

National Museum of



Antiquities of Scotland

QUEEN STREET

EDINBURGH, 2

Tel. WAVerley 5984

2nd March, 1962.

K.S. Lyon, Esq.,
12 Castle Street,
Dornoch,
Sutherland.

Dear Mr Lyon,

Thank you for your interesting letter. I am afraid 'college' is a puzzle. Its normal sense in Scotland is 'university', which would not apply here. The original sense of the word implies some sort of a gathering, for purposes of education, religious instruction, etc., and I suppose the developed meaning of a place where men gather to sleep might be possible. I'm afraid this is the best suggestion I can make at the moment.

As a matter of fact, the medical terms are all comparatively straightforward. Basilicon ointment is a name given to several ointments supposed to possess sovereign virtues; snake root is the dried root of Polygala senega and aristolochia serpentaria; melilot-plaister is a plaster or poultice made usually from the flowers of the yellow melilot; diapalma plaister is a desiccating plaster containing sulphat^e of zinc; epispastick is a blistering substance; collyrium is an eye-wash or salve.

I should be interested to see your papers some time, particularly the inventories, as these often contain much useful information about early household furnishings etc. which is not otherwise readily available.

Yours sincerely,

Alexander Fenton,

Assistant Keeper.

P.S. You may be interested in our Collector's Guide, which I enclose a copy.

A GUIDE LEAFLET FOR RECORDERS OF SCOTTISH COUNTRY LIFE

Issued by the National Museum of Antiquities of
Scotland, February 1961

These notes are intended as a guide for those who are willing to help with the collection of material and the recording of information about everyday life in the country districts of Scotland. The story of the changes of Kings and governments is well enough preserved in the history books: the Museum is anxious to fill out the other side of the picture. Members of local societies, school teachers, persons from every parish in Scotland, are invited to help us to study the life of their own areas, the crafts, tools, implements, the ways in which they are used, the local names for these things, the farm-buildings and dwelling-houses, the stories, traditions and proverbial lore - everything, in fact, that has not been systematically recorded up to now.

A selection of the subjects we are trying to cover is given below. We should be glad to hear from anyone who can help us with some or any of these. Notebooks will be supplied to collectors, if desired. All communications should be addressed to:

The Keeper,
National Museum of Antiquities of
Scotland,
Queen Street,
Edinburgh, 2. (Tel. WAV 5984)

BUILDINGS: What old-fashioned types are there in your district? Farm-houses, crofts, cottages? Thatched roofs? Box beds? Clay and straw partitions? Fireplace with swey? Outhouses: stable and fittings, byre and fittings, barn, corn-loft, etc. Any unusual, obsolete, or obsolescent features should be noted, and if possible, measured and sketched.

AGRICULTURE: Cultivation. Old ploughs, especially wooden ones, with local names of parts, and information about local makers. Oxen used? Wooden harrows? Spade cultivation?

Sowing. Ways of sowing by hand. Locally made seed-drills?

Harvesting. Scythes and sickles. How are they sharpened? Sizes of hay-coles? Is hay built in stacks or sows? Wooden hay rakes and 'tumbling tams'? Stooking of grain. Number of sheaves per stook. Making of bands for sheaves. Any special customs on the cutting of the last sheaf? Celebration when crop is all in? What are the kinds of stack-foundations? Shapes of stacks? Methods of roping stacks? Making of straw-ropes for roping thatch? Thrawcrooks and their local name? Hay and corn carts?

Threshing and winnowing. Locally made mills? Horse-driven mills? Fanners? Bruisers?

FARM ANIMALS: Implements used in foddering, e.g. turnip-toppers, turnip-hashers, chaff-cutters, whin-mills, bruise-boxes, sculls, etc. Local names? How are animals fastened outside or in the byre or stable?

Horse harness. Recipes for cleaning harness.

Horseman's word? Horse lore in general.

Types of sheep-folds? Snow shelters for sheep?
Ear-marks? Any old books of ear-marks?

Details of local veterinary practices.

SMITHING: Description of local smithy, especially the forge. Nail-making seat and anvil? Tools used, and their names and uses. What did the smith specialise in? - e.g. ploughs. How were iron rings put on cart wheels?

CRAFTS: What crafts are carried on in your area? Are any old illustrated catalogues available? Full details of all tools, sketched if possible, with local names, and methods of use.

CRAFTS: (Contd.)

Shoemaking, saddlery, collar-making, basket-making, joinering, locally made furniture, wood-turning, pottery, textiles, thatching, dyking, coopering, wheel-wrighting, etc.

FENCING: Local shapes of gates? What kinds of dykes are characteristic of your area? Any earthen dykes? Any local kinds of fencing?

TRANSPORT: Local makes of carts? Any special ornamentation on them, especially on the head-board? Sleds used for transport? Wooden pack-saddles? Baskets of all kinds and other containers?

FUEL: Is peat-cutting done in your district? What implements are used, (1) for taking off or cutting the surface turf; (2) for undercutting the peat-bank; (3) for cutting and lifting the peat? How stacked for drying? How is it transported to the house? Are peat barrows used? What are the peat-barrows in your district like? How are peats stacked at the house? Peat-sheds? Allocation of peat banks?

Generally speaking, anything that is going out of use or out of fashion should be recorded, as well as anything that has been locally made. Old photographs, post-cards, farmers' diaries, tradesmen's and craftsmen's account books, notebooks of horsemen's lore, etc. are of particular value.

All information collected is kept in classified files, and is freely available to interested enquirers.



SCOTTISH RECORD OFFICE

P.O. Box 36, H.M. General Register House

EDINBURGH 2

Telephone : Waverley 2561 ext. 7

Postage must be prepaid

Your reference :

Please address any reply to ~~THE RECORD OFFICE, EDINBURGH~~

Curator of Historical Records

8th March, 1962.

Dear Sir,

I refer to your letter of 3rd March inquiring about the meaning of the term "college" as applied to rooms in Embo and Dunrobin.

As you say, the dictionaries do not help; nor is there any reference to the "college" at Dunrobin in Sir William Fraser's Sutherland Book, although household inventories in the muniments at Dunrobin might throw some further light on the use of the room. Mr. Aitken, the Editor of the Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue, suggests a possible Gaelic derivation, although there are phonological difficulties, and has given the following references: cf. Irish codalteach, codaltach 'sleeping-chamber'; Gaelic cadal and Irish codladh, obsolete Gaelic colladh and (mid-Perthshire) collaidh, all = sleep, plus Irish and Gaelic teach house.

I am sorry not to be more helpful.

Yours faithfully,

Curator of Historical Records.

K. J. Lyon, Esq.,
12 Castle Street,
Dornoch,
Sutherland.

National Museum of



Antiquities of Scotland

QUEEN STREET

EDINBURGH, 2

Tel. WAVerley 5984

12th March, 1962.

K.S. Lyon, Esq.,
12 Castle Street,
Dornoch,
Sutherland.

Dear Mr Lyon,

Thank you for your letter. It sounds as if you have got the right explanation for "college", as it certainly seems to be completely unlike a farm-servants' "chaumer" or "bothy", which even today can be a pretty bare place.

I should certainly like to have a copy of the Dunrobin and Embo inventories some time, if it is not going to involve you in too much labour. I was interested to hear of the farm accounts (which interest me particularly) that you sent to the Record Office, and I'll have a look at them when opportunity offers. It would be nice to see the photograph of the old house within the walls of Skelbo Castle, and I can copy it photographically and return it.

I enclose some more guide leaflets, and if your friends would like to have notebooks for jotting things down in, I shall send them on later.

If you have any other queries about names, etc., I shall always be pleased to help.

Yours sincerely,

Reconder Fenton,

Assistant Keeper.

THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL DICTIONARY

THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL DICTIONARY ASSOCIATION LTD

President: JOHN McVIE, O.B.E., Edinburgh.

Chairman: Professor W. L. LORIMER, LL.D., F.B.A., St Andrews.

Editor: DAVID D. MURISON, M.A. (Aberd.), B.A. (Cantab.).

Secretary and Treasurer: W. CROWN HODGE, Clydesdale & North of Scotland Bank Ltd.,
88 Princes Street, Edinburgh.

TEL. NO. 44961 (EXT. 2)

27 George Square,
Edinburgh, 8.

12 March 1962

Dear Mr Lyon,

The staff of the Register House have passed on to me the usage of the word college which you have discovered in some Embo and Dunrobin documents. It would appear to indicate a kind of dormitory and I suspect that it may have ~~be~~ survived from some pre-Reformation usage though I cannot at the moment find any corroborating evidence for this. The context as given me by the Register House is very scanty and I should be very glad to have an excerpt of the sentence or passage in which the word occurs.

I wonder if there is any evidence to show a link with Roman Catholicism in the history of Embo.

If by any chance you come across
any other similar out-of-the-way usage
in your research, I should be very
pleased to have a note of it.

Yours sincerely,

David Morrison.

Notes & Queries 10th

Series 317

occasion

THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL DICTIONARY

THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL DICTIONARY ASSOCIATION LTD

President: JOHN McVIE, O.B.E., Edinburgh.

Chairman: Professor W. L. LORIMER, LL.D., F.B.A., St Andrews.

Editor: DAVID D. MURISON, M.A. (Aberd.), B.A. (Cantab.).

Secretary and Treasurer: W. CROWN HODGE, Clydesdale & North of Scotland Bank Ltd.,
88 Princes Street, Edinburgh.

TEL. No. 44961 (EXT. 2)

27 George Square,
Edinburgh, 8.

24 March 1962.

Dear Miss Lyon,

I should have thanked you for your kind and prompt reply to my query about college etc this time. I still have no suggestions to offer about its origin in your sense which I can substantiate.

From the context it obviously is intended to mean a common bedroom or dormitory and just as barrack (still used in Morayshire for a farm servants' botthey), which you very properly compare, has been taken from military usage, so college appears to have been transferred from academic or ecclesiastical usage of a building in which people live in common.

As the word college is not elsewhere authenticated in this sense, one wonders whether it may not have been a family

traditional usage and the origin of it due to some association of some of the family, not necessarily in the 18th century, with a ~~the~~ University or with a Cathedral or Abbey. Hence my question about Catholics.

There is one jocular usage of college for a public-house in Aberdeenshire and in my own native parish of Fraserburgh an old site of a Chapel attached to the Abbey of Deer was sometimes called the College.

I still feel that there may be some semantic association of this sort in the case of your Sutherland colleges but you will be able to decide more accurately on this from your own knowledge of the families in question and their historical connections.

Anyhow very many thanks for sending me the reference and the context of the usage.

Yours sincerely,
David Morrison.

National Museum of



Antiquities of Scotland

QUEEN STREET

EDINBURGH, 2

Tel. WAVERLEY 5984

3rd May, 1962.

Miss K.J. Lyon,
12 Castle Street,
Dornoch,
Sutherland.

Dear Miss Lyon,

Thank you very much indeed for sending on your typescript copies from the Dunrobin and Embo Inventories. They are of considerable interest from the point of view of the social history of the period, and will be of help to us when, some time in the future, we set about reconstructing period rooms. I don't think there is much doubt that "hnds" stands for hogsheds. A "yettling" is a griddle for oatcakes, etc., and under the heading Labouring and Garden Utensils, "relloch" should read "kelloch", and "slaughter" should read "flaughter". A kelloch cart is, or was, like a large basket mounted on wheels, used especially for carrying manure, and often having a hinged bottom to let the contents drop out easily. A flaughter spade is a turf spade.

It would be most interesting to see something of the accounts of droves in Sutherland in the 18th century, when you get a little time, though I'm afraid I'm giving you rather a lot of work to do on your typewriter. Do you know Haldane's book on The Drove Roads of Scotland?

With thanks again for your trouble,

Yours sincerely,

Alexander Fenton,

Assistant Keeper.