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Scottish Late-Seventeenth Century Male Clothing: Some Context for the Barrock Estate Finds

By DAVID WILCOX

In 1920 the remains of a body were discovered, buried in a peat moss at Quintfall Hill on the Barrock Estate, near Keiss, Caithness, Scotland. The corporeal remains and the clothing were transferred to the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh where they remain to this day. Shortly after the find, an account of the discovery appeared in the Journal of the Antiquaries of Scotland, but apart from passing reference, very little further consideration was given to these clothes. In this article, the first of two dealing with this topic, the clothing finds are described and discussed in the context of other Scottish finds of the period c. 1700 and in relation to contemporary observations and descriptions of dress found across the Scottish mainland and in its outlying islands. The garments will also be considered in relation to the dominant historical dress narrative which has been based largely on elite clothing.

KEYWORDS: *Scottish dress, Highland dress, Lowland dress, tailoring, seventeenth-century men's fashion, Scottish peat bog finds, Barrock Estate finds, Caithness*

INTRODUCTION

One of the young men seized the rope, and pulled by it, but the old enchantment of the devil remained. It would not break, and so he pulled and pulled at it till behold the body came up in the sitting posture, with a broad blue bonnet on its head, and its plaid around it, as fresh as that day it was laid in. [...] One of the lads gripped the face of the corpse with his finger and thumb, and the cheeks felt quite soft and fleshy, but the dimples remained, and did not spring out again. He had fine yellow hair about nine inches long, but not a hair of it could they pull out, till they cut part of it off with a knife. They also

cut off some portions of his clothes, which were all quite fresh, and distributed them among their acquaintances, sending a portion to me among the rest, to keep as natural curiosities [...] on searching his pockets, nothing was found but three old Scots halfpennies.¹

This description was penned by writer James Hogg (1770-1835), seemingly a faithful description of a real event; the opening of the grave of a suicide, a herdsman who had died around 1718, by two peat cutters, disturbing the corpse some hundred years later. The account appeared in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* of 1823. *The New Statistical Account* also makes reference to this discovery, describing the body 'found entire, with bonnet, coat, plaid, hose, etc., quite fresh.'² Hogg's letter to Blackwood's was re-cycled a year later in his masterpiece, audaciously inserted wholesale in his *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (published 1824). Could the above description be pure invention? Scholars suggest that it was a true account. However it does convey, in much the same way that Dickens describes the waxwork horror of Pip's first sight of Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations* (1861), the nervous shock on uncovering human remains. The present author recognises this from his own experience of unexpectedly uncovering, when opening a museum storage box, the remains of a man's skull, complete with its shock of dark, greasy hair and another occasion when he was shown the dismembered torso of an iron age man, black with tannin, but the detail of its skin uncannily untouched by time, every pore and crease vividly present. No wonder, then, that when peat-cutters found the first evidence of a corpse, they often quickly ran off, abandoning the site and working another spot.³

Reflecting on these two accounts, however, there are other elements of recognition: the broad blue bonnet, the plaid, coat and hose. These garments are already familiar from other Scottish and Irish wetland finds and they add the tang of authenticity to Hogg's description, which he admits was not based on his own direct experience. Hogg reports that he also had

fragments of the man's plaid and 'waistcoat breast' and that the blue bonnet had been sent to Edinburgh.⁴ Attempts to trace these have led nowhere. Fiction or not, what remains true is that bodies recovered from wetlands are often found wearing the clothes of their last hours and these remain a valuable record of how clothes were worn as much as a record of the garments of the past. In addition, the clothes of these unfortunates, who have often died of exposure or had their life brutally ended, are testimony to another clothing narrative, one that runs parallel to the elite clothing narrative. Are there any points of contact between the two? This article will discuss an individual set of clothes and examine its relationship to similar others and to the dominant elite clothing narrative.

A DISCOVERY AT BARROCK ESTATE, NEAR KEISS, CAITHNESS, 1920

The uncovering of a body, discovered some three feet underground, revealed a figure wrapped in a plaid, and whose clothing consisted of two pairs of breeches, worn one over the other and similarly two short jackets, worn one over the other. In addition the dead man had worn a pair of cloth hose, low-heeled leather shoes, a round, flat bonnet and had an additional piece of cloth which seems likely to have held a knife on his underarm. The dead man's hair was long. The skull showed the mark of a heavy blow. The man's leather purse was found to contain nineteen sixpenny pieces Scots, one of which could be dated to 1694, suggesting a date in the late-seventeenth century for the time of the victim's death. The human remains, clothes, coins and plaid were for many years part of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland collection, held at Queen Street, Edinburgh, UK, but were later transferred, after amalgamation of the museums in 1985, to the National Museums Scotland Collection Centre, Granton, Edinburgh, where they are currently stored.⁵ Figure 1 shows the clothes as they were once displayed at the Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh, while Figures 2 and 3 show respectively the outer doublet and the outer pair of breeches worn by the Barrock Estate man.

The original report by Stewart Orr (1872-1944), a professional watercolour artist for *Proceedings of the Antiquaries of Scotland* of 1921 gives a good account of the clothes in descriptive terms and at that time an attempt was made to show the pattern shapes of the clothing.⁶ At that time there had been no tradition of pattern analysis and so, even although the garments were examined by a tailor, the pattern shapes he proposed were very rudimentary and inaccurate (Figure 4). The clothes were examined afresh by the present author and transcribed more systematically to demonstrate their cut through scaled pattern diagrams. These will be the subject of a second article, to be published in a later edition of *Costume*, where they will be reproduced and the garments discussed in further detail, including details of the textiles and dyestuffs. It should be noted that while woollen clothing will survive in peat bogs, linen does not usually survive. Thus there may be elements of dress that were once present in this and other sets, but which have since been biodegraded.

CAITHNESS IN THE LATE-SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The Barrock Estate clothing finds were recovered in Caithness. What was this part of Scotland like in the late seventeenth century? Geographically, Caithness is a distinctive region in the north east corner of Scotland. The underlying geology is old red sandstone which because it splits easily, has been used as a building material since Neolithic times. The countryside is open rolling farmland, moorland and scattered settlements. The moorland and blanket bog is extensive, the largest in Europe. The Welsh naturalist Thomas Pennant (1726-1798), writing in the later eighteenth century (1769), said ‘Caithness may be called an immense morass, mixed with some fruitful spots of oats and barley, much coarse grass, and here and there some fine, almost all natural, there being as yet very little artificial.’⁷ He noted the surplus of oatmeal and of livestock and fish which were in relative abundance. These are characteristics commented on by earlier visitors, with Scottish clergyman John Brand (1668-1738), who visited in 1700, claiming that ‘The Country is pleasant and very fertile, abounding with grass and corn, hence

yearly there is a great quantity of victuall exported [...] The cattle and fishes are also to be had very cheap'.⁸ Brand's commentary however seems to overlook the general food crisis of the previous decade. At the beginning of the 1690s there was a slump in trade with the Baltic and France, followed by four years of failed harvest – this was the low point of the Little Ice Age – leading to mass starvation throughout Scotland. Clearly, even following the below average yield of the 1694 harvest, Caithness continued to export grain in 1695 (16,000 bolls; 1 boll = 140lbs) – Brand records this figure. Unfortunately there are no surviving parish registers for the period 1685-1705, so it is not clear how great an impact famine made on this area.⁹

Regarding dress, *The Statistical Account for Wick, Caithness*, from the late-eighteenth century notes that there had been a shift in the attitudes of the local young men and women towards dress, noting that 'some, who before put up with a kelt coat (a kind of coarse flannel dyed black), the housewives own manufacture, common stuff gowns for the women, are not now satisfied without good English cloth, muslin gowns, white stockings [...]'.¹⁰ This suggests that in earlier times, the woollen cloth had been made and sourced more locally. In Shetland, the *Statistical Account* also noted that the old men and women still wore black clothes of coarse undyed wadmal, suggesting that there it had until recently (1790s) been the common fabric.¹¹ Wadmal was a coarse, dense, usually undyed woollen cloth, valued for the making of warm winter clothing.¹² In fact, the *Statistical Accounts* suggest a tradition of cloth and clothing made from undyed wool was found in many places, from Shetland in the extreme north to Kirkcudbright in the extreme south.¹³

MALE DRESS IN SCOTLAND C. 1700

This is a complex subject as there are so many factors to be considered. By geography and tradition Scotland was anything but uniform in matters of dress. Perhaps the four most defining and dividing features were religion, status, income and location. There were however two broad

boundaries which seemed to denote to travellers and commentators changes of ethos and appearance. For those travelling from England, there was first the contested English/Scottish border, while further north and west, there were the Highlands and Islands. Travellers from the south observed that in Lowland towns, the dress was similar to that of England, in that there was the wearing of good linen, for those who could afford it, along with waistcoats or vests, coats and breeches. By this time too there was the adoption of periwigs, again, by those who could afford such items. A portrait of Wrights and Masons by Roderick Chalmers, made in 1720, suggests the wearing of wigs to be more general, even among the craftsmen of Edinburgh (Figure 5).¹⁴ A quarter of a century earlier tax records for Edinburgh in 1694 show that there were twenty-nine wigmakers in the centre of the city.¹⁵

It was also clear that in the Lowlands, many followed the fashions of the times. Martin Martin (d.1719), a native of Skye, in telling a story of a St Kilda islander's reaction to the sights of Glasgow, writes (in 1695):

He could not imagine what the pews were designed for, and he fancied the people that wore masks (not knowing whether they be men or women) had been guilty of some ill thing, for which they dared not show their faces. He was amazed at women wearing patches, and fancied them to have been blisters. Pendants seemed to him the most ridiculous of all things; he condemned periwigs mightily, And much more the powder used in them. [...] he wondered how they made them fine clothes[...] He thought it foolish in women to wear thin silks, as being a very improper habit for such as pretended to any sort of employment. When he saw the women's feet, he judged them to be of another shape than those of the men, because of the different shape of their shoes. He did not approve of the heels of the shoes worn by men or women.

Clearly a highly urban and fashionable population is being described, whose clothing stands in marked contrast to the remote islander's.¹⁶

FOOTWEAR

The fact most noted north of the border was that women and children often went about bare-footed, although not the menfolk. Thomas Morer (1651-1715), a clergyman writing in 1689, commented:

What I add more, treats of the Scotch in common. Their ordinary women go barefoot, especially in the summer. Yet the husbands have shooes and therein seem unkind in letting their wives bear those hardships without partaking themselves.¹⁷

Some time later, writing in the late 1720s, when he first came to Scotland, to work on General Wade's road building programme in the Highlands, Edmund Burt (d.1755) made similar observations when in Edinburgh:

[...]The poor men are seldom barefoot in the town, but wear 'brogues', a sort of pumps without heels, which keep them little more from the wet and dirt than if they had none, but they serve to defend their feet from the gravel and stones.¹⁸

Thomas Morer, who had visited Scotland in 1689, had also commented on the footwear of the men in his writings on the Highlands. His observation is recognisably similar to that of Burt: 'They wear a sort of Shooes, which they call Brocks, like our Pumps, without Heels, of a very thin Sole, and affording little security from the Wet or Stones, which is their main use and chiefly intended for.'¹⁹ When in the north of Scotland himself, stationed around Inverness, Burt makes the additional comment relating to the shoes of Highlanders: '[...] brogues, or pumps without heels. By the way, they cut holes in their brogues, though new made, to let out the water, when they have far to go and rivers to pass: this they do to preserve their feet from

galling.²⁰ An observation on men's brogues was also made by Martin Martin writing in 1695 of the Western Isles: 'The generality now wear shoes, having one thin sole only, and shaped after the right and left foot so that what is for one foot will not serve the other.'²¹ These brogues had no heels, which explains the shaping for left and right since by this point shoes with heels were made as 'straights', the same last being used for both feet.²² This is not to say that fine shoes with heels were not worn. They were by those who could afford them and when circumstance called for them. But there was a surviving culture of barefootedness, with Burt noting that: 'in my journeys, when they did not expect to be observed by any but their own country people, I have twice surprised the laird and his lady without shoes or stockings, a good way from home, in cold weather.'²³

COAT, WAISTCOAT, BREECHES AND TREWS

By the end of the seventeenth century, there was among men the general adoption of a new style of dress that is the vest, coat and breeches, a fashion that began to establish itself in the 1660s. Martin Martin, himself an islander and a native Gaelic speaker, reports in 1695 of the men of the Western Isles that: 'They now generally use coat, waist coat, and breeches, as elsewhere; and on their heads wear bonnets made of thick cloth – some blue, some black, and some grey.' He also comments that in the Western Isles 'persons of distinction wear the garb in fashion in the south of Scotland.'²⁴ In other words, a degree of fashionability was maintained by those who could afford it and who were in touch with current trends through travel and communication beyond their native locale.

But there were other distinctive modes of dress associated with Highlanders and Islanders. Martin Martin (1695) again: 'many of the people (men) wear trews' and he comments that they require special skill to make.²⁵ Trews (in Gaelic: *triubhas*) are in essence a pair of very close fitting trousers or leggings that have been cut on the bias. They are

extremely flexible and the bias cut allows them to adjust to the wearer, hence the close fit. They were often cut from patterned fabric, such as checks or stripes. This was an old form of dress both in Ireland and Scotland – several pairs of trows of the late-sixteenth/early-seventeenth century have been recovered from Irish peat bogs, while Scottish peat bogs have yielded only the remnants of a pair of trows from the same period.²⁶ The earliest illustrations of this garment seem to be in the Book of Kells, an eighth-century manuscript. The seventeenth-century Scottish cleric, James Gordon (1615?-1686) in his *History of Scots Affairs from 1637 to 1641*, notes that ‘in the sharp Winter weather the Highland Men wear close trowses, which cover the Thighs, Legs and Feet.’²⁷ But Burt, writing later (c. 1730), makes the observation that: ‘Few besides gentlemen wear the ‘trowse’ – that is, the breeches and stockings all of a piece, and drawn together.’²⁸

In Burt’s letters, he also mentions as part of the Highland habit ‘a short coat, a waistcoat, longer by five or six inches’.²⁹ This is possibly of some relevance in the discussion of the Barrock Estate peat moss clothing find. There is also a rare mention in Martin Martin (1698), when visiting St. Kilda, a cluster of small islands far out in the North Atlantic Ocean, beyond the Outer Hebrides, of the men’s clothing. As well as wearing familiar elements of dress such as a short waist-length doublet, and plaid, he notes that ‘some of late have got breeches, and they are wide and open at the knees’³⁰ This reference is also of some relevance concerning another set of clothes from this period, those recovered from a peat moss at Gunnister in Shetland, where a pair of breeches of this type were found (Figure 6). The point of note is that this mid-seventeenth century style continued to be found in parts of Scotland around 1700, while Martin’s noting of the continued wearing of the short doublet suggests that on St. Kilda, probably on account of its remoteness, it had taken a long time for mid-century styles to reach and influence the clothing habits of the islanders.

The other element of Highland and Island dress that was much commented on was the plaid. And if the Highlander did not have much in the way of clothing, he would at least have a plaid. This was such a fundamental garment to the way of life and to daily comfort that Alexander Dunbar (dates unknown), a volunteer in Liège in 1705, wrote home for ‘ane night gounne [...] I mean ane Highland plaid [...] for that is ane thing I cannot want either summer or winter’.³¹

The plaid seems to have been worn generally in Scotland, among Lowlanders as well as Highlanders. John Ray (1627-1705), a naturalist, had noted the wearing of plaids among the generality when visiting Dunbar, on the south east coast of Scotland, associating it with the poor. This observation on the Lowland poor was repeated by Thomas Kirke (1650-1706), an antiquarian, in 1679.³² Throughout the eighteenth century the wearing of plaids continued among Lowlanders, with its presence noted in Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire in the 1780s and 1790s.³³ It was the manner of wearing the plaid, belted to form a kilt that often distinguished the Highlander as William Sacheverell (1664-1715), Governor of the Isle of Man, wrote in 1688:

The usual outward habit of both sexes is the pladd; [...] The men wear theirs after another manner, especially when designed for ornament: it is loose and flowing, like the mantles our painters give their heroes.³⁴

Morer added his description in 1689:

They are constant in their Habit or Way of Clothing; Pladds are most in use with ‘em, which, tho’ we English thought inconvenient, especially for Swords Men in times of Action, and in the heat of Summer, as when we saw ‘em; yet they excused themselves on these accounts, That they not only serve them for Cloaths by Day in case of necessity but were Pallats or Beds in the Night at such times as they travelled and had not opportunities for better Accommodation, and for that reason in Campaigns were not

unuseful: [...] These Pladds are about seven or eight yards long, differing in Fineness according to the Abilities or Fancy of the Wearers. They cover the whole Body with ‘em from the Neck to the Knees, excepting the Right Arm, which they mostly keep at liberty. Many of ‘em have nothing under these Garments besides Wastcoats and Shirts, which descent no lower than the Knees, and they so gird ‘em about the Middle as to give ‘em the same length as the Linen under ‘em, and thereby supply the defect of Drawers and Breeches.³⁵

In 1695 Martin added further descriptive details:

The plaid wore only by the men is made of fine wool, the thread as fine as can be made of that kind. It consists of divers colours; and there is a great deal of ingenuity required in sorting the colours so as to be agreeable to the nicest fancy. [...] The length of it is commonly seven double ells. [...] Every isle differs from each other in their fancy of making plaids as to the stripes in breadth and colours. This humour is as different through the mainland of the Highlands, in so far that they who have seen those places are able at first view of a man’s plaid to guess the place of his residence. When they travel on foot the plaid is tied on the breast with a bodkin of bone or wood (just as the spina wore by the Germans, according to the description of C. Tacitus). The plaid is tied round the middle with a leather belt. It is plaited from the belt to the knee very nicely. This dress for footmen is found much easier and lighter than breeches or trews.³⁶

Guy Miège (1644-1718, author and lexicographer) published in 1707 *The Present State of Scotland*, but drew on a much older account for his text, making a translation of parts of George Buchanan’s publication of 1581, *Rerum Scoticarum Historia*. Writing of the dress of the Highlanders, Miège paraphrases Buchanan thus:

Their ancestors as do most of them still, made use of plaids very much variegated, but now they make them rather of a dark-colour, resembling that of the corps of heath, that they may not be discover'd while they lie in the heaths waiting for their game, being rather wrapped up than covered with those plaids. They endure all the rigours of the season and sometimes sleep cover'd all over with snow.³⁷

Burt writing in the late 1720s recorded that:

[...] over this habit they wear a plaid, which is usually three yards long and two breadths wide, and the whole garb is made of chequered tartan, or plaiding: this, with the sword and pistol, is called a 'full dress', and, to a well-proportioned man, with any tolerable air, it makes an agreeable figure; but this you have seen in London, and it is chiefly their mode of dressing when they are in the Lowlands, or when they make a neighbouring visit, or go anywhere on horseback; but when those among them who travel on foot, and have not attendants to carry them over the waters, they vary it into the quelt, which is a manner I am about to describe.³⁸

At this point in his account, Burt goes on to give a description of the very specific wearing of the plaid common to the Highlands and which ultimately 'inspired' the kilt. In relation to the plaid, Burt notes that it is two breadths (or web widths) wide. It is worth stating here that Highland looms at this period were upright and only narrow widths of cloth could be woven, hence the need to join two selvedge lengths together.³⁹

Burt continues, echoing Martin Martin's description:

The common habit of the ordinary Highlanders is far from being acceptable to the eye; with them a small part of the plaid, which is not so large as the former, is set in folds and girt round the waist, to make of it a short petticoat that reaches half way down the

thigh, and the rest is brought over the shoulders, and then fastened before, below the neck, often with a fork, and sometimes a bodkin, or sharpened piece of stick, so that they make pretty nearly the appearance of the poor women in London when they bring their gowns over their heads to shelter them from the rain. In this way of wearing the plaid, they sometimes have nothing else to cover them, and are often barefoot; [...] This dress is called the 'quelt'; and, for the most part they wear the petticoat so very short, that in a windy day, going up a hill, or stooping, the indecency of it is plainly discovered.⁴⁰

This manner of wearing the plaid as a kilt, in Gaelic *breacan* or *féileadh mór*, seems to originate in the sixteenth century, at a time when Highland Scotland was becoming less tied to Irish modes of dress.⁴¹ At the time under discussion, the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, the separate, short pleated garment that became the modern kilt did not exist. Its origins are later, in the period 1727- 1734, when Thomas Rawlinson, a Lancashire Quaker iron-master set up business at Invergarry, near Inverness. The plaid-free kilt was devised by himself and a regimental tailor from Inverness, creating a practical solution for the highlanders in his employ. Rawlinson himself wore it, to encourage its adoption. The first published account of the origin of the *féileadh beag*, the small kilt, appeared in 1785, although the report was first given in 1768 by an acquaintance of Rawlinson.⁴²

BONNETS AND STOCKINGS

The other accessories of Highland dress around 1700 were the bonnets –although these were also worn by Lowlanders – and the short stockings. The stockings were not knitted but cut from cloth, on the bias, and in this they were like the trows; similarly, they were sometimes cut from patterned cloth. Sacheverell, in 1688 wrote: 'Their thighs are bare, with brawny muscles. Nature has drawn all her streaks bold and masterly; *what is covered is only adapted to necessity*

– a thin brogue on the foot, a short buskin of various colours on the leg, tied above the calf with a striped pair of garters.’⁴³ While Morer comments in 1689, ‘Those who have Stockings make ‘em generally of the same piece with their Pladds, not knit or weaved, but sow’d together, and they tie ‘em below the Knee with Tufted Garters.’⁴⁴ In the late 1720s Burt observed, ‘The stocking rises no higher than the thick of the calf, and from the middle of the thigh to the middle of the leg is a naked space [...]’. Martin, writing in 1695, continues his story of the islander from St Kilda who, when visiting Glasgow, is filled with amazement at the contrasts with his island life: ‘to see stockings made without being first cut, and afterwards sewn, was no small wonder to him.’⁴⁵

The wearing of bonnets as headwear was quite general in Scotland at this time, and was noted by many travellers before and after the late-seventeenth century. Essentially they were worn by those who could not afford to follow fashion, those who were not wearing periwigs and cocked hats, nor wearing their hair in the style of a periwig. Sacheverell in 1688 writes: ‘a blew bonnet on their heads.’⁴⁶ Morer enlarged the description in 1689: ‘They cover their Heads with Bonnets or Thrum-Caps, not unlike those of our Servitors, tho’ of a better consistence to keep off the Weather. They are Blue, Grey, or Sad-colour’d as the Purchaser thinks fit; and are sometimes lined according to the Quality of their Master.’⁴⁷ Martin’s 1695 description echoes the previous ones: ‘and on their heads wear bonnets made of thick cloth – some blue, some black, and some grey.’⁴⁸ While Burt added, *c.* 1730, that ‘The Highland dress consists of a bonnet made of thrum without a brim [...]’⁴⁹

THE LOWLAND HABIT

As can be seen from the commentaries written both at the end of the seventeenth century and some decades later, there was considerable attention given to the description of the clothing of the Highlanders and Islanders, while the Lowlanders received much less comment, possibly

because there was much less to remark on, too much that was familiar. Were it not for the discovery of several sets of men's clothes in peat moss in Caithness, the Isle of Lewis and the Shetland Isles, our knowledge of the realities of Scottish dress beyond the Lowlands, would be much poorer. There is little else that survives, beyond the descriptions of travellers. Images are hard to find – unlike the Netherlands, Scotland did not have a flourishing community of genre painters who might have left a vivid account of the dress of the people. The closest we get to a contemporary image of a Scot dressed in vernacular style is Richard Waitt's extraordinary painting of 1731, *The Cromartie Fool* (Figure 7). Although Cromarty is in the north-east coast of Scotland, north of Inverness, here we see a man wearing the Lowland habit of coarse linen or flannel shirt, and woollen coat and sleeved waistcoat. Sadly we cannot see all of his dress, but the coarse woollen cloth and the level of wear and tear is familiar from the peat bog clothes under discussion in this essay. Another rare image from this time is that of Patie Birnie (d.1721), a well-known fiddler of his day (Figure 8). This dates from 1715-1720 and shows the musician wearing a great-coat with a collapsible collar.⁵⁰ Birnie was a Lowlander, living at Findhorn, on the north shore of the Firth of Forth, opposite Edinburgh.

Elsewhere, in some journals and accounts, we find interesting details of male clothing habits among the Lowland gentry around 1700.⁵¹ From these it is clear that they followed fashion to a certain extent, and that although they had land and income, they still gave time and thought to clothing transactions, managing their expenditure; as well as investing in new clothes, older clothes might be re-worked. It was a common practice for tailors to re-make coats by turning the inside face of the cloth to the outside, thereby giving the coat a fresh lease of life.⁵² Similarly, coats and waistcoats might be re-made for another, junior member of the family. Landowner George Home (1660-1705), writing at the turn of the century in his diary records that he had the tailor make a suit for his son from a coat and waistcoat.⁵³ Home, living in the country, sometimes had a tailor stay for a few days to work, yet he also records visiting

his regular tailor in Edinburgh, when on business there, to have clothes made or altered. It was common for country tailors to visit their clients' homes, where, as well as receiving pay for the work of making, altering and repairing, they were given board and lodging.⁵⁴ Home also left a list of his personal linen and accessories in the year 1694:

Wednesday 16th (May). Account of my Linnens. Imp. 6 Night Shirts. 4 Holland halfe shirts. 5 pair of slieves. 7 Caps for nightcaps. 8 little caps. 5 snuff napkins 4 long Muzlin cravats 4 Muzlan cravats wt stocks 4 long Holland Cravats 3 Linnen night cravats 5 snuff napkins 4 pair of linen thred stockins. These I use at present. I have beside lying in a trunk in the little study in my chamber 5 laced Cravats 1 point cravat 2 pair of laced Ruffles and ane odde one 2 Holland shirts. I gave Margaret Turner my linnens for present use to be washt.⁵⁵

Fine linen was a marker of social distinction and it was a valuable commodity. The sons of the elite and the professional classes were frequently overseas, studying at universities in France and the Low Countries and were charged with buying linen and shirts, which had to be washed before their return, thus avoiding tax duty.⁵⁶ By way of contrast, the clothing found on peat bog bodies on Lewis and Shetland from this same period shows that the men were wearing at least one woollen shirt (Figure 9). The man found at Barrock Estate, Caithness-shire, while wearing two woollen doublets, was not found to have a woollen shirt. It is quite possible that he did have a linen shirt which has since decomposed. He left no laundry list. Such a shirt would be similar to that of a poor Lowlander, 'made of *harn*, a linen cloth made of tow, the coarser part of flax thrown off when it had been passed through the hackle, spun and imperfectly bleached at home.'⁵⁷

CONCLUSION

Regarding male dress, Scotland at the turn of the century, *c.* 1700, was anything but uniform. Lowland and Highland and Island regions all had landowners who had the wealth or credit to be able to keep abreast of changes in fashion and to afford fine clothes. Substantial cloths, silks, good linen and fine lace appear in their household reckonings and diaries. Lowland fashions, the fashions derived from France and from London, were emulated far and wide, although with a northern inflection – most specifically in the case of the Highland gentry who also adhered to the use of the plaid and the trews when on home ground. Beyond this elite there was a mass of men whose clothing we can barely know – ranging from the merchants and craftsmen, who could also adopt more fashionable clothing – to those whose livelihood was perhaps more precarious, whose clothing lagged in fashionability and for whom utility was more important. The set of clothes found at Barrock Estate, near Keiss, Caithness-shire, and dating from the last decade of the seventeenth century, shows us the material reality of some of these garments. The clothes, although found in the north east of Scotland, could just as easily be those of a poor Lowlander. In a complementary second article the clothes will be analysed in more detail and discussed in relation to other peat bog clothing finds.

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¹⁰ Donald J Withrington and Ian R Grant (eds), *The Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-1799, Vol XVIII, Caithness and Sutherland* (Wakefield: EP Publishing, 1979), p. 266.

Kelt was a coarse black cloth and many countrymen kept black sheep specially to provide wool for this cloth.

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¹² *Wadmal* was a coarse, dense, usually undyed woollen cloth woven in Scandinavia and the Orkney, Faroe and Shetland Islands where it was valued for the making of warm winter clothing. Its manufacture reaches back to Viking times – see Thor Ewing, *Viking Clothing* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2006), p. 146.

¹³ Burnett et al., 'The Practice of Dyeing Wool in Scotland, c.1790-c.1840', *Folk Life*, 42 (2003-2004), 7-31 (p. 9).

¹⁴ The group portrait of Wrights and Masons by Roderick Chalmers is held by the Conventry of the Trades of Edinburgh at 'Ashfield', 61 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7HL. The painting can be viewed by appointment

and is here reproduced by the Convenery's kind permission. Chalmers appears in the group portrait, which is staged outside the Palace of Holyroodhouse, as the artist figure. He was by trade an heraldic painter.

¹⁵ Helen M Dingwall, *Late Seventeenth- Century Edinburgh: A Demographic Study* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994), p. 137.

¹⁶ Martin Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland, circa 1695, including A Voyage to St Kilda* (first published 1698) (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 1994 edition), p. 318-319.

¹⁷ Thomas Morer, *A Short Account of Scotland* (London: printed for Tho. Newborough, 1702), pp. 14-15

¹⁸ Edmund Burt, *Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland, as related by Edmund Burt*, (First published London: S.Birt, 1754) (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 1998), pp. 40-41. Burt (died 1755) was a surveyor or engineer, most probably contracted in the late 1720s to work on General Wade's strategic road and bridge building programme in the north of Scotland. Burt was mostly stationed at Inverness.

¹⁹ Morer, *A Short Account of Scotland*, p. 9.

²⁰ Burt, *Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland*, p. 231.

²¹ Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, p. 246.

²² Giorgio Riello, *A Foot in the Past: consumers, producers, and footwear in the long eighteenth century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 85. Riello notes that left vs. right was known at the beginning of the seventeenth century, although straight dominated. For heeled shoes, making a left and a right necessitated two lasts, which remained uneconomical until improvements in technology in the early nineteenth century made this viable.

²³ Burt, *Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland*, p. 236.

²⁴ Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, pp. 245-246.

²⁵ Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, pp. 246.

²⁶ Mairead Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland* (London: Batsford, 1989), pp. 55-59, 71, 74,77-79. Seventeenth-century trews were recovered from peat moss at Kilcommon, Co.Tipperary, Killery, Co.Sligo and Dungiven, Co.Derry. The find at Dava Moor, Morayshire, is noted in Naomi Tarrant, 'The 17th century doublet from Keiss, near Wick, Caithness', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquities of Scotland*, 131 (2001), 319-326 (p. 325).

²⁷ John Telfer Dunbar, *History of Highland Dress* (Edinburgh & London: Oliver & Boyd, 1962), p. 35

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²⁹ Burt, *Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland*, p. 231.

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³¹ Plant, 'Clothes and the Eighteenth Century Scot', p. 15.

³² Helen Kelsall and Keith Kelsall, *Scottish Lifestyle 300 years ago: New Light on Edinburgh and Border families with a New Chapter on Music Making* (Aberdeen: Scottish Cultural Press, 1993), pp. 133-4.

³³ Stuart Maxwell and Robin Hutchison, *Scottish Costume 1550-1850* (London: A & C Black, 1958), p. 102.

John Mitchell, 'Memories of Ayrshire about 1780', *Miscellany of the Scottish History Society*, vol. 6 (1939), 241-334 (p. 266).

³⁴ *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis, consisting of Original Papers and Documents Relating to the History of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, edited by the Iona Club, Edinburgh (Edinburgh: Thomas G Stevenson, 1847) p. 43. William Sacheverell was Governor of the Isle of Man, and was employed in 1688 in the attempt to recover the stores of the *Florida*, one of the great vessels of the Spanish Armada (which was blown up and sunk in the harbour of Tobermory in Mull, exactly a hundred years before). He made an excursion through the Isle of Mull, and thence to Icolmkill. In 1702 he published at London an account of this excursion, along with an account of the Isle of Man. In this volume, he describes the dress, armour, and general appearance of the Highlanders as he saw them in the Isle of Mull in 1688.

³⁵ Morer, *A Short Account of Scotland*, pp. 7-8.

³⁶ Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, pp. 246-7.

³⁷ Guy Miège, *The Present State of Great Britain. In two parts. The I. Of South. II Of North Britain*, Vol. 2. (London, 1707), p. 47.

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⁴¹ Michael Newton, *Warriors of the Word: The World of the Scottish Highlanders* (Birlinn: Edinburgh, 2009), pp. 196-197.

⁴² Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland', in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 15-41 (p. 22).

⁴³ *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis*, p. 43.

⁴⁴ Morer, *A Short Account of Scotland*, p. 8-9.

⁴⁵ Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, p. 319.

⁴⁶ *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis*, p. 43.

⁴⁷ Morer, *A Short Account of Scotland*, p. 9. A thrum-cap or bonnet was one made of waste yarn.

⁴⁸ Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, p. 245-6.

⁴⁹ Burt, *Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland*, p. 231.

⁵⁰ The collar on Patie Birnie's coat or cloak is familiar from the eighteenth-century pattern cutting diagrams for a great-coat, re-printed in Norah Waugh, *The Cut of Men's Clothes* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969), p. 95.

⁵¹ Diaries, accounts and editorial commentary that shed light on the clothing practices of the gentry in lowland Scotland can be found in Kelsall, *Scottish Lifestyle 300 years ago*; W C Dickinson, *Two Students at St Andrews 1711-1716* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1952); Helen Kelsall and Keith Kelsall, *An Album of Scottish Families, 1694-96: being the first instalment of George Home's diary, supplemented by much further research into the Edinburgh and Border families forming an extensive network* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1990).

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⁵⁴ Kelsall, *Scottish Lifestyle 300 years ago*, pp. 38, 202. Mitchell, 'Memories of Ayrshire about 1780', p. 267.

Mitchell records that clothes made by country tailors were not very skilfully fitted, despite their long apprenticeship. They would travel with an apprentice who would carry the goose (iron) and the smoothing board, and in summer, it was not uncommon for them to arrive with the early dawn, at 4am.

⁵⁵ Kelsall, *An Album of Scottish Families, 1694-96*, p. 3.

⁵⁶ Plant, 'Clothes and the Eighteenth Century Scot', p. 21.

⁵⁷ Mitchell, 'Memories of Ayrshire about 1780', p. 262.

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