

## **KILMARNOCK ACADEMY: FORMER PUPILS**

### Contents:

Gilbert Adair (1944–2011), novelist and screenwriter.

**Adamson, Janet Laurel (1882-1962), Labour MP**

**Sir Stuart Atha (b.1962), RAF air marshal**

James Barr (1862-1949), minister & politician

Matthew Black (1908-1994), biblical scholar

John Bell (b.1949), church musician

John Morton Boyd (1925-1998), conservationist

David Murray Boyd (1926-2016) geophysicist

William Boyd (1874-1962), educationalist

Zachary Boyd (1585-1653), minister & university administrator

John Caldwell (1903-1974), botanist

Robert Colquhoun (1914-62), artist

Craig Conway (b.1985), professional footballer

Stewart Conn (b.1936), poet and playwright

Sir David Paton Cuthbertson (1900-1989), medical researcher

**John Shaw Dunn (1883-1944), pathologist**

Sir James Macdonald Dunnett (1877–1953), imperial civil servant

**Robert Dunsmuir (1825-1889), Canadian industrialist and politician**

Sir Alexander Fleming (1881-1955), bacteriologist

Helen Flockhart (b.1963), artist

George Forrest (1873-1932), plant collector

**Sir George Fowlds (1860-1934) New Zealand minister of education**

**Thomas Nisbet Gallacher (b. ?1946) HM Senior Chief Inspector of Schools in  
Scotland and cricketer**

**Alexander Galt (1854-1938), physicist**

**Hugh Miller Galt (1866-1936), pathologist**

**Hugh S. D. Garven – medical missionary**

**John Gilchrist (1924-2010), chief valuer for Scotland**

**Ronald Hamilton (b.1945), footballer and chartered accountant**

**Donald Stewart Hendrie (1909-64), agriculturalist**

**William Hewitt (b.1951), Moderator of the General Assembly**

**Bernard Isaacs (1924-95), professor of geriatrics**

**Jackson, Fred (1916–2004), Revolutionary Communist Party activist**

**Billy Kay (b.1951), writer & broadcaster**

Hugh Kerr (b.1944), Labour MEP  
Jimmy Knapp (1940-2001), trade unionist  
David Landsborough (1870-1957), medical missionary  
Sir James Rognvald Learmonth (1895-1967), surgeon  
Sir Alexander McColl (1878-1962), businessman  
Alexander McCurdy (1897-1917), footballer  
Margaret McDowall (1936-??), swimmer  
Hugh McIlvanney (1933-2019), sports journalist  
William McIlvanney (1936-2015), novelist  
William McKerrow (1803-1878), educationalist  
John Dunlop Miller (b.1941), Moderator of the General Assembly  
Eleanor Allen Moore (1885-1955), artist  
Lieutenant-General Robert Menzies (b.1944), Surgeon General of the British  
Armed Forces  
Sir William Muir (1819-1906), imperial administrator & Islamicist  
Nicol Peacock (d.2008), nuclear fusion scientist  
Andrew Picken Orr (1898-1962), marine biologist  
Lord Boyd Orr (1880-1971), nutritionist  
Colin Dunlop Wilson Rankin (1869-1940), soldier, politician and businessman  
Robert Cecil Robertson (d.1942), epidemiologist  
John Merry Ross (1833-1883), literary critic & historian  
Cameron Sharp (b.1960), athlete  
Derek Alexander Stark (b.1966), rugby player  
Sir Robert Murdoch Smith (1835-1900), army engineer & archaeologist  
Lord Stevenson (1873-1926), businessman & civil servant  
Sir William Taylor (1843-1917), Surgeon General to the British Forces  
Alexander Thom (1894-1985), engineer & archaeologist  
Sir Robin Wales (b.1955), local politician  
Hugh Watt (1879-1968), church historian  
Sir Robert Dickie Watt (1881-1965) - agricultural scientist  
Sir William Wyllie (1802-1891), army officer

**Gilbert Adair**  
**(1944–2011)**  
**Novelist and screenwriter**

Gilbert Adair was a pupil at Kilmarnock Academy from 1957 until 1963 when he left for Glasgow University, graduating with an MA in French in 1967. After graduation, he lived and worked for a while in Paris and witnessed the uprising of May 1968 on which he based his first novel, *The Holy Innocents* (1988), filmed as *The Dreamers* (2003) by Bernardo Bertolucci. After his return to Britain in 1980, he established himself in London as a cultural and film critic and wrote a further eleven novels, a number of works of non-fiction, and several more screenplays. His fiction shows a love of intellectual games and erudition, traits that are foreshadowed in this short story which appeared in the *Goldberry* in 1962. The subtitle, for example, of Molière's comedy, 'Tartuffe', which features in the story, is 'The Imposter'. The story's concern with identity and roles is also seen in his use the pseudonym of Peter Gymnopedie, a gymnopedie being a choral dance performed by naked youths at ancient Greek festivals. It also anticipates Gilbert Adair's later secrecy about his background. He told the curious that he came from Edinburgh, something that is perhaps understandable for a gay man in this period from Kilmarnock. He died after a long illness in 2011.

**L'Apprenti Sorcier: A Scherzo**

Paris: the song of a great city. Beneath the roofs of Paris the chorus of cats, dogs and corner-boys were on the move: even the sparrows seemed to prefer to walk, because the shadowy, yellow day was so clean, outside and inside. The shabby little school-teachers with greasy, drooping moustaches, shuffled to the school-gates; the jockeys from the stables on the outskirts, stretching their legs and horses, scratched and yawned; the tiny ballet dancers idled along the cobbles, aimlessly kicking the stones, dreaming not of swans or lakes, but of sleep. Paris is a circus, with clowns, yes, but also dazzling equestriennes, blowing bubbles where once were cobwebs.

Cymbeline was nothing so romantic, but a shop-girl, selling tin soldiers and little wooden forts in a tiny toy shop off the Rue de la Paix, surrounded by window boxes and gaudy, striped curtains. And yet, in another way, she was more romantic; even the ballerinas, youthfully pink, are often dull underneath. But in the breast of Cymbeline, rather pathetically droll, almost shabby, was performed a sumptuous ceremony underneath, a private, exquisite

world, existing only for her. A world of pale sophisticates, of defeatist and world-weary men-about-town, a world both engaging and wistful, both ugly and beautiful, like a pretty gargoyle. On the surface, she crossed the crowded room of life, coming in one door going out the other, merely getting her clothes rumpled; yet she had her hour.

Her name was not really Cymbeline, but Josephine: she preferred the escapism it provided. When she was sixteen, she went to church to confess sins she had not committed, determined to catch at least the echo of life, stifled in her 'petit bourgeois' home: when she was nineteen she was thoughtful and absurd enough to fall in love with a man of eighty, a love only cut short by his death from consumption.

But Cymbeline was in love again; a young man with a curiously pleasant yet desiccated appearance, like a piece of old, but still acceptable cheese. He was an actor, a very small actor in very small parts in a very small theatre but Cymbeline would never admit this, least of all to herself. She was going to see him now in a tiny theatre on top of the hill, in the shade of the cathedral, beneath the poplars. Roger, dearest Roger, steps out of a whirl of backstage movement clumsily without the gait or air of the actor; bright lights shine out of the black stage.

"Roger, dearest," laughed Cymbeline as he kissed her gently on the forehead. "You do look funny in that powdered wig; what on earth are you playing?"

"It's 'Tartuffe', Cymbeline. I play the part of the second citizen; you'll never guess. I have three whole lines to speak. I've been learning them all morning. Roger was boyishly excited and proud, like a youth who has shaved for the first time, but this didn't rub off on Cymbeline, who was strangely down-to-earth.

"Roger, dearest . . . er, Roger . . . I've informed Mama and Papa that you'll be entertaining them at the Club Topaz on Friday, and, of course, discuss the . . . er . . . our wedding. That's all right, isn't it, you'll be able to get off from the theatre, won't you?"

Roger quailed; "Oh, but, Cymbeline, I couldn't . . . I couldn't . . . not your father, you told me he was so Bohemian and sophisticated, such a man of the world—and I'm so ordinary, I wouldn't know what to say. Oh, Cymbeline, you had no right to tell them."

But, Roger, you can do it, you're supposed to be an actor: act, play the part of the second citizen, that might impress him. You'll have to, it's all settled."

"I couldn't; your father would realize immediately: you're born to play a role not another role."

“Sometimes,” sighed Cymbeline, “I wish you were less of your Roger and more of my Roger . . .” These two had never had a real quarrel, but they had passed one awful day making weird sounds on the furniture of an Alpine hostel, just to irritate each other; sometimes their very different worlds clashed physically.

So Cymbeline skipped out, down the slanted iron steps on to the shadowy cobbles. For a very long time Roger sat and dreamed; he knew, as only a failure knows, that he couldn’t do it, he couldn’t meet her father, a true ‘bon viveur.’ as he was, a shabby, cringing actor. The wedding would, at once, be off. Roger sat, his head on his hands, and sadly stared at Maurice Saint-Pe, the star actor, who played the star roles, who had the star on his dressing-room door. He was king of this little world; he was someone who could play the brilliant, young actor, he wanted to show to Cymbeline’s father. An idea was invading his mind, slowly, like all his ideas; Saint-Pe would be the man Cymbeline’s father would meet . . . he would consent to the marriage, everything would be solved. Surely even Saint-Pe for a few francs would consent to take his place . . .

Cymbeline’s father sat in the tiny salon of his home, his head on his hands. He turned sadly to his daughter Josephine; he alone called her Josephine, because, a little bank clerk, he had no time for escapism.

“Oh, Josephine, why on earth did you invite this actor to meet us; from what you’ve told us, he’s far too sophisticated too worldly, we’re so ordinary. Why, you said he’d taken London by storm, how could we possibly meet him?” But Cymbeline merely smiled—not reassuringly, but rather maliciously. Cymbeline’s father thought quickly. *Que faire?* He couldn’t possibly meet this actor, this Roger, as the *petit bourgeois* he knew he was; no great actor as indeed his adored Josephine had assured him with glowing reports of each triumph, would possibly want to marry into this stagnant and disenchanting family. He thought quickly—if only this Roger could meet someone else, more suitable, an actor, that was it. He would hire an actor from the *Comedie Francaise* to play the weary cosmopolitan, no doubt expected . . .

Then, dear reader, this little tragedy is over: on Friday two reputable actors found themselves in a quite bewildering after-dinner conversation at the Club Topaz, each one waffling away, as only ham actors can: another young actor was giving a most nervous and erratic performance as the second citizen in ‘*Tartuffe*’, delivering his three lines in a hysterical, hilarious manner, for Roger had once seen a photo of Cymbeline’s father, a man who seemed to be sitting in the third row, instead of at the Club Topaz; and in the audience in

the third row sat a befuddled bank clerk staring alternately at the name Roger Lalo in his programme and at the same young man performing on the stage, the young man he was supposed to be entertaining at that moment in the Club Topaz.

Cymbeline, the sorcerer's apprentice, had spun her web and all were caught; but she alone is a shooting star in the imagination, now gone for ever after lighting up the sky.

Peter Gymnopedie

**James Barr**  
**(1862-1949)**

**Minister of religion and politician**

James Barr was a Presbyterian minister with a social concern who became a Labour member of Parliament. He was born on his father's farm, Beanscroft, in the parish of Fenwick which was four miles from Kilmarnock on the Grassyards Road. He was educated initially in the school at Waterside and then at Kilmarnock Academy from 1877 until 1879, becoming school dux in his last year. In his memoirs, *Lang Syne* (1948), he described his time there:

In February, 1877, I entered Kilmarnock Academy, then in North Hamilton Street, where Dr. Hugh Dickie was Rector and the leading teacher was Dr. John G. Kerr, later of Allan Glen's School, Glasgow. I was fortunate beyond measure. Dr. Kerr was a Snell Exhibitioner of Balliol College, Oxford. He was equally distinguished in Classics and in Mathematics. I soon came under his spell and within a fortnight of entering his class in Mathematics I took up Euclid at the sixteenth proposition in the first book and read on with great delight proposition after proposition. At the end of six months I was awarded the first prize in the Junior section, and two years thereafter I won the gold medal for Mathematics and was declared dux of the school.

In a sermon printed at the end of his memoirs he recounts a memory associated with his school days: 'My father came in when the School of Kilmarnock was skaling and he took me out to Brown the Jewellers in Duke Street, and he gave me my first watch; he is gone almost fifty years to his rest and I could never part with that.' Barr left Kilmarnock Academy for Glasgow University in 1879 where he lifted numerous prizes and graduated in 1884 with a joint first in philosophy and logic.

He spent a year in America recuperating from a breakdown and on his return entered Trinity College, Glasgow, to study for the ministry of the Free Church of Scotland (then a larger, more moderate body than our contemporary Free Church). In 1889 he became the minister of Johnstone and Wamphray FC, Dumfriesshire, before moving in 1896 to Glasgow to be minister of Dennistoun FC (1896-1907) and St Mary's United Free (UF) Church in Govan (1907-1920). Before his entry into politics, he became the secretary of the United Free Church Home Mission Board. The UF Church had been formed in 1900 through the union of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church, but when it was proposed that the UF Church should reunite with the Church of Scotland in 1929, Barr resisted the proposal because he was against having an established, state-supported church, and after the union he

became the moderator of the remnant body which continued as the UF Church.

While in Glasgow he became engaged with working-class social problems, attracting working-class men to special services he ran for them in Govan. He was an advocate of temperance and was involved from the earliest days of his ministry with school boards which had been set up by the 1872 Education (Scotland) Act. He supported the Liberal Party and became active in campaigning for it as he saw it as the best means for forwarding his social concerns, which included pacifism, animal welfare and the abolition of capital punishment, and also for promoting home rule for Scotland. His interests in education and Scottish affairs, for example, led to his support for a chair in Scottish literature which was established at Glasgow University in 1913. In 1919 Barr led the Scottish campaign in support of prohibition, and although he was unsuccessful in achieving this through local referenda, it led to him joining the Independent Labour Party in 1920. In 1924 he became Labour MP for Motherwell which he held until his defeat in the 1931 General Election, and then he subsequently became Labour MP for Coatbridge and Airdrie from 1935 until his retirement ten years later. In 1927 he unsuccessfully introduced a Home Rule Bill for Scotland. As well as fostering interest in Scottish nationalism he also acted as chair of the Parliamentary Labour Party, although he disapproved of the formation of the National Government by Ramsay MacDonald.

As well as his autobiography, *Lang Syne* (1949), Barr published a number of books, most notably *Christianity and War* (1903) and *The Scottish Covenanters* (1946). He believed that the church's identification with establishment elites was a serious barrier to reaching the working-classes and through his devotion to his principles, he sought to integrate his faith with social action. One of his daughters was the first female Presbyterian minister in Scotland.



## **John Lamberton Bell**

**(b.1949)**

### **Church musician**

John Bell is the leading contemporary hymn writer in Scotland. He attended Kilmarnock Academy from 1962 until 1968 and after secondary school matriculated at Glasgow University. He was ordained as a minister of the Church of Scotland in 1978. After a spell in the Scots Kirk in Amsterdam and five years as a youth advisor to Glasgow Presbytery, in 1983 he went to work full-time with the Iona Community. The Community, based on the Hebridean island where St Columba had founded his monastery, is an ecumenical fellowship of men and women who seek radical ways of living out the gospel in today's world, a programme which is close to the heart of John Bell's expression of the Christian faith. In 1988 he became the Community's worship resource worker and since then has worked with its Wild Goose Resource Group, based in Glasgow, which leads liturgical events worldwide and produces contemporary hymns and worship songs.

John Bell is a major international figure in the renewal of Christian worship. The leading hymnologist Ian Bradley has stated: 'It is hardly too much to say that John Bell has almost single-handedly transformed the culture of worship and especially of church music in Scotland'. Bell has edited several collections of contemporary hymns, especially *Common Ground* (Edinburgh: St Andrews Press, 1998) and he is the convenor of the Church of Scotland Church Hymnary Revision Committee which has resulted in the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Church Hymnary*. He has also written many hymns himself which are to be found in numerous modern hymn books. He is particularly noted for his arrangements of traditional Scottish folk tunes for his compositions, but he also uses music from throughout the world in his collections. He has stated, "I do think it's helpful to sing the songs of other cultures. By singing their songs, we can stand, to some extent, in deeper intercession with these people. And throughout that experience our understanding of mission and evangelism and the reign of God and the Trinity is enlarged."

His hymns have been described by Bradley as being 'grittily incarnational'. Perhaps his most famous compositions, co-written with Graham Maule (another Wild Goose worship group member), are 'A Touching Place' and 'Will you come and follow me'. The former hymn celebrates that it is Christ who calls to worship and makes room for all who come. The latter asks:

Will you come and follow me,  
if I but call your name?

Will you go where you don't know  
and never be the same?

Will you let my love be shown,  
will you let my name be known  
will you let my life be grown  
in you and you in me?

<http://www.rwlswann.org.uk/songs/hymns/w/willyoucomeandfollow.htm>

John Bell is a frequent broadcaster on the media and he lectures at theological colleges in Britain and the United States. He also leads worship workshops in both of these countries as well as Canada, Australia and Japan. In 1999 he was awarded a fellowship of the Royal School of Church Music and in 2002 Glasgow University made him a Doctor of the University. At the end of a talk in 2017 at the Christian festival, Greenbelt, in which he took issue with conservative interpretations of the Bible about sexuality, he told the audience that he had a vested interest in the subject: he was gay himself. He had chosen not to broadcast the fact earlier in order not to compromise his work with the Church of Scotland. He has no partner.

## **Matthew Black**

**(1908-1994)**

### **Biblical scholar and university administrator**

Professor Matthew Black was the dominant influence in theological education in St Andrews University in the third quarter of the twentieth century. He was born in Kilmarnock of working-class parentage, his father being an engineer's pattern maker and his mother a hosiery worker. After leaving Kilmarnock Academy, he went to Glasgow University where he graduated in classics in 1930 and in philosophy in 1931 and then proceeded to take a BD in 1934, specialising in Old Testament studies. He then studied at Bonn in Germany where he took a DPhil.

On his return to Scotland he became assistant to the professor of Hebrew at Glasgow and in 1937 moved to Manchester University and then to Aberdeen in 1939 as a lecturer in biblical criticism. During the Second World War he became a parish minister in Dunbarney, Perthshire, where he also became a chaplain to both the British armed forces and to a German prisoner of war camp. It was at this time that he was awarded a DLitt by Glasgow for his *Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (1946). After the war he became a New Testament lecturer at Leeds and then in 1952 was appointed to the chair in biblical criticism at Edinburgh University but moved two years later to the same chair at St Andrews University. He also became Principal of St Mary's College where he became the dominant influence until his retirement in 1978.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 had a major impact on biblical studies and Black published his *The Scrolls and Christian Origins* in 1961. Later publications included editing Peake's *Commentary on the Bible* (1962) and an edition of *The Book of Enoch* (1985). He was appointed a fellow of the British Academy in 1955 and a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1977. He died in St Andrews. There is a biographical article on him in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

**John Morton Boyd**  
**(1925-1998)**  
**Conservationist**

Dr John Morton Boyd was one of the leading conservationists in Scotland at a time when the general public was becoming aware of the need to preserve the natural heritage of Scotland. He was born in Darvel, coming from a line of stonemasons. His father, Robert Boyd of the Sheiling, Darvel, was a master builder in the town and his mother was a textile designer and the daughter of a Newmilns blacksmith. He attended school in Darvel and was admitted to Kilmarnock Academy on 1 August 1937. In his autobiography, *The Song of the Sandpiper* (1999), he described his school days there:

I was an extrovert and an athlete who found it difficult to strike the right balance between work and play. I emerged from school with only the minimum qualifications for university entrance, but as head boy [in 1943-4] and sports champion.

At school my best friend was John Gilchrist, the son of a laceweaver, a friendship that lasted a lifetime. He had an excellent mind, and I envied him his erudition and thoroughness in all things. We shared the same intellectual and outward-approach to life, and he was, in some important respects, my pacemaker. As an aspiring surveyor and valuer, he helped me to seek a professional standing for myself, and to do so in engineering. Two of my teachers thought this was a mistake: time and again they tried to persuade me to find a career in the natural sciences, but I ignored their advice. The world of engineering was much more macho than biology, which, at school, I regarded as a subject for girls.

J. Morton Boyd, *The Song of the Sandpiper* (1999), pp.14-15.

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He left school in 1943 and was for four years a navigator in the RAF. After demobilisation he entered Glasgow University to take an engineering degree, but, partly under the influence of reading the natural historian Frank Fraser Darling, he switched in his second year to biological science, graduating in 1953. He then undertook a PhD, which he was awarded in 1957, on the earthworms of Tiree, research that began a lifelong love affair with the Hebrides.

He worked on St Kilda during Glasgow University expeditions in the 1950s, and was recruited to the Nature Conservancy. From 1957 until 1968 he was their regional officer in charge of wildlife conservation in the west of Scotland. In 1965 he travelled widely in East

Africa and the Middle East, broadening his understanding of conservancy in different contexts. In 1966 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. From 1968 until 1970 he was the Nature Conservancy Assistant Director (Conservation) and from 1971 until his retriial in 1985 he became Director (Scotland) of the Nature Conservancy, a body which in 1974 became the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC). Among his many achievements were work on the grey seals of North Rona, the gannets of St Kilda and sheep on Soay and Boreray. He promoted the reintroduction in 1973 of sea eagles to Rum, an NCC island reserve with which he had a special affinity. He also fought for the establishment of a NCC reserve on Loch Laggan. He served during times of great political and organisational change, but he was always able to adapt to the altered circumstances and succeeded in remaining steadfast in his adherence to his conservationist principles.

He was awarded the CBE on retiring and he became the ecological consultant to a number of public bodies and served in various capacities in a number of other Scottish organisations. He wrote several books, four of them on the Hebrides, and co-authored the second edition of *The Natural History of the Highlands and Islands* (1964) with Fraser Darling. He was a keen artist, particularly in watercolours, and was a rock climber and winter mountaineer. A committed Christian, he was a Church of Scotland elder for 40 years and was involved in the affairs of the General Assembly and the World Council of Churches.

**David Murray Boyd**  
**(1926-2016)**  
**Geophysicist**

David Murray Boyd was a world-renowned authority on aeromagnetic surveys and Emeritus Professor of Geophysics at the University of Adelaide. He was born in Dalmuir, Clydebank, on 28 June 1926, the son of William Boyd, a lecturer in Education at Glasgow University who is also featured amongst the Academy former pupils, and his wife, Dorothy Wilson, a former schoolteacher.

In 1939 Boyd was sent to the Ayrshire towns of Dalmellington, then, as an evacuee, to Beith, and finally in 1941, when Dalmuir and Clydebank suffered badly in the blitz, to Mauchline. It was there his attendance at Kilmarnock Academy began. One of his nicknames at school was ‘Smiler’, because he always had a happy smile on his face, which has remained a characteristic of him as a person. In an autobiographical essay written in 1995, he recalled of his time at the school:

In these years I showed some aptitude for science and mathematics but also developed a fondness for music and Greek which led me to discover Socrates, Plato and Thucydides... I look back with appreciation on the solid foundation in science provided by Dan MacFarlane, the appreciation of poetry from Happy Harry Hamilton, but by far the most important influence came from William Wallace who taught me Greek, and through the Greek the habit of going back to fundamentals which has been a feature of my professional work.

In 1942, obviously troubled by the war, he contributed a poem entitled ‘Death’ to *The Goldberry* which asked why man should have the power to take from ‘A fellow mortal... his dear possession, life?’ The poem mordantly reminded those who do so that ‘no tyrant master, harsh or kind’ is spared by ‘all consuming Death’. The following year, his final year at the Academy, he was joint editor of *The Goldberry*. He could have stayed at the school for a further session, but at the last moment he applied for Glasgow University. Because of his last-minute application, he found the Chemistry class fully subscribed, and so he took Geology to accompany Physics. This was a happy chance as he enjoyed the subject immensely and went on to take double Honours in Physics and Geology in 1946.

His degree meant he was ideally placed to take up a lectureship in the new subject of geophysics in Glasgow University's Department of Geology. In 1955 he left the University to work as a Senior Geologist and Geophysicist with John Taylor and Sons, mining engineers in London. During his period with the firm he did surveys of the mines at Strontian and many other places on the west coast of the British Isles. In 1958 he moved to Hunting Surveys Ltd., based in Elstree, Hertfordshire, with responsibility for major ground and airborne surveys, magnetic and electromagnetic surveys, and he became expert in interpreting the results of these. During his time with Hunting he travelled widely in Africa, Southern Asia, Australia, parts of Europe and visited North America. He notes in his biographical essay of his time in Uganda surveying for the United Nations Development Project (UNDP): 'One important feature of this survey was our insistence on the education of local staff to use the results of the survey; part of my Scottish inheritance of the appreciation of education developed in Kilmarnock Academy.' Some of the places in which he conducted surveys during this period, such as Cyprus, Angola and the South China Seas, were notorious trouble spots due to civil wars, and therefore the surveys were sometimes carried out in close proximity to danger. In 1964 and again in 1968 he was seconded to the UNDP for surveys respectively in Cyprus and Tamil Nadu, India. His experience with Hunting made him into one of the two or three leading international experts in the interpretation of airborne magnetic surveys.

In 1969 he was appointed the professor of Geophysics in the University of Adelaide, the first chair in applied geophysics in Australia, where he remained until his retirement in 1991. During his time at the University he was Dean of the Faculty of Science in 1978; the Deputy Chairman and then Chairman of the Education Committee (the principal academic body in the University and the equivalent of the Senate in Scottish universities) 1979-1982; Chairman of the University Animal Ethics Committee 1985-1992; and Chairman of the Centre for University Education 1990-1992. As a post-graduate supervisor he tried not to create clones of himself but to encourage his students to think for themselves. While at the University his worldwide travels for surveys continued, two particular favourite countries being India and Finland: 'India for its sculpture, art and architecture, Finland for its architecture, scenery and geology and both for the people.' He also served the wider community in the Australasian region as President of the Geological Society of Australia 1986-88; Chairman of the panel managing the scientific exchanges funded by the Department of Science under the India

Australia Science and Technology Agreement; and Organiser for the Australia and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science Congresses in 1991 and 1997.

In 1956 he had married Jeannie Whalley, a modern languages teacher, and they had three children. His Scottish background was crucial to him, as he noted: 'I feel at home with all kinds of folk from mine workers to cabinet ministers. I grew up in a working class community in an academic family so that I feel at home in almost any company, well almost any high or low.' Looking back on his career he considered that the 1960s were the period of his best contribution to science. At Adelaide University 'I think what I did was important but I miss the work that I did with Huntings which I think was a very important contribution to the welfare of the developing world.'



**William Boyd**  
**(1874-1962)**  
**Educationalist**

Dr William Boyd was the head of the Education Department at Glasgow University for most of the first half of the twentieth century and was a noted educational theorist and historian. He was born in Riccarton and grew up in Kilmarnock. His father was David Boyd, who was a patternmaker at Glenfield & Kennedy, and his mother was Janet Smith, the daughter of a farmer on Craigie Hill. He attended the Grammar School in Kilmarnock and then in 1886 at the age of 12 he transferred to Kilmarnock Academy. He entered the Academy on a bursary which was open to all the local schools of £12 for two years. At the end of this period he came top in the examination for the Ballochmyle Bursary which was open to Academy pupils. This bursary was awarded by Sir Claud Alexander of Ballochmyle and was supplemented by the South Kensington Science and Art Department, London. This allowed him to continue schooling for the next three years: £9 for the first year, £12 for the second and £15 for the last.

Boyd found the teaching of science at the Academy particularly stimulating, something he attributed largely to policies of the then rector, Dr Hugh Dickie. In his private memoirs he noted:

At this time the number of teachers in a school like the Academy was limited to three or four, not as now a horde of people. That meant that when the small number of teachers was good, their influence was correspondingly greater. And by my good chance, the four men who were to teach me in the following five years were all men of outstanding personality and character.

In 1891 he matriculated, again on a bursary, at Glasgow University where he graduated with both an MA and a BSc. In 1897 he was appointed the Ferguson Scholar and spent three years as assistant to Henry Jones, the professor of Moral Philosophy, during which time Boyd gave the lectures on Plato's Republic, an interest that was eventually to issue in his *An Introduction to the Republic of Plato* (1904). He was consecutively assistant master at Blairgowrie School, Perthshire, from 1900-1902, science master at North Kelvinside Higher Grade School, Glasgow, 1902-1907 and headmaster of Colston Public School, Bristol, in 1907. In this last year he was made head of the Department of Education at Glasgow University, a post he held until his retirement in 1946. He was awarded a DPhil in 1911.

His teaching at Glasgow University was described in his obituary in *The Times* as being ‘vigorous, unconventional and iconoclastic but always inspiring’. He was one of the principal individuals involved in the University establishing the BEd degree in 1918. He founded a child guidance clinic, one of the first in the country, in the Department in 1926 which he ran with the assistance of teacher volunteers until Glasgow Corporation began its own clinic. He also helped introduce the Workers Educational Association to Scotland, an organisation which is a national provider of community-based education and which provides adults with access to organised learning. In 1920 he became the president of the Educational Institute of Scotland, the principal representative body for Scottish teachers.

His magnum opus was *The History of Western Education* (1<sup>st</sup> edn 1921), a magisterial one-volume survey in the nineteenth-century tradition of broad generalization which became the standard textbook of its time. It was translated into several languages and still, in the early twenty-first century, turns up on bibliographies for educational courses, having gone through eleven editions and having been reprinted as recently as 1980. However, his most scholarly publication was probably his *The Educational Theory of Jean Jacques Rousseau* (1911), a work that was still being cited in the bibliography to the article on Rousseau in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in 2005. Boyd was an advocate of the ‘New Education’, associated in America with the philosopher John Dewey, ‘with its faith in the free development of personality’ (Boyd, *History of Western Education*). It attempted to enliven education by centring school work on the interests of the child and broadened the function of the school to include intervention in health care and community life. Boyd particularly commended the Scottish Education Act of 1908 for making schools welfare centres, requiring the medical examination of the pupils and authorising the employment of doctors and nurses.

In 1930-1931 he was visiting professor at Columbia University and Ohio State University in 1931. This issued in his *America in School and College* (c.1931), which contained keen penetrating insights into American culture and way of life. He was also awarded two honorary degrees, a DLitt from the University of Western Australia and an LLD from Glasgow University. After his retirement Boyd produced several more books. In addition to *Education in Ayrshire through Seven Centuries* (1961), which is still to be surpassed, he wrote *Emile for Today* (1956) and *Plato’s Republic for Today* (1962). He also assisted John Strawhorn in writing the volume on Ayrshire in the *Third Statistical Account of Scotland* (1951). Before his death he was working on a commentary and new translation of the New Testament. He died in Totnes, Devon. His autobiography, *The Memoirs of William Boyd 1874-1962*, was published posthumously in 2011. His *Times* obituary stated that ‘Boyd’s

complete integrity and kindness were coupled in a unique way with an indomitable courage.’  
Along with his brother John, he donated the Boyd Cup to Kilmarnock Academy.

## **Zachary Boyd**

**(1585-1653)**

### **Minister of religion and university administrator**

Zachary Boyd was the author of one single line of poetry which is among the most famous in the English language. He was a popular poet, a Church of Scotland minister, a Covenanter and a noted benefactor of Glasgow University.

Boyd belonged to the landed classes being a member of the Boyds of Penkill family, although it would appear his own immediate background was more modest it being probable that his father was a farmer. He was educated at the Kilmarnock burgh school, Kilmarnock Academy's predecessor. He entered Glasgow University in 1601 and then studied at St Andrews University from 1603 to 1607 where he graduated with an MA. From 1611 he studied and later taught at the Protestant Academy at Saumur in France, where he was offered the principalship which he declined. He left France when the persecution of Protestants was becoming more acute, and in 1625 he became the minister of the Barony Parish in Glasgow. He was closely involved in the affairs of Glasgow University, serving three times each as Dean of Faculty and as Rector and from 1644-53 he was the Vice-Chancellor.

He was a Presbyterian of the orthodox Calvinist school and as such he supported the National Covenant of 1638 (the document which gave rise to the term 'Covenanters'), and later also disapproved of Cromwell's government as threatening Presbyterianism. However, this support for the Covenant probably reflected a shift in his opinions as in 1633 he had met Charles I, whose ecclesiastical strategy the Covenanters came to object to, the day after his Scottish coronation in Edinburgh and had composed a Latin ode for the occasion. He also later met Cromwell in 1650 and preached a sermon critical of his policies before him. After Cromwell invited him to dinner and prayed with him for three hours, the two men seemed to come to a better understanding.

Boyd published three volumes of religious poetry which retold biblical stories. They were very popular but were much mocked as being risible by more sensitively poetic critics. Here he is describing Jonah being swallowed by the whale:

But what is this that near him wee doe see,  
Like to a tower wambling on the sea;  
A monster great, the Leviathan strong,  
With beame-like jawes, which follows him along;

A little space the whale did round him play,  
To wait his time, but in a short delay  
He wheel'd about, and in a trice wee sawe  
The living man he buri'd in his mawe.

It is easy to mock, and it was an attempt to make the Bible stories more accessible in a less literature culture. There is one line of verse by Boyd which is known by millions worldwide. In 1646 he wrote a metrical version of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm and its first line was 'The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want'. This line passed unchanged into the Scottish Psalter of 1650 and has become famous (in its modern spelling) as the first line of the version which is still universally sung. During his lifetime Boyd also published several prose works and books of sermons. Glasgow University holds a number of unpublished works by him in its manuscript collections.

Boyd was also a generous benefactor to Glasgow University, although the source of his wealth is unknown. In 1637 he left the University his manuscripts, books and £20,000 Scots to erect new buildings, with a smaller sum set aside for burseries to maintain three students of Divinity each year (a bequest which was later merged into one). In 1658 a bust of him was erected over the entrance to the old college which stood in Glasgow's High Street. After the move to Gilmorehill it has been displayed in the Hunterian Museum.

(View at

<http://www.theglasgowstory.com/image.php?inum=TGSB00219&t=1&urltp=story.php?id=TGSBH06>)

**John Caldwell**  
**(1903-1974)**  
**Botanist**

Professor John Caldwell held the chair of botany at Exeter University from 1935 until 1969 and was a leading expert in viral diseases in plants. After Kilmarnock Academy, he went to Glasgow University and then John's College, Cambridge.

In 1935 he became the head of the Botany Department of the University of the South West which became from 1955, Exeter University. While there, he played a significant part in establishing the university's celebrated display of trees and plants within its grounds and in 1969, assisted by two others, he published a guide to them, *Grounds and Gardens of the University of Exeter* (available online at <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/grounds1969/>). From 1957 until 1959 he served as Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the university. He was also involved in a number of voluntary and public bodies in the Exeter region over a long period, and in 1971 he was awarded the OBE.

An obituary appeared in *The Times*.

**Craig Conway**  
**(b.1985)**  
**Professional footballer**

Craig Conway established himself as a pacy midfielder with Dundee United. Like most of his contemporaries from Kilmarnock at this time, he was born in Irvine. His parents are owners of a high-quality hairdressing business in Kilmarnock, now known as the Conway Hair and Beauty Spa. Craig came to Kilmarnock Academy in 1997 and left after S4 in 2001. During this time he was part of Ayr United's youth training scheme, which was to lead to his future career.

He trained as a hairdresser after leaving school and initially he worked part-time at this trade. It was with the Division Two side Ayr United that Craig began his professional football career. He made his first team appearance for Ayr in season 2002-3 when he came on as a substitute, and he made a further 10 appearances in this role the following season. He established himself in the Ayr first team in season 2005-6 when he made 35 appearances and scored 4 goals. Altogether he made 74 appearances as an Ayr player and scored 9 goals. Craig made the move to the SPL, the top flight of Scottish football, when he signed for Dundee United in June 2006. He played his first game for them against Falkirk in the season that followed and made occasional appearances in the starting line up but played more frequently as a substitute.

It was the arrival of Craig Levein as manager in November 2006 which transformed Craig's career. Levein played Craig as a first-team regular, and in the season 2006-7 he provided more assists in goals than any other player. Craig played as a left-sided midfielder who broke through on the wing and in his first year with United he put on a stone in muscle which gave him the body strength to play at SPL level. In February 2007 he suffered a broken foot and at the start of the following season he needed a bone graft. After recovering from these injuries he became a first team regular at No. 6, and—doubtless to his deep satisfaction—scored his first goal for United against his home-town team, Kilmarnock, in season 2008-9. Since then he became a regular goal-scorer for United in all competitions, often with spectacular long-range shots. In 2013 he signed for Brighton & Hove Albion in the English Football League Championship. The following year, he joined Championship side Blackburn Rovers on a two-year deal. In 2019 he signed for Salford City in the English football league Two and made his debut on 5 October 2019 against Walsall.

Levein has said of Craig, "He's a player I rate highly... Wingers are never the most consistent players in a team but that's the challenge for Craig – to produce top performances on a regular basis. He's definitely got the talent to do it" (*Daily Record*, 1 October 2008). He has

been capped three times for Scotland.



## **Robert Colquhoun**

**(1914-62)**

**Artist**

Robert Colquhoun is the most widely-acknowledged artist produced by the Academy. His father, also called Robert Colquhoun, was an engineering fitter, and during Colquhoun's time at Kilmarnock Academy from 1927 until 1933 the family lived in New Mill Road. He attended Loanhead Primary School and entered the Academy to take the six-year general course in languages, Mathematics and Art. His school record, still preserved in the East Ayrshire Archives, was adequate, but by no means brilliant. It was, however, in Art that he shone, his marks in the subject steadily rising as he progressed through the school. Even as a pupil his command of his medium was exceptional—a lino-cut done in S5 appeared in the *Goldberry* in 1931, and a line drawing produced in S6 in 1963. An early influence on him was his Art teacher at Kilmarnock Academy, James Lyle, who was convinced of his pupil's potential greatness. When Colquhoun was in third year, Lyle noticed one Friday that he was not in class. To Lyle's surprise he was informed that Colquhoun had left school to begin an engineering apprenticeship. He visited the Colquhoun household where he learned that financial pressures had forced this move. Lyle enlisted Sir Alexander Walker, the chairman of the whisky firm, known for his patronage of the arts, and the Revd James Hamilton, the minister of the Henderson Church, Kilmarnock, and chairman of the Ayrshire Education Committee, in obtaining enough grants for Colquhoun to continue his studies. Colquhoun was able to complete his secondary education and left school with a Higher leaving certificate in English, Mathematics, French and Art. He won a scholarship to the Glasgow School of Art.

At the Glasgow School of Art he met Robert MacBryde, a fellow student from Maybole, and the two men became lifelong partners. Colquhoun was awarded a travelling scholarship and both men went abroad, living in Paris and travelling in Italy and the Netherlands on the eve of World War II. Returning to Kilmarnock, they established a studio in a hut adapted for the purpose in Colquhoun's grandparents' garden in Netherton, and they held an exhibition in Kilmarnock a few days after war was declared. Colquhoun reluctantly trained as an art teacher at Jordanhill, but he failed to find a teaching post and he was conscripted into the Royal Army Medical Corps. His health soon collapsed, however, and in 1941 he was discharged suffering from heart problems. MacBryde, who had been exempted from military service on health grounds, was staying in London with a wealthy art patron, and after a brief return to Kilmarnock, Colquhoun joined him. There they became friendly with a number of literary and artistic figures, such as Dylan Thomas, George Barker, Francis Bacon and Lucien Freud. 'The Roberts', as they came to be known, were celebrated for their genial and

easy-going hospitality and their studio at 77 Bedford Gardens in Kensington became a hub for artistic circles.

Colquhoun delighted in his Scottish identity and saw his art, as had often been the case with Scottish artists, as being influenced by contemporary European art. Initially his style in London had been influenced by English Neo-Romanticism, as practised by artists such as Graham Sutherland and John Piper, but his mature works were influenced by the Polish Jewish artist Jankel Adler, a refugee from the war in Britain and a friend of Picasso and a colleague of Paul Klee, whom Colquhoun became friendly with in 1943. Colquhoun's personality was reflected in his art: he tended to be withdrawn, and impressed people as being rather gloomy. The stylised figures which Colquhoun painted had mask-like faces which express powerfully the fears of the mid-1940s. Colquhoun's vision is a tortured, nihilistic one. His art shows grief-laden, agonised figures, which are often women.

In 1947 the artist and critic Wyndham Lewis had regarded Colquhoun as 'one of the best—perhaps the best—of the young artists'. However, the mid-1940s proved to be the apogee of his fame, and by the 1950s his painting style was perceived as being unfashionable and his reputation began to suffer. Between 1950 and 1954 he and MacBryde lived in the Tilty Mill in Essex, and they had a further spell in the countryside in Suffolk from 1957 until 1959. But always London was the attraction, and particularly Soho and its pubs. Colquhoun's health increasingly suffered from his alcoholism and while working to mount an exhibition in London he died of a heart attack in the arms of MacBryde. He had not visited Kilmarnock since 1946, but his body was brought back to the town for burial.

Like many artists, Colquhoun's posthumous reputation has continued to rise, and his work now commands large sums. A biography by Robert Bristow of Colquhoun and MacBryde entitled *The Last Bohemians* appeared in 2010. The following appreciation of Robert Colquhoun appeared in the *Goldberry*, the Kilmarnock Academy magazine, in 1963 when a retrospective exhibition of his work was mounted in Kilmarnock, when it was hoped that a memorial gallery would be established in the town:

A year ago, in September, one of Kilmarnock Academy's most distinguished former pupils, Robert Colquhoun died. It is a pity that it had to be the occasion of his death that brought his work to our attention. A posthumous exhibition to some of his paintings and monotypes was staged at the Dick Institute in May.

Robert Colquhoun was born in Kilmarnock in 1914. From an early age his artistic talent was recognised, during the six years when he was a pupil of Kilmarnock

Academy, he was encouraged in every way by the late Mr. J. Lyle. Several of his drawings were published in “Goldberry” during the years 1927-33.

After winning a scholarship to Glasgow school of Art in 1933 he further distinguished himself by winning a post-diploma award for an additional year at the school, and a travelling scholarship to Italy. It was this point in his career he met Robert MacBryde, with whom he remained firm friends until his untimely death. MacBryde accompanied him to London and there his acquaintances included Michael Ayrton, Dylan Thomas, Jankel Adler and Wyndham Lewis. Many literary contemporaries influenced him. His breadth in art mirrored the breadth of argument which he must have enjoyed with his fellow artists. He was commissioned by several writers to illustrate their works, while both he and MacBryde designed the décor and the costumes for the Scottish ballet “Donald of the Burthens” produced at Covent Garden, and “King Lear” at Stratford. He experimented with monotypes and saw the possibilities of this medium and his work in it shows how uniquely he developed it.

He went to London in 1941 and although he lived and worked there until his death he never forgot his early visual experiences of Ayrshire and Kilmarnock. He was greatly influenced by this countryside, this strongly coloured landscape of dairy farms, deep lush country and sparse woodlands, with the particularly light and colour along the Ayrshire coast. He was faithful to all this in his early work. His study of farm labourers and workmen, which no doubt came directly from his early experiences are full of conviction and feeling. Robert Colquhoun had complete mastery of handling. He worked beautifully with a perfectly fluent and precise instinct and in this he was a typical product of both Glasgow School of Art and Mr. Lyle.

On first seeing Colquhoun’s later paintings, his work seems cold and austere. However, with familiarity the beauty of his shapes, his superb draughtsmanship and his feeling for line soon became apparent. His human figures, in mute alignment, seem to be performers in a ritual drama, rather than people living a life of their own. His best oil paintings have real feeling in them and an absolutely genuine tragic grandeur.

The impact of Robert Colquhoun’s work should be an inspiration to every pupil of Kilmarnock Academy.

No matter where our talents lie, his intensity of purpose and single mindedness should serve as an example to us all. It is only fitting that some of his best work should be on permanent exhibition in his hometown, here in Kilmarnock. Colquhoun’s work will undoubtedly last and find an honourable place in the unfolding history of British art.

*Goldberry* (1963), p.52.

The Dick Institute, Kilmarnock, holds two oils by Colquhoun and a number of works on paper. Larger collections can be found at Aberdeen Art Gallery; Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow; the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh; and the Tate Gallery, London.

Images Colquhoun's work can be viewed online at:

- [http://www.nationalgalleries.org/collection/online\\_az/4:322/?initial=C&artistId=2956&artistName=Robert Colquhoun&submit=1](http://www.nationalgalleries.org/collection/online_az/4:322/?initial=C&artistId=2956&artistName=Robert%20Colquhoun&submit=1)
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ArtistWorks?cgroupid=999999961&artistid=932&page=1>

**Stewart Conn**  
**Poet and playwright**  
**(b.1936)**

Stewart Conn is a noted contemporary poet and playwright. He was born in Glasgow and moved to Kilmarnock in 1942 when his father, Dr John Conn, was called to be the minister of St Marnock's Church in the town. The family had Ayrshire roots, having relatives who farmed on Craigie Hill. He entered the Primary Department of Kilmarnock Academy and enrolled in the secondary school in 1948, leaving after S6 in 1954. He followed an academic course, taking Highers in English, History, Latin, French and Biology. In his senior years he was involved in producing the school magazine, *Goldberry*

After taking a degree at the University of Glasgow he did National Service in the RAF. He then became a producer with BBC Radio and was appointed Senior Drama Producer for BBC Radio Scotland in 1977 where he was able to encourage many younger writers. Since his first poetry collection, *Thunder in the Air* (1967), Conn has published a further nine collections. His early poems drew upon his Ayrshire experience, territory he returned to with his collection, *In the Blood* (1995). *Stolen Light: Selected Poems* appeared in 1999. He is also a distinguished playwright, his most widely-acclaimed plays being *The Burning*, first performed in 1971, and *Herman*, first produced in 1981.

Douglas Dunn, a literature professor at St Andrews and himself a leading poet, has written that Conn has an 'unnerving sense of the fragility of life'. His early poems set in the countryside near Kilmarnock deal with the harsh realities of farming. *In the Blood* has several poems such as 'Castles', suggested by the school house names of his time, and 'School Motto', which deal with the period of his life when he was a pupil at Kilmarnock Academy:

**School Motto**

Our infants mistress  
Annie C. MacLarty FEIS  
took us to her ample bosom  
  
before handing us over  
to Davy Gordon, who ruled  
with a rod of iron.

In senior school

a third at Aberdeen.  
By then, we others had gone  
our own way: unshriven,  
  
but trying (some of us)  
to *do justly, love mercy,*  
*and walk humbly.*

*In the Blood* (1995)

© Stewart Conn

we were further matured  
by two breakdowns and a suicide.

Used with permission

Later our French master  
went into mourning, when  
a colleague's son got only

Kilmarnock Academy, he makes it clear, is 'in the blood'. Conn's humane vision and understated lyricism has established him as a significant contemporary Scottish voice.

**Sir David Paton Cuthbertson**  
**(1900-1989),**  
**medical researcher**

Sir David Paton Cuthbertson was a distinguished academic who did pioneering research in body metabolism after trauma. He was a native of Kilmarnock, where his mother had been matron of Kilmarnock Infirmary; his father was the secretary of Auchincruive Agricultural College. He entered the primary department of Kilmarnock Academy on 23 April 1906 and at the time the family lived at 4 Charles Street, Kilmarnock. After his army service from 1918-19 he entered Glasgow University and graduated BSc in 1921 with chemistry as his principal subject. In 1926 he graduated with a MB ChB and in 1926 was appointed as a lecturer in pathological biochemistry at the University and clinical biochemist at Glasgow Royal Infirmary. It was during this time that he began working on the metabolism of patients. In 1934 he was appointed as a lecturer in physiological chemistry at Glasgow and he continued his research into metabolism which with the publication in *The Lancet* of a Royal College of Surgeons lecture in 1942 earned him worldwide recognition. He classified the metabolism of patients into 'ebb' and 'flow' phases, the former during the period of clinical shock and the latter when the metabolism begins to return to normal.

In 1943 he was appointed Director of the Rowett Research Institute in Aberdeen (where another former Kilmarnock Academy pupil, John Boyd Orr, had also been Director) and oversaw its expansion and establishment as an important international centre for research in nutrition. He retired in 1965 when he was also knighted. During his retirement he returned to his research into metabolism after trauma. He was awarded by honorary degrees by three universities and was made an honorary fellow or member of several distinguished academic bodies.

He was an accomplished golfer: it was after playing a game at Troon, where he was living, that he died. He is celebrated through an annual lecture named after him and a plaque in Glasgow Royal Infirmary. There is an article on him in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

**John Shaw Dunn**

**(1883-1944)**

**Pathologist**

b. 1883; Blacksyke School; KA 17 August 1891; father Hugh Dunn, Earlston Villa, Caprington d. 10 June 1944

This part of the website is under construction.



**Sir James Macdonald Dunnett**  
**(1877–1953)**  
**Imperial Civil Servant**

James Dunnett had a distinguished career in the Indian Civil Service. His father was the Revd William Dunnett, a Kilmarnock minister.

He was educated at Kilmarnock Academy, and then Edinburgh University from which he graduated with an MA, before studying at Christ Church Oxford. After passing the entrance exam in 1900, he was appointed to the Indian Civil Service where in 1901 he became the assistant commissioner for the Punjab. He was eventually to rise to becoming the Reforms Commissioner of the Government of India from 1930 to 1936. His final civil service appointment was in Britain as 1940 as Assistant Secretary in the Department of Health, Scotland.

In 1922 he was made a Companion of the Indian Empire. He was knighted in 1932 and in 1934 he became a Knight Commander of the Indian Empire. His wife was Annie Sangster (*d.* 1951), They had four children and their second son was Sir Ludovic James Dunnett (1914–1997), a distinguished UK civil servant, who was permanent secretary for fifteen years in three different departments.

**Portrait: National portrait gallery, London**

<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp131937/sir-james-macdonald-dunnett>

## Sir Alexander Fleming

(1881-1955)

### Bacteriologist

Sir Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin which became the world's first dependable antibiotic. He enrolled in Kilmarnock Academy on 28 August 1894. The son of a farmer, he was born at Lochfield, a farm near Darvel to the east of Kilmarnock. At the time Kilmarnock Academy was the Higher Class school for most of north and east Ayrshire and so it was there he was sent to complete his education. The entry in *McDougall's New Admission Register arranged to meet regulations of Scotch Education Department, Dated 26th March 1887*, now in the East Ayrshire Archives, records:

SUCCESSISVE NUMBER (ON ADMISSION OR RE-ADMISSION)	2203
DATE OF ADMISSION OR RE-ADMISSION (YEAR/MONTH/DAY)	94/8/28
EXACT DATE OF BIRTH (YEAR/MONTH/DAY)	81/8/6
THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN	Hugh Fleming, Lochfield Darvel
THE LAST SCHOOL ATTENDED BEFORE ENTERING THIS SCHOOL	Darvel School

Unfortunately, no records are extant for school leavers of this period and it is not known how long Fleming was a pupil in the school. His most recent biographer, Gwyn Macfarlane, states eighteen months, but if Macfarlane's date for Fleming leaving is accurate—the summer of 1895—then it would appear from the entrance date in the school records that he was a pupil for only one session. In this passage from his book, Macfarlane describes Fleming's experience at the Academy:

Meanwhile Alec had transferred to Kilmarnock Academy at the age of twelve. Once more he was ahead of his contemporaries by at least a year, and clearly had a quick intelligence, an excellent memory and the urge to learn. But he did not exert himself unduly, being fortunate enough to absorb what his new school had to offer with a little apparent effort. He could extract the essential facts from a book or a lesson, tuck them away in his memory and recall them at will, even years later. But he was also observant and critical, drew his own conclusions from what he learned, and wasted little time in talking... The Academy, founded in 1633, to which Alec went as a pupil in 1893, was then on the London Road near the river. It was not until 1898, three years after he left, that the Academy moved to its present imposing site near the Dick Institute. When he entered the school, there were about 700 pupils, none of them boarders. The curriculum

was surprisingly comprehensive: English, Latin, Greek, German and French; history, geography, geology, and astronomy; arithmetic, algebra, plane and solid geometry, trigonometry, and mechanics; chemistry, physics and biology. On the more practical side there was agriculture, domestic economy, book-keeping and shorthand ('phonography'). There were organised games and sports and a school orchestra. Pupils paid ten shillings per quarter for each subject, with an average of £10 per annum - a sizable sum in those days. There were bursaries to be won, but there is no record that Alec ever held one, or won any prizes during his short time at the Academy. He was only there for eighteen months. During the week he stayed with an aunt in the town, and went home for the weekends. The railway extended at that time only as far as Newmilns, and unless Alec could catch the horsebrake there, or get a lift to Darvel, he had a six-mile walk home to Lochfield late on Friday nights, and another in the early hours of Monday morning. Alec was probably not sorry when, in the summer of 1895, Hugh [his father] decided that he should accept an offer from Tom [his brother] to live with him and John and Mary [other siblings] in London, and was even more pleased when Robert [another brother] joined them all six months later.

Gwyn MacFarlane, *Alexander Fleming: the Man and the Myth*(1984)

© Gwyn MacFarlane

In London, Fleming first worked as a shipping clerk while he continued his education at the Polytechnic Institute. In 1901 he became a student at the medical school in St Mary's Hospital. And in 1908 he graduated with the degrees of MB, BS and a year later he became a FRCS. He was never to practise as a surgeon, however, and instead he became a bacteriologist at St Mary's, becoming a professor in the subject in 1928 at the University of London.

The discovery which was to make Alexander Fleming famous was made by chance and its immense significance was not immediately apparent. In the summer of 1928 Alexander Fleming, a bacteriologist at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, went away on holiday. As was his habit—he was very untidy—he left a clutter of plates growing various bacteria lying about his desk. While he was relaxing on holiday, something very strange was happening back at the laboratory. Some fungus spores floated onto one of the plates, probably wafting in the door which was always open. The weather was perfect for them to grow. Soon the mould covered part of the plate in which Fleming meant to grow bacteria.

On 3 September, when he returned from holiday, Fleming began to tidy up, putting the plates he didn't want into a tray containing cleaning fluid. He put the mouldy one among them. It

was obviously no good. Just then an assistant came in to see him. Fleming began to show him what he was doing, and he picked up one of the plates from the pile that had not yet been submerged in the liquid. It was the mouldy one. "That's funny," he suddenly said, and looked more closely.

What Fleming had noticed was that no bacteria had grown where the fungal mould was. The rare form of *penicilium notatum* which had invaded his culture plate killed bacteria. Although it would be years before the full implications of the discovery were realised, Fleming had made what has been described as the single most important practical advance in the history of medicine. He had discovered the world's first dependable antibiotic.

It was eleven years later before the discovery was fully developed by Howard Florey and Sir Ernst Chain who developed a means of producing the drug. Fleming was knighted in 1944 and shared the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 1945 with Florey and Chain. He died suddenly in 1955 after a heart attack and his ashes were interred in St Paul's Cathedral, London.

For more information visit <http://nobelprize.org/medicine/laureates/1945/fleming-bio.html>

## **Helen Flockhart**

**(b.1963)**

### **Artist**

Helen Flockhart is a former Kilmarnock Academy pupil who has established a leading reputation for herself in the contemporary art world. She grew up in Stewarton, and after secondary school at Kilmarnock Academy she studied at the Glasgow School of Art from 1980 until 1985 where she was awarded a first-class BA and a Diploma in Post Graduate studies. From 1985-6 she studied painting at the State Higher School of Fine Art in Poznan, Poland.

Flockhart paints in a contemporary style, using symbolism rather than photographic realism. But she draws on the great western realistic tradition of art by painting in a sharply-focused manner. She has said of her work, "I hope my paintings create a feeling of stillness—that they suggest a lull, a sense of portent, slowing a movement right down to its core of frozen energy." She was elected a professional member of the Scottish Society of Artists in 1998.

Another former pupil of the Academy, the Glasgow *Herald* arts journalist, Jan Patience, has described Flockhart's work in an essay:

Flockhart's figures seem to glow with the beauty and energy of 16th-century portraits but there is still a contemporary feeling to the overall scene. "The pictures emerge from an instinctive process which is initially quite abstract," she explains, "beginning as tiny, almost geometric studies on paper in which the relationship between shapes and the space which they inhabit is pushed around."

In the piece which graces the invite card for Spectators [an exhibition held at The Open Eye gallery in Edinburgh in 2010], Flockhart's subject is a still beautiful red-haired woman in her middle years, wearing a green dress and possessed of skin like alabaster. She is swaddled by the darkness of a repeating pattern in the background and she glows unnervingly against this background as she stares into the middle distance. Perhaps all painters do paint themselves into the picture but, as Francis Bacon said, "The job of the artist is always to deepen the mystery."

Extracts from Jan Patience, 'Active Spectators', Arts, *The Herald*, 19.06.10.

Examples of her work are held, among other places, in the Dick Institute, Kilmarnock, and the Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow as well as Flockhart's works the Fleming Collection in London, the Scottish Arts Council, Strathclyde University and the Lillie in Milngavie. Images of her work can be viewed online at:

<http://www.r-h-g.co.uk/Artists/Helen%20Flockhart/>

**George Forrest**  
**(1873-1932)**  
**Plant collector**

George Forrest was one of the greatest of all plant collectors which the British Isles has produced. The youngest of thirteen children, he was born in Falkirk where his father, also George Forrest, was a draper's assistant. He attended Falkirk Southern School, but in 1885 his father, who had commenced his own business, had to give up his shop owing to ill-health and the family moved to Kilmarnock. Initially they were to live with Forrest's older brother James, who was a minister, originally with the Evangelical Union, the denomination to which the family belonged, but latterly with the Unitarian Church. His manse was at 48 Portland Road at the south-west junction of Portland Road and South Hamilton Street and Kilmarnock Academy, where Forrest was enrolled, then in Woodstock Street, would be clearly visible from its front windows some 100 yards away.

The Academy rector at the time was Hugh Dickie who fostered an interest in science and was himself an enthusiastic teacher of its various branches. During Forrest's time at the school in 1887, a purpose-built science laboratory was erected, the first of its kind in Ayrshire. Another early influence on Forrest was probably the Glenfield Ramblers, a society of amateur natural historians whose collections were to form the basis of the Dick Institute's. The Mathematics master at Kilmarnock Academy 1886-1896 was David Murray, one of its most influential members and its president for a number of years, and Forrest's brother James was also a member. In *George Forrest: Plant Hunter* (2004), Brenda McLean identifies a number of features Forrest owed to Kilmarnock Academy: a knowledge of botanical Latin; acquaintance with French which he later used in communicating with French missionaries in China; and a broad understanding of the natural sciences.

He left the Academy in 1891 to work for Rankin and Borland, pharmaceutical chemists, near the Cross in Kilmarnock, and his time there gave him a basic knowledge of medicines. In 1898 the inheritance of a small legacy enabled him to travel to Australia to visit relatives and while there he tried sheep farming and gold digging. It also gave him his first experience of a truly wild environment, crossing the desert and riding in the outback. On his return to Scotland, his family were living in Loanhead near Edinburgh. A fortuitous contact with Professor Isaac Balfour, Regius Keeper of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, led in 1903 to his employment in the garden herbarium where he learned methods of plant preservation and classification with the understanding that it might lead to a career in plant collecting.

His first visit overseas expedition came in 1904 when A.K. Bulley, a Liverpool cotton merchant, sponsored a trip to Yunnan province, in remote south-west China near to the Tibetan and Burmese borders. He was there for three years amid turbulent social conditions. The massacre in 1904 of a Tibetan army by a British force under the command of Francis Younghusband had provoked a backlash, and in 1905 it was reported Forrest had been murdered. In fact he had escaped and had to hide in the mountains eluding the warrior lamas who pursued him for twenty-one days, eight of them without food. The French missionaries who had been with him were butchered and their hearts and brains were eaten—a fate Forrest would surely have shared. Undaunted, as all his specimens had been lost, he quickly returned to his task of collecting once he reached safety.

On his return to Scotland in 1907 he married Clementina Traill, of an old Orkney family, in Rosslyn Chapel, and took a house in Lasswade nearby. Although his marriage continued to be an affectionate one, subsequently Forrest was to spend most of his married life in Yunnan province, making six further trips there, while his wife stayed in Scotland with their children. As well as the hazards of travel, the political situation in China continued to be unsettled as the Manchu dynasty came to an end. Despite these difficulties, he collected over 25,000 plant specimens and discovered over 1,000 new species of plants, introducing over 300 species of rhododendrons to Britain and transforming the British garden. Over one hundred plant genera have species named after Forrest. In addition many hybrids are descended from plants introduced by him: for example *Rhododendron griersonianum* has been the direct parent of 159 garden hybrids. His collecting was not limited to plants, and he also collected birds, insects and mammals (he has species in each class named after him). Ethnographical and natural history items collected by him can be found in Kew Gardens, London; the Natural History Museum, London; the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh; Botanic Gardens, Ness, Cheshire; the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh; and the American Natural History Museum, New York.

He was described by one of his sponsors as being ‘a very small compact man with a fine chest on him, built for fatigue’ (quoted in McLean, *Forrest*, 106). He worked best as a pioneer. He could be irascible and he jealously guarded against rival collectors his monopoly on Yunnan province, but he also learned several local Chinese dialects and he employed native collectors, finding an affinity with the indigenous people. In 1920 he was awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour and in 1927 the Veitch Memorial Medal by the Royal Horticultural Society and in 1924 he was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society. He died of a heart attack on his final trip to China, having intended to retire when he returned, and is buried in Tengchong. The Scottish Rock Garden Club awards an annual medal in his honour.

Some of his introductions can be found listed at [www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/ForrestPlants.htm](http://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/ForrestPlants.htm)



**Alexander Galt**  
**(1854-1938)**  
**physicist**

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**Donald Stewart Hendrie**  
**(1909-64)**  
**agriculturalist**

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**Billy Kay**

**(b.1951)**

**Writer and broadcaster**

Billy Kay is a writer and broadcaster who is an enthusiast for the Scots language and for Scottish working-class life. He was born in Galston and was educated at Galston High School before transferring to Kilmarnock Academy. He graduated MA in English Literature from the University of Edinburgh.

Kay now lives in Newport-on-Tay, Fife. He has published poetry, a play and short stories, and he has also co-written *Knee Deep in Claret: a celebration of wine and Scotland* (1983) and edited *The Dundee Book: an anthology of living in the city* (1990). But it is his work for radio and television for which he is best known. His radio series 'Odyssey' gave rise to two books: *Odyssey: voices from Scotland's recent past* (1980) and *Odyssey: the second collection* (1982). They were exercises in oral history, preserving testimonies from Scotland's working classes such as the lace workers of Kay's native Irvine Valley. His TV series 'The Mither Tongue', a survey of Scots, both its history and current state, also produced a book entitled *Scots the Mither Tongue* (1986).

In his work Kay has been concerned to explore Scottish culture. His approach is fresh and modern in its use of oral history and its high valuation of the Scots language. He pays attention to forgotten and marginalized peoples within Scotland: Glengarnock steelworkers, the Lanarkshire Lithuanians, Dundee jute workers. He draws attention to the way in which spoken Scots is still vibrant and he is part of a contemporary move to keep it central to Scotland's culture. Kay's *oeuvre* is part of a reassessment of what it means to be Scottish.

**Hugh Kerr**  
**(b. 1944)**  
**Labour MEP**

Hugh Kerr was a Labour Party Member of the European Parliament and was a former lecturer in social policy.

Kerr was a pupil from 1955 until 1959, having come to the Academy from Hurlford. He left at age 15, the minimum school leaving age then. He returned to education at the London School of Economics and Essex University. From 1968 until 1994 he was a lecturer and later Senior Lecturer at the University of North London specialising in European social policy. In 1994 he was elected for West & Hertfordshire East as a Labour Member of the European Parliament, where he served until 1999. A committed fan of opera, during this period, with Nana Mouskouri, he was in charge of music policy for the European Parliament. Being critical of Tony Blair's New Labour, feeling it was deeply authoritarian, expulsion from the party soon followed. In the European Parliament he then became the first MEP for the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP), and after his new party failed to win a seat in the next round of elections, from 1999 until 2004 he became Press Officer in the Scottish Parliament for its leader, the MSP, Tommy Sheridan,. He resigned from the SSP in 2006 to become press officer in Sheridan's new party, Solidarity, but left it to join the Scottish National Party in 2011. He resigned from his new party in 2016 after what he perceived as a right-wing gesture by Nicola Sturgeon.

In a biographical note he sent to the Academy, he stated that he never really took to the middle-class ethos of the Academy. He continued:

There is a lot of mythology about how good Scottish education in general and Kilmarnock Academy in particular was. In truth it failed a generation of working-class young people who were alienated by the ethos of the school and were often rejected by the teachers and that supposedly great Rector Dr Macintyre. Many of my friends from Hurlford were among them including my brother Jim, later they would go on to university and achieve high positions but it was in spite of Kilmarnock Academy rather than because of it!

As for me I was called into Dr McIntyres office and invited to leave he said "Kerr if

you ever need a reference from me it will be an extremely bad one"! Many years later I reviewed Willie McIlvanney's great book *The Kiln* which is less than flattering to the Academy. I said, "Fortunately after collecting 3 degrees becoming a university lecturer and visiting professor in Australia and the USA and an MEP I never needed a reference from Kilmarnock Academy"!

Now a freelance journalist, he has served as vice-chair of Scottish Executive of National Union of Journalists and has written on music and cultural politics for *The Scotsman*, *The Herald*, *The Guardian*, and *Opera Magazine*.

**Jimmy Knapp**  
**(1940-2001),**  
**Trade unionist**

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**David Landsborough**  
**(1870-1957)**  
**Medical missionary**

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**Sir James Rögnvald Learmonth**  
**(1895-1967)**  
**Surgeon**

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**Alex. McCurdie**

**(1897-1917)**

**footballer**

Alex McCurdie played as a centre forward for Kilmarnock F.C. in the early twentieth century. He was killed in action in France during the First World War . The special memorial edition of *The Gold Berry* commemorating the former pupils and teachers of Kilmarnock Academy which was issued in 1923 carried the following obituary of him:

SERGEANT ALEX. M'CURDIE, A. & S. H., Burngrange, Mauchline, was of the Class VI. whose school course finished in 1914. He will be best remembered as a member of the football team. His play having attracted the attention of the secretary of the Kilmarnock F.C. he was persuaded to join their reserve eleven as centre forward, and even played many games for the "A" team. After continuing his studies for a short time at Glasgow University he joined the 14th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, where his reliability and fearlessness made him a favourite with both officers and men. He was killed in France in April, 1917, at the age of twenty. Shortly before his death he had been recommended for the D.C.M.

*The Gold Berry* (1923), pp.46-7.

©Kilmarnock Academy

**Sir Alexander McColl**  
**(1878-1962)**  
**Businessman**

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**Margaret McDowall**

**(b.1936)**

**Swimmer**

Margaret McDowall was the dominant force in British women's backstroke swimming in the 1950s. She came to Kilmarnock Academy from James Hamilton Academy to follow the commercial course. A talented swimmer at an early age, she was a member of the Scottish Swimming Team from the age of 14. The Kilmarnock Academy swimming baths were still in use and her training swims in them was a memorable sight for her contemporaries at school. Her greatest achievement was to win the silver medal in the 1952 Helsinki Olympics.

**RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT**

Bologna Trophy
British Swimming Championships 1950 100 Yards Winner
Scottish Swimming Championships 1951
100 yards Junior Championship
Winner 100 yards Senior Championship
Winner British Swimming Championships 1951
100 Yards Winner Scottish Swimming Championships 1952
100 yards Senior Championship Winner
British Swimming Championships 1952 100 yards Winner
Olympic Games 1952 Helsinki 100 yards backstroke Silver Medal
Scottish Swimming Championships 1953 100 yards Senior Championship
Winner Scottish Swimming Championships 1954 Senior Championship Winner
Scottish Swimming Championships 1955 100 yards Senior Championship Winner
Scottish Swimming Championships 1957 100 yards Senior Championship Winner
Scottish Swimming Championships 1958 100 yards Senior Championship Winner

**Hugh McIlvanney**  
**(1933-2019)**  
**Sports journalist**

Hugh McIlvanney is widely acknowledged as being the finest contemporary sports journalist in Britain. He spent one session at Kilmarnock Academy from 1949 until 1950, transferring from James Hamilton Junior Secondary in London Road in the same year that his brother William entered S1. The course he followed was clearly directed towards a future career. He studied English, History, Geography, Arithmetic, Shorthand, Bookkeeping, Typing and Commercial Practice. His school records, still held at Kilmarnock Academy, show that he was extremely successful in these subjects, but, as for many others at that time, a secure job instead of staying on at school meant a steady income.

McIlvanney left Kilmarnock Academy to take a job as a journalist with *The Kilmarnock Standard*. In the 1960s he moved to London to work as a sports writer with *The Observer*, where he was to remain for thirty years eventually becoming its chief sports writer. Recently he has moved to the same post at *The Sunday Times*. He has been winner of the prestigious Sports Writer of the Year on seven occasions, a unique achievement, and is the only sports journalist to have been voted Journalist of the Year. Some of his best writing has been collected in a series of books on his three main sporting interests: *McIlvanney on Boxing* (1982), *McIlvanney on Football* (1994), and *McIlvanney on Horseracing* (1995). He has also ghost written *Managing My Life* (1999), the autobiography of Sir Alec Ferguson, the Manchester United manager.

His journalism is noted for its stylish prose, incisive commentary and acerbic wit. He has won the intimate confidence of many leading sportsmen, such as Muhammad Ali and Jock Stein. His writing on Ali is particularly fine, McIlvanney's journalistic career spanning the boxer's great years, including the famous 'rumble in the jungle' in 1974 with George Foreman. For McIlvanney, as for Bill Shankley, sport is not a matter of life and death—it's more important than that. The racetrack, for example, is 'a place where everyday reality is suspended in favour of a theatrically heightened version', and horseracing itself 'is one of the most attractive and natural metaphors for life that sport has to offer'. In McIlvanney's journalism, sport provides a compelling image for the human condition. It is this ability to grasp the existential significance of the sporting contest which makes him such an illuminating commentator.

In 1996, McIlvanney was made an OBE for services to Sports Journalism. He retired in 2016 and died in London 2019 after a short illness.

## **William McIlvanney**

**(1936-2015)**

### **Novelist**

William McIlvanney was one of the leading contemporary novelists in Scotland. He was a pupil at Kilmarnock Academy from 1949 until 1955. Born in Kilmarnock of working-class parents, he is representative of many others during this period who found increased opportunities through education. When McIlvanney entered the school the teacher enrolling him noted that his surname was spelt with one 'n' on his birth certificate. Pedantically, the mistake on the official document was followed, even though below it on the register his brother Hugh's surname was entered with two 'n's. William, however, was stuck with only one during the rest of his schooldays.

He was a brilliant pupil, following an academic course with conspicuous success. In S5 he took English, History, Mathematics, Latin, Greek and French. His ability in English was always strong. He was a frequent speaker at the Literary and Debating Society and the *Goldberry*, the school magazine, contains some of his juvenilia, the first of his work to appear in print. In session 1953-4 he was appointed a prefect, becoming the Deputy Senior Prefect in 1954-5 and the editor of the *Goldberry* that same session.

He took an MA at the University of Glasgow before teaching English from 1960 until 1975 in Irvine Royal Academy and then Greenwood Academy, Dreghorn, where he was also Assistant Head Teacher. In 1975 he left teaching to devote himself to writing full-time. From his first novel, *Remedy is None* (1966), his writing strongly reflected his Kilmarnock roots. *Docherty* (1975), which won the Whitbread Prize, is set in the early twentieth century in the High Street area of the town (called Graithnock in it), and many locations near to the Academy feature in the novel. *The Kiln* (1996) is the story of a boy, grandson of the eponymous hero of *Docherty*, at secondary school in the post-war period, and it draws upon his own experience while at Kilmarnock Academy. There are portraits in it which are recognisably of the Old Academy and several of its teachers, including the rector and his office.

McIlvanney also produced volumes of poetry, short stories, and essays and journalism. With *Laidlaw* (1977) and *The Papers of Tony Veitch* (1983) detective novels about the policeman Jack Laidlaw, McIlvanney changed his setting to Glasgow, where he himself had moved. However, with the third novel in the trilogy, *Strange Loyalties* (1991), McIlvanney returned to Ayrshire. This series of novels is credited as being the origins of the 'Tartan noir'

genre for which novelists such as Ian Rankin, Louise Welsh, Denise Mina, and Val McDermid are known.

McIlvanney was concerned to reflect vibrant working-class life in literature. This could be seen, not only in his excellent ear for west of Scotland speech, but also in his use of popular forms such as the detective story. Kilmarnock provided him with both vital experience and enabling education. His work established him as one of the major contemporary Scottish writers.

The site on which the present Kilmarnock Academy opened in 2018 was named the William McIlvanney Campus in his honour.

**William McKerrow**  
**(1803-1878)**  
**Educationalist**

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## **Eleanor Allen Moore**

**(1885-1955)**

### **Artist**

Eleanor Allen Moore is included in the circle of Scottish painters now known as the Glasgow Girls. She was born in Glenwhirry, County Antrim. Her mother was Scottish, from St Cyrus, Angus, and the family lived in Edinburgh from 1888. In 1891 her father, the Revd Hamilton Moore, was called to be the minister of Loudoun Parish Church, Newmilns. She was encouraged to develop her artistic talents, playing the piano and painting. She came to Kilmarnock Academy in 1895 (the admission register simply gives her Christian name as 'Nellie'), but it would appear that she did not attend the school for very long. In 1902 she enrolled in the Glasgow School of Art.

After graduating she was unable to afford the cost of a model, posing for herself in some of her early paintings. For one oil painting, 'The Silk Dress', she grandly dressed herself in a Victorian gown in a pose partly suggested, perhaps, by the work of the Scottish colourist, F.C.B. Cadell. She continued to paint and exhibit, but during World War I she was a Voluntary Aid Detachment nurse at Craighleith Military Hospital in Edinburgh. She resumed painting after the war, and in 1922 Moore married Robert Cecil Robertson, a doctor and another former pupil of Kilmarnock Academy. Her husband was appointed Public Health Officer with Shanghai Municipal Council in 1924 and their privileged life in Shanghai with a number of servants allowed Eleanor to continue painting. She produced some fine watercolours of the Chinese people in the 1930s and she was also popular as a portrait painter in the expatriate community. As she and her husband explored the countryside around Shanghai in their houseboat, Robert, whose father had inherited a family house painting and decorating business, also took up painting, producing some impressive studies of local scenes and people. Eleanor and her husband stayed in Shanghai until the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937 when they moved to Hong Kong. Her husband died in Hong Kong in 1942, and sadly many of his paintings were lost at sea when being shipped back from Shanghai. After World War II Eleanor returned to Scotland, but did little painting subsequent to her return. She died in Edinburgh. Her daughter, Ailsa Tanner (1923-2001), who was born in Kilmarnock, also became a painter and was a noted art historian.

Since the 1990s Eleanor Allen Moore has been claimed as belonging to the school of painters known as 'the Glasgow Girls'. This is a description for women painters associated with the Glasgow School of Art of the early twentieth century which has been coined to counterbalance the better-known male painters, 'the Glasgow Boys'—among others, it was Ailsa Tanner's work which helped establish their number. Eleanor Moore's work displays



her superb draughtsmanship, utilising the non-symbolic subjects favoured by these Glasgow artists. Her swift brushwork, which in technique evidently owes something to Chinese calligraphy, can be seen in her sympathetic watercolours of Chinese people although they are treated in the realistic tradition of western art. She and her husband were the subjects of an exhibition at the Dick Institute, Kilmarnock, in 1997 and again in 2007, where several of her works are held.

‘The Silk Dress’, a self-portrait in a Victorian gown, can be viewed online at:

[http://bertc.com/subtwo/moore\\_e.htm](http://bertc.com/subtwo/moore_e.htm)

**John Dunlop Miller**  
**(b.1941)**  
**Moderator of the General Assembly**  
**of the Church of Scotland**

The Very Reverend John D. Miller is noted for his radical Christian vision of a bias towards the poor. John Miller's father was the minister of the Laigh Kirk, Kilmarnock, from 1945 until 1950. He was enrolled in the Primary Department of Kilmarnock Academy in 1946, but just before Christmas 1950 the family moved to London, where his father would later serve as the moderator of the Presbyterian Church, and during his secondary years he attended an independent school. He studied at the universities of Oxford and Edinburgh and also at the Union Theological Seminary, New York.

His sole charge has been Castlemilk East Parish Church where he was minister for some 36 years, from 1971 until his retirement in 2007. Castlemilk is a large peripheral post-war housing scheme on the south side of Glasgow, built to accommodate people rehoused from inner city slum areas. It has many of the problems associated with unemployment and poverty. In 1972 John Miller gave up the large manse in nearby Rutherglen for a Housing Association flat in the scheme to be near the people, and he would send his three children to local Castlemilk schools. In the scheme he was a kenspeckle figure as he travelled around it daily on his bike. He campaigned for measures to help those on state benefits manage debt, and he also worked closely with the Glasgow Association of Family Support Groups which helps the families and friends of drug misusers and also their partners through offering advice, information and support. For 16 years he was chairman of a project helping young people on the streets. He has also been deeply involved with the Kirk's Department of National Mission. His wife, Mary, was one of the cofounders of the Jeely Piece Club which established summer play schemes for children in Glasgow. He marked the new millennium by cycling to John O'Groats in the company of a Roman Catholic priest.

In 2001 he was elected Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, a year-long appointment. The Moderator chairs sessions of the General Assembly, the Church of Scotland's annual gathering, and leads its worship, rules on points of order and signs documents on behalf of the Assembly. During his Moderatorial term he travelled throughout Scotland and visited a number of countries in an ambassadorial capacity. At the Vatican he met with Pope John Paul II. He also visited Kilmarnock Academy and met with a group of

senior pupils in the school library where he demonstrated his immense capacity for listening without censure.

In 2006 the city of Glasgow awarded him the Loving Cup, the city's most prestigious award which recognises people who bring distinction, honour and publicity to the city. The presentation was presided over by a friend from his Oxford years, Neil McGregor, the Director of the British Museum. In presenting the cup the Lord Provost of Glasgow, Liz Cameron, said, "John Miller is one of Glasgow's greatest friends and servants who has been totally dedicated in his work to improve the wellbeing of the people of Castlemilk. He is a quiet and unassuming individual who is respected and appreciated by everyone, and he is a very worthy recipient of the highest civic honour the city can bestow on anyone."

In 2007 he was further honoured when the non-denominational Miller Primary School in Castlemilk was named after him and his wife. In a typical gesture he presented both it and the local Roman Catholic primary school with a framed photograph of himself meeting the Pope. In the year after his retirement he went to work in Zimbabwe with sufferers of HIV/AIDS.

His time in Castlemilk has had a profound impact on his faith. In an interview with *The Sunday Herald* (22 Oct. 2000) he said, "I think it is in the realm of spirituality that living in Castlemilk all these years has had an effect on me. One of the things that has been a continuing and constant feature here is the way that people retain an ability to live in spite of catastrophe... I think people in the schemes, because of the difficult nature of life, recognise the validity of discussions of God. I find myself engaged in conversations about the nature and existence of God and the universe daily, and many times almost instantly after meeting somebody."

**Sir William Muir**  
**(1819-1906)**  
**Imperial administrator & Islamicist**

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**Andrew Picken Orr**  
**(1898-1962)**  
**Marine biologist**

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**John Boyd Orr,  
1st Baron Boyd Orr  
(1880-1971)  
Nutritionist**

John Boyd Orr, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Boyd Orr, had a major impact on global health through his work on nutrition for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. He was born in Kilmaurs and when he was five the family moved from the village, where his father had been a quarry-master, to West Kilbride. He was sent back to Kilmaurs though in order to complete his education at Kilmarnock Academy. His father's business was performing poorly and Boyd Orr was enabled to attend Kilmarnock Academy through winning a bursary—a grant which defrayed the cost of his school fees. He enrolled in the school on 11 September 1893. The entry in *McDougall's New Admission Register arranged to meet regulations of Scotch Education Department, Dated 26th March 1887*, still held in Kilmarnock Academy, records:

SUCCESSISVE NUMBER (ON ADMISSION OR RE-ADMISSION)	2023
DATE OF ADMISSION OR RE-ADMISSION (YEAR/MONTH/DAY)	93/9/11
NAME IN FULL: CHRISTIAN AND SURNAME	John Orr
EXACT DATE OF BIRTH (YEAR/MONTH/DAY)	80/9/23
THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN	Robert Orr, Hollandgreen Quarry, Kilmaurs
THE LAST SCHOOL ATTENDED BEFORE ENTERING THIS SCHOOL	West Kilbride P.S.

Unfortunately, no records are extant of school leavers for this period and it is not known how long Boyd Orr was a pupil in the school. To judge from the passage in his autobiography, *As I Recall* (1966), describing his experience at Kilmarnock Academy, his stay in the school was probably brief—evidently he did not, for example, know Alexander Fleming while at school and this suggests he may have left before or shortly after Fleming enrolled in August 1894. In the following extract from *As I Recall*, Boyd Orr describes his educational experience at Kilmarnock Academy:

When I was thirteen I won a bursary and was sent to Kilmarnock Academy, about twenty miles from my home. Fortunately or unfortunately for my education, my father owned a quarry about two miles from Kilmarnock and I was sent to lodge with the tenant of a house near the quarry. I found life at the quarry among the navvies and quarrymen much more interesting than walking two miles to the Academy in Kilmarnock. I was allowed to fire the engines and work the crane and

mingled as I wished with the workmen who taught me to smoke, and from whom I gathered a wonderful vocabulary of swear words.

Part of my pocket money for lunch in Kilmarnock was spent on buying the penny and twopenny “blood and thunder” stories of the Wild West. These were forbidden and had to be smuggled into the house when I went home. I still remember the stories and names of some of the books—*Panther Paul the Prairie Pirate*, *Icicle Isaac from Frozen Flats*, *Deadwood Dick in Denver City* and other alluring titles. Such was my first introduction to English literature! So far as I can remember they were good clean stories of adventure, suitable for a boy of thirteen or fourteen years and, on the whole, better than some of the Westerns on television today.

My report from the Academy must have shocked my parents for I was taken home and sent again to the village school where I was soon taken on as one of the four pupil teachers. It was customary then for one or two suitable pupils of about thirteen or fourteen to be taken on to the teaching staff as pupil teachers serving a kind of apprenticeship to the teaching profession. The headmaster invited me to become one and I accepted. I was paid £10 to the first year, rising to £20 in the fourth year.

John Boyd Orr, *As I Recall* (1966).

© Estate of John Boyd Orr.

Boyd Orr could have been, in the words of Lord Ritchie Calder, the left-wing Scottish journalist, “successful in any one of half a dozen careers.” After a brief spell as a teacher, he entered Glasgow University to study medicine. It was while in Glasgow that he encountered the dreadful poverty and diseases of the slum children. This started him on a life-long crusade against these social evils.

During the World War I, he won both the MC and the DSO for bravery. After the war he studied animal nutrition, being the founder of the Imperial Bureau of Animal Nutrition (1929), and the Director of the Rowett Research Institute and Professor of Agriculture at the University of Aberdeen (1942-5) and this led him to study human nutrition too. His social concern was evident in his book *Food, Health and Income* (1936) and Ritchie Calder played a significant part in producing a film version, ‘Enough to Eat?’ It was the findings of his studies in nutrition that were adopted by the government and formed the basis of the diet that the nation kept during the World War II. The healthy condition of the British people during the war has been generally judged as a key factor in the victory.

He became the M.P. for the Scottish Universities in 1945 but resigned the following year to become the first director-general of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation. At a time of severe world-wide food shortages, it was his advice that averted famine

conditions. He pointed out two problems: half of the world's population lacks sufficient food; farmers everywhere dare not overproduce in case they cause a slump in food prices and ruin themselves financially. His solution was to use one problem to solve the other. Governments could use the excess to feed the needy.

He had a forthright personality and he was outspoken on issues about which he felt strongly. There was a touch of eccentricity about him. Once he went into a barber's for a haircut. While deep in thought about a problem that he was trying to solve, he heard the barber ask if he wanted a shave. Boyd Orr replied that it was a haircut that he wanted. The barber protested that he had just finished giving him one. Not wanting his train of thought interrupted, he ordered the barber to cut it again!

In 1949 he was created 1st Baron Boyd Orr and that same year he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. His later years were devoted to the task of promoting world peace and unity.

For more information visit <http://nobelprize.org/peace/laureates/1949/>



**Colin Dunlop Wilson Rankin**  
**(1869-1940)**  
**soldier, politician and businessman**

**Robert Cecil Robertson**  
**(d.1942)**  
**epidemiologist**

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**John Merry Ross**  
**(1833-1883),**  
**Literary critic & historian**

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## **Cameron Sharp**

**(b.1960)**

**Athlete**

Cameron Sharp is the most successful track and field athlete that Kilmarnock Academy has produced. His career was prematurely ended by a serious car accident in 1991 and he has won admiration for his courageous fight against his injuries which have left him disabled. He now lives in Edinburgh with his wife.

### **RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT**

1978	Commonwealth games, Canada	Gold medal 4*100 metres relay
1980	Olympic games, Moscow	Semifinals 100 metres and 200 metres final
1982	European Championships, Athens	4th 100 metres and 2nd 200 metres final
1982	Commonwealth Games, Brisbane	3rd 100 metres final, 3rd 200 metres final and 3 <sup>rd</sup> 4x100 metre relay final
1983	World Championships, Helsinki	Semi-finals of the 100 metres and 200 metres
1986	Commonwealth Games, Edinburgh	3rd 4x100 metres relay

He was also:

- the Scottish 100 metres and 200 metres champion;
- the AAA 100 metres and 200 metres champion;
- the UK national champion

**Robert Murdoch Smith**  
**(1835-1900)**  
**Army engineer and archaeologist**

The following obituary of Major-General Sir Robert Murdoch Smith appeared in the *Gold Berry*, the Kilmarnock Academy magazine, in 1911:

Over twelve years ago the present buildings of Kilmarnock Academy were opened by Sir Robert Murdoch Smith, one of the schools most eminent former pupils. It will be of interest to our readers to recall in brief outline the events of his distinguished career.

Major-General Sir Robert Murdoch Smith, K.C.M.G., was the second son of Dr. Hugh Smith, medical practitioner in Kilmarnock, and was born in his father's house in Bank Street in 1835. He received the whole of his school education at the academy, under Mr Harkness. After leaving school he went to Glasgow university, and in 1855 he obtained a commission in the Royal Engineers by open competition, passing first out of some 380 candidates. In the following year he was selected to command the party of engineers which accompanied Sir Charles Newton's archaeological expedition to Asia Minor. His zeal and capacity contributed largely to the success of this expedition, which resulted in the discovery of the site of the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, and the acquisition of its magnificent sculptures, which now form one of the chief treasures of the British Museum. In 1861, after a year of regimental duty at Malta, he undertook another expedition, this time on his own account, to explore the ancient cities of the Cyrenaica in North Africa. Accompanied by his friend, Lieut. E.A. Porcher. R.N., he spent a year in the wild country about Cyrene. The explorers made important discoveries, and brought home many valuable antiquities, which they presented to the British Museum. The results of the expedition were recorded by them in a fine illustrated volume, "History of the Recent Discoveries at Cyrene," published in 1864.

In 1863, Sir Robert (then Captain Murdoch Smith) found the main work of his life. In that year he was appointed to the staff project Persian telegraph, which now connects India with Europe, through Persia and Russia; and in 1865 he became director of the telegraph at Teheran. Speaking at Kilmarnock in 1899, when he relieved the freedom of the burgh, Sir Robert said referring to his period of life: "It would be endless to describe the difficulties by which the task that thus devoted upon me surrounded. Imagine a country in many ways resembling the roadless, lawless Highlands of Scotland as depicted in the pages of 'Waverly,' and 'Rob Roy,' and you will have some idea of the conditions under which a telegraph, 1200 miles in length,

through a rugged mountainous, and absolutely independent country had to be, maintained guarded, and worked. Local authorities everywhere, not to speak of the Nomadic tribes through whose country the line had to pass, were naturally the reverse of friendly towards what they correctly regarded as means of ultimately bringing them more directly under the control of the central government at Teheran. Add to this extreme difficulty of transport, the fanaticism of the Mohammedan priesthood, and the natural jealousy and suspicion with which we, as foreigners, were generally regarded, and you will hardly be surprised to hear that success often seemed well nigh hopeless. It came at last, however, very gradually, after some ten years of incessant struggling, and the whole line was brought into a state of general efficiency that, for the last century, has compared favourably with that of the oldest and best - established lines in Europe.”

Murdoch Smith remained at the head of the telegraph in Persia for twenty years. His artistic and antiquarian tastes found in a new field of exercise in the art and antiquities of Persia, on which he became a recognised authority. It was chiefly through his exertions that the fine collection of Persian exhibits now at South Kensington was acquired. In 1885 he was offered the post of Director of the Edinburgh Museum of science and art, now the Royal Scottish Museum, which he accepted. In 1887 he made another visit to Persia, being on a special diplomatic mission to adjust certain differences which had arisen with the Persian Government, in relation to the occupation of Jashk, on the Persian Gulf, by British troops. Not only was this question settled to the satisfaction of both parties, but the opportunity was taken to secure a renewal on favourable terms of our telegraph convention with Persia. On his return home he relieved his honour of knighthood; and in December, 1887, he retired from the army with the rank of Major-General. His remaining years were spent in Edinburgh, here he was not only a successful administrator of the Museum, but an active member of many public bodies and a well -known and popular figure in society. He died in 1900.

Throughout his life he retained a warm attachment to his native town and a vivid memory of his old school. In December, 1890, he opened the Kilmarnock art gallery. His last public appearance was on the 9th of February, 1899, when he visited Kilmarnock to open the new buildings of the Academy, and to receive the freedom of the burgh, an honour in which he highly appreciated.

*Gold Berry* (1911), pp.13-15.

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**James Stevenson**  
**1st Baron Stevenson**  
**(1873-1926)**

**Businessman and civil servant**

Lord Stevenson was the first person from Kilmarnock to be elevated to the peerage. His father was Alexander Stevenson of Portland Terrace, Kilmarnock, a warehouse manager with John Walker & Sons. In the first Kilmarnock Academy Admission register which is extant, he is one of the 727 names which appear as being enrolled on 1 November 1887 when the register was established according to new regulations and evidently he, along with the other individuals, such as the future plant collector, George Forrest, were being transferred from an earlier register, now lost. 'Richard' has been entered in pencil before 'James'. He left the school on 20 January 1888, according to the register, to work as a clerk in Glasgow for a firm of Whisky blenders. He returned to work in Kilmarnock in 1890 for John Walker & Sons as a commercial traveller and he worked his way up to become joint managing director of the company. He developed Walker's business in England and established its export trade. It was he who coined the phrase 'Born in 1820, still going strong', one of the most successful of advertising slogans.

During World War I he worked for the government in the Ministry of Munitions, being made a baronet in 1917. After the war he held a number of government posts and he chaired the committee responsible for the British Empire Exhibition in 1924-5 which was a congenial task as he was a keen imperialist. After the Exhibition it was proposed that stadium erected for it in Wembley, north London, should be demolished. Stevenson successfully fought for its preservation. Its twin towers were the most-prominent feature of Wembley Stadium, 'the home of English football', until the erection of the new Wembley in the twenty-first century. As a member of the board of John Walker & Sons he was a proponent of merging the three major whisky blenders with Distillers as the holding company, the view that prevailed in 1925. There is an article on him in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. When he died in 1926 the *Goldberry*, the Kilmarnock Academy school magazine, carried the following obituary of him:

The late Lord Stevenson must be mentioned here as an old pupil of Kilmarnock Academy. That "the child is father of the man" is well shown in Lord Stevenson's case. The vigour of youth was followed by amazing work and versatility later in life. While in business in the employ of Messrs. John Walker & Son's, he cultivated the literary and musical tastes which he possessed.

During the Great War the title of Baronet was conferred on him in recognition for his services. During ten years he toiled unceasingly, and produced the brilliant work which earned his reward. He is, however, chiefly known as Chairman of the Standing Committee of the British Empire Exhibition-known as “the man who saved Wembley” by his excellent handling of the tangled affairs. His reward was the elevation to the peerage.

His successful career was due to his pleasant disposition, tact, and ability at the head of affairs. Old pupils who knew him feel regret: present pupils feel, on the other hand, pride that the first commoner of Kilmarnock to receive a peerage was also a pupil of the Academy.

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## **Alan Watson Thom**

Aviation pioneer

**Alan Watson Thom** was with us from 1934 to 1940. At Cambridge University he gained a First Class in the Engineering Tripos, then went to research as the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough. He was one of the most brilliant young men in the department of High Speed Flight. His death was tragic with the irony of War: after much dangerous work in the testing of the Meteor jet prototype he was killed in a crashed transport 'plane.

**Alexander Thom**  
**(1894-1985)**  
**Engineer & archaeologist**

This part of the site is under construction.

**Sir Robin Wales**

**(b.)**

**Local politician**

Sir Robin Wales is a leading figure in local government in London and a Labour Party politician. He has been Chair of the Association of London Government since 2000. He was elected Mayor of Newham in 2002, after seven years as borough leader, and is one of 11 democratically-elected mayors in the country.

Robin comes from Kilmarnock and has a BSc in chemistry from Glasgow University. He has two children, and before becoming Mayor was employed by BT where he was responsible for developing credit and fraud management systems. He has extensive experience of working in IT, employee communications, customer services and logistics.

Having moved to London in 1978, Robin was a councillor from 1982-86 and then from 1992 in the London Borough of Newham. He was elected Mayor of Newham in 2002, after seven years as borough leader, the first Labour directly-elected Mayor in the country. He was awarded a Knighthood in the Birthday Honours' List 2000 in recognition of his service to local government

Sir Robin Wales has been Chair of the Association of London Government since 2000. He is a member of the London 2012 board, steering London's bid for the 2012 Summer Olympics.

He was awarded a Knighthood in the 2000 Birthday Honours List in recognition of his service to local government.

[http://www.futurestratford.com/people\\_detail.php?peopleID=4](http://www.futurestratford.com/people_detail.php?peopleID=4)

<http://www.london2012.com/en/bid/theteam.htm>

**Sir Robert Dickie Watt**  
**(1881-1965)**  
**agricultural scientist**

**Sir William Wyllie**  
**(1802-1891)**  
**Army officer**

This part of the site is under construction.