

### Miss Kathleen Lyen.

With the recent passing of Miss Kathleen Lyen, not only has Dornoch lost its most elderly resident, but a last link with one of Sutherland's eldest & most respected families has been severed.

An only child, Miss Lyen was born in New Zealand in 1885, but returned to live in this country when she was seven years old. For a time she & her parents spent their winters in London (where she had vivid memories of seeing Queen Victoria drive by, & also of watching the Queen's funeral procession), and their summers with her maternal grandmother, Mrs. Dugald Gilchrist of Ospisdale, Sutherland.

The Ospisdale estate had been purchased by an earlier Dugald Gilchrist, principal factor of the Sutherland estate, from Robert Gray, Esq. of Airdens in 1783; the house was old & full of treasures, & it was there that her great love of her mother's native county grew, and her interest in the landscape & wildlife of Sutherland became a consuming passion which remained with her until the end of her life.

Soon after the turn of the century the Lyens decided to remain at Ospisdale throughout the year, & apart from continuing her education at Cheltenham Ladies College & a two-year spell in Paris studying art, Kathleen remained in the North until about 1929. Mrs. Gilchrist had died some years previously and the Great War of 1914-18 brought many changes.... Kathleen made a valiant effort to keep the estate together by raising pigs, keeping bees & doing much of the garden work herself, but eventually she was forced to give up the unequal struggle, and the place was sold.

The family then removed to North Wales where her father had connections; both her parents died within a few years, & at the outbreak of the second War this redoubtable lady, although by this time in her fifties, was able to undertake some kind of war work, a privilege she felt had been denied to her in the previous war, so she enlisted in the A.T.S. & finally became a recruiting sergeant in Wrexham.

Severe illness curtailed her military career, but happily she recovered to spend several more years in that part of the world, where she worked diligently for the Red Cross, as well as developing her skills as gardener, water-colourist & archaeologist. Her heart, however, was always in Sutherland, & she came back here for good some 30 years ago, & lived in Dornoch, where the slender old lady, invariably accompanied by her little white terrier, soon became a kenspeckle figure.



Incidentally, Trixie, the terrier, survived until a few months ago, having achieved the great age of 18 years.... they were indeed a remarkable pair.

Those of us who were lucky enough to count Kathleen as a friend will long remember her for her courage, her independence & her great interest, which was somehow infectious, in all things which were old or not so old, provided that they were worthwhile. She was a link not only with the last century, but with the previous one she took pleasure in telling people how she, as an infant, had been held in the arms of an old man who, when HE was a babe in arms, had been present at the execution of Queen Marie Antoinette in 1793 - what a span of history!

The funeral service was conducted by the Rev. James Simpson in Dornoch Cathedral & was attended by her only cousin, Mrs. Peter Barclay of Little Dunham Lodge, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, & many local friends.