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For the connection between Macadamias and Kilmarnock see article
by Rob Close within

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Kilmarnock and the Macadamia Nut: A Loose Connection

John Macadam, chemist, teacher and politician, 1827 – 1865

John Macadam was born in Glasgow on the 29th May 1827. His parents were William Macadam (1783-1853) and his second wife, Helen Stevenson^{i 1} (1803-1857), who had been married in Glasgow on 3rd January 1825. The marriage had also been proclaimed two days previously, on the 1st January, in Clackmannan.

William Macadam had been born in Glasgow on 3rd November 1783. His parents were John Macadam, a weaver, and Margaret Findlay. He was first married, on 1st June 1813, to Rachel Gentle, with whom he had a son, William (b. 1815, died after September 1877). One genealogical site inaccurately suggests there was a second marriage, to a Mary Brougham². Besides his son with Rachel Gentle, William Macadam had a further 7 children with Helen Stevenson, of whom John was the second, and eldest son.³

¹ Helen was born in Cumbernauld on 24th August 1803. She was the daughter of William Stevenson, a farmer (born in Dunlop in August 1765 in) and Helen Grindley (born at Seabegs, Bonnybridge, 27th May 1781). William Stevenson died at Park Farm, Clackmannan, on 27th July 1839, and Helen Grindley/Stevenson in Tranent on 8th November 1844. Edwin Macadam, shelwin.com/e/ancestry/macadam/macadam-history.htm#. John%20Macadam.%20MD, accessed 7th January 2025. Cited hereafter as shelwin.com

² Mary Brougham was actually the second wife of William Macadam, junior

³ I am happy to share the extended family tree

William Macadam is usually described as a calico printer. The Clackmannan proclamation describes him as ‘merchant, Glasgow’, and in the 1851 Census he describes himself as ‘retired merchant and calico printer’. His early life has been hard to establish, but he is probably the William Macadam, listed in the 1809 Glasgow Directory as a cotton spinner in McKechnie’s Street, Calton⁴. By 1812 he is in Bell Street, where he remains until 1815, and from 1816 until about 1836 he is in partnership with a Mr McKinlay as merchant and manufacturers, initially in Hutcheson Street, and subsequently in Cochrane Street. From 1837 he seems to be a partner in William Hall & Co., shawl printers, with an address in Glasgow, and also at the Greenholm Printworks in Kilmarnock. By 1843 the firm name has become Macadam & Co. From 1831 his residential address in Glasgow appears to have been 169 George Street.

A little more certainty is reached with the 1841 Census, when the family is living in Low Glencairn Street, Kilmarnock, though he appears to be away from home. Those recorded are Helen, along with William (born c.1821, whom I assume to be her stepson), Mary (born c.1836) and George Robert (born

⁴ The Glasgow Directories are available on-line on the National Library of Scotland website. I have not attempted to give individual references

c.1838). The next reference to him is in the *Edinburgh Gazette* of 30th December 1845, announcing the sequestration of Macadam & Co., shawl printers in Kilmarnock, and the partners in the business, William Macadam and William Macadam, junior.⁵ The company was based at the Greenholm Printworks, which covered ground on either side of Glencairn Street, north of Riccarton Bridge. This land, covering over 7 acres, was advertised for sale in July 1846.ⁱⁱ By the 1851 Census, William, senior, and Helen have returned to Glasgow, and are living at 77 Portland Street, together with their children John (b.1828), Margaret (b.c1831) Charles Thomas (b. c.1833), Mary and George Robert. All the children are stated to have been born in Glasgow. William Macadam died in 1853, and his wife in 1857⁶.

John Macadam, William's second son and the subject of this note, having secured a position as a lecturer in chemistry at the Scotch College in Melbourne, left the UK on board the sailing

⁵ *Edinburgh Gazette*, 5497, Tuesday 30th December 1845, 818c. A dividend was paid to the creditors in July 1846 (*Edinburgh Gazette*, 5555, Tuesday 14th July 1847, 292b), and the elder William Macadam made a voluntary surrender of his effects (*cessio bonorum*) in November 1846 (*Edinburgh Gazette*, 5590, Friday 13th November 1847, 545c). Shawl and calico printing could be a perilous business, subject to the whims of women's fashion, and William Macadam was probably a victim of a particularly severe downturn in the early 1840s, which had bankrupted over 50% of the shawl manufacturers in Paisley. See, for instance, John Malden, ed., *Borland's Fowler*, Edinburgh, Scottish Record Society, New Series, vol.44, 2019, p.xi

⁵ *Kilmarnock Herald*, Friday 3rd July 1846, 1f. It is possible that Greenholm is an earlier name for the Irvinebank Printworks

⁶ She died on 20th January 1857 at 6 Kelvinhaugh Street, Glasgow, and the death was registered by her son, George

ship *Admiral* on 8th June 1855 and arrived in Melbourne on the 8th September 1855. According to one biography, he was born at Northbank, Glasgow⁷. He was educated in Glasgow, and studied chemistry first at the Andersonian Institute and, subsequently, with William Gregory at Edinburgh University, before working for a year or so (in 1846-47) as an assistant to Professor George Wilson. In 1854-55 he returned to Glasgow to study medicine at Glasgow University⁸, before emigrating to Australia.

Macadam seems to have thrown himself wholeheartedly into the intellectual life of Victoria, Australia. As well as lecturing at the Scotch College, by 1857 he was also teaching at the Geelong Church of England Grammar School. In 1858 he was made the official analytical chemist for the Government of Victoria, and in 1860 Health Officer for the City of Melbourne. In March 1862 he began work as a lecturer in medicine (chemistry and physical chemistry) at the University of Melbourne School of Medicine. Paid work seems not to have exhausted Macadam's energies: by 1857 he was the Honorary

⁷ Edwin Macadam, shelwin.com

⁸ K F Russell, *John Macadam (1827-1865)*, in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. V, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1974. Accessed online, 7th January 2025. Russell's article is the principal source for Macadam's Wikipedia page, which is, in turn, the principal source for this article.

⁸ See, for instance, *Geelong Advertiser*, Monday 29th April 1861, 5e, accessed 14th February 2025, via trove.nla.gov.au.

Secretary of the Philosophical Institute of Victoria, which, partly through his urgings, became the Royal Society of Victoria [RSV]. He oversaw the construction of the Society's premises – still in use, today – and campaigned successfully for the royal support. He remained as Secretary of the Society until 1862, when he was made a Vice-President – he also edited the first five volumes of their Transactions.

From 1857 until his death, Macadam was also secretary to the RSV's Exploration Committee. This was the committee that funded the well-known, though ill-fated, Victorian Exploring Expedition, colloquially known as the Burke and Wills Expedition. The instructions to Burke and Wills were issued by John Macadam, in his role as Secretary to the Committee are given below:

The object of the Committee in directing you to Coopers Creek is that you should explore the country intervening between it and Ludwig Leichhardt's track south of the Gulf of Carpentaria, avoiding as far as practicable Sturt's route to the west and Gregory's down the Victoria on the east. Should you determine the impracticability of this route you are desired to turn westward into the country recently discovered by Sturt

and connect his furthest point north with Gregory's furthest southern exploration in 1856 ... The Committee is fully aware of the difficulty of the country you are called on to traverse and in giving you these instructions has placed these routes before you more as an indication of what it has been deemed desirable to have accomplished than as indicating an exact course for you to pursue ... The Committee entrusts you with the largest discretion as regards the forming of depots, and your movements generally.

The Burke and Wills Expedition was the first to traverse Australia from south to north, having left Melbourne in August 1860. It is an important part of Australian heritage, and the subject of much debate. Neither Burke nor Wills survived the trip, dying at Coopers Creek, in Queensland, on the return trip. The role of the Committee, of Macadam, the funding, in-fighting, the suitability (or not) of Burke, especially, and Wills have all been discussed, and remain subjects of conflicted discussion. The relevant Wikipedia page seems a good place to learn more about the expedition and its afterlife.

As if this wasn't enough, Macadam also found time to be a member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly, having been

first elected for the Castlemaine constituency in October 1859. For just over six months from April to November 1861, he served in the short-lived Heales ministry as Postmaster General for Victoria.⁹ He left parliament in August 1864.

Macadam was not, however, all work and no play. Just over a year after he had been in Australia, on 18th September 1856, he married Elizabeth Clark, the second daughter of John Clark of Levenfield in Dunbartonshire. Elizabeth was born in Glasgow on 7th October 1832, and the marriage must have been contracted before Macadam left Scotland. The Clarks were, like the Macadams, engaged in the calico and printing trade, and it is probable, though as yet unproven, that the families knew each other. She had only arrived in Melbourne a few days before the wedding, having travelled from England on the same ship, the *Admiral*, on which Macadam had travelled the previous year. John and Elizabeth had two sons, though neither survived infancy – John Melnotte (1858-1859) and William Castlemaine (1860-1865). As we shall see below, Elizabeth was widowed in 1865, and on 26th February 1868 she married the reverend John Dalziel Dickie, minister of Colac. Dickie

⁹ It has been hard to restrict this article to John Macadam. The side-hustles, such as Burke & Wills, Aussie Rules football, &c., threaten to turn it into a history of mid-19th Century Australia.

died on Christmas Day 1909, and Elizabeth died in Brighton, Victoria in 1915.

Macadam has one more demand on our interest. In August 1858 he helped to organise a game of football between Scotch College and Melbourne Grammar School. This game, held on 7th August 1858, is generally accepted as an important predecessor to Australian Rules football. Macadam had been involved in formulating the rules for this game, together with Thomas Wentworth Wills (1835-1880), an early Australian sportsman, whose Wikipedia page is of considerable interest¹⁰. The Argus (Melbourne) reported it thus: ‘Football. A match at this excellent game was played in the Richmond Paddock on Saturday, between the scholars of the Church of England Grammar School and those of the Scotch College. The ground was visited during the afternoon by a considerable number of persons interested in the sport. Dr Macadam acted in the capacity of umpire on the one side, and Mr Wills on the other. The contest, which lasted until late in the day, was undecided, a game having been declared in favor of each party,’ⁱⁱⁱ while a correspondent of the *Geelong Advertiser*, quoted in the *Portland Guardian and Normandy General Advertiser*,

¹⁰ *The Argus* (Melbourne), Monday 9th August 1858, 5g, accessed 14th February 2025, via trove.nla.gov.au

reported that ‘a football match between the boys receiving tuition at the Scotch College and those of the Church of Scotland Grammar School is playing to-day in the Government paddock near the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The match commenced at twelve o’clock, when nearly eighty combatants attended. The authorities of the schools have apparently taken every precaution against what is intended to be a healthy amusement degenerating into one of party strife. In the pavilion erected by the Melbourne Cricket Club, there is ample refreshment laid out for the scholars.’¹¹

Ultimately, Macadam’s public spiritedness brought about his end. In early 1865, because of his medical chemistry knowledge, he was called as a witness in the case of William Andrew Jarvey¹², a ship’s captain, who was accused of poisoning his wife, Catherine. The trial in Dunedin, New Zealand lasted for seven days, and was ‘chiefly remarkable for the examination and cross-examination of Dr Macadam, which lasted three days, and for the unprovoked attack made upon him by His Honor Judge Chapman in summing up. It appears that the medical fraternity of Dunedin were highly indignant that

¹¹ *Portland Guardian and Normanby General Advertiser*, Wednesday 11th August 1858, 3a, accessed 14th February 2025, via trove.nla.gov.au

¹² ¹² For more on Jarvey see Adrian Rogan, *William Andrew Jarvey, Clothier and Pawnbroker, Hobart, Tasmania (? – 1865)* in Museums Victoria Collections, <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/articles/2557>, accessed 14th February 2025

the analysis of the stomach, &c., of the deceased Mrs Jarvey was entrusted to a gentleman resident out of the colony, and Dr Macadam on his arrival consequently found himself in a regular hornet's nest.¹³ On the return trip to Australia, Macadam fractured his ribs during a storm. Despite being advised not to return, he set out again for New Zealand, but died at sea on the 2nd September 1865. His student, John Drummond Kirkland (1836-1885, born in Dublin) gave evidence, in his stead, at Jarvey's second trial, which saw him convicted. Jarvey was hanged in Dunedin on 24th October 1865.^{iv}

The *Bendigo Advertiser* said that 'we believe nothing but a sense of duty induced him to disregard the opinions of his medical advisers, who considered a sea voyage extremely hazardous with a constitution so debilitated by sickness, and to which cause, for some time past, has been attributable that complete relief from the arduous and multifarious duties he had undertaken.'¹⁴

An inquest found that 'his death was caused by excessive debility and general exhaustion.' The funeral was large, and was described by the *Melbourne Leader*, thus: 'The coffin was drawn by four horses. Four mourning coaches contained the

¹³ *The Age* (Melbourne), Friday 7th April 1865, 5e, accessed 14th February 2025, via trove.nla.gov.au.

¹⁴ *Bendigo Advertiser*, Friday 22nd September 1865, 2a, accessed 14th February 2025, via trove.nla.gov.au

chief mourners and the more intimate friends of the deceased gentleman. A large procession followed, in which were several members of Parliament, the members of the Royal Society, the Chief Justice, the Mayor and Corporation of the city of Melbourne. A number of private carriages and the public wound up the procession ... At the University, the chancellor, the vice-chancellor and a number of the students, all in their academic robes, met the funeral cortege, and proceeded the remainder of the distance.' He is buried in Melbourne General Cemetery, his grave surmounted by a marble obelisk.

But what, you ask, of the macadamia nut? There are four species in the genus *Macadamia*, of which two (*M. integrifolia* and *M. tetraphylla*) are cultivated. The genus is native to eastern Australia, and is perhaps the only Australian native species to have achieved a position of importance in the global food chain. [I'd suggest that sugar, which is a native of the islands of the eastern Malay archipelago, i.e., east of the Wallace line, could also be so considered]. The tree was first described by Allan Cunningham, who met with it in Queensland in 1828 – it was, of course, already known to the native Australians. The first attempts to grow it commercially took place in Queensland in the 1860s, but it was not until 1882,

in New South Wales, that production took off. Trees were taken to Hawai'i in 1882, where it quickly became an important crop, and Hawai'i remained an important producer until recently. The major producer in 2024 was South Africa, whose 77,000 tonnes is roughly a third of the total global production.

The trees initially found by Cunningham were first scientifically described in 1857 by Ferdinand von Mueller (1793-1896). Von Mueller had been born in Rostock but came to Australia in the 1840s. In 1853 he was appointed as the Government Botanist for the Government of Victoria, and was an active explorer of the young colony, finding and identifying many new plants. He was also the founding Director of the Royal Botanic Garden in Melbourne. Like Macadam he was involved in the Philosophical Society of Victoria, and was the President – to Macadam's Secretary – when that body became the Royal Society of Victoria in 1859. Like Macadam he, too, was heavily involved in the planning of the Burke and Wills expedition – he was one of the few on the committee who had the necessary field experience. The two men worked often together within Melbourne's then small intellectual circle, and were friends as well as colleagues, and it is for this reason that he named the new genus *Macadamia*.

The links between Kilmarnock and the Macadamia may be weak – it cannot be argued that John Macadam spent much of his life in the town – but Ayrshire does have a small claim on this multi-faceted character and his role in the development of Australia.

Rob Close

14th February 2025

Mr Churchill Comes to Ayr

By David Dutton

President Dumfries and Galloway Natural History and Archaeological Society

In the middle of May 1947, the people of Ayr welcomed a distinguished visitor, Winston Churchill who had two engagements in the town. The first, at the town hall, was to receive the freedom of the burgh. Then, at Ayr's ice rink, he was scheduled to address a meeting of Scottish Unionist Associations. This venue had a capacity of 6,000 but, as the *Scotsman* had noted a month earlier, three times that number of applications had been received.¹ The great war leader was, of course, no longer Britain's Prime Minister, having experienced a shock and, for Churchill personally, devastating defeat in the general election of July 1945 at the hands of Clement Attlee's Labour party. But Churchill remained a figure of enormous prestige. Indeed, it has been convincingly argued that Churchill's international reputation continued to grow even after the conclusion of the Second World War.²

Renowned for his wartime oratory, he could still deliver grand set-piece speeches, usually dealing with key issues of world affairs. And, when Churchill spoke, the world as a whole took note. Most famously, in March 1946, in Fulton Missouri and with the American President, Harry Truman, among his audience, Churchill effectively announced the reality of the new Cold War, declaring that 'from Stettin in the Baltic to

¹ *Scotsman* 17 April 1947

² J. Ramsden, *Man of the Century: Winston Churchill and his Legend since 1945* (London, 2002)

Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain [had] descended across the continent'. Of equal moment was his address in Zurich six months later, on the need for European unity to bring peace and stability to the continent. 'We must', he insisted, 'create a kind of United States of Europe', though not all his listeners noted that he seemed to rule out actual British membership of such a body. The crucial lead would have to be taken by France and Germany; Britain's role in this endeavour would be as a 'friend and sponsor of the new Europe'.

In such forums, Churchill was in his element, basking in his unrivalled status of international statesman. But he could not totally ignore domestic politics. After all, he remained leader of His Majesty's Opposition. But Churchill appeared bored by the routine business of the House of Commons. He was a frequent absentee from parliament, preferring to delegate his responsibilities to his second-in-command and designated successor, Anthony Eden, while accepting invitations that took him abroad, taking frequent and extended holidays and concentrating on the writing of his war memoirs³. Similarly, he took little part in the important review of Conservative party policy, that was carried out at this time, where the leading role was taken by R.A. Butler.

But Churchill did retain one key ambition on the domestic front and that was to secure formal endorsement from the British electorate. Having come to power at the fall of Neville Chamberlain in May 1940, he had never led the Conservative party to electoral victory – something he was determined to put right. It was this, more than anything else, that drove him on, at a time when the majority of his senior colleagues would have

³ The first two volumes were published in 1948 and 1949

been happy to see him retire from front-line politics. Churchill, after all, was 72 years old when he came to Ayr and in less than perfect health.

What Churchill believed he did have was a strategy for future electoral success. Addressing the meeting of Scottish Unionist Associations in Ayr gave him an opportunity to outline his thinking. It soon became clear from his speech that the pain of defeat at the polls in 1945 was still raw. It was, he declared,

a shocking misfortune that on the morrow of our victory [in the war], after we had rendered service for which the whole world should be grateful, we were suddenly struck down and laid low by the arrival in power of a narrow, bigoted, incapable Socialist faction, who, instead of trying to help the country out of its perils and solve its problems, cared above all for the gratification of their Party dogmas and did not scruple to divide our nation as I have never seen it divided before⁴.

But how was this electoral disaster to be reversed? The problem facing Churchill and the Conservatives was formidable. Labour had won the 1945 general election in a landslide. When all the results were in, Labour held 393 seats to the 213 of the Conservatives and their allies. The gap in the popular vote was less dramatic but still considerable, putting Labour eight percentage points ahead of the Tories. Perhaps surprisingly, Churchill seemed to focus his attention on the third party in the electoral contest. Though the once mighty Liberal party had secured only 12 seats in the new House of Commons – soon reduced to 10 by defections – more than two million electors

⁴ M. Gilbert, Winston S. Churchill vol. viii (London, 1988), p. 330

had voted Liberal. If the majority of these could be won over to the Tories, the latter's position at the next electoral contest would be much more promising. But this take-over would not be easy. While some Liberals saw Labour's socialism as the very antithesis of their own belief in individual freedom, others recognised that much of the radical Liberalism of earlier years had been bequeathed to Labour and that Attlee's government had the resolution and intention to build on the social and welfare reforms of the Liberal government of 1905-15.

In his address in Ayr, Churchill proceeded cautiously, but with the confidence of one who had spent two decades of his political career within the ranks of Liberalism. He wanted, he said, to see Labour's threat to the life and freedom of the British nation increasingly resisted by all independent and Liberal-minded men and women. He recognised that the once-great Liberal party itself had been worn down 'not by Conservatives but by the Socialist movement and our present electoral system'⁵. Nonetheless, Churchill suggested that it would be a national misfortune if Liberalism as a political entity should not 'continue to assert itself in our island'. Liberals, he argued, had nothing to fear from the Tory party:

It is a mistake for Liberals to waste their time abusing Conservatives. They should concentrate their fire on the common opponents. We do not seek alliances with those who do not wish to work with us, but there is no reason why we should not be what was called in the War co-belligerents, or why reciprocal services of good will, courtesy and mutual aid should not be interchanged

⁵ By 1950 Churchill seems to have given serious consideration to the possibility of calling for electoral reform as the basis for permanent co-operation between Conservatives and Liberals and probably for the gradual absorption of the latter.

between us wherever, but only wherever, there is an honourable and sincere agreement on fundamental principles⁶.

One key element in Churchill's strategy was already making significant progress. Only days before the leader's speech in Ayr, Lord Woolton, the Party Chairman, and Lord Teviot, his opposite number in the so-called Liberal National party, had reached an agreement to regularise the informal electoral pact that had existed between the two bodies ever since the Liberal Nationals had defected from the orthodox Liberal party in 1931-32. The chief provision of this agreement was a commitment to merge local party associations into joint local parties under mutually agreed titles. Over the months that followed, hybrid bodies of this kind emerged in such varied constituencies as Dunstable, Bideford, North Angus and East Fife. As a result, at the general election of February 1950, as many as 53 candidates stood under an array of assorted labels including 'Conservative, and National Liberal', 'National Liberal and Conservative', 'Conservative and Liberal' and 'Liberal and Conservative'. (The Liberal Nationals themselves were re-named 'National Liberals' in 1948.)

In the press conference called to announce the Woolton-Teviot pact, the Conservative Chairman had explained what was happening:

I am of the opinion that as food and living standards in the country progressively deteriorate so, conversely, among all shades of Liberal thought is there an increasing wish to combine their efforts in order to oppose Socialism. The

⁶ The Times 17 May 1947

agreement between Liberal Nationals and Conservatives is the spontaneous expression of such a wish and it has the entire approval of both the Conservative headquarters and the Liberal National headquarters⁷.

But Woolton said enough to make it clear that the Conservatives' real goal was not only to swallow up the Liberal Nationals (many of whom were, in any case, now indistinguishable from Tories), but also to attract the bigger fish of the mainstream Liberal party into the Conservative embrace:

This is a development that not only gives great encouragement to all progressively-minded persons, but will also bring about a unity of effort and thought among those who desire a progressive national policy based on respect for freedom and individual liberty. There is great Liberal sentiment in this country. There is now no major issue between Liberalism and Conservatism. They are both expressions of the same political philosophy, and those old battles that used to enliven political life in the days gone by between Liberals and Tories are now just ancient and meaningless feuds.⁸

Tory tactics to achieve their goals were more ruthless than Woolton's carefully chosen words implied. According to Liberal commentators, the meetings at which joint local associations were set up were dominated by Conservatives, with genuine Liberals being either greatly outnumbered or even excluded. In North Angus, for example, 'less than a dozen Unionists' met in Montrose to form a Unionist and Liberal association. When one Liberal told the meeting that these men

⁷ The Times 12th May 1947

⁸ *ibidem*

were acting in an unconstitutional manner, he was requested to leave. ‘No doubt the formation of this Association will be hailed by the Tory machine as another victory for freedom and democracy’⁹. A private meeting at Tory Central Office revealed that even the apparently random choice of combined party designations carefully reflected Churchill’s underlying political purpose:

It is thought that in general the name ‘Liberal’ is to be preferred in the joint title to ‘National Liberal’, as it has a wider connotation. It may, however, be necessary in some cases to retain the prefix ‘National’, e.g. where there is a left-wing [i.e. orthodox] Liberal Association which is not willing to participate in joint action, or where a left-wing Liberal candidate is already in the field.¹⁰

The clear purpose was to create an indissoluble link in the public mind between Liberalism and Conservatism. If this also increased confusion among less well-informed voters about what constituted genuine ‘Liberalism’, so much the better.

Yet Churchill’s strategy appeared to fail. At least, it failed to produce a Conservative victory in the general election of February 1950. The great Labour majority of 1945 disappeared, but Labour still retained a bare majority of five seats over all other parties combined. The Liberal party had somehow managed to field as many as 475 candidates (compared with 306 in 1945), but there was nothing encouraging in their performance: ‘to win six seats with 475 candidates, and to lose 319 deposits ... was a defeat on a scale which it will be hard to

⁹ *Liberal Magazine* January 1949

¹⁰ Bodleian Library, Oxford, Conservative Party Archive, CCO500/12/1, note of discussion on titles of joint organisations and their prospective candidates 13 August 1948

parallel.¹¹ 'At the same time, Conservatives believed that Liberal interventions were enough to deprive them of victory. Between them, the Tories and Liberals had captured about 1.85 million more votes than the victorious Labour government. Surveying the electoral campaign, one veteran Conservative MP predicted that 'the infernal Liberals are going to queer our pitch all over the country.'¹²

In normal times, it is possible that Attlee's government could have soldiered on with its tiny parliamentary majority for two or three years and then, benefitting from a favourable movement in Britain's terms of trade and a resulting dramatic improvement in the country's economic outlook, gone to the country and secured a third successive electoral victory. In such a scenario, the 1950s could have been a Labour decade rather than one of Conservative domination. But these were not normal times. Many of the leading figures in the Labour government were tired and elderly, having served in office continuously for ten years since joining Churchill's wartime coalition in May 1940. This being the case, Attlee went to the country early, calling another general election in October 1951. For the Liberal party this was a disaster. Strapped for cash, just 109 candidates were put into the field. Unsurprisingly, the party slumped to the worst performance in its history – its overall vote reduced to under three-quarters of a million (less than 2.6 per cent of the total), its Commons representation down to just six MPs, with 66 candidates losing their deposits.

Finally, Churchill's goal of securing popular endorsement had been achieved. The statistics suggest that few Liberals deprived

¹¹ H.G. Nicholas, *The British General Election of 1950* (London, 1951), p. 299

¹² S. Ball (ed.), *Parliament and Politics in the Age of Churchill and Attlee: The Headlam Diaries 1935-1951* (London, 1999), p. 615

of a Liberal candidate in 1951 felt unable to register a vote, and that the majority of them transferred their support to the Tories. This appears to have been a key factor in the Conservatives securing a narrow, but still workable majority of 17 in the new House of Commons. Harold Macmillan's contemporary assessment was that ex-Liberals had been decisive in securing Conservative successes north of the River Trent¹³. But Churchill was not quite finished. Drawing up his new cabinet, he decided to offer the position of Minister of Education to the Liberal leader, Clement Davies. The latter was sorely tempted to accept but ultimately turned down the offer. Had he entered a Conservative government, it seems probable that the Liberals would have ceased to exist as an independent political force. His refusal was probably Davies's greatest service to the party which he led for more than a decade. The strategy which Churchill had begun to outline in Ayr in 1947 had been only partially implemented.

Editor's note

The Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society which was founded in 1862, is the sister organisation of AANHS. Members are welcomed at meeting of each society. Details of DGNHAS can be found on their website at <https://dgnhas.org.uk/>

¹³ H. Macmillan, *Tides of Fortune* (London, 1969), pp. 360-1

Lady Edith Maud Abney-Hastings,

10th Countess of Loudon

By Fiona Williamson

On a recent holiday in England we were visiting the pretty market town of Ashby de la Zouch in Leicestershire, when we noticed a very ornate octagonal monument erected in memory of **Lady Edith Maud Abney-Hastings** (1833-1874) 10th Countess of Loudon. The monument was designed by the famous architect Sir George Gilbert Scott and had been commissioned by her husband Charles Frederick Abney-Hastings (1st Baron Donington). The monument was unveiled on 24th July 1879.

The Hastings family home of Donington Hall is situated not far from Ashby de la Zouch and is now well known as a centre for motor racing.

I was intrigued that Lady Edith was described as Countess of Loudon ‘in her own right’. **Loudon Castle** is situated near Galston in Ayrshire. During the Second World War the castle was used to house Belgian troops until it was accidentally destroyed by fire on 1st December 1941 and was never rebuilt. I have memories of visiting in the 1990s with our children in school summer holidays, when the grounds were used as an amusement park with a children’s zoo and rides, known as Loudon Castle Theme Park.

Lady Edith was descended from the Earls of Loudon. The title of Countess was often passed down the female line when there was no direct male heir. Thus Lady Edith inherited the title 10th

Countess of Loudon from her father **George Rawdon-Hastings** (1808-1844) 7th Earl, her brothers Paulyn (1832-1851) 8th Earl and Henry (1842-1868) 9th Earl. Her brothers had no children so Lady Edith became the 10th Countess. Her father and brothers also held the title Marquess of Hastings, but this title was not allowed to be passed to her and is no longer in existence.

Lady Edith's grandmother was **Lady Flora Mure-Campbell** (1780-1840) and she was the 6th Countess of Loudon. Lady Flora married **Francis Rawdon-Hastings** (1754-1826) 1st Marquess of Hastings and their children were all born in England. The family also spent time in Scotland and the architect Archibald Elliot was asked to draw up plans to rebuild and extend the existing Loudon Castle in 1804. The completed 90 roomed castle is described in detail by AH Millar in his book 'The Castles and Mansions of Ayrshire'. The family also owned nearby Rowallan Castle, Kilmaurs until it was sold to Archibald Corbett in 1901.

The current holder of the title is **Simon Michael Abney-Hastings**, 15th Earl of Loudon, the great, great, great grandson of Lady Edith. Simon lives in Melbourne, Australia. He was present at King Charles 3rd Coronation and played an active role where he presented King Charles with 'gold spurs of the royal regalia – emblems of knighthood and chivalry'. It sounds as if he is interested in his family history as he is patron of several societies, including *Ashby de la Zouch Museum* and *Friends of Loudon Kirk*, where many of his ancestors are buried.



Loudon Memorial, Ashby de la Zouch



Loudon Castle, Galston, Ayrshire



Talks are held at 1.30 pm on the second Thursday of most months in Room 1B at Belford Mill, 16 Brewery Road, Kilmarnock, KA1 3HZ

The syllabus of talks for the start of the new session, 2025-2026 is below

Thursday 11th September topic to be confirmed

Dan Ross

Thursday 9th October *Going to the Pictures*

June Wiggins

Thursday 13th November *Culzean Castle and the Kennedys*

William Rogers

Visitors are welcome

Members and visitors are asked to make a contribution of £3

Website: www.eastayrshirefhs.co.uk Temporary email address: jffh@btinternet.com

Address: c/o Dick Institute, Elmbank Avenue, Kilmarnock, KA1 3BU UK Membership (with printed magazines) £15; E-membership £10.50

Kyle & Carrick Civic Society

Public Meetings 2025-26

Please note that meetings will be held in the Horizon Hotel, Esplanade Ayr except for the December meeting which will be held in Holy Trinity Church Hall, Fullarton Street, Ayr, Doors open 7.15 p.m. Visitors always welcome,

Monday 6 October *Scotland Beneath the Surface*

L. Bruce Keith

Monday 3 November *Artificial Intelligence*

John Rattenbury

Monday 1 December* *The Commonwealth War Graves Commission*

Terry Wright

Monday 12 January *Arran and The Firth of Clyde in the Second World War*

Colin Turbett

Monday 2 February *The Alloway Railway Tunnel Mural*

Ron Ireland

Monday 2 March *Recycling in South Ayrshire*

Kenny Dalrymple

Assistant Director, Housing and Operations

*The December meeting will be held in Holy Trinity church hall, Fullarton Street, Ayr.

North Ayrshire Family History Society

Dates for your Diary 2025/6

Mid August Journal Articles

Please send articles to Ann Tyler (anndtyler@gmail.com) for inclusion in **Autumn Journal Issue 89**

11.00 am Wednesday 20th August

Riverside Museum, Glasgow

2.00 pm Fairfield Heritage Centre, Govan

7.30 pm Tuesday 9th September Tom Ward

‘Our Fathers’ Experiences as POWs in World War 2’

2.00 pm Friday 26th September Workshop

7.30 pm Tuesday 14th October Jeni Park ‘Kilwinning Archives’

2.00 pm Friday 31st October Workshop

10.00 am Saturday 8th November Coffee Morning Dunn Memorial Hall

7.30 pm Tuesday 11th November Ailsa McInnes

‘The Lands of Drumfork – tracing farming ancestors’

2.00 pm Friday 28th November Workshop

7.30 pm Tuesday 9th December June Wiggins ‘The Railways’

2026

2.00 pm Tuesday 13th January Christine Gallettie ‘The Centenary of Passchendaele – a personal story’

2.00 pm Friday 30th January Workshop

2.00 pm Tuesday 10th February Show & Tell Afternoon

2.00 pm Friday 23rd February Workshop

7.30 pm Tuesday 10th March David Dewar ‘Elizabeth Crichton – A Woman with a Dream’

2.00 pm Friday 22nd March Workshop

7.30 pm Tuesday 14th April Stephen Martin ‘The Burrell Family’

7.30 pm Thursday 23rd May Workshop

7.30 pm Tuesday 12th May AGM

PRESTWICK HISTORY GROUP

PHG0217 SEASON 2025 – 2026

Meetings held in 65 Club Hall, Main Street, Prestwick, at 7.30 p.m. Open to anyone interested - no membership - come and tell your tale.

Meetings last approximately one hour with a break around 8.30 p.m. for tea or coffee and biscuit followed by discussion on topic of the night or any other matter raised. We will endeavour to answer your questions. If unable to answer we will try to find out and advise you at a later date.

A donation at the end of the meeting is appreciated to cover costs of providing tea or coffee and biscuit along with running expenses of the Group.

Prestwick History Group starts on 2 October, 2025 and meets on the first Thursday of the following months starting October, November, December, 2025 and February, March, April and May, 2026.

Date	Topic	Speaker
2 OCT 2025	Late Victorian Life in Ayrshire	PowerPoint Presentation by Carolyn O'Hara
6 NOV 2025	Grahamston – Glasgow's Forgotten Village	Kevin Scott
4 DEC 2025	Reg – The Life and Times of Reggie Gibson, Ayr	PowerPoint Presentation by Peter Smith
5 Feb 2026	Sir John Steell – The Scottish Sculptor	PowerPoint Presentation by Carolyn O'Hara

5 Mar 2026	Fifty Years of Newspaper Photography	PowerPoint Presentation by Jim Roddy
2Apr 2026	The Railway Revolution	PowerPoint Presentation by June Wiggins
7 May 2026	Blether of 2026	Presentation by Prestwick History Group

Convenor : Alisdair W. R. Cochrane, 12 Westbourne Gardens,
Prestwick, Ayrshire, KA9 1JE Telephone : 01292 – 470234
Committee : Alex Young, Rob White, Ken Nairn and Peter
Smith.

Sponsored by Prestwick Community Council and The 65
Club. Organised by Prestwick History Group



Our monthly talks are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 2pm in the lesser hall, Stewarton Area Centre, Avenue Street, Stewarton, KA3 5AP. Members £1 non-members £4.

Syllabus 2025-2026

Date	Topic	Speaker
2 Sep 2025	Covenanters of Ayrshire	Dane Love
7 Oct 2025	Paisley Witch Trials	Jillian MacFarlane
4 Nov 2025	Glasgow's Story – Stewarton Influences	Fred Dinning
2 Dec 2025	Basic, Better, Best	Robert Watt (Past and Present)
6 Jan 2026	A Free Trader of the Carrick Coast William Brackenridge and the Ladyburn Smuggling Company	Tom Barclay
3 Feb 2026	Andrew Carnegie (Billionaire who gave away his fortune)	David Dewar
3 Mar 2026	Nepal and the Himalayas	Graham Boyd
14 April 2026	Scottish Tramways	Gary Ward
5 May 2026	Seaside Entertainers	June Wiggins

AANHS Publications

Publications of the Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society (AANHS) are available from Mr Denis Rattenbury, 4 Ewenfield park, Ayr KA7 2QG

☎01292 280593 email: info@aanhs.org

Further information about the AANHS and its publications will be found on the society's website: www.aanhs.org/publications/uk

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

Antiquities of Ayrshire by Grose (edited by Strawhorn revised 2010) £4.00

11 Robert Adam in Ayrshire (Sanderson) revised 2010 £4.00

13 Toll and Tacksman (McClure) £1.50

20 Historic Ayr: A Guide for Visitors 2nd edition £2.50

30 The Early Transatlantic Trade of Ayr 1640-1730 (Barclay & Graham) 104 pages £4.50

33 Dr John Taylor, Chartist: Ayrshire Revolutionary (Fraser)
112 pages £4.00

35 The Masters of Ballantrae (Hunter) 30 pages £4.00

37 Historic Troon and Its Surroundings 40 pages £3.00

38 Excavations in Ayr 1984-1987 (Perry) 140 pages £9.99

39 The Church Buildings of Ayrshire (Hume) 94 pages £7.50

41 Mining and Quarrying in Stevenston (McLatchie) 210 pages £9.50

42 The Battle of Largs (Cowan) 95 pages £8.00

43-45 Ayrshire Collections – 128 pages £7.50

Ayr Jails by Jane Jamieson

Kilwinning Revisited by Margaret H B Sanderson

A Bonnie Lass by Petra Baillie

47 Watermills of Arran by Alastair Weir 71 pages £6.00

48 Oculous: The Musings of a Liberal Victorian in Ayr by
Carolyn O'Hara 140 pages £8.00

49 Ayrshire Castles from Kings to Covenanters 121 pages
£10.00

Ardrossan Castle Revisited by David H Caldwell

Turnberry Castle and Countryside by Piers Dixon and William Wyeth

Seagate Castle with Some Family Resemblances by Aonghas Mackechnie

Ayr as a Garrison Town by Louise Turner

Castle Restoration in Ayrshire by Michael C Davies

50 John McCosh of Kirkmichael: Surgeon, Photographer and Philanthropist

51 The Diary of Thomas McClelland Ayr in the 1790s (Young and Close)

52 The Hog Score in the Great Rink in the Great Rink of Time (McCowan)

53 Witness to War – Arran and the Firth of Clyde in the Second World War (Turbett)

54 Kilwinning's Early Railways (Hawksworth)

55 Boswell's Galloping Farmers – Ayrshire Yeomen at Gallipoli Oct-Dec 1915
(Close and Watson)

56 The Industrial Heritage of North Ayrshire (Hawksworth, Weir and Rankin)
