



On an Ayrshire Farm 1823-1824

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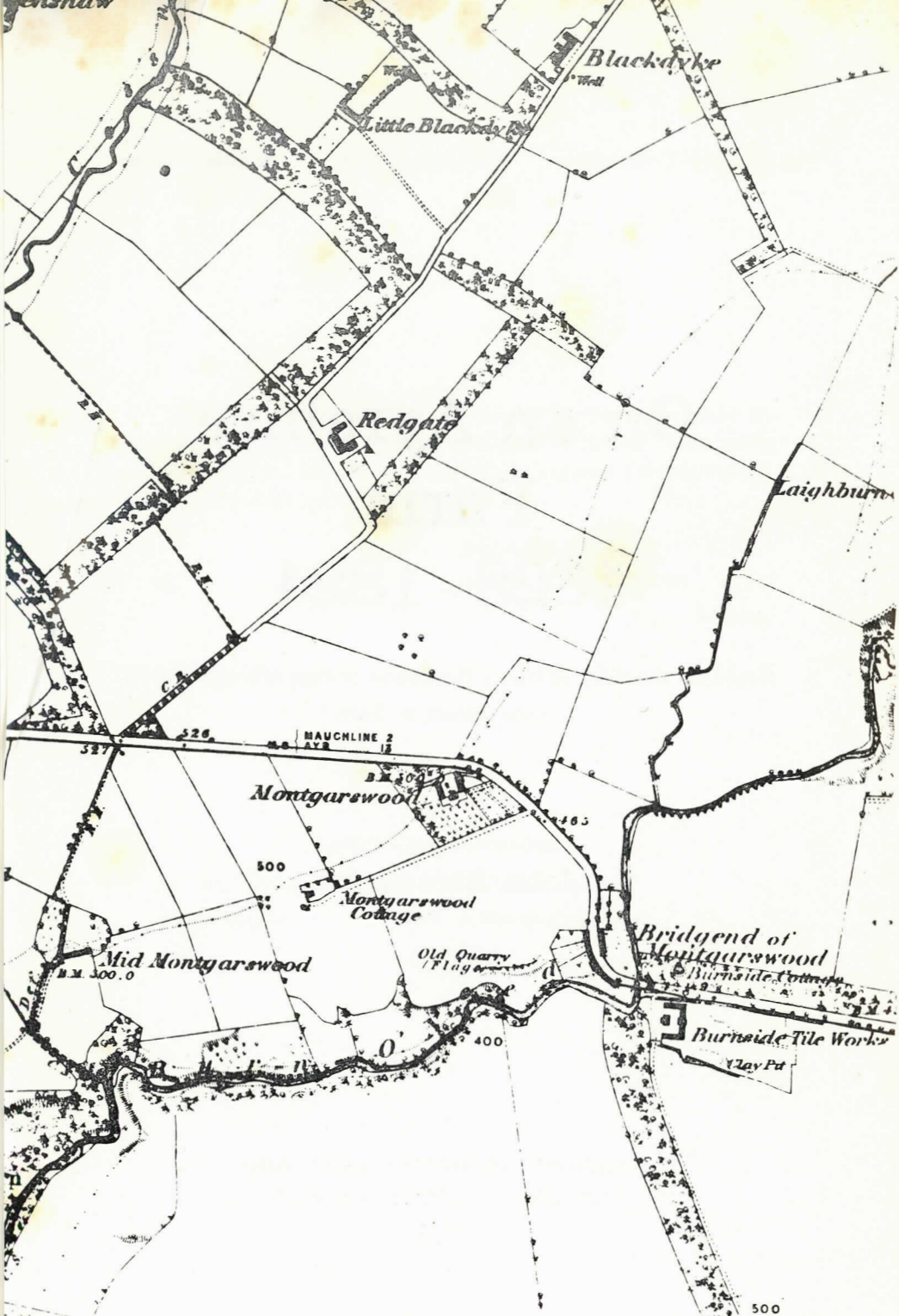
*Based on the diary of Henry Richmond of East Montgarswood,
in the parish of Sorn.*

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The original Diary of Henry Richmond of East Montgarswood in the Parish of Sorn, covering the year 1823 and most of 1824, is an aged manuscript, written with a quill in minute handwriting that has become very difficult to decipher. Just over ten years ago the author's great-grandson, Grant Richmond of Toronto, had the diary transcribed and copies typed and bound.¹

Henry Richmond and his Farm

The Richmonds are an Ayrshire family.² They are recorded as property owners in the late 16th century in Riccarton, and in the 17th century spread to neighbouring parishes—Loudoun, Galston, Mauchline, and Sorn.³ It seems likely that the Richmond family improved their fortunes as dependents of the Campbells of Loudoun who were extending their possessions considerably and gaining prestige, attaining a lordship (1601, Lord Campbell of Loudoun) and an earldom (1633, Earl of Loudoun and Baron Tarrinzean and Mauchline).⁴ In the middle of the 17th century, one John Richmond was occupying Mossgavil (Mossgiel) as servant to Lord Loudoun and as bailie of Mauchline.⁵ From this John Richmond and his wife Margaret Mitchell almost certainly was descended an 18th century Mauchline merchant called Henry Richmond who acquired Little Montgarswood in nearby Sorn parish. One son of this Henry Richmond was John Richmond who was a close acquaintance of Robert Burns. Born in 1765, he was educated at school in Newmilns, became a clerk to Gavin Hamilton the lawyer, went to Edinburgh (where Burns lodged with him), returned to Mauchline as a solicitor, married Janet Surgeoner in 1791, lived in the 'new house of the Kiln Knowes' in High Street, and died in 1846.⁶ This John

1. The original is now in the possession of the diarist's great-great-grandson, John Richmond, 8 Varcourt Place N.W., Calgary 45, Alberta, Canada; one of the typescript copies is in the Burns House Museum, Mauchline.
2. G. F. Black, *Surnames of Scotland*, 1946.
3. *Index to the Register of Sasines: Ayr*, I: 1599-1605; II: 1617-34; III: 1635-60. See also James Paterson, *History of the Counties of Ayr and Wigton*, 5 vols., 1863-1866, esp. Vol. I, Part II (Kyle) henceforth referred to as Paterson: 682, 683.
4. *Scots Peerage*; also J. Robertson, *Ayrshire: Its History and Historic Families*, vol. 2, 1908, 219-247.
5. Mauchline was created a burgh of barony in 1510, renewed in 1606 by charter grant to Lord Loudoun. John Richmond may have come to Mossgiel after the murder in 1642 by Hew Campbell in Netherplace of John Campbell in Mossgavil. Paterson, 542, 543.
6. C. T. Rogers, *The Book of Robert Burns*, 3 vols., 1889-91: vol. 2, 163-168; J. T. Gibb, *The Land of Burns*, 1911, 17; *Burns Chronicle*, 1925 and 1934.

Richmond had an elder brother James who took over Little Montgarswood from his father in 1798, and whose son was the diarist.¹ Henry Richmond we can thus identify as a nephew of Burns' friend John Richmond. Two contacts are noted in the diary.² Henry had no great opinion of his uncle and is reported to have 'frequently and without scruple characterised him as one of the greatest liars.'³

Montgarswood was part of the Mauchline lands of Melrose Abbey and passed into the hands of a branch of the Campbell family around the time of the Reformation.⁴ When George Wishart came to Mauchline in 1544 one who welcomed him was George Campbell of Montgarswood.⁵ This little estate was divided, presumably in the 17th century, for when Sorn parish was disjoined from Mauchline in 1694,⁶ the western part remained in Mauchline parish. This became part of Ballochmyle estate⁷ and was tenanted latterly by Andrew Fisher and then his son William Fisher, Burns' 'Holy Willie'.⁸ The eastern part in Sorn parish, known as Little Montgarswood, comprised the farm of East Montgarswood and some adjoining land. The last reference to a Campbell in ownership was in 1724.⁹ Some time after that it was acquired by Henry Richmond and was farmed thereafter by his son James, and then by his grandson the diarist.

In an introduction to his diary, Henry Richmond records that he was born on 8th October, 1796. He went to school from 5 till 13 years of age, but though a keen scholar reluctantly left to 'assist with the work of the farm.' At the age of 20 in February, 1817, he married Catherine Buchanan from Enterkine in Tarbolton parish. He had a year previously taken over the management of East Montgarswood and in 1818 extended his acreage to include Chapelcroft and Blackdyke-croft. As the farmhouse of Montgarswood would still be occupied by the family, the newly-married couple set up house at Mauchline Hillhead toll. In 1819 he moved into Blackdyke with his wife and two infant daughters (Janet, born 23.11.17, and Mary, born 13.1.19). In 1820 his only sister died

1. J. Strawhorn, ed., *Ayrshire at the Time of Burns*, 1959, 307; also Rogers, vol. 2, 163, 168; Paterson, 704.
2. 16.2.23: meet at Mauchline Kirk; 10.3.24: note from uncle regarding brother James's grave.
3. A. B. Todd, *Poetical Works*, with autobiography, 1906, 30.
4. Paterson, 536-538.
5. John Knox, *History of the Reformation in Scotland*.
6. Paterson, 539.
7. Paterson, 568.
8. *Ayrshire at the Time of Burns*, 140; see also A. B. Todd, 56. Todd's father recovered Fisher's body from the stream after his drowning, on the way home to the farm of Tongue, in 1809.
9. Paterson, 704.

(27.1.20). Later in the year his wife bore him a third daughter (Catherine, born 20.6.20) but being 'naturally of a delicate constitution . . . her health declined apace. She died on 26th March, 1821, and left me in a state of mind that can scarcely be described.'

When Henry Richmond began his diary in 1823 he was thus a 26 year old widower, living usually at Blackdyke but sometimes at East Montgarswood, and managing the two farms. Just who belonged to the two households it is tricky to deduce. Grandfather Henry Richmond lived at Blackdyke. Henry's mother and father were still alive. The mother is mentioned only once as is the father who in September, 1823, managed to go to Sorn church for the first time in years. A brother James was living at Montgarswood, 'but poor fellow he is not well, I doubt he is consumptive' (21.11.23) and in fact he soon died (4.3.24). Another brother Alexander was married and lived at Townhead in Sorn. Brother William arrived back home in 1823 after four years' absence,¹ and paid occasional visits from Enterkine where he seems to have settled. The fourth brother, Daniel, also paid some unwelcome visits, 'plaguing me with his Debts and embarrassments.' Henry's three infant daughters seem to have been boarded out—Janet possibly at Bridgend, Mary sometimes at Montgarswood, sometimes at Enterkine, little Katie for a time at Sorn and latterly going to her mother's folk. Mother-in-law from Enterkine came to stay now and again, and there are mentions of 'the boys'—possibly nephews—who came to Blackdyke in the summer of 1823, whom he diverted at Hallowe'en, sent to school next year, and who from time to time did odd jobs about the farm.²

Exactly how many comprised the joint household it is impossible to determine exactly, nor is much said about the domestic arrangements. We know about house repairs like thatching and 'stopping some holes,' masons putting up a chimney, and Henry sweeping the vent. We know that coals were brought (there are no mentions of peat) but we have to guess at things like the diet of the farm folk. This can be implied from the crops grown, and references to small beer, wheaten bread, oaten cakes for breakfast, dinner, taking tea with visitors (twice—which suggests it may still have been an occasional treat), several mentions of whisky; and biscuits and wine at a funeral.

1. Possibly in England. H.R. 'wrote to Liverpool' (6.4.23); William returned (22.8.23).
2. The boys are mentioned: 9.5.23; 11.11.23; 10.5.24. There are also references to 'Young Thomas' (11.4.23), 'Little Jack' (28.2.24; 12.4.24), to Andrew Gebbie (15.3.24; 7.3.24) and Henry Gebbie (9.9.23; 8.11.23).

The diary is a 'Manuscript or Journal of various articles, consisting chiefly of Remarks on Agriculture, interspersed Occasionally (*sic*) with Miscellaneous Literature'. There are daily references, from the beginning of January, 1823 till 17th October, 1824, noting the weather and the work done about the farm; a great deal about reading; some information about the church and about politics; miscellaneous mentions of jaunts, special occasions, people he knew and met; his thoughts and feelings; and the record of a secret romance. He thoughtfully added a detailed plan of Montgarswood.¹

From the Plan we can see that the old farmhouse of East Montgarswood stood on the western edge of the farm—west of the modern steading and beside where Sorn Mine now is. Not a trace of it now remains. The Plan clearly shows the farmhouse as a long low one-storeyed thatched building, with byre and barn on the west and a two-roomed dwelling house at the east end. Beside it was the old kiln or carthouse, and before the door was a little hut. Along the front ran a road, the line of which can still be traced. This was in fact a surviving part of the old Sorn road, which left Mauchline High Street for Welton, continued direct to Montgarswood, crossed the Burn O'Need beyond, and wandered its way to Sorn.² The new road, shown on the plan and still in use, was constructed after the Ayrshire Turnpike Act of 1766. Its route over the Mauchline Hilltop is an awkward one and it is a puzzle why the Turnpike Trustees selected it. Oddly enough there were criticisms of the continuation of this road east of Sorn village.³

Where the turnpike road swung round to make a bridge crossing of the Burn O'Need, the clachan or hamlet of Bridgend was situated. Just as the laird of nearby Ballochmyle, Claud Alexander, set up his considerable new weaving town of Catrine in 1787,⁴ so here the laird of Little Montgarswood, the diarist's grandfather, established this much smaller community—sometime after 1766 when the bridge was built, and presumably before 1787 since cotton was not worked here. The weavers, a later resident informs us, were customary weavers producing 'blankets, druggets, and such like fabrics for the farmers' wives of the district.'⁵

1. He tells us he made the plan 24-25.9.23, but he made additions afterwards till 1826.
2. Roy's Military Survey Maps in the British Museum, dated 1755-67, photostat copies of Ayrshire sheets in Carnegie Library, Ayr.
3. Sir John Sinclair, *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, 21 vols., 1791-99: XX, 157. (The 'Old' Statistical Account, referred to here as O.S.A.).
4. O.S.A., XX, 176-180.
5. A. B. Todd, 30.

In the Statistical Account for Mauchline parish, 'Daddy' Auld reported that 'At Bridgend, about 2½ miles from Machlin, there is a coal work, with a fire engine.'¹ But this could not be at Montgarswood Bridgend, which was not within Mauchline parish. In any case there is no indication of a pit on the Plan and Richmond, who carefully charted even ruins of an old mill and of an old farm house could hardly have overlooked a pit big enough to require a 'fire engine' or steam pump. And there are numerous references to coals being brought from elsewhere. The explanation is that there were two other places of the same name in Mauchline parish.² By the River Ayr was Barskimming Bridgend; and the more likely site for this coal pit, Bridgend at Lawersbridge by the River Cessnock, not far from the modern Mauchline Pit.

The Plan of East Montgarswood indicates who the tenants were at Bridgend—Begg, Walker, Finlay, Mitchell, Wallace, Lapraik. James Begg, we learn elsewhere,³ was an old stone mason, an orthodox Protestant who hated the Catholic church. He kept an adventure school. 'The inhabitants of the more remote districts occasionally unite, and employ teachers for the instruction of their children,' wrote the minister of Sorn,⁴ describing an arrangement that was far from unique.⁵ Here Henry Richmond may have been taught; here he 'sent the children to school' (10.5.24); and several times he paid their fees and 'settled with Mr Begg'. Next door lived Andrew Walker, a cotter who worked on Montgarswood. A married man, his wife died in 1823. His son, John Walker, was a weaver here, an ardent reformer, and reputedly fonder of an argument than of work. Old Andrew Walker had a passing acquaintance with Burns and was the brother of Thomas Walker of Ochiltree who had written an epistle to Burns and who would come to die here at Bridgend in 1833.⁶ William Lapraik who lived across the road was a thatcher, perhaps a son of John Lapraik of Dalfram.⁷ Of Finlay, Wallace and John Mitchell, I have no information, but there are diary references to all of them at Bridgend having coals brought to them.

Besides those persons who were members of the family and those we know were living at Bridgend we can identify

1. O.S.A., II, 110.
2. Roy's Map.
3. A. B. Todd, 58.
4. O.S.A., XX, 161.
5. Cf. Burns's early Education at Alloway, where his father organised such a school. See William Boyd, *Education in Ayrshire Through Seven Centuries*, 1961.
6. A. B. Todd, 58.
7. See James Paterson, *Contemporaries of Burns*, 1840.

others who helped Richmond work the two farms. Andrew Walker in Bridgend has been noticed. There was a James Gibson who did a lot of carting work. There was another, referred to as Jamie, who appears on almost every page of the diary, as Richmond's principal labourer. This I presume was James Dunlop, a cotter who occupied the 12 acre holding of Little Blackdyke. He was at this time in his sixties and was later described: 'he had a fresh, ruddy, cheerful countenance, and though low in stature, his well-built frame indicated that he had once been possessed of great strength, and this, by report, was equalled by his great courage and daring, for like many country people then, having in his young days been engaged in the smuggling business, he had once broken the arm of an excise officer who had seized the bridle of his horse when he was riding by in the dark with a cask of brandy or whisky behind him. His tales of the olden days were many and stirring, and related mostly to encounters with the gaugers and their men, and to battles at country fairs . . . Of Burns he had a vivid recollection, having, along with a brother, assisted Robert and Gilbert in the formation of a march fence between the farms of Lochlea and Fencedyke.' He was a master of sarcasm and could make cutting remarks about the liberal opinions of his master the laird.¹

There was, as one would expect, a good deal of coming and going with neighbouring farmers. The closest contacts were with the folk of Redgate, which lies actually between Montgarswood and Blackdyke. Redgate was tenanted by Andrew Borland, and Henry Richmond was there when Agnes Borland died. 'A most solemn scene, affected me very deeply, for her trouble was short and severe, her husband and daughters, were extremely affected with grief,' (31.5.23). Of these daughters, more later. To the west was Mid-Montgarswood, which no longer exists. The tenant here was Old William Lamont, who also died (7.1.24). To the south, over the Burn O'Need, is Crofthead, tenanted successively by Gardener and McGaan. To the East was Burnside, whose tenant was roused (28.6.23). It was occupied thereafter by Andrew Sloan or perhaps William Dalziel.

Henry Richmond was obviously a man of greater substance than his immediate neighbours—a laird, a heritor of Sorn Parish, a trooper in the Ayrshire Yeomanry; he worked two farms, employed several workers, contracted ploughing, harvest and carting work and contemplated taking a lease on Burnside, Windyege and Mid-Montgarswood farms when they fell vacant.

1. A. B. Todd, 30, 31.

Work on the Farm

The diary contains a great mass of information about farming practice which would be of particular interest to working farmers, just as his detailed daily weather records would be of value to specialists in that subject. For the economic historian the outstanding value of the diary is the evidence it contains of the stage which had been reached in agricultural improvements in early 19th century Ayrshire. The transformation from subsistence farming to commercial production that is known as the agricultural revolution began, as far as Ayrshire is concerned, with the pioneering efforts of several landlords in the early 18th century and brought a more widespread transformation of farming practice by the 1780s—Ayrshire at the time of Burns.¹ The agricultural revolution involved the improvement of the better croft land and the reclamation of what was previously rough pasture; the enclosure of farms, with new field divisions; a massive increase in crop production and stock breeding; and incidentally a complete transformation of the Ayrshire landscape. It is clear from what we know of Burns at Mount Oliphant, Lochlea and Mossgiel that these changes were only beginning. Ellisland, however, was a new improved farm, and by the 1790s the transformation was well advanced on the greater estates.

On smaller estates, however, where capital resources were limited, developments must have come later and more slowly. When Henry Richmond took over the farm in 1816, he seems to have initiated improvements which were already accomplished on the great estates. 'The spirit of improvement with which I was now actuated discovered abundance of employment' he noted in his introductory remarks. Unfortunately his hopes of including a history of improvements on the farm were not realised. But in 1823 and 1824 he was still in process of modernising his farms. While the work of agricultural improvement on the great estates has been well documented, Henry Richmond's diary is of particular value as a commentary on work on a very small estate.

The first job of the improvers was to clear the land of stones and boulders and this work was still incomplete. There are 27 references to clearing and carting stones, e.g. 'Jamie raising stones from ryegrass furs' (4.9.23) until 'fine soft earth not a single stone to incommode us' (11.8.24), and he even had to 'fetch stones from Grass Males' (11.6.24) to use in draining. There are 24 references to working at draining and the Plan shows his progress here between 1818 and 1826.

1. See *Ayrshire at the Time of Burns*, passim; also J. Strawhorn, 'Farming in 18th Century Ayrshire' in *Ayrshire Collections*, Vol. 3.

Various not very successful experiments in draining had been undertaken in 18th century Ayrshire,¹ using turf, clay, or stones. Richmond made stone drains, some of which are still functioning effectively. Quite soon afterwards, in 1825, tile drainage was introduced into Ayrshire by the Duke of Portland, and in fact a tile works was erected at Burnside, just across the Burn O'Need.² The traditional method of keeping land partially dry was to plough it up into high-backed rigs. One of the jobs Richmond was doing was to level these old rigs. In 1820 he levelled Rooding Croft, in 1821 Braehead, and later other patches. 'I have nearly completed a task to which I have always looked forward with distrusting anxiety, viz. levelling and straightening part of Bruntland.' (30.3.24). He also began to 'pole off rigs in a new direction, difficult to do on account of old furs.' (12.4.24). And there are 25 references to carting earth.

To improve the soil by liming had long been practised in Ayrshire.³ But now this became a major priority. All over the county in the 18th century lime kilns were erected, and indeed this marked the beginning of the Ayrshire coal industry—to produce coal for the extensive lime burning.⁴ Coal heughs (or quarries) were opened up on outcrops, bell pits and ingaunees went deeper, and by the end of the 18th century several deep pits had been sunk, drained by 'fire engines'. Though Richmond had qualms about too much liming (24.7.23) there are 63 references to lime, and he made up composts of lime and earth. So much was lime in demand that although the three kilns in Sorn parish were producing several thousand tons annually,⁵ it was in short supply. Richmond carted 25 loads from Sorn heugh, got supplies also from Barbraes (2) and Hagusbank (2); had to go as far afield as Auchinleck parish to Barglachan (11) and Common (10); and in August, 1824, he restored the small old kiln at East Montgarswood and set it afire.

In 1823 and 1824 Richmond was still in process of enclosing East Montgarswood. 'The inclosures are very deficient. They are indeed not complete though unequalled in one part of the neighbourhood.' (15.8.23). The diary has no fewer than 92 references to dykes—planting new dykes of

beech and thorn; filling up, mending, repairing (or sorting) old dykes; regularly clipping, cutting, or switching them; nailing up gaps with palings. He was still at it ten years later when the young A. B. Todd worked for him and remarked that 'his hedges were the best and most beautiful in the district.' He was, like all the great improvers, also a tree planter—beech, larch, firs, a walnut, and had an orchard of 'the finest apples and pears that ever made a boy's mouth water.'¹ In his diary he noted that he 'had lain in wait these two or three mornings past for boys that steal apples, catches them this time.' (18.8.24).

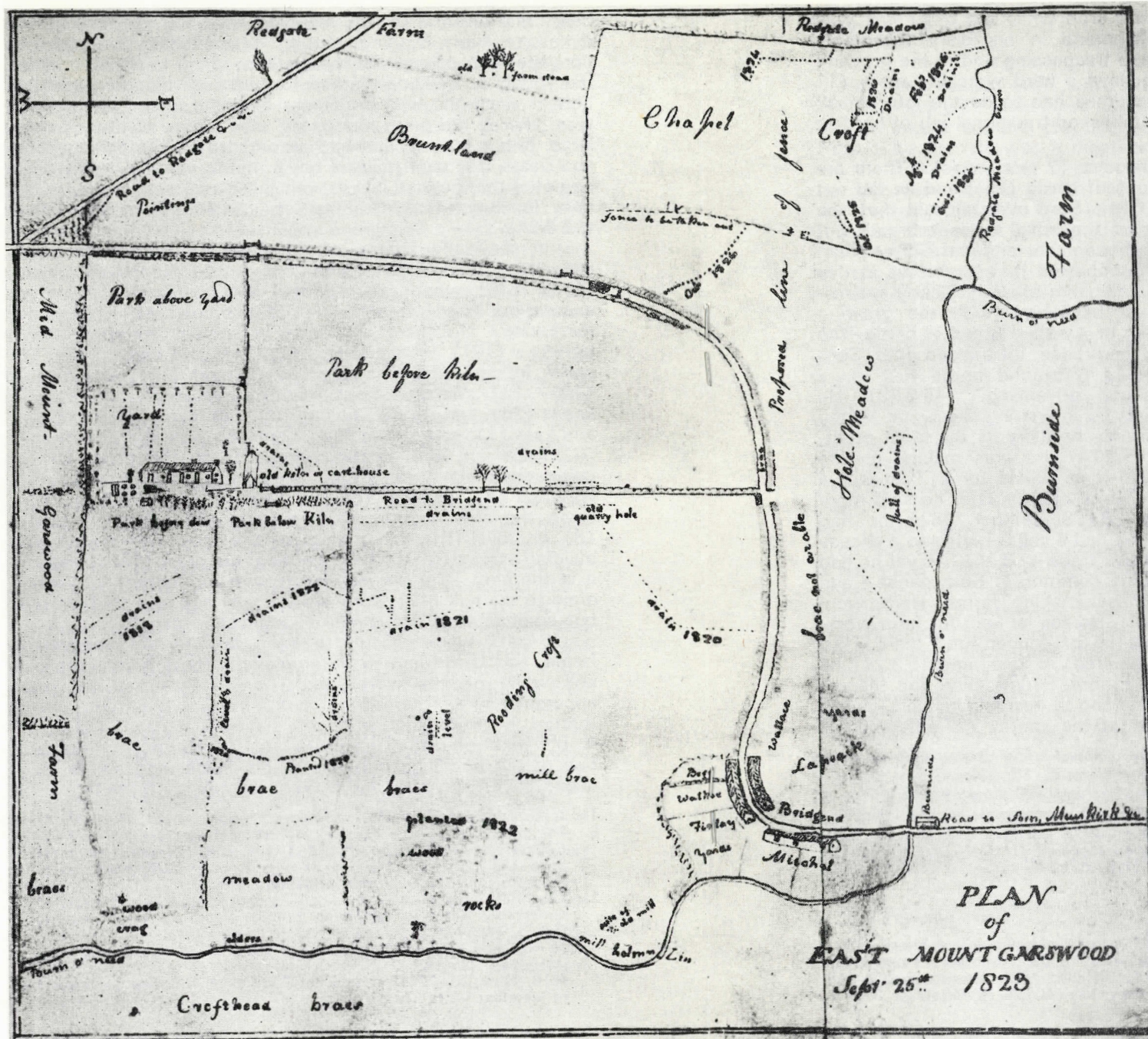
In the early stages of the agricultural revolution and especially during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815) when grain prices were high, there was an excessive concentration on production of crops for marketing.² So there are many references to corn (103), potatoes (101), wheat (36), bear (21), and barley (12). For cattle fodder there was hay (99), clover (10), and turnips (10).³ For domestic consumption presumably, there were beans (23), carrots (6), onions (3), cabbages (2), leeks (1), and kale (1); and a little flax or lint (6) was still grown.

There are innumerable references to the processes of cultivation—ploughing (106), harrowing (40), rolling (17), watering (4), weeding (6); mowing (40) and shearing (47), using the new scythes (3);⁴ rickling (54), forming stooks (8) or coils (6); the 'inning' of the crop with laying and building stacks (100); then 'dighting' the grain (13), threshing it in the barn (91), winnowing it with his fanner (2); taking grain to the mill (17), normally we may suppose to Sorn mill, but sometimes to Haughmill in Mauchline parish.

Beasts were difficult to keep on the old unenclosed farms, and herds had to be employed. There were problems still while hedges were young, and because gates were apparently rare. 'There is not one park that the cows can be trusted in from the want of sufficient gates.' (15.8.23). A. B. Todd noted that ten years later 'he had not a gate upon one of the openings into any of his fields, and so he must needs have a herd for his cows in summer.'⁵ Sometimes too

1. A. B. Todd, 31-33.
2. For overcropping see 'Farming in 18th century Ayrshire' in *Ayrshire Collections*, Vol. 3, esp. 151, 153, 158. H.R. mentions the rotation once (24.7.23): 'three crops of oats & one of ryegrass, which is the common rotation in this neighbourhood'.
3. Clover is once described as 'cow's grass' (11.9.24). Turnips were remarkably slow in becoming popular. See *Ayrshire Collections*, Vol. 3, 154.
4. A. B. Todd, 22-24, thought the sickle was 'then the only reaping instrument in use.'
5. A. B. Todd, 31, 32. Despite what Todd says, H.R. has six references to mending 'yetts' (gates).

1. See William Aiton, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Ayr*, 1811, 364-373.
2. Ordnance Survey Six Inch Map, 1857.
3. Timothy Pont, *Cuninghame*, various editions of this 17th century work.
4. See, for example, the account of the Earl of Dumfries's limeworks in J. Strawhorn, *New History of Cumnock*, 1967; also J. H. G. Lebon; 'The Development of the Ayrshire Coalfield' in *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 1933.
5. O.S.A., XX, 153-155.



Henry Richmond's plan of East Montgarswood, drawn in September 1823 and amended as necessary over the next three years. Besides many features mentioned in the text (e.g. field drains and hedge lines) it shows the positions of Redgate Farm and Bridgend.

Compare this plan with the 1857 Ordnance Survey, reproduced on page 46. This shows Richmond's new farmhouse, built after his second marriage, and also the farms at Blackdyke, to which he had moved in 1819 (see pages 48 and 49).

he had 'one half of a field in crop while the other half was being kept in pasture.' Richmond in his diary repeatedly complains of cattle and sheep trespassing and in the growing season it was essential to have a herd watching them (11 references). Richmond sometimes had to do the job himself on Sundays. So the long-established traditional job of herding was slow in disappearing.¹

Only a few sheep were kept (7 references).² There are also remarkably few mentions of cattle (25); and he did not have his own bull.³ In 1796 the Sorn minister said that 'the black cattle consist partly of the small ancient breed, but mostly of a mixed breed between that and the Cunningham kind.' By 1837 his successor reported that 'the cows in this parish are mostly of the Cunningham breed.'⁴ Clearly specialised dairy farming was just beginning, with the growing popularity of the Cunningham or Ayrshire breed of cattle. The making of Dunlop cheese had been introduced into Sorn parish in the 1780s.⁵ In 1823 Richmond noted that 'dairy produce has . . . continued advancing.' (15.3.23). He purchased a calf 'with a view to improving the breed as my attention is beginning to turn to the dairy as the most profitable branch of farming.' (15.3.24). He was making cheese and took 40 stones and sold it at Darvel for £17, at 8/6 a stone. (13.11.23; 14.11.23). Some months later he sold more at 10/- a stone. (20.8.24). By September, 1824, he had another 42 stones for sale, and had a cheese loft and a cheese cart for what was now a regular trade (2.9.24). As yet he had no pigs, which were becoming common in Sorn parish,⁶ and later became general on cheese-making farms. Hens were kept, in a hen house (19.8.24), Horses he kept for farm work. Like the other local farmers he no longer bred them,⁷ but bought and sold them as required. At one time (5.3.24) he had only one but usually had more. Paddy, Livy, and Maggie are named. To keep them shod and to maintain his cart wheels he was a frequent customer at the smithy (21 references).

1. For herding see W. Fullarton, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Ayr*, 1793, 11.

2. For objections to sheep, see *Ayrshire Collections*, Vol. 3, 157.

3. He mentions cattle (12), calves (2), and cows (11) including 'Old Horny' which he sold (12.2.24).

4. O.S.A., XX, 151; *New Statistical Account (N.S.A.)*, V. 140. For the development of the Ayrshire breed of cattle see *Ayrshire Collections*, Vols. 1 and 3.

5. O.S.A., XX, 151.

6. O.S.A., XX, 151.

7. 'Some of the horses are still of the old diminutive breed of the country . . . The farmers rear most of their own horses and a few likewise for sale'. O.S.A., XX, 150. 'No particular attention is paid to the breed of the horses in the parish'. N.S.A., V, 140.

Social Life

Besides dealing with work on and about the farm, the diary is filled with references to Richmond's other activities. As one would expect, the church occupied a considerable place in his life. He was a member of the Sorn congregation and there are glimpses of parochial activities. Early in 1823 the patroness of the parish, Mrs Somervell Brown, died;¹ later in the year when Rev. Lewis Balfour was translated to Colinton, her sister and successor presented Rev. James Stewart.² There was a dinner at Sorn Castle for the principal heritors, and another at Greenfoot for the elders and the lesser heritors like Henry Richmond (11.2.23).

The sacrament was celebrated at Sorn once a year on the second Sunday in May, with a day of humiliation and prayer preceding it. Occasionally the church was closed and there was no service on Sunday when the sacrament was being celebrated in a neighbouring parish. Richmond thus went once to Mauchline (22.6.23) and to Ochiltree (4.7.24). Of Mauchline he said: 'Dull day, at Mauchline sacrament, had good mind of Burns' "Holy Fair" and the contrast that it now presents. There is no tent erected for they have the use of the Burgher Meeting House for the day. Old Mr Smith of "Common Sense" is no more and his son George is officiating in his stead.' Altogether he attended Mauchline church four times, Catrine Chapel of Ease once, Ochiltree once, and Mauchline Burgher meeting house once. No signs of sectarian dispute appear, and when a visiting minister made disparaging remarks about dissenters this gave umbrage, and not only to Richmond (25.4.24). Of the services themselves there are only occasional passing remarks. An interval between the two services was introduced (13.4.23) and on one occasion a case of church discipline was noted — 'reported a very immoral character' (21.12.23). Altogether in twenty months Richmond attended 61 church services, but missed church 28 times. He was obviously not keenly involved in ecclesiastical affairs, and refused an invitation to become an elder. He conducted family prayers at least once and prayed with two aged neighbours (Lamont, 23.12.23; Mrs Walker, 7.2.24).

1. See Paterson, 707.

2. For ministers see *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, 9 vols., 1915-1961. Rev. Lewis Balfour's daughter was the mother of Robert Lewis Stevenson. See A. Edgar, *Old Church Life in Scotland*, 2 vols., 1885, 1886, for details of worship and discipline.

During the period he attended five funerals—brother James, Mrs Borland of Redgate (3.6.23), the Cooke child in Catrine (3.1.24), William Lamont (10.1.24), Mrs Walker from Bridgend (26.2.24). There was a wake at Redgate—'Sat up at Redgate last night, 'tis an old custom but generally an unnecessary one.' (1.6.23). He tells of the arrangements he made for his brother's funeral. 'I went to Catrine, bespoke a coffin, &c, and wrote letters. Andrew Cowan comes with coffin.' (4.3.24) 'Got one pint of whisky and 4 bottles of wine. One bottle of the whisky and 2 of the wine remains after serving about 40 people.' (5.3.24) This would be for those who came to view the body and pay their respects on the eve of the funeral. He was concerned about the excessive service of drink at funerals, and the consequent drunkenness, which temperate opinion in the church was seeking to eradicate.¹ Made ready barn for funeral. Send James to Catrine for funeral service. Has entered into an engagement in the parish to give no service but it will not be easy to eradicate old customs. I mean to act in a kind of median between extravagance & niggardliness & wear it out by degrees when prejudices may be in some measure removed. Giving large feasts at funerals is a system that in many cases has been followed by a load of debt which poor people have often found it difficult to get discharged & has ever been productive of embarrassment for their future lives. I gave this day whisky and biscuit once round, choice of wine and bread to correspond one round too. Very stormy kind o' day. After the funeral we had a nice social discourse together.' (6.3.24) A few days after the burial in Mauchline there was an unusual kind of problem—the threat of body-snatching. 'Received a note from Uncle saying that there was a rumour afloat that Brother James' grave had been meddled with, so I forthwith sped to Mauchline.' (10.3.24) Next day he went back and treated the gravedigger to 5 gills of whisky and a shilling to keep an eye on the grave. He explains that 'resurrection men' have 'carried off several subjects from neighbouring Church yards, particularly the theft of the body of a young woman belonging to Catrine.' (11.3.24)

The year was punctuated by the calendar of farm activities and such occasions as funerals more than by other seasonal festivals. Christmas and New Year pass by unnoticed. But at Old Hallowe'en (11.11.23) he 'went thro' several ceremonies to divert the youngsters' — and it was celebrated according to the old calendar which had been statutorily superseded in

1. See *Strawhorn New History of Cumnock*, 167, 168 for the situation in a nearby parish.

1752. He also noted (12.5.23) 'This is what old people call Beltan Day, a festival among the ancient Caledonians whereon they kindled bonfires in honour of some of their deities. Old people still speak of Beltan that know nothing about its derivation, but make it a rule to drive their cattle to pasture on this day. Our cattle were turned out today, accordingly'.¹ There are three curious references which may possibly have had some traditional significance — he writes that he had his 'ears washed' (15.9.23, 5.6.24, 15.9.24). Oddly enough there are no mentions of any harvest festivals.²

Henry Richmond's life was also interrupted by visitors — relations like his brothers, his mother-in-law and others. There were also occasional passers-by who spent the night at Montgarswood — a man with a bull (14.6.24); 'a Hanoverian lodged here last night' (22.6.24); 'some strolling persons' (1.2.24); and 'itinerant musicians' (29.7.24). Visitors he sometimes found a nuisance. He himself did quite a bit of jaunting. He spent half-a-dozen weekends with his in-laws at Enterkine in Tarbolton parish, revisiting old haunts (e.g. 27.12.23, 28.12.23). He paid regular trips into Catrine, visiting friends, going to the library, at least once dropping in to the inn — 'at Miller had a gill of whisky' (24.12.23) — and to see amateur dramatics when Allan Ramsay's 'Gentle Shepherd' was performed in Catrine (8-19.12.23). He went to markets at Sorn, Kilmarnock, Darvel, and especially Mauchline — six times to Mauchline, which had twelve fairs in the year.³ He went to Ayr to try to sell a horse and to Glasgow for the same purpose. This involved a three-day excursion, staying overnight at Mearns Inn on the way there and back. He grudged the cost of these trips. At Ayr: 'Had only 3/- with me today, expended 2/- of it on Breakfast which was bad economy'. (9.7.23). At Glasgow fair: 'I incurred great expense by this jaunt. 15/- would not cover it — too extravagant'. (15.7.23). Apart from this, as a trooper in the Ayrshire Yeomanry he spent a week's parade in Ayr in June 1823, and a week at Kilmarnock the following year. Altogether he got around more than most people would.

He found most of his recreation at home. There was some shooting of hares, a little fishing, and even amusing himself with a telescope. But his main delight was in his books.

1. For Beltane Day in neighbouring parishes see *O.S.A.*, II, 82 (Galston), and *N.S.A.*, V, 741, 742 (Tarbolton).
2. For local festivals and old customs, see *Ayrshire at the Time of Burns*, 75-79.
3. Aiton, *op. cit.*, 568.

Some he had bought. In 1823 he 'began to accumulate a small library and seldom went to a large town without purchasing a Book'. Most he borrowed from the Catrine Literary Book Society which had been founded in 1814.¹ He joined this in December 1822 and had read nearly 30 books in the course of that winter. (1.2.23). The range of his reading is quite remarkable. As far as English literature is concerned, he was acquainted with Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Shenstone, Swift, Addison, and was now reading Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, Boswell's *Tour to Corsica*, Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and *Sermons*, Smollet's *Peregrine Pickle* (the only book he abandoned unfinished). He knew of 'the Lake Poets' and copied into his diary a poem which impressed him, Thomas Hood's 'Cataract of Lodore' (12.7.23). He was, like Burns, an enthusiast for all things Scots. He had started (like Burns) with Hamilton's *Life of Wallace*, knew Blind Harrie, was now reading *The Chronicles of Scotland*, Porter's *Scottish Chiefs*, four volumes on *The Beauties of Scotland*. He was also going through historical and philosophical works by well known recent Scottish authors — Blair, Robertson, Hume, and Lord Kames; and reprints of the *Rambler* and *Mirror* magazines. Of Scottish literature he knew not only Burns but older writers like Ossian, Home, Allan Ramsay, Henry Mackenzie, Joanna Baillie. He was also reading new authors — Tannahill's poems, Hogg's tales, John Galt's *The Provost* (recently published in 1822). He had just become absorbed in the new best-sellers of Walter Scott — *Old Mortality* (1816) which made him think again about the Covenanters (15.2.23, 31.3.23); *Rob Roy* (1818); *The Monastery* (1820); *Kenilworth* (1821); and the newly-published *Quentin Durward* (1823). Most of what he read can be identified, and recognised as classics. Only a few cannot be definitely traced: D. Harrart's *Life* and an un-named 'Inyclopedia', for instance. Altogether he read 29 books in 1823; another 17 before October 1824 — a total of 46 volumes over the diary period of twenty one months.

Burns of course was a special favourite. He quotes him in passing on numerous occasions — as compared with only one biblical quotation — and mentions specifically 'The Holy Fair', 'Tam O' Shanter' and the 'The Vision'. He read Currie's life of Burns, and also Burns's correspondence with George Thomson. When at Ayr, Richmond visited Burns Monument²

1. The Public Library founded in 1814 had (by 1837) over 600 volumes and 70 members paying an entry fee of £1 and 2/3 annually. Other libraries were founded in 1825 and 1829. For details see *N.S.A.*, V, 145, 146.
2. Burns Monument, Alloway, was commenced 25th January 1820 and completed 4th July 1823. It was sponsored by Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck, antiquarian, poet, colonel in the Ayrshire Yeomanry, who died after a political duel in 1822.

and had an interesting conversation. (11.8.23). 'Visit Burns' Monument today, has not seen it since it was completed before, a most superb structure, and has from its situation among the scenery of "Tam O' Shanter" both to the eye and to the imagination a very imposing effect. A great many visitors there, saw one old man, an acquaintance of the Poet's and his father Wm. Burns. Told me the Father's manners were very austere, allowed his servants one half day to all Ayr Fairs, but to be home by sunset in summer and daylight going in winter. Corroborated the story told by Burns about the dancing school affair, which alienated his father's affections.'¹ Elsewhere Richmond proclaimed: 'I am an enthusiastic admirer of this first of Scotia's bards' and in the course of a long assessment fittingly declares that 'his writings possess a peculiar charm that elevates the soul and melts the heart.' (31.1.24).

Not only was Henry Richmond a reader. He was also a writer skilful in handling words, conscious of Scots words and idiom, and some of his descriptive passages in the diary could be judged of literary merit. He had also tried his hand at poetry from the age of fourteen, still occasionally wrote some pieces, and later had one poem privately published.² This was a satirical piece describing 'a robbery committed on a small farmer called Findlay at Rachel Brae, a lonesome rocky place about a mile east of Mauchline, then said and believed to be haunted by evil spirits.' Only the opening stanza has been recovered:

'Twas in the time when Boreas' breath
Wi' biting breezes blaw,
And ilka glen and knowe appear
White wi' December snaw.

Writing verse in imitation of Burns was of course a popular Ayrshire pastime.³ As well as Richmond at East Montgarswood there was John Walker at Bridgend; Meikle, a young man from Catrine whose poems Richmond bought in 1823; and A. B. Todd who as a lad spent three years at East Montgarswood.

Henry Richmond was obviously a thinker and a man of ideas. The country had just been through a period of acute

1. For 'the dancing school affair' at Tarbolton, see biographies of Burns, e.g. Robert Chambers, *Life and Works of R.B.*, 1896, vol. 1, 87.
2. Rogers, vol. 2, 168; A. B. Todd, 29.
3. See James Paterson, *Contemporaries of Burns*, 1840; also publications of John Wilson, Kilmarnock, catalogued in Dick Institute, Kilmarnock and Carnegie Library, Ayr.

social distress and political upheaval after the end of the Napoleonic War in 1815. As he said: 'The long protracted war between this Country and France tended to raise everything above its real value, land and farm produce rose to an enormous price and the sudden transition from war to peace produced an alarming reverse. Agriculture previous to this period was in a flourishing state, farming was a lucrative employment, but henceforward, owing to the causes above stated and a succession of late and unfruitful seasons it rapidly declined and those employed in it were reduced to a state of abject dependence on the will of their landlords.' (1816). There was particular distress among the manufacturing classes in the towns. The Ayrshire Yeomanry which had been formed for home defence in 1793 was expanded in order to cope with threatened political upheaval. They were mustered to deal with a riot in Ayr in 1816, and again called out when radical risings were feared in December 1819 and in April 1820. On this occasion detachments were sent to Stewarton, Paisley and Glasgow. Others were posted at Ayr, Galston, and Mauchline, where disturbances were expected. On 23rd April 1820 seven yeomen under Colonel Boswell of Auchinleck and some special constables arrested thirty radicals at Mauchline and seized a quantity of arms. Richmond joined the Yeomanry about this time, but possibly not until May 1820 when Claud Alexander raised the new Ballochmyle troop.¹

After 1820 there was an improvement in trade and the political temperature subsided. Richmond like many others may have disapproved of the policies of the extremer radicals, but he was in favour of reform. He continued as a trooper in the Ayrshire Yeomanry but service was limited to annual reviews and attendance at the ball which Captain Alexander of Ballochmyle gave to his troop. (1.3.24). As a man of liberal opinions, Richmond disapproved of slave trading (23.11.23); he read a newspaper almost every week;² he bemoaned the overthrow of the liberal Spanish government by reactionaries, which was helped by a French invasion of Spain (12.2.23, etc.); he noted with approval 'a very full account of a public dinner to Mr Brougham in Glasgow. He (Mr B.) is one of the champions of the opposition . . . Liberal opinions are more widely diffused now than formerly and a man may oppose the measures of a ministry without being considered disloyal to the King or a traitor to his country'. (20.9.23). Richmond had no vote, but later in 1832 he took an active part in the general

1. W. C. Cooper, *A History of the Ayrshire Yeomanry Cavalry*, 1881; W. S. Brownlie, *The Proud Trooper*, 1964. For the raising of the fifth troop of 50 men in 1820 see Cooper, 11, 31.

2. There are 52 references to reading newspapers. Sometimes he read out the news to those with him, a common practice (e.g. 20.1.24).

election, speaking at Mauchline on behalf of the Liberal candidate, Mr Oswald of Auchincruive; and after the passing of the Reform Act of 1832 and the extension of the franchise, Richmond gained a vote.¹

Personal Life

Throughout the diary we get not only a picture of farm life and early 19th century society and occasional mentions of local events,² but also revelations of Henry Richmond's own personal life. We hear when he falls in the burn, hurts his hand, has a head cold, the colic, and has a spell of headaches and feeling unwell. He tells of buying new stockings, horseman's boots, a new vest, an underwaistcoat, settling with the tailor, getting his hair cut by the Catrine librarian or his 'head polled'.

Throughout the diary he records his moods and emotions. He declares himself indolent many times, languid, suffering from ennui; he judges himself to be thoughtless, careless, bad-tempered, and bashful; in his introduction to the diary he boasts of his intellectual superiority and his pride in his country.

Through the diary we can pick out the thread of a secret romance. Though a widower, Henry Richmond was a virile young man in his late twenties. In the spring of 1823 he remarks that 'any beautiful little girl attracts my attention . . . but hold! these days are gone never to return'. By the autumn however he notes 'my amorous disposition which is lighted up by every new face'. Thereafter the diary is punctuated by details of flirtations.

He tells of 'Tuesday night when I waited upon one sister and got the other' and two nights later had another 'opportunity for indulging my passion for the female sex by seeing a young woman home'. (11.9.23). On the Tuesday the girl disgusted him somewhat, 'yielding at the first solicitation, not to the very act of fornication for that was what I never desired but to almost everything else'. Her sister whom he saw home on the Thursday he preferred for she 'kept my desires always alive by small concessions granted with delicacy'. He therefore arranged another tryst with her but to his consternation discovered on the Sunday that she was proclaimed for marriage. He met her sister instead and

1. A. B. Todd, 31 for the 1832 election. For voters before and after 1832 see *Ayrshire at the Time of Burns*, 101-113; C. E. Adam, *View of the Political State of Scotland*, 1887; W. Carter, *Directory of Ayrshire, 1832*; *Ayrshire Directory*, 1851-2, which contains H.R.'s name.

2. For example, cart accident (9.7.23); accident at Sorn Bridge (2.9.23); boy killed by lightning (8.5.23); murder at Ochiltree (1.7.23).

indulged in 'an almost criminal intrigue . . . to fulfil my lustful desires — not that I would for any consideration have enticed the object of my visit to commit fornication, but only lustful dalliance'. Eventually he admits he was 'quite disgusted with her'.

This brief affaire in September was abruptly cut short. In December he reveals however that his mind was still on the opposite sex. Coming home from Catrine one night 'my besetting passion prevailed on me to call on a country girl famed in the neighbourhood for beauty. Could not say I enjoyed much satisfaction by this visit, 'tis vanity'. After what was obviously a rebuff in this quarter, there is nothing, apart from a passing reference to someone called Jean at Montgarswood; till another and more serious business began in February.

'Had a certain amour tonight with a neighbouring girl with whose sister I had an interview a while ago. This girl is just as amorous but yields not all at once — which gives a zest to enjoyment and prolongs pleasure'. Whether this was another sister of the two he was associating with in September is not clear. At any rate he follows up this first encounter with six more meetings in March and April. He finds her 'amorous, but I verily believe virtuous'; 'my inamorata, she is turning tame'; there were, he insists, 'no liberties'; he calls her his 'fille de chambre'; he has a 'very pleasant night'. But a note of trepidation creeps in: 'beginning to think I will carry the joke too far'; 'committed things today and tonight which I may repent'.

He names her in the diary as M.B. and later refers to her as Mary. It is clear she is Mary Borland of Redgate farm, who had lost her mother the previous summer. Richmond had very close contacts with Redgate farm and its folk (42 references), co-operating from time to time with Andrew Borland, and indeed Henry and Mary were working together at the potato planting in March 1824.

He obviously feels he is becoming too involved. 'At Redgate this evening. I have carried the joke too far, I cannot retrace my steps'. They meet much less frequently. In May he has only one 'assignation', and only one 'tryst' in June. He turns his attention to another girl he sits beside in church and of this, or still another he cryptically notes: 'Had I room I would expatiate on this night's transactions, Miss Bigbie alias Beattie, &c &c &c'.

Then at the beginning of July he 'met M.B. accidentally and appointed a meeting'. A few nights later he 'met M.B. in wood' and from a third meeting he was so late in leaving her that he did not go home but 'made a shakedown in barn'.

At the end of July he 'went and met M.B., within a hair's breadth of committing an act which might have ruined her and disgraced me, she would not have resisted'. After this he kept away from her and in August they met only once, when, he says, 'nothing remarkable' happened.

At the beginning of September there is another passionate encounter. 'Went to my inamorata M.B. Old man not at home. Takes me to barn, allowed me to proceed too far, almost to disgust, relents and wishes it were otherwise'. Then, finally, a month later in October, 'Went to Redgate, in barn with Mary for a good while, very yielding tonight'. He came away at two in the morning, 'turned a row of stooks coming down, never in bed, read and watch the night'.

Less than a fortnight later, the diary abruptly ends: 'Oct. 17. Great fall of snow. At church, young minister preaches, Bitter cold . . .'

The love affair with Mary Borland came to nothing. Family records in Canada indicate that he married an Agnes Murray in 1831.¹ In that year Henry Richmond built for his new bride the present farmhouse of East Montgarswood, and the old farmhouse — thereafter known as Montgarswood Cottage — was retained for a farm foreman.² The foreman's ten year old son, A. B. Todd, recalled that Henry Richmond was still planting trees and dykes, and he was getting the lad to bring him books from Catrine library. The second marriage produced a family of six: James (born Jan. 1832), Henry (16 Sept. 1833), Agnes (1835), John (25 July 1837), Robert (23 Nov. 1840), Willie (12 Sept. 1843). Henry Richmond was left a widower again when his second wife died on 9th January 1845 at the age of thirty six. His eldest son James emigrated to Canada in 1849 and became a teacher there. Henry and John joined him and the half-sisters Janet and Mary followed them. Henry Richmond continued at East Montgarswood till his death in 1871 at the age of seventy five. Over a century later the present farmer and some few others can recall having heard of 'Laird Richmond' — indeed a most remarkable man.

1. Information from John Richmond, Calgary.

2. A. B. Todd, 29-33.

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