

STEP WE GAILY ON WE GO, ALL FOR

Sandy's Wedding

A VILLAGE CELEBRATES IN BOOTS AND COATS

I'M just back from a Highland wedding.

It was the first for 30 years in Glenug Village, scattered in the rain along the shores of Loch Ailort, 35 difficult miles west from Fort William.

It went on for a day and a night, this celebration for which they killed a stag, slaughtered the chickens and came from miles around by bridle path and boat to attend.

And no doubt it is still going on—after they had rowed me out in a storm to the ferry boat for Lochailort and the road back south.

10-mile walk

Sandy Beag, who is MacPherson the shepherd, and his bride, Barbara Macdonald, were married in a chapel up a stony path in determined rain that only West coasters could weather.

In gumboots and storm coats more than 70 wedding guests trickled into Glenug on

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Wednesday for only the third wedding in 50 years.

Some walked the bleak ten miles across the hills and moors from Lochailort. Others were brought by "The Whaler," who is Ronald Macdonald, the boatman, who gave his sister away in marriage.

And a marathon festivity began . . .

Piped by tradition and Ian MacLellan, the piper from Eilean Shona, in Loch Moidail from "The Whaler's" home to the church, the bride was drenched in a downpour that never let up.

The parish priest, Father Joseph Campbell—who had walked five miles through the rain across the hills from Kinlochmoidart—fretted to begin a ceremony too rare for him in the fastnesses of Moidart.

And after they were married, Sandy and Barbara, led by a

dripping piper, walked to the reception at "The Whaler's."

They had a ceilidh in the kitchen, waiting for the band from Roshven to come by boat.

Then it was off to the dance in the hall on the shore, half a splashing mile along more stony tracks—with the traditional shotgun explosion echoing across Glenug Bay and the piper tapping time in boggy grass while the cows and dogs looked puzzled.

And what a dance it was! Sandy and Barbara led off in the first reel and they didn't stop till dawn.

Wilder . . .

Two lairds were there, with their wives, and folk who had set out the night before turned up out of the wet darkness, until the tiny hall was jammed.

Hour after hour they reeled and jigged. Music and song as incessant as the rain that danced on the tin roof. Wilder and wilder it got; jackets came off and kilts flared.

Glenug was having a wedding and it didn't know when the next would be—or whether it would be in this century or the next.



In walking kit, Father Campbell arrives.



Ian MacLellan, pipes Sandy and Barbara from chapel.



Traditional shotgun blast echoes over Glenuig Bay as Sandy and Barbara leave for evening dance in hall half a mile away