

Card 1



"Flood in the Highlands", by Sir Edwin Landseer, oil on canvas, 1860, courtesy of Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums collections.

The Muckle Spate of 1829



Card 2



As we have learned, bridges throughout the region were badly hit by the Spate.

This bridge in Moray managed to withstand the floods, despite the height of the river there (note the line marked by the artist). '40 feet' is over 12 metres!

Not all bridges were so lucky.

On August 12th, 1829, the *Aberdeen Journal* reported:

In some parts of the country, scarcely a bridge is left...

The bridge at Ballater, over the Dee, is completely destroyed. One of the arches of the bridge of Invercauld was carried away; and the bridge of Banchory has received so much damage that a part of it will require to be taken down.

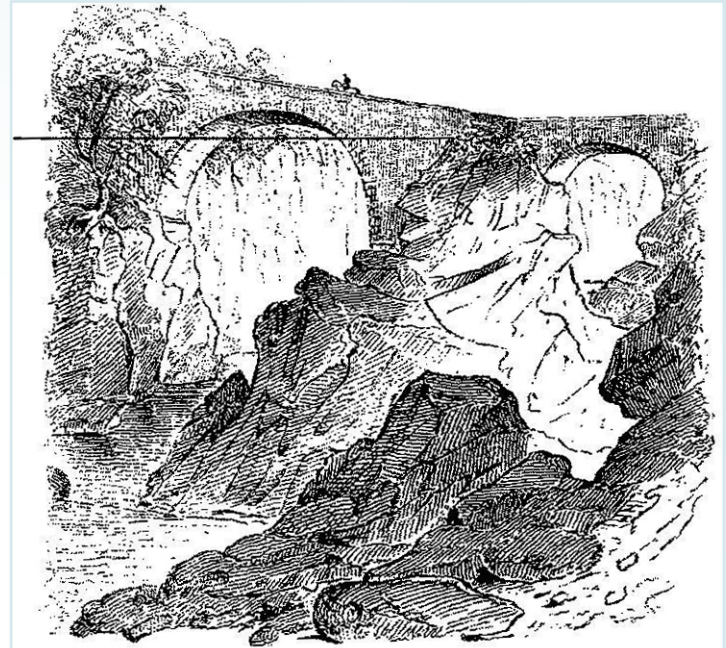


PLATE 11. DULSIE BRIDGE - A LINE SHOWS THE FLOOD LEVEL 40 FEET PERPENDICULAR ABOVE THE USUAL LEVEL.

Card 3

Story 1 ~ from the *Aberdeen Journal*, August 12th 1829, about an incident at Banff:



“It was not therefore supposed that the South Mail, which comes in in the afternoon, would attempt the turnpike, leading through the market place; but within a few minutes of her usual time, she appeared at the west end of the bridge and drove forward.

As she turned the corner of the Flesh Market, signals were made, and loud cries uttered, from the nearest house, to warn the driver and guard of the danger before them, and to deter them from going forward, yet still they kept urging the horses; and, just as they reached the place where the Earl of Fife’s garden wall had burst, the raging current from thence caught them, and bore the horses and coach away.

Long and hard did the poor animals struggle ...”

Story 2 ~ an incident near Rothiemay:



“Three men went out at seven o’clock on the morning of Tuesday, to cut grass in the haughs there, and all of a sudden were surrounded with water, by the neighbouring river breaking out at one time at different places.

They had a horse and cart along with them, and when they saw the perilousness of their situation, they naturally drove the animal, and went themselves to the highest accessible eminence. But here also the watery element pursued them.

As the only resource left them, they unloosed the horse and ...”

After you have written your 2 endings, turn over to find out what really happened.

Card 3 (back)

Story 1

Three of the horses were drowned, despite the best efforts of some people who had set out in a boat to save them. The fourth horse was saved, with much difficulty, by a man who jumped into the water from the boat.

The coach was stopped when it collided with a house, after it had been carried along by the water. The guard and driver, along with the mail, were rescued from the coach by boat.

Story 2

The men got into the cart and stayed there, up to the shoulders in water, until the next morning. A boat was carried six miles, to rescue them. The men were so exhausted by being in the water for 24 hours, that they could barely speak or stand. They did recover, however.

Card 4



The mapping of Scotland had been started in 1747, by General Roy.

This was a military survey of roads, which took place just after the the uprising of the Highland clans and the battle of Culloden.

You can explore this old map on the National Library of Scotland's website; see:

geo.nls.uk/roy

The 1747 map is known as "The Duke of Cumberland's map".

The Duke (pictured) had marched his troops from Aberdeen to Culloden (near Inverness, nearly 100 miles away) for the battle, along an old military road.



The Muckle Spate of 1829



- and capped with Lime. Several of the Rafts at
 Worcester, and towards Mill of Hincordens not
 fenc'd yet. That Line of Road appears to have
 suffered very little damage by the late Flood,
 farther than washing off several pieces of the
 binding here and there, which had been repair-
 ed immediately after the abating of the Flood,
 but the Bridges have been considerably dam-
 aged.
- 1^o The half of the causewaying swept away
 in a small arch on the 2^d Mile
 - 2^o The Bridge over the Burn of Invercarnie at
 Callarand - 2 Arches - about 5 feet of the bar-
 rage Way of one of the arches, and a piece
 of the Centre Pier along with the Parapet Wall
 and Causewaying swept down, and the end of
 the other arch & parapet Wall considerably
 injured -
 - 3^o Two large Drains near the above mentioned
 Bridge, completely swept down - These damaged
 Bridges had been immediately after the abat-
 ing of the Flood, secured with wooden Posts
 & Nails for the accommodation of the Public
 - 4^o The Bridge at the Munk of Hincordens
 & Keil - The whole of the shoeing of this
 Bridge had been swept away, and a few of
 the Pier Stones fallen in - This Bridge above
 the Water stands pretty low, without the
 least appearance of Rent or Shakes in it -
 There are several of the largest best Drains
 damaged in the Causewaying - The rebuilding
 and repairing of these Bridges & Drains
 were contracted for sometime ago - The re-
 maining

A. H. P.

Card 6

This is another 1829 report which refers to damage caused by the Muckle Spate.



Can you find this information on it?

- ◆ What was Mr Paterson asked to do?
- ◆ Which bridges were injured?

The meeting, considering, that the late unexampled floods in the Fugh & in the Dee have injured the Bridges of Fugh and Cobbleheugh, particularly the former, the parapet walls of which have been carried away, - authorised Mr Paterson the Surveyor, or the committee lately appointed as to the Bridge of Cobbleheugh, to get the necessary repairs immediately executed, by contract, or otherwise, so as to put the Bridges in as good a state as they were previously in; and the treasurer was authorised to pay from the current revenue of the road, the requisite expenses, as well as the expenses incurred in the temporary repairs already made for making the bridge of Fugh in the meantime passable.

The meeting adjourned to the day of —
Mr Paterson

Card 7



“Anxious for the fate of the Kerrs, Mr. Suter went to the offices, about 7 o’clock in the morning, and there he found their son, his servant Alexander Kerr, who, since last night, had never left the spot. He was still gazing towards Stripeside, in an agony of mind, and weeping for the apparently inevitable destruction of his parents, their rescue appearing utterly impossible.

Mr. Suter tried to comfort him but, even whilst he spoke, the whole gable of Kerr’s dwelling, which was the uppermost of the three houses composing the row, gave way and fell into the raging current.

Dr. Brands, who was looking on intently at the time with a telescope, observed a hand thrust through the thatch of the central house. It worked busily, as if in despair of life; a head soon appeared; and at last Kerr’s whole frame appeared on the roof and he began to exert himself in drawing out his wife and niece. Clinging to one another, they crawled along the roof towards the northern chimney. The sight was torturing.

Kerr, a little ahead of the others was seen tearing off the thatch, as if trying to force an entrance through the roof, whilst the miserable women clung to the house-top, the blankets which they had used to shelter them almost torn from them by the violence of the hurricane”.

Turn over

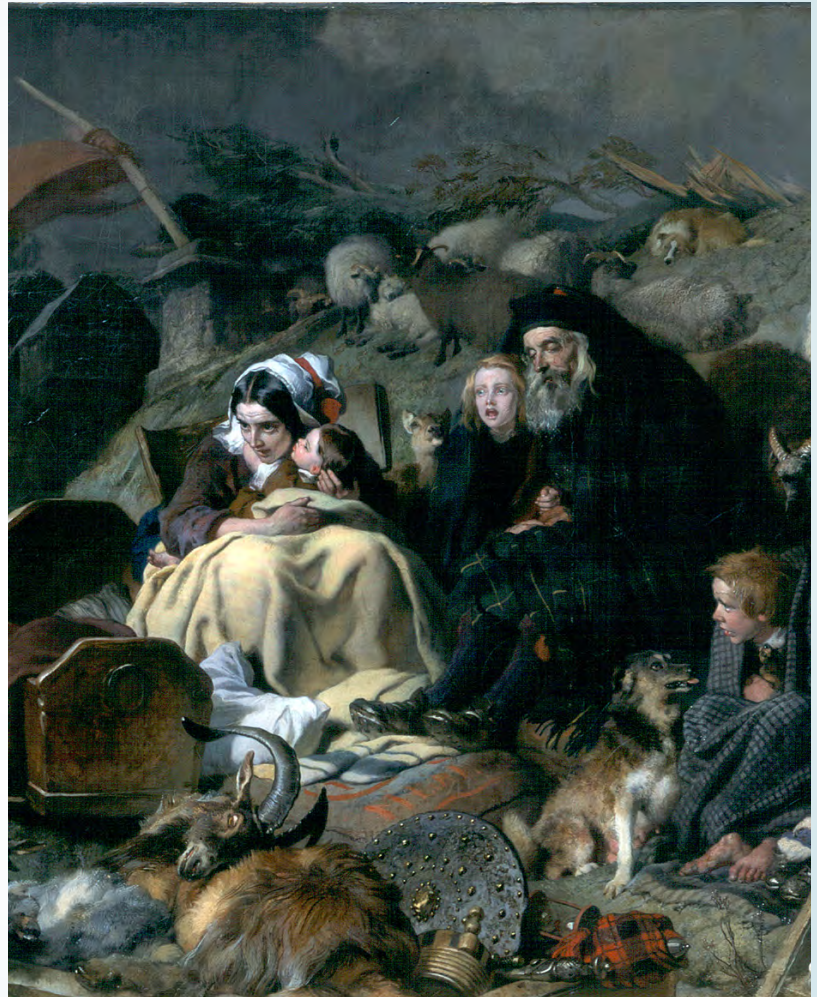
Card 7 (back)

Another family in difficulties ...

"His wife, covered in a blanket, sat shivering on a bit of log, one child in her lap, and a girl of about 17, and a boy of about 12 years of age, leaning against her side. A bottle and a glass on the ground, near the man, gave the spectators, as it had doubtless given him, some degree of comfort.

Above, a score of sheep were standing around, or wading or swimming in the shallows. Three cows and a small horse, picking at a broken rick of straw that seemed to be half afloat, were also grouped with the family.

Dreading that they must all be soon swept off if not soon relieved, the gentlemen hastened to the offices and looked anxiously out from the top of the tower for a boat. At last they had the satisfaction to see one launched from the garden at Earnhill, about a mile below."



The Muckle Spate of 1829

Card 8



*Tho' I was only but a bairn
In aughteen twentymine,
The mem'ry o' the Muckle Spate
Has never left my min'.*

*We had a byous weety time,
A week, or maybe mair,
The eident rain kept pelting on,
Nae single hoor wis fair;*

*An' then for fouran'twenty hoors
There followed a doonfa'
the like o' which, sin' Noah's flood,
The warl' never saw.*

*The thunner rum'lt roon the hills,
The howes were in a soom,
We thocht the warl, owergaen wi' age,
Drew near the crack o' doom...*

*The Feugh cam' rairin' doon fae Birse,
An swept the haughs o' Stra'an;
Horse, pigs an' keye were droont i' Dye,
an sheep by scores in A'an.*

*An yarn reels, an spinnin' reels,
An' bowies, cogs an' caups,
An' tables, chairs, an' cutty steels,
On ane anither's taps;*

*An' girmels, aumries, washin' tubs,
An' smuggled whisky kegs;
Cheese chessils, bitter kits an' kirms,
An' couple bauks an' legs*