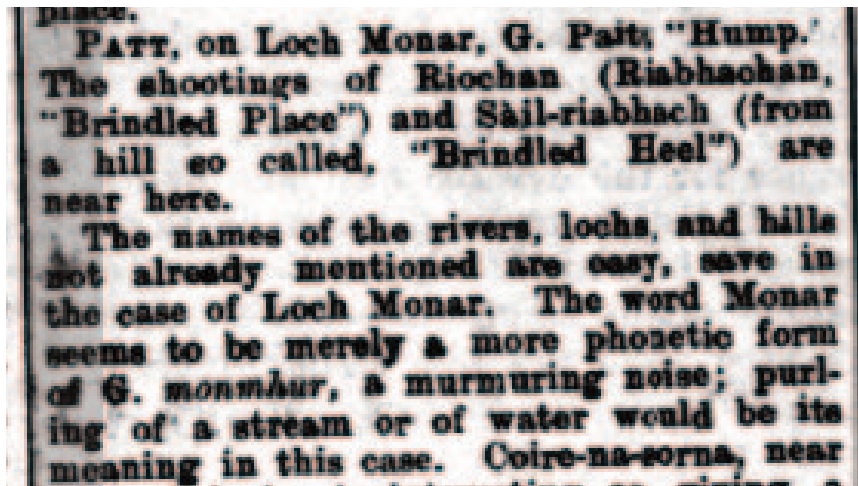
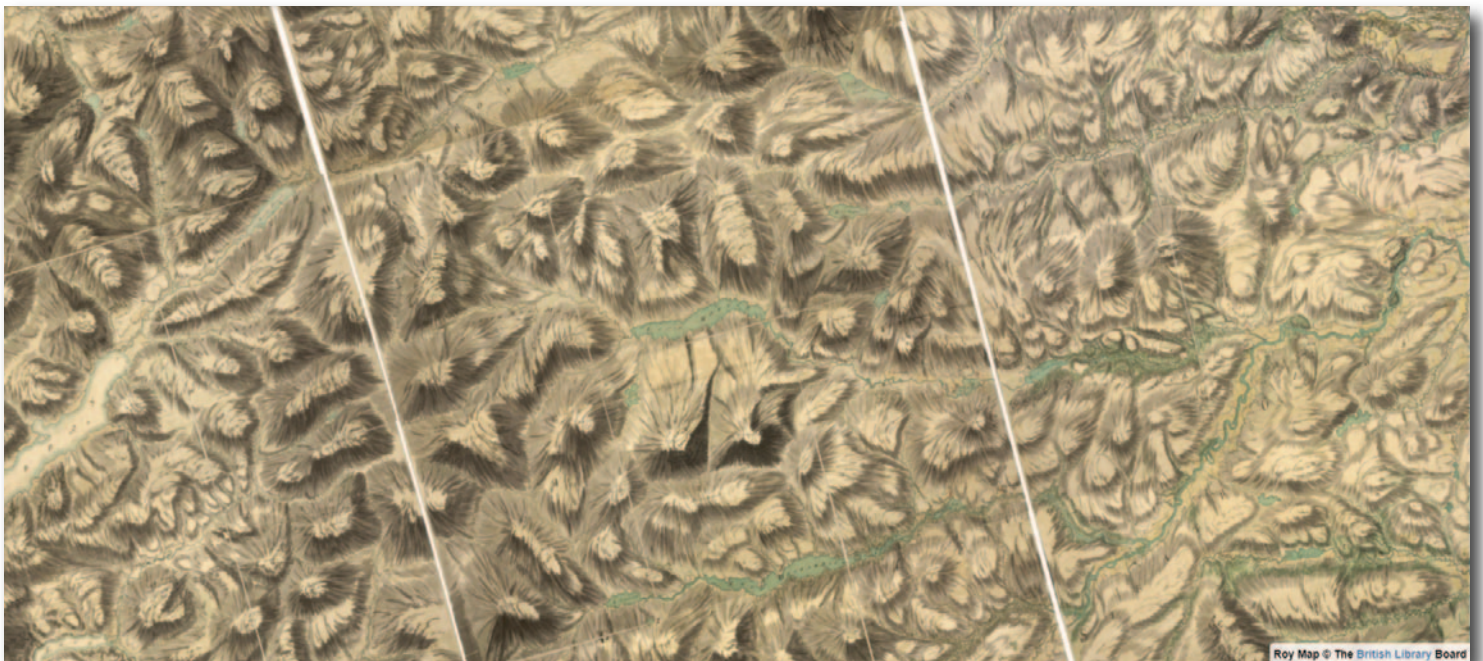


The Lands of Monar



Monar is located in Glen Strathfarrar, Inverness shire. Loch Monar is seven miles long and a mile and half broad and is surrounded by high hills, including five 'Munros'.



Images from the map of The Roy Military Survey of Scotland, 1747-55 shows the mountainous and remote landscape.



26th April 1620

Charter by Colin, Lord of Kintail, in favour of John McKenzie [McKenzie] of Fairburne [Fairburn] of the lands of the 'girsingis and forreste' of Monar.

In 1655, Kenneth Mackenzie, 4th Earl of Seaforth or Lord Mackenzie of Kintail 1661-1701, a Jacobite supporter, took part in a great hunt through the Forrest of Monnair.



4th Earl of Seaforth

Art UK.

In 1758, Monar and Strathmore were part of th Earl of Seaforth's land and Pait was part of Lord Lovat's lands.

It is said that in the 1600's the Lords of the Isles used Jura as their special hunting grounds. There are no specifics to the methods used so we are unclear if they were still using the deer drives, or hunting with deer hounds on the open hill or even using early muskets as a precursor to modern day deer stalking. The Gaelic language has many meanings for the word stalking (Stalcaireachd) with many references to creeping, crawling, gazing, staring and prowling. It is these definitions which perhaps brought into use the statement "deer stalking" (Stalcaireachd Feidh) which is a very uniquely British expression for the stealthy (as opposed to hunting) pursuit of deer with the intention of killing for meat, control of numbers or sport. Deer stalking is still the main term used to describe the management of the Jura wild deer herd as a natural food resource.

www.juradmg.co.uk/deer-stalking

In 2023 Deer Stalking seasons in Scotland are as follows:

Red Deer stags and Sika stags: 1st July – 20th October

Red Deer Hinds and Sika Hinds: 21st October – 15th February

Roe Bucks: 1st April – 20th October

Roe Does: 21st October – 31st March

A Description of Deer Stalking

MONAR FOREST.

"It is a lonely place enough in the summer and autumn; but it is fitter for their work later on, when the long nights come, and the wind howls down Strathmore, and the snow flies in a great sheet before it. Then we may fancy them at the play, these ancient sportsmen, working their will among those great hills. Farquhar Macphail may well shake his head, when in his travels in the spring he comes across the white bones of a deer at the foot of some great rock. It is good for him that he was not up among those grey stones when that beast died, or he might have seen that which would have made his hair white before its time. He might have seen that which ever afterwards would cause him to give a wide berth to that spot—let the wind blow as fair as ever it blows, and the stag be as big in the body and as rough and black in the horn as ever a stag could be. One word as to the duties of a stalker before this paper is closed. There is a theory held by some that the man who shoots should also do the stalking, and that failing this he is not a real sportsman. The owner of a forest, or one who, so to speak, has the *entrée* there, can, if he is keen and strong, and has the bump of locality in his head—a bump which some people never have and cannot acquire—combine the two. One of the permanent rifles in Monar is a notable instance of this, though he, in addition to his practice there, has had the

benefit of experience gained in many long expeditions after big game in different parts of America and India. Such a one, in learning the work, in making himself acquainted with the ground and the ways of the wind, will make many mistakes and lose many stags. He can afford to do so. It is quite a different thing when a stranger is turned into an unknown forest for a week's sport. Let it be granted that he is not only a good shot, but also understands the ways and habits of deer. There is some ground in almost all forests where a man can hardly go wrong—he gets up, after an hour or so's climb, on to a level plateau a mile wide and perhaps some miles long; there are corries lying on either side, and if the wind is fair and the deer are high up, it is not difficult to get a shot. But on the other parts of the same ground. The herd is on a face a couple of thousand feet below the skyline, the hillside is rough, and the amateur thinks that nothing will be easier than to get within a fair shot of it. Twenty years' experience on the part of the stalker has taught him that where those deer lie they are safe—are so protected by the lie and rise of the hills round that it is not only difficult, but quite impossible, to come in to them: try them as you will, you must give them the wind. He knows, too, that if they are moved other deer lying below them will be shifted, that these in their turn will shift others, and that in half-an-hour after the first stag had been disturbed a great clan would be cleared of its

had been disturbed a great glen would be cleared of its tenants, which would pass out into an adjoining forest, and not come back till the wind changed—perhaps for weeks. The amateur sees another stag—*this* beast can be got at, but only in one way, by a delicate bit of working, by running the finest possible line between giving him the wind and letting him see you, an operation so nice and complicated that it is a thousand to one that the gentleman does not hit it off. In his own forest—if he had one—it would be right that he should try his hand, though of course even here he would be naturally greatly guided by the advice and experience of the man who knew the ground. In a fair-sized forest there are perhaps one or two strange rifles out every day. If these men—granted that they knew more than the average of wandering sportsmen—were allowed and encouraged to work their wicked will, and try their own hands at the work, they would not only do very little themselves, but in a short time seriously damage the beats they were on. It is a great thing in stalking to get within a fair shot of your stag; but it is often still more difficult to do so without disturbing and spoiling ground. No man of any experience would consent to be merely an instrument in the hand of the stalker with him. He would want to know the why and wherefore of every movement, but it would be absurd for him to say, “We will go to them this way.”

when the latter wished to attack them in quite another manner. It would be interesting to see a fair amateur stalker who had never been there before, turned out into the west end of Monar when the wind was blowing strongly from the north. If such a one, after a week's grappling with those great hills in the best part of the season, was to make more than a very indifferent score, then would the writer of this paper cheerfully agree to divide his patrimony into two portions, and hand over one of them to Mr Justin M'Carthy and the other to Mr Parnell.”

Northern Chronicle and General
Advertiser for the North of Scotland,
9 September 1891

According to Alexander Matheson of Lochalsh who wrote to the Inverness Courier in 1883: “The Mackenzies of Fairburn used Monar as summer grazing for young cattle and horses and partly as a deer forest.”

At the turn of the 19th century, West Monar was occupied as a sheep farm by Murdo Maclennan of Tullich (a Dealer in Meal), in Lochcarron and East Monar was similarly occupied by a Mr Macdonald (Alexander Macdonald of Glenco, d.1815, a well-known farmer of black cattle).

In 1825 General Sir Alexander Mackenzie of Fairburn sold Monar for £6,000 and it was bought by Hugh Fraser of Eskadale, b.1766, died 23 January 1841
Hugh was married to Ann Fraser.

EXTENSIVE GRAZINGS IN ROSS-SHIRE
TO LET,
Entry at Whitsunday 1824.

THE Valuable and extensive LANDS and GRAZINGS of MONAR formerly a Royal Forest, situated in the Parish of Urray and County of Ross, and presently occupied by the Heirs of the late ALEXANDER MACDONALD, Esq. of Glenco and others.—These Lands, which are supposed to contain about forty thousand Acres, are well known to afford the best Grazings in the North of Scotland; and the Sheep reared on them always fetch the highest price in the Market.—The Lands are situated about 20 miles to the west of Beauly, and are of easy access, and will be Let in whole or in Lots to suit Offerers. For a description of the Lands inquiry may be made at Mr COLL MACDONALD, Inch in Lochaber, or Mr DUNCAN MACRAE, Faddoch, by Lochalsh—and for further particulars application may be made to JOHN MACKAY, Solicitor, Inverness, or to the Proprietor, HUGH FRASER of Eskadale, by Inverness.

Inverness, 12th Aug. 1823.

There will be exposed to Sale, by public Roup, within the Caledonian Hotel, Inverness, on the 1st day of February next, at 12 o'clock noon, if not previously disposed of by private bargain,

THE LANDS and GRAZINGS of MONAR situated in the parish of Urray and County of Ross. These Lands are extensive and capable of keeping upwards of 6000 Sheep; and the superior quality of the Stock reared on them is well known at market. There is sufficient accommodation for Tenants and Shepherds, and the Houses and Fanks are in good repair. The Parliamentary road from the Sea-port of Beauly by Erchless Castle, runs within a few miles of the property, from which there is a branch road to **Monar** now in progress. The Muirs afford excellent sport, including among other game, Mountain Hare, Ptarmigan, Black Game, Red Deer, and Roe; and there is a good Shooting Box conveniently situated. **Lacch-MOLAR** which is about 10 miles in length, as well as several smaller lakes on the property, abound with fish.

The lands hold of the Crown; the Teinds are valued and nearly exhausted; and the public burdeas are a mere trifle.

For further information, application may be made to **HUGH FRASER**, Esq. of Eskadale, by Inverness; **ANDREW WATSON**, Esq. W. S. 19, Melville Street, Edinburgh; or **MACKAY and WILSON**, Solicitors in Inverness, in whose hands are the Title Deeds.

Inverness, 12th November, 1827.

Tenants: John Mitchell, tenant in Auchnaduly



In 1836 Mr Fraser sold the estate to Sir John Wallace Dunlop, MP for Ayrshire

Sir John Wallace Dunlop, b.1804., d.4 April 1839, Hastings

John married first 17 November 1829, Charlotte Constance, 1809-32, daughter of Sir Richard Downs Jackson, 1777-1845 and Charlotte Margaret Maling, b.1785

On 29th December 1835 John married secondly Lady Harriet Primrose, eldest daughter of the 4th Earl Roseberry and Harriet Bouverie; and sister of Lord Dalmeny.

Following the death of Sir John in 1839, the estate of Monar was sold for £16,000.

It was bought by Henry William White, J.P., D.L., of Monar & Lentrán, b.1817, India, d.1 February 1875, Elboeuf, Normandy, France.



Lentrán House, built in 1866

Henry was married to Alexandrina Eliza, daughter of Alexander Macleod, Major of the 12th Regiment, The Bengal Native Infantry, who commanded the Cuttac Legion; and Louisa, daughter of Henry Brown, of the Indian Civil Service.

At the 1857 Inverness Annual Sheep and Wool Fair Mr White sold his wedders for 1s 6d above last year's prices and then bought the Letterfinlay lambs.

The first lodge to be built at the head of loch Monar was possibly built around 1840.

Stalker: John Cameron.

Gamekeeper: James Urquhart.

In 1844 William Henry Hyett, MP for Stroud, 1795-1877, is recorded as staying at Paitt, Monar as well as attending the Northern Meeting in Inverness.

In 1861 Mr White divided Monar selling approximately two-thirds of the property and retaining a third for himself; this created problems of getting sheep to market. Those on West Monar (Strathmore) had to be driven through East Monar (Monar) by the Shepherds and their dogs, sometimes causing problems for deer stalker parties.

East Monar was bought by William James Owen Holmes, b.2 September 1839, d.14 September 1908, Strumpshaw Hall, Norfolk.

Married to Ellen, daughter of John Dunham, Snarehill, Thetford, Norfolk.

Head Stalker: William Collie, b.28 April 1829, Dalnavert, Inverness shire, d.1st May 1910, Winnipeg, Canada.

Moved from Coulin Estate to Monar with his wife, Ann, daughter of Lachlan Rose and Ann Mackay.



William and Ann (Rosie) Collie

With their children, Sarah, Mary, Peter, Lachlan, Robert and a maid servant.

William, Alexander Rose, Maggie and Flower were born at Monar.

The Collie children were taught by their father and then went to school in Beaul, which was 25 miles away.

William Collie emigrated to Canada in 1889.



MR. FARQUHAR McPHAIL (FEACHY), 1908.

Farquhar (Feachy) McPhail,

b.1827, Applecross, d.1919,
son of John Macphail and
Christy Campbell. Under
Forester and Stalker who
lived in a stone house at
Luib- in-inver.



The house built for Farquhar McPhail

Farquhar was married to Mary MacLennan, b.1829, d.1 November 1886, daughter of John MacLennan and Anne Macdonald.

They had, John, Donald Farquhar, Murdoch/Murdo, Angus John, George, Christina and Anne.

Ghillie: John (Shohchan) Mackenzie.

Messrs Gordon had the lease for the West Monar run which expired in 1878. Mr Holmes took it on and the stock of 3,000 sheep.

Shepherds:

Hector McLennan (Eachin Mohr = Big Hector).
John McGileas.

Because rain often interfered with shearing and prolonged the activity, William Collie had a galvanised iron roof shed erected for keeping about 400 sheep in during shearing time. He managed the sheep farm for about 10 years.

Labourers/Whisky smugglers:



James Macrae (Hamish Dhu)

James, d.1915, his sister, Mairi and their father, Alexander (Alister Mohr) lived in a thatched roof house, on a croft at Pait rearing black Highland cattle.



LOCHALSH—ILLICIT DISTILLATION.—The Revenue officials, now stationed at Lochcarron, made a raid into the wild and almost inaccessible solitudes surrounding Loch Monar in this parish, on Tuesday, the 27th ult. After several hours' search on the southern shore of the loch (where but very few human habitations are to be seen), two large smuggling bothies were found, besides a quantity of malt, &c. One of the bothies was for distilling, and the other for malting, and both were in first-rate order. It may be recollected that only a fortnight previously, as reported in these columns, a somewhat similar discovery was made in the parish of Kintail by the same officers.

Ross shire Journal, 9th
March 1883

Grazing Tenants:

Murdo McLennan, Auchunlee of Loch Carron
The Rev Dr Alexander Downie, Minister of Lochalsh
John McDonald, Shepherd, Auchnasheen
John Mitchell, Tenant in Auchnaduly
Alexander McDonald Esq of Glenco

In 1863 a shooting Lodge was built at the west end of Loch Monar, a mile from Strathmore Lodge which was owned by Henry White.

Following the death of Henry White in 1875, West Monar (Strathmore) was bought by Lord Wimborne.



**Sir Ivor Bertie Guest,
1835-1914**

1st Baron Wimborne of
Canford, 2nd Baronet.

West Monar is suitable ground for the summering of sheep and a certain number could winter there too.

Tenant: Duncan Alexander Macrae had the sheep farm at Monar and occupied the Lodge.

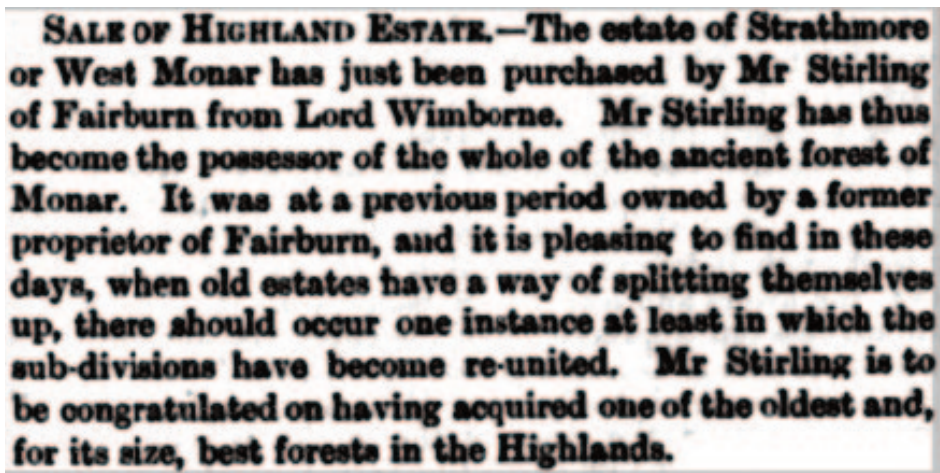
1883 The Monar wedder flock were sold at the Muir of Ord market, consisting of:

1250 three-year old Cheviot widders
1114 Black-faced wedder hogs
105 Cheviot wedder hogs

In 1881 William J. O. Holmes sells East Monar, about 23,000 acres to John Stirling.

Stalker: 1894 Kenneth Maclennan.

In 1883 John Stirling bought Strathmore (West Monar) about 7,600 acres, from Lord Wimborne.



SALE OF HIGHLAND ESTATE.—The estate of Strathmore or West Monar has just been purchased by Mr Stirling of Fairburn from Lord Wimborne. Mr Stirling has thus become the possessor of the whole of the ancient forest of Monar. It was at a previous period owned by a former proprietor of Fairburn, and it is pleasing to find in these days, when old estates have a way of splitting themselves up, there should occur one instance at least in which the sub-divisions have become re-united. Mr Stirling is to be congratulated on having acquired one of the oldest and, for its size, best forests in the Highlands.

Stalker: William Collie worked for John Stirling for 8 years before emigrating to Winnipeg, Manitoba. He had been at Monar for 27 years.

Peter Collie, the eldest son emigrated to Australia. In 1882 Lachlan and Robert Collie left for Manitoba, Canada. William Rose Collie went the USA.

Stalker: Farquhar McPhail also stayed on to work for John Stirling.

Mrs McPhail produced milk and butter for the lodge.
Murdo and Angus MacPhail carried out seasonal work.
Donald MacPhail, ghillie, 1888.

Seasonal Employees:

Kenneth Chisholm, 1890.
K. G. McDonald, 1890.
Alex McDonell.

D. C. McDonell, 1890.
Mrs McDonell, milk, butter, eggs, oatmeal.
Roderick McLean, labouring & ghillie, 1883.

Teacher: 1889, Donald Matheson.

1907 William Stirling has Monar.



Pony boy returned from the hill with a stag



William Stirling seated left, Farquhar Macphail standing centre



William Stirling, seated on ground at front



John Stirling, seated centre with employees of Monar
A successful day's deer stalking.



Return from the hill, William Stirling 2nd right

1914 Sir John Stirling has Monar.



Strathmore Lodge



Looking across to Strathmore



Boat House, Strathmore 1958



The Spray and An Gead

From a 1913 letter, Strathmore Lodge:

Ground Floor

Dining Room 16' x 13' x 8'
Front bedroom 14' x 9' x 8'
West bedroom 14' x 11' x 8'
Passages 100 linneal feet x 8'
Kitchen 13' x 13' x 8'
Servant's bedroom 14' x 9' x 8'
W.C.

First Floor

Front bedroom 16' x 10' x 7'
East bedroom 12' x 10' x 7'
West bedroom 12' x 12' x 7'
Passage 40 linneal feet x 7'

Stalker/Keeper: 1911: Donald Macdonald, Monar (came from Ardvourlie, Balallan, Stornaway, Isle of Lewis.

Stalker/Keeper: 1913: Thomas Fleming, Strathmore (came from Finiskaig, Lochnevis, Mallaig:

Duncan Macrae.
John Mackenzie.
James Maclean.

Stalking ponies:

Craggin, Star, Dandy, Punch.

Shepherds:

Duncan Macrae and his son, Alister.
Jimmy Burns, married to Margaret.
Ian Thompson, married to Betty; they had Alison and Hector.
Mr Venter.

Dairy/Housekeeper:

Flora Macdonald.



Monar Lodge

In 1877 the lodge consisted of Dining room, Kitchen, 5 bedrooms and other accommodation.



Transport on Loch Monar



Stalker, Monar: Tommy Fleming, from 1920-56.
Married to Katie; they had Jessie.

Stalker/General Labourer: Allan Fleming.
Married to Gracie.

Employees 1955:

A.H. Fife.

Pait:

J. Burns and Margaret Burns, 5 children.

Whisky Distiller: 'Big' James Macrae.

School teachers:

Margaret Ross.

Miss Macleod.

Miss Lennox taught the Strathfarrar children in April and May, 1907.

Tenants:

1937 Sir Sothern Holland.

Employees of the Monar Sheep Farm, 1923:

Ken Urquhart, Shepherd.

Thomas Macdonald, Shepherd.

Hector Macdonald, Shepherd.

Roderick Mackenzie, wages at Sheep Shearing.

Stock:

Cross Shetland & Soya lambs.

South Down wedder lambs.

Cheviot lambs.

Black Face wedder lambs.

Black Face Ewe Lambs.

Black Face wedders.

Highland Cattle.



Pait Lodge



Boathouse for Pait



Pait Lodge in 1913

Pait Lodge 1915:

The Lodge is most pleasantly situated at the east end of the Forest and close to Loch Monar. It has recently been added to and made most comfortable and contains: Dining Room, Drawing-room, Smoking-room and Gun Room, five best bedrooms, one dressing-room, five servants bedrooms, bathroom (hot and cold water) drying droom, store, pantry, butler's pantry and ample kitchen accommodation.

A new ghillie's bothy containing four fairly large rooms and a WC with water laid on has recently been erected.

The proprietor has a good motor boat at Pait for use on Loch Monar which is kept in a boat house and there is a motor shed at the foot of Loch Monar which belongs to the proprietor.

The route to Pait is by a good road from Beaully Station (Highland Railway) 26 miles to the foot of Loch Monar which takes about an hour and three quarters by motor car and then by motor boat along Loch Monar during the season provided by Sportsmen along the route in which the proprietor of Pait has a share for carrying letters, etc. Post and Telegraph office at Struy, 21 miles.

Sir Kenneth Matheson of Lochalsh, 1855-1920, owned Pait, along with Killilan and Glomach estates.

In the 1880's the estate was leased by William Louis Winans, 1821-97, a millionaire originally from Baltimore, USA.

Stalker: Theodore Campbell.



L-R, Donald,
Mrs Campbell, Theodore
Campbell, Katie and James
Macrae from Pait.
Strathmore in
the background.

Maggie Grey,
domestic help for
Theodore Campbell.

1900 Mr Richard Bowerman West, 1865-1900, of Streatham Hall, Exeter bought the three estates from Sir Kenneth, but on his early death, left them to his uncle, Mr Richard John Bowerman, 1847-1915 of 32 Pembridge Square, London.



**Streatham Hall,
Exeter built in the
1860's by Richard
Thornton West**

1914 Mr R.J. Bowerman sold Pait, along with Killilan and Glomach estates.

Mr Walter Melville Wills, 1894-1941 of Bracken Hill, Leigh Woods, near Bristol sold Pait in 1918.

1923 Colonel Oliver Haig 1875-1959 of Ramornie, Fife had Pait.

Keeper: Kenny Mackay.

1937 Colonel Oliver Haig sold Pait.

1937 Sir Sothern Holland (Sir Alfred Reginal Sothern Holland, 1876-1948) buys Pait Estate.

1949 Sir John Stirling buys Pait.

Stalker: Kenny Mackay. Married to Teenie; they had Iain, Kenny and Bidy.

Stalker: Iain Mackay. He drove the Pait motor launch.

Ghillie/Boatman: Farquhar Mackay.

Labourer: James Macrae, worked on the hill paths.

Pait Forest Farm:

Stock 1958-61 on average 167 cows.
Easter Lovat Marksman, Shorthorn Bull.
Glastullich Flashman, Shorthorn Bull.



Glen Orrin head with Loch na Caoidhe. The tracks marking the hillside in the left foreground are ample evidence this pass has been used as a drove road for generations.

**Moving Cattle
between
Fairburn Estate
and Monar
Estate via
Glen Orrin.**



Crossing the river Orrin heading towards the ruins of Cabaan

In June prior to 1959, the Fairburn Hill Cattle were taken to Monar for the summer grazing. The distance from South Arcan (where the cattle are collected) to Monar is 32 miles. Bulls, and cows with young calves were lorried to Monar. The remainder of the cattle were driven up Glen Orrin by 2 men, along the old drove road running along the north side of the river Orrin, passing Corrie Hallie Lodge and over to Corrie Dhomhain in east Monar, a journey of 2 days. The men were brought back by the lorry which took up the bulls, etc.

In 1960 to continue the farming operations at Monar Sir John Stirling judged the following would be required.

Monar:

Bothy
Shepherd's house
Byre and stable
Larder
Boathouse
Shed for hay, feed, cars, etc.
Park to hold stock, 2 or 3 acres
Loading bank

Lub an Inbhir:

Shepherd's House
Byre and large barn
Stable
Boathouse and pier
Fank, dipper and park
Bridges over toll a choin and M.C.
Mas burns

Strathmore:

Shepherd's house
Byre and woolshed
Park to hold sheep for clipping
Pier

Pait:

Bothy
Larder
Stable
Byre and Barn
Boathouse and Pier



Stalking ponies and ghillies awaiting instrucion



Keepers and ghillies on the hill



Infront of Monar Lodge, Sir John Stirling centre



Spying at Lub an infin 1931 – John Stirling his brother, James Erskine Stirling with stalkers



**On the hill,
John Stirling right**



Liesure time at Monar



Moll Stirling and Kythe Stirling with Roderick Stirling



Trout fishing on the loch



Postal Service to Glen Strathfarrar

1961 – River Orrin is dammed

1963 – Loch Monar is dammed

Monar, Strathmore and Pait in 1960



In 1965 Sir John Stirling sold Monar & Pait to Mr Colin Strathearn Ropner Stroyan, WS, 1927-2022, from Doune, Perthshire.

The connection between Fairburn Estate and the Lands of Monar was severed for a second time.

Books about Monar:

The Last Highland Clearance by Iain Mackay, published by Bidean Books.

Isolation Shepherd by Iain Thompson, published by Bidean Books.

Burn on the Hill by Elizabeth Allan, published by Bidean Books.