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THE DISPUTED LOCATION OF MUIRKIRK TOLL by David McClure

Thomas Miller of Barskimming, Lord President of the Court of Session; Keith Stewart, brother of the earl of Galloway and Receiver General of the Land Tax for Scotland; Claud Alexander of Ballochmyle, a former paymaster of the East India Company and founder of the cotton mills at Catrine; James Boswell of Auchinleck; and John Loudon McAdam of Sauchrie: these Ayrshire landowners were the principal protagonists in a dispute over the relocation of a tollbar in the parish of Muirkirk in 1789. Their active involvement in what might seem a very local and even trivial matter, underlines both the importance attached to improvement, agricultural and industrial, in the late eighteenth century and the extent to which improvement depended on road development.

The Ayr to Edinburgh turnpike road which ran through the parish of Muirkirk was included in the first Ayr Road Act in 1767 (7 Geo. III c. 106), in which it was defined as *the road leading from Ayr by Mauchline, Sorn and Muirkirk towards Douglas, so far as that road is within the said county of Ayr*.¹ A tollbar was erected at Boghall (Wallacetown) near Ayr in 1770, and another at Mauchline in 1772.² Metalling of the road as far as Mauchline was probably completed within a few years of the passing of the Act. East of Mauchline, however, matters proceeded more slowly.

James Boswell (1740-1795), one of the trustees on the committee for the road, recorded in his journal on Friday, 8th November 1782, that he *walked from breakfast till dinner laying out a new road from Sorn*.³ Two and a half years later, on Tuesday 24th May 1785, a petition was submitted to the commissioners of supply for Ayrshire, signed by *Thomas Miller Esq. Lord Justice Clerk* (1717-1789) as convener of the road committee, seeking the reinstatement of a grant for two bridges on the line east of Muirkirk, over Ponesk Burn and the Water of Ayr.^{4,5} A grant of £70 had been awarded for these bridges some years previously but, the bridges not having been built within the prescribed three years, it had lapsed. According to the petition, the trustees *had advanced large sums of money out of their own pockets for making and repairing the said road without any prospect of repayment; and they have now nearly completed the line of said road through this county to join Mr Douglass's [sic] road by which a very important communication is opened to Edinburgh and a great part of Scotland*. The grant was renewed. The road was either not nearly completed as they claimed, or soon fell into complete disrepair, because a couple of years later it was being made anew.

1785 was the eve of dramatic changes in that part of Ayrshire, described by Fullarton as that *bleak, uncultivated country*.⁶ That year Keith Stewart (1739-1795) commenced to acquire land in Muirkirk, becoming the largest landowner in the

parish within a few years. In 1786 Claud Alexander (d. 1809) and his partner, David Dale, commenced the cotton mill at Catrine in the adjacent parish of Sorn.^{7,8} In the same year Archibald Cochrane (1749-1831), 9th earl of Dundonald, founded the British Tar Company and began to erect his tar kilns at Kaimes, where Stewart became both his landlord and provider of finance.⁹ Stewart commissioned mineral surveys and, as a direct result of his efforts to interest ironmasters in the deposits in the parish, the Muirkirk Iron Company was established by a group of entrepreneurs from Glasgow in 1787.^{10,11} The reward for his endeavours and investment was that the company contracted to take minerals from his lands.¹² It was also to be a potentially profitable customer for the tar company, which contracted to coke 10,000 tons of coal a year, sufficient to supply one furnace.¹³

Thomas Miller was also convener of the committee for the turnpike from Kilmarnock to Cumnock. In 1787 he resigned from that post, explaining that *the business of the Roads required more attention & more frequent meetings that he can attend*.¹⁴ Notwithstanding this, he continued his active involvement with the Muirkirk road.

Good communications were essential to the success of Muirkirk's nascent industries. It was, according to the founders of the iron company, a *Desart & Inland Place*, and they would preferably have established their furnaces elsewhere, had similar deposits of iron ore been available.¹⁵ Stewart, as befitted a landowner committed to developing the commercial potential of his estates, became involved with the road committee. On Friday 5th October 1787, the trustees meeting in Mauchline were joined by John Bushby, sheriff clerk of Dumfriesshire and Stewart's factor. He attended on behalf of Stewart, for whom he made a memorandum of the proceedings which was agreed correct by all those present.¹⁶ According to Bushby *Mr Alexander has undertaken the making that part of the road between Air & Muirkirk that joins to Mauchline so far as his interest runs... and so far as not reimbursed at the End of the 7 years he becomes a Creditor with others on the Toll bar funds*. This left about 560 falls (about 2 miles) of road to be made to the junction with the road towards Muirkirk from Cumnock, and about half a mile beyond Muirkirk. The sum required was about £140, which Stewart was going to advance. They calculated that he would be repaid out of the conversion money of the parish in seven years, but that for payment of interest he would have to rely on the revenue of the tollbars. A further £100 would be required for bridges. John McAdam of Craigengillan and Adam Crawford Newall of Polquhairn, both having lands lying along the road, would benefit from its improvement. There was little hope of assistance from them however: *The first will not advance a shilling in my opinion; he will trust to Mr Stewart's advancing the money rather than allow the road to stop short - The last cannot advance as he is but a Life-renter [and is] very pinched*. Following his death, in July 1791 Crawford Newall's lands, about 1100 Scots acres, were subject to a judicial sale.¹⁷ Stewart's response to Bushby is not in the muniments, but it is clear that he did advance a sum of money and become a creditor on the road.

In addition to his interests in Muirkirk, his estate and mansion of Glasserton in Wigtownshire and his duties as Receiver General of the Land Tax for Scotland, Keith Stewart was a commodore in the Royal Navy. About this time he was called away for service against the French, and in 1788 he commanded the Berwick in action against the enemy fleet. This absence in the service of his country coloured his reaction to subsequent events.^{18,19}

Development of communications continued. The partners in the iron company were particularly interested in the road to Glasgow by way of Strathaven, which was then almost impassable at any time of the year. According to John Ainslie, the Edinburgh land surveyor and map maker, in his report dated 15th July 1788 prepared for the commissioners of supply of Lanarkshire and Ayrshire (though he addressed it to the road trustees of the two counties), *the Road from Muirkirk to Strathaven in its present condition is so wretchedly bad that it is next to an impossibility for any person upon Horseback to travel upon it without a Guide and even then very dangerous. and altogether impassible for any Carriage*.²⁰

Progress continued on the Edinburgh road, with the Ayrshire commissioners of supply making a grant of £150 on 30th April 1788 for bridges over the Greenock and Garpel between Sorn and Muirkirk.²¹ The name "Garpel" is misleading. The burn referred to is the Whitehaugh, crossed by the road near to the farmhouse of Garpel, and not the Garpel Burn on the line of another prospective road, that from Muirkirk to Sanquhar. On this occasion the petition was presented for the road committee by Claud Alexander, Arthur Campbell of Auchmannoch and John Farquhar Gray of Gilmilnscroft. It was pleaded that the bridges were necessary *in order to make the above Line of Road passable for Travellers*.

The road committee had three meetings in the following month.²² At the first, held in Mauchline on Thursday 1st May, two matters were tabled for further enquiry: a proposed alteration of the line east of Muirkirk; and whether it would be advantageous to alter the present positions of the tollbars. The second was at Muirmiln on Saturday 10th May. They examined a new line proposed by Commodore Stewart, which they considered much better than the existing one. *But as the Old line is partly made and the rest passable and there is at present no funds, they opted to keep the present line unless Commodore Stewart will advance money*. It appears that he did not choose to do so. At this meeting they also recommended that *the Tollbar should be removed from Muirkirk to near to the Junction of the Mauchline and Cumnock Road providing Mr Strang will agree to pay the Original expense of building the present Tollhouse*. From this it appears that a Mr Strang was the instigator of the relocation of the Muirkirk tollbar. The third meeting took place at Mauchline on 26th May, but its business appears to have consisted solely of receiving the report from the previous meeting. None of these meetings were attended by Stewart, who as we have seen was attending a naval engagement; nor by Bushby to act on his behalf. Alexander attended all three; James Boswell on the 26th only.

John Loudon McAdam (1756-1836) had by now an interest in Muirkirk, through his employment as agent for the tar company founded by his cousin, Archibald Cochrane. He must also have been known to Stewart, who in a letter dated 26th July 1788 to John Wright, then conducting mineral surveys for him, wrote that McAdam should be informed when Mr Wilkinson, an English ironmaster, arrived in the parish.²³ McAdam soon became the main negotiator between the British Tar Company and the Muirkirk Iron Company.²⁴

The relocation of the Muirkirk tollbar was the only issue on the agenda at a meeting of the road committee which was held in Mauchline on Tuesday 7th April 1789.²⁵ Those attending were Alexander (presiding), Miller, Boswell, Campbell, Farquhar Gray, and McAdam of those already mentioned, together with Bruce Campbell - a cousin of Boswell's, and Robert Aird of Crossflat. In a demonstration of fairness, they roused the bar first in its present position, and then in the proposed position. The best offer in the first case was from the current tacksman, James Murdoch, for £25-5s-0d, and in the second case was from Charles Hopekins at Muirkirk, for £26-10s-0d. Mr Strang offered to purchase the existing tollhouse for £18-0s-0d if the bar were moved. The offers of Hopekins and Strang were accepted and the road trustees agreed to build a new tollhouse at Wellwood dykes. No dissent was recorded, though it appears from a subsequent letter written by Alexander to Stewart, that McAdam may have at least expressed doubt.

In that letter, dated Sunday 3rd May 1789, Alexander complained that *McAdam has misrepresented the business of removing the Muirkirk Toll bar. According to Alexander, at the suggestion of James Boswell, they had offered very fair to Mr Macadam on the 30th April, That if he would secure us in a House at or near the present situation we paying the Rent that we should let the Tollbar remain for this year he paying the difference betwixt the Rent offered at Muirkirk & what was offered for the situation at Wellwood.*²⁶

McAdam was by then running the tar works, writing to Stewart on Monday 11th May that he had found it necessary to go to Muirkirk because the tar was not to his liking.²⁷ He wrote to Stewart again on Saturday 16th May, saying that the business of the Muirkirk tollbar was much more *scandalous* than he had thought.²⁸ McAdam had taken *great pains at Muirkirk to get to the bottom of it*. He had discovered that *Mr Strang has used any unfair means to prevent the peoples bidding [sic] for it in its present situation by promises threats and the idea of his Town being exempt and on the contrary had his own emissarys to bid up the other place*. Alexander was ashamed to acknowledge his being so egregiously taken in to countenance this business and therefore wishes it never to come to publick hearing. Thomas Miller, on the other hand, was angry that people he calls Strangers / meaning yourself and my [sic] should interfere in what he has directed for a dozen of years and therefore he opposes you. We cannot know what substance there was for McAdam's accusations. Miller's anger, however, was unjustified. However recent their interest in the road compared to his own, Stewart and McAdam were qualified to

act as road trustees, and to attend and vote at meetings of the road committee. Stewart was also entitled to be concerned as a creditor of the road.

Stewart wrote a *memorandum*, undated, but clearly following receipt of McAdam's letter (memorandum in the sense of a note of something to be remembered; a record of observations - possibly for future use).²⁹ He saw the removal of the tollbar from Muirkirk to Wellwood as *only an Indulgence to one Proprietor at the Expense of another*. Despite the results of the roup, he thought that the revenue would have been higher had the bar been left at Muirkirk. He felt that because he had been granted security upon the toll funds when he advanced money for the road, he should have been consulted before the bar was moved, and that during his absence *some Gentlemen . . . took many undue means to gain their object*. Despite the *People being prevented from bidding for the Toll bar as it then stood*, only a few shillings of annual rent were gained by moving it. Little of this small gain would have been lost by waiting for his return. He was sure that this small indulgence would have been granted to him as a subscriber to the road, *even to me a Stranger* [with reference to Miller's categorisation of him], *if other concealed reasons had not been at the bottom, which were not explained to the meeting, because they were not fit to be brought forward*.

An appeal by the Honble. Keith Stewart of Glassertoun against the removing of the bar from Muirkirk to Wellwood dykes was laid before the general meeting of Ayrshire road trustees in Ayr on 1st June 1789, presided over by the earl of Dumfries.³⁰ With the *consent of the parties*, the 21 trustees at the meeting deferred giving judgement thereon. Perhaps this *consent* indicates that Stewart was by some means reconciled to the matter. The appeal did not come before the general meeting again, and Stewart's surviving records contain no later reference to the bar.

However Stewart and McAdam continued to be involved with improvement of the Edinburgh road. A petition to the commissioners of supply on 16th June 1789, signed by McAdam on behalf of Stewart, pleaded that the bridge across the Ayr at Muirmiln was *gone into great disrepair* and would soon become *dangerous for Passengers*.³¹ A newspaper advertisement placed in July by the clerk to the road committee, Gavin Hamilton, indicates the nature of the concession which Stewart had won.^{32,33} An additional tollbar was to be erected to the east of Muirkirk, near to the county line. Thus Dernhunch (or Darnhunch) toll was established, and in the roup of bars that took place at Mrs Crook's inn in Mauchline on Wednesday 20th April 1791, those for the Ayr to Edinburgh road were at Bogwood, Wellwood and Dernhunch.³⁴

According to a measurement of the section of road between Muirkirk and Sorn dated 3rd November 1789, a length of 372 feet then remained *unmade*.³⁵ The bridges over the burns of Greenock and Whitehaugh were not completed until 1794, delayed in part by the demand for labour in the iron and tar works, and further grants were awarded for bridges on the road, for instance in 1792, 1793 and 1798.³⁶

Sheppard commented that the road was tolerable *excepting a few miles in the parish*. Of the bridges then being built he wrote, *it seems strange that they should not have been built sooner on a line of road so long and so much frequented*.³⁷

The economic importance of roads in underpinning all other improvements was such that landowners of substantial means were involved in road business. Although they might agree in general about a particular road, they could fall out over matters of detail according to the interests of their own estates and undertakings. This was particularly so in the Kyle district of Ayrshire, which lacked a single, dominant landowner deferred to by the rest, such as the earl of Cassillis in Carrick or, to a lesser extent, the earl of Eglinton in Cunninghame.

Postscript

1. James Strang of Kaimshill, probably the Mr Strang of the toll dispute, failed in his contract to supply coal to the Muirkirk Iron Company and in December 1789 surrendered his assets to the company.³⁸

2. Thomas Miller died at Barskimming on Sunday 27th September 1789 and was buried in the family vault at Stair.³⁹

3. Keith Stewart died at Glasserton on Tuesday 3rd March 1795.⁴⁰ His trustees were John Loudon McAdam and John Bushby.⁴¹

4. John McAdam, his own financial difficulties precipitated by Stewart's death, sold Sauchrie and in 1798 left Ayrshire for Falmouth.⁴²

5. Early in the nineteenth century two reservoirs (the lower of which has since been drained) were created east of Muirkirk near Glenbuck for the mills at Catrine. The road was diverted and Dernhunch toll was replaced by one at Glenbuck on the county line.

Notes

All sources beginning CO3 will be found in the Ayrshire archives in the County Buildings, Ayr.

All sources beginning GD46 will be found in the Seaforth Muniments in the Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh.

1 David McClure, *Tolls and Tacksmen* (AANHS 1994).

2 CO3/4/1, Minutes of the general meetings of Ayrshire roads trustees.

3 James Boswell: Irma S. Lustig and Frederick A. Pottle (eds.), Boswell: *The Applause of the Jury 1782-1785*.

4 CO3/1/3, Minutes of the Ayrshire commissioners of supply.

5 David McClure, Miller of Barskimming in *Ayrshire Notes* No.8 (AANHS 1995).

6 William Fullarton, A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Ayr (1793).

7 James Edward Shaw, *Ayrshire 1745-1950* (1953) p.56.

8 Ian Donnachie and George Hewitt, *Historic New Lanark* (1993) pp.14-15.

9 J. R. Hume and J. Butt, Muirkirk 1786-1802: The creation of a Scottish industrial community (*Scottish Historical Review* Vol.45, 1966), p.162.

10 Hume & Butt, op. cit. p.164.

11 Rev. John Sheppard, *Old Statistical Account, Muirkirk* (1791-2).

12 GD46/17/5, Tack of minerals, Keith Stewart to Muirkirk Iron Company.

13 Hume & Butt, op. cit. p.168.

14 CO3/5/1, Minutes of the committee of trustees for the road from Kilmarnock to Cumnock.

15 Hume & Butt, op. cit. p.170.

16 GD46/13/11 (4).

17 *Glasgow Mercury*, 19-26/7/1791.

18 P. H. M'Kerlie, *History of the Lands and Their Owners in Galloway* (1906), p.492.

19 *Dictionary of National Biography*.

20 GD46/13/11 (9).

21 CO3/1/3, op. cit..

22 GD46/13/11 (4).

23 GD46/17/8.

24 Hume & Butt, op. cit., p.172.

25 GD46/13/11 (5).

26 GD46/13/11 (28).

27 GD46/13/11 (29).

28 GD46/13/11 (30).

29 GD46/13/11 (33).

30 CO3/4/1, op. cit..

31 CO3/1/4, Minutes of the Ayrshire commissioners of supply.

32 *Glasgow Mercury*, 14-21/7/1789.

33 The same Gavin Hamilton who was a friend of Robert Burns and whose farm of Mossgeil had been rented by Burns and his brother Gilbert in 1784-6.

34 *Glasgow Advertiser*, 12-25/3/1791.

35 GD46/17/1.

36 CO3/1/4, op. cit..

37 Rev. John Sheppard, op. cit..

38 Hume & Butt, op. cit., p.168.

39 *Dictionary of National Biography*.

40 GD46/17/12, p.1.

41 GD46/17/12, p.35.

42 David McClure, *Tolls and Tacksmen*, op. cit..

A DIFFERENT KIND OF SPORTSMAN

by Dave Killicoat

On a short visit to Lochgilphead last September in search of some of my Argyll ancestors, the Registrar, Mrs Isabella Soudan, mentioned that all those resident in the area with the surnames Bruce, Law or Hamilton were probably descended from one family in Newton-on-Ayr at the end of the 18th Century. It transpired that one of the Assistant Registrars was herself amongst these and had done some research on the South Knapdale side. Armed with copies of this work I returned to Ayr and added it to my pile of "things-to-do - eventually!" Only a matter of a few days later I was working on the index to the Lairs in Newton Green burial ground, when I found one lair which had been purchased by a William Bruce in the early 19th Century, and apparently never used. The name and the fact that he was a fisherman rang bells so it was not long before I had connected the lair with the families in Lochgilphead. The file was resurrected and examined in greater detail.

Around the turn of the last century, William Bruce, a herring fisherman, lived in the parish of St Quivox and Newton with his wife Agnes Robertson and children including George (born 1791), Jean (born 1798) and William (born 1801). Nearby lived William's sister Helen Bruce, who was now the wife of another fisherman, John Law, and their children, including James (born 1801)

The writer of William Bruce, junior's, obituary in 1893 supplies much of the initial information regarding the families by quoting a correspondent who some years previously had interviewed this "sturdy old warrior":-

"William Bruce was born in the town of Newton-on-Ayr in the year 1801. He remembered perfectly and could describe with accuracy and vividness the proceedings that took place in Ayr on the occasion of the Jubilee of George III in 1809. He also attended school in Ayr, along with the family of Sergeant Ewart who captured the French Eagle on the field at Waterloo. Willie followed the calling of a seaman and fisherman and numerous were the stories he was in the habit of relating when going in the skiff with his father to sell herrings. He frequently waded across the River Clyde below Glasgow Bridge. There was no idea then that any person would ever see sailing on its waters such vessels as the Campania, Lucania and the Ramilles. The writer recollects Willie telling how he and some others started on a Sunday morning to walk barefoot from Glasgow to Ayr, a distance of some 60 miles. It brought out his powers of endurance which characterised his long life of 92 years. The luxurious mode of living the present generation adopted was not known in the day of Willie: frugality and economy were the virtues to which they were trained and made the Scottish peasants the admiration of the world. Willie and his companion started on their journey without scrip or money, and did that 60 miles, and all the food or refreshment they had on the journey was a little meal mixed with water they got in a wayside house.

"In the mid Twenties he, along with his brother-in-law William Hamilton and his relative James Law arrived at Ardrishaig with their families on board the skiff 'SPORTSMAN' to prosecute the herring fishing. His brother George arrived sometime afterwards and they, and their descendants, who are numerous, for now part of the small community of the village [sic]. Willie was a great favourite in the village. Who will ever forget who saw him dressed in his blue bonnet with his snowy white hair waving below, that manly countenance on which were strongly marked honesty and stern integrity of purpose".

The original passengers on the 'SPORTSMAN' in the late 1820s were William Bruce, with his wife Mary Paton and son William (born 1827), his sister Jean and her husband William Hamilton, with their son Stewart (born 1821), and his cousin, James Law, with his wife Helen Scobbie, daughter Helen (born 1822) and son Walter (born 1826). In fact there may have been another four children on board the vessel as they all appear to have died very young, and it is difficult to discover if they died before or after the journey to South Knapdale.

Having arrived in Ardrishaig, William and Mary Bruce had at least five more children: Ann (born 1831), David (born 1832), Agnes (born 1838), Robert (born 1840) and Mary (born 1843). William and Jean Hamilton also produced a further five children: Margaret (born 1828, and the first 'SPORTSMAN' child to be born in Ardrishaig), William (born 1830), Jane (born 1832), Elizabeth (born 1837) and Janet (born 1839). James and Helen Law had six children all recorded in the Old Parish Registers of South Knapdale: Mary (born 1830), John (born 1833), Catherine (born 1834, and died in infancy), James (born 1836), Ann (born 1839) and George (born 1842).

Seven or eight years later, William's elder brother George arrived with his wife Agnes Young. George and Agnes had ten children born in St Quivox and Newton, and only one born in South Knapdale, who was Birnet Hardie Bruce, born in 1835. At least eight of those born in Ayrshire emigrated to Ardrishaig at some point: William (born 1815), Martha (born 1817), Janet (born 1819), John (born 1823), George (born 1826), Robert (born 1828), James (born 1830) and Jean (born 1832). The eldest son - William - either married Janet Paton (sister of his uncle William's wife) in Dundonald before making the journey or returned to marry, before taking her to live in Argyll.

If you are following the story so far you will realise that by 1841 there are three families of Bruces, nineteen in number, one family of seven Hamiltons and one family of eight Laws - all with Ayrshire descent. There is also the first complication in the genealogy with two William Bruces - uncle and nephew - marrying respectively the Paton sisters Mary and Janet. In 1856 George Bruce and his cousin Jane Hamilton added to the confusion by marrying. Even with these relationships, conventional methods of charting family history had gone by the board so if you include the following facts you can imagine the problem: -

William Bruce and his sister Ann marry Margaret McBrayen and her brother Duncan; William and Ann's brother David and sister Agnes marry Mary McFarlane and her brother Donald; Walter Law and his sister Mary marry Mary McEwan and her brother Duncan; Walter and Mary's brother James and sister Ann marry Flora Smith and her brother Angus; Stewart Hamilton and his cousin Robert Bruce marry sisters Christina and Jane McIntyre; John Law and his cousin Birnet Hardie Bruce marry sisters Mary and Janet McCallum.

By the time of the 1881 census it is possible to find living in Lochgilphead in excess of 150 people who can all claim descent from the parents of the original William and Helen Bruce in Newton-on-Ayr, and this in a relatively small parish. Of these, more than 80 are Bruces, Laws and Hamiltons.

The genealogy of the above family is certainly the most complicated I have yet found but it does serve to demonstrate how quickly a large number of descendants can derive from one set of parents. It may also provide some clues for those of you who thought some of the families of their ancestors had disappeared off the face of the earth in Newton-on-Ayr when they had merely gone fishing. Alternatively I hope that the information provided will be of even further use to family historians with connections here: I say "further use" because I have already found, purely by chance, four people, one from Fife, who had at least one relative on the 'SPORTSMAN'.

The complete file has been copied and deposited in the local history department at the Carnegie Library in Ayr, which can provide further information if required. All future discoveries will be added as soon as practicable.

Sources:

- 1 *Argyllshire Advertiser*, 1893, courtesy of Mrs Soudan.
- 2 The Old Parish Registers of South Knapdale and St Quivox and Newton (available on microfilm at Lochgilphead Registrar's Office and Carnegie Library, Ayr, respectively).
- 3 *The International Genealogical Index*.
- 4 The Censuses for South Knapdale and Lochgilphead, 1841 - 1881. (Mitchell Library, Glasgow, or Lochgilphead Registrar's Office).
- 5 Index to the 1881 Census on microfiche (Kilmarnock Family History Centre).
- 6 Transcripts of various certificates of birth, marriage and death obtained at Glasgow Genealogy Centre, 22 Park Circus, Glasgow.

TO ATTENDANCE AND BLEEDING

In my note on cock-fighting in Ayrshire Notes 10, one of the bit players was James Bone, the physician who treated the injured William Graham. Born circa 1750, Bone was one of a succession of Ayr doctors, including Philip Whiteside and George Charles, who were prominent in the public affairs of the Burgh. He became a Burgess in 1803, and served as a Baillie for a period after November 1803.

In June 1790, two years before he treated Graham, he was obliged to pursuer a number of debtors through the Ayr Burgh Small Claims Court. A number of the debts had remained unpaid for ten years or more, and Bone's decision to pursue these 32 debtors was probably prompted by what we would now regard as a cash flow crisis. The debts are mainly small, ranging from £1 5s 11d, owed by Colin Campbell, landwaiter, for various treatments stretching back to November 1777, to the 7d, owed by James Thom, indweller, for a glass of hysteric drops supplied to him in February 1778. We would, perhaps, be rather surprised if our doctors were to prescribe "hysteric drops", and it is this insight into medicinal treatment in the late 18th Century that makes James Bone's defaulters of interest.

The most expensive treatment appears to have been "inoculation", for which Bone charged 5s. This he carried out in May 1781 on a child of Arthur McConnell, candlemaker, in June 1782 on a child of Andrew McKelvie, a labourer, and in May 1784 on a child of John Walker, quarrier. Inoculation, which is the deliberate insertion of the virus beneath the skin, had been developed in the early 18th Century, principally as a prophylactic against smallpox, and led, in 1796, to the development by Jenner of vaccine inoculation. It was, however, not cheap - 5s was, to McKelvie the labourer, for instance, roughly 2 days wages - a considerable expenditure.

Arthur McConnell had need of the doctor again in the spring of 1789, when the various remedies prescribed included "a vomit" (3d), "a blister" (6d) and rhubarb (4d). A vomit is obviously an emetic designed to purge the body of whatever was ailing it, and it is unfortunate that the accounts do not allow us to know what ailments Bone was treating, for this is a frequent prescription. Blisters were, unsurprisingly, plasters applied to raise a blister, and appear to have been particularly used in combating various inflammations. Again it is a remedy to which Bone resorts frequently. The physical effects of rhubarb are well-known, as are those of senna leaves, which are also regularly prescribed.

An anodyne draught or an anodyne pill are also frequently referred to in these accounts: "anodyne" meaning 'reducing or assuaging pain': we are dealing here with late 18th Century painkillers. On 21st August 1779, for instance, Andrew McKie, tailor, received an anodyne draught, a dose of salt and two anodyne pills, and was also charged 1s for "bleeding and attendance". Bleeding, too, appears to have featured regularly in Bone's armoury of cures: between this, the emetics and

the laxatives, it is apparent that 18th Century medicine believed strongly in 'purging' in various ways. Agnes Kirkland, relict of George Smith, shoemaker, was charged, in 1783, 1s for "3 papers sweating powder and bleeding".

Sudorific (i.e. promoting perspiration) draughts and powders were charged respectively in 1779 to John Logan, tailor, and in 1780 and 1781 to the schoolmaster John Ramsay; in 1779 John White, mason, received a glass of vervain drops (3d), while in 1784 James Aitken, stocking maker, received syrup of buckthorn (5d), as well as an escharctic powder and an antipsoric ointment. In 1788 Ephraim Stewart, wright, received syrup of poppies (3d). Other seemingly exotic remedies include Peruvian bark, for which George Gaulston, butcher, was charged 5d in 1781, and Indian Pinks, prescribed for Ramsay in 1782 and Aitken in 1783. Peruvian bark is a source of quinine, while a worming powder is prepared from the roots of Indian Pinks. There are many other strange and unusual sounding prescriptions, as well as 'cooling juleps' and calomel, but I'll conclude with the 3 leeches for which David Lauchland, a servant with Captain John Webster, was charged 1s in September 1789.

A medical historian would doubtless be able to read more into these accounts than I have done. They do however, I hope, throw some light, for those of us of a non-medical background, on the day-to-day treatment of illness in Ayr in the 1770s and 1780s. The source is B6/35/31 1790/20, from the Ayr Burgh records, in the Carnegie Library, Ayr.

Rob Close

Can any reader help?

1. The AANHS is still studying the Drongan Pottery. A quantity of sherds found on the site need to be compared with its known products. If you have or know of any piece of pottery which you are reasonably confident came from there, will you please speak to James Mair on 01560 323097?

2. Dr Brian Moffatt, Director of SHARP, which is investigating the medieval hospital site at Soutra, believes that an old Ayrshire name for the plant bistort (*Polygonum Bistorta*) is 'Pencuir Kale'. He thinks Pencuir is probably a placename. Alastair Hendry points out that an ancient name for Pinwherry was Penquhiren, which is quite close. Will any reader who has ever come across the term Pencuir Kale, or has any suggestions, please speak to Trevor Mathews on 01292 441915?

NETHER CATRINE HOUSE

The Laird's House where Burns dinner'd with a Lord

by Tony Kleboe

During the 18th Century, Catrine had three divisions, Wester Catrine, Nether Catrine and Over Catrine. In one of these is Dugald Stewart's house ... "the seat of the late Dr and the present Professor Dugald Stewart" is how Burns described it in 1786. Dr Stewart had died in January 1785 and in October the following year the well-known and important meeting between Burns and Lord Daer took place to arrange for the poet's introduction to Edinburgh and to promote a second edition of his poems. Biographers of Burns have been at variance over which house the meeting took place in, and this note attempts to unravel the confusion.

Burns' poem marking the occasion does not name the house, nor did Professor Stewart when writing to Dr James Currie, author of the first major Burns biography - "my house in Ayrshire" sufficed; indeed there is no evidence to date of the title Nether Catrine House being used during the 18th and 19th centuries. However the title is correct inasmuch as it was the house of the lairds of Nether Catrine and remained so until Colonel Matthew Stewart, Dugald's heir, built Catrine House in c.1828, and the old house became Catrine Farm.

The old house is still recognisably Dugald Stewart's country residence. But it had seldom been given its proper title until recently, when it became necessary to have it 'listed'.¹ In 1888 John Stewart Blackie wrote of a lovely country residence at Catrine and in 1891 in Chambers' "Life and Works of Burns", it becomes a villa at Catrine. In 1904 Charles Dougall, in his book "The Burns Country", correctly identified the building and wrote: "... this farmhouse, and not the present Catrine House, which was not built until the cotton works had been established ..."

In 1921 Duncan McNaught's book "The Truth about Burns" refers simply to Dugald Stewart's house in Catrine and then in 1930, in Catherine Carswell's important biography, it is only "house near Ballochmyle". In 1936 Hans Hecht correctly refers to it as Professor Dugald Stewart's country residence in Catrine. But three years later, in 1939, De Lancy Ferguson made a significant descriptive addition when the venue of Burns' meeting with Lord Daer became "... in October came an invitation to dine on the 23rd at Catrine House, country home of Dugald Stewart ..."

A stranger visiting Catrine in 1939 asking for Catrine House would have been directed up the hill to the A76. Catrine farm house, alias Nether Catrine House, at that time was hidden to the north by a tenement building, and to the south by the

railway station and goods yard. In 1950 a new name appears: Catrine Bank. Here again, a stranger asking for directions to Catrine Bank, and having eliminated the imposing 1873 red sandstone building housing the Catrine branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland in St Germain Street, may or may not be directed to Daldorch House, formerly Catrine Bank, the residence of early Catrine cotton mill managers, and at present undergoing refurbishment, and planned to become, in 1998, a special needs school for autistic children.

Many Burns biographers since 1950 have stated that the October 1786 meeting of Burns and Lord Daer took place in Professor Dugald Stewart's house, Catrine Bank.² We may never know how this misnaming came about. Speculation could be interesting but probably unproductive. Perhaps it is not important that Nether Catrine House should be misnamed, but there is a danger for future researchers. Catrine House no longer exists but Catrine House Nursery and Caravan Park does. Catrine Bank, renamed Daldorch, is still there. Both locations are reasonably close to Nether Catrine House. The name and the location could become items of Burns mythology: a heritage loss for both Burns and the village of Catrine.

NOTES

1 Historic Buildings and Monuments, Scottish Development Department, letter ref. HGH/A/SF, August 1989: "I now write to confirm that Nether Catrine House was included on the Secretary of State's list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at Category B on 26 July 1989".

2 The Baird Institute, Cumnock, Burns collection of approximately 300 items provided the foregoing information. Authors naming Dugald Stewart's house as Catrine Bank include David Daiches (1950), Maurice Lindsay (1954), Alan Bold (1991), James Mackay (1992) and Ian McIntyre (1995)

AYRSHIRE FEDERATION OF HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING GIRVAN, TUESDAY 13 MAY 1997

The Annual General Meeting of the Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies will be held on the evening of Tuesday 13th May, 1997, in the McKechnie Institute, Girvan. The meeting will be preceeded by a walking tour of Girvan. Members of the Federation will be notified directly, but, as always, the Federation welcomes visitors to its meetings. Further details can be had from the Federation's secretary, Dave Killicoat, on 01292 260013.

GEORGE DOUGLAS OF RODINGHEAD A Postscript

At the conclusion of his Cessnock monograph [AANHS, No. 18, 1996, p.56], James Mair mentions that George Douglas, the factor to the Loudoun and Cessnock estates, purchased the small estate of Rodinghead from the guardians of the Countess of Loudoun towards the end of the 18th Century.

This purchase qualified him to be a commissioner of supply. Judging by his attendance at commissioner's meetings, Douglas was prepared to be as attentive to county business as he was to that of his employers. In the 27 years from 1792 to 1818, a George Douglas of Rodinghead attended the annual land tax meeting in all but four years. After an interval of 11 years, someone of the same name attended on five occasions from 1829 to 1842. It is probable that this second series represents the attendances of his son.

David McClure

George Douglas of Rodinghead died on the 26th January 1826. His wife, Isabella Dykes, whom he had married in 1794, died in March 1815. They had at least 4 daughters, of whom 2 died unmarried, and 1 son, also George. He died on 5th February 1850. As a factor, George Douglas's name appears frequently in the contemporary Glasgow and Ayr papers, in connection with farm lets and the other day-to-day business of the estates he managed. In 1799 he made a "Voluntary Contribution in Aid of Government" of 30 guineas, "over and above all taxes". (*Glasgow Courier*, 10 September 1799). In February 1804 he took out an insurance policy with the Sun Insurance Office, insuring his house for £500, his "household goods, wearing apparel, printed books and plate" for £500, and his farm buildings and stock for £500, a total insured value of £999. (Guildhall Library, MS 11937, vol. 60, policy no. 759931)

Rob Close

From the Riccarton Old Parish Register of 1840:

Campbell Jessie, daughter of George James Campbell Esq. of Treesbank & Catherine John Indiana Jones, was born at Frankfort on the 28th December 1840.

AYRSHIRE SOUND ARCHIVE

Since its inception in the early 1980s, the Ayrshire Sound Archive has been run by the Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies. The Federation has now decided that it is time to establish the Sound Archive as a separate entity with its own constitution, committee of management, and financial control. There is money in the Federation's accounts which will be transferred to the Sound Archive, once it has been formally established. The Federation feels that this will enable the Sound Archive to make further progress, and particularly to make applications on its own account for grant support from bodies such as the Lottery.

There is a tremendous amount of work to be done with the Archive, including the accessioning and cataloguing of tapes which have been deposited over the last few years, the transcription and publication of some of the better tapes, and the development of further Resource Kits to follow on from the success of the Mining Resource Kit. The Archive is currently housed at Paisley University's Craigie Campus, though this is an issue that we suspect that the new organisation may wish to discuss. The office-bearers of the Federation are currently preparing a new constitution, etc., for the Ayrshire Sound Archive.

We are, however, looking for VOLUNTEERS, from throughout the county, to help with the Archive. In particular, we need people who are willing to help with the work of accessioning, transcription, etc., but we also need people to serve on the ASA Committee, and to take on the various offices such as Secretary and Treasurer.

This is an opportunity to become involved with an important aspect of local history in Ayrshire. If you are interested in becoming involved please contact either Rob Close [01292 590273] or Dave Killicoat [01292 260013].

AANHS 50TH ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM

The AANHS was formed in 1947, and celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. 1997 is also the centenary year of the University of Paisley, or more precisely of its predecessor Paisley College. On Saturday 1 November 1997 the two bodies are celebrating their 'birthdays' jointly in a one-day symposium, using the excellent facilities of the Craigie Campus in Ayr, with the title 'Changing Ayrshire and the south-west: 1807, 1947, 1997'. It will run from 10-00 to 4-00. Lectures and archive films have been chosen to interest a wide range of people, and workshops will allow those who wish to participate more actively to do so.

More details are given on the enclosed booking form. It will help the organisers if you book early: cancellations will be accepted until quite close to the date.

AYRSHIRE ARCHIVES NEWS

The Ayrshire Archives, in the charge of archivist Kevin Wilbraham and his assistant Pauline Gallagher, are now fully operational. In a very short time this small team has done sterling work in consolidating the existing archives, combining the resources of the three Ayrshire councils, and discovering many new potential acquisitions of great significance. One of the more exciting of the recent "finds" was handed over by the President of the AFHS, Stuart Wilson. This document has been confirmed as an original dating from 1322, and is currently undergoing conservation in Edinburgh. It was initially thought to be a Papal Bull but closer examination has revealed that it was witnessed in Edinburgh. We look forward to its return to Ayr with a complete transcription.

The archive service is a joint venture between the three Ayrshire councils and very effectively covers the whole of the old county of Ayr. The AFHS committee have kept in close contact with the archivists and councils and are confident that Ayrshire now has the opportunity to build a county archive to rival that of any in the country. Much work remains to be done so we must continue to give our fullest support. Opening hours at the archive office in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr, are presently Wednesdays, 9.30 am to 4.30 pm, with a break of an hour at lunchtime, but it is hoped that they will be opening for longer sometime in the future. Kevin and Pauline can be contacted at County Buildings, on 01292 612138.

COUNTRY WALKS AND TRAILS

Enterprise Ayrshire, Scottish National Heritage and the South Ayrshire Council have sponsored two admirable free leaflets showing several walks around Straiton and Barr. Distances range from 1¼ to 8 miles. Access has been secured where necessary, and paths have been made safe, convenient and well marked. There are clear large-scale maps, and well-selected brief commentaries on local history, folklore, scenery and wildlife. These leaflets meet a long-standing need. The size and cost of the physical task of creating and restoring paths limits the rate at which further leaflets can be produced, but we look forward to the next, which will probably feature the River Ayr.

The AFHS intends to compile a list of both country walks and town trails in Ayrshire, and to encourage the production of new ones. It would be glad to hear of examples, whether their booklets or leaflets are available now or out of print. Please tell its Secretary, Dave Killicoat, whose address is on page 2, of any in your area.

A joint team from AANHS and the Kyle and Carrick Civic Society is preparing a booklet of guided walks in Historic Ayr, updating and expanding the long-established *Around Old Ayr*.

NEW BOOKS ABOUT AYRSHIRE

EXPLOSIVES IN THE SERVICE OF MAN

John E Dolan and Miles K Oglethorpe

RCAHMS, 1996, £500,

ISBN 0 7480 5811 7

Subtitled "Ardeer and the Nobel Heritage", this book deals with an element in Ayrshire's industrial history which has been well-known, yet at the same time largely unknown, due in large part to the secrecy surrounding the manufacture of explosives at ICI's Stevenston site. Such was the secrecy that the site does not appear on Ordnance Survey maps, which infer that the dunes south of Ardeer have never been developed. That one of the illustrations in this excellent volume is a reprint of a 1941 Luftwaffe photograph marking both the Nobel Works and the Ordnance Factory at Irvine is fair comment on how effective this secrecy was.

The fortunes of Ardeer have declined in recent years, a trend, as the authors point out, accelerated by the contraction in the British deep mining industry. One of the tasks of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland is the recording of monuments which are threatened, and as part of this process, survey work at Ardeer began in 1990. This volume arises out of the co-operation between the Royal Commission and ICI, who supported its publication, and was published to coincide with the Nobel Conference held in Glasgow in December 1996. The authors are, respectively, a former manager in ICI's Nobel Division and a RCAHMS survey officer. The result is a volume which details in a straightforward and readable manner the growth of the site from the time that Alfred Nobel established the British Dynamite Company at Ardeer in 1871. There is a useful glossary of the many technical terms which cannot be avoided. (Kieselguhr?!)

The book is richly illustrated, many of the illustrations coming from the Royal Commission's survey work, while others are taken from the company's own archive. These are complemented by a series of maps, showing the development and internal layout of the site. While prominence is given to the technological development of the site and the manufacturing processes, due notice is also taken of the personalities, the buildings - including Africa House, translocated from the 1938 Bellahouston Empire Exhibition - and the transport systems associated with the site over the years.

This is a book which adds considerably to the industrial history of Ayrshire, setting - as is all too often not the case - an important local industry in its national and international setting. At a fiver, it's a bargain: copies from booksellers, or direct from RCAHMS, at 16 Bernard Terrace, EDINBURGH EH8 9NX

REFLECTIONS OF BEITH AND DISTRICT

"ON THE WINGS OF TIME"

Beith High Church Youth Group, 1996, £500, ISBN 0 9522720 0 8

It was a pleasant surprise to come across a small book which has been produced independently of any local history group, and yet will be very much appreciated by readers of the Ayrshire Notes. The book is the result of a project to record the stories of some of the senior citizens of the Beith area (and one or two not so senior) in their own words.

Each section is prefaced by a short biography of the interviewee which helps to put the extract that follows into context. The occasional photographs and poems add to the flavour. The text is well edited so that you feel you are sitting listening to the voice rather than reading the words. Whilst it can hardly be said that there is any item of specific historical significance, there is much here of relevance to the social historian and it is presented in such a way that it can be picked up and read at random.

The book is probably best summarised in a short quote from the comments at the end of the contribution made by Cissie Shearer (78) of Gateside. Cissie had enlightened her small audience about the dry lavatories of the village:

"In answer to her interviewer's question regarding 'night-time' visits to the huts and whether they locked or not, Cissie replied in her inimitable way, 'It could be awkward if someone was already in and if the snib was broken, then a big foot was needed to keep others out!' These were the dangers of a 'through the night' visit to the toilet!

"It was with such recollections that the interview was concluded because it somehow encapsulated the wide experiences about the reality of life, both happy and unhappy, that Cissie Shepherd's memories evoked. It was indeed a pleasure to have shared her recollections of Gateside".

The book is available from the Youth Group, c/o 7 Manuel Avenue, BEITH, Ayrshire, KA15 1BJ.

Dave Killicoat

A review copy of Dr Margaret Sanderson's latest book was received too late for the careful review which it deserves. It will be included in our September reviews. For those who would like to look at it in the bookshops without delay, the details are:

AYRSHIRE AND THE REFORMATION

by Margaret H B Sanderson

Tuckwell Press, 1997, £14.99,

ISBN 1 898410 91 7

MINING - AYRSHIRE'S LOST INDUSTRY

Guthrie Hutton

Richard Stenlake Publishing, 1996, £12.95

ISBN 1 872074 88 X

The growing series of well-illustrated books published by Richard Stenlake will be known to most readers of Ayrshire Notes. Guthrie Hutton has already produced books for the firm on Old Leith, Old Perth, and others, and a series on Scotland's canals. This volume on Ayrshire's coal industry benefits hugely from the larger format used which allows many of the photographs to shine forth in all their glory. Many of these, too, are unfamiliar images, which adds considerably to the value of the book.

The subtitle, "An Illustrated History of the Mines and Miners of Ayrshire and Upper Nithsdale", shows not only that the mining communities and pits of Kirkconnel are not ignored, but also stresses the emphasis on the mines, the miners and their communities. This is not a comprehensive history of Ayrshire's mining history, but through the accompanying text, it adds considerably to the raw material for a comprehensive history of this important part of Ayrshire's industrial past. The emphasis is on the community, and the camaraderie, with little on the economic and political issues which underline the rise and fall of deep mining in Ayrshire.

Of the images which are unfamiliar - to this reviewer, at any rate - many relate to the building and sinking of new pits, including the Killoch, image of a bright new future for Ayrshire's miners, and the short-term drift mine at Mortonmuir near Cronberry. Others, also from Cronberry, record the 1930 visit of an evangelising preacher; also recorded is the aftermath of the accidents at Highhouse and at Knockshinnoch Castle. The strength of this book lies in the quality, both of the image and of the reproduction, in the majority of these over 200 photographs. They record, in an unequalled way, a way of life which is now extinct in the county. It is difficult to imagine opencast mining generating the same nostalgia in the 21st Century.

Short Notice:

MUIRKIRK, AYRSHIRE: An Industrial Landscape.

RCAHMS Broadsheet 1. ISSN 1358 - 3441

The publishing policies of the Royal Commission have moved away from the comprehensive county-by-county volumes, which had become increasingly unwieldy and expensive as the levels of knowledge, research and interpretation grew. This can readily be seen by contrasting early volumes, from the beginning of the century, which deal with a complete county or counties, and the last volumes,

dealing with Argyll, where a single volume is needed for the monuments of a single island - Iona, admittedly, but indicative of this change. The new policies lay the emphasis on subject based studies, and on a more varied approach. Ayrshire is one of the counties for which no county volume has been produced, and this is perhaps why two of the earliest manifestations of the new policies have Ayrshire themes: one is the book on Ardeer, reviewed above; the other is this Broadsheet, the first in a projected series, which provides a well illustrated survey of the archaeological remains of the ironworks at Muirkirk. Copies can be obtained from the RCAHMS at 16 Bernard Terrace, EDINBURGH EH8 9NX.

A PRIVILEGED BOYHOOD

Alexander McRobbie

Stenlake Publishing, 1996, £5.99

ISBN 1 872074 61 8

The appearance of this book last year was one of the earliest indications that the Ochiltree Picture Postcard Factory's ambitions extend beyond sepiatone, and at first sight it might appear to hold little for the Ayrshire historian, being largely an account of a Cowcaddens childhood. However, the author's father was employed by the Glasgow and South Western Railway, which afforded his family an annual holiday in Newton on Ayr, and gives us a Glasgow keelie's view of Ayr in the '30s.

Young Master McRobbie had a summer job of looking after, and providing entertainment for, his younger siblings, leading them on daily expeditions from 55 Green Street to the beach. Although these were adequately financed by his parents, the McRobbie children were well served by their elder brother, who supplemented his income by various means, including collecting dung in Ayr streets for his uncle's roses. His later escapades in Newton coincided with puberty, so consider this a forewarning that the book contains some 'adult' reading, albeit reported frankly: this is not historical romance!

Where it concentrates on what the author did, how he felt, and how he perceived things this is, in effect, transcribed oral history (I wish there was more of this quality in the Ayrshire Sound Archive). As usual with published reminiscence (and oral history) the danger lies where the author moves away from personal experience to make historical generalisations. In this case the cliché count is quite low, and there is some lily-gilding, where reported speech is used, but in comparison with many other accounts of the period this is surprisingly unsentimental stuff and quite pleasant reading.

PUBLICATIONS of the
AYRSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL & NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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

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Armstrong's Maps of Ayrshire (1775: reprint: 6 sheets)	£12.00