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Contributions for the Autumn 1996 issue of *Ayrshire Notes* should be sent before the end of August to Dr John Strawhorn, 51 Connel Crescent, Mauchline, KA5 5AU. Member Societies should send information about their activities to Rob Close at the address below.

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A LOUDOUN LETTER BOOK

by James Mair

One of the personal Letter Books of John 4th Earl of Loudoun recently came to hand. It was Letter Book Number 3 and concerned the major part of the year 1751. Other books might deal with more stirring times in his career; as it is, it still provides many insights into the character of this remarkable man. It is a small leather-bound pocket volume with a brass clip, 18x13 cm, with 186 pages of minute and almost indecipherable writing in fading red and blue inks. It contains most if not all of the letters sent and received by the Earl between April 22nd and December 24th 1751, beginning in London and finishing on his return there after a sojourn in Scotland.

The topics touch on his military life, estate business, politics and patronage and many other details of the experiences of a man of affairs and influence. These he recorded conscientiously, showing him to be a man of meticulous care and a breadth of outlook. Much of the gossip in his letters is intriguing, but, lacking information on many of the persons involved it mainly remains so. The difficulty of interpretation is increased as the gossip is mostly contained in letters to ladies to whom, and to them only, initials alone are given.

The salient facts of his life are well known. He was born in 1705, when his father was helping to negotiate the Treaty of Union. He came into his inheritance in 1731 and was a representative peer for forty-seven years. At the commencement of the Jacobite Rising he was Adjutant-General to Sir John Cope and after the ignominy of Prestonpans he raised a Highland regiment which served with various fortunes for the rest of the campaign. He became Governor of Virginia in 1756 and Commander-in-Chief of British forces in North America. He also commanded troops in Portugal in 1762 and was appointed Governor of Edinburgh Castle. He died at Loudoun Castle in 1782, aged seventy-seven.

Soon after succeeding to his estates, he began a life-long endeavour in agricultural improvements and the introduction of trees, plants and vegetables unfamiliar to the country. His military travels widened his knowledge of rural economy and he was not above the task of following up unsolicited information on some strange species.

"Written London December 24th 1751. To the Reverend Mr Rand of Maidstone, Kent. This comes to beg a favour of you... 'Tis to get some Warmouth Pine Seed, called by some New England Pine, from Sir -- Hatchbols. If he allows the gardener to dispose of it, let me have several pounds of it. I shall not grudge on price and shall pay the money where you direct."

His army connections often assisted in his search for suitable specimens. "Written London December 12th. To Sir John Whiteford [in Ireland]. I should be very happy if I could get a barrel of the Wise Potatoes and another of the Castone

Potatoes that were clean and unmixed with other kinds. I know as I had some of the first last year from Captain Johnson, but they were not clean and other kinds were mixed. But if you have any at your Back Quarters you may get them from there and I will grudge no expense. But the most material part of the commission is Bean Stalks... I know they will be dear, but I would be infinitely obliged if you could get me 1000. If that number is not to be had, I will take what I can get. You will be so good as to order Captain Johnson to pay the expense whatever it is and send them to Irvine to the care of Mr Davidson, Postmaster there."

Much of the correspondence is conducted with his factor James Arnot. His attitude to tenant farmers seemed to be one which invited cooperation rather than imposing his will. William Aiton describes how Earl John often brought together the tenants on the estate and conversed with them on rural affairs.¹ On one occasion James Arnot reported that John Dykes in Gilfoot would not sign his lease, declaring that his multure of 36 bolls was too high and "he told me he had nothing to do with me, it was only with your Lordship." The Earl replied that the terms were in his book "written before him and read to him. I see he had been foolish, but I am not sorry for it and I shall get it more to mind when I come down."²

Another of his most frequent correspondents was his mother Lady Loudoun, living at Sorn Castle, equally absorbed in her garden there and in the estate. This wise and accomplished lady, enthusiastic as her son for agricultural improvement, managed the Sorn estate for almost half a century until her death in 1779 in her hundredth year. Letters to her largely dealt with questions of agriculture and forestry, but also had passages on family matters, household pets and society gossip. He mentioned that "Gip is past her time and no whelps, afraid she never will," and in the letter of July 16th he has to wait in London "for the King of Corsica's marriage to the daughter of Edmiston of Ednam... she is very happy on being a queen and to be the mother of kings."

Over the years a constant supply of seeds and of native and exotic plants, trees and vegetables is sent to Loudoun and Sorn. In the same letter he is disappointed that "the former seeds did not rise, particularly the Larix and American Chestnut. I have enquired about the Siberian Ceders. They may still rise next year therefore do not let them be disturbed..." Three days later his mind is on vegetables, cucumber, lettuce and Russian cabbage, considering cabbage seed from Archangel more suitable for the home area.

Flowers also figure in the correspondence. "I have got from the Duke of Argyle some of the seed of the Perennial Flox. I send parts in this as I will not venture all in one packet. I now give you particular directions about sowing it."³ Aiton mentions that the Earl introduced into Ayrshire about the middle of the 18th century the raising of saughs (for making hoops) in damp marshy ground.⁴ This is borne out in the same letter to the Earl's mother: "I am to have saughs of Lincolnshire Fens... I find they plant Oziers, which is our Water Willow, on moss for the basket makers."

As well as the trees already mentioned and the more common native species, such as oak, beech, ash and elm, many more unusual trees were tried out and a variety of fruit trees introduced. He assiduously collected and sent home from places where his military career carried him, previously in Flanders and later in North America and Portugal. Loudoun woods still bear witness to his dedication in this field and within half a century the Browns of Lanfine began to duplicate his efforts on the other flank of the Irvine Valley. In addition Earl John was early on the scene, perhaps first in the area, in sowing new kinds of vegetables, notably turnips and carrots, while mention is made of a strawberry bush in blossom in December that year at Sorn.

He was often asked to exercise his powers of patronage in civil as well as military affairs. A persuasive request came from an old soldier who had "been employed as a painter at Loudoun, was a soldier with Whitham's regiment, which is now in Scotland commanded by L. G. Skelton, wants to be put into Chelsea [Hospital] or otherwise provided for."⁵ As Governor of Stirling Castle the Earl received a regular report and sick list. "In obedience to your Lordship I have given the Return of the Invalids. There is one John Menteith, No 17, who is yet fit and willing to do duty. He was afflicted with spitting blood..."

No	Name	Age	Service	Invalid.
1	Daniel Grant	44	22	Lame, palsied. Wounded in Ireland by a mob.
2	Daniel Muir	66	30	Wounded at Malplacket. Worn away.
3	Charles Morgan	66	46	Wounded at Sheriff Moor. Palsied.
4	Thomas Owen	75	48	Wounded at Barcelona and Laredo. Blind.
5	John Manners	61	30	Lame and worn away.
6	James Sheppard	65	44	Wounded at Kenawa. Lame
7	Ro. Train	58	11	Wounded at Prestonpans. Lame.
8	Cha. Petrie	69	45	Wounded at Brechin.
9	Pat Finlayson	72	41	Worn away.
10	Adam Archibald	63	34	Lame and worn away.
11	Will McKie	70	40	Worn away.
12	Ro. Brodie	74	49	Wounded at Romalie and Malplacket. Rupture.
13	Ric. Thornby	64	35	Lame and worn away.
14	Ro. Livingstone	64	42	Worn away.
15	Will Lamb	64	50	Wounded at Marins Deat. Worn away.
16	Rich. Collier	57	26	Deaf. Not right in his judgment.
17	Jo. Menteith	60	44	Gravel and spitting blood, but ready to do duty.
18	Will Kirkland	73	53	Blind and worn away." ⁶

Regardless of earlier acts of valour, it seemed the old soldiers of the garrison at that time did not die, they only faded away. If they had served at Culloden, all but one would have been in their fifties or sixties, but this would have given no advantage to the Jacobite army for it also had its proportion of ancients.⁷

In the short period covered by the letter book there were numerous appeals for help and support, including one from an anxious mother whose son apparently had moved to London. "You will favour Willy with your protection and good advice, which I am afraid he stands much in need of. I shall order him to come to you when he arrives in London and to be directed by you in every thing. I rely on your goodness of which I have had so many proofs."⁸

It was not only poor soldiers who experienced insecurity in the 18th century. Many people from the professional classes could fall into dire circumstances as in this instance. "Tho I am not acquainted with your Lordship, yet my brother was both in General Campbell's family and in Flanders as Chaplain of the Grays, I think it is my duty to acquaint your Lordship of his death... and to mention his poor distressed widow and six fatherless children the oldest not above eleven years of age."⁹ Once again the Earl promptly came to a petitioner's assistance and at no time in the correspondence hesitated to do so. "I have this minute received the enclosed from Mr Bannatyne and, as it may be of use to your Lordship, have sent it to you. The Regiment has always had Presbyterians appointed by the King on the Colonel's recommendation. When this man was appointed the Secretary of War made a struggle. I hope your Lordship will give orders for the proper certificates being made out that the widow may get the pension. She is a natural daughter of Sir James Campbell."¹⁰

A number of other appeals were made to his generosity. One person with fluency in languages applied to be his secretary when he was to be appointed Governor of Jamaica, while a gentleman from Yarmouth asked the Earl to give some guidance to his nephew, a Mr John Manning, who was studying at Edinburgh. This appeal arrived with the gift of some barrels of herrings and the Earl replied that he had informed himself "both as to his capacity for the studies he is following and his application to them... Some people thought Dr Stevenson had advised him to follow too many Colleges at once, but I took it on me to approve his continuing. My reason for which was that as at present he gives great application. If we should leave him too much leisure time there is a danger that he may get a taste for pleasure and that would presently put an end to his studies."¹¹ Non-conformists denied access to Oxford and Cambridge trooped up to Scotland to attend her universities, especially to the renowned medical schools, but the hazards facing students in their extra-mural activities seemed to be as enticing and difficult to overcome then as now.

After the Jacobite rising of 1745/6 an Act was passed "for the more effectual disarming of the Highlands". Weapons were necessary equipment in civilian life for hunting and providing subsistence. Requests were made at times to obtain

licences to carry arms, two in this correspondence from MacIntosh of MacIntosh. Earl John, noted for his leniency in the aftermath of the '45 Rising, was regarded as a good advocate on behalf of some Highland petitioners.

There seemed to be no end to claims on his good nature. On his return journey to London to attend Parliament, he was given custody of two children to accompany him all the way. "I write on the 25th from Anwick, which morning I set out at five and have travelled on ever since. I only stopt twice to drink tea and once to eat. I have only come 11 stages which makes 171 miles, tho I have been on [the road] two days and one night. My little companions are very tired though they behaved very well. As soon as they came in and saw a bed, they had a game of Romps and are now asleep."¹²

All of the Earl's diplomacy was required by the end of the year over the presentation of a new minister for Sorn Parish. He had apparently offended his mother when he writes "Your Ladyship may be sure I should not have meddled except circumstances had changed and I should have acquainted your Ladyship with my motives for so doing."¹³ Rev. William Steele had demitted the charge in October 1751, and there was no rush to replace him. During long vacancies heritors would happily pocket the stipends and could avoid the expense of repairing kirk, manse and outbuildings which could help to attract a suitable new minister.

The reluctant gentry in this instance seemed to be Dr John Stevens of Dalgain and Mr Alan Whitefoord of Ballochmyle, as the letter adds that "both these gentlemen have all along had an inclination to delay the settlement... They are afraid of a demand in the Sorn for harder reparations of the house and newbuilding the offices and therefore they are for Vacancy Sleepings to answer their demands. I am far from sure that they are now inclinable to come into Affleck's plan for sinking the parish into the neighbouring ones for fear of harder augmentations."¹⁴

The essential fairness and sagacity of the Earl emerges in his vindication to his mother. "Your Ladyship knows I never have given a presentation and have always settled those affairs with the Presbytry. If within the half year, this is allowed to me by law, I make a compliment as if I allow that time to choose him. Their time commences and if they agree to the man I have a mind for, they make me a compliment. Now of the two I think it more pleasant to do favours than to receive them."¹⁵ Lay patrons had six months to present. After that period presbyteries could advance their candidate. Mr James Connell was ordained on the 26th October 1752, after a vacancy lasting twelve months, a short period on average when in the years 1751/52 Auchinleck (Affleck) was lacking a shepherd for sixteen months and neighbouring Cumnock was without a spiritual guide for twenty-two.¹⁶

Earl John's portrait in Highland dress to be seen latterly at Dumfries House displays a fine-looking gentleman who must have had many admirers, but he remained a bachelor and died unmarried at Loudoun Castle in 1782. Some entries in his letter book exhibit a whimsical approach to the question of marriage. "You

see I am not changed. I will promise whenever I see three good wives, I will begin to think of matrimony."¹⁷ And later: "Who could believe that so genteel a thing as a Beautiful Maid could ever degenerate into what we call a Termagant Wife... But as for the Marriage Lottery, I have never ventured to bid for a ticket from what Solomon says that he had hardly found one Prize in a thousand, and nobody ever dealt deeper in tickets than he did."¹⁸

In 1751 he was still in his prime, expecting the Governorship of Jamaica and soon to become Commander-in-Chief in North America. He was writing a number of affectionate letters to ladies, passing on news and gossip and providing advice. To one lady in particular he was sending very frank love-letters and receiving equally candid ones in return. Between leaving London in the summer and returning in December, a series of letters to R.E. tells of a close relationship and gives an insight into the style of aristocratic liaison in the 18th century.

He had known the lady for a number of years,¹⁹ and soon after they both left town, he was declaring "You cannot imagine how long and disagreeable it is to be without you."²⁰ He received what must have been a momentous reply. "I wrote the day after yours arrived on the Friday. I told you in that I was hardly alive. The journey fatigued me to death and shook me quite to pieces. I continued in very great pain and quite out of order, so that on Sunday night they were obliged to send for a man-midwife, about twenty miles off, and I miscarried on Monday evening of a daughter... I have sat up these three or four days and hope to get out of the room in a week more. My sister has taken great care of me, but at the same time was extremely angry with me for coming so long a journey in my condition."²¹

His response seemed very unsympathetic. "Your illness and miscarriage both, which I am very sorry for, but if the mother is well we may make up the other."²² But meantime her health had deteriorated, although she was able to say "I see in last Monday's paper that you are to be made Governor of Jamaica. You must excuse me if I wish from all my heart that it may not be true. I have often heard it is a very wild place and will agree with very few European constitutions. Therefore I wish you may not get it. I can say no more as I am not well, but let me hear all about it. God bless you, I am ever etc."²³

From this point letters seem to have gone astray for a while and the Earl took the step of enquiring into the lack of information by writing to her relations. It appears that his liaison with the lady was not wholly welcome to her family. The next letter gives the only clue, at least in this notebook, to the identity of the lady in question and shows his concern for her welfare. "Your Sister-in-Law left me in Prive Garden on the evening of the 7th [August?] and went by water to the Temple Stairs in order to go out of town with you last night, from which time I have heard nothing of her and am in the greatest anxiety about her as I think it could be no slight accident could prevent her writing so long... Nothing but necessity shall oblige me to break through the rules you have laid down, but I must know what is become of her. At all events

I shall not sign this, as I believe you will not choose I should, and you can have no doubt of whom it comes from. I beg leave to offer my complements to Mrs Harris. I am with great regard. The enclosed is the fifth letter I have written her."²⁴

Soon all is well again and R.E. has recovered her spirits, writing "I hope you will think of a couple of Lottery Tickets, for it is in my head we shall get at least one of the £10,000."²⁵ They obviously could not resist sharing a stake in the old style lottery, so generally popular until finally banned as a demoralising influence in 1826.

The missing letters and the misunderstanding arising from their delay is explained early in the following month when she remarks that the Earl's first letter had gone "to Huntingdonshire, occasioned by your bad writing... You wrote Ramsey instead of Romsey [Kent]."²⁶ It was then approaching the end of the year 1751 with the meeting of Parliament due and the winter season already in progress with the return of the gentry to the metropolis. Both were looking forward to these events.

Her penultimate letter describes her feelings and the outspoken nature of their relationship. "I am extremely glad you are disappointed about Jamaica, but wish from my heart you may get as good a thing without leaving your own country... I am now quite recovered. I shall stay here till I ride north, when I hope to have the happiness of meeting you in town, for the only joy I have is being with you."²⁷ Short of access to successive letter books, further information on the relationship between John 4th Earl of Loudoun and R.E. is lacking.

Letter Book 3 remains in the possession of Mrs Madeleine Kerr, younger daughter of the late Lady Jean Campbell of Loudoun. Most of the Loudoun papers lie in the archives of the Marquess of Bute at Mountstuart House, Rothesay and Dumfries House, Cumnock. Additional material is lodged in the Huntington Library, California and the Houghton Library, Harvard University. Other items are dispersed elsewhere, including the archives of Strathclyde Regional and Kilmarnock and Loudoun District Councils. It is regrettable that the papers of this important Ayrshire family and of the illustrious 4th Earl are so widely scattered, but at least most of them still exist, having escaped the disastrous fire at Loudoun Castle in 1941.

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2. To James Arnot at Loudoun from London, April 30th.
3. To Lady Loudoun at Sorn from London, December 7th.
4. Aiton, p340.
5. From Peter Higgins, Morpeth, December 2nd, to Lord Loudoun in London.

6. From Ensign George Munro, Stirling, September 25th, to Lord Loudoun.
7. *The Prisoners of the '45*, Scottish History Society, 1928, pp 228-232: Heights and Ages of Prisoners.
8. From Mrs E Dalrymple, Edinburgh, December 5th.
9. From Mr Charles Bannatyne, Ayr, December 14th.
10. To the Earl of Rothes from Lord Loudoun, December 23rd.
11. To Mr John Morse of Yarmouth, December 24th.
12. To Lady Loudoun at Sorn, November 27th.
13. To Lady Loudoun at Sorn, December 24th.
14. *ibid.*
15. *ibid.*
16. Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, 1868, vol. 2, pp97, 104, 140.
17. To B.B., September 5th.
18. To P., from Loudoun, November 3rd.
19. As mentioned in letter to R.E., from Loudoun Castle, October 13th.
20. To R.E., August 15th.
21. From R.E., Shinfield, August 22nd.
22. To R.E., September 3rd.
23. From R.E., Shinfield, August 29th.
24. To Mr David Harris, no date and unsigned.
25. From R.E., Shinfield, September 19th.
26. From R.E., Shinfield, October 4th.
27. *ibid.*

COCK-FIGHTING IN AYR

by Rob Close

On Wednesday 23 March 1803, the Aberdeen Journal reported that "the grand main of cocks between the Hon Mr Maule and Mr Oswald of Auchencruive commenced on Monday se'enight and terminated on Saturday. The honourable gentleman was defeated, with great loss, Mr Oswald gaining the main four battles, and also the byes, by one." The venue for this event is not specifically stated, though was presumably in Aberdeen, but the paper goes on to allude to contemporary concerns about sheep worrying by dogs, and to suggest that Mr Hallion convert his cockpit into a dogpit, and to provide more worthwhile amusement for "our cocking gentry".

Evidence that 10 years earlier cock-fighting took place in Ayr, and at a considerable remove on the social scale from George Oswald, survives in the records of the Ayr Burgh Court'. On 16 March 1792, William Graham, son of Benjamin Graham, innkeeper in Ayr, brought a charge of assault against Thomas Nisbet, the son of Thomas Nisbet, smith, and also against Janet Watt, wife of the elder Nisbet and mother of the younger. From the charge and the evidence heard by the court, we learn that both William Graham and Thomas Nisbet junior, both of whom must have been 14 or 15 years old, were present at a cock-fight taking place in a yard in the Townhead of Ayr belonging to Andrew Wales, labourer. Of the two cocks fighting one belonged to William Graham, the other to young Thomas Nisbet's grandmother. During the course of the contest Nisbet kicked at Graham's bird: Graham in return pushed him. At this point this 'childish quarrel', as the presiding bailie termed it in his summing up, over-reached itself: young Nisbet "seized a large stone or brick, and threw it with all his vigour" at Graham, striking him "on the left side of the head, behind the ear, and caused him fall flat upon the ground, where he lay for some time to all appearance dead or motionless, and while lying in this state, the foresaid Janet Watt came running from her own house up the yard, with a stick in her hand, and in a furious manner struck [him] several times over the body, swearing that she would make him rise." Graham was eventually carried home, where he was examined and bled by James Bone, surgeon: he was "very ill or faintish" through the night, and remained in a "lingering state" for some days before recovering.

While the case is, in itself, not especially exciting or dramatic, it helps us to build a picture of life for the common populace of Ayr at that period. It confirms that cock-fighting did take place in Ayr, more specifically in that land apart, the Townhead, and, we may infer, frequently enough for a cock-fight not to be regarded as anything but a commonplace occurrence. We learn that bleeding was considered the proper

cure(?) for severe bruising about the head and may, in retrospect, consider that the cure may have been a contributory factor to young William Graham's lingering state. We learn a little about the domestic arrangements, recreations and genealogy of the Nisbet family, and from the examination of witnesses a little about themselves; the surgeon, James Bone, for instance, gives his age as 40, and one James Downie, described as "servant to Benjamin Graham", is 16.

The Court found young Thomas Nisbet guilty, and he was fined 20 shillings; insofar as her thrashings with her stick had not injured William Graham, Janet Watt was absolved [i.e. absolved]. This verdict was appealed against to the next Ayr Circuit Court of Justiciary: the outcome of the appeal is presumably in the records of that court in the Scottish Record Office.

1 Kyle and Carrick District Libraries, B6/35/32, 1793/39.

AANHS MEETS IN CARNEGIE LIBRARY

Will those readers who are not members of the AANHS (who are welcomed at its meetings) please note that *all* of its regular winter lectures will in future be in the Carnegie Library, Ayr.

The meetings on the *second* Thursdays of the month, which until 1995 had taken place in Ayr Academy, have already moved to the Reference Section of the Carnegie Library. This has a ramped approach from Garden Street, which helps the not-so-sprightly, and ample car parking in the (free) multi-storey park in Cross Street. From October 1997 the meetings on the *fourth* Thursdays will also move there from the Loudoun Hall, which with all its charms is rather difficult of access.

THE COUNCIL FOR SCOTTISH ARCHAEOLOGY

Both the AFHS and the AANHS are affiliated to the Council for Scottish Archaeology (CSA), a national body which "seeks to promote informed opinion concerning the study and conservation of Scotland's archaeological heritage and brings together individuals, societies and organisations in order to do so". It seeks to do this by:

- * advancing the **education** of the public concerning Scotland's archaeological heritage.
- * encouraging the better **identification and conservation** of material evidence of past human activity in Scotland.
- * pressing for the adoption of improved policies for the **presentation, management and interpretation** of Scotland's archaeological heritage.
- * facilitating **liaison** between statutory bodies, archaeological societies, other appropriate groups, organisations and the general public.

One of its prime concerns at the moment is that the impending changes in local government should not put an end to the good work which has been done by the Strathclyde Region's archaeological service. Both AFHS and AANHS have themselves made strong representations to the three new Ayrshire Councils on this subject, and it is cheering to read in the CSA's journal *Scottish Archaeological News*:

"Strathclyde:

At the time of writing [Spring 1996] there is reasonable confidence that the archaeology team currently in place (minus its head) will be maintained through a system of joint subscription by the new councils. That, is, four archaeologists will continue to cover the area of old Strathclyde at a cost shared between the new authorities. The only doubt remains in Argyll and Bute, where a final commitment has been hard to obtain."

Another of CSA's publications is its annual *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*, which aims (quite successfully) to report every significant piece of fieldwork in the country. For instance, the most recent issue, for 1995, mentions the AANHS exploration of the site of the former Drongan Pottery, amongst many hundreds more.

Whilst every individual archaeological society cherishes its independence, it is essential for us to be aware of events on the national scale, and to act together to influence them through such bodies as CSA. Your committees are well aware of this, and try to make sure that local concerns are understood and acted on.

GAS WORKS IN AYRSHIRE

One of the most interesting of the talks given at the Ayrshire Federation of Historical Society's 1995 Conference, "Driving Forces" was that by Bob Winn on the development of the gas industry in Scotland. The early gas industry in Scotland has not yet been fully investigated, and we are grateful to Bob, and to James Keith, for allowing us to include this comprehensive list of gas works in Ayrshire, which we hope will inspire researchers to go off and discover more about these ventures. Ayrshire, after all, through William Murdoch, has a very particular place in the history of gas in Scotland. I have added a few references from my own files, but the core of the information is that compiled by James Keith, and presented by him in "In Search of Old Gas Works" to the Scottish Section of the Institution of Gas Engineers in January 1989.

LOCATION	DATE	YEARS IN PRODUCTION
Ardrossan	1900 - 1960	60
Auchinleck ¹	1857 - 1959	102
Ayr ²	1826 - 1962	136
Beith ³	1832 - 1950	118
Cumnock ⁴	1837 - 1958	121
Dalry	1837 - 1956	119
Darvel	1853 - 1958	105
Dunlop	1877 - 1934	57
Galston ⁵	1843 - 1904	61
Girvan ⁶	1840 - 1972	132
Irvine	1838 - 1964	126
Kilbirnie	1840 - 1952	112
Kilmarnock	1901 - 1964	63
Kilwinning	1835 - 1956	121
Largs	1888 - 1962	74
Maybole	1834 - 1969	135
Muirkirk	1859 - 1977	118
New Cumnock	1907 - 1959	52
Newmilns	1873 - 1958	85

Newton upon Ayr	1845 - 1964	119
Saltcoats	1836 - 1960	124
Skelmorlie(and Wemyss Bay)	1874 - 1907	33
Stevenston	1899 - 1953	54
Stewarton	1832 - 1955	123
Troon	1845 - 1961	116
West Kilbride	1858 - 1951	93

Rob Close

1 An advertisement seeking contractors to build a gas works in Auchinleck appears in the *Ardrossan & Saltcoats Herald* for 16 May 1857.

2 The following notice appears in the *Ayr Advertiser*, 8 April 1875: "Died, 1st April 1875, at the Gas Works, Hanley, John Haswell, gas manager, 67. Deceased will be remembered by many as the first lessee of the Ayr Gas Works after they were acquired by the late Captain McTaggart of Seafeld from the British Gas Light Co., by whom they were originally erected." A letter, signed "A Merchant" in the *Ayrshire Magnet* of February 1826 suggests that not every one in Ayr was happy with the British Gas Light Co: "The profits accruing to individuals by embarking in gas light establishments being so well known to the people of Scotland, it is a matter of surprise to every person visiting Ayr that our townsmen have not followed the example of our neighbours of Kilmarnock, Paisley and Glasgow; particularly when it is well known that the individual who first applied coal gas for the purpose of illumination is a native of this county. Surely it is not for want of capital that the people of Ayr did not embark in the speculation in their own account. Some how or other a general idea seems to have prevailed that the erection of a work for this purpose and the manufacture of gas were matters of utmost difficulty. This however is not the case, as it is well ascertained that any person possessed of a very little chemistry and mechanical knowledge is quite able to manage the above process: besides, plans and directions can be obtained from the superintendents of gas works already established on the best principles for a mere trifle. Had this been sooner known there certainly would have been no necessity for leaving ourselves to the mercy of an English company for this modern convenience of life. Another reason may also have operated against our townsmen in the speculation: Ayr as is well known like other very old towns is built in an irregular detached and straggling manner; to light the outskirts of such a town would require so much pipe as to render it exceedingly expensive and altogether unprofitable. But as most of the shops lie in that line of street commencing at Wallacetown, down the main street, and up the

Sandgate and through the New-market Street, it occurs to me that it would be a profitable speculation for the merchants and others, whose property lie in that line, to form a company in small shares for a private gas work to light that part of the town, which no doubt would pay handsomely. In this circuit you would want the public lamps, and the outskirts of the town, but in my opinion they are not very enviable. You may therefore leave them without any grudge to be lighted by the London company. I am certain convenient ground for the erection of the work could be got at several places on the east side of the main street, at a moderate rate. I hope the merchants and others concerned will see the propriety of having an early meeting to discuss the above, which I have no doubt would lead to the immediate erection of such works as I recommend."

3 The Files of Dissolved Companies quote a formation date of 1856 for the Beith gas undertaking. However *Hastings Directory* (1880) quotes 1821. Both the *Hazel Directory* (1900) and *Watson & Viney's Directory* of 1900 quote 1832. *Heywood's Directory* (1930) says 1856, while *Slater's Directory* shows that Beith Gas Works was in existence by 1852. It appears that the contract of co-partnery of 1832 had expired, and a new one dated 1856 was in force at the time of registration under the Companies Act.

4 An advertisement seeking contractors to build a gas works in Cumnock appears in the *Ayr Advertiser* of 12 January 1837.

5 In Titchfield Street. In 1879 the manager was John Stevenson.

6 The foundation stone was laid on 9 June 1841 (*Ayr Advertiser* 15 June 1841). The *Ayr Advertiser* of 17 October 1912 reported that a new gasometer, designed by Messrs W & C Fairweather of Kilmarnock, and built by Dempster & Co of Elland, West Yorkshire, had been formally opened the previous day. On 26 February 1914 the *Ayr Advertiser* reported that the gas works were to be extended.

FINDING OUT ABOUT AYRSHIRE

(9) Robert Burns

For local historians (and others) the career of our country's most celebrated native deserves investigation, especially in this year when the bi-centenary of his death is being so widely commemorated.

James Currie who was commissioned to write the first official biography of Robert Burns produced a four volume work in 1800, which is still worth looking at. He collected reminiscences from a number of people who had known the poet personally. But, believing that a man of genius must always have compensating flaws of character, he relied on hearsay and gossip to allege that Burns was "perpetually stimulated by alcohol" and suffered from "other pollutions". Burns suffered further at the hands of later writers like R H Cromek (1808), John G Lockhart (1828), and Allan Cunningham (1834). A new departure was made by Robert Chambers (1851) who "collected new and authentic particulars from all available sources", and by William Wallace whose revised four-volume edition of 1896 remains a work of outstanding merit.

Burns' reputation was rehabilitated by authors like Rev. Hamilton Paul of Ayr (1819), William Scott Douglas (1877-79), and W E Henley and T F Henderson (1896-97), J C Dick (1908), while Sir James Crichton-Brown (1926) diagnosed Burns as dying not of alcoholism but of rheumatic endocarditis.

A new departure was marked by a series of biographies by foreign authors. The first was Auguste Angellier, *Robert Burns, La Vie et Les Oeuvres*, 1893. Hans Hecht, *Robert Burns, Leben und Wirken*, 1919, was translated into English, 1936, now reprinted by Alloway Publishing: this remains a good short readable book. Franklin Bliss Snyder's *Life of Robert Burns*, 1932, is more difficult to lay hands on, unfortunately, for in some ways it is the best book ever written on the poet's life. Of more recent biographies, the most impressive is James Mackay's *Burns*, Mainstream, 1992. This massive work examines in meticulous detail every incident in Burns' life from his birth in Alloway in 1759 to his death in Dumfries in 1796.

When novelists have chosen to depict Burns they have annoyed some purists. Catherin Carswell's *Life of Robert Burns*, first published 1930, reprinted by Canongate 1990, is a good read, though imagination sometimes gets the better of facts. James Barke's *The Wind that shakes the Barley*, 1946, and four subsequent novels, are, by contrast, a rather romanticised account of "the life and loves of Robert Burns". Barke was a fervent admirer of Burns, and his fiction is solidly based on reliable fact.

For those requiring literary criticism, the two essential books are David Daiches, *Robert Burns*, 1950, reprinted 1994, and Thomas Crawford, *Burns, A Study of the Poems and Songs*, 1960, reprinted 1994. For Burns' works, the standard publications are *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns* ed. J De Lancey Ferguson, 2 vols, 1931, revised edition by G Ross Roy, 2 vols, 1985. James Mackay has also produced for Alloway Publishing the *Complete Poetical Works*, 1986; *The Complete Letters*, 1989; and *The Complete Wordfinder*, 1989.

For those others who are more interested in people and places than in poetry, consult Maurice Lindsay's *Burns Encyclopedia*, 1959, paperback 1995. Also, Andrew Boyle's *The Ayrshire Book of Burns Lore*, 1985, and James Mackay, *Burns Lore of Dumfries and Galloway*, 1988. The 18th century background is fully explored, in *Ayrshire at the Time of Burns*, 1959. Along with this fifth volume of the 'Ayrshire Collections' the AANHS issued *Armstrong's Map of Ayrshire*, which has required several reprints and is still available. Copies of the book are now a rarity. The most renowned AANHS publication, it enjoyed a world-wide circulation and has won mention in almost every book on Burns (and Boswell) which has been published since. Though too costly to reprint, its contents have been distilled and augmented in *The Scotland of Robert Burns*, by John Strawhorn who adds this volume (reviewed elsewhere in this issue of *Ayrshire Notes*) to the one he edited to commemorate the bicentenary of Robert Burns' birth.

THE WORST WINTER I CAN REMEMBER --(?)

We are indebted to David McClure for the following newspaper account:

Glasgow Mercury, 2/2/1796, p.39

Ayr, January 26, 1796

There was a prodigious deluge here yesterday in consequence of the highest tide ever encountered on the coast, and above twenty-four hours constant rain, which swelled the river exceedingly. The little light house was carried away entirely, the rope work houses filled of water, and hemp &c. much damaged; many families were obliged to leave their houses and remove their furniture. The damages sustained in and about Ayr will amount to several hundred pounds.

NEW BOOKS ABOUT AYRSHIRE

THE SCOTLAND OF ROBERT BURNS

by John Strawhorn

Alloway Publishing £8.50 ISBN 0 907526 67 5

Readers of *Ayrshire Notes* will need no reminding that 1996 is the 200th anniversary of the death of Robert Burns, and the cause of much celebration and reappraisal of his life and work, including the publication of a new biography, and the re-issue of AANHS publications which deal with aspects of his life. All this, and much more, is to be welcomed, focusing as it does national and international attention on Scotland in general, and Ayrshire in particular.

"May you live in interesting times" is an old Chinese curse: the period of the late 18th century through which Burns lived his short life was one of profound change and upheaval: the beginnings of what are called, in shorthand, the Industrial and Agricultural Revolutions, revolutions which affected every inhabitant of Scotland, Burns not excepted. It is clear, therefore, that a book dealing, as this one does, with the background to Burns' life is bound to have an interest, and an appeal, far beyond those concerned only with hagiography.

Dr Strawhorn leads us through the Scotland of Robert Burns in a series of chapters, commencing with Landscape 1759, concluding with Townscape 1796, and visiting, among other topics, Daily Life, Agriculture, Education and Way of Life. His unrivalled knowledge of the Ayrshire of that period allows him to draw out the salient points in each chapter, and to place Burns, and his poetry, within its context. From our vantage point 200 years on, we can see where the revolutions ultimately led: from the contemporary recollections of people such as Burns we obtain a glimpse of the insecurity and confusion of the fast-changing economy of 'interesting times'. For the historian of Ayrshire this is a useful recapitulation of the complex changes of that period, and will prove a continuing source of figures, dates and statistics.

However, the book is aimed, more specifically, at the general reader, and he or she will find it an admirable introduction to this period. The text is broken up with 40 illustrations by Christy Danielles which help to put across a feeling for the landscapes, buildings and people of Burns' time. The late 18th Century is a difficult period to write logically about: so much was happening, everything was changing, and it is not always easy to distinguish 'cause' from 'effect', or to fully understand the inter-relationships which drive the changes in town and country. John Strawhorn has managed to produce a book which consolidates, and builds on, his previous work

in this area, and which can be recommended to the general reader with an interest in the period. It will also, I can see, be of particular interest to those undertaking projects at different levels in the educational system. Perhaps among those general readers and scholars a spark will be ignited which will lead to further research into this fascinating period in Scottish history.

Rob Close

JOHN SMITH OF DALRY
Geologist, Antiquarian, and Natural Historian
Part 1 - Geology
AANHS £6 ISBN 0 950 2698 8 3

John Smith's *Prehistoric Man in Ayrshire* was published in 1895, and to mark the centenary a conference was sponsored by the AANHS who now publish the first batch of contributions from those experts who lectured at the conference.

Dr R B Wilson outlines the life of this remarkable man: Growing up in Dalry where his father was a mine manager, Smith trained as a mining surveyor and served first at Lugar, then at Eglinton Iron Works, Kilwinning. While still in his forties he resigned from that post to devote his whole time to continuing his explorations throughout Ayrshire and beyond. In a further article Dr Wilson assesses Smith's skills as a geologist. Dr Ian Rolfe continues the story by describing Smith's contributions as a self-made scientist; his collections of specimens, his contribution to geological journals, his series of popular articles in *The Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald*; while Jennie Calder provides a report on the geological excursions for ladies which he organised. The remaining articles in this well illustrated monograph are directed towards specialists: Dr John Pollard on Trace Fossils; Dr Douglas Peacock on Glacial Drift; Mr Brian Jackson on Semi-precious Stones. Though the material there presented is highly technical, and heavy going for the ordinary reader, what shines through is the energy and expertise of John Smith, and how highly regarded he remains in geological circles.

If all this was not enough to earn him a lasting reputation, he was in addition a pioneer in archaeology and natural history, as will be revealed in the subsequent monograph, whose publication we eagerly await.

LARGS THROUGH THE CENTURIES

by J R D Campbell

Largs & District Historical Society, 1995 £4.99 ISBN 0 9502751 3 1

The Largs & District Historical Society is one of the most active in Ayrshire, supporting not only a programme of winter lectures and summer outings, but also a maritime section; they also run the local museum, produce a regular newsletter, and are not afraid of the difficulties of publishing. Mr Campbell's book is well-presented, and a useful contribution to the history of Cunninghame's western seaboard.

This is not a conventional history, and is perhaps the better for that. Mr Campbell set out, as he explains in his Preface, with the aim of unravelling the reasons behind the differing barony charters that were granted in the 16th and 17th Centuries, and he begins with an overview of the history of this part of Ayrshire. On reaching more modern times, he adopts a rather more discursive approach, in what might be regarded as a town trail format, using existing and recently disappeared buildings to inform and illuminate the history of the town. This can lead to some challenging mental jumps in both time and matter, such as from the founding of Largs Pier in the 1830s via 1930s architecture to illicit stills on the hills above Largs in the early 20th century, but there is a great deal of interesting material in this book, and it will well reward thorough reading.

Mr Campbell has obviously been particularly interested in the way that Largs has developed, through the various barony burghs, and the development proposals that were brought forward in the 1800s, as Largs developed in importance as a watering place. He reproduces a number of unfamiliar plans and photographs which help us to understand how and why the town developed in the way it did. The biggest disappointment is the lack of an index, which is especially acutely felt when the story is told in a non-chronological way.

This book has certainly helped me to a greater understanding of the urban morphology of Largs, and I can recommend it to anyone with an interest in the history of Largs. The excellent drawings on pages 88 and 89, showing the buildings fronting the shore c.1890, prepared as part of a proposal that would have brought a railway along the front to the pierhead, are worth a fiver alone.

Rob Close

THE LARGS AUSTRALIANS.

by Mary B Hall

Largs & District Historical Society, 1995 £2.00 ISBN 0 9502751 4X

The links between Scotland and Australia are well-enough known. This little booklet is the result of work originally carried out by an MSC team in Largs in 1985, with additional research by LDHS members, and brought together in this form by Mary Hall. In it, the stories are told of a number of people with Largs connections who did well in Australia. Leading the way of course is Sir Thomas Makdougall Brisbane, Governor of New South Wales from 1819, and after whom Brisbane in Queensland is named. Thomas Brisbane was born at Brisbane House, Largs in 1773 and died in Largs in 1860. His life, as laird, military man, astronomer and colonial governor is told, as is something of the family's relationship with the burgh of Largs.

Succeeding chapters deal equally efficiently with others who set off from Largs, such as Thomas Lang, who trained as a nurseryman in Kilmarnock with Thomas Samson, and developed the potential of the Kilmarnock Willow, before emigrating to Victoria in 1854, where he established a successful nursery business, or George Elder, who oversaw the building of the railway from Port Adelaide to Adelaide, and returned enriched to Largs to live out his days in comfort at Knock Castle.

This is a field of historical research which could be profitably explored in other parts of Ayrshire, and Mary Hall and the Largs society are to be congratulated on this pioneering work. The publishing standards are not up to those of J R D Campbell's book reviewed above, but there is a considerable amount of information in this booklet's 20 or so pages

Rob Close

AYRSHIRE SOUND ARCHIVE CATALOGUE, Volume 1. Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies

Soon after the AFHS was formed, a proposal was made to establish an Ayrshire Sound Archive, and the project was realised because of the commitment of Barbara Graham who publicised it and secured the necessary funding; but it was a busy cooperative effort by other enthusiasts whose names are listed in the introduction.

As a result local historians and others now have access to a remarkable collection

of audio tapes housed in Craigie College of Educations (now the Craigie campus of the University of Paisley). The collection is constantly being added to, and this catalogue provides a taste of the contents.

The first 140 or so tapes in the collection are here listed, covering those recorded between the years 1969 and 1985, and collected in the first two years of the Archive's existence. Topics covered include farming, coal mining, steel works, and the making of carpets, lace curtains, bricks, curling stones, fishing nets. There are reminiscences from every corner of the county, from Beith in the north to Ballantrae in the south. There are memories of World War One, reports on Covenanters' gravestones, tapes about golf and quoiting. There are others where one can listen again to the familiar voices of Willie Ross and Jamieson Clerk. The quality of reproduction of course varies, from professional productions by BBC Scotland to recordings made when Ayr Academy pupils listened to old folk in Ayr Welfare Home in 1969.

This is not just a list of tapes, but for each a lengthy summary of the contents. Because of this, the *Catalogue* is a 'must' for anyone making a serious study of Ayrshire's recent history. Copies have been distributed to all members of AFHS. There are a few copies left, available at £6.50 including postage from Rob Close, 1 Craighrae Cottages, Drongan, AYR KA6 7EN.

AUDIO-VISUAL PRODUCTIONS

NEWMILNS AND GREENHOLM: THE VIDEO
Alloway Publishing, Hastings Square, Darvel, £19.95

NEWMILNS: FACT, FICTION, AND FOLKLORE
Newmilns & Greenholm Initiative, Main Street, Newmilns
Cassette Tape, £2.50 by post

John Macintosh, architect and local historian, was also a keen photographer who a hundred years ago took many pictures of Ayrshire, and especially of Newmilns. Some were utilised to produce *Lang Lang Syne, when your grannie and grandpa were weans*, a set of slides which Ayrshire Educational Trust issued to schools in 1952 (and re-issued in 1980) to encourage local studies. Another photographer, Robert Brown, took more photographs of Newmilns in the 1940's and 1950's, and his son David Brown has combined a selection with some from Macintosh to present a series of still pictures of a changing community, illuminated by a clear commentary and an accompanying booklet.

The video tape runs for about ninety minutes. While much of it is of purely local interest, outsiders interested in social history will find it has much to offer: changes in street scenes and architecture; costumes of children and old folk; sports and pastimes old and new; photographs of nineteenth century locomotives and railway building; an early car. Black and white is succeeded by colour; and there is a final impressive movie sequence illustrating the making of lace fabrics in one of the local factories.

Similarly the audio tape produced by the Newmilns and Greenholm Initiative records stories of the recent past by a number of residents, with accounts of schooldays, trades, pastimes, and the like.

THE BURNS BICENTENARY

The commemoration of Burns' death is already well under way. The Alloway Library has put on a fine series of lectures, which will be continued in the autumn, and the Carnegie, Dundonald, Forehill, Prestwick, Symington, Tarbolton and Troon libraries have also arranged impressive programmes. The Ayrshire Association of Burns Clubs held a very successful horse ploughing competition at Mossiel Farm, Mauchline.

The AANHS has introduced a Burnsian flavour into its lecture programme in the Carnegie Library. On 10 October Marion Stewart will speak on "Burns' Neighbours in Dumfries: Authentic Voices; on 28 November Walter McGinty's subject will be "That Presbytry of Ayr!: Burns and a Heresy Trial"; on 12 December Gavin Sprott will tell of "Burns the Farmer".

It has also arranged, in collaboration with the Kyle and Carrick District Council (or, rather, its successor the South Ayrshire Council), a lecture in Ayr's Civic Theatre by John Purser on "The Wee Apollo: how Burns brought Scottish Song into the Temple of the Arts". All who were at Dr Purser's 1994 musical/archaeological lecture "Scotland's Musical Past" (and no doubt many others who missed it) will be keen to hear how Burns influenced Scottish culture and society through song. More details in our autumn issue!

Two of its monographs with Burns associations have been reprinted, *Antiquities of Ayrshire* and, in partnership with Mauchline Burns Club, *Mauchline Memories of Robert Burns*.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

ANNIVERSARIES: 1996 is not only the bicentenary of the death of Robert Burns. Also in 1796 there died James Macpherson, whose *Ossian* produced widespread controversy and European renown. In 1759 Macpherson was introduced to Edinburgh literary circles by George Lawrie who later became minister of Loudoun and in 1786 introduced to Edinburgh a real-life Ossian in the person of Robert Burns. Further back, in July 1296 William Wallace assembled supporters and went on to ambush an English force at Loudoun Hill. In 1997 will be celebrated the 1600th anniversary of St Ninian's arrival at Whithorn; and the 50th anniversary of the AANHS.

AANHS: When in April 1947 a steering committee was formed to establish the AANHS, one then elected was John Strawhorn, who has been a committee member ever since. We are searching our records to ascertain if there are any other founder members still with us, and have found two at the time of writing. If you are another, please contact Dr Trevor Mathews.

SOME AYRSHIRE REFERENCES: *Scotland's Ruine*, ed. Daniel Szechi, Association for Scottish Literary Studies, £25, publishes Lockhart of Carnwath's *Memoirs of the Union of 1707*. Lockhart in 1711 was able to examine the public accounts, and produced figures indicating that £20,540/17/7d was awarded in 1707 to the Earl of Glasgow, apparently to bribe support for the Union. Among those in receipt of money were the Earl of Eglinton (£200), Sir Alexander Home Campbell of Cessnock (£50), John Muir, Provost of Ayr (£100), Major Cunningham of Aiket (£100). In *The Scottish Office 1919-59*, edited by Ian Levitt (formerly of Ayr) for the Scottish History Society, are included documents relating to Prestwick Airport in 1958.

KILMARNOCK TOWN COUNCIL: Kilmarnock and District History Group Newsletter 106, May 1995, contains a useful and interesting analysis of membership of Kilmarnock Town Council from 1792 till 1810. The council consisted of sixteen councillors, two bailies and a treasurer, and elections took place each Michaelmas. Among their number were John Wilson, bookseller, who served for seventeen years; and other Burns associates like William Parker, Thomas Greenshield, William Brown, and John Samson (brother of Tam).

WHY KEEP IT A SECRET? We have heard of a book of Saltcoats pictures and a video of Girvan, but have no further particulars. If you are really anxious to increase sales of new local publications, let us know the title, from whom it can be obtained, and at what price including postage. We shall advertise it free! If you can spare a copy we promise a full review in *Ayrshire Notes*.

AYRSHIRE FEDERATION OF HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

Since the last edition of Ayrshire Notes was published, the Federation has held two successful events in Troon and Kilmaurs

The first of these was the Federation's Annual Conference, held in the Walker Hall, Troon, on the subject of "Driving Forces", i.e., the development of the power and transport industries which made possible much of the change in Ayrshire and Scotland in the years following the onset of the Industrial Revolution. About 50 delegates to the conference were treated to a series of interesting and enjoyable discourses. David McClure, whose detailed studies of the turnpike roads of Ayrshire have appeared both in the pages of this journal and in a monograph published by the AANHS, opened the proceedings in fine style as he discussed the personalities involved at all levels in the development of Ayrshire's road network, from the Commissioners who ran the show to the tollkeepers who collected the money. Ian Johnson continued the transport theme with a survey of the history of the Kilmarnock and Troon Railway and, more particularly, of the Laigh Milton Viaduct which carried the KTR over the Irvine near Gatehead, and which is now the subject of a £1,000,000 restoration project. In the afternoon, John McGown, from Scottish Power, illuminated the complex history of the Galloway Hydro-Electric Schemes, a development which had profound effects on the economy of south west Scotland, but which largely goes unnoticed in deeply buried pipes and tunnels. Bob Winn entertained us greatly with the story of gas power, from William Murdoch's cave at Lugar to the current innovations of Scottish Gas. The gas industry is not well researched, and, with Bob Winn's permission, we include elsewhere in this journal, a list of public gas works in Ayrshire, in the hope that this will encourage some in-depth study in Ayrshire. Bob's talk was also notable for its well-chosen illustrations. Interesting pictures also accompanied John Hume's talk on the architecture of public utilities, taking us from the familiar and well-known, through the loved and lost, to the obscure, such as the ventilators for sewers in Aberdeen, cleverly disguised as lamp standards.

The success of the day owed much to the good humoured chairmanship of John Crompton, from the Royal Museum of Scotland, and to the excellent catering provided by Tudor Banqueting of Troon. We hope to reinstate the Conference as a regular part of the Federation's calendar, and look forward to seeing more of you this year.

The Swap Shop is a long-standing part of the Federation's calendar. This year, it was held in the Museum at Kilmaurs, thanks to the kindness of Bob Beattie and his colleagues at Kilmaurs History Group. About 30 people assembled, and were conducted on a tour of the village, including the Tolbooth, and the Church, with the

attached Glencairn Burial Aisle. After refreshments provided by the local group, the business of the Swap Shop was conducted in the customary manner. We were pleased to see a good turn out, and would again stress the importance of these opportunities to exchange information with other groups, and encourage more of you to attend this year, at either the AGM or the Swap Shop, or both.

We have one event planned for the current period. This is the Federation's Annual General Meeting, which will be held on the evening of Wednesday May 15th 1996 in Dundonald. Thanks to the hospitality of Dennis Hemingway and the Friends of Dundonald Castle, we shall begin with a tour of the Castle, before traversing the length of the village, to the Montgomery Hall, where the AGM will be held. I would stress that the business of the AGM will, hopefully, be brief: the main function of the event being, like the Swap Shop, the friendly exchange of information and ideas. Further details will be sent out nearer the date, but I, as always, ask you to note this day in your diaries now.

Finally, wearing my Treasurer's cap, I thank all those who have paid their 1996 subscriptions to the Federation, and gently remind those who have not done so that these are now due. The rates are £10 for Societies, and £5 for individuals.

Rob Close

OLD RECORDS - NEW DISCOVERIES

The AFHS and the Scottish Local History Forum are holding a one-day Spring Conference looking at how Local Government records can be used by local historians, with some practical examples. It will be on Saturday 27 April 1996, from 10-00 to 4-40, in the County Buildings, Ayr.

It will be chaired by Prof. Roy Campbell, and the speakers are Peter Anderson, David McClure, Rob Close, Robin Urquhart and Ian Fisher. Leaflets giving full details are in the Carnegie Library, Ayr.

PUBLICATIONS of the

AYRSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL & NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

available from Ronald W Brash MA, Publications Distribution Manager
10 Robsland Avenue, Ayr, KA7 2RW

Roderick Lawson of Maybole 1831-1907 (Douglas)	£1.50
An Ayrshire Family 1526-1900 (Waterson)	£1.50
Ayrshire Honestones (Tucker)	£1.50
Ayrshire Mining Enterprises 1600-1840 (Whatley)	£1.50
Digging Up Old Ayr (Lindsay)	£1.00
Ayrshire Abbeys (Cowan)	£1.25
George Lokert of Ayr (Broadie)	£1.25
A Scottish Renaissance Household (MacKenzie)	£3.00
The Shipping Trade of Ayrshire 1689-1791 (Graham)	£3.60
Plant Life in Ayrshire (Kirkwood/Foulds)	£4.20
The Barony of Alloway 1324-1754 (Hendry)	£3.60
Robert Adam in Ayrshire (Sanderson)	£3.60
The Cumnock Pottery (Quail)	£5.00
Tolls and Tacksman (McClure)	£3.60
Smuggling and the Ayrshire Economic Boom (Cullen)	£4.00
The Port of Ayr 1727-1780 (Graham)	£4.20
John Smith of Dalry Part 1: Geology (ed. Reid)	£6.00
John Smith of Dalry Part 2: Archaeology & Natural History (ed. Reid)	£7.20
Mauchline Memories of Robert Burns (ed. Strawhorn) (reprint)	£3.50
Antiquities of Ayrshire (Grose, ed. Strawhorn) (reprint)	£4.20
Round Old Ayr: guided walk (Brash)	£1.20
Armstrong's Maps of Ayrshire (1775: reprint: 6 sheets)	£12.00