

KILMARNOCK - A HISTORICAL SURVEY

by Dr John Strawhorn

A paper on the general history of Kilmarnock. The complete paper was presented by the late Dr. Strawhorn at our first evening class on October 8th, 1974. The original manuscript (complete with references) is held by the Dick Institute.

PART ONE - ORIGIN OF THE NAME

Of the origins and early history of Kilmarnock, hardly anything is known. Around 1605 Timothy Pont wrote: 'It hath a pretty church from vich ye village, Castle, and Lordschipe takes its name. It was built by the Locarts, Lord of it and dedicat to a holy man Mernock as vitnesses ye Records of Kilwinin abbay.' In the long period of more than three centuries since these words were written, various writers have elaborated on this statement, but added in fact no further information.

In the Old Statistical Account, Rev. James Mackinlay declared (1792): 'The name Kilmarnock, or Cellmarnock, is evidently derived from St. Marnock, who is said to have been a bishop or confessor in Scotland. He died, A.D. 322, and probably was interred here.'

George Robertson wrote (1820): 'The name is supposed to be derived from a St. Marnock, whose cell or kil, a residence or place of sepulture, is thought to have been here. Such a Saint is stated to have died A.D. 322. But Kilmarnock, as a place, is not mentioned in history till near 1000 years after.'

In the New Statistical Account, Rev. David Strang (1839) reiterated the same facts, and doubts: 'The name Kilmarnock evidently means the cell of Marnock, who is said to have been a bishop or confessor in Scotland in the beginning of the fourth century.'

Alexander McKay in the first edition of his History of Kilmarnock (1848) elaborated the same theme: 'The origin of Kilmarnock, like that of many other towns of importance, is involved in considerable obscurity ... It is stated by some writers that, so far back as the year 322, it was the residence of a St. Mernoc or Marnock, but it is more probable that the Saint settled here about the end of the sixth, or the beginning of the seventh century, when some of the early teachers of Christianity, who had been educated at I-colum-kill, under St. Columba, established places or religious worship in different parts of our island. Here, according to tradition, St. Marnock founded a church ... It is also said that he was interred here within the precincts of the ground he had consecrated.'

In his second edition (1858) McKay omitted the last sentence quoted, and added: 'But there is no account, we believe, on which reliance can be placed regarding the Church of Kilmarnock prior to the twelfth century.'

James Paterson in his county history (1866) speculated further: 'The name of the town and parish of Kilmarnock is evidently derived from the church which was dedicated to Saint Marnock, a Scottish saint of very early times, who was commemorated on the 25th of October, on which day there was

formerly held in Kilmarnock an annual fair, now held on the third Wednesday of October. The site of the church of St. Marnock may have been that of a Druidical temple - for it is well known that the early promoters of Christianity everywhere ... judiciously endeavoured to plant the cross in the locality, if not upon the very spot, where the fires of Baal had previously burned. The history of the church of Kilmarnock cannot, however, be traced, with any degree of certainty, before the erection of the monastery of Kilwinning, in the twelfth century, to which it became an appendage.'

In his valuable Gazetteer of Scotland, Groome (1886) advanced a new theory, deriving the place name from No-Ernin-occ, interpreted as 'my little Ernin'. An Irish saint of this name died in 634 or 635, and it was suggested that some of his disciples may have dedicated an early church at Kilmarnock to his memory. Groome however follows Pont in believing a later church was founded about the end of the 12th century or the beginning of the 13th, attached in due course to Kilwinning Abbey.

Finally, and more recently, in the Third Statistical Account (1951) William Boyd summed everything up pithily: 'When and how Kilmarnock came into being nobody knows ... There is not a tittle of historical evidence that a St. Marnock ever had anything to do with Kilmarnock.'

All that can creditably be believed is contained in Pont's original note: 'It hath a pretty church from vich ye village, Castle, and Lordschipe take its name. It was built by the Locarts, Lords of it and dedicat to a holy man Mernock as vitnesses ye Records of Kilwinin abbay.'

A number of archaeological finds made within the parish suggests that the area was settled in prehistoric times. In the 12th century Cuninghame was fully incorporated in the Kingdom of Scotland and awarded by David I to Hugh de Morville, who seems to have given a member of the Locart family the lordship of this part. From the Locarts the lordship may have passed to the Soulis family, then to the Baliols, and more definitely in the 14th century to the Boyds who held it for the next four hundred years. One of the first actual members of the name Kilmarnock is in John Barbour's late 14th century poetical life of Bruce, in which an English knight is pursued.

'To Kilmarnock and Kilwinnyne,
And to Ardrossan after syne.'

It may safely be presumed that the Locarts built a castle and church at Kilmarnock, and the latter became attached to Kilwinning Abbey. In the surviving Kilwinning records there are several mentions of Kilmarnock: c.1315 - remitting annual payments to the heirs of Baliol for the lands of 'Kilmernoc'; 1329 - granting to Kilwinning the perpetual vicar of the churches of Beith and 'Kylmernoc'; 1333 - confirming the previous awards involving 'Kilmernoc'; 1552 - transferring to the Earl of Eglinton various monastic lands including some in 'Kilmernok'.

Pont, who seems to have seen the original records of Kilwinning Abbey could state that the church was 'dedicat to a holy man Mernok.' This does not however necessarily imply that the church was dedicated to Marnock, and then gave its name to the parish. The barony of Kilmarnock possibly, perhaps probably, took its name from the Macharnock Water. Kilwinning Abbey may have decided to dedicate the church at Kilmarnock to St. Marnock, without suggesting any association apart from a similarity of name. A moment's reflection will remind you that naming the present St. Joseph's R.C. Church in Kilmarnock has never involved a belief that he founded it or had any personal association with the area.

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PART TWO - THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The Burgh Charter of 1592

Kilmarnock's history really begins in 1592 with a charter from James VI in favour of Thomas, Lord Boyd, erecting Kilmarnock into a burgh of barony.

Ayrshire at the end of the 16th century contained a population round 50,000, mostly living on the land as tenants of feudal lairds. The most powerful of these were the Earls of Glencairn, Eglinton, and Cassillis; the hereditary sheriff, Campbell of Loudoun; Lord Cathcart; and Lord Boyd of Kilmarnock. There were two long-established royal burghs on the coast - Ayr and Irvine - which by charter had a monopoly of foreign trade. There were also burghs of barony whose royal charters offered more restricted privileges - manufacturing local products from local materials and organising local markets for local people.

Two old coastal burghs of barony - Prestwick and Newton-upon-Ayr - had been joined more recently by a succession of others - Newmilns, Auchinleck, Cumnock, Mauchline, Maybole, Kilmaurs, Saltcoats, Ballantrae, in that order. In 1592 came Kilmarnock as the county's thirteenth burgh, followed by another nine in the next hundred years. The establishment of these burghs was a sign of manufacturing and commercial expansion. They were set up by the local lairds on their own lands, for their own profit and prestige. Campbell of Loudoun had set up the first inland burgh in 1491 - a century before Kilmarnock - and in the early part of the 16th century the three earls, the abbot of Melrose, and three lesser lairds had followed his example. Then came a gap of fifty years before Kilmarnock and another series.

Obviously Kilmarnock held no special prominence in the 16th century, only one of a group of minor centres, indeed lagging nearly seventy years after Kilmaurs.

The charter of 1592 is a lengthy document which begins and ends by confirming the Boyds in their possession of the lands of Kilmarnock and specifying the future line of succession. Contained within is a section authorising the creation of a burgh of barony. Much of this is formal repetition of what is usual in other contemporary burgh charters; but certain local particulars are given, which justifies close examination of this extract.

The charter is in favour of Thomas, Lord Boyd and of Robert, Master of Boyd. It is dated 12th January, 1591, which is 1592 by modern reckoning. The 'Kirkton of Kilmarnock' was to be a burgh 'in all time coming'. The inhabitants would have the usual privileges of buying and selling and having tradesmen. Certain inhabitants would be burgesses. They would have the right of annually electing bailies, subject to the superior's approval. There would be a weekly market and an annual fair. The superior could feu plots for burgesses to build on.

The charter indicates the creation of a typical burgh of barony: a little community where craftsmen and local traders could carry on business; where the burgesses, with capital and enterprise, could extend their activities; with markets and fairs and manufacturing supervised by elected officials; all under the aegis of the landowning superior.

It is clear from the charter that a 'Kirkton of Kilmarnock' was already in existence. Indeed there is an earlier mention in 1534 of the 'toun and castle of Kilmarnock'. Obviously there was a well-established community. The burgh charter did not involve the creation of a 'new town' where nothing had existed before. What remains mysterious is why Kilmarnock was not made a burgh at a much earlier date. Why were the Boyds so dilatory? Involvement in national politics and local feuds did not deter other Ayrshire lairds from seeking and obtaining charters. There is even the possibility, admittedly speculation, that the indwellers in the Kirkton had to pressurise Lord Boyd to obtain the charter in 1592 - certainly their successors on later occasions had to push hard against the superior to improve their status.

The Seventeenth Century

The kirkton must have been a small place when it was made a burgh in 1592. Just a few years later, at the beginning of the 16th century, Timothy Pont described Kilmarnock as 'a large village, and of great repair'. but Kilmaurs was obviously bigger and more important, as 'a large village seated in a good soyle, and very populous'.

Yet within one hundred years Kilmarnock, though a late developer, had made a most remarkable expansion, outstripping not only Kilmaurs but all the other Ayrshire burghs of barony, becoming the

county's largest inland centre, challenging the supremacy even of the two royal burghs of Ayr and Irvine. At the beginning of the 17th century, the little new burgh could hardly have had more than a hundred or so inhabitants. By 1668 it was in the neighbourhood of one thousand. A disastrous fire in that year destroyed the greater part of the town and 'about six-score families are set to the field destitute both of goods and houses'. By the end of the 17th century Kilmarnock seems fully to have recovered. The populations of the Ayrshire burghs in 1700 have been calculated as follows: Ayr, about 2,000; Irvine, perhaps 1,500; Kilmarnock, around 1,000; Maybole and Saltcoats, about 500 each; and other seventeen burghs, smaller than that, mere clachans.

How can this extraordinary, almost meteoric rise of Kilmarnock be explained? It is all the more amazing that this spectacular growth took place in a century torn by civil and religious strife, with Kilmarnock enduring military occupations, persecution of Covenanter plus the disastrous fire of 1668. The reason for Kilmarnock's rise must be found in a combination of the enterprise of the new burgesses and the geographical advantage of Kilmarnock which they were able to exploit.

In 1658 Richard Franck noted that Kilmarnock was 'crowded with mechanicks'. He remarked on the knitting of bonnets, the weaving of woollens and the making of cutlery as a subsidiary trade. We know that stockings were being made in 1603, that the bonnetmakers formed an incorporated trade in 1646, and were joined by skippers, shoemakers, weavers and tailors.

As early as 1617 Irvine was complaining to the Convention of Royal Burghs about Kilmarnock merchants dealing already in foreign trade, which they had no legal right to do. Despite this complaint, by the end of the century Kilmarnock was exporting to Ireland through Irvine to France through Ayr and to Holland via Bo'ness on the Firth of Forth. This last enterprise paid off - royal burghs tended to be conservative and lacking in initiative. The incorporated trades of Kilmarnock, uninhibited by tradition or strict regard for the law, drew unto themselves the rural raw materials of north and central Ayrshire, and the Kilmarnock merchants built up a direct trade with foreign customers, acting through agents abroad. As a result, as Smout says, 'Kilmarnock hose and cloth were trade names recognised in the discriminating markets of Rotterdam and Leyden' and he concludes that 'there were enterprising spirits in Kilmarnock'. Do not be misled by a report the burgh of Kilmarnock itself made in 1700: Kilmarnock has little or no forraigne trade ... there is not above two or three persons in the whole Town of Kilmarnock that either had or understood forraigne trade'. This was in reply to a tax demand. To similar requests Ayr and Irvine complained that their harbours were silted up, their quays in a ruinous condition, and their trade quite decayed - all of which was equally exaggerated. Among their grumbles about loss of trade, Ayr and Irvine blamed Kilmarnock's competition. 'It is offered to be proven that the trade of Kilmarnock is import and export to France, Holland, Norway, Virginia, England and Ireland and other forraigne parts have been above half of the trade of both of the Burghs of Ayr and Irvine.' An indication of how well Kilmarnock was doing is the amount of spare capital they had to invest in 1695 in the Company of Scotland's ambitious scheme to plant a colony at Panam - the ill-fated Darien scheme. In the subscription lists Ayr contributed £2,600; Kilmarnock, £1,600; Irvine, only £800. Eight Kilmarnock merchants invested £900; two apothecaries, £400; and a writer, £300. And this was at the very time when Kilmarnock burgesses were involved in expensive negotiations with their superior.

By modern standards Kilmarnock in 1700 was a small enough place. There was the parish church, a building dating back to 1410 nearby a stone bridge, at least a century old; a tolbooth; the burgh school in College Wynd; the Cross, with its gallows and a cornmill, removed in 1703. The 'ugly houses ... little better than huts' noted by Franck in 1658 had perhaps seen many of them replaced after the 1668 fire by more substantial stone dwellings. These new buildings were two storeys high, with outside stairs leading on to the crooked and narrow streets. From a labyrinth of vennals and wynds about the Cross, you could go by Cheapside towards Irvine; over the bridge and down Sandbed towards Nethert

Riccarton (which itself became a burgh in 1638), and on to Ayr; east across the Green towards Crookedholm for Newmilns and Edinburgh, or for Mauchline and Dumfries; or by the main thoroughfare up Foregate and Soulis Street on the highway to Glasgow.

The economy of this close little corporation was supervised by a council, as laid down in the charter of 1592 and a second charter of 1678. There was a baron-bailie nominated by the superior. But it is clear there were also bailies elected by the burgesses and this council had its own treasurer, and a tolbooth where it met. In 1688 the indwellers made bitter complaint that the superior - William, lord Boyd, first earl of Kilmarnock - had in an unauthorised manner imposed a stent to entertain the notorious Highland Most, had usurped the Common Good, and exacted illegal dues at the markets. He asserted that as superior of the burgh he was within his legal rights. Two years later in 1690 he was however willing to accept fifty guineas of gold from a group of the inhabitants to sponsor an attempt to transform Kilmarnock into a royal burgh. This proved abortive, but in 1695 his eldest son and successor agreed to a new 'sett' or constitution for the burgh - with two bailies, a treasurer, and sixteen councillors. And in 1700, his second son, the third earl, in consideration of a sum of £3,650 Scots handed over to this council the common goods and customes of the burgh, including the tolbooth with the shops thereunder, the tron and weights, and the whole common green.

In their vigorous policy of advancing the interests of Kilmarnock, the council worked in close association with the kirk session. After Fenwick was disjoined in 1641, Kilmarnock Kirk Session could focus more of its attention on the town. The session was responsible not only for the management of the church but for the wellbeing of the whole community, administering discipline, poor relief and education.

Discipline involved matters of faith and morals, and also public order in general. Here sessions and council worked hand in hand. From the session records, 1689: 'the Session appoints the Elders in their respective quarters to go through and search the several Ale-houses and other suspect places therein each Saturdays night, immediateli after nine a clock, and that they take exact notice of such as they find drinking there after the said hour, or any way deboshing, and make delation thereof to the Session.' From the council minutes, 1695: 'no ale be sold by vintners after ten o'clock on Saturday nights.'

The session was the authority responsible for poor relief. The collections were uplifted at the church door, bad money was set aside, and the treasurer arranged for its distribution to the needy according to the session's instructions. '1692 - To Bessie Miller, to buy blankets to her, £1 Scots,' and later 'To Robert Barr, for making Bessie Miller's grave, two shillings, and fortien shillings of charity, £2 13s 4d Scots.' Special cases received consideration. In 1646, 'the treasurer of the charities to give weeklie the pryce of ane peck meall for the space of ane half year, to lane John Boyd for his help to ane trade.' In 1697 they agreed to defray the expense of treatment for 'Jonet Brown's briest.' In the famine years at the end of the century they had 87 on the poors roll and in 1698 had to provide 'a load of meal to a poor, honest, indigent member of the session, whose name is concealed.' In 1693 they had ordered sixty badges for licensing beggars, and arranged that a list of the poor be handed to the bailie.

In the provision of education there was the same co-operation between council and session. Kilmarnock had a schoolmaster before 1629 and so presumably a school. Others are noticed throughout the century, including one who in 1677 had to give up his post for opposition to episcopacy. The eighth Lord Boyd made a grant 'for keeping ane schools within the parochieine of the Old Kirk of Kilmarnock, and for provisions of ane constant rent and stripend for holding ane schoolmaister.' But this grant - made between 1641 and 1654 - had later to be supplemented. In 1697 the master's salary was made up by the following contributions: '£126 13s 4d Scots by Session, £53 6s

8d by the heritors, and £20 Scots out of the common good of the town.’ The school, in the College Wynd, was a humble erection, with glass windows but a turf roof. By 1704 it was ‘decayed and weak and ready to fall’ and a house-to-house collection had to be made towards its repair. It was good enough to persuade Boyd of Trochrig and possibly other county gentry to send sons to be educated here. The enthusiasm with which the session supported the school is evident. In 1677 they desired the magistrates of the burgh to recover arrears of fees; they agreed themselves to pay for the schooling of able children of poor parents; they arranged for the elders to draw up a list of all boys who were fit for the school and to persuade parents to send them; they stipulated that ‘non be put to inferior schools who are fitt for the publick school.’

In social progress as in commerce, ‘there were enterprising spirits in Kilmarnock’ in the 17th century.

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PART THREE - EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

The Eighteenth Century

This remarkable first hundred years of Kilmarnock rising from 13th to 3rd place among the Ayrshire burghs, was followed by an equally successful second century in which Kilmarnock advanced from 3rd to 1st place, outstripping both Ayr and Irvine. The 18th century saw the beginnings of modern industry in Scotland and in Ayrshire Kilmarnock advanced to become the county’s industrial capital. Population grew rapidly from about 1,000 in 1700 to 3,000 in 1750 and 6,000 by 1800. As compared with Kilmarnock’s population of 6,000, Ayr had 4,000 and Irvine about 3,500.

By the 18th century the history of Kilmarnock is well documented. But more is needed than simply to record how Kilmarnock expanded. An attempt must be made to explain the factors which contributed to Kilmarnock’s rise to supremacy.

First, there is ample evidence of continued enterprise, and on a wider scale in the 18th century. The Union with England in 1707 opened up for Scots merchants trade with England and with the colonies in America. The new common market produced no immediate benefits. There was a slow development for half a century, then a massive expansion of trade and manufacturing in the last quarter of the century. As Glasgow began its expansion as a great port for transatlantic trade and its development as a great industrial centre, it superseded Edinburgh as Scotland’s largest city. So Ayrshire developed in Glasgow’s shadow, and Kilmarnock copied Glasgow in superseding the older centres.

There was, in 18th century Kilmarnock, an expansion of the traditional crafts of wool, linen, and leather, with a widening range of products. In woollens, there were bonnets, stockings, duffles, plaidings, blankets, carpet making began in 1726; and a woollen manufactory driven by water power was set up in 1743. Efforts were made in 1727 to encourage the linen manufacture. The leather trade manufactured boots, shoes, gloves, and saddles. Traditional crafts were supplemented by new trades. Silk weaving was introduced in 1770, and from the 1780s Kilmarnock took up the new cotton manufacture. Several local spinning and carding mills were set up to complement the great factory at Catrine, and weaving was done by handlooms. By the end of the century there were 6,000 muslin weavers in Ayrshire, 4,000 of them in Cuninghame, over 1,000 of these in Kilmarnock. Around 1780 the Caprington pits were opened up, supplying farmers with coal for lime burning, providing domestic fuel for the town, powering the new steam engines in local industry, and there was a growing export trade. By 1791 there was an output of about 7,000 tons, almost half of which was exported through

Irvine to Ireland. All these developments needed men of commercial acumen, men open to new ideas, and we know that Burns's acquaintances in Kilmarnock were a lively set of people.

The second factor which contributed to Kilmarnock's development was the continuing vigour of the burgh council. Under the new constitution of 1695 and the rights acquired in 1700 the councillors felt free of the restrictive control of the superior. When the fourth Earl of Kilmarnock went off in support of the Jacobite cause in 1745, he found no support in Kilmarnock, and his execution in 1746 must have increased the council's feelings of independence. The Heritable Jurisdictions Act of 1747 curtailed the powers of barons and their bailies and confirmed the privileges of such burghs as were 'independent of the lord of regality or baron.' Shortly after mid-century the Kilmarnock estates were acquired by the Earl of Glencairn, who sought to re-assert control over the burgh. The dispute was taken to the Court of Session, which in 1771 found in favour of the burgh, recognising its independence and giving it a standing at law equal to that of the royal burghs.

The minutes of Kilmarnock Burgh Council in the 18th century reveal its progressive policies in improving the growing town - laying out new streets, paving the causways, building bridges, dealing with nuisances. The council obviously represented Kilmarnock's expanding commercial interests. Compare the council of the old royal burgh of Ayr, conservative and backward-looking, with incorporated trades hidebound by vested interests - so that the development of new trades within the royal burgh was impossible; men of enterprise had to cross the river and develop the new manufactures in Newton and Wallacetown outwith the royal burgh's authority. Similarly with Irvine. Burns went there to learn the flax trade. The burning down of the heckling shop is in a way symptomatic of Irvine's difficulties. Had he come to Kilmarnock for an apprenticeship, things might have turned out differently.

The third factor making possible Kilmarnock's expansion was its geographical situation. In earlier times an inland site was at a disadvantage, and Ayr and Irvine developed as royal burghs because they were ports. For a time in the early 18th century Irvine enjoyed a period of renewed prosperity as the port of Glasgow, but with the opening up of the Clyde and Glasgow becoming its own port, Ayr and Irvine both suffered. Their harbours were fit only for small vessels, those now handling coastal and Irish cargoes. Kilmarnock with a hinter-land covering the whole of northern and central Ayrshire was well fitted to help fill the holds of Glasgow ships and fill the stomachs of the great Glasgow population. The Ayrshire Turnpike Acts of 1766 and 1774 created a network of firstclass roads facilitating the transport of raw materials and finished products to and from Kilmarnock. After the Kilmarnock estates were sold again in 1785, there was talk of constructing a canal from Kilmarnock to Troon for the coal trade, and eventually the new landowner, the Duke of Portland would construct a railway line in 1812.

Kilmarnock by the end of the 18th century was still a small compact community, enjoying boom conditions, able comfortably to absorb the flood of incomers from the surrounding countryside and beyond. It had acquired new facilities - five churches, two public, several private schools, fifty inns and ale houses, a post office, a printing shop, three masonic lodges and a library. The minister writing in the Statistical Account waxes into a rhapsody of praise for the town.

The Nineteenth Century

In the 19th century, under the momentum of industrial expansion, Kilmarnock's population growth accelerated: from 6,000 (1800) to 21,000 (1851) and 35,000 (1901) and the town became a major centre in the west of Scotland.

The traditional manufactures continued to expand, and became increasingly mechanised. In carpet-making, Thomas Morton's improvements, with the application of steam power in 1857, produced goods 'the quality and patterns of which are not surpassed by any in Britain'. In 1860 power-operated bonnet-knitting machines were introduced. In 1873 power was also applied to the manufacture of boots and shoes. In the sixties the Scottish cotton industry collapsed, and never recovered. There was massive emigration from Ayrshire - 22 of the 44 parishes lost population in that decade and the country suffered a net loss of 30,000. But Kilmarnock's population growth was only slowed down, in the sixties and seventies, and then renewed its rapid increase.

The check to one branch of the textile industry was partly compensated by the continued expansion of other branches, and by the parallel considerable development of coal-mining all round and under Kilmarnock. By 1840 Troon was exporting 140,000 tons annually, mainly from the Kilmarnock district. Output could be increased as the new railways offered improved transport facilities. The Glasgow, Paisley, Kilmarnock and Ayr Railway Company formed in 1837 extended its line from Glasgow via Dalry to Kilmarnock in 1843; the old Kilmarnock-Troon line was taken over, re-laid, and re-opened for steam trains (1847) and was extended east to Galston (1848) and Newmilns (1850); and a network of colliery tracks was formed. After the main line was pushed south towards Dumfries to complete a direct link with the south (1850) the Glasgow and South Western Railway Company came formally into existence, with coal traffic as its main business.

Following the railways there was a massive expansion of the iron industry in the fifties and sixties. Portland Iron Works was set up at Hurlford in 1846 and eventually there were 48 blast furnaces in Ayrshire. Kilmarnock participated in the expansion of heavy industry, with the establishment of iron foundries and specialised engineering businesses. Locomotive building was begun by Andrew Barclay (1840) and at the G. & S.W. works (1865). The Kennedy Patent Water Meter Co. was initiated (1852) and the Glenfield Iron Co. (1865), the two combining to form Glenfield and Kennedy (1899).

While Scotland became dependent on heavy industry in the late 19th century, Kilmarnock retained diversification, combining coal and engineering with the traditional textiles and leather, and adding a range of miscellaneous manufactures from whisky blending to bricks and pottery. Kilmarnock was admirably situated and the necessary rail links were augmented with the direct line opened to Glasgow in 1873.

The massive expansion of the town in the 18th and 19th centuries posed a whole series of problems for the burgh council. In particular the old huddled labyrinth of narrow crooked streets around the Cross was hopelessly inadequate for the growing traffic and bold action was taken by the council when in 1804 King Street was opened to provide a new outlet to the south, and Portland Street and later Wellington Street a similar outlet to the north. Drastic surgery created a completely new main thoroughfare through the town, and in 1805 new Town Buildings were erected in King Street. Most burgh councils were by this time hopelessly inefficient and corrupt and there were widespread demands for reform.

That in Kilmarnock was unusually liberalised and indeed in 1810 was progressive enough to obtain a private act of parliament to extend municipal powers.

Reform ideas were in the air, with the mercantile interests seeking more scope for their activities and the poorer sections of the community anxious to improve their lot. The reform movement, with great demonstrations in Kilmarnock in 1816, 1819, and 1832, culminated in the reform of parliament in that last year. Before that time not a single person within Kilmarnock had a vote; now it was granted to 730 householders who shared in the election of an M.P. for Kilmarnock Burghs. Some of the disappointed majority who remained unenfranchised renewed their agitation in the Chartist movement but not till 1867 was the franchise extended, when nearly four thousand Kilmarnock men got the vote.

The reform of parliament in 1832 was however followed by municipal reform. Kilmarnock as a parliamentary burgh was ranked as equal with a royal burgh, and the 730 householders who held a parliamentary vote might now also share in electing a reformed town council, comprising provost, four bailies, treasurer, and ten other councillors. Arrangements were also made for ratepayers to elect fifteen commissioners who, joined by the councillors could provide new social services such as police, lighting, paving, cleansing, water supply and levy a rate to finance these. Already in 1822 gas had been introduced into the town by a private company of local persons. In 1850 an adequate water supply was provided by the Commissioners as part of their activities. Poor relief was in the hands of the heritors and the kirk session till in 1845 this increasingly vexatious duty was transferred to a parochial board, which had powers to levy a poors rate; later in 1894 replaced by a parish council of elected members. Similarly in education: though the old burgh school had been superseded by an academy erected in 1807 (on the site of the present Grand Hall) it found difficulty in coping; till in 1872 an elected parish school board was statutorily established, built a new academy (at a cost of £4,500), and a range of other schools. Municipal enterprise was throughout the 19th century limited by statutory control, but what the public authorities were not permitted to attempt was accomplished often by voluntary effort, witness the institution of Kilmarnock Infirmary in 1868.

The Ordnance Survey Six Inch Map published in 1860 offers a vivid and detailed picture of the growing town. The built-up area was extending all along the main Glasgow-Ayr thoroughfare from near Beansburn in the north down as far as Low Glencairn Street. To the west building was going on in Dundonald Road, but North Hamilton Street was the edge of the town, with Bonnyton Square out in the open country. To the east, beyond Tam Samson's House, there were new villas in London Road, but the manse and glebe were still in a rural setting. Reading contemporary local writers makes it clear that Kilmarnock had not yet become accustomed to being a big town. People still felt and behaved as if they were living in a small community - a sort of overgrown village - which had mysteriously taken to getting bigger and was changing in all sorts of ways, but which was still compact enough for local folk to know intimately from end to end.

The character of the town centre was being altered. The Town Buildings (1805) were joined by the Court House in St. Marnock Street (1852) and the Corn Exchange (1862). The statue to Sir James Shaw was erected at the Cross (1848). A new access to the town centre came with the opening of Duke street (1859) and a brave attempt was made to create a new main thoroughfare in John Finnie Street (1864). Though most of the town green had become built over, ample alternative recreational areas were opened to the public - Kay Park (1879), Bellfield Estate (1888), and Howard Park (1894). There was a range of sporting facilities, including Kilmarnock Bowling Club (1855) and Kilmarnock Football Club (1869). There was a most remarkable flowering of cultural activities. Kilmarnock Library (1797) was followed by Thomas Morton's Observatory (1818), the Philosophic Institution (1823), Kilmarnock Drawing Academy (1831), the Mechanics' Institution (1835), the Philharmonic Society (1845), the Atheneum (1848), Kilmarnock Burns Club (1855). After 1831 there were half-a-

dozen attempts at running a weekly newspaper, until with more lasting success the Kilmarnock Standard was founded (1863).

The churches continued to occupy a prominent place in the life of the community. By the second half of the 19th century there was a score of congregations - the established kirk (5), the U.P. Church (4), the Frees (3) plus Reformed Presbyterians, Original Seceders, Evangelical Union (2) - all belonging to the old tradition, now joined by newcomers to Kilmarnock - Baptists, Methodists, Episcopals, Christian Brethren, and the Roman Catholics with a place of worship since 1847. This is a sign of continued vitality, but at the same time of the growing complexity of local affairs.

PART FOUR - THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The 20th century continued to grow, but with a more modest rate of growth, from 35,000 (1901) to 49,000 (1971). Economic difficulties checked expansion. In the first decade of the century, depression and emigration actually brought a temporary drop in the number of inhabitants. Ayr, by taking in the industrial areas north of the river and extending residential developments to the south, rose to surpass Kilmarnock's population at the census of 1921 and again in 1951. But Kilmarnock surmounted the serious interwar depression with a new period of manufacturing developments and successfully diversified her economy.

The 20th century saw the extinction of the once-powerful coal mining industry, as the north Ayrshire coalfield was worked out. The ring of pits around Kilmarnock all closed down: Caprington (1911), Altonhill (1912), Fairlie (1914), Inchgotrick (1923), Wyndyedge (1927), Woodhill (1928), Wardneuk (1930), Newhouse and Blacksyke (1931), and Wellington, Kirkstyle, Annandale, and Dallas (1935). But in the general decline of Scottish heavy industry, sufficient specialised businesses survived and there were about 4,000 employed in engineering in mid-century. More than half of these were in Glenfield and Kennedy Ltd., and most of the others in Holm Foundry, Barr, Thomson & Co., and the long-established Andrew Barclay & Co. In the 'twenties, the closure of the G and S.W. locomotive and wagon building works and two large forges were severe blows, but this balanced a generation later by the opening of a new range of engineering businesses. Other traditional trades were also able to continue. In mid-century there were about 3,500 workers in the textile industry. About half were in Blackwood, Morton & Sons Ltd., an old firm which was reorganised and moved into modern premises to mass produce carpets. Smaller firms handled a variety of woolens and knitwear, including the traditional Kilmarnock bonnets. Another 3,500 workers found employment in a continuing variety of manufacturing. One of the old leather firms going back to 1820 developed into the massive Saxone Shoe Co. Ltd., Johnnie Walker, 'born 1820' was 'still going strong'. On a smaller scale, Smith Brothers (Kilmarnock) Ltd., founded in 1819, continued successfully. And though some old firms collapsed they were replaced by new manufacturing businesses which in the second half of the 20th century found Kilmarnock a promising place to set up undertakings.

In addition to 11,000 employed in manufacturing, Kilmarnock in mid-century could offer jobs to another 9,000 in building, transport, distributive and other services. Many of these could now come in daily by bus from the constellation of smaller communities around Kilmarnock. The Scottish General Transport Company began in Kilmarnock in 1920 and in 1932 became the main partner in the Western S.M.T. Co., bringing in workers to Kilmarnock daily, and at weekends, bringing in others for shopping and recreation.

The Third Statistical Account suggested that 'the comparatively rapid growth of Kilmarnock into big town status has brought some considerable loss in community sense'. Various symptoms of this have

been pointed out. Many of the once-flourishing 19th century cultural organisations languished or died. In the early 19th century there was a wooden theatre; later the Opera House, opened in 1875; followed by the King's Theatre (1904). But it was converted into a cinema and efforts to set up a Civic Theatre in the 1950s failed. Even the number of cinemas dwindled from six in 1950 to one. The number of religious assemblies continued to multiply, but in mid-century, the total of 32 different congregations belonged to 19 separate bodies, and nearly half of the adult population had no church affiliation of any kind.

Various reasons have been advanced for this apparent decay of community cohesion. Improved transport facilities made it possible for some local businessmen to live out of town - 'people of wealth and leisure for whom an industrial town like Kilmarnock has no great attraction'. In the second half of the 20th century an increasing number of shops, businesses, and industrial undertakings passed entirely out of local hands to become branches of faceless corporations. Part of Kilmarnock's trouble was the nature of its growth. Not only did its spread swallow up the old separate village communities of Beansburn, Bonnyton, and Riccarton, but the neighbourhood districts of the old town itself lost their identities as in the process of rehousing people were dispersed to the new housing schemes. These large new housing areas lacked adequate shopping and recreational facilities, and most of them were beyond convenient walking distance of the old town centre.

None of these problems were peculiar to Kilmarnock. And in fact many of the old traditions and organisations managed to survive well enough. The Third Statistical Account recorded the variety of associations of one kind or other: some old like the Glenfield Ramblers (formed 1884) some new, like the wide range of youth organisations. Bonds of unity were formed by such diverse institutions as Kilmarnock football team, the Kilmarnock Standard, and the town council.

Kilmarnock town council acquired a new standing as a result of 20th century municipal reform. The Town Councils (Scotland) Act of 1900 combined the old council and the police commissioners into one body; the Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1929 designated Kilmarnock as a large burgh with control over all local services apart from education; a series of acts extended the powers and responsibilities of the councils in providing these services; and in 1945 the franchise was extended from ratepayers to all adult residents.

Throughout the century successive councils extended municipal provisions. In 1903 an electricity works was set up, and a tramway system laid out, converted to a municipal bus service after 1926, then sold to the Western S.M.T. in 1931. The Dick Institute, opened in 1901, was developed into a first class library and museum. The Grand Hall was built in 1927. Nine new parks were acquired in the first half of the century, and municipal golf courses and bowling greens laid out. In 1940 an indoor swimming pool was opened. An infectious diseases hospital was supplemented by a maternity home in 1924 (with a new one in 1937). But by far the biggest achievement was the rehousing programme commenced in 1919. By mid-century 5,000 council houses had been built, and in the next twenty years this figure was more than doubled. At the 1971 census, there were 11,600 council houses, over 70% of all the dwellings in the town. In this housing revolution of the 20th century, Kilmarnock has been almost entirely rebuilt.

The first aim was, rightly, to provide reasonable new homes. Only when the back of the rehousing programme was broken has it been possible to consider the public provision of sufficient community facilities to enrich the quality of life. And Kilmarnock town council in the last phase of its existence, before regionalisation, boldly repeated what an older council had done 270 years before. The old main thoroughfare could no longer perform the double role of traffic artery and shopping centre. In 1945 an attempt to cope with growing traffic was made by taking away the statue of Sir James Shaw and

converting the Cross into a roundabout; later a one-way traffic system was introduced. But more drastic surgery was found essential. In 1973 an outer bypass was formed to take away the heavy through traffic round the town. A new inner road system was driven through the town centre. In 1974 the Foregate pedestrianised shopping area was opened, to be followed by a new bus station, a multi-storey car park, a civic centre, and a re-shaped central precinct for the town: a fitting memorial to a form of municipal government which passed away in 1975, after serving Kilmarnock well in its 400 years as a burgh.

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EXPLORING OLD KILMARNOCK

by

Alex W. Marshall.

“The face of Kilmarnock continues to change. Although there is always something inspiring in the building of a new age, let us hope that something of Kilmarnock’s past can be preserved.”

These are not my words, but the opening words from Alexander Walker’s 1918 Town Plan for Kilmarnock.¹

Change has always been going on, perhaps more rapidly this century than in previous years. There have been signs, however, that the area we now call Kilmarnock has been an inhabited place for a long time.

It is known that a burial urn was found in the area of Fowlds Street. Modern Ordnance Survey Maps indicate that the Romans were in the vicinity, and our 1916-1918 Town Planners took cognisance of this. It is more than likely that people began to live together in villages for mutual support and protection and that what was happening in Kilmarnock was similar to what was happening all through Western Europe.

Many factors have influenced the ultimate growth and shape of the town:

Climatic conditions

The availability of building material
The rivers and crossing points - fords or bridges
The availability of water
The road patterns or communication with our neighbours
The Parliamentary boundaries
The rail roads
The coal workings
The availability of building land
The skills of her craftsmen
The state of industry

The first houses appeared to have centred around the Cross, both north and south of the river and all within reasonably easy access to the river or stream. The Strand in Kilmarnock took its name - as did its more famous namesake - from the stream which flowed there.²

Little is known about the early days of Kilmarnock, although a brief but vivid description has been left by Timothy Pont, visiting the area in the 17th century. He described it as “a large village in good repair, which hath one stone bridge over the River Marnock”.³

Later in the same century, a Cambridge scholar described it as “a mean and inelegant place in a state of disrepair”. If it was similar to other villages in the Lowlands, some of the houses would have been built of turf or mud plastered on to basket work fixed to stakes with the roof formed of couples set eight to ten feet apart, with their feet reaching into the ground (like a tent). On this rested crossbeams, and on top roof trees covered with brush wood. On top of this, divots of turf were laid, into which oat-straw or rushes were worked. The grass grew on this, and it was not uncommon to see sheep grazing on the top.

There were very few windows, and such openings as there were were curtained. There was always the danger of fire, and, in fact, a disastrous fire did occur in 1668 which burned down almost all of the houses in Kilmarnock and put 120 families - or about 600 or so of its inhabitants - to the fields for shelter.⁴

It was from this, with the help of the Kirk, that the second reconstruction of the town took place, and houses and buildings were erected which were to last, in some cases, until the present day.⁵ This second major rebuilding produced houses - mostly of two storeys - built with local stone and covered with thatch.⁶ Most of these had outside stairs for easy access to the upper floors. The bottom floors were of dirt, the upper floors of sawn timber⁷ such as was in the Tam O’Shanter Inn until it was demolished several years ago.

It was almost essential in those days to have a garden attached to one’s house, so that there was room to sink a well, dig a dry lavatory, build a kitchen midden, plant a rowan tree (to keep the witches at bay), to grow berry bushes (hence the Gooseberry Fair), and, if lucky, to plant a fruit tree and to keep poultry, pigs and bees.⁸ The houses north of the river were fortunate in this as there were fewer houses in the space available.⁹

As we now sub-divide our town into districts, so in years gone by the town was divided.¹⁰ There was:-

Middle Soulcross	Smiddieraw	Vennel Foot	Townholm
Townhead	Foregate	The High Green	The Low Green
The Greenfoot	The Cross	The Bridgend	Townfoot
Netherthorholm	Greenholm		

Most of these districts will be easily identified by you, except the Townhead and the Townfoot which were the High Street and the Grange Street areas, through which passed the main road.

The first real maps of the town were produced in 1783.¹² These give a general picture of the town, but what it looked like earlier can be gleaned from old Town Council records.

There is, however, a fairly accurate and detailed map of the central section of the town dated 1808.¹³ This map or plan contained the proposals for the new line of King Street, Portland Street, etc., and was submitted to the Court of Session in Edinburgh in that year, but must have been drawn before the end of the century.

Until the 13th October 1709, a “Stone Cross” stood at the Cross.¹⁴ This was removed - presumably because it was obstructing the roadway. It was reasonable to assume that it stood in front of the Toll Booth which was situated approximately where Hepworth the Tailor’s Shop stands, or - for people of my generation - where Rankin and Borland’s Chemist Shop once stood.

In the Cross area stood a corn mill.¹⁵ This was driven by a lade or stream which came down from the dam at the head of the Town Green via Ladeside Street as an open ditch, under Clerk’s Lane and Regent Street to the mill from where it rejoined the river east of Sandbed Bridge. This corn mill was removed in 1703.

I have not found an exact location, but from the evidence of the lade the mill could have been situated at the junction of Regent Street and Foregate as it was then.

The Toll Booth was built about 1691/1700.¹⁶ It was a two-storey building with a thatched roof and a bell tower. The access to the upper floor was by an outside stairway. The Council Chamber was upstairs, and the weigh-house or tron, plus some shops, were downstairs. Down a lane at the west end was the jail known as the Thieves’ Hole, and upstairs the jugs or iron collar, where erring citizens were made to stand for varying periods for minor offences.

The Cross Well, the source of most of the drinking water, stood in Regent Street¹⁷ in front of what was recently the Clydesdale Bank. In my day, or - for the older folks - Old Tom Stewart’s, the Ironmonger.

There was the occasional erection of the gallows¹⁸ which was marked by what was known as Nisbet’s Stone. This stone has been replaced in a monument at the entrance to Burns’ shopping precinct.

The Cross had been used for a market since 1609.¹⁹

The 1783 maps show street names, some of which should be familiar. Regent Street continued from the Toll Booth into Clerk’s Lane up to Ladeside Street, which in turn continued via a path to Soulis Street at the Meal Market. The Foregate continued into Soulis Street and up into High Street and into Dean Lane, which was the main road out to the north.

High Street was to have been the High Street. The Earl of Glencairn wanted it extended right up Townholm, over the Barkmill Dam to the river, and continued to Dean Castle. A road was actually laid out part of the way.

Dean Lane continued up to Gallows Hill to join Deans Street²⁰ at the junction of what was to be known as Witch Street. Deans Street continued past Gills Hall into what was named Perfect Road and so to Beansburn.²¹

There was a street called Back Street, served by a lane from the Foregate, which most of you know as Church Street, which at one time was called Smiddy Raw, and so named in the Feu Charter of the Old High Kirk. This continued up Boyd Street and so to Dean Lane.

In 1744 New Street was made from the bottom end of Back Street to Regent Street to give access to the people of Back Street to the Town's Green and the river.²²

To come back to the Cross:

What we now know as Waterloo Street was formed in 1752.²³ There had been a passage to the river from the corner of a Mrs. Paterson's yard dyke which was closed up and a cast or wall built along the river's edge and the road causewayed, the money for this being raised by public subscription. This gave access to Greenfoot and to the new school - the Academy, which was then being built - and to continue into what was then known as the Watering Path.

In 1753 the Green Bridge or London Road Bridge was erected.²⁴

Leading out of the Cross to the north-west was a street known as the Croft. This led to the Strand and across to Dunlop Street.²⁵ Dunlop Street split in two, one part to go up Firs Brae, past the Powder Magazine and on to open country. First Brae, or the Gas Brae, was so called because there was a row of fir trees marking the end of Langlands Estate. The other branch went along Grange Street. Leading from Grange Street to the river was a street known as Swine Row - what we now call Nelson Street - a one-sided street, the houses all being on the north side of the street.

Further on, there was virtually a crossroads. The road to the right led to Irvine and to the left into Kilmarnock House. Straight ahead led to Ballet or Bullet Road. This ran through the common lands of Kilmarnock to Caprington Castle, Dundonald, etc.²⁶ Kilmarnock House, which stood on what is now St Marnock Street car park, had also a gatehouse or opening at Nelson Street.

Coming back to the Strand:

This was the first street to be causewayed or paved with round stones taken from the river.²⁷ This was in 1708, and was built up to just beyond Dunlop Street.²⁸ Then it was open country. On the left, or west side, stood Langlands House, just about where the Opera House (or what became the Sandriane Pub and is now Pillars, in John Finnie Street) was situated. Langlands House looked east over open ground on to the bowling green, and into the garden of Back Street and Foregate.

Beyond Langlands the road split in two, the right fork to go round the back of the bowling green to the back of the yards of Garden Street and to continue up to Fulton's Road and so to join Dean Lane. The other branch of this road went up the hill through open country in the direction of Kilmaurs.

Between the then unnamed Hill Street and Garden Street stood a bit of common ground known as Sheiling or Shelling Hill²⁹ where, in the olden days, the corn was flailed and tossed to allow the chaff to separate as husk from the corn. This area became known later as Mount Pleasant, and still later the Fever Hospital and the Infirmary were built upon it.³⁰

Go back to the Laigh Kirk again:

There was a row of two-storey houses between the back of the building which includes W.H. Smith's shop and the Kirk steps. The Kirk Lane ran round the churchyard, which was at one time a school playground.³¹ This led to College Wynd, which in turn ran north-west to join Dunlop Street just short of this junction with Grange Street. The Kirk haugh was not built up until 1710, when Bank Street - or, as it was sometimes called, the Clay Mugs - was formed,³² so it must have been pretty tortuous getting through the town to the west.

Going back to the Strand again and turning south over the river bridge - this was a two-arch bridge which was so steep that it was dangerous for horses and even for foot traffic. It was repaired in 1753³³ but had to be taken down and lowered and made into a single arch bridge in 1762.³⁴ This new bridge has lasted to the present day and leads to the Sandbed.

Immediately over the bridge to the left was a footpath which ran along the river to David McKean's steps.³⁵ A little further on was a close - a hole in the wall, as Burns described it - actually a remnant of a former road. Entering the close, on the left was an opening into a triangular shaped courtyard known as Victoria Place.³⁶ Any students of the Covenanting period will know the name. This was where the Bloody Dalziel was housed, from the windows of which he gave his orders to the soldiers.³⁷ On the right was a wide courtyard or open space which extended from the former Harry Lennon's building at the Sandbed to about the old Woolworth's site at an angle to the present street line.³⁸ This was known as Morris Place. The building which housed Harry Lennon's bookmaker's shop was quite imposing with a balcony at the first floor level and a broad stone stair leading up from the street.³⁹ The building still exists but is now lying empty.

On the bottom right of this was Cooper's Inn, which later became the terminus of the Edinburgh Stage Coach.⁴⁰ This stage coach was called the 'Marquis of Hastings', and I believe it was run by a man called Paterson who stayed in the nearby Back Causeway. The upper floor housed the old Sun Inn.⁴¹

Let us go back to Greenfoot, across the "slent" and up the other side, or, better still, let us take the period when we go across the Flesh Market Bridge into the Brigend.⁴² The Flesh Market must have been its polite description, as it was clearly designated the "Slaughterhouse" in the Town Plan.⁴³ A square-shaped building, open in the centre with covered enclosures or stalls around the outside. There were six stalls but only two were used, one on either end of the building. One flesher was called William Arbuckle and the other William Gray. This Flesh Market was discontinued when Duke Street opened. This William Arbuckle was the father of Bailie Arbuckle who gave his name to Arbuckle Street.

From the bridge to the south-west ran a fairly wide lane which opened out to a reasonably wide area⁴⁴ and should have presented no problem to a stagecoach. There was room to go forward into Morris Place, from whence the Edinburgh stagecoach left, or to turn south down a street almost in the position of the present King Street. This was very narrow in one place, just about where Fraser's, the former Lauder's Emporium, now stands. There were lanes to Sandbed above St Marnock Street, or,

alternatively, one could go straight down the line of the present King Street to join the main road at about Fowlds Street. There was a wide opening where the St Marnock Street Bridge now is.

The houses were grouped in closes with the front entrances from the higher level. The backs of the houses were to the Sandbed.⁴⁵

The Back Causeway, or what was later known as Mitchell Street, was much wider than it eventually was. All the indications point to the main road from the east coming in the present Mauchline road to Braehead - a name which was given to London Road at Braehead House - turning up Braeside and down "Tankardhall Brae" into the Back Causeway. It ran south through the route which I have just mentioned.⁴⁶

I can find no record of the street names in this part of Kilmarnock which must have been as populated as the north side of the river - if not more so.

To come quickly to the beginning of the 19th century, and following the improvements made by the Earl of Glencairn in 1765 and onwards -

An Act of Parliament for the improvement of Kilmarnock passed into the Statute Book in 1802 and a plan⁴⁷ was drawn up to push a new wide road right up through the town, through the Cross, and in a straight line to about Wellington Street.

The first phase went well, and by 1804 the bridge was built and the new road through the Cross was formed at a higher road level than the old Cross. Then the plan came unstuck. The next phase would have meant the demolishing of part of Fore Street, part of New Street and the most of Back Street. It was a pity that this did not succeed, but there must have been strong objections which took the Commissioners to the Court of Session in Edinburgh in 1808, with the result that the new road out of the Cross to the north, now called Portland Street, was not opened until 1810 and was pushed through the lower part of the Croft and up through the back gardens of the houses in the Strand and the Foregate into the centre of the bowling green, where it changed direction slightly and passed through the gardens of the Back of the Yards (now Garden Street) and those of Smiddy Row or Back Street (now Church Street) over the junction of Fulton's Road and up the back gardens of the houses on the west side of that road to the junction of Deans Street and Dean Lane. Deans Street was formed about 1820.⁴⁸ The original plan of this development is still in existence, as is the one for East and West George Streets, which were not opened until about 1819/1820.

There is a fairly accurate record of the town about this time. "Government Abstracts" of 1821 indicate that there were 1,320 houses occupied by 2,696 families. There were five houses unoccupied and five in the course of building - a very overcrowded place, and little being done to relieve the situation until 1824, when the Kilmarnock Building Company was formed and began building the Robertson Place area with houses on a uniform plan.⁴⁹ This caused a new district name to come into use in Kilmarnock - The Newton.

About this time, too, the Holm Square began to be developed.

Around this time, too, there is a fairly full record of all the property owners and many of the characters in the town.⁵⁰ Many names familiar now were equally familiar in those days.

Aitken; Arbuckle; Bicket; Blackwood; Borland; Brown; Bryson; Campbell; Clark;

Crooks; Cunningham; Finnie; Lauder; McKie; Marshall; Paxton; Rankin; Samson; Stewart; Walker.

The Cross area was surrounded by shops. Most of these had half doors or stable-type doors, the bottom half closed against the dust or filth of the street. (Bear in mind that there was no regular street sweeping, and no provision for the clearing of rubbish. What was dumped in the street was left until it blew away.) There was a water butt at each shop door which was filled from the Cross well. The water from these butts was used to dampen the stour or dust in front of each individual shop. The half door was not opened until a customer approached.

Starting from the corner of Cheapside Street, where W.H. Smith's shop now is, was a Mr Forrest, a grocer, who was followed by a Mr Lauder, a hatter. Next door was Samson's seed shop which later came into the hands of Mr Robert Paton.

Where Hepworth, the tailor's shop, now is was a Mr James Mather, bookseller, which later was converted into the Rainbow hotel or restaurant.

Next to this was the distinctive shop of Mr Rankin, chemist and druggist, which later came into the hands of his chief assistant, Mr Borland.

Over to the corner of the former Waterloo Street and King Street (approximately on the site of the current Woolworth's shop) was Hugh Crawford and Sons, booksellers and printers. Mr Crawford followed John Wilson in the printing business. On the same building, but next door stood the shop of one Bauldy Morris, a china and coarse delf merchant.

Over Waterloo Street corner was a wine and spirit merchant's shop occupied by a man called Symington. This shop was later taken down and the castellated building which we remember was erected - later known as The Whisky Palace.

Further along the low side of the Cross was the close leading to the Star Inn or Hotel, occupied at that time by the Widow Howat, and used for a workmen's resort, trade meetings, colliers' balls, marriages and dances.

Next was a shop occupied by a John Gilmour, of whom not very much is known, save that he was thrown into prison for not paying his Road and Bridge Tax.

Adjoining this was a shop occupied by John Bicket, who was a tinsmith and plumber and who later made his name as a manufacturer of gasometers.⁵¹ If you remember - about this time there was a man in Crosshouse - later in Aucinleck - called David Murdoch who played around with coal and devised the method of extracting coal gas. The Bicket family and Kilmarnock benefited from this.

We next come to a close which led through to Waterloo Street, and still did, up to the demolition in the 1970s.⁵² In this close was the White Hart Inn - later called the Victoria Hotel, and is remembered because the Mormons used to hold meetings there. One of their members, a John Lyon, went to Salt Lake City where he died a bishop of that faith.⁵³

Next to this was Thomas Stewart, Ironmonger, and Messrs. Clark, Shoemakers, the father and uncle of George Clark of the Saxone. The Clarks also had workshops upstairs in this property.

Next came Nailers Close which led to David's Lane; then the shop of Thomas Hillhouse, the Flesher. Nailers Close and the Flesher's shop were demolished to allow Duke Street to be formed.⁵⁴

Over now to the shop at the junction of Foregate and King Street where the Royal Bank now stands -

Until 1813 this was a two-storey thatched roof building with an outside stair, occupied by a tailor called Stevens.⁵⁵ After 1813 a new building was erected on this site and occupied by a grocer and wine merchant called Rankin, and his descendants occupied the property for many years. In the latter part of the 19th century, the upper storey of this building was used as a reading room.

The Rankin's shop was also used as the first Post Office in Kilmarnock, Mr Rankin being the first postmaster here.⁵⁶ Because of the extension of the Post Office business, it had to be moved to the building erected by John Bicket at the corner of Queen Street and King Street. The next G.P.O. was at the corner of Bank Place and John Finnie Street.

During the first half of the 19th century, despite difficult conditions, i.e. the aftermath of the Napoleonic War, a scarcity of food and the debt incurred by the Town Council to buy food for the poor, industry prospered, and the building of the new Town Hall and shops on both sides of King Street and Portland Street proceeded apace.

The population increased $3\frac{1}{2}$ times (from six thousand to twenty-one thousand) and there is no record of the townspeople's nostalgically wanting the old lanes, shops and buildings to remain. All records indicate that they were proud of their new enterprises, new street lines and new buildings which ranked among the best in Britain.

The advent of the railways in 1843 with its itinerant labour created problems of housing. The building of bridges, railway station goods sheds, etc., along with the building up of the new streets brought prosperity to the building industry and attracted building tradesmen from outside the town, some of whose names are still known to Kilmarnock folk.

Previous to the railways, there had, of course, been the Duke of Portland tram line in 1809, which ran from the area of Kilmarnock House - or St. Marnock Street - to the Harbour at Troon. The house feus in the Seaford Street area still show the line of the tramway, which not only shipped coal from Kilmarnock, but also passengers.⁵⁷

The other method of transport was by pack horse or by horse and cart.⁵⁸ Goods for transport were collected at Carriers' Field, which was where the Palace Theatre and Arts Guild premises now stand. Goods were loaded on to the carts and then hauled through atrocious roads to Logan's Well, where the horses were exchanged and hitched to the incoming carts of raw material to be delivered in Kilmarnock.

The mention of the Palace Theatre area will not be out of place. In olden times it was part of the Bleaching Green, and jealously guarded by the townspeople, when the Green Bridge - or London Road Bridge - was opened in 1753 and Green Street formed.⁵⁹ This had the effect of quartering the Green. The south-east quarter already housed the school (the Academy) which had been built the previous year.⁶⁰ This area of ground then became the school playground. Later, the part fronting to Green Street was fenced off to become Carters Field. Later still, after the railways had removed the necessity for carters, the area was built up.⁶¹ On the site of the Palace Theatre and the Albert Tower, was the fish market, an open area with covered stalls around the perimeter, similar to the old flesh market. Next to that, about the site of the old Registrar's Office was the Butter Market. Then came an 'L'-shaped building which was the weigh house with a weighing machine for two-wheeled carts. In the crook of the 'L' was the Weigh House Inn. Next came an open yard which housed the boilerhouse and well. Then came a triangular-shaped building which housed the Fire Brigade, which is associated with Mr Inverarity.

Lastly, came a very old row of houses, which latterly housed Robin Donnelly and his Weights and Measures, with the Children's Officer upstairs.

The next change on this site came around 1862 when the Corn Exchange and the Albert Tower were built.⁶² Behind this, a large hall was erected to carry on the business of the Corn Exchange. In this hall there was a circular gallery at one end and a platform built complete with an organ at the other.

The area behind the Corn Exchange was roofed over and became the Butter Market, and behind the Butter Market, on the old Academy playingfield, an Agricultural Hall was built. This was connected to the old Academy.

November 1859 saw the opening of Duke Street. The opening was quite informal, and the Town Council Minute still exists. The Provost, Archibald Finnie of Springhill (not Archibald Finnie of Kilmarnock, who was his father) was presiding over a meeting of the Police Commissioners in the morning, and stated, "That a Mr Reid, the Contractor, had got the new causeway in the Cross and Duke Street connected, and deemed it advisable to have the street opened to the public, and seeing the day was fine and a market one, it was unanimously agreed that it be opened that day at 3 o'clock, the Provost to invite the Town Council and Police Commissioners and thereafter to meet in the Town Hall for a glass of wine to celebrate the event."

The making of this street opened the centre of the town to the London Road Bridge, and caused the disappearance of Nailers Close and part of David's Lane, and removed a considerable amount of old property. Duke Street rapidly built up. The Royal Hotel with shops underneath on the south side and a row of shops on the north side were built.

The opening of Union Street followed in 1860 and plans for John Finnie Street were made in 1861⁶³, but there was some bother raising the cash, and Mr John Finnie of Bowden Lodge, Manchester, advanced the money and guaranteed the Town's Improvement Trustees against financial loss.⁶⁴ The street was opened in 1864 and almost completely built up in the next fifteen years.

John Dickie Street was opened up in connection with John Finnie Street.

In 1868 the Infirmary or Fever Hospital was erected on Mount Pleasant.

At the other end of John Finnie Street, St Marnock Kirk had been built in 1836, but so far I have been unable to trace the date of St Marnock Street Bridge or the making of St Marnock Street. I do know that the original name of the street from the junction of King Street right to the Railway Bridge at Irvine Road was St Marnock Street. Later on, part of this street was called Portland Road.⁶⁵

Before the opening of the Butter Market for the indoor sale of butter and eggs, the wives and daughters of farmers carried these into town and stood about in all weathers to sell their wares.

It was not uncommon to see girls and women walk into town in their bare feet and put on their shoes when they came near the town centre. On the way through the town they would pass the time of day with the women of the town who often sat outside their homes on stones or stools knitting Kilmarnock Bonnets and other woollen goods.

During this decade, as in the previous one, there was agitation and unrest all through the country to have Parliamentary Reform⁶⁶ The Reformers got their way, with the result that a Parliamentary Boundary, a line of limitation, came into being in July 1832.⁶⁷

If you will go with me in your imagination round the first boundary, starting at the confluence of the River Irvine and the Kilmarnock Water in a straight line to a point of the Old Irvine Road, 350 yards

west of Grange Street; from this point, in a northerly direction to where the road from Hillhead Farm joins the Kilmaurs Road; thence in a straight line through the summit of Bonfire Knowe to the Kilmarnock Water, just above the Dark Path; thence in a straight line to the bridge over the Mill Burn on the Mauchline Road; down the Mill Burn to a point at which it joins the River Irvine; thence in a straight line to Bellsland Bridge on the road from Riccarton to Galston; thence in a straight line to a point called Witchknowe at which two roads met; thence in a straight line to a bridge over the Maxholm Burn on the Ayr Road; down the Maxholm Burn and the River Irvine to the starting point.

It is no accident that Bruce Street is where it is. This was the first boundary of the Burgh of Kilmarnock.

The district of Kilmarnock extended to Renfrew. In the original Act, the Kilmarnock District was listed as Dumbarton, Kilmarnock, Renfrew, Rutherglen and Port Glasgow.⁶⁸

The building of Kilmarnock required material⁶⁹, and I had better mention this, perhaps, on the way past.

There is mentioned in various Town Council Minutes that permission is given to raise stones, either from the river bed, as at the time when the Strand was causewayed, or to cut stones from the Town's Quarries.

The Quarries which I know about were the Town's Quarrie, north of Dean Lane, at what we call Cuthbert Place - or on the river at Tam's Loup - which was recently infilled and landscaped at a cost of many thousands of pounds.

There was a quarry in the area in front of St Andrew's Parish Church, and it is more than likely that the early houses in the Netherton were built of stone from this.

There are two stories about this quarry. One that sheep fell into it on their way to the Slaughterhouse which stood alongside it, and the other that it was filled up by spoil from the excavation of the Galleon Brae between Douglas Street and the Netherton, when unemployed men were given the task of lowering the road level there at a payment of 1/6d. per day.

There were two quarries in Holmquarry Road.⁷⁰ The larger of the two was in what is now the Direct Labour Department Yard, and the smaller further down the river in the Gas Works Yard.

Unemployed men earned their dole by working in these quarries.⁷¹ Later a rifle range was formed between them. This ran from the Cattle Market to the river.⁷²

There were a number of quarries in the Peatlands, which is halfway to Craigie Hill, and, by the size of some of them, must have been worked for many years. The District Council used the deepest of these for a dump for household refuse. It is now filled.

The latest of the quarries to appear was the Dean Quarrie.

Another feature on the face of Kilmarnock was the Dams on the river.

As far as I can trace, there were dams at the following places:-

On the river above Dark Path Cottage - this served the factory of a Bonnet Manufacturer.⁷³

In the Dean Park, just below the Lauder Bridge - part of this still exists - the lade followed the south bank and came down to a pond in the Townholm area. It is described as a Mill Dam.

Another one was at Blackwood Brothers in Menford Lane, just above the Black Rocks. There was only a very short lade and sluice.

The dam at the foot of the Meal Market steps, or at the top of Ladeside Street, still exists, although almost all physical evidence of a lade has now gone. There are, however, good maps which clearly show this.

There was a very long dam across the river just above Green Street Bridge. This sloped across the river from the back door of the present Grand Hall to about sixty feet above the bridge on the other side. This served Benjie's Mill at the foot of Braeside Street. Little evidence is left.

Another was at the 'Trimmer Brig'.⁷⁴ This flowed into a culvert on the Nelson Street side, where there was a Curl Hair Manufactory, and down the side of St Marnock Place to drive a flour mill on the south-west corner of St Marnock Street Bridge.⁷⁵ The lade from this flowed the whole length of Waterside Street drying green, to discharge into the river there.

There were two dams on the River Irvine - one for the Mill above the Struther's Steps, and the other for Riccarton Mill behind the Glenfield Meter Works.

Toll Houses marked the limits of the town, and, without going into the reason for them, these were located at the following positions:-

Starting at Kilmaurs Road -

There were three toll houses⁷⁶ - the 'Old Toll' situated on glebe land on the west side of what we now know as Hill Street, approximately where Johnnie Walker's works entrance gates now stand; the 'Strandhead Toll' which stood on the east side of the road, right on what is now the junction of Witch Road and Hill Street. The name 'Strandhead' indicates that this was the name given to this road from Cheapside Street to the Toll House.⁷⁷ The third one stood on the junction of Montgomerie Place or Montgomerie Street, just short of the mineral railway which crosses the road at this point.⁷⁸

One of the earliest toll houses stood in Dean Lane, right on the junction of Cuthbert Place. It, too, like the one at Johnnie Walker's, was called the 'Old Toll'.

Deans Street Toll stood on the east side of the road, in what is now Dean Park. The location was just about Gill's Hall or Gillsburn House.⁷⁹ Miss MacLarty writes in her "Memories of Old Kilmarnock" that a Toll House stood on the west side of the road, opposite the entrance gates to the Dean Park. The 1858 Ordnance maps show this. She also mentions metal gates on the road at this point. The 1880 map shows the Toll House back in its original position. The park was called Toll Park before it became Dean Park.

There was a toll house at the junction of Hollis (Holehouse) Road and Braehead. There is an old building on this exact spot, which may be the toll house still standing. This covered the entrance to the town from the north-east.

I understand that there was a toll house at the junction of Holehouse Road and Grassyards Road, just before the railway bridge, but the maps do not show this.

Traffic from the east paid toll just beyond Samson Avenue, about where the 'bus stop now stands.⁸⁰ The foundations of the building still exist and help to support London Road.

From the south, roads were covered by a toll in Old Street, which stood opposite Academy Street, or Pie Row, in Riccarton.⁸¹ In later years this became a billiard hall, and subsequently a bookmaker's shop, but has now been demolished to make way for the A71 roadway. This was the site of the South Toll.

The house which stood at the junction of the two Riccarton bridges was also a toll house. The 1858 map shows this very clearly, and I understand that it later became a police sub-station.

Entry to the town from the south-west was covered by two tolls, situated at Townend Loan, one on either side of what we know as the Wee Thack Public House.⁸² One looked on to Grange Street, the other on to the then Irvine Road, the latter being quite recently demolished. There was a gated toll on the west side of the railway bridge on the Irvine Road.⁸³ The toll house stood on the left, immediately through the bridge. This was known as Townend Toll.

Recently, a Craigie College student produced a thesis on toll houses, toll bridges and turnpike roads in and around this area. A copy of this may be seen at Craigie College.

The last toll, as far as I am aware, was for crossing King Street Bridge. I have seen a photograph of the metal gates which stood just outside the Town Hall. Farmers, etc., used to take the route over the Flesh Market Bridge rather than pay the toll. The Town Council countered this by erecting a single iron railing across the Flesh Market Bridge⁸⁴, on which the local boys used to 'skin the cat'.

Tolls were abolished about 1883.

The second half of the 19th century was a period of both consolidation and expansion, but the basic shape had been formed by this time, so I would like to conclude by taking you on a visit of Kilmarnock one hundred years ago to indicate the location of some of the works and factories which provided work for many of the townspeople.

At this time there were 1,056 separate business establishments in the town, and another 55 in Riccarton, making a total of 1,111.⁸⁵ Every service trade known was represented, and almost all of the requirements for the entire working community were produced locally.

Starting in the north-west section - the Kilmaurs Road area - there were the Elmslie Mills, the Caledonian Railway Goods Shed and a Gas Works. Further north on this road were the Hillhead Brickworks.⁸⁶ and ⁸⁷

In Townholm, there was - on the left, or river side - a Tannery, a Woollen Spinning Mill and Kennedy's Water Meter Works. On the right, beyond the bowling green, Townholm Engine Works, Kilmarnock Forge, and beyond that, Kilmarnock Foundry.

In High Street were Bishopfield Print Works and Blackwood Brothers Spinning Mill.

The High and Low Tanyards were in Ladeside Street.

Behind Green House, or in what later became Dick's Garage Workshops, was a Carpet Factory. There were two mills at the foot of the Tankardhall Brae.

The Slaughterhouse was in St Andrew's Street, and further on Richardland Brewery.

On either side of Welbeck Street - just at the bridge (but there was no bridge then) - was the Welbeck Print Works with the Victorian Mills behind, and on the other side of Welbeck Street was the Newton Print Works.

Further south stood the Glenfield Print Works, the Glenfield Iron Works and Kennedy's Patent Meter Works. Below this was the Holm Foundry and, at Riccarton Bridge, the Glencairn Mill.

On the west side of the road, just about where the Tram Depot stood, was Barclay's Engine Works. That was before this area became the Cattle Market.

Where B.M.K. now stands was the Burnside Print Works, and at the Netherton, adjoining the river, was the Nursery Cotton Mill. In the Netherton, behind the Female Industrial School, was the Netherton Iron Works, later Barr, Thomson & Co., Ltd.

The Cattle Market was in Barbadoes Green, just at Wards Place.

The Gas Works were in Langlands Street, and the Caledonian Foundry was in West Langlands Street where Barclay's Engineering Works now stand.

On the north side of West Langlands Street stood the Vulcan Foundry, and behind this the Titchfield Foundry, the Portland Forge and a Saw Mill - then up to the Bonnyton Railway Workshops.

This is now a comprehensive list, and takes no account of the many carpet factories in the Grange Street area and all the small workshops in the congested central area.

One of the most notable features of the Kilmarnock scene was the number and size of the nurseries for growing food, which surrounded and literally hemmed in the town.⁸⁸

The area of Kay Park was a nursery. Where the Henderson Church, Kilmarnock Bowling Green and Tennis Courts now are was another nursery. From the back of Clark Street, Martyrs Kirk to Elmbank House and down to Robertson Place was nursery ground; also the area between Titchfield Street and St Andrew's Street, right back to Robertson Place, through which ran the Galleon Burn.

There were nurseries, too, in the following areas - the whole of the area between West Shaw Street and Holmquarry Road, except the Burnside Print Works⁸⁹; the area which we call Nursery Street; the whole of the area between Dundonald Road and the old tram line to Troon⁹⁰; an area on the north side of West Langlands Street where the Saw Mill eventually took over; the area above Thomson Street - and one with which we are familiar today - the one at Muir's Bank or Strawberrybank, which has been worked by the Fulton family for over one hundred years.

Thus concludes our tour of mid-19th century Kilmarnock.

Footnotes

- 1 1918 Town Plan of Alexander Walker (later Sir Alexander Walker) of Johnnie Walker's, who was Chairman of the Committee formed to plan post-war building
- 2 Maps of 1783 and 1808, and excavations
- 3 A. Mackay, "History of Kilmarnock"
- 4 A. Mackay, "History of Kilmarnock"
- 5 A. Mackay, "History of Kilmarnock"
- 6 Old oil paintings and photographs
- 7 Author's personal experience of this type of house
- 8 Author's personal knowledge
- 9 Woods' 1819 Town Plan
- 10 Local knowledge
- 11 Town Maps
- 12 Maps in A. Mackay's "History of Kilmarnock"
- 13 Maps in possession of author
- 14 Town Council Minutes
- 15 Town records
- 16 A. Mackay, "History of Kilmarnock"
- 17 Photographs of old Kilmarnock, and Plan of Duke Street, in possession of author
- 18 Town records
- 19 Town records
- 20 Woods' 1819 Town Plan
- 21 1783 Map
- 22 Town Council Minutes of 5th June 1744
- 23 Town Council Minutes of 25th October 1752
- 24 Town Council Minutes of 12th April 1753
- 25 Woods' 1819 Town Plan
- 26 Ordnance Survey

27 Town Council Minutes of 15th November 1708
 28 Woods' 1819 Town Plan
 29 Woods' 1819 Town Plan
 30 Town Maps
 31 Ordnance Survey 1858, and old paintings
 32 Town Council Minutes of 21st August 1710
 33 Town Council Minutes of 14th November 1743 and 3rd March 1753
 34 Town Council Minutes of 31st March 1762
 35 Town Plan
 36 Street Plan of 1783
 37 A. Mackay, "History of Kilmarnock"
 38 Town Plan of 1808 showing proposed new street line
 39 Old photographs
 40 Street Directory of 1832
 41 1918 Town Plan of Alexander Walker
 42 Town Council Minutes of 25th October 1752 and 13th March 1770
 43 1918 Town Plan of Alexander Walker
 44 Street Plan of 1808
 45 Street Plans of 1808 and 1819
 46 Ordnance Survey of 1858
 47 This plan still exists and is in the keeping of the Dick Institute
 48 Woods' 1819 Town Plan
 49 A. Mackay's "History of Kilmarnock"
 50 1918 Town Plan of Alexander Walker
 51 1918 Town Plan of Alexander Walker
 52 Ordnance Survey of 1858
 53 1918 Town Plan of Alexander Walker
 54 Duke Street Plan - still exists - in the keeping of Dick Institute
 55 1918 Town Plan of Alexander Walker
 56 1918 Town Plan of Alexander Walker
 57 Ordnance Survey of 1858; and Plan of Railway of 1809 - now in Dick Institute
 58 1918 Town Plan of Alexander Walker
 59 Town Council Minutes of 12th April 1753
 60 Town Council Minutes of 25th October 1752
 61 Ordnance Survey of 1858
 62 1918 Town Plan of Alexander Walker
 63 Plans still exist for both streets
 64 A. Mackay, "History of Kilmarnock"
 65 Ordnance Survey of 1858
 66 A. Mackay, "History of Kilmarnock"
 67 Act of Parliament, copies of which are in the Dick Institute and in the possession of the author
 68 Information from Dr John Strawhorn, Mauchline
 69 Local knowledge and maps
 70 Ordnance Survey of 1858
 71 Local Legend
 72 Ordnance Survey
 73 Ordnance Survey of 1889
 74 Ordnance Survey of 1858

75	Old photographs
76	Woods' 1819 Town Plan
77	Government Survey 1880
78	Ordnance Survey
79	Woods' 1819 Town Plan
80	Ordnance Survey
81	Woods' 1819 Town Plan
82	Woods' 1819 Town Plan
83	Ordnance Survey of 1858
84	1918 Town Plan of Alexander Walker
85	Street Directory
86	Government Survey of 1880
87	Ordnance Survey of 1858
88	Ordnance Survey of 1858
89	From a man known to the author who still remembers this
90	Ordnance Survey of 1858

MISS ANNIE MACLARTY'S MEMORIES OF THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

by

Gabrielle McCracken

Sooner rather than later, anyone who researches the recent history of Kilmarnock is bound to encounter the revered name of Miss Annie Maclarty, who in the first half of this century made such an important imprint in the education world, not only in Ayrshire, but also nationally.

The History Group has been given permission by Mr.W.H. McQueen, Head Teacher of Gargieston School, Kilmarnock, to make use of the memoirs left by Miss Maclarty of her years at the Grammar School. Gargieston is the successor to the Grammar, an old stone building which till 1976 stood behind St. Marnock's Church, with an imposing pillared gateway on Dundonald Road where is now the car park of the new Sheriff Court. When it closed, staff and pupils moved to the new Gargieston site.

Many of the older members of the History Group will remember Miss Annie Maclarty with affection and respect, either as teacher, colleague or 'eminence grise'. I knew nothing of her when I began to read her notes, but everybody who knew her immediately replied to my enquiries, "She was a character".

She was born in 1881, the eldest child and only daughter in the family of five of a Kilmarnock policeman, Sergeant John Maclarty, who himself is remembered as "a character" - a firm disciplinarian who when the Burgh Band played every week in the Dean Park would tolerate no bad behaviour among the young who came to listen. The family lived in Witch Road, but later moved to Orchard Street, and finally in 1902 to 26 William Street where Miss Maclarty herself lived till her death in 1975 at the age of 94.

During her long life she had a remarkable influence on education, not just in Kilmarnock, but all over Scotland, serving the Educational Institute of Scotland on all its important committees and as its President, particularly championing the status of the non-graduate teacher.

Annie's own education began at the age of 5¹/₂ at the Grammar School in 1887, and was much influenced by her mother who declared that her daughter was not to stay at home as she had done and "be a football", tossed around to look after whatever branch of the family needed her. School attendance had been made compulsory only 15 years before - and by 1889 it was free for all those of compulsory school age. The Grammar School had been founded in 1817 as the Free, or "Ragged", School, but in 1877 the Kilmarnock School Board (School Boards had superseded parish control in 1873) took it over and converted it into a Grammar School, intermediate between the Academy and other schools - "the outwards symbol of its rise in status was to wear boots like the Academy!"¹

Annie did not greatly enjoy her own schooldays, and recalls that she could read before she went to school and was often bored - she declares she was an adept at "reading below the desk" by the time she was 12, and had "spasms of rebelliousness". She thinks she must have been a frequent talker-in-class as she recalls her father going down to the school to ask if she could be strapped instead of kept in so often after school hours - he disliked her going home alone on dark winter afternoons. No doubt she was a bright child (she was so concerned at the chronological gaps in the history that was taught that her grandmother gave her a History of Scotland for herself); and she was dux in Standard VI, winning the Jasper Young medal. Certainly she could have won a bursary to the Academy, as many of her friends did, going on to the University, had not her father refused to complete the bursary application form because it required a statement of income. As far as he was concerned she could now stay at home. The headmaster, convinced of her great ability, said that he would like to have her as a Pupil Teacher, to which her father replied, "If she's any use to you, you can have her!"

The Grammar School Log Books record her progress: "1896 Annie Maclarty monitor" (monitor was not a prefect but a teaching role, commanding a salary of £6 per year and held before becoming a pupil teacher. Annie would have been 14.). "1900 - Annie Maclarty - 4th year Pupil Teacher, £20" (the headmaster's salary at that time was £220 p.a.). "1901 - Annie Maclarty - ex-Pupil Teacher received intimation she had passed 2nd Class": this may not seem very distinguished but, under the system of the time, Pupil Teachers received whatever in-service training their locality provided. Glasgow P.T.'s went to a special Institute, whereas the Kilmarnock P.T.'s were taught by their own headmaster. But the Glasgow Church of Scotland Training College (known as the Normal School as it was meant to provide a 'norm' of education) had a formidable week-long entrance examination in which all had to compete on equal terms. Kilmarnock at that time consequently had very few trained teachers and relied on "ex-P.T.'s". The Training College generally accepted only 1st Class passes (seconds could be admitted to the Episcopal Training College in Edinburgh, thirds had almost no chance of training), but Annie must have been considered sufficiently good material for special treatment.

She appears to have taught in Glasgow for a while and in the primary department of Kilmarnock Academy for a brief period before returning to what was virtually her own old school, as the Grammar had been moved, lock, stock and barrel, to the new Loanhead building in 1904. While at Loanhead she was chosen for an experiment involving teaching the same group of children right through Primaries 3, 4, 5 and 6. Then in 1919 she came back to the Grammar School proper, which had been going through difficult years, and now with a new and lively ex-Army headmaster had an opportunity to be brought back to its old high standards.

Miss Maclarty's life became totally dedicated to the advancement of education. Early in her teaching career she had joined the E.I.S., by 1919 she was on its National Council, and soon on all its influential committees, and within four years she was its President - the first woman primary school teacher ever to reach that distinction. The "Kilmarnock Standard" of 16th January 1926 reported a powerful address to the E.I.S. Annual Conference in Glasgow on "The Professional Spirit" in which she urged teachers to aim for a professionalism that she defined as a balance between altruism and egotism - "the application of civilization and chivalry to the problems of the profession". In the same year the honour of Fellow of the E.I.S. was conferred on her, and at the A.G.M. her successes were recounted²: she had been representative at the triennial imperial conference in London, representative to the N.U.T. Conference in England, involved in drafting the Superannuation Act, President of the Ayrshire Branch of E.I.S.: she was "an outstanding personality, fertile in ideas, possessing great knowledge in all that pertains to the teaching profession, greatly in demand as a speaker". How right her mother had been to insist on her education.

In 1929 Miss Maclarty was appointed Head of the Park Road School, Irvine - a rare distinction for a woman - and when it closed in 1938 she came back to Kilmarnock Academy. In the same year she retired from the National Council of the E.I.S., having been on it nearly 20 years, and a complimentary luncheon was given for her in Ayr. The speeches made in her honour³ bring to light her character and one can imagine her humorous appreciation of them. She "made her presence felt - she was no respecter of persons - she could be, and was, a censor of all and sundry", but "there were two outstanding things in her career, firstly concern for the child, and secondly interest in the status of the profession". She had "clearness of mind, conciseness in debate, and dogged determination above all Ayrshire is proud of her." Miss Maclarty made what the reporter calls a "characteristically blunt reply":- "at first she had not been enamoured of the Council, but in the stirring times of change from School Board to Education Authority and of salary struggles, she came to realize what it meant to her". The void caused by her retirement she hoped to fill by working for the establishment of children's clinics - another of her great interests. In the following year she was made an M.B.E.

A Loanhead School group photo of c.1910 shows a tall handsome young woman, and a portrait photograph in her middle years shows the same strong good-looking face with perhaps the addition of a more determined mouth. On tape in her last year, her voice is rich and humorous, a well-enunciated cultured, truly Scottish voice: and her anecdotes and laughter show a deep understanding of children - when Woolworths' in her teaching days had complained that school-children were pilfering in their lunchtime, she championed the country children with no home to go to in the break and declared to the store that it was presenting too great a temptation and must increase its staff. She was large, and noted for her lumbering, ungainly walk, but she always dressed smartly, and though completely undomesticated herself (the resident house-keeper who had come in her mother's last illness and stayed nearly 40 years, used to say, "If I didna' boss her, she'd ha' bossed me") she cared very much that girls should get not only good academic but also good domestic education. As a teacher, she was "inspiring", recalls one who was taught by her for the full 4-year experiment in Loanhead. She loved poetry, and often read aloud to her class. At arithmetic she was "marvellous"; she published a series of arithmetic textbooks which were used all over Scotland; they use old coinage and Imperial not metric weights and measures, so are not much use in modern schools, but they must have been invaluable in their day - full of practical problems phrased in a way to interest children ("how many buses needed to carry the football crowd?") and plenty of plain unadorned sums to ensure proficiency. Discipline was no problem to her, despite classes that could be 60 strong, and it was kept not by force or threat but by respect. The same Loanhead pupil remembers seeing only one 'skelping' in four years. She became an expert on IQ testing and was largely responsible for the formation of the child guidance service in Kilmarnock. In her accounts of the innovations and advances made at the Grammar School under the Headmastership of Major Yuille, she gives no credit to herself but one suspects that her work and inspiration must have been vital. It is indeed characteristic of her Grammar memoirs that they give no impression of the eminence of the author herself in the world of education. Bad systems and practices receive implied criticism, good practices and headmasters implied praise, but there is little passing of judgement - the characteristics are pride in the school, loyalty, and devotion to the pupils. She became a J.P. and was on the panel of Justices in the old Juvenile Courts - surely a most suitable appointment. In her early years of teaching, probably before her great involvement with E.I.S., she was head of an adult evening school for women in Grange Street, and in the twenties she founded the Kilmarnock Women's Educational Club, with over 80 members, not necessarily teachers, that met monthly in Lauder's Tearooms for about 60 years, closing only four years ago. The last 14 of them still met once a month for friendship's sake.

When Miss Maclarty retired from Kilmarnock Academy in December 1946 (by that time the Primary Department had been phased out and she was Lady Supervisor of the girls) she inevitably continued her educational interests. She founded the Ayrshire Branch of the Scottish Retired Teachers'

Association, and was much visited by former pupils and colleagues. Neighbours who were children in her later years remember with affection calling in on her as they passed her house. When she died in 1975, her 95th year, a colleague said, "She was an inspiration to all who knew her".

Notes

1 William Boyd - Education in Ayrshire through Seven Centuries

2 "Kilmarnock Standard", 26.9.1926

3 "Kilmarnock Standard", 12.11.1938

EARLY DAYS IN THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

by

Annie Maclarty

1887 - 1894

In August 1887 at 5½ years of age, I became a pupil of Grammar School, in Kilmarnock Art Galleries.⁴ The Headmaster was John C. Lindsay, F.E.I.S.⁵ At this point, fees had not been abolished, and the fees in Grammar and the Academy were exactly the same at every stage, for Grammar still had pupils to University entrance age.

At this time a storey was being added to the school building but we were back in school before the end of the session. Miss Helen Smith, Headmistress, was in charge of Infants and Standard I. As her assistants she had four pupil teachers, Misses Calderwood, Dawson, Henderson and Farquhar. The seating was low forms to hold four pupils, comfortable as they had a back slotted to hold our slates. The floor was galleried, the back seat was very high indeed. One room was larger than the other (one held) 60 children, (the other) 40 to 50 pupils. Miss Smith took the brighter pupils herself for reading and counting, while the slower pupils were taken for reading and counting in smaller groups by her pupil teachers.

Pupils at the end of the school year, 31st October, were examined individually by H.M.I.⁶ at age 7 years, and pupils who did not meet the required standard were retarded for a year. The test at this stage was ability to sight read a suitable passage, with a simple piece of dictation, and have at least two out of four sums correct in a test of two addition and two subtraction. At this stage the examination was done on slates and individual results recorded in the sheet of names given to H.M.I. when he arrived.

There were other five stages in the elementary school - Standards II to VI, with similar prescribed work which the pupils had to pass to go on to the next class.

In Standard II we still had reading and counting twice in the six hours. The afternoon reader (book) was the property of the school, so it was never taken home. As far as I can remember, it was a simple introduction to the geography of the world. Grammar was also added to the curriculum - nouns and verbs were picked out of the reading lesson. We recited one poem - "We are Seven". There was no piano, so three songs and the Modulator⁷ was our singing lesson, often crowded out by grant-earning subjects. Bible was taken from 12 to 12.25 p.m. All work was done on slates but we began with ink in our second half of the term. We copied a model of copperplate line from a copybook and a blot was a serious offence. Failures in spelling (over two errors) and in the morning's sums were 'kept in' at 4 o'clock to have extra help by the class teacher, as were offenders on discipline - talking in class or in lines being the most common transgression. The culprit had usually "10 lines", which meant transcription from his reader but he had to wait till the teacher was ready to examine the exercise (usual time 4.25 p.m.) and then there would be no company on the way home. Teachers' hours in those days were 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

No class teacher in Grammar School in my schooldays had the right to corporal punishment, with one exception, Mr. Boyd, the first assistant, who had a strap. Mr. Lindsay came round all the classes around 3.15 p.m. to 4 p.m. daily. He brought his cane on this round, and offenders - talking, etc., or bad work - were brought before him, but never were more than a few caned. He was the judge after the teacher stated her complaints against the culprits. By his system, corporal punishment was reduced to a minimum.

Again, the whole school became keyed up for H.M.I. in November and the same individual testing was done and any failure retarded, and we passed on to Standard III. Geography and History were now added to the curriculum. We did Scotland and learned by rote the names of islands and bays, etc. One group came out and took turns pointing these out on the map of Scotland, while another row recited their names. Neither Ayrshire nor Kilmarnock received any special treatment. History began with Wallace and Bruce, and this period was done carefully, but after 1328 we missed the history of Scotland until we had the reign of Mary Queen of Scots in detail. In addition to nouns and verbs picked out by the pupil from the reading lesson, pronouns and adjectives were added and simple analysis was begun - subject and predicate. For recitation we learned about 80 lines of the "Ballad of Chevy Chase". Although we had to buy the full poem, the remainder of the poem was never even read in class. There was no piano in school, so we learned three songs from the sol-fa tune written on the blackboard. Arithmetic was the four rules⁸, long division and multiplication by hundred and thousands, LSD⁹ was begun with addition and subtraction. Copy writing work was three times weekly, and dictation in ink was begun on special copies with German ruling¹⁰. H.M.I. again arrived for a week in early November and examined each class: no pupils were retarded this year.

Standard IV. In Arithmetic we finished the tables of weight, length, capacity and square measure, and were introduced to fractions in mental arithmetic. There were two dictations every week in ink. History was the Stuart kings, Geography was England. Ireland we had a look at, but never learned all the names as in England and Scotland. Recitation was from the "Lady of the Lake" - prescribed lines as before, and again we never read the rest of the poem in class. Grammar was still stressed, analysis was more detailed and parsing of nouns introduced. Singing as before. Boys only had drawing from 9 to 9.45 while girls were having sewing and knitting.

Standard V. Arithmetic this year tackled fractions, both vulgar and decimal, and Ratio - 'proportion' in these days - was begun. Poetry this year was Gray's "Elegy" which we analyzed and parsed, but never read the whole poem in class. Europe was done in Geography, with a look at Canada and Australia. History was from George I to George IV. We had 'drill' in the playground on fine days. H.M.I. arrived in November again, and this year arithmetic was done on our slate and copied in ink. Composition had been introduced with the "Narrative": the teacher read a short story to the class and the pupils retold this story in ink on a copy book.

The pupils were now 11 years old at least and some who had been 'retarded' were 13. In those days pupils who wished to leave school could do so if H.M.I. considered they had reached the required standard. In addition, any 13-year-old was also allowed to leave school. There never was a big exodus in Grammar School at this stage, and in my day as a pupil and later as a pupil teacher I never knew of any pupil in Grammar who could not (read) fluently by Standard V. 'Retardation' and small reading groups at earlier years had seen to this. Spelling was another matter: bad spellers did much transcription and writing out spelling between 4 and 4.30 p.m.

Standard VI. This class was taken by Mr. Boyd, the First Assistant. By this time the arithmetic was so proficient that we finished vulgar fractions - complex and compound; we also finished proportion and simple interest. Decimals were completed and we did a little decimal money (sic). Geography covered Asia and Africa, History the Victorian period. Our reader was Shakespeare's "Merchant of

Venice” and our repetition was taken from the play. For composition, original essays on simple subjects were now required. The girls had fancy sewing (cushions, cosies, etc.) added to the elaborate white seams and the socks and stockings knitted in these last two years.

The piano. A piano had been bought for infants (ground floor) and as a piano now also appeared upstairs musical drill was introduced. Dumb-bells, barbells, Indian clubs were used to music, normally played by one of the pupil-teachers. Singing was now a pleasure, and the Exhibition of Work and Prize-giving in June was now enriched by displays of physical exercises to music.

At the close of Standard VI many pupils left school, but in my class about a dozen pupils proceeded to join Standard Ex VI in The Academy. Four of the girls became teachers and two were typists, three boys went into the Civil Service and one became a banker and another a cashier. Many boys went into engineering, while the girls of the Grammar favoured dress-making and shop assistants in those days - 1894.

Notes

- 4 The school log book records that in e.g. 1881 “124 applications for admission refused” and in 1886 “the premises only contain space for 317 children at 10 sq. feet per child”. In 1887 “classes removed to the Corporation Halls” (now part of the Grand Hall complex) to enable extensions to be carried out. McKay (edition of 1880) describes Grammar as “what may be termed a middle class school”, yet the school inspectors’ report which was recorded in the log book of 1882 stated, “to teach an average of 376 in two rooms is very un-satisfactory”. One wonders what the less than middle class schools were like. The 1887 extension enlarged the school but the roll also increased: a large new area of prosperous houses was being built around Dundonald Road (though many of these children would probably be going to the fee-paying Academy). In December 1898, 821 pupils attended Grammar and the roll would have been even greater as truancy was by no means unknown and constant epidemics brought down attendances (one of Miss Maclarty’s own brothers died of diphtheria). And yet by 1901 the inspectors’ report was “this is a very fine example of a well-organized, well-taught and thoroughly efficient school”.
- 5 Lindsay was headmaster from 1878 (when the School Board acquired the Free, or “Ragged”, School in Dundonald Road, enlarged it and designated it the “Grammar School”) till his death in 1895. A contemporary of Miss Maclarty, Mr. John Paul, described him as “a sound Headmaster, though very indrawn and friendless”. He had “never known him to speak to a pupil except on school matters or recognize a pupil outside the classroom, he just did not see you”. Mr. Paul remembers the Grammar in his day as “a place to be proud of, clean walls, unmarked desks, everything spick and span, uncluttered playgrounds, clean lavatories, ONE block of sandstone where you sharpened your slate pencil (just above the tap near the stair door), the pupils took good care of the place”.
- 6 Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Schools. When the School Board system started, inspection by the parish was abolished and was replaced by government inspection. In the Grammar, two or three inspectors came for a week every year in November. They reported on the school in general and examined each child individually. On their reports depended the size of grant allocated to the school - a failure meant no grant for that child, but for each child earning full marks an extra 6d. (21/2p) was allocated, and this the Grammar prided itself on earning. However, to reach this standard, large numbers of children were kept back, or ‘retarded’, each year till sufficiently proficient in reading, writing and arithmetic, and on the day of examination some children were even requested by the school to be absent. Another disadvantage was that the school concentrated on teaching those subjects that were grant-earning. During inspection week, the H.M.I. were entertained royally to lunch by the Headmaster - Annie remembers as a Pupil-Teacher clearing away the whisky bottles!
- 7 The Modulator was a large piece of American cloth, hooked over the blackboard, on which were printed the sol-fa name: to these the teacher pointed as the children sang.
- 8 The four Rules were “divide, multiply, subtract, cross down next figure”, i.e. the method of long division.

9 i.e., working with money in pounds (Librae), shillings (Solidi) and pence (Denarii) - the old coinage.

10 German ruling was the four horizontal lines on a copybook which determined the required style of handwriting. Most letters had to fit neatly between, and touching, the two middle lines: tall letters (b, h, k, etc.) had to reach up to the top line and long ones (g, y, p, etc.) down to the bottom one. "Those were the days of marvellous writing", Miss Maclarty recalls, "and woe betide you if you did not touch the lines."

THE WIND OF CHANGE

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL FROM 1895 - 1905

In 1895 Grammar School population was bursting at the seams, so the School Board decided to enlarge the school again, and five new rooms in the new wing were added to the old building. When the extension was finished around 1897 there were now 14 classrooms and one new feature for a primary school - a fully equipped kitchen for cookery and laundry.

Mr. John Lindsay lived to see the children occupying the new rooms; his daughter, Miss Mary Lindsay, L.L.A. - a special Froebel Certificate from the London Institute - was installed as Infants' Mistress - a new appointment under Kilmarnock School Board. Miss Smith still drew salary as a Headmistress, responsible for the sewing of the whole school, but was now only in charge of Standard I. Mr. Lindsay had a chill and died shortly after the addition was opened. His successor was Mr. David Murray¹¹, MA, BSc, a teacher of Mathematics in the Academy; a younger man, he made many changes. He was a keen Glenfield Rambler, so nature knowledge now appeared for every stage. Girls were also introduced to drawing (formerly they sewed while the boys had drawing), cardboard modelling and designing with coloured paper was now added to the programme for boys.

Formerly no class teacher in Grammar except the male First Assistant administered corporal punishment. Mr. Lindsay went round the school daily from 3 to 4 pm and dealt with the delinquents himself. Now each certificated¹² teacher was responsible for her own corporal punishment - however that did not mean less punishment but more.

Other changes were on the way. Mr. Lindsay had been fully responsible for the education of his pupil teachers and his practice was to choose those youngsters from the prizewinners in the highest Standard, but this practice ended just before his death. Pupil teachers were to have regulated hours and attend classes in the Academy for French, German, Maths, Science and Art. Monitors chosen by individual headmasters were abolished, and intending pupil teachers at age 14 sat a common examination set by an outside examiner. In my day the examiner was Dr. McNaught. Pupil teachers had also to be 14 years of age, but the agreement was not signed on the 14th birthday - the aspiring pupil had to be 14 years at the end of the school year, in the school which chose her, e.g. my birthday was 25th December and the school year ended on 31st October. There were no exceptions so I was nearly 15 years old when my father signed a 4-year indenture form for me. Pupil teachers were paid at the rate of £12 for the first year, £15, £17.10 shillings, then £20 in the last year.

There were six or seven pupil teachers in Grammar School in my time; we taught from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., mostly in the first three classes, e.g. Miss Lindsay was in charge of about 110 beginners in two rooms - she was the only certificated teacher in the department. Her assistants were one ex-pupil

teacher, one pupil teacher in her 3rd year, one pupil teacher in her 2nd year, and me, beginner. Miss Smith in the second year (then Standard I) had two pupil teachers to assist her with 90 to 100 pupils (6-7 years of age). The next year, Standard II had one certificated assistant and again two pupil teachers. Standards above that had usually one certificated teacher and one ex-pupil teacher until Standard V when there were two certificated assistant teachers - one of these was a male as, in Mr. Murray's time, the organization after Standard I was one boys' class and one girls' at every stage until Standard VI - by that time the numbers had dropped. Retardation was responsible for some of this, but even in these days pupils could still leave at 11 years of age provided they had reached a certain standard set by H.M.I.; and, of course, 12 years of age was the average leaving age until Supplementary Classes¹³ were instituted around 1904 when the age was raised to 14 years. After that, no pupil left at Standard V.

In January 1905 the staff and pupils of Grammar School went to Loanhead. The intention of the School Board was that the new school would be the Grammar School, but the Department held that the name belonged to the building not to the pupils, a rule which does not now hold.

Netherton School, a small school¹⁴ and one of the oldest in the town, closed, and Mr. Lang its Headmaster, his staff and pupils were moved to Grammar and the school had a bad time.¹⁵ In those days there were no areas as we know them so when parents fell out with any school they just moved their children to a new school. As Grammar had plenty of room, all the town's difficult pupils congregated there and Grammar fell on bad days. Happily, after the 1919 War a new era began for Grammar and by 1927 it was again on the map as one of the good schools of Kilmarnock.

(Miss Maclarty appears to have left Grammar School in 1902 to complete her training and teach elsewhere - including for a time among her old colleagues in the new Loanhead. But she returned for a further period, 1919-28. During the war years the Log Books record that from December 1914 to June 1915 Grammar children received instruction only from 1 to 5 pm and that was in Bentinck School (whose pupils previously were taught in the morning) because Grammar had to be vacated for "Military Purpose" - one wonders what it was. There are notes of the deaths in action of staff and their relations - and in 1917 "the pupils collected 400 eggs in the last two days for wounded soldiers". In the great 'flu epidemic of 1918 all the Elementary Schools were closed for a month because so many pupils and staff were ill.)

Notes

- 11 David Murray was Headmaster from 1895 to 1904, when he was appointed Rector of Kilmarnock Academy. McKay describes him as a "singularly cultured and loveable personality". Mr John Paul, a contemporary of Miss Maclarty, remembers the contrast with his predecessor - "the kindly eye instead of a stare, the pleasant voice instead of the staccato 'yelp'. the 'good morning all' with his shadow of a smile... We had got a scholar and a gentleman as a headmaster."
- 12 David Murray aimed at getting rid of ex-Pupil Teachers and having none but qualified teachers who had been to college or university.
- 13 Supplementary Classes were for those children who had completed Standard V and who were not yet 14 and of an age to leave, but did not want to move on to further education at Academy level.
- 14 At the time of the move, 705 children and 22 staff (this obviously included Pupil Teachers) left the Grammar buildings, and 416 children and 10 staff from the Netherton moved in.
- 15 The altered atmosphere of the school is obvious in the Log Books:-
 - 1909 - a truant-player in III sentenced to four years in a training ship in Sheriff Court today.
 - 1912 - necessitous and poor children were today supplied with cocoa and bread and butter.
 - 1916 - many children still barefooted.

MISS MACLARTY'S SECOND PERIOD IN GRAMMAR

1919 - 1928

In March 1919 Mr David Yuille¹⁶ from the Academy was appointed Headmaster, Mr. John Mackintosh from Bentinck First Assistant and Miss Maclarty as teacher of Supplementary Classes. The new janitor had been a sergeant with Major Yuille in Gallipoli¹⁷ and had worked before that in the Glenfield¹⁸. The burning question was the cold school. I could confirm that the poor heating had gone on since 1907 at least¹⁹. Graphs (daily) were now kept; these were presented to the Master of Works in the Country Buildings who examined the furnace, etc. He called in a heating expert from Glasgow and it was discovered that when the new wing was added round 1897 two pipes from the boiler were in the wrong place and no janitor could ever produce heat. During the summer holidays the fault was corrected and Grammar became again a warm school.

Major Yuille became the first teachers' representative on the first School Management Committee and one of his first enterprises was to get an extra School Board Officer and to set about defining an area system for enrolment of pupils. The town had grown, the streets were busier and he found children from High School in Grammar School and pupils crossing the main streets from west to north to enrol in Loanhead. In addition, pupils from rural areas were sometimes walking two miles in the morning, back at 4 pm, and at large during the dinner hour; no school meals in these days²⁰. Areas were drawn out for each school; this made school journeys safer and provided a better distribution of pupils. In addition, parents with a grievance had now to settle with the school instead of taking their children to another school. This benefited Grammar as it had become a kind of refuge for difficult personalities among parents.

The new headmaster then set about organizing the school. The Advanced Division was now replacing the old Supplementary Classes. At this date, 1919, the 12-14 (years old) children in Grammar School had never had cooking, laundry, dressmaking, woodwork and science as in the other schools in the town. The boys now went to Hamilton School ²¹ for woodwork, the girls went there for cookery, etc. One vacant room on the ground floor was fitted out for science teaching, and a B.Sc. to teach this subject was added to the staff. This new science room also relieved congestion of classes from other primary schools in the Academy²². A teacher of dressmaking and sewing was appointed, and a visiting teacher of Physical Exercise was added to the staff.

The two Supplementary Classes were in 1919 one for boys and one for girls, all ages and stages. The 12+ pupils who qualified²³ were now housed in the new wing in two stages - first and second year. Mr. David Yuille (jun.) started a group of Boy Scouts, and Miss McGregor, visiting teacher of drill, etc., started Brownies. A new era had begun.

Major Yuille went to Bentinck School (1925) and was replaced by Mr. George Brown, M.A., who carried on the good work. The Advanced Division was now organized on a subject basis. One teacher was responsible for Arithmetic and Mathematics, etc., while another teacher had English and History. Good pupils were qualifying earlier and, although pupils still left on reaching their 14th birthday, the Advanced Division soon required three permanent teachers: in addition, there were visiting teachers of special subjects. The school football team and the girls' netball team began to compete for the cups and prizes at the school. In my last year²⁴ in Grammar School we presented pupils for the Advanced

Certificate - 3 years' course - the first primary in the town to do this. We had six passes out of six presentations. It was difficult to persuade some good pupils to put in the extra weeks after their fourteenth birthday, so the third year grew less as the session advanced. In that same year the Grammar School boys won the Kilmarnock Cup in the Schools Football Competition. David Richardson the goal-keeper was chosen to be the goalkeeper for the Kilmarnock Team which played in the Ayrshire competition, and was again goalkeeper for Ayrshire later in the County Championship match at Ibrox Park. The girls in the Advanced Division also won a prize for their dancing at the Annual Musical Festival in Ayr. Grammar School had again taken its place as one of the Kilmarnock's first-class primary schools.

Notes

16 Mr. John Paul, a contemporary of Miss Maclarty, was taught by Mr. Yuille at the Academy and describes him as "a teacher of great skill, incapable of laziness, meanness or spite When I went into teaching I had the benefit of having learned from Yuille the value of teaching the interesting bit more than is in the textbook, and that good discipline includes patience and bans impatience."

17 A battle front of the First World War.

18 Glenfield & Kennedy, hydraulic engineers, Kilmarnock.

19 The Log Book has an entry for 14th January 1913, "Average heat in Infant Department 43(" - though there were other reasons than the boiler for poor heating. An entry for 12th January 1912 reads, "For want of coal, pipes were cold and the school starving", and for 8th March 1912, "Owing to coal strike, school without other heat than from lighted gas jets for two days". The gas would normally have been for lighting not heating and very inappropriate for the latter. No school closures because of cold in those days!

20 Meals were provided in exceptional circumstances. April 18th, 22nd and 23rd in the Log Book of 1921 read: "Free midday meals commenced for children in necessitous circumstances on account of the miners' strike" - "Number fed 145-155" - "Feeding continued Saturday and Sunday".

21 The site on corner of Woodstock Street and North Hamilton Street, which now holds Woodstock School and the Child Guidance Centre, held first Kilmarnock Academy (before the present Academy was built) and then Hamilton School: this later became Grange School but was pulled down when the present Grange was built.

22 It is hard to know what Miss Maclarty means here; perhaps someone can elucidate.

23 - qualified but did not wish to go on to the Academy.

24 i.e. 1928. In the previous year, 1927, the Log Book records that the Teachers' Committee "agreed to grant Miss Maclarty leaves of absence necessary to carry out her duties as President of E.I.S.". The Grammar had as much reason to be proud of her as she was of it.

EARLY DAYS IN THE A.1 BUS SERVICE

by

Charles Hannah

The A.1 Bus Service, Ayrshire Bus Owners Association, was formed in 1925. However, it did not commence operations as such until Easter 1926. Prior to the formation of the A.1 Service, bus services had been operated between Irvine and Kilmarnock by a group of people who owned their buses and ran a 15-minute service. The same operation was carried out between Irvine and Ardrossan by a group of bus owners who resided in that area. Passengers wishing to travel on past Irvine had to change buses, although at this time the Scottish Transport bus ran direct between Kilmarnock and Ardrossan.

Before the A.1 Service was formed, the buses for Kilmarnock had their Irvine stance outside what is now the entrance to the Caledonian Hall. At that time, Alex Mathieson had a cycle shop there. The buses for Ardrossan had their stance directly across the street. A number of owners from both local groups came together and decided to form what could be termed a co-operative of bus owners. Thus the A.1 Service came into existence.

This is a list of Founder Members and members during the very earliest days of the A.1 Service. A large number of members have disappeared either through financial difficulties, selling out or the original members dying and their heirs giving up the business.

KILMARNOCK

A. Dykes	Darvel
Young Bros.	Galston
J. Douglas	Hurlford
E. Ferguson	“
J. Greenway	Kilmarnock
H. & J. Carlin	Crosshouse
H & H	“
W. Graham	“
Mrs Hosie	Springside
J. Hunter	“
T. Hunter	“
A. Hunter	“
J. Drysdale	Dreghorn
R. Hosie	“

ARDROSSAN

R. Meney	Kilwinning
J. McMenemy	“
W. Paterson	“
E. Docherty	Stevenston
Cowie Bros.	“
John. Stewart	“
W. Stewart	“
J. Stewart	Saltcoats
J. Murray	“
D. McGregor	“
Mrs Wilson	“
Mrs Reid	“
W. Roy	Ardrossan
J. Hogarth	“

W. Hill	Greenwood	J. Docherty	“
A. MacPhail	Irvine	C. Brennan	“
J. McIlroy	“		
R. Watson	“		
A. Hunter	“		

The owner-members of the new service came from a variety of backgrounds. Some were miners, some haulage contractors, shopkeepers, garage owners, motor mechanics, a number of housewives and even an undertaker.

The first office the A.1 Service had was in Chapel Lane, Irvine (popularly known as the Grip); this Lane was at the side of the King's Arms Hotel at Irvine Cross.

They spent nearly a year there before moving to more commodious premises in Eglinton Street, Irvine across the street from Irvine Burns Club. I worked in those offices for 14 months. Finally the office was moved to Parkhouse Road, Ardrossan, where a bus stance and a new office had been constructed on land purchased by the Association.

When the Kilmarnock to Ardrossan service was started, some buses could only run as far as Stevenston, as permits were required to operate in Saltcoats and Ardrossan. Drivers and conductors also had to be licensed in those towns. This was before the Road Traffic Act made licensing compulsory.

The first bus stance the A.1 had in Ardrossan was in a blacksmith's yard in Park Street, near the top of Glasgow Street. They then moved to a yard behind Hogarth's Garage at the top of Glasgow Street, but after a short stay there, they moved across to Bob McLean's garage, and finally to their present stance in Parkhouse Road. I think the reason for leaving the blacksmith's yard was because of the large number of punctures, due no doubt to horse shoe nails which were picked up in the yard.

The Kilmarnock bus stance was originally in Grange Place, later moved to John Dickie Street, outside the Laigh Kirk. On Sundays the buses had to move back to Grange Place, so as to avoid interference with the church services. For a short time the stance was at a garage up in Dean Street at Beansburn, but was not a success as it was too far from the town centre, so it was moved back to the Laigh Kirk.

The buses for Darvel and Cumnock had their stances in Sturrock Street, across from The Salvation Army Citadel. The service was run by a system of boards. A certain number of buses were required each day to operate the service, so sheets were made out allocating certain runs and at the same time allowing time for meals and yet enabling the bus crew to finish within a certain time limit. These sheets were then pasted on to boards and issued to the bus crews. The buses received a different board each week and a rest day was allowed each week. When I say 'rest day' I exaggerate a bit, as the conductor had to wash the bus, inside as well as outside, then grease it, and the driver was responsible for doing running repairs and generally keeping the bus in order.

At this time we worked every Saturday and almost every Sunday, with no time off at Christmas or New Year. The hours were long; a workers' run in the morning before we started service runs. As each owner was allowed only two buses on the service, he was given one board for an early shift and one for a late shift, so that a bus was always available for workers' runs morning and evenings.

On weekdays' service, a bus ran every seven minutes with the last bus leaving the terminus at 11 p.m. On Saturdays, a bus every five minutes with the last bus leaving at midnight. On Sundays, buses ran a ten minute service.

On Saturdays, all buses were on the service (that is, except those on private hire) and there were no boards; buses just ran in rotation every five minutes.

In wintertime, especially when the football season was on and the buses were busy running to Rugby Park, buses were sent from Kilmarnock to turn on the road at Irvine, Dreghorn, Springside, Crosshouse or wherever required, to uplift passengers who were unable to board the service buses which were usually full up.

For two years the main road between Dreghorn and Irvine was closed, owing to a dispute over the building of a replacement bridge over the Rivert Annick on the outskirts of Irvine. While this dispute dragged on, all traffic between Dreghorn and Irvine had to turn off at Dreghorn Brae Head, go downhill and over the railway crossing and turn left at Stanecastle for Irvine.

Before the A.1 Service was formed, the buses were very antiquated, some being of the charabanc type, with each row of seats having its own door, but most buses were entered by a door in the rear with seats along each side, facing inwards, similar to a railway compartment.

Most of the buses had canvas side-curtains which could be rolled up in good weather, and the lighting was supplied by a carbide bicycle lamp fixed behind the driver's compartment. I have always remembered the man who supplied the carbide for the lamps. He stayed in the Vennel in Irvine and that was where we went to buy the carbide.

The conductor (in those days a "bus boy") was equipped with a money bag and a whistle. This whistle was a very important part of the bus boy's equipment, as it was used to relay signals to the driver. One blast meant stop, two blasts for start, three blasts meant another vehicle wished to overtake, while four blasts meant that the enemy - the opposition bus - had been sighted behind us. The opposition at that time was the Scottish Transport.

There was a lot of rivalry between the drivers of the A.1 Service and the Scottish Transport drivers. I remember two occasions when opposing drivers came to blows. One time was outside the railway station at Saltcoats and the other time at Crosshouse.

At the start of the A.1 Service, the old buses had been replaced with new single deck vehicles. There were numerous makes among them - Albion, Lancia, Rec, Dodge, Ford, De Dion Bouton, Chevrolet, G.M.C., to name some of them - and they were all 14 or 20 seaters.

The A.1 Service branched out and started the Irvine, Troon and Ayr route. The Boswell Place stance in Ayr was where the Post Office now stands, nearly across from Tesco. This service eventually broke away and formed the A.A. Service.

Another service was started between Saltcoats and Largs, and later some owners broke away and formed the Clyde Coast Service. A service was started between Kilmarnock and Cumnock, with the bus stance at Cumnock Square.

Another service was started between Kilmarnock and Darvel, with the stance at Hastings Square, Darvel. Both these services failed because the bus owners from the Adrossan end refused to operate on these routes. Another service which had a very short life was that between Kilmarnock and Ayr.

One service which is still going strong is the local service which runs between Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Stevenston and Ardeer.

I conducted the first bus on the Irvine, Troon and Ayr route. The Irvine stance was down at the foot of the Bridgegate, now part of the new shopping centre, and I remember when we left Troon for Ayr and reached the road junction at Alton Farm, Southwood, we took the wrong road and were making back towards Troon when a passenger put us on the correct road. The tramcars ran between Ayr and Prestwick at this time, and we had many tussles with them, especially at a point in Prestwick where there was a loop line to enable the tramcars to pass. Great care had to be taken here as there was no room to overtake at this point and some of the tramcar drivers increased speed when being overtaken and tried to jam the bus against a pole.

Each owner had his personal code letter on his return tickets. At this time it was the old bell punch type which punched a hole in the ticket. Every week he returned to the central office the return tickets collected on his buses. The value of the tickets he had collected was credited against those issued by him and returned by other owners, then cash adjustment was made as required.

An ever-present hazard for a bus conductor at this time was overloading the bus. The buses were subject to the Railways Act which banned overcrowding. On one occasion my bus was stopped at Troon Cross and I was charged with having 30 passengers on a 20-seater bus. I was fined 10/- at Irvine Burgh Court, August 1928. I may say I have never heard of a railway guard being charged with overcrowding his train.

Being fined 10/- (50 pence) may seem a trifle nowadays, but at that time my wages were 14/- (70 pence) per week, so it really was a hefty fine - over 70% of my weekly wage.

In the early days the driver and conductor had a sideline in revenue. It was quite common at that time to send parcels or letters by bus, and the fee was divided between driver and conductor. A favourite of mine was John Howie, who had a wholesale confectioners business in the Doura in Kilwinning. When I had to deliver a parcel for John, in addition to the fee I was given a large bag of mixed sweets.

I enjoyed my time on the buses. Looking back, the people seem to have been more friendly, although at this time we could be pestered by drunk men. He would be warned regarding his language and general conduct, and, if he still persisted in annoying people on the bus, the bus was stopped and he was made to get off. That was one thing that was not tolerated in those days, foul language.

Whiles I think back on conditions during my time on the buses. When I first started as a schoolboy there were no windscreen wipers. The windscreen was in sections so that the driver could open part to get a clear view in inclement weather. At other times a raw potato would be cut and rubbed on the outside of the windscreen which allowed a better view for the driver. Then came a wiper which was operated by hand, to be followed with one which was suction-operated by being connected to the engine exhaust manifold. Now we have electric wipers with slow, fast and intermittent wipe.

Most of the old buses had carbide headlamps (beautiful brass lamps) while a few had electric lamps which were not very reliable.

The brakes were rod operated and never to be relied upon, but then speeds were very modest compared to nowadays. It was a common occurrence when driving at night to come upon a farm cart which had no lights showing, so you can appreciate that a sharp lookout was essential.

The road surfaces were very primitive, but then again traffic was very sparse compared with modern conditions, and it was a common sight to see a roadman sitting in one of the roadside enclosures breaking stones with which to repair the stretch of road which was his responsibility, and, as some of the old buses were fitted with solid types, you can understand that comfort was not of high quality.

The driver always had to keep a sharp lookout for the police speed trap. This applied equally to car and lorry drivers. It operated as follows, with three or four policemen, some in plain clothes, some in uniform. A straight part of the road was essential - a policeman at the start, one at the end of a given distance, and one or two uniformed men a short distance farther on. The method used was, on the vehicle passing the first man a signal was made, such as a hankie being waved, whereupon the second man started a stop watch. If the vehicle passed the second man within a certain time, the speed limit had been exceeded and a signal was made which instructed the uniformed officer to stop the vehicle and charge the driver.

May I just add that at this time petrol was 10d. or 4p per gallon, and was delivered in 2-gallon cans, this being before petrol pumps were installed.

In its early years the A.1 Service was operated on a very personal basis. In a great many instances the bus was driven by the owner and conducted by a son or a daughter. If this was not the case, then the persons employed were usually immediate family relatives.

When one looks back at some of the people employed, it is then realised how regulations have been imposed over the years; in very many cases they were long overdue.

There were no inspections to ensure the buses were in roadworthy condition, but in all fairness it must be said that the owners and drivers took a pride in their vehicles and endeavoured to maintain them in first class condition. There were no medical checks on the drivers or conductors.

I remember one driver in particular, Hugh Carlin of H. & J. Carlin, Crosshouse. Wee Hughie, as he was universally known, was a cripple, denied the use of his legs and totally dependent on a pair of crutches. To this day I am unable to understand how he was able to drive a bus in such a physical condition.

One remembers old Jimmy Drysdale of Dreghorn who occasionally took his bus off the service in order to transport a coffin to where there had been a death.

If a bus was taken for a special run somewhere, invariably the conductor went with it, to be treated as one of the party.

Buses were in demand for juvenile and junior football team supporters and this was always a welcome break away from work and a chance to see a football match.

On the other hand, we always helped elderly people and children to enter or leave the bus, helped with luggage, and always made sure no-one was left behind at a bus stop.

I conducted the first bus to show the A.1 sign. This sign was a large transfer which was fixed to the windscreen of the bus. The sign was a large red circle with a white A.1. The bus, a Dodge, was owned by Wm. Graham of Crosshouse who was also the first President of the A.1 Service.

Before the A.1 started, I was one of a number of boys who used to conduct buses after school hours. I was only 11 years of age when I started on the buses and had my first driving licence when only 16 years of age, and was driving a bus on the Darvel route at that age. At this time, an ordinary driving licence entitled you to drive any type of vehicle. I faked my age by a year to get a licence.

The Darvel route was one of the cheapest bus runs in the country: Kilmarnock to Hurlford, 3d. R.; Galson, 5d. R.; Newmilns, 7d. R.; Darvel, 9d. R.; and the return fare between each place was 3d. Workers' fare between each place was 1d. Kilmarnock to Crosshouse was 4d. R, Kilmarnock to Irvine, 11d. Workers' fares were half rate. Just consider the present fare between Crosshouse and Kilmarnock - 80p R. (16/-) - 48 times what it used to be. More than my weekly wage was.

A fashion in the early days was to paint names on the sides of the buses. Mrs. Reid had "Bonnie Doon", J. Drysdale had "Highland Mary", and H. & H. had "Wee Scottie" and "Royal Scot".

In the early days of the A.1 Service, before bus stops were erected, it was usual for passengers to ask you to stop at a point nearest their homes. Thus in Springside, we had the line gates, the Croft Lyons Road End, Six Rows, Stewart's Cottage, this end of the Black Square, the middle and the far end. So that in Springside we had eight stops in each direction.

In Glasgow Street, Ardrossan, you were given the house number at which to stop. If we had too many stops we sometimes became cheeky and asked them which room it was so that we could take them right up to it.

Things are so different nowadays with orderly queues at the bus stops. In the early days it was mostly a case of the strongest got on the bus. I remember I was once warned by the Saltcoats Station, passengers were waiting to go to a number of different destinations, such as Ardeer, Glasgow and Ayr, as well as Kilmarnock. So I got into the habit of shouting - Stevenston, Kilwinning, Irvine and Kilmarnock. This was to let the passengers know our destination, but it would appear that the rival bus company inspector had reported me. I was warned to stop, or my licence would be revoked.

During the general strike of 1926 we were forced to take our buses off the road under threat of violence. I remember we were travelling towards Ardrossan when, at the South West Station at Kilwinning, we met a bus from the Ardrossan end. We swapped passengers, turned to go home to put the bus in the garage, but when we came to Springside we were stopped at Stewart's Cottage by a crowd of men who threatened to smash up the bus. Wm. Graham, the driver and also the owner, tried to reason with them, telling them he was going home to the garage at Crosshouse. He also reminded them that, only a few months earlier, he had been working beside them in the pits. Things looked very ugly, but just then a Scottish Transport bus appeared, making for Ardrossan. Attempts were made to stop it, but the bus carried on, and what has remained vividly in my memory since is a picture of a man I knew well, stooping to pick up a large stone which he threw at the bus. The stone smashed a window at which was seated a woman with a child in her arms. The bus didn't stop, so I don't know if the woman or child received any injuries. I still remember who was driving that bus - his name was Willie Rae and he came from the Wood Wynd, Kilwinning. Eventually we managed to slip away home.

I also spent two summers, 1937 and 1939, as a bus driver and conductor in Arran. I stayed in Whiting Bay and was on the service run between Whiting Bay, Lamlash and Brodick. In Arran at this time the driver also acted as conductor (one-man buses). We also took part in mystery tours round the Island and, when required, taxi service to and from steamers. The firm I worked for was A.C. Lennox & Sons, with garages in Whiting Bay and Lamlash. The Boss, old Pa Lennox, was a real character, who also owned two hotels in Whiting Bay. When summer came he vacated his large room and moved into a smaller room; then, when the visitors' season was over, all his belongings were moved back into the large room. One year, he had two drivers, local men, Jimmy Reid from Whiting Bay and Hughie MacKenzie from King's Cross, to transfer his own and other belongings for him, and they were both very fond of a dram. In the course of moving the articles, they came across a whisky bottle more than half full. This was too good a chance to miss, so one told the other to keep a lookout for old Pa while he would take a quick drink. Out came the cork, up went the bottle, a quick gulp and they quickly found out that old Pa was smarter than they were - the bottle contained not whisky but petrol. Old Pa knew his men.

THE KILMARNOCK ABSTAINERS' UNION

by

Barbara Graham

The Abstainers' Temperance Union was established in Kilmarnock in January 1855. The evidence for this date of establishment comes from notes in the sole surviving minute book of the Kilmarnock Abstainers' Union¹, which covers the period from March 1867 to January 1874. An entry in the "Kilmarnock Journal" for 4th January 1855, however, suggests that the Society had been active at least during the previous year. This article also indicates the activities of the Society:-

"A Good Movement

The Abstainers of Kilmarnock have for some time carried on a Saturday evening meeting, which we cannot but think must have been attended with good results. The place of gathering is Mr Gunnyon's Schoolroom, East George Street. The early part of the evening is intended more especially for the juveniles, and the later part of the evening for older abstainers. First, a short lecture is delivered on some popular or interesting subject by some working man, previously asked to do so, and afterwards its merits, arguments and conclusions are discussed, and applauded or combatted as may be. Then songs and stories go round until the bell chimes the tenth hour, and all the characteristics of an ordinary social party, excepting liquors, are thus enjoyed by the visitors. As 'mortal men' must have some stimulus or other, this arrangement is excellent, as it supplies that relaxation and excitement, which, if no such arrangement existed, would certainly be longed for and might be sought in other places even by an abstainer."

There is certainly ample evidence in the same edition of the "Kilmarnock Journal" of Kilmarnock citizens having sought stimulus elsewhere, often with disastrous consequences. Despite the fact that the Journal's editorial for 4 July 1855 remarked that at the recent Hogmanay celebrations "the number of cases of drunkenness were very limited", the evidence from court cases in other columns told a different story. Baillies Mack and Laughland found themselves dealing with offenders such as Allan Wyper, who had been "found lying in a drunk and disorderly condition - incapable of taking care of himself - in the streets on Wednesday night", for which he fined 2s. 6d., or five days' imprisonment. Drunkenness was often at the root of violent offences, as was the case with Arthur Matthews who had assaulted Thomas Weir, "labourer, an old man". The court report stated that, "the prisoner did not know whether he was guilty or not - having been drunk at the time." Similar cases were reported from other towns and villages in the area. There were, of course, many vested interests in drink, for in 1867 there were 140 licences granted in the burgh - 78 to taverns, 12 to inns and 50 to grocers.

Deep-rooted though this "pernicious evil" was in the town, there was undoubtedly amongst certain members of the community an equally strong movement afoot aimed at the dissemination of culture and "improving" activities. In the 8th December edition of the "Kilmarnock Journal" in the same year, 1855, there was an announcement by Arthibald McKay (author of the "History of Kilmarnock") to the effect that he had "purchased the entire Circulating Library, consisting of Two Thousand Five Hundred Volumes - which belonged to Mr James Millar, Bookseller". This was now open to the

public at 116 King Street from 9 am until 9 pm. The significance of this development appears in the second paragraph of the announcement:-

“With a view to render the Library more consonant with the improved taste of the present age, Mr McKay has been at pains to withdraw from the purchased stock some hundreds of volumes of a frivolous description; and having added various Standard Works on the subjects of History, Criticism, Biography, Travels, etc., he hopes to have so enriched the whole that it will be found one of the most select, as it is unquestionably one of the most extensive, Circulating Libraries in the County of Ayr.”

Implicit in this announcement was the assumption, shared by the prohibitionists, that some members of the community had been gifted with superior wisdom on moral issues, and that they had a sacred duty to act as censors or agents of enforcement in order to save the weaker brethren from their own folly. It was this sense of social responsibility which imparted to the abstainers the zeal and dedication which they undoubtedly displayed.

Kilmarnock Abstainers' Union

The temperance cause in Kilmarnock was further strengthened in December 1855 when various groups of like-minded people came together to form the Kilmarnock Abstainers' Union. According to the “Kilmarnock Journal” of 14th December 1855 this occurred at a meeting in Clerk's Lane Chapel (Evangelical Union Church) when Mr Barclay, banker, proposed, “That the Operative and Towns' Societies, with all abstainers who desire to do so, unite into one Society or Union, to work the cause more efficiently”. The Union's aim was total abstinence and its constitution declared that neither religious sectarian nor political differences amongst members should be allowed to stand in the way of the achievement of this end. A committee of 24 members was appointed to handle the membership subscriptions and to arrange a programme of lectures. Mr Andrew Barclay was appointed President, Mr William Hunter, Vice-President, Mr Ferguson, Treasurer, and Mr Alexander Brown, Secretary. Little did Alexander Brown realise on that night that his term of office in this capacity was to stretch out beyond two decades.

The story of the Kilmarnock Abstainers' Union becomes patchy between its establishment in 1855 and the spring of March 1867 when the only extant minute book began. From a note in the minute book, however, it appears that the Union moved to premises at 93 King Street, henceforth known as the Abstainers' Hall, in May 1863. By the summer of 1867, however, a search was being conducted for new premises in East George Street fell through as the asking price seemed poor value for money. By the autumn of 1867, however, the Union has succeeded in purchasing the Independent Church and Manse in Mill Lane for a sum in the region of £400 to £500. This was a financial strain and the sum of £400 was borrowed from Mr McColl at 4 1/2 per cent interest, with the buildings as security. The Society felt, however, that the suite of buildings thus acquired represented a better investment than did the East George Street property, and the intention was to draw in revenue from hiring out the larger and lesser halls and also from rent for the manse. The first committee meeting was held in the new hall on 14th September 1867 and the annual general meeting followed there two days later. Once again, the incorrigible A.P. Brown was confirmed as Secretary alongside James Little as President and James Lennox as Treasurer. Amongst the Committee were such well-known Kilmarnock businessmen as H. Tannahill, John and James Wishart and Alexander Lamont, with a sprinkling of juvenile representatives.

The assiduity of the Committee, particularly in the early period covered by the extant minute book, would put modern organisations to shame. Its meetings around the period 1867 to 1869 were at least

weekly in addition to which there were the weekend activities and Special Committee meetings convened before major events such as rallies and bazaars. Even Christmas Day brought no respite from Committee meetings in 1867. The aim was to keep up a barrage of activities so that the abstainers in all kinds of ways, not least through the personal efforts and ingenuity of Alexander Brown, as can be seen from the following minute of 18th September 1867:-

“The Secretary’s policy and efforts anent using mottoes advertising in the news columns and giving the ‘Standard’ a share of our printing were warmly approved and he was instructed to continue them at his discretion, as also he advertises all our notices in the ‘Standard’, ‘Herald’ and ‘Weekly News’.”

Special meetings were also advertised in a more public and time honoured way. Reference is made in the minutes² to announcements being made “by Drum and advertisement” and “by the Bellman”. The Union banner with its motto, “We seek to deliver our country from the thralldom of strong drink. Fellow countrymen help us. O God help us”, was also a means of literally flying the temperance flag at public rallies.

The right of assembly was a liberty held dearly by a generation which remembered not only the Chartist demonstrations of the 1830s and 1840s, but in some cases also the Radical rallies of the 1816-20 period. According to the minutes, there was controversy over this issue in the town because of the Police Commissioners’ desire to prevent disorder in public places. In June 1867 the Abstainers’ Union in conjunction with the Working Men’s and Reform League organisations held an open meeting “in the public park ... to agitate the right of holding meetings in the Cross, which some of the Police Commissioners were trying to stop”. At this meeting, it appears to have been decided to hold a further rally at the Cross itself, but thereafter the issue disappears from the minute book.

The reformers also maintained steady pressure upon the town’s magistrates on the issue of licensing control. This they did on one occasion by proposing that a petition be sent from the ministers of the town requesting a meeting to consider reducing the number of licences in the district. In 1869 the Union paid two supporters to gather names for a petition in favour of the Permissive Bill for voluntary local prohibition and this was duly dispatched to Parliament with “1313 signatures, including 13 Ministers and a good number of ladies”. The Committee was also quick to send a deputation to the Provost and the Magistrates when in 1870 there arose the proposed insult of a public house to be opened directly opposite the Abstainers’ Hall.

The concern of the reformers to work within the law and to press for further legislation was echoed in their approach to the orderly conduct of their own meetings, as can be seen in the Society’s bye-laws of 1865. Speakers were reminded that they must at all times address the chairman and not speak “more than thrice on the same subject without permission”. Perhaps the framers of the regulations had specific individuals in mind when they added that there were “No personalities to be allowed, and all to speak as kindly, pleasantly, charitably and forbearingly as possible”. Likewise, they expected a high standard of behaviour of those who hired their premises and on occasion they stipulated in the contract that no smoking should be allowed.

Social Activities

The main backbone of the Union’s activities was the weekend events. The format of these changed from time to time. Frequently there were Sabbath evening sermons, presumably in addition to those preached in churches. Attempts at Saturday evening meetings came and went with varying, but never spectacular degrees of success. The funding of these events was always a problem, and in January

1869 it was noted, "Artistes at the Saturday evening meetings to get no pay, but a treat at the close of the season". There was a realisation that Saturday night events should be enjoyable if they were to attract audiences and yet at the same time there was an awareness of the deadly serious purpose of the whole movement. The dilemma of emphasis is aptly summed up in the following minute of 14th February 1871:-

"Resolved that we have Free and Easy Entertainments on the Saturday Evenings commencing with a 4d. Soiree on Saturday, 25th February That we cause Members in future to come forward to the Saturday Meetings at 9 pm and publicly take the pledge and have the Union's preamble and admonitions read over them."

As part of the same effort to lighten the proceedings, a piano was purchased around the same time and an old organ was leased from Winton Place Evangelical Union Church on a year's trial basis. The latter, however, was returned after the year, having failed to pay its way, as it had cost £10 in maintenance, while "the amount realised from its use (by hire to renters of the hall) is just about as many shillings".

More regularly popular were the Saturday afternoon activities, which seem to have been of a more genuinely recreational nature. The idea of opening the hall on Saturday afternoons was to provide a venue for wholesome entertainments well away from the lure of public houses, which were the obvious counter-attraction on the half-holiday. The Committee tried its best to provide what the public wanted. In October 1868 the Entertainments Committee was authorised to purchase twelve yards of cloth for carpet bowls and to advertise in local papers for a second-hand "Bagatelle Board and Bowls". In 1872 the added attraction of a prize of five shillings' worth of temperance books was instituted for the winning team in a carpet bowls competition arranged amongst the town's four temperance lodges. An Ice Table was also purchased in 1871 for the popular game of "dry ice" or "black ice", which was an indoor equivalent of curling. Doubtless, a few good white shirts were ruined with the black lead from this device!

On the same principle of offering a haven from temptation on public holidays, the abstainers were ever eager to arrange special events for high days and holidays. In 1869 the Union decided to "erect the Tent for the sale of refreshments at the Cattle Market Fair at Ayr and Irvine Races". There was also discussion about "an exhibition of Fireworks at half profits with the artiste", but it is not clear from the minute book if this took place. The refreshment tent must have been successful, however, for it was decided to erect it again at the October Cheese Show. In the following year the Committee agreed "to open Hall free at Feeing Fairs, arrange the Music and Refreshments and request the patronage and aid of the Ayrshire Agricultural Association and the Provost and Magistrates". This proposal was evidently well received, for in April 1870 it was recorded that the Town Council had offered the use of the Butter Market for the Feeing Fair. Determined to make a success of this opportunity, the Union sent out circulars to farmers and, in anticipation of an influx, requested "Police to prevent obstruction of footpaths".

The supreme examples of holiday entertainment organised by the Kilmarnock Abstainers' Union were the bazaars and exhibitions which were held at Ne'erday in 1867 in the Corn Exchange and in 1868 and 1869 in the Abstainers' Hall. The amount of effort which went into the preparation of these events was prodigious and perhaps that is one reason why the practice seems to have ceased in the 1870s. Details of the first of these events are scanty, but the bazaars held in the hall in the two following years can be savoured through the minute book.

The 1868 exhibition was obviously extensive and it contained such curiosities as “a Bonnet 100 year old (a) Lincoln Correspondence Book³ (and) Printing and Lithographic Presses per Mr Guthrie” (editor of the ‘Kilmarnock Herald’). Messrs McLelland and Reid were charged with bringing in a supply of toys, and there was also to be “a Grotto with a Bullfinch in it” at no extra charge. Enquiry was also made about obtaining a velocipede⁴ from Glasgow. An indication of the range of occupations of Union members is apparent from the arrangements which were made for the judging of certain classes of exhibits. Mauchline box work was to be judged by Messrs McLelland and Aitken, while the latter (or his namesake?) together with an unnamed colleague were to choose the Haddow of Glasgow for the judging of winceys, while Messrs Brown and Laurie were to judge photographic exhibits. Similar responsibilities were also allocated for bookbinding (Mr McKie), book printing (Messrs Galloway and Fulton), cabinetwork (Messrs Hood, Reid and Cunningham), engines and mechanical exhibits (Messrs MacCulloch, John Barclay and James Blackwood) and statuary (Mr Black). Obviously, this was a very high class exhibition and it is to be hoped that the Captain of Police saw fit to use the complimentary family season ticket which was approved in the minutes.

It was difficult to improve upon the spectacle for the following year, but plans began as early as September 1869 when the Secretary noted a decision to “enquire as to Fulton’s Orrery⁵, Lime Lights and other extra attractions”. Other ambitious plans discussed in the minutes included asking Mr Bouverie, MP, to open the exhibition and to obtain “contributions from South Kensington Museum”. As late as 14th December it was “agreed to get three models from Yeovil”⁶ and to “write to Lanfine (near Darvel) or Newfield for a Tree and Shrubbery”. Perhaps the more ambitious of these ideas did not come to fruition, for the decision on 22nd December to “hire a Grotto from Mr Patrick for £5” plus his travelling expenses has the appearance of being a last-minute arrangement. It is to be hoped that the request to Mr Little “to furnish (a) camel for (the) fountain” referred to a beast of the stuffed variety!

Considering that these events lasted for several days, the burden of administration upon Union members was quite significant. The value of some of the exhibits was such that it was necessary in 1869 for “Mr Nairn with assistance of Volunteers to act as night watchman”. Perhaps the instruction to the Hallkeeper that before and during the exhibition all articles should be “dusted at least twice daily” led to a certain digging in of heels, for it was after the bazaar of 1868 that a motion was passed awarding the Halls Officer the sum of £13 per annum.

As always with such events, it was impossible for them to function without the assistance of the fair sex. A terse minute of 22nd December 1868 announced, “Ladies to be got for the stalls”. It is comforting to note that they and their male colleagues did at least receive some small reward as in January the Exhibitions Committee arranged “a soiree for the assistants and friends”.

Unrepresented though they were on the Abstainers’ Union Committee, ladies nonetheless also exhibited their usefulness as distributors of tracts on a door to door basis. Once engaged, it was difficult to break free of the commitment as Miss Weatherstone found to her cost when she submitted her resignation in May 1873 prior to her marriage. The Committee generously decided not to accept her resignation, but “to give her a recess till her honeymoon be over”. Possibly this is not what she had in mind! The same tenacity was displayed with other members, and at several points in the minute book arrangements were made for Committee members to “attend upon” departed brethren, presumably in order to reason with them and redeem them into the flock once more. Incoming clergymen were also considered fair game as can be seen from the minute of 17th August 1869 to the effect that “Messrs McBride and Robertson wait on the New Minister of St Andrews Free Church when appointed to ascertain how far he is willing to aid our cause”.

Those who devoted themselves to the juvenile side of the movement certainly worked hard, but this was seen as a vital activity. A sub-committee of the Kilmarnock Abstainers' Union was designated to keep under its wing the Band of Hope, an organisation for young people which had first been established at Leeds in 1847 and which had expanded rapidly. As with Saturday entertainments, however, there was a dilemma about how to attract young people to join the Band of Hope by offering recreational activities, while at the same time ensuring that the critical message of abstinence was conveyed to them. In a minute of 17th August 1869 it was agreed that "we should now organize our Juvenile Meetings on a plan something similar to Sabbath Schools - that the audiences might be more select and better benefitted". There was in this statement a tacit acknowledgement of the fact that the youngsters from the very bottom layer of society, who were most in need of a helping hand to save them from immorality, were not being encouraged to join the ranks alongside the better behaved children of "respectable abstainers". This situation was not peculiar to the Kilmarnock Union, but was a general feature of the Band of Hope nationally.⁷ Some of the activities in which the children were engaged are evident from the lists of prizes which were awarded. Apart from awards for good attendance and "meritorious conduct", prizes were given for committing verses to memory and for essay writing - certainly not activities associated with street urchins. Evangelism was also encouraged and rewards were given to children who managed to introduce six new members.

Relations with other organisations

Apart from the Band of Hope, many other organisations appear to have used the Abstainers' Hall at rates of payment within the Committee's discretion. The Foundry Boys, for instance, were given a cheap let on Sunday afternoons, and similarly generous terms were arranged for various temperance lodges such as the Ark of Safety, the Eldorado Lodge and, particularly, the Order of Good Templars, which arrived in Britain from America in 1868 and spread rapidly, and its sister Excelsior Lodge for females. The Baptist congregation under its pastor, the Reverend Edward Stobo, also used the hall while their new church was being built at Fowlds Street between 1869 and 1870. This relationship did not always run smoothly, however, and on at least one occasion Mr Stobo had to resort to a written complaint about the state of the hall after the Saturday evening entertainments. Nonetheless, fences were mended sufficiently for the Abstainers to offer a tea meeting on the occasion of Mr Stobo's emigration to Canada in October 1872.

For other activities of a more frivolous nature, the Committee felt justified in imposing a higher scale of charges. Thus it was decreed in 1870 that the rate for dancing classes should be five shillings per day or seven shillings and sixpence for both day and evening for either hall on 25/- for an "assembly" held in three rooms. On special occasions a term of hire could be extended beyond 10.30 pm at an extra charge of sixpence per half-hour. It was to be made quite clear to hirers, however, that "No irregularity (was) to be allowed on any account". To underline this fact in respect of one noxious habit, notices were prominently displayed to the effect that smoking was strictly prohibited.

Despite these lets, the hall was never a paying proposition, partly because of money spent on its maintenance. By the early 1870s the Committee was having to look to more radical means of solving its financial problems. In April 1872 the Committee decided to lease their whole premises and stock to the Good Templars for ten years on the understanding that the Union would "pay for our meetings on present Templar terms". The Templars wanted to drive a hard bargain, however, and asked for a lease for twenty years plus half of the profits of any future bazaars. Apparently this made the Abstainers think again and it appears that the Templars continued to pay rental to the Abstainers' Union.

A new solution was reached in 1873, however, when the Mill Lane premises were let to the School Board for a year for use by one branch of the Kay Schools at a charge of £30 for the large hall and the Committee room and £10 for the lesser hall on the understanding that “Damage to Forms and Fittings (were) to be made good by them”.

The minute book comes to an end in January 1874, although the last AGM of the Kilmarnock Abstainers’ Union to be recorded in the “Kilmarnock Standard” was held in November 1880. It is clear from the minute book, however, that the hey-day of the Society was over by 1873. The peak year for converts willing to sign the pledge in the period covered by the minute book was 1867 when 334 adult and 77 juvenile adherents were recorded, and in 1868 the figure for juveniles rose to one hundred. By 1871, the last year for which figures are recorded in the minute book, numbers had fallen to 110 adults and only 4 juveniles. Clearly, the arrival of the more vigorous Order of Good Templars was creating a rivalry for the same pool of temperance-minded citizens, although some keen individuals belonged to both organisations. By November 1873 the Committee of the Kilmarnock Abstainers’ Union had decided “to grant (the Good Templars) use of (the) Large Hall and our stock of entertainments and (our) library for a public house without the drink for Saturday afternoons and evenings”. Some of the drive had obviously gone out of the Abstainers’ Union and it was prepared to pass on the torch to other hands.

Notes

- 1 To be presented to the Dick Institute Reference Library.
- 2 24th April and 22nd May 1867.
- 3 This would be a book containing copies of letters of condolence from various Scottish towns and abolitionist societies sent to the American people on the death of Abraham Lincoln.
- 4 A velocipede was an early form of bicycle.
- 5 Fulton’s Orrery was a full scale working model of the universe constructed by a Fenwick man. It was an object of great admiration and it travelled as far afield as London on exhibition. The Orrery is currently on display in the Museum of Transport, Glasgow.
- 6 The significance of this minute is unclear.
- 7 See Shiman, Lilian L., *Crusade Against Drink in Victorian England*, Macmillan, London, 198

SOME KILMARNOCK ARCHITECTS

by

Rob Close

In choosing to address the topic of “some Kilmarnock architects”, there were a number of factors which influenced the selection of that particular title. Firstly, it was an opportunity to pull into a more ordered form the information that I have acquired over a number of years on these architects and their work. Some of these architects have had a profound effect on the townscape and landscape, not only in the Kilmarnock area, but also further afield, and, consequently, the second factor was the chance to make more people aware of them, and their work. Thirdly, I am also well aware that there is much more that remains to be discovered about some of these people - all, in fact, men, a fact, which however much we may regret it these days, a fact which reflects the actualité of the period with which we are dealing. By airing these gaps in our knowledge, I am hoping that readers, and their friends, may be able to provide additional information, especially with regard to the architects from the later period.

Some of the men whose names will be mentioned are always going to remain shadowy characters. An example is one Robert Smith, who appears, described as an architect, in the Kilmarnock Directory for 1846-1847, and again in 1851. To date, Smith's only known work is the additions and alterations made to the established church Manse at New Cumnock in 1847. This manse has long been demolished, and Robert Smith, whose name is hardly an encouragement to deeper research, seems destined to remain a bit-part player in this production. He may have been the Robert Smith, architect, who died, aged 92, in Beith in 1916: or he may have been the Robert Smith, architect, who moved successively from Hamilton to Dalry to Maybole, and who in 1864 was involved, probably as superintending site architect, in the construction of the Peddie & Kinnear designed Crawfordton House at Moniaive. Even I, an obsessive, am willing to admit that time is too short to pursue vigorously the architect of additions to a now demolished building of minor importance!

Of far more interest are those men whose work has made a lasting contribution to the architectural heritage of this area. Some of these - Robert Johnstone, James Ingram, Thomas Smellie - will be more familiar to you than some others, such as Gabriel Andrew, James Hay or W F Valentine. All of them made a mark on this area, and all deserve to be better known. The period under discussion stretches from the late 18th Century - a time when the architect was beginning to be recognised as a separate entity from the builder - through to the 1930s. The period of highest activity was the Victorian era, and especially the latter years of the 19th Century. In the late 19th Century Kilmarnock was at the peak of its industrially based wealth and importance. This period also witnessed a particular flowering of architecture in Kilmarnock, especially the years from 1890 or so through to about 1900, a period when people such as Robert Ingram, Smellie, Andrew and Hay were at the heights of their careers, and there was an underlying sound economy which supported this flowering. To this we will return in more depth in due course.

Architecture, of course, is recognised as one of the arts. It also, of course, has a very definite function, which, at once, sets it apart from the other arts. In beginning to look at the architects of Kilmarnock, we have to, firstly, and in order to introduce the first of them, make a distinction between what we may call “vernacular” architecture, and what is generally called “formal” architecture. Vernacular architecture is essentially the traditional architecture of an area, an architecture based on the materials available, on the simple engineering required to ensure that the building remains upright, and on the traditional accommodation requirements. Vernacular architecture is not consciously designed to be anything other than functional: any “beauty” we may see in vernacular architecture, for instance in the

Main Street of Dunlop, comes from a complex subsequent overlaying of attitudes and ideas (or ideals): it certainly does not come from any determination on the part of the builder to produce a thing of beauty.

In the years around 1800 the appellation “builder and architect” is frequently encountered. This is, in part, a recognition not so much of the artistic element in architecture, but the scientific and engineering element, the increasing awareness that there were scientific rules and laws which explained why buildings stayed up and why they, sometimes, failed. Among the first tradesmen in Kilmarnock to use this joint appellation was the firm of Howie & Brown, which survived for many years. The partners were John Howie, who was born in about 1775 and died in July 1845 at Rhu, and Hugh Brown, who was somewhat Howie’s senior, having been born in about 1735, and who died in April 1821. Howie, throughout his life, calls himself a builder, though Brown appears to be more amenable to the “builder and architect” description. Both however were able to make plans and draw up specifications - on 11th August 1819, William Finnie “fixed with Howie to make right plan, [and] to get specifications and estimates for the wright work” of alterations to a house which Finnie’s colleague John Buntine had recently acquired.

Contemporaries of Howie and Brown included the very shadowy Robert Galt, who was married in 1824, and who was employed as master mason on the 1820 Tarbolton Parish Church. This church is, of course, one of the masterpieces of another contemporary of Brown and Howie, Robert Johnstone, elder. Johnstone has been slightly unfortunate in that two of his other better buildings, Kilmarnock Town Hall and the King Street (or Relief) Church, also in Kilmarnock, have been demolished. The Relief Church, completed in 1832, was a particularly competent design: a classically inspired church with a spire, similar to Tarbolton. Both are rooted in a strong contemporary tradition which can be traced back to London churches such as St Martins in the Fields, Trafalgar Square. A number of domestic buildings have also been convincingly ascribed to Johnstone. These include the established church Manse at Irvine, of 1820, and, in Ayr, no.21 Wellington Square, which dates from a few years earlier, 1814. Further attributions which can be made include two houses in Templehill, Troon, no.155, Bank House, which was his own “summer” house in Troon, and no.179, which was the “summer” retreat of William Finnie. Robert Johnstone died in May 1830, the Ayr Advertiser noting that he “was skilful and active in business, and universally esteemed as a man of the strictest honesty.” He had retired from business in 1827, when his stock-in-trade was roused. This consisted of “wrights’ benches, planes, tools, &c., about one thousand feet of yellow pine and birch timber in logs; a number of veneers and mahogany boards; also a considerable quantity of well-seasoned flooring, and boards of different sizes”. The yard appears to have been at the foot of Langlands Brae. Johnstone was succeeded in business by his son, also Robert, but he appears to have acquired neither his father’s skill or acumen, and leaves little mark on the Kilmarnock architectural scene, and, indeed, his date of death has not been discovered. Johnstone’s eldest son, John, was also an architect, but not in Kilmarnock. His career included a spell as a clerk-of-works in the office of George Gilbert Scott, before settling down in private practice in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Shortly after Robert Johnstone’s death, James Ingram set up in business as an architect in Kilmarnock. As Johnstone’s roush shows, he was still heavily involved in the hands-on side of the profession: Ingram was, in contrast, the first architect, as we would recognise the term, to practice in Kilmarnock. James Ingram was born in 1799, in Sorn parish. His father, Andrew Ingram, was for many years land steward on the Barskimming estate of the Millers of Glenlee. Built in 1791, Barskimming was the subject of additions and alterations in about 1816, designed by the Glasgow architect David Hamilton, and it was with David Hamilton that James Ingram served his apprenticeship. Hamilton was one of the greatest architects ever to practice in Glasgow and “from his stature and influence [he] can fairly be called the father of Glasgow architecture”. Born in 1768 he trained as a mason, and set up as an architect about 1790, and quickly gained a reputation for high quality and inspirational design. Major works by Hamilton in Ayrshire include the Manor Park Hotel, near Largs, the tower at Kilwinning Abbey, and the Jacobean-style Dunlop House, completed in 1834. Other commissions on which young James Ingram may have worked include the massively castellated Castle Toward in Cowal and the unimaginably vast additions made to Hamilton Palace.

At some time in the 1830s, probably after completing his apprenticeship and serving a period as a draughtsman, James Ingram returned to his native Ayrshire and set up as an architect on his account. The earliest building to which we can attach his name is the Parish Church in New Cumnock of 1831-1833, and his first major work in Kilmarnock was St Marnock's Church, built between 1834 and 1836. One commentator, George Hay, has described the external treatment as "fairly" scholarly, while the pulpit "is an expression of the crescendo of Gothic revival."; the church is a rectangular 6-bay building with a centrally placed tower on the north gable, its details, such as the window tracery, Perpendicular Gothic, though the battlemented roofline is very much part of the Gothic Revival. McKay calls it an "elegant edifice" and says that "its front and tower and rich in Gothic ornament and architectural beauty." During the next 50 years or so, Ingram pursued a successful career in Kilmarnock and district. Designs by him include Loudoun Parish Church in Newmilns, Fullarton Church in Irvine, and St Andrews in Kilmarnock, as well as banks, commercial buildings, including much of the much-lamented Duke Street, and offices in John Finnie Street for the coalmasters Archibald Finnie & Son. Two buildings may be seen as epitomising the pinnacle of James Ingram's career: these are the Palace Theatre group in Kilmarnock and the Town House in Irvine. Of these the Irvine Town House is the earlier, having been begun in 1859 and completed in 1861. It is in an Italianate style, topped by a graceful 4 stage tower with a fine octagonal lantern, a distinctive landmark in the town. Shortly after the completion of this commission, a competition was announced for plans for a new Public Hall in Kilmarnock. This competition was won by Ingram, with another large Italianate design, and in March 1862 contractors were advertised for, and the building was formally opened in September 1863. These buildings are magnificent, without doubt the jewel in Ingram's crown. Built of bright red Ballochmyle sandstone, just then becoming widely available, and held to be both more attractive and more durable than the locally quarried stone. It extends for 136' along Green Street and for 92' along London Road, and is adorned with a tower, of 110', named - for the lately deceased Prince Consort - the Albert Tower. Both Irvine's Town House and Kilmarnock's Palace Theatre have much sculpture work of good quality, and in both cases the sculptor was Joseph Boyd, of Troon.

James Ingram died in July 1879, having been ill for a couple of years. The Kilmarnock Standard said that "for a period of nearly half a century he has practised his profession ... with great ability and success. Everything he did was characterised by originality and effectiveness of design". He was buried in the churchyard at Sorn. In 1921, he was recollected as being "a person rather under the average height, and of somewhat slim build in comparison with his son and successor, Robert Samson Ingram". Of Ingram's sons, we will return to R S Ingram in due course. Another son, William, also became an architect, practising in Glasgow. His work is of considerably less interest than that of his father, and brother. Highlights are perhaps the Roman Catholic churches at Fauldhouse (West Lothian) of 1873, and at Newton Stewart, opened in 1876. In 1862 he designed the Free Church manse in Tarbolton, and he is also credited with the manse associated with the Evangelical Union Church in Catrine, dated 1896.

Contemporaries of James Ingram include Alexander Adamson and William Railton, both of whom have left a mark on Kilmarnock. Others, who have not left their mark, include Robert Smith, who has already been exhaustively discussed, and William Fulton, who died in 1850. Fulton's major work appears to have been superintendence of the works of improvement in the 1840s at Troon Harbour. Additionally, we know that in 1836 he reported to Ayr Town Council on necessary repairs to the Town Steeple.

Alexander Adamson was born about 1841. His father, also Alexander Adamson, was a merchant in Kilmarnock, who at the time of his son's birth was Vice-President of the Mechanics Institution. It is not known where Adamson obtained his training, but it was probably with an architect in Glasgow, and it was in Glasgow that he practised. From 1867 to 1871 he was in partnership with John McLeod, who lived in Dumbarton; from 1872 until 1876 he practised on his own account, latterly from an address in Renfield Street. For much of this period, Adamson lived in Greenock, but returned, in 1872, to Rosefield Cottage, the parental home in Thomson Street. Unfortunately, Adamson's career came to

an end about 1876, when he must have suffered some form of mental breakdown. At the time of the 1881 Census, he is a "lunatic" inmate at Gartnavel, and he died there, aged 51, in May 1893. In the circumstances, it is perhaps unsurprising that there are no obituaries in the local press. Nonetheless, we are able to name a number of buildings designed by Adamson. In 1874 he designed a United Presbyterian mission church in Roxburgh Street, Greenock, described by the Greenock Advertiser as a "very tasteful and substantial [building] of the semi-Gothic style of architecture." His association with Greenock also led to him being commissioned to design a museum extension - the McLean Museum - to the Watt Institute in that Burgh. This extension was opened in 1876, Adamson, on this occasion, using a collegiate Tudor style matching the design of the original building - 1846 - by Edward Blore, the English architect closely associated with Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford. The opening of this extension was apparently unrecorded by the Greenock Advertiser - according to staff at Inverclyde Libraries, the local press were "more interested in the Municipal elections."

In Ayrshire, Adamson designed two schools, both of which still survive, for the Kilmarnock Landward School Board. That at Rowallan, the smaller, was opened in 1875, and the substantial school at Crookedholm opened in 1876. He also designed schools in Saltcoats and Ardrossan. His biggest contribution to Kilmarnock's architecture heritage is, however, the entrance lodge for Kilmarnock Cemetery, which was opened in 1876. For this building, Adamson chose a vigorous Scots baronial design in rock-faced red sandstone, culminating in a 14 foot high arched entrance with enriched mouldings, flanked on either side by massive turrets.

The final contemporary from this period is William Railton. Railton had been born in Gorbals in November 1820; his father, John, was a law agent in Glasgow. John Railton's wife, Margaret Thomson, was a native of Kilmarnock. Again, nothing is, unfortunately, known of Railton's training. He was in practice in Kilmarnock by 1851, the year in which he first appears in the Kilmarnock Directory, and remained in practice in the town until his death in September 1902. He lived initially in London Road, probably at the house which is now 38 London Road; he was there in 1851 with his widowed mother, whose changed circumstances may have occasioned the return to Ayrshire. By 1861 he was living in Dundonald Road, with his recently acquired English wife, Isabella, the daughter of Joseph Railton of Carlton, Cumberland, who may have been a relation. At some point during the 1860s he built himself a house - Viewbank - in Grange Terrace, which remained his home until his death.

Besides practising as an architect, Railton was also heavily involved in the life of the town, an activity which didn't do him any harm, professionally, and would perhaps have raised a few eyebrows these days. Railton had been an elder of the High Church since 1856, and was also, at different times, Secretary of the Kilmarnock Free School, Secretary of the School of Science and Art, Director of the Industrial School, and, crucially, Director of the Kilmarnock Infirmary. A list of buildings designed by Railton includes alterations to the High Church, made in 1868, the School of Art in Woodstock Street, 1877, the Free School, Dundonald Road, of c.1867, and the Infirmary, also of 1867.

The earliest commission yet identified is for alterations and additions, including a new entrance porch, at Eglinton Castle, dated 1857. In Kilmarnock, besides the buildings already mentioned, he was also responsible for the old Sheriff Court, and for some of the commercial blocks in John Finnie Street. He also designed a number of banks, principally for the Union Bank, in places as diverse as Govan, Lochgilphead and Forfar, but including the bank which closes the vista of Bank Place. He also obtained an entree into Islay, designing the Poorhouse at Bowmore, of 1864, and the 1878 school at Portnahaven. Back in Ayrshire, he also designed schools at Dreghorn, Springside and Cunninghamehead, all for Dreghorn School Board, and in 1879 completed the church at Fergushill near Kilwinning.

Some anonymous reminiscences of working with Railton appeared in the Kilmarnock Standard in 1921. From these we learn that Railton was responsible for laying out several new streets, including Grange Street, North Hamilton Street and Fullarton Street. We also learn that the Kilmarnock builders

considered William Railton to be the best for “plan”, while they considered James Ingram best for “elevation.”

Railton’s Portnahaven School has been described as a “a good example of an immediately post Education Act school, little altered.” It is a single storey school, with a detached 2-storey schoolhouse adjacent. Of Railton’s major Kilmarnock buildings, the Union Bank is an attractive classical building, of 2 storeys and a basement beneath, with a porch with paired Roman Doric columns. The former Sheriff Court House in St Marnock Street, completed in 1852, is also in a competent classical style, composed of a central 3 bay 2 storey block, with single storey wings to either side. It is impressively detailed. Plans for a court house had first been draw up by James Ingram in 1847, but nothing appears to have been happened. In January 1850 the Kilmarnock Police Commissioners were shown three sets of plans, by Railton, Ingram, and “Johnstone”, presumably Robert Johnstone junior, and Railton was appointed to the commission.

The Sheriff Court House is a impressive contribution to Kilmarnock’s heritage. Railton’s greatest contribution, however, is sadly neglected - and, may, have actually gone by now. This is the Infirmary or Fever Hospital in Wellington Street. Built in 1867 to 1868, Railton here puts behind him the traditional classical of the bank, and of the Sheriff court, and produces a building which dominates its site, and which owes a considerable debt to Alexander Greek Thomson. This is most obviously seen in the external decoration, but also in the treatment of the windows, and in the relative scarcity of the decoration and ornament. The Kilmarnock Standard found the design to be “exceedingly graceful, as well as economic” and continued thus: “The front of the building is an adaptation of the Greek style, which shows effective handling combined with economy. A handsome doorway, with square pillars, and cornice above, admits to a spacious hall. The grouping of the windows in the two upper storeys gives lightness to the appearance of the structure, while its height, combined with the deep projection of the centre and the wings, gives a massive effect to the whole must prove very imposing.” The Standard was right: here Railton relies on the simplicity and the unity of the design to produce artistic effect. That he succeeded so well only increases despair at the state into which this wonderful creation has been allowed to fall. The success of this building also encourages speculation about Railton’s mentors during his formative years in Glasgow.

An architect whose star flickered brightly but briefly was Charles Mitchell, who was responsible for much of the housing built on the glebe lands southwards from London Road. Mitchell started his business in Kilmarnock about 1887, and quickly opened further offices in Edinburgh, c.1889, and in Dundee, c.1891. Mitchell appears to have been an entrepreneurial architect: the power of hindsight allows us to suggest that he was expanding at a rate which could not be sustained. In April 1894 he was sequestrated; the following month, during his bankruptcy examination, he explained that he had made losses on the purchase and upkeep of Burnside, London Road, which he continued to run as a boarding guest house, on property in Dundee and on building houses on the Glebe.

We can now turn to the next generation of Kilmarnock architects. This generation, born in the years around 1850, came to the height of their artistic and professional abilities in the 1890s and 1900s, a time when Kilmarnock was busy, growing, confident and wealthy. The result was that these men - still only men - found much work, and many opportunities to flex their artistic muscles. In no particular order, they are Gabriel Andrew, William Newlands, James Hay, Thomas Smellie and Robert Ingram. The Ayr architect James A Morris also belongs to this generation, and had close familial and business links with Kilmarnock, though produced little architecture in Kilmarnock.

Gabriel [Gibby] Andrew was born in 1851 in Kilmarnock. He was the son of Alexander Andrew, a joiner. He served his apprenticeship with William Railton, and in 1875 began in business on his own account, with his office at 9 East George Street. In 1883 he removed, to, as his advertisement in the Standard describes it, Messrs John Walker and Son’s new buildings in Croft Street. In 1900 Andrew formed a partnership with William Newlands, of whom more anon, and they operated from an office at 84 Portland Street. For many years, Andrew and his wife, Jessie Adams, lived at 38 Kay Park

Crescent, a house which he had designed himself. Gabriel Andrew retired in 1929, and died in July 1933.

Andrew's list of projects is a substantial one. Two projects from the early years of his practice are the whisky bonds for John Walker and Son in Strand Street, and the Lorimer Library in Tarbolton. The bonded warehouses comprise three blocks, one of terracotta brick, with red sandstone dressings, the others, in a French Renaissance style, display long runs of blank arcades in grey sandstone and white brick. One block, of 4 storeys, displays a particularly fine rounded end frontage to the junction between Strand Street and Croft Street. The Lorimer Library is a far simpler building, single storey and dominated by a big bow window on the street front. Andrew remained as retained architect to Walkers for many years, and was also retained by the Kilmarnock Equitable Co-operative Society. For the KECS, and for other co-operative societies, he produced a number of remarkable commercial structures, such as that at the west end of Newmilns, opened in 1900, with its remarkable Glasgow School inspired tower, at Galston, where the tall red sandstone facade is difficult to appreciate in the narrow confines of Titchfield Street, and at Catrine, 1903, where the design is plainer, but the projecting bays are linked by the long overhanging eaves in a remarkably assured manner.

Another striking tower which, like that at Newmilns, displays clear awareness of what is happening elsewhere in the architectural world, crowns the former Hurlford Academy - now Hurlford School - which was opened in 1905, in a style called by the contemporary press, "Free Renaissance". Apart from the house at Crossroads School, and some alterations to Kingsford School, Andrew did few schools, partly, of course, because there was bound to be a lull in school building following the flurry of building following the establishment of School Boards in the 1870s. Also in Hurlford, Andrew designed the church - now a hall - on Mauchline Road. Returning, finally, to Kilmarnock, he was also architect of 37 Bank Street, and a number of commercial properties, especially in the John Finnie Street area, where his links with the Co-operative proved beneficial. Domestic work includes the remarkable houses of de Walden Terrace and Evelyn Villas.

Andrew's partner, as we have seen, after 1900 was William Newlands. Newlands was born in Kilmarnock in 1853: he was a brother of the long-established Kilmarnock jeweller, John Newlands. His initial training was as an apprentice with William Railton, and when this was completed, he practised for a while in Glasgow, but his health failed, and, as a result he spent six years in South Africa, followed by three years in Aberdeen, where his brother George was in business. He returned to Kilmarnock in 1880; his first office was in "Mr Wood's buildings, next to the Opera House" in John Finnie Street, and in 1885 he moved to 4 Mill Lane. In 1900, as we have seen, he joined Gabriel Andrew in partnership. There are few buildings which can be directly attributed to him, though he presumably had an increasing input into those, such as the Galston and Catrine Co-operatives, and the school at Hurlford, which post-date the formation of the partnership. One building which is associated with him is the former Technical School in Elmbank Avenue, now part of Kilmarnock Academy, and built between 1907 and 1909. This is a fine, if somewhat florid, Edwardian classical school, with plentiful figure sculpture and carved decoration. There is none of the eclectic designing associated with Newmilns or Hurlford, which lends support to the theory that Newlands was responsible for this building. It is, nonetheless, a remarkable and highly competent piece of design. Newlands was unmarried: he died in March 1930 at his home in Kilmaurs.

James Hay was born in 1871. He was born in Edinburgh, and received his training in that city. He first came to Kilmarnock in 1896 to act as assistant to Gabriel Andrew: 2 years later, in 1898, he commenced in business on his own account, and continued to do so until 1919, when Gabriel Steel joined him as a partner in James Hay and Partners. The firm continues to this day, now known as Hay Steel and Partners, and trading from an address in Ayr. James Hay died in January 1929. He seems to have specialised, in large part, in domestic architecture. His obituary refers to, but doesn't identify, "notable examples of his domestic work in Troon and Prestwick." A particularly effective house is 115 Prestwick Road, Ayr, designed in 1901. Two non domestic commissions of some interest are the Episcopal Church in Prestwick, and the town hall at Galston. The church at Prestwick - St Ninians -

was built between 1925 and 1926. Designed as a substantial church, in the style of 14th Century, with transepts and a central tower “in the Sussex style”, a perhaps not unexpected lack of funds ensured that only a very small part of this concept was executed. Despite the quidity caused by its incompleteness, sufficient exists to show that Hay was a highly competent designer. Galston’s Town Hall, too, is a highly skilled exercise in pastiche: this time the template is the Scots Baronial style, which is again handled with commendable ability. The Hall was also built in 1925 and 1926, and is thus contemporaneous with the church in Prestwick. According to the late Alex Dunlop, the original design for Galston’s Town Hall had been a neo-Georgian one by Hay’s partner, Gabriel Steel, which Hay unilaterally withdrew and replaced with his own baronial conceit.

Of this generation of architects, the one whose name is perhaps best known to current generations is Thomas Smellie. Smellie’s reputation, today, is based however largely on his non-architectural activities. Thomas Smellie was born in January 1860 in Dumbarton Road, Partick. His father, John Smellie, was an engineer and architect in Partick, where he also acted as a consultant to the Burgh Council. It appears that Thomas Smellie’s initial training was with his father, but in 1886 he came to Kilmarnock to work for Gabriel Andrew, with whom he remained until 1889. In that year he set up in business on his own account, firstly and briefly in Ardrossan, before returning to Kilmarnock the same year. His office was, initially in Bank Street; latterly he moved to Grange Place. In 1891 he married Janet Stewart, daughter of a Free Church minister. At the time of his marriage he was living at Burnside House, in London Road, - incidentally one of the properties on which Charles Mitchell has lost money - but soon after moved to Charles Street, and subsequently to 46 Portland Road, where the studio he built for himself is still clearly visible at the junction with Hamilton Street. Smellie died in Kilmarnock in June 1938. For a few years after 1905 he assumed as a partner David Greig, the son of a Kinross-shire landowner, but the partnership seems to have been dissolved soon after 1909, and nothing has yet been ascertained of Greig’s subsequent career. In 1920 Smellie entered into a partnership with the Glasgow architect Ninian MacWhannell, but this appears to have been a short-lived arrangement. Smellie retired from practice in 1932.

With regard to Smellie’s architectural work, perhaps his best known building is the Henderson Church in London Road, Kilmarnock, completed in 1907. Other buildings of quality include the villa West Park, in Kilmaurs, dated 1890, the school of 1895, demolished in 1996, in Dundonald, and the buildings 65 King Street, Kilmarnock, built in 1901 for Robert Rogerson. His obituary in the Standard also states that he was retained as architect to Saxones, for whom he built, inter alia, “a water tower of unique design.”

The Henderson Church, designed in a freely adapted Gothic style, occupies a prominent site, and culminates in an elegant tower. 65 King Street was praised by Building Industries in 1901 as an important example of a “self-possessed restful facade” welcomed as a worthy alternative to the baldness of early 19th Century architect, and to the “unhappy flashiness” of the late 1890s.

Smellie’s interests extended beyond pure architecture. In 1908 he gained a patent for a “double-acting ventilating apparatus formed in sheet metal, ... terracotta, brick or timber.” Some years earlier he had lectured to the Glenfield Ramblers on “Some Ancient Types of Domestic Buildings”, and, towards the end of his life, in 1936, he published “Mrs Goudie’s Tea Party”, described as a light-hearted trifle in the Scots Vernacular, part of which was broadcast on the BBC. Smellie’s major fame, however, is as a book illustrator. His Sketches of Old Kilmarnock, for which he provided both letterpress and illustrations, is of course his best known work in this field. This collection of sketches of a Kilmarnock that was changing rapidly still remains an important source for anyone interested in the history of the Burgh. Other books illustrated by Smellie included Alexander Smellie’s “Men of the Covenant”, and MacMillan’s “Life of John Knox”. He also illustrated an edition of John Kelso Hunter’s “Retrospect of an Artist’s Life.”

Like Smellie, Robert Samson Ingram also followed the same profession as his father. In his case, of course, he joined his father in partnership, and succeeded, after James Ingram’s death in 1879, to full responsibility for the firm. Robert Ingram was born in May 1841, and undertook his training in his

father's office. He married, in 1892, Frances, a daughter of John Torrance, a Kilmarnock solicitor, and died, at Mauchline, in October 1915. Robert Ingram's best known design, the Kilmarnock Burns Monument, was opened in August 1879, only a fortnight after the death of his father, and his solo career perhaps never again reached such a height. He must always have lived with the long shadow cast by his father, and his career appears to have been one of potential unfulfilled. Towards the end of his life, he was essentially peripatetic: prior to Mauchline, he had also lived in Ayr, as well as in the family house in Dundonald Road, which was sold in 1902. No obituary appeared in the Kilmarnock press after his death, while his wife lived out her remaining years living with her unmarried sisters in Edinburgh.

Ingram's other major contribution to Kilmarnock's townscape was, of course, the Dick Institute. Although in no way responsible, Ingram may also have been affected by the fire which badly damaged this building in the early years of its existence. Ingram was also caught up in the fall-out from the goings-on of the fraudulent Kilmarnock solicitor Arthur Sturrock, who 'absconded' in 1896. In 1898 Ingram was sued by Sturrock's estate over £3000 which he was said to owe them in terms of a bond between him and Sturrock. The Court of Session eventually decided the Bond, and especially Ingram's signature thereon, was a forgery, but not before the Court had had some amusement at his expense. Questioned by Counsel, Ingram was asked, "is it the case that you keep absolutely no letter books?", to which he replied, "Quite true - neither did my father before me", soliciting laughter from the court, which was repeated after the exchange, "Then this has really been hereditary? - Just so.". Asked whether he had a good practice, Ingram replied "I am not prepared to say anything about that".

It is perhaps worthwhile at this juncture to mention the Ayr architect James A Morris. Born in 1857, Morris lived to 1942, successfully outliving most of his contemporaries. Morris's father was a sea-captain, but was descended from a family which had been long associated with Kilmarnock, most especially as china merchants. His uncle, James, was a successful entrepreneur, whose fortune was inherited by James A Morris. Having trained in Glasgow with the architect A Lindsay Millar, Morris set up his own practice in Ayr in 1881: his best known designs include a number of substantial villas, including the Savoy Croft and Balgarth Hotels, and his own house in Savoy Park, all in Ayr. He also designed the South Church in Prestwick and the particularly attractive Episcopal Church in Troon. Financially independent, Morris was able to devote much of his time to other interests. He wrote and lectured widely, served on a number of national bodies, and masterminded the campaign to save Ayr's Auld Brig. His relevance to this lecture, though, is that he inherited from his uncle a substantial shareholding in Glenfield and Kennedy, and served on the Board of Directors for many years, ultimately acting as Chairman. While a board member at The Glen, he was commissioned to design an extension to the existing offices: a situation which echoes William Railton's relationship with the Kilmarnock Infirmary, and one that would raise eyebrows today.

Contemporary with the group of skilful architects, we should also mention the engineer Jams Montgomerie Pearson. Pearson was born, in 1856, in Newton Stewart, but grew up, after the death of his doctor father, in Muirkirk. He received his training with the Ayr architect James I McDerment, and set up in practice in Kilmarnock in the 1880s. In 1882, he married, in the Isle of Man, Emily Haslam. He died in April 1936. His obituary noted that "he was soon recognised as an expert civil and mining engineer, and he was entrusted with important commissions both from private individuals and public bodies. As an arbiter and valuer his services were in great demand, and his hands were always full of work. A man of superabundant energy ... he was punctiliously careful and conscientious in the performance of all his work. Although he did not lay himself out specially for architectural work, Mr Pearson was responsible for the plans of quite a large number of buildings in various parts of the county, and in Kilmarnock a notable example of his ability in that direction is to be found in the Wallace Chambers, originally built for Messrs William Wallace & Co., but now owned and occupied by Messrs John Walker and Sons Ltd. ... A man of the highest probity, with a wonderful variety of gifts, Mr Pearson was of a reserved and unassuming disposition, and never courted publicity in any

shape or form. He was however very fond of a social hour among his most intimate friends, and it was on such occasions that his fine qualities of head and heart were most pleasingly revealed.”

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Pearson’s architecture can be found in Muirkirk, where he was responsible for both the Roman Catholic Church, of 1905 to 1906, and the 1922 War Memorial gates. Wallace’s - or Walker’s - property was built between 1903 and 1905 in a free Renaissance style. It is, now, the Council Chambers in John Finnie Street.

Before concluding it is worth looking, in less detail, at the next generation of architects practising in Kilmarnock.

We have already mentioned Gabriel Steel, who was a partner with James Hay. Buildings associated with Steel’s solo practice include the brick Council Chambers in Newmilns. Also associated with Hay & Steel was Eric Hurcomb, who was responsible for Kilmarnock Fire Station. John Joseph Railton, who lived from 1862 to 1952, was the son of William Railton, and trained with his father. J J Railton, however, lived most of his life in Ayr: He travelled extensively in his youth, venturing as far as Cairo, but, to date, little is known of his architecture, beyond the surgery extension in London Road, Kilmarnock.

William Forrest Valentine, who was born in 1885, the son of a farmer, undertook his apprenticeship with Robert Ingram, and spent some time travelling in Italy, before setting up his own practice, around 1907, in the Pearson designed Wallace Chambers. Valentine did much work for the Kilmarnock Equitable and other co-operative societies throughout Ayrshire. Prominent buildings designed by Valentine include two prominent pubs, the Halfway House at Symington and the Dark Horse (now the Hunting Lodge) in Glencairn Square, Kilmarnock. He also designed the Masonic Hall in London Road, and the unique Thornhill War Memorial. Valentine died in 1957: he had married in 1914, Agnes, a daughter of James Smith, accountant and sometime Provost of Kilmarnock: they lived at Gardrum, 21 Glasgow Road, a house designed by himself. Valentine also interested the press on other occasions. In January 1925 he was fined £2 by Ayr Police Court for being drunk in charge of a car in Station Road, Ayr, and in November the same year he was disqualified from driving for two years, after being found guilty of being “drunk in charge” in Auchinleck. Again, in August 1935, he was fined £3 for “using obscene and offensive language and conducting himself in a riotous and disorderly manner while he was a passenger on a PSV travelling between Ayr and Kilmarnock, and particularly at a bus-stop in Ayr Road, Prestwick.”

I want to close by mentioning Alex Dunlop, who died last year. I was fortunate enough to interview Alex Dunlop in 1993: much of what I know of the Kilmarnock architects of the early and mid 20th Century I owe to him. Alex Dunlop trained, between 1923 and 1927, with James Hay, before completing his training with the great James Miller in Glasgow. [Miller was the architect of, inter alia, the Turnberry Hotel and Kilmarnock War Memorial]. He worked, briefly, for W F Valentine, before setting up on his own in 1933. Buildings by Alex Dunlop include the faience facade to Black’s Bar, and the now destroyed Kilmarnock Baths. He was also responsible for the attractive sub-baronial council housing in Newmilns and Darvel, as well as the Forestry Commission village at Glentrool.

This has been, of necessity, a brief overview of the development of the architectural practice in Kilmarnock. From the earliest architects, such as Robert Johnstone, whose skills arose out of experience as builders, the professional eventually grew into a separately recognised skill. The first generation of Kilmarnock architects, such as James Ingram, had usually received their training outside the town, but successive generations were able, as we have seen, to receive a training within the burgh. This continued into well into the 20th Century. However brief, I hope this overview has shown not only how the professional grew, but also has thrown some light on the importance of architects and architecture in the development of streetscape and landscape.

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS OF CARPETS

by

John Hood

David Loch in his "Essays on the Trade, Commerce, Manufactures and Fisheries of Scotland" - published in 1778 - provides a convenient starting date for this short history of carpet manufacturing in Kilmarnock. He writes that it was "said to be introduced by Miss Maria Gardiner, who, observing the indolence of the people of the place, brought spinners and weavers of carpets from Dalkeith about the year 1728". This was an important year in the development of woollen textile production in Scotland as it saw the introduction of "The Particular Plan for Wool" by which £ 280 per annum was to be set aside for the salaries of fourteen persons, skilled in sorting, stapling and washing coarse tarred wool, and £ 420 p.a. for equipment needed to wash, boil and sort. Sorting stations were set up in the main wool trade centres amongst which was Kilmarnock. This money originated with the Treaty of Union in 1707 and the funds accumulated, for a number of years in the hands of the Commissioners for the Equivalent who eventually transferred them to the Barons of the Exchequer.

In 1727 a Board of Trustees for Manufactures was set up. They soon issued a "general plan for wool" and followed it up with a "particular plan". It is likely that the grants available under the provisions of these plans were as much an incentive for Miss Gardiner's efforts as the reason given by Loch but, in fairness, there is the following in the minute book of the Laigh Kirk session dated 11th January 1728 - "It being represented to the Session that there were several families in the town that were very straitened, whose clamant condition called for present Relief". The following Thursday, £ 93 Scots was distributed.

Maria Gardiner was the wife of the Reverend Lawrence Hill, minister of the second charge of the Laigh Kirk, and half (or step) aunt to William, fourth Earl of Kilmarnock, who was later beheaded as a result of his activities in the 1745 Rebellion. It is often suggested that the fourth Earl's involvement in the Jacobite cause was as much motivated by financial reasons as by the influence of his wife, whose family had strong Jacobite connections.

1603 - 1707. The Background.

Whatever the reason for Miss Gardiner's efforts, one thing is certain and that is that her initiative would have come to nothing without a sound textile experience to build upon. According to the Kilmarnock Town Books, hose or stockings were manufactured in the town in 1603; bonnet making is supposed to have started about the same time and is known to have been flourishing by 1646 when the Bonnet Maker's Guild was formed. When Richard Frank wrote his "Northern Memoirs" in 1658 he could report that "Part of their manufacture is knitting of bonnets and spinning (weaving) of Scottish cloth".

The Union of the Crowns did not bring any material benefits to the Scots, despite the anticipated extended market, as the English Parliament maintained and strengthened existing trade barriers. The struggle between the two nations continued unabated. Scottish exports still tended to be in raw materials down the east and west coasts to the continent but an exception seems to have been the quantities of low priced heavy serges, known as "Exeters" made from our local coarse wools and used in the Low Countries for making up into military uniforms. In 1623, for instance, 360 ells of cloth were exported to Holland through Irvine and there are earlier records of cloth exports to France. It was not until relatively recent times that farmers and landowners realised that sheep could be bred to improve the quality of wool. The stuff produced up to about 1800 was hard, coarse and wiry; more like hair than the soft wools of today. In addition it was the custom to smear the sheep with a "salve" of butter and tar in an attempt to reduce the incidence of disease carrying vermin. This sticky mess had to be removed from the fleece before use by boiling it in copper vats and skimming the melted mixture from the surface of the liquor. (When the Wool Sorting Station at Kilmarnock was established, copper boilers were installed for this very purpose). The wools were much darker in colour than those of the present day and as dyestuffs were expensive, not very fast, and limited to those obtainable from natural sources like dogwood, madder, cochineal and indigo, most cloth was left undyed. This material was "hoden-grey". It was a brown grey colour and, woven as plain cloth, was worn by the majority of people. The middle class merchants and freemen of the burghs wore red or blue dyed woollens while the nobility could afford to wear silks and imported "fine stuffs" - probably cloth woven in England from fine Spanish wools. Shirts and sarks were woven from linen.

By 1684 weaving in the town was of sufficient importance to justify the granting of a "Weaver's Charter". A charter merely confirms the existence and regulates the operation of an existing trade. In 1681, for instance, the Archbishop of Glasgow granted one to the weavers of Glasgow who already held a Seal of Cause issued by the Provost and Baillies in 1605 who, in turn, refer to "old actis extractit" out of the trades minute book of 1514. This type of document was not uncommon at the time and usually regulated the quality and type of material to be produced, the term an apprentice had to be indentured and the standards of workmanship expected from journeymen and masters. To begin with they served the community well but eventually became too restrictive, causing the decline of the trade they were meant to protect. The redistribution of trades during the Industrial Revolution and the growth of factories in new towns was, at least in part, due to Guild restrictions in the old Royal Burghs and Burghs of Barony. By 1700 when the "whole of the common good" was granted to the town, the principal trades were weaving, bonnet making and stocking making.

1707 - 1760. The Effect of the Union.

Because of the policy of the English Parliament, the Scottish woollen trade was in considerable difficulty by the time of the Union and efforts were made to encourage the use of woollen cloth. An Act had been passed in the Scottish Parliament in 1686 and ratified in 1695 to the effect that the bodies of all persons dying within the Kingdom should be buried in Scotch linen. These Acts were later rescinded and replaced just before the Union with one which stated that "no corpse of any person of what condition or quality soever shall be buried in linen of whatever kind", from then on it was to be plain woollen cloth or stuff.

Under Article 15 of the Treaty of Union it was agreed that £ 2000 p.a. for seven years would be used to stimulate the manufacture of tarred wool in the Lowlands and Borders of Scotland to recompense for the loss expected by "freeing" the trade in fine woollens from the South and to compensate for the loss of the freedom to export wool, but it was not until after considerable pressure from the Convention of Royal Burghs that, twenty years later, the Board of Trustees for Manufactures was

appointed to manage the distribution of this money. As a result of the "particular plan for the woollen trades" wool sorting stations were established at fourteen locations in the lowlands and borders. Andrew Boyd, the first Superintendent at Kilmarnock in 1729 is credited with re-establishing bonnet making in the town, but as there is record of a minute book of the Corporation of Bonnet Makers held by Baillie Adam Boyd in 1722, one wonders if some confusion has arisen. Superintendent Andrew , in contrast to some of his colleagues seems to have taken his job seriously because we also read of him introducing the manufacture of Irish flannel. It is reported that locally woven woollen goods were a feature of the markets in Kilmarnock in 1720.

Patrick Lindsay, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, writing in 1733 says that "at Kilmarnock are made of our own wool, low priced serges, known by the name of that place where they are made. These are partly for home consumption, and partly for the markets of Holland, and by the help of a little care and encouragement, burying crapes, at least those of low prices, might also be made there for home consumption. Our women are all bred to spin linen yarn, and are not so fit to spin woollen." Mr Lindsay felt that rather too much of the "Equivalent" was being allocated to the wool trades and was making a plea for a share to be diverted to the linen trade which was concentrated along the east coast from Edinburgh to Aberdeen. In 1728, the Commissioners for Trade and Industry produced a scheme whereby a subsidy of £ 300 was made available to those who set up units to manufacture woollens and Kilmarnock is one of eleven towns listed in 1740 as containing a "subsidised manufactory". By this date, the general economic situation in Scotland was improving and alternative markets were becoming available. The cheap, coarse woollen cloth was attractive to the slave owners in the States and as the merchants of Glasgow developed their trade in tobacco so too was the export of these woollen goods. In 1743 a "woollen manufactory" was erected in Green Street, which, by 1778, became Wilson, Gregory & Co., producing "blankets, plush, damask and all kinds of Scotch carpets, narrow twilled cloths of different colours and horse and collar cloths fit for saddles."

Ground was granted in 1746 by the Town Council for the purpose of erecting a "waulk mill" (i.e. a cloth fulling or finishing factory) and the applicants were given the liberty to construct a dam at the foot of the path leading to the Meal Market in the High Street. The term "manufactory", as used for the building in Green Street, described an operation more like the function of our modern warehouseman except that the manufacturer generally bought the raw materials and passed them out to individuals for processing in their own homes in the case of spinning and weaving, and in small factories for dyeing and finishing. Dyeing and finishing moved into factories before the other processes because of their need for a substantial supply of water for processing and power and also for the specialist know-how.

According to a petition to the Lords of Council and Session there were by 1776 sixty-six looms weaving carpets, forty weaving linen, thirty weaving blankets, thirty - serges and shalloons, twenty - duffles and six frames knitting stockings.

1760 - 1830. Mechanisation.

When yarn was still being spun on the wheel, it was reckoned that it took the efforts of four spinners to keep one hand loom weaver supplied with yarn, and as spinsters were in short supply, (some things never change) all sorts of people were drawn into the search for an improved method. Eventually their efforts were so rewarding that the boot was transferred to the other foot and the pressure was on to find more efficient weaving methods. The complex movement of a loom defeated the improvers for many years and hand loom weaving continued along side the factory system which was emerging in the spinning industry until about 1825. The change to power loom weaving was gradual but

progressive from about 1810 to 1850 and was accompanied by a reduction in weaver's earnings of up to 70%. A hand loom weaver in 1812 could expect to earn in the region of £ 3 a week, but by 1825 this had been eroded to 52.5p to creep up to a maximum of 90p by 1840. This was the basic reason for the aggressive agitation in Kilmarnock in 1824 and again in 1831 when the Reform movement was at its height. The Reform Act created 493 electors out of a population of over 18,000 and 299 voted for Dr. John Browning who, in 1836, supported a move in parliament to place control of hand loom weavers' wages in the hands of local Boards of Trade. Hard economic fact in association with restrictive practices, introduced originally to protect the trade combined to kill off hand loom weaving other than as a handcraft.

Working conditions read like a horror story nowadays, as the following example, taken from the shawl weavers in Paisley in 1820, shows. From April to September they worked from six in the morning until ten or eleven at night (depending on availability of daylight) and also on Saturday mornings - eighty-six to ninety hours a week but their "drawboys" had to "knock-up" their weaver at half past five and had to clean up round the loom and shed on Saturday afternoon before collecting their wages. These youngsters would have been about twelve to fourteen years old and put in a ninety - five hour week. David Gilmour, tells of his time as a drawboy and says that when sleep overtook him in Kirk (as well it might) on a Sunday, he always took care to nod his head towards his mother, as his father used to bring him to his senses with a large pinch of snuff.

The old (or first) "Statistical Account of Scotland" states that in 1791 the value of production for the various trades in Kilmarnock were:-

1.	Carpets manufactured	£ 21,400
2.	Shoes and boots	£ 21,216
3.	Tanning	£ 9,000
4.	Gloves	£ 3,000
5.	Bonnets, nightcaps and wigs	£1,706
6.	Miscellaneous	£ 30,528
	Total	<u>£ 86,850</u>

Another source breaks down the miscellaneous item further and says that out of the £ 30,528 there were £ 6,500 worth of sheep and lamb skins dressed, and the same value of printed calicoes. After all these trades had taken their share of a dead sheep there cannot have been much left over and it is interesting to note that meat was 1d. to 2d. per lb. cheaper and of better quality than that sold in Glasgow or Paisley.

In 1668 the Convention of Royal Burghs had collected a sum of money to help the people of Kilmarnock who were rendered homeless as a result of a fire which destroyed the whole town. Four hundred families required assistance which means that the population was probably about the 2,750 mark. At the time of the old Statistical Account it had risen to 6,776 and twenty years later, in 1831 (the year before the first outbreak of cholera in the town) it was three times greater at 18,093 and the value of production had increased to:-

1.	Manufacture of Brussels, Venetian and Scottish carpets	£100,000
2.	Boots and shoes	£ 42,000
3.	Tanning and skins dressed	140,000 - (value not quoted)
4.	Gloves	not mentioned
5.	Bonnets	£ 12,000
6.	Manufacture of harness and printed shawls	£ 200,000
	Total	<u>£ 354,000</u>

Item six on the list is interesting. Printed calicoes were valued at £ 6,500 in 1791 and the increase to £ 200,000 over forty years indicates the growth of a fashion trade whose magnitude was challenged by only two other towns in the U.K. - Paisley and Norwich. When Queen Victoria took to wearing an Indian shawl all the ladies of fashion "just had to have one, my dear!" The original beautiful traditional shawls were brought back by men returning from service in India and were very soon imported by the French and ourselves. Of course they were very expensive and the first efforts at lower priced imitations were sorely restricted in design and colour as they were woven with very fine worsted yarn on simple looms. Development took off in two very different directions. On the one hand, was the development of looms capable of producing highly intricate and colourful designs and on the other, was the introduction of block printed patterns on to fine cotton cloth which began here in 1770. Whilst this was an important and very profitable industry in its time, it only features in the carpet story because of its influence in loom development.

1770 Onwards. - Carpet Loom Development.

A "harness" in a loom is the method of tying or "lashing" together "mails" or guide eyes through which each thread of the warp is passed so that it can be lifted over the shuttle to appear on the face of the cloth or left down to be on the back as the design demands. The simple loom is basically a wooden or metal frame with two large rollers, one at the front and one at the back. Warp threads of yarn are unwound from the back roller as weaving proceeds and the woven cloth is wound onto the front roller. Each individual warp thread passes through an eye called a "mail" which are tied into frames called "heddles" or "healds" in such a way that

sets or groups of threads may be raised or lowered as required. In plain weaving, the "web" or collection of warp threads is split into two lots with each alternate thread passing through one or other of the two sets of heddles.

As one set is raised the other is lowered and the shuttle carrying the weft is passed through the tunnel or "shed" of threads so formed. The position of the heddles is reversed and the operation repeated with the shuttle being returned to its original position. Each succeeding cycle is similar and repeated until the work is finished; each weft shot being beaten into the "fell" of the cloth by the "reed" or "sley". Variations on the simple loom are created by increasing the number of heddles and controlling each set of ends (threads) of warp. As the number increases, the complexity of the weaver's job becomes more difficult until a practical maximum is reached at about fifteen. Hop sacks, twills, herring bones, etc., are woven on this type of loom, but more complex cloths are not possible so the "draw loom" was invented to circumvent these limitations.

In the draw loom, individual mail eyes were tied, as required, in bunches, dictated by design requirements, to an overhead "harness" of strings and thence to control ropes which were operated by a draw-boy. Heddles were still used to produce the basic weave which formed the structure of the cloth and the draw-strings produced the surface figuring.

Both shawls and carpets were woven on similar types of draw-looms; the difference being that carpet looms wove with a coarser sett or pitch. The type of carpet produced at that time on a loom was called Scotch Carpet, Ingrain or Kidderminster. It did not have a pile surface and developed, as far as is known, from the coarse heavy broadcloth or "fote" cloths woven in the Kidderminster area which were used as all-purpose coverings. Another source says that Scotch Carpets were introduced into Kidderminster in 1735 from Scotland. An inventory of the content of Naworth Castle in 1619 refers to "seven carpets of Kidderminster stuff" which suggests that it originated in Cumbria. Pile carpets had been produced for a very long time before this but, as each tuft of pile was inserted by hand, were very expensive.

It is not known what kind of carpeting was brought by Maria Gardiner from Dalkeith but as a number of Heugenot weavers are known to have settled in the Edinburgh area after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, it would in all likelihood, be Brussels which certainly was woven in Kilmarnock from an early date. The standard narrow carpet loom was twenty-seven inches wide and the broadloom was twice that.

In the early days, the weaver threw the shuttle from one side of the loom and caught it at the other without rising from his seat. The sliding, half-standing position necessary because of the need to operate the change of heddles produced an infirmity known as "weaver's bottom" which Burns draws attention to in "The Ordination" :-

"Kilmarnock wabsters, fidge and claw,
An' pour your creeshie nations;
An' ye wha leather wrax an' draw,
Of a' denominations;
Swith to the Laigh Kirk, ane an' a',
An' there tak up your stations;
Then aff to Begbie's in a raw,
An' pour divine libations
For joy this day."

A broadloom was operated by two weavers until Kay invented the flying shuttle in 1733. Both widths are referred to as being "one ell webs" which is very confusing; but the whole subject of weights and measures in history is confusing. There were, in fact, four main "ells" in use at this time: Flemish - 27"; English - 45"; French - 54"; and Scotch - 37.2". The Scotch ell had been standardised in 1552 by Parliament when certain units were adopted for use throughout the country and the Edinburgh ell was chosen but a hundred years later Irvine's Customs Officer petitioned the Lords of Session for a ruling on which ellwand was to be used to measure cloth for export; Irvine's own or that of Paisley.

Up to 1728 the draw-loom remained the most advanced but in that year a French mechanic (Falcon) invented the first machine of any kind to be controlled by punched card. It remained unknown in this country and most patterned cloth continued to be woven on draw looms but the need for two people to operate it and the expense of errors caused by the tedium of the draw-boy's job encouraged the search for an alternative.

In our own area, the man who did most work on improved methods of patterning control was Thomas Morton. He was the son of a brickmaker who moved from Mauchline to a piece of ground he had purchased in what was to become Morton Place. The end of the eighteenth century was a time of great change and improvement on the land and in agriculture and Morton senior, who was a bricklayer in the West Midlands and North Wales, foresaw a demand for bricks in the West of Scotland. He soon found that the clay at Morton Place was not suitable for brickmaking but a deposit of first class material was found at Gargieston to the west of the town and the brickworks were transferred to that location. Young Tom was apprenticed to his father but his talents lay in other directions and was later apprenticed to Bryce Blair, a wheelwright, whose workshop was in the Sandbed. After serving his time, he set up on his own account at Morton Place with a number of turning lathes, some of which he drove by wind power.

The control strings of the draw-loom passed over pulleys set in a frame called the "whorle box" above the loom. Morton turned replacement wooden pulley wheels on his lathes and was in and out of the weavers' sheds in the course of his work. The disadvantages and limitations of the draw-loom were obvious to him and, for some years he and his brother-in-law, John Peden, (who founded the firm of Peden, Coachbuilders in Bank Street) "wrought", as they said, at this problem. After a time, Peden gave up and Morton was left to continue on his own. In 1810 Mr. Cunningham of Fairlie House, Gatehead, asked him to repair a barrel-organ. At first, the connection between the mechanism used to control the production of music and the possible control of pattern forming on a draw-loom did not occur to him, but one night he saw the whole system, of what became known as the carpet barrel loom,

in a dream. He sketched the essentials of the layout on the bedroom wall. The account of the incident does not mention what Mrs. Morton thought of the new decoration!

In effect, the draw-boy was replaced by a wooden drum in the surface of which was drilled a set of holes at regular intervals both across the width and round the circumference. Pegs were tapped into the holes and at each pass of the shuttle from side to side the drum was moved on one step bringing a new set of pegs into position and releasing the strings drawn by the previous set of pegs. Orders for the new loom came in great numbers from local manufacturers and Morton negotiated an agreement with them that if they bought looms only from him, he would not sell to anyone outside the town. This restrictive agreement cut Andrew Barclay, founder of the well known railway engine company, out from loom building. Barclay's father was a wheelwright with Gregory, Thomson and Company and had developed and improved certain of the motions of the carpet barrel loom. Other people were also at work on loom improvements but the most successful was Joseph Jacquard. Morton heard about this loom and, recognising the increased flexibility of Jacquard's system, modified his own looms after 1827 to accept Jacquard cards. Between 1811 and 1821, Morton attempted to improve Ingrain carpeting and eventually perfected three-ply or triple thickness carpet which became known as Scotch Carpet. Andrew Barclay's biographer claimed that it was Barclay who first produced the triple cloth and says that the original piece of carpet was in possession of the "Kilmarnock Standard".

Morton also applied the Jacquard to the Brussels loom and the rapid expansion of carpet weaving in the town in the early part of the nineteenth century was largely due to the provision of suitable looms at a time when markets at home and in the States were expanding. In 1815, the Board of Trade made him a grant "to aid him in the prosecution of further experiments" and his fellow townsmen presented him with a silver punch bowl at a public dinner held in his honour in 1826. He was elected a member of the Royal Scottish Society of Arts in 1835.

In 1778 there were 66 carpet looms in the town which increased to 800 by 1825 and to 900 by 1840.

The Carpet Companies.

When Lord Milton bought his length of carpet in 1735 it would almost certainly have been woven on a hand operated draw-loom by a weaver working in his own home and this, despite the founding of the Factory Mill in 1738, would be the normal situation until about 1790. Gregory, Thomson and Company was in operation by 1778 and was the nursery for most of the other firms as they drew trained and experienced workers from them. Some of the existing woollen manufacturers, while continuing existing activities, added carpets to their list of products and some of the younger members of the owners' families entered carpet manufacturing on their own account. For instance, the Blackwood family had been bonnet makers from 1625 until about 1750 when they became cotton, worsted and wool spinners and finishers and by 1847 carpet makers. On the other hand Hugh Wilson set up business as a carpet maker in 1820, moving to worsted spinning and then carpet yarn spinners only by the end of the century.

Hugh Wilson married a sister of Mrs. Sandy Walker, daughter-in-law of Johnnie Walker and it was arranged through this connection that when Ingrain carpets were being packed for export to the States a bottle of whisky would be rolled up inside as a present for the buyer. The American taste for whisky is said to have developed from this happy practice.

By 1833 there were eight carpet manufacturers in the town.

Thomas Breckenridge - Ladeside

William Brown & Co.-	16 Grange Street
Gregory, Thomson & Co. -	24 Grange Street
James McLean	- 29 Grange Street
John Raeburn	- 17 High Street
John & Robert Thomson -	24 Green Street
Hugh Wilson	- 20 Grange Street
William Wyllie	- Welbeck Street

About 1853, Hugh Wilson's second son, John, set up in business as a rug manufacturer in Burnside Works, weaving Scotch carpets on hand looms. The original factory had been built about 1820 as workshop for a market garden which occupied the ground close to the river and by 1847 the premises were in use as a shawl print works. He sold the business to James and Robert Blackwood in 1879. James Blackwood and his father started weaving carpets in Townhead Mill in 1847 and in 1860, after his father's death, took his brother into partnership to become Blackwood Brothers and Company. In 1882 the partnership was dissolved. James carried on at Townhead under the original name and Robert went to Burnside to operate as R. Blackwood and Sons. Scotch carpets were made on hand looms until 1881 when some second hand power loom were bought from Crossley of Halifax.

Gavin Morton (or Guy, as he was usually called) was a nephew of Sir Alexander Morton of Darvel who had started lace weaving in the valley in 1853 and was so successful that twenty years later he employed between four and five hundred weavers. His company diversified into carpet weaving in the late 1870's which grew to such an extent that he had to enlist the help of W. F. Blackwood on a commission basis. Guy felt that he would like to change the direction of the carpet business and as he was a natural engineer of considerable ability as well as being a gifted textile designer, wanted more freedom to develop his ideas. He decided to join the Burnside company, gradually becoming the dominant partner and sole partner in 1933.

In 1829 Gregory, Thomson and Company joined with Andrews, Thompson and Company, carpet importers of New York, to establish the Thompsonville Carpet Manufacturing Company of Connecticut and a number of Gregory, Thomson's employees went out to work in the new factory. There were three partners in the American company who, between them, held seventy-one shares in the new company; the Kilmarnock company holding the remaining ten. This new partnership was a response to the last of the series of tariffs on carpet imports to the States enacted in 1824. It was envisaged that yarn would be spun in Kilmarnock and shipped to Thompsonville to be woven but this idea was soon discarded as impractical and spinning plant was sent out to be installed along with the rest of the machinery. Many difficulties were experienced in the early years but eventually trade improved and it later became part of the Biglow-Sanford Company.

The bulk of carpets woven in the town during the nineteenth century were of the Ingrain type and production continued until 1929 though in greatly reduced volume. Some of the limitations of colour and design were overcome by painting in dyestuffs to limited areas of the woven cloth just before steam finishing. Brussels and Wilton carpets were woven from about 1760 and Chenille Axminster from about 1860. Spool Axminster was introduced in 1928 and Tufted in 1954.

As the industry expanded it required more and more skilled men to maintain its plant and machinery and most were ex-wheelwrights. By 1840 they were called millwrights and worked mainly with timber but as the century wore on more and more of their work involved the use of metal. Thomas Morton believed that the class of work he did required higher skills than those possessed by millwrights and called his men "Mechanitions" but eventually they became engineers.

The carpet story is by no means finished as the remnants of B.M.K. are now merged with Stoddard, Sekers International of Elderslie and production still continues in Kilmarnock though not at Burnside Works which was demolished a number of years ago.

Change is the substance of history and the one thing that is certain is that it will continue to provide another chapter or two in the carpet story over the next hundred years.

CHANGING TIMES IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

by

David Bowman (and Barbara Graham)

“In 1887, at the age of sixteen, I began working at Bentinck Mill, Kilmarnock, with Messrs. Little, Manufacturers.

They were still carrying on with hand-loom weaving, hand winding and warping. The weavers worked on their own looms and had their “pirns”¹ wound by their wives or a member of the family. The bobbins for warping were also wound by women in their homes on a spindle driven by a large wooden wheel, with the yarn running on a windlass.

The cloth produced was mostly thibet² skirting, thibet aprons, woollen cloth for raincoats, woollen linings and later woollen and wincey³ shirtings. One woman weaver was constantly employed weaving reversible aprons. Reversible means that the coloured stripe might be scarlet on one side of the cloth and blue on the other side. This effect was obtained by a special drafting of the warp and special treadling arrangement. The weavers were old and the last of their generations. They worked long hours and their wages were very small. While I was employed at Bentinck Mill, power-looms and power-winding were introduced. In addition to the hand-looms and the few power-looms in Kilmarnock, we had “webs”⁴ woven in Girvan and Newmilns, where there was then a number of hand-loom weavers who worked for a weavers’ agent to whom we sent the webs.

I remained in that job for four years. My wage at the beginning was five shillings a week. In February 1891 I was offered a situation by Messrs. John Lawson and Son, Manufacturers, Loanhead Mill, Kilmarnock. I accepted it and started with them early in March on a two years’ engagement at a wage of 22 shillings a week for the first year and 25 shillings a week for the second.

When I started at Loanhead Mill, they were chiefly producing thibet skirting, which was at that time worn by most women as skirts under dresses or as skirts along with a bodice of other material. They were made in very pretty stripes and some of them had attractive geething⁵ and dobbie⁶ effects. The cloth was made 36 inches wide, and 3 yards made up a skirt. They were in constant demand for very many years, but in course of time fashions began to change, so the demand slackened and now they are completely out.

In addition to thibet skirting, thibet butchers’ aprons, made in indigo with white stripes, were in demand, and a considerable demand for them continues. Shirtings, woollen union⁷ and wincey druggets⁸, drugget aprons, Scotch tweeds and kitchen plaid⁸ were also made. When the thibet skirting trade began to fall off, other cloths were introduced - ladies’ dress materials, serges, cloth for waterproof coats of the Burberry type, having 150 ends of 2/80 lace to the inch in the warp and 120

shots of weft per inch. Linings for coats were also made. School blazer cloths became quite a big trade. These were made in school colours and in very many designs.

In the practical work of the Mill I had very varied experience and this was supplemented by attending evening classes in weaving in Kilmarnock and a session at the Weaving College in Glasgow. This enabled me to deal with all the demands made upon me.”

This account of work in the textile industry raises a number of interesting points. It may seem surprising to learn of hand-loom weaving being operated on a commercial basis as late as 1887. From the 1830s hand-loom weavers had found it increasingly difficult to survive in the cotton industry which by that time had gained predominance over the older linen and woollen textile industries. It was only after the middle of the 19th century, however, that power-looms became the norm in the woollen industry and hand-loom weavers continued to be employed for fancy work which the early power-looms could not handle. By the end of the century little hand-woven cloth was sold and the last remaining hand-loom weavers employed in Scotland in the 20th century were pattern weavers, who produced samples for firms such as tweedmakers. Others eked out a meagre freelance existence producing customers' orders. Mr Bowman's mention of the hand-loom weavers being “the last of their generation” implies the end of an era.

It is clear from the extract that weaving still tended to be a family concern, with several members of a family being employed by one firm. It is interesting to read of a woman being employed on specialist work, presumably on a hand-loom, for women were more commonly employed on power-looms as the work on the old hand-looms could be very heavy and so only boys were usually taken on as apprentices for that type of work. When power-looms were first introduced the women who operated them were employed at half the men's wage rate. This, of course, was an incentive to manufacturers to invest in more machinery in order to cut labour expenses and so remain competitive with other countries where wage rates were even lower. Only by producing more cloth at cheaper rates could they retain a portion of their former markets when European trading policies became protective from the 1870s onwards, and a steep American tariff on imports of foreign woollen manufacturers was erected in 1890.

The sum of five shillings a week which Mr. Bowman earned as an apprentice indicates the meagre wages current among hand-loom weavers. Throughout most of the woollen industry wages were low. A survey conducted in 1885 showed that earnings in the Scotch tweed trade were £ 35 per annum (13s.4½d. per week), compared with £ 34 (13s.0¾d.) in the shawl trade and only £ 31 (11s.9d.) in the manufacture of shirtings and blankets, which is the sector nearest to the type of work being produced in Bentinck Mill. The average rate depended largely on the proportion of female employees in a particular branch of the industry and it was possible for individual earnings to be much higher. In the quality tweeds trade in Galashiels, for instance, which employed a higher percentage of males than did some other sectors of the textile industry, weavers in 1877 earned an average of 22 shillings, while pattern (hand-loom) weavers averaged 25-30 shillings, foremen earned 28-30 shillings and pattern designers could earn between 32 and 70 shillings per week. These rates remained virtually static for some twenty years.

The Borders workers were very much the Scottish elite, however, and the wages earned by Mr. Bowman in his second weaving mill (22s. rising to 25s.) compared favourably with local rates. Even in 1906, fifteen years after Mr. Bowman entered employment with Messrs. Lawson and Son, the average weekly earnings of male woollen workers in the Scottish counties beyond the Borders was only 23s.11d., with women earning 11s.8d., boy apprentices being paid an average of 8s.11d. and girls

7s.4d. The comparable average figures for the three Borders counties of Peebles, Selkirk and Roxburgh were 27s.7d. for men, 18s.6d. for women, 10s.6d. for boys and 8s.6d. for girls.¹⁰

Had Mr Bowman belonged to an earlier generation of weavers, his chances of receiving appropriate technical education would have been much reduced. Although Anderson's Institution in Glasgow was founded as the first technical college in Britain as far back as 1796 and introduced evening classes for "mechanics" in the early 19th century, it was not until the 1870s that technical education became a matter of public concern. The German victory in the Franco-Prussian War had proved the value of widespread technical education and the more progressive sectors of British public opinion demanded the encouragement of practical forms of education¹¹. Apart from this crisis, it was inevitable that, as industry became increasingly mechanised, the need for skilled manpower would require more sophisticated training than mere observations in the factory could provide.

Unfortunately, Mr. Bowman does not mention where in Kilmarnock his evening classes in weaving were held. It is more than likely that they took place in the School of Science and Art in Woodstock Street, adjacent to the Kilmarnock Academy building of 1876 at the junction of North Hamilton Street and Woodstock Street. This School, which taught courses for examination by the prestigious South Kensington Department of Education, had been formed in 1865 when it shared premises with Kilmarnock Library in the Corn Exchange Buildings. As a result of subscriptions from a group of local businessmen, money had been raised to erect a fine new building in Woodstock Street, which was opened in 1878¹². Mr. Bowman's attendance here, however, is purely speculative.

The details of his education in Glasgow are better-known because of the survival of two of his exercise books. The College at which he attended evening classes in 1900-1 was Glasgow Technical College (Weaving Branch)¹³. This had been opened in 1877 at Well Street, Calton, a district of Glasgow in which there was a concentration of textile factories. There it remained until 1908, when it was amalgamated with the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College in George Street. The latter was the descendant of Anderson's Institution and the forerunner of the University of Strathclyde.

Weaving was the basic class of instruction in the College, beginning with hand-loom weaving techniques and proceeding to a knowledge of the most sophisticated power-looms of the day. As the College grew in reputation and more funds were attracted from both entrepreneurs and Government, the subjects of instruction were expanded to include spinning, knitting, dyeing, calico printing, engraving, design and chemistry.

By the middle 1890s grants from the Government and the Town Council had enabled fees to be reduced from the original £12 for day classes and £5 for evening classes to only six guineas for day classes and a sliding scale from one guinea for first year evening classes to two guineas for evening classes for fourth year students. Set against contemporary wages, however, fees were sufficiently expensive to act as an incentive to study for those who enrolled. Students were prepared for both the College's own examinations and those of the City and Guilds of London Institute, although the latter were not compulsory. The high success rate of students in both internal and external examinations is a tribute not only to the quality of the teaching staff but also to the perseverance of students such as Mr. Bowman who were prepared after a long day's work to travel to Glasgow to further their education. Well might men such as he take pride in the work to which they showed such dedication.

- 1 *Bobbins*
- 2 *Fine woollen cloth of a type originating in central Asia.*
- 3 *Cloth with linen or cotton warp and woollen weft. This was a popular product of Glasgow and the West of Scotland.*
- 4 *Piece of cloth which has been woven in a loom, but has received no further treatment.*
- 5 *Twisted thread design?*
- 6 *Arrangement for lowering and raising harnesses on loom to produce a pattern.*
- 7 *Originally cloth woven with linen warp and woollen weft, but the name can refer to any material in which warp and weft are of different fibres.*
- 8 *Coarse stuff, often undyed and unmilled, and used by working class people for everyday clothing.*
- 9 *Coarse woollen cloth.*
- 10 *C. Gulvin, The Tweedmakers (1973), pp. 174-5.*

- 11 *M. Blair, A Short History of the Glasgow Technical College (Weaving Branch) 1908), p. 11.*
- 12 *A. McKay, History of Kilmarnock (4th Ed.), p. 169.*
- 13 *M. Blair, A Short History of the Glasgow Technical College (Weaving Branch).*

THE KILNFORD TRAGEDY 1924

by

Stuart J Wilson

Kilnford Farm was on the Auchans estate just outside of Dundonald. It was close to the present A759, just beyond its crossroads with the B730 Dundonald to Dreghorn Road, on the right hand side as you travel towards Hillhouse Quarry. The farm buildings no longer exist, but a private residence of the same name has been built on the site.

At the time of the fire, on Sunday 21st September 1924, the farm was tenanted by Mr John G. Smith. The farm buildings formed three sides of a square, the farmhouse being in the back-ground and facing the road. On the left hand side and set at right angles to the house were the dairy, byre and granary; while on the opposite side was a byre for young stock with a loft above it for storing seed potatoes. It was in this loft that the tragic fire occurred. The building was a stone-built two storey structure with a stone staircase connecting the ground and upper floor. At the time of the fire it was being used to provide sleeping accommodation for a "tramp squad" of "tattie howkers" employed by the Scottish Wholesale Co-operative Society Ltd. The Society had purchased the growing crop, as was the normal practice, and were responsible for the harvesting of it. The farmer had responsibility merely to provide suitable living accommodation for the potato diggers.

There had been much disquiet prior to the Great War regarding the housing provided for seasonal workers in Scotland, which included not just potato diggers but also berry pickers, navvies and herring gutters. A Royal Commission had been established in 1912 to investigate the housing of the industrial population of Scotland both urban and rural, under the chairman-ship of Sir Henry Ballantyne, and amongst many conclusions was the recommendation that the farmer should be required to report to the local authority the number of workers which he proposed to provide accommodation for, and that the approval of the authority be required both for the extent and the nature of the accommodation provided. When the merchant assumed occupation he would take over the entire responsibility for the conduct of the workers, for keeping order and for the cleanliness of the premises. He would also be responsible for leaving or restoring the premises at the end of the occupancy in or to the condition in which they were received.

As far as Kilnford was concerned, the accommodation had recently been approved by the local authority who expressed themselves as quite satisfied with the provision made for the comfort of the workers. The loft had been divided into three compartments, access to each of which was from a passage leading from the staircase. When the fire broke out shortly after one o'clock on the Sunday morning, two men were in the room nearest the staircase, two men and a boy in the next cubicle and six women in the compartment at the far end of the loft. The number sleeping in the loft would have been much greater but for the fact that many of the diggers had gone home for the weekend. In all, 28 harvesters, including 15 women, had been engaged for the previous three weeks on the farm.

How the fire started was uncertain at the time, but the most likely theory was that it was caused by an unextinguished light thrown to the floor by one of the workers, or by a lighted candle being accidentally overturned by someone in their sleep. There was certainly a lot of loose straw lying about the floor, because the howkers used straw in place of mattresses on their plank beds raised a foot or so above the floor.

The fire apparently started near the staircase and John Murray, who shared the compartment at that end with John Greenan, was the first to be aware of danger. He wakened his companion and they both fought their way with some difficulty down the stairs and outside. Murray ran to the farmhouse to raise the alarm and a messenger was sent to Auchans House to telephone for the Kilmarnock Fire Brigade and medical assistance from Dr Macfarlane of Dregghorn. Farmer Smith got a ladder, climbed up and broke in two or three of the upper storey wooden windows with a heavy mallet. Dense smoke and sparks poured out and it was impossible to gain an entrance, although Mr Smith repeatedly shouted a warning to those asleep inside until driven back by the intense heat and smoke.

When John Greenan realised that the women and other men were still trapped inside the burning building he raced up the staircase and fought his way along the passage to the women's room. Bursting open the door, he entered and seized the nearest of the unconscious women, Susan Cree, and carried her back along the passage to the staircase, where he pushed her out of reach of the flames into the care of those outside, before returning again along the passage in an effort to reach the women's quarters. He was never seen alive again.

Greenan was not the only hero that night. A boy of only 17, John Ormsby, died in a vain attempt to save his grandmother Mrs Annie Dunsmore. John was sleeping in the middle room and had been awakened in time to allow him to escape, but had chosen to remain inside and try to reach his grandmother. He unfortunately perished in his brave attempt.

Almost as soon as the Fire Brigade arrived from Kilmarnock the roof of the barn fell in and it was impossible that any of the occupants could still be alive. Firemaster Inverarity and his men were mainly concerned with controlling the blaze and preventing it spreading to the adjoining farmhouse. They were helped in this by the direction of the wind, which fortunately blew the sparks and burning debris away from the house instead of towards it. As a precaution, however, Mr Smith had begun to remove furniture from the house, and eight valuable Clydesdales had been led to safety from the stables. The firemen quickly had the blaze under control and could soon enter the barn to begin the grim task of recovering the victims' bodies. When they were found, most of the victims were in a state of composure which is consistent with them having been suffocated in their sleep before the flames reached them.

While removing the bodies, Firemaster Inverarity was involved in a somewhat macabre accident. He was descending a thirty-foot ladder with the body of John Greenan over his shoulder when the ladder broke, plummeting both fireman and burden to the ground. Fortunately Mr Inverarity escaped serious injury apart from severe shock.

Those who died in the fire were:-

John Greenan (32) from Kilwinning who had been previously 10 years in the Royal Navy.

Joshua McPahil (35) from Stevenston.

Samuel Goreman (50) of Coatbridge.

John Ormsby (17) of Paisley.

Annie Dunsmore (68), John's grandmother, also from Paisley.

Bridget McDermott or Marshall (54) of Kilwinning.

Annie Kerr or Moran (43), a native of Edinburgh but of no fixed residence.

Jeanie Cree or Orr (26), married, from Fore Street, Kilmarnock.

Bella Cree (18), Fore Street, sister of Jeanie, and also of Susan Cree who was rescued by John Greenan.

Eight of the victims were buried in Dundonald Parish Cemetery on the Tuesday afternoon after the fire. John Greenan was interred in his home town of Kilwinning.

Jeanie Cree/Orr had left a child of little over a year old with her mother in Fore Street. She had wanted to take the baby with her to Kilnford, but thankfully this had not been permitted. If still alive, this baby will now be around seventy years old. Does anyone know what became of him/her?

THE KILMARNOCK TO TROON RAILWAY

by

Frank Beattie

It was not a big event. No fanfare, no celebrations. In effect it was just the start of a new coach service. But when the whip cracked and the horses pulled the Caledonia away, a new era in public transport was born.

It was June 27, 1812 and the passengers making their way from Kilmarnock to Troon didn't know they were making history, and probably didn't care. But what happened that morning was the beginning of something new; something very special. The journey was the start of regular railway passenger services in Scotland.

The passengers had good reason to think that it was nothing special. The coach ran between Kilmarnock and Troon on the new fangled railway, tram line, metal road, or whatever they called it, but in the line wasn't even finished at the Kilmarnock end and the passengers had had to make their own way to Gargieston, almost two miles from the town centre. Still, it was a good service. Three times a week and the run was smooth and reasonably swift. All things considered, the fare of one shilling (5p) wasn't too bad.

The proprietor of the Caledonia was a William Paterson from Kilmarnock. The driver was one by the name of Willie Wight, sometimes referred to as Willie Wright. He was the first driver of a passenger train in Scotland, though he drove horses, not an engine. He must have made a bob or two at this service, because he later purchased it.

The Kilmarnock and Troon Railway was built primarily to take coal and minerals from the pits around Kilmarnock to the harbour at Troon. It was the first railway in Scotland which was to cross land owned by more than one person and subsequently was the first constructed under Act of Parliament.

First survey work suggested that a canal should be built and a plan was drawn up. It even reached the stage of a Parliamentary Bill. But that fell through. Then a plan for a railway was completed and an Act of Parliament obtained. Construction on the railway started in 1808 and took four years. The line was completed in July 1812. It was double track throughout, with frequent passing places.

The railway was a major undertaking, one of the most ambitious engineering projects of the day. The Duke of Portland was the prime mover and the major investor. He had acquired the lands around Kilmarnock when he married Henrietta Scott in 1796. He wasted no time in exploiting the rich coal deposits of the area. The biggest problem was transporting the coal from Kilmarnock to the coast, for much of it went to Ireland. At the end of the 18th century coal from Kilmarnock was taken by road to Irvine for export to Ireland. In those days the roads were poor and the only practical alternative was a canal.

The proposal to build a canal was probably dropped because the railway plan was cheaper, even if it was technically more advanced. Railways had been built in Scotland before, but nothing on such a grand scale as the Kilmarnock and Troon. Most of the earlier railways, or waggonways were built at colliery pitheads and ran for just a short distance.

The construction of the Kilmarnock and Troon Railway posed several problems. Spanning the River Irvine at Gatehead required a bridge of four arches - the world's first railway viaduct. Now (1996) the bridge has been restored and plaques explaining its historic significance placed there.

The passenger traffic that first summer proved that the service was viable, so the following year it ran again, following the same pattern as before. Three return trips were made each week, on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. This year the service was extended into spring and summer. The Caledonia carried goods as well as passengers and it left Kilmarnock at 9.15 am. The return journey started from Troon at 6 pm. It doesn't seem much, but the services were adequate for the demands of the day.

Fares were adjusted too. In 1813, a day return for an inside passenger was 2/6. A single journey was 1/6. Outside passengers paid 1/6 and 1/- (1/- = 5p). Tickets were sold by William Patterson in Kilmarnock and a Mr Thomson in Troon. A claim has been made that the Kilmarnock and Troon Railway was the first railway to have a booking office.

One feature of the journey was a stop at Drybridge, where both men and horses were refreshed. With this stop and with the horses jogging along at seven miles an hour, the journey took between one and a half and two hours.

The original Kilmarnock terminus was at the offices of Kilmarnock House, but the exact location is unclear. It might have been about where the Episcopalian Church is now at the corner of Dundonald Road. Or might have been just a little further on at what became the Bank Street Police Station and is now a car park. This terminus was moved down the line in 1821 to allow developments on the Duke's land.

As a general rule the passengers in the very early days did not go all the way into Troon, preferring to disembark at Johnnie Hay's pub, the Bottle and Glass. It was an easy trudge from there down through the fields to the sea.

Others ran passenger vehicles on the line. One was known as The Boat and was just an open truck, and according to the company minutes a Mrs Jean Brown of Troon was given permission in 1830 to run a jaunting car on the line. At the same time Willie Wight was allowed to run an additional vehicle.

The Kilmarnock and Troon Railway is one of the most fascinating little lines in the country, with more 'firsts' than most other lines. But it has been poorly researched to date.

One day...

THE MURES OF ROWALLAN

by

Barbara Graham

Considering the family's long standing connection with Kilmarnock, it is surprising that most local people know so little about the history of the Mures of Rowallan. Even the assiduous searcher finds gaps in the story of the Mures which it is impossible to fill, but the following commentary provides a brief outline of the family's history.

As with most ancient families, the origin of the Mures is obscure. The first member of the family of whom there is record is Sir Gilchrist Mure, who was knighted by King Alexander in 1263 after the Battle of Largs on the same occasion on which Robert Boyd received a knighthood.¹ It is not clear, however, whether he was granted the lands of Rowallan at that time or whether the estate came into his possession at a later date.

The "Historie of Rowallane" gives the flavour of those perilous times when the Scots nation was on the anvil:

"Acho (Haco) King of Norway landit at Air wt 160 schippis and twentie thousand men of warre, and ye caus of his cum'ing was becaus Macbethe had promissit to his predessores some yles, qlk (which) yi had not gottine, viz. Boote, arrane wt ye tuo Cumbrais; hnaing tane Arrane and Boote he come to the lairges (Largs) in Cunynghame, qr (where Alexr foirfather to the first Stewart yt (that) was king, discomfeit ym and sleu 16000 of his men. He (Haco) died throw sorrow. Yr (there) was slaine of ye Scotts, 5000."²

Although the Battle of Largs ended the last serious threat of Norse invasion, the political climate was no more settled for succeeding generations of the Mures. By the 1290s Scotland was plunged into the confusion of the succession dispute. Not enough details survive to form a clear picture of the role of the Mures at this time, but it may be surmised that, unlike the Boyds, their later allies, they may have opposed the Bruce claim, for Gilchrist Mure had married Isabell Cumine, or Comyn, and so his descendants were closely related to Bruce's bitterest enemies.³

The Cumine connection was obviously strong, for part of the Cumine arms was incorporated in the Mure's heraldic device. Wherever their sympathies may have lain, the Mures did not allow their fortunes to suffer in the long run. In the latter years of Bruce's reign, Adam Mure married a distant relative, Janet Mure of Polkellie, thus uniting two branches of the family and strengthening the Mure inheritance. The Polkellie line branched off again, however, in a couple of generations and remained in the hands of a cadet branch of the Mures until the end of the 14th century.⁴

It was a daughter of this marriage who was to raise the fortunes of the Mures to their most exalted level. Elizabeth Mure of Rowallan was married in 1336 to Robert the Steward, grandson of Robert Bruce and heir-apparent to his half-uncle, King David II. Although it was apparently unknown at the time, Robert was distantly related to his wife within the “forbidden degrees” of kinship, which meant that within the strict letter of canonical law neither the marriage nor the couple’s four sons could be considered legitimate. In 1347 this situation was apparently remedied by the grant of special dispensation from Pope Clement VI which declared both the marriage and the children legitimate. The matter was not allowed to rest there, however, for after the death of Elizabeth Mure, Robert Stewart married Euphemia of Ross, by whom he had two sons. In 1371 Robert succeeded David II as King and the question of his legitimate successor arose. Naturally, the Ross family urged the claim of Euphemia’s eldest son, but the King stood by the legitimacy of his first son, John, who eventually succeeded him in 1390, taking the title of Robert III as the name John was considered to be an unlucky one for a King, given that the reigns of John of England, John Balliol and John of France had all ended in disaster. Thus the blood of the Mures mingled with that of the House of Stuart in a line which was to be unbroken until the death of Queen Anne in 1714.⁵

The next most striking member of the Mure family was Robert, known as “the Rud” because of his violent, quarrelsome nature. Robert held the lordship of Rowallan in the latter part of the 15th century. Where his ancestor, Adam, had enhanced his family’s status by judiciously arranged marriage, Robert seemed set on the path to ruin. He was well known through frequent attendance at Court in the minority of James III, but he won no favours there because of his offensive behaviour. The “Historie of Rowallane” gives a glimpse of this uncouth character.

“He was ane man black hared and of ane hudge large stature, therefore commonly called the Rud of Rowallane. The King in his bearne (drunken) heed proponed to round with him and as he offered swa (so) to doe, dang out his eye with the spang of ane cocle-shell. He was a man regarded not the well of his house, but in following court and being unfit for it, waisted, sold and wadset all his proper lands of Rowallane.”⁶

Robert was no wiser in his choice of a bride than he was in financial affairs. Few details survive of his wife Margerie Newtoun, daughter of the Laird of Michaelhill in the Merse, but her reputation was obviously not good according to the family historian, who lamented that with “Ane druncken woman and ane waistor man, quhat (what) made then this house to stand but the grace of God.”⁷

The unsavoury Robert outlived his eldest son and was succeeded in 1504 by his grandson, John, who had been still a minor when his father died in 1495. It was the custom at that time for the custody of a child inheritor to be given to a responsible person who held the child’s estate “in ward” until he or she came of age, in the meantime enjoying a proportion of the profits of the estate and paying for a further proportion to the Crown. It must be assumed that John’s mother was also dead by the time his father died, for he was put in the custody of the highly colourful Margaret Boyd, third daughter of Boyd of Bonshaw. She had been a mistress of James IV, and no doubt it was due to her influence with the King that she secured the wardship of John Mure. It is doubtful if the post was much of an honour if the boy’s grandfather had neglected the estate, but that did not deter Margaret Boyd, who eventually reinforced her position by marrying her young ward, possibly in 1498 when it was recorded that King James IV gave sasine of the lands of Warnockhead to John Mure and Margaret Boyd. It would be fascinating to know further details of these two characters, but without such information it is impossible to tell whether this was simply a marriage of convenience or whether time shrouds an unlikely love match. The significance of this marriage in the long-term was the cementing of the Mure alliance with the Boyds, which was to be so important in the next two centuries.⁸

John Mure must have died while still a young man, for he was killed with his monarch at the disastrous Battle of Flodden in 1513, only 9 years after he succeeded to his inheritance. It is surprising therefore to find that he left no fewer than eight children. We must assume therefore that he had been a teenager when he married Margaret Boyd, who was by then the mother of two illegitimate royal children, the future Countess of Morton and the Bishop of St. Andrews.

Most of John Mure's children made good marriages. The eldest, Mungo, married Isabell Campbell, daughter of Sir Hugh Campbell of Loudoun, Sheriff of Ayr, and the daughters married the Lairds of Newark, Sorbie, Bar and Portincross respectively. In all probability their resourceful mother was responsible for such successful dynastic planning.

Mungo inherited a fair share of his mother's ambition. In keeping with his wife's important status, Mungo set about improving his ancestral home. Much secular building was being undertaken in the reign of James V (1513-42), most notably the royal residences at Falkland, Stirling and Linlithgow, and Renaissance influence was percolating through the country. Just as the King had looked to France for his two brides, the ill-starred Madeleine and her successor, Marie de Guise, so too the builders of his reign looked to the Continent for inspiration.

Obviously Mungo Mure had only limited resources at his disposal, but he was able to introduce some notable improvements in his Castle of Rowallan, which reflected the current trend towards a more gracious and less defensive style of living. In particular, he "raisit the hall upone four vouttis (vaults) and laiche trance (?) and compleitit the samen in his awen tyme."⁹

Mungo must have imparted his desire to enhance his property to his eldest son, John, for he in turn took "great delyte in policie and planting." He builded the "fore wark, back wark and woman house (i.e. the old kitchen and servants' rooms on the east of the Castle) frome the ground." It seems, therefore, that it is to John Mure that we owe the twin turrets at the entrance to the Castle which have such a French air that they might have been lifted direct from one of the chateaux of the Loire valley. A tablet at the front of the Castle gives the date of completion of this work as 1562. John did not stop at beautifying his home, for he also "plaintit the oircharde and garden, sett the uppir banck and nethir banck, the birk zaird (yard) befoir the zett (gate)." It is easily seen why John Mure was said to have "lived graciouslie."¹⁰

It was not all gracious living in the Ayrshire of the 16th century, however, for these were the years of what one historian has called "the Ayrshire Vendetta,"¹¹ when noble families feuded with one another to the death in an effort to assert their supremacy. The Mures were not in the premier league of Ayrshire families, but inevitably they were drawn through marriage relations into the maze of political alliances which were the order of the day.

Through most of this turbulent period in Ayrshire history, the Mures stood by the Boyds as their allies in feuds with the Montgomeries of Eglinton and the Cunninghames of Glencairn, who had come into ascendancy in North Ayrshire after the Boyds fell from favour in 1469 when James III came of age. After forfeiture of the Boyd lands and title in 1469, a portion of the Kilmarnock estates was restored to Alexander Boyd in 1492 (12) but the title of Lord Boyd was not restored until 1536. (13) During the interim period, the chief of the Boyds was known as the Gudeman of Kilmarnock, a title implying the status of gentry rather than nobility. While the Montgomeries and Cunninghames circled around the fallen family like killer whales, the Boyds were glad to enlist the support of the Mures of Rowallan in their efforts to keep their heads above water and to fight back and regain their former status.

When James Boyd, son of Thomas Boyd who had been created Earl of Arran and had married the King's sister before the Boyds fell from power, was slain by the Earl of Eglinton in 1484, his cousin and successor, Robert Boyd, vowed vengeance on the Montgomeries. Revenge was long delayed but was eventually achieved, in part by means of an alliance with his kinsman, Rowallan. "The Historie of Rowallane" states that "Mungow Muir of Rowallane, quhois (whose) mother was (Margaret) Boyd, Joynit wt Robert Boyd, Gudemane of Kilmarnock, in seeking revengement of the Slauchter off James Boyd, the King's sister's sone, quho (who) sould (should) have been Lord Boyd, bot before he was fully restoirit was slaine be the Earle of Eglintone." (14)

Such evidence that Boyd was not a lone weakling evidently persuaded Eglinton that discretion might be the better part of valour, for in May 1530, a contract was "aggreid betuix ... Hew, Erle of Eglintoun and ... Robert Lord Boyd, anent all quarrellis and slaughters of thair kin," by which Robert Boyd was to receive "for the slaughter of his chief," two thousand marks, while the Earl of Eglinton was discharged for all "bygone spulzies and slaughters." It is interesting to note that in this document the Boyd chief is already referred to as Lord Boyd, although his title had not been formally restored. (15)

The Mures also stood by the Boyds in their quarrels with the Earl of Glencairn. At an unspecified date sometime before 1536, Glencairn put forward a claim to the barony of Kilmarnock, a traditional Boyd honour, and proclaimed a court to be "holdin at the Knockanlaw." (Literally "hill of the law.") On hearing of this, Robert Boyd and Mungo Muir raised their friends and supporters and appeared in arms at Knockinlaw, where they challenged Glencairn to battle and thus "stayit him from his pretendit court holding." (16)

In 1544 the feuds escalated beyond the local level. Scotland was then passing through the turmoil of yet another minority, that of Mary Stuart. The Duke of Hamilton was acting Regent but his authority was challenged by the ambitious Earl of Lennox, who brought the struggle to a head by rising in armed rebellion with the support of his ally, Glencairn. The issue was decided in a skirmish known as "the Field of Glasgow," to which Glencairn brought a large contingent of supporters. (Estimates range from 500 to 800 men.)

The fact that Glencairn was on one side was enough to range Boyd and Mure automatically on the opposing front, although in fact, both were distantly related to the Duke of Hamilton through Margaret Boyd. The two allies therefore hastened to the scene of the dispute, "the said Mungow being lairglie bettir accompanied than the foirsaid Robert." Their arrival seemed to turn the balance of the struggle. "In the heat of the battle, while victory was doubtful, Robert Boyd, (17) of the Kilmarnock family, arrived wt a small party of horse and having valiantly thrust himself into the midst of the combat, decided the fate of the day."

The services of the Boyds and Mures did not go unrewarded, for "the Duick Hammiltone quho (who) reckonit both his lyfe and honor to be preservit be thair handis, maid the said Robert Boyd, Guidman of Kilmarnock Lord Boyd (18) lyk also as the Revardit the said Mungow Mure with dyvers fair gyfts." Although the Boyd contribuion seems to have been the more celebrated, young Robert Boyd himself acknowledged "the alteratione of his estait to the worthines of the said Mungow's handis." (19)

Accounted "a man of singular valour" all his life, Mungo Mure "died in battell at the Black Satterday," (20) this being a woeful reference to the disastrous battle of Pinkie on 10th September, 1547 when ten thousand Scots died, defending their child Queen against the "Rough Wooing" of the English Protector, Somerset. (21)

Although the feud with Glencairn ceased temporarily after the Field of Glasgow, the Montgomerie-Boyd vendetta continued unabated despite the settlement of 1530, with Mungo's successor, John Mure, following his father's policy of supporting the Boyds. In 1547, in retaliation for the murder of Montgomerie of Lainshaw by Lord Boyd and his party, his son, the Tutor of Eglinton, plotted to ambush Boyd "in the bogsyd beesyd Irving" and kill him. In this time of great need, Mure rallied to Boyd's support:

"At qlk (which) tyme Johne Muir of Rowallanne, accompanied with his friendis and servantis, come to the said maister (22) of Boyd quhair (where) he was and thair, wt out (without) reckoning his querrell wes willing to wenter (venture) his lyfe and all that wes wt him in the defence of the said maister's lyfe. Thair wes wt the Laird of Langschaw, at that tyme the Laird of Carnell, quho (who) had mariet the said Jhone Muir of Rowallane's sister, and the Laird of Sesnok, quho and the Laird of Rowallane was sister bairnes (cousins,) they tua refusit the pursuit, because of the said Jhone Muir of Rowallane's being wt the foresaid maister of Boyd quhom (whom) they war assurit wald not forsaik his defence. The said Robert, maister of Boyde, semit nevir to forzett that kyndlie turn." (23)

By this time the Reformation had gained a firm hold in Ayrshire. Among the supporters of the early Reformer, John Willock, in his dispute with Quintin Kennedy, Abbot of Crossraguel, were John Mure of Rowallan, his brother-in-law, John Fullarton of Dreghorn, and their ally, Robert, Lord Boyd. (24) In 1562 the names of both Mure and Boyd were found among the signatures on a bond to "maintain and assist the preaching of the evangel" and to abolish "idolatry", a clear warning to Mary Stuart than she should not attempt to impose her Catholic religion on the Protestant nobles and people of Scotland. (25)

By 1567, however, Boyd had become a Queen's man and it was perhaps for this reason that Mary thought it worthwhile after her escape from Loch Leven Castle in May 1568, to write Boyd's friend, John Mure, urging him to join her muster of loyal forces.

"Traist Friend, We greit zou (you) weil. We believe it is not unknown to zou the greit mercie and kynness that Almythie God of his infinit gudness hes furthschevin towart us at this tyme in the deliverance of us fra the maist straitless presson (prison) in quhilk (which) we ware captive, of quhilk mercy and kyndnes, we cannot enough thank and therefore we will desire zou as ze will do us acceptable service, to be at us with all possible (speed) on Settirday the aught (eighth) of this month, be aught hours afternone or sooner gif (if) ye may, well accompanyt with zou honourable friendis and servantis, bodin (bidden) in feir of weir (war) to do us service as ze sall (shall) be appointit, because we know zour constance at all tymes." (26)

Mary's plea fell on deaf ears, for Mure apparently did not rally to her aid. Their difference of opinion, however, did not prevent Lord Rowallan from offering assistance to his former ally, Lord Boyd, when he was obliged to surrender Dean Castle after participating in the disastrous Battle of Langside:

"Efter the field of Langsyd the said Robert being Lord Boyd, fell in the disfavour of the Regent Murray; how kyndly he was ressavit (received) in the place of Rowallane be the said Johne Muir Laird thairoff, it is well knain (known) to dyvers within the perishenne (parish) zit (yet) living." (27)

After this long record of friendship it was a pity that a bitter feud should have blown up between the Boyds and the Mures in the 1570's. Around the beginning of that decade a party of Mures fell into dispute with Robert Colvill and killed him. Since the fourth Lord Boyd was related to the Colvills through his mother who was the daughter of Sir Robert Colvill of Ochiltree, this act of the Mures brought the vengeance of the Boyds down upon their heads. Thomas, Master of Boyd, with a party of some 15 supporters, prepared for retaliation. It is easy to picture them as contemporaries saw them,

“all boiden (bidden) in feir of weir (war) wt Jackis Speiris secreitis steilbonnetis swordis lang culiveringis duggis and pistolettis, expresslie prohibeit to be borne worne usit or schot be our actis of pliament.” (Parliament) (28) This warlike preparation was conducted against John Muir “in the Wall” (or Well), a cadet of the Mures of Rowallan, whom they ambused and slew. (29)

From there the vendetta escalated until it was of such serious proportions that the heads of the two houses had to be called by the Regent Mar to appear before the Secret Council in 1572 to have the dispute settled. Lord Boyd’s offer of peace on this occasion is recorded:

“I offer to cum befoir him (Rowallan) and freyndis and confes that I haif offendit my lord God and him in ye slautter of Johne Muir and will desyir ye said Lard (Laird) for ye auld kyndness yt was betuix my hous and his to forzett (forget) and forgif ye same and faryr (further) I offer to amend to Johne (Mure’s) wyfe and barne (bairn) be sycht of freyndis and to stand in hartle kyndnes wt ye said Laird (Rowallan) as my fayr (father) stuid to his, in all tymes cuming hee standand in lyikmaner to me.” (30)

At the same time Lord Boyd, swore that none of his party would molest any of Rowallan’s following, for such were the ramifications of feuds that quite distantly related members of a family could find themselves embroiled in a vendetta:

“Be it kend till (to) all men by yir prit ires (by these present letters) me, Robert Lord Boyd for myself and takand ye burdyng upon me for all personis of my surename cum of my awin (own) house my men tenentis and servandis ... at comand of my lord regentis grace and lordis af secreit counsall upon my lawtie and honour asouris Johne Mure of Rowallane and all personis of his surename cum of his awin hous his men tenentis and servantis to be unhwat (unhurt), unharmit, unmolestit, troublit or in any wayis persewit by ye law owther (either) for auld feid (feud) or new unto ye first day of August nixt.” (31)

By the time John Muir’s son, William, succeeded in 1591 quieter times were dawning. This was fortunate for William was a man “of meik and gentle spirit, (who) delyted much in the study of phisick (medicine) which he practised especially among the poore people with very good success. He was ane religiose mane.” (32)

By contrast, his son, another William was “ane stronge man of bodie and delyted much in hounting and halking.” (33)

Not much is known of this Laird beyond the fact that he married twice. His first wife was Elizabeth Montgomerie, daughter of the Laird of Hessilheid.⁽¹⁾ A century earlier such an alliance would have been out of the question, but now the old feuds were dying out. His second marriage was to Jeane Porterfield, daughter of the Laird of Duchall.* This lady’s interesting testament has survived and its list of her possessions provides a fascinating glimpse of the standard of living maintained in the early 17th century by an Ayrshire lady of comfortable but not opulent means. Her wardrobe contained some luxury items, such as “ane velout cloik (velvet cloak) furoit with plusche and the four lapis lynit with satein, estimat to XXX lb.” Even her more mundane clothes sound attractive for they included among a long list “ane ryding cloik of violat hewit claith, estimat to ten lb,” and “ane doublat and skirt of black Spanes taiffatie, all estimat to thrie lb.” Her jewellery included “and gould ring set with ane dyamont, estimat to XXX lb ... ane ring set with ane rubie, estimat to ten lb,” a “neck chinze (chain) of gould, with ane taiblet of gould, estimat to threescoir lb” and “ane chaddow (chain?) of orien pairll (Oriental pearls) estimat to X lb.”

Lady Jane's household effects were also included in her testament. The homely details ring down the ages with a reassuring air of familiarity:

"Fyve pair small lynyng scheittis (linen sheets) xiii lb twa peir of walkit (waulked) blankattis nyne sewit cuschanes, iii lb fyve silvir spones, xv lb."

Obviously a spring-cleaning session had been envisaged, for the inventory included "thrie pair of auld courtingis (curtains)" and "tuelff ells of Scottis reid scarlot to be courtingis, viii lb." Somehow the pathos of this uncompleted task strikes home with more immediacy than tales of drama on the battlefield. (34)

The third William in succession assumed the lordship of Rowallan in 1639. By nature he was akin to his grandfather, being "pious and learned (with) ane excellent vaine iun poyesie." At the age of 22 he had an address to King James included in the "Muse's Welcome" which was presented to the King during a visit to Hamilton in 1617. His other literary works included several translations of Latin works and various religious treatises, including "The True Crucifixe for True Catholikes" (1629) a work which was highly regarded in its day. After a controversy in 1629 about which version of the Psalter should be used in Scottish churches, which had rejected the edition produced by King James VI and I, Rowallan over the next decade produced his own version. Unfortunately it was not chosen as the official edition, but the Committee which reviewed all the possibilities was authorised to borrow liberally from the Rowallan version when preparing its final version. (35)

Despite his great literary accomplishments, Sir William did not live in an ivory tower. Practical works interested him too and "he delyted in building and planting; he builded the new work in the north syde of the close, and the battlement of the back wall, and reformed the whole house exceidingly." (36)

His energies were not confined to the affairs of his own estate. By the 1640's civil war rolled over the country and responsible landowners felt obliged to stand by their principles. In 1643, Sir William served as a M.P. in the Scottish Parliament held in Edinburgh and in the following year, he took his place on the "Committee of Warre" for the sheriffdom of Ayr. Later in the same year he marched with the Scots army into England to support the Parliamentary interest against King Charles I. It may be assumed that he was present at the Battle of Marston Moor on 2nd July 1644, a Parliamentary victory in which the Scottish contribution played a large part. Mure was apparently considered a man of some importance for in a letter of 12th August, 1644, to his son, he mentions being left temporarily in charge of his regiment while the army was in the Newcastle area. (37)

William's successor in 1657 was yet another William, who, like his father, lived through turbulent times. After the Stuart restoration in 1660, it was the turn of Scottish Presbyterians to suffer persecution, and as a convinced Covenanter, Rowallan bore his share of misfortune. He allowed conventicles to be held at Rowallan Castle, where in the nineteenth century "two kirk-stools (were) still shown in the garret, the most commodious apartment in the house, which is called to this day the 'auld kirk'." (38)

Retribution for such defiance of the law followed in 1665 when the Lairds of Cunninghamhead, Nether Pollock and Rowallan were imprisoned in Stirling Castle. Obviously these three were considered to be inveterate ring-leaders, for when a number of other landowners were released in 1668 after imprisonment for similar offences, they were kept in custody until the following year.

A further wave of repression followed in 1678 when Ayrshire was obliged to play unwilling host to a number of Highland regiments, which were quartered without payment in private homes and which, to

put it mildly, were none too civil in their behaviour. When the total bill for this visitation of the Highland Host was reckoned, the loss accruing to the parishes of Kilmarnock and Fenwick amounted to £14,431. 0s. 8d. Scots. The losses incurred by the Rowallan family accounted for more than half of this total:

“Rowallan’s lands for quarters, £1,471. 6s. Dry quarters, £5,891. 6s. Plunder, £1,071. 16s.” (39)

Such crippling losses were not considered sufficient punishment for attachment to Covenanting principles, however, and in 1683, Sir William and his eldest son were arrested and taken to London. From there they were sent to the Edinburgh Tolbooth, where they were joined soon afterwards by the Laird’s second son, John. In order to secure their release from custody in April 1684, the family had somehow to raise a bond of £2,000 from their already impoverished estate. Sadly Sir William did not live to see the establishment of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, for he died in 1656 just three years short of that achievement. (40)

Sir William’s successor and namesake was the last in the male line of succession of the Mures. On his death in 1700, the estate passed to his youngest daughter, Jean, whose second husband was David Boyle, 1st Earl of Glasgow. From this marriage, the inheritance passed to another Jean, whose marriage to Sir James Campbell of Lawers eventually brought the Rowallan estate into the orbit of the Campbells of Loudoun. As third son of the second Earl of Loudoun, Sir James did not expect to succeed to the Loudoun estates. He was killed in action at the Battle of Fontenoy in Flanders in 1745 before the outbreak of the Jacobite Rebellion, during which his Campbell relative, the 4th Earl of Loudoun, featured as a prominent general on the Government side. The son of this marriage, James Mure Campbell, however, succeeded unexpectedly to the Loudoun estates as 5th Earl when his cousin died in 1782. (41)

The Rowallan estate remained an adjunct of the Loudoun inheritance until the twentieth century, but the Castle at Rowallan was allowed to fall into disrepair. The Loudoun fortunes began to sink in the second half of the nineteenth century due to the abuses of the youthful Henry Weysford-Charles Plantagenet, 9th Earl of Loudoun and fourth Marquis of Hastings. As a nineteenth century historian tactfully commented, “The last Marquis figured prominently in the turf annals of his time”. In other words, “He lacked disastrously the steadying power of self-control and his racing ventures and misfortunes have many of them of the wildest and most rash description, involved him in heavy financial losses; his whole career, in short, was sad in the extreme.” The ninth Earl died while in his early thirties, but the estate never recovered from his extravagance. (42)

By the turn of the century the titles of Loudoun and Rowallan had passed to Charles Edward Hastings-Abney Hastings, Lord Donington. In 1901, Lord Donington sold Rowallan Castle and estate to Mrs. Polson of Glasgow, who gifted it to her son, A. Cameron Corbett, M.P., father of the late Lord Rowallan. By that time the Castle was totally uninhabitable and so in 1902 Mr. Corbett commissioned Sir Robert Lorimer to build a new house in the Scottish Baronial style on the rising ground behind the old Castle. This was completed in 1906 and Mr. Corbett and his now motherless children moved into the new house at Rowallan, leaving behind as a gift to the city of Glasgow, their previous estate at Rouken glen. (43) In 1911 at the coronation of King George V, Mr Corbett was created 1st Baron Rowallan or Rowallan, and so this ancient title was rescued from extinction. (44)

The late Lord Rowallan, who died in November 1977, was second in the new line. Although not a Mure, he had a record of public service of which the Mure spirits who may yet inhabit the old Castle could rightly feel proud. His attachment to Rowallan and his fears for its future were expressed in his

autobiography, which, although it is the story of a Corbett, is nevertheless a fitting conclusion to the story of the Mures of Rowallan

THE MURES OF ROWALLAN

Footnotes

- 1 Paterson, J. - "History of the County of Ayr" (1852), Vol. 2, Page 182.
- 2 Mure, Sir William - "The Historie & Descent of the House of Rowallane" (c.1657), Pages 19-20 note. (Ed. William Muir, 1825).
- 3 Paterson - "Ayr", Vol. 2, Page 184. Mure - "Historie", Page 21.
- 4 Paterson, J. - "History of the Countries of Ayr & Wigton" (1866), Vol. 3, Part 1, Page 247.
- 5 Bingham, C. - "The Stewart Kingdom of Scotland, 1371-1603", Pages 24-30.
- 6 "Historie", Pages 71-72.
- 7 "Historie", Page 72.
- 8 "Ayr", Vol. 2, Page 187. "Historie", Pages 74-79.
- 9 "Historie", Pages 79-81.
- 10 "Historie", Page 83.
- 11 Robertson, W. - "Ayrshire: its history & historic families", Vol. 1, chs. 7 & 8.
- 12 Robertson - "Ayrshire", Vol. 2, Page 337.
- 13 Paterson, - "History of the Counties of Ayr & Wigton", Vol. 3, Part 1, Page 26.
- 14 "Historie", Page 127.
- 15 Paterson, - "Ayr & Wigton", Vol. 3, Part 1, Pages 26-27.
- 16 "Ayr & Wigton", Vol. 3, Part 1, Page 28 "Historie", Page 127.
- 17 Robert, 4th Lord Boyd, grandson of the Robert Boyd mentioned above in earlier vendettas.
- 18 I.E. Lord Boyd in his own right, as his father was still living.
- 19 "Historie", Pages 79-81, 130-131. "Ayr & Wigton", Vol. 3, Part 1, Pages 29-31. Robertson - "Ayrshire", Vol. 2, Page 339.
- 20 "Historie", Page 81.
- 21 Prebble, J. "The Lion in the North" (1971), Page 185.
- 22 Classed here as Master of Boyd because his father Thomas was still living, although he had resigned the lands and lordship of Kilmarnock to his son.
- 23 "Historie", Page 128.
- 24 Robertson - "Ayrshire", Vol. 1, Page 206.
- 25 Ibid, Vol. 2, Page 340.
- 26 "Historie", Pages 131-132.
- 27 Ibid, Page 128.
- 28 Ibid, Page 120.
- 29 Paterson - "Ayr", Page 189.
- 30 "Historie", Page 116.
- 31 Ibid, Page 117, Document of 10th May, 1572.
- 32 "Historie", Page 86.
- 33 Ibid, Page 88.
- 34 Lady Jeane's testament, quoted in Paterson's "Ayr", Page 191.
- 35 "Historie", Pages 92-94. Samples of his verses are quoted on Pages 133-136.
- 36 "Historie", Pages 90-91, 94.
- 37 Ibid, Pages 94 and 137-138.
- 38 Ibid, Page 96.
- 39 McKay A. - "History of Kilmarnock" (5th.ed. 1909), page 51
- 40 "Historie" Pages 96-97

- 41 Ibid Pages 99-101
- 42 Robertson - "Ayrshire" Vol. 2, Page 241
- 43 Lord Rowallan - "Rowallan" (1977) pages 26-27, 33
- 44 Ibid, page 35.

KILMARNOCK BURGH POLICE: A BRIEF HISTORY

by

Superintendent Mair

On 3rd November 1800 the Town Council minutes read "Considering that several attempts by a number of persons to break into different houses in town and in one instance broke into the Innkeepers house, resolved that it will be proper sometime to have a town guard to be composed of nine of the inhabitants, three of the Volunteers and a Special Constable to be appointed in rotation to keep watch and patrol the streets during the night until it shall be declared by the Town Council to be no further necessary and the Council decreed that the expense of coal and candles shall be defrayed from the town and that the Magistrates shall give orders for calling out the inhabitants to perform this duty as they see fit".

The Tolbooth and the Town Gaol at that time were situated in Cheapside Street with a cell on the edge of Kilmarnock Water known as 'Thieves Hole'. Both male and female lawbreakers were placed in this cell. The passageway is still there and now referred to as the 'Hole in the Wall'. In 1802 an Act was passed amending the Acts relating to the Police and Improvement of the Burgh of Kilmarnock, which, among other things, allowed for the erection of a new Town Hall and Guard House and enlarging and repairing the Gaol or Tolbooth. (The enlarging and repairing the existing Gaol consisted of erecting a partition in the cell to segregate males from females).

The new Town Hall and Guard House (cells) were erected in King Street in 1805 and it was about that time rates or, as it was known them, conversion money, was collected from the inhabitants.

In 1810 a further Act was passed "for paying, lighting, cleansing, watching the Burgh of Kilmarnock and for regulating the Police and Markets". The policing of the town then turned to the burgesses who among themselves elected by ballot to carry out the duty of Town Watchmen and were known as the "Burgess Police". Around this time Commissioners of Police replaced the Commissioners of Supply in respect of the Town of Kilmarnock.

This was a time of reform and in 1812 the Deputy Lieutenant of the County and the Magistrates of the Town arranged to call out and have sworn in 60 or 70 Special Constables to assist in keeping the peace in the town.

In 1828 the library at the Town Hall was converted into a Police Office for use by the Commissioners of Police, Conversion of Monies, Surveyor of Police, and the Collector of Road Money. The Town officers were made Officers of the Police to assist the Police Sergeant. This would be a Sergeant Paton (ex-Sergeant in the Scots Greys) who, along with four policemen, was employed in an attempt to establish a regular police force. An old register records the appointment of one Constable John Cook in 1828 who retired in 1870 aged 71 with an allowance of 10/- per week and died three months after retiral.

The first Superintendent of Police was appointed in 1846, one by the name William Blane. This unfortunate person found several local dignitaries drinking after hours and ordered them out of the public house. The pressure placed on him after this was such that he became insane and was placed in the madhouse, dying soon after his release.

He was succeeded in 1855 by Superintendent D.R. Craig and he in turn was replaced by Superintendent Alexander Galt in 1858, the strength of the Force at that time being 1 Superintendent, 1 Inspector, 3 Sergeants and 13 Constables. In common with a large number of Kilmarnock Police, Superintendent Galt had previously served in Ayrshire Constabulary. He resigned in 1868 because of bad health.

Superintendent George Willison, a Law Clerk aged 29 years, was appointed in 1868 and became known as Chief Constable in 1878. The strength in 1884 was 1 Superintendent, 1 Lieutenant, 1 Night Lieutenant, 1 Inspector, 1 Detective Sergeant and 16 Constables with salaries of £232 per annum, 35/- per week, 31/- per week, 30/- per week and Constables in Merit Class 1st, 2nd and 3rd class at 25/-, 24/-, 23/- and 22/- per week respectively.

Angus Cameron who was later to become Chief Constable was appointed Detective Sergeant on transfer from Ayrshire Constabulary in 1879.

George Hill was appointed Chief Constable in 1898, the same year in which the new Burgh Police Chambers were opened in Sturrock Street. Over the years with increases in the strength of the Force this office became overcrowded and new Administrative Headquarters were opened at 82 Dundonald Road in 1954.

Chief Constable Hill served until 1904 when he became Chief Constable of Carlisle. The first Deputy Chief Constable was appointed in 1894 and the change in rank structure began to stabilise:

	C.C.	Supt. & D.C.C.	Lieut.	Det.	Sgt.	Sgt.	Constables
1899	1	1	1	1	1	1	25
1900	1	1	1	Det.Insp.:1		1	25
1901	1	1	1	Det.Insp.:1		4	25
1904	1	1	1	Inspector:1		4	25
1905	1	1	1	Det.Sgt.:1		4	25
1907	1	1	1	Insp.:1	Det.Sgt.:1	3	26

No reason is given for the changes from Detective Sergeant to Detective Inspector to Inspector and back to Detective Sergeant.

The Chief Constables from 1904 were as follows:- 1904-9 John Campbell 1910-21 Angus Cameron; 1921-47 Charles Roy; 1947-60 John Grant; 1961-1968 William D. Gammie.

The Force amalgamated with Ayr Burgh and Ayrshire Constabulary on 15th May 1968, the strength at that time being 1 Chief Constable, 1 Superintendent and Deputy Chief Constable, 6 Inspectors, 14 Sergeants, and 89 Constables and 8 Policewomen.

Uniform would appear to be button up tunics which with slight variations were worn until 1950 when collars and ties were introduced, caps were pill-box type with small peak and would appear to have been replaced around the time of the First World War with the wider crowned Army type flat peaked cap. Metropolitan helmets were issued in 1926 until 1950 when all Scottish Police Forces reverted to the flat cap with diced band. Helmets were also worn by Constables round about 1900, possibly until the start of World War I.

The present Sheriff Court House was built in 1852 with an adjoining prison in Bank Street. At that time the County Police had an office in Titchfield Street, Kilmarnock, and when the Prison ceased to exist as such in 1880, the County Police took over the premises.

The old Burgh Police Office in Sturrock Street was demolished under the Town's re-development plan in 1973 and Bank Street became the main Police Office of Ayrshire Constabulary in Kilmarnock, with the office at 82 Dundonald Road retained for administrative purposes. New Police premises are due to be completed in 1977.

KILMARNOCK SHERIFF COURT

by

Sheriff David B. Smith

The opening for business of the new sheriff court house across St Marnock Street from the old court house is the occasion for the following notes on the history of the court at Kilmarnock.

Originally the sheriffdom, as the judicial unit, was coterminous with the county; and in each sheriffdom there was a caput, or burgh, in which the sittings of the head court of the sheriff took place. The first mention of a sheriffdom of Ayrshire occurs about 1207; and the first named sheriff was Reginald of Crawford in 1214. From that time the caput of the sheriffdom was the burgh of Ayr.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Small Debt Act 1837 made provision for small debt courts to be held by the sheriff in other locations within his sheriffdom to be held at Saltcoats, Largs, Kilmarnock, Beith, Old Cumnock, Girvan and Maybole.

The medieval location of sheriff courts, however, did not always correspond with the demographic reality of later periods. Thus by the middle of the sixteenth century Lanarkshire had been divided into an Upper and a Lower Ward with courts at Lanark and Hamilton respectively; and by the middle of the eighteenth century the growing commercial importance of Glasgow meant that an additional sheriff court of Lanarkshire was established in the city. Similarly, for example, in the early years of the nineteenth century additional courts for the sheriffdoms of Renfrew, and Forfar, were established at Greenock (1815), and Dundee (1831). Similar developments took place elsewhere.

In the first decades of the nineteenth century Kilmarnock and North Ayrshire grew rapidly in industrial and commercial importance, as well as in population. By about 1840 the population of Kilmarnock exceeded that of Ayr. The consequent new-found feelings of importance gave rise to a demand for the establishment of a new sheriff court at Kilmarnock. The Society of Procurators at Ayr, having derided the idea in 1824, were by 1845 in favour of the proposal, and started the ball rolling with representations to the Home Office in London.

There followed in quick succession a series of petitions to the Home Office from “the magistrates, landed proprietors, solicitors, and inhabitants of Irvine and neighbourhood”; from “the magistrates and inhabitants of Saltcoats”; from “the justices of the peace, landed proprietors, merchants, solicitors, farmers, and others, of the towns and parishes of Beith and Kilbirnie”; from Kilwinning, and Dalry, and of Kilmarnock itself. The MP for Kilmarnock Burghs, the Hon. Edward P. Bouverie, added his weight.

This concerted onslaught achieved its intended result; permission was granted for a second sheriff substitute of Ayrshire who would sit at Kilmarnock; and Benjamin Robert Bell, an advocate of thirty-four years of age, was appointed on 2nd July 1846.

There was as yet no sheriff court house, and the new sheriff substitute took his seat on Friday, 29th August 1846, within the Town Hall in King Street. At the ceremony of welcome, Robert Robertson, Dean of the Society of Procurators of Ayrshire, struck a curiously sour note by reminding Sheriff Bell that “thousands of the inhabitants of the county and a majority of the faculty at his Lordship’s bar, thought there was no necessity” for the court; and by criticising the choice for the office of procurator fiscal. Shortly afterwards, the sixteen law agents practising in Kilmarnock elected their own Dean. It was clear that a sheriff court house was required. By 1850 the Commissioners of Police had obtained plans for a new building from three local architects, James Ingram, Robert Johnstone, and William Railton. After some acrimony Ingram withdrew from the contest, and a decision in favour of Railton’s plans was made, it appears, on the ground that his proposals were cheaper than Johnstone’s.

The court house was opened on 5th May 1852; it has housed the sheriff court at Kilmarnock for one hundred and thirty-four years. (It is gratifying to note that the Minister of State at the Department of the Environment has stated in a public letter to Mr Willie McKelvey, MP for Kilmarnock, that it is the Government’s intention to restore the old burgh and provide therein offices for the procurator fiscal.)

The original bounds of the Kilmarnock sheriff court district comprehended all of Ayrshire north of the River Irvine, except the parishes of Irvine and Kilwinning, and also the parish of Mauchline. When the changes in local government took place in 1975 the opportunity was taken to make sheriff court districts coincide, so far as possible, with the new local authority districts. The result was that Kilmarnock lost Mauchline but gained Irvine and Kilwinning, Arran and the Cumbraes. That large accretion of population meant that a single sheriff could no longer cope; and in 1975 a second permanent sheriff was appointed. The volume of work has continued to increase to such an extent that since 1983 the complement of permanent sheriffs has been increased to three.

The new court house is much larger than its predecessor. It contains no less than five courtrooms: Kilmarnock will be added to the list of places where the High Court of Justiciary sits.

There follows a list of all the sheriffs of Kilmarnock. From 1846 until 1971 the resident sheriff’s official title was “sheriff substitute”: from 1971 the law has followed popular usage by designating the local judge as “sheriff”.

Until the appointment of Sheriff Russell, all the incumbents had been drawn from the Bar.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Former appointment</u>	<u>Subsequent</u>
<u>appointment</u>		
1 Benjamin Robert Bell	1846-52	Banff (as Principal)
2 Thomas Anderson	1852-83	Resigned
3 David Hall	1883-1901	Died
4 David James Mackenzie	1902-14	Wick Glasgow
5 John Arthur T Robertson	1914-21	Falkirk
6 William Dunbar	1921-22	Stornoway Died

7 Walter James Robertson	1922-25		Glasgow
8 John Bartholomew	1925-26		Glasgow
9 Alfred Martin Laing	1926-42	Kirkwall	Resigned
10 James Lindsay Duncan	1942-51	Stornoway	Edinburgh
11 George William I C Cohen	1951-56	Wick	Edinburgh
12 Reginald Nathaniel Levitt	1956-82	Wick	Died
13 David Buchanan Smith	1975-		
14 Thomas Malcolm Croan	1983-	Banff, Peterhead	
15 Terence Francis Russell	1983-	Oban, Campbletown, Fort William	

150 YEARS OF KILMARNOCK PROVOSTS

by

Charles Woodward

PORTRAITS OF KILMARNOCK PROVOSTS

Although the Burgh of Kilmarnock was founded in 1591, it did not have a Provost till after the Reform Act in 1833. Before then the magistrates were appointed by the Boyds, Lords of Kilmarnock, and later by the other owners of Kilmarnock Estate who followed them.

The earliest portrait we have is of Archibald Finnie, the third Provost, in 1837. After this a few Provosts had portraits painted, until it became a tradition with Peter Sturrock in 1874. From then there is an almost unbroken series until 1975 when the Burgh of Kilmarnock was merged as part of Kilmarnock and Loudoun District. Six different artists painted portraits - we have portraits of 24 Provosts.

ARCHIBALD FINNIE - Provost 1837-1839

The third Provost of Kilmarnock and one of the prominent family of Finnies. His son, also Archibald, was also Provost of Kilmarnock from 1858 to 1861 and was connected with the building of Duke Street and the Corn Exchange buildings, now the Palace Theatre. Archibald's brother John, a successful merchant in Brazil, supplied the funds for the formation of John Finnie Street in the 1860s.

Archibald Finnie was a colliery and ironworks owner, and at this time Kilmarnock was the centre of the Ayrshire coal industry, although it is difficult now to picture collieries like Bonnyton, Kirkstyle and Annanhill.

The family home was Springhill, now an Eventide Home. It is indeed true that these portraits reflect the history of Kilmarnock in many of its social, economic and civic ways.

ROBERT CUMMING - Provost 1847-1852

Treading in the footsteps of his father and grandfather who were both Magistrates, Robert Cumming was elected Town Treasurer in 1836, and Magistrate two years later. His interests in civic life were the Gas Company where he was for 20 years a director, and the Water Company where he was its first chairman.

It is perhaps ironic that this portrait was presented to the Water Company, as it was during his term as Provost that Kilmarnock suffered its worst ever flood.

In the early morning of 14th July 1852, following very heavy thunderstorms, the Kilmarnock Water burst its banks. Many bridges, dams, factories and houses were swept away. Much of the town centre was inundated and the water rose as high as the base of the Laigh Kirk steeple. There was a torrent of water four feet deep at The Cross. Many more people lived in the area then than now, and they were awoken by cries of alarm or the sounds of destruction as doors, windows and even walls were smashed in and the debris was crashed around. The Council Chambers in King Street were built over the river and there were 21 prisoners in the cells. Miraculously they were led to safety and, although throughout the town many lives had been at risk, no-one was killed.

The level of the flood on Fleshmarket Bridge is marked on Tom Paterson's etching, displayed elsewhere in the gallery.

PETER STURROCK - Provost 1874-1886

Born at Struthers Farm he studied as a civil engineer and practised for some time before leaving the collieries of Skerrington at Hurlford and Wellington at Crookedholm.

First elected to the Town Council in 1866, he rose to be Town Treasurer and Dean of Guild. In 1874 he was elected Provost. During his term of office much of the old town was demolished to make way for Union Street, John Dickie Street and Sturrock Street.

He was associated with the acquiring of the Gas Works in 1871 and the opening of the Corporation Art Gallery in 1886. Peter Sturrock proposed in 1877 that a monument be erected in Kilmarnock to Robert Burns and a public appeal raised £2,488 in 18 months.

DAVID MACKAY - Provost 1895-1901

Due to David Mackay's efforts more than any other do we owe the existence of the Dick Institute today. With his organising ability and persuasive speaking, Kilmarnock ratepayers adopted the Public Library Act in 1893. The mansion house of Elmbank was acquired for the housing of the library and museum. Seeing that these premises were soon too cramped for the valuable collections that were

being donated, Provost Mackay approached James Dick, a native of Kilmarnock, resulting in the generous gift to the town of the Dick Institute, erected on the site of the old Elmbank House.

As Chairman of the Kilmarnock Burns Club he is credited with the idea of forming the Burns Federation. He was a talented amateur artist, a great patron of the arts and a promoter of the annual art exhibitions in the Corn Exchange.

In his business life he was concerned with the firm of William Wallace and Co., one of the principal spirit firms in Scotland, and makers of "The Real Mackay" whisky.

JAMES HOOD - Provost 1901-1907

During his Provostship many municipal improvements were made - a new gas works, the introduction of electric lighting and the water scheme at Lochgoin. These undertakings involved considerable Parliamentary work and he was frequently in London. The most important scheme was undoubtedly the opening of the Kilmarnock trams on 10th December 1904.

It was while he was formally opening the tramway that Lord Howard de Walden stated his intention to present the Burgh with a gold chain of office for the Provost of Kilmarnock. The chain was duly made and presented to James Hood in May 1905 at his Lordship's home in London. The chain is on display, and fully described, in the exhibition.

James Hood was associated with the family cabinetmaking business, and several Hood cases are still giving good service in the Dick Institute. He was Vice-President of the Kilmarnock Glenfield Ramblers from 1912 and 1915 and was responsible, with a small band of geologists, for making the best he could from the havoc in the Thomson Coral Collection after the Dick Institute fire in 1909.

MATHEW SMITH - Provost 1910-1917

Born on the estate of Bellfield House, Mathew Smith entered the family grocery business in Glencairn Square. In his early 20s he joined the Town Council and but for two short breaks he would have had over 50 years' service. During the half century he served under seven Provosts and he held practically all the important convenerships, and was prominent in carrying out improvements in Kilmarnock's water supply. The building of Kirklandside Infectious Diseases Hospital was completed in this period.

Kilmarnock is indebted to Provost Smith for his interest in the declining numbers of 'Kilmarnock Worthies'. He employed as an errand boy Neddy Whiteside (who referred to his employer as the 'Big Yin') and gave a helping hand to many colourful characters in the town.

At a ceremony in 1927 there was a double presentation made to him. He was given the Freedom of the Burgh, the highest honour any man can receive from his native town. The presentation scroll was contained in a richly ornamented silver casket made by J. Cameron & Sons, King Street. He was also presented with a portrait of himself by Andrew Law, a replica of the one displayed here which was kept by the Town Council.

JAMES WILSON - Provost 1921-1927

Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather he took an active part in the affairs of the town. Although he had this hereditary connection with the Town Council he had, at the same time, a splendid record on his own account. He entered the Council in 1886 as a member for the First Ward. Later, he became convener of the committee that was responsible for the electric lighting and tramway scheme. This was the most extensive scheme the Council had ever undertaken and it developed during his term as Provost till it provided light and power for the whole of Ayrshire as well as to Paisley and Greenock.

James Wilson was an active sportsman, being keen on football, cricket and golf. Interestingly, he played for Kilmarnock Football Club and took part in the historic game when Queen's Park first visited Kilmarnock in the 1870s.

For many years he designed the layouts of the colourful flower borders in the Kay Park.

GEORGE WILSON - Provost 1937-1943

Son of a former Provost, his family had been prominent in the civic light of the town for four generations. His great-grandfather had been at the public meeting in Dean Park in 1816 when a resolution was passed declaring "the present Parliamentary representation in Scotland to be altogether unreasonable, unconstitutional and unjust, considering that of two millions of inhabitants only 2,700 have a right of voting for members of Parliament". This meeting led to the arrest and trial of Baird and McLaren and their imprisonment for six months.

In 1927 George Wilson succeeded his father as representative for the Dean Ward and in 1937 he was elected Provost. He was the representative from Kilmarnock Town Council on the County Council for six years. He took a great interest in the Dick Institute, particularly in the Art Gallery.

Throughout his office many additional responsibilities were placed on him owing to the war, particularly Civil Defence and War Comforts Committees.

DANIEL CAIRNS - Provost 1946-1950 and 1956-1959

A native of Kilmarnock, Daniel Cairns joined the Town Council as a Labour member in 1931, and served continuously until his retirement in 1974. His main public interests were in health and social-welfare. This led him to work on committees as diverse as the Ayrshire River Purification Board and Kilmarnock Public Library Committee. He had two terms as Provost and was, in fact, the first Labour member to hold the office. The climax of his municipal career came in 1964 when he was made a Freeman of the Burgh in recognition of his public service. Many spheres of public activity other than local politics engaged his attention. For many years he served on the management of Kilmarnock Co-operative Society, and in the church he was a lay preacher, organist, choirmaster and Sunday-School teacher.

Possessing so many public interests left him little time for recreational activities. He enjoyed bowling, however, and had an abiding passion for football, particularly as a supporter of Kilmarnock Football Club. Once he actually played football for Scotland against England at “welfare” level.

JAMES MACKIE - Provost 1968-1971

Joining the Town Council in 1953 James Mackie remained a councillor till the local government re-organisation in 1975. As a councillor, his main interests lay in the General Purposes Committee and the Streets and Watch Committee. He represented the Town Council on the County Council and the Convention of Royal Burghs. Whilst serving on the Police Committee the research was done which led to the establishment of crime squads.

James Mackie served the Labour movement throughout his life, both as an elected Member of the Council and as a trade union official. For 30 years he was a delegate to Kilmarnock Constituency Labour Party, and served as both secretary and treasurer.

For a number of years he was chairman of the Old People’s Welfare Committee, and he brought to this and all other work the enthusiasm which he had for sport and outdoor life. He was a gardener, a golfer, a boxing enthusiast and a supporter of Kilmarnock Football Club.

ANNIE MACKIE - Provost 1971-1974

Annie Mackie had been prominent in the town as a social worker and member of the Labour Party for many years before she was elected to the Town Council after several unsuccessful attempts at the polls. She became convener of the Children’s Committee and the Social Welfare Committee. Annie Mackie actually followed her husband as Provost of Kilmarnock, taking over from him in 1971.

Her work with the blind, the mentally handicapped and the deaf, amongst others, was duly rewarded with an OBE in 1976.

She had been a member of the Labour Party for 50 years, a delegate to the Kilmarnock Constituency Labour Party for 31 years, and secretary to the Women’s Section for 30 years. In 1969 her service to the Labour Party was recognised in her appointment as chairman of the Scottish Labour Party.

MAISIE GARVEN - Provost 1974-1975

Maisie Garven’s special contribution to local government came with her appointment as Provost in 1974. She was to see through the re-organisation that put an end to Town and County Councils and

replaced them with the present two-tier system of District and Regional Councils. Before that time she had an uncertain start in local government. She was first elected to the Town Council in 1952 but was beaten in the next year. Re-elected for the second time in 1958 she maintained uninterrupted service as a councillor through till 1980. Her concern for the social conditions of the community is reflected by the fact that she was appointed convener of the Housing Committee in 1958, a position she held until her death in 1980. During her leadership of this committee the New Farm Loch housing estate was conceived and brought into being.

In early life she was active in the Salvation Army, a link she maintained throughout her life. Teaching was her vocation and she taught in the primary schools at Galston, Crosshouse and Dreghorn.

Latterly, she was chairman of the Dean Castle Country Park and chairman of Kilmarnock and Loudoun District Town Twinning Association. In 1977 she was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal for services to the community.

THE ARTISTS

JAMES TANNOCK (1786-1863)

James Tannock was born in Kilmarnock, in Grange Street. He studied painting in Edinburgh in 1803 as a student of the famous Alexander Nasmyth, and set up as an artist, working for a time in Paisley, later Irvine, and other places. In 1810 he moved to London, and studied at the Royal Academy. A highly regarded artist in his own lifetime, James Tannock is now not well known, although a number of fine portraits by him survive. He regularly visited Kilmarnock throughout his life, and in fact died here. As far as is known, the only Provost's portrait by him is Archibald Finnie.

WILLIAM TANNOCK (1794-1879)

The brother of James Tannock, William ran an art gallery in Grange Street. He produced a number of portraits locally, which are interesting but lack the quality shown by his brother's best work.

ALEXANDER S. MACKAY (1832-1898)

Mackay was born in Kilmarnock, but studied and worked in Edinburgh, as did his brother James. They kept contact with Kilmarnock, and produced local landscape paintings as well as portraits. Alexander painted two Provosts.

SIR JAMES GUTHRIE (1859-1930)

Guthrie was born in Greenock, and originally trained as a lawyer. He then studied painting in London and Paris. His work was trend-setting and influenced other painters - especially the Glasgow School. The most prominent artist to be commissioned to paint a Kilmarnock Provost - he painted only one - David Mackay.

ANDREW LAW (1873- 1967)

Law was born in Crosshouse, but his family soon moved to Kilmarnock. He attended the Kilmarnock Art School, and then the Haldane Academy of Fine Art, which later became the Glasgow School of Art. After a short scholarship in Paris Law worked as an artist, first in Kilmarnock and then in

Glasgow. He taught at Glasgow School of Art till his retiral in 1938. He produced a variety of paintings including still life studies of flowers, street scenes of Kilmarnock and many portraits. he painted all eleven Provosts of Kilmarnock from 1908 to 1954.

NORMAN J MILLER MILLER (1914-)

Born in Greenock, Miller Miller was brought up in Rothesay. After leaving school at fifteen, he worked in a local office before moving to Ayr, where he worked until after the Second World War. He had always had an interest in painting, and in 1946 he decided to make it a career, soon gaining commissions to paint portraits. He painted six Kilmarnock Provosts

HISTORIC KEEPS AND CASTLES AND STATELY HOMES OF AYRSHIRE from the 'KILMARNOCK STANDARD'

by

Bill Cook

This article is a very good example of the valuable contribution which members can make to the History Group. It was compiled by one of our members, the late Mr Bill Cook, who extracted the information from the 'Kilmarnock Standard' available in the Dick Institute. The articles are spread over the years 1921 to 1926 and Mr Cook remembers reading some of them while still at school!! He must have had an excellent memory. The articles all relate to keeps, castles and stately homes of Ayrshire. As far as I am aware they are not all written by the same author. Perhaps an interested member could take on the research task of tracking down the identity of the original authors.

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A LOCAL POEM - "FLOOD"

We were given a copy of the following poem by Mrs Livingston of Glebe Road. The poet is known only by the initials "J.H.", although the four lines written after the poem identify him as Johnnie Hose, a milkman of the town who was well-known for his poetry. He delivered milk from a pony and trap, and had a unique way of dealing with customers who were reluctant to settle their bills. He wrote a poem about them, attached it to his cart, and only removed it when the debt was cleared!

FLOOD Sunday 3rd January 1932

'Twas on the 3rd of January, in Nineteen Thirty Two,
The rain cam' doon in torrents, an' filled the rivers fu';
The Irvine an' Kilmarnock were rinnin' like a weir,
An' floodin' into puir folk's hames, amang their guids an' gear.

Frae Crookedholm tae Riccarton 'twas like an inland sea;
An' here an' there a 'Bus or hoose like islands caught the e'e;
Barr Thomsons an' the Glenfield Works hae suffered gey an' sair;
Frae Willock Street, a' up the Holm, an' roun' about "the Square".

It poured awa' for forty hours, relentless as Fate,
The Cessnock Water burst her banks an' added to the spate;
The auld folk shook their heids an' said "In a' my life, I never
Saw boats a-plyin' on the roads, and railways like a river!"

The cairters an' the firemen cam' an' helped baith young an' aul',
A hunder an' twenty families tae an Institute or Hall;
The toon was a' in darkness, we were in a sorry plicht,
Nae gas tae mak' a wee drap tea, an' nae electric licht!

Whilst darkness brooded o'er the earth, there came a goodly band
Of Police and Salvationists to lend a helping hand:
Tak' tent, ye careless croakers, whene'er you're casting blame -
In days of dire calamity the human heart's the same.

We've been unco sair afflicted, for nae reason that we ken;
What in a' the world's the maitter, is it comin' to an end?
But the mavis sings a blythesome sang, the flood is weel awa',
An' bairnies, milkmen wi' their horse, hae paiddled through it a'.

Here comes Johnnie Hose,
Wha seldom is late;
The mare an' he goes
Whaur the 'Buses are bate!

Note on the above poem by Mr H.R. Wilson

I well remember my father, who was a member of Glenfield and Kennedy's internal Fire Service, being called out to the factory on that occasion to render whatever service they could. He later told me that the entire floor area which was made of pitch pine blocks was entirely floating on top of the flood water. These blocks were later collected, bagged and distributed to the workers. Many a fire burned brightly that winter on the "Glen" floors. It's an ill wind!