

AYRSHIRE NOTES

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WILLIAM LOGAN OF CASTLEMAINS

By David McClure

I talked much this forenoon about high roads, a plan for making them passable through Ayrshire, and other solid conversation, which made Lord Kames say that he was proud of me.

James Boswell, 24th September 1762 ¹

The first act for the improvement of roads in Ayrshire was passed in 1767. Trustees named in the Act, or qualified by land ownership, were called to the first General Meeting of Road Trustees, which took place in Ayr on 14th July 1767. Among the 17 trustees who attended that meeting was William Logan of Castlemains, a small property in New Cumnock ².

From a study of the minutes of the meetings of the Roads Trustees it may be seen that over the ensuing 28 years, William Logan was the most frequent attender. Of the 222 meetings from the first to the one held on 20th October 1795, he attended 129 (58%). For comparison, the next four most frequent attenders in this same span of meetings were John Campbell of Wellwood (117 meetings), James McGhie of Skeldon (93), John Hamilton of Sundrum (89) and David Bannatyne of Gardrum (82). In all, 247 trustees attended one or more of these 222 meetings.

Nor was Castlemains a spectator. He was elected to the chair (Præses) on 26 occasions, more than any other trustee during the same period. The four next most frequently elected Præses were John Campbell, 4th Earl of Loudoun (24), Patrick MacDowall, 5th Earl of Dumfries (23), Alexander Montgomerie of Coilsfield (22) and John Hamilton of Sundrum (22). Both of the latter also served for many years as Conveners of the county.

Castlemains was appointed to the Ayr to Dumfries road committee in 1767 and that from Irvine to Dalmellington in 1768. He was one of the 8 members (from a committee of 33) of the Ayr to Dumfries committee who

convened at Ochiltree on 1st October 1767 and again "within the house of James Mitchell, Vintner in Ayr" on 26th October. On 9th June 1768, he was one of 7 members of the 34-strong Irvine to Dalmellington committee who "met at Stair Bridge and rode and examined the road". With the passing of the 1774 Road Act, he was made a member of several of the new committees.

Like most Roads Trustees with the exception of the Earls, who were ineligible, Logan of Castlemains was a Commissioner of Supply, and his attendance at the Commissioners meetings is likewise a matter of record in the minutes ³.

He was for some time Sheriff-Substitute of Ayrshire. In the minutes of the Roads Trustees he is, for his first 113 meetings, recorded as William Logan of Castlemains. Thereafter, for the remaining 16 meetings, which spanned the period from 19th October 1784 to 20th October 1795, he is William Logan Sheriff-Substitute. In fact these minutes do not permit one to conclude that they were one person. However the identity is made in the minutes of the Commissioners, for instance on 29th April 1780, from which date comes the following extract:

William Logan of Castlemains esq. Sheriff Substitute of Ayrshire produced to the meeting the Act of Parliament for laying on the land tax for the service of the present year 1780, whereupon all the Commissioners present, in obedience thereto qualified by swearing the oaths of allegiance and abjuration and subscribing the same with the assurance to His Majesty George the third.

At another meeting in the same year his age is given as 63, which confirms 1717 as the year of birth, as given by JMH ⁴.

His interest in the roads in the county was shown some time before the 1767 Act, when he appealed to the Justices of the Peace in a matter concerning his lands in New Cumnock parish. His petition was considered on 20th May 1760. They set up a committee whose report was dated 9th July 1760. The report was considered and the judgement of the justices given on 23rd July 1760 ⁵.

At Ayr the 23rd of July 1760 which day at a meeting of the Justices of the Peace of the shire of Ayr convened at an

adjournment of their Quarter Sessions whereof the Earl of Loudoun was elected Præses, there was presented to them a petition by William Logan, writer in Ayr, shewing that before the bridge over the Water of Nith at New Cumnock was built the only way leading from Dalmellington and Carsphairn to Edinburgh went through the petitioner's lands of Castlemains and was used as such by horses and foot passengers and cattle drivers. That since the bridge was built they continued to use the same road when the Water of Nith was little and could with ease be passed, but when the water was large they passed through the petitioner's lands of Little Mains by the bridge over Nith, whereby the petitioner's lands were burdened with two roads since building said bridge in place of one, to his great hurt.

He wanted the Justices of the Peace and the Commissioners of Supply to allow him to stop the high road leading through Castlemains. At their Quarter Sessions on 20th May 1760, they remitted to John McAdam of Craigengillan, Thomas Gordon of Earlstoun and Hugh Logan of Logan, or any two of them, to inspect and report, which they did on 9th July. At their adjourned meeting on 23rd July, the Justices decided to allow him to stop up the road through Castlemains.

So aspects of the career of William Logan of Castlemains are a matter of record in primary sources. What lent interest to him for the author, is his almost complete absence from subsequent texts about the parish of New Cumnock and the county (which remark is not thrown out as a challenge!). This begins with **Paterson** ⁶ and **Robertson** ⁷, and is continued by more modern texts. There is a small aside in Paterson's chapter on New Cumnock, when he writes:

The castle [of Blackcraig], however, must have been pretty entire in 1784, on the 2nd of September of which year the proprietors of the parish met at it to ascertain the march between it and the grounds of Little Mains, or Castle ⁸.

There is however a small privately published volume, **The Logans of Knockshinnoch, JMH, 1885** ⁹, which includes a short biography of Logan of Castlemains. This may be found in Cumnock and Doon Valley Libraries' Local History Collection, located at the council offices at Lugar, and I am indebted to John Laurenson for drawing it to my attention.

According to JMH, Logan married Grizell Ferguson, daughter of John Ferguson, who was a lawyer and bailie of the regality of Cumnock ¹⁰, and it was the her dowry (£525 stg.) and money left to her by her brother (£2000 stg.) that he invested in land in New Cumnock. They had no children. He was Sheriff-Substitute of Ayrshire for over thirty years, and was said to have

done almost all the county business. We find that he was Sheriff in 1765; and the last notice we have of him alive is on 18th March 1793, when Edward McCormick, advocate, the newly appointed Sheriff Depute, again appointed him as Substitute.

JMH also reveals that:

He, unfortunately, became a partner in the Douglas and Heron Bank, and was ruined by its failure in 1773, and had to sell his New Cumnock property.

Ayrshire at the Time of Burns ¹¹ records that he was in the roll of freeholders in 1759, and suggests erroneously that he died between Michaelmas 1788 and 3rd August 1789, which would have been more than six years before his last attendance at a Roads Meeting.

Among Logan's fellow trustees, albeit much less active than he, were James Boswell and John Loudon McAdam. Logan and Boswell were present at the meeting on 29th October 1782. Logan and McAdam both attended the meetings on 23rd October 1787, 21st October 1788 and 2nd April 1792.

Logan continued to play an active role in the county's affairs at an advanced age, out of financial necessity. With his losses arising from the collapse of the Ayr Bank, he depended upon the income from his public position. His contemporary John Boswell, formerly of Knockroon, was another whose losses on that count may have led to his long tenure in a public position, as clerk to the Commissioners of Supply, a position which carried a salary of about £15 17s sterling a year.

In October 1795 the Sheriff Depute appealed for a pension for Logan, then 79, who had held his office for thirty four years. The minute concerning this appeal, which was a tribute to Logan's faithful service, follows in full:

Thereafter, Colonel Fullarton † moved, That the Freeholders and Commissioners of Supply met this day, do take into their consideration a Letter from Edward McCormick Esq. Sherriff depute of the County, addressed to Sir Adam Fergusson of Kilkerran Bart. M.P. which he had laid before the meeting; Setting forth, That Mr William Logan had held the publick and important office of sole Sheriff substitute of this County, for the space of Thirty four years. That he was now in the Seventy ninth year of his age, and from his natural, as well as some accidental infirmities, was desirous of being relieved from the Fatigues of that laborious office, But in consequence of certain well known misfortunes, he was unable to retire without an adequate compensation for the loss of his sallary, and perquisites of office, amounting to about £70 Str.. He therefore submitted to Sir Adam Fergusson as Member of Parliament for the County, the propriety of making an application to his Majestys Ministers, for a suitable pension to Mr Logan during life, in consideration of the long duration and extraordinary merit of his services, and in consideration of his advanced age. Which motion, being seconded by Mr Boyle, and unanimously agreed by the Meeting, they Requested Sir Adam Fergusson Bart. their Representative in Parliament, to apply to his Majestys Ministers for such Pension for Mr Logan, as may be tantamount to the annual value of his present office, as Substitute Sherriff, in consideration of his faithfull services, and other particular Circumstances attending this Gentlemans case.

According to a note in the margin, the application was refused, and that is the last record of him in the minutes of the Commissioners of Supply.

William Logan of Castlemains is a man who played a substantial part in the affairs of the county in the second half of the eighteenth century. Because he did not occupy one of the principal county offices (Convener or Sheriff Depute) and because he did not leave an estate for his heirs to occupy and so warrant the attention of Paterson and others, he has been largely forgotten.

† Colonel William Fullarton of Fullarton, author of *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Ayr* (1793).

Note: This information was obtained in the course of research on the work of the Roads Trustees, which was begun with the guidance of Alastair Hendry and Robin Urquhart, SRC Archivist.

Bibliography

- 1 **Boswell's Harvest Journal**; published with the **London Journal** in a limited edition edited by F. A. Pottle (copy in District Library at Lugar).
- 2 **Minutes of Ayrshire Roads Trustees** (Strathclyde Regional Archives, Ayr).
- 3 **Minutes of Ayrshire Commissioners of Supply (do.)**
- 4 **See (9).**
- 5 **Brackenridge and Graham, Solicitors, Logan Estate Papers**, item ref. ATD 61/2/97/1 (Logan's petition), (Strathclyde Regional Archives, Ayr).
- 6 **History of the County of Ayr**, James Paterson; Volume 1 1847, Volume 1 Part 2, 1863.
- 7 **Historic Ayrshire**, William Robertson, Volume I 1891, Volume II 1894.
- 8 **Paterson**, Volume 1, 1847, pp. 352/3; Volume 1 Part 2, 1863, p. 311.
- 9 **The Logans of Knockshinnoch**, JMH, 1885.
- 10 **History of Cumnock**, John Strawhorn, 1966, pp. 31, 33, 34.
- 11 **Ayrshire at the Time of Burns**, Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, 1959, p. 106.

The **AFHS Swap Shop** will be held at 7-30 pm on Friday 8 October at the Cathcartston Visitor Centre, Dalmellington. Each affiliated Society is invited to send two representatives to take part in this valuable sharing of ideas and experiences.

BOSWELLIANA

Sheriff Neil Gow provided a witty and informative address on James Boswell to a large and appreciative audience at the February meeting of the AANHS. The interest aroused inspired a visit to Auchinleck by the Society.

One sunny evening in July over eighty members and friends arrived to be divided into two parties, who in turn visited Auchinleck House and the Boswell Museum. A lecture on the house and its history was delivered by James Simpson, who is an Edinburgh architect; and another by Sheriff Gow on Auchinleck and Boswell's home there. The Boswell Mausoleum was opened up specially for the occasion, and small groups of brave souls made a hazardous descent into the crypt where the coffins of Boswell, his wife, and other members of the family lie at rest.

Those whose interest in Boswell has been whetted may be interested in an article reprinted from the AFHS news sheet of October 1989. It is by John Strawhorn who was appointed a Yale Research Fellow to edit Boswell's correspondence with his estate overseers, and after two visits to New Haven, Connecticut, to work on the Boswell papers, he answered the following question: **HOW DID THE BOSWELL PAPERS GET TO YALE?**

When the famous biographer died in 1795 he left behind at Auchinleck House a great mass of journals, letters and other papers. These rather embarrassed the family, containing as they did quite intimate revelations of JB's private life; they were too many to burn, so they were stored away out of sight. When JB's grandson died in 1847, the estate was inherited by a daughter Emily who in 1873 married Lord Talbot of Malahide near Dublin. Auchinleck estate was in the hands of the Talbots until 1920 when the farms were sold off, and the mansion and policies purchased by a distant relative, Col. John Douglas Boswell of Garrallan. Sometime before 1920 there were transported to Malahide furniture, paintings, and the mass of Boswell papers.



Auchinleck House, seat of the Boswells

Professor C B Tinker, an American Boswell scholar, somehow got to hear of the papers at Malahide, and paid a visit in 1925. He was shown a drawer full, but refused permission either to study or purchase. More persuasive, Col. Ralph Isham, an American collector, followed in 1927 and acquired for about £35,000 all the Boswell papers at Malahide; and others which subsequently turned up there, some found in a box for storing sports equipment, others when a stable loft was being cleared.

Meanwhile, Professor Abbott of Aberdeen, while searching in Fettercairn House in Aberdeenshire for something else, came across in 1930 over a thousand Boswell items which at the time of his death had been taken away for examination by Sir William Forbes, one of his executors. Dispute over the ownership of these Fettercairn papers had to be settled in the Court of Session. Lord Clinton, owner of Fettercairn, was adjudged to have no right to them though they had been in his family's possession for four generations. Isham, having purchased "all JB's papers" from the rightful heirs seemed to have a strong claim. But another claim was held to be valid - that of an infirmity in Carlisle! When JB's grandson died, though the estate went to his elder daughter, all the

other effects went to his widow, who divided them between her two daughters. The younger married the mayor of Carlisle and left her all to the Cumberland Infirmary, Carlisle, which the Court of Sessions judged to be entitled to half of the 1,607 items at Fettercairn.

By the end of the war Isham had been able to purchase the Infirmary's share and in 1948 all the Boswell papers arrived in New York. But Isham by this time had exhausted all his resources, and a fund was raised by which they were obtained by Yale University in 1949.

Professor Fred Pottle of Yale in 1950 published *Boswell's London Journal 1762-63* which has since been followed by a dozen other volumes based on JB's journals. There have also appeared the first of a projected forty volumes of Boswell's correspondence. These productions of the Boswell Office at Yale have earned it the name of "the Boswell Factory".

Yale's manuscript collection has been further swollen by the acquisition of a further mass of papers which remained at Auchinleck House till the 1960s. Only some of these relate to the Biographer. Most are estate papers extending from the 15th to the 20th century. They include charters, rent books, account books, mining records, and range from a letter to Mary Queen of Scots to an estimate for repairs by James Armour, Burns's father-in-law. Altogether the Boswell and Auchinleck papers stored in the Beinecke Library at Yale fill 4,032 folders in 195 boxes, occupying 101 feet and three inches of shelf space. Searching among them for items to annotate Boswell's estate correspondence, John Strawhorn has found himself in a treasure trove of Ayrshire history.

The Laird
Acknowledging my
accounts for 1791
6th Feb 1792

THIS ONE IS IN AYR!

Opposite: the opening and end
of a letter from James Boswell to his
overseer, from the collection of the
Carnegie Library, Ayr.

London
6 Febry 1792
Andrew.
you did very properly
towards the Auchinleck
Beneficial Society.
My brother finds your
accounts quite accurate, which
I am very glad is the case;
and I observe you have written
them in a good hand, to which
I hope you will always be attentive
I wish Rudston Plantation
movings may pro-
It is a bad thing that George
Paton is so dilatory. I enclose
the bill, which his son and
be granted. I found it here.
send me a state of what
you have now received & paid
out since your last account. You
need not be particular as to small articles
I remain your well wisher
James Boswell.

FINDING OUT ABOUT AYRSHIRE

(4) MAPS

They used to say that Geography was about maps and History was about chaps. Nowadays geographers are just as interested in why and how people live in particular places, so that, for example, much good historical material can be found in the *Scottish Geographical Magazine*. Conversely, it is a poor local historian who is not intimately acquainted with every corner of his parish, and G M Trevelyan once wrote that a stout pair of boots was an essential item of a social historian's equipment. To become familiar with the various old maps featuring a locality deeply extends one's understanding of its past.

Those maps of Scotland first published in the 16th century are small in scale and show little useful local detail. But we are fortunate in possessing large-scale maps of our area which were published in Amsterdam in 1654 by W and J Blaeu within an eleven-volume atlas of the world. Volume 5 comprises maps of Scotland based on surveys made fifty years earlier by the Rev. Timothy Pont. A copy of the map of North Ayrshire was reprinted along with Pont's notes in a well-known book entitled *Cunninghame Topographized by Timothy Pont*, edited by J S Dobie, 1871. The map of Kyle, from Blaeu's edition of 1662, has been reprinted by Bartholomew, and copies are still on sale. Both these maps, and that of Carrick, can be consulted in the Carnegie and other district library headquarters.

Almost a hundred years later another cartographic survey of Scotland was made. Following suppression of the 1745 rebellion, to assist in pacification, a young engineer officer called William Roy was appointed to make between 1747 and 1755 a set of large scale maps (1000 yards to the inch) which covered most of Scotland -- and included Ayrshire. These manuscripts are held in the British Museum (now British Library) in London. It was only about thirty years ago that black-and-white copies became available (coloured slides are now obtainable) and many local historians are still unaware how valuable they are, since they

provide a picture of the countryside before turnpike roads were constructed, when few of the cultivated fields were as yet enclosed by hedges, when some towns (like Prestwick) were small, and others (like Ardrossan, Catrine and Auchinleck) were not yet founded. Carnegie Library, Ayr, has a set covering the whole of Ayrshire.

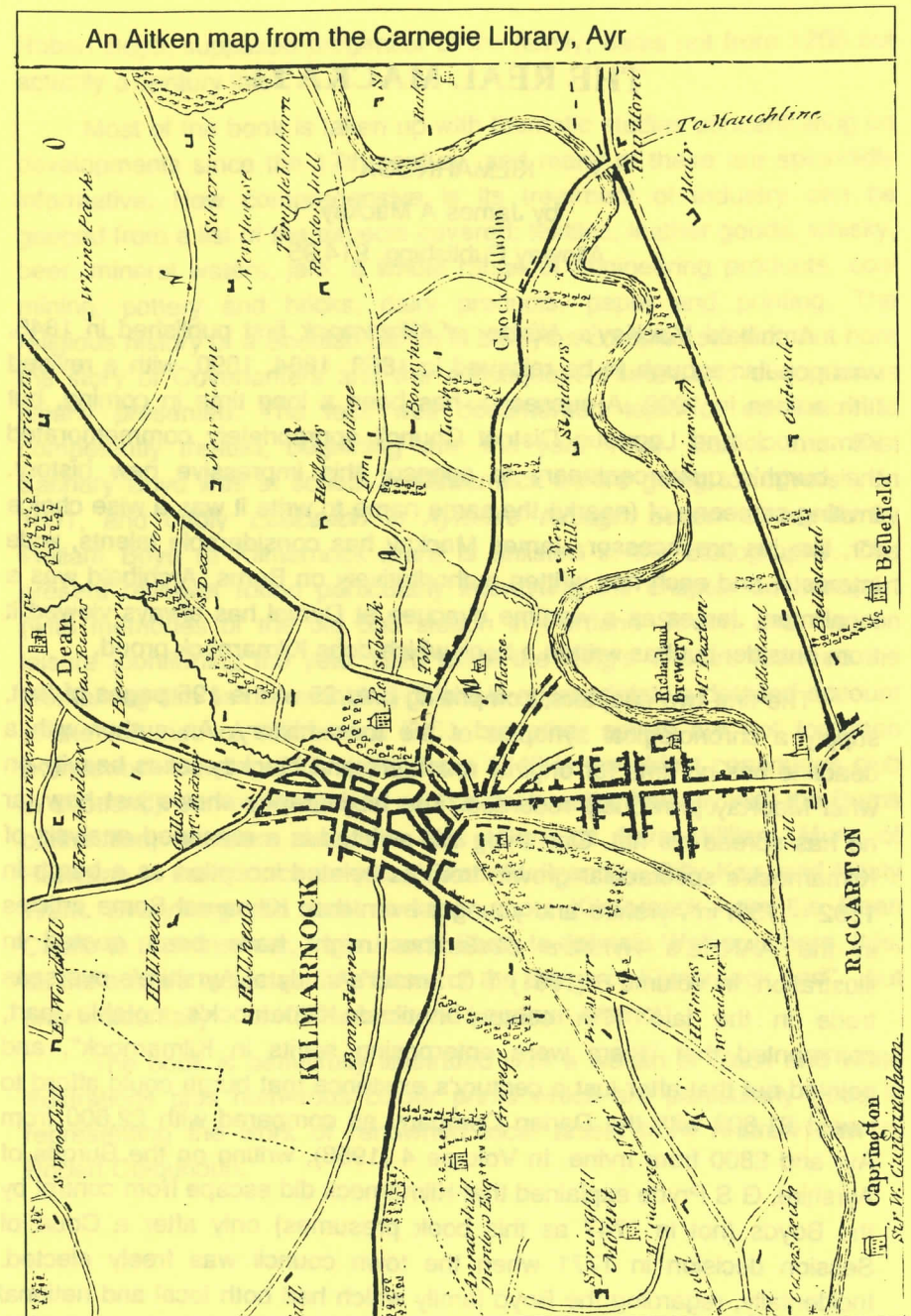
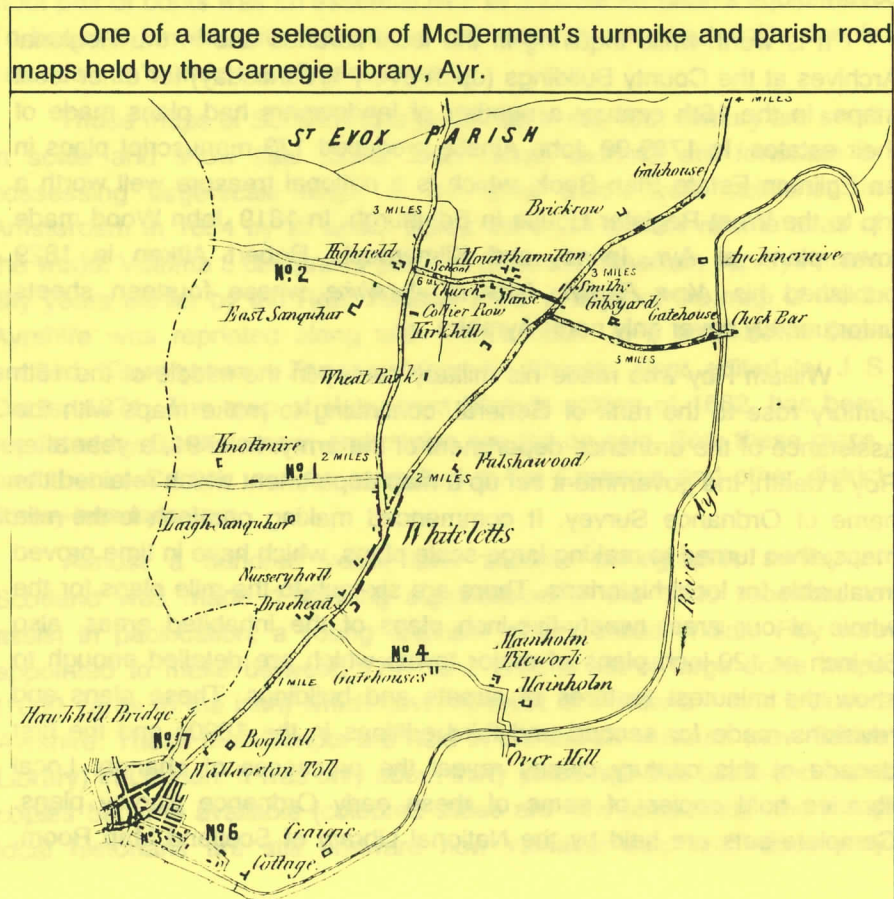
More widely known is the excellent six-sheet map of Ayrshire published in 1775 by A and M Armstrong, with its large-scale map of Ayr. How it came to be produced, and what information it contains are explained in *Ayrshire at the Time of Burns* which the AANHS issued in 1959 with facsimile copies of the map, which has proved so popular as to require several impressions since and is still easily obtainable (see back cover).

It is worth-while inquiring in the local libraries and in the Regional Archives at the County Buildings (open every Wednesday) for other local maps. In the 18th century a number of landowners had plans made of their estates. In 1789-90 John Ainslie produced 173 manuscript plans in an Eglinton Estate Plan Book, which is a national treasure well worth a trip to the West Register House in Edinburgh. In 1819 John Wood made town plans of Ayr, Irvine, and Kilmarnock. Robert Aitken in 1829 published his *New Parish Atlas of Ayrshire*, whose fourteen sheets unfortunately cover only north Ayrshire.

William Roy who made his military survey in the middle of the 18th century rose to the rank of General, continuing to make maps with the assistance of the ordnance department of the army. In 1791, a year after Roy's death, the government set up a map department which retained the name of Ordnance Survey. It commenced making one-inch-to-the-mile maps, then turned to making large-scale plans, which have in time proved invaluable for local historians. There are six-inch-to-the-mile plans for the whole of our area; twenty-five-inch plans of the inhabited areas, also 60-inch or 120-inch plans of major towns which are detailed enough to show the minutest features of streets and buildings. These plans and revisions made for second and third editions in the 1890s and the first decade of this century clearly reveal the processes of change. Local libraries hold copies of some of these early Ordnance Survey plans. Complete sets are held by the National Library of Scotland Map Room,

Causeyside Building, 31 Salisbury Place, Edinburgh. Photocopies can be obtained of all Ordnance Survey Maps except those less than fifty years old for which copyright restrictions apply.

Miss Margaret Wilkes, head of the map department of the National Library of Scotland, will speak on "Ayrshire: the View from Charts, Maps and Plans" at the AANHS meeting in Ayr Academy on Thursday 14 October at 7-30. In a memorable lecture last January Mrs Yolande Hodson described William Roy's map-making career.



THE REAL MACKAY!

KILMARNOCK

by James A Mackay

Alloway Publishing, £14.95

Archibald MacKay's *History of Kilmarnock*, first published in 1848, was popular enough to be reissued in 1858, 1864, 1890, with a revised fifth edition in 1909. A successor has been a long time in coming, but Kilmarnock and Loudoun District Council appropriately commemorated the burgh's quatercentenary to sponsor this impressive new history. Inviting someone of (nearly) the same name to write it was a wise choice for, like his predecessor, James Mackay has considerable talents, wide interests, and each has written authoritatively on Burns. Archibald was a local man; James as a wartime evacuee at Darvel has always viewed it from outside; but has written a book which does Kilmarnock proud.

The first two chapters, comprising only 25 of the 195 pages of text, supply a chronological synopsis of the town history. An author with a deadline has no time for original research, and Mackay relies heavily on what MacKay previously recorded. The bibliography shows just how far he has spread his net. One thing still awaited is a reasoned analysis of Kilmarnock's spectacular growth from its belated inception as a burgh in 1592 -- 13th in Ayrshire and younger even than Kilmaurs! Some articles in the AANHS's *Ayrshire Collections* might have been quoted in illustration. In Volume 6 (1961) T C Smout's study of Ayrshire's overseas trade in the late 17th century noticed Kilmarnock's notable part, commented that "there were enterprising spirits in Kilmarnock", and pointed out that after just a century's existence that burgh could afford to invest £1,600 with the Darien Company as compared with £2,600 from Ayr and £800 from Irvine. In Volume 4 (1958), writing on the Burghs of Ayrshire, G S Pryde explained that Kilmarnock did escape from control by the Boyds (not in 1747 as this book presumes) only after a Court of Session decision in 1771 when the town council was freely elected. Incidentally, regarding the Boyd family which had both local and national prominence, Pryde in the same article proved that a document naming Sir

Robert Boyd, supposed progenitor of the family, dates not from 1205 but actually a century later.

Most of the book is taken up with thematic studies concentrating on developments since the 17th century, and many of these are splendidly informative. How comprehensive is its treatment of industry can be gauged from a list of the aspects covered: textiles, leather goods, whisky, beer, mineral waters, jam, a whole range of engineering products, coal mining, pottery and bricks, dairy products, paper and printing. The religious history of a Scottish parish is always a complex subject, but here the story of Covenanters and the subsequent dissent and disruption is clearly presented. The less well documented topic of education is competently treated, beginning with the year 1629. Earlier than that Zachary Boyd was at school in Kilmarnock before going to university in 1601, and oddly *Education in Ayrshire through Seven Centuries* by William Boyd (a Kilmarnock man) is unlisted in the bibliography. The present reviewer found particularly interesting the chapter on transport (with memories of the old bus station in Portland Street) and that on leisure (confirming the year 1929 when the King's Theatre featured the first talking film as I remember!) There is appropriately a detailed account of the fortunes of Kilmarnock F.C., but other sports are not forgotten (Kilmarnock Bowling Club dating from 1740 is the oldest continuous club in Scotland). James Mackay of course deals authoritatively with the Burns connection; literature and the arts takes us from William Mure of Rowallan in the 16th century to William McIlvanney, Billy Kay, and Kirsty Wark. Everything you want to know about Kilmarnock from the Dean Castle to Dick Institute, from Jimmy Shaw to Johnnie Walker is here. It is, as the subtitle indicates, "A history of the Burgh of Kilmarnock and" - but only incidentally - "of Kilmarnock and Loudoun District".

The book is beautifully illustrated with a wealth of black and white illustrations plus numerous colour prints which are particularly good in representing the work of renowned local artists from Andrew Law to Robert Colquhoun.

OTHER BOOKS ABOUT AYRSHIRE

ROBERT ADAM IN AYRSHIRE

by Margaret H B Sanderson

AANHS, £3.60

Dr Sanderson has made important contributions to Ayrshire local history in several AANHS publications. Following upon her recent book on *Robert Adam and Scotland: Portrait of an Architect*, she has favoured us with this particular study of his work in Ayrshire, with detailed accounts of the building of Dumfries House, Auchincruive, Caldwell, Culzean, Dalquharran, and civic improvements in Ayr. The illustrations from original plans and pictures add to the value of the 35-page booklet, and Robert Adam's view of Crossraguel Abbey makes an attractive coloured cover. Appropriately, Kyle and Carrick Civic Society collaborated in publication.

REFORM ACT PLANS OF 1832

AYR, £4.99

IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK, £4.99

Historical Discovery, a company based at 9-11 Market Street, Crewe, CW1 2EW specialising in facsimile reproduction of maps and topography, has undertaken publication of all those 350 plans and descriptions of towns which were officially prepared in connection with the 1832 Reform Act, in order to define the boundaries of the new constituencies. While these are of great interest to any local historian, they should be of particular value to schools, providing a summary of events leading up to the Reform Act, details of population and electorate in each Scottish constituency, a report on the burgh, and a full-scale facsimile hand-coloured map. The report on Ayr, for example, includes facts like "There is an Academy, which, from the celebrity of its teachers, has drawn a great many Families to the Town for the education of their children". Unfolded copies of the map suitable for framing can be obtained from the publisher at £4.99 plus £1 post and packing.

THE PARISH OF LARGS

by David B Baxter

Largs & District Historical Society, £8.95

A well-researched history of the parish from the 13th till the 20th century. Obtainable from the Largs & District Historical Society, Kirkgate House, Manse Court, Largs KA30 8AW (add 55p for postage).

SCOTTISH LOCAL HISTORY Vol. 28, June 1993

Scottish Local History Forum, £3

This most recent issue of the Forum (annual subscription £10) contains several articles of special interest to those whose researches involve the use of newspaper files.

SCOTTISH LABOUR HISTORY REVIEW No. 6, Spring 1993

Scottish Labour History Society

Amongst socialist pioneers, the name of Mary Macarthur from Ayr is fairly well-known. Less familiar is Marjory Neilson whose career is recounted by Rob Duncan in this magazine (issued to members, £5 annual subscription). She was born in Beith in 1884, daughter of a foreman cabinet maker. Dux at Beith Academy, she enrolled as a student at Glasgow University in 1902 and began teaching in Lanarkshire in 1908. While at university she broke from family tradition, becoming an atheist, a supporter of women's rights, and a socialist. In Wishaw she organised a socialist Sunday School and became a prominent activist in the Independent Labour Party, speaking at public meetings throughout the West of Scotland, working alongside Robert Climie of Kilmarnock. In 1913 she met Walton Newbold who was in Scotland making a critical investigation of the armaments industry, married him in 1915, and then moved to London. There she continued her political anti-war activities, and as a representative of the left-wing of the ILP she welcomed the Russian Revolution and travelled to Moscow in 1920 to participate in the second congress of the Communist International. She returned to Lanarkshire in 1922 when her husband successfully contested the Motherwell-Wishaw constituency. Walton Newbold, popular as 'Madge's

man' became Britain's first Communist M.P. But Marjory Neilson Newbold was already stricken with a fatal strain of tuberculosis, and she died at Beith in 1926.

GIRVAN MEMORIES

by James McMeikan

Kyle & Carrick District Council

The author is an authority on the local lore and appropriately this book is subtitled "A Walk down Memory Lane". Over fifty pages of old photographs portray the harbour, the town, working life, recreations, notable events, and recall the days when Girvan beach was crowded with holidaymakers.

The Scots Magazine

August 1993, 95p

This issue contains an article on Henry Ewing Torbet (1912-83), a Dundee banker who became a hermit and spent the last three decades of his life in Bennane Cave by Ballantrae. Also featured are ten magnificent colour photographs illustrating "Ken Andrew's Ayrshire".

1993 is the centenary year of the Carnegie Library, Ayr, and a number of events are being held to celebrate it. Look out for announcements of exhibitions, lectures etc. in the press and local libraries.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

We are uncertain just how far into the past our archaeological remit operates, but we believe that some of you will be interested in the major exhibition on DINOSAURS FROM CHINA open seven days a week from 16 September 1993 until 30 April 1994 at the Dick Institute, Kilmarnock. Admission costs £2 for adults, £1 for children and concessionaries.

The Council for Scottish Archaeology has sponsored an INVENTORY OF SCOTTISH CHURCH HERITAGE. Three years of research by archaeologists, historians, and conservation groups, has produced a survey of more than 1,000 religious sites dating from the 5th to the 10th century. Stored on computer data-base, the information will in the near future become available for consultation by organisations, individuals and public bodies.

DUNASKIN HERITAGE CENTRE at Waterside, Patna, was officially opened on 11 July. The site of Scotland's most important Victorian ironworks has been transformed into an open-air industrial heritage museum. The furnace bases and locomotive shed have been restored, there is a visitors' centre, craft workshop, and exhibitions. Further plans include a railway link with Ayr by steam train.

"A CHANGING LANDSCAPE", the spring conference of the Scottish Records Association, on the theme of agricultural change in the Lowlands, was held at Craigie College on Saturday 5 June. Speakers from the worlds of archaeology, history and even landscape gardening (!) included Roy Campbell, Alastair Hendry, Ian Whyte and Ian Morrison. Topics ranged from climatic change before, during and after the

agricultural revolution to the life of one of the county's leading improvers. Exhibitions by the AANHS and Kyle and Carrick District Reference Library were a colourful alternative to the lunchtime discussion. If you didn't attend the conference, you can still discover the connection between Napoleon's whist losses and the sick pay of a Rozelle gardener by obtaining a copy of the conference report, which will be published by the Association early next year.

Professor Campbell will be lecturing on "Land Ownership in the South-west before 1914" at the 9 December meeting of the AANHS.

EXPLORERS REQUIRED. You might be forgiven for thinking that, to borrow a phrase from Saki, the people of Ayrshire produce more history than can be consumed locally. But is it good history?

At first glance you might find terms such as palaeography and historiography quite intimidating, but they are simply disciplines which improve your historical research and enable you to read published histories with a critical eye.

A course of evening classes run by Glasgow University's Adult Education Department starts in October at Ayr Academy, giving you the chance to pick up or hone your historical skills and take part in research projects, involving original historical sources, some of which have not yet been used by local historians or genealogists. The course, called **EXPLORING LOCAL HISTORY**, will be run by Robin Urquhart and Alastair Hendry. For more details contact Robin Urquhart at Strathclyde Regional Archives (041 227 2733).

- Contributions for the Spring 1944 issue of *Ayrshire Notes* should be sent before the end of February to Dr John Strawhorn, 51 Connell Crescent, Mauchline, KA5 5BN.

- Local Societies may obtain additional copies of *Ayrshire Notes* for their members at reduced rates by prior arrangement with Dr Trevor Mathews, 10 Longlands Park, Ayr, KA7 4RJ.

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