



The bronze crozier-head added in the Dark Ages to encase the wooden pastoral staff of St. Fillan (died 703). This bronze head was itself later in turn encased in a silver head during the Middle Ages.

The Bell of St. Fillan, known as the *Bearnan* or 'Little Capped One'. As late as 1488, it was carried in the sacred pageant at King James IV's Coronation. It was in the hereditary custody of a Dewar whose toft is referred to in 1640 as 'Dewar-Vernan's Croft', at Suie in Glendochart. The relics of the Founder Saint were the essential insignia of a Celtic abbacy, and were sometimes given in hereditary custody with a toft of land to younger branches of the abbatial family. Such hereditary custodians were styled 'dewars', which often became their surname. In Glendochart there were five separate hereditary Dewars, each with a separate relic of St. Fillan (the pastoral staff, the bell, the arm-bone, the 'meser' and the 'fearg'); they were presumably cadets of the hereditary Abbots of Glendochart, whose principal heirs were the Macnabs of Macnab. *Fearg* means 'Wrath', and it is uncertain what relic acquired this bye-name. Its hereditary Dewars had their toft at Dewarna-farg's-croft, which is referred to as late as 1632, and was at Auchlyne in Glendochart, where the ruins of their *Caibel-na-Fairge* or Chapel of the Fearg can still be seen. It has been suggested that the 'meser' was a *meise* or portable altar, but it seems more likely that it was the saint's missal, miraculously written by night. In 1468 a MacGregor certified to the Bailie of Glendochart that he held the tack of the lands of Corehynan from the 'Deore of the Meser'. The saint's arm-bone was known as the *Main*, and his toft at Killin is referred to in 1640 as 'Dewar-na-Mans-croft' and in 1670 as 'Dewar-na-Maynes-croft'. King Robert Bruce prayed in the Priory of Strathfillan while a fugitive, and attributed his escape from the MacDougalls to the saint's intervention. Accordingly, the silver shrine of the saint's arm-bone was brought to spend the night in the king's tent on the eve of Bannockburn, and was borne to the battlefield by the Abbot of Inchaffray himself. This enshrined arm-bone must have been an especially interesting relic,

as we are told that once upon a time, 'when the saint was in his cell after sundown, a lay brother was sent to call him to supper. The messenger, curious to know what St. Fillan was doing, looked through a chink in the wall, and was astonished to see him writing by means of a light that streamed from his left arm. Next day a tame crane that was kept by the holy fraternity picked out the eye of the lay brother who was guilty of prying upon the saint, and rendered him quite blind. but at the request of the rest of the brethren St. Fillan restored his sight to the erring one'. In 1549, the Privy Council protected 'Malise Doir of Quickrich' (Malise Dewar of *Coigreach*, the saint's pastoral staff) 'Archibald Doir of Fargy' and 'Malcolm Doir of Bernane' (*Bearnan* was the saint's bell) from having to hand over their sacred relics to the Prior of Strathfillan. St. Fillan's bell and pastoral staff are now in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, in Edinburgh. The most important family of Dewars today is that of which the millionaire peer Evelyn Dewar, 3rd Lord Forteviot, is the head. Coming from the Perthshire highlands, they are most probably sprung from one of the five hereditary Dewars of St. Fillan, and so ultimately akin to the Macnabs, the Sons of the Abbot of Glendochart.

The elaborate silver crozier-head added to encase St. Fillan's pastoral staff, probably in the fourteenth century. In 1336, the Menzies chief, as then overlord of Glendochart, confirmed Donald McSobrell, dewar Cogechach, in the lands of Ewich in Strathfillan. The saint's staff was known as the *Coigreach* or 'Stranger', because it was so often carried by its hereditary Dewar to far places: for if any inhabitant of the parish of Glendochart should have goods or cattle carried off from him and 'be unable to follow them, whether from doubt of the culprit, or feud of his enemies, then he might send a messenger to the Dewar of the *Coigreach*, with fourpence, or a pair of shoes, and food for the first night, and the said Dewar should follow the goods, or cattle, wherever they might be found within the bounds of the Kingdom of Scotland'. The inquest that reported this to the Bailie of Glendochart in 1428 declared that 'the office of bearing the said relic was given to a certain

progenitor of Finlai Jore' (i.e. Finlay Dewar) 'the present hereditary bearer, by the coarb of St. Fillan' (i.e. an ancient Celtic hereditary Abbot of Glendochart); and that in return for his services, the Dewar was due certain specified quantities of meal from each inhabitant of the parish. In 1487 the then bearer of the 'Quegrich', Malise Doire (i.e. Dewar) was confirmed in possession by King James III. After a later 'Malise Doir of Quickrich' in 1549 got the Privy Council to prevent the Prior of Strathfillan from forcing him to surrender his hereditary charge, the 'annoyance of the Church at being defeated in its action against the Dewars may account for the fact that in the following year the Crown authorities stepped in and imposed certain charges upon the lands which Malise Dewar of the Quigrich and his ancestors had always held free'. As a result, in 1575, the next Dewar of the *Coigreach* was obliged to sell all his lands of Eyicht, Cryt-in-dewar in Auchincarne and the half merkland called Cragwokin, to Campbell of Glenorchy. In the reign of Charles II, the then Dewar was so poor that he had to sell the *Coigreach* itself to MacDonell of Glengarry, who venerated the relic as a Catholic. But the Dewars 'never rested until they regained possession of the Quigrich, and brought it back from Lochaber to Breadalbane'. In 1782 its then bearer, Malise Dewar, was a day labourer living in *Sraid Glas* (Grey Street) at Killin. As late as 1795, Presbyterian highlanders were wont to come 'over a hundred miles to Killin to procure water that had been passed through the interior of the crozier'. The succession of the family in the nineteenth century is set out in the Rev. William Gillies' invaluable *In Famed Breadalbane* (Perth 1938). In 1818 Archibald Dewar of the *Coigreach* emigrated to Canada, taking the relic with him; and Highlanders settled in Canada used to come to him to get water in which it had been dipped to cure their sick cattle. But in 1876, Alexander Dewar of the *Coigreach* (with the consent of his own son) was induced to transfer the saint's pastoral staff to the Society of Antiquities of Scotland, 'on trust to deposit the same in the National Museum of Antiquities at Edinburgh, there to remain in all time to come for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of the Scottish Nation'. However, the present representative of the Dewars or Keepers of St. Fillan's crozier, Robert St. Fillan Dewar, bears as heraldic insignia two such pastoral staves in saltire behind his arms.