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Contributions for the Spring 1997 issue of *Ayrshire Notes*, including information about the activities of Member Societies, should be sent before the end of February to Rob Close, 1 Craigbrae Cottages, Drongan, Ayr, KA6 7EN, tel. 01292 590273.

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## CHILD OF THE SUN

by Mary Denning

[Mary Denning is the *nom de plume* of Debbie Camp, a Member who contributed two articles to *Ayrshire Notes* during 1995. This article first appeared in *The Ayrshire Post*; it is reproduced here for those readers who missed it then, and to give it a merited place in our archives.]

"Be it known to all men... [that]... Mr Scipio Kennedy from Guinea, servant for Sir John Kennedy of Culzean... might have of freedom by ye law..." This statement was written at Culzean Castle in Ayrshire, in a document dated the 6th of February 1725<sup>1</sup>. It gave Scipio Kennedy his freedom at the age of "twenty eight or thirty years". He had been a slave since his infancy. At the turn of the 18th century, when about six years old, Scipio had been taken from his home in Guinea, on the west coast of Africa, and forced on to a slave ship bound for the West Indies. He was fortunate: intended for the plantations, he was bought by Captain Andrew Douglas of Mains in Dunbartonshire. It is not recorded where the transaction took place, but, in Scipio's document, he recorded that "It was my happiness to fall into his hands".

At this time, it was very fashionable to own a black page or coachboy. A good-looking young African, dressed in the family livery or some more exotic outfit, and sometimes sporting an engraved collar around his neck, was a great status symbol. Captain Douglas brought the African boy to his Scottish home in about 1702, and gave him the name of Scipio. He lived with the Douglas family for two or three years and then, in 1705, the Captain's daughter Jean married John Kennedy. Either at this time or shortly afterwards, Scipio joined the new couple. Five years later, John inherited his father's knighthood and the family home and moved to Culzean Castle, and Scipio moved with them.

Here he was to enjoy a special position in the household, halfway between poor relation and favoured servant. According to Scipio's document, he "received clothing, maintenance and education with more than ordinary kindness...". Religious instruction was an important part of any child's education, and he became a Christian. By the time the document was signed Scipio had been living with Sir John's family for 19 years. He was now free to look elsewhere for employment. However, he decided that he had "... maturely and deliberately... [decided] to continue and remain with the said Sir John, his heirs and successors, in his service". Sir John agreed to pay Scipio twelve pounds Scots money yearly plus drink money for his service. The new contract was for another 19 years, the same duration used for land contracts in Ayrshire.

It is hardly surprising that Scipio elected to remain with Sir John. The Kennedy family had been kind to him and now Sir John was planning to pay him a good



servant's wage. Besides, he had lived with the same family since a child of about 10 years old. Where else could he go? He chose to remain at Culzean. However, in case he changed his mind, a clause was included in his document to the effect that, though he could leave the Kennedy Household during the next 19 years, he should pay Sir John or his heirs "the sum of five pounds sterling... yearly and proportionately" while he was away.

On June 9 1728 Margaret Gray gave birth to a daughter whom she called Elizabeth. According to the Kirkoswald Church register, this baby was "born in fornication", and the father was Scipio Kennedy of Culzean. Scipio married the child's mother on the 19th October of that same year<sup>2</sup>. Several children followed, including some sons, and each child bore Scipio's adopted surname of Kennedy. They lived at Culzean. On a surviving estate map drawn up in the 1730's there is an enclosed area marked 'Scipio's'<sup>3</sup>. It would seem that Scipio and his family were given a home close to the castle, just beyond the cultivated gardens and orchards. This area is roughly the same size and shape, and in the same position, as the present walled garden which was created in 1786, some years after Scipio's death.

In 1742 Sir John died and his eldest son took over until he died two years later. The next son Thomas then became Laird of Culzean, and eventually the 9th Earl of Cassillis. He was only two years older than Scipio's first child and continued to honour the special relationship between this man and his family. Meanwhile Sir John Kennedy's widow, Lady Jean, outlived her husband by 25 years. She had given birth to 20 children, few of whom survived to adulthood, but she had always retained a special affection for Scipio. In her will she wrote "I leave and bequest to Scipio Kennedy my old servant the sum of ten pounds sterling"<sup>4</sup>. This was only a little less than the amount bequeathed to each of her three grandchildren.

Scipio died on June 24 1774<sup>5</sup>. His son Douglas erected a gravestone to his memory in Kirkoswald kirkyard, which recorded an age of 80 years, though Scipio never knew his exact age.

The lives of lairds and masters are often well documented, but those of their servants are caught only in glimpses. We cannot know how Scipio truly felt about his life in the Scottish lowlands. It would seem he settled down to become a good Ayrshireman, viewed with curiosity by strangers no doubt, but accepted by the local people. Yet what sights his eyes must have seen! Did he ever sit down and dream of his infant days under the heat of the African sun? And what of his children - half Scottish, half African and living under the name of Kennedy? Did they marry and have children of their own? Is Scipio's line in existence today? Perhaps there are Kennedys in Ayrshire even now who are not from the noble family descended from Robert the Bruce, but instead are a living testament of one small child stolen from his African home 300 years ago.

## Notes

1. Scottish Records Office, Ailsa Muniments, GD25/9/72/9
2. Kirkoswald Church Registers: copy in Carnegie Library, Ayr.
3. A copy of this map, by Forbes, is displayed in the Visitors' Centre at Culzean Country Park.
4. *ibid.* 1.
5. *ibid.* 2.

## LESS FORTUNATE THAN SCIPIO

Run away from the Subscriber, living near Beith - a Negroe man aged about 22 years, 5 feet and a half high or thereby. He is a Virginia born slave, speaks pretty good English; he has been 5 years in this country, and has served sometime with a joiner; he has a deep scare [sic] above one of his eyes, occasioned by a stroke from a horse; he has also got with him a certificate which calls him James Montgomerie, signed John Witherspoon, minister. Whoever takes up the said runaway and brings him home, or secures him and gets notice to his master, shall have 2 guineas reward, besides all other charges paid, by me, Rob Shedden, Morrishill, April 26th 1756. N.B. The Negroe run away the 21st inst."

(Glasgow Courant, 10th May 1756)

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# PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF AYRSHIRE COMMISSIONERS OF SUPPLY by David McClure

## Introduction

The Commission of Supply was instituted by Act of Convention in 1667 for the primary purpose of collecting the land tax. The commissioners of each county met on 30th April each year (or if that fell on a Sunday then on 29th April or 1st May) at the annual land tax meeting to audit the collection of the tax for the preceding year and confirm its payment to the Receiver General for Scotland, and to assess the county for the tax in the coming year. In the first half of the eighteenth century this meeting was often delayed by the late arrival of the Land Tax Act from London, and sometimes it was July before the commissioners convened to *grant ane aid to his majesty*.

Assessment was a simple matter. The total amount required from the county was divided among the landowners in proportion to the values of their estates. While the amount of the tax levied by government on the county was expressed in Sterling, both the rate and the land valuation were in Scots. Thus in 1774 *The commissioners having considered the act of parliament for laying on the cess for the service of the year 1774, they for the shire's proportion being £1930 12s 4½d sterling cast state and proportion the same at £3 0s 9d Scots on each one hundred pounds Scots of valuation at each of the four terms aftermentioned and do impose 2s 8d Scots for the collectors' salary and 6d Scots for clerk's salary and 7s 6d Scots for bridges and other uses on each £100 Scots of valuation at each of the said terms and appoint the same to be paid to the collectors at each of the terms following, viz.: the 1st of June and 1st of September, the 1st of December and 1st of March ...*

At the same meetings they assessed the county for bridge money (as stated in the extract), and authorised the collection and determined the expenditure of this and also of rogue money, which was assessed by freeholders at their Michaelmas head court.

Commissioners held meetings at other times in the year, particularly for matters concerning the administration of the valuation roll, but the land tax meeting was their principal annual meeting and was in most years by far the best attended.

## Chart of Principal Officers of Ayrshire Commissioners of Supply

The chart opposite was compiled from the minutes of the commissioners' meetings from 1713 to 1758 and from 1774 to 1891<sup>1</sup>, which are held in the County Buildings in Ayr and are, since 1st April 1996, under the supervision of South

Principal Officers of Ayrshire Commissioners of Supply			
Convener	Clerk	Collectors	
1713			
1717		John Blair of Adamtoun	George Hutchinson of Monkwood
1729	James Hunter	David Blair of Adamtoun	Capt. Laurence Nugent of Galrigs (from 1735 of Newfield)
		Thomas Boyd of Pitcon	John Hutchinson of Sanquhar (from 1748 of Monkwood)
1738	John Gairdner		
		William Wallace	
1758	James Fergusson		
1771			
		John Shaw of Dalton	William Logan of Camlargh
1773			
1776			
	John Boswell	John Montgomery in Grange/Ayr	
1786			
		John Boswell	Bruce Campbell of Mayfield (from 1803 at Sornbeg)
	John Hamilton of Sundrum		
1806			
	Hamilton Boswell (son of John)	Hamilton Boswell	
1819			
		Thomas Gibson	
1820			
	David Shaw		
1855			
1856			
	Shaws jointly		
1865			
1875			
	Charles George Shaw (son of David)		
1882			
1891			

From 1836, the collector of the land tax was appointed by the Lords of the Treasury.  
Crosshatching denotes lack of record.  
Key to numbers:  
1. Sir John Cochrane of Ochiltree  
2. Sir Adam Whytfoord of Blairquhan  
3. James Fergusson (son of prec.)  
4. William Wood  
5. John Campbell at Sornbeg  
6. Thomas Ranken  
7. John Douglas Boswell

Chart © David McClure 1996.



Ayrshire Council. Continuity of tenure was assumed during the period of the missing minutes. From Sir Thomas Wallace's attendance at the meeting of roads trustees on 1st May 1770 it is probable that he was continued as convener at a land tax meeting on the same day. He died in 1771. James Fergusson, clerk from 1758, died in 1773. He was also clerk to the roads trustees from 1767, in which post he was succeeded by his son.<sup>2</sup> It is assumed that his son also succeeded him as clerk of supply, a post he was reappointed to at the 1775 land tax meeting. William Wallace was a collector both before and after the break in the minutes. There is nothing to indicate when John Hutchinson of Sanquhar's term ended, or who followed him, until the appointment or continuation of John Shaw of Dalton in 1774.

### Convener, Clerk and Collectors.

At the annual land tax meeting the commissioners elected their convener, clerk and collectors, or continued present holders in their posts. The convener was unpaid. The clerk and collectors both enjoyed a salary, while the latter had the further benefit of the use of the land tax funds between collection and payment to the Receiver General. Earning a turn on such money was a recognised benefit of office.

Sums for the salaries of the clerk and collectors were levied along with the land tax, for instance in 1774 raising £15 17s 9½d Sterling for the clerk and £42 7s 5½d Sterling for each of the collectors. The paid positions were keenly sought and land tax meetings at which vacancies were to be filled attracted high attendances. In 1726, the deaths of both the collectors brought an attendance of 76, higher by 29 than any preceding meeting within the span of the extant records. James Boswell records in his journal on Wednesday 30th April 1777: *Was engaged to go to Ayr to support Knockroon in case an attempt should be made to turn him out from being Clerk of Supply.*<sup>3</sup> In 1786, Bruce Campbell<sup>4</sup> and William Logan<sup>5</sup> (sheriff substitute and formerly of Castlemains) both wrote to William Forbes of Callendar (an Ayrshire commissioner by virtue of landholdings in the county) soliciting his support for their applications for the post left vacant by the death of William Logan of Camlarg.<sup>6</sup> In 1832 the attendance of 118 was the highest of all Ayrshire land tax meetings in the extant records, drawn by a contested election for a new collector. The candidates were Mr Neill of Barnweil and John Douglas Boswell; the latter won with 61 votes to 53.

### Convener

The office of Convener of the Commissioners of Supply carried considerable status. Whetstone<sup>7</sup> says that the convener was the most important county leader after the sheriff. It is hardly surprising that the minutes of the commissioners confirm the central position occupied by their convener, while relegating the sheriff to a supporting role. The sheriff depute<sup>8</sup>, appointed by the Home Secretary on the advice of the Lord Justice Clerk, in turn advised by the principal landowners in the county,

was entitled to act as a commissioner *ex officio*. He, or in his absence his sheriff substitute (also a commissioner *ex officio*), was often though not invariably chosen to preside over the meeting and often, and again not invariably, presented the Land Tax Act to the assembled commissioners.

While the term Convener is often synonymous with Chairman or Preses, the two positions were quite distinct in the case of the commission of supply. The responsibility of a preses for conducting the business of a meeting ceased when, some days later, the clerk handed him the minute book for signature. The convener had more of the character of a chief executive, pursuing the business of the commissioners between meetings and bringing forward matters for their attention. Since they normally remained in the post for many years, conveners came to exert their influence in all manner of county business. When it was deemed appropriate to debate an issue before a wider county forum, it was normally the convener who called the meeting by advertisement in the Glasgow and Edinburgh papers. Many such meetings are recorded in the commission of supply minute books, distinguishable only by the terms the clerk used to describe those assembled in his preamble to the sederunt. According to the occasion, those present might include: noblemen; gentlemen; commissioners of supply; justices of peace; proprietors of land; freeholders; landholders; heritors; the Lord Lieutenant; Deputy Lieutenants; magistrates of royal burghs; magistrates of burghs; magistrates of towns; clergy; and roads trustees. Many of the names were the same whatever the categories, but there were always some who were admitted who could not have attended a regular commissioners' meeting on account of being too high or too low.

### Clerk

Clerks were invariably lawyers (*writers*) practising in Ayr. They could be characterised as professional men with land-owning aspirations, prepared to undertake a poorly rewarded public office for the standing in the community it brought them, coupled with the private business that some of the commissioners undoubtedly put their way. They were often appointed to other public posts. For instance, James Hunter was provost of Ayr for four years, 1736 to 1738 and 1740 to 1742.

James Fergusson owned the estate of Bank. Neither he nor his son, James (2), attended a land tax meeting in the capacity of commissioner, but his grandson, James (3) attended 4 meetings from 1795 to 1799. James (1) was provost of Ayr from 1771 to 1773. James (1) and (2) both served for a time as clerks to the Ayr Roads Trustees and had for some years to bear the cost of obtaining the 1767 Ayr Roads Act.

The Shaw's connection with county administration was continued by clerk of supply Charles George Shaw who was clerk to the county council until 1902, when he was succeeded by his son James Edward Shaw of High Greenan. According to



Strawhorn<sup>9</sup>, *From 1929* [when the powers of the council were greatly increased by the Local Government (Scotland) Act] *till his retiral in 1939, J. E. Shaw was a dominant figure in the county.* Thus the prestige formerly enjoyed by the convener in the days of the commissioners, came to be enjoyed by the clerk under the county council.

### Collectors

During the first half of the eighteenth century, collectors were landowners qualified to be commissioners and continued to attend meetings in that capacity while serving as paid collectors. They appointed depute collectors, but remained responsible for the thoroughness of collection and the security of the funds, for which they had to find others to stand surety as *cautionners*. During the 1745 rebellion Ayrshire collectors risked their lives to protect the money and went *abroad ... to prevent paying any of the Land Tax to the Rebels who had made Three Several Demands for the same under pain of Military Execution.*<sup>10</sup>

Later, those appointed were not commissioners. John Boswell, William Logan and Bruce Campbell were former commissioners who lost their estates as a consequence of the collapse of the Ayr banking company of Douglas Heron & Co.<sup>11</sup> Hamilton Boswell followed his father John and from 1813 was sole collector. In 1836 the responsibility for appointing a collector for the land tax was transferred to the Lords of the Treasury. The commissioners of supply continued to appoint a collector for other county taxes, but neither the names of the persons appointed nor the salaries they received were routinely recorded in the minutes.

### Conclusion

Until the founding of the county councils by the Local Government Act (1889), the commission of supply was the principal administrative body in the county. The influence of the commissioners continued under the Standing Joint Committee until that was abolished under the Local Government (Scotland) Act (1929). Further information may be found in a paper by Hamilton<sup>12</sup> and in books by Shaw<sup>13</sup> and Whetstone<sup>14</sup>, all of which are in the Local History Section of the Carnegie Library, Ayr.

### References

- 1 CO3/1/1 to CO3/1/13 inclusive.
- 2 David McClure, *Tolls and Tacksmen* (AANHS 1994).
- 3 *Knockroon*: i.e. his cousin John Boswell, formerly of Knockroon. This is in *Boswell in Extremes, 1776-1778*, published 1970, in the Yale edition of the journals.

- 4 A second cousin and close friend of James Boswell.
- 5 David McClure, "William Logan of Castlemains" in *Ayrshire Notes* (No. 5, Autumn 1993).
- 6 GD171/235/12 (14th June 1786) and GD 171/235/13 (20th June 1786). These letters were consulted in the Scottish Record Office but may now be in the archives at Callendar House, Falkirk.
- 7 Anne E Whetstone, *Scottish County Government in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (1981).
- 8 The **real** sheriff. Hereditary sheriffs were abolished by the Heritable Jurisdictions Act (1747). The office of principal or high sheriff was a ceremonial one without authority or responsibility.
- 9 John Strawhorn, *The History of Ayr* (1989) p.236.
- 10 CO3/1/1, 17/5/1746.
- 11 For a recent analysis of the fall of the bank, see L. M. Cullen, *Smuggling and the Ayrshire Economic Boom of the 1760s and 1770s* (AANHS 1994).
- 12 Thomas Hamilton, "The Ayrshire Commissioners of Supply" in *Ayrshire Collections* Vol. 1. (1950).
- 13 Charles Edward Shaw, *Ayrshire 1745-1950* (1953).
- 14 Anne E Whetstone, *op. cit.*

### SWAP SHOP

The Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies' annual Swap Shop will be held this year in Catrine, on Sunday 10th November. The Swap Shop is an ideal opportunity for member societies and individuals to get together to discuss issues of mutual interest, and to exchange news of winter programmes to come, and summer outings past. The meeting itself will be held in the A M Brown Institute, but beforehand there will be a tour of Catrine, looking at the industrial archaeology and other important buildings. In particular, through the co-operation of the Catrine Voes Trust, we will look at the work of restoration which has been carried out on the Voes, the reservoirs by which the flow of water to the big wheels was controlled.

The tour will start at 2 p.m., and the afternoon will finish about 5.30 p.m. Further details and an application form will be sent to AFHS members but, as always, an invitation to attend is extended to AANHS members and others, who are encouraged to get in touch with Rob Close, AFHS Treasurer, at 1 Craigbrae Cottages, Drongan, AYR KA6 7EN.



## GAS WORKS IN AYRSHIRE

Further to the notes on Gas Works in Ayrshire in Ayrshire Notes 10, it should be noted that the list was compiled by Bob Winn and James Keith, and that they should be credited with authorship of the list.

The publication of the list has, additionally, brought forward information on other settlements in Ayrshire which had Gas Works of their own. Many of these must have been abandoned quite early, perhaps unable to compete once other forms of power, especially electricity, became more widely available and reliable. Among these are Mauchline, Catrine, and Dalmellington, whose existences were respectively drawn to our attention by John Strawhorn, James Kleboe and Stanley Sarsfield. Stanley also sent, in support of the existence of the Dalmellington works, a photocopy from "The Gas World" Year Book for 1909. This single page alone, which covers Scotland alphabetically from Coupar Angus to Greenock, shows that there were also Gas Works at Dreghorn, Dundonald and Dunlop. The works at Dunlop, managed by John Gemmell, had 137 consumers, and also supplied 21 public lamps. At Dundonald, an engineer, G W Anderson, a manager, A H G Richmond, and a secretary, R B Anderson, oversaw an operation which served a mere 85 consumers and 6 public lamps.

We also now know that there were works at Ochiltree and Tarbolton, shares in their respective companies being sold by the Ayr solicitor, David Dunlop, in 1886, along with shares in the companies at Ayr, Dalmellington and Muirkirk.

### The electronic future of the past

The Scottish Local History Forum's A.G.M. and autumn conference is on Saturday 5 October 1996 at the Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh. The theme is electronic aids to the study of the past; several users will give talks and demonstrations. There will also be guided tours of the new SRO building. Leaflets are in the Reference Section of the Carnegie Library, Ayr.

## FINDING OUT ABOUT AYRSHIRE

### (10): The "Collections"

We are fortunate in having at our disposal two series of volumes which repay perusal by anyone making a serious study of Ayrshire history.

The eighteen massive volumes of the *Archaeological and Historical Collections* were published between 1878 and 1890 by the Ayr and Wigton (later Ayrshire and Galloway) Archaeological Association. Apart from the many valuable articles on archaeology, there are masses of historical documents transcribed, which contain references to persons great and small from different parts of the county, and information about a variety of topics. We have the Charters of the Royal Burghs of Ayr (Vol. 11) and Irvine (Vols. 17, 18), Crossraguel Abbey (Vols. 13, 14), The Friars Preachers of Ayr (Vol. 12), The Boyd Papers (Vol. 3), the Baron Court Book of Corshill (Vol. 4), and shorter manuscripts in other volumes. Of particular interest are the Protocol Book of John Mason of Ayr (Vol. 6) and of Robert Broun of Irvine (Vols 7, 8, 9). These records of lawyers' transactions are not, in themselves, particularly absorbing reading, but a mine of information about people and places. Since all the volumes of these *Collections* are well-indexed, no local historian can avoid making a search through every one of these volumes.

Since 1950 the new Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society has published no fewer than twelve volumes of *Ayrshire Collections* and seventeen subsequent monographs. Many of the contributions are by authors who present the results of their work with unpublished documents. The earliest dealt with the records of the Ayrshire Commissioners of Supply (Vol. 1, 1950); the most recent concerning the customs records of the Port of Ayr (monograph 15, 1955). Following precedent, original documents have been transcribed and published. Vol. 1 has documents relating to Newmilns and the American Civil War, and also Three Letters of George Dempster. Vol. 3 has the Protocol Book of Henry Prestoun and also Cassillis papers. Volume 4 has documents relating to the Gilbertine House at Dalmailing, calendar of documents relating to Fail, and Correspondence of the first Earl of Dundonald. Vol. 6 has extracts from Ayr presbytery records relating to schools 1642-1746, and selections from the Auchenharvie papers. Vol. 7 has three Ayrshire charters and extracts from John Welch's kirk session book. Vol. 9 contains the Annals of Fenwick 1842-56. Vol. 10 has the Protocol Book of James Colville. Not all knowledge comes from documents, as is revealed by studies on the Monks' Road (Vol. 1), Rails to Ayr, (Vol. 13), and ornithological studies (Vols. 3, 6, 7). Regrettably there are few archaeological contributions, apart from those in Vols. 4 and 7. However, recent discoveries and interpretation appear in a monograph on



the Stone Ages in Ayrshire (1898), while life in the county in more recent times is recorded in a report on Ayrshire Miners' Rows (Vol. 13). In between there are volumes on the history of Ayr (Vol. 2), Ayrshire at the Time of Burns (Vol. 5), and studies ranging from Robert Bruce (Vol. 13) and Ayrshire Abbeys (Vol. 14), to Robert Adam and Cumnock Pottery (Nos. 11 and 12, 1994)

Whatever the period or parish you are interested in, or whatever topic from church bells (Vol. 1) to family history (Vol. 14), AANHS publications have something to offer. Each of the first twelve bound volumes of *Collections* is provided with an index. Perhaps someone can be persuaded to do the same for Vols. 13, 14, and the monographs. Until then, we have been provided recently (April 1996) with a useful catalogue of the contents of all AANHS publications.

## DOORS OPEN DAY

Doors Open Day, arranged throughout Ayrshire by Kyle and Carrick Civic Society, with help from the groups affiliated to the AFHS, is to be held on Sunday 29 September this year. There will be many buildings with Burns' associations.

In addition to Lochgoin, Cathcartston Visitor Centre, Ayr Academy, Dalgarven Mill, Dunaskin Heritage Centre, No.2 Chapel Row Cottages, Largs Museum, Irvine Burns Club, Dalmellington Band Hall, Symington Parish Church, Inverclyde Scottish National Sports Centre, Ayr Sheriff Court, Kilbirnie Auld Kirk and St Margaret's Church, Dalry, there will be new (old) additions: Dailly Parish Church, Dalmaolkeran Historical and Conservation Society Museum, and the Skelmorlie Aisle, Largs.

Leaflets listing details of opening times will be available from libraries and tourist offices in August. Please send an s.a.e. to Michael Hitchon, 1 Barns Terrace, Ayr KA7 2DB, for a copy.

Michael Hitchon.

## A WALK TO AYR, 1792

by Rob Close

Among the various records in the Glasgow City Archives is a manuscript volume in which Adam Bald, a young Glasgow merchant, recorded the events of various expeditions he made between 1790 and 1810<sup>1</sup>. In July 1792, he had made a spontaneous sea trip from Greenock to Liverpool and back, which had not been without its troubles, which included being storm-bound in Lamlash, extremely uncomfortable sleeping arrangements on board, and an encounter with prostitutes in the Vauxhall Gardens in Liverpool. The account of this particular expedition has been transcribed<sup>2</sup>, and is perhaps better known than the remainder of the manuscript volume. Young Adam Bald also considered himself something of a poet, and many of his expeditions are recorded in the form of lengthy poetic essays. Luckily, when he and his companion, Mr Lawson, made a trip to Ayr, leaving Glasgow on Sunday 7th October 1792, his poetic muse deserted him, and the journey is recorded in prose. Leaving Glasgow early in the morning, they crossed the Mearns Moor, and were soon in Ayrshire. The following is Bald's account of the remainder of the trip:

"Kingswell Inn appearing in view call'd forth the growling propensities of hunger, which were soon pacified with a good breakfast at eight pence a head. Continuing our excursion arriv'd in Kilmarnock about one o'clock, and when in passing one of the churches, a carriage stoppt apparently belonging to a person of distinction by the crowd which flock'd around it, anxious to witness the offerings of nobility; eager for a peep we also mingl'd with the multitude when alight'd from the carriage the heiress Miss Scot a young lady of distinguished worth, with her mother and two sisters; after they had entered the church we pressed forward to the place to see their collection when to our surprise there were twenty-six guineas which she and her sister had given to the poor<sup>3</sup>. After we had satisfied our curiosity with a saunter through the rest of the town, bent our course for Ayr, where after an agreeable walk, arriv'd about five o'clock p.m., taking up our lodgings in Mr Simpson's Inn, drinking tea on our arival and supping at ten, went to bed soon afterwards<sup>4</sup>. After paying our bill next morning which was moderately charged, six pence a head for supper, and nothing for beds, we sallied forth at eight o'clock and stepping into a barber's shop to get shav'd, to my astonishment and terror a stout bouncing lass began to prepare the requisite apparatus for freeing my chin of its daily crop, but being rather an uncommon employment for a female, [I] hesitated a little ere I allowed her to go on, but assuring me she was no novice in the trade submitted for once to be shav'd by a woman, and was never I must confess so well pleas'd with the process, for she handled the razor so dextrously that it appear'd as a piece of polish'd wood gliding amongst my bearded chin. Breakfasted in a Mr Brydon's, an acquaintance of Lawson's, after which sauntered in and about the town but observ'd nothing worth notice, save a machine in the immediate neighbourhood for drawing



the water from a stone quarry, the bucket filling and emptying itself, with the assistance only of a horse for pulling it up and down. Left Ayr about twelve o'clock, and in passing through Prestick called on a Mr Broadfoot late one of the teachers in the Glasgow Grammar School; after resting with him half an hour continued our rout towards Irvin which we reached about four o'clock and in ten minutes had a good dinner serv'd us in Mr Bryan's Inn at six pence a head<sup>5</sup>. After dinner cross'd the Water of Irvin at the harbour in a boat for a nigh road to Saltcoats and after traversing for about two miles of a sandy desert arriv'd in said town about six o'clock, and putting up in Kelso's Inn, had supper at eight with a suitable wash down of punch, and retired early to bed. About seven next morning we sauntered towards the burying ground of Ardrossan where a man it is said is interred who had been guilty of some wicked deed, and to perpetuate the abhorrence of such a crime (altho' we could not learn what it had been), and to deter others from following the same course, the picture of the devil is cut on his gravestone. At nine returned to breakfast and in half an hour afterwards bade adieu for a time to the western coast, and directed our steps homeward. In passing Kilwinning devoted half an hour in viewing the ruins of its antient monastery and sauntering amongst the tombs and jotting down some of the whimsical inscriptions on the gravestones. After an agreeable walk through Dalry and Beith arrived in Paisley at four o'clock and dining in [ ]'s<sup>6</sup> Hotel stepped into the double coach at five o'clock for Glasgow, where we arrived at half past six."

While Bald may not have been the most observant of travellers, this record of his visit to Ayr is of value for conveying something of the atmosphere of Ayrshire in the 1790s. The crowds jostling round the church door for a sight of a wealthy young heiress, and Adam's trepidation at a "stout, bouncing" female barber - perhaps understandable so soon after his experiences in Liverpool - give a colour, and a roundness, to contemporary life which is absent from the formal records of the period, upon which so much of our understanding is based.

- 1 Glasgow City Archives, TD19/6. The trip to Ayr is on pp 84-86.
- 2 Glasgow City Archives, TD19/1.
- 3 The young lady is Henrietta Scott, who was probably 18 at this time, and who subsequently married the Marquis of Titchfield, who became Duke of Portland. For fuller information see James Mair, *Cessnock: an Ayrshire Estate in the Age of Improvement*, 1996, AANHS.
- 4 The Black Bull in River Street.
- 5 William Bryan, who appears to have died in 1799, was the landlord of the Cross Keys, Irvine.
- 6 Undecipherable.

## NEW BOOKS ABOUT AYRSHIRE

JOHN SMITH OF DALRY

Geologist, Antiquarian and Natural Historian

Part 2 - Archaeology and Natural History

AANHS £7.20 ISBN 0 9527445 0 3

This is a splendid piece of work and a credit to all involved in its production. Part 1 which appeared six months previously is equally authoritative, though its articles on sometimes abstruse aspect of geology make difficult going for the general reader. By contrast, Part 2, by experts in this other field, provides an interesting and valuable survey of our county and its earliest inhabitants.

John Hume is able to draw on family memories to present 'John Smith, the Man and his Times'. The author's father provided family papers and reminiscences of "Uncle John Smith". This fascinating account complements the other studies of Smith's life which appeared in Part 1.

There follow three most impressive articles on Early Prehistory, the Iron Age, and the Early Historic Period, each of which not only analyses Smith's contribution, but effectively provides an up-dated account of the respective periods. Alex Morrison in 'The Early Prehistory of Ayrshire' points out (p. 14) that "a major part of the archaeological evidence on which we base our interpretations of the earliest societies in the region was already available at the time when *Prehistoric Man in Ayrshire* was published in 1895, some of it discovered by Smith himself". From this and more recent discoveries Morrison is able to describe the Mesolithic, Neolithic, and Bronze Ages within Ayrshire. Alastair Hendry follows on with 'The Iron Age in Ayrshire', deals with native sites and the Roman presence in the county, and provides a current list of sites of known or possible Iron Age occupation, with notes on those discovered or excavated since Smith's time. Leslie Alcock in 'The Early Historic Period' studies the Hunterston Brooch, the Buiston crannog, the Courthill of Dalry, and the Castehill fort at Dalry, all of which were noted by Smith, and the last of which he himself excavated. Smith's work in each case has been the basis for later studies, as Alcock relates. Appropriately, each of these articles is supplied with excellent maps and plans which not only illuminate the text, but will help amateur local historians to a clearer understanding of what was going on in their corner of the county in earliest times.

A similar high standard of treatment is maintained by Ralph Kirkwood in 'John Smith's Contribution to the Botany of Ayrshire'. This is more than a review of Smith's *Botany of Ayrshire* which was published in 1896. It is no less than a description of Ayrshire's plant species, enumerating the parishes where each was



recorded by Smith, and (so detailed is Dr Kirkwood's expertise) commenting on their present distribution.

Two shorter pieces conclude the volume: Fred Woodward, 'John Smith's Contribution to Zoology' and Charles Woodward, 'John Smith's Notebook at the Dick Institute, Kilmarnock'. Both are short but informative. The latter includes some drawings by Smith, a fitting ending to what is a lavishly illustrated and nicely-printed publication.

OLD GIRVAN: A PICTORIAL HISTORY  
9 videotapes @ £10 each plus £1 postage  
From J G Walker, 29 Dalrymple Street, Girvan  
All profits to Cancer Research

This is a highly-professional production, combining skilful camera work by Arthur Walker, its promoter, and clear and competent commentaries by James McMeikan, enhanced by a pleasant background of appropriate and unobtrusive classical music. We have much enjoyed the two volumes we have viewed.

Vol. 2 commences with a long and most impressive section, with pictures, both black-and-white and coloured, of the harbour c. 1910, when Girvan was the principal fishing port on the west coast, with markets six days a week. There were also pleasure boats packed with holiday makers on trips to Ailsa Craig. Girvan had its own lifeboat, and a missionary yacht called to provide gospel meetings. Part 2 shows early views of Dalrymple Street, with the daily coach setting off with mail and passengers for Ballantrae. The road surface was of earth and stone, so that on hot summer days, a water cart was needed to lay the dust. Then came an early motor coach with solid tyres and chain-driven wheels. Part 3 presents pictures of the excavations of Bronze Age urns at Coalpots Road, as reported in *Ayrshire Collections*, Vol. 7. Part 4 has a unique sequence on spinning, handloom weaving, and the cottages. Part 5 recalls December 1908 when the entire town was submerged under 18 feet of snow. Part 6 shows St Joseph's Convent in about 1920: a private school for a hundred girls, it included rooms for cookery, needlework, music, art, and science. The final section on the Town Council shows pictures from earlier years - when the Provost led top-hatted councillors to the kirk of the council - until Girvan lost its municipal independence in 1975.

Vol. 5 provides a guided tour, by horse-drawn wagonette and early motor coach, out into the country where fields of corn in stooks have long been built over. We travel to Ballantrae, Colmonell, Dailly, Maidens, Turnberry, Maybole, Dunure, Croy Shore, Kirkoswald, Kirkmichael, Straiton, admiring vernacular architecture, with passing glimpses of such things as toll houses, threshing mill, and a fine view of a steam train crossing the Pinmore viaduct.

Clearly productions such as these are an inestimable contribution to social history. How indebted we are to all those early photographers, and to those who have rescued their slides and prints to present them to us, either in book form, or now on videotape. But can we conclude with a challenge? Can we emulate the early photographers by using our camcorders to produce an even more vivid record of everyday life in our local communities in the last days of the 20th century? In our last issue we reviewed the Newmilns videotape which made such a record of lace making in the Irvine Valley factory. We should have more like that to bequeath to posterity. Unlike Sam Goldwyn who complained "Why should I do anything for posterity? What's posterity ever done for me?"

The contents of the nine videotapes include:

1. Girvan Harbour pre-1910; the bridges; Stair Park & War Memorial.
2. The Harbour from 1910 onwards; Dalrymple Street; Weavers' Cottages etc.
3. The streets of Old Girvan.
4. Sport and Leisure; the shore; St Andrew's Church; Bridgemill; Ailsa Craig.
5. A Tour of Girvan District and Villages.
6. Trade and Business; Shops; Gasworks; Post Office; Ailsa Shipbuilding etc.
7. The McMaster Town Hall (1909 - 1939)
8. The Fifties and Sixties; the work of John Thomson and John Murray etc.
9. New Discoveries of Old Girvan; the Strathaven Plates; Treasures from the past; press impressions of the thirties; the Hume wartime portraits etc.

There is a limited stock of Vols. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 on the N.T.S.C. system for use in USA and Canada, at £14.80 each plus £1 postage.

#### THE PARISH CHURCH OF STEWARTON 1696 - 1966

compiled by Archibald Chalmers

£3.50 including postage: proceeds to church funds  
from A. Chalmers, 1 Thomson Terrace, Stewarton, KA3 3BJ

It is said that the camel was an animal designed by a committee. The committee led by Mr Chalmers which created this forty-eight page booklet has produced something rather more elegant. True, there are some pages of little general interest, but more which deserve attention. A McKellar provides a summary of 'Past Ministries' from the 13th century church which was subject to Kilwinning Abbey, through the Reformation and difficult times of the 17th century, and the erection



of the present building in 1696, until the Union of 1929 when it became known as Stewarton Laigh Kirk, and 1962 when the congregation of Cairns Church was united in what has since been St Columba's Church. There are contributions by those who have since been ministers, extracts from minutes which also reveal the more recent changes. These, and brief notes on various aspects of congregational life are of more than parochial interest, but a useful commentary on one important aspect of social change in the present century. What memories are stirred by these paragraphs:

'The most popular event of the whole year was undoubtedly the Sunday School trip, know locally as "the ja'nt", which always headed for South Beach, Ardrossan. On that particular Saturday in mid-June each summer we all gathered at the Hall at 10-30 am. The boys dressed in the traditional grab of grey flannel shorts held up by a striped belt with snake clip, white shirts and socks, and sandals or "sandshoes". The lassies wore gaily coloured print frocks, most of them made up by their mothers. All had tinnies (tin cups) suspended from their shoulders by tape.

'All the local kirks then marched to the railway station with the various ministers leading the procession and with (in our case) the Laigh Kirk Sunday School banner held aloft. Then into the special train, down with the windows and out with the streamers and we were on our way. Oh, the excitement!

'At South Beach a ring was formed when tea, "auld kirk sandwiches" and pokes (with bun, chocolate, biscuit and cake) were handed out by the teachers. Later the races were held, the winners receiving 3d, with tuppence for second and a penny for third.

'Wasn't it strange that on the Sundays immediately before the Christmas parties and the Trips, the attendances were the highest for the whole year?'

### SCOTTISH ARCHIVES

The Journal of the Scottish Records Association  
Volume 1, 1995. (£10.00 + £2.00 p&p; free to members)

This is a journal to be doubly welcomed by the readers of Ayrshire Notes: first, as an authoritative, interesting and well-presented volume of papers in which active historians report on recent work, with emphasis on the identification of sources and discussion of their value; secondly, for the inclusion of two papers of particular interest to historians of Ayrshire.

The papers fall into two groups, the first five having been presented at the SRA conference in June 1993 in Ayr concerning Agricultural Improvement in the Lowlands, and the other four at the Association's November 1993 conference on Crime and Society. If it appears that these papers have taken a long time to appear

in print, it must be appreciated that this journal is not only a new venture, but is also refereed, a factor that may entail a delay but unquestionably adds value.

Our understanding of two of Ayrshire's present day leisure grounds will be enhanced by the papers of Andrew Sclater and Alastair Hendry. Andrew Sclater considers the development of the Picturesque landscape of Culzean, finding evidence on the ground as well as in the archives, and speculates on the possibility of Robert Adam having tried his hand here as a 'landscape architect'. In Alastair Hendry's paper we learn not only of Archibald Hamilton's improvement of the Rozelle estate, but also of his encounter with Napoleon on St. Helena and of the severity with which he punished offenders during his command of ships of the East India Company.

The Scottish Records Association is concerned with the preservation and use of public and private records in Scotland. At a time when, following the reorganisation of local government, Ayrshire archives in the County Buildings have been inaccessible for months, the value of the SRA as an independent watchdog must surely be appreciated by all Scottish historians. The Journal shows that the Association is also making a valuable contribution to historical scholarship in Scotland.

### THE AUCHENHARVIE COLLIERY: AN EARLY HISTORY

by Irene Hughson

Richard Stenlake Publishing, [1995], £4.00

ISBN 1 872074 58 8

This publication is a triumph for the Three Towns Local History Group, whose members undertook the research which enabled Irene Hughson to co-ordinate this history of an early North Ayrshire colliery. Auchenharvie is between Saltcoats and Stevenston and, in the pre-railway days, was in a good position, close to the sea, to exploit the coal which lay beneath the property. The well-known ruined engine house is a poignant reminder of this early industrial enterprise.

Research into the early industrial history of this part of the Three Towns is made easier by the survival of the Auchenharvie papers, estate papers of the Cunninghames of Auchenharvie which deal extensively with the family's various enterprises, which included not only coal exploitation, but also salt, brewing and shipping. Photocopies of these papers are available in the Local History Section of Ardrossan Library.

The Three Towns Local History Group have made good use of the Auchenharvie Papers, and other sources, to produce a highly readable discussion of the development, the rise and the decline of the Cunninghame family's exploitation of the coal at Auchenharvie. It is particularly strong on the economic and financial aspects of



the business, reflecting the strengths of the surviving estate papers, and will be of considerable value not only to those with an interest in Saltcoats and Stevenston, but also to anyone with an interest in the industrial development of Ayrshire generally.

I would have welcomed an index - this seems to be becoming a recurring theme in my reviews - but overall the Local History Group, Irene Hughson, the publishers and printers have to be congratulated on producing a very attractive booklet, whose 36 pages represent astonishingly good value for £4.

Rob Close

### OLD MUIRKIRK AND GLENBUCK

by David Pettigrew

Richard Stenlake Publishing, 1996, £5.99

ISBN 1 872074 71 5

This reviewer has always been slightly cautious in approaching books of old photographs and postcards. Although I enjoyed the images, I often wondered about the accuracy of the text, which often seemed to be a mishmash of standard truths and half-remembered local stories. The early volumes were, perhaps, produced by people whose interest was in the photographs, per se, but, more recently, as local historians and others have begun to recognise the value of these images, there is a welcome increased accuracy in the text, with a commensurate increase in the value of these books to local historians.

David Pettigrew's book of photographs of Muirkirk and Glenbuck is, therefore, to be welcomed by Ayrshire historians as an important contribution to the history of these communities, inextricably linked with the very earliest stirrings of the industrial revolution in Ayrshire, but now fallen on harder times. Glenbuck, indeed, can hardly be said to exist, while, in Muirkirk, the contrast between the picture of Main Street on page 8 and the current view from the same position offers a stark reminder of how much Muirkirk has changed.

These are essentially industrial communities, and the photographs largely reflect this, following the growth and decline of the various industries, especially the collieries and the iron works. It is a welcome reminder of what has been lost: one must particularly regret the loss of the castellated furnace bank, and the stark symmetry of the Irondale Inn. Less regretted, perhaps, are the flats and prefabs of Smallburn, though the photograph, one of a number taken by David Crawford in 1964, has a wonderfully dream-like quality. Finally, can anyone confirm that the corrugated iron golf club house, on p.38, is the same building as that presently used by Muirkirk Angling Club?

Rob Close

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

**ADVANCE NOTICE:** Dr Margaret Sanderson, whose publications are well known to Ayrshire readers, tells us that in the spring there will be published (by Tuckwell Press) her new book entitled *Ayrshire and the Reformation: People and Change, 1490-1600*.

**ANOTHER ANNIVERSARY:** It has been noticed that 1997 will be fifty years since work commenced on the Third Statistical Account of Ayrshire, and the AANHS has been considering the possibility of an 'update'. Towards this end Kaye Smith, a student at Ayr College, has agreed to undertake a survey of economic developments in Ayrshire 1947-1997.

**GREEN MEN:** In an informative article in *The Scottish Local History Journal* (Vol. 37, June 1996), Betty Wilsher provides an account of the so-called 'Green Man' on gravestones throughout Scotland, with details of those noticed in graveyards at Ayr, Barr, Fenwick, Kilmaurs, Muirkirk and Riccarton.

**CAN YOU HELP?** Mr Albert Bil, 23 Airyhall Gardens, Aberdeen, AB5 7QL, is researching the environmental/ecological history of the Lendalfoot Hills - the area between the coastal road from Girvan to Lendalfoot (A77), the Girvan/Pinwherry road (A714), and the Pinwherry/Colmonell road (A765). Any information about local land-owning families and their records from medieval times onwards would be greatly appreciated by Mr Bil.

**RIVER IRVINE FLOODS:** Flooding in and around Kilmarnock has led to Babbie Group, Consulting Engineers, 95 Bothwell Street, Glasgow G2 7HK, being commissioned to make a hydrological study of the River Irvine from Darvel down to Shewalton, and its tributary Kilmarnock Water within that town. The consultants would welcome information on the history of flooding in the area.



## **PUBLICATIONS of the**

### **AYRSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL & NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

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