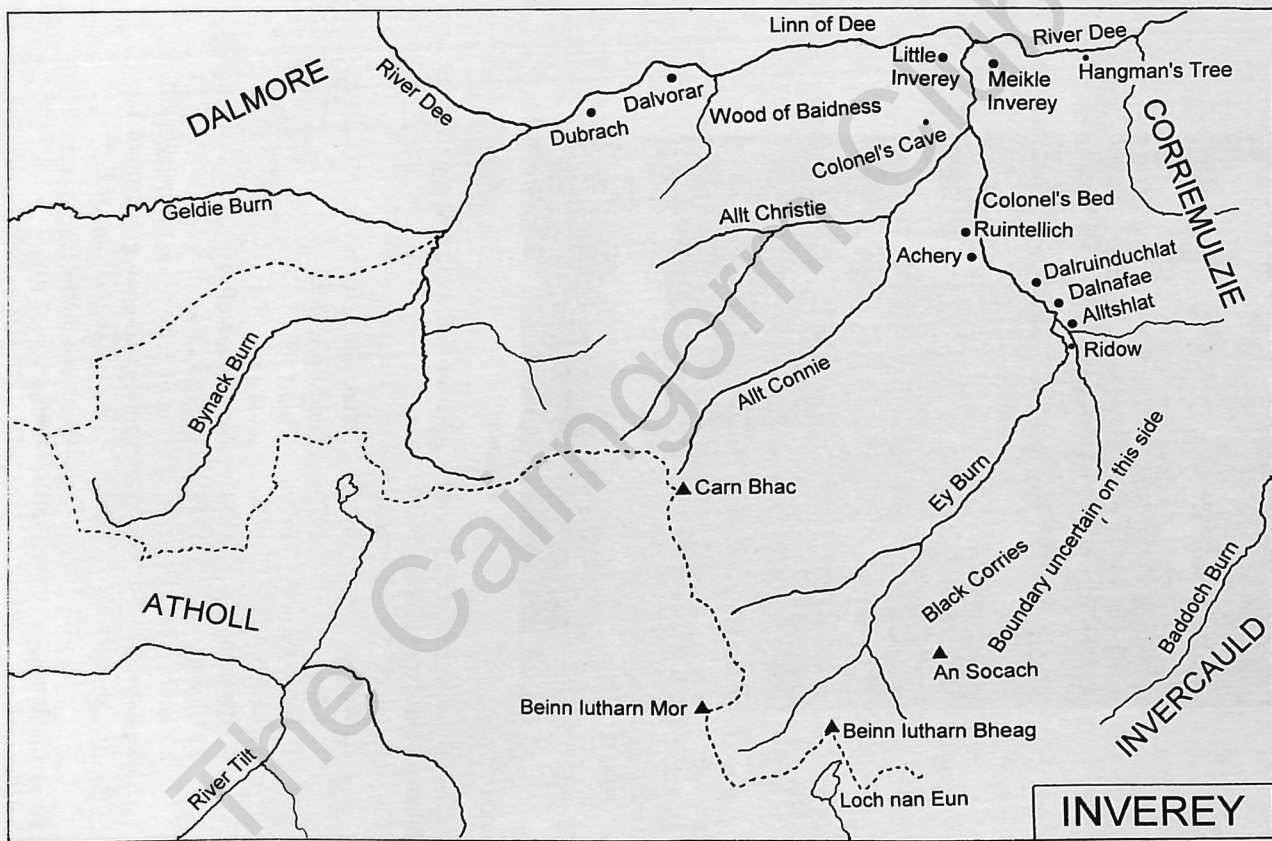


Inverey and the Farquharsons

Graham Ewan

The Inverey Estate was quite large. The northern boundary, as described in the Charter granted in 1707, started at the Inver or mouth of the Ey and followed the River Dee westwards as far as its junction with the Geldie. On the west the boundary followed the Geldie as far as its junction with the Bynack Burn and from there followed the watershed between the Bynack Burn and the Geldie. On the south it followed the line of the present County Boundary as far as the headwaters of the Ey. The eastern boundary is not described. It is possible that it included the whole of the Glen Ey catchment area, but the exact line is not known. There is, however, a possibility that parts of Glen Ey belonged to the neighbouring small estate of Corriemulzie and Craggan, which used to have their shieling grounds where the farms of Dalruinduchlat, Dalnafae and Alltshlat were later to be established (i.e. the area around the Piper's Wood). It is interesting to note that as late as the 1841 census these farms were listed along with Corriemulzie, while those on the west side of the Ey are listed along with Inverey. However, the charter granted to Inverey in 1707 mentions these grounds as belonging to the Inverey Estate. The water is muddied further when one reads a charter granted in 1632 to Alister Mackenzie in the estate of Corriemulzie and Craggan, where these pasturages are described as belonging to him. The tenants of Coldrach in Glen Clunie, which belonged to Invercauld, also had a right of shieling in Glen Ey in the area called the Black Corries (the west side of An Socach). In this case there seems no doubt that, despite these shieling rights, this area definitely belonged to Inverey. There is also a difficulty about the eastern boundary in the immediate area of Inverey itself. The area so far described would exclude the village of Meikle Inverey, but it must have been part of the estate. We can only assume that the boundary lay somewhat east of this at that point.

The Estate of Inverey was, at the start of its known history, in the hands of the Lamonts. Around 1620 the Lamonts, along with members of Clan Chattan, conducted a major raid down Deeside and laid waste much of Glen Gairn, Tullich and Glen Muick. Following this raid, the Farquharsons moved against Lamont, who was arrested and hanged from the so-called Hangman's Tree which still stands, although now in a decrepit state, just west of Mar Lodge Bridge. Whether anyone else has ever been hanged from this tree, I do not know. It was following this event that the first Farquharson Laird was installed in Inverey.





Hangman's Tree

There were to be eleven Farquharson Lairds in Inverey over the next hundred and sixty years:

- | | | |
|--------------------|------|--|
| 1. James | 1632 | |
| 2. William | 1635 | (eldest son of 1) |
| 3. John | 1670 | (eldest son of 2) |
| 4. Peter (Patrick) | 1699 | (eldest son of 3) |
| 5. Joseph | 1737 | (eldest son of 4) |
| 6. Benjamin | 1738 | (second son of 4) |
| 7. Charles | 1739 | (brother of 4) |
| 8. James | 1750 | (son of 3, by second marriage) |
| 9. John | 1753 | (great-great-great-grandson of 1) |
| 10. Alexander | 1754 | (great-great-grandson of 1,
by second marriage) |
| 11. James | 1780 | (eldest son of 10) |

It would seem that James, the first Laird, was first installed in Inverey in 1622 as a tenant, but did not receive the feu right until 1632. The dates of entry into the estate given above are not necessarily the dates of the death of the previous owner. Sometimes the estate was made over to the eldest son before the death of the father. James, 1st of Inverey, for example, lived until at least 1664, although he had made over the Inverey estate to his son 32 years earlier.

The Feu Superior was of course the Earl of Mar until the 1715 uprising, after which the Superiority was confiscated by the Government. Lord Erskine of Grange, the Earl of Mar's brother, and his friend Lord Erskine of Dun were later allowed to buy it back for a knock-down price, and administered it in trust for Thomas Lord Erskine (the Earl of Mar's son). However the Earl of Mar had incurred enormous debts as a result of the uprising in 1715 and these had to be repaid. In order to achieve this, the Superiorities of Inverey and most of the other Upper Deeside estates were sold to Lord Braco (later the Earl of Fife) in 1735. While the Farquharsons had most of the privileges of owning the estate for a yearly payment of £25 Scots, they also had to perform various services for the Superior. These included attendance at any district courts that the Superior might arrange, personal attendance with dogs and hounds at all huntings, and military service if required. The naturally growing fir woods and the deer and roe remained the property of the Superior. The Farquharsons and their tenants nevertheless had the right to a certain amount of servitude timber from the fir woods, such as they required for their buildings. The tenants had to apply for this through their Laird.

The old Charters laid down that the succession in the Estate was to be strictly to the nearest male heir. In the early years it would appear that the Farquharsons of Inverey prospered. As the years went by, other estates were acquired: Tullich in 1638, Balmoral in 1642 and Corriemulzie in 1660. They also had interests in Easter Micras and elsewhere. All these acquisitions passed on from father to son as planned until 1738 when Peter's eldest son Joseph died unmarried and so the estate passed to his brother Benjamin, who died the following year, also unmarried. The estate then passed on to Charles, Peter's brother, who had already acquired in 1731 the Barony of Auchlossan.

When Charles died in 1750, also unmarried, the estate passed to his half-brother James. However, in 1753 the two daughters of Peter, Emilia and Margaret, mounted a legal challenge to his right to the estate. During the process both sisters died, shortly followed by James himself. The case was carried on by Patrick Mearns and Charles Grant, sons of the deceased sisters, but in the end their claim was rejected by the Lords of Session of Scotland on 11th February 1756. The estate had meantime passed to John, James's second-cousin-once-removed, but he died a short time thereafter, without having had time to make up his titles, and the estate passed on to Alexander Farquharson of Auchindryne, a great-grandson of James (1st Laird) by his second marriage.

Unlike all the previous Lairds, Alexander was a catholic, and although he styled himself 'of Inverey' he lived most of his time in Balmoral until the estate passed on to his eldest son James in 1780.

The Farquharsons of Inverey, although protestant, were always staunchly Jacobite and took an active part in all the main uprisings. A brief summary of their activities follows.

Colonel William Farquharson of Inverey took part in the campaigns of Montrose in 1645, participating in the Battle of Alford on the 2nd of July and the Battle of Kilsyth on 15th of August. It is likely that Inverey commanded the main rebel battle-group on both these occasions. He was in action again in April 1646, when along with Alexander Irvine of Drum they beat up some government quarters at Murtle. He also took part in the storming of Aberdeen the following month. In May 1664, along with others from Upper Deeside and Donside (under the Earl of Mar), he took part in a raid on Aberdeen to demolish the cruives which had been erected across the River Don, injuring the fishing in the upper part of the river. It is said that 2,500 men took part. In the court hearing which followed, it being shown that the construction of the cruives had contravened several Acts of Parliament, the Lords took the view that Mar and his associates had acted with some justification and so absolved them.

His son, John, perhaps better known as the 'Black Colonel', took part in Dundee's insurrection in 1689. He was probably not present at the Battle of Killiecrankie, but prior to that a party of Farquharsons led by him burned down Braemar Castle to prevent its use by Government troops. He in turn had his own castle in Inverey burned down after the rebellion failed, but escaped capture by hiding in the gorge of Glen Ey at the spot now known as the Colonel's Bed. High up on Creag a Chait, on the Ordnance Survey Pathfinder series, you will find the words Colonel's Cave. A detailed search of the crags in this area failed to find any trace of a cave, but there may have been one in past times. It is said that from this spot the Black Colonel watched while his castle burned.

In 1715, Peter Farquharson, the Black Colonel's son, was a colonel in the Earl of Mar's Regiment. He was presumably present at the Battle of Sherriffmuir and afterwards fled to France where he remained until the Act of Indemnity was passed. He narrowly escaped having his estate forfeited, because his name had been wrongly inserted in the Act of Attainder as Alexander Farquharson of Inverey.

Charles Farquharson, 7th Laird and brother of Peter above, did not take part in the 1745 uprising (although he had accompanied his brother in 1715), but there is no doubt that a number of his tenants did, joining up with Farquharson of Monaltrie's regiment. The most famous of these was Peter Grant of Dubrach, who was promoted to sergeant following the Battle of Prestonpans. He was captured after the Battle of Culloden and taken prisoner

to Carlisle. He managed to make his escape from there and returned to the Braemar area, where he died in 1824 at the age of 110. He is buried in Braemar churchyard next to the Farquharson mausoleum.

Ironically, Dubrach was taken over as an outpost for government troops who were stationed there for some years thereafter. Dubrach, of course, is strategically situated at the junction of the routes north through the Lairig Ghru, south and west to Glen Tilt and Glenfeshie, and east along the Dee valley. The detachment consisted of a sergeant, a corporal and twelve men. Their duties were to patrol north as far as Glen Geusachan, east as far as Glen Lui, west along Glen Geldie, and south along Glen Tilt. At fixed points along these routes they would meet up with patrols from military outposts elsewhere.

The Farquharsons in Inverey became involved in a number of no doubt expensive court cases to settle arguments with neighbouring estate owners. The first such was in 1723 when Kenneth Mackenzie of Dalmore took action against Peter Farquharson of Inverey. There were various points at issue, but the main ones were concerned with the new ploughed lands in Glen Ey, which had once been the shieling ground of the tenants of Corriemulzie. Kenneth Mackenzie claimed that the tenants there should be thirled to his mill at Dalmore in the same way as Inverey's tenants in Corriemulzie were. He also claimed that "his tenants in Craggan were in use to pasture their cattle in Rieluchlat and Altalat" i.e. where the new ploughed lands were. I do not know the outcome of the case.

A further case took place in 1743 between Charles Farquharson and Lord Braco in which there were two main points at issue. The first concerned a bulwark that Lord Braco had erected in the Dee at the west end of the Haugh of Dalmore, which Farquharson claimed was diverting the river on to his land to its injury. The second was an argument about rights of way in the vicinity of Dalmore House (Mar Lodge). It appears that the main route eastward from Inverey at that time had been to cross the Dee by a ford called the Puintoul and go eastwards from there past the front door of Dalmore House. Lord Braco, in an effort to provide some privacy around the House had blocked off the entrance to the ford. He wanted people to use a road down the south side of the Dee, but most of the witnesses stated that this was an exceedingly bad road and not nearly as good as the one on the north side of the water. During the case it was claimed that Lord Braco had actually removed the bulwark, but witnesses for the Inverey side said that the foundations remained and were causing just as much damage as the bulwark itself. Again it is not clear what the outcome of this case was.

In both of the above cases there was a further argument concerning the location of the buildings of Inverey's tenants in Drumcraggan, which were probably built on land belonging to Dalmore. This really is part of Corriemulzie, not Inverey, but of course the Farquharsons were the owners of Corriemulzie as well by this time. In this case we know that the outcome must

have been favourable to Inverey, as the matter was not finally settled until 1778.

There is little information about the tenants on the estate during the time of the Farquharsons. They lived in fire houses, which were small buildings with low dry-stone walls and a thatched roof. There was no fireplace, the fire being in the middle of the floor, and the smoke simply escaping through a hole in the roof. There is no doubt that they were all subsistence farmers keeping cattle and growing oats, bere and kale on small patches of arable land. Some sheep and goats were also kept. They worked the land on the old run-rig system, whereby each tenant had narrow strips of land scattered about over a wide area. The kale was grown in kale-yards, which were usually small in area surrounded by a dry-stone dyke. These were the only enclosures. The cattle wandered about the available pasture accompanied by a herd, usually a young boy, whose job it was to make sure they did not stray on to prohibited areas. The cattle were taken to summer shielings in the Glens of Connie and Christie during the summer months. It is perhaps likely that when the Farquharsons first took over Inverey the only settlement on the estate was in the immediate area around Inverey itself. As the years went by, population pressure led to the expansion up Glen Dee to Dalvorar and Dubrach and into Glen Ey, first to Ruintellich and Achery and later to Dalruinduchlat, Dalnafae and Alltshlat. There is evidence of this in the charter granted to Peter Farquharson in 1707, where reference is made to the town and lands of Achery, while Dalruinduchlat and Dalnafae are still referred to as shieling grounds, although they had almost certainly become permanent settlements by that time.

The 1692 Poll Book records eight families living in Glen Ey, eight in Meikle Inverey and thirteen in Little Inverey, a total of twenty-nine in all. There is no mention of Dalvorar and Dubrach, but it is possible that they were linked in with Little Inverey. Dubrach is certainly mentioned in the same memo to the Earl of Mar complaining about encroachments on to the shielings, as were the new ploughed lands of Dalruinduchlat, Dalnafae and Alltshlat.

Father Charles Farquharson (brother of Alexander Farquharson, 10th Laird) conducted a survey of the population in the parish. Unfortunately the exact date is not known, but it must have been some time in the mid-1700s. He lists seven families in Glen Ey, twelve in Inverey and five in Glen Dee, a total of twenty-four. Of these, twenty were catholic and only four were protestant.

The earliest Rental List to have survived is that of 1785, the date of the purchase of the estate by the Earl of Fife. Here there are seven tenants listed in Glen Ey, twelve in Meikle Inverey, eight in Little Inverey and two in Glen Dee, a total of twenty-nine.

It seems strange that there should only have been twelve families living in Inverey at the time of Father Farquharson's survey, when there were twenty-one in 1692 and twenty in 1785. In his lists he gives the name of the head of the family if they were catholic, but only gives the number of protestant families

at the end of each list as a footnote. In the case of Inverey the footnote reads: "Only one whole protestant familie." I suspect that he has missed out some families who were partly protestant and partly catholic.

On 21st August 1725 all the heritors in the Lordship of Mar were summoned to a court convened by Lords Grange and Dun and held at Castletoun of Braemar. At this court an Act for the Preservation of the Fir Woods was made and enacted. Its main points were that no-one was to be allowed to cut and carry away any timber, except servitude timber, which could only be cut in June in the presence of the baillie or forester expressly appointed to oversee this. There were also severe restrictions in the use of servitude timber. It could only be used in the construction of buildings, and its use for fencing or any other purpose was expressly forbidden. Any muirburn was to take place between Michaelmas and the end of March, and there was to be no muirburn within 300 Scotch ells of any old or young fir trees. When Lord Braco bought the Superiority of the Estate in 1735, he lost no time in trying to enforce the terms of the above Act to stop what he called the gross abuses that were taking place in his fir woods. The people of Inverey had been in the habit of digging up the roots of old trees and using them as firewood. Even this apparently harmless activity was to be stopped. And of course there was to be no hunting of deer or roe. Proclamations to this effect were made from time to time at the church doors of Kindrochit and Crathie immediately after the dismissing of the congregation.

There was one substantial fir wood on the Inverey Estate. It covered the face of the hill opposite Little Inverey and extended westwards to beyond the Linn of Dee, and was called the Wood of Baidness. As was the case in neighbouring estates, Lord Braco was keen to exploit his fir woods for his own profit. Some of the wood was cut on his own account and manufactured in his sawmill at Delnabord, which was just across the river from Muir. Some of the trees were sold to wood merchants: for example in 1753 six hundred trees in Baidness were sold to a merchant called John Farquhar. Two letters survive from tenants of Inverey who had been caught cutting wood in Baidness by Lord Braco's forester. They agreed to his Lordship's terms that they would each pay the forester six pence for the return of their axes, and being bound not to be found in the like transgression, under the penalty on one pound sterling.

In 1778 Alexander Farquharson agreed to lease the hill opposite to Mar Lodge to the Earl of Fife, who wanted to plant trees there to embellish the view from Mar Lodge. An interesting clause in the agreement required the Earl to enclose the area with a sufficient stone dyke six quarters high. There was to be no poinding of any cattle belonging to Inverey's tenants, which might happen to stray into the area. The road from Corriemulzie to Inverey was to remain open and not to be altered in any way. For this the Earl was to pay £35 grassum entry money and 10/- per year rent. Any birch trees growing within the enclosed area

were to become the property of the Earl. Another part of the agreement was that Alexander Farquharson would renounce his right and that of his tenants to servitude timber from the Earl of Fife's fir woods in Inverey. In return the Earl disposed to him the fir woods on the estate of Balmoral and also the right to hunt deer and roe on Balmoral.

Long before the estate passed to James, 11th Laird, in 1780, the Farquharsons were having serious financial difficulties. The burdens passed on by previous military adventures and a number of very expensive court cases had taken their toll. In fact in 1775 a John Mackenzie of Delvin acquired temporary right over Inverey and Corriemulzie, but this was restored to Alexander Farquharson in 1777. The Earl of Fife had long wanted to purchase the Inverey Estate, probably to give him more control over the tenants thereof, whom he frequently accused of poaching and other abuses. That this was still a problem in the 1780s is illustrated by the two events described below.

On 17th July 1781 a court was held at Mill of Lawsie in an attempt to find out who had started a fire in the wood of Baidness in June 1780. This fire burned some birch wood belonging to Inverey and some fir wood belonging to the Earl of Fife. Finlay McIntosh, a tenant in Inverey, described the area where the fire took place as part of the outshot and daily pasturage of his possession. John Grant, another tenant, described it as part of the common pasturage. All the tenants of Little Inverey were summoned to give evidence, but none had any to offer save the fact that some had heard that a Donald Grant alias Keir was responsible. Nevertheless, on the strength of this a warrant was issued for the arrest of the said Donald Grant.

On the 28th Day of October 1782, Peter Downie in Inverey and James Fraser also in Inverey were seen in the Forest of Derrerray (in Glen Lui), shooting with guns and slaying deer and roe. On the 9th December 1783, Alexander Stuart Esq. of Edinglassie, Justice of the Peace in the County of Aberdeen, granted a warrant for the arrest of the two people so accused, with the recommendation that the constable executing the said warrant should be accompanied by a corporal and four soldiers from the Braemar Barracks.

In 1785 a further attempt was made by the Earl of Fife to put an end to these practices. The tenants of Inverey were summoned to take an oath to obey the game laws and the laws for the preservation of woods. These seem to have been extended since previous attempts. For example there was to be no cutting of birchwood, alder, thorns or holly, when previously only fir wood was mentioned. The people of Inverey were prohibited from carrying guns, and no dogs were to be allowed within the confines of the forest. Hares, partridges, heath fowl and black game were added to prohibited list for hunting. The tenants also had to obey the laws for shieling and must go to their shielings no later than 26th May and remain there until the 26th August.

When James inherited in 1780 and faced the prospect that he would have

to sell the estate, he was determined that it would not be to the Earl of Fife. He was well aware of the fact that the Earl was interested in buying it, but relations between the two families had seldom been easy. However the Earl of Fife eventually accomplished the purchase in 1786 by using an intermediary to buy the estate and then sell it on to him. This was a George Robinson, described as a Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh, who paid the sum of £8,400 sterling with interest thereof from the term of Whitsunday 1785. The eventual total came to £8,820 but these figures include not only the sale of the Inverey Estate but the Estates of Corriemulzie and Auchindryne also. With this event ends the history of the Farquharsons of Inverey, at least as far as Inverey Estate is concerned.

Most of the information on which this article is based derives from the Duff House Papers, which are held in the Special Libraries and Archives of the University of Aberdeen, and also from some private Mar Estate Papers kindly lent to me by Captain Nicolson