

AYRSHIRE \$ NOTES \$

HISTORY

ANTIQUITIES

ARCHÆOLOGY • NATURAL~HISTORY

No. 20

Spring 2001

£1.00



Lanfine House
Home of "An Eighteenth Century Tearaway"

Contributions for the Autumn 2001 issue of *Ayrshire Notes*, including information about the activities of Member Societies, should be sent before the end of July to Rob Close, 1 Craigbrae Cottages, Drongan, Ayr KA6 7EN, tel. 01292 590273.

Local Societies may obtain additional copies of *Ayrshire Notes* for their members at cost price by prior arrangement with David McClure, 7 Park Circus, Ayr KA7 2DJ, tel. 01292 262248.

AYRSHIRE NOTES
is published by
AYRSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL & NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
in association with
AYRSHIRE FEDERATION OF HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

© 2001. The copyright of the articles belongs to the individual authors.

AANHS President	William Layhe
AANHS Secretary	Dr Trevor Mathews 10 Longlands Park, Ayr KA7 4RJ Tel. 01292 441915
AFHS Chairman	Stuart Wilson
AFHS Secretary (acting)	Rob Close 1 Craigbrae Cottages Drongan Ayr KA6 7EN Tel. 01292 590273

Lanfine House

Cover photo from A. H. Millar, *The Castles and Mansions of Ayrshire*, (1885). This late 18th century house was "largely reconstructed and extended c.1919-1920" (Rob Close, *Ayrshire & Arran: An Illustrated Architectural Guide*, 1992).

Contents

A Tour of Irvine Old Parish Kirkyard	4
An Eighteenth Century Tearaway	8
The Mysterious Death of Sir Alexander Boswell	11
A Kilmarnock 'Soiled Dove'	15
Scotland's Churches Scheme	19
Book Notes	20
Rev Robert Stirling DD	20
Whispers of Horse Island	21
Beith Supplement and Advertiser	21
Burns Country	21
Clyde Coast Picture Palaces	22
Ras al Khaimah	22
Notes and Queries	23
David Wilson MacArthur	23
www.scan.org.uk	24
www.nas.org.uk	24
edina.ac.uk	25
Diary of Meetings February - May 2001	25
Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies	27
AANHS Publications in Print	28

A Tour of Irvine Old Parish Kirkyard

In 2000 the AGM of the Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies was held at the Hall of Irvine Old Parish Kirk. After the meeting, it being a pleasant afternoon, I went for a wander round the kirkyard on the lookout for gravestones and monuments of particular interest. The following notes are the results of my wanderings and I am grateful to Anne Gaw for providing much of the information, most of the remainder coming from Dr John Strawhorn's book, *The History of Irvine*. The tour starts just inside and to the left of the main gate facing the kirk and follows a clockwise direction, finally ending up back again at the main gate.

Reverend Charles Bannatyne

The gravestone of the Rev. Charles Bannatyne is set into the ground near the north wall which backs on to Peden Place. He was minister of the kirk from 1751 until his death in 1773. It was during his ministry that the present church was built; indeed he laid the foundation stone and, to the horror of his superstitious parishioners, it cracked. This was considered by them to be an unlucky omen: the portent of imminent disaster. No ill fate befell the church but the minister himself took ill and died shortly before the church was completed. There were those who were convinced that his untimely demise at the age of 58 was the fulfilment of the evil prophecy in the cracking of the foundation stone.

Covenanters

If we now turn towards the north-east corner of the kirkyard and look for a large flat table stone about twenty metres to the left of the back gate. This is a stone commemorating two Covenanters, James Blackwood and John McCoul, who were hanged at Irvine on the last day of 1666 for taking part in the Pentland Rising. The title 'Pentland Rising' is a bit of a misnomer because the insurrection was in fact sparked off by an incident at Dalry (Kirkcudbrightshire) on 13th November 1666. It resulted from the heavy-handed attitude of Sir James Turner's soldiers who were collecting recusancy fines in the area. The Covenanters occupied Dumfries and advanced on Edinburgh, via Dalmellington, Ayr, Cumnock and Lanark, gathering supporters on the way. Faced with heavy rain, their numbers dwindled to fewer than 1000 ill-armed men. Beaten back from Colinton by the Edinburgh Fencibles, the rebels were caught on 28th November at Rullion Green on the slopes of the Pentland Hills by a government force under the command of Tam Dalyell of the Binns. Fifty rebels were killed and eighty taken prisoner. Some of the captives were returned to Irvine and Ayr for execution, among them Blackwood and McCoul. The Irvine hangman, William Sutherland, a highlander, refused to perform the grisly task, despite severe pressures including being put in the stocks. Eventually one of the prisoners at Ayr, Cornelius Anderson, agreed to carry out the hanging, fortified by brandy and the promise of release.

Reverend Henry Ranken

Just inside the back gate, on the left hand side against the wall, is the headstone to Rev. Henry Ranken, who was inducted as assistant in 1891, and as full minister in 1893. Ranken quickly became involved in the life of Irvine, becoming President of the Burns Club in 1895. He was present at the unveiling of the Burns' Statue on Irvine Moor in 1896, at which an oration was given by the Poet Laureate, Alfred Austin. Many years later Austin published his autobiography, in which he expressed his surprise at the amount of alcohol the magistrates and councillors had consumed on that occasion without becoming inebriated. In a letter to *The Times*, Ranken made a staunch defence of Irvine's men of office, saying it had all been in the poet's imagination, and that they were all well-bred men. Under Ranken, the church prospered: stained glass windows were installed, the interior renovated, and the organ reconstructed. He published a book, *Burns and Irvine* in 1905. He retired in 1928 and died in 1937.

On the same stone is commemorated his elder son, Harry Sherwood Ranken, Captain, RAMC. One of the first casualties of the Great War, he died in October 1914 of wounds received after gallantly continuing to care for others under fire when his own thigh and leg were shattered. For his actions he was posthumously awarded the Legion of Honour and the Victoria Cross.

Tragedies at Sea

On the right-hand side of the path going from the back gate towards the church are two tall white columns, side by side, commemorating two tragedies at sea. The first took place on 27th February 1860 when the schooner 'Success', of Nantes, was wrecked trying to make Irvine bar in a storm. The stone is inscribed, 'To the memory of seven sailors who lie together here, drowned and washed ashore and given burial by the people of Irvine'. The other column records a tragedy which occurred on 21st June 1876 when a small boat, returning to Irvine from Troon, capsized near the bar. Five men and two boys, aged 13 and 15, were drowned, and the monument was erected with funds raised by public subscription.

Helen Miller

Coming from the back gate, a little bit in from the right hand side of the path, near the east door of the church is the grave of Helen Miller. She was the daughter of the host of the Sun Inn, and one of the 'Belles of Mauchline', referred to by Burns in his poem: 'Miss Miller is fine, Miss Markland's divine'. She later married Dr John Mackenzie, who was a physician in Irvine from 1801 to 1827. He was a founder member of Irvine Burns Club in 1826. His wife died in 1827, and he left Irvine for Edinburgh, where he died in 1837.

John Ferguson, Holms of Caaf

Right on the corner by the church, where the path leads up from the back gate, stands the gravestone of John Ferguson of Holms of Caaf, one of the major benefactors of the town of Irvine. He was born in Irvine in 1787. His father, the owner of a small coastal

craft, died in 1802. John then lived with his mother, Mary Service, in Fullarton Street, and then High Street, supported by her five brothers, who were all doing well in America. John attended the Grammar School, and got his first job with the Paisley Banking Company in Irvine. He was transferred by the bank to London, and then went to New York to wind up his uncles' affairs. Each had died intestate, and John found himself heir to almost £1,250,000. He returned to Irvine in 1810, aged 23, and set himself up as a landowner with property at Cairnbrock and Airies in Wigtownshire. Holms of Caaf, the name by which he was known locally, was the name of his maternal grandfather's farm near Dalry. He continued to live with his mother in the High Street; the house had a flight of steps projecting out onto the street and, with his permission, evangelical ministers used the top step as a pulpit when conducting open-air services on a Sunday evening. When he died in 1856, £500,000 was set aside for educational and religious causes throughout south-west Scotland. There were a number of generous bequests to the poor and aged of Irvine, and some personal bequests, to which have been attributed the building of some of the villas in Kilwinning Road.

John Peebles

Almost opposite John Ferguson is the grave of John Peebles. Look for a low-walled enclosure which once had iron railings. This is by no means the oldest stone in the kirkyard, but it is probably the oldest with a legible inscription, having been restored in 1906. The raised iron letters round the edge of the stone tell of John Peebles of Broomlands who was Provost in 1570 and who died in 1596.

Schoolgirl Annie

A few metres from the back door of the church is a memorial to Annie, aged 7 years and 9 months, who died in 1882 after an accident with a knitting needle: 'Little girls attending school, by me a warning take / The wire that in my hand I held, my brain did penetrate'.

David Sillar

Just a metre or so from the path bordering the back door of the church, and almost opposite the door, stands the headstone to David Sillar, Burns' 'dainty Davie'. He was the son of the farmer at Spittalside, Tarbolton, a neighbour of the Burns family in Lochlea. He became a schoolmaster and wrote poetry. Along with Burns, and Gilbert Burns, he was involved in the formation of the Bachelors' Club in Tarbolton in 1781. He was also a founder member of the Mauchline Debating Society, and played the fiddle better than Burns, whom he taught how to play. In 1783 Sillar moved to Irvine to set up in business as a grocer in a vault under the Tolbooth in the High Street, but this was not a success, he went bankrupt, and was imprisoned for a time in the Tolbooth itself. After this he returned to teaching, and ran a school for navigation in East Back Street. In his 'Epistles to Davie', Burns encouraged him to publish, which he did, and his *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* was printed by John Wilson in Kilmarnock and published in 1789. In 1811 Sillar became heir to a fortune, inheriting from two younger brothers who had

made money in the lucrative West African trade. A Councillor from 1815 until his death in 1830, aged 70, he was, in 1826, a founder member of the Irvine Burns Club.

Thomas Cumming

Three stones away from Sillar's can be found that of Thomas Cumming, who died in 1509. All that is known of him is that he was a Bailie of Irvine, but this is probably the oldest clearly dated stone in the kirkyard.

Bailie Fullarton

The seventh stone from the south-west corner of the church is a table stone to the memory of Bailie Robert Fullarton, who died in 1835, aged 95. Fullarton spoke with a strong Highland accent, and seems to have come originally from Rothesay: he is the model for 'Provost Pawkie' in John Galt's novel *The Provost*. A candlemaker, every day he had some public duty to carry out, and every afternoon was entitled to a dram at the expense of the common good fund.

Fullarton Family

A tall grey sandstone memorial with a tall tree growing almost over it commemorates the Fullartons, one of the founding families of Irvine. They occupied lands on the southern bank of the Irvine, given in the 13th Century to Alan de Fowlertoun. The estate was later extended to include Shewalton, Gailes, Crosbie, Troon and part of Dreghorn. George Foullertoun, who held the lands from 1430 to 1471, probably moved the family seat to Crosbie, where it remained until a new Fullarton House was built near Troon in 1745.

William Jack

Close to the Fullarton stone, a little nearer the river, stands the headstone of William Jack. Born in 1834 in Stewarton, but brought up in Irvine, Jack was successively editor of the Glasgow Herald and, for thirty years, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Glasgow. Aged 90, he died in 1924.

James Steedman

About fifty paces to the left of the main gate, and about twelve paces out from the wall, you should look for a bluish-grey stone which stands out amongst the darker stones. This commemorates James Steedman, 1790-1865, inventor of the screw propeller. Steedman began his career as a joiner and cabinetmaker, but as a boy he had been more interested in the study of natural history. Being the son of the private baker at Eglinton, he was free to wander through the woods there, and his observation of birds led him to attempt to make a flying machine, while later his study of fish gave him the idea for rear propulsion for ships. This idea was strengthened when watching a school friend sculling a boat, when he observed that, for greatest speed, the boat should be propelled from the rear rather than the sides. From this early work, he went on to learn from the experiments of Henry Bell, who was at that time working on his paddle-propelled vessel, the 'Comet'. Returning to Irvine, from Glasgow, in 1814 Steedman was ready to carry out his own

experiments: observation of an old woman spinning yarn on a spinning wheel led him to recognise that the motion of the screws which provided the spinning action resembled the tail action of a fish. His first experiment was tried out in a ditch at Eglinton woods, using pieces of wood he picked up, and the spring from a mole trap. By 1816 he had tried out an improved model on the River Irvine itself.

Over the next decade he constructed a number of models in collaboration with William McCririck, a gunsmith. A model of his screw propeller was taken to London in 1830 by another Irvine man, Maxwell Dick. Sadly for Steedman, it is alleged that one of the engineers to whom the propeller was shown picked up and patented the invention giving no credit to Steedman.

Maxwell Dick himself is an interesting character. In addition to being a printer, publisher, bookseller, Freemason, Burnsian and magistrate in Irvine, he was also a talented inventor. In 1827 he devised a snowplough; in 1829 he experimented with a suspension railway at Gailies; in 1832 he invented a bed, warmed by hot water pipes, for the benefit of those suffering from cholera. In addition to his contribution to the design of the screw propeller, and to a suction dredger, he put on show a telegraph insulator at the Great Exhibition of 1851; and in 1856 he was experimenting with guano and other artificial fertilisers.

Duncan Forbes

Our tour of the kirkyard is completed by looking for a stone, set in the wall between the small side gate and the main gate where we began. It commemorates Duncan Forbes who fought under the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo, and who 'fell gloriously in battle on 18th June 1815'.

Stuart Wilson

An Eighteenth Century Tearaway

Parents of each succeeding generation have held high aspirations for their children, hoping that they would at least maintain, or perhaps improve upon their fortunes. How often have their hopes been dashed through trying to force a square peg into a round hole to the dismay and unhappiness of all concerned. A case in point was that of the unfortunate youth Andrew Brown, born on the 4th December 1775 into a family lately prospering in the world. He was the younger son of John Brown of Lanfine, textile merchant and partner in the Ship Bank of Glasgow.¹ His early schooling was at Glasgow Grammar School, under Alexander Bradefute, with the intention of going on to the University there. However, to his father's displeasure, his interests and disposition did not lean towards involvement in the commercial life of the city, unlike his elder brother Nicol.

Like his father before him, he was persuaded to start work at the bottom of the ladder and was apprenticed to a handloom weaver, but within eighteen months he had broken his three-year indenture. He went off to sea on a sailing ship, bound from Greenock to New York and then on to Grenada. On his return he lodged with Dr Lyon,

then surgeon in Newmilns, and resumed his apprenticeship with John Morton, weaver there. Described by his older brother as 'tall and well-made, broad-shouldered and of great muscular strength', it soon became apparent that after his maritime experiences Andrew and the sedentary life were incompatible.² He was unsuited to long hours at the hand-loom, known generally as 'the four stoups of misery', and plainly yearned for an active, outdoor life. So once again he left home to become a sailor, joining the Royal Navy in 1794, aged eighteen. His father, reconciled to the decision, proffered the usual parental advice: 'Be obedient to your captain. Do everything faithfully and cheerfully. Take care of your clothes and keep yourself orderly and clean. Mind your duty to your Maker. Read your Bible, especially on Sunday, which will give great pleasure to all your friends, especially your mother and affectionate father'.³

He saw active service during the Napoleonic Wars until the Peace of 1802, taking part in the destruction of the Spanish fleet at Cape St Vincent under Sir John Jervis. Jervis, later Earl St Vincent, had also been a runaway to sea. He was a stern disciplinarian, disinclined even to accept married officers in his service. They ought, in his eyes, to be married to the Royal Navy. 'Discipline', he would continually assert, is summed up in one word, 'obedience'.

Andrew had immediately come under fire in his naval career and acquired a reputation as a brave seaman. Six feet two inches tall, strong and robust, he made his mark on board, but he would never accept promotion out of the lower deck.⁴ It was there he stamped his authority on his shipmates, as a chance meeting described.

'Colonel Moore of Rothesay ... happened to be in Portsmouth in the early part of the French war and having a curiosity to visit a ship of the line, he went on board a 74-gun ship at anchor in that harbour. A sailor was directed to show him whatever was curious regarding the interior arrangements of this man-of-war. Accordingly my informant, having visited all parts of the ship, was about to depart, but before going away he presented the sailor who had been his guide with half-a-crown; but he had scarcely done this when a Herculean-looking sailor with broad shoulders and upwards of six feet high came up and, rudely snatching the half-crown from the guide's hand, told him in an insolent domineering manner, "nobody on board here, sir, shall take money from visitors except me", and so walked leisurely away with the gift. My friend, Mr Moore, then turned round to his late attendant and enquired of him, "Who was that who has so unceremoniously carried off your present?" "Oh", said the sailor, "he is the son of Bailie Brown of Glasgow and has fought and thrashed all the stoutest men on board ship, and no seaman here now dares to contradict him"'.⁵

The intrepid character of Andrew Brown is demonstrated in this incident. His voluntary enlistment in the Royal Navy had spoken clearly of his daring, in contrast to the behaviour of the potential victims of the press gangs of that period. Their appearance in the Firth of Clyde led to a mass exodus up-country by the inshore sailors and able-bodied longshoremen from the ports and coastal villages of Ayrshire, while merchant ships arriving from abroad would not dock until they knew it was safe for their crews to come ashore.⁶ An inland domicile with ignorance of sea-faring did not always guarantee a safe haven. The Newmilns Burgh Treasurer's Accounts for 1757 report the sum of six shillings

and sixpence paid Robert Patterson for 'one load of coals for the Prest Men in the Tolbooth'.

Much earlier his harum-scarum nature was recognised. As a schoolboy he would today be diagnosed as hyperactive and averse to formal education. A description of him in his schooldays tells of his lack of interest in his lessons, and of his remarkable dexterity and skills in energetic and often wild pursuits. For one of his boisterous adventures, 'he made a neat little four-wheeled carriage, in which he placed an elevated seat for driving; and it was his highest delight to seize upon any dogs that might be wandering about the streets, and to harness them to his carriage, and then mounting on his coach-box to act the part of Jehu along Bell Street and the Candleriggs, never sparing the lash'.⁷

After the scrapes and escapades of his days at school and in the navy, Andrew Brown at last entered on a career more suited to his talents and temperament, and which should have been his proper desert, from his early teenage years until the end of his short life. During the short break in the war with France he returned home in 1802 to be with his father in his last illness. With part of his inheritance he bought the lands of Sornhill for £6,000. His farming methods quickly gained the admiration of his neighbours. Soon after, he was producing the finest crops in the county as he adopted the modern practices in agriculture, lately begun in this part of Ayrshire. One of his closest friends was Bruce Campbell of nearby Sornbeg who, as factor to the Earl of Marchmont, had been involved in perfecting the Ayrshire breed of dairy cow.⁸ It is likely that it was with Campbell's advice and encouragement that he was shortly showing the best cows in the district as he entered into the prevailing spirit of agricultural improvement, while also becoming a patron and regular attender of the Galston Farmers' Society.

His other great and abiding interest was, in the end, also his grave misfortune. His love of field sports took him out in all weathers, always accompanied by his four pointers or four greyhounds, and he was soon regarded as the most successful sportsman in the county. As early as 1804, however, he was periodically coughing up blood, and already showing the symptoms of the illness which had carried off his mother and three sisters. In August 1805, when the new season began, he spent three days shooting on the moors, staying overnight in the damp conditions at Cairnsaigh. The bleeding returned. He would not agree to the recommendation of his cousin Dr Thomas Brown of a voyage to a warmer climate.

After all the events of his wayward youth, Andrew Brown had at last settled down to the life of a respectable county gentleman, with all its customary responsibilities and obligations. His brother records his acts of generosity, giving 'particularly to my father's poor relations about Newmilns in clothes, money and provisions'.⁹ With an additional touch he helps to round off the diverse characteristics of his brother's personality, reporting a good musical ear and many hours spent playing the violin.¹⁰ Unluckily, by March 1806, when he seemed to have settled comfortably into the social scene of his home area, illness had reduced his basic strength and vitality. His friends, such as Bruce Campbell, Archibald Nisbitt and others, and the Reverend George Smith of Galston, faithfully attended him.

Much loved by his personal servants, who did everything in their power to help, he refused all close attention until near the end, saying 'I have been accustomed all my life to serve myself. When I compare [my situation] with many scenes I have witnessed on shipboard, when numbers of my brave mess mates, who were [more] entitled to better things than ever I was, were strung up in their hammocks, perhaps many of them in the jaws of death and none at hand to give them a drink of water. When I think of scenes like these I am almost ashamed to take the attendance I have already'.¹¹

On the 1st of April 1806 he went out by himself on his favourite black horse, and again on the following day for the last time. On this occasion he was only strong enough to travel in the carriage with his brother to be shown the new allocation of feus for weavers' cottages in what was to become Brown Street in Greenholm. He died on the 10th April, aged 30, from tuberculosis, the scourge of rich and poor alike in those times.

Jim Mair

- 1 Senex (Robert Reid), Glasgow Past and Present, vol.2., Glasgow, 1884, 218.
- 2 Brown Papers. Nicol Brown's Journal for 1806.
- 3 Brown Papers. Nicol Brown's Memoir of his brother Andrew.
- 4 *ibid.*
- 5 Senex, *op. cit.* 219-220.
- 6 *ibid.* 137.
- 7 *ibid.* 219.
- 8 John Strawhorn, ed., Ayrshire at the Time of Burns, [Ayr], 1959, 47.
- 9 Brown Papers. Nicol Brown's Memoir of his brother Andrew.
- 10 *ibid.*
- 11 *ibid.*

The Mysterious Death of Sir Alexander Boswell

At Edinburgh High Court, at 5 a.m. on the morning of 11th June 1822, after a seventeen-hour trial, a jury returned a verdict of Not Guilty on James Stuart of Dunearn. He had been charged with the wilful murder of Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck on 26th March of the same year. And so ended one of the most bizarre episodes involving Scottish society in the 19th Century.

A duel had taken place between the two men at Auchtertool, near Balmuto, Fife, on the 26th March, resulting in the death of Boswell.

It was an unlikely match between Boswell and Stuart. Sir Alexander Boswell was the eldest son of James Boswell (famous for his travels and his biography of Doctor Samuel Johnson) and his wife, Margaret Montgomerie. Boswell was a powerfully built man, a lover of field sports since boyhood. Magistrate, Deputy Lieutenant of Argyllshire, a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Ayrshire Cavalry, Boswell was all these things and more. He wrote songs and poems, and had a printing press installed at Auchinleck. A rigid

Conservative in outlook, for five years he had been the MP for Plympton in Devonshire, but had accepted the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds in 1821, and consequently resigned his seat in Parliament. An enthusiastic Scot, and Burns lover, he along with a friend, raised the money for the monument erected on the banks of the river Doon at Alloway.

James Stuart was the eldest son of Charles Stuart of Dunearn in Fife, who for some years was minister of the parish of Cramond in Linlithgowshire (West Lothian). He later practised as a physician in Edinburgh. James studied law and was admitted to the Society of Writers to the Signet in 1798. Despite being an officer in the Fifeshire Yeomanry, until the day of the fatal duel Stuart had never held or fired a gun in his life.

What had forced him to challenge a man who seemed to have everything in his favour? Stuart was an enthusiastic politician on the Whig side. As such he wanted change. Like so many others, he felt the time had come for reform and considered that the electoral franchise should be extended.

Although Stuart's views were hardly extreme, and were shared by many throughout the country, he seems to have gained the odium of a particular sector of the Tory and anti-Reform faction in the country. In particular, he seems to have upset the reactionary press. One short-lived, and especially virulent, Tory paper, *The Beacon*, vilified Stuart and his views from its first issue in January 1821. Sir Walter Scott was among the sponsors and backers of *The Beacon*, although he took no part in its management or direction; indeed, he was shocked by the editorial excesses committed by the paper, and withdrew his patronage. The paper ceased publication in August 1821.

The gap was soon filled. On 10th October 1821, the *Glasgow Sentinel* made its first appearance, replacing *The Beacon*, and having the same political outlook. Again, Stuart was under attack from the very first issue. One piece in particular, 'The Whig Song', made scathing remarks about Liberals in general, and Stuart in particular. It accused them of lacking principles and conscience, and of making decisions and not sticking to them. It even implied that they could be bought for a price.

Puzzled as to why he alone had been singled out for what he thought were libellous attacks, Stuart raised an action against Robert Alexander and William Murray Borthwick, the proprietors of the *Sentinel*. Borthwick, who was lying in Glasgow jail at the time, for a small debt, contacted Stuart and stated his willingness to settle out of court. If Stuart would agree to this, Borthwick would supply the relevant papers that would identify the writer of the offending articles. Borthwick's debts were cleared - it is not disclosed who paid his debts - and he was released from prison.

Breaking into the offices of the *Sentinel* the morning after his release from prison, Borthwick removed all the papers from the editor's desk. Stuart examined the pertinent material and discovered for the first time the name of his enemy. The person concerned was none other than Sir Alexander Boswell, whom Stuart knew, and considered a friend. Apart from their political views, there was no other contention between the two men.

When Boswell returned from London on the evening of Saturday 23rd March, after attending the funeral of his younger brother James, he found a card from Lord Rosslyn requiring arrangements to be made to give James Stuart satisfaction. A local

Sheriff, hearing of the impending duel, had guards placed at the houses of both men, and had them arrested. They appeared before him on the Monday night, when they were bound over to keep the peace within the district of Edinburgh, under penalty of five hundred shillings.

Despite Stuart's assurance that a simple apology would resolve their differences, none was forthcoming from Boswell. He would neither deny the accusation nor make any attempt to apologise. Knowing that the Sheriff's ban did not extend to Fife, the two men arranged for the duel to take place the next morning. Stuart set off almost immediately for Fife, with Boswell following a few hours later.

The two men for combat on the grounds of Balberton Farm. Lord Rosslyn was acting as second for James Stuart; the Hon. John Douglas (later the Marquis of Queensbury) representing Boswell. Two medical practitioners, Doctor Wood and Mr Liston, were also in attendance. Even as the pistols were being prepared, Stuart made a final attempt at reconciliation. He approached Boswell and asked if the dispute had to be resolved in this manner. Wasn't there any other way out? Boswell heard him out and dismissed his pleas with a casual shake of his head. Despite the chill of the morning, Stuart was soaked in perspiration as he spoke a last few words to his second. Boswell however appeared calm and unruffled.

At twelve paces Rosslyn gave the command to fire. Stuart's shot struck Boswell in the right shoulder, the ball imbedding in his neck. Boswell's pistol discharged as he fell, the ball striking the ground. The two medical men rushed to the fallen Boswell and had him carried to Balmuto, the ancestral family home. Here, with his wife and family in attendance, he died the following day, 27th March 1822. His body was taken to Auchinleck, where he was buried.

Stuart, on the other hand, left the field immediately after the fatal shooting and travelled to London, and thence to Paris. After discussions with his friends, he surrendered himself there to the British Ambassador. He then agreed to travel back to Edinburgh, where he was charged with wilful murder. He stood trial on 10th June 1822, at Edinburgh High Court.

The Scotsman of 12th June 1822 noted that 'the results and consequences of this trial must, on all good minds, operate like a charm. It has proved that there are honourable men on both sides: that there is justice in our courts: that juries can be honest, and the Bench impartial. No one doubted that Mr Stuart would be acquitted. The wrongs were all his. As his senior counsel observed, he was to be considered not as a person guilty of a great crime, but as one who had fallen under a great calamity. But when it is taken into account that the jurors were almost to a man the political opponents of Mr Stuart, and the party that had fallen was of some rank, and of considerable consequences to the side in power, the manner of the acquittal will be allowed to have been exceedingly handsome'.

The Scotsman also stated that, with the provocation given, and Stuart's mild and easy terms offered for adjustment, he was indeed the offended party. Even on the duelling field his conduct, when it was more likely that he would be the sufferer, was exemplary, and his grief genuine and generous when it turned out otherwise. The *Glasgow Sentinel* was severely criticised in the report, it being stated that it was the paper, and not

Stuart, that was the real murderer. 'One of the shots the *Sentinel* had fired had rebounded and struck the person of a soldier combating under its banner' the report concluded.

There were some puzzling aspects of the events surrounding the death. Stories abounded that Boswell never intended to injure Stuart: it was always Boswell's intention to fire into the air. This seems hard to believe. Minutes before the fatal shooting Stuart had asked Boswell to reconsider. Although Stuart had issued the challenge, had Boswell been generous and agreed to his request, no-one would have thought Boswell anything but honourable, even noble. And then there was the matter of a letter written on 24th March 1822, the day after the challenge was delivered: this letter was written by Boswell and addressed to Robert Maconachie. The following is an edited transcript of the note:

'My Dear Maconachie. I must now address you on a subject of a delicate nature, which I do from confidence in your friendship. About ten days ago, Mr Stuart of Dunearn went to Glasgow and by the instrumentality of certain persons, one formerly a partner in the *Clydesdale Journal* (now the *Sentinel*), broke open the editor's desk and carried off his papers, and, I understand, among others, some squibs in my hand'. Boswell goes on to say that on his arrival from London, after his brother's funeral, a letter awaited him from Lord Rosslyn. Boswell further states that he doesn't know who the offended party may be, but should it turn out to be James Stuart he will give him a meeting. The letter goes on: 'In order however to obviate many of the circumstances that follow such transactions, I mean that the meeting shall take place on the Continent, say Calais, and I wish to put your friendship to the test, as to request you to be my friend on this occasion. If I had deemed it expedient to meet any man here [in Britain] John Douglas would have gone out with me; but if I should be the successful shot, I should not like the after proceedings of our courts of law, and therefore wish to pass beyond their jurisdiction'. Boswell finishes with, 'I know this is perhaps the greatest favour that can be asked of any man; but by this arrangement, you will be implicated in less trouble, and you won't mind a trip to France'.

This hardly seems like the attitude of a man who is going to fire into the air, and has no intention of injuring his opponent. We must assume that Stuart did not agree with these arrangements, and that Boswell went ahead with the duel in Fife rather than lose face.

Some further questions have continued to puzzle historians. Why was Stuart singled out for such treatment by the press? There were many other people with keen Whig leanings that were never subjected to any libellous attacks. In his letter to Maconachie, Boswell refers to his writings as 'mere squibs'; if they were of so little consequence why was he willing to put his life on the line? Boswell was described by his contemporaries as jovial, amiable, good humoured and having all his father's cleverness without one touch of his meaner qualities. Why then was he so bitter towards a man who believed Boswell was a friend? Finally, how did a nervous, sweating man who had never fired a pistol in his life manage to win such a duel?

George Wade

References: Dictionary of National Biography; Scotsman; Ayr Advertiser.

A Kilmarnock 'Soiled Dove'

'There was, however, about the deceased an honesty which raised her high above those with whom she consorted. Often had the police to interfere and bring her from the midst of her fallen companions, who were mistreating her because she would not be so wicked as they were ... she never robbed, and even warned those whom she saw were being made victims by her companions'.¹

The preceding quote is taken from an 1866 newspaper report of the death of Elizabeth Muir. Commonly known as 'Dublin Jack', Muir was a Kilmarnock prostitute, who was aged about 40 when she collapsed in Wright's public house, and died shortly afterwards in the police office in Guard Lane.² The names of a number of mid 19th Century prostitutes in Kilmarnock have come down to us from the press reports of their appearances in court, but the sympathetic tone displayed in Muir's obituary is remarkable. Unfortunately, we know little more about Muir than this. However, for another Kilmarnock prostitute we can put together some account of her life.

Elizabeth Mulholland was born in Ireland in about 1841. Her parents were William Mulholland, a shoemaker, and his first wife, Mary Ann McCaig. It has not proved possible to discover when her mother died, nor when William Mulholland came to Scotland. We know that the family were in Kilmarnock by 1850. Elizabeth's half-sister, Martha, was born in 1851 or 1852.³ She was William's child by his second wife, Martha Williamson.⁴ William and Martha Mulholland must always have lived in near-poverty. On Census night 1861, the family was living at 30 West Shaw Street, and consisted of William, his wife Martha, and their daughter Martha.⁵ In 1868 William made application for poor relief: the family were then living at 1 Bentinck Street.⁶ The Inspector of Poor noted that he had been born in Ireland (c.1793, for his age is given as 75), was a Protestant, a shoemaker, and partially disabled due to chest disease. At that time his second wife, Martha, born c.1812, and his youngest daughter, Martha, were living with him - the daughter being employed as a bonnet maker. His other children, who no longer lived at home, were named as Susan, 38, married and living in Glasgow, Ellen, 30, Elizabeth, 28, Thomas 26, unmarried and working as a plasterer, and Catherine, 25, married to a coalman. William was stated to be earning 2s 6d a week, and was awarded poor relief of 1s 6d.

By Census night 1871, the family, which now consisted of William, his wife, his daughter Martha, and her illegitimate 9-month-old daughter, Margaret, had moved to 47 Low Glencairn Street. Here William Mulholland died on 3rd August 1871; the cause of death was asthma.⁷ Almost immediately, Martha Mulholland, his widow, applied for poor relief, giving her address as 35 Low Glencairn Street.⁸ The Inspector noted that she was born in Ireland, was a Protestant, earned her living as a hawker, and was partially disabled, due to 'debility'. She earned 2s 6d a week, while her daughter, Martha, earned 4s a week as a bonnet worker, and had, as we have seen, an illegitimate child.⁹ It is not clear what relief was offered Mrs Mulholland, but in May 1876 she was removed from the Poor Roll, and was encouraged to go to the Cunninghame Combination Poor House at Kilwinning. She seems not to have gone, for she got casual relief in March 1877, and was

restored to the Poor Roll the following month, getting 2s a week. She died in June 1878, and was buried at the expense of the Poor Relief Board.¹⁰

Elizabeth Mulholland would have been about 20 in August 1861, when she was already working as a prostitute, as the following passage shows:

'On Tuesday a young man of the Campbell clan from the town of New Cumnock visited Kilmarnock for the purpose of transacting business in the baking line.¹¹ He managed however quite apart from his business to get into rather an ugly entanglement which cost him rather dear. Some wayward fancies inspired by John Barleycorn induced him to visit a well-known house of fallen women in Fore Street, kept by a notorious person of the name of Hay.¹² He in yankee phrase liquored with two girls, Elizabeth Mulholland and Jeannie Carl, and with these two he afterwards visited the public house of Mr William Robertson in Green Street. In Robertson's, according to the baker's statement, one of the girls had filched from him his purse containing 75s in silver, and gave it to the other who made off with it towards the Holehouse Road. The police were called and both of the girls taken into custody. Search was made on the farm of Parkhead for the money, but none was found, and as it was not got in the possession of the girls, it was found necessary to liberate them. The baker had while in company with the girls in his breast pocket £24 in notes, but luckily for him it escaped the hands of the thieves, into whose hands he foolishly placed himself'.¹³

It seems apparent, therefore, that by this time Elizabeth Mulholland had fallen into a way of life that revolved around drink, casual sex and opportunist theft. We have no way of knowing what in her character, and her personal circumstances, led her to this situation, though there are indications that she had a poor relationship with her family. It would also be interesting to know more of the role of brothel-keepers such as John Hay in the recruitment of girls such as Mulholland.

Over the following years, Elizabeth Mulholland appears regularly before the authorities in Kilmarnock. In April 1865 she was fined 5s for being drunk in Waterloo Street, Kilmarnock,¹⁴ and again in September 1865 'John Hay, a labourer, and Elizabeth Mulholland, a soiled dove,¹⁵ having been carousing, conducted themselves in an outrageous manner in Boyd Street on Saturday. They were both wilfully forgetful of the offence but after proof was led the charge was found true, and they were each fined in 10s 6d'.¹⁶ It is noteworthy that she is still involved with John Hay; the nature of the report also suggests that the offence was of a sexual nature.

Hay is a shadowy character. Looking again at his entry in the 1861 Census, we see that he gives his age as 43 (i.e. born c.1818), and his wife as Isabella, 28.¹⁷ It may be that she was merely another of the 'boarders', their wedded state a sop to the sensibilities of the census enumerator. In 1862 it was reported that on 29th June, 'in John Hay's brothel, Fore Street, James Connery, furnaceman, Hurlford, and Owen Woods, engineman, Crookedholm, attacked and assaulted, by striking, kicking and dragging by the hair, Hay's wife, Lilius Paton'.¹⁸ In August 1863, John Hay, 'keeper of a notorious house in Fore Street', was jailed for 1 month for assaulting one Agnes Cunningham.¹⁹ After their court appearance in 1865, Hay disappears from the record, and nothing further is known of him.

Elizabeth Mulholland does not appear in the papers again until 1869, when she was found guilty of being drunk and disorderly.²⁰ She was before the Court again in

December 1870, charged with prostitution.²¹ A few months later, she was back before the Court, and jailed for 30 days after being found guilty of breach of the peace at her father's house in Low Glencairn Street.²² The following month, March 1871, she was again before the Court, charging with assaulting her father on the 23rd March, having only just been released after serving her last sentence. She was imprisoned for a further 30 days. It was noted that she had been imprisoned about 11 times in the previous two years.²³ She spent the Census night (3rd April) of 1871 in Kilmarnock Prison.²⁴ The nature of these offences suggest that Mulholland had a bad relationship with her father, but whether this had been a factor in her drift into crime and prostitution cannot be tested.

As we have seen, her father died later in 1871. Elizabeth Mulholland appears not to have caught the interest of the press over the next few years, but her life must have continued to be a sad one of drink and dissolution. On Saturday 27th October 1877, she was found by the police, drunk and incapable, and taken into custody. The following morning, she was seen in her cell by the duty officer, and she asked him to go to her stepmother to get her a cup of tea. When he returned ten minutes later, 'he discovered that she had hanged herself by a napkin tied to one of the bars of the door'.²⁵

So ended a life which can have had few redeeming moments.

Rob Close

- 1 *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald*, 1st December 1866, 8a.
- 2 The registration of Muir's death is New Register House [NRH], Deaths 1866, Registration District 597, Entry no. 645. Her occupation is given as 'sewer', and her father's name as John Muir. Her mother's name is not recorded, and the cause of death is given as congestive apoplexy, the result of alcoholic poisoning.
- 3 In the 1871 census Martha's place of birth is given as Kilwinning, but when she applied for poor relief in 1878 her place of birth is given as Kilmarnock. [Kilmarnock Poor Register, Book 17/3/1/20, Item 2079. I owe this reference, and other Poor Register references, to Jim Steel]
- 4 They were married in Kilmarnock on 4th February 1850. [www.familysearch.com, seen 20th January 2001]
- 5 Census 1861, Registration District 597, Enumeration District 21, Entry no.110.
- 6 Kilmarnock Poor Register, Book 17/3/1/18, Item 821.
- 7 NRH, Register of Deaths 1871, Registration District 597, Entry No. 362. His parents' names are given as John Mulholland and Elizabeth Salmon.
- 8 Kilmarnock Poor Register, Book 17/3/1/20, Item 1363.
- 9 Martha Mulholland had, besides Margaret, other illegitimate children. Jessie was born c.1873. In May 1878 Martha was pregnant, unable to work, and sent to the Cunninghame Combination Poorhouse. She appears to have been pregnant again in December 1879, while her 2-day-old daughter Martha died in December 1880. She seems to have subsequently married a labourer, Alexander Cochrane, and died in February 1920 [Kilmarnock Poor Register, Book 17/3/1/20, Item 2079; NRH, Register of Deaths 1880, Registration District 597, Entry No.552; NRH, Register of Deaths 1920, Registration District 597, Entry No.66]

- 10 Her date of death is given as 15th June in the Poor Register, but the certificate of death [NRH, Register of Deaths 1878, Registration District 597, Entry no. 239] gives the date as the 14th June. She died at 7 Sandbed Street, Kilmarnock. Her parents are recorded as John Williamson, labourer, and Janet Irvine or Williamson.
- 11 1861 Census, Registration District 608, Enumeration District 1, Entry no.21, for a house in Castle, New Cumnock, records John Campbell, 55, a master baker, and his two unmarried sons, both journeymen bakers, James, 24, and David 18. One of the sons is presumably the callow youth who fell in with Mulholland and Carl.
- 12 There appear to have been two, probably related, brothel-keepers in Kilmarnock called Hay. One, John Hay, is at 18 Fore Street in the 1861 Census, living in a house with 2 windowed rooms with his wife, Isabella, 4 boarders (all described as hand sewers), Susan Fury, Mary Lochhead, Elizabeth McLucky, Helen Downe, and Helen's 6-year-old son, James. [1861 Census, Registration District 597, Enumeration District 7, Entry no.90]. The other, William Hay, seems to have operated from Ladeside Street and, latterly, Soulis Street.
- 13 *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald*, 10th August 1861, 3f.
- 14 *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald*, 22nd April 1865, 8a.
- 15 *The Oxford English Dictionary* has no examples of this expression for a prostitute earlier than 1882, and regards it as being an Australian and North American term.
- 16 *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald*, 23rd September 1865, 8a. This case, at Kilmarnock Police Court on the 18th September, is also reported, briefly, in *Kilmarnock Weekly Post*, 23rd September 1865, 5a, Hay being described as a 'brothel keeper', and Mulholland as a 'prostitute'.
- 17 See footnote 12.
- 18 *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald*, 5th July 1862, 3a.
- 19 *Kilmarnock Weekly Post*, 22nd August 1863, 5d. Cunningham is described as a prostitute in 1865. [*Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald*, 4th November 1865, 8d]
- 20 *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald*, 3rd July 1869, 8c. It is probable that other references to Mulholland in the local press remain to be discovered.
- 21 *Kilmarnock Standard*, 10th December 1870, 2e.
- 22 *Kilmarnock Standard*, 25th February 1871, 2g.
- 23 *Kilmarnock Standard*, 25th March 1871, 2e.
- 24 1871 Census, Registration District 597, Enumeration District 14, entry no. 74. Another inmate was Margaret Murray or Sharp, another prostitute.
- 25 *Ayr Advertiser*, 1st November 1877, 6f. See also *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald*, 3rd November 1877, 5c, which says that she hanged herself with a neck shawl 'from the stanchion of the aperture for light and air to the cell'.

SCOTLAND'S CHURCHES SCHEME

Scotland's Churches Scheme is an ecumenical charitable trust, providing an opportunity to access the nation's ecclesiastical heritage by assisting Churches in membership to:

- work together with others to make the Church the focus of the community;
- open their doors with a welcoming presence;
- tell the story of the building (however old or new), its purpose and heritage (artistic, architectural and historical);
- provide information and care for visitors, young and old.

The Scheme has grown rapidly since its inception in 1994 and there are now 647 Churches in membership, operating an 'open doors' policy. These churches are spread across Scotland and across all the religious denominations. They contain a significant part of the nation's heritage - over 400 are listed buildings, a quarter being Category A.

The country possesses a surprising and delightful diversification in the range of its church buildings, deriving in part from its complicated ecclesiastical history. From the ancient Abbey foundations such as Iona and Pluscarden, through the great medieval cathedrals such as Glasgow, and St Magnus in Kirkwall, to the wonderful spread of parish churches. For example, in membership of the Scheme we have the fine Collegiate Church of St Mary's Haddington - the largest parish church in Scotland - and the small remote Hebridean Episcopal Church of St Moluag's, Ness, in the Isle of Lewis, with no heating, electricity, water or vehicular access. Even the church on St Kilda is involved!

Ayrshire is well represented in the Scheme with 51 Churches in North, East and South Ayrshire, ranging from Largs to Ballantrae and Glenapp, and inland to Cumnock, and across the Clyde to Arran. The major denominations are all included and our broad ecclesiastical heritage is well demonstrated - from the pre-Reformation Auld Kirk of Kilbirnie to the modern church, by Jack Coia, of St Peter in Chains at Ardrossan. The fine small rural Ayrshire parish churches, such as Sorn and Dunlop, and the imposing architectural gems, such as Symington, and Ayr Holy Trinity, together with the country's smallest Cathedral, on Cumbrae, are all featured with many others in the Scheme's Guidebook.

The comprehensive guidebook, *Churches to Visit in Scotland*, can be obtained in cased or paperback edition. Many of the churches are finely illustrated with line drawings by John Hume. It is available from bookshops, or from the Scheme office ['Dunedin', Holehouse Road, Eaglesham, GLASGOW G76 0JF. Telephone: 01355 302416]. The price is £5.50 (£7 including postage and packing) for the paperback, and £10 (£12 including postage and packing) for the hardback.

Scotland's Churches Scheme has successfully promoted access to the nation's ecclesiastical heritage, with many of our Church buildings large and small, urban and rural, in membership. The Scheme's success to date, over a relatively short period, is hugely encouraging and has the potential of further raising the awareness of our ecclesiastical heritage and making it more accessible to a wider audience.

To enable the Scheme to provide greater advice and assistance to member Churches, which has been identified as a priority by a recent survey, we have recruited Local Representatives and now cover Scotland with a local network of some 20 enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers. With this in place, we now hope to move forward and, as and when the necessary funding is forthcoming, provide:

- high quality heritage information;
- guidance on promotion and interpretation, and improving visitor care;
- assistance with signs, posters, brochures, with a specific emphasis on educational activity and the encouragement of school groups and other young people to visit;
- formulation of a panel of willing specialists to advise on security, access for the disabled, and display and conservation of heritage items;
- expansion of the Scheme with the involvement of more churches and the wider circulation of the guidebook.

It is important that membership of the Scheme is not confined to Churches with an architectural or historic significance. The Scheme is about opening up our church buildings both for the visitor and for the community, many of whom seek the peace of the sanctuary outwith normal services.

As Bishop Mario Conti, a Scotland's Churches Scheme Trustee, pointed out in his Foreword to the current Guidebook, 'our churches are more than bricks and mortar - they are treasures of sacred art and open books of remembrance. Even more they are sacraments of the faithful communities which worship there'.

Brian Fraser
Director, Scotland's Churches Scheme

Book Notes

Over the last few months a number of books on Ayrshire themes have been brought to our attention. We commend the following to our readers:

Rev Robert Stirling DD, by Robert Sier

Published in 1995, we have only just become aware of the existence of this biography of Robert Stirling, who was minister firstly at Kilmarnock, and then at Galston. This first ever biography of Stirling examines the possible motives that lead a student of divinity, with a classical education, to invent and patent, in 1816, the Heat Economiser. With his brother James, Stirling developed his ideas into the Stirling Cycle Engine, which over a hundred years later is the subject of renewed interest. Copies are available from the publishers, L A Mair, at 20 Pines Road, CHELMSFORD Essex CM1 2DL. The cost for this 189 page hardback is £11, post free.

Whispers of Horse Island, by John Steele and Noreen Steele

Horse Island is a small island in the Clyde estuary which displays a rich scenery and range of birdlife. Only half a mile from the shore, it also has an amazing history - of tempestuous seas, of shipwreck and of man's grand plans. John and Noreen Steele have collected together a fascinating store of information, observation and anecdote about this little known island. This generously illustrated book is available through booksellers, or direct from the authors at £7.99, post free. Their address is 104 Eglinton Road, ARDROSSAN Ayrshire KA22 8NN. Phone: 01294 464917.

Beith Supplement and Advertiser, by Donald L Reid

Here is a book that will open your eyes up to the rich history of Beith, famous for its cabinet and chairmaking skills. This fascinating book traces the history of the Beith Supplement newspaper from its birth in 1865 until it was incorporated into the Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald in 1965. The paper served Beith, with its population of less than 7000, for 100 years. During that time there were only four owner/editors and the book captures their contribution to the success of the newspaper. Readers will be captivated by the excerpts of news, including details of Beithites who migrated furth of Scotland; news about cabinet works; the Beith Volunteers; the intriguing Dr Mathias; the Cadgers parade and races; smugglers; the Reverend John Witherspoon; the fight for clean water; the coming of the railway; Spier's School; factory accidents. The many stories in this book give a fascinating insight into Beith over a period of 100 years, evoking memories of bygone times. [Reviewed by **Iain D Shaw**, Greenock Burns Club]. Available locally in Beith at £8, or by post, for £9.40, from Beith Open Award Group, c/o Donald Reid, 7 Manuel Avenue, BEITH Ayrshire KA15 1BJ.

Burns Country, by David Carroll

This book forms part of the *Britain in Old Photographs Series* produced by Sutton Publishing. David Carroll has used almost 200 photographs drawn from a range of private and public collections to illustrate the places connected with the life of Scotland's national poet in what we now know as the Burns Country - Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway. The text accompanying the illustrations gives the background and Burns associations of the views selected. All the main locations of the poet's life are depicted as are the settings, the landscapes whence sprang some of his most famous lines for many of his poems. A few views have no direct connection with Burns but would have been familiar to him. Inevitably all the photographs date from many years after his death and places would have changed considerably. The inclusion of some early engraving helps to remedy this and adds variety and interest to this collection. The author states that even the earliest photograph to appear was not taken until more than sixty years after the poet's death. In spite of these obvious limitations this is an interesting and well-produced book with much useful background information included in the text. It will appeal to anyone interested in Burns life and work and could provide a guide for anyone visiting the Burns Country. The author has provided us with a book that can be thoroughly recommended and

will retain its interest with the passage of time. [Reviewed by **Tom Morrall**] Priced at £10.99 by Sutton Publishing Ltd., Stroud. ISBN 0-7509-2213-3.

Clyde Coast Picture Palaces, by Bruce Peter

Published by Stenlake Publishing, Ochiltree, at £6.99. From the Viking at Largs on the front cover, to the La Scala at Clydebank on the back cover, Bruce Peter has provided an evocative journey through the cinemas and picture palaces of the Clyde estuary. In the now familiar Stenlake formula, each photograph is accompanied by explanatory text. While some of the Ayrshire images are familiar, the author has also found others which are much less well-known, and provided a good introduction to cinemas on the Ayrshire coast. ISBN 1-84033-113-5.

Ras Al Khaimah

As some of you will know, Gordon Higgs, who was a valued member of the committee of the AFHS and of Girvan Historical Society, has taken a three-year post at a school at Ras Al Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates. He has sent us the following note on the area:

'Where environments meet, so do people, and history is made. Like Ayrshire, Ras Al Khaimah has its upland, coastal plain and shore zones, plus the added dimension of a desert fringe on one side. In times of peace locals spread from the hills, farmed dates on the plains and fished along the shore, retreating to hill forts when hostiles approached. Invaders tended to build forts, suppliable by sea, near natural harbours. Trading settlements often built up around these. Each left their mark on the land.

From the hills came copper, diorite and softstone. Babylonian records record that these were imported from 'Magan' around 4000 years ago, via 'Dilmus' [Bahrein]. Remains of a settlement of that age have been found at Shimal, 5 kilometres from Ras Al Khaimah, near remnants of double-walled chambered collective tombs. Grave goods from these period were also found indicating links with the Indus Valley civilization. Coastal changes led to later settlement relocation. British and German teams will again be excavating a nad [cell] at Khatt this winter. A long period of habitation is indicated, through to the Islamic period, and trade with places as far away as China.

The Portuguese came at the end of the 15th Century, defeated the Kingdom of Hormuz, and put a garrison and customs house in Julfar. Coins and pottery of this period have been found, and the great navigator Ahmad ibn Majid, employed by Vasco de Gama, was from here. Following the defeat of the Portuguese in the 1630s, the main centre of population moved from Julfar to Ras Al Khaimah. The Fort which houses the museum was built on the site of the Persian occupation in the 1740s. Kunj stoneware, Chinese porcelain and even Thai caledons have been found near here, plus glass bangles from southern Iran or India.

The British arrived in 1809 and destroyed the local fleet. The fort at Dhayah, near Rams, has been restored since H.M.S. Liverpool's assault in 1819, which led to the

1820 peace treaty between the local sheikhs and the British. Since the trucional states became the United Arab Emirates, Ras Al Khaimah has prospered. A new town, Al Nakheel, has sprung up over the last 20 years, and is still growing. A French hypermarket opened in October 2000, and has provided a new focal point for the area. Archaeologists of the future may have to explain discarded shopping trolleys and plastic bags.'

For more details of the on-going archaeological work, Gordon recommends the Durham University web-site.

He would also, I'm sure, appreciate news from home. His address is H.C.T. Women's College, P.O. Box 4792, Ras al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates.

Notes and Queries

David Wilson MacArthur

David Wilson MacArthur was born on 29 August 1903, probably in Ayrshire as he refers to his boyhood in his book on the River Doon. His father was Dr Alex MacArthur, MB, CM, but he does not mention his mother in the listing in *Who Was Who*. He was educated at Ayr Academy and Glasgow University (MA Hons Eng. Lang. and Lit.) and published his first novel while still at university (*Yellow Stockings* (1925)).

His maternal great grand uncle was a Major General Sir Archibald Galloway, who was in the service of the East India Company and died in 1850. Sir Archibald wrote a number of books of which *A Commentary of the Moohummuddan Law* seems to have been the most important. His maternal uncle, Judge David Alec Wilson, was born in Glasgow in 1864 and served in Burma and India. He is best known for his biography of Carlyle of which the last part, *Carlyle in Old Age*, was unfinished when he died in 1933. David Wilson MacArthur undertook to finish it and it was published in 1934.

MacArthur ended up in London in 1935 where he was fiction editor at the Daily Mail and the Evening News. He travelled widely in Europe, America and Africa and wrote "over 500 short stories and innumerable articles" (*Who Was Who*). He seems to have been a restless character, but apparently ended up on a farm in what was then Rhodesia. He cannot have spent a lot of time there, judging from the number of travel books he wrote both before and after the Second World War and it is not clear when he acquired this farm. Together with his wife he drove from Benghazi to Alexandria (and presumably from there down to Rhodesia), as described in *The Road to the Nile* (1941). (Apparently also published under the slightly misleading title *The Road to Benghazi* the same year).

When war broke out he managed to get back to Britain and spent the war years in the RNVR. This resulted in a number of books about the Royal Navy and related matters. After the war he and his wife started travelling again in their faithful Flying Standard 12, first to Sweden and then through Spain, along the north coast of Africa and all the way down to South Africa. (*Auto Nomad in Barbary* (1950) and *Auto Nomad*

Through Africa (1951)). They also crossed the Sahara, which almost ended up as their last journey and which is vividly described in *The Desert Watches* (1954).

He settled in Rhodesia in 1947 and, according to himself, "engaged in tree-farming as well as writing". In all he wrote over 40 books, the majority between 1945 and 1981: a number of travel books, adventure stories for boys and murder stories, some under the pseudonym of David Wilson. Most of the other books were written under the name of Wilson MacArthur.

He spent some time in Canada (probably together with his wife) and was a passenger on the first ocean-going freighter that called at the new seaport of Churchill in Manitoba. This resulted in *Traders North* which knowledgeable people at the Hudson Bay Company pronounced an excellent account of the earliest traders in the 17th century.

David Wilson MacArthur died in Richmond (probably) in South Africa on 13 November 1981. He had married Patricia Knox Saunders in 1956 and they had two sons. So what happened to the wife he travelled with extensively in Europe and Africa (and probably America) and who originally came from South Africa? How much time did he actually spend on his farm in Rhodesia? Did he eventually end up in Richmond, SA? There are many question marks and the information given in *Who Was Who* and on the blurbs on various dust jackets seems to conflict.

I need more material to fill in the many gaps. He was a good sportsman, photographer (many of his books are illustrated with his photographs) and yachtsman. He also filmed some of his travels, but I have only found one reference to that. If anyone knows more about him, please let me know.

Thorsten Sjolín

If you have any information on MacArthur you can contact Thorsten by email:

thorsten.sjolin@btinternet.com

www.scan.org.uk

"Internet Access to the Written History of Scotland" is the slogan of this major, lottery-funded project. It was launched in November 2000, and carries a limited amount of material as yet, but all the features of the site which will be developed over the next three years are illustrated by a series of sample pages: lists of holdings of almost 50 participating Scottish archives; a comprehensive index to Scots wills from 1500 to 1875; and a variety of 'research tools'. This is a site to watch.

If you would prefer to learn more about it off-line, note that one of the attractions in Largs on 26th May (see notes following the Diary, below) is Joanna Baird, speaking on "The Scottish Archive Network (SCAN): Past, Present and Future".

www.nas.gov.uk

The official website of the National Archives of Scotland was launched on St Andrew's Day. Among the many records which can be viewed on-line are the declaration of Arbroath, the earliest letter of Mary Queen of Scots, and the Act of Union 1710. The website also includes information on sources for family history.

edina.ac.uk

This University of Edinburgh site has the complete First and New Statistical Accounts of Scotland. Access is free and the images can be downloaded to give a good print.

Diary

- AANHS Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society. Meetings in Carnegie Library, Ayr, at 7.45 p.m.
- CSD Catrine Sorn & District History Society. Meetings in A M Brown Institute, Catrine, at 7.30 p.m.
- DHS Dundonald Historical Society. Meetings in the Sheltered Housing Unit, Fullarton Avenue, Dundonald, at 7.30 p.m.
- KCCS Kyle and Carrick Civic Society. Meetings in Loudoun Hall, Ayr, at 7.30 p.m.
- KDHG Kilmarnock & District History Group. Meetings in Kilmarnock College at 7.30 p.m.
- LDHS Largs and District Historical Society. Meetings in Largs Museum at 7.30 p.m.
- L(MS) LDHS, Marine Section. Meetings in Largs Museum at 7.30 p.m.
- LNAFHS Largs & North Ayrshire Family History Society. Meetings in Largs Library at 7.30 p.m.
- PHG Prestwick History Group. Meetings in 65 Club, Main Street, Prestwick, at 7.30 p.m.
- WKAS West Kilbride Amenity Society. Meetings in Community Centre, West Kilbride, at 7.30 p.m.

February 2001

Thu 1st	PHG	Quentin Wilson	Elsie Mackay & Flying the Atlantic
Mon 5th	KCCS	Scott Cooper	History of Ornamental Garden Buildings in Scotland
Mon 5th	L(MS)	Iain Quinn	Living Memories of Clyde Steamers
Tue 6th	KDHG	Roland Paxton	Kilmarnock & Troon Railway, 1811 - 1846
Thu 8th	AANHS	Ronald Brash Tom Barclay	The Centenary of Ayr's Tramways Yaxley Robson: Ayr's Roundhead Provost
Tue 13th	LNAFHS	Bruce Morgan	Care of Archives
Wed 14th	DHS	Catherine Lang	Herbs for Healthy Living
Tue 20th	KDHG	David Harvey	Resurrectionists in Glasgow

Thu 22nd	AANHS	Miles Oglethorpe	Losing our Mines: Remembering the Coal Industry
Thu 22nd	LDHS	Gordon Riddle	Conserving Culzean
Tue 27th	WKAS	Alan Hodgkinson	Hands-on Gemstones

March 2001

Thu 1st	PHG	Peter Drummond	The Conservation of Macrae's Monument
Mon 5th	KCCS	Terry Levinthal	Scottish Civic Trust
Mon 5th	L(MS)	Eric Graham	Aspects of Local Marine History of 17/18th Centuries
Tue 6th	KDHG	Lee Stewart	Samurai Swords
Thu 8th	AANHS	Gordon Riddle	Culzean: A Challenge for the Millennium
Tue 13th	LNAFHS	Don Martin	The Forth and Clyde Canal
Wed 14th	DHS	Huw Pritchard	Ayrshire Archives
Tue 20th	KDHG	John Smillie	Down Memory Lane
Tue 27th	WKAS	Barry Wright	Memories of West Kilbride and Portencross
Thu 29th	LDHS	John Gallacher	Madeleine Smith - Did She or Didn't She?

April 2001

Thu 5th	PHG	Ken Andrew	Exploring Monkton
Tue 10th	LNAFHS	William Cross	Researching the Records at Kew
Wed 11th	DHS	John Barbour	Scottish Dance and Tartans

May 2001

Thu 3rd	PHG	members	Blether of 2001
---------	-----	---------	-----------------

Most societies will have summer outings, but these are often, for various reasons, limited to Society members.

There are three major events taking place over the summer and autumn months which we bring to the notice of our readers.

On Saturday 12th May, South Ayrshire Educational Services are holding another of their popular South Ayrshire History Fairs in the Walker Halls, South Beach, Troon. As always, there will be plenty of stalls selling books, magazines, and gifts, and an excellent range of speakers has been put together. The speakers are Fiona Watson, 'William Wallace and Ayrshire'; Ged O'Brien, 'Football: The Game Scotland Gave the World'; Peter Yeoman, 'Medieval Pilgrimage Places in South West Scotland'; and Derek

Alexander, 'Burning Issues: Vitrified Forts in South West Scotland'. Further details from South Ayrshire Educational Services, Library Headquarters, 26 Green Street, AYR KA8 8AD. Phone: 01292 288820.

A fortnight later, on Saturday 26th May, Largs and North Ayrshire Family History Society, are the hosts for the 12th Annual Conference of the Scottish Association of Family History Societies, under the title 'Honest Men & Bonnie Lassies'. This will be held in the National Sports Centre, Inverclyde, Burnside Road, Largs. There will be stalls and displays, and again four excellent speakers have been arranged. They are Lesley Diack, 'Work and Bonnie Lassies'; Eric Graham, 'The Seafarers of North Ayrshire before 1840 - Atlantic Voyagers, Fishermen and Smugglers'; Joanna Bird, 'The Scottish Archive Network (SCAN): Past, Present and Future'; and Robert Ferguson, 'Dalgarnen Mill - The Living Past'.

Further details can be obtained from Christine Craig, 12 Kelvin Gardens, LARGS, Ayrshire, KA30 8SX, or by e-mail at christine_craig_99@yahoo.com

Finally, on Saturday 15th September, 2001, Dr Ann Hamlin will give the tenth annual Whithorn Lecture, at St Ninian's Priory Church, Whithorn, at 7.45 p.m. Dr Hamlin's talk is entitled 'Ninian and Nedrum: Whithorn and the Early Church in East Ulster'. Dr Hamlin is a former Director of the Built Heritage, a member of the Environment and Heritage Service, and the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland. This should be an interesting lecture on the Irish connection with Whithorn. Admission is free.

Further information, including an accommodation list, can be obtained from the Hon Secretary, Friends of the Whithorn Trust, Mansefield, WHITHORN, Wigtownshire DG8 8PE.

The full diary for the Winter Season 2001-2002 will appear in the next issue of Ayrshire Notes. Secretaries of all societies are encouraged to send syllabuses to Rob Close. Address on inside front cover.

Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies

Annual General Meeting

Notice is given that the Annual General Meeting of the Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies will be held on Sunday, 20th May 2001, at 2 p.m., at Maybole Castle, High Street, Maybole. All members of the Federation are welcomed and encouraged to attend. We are the guests of May-Tag Ltd. and Maybole Historical Society. It is hoped to have a tour of the castle and a tour of Maybole. More details can be had from Rob Close or Stuart Wilson.

PUBLICATIONS of the AYRSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL & NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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

Ayrshire Honestones (Tucker)	£1.50
Digging Up Old Ayr (Lindsay)	£1.00
George Lokert of Ayr (Broadlie)	£1.25
A Scottish Renaissance Household (MacKenzie)	£3.00
The Shipping Trade of Ayrshire 1689-1791 (Graham)	£3.60
Plant Life in Ayrshire (Kirkwood/Foulds)	£4.20
The Barony of Alloway (Hendry)	£3.60
Robert Adam in Ayrshire (Sanderson)	£3.60
The Cumnock Pottery (Quail)	£5.00
Tolls and Tacksmen (McClure)	£3.60
Smuggling and the Ayrshire Economic Boom (Cullen)	£4.00
The Port of Ayr 1727-1780 (Graham)	£4.20
John Smith of Dalry, Part 1: Geology (ed. Reid)	£6.00
John Smith of Dalry, Part 2: Archæology & Natural History (ed. Reid)	£7.20
Mauchline Memories of Robert Burns (ed. Strawhorn) (reprint)	£3.50
Antiquities of Ayrshire (Grose, ed. Strawhorn) (reprint)	£4.20
Cessnock: An Ayrshire Estate in the Age of Improvement (Mair)	£4.50
Robert Reid Cunninghame of Seabank House (Graham)	£3.60
Historic Ayr: A Guide for Visitors	£2.00
The Rise and Fall of Mining Communities in Central Ayrshire (Wark)	£3.00
The Last Miller: The Cornmills of Ayrshire (Wilson)	£6.00
Historic Alloway, Village and Countryside: A Guide for Visitors	£2.00
The Street Names of Ayr (Close)	£5.00
Armstrong's Maps of Ayrshire (1775: reprint, 6 sheets)	£12.00