the Synod of Argyll.[124] Initially the Society hoped to appoint Glass to Blair Atholl in the place of John Clow. However, pressure from the minister and heritors in Braemar ultimately moved the Society

---

[114] Bannerman, *Beatons*, 68–9, 127; Thomas Whyte, *An Historical and Genealogical Account of the Bethunes of the Island of Sky* (Edinburgh, 1778)., 6.
[115] ICA, Bundle 571.
[116] NRS, GD95/2/1, 343 (16 Oct 1713).
[117] NRS, GD95/2/2, 17 (21 May 1714).
[118] Ibid, 65 (21 Mar 1715), 68 (1 Apr 1715).
[119] NRS, GD95/2/1, 226 (4 Oct 1711), 236 (27 Nov 1711); BC, Box 45/9/185.
[120] NRS, GD95/1/1, 171–2 (6 Nov 1712).
[121] NRS, GD95/2/1, 354 (14 Jan 1714), 313 (11 May 1713); Simpson, *Education in Aberdeenshire*, 147–8.
[122] NRS, GD95/2/3, 411 (6 Oct 1726).
[123] NRS, GD95/2/1, 304 (20 Mar 1713).
[124] Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 170; NRS, CH2/557/4, 226 (21 Oct 1706).

once again to delay the settlement of the school at Blair Atholl.[125] His career with the Society was short-lived. Less than a year after his appointment, Rev. Adam Fergusson reported that not only had Glass 'fallen into the scandal of fornication', he had also refused to sign the Confession of Faith, a requirement for schoolmasters.[126]

David Strang was the first SSPCK schoolmaster at Glenlivet. Born in 1674, he was 38 years old when first recommended in 1712 by Rev. Neil MacVicar.[127] He was a Gaelic-speaker with a university education who had previously found employment in the Lowlands, working as a teacher in Dundee and then as a chaplain to 'a gentleman's family in Galloway'.[128] He served as a teacher in Glenlivet until 1716, when he resigned to serve as a missionary preacher for the Presbytery of Aberlour.[129]

Drawing on this evidence we can come to several conclusions regarding the first cadre of SSPCK schoolmasters. With the exceptions of the Sutherland schoolmasters William MacKay and George Henderson, all are confirmed to have achieved university degrees. Reflecting a largely conventional career trajectory for university-educated Scottish schoolmasters, many went on to serve in the ministry. The issue of a brain-drain to the ministry was something the Society would seek to address in the years which followed. Nevertheless, it is notable that most early candidates were already rooted in the communities that they were employed to serve. Indeed, this appears to have been the Society's intention. John MacPherson, Donald MacLeod and Kenneth Bethune, for example, were all natives of Skye; all had already been employed as schoolmasters. A similar pattern is evident in Ross and Sutherland, with the appointments of William MacKay, William Gordon, John Robertson and George Henderson. The Perthshire origins of John Clow were cited to justify his appointment to Blair Atholl, while his move to Glengairn in Aberdeenshire was determined not only by his scruples at serving under an episcopal minister, but also by the failure of local agents to present a suitable local candidate. Alexander Glass was commissioned to Braemar only after the local candidate, John Hunter, was deemed unfit by Lord Grange and minister Adam Fergusson.

Contrary to Allan Macinnes' description of the SSPCK's schoolmasters as the 'shock troops of Presbyterianism'—an interpretation to which Gray and Szasz give credence—most of the first generation of SSPCK schoolmasters were local men, most of whom were unlikely to have been motivated by the imposition of Presbyterianism on their respective

[125] NRS, GD95/2/1, 204 (20 Mar 1713); Fagg, 'Complaints and Clamours', 302–3.
[126] NRS, GD95/2/1, 264 (1 Mar 1714); GD95/2/2, 1 (11 Mar 1714).
[127] NRS, GD95/1/1, 156 (6 Mar 1712);
[128] Ibid.,, 176–7 (1 Jan 1713).
[129] NRS, GD95/2/2, 146 (20 Nov 1716); *Fasti*, vi, 122.

communities through the medium of English.[130] Furthermore, many candidates had served as schoolmasters prior to the inception of the SSPCK, suggesting that there is unlikely to have been a radical shift in their agenda or their conception of the roles they played in their localities. Instead, it is much more likely that they understood the SSPCK's mission to be nothing more than a lucrative employment opportunity, or at least a more generous source of income than they would otherwise have received from their localities alone.

Gaelic

The recruitment process reveals several significant points about the Society's attitude towards Gaelic at this early stage, and its first attempts to formulate a language policy. The abilities to 'speak, read and write both English and Irish languages' were among the criteria listed by the Society for its teachers. The letters sent to universities and presbyteries, which requested recommendations, reiterated that the Gaelic literacy was desirable:

> [as] the persons they are to teach is by the patent declared to be principally these inhabiting the Highlands, Islands and remote corners of Scotland; Therefore it's necessarie that they be capable to write a fair hand, and be skilled in arithmetic, and that they understand and can read both in the English and Irishes languages.[131]

At this early juncture, the Society was ideally looking for bilingual, Gaelic-literate, schoolmasters. The Society's attitude towards Gaelic, as a literary medium, was not pre-determined as scholars such as Campbell, Durkacz and Withers have suggested.[132] It would, in fact, appear that the SSPCK was initially receptive, albeit tentatively, of the idea of using Gaelic literacy to instruct children in Presbyterian doctrine. The issue of language is not addressed in the letters patent, nor does it feature in the *Proposals* of 1710.[133] The *Account* of the SSPCK published in 1714, when the earliest schools had been operating for two years, specified only that schoolmasters were 'not to teach any Latin'.[134] The ban on teaching Gaelic books did not become official policy, nor did it appear in public advertisements, until 1720.[135] The Society's register of school books demonstrates that 'Irish Catechisms', presumably copies of the Synod of Argyll's Gaelic translation of the *Larger Catechism* first published in 1714, were being dispatched to Skye and St Kilda as late as 1718 – although these were

[130] MacInnes, *Clanship*, 178; Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 175–6; Szasz, *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans*, 80.
[131] NRS, GD95/1/1, 199 (15 Jun 1711).
[132] Durkacz, *Decline*, 47; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 122; Campbell, *Gaelic in Scottish Education*, 50–60.
[133] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 200.
[134] *Account of the SSPCK* (1714), 23–4.
[135] NRS, GD95/1/2, 103–4 (3 Mar 1720); *Account of the SSPCK* (1720), 35.

sent in much smaller quantities than English catechisms, and there is no explicit evidence of their being used in schools.[136] It is crucial to recognise the remarkable flurry of Gaelic Protestant religious publishing that took place in the 1680s and 1690s: Robert Kirk's revised edition of the *Shorter Catechism* (1688), his transliteration of the Irish Bible into a Roman script (1690), and both Kirk's and the Synod of Argyll's translations of the Psalter (1684 and 1694). This certainly spurred the General Assembly in 1694 to advocate the use of the Gaelic Catechism and Psalter for public and family worship; this attitude most likely influenced the Society's decision to leave the door open to Gaelic literacy.[137] The primary objective of schools would still be to impart literacy in English, continuing the pre-existing tradition of formal education in the Highlands, but the use of Gaelic texts, however limited, remained an option. However, only three of the first 11 teachers were confirmed to have been able to read Gaelic – Donald MacLeod from Skye, William MacKay from Sutherland and James Murray from Perthshire.[138] Perhaps the scarcity of Gaelic-literate teachers made it difficult for the Society to consider introducing Gaelic texts on a more formal basis. After 1715, when Gaels were cast as internal enemies of the British state, such a policy probably became harder to justify.

Curriculum, Rules and Purpose

A major concern of the SSPCK and many of its earliest supporters was to ensure that schools provided religious and moral instruction as a foundation for learning. One accusation levelled at country schoolmasters was that they often neglected the religious component of education, instead emphasising the study of languages as an entry point. The Society's regulations specified that teachers were to prioritise 'train[ing] up those that shall be under their charge in the Knowledge of God; and the principles of the Christian Reformed Religion'.[139] The foundational text for instruction was the *Shorter Catechism*, presumably the English version although the language is unstated; once scholars had mastered this text, they were to progress to reading the Bible. Only after scholars mastered reading were they to be allowed to progress to the more functional elements of education, namely writing and arithmetic, so 'that they may be thereby rendered more usefull in the several stations of the world'.[140] Teachers were to catechise scholars at least twice a week and pray with them daily.

[136] NRS, GD95/9/1, Register of Schools (1710–61), 1, 315; GD95/10/82, Accompt of Books Sent to the Society's Charity Schools Since its First Constitution (1721).
[137] 1694 General Assembly Act XX; Stephen, *Defending the Revolution*, 248–9; Ronald Black, 'Gaelic Religious Publishing, 1567–1800', *SGS*, 24 (2008), 74–5.
[138] NRS, GD95/2/2, 51 (21 Jan 1715).
[139] NRS, GD95/1/1, 136 (1 Nov 1711).
[140] Ibid.

They were also expected to closely scrutinise the behaviour of their pupils, taking steps to correct 'the beginnings of vice', such as swearing, stealing and non-observance of the Sabbath.[141] On the Sabbath, teachers were to accompany their classes to public worship at the parish church. On the Monday, they were to test scholars on the content of the sermon. The duties of the schoolmaster extended beyond the classroom – they were to serve as spiritual role models not only for their students, but for the community at large. From this perspective, schoolmasters were bringing the moral agenda of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners into Highland localities. When the minister was absent, or the school was situated at a distance from the church, teachers were expected to spend a considerable part of the Sabbath with parishioners, reading from the Bible, catechising and praying.[142] Despite the criticisms levelled at the schoolmasters who preceded the Society, it is uncertain that SSPCK regulations diverged from earlier practice. Using the catechism as the foundational text dates back to Knox's *First Book of Discipline* (1567). Even if the main focus of Highland schools during the Restoration came to be instructing children in languages, Highland schoolmasters still served religious functions. For example, in 1685 teachers in the Presbytery of Dunkeld were ordered 'to call [their] scholars together evry Lord's day after sermons, especially these that lived in the town, and to examine them upon the sermons and catechise'.[143] Highland schoolmasters, like their Lowland peers, often served as precentor, clerk and reader to the local church. In 1677 Kiltarlity schoolmaster John Munro was applauded by the minister and elders of the parish for his 'painefullness and diligent attendance on the school and [kirk] sessione' and his 'Christian, civill, blameless, conversatione'.[144] In 1682, the Presbytery of Dingwall reported that Kirkhill schoolmaster Thomas Fraser 'read the scriptures publicly every Lord's Day in the Irish, betwixt the second and third bell'.[145] While the SSPCK emphasised the spiritual and religious functions of its teachers, it is evident that the remit of earlier schoolmasters also included the spiritual and moral edification of pupils, and indeed the community at large, long before the SSPCK codified this practice as policy. In this respect, the Society was not breaking new ground, but rather attempting to harness and sustain developments in the role of teachers that had already taken place at a local level.

There were, however, some noteworthy differences between established schools and those sponsored by the Society. First and foremost, SSPCK schools were free at the point of use. Schoolmasters received the relatively generous salary of 300 merks—above the legal

[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Hunter, *Diocese and Presbytery of Dunkeld*, 88
[144] MacKay, *Inverness and Dingwall*, l.
[145] Ibid.

maximum of 200 merks—'that they may be enabled to teach all that come to them gratis'. They were, however, permitted to accept money from 'Gentlemen or others that are in plentifull circumstances' who opted to pay. Inducements were also offered – each scholar who learned to read the Bible 'perfectly' was to be gifted their own Bible and a pair of shoes.[146] Perhaps the most controversial policy adopted by the Society was the ban on teaching Latin in its schools.[147] In the Highland schools of the seventeenth century, knowledge of Latin had come to be considered 'the great test of the schoolmaster's fitness for his work', and its exclusion from the curriculum dismayed several teachers, as well as the communities they served. The best illustration of this comes from South Uist in 1727. Despite the complaints of the South Uist schoolmaster Norman MacLeod that even the few Protestants on the island sent their children to Catholic schools to learn Latin, the Society refused to permit Latin in its school.[148] The Society initially adopted this policy to ensure that its free schools did not compete with parochial schoolmasters, who relied on the payment of fees.[149] Furthermore, the influential 1707 pedagogical treatise, *The Christian School-master* by English minister James Talbot argued that charity schools should teach 'such parts of Learning only as are necessary for the poor Children', claiming that Latin could 'be found very useless and unprofitable, if not prejudicial to them'.[150] In a Highland context, the issue of Catholicism loomed large. Although it was not a practical priority at the beginning, the Society ultimately aimed to win converts among the Catholic population; teaching young Catholics Latin, it was feared, would only better equip them for the priesthood. Despite the strong demand for Latin among Highland communities, these issues were considered justification enough for the exclusion of the language.

The Operation and Reception of Schools

This chapter now turns to the operation of the SSPCK's schools. Teachers' reports and correspondence between the Society and local agents will be used to determine how schools were received, how they operated 'on the ground', and the obstacles encountered by schoolmasters. These sources also indicate the social and religious backgrounds of the pupils who attended, and the role that local agents envisaged for SSPCK schools. By focusing on the localities we can investigate the Society's earliest policy measures concerning language

[146] Ibid., 204–5
[147] NRS, GD95/1/1, 135–8 (1 Nov 1711).
[148] NRS, GD95/1/3, 5–6 (1 Jun 1727)
[149] See NRS, GD95/1/2, 412 (5 Jan 1727); GD95/2/4, 321–2 (22 Oct 1727).
[150] James Talbot, *The Christian School-Master* (London, 1707), 100–1.

use in the classroom, the format of schools, and the proper procedure for dealing with Catholic children.

Highland Aberdeenshire

The school at Blair Atholl ought to have been the first to begin operating in November 1711. The Duke of Atholl had approved of the Society's teacher, John Clow, and promised to construct a permanent schoolhouse by the following summer.[151] Before travelling to Blair Atholl, however, Clow expressed his reluctance to serve under Duncan Stewart, the Episcopalian minister of the parish.[152] Despite urging Atholl to determine a less problematic location, or even to remove Stewart from the parish, the Duke did not comply soon enough. This led to Society to reappoint Clow to Auchintoull in the parish of Glengairn in Highland Aberdeenshire. The school at Blair Atholl did not open until 1716.[153]

Clow arrived at Auchintoull to find that a schoolhouse had already been constructed by the tenantry; his living quarters were provided by local gentleman William MacDonald of Renatton.[154] The first report from the school was read on 25 October 1712. Both minister and teacher attested to the popularity of the school. Including three Catholic children, John Clow reported that he had 40 scholars:

> half of which at May Day last, knew not a letter, nor could speak one word of English, and now they can read some of them in the Bible, and many answer the Questions of the Catechism, even in the church, all of them are Learning to write, and some to cast accompts.

In line with the Society's rules, Clow was serving not only as a schoolmaster but also as a reader in the absence of the minister. Rev. James Robertson reported that on the Sabbath:

> not only his Schollars but the protestant people there about do Conveen in the schoolhouse, where both in Irish and English, he prays, reads the scriptures, sings psalms and catechises them.[155]

On the other hand, according to Clow and Robertson, Catholic missionaries in the parish were attempting to discourage people from sending their children to the school.[156] In response, Clow appears to have taken a confrontational, perhaps counterproductive approach towards local Catholics. In early 1713, a local Catholic gentleman, James Grierson alias

[151] NRS, GD95/2/1, 230 (12 Nov 1711), 233–4 (24 Nov 1711).
[152] Ibid., 236 (27 Nov 1711).
[153] Ibid., 233 (24 Nov 1711), 236 (27 Nov 1711), 295 (30 Jan 1713); GD95/1/1, 177 (1 Jan 1713); BC, Box 45/9/185. cf. Leneman, 'Social History of the Atholl Estates', 102, 106; *Fasti*, iv, 144.
[154] NRS, GD95/1/1, 171–2 (6 Nov 1712).
[155] NRS, GD95/2/1, 281 (25 Oct 1712).
[156] Ibid.

Callum Òg, wrote to Lord Grange to complain that John Clow had denied Catholic children access to his school 'unless they woud assist at his prayers Learn his Doctrine & Go to the Kirk'.[157] Furthermore, when an unnamed Catholic gentleman entrusted Clow with his children 'only for their Learning', Clow took them to Protestant church services against the parent's wishes. After a series of insults—such as claiming 'he woud see their necks twisted' before admitting them to his school and referring to their area of residence as 'the Cursed Corner'—Clow followed a group of Catholics with the intention of intruding on a private Mass. Despite being asked by one Catholic gentleman to return to his schoolhouse and cause no trouble, Clow persisted in following the group, until he encountered a group of children:

> who were not wise & from words fell in Discord that his wige fell off & his Hat being Teared it being tender among the hands and he haveing Left it Behind him went to his former Quarters w[ith]out haerm or further preiudice that Can be aledged w[ith] anney Color of reall presumption.[158]

At the local hearing which followed, James Robertson reported that Clow had tried to intimidate the witnesses. Nevertheless, Grange and Mar appear to have given Clow redress for his damaged wig and he maintained his employment with the Society.[159] In May 1713, perhaps feeling embarrassed, Clow recommended moving the school to the Bridge of Gairn, predicting that by July:

> all that about the Schooll will be able tollerably to speak English, spell, read, write, read plain writings, understand the common rules of Arithmetick, sing the common tunes of musick, and have their catechisms and prayers by heart.[160]

Lord Grange, however, persuaded the Society to delay the relocation of the school. At his advice, the school was moved to Tombellie in Spring 1714, by which time John Clow had already been reassigned to the school in Braemar to replace Alexander Glass, to whom we now turn.[161]

Alexander Glass arrived in Braemar in April 1713, but unlike Clow faced several difficulties. Heavy rain throughout the Spring had delayed the construction of the schoolhouse and, despite earlier expressions of enthusiasm for a school, parents appeared reluctant to send their children to be instructed by Glass. As a temporary solution to the former, Lord Grange arranged to have Glass accommodated in the Earl of Mar's

[157] NRS, GD124/15/1094/2.
[158] Ibid.
[159] NRS, GD95/1/1, 172 (6 Nov 1712), 191 (4 Jun 1713).
[160] NRS, GD95/2/1, 313 (11 May 1713).
[161] Ibid., 340 (15 Oct 1713); 329 (27 Jul 1713)

courthouse.[162] With regard to attendance, Rev. Adam Fergusson reported in January 1714 that the Society's requirement that teachers maintain attendance rolls had been manipulated by Catholic priests to convince the people 'that those who were bred at these Schools, would in process of time be called away to serve Her Majesty and the government'. Therefore, Fergusson asked that teachers be excused from maintaining attendance rolls in the interim.[163]

By January 1714 Glass had managed to bring in 26 pupils, nine of whom were 'reading the Bible pointedly'.[164] However, on 1 March 1714 Rev. Fergusson reported to the Society that Alexander Glass had 'fallen into the scandall of fornication' and was therefore unfit to continue serving as schoolmaster.[165] Another letter from the Presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil revealed that not only was Glass unwilling to repent for this offence, he had also refused to sign the Confession of Faith. Due to his offences, the presbytery argued that employing Glass '[gave] adversaries too much ground to speak of the Societies design'. This prompted the Committee to dismiss Glass and appoint John Clow in his stead. Clow's school, which was then being relocated to Tombellie, was to be provided with another master.[166] The last report before Glass's dismissal indicated that 30 scholars were regularly attending, ten of whom were reading the Bible, 'and are pretty well advanced in writing and Arithmetick'.[167]

By the time of his reappointment to Braemar, Clow had instructed a total of 77 children at Auchintoull.[168] He had written a small book concerning techniques for the teaching of reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic, and also recommended several books which he believed would be useful in instruction, particularly for persuading Catholics of their errors: *Allan's Catechism*, Pool's *Dialogues*, and a 'Catechisme against Popery'. Clow advocated printing the catechism that was subjoined to the Synod of Argyll's Gaelic Psalm Book for use in schools and reported that he had worked with Rev. Adam Fergusson of Braemar to translate *Allan's Catechism* into Gaelic, which the Synod of Aberdeen had promised to print. Significantly, in this instance the Society did not comment on the use of a Gaelic text, perhaps looking to keep its options open.[169] Despite Clow's brash approach towards the Catholics of Glengairn, he was still considered 'one of the best of the Societies Schoolmasters' by Rev. Robertson, which influenced his appointment to Braemar 'to keep up the reputation of the said school'.[170] After Clow's appointment, however, the school still struggled. A key factor was the departure of Adam Fergusson in November 1714 from the

[162] NRS, GD95/2/1, 338 (10 Oct 1713), 342 (15 Oct 1713); GD95/1/1, 223–4 (11 Mar 1714).
[163] NRS, GD95/2/1, 353 (14 Jan 1714).
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid., 264 (1 Mar 1714).
[166] NRS, GD95/2/2, 1 (11 Mar 1714).
[167] NRS, GD95/1/1, 223–4 (11 Mar 1714).
[168] NRS, GD95/2/1, 354 (14 Jan 1714), 364 (1 Mar 1714); GD95/2/2, 1, (11 Mar 1714).
[169] NRS, GD95/1/1, 191–2 (4 Jun 1713).
[170] NRS, GD95/2/1, 364 (1 Mar 1714); GD95/2/2, 1, (11 Mar 1714); 60 (25 Feb 1715).

charge of Crathie and Braemar to Logierait in Perthshire. Deprived of a key ally, in December Clow lamented that:

> he can do so little, having now [no one] to concur with him against the popish Priests and Emissaries that are become so very insolent and outragious [sic] and keep publick masses avowedly in contempt of the Government.[171]

Echoing Fergusson's earlier request, Clow asked that he be exempted from keeping detailed lists of scholars, arguing that this prevented parents from sending their children to school, many believing there was 'some evil designe in taking up these rolls'. He suggested that a statement of the number of scholars would suffice.[172] The General Meeting expressed little sympathy, advising Clow, rather unhelpfully, to keep his lists 'secretly and subtly'.[173] The last report before the 1715 rising, transmitted by James Robertson, struck a sombre tone:

> tho' the School at Castletoun has one of the best of the Societies Schoolmasters, and who does all that man can do, not only by teaching the few schollars that he has, but during the vacancie of the Paroch by reading to the people in the Church on the Sabbath, and Catechiseing in the afternoon, yet the people are so obstinat that few of them send their children to School, many of them having withdrawn such as they sent.[174]

It appears that many inhabitants, Catholic and Protestant alike, were convinced by the warnings of Catholic priests that the unprecedented practice of keeping detailed lists of scholars and transmitting them to Edinburgh may have had a sinister motive. Robertson concluded his report by reiterating the wish 'there were a legal way fallen upon to oblige both popish and Protestant parents to send their children to school'.[175]

Once transferred to Tombellie in Glenmuick, the neighbouring school fared far better. The new schoolmaster was James Jamieson, a teacher from Lanarkshire with no Gaelic, who was recommended by Prof. William Hamilton. His first report from 2 December 1714 attested to his positive reception among the community. Parishioners had already provided Jamieson with a schoolhouse and were 'generally inclined to have their children educated'. The list of scholars contained 64. However, Jamieson emphasised that 26 of them were very young, 'being about seven or eight years of age or under', so the Committee should expect slower progress.[176] Unlike Clow, Jamieson was much more circumspect in his treatment of Catholics. On 2 December 1714, he requested the Society's advice concerning 'how to

[171] NRS, GD95/2/2, 45 (9 Dec 1714).
[172] Ibid.
[173] NRS, GD95/1/1, 288–9 (6 Jan 1715).
[174] NRS, GD95/2/2, 60 (25 Feb 1715).
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid., 41 (2 Dec 1714).

behave toward […] the Catholic parents, who desire the benefits of [their children] being taught at his school, but will not attend upon Gospel ordinances'.[177] In a second letter from 9 December, Jamieson repeated his appeal for advice concerning Catholic children, as another Catholic had entered his school who, despite complying with the school rules, would not attend Protestant worship, and he feared that this practice would soon become widespread among Catholics.[178] However unhelpful it may have been to Jamieson, the Committee's response emphasised subtle persuasion as the best approach to Catholic children:

> School masters should not only receive and admitt to their schools all the children of popish parents freely, whenever they are offered, but that they be enjoyned to use their outmost endeavours with papists to perswade them to send their children to their schools, and that they take double pains with such children when they come to instill in them, and inculcat to them the principles of the reformed Protestant Religion, and shew them the errors and dangers of poperie, and that they by all kindly and gentle methods, endeavour to perswade them to attend the public ordinances, but to use no kind of compulsion.[179]

In February 1715, Jamieson represented the 'prosperous state of the school of Tombelly' and gave an account of 'the wonderfull profiteing of the schollars', of whom there were now 71. Due to the great progress made by the scholars, James Robertson requested more Bibles, as the original stock had been wholly exhausted by gifting them to those able to read.[180] Unlike the school at Braemar, which had been undoubtedly affected by the scandal surrounding Alexander Glass, as well as local fears regarding attendance roles which had been stoked by Catholic priests, on the eve of the 1715 Jacobite Rising the school at Tombellie was faring well.

Presbytery of Skye

The SSPCK's first school in Skye was settled at Earlish in the parish of Snizort with John MacPherson as its schoolmaster. While initially the Society aimed to establish the school at the parish's main settlement of Snizort, it ultimately opted for Earlish as the Presbytery of Skye reported that 'there is a constant School already setled at Snizort and the setling the Societies School there would ruin it'.[181] Nevertheless, in March 1713 John MacPherson reported that most inhabitants of the parish who could afford boarding intended to send their

[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid., 43 (9 Dec 1714).
[179] Ibid., 43 (9 Dec 1714).
[180] Ibid., 60 (25 Feb 1715).
[181] Ibid., 251 (25 Feb 1712).

children to the Society's school.[182] Whether this was true, at this early juncture it seems that MacPherson wanted to maximise the number of scholars to demonstrate the school's success. At the time of the report MacPherson only had 12 scholars, but he argued that this would soon increase if the Society agreed to pay maintenance for poorer children and allowed the teacher to teach Latin to 'the richer sort'. Regardless, MacPherson soon informed the Society that he was to leave the school by Whitsunday, having other business to attend to, including 'the duty to his Brother's family which lyes upon him'.[183] At the same meeting, the Committee read a letter from the Presbytery of Skye, which echoed MacPherson's proposal that 'the restriction from teaching Latine may be taken off' for both Skye and Glenelg.[184] The Committee refused, and at the General Meeting which followed letters were sent to all SSPCK schoolmasters stating 'that none of them are permitted to teach Latine'.[185] As discussed further below, these letters also stated for the first time that teachers were not permitted to teach 'Irish Books'.[186] The first report from Donald MacLeod in Glenelg also came in March 1713. He reported that 20 scholars were in attendance but predicted 40 by the autumn. The parishioners had built a house and schoolhouse to the value of £10 sterling. MacLeod was forthright in his demand for books, requesting 'some of the Catechisms that are divided in sillables, also proverbs, psalm books and Testaments new and old'.[187]

The Presbytery of Skye was forthright in setting forth its own ideas for the SSPCK schools in its bounds. A letter to Prof. William Hamilton from May 1713 proposed that the Society should either divide the 600-merk allowance for the presbytery among three smaller schools, or else divide it evenly among the seven pre-established schools of Glenelg, Sleat, Strath, Snizort, Bracadale, Duirinish, and Harris to supplement the salaries of legally settled schoolmasters.[188] From the presbytery's point of view, it seems that the SSPCK was seen as something of a quasi-governmental agency—first and foremost a source of revenue—rather than an ideologically motivated external agent, whose purpose was to prop up and supplement the existing framework of schools rather than to implement an unprecedented programme of religious, cultural and linguistic assimilation. Taking its cue from the presbytery, the General Meeting of 31 July introduced the 'act for settling small schools', which empowered the Committee to establish 'more charity schools with lesser salaries […] in such places as the greater schools with larger salaries do not, nor cannot so adequately

[182] NRS, GD95/2/1, 301 (2 Mar 1713).
[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid, 306 (11 Mar 1713); NRS, GD95/1/1, 182–3 (12 Mar 1713).
[186] NRS, GD95/2/1, 306.
[187] Ibid., 300–1.
[188] Ibid., 317 (29 May 1713).

serve the ends of the patent'.[189] In October 1713, the Committee met with members of the MacLeod gentry—including the Tutor of MacLeod John MacLeod of Contullich, Donald MacLeod of Sandwick, Roderick MacLeod 'of Einzie' and Donald MacLeod of Ullanish—to devise policies for improving the operation and attendances of schools in the Presbytery of Skye. Echoing John MacPherson's earlier judgement, the gentlemen reported that the greatest hindrance to the Society's schools 'is the poverty of parents who are not in case to board their children from themselves'. The solution they proposed, in accordance with the Society's recent legislation, was to settle a greater number of schools with lesser salaries.[190]

The resolutions of the meeting did not lead to an immediate overhaul of the schools in Skye and Glenelg. Donald MacLeod in Glenelg and Kenneth Bethune, the new schoolmaster in Skye, maintained their posts with their salaries undiminished. Furthermore, in April 1714 the Society agreed to Presbytery of Skye's request to relocate the school at Earlish to the more populous settlement of Snizort, effectively replacing the parochial school which had been established there previously.[191] The Society was probably biding its time, in the expectation that both teachers were ultimately looking to progress to the ministry, before commencing to look for other candidates willing to serve for a more modest salary. In the meantime, however, the Society appeared content to fill gaps in provision wherever they existed, and at this stage the schools in Glenelg and Skye began to enjoy some success. While Donald MacLeod had ultimately intended to leave his post to complete his studies at King's College, Aberdeen, in May 1714 he reported 42 scholars in attendance. Interestingly, he also requested—and received—'half a dozen of Irish Psalms books' for his parish, again illustrating the ambiguity of the Society's early attitude towards Gaelic texts.[192] Kenneth Bethune in Snizort reported that he had 53 scholars, most of whom were reading the Bible and learning arithmetic, and many of whom were 'the children of many indigent persons who could not otherwayes have got their children educated than by the Societies Charity'. However, when the Society received news that Bethune had entered trials for the ministry, it opted to anticipate his success and seek out a new master.[193] Despite a letter from the Presbytery of Skye in March 1715 pleading that Bethune be continued in his post in the meantime, by April John McIver, a Lewisman recommended by Prof. William Hamilton, was commissioned to Snizort.[194] In October 1715, Donald MacLeod too declared his

[189] NRS, GD95/1/1, 196–7 (31 Jul 1713).
[190] NRS, GD95/2/1, 343 (16 Oct 1713).
[191] NRS, GD95/2/2, 9 (8 Apr 1714).
[192] NRS, GD95/2/1, 327 (16 Jul 1713); GD95/2/2, 40 (2 Dec 1714), 102 (5 Apr 1716); *Fasti*, vi, 155. Donald MacLeod was convinced by his brother Rev. Murdo MacLeod to remain in his post until 1715, when he originally intended to leave in Autumn 1713. See GD95/10/45.
[193] NRS, GD95/2/2, 40 (2 Dec 1714).
[194] Ibid, 65 (21 Mar 1715), 68 (1 Apr 1715).

intention to leave the school at Glenelg,[195] At the onset of the 1715 Jacobite Rising, the Society's foothold in the Presbytery of Skye remained tenuous and its schools unsettled. Nevertheless, the Society already had a basic plan in place for remedying the main issue—the brain-drain to the ministry—and this was to establish smaller schools with lesser salaries.

Sutherland

The schools of Durness and Lairg in Sutherland began operating in winter 1712, with William MacKay and William Gordon as their respective teachers. Both were employed without requiring their presence in Edinburgh. While the schools were up and running faster as a result, there was a substantial delay before the teachers received their allowance of books sent from the capital, and they presumably had to make do with what was available in their localities in the meantime.[196] In March 1713, for example, MacKay reported that while he had 52 scholars, he 'had much adoe to get them books, and that there were very many of the Scholars that were not able to buy books for themselves'.[197] MacKay eventually received his allocation by October 1713. Indeed, his allowance was increased to £3 sterling worth of books, up from £2, due to his school's high attendance. On the other hand, the minutes suggest that Gordon did not receive his allocation until June 1715. Once the books were received, it was not long until the masters began demanding more and requesting advice on the best ways of disposing of them.[198] Indeed, the desire for books appears to have been a primary factor in securing high attendances. In January 1715 MacKay complained that 'every schollar that once gets use of books pretends a right to them, and if they do not get them they will either be idle, or stay at home, Because they can get none there to buy.'[199]

As suggested by the attendance level at Durness, the school was exceptionally well-received by the community. The influence of Lord Reay, the chief of the clan Mackay and sole heritor of Durness, was crucial not only in the selection of William MacKay as the schoolmaster, but also in encouraging parents to send their children to the school.[200] By the end of 1713, over 60 scholars in attendance. Many were reported to have read the Bible twice over and most had progressed past reading, to learn writing, arithmetic and church music.[201] The established rhythms of local agriculture continued, however; in the summer the school was all but emptied as inhabitants travelled to the sheilings:

[195] Ibid., 82 (5 Oct 1715)
[196] NRS, GD95/2/1, 294 (16 Jan 1713).
[197] Ibid., 301 (11 Mar 1713).
[198] NRS, GD95/2/1, 324 (26 Jun 1713) 330 (27 Jul 1713) 342 (15 Oct 1713); GD95/2/2, 8 (8 Apr 1714), 74 (1 Jun 1715).
[199] Ibid., 51 (21 Jan 1715).
[200] Ibid., 305 (20 Mar 1713), 342 (15 Oct 1713).
[201] NRS, GD95/1/1, 215 (7 Jan 1714).

> The school master showes that about this time of the year for six or seven weeks, the people in that Countrey go all to the hills with their cattle, which makes his School very thinn, But after that they will return.[202]

William MacKay was the first teacher to confront the Society with the issue of using Gaelic books in the classroom. In a letter to the Committee in early 1713, MacKay 'desire[d] to known if he may be allowed to teach his schollars to read Irish books', as well as asking 'if he may teach boys and girles in one school'. This was referred to the General Meeting, which was at the same time handling the Presbytery of Skye's request to lift the ban on teaching Latin in SSPCK schools. It is notable that when the Society first resolved to send letters to teachers which stated limits on the kinds of books that could be taught in its schools, both Latin and Irish were paired together: 'none of [the teachers] are permitted to teach Latine, or Irish books'. In this respect, this initial ruling against Gaelic may have had little to do with any ideologically motivated opposition to the language, and more to do with ensuring that teachers focused on what were considered more fundamental and practical subjects by both the Society and its donors. Indeed, a further letter was sent to MacKay signifying that:

> he may catechise the poor people and children in the Irish tongue, who do not understand English, But that he must only teach his schollars to read English books, and that there appears no danger in teaching boys and girles in one Schooll.[203]

The reliance on Gaelic orality alongside English literacy probably represented a continuity, not a break, with earlier practice. MacKay used Gaelic as a medium of instruction in his school, presumably teaching his pupils how to translate English books into Gaelic as was established practice at the local grammar school of Dornoch. His next letter noted that 'many of his children have nothing but Irish' and no prior contact with English, and therefore 'he must examine and pray and sing with them in that language, unless the Society give other orders.'[204] In response, the Society stated that:

> he may Catechise his Schollars, and pray and sing with them in Irish untill they can understand Inglish, But that he teach them only to read English and to do his endeavours as soon as he can, to make them understand that language.[205]

[202] NRS, GD95/2/1, 324 (26 Jun 1713).
[203] NRS, GD95/1/1, 183–4 (12 Mar 1713).
[204] NRS, GD95/2/1, 324 (26 Jun 1713).
[205] Ibid.

Although the ultimate goal was to teach pupils to understand English, the Society's attitude towards the use of spoken Gaelic in the classroom remained inchoate. This practice allowed schoolmasters like William MacKay to continue teaching in accordance with local customs insofar as this did not obstruct pupils' progress in learning to read in English. Early in 1714, William MacKay set up a small school at Eriboll wherein his daughter, the schoolmistress, taught pupils to read Kirk's Bible, and the Society supported this initiative.[206] In January 1715, MacKay reported that of the 16 scholars at Eriboll 'many […] do read in the Bible, and can turn the Irish Bible into English'. It is striking that the Committee did not reprimand MacKay on this occasion, presumably as members were more relaxed about the idea of Gaelic texts being taught in a school that was not directly under the Society's control.[207]

The school at Lairg, under teacher William Gordon, was not an immediate success as was the case with Durness. By July 1713, almost a year after the school began operating, Gordon still had no more than 20 scholars; he complained to the Society that there was 'litle esteem of the means of knowledge and education' among the people, and noted that many of his scholars were 'so poor that such as live at any distance are not able to bestow bread on their children to keep them at Schooll'.[208] In October 1713, Gordon lamented that while he had only 24 scholars, 'there are above fifty children in the parish, whose parents are for the most part able if they were willing, to keep them at Schooll'.[209] The Committee's report to the General Meeting of November 1713 then concluded that the school had failed to meet the Society's expectations.[210] However, following the intercession of Lord Strathnaver and the Presbytery of Dornoch, by June the following year the number of scholars had increased to 40.[211] The negative tone of Gordon's early reports may have had some validity, but are more likely a reflection of his career ambitions and his high regard for formal education, he being a university-educated teacher trained in classical languages. Furthermore, despite the slow progress of the school, it is notable that the ministers and communities from other parishes in Sutherland campaigned eagerly for the benefit of a Society school from the outset. In May 1713, a group of unnamed ministers petitioned the Society for a school in Kildonan, proposing that 100 merks be deducted from Gordon's salary to fund another teacher.[212] The Society refused this proposal, but promised to establish a school at Kildonan when funds permitted. The Kildonan school was settled a year later in May 1714, with George Henderson as its teacher. Also in May 1714, General Assembly commissioners from

[206] Ibid., 355 (14 Jan 1714).
[207] NRS, GD95/2/2, 51 (21 Jan 1715).
[208] NRS, GD95/2/1, 330 (27 Jul 1713).
[209] Ibid., 339 (15 Oct 1713).
[210] NRS, GD95/1/1, 209 (5 Nov 1713).
[211] NRS, GD95/1/1, 234 (26 Jun 1713).
[212] NRS, GD95/2/1, 314 (14 May 1713).

Ross and Sutherland appeared before the Committee to propose the relocation of the Lairg school to the parish of Creich.[213] These efforts led the Society once again into discussions with Lord Strathnaver and the Presbytery of Dornoch, ultimately determining that Lairg was still the most suitable location for the school:

> Because the parish of Larg is Centrical to five or six parishes, and there are children out of four neighbouring parishes that now attend that school, And the parish of Larg is so contiguous, that the most part of the Children in it can attend the school out of their own parents houses, And there is Likewise good accommodation for boarding of those from other parishes, whereas Creich is only Centricall at most to two parishes.[214]

This decision, however, appears to have incensed the parishioners of Creich who were eager to see the school settled in their parish. In January 1715, Rev. John MacKay of Lairg reported that, of the 44 scholars in the list he sent to the Society, 28 had since left, leaving the school with only 16 scholars. He apologised, explaining that:

> the disappointment the paroch of Creich mett with in their attempt of having this school transported to them, made them keep their children at home that used to attend the school.[215]

Rev. MacKay added that in the summer:

> there was a foolish report spread that the Societies Schools were intended as a Seminary for the Plantations; which frighted some from sending their children to the school.[216]

Although eager to have their children educated, in light of such rumours, parents were suspicious of the purpose of the Society's schools, choosing to withdraw their children out of fear. Moreover, MacKay stated that:

> An universal sickness in that Country [had] kept many back, who before were advanceing very fast in their Learning, And furder which is worst of all, a general disesteem for Christian education reigns among people in that Country, which makes the parents preferr the litle services of their children to their learning.[217]

[213] NRS, GD95/2/2, 17 (21 May 1714).
[214] NRS, GD95/1/1, 236 (3 Jun 1714); GD95/2/2, 27–8 (12 Aug 1714).
[215] Ibid., 50 (13 Jan 1715).
[216] Ibid.
[217] Ibid., 51.

He concluded his report by urging the Society once again to consult with Lord Strathnaver to establish measures to oblige parents to send their children to school.[218] At this juncture, however, the patterns of agricultural life in Lairg continued to have a great bearing on attendances – with parents unable or unwilling to dispense with their children's labour.

Abertarff

Despite Alexander MacKenzie of Fraserdale's promise to construct both bridge and schoolhouse at Abertarff, when the schoolmaster Patrick Nicolson arrived at his post in winter 1712 neither structure was in place. In a report in March 1713, Nicolson noted 'the loss the school sustains through want of a School house and a bridge over the water that separates that countrey'.[219] The Committee continued to put pressure on Lord Fraserdale to provide these amenities, but official orders for constructing the bridge were not issued until March 1714.[220] Before then, the Society had to write to Nicolson on two occasions to persuade him to remain in his post, lest another charity school in Abertarff fail soon after its establishment.[221] Despite these issues, Nicolson's report from March 1713 indicated that 'Some of the papists [in Abertarff] are willing, and even resolute to put their children to Schooll if these inconveniences were removed', namely if a bridge were constructed to allow the Catholic population to access the school.[222] This news was well-received by the General Meeting, which sent a letter to Nicolson reminding him to use all methods 'to engage the poor children, Especially papists' to attend his school.[223]

At the time of Nicolson's first report in March 1713 he was teaching only 17 pupils, one of whom was from a Catholic family; however, he insisted that he would have had over 30, were it not for the cold weather and the absence of a bridge.[224] By December, attendance had increased to 39 scholars, all of whom were reportedly learning to read.[225] In August 1714, Nicolson stated that six of his scholars had been examined by the minister Rev. Thomas Fraser, and had been 'found capable to read the Bible exactly'. In the same letter, Nicolson indicated that he had loaned a Bible to a local Catholic gentlemen, and asked whether he should require the book back, to which the Committee responded that, if he 'made a right use of the said Bible, [...] he should be able to keep it'.[226]

---

[218] Ibid.
[219] NRS, GD95/2/1, 301 (2 Mar 1713)
[220] Ibid, 363 (1 Mar 1714).
[221] Ibid., 360 (18 Feb 1714); GD95/1/1, 219 (11 Mar 1714)
[222] NRS, GD95/2/1, 301 (2 Mar 1713).
[223] NRS, GD95/1/1, 183 (12 Mar 1713).
[224] NRS, GD95/2/1, 301.
[225] NRS, GD95/2/1, 349 (31 Dec 1713).
[226] NRS, GD95/2/2, 29 (7 Aug 1714).

Despite these early signs of success, Nicolson was, like many other early SSPCK teachers, ultimately bound for the ministry. In January 1715, he informed the Committee that he intended to leave his post in the autumn. Nicolson's final report demonstrated that the school was being utilised by the community; there was a total of 53 scholars in attendance, 23 of whom were reading the Bible, 19 learning writing, and 11 learning arithmetic.[227] Eager to capitalise on this momentum, the Committee sent orders to James Murray, the Gaelic-speaking schoolmaster in Shapinsay in Orkney, to take up the school at Abertarff.[228] By April 1715, the Committee had yet to receive any indication from Murray that he had arrived at Abertarff, meaning that the school was left without a master on the eve of the 1715 Jacobite Rising.[229]

Glenlivet

The campaign for an SSPCK school in Glenlivet began in August 1711, when the parish of Inveravon and Presbytery of Aberlour submitted a petition and letter to the Society, 'representing the great need that place has of a School and how usefull one or more might be there'.[230] The letter from the presbytery described the:

> wideness of that Countrey and that Ignorance, Popery, and Immorality does over spread it, And crav[ed] that the Society may give their assistance for rooting out of poperie, superstition and ignorance [...] and for promoting morality and religion.[231]

At first the Society promised to set up a school once its stock increased, but in 1713 proceedings for the settlement at Blair Atholl came to a halt when the Duke of Atholl stopped responding to the Society's letters. Consequently, the Society began to consider the applications of Glenlivet and Gairloch in Wester Ross. News travelled fast, and on 15 May 1713, as that year's General Assembly was under way, Rev. James Bannerman of Inveravon appeared before the Committee to press his parish's claim to a Society school. However, two Ross-shire ministers, Rev. George Gordon of Cromarty and Rev. Daniel MacKillican of Alness, also appeared to argue for the school's settlement at Gairloch.[232] After considering both cases, the Committee decided to settle the school at Ballknockan in Glenlivet, mainly as Bannerman could assure the Society that the teacher would be provided with a

[227] Ibid., 48 (3 Jan 1715).
[228] Ibid., 52 (4 Feb 1715).
[229] Ibid., 70 (22 Apr 1715)
[230] NRS, GD95/2/1, 217 (31 Aug 1711).
[231] NRS, GD95/1/1, 130 (1 Nov 1711).
[232] NRS, GD95/2/1, 315 (15 May 1713); *Fasti*, vii, 5, 27.

schoolhouse and accommodation when he arrived at his post. At the same meeting, David Strang was named as the SSPCK teacher of Glenlivet and ordered to travel to his station.[233]

Despite Glenlivet's reputation for Catholic recusancy and Jacobite proclivities, in July 1713 David Strang reported that 'he mett with unexpected encouragement in that place'. The Marquess of Huntly, Alexander Gordon, had ordered timber to build a house and schoolhouse, and 'had by a letter to Mr James Bannerman the Minister of Inveraven highly approved of the good designe of the Society'.[234] It is worth pondering what led Huntly to support the SSPCK at this stage. Although married to the staunchly Protestant Lady Henrietta, Huntly was a devout Catholic. As the second Duke of Gordon from 1716 until his death in 1728, he became the most influential Scottish Catholic of his era, using his power and patronage to promote the old faith across great swathes of country from Speyside through Badenoch to Lochaber. He protected priests working on his estates and was patron to the Catholic seminary at Scalan in Glenlivet from its foundation in 1716.[235] The influence of Huntly's resolutely whiggish wife may have played some part in his decision to assist the Society. It seems likely that Huntly himself supported the Society's aim to increase educational opportunities on his Highland estates irrespective of his religious allegiances. Strang also received assistance from the local Protestant lairds John Grant of Tomnavoulin and John Stewart of Drumin, which he reported 'strengthen[ed] his hand very much' in securing the attendance of pupils at his school.[236]

At the time of the first report in July 1713, Strang's school was prospering:

> his school dayly increases, that he had already fourty schollars and hopes in a little time to have many more, the most of which knew not a letter when they entered, and now most of them are spelling, and some reading the Catechisme, and are making good progress, and attend the ordinances gravely and orderly.[237]

However, tensions soon arose concerning the location of the school. The Society determined that the school was to be settled at Ballknockan, 'the place pitched upon by the presbytery [of Aberlour] as most Centricall'.[238] However, in October 1713 Huntly informed the Society that he had held his own closed ballot of heritors and tenants to determine the most suitable location for the school, which reportedly found that 'all the people both rich and poor had voted that the Societies school in Glenlivet, should be removed out of that bounds to

[233] NRS, GD95/2/1, 315.
[234] Ibid., 328 (27 Jul 1713).
[235] Stiùbhart, 'Royal Bounty Scheme', 100; Eric Richards, 'Gordon, Alexander, second Duke of Gordon', *ODNB*. URL: https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/11020.
[236] NRS, GD95/2/1, 328 (27 Jul 1713).
[237] Ibid., 328 (27 Jul 1713).
[238] Ibid., 328–9 (27 Jul 1713).

Tomnavillan'.[239] Both Strang and the presbytery advised against the relocation of the school, arguing that it would jeopardise the school's progress; Huntly's decision, the presbytery argued, owed less to the ballot's outcome than it did to the influence of his chamberlain, 'a man disaffected to the designe'.[240] Suspicious of Huntly's intentions, and irked that local heritors had discussed relocating the school without first consulting the Society, the General Meeting ordered that the school would remain at Ballknockan. A letter was sent to the presbytery advising it that heritors had no legal right to move schools without the Society's permission.[241] Nevertheless, on 27 November 1713 the Committee received news that the schoolhouse at Ballknockan had been 'pulled down in the night time and the timber carried off' to Tomnavoulin. According to the Presbytery, Huntly had orchestrated this in concert with his chamberlain.[242] However, both the presbytery and the Society ultimately accepted the reality of the situation, and in early 1714 Strang was ordered to travel to Tomnavoulin.[243] On this occasion local agency, in the shape of elite power, succeeded in imposing its own wishes on the Society's school.

Despite the misgivings of Strang and the presbytery, the school was well-received in Tomnavoulin and quickly began to prosper. In May 1714, Strang reported that he had 60 scholars and that the numbers were growing daily. He requested a variety of books, including 'plain tract[s] upon the Popish contraversies' for instructing the children of Catholics. Strang reported that many of his Catholic pupils had 'now come that length, that they will by no means hear a Catholic priest'.[244] However, Strang had angered several prominent local Catholics by bringing their children to Protestant services on the Sabbath, prompting them to submit a petition to the presbytery complaining of his actions.[245] It was becoming increasingly clear to the Catholics of Glenlivet that the Society and Strang were unwilling to compromise on the religious element of education in the school. In July, the minister of Aberlour reported that a Catholic school had been set up to draw children from the SSPCK school. A large number of scholars had already left and, to make matters worse, local priests were threatening all Catholic parents who sent their children to the SSPCK's school with excommunication.[246] The Catholic school was soon suppressed with the assistance of Lord Grange and the schoolmistress was forced to flee Glenlivet.[247] Nevertheless, this episode had severely impacted the SSPCK's school, and Strang was unable to bring in as many scholars

[239] Ibid., 337 (1 Oct 1713).
[240] NRS, GD95/1/1, 209–10 (5 Nov 1713).
[241] Ibid.
[242] NRS, GD95/2/1, 346 (27 Nov 1713).
[243] Ibid., 346, 350 (31 Dec 1713); GD95/1/1, 216, (7 Jan 1714), 356 (14 Jan 1714).
[244] NRS, GD95/2/1, 16 (24 May 1714)
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid., 24 (1 July 1714); GD95/1/1, 241–2 (13 Aug 1714).
[247] NRS, GD95/1/1, 247 (4 Nov 1714).

as before. The Committee heard very little else from Strang until May 1716, when he reported that the school had only 27 scholars.[248]

Gairloch

The campaign for a school in Gairloch began in 1711 when the Presbytery of Dingwall petitioned the Society for two schools in the MacKenzie-dominated parishes of Gairloch and Assynt.[249] On 14 May 1713, ministers Rev. George Gordon of Cromarty and Rev. Daniel MacKillican of Alness presented the Committee with a petition from the heritors of Gairloch, appealing for a school in their parish.[250] This is striking as Gairloch had gained a reputation as an epicentre of Episcopalian resistance. Only two years earlier, in 1711 the newly ordained minister John Morison was seized and imprisoned by a mob at the instigation of Sir John MacKenzie of Coul. While imprisoned at Kinlochewe, Coul proclaimed to Morison that 'no presbyterian should be settled in any place where his influence extended, unless Her Majesty's forces did it by a strong hand'.[251] It should be noted, however, that Morison did have sympathisers in his parish, including Colin MacKenzie of Findon the tutor of Gairloch, and other heritors who attended his sermons and subscribed the petition to the SSPCK. Shortly after this episode, Sir John's brother, Colin MacKenzie of Coul, a Dutch-educated advocate, undertook to ensure that his elder brother John would cooperate with the presbytery in future.[252] By 1713 Morison was in a relatively comfortable position, and he perhaps sought to consolidate this by providing his parishioners with a likeminded schoolmaster. Gairloch was a largely Episcopalian district with strong local demand for schools; the SSPCK may have anticipated easy conversions to the established church and government simply by providing a school. The Society agreed in July 1713 to 'instantly erect a school at Gairloch', but due to difficulties finding a suitable teacher, the school was not settled until May 1714.[253] The teacher John Robertson took up the school at Poolewe, 'the most centrical place' in the parish, where he was well-received by the community. In the first report from 4 February 1715, Robertson stated that he had 'already thirty Schollars, and they are encreasing'. Rev. Morison's letter to the Society confirmed this account, stating his hope that 'the youth trained up in that Schooll, will be among the first that will yield a cordial reception to the Gospel in these Highlands'.[254]

[248] NRS, GD95/2/2, 106 (3 May 1716).
[249] NRS, GD95/2/1, 223 (14 Sep 1711).
[250] Ibid., 314 (14 May 1713), 327 (10 Jul 1713); Alexander MacKenzie, *History of the Clan MacKenzie with Genealogies of the Principal Families* (Inverness, 1879,) 336.
[251] Stephen, *Defending the Revolution*, 253; *Fasti*, vii, 146–7.
[252] NRS, CH/2/312/1, 145 (12 Apr 1711).
[253] NRS, GD95/2/1, 361 (18 Feb 1714).
[254] NRS, GD95/2/2, 55 (4 Feb 1715).

Supporting Local Projects in Perthshire and Moray

The SSPCK introduced the 'act for settling small schools' in July 1713, partly in response to the Presbytery of Skye's proposal that teachers' salaries should either be reduced to fund more schools or be spread evenly between the schools already established on the island.[255] At this point, however, the Society had already considered similar proposals from the parish of Comrie in Perthshire. In August 1712, the Society received a petition from the minister and kirk session:

> shewing the great loss they are at for want of Schools, the largeness of that paroch, and the multitude of inhabitants therein, And craving six pounds sterling might be allowed them yearly for helping them to set up Schools in the said paroch.[256]

The Society was at first unable to assist, and local efforts continued to attempt to meet local needs. However, the Society's intervention was necessary to put local initiative on a more secure financial footing. In March 1714, the minister of Comrie informed the Society that his parishioners had managed to establish three schools with local charitable funds, in Lochearnside, Glenartney, and Glenlednock, wherein a total of 100 pupils were receiving instruction. These schools were established in addition to the parochial school, specifically to serve communities at a distance from the church, and were staffed by local men without university degrees. The minister warned, however, that these schools would soon falter without the Society's assistance. In light of the recent act passed 'for settling small schools', the Committee agreed to help, granting a sum of £6 sterling (£72 Scots) to be divided among the three schools.[257] By 1715 the Society had sponsored two further batches of small schools. In Balquhidder in the Presbytery of Dunblane, the Society granted 200 merks (£11/3/4 sterling) among three schools, and in Edinkillie in the Presbytery of Forres the Society gave 200 merks among four schools.[258] It is notable that, as with Comrie, the small school format in both Balquhidder and Edinkille was adopted in response to the urging of local agents, namely Rev. James Robertson of Balquhidder and the Presbytery of Forres. Rev. Robertson argued successfully that 'the parish being wide, there is necessity of three schools therein': one at the west end of Lochearn, one in Strathyre, and one for the Braes of Balquhidder.[259] The Presbytery of Forres obtained four schools in Edinkillie 'in respect of the situation and

[255] NRS, GD95/1/1, 196–7 (31 Jul 1713).
[256] NRS, GD95/2/1, 272 (1 Aug 1712).
[257] Ibid., 362 (1 Mar 1714).
[258] NRS, GD95/2/2, 34 (7 Oct 1714); GD95/1/1, 248 (4 Nov 1711).
[259] NRS, GD95/2/2, 34 (7 Oct 1714).

extent thereof, and its separation by impassable rivers'.[260] Both batches of schools went on to raise attendances of around 100.[261] Considering the near immediate success of these schools along with the readiness of local agents to recommend teachers for them, it seems likely that they were also pre-existing establishments, as was the case in Comrie.

Table 4. SSPCK school attendances, 1711–15

LOCATION (# OF SCHOOLS)	# SCHOLARS	LOCATION (# OF SCHOOLS)	# SCHOLARS
Braemar	64	Lairg	40
Glengairn	57	Kildonan	21
Glenlivet	60	Gairloch	30
Abertarff	53	Comrie (3)	100*
Glenelg	42	Balquhidder (3)	122*
Snizort (Skye)	53	Edinkillie (4)	96*
Durness, Strathnaver	60		

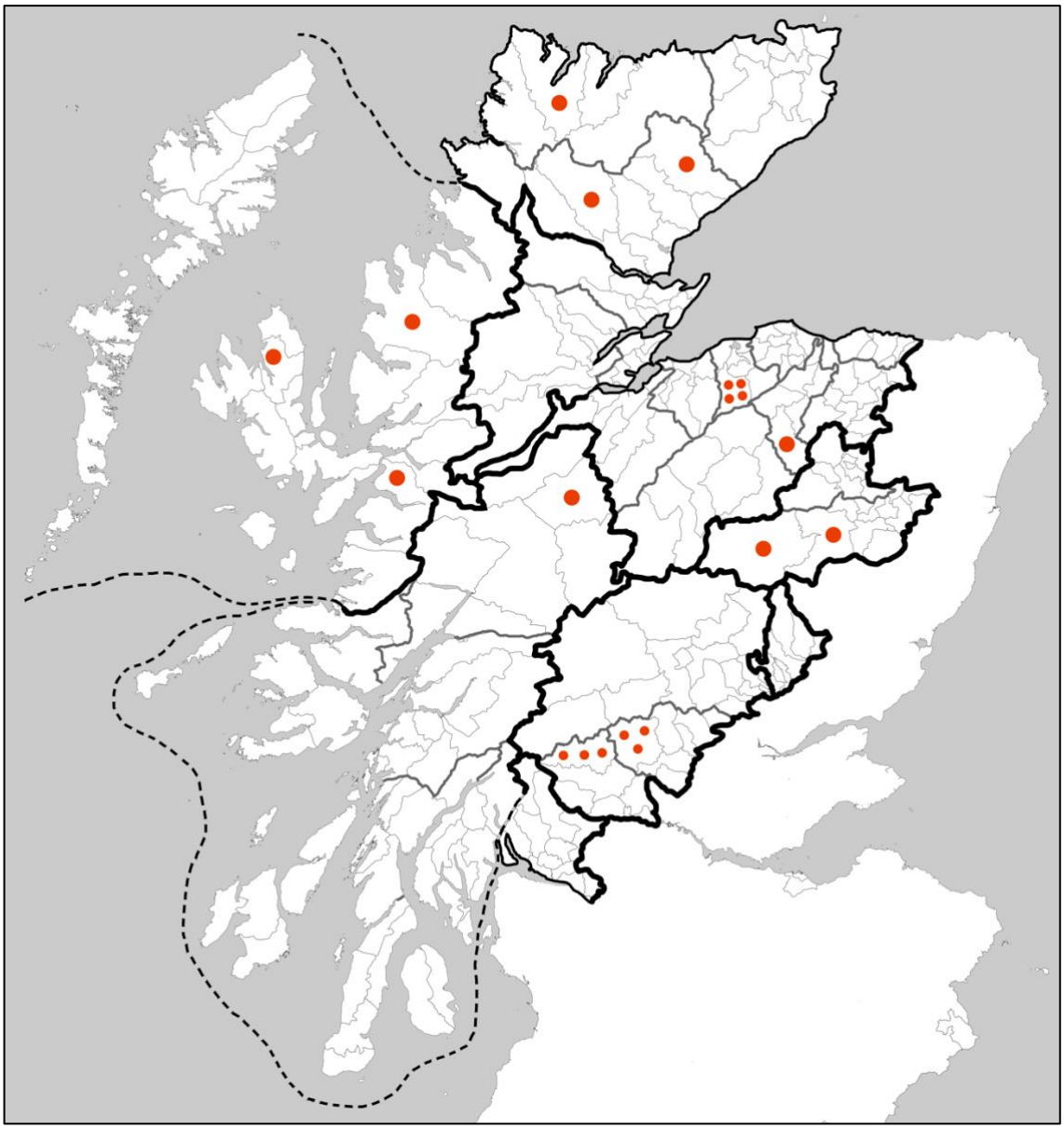
Sources: NRS, GD95/1/1; GD95/2/1–2. *Denotes that number is the total attendance at multiple schools.

To the Society, it was clear which approach to the establishment of schools was the more cost-effective investment. A standard school with a salary of £17/10/0 (300 merks) looked to educate around 60 scholars at best; in Comrie, on the other hand, for just £6, around a third of the cost, the SSPCK could claim to be educating over 100 children (see table 4). By essentially propping up three pre-existing local initiatives, the Society added ten locations, ten teachers and over 300 pupils to its own list of schools. The appearance of growth and success, it was hoped, would attract further donations. It is telling that one of the final acts passed by the Society before the outbreak of the '15 ordered a public collection at church doors 'to furnish their scholars with books, and to settle a greater number of small itinerant schools in remote glens and places in the Highlands and Islands'.[262] The debate over approach to the establishment of schools and teachers' salaries was to continue in the decades that followed, not infrequently proving a point of contention between the SSPCK and the localities it sought to assist.

[260] NRS, GD95/2/1, 299 (27 Feb 1714).
[261] NRS, GD95/2/2, 232 (2 Jun 1718), 264 (4 Feb 1719).
[262] 1715 General Assembly Act XII.

Table 5. Small Schools and Teachers Sponsored by the SSPCK, 1714–15

	LOCATION	TEACHER	PLACE OF ORIGIN	PLACE OF OPERATION
1714	Comrie [3 Schools]	Robert Coventry	Comrie	Comrie
		James Stewart	Comrie	Comrie
		Patrick Stewart	Comrie	Comrie
	Balquhidder [3 Schools]	James MacCallum	Balquhidder	Balquhidder
		John Buchanan	Balquhidder	Balquhidder
		Unnamed Teacher	Balquhidder	Balquhidder
1715	Edinkillie [4 Schools]	John Calder	Edinkillie	Edinkillie
		William Gowie	Edinkillie	Edinkillie
		John Sangster	Edinkillie	Edinkillie
		James MacKay	Edinkillie	Edinkillie



Map 7. Schools maintained by the SSPCK in 1715 excluding Orkney and Shetland

Conclusion

With the first scheme in 1711, the Society undertook to establish 11 schools, spread as equitably as possible among the regions of the Highlands. This initial approach was adopted

largely to satisfy the demands of local agents – ministers and heritors, as well as ordinary tenants, who had already engaged with the Society. The Society hoped that, in turn, local agents would use their power and influence in their respective localities to support teachers and encourage parents to send their children to SSPCK schools. Finance also had a great bearing on the early scheme, limiting the scale and the number of schools that the Society could support. Aiming to reach a wider portion of the population on a limited budget, the Society resolved that the first schools would be resettled within their respective districts in locations which maximised their accessibility.

Local influence was also evident in the first generation of SSPCK schoolmasters. These were primarily university-educated men, the standard of pedagogue that many Highland communities, like their Lowland counterparts, had come to expect. Early teachers were not, nor were they intended to be, cultural and religious 'shock troops', as Macinnes and Szasz claim. Most were Gaelic-speakers rooted in the localities they were intended to serve, whether they were recent university graduates ultimately destined for the ministry, or active local teachers in search of a more stable source of income. Once employed by the Society, teachers were required to prioritise the religious aspects of schooling, ensuring that children were taught to read the catechism and the Bible before progressing onto the more practical aspects of education, namely writing and arithmetic. These religious duties also went beyond the schoolhouse. Schoolmasters were expected to serve as spiritual and moral role models in their communities, performing pastoral duties such as catechising the poor and reading from the Bible publicly in the absence of the minister. However, it is doubtful whether this particular mould of teacher differed much, if at all, from its predecessor; evidence overwhelmingly suggests that many Highland schoolmasters who operated prior to the SSPCK's intervention fulfilled similar religious functions.

The function of the early SSPCK schools varied from region to region, reflecting the differing needs and demands of each respective locality, as well as the wishes of local agents. In Aberdeenshire, SSPCK schools were ostensibly settled to address the growth of Catholicism in the region. In practice, however, the schools in Braemar and Glengairn provided inhabitants with an additional point of access to schooling for their children, an opportunity that both Protestants and Catholics seized. The situation was similar in the schools of Glenlivet and Abertarff; although the children of Protestants were undoubtedly in the majority, many Catholic parents also elected to educate their children in SSPCK schools. Nevertheless, when Catholic parents in Glengairn and Glenlivet discovered that Society teachers were secretly bringing their children to Protestant worship, they did not fail to express their discontent, and soon after withdrew their children from their schools.

The two schools in Sutherland fulfilled the terms of the mortification left to the Society by the Dowager Countess of Sutherland, providing the predominantly Protestant population with opportunities to have their children educated for free. The school at Earlish in Snizort, Skye was intended to supplement and operate alongside the schools already established in the island, but less than a year after its establishment it had effectively replaced the parochial school of Snizort. The school in Glenelg was settled with the Clan MacLeod in mind; while Knoydart, the southern portion of the parish, was predominantly Roman Catholic, the school was established to serve the largely Presbyterian MacLeod population in the north. The example of Gairloch is perhaps the most the most striking. Despite the district's reputation for violent Episcopalian resistance, a small but influential core of MacKenzie gentlemen were eager to enlist the Society's help in establishing a school. From the perspectives of the Society and the Presbyterian minister, the school at Gairloch may have been seen as a promising opportunity to reconcile the population to both church and state.

The Society did face several difficulties in the early years, first and foremost employee retention. Many schoolmasters were destined for the ministry, but in this period the Society was in no position to turn down qualified candidates, especially those who were already rooted in their communities. The Society was also confronted with several local disputes concerning the locations of its schools. The will of the local elite in all regions heavily influenced where schools were settled; indeed, in Glenlivet the school was moved by Huntly without consultation, demonstrating the limits of the Society's power in localities. In Lairg, the inhabitants of the neighbouring parish of Creich withdrew their children from the school in protest when the Society refused to move the school there. These examples of local disputes, however, reflect the popularity of SSPCK schools and, indeed, a demand for more schooling in general.

While the early schools were generally well-received by their communities, certain aspects of the Society's modus operandi were not. Teachers in Braemar and Lairg, for example, complained that the practice of keeping attendance rolls made parishioners anxious that there was a more nefarious motive at work, namely that children were being educated in preparation for their shipment to overseas colonies. The Society's policy towards Latin was also an issue. Foreshadowing future tensions between the SSPCK and Highland communities, the Society refused the request of Skye schoolmaster, John MacPherson, to teach Latin to the 'richer sort' in his school.[263]

The issue of Gaelic, on the other hand, while not entirely absent in this period, did not loom large. Indeed, the Society's policy towards Gaelic in this period was, perhaps

[263] NRS, GD95/2/1, 301.

purposely, amorphous and ambivalent. The first calls for schoolmasters included literacy in Gaelic as a desirable qualification. However, while all schoolmasters were literate in English and some of them in Latin, it is doubtful that many were, in fact, literate in Gaelic. Gaelic was evidently permitted as a language of communication in the classroom. It took the enquiry of Durness teacher William MacKay in 1713 for the Society to determine that teachers were not to teach using Gaelic or Latin books. Nonetheless, the Society did not oppose oral translation between Gaelic and English, nor the teaching of Gaelic books in non-Society schools, and it continued to send copies of the Gaelic Catechism to the Presbytery of Skye until 1719. This suggests that there was no blanket approach towards Gaelic in the early years. It would take further prompting from localities over the following decade for the Society to clarify its policy on the use of Gaelic in education.

In 1714 and 1715 the Society began to support a total of ten pre-existing 'small schools' in Comrie and Balquhidder in Perthshire, and Edinkillie in Moray. These schools had been established in addition to the parochial school to serve communities at a distance from the church. They were also staffed by local men without university degrees who were willing to accept lesser salaries from the Society. In each case this approach was adopted at the recommendation of local agents, who argued that multiple small schools would be more effective than one larger institution. These schools were soon successful, bringing in around 100 pupils per parish. By propping up such local initiatives, the Society found that it could educate more pupils at a much-reduced cost. As we shall see in the following chapter, the Society saw in these initiatives the potential to expand operations elsewhere in the Highlands despite its limited finances. At the outbreak of the Jacobite Rising in September 1715, the SSPCK supported 23 schools across 16 parishes in the Highlands and Islands, including three in Orkney and Shetland. However, the type and purpose, as well as the effectiveness, of schools varied from region to region, and the Society was still struggling to find a coherent approach to establishing schools.

5

THE ’15 TO THE ERA OF GENERAL WADE, 1715–*c.*1730

At the outbreak of the Jacobite Rising in September 1715, the SSPCK supported 23 schools across 16 parishes in the Highlands and Islands. It was still working to establish a basic level of organisation for both its schools and the management of its affairs in Edinburgh. Locations and schoolmasters were far from settled, the approach to the establishment of schools varied, and demand continued to outstrip the Society’s ability to supply. Most but not all SSPCK schools were affected by the rising and its fallout. Experiences, however, were varied and there is little evidence to suggest that schools were targeted by insurgents for political, religious or indeed cultural reasons, even in disaffected regions.

Seeking to capitalise on increased government interest in the Highlands in the rising’s aftermath, the Society mounted lobbying campaigns in Edinburgh and London with the aim of securing government funding for schools. The rising, the Society argued, demonstrated the need for more schools in order to wean Gaels away from the twin temptations of Jacobitism and Catholicism and to integrate the region with the rest of the country. The campaign bore some fruit, galvanising parliament to add a late amendment to its ‘Act for the more effectuall securing the peace of the Highlands of Scotland’, which agreed to appoint a royal commission to enquire into establishing schools in the Highlands.[1] The Society played a pivotal role in forcing the matter, lobbying for the nomination of the commission and gathering information from Highland church courts, lest the issue be forgotten about entirely. Despite initial optimism and assiduous lobbying efforts, no official funds were ever received directly by the Society in this period.

Nevertheless, the years 1715 to 1732 still saw the number of schools rise by over 300%, from 23 to 104 – including 22 in Orkney and Shetland. The first phase of expansion was made possible in 1719, when the Kirk granted the Society £600 Sterling from its share of the Equivalent. In the five years that followed, the Society established over 25 new schools across the Highlands and Islands, including Badenoch, Lochaber, Perthshire and the area surrounding Loch Lomond. Growth was stimulated further by lowering the average teacher’s salary, which allowed the Society to spread its resources wider. The year 1725 witnessed the instigation of an active interventionist government policy towards the Gàidhealtachd. The

[1] 1 Geo. I, c. 54.

government launched a range of initiatives in order to integrate the region into the British state, and the Society used this to its benefit. General Wade was dispatched north to impose military and legal authority on the region, disarming the clans and supervising the construction of a network of military roads. At the same time, Walpole's spy network was engaged in suborning the Jacobite chiefs in exile, winning them over with a mixture of bribes and promises of restoration to their forfeited estates. The Royal Bounty scheme in particular facilitated the extension of SSPCK schools and the opening of new frontiers in Catholic and Jacobite districts. By collaborating with the Royal Bounty Committee (RBC), the SSPCK was able to spread its influence much wider than had been the case when it relied solely on its own resources.[2] At the same time, the Society was refining its management methods. Most significantly, the Society introduced measures which invited local elites to participate in the management of schools. The Society was also making adjustments as to how schools were run, introducing a bursary scheme and proposing measures which attempted to limit the amount of Gaelic spoken in schools.[3]

This chapter first considers the Society in the immediate aftermath of the '15. It reconstructs the Society's campaign for government support, establishing the political context in the wake of the rising to determine whether this influenced the Society's approach. It explores the mechanics behind the composition of the royal commission's report on Highland schooling, gauging the influence of local agents and the SSPCK in the process. The chapter investigates the impact of the rising on schools, surveying each school outwith Orkney and Shetland to determine which schools experienced disruption, the nature of disruption, how localities and the Society responded, and the ease with which schools recovered in the years that followed. The chapter then traces the growth and institutional development of the SSPCK up to *c.*1730. The chapter examines the expansion of schools and traces the SSPCK's evolving relationship with the Highland elite. It also looks at the development of school policies concerning the use of Gaelic in the classroom, the provision of bursaries for poorer children, and the proper procedure for teaching the children of Highland gentlemen. The turn of the decade provides a natural terminus, as the early 1730s witnessed the launch of the Society's first American mission, as well as the death of the first SSPCK secretary John Dundas, a key administrator and influential member. Together these events marked the beginning of a new era for the Society, in terms of both its mission and its management.

[2] Stiùbhart, 'Royal Bounty Scheme', 137–8.
[3] NRS, GD95/2/3, (5 Apr 1723), 188–9.

The Aftermath of the '15: The View from Edinburgh

With the outbreak of the 1715 rising, the future of the Society hung in the balance. By October, Jacobite forces were in *de facto* control of most of Scotland north of the Forth, although they were unable to take Fort William or Stirling Castle.[4] The General Meeting scheduled for November was cancelled.[5] The Committee continued to meet while the rising was active, although the agenda was limited to dealing with matters as they arose. On 5 October 1715, Glenelg schoolmaster Donald MacLeod declared his intention to leave his post the following month. This, however, had little to do with the rising. Rather, MacLeod was returning to his university town of Aberdeen to undertake ministerial trials.[6] The rising is not mentioned until 2 January 1716, when the Committee delayed plans for a collection at church doors for books and small schools 'because of the present troubles and Confusions in the Countrey'.[7]

In order to gauge the Society's financial standing as the rising waned, all debts were reviewed and an account was issued listing the Society's schools, teachers' salaries, and expenses for books.[8] Much to the Society's dismay, several debtors were implicated in the rising, such as Sir Hugh Paterson of Bannockburn, Sir John Erskine of Alva, James Graham of Braco and John Lockhart of Carnwath. Difficulties recovering Bannockburn's debt later forced the Society into negotiations with the Committee for the Forfeited Estates to recover the principal.[9] The earl of Mar and John Farquharson of Invercauld were expelled for their participation in the rising. Invercauld was later pardoned by George I after it was determined that he had been coerced into rebellion by the earl of Mar, his feudal superior. While Invercauld did not formally re-join the Society, he continued to serve as a correspondent for Highland Aberdeenshire and provide bursaries for the school in Braemar.[10] Economic harm occasioned by the rising is reflected in the Society's finances. As Gray points out, contributions dropped to £128/18/9 in 1716, £200 less than either the preceding or following year. While a large amount of interest was paid in, this may have reflected the wishes of borrowers to square their debts.[11] In July 1716 the Society applied to the Convention of Royal Burghs for a corporate donation, but was advised that this:

---

[4] Cf. Lenman, *Jacobite Clans*, 74–87.
[5] NRS, GD95/1/1, 280 (3 Nov 1715).
[6] NRS, GD95/2/2, 82 (5 Oct 1715). For evidence of MacLeod's presence in Aberdeen 1715–19, see GD95/2/2, 102 (5 Apr 1716) and *Fasti*, vii, 155.
[7] NRS, GD95/2/2, 84 (2 Jan 1716).
[8] Ibid., 84–9 (4-5 Jan 1716); GD95/10/59, /60.
[9] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 162, 192; NRS, GD95/2/2, 84–5 (4 Jan 1716), 140 (4 Oct 1716); GD95/1/1, 291–2 (7 Jun 1716); GD95/8/3, 25–6.
[10] NRS, GD95/1/1, 290 (1 Mar 1716). John Grant Michie (ed.), *The Records of Invercauld,1547–1828* (Aberdeen, 1901), 295–6, 307–10. In 1724, Invercauld was appointed SSPCK correspondent for the Presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil. GD95/2/3, 277 (2 Jul 1724).
[11] NRS, GD95/8/3, 5; Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 196.

> would be of Litle effect at this time, in respect that the expences of the Burrows and their missive dues was much greater this year than ordinary, and that because of the Confusions that have been of Late in the Countrey, almost all the Royal Burrows especially in the north have been at more than ordinary charges.[12]

As we shall see, the rising also compromised the ability of some to support schools in their own localities, which placed further strain on the Society's resources.

In addition to challenges, the rising presented the perfect opportunity for the Society to renew its appeal for government support. As the political situation stabilised in February 1716, the Committee moved swiftly to establish a relationship with the Commission of Police – a government body whose remit included determining measures to 'civilise' the Highlands.[13] The Society submitted a memorial to the commissioners which, echoing the sentiment of earlier documents, argued that the ignorance of ordinary Highlanders had made them 'proper tools to their popish and Jacobite heads of Clannes and others for carrying on their wicked and Rebellious projects'. Schooling, it was argued, was the most effective remedy. The Society's 23 schools fell 'far short of answering the great necessity of the vast and large bounds of the Highlands and Islands'. It was therefore proposed that the commission recommend to the king to grant a sum 'out of his Royal Bounty to enlarge the societies stock', so that:

> mo[r]e schools [may] be erected in these parts for teaching the principles of our holy Religion in the English language, and by time wearing out the Irish.[14]

The memorial also contains the oft quoted and more flagrantly anti-Gaelic statement:

> Nothing can be more effectual for reducing these countries to order, and making them usefull to the Commonwealth than teaching them their duty to God, their King and Countrey and rooting out their Irish language, and this has been the case of the Society so far as they could, For all the Schollars are taught in English.[15]

This was the Society's first official pronouncement expressing an explicit desire to eliminate Gaelic. Yet, as Nathan Gray has pointed out, it should be understood in the context of the

[12] NRS, GD95/2/2, 119–20 (5–7 Jul 1716); GD95/10/61.
[13] Ibid., 94 (21 Feb 1716); Scott, 'Politics and Administration', 213–4; P. W. J. Riley, *The English Ministers and Scotland, 1707–1727* (London, 1964), 185–6. The Commission was set up by the Whig ministry in 1714 nominally to improve governance in Scotland, although in practice it served primarily as a source of patronage for Scottish politicians. Its official remit, however, required the commissioners to compile a report and propose policies for dealing with the Highlands. Riley states that, as the commissioners made little to no attempt to undertake any of the tasks assigned to them, 'the amount of work accomplished up to 1727 was ludicrous'.
[14] NRS, GD95/2/2, 100–1 (5 Apr 1716).
[15] Ibid.

campaign for government support – it was not a public policy statement nor did it reflect common practice in schools at this time.[16] As the previous chapter demonstrates, the Society was yet to establish a coherent policy for language use in the classroom and Gaelic had served as a medium of instruction in most schools outwith Orkney and Shetland. It is noteworthy that in an earlier draft of this memorial the equivalent passage adopts a much subtler tone. Highlanders were to be taught:

> the foundations of the Christian Religion, [so] they might be the better and more useful subjects. Since that teaches them duty to the King, Love to their Countrey, Justice to their neighbours, laudable industry in the work of their generation and, occationaly, the national language without wch they, in a great measure, remain useless to themselves and the world.[17]

Gaelic is not mentioned explicitly; rather the memorial emphasises the need to instil the religious principles from which loyalty, industry and the English language naturally stemmed. The rebellion provided 'new evidence that Disloyalty is the effect of want of understanding, and the issue of irreligion'. This is echoed in a 1723 memorial to the government, which emphasises the value of Gaels being 'taught to understand the Comon language of Brittain'.[18] The Gaelic language need not be 'rooted out' to make way for English, but Gaels and the wider world stood to benefit from their learning the 'national language'.[19]

The existence of this earlier draft, which was never to see the light of day, suggests that the memorial's composers were consciously tailoring the Society's rhetoric to maximise its chances of drawing support. It should be noted that the earlier draft also broaches the forfeiture of Jacobite estates, proposing that profits arising from them 'be added, by proper authorities, to the Funds of the society', to be paid either annually or as a lump sum directly into the stock.[20] The final draft, however, is much more ambiguous, requesting money 'out of any fund his Majesty thinks most proper'. This may indicate that the Society wanted to avoid appearing too presumptuous at this early stage, given that a forfeited estates commission had not yet been appointed. It may also have sought to avoid any potential conflict of interest with either creditors or the Whig politicians who hoped to profit from the forfeitures.[21]

---

[16] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 18, 213
[17] NRS, GD95/10/62. 'Occationaly' presumably means that learning duty to the king etc. would prove the occasion of Gaels learning English, the 'national language'.
[18] NRS, GD95/10/70.
[19] NRS, GD95/10/62.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Lenman, *Jacobite Clans*, 89; idem, *The Jacobite Risings in Britain, 1689–1746* (Aberdeen, 1995), 162.

That the Society ultimately opted for a harsher, more flagrantly anti-Gaelic stance makes sense given the political context. Following the union of 1707, power and patronage in Scottish politics were bitterly fought over by two Whig factions: the Argathelians under the leadership of John Campbell, second duke of Argyll and his brother Archibald, earl of Islay; and the Squadrone, under John Ker, first Duke of Roxburgh. Although the Argathelians were in the ascendancy at the outbreak of the rising, the leniency Argyll, as commander-in-chief of the forces in Scotland, showed towards the defeated Jacobites, and his reluctance to wreak vengeance upon them, proved to be the downfall of his interest. Argyll was replaced by his rival General William Cadogan, and the Duke of Montrose replaced Islay as Lord Clerk Register. The Independent Highland Companies were disbanded, Roxburgh was appointed Secretary of State for Scotland and the legal apparatus of the region, including the Commission of Police, were placed in the hands of the Squadrone who had backed punitive measures against the rebels.[22] According to Stiùbhart, the faction 'had no clear positive policies towards the region, other than heavy-handed reprisals, and depriving Argyll of opportunities for patronage'.[23] On the other hand, for the few committed Whigs, including the Squadrone supporter Montrose, who were based in or close to the Highlands, there were very real security concerns that required government action, especially following the disbanding of the Independent Companies.[24] In this context, the Society probably composed the final draft of its memorial to align itself more closely with the view of the Highlands espoused by the ascendant Squadrone interest. Moreover, the lack of any coherent 'Highland policy' on the part of the Squadrone could have made its supporters more receptive to the Society's proposals.

The Commission of Police agreed to back the Society's proposals. In March 1716, the king ordered members of the commission in London 'to conferr together on the subject of the memorial and take such measures as they shall judge most likely to promote the pious design'. Letters and copies of the memorial were subsequently dispatched to the commissioners and correspondents in London.[25] On 27 April, upon reading 'letters from friends at London shewing that there are some motions there about erecting of more Charity Schools in the Highlands and the government granting their assistance for that end', the

[22] Scott, 'Politics and Administration', 305–7; Stiùbhart, 'Royal Bounty Scheme', 74, 77–8. In 1715 the Commission of Police was composed of the Marquess of Tweeddale (President), the Duke of Sutherland, the earls of Buchan, Haddington and Marchmont, and John Haldane of Gleneagles (Squadrone); and the earls of Bute and Deloraine, and Thomas Kennedy (Argathelians). In 1716, Bute and Deloraine were removed from their posts, thereby consolidating Squadrone control over the commission.
[23] Stiùbhart, 'Royal Bounty Scheme', 78.
[24] Lenman, *Jacobite Clans*, 86.
[25] NRS, GD95/2/2, 100–1 (26 Apr 1716).

Committee dispatched letters to Scottish MPs and Peers to request their support.[26] By mid-1716, there was a profound optimism that a substantial grant was coming the Society's way. After attending the General Assembly in May, Wodrow remarked that 'somewhat is expected for the charity schools in the North out of the forfaulted estates'.[27] The Committee's report to the June General Meeting expressed 'hopes that something considerable may be obtained in favours of the Society if due pains be taken to prosecute this methode'.[28] Members were urged to write to their contacts in London. Those in London—including Lt. Col. John Erskine of Carnock, John Stirling, principal of Glasgow University, and George Drummond, provost of Edinburgh—were urged to use their interest with the Commissioners of Police and 'the great men about Court' to obtain government support, and to solicit their 'English friends and acquaintances to Contribute to the society'.[29] On 25 July the Committee received news that a clause had been added to parliament's 'Act for more effectual securing the peace of the Highlands' which ordered the appointment of a royal commission to enquire into the state of schooling in the Highlands and, before 1 December 1716:

> Lay before his Majestie an account of the proper places for establishing schools, and of the necessarie salaries for the maintainance of them, that all needful provision may be made for that end.[30]

While the SSPCK applauded the intention, it did not trust the institutions of the reactive British state to make good this promise without considerable prompting and assistance:

> The said act may be of good use, if the intention thereof be truely prosecuted, & that through the multitude of other weighty affairs at the court, the same may come to be forgotten. They thought it the duty of the society to do what was proper for them in order to get the design of the said act made effectual.[31]

The Society could not let this opportunity slip away. It took immediate steps to compile its own report on the state of Highland education, to be submitted to the royal commission. Letters were sent to Highland presbyteries, requesting reports on 'the number of Charity schools that will be needfull to be sett up in their severall bounds, and of the most proper places for setting them up in, where they may be most universally usefull'.[32] Building on the information gathered from synods in 1710, this second survey was to give the Society a near

[26] Ibid., 105 (27 Apr 1716); TNA, SP54/12/1, Principal William Hamilton to Duke of Roxburgh (1 May 1716)
[27] Wodrow, *Analecta*, ii, 317.
[28] NRS, GD95/1/1, 293 (7 Jun 1716).
[29] NRS, GD95/2/2, 118 (19 Jun 1716).
[30] 1 Geo. I, c. 54; NRS GD95/2/2, 124 (25 Jul 1716).
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.

comprehensive picture of education in the Highlands, including the schools already established, the factors which made their establishment difficult, the number of additional schools required and the presence of Catholicism and Episcopalianism in each respective locality.[33]

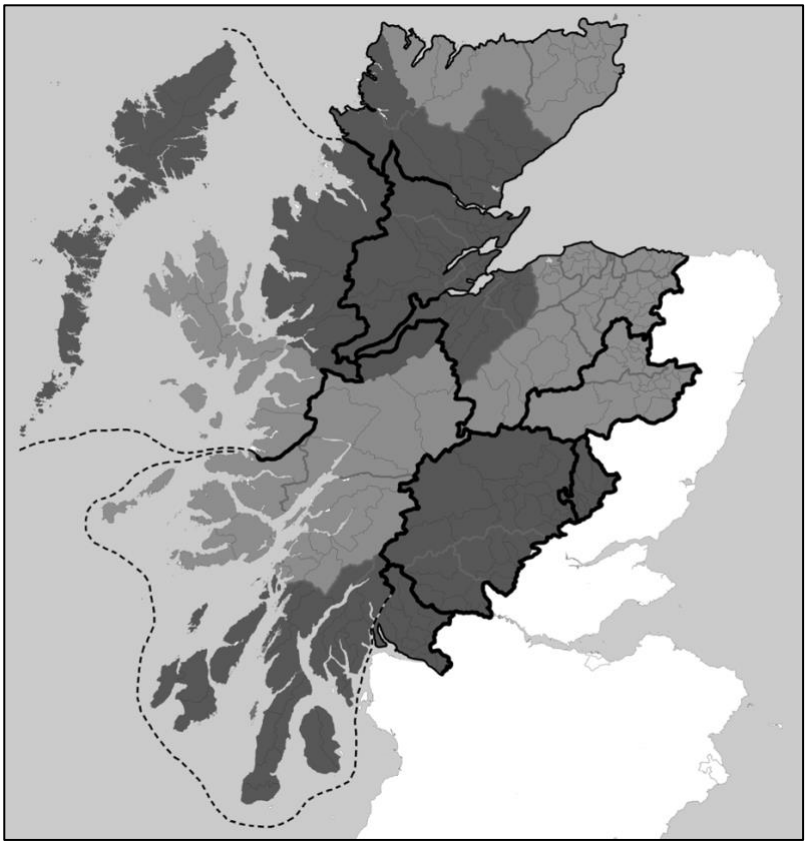
The Committee attempted to enlist the assistance of several political figures, including the Secretary of State Charles Townshend, Scottish Secretary Roxburgh, and Sir Adam Cockburn of Ormiston, the Lord Justice Clerk and Roxburgh's principal agent in Scotland.[34] Robert Pringle, brother of Walter Pringle and an undersecretary of state in London, was engaged to use his influence with 'principall secretaries and others about' the Prince of Wales to 'procure a nomination of fit persons' to the commission.[35] By 6 September, Pringle had obtained a warrant from the king for appointing the commission.[36] While the exact membership of the commission is uncertain, the SSPCK minutes suggest that it was dominated by Squadrone supporters, naming only the Duke of Montrose and the earls of Haddington and Sutherland.[37]

Robert Pringle also used his influence to secure the appointment of SSPCK secretary John Dundas of Philpstoun as clerk to the commission.[38] In this position, Dundas served as a strategic point of contact between the commission and the Society, and this stood to benefit both parties. The commission could rely on Dundas's contacts, expertise, and experience with the unique challenges of Highland legal, ecclesiastical and educational affairs.[39] The Society, on the other hand, had a 'man on the inside' who could forward its agenda and ensure that its proposals were given due consideration. Moreover, Dundas and the Society benefitted from the prestige and authority which came from their respective roles as crown-appointed clerk and board of advisors to the royal commission. This was probably a cause for optimism among Highland church courts, giving them greater impetus to begin engaging with the Society and communicate the educational needs of their parishes in detail. For example, when the Society presented its report to the commission, it had only received returns from the Presbyteries of Dunkeld, Dumbarton, Dunblane; it was yet to receive returns

[33] Returns have been found for eight presbyteries. See NRS, CH2/106/3, Presbytery of Dunkeld Minutes, 169–73 (4 Sep 1716); CH2/546/7, Presbytery of Dumbarton Minutes, 109–16 (5–6 Sep 1716); CH2/553/4, Presbytery of Inverness Minutes, 155–7 (19 Sep 1716); CH2/92/4, Presbytery of Dingwall Minutes, 2–5 (21 Sep 1716); CH2/111/4, Presbytery of Dunoon Minutes, 277–82 (10 Oct 1716); CH2/1153/2, Presbytery of Kintyre Minutes, 181 (23 Oct 1716). The report for Tain is transcribed in MacNaughton, *Church Life in Ross and Sutherland*, 87–95. The reports for presbyteries within the Synod of Angus are mentioned in Jessop, *Education in Angus*, 76–7.
[34] Ibid.; Scott, 'Politics and Administration', 240; TNA, SP54/12/1, /103, /126, /234a.
[35] NRS, GD95/2/2, 125 (25 Jul 1716).
[36] Ibid., 126 (6 Sep 1716); TNA, SP54/12/103, John Dundas to Robert Pringle (14 Aug 1716).
[37] NRS, GD95/1/2, 98 (3 Mar 1720).
[38] TNA, SP54/12/103, /229.
[39] See Wodrow, *Analecta*, iii, 357; iv, 233–6.

from the Presbyteries of Inverness, Tain, Dingwall, Dunoon and Kintyre. A further letter to presbyteries from John Dundas, in his capacity as 'clerk to the commission appointed by the king', prompted detailed responses from each in time for the publication of the royal commission's report on 2 November.

Map 8. Scope of the 1716 Presbytery Survey (in dark grey)



SYNOD	PRESBYTERY	# SCHOOLS
Angus	Angus	5
Argyll	Kintyre	5
Argyll	Dunoon	37
Argyll	Inveraray	4
Glasgow & Ayr	Dumbarton	4
Moray	Aberlour	7
Moray	Inverness	16
Perth & Stirling	Auchterarder	3
Perth & Stirling	Dunblane	3
Perth & Stirling	Dunkeld	17
Ross	Tain	11
Ross	Dingwall	28

Space does not permit a comprehensive discussion of the presbyterial returns. However, together with the 1710 survey, they demonstrate a strong demand for more schools across the Highlands. They shed light on the variety of issues that affected schooling in the region, and the ways in which local efforts were attempting to meet local needs. Many are written with candour, suggesting a widespread expectation among Highland presbyteries

that the government would intervene to improve schooling in the region, and often provide advice based on local experiences. The returns from the Presbyteries of Dunkeld, Tain and Dingwall for example, give minimum salaries for the government-funded schools, recommending that these should supplement the already established parochial schools.[40] Dunoon proposed to:

> ye Government [to] fall upon the happy way of getting fixed salaries to the schools at the severalls Kirk towns where they have none and an 100 pound Scots for little ambulatory schools as the Presby had modelled them in every parish […] for teaching English in the severall Quarters and nooks.[41]

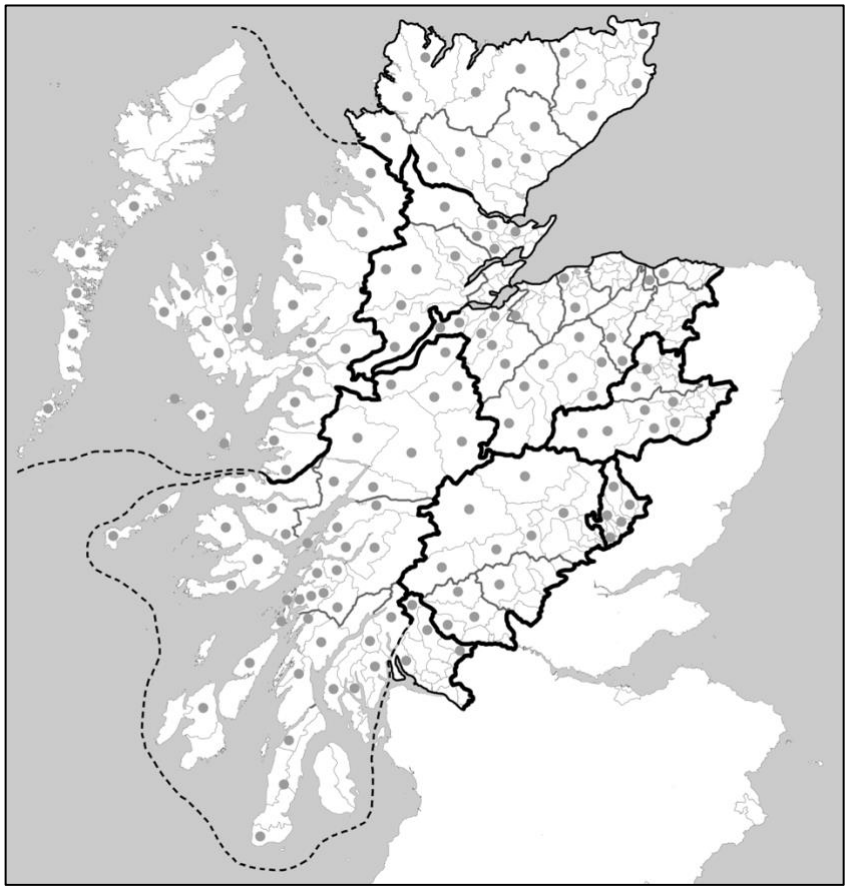
The Society's report to the commission relayed these concerns, arguing first for stricter enforcement of existing educational laws which required heritors to maintain parochial schools. It then listed 101 locations that required schools in addition to the legal requirement.[42] The Society proposed that it be empowered to receive the government fund and 'lay out the money as they shall see cause'. In turn, the Society would continue to appoint teachers and govern schools in accordance with its royal letters' patent.[43] The report also suggested granting a yearly fund for maintaining poor children at charity schools, or for sending them to the grammar schools at 'Fort William, Inverness, Dunkeld or other places'. Finally, the report argued for the enforcement of the 1700 Act, which ordered that the children of Catholics be removed from their parents and educated as Protestants. This programme would require £2000 to £3000 sterling yearly, but the Society argued it would:

> Lay the most promising & effectual foundation of civilizeing the Highlands, and by times rooting out the Irish language, teaching the inhabitants the principles of the true Religion in the English tongue, and Instructing them in vertuous imployments Both they & these spacious Countreys, may be made usefull to the Common wealth.[44]

It is noteworthy that, while the Society included this anti-Gaelic statement in its report, the presbyteries that requested schools, provided the Society with information, and would be ultimately responsible for the management of schools in their localities, demonstrated no such ideological commitment – none of the extant returns to the 1716 survey mention language.

[40] NRS, CH2/106/3, 169–73; CH2/92/4, 5; MacNaughton, *Church Life in Ross and Sutherland*, 95.
[41] NRS, CH2/111/4, 281–2.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 135.
[44] Ibid., 137.

The report of the royal commission was presented to the king on 2 November 1716. It went over and above the Society's proposals, listing 151 locations that required schools and proposing that each be granted £20 sterling yearly, costing a total of £3020 yearly.



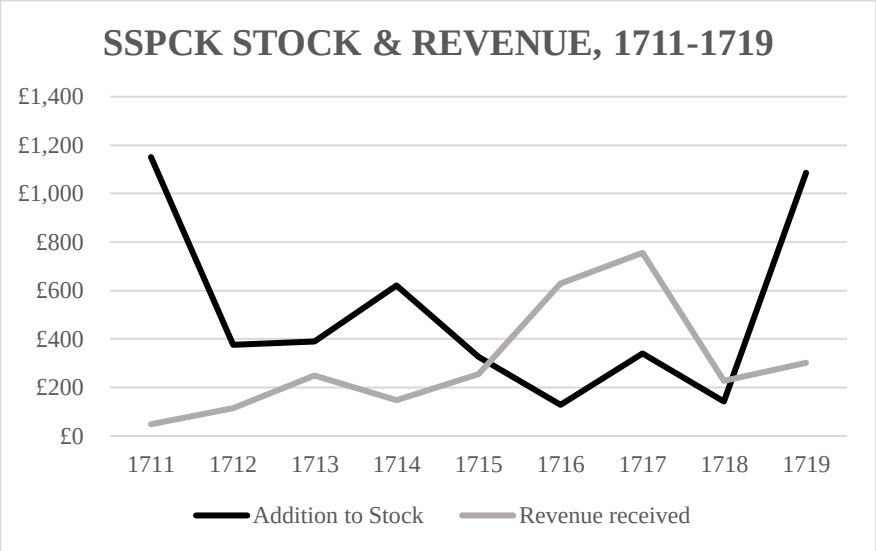
Map 9. Schools proposed in 1716 Royal Commission report

While the report recommended that the crown appoint the managers of the fund, the wording heavily suggests that the ultimate aim was to see the SSPCK transformed into an official crown agency dedicated to Highland education. For example, the managers were to:

be endowed with the same Powers and Privileges, and be enjoined to act by the same Rules, and under the same Provisions and Restrictions that are contained in the [SSPCK's] Royal Letters Patent; a Copy of which Royal Patent is herewith humbly offered to Your Majesty.[45]By Acts of Parliament in 1718 and 1719 the forfeited estates were vested in the trustees 'to be sold for the use of the public', and a sum 'not exceeding' £20,000 was earmarked out of the expected profits for the erection and maintenance of schools in the Highlands.[46]

[45] TNA, SP54/12/229.
[46] 4 Geo. I, c. 8; 6 Geo. I, c. 11.

Figure 2. SSPCK Finances, 1711–1719



	STOCK	STOCK ADDITION	REVENUE
1710	£3,094		£2
1711	£4,245	£1,151	£49
1712	£4,622	£377	£115
1713	£5,012	£390	£251
1714	£5,633	£621	£149
1715	£5,961	£328	£256
1716	£6,090	£129	£629
1717	£6,430	£340	£756
1718	£6,572	£142	£229
1719	£7,658	£1,086	£302

In 1718 the SSPCK's stock stood at only £6,572, and its annual revenue was equally as modest. Revenue peaked at £756 in 1717, shortly after the rising. The financial unease which resulted from the rising may have been the cause of many being eager to square their pledges and debts to the Society. Or perhaps subscribers thought the rising demonstrated the need for the SSPCK and Highland schools, in keeping with the SSPCK's own judgement that now was the time to make the political case for funding. Regardless, revenue soon dropped below £300.[47] If the Society could secure this government fund, the main factor inhibiting the large-scale proliferation of its schools, namely a shortage of funds, would be an issue of the past. Furthermore, the creation an official government agency dedicated to Highland education would demonstrate a clear, long-term commitment on the part of the British state to integrating the region with the rest of the country.

[47] NRS, GD95/8/3, 1a–4.

The Aftermath of the '15: Localities, 1716–*c.*1719

This chapter now turns to the localities, examining the impact of the rising on SSPCK schools and the communities they served, both in its immediate aftermath and the years that followed. Most SSPCK schools were affected by the rising in some way. By June 1716, the Society had gathered reports from the majority of schools, describing both their current situation and the impact of the rising in their respective localities.[48]

Abertarff and Laggan

In November 1715, Shapinsay schoolmaster James Murray was appointed to Abertarff to replace Patrick Nicolson, who had recently answered a call to the parish of Kiltarlity. Because of the rising, in January 1716 Murray was reassigned to Blair Atholl.[49] Operations in Abertarff were suspended until April 1716 and remained unsettled for some time afterwards. Lord Fraserdale's role in the rising cleared the way for Simon Fraser—afterwards Lord Lovat—to regain his estates and assume the chiefship of the Clan Fraser, making him the principal heritor in the parish.[50] Lovat moved quickly to exert his influence on the Society's school, recommending kinsman John Fraser for the vacancy. Fraser had previously failed to appear before the Society for examination, and was probably more in need of money than he was adept at teaching, but he was allowed to take up the post in the interim.[51] The Society hoped to find a more suitable candidate in Mr James Johnston, former schoolmaster of Kirkmichael in the Presbytery of Aberlour.[52] However, his settlement was delayed following a complaint from Rev. Duncan McLea of Kirkmichael. This concerned an incident in 1713 when Johnston—inadvertently, as it was later determined—sparked a rumour that McLea had informed military officers 'against the papists and rebells' in the parish, thereby bringing the ire of parishioners upon their minister. It was not until April 1717 that Johnston was fully reinstated, following his confession before the presbytery and an expression of regret for his actions.[53] Attendance at the school was low after Johnston's settlement. In February 1718, the minister Thomas Fraser reported that:

> by reason of the late Insurrection, death of cattle and scarceity of bread, the inhabitants of that countrey are reduced to great povertie, and not in case to

[48] Ibid., 298–9 (7 Jun 1716).
[49] NRS, GD95/1/1, 282 (5 Jan 1716).
[50] Edward M. Furgol, Fraser, Simon, eleventh Lord Lovat, *ODNB*. URL: https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/10122.
[51] NRS, GD95/2/2, 104 (11 Apr 1716).
[52] Ibid., 123 (25 Jul 1716); CH2/6/2, Presbytery of Aberlour Minutes, 173 (31 May 1716). Kirkmichael was later a parish in the Presbytery of Abernethy, although in this period the two courts were often referred to interchangeably.
[53] Ibid., 96 (3 Feb–3 Mar 1713), 105 (30 Sep 1715), 191 (11 Apr 1717); GD95/2/2, 164–5 (28 Mar 1717); Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 193.

> keep their children at School, so that […] the number of schollars there [is] about eight or nine.[54]

No progress had yet been made towards installing a bridge, which continued to prevent children on the other side of the Tarff from attending.[55] In July 1718, the Committee resolved to move the school to the parish of Laggan in Badenoch, directly to the south of Abertarff. Letters were written to the Presbytery of Inverness and Lord Lovat stating that the school would not be restored until a bridge was built.[56]

The campaign for a school at Laggan began in 1714 with a petition from Rev. Daniel MacKenzie of Kingussie. Not only was Laggan without a school, it also shared a border with Lochaber 'where several hundred of late have apostatized to popery'. A school, MacKenzie believed, would help contain the 'popish contagion', preventing its spread into Badenoch.[57] The school at Laggan, however, fell far short of the Society's expectations. While attendance peaked at 32 scholars in December 1719, a year later this had dropped to just 15.[58]

Perthshire

As Perthshire was close to the epicentre of the rising, the schools there were heavily impacted. Rev. James Robertson of Balquhidder reported 'that the Rebellion had been a great hinderance [sic] to the societies design' and that 'many people were pressed out' to participate in the rising. While schoolmaster John Buchanan had remained in his post despite 'great temptations' to flee or join the rebels, James MacCallum initially was unaccounted for.[59] When MacCallum returned to his post, he was subject to an enquiry before the Presbytery of Dunblane. The enquiry found that James MacCallum had initially joined the Duke of Atholl's troops to resist the rebels, but upon his return he was kidnapped by 'McGregors who carried him with them into Argyleshire'. According to MacCallum, he eventually escaped but had to spend the winter in hiding, accounting for his prolonged absence. While we cannot be certain of the veracity of MacCallum's story, positive accounts of his behaviour, and testaments to his loyalty to both church and government ensured that he maintained his post.[60] Attendances rose swiftly to pre-rising levels, reaching a total of 131 scholars across the three schools in Balquhidder by June 1718.[61]

[54] NRS, GD95/2/2, 221 (3 Apr 1718).
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid, 241 (3 Jul 1718).
[57] GD95/2/2, 17 (21 May 1714).
[58] Ibid., 341, (15 Jan 1720); GD95/2/3, 30 (28 Dec 1720).
[59] Ibid., 101 (5 Apr 1716).
[60] Ibid., 121–2 (7 Jul 1716).
[61] Ibid., 232 (3 Jun 1718).

A petition from Comrie in 1716 informed the Committee that parishioners were unable to maintain three charity schools as they had before the rising and requested an additional 40 merk salary. The minister of Comrie had made the same appeal in early 1715, and it is possible that petitioners were capitalising on the rising to maximise their chances of receiving support.[62] Indeed, they cited the situation of Comrie 'upon the borders of the Highlands' arguing that the success of schools there 'might have good influence upon other places'. The appeal was successful, and the Society granted an additional 40 merks (£2/3/1 sterling).[63] Nothing more was received from Comrie until August 1719, when the minister Dougall Campbell reported that the schools had a total attendance of 84 scholars, although he noted that 'since May each of these schools wanted about a third of these numbers and will not have them till after harvest, the parents being poor, and must send their children to herding'.[64]

Following his reappointment from Abertarff, James Murray was able to take up his post at Blair Atholl in February 1716.[65] In June he reported that the Duke of Atholl had been 'most kind to him', giving him

> a Chamber for himself, and ane house for a School to be presently given him, so that he is well accomodate for School and house, and that his Grace was pleased to write to his Vassalls Tennents and people to Countenance and encourage his School and Send their Children to it.[66]

However, it was soon discovered that the school had allegedly 'broke and ruined the Legal one' settled nearby. The Society did not intend to compete with legally established schools: 'the Society are resolved not to settle any of their Schools near any of the Legal Schools That being contrair to the designe of the erection.' Murray was thus ordered to relocate to the parish's second kirk at Struan.[67] The prosecution of this order was delayed, however, until 1719, owing in part to the school's popularity. Starting with just 32 scholars in September 1716, by the following January, Murray reported 84 in attendance.[68] However, the Duke of Atholl ceasing to correspond or cooperate with the Society was also a factor. When Murray did arrive at Struan he was not provided with a house and was still

[62] Ibid., 67 (21 Mar 1715).
[63] NRS, GD95/1/1, 289–90 (1 Mar 1716).
[64] NRS, GD95/2/2, 315 (13 Aug 1719).
[65] Ibid., 94 (10 Feb 1716).
[66] Ibid., 119 (19 Jun 1716).
[67] Ibid., 142 (25 Oct 1716), 144 (1 Nov 1716).
[68] Ibid., 152 (3 Jan 1717).

complaining of the inadequacy of his accommodation in 1722.[69] He was, nevertheless, successful in his new post, reporting 71 scholars in January 1719.[70]

Aberdeenshire

Moving north-east to upper Deeside, the Presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil reported that while Glengairn schoolmaster James Jamieson 'behaved himself dutyfully and Loyally', John Clow in Braemar was implicated in the rising. At the end of a church service at Castleton in January 1716, Clow had stood before the congregation and read out the pretender's proclamation. This 'raised prejudice in the minds of some people against' the minister, John McInnes, for his failure to support the rising and 'helped to confirm the people in their inclinations' towards it.[71] Strikingly Clow, a teacher who had balked at the idea of serving under an Episcopalian minister in Blair Atholl and had gained notoriety for his hardline approach to Catholics, was described as having 'contracted too great ane Intimacy with Papists in that Countrey'.[72] Clow sent in a formal apology for his behaviour, pleading that he was under pressure as he was serving in an epicentre of the rising, but was nonetheless dismissed by the Society.[73]

Both schools were subsequently moved at the presbytery's recommendation: Tombelly was transported to Glenmuick, while the school at Castleton of Braemar moved around 20 miles east to Monaltrie in the neighbouring parish of Crathie.[74] It should be noted, however, that these transplantations were unrelated to the events of the rising. Rather, both schools had been settled in their locations for two years, and the presbytery in concert with local heritors aimed to spread their benefit as widely as possible. Local elites in Highland Aberdeenshire had a vested interest in retaining SSPCK support and actively sought to have schools settled on their estates. Between 1719 and 1720, Charles Gordon of Abergeldie used his influence with the presbytery and schoolmaster to ensure his estate on the other side of the Dee was the next to benefit from the Braemar school.[75] John Young, the next schoolmaster at Braemar, wrote in December 1717 that 'the Laird of Invercald [sic] continued still his five bursars at the School, and that he appears to have a very great concern for the education of the rising generation'.[76] While the school was moved from Invercauld's Castleton estate, it still stood to benefit his brother Alexander Farquharson's estate in

[69] Lenman, 'Social History of the Atholl Estates', 156. Lenman suggested that the Duke of Atholl simply lost interest once the school was moved from Blair Atholl.
[70] NRS, GD95/2/2, 259 (13 Jan 1719)
[71] NRS, GD95/1/1, 298 (7 Jun 1716), GD95/2/2, 100 (5 Apr 1716).
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid., 100 (5 Apr 1716); GD95/1/1, 298 (7 Jun 1716).
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid., 260 (13 Jan 1719); GD95/1/2, 64–5 (13 Aug 1719), 88 (3 Mar 1720).
[76] NRS GD95/2/2, 210 (24 Dec 1717); GD95/1/1, 359 (2 Jan 1718).

Monaltrie. The Committee noted in 1716 that 'the Laird of Monaltrie had in a peculiar manner signalized himself for the encouragement of the Societies Schools'. The gentry of Glenmuick 'promised to see that their tennents send out their children, and cause them give punctuall attendance'.[77]

With the endorsement of a local elite that also demonstrated sensitivity to local demands for schooling, it is perhaps unsurprising that both schools soon prospered in their new locations and retained a great degree of stability. There were 62 scholars at Monaltrie in February 1718, most of whom '[knew] not a letter when they entered', but 'did in nine moneths time read the Bible pointedly'.[78] Clow's successor at Monaltrie, John Young, was previously a farmer in Angus until he was evicted by his Jacobite landlord, the viscount Arbuthnott, early in 1716.[79] Not being a Gaelic-speaker, the Committee was at first cautious about appointing him to Braemar. However, the minister John McInnes echoed the advice given by the lairds of Dalmore and Auchindryne in 1712, stating that 'the Irish tongue is no wayes of such necessity for a man in his station in that place' and that 'it could easily be dispensed with'.[80] His appointment marked the beginning of a 47-year long career as an SSPCK schoolmaster, sixteen of which were spent in Braemar and the adjoining parish of Strathdon.[81] The Glenmuick school was so well-attended by December 1716 that James Jamieson had to request more books, including 'three or four dozen of Shorter Catechisms […] entreating that they may be sent as soon as possible'.[82] Jamieson left his post due to illness in June 1717 and was swiftly succeeded by Mr. Andrew Rule. A highly qualified teacher from the Borders with not a lick of Gaelic, Andrew Rule went on to serve SSPCK schools in Glenmuick, Tullich and Glengairn for the next 42 years, probably becoming a well-respected figure among parishioners.[83] In May 1719, the presbytery reported 63 scholars at his school divided into three different classes based on their progress through the curriculum. With only four pupils, the least advanced class was still learning how to read the Catechism and syllabicate; the most advanced class contained 28 pupils all capable of 'reading the Bible distinctly', some of whom were learning advanced arithmetic.[84] Rule's school was an early beneficiary of the SSPCK's bursary scheme, with at least four of his pupils going on to teach in Society schools.

[77] NRS, GD95/2/2, 145 (8 Nov 1718).
[78] NRS, GD95/2/2, 210 (24 Dec 1717), 217 (7 Feb 1718).
[79] NRS, GD95/2/2, 122 (7 Jul 1716).
[80] Ibid., 126 (6 Sep 1716).
[81] Cowper, *SSPCK Schoolmasters*, 106.
[82] NRS, GD95/2/2, 150 (20 Dec 1716).
[83] Ibid., 186 (15 Jun 1717); Cowper, *SSPCK Schoolmasters*, 93.
[84] NRS, GD95/2/2, 303 (4 May 1719)

Glenlivet

Moving northwards to Glenlivet, the Presbytery of Aberlour gave an account in May 1716 of schoolmaster David Strang's 'Loyal and dutyfull deportment […] during the late trouble'. The school however was 'greatly decayed', having only 27 pupils, down from 50 in the 1714 report. This the presbytery ascribed to the rising, but also to the location of the school, which was placed 'contrary to the presbyteries inclination at the marquis of Huntley's desire'.[85] David Strang resigned his post after receiving his preaching license late in 1716, to be replaced by Mr John Forsyth, a university-educated man recommended by the Presbytery of Aberlour.[86] Before his arrival, the school was relocated from Tomnavoulin to Bellaknockan. By May 1717, the school had 53 scholars, 27 of whom had Catholic parents.[87] Forsyth was successful at drawing Catholic children to the school – in 1718, 31 of 49 pupils were of Catholic parents.[88] This reportedly 'raised no small noise among the Priests' who had tried to dissuade Catholics from using Protestant schools, even threatening families with excommunication.[89] Attendances remained stable over the next couple of years, not dropping below 40 despite the withdrawal of several Catholic children in 1719 to a nearby Catholic school. A possible precursor to the seminary at Scalan, this school was held in the house of Robert Farquharson of Auchriachan, reputed to be 'the Ringleader of Popery' in Glenlivet.[90]

Sutherland

Moving northwards again to Sutherland, in May 1716 Rev. George Brodie apologised that only 33 scholars were now at the school of Durness. However, he reported that many:

> had made good proficiency in their Learning considering their frequent absence occasioned by their parents attending the Lord Reay in his Majesties Service against the Rebells.[91]

Including the smaller school at Eriboll run by the schoolmaster William MacKay's daughter, by April 1717 a total of 85 scholars had passed through the school's curriculum. In response to letters from Lord Reay, the Presbytery of Caithness and the schoolmaster, the Committee permitted them to determine a new location for the school within the parish.[92] In December 1719, MacKay reported that he had instructed a further 37 scholars at the school's new

[85] Ibid., 106 (3 May 1716).
[86] Ibid., 146 (20 Nov 1716).
[87] Ibid., 171 (30 Apr 1717), 180 (15 May 1717).
[88] Ibid., 233 (3 Jun 1718).
[89] NRS, GD95/2/3, 14 (17 Aug 1720).
[90] NRS, GD95/2/2, 233 (3 Jun 1718), 269 (13 Mar 1719); CH1/2/73/376, Representation of the state of Popery in the parish of Kirkmichael and presbytery of Abernethy (29 Apr 1736).
[91] Ibid., 109 (3 May 1716)
[92] Ibid., 170 (30 Apr 1717).

location of Ribigill, several of whom had now 'gone to the Lowlands to make farder progress in their learning'.[93]

Very little detail is given concerning the school at Lairg in the rising's aftermath. However, it is clear that local ministers were satisfied with the conduct of teacher William Gordon: on 17 May 1716 the Committee heard the report of 'two ministers from Ross' and continued Gordon's salary.[94] In August Lord Strathnaver and Gordon successfully lobbied the SSPCK to continue the school in the parish of Lairg, abrogating the Presbytery of Dornoch's decision to move the school to Creich.[95] By December 1716, the school had been moved to the other side of the River Shin to Milton of Gruid.[96] Shortly thereafter, William Gordon was embroiled in a scandal. The Presbytery of Dornoch reported in May 1717 that not only had Gordon neglected his school and taught Latin, he had also been processed before the presbytery 'for scandilous carriage with four several young women, of which one of them was his oun Schollar, and his servitrix another'. Gordon was immediately dismissed from the Society's service.[97] The Committee declared that the Lairg school 'tho' among the first that were settled, ha[d] not answered the Society's design'.[98] It was to be four years until another teacher was appointed to Lairg.[99]

Similarly, Kildonan appears to have been unaffected by the rising. There were, however, local disputes over the location of the school. In November 1716, teacher George Henderson reported that his school had been moved 5 miles north to Kinbrace without the Society's consent. The Society was incensed at first, sending a letter to the Presbytery of Dornoch:

> showing them that they will suffer none of the Societies Schools to be transported but by the Societies order or their Committees, But that they will never refuse to transport Schools to such places as they find upon due Information are most proper seats for them.[100]

The transplantation reportedly had little to do with presbytery. Rather, it was the result of 'a private concert betuixt the Minister, paroch and Schoolmaster', intended 'for greater conveniencie, Kinbrace being more centrical'.[101] Once again, Lord Strathnaver proved to be

[93] Ibid., 325 (3 Dec 1719).
[94] Ibid., 114 (17 May 1716).
[95] Ibid., 127 (2 Aug 1716)
[96] Ibid., 158 (31 Jan 1717).
[97] Ibid., 174 (2 May 1717). The presbytery and kirk session of Dornoch subsequently resisted Lord Strathnaver's attempt to install Gordon at Dornoch grammar school. See Bentick, *Dornoch Cathedral*, 265.
[98] Ibid., 176 (15 May 1717).
[99] NRS, GD95/2/3, 72 (24 May 1721).
[100] NRS, GD95/2/2, 148 (27 Nov 1716).
[101] Ibid., 158 (31 Jan 1717).

the real culprit, ordering Henderson to his new location. At this point, the Society conceded defeat, but spelled out the consequences for any future infringements:

> if they take upon them hereafter to transport any of the Societies Schools, without their express order, they must resolve to maintain them too.[102]

If local agents continued to move schools without the Society's approval they would also have to pay for them. The Kinbrace school struggled at first. In December 1717, the presbytery reported 18 scholars in attendance, observing that the 'School would be much thronger had it not been for the late death of Cattle and dearth, which has reduced the Country to great straits'.[103] Matters had improved by 1719, with 33 scholars, all 'making great advances', at the school.[104] In the same year, the school was relocated to the comparably small parish of Loth on Sutherland's east coast following a joint appeal from Lord Strathnaver and the Presbytery of Dornoch. The Society did stipulate, however, that the school should be settled 'without prejudice of the Legal School that ought to be in the said parish of Loath'.[105]

Gairloch and Kilmorack

John Robertson, the schoolmaster of Gairloch in Wester Ross appeared before the Committee in May 1716 to report:

> that the late Rebellion had hendered [sic] him from keeping of a School there for some time past, and that the people being divided about the Situation of the School he did not meet with that encouragement there that he wished for.[106]

The rising hampered the school's progress, and at the same time a dispute had arisen among parishioners concerning the location of the school. Unable to resolve the dispute, Robertson 'earnestly pressed to be settled elsewhere' even if this meant a lower salary. A month before the schoolmaster's appearance before the Committee, the minister John Morison reported 'that tho the said school was much shaken, yet he had hopes it would recover as well if not better than before'. Considering 'how great a need there is of a school in that Countrey', Robertson was initially suffered to remain in his post.[107] In October 1716, there were only ten pupils at the school, but more were expected after the harvest season. Robertson added with optimism that:

---

[102] Ibid., 162 (7 Feb 1717).
[103] Ibid., 209 (24 Dec 1717). 'Thronger' here means busier.
[104] Ibid., 287 (26 May 1719).
[105] Ibid., 319 (16 Sep 1719).
[106] Ibid., 113 (17 May 1716).
[107] Ibid., 113 (17 May 1716).

> most of all the Schollars repeat the Catechism both in Irish & English befor the Congregation & Some of the Schollars that have left the school are Sent through the paroch to teach not only the young ones that cannot be got to school but also those who might be their Fathers and grandfathers.[108]

Deprived of a key ally following the departure of Rev. John Morison to the parish of Urray in November 1716, Robertson abandoned his post. A letter from the Presbytery of Dingwall reported that he was:

> obliged to leave that place for some time, by reason of sickness [but] was very much unwilling to return thither especially considering that Mr John Morison the minister was now transported to Urray.[109]

As the charge of Gairloch was now vacant, the presbytery argued that the school would find more success in a parish with a settled, Presbyterian minister, namely Thomas Chisholm's parish of Kilmorack.[110] The Committee was eventually convinced in May 1717 when Chisholm presented a description of his parish:

> That it is twenty four miles Long and fourteen in breadth, of which there are only six miles Inhabited by protestants, and the rest by papists, & that there are about fifteen hundered Examinable persons therein, wherof about two thirds are papists, and that there is no school in that paroch.[111]

Strathglass, a district in the northern portion of the parish, had experienced a marked Catholic revival in the latter half of the seventeenth century, facilitated by support from the chiefs of Clan Chisholm.[112] Many of the Protestant parishioners also had Episcopalian and Jacobite proclivities. For example, in March 1711 Thomas Chisholm's ordination was obstructed by a mob which surrounded the church armed with clods and stones.[113] Nevertheless, in December 1718, Chisholm reported with optimism:

> that some private gentlemen and the body of the common people are very fond of the school now settled among them by the Society, and that it has already very much reconciled them to the Government both of Church and state.[114]

---

[108] Ibid., 138 (4 Oct 1716).
[109] Ibid., 161 (7 Feb 1717).
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid., 176 (15 May 1717).
[112] Odo Blundell, *The Catholic Highlands of Scotland*, i (Edinburgh, 1909), 193; MacDonald, *Missions to the Gaels*, 157, 239. See Alexander MacWilliam, 'A Highland Mission: Strathglass, 1671–1777', *IR*, 24 (1973), 75–28.
[113] *Fasti*, vii, 39.
[114] NRS, GD95/2/2, 213 (9 Jan 1718).

There were 47 scholars in attendance, many who 'knew not a letter at their entrie', but had now 'repeated the whole Shorter Catechism in the Church very distinctly in Irish'. Chisholm added that 'severalls come to the age of men attend the school very punctually and make good proficiency'.[115] John Robertson continued as teacher in Kilmorack until 1738, producing several scholars of note who went on to teach in Society schools.[116]

Presbytery of Skye

Rev. Archibald MacQueen of Snizort reported in May 1716 that while the school in Skye 'was in a very flourishing condition' before the rising, attendances had fallen 'since matters turned in disorder'. Nevertheless, schoolmaster John McIver did 'punctually attend [his] station' over the course of the rising and the minister expressed confidence that the school would quickly recover. In a letter read at the same meeting, McIver reported a healthy attendance of 37 scholars. Both correspondents petitioned against the resettlement of the school, maintaining that it was already in a convenient 'centricall' location and 'to remove it from thence would be very Inconvenient'.[117] The school swiftly recovered, reaching 55 scholars by October 1716.[118] In May the following year, many of McIver's scholars 'were necessitat to retire, because of the great famine which is generally throughout the Highlands, especially in these bounds'.[119] Famine conditions were also affecting the school of Abertarff and the SSPCK's first school in Lochaber at the church of Kilmallie. In turn, the Committee was empowered to resettle schools 'where they may be more useful'.[120] To make matters worse, in Skye by June 1717 John McIver had abandoned his post, returning to his native Lewis after 'fall[ing] under some scandal'.[121] The Presbytery of Skye was swiftly at hand with a replacement for McIver and a new location for the school. The highly qualified John McPherson who had previously taught for the SSPCK in Skye was once again looking for employment, and 'there was ground to hope [the school] might be more usefull' in the parish of Bracadale.[122]

Glenelg schoolmaster Donald MacLeod had left his post in November 1715 to undertake ministerial trials in Aberdeen.[123] The school remained vacant following his departure. In his letter from May 1716, MacQueen remarked that 'he knew of no great

[115] Ibid.
[116] Cowper, *SSPCK Schoolmasters*, 89. These include William Fraser, John Paip and James MacDonald. See ibid., 32–3, 85, 50.
[117] NRS, GD95/2/2, 106–7 (3 May 1716).
[118] Ibid., 141 (25 Oct 1716).
[119] Ibid., 181 (15 May 1717).
[120] Ibid., 187 (28 Jun 1717); GD95/1/1, 339–40 (6 Jun 1717).
[121] NRS, GD95/2/2, 199 (17 Oct 1717)
[122] Ibid., 197–9 (5 Sep–17 Oct 1717).
[123] NRS, GD95/2/2, 82 (5 Oct 1715). For evidence of MacLeod's presence in Aberdeen 1715–19, see GD95/2/2, 102 (5 Apr 1716) and *Fasti*, vii, 155.

encouragement it mett with there or may have for its continuance in that place'. However, he expressed his hope that it would 'not be transported out of the bounds of that presbytery but setled in some part of McLeods Interest, either at Bracadale or Dunvegan'.[124] Given that the salary for Glenelg was soon earmarked for a school in Mull, the transplantation from Snizort to Bracadale ensured an SSPCK school remained in MacLeod territory.[125] The school was a success. By February 1719 MacPherson was instructing over 80 scholars.[126] In October, several gentlemen in the parish reported that they had provided MacPherson with an assistant, but pled that the teacher might be permitted to teach Latin – a request that was naturally denied.[127] In September 1720, MacPherson reported that attendance had dropped to 48, as 'many [had] been obliged to take home their children for meer poverty' while wealthier parishioners had sent their children elsewhere to learn Latin.[128] Nevertheless, attendances stayed consistently above 45 until MacPherson's departure in November 1723.[129]

Kilmallie

The SSPCK's first foray into Lochaber came in the aftermath of the '15. The Lochiel estate was not forfeited following the '15 as the elderly clan chief, Ewen Cameron of Lochiel, had not taken part. The commission of the General Assembly had been pushing for a school at the kirk of Kilmallie ever since the ordination of Rev. Robert Stewart, a Presbyterian who had served as chaplain to Lochiel.[130] Towards the end of 1716, the Society judged that it could afford to establish one new school. Unfortunately, the teacher Mr Robert Stewart, probably a relative of the minister, arrived at a time of scarcity and the school did not prosper. There were 20 scholars in attendance by February 1717, but in June he reported that most had stopped attending.[131] He was able to secure assistance from the Lady of Lochiel 'to provock them put their children to school'. However, when 'she threatened to put all those out of her land who would not send their children to school', poignantly 'all the answer they gave her was that if she gave them meal, they would do so, they As well as Learning, otherwayes the Compliment is Litle worth'.[132] In June 1717, 'by reason of the present dearth in the Highlands and Islands particularly in Lochaber and the Isle of Skye', Stewart was

[124] Ibid, 106–7 (3 May 1716).
[125] NRS, GD95/1/1, (7 Jun 1716); GD95/2/2, 145 (8 Nov 1716).
[126] Ibid., 264 (4 Feb 1719).
[127] Ibid., 321 (13 Oct 1719).
[128] NRS, GD95/2/3, 23 (6 Oct 1720).
[129] Ibid., 232 (24 Dec 1723).
[130] NRS, GD95/1/1, 216 (7 Jan 1714)
[131] NRS, GD95/2/2, 162 (7 Feb 1717), 187 (28 Jun 1717).
[132] Ibid.

moved to Creich in Sutherland. This was intended to be a temporary measure until the west recovered from the famine, but a school was not resettled in Lochaber until 1720.[133]

Mull

The SSPCK's first school in Mull was established in January 1717 at Kilninian, with Mr John Beaton as its teacher. Beaton was a local teacher recommended by Rev. John MacLean of Kilninian. Of the parishioners, Beaton remarked:

> Tho for most part in indigent necessitous circumstances, yet shew a readyness to send their children to Schooll, when made sensible of the advantage of education.[134]

Although he was teaching 33 scholars by May, in the summer 'the great dearth of victual and death of their cattle' reduced the school to only six.[135] It recovered over the winter, but in spring 1718 Rev. MacLean warned that 'the calamity is like to continue also for this Sumer in a great measure', stating that the school would not recover 'until the Lord is pleased to remove the great dearth.'[136] At MacLean's recommendation, the school was re-settled at Pennymore in his parish of Kilninian in 1718.[137] Here, the Society was once again confronted with the issue it faced in Blair Atholl. Unbeknown to the Society, its school had been settled close to a locally maintained school. Rev. MacLean, however, seemed unaware that this would be an issue. In January 1719, he reported that though the school had 38 scholars:

> The school had been more numerous, were it not for a School that is keept in the other remote corner of his parish consisting of thirty Schollars, who (for a considerable part of them) would have come to the Charity school if this other had broke up, as its like it most shortly do.[138]

Clearly irked by this, the Society sent a firmly worded response to MacLean, informing him that 'the Societie designs not by their Schools to discourage any other Schools'. It sought:

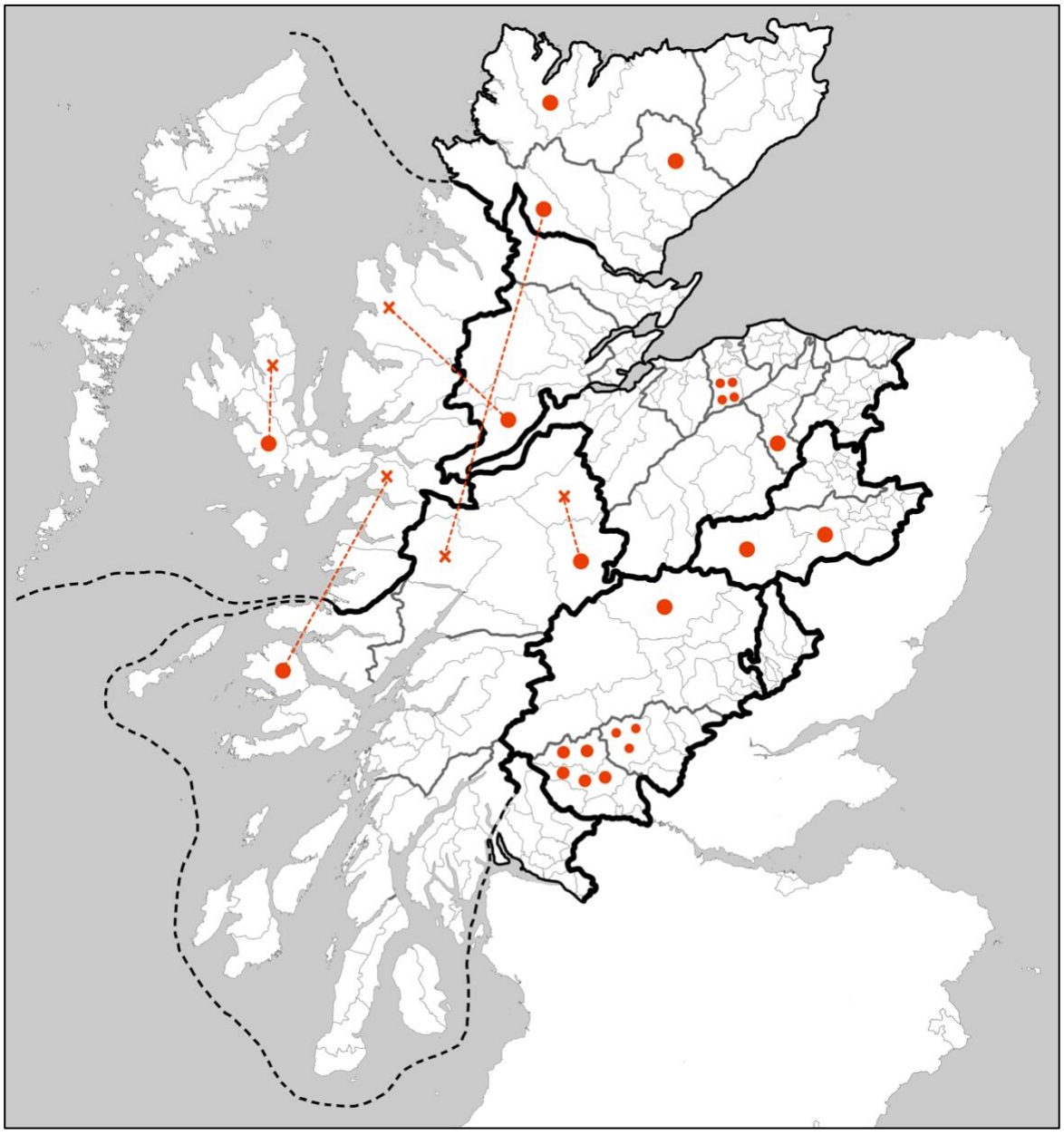
> rather to encourage and assist them and therefore they desire he may be at all pains to keep up that other school, for if it be suffered to fall it may make the Society also to withdraw there's, and lest the Societies Schools being too near to Penniemore, does harm to the other school, therefore to desire him to inform the Committee of the places through the Island lying at a greater distance

[133] NRS, GD95/1/1, 339–40
[134] NRS, GD95/2/2, 166 (28 Mar 1717).
[135] Ibid., 175 (6 May 1717), 216 (7 Feb 1718).
[136] Ibid., 222 (24 Apr 1718).
[137] Ibid., 247 (17 Oct 1718).
[138] Ibid., 261 (19 Jan 1719).

> therefrom that may be proper seats for the Charity School that the Society may transport it to the most convenient place.[139]

By June, the Society school had been moved to Aros, another location in MacLean's parish. According to MacLean, however, the other school—which had been set up the previous year and was maintained by local gentlemen—'must fall because they will contribute with it no longer'. The Committee 'perceived that the design of the Gentlemen of that Island is that the Societies School shall save them the expences of a Legall one'. Clearly exasperated with MacLean, the Society restated its intention not to obstruct or supply in the place of legal schools – something it was increasingly finding itself doing. The Committee threatened to withdraw the school if he failed to name three locations 'at least three miles from the said places of Aros and Penneymore' that could be served, in turns, by an itinerant school. This school was intended to 'be serviceable to all those parts of the Island who cannot have the benefite of a Legal School.'[140] Beaton left his post in October 1719 after being 'maltreated and beaten' by a 'Dougald McDougald in that Isle to whom the Books were directed and had detained some of them'.[141]

[139] Ibid., 262.
[140] Ibid., 301 (12 Jun 1719).
[141] Ibid, 322 (13 Oct 1719).



Map 10. SSPCK schools and their movements, 1716–18

The Wider Picture

Drawing on this evidence we can come to several conclusions concerning the aftermath of the ’15 and its bearing on SSPCK schools. Given that the rising’s centre of gravity lay in the eastern parts of the Highlands and eastern Lowlands north of the Tay, it is unsurprising that the most acute and immediate destabilising effects were felt in Aberdeenshire and Perthshire.[142] At the rising’s epicentre in Braemar, teacher John Clow turned parishioners against their minister when he read the pretender’s proclamation in the church. Armed conflict and depredations in Balquhidder brought schools to a halt and led to the flight of one schoolmaster. However, the rising sent shockwaves far beyond these primary theatres. In the central Highlands, the Society had to deal with changing power dynamics, namely the

[142] Lenman, *Jacobite Clans*, 81.

succession of Simon Fraser to the title of Lord Lovat and chiefship of Clan Fraser. Once writing 'I am resolved that the Lord Lovat shall be always Master of the shire of Inverness', Lovat moved swiftly to stamp his authority on the region in any way he could, from taking control of electoral politics to attempting to install a Fraser kinsman as schoolmaster of Abertarff.[143] He was, however, slow to set up the long-awaited bridge over the Tarff water, leading to the school's transplantation to Laggan. The school at Gairloch in MacKenzie country ultimately failed when Rev. John Morison took up the charge of Urray, depriving the schoolmaster of a key ally and prompting him to negotiate a transfer to Kilmorack. Before this, however, parishioners had been 'divided about the Situation of the School'. While these divisions may have been manufactured to ensure the removal of the school, this seems unlikely given the lengths taken by parishioners to have the school established. It is entirely possible that the rising simply accentuated a pre-existing local dispute concerning the school's location. There is little indication that SSPCK schools or their teachers were targeted by insurgents, let alone for ideological reasons. The rising did cause drops in attendance, but the majority of schools swiftly recovered.

It is therefore not a story of the rising's impact on schools, but rather a story in which the rising was but one factor among a series which could determine the success or failure of a school. The Society relied on the assistance and support of local landowners and understood that schools would also have to benefit the gentry and their interests if they were to succeed. In Aberdeenshire, for example, landowners continued to cooperate eagerly, and schools prospered. But the Society was aware that reliance on local support could have its limits, especially when determining locations. SSPCK schools offered landowners and wealthier tenants an opportunity to cut costs, by saving them the expense of a teacher's salary and their children's tuition, and sometimes this was unavoidable. They could use their influence with presbyteries to have schools settled where they stood to benefit most from them.[144] The examples of Braemar and Glenmuick also demonstrate that, in Aberdeenshire at least, a school could succeed in a Gaelic-speaking parish with a non-speaking teacher. Across the Highlands, schools and attendances were heavily affected by prevailing economic conditions. Famine in the 1720s forced the relocation of the school in Kilmallie to Creich, and drastically reduced attendances in Skye. Catholics in several regions proved eager to send their children to schools, but most schools served a majority Protestant audience. The relationship between the schoolmaster and the community he served was also important, with locally rooted schoolmasters being the norm rather than the exception. The issue of

[143] Mitchison, 'The Government and the Highlands', 28.
[144] See NRS, GD95/1/2, 412–3 (5 Jan 1727).

language plays a surprisingly minor role in the Society's minutes between 1716 and 1718. The Society, it seems, was too preoccupied with settling and managing schools to concern itself with the languages spoken and read in the classroom. On the other hand, the Society was deeply concerned with employing teachers who could serve as moral and spiritual role models for their communities. Indeed, the quality of the relationship between the schoolmaster and his community proved perhaps the most important factor in determining a school's success.

The Report of 1719

In a report from August 1719, Nicol Spence observed that in some places 'for the most part tenants children who are not poor, have as much benefite from the Charitie schools as the poorest'.[145] He went on to admit that this was a consequence of the Society's approach, but makes clear the Society's primary object:

> It is true that at the beginning, for a tryal and ye encouragement of people to send to the societies schools, there was necessity for the Society to take the methods they took. Otherwayes few or none would have come to their schools; It being certain that many in the Highlands and Islands, being Ignorant of the advantages of knowledge, have a prejudice at Learning to read & Lookt upon it as a needless diversion from their work. But now many are of another mind, and the poor who are greedily desireing knowledge cannot get it.[146]

Moreover, the report noted

> that some 50 [merks] schools hath had more scholars than ye 300 [merks] schools, and the giveing of these Large salaries has occasioned schoolmasters deserting parochial schools qr the was not so much […] and in some places heritors let parish schools fall that the societies schools might take its place, for instance Mull and Blair Atholl.[147]

Looking to rectify these issues, spread its resources more widely, and reach poorer communities, the Society resolved at the time of the 1719 report to become stricter with the assistance it gave to parishes, especially those without legal schools. The Society already had a template that it could draw upon, which had proved more cost-effective and more advantageous to the poor.[148] The promise of government support was not yet forthcoming,

[145] NRS, GD95/10/66–7.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid.
[148] NRS, GD95/10/66.

but royal commission's report had raised expectations among Highland localities – the demand for schools had never been higher.

Small schools in Perthshire and Edinkillie and ambulatory schools modelled by the Presbytery of Dunoon catered for remoter communities which could not access legal schools. Teachers of these schools served for a salary of around 100 merks (£5/7/8 sterling), a third of the cost of an ordinary schoolmaster, and were often supported in part by their community. Table 6 below demonstrates the cost-effectiveness of this calibre of teacher. In 1719, the 13 ordinary teachers instructed 533 pupils at a cost of £166/7/17 and the 13 teachers of smaller schools were instructing 461 at a cost of £50/6/1 to the Society. While in ordinary schools the cost per pupil was 6 shillings 3 pence, in smaller schools it was only 2 shillings 1 pence – one third of the cost. Moving forward, the Society would attempt to introduce this model on a wider scale across the Highlands.

Table 6. SSPCK school attendances and salaries, 1719

PARISH	YEAR ESTD	# SCHOOLS	# SCHOLARS	SALARY
Small Schools				
Balquhidder	1713	3	131	£16/3/1
Callander	1717	3	103	£16/3/1
Comrie	1714	3	89	£10
Edinkillie	1715	4	138	£8
TOTAL:		13	461	£50/6/1
Ordinary Schools				
Laggan	1718	1	32	£16/3/1
Braemar	1713	1	62	£16/3/1
Glenmuick	1712	1	63	£16/3/1
Glenlivet	1713	1	40	£16/3/1
Durness	1713	1	37	£16/3/1
Skye	1713	1	80	£16/3/1
Mull	1716	1	38	£16/3/1
Blair Atholl	1716	1	71	£16/3/1
Creich	1717	1	30	£16/3/1
Kildonan	1715	1	33	£10/15/4
Kilmorack	1717	1	47	£10/15/4
TOTAL:		13	533	£166/7/17

Sources: NRS, GD95/1/2, 76–77; GD95/10/67.

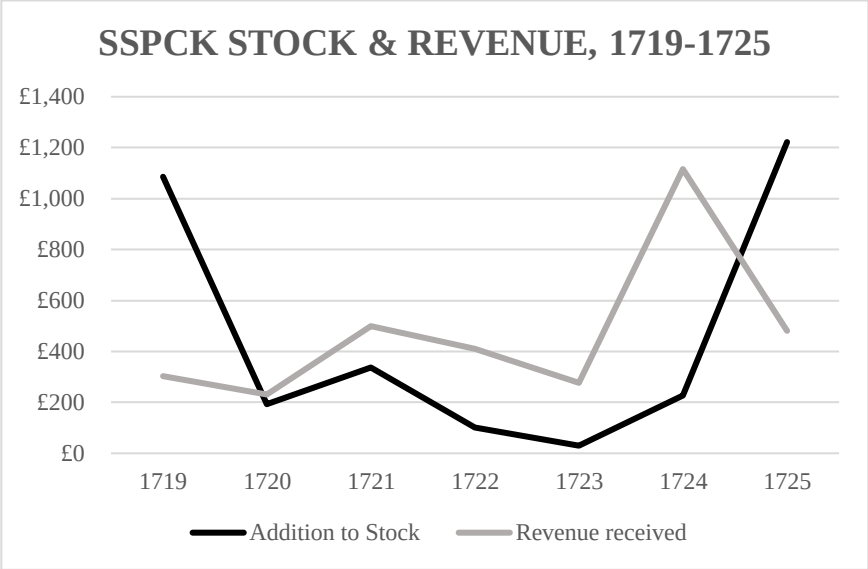
The Failure of Government Support

Following the announcement in 1718 that up to £20,000 from the income of the forfeited estates was to be granted for establishing Highland schools, the SSPCK and the General

Assembly lobbied assiduously to secure the money for the Society. They sent a steady stream of memorials and petitions, addressing crown, parliament, individual MPs, and supporters in London, reminding them of the government's pledge and arguing that the SSPCK would be the most effective and impartial manager of the fund.[149] In 1718, the Society also began manoeuvring for control of King William's gift from the bishop's rents of Dunkeld, a £150 sterling per annum grant introduced in 1696 to fund schools in the shires of Perth, Dumbarton and Stirling.[150] Both of these campaigns, however, were ultimately unsuccessful. The trustees of King William's gift were unwilling to relinquish control over the fund.[151] The hoped-for profits from the forfeited estates disappeared in the costs of administration and in the methods used by purchasers in their dealings with the exchequer. By the connivance of the courts and exchequer, most estates were bought up at a low cost by agents acting for the original owners.[152] The SSPCK's optimism peaked in 1724 when following an address to the king, 'His Majestie was pleased to order a Reference of [£20,000] to the Treasury' adding that 'His Grace [Roxburgh, Secretary of State] did not doubt, but that it would have the desired effect'.[153] This came to nothing, however, and the SSPCK's disappointment came to be well-documented in its publications which, as late as 1774, complained that 'no part of this money hath ever been received by the Society'.[154] As noted by Bob Harris, Scottish MPs and politicians were effective in representing the Scottish national interest at Westminster, particularly in securing measures for promoting national economic development.[155] However, this episode demonstrates that the British government had neither the capacity nor the political will to leverage the funds for their intended purpose. Nevertheless, expectations had been already raised among Highland agents, and their vocal demands in the ensuing years would place a greater strain on the SSPCK's—still relatively meagre—finances.

[149] NRS, GD95/2/2, 345 (11 Feb 1720), 349–50 (2 Apr 1720); GD95/2/3, 26 (7 Nov 1720), 169–65 (10 Jan 1723); GD95/10/56, /69 , /70, /77; TNA SP35/6/44; SP54/14/26, /34, /38; SP55/12/79.
[150] NRS, GD95/1/2, 16–17 (7 Aug 1718); GD95/2/2, 235–6 (14 Jun 1718), 333–4 (15 Jan 1720). See Leneman, 'Social History of the Atholl Estates', 154–9, appendix 19.
[151] Leneman, 'Social History of the Atholl Estates', 154.
[152] Lenman, *Jacobite Clans*, 89–93.
[153] NRS, GD95/2/3, 251–2 (2 Apr 1724).
[154] *Account of the SSPCK* (1774), 9.
[155] Bob Harris, 'The Scots and the Westminster Parliament' in Julian Hoppit (ed.), *Parliaments, Nations and Identities in Britain and Ireland, 1660-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 138–9.

Figure 3. SSPCK Finances, 1719–1725



	STOCK	STOCK ADDITION	REVENUE
1719	£7,658	£1,086	£302
1720	£7,852	£194	£231
1721	£8,189	£337	£498
1722	£8,290	£101	£409
1723	£8,547	£30	£278
1724	———	£227	£1,116
1725	£9,769	£1,222	£481

Growth and Development of Schools, 1719–1730

Nonetheless, the first real phase of expansion since the Society's formative period became possible after 1719, when the Society received a considerable addition to its stock in the sum of £1086/14/2 sterling.[156] This included a grant of £600 from the Kirk from its share of the Equivalent.[157] While this fund was originally earmarked to fund probationers and catechists, the Society convinced the 1719 General Assembly that schools would 'be a much more probable way to advance the knowledge of Christ, and root out the Popish errors'. Schoolmasters, the Society argued performed all of the duties of catechists in addition to teaching children to read the Bible, which in the long term would address the 'difficulties [that] occur in getting preachers having the Irish language'.[158] In the five years that followed, the Society established over 15 new schools on the mainland, expanding operations in the southwestern Highlands and opening new frontiers in Banff, Badenoch and Inverness-shire.

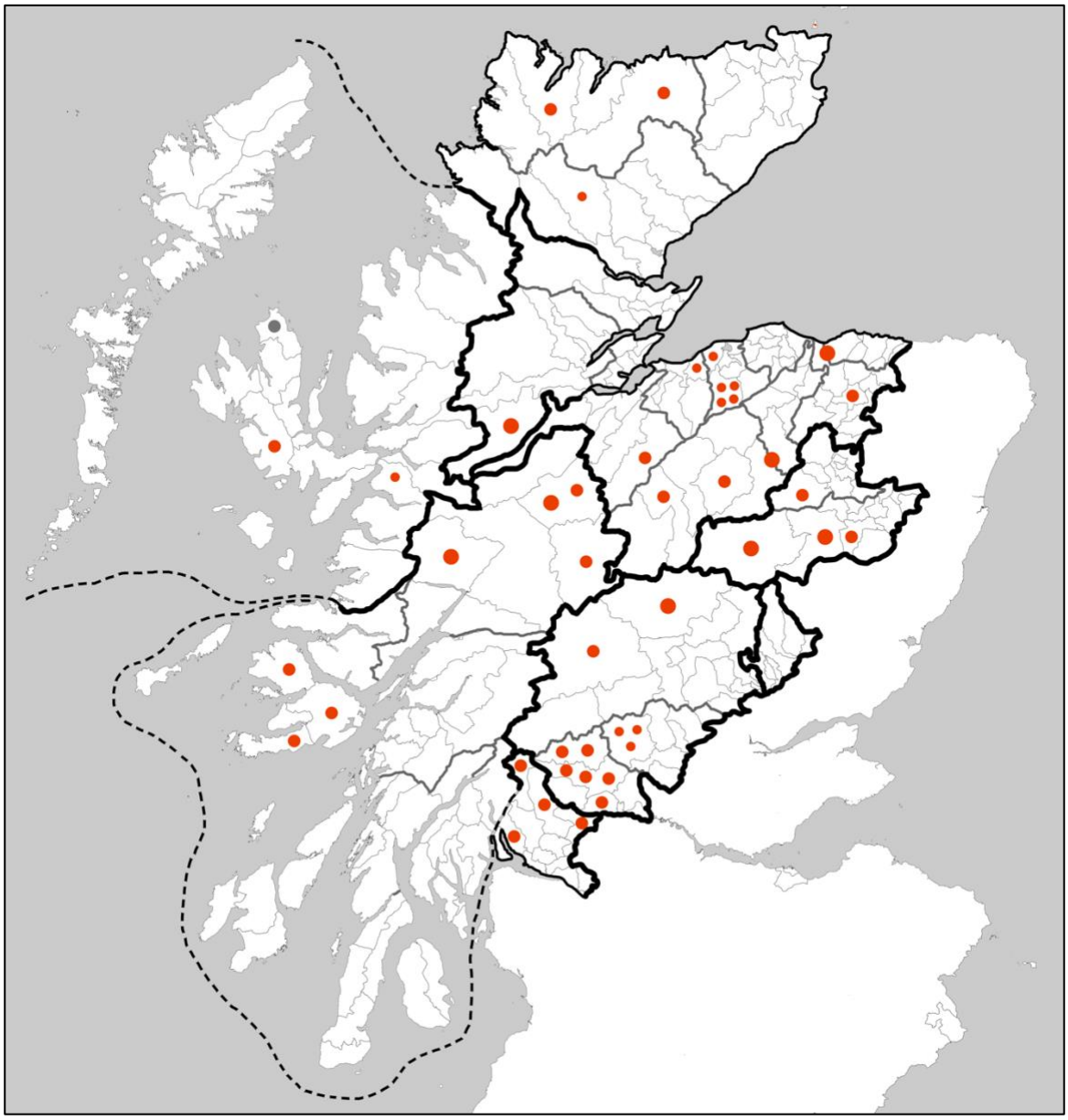
[156] NRS, GD95/8/3, 6.
[157] NRS, GD95/2/2, 292–3 (12 Jun 1719).
[158] 1719 General Assembly Act V.

Many of these were set up in proximity to the military fortifications constructed after the failure of the '15 – Inversnaid near Loch Lomond, Ruthven in Badenoch, Bernera on the mainland opposite the Isle of Skye, and Fort Augustus in the Great Glen. With the guidance of the Duke of Montrose and the Presbytery of Dumbarton, four schools were set up around Loch Lomond, in the parishes of Row and Arrochar to its west and Drymen and Buchanan to its east.[159] Following petitions from the Presbyteries of Aberlour and Abernethy concerning the activity of Catholic priests in the region, three schools were established in Badenoch, at Rothiemurchus, Kirkmichael and Alvie.[160] A school was returned to Glenelg to serve the Protestant population in the north of the parish who according to their minister Murdo MacLeod were:

> more desireous of a School than formerly and having a garrison in their bounds and several Lowlanders, soldiers, tradesmen and others, the people find themselves at a great disadvantage for want of Schools.[161]

Abertarff received two schools, one at Stratherrick to the east of the water of Tarff and the other near to Fort Augustus.[162] In addition to the schools settled near military barracks, the Society established numerous other schools responding to both local demands and reports of Catholic missionary activity. The Society set up a school in Bellie in Banffshire, where it competed with the Duke of Gordon's Catholic school at Fochabers.[163] A school was set up in Rannoch with the assistance of Lady Weem, who contributed half of the teacher's salary. Lady Mackintosh oversaw the establishment of a school in the strongly Jacobite district of Moy and Dalrossie, providing a schoolhouse and paying maintenance for poor scholars.[164] The school of Kilmallie was resettled following a petition from its 'heritors, gentlemen and minister', and two more schools were set up in Mull.[165] In Lairg in Sutherland, the Society began paying a small allowance to one of its own scholars, John Mackay, to travel through the parish teaching inhabitants to read.[166] As will be discussed in more detail below, this prefigured the launch of the SSPCK's bursary scheme in 1721, which was to prove a key component of its developing approach towards establishing schools.

[159] NRS, GD95/2/2, 275–6 (3 Apr 1719). See also CH2/546/7, 109–17.
[160] NRS, GD95/1/2, 161 (1 Jun 1721).
[161] Ibid., 169.
[162] NRS, GD95/2/3, 77 (3 Aug 1721).
[163] Ibid., 25 (21 Oct 1720).
[164] NRS, GD95/2/2, 306 (16 Jun 1719).
[165] Ibid., 323 (29 Oct 1719).
[166] NRS, GD95/1/2, 167–8 (1 Jun 1721).



Map 11. SSPCK schools in 1724. Smaller markers indicate salaries of 100 merks or less. The grey marker in Trotternish indicates that a school was in the process of being erected.

It is notable that each of the schools mentioned, bar three, were allotted salaries of only 100 merks. This was the result of deliberate policy following the 1719 report, whereby the Society resolved to spread its resources more widely and limit the assistance it gave to parishes where heritors had neglected to establish parochial schools. However, in some regions this met with resistance. The resolution was first tested in 1720 when the Society offered only 100 merks for a schoolmaster in Moy and Dalarossie. The minister James Leslie objected that 'a scholar could not yet be found' who would serve for such a low salary, suggesting that the local presbytery had been looking for a university student – the expected standard for Highland schoolmasters before the Society's inception. The Society responded obstinately that teachers elsewhere served for 100 merks.[167] Matters came to a head in Mull

[167] Ibid., 101 (3 Mar 1720).

in March 1720. Following the resignation of John Beaton in November 1719, the Society 'finding that the number of Schollars at their School in that Island are usually but few', determined that the 300 merk salary allotted for the island should be split among three smaller schools 'it being thought too much to give three hundered merks for teaching twenty one or twenty two Schollars'.[168] Rev. John MacLean of Kilninian, however, had already found a candidate to replace Beaton: Maclean's brother Hector, a student of divinity. MacLean warned that the Society 'Will never find a Schoolmaster that can subsist in that place with a Salary of one hundered pounds', arguing for a minimum of 200 merks (£10/15/4 sterling). Frustrated by this attitude, the Committee retorted 'how petty Schools are erected on much Smaller salaries in the Highlands of Dumbartoun, Murray and Ross, and are very Successful, and that yet vivers [meaning food or provisions] are as dear there as on Mull'.[169] Following the resignation of John MacPherson in Bracadale in 1724, the Society attempted to reduce his successor's salary to 100 merks. A complaint from the Presbytery of Skye, however, ensured that the island maintained its 300 merk allowance, albeit divided between two schools in Bracadale and Kilmuir-in-Trotternish.[170] James Johnston in Laggan on the other hand successfully resisted the Society's plans to divide his salary, arguing that he could not live on less than 200 merks in his station.[171] In Presbyterian Sutherland, however, local agents were more receptive to the Society's approach. Lord Reay actively engaged with the scheme, agreeing to establish a parochial school between Durness and Farr, in return for the Society providing three salaries of 100 merks.[172] Returning to the case of Mull, when the Society responded to MacLean's objections it made an enquiry which provides a significant indication of the Society's developing raison d'être and modus operandi. It asked:

> what can be the Reason of the difficulty of geting young men for Smaller Salaries to teach petty Schools in their bounds as well as in other Highland places, seing the things to be taught in the Charity Schools are but reading English, writing, arithmetick, and the Like which require Schoolmasters of no great Learning or Character, Shewing them that the Societie has found to their experience, that young men well Skilled in those things, that are the proper Business of their Schools, if they be men of piety and vertue, have proven more usefull then men that have greater degrees of Learning and aim at furder advancements in the world than the Station of Schoolmasters.[173]

Of the 22 schoolmasters with a degree employed before 1720, only eight were still working for the Society. Of the 14 who left, three had graduated to the ministry, four had resigned,

[168] NRS, GD95/2/2, 363 (26 May 1720).
[169] NRS, GD95/2/3, 6 (7 Jul 1720).
[170] Ibid, 289 (19 Nov 1724).
[171] NRS, GD95/2/1, 159–60 (1 Jun 1721).
[172] NRS, GD95/2/3 (6 Oct 1720).
[173] Ibid.

one had died, and six had been dismissed for misconduct – a real problem for the Society given its emphasis on morality and reforming manners. Having operated now for over a decade, the Society had found that most university-educated schoolmasters had been more trouble than they were worth, while their demand for higher salaries had proved an obstacle to the Society's expansion. On the other hand, by choosing not to employ local, university-educated schoolmasters, the Society was departing from the norm in most parts of the Highlands, something that would strain its relationship with those in power locally. What the Society's letter to Rev. MacLean confirms is that the Society's aspirations for Highland education were utilitarian in the extreme. Rather than seeking to satisfy local aspirations for a curriculum including Latin from a properly trained and adequately paid teacher, it was pursuing a basic, cut-price strategy, which set a lower bar for schoolmasters and restricted their purposes to teaching English and providing a moral example. While dashed hopes of government support definitely had significant bearing on the Society's approach to schools, it is perhaps on these grounds, more than for its stance on Gaelic, that the organisation should be condemned.

Bursary Scheme

The Society's bursary scheme was to become a crucial component of its new approach, providing 'a seminarie of out which Schoolmasters may be had for teaching schools, especially in remote Corners, Glens and Islands'.[174] The scheme was intended first and foremost to train up Gaelic-speaking scholars to serve as SSPCK schoolmasters. As early as 1711 the Society committed 'if their funds increase' to pay premiums to their most promising scholars. This, it was hoped:

> would encourage them to assist the Schoolmaster, where the Schollars are numerous, in teaching the other Schollars, that so after having spent some time in teaching, under the Inspection of a School-master, they may be fitted to teach Schools themselves, or at least may be usefully Imployed when they return home, in Instructing their friends and neighbours.[175]

In 1717 schoolmasters were asked to identify their best scholars 'that they may have some encouragement for qualifying them to be schoolmasters'.[176] By 1720 the Society was in a position to launch its scheme. Sponsored by charitable persons, 'Youths of more than ordinary capacity' would receive an allowance of 12 pence Scots for each day of attendance. They would receive a suit of clothes and a pair of shoes at the end of each year. It was

[174] Ibid., 189–90 (5 Apr 1723).
[175] NRS, GD95/2/1, 205 (20 Jul 1711).
[176] NRS, GD95/2/2, 190 (4 Jul 1717).

expected that in their third year they would bear some of the teaching duties, for which they would receive 18 pence Scots. After this probationary period, they would be employed as masters in the first suitable vacancy.[177]

The scheme was deemed an unqualified success. Indeed, it was so well-received that within three years the system was full up. Henceforth, bursaries were limited to those aged twelve years and above who were able to read the Proverbs distinctly and 'to have otherwise made good progress in learning the English language'.[178] Due to the shortage of Gaelic-speakers qualified to be teachers, it was important that bursars were fluent in both Gaelic and English, and this was adhered to strictly by the Society. In 1727, for example, Glenmuick schoolmaster Andrew Rule was reprimanded for granting a bursary to a scholar without Gaelic, despite being a successful non-Gaelic-speaking teacher himself.[179] In 1726 the Committee resolved to take stock of the bursary scheme, requesting that all schoolmasters send in reports detailing the progress of their current bursars, what had become of previous bursars and whether any would be fit to teach schools. As Table 7 shows, the final report demonstrated that there had been a total of 41 bursars by 1726, 11 of whom were still at school. 30 had graduated, five of whom had become SSPCK schoolmasters, and several others had gone on to become private schoolmasters or Royal Bounty catechists. Due to a shortage of funds, however, the Society resolved not to grant any more bursaries until its position improved.[180] From its foundation in 1727, bursars were sent to Raining's School in Inverness for their third year of study to master English and learn Latin. Established under the auspices of the SSPCK with money left by the wealthy merchant John Raining, the institution was dedicated to educating Gaelic-speaking boys in an English-speaking environment. Up until 1747, the school was held in 'four rooms above the Grammar School of lnverness'.[181] In 1729 the Society found that 'diverse of the Bursars are now Teachers of the Society's Schools and of other privat schools, and others of them are fit to be so employ'd'. In a more comfortable financial position and eager for more teachers to facilitate the expansion of schools, the Society lifted the moratorium instituted in 1726. Letters were written to schoolmasters requesting them to recommend promising scholars to attend Raining's school to undertake teacher training.[182] Allan and Ronald, sons of John MacDonald, Doctor of Medicine and SSPCK correspondent in North Uist, attended

[177] NRS, GD95/1/2, 74 (5 Nov 1719), 114–5 (3 Nov 1720); GD95/2/3, 17 (25 Aug 1720).
[178] NRS, GD95/2/3, 189–90 (5 Apr 1723).
[179] NRS, GD95/1/3, 25 (2 Nov 1727).
[180] NRS, GD95/2/2, 409 (6 oct 1726).
[181] Wodrow, *Analecta*, iii, 357; The decline of the Celtic languages, 58-9; Thomas M. Murchison, "Raining's School: a seed-bed of talent", TGSI, 52 (1980-2), 411-12.
[182] NRS, GD95/1/3, 156–7 (6 Nov 1729).

Raining's School between 1736 and 1738, and then went on to serve as schoolmasters in South Uist and Barra.[183]

Table 7. Report concerning the number of bursars in 1726

SCHOOL	**# BURSARS**
Aberdeenshire	
Glenmuick, Tullich & Glengairn	6
Crathie & Braemar	3
Strathdon	1
Perth & Dumbartonshire	
Balquhidder	1
Comrie	2
Buchanan	3
Arrochar	1
Blair Atholl	3
Other	
Abertarff	3
Bracadale in Skye	8
Edinkillie	1
Kilmallie	3
Kilmorack	6

Sources: NRS, GD95/2/3, 409.

As Table 8 demonstrates, a total of 24 bursars have been identified who became SSPCK schoolmasters between 1720 and 1745. Each schoolmaster was paid a salary of less that 100 merks (£5/7/8 sterling). The table also demonstrates that nearly half of these were educated at schools in Aberdeenshire, suggesting that this region benefitted most from the scheme. The pre-existing culture of bilingualism in the region and strong local support for schooling possibly facilitated a disproportionate output of bilingual teachers. As will be discussed further in the next section, the Society attempted to export most of these teachers to more northerly and westerly parishes, which yielded mixed results and attracted opprobrium from some localities. This suggests that, if there was any sense of 'cultural intrusion' among Highland communities in this period, Gaelic-speaking teachers from Aberdeenshire may have been its primary agents. Nevertheless, 11 bursars ended up serving their own communities.[184]

[183] NRS, GD95/2/4, 280 (5 Aug 1736); Cowper, *SSPCK Schoolmasters*, 49, 51.
[184] See pp. 190–1.

Table 8. Bursars who went on to serve as SSPCK schoolmasters, 1720–45

NAME	SCHOOL OR REGION	GRADUATION YEAR	FIRST SCHOOL TAUGHT
Aberdeenshire			
Peter Constable	Glenmuick, Tullich & Glengairn	1723	Moy & Dalarossie
Alexander Farquharson	Crathie & Braemar	1723	Braemar
Arthur Tause	Glenmuick, Tullich & Glengairn	1727	Kiltarlity
Charles MacArthur	Crathie & Braemar	1726	Kilmonivaig
Alexander Downie	Strathdon	1728	Kiltarlity
Archibald Lamont	Crathie & Braemar	1729	Lewis
John Tastard	Crathie & Braemar	1729	Braemar
Charles Tause	Crathie & Braemar	1731	North Uist
Charles MacHardy	Crathie & Braemar	1731	Lismore
Peter Catanach	Glenmuick, Tullich & Glengairn	1734	Gairloch
Donald Lyon	Crathie & Braemar	1742	Gairloch
Perthshire			
John Menzies	Rannoch	1728	Rannoch
John Ferguson	Perthshire	1729	Comrie
Duncan Wright	Perthshire	1730	Killin
Duncan Drummond	Perthshire	1730	Glenalmond
Donald Cameron	Rannoch	1731	Rannoch
Inverness- and Ross-shire			
James Couts	Kilmorack	1726	Kiltarlity
William Fraser	Kilmorack	1725	Kilmorack
Alexander MacPherson	Laggan	1726	Laggan
James MacDonald	Kilmorack	1728	South Uist
Alexander MacKenzie	Lochcarron	1732	Lochbroom
Other			
John Abercrombie	Ruthven	1727	Ruthven
Allan MacDonald	North Uist	1738	South Uist
Ronald MacDonald	North Uist	1739	Barra

Sources: NRS, GD95/2/3–4; Cowper, *SSPCK Schoolmasters*

Gaelic

The years 1719–25 were the most formative in the development of the Society's approach to Gaelic in the first half of the eighteenth century. As chapter four has demonstrated, the SSPCK in its early years had not developed a uniform approach to the use of Gaelic in the classroom. Gaelic was permitted as a medium of oral communication and the Society quietly provided schools in Skye and St Kilda with copies of the Gaelic catechism. The Society was also receptive, if not cautious, of the idea of using Gaelic texts in the classroom – it encouraged Braemar schoolmaster John Clow to undertake a Gaelic translation of Allan's

catechism, and did not disapprove when William MacKay in Durness reported that his daughter at nearby school of Eriboll taught children to translate the Irish Bible into English. However, when MacKay asked the Society to clarify its policy regarding Gaelic texts, he was advised to teach 'them only to read English and to do his endeavours as soon as he can, to make them understand that language'.[185] In 1719 the language issue was once again broached by a schoolmaster, this time in Highland Perthshire. In his report to the Committee, James Murray in Blair Atholl disclosed that he:

> teaches the Children to read the Irish Catechism and Irish psalms after they can read the Scriptures in English pretty well, and that he has done this for the good of their ignorant parents, who understand not the English tongue, that the children when they go home at night may be in case to read to them.[186]

Murray added that this was 'very satisfying to their parents' but promised to forbear it if the Society disapproved. At the end of the letter he requested 'a dozen or a dozen and an half of Irish psalm books'.[187] The Committee's response was equivocal, stating simply that the Society had 'resolved to give no encouragement to the teaching to read in the Irish Language, and therefore they will furnish no books for that purpose', but did not ask Murray to cease the practice.[188] In June 1719, the Society first broached the topic of rote learning in schools, whereby children learned to read the English Bible aloud without understanding its content. This was considered 'a convenience to be provided against' and the Committee resolved to determine measures for schoolmasters 'which may oblige them to make it their principal work to cause the Children [to] understand and speak the English Language'.[189] Ironically, it was another request to teach Latin from Skye teacher John MacPherson that prompted the General Meeting to determine 'that neither Latine nor Irish should be taught in the Societies schools'.[190] Indeed, it was the issue of Latin that continued to prove the biggest point of contention between the Society and Highland communities, prompting protests in several regions. In October 1720, MacPherson reported that many of his pupils had left the school and 'gone elsewhere to Learn Latine'.[191] John McBean in Kilmallie wrote in 1721 that parishioners were pressing him to teach Latin, and 'represented his fears that a numerous school will not be got at Kilmalie if Latin be not taught'. The Society, rather unhelpfully, responded that if that it would simply move the school if this proved to be the case.[192]

---

[185] NRS, GD95/2/1, 324 (26 Jun 1713).
[186] NRS, GD95/2/2, 259 (13 Jan 1719).
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid., 263 (4 Feb 1719).
[189] Ibid., 308 (22 Jun 1719).
[190] NRS, GD95/1/2, 73 (5 Nov 1719).
[191] NRS, GD95/2/3, 23 (6 Oct 1720).
[192] NRS, GD95/1/2, 172 (10 Aug 1721).

In February 1720 letters were sent to teachers, ministers and presbyteries, requiring that:

> particular care be taken of teaching children to understand as well as to read the English Language, and for that end The masters do Converse with them, and cause them converse amongst themselves as much as possible in that Language.[193]

This implies that until now Gaelic had been the normal spoken language of the classroom. Hoping to remedy the issue of rote learning, conversation in English was to be introduced to aid comprehension, thereby limiting the amount of Gaelic spoken in the classroom, meanwhile promoting the use of English. In March, the Society backtracked on the concession given to James Murray, whereby he was allowed to teach children to read the Gaelic psalms and catechism. It is notable, however, that in this instance the Committee and General Meeting were in disagreement. While short on sympathy for Gaelic, the Committee demonstrated a more pragmatic attitude towards the use of Gaelic texts in the classroom, informing James Murray:

> that the Societies design was not to discourage using any proper means of instruction in the principles of Christianity, but to farder the same, and yet not to continue the Irish Language, but to wear it out, and to Learn the people the English tongue, and therefore discharging the Learning any to read Irish, unless they can first read and understand English…

The General Meeting, on the other hand, 'did not agree to their Committee's opinion as to the teaching of Irish' and resolved that schoolmasters should 'forbear to teach reading Irish upon any pretext whatsomever unless they get new and particular directions in that matter from a General Meeting'.[194] Thereafter, SSPCK publications began to include the ban on Gaelic texts alongside Latin, but the issue was still far from settled. For the many regions where Gaelic was a necessary medium of communication, the Society's policy was still neither clear nor consistent.

Three Highland clergymen appeared before the General Meeting of June 1721 to submit a petition referred to as the 'Representation anent teaching Irish'.[195] These ministers were each from parishes in the northern and north-western Highlands: Rev. Murdo MacLeod of Glenelg, Rev. Walter Ross of Kilmuir-Easter and Rev. John MacKay of Lairg. According to Durkacz, the ministers claimed that 'the ends of the society were frustrated by its refusal

[193] NRS, GD95/2/2, 346 (11 Feb 1720).
[194] NRS, GD95/1/2, 103–4 (3 Mar 1720).
[195] Ibid., 170–1 (1 Jun 1721).

to allow the teaching of Gaelic reading'.[196] While the petition did recommend the use of the Gaelic texts in the classroom, this was not its primary focus:

> through a defect of the present method of teaching some of the Societies Schools in their Highland bounds, these good ends proposed are much frustrate, for in places where nothing of the English tongue is understood the Children are taught to read only in English which they understand not, and are denied the benefite of expounding and translateing the same by help of their masters into their mother tongue as is the ordinar fashion and practice of the Gramar Schools, and thus they return home able indeed to read the Bible but understand not even the plainest Historical part of what they read and after residing in the Countrey where they hear nothing but Irish, in a Litle time they entirely forget what with much Labour & Long time they acquired, which as it proves a great discouragement to the parents to send them to school, so the principle design of the Society in propagating Christian knowledge is thereby obstructed.[197]

To address the problem of rote learning in schools, the petitioners recommended to the Society that:

> the teachers in their bounds be strictly enjoined, constantly to exercise their schollars to the translation of the Catechism and Bible and what other English books they read into the Irish and when once they come to read English, to put in their hands the translations of the Shorter Catechism and psalm book which they have in vulgar Irish (the Last of which they sing in all their Churches by order of Assembly) that they may collate and compare these translations, which method as it is the only way to make them capable to understand what they read, and when they return home to instruct their Ignorant parents who understand not English.[198]

In sum, the petitioners were recommending the use simultaneous translation from English into Gaelic in schools in order to aid comprehension, as was the norm in Highlands prior to and indeed after the SSPCK's foundation. Only after learning to translate from English into Gaelic were scholars to be taught to read the Gaelic catechism and psalter for the specific purpose of instructing Gaelic-speakers in their communities. Again, at no point had the Society placed a ban on spoken Gaelic in the classroom; indeed, this would have run counter to the Society's insistence on employing Gaelic-speaking teachers. We can be certain that at this stage Gaelic was still the standard means of oral communication in SSPCK classrooms, apart from in Highland Aberdeenshire where bilingualism appears to have been established on the ground.[199] The initial opinion of the Committee was that while 'schoolmasters should

[196] Durkacz, *Decline*, 63.
[197] NRS, GD95/1/2, 170.
[198] Ibid.
[199] NRS, GD95/1/1, 198 (31 Jun 1713), 310 (1 Nov 1716); GD95/1/2, 2–4 (11 Mar 1718), 332 (4 Mar 1725).

be at much pains in learning their schollars to translate from English into Irish' it was unnecessary to teach the reading of Irish. Rather the ability to translate from English into Gaelic was considered sufficient for scholars to instruct their communities.[200] While Gaelic books were ruled out, the use of spoken Gaelic was still accepted, raising doubts concerning the sincerity of the Society's rhetorical commitment to 'rooting out' the language.

The Society did not act immediately on the advice of the 'Representation'. However, after receiving two letters from teachers in Sutherland in 1722 which conveyed the difficulties they experienced teaching children to speak English, the Society appointed a dedicated 'language' subcommittee to determine policy measures.[201] In April 1723, the Society sent printed letters to Highland presbyteries which requested their advice on how best to teach children to understand English and recommended, but did not mandate, several methods of its own for 'Learning English'. It was proposed that as soon as scholars began to read the catechism in English teachers should 'assist understanding by getting them to translate the English into Irish for each question'. It was also recommended that those who grasped the rudiments of English should be banned from speaking Gaelic except when translating 'for the benefite of those who are learning the same'. 'Clandestine Censors' were to be appointed 'to delate Transgressors'. The Society for the first time mooted the idea of composing 'an English and Irish vocables', a project which culminated in the publication in 1741 of the first printed Gaelic dictionary.[202] Representatives of Highland presbyteries who attended the 1723 General Assembly met with the Committee on 23 May to discuss schools and 'the most effectual method of extirpateing the Irish language'. They were asked to lay the matter before their presbyteries and return their answers to the Committee.[203] Whether or not this was adhered to is unclear, as the Society's minutes include no reference to receiving returns from presbyteries. Nevertheless, the available evidence demonstrates that at this stage the Society's language policies were not necessarily arbitrary diktats determined by a group of ignorant, anti-Gaelic Lowlanders. Rather, they were considered recommendations based on both experience and active consultation with Highland agents who were familiar with the situation in their respective localities. At this point in time introducing Gaelic texts into the classroom was a step too far for the Society. While Durkacz and Withers are right to present this as a lost opportunity for Gaelic in education, it should be recognised that the

[200] Ibid., 177 (10 Aug 1721).
[201] NRS, GD95/2/3, 128 (21 Jun 1722). The subcommittee included the only two known Gaelic-speakers on the Committee, Alexander MacLeod and Rev. Neil McVicar.
[202] Ibid., 188–90 (5 Apr 1723).
[203] Ibid., 199 (23 May 1723). Those in attendance were Rev. William Stewart of Inverness (Inverness), Rev. William MacBeath of Olrig (Caithness), Rev. Archibald MacQueen of Snizort (Skye), Rev. Daniel Morison of Kilbrandon (Lorn), Rev. James Robertson of Glenmuick (Kincardine O'Neil) and Rev. Alexander Shaw of Edinkillie (Forres).

Society's advice—to utilise simultaneous translation from printed English into spoken Gaelic—ultimately represented a continuity with established modes of Highland education. It was the SSPCK's strict prohibition of Latin, on the other hand, that marked a clear break with tradition, leading many to vote with their feet and send their children elsewhere.

The Royal Bounty Scheme, the SSPCK and the Highland Elite

The year 1725 was a momentous one in the history of the Highlands. The British Government was taking a more proactive approach towards the region in an attempt to counteract Jacobitism, supporting a series of military, economic and ecclesiastical initiatives intended to integrate the Highlands with the rest of the country. General Wade was despatched north to impose military authority on the region. A new Disarming Act was passed, six new Highland companies were raised among the well-affected clans, and a new programme of constructing military roads and barracks was commenced. The Church of Scotland oversaw the creation of a new ecclesiastical structure in the Highlands, erecting three new presbyteries and the new Synod of Glenelg, which was to oversee the entire north-west coast and northern Hebrides. Perhaps most significantly for the SSPCK, a Royal Bounty of £1000 per annum was granted to the Kirk from the civil list to provide missionaries and catechists in the region to counteract the 'growth of popery'. King George himself donated £1200 to the Society.[204] General Wade succeeded in the main aims of his mission, winning over recalcitrant gentry in the region with 'an astute mixture of charm and menace'.[205] On the continent, the covert operations of Robert Walpole's spy network were also successful in winning over exiled Jacobite chiefs with a mixture of bribery and promises of restoring their forfeited estates. By the end of the year the Gàidhealtachd was according to Stiùbhart 'the most peaceful it had been in living memory'.[206] Wodrow recounted a conversation with a MacKenzie, a man 'of excellent sense, but rigide Jacobit', who upon hearing of the Royal Bounty scheme remarked 'Nou they have fallen on the knack, and the most effectuall way of ruining our interests for ever'.[207] To contemporaries, Whig and Jacobite alike, it seemed as if the government and church were finally giving the region the attention and care it required. The Highlands were to be integrated smoothly into the British state and empire, bringing all of the promised benefits of peace, stability and prosperity. Even among Jacobites, it was clear that Highland disaffection stemmed largely from an absence of central governance and the unsatisfactory integration of the region into the United

[204] Wodrow, *Analecta*, iii, 188; idem, *Correspondence*, iii, 189–191; Stiùbhart, 'Royal Bounty Scheme', 88.
[205] Ibid., 89.
[206] Ibid., 83–9.
[207] Wodrow, *Analecta*, iii, 289.

Kingdom. Sankey and Szechi have pointed out that the Scottish Jacobite elite were generally eager to exploit lucrative employment opportunities or improvement schemes associated with the new British state. In a Highland context, however, hitherto such opportunities had been few and far between.[208]

Church and government initiatives in this period facilitated the expansion of the Society, allowing it to open new frontiers in Episcopalian and Catholic districts in the Isles and the western and northern Highlands. At the same time the Society was refining its management methods: meetings in Edinburgh were streamlined, membership of the Committee was limited to those living near the capital, and the Society once again began to identify potential London correspondents.[209] From 1724, with the number of schools yearly increasing and still anticipating the £20,000 grant from the government, the SSPCK began to make moves towards establishing a closer, more formalised relationship with local elites. Up to this point, the Society's interactions with Highland elites had been mixed in nature. It was still fighting an uphill battle in its push for heritors to establish parochial schools, but fruitful interactions with elites in Lochaber and Sutherland and the shires of Aberdeen, Perth and Dumbarton had demonstrated the value of cooperation. With the guidance of presbyteries, regional correspondents' boards were appointed, which consisted mainly of gentry, chief tenants and professionals – often those who also served as church elders. Their remit included recommending locations for schools, ensuring adequate accommodation was provided, carrying out visitations, reporting on the conduct of schoolmasters, examining scholars, and communicating local conditions to the Committee in Edinburgh. They were responsible for reading out the rules and orders of the Society and ensuring that children were taught to translate from English into Gaelic.[210] Furthermore, considering 'how much their schools need[ed] the Countenance of the principal Heretors and superiors', the Society raised the membership threshold from 100 to 120 to create space for Highland gentlemen.[211]

Shortly before meeting with General Wade to surrender weapons, reconcile the Clan MacKenzie with the crown and negotiate the restoration of the exiled earl of Seaforth's lands, Ross-shire heritor Sir Colin MacKenzie of Coul was appointed both a member of the SSPCK and a correspondent for the Presbyteries of Dingwall and Gairloch.[212] Perhaps reflecting the broader climate of reconciliation in this period, the Society sought to include all major heritors on its correspondents' boards, regardless of their suspected political

[208] Margaret Sankey and Daniel Szechi 'Elite Culture and the Decline of Scottish Jacobitism, 1716-1745', *Past and Present*, 173 (2001), 122.
[209] NRS, GD95/2/3, 139–142 (2 Nov 1722).
[210] NRS, GD95/1/2, 296–301 (4 Jun 1724).
[211] NRS, GD95/2/3, 255–6 (7 May 1724).
[212] NRS, GD95/1/2, 355 (4 Nov 1725).

sympathies. Indeed, many of the individuals appointed as correspondents, particularly in the western and central Highlands, were from notable Jacobite families, among them Donald Cameron of Lochiel, Charles Stewart of Ardsheal, Alexander Robertson of Struan, Roderick Chisholm of Comer, and Alexander MacDonald of Keppoch. The involvement of these individuals suggests that support for the SSPCK, or at least support for increased schooling in the region, may have transcended political and even religious allegiances. Heritors may have simply been falling in line, especially considering the new military presence in the region in the person of General Wade. The SSPCK, and local presbyteries for that matter, were becoming increasingly difficult to ignore, and were actively seeking the engagement of the local gentry, many of whom also served as parish elders. It is possible that education crossed the ideological and religious divide. Comer, Tiendrish and Keppoch, for example, were Catholics, but nevertheless engaged with the Society to negotiate the settlement of schools in their lands in Strathglass and Kilmonivaig respectively.[213] Indeed, the words of Colin MacKenzie of Coul suggest that many among the Highland gentry viewed the SSPCK's schools as a form of government support, and sought to have more input in the matter: 'We reckon (and we think upon very good Grounds) that the whole of [the SSPCK's] Stock is ours, until the Means of Instruction be established among us'.[214]

[213] Ibid., 403–4 (3 Nov 1726); GD95/1/3, 28–9 (2 Nov 1727); GD95/2/3, 288 (19 Nov 1724), 291 (16 Nov 1724), 308 (1 Apr 1725); GD95/2/4, 48 (16 Nov 1727); GD95/2/5, 507 (4 Sep 1740).
[214] Anonymous [Sir Colin MacKenzie of Coul], *The Highland Complaint* (Edinburgh, 1737), 22.

Table 9. SSPCK Correspondents, 1724–45

PRESBYTERY	SURNAME	#	NOTABLE MEMBERS
Abertaff	MacDonald	7	Donald Cameron of Lochiel; Roderick Chisholm of Comer; Alexander MacDonald of Keppoch; Donald MacDonald of Tiendrish; John MacDonell of Glengarry
	Cameron	10	
	Chisholm	1	
	MacPherson	3	
	Fraser	8	
Aberlour	Grant	4	John Gordon of Glenbucket
Abernethy	Grant	5	
	Gordon	2	
Caithness	MacKay	4	Lord Reay
	Sinclair	3	
Dingwall	Fraser	2	Sir Colin MacKenzie of Coul
	MacKenzie	1	
	Munro	1	
Dunkeld	Campbell	7	James Murray, Duke of Atholl; Alexander Robertson of Struan
	Menzies	6	
	Robertson	5	
	Stewart	4	
Gairloch	MacKenzie	9	Sir Colin MacKenzie of Coul; Alexander MacKenzie of Gairloch
	MacLeod	3	
	MacRae	1	
Inverness	Campbell	1	John Forbes of Culloden; Angus Mackintosh of Mackintosh
	Fraser	2	
	Ross	2	
	MacKintosh	1	
Kincardine O'Neil	Farquharson	7	Alexander Farquharson of Monaltrie; John Farquharson of Invercauld
	Gordon	4	
	MacDonald	1	
	MacKenzie	2	
Long Island	MacAulay	5	Alexander MacKenzie of Delvine; Dr. John MacDonald; William MacLeod of Berneray
	MacDonald	4	
	MacKenzie	8	
	MacLean	2	
	MacLeod	3	
	MacNeil	2	
	Morison	2	
Lorn	Campbell	4	Dugald Stewart of Appin; Allan MacLean of Ardgour; Charles Stewart of Ardsheal Alexander MacKenzie of Delvine; Dr. John MacDonald; William MacLeod of Berneray
	MacLean	10	
	Stewart	2	

Sources: NRS, GD95/2/3–5.

The SSPCK moved swiftly to establish a relationship with the Royal Bounty Committee (RBC). As Stiùbhart has pointed out, many on the SSPCK's Committee 'would

be the most assiduous attenders of the meetings of the [RBC]'.[215] Indeed, the two bodies appear at times to have been amorphous and interchangeable. As Wodrow wrote of his time sitting on the committee, much of the management of the Royal Bounty was down to the SSPCK secretary and clerk, John Dundas of Philpstoun and Nicol Spence: 'I see all is managed by the Sub-commity, who are a feu in and about Edinburgh and the Committy only meets to approve what they do, and read letters'.[216] From the beginning, the Society was willing to alter its entire scheme of schools to better cooperate with the RBC:

> Bearing that there are many more Places needing and craving Schools, And that the Society being desireous to make the benefite of their Funds as extensive as they could, had been obliged upon the Death or Removal of Schoolmasters to diminish the Salaries formerly in use to be paid, in order to have the more Schools, And also to remove the Masters from place to place, after they have been three or more years therein, And yet they are not in case to answer all the Demands that are made; But having had Information concerning the State of the Parishes of Kilmanivaig, Gairloch and South Uist, With the Isles of Coll, Tirree, Egg, Roum, Muck and Cana and Country of Glenstrafarer, And being informed That there is a mixture of Protestants in South Uist, Kilmanivaig, Glenstrafarer, and in the Isles of Muck, Roum, Egg and Cana, And that now Southuist has given a Call to One to be their Minister, That one is lately settled in Kilmanivaig, And that these of the foresaid four Isles are about calling One, As likewise that Preachers and Catechists are sent to these Places, The Committee of the said Society Judged this a proper Season of sending Schoolmasters thither, Seeing Ministers, Preachers Catechists may very much encourage the Schools, And have therefore under consideration the providing of these places with Schoolmasters and Books, tho' they should sink their Schools in other places where they are not so needful.[217]

At the beginning of 1725 the Society maintained 58 schools (45 excluding Orkney and Shetland). By 1732, this number had reached 105 (84 outwith Orkney and Shetland).[218] The Royal Bounty scheme spurred the Society to establish schools in Gairloch, Lochcarron, Lochbroom, Glenshiel and Lochalsh in the MacKenzie-dominated north-western Highlands; Urquhart and Glenmoriston, and Kiltarlity in Inverness-shire; and Harris, Lewis, and North and South Uist in the Outer Hebrides. However, while the Royal Bounty was renewed annually by the king, within a few years the whole initiative had run out of steam. The more capable preachers on the scheme were snapped up quickly by presbyteries to fill vacant pulpits, while others refused outright to travel to remoter regions. The problem remained of the sheer intractability of many Highland parishes, not to mention the continued shortage of

[215] Stiùbhart, 'Royal Bounty Scheme', 91, 106.
[216] Wodrow, *Analecta*, iii, 357.
[217] NRS, CH1/5/51, 26-7 (13 Aug 1725).
[218] NRS, GD124/20/21; *A Short State of the SSPCK* (1732), 16–23.

qualified Gaelic-speaking personnel.[219] Despite the efforts of the RBC and SSPCK to divert the fund towards erecting new, smaller parishes, and to pay for schoolmasters' salaries, authorities in London remained unreceptive to the idea.[220] Responding to a petition from the SSPCK and RBC in January 1729, General Wade wrote that:

> He could not undertake to ask His Majesty for more than the Continuation of the sum of One thousand Pounds as he had given last year for Reformation of the Highlands and Islands […] That he believed that that whole sum was employed for support of Itinerant Preachers, and as it was only an annual Bounty, no part thereof could be employ'd for schoolmasters who could not undertake that Business without an Established salary.[221]

In an attempt to salvage the scheme, the SSPCK effectively hijacked the Royal Bounty fund in 1729, using it to pay additional salaries to schoolmasters in return for their services as parish catechists.[222] While this allowed the Society to make its resources go further and supplement its schoolmasters' salaries, objections were quickly raised by Highland presbyteries. The commonest complaint was that the joint role of catechist-schoolmaster served only to overburden employees, preventing them from carrying out either duty effectively. Such complaints were received from across the Highlands, including the Presbyteries of Mull, Lorn, Aberlour and Tongue.[223] Indeed, in 1737 Colin MacKenzie of Coul would remark that:

> Our inferior missionaries have two offices, being jointly employed as School-Master-Catechists, which renders them incapable of discharging either, tho' they were otherwise capable.[224]

Another issue was one of personnel. It was not uncommon in the late-1720s and 1730s for the Society to overlook local candidates in favour of the teachers generated by its own bursary scheme. This must have been particularly felt in the north-western Highland and the Isles, as the majority of bursars who went on to serve as SSPCK schoolmasters came from the central and eastern Highlands, particularly the districts overseen by the Presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil in Highland Aberdeenshire. Across 1733 and 1734 at least four such schoolmasters—in Lismore, North Uist, Muck and Kilfinichen in Mull—were rejected by

[219] Stiùbhart, 'Royal Bounty Scheme', 93–4, 140.
[220] Dòmhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart, 'Òraid mu na h-Aobharan air Cùl Bhliadhna Theàrlaich' (Unpublished paper, 2004), 8.
[221] NRS, GD95/1/3, 101 (2 Jan 1729).
[222] Stiùbhart, 'Royal Bounty Scheme', 128.
[223] NRS, GD94/2/4, 282 (12 Jun 1730), 287 (18 Jun 1730), 321 (22 Oct 1730), 325 (17 Dec 1730).
[224] *Highland Complaint*, 12.

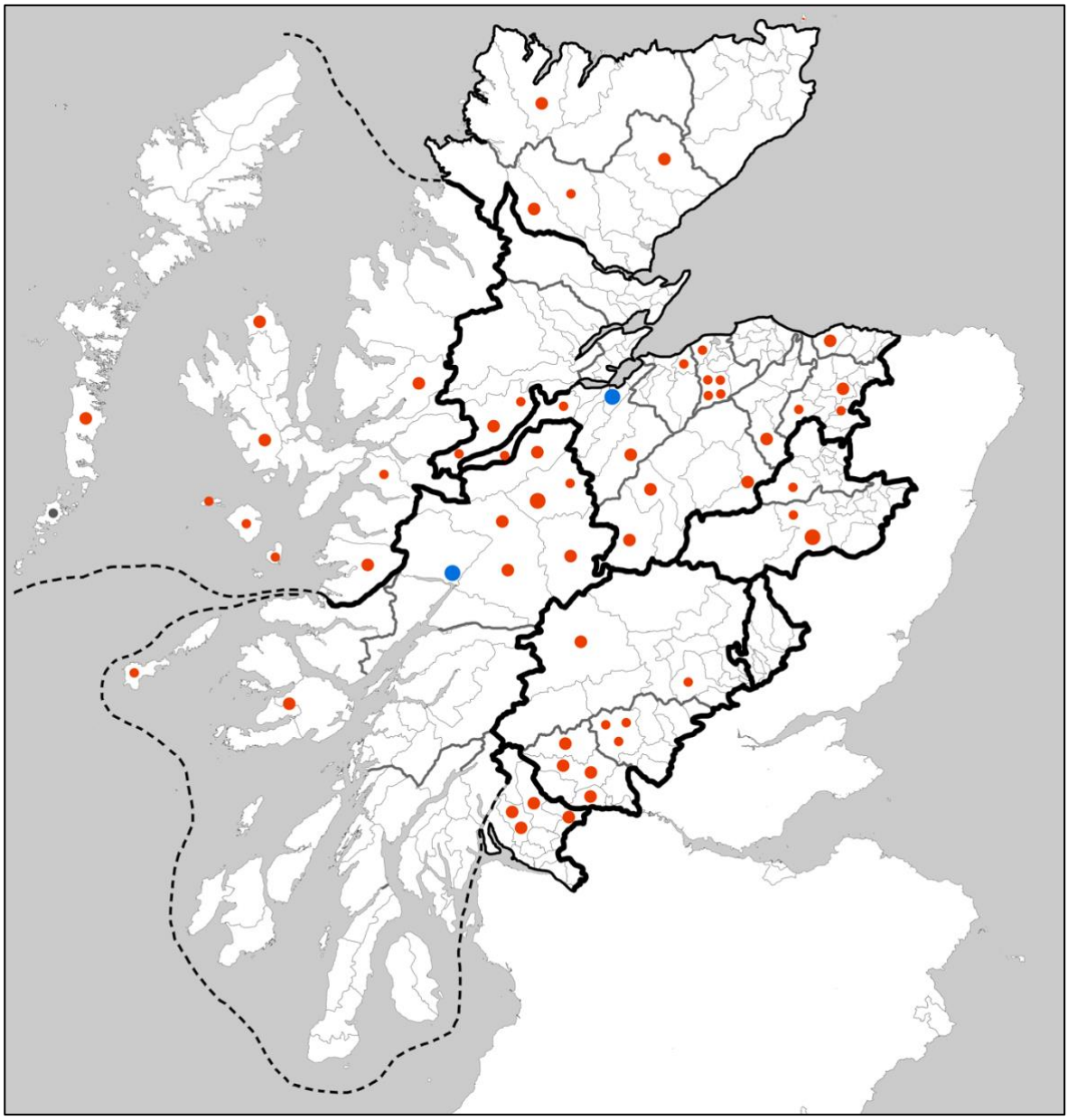
their communities, and in each of these cases the Society had disregarded candidates recommended by the local presbytery.[225] Once again, this is commented on by Coul:

> If any of us shall shew Kindness to any of their schoolmasters (which for some Years now past very few of them have deserv'd) this very schoolmaster is hurried away from us, without knowing for what, but that 'tis the Society's Pleasure [. . .] and in this Schoolmaster's stead there's oft none sent, or a beardless Boy, good for nothing, or some broken superannuated Tradesmen […] Our best qualified young Men are overlook'd, Recommendations in their favours, from Synods, Presbyteries and Heritors disregarded; but just as young Men are friended in Edinburgh, so they are sent to reform the Highlands. When but few stand so much in Need of Reformation themselves.[226]

Much of the initial success of SSPCK schools depended on the positive local relationships it established, not least through the appointment of local schoolmasters. However, these new teachers were not only outsiders among the communities they served, they were also increasingly inexperienced and underqualified, as the Society's growth proceeded at an unprecedented pace. In 1729, for example, the Society considered removing the requirement that its schoolmasters be proficient in arithmetic.[227] The Society was not only becoming less receptive to local demands; it struggled to supply enough schoolmasters to keep up with this demand. Without recourse to official funds, or indeed a more sophisticated bureaucratic framework which could better meet the aspirations of Highland localities, the SSPCK was beginning to appear as if it was imposing itself on communities. At the same time, it was becoming clear that government engagement with the region was beginning to wane. Calls—from parishes, presbyteries, synods and the committee itself—to divert the Royal Bounty towards splitting unwieldy parishes and paying teachers' salaries were consistently dismissed. While Scotland as a whole experienced 'modest but patchy' economic growth in the 1730s, this mainly benefitted the easily accessible and comparably resource-rich Lowlands. The Highlands, on the other hand, were much poorer and generally more excluded from wider Scottish and British economic networks.[228] The withdrawal of military commissions for Independent Companies in the late 1730s not only weakened government authority in the region, it also removed one of the few sources of patronage available in the region, alienating chiefs with Jacobite proclivities such as Lord Lovat and Sir James Grant of Grant who had held commissions.[229]

---

[225] NRS, GD95/2/4, 400 (15 Jun 1731); GD95/2/5, 99 (5 Jul 1733), 125 (6 Oct 1733); 178 (29 Nov 1734).
[226] *Highland Complaint*, 12–13.
[227] NRS, GD95/2/4, 140 (16 Jan 1729).
[228] Christopher Whatley, *Scottish Society, 1707-1830: Beyond Jacobitism, Towards Industrialisation* (Manchester, 2000), 62; Stiùbhart, 'Òraid mu Bhliadhna Theàrlaich', 14.
[229] MacKillop, "*More Fruitful than the Soil"*, 20–21.

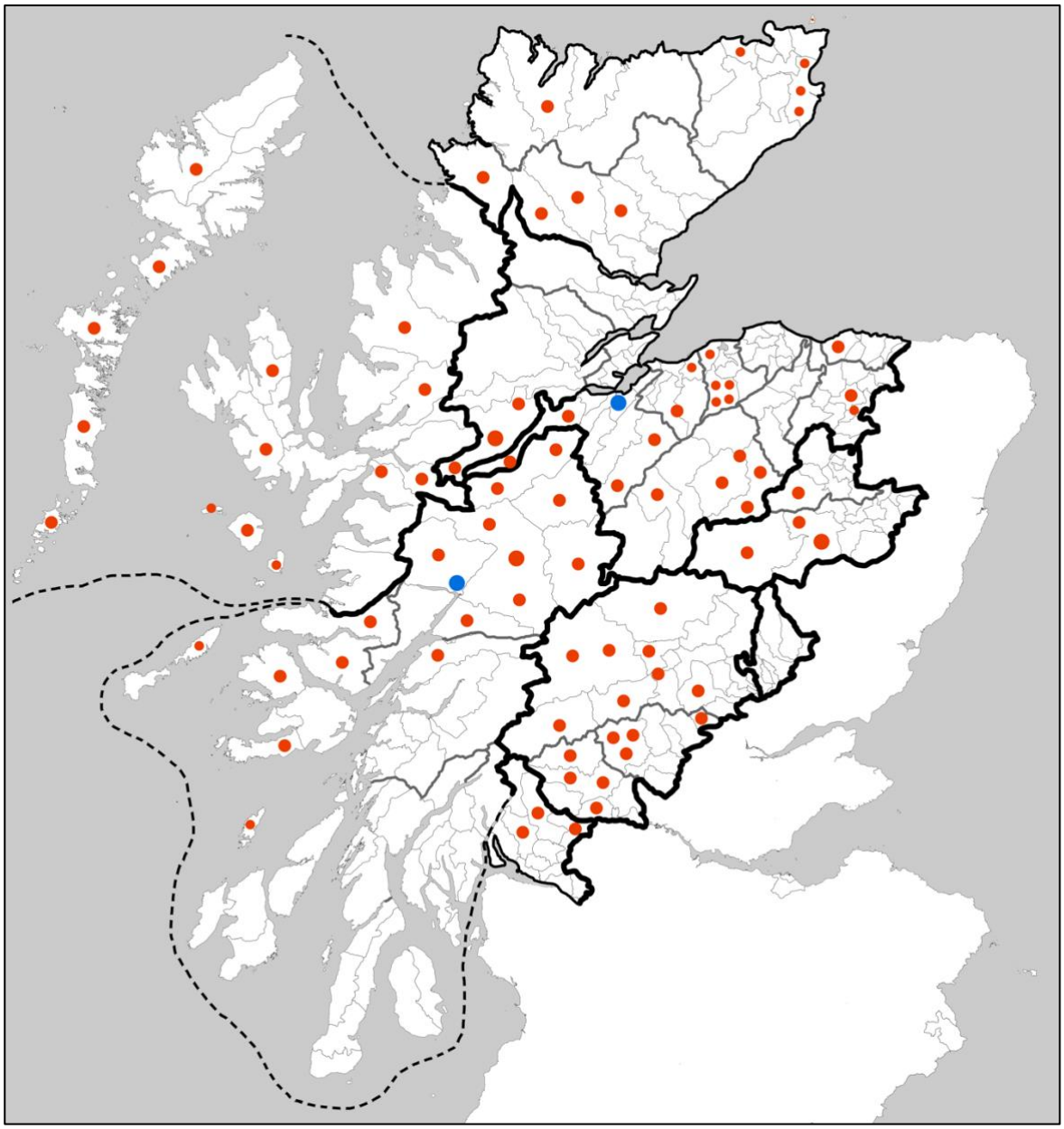


Map 12. SSPCK schools in 1729. Blue markers indicate Raining's School Inverness and the Maryburgh school, which served in the place of a grammar school.

By the 1730s the managers of the SSPCK were struggling under the sheer weight of their own operations. Handling letters and petitions from parishes across the Highlands, and receiving reports from over a hundred schools, the day-to-day running of the Society must have become an administrative nightmare. In this respect, the Society became a victim of its own success. It has been noted that Dundas and Spence had borne the brunt of the duties for managing both the SSPCK and the Royal Bounty, and understood the situation in the Highlands far better than others who attended either committee. The death in 1731 of John Dundas, SSPCK secretary and procurator of the Church of Scotland, deprived the Society of a key administrator. In the same year Nicol Spence, another key administrator, requested that he be exempted from receiving any more letters regarding schools.[230] Adding insult to

[230] NRS GD95/10/106; Wodrow, *Analecta*, iii, 356–7.

injury, the General Meeting of the Society empowered the Committee to take a much more active approach towards routine business: in other words, only major and weighty matters were to be referred back to it.[231] As we shall see in the following chapter, the excitement engendered by the Society's impending American mission would mean that, at this crucial juncture, Highland affairs were being increasingly sidelined.



Map 13. SSPCK schools in 1732. Blue markers indicate where the Society maintained fixed schools with salaries exceeding 300 merks, namely Maryburgh at Fort William which stood in for the grammar school, and Raining's School in Inverness.

Conclusion

In the aftermath of the '15, the Society was arguably in a position of weakness. Although its mission was still in its infancy and the first schools had only been in operation for three or

[231] NRS, GD95/1/3, 228–32 (7 Jan 1731).

four years, the SSPCK's core of support—the Scottish urban middle classes—had been contributing to the cause of Highland education for nearly a decade, seemingly to no good effect. Numerous attempts to solicit financial support from the crown and government, however, suggest that the Society did not intend to remain at the mercy of the vicissitudes of public opinion. Nor was it believed that charitable contributions alone could answer the unyielding demand for schools coming from tenacious Highland agents, including ministers, presbyteries and gentry. Government sponsorship would be the Society's panacea. It pursued this with determination, utilising all of the resources at its disposal, including the influence of its members and their personal and professional connections. In memorials and petitions, the Society could tailor its rhetoric to maximise its chances of garnering support from the regime of the day. In this, however, the Society was ultimately disappointed. While Scots were successful in leveraging support at Westminster, the government ultimately failed to make good its promise of the £20,000 for Highland schools.[232] The Royal Bounty scheme provided some consolation and allowed the Society to spread its resources more widely than before, but the strict terms of the grant prevented it from being used to pay for schools or for dividing large Highland parishes. Nevertheless, the alliance between the SSPCK and the RBC would become a staple of the Church of Scotland's Highland mission, lasting more than a generation up to 1758.

This period also witnessed significant changes in the ways that the Society's schools were administered, and this had a profound bearing on the communities that had come to rely on them. No longer could communities hope for the Society to provide the full salary for a university-educated teacher – the standard of pedagogue that many had come to expect. Instead, the Society championed, in its own words, 'Schoolmasters of no great Learning or Character': those with a basic English education who were willing to serve for a much-reduced salary and had no pretensions to graduate beyond their station. This was a far cry from the university-educated scholars employed at the beginning and who, despite the issues they raised for the Society, must have helped to give the organisation credibility, especially in the localities they served. A lesser, but perhaps more reliable, breed of teacher was originally discovered by the Society serving poorer parishioners in the itinerant schools of Perthshire and Argyll, and after 1719 it sought to export this model beyond the Lowland peripheries of the Highlands. From its introduction in 1720 the Society's bursary scheme was specifically geared towards producing this standard of teacher. In practice, however, many objected to the imposition of increasingly underqualified teachers from outwith their

[232] Harris, 'Scots and the Westminster Parliament', 136; Innes, 'Domestic Face of the Military-Fiscal State', 105–6.

communities, most graduate bursars hailing from Highland Aberdeenshire. Debates concerning schoolmasters' qualifications and the target audience of SSPCK schools would continue into the second half of the eighteenth century.[233] In 1760, for example, Rev. James Robertson, the moderator of the Presbytery of Gairloch, wrote candidly to the Society:

> We cannot but agree with the honest People in wishing that your Plan of Schools was different from what it is, as we are perswaded that one good School would moderately speaking be of greater use in the Country than three of the present Set of Schools. As to the Objection that your Schools are intended for the Benefit of the poorer Sort, you cannot, Sir, but be sensible that the Schools which are best for the Children of the richer Sort are likewise best for the poor. And when a School is so bad that it is not worth the richer people's while to send their Children to it the poor will reap little Benefit by it. Besides that the Example of the richer sort is necessary to bring the poorer to send their Children to School.[234]

It is important to note that, at a local level, rich and poor alike had clear expectations and standards that were being communicated to the Society in Edinburgh, whether this was achieved by letter or by electing to send their children to be educated elsewhere. These expectations were the result of generations of experience with formal education which had been adapted to serve clan society. From this perspective, it is perhaps unsurprising that it was the exclusion of Latin and the Society's increasing disregard for teachers rooted in their communities, not the issue of Gaelic, that attracted most criticism.

[233] See Withrington, 'S.P.C.K. and Highland Schools'.
[234] NRS, RH15/105/5, James Robertson, Moderator of the presbytery of Gairloch (27 Mar 1760).

6

THE MISSIONS AT HOME AND ABROAD, *c.*1730–*c.*1735

While the Highlands were the SSPCK's primary concern, the royal letters patent also included a commitment to expanding its mission to Britain's overseas colonies – the 'Popish and Infidel Parts of the World'.[1] From a theological perspective, the failure of Scotland's colonisation-cum-missionary project in Darien was widely regarded by Presbyterians as a defeat at the hands of providence, after which the Highlands became the main focus for the Scottish missionary impulse. The extension of Presbyterianism and removal of Catholicism in the Highlands, the Society and its supporters hoped, would prove effective in restoring providential favour to the Scottish nation. At its foundation in 1709, the Society had to pursue this agenda within the context of the multiconfessional British state and its burgeoning empire. While acknowledging the importance of foreign missions and imperial affairs, the Society's purpose in the first two decades of operation was to ensure that the so-called 'Highland problem' remained on the British government's agenda. The Society did not trust the government to develop a coherent Highland policy without substantial prompting, and feared, as a minute from 1716 states, 'that through the multitude of other weighty affairs at the court, the same may come to be forgotten'.[2]

The Society's foundation came at a time when Christian missions were becoming increasingly important to British overseas expansion. Protestant missionary organisations such as the New England Company (NEC, founded 1649) and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG, 1701) laboured to extend and consolidate Protestantism in North America, in order to provide a moral basis for the empire and to protect it against the encroachments of foreign Catholic powers.[3] It is notable that none of the mission statements published by the SSPCK's antecedent organisations before 1707 mention foreign mission. However, a list of proposals for establishing a Scottish society from 1708 stressed the need to promote Christian knowledge in the 'Forraign Parts of the World', as well as the Highlands, lamenting the lack of education in the American colonies and the cruelties inflicted on natives by Roman Catholics.[4] The Society's *Proposals* from

[1] NRS, GD95/1/1, Royal Letters Patent, [1].
[2] NRS, GD95/2/2, 118 (13 Jun 1716).
[3] Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914* (Manchester, 2004), 7; Clare Loughlin, 'Concepts of Mission', 191.
[4] NRS, GD95/1/1, [2].

1710 promised 'so soon as they are enabled by the Charitable Contributions of Well disposed Persons to give suitable Encouragement to Ministers to go unto Foreign Parts to preach the Gospel to Infidels and Papists'.[5] By pledging future support, the SSPCK was seeking to demonstrate its potential value to British state and empire, and garner English support for its mission. From this perspective, the Society was attempting to integrate itself within the established English missionary tradition, facilitated by new opportunities made available through British imperial networks.[6] As discussed further below, however, colonial mission also offered opportunities to secure a place for a distinctly Scottish Presbyterianism overseas, which was to become a defining characteristic of Scotland's imperial legacy.[7]

The prospect of an overseas mission first arose in 1717, when London-based Dissenting minister Dr Daniel Williams left the Society a substantial bequest to 'maintain a competent number of well qualify'd Ministers in Infidel Foreign Countries' to bring heathens 'to the Knowledge of Christ Jesus'. Towards this purpose, Williams entrusted the Society with £100 sterling as well as the rents raised on his estate in Catworth in Huntingdonshire, which were estimated to be around £68 per annum.[8] However, the SSPCK remained tentative towards the idea; it was not until 1732 that it embarked on its first colonial mission, sponsoring three ministers to convert Native Americans in New England. There were several factors behind this delay, the first being finance. The terms of Williams' bequest dictated that the funds would only be made available to the SSPCK one year after it had maintained three missionaries 'in Foreign Infidel Countries' at its own expense.[9] As previous chapters have demonstrated, the Society's operations in the Highlands were severely restricted by a shortage of funds, leading the Society to seek out teachers who were willing to serve for a fraction of the original 300 merk salary. The Society's firm commitment to the Highlands was demonstrated in 1722, when it attempted unsuccessfully to redirect Williams' legacy towards establishing more schools in the region.[10]

How, then, did the Society come to shift its focus towards America after 1730? A recent article by Clare Loughlin explores this question, arguing that evangelising Indians and carving out a place for Scottish Presbyterianism abroad became seen as ways to recover providential favour for the Church of Scotland when its commitment to converting Highland

[5] NRS, GD95/10/40.
[6] Mills, 'SSPCK in British North America', 15, 17–18. For more detail see Jamie J. Kelly, 'The Rhetoric of Empire in the Scottish Mission in North America, 1732–63', *Scottish Church History*, 49 (2020), 25–37.
[7] John MacKenzie, 'Presbyterianism and Scottish Identity in Global Context', *Britain and the World*, 10 (2017), 88–112.
[8] *A True Copy of the Last Will and Testament of the Late Reverend Daniel Williams*, *D.D.* (London, 1717), 16–18.
[9] Ibid., 16.
[10] NRS, GD95/2/3, 147–9 (27 Nov 1722).

Catholics began to waver.[11] The Society's activism against Catholics waned in the 1730s; despite the attempts of teachers to exclude Catholics who refused to be catechised or attend Protestant worship, in 1729 the Society ordered 'That none who seek to be taught to read the Holy Scriptures of Truth [should] be excluded' from SSPCK schools.[12] On 5 November 1730, the General Meeting rejected the Committee's proposal to exclude the Catholics who did not observe the Society's rules, proclaiming 'That all should have the means of Knowledge, & the benefite of Instruction'.[13] From 1729 the Society came under increased scrutiny in Edinburgh and the Highlands for the shortcomings of its management, particularly the scheme of catechist-schoolmasters that it funded in partnership with the RBC, and the scandalous bankruptcy of the Society's treasurer, Joseph Cave in 1735. This chapter seeks to build on Loughlin's argument, taking a closer look at the motivations, mechanics and financial issues behind the SSPCK's American mission, the ways that the Society's earliest colonial endeavours impacted on the mission in the Highlands, and how local agents responded.

Dr Daniel Williams and the London Correspondence Board

Dr Daniel Williams was first introduced to the SSPCK through founding member and Royal Chaplain Prof. William Carstares. In 1710 Williams worked alongside secretary John Dundas in attempting, unsuccessfully, to establish a network of mutual support and correspondence between London's Dissenters and the SSPCK.[14] Upon his death in 1716, he entrusted to the Society £100 and 'all [his] lands and tenements in and about Catworth in Huntingdonshire, being let at about sixty eight pounds per annum', for the provision of missionaries and ministers in 'heathen and infidel lands'. Although interested in the bequest, the Society was at first unable to fulfil its terms; the primary condition was that the lands were only to be bequeathed 'at the End of one Year after [the SSPCK] have sent Three qualify'd Ministers to abide in Foreign Infidel Countries' at its own expense. Moreover, the estates would only be granted 'to have and to hold as long as the said Society continues to carry on the said Attempt'. Falling short of these requirements would see the bequest revert to Williams' heirs and trustees.[15]

[11] Loughlin, 'Concepts of Mission', 192–3, 205–7.
[12] NRS, GD95/1/3, 148 (7 Aug 1729).
[13] Ibid., 215 (5 Nov 1730)
[14] Edwin Welch, *Popish and infidel parts of the world: Dr. Daniel Williams & the Scottish SPCK* (London, 1996), 6–7; Rusty Roberson, 'Scottish Missions and Religious Enlightenment in Colonial America: the SSPCK in Transatlantic Context (University of Edinburgh PhD Thesis, 2012), 60–61.
[15] *Last Will and Testament of Daniel Williams*, 16–17.

It was clear that a successful transfer of the estates would require substantial time, energy and resources. Indeed, as discussed further below, although the Society had missionaries in the field by 1732, it was not until 1739 that the Catworth estate was officially conveyed to the Society.[16] Edwin Welch is therefore correct to suggest that the slow pace of the property transfer reflected the Society's initial hesitance to pursue a new—potentially costly—venture, especially in 1717 when the Society was still struggling to establish schools and find a basic level management.[17] Nevertheless, the Society was still eager to secure control of the bequest. In 1722 the Society attempted, unsuccessfully, to modify Williams' legacy in favour of the Highlands.[18] On his trip to London in 1727, Prof. William Hamilton met with one of Williams' trustees, Dissenting minister Dr. Edmund Calamy, in an attempt to renegotiate the terms of the bequest. However, Calamy reiterated that the Society must 'perform the conditions' as set down in Williams' will, or else it 'could not expect their Legacy'.[19]

At the beginning of 1728, the SSPCK was in a relatively comfortable position and the Highlands were the most peaceful they had been in living memory. The Society could boast of 78 schools, serving around 3,000 scholars in the Highlands.[20] From 1724 the British government supported a range of political, military, commercial, ecclesiastical initiatives to better integrate the Highlands with the rest of the country, which dovetailed with the Society's mission. According to Dòmhnall Uilleam Stìubhart, by the end of the 1720s Jacobitism and disaffection were in terminal decline largely as a result of these initiatives, even if Kirk and Society efforts to convert Highland Catholics had mostly failed.[21] To the Society, it is probable that there seemed to be no better opportunity to join England's missionary societies in Britain's North American colonies. This suggests that despite its mixed success in converting Highland Catholics, the Society may originally have turned to North America for optimistic rather than pessimistic reasons, building on the momentum of its burgeoning mission at home.

In November 1728, the Society established a board of correspondents in London for the purpose of negotiating the transfer of Williams' estate with his trustees.[22] Composed of emigrant Scots and English Dissenters, the board's first meeting took place in December 1728.[23] Eventually, this board took on the responsibility of coordinating the Society's work

[16] NRS, GD95/5/1, 38–42.
[17] Welch, *Popish and infidel parts of the world*, 9.
[18] NRS, GD95/2/3, 147–9 (27 Nov 1722).
[19] NRS, GD95/2/4, 44 (16 Nov 1727).
[20] *Account of the SSPCK* (1729), 28–32.
[21] Stiùbhart, 'The Genesis and Operation of the Royal Bounty', 140; Loughlin, 'Concepts of Mission', 197.
[22] NRS, GD95/2/4, 108–109 (5 Sep 1728); GD95/1/3, 85 (6 Nov 1728).
[23] NRS, GD95/1/3, 200 (23 Mar 1732).

in America: they were asked to determine which locations were most likely to benefit from the Society's help, name prospective missionaries, and manage the expenses of the colonial mission.[24] Alexander Dundas, one of the many well-connected emigrant Scots domiciled in London, was initially the most influential member of the London board, and the SSPCK was eager to make use of his cosmopolitan connections and colonial ties. Dundas was the first to recommend New England as the most promising starting point for the SSPCK's colonial mission, due to the doctrinal similarities between local congregational churches and the Church of Scotland. It was Dundas who initially approached Jonathan Belcher, the recently appointed governor of Massachusetts, in London in 1730 regarding the Society's plans for an American mission.[25] Belcher, a native of Massachusetts, understood the importance of nurturing ties with London to better serve his ambitions in New England, while his religious credentials made him a prominent name in Protestant Dissenting circles in Britain and America.[26] As discussed below, the relationship with Belcher eventually bore fruit in the 1730s when the Society launched its New England mission, illustrating the significance of social connections and religious ties in the business of operating charitable and missionary societies.

With the London board established there were several matters that required attention before the Society could launch its colonial mission. Firstly, the Society needed to find a suitable location and appoint three missionaries at its own expense. Before the London board had made any proposals, in June 1729 the Committee wrote to the Synod of Philadelphia in what was considered the spiritual centre of American Presbyterianism, requesting advice and raising awareness of the SSPCK. In the absence of a timely response, in December 1729, Alexander Dundas and the Society's London secretary, the Aberdonian Adam Anderson, wrote to the Committee suggesting that the Society appoint ministers already living in the colonies to serve as missionaries; they argued that this move would be the most financially prudent and, by tapping into pre-existing church networks, the Society 'would create a greater esteem amongst the people that join with them in worship, and make them contribute more freely towards furthering such a design'. In their letter, Dundas and Anderson included 'a list of some Divines' of a 'Sister Church' in New England, recommended personally by Governor Belcher. These men ministered to fixed congregations and claimed to have knowledge of 'the Indian Language'.[27]

[24] Grigg, '"How This Shall Be Brought About"', 46.
[25] NRS, GD95/1/3, 198–204 (6 Aug 1730).
[26] Grigg, '"How This Shall Be Brought About"', 46–47; Clifford K. Shipton, *New England Life in the Eighteenth Century: Representative Biographies from Sibley's Harvard Graduates* (Cambridge MA, 1963), 50-51.
[27] NRS, GD95/2/4, 213 (4 Sep 1729), 243–246 (11 Dec 1729), 202–204 (17 Jul 1729); GD95/1/3, 200.

However, in late 1730 the Society received some bad news. Despite the original estimate in Williams' will, it became clear that the rents from his Catworth estate would not be sufficient to maintain three missionaries; rather than £68, the yearly rent only amounted to £56. In addition to incurring the costs for the first year, the SSPCK would be required to supplement the revenues from Catworth with £21 from its own revenue—£7 per missionary—in order to fulfil the terms of the bequest. The prospect of increased financial strain further convinced the Society that employing ministers already situated in New England was the most feasible policy. It was estimated that, within three years of commencing its colonial venture, the SSPCK would be able to sustain the mission using only the bequest, supplemented by donations from 'some good people in New England'.[28] The aim was that, by supporting a mission in New England, the Society would 'come to be generally known in these Parts'. The Society believed that 'Nothing [could] render it more amiable in the Rich planter's Esteem than this mission, and nothing [was] more likely to draw down a Blessing from Heaven'.[29] This adds weight to Loughlin's argument, demonstrating that the American mission was, from the outset, motivated by a desire to recover providential favour.[30] However, the Highlands still remained a priority; while willing to incur the steep start-up costs, in the order of £90, at first the SSPCK sought a self-sustaining foreign mission that would have no financial bearing on the equally important mission at home. The hope was 'that the people [in America] will contribute Sufficiently and save the Society's expence rather than suffer so good a work to be dropt'. Furthermore, Adam Anderson argued that 'if upon three years tryal things not answer expectation, the Society at worst, would only be sixty three pounds out of Pocket upon One of the most laudable designs in the World'.[31] In August 1730, the Society agreed unanimously to set up a New England board of correspondents. Governor Belcher, several Bostonian ministers and a number of prominent laymen were appointed to 'pitch upon well qualified and faithful persons' to undertake a mission to 'the poor heathen people in New-England' who were to be 'the first objects of their care in these places'.[32]

[28] Ibid, 198-200; Grigg, '"How This Shall Be Brought About"', 46.
[29] NRS, GD95/1/3, 198.
[30] Loughlin, 'Concepts of Mission', 204.
[31] NRS, GD95/1/3, 198.
[32] Ibid., 201; *An Abridgment of the Statutes and Rules of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge* (Edinburgh, 1732), 44.

Logistics: Edinburgh, London and The Boston Board

Following the appointment of the Boston board, Governor Belcher and Benjamin Colman, a prominent Congregational minister and champion of 'transatlantic Protestantism', began their search for prospective missionaries.[33] In contrast to the case of its own Highland schoolmasters, the SSPCK insisted that candidates should be university-educated, ordained 'ministers of the Gospel', who were willing to live and preach among the Indians, 'bringing them to Knowledge of God in Christ'.[34] However, ordained ministers were already in high demand in the colonies. As with the situation in the Highlands in the aftermath of the Revolution, very few ministers with comfortable, well-paid charges among English-speaking congregations proved willing to endure the harsh exigencies of life on the frontier for a reduced salary.[35] Despite a broad advertising campaign, by the end of 1731 there was only a single applicant: Joseph Seccombe.[36] A pious Harvard graduate, Seccombe was eager to assist the SSPCK, foregoing a Harvard Hopkins scholarship to do so.[37] He was immediately deployed to Fort George in modern-day Maine in the winter of 1731, where he was to meet with Captain John Gyles, a soldier and interpreter who would acquaint Seccombe with the garrison and begin instructing him in the 'Indian language'. Benjamin Colman's first report from November 1732 indicated that down to that point Seccombe had served mostly as a chaplain to the garrison. However, Gyles encouraged visiting Indians to listen to him preach. Due to the lack of any pre-existing missionary network in the field, Seccombe was uneasy about venturing out beyond the frontier.[38] At this point, the SSPCK was grateful to have a minister in the field, remaining patient in its hope that circumstances would eventually enable missionaries to venture out of their forts and preach among natives.

The Boston board was empowered to select and ordain missionary ministers and pledge salaries on the Society's behalf. This power, and the badge of legitimacy that came through association with the SSPCK, would come in useful for men such as Belcher and Colman who sought to advance their own political and religious aims in New England's peripheries. When seeking out potential recruits, they were also searching for men who would minister to the colony's frontier garrisons, several of which had hitherto lacked any ministerial presence.[39] As far as the SSPCK was aware, this would allow missionaries to come into regular contact with the indigenous population, and in light of Belcher's pledge

[33] John Grigg, *The Lives of David Brainerd: The Making of an American Evangelical Icon* (Oxford, 2009), 48.
[34] 'Commission to Correspondents in New-England, 1730', 44; Jonathan Belcher, 'The Belcher Papers', *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 6: 7 (Boston, 1894), 12–13.
[35] Ferguson, 'The Problems of the Established Church', 17 (1972), 17-18
[36] NRS, GD95/2/5, 3 (3 Feb 1732); GD95/8/3, 235.
[37] Roberson, 'Scottish Missions and Religious Enlightenment', 92-93.
[38] NRS, GD95/2/5, 3–5; 'Belcher Papers', 6: 6, 189.
[39] Grigg, '"How This Shall Be Brought About"', 48–49.

to seek further support from the Massachusetts Assembly towards this endeavour, the Society promised larger salaries, including half a year's payment upon commission.[40] As Grigg had pointed out, however, it would be unfair to portray Belcher as a purely Machiavellian character, utilising the good will of the Society to pursue his own narrow agendas. Rather Belcher was simply adhering to established English missionary practice. The mobile nature of many Native communities proved a far cry from the sedentary villages that the SSPCK encountered in the Highlands, and this had been a long standing issue for missionaries seeking to convert Indians.[41] The hope was that more Indians would choose to adopt fixed lifestyles in proximity to the forts. Thus Belcher favoured a tried and tested system of selecting military chaplains, who would evangelise, and negotiate strategic treaties of accommodation and conversion with, peripatetic Native communities.[42]

In spring 1732 Belcher presented his proposal to the Massachusetts Assembly, skilfully balancing a religious exhortation to 'encourag[e] this pious design' with local political concerns. He stated that, under his design, missionaries were to 'serve as Chaplains to those Garrisons, as well as Instructors to the Indians', citing numerous petitions from soldiers and officers requesting 'that the Worship of God may be upheld among them'. Belcher's case convinced the assembly and its members pledged annual salaries of £100 for each missionary.[43] This injected new energy into Belcher and Colman's recruitment campaign and, soon after, another two missionaries were procured: Harvard graduates Steven Parker and Ebenezer Hinsdell. Shortly afterwards, Belcher sent a letter to Lord Islay, SSPCK member and future Duke of Argyll. This letter includes a generic report of the activities of Catholic priests among the Indians, and news of the money bestowed by the Massachusetts Assembly upon the Society missionaries. However, the primary purpose of the letter was to request that Islay contact Belcher's son at Cambridge University to assist him in finding 'a good foundation whereon to build his future fortune'.[44] This reveals the way that personal association with the SSPCK could be utilised by colonial politicians such as Belcher, not only to attract funding for missionaries, but also to advance their personal and familial interests.

In January 1733, nearly five years after the establishment of the London board, the SSPCK received news that it finally had three missionaries in 'infidel foreign countries', all

[40] NRS, GD95/1/3, 257 (29 Apr 1731).
[41] Grigg, '"How This Shall Be Brought About"', 49; Henry W. Bowden, *American Indians and Christian Missions: Studies in Cultural Conflict* (Chicago, 1981), 127–128.
[42] 'Indian Treaty at Deerfield Massachusetts', *Collections of the Maine Historical Society*, 4 (Portland, 1856) 123-144.
[43] Grigg, '"How This Shall Be Brought About"', 48; Mills, 'The SSPCK in British North America', 18; *New England Weekly Journal*, 3 July 1732.
[44] 'Belcher Papers', 6: 6, 188–189.

of whom were awaiting ordination. Joseph Seccombe remained at Fort George; Stephen Parker was commissioned to the easterly Fort Richmond, and Ebenezer Hinsdell was entrusted with Fort Dumber on the Connecticut River. They were paid a fixed salary of £20 and were required to keep journals, documenting their missionary activities. These were to be regularly forwarded to Society boards in London and Edinburgh. The SSPCK expressed gratitude to the Boston board, but, probably weary of Belcher's demands and increasingly aware of his politicking, the SSPCK reiterated that the Boston board should 'take care that the forsaid three ministers being chaplains in the above forts do not divert them from their work as missionaries'. The Society also reiterated that the terms of Dr Williams' will required it to monitor the success of the missionaries and, in cases where an individual abandoned his post, find a suitable replacement in a timely manner, or else lose access to the bequest.[45]

Initial Forays and Failures in Massachusetts

The SSPCK's first year in the mission field was deemed a success. A report written by Benjamin Colman from July 1733 was sent from the Boston board to Edinburgh and, while vague in places, the Society was satisfied. Colman wrote of 'hopeful beginnings': missionaries 'sometimes travel and hold Sabbath with the Indians', and they had received a number of invitations on behalf of Indian communities requesting religious instruction. Colman once again defended the approach that was used, arguing for patience in 'gain[ing] the esteem and affection of these poor people'.[46] Yet as early as May 1733 Belcher wrote to the Society to express his concern that the 'design of spreading Christian knowledge' might not be as simple as originally envisaged.[47] While this was seemingly shrugged off at the time, it underlined the concern that, while the missionaries were serving their garrisons well, they were not making any meaningful progress with the Indians they encountered, thus jeopardising the Society's claim to Williams' bequest. Many natives sought out religious instruction but struggled to grasp the basic theological tenets of Protestant Christianity. For example, in the case of Hinsdell, many Indians sought him out in order to have their children baptised, yet few understood him when he explained that this would first require 'certain qualifications', namely that the parents too should be 'instructed in the principles of religion'[48]. In a letter received by the SSPCK in August 1733, Belcher explained that the

[45] Welch, *Popish and Infidel Parts of the World*, 13; NRS, GD95/1/3, 340–341.
[46] NRS, GD95/2/5, 103 (26 Jul 1733).
[47] Ibid., 98-99 (24 May 1733).
[48] 'Hinsdell to Commissioners, 26 January, 1733', *Massachusetts Archive* 52: 420, quoted in Grigg, '"How This Shall Be Brought About"', 50.

activities of Jesuits were deterring Indians from travelling to the British forts. He requested a small sum from London towards purchasing inducements such as books and clothing, 'something yearly to be distributed among their heathen families'.[49] On this occasion, the Society sent 'three distinct parcels of sundry small Toys to value of £6 [...] to be distributed by the Missionarys to the said poor Indeans'.[50] Other letters from Benjamin Colman and the missionaries themselves also requested money for food, books and clothing as this was 'the means by which popish emissaries win them', and the Society was generally compliant to these demands.[51]

Positive reports continued to roll in up to 1736, yet due to events nearer to home the Society in Edinburgh was becoming increasingly impatient and concerned. The London board was still struggling to secure the Catworth estate. In January 1736, the trustees signed the conveyance to the property and the Society received backdated rents from November 1733, albeit with deductions for the costs of repairs. Nevertheless, the trustees soon determined that the conveyance was defective and required further deliberation. The property transfer was not completed officially until 1739.[52] To make matters worse, in January 1735, the Society's treasurer Joseph Cave declared bankruptcy, despite owing the Society £1646/11/3 sterling that he had borrowed from the Society's stock. Cutbacks in teachers' salaries and school provisions became inevitable.[53] In the scheme drawn up on 18 September 1735, six schools were closed (one each in Lewis, South Uist, Glenshiel abd Lismore, and two of the three schools in Skye); seven schoolmasters suffered pay cuts, and nine were only paid for half the year.[54] Despite this, in November 1735 the Society agreed to appoint a minister for the Highland colony in Darien, Georgia, pledging the generous salary of £50 on the condition that he also serve as a missionary to the Indians. As a result of these financial issues, the Society became more insistent that its missionaries meet the terms of Williams' bequest, thus securing the funds it so desperately required to continue its work in America and avoid further cutbacks in the Highlands.

Seccombe, Parker and Hinsdell were still loath to venture too far from their stations, while the Jesuit mission, stemming from New France, had reportedly reduced the number of Indians willing to report to British fortifications. In a letter to Colman, Thomas Coram, a London-based philanthropist who kept correspondence with the SSPCK, warned that the Society might be deprived of Williams' bequest due to the Boston board's approach of

[49] 'Belcher Papers', 6: 7 (Boston, 1894), 12–14.
[50] NRS, GD95/1/3, 373–4 (4 Aug 1733).
[51] Ibid.
[52] NRS, GD95/5/1, 38–42.
[53] Grigg, '"How This Shall Be Brought About"', 51; Welch, *Popish and Infidel Parts of the World*, 12–13; NRS, GD95/1/3, 419–423 (31 May 1735).
[54] NRS, GD95/2/5, 240–8 (18 Sep 1735).

'settl[ing] the three missionaries as chaplains to your garrisons rather than for regaining the perverted Indians out of the pollutions of the F[rench] Jesuits'.[55] This was also contrary to how the Society wanted its missionaries to operate. In November 1736, the Committee considered the journals sent by the three missionaries, noting that while the men were 'painful and diligent in entertaining Christian conference with the poor ignorant Indians', their success was limited as it was 'only the trading part of the Indians that chiefly report to the forts & truckhouses'. Moreover, the limited contact with Indians, during which most time was spent in trade negotiations, prevented missionaries from making any meaningful impression.[56]

The issue stemmed more from the dual employment of the Society's missionaries, rather than their reluctance to preach among Indians. A substantial proportion of their salaries was paid by the Massachusetts Assembly to whom their duties as military chaplains were considered paramount, regardless of the terms of the SSPCK's commission. Thus the reality on the ground was that the Society was simply augmenting the salaries of colonial military chaplains who only kept sporadic contact with Indian traders. This did not meet the terms of the bequest, nor did it bring the Society any closer to its goal of educating and spreading Christian knowledge among the heathen. Despite Governor Belcher's attempt to explain away the lack of progress, citing Indian ignorance and the influence of Jesuits, by October 1737 all three missionaries were dismissed by the Society. The London board continued to correspond with Boston, eager to find replacements for Seccombe, Parker and Hinsdell who would, in line with the SSPCK's original commission:

> undertake to live and inhabit with the Indians in the wilderness where they are much more numerous than among the English settlements, and thereby have access to instruct them in principles of the Christian religion'.[57]

However, this correspondence bore no fruit and, by the beginning of 1738, the SSPCK was left with only one missionary in America. This was John MacLeod, the minister of the Darien settlement at the southern frontier of Georgia, to whom this study now turns.

---

[55] 'Thomas Coram to Benjamin Colman, 23 September 1735', *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 56 (1922-1923), 24-26.
[56] NRS, GD95/1/4, 36–37 (4 Nov 1736); Grigg, '"How This Shall Be Brought About"', 51.
[57] Roberson, 'Scottish Missions and Religious Enlightenment', 95–96; *Statutes and Rules of the SSPCK*, 46–47; NRS, GD95/2/5, 340 (29 Sep 1737).

Settling a Minister in Darien, Georgia

In 1735, the trustees of the newly chartered colony of Georgia had secured the passage of the first 180 Highlanders—men, women and children—from Inverness-shire, to the banks of the Altamaha River. Between then and 1754, many others followed suit. Among the first emigrants were Mackintoshes, MacGillivrays, MacPhails, Farquharsons, MacBeans and MacPhersons. Many of whom, like their leader John Mòr Mackintosh of Borlum, had fought for King James during the 1715 Jacobite rising, yet a fair share of emigrants came from Whig clans, such as the MacKays. According to a letter from minister Daniel McLachlan to the Georgia trustees, many Highlanders were seeking to emigrate as a result of rising rents and a drop in the price of the cattle, the commercial mainstay of the Highlands.[58] Georgia's leaders, such as the Englishman General James Oglethorpe, sought to channel the perceived ruggedness, militarism and hierarchy of clan society—all seen as sources of Highland lawlessness in Britain—into an effective military defence for the colony:[59]

> They put so much Confidence in, and have such affection for one another, that they would go in Shoals to any Colony in America, provided there was a Sufficient Detachment of their own people planted there before 'em, and if they were sure to raise from the Produce of their Labour a Comfortable Subsistence. In short, there only wants Some one of the Highland Clans to lead the way, and all the rest may easily be prevailed to follow.[60]

The transported communities were to provide a military buffer along the southernmost border, protecting the British colony from hostile Native American and Spanish incursions. However, most of the settlers only spoke Gaelic and would thus require a cultural and linguistic intermediary. In addition to this, the Georgia trustees were concerned for the spiritual welfare of the colonists. According to Harman Verelst, the trustees' accountant, it would be 'a deplorable Condition for such a Number of poor people to be without Spiritual Help, they not speaking the English Language', and asked the Society to 'recommend a Godly Minister of the Gospel'. [61] As with the Society's schoolmasters, Gaelic was considered essential for the minister. Adam Anderson, the secretary of the SSPCK London board, and

[58] 'Letter from Daniel McLachlan to the Trustees, 9 May 1735', in Allen D. Candler et al. (eds.), *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia* [*CRG*], 32 vols to date (Atlanta GA, 1904-1916, 1976-), vol. 20, 338–339; Anthony W. Parker, *Scottish Highlanders in Colonial Georgia: The Recruitment, Emigration and Settlement at Darien, 1735–1748* (London, 1997), 35.
[59] Andrew MacKillop, 'Military recruiting in the Scottish Highlands 1739-1815: The Political, Social and Economic Context' (University of Glasgow PhD Thesis, 1995), 21.
[60] *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 43, 1737,* ed. K. G. Davies (London, 1963), 40-59; Alex Murdoch, 'Emigration From the Scottish Highlands to America in the Eighteenth Century', *British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies* 21 (1998), 164.
[61] Harman Verelst to Nicol Spence, Clerk to the SSPCK, 23 Aug 1735, *CRG* vol. 29, 83–84.

non-parliamentary Georgia trustee, had already written to Edinburgh in July, recommending that the General Meeting commission a minister for the colony if requested. The letter states:

> the said Families being of the communion of this Church, and many of them not understanding the English Tongue It was therefore the desire of the said Trustees, that this highland Colony should have a minister of the Church of Scotland to preach to them in Irish and to teach and catechise their children in English.[62]

To entice the Society further, Anderson added that the minister could act as a missionary 'among the Indian natives', thus fulfilling the terms of Dr Williams's bequest.[63] This illustrates the importance of the London board in directing the SSPCK and bringing it into the British imperial sphere. Adam Anderson was certainly motivated by grander ambitions than Highland education and, unlike the Edinburgh-based Committee, the conversion of Native Americans was not his top priority. Originally from Aberdeen, Anderson moved to London to serve as the clerk to the ill-fated South-Sea Company, and later published a treatise on trade and commerce in the British Empire. He also had a vested economic and religious interest in Georgia, as a non-parliamentary trustee for the colony. In the mid-1730s there occurred a rift among the trustees, with many Dissenters and Presbyterians objecting to Oglethorpe's promotion of Anglicanism in the colony. It is likely that Anderson played a part in this, on behalf of the trustees and the SSPCK, by securing a Presbyterian minister for the Darien community. As the Society grew in scale and scope, the motivations and interests at work within it became more diverse.[64] While some scholars focus on the tolerant and ecumenical nature of the SSPCK in British North America, the role played by Adam Anderson in the promoting of Presbyterianism against the wishes of Oglethorpe demonstrates that the extent to which imperial competition between Anglicans and non-Anglicans shaped the SSPCK's colonial policy warrants more scholarly attention.[65] After confirming with Dr Williams' trustees that the George mission would fulfil the terms of the bequest, and despite ongoing financial difficulties in the wake of Joseph Cave's bankruptcy, the Society eagerly accepted the offer and began looking for a suitable candidate.

The minutes reveal the extent to which SSPCK now viewed itself within a cosmopolitan British imperial framework, in which participation came with both costs and advantages. A central concern was that, as the English SPG already had an Anglican

---

[62] NRS, GD95/2/5, 232 (29 Jul 1735).
[63] Ibid.
[64] A. A. Hanham, 'Trustees for establishing the colony of Georgia in America (act. 1732–1752)' *ODNB*, Accessed 20/4/2016, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/95206; Roberson, 'Scottish Missions and Religious Enlightenment', 76–77.
[65] Mills, 'SSPCK in British North America', 16, 30. See Loughlin, 'Concepts of Mission', passim; MacKenzie, 'Presbyterianism and Scottish Identity', 6.

missionary in Georgia, 'it may be fear'd that the non-complyance of one society might obstruct our current donations in England'. This demonstrates that there was element of compulsion in the Society's decision to accept the Georgia mission. It was also stated that 'it may be hop'd that our granting this Request may be follow'd with new donations sufficient to supply the second years salary before it be wanted, and will make the Bounty of the society more general known & esteem'd in Brittain, and America'.[66] In other words, the Directors speculated that participation would be a worthwhile investment, hopefully yielding a net gain in funding for the Society despite initial costs. However, in the meantime it was resolved that the number of schools would need to be reduced to account for these costs, prompting further cutbacks in the Highlands at a time when worsening socio-economic conditions were causing many to emigrate.[67] In this instance, the gravitational pull of London and the priorities of empire had drawn the SSPCK's focus southwards at the expense of the Highlands, but in the hope that the Georgia mission would yield further donations, which stood to benefit the Highlands too.

By October, the Society had resolved to send John MacLeod, a native of Skye, to minister to the Darien[68] colony in Georgia. As a Church of Scotland minister, he was commissioned to 'preach to [the Highlanders] in Irish and to teach and catechise their children in English' but, as a missionary, he was expected to 'propagat[e] Christian knowledge, among the Indian natives in Georgia'. He was granted a generous salary of £25 annually, augmented by an additional £25 for the anticipated set-up costs, while the Georgia trustees granted him 300 acres of land. It is noteworthy that the Society was very happy to provide copies of Kirk's Bible for the fledgling colony, despite exhibiting a more prohibitive attitude to Gaelic texts in schools.[69] This was consistent insofar as the distinctive aspects of Highland society, including the clan ethos, from which its lawlessness was seen to stem in Scotland, were to be preserved in Georgia for the military protection of the colony.[70] Gaelic was accepted as a distinctive feature, but children were still to be educated in English in MacLeod's school.

Upon his arrival in 1736, MacLeod began work on building a church, erecting a charity school and attempting to interact with Indians. As the colony of Georgia was still in its infancy, it lacked the bureaucratic central governing bodies that were found in New England

[66] NRS, GD95/2/5, 233 (29 Jul 1735).
[67] NRS, GD95/2/5, 232–234 (29 Jul 1735); GD95/1/3, 453 (11 Aug 1735).
[68] The settlers named the town Darien 'at their own desire' named after the failed attempt at a Scottish settlement in 1698 on the Isthmus of Darien in Panama. According to Parker, 'this may have been a gesture of defiance on the part of these new immigrants to the Spanish in Florida'. Parker, *Scottish Highlanders in Colonial Georgia*, 142.
[69] NRS, GD95/2/5, 232–233 (29 Jul 1735), 250–251 (2 Oct 1735).
[70] Parker, *Scottish Highlanders in Colonial Georgia*, 1.

and, as a result, the evidence of MacLeod's ministry is considerably fragmented. Historians have to rely on limited SSPCK minute entries and a handful of letters in Georgia's colonial records. From the available evidence, it can be deduced that MacLeod served his congregation with diligence and had few issues with the Highlanders themselves. Interestingly, the only example of a clash with his congregation came in January 1739, and concerned the topic of slavery. In response to a petition submitted by Lowland Scots to Oglethorpe in favour of introducing slavery in the colony, the Darien Highlanders submitted a remarkable counter-petition which denounced it. The counter-petition included tactical and economic, as well as more admirable moralistic arguments. Slavery was opposed firstly because proximity to the Spanish settlement, which granted freedom to slaves, made the keeping of slaves impossible; secondly, on the grounds that white men 'may be, by the year, more usefully employed than a negroe'; third, because losing slaves through death or runaways 'would inevitable ruin the poor master', making him 'a greater slave to the Negroe Merchant than the slave he bought could be to him'; fourthly, because the colony would have 'to keep a Guard Duty at least as severe as when we expected a daily invasion'. Finally, the petition stated that 'It is shocking to human Nature, that any Race of Mankind and their Posterity should be sentenc'd to perpetual Slavery; nor in Justice can we think otherwise of it'.[71] It is not clear why, but MacLeod apparently denounced this counter-petition.[72] Nevertheless, he attracted the admiration of the fervent Anglican colonial leader, James Oglethorpe, a vocal opponent of the introduction of slavery in Georgia. In early 1737 Oglethorpe wrote to the Society:

> The Behaviour of the said Mr John McLeod hath been very worthy of a Christian […] he has been careful & diligent to instruct and improve his people both by his preaching and example.[73]

As with the situation in New England, however, MacLeod's commission as a missionary to the Indians was undermined by his role as a pastor to the Highland colony. By 1738, following the resignations of the Society's New England missionaries, MacLeod was the only SSPCK missionary still in the field. Most of his time was taken up ministering to the people of Darien and attempting to eke out a living in the inhospitable terrain. Oglethorpe's letter also pleaded with the Society to raise MacLeod's salary and, in March 1737, it was agreed that until further notice he would receive £50 annually. On another occasion, MacLeod attempted to bargain with the Society, offering his 300 acres in perpetuity 'for the

[71] Anthony Parker, 'Scottish Highlanders in Colonial Georgia: The Recruitment, Emigration and Settlement at Darien, 1735-1748' (University of Georgia PhD Thesis), Appendix C.
[72] Alex Murdoch, *Scotland and America, c.1600-c.1800* (Basingstoke, 2010), 45–46.
[73] NRS, GD95/1/4, 48 (17 Mar 1737).

better Support of myself and my Successors', in return for extra funds towards employing servants to improve the land.[74] Then, in 1740, a large number of men from MacLeod's congregation participated in the raid on St. Augustine, against the Spanish. This ended in disaster for Oglethorpe's troops, with Darien men in the front line sustaining the greatest losses. This effectively crippled the Darien settlement, and the remaining Highlanders emigrated to South Carolina.[75] The SSPCK received news of the disaster from John MacLeod himself, in a letter of November 1740. It pledged to support him in his passage to South Carolina, and the Directors arranged for the payment of his final salary, thus ending the SSPCK's efforts in the American South.[76]

A Highland Perspective on the SSPCK's American Mission

Capitalising on the government's active approach towards the Highlands in the 1720s, the SSPCK launched its own incorporative drive, encouraging Highland elites to take a more active, formalised role in the management of schools, by becoming a member or an official correspondent.[77] Expectations were raised among the Highland elite; the government and other agencies were finally giving the region the attention and care it required, and were willing to afford elites some say in the improvement of their own communities.

One such optimist was Sir Colin MacKenzie of Coul, the Clerk to the Pipe of the Exchequer, unofficial head of the Clan MacKenzie and the most influential Ross-shire heritor of his day. Coul was appointed SSPCK correspondent for the Presbyteries of Gairloch and Dingwall in 1724, the same year he began petitioning for the return of the school in Gairloch that had been withdrawn seven years before.[78] In 1725 Coul met with General Wade to reconcile the Clan MacKenzie with the crown and negotiate the restoration of the exiled earl of Seaforth's lands, and shortly afterwards became an official member of the SSPCK.[79] In 1726, he presented the Society with 'proposals for encouraging ministers and schoolmasters', which called for greater government assistance to establish fixed schools and split larger Highland parishes into more manageable units.[80] Coul hoped that the these proposals would go on to form the basis of a petition to the government, strengthened by the Society's endorsement, adding to weight to the suggestion that the Highland elite may have

[74] NRS, GD95/2/5, 312 (1 Mar 1737), 371–372 (8 Jun 1738), 380 (6 Jul 1738); Part of a Letter from Mr John McLeod [sic] Missionary at New Inverness in Georgia, to the Secretary of the SSPCK, Jan 26th, 1738–9, in *CRG*, vol. 22, 9–14.
[75] Parker, *Scottish Highlanders in Colonial Georgia*, 79–80.
[76] NRS, GD95/2/5, 514–518 (25 Nov 1740).
[77] See pp. 186–191.
[78] NRS GD95/2/3, 291 (26 Nov 1724), 355 (23 Dec 1725); GD95/1/2, 355 (4 Oct 1725).
[79] MacKenzie, *History of the Clan MacKenzie*, 228.
[80] NRS GD95/2/3, 415 (1 Dec 1726).

viewed the SSPCK a quasi-governmental development agency. However, Coul's hopes were dashed in 1727 when the Society, despite recognising the merit of his proposals, was unable to back them as such matters were not considered to be within its remit. Instead the Society urged him to form his proposals into a short paper, to be lodged 'in the hands of such as have most access to use endeavours to obtain an act of parliament'.[81]

A decade later, in 1737, the Society received news of an anonymous pamphlet published in Edinburgh entitled *The Highland Complaint*, which included a scathing critique of the organisation.[82] The author was almost certainly Sir Colin MacKenzie of Coul, given that many of the arguments in the pamphlet are also made in his letters to Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, his friend and fellow Baron of the Exchequer.[83] One of Coul's main criticisms was that the Society, he believed, was pouring too much money into the American mission, when its assistance was still desperately needed in the Highlands:

> Contributions were sent to aid our Kings to advance Christianity in Scotland, when their own work at Home had been compleated, that is, when Paganism had been abolished, and sufficient means of instructing their own Inhabitants had been settled upon a lasting Bottom. I hope our Society will follow so proper and reasonable an Example. While so considerable a Part of the Isle of Britain, as the Highlands and Isles of Scotland, is still destitute of the Means of Grace, it will be look'd upon as pretty singular for our Charity-Administrators to lay out our pious Funds, be they large or scrimp, upon Foreigners […] Our old Proverb tells us, that our charitable Works should begin at Home.[84]

In a tract from 1734, Coul had also questioned why the British government, which 'so anxiously & with So great Expences provides for Distant Colonies, shou'd forbeare the Improveing the High[lan]ds & Isles of Scot[lan]d'.[85] From Coul's perspective, the government and the SSPCK, which had raised so many expectations among the Highland elite in the 1720s, were now losing interest, the region once again being left to fend for itself. The SSPCK responded to Coul's pamphlet in a public letter, justifying its involvement in America:

> The Societie are oblidged by a mortification of the late pious & Learned Dr Dan. Williams, a dissenting minr in England to maintain 3 missionary minrs in Forreign Infidele parts […] But if pious persons intrust ye Societie wt a fund

[81] NRS, GD95/2/1, 412–3; GD95/10/144b.
[82] Anonymous, *The Highland Complaint*, 19–20.
[83] NRS, GD18/3218, 'Remarks upon the present state of the Highlands of North Britain with a short, easie and unexpensive method of civilizeing and reforming the inhabitants and for rendering them usefull to the publict state of Britain in all ages to come' by Sir Colin MacKenzie of Coul, bt, and addressed to Scottish Members of parliament', Jan 1734, passim.
[84] Anonymous, *The Highland Complaint* (Edinburgh, 1737), 19–20.
[85] Ibid. 19; Jamie J. Kelly, 'The SSPCK and Highland Elites: Cooperation and Criticism, 1709–*c.*1745', *Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 2018* (forthcoming), 2, 6–11.

> as Dr Williams has done, should not the donors will be observed, he also gave into the societie of more in money.

Yet the Society concurred with Coul, that there was 'no doubt charity should begin at home'.[86] The Society had originally envisioned a self-funding America mission, with the rents from Williams' estate alone covering the costs of three missionaries. However, the Society proved consistent in its willingness to sustain additional—often substantial—costs to keep its American mission afloat, despite costs being cut in the Highlands.

The Society's minute books also suggest an internal shift in priorities. From 1731, the Directors' Committee was empowered to deal with routine business, without consulting the General Meeting. Only weighty affairs, such as the progress of missionaries in the colonies, were to be communicated to the General meeting. By 1737 the Committee was no longer regularly presenting detailed lists of its schools to the General Meeting, despite this being a statute requirement from 1723.[87] With mission fields and commercial opportunities opening up abroad, interest in the Highlands was indeed declining in government circles. As the Society's interests were drawn abroad, its pedagogical remit—such as the commitment to educating the poor 'as a panacea for social, political and religious ills'—was being sidelined.[88]

The Society's original mission, the education of the Highlands, was suffering from the vicissitudes of public opinion, as donations decreased. It was thought necessary to re-brand the Society to some extent, to focus more on contemporary cosmopolitan concerns, rather than Highland education. One possible way to compensate for this shift in domestic priorities, proposed MacKenzie of Coul, would be to include the Highland clergy and heritors in the meetings of the SSPCK. However, in a telling statement, the Society revealed why this was not a viable option: 'it is to be feared if [the SSPCK] were under Highland manadgment, the Contributors would have greater ground of complaint […] Whereas the manadgment at Ed[inburgh] is very regular And the funds imployed more aggreeably to the Contributors inclinations'.[89] In other words, the failure of government support and the Society's consequent reliance on donations led it to prioritise its contributors over those the contributions were intended to assist.

---

[86] NRS, GD95/10/144a–b, 4.
[87] NRS, GD95/1/3, 228–32 (7 Jan 1731); GD95/1/4, 37 (4 Nov 1736); *Statutes and Rules of the SSPCK*, 17.
[88] Stiùbhart, 'Òraid mu na h-Aobharan air Cùl na h-Eilthireachd agus Bhliadhna Theàrlaich', 5–6; Jones, *Charity School Movement*, 176.
[89] NRS, GD95/10/144a, 6a. This statement is found on a separate, smaller page, inclosed in page 6 of the larger document of comments responding to *The Highland Complaint*.

Conclusion

The SSPCK's mission in Scotland relied on established institutions and infrastructure. It sought to strengthen the Presbyterian Church of Scotland's presence in Catholic and Jacobite territories, while also serving Highland Presbyterians to ensure their continued loyalty to the church. It relied on local backing from parishes and presbyteries as well as enjoying the support and resources of the General Assembly in Edinburgh. In colonial North America, on the other hand, the situation was vastly different. In both Massachusetts and Georgia, the SSPCK had to rely on the cooperation of distant colonial governors, many of whom, like Jonathan Belcher and James Oglethorpe, had more pressing priorities than the propagation of Christianity among the 'Heathen Nations'.[90] Moreover, the stringent terms of Dr Williams' bequest, in conjunction with the laborious legal process of settling the will, meant that the Society often had to dip into its own, already stretched, revenue to fund the mission. Throughout these costly endeavours, the Society was constantly at risk of losing money; it was not until 1739 that it began receiving steady revenue from the Catworth estates.[91]

The Society had spent eight years funding an ultimately fruitless endeavour in Massachusetts, while reports from Georgia also suggested that there was little immediate prospect of missionary work among the Native Americans there. Jonathan Belcher's appropriation of Seccombe, Parker and Hinsdell as military chaplains may have given the Society some indication of the political issues and ministerial shortages that were manifest in the colonies, but this neither fulfilled Williams' bequest, nor matched the Society's ambitions. John MacLeod served the Darien community as well as he could, yet the virtual eclipse of the settlement following the abortive raid of St Augustine in 1740 prevented him from preaching among the Natives. He later answered a call to the ministry from Edisto Island in South Carolina – a slave-holding colony.[92]

In the Highlands by the mid-1730s, the fall in cattle-prices—brought about by greater exposure to Lowland and English markets—and rising rents were forcing many to seek greener pastures abroad. Prominent among these were the settlers of Darien, Georgia. Despite worsening social and economic conditions in the Highlands, the SSPCK was spending large sums of money on grander, imperial projects abroad, while cutting costs in the Highlands. The Georgia mission was a risky venture that left the SSPCK open to criticism from many in Scotland, especially those in the Highlands who believed its funds could be better used at home. The closure of schools that resulted from the employment of the Georgia missionary, John MacLeod, certainly reveals that the Society was willing to

[90] *Statutes and Rules of the SSPCK*, 46.
[91] NRS, GD95/5/1, 38–42; Grigg, '"How This Shall Be Brought About"', 50.
[92] Murdoch, *Scotland and America*, 46.

spend money to make money. The Society anticipated that significant English donations would follow and thought it could thereby justify some short-term closures in the Highlands. Whether they believed it, the Edinburgh Directors claimed that they were duty-bound by Williams' bequest to fulfil his wish of the Society becoming an established Presbyterian missionary organisation in North America. The SSPCK was optimistic in 1730, counting on the timely transfer of the Catworth estates which would enable the foreign mission effectively to fund itself. This did not materialise, yet the Society remained undeterred. In early 1738, it is likely that some in the SSPCK believed that their efforts would continue to falter, but in November of the same year, a request from the start-up Presbytery of New Brunswick to supply missionary ministers to live and preach among Indians would inject new energy in the Society's mission in British North America on the eve of the Great Awakening, while the Highlands appeared to remain an afterthought.[93] It would take the shock of the '45 in Scotland for the SSPCK to renew its focus on the Highlands.

[93] Roberson, 'Scottish Missions and Religious Enlightenment', 106–8.

CONCLUSION

When the first schools were established in 1711, the SSPCK was not entering an educational vacuum as many scholars have claimed.[94] It was entering a region with a rich and complex legacy of schooling, albeit one which reflected circumstances both general to the region and particular to its several constituent districts. The strength of this legacy is most evident for Highland Perthshire, and Argyll and the Isles. Both regions demonstrated a sustained commitment to expanding and improving educational provision throughout the seventeenth century, in times of presbytery and episcopacy alike. Following the Revolution, both could rely on government support to fund additional schools to promote Presbyterianism and counteract Jacobitism in their respective regions. Consequently, by 1709 many parishes in Argyll and Perthshire had already went above and beyond the legal requirement of one school per parish, maintaining supplementary and ambulatory schools which catered for communities who lived at a distance from the parochial school. Similar patterns are also evident in what were considered Highland border regions, namely Banffshire, Nairn, Angus, Stirlingshire and Dumbartonshire. As might be expected, following the Society's intervention in 1709, its work would prove to be largely auxiliary to the systems already established in these regions.

In Gaelic-speaking Aberdeenshire, schools were established in most parishes by the turn of the eighteenth century. Only in the united parishes of Crathie and Braemar did the process of settling a school drag on into the following decade. Nevertheless, two schools were established there by 1711, one year before the opening of the first SSPCK school. Indeed, John Hunter, the incumbent schoolmaster of Braemar, was the first candidate considered for teaching the Society school in the parish. In Inverness-shire and Easter Ross, schools were settled in all lower-lying parishes to the east as well most westerly upland parishes. There were prestigious grammar schools in Inverness, Petty, Dingwall, Fortrose and Kingussie. For parishes without schools—for example, Urquhart and Glenmoriston, Boleskine and Abertarff, and Moy and Dalarossie—evidence can usually be found of local efforts to have schools established which stretched back to the Restoration period or earlier. Where schools were lacking and where schools failed, lack of finance was often the main issue. But even where funds were available, efforts to establish schools could falter if tenants

[94] Durkacz, *Decline*, 46; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, 30; Houston, *Scottish Literacy and Scottish Identity*, 74, 82.

failed to agree on a fixed location for the school, especially when landowners had the wherewithal to send their children elsewhere for their education. Evidence is sparser for Wester Ross and Sutherland. The Presbytery of Dingwall confirmed in 1716 that there were no schools in Kintail, Lochalsh, Lochcarron, Gairloch, or Lochbroom.[95] However, the parochial school of Contin and grammar school at Dornoch ensured these regions were not entirely devoid of schooling by the eighteenth century.

The curriculum in Highland schools focused overwhelmingly on English and Latin, both of which—through pragmatic processes of very long standing—had come to serve as official languages of literacy in the region, for use in written and printed text.[96] Nevertheless, it appears that in most regions Gaelic retained a place as the standard means of oral communication in the classroom and was customarily used for simultaneous translation of English and Latin texts into spoken Gaelic.[97] Highland Aberdeenshire stands out as an exception, where schools appear to have operated on an English-only basis – perhaps aided by a pre-established culture of bilingualism on the ground, or forced by the absence of Gaelic-speaking teachers.

In the Highlands as in the Lowlands, communities had pre-established standards with regard to the quality and content of schooling. Most, if not all, communities strained to have university-educated schoolmasters. They also expected Latin to be taught in their schools as a matter of status and self-respect, as well as to retain the possibility of their children graduating to university. As demonstrated by chapters four and five, it was the Society's refusal to allow Latin in its schools, not its stance towards Gaelic, that attracted most opprobrium from Highland communities. It cannot be said that schooling in the region was entirely sufficient; indeed, large, disjointed parishes, the costs associated with education, and the functionality and strength of orality in the region, ensured that countless children went unschooled. However, these issues could also affect schooling in many Lowland parishes, albeit to a lesser degree and with a very different linguistic situation. It is nevertheless clear that the Highlands were not divorced from education in the Lowlands, but rather formed a constituent part of a wider, national educational tradition – something the Society would initially attempt to work out from.

Following the Revolution of 1688–9, Scottish Gaels were again cast as the domestic 'other' – as Jacobites, Papists and inveterate enemies of the new political and ecclesiastical settlement. Scottish Presbyterians in particular regarded Highlanders with fear and disdain, as an ungodly, barbarous people who needed to be pacified and contained by military force.

[95] NRS, CH2/92/4, 4 (1 Sep 1716).
[96] See pp. 37–47.
[97] See pp. 46–7, 180–5.

Attitudes began to change after news spread of the Massacre of Glencoe, which was widely regarded as a stain of Scottish good faith and tantamount to a national sin.[98] The disastrous Darien expedition stoked profound anxieties that Scotland had lost divine favour. Presbyterians, particularly those involved in the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, saw in the Highlands a mission field – one without the same political, logistical and financial complications as Darien which, if approached properly, held the key to redeeming the nation's soul.

The Societies for the Reformation of Manners were the in the vanguard of efforts to restore providential favour to Scotland. Emulating an English model, at the turn of the century these societies aimed to combat moral decay and impiety in Scotland's towns by bolstering the efforts of authorities to enforce existing laws against immorality and profanity. The Edinburgh societies included individuals such as John Dundas of Philpstoun and Nicol Spence who were key administrators of the Kirk, as well as prominent members of Edinburgh civic society who served as church elders. In partnership with the town council, the Edinburgh societies pioneered in raising funds to establish charitable educational institutions geared towards not only the education of their pupils, but also their moral and spiritual edification. The societies' first forays into Highland education came in 1701 with the establishment of a school at Abertarff near Fort Augustus, then regarded as the 'most barbarous and wild part in all the Highlands'.[99] This early effort came to very little, owing in large part to long-standing disagreements between parishioners concerning the most convenient location for a school. As a result, it became clear that a more coordinated approach was necessary. The campaign for charitable education in the Highlands was revitalised in 1703 by the arrival of James Kirkwood in Edinburgh. An exiled Scottish Episcopalian minister and correspondent for the English SPCK, Kirkwood advocated for official support for the cause of Highland education and sought to disseminate copies of the Irish Bible in the Highlands for use in schools and worship. Together with prominent members of the Edinburgh Societies for the Reformation of Manners, Kirkwood mounted a campaign to secure official support towards Highland education. While the earliest effort—namely, the petition to the Scottish parliament of 1703—came to nothing, by 1707 the Church of Scotland had appointed a dedicated committee 'for the propagating of Christian knowledge' which included Highland education within its remit. By 1709 this committee had developed into the SSPCK: a national, joint-stock charitable corporation with a royal charter that was dedicated to raising funds to set up schools in the Highlands.

[98] See p. 52; Hopkins, *Glencoe*, 495.
[99] Armet, *Extracts*, 290.

Previous studies have tended to portray the Society as a largely monolithic organisation, one characterised by its unwavering pursuit of fixed ideological goals, foremost among them being the elimination of Catholicism and the Gaelic language. However, this deterministic viewpoint overlooks the various interests and agendas that were represented in the Society and among its correspondents. It also leaves unnoticed the influence that was exercised by the Committee and individual officers in the day-to-day running of the Society and in the formulation of its school policy. It was the Committee, with its more frequent meetings and dedicated core of long-serving members, which proved the more willing and suitable body for managing the Society's affairs. While the majority of the Committee—ministers, lawyers, professionals and merchants—tended to represent the upper-echelons of Edinburgh society, the example of Alexander MacLeod, the lawyer from Harris and longstanding SSPCK Director, reveals that clan interests were not entirely absent from the Society's considerations. The influence of John Dundas of Philpstoun and Nicol Spence cannot be overstated. In their respective roles as secretary and clerk to the Society, their diligent attendance and administrative acumen provided the SSPCK with an indispensable level of stability and consistency in its first generation of existence. Indeed, it is evident that both men exercised a profound influence over church affairs in this period, something that has hitherto gone unacknowledged in the general historiography of the Kirk in this period. Future studies will be required to determine the specific roles played by Dundas and Spence in the governance of the Kirk and to establish the true extent of their influence over Kirk affairs.

Once established, finance proved to be an ever-present problem and consideration for the Society, one that required just as much deliberation as the mission itself. Launching a national project in the wake of the Darien disaster was difficult enough given the economic crisis and the climate of public mistrust that it occasioned.[100] Matters were worsened by the pervasiveness of famine conditions across Scotland from the 1690s onwards, affecting many parts of the country well into the 1710s – something that Society's records themselves document. Under these circumstances, even those who supported the Society's mission were sceptical about contributing money to yet another national project, while others simply could not afford to.[101] As a result, the vast majority of early donations to the Society came from a limited geographical area centred around Edinburgh.[102] The economic climate also limited the Society's investment options. In the absence of sound land investments, the Society was forced to issue private loans to raise revenue on its stock. From the outset the Society was

[100] Gray, 'Charitable and Religious Origins', 46, 128–30.
[101] See pp. 82–4; Wodrow, *Correspondence*, i, 72–4.
[102] See p. 69.

walking a financial tightrope. While pursuing its ultimate aim—of a rising generation of literate Gaels, educated in the Presbyterian faith—the Society was required continually to balance the priorities of Highland communities with those of its donors to keep money coming in. This assumed a new significance following the launch of the American mission in 1731, when the Society was compelled to balance its commitment to Highland education with its more costly, but potentially more lucrative, endeavours overseas.

Fundamentally, the Society hoped for a generous crown grant and campaigned earnestly to obtain one. Government support was a panacea for the Society: it would at once increase the number of schools in the Highlands and enhance its authority, giving it the freedom to set its own agenda unencumbered by the vicissitudes of public opinion. Optimism peaked in 1718 following the announcement that up to £20,000 from the income of the forfeited estates was to be granted for establishing Highland schools. In this, however, the Society was ultimately disappointed. Despite receiving news in 1724 that King George himself had referred the matter to the treasury, the fund was not forthcoming. As late as 1774, the Society continued to lament that 'no part of this money hath ever been received by the Society'.[103] While the Royal Bounty scheme paid to the Kirk from 1725 provided some consolation, allowing the Society to spread its resources more widely than before, the scope and scale of its educational operation continued to be restricted by its limited finances. The failure of government support and the consequent reliance on donations could lead the Society to prioritise its contributors over those the contributions were intended to assist, the implications of which are discussed further below.

Moving our focus from the management of the Society to the operation of its schools, the first scheme of 1711 represented an exercise in pragmatism. By establishing 11 schools spread evenly among the regions of the Highlands, the Society aimed to satisfy the demands of local agents – the ministers, heritors and ordinary tenants who had already engaged with the Society. In the early years, the Society demonstrated a willingness to work with and respond to localities; it set great store by the recommendations it was offered by local agents with regard to schoolmasters, locations for schools, and the length of time they should remain settled in one place. The Society stood to benefit from taking local advice on board and it was hoped that local agents would respond in kind, using their power and influence to support teachers and encourage parents to send their children to schools. Local influence and indeed local expectations were also manifest in the first generation of SSPCK schoolmasters: most were university-educated Gaelic-speakers rooted in the localities they served. Some were recent university graduates ultimately destined for the ministry, others were active local

[103] *Account of the SSPCK* (1774), 9.

teachers in search of a more stable source of income – a far cry from the intrusive cultural and religious 'shock troops' described by Allan Macinnes.[104]

Nor was there a rigid template for what constituted an SSPCK school at this point, both in terms of the typology of schools and the curriculum. The first 11 schools loosely followed a model whereby local teachers—or teachers with some connection to the locality they were intended to serve—were paid the relatively generous salary of 300 merks[105], so that they might provide free religious instruction and literary education to the children in their communities. In the cases of Edinkillie, Comrie and Balquhidder, the Society stepped in to support clusters of 'small' schools, most of which were already established on the ground, and which shared the purpose of serving communities at a distance from the main parochial school. In both cases, the Society was essentially propping up the pre-existing educational systems in these localities. Indeed, in the early years it seems likely that the experienced reality on the ground in most cases was characterised by continuity rather than change: locally-rooted teachers were being paid to deliver a curriculum that many had come to expect in adherence with local norms, with English Bible literacy as the main focus. Teachers also continued to play a familiar role as spiritual leaders and moral exemplars for their respective communities, alongside parish ministers. As a result, each of the early schools were well-received in their localities.

Surprisingly perhaps, the continuities also included the SSPCK's approach towards Gaelic, more specifically the respective roles assigned to Gaelic and English in the classroom. In the early years, the Society's language policy proved amorphous and ambivalent. While the Society determined in 1713 that its schoolmasters were not to teach Gaelic books, Gaelic maintained its place as the normal spoken language of the classroom – a natural result of the Society's deliberate policy of recruiting fluent Gaelic-speakers. The case of Highland Aberdeenshire is the exception that proves the rule; while the inhabitants of the united parishes of Crathie and Braemar were mostly Gaelic-speakers, schoolmasters without Gaelic appear to have served the parish with relative success, perhaps owing to a pre-established culture of bilingualism on the ground. At this stage, the Society's policy towards Latin was much clearer than it was towards Gaelic. From the outset, teachers were prohibited from teaching Latin in their schools to ensure that SSPCK schools did not impinge on or prevent the establishment of parochial schools, in which Latin was generally considered to be a staple of the curriculum.

[104] Macinnes, *Clanship*, 178.
[105] This sum exceeded the maximum schoolmaster's salary of 200 merks codified in the 1696 Education Act.

The ’15, however, represented a material change in circumstances for the SSPCK. In the rising’s aftermath the Westminster government became more receptive to ideas for tackling the so-called ‘Highland problem’ and the Society’s call for government support for Highland schooling seemed as if it might be answered. Taking into consideration the new regime, which included the characteristically anti-Gaelic Squadrone interest to the detriment of the more conciliatory Argathelians, the Society lobbied government agencies, arguing that schooling—in the English language and in Presbyterian doctrine—would prove the most effective antidote to future disturbances from the Highlands. This was the context in which the Society composed the infamous memorial to the Commission of Police, which for the first time stated its commitment to ‘rooting out their Irish language’.[106] However, this was not a public policy statement, nor did it reflect common practice in schools at this time. Rather it was the result of a deliberate attempt to maximise the Society’s chances of receiving support from the regime of the day, and in this the Society was initially successful. Its efforts played no small part in prompting the appointment of a dedicated royal commission tasked with enquiring into the state of schooling in the Highlands. The Society was instrumental in the composition of the commission’s report, drawing on its own records and conducting a survey of Highland presbyteries to determine which locations which required schools. The appointment of SSPCK secretary John Dundas as clerk to the commission further illustrates the level of influence that Society had over the royal commission. The commission’s report concluded that schools were required in 151 location across the Highlands and proposed that each teacher be granted £20 sterling yearly. It is revealing that the report, subscribed by Dundas himself, recommended that the managers of this fund:

> be endowed with the same Powers and Privileges, and be enjoined to act by the same Rules, and under the same Provisions and Restrictions that are contained in the [SSPCK’s] Royal Letters Patent; a Copy of which Royal Patent is herewith humbly offered to Your Majesty.[107]

The ultimate aim here was to see the SSPCK transformed into an official crown agency dedicated to Highland education. However, this did not come to fruition. The £20,000 earmarked by parliament in 1718 from the forfeited estates for Highland schools disappeared in the costs of administration and in the methods used by the estates’ purchasers in their dealings with the exchequer. Accordingly, the growth of the Society’s network of schools proceeded slowly, limited by the number of donations it received and the success of its investments.

[106] NRS, GD95/2/2, 100–1 (5 Apr 1716).
[107] TNA, SP54/12/229.

The period 1716–32 witnessed a significant expansion of the SSPCK's network of schools, from 23 schools to 104. Along with this growth came significant changes in the ways that the Society's schools were administered, which was to have a profound bearing on the communities that had come to rely on them. The initial approach—which saw locally-rooted, university-educated schoolmasters paid a proper salary to serve their respective communities—was largely dispensed with. In its place, the Society attempted to export the model it had observed in the small schools of Perthshire, Edinkillie and Argyll, whereby teachers of more modest qualifications were paid a reduced rate to educate poorer parishioners settled at a distance from the main parochial school. This was met with resistance in many localities, yet the Society ultimately succeeded in implementing its new approach. Its success was facilitated by the extremely popular bursary scheme, which was geared towards producing literate, bilingual teachers versed in the rudiments of Presbyterian theology, who were willing to serve for a relatively modest salary, but did not receive a university education, nor did they aspire to enter the ministry.[108] Nevertheless, the Society's growth in this period came at a cost. Many communities began objecting to what appeared to be the imposition of increasingly underqualified teachers from outwith their communities, as most graduate bursars hailed from Highland Aberdeenshire. At a local level, rich and poor alike had clear expectations and standards for education that were being communicated to the Society in Edinburgh, but as its operations expanded the Society became increasingly unreceptive to local demands.

The issue of language also featured during this period. The Society's stance on Gaelic texts was solidified. Responding the requests for copies of the Gaelic psalms from schoolmasters in Perthshire in 1719, the Committee determined that the Society was to 'give no encouragement to the teaching to read in the Irish Language, and therefore they will furnish no books for that purpose'.[109] Ironically, it was another request to teach Latin from Skye teacher John MacPherson that prompted the General Meeting to determine in November 1719 'that neither Latine nor Irish should be taught in the Societies schools'.[110] Despite its refusal to pay for Gaelic books, the Committee recommended that schoolmasters should at least be permitted to teach them after pupils had learned 'first [to] read and understand English'.[111] On this occasion, however, the General Meeting intervened to overrule the Committee, ordering schoolmasters to 'forbear to teach reading Irish upon any

[108] See pp. 175–9.
[109] NRS, GD95/2/2, 263 (4 Feb 1719).
[110] NRS, GD95/1/2, 73 (5 Nov 1719).
[111] Ibid., 103–4 (3 Mar 1720).

pretext whatsomever unless they get new and particular directions in that matter from a General Meeting'.[112]

The most significant, and potentially disruptive, change came with the Society's attempts to govern the language spoken in the classroom. In 1719 the Committee was asked to determine measures for schoolmasters 'which may oblige them to make it their principal work to cause the Children [to] understand and speak the English Language'.[113] This was followed up in 1720 with decision to introduce conversation in English in the hope this would aid comprehension, thereby limiting the amount of Gaelic spoken in the classroom and promoting the use of English at its expense.[114] It was this decision, more than the Society's exclusion of Gaelic texts, that had the potential to foster a negative attitude towards Gaelic in formal education. However, it should be noted that this approach was soon tempered by the intervention of local agents. The 'Representation anent teaching Irish' of 1721, a petition presented to the SSPCK by a group of ministers from northern and north-western Highlands, recommended the use simultaneous translation from English into Gaelic in schools in order to aid comprehension, as was the norm in Highlands prior to and indeed after the SSPCK's foundation. This prompted the appointment a dedicated language subcommittee which solicited advice from Highland presbyteries on how best to teach children to understand English, which was now a priority. It was proposed that as soon as scholars began to read the catechism in English teachers should 'assist understanding by getting them to translate the English into Irish for each question'. It was also recommended that those who spoke English should be banned from speaking Gaelic except when translating into English.[115] The Society's prohibitive approach towards Gaelic undoubtedly set the tone for the future approaches to Highland education, which overwhelmingly sought to promote English—both written and spoken—at the expense of Gaelic, and for this the Society should be rightfully condemned. Nevertheless, it would continue to be the exclusion of Latin that proved biggest point of contention between the Society and Highland communities. More so than the Society's approach to Gaelic, the exclusion of Latin marked a clear break with tradition, which led many to vote with their feet and send their children elsewhere.

The onset of the 1730s marked the beginning of a new era for the SSPCK, in terms of both its management and its mission. It witnessed the launch of the Society's first American mission as well as the death of John Dundas, the first secretary and a key administrator of

[112] Ibid.
[113] NRS, GD95/2/2, 308 (22 Jun 1719).
[114] Ibid., 346 (11 Feb 1720).
[115] NRS, GD95/2/3, 188–90 (5 Apr 1723).

the SSPCK. In the Highlands, the 1730s were characterised by the fall in cattle-prices, rising rents, and major estate reorganisations in Argyllshire which forced many to seek greener pastures abroad. It was perhaps untimely that at this juncture, just as the interest of the government in the Highlands was waning, the SSPCK appeared to be following suit, engaging with costly and potentially risky colonial endeavours, meanwhile imposing cuts on its schools at home. While the Society did manage to carve out for itself a place in Britain's burgeoning empire, this came at a cost, attracting the opprobrium of Highland agents—ministers and landowners alike—who were witnessing the worsening social and economic conditions, as well as declining educational standards, in their localities. The established historiography gives the impression of an improving, burgeoning, industrious and proactive British state dealing with a population that was largely in stasis, either passive or actively hostile to education, improvement and integration. What emerges from this study, however, is that the Society came to a region that was demonstrably eager for more education: one where communities were generally dynamic and had thus far proved adaptable in a time of rapid social and economic change. The problem was that these same communities were confronted, in their time of need, with a largely passive and inconsistent, when not actively hostile, British state.

In the 1720s, not only was the SSPCK helping to increase educational opportunities in the region, it also seemed willing to give Highlanders a greater say in the day-to-day management of the organisation and its schools. It was in this period that Sir Colin MacKenzie of Coul joined their ranks, and the famed poet Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair entered employment as an SSPCK schoolmaster. It seemed that education was a cause around which Highlanders and Lowlanders could unite. By the 1730s, however, this relationship had begun to break down. Without any regard for the opinions of its Highland correspondents, the Society hijacked the Royal Bounty to fund a scheme of jointly employed catechist-schoolmasters. While the number of schools increased rapidly—reaching over 100 in 1737—this was not matched by an enhanced role for local agents. Rather, the Society became increasingly distant and high-handed, for instance transporting schools, often without any warning or explanation. The mistrust this engendered was exacerbated further by the Society's decision to embark on missionary work in North America. Suddenly, money allegedly designed for the benefit of the Highlands was being sent overseas, just as the region was becoming more of an afterthought in government circles. It may be that, rather than rebelling against the very idea of the SSPCK, as John Lorne Campbell suggested, many Gaels, among them Sir Colin Mackenzie of Coul, simply sought to exert more influence in the matter. Unfortunately, this was more than the Edinburgh-based Directors were willing to give.

The preceding study has been an exploration of the SSPCK's early history in the contexts of education in the Highlands, and governance in the fledgling British state and empire. While the Society's intervention was not the beginning of formal education in the Highlands, it did mark the beginning of a new chapter. The Society's actions would have a profound impact on the nature and development of education in the region, particularly in terms of language use in the classroom, the origins and calibre of schoolmasters, and the quality, standard and purpose of teaching. It provided a blueprint for future Lowland-based agencies such as the Gaelic Schools Societies of the nineteenth century, which would also raise charitable donations for the purpose of Highland education. By the outbreak of the '45 the Society maintained 137 schools – including 24 in Orkney and Shetland.[116] This, it achieved largely with its own modest resources, and limited assistance from the distant Westminster government. While the Society was ultimately disappointed in its campaign for government funds—namely, the £20,000 pledged in 1718 for establishing Highland schools—it did manage to carve out for itself an important and lasting role in the governance of the British state. For good or ill, by the 1730s the Society had proven itself a valuable government agency for the Highlands, one which readily cooperated with state authorities, relayed reliable information to the government in London, and played a crucial role in keeping the peace in the Highlands. In an imperial context, the SSPCK set a precedent for Scotland's involvement in the mission fields of Britain's burgeoning empire, securing a home for Presbyterianism, with a distinctly Scottish accent, in North America on the cusp of the Great Awakening, and only decades before the Revolutionary Wars.

[116] NRS, GD95/2/6, 290–307 (20 Aug 1745).

Bibliography

MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

National Archives, Kew

SP35	Secretaries of State: State Papers Domestic, George I
SP54	Secretaries of State: State Papers Scotland Series II
SP55	Secretaries of State: State Papers Scotland: Letter Books

National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh

MS 1401	MacKenzie of Delvine Papers, fol. 16
MS 1954	Journal of the Proposalls made to, and the Resolutions taken by, the Society for endeavouring Reformation of Manners, in Ed[inburgh]

National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh

Church of Scotland Records

CH1/1/18	Register of the General Assembly, 1702-1708
CH1/1/29	Register of the General Assembly, 1720-1725
CH1/2/73	Papers of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Main Series, 1737
CH2/6/2	Presbytery of Aberlour Minutes, 1709-1736
CH2/92/4	Presbytery of Dingwall Minutes, 1716-1723
CH2/106/3	Presbytery of Dunkeld Minutes, 1712-1717
CH2/111/4	Presbytery of Dunoon Minutes, 1707-1716
CH2/271/4	Synod of Moray Minutes, 1702-1713
CH2/312/1	Synod of Ross Minutes, 1707-1717
CH2/345/1	Synod of Sutherland and Caithness Minutes, 1656-1729
CH2/449/5	Synod of Perth and Stirling Minutes, 1708-1714
CH2/546/7	Presbytery of Dumbarton Minutes, 1714-1720
CH2/553/4	Presbytery of Inverness Minutes, 1708-1727
CH2/557	Synod of Argyll Minutes, 1639-1661, 1687-1892
CH2/602/1	Presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil Minutes, 1700-1713

CH2/619/26	Presbytery of Auchterarder Minutes, 1703-1712
CH2/840/11	Synod of Aberdeen Minutes, 1697-1705
CH2/1080/1	Synod of Orkney Minutes, 1704-1730
CH2/1153/2	Presbytery of Kintyre Minutes, 1707-1723

Episcopal Chest

CH12/12/817	Letter from Aeneas Morison, Contin, to Patrick Dunbreck concerning the state of the highlands and liturgy in Gaelic, Sep 1713

Records of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK)

GD95/1/1	SSPCK General Meeting Minutes, 1709-1718
GD95/1/2	SSPCK General Meeting Minutes, 1718-1727
GD95/1/3	SSPCK General Meeting Minutes, 1727-1735
GD95/1/4	SSPCK General Meeting Minutes, 1736-1759
GD95/2/1	SSPCK Committee Minutes, 1709-1714
GD95/2/2	SSPCK Committee Minutes, 1714-1720
GD95/2/3	SSPCK Committee Minutes, 1720-1727
GD95/2/4	SSPCK Committee Minutes, 1727-1732
GD95/2/5	SSPCK Committee Minutes, 1733-1741
GD95/2/6	SSPCK Committee Minutes, 1741-1750
GD95/8/3	General Ledger, 1709-1779
GD95/9/1	Register of Schools, 1710-61
GD95/10	Volume of Papers Transferred from New College Library, 1707-40

Exchequer Records

E424/1	Bishop’s Rents: Argyll, General Account, 1705-1729

Registers of Deeds

B12/5/1	Culross Burgh, Register of Deeds and Protests, 1713-1735
RD1/65	Register of Deeds First Series, Hay's Office, 1598
RD4/7	Register of Deeds Second Series, MacKenzie's office, 1663
SC34/19/1/2	Tain Sheriff Court, Register of Deeds, 1679-1695

Private Papers

GD18/3218	‘Remarks upon the present state of the Highlands of North Britain with a short, easie and unexpensive method of civilizeing and reforming the inhabitants and for rendering them usefull to the publict

state of Britain in all ages to come' by Sir Colin MacKenzie of Coul, and addressed to Scottish Members of Parliament, Jan 1734

GD124 Papers of the Earls of Mar and Kellie

Miscellaneous Paper Bundles

RH15/105/5 Papers of William Ross, writer in Edinburgh, agent of the Church of Scotland, and clerk to SSPCK

Blair Castle, Blair Atholl

NRAS 234 Papers of the Dukes of Atholl

Inveraray Castle, Inveraray

NRAS 6 and 1209 Papers of the Dukes of Argyll

PRINTED PRIMARY MATERIAL

Newspapers and Periodicals

The Scots Courier

The Edinburgh Magazine

Sources published before 1800

Anon. [Sir Colin MacKenzie of Coul Bt.], *The Highland Complaint, transmitted by a gentleman of that country to his friend at Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1737)

Borland, Francis, *The History of Darien. Giving a short description of that Country, an account of the attempts of the Scotch Nation to settle a colony in that place, a relation of the many tragical disasters which attended that design; with some practical reflections upon the whole* (Glasgow, 1779)

Dundas, John, *The Method of Procedure by Presbyteries in Settling of Schools in every Parish* (Edinburgh, 1709)

Hamilton, William, *The Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion* (Edinburgh, 1732)

List of the Subscribers to the Company of Scotland, Trading to Africa and the Indies (Edinburgh, 1696)

Memorial Concerning the Disorders of the Highlands, especially the northern parts thereof, and Isles of Scotland, with an account of some means, by which the same may be redressed and prevented and vertue may be promoted in these parts (Edinburgh, 1703)

Overture of an Act in Favours of the Highlands and Isles (Edinburgh, 1703)

Principal acts of the General Assembly, of the Church of Scotland; conveened at Edinburgh, March the 10th. 1703 (Edinburgh, 1703)

Principal acts of the General Assembly, of the Church of Scotland; conveened at Edinburgh, the 4th April 1706 (Edinburgh, 1706)

Proclamation for Encouraging the Design of Erecting Schools for Propagating the Knowledge of Christ in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland (London, 1708)

Proposals by the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (Edinburgh, 1710)

Recommendation of a Charitable Contribution: for the promoting Religion and the Knowledge of God in the Highlands: With an account of the Resolutions of the Synod of Glasgow for that End, and of the Desolate State of those Parts (Edinburgh, 1703)

Rule, Gilbert, *A Vindication of the Church of Scotland, being an Answer to Five Pamphlets* (Edinburgh, 1691)

Rule, Gilbert and Meldrum, George, *Two sermons preached at the meeting of the council of George Heriot's hospital at Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1695)

Shaw, Lachlan, *The History of the Province of Moray* (Edinburgh, 1775)

SSPCK, *An Account of the Rise, Constitution and Management of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge* (London, 1714)

——, *The State of the Society in Scotland, for Propagating Christian Knowledge, anno 1729* (Edinburgh, 1729)

——, *An Abridgment of the Statutes and Rules of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge* (Edinburgh, 1732)

——, *A short state of the Society in Scotland, for Propagating Christian Knowledge, anno 1732* (Edinburgh, 1732)

——, *Information for the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge against Mr Robert Steuart, Professor of Natural Philosophy in the College of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1735)

——, *An Account of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge From its Commencement in 1709* (Edinburgh, 1774)

——, *An Account of the Funds, Expenditure etc. of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge* (Edinburgh, 1796)

Statutes of the Maiden Hospital: founded by the company of merchants of Edinburgh, and Mary Erskine (Edinburgh, 1783)

True Copy of the Last Will and Testament of the Late Reverend Daniel Williams, D.D. (London, 1717)

Williamson, David *A sermon preached before his Grace the King's commissioner, and the three estates of Parliament: June the 15th. 1690* (Edinburgh, 1690)

Sources published since 1800

Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638-1843, ed. Church Law Society (Edinburgh, 1843)

Allardyce, James, (ed.), *Historical Papers Relating to the Jacobite Period, 1699-1750*, 2 vols (Aberdeen, 1895-6)

Armet, Helen (ed.), *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1689-1701* (Edinburgh, 1962)

Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 43, 1737, ed. K. G. Davies (London, 1963)

Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, series 6, vols 6-7 (Boston, 1894)

Collections of the Maine Historical Society, vol. 4 (Portland, 1856)

Colonial Records of the State of Georgia, Candler, eds. Allen D et al. (Atlanta GA, 1904-1916, 1976-), vols 20, 22, 23 and 29

Coram, Thomas 'Thomas Coram to Benjamin Colman, 23 September, 1735', *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 56 (1922-1923)

Dawson, Jane (ed.), *Clan Campbell Letters, 1559-1583* (Edinburgh, 1997)

Erskine, John, *Journal of the Hon. John Erskine of Carnock, 1683-1687*, ed. Walter MacLeod (Edinburgh, 1983)

Fraser, William (ed.), *The Earls of Cromartie, Their Kindred and Correspondence* (Edinburgh, 1876)

Gray, Nathan (ed.), 'Sir David Home, Lord Crossrig, "A Narrative of the Rise, Progress and Success of the Societies of Edinburgh for Reformation of Manners", 1701', *Miscellany of the Scottish History Society*, xiv (2010), 111–138

'Lists of Popish Parents and their Children in Various Districts of Scotland, 1701-1705' in *Miscellany of the Maitland Club*, iii (Edinburgh, 1843), 387–441.

MacGill, W. (ed.), *Old Ross-shire and Scotland as seen in the Tain and Balnagown Documents* (Inverness, 1909)

MacTavish, Duncan (ed.), *Minutes of the Synod of Argyll, 1639-1661*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1943-1944)

Martin, Martin, *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland circa 1695*, ed. Charles Withers (Edinburgh, 1999)

William MacKay (ed.), *Records of the Presbyteries of Inverness and Dingwall, 1643-1688* (Edinburgh, 1896)

Shields, Alexander, *A Hind Let Loose, or, An historical representation of the testimonies of the Church of Scotland, for the interest of Christ: with the true state thereof in all its periods* (Edinburgh, 1867)

Withrington, Donald (ed.), 'Lists of Schoolmasters Teaching Latin, 1690', in *Miscellany of the Scottish History Society*, x (Edinburgh, 1965), 121–142

Wodrow, Robert, *The History of the Sufferings of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution*, ed. Robert Burns, 4 vols (Glasgow, 1828-80)

——, *Analecta: or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences*, 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1842-3)

——, *The Correspondence of the Reverend Robert Wodrow*, ed. Thomas M'Crie, 3 vols, (Edinburgh, 1842-1843)

SECONDARY SOURCES

Books and Articles

Ansdell, Douglas, *The People of the Great Faith: The Highland Church 1690–1900* (Stornoway, 1998)

Bain, Andrew, *Education in Stirlingshire from the Reformation to the Act of 1872* (London, 1965)

Bannerman, John and Black, Ronald, 'A Sixteenth Century Gaelic Letter', *SGS*, 13 (1978) 56–65

Bannerman, John, 'Literacy in the Highlands' in *The Renaissance and Reformation in Scotland: Essays in Honour of Gordon Donaldson*, eds. I.B. Cowan and D. Shaw (Edinburgh, 1983), 214–35

——, 'The Scots Language and the Kin-based Society', in *Gaelic and Scots in Harmony: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on the Languages of Scotland, University of Glasgow 1988*, ed. Derick S. Thomson (Glasgow, 1990), 1–19

——, *The Beatons: A Medical Kindred in the Classical Gaelic Tradition* (Edinburgh, 1998)

Barclay, William, *The Schools and Schoolmasters of Banffshire* (Banff, 1925)

Barron, Evan MacLeod, *The Scottish War of Independence* (Inverness, 1934)

Beale, J. M., *A History of the Burgh and Parochial Schools of Fife* (Edinburgh, 1983)

Beard, Ellen L., 'Satire and Social Change: The Bard, the Schoolmaster and the Drover', *Northern Scotland*, 8 (2017), 1–21

Bentinck, Charles D., *Dornoch Cathedral and Parish* (Inverness, 1926)

Black, Ronald, 'Gaelic Religious Publishing, 1567-1800', *SGS*, 24 (2008), 73–85

Blundell, Odo, *The Catholic Highlands of Scotland*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1909-1917)

Bowden, Henry W., *American Indians and Christian Missions: Studies in Cultural Conflict* (Chicago, 1981)

Boyd, W. *Education in Ayrshire over Seven Centuries* (London, 1961)

Brewer, John, *The Sinews of Power: War Money and the British State, 1688–1788*, (London, 2014)

——, 'Revisiting the Sinews of Power', in Aaron Graham and Patrick Walsh (eds) *British Fiscal-Military States, 1660–1783* (Abingdon, 2016), 27–34

Brunner, Daniel L., *Halle Pietists in England: Anthony William Boehm and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* (Göttingen, 1993)

Campbell, John L., *Gaelic in Scottish Education and Life: Past, Present and Future* (Edinburgh, 1945)

——, *Canna: The Story of a Hebridean Island* (Oxford, 1984)r

Cheape, Hugh and Grant, I. F., *Periods in Highland History* (London, 1987)

Cheape, Hugh, 'Gaelic Genesis', *Scottish Book Collector*, 79 (2004), 15–23

Clarke, W. K. Lowther, *A Short History of the SPCK* (London, 1919)

Cullen, Karen J., *Famine in Scotland: The 'Ill Years' of the 1690s* (Edinburgh, 2010)

Curtis, T. C. and W. A. Speck, 'The Societies for the Reformation of Manners: A Case Study in the Theory and Practice of Moral Reform', *Literature and History*, 3 (1976), 45–64

Durkacz, Victor E., 'The Source of the Language Problem in Scottish Education, 1688-1709', *SHR*, 57 (1978), 28–39

——, *The Decline of the Celtic Languages: A Study of Linguistic and Cultural Conflict in Scotland, Wales and Ireland from the Reformation to the Twentieth century* (Edinburgh, 1983)

Fagg, Jane B., '"Complaints and Clamours": The Ministry of Adam Fergusson, 1700-1754', *RSCHS*, 25 (1994), 288–308

Ferguson, William, 'The Problems of the Established Church in the West Highlands and Islands in the Eighteenth Century', *RSCHS*, 17 (1972), 115–30

Gillies, William *In Famed Breadalbane: The Story of the Antiquities, Lands and People of a Highland District* (Perth, 1938)

Gould, Eliga H., 'The Christianising of British America', in Norman Etherington (ed.), *Missions and Empire* (Oxford, 2008), 19–39

Graham, Henry, G., *Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1901)

Grant, F. J. (ed.), *The Faculty of Advocates in Scotland, 1532–1943* (Edinburgh, 1994)

Grigg, John A., '"How This Shall Be Brought About": The Development of the SSPCK's American Policy', *Itinerario*, 32 (2008), 43–60

——, *The Lives of David Brainerd: The Making of an American Evangelical Icon* (Oxford, 2009)

Harris, Bob, 'The Scots and the Westminster Parliament' in Julian Hoppit (ed.), *Parliaments, Nations and Identities in Britain and Ireland, 1660-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 124–145

Hechter, Michael, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (London, 1975).

Hunter, John, *The Diocese and Presbytery of Dunkeld, 1660-1689*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1918)

Hopkins, Paul, *Glencoe and the End of the Highland War* (Edinburgh, 1986)

Houston, R. A., *Scottish Literacy and Scottish Identity: Illiteracy and Society in Scotland and Northern England* (Cambridge, 1985)

Innes, Joanna, 'The Domestic Face of the Military-Fiscal State: Government and society in eighteenth-century Britain', in Lawrence Stone (ed.), *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689-1815* (London, 1994)

Jessop, J. C., *Education in Angus* (London, 1731)

Jones, M. G., *The Charity School Movement: A Study of Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action* (Cambridge, 1938)

Kelly, Jamie J., 'The Rhetoric of Empire in the Scottish Mission in North America, 1732–63', *Scottish Church History*, 49 (2020), 25–37

——, 'The SSPCK and Highland Elites: Cooperation and Criticism, 1709–*c.*1745', *Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 2018* (forthcoming)

Kennedy, Allan, *Governing Gaeldom: The Scottish Highlands and the Restoration State, 1660-1688* (Leiden, 2014)

——, 'The Condition of the Restoration Church of Scotland in the Highlands', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 65 (2014), 309-326

——, 'Managing the Early Modern Periphery: Highland Policy and the Highland Judicial Commission, C. 1692– C. 1705', *SHR*, 96 (2017), 32–60

Landsman, Ned 'The Episcopate, the British Union, and the Failure of Religious Settlement in Colonial North America', in C. Beneke (ed.), *The First Prejudice: Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Early America* (Philadelphia, 2011), 75–97.

Lenman, Bruce, *Jacobite Clans of the Great Glen, 1650-1789* (Methven, 1984)

MacCoinnich, Aonghas, 'Where and How Was Gaelic Written in Late Medieval and Early Modern Scotland? Orthographic Practices and Cultural Identities', *SGS*, 24 (2008), 309–56

——, *Plantation and Civility in the North Atlantic World: The Case of the Northern Hebrides, 1570-1639* (Leiden, 2015)

MacDonald, Archibald, 'Gleanings from a charter chest in Sleat', *TGSI*, 38 (1962), 357–406

MacDonald, Fiona, *Missions to the Gaels: Reformation and Counter-reformation in Ulster and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, 1560-1760* (Edinburgh, 2006)

McElroy, Davis D., *Scotland's Age of Improvement: A Survey of Eighteenth-Century Literary Clubs and Societies* (Washington, 1969)

MacFarlane, Walter, *Geographical Collections Relating to Scotland*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1907)

MacGregor, Martin, '"Làn Mara's Mìle Seòl" ("Floodtide and a Thousand Sails"): Gaelic Scotland and Gaelic Ireland in the Later Middle Ages' in *A' Chòmhdhail Cheilteach Eadarnàiseanta: Congress 99: Cultural Contacts Within the Celtic Community* (North Kessock, 2000), 77–97

——, 'The Genealogical Histories of Gaelic Scotland' in *The Spoken Word, Oral Culture in Britain, 1500–1850* eds. Adam Fox and Daniel Woolf (Manchester, 2002), 196–239

——, 'The Statutes of Iona: Text and Context', *IR* (2006), 111–181

——, 'Creation and Compilation: The Book of the Dean of Lismore and Literary Culture in Late Medieval Gaelic Scotland', *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature: Vol. 1*, eds. Ian Brown et al. (Edinburgh, 2007), 210–18

——, 'The Campbells: Lordship, Literature and Liminality', *Textual Cultures: Texts, Contexts, Interpretation*, 7 (2012), 121–57

Macinnes, Allan, 'Repression and Conciliation: The Highland Dimension 1660-1688', *SHR*, 65 (1986), 167–95

——, 'Catholic Recusancy and the Penal Laws, 1603–1707', *RSCHS*, 23 (1987), 27–63

——, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart* (East Linton, 1996)

MacInnes, John, *The Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland, 1688–1800* (Aberdeen, 1951)

MacKay, John, *The Church in the Highlands, or, The Progress of Evangelical Religion in Gaelic Scotland, 563-1843* (London, 1914)

MacKay, William, *Urquhart and Glenmoriston: Olden Times in a Highland Parish* (Inverness, 1914)

——, *Education in the Highlands in the Olden Times* (Inverness, 1921)

MacKenzie, Alexander, *History of the Clan MacKenzie with Genealogies of the Principal Families* (Inverness, 1879)

MacKenzie, Donald W., 'The Worthy Translator – How the Gaels Got the Scriptures in Their Own Tongue', *TGSI*, 57 (1990–2), 168–202

MacKenzie, John M. 'Presbyterianism and Scottish Identity in Global Context', *Britain and the World*, 10 (2017), 88–112

MacKillop, Andrew, *'More Fruitful than the Soil': Army, Empire and the Scottish Highlands, 1715-1815* (East Linton, 2000)

MacKinnon, Donald, 'Education in Argyll and the Isles, 1638-1709', *RSCHS*, 6 (1938), 46–54

MacLean, Donald, *The Counter-Reformation in Scotland, 1560-1930* (London, 1931)

McLeod, Wilson, *Divided Gaels: Gaelic Cultural Identities in Scotland and Ireland, c. 1200–c.1650* (Oxford, 2004)

MacNaughton, Colin, *Church Life in Ross and Sutherland from the revolution to the present time* (Inverness, 1915)

McNeill, Peter and MacQueen, Hector (eds), *Atlas of Scottish History to 1707* (Edinburgh, 1996)

MacWilliam, Alexander 'A Highland Mission: Strathglass, 1671-1777', *IR*, 24 (1973), 75–28.

Meek, Donald, 'The Gaelic Bible' in *The Bible in Scottish Life and Literature*, ed. David F. Wright (Edinburgh, 1988), 9–23

——, 'Scottish Highlanders, North American Indians and the SSPCK: Some Cultural Perspectives', *RSCHS*, 23 (1989), 378–96

——, 'The Scoto-Gaelic scribes of Late Medieval Perth-shire' in *Bryght Lanternis. Essays on the Language and Literature of Medieval and Renaissance Scotland*, eds. J. Derrick McClure and M.R.G. Spiller (Aberdeen, 1989), 387–404

——, 'Gàidhlig is Gaylick anns na Meadhan Aoisean' in *Gaelic and Scotland: Alba agus a' Ghàidhlig*, ed. W. Gillies (Edinburgh, 1989), 131–45

——, 'Language and Style in the Scottish Gaelic Bible (1767–1807)', *Scottish Language*, 9 (1990), 1–16

——, 'The Pulpit and the Pen: Clergy, Orality and Print in the Scottish Gaelic World' in *The Spoken Word, Oral Culture in Britain, 1500–1850* eds. Adam Fox and Daniel Woolf (Manchester, 2002), 84–118

Mills, Frederick V., 'The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge in British North America, 1730-1775', *Church History*, 63 (1994), 15–30

Morison, Alick, 'The Contullich Papers, 1706-1720', *TGSI*, 44 (1967), 310–348

——, 'The Accounts of a Doer: Alexander MacLeod the "Advocate"', *TGSI*, 50 (1977), 97–140

——, 'Early Harris Estate Papers, 1679-1703', *TGSI*, 51 (1978), 8–172

Murchison, Thomas M., "Raining's School: a seed-bed of talent", *TGSI*, 52 (1980-2), 405–17.

Murdoch, Alex, 'Emigration from the Scottish Highlands to America in the Eighteenth Century', *British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, 21 (1998), 161–74

——, *Scotland and America, c.1600-c.1800* (Basingstoke, 2010)

Ò Baoill, Colm, 'A History of Gaelic to 1800', *The Edinburgh Companion to the Gaelic Language*, eds. M. Watson and M. Macleod (Edinburgh, 2010)

Pascoe, C. F., *Two Hundred Years of the SPG: An Historical Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1900*, vol. 1 (London, 1901)

Parker, Anthony W., *Scottish Highlanders in Colonial Georgia: The Recruitment, Emigration and Settlement at Darien, 1735–1748* (London, 1997)

Porter, Andrew, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914* (Manchester, 2004)

Prunier, Clotilde, *Anti-Catholic Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Frankfurt, 2004)

——, '"They Must Have Their Children Educated Some way": The Education of Catholics in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *IR*, 60 (2009), 22–40

Raffe, Alasdair, *The Culture of Controversy: Religious Arguments in Scotland, 1660-1714* (Woodbridge, 2012)

Riley, P. W. J., *The English Ministers and Scotland, 1707-1727* (London, 1964)

——, 'The Scottish Parliament of 1703', *SHR*, 47 (1968), 129–150

Roberson, Rusty, 'Enlightened Piety during the Age of Benevolence: The Christian Knowledge Movement in the British Atlantic World', *Church History*, 85 (2016), 246–74

Roberts, Alasdair, 'Gregor McGregor (1681-1740) and the Highland Problem in the Scottish Catholic Mission', *IR*, 39 (1988), 81–108

——, 'Roman Catholicism in the Highlands' in James Kirk (ed.) *The Church in the Highlands* (Edinburgh, 1998),

Rose, Craig, 'Providence, Protestant Union and Godly Reformation in the 1690s', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 3 (1993), 151–69

Sankey, Margaret and Daniel Szechi 'Elite Culture and the Decline of Scottish Jacobitism, 1716-1745', *Past and Present*, 173 (2001), 90–128

Sellar, W. D. H. 'Celtic Law and Scots Law: Survival and Integration', *Scottish Studies*, 29 (1989), 1–27

Shaw, F. J., *The Northern and Western Islands of Scotland: Their Economy and Society in the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1980)

Shipton, Clifford K., *New England Life in the Eighteenth Century: Representative Biographies from Sibley's Harvard Graduates* (Cambridge MA, 1963)

Shlenther, Boyd S. 'Religious Faith and Commercial Empire', in P. J. Marshal (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire Vol. II: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1998), 130–140

Simpson, Ian J., *Education in Aberdeenshire before 1872* (London, 1947)

Stephen, Jeffrey, 'Defending the Revolution: The Church of Scotland and the Scottish Parliament, 1689–95', *SHR*, 89 (2010), 19–53

——, *Defending the Revolution: The Church of Scotland, 1689–1716* (Farnham, 2013)

Stiùbhart, Dòmhnall Uilleam, 'The Genesis and Operation of the Royal Bounty Scheme 1725-30', *RSCHS*, 33 (2003), 63–141

Szasz, Margaret C., *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans: Indigenous Education in the Eighteenth Century Atlantic World* (Norman OK, 2007)

Thomson, Derick S., 'The Gaelic Learned Orders and Literati in Medieval Scotland', *Scottish Studies*, 12 (1968), 57–78

Watt, Douglas, *The Price of Scotland: Darien, Union and the Wealth of Nations* (Edinburgh, 2007)

Whatley, Christopher, *Scottish Society, 1707-1830: Beyond Jacobitism, Towards Industrialisation* (Manchester, 2000)

—— 'Reformed Religion, Regime Change, Scottish Whigs and the Struggle for the 'Soul' of Scotland, *c.*1688-*c.*1788, *SHR*, 92 (2013), 66–99

Welch, Edwin, *Popish and Infidel Parts of the World: Dr Daniel Williams & the Scottish SPCK* (London, 1996)

Whyte, Thomas, *An Historical and Genealogical Account of the Bethunes of the Island of Sky* (Edinburgh, 1778)

Williamson, Arthur H., *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI: the Apocalypse, the Union and the Shaping of Scotland's Public Culture* (Edinburgh, 1979)

Withers, Charles W. J., 'Education and Anglicisation: The Policy of the SSPCK Toward the Education of the Highlander, 1709-1825', *Scottish Studies*, 26 (1982), 37–56. Available online at URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20050228002314/http://www.rfs.scotshome.com/Education_and_Anglicisation.htm [Accessed: 8 Nov 2016].

——, *Gaelic in Scotland 1698–1981: The Geographical History of a Language* (Edinburgh, 1984)

—— 'Kirk, Club and Culture Change: Gaelic Chapels, Highland Societies and the Urban Gaelic Subculture in Eighteenth-Century Scotland∗', *Social History*, 10 (1985), 171–92

——, *Gaelic Scotland: The Transformation of a Culture Region* (London, 1988)

Withrington, Donald J., ‘The S.P.C.K. and Highland Schools in Mid-Eighteenth Century’, *SHR*, 41 (1962), 89–99

——, ‘Schools in the Presbytery of Haddington in the 17th century’, *Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society*, 9 (1963), 90–111

——, ‘Education in the 17th Century Highlands’, in *The Seventeenth Century in the Highlands* (Inverness, 1986), 60–69

——, ‘Schooling, Literacy and Society’ in T.M Devine and Rosalind Mitchison (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland* (Edinburgh 1988), 164.

——, *Going to School* (Edinburgh, 1997)

UNPUBLISHED THESES

Atkinson, Justine, ‘The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge: Establishing Identity Under the Union’ (University of Newcastle MA Thesis, 2010)

Clarke, Tristram, ‘The Scottish Episcopalians 1688-1720’ (University of Edinburgh PhD Thesis, 1987)

Diffendal, Anne Polk, ‘The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts and the Assimilation of Foreign Protestants in British North America’ (University of Nebraska-Lincoln PhD Thesis, 1974)

Dziennik, Matthew ‘The Fatal Land: War, Empire, and the Highland Soldier in British America, 1756-1783’ (University of Edinburgh PhD Thesis, 2011)

Gray, Nathan ‘“A Publick Benefite to the Nation”: The Charitable and Religious Origins of the SSPCK, 1690-1715’ (University of Glasgow PhD Thesis, 2012)

Leneman, Leah, ‘A Social History of the Atholl Estates 1685-1785’ (University of Edinburgh PhD Thesis, 1982)

MacKillop, Andrew, ‘Military recruiting in the Scottish Highlands 1739-1815: The Political, Social and Economic Context’ (University of Glasgow PhD Thesis, 1995)

Parker, Anthony, ‘Scottish Highlanders in Colonial Georgia: The Recruitment, Emigration and Settlement at Darien, 1735-1748’ (University of Georgia PhD Thesis)

Raffe, Alasdair, ‘Religious Controversy and Scottish Society, c.1679-1714’ (University of Edinburgh PhD Thesis, 2007)

Roberson, Rusty, ‘Scottish Missions and Religious Enlightenment in Colonial America: The SSPCK in Transatlantic Context’ (University of Edinburgh PhD Thesis, 2012)

Scott, Richard H., ‘The Politics and Administration of Scotland, 1725-1748’ (University of Edinburgh PhD Thesis, 1982)

Young, Helen Louise, 'The Small Rural School and Community Relations in Scotland, 1872-2000: An Interdisciplinary History' (University of Stirling PhD Thesis, 2016)

UNPUBLISHED PAPERS

Stiùbhart, Dòmhnall Uilleam, 'Òraid mu na h-Aobharan air Cùl Bhliadhna Theàrlaich [Lecture on Highland Motives in the 1745 Jacobite Rising]' (Unpublished Paper, 2004)

REFERENCE AND WEBSITES

Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1638-1842, ed. Church Law Society (Edinburgh, 1843), British History Online, URL: http://british-history.ac.uk/church-scotland-records/acts/1638-1842/ [accessed 22 June 2019].

Brown, Keith M. et al. (eds), *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707* (St Andrews, 2007-2010), URL: https://rps.ac.uk/

Cowper, A. S, *SSPCK Schoolmasters, 1709-1872* (Edinburgh, 1997)

Ó Maolalaigh, Roibeard, et al., 'Sgeul na Gàidhlig: the Story of Gaels and Gaelic at the University of Glasgow from 1451', URL: https://sgeulnagaidhlig.ac.uk/ [Accessed 22 Jun 2019]

Scott, Hew et al, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae: The Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation,* 11 vols (Edinburgh, 1915-28)

Sinclair, John. *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, 21 vols (Edinburgh, 1791-99), URL: https://stataccscot.edina.ac.uk/ [Accessed 3 Oct 2017]

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Hanham, A. A., 'Trustees for establishing the colony of Georgia in America (act. 1732–1752)', URL: https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/95206/

Millar, A. H., 'Pringle, Sir Walter, Lord Newhall', URL: https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/22809/

Richards, Eric, 'Gordon, Alexander, second Duke of Gordon', URL: https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/11020/

Sellar, W. D. H., 'Dundas, John', URL: https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/67528/

Speck, W. A., 'Sacheverell, Henry', URL: https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/24440/