

AYRSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

# CESSNOCK

AN AYRSHIRE ESTATE IN THE AGE OF IMPROVEMENT



JAMES MAIR

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### Profile of the Author

James Mair is happy to be known as an Ayrshire man. He has had a lifelong interest in the social and industrial history of Ayrshire and spends much of his free time scouring the countryside for unrecorded archaeological features. He has contributed a number of articles on these subjects to various publications. Now as a retired teacher he can devote more time to research and writing, hoping to mine deeper in the untapped historical reserves of the county.

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*Front cover illustration:* Cessnock Castle in the 1890s, with the 15th century keep on the right and later extensions centre and left.

## CESSNOCK AN AYRSHIRE ESTATE IN THE AGE OF IMPROVEMENT

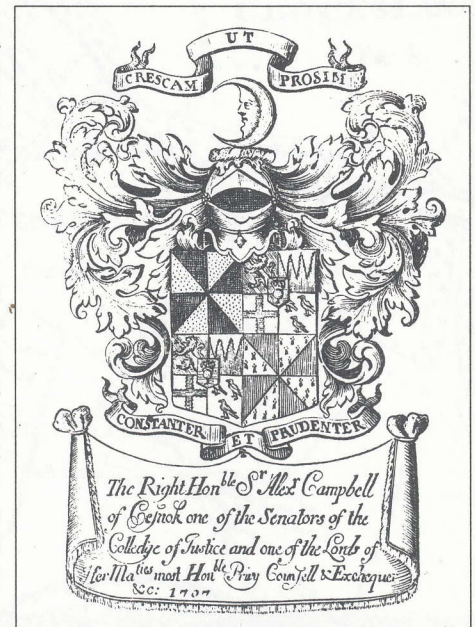
### PREFACE

One of the letter books of Cessnock estate, which provides most of the information for this study, has survived a long series of mishaps and family misfortunes. It had lain in jeopardy among the last collection of Loudoun estate papers which surfaced recently, before the family finally cut the connecting thread to its Ayrshire possessions stretching back eight centuries.

The Campbells of Loudoun held a prominent and often illustrious place in Scottish history, figuring largely in national and local affairs during the Covenanted period, in the arrangements for the Treaty of Union, during the Jacobite Rising of 1745 and in leading early agricultural improvements in Ayrshire. As in the annals of many landed families, fortunes rose and fell, until Henry, fourth Marquis of Hastings and ninth Earl of Loudoun, led his short colourful life. Between his coming-of-age in 1863 and his death in 1868 he squandered the family's wealth and estates on the turf.

Without the capital and resources to climb out of its financial difficulties, the family's position continued to slide, until crippling death duties led to the sale of valuable possessions in the 1920s and 1930s. Paintings, furniture, sculptures, books and manuscripts which might have redeemed the family fortunes if sold fifty years later, fell to knock-down prices in the period between the World Wars. Many now enhance the interiors of some great houses and constitute prized exhibits in museum collections.

A disastrous fire at Loudoun Castle in 1941 consumed most of the remaining treasures which could not be saved in a quick evacuation. A

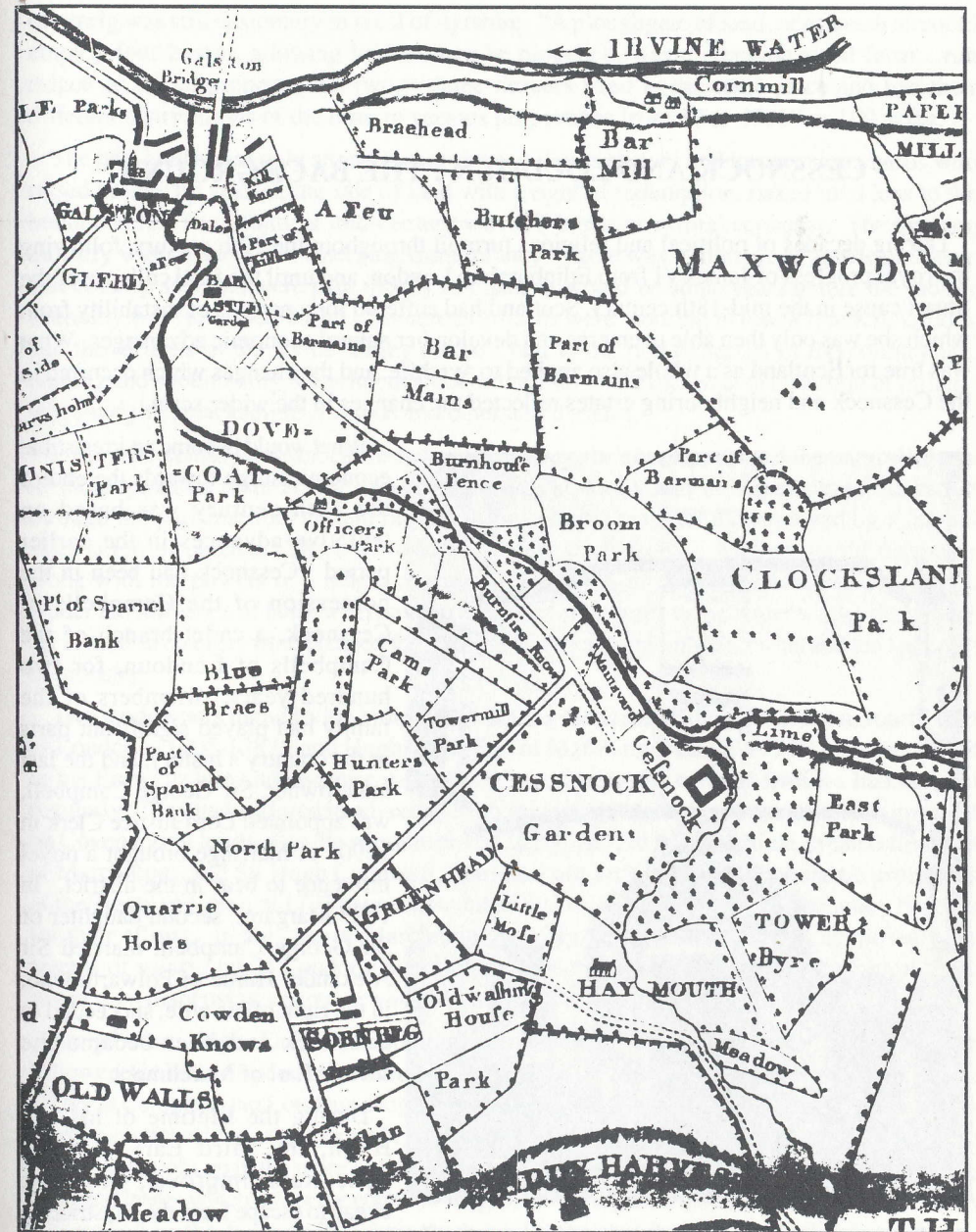


Bookplate displaying the arms of Sir Alexander Hume of Polwarth, who acquired Cessnock through marriage to Margaret Campbell, and the earldom of Marchmont on the death of his father the first earl.



# PREFACE

small selection of estate papers lodged in outlying premises escaped the flames, including Letter Book 59 covering the years 1787 to 1800. It recorded almost exclusively the affairs of the adjacent estate of Cessnock which, during that period, was under the simultaneous business management of George Douglas, the factor at Loudoun. Cessnock was a microcosm of those estates in Ayrshire able to take advantage of natural resources, entrepreneurial skills and reserves of capital at a time of rapid economic and social change. It is from the careful documentation found in Letter Book 59 that these developments are examined. It was made available by Mrs Sheena Williams, elder daughter of the late Lady Jean Campbell of Loudoun, and her husband Mr Donald Williams, the last residents of the family estate now living in Arizona, USA.



Estate plan of Galston and Cessnock, showing the large areas of enclosure already established in the second half of the 18th century.



## CESSNOCK AND LOUDOUN : THE BACKGROUND

During decades of political and religious turmoil throughout the 17th century, following the royal progress of James VI from Edinburgh to London, and until the final collapse of the Stuart cause in the mid-18th century, Scotland had suffered long periods of instability from which she was only then able to emerge and develop her natural economic advantages. What was true for Scotland as a whole also applied to Ayrshire, and the changes which occurred in the Cessnock and neighbouring estates reflected the changes in the wider scale.



New entrance to Cessnock Castle built in 1665 between the old building and the extension, with the Campbell of Cessnock arms displayed.

What would become an irresistible economic surge towards the end of the 18th century was based on tentative advances in the earlier period. Cessnock had been in the possession of the Campbells of Cessnock, a cadet branch of the Campbells of Loudoun, for two hundred years. Members of the family had played significant parts in the country's history, and the last male owner, Sir George Campbell, was appointed Lord Justice Clerk in 1690. A marriage brought a novel influence to bear in the district. In 1697 Margaret, second daughter of Sir George Campbell, married Sir Alexander Hume of Polwarth who, in the right of his wife, succeeded to Cessnock and later became the second Earl of Marchmont.

During the lifetime of his son Hugh, the third Earl, a noted agricultural improver, Cessnock began to escape from the constricting bonds of subsistence farming. In the mid-18th century the age-old system

## THE BACKGROUND

of runrig was still customary in most of Ayrshire. "A ploughgate of land, or as much as could employ four horses, allowing half of it to be ploughed, was a common sized farm... run ridged or mixed property, and two or three farmers lived in the same place and had their different distributions of the farm in various proportions from 10 to 40, 60 or 100 acres."<sup>1</sup>

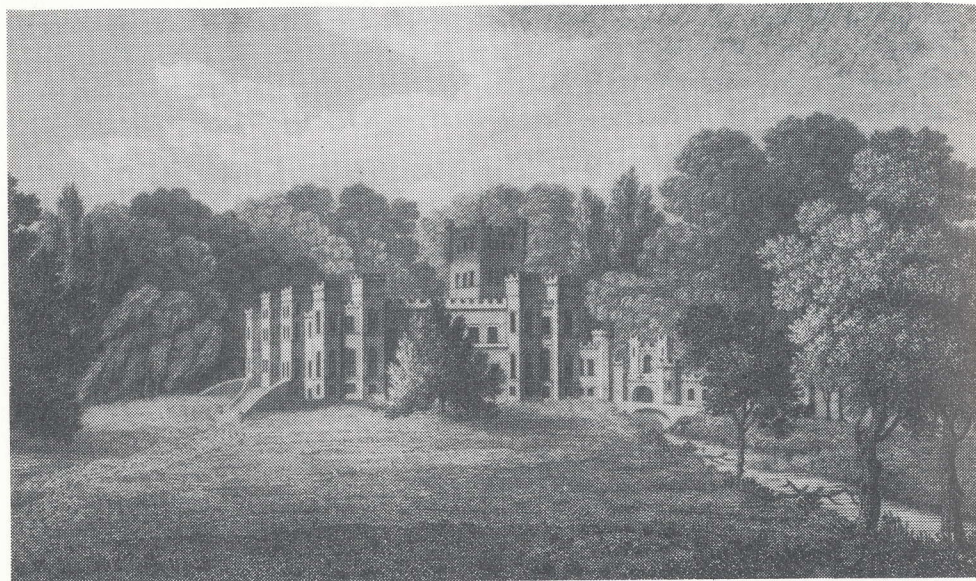
The best land could only attract two or three shillings an acre and impecunious lairds who raised money by wadset, the sale of land with a right of redemption, risked total loss to the bondholders. The county at mid-century was still based on a rural economy. The banking industry was unstable and emerging from infancy. There was a shortage of specie and rents and country servants were paid mostly in meal. It would be some years before the money economy was fully established. Numerous artisans were working in towns like Kilmarnock and the villages of the Irvine Valley but still tied to the raw materials of the countryside, tanning and shoemaking, weaving in wool or linen and with the usual distribution of millers, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, masons and other allied trades.

From mid-century onwards a fresh wind blew over the countryside and the natural talents of the population were at last allowed to flourish. Many had the elements of education through the parish school system or, like Robert Burns, from tutors employed by a mutual association of parents. The old world of bogles, warlocks and witches would disappear along with the powers of a magic charm or talisman as an age of reason was ushered in. Under the influence of landowners aware of the developments in the wider world, there were set in motion changes which reaped the benefits of agricultural improvements and the fostering of industry.

Two landowners in the Irvine Valley were among the leaders in the field: John, fourth Earl of Loudoun (1705-1782), and Hugh, third Earl of Marchmont (1708-1794), who succeeded to his Berwickshire and Ayrshire estates in 1740. The paths of their families had crossed regularly. They had suffered in adversity from imprisonment and from the penalties imposed on Covenanted lairds after the restoration of Charles II.<sup>2</sup> Sir Patrick Hume, created first Earl of Marchmont, and Sir Hugh Campbell, third Earl of Loudoun, were enthusiastic promoters of the Treaty of Union of 1707 between Scotland and England and received pecuniary benefits for their efforts. In the case of Marchmont £1,104 : 17s : 7d was granted, supposedly for arrears of salary,<sup>3</sup> while Loudoun as a Commissioner for the Union and Secretary of State advised on dispensing various rewards for supporters of the Union.<sup>4</sup>

Long before Hugh, Earl of Marchmont, relinquished his Ayrshire estates, he had already followed his father's principles of agricultural improvement and on each side of the Irvine Valley at Cessnock and Loudoun progressive methods forged ahead. Wealthy Scots aristocrats might have found the attractions of London and governmental intrigues absorbing, but many were also caught up in the more mundane discussions about seeds, pasture, tilth, crop rotation, rents and leases which swept the country. Judges, lawyers, parish ministers and other luminaries succumbed to the fever and in their stock books, inventories, ledgers and account books maintained regular and careful records. Publications on agriculture, husbandry and





Loudoun Castle in 1811 after rebuilding and enlargement.

arboriculture became required reading, until the *General Views* of the agriculture of the various counties (1793-94), and Sir John Sinclair's *Statistical Accounts* of the parishes (1791-99), gave the broad picture of the great changes achieved by the end of the 18th century.

The most influential contributions came from aristocratic, diplomatic and military personages travelling through England and the rest of Europe and seeing for themselves the most advanced and effective methods practiced there. Marchmont and Loudoun were two who were open to the benefits of good estate management. Both served for a large part of the century as Representative Peers of Scotland, Marchmont from 1750 to 1784 and Loudoun from 1734 to 1782. Their common interest in estate matters, and religious and political affiliations, created a bond of friendship. A demonstration of their affection appears in the Loudoun factor's correspondence after the Earl's death. Feu duties for parts of the estate of Cessnock had remained unpaid from 1694 to 1787 and George Douglas, factor, wrote "Some days ago I had a letter from Mr John Hunter desiring me to send you a state of arrears of feu duty of the Cessnock estate, due by the Earl of Marchmont to the Countess of Loudoun, which has laid over a great while owing to the friendship that subsisted between the two families. Earl John would never allow it to be pushed for, as he said Lord Marchmont and him would settle it between themselves."<sup>5</sup>

By the last quarter of the century milk production in the county depended almost exclusively on the handsome brown and white breed of Ayrshire cattle. Their progenitors had been introduced by the Earl of Marchmont around 1750 and developed under the eye of his factor,

Bruce Campbell of Sornbeg. Aiming for a larger animal with a greater yield, and by the import of other stock, the excellent Ayrshire cow was realized, suited to the moist grasslands of the county. John Dunlop of Dunlop, John Orr of Grougar for whom Bruce Campbell was for a time factor, and Alexander, tenth Earl of Eglinton, all figured in improving the breed.

At the end of the century the cows were capable of giving "24 to 34 English quarts of milk daily, during the summer months, while some of them will give as far as 40 quarts, and yield 8 or 9 English pounds of butter weekly."<sup>6</sup> William Aiton noticed that about the same time offspring of the new breed had "greatly multiplied on the strath of the water of Irvine."<sup>7</sup>

Although oats and bere (barley) would continue as the staple crops, farmers were encouraged to sow some flax. Government grants were made available for flax cultivation and lint milling after the Board of Trustees for Manufactures was instituted in 1727. Their funds assisted the development of the linen trade in the parishes of Loudoun and Galston. In this a notable contributor was John Brown, son of Nicholas Brown, who was married to Marion Campbell of Waterhaughs, also a cadet branch of the Campbells of Loudoun.



## JOHN BROWN OF LANFINE

John Brown (1729-1802), after an apprenticeship at handloom weaving, created a fortune as a textile manufacturer and banker in Glasgow. By assiduously encouraging the growth of flax in his home area, he built up a business by travelling throughout the country buying yarn. An early receipt demonstrates this activity by the age of twenty. "Received by me John Brown 900 marks Scotch, being £50 sterling from Miss Betty Fawside, daughter of Mr Hugh Fawside, minister in Newmilns to be laid out by me at the best advantage I can for her behove in buying yarn and in dying, weaving and whitening Chequer Cambricks and other Linen Cloath. Signed at Burnmouth on 1st June 1749".<sup>8</sup>

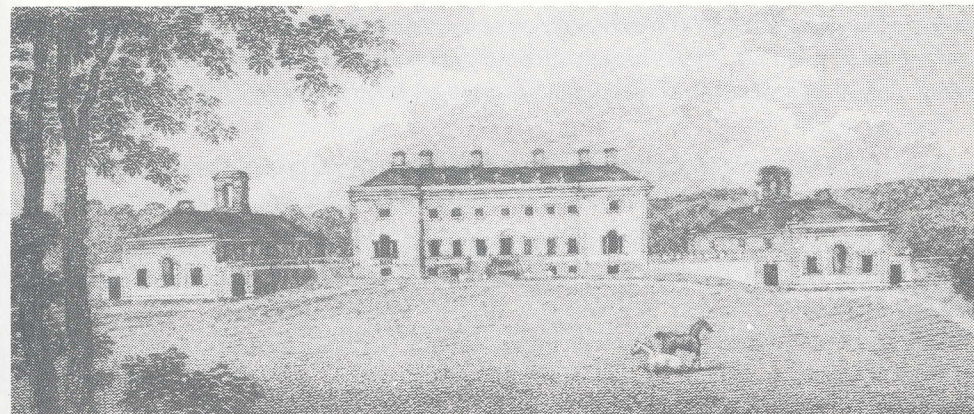
His father was a surgeon and a bailie in Newmilns, and the son was placed to learn weaving with a relative, Alexander Blair, lintmiller in Galston. Indentured weaving apprenticeships were increasingly common in the 1740s among the sons of farmers and professional men as Brown himself recorded, "a great many gentlemen's sons went into the business . . . as the making of fine linens and hollands was beginning to be introduced to Scotland a little before this time."<sup>9</sup> His life is a classical example of business enterprise, starting from small beginnings to reach the highest level in commerce in Scotland during the second half of the century.

While expanding his knowledge of textiles in a Shuttlefield factory, he entered his first partnership in Candleriggs and by 1753 had set up a bleachfield in Camlachie. His chief activity at this period was organising links with flax growers and spinners in his native county and the west of Scotland.<sup>10</sup> He then extended his affairs in a new partnership with Alexander Fisher, son of the minister of Maybole, and stepped up his business as a yarn merchant, travelling to areas of heavy flax cultivation in the counties of Stirling, Perth, Angus and Kincardine.<sup>11</sup>

In 1759 he joined the flamboyant Glasgow entrepreneur, Robert Carrick, to form Brown, Carrick & Co. They took advantage of the great demand for linen from the plantations of the West Indies and North America, sending quantities to Carrick's brother Peter, a merchant in St Kitts, and to Andrew Marr, concerned in another Brown partnership, who was their agent in Charleston, South Carolina.<sup>12</sup> From then onwards Brown's business made amazing progress and he made a quick personal fortune. He partnered Carrick again in the old Glasgow Ship Bank and became a respected figure in the city, an original member of the Chamber of Commerce, and two years later in 1785 a bailie in the city council.

He bought back what had been his mother's family estate of Waterhaughs and built a new mansion, Lanfine House.<sup>13</sup> He also acquired adjoining tracts of the Cessnock estate until

## JOHN BROWN OF LANFINE



Marchmont House, Berwickshire in the late 18th century.

his family had possession of over 10,000 acres. His effect on his own local area cannot now be accurately ascertained, but must have been considerable. Alexander Blair's lintmill at Longhouse in Galston had been built in 1748 and during Brown's lifetime others were operating near Darvel at Dalquharn in Galston parish and at Bankhead with a bleachfield in Loudoun.

Before the decline of linen production in the district<sup>14</sup> with the change to cotton, two other lintmills were working. The productive capacity of rural mills was around 1000 stones per annum. Colonel Fullarton estimated in 1793 that this amount could be grown on 37.75 acres.<sup>15</sup> In that year also up to 30 acres of flax were cultivated in Galston parish, with 900 to 1000 stones dressed in the village lintmill.<sup>16</sup> Clearly flax was being imported from neighbouring parishes or further afield to supply the mills of the district. Growing and processing flax often brought a small additional income to farming families as "each farmer sowed a sufficiency of flax to employ a woman of his family at leisure hours."<sup>17</sup>

At Cessnock, Lord Marchmont continued with a number of improvements initiated by his father, but relinquished ownership of the estate in 1769. He had started building a new mansion in 1750 on his Berwickshire estate which took ten years to complete.<sup>18</sup> Home Castle and other lands by the river Tweed were purchased, financed by the sale of his mother's estate of Cessnock.<sup>19</sup>

John Brown of Lanfine continued to acquire additional parts of the Cessnock estate. His brother, Dr Thomas Brown, was in his early career a surgeon on the ship *St George* of the East India Company and by judicious investments was able to bank large sums for himself and John.<sup>20</sup> The failure of the Ayr Bank in 1772 ruined a number of the Ayrshire gentry, casting many estates on to the market. New money acquired in business and trade in Glasgow and London and in the East and West Indies opened the opportunity for the purchase of these and other estates, and most of the new owners, having already succeeded in business, were also enthusiastic agricultural improvers.



## CESSNOCK CHANGES HANDS

In 1776 the major part of the Cessnock estate came into the hands of one of these new owners. John Wallace, second son of Thomas Wallace of Cairnhill, went to Jamaica, then returned to become a partner in a Glasgow firm of Virginia merchants. After acquiring Cessnock, not only did he continue with improvements instituted by the Earl of Marchmont, but he also started to exploit the coal measures discovered by the Earl and to develop the lime quarries which had already been surveyed. A map of the Cessnock estate from the time of its sale by the Marchmonts shows limestone areas at Burnawn and Cogove, with coal seams recognised at Purroch, Liffnock and Norrisbank. The Rev George Smith writing in 1791 affirmed that Mr Wallace of Cessnock was the gentleman "to whom this neighbourhood owes the important advantage both of coal and lime, which so materially contributed to its improvements."<sup>21</sup>

The cartouche of the old map described the assets and attractions of the Marchmont estates in Ayrshire to prospective buyers. "The mansions Haining, Cessnock and Sornbeg are large and commodious amidst a great variety of fine trees and there are several pleasant situations for gentlemen's seats on other parts of the estates near valuable woods and plantations. The lands are all arable naturally of a rich substantial soil well watered, in greater part inclosed, abounding in good coal and limestone, and in these circumstances are highly improvable at an easy charge."<sup>22</sup> These attractions were not sufficient to hold John Wallace for long. He sold Cessnock in 1787 and moved to the estate of Kelly on the Ayrshire-Renfrewshire border.

Late in the 18th century two little girls came into their inheritances. One would become the Duchess of Portland and the other the Marchioness of Hastings. Each would own large estates in Ayrshire and in England and be connected with leading figures in the country's political and military life. Henrietta Scott, daughter and co-heiress of General John Scott of Balcomie and MP for Fife, was one year old when her father died. Flora Mure Campbell became Countess of Loudoun in her own right when orphaned at the age of six in 1786. Both remained under the guidance of their tutors (guardians), eminent friends and relations named in their fathers' wills, until they reached their majorities, but in practice with the general supervision of Edinburgh lawyers, appointed for the day-to-day running of their affairs.

The actual routine management of the adjacent estates of Cessnock and Loudoun was administered by George Douglas. He had been engaged as factor in 1774 by John, fourth Earl of Loudoun, served James Mure Campbell, fifth Earl, from 1782 to 1786, and confirmed as factor for the juvenile Countess of Loudoun. When the estate of Cessnock on the south

## CHANGES HANDS

of the river Irvine in the parish of Galston was purchased in 1787 by the tutors of Henrietta Scott on her behalf, George Douglas was offered the post of factor. As the man on the spot and obviously highly recommended he accepted the position there to add to his current responsibilities.

It is from a letter book of estate business, covering the years 1787 to 1800, that most of the factual material for this study is compiled.<sup>23</sup> The contents of the letters confirm Douglas as a sound businessman and estate manager, assiduous, meticulous and knowledgeable in his work. With a grounding of good common sense and understanding of human nature he was skilful in handling personal relationships with his employers, tenants, estate workers and the general public. Sometimes dependent on deputies in new enterprises and afterwards disappointed, he could take decisive action to make amends. Generally fair in his dealings and tireless in attending to the interests of others, he was the kind of godsend required by the landowning classes of the period.

Before the systematic application of improved farming methods became the new orthodoxy in the last quarter of the 18th century, the Ayrshire countryside revealed a sad picture. "Farm houses were mere hovels, moated with clay, having an open hearth or fireplace in the middle; the dunghill at the door; the cattle starving and the people wretched. The few ditches which existed were ill constructed and the hedges worse preserved. The land was over-run with weeds and rushes, gathered into very high, serpentine ridges, interrupted with large baulks, such as still disgrace the agriculture of some English counties."<sup>24</sup>

While in the Highlands chiefs in financial difficulties began to clear the population from the land, in Ayrshire longer leases, renovated farm buildings, free allocations of trees for shelter belts, generous terms for the liming of fields and the better provision of field drains, all helped to maintain the rural population and raise production. Some improvers even advocated the sub-letting of small portions of land by farmers to cotters, allowing them to keep a cow and a few chickens, and be assets to the farming economy. "Labourers in agriculture are, of all classes in society, the most valuable. They are of the greatest utility to the occupiers of the land, and, from among them many of the best farmers have sprung up... When cotters have as much land, as enable them to keep a cow or two, with a garden, they become more frugal, more diligent and live in a more industrious way."<sup>25</sup>

Alexander, tenth Earl of Eglinton and John, fourth Earl of Loudoun led the way in the agricultural revolution in the county. Before the end of the century men who had built their fortunes in business at home and abroad and acquired Ayrshire estates vied with each other in rural affairs, as if native sons of the soil. Robert Hamilton, merchant in Jamaica, purchased Rozelle in 1754; Richard Oswald, London merchant, Auchincruive in 1764; William Campbell bought Craigie in 1783 with money amassed in India and in the same year Moses Craufurd of the East India Company took possession of Newfield. Claud Alexander made his fortune in the same Company and moved into Ballochmyle in 1786, and Mungo Fairlie, a West



Indies merchant, obtained Holmes, which previously had been part of the Marchmont estate.

These and many others regarded themselves as landowners who used scientific methods in farming, applied with business practices. Every new book on agricultural subjects was quickly digested, effects evaluated, and successful methods implemented. "Almost every proprietor . . . has paid such unremitting attention to the improvement of the soil and to the melioration of the condition of the tenantry that it would be difficult for me to say which of them most excels . . . None of these, nor any respectable proprietors in this county, are ashamed to be seen conversing with intelligent farmers . . . They all traverse their estates, survey the improvements, encourage their tenants, and hear their complaints."<sup>26</sup>

## LEASES AND RENTS

In the Loudoun Papers, the letters of George Douglas give an insight into conditions and attitudes. Tacks (leases) on the Cessnock estates when renewed were given for a period of nineteen years from the term days, Whitsun or Martinmas. Such long leases were first introduced in the district in the 1750s and '60s. The periods covered by mill tacks varied and traditionally commenced on a different date, as in the case of John Hunter. "I have perused your memorial as to the lease to be entered into with John Hunter of Barrmilln . . . Beltan is the term commonly used in this country for the entry to milns, which is sometimes otherwise mentioned viz to be 12th May or the 1st May, old style."<sup>27</sup> The factor in promoting Hunter's application had earlier looked favourably on him as a "very good young man and bred as a miller under his father and is much respected by the sucken."<sup>28</sup> Eight falls of ground were reserved at the east end of Barrmillholm for the drying house at the paper mill. This was a unique enterprise, the only paper mill in Ayrshire being at Strathmill, which began operation earlier in the 18th century and continued working up until the 1st World War.<sup>29</sup>

Provision of longer leases was the catalyst in the years of improvement. By these a transition could be achieved from the old system of paying in kind and by services to paying monetary rents. This stimulated a commercial approach to management and led to further improvements and the enhancement of the valuation of the land. The new system favoured accumulation of capital and allowed other enterprises in mineral extraction and manufacturing to be fostered, all having a beneficial effect on the fortunes of a well-run estate.

Rents were readily gathered from capable tenants, but judgement was required in choosing them, and was not infallible. "The change so soon of McFarlane from Bruntwood and Drinan from Boghead might lead the Commissioners to think it is a plan of mine to bring about a change in tenants for my own interest, but that I can assure them is not the case. Where such a circumstance happens, it is a very disagreeable one to me or any Factor. But such is the situation of the county at present and where such a number of tenants is wanted for farms some of them will turn out bad, after every precaution possible is taken to the contrary."<sup>30</sup>

John McFarlane, originally from Galloway, was troublesome to his neighbours. He kept all his farm in grass and ran a great number of sheep, damaging the fences. Douglas concluded that "to keep any ill-natured tenant against his will is very disagreeable, besides being hurtful to the farm . . . if he is at liberty to give up the farm, which I hope they [the Commissioners] will agree to, another tenant must be looked out for which there is little



difficulty in getting.”<sup>31</sup> The system of husbandry recommended by Alexander Fairlie of Fairlie and generally adopted throughout the district was clearly explained in a letter advocating the purchase of Millrig, the estate of Bruce Campbell in Galston parish. “The farms are considered to be in three divisions, one third to be in tillage three years, other two thirds in pasture. That in tillage for three years laid down with grass seeds and rests for six years before being in tillage again. The other two thirds go through the same rotation of crops and pasture.”<sup>32</sup>

On one occasion George Douglas defended his honour in reply to a letter on his professional duties. “I likewise received inclosed Mr Erskine’s letter to you of the 23rd, wherein he mentions that Miss Scott’s Commissioner expects that their Factor shall accept of no present or gratification from the tenants at obtaining their Tack. I can only answer for myself that I never did receive the smallest fraction from any tenant of Miss Scott’s either as present, gratification or parquisite in any manner of way nor upon any occasion. Nor do I believe there is a tenant upon any of Miss Scott’s Estates that would dare to offer me such.”<sup>33</sup>

There were of course some perquisites in the job. In December 1787 he received a silver porter jug from Mrs Scott and another less solid but no less welcome gift was dispatched later from the south. He asked for special precautions to be taken with this. “I am very much obliged to your Lordship in offering to send me a Hogshead of Port. If it is put on board any of the ships sailing from London to Carron wharf or Grangemouth directed to me at Loudoun Castle . . . it will come along the Canal to Glasgow, where I will send for it. If your Lordship will take the trouble to order any person to write to me the name of the ship it is put aboard and when she sails from London, as the sailors some time play tricks with casks of that kind. If a dry cask was put upon it, it would prevent any accident happening.”<sup>34</sup>

It was in this same letter that Douglas spelt out to his employer his philosophy of letting. “As to the farms that is nearly out of lease, the present tenant is always preferred and has the first offer and is seldom let to a new one, where the old one has an inclination to remain, which sometimes happens otherways by his death and his heirs taking into some other line. As to letting farms at auction, it is never done upon any of your Lordship’s estates here, nor upon any estates where I had any concern.

“The leases which is nearly out . . . was let from 20 to 30 years ago. In that time land is greatly advanced in its value as farming in Ayrshire has arrived at greater perfection, besides the rise on the different articles the farm produces. At the same time, I agree with your Lordship that to let the farms upon a moderate scale is most commendable as often when a tenant has a rack rent that he has difficulty to pay he sinks under the burden and the proprietor often loses his rent.”<sup>35</sup>

He had to put his views on estate management into practice in 1793 when the farmers were in difficulty. “Owing to the stagnation of trade in this country at present the rents have not been so well paid for this last half year as usual, which has increased the list of

arrears, but this I consider only as a temporary circumstance, as this year the farmers have all good crops for which they are getting good prices. The cattle indeed are very low which is the principal drawback at present. It is hoped that will soon take a turn and the arrears all be got up. I consider at present to distress the tenants by pointing or other ways would be very detrimental to the estate . . . I begin to collect the rents for Crop 1793 in the course of ten days, when I hope the payments will be good.”<sup>36</sup>

The independence and pride of the Ayrshire farmer in the security of his lease was often demonstrated and, although many must have been ousted, it was more from bad agricultural practices and indolence than from seasonal debt. Persuasion to relinquish a lease rather than the severity of the law seems to be the method adopted by the Cessnock factor, as in his dealing with an aged farmer. “There is a tenant in the farm of Wardlaw, William Stevenson, a poor old man who I have been obliged to sequester every other year, since ever Miss Scott purchased, for the recovery of the rents. He has nothing but hiring in cattle to eat the grass through the summer, and gets some person to plow part of the ground for him, which is both starving the farm and himself.

“I have often tried to see what he would give up his Tack for, but the headstrong old man would never come into any terms. He possesses about 75 acres for which he pays £43 of rent yearly. I could at this time get at least £1 per acre had we it in our possession . . . He has 10 years of his lease to run.”<sup>37</sup>

If the duties of a good factor were not only to encourage improved husbandry but also to foster rural industry Douglas filled his post well. “There has been an application made for two feus by two tradesmen viz a Carpenter and a Blacksmith upon the roadside upon Killoch Estate, leading from Galston to Sorn. This will, if agreed to, be of service to the estate, both as to accommodating the tenants with proper workmen . . . as it will be a means of bringing other tradespeople to follow their example.”<sup>38</sup>



## COMMON LANDS

It was in the last decade of the 18th century that the remaining portion of the Galston parish commonities finally disappeared.<sup>39</sup> Who, if anyone, owned the common lands has not been determined in detail. The tenants in the fermtouns utilised them for peat and turf,<sup>40</sup> but as early as the 17th century in Scotland landed proprietors, as heritors, laid claim to them. The area known as the Mean Muir of Galston Muir attracted the attention of the heritors of the parish. "I had an order from Mr Erskine soon after the purchase of Cessnock Estate from Mr Wallace to see if a division could be brought about with other proprietors that have a privilege upon it . . . It is much for Miss Scott's interest that it was brought about, as it lies detached from all her estates and not one farthing of rent is got for it, whereas if it was divided it could either be let or sold. It will amount to a considerable number of acres of improvable land, which could turn out to some amount."<sup>41</sup>

The common land of the Mean Muir, was subsequently divided up according to plan among the heritors, but one feuar disagreed with the settlement. Douglas gives a clear account of the dispute and the subterfuge adopted in the attempt to solve the problem, giving some idea of the claims and counter-claims involved in the delicate task in the appropriation. "As to Galston Muir, it stand thus. In the year 1729 part of that muir was divided amongst the Heritors, who had a claim by their estates adjoining according to their valuation of having been in common amongst them for time immemorial. The Earl of Marchmont feued out his part to Robert McCulloch, which James Sawyer has now a right to by marrying McCulloch's daughter.

"There still remains that Muir, which was not then thought proper to divide as it was all Black Moss as a privilege to all concerned, about 360 acres for casting peats. Sawyer has liberty with the other heritors to cast peats upon this common or undivided Muir, but since the year 1729 there is nearly 50 acres of that moss that the peat is entirely cast off, and has now a green sward. This Sawyer claims as his property and has sett it as such to his tenant . . . He may claim the whole of the 360 acres when the peat is cast off, which is yearly decreasing. In the summer 1795 when the heritors were dividing another part of the Muir . . . they thought proper to divide the marches of the one which is the part now in dispute, to which Sawyer would not join in nor produce his papers.

"They then called in old men who knew these marches . . . They traced out the pit stones put in at that time [1729] which appeared very distinct, but Sawyer refused [to accept] to be the marches. He claimed up to the soum or peat breast, which was some hundred yards into the Moss by casting peat . . . By his making this claim, it will bring forward the

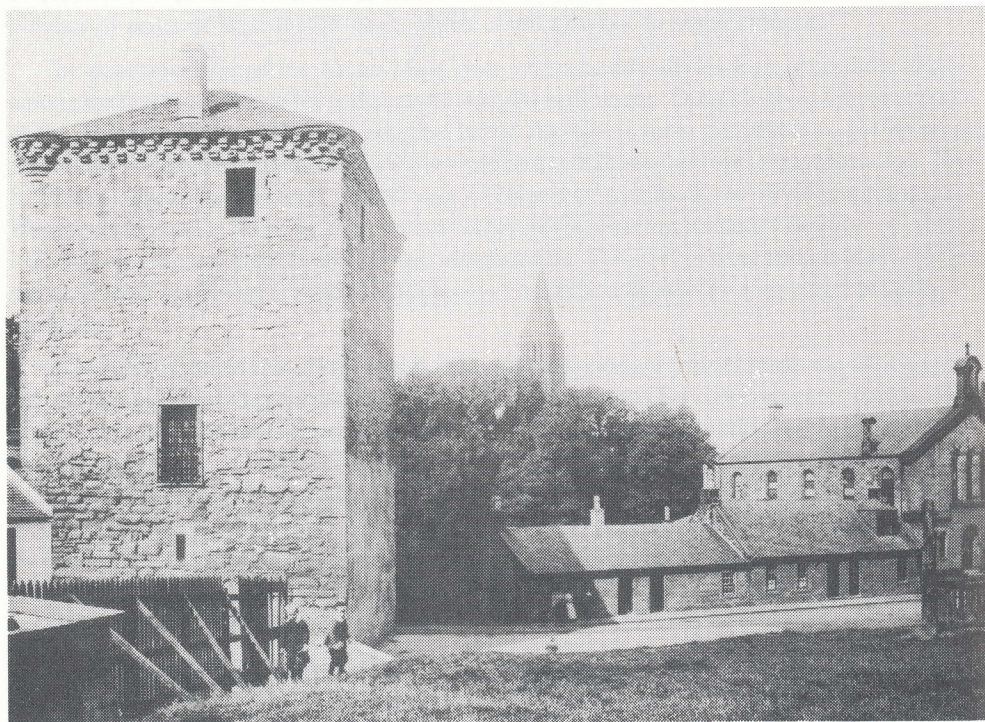
## COMMON LANDS

business so as to get the whole settled." The factor then suggested a scheme to test Sawyer's resolution which would add considerably to his parish dues. "Would it not be proper to summon him to enter? It would then be known how far he was or was not bound to pay augmentation of stipend to the minister of Galston."<sup>42</sup>



## WOODLANDS

In 1795 Henrietta Scott married the Marquis of Titchfield, later made Duke of Portland, and it was his policy, like the other Ayrshire proprietors, to increase woodland on his estate. This would improve the supply of timber in periods of scarcity, giving an additional source of income and provide the raw material for building, enclosure and pit workings, all expanding at that time. He also encouraged his tenants to plant ash trees around their farms to give shelter, they no longer hating birds as in former ages now that better farming methods furnished greater yields of corn. "Agreeable to your Lordship's orders when last in this country I have now dressed up and taken in as a nursery the Garden and Old Orchard at Barr Castle . . . I am convinced it will answer the purpose well, and furnish a sufficient



Barr Castle in the 1890s with the Associate Congregation (Erskine) Church on the far right.

## WOODLANDS

stock of plants to insure the purpose of planting the different estates . . . I have got some different kinds of seeds for a succession particularly Larix. Your Lordship mentioned sending a quantity of acorns from Welbeck. If they are to come this season, the sooner they are to come the better as the season for doing them is at hand."<sup>43</sup>

The price of timber at this time during the Napoleonic War was at a premium, and available supplies brought good business. "I have sold the Spring wood called Barr Wood to be cut over at the sum of £541, a sum of at least £150 more than I expected, but from no foreign wood getting in of any consequence, wood is in course considerably higher in its value . . . I have taken in a nursery at Barr Castle which is stocked with oaks, ash, elm and larches."<sup>44</sup>

By 1755, as shown in General William Roy's *Military Survey of Scotland*, both Loudoun and Cessnock policies were heavily wooded. Afforestation had taken place on his estate under the direction of John, fourth Earl of Loudoun, between the years 1733 and 1775 during which period up to one million trees had been planted.<sup>45</sup> Similarly and probably under his influence the related family in Cessnock had recognised the potential benefits of commercial woodlands.<sup>46</sup>

The parish minister of Galston described in 1791 "a great deal of fine old planting, many very large Scots firs, and some copse wood round the house at Cessnock." He also reported that "by the oldest leases on the Barr estate, the tenants were bound to plant at least twelve ash yearly. This accounts for the beautiful appearance of the farm houses on that property, which are in general surrounded by trees."<sup>47</sup> Coppicing was also practiced in the area as standard forestry management for normal timber requirements, but also for tanning. The Rev George Smith numbered twenty-one shoemakers in the village of Galston and noted "till of late, the chief manufacture was shoes, which were made for merchants in Kilmarnock."<sup>48</sup> Tanning is also recorded in the neighbouring burgh of Newmilns, although the principal industry was muslin weaving. "To James Leitch, merchant in Newmilns . . . land where the Barkfalt stands or stood, with the Barkfalt itself and privileges of the same both above and beneath the ground."<sup>49</sup>



## LIVESTOCK

The Marquis of Titchfield proved one of the greatest agricultural improvers of his time, developing both his Scottish and English estates. He was a witness to the changes already introduced by the Scott trustees at Cessnock, and the progress made in the breeding of the Ayrshire dairy cow from the early experiments there by Bruce Campbell while factor to the Earl of Marchmont. His interest in cattle breeding emerges from the correspondence with his factor, George Douglas. "I am sorry I have been so long in answering your Lordship's respecting the oxen . . . I find that the Highland oxen which may weigh when fat from 27 to 30 stone . . . the price will be about £7 each. The expense of carrying up to Welbeck about £6 per score . . . Galloway oxen that may weigh from 30 to 36 or perhaps some to 40 stone, the price is £9 each, the expense of carrying up at £7 per score."<sup>50</sup>

Six weeks later he added "I have now bought 30 Galloway Bullocks and next week is the greatest market for Highland cattle at Falkirk, when I propose the 40 wanted."<sup>51</sup> The cattle were duly dispatched. "My Lord, On Friday 9th . . . the bullocks from the Falkirk market arrived. As they have been far drove and had still a long way to go I thought it proper to give them a few days rest here. They left again on Wednesday . . . and joined the bullocks from Galloway that evening at Cumnock and proceeded next morning to Welbeck . . . They are under the care of Andrew Campbell, who is one of your workers upon your Lordship's estate of Cessnock . . . He has two Highlandmen alongst with him."<sup>52</sup>

The factor went on to record the full cost of the operation. "Accompt of Bullocks bought for the Marquis of Titchfield and sent to Welbeck, 14th September 1796:

To 30 Bullocks in Galloway at £9:5:0 each	£277:10:0
To 2 heifers bought in ditto at £10 each	20: 0:0
To expenses at purchasing, delivering and carrying to join others at Cumnock with Tolls on road	2:16:4
	£300: 6:4
To 50 bullocks bought at Falkirk market at £6:15:0 each	£337:10:0
To expenses at purchasing grass upon the road and Tolls	4:19:4
	£342: 9:4
	£642:15:8" <sup>53</sup>

The following year more cattle were bought at the Falkirk Tryst, apparently for breeding purposes as, a few months earlier, a bull had been purchased. "About ten days ago a Dun

## LIVESTOCK

Bull of the Duke of Argyle's Highland herd came here in good order . . . He is going in the fields here where he has exceeding good grass, till such time as your Lordship is pleased to give orders how he is to be disposed of."<sup>54</sup> The bull with the cattle on the factor's list were to be driven to Welbeck, regardless of his or his clerk's poor arithmetic.

"Account of Oxen bought for the Marquis of Titchfield at Falkirk 6th September 1797.

20	Oxen at £6: 0:0 each	£120: 0:0
22	Ditto at £7: 5:0	150: 10:0
20	Ditto at £5:10:0	110: 0:0
10	Ditto at £5: 0:0	50: 0:0
22	Ditto at £7: 8:0	162: 16:0
40	Ditto at £6:17:6	275: 0:0
134		£877: 6:0" <sup>55</sup>

While Titchfield added to his herd of Highland cattle at Welbeck Abbey, his tenants on his Cessnock and Kilmarnock estates improved their Ayrshire breed and developed their dairy business. According to William Aiton,<sup>56</sup> the brown and white Ayrshires became popular around Dunlop and Stewarton between 1770 and 1780 and their progeny spread throughout Cunninghame and Kyle. The selection of the best animals, following experiments from 1750 onwards, resulted in a large stock of the finest dairy breed in the country. The reputation attached to the county's dairy production quickly widened and led to requests to George Douglas from his Edinburgh lawyer correspondents for supplies of the excellent Dunlop cheese.

"I have sent you by our Carrier, who sets out for Edinburgh this morning, 5 cheeses as you desired. Three of them are from Dunlop where I have got my own for several years, two from a Farmer in this neighbourhood all of which I hope will turn out well. The account of their prices I have not yet received. The Dunlop cheeses are marked as follows:

1st Weighing	£	21¾ lbs
2nd Do	-	24 lbs
3rd Do	-	24½ lbs

The other two without mark weighing 2 stone 13 lbs in whole."<sup>57</sup> In his time Robert Burns noticed that lasses attended the Mauchline Holy Fair:

*"Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in monie a whang,  
An' farls bak'd wi' butter,  
Fu' crump that day"*<sup>58</sup>

Dunlop became the brand name for the cheese production of the county, much preferred in the expanding markets of industrial towns and cities of west central Scotland and beyond.<sup>59</sup>



## LIME

The fertility of the land improved during the last decades of the 18th century. One important factor was the availability of lime to sweeten the soil by neutralising acidity and encouraging growth. Copious amounts of limestone existed near the surface in the Irvine Valley and large reserves of coal as fuel for lime-burning. Most of the numerous limekilns in Galston parishes are still features of the landscape, along with the old scars of the lime quarries.

Cessnock estate encouraged its own tenants by providing lime at reduced rates of 3½ pence per boll with the tenant leading it to his own farm. A good tenant, Quintin Clark, was let two enclosures called Drumleyhill adjoining Barleith, but was required to transport from "Cessnock Limekilns 1200 Bolls of lime which is at a rate of 100 Bolls per acre."<sup>60</sup> The success of the system of liming in Ayrshire attracted attention from elsewhere in Scotland and Douglas provided technical information to enquirers.

"With respect to the expense of burning lime with coal in Ayrshire, I have endeavoured to get that ascertained as nearly as possible, taking it upon an average the different qualities of both lime and coal.

"In answer to your questions they are as follows:

- 1st. The boll of lime by which we measure limeshells is the Winchester bushell and five bushells to the boll.
- 2nd. A ton of limestone produces about nine bolls of lime.
- 3rd. Coals allowed for burning the ton of limestone is two loads or ¼ a ton, as eight loads is nearly a ton at 112 to the 100 weight, as that is what both lime and coals is calculated and sold at English weight 16 pound to the stone.
- 4th. Both great and small coals is used in burning lime, 2/3 great and 1/3 small is the general custom. The difference of the expense is nearly the same altho the small coal is about one-seventh cheaper it takes a greater quantity.
- 5th. The lime stone in this country is of different qualities. The general run is a fine blue stone which produces two bolls of flour, or slacked lime, to each boll of shells, some rather more.
- 6th. The expense of coals for burning lime stone at the rate of  
 Two loads to the Ton as above at 6d. a load      £ 0: 1: 0  
 Knapery and burning the tun of Limestone      0: 0: 4  
 Raising the tun of Limestone out of the quarry where the lair or  
 tiring is of moderate depth viz. from 4 to 6 feet      0: 0: 10  
 Total expense of Knapery and burning a tun etc      £ 0: 2: 2

## LIME

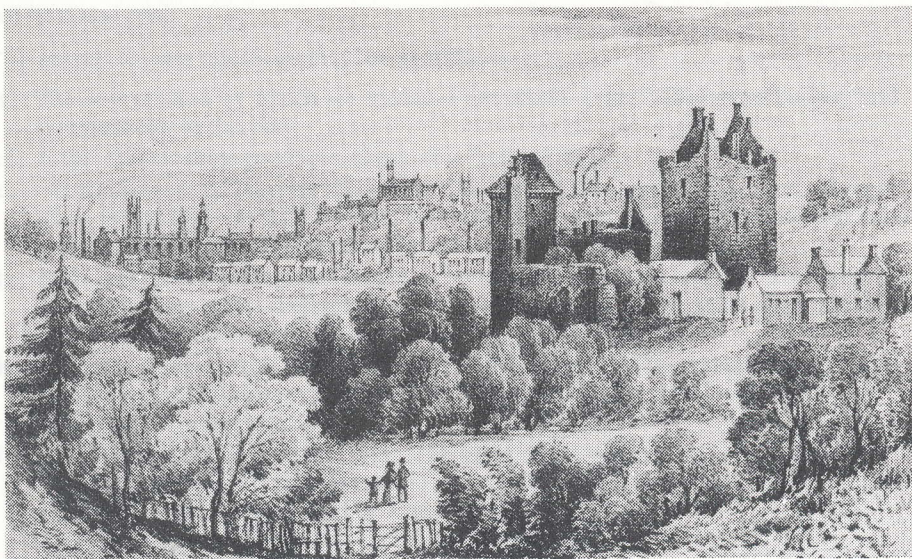
"The last state gives a general sketch of the price of coals and raising the limestone, but they must vary according to the price the coals are sold at and also the depth of the lair upon the limepost. The knapery and burning is much the same, unless the stone is very easy broken. Drawkilns are generally used through this country, as they take considerably less quantity of coals to burn the same quantity of limestone than the clampkilns. I hope the above will give you a general sketch of what you may be able to burn in Aberdeenshire."<sup>61</sup> From the first application of lime to the soil, the agriculture of Ayrshire received lasting benefits in its pasture and tillage. The abundance of limestone in the county hastened its processing and early use which was copied to advantage in other regions.



## HENRIETTA SCOTT

A year before the purchase of Cessnock in 1787 on behalf of Henrietta Scott, her guardians had bought the Dean Estate near Kilmarnock from James, thirteenth Earl of Glencairn. It had been acquired from the estate of the attainted Jacobite, William, fourth Earl of Kilmarnock, in 1752. When it came into the hands of the Scott family in 1786 as their first acquisition in Ayrshire, it was already linked with the name of the deceased General John Scott as the ancestral home of his first wife Mary, granddaughter of the executed Jacobite earl.

The young heiress, Henrietta Scott, had many influential relations. Her grandfather through her father's second marriage was Robert Dundas of Arniston, Lord President of the Court of Session, and she was therefore niece of Henry Dundas, first Viscount Melville, who exercised autocratic power in Scotland in the last quarter of the 18th century and the early years of the 19th.<sup>62</sup> A detailed account of the acquired wealth of the Scott family would require an intensive and prolonged investigation, but the purchase of the Ayrshire estates with their agricultural assets and potential mineral resources would prove, under efficient stewardship, gilt-edged securities.



Dean Castle in the late 18th century with a stylised version of the town of Kilmarnock in the background.

## HENRIETTA SCOTT

The movement into landed estates at this period, financed by newly acquired wealth in the East and West Indies and from mercantile ventures in Britain's growing cities, was matched from a different but equally potent source by the Scotts. There are many ambiguities in the career of General John Scott of Balcomie. He was the last baron of Scotstarvit, direct descendant of Sir John Scot of Scotstarvit (1585-1670). He gained a reputation as one of the most experienced gamblers in Europe and is said to have amassed a half million pounds at the gaming tables, becoming the wealthiest commoner in Scotland. At his death in 1775 he had been an MP continuously for twenty years and had added another eight estates in Fife to the ancestral Scotstarvit.<sup>63</sup>

One of his greatest coups was the winning of the mansion house of Sir Laurence Dundas in St Andrews Square, Edinburgh, now the headquarters of the Royal Bank of Scotland, against a stake of £30,000. He left in his will the sum of £300,000 in money alone. His wife Margaret, third daughter of Robert Dundas, inherited the perspicacity and initiative of the Dundas family, guiding the matrimonial as well as the business affairs of her three daughters.<sup>64</sup> There were no shortages of funds for the acquisition of Ayrshire estates by the guardians of Henrietta Scott when the decision was made to venture into that county. They followed the policies of the General in his wide investment in land and property in Fife and Edinburgh, before he was laid to rest. He was later provided with a magnificent mausoleum by his daughter Henrietta in Kilrenny churchyard, his gambling talents effectively counterbalanced by his military and parliamentary services.

After the purchase of the Dean and Cessnock, the Mount estate was bought from Major William Dunlop, and Busby Barclay from the Earl of Glencairn, both in 1787, and Grange from Alexander Hamilton in 1792, while smaller parcels of land were rapidly snapped up whenever they became available. All of these were rich in coal reserves. Although all but four parishes in Ayrshire had plentiful deposits, the potential for large-scale coal extraction was not realised until the last quarter of the 18th century. Before then some development occurred in the coastal strips near Ayr, Irvine, Saltcoats and Stevenston for export mainly to Ireland. But from the mid-1770s coal mining steadily increased and from the years 1775-79, when 15,489 tons were exported, growth continued to the end of the century, when between the years 1795-99 tonnage shipped to Ireland reached 36,618.<sup>65</sup> In the Cessnock and Kilmarnock estates mining was already in progress and from the mid-1770's onwards as techniques improved and demand increased they played a large part in this development.



## COAL MINING

John Wallace, the previous owner of Cessnock, in his short residence as laird had begun the extraction of minerals on the estate. George Douglas in early correspondence with the new owners tells of the usefulness of the ancient clock on the castle wall, once a feature of the old Galston church and still *in situ*, for the mine and quarry workers on the estate, indicating how close these works were to the castle at that date. "Mr Wallace proposes some time soon to sell off what of his furniture in Cessnock House he does not intend to carry to Glasgow . . . the large clock upon the old Tower, and some other such articles as those he purchased when he came to Cessnock from Lord Marchmont . . . The big clock should not be let go away, as it is of great use to the people employed about the house at the Coall and Lime Works, besides disfiguring the house."<sup>66</sup> The same letter mentioned that "Miss Scott has purchased Busby Barclely [sic], her entry to the lands being at Martinmas next and to the Coall upon the first of June . . . At the same time Mr Pope [Manager of the Coalworks] and I to meet . . . when we shall concert on what part of the moveables at the Coall work is proper to Miss Scott."

An approach was made to consider the exploitation of ironstone, also plentiful in the district, and Douglas toured the area with representatives of the company and reported. "You have enclosed a letter to me from Mr Robertson of the Dalnoter Company . . . That Company has severall Gentlemen looking thro different places in Ayrshire lately for Ironstone, and as I had observed a considerable Quantity both upon the estate of Killoch and Cessnock and likewise upon Loudoun estate I sent in samples of them all which brought these gentlemen to see in what situation the Stone lay and the thickness of the seams and likewise its quality. All of which they were pleased with, and wished much to have a proper place for Erecting a Furnace for Smelting, if that they could make a Bargain with the different proprietors. They took a view of the Water of Irvine above Galston and found that from the papermill to Galston is about an English Mile would give them a fall enough, but in this the papermill would be condemned."<sup>67</sup> Within two weeks it had been decided not to accept the offer. "As to the Dalnoter Company, if they keep their terms so low for the different articles it is not worth attending to. The Coalls we consider at two shillings and sixpence a ton at least, the lime at sixteen pence a ton . . . As to the Ironstone at twopence a ton, it is not worth destroying the land for."<sup>68</sup>

To take full advantage of the excellent coal measures in the district access had to be found to the deeper seams, but the decision depended on the prospective return on the outlay of capital. Deeper seams required a more efficient winding and haulage system and

## COAL MINING

pumping out underground water. For these operations at low levels an expensive steam engine was essential. In the same year this was being prescribed for a new pit at Lawersbridge.<sup>69</sup> "Inclosed you have Mr Pope's letter to me giving his opinion of working the Coall at Lawsbridge. The expense of erecting the Fire Engine he computes at £900 or £1000. The last sum in my opinion may be stated, as I have no doubt that the engine with the powers to work a ten inch bore will take from £700 to £800 to erect here and the Pitt Sinking and other expenses may be estimated at £200. As to the profits that may arise on the Coall Yearly, on giving up Nourishbank<sup>70</sup> and Cessnock, I should . . . suppose the profits to be nearly £400 yearly."<sup>71</sup>

The pits owned by Miss Scott were thriving. In his report to her tutors the factor was optimistic. "The Coal works are all going on very well at Kilmarnock. The out put is not so much as could be wished on account of two steam engines being just now erecting, one upon the Blind and one upon the Fire Coal, both of which will be completed in the course of a fortnight or three weeks. When that is done the great expense of drawing the water by horses will be lowered. The Cessnock and Norisbank Coal Works are both doing well, and we are sinking the Engine pit at Lawersbridge, which is now about 16 fathoms down and looks well."<sup>72</sup>

The estimate on how long it would take to get the engine into production proved accurate. "Mr Pope has now got the two Steam Engines agoing upon the Blind and Seeing Coal at Kilmarnock,<sup>73</sup> which answers the purpose well, so that their works should now be carried on at advantage. They are now begun to carry at the rate of 30 to 40 Carts of Blind Coall to Irvine a Day."<sup>74</sup> The port of Irvine was one of the chief outlets for the coal of central Ayrshire. Export to Ireland at this period was a valuable source of income to the landowners. The organisation of the industry was still on estate lines, working under pit managers. The potential was enormous, but competition was fierce in a restricted market. Consequently the movement of coal to Irvine resulted in occasional gluts, especially as the Irish demand proved volatile. The factor reported the situation to Miss Scott's mother in the summer of 1789. "I am sorry to inform you that the sales of the Blind Coal to the Irish Markets is still the same as they have been this Eight months past, no demand from that quarter nor any appearance of it getting better. We have between £300 and £400 on the shore of Irvine, besides what is on the hill at Kilmarnock. All the other coal masters is in the same situation both as to the Blind and Seeing coal. They were sent to the shore with a view of the sales taking place in the end of May as usual. So far as I can learn the stagnation of the sales arises from general Bankruptcy in Ireland, taking place with those that dealt in the coal trade. At the same time a new Coallery is set up in the North of Ireland at a place called Fairhead near Loarn [Larne] which serves in a great measure what lime is burnt in that part of the Country as well as what is used for Malting."<sup>75</sup>

Early in the year Douglas had disapproved of corrupt practices to hasten the movement of coal, already adopted by a rival estate. "I assure you I am very much against both the plans he proposes to bribe the Shipmaster at Irvine, either with drink or money . . . I have



always said to him [Mr Pope] he was to take no notice of the Riccarton Coalmasters, altho they might hurt Miss Scott at present . . . As they have to pay two pence for each cart of Coals carried to Irvine higher than Miss Scott, and the Coals rather of an inferior quality, their great run cannot be of long duration. Were we to lower the price or to follow them up in drink with the Shipmasters, as they do, I have no doubt that it might rouse Mr Cunningham of Longshaw's pride, who the Riccarton Coal belongs to, to support them. In my opinion, the less notice taken of them the better."<sup>76</sup>

The factor had high hopes of the new pit at Lawersbridge to replace those adjacent to Cessnock Castle, by then almost exhausted; though meantime pumping operations were meeting many difficulties on Loudoun estate. In a letter to Carron Ironworks he complained "Sir, Yours I duly received acquainting me of the pipes for Lady Loudoun's Colliery being forwarded to Glasgow which I immediately sent for. On their arrival here and being examined by the Engineer he found that the lower flange clockset pipe had a small crack in it. We hesitated some time whether to put it down or not, but as the workers had stood so long on account of the other being broken it was thought proper to make a trial of it. So soon as the water in the pit came down the length it gave way, and three or four blown holes about a foot above the flange sucked in so much air that the whole of the pipes were obliged to be taken out of the pit. They have for these two days been trying to mend it, by laying plates of iron and screw bolts on the blown holes and this day propose to make another trial of it, which I am afraid will not succeed . . . I write this to let you know the situation it was received in."<sup>77</sup>

By September 1790 the Lawersbridge pit had begun to produce up to expectations at a depth of 40 fathoms, although with no more than 16 colliers through lack of space in the workings. Within a month the chance events which have dogged the mining industry throughout its history played their part. The steam engine could not cope with excess inrush of water and then the first pit fatality occurred as Douglas described: "Circumstances still seem to be unlucky. About three weeks ago one of the Colliers lost his life in going down the shaft, by a loose stone falling upon his head. Since that time the colliers cannot be got to work regularly . . . The Riccarton company, who always take every advantage, have on this account been bribing the workers and giving them large premiums to carry them off."<sup>78</sup>

Competition for miners increased rapidly as the Ayrshire coalfield opened up during the last two decades of the 18th century. Shortage of labour in a dangerous and stigmatized job had been an important factor in partially liberating Scottish colliers from serfdom by the Act of 1775. Men entering the trade from that date were free labourers, while those already employed in it, mostly in the old-established mining districts in Fife and the Lothians, gained freedom by stages. Serfdom was finally abolished by a further act of 1799.

Entering the 1790s, the pits at Mount and Towerhall near Kilmarnock were doing good business. But on the Cessnock estate, in and around Galston, the old pits at Cessnock and Norrisbank were declining, and the high hopes for Lawersbridge were not being fulfilled, due to geological faults. The workers had "met with nothing but one step and dykes

crossing us at every three or four fathoms distance. There is no less than three downsteps the thickness of the coal in the distance of a few fathoms, which has almost put us into the old workings and out of the power of the engine."<sup>79</sup>

Alongside the possible closure of the new pit at Lawersbridge, Douglas had additional trouble in the behaviour of Mr Pope, the manager of the coalworks. In his report to Mrs Scott, he describes him as a "drunken monster" who had been released from his post. An application was made to the sheriff to order him to surrender his account books and to give up the tenancy of his house at the Mount. The factor had for months tried to reach a settlement of the accounts, but "every time I appointed to meet him, he was so drunk I could make nothing of him."<sup>80</sup> The manager was replaced by Mr John Guthrie, "a very intelligent, active, sober man."

The dangers of mining were always apparent to those engaged in it and many incidents were reported. In May 1787 the workings under the river at Kilmarnock were breached. It appeared sabotage was the cause. It occurred when no-one was in the pit, but the underground griever, who came under suspicion, was discharged.

The fatality at Lawersbridge in 1790, and the subsequent disinclination of the men to return to that pit, encouraged the Scott estates through the charitable inclinations of Mrs Scott to establish a form of insurance scheme. It was proposed by the colliers "to enter into a Box to raise a fund for the support of those that by accident or otherways was unable to work. It is presumed that whatever sum is thought proper to be given by Miss Scott should be applied as a foundation to that fund and to a stock to be managed in whatever way is thought most proper, and none to be admitted into society but those that are employed in Miss Scott's coalworks in Ayrshire."<sup>81</sup> They did not have to look far for precedents. Weavers' societies in neighbouring parishes made similar provisions. The Fenwick Weavers' Society was instituted in 1761 and the Galston parish minister recorded that there was a "universal society for the relief of the poor at Newmilns with a fund which is of great use to tradesmen in distress. Some of the natives of Galston befall to it."<sup>82</sup>



## MANUFACTURING

Apart from the developments in agriculture and mining, encouragement was given to manufacturing and craft work by the Cessnock estate. Money was advanced by bonds to initiate new enterprises or to improve existing establishments. Support was given mainly to the textile industry, to the woollen trade in Kilmarnock and to foster the spread of handloom weaving into Galston, long practised in the neighbouring burgh of Newmilns and promoted by the Loudoun estate in the new village of Darvel.

One innovation which took off swiftly was the skill of tambouring. With the rapid rise of the import of cotton in the final two decades of the 18th century, handloom weavers quickly adapted to the new yarn. Plain muslins were produced in greater quantities and fashion soon demanded some forms of embellishment which could not then be accomplished on the plain loom. Consequently embroidering using a tambour frame became a popular activity among the female population of the west of Scotland. As Miss Scott was still in her minority, her mother must be considered the driving force in these and other endeavours in the textile field. By 1789 the factor was reporting on his efforts to attract an expert in the trade. "I have been making every enquiry I could into Mr Halbick's general character . . . I find from every person that is acquainted with him that he bears a good character and is exceedingly industrious in his line of business . . . I had likewise a conversation with Mr Halbick. He tells me he was born in Switzerland and came to London about 18 years ago, where he carried on business for about 15 years in the tambouring way. He was there applied to by several people in Glasgow . . . and to enter into partnership with them, but found it did not answer his business so well as a manufacturing town, which made him fix upon Kilmarnock where he has been for about 19 months.

"He now has about 40 girls employed and indented for five years . . . His wife is very much respected for the care and attention paid to them, both as to their education and morals. He means to carry on the muslin trade and to teach some boys in the weaving of that article for which he says he thinks £100 would be sufficient . . . If he could by degrees bring that branch to answer as it has done in Paisley it might turn to great advantage to the Kilmarnock manufacturers who are now almost to a man become bankrupt and business almost to a stand . . . Without some steering person coming among them to set them agoing the inhabitants will be much distressed as they are mostly bred up to the manufacturing business."<sup>83</sup>

Though muslin weaving in Galston and district went from strength to strength with the associated tambour work, Mr Halbick found himself in difficulties. Despite his diligence,

good character and sound Glasgow references from "Mr John Auston & Coy; Mr Robert Thomas, manufacturer, and Mr Robertson in Newbigen,"<sup>84</sup> some of his problems were not self-induced. One was clearly outlined by the factor in his report to the tutors. "As to the tambourer, I am doubtful the £100 advanced to him will not turn out too well. Although he is very industrious, yet the young girls under his charge do not attend him properly. Since they have got any knowledge of the business they set up for themselves."<sup>85</sup> The picture of a bewildered foreigner with good intentions, but unable to detain his vanishing workforce and deal with broken indentures, could explain his travels from London to Glasgow, then to Kilmarnock and finally to places unknown. By 27th November in a letter to Miss Scott the factor communicated that Mr Halbick had left Kilmarnock considerably in debt with his effects sequestered to pay his rent, adding "I am afraid Miss Scott will be a loser by him as nothing will be got, even by following him, even suppose we could find out where he is gone."

Tambourers were very much in demand in Galston and, encouraged by the Cessnock estate, the town became a noted centre for this type of work. From an early beginning in simple embroidery the product developed into the making of gowns and christening robes, with beautiful lace insertions, widely renowned as Ayrshire White Needlework. As elsewhere in this period of booming cotton production, handloom weaving was a rapidly growing trade. "When Mr Wallace left Galston [in 1787] there was not above four loomshops in the whole village, and at this time there is above sixty and all well employed, beside other branches of trade increasing equally."<sup>86</sup>

As fashion dictated, the embroidery trade had a meteoric rise and an equally swift decline. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries it employed many thousands of women and girls in their own homes, but the technical advance of the handloom eventually sealed its fate. The jacquard machine



Christening robe of Ayrshire White Needlework.



and other loom attachments, such as the lappet wheel and the sewing frame, when introduced for the mechanical reproduction of complex designs on cloth, replaced hand embroidery. One account gives a brief history of its rise and fall. A Mrs Watson of Kilmarnock "was early put to work, and that, at the age of seven [in 1811] she could at tambouring . . . earn five shillings in a week; and that when left a widow, with young children, at the age of thirty-two she could make weekly by her tambour eight or nine shillings. The tambouring frame, occupying a considerable portion of her little garret [in 1879], is now a relic of the past - the only one in Kilmarnock, and it may go too, for Mrs Watson has had no work for some time."<sup>87</sup>

Attempts continued to bring large-scale enterprises to the Cessnock and Kilmarnock estates. A new industrial site was offered at Camskeith (Cambuskeith) Mill on the lands of Mount, near Kilmarnock. It had been destroyed by fire in 1788 but although the mill buildings were lost the dam and lade remained intact. "I have an offer given in lately for a paper miln to be built at Camskeith . . . The proposal is for Miss Scott to build the miln. The estimate amounts to £377 Sterling, including building and machinery, for which the paper miller offers eight per cent of rent yearly . . . We are still keeping the dam, which has a great command of water and is a pity it was not turned into some useful purpose for the estate. Miss Scott has now the whole thirlage belonging to this miln, excepting one farm called Loanhead."<sup>88</sup>

That undertaking fell through, but two months later a new one appeared. "Mr Thomas, a principal manufacturer in Kilmarnock, proposes taking Camskeith Miln upon Kilmarnock estate and filling it with a woollen and cotton miln which would be a very great advantage to this place . . . The man who has given in the proposal is of a worthy character and very capable of recovering the trade of Kilmarnock."<sup>89</sup>

Mrs Scott had always had a particular interest in the type of materials available in the locality, on how to expand the markets for traditional products and how to promote the new. As early as the first full year after purchase of the Kilmarnock estate, she enquired into the trade of the town and received detailed replies from the factor. "I have likewise made application to the different manufacturers for patterns of their different clothings which you will receive alongst with this, with their width and prices marked upon each . . . That they can make them of any colour or price wanted . . . The only articles I find are not manufactured in Kilmarnock are the shirtings and sheetings, there being no linen work carried on, but blankets of all kinds are made at different prices according to their qualities."<sup>90</sup> Later correspondence described some of the goods supplied and one important customer. "This day I made the particular enquiries into the way and manner the manufacturers formerly served the Army and Navy in cloathing. I find they were not contractors themselves, but supplied the contractors with what they had commissions for, for the government use. The articles were, such as Blanketing, Blue Cloath for Westcoats, Jackets and Trusers, Coarse Rugs for Coverlets, Coarse Stockings and Shoes. All these articles they could furnish to any extent, by having six months' previous notice . . . The Woollen Factory that was formerly in the

firm of Williams & Co. is the place all these articles can be furnished from, now carried out under the firm of Gregory & Co."<sup>91</sup> In the 1780s factory organisation could still not take precedence over the pressing claims of agriculture in what was still a country district, and orders could be delayed. "Mr Perry is to send articles to you as soon as he gets them finished. He says the reason for their not being completed before this is owing to the spinners being mostly employed in the harvest."<sup>92</sup>

In the last two decades of the 18th century the transfer from linen to cotton handloom weaving in the Irvine Valley was rapid, and the numbers entering the trade increased as quickly as the strictly enforced indenture system allowed. The reports of 1791 in the *Old Statistical Account* give the number in Galston in the lately introduced weaving trade as 55, while in the neighbouring burgh of Newmilns there were 266 and in the village of Darvel 58. Another 20 were located in the landward area.<sup>93</sup> The development of the cotton trade in the district attracted the attention of city manufacturers. Following the erection of a spinning mill at Catrine in 1787 by Claud Alexander of Ballochmyle and David Dale, a similar project was considered for Galston. "There has been a company here several times with a view to set up a cotton work . . . The company is from Glasgow and is said to be a wealthy set of people . . . According to the plan of the machinery, they mean to employ some five or six hundred hands . . . There is at present, near the place they propose erecting the miln, a small property belonging to Mr Andrew Blair upon which he has erected a lint miln. By an indulgence from Lord Marchmont, he got liberty to bring a lade to the miln through Cessnock estate, but this was only so long as his Lordship or his successors pleased."<sup>94</sup> This project was never begun. Unlike the area occupied by the five storeys high Twist Mill and the Jeanie Mill at Catrine, employing five hundred with as many outworkers and with its abundant supply of water, the narrow holm east of Galston would have proved unsuitable. There were already three mills within the space of three-quarters of a mile along the River Irvine. These produced paper at Strathmill, oatmeal at Barrmill and lint at Blair's mill at Kilknowe, with only a thirty feet fall of water between them.

As much as the idea appealed to the factor and Miss Scott's trustees, it could go no further and instead promotion went to the feuing of land for wool-spinning mills on the Kilmarnock estate. Cessnock concentrated on the natural advantages which lay in agriculture, mineral deposits and the production of cotton textiles by handloom. In order to accommodate the boom in cotton manufacture, the Cessnock estate entered a period of rebuilding, and extended the village of Galston.



## COMMUNICATIONS

The increased demand for coal for domestic use, for lime burning and export to Ireland, encouraged further development in Miss Scott's estates and those of other proprietors around Kilmarnock, but the lack of suitable transport for heavy products proved the greatest obstacle to expansion. Minerals were carried in long lines of carts to the depots, but until the improvements introduced following the Turnpike Trust Acts of 1766 and 1774 good roads were practically non-existent. William Aiton comparing the old country tracks with the inordinate theological controversies of the times believed "the road towards heaven was too much talked of, to admit of anything being done to those leading to market towns." Even after the construction of turnpike roads there was a reluctance to pay the conversion money which replaced statute labour, while others were "fined for evading the toll, and punished for knocking down the toll-keeper."<sup>95</sup> On occasion, dramatic events occurred at the toll-bars. James Aiton, an acquaintance of Burns, who kept the toll-house at Hurlford, ran out one night in his nightshirt to demand payment from a traveller who drove through. He chased after him and, although being lashed now and then with the escaper's whip, managed to catch him at the next toll.<sup>96</sup>

Other options were proposed for the movement of heavy goods. In 1795 a project was well forward in the mind of Colonel Fullarton of Fullarton to construct a canal from Kilmarnock through his lands to a harbour at Troon. George Douglas favoured the plan and wrote to the Marquis of Titchfield, who had acquired the estates of Miss Scott through their marriage in that year: "I mentioned to your Lordship in my last that I intended waiting upon Col Fullarton, which I accordingly did. I gave him every information I could respecting the expenses in carrying the coal from your Lordship's works to the shore at Irvine . . . [and] so far as I could judge what might be expected by land carriage from Glasgow and Paisley, which must be considerable. As to certain seasons of the year, ships often lie at Port Glasgow a month, six weeks or two months after being loaded, before they can proceed to their voyage from contrary winds in so narrow a channel. Whereas at the Troon . . . on open sea they cannot be confined a few days, so that any valuable goods from Glasgow can be sent to the basin at Kilmarnock may be landed in the West Indies at the market before the ships from Port Glasgow can sail. From these circumstances and several others that Col Fullarton has collected he seems to think that a canal might turn out to good, and he thinks with your Lordship's assistance there will be little difficulty in getting the Bill to pass through Parliament."<sup>97</sup>

The canal was welcomed, following the earlier success of one built in 1772 by Robert

## COMMUNICATIONS

Cunninghame of Seabank and Patrick Warner of Ardeer from their collieries to a point near the harbour at Saltcoats. But this was a more ambitious project, with a number of difficulties arising. There were worries about the escape of water on the lands of the Earl of Eglinton at Shewalton Moss, and that the route would carry it too close to the house of Sir William Cunninghame of Caprington, which had recently been rebuilt. There was also a problem about an adequate supply of water, but it was proposed to overcome this with the construction of a large reservoir "on the head of Arness or Crawfordland Water, north of Kingswell and at about eight miles above Kilmarnock."<sup>98</sup>

The factor remained enthusiastic and in the same letter stated that "this Canal if carried on will be of great advantage to this part of the country in which there is an inexhaustible field of coal, both the malting and fire kind, at which there is a great demand at all times from Ireland . . . From your Lordship's coalworks alone at Kilmarnock there is annually exported from three to four thousand tons of Malting Coal, which is sold from 10/- to 11/- per ton. The expense in land carriage, which is about 7 miles, is from 4/- to 5/- per ton."<sup>99</sup> Fullarton proposed that the canal should cross the River Irvine by an aqueduct a little below Fairlie House, through that estate, past the coalpits and on to Kilmarnock, bringing it closer to the town, where there would be "a much more extensive and commodious place for a basin for vessels to lie in and load."<sup>100</sup> With the trade which would arrive overland from Glasgow and Paisley, Douglas, like William Aiton a decade later, seemed to visualise Kilmarnock as the Manchester of the west of Scotland. Certainly he had at heart the interests of his employer and the town of Kilmarnock, and with the proposal appeared the promise of a great industrial boom. "It was proposed by the magistrates in Kilmarnock that there should be some alterations take place as to widening the streets and enlarging the town, and to throw a bridge over the river at Kilmarnock House. The town stands in much need of some alterations as the streets are remarkably narrow at present and so crooked that carriages have some difficulty of turning at the different corners."<sup>101</sup>

In the end the canal was never built. The transport charges intended by Colonel Fullarton would have made it more costly to move the coal by water to Troon than by road to Irvine. Subsequently in 1803 the Fullarton estate was sold to the Marquis of Titchfield. A harbour was developed at Troon and the connection to Kilmarnock resurrected as a railway. Work started in 1808 and was completed four years later. This with other enterprises had their rewards in the 19th century, but were built on measures taken in the 18th.

Landed proprietors were involved in road construction, either as Road Trustees responsible for new turnpike roads, or on their own behalf providing ancillary parish roads. Galston parish was well served by the turnpike roads. These ran from Ayr through Galston to Strathaven; from Kilmarnock, Mauchline and Sorn to Galston; and there was a link road through Loudoun which joined the road from Kilmarnock to Glasgow.<sup>102</sup> In 1798 additional provision was proposed: "There is a proposal at present for carrying a line of road through the Cessnock estate considerably to the east of the house, to join the great road leading to





Kilmarnock House occupied by the Earls of Kilmarnock after fire destroyed Dean Castle in 1735.

Edinburgh by Hamilton at Newmilns upon the line which is about two miles of length. There are two bridges needed for which Mr Brown of Lanfine applied to the County for, for which £148 was granted. He has subscribed £50. Some others have subscribed a part and as it goes though the Marquis's estate it must be considerably advantaged, as the road runs near to the lime and coalworks." <sup>103</sup> It is interesting to note that the Road Trustees subsidised Brown towards the cost of his two bridges, but some disagreement occurred on their relative contributions to the work among the principal estate owners. The factor mentions that Brown of Lanfine "expects the Marquis's subscription to be £50. He has subscribed himself £100, which I do not consider more than his proportion, as the bridge to be carried over at Newmilns joins his estate to that thriving village, where he has in view feuing out to great advantage." <sup>104</sup>

The factor had been involved some years earlier in an altercation over the intended closure of an existing road. Colonel John Craufurd of Craufurdland had long campaigned to have the bridge by his estate stopped up. If successful it would have meant the closure of a road useful to the Kilmarnock and Loudoun estates, both in Douglas's care. Craufurd

had earlier been prevented by the Court of Session from closing the bridge and road and the Court had decreed it to be "a public and patent road in all time coming, but notwithstanding he has got a number of Trustees upon the roads to assist him in endeavouring to get it shut up." <sup>105</sup>

The motive for the Colonel's action was never clear. As an ageing bachelor member of the local gentry, he left his estate to Thomas Coutts, his London banker, causing further litigation on behalf of his relations. A colourful and unconventional character, he had attended his friend the Earl of Kilmarnock when he was beheaded for his part in the '45 Rising. For this gesture he was placed at the bottom of the army list, although previous distinguished service at the Hanoverian battles of Dettingen and Fontenoy secured some rehabilitation and his eventual promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel.

Douglas reported to his employers the latest stage in the saga. "Craufurdland is now gone into town [Edinburgh] to attend for his interest and will leave no stone unturned to support his cause, which has been his favourite hobby-horse for this 20 years past, and has to his expense gone against him. About ten years ago it then cost him upwards of £300 and the process was solely carried on at the expense of the tenants upon the estates of Kilmarnock and Rowallan . . . He however has had the address, by the assistance of a Junto of Trustees upon the road in the Kilmarnock district, to bring it forward again. I should be sorry the young ladies should now be failed, when their tenants behaved so gallantly in the former process. The Lord Advocate has drawn out a very masterly petition to be heard before the Court of Session, to which Craufurdland has given in answers." <sup>106</sup>

Even without the vexation of the law's delay, Colonel Craufurd had engaged in his last battle. He died in Edinburgh in February of the following year, leaving the road and bridge open to the present day and his aunt to a new contest to recover the family estate. Whether some hostility to the Loudoun and Scott families was the cause of his action, or just cantankerousness in his old age, is not clear. George Douglas was free to return to his more mundane duties.



## VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

The factor was always on the alert for means of improving places within his sphere of influence, as when the old manse of Galston came up for sale on the 20th July 1796. "It lies in the middle of the village of Galston, all of which belongs to Lord and Lady Titchfield, except itself. In my opinion, it should be bought up for them in all events, as falling into another person's hand would interfere much with the plan of improvements of that village, which is now thriving amazingly. The house and offices with an excellent garden, well stocked with fruit trees, for a small sum may be put in good repair."<sup>107</sup>

The area is now a built up part of Galston with the names Manse Place and Orchard Street marking the site of the old manse and its garden. Apart from the allocation of feus to accommodate the people of the fast-growing town, the factor fortunately saw the advantage of repairing Barr Castle, not only for its utilitarian purposes, but as a feature to add to the lasting character and appearance of the town. Now lying well within its boundaries, spoiled slightly by its hip-ended replacement roof, it was saved by his efforts from collapse and disappearance from the scene. He drew attention to its useful and architectural values in another of his letters. "Part of the battlement of the old castle of Barr of Galston is fallen down. If it is not immediately repaired, the whole roof will fall in. It is at present a useful house as it holds the garnels for storing up the meal from the estates, which will hold from 250 to 300 bolls . . . No other place I know is large enough to hold them. It is likewise a fine termination of one of the new streets carrying on in the village of Galston. Should it be thought proper to repair the roof . . . it might be got done for £15 or £20, if that is agreed to. The battlement should be taken down and slated over, which would preserve it for ages. In this castle is the prison where offenders are often laid into, even at this time it being the strongest in the neighbourhood."<sup>108</sup> Another beneficiary of the retention of the castle was Galston's famous handball game. Medieval in its origins it could only be played against this and similar buildings. Up until after the second World War the unique excitement of the sport which thrilled generations of the townspeople and visitors could only have been maintained with the survival of the tall, blank north wall of the castle.

The factor now and again suggested improvements. "I forgot to mention, in the Laigh Kirkyard at Galston there are three old houses, on line with the Schoolhouse now built there, which are quite ruinous and cannot properly stand above one year at most. They are posset at present, but with poor people which are supported by the Session and I believe paid little or no rent for several years past. What I would propose is to feu out the ground

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where the houses stand with the yards at the back . . . at the rate of sixpence per fall . . . and be the means of bringing more respectable inhabitants in so thriving a village . . . which would turn out to Miss Scott's advantage. The plan cannot be altered as the ground is confined by the Water on the north and the Mercat Place on the south."<sup>109</sup> His building policy continued for a number of years, although sometimes the sitting tenants had to shift for themselves. "There are about 20 coal [miners'] houses in the village of Galston the greater part of which is almost ruinous. To Miss Scott to build them again would take a considerable sum, besides being a set of very poor tenants with an ill paid rent, as many of them are upon the Session."<sup>110</sup> New building also continued to the west. "There are twelve new houses going on at this time, besides what is to be built in the course of this summer. The greatest part of what is to be built is in Titchfield Street, which leads down towards Kilmarnock. It is a most thriving village at present and from its situation, as to roads and water, will make one of the pleasantest in the country."<sup>111</sup>

By 1811 William Aiton was describing Galston as one of the handsomest in the county of Ayr.<sup>112</sup> As well as demolishing old cottages and building new, the Scott trustees encouraged the use of slate in Galston and Kilmarnock. "The difference between slate and thatched roof will run for a house of 44 feet long by 20 feet wide over the walls, the slate about £36 and the thatch about £14. There is no doubt that a slate roof is the cheapest in the end, as it will stand for 40 years with very little repairs, while a thatch roof requires annual repair, besides using a great part of what should go for manure to the farm. The wood part of both will last the same if kept water tight. Home wood is of ash, oak or elm and will last as long in building as foreign."<sup>113</sup>

Timber for building was carried from Cessnock woods or from the port at Irvine. For houses built at Kilmarnock, the cost of home or foreign timber including transport was the same. The factor advised that the roofs of the farm dwelling houses be of slate when rebuilt, while barns and offices might remain thatch. He also seemed to consider an early form of landscaping, going beyond a purely utilitarian approach. He thought good houses would be "a great inducement for respectable tenants taking the farms. I know of no place where this will make a better appearance for ornamenting the country. What I would further advise, in place of making their barnyards and gardens in the ordinary size of perhaps one acre of land, to take in from two to three acres and draw that in a circular form round the house, keeping one side open to the south and in that plant on the inside about six or seven rows of trees for shelter."<sup>114</sup>



## EDUCATION AND CHARITY

Apart from the normal business of estate management, Douglas had to concern himself with the interests of the new owners, who were attentive to the social and educational needs of the population. Mrs Scott appeared again as the motivator in these projects. By April in the first year after purchase the factor had set in motion a scheme for a new schoolhouse. "Relating to the schoolhouse in Galston, we had a meeting of Heritors who agreed to the same being carried out with all convenient speed and advertised for plans and estimates to be given in for the same. So soon as they are received they will be transmitted to you. At the same time the Heritors agreed to assess themselves at the rate of sixpence Sterling in the pound Scots valuation for carrying on the same, which I should think with what Miss Scott offers should build a new house."<sup>115</sup>

The estimated cost of the school with a house upstairs for the schoolmaster was £140. It was completed by December in the same year and the building still stands at Galston Cross. Similar efforts were afoot in Kilmarnock with proposals for a School of Industry, while a Mr McNider was offering a house and garden for sale at the Townhead on Kilmarnock for a schoolhouse. By the following year a Sunday School was also in operation, apparently financed out of Mrs Scott's own pocket:

"To cash received to pay the Schoolmaster in Galston	
for keeping the Sunday School	£5: 0: 0
By paid said schoolmaster half a years salary	£2:10: 0
Balance in Geo. Douglas's hand to be paid when due is	£2:10: 0" <sup>116</sup>

The early Sunday Schools were charity run for children who could not normally pay the parish school fees. They gave religious education, but also provided the rudiments of learning. "The Sunday School goes on very well at Galston and well attended to. The inhabitants seem to view the usefulness of it in its proper light, as they keep their children constantly at it. The number I think you proposed was to be about 25. There are at present upwards of 30. The Schoolmaster, who is an exceedingly good man and an excellent teacher, does everything he can to encourage them and does not begrudge his time in attending to the extraordinary number of what was appointed."<sup>117</sup>

Seven years later it was still operating as before and, like similar establishments elsewhere, was giving instruction in a trade. "There is another year due at Whitsunday of the annuity to the schoolmaster for keeping the Sunday School and also the sewing mistress."<sup>118</sup> The growth of the sewed muslin trade in Galston required an alternative source of instruction

## EDUCATION AND CHARITY

after Mr Halbick absconded in 1790. Other educational and charitable activities were favoured by the estate. "Five pounds to be given to the schoolmaster who teaches the colliers' children at Mount Coalworks . . . Five pounds yearly to the midwife in Galston as an encouragement to her, till she is established and has got properly into business."<sup>119</sup>

Mrs Scott's Sunday School was probably tolerated because of her aristocratic connections, while others were falling under the scrutiny of the established church. Jealous of their prerogative, the ecclesiastical authorities were often hostile to the various dissenting bodies opening their own schools and catechising the children of their adherents. According to the Rev Andrew Edgar, Minister at Mauchline, the Presbytery of Ayr had not the same animosity towards Sunday Schools as the Presbytery of Irvine, and the parish school at Galston seemed to enjoy a good record. It is described as a grammar school, teaching Latin, and in 1738 had received a presbytery inspection as in Ayr, Cumnock and Maybole.<sup>120</sup>

The schoolmaster in Galston was almost certainly the teacher of the Sunday School, receiving only £5 a year for that task, but along with his normal salary and the additional payments as session clerk and precentor it would have provided a reasonable sum. The post attracted James Jardine in 1792 who put education "on a firm basis, giving a sound elementary education and a knowledge of Latin sufficient to take them to University."<sup>121</sup>



Mrs Scott's schoolhouse at Galston Cross, built in 1787.



Respect in the community raised him to an elder in 1801 and he completed an unusual length of service for a schoolmaster at that period, dying in office in 1824.

One of the principal duties of the heritors of a parish was provision for the poor, when income from other sources fell short. The reluctance of this group to meet its obligations and the increasing number of poor at this time and through into the 19th century led finally to the collapse of the system and the passing of the new Scottish Poor Law in 1845. The poor funds before the new law came into operation were raised from church collections; from fines for breaking church discipline; the let of certain pews in the kirk; baptism and marriage fees and hiring the mortcloth for funerals. In some parishes income could be augmented by gifts, legacies and investments, but when these did not suffice the kirk session called for contributions from heritors and feuars. After the severe winter of 1782-83 a meeting was called of the heritors of Mauchline parish. George Douglas, representing the Earl of Loudoun, was one of the few who troubled to appear. No action could be taken on the poor's behalf, but several local tenant farmers "offered to present and supply the parish with such meal as they could spare."<sup>122</sup>

Douglas noted the difficulties in implementing the conditions of the Poor Laws. These had not been updated since the adjournment of the Scots Parliament in 1707 and by the end of the century the terms were becoming progressively impractical. Local circumstances reflected this situation. "As to litigation about the poor's stent in the Parish of Kilmarnock it stands thus. It had been in use for upwards of twelve or fifteen years back to raise by voluntary subscription which, with other funds, was in use to support the poor, but that turning out ineffectual in the year 1784 at a meeting of heritors it was found necessary that a stent should be laid on the whole town of Kilmarnock. For that purpose the same was repeated at a meeting in the year 1785 with orders for the Collector to carry on law suits for recovery of such as refused to pay the said stent for both years, which is now a process carrying on before the Court of Session. As many of the heritors refused to pay their proportion of the stent, the sum of £80 now proposed to be raised by voluntary contribution, is to support the poor in the meantime as those heritors who paid the stent the first year refused the second as others had entirely objected to it."<sup>123</sup>

From the same letter it is clear that the let of the church pews was becoming an accepted feature to raise funds for the poor. "As to the church seats, the whole provision of it is undivided, ever since it was last built 20 years ago. At the last meeting of the heritors it was agreed that application should be made to the Sheriff to have the whole divided to prevent disputes as every person takes possession of what part he thinks proper. In the main what sum arising from them for this year, as they were set by public roup, is ordered to be given for maintenance of the poor."<sup>124</sup>

Poor harvests in the 1790s led to calls on the heritors of Galston to assist the poor. Scarcity of meal with its accompanying inflation produced an inflammatory situation in the years 1799-1800. Prices more than doubled from one shilling a peck and the factor

advised the Marquis of Titchfield that his contribution as a heritor to the poor fund should be £15 "and more money may be required afterwards if the times should continue hard and victuals scarce."<sup>125</sup> Times did continue hard, for in 1800 meal mobs were operating in both Galston and Newmilns, enforcing sales at reduced prices, confiscating and carrying off wagonloads of meal and threatening farmers against export out of the parish.<sup>126</sup>



## THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL VIEW

From the tone of his letters, George Douglas can be seen as invariably fair in his dealings with farming tenants and estate workers, but was unyielding and more conventional when faced with religious and political innovations. The French Revolution in 1789 and the war with France which opened in 1793 spread uneasiness among the gentry and landed aristocracy. As factor for the Countess of Loudoun and Miss Scott of Cessnock, he was canny and circumspect when estate business involved him with those he believed threatened the establishment; dissenters in religion, and radicals in politics.

Douglas, as factor of the Loudoun and Rowallan estates, became involved with dissenters at nearby Fenwick. The ordination of the Rev William Boyd in 1782 had taken two years to accomplish against the popular will and achieved only after the vast majority of the congregation decamped on the appointment of their own secessionist minister. In 1784 the factor had to intercede to retrieve the communion cups at Fenwick church which the treasurer thought "belonged more properly to the congregation he had joined."<sup>127</sup> Robert Burns commented on the situation in *The Ordination*:

*"Lang Patronage wi' rod o' airn,  
Has shor'd the Kirk's undoin  
As lately Fenwick, sair forfairn  
Has proven to its ruin."*

In 1793 Douglas refused to grant a feu for a meeting house in Galston, and in 1796 he was again writing on the topic. "I wrote on the 14th on various subjects. Among the rest were the proposals given in by the Associate Congregation of Galston for feuing a piece of ground for building a meeting house upon. I have been pestered with them on that subject for some years . . . I have little doubt but you will have a visit from some of them . . . and I wish to put you on your guard that no undue advantage may be taken, as they are a set of jesuitical undermining people . . . I told them that the feu was agreed to, but before it could be fully settled they must give in their proposals how they were to support their poor."<sup>128</sup>

For three years the dissenters had been meeting in a tent in the summer months and in winter in a room in the old Barr Castle, where George Wishart in 1545 and John Knox in 1556 had preached on their Ayrshire missions before the Reformation. "They took advantage of my absence and fell to work, opened up a freestone quarry at their own hand and nearly raised as many stones as to build the [meeting] house in a day or two. On my going over to Galston on Tuesday morning last . . . and finding them going on in that situation, I peremptorily

## THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL VIEW

told them to stop . . . otherwise I would raise a prosecution against them. They came over to me yesterday morning insisting upon their going on . . . After all this they justly deserve to be treated in a different manner . . . and if they were stopped altogether it would be no hurt to the village, but rather an advantage as they are rank democrats and continually laying plots for the disturbance of the place."<sup>129</sup>

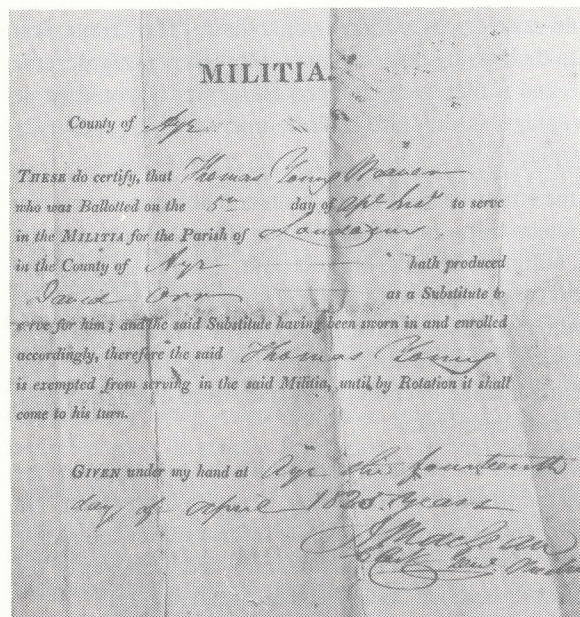
The factor could not long frustrate the enthusiasm of the dissenters who were not among the more extreme opponents of state intervention in church affairs. They belonged to the Burgher wing of the Secession Church, willing to take the burgess oath. Their meeting house was eventually completed and replaced on the same site in 1859 by a neat and attractive building, the Erskine Church, still standing in Wallace Street, although now serving as a hall in a united presbyterian church. Douglas had his ear to the ground regarding all local activity. He was aware that the individuals seeking change in church and state were often identical, and that the local dissenters were also "rank democrats".

Towards the end of the century movements for reform, inspired by the principles of the French Revolution and disseminated by the writings of Tom Paine, began to have effect. On the 30th April 1793 the second general convention of the militant reform organisation, the Friends of the People, met in Edinburgh. Both Galston and Newmilns had branches of the society and were able to send their foremost member, John Wallace, as a delegate.<sup>130</sup>

As early as 1792 the government had considered promoting a Scottish Militia Bill and after the beginning of the war with France it was again mooted. "There was a meeting of the heritors of the county of Ayr held lately to take into consideration the proper plan for raising troops for the defence of it . . . What answer may be given for Miss Scott, as it is most likely the Gentlemen in the county may be divided in their opinion whether the sum to be raised is by stent of six pence per pound Scots valuation or by voluntary subscription."<sup>131</sup> All the great landowners agreed to the assessment and two or more troops were to be raised, depending on the sum available. Volunteer companies were quickly recruited, but when the Militia Act was passed in 1797 trouble erupted. Disturbances occurred throughout the country. Schoolhouses were attacked in popular riots, as in every parish schoolmasters were required to draw up lists from their registers of baptisms from which all able-bodied men between the ages of nineteen and twenty three would be balloted to serve. The master in nearby Strathaven had his registers seized. The teacher in New Cumnock was ducked in the loch and in Galston the Tree of Liberty, the symbol of the revolution, was set up to express the feelings of the populace.

By October, George Douglas felt that the situation locally had calmed down. "As to the Militia in Ayrshire, the inhabitants seem now to be perfectly reconciled to it and every parish is entering into a subscription for raising money for those that are balloted to serve in case they should not incline to go."<sup>132</sup> Persons chosen in the ballot could pay for a substitute, which was a very convenient arrangement for those who could afford it. Apart from private agreements, in some parishes there seems to have been a common fund to pay for substitutes, but it would still have obliged the poorest or the unemployed to join.





Militia substitute's certificate.

a number of unacceptable clauses in the Bill. By March 1799 large groups were resisting its passage and the factor tried to influence those under his control. "I have spoken with Mr Guthrie [pit manager] concerning the Colliers and that he would try to reconcile them . . . There has been about Glasgow and in this county several meetings among the Colliers and subscriptions going on to oppose the Bill. I am told they have already raised upwards of £300 from Glasgow deputations sent through the whole of the country, which has put them in a sad fermentation and some of the coalmasters are said to be at their head."<sup>134</sup> He mentioned a Mr Wilson, Town Clerk of Glasgow,<sup>135</sup> being engaged to organise opposition to the Bill, but when some amendments were accepted the colliers were mollified. Wages were to be fixed by justices of the peace in each county, a method which was to prove inadequate and the Combination Acts passed in the same year guaranteed that the miners' struggle for better wages and conditions would continue for many years to come.

The government suppression of action for reform during the final decade of the 18th century did not stifle rumblings of discontent heard at various times from different sources as reported in the factor's letter book. The events leading up to the Bill of 1799 for the emancipation of colliers elicited some comments on social and political affairs. "I received the circular letter Mr Brodie mentioned. I have sent copies of them to all the principal coalmasters in this county. I hope they will either attend or by proxy. There is much need for some regulations respecting colliers, as they are at present a very unruly set of men."<sup>133</sup> Although the miners in Scotland were in favour of emancipation, they disagreed with

## LIFE AND CHARACTER

The contents of a business correspondence may not be the best avenue towards discovering the personality of an individual, but between the lines clues may appear to reveal a little about the writer. The general tenor of the factor's thoughts on estate management was an open-minded approach to ideas of land improvement and friendly encouragement to any of the rural population willing to adapt to them. In the same period and for years to come, while Highland landlords were regarding their people as encumbrances to be evicted at will, lowland lairds at their best still had a residual feudal attitude with mutual obligations with their tenants. Some were still old style kindly tenants, with tacks held annually by virtue of the goodwill of their landlord, but still a hereditary right.<sup>136</sup>

To a certain extent pressure was exerted on farmers in Ayrshire to adopt the new methods, but this was done more by persuasion and guidance at the time of allocation of new leases. When the fermtouns of multiple tenancies were being consolidated into single holdings there were more farmers available than farms. Currently the textile and mining industries in Ayrshire were expanding with comparable or better wages on offer. The ruthless eviction of the rural population was neither profitable nor sensible and higher rents could be obtained through improved standards and larger economic units.

The larger farms could be managed by the extended families and household servants of those days, but it was acknowledged that a sub-stratum of agricultural workers was equally beneficial for the rural economy. "The labouring class of men in this county, who gain their livelihood by hedging, ditching, mowing, threshing, reaping and other country work, are paid from twelve pence to fourteen pence per day. They usually endeavour to have a small house and garden, which costs them 20,30 or 40 shillings annually, besides a cow's grass, and sufficient ground for their potatoes."<sup>137</sup>

Various entries in the letter book demonstrate the factor's efforts to be fair, and tell of the difficulties which can arise with the human element in estate management. Some examples come from the Loudoun as well as the Cessnock records. "You have a receipt for Grizel Alexander's meal and likewise James Mitchell's. As that was given out as charity, I never took their receipts, but as that circumstance may not be so properly known as when the accounts were examined by the two late Earls who knew them, it is necessary to send them."<sup>138</sup> Grizel Alexander's husband, John Young, was undergroom at Loudoun and was killed by a stroke by a horse on the breast, and left her with a small family of six children, Earl John gave her a free house . . . with 6½ bolls of meal yearly and cow's grass on his death. Earl James reduced it to a free house and 3 bolls, 4 pecks meal yearly, which was



To Mr Walker

Loudoun Castle 9<sup>th</sup> Decemr 1794

(Dear Sir

You have here inclosed a letter I had this day from Mr. Bruce Campbell of Mellurgie wanting to Borrow £2500 upon that Estate should miss Scotts Commissioner's bedespare to lend him that sum I have not the least doubt but that the security is perfectly good as I am well acquainted with the land having some years ago viewed them with a view for miss Scott to purchase them as they ly almost wholly surrounded by miss Scotts Estates & must be a very desirable purchase for her on that acct the yearly rent of the whole lands is about £900 according to my estimate the public burdens is small The subject I suppose will soon come to be sold altogether it will not be against miss Scott in that case having the money up. A Mr. Campbell mentions in his letter the sum that is already upon it which is meant to be paid up except the £500 for his sons Commission which is immediately wanted in that case an answer is expected as soon as you can conveniently whether he can be accommodated with it or not I am

To Mr J. S. Walker

continued by Lady Loudoun's tutors at their first general meeting. James Mitchell was an old servant and had lived about the family for upwards of 60 years and is now unable to work for his bread. He petitioned the tutors at their first meeting after Lord Loudoun's death, who ordered him two bolls of meal yearly." <sup>139</sup>

Some of his dealings with servants and ex-servants stretched his patience and he had to appeal to his employers to sort the problems out, as in the case of a refractory matron. "Some years ago Lady Loudoun's nurse and her husband were brought to Rowallan at which time Lord Loudoun settled his wages at 6½ bolls of meal, a free house and cow's grass, all yearly . . . Since his death she is daily making additional demands and says she has one or other of Lady Loudoun's tutors orders for it . . . They have likewise got in a second cow which they say they have orders for. I should be glad this was taken into consideration at the meeting and what I am to do pointed out, particularly as I am daily pestered with her and found fault with when her demands are not met." <sup>140</sup>

The factor had happier duties to perform. The purchases of the Kilmarnock and Cessnock estates, on behalf of the heiress Miss Henrietta Scott, were investments for her coming of age, which duly arrived on her 21st birthday in 1795. "Madam, I was honoured with yours of the 18th inst, on receipt of which I immediately proceeded to warn the tenants upon your estates and prepare for the generous entertainment you ordered me to give them at Kilmarnock and Galston. They accordingly met at Kilmarnock to the number of about 250, besides the Magistrates, Town Council and Clergy upon the 29th, your birthday, where it was celebrated with every demonstration of joy. The whole town was illuminated, the bells set a-ringing and every person vying with one another who to show most loyalty on the occasion. On seeing them all so happy, I ordered a hogshead of porter to be distributed at the Cross, with a bonfire in the evening. The whole was closed with the greatest harmony and good order. The same was done at Galston where about 150 tenants and heads of families were entertained, which behaved in the same manner. This was a great number, but to do it upon a liberal plan there was none invited that could well be omitted, and to have it more confined would have been but a small saving. I have not yet got the whole of the expense made up, but when it is I hope it will meet with your approbation." <sup>141</sup>

After these festivities he had to arrange for the visit to the district of William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, Marquis of Titchfield. He married Henrietta Scott in August 1795 and made his first inspection of his newly acquired Ayrshire estates shortly afterwards. George Douglas's wife died on 17th July, but within a few weeks he wrote to the Marquis about accommodation for his visit. "The Countess of Loudoun who has been here for some days desired me to mention that it would make her very happy that your Lordship, on coming to this country, would take up your lodging in Loudoun Castle as her Ladyship does not reside here and no person lives in the Castle but a servant." <sup>142</sup>

Flora Mure Campbell, Countess of Loudoun was born in 1780 and succeeded to the title at the age of six, but was brought up by the Earl and Countess of Dumfries mostly at Dumfries House. She married the Earl of Moira, later Marquis of Hastings, in 1804, after



which Loudoun Castle entered a long period of rebuilding, but in the interim lay vacant leased to a tenant. Consequently the factor offered an alternative. "Your Lordship can be accommodated with any thing that is wanted, as my house is within a hundred yards of the Castle, which is but small. At the same time it is very much at your service . . . Your Lordship can have a clean room and bed with a dining parlour. These your Lordship can have your choice of on coming here."<sup>143</sup> A week later the factor had a reply in which the Marquis accepted the smaller and homelier atmosphere of the factor's house, rather than the grander but, no doubt, draughtier halls, rooms and corridors of the old castle.

The factor had to look to his own interests as work piled up while managing two large estates, especially with absentee landlords in the shape of two young ladies, one of whom did not reach her majority until 1795 and the other in 1801. In 1792 he was advancing reasons for an increase in salary. "I have several times thought of hinting to Miss Scott's Commissioners to take into consideration the factor's fee I have for the estates in Ayrshire, under my charge . . . I shall beg leave to point out a few circumstances to enable them better to judge . . . My factor's fee was settled in the year 1786 at £150. At that time I had only Kilmarnock, Haining and Halmark estates. Cessnock and Killoch I got the charge of in the year 1787. Mrs Scott that year, by her own desire at one of the meetings, got an additional £15 yearly for my clerk and this situation has stood ever since, although the rents are now double."<sup>144</sup>

As a rapidly expanding estate, taking in most of the towns of Kilmarnock and Galston and involving heavy work in issuing new farm leases and in developing industries, Douglas was under severe pressure to keep up with new business. "I need not mention the different purchases that have been since made, as that can be easily seen into. There are several of them particularly the Braehead, which is mostly let out in Town acres or small pendicles, which is worse than managing larger farms. Besides there are feus and superiorities purchased from Lord Marchmont and Mr Anderson in the year 1788 which are numerous and widely scattered and take considerable trouble in collecting. There is in addition . . . Mr Hamilton's estate of Grange of about 17 or 18 tenants, besides a great number of feus."<sup>145</sup>

He did not, of course, wish to lose the post, just to receive a little more remuneration. ". . . these circumstances I only mention that it may come more easily into the Commissioners' view, and if they should think proper to add any thing to my salary, whatever the sum may be, I shall be perfectly satisfied. I think I can safely say to my conscience that I discharged my duty in every respect, where Miss Scott's interest is concerned, ever since I was honoured with the charge of her estates."<sup>146</sup>

He added judicious little reminders about his expenses in his correspondence with the lawyers acting for the guardians. "I forgot to mention, when I saw you last, how I was to state my expense when I was at Hatton three different times . . ."<sup>147</sup> I was about three weeks each time from home and, as you know lodgings in Edinburgh and travelling charges are now high, I hope the Commissioners will not think £10 each time too much."<sup>148</sup>

Letter Book 59 came to an end in the year 1800. George Douglas witnessed the great changes taking place, when the agricultural economy was no longer the dominant factor in the life of the community, but a contribution to the demands of an emerging industrial age. He, like others in his situation working for enlightened employers, was able to use his talents to encourage new farming methods, to improve and promote young industries, especially those of handloom weaving and mining in his own district. His sympathies remained mainly with the people of the land, house servants and estate workers. As seen in his dealings with the dissenting congregation in Galston, he had greater difficulty understanding the people of the growing towns and villages.

The Loudoun estate had established the new village of Darvel in 1752 and leased numerous feus there in the 1790s, mostly to house the increasing number of weavers in the developing cotton trade. He was soon involved in jousts with their independent spirit. "I am sorry to see that your endeavours to accommodate matters with the Dervall feuars has proved ineffectual . . . but they are misled by two or three hot headed leaders."<sup>149</sup> The disagreement seems to have arisen over the price of new infestments and the factor was given the liberty to allow "a deduction as I thought proper and, saw occasion of their being poor, several of them I settled with . . . till such a time as they entered into a combination which put an end to it."<sup>150</sup>

Gavin Hamilton, lawyer of Mauchline and friend of Robert Burns, carried out the legal work of the Loudoun estate and prepared the papers, but "they refused to take the rights up, as they said they could get them cheaper done themselves... The feuars when they were summoned before the Justices behaved with every degree of insolence, which put an end to further offers being made to them."<sup>151</sup>

Mention of a combination among the Darvel feuars speaks of the spirit of the times. The government passed a Combination Act in 1799 against the activities of trade unions, while the landed classes fortified themselves against threatening political encroachments. Being a servant of the land-owning interest Douglas could not readily act against it, but throughout his correspondence there is a thread of human compassion for people in difficult circumstances and a willingness to avoid unnecessary punitive measures. He could not be aware in his situation of the irresistible forces which would compel fundamental change in the new century.

The first fifty years of the 19th century would paint a different picture, detailing the turmoil leading up to the Radical War of 1820, the agitation for the Reform Bill of 1832 and the struggles of the Chartist Movement up until 1848. These were the years when the Irvine Valley towns were described as "seething with revolutionary madness," mostly from the activities of the handloom weavers of the district.<sup>152</sup> Before these events arrived to exercise the minds and challenge the authority of the aristocracy, Douglas's terms as factor at Cessnock, Kilmarnock and Loudoun ended.

His business sense has been steadily revealed in the letters and his good judgement must

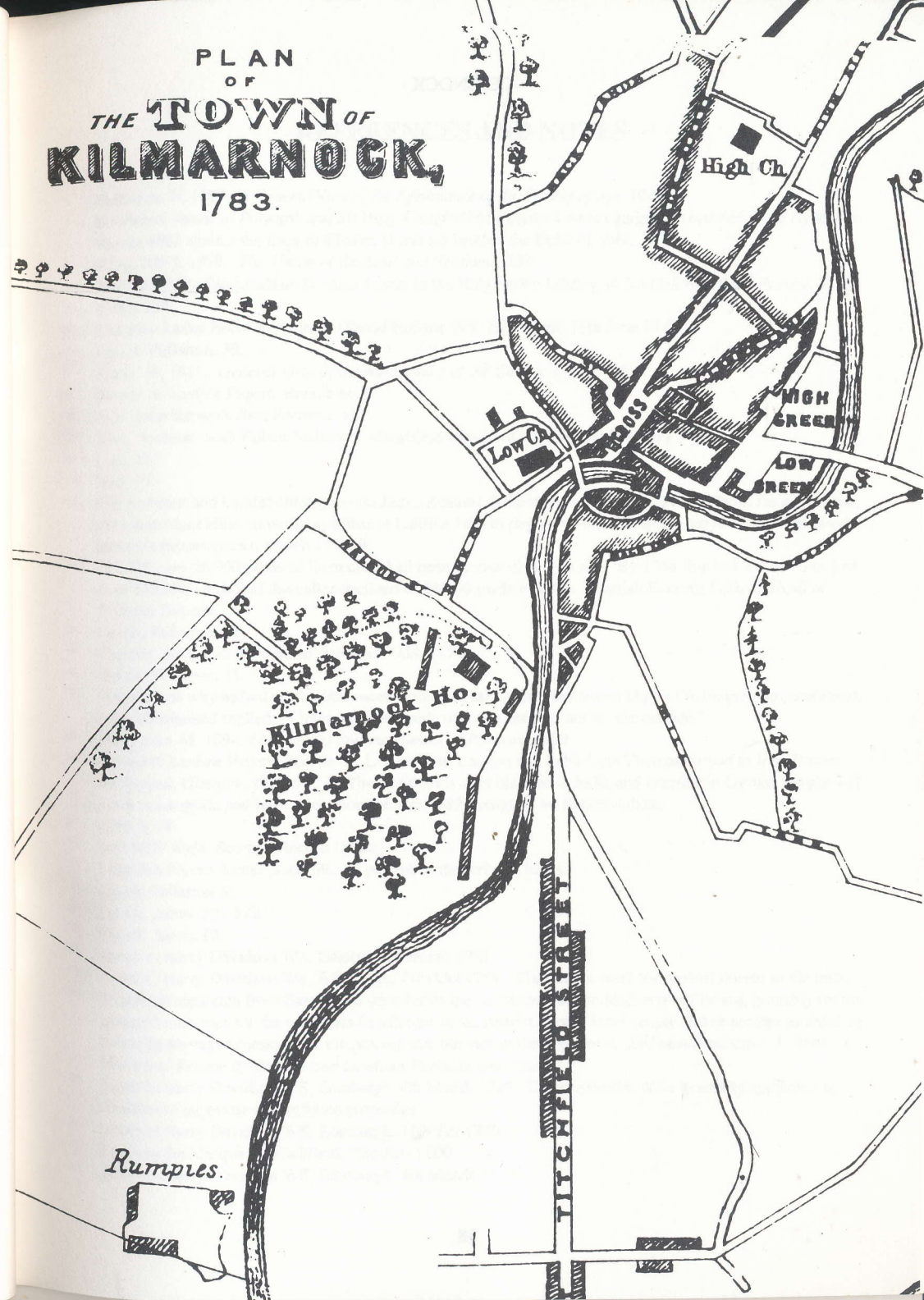


have brought its rewards. Before the end of the century he had purchased the small estate of Rodinghead in Mauchline parish from his employers, the guardians of the Countess of Loudoun. In 1802 he became one of the original partners of the Kilmarnock Bank and within a few years had relinquished all his factorial posts.<sup>153</sup>

The Campbells of Cessnock and the Humes of Marchmont had not gained from the vast potential in natural resources of their lands. Through marriage to Miss Henrietta Scott the Duke of Portland secured these and built on the safe foundations laid down by her factor. George Douglas's letter books record the wide sweep and attention to detail of good estate management. The Portland estates set off on their successful course of development during the first half of the 19th century in land, minerals, manufacturing, transport and harbours from which a large extent of Ayrshire greatly benefited.

Now only the family names of Bentinck, Henrietta, Titchfield, Portland and Welbeck in the streets and roads of Galston, Kilmarnock and Troon, tell of their passage across the scene. No such commemoration marks their factor's work on their behalf. Only the impact he made on the economic life of the county remains and the subsequent reverberations from his incisive contribution.

PLAN  
OF  
**THE TOWN OF  
KILMARNOCK,**  
1783.





## REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 Fullarton, W. 1793. *A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Ayr*, 10-11.
- 2 Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth and Sir Hugh Campbell of Cessnock were charged accessories to the Ryehouse Plot in 1682 against the lives of Charles II and his brother the Duke of York.
- 3 Riley, P.W.J. 1978. *The Union of England and Scotland*, 337.
- 4 Rae, T.I. 1970. The Loudoun Scottish Papers in the Huntingdon Library, in *Scottish Historical Review*, XLIX (148), 228.
- 5 Loudoun Letter Book 59. Letter to David Erskine WS, Edinburgh, 16th June 1788.
- 6 Op cit. Fullarton, 59.
- 7 Aiton, W. 1811. *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Ayr*, 425.
- 8 Brown of Lanfine Papers, Bundle 66.
- 9 Ibid. John Brown's *Recollections*, 151.
- 10 Ibid, "Account with Robert Wilson of Mauchline who gave out flax, 1st February 1753".
- 11 Ibid, 12.
- 12 Ibid, 15.
- 13 The architect and builder employed was James Armour, father-in-law to Robert Burns. "With James Armour, mason in Mauchline, to build my house at Lanfine I am to pay thirty-three shillings per rood of mason work" Brown's *Recollections*. March 1772, 9.
- 14 In 1728 over 26,000 yards of linen cloth had been produced in Ayrshire. By 1758 this had increased to just over 139,000 yards and thereafter declined to 54,000 yards in 1788. Scottish Records Office, Board of Trustees Reports.
- 15 Op cit, Fullarton, 78.
- 16 *The Old Statistical Account of Scotland (OSA)*, 1791, 2, 76.
- 17 Op cit, Fullarton, 11.
- 18 When asked why he had used rubble-work instead of ashlar for Marchmont House (William Adam, architect), Lord Marchmont replied, "I intend to live inside of my house and not on the outside."
- 19 Warrender, M. 1894. *Marchmont and the Humes of Polwarth*, 100
- 20 Brown of Lanfine Papers, Bundle 61, Letters from London and India from Thomas Brown to John Brown, Bellsmynd, Glasgow, 1750-54. Dr Thomas Brown after his time in India and practice in London bought 171 acres at Langside and built a mansion there in 1782, designed by Robert Adam.
- 21 OSA, 2, 78.
- 22 Ref. RHP 4088, Scottish Record Office.
- 23 Loudoun Papers, Letter Book 59. At present in the writer's hands.
- 24 Op cit, Fullarton, 9.
- 25 Op cit, Aiton, 521-522.
- 26 Op cit, Aiton, 82.
- 27 Letter to Harry Davidson WS, Edinburgh, 6th Jan 1791.
- 28 Letter to Harry Davidson WS, Edinburgh, 27th Oct 1789. The sucken were the tenants thirled to the mill.
- 29 Strathmill, upstream from Barrmill on the river Irvine, continued the production of millboard, probably for the jacquard machines for the numerous handlooms in the district. Some local people still remember as children throwing the rags necessary for the process into the vats at the paper mill. See also Macintosh, J. 1890. *Historical Review of Galston and Loudoun Parishes and Poems*.
- 30 Letter to Harry Davidson WS, Edinburgh, 4th March 1789. Commissioners were generally appointed by creditors to supervise sequestrated properties.
- 31 Letter to Harry Davidson WS, Edinburgh, 11th Jan 1789.
- 32 Letter to the Marquis of Titchfield, 25th July 1800.
- 33 Letter to Harry Davidson WS, Edinburgh, 4th March 1789.



- 34 Letter to the Marquis of Titchfield, 13th July 1800.  
 35 Ibid.  
 36 Letter to Mrs Scott, 2nd Dec 1793.  
 37 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 27th Nov 1792.  
 38 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 29th Oct 1792.  
 39 OSA, 2, 77-78.  
 40 OSA, 2, 109.  
 41 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 31st July 1794. See also Adams I.H. 1971 *Directory of Former Scottish Commonities*, Scottish Record Society, 38.  
 42 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 7th Oct 1796. See SRO PHP 4000. Plan of the grounds in Dispute between Mr James Sawyer and other Heritors of Galston Muir.  
 43 Letter to the Marquis of Titchfield, 16th March 1797.  
 44 Letter to the Marquis of Titchfield, 9th June 1797.  
 45 OSA, 8, 108.  
 46 Scottish Record Office, Estate Map for 1760. RHP 14088.  
 47 OSA, 2, 17.  
 48 OSA, 2, 79-80.  
 49 Loudoun Estate Deed Book, 30th July 1793. A barkfalt was a tanner's pit. An interesting feature of these local woodlands is that the evidence of coppicing is still obvious today, the practice having continued into recent times.  
 50 Letter to the Marquis of Titchfield, 11th July 1796.  
 51 Letter to the Marquis of Titchfield, 28th Aug 1796.  
 52 Letter to the Marquis of Titchfield, 21st Sept 1796.  
 53 Ibid.  
 54 Letter to the Marquis of Titchfield, 9th June 1797.  
 55 Letter to the Marquis of Titchfield, 12th Sept 1797.  
 56 Op cit, Aiton, 425.  
 57 Letter to H Davidson WS, Edinburgh, 3rd Dec 1787.  
 58 *The Holy Fair*, verse 7.  
 59 Price in 1791 6/- to 8/- per stone, OSA, 3, 110.  
 60 Letter to H Davidson WS, Edinburgh, 24th April 1787.  
 61 Letter to Francis Farquarson, Esquire, Accomptant, Edinburgh, 10th Feb 1794.  
 62 Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville, 1742-1811, held various ministries under William Pitt from 1783 to 1801 and under the system of patronage could offer posts and perquisites to friends, relatives and political followers. He became known as Harry the Ninth, the Uncrowned King of Scotland.  
 63 One of the estates, Barns, included the Isle of May with its lighthouse, which was sold in 1815 by Henrietta Scott when Duchess of Portland to the Commissioners of Northern Lights for £60,000. In due course all the Fife estates were alienated by the family.  
 64 The eccentric General Scott directed his daughters be disinherited if they married peers, but this was not followed. The eldest, Henrietta, as mentioned was married to the Marquis of Titchfield, later Duke of Portland; the second, Lucy, to Francis, tenth Earl of Moray; and the youngest, Johanna, to the Prime Minister George Canning and became Viscountess Canning.  
 65 Quoted by Whatley, C A, 1983. *The Finest Place for a Lasting Colliery*, AANHS, 120.  
 66 Letter to David Erskine WS, Edinburgh, 17th April 1787.  
 67 Letter to H Davidson, WS, Edinburgh, 8th May 1787.  
 68 Letter to H Davidson WS, Edinburgh, 21st May 1787. The company established an ironworks in 1787 at Muirkirk, which continued operating under different owners until 1921. William Robertson was a partner in the Dalnotter and Smithfield Ironworks near Glasgow. For a short period before 1791 the Muirkirk Company extracted iron stone at Cairnsaigh at the east of Galston parish. OSA 2, 78.

- 69 It is mentioned as a "coal-work with a fire engine" at Bridgend, i.e. Lawersbridgend in Mauchline parish. OSA 2, 110.  
 70 Norrisbank is on the east bank of the Cessnock Water and the boundary of Galston and Riccarton parishes, described on the Marchmont Estate Map as having a fine going coal seam.  
 71 Letter to D Erskine WS, Edinburgh, 22nd Oct 1787.  
 72 Letter to David Erskine WS, Edinburgh, 2nd June 1788.  
 73 Blind coal with a high carbon content gave strong heat and little flame. Coal with a higher amount of bitumen burned brightly but with less heat was known as Seeing or Candle coal.  
 74 Letter to H Davidson WS, Edinburgh, 16th July 1788.  
 75 Letter to Mrs Scott, 15th July 1789.  
 76 Letter to H Davidson WS, Edinburgh, 28th Jan 1789.  
 77 Letter to J Stainton, Carron, 16th Dec 1789.  
 78 Letter to H Davidson WS, Edinburgh, 25th Oct 1790.  
 79 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 11th June 1792.  
 80 Ibid.  
 81 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 9th October 1792.  
 82 OSA, 2, 82.  
 83 Letter to David Erskine WS, Edinburgh, 8th July 1789.  
 84 Ibid.  
 85 Letter to H Davidson WS, Edinburgh, 25th Oct 1790.  
 86 Letter to David Erskine WS, Edinburgh, 3rd Sept 1790.  
 87 Landsborough, D. 1879. *Contributions to Local History*, 76.  
 88 Letter to H Davidson WS, Edinburgh, 9th March 1791.  
 89 Letter to James Dundas WS, Edinburgh, 20th May 1791.  
 90 Letter to Mrs Scott, 16th July 1787.  
 91 Letter to Mrs Scott, 30th Sept 1787.  
 92 Letter to Mrs Scott, 2nd Nov 1787.  
 93 OSA, 2, 79; and 3, 104.  
 94 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 22nd Jan 1793.  
 95 Op cit, Aiton, 538-539.  
 96 Wilson, M, *The Ayrshire Hermit and Hurlford Sixty Years Ago*, 105-106.  
 97 Letter to the Marquis of Titchfield, 23rd Oct 1795.  
 98 Letter to the Marquis of Titchfield, 12th April 1796.  
 99 Ibid. Malting coal was the blind coal sold in great quantities to Ireland, slow burning with a high calorific content.  
 100 Ibid.  
 101 Ibid.  
 102 McClure, D. 1994. *Tolls and Tacksmen*, AANHS Monograph No. 13, 49.  
 103 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 10th Dec 1798.  
 104 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 11th March 1799.  
 105 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 3rd June 1791.  
 106 Letter to Mrs Scott, 23rd Nov 1792. The Lord Advocate from 1789 to 1801 was Robert Dundas of Arniston. The "young ladies" were Miss Scott and Lady Loudoun. Rowallan was part of the Loudoun estate.  
 107 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 22nd June 1796.  
 108 Letter to David Erskine WS, Edinburgh, 28th April 1788. The street referred to is Wallace Street.  
 109 Letter to David Erskine WS, Edinburgh, 20th Dec 1787.  
 110 Letter to David Erskine WS, Edinburgh, 3rd Sept 1790.  
 111 Letter to the Marquis of Titchfield, 16th March 1797.  
 112 Op cit, Aiton, 126.



- 113 Letter to Henry Davidson WS, Edinburgh, 12th April 1787.
- 114 Ibid.
- 115 Letter to H Davidson WS, Edinburgh, 24th April 1787.
- 116 Letter to Mrs Scott, 24th May 1788.
- 117 Letter to Mrs Scott, 15th July 1789.
- 118 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 23rd June 1796.
- 119 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 13th Sept 1796.
- 120 Edgar, A. 1886. *Old Church Life In Scotland*, Second Series, 115.
- 121 Hogg, J A, 1909. *History of Galston Parish Church*, 42.
- 122 Op cit, Edgar, 61.
- 123 Letter to David Erskine WS, Edinburgh, 29th Oct 1788.
- 124 Ibid.
- 125 Letter to the Marquis of Titchfield, 25th Dec 1799.
- 126 Logue, K J. 1979. *Popular Disturbances in Scotland 1780-1815*, 32-33 and 204-205.
- 127 Letter to John Hunter WS, Edinburgh, 23rd Sept 1790.
- 128 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 18th Aug 1796.
- 129 Ibid.
- 130 John Wallace, a handloom weaving agent, played a leading part in all the agitations for reform up until the Reform Act of 1832, and kept a diary recording political and social events of the period in and around Galston.
- 131 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 23rd April 1794.
- 132 Letter to Lord Titchfield, 25th Oct 1797.
- 133 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 15th June 1798.
- 134 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 19th March 1799.
- 135 John Wilson WS, Procurator Fiscal and Town Clerk of Glasgow, died 1805.
- 136 At Loudoun Mill at Newmilns the property lay in the possession of the same family for three centuries from 1593 until the 1890s. "Deed of declaration anent the kindlie tack of the mylne of Newmylnes, 20th February 1593", to James and Janet Loudoun.
- 137 Op cit, Fullarton, 72.
- 138 John, fourth Earl and James, fifth Earl.
- 139 Letter to John Hunter WS, Edinburgh, 16th Feb 1789.
- 140 Ibid.
- 141 Letter to Miss Scott, 30th April 1795.
- 142 Letter to the Marquis of Titchfield, 8th Aug 1796.
- 143 Ibid.
- 144 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 29th Oct 1792. The use of Commissioners here is synonymous with Tutors or Guardians.
- 145 Ibid, 29th Oct 1792.
- 146 Ibid.
- 147 Hatton House in Midlothian.
- 148 Letter to James Walker WS, Edinburgh, 29th Oct 1792.
- 149 Letter to John Hunter WS, Edinburgh, 11th Dec. 1799. He was law agent for the Loudoun estate.
- 150 Ibid.
- 151 Ibid. Gavin Hamilton, as well as being the Loudoun estate lawyer, rented the farm of Mossgiel from the Earl of Loudoun and sub-let it to Burns. He was also instrumental in presenting the poet to others in Newmilns, including the Rev Dr George Lawrie who introduced Burns to the Edinburgh literati and saved him from his West Indies adventure.
- 152 Johnston, T. 1920. *The History of the Working Classes of Scotland*, 241.
- 153 Shaw, J E, 1953. *Ayrshire 1745-1950*, 251.



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