

**SCOTTISH RECORD
SOCIETY: PARISH
REGISTERS OF CANISBAY
(CAITHNESS), 1652-1666**

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Scottish Record Society: Parish registers of Canisbay (Caithness), 1652-1666 by D. Beaton

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D. BEATON

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Canisbay, Caithness (parish)

(SCOTTISH RECORD SOCIETY

~~HEGARTY~~
~~1887~~

Indices and calendar 1652-1666
no 48

PARISH REGISTERS

OF

CANISBAY (CAITHNESS)

1652-1666

EDITED BY

REV. D. BEATON, WICK.

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P R E F A C E.

THE Registers of Baptisms, Matrimonial Contracts, and Marriages which follow, cover the period during which the Rev. William Davidson served "the cure at Cannasbey," viz., from 1652-1666. Mr. Davidson, however, though serving the cure from 1652 was not admitted minister of Canisbay until 17th February, 1655, and eleven years later he was transferred to Birsay (Orkney). As noted in the footnotes there are a number of blanks in the Registers, and after 1661 the entries of baptisms, marriage contracts, and marriages were not kept in a separate register, but included in the record of the kirk-session proceedings. The entries in these Registers will be of service to the genealogist interested in such Caithness families as the Sinclairs of Canisbay, of Dunbeath, of Mey, and of Brabster, and also such families as the Groats, the Kennedys of Stroma, the Mowats of Freswick, etc. Most of the outstanding Caithness families have already been dealt with by Henderson in his *Notes on Caithness Family History*, but owing to the vast amount of new material it is to be hoped that someone competent for the task will undertake the work of revising Henderson's *Notes* and so bring the book up-to-date. Brief genealogical articles, dealing with the Groats and the Calders, have appeared in the *John O'Groat Journal*, 21st February, 1899, and in the *Northern Ensign*, 3rd July, 1900. The name Ogstone which appears in the Registers is evidently that borne by some of the descendants of the Rev. Andrew Ogstone, minister of Canisbay prior to Mr. Davidson. The name has been changed in modern times into Houston, but its old connection with Hogstown in Strathbogie, from which the name originates, has been persistently maintained through the centuries in the Caithness folk pronunciation of Houston as "Hougston." So also with Warrs, though now written "Wares," one continually hears it pronounced in Caithness as "Warrs": the *a* having the *ah* sound. A feature of the names in the list is the

number of surnames derived from local place-names, such as Bowar, Broch, Caldër (Caldell), Coghill (Cogill, Cogle), Dunnet, Gills, Ham, Harrow, Skail, Stroma, Swanny (Swanie)¹ and Wares (Warrs). The purely Celtic surname, which in its Anglicised form appears as "MacIlhuy," is presumably the Gaelic *Mac Ghille Dhuibh* (son of Duff's servant), which in its modern contracted English form would be MacDuff.

The parish of Canisbay is on the extreme north-east of Scotland, and has within its borders the far-famed John O'Groat's House.

D. BEATON.

Wick, 27th August, 1914.

¹ Island of *Sveona* in Orkney.

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PARISH OF CANISBAY.

REGISTER OF BAPTISMS.

Register of the names of the bairnes baptized be Mr. Wm. Davison since his entrie to serve the cure at Cannasbey, before and since his admission, containing the names of ye parents, presenters, of ye childrene and ye witnesses, with the date of ye day, moneth and yeir wherin they were baptized.

APRIL, 4, 1651.

Andro Mowat in Oughingill had a sonne baptized and named Alexander; Alexander Jack and Andro Ogstone, witnesses.

APRIL, 5, 1652.

Donald M'Beath in Braibster had a daughter baptized and named Elizabeth; Andro Dunett and Donald Baine, witnesses.

BAPTISMES.

June, 1653; wher the day of the moneth is notted on ye margent.

12. A daughter begottin in fornicat^on baptized to William Mendtheplay in Friswick and named Helene; Donald Liell and John Warrs, witnesses.
19. A sonne baptized to Johne Rosie in Mey, called William; Wm. Sinclair and Wm. Rosie, witnesses.¹
- .. Patrick Mowat in Friswick; Magnus; the same day witnesses.²
- .. Alexr. Miller in Mey; Christane; Jon M'Beath, Wm. Dunett.

JULY, 1653.

28. Donald Liell, younger, in Cannasbey; Magnus; Jon M'Beath, Wm. Dunett.

AUGUST, 1653.

8. Sir Wm. Sinclair of Cannasbey, knight baronet; George; Sir James Sinclair of Murkle, Francise Sinclair in Scrabster, Walter Bruice of Ham.
12. Tuo childrene baptized to Joⁿ, Nicolsons in Slicklie; Thomas and Janet; Thomas Tailor, Donald Baine in Braibster. They wer begottin in fornicat^on.
- .. Andro Watsone in Stroma; William; Wm. Geddes, Donald Liell, younger.
21. Andro Stevin in Ouking'ill; Janet.³
26. Donald Barnatsone in Friswick; Margaret; James Dunett, Johne M'Beath.
- .. Tuo childrene baptized to John Banks in Holamey; Donald and Issobell; James Warrs in Cannasbey, Johne Groat.

¹ For the sake of brevity the succeeding entries will simply give the father's name, name of child and names of witnesses, thus:—John Rosie (father); William (child); William Sinclair, William Rosie (witnesses).

² That is the same witnesses as in preceding entry.

³ Where witnesses' names are not given it is to be understood that they are not in the Register.

28. James Warrs in Dungasbey ; James ; James Warrs in Cannasbey. John Groat.

SEPTEMBER, 1653.

4. A daughter begottin in fornicacn be Thomas Groat ; Barbara ; Joⁿ Sim-
sone, Joⁿ Stevin.
" Andro Laird in Dungasbey ; Issobell ; David M'Beath, William Harpar.
" Michall Gray in Friswick ; baptized John, begottin in fornicacn ; John
Cormack, George Mowat.

OCTOBER, 1653.

2. Ane sonne begottin in fornicacn be William Bruice, younger in Lythe ;
Donald ; Donald Groat of Warrs, Hendrie Hendersone in Dungasbey,
Thomas Bruice in Cannasbey.
4. William Barrie, smith in Friswick ; Janet.
16. Hew Groat ; Issobell ; Mr. William Davidstone, Thomas Groat.
" John Watstone in Stroma ; Walter ; John Mansone, Joⁿ Stevin.
22. Alexander Rosie in Holamey ; Hendrie ; Hendrie Miller, James Banks.

NOVEMBER, 1653.

2. Donald Laird in Nybster in ye parishe of Wick ; Johne ; John Sinclair,
Joⁿ Leyth.
27. Alexander Cogill ; Barbara, begottin in fornicacn ; Alexander Barnatsone,
Thomas Robsone.
28. Barrie Barnatsone ; Johne ; Johne Simsone, James Warrs.
" Johne Baine in Slickellie ; George ; George Baine, William Johnstone.

DECEMBER, 1653.

10. Donald Swanny ; Peter.
17. Hendrie Liell in Mey ; Alexander ; Alexander Sinclair, Johne M'Kenzie.
21. A child begottin in fornicacn by Andro Smith in Braubster ; name not
given ; William M'Beath.
28. Johne Mowat in South Ronaloshae in Orkuay ; Peter ; William Rosie,
Andro Watstone ; also William Rosie became suretie yt the said chyld is
lawly begottin under ye paine of 40 pund.

JANUARY, 1654.

8. William Rosie in Stroma ; Marie ; Thomas Tailor, Barrie.
15. Ane daughter begottin in fornicacn baptized to William Mowat in Fris-
wick ; Issobell ; George Stroma, Johne Mowat.
" James Harrow in Mey ; Elizabeth ; Johne Sinclair, Alexander Sinclair.
" Donald Rugg in Okiegil ; Janet ; Thomas Tailor, Barrie.
29. Donald Mowat in Mey ; James ; James Dunnett, Donald Liell in Mey.

FEBRUARY, 1654.

11. Alexander Baine in Braibster ; Christane ; Thomas Tailor, Barrie.
17. Alexander Smith in Dungasbey ; Margt. ; Thomas Tailor, Barrie.

MARCH, 1654.

2. James Dunett ; Malcome ; Andro Dunnett, Thomas Tailor.
8. Donald Groat of Warrs ; Issobell ; Johne Groate, Malcome Groate,
younger.
10. Donald Miller, younger, in Braibster ; Margaret ; John M'Beath, Adam
Baine.
" William Rug in Gills ; John ; Andro Dunett, Barrie.
14. John Sinclair, soumyne in Dungasbey ; John ; Thomas Groat, Donald
Hendersone.
16. Johne Mathewsonne in Huna ; Janet ; John Simsone, Thomas Robsone.
19. Malcome Rosie in Mey ; Alexander ; Alexander Rosie, Alexander M'Beath.

APRIL, 1654.

2. Johne Stevin ; Donald ; Mathew Dunnett, Thomas Groat.
 „ Gilbert Banks ; Margaret ; Johⁿ Dunett, James Gairdin.
 4. Donald M'Beath in ye Field of Braibster ; Alexander ; James Dunnett,
 Barny.¹
 9. Donald Braibiner in Warrs ; Christane ; Donald Stout, Barny.
 „ Patrik Kennedy in Okingill ; Catharine ; Findlay Groat, Barnie.
 „ Gilbert Mowat in Okingill ; Issobell ; Adam Baine, Barnie.
 15. Thomas Taillor ; Janet ; Johne M'Beath, James Dunnett, James Warrs.
 16. Alexander M'Beath in Mey ; Margaret ; James Dunnett, Donald M'Beath.
 „ Walter Rosie in Mey ; Hendrie ; John Harrow, John Liell.
 „ Alexander Smith in Mey ; Alexander ; John Liell, David Gills.
 23. David Baine in Stroma ; Issobell ; John Ham, Barnie.
 „ William Taillor ; Janet ; William Wright, Barnie.
 29. John Baine in Braibster ; Issobell ; Alexander Baine, Donald M'Beath.

MAY, 1654.

4. Malcome Dunett in Canasbey ; Helene.
 17. Andro Barnatsone ; Issobell ; Johne Dunnett, William Dunnett.
 18. Donald Smith in Scoularie ; Janet ; Donald M'Beath, Donald Baine.

JUNE, 1654.

7. Donald Georgeose ; John ; John M'Beath, Barnie.
 11. Donald Mowat in Friswick ; Helene ; Andro Ogstone, William Mowat.
 13. Findlay Groat in Skirseie ; John ; Thomas Taillor, Barnie.
 16. Donald Mowat in Mey ; George ; Hendrie Miller, Malcome Dunnett.
 18. William M'Fend in Holamey ; Christane ; Donald M'Beath, William
 Johnson.
 „ William Groat ; Donald ; Hendry Miller, Malcome Dunnett.

JULY, 1654.

8. William M'Beath in Braibster ; George ; Mathew Dunnett, Thomas
 Taillor.
 31. Johne Liell in Holamey ; Issobell ; James Banks, Walter Rosie.

AUGUST, 1654.

5. David Gills ; David ; Thomas Taillor, Barnie.
 15. John Simsone ; Helene ; Donald Groat, John M'Beath.
 26. Magnus Stevin in Okingill ; Helene ; Thomas Taillor, Andro Ogston.

SEPTEMBER, 1654.

3. Thomas Groat ; Johne ; John Groat, Hew Groat, Malcome Groat.
 24. Andro Mowat ; Issobell ; Donald Wright, Wm. Miller.
 „ George Stroma ; Margaret ; William Bruce, Donald Swannie.

OCTOBER, 1654.

1. John Southerland, a poore traveller ; John ; Johne Simsone, Barnie.

NOVEMBER, 1654.

30. Magnus Mowat of Friswick ; Patrik ; John Kennedy, Laird of Karmucks,
 Findlay Groat, Andro Ogstone.

DECEMBER, 1654.

23. Williame Bowar ; Margaret ; Thomas Taillor, Barny.
 31. David Warrs ; Marion ; Huchon Harpar, Malcome Dunnett.

¹ Barny, or Barnie, was the kirk-session officer.