

Peter Mitchell Janet Smyton

Peter and Janet were married in 1795 and the OPR entry in the Coupar Angus registers is brief:

04 July 1795 Marriage Peter Mitchell and Janet Smyton.

At one time there was some uncertainty whether Peter and Janet or another couple were the correct line. A comparison of the names of Janet's siblings and Margaret's siblings particularly the inclusion of the name Esther in both, seems to confirm that the correct line is being followed.

Over the next five years the couple have three children, all of them born at Barloch. The Registers state:

Bapt. Margaret Mitchell dau. to Peter Mitchell, Barloch and his wife Janet Smyton. 11th June 1798.

1800 13th August. Peter Mitchell, Barloch and his wife Janet Smyton had a child bapt^d. named James.

1803 2nd August. Peter Mitchell, Barloch, and Janet Smyttan his wife had a child baptized called William.

The writing in the above entries is absolutely clear but there seems to be no place in the district called Barloch. George Street, which runs westwards from Coupar Cross towards Perth, was previously called Barlatch Street so one may be a corruption of the other.

By the time the next child is born they have moved to the town of Cupar Angus. The births of another four children are recorded there:

1806 29th August. Peter Mitchell in Cupar and his wife Janet Smytans had a child baptized. Esther.

1809 25th March. Peter Mitchell in Cupar and Janet Smyton had a child lawful child baptized called Robert.

1811 Peter Mitchell thatcher in Cupar and Janet Smyttan had a lawful child baptized on 21 Aug^t. called Elspeth.

1814 Jany. 11th. Peter Mitchell thatcher in Cupar and Janet Smyttan had a lawful child baptized called George Halkett.

These last two entries also tell us Peter's occupation of thatcher.

Although many materials were used for thatching in Scotland, for example, grass, rush, bracken, heather, broom, doken or reed, the material used in the Coupar Angus area up to the end of the nineteenth century is likely to have been oat or rye straw.

Purlins, in the form of branches about 3 inches diameter, were fixed horizontally onto the roof trusses and a layer of thin turf laid over them. The straw was bundled into "bottles",

bound with a wisp of straw slightly above the half way mark and placed on the turf layer. Pegs were then pushed through the tie, two per bottle, and into the turf, the pegs being angled to obtain maximum grip and the ends were covered by the next layer of bottles. The ridge would be covered in either turf or straw and the whole roped down. The ropes which would be made of straw, heather or hay, being held in place by boulders tied to their ends.