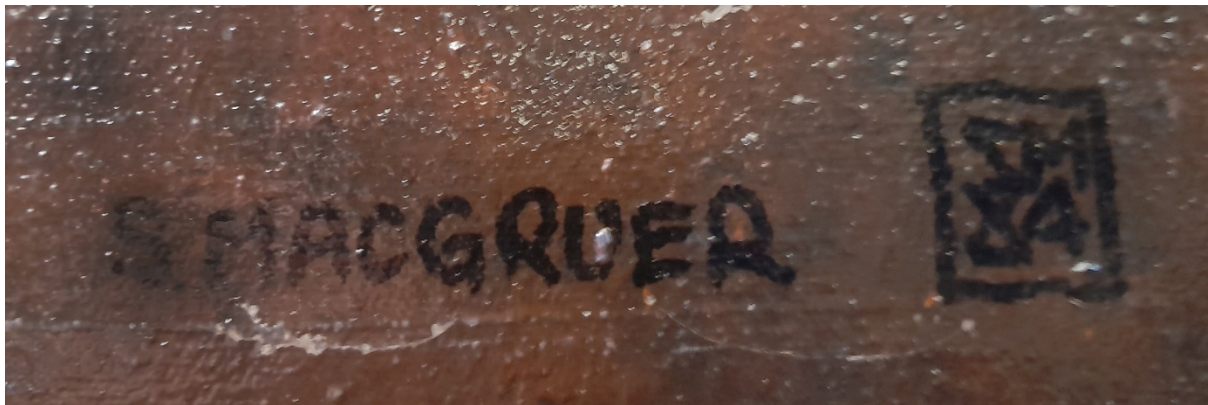


'COASTLINE WIDOWS' by Steve MacGruer



4 ft by 3 ft landscape Acrylic on canvas, signed with artist's name and monogram, bottom right.



This painting was first purchased by Hazel Godfrey and her late husband Dr Allan Matheson some 40 years ago, in 1984, from the artist's gallery in Golspie, whilst on holiday in the area.

Steve MacGruer, who died in 2004, aged 57, was an artist of outstanding talent, humour and friendliness. Schooled in Golspie, and with a natural artistic talent, he studied art at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art in Dundee, and completed teacher training in Aberdeen and Shetland. He taught art at Golspie High School for 26 years and retired as principal teacher of art in 1998.

(Extracted and compiled from; Steve MacGruer - Obituary, The Northern Times, 20th August 2004, by Alan Macdonald and courtesy of Caroline McMorran)

This original work was apparently inspired by the play 'The Widows of Clyth', a contemporary play written in 1979 by Donald Campbell, based on a drowning tragedy.

Set in Caithness in 1876 - 1886, the subject of this play is the "Clyth Calamity", in which six fishermen lost their lives. Their widows and 26 children faced a nearly hopeless struggle for survival on these barren shores. Donald Campbell's achievement is that he gives this remarkable historic incident a mythic dimension. It becomes not a tragedy, but a parable of triumph.

96 pages, Paperback First published June 30, 1979

From The Scotsman 28th January 1876, p5

MELANCHOLY BOAT ACCIDENT NEAR WICK - SIX FISHERMEN DROWNED

A melancholy boat accident occurred at Clyth, on the Caithness coast, yesterday, by which six fishermen lost their lives. The unfortunate crew proceeded to the fishing in the morning in a small boat. As the weather was fine, a moderate breeze blowing from the south west, no danger was apprehended. In the course of the forenoon, however, the boat was seen bottom upwards in a narrow channel between an out-lying reef of rocks and the shore, near Clyth Ness. On being picked up, it was found that the sail was set and the sheet tied, from which it was supposed that the boat had been caught by a sudden squall and capsized. The body of one of the crew, named Thomas Sutherland, was found entangled in the nets which were attached to the boat. The names of the unfortunate men are - Thomas Sutherland and David Sutherland, brothers; Robert and William Sutherland, also brothers; and Donald Sinclair and William Mackay. The first five were married, and leave widows and families. It appears that the whole crew were related to each other by marriage.

Widows of Clyth (caithness.org)

The painting has been very generously donated by Hazel Godfrey to Coigach Heritage as part of a fund raising auction towards Lorg na Coigich, and in memory of the late Dr Allan Matheson.

[Lorg na Còigich — Coigach Heritage \(coigach-heritage.org\)](http://coigach-heritage.org)