

*Blairgowrie  
and  
Strathardle  
1886*



*John A. Macdonald*

## FOREWORD

Mr John A. Reid-Macdonald in 1899 published *The History of Blairgowrie*. He was also a regular contributor to the *Blairgowrie Monthly* from 1890 to 1892, and then, when the magazine became an annual, from 1893 to 1899. I assume that the author of *Blairgowrie and Strathardle* 1886, now printed for the first time, was the same Mr Macdonald.

This publication is a facsimile of the hand-written manuscript which I found by chance at the bottom of a box of books being offered for sale (and which I bought) at an auction in Perth.

There is, at the beginning of the book, a list of 73 illustrations which were to appear at intervals in the text, but, alas, only 8 are there. The gaps in the body of the text were, I suppose, for the others. Whether Mr Macdonald never completed these drawings or whether he had drawn them in a separate sketch book, intending to copy them into the text but not finishing the task, I do not know. I hope, however, that even without all the intended sketches, this little book will be a source of pleasure and interest, especially to those readers who live in Blairgowrie or in Strathardle.

Lorien, Kirkmichael  
Perthshire

Leslie Johnston  
1985

SCOTLAND



# Reminiscences . of The Travels and Exploits of James A. Reid, of Sydney, Australia

ENGLAND



Being  
an account of a Voyage Round the World\*  
with descriptive notes  
of a Tour through England, Scotland,  
and particularly the Perthshire Highlands.

Constructed in Rhyme .

by  
John A. Macdonald, Blairgowrie.

Embellished  
with upwards of 70 illustrations.

To  
which is added, several select poems,  
by various authors, descriptive of places,  
visited etc.

From 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1883, to 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1884



IRELAND

Constructed and Written by  
John A. Macdonald, Blairgowrie  
Scotland.



AUSTRALIA

1<sup>st</sup> April 1886.

on Monday morn we took guid care,  
to rise in time, as doon in Blair,  
I had to be, twicen eight an' mine,  
if the day was fair, an' clear, an' fine,  
Baith gaed to bed, an' rose at three,  
syne bask'it sot an' had oor tea,  
An' on the green wi' hammer an' stane,  
we had a throw afore we'd gane.

Doon to Kirkmichael at five we went,  
along the road, sae weel we kent,  
I landed hame at breakfast time  
an' got some meat an' filled my wame,  
as Jim gaed, danderin' yont the sod,  
for while, alane to scour the road.

The Glesca cousins had got their holiday,  
an' tae b'nnochdhu, they gaed to play,  
Uncle Andrew cam' the length o' Blair,  
up to Granny's he paid their fare,  
An' took his seat upon the brake,  
wi' a' his weight, it 'gan to quake.  
The springs got flattened mighty doon  
considerin' there wis 17 stanes aboon,  
o' solid flesh an' bone.

When o'er the brig, he seized the whup,  
an' gai'd the horses gallop up,  
An' made them ray their skinny bames,  
tho' gracefully he held the reins.

An' drew up safely at the Inn,  
quid beasts, they wur gay, sairly done,  
The youngsters liked the braes to roam,  
free from restraint, o' skule an' home,  
By gosh! Andrew's a sonsie weight,  
as much in girth's he is in height,  
An' fegs, ye'll no get money men,  
to match him, sixteen stane, an' ten,  
He stayed nae lang to get some south,  
about the place whar he spent his youth,  
But had to leave an' canvas roon'  
the various works in Glesca toon,  
Aft he left G. an' J. by themsel's,  
tae wander mang the flowery dells,  
Until they had 't come under rule,  
an' tak their place again in school.

I wrote to Jim that I e'er lang,  
wad tak holidays, if wark's nae thrang,  
An' propos'd to start on Saturday night,  
if it was fair an' roads were light,  
I got a note before I went,  
a short reply, which he had sent,  
To say hoo glad he wis, Jim comin',  
he'd meet me at Lounie i' the gloamin'.  
Says he, "The weather is something grand,  
mong the hills o' this porridge land,  
An' gents are strutting about the braes,  
decked up in fancy breeks an' claes,  
I wad set tae lauchin, honest fowks,  
to see the peacock strutting gowks."  
"If we'd the tilt," fu' aft he said,  
we'd put these billies in the shade."

"The Bridgend folk the ither day,  
 commenced to gither in their hay,  
 To help them at it, young 'tha' an' me,  
 shift in wi' spunk an' mucklo glee.  
 The Strathardle Games come aff e'er lang,  
 are you to try the calar or the stane?  
 I hae been practising for some time back,  
 but feint much progress I can make."

On Saturday night at half past two,  
 John jurneys on to Ennochedhu,  
 on Dewar's coach, an' twas a treat,  
 gosh lad! I scarcely had a sate.  
 But after we left the Brig o' Bally,  
 some folk gaed aff, syne I did crawl,  
 here wis a young man brought his wife,  
 to see about here, the hielant life,  
 Their manners mang the hills sae green,  
 they cam' doon sooth frae Aberdeen.  
 I w' mony cracks we had an' queer,  
 I didna like at him to spier,  
 whar' he'd be takin' up his lodgin',  
 in whatna' glen he wad be dodgin',  
 E'er lang the rain cam' fellin' doun,  
 an' drenched us a' frae foot to crown,  
 an' made the coach maist dreich to draw,  
 the postes could hardly pu'd awa,  
 Oh! wis nae I surprized to ken,  
 my Aberdeen fren' had ga'en up the glen,  
 To stop wi' Grammy, twar' three days  
 an' seek some exercise mong the braes  
 I cuist my coat about my head,  
 shouldered my knapsack an' on I gaed,

Expectin' him at every turn to see,  
 yet naething but rain cam' in my e'e,  
 When I landed yont by at the biggin',  
 I there spies jimmy busy diggin'.

His fists amang the peat an' glod,  
 happit up at Shonae Oean's abode.  
 An' whan he did come toddlin' in,  
 he wis near droopit to the skin,  
 we ga'd him shift his breeks an' sark,  
 but hod'it his ain for a lark,  
 He had tae put on a preck o' Sandy,  
 or ony ither that cam' handy,  
 They fittit fine, but hung gay loose,  
 as he cam' stoppin' but the hoose,  
 When I at the chanter thon began,  
 he bolted ben for the melodian,  
 syne we had a concert by ourselves,  
 "whats a the steo," an' the "bonnie blue bells."

On Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> August 1874,  
 we decked ourselves as we'er we did afore,  
 an' hied us on wi' mony behornes,  
 to see the Strathardle Highland Games,  
 they're held ilka year, as far's I learn,  
 in a field yont by Balnagavin,  
 just opposite the "black Mill",  
 where flows the Ardle dark an' still  
 wi' mony gurgling rippling rill.