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*Street scene in Sfax Algeria*

**Watercolour by John Houston (1913-1985)**

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***Cover illustration and page 3***

John Houston (1913-1985) was educated at Ayr Academy and studied at Glasgow School of Art from 1931 to 1936. He served in the Royal Signals Regiment from 1941 to 1946, and painted many watercolours during his wartime service in North Africa and Italy. He kept a detailed diary during the war. After his service John taught art in Ayrshire, serving for many years as Head of Art in Grange Academy, Kilmarnock. He produced a prodigious number of watercolours during his travels in Scotland and on visits abroad, particularly in Greece, Russia, and Australia.

# Contents



*23a Atlas MountainsTunisia*

# The Girvan Clique: Ayrshire golf in 1751

Early regular play as found by
David Hamilton, David B. Smith, David McClure and Robert Close

PROFESSOR Michael Moss's research in the Kennedy papers has brought to light an important letter relevant to early golf in the west coast of Scotland. In the course of giving family news, on 15th February 1751, Archibald Kennedy wrote thus to Sir Thomas Kennedy:

> There are grand Golph Matches at Girvan every fourtnight. The parties Generally are Barganey, Ardmillan Pinmore Mr Cathcart, the minister and Doctor Bannerman which occasions harmony and friendship and Sir John is Judge of fair play at that and the drinking, there are Complaints for the most part next day of Sore heads and great drouths [thirsts][1]


**The estate houses of Killochan, Barganey and Ardmillan, close to Girvan, as shown in Armstrong and Son's *Map of Ayrshire* 1775.**

This is a wry note on the sociable routine of a group of golfing cronies. The seven men mentioned were enthusiasts who attended regularly, and it seems there was a wider group of less keen players. It is of importance that they were playing regularly in February. The meetings were held every two weeks, suggesting that the golf alternated or coincided with another fortnightly local event, though the markets and court sittings were inland at the larger town of Maybole.

Girvan is four miles south of Turnberry and eighteen miles south of Ayr, and this southern part of the County of Ayr, called Carrick, has an illustrious and turbulent history. The coastal links at Girvan, on the seaward side of the main street were, and still are, natural for golf. The area is celebrated for its mild winter climate, one largely free of snow and frost, a beneficial effect of the warm Atlantic Gulf Stream as it reaches the west coast of Scotland. But a formal golf course only emerged at Girvan much later than the time of the letter. Not until 1900 were the ancient links used for the start of a new 18-hole course, run then and now by the town authorities.[2]

The men mentioned in the Girvan letter were well-off lairds identified by their estate names, plus two professional men, doubtless all playing with expensive long-nosed clubs and featherie balls. These 'grand Golf Matches' would be high-profile outings by the great and good of Carrick, and were well enough known to be remarked on by the non-golfing writer of the letter.

## *The Golfers*

The letter, though brief, gives much detail. The players (described individually below) were landowners with estates near Girvan and they had many associations with the powerful local Kennedy family. There were other ties of marriage and property within the group, and the ages, where known, suggest a group of gentlemen in early middle life. Two professional men also were regular players – the Minister (of the Church of Scotland), and a local medical man. To meet on the links, as Armstrong and son's map shows, the gentry needed only a short journey from their substantial country houses, since Bargany is just over four miles from Girvan, and Ardmillan is about three miles distant, as is Sir John's castle at Killochan. But their journeys would be by horse over the rough roads of the day, and since it is unlikely that the far-from-sober lairds would risk a dark winter's night ride home over the muddy roads after their February golfing, drinking and eating, accommodation at a warm inn would be preferred. Dr Bannerman may have come furthest, from Maybole inland. Certainly they seemed to be together in Girvan next day to share and compare their hang-overs. The companionable nature of the group in their sport and drinking is emphasised, and the outings are seen as promoting local harmony and Enlightenment values in a fractious part of Scotland. There is a hint of masonic terminology in Kennedy's use in his letter of the word 'grand' for his 'Golf Matches'. But the word may have been used casually, and there was no local Girvan Masonic Lodge until 1775. Heavy drinking was a feature of the group. On another occasion, Archibald Kennedy wrote to Sir Thomas, then abroad, in 1751, reporting that he had hosted and entertained some of the group:

> Mr Hamilton of Barganey was here about two nights with your brother about ten days agoe and very merry when good Dr Bannerman was fairly laid aside.[3]

When drinking, Hamilton the golfer could be aggressive:

> Hamilton [Barganey] suspected John [his footman] of improper conduct with a lady guest. The following day, Mr Hamilton having dined and drunk very freely, asked for one of his golf clubs, which he broke in

pieces over John's back, saying 'You damned scoundrel - provide yourself with a place [i.e. leave]'.[4]

## *East and West*

The interest of this letter is that it has been generally considered that golf in eighteenth century Scotland was primarily an east coast game, thriving notably at St. Andrews and Edinburgh. But though the game was ancient at the time of Kennedy's letter, only one Scottish golf club with a formal organisation existed – the Gentlemen Golfers at Leith, later called the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, a society founded in 1744. The St. Andrews society, later called the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, emerged in 1754, three years after the Kennedy letter.[5] The first golf club in Ayrshire appeared very much later, at Prestwick in 1851, exactly 100 years after the letter.

However, the membership of the pioneering east coast clubs, when studied closely, shows they had active and distinguished members drawn from the west of Scotland. The powerful Ayrshire Eglinton family played at St. Andrews and at Leith Links, and Campbell from the Saddell estate in Kintyre was also a prominent player in the east. This suggests that west coast country gentlemen were certainly interested in the game in the 1700s, but played in the east.

The explanation is that Scottish golf before about 1850 was a winter game, and in autumn the gentry from all parts of Scotland migrated east to Edinburgh.[6] In this pre-industrial era, the summer harvest was too important to the landowners and the rural population to allow them to take time off for sport. Though the sportsmen from Ayrshire had available in summer the now-famous strip of continuous suitable links stretching from Turnberry in the south to Troon in the north, the gentlemen players did not play and ignored its potential for golf. Once the harvest was in and the grain separated and stored, many migrated to Edinburgh for the winter months. Edinburgh had a colder but drier winter than the west, and offered distinguished company and chances for social advancement, together with the meetings of literary and scientific clubs and an opportunity to obtain expert help with their legal and financial affairs from Edinburgh's 'nest of advocates'. And Edinburgh had winter sports and pastimes available, notably excellent golf in select company at coastal Leith, in which some golfing members from the west joined.

## *Wintering at Home*

But not all country lairds would move east in winter in this way, and many others could not do so. In particular, professional men like clerics and doctors had year-round responsibilities and could not make this seasonal migration. These west coast sportsmen staying at home would surely be tempted by winter golf on the fine Ayrshire turf. A few scattered references, almost folk-tales, allude to earlier golf in Ayrshire, and these only involve celebrated, individual golfing incidents.[7] This Kennedy letter supplies the missing link in the west coast evolution of the game. Written in February, it describes a clique of Ayrshire golfers at play, in winter, like others on the other side of Scotland.

## *Their Play*

Though this Girvan group lacked any known formal structure, such as written records or a trophy to be won, there is a hint in the letter that they had some internal organisation in the matters of leadership and finance. In the pioneer east coast clubs at Leith and elsewhere, a structure was emerging and the golfing societies later were headed by a 'captain' appointed for a year from the group to supervise the club's activities. He acted as keeper of the rules, and arbiter on any disputes. At the early Edinburgh and St. Andrews clubs, the captain for the year was easily decided upon: he was the winner of their major golf meeting of the previous year.

**Killochan Castle, from an engraving by James Clark, undated.**

The Girvan letter shows that this honour was vested by the group in 'Sir John'. Perhaps he had won their internal competition or, as the senior and wealthiest member, he was perhaps the natural leader. His duties were to be 'judge of fair play' doubtless being expected to know the rules and make judgments thereon. The Girvan clique acknowledged

some form of code, probably no different from the rules, habits and agreed procedures orally transmitted down among golfers elsewhere in Scotland. These were first written down by the Leith golfers in 1744, seven years before the letter, simply to prevent muddles at their big open competition coming up.

## *Eating and Drinking*

The letter shows Sir John had another function. He was to be judge also 'of the drinking'. It is unlikely that he had any judgmental remit to curb his drouthy group's usual massive, eighteenth-century post-golf intake in their favoured Girvan inn. Instead he may have had another interesting and important function.

The records of the pioneer clubs show that the members would subscribe ahead a fixed amount for the post-match dinner and drink. This sensibly helped the planning for the evening, but there was a regular problem, namely that the members called for more drink after the agreed sum of money, given in ahead, had been used up. Tedious disputes then followed on the responsibility for these extras on the bill. To deal with these over-runs, a simple regulation favoured in these early clubs was that it was the captain's responsibility to watch the drinking and call for the landlord's bill when the group pot of money was used up. Further orders for drink were to be called by and charged to individuals, not the group.

Similar rules were adopted in the early curling clubs. Even this seemed to fail on occasions and some early clubs added that if the captain failed to enforce this strategy, any excess had to be paid by himself. The Girvan letter does show that Sir John had this role. Thus his group, though not a formal golf club with any written agreements, may have had this simple form of group finances.

Would 'the Minister' and Dr Bannerman, clearly regular players, join the rumbustious evening event in a Girvan inn? Dr Bannerman, from the letter quoted above, certainly enjoyed his drink, but did the Minister? The stern Presbyterian reformers of the previous century and the temperance-minded Victorian Scottish clergy later would not have joined such gatherings. But in the 1700s, public drinking by ministers of religion was common and the early golf clubs had their chaplains who had a role at their hearty dinners. However, the minister at Girvan may have lived in town closer to the inn and at least may have got home at night.

In summary, the group of Girvan cronies described in the letter had regular golf winter outings on fixed days, and had nominated a respected senior member as their leader to make judgments from an unwritten code of rules and to preside and prevent muddles in the finances at their convivial evenings. If, at about the time of the letter, the Girvan golfers had also kept simple written records of their affairs, or played on a particular day for an identifiable trophy, they would be adjudged to be the second oldest golfing society in the world, and acknowledged as pioneers of a game whose time had yet to come in the west. It would have been a fitting addition to the present fame of Ayrshire golf.

## *Persons and Places*

**Archibald Kennedy, writer of the letter**

He does not seem to be part of the golfing group, but is clearly familiar with their routine. He was the son of Alexander Kennedy of Kilhenzie, owner of an estate one mile

south of Maybole, and emigrated to the USA, dying there in 1763. His son, also Archibald, a captain in the British Navy, left for America in 1763, before succeeding as eleventh Earl of Cassillis in 1792, and died in America in 1794.

**Sir Thomas Kennedy, recipient of the letter**

Presumably Sir Thomas Kennedy of Culzean (died 1775) who succeeded his elder brother in the baronetcy in 1744. He was made a burgess of Ayr in 1745 and was commended for his actions in controlling the press-gangs active in Carrick in 1757. After legal dispute, he became ninth Earl of Cassillis in 1762 when the eighth Earl died childless in London in 1759. His brother David became the tenth Earl in 1775.


**'Bargany' House, from R. Lawson, *Places of Interest about Girvan* 1892.**

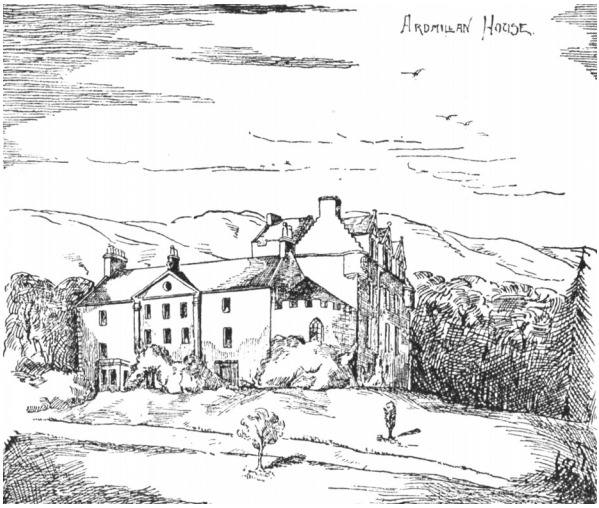
**'Barganey'**

John Dalrymple of Barganey, advocate from 1735, afterwards added 'Hamilton' to his name after the death of his uncle James Hamilton. He was second son of Sir Robert Dalrymple of Castleton, born 4th February 1715 and died on 12th February 1796. He married twice, and was MP for Wigtown Burghs from 1754-61 and from 1762-68. He succeeded to the Barganey estate in 1736 which, with 57 windows assessed to the Window Tax, was the second largest house owned by those involved in the golf matches. He was made a burgess of Ayr in 1751. He married twice without issue, and the estate passed to Hew Dalrymple, an heir also to property in North Berwick.

**'Ardmillan'**

Arch(i)bald Craufurd or Craufuird (the form preferred by the family), of the estate of Ardmillan, a house with nineteen taxable windows, succeeded in 1748 on the death of his father, a keen Jacobite. In that year he married Anne, daughter of Robert Kennedy of Liverpool. His birth date is unknown, but he died in 1784, suggesting a man of near middle age at the time of the letter. He was one of the active roads trustees administering the 1767 *Ayr Roads Act*. He was ruined in 1772 by the failure of the Ayr Bank and his £1000 stake made him liable for £4,400 of the debts. His younger brother, Thomas (died 1793), then in Bristol, bought the Ardmillan estate cheaply, apparently intending to reinstate his elder

brother, but instead dispossessed him by keeping the property for himself. This distressing event precipitated Archibald's suicide.




**Ardmillan House, from R. Lawson *ibid.***

Thomas settled in Ardmillan and re-married. His second wife was Jane, the daughter of Hugh Hamilton (see below), the golfing minister mentioned in the letter – see *Scottish Notes and Queries* September 1926, p162. The house at Ardmillan was visited by Boswell in 1769.

**'Pinmore'**

Robert Kennedy of Pinmore was noted in 1753 to occupy a house in Colmonell parish with 33 taxable windows, having succeeded his father of the same name. He was also named in the 1767 *Ayr Roads Act* and in 1772 was also involved in the Ayr Bank crash having a £500 unlimited liability stake which required £2,200 to meet the creditors. He had to sell Pinmore and it was bought by Hugh Hamilton, the son of the golfing minister in the letter (see below).

**'Mr (i.e. Master of) Cathcart'**

There is difficulty identifying this man, one of the many Cathcarts in the area. 'Master' usually denotes the heir to a title while the father is alive, but in Ayrshire it could be used for the incumbent's title and the style 'Master of Cathcart' is used in the Scots Peerage 1905, Vol II, p512 for the established estate owner.

It is tempting to choose John Cathcart (1731-1783), the son of Sir John Cathcart of Killochan, identified below as 'Sir John', the senior respected figure in the golfers group. It was reasonable that he might bring his son and heir along to the golf outing, although the young man was only twenty years of age at the time.

Other possibilities are Robert Cathcart (born 1721), age 30 and unmarried at the time of the letter, the son of John Cathcart of Genoch, Knockdolian and Easter Barneill, who married Agnes Cochrane in 1719 and died in 1779 'at an advanced age.' Robert married Marion Buchan in 1763 – see *Scottish Notes and Queries* May 1928, p91.

**'The Minister'**

This may be the Church of Scotland minister in Girvan, rather than the incumbents of the adjacent parishes of Dailly, Colmonell or Kirkoswald. At this time, the Girvan charge was held by Hugh Hamilton (1707-1787) aged 44 at the time of the letter and inducted to the parish in 1737. In 1743 he married Helen, widow of Patrick Paisley, who had died in 1736, when minister at Kilmarnock. The children of the new marriage included Hugh Hamilton (b. 1746) who, as mentioned above, bought the Pinmore estate after the golfer Robert Kennedy's bankruptcy and Jane, their daughter, became the second wife of the controversial brother of one of the clique, Thomas Craufurd – see above.

**Dr Bannerman**

It is likely he was a surgeon/apothecary, namely a 'general practitioner' of the day, adopting the physician's title of 'Dr' without having the degree of MD. No record of this man can be found as a Scottish or Leiden graduate. His house does not appear in the Window Tax records, suggesting that he had only a modest income through sales and preparation of medicines.

He is likely to be the apothecary 'Mr Bannerman' noted in 1766 to have a shop in Maybole, inland from Girvan, who was censured by the church for a drug sale: 'On this occasion the purchaser bought a brownish powder to give to a pregnant girl who was to take it followed by a bitter apple in order to have an abortion.' See Jean Aitchison: *A Study of the Servant Class in South Ayrshire, 1750-1914* an M.Phil. thesis Glasgow University, 1998, quoting Kirkoswald Kirk Session Records, 7th October 1766. Jean Aitchison's monograph on the subject is also available as *Servants in Ayrshire* (2001) on www.ayrshirehistory.org.uk

**'Sir John'**

This is probably Sir John Cathcart (1700-1795) of Carleton and Killochan, three miles from Girvan and owner of the biggest house in the parish, judged by a Window Tax on 77 windows. He was age 51 at the time of letter, and as a prominent landowner and a little older than the others, he would have a natural authority in the group and this, rather than golfing skills, perhaps led to his 'captain's' role. The player, 'Mr of Cathcart', described in the letter, as discussed above, may be his son and heir. For Cathcart, see *Scottish Notes and Queries* 3rd Series Vol V, July 1927, p127.

## *Notes*

**The Window Tax**

David McClure of Ayr has studied the various Ayrshire Window Tax assessments in the eighteenth century, and these give an indication of the size of the various estate houses owned by some of the golfers. The tax was imposed on houses with more than seven or eight windows: see National Archives of Scotland E 3226/1/11, Window Tax, April 1753-1759.

**The Ayr Bank Crash**

The Ayrshire-based Douglas, Heron and Co. Bank crashed in 1772, only three years after opening, and the event ruined many local landowners, including two of the golfers. Liability was not limited and the many founder subscribers were liable for the huge debts, having to pay in over four times their stake. The Bank crash is described by Frank Brady: 'So fast to ruin: the personal element in the collapse of Douglas, Heron and Company' in *Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society,* 1976. Also, JT Ward: 'Ayrshire Landed Estates in the Nineteenth Century' in *Ayrshire Collections,* Vol 8, Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society 1969. And in Sidney Checkland: *Scottish Banking: a History 1695-1973* Glasgow, 1975.

The relevant legal documents are found in the National Archives of Scotland Registers of Deeds RD 2 / 211 folios 205-203.

## *Acknowledgments*

Michael Moss drew David Hamilton's attention to this letter; David B. Smith added useful comments and he brought in the expertise of Ayrshire historians David McClure and Robert Close.

## *Endnotes*

1 The letter is in the Ailsa Muniments in the National Archives of Scotland, GD 25/9/40.

2 Girvan was a favourite local holiday resort in the early twentieth century and the number of postcards showing the Girvan golf links now circulating rivals those from St. Andrews and Carnoustie.

3 National Archives of Scotland, GD 25/9/40.

4 John Beresford (ed), *John MacDonald, Memoirs of an 18th Century Footman* London 1790.

5 The Glasgow Golf Club emerged in 1787 as the first such society in the west, but disbanded not long after.

6 See David Hamilton *Golf – Scotland's Game* Kilmacolm 1998, pp52-55.

7 One of the earlier Ayrshire golfing legends involved an owner of Bargany, Thomas Kennedy (died 1597), whose broken nose resulted from a hit by a golf-ball struck 'on the hills of Air[Ayr], in reklesnes.' Another future Laird of Bargany was noted in 1620 to have played on the links at Ballantrae, south of Girvan, an area no longer used for golf: see Alastair J Johnston and James F Johnston *The Chronicles of Golf 1457-1857* Cleveland 1993 p55, quoting Robert Pitcairn's *Historical and Genealogical Account of the Name of Kennedy,* 1830. Lastly, from Maybole, the once-powerful inland 'capital' of Carrick, there is a description in 1683 of 'a pleasant spot enclosed with an earthen wall wherein they were wont to play football but now at Gowffe and Byasse bowls': noticed by Michael Moss in *Scottish Record Society, Macfarlane Geographical Collections,* 1906, vol II pp 1-12. This is clearly the 'short' form of Scottish golf, closer to the Dutch street game of 'colf'. For 'short' and 'long' golf see Hamilton *Golf* (ref 5) p27.

# School Inspection Records

Notes on the National Archives of Scotland [NAS] series of educational inspection files, class ED18

Among the many interesting classes of records stored in the NAS in Edinburgh, there is a much over-looked series of files relating in the main to the educational inspection of schools and dating mainly from the mid 19th and early 20th centuries. The reference for the series is ED18 and it can be accessed in the premises of the NAS in Charlotte Square – West Register House – without prior ordering.

Most of the files are inspection reports for schools and the series covers all of Scotland. The series is organised by county, then by primary school, higher grade school and academies. The files are numbered sequentially, and Ayrshire starts at roughly ED18/518, Annick Lodge Primary School, and ends shortly after ED18/701, St Joseph's Academy, Kilmarnock. Thus the series covers approximately 200 Ayrshire schools.

Inspection of schools in Scotland began in 1840 and continues to this day although in a very different form. School inspection was established under the control of the Education Committee of the Privy Council in Whitehall. The background to this was as follows. In 1834 a select committee under the chairmanship of Lord John Russell collected evidence on the state of schools in Scotland. Amongst other things it noted that although the parochial school system had been in operation for roughly 150 years, the regulations governing these were more concerned with how the schools were supported than with the education of the children. There was little uniformity between different schools and different areas. In the main the schoolmaster's salary was poor and set by the price of corn, although many schoolmasters had a couple of acres of land and sometimes a house as well. Many masters supplemented their incomes by being session clerk, or factor for a local landowner. In outlook and demeanour, schoolmasters could also be influenced by local conditions such as the landowner's preferences, the heritors and the clergy.[1]

In 1833 Parliament granted £20,000 for the establishment of schoolhouses throughout Great Britain, with increasing amounts continuing to be granted annually until 1839. This led to the establishment of Parliamentary schools, although the uptake of this grant was greater in England than in Scotland. This was due to the existence in Scotland of the parish-based provision of education, which was generally lacking in the English system. Obviously, school inspection was initially concerned with those premises which were in receipt of the government grant. However, most parish schools proved agreeable to informal inspection, and the system was gradually expanded to include all schools.

This situation is reflected in the files which form ED18, especially those which predate 1872 and the Scottish Education Act of that year, which made elementary education compulsory in Scotland, instituted the system of school boards, and brought greater government intervention into the management of schools and the quality of education. Files which predate 1872 usually include the annual return the school was required to submit to

the Privy Council on Education in London in order to qualify for their grants. Gradually, as the grant system was perfected, the school inspectors were required to comment on the arrangement of the desks, the apparatus and books used, the organisation of the school, methods of instruction and attainments of pupils.[2] However, these earlier returns which were compiled to qualify for the government grants are frequently very detailed, and can include sketch plans of the layout of the desks in the classroom, the position of the master's house, a brief history of the foundation of the school and the names, ages and qualifications of the teachers. Almost no pupil names are recorded, although very occasionally there are returns of pupils, almost exclusively relating to secondary education, who transferred to other schools to continue their education.

The Education (Scotland) Act of 1872, as we have seen, made elementary education compulsory in Scotland from the age of 5 to 13. The leaving age was raised to 14 in 1883, although in practice most pupils left when they were felt to be sufficiently proficient in reading, writing and arithmetic.[3] School fees were however not abolished until the 1890s. The general provisions of this Act proved unacceptable to Catholic and Episcopal schools, and they remained outside the school board system, although they could still qualify for grants for the running costs of the schools from the Committee of the Privy Council on Education. They did not, however, qualify for capital grants for building or maintaining schools. This continued to be the case until the Education (Scotland) Act of 1918 brought all schools, including denominational ones, under state control. Thus the files in ED18 also contain information on Catholic and other denominational schools which remained outside the school board system after 1872. One such is St Sophia's Roman Catholic School in Galston, which was established in 1884 for the education of the Roman Catholic poor of Galston and neighbourhood. The teacher was Mary Fitzgerald, who had been born in 1851 and had taught at St Helen's School, Brentwood. She had trained at Mount Pleasant in Liverpool. Mount Pleasant was an important training centre for Roman Catholics and supplied a great many teachers to Scottish Catholic schools. The file on St Sophia's School also has a small sketch plan of the layout of the school.[4]

It is also noteworthy how many schools were established by mine and factory owners for the education of their workers' children. Fergushill Colliery School is an example of this. Located in Kilwinning parish, it became known as Fergushill Public school after 1872. The buildings originally belonged to Lord Eglinton and Messrs Archibald Finnie & Son. The school was established c.1836 and the premises were also used as a preaching station and a Sabbath school on Sundays. At the beginning Archibald Finnie was solely responsible for managing the school and employing the teacher. The school buildings were rebuilt in 1858 and 1866. This file includes a sketch plan of the layout of the classroom. In 1873 the teacher was Andrew Thomson, who had been born in 1828. On 26th May 1874, Kilwinning School Board assumed responsibility for the school. It later became known as Fergushill Primary School.[5]

Benwhat Public School owed its origin to the Dalmellington Iron Company. Indeed, it was originally called Dalmellington Iron Works School. The file on this school contains a block plan of the buildings and a sketch showing the layout of the benches in the classroom. The school was established in 1874 and the premises were used for divine service

fortnightly. The teacher was William Guthrie, who had been born in 1848, and had previously taught at Eglinton Iron Company's School at Cronberry. Benwhat later became Benwhat Primary School and was discontinued by Ayr County Council Education Department on 23rd November 1951.[6]

Barleith Public School, which was run eventually by Riccarton School Board, was erected in 1878. Its premises belonged to the Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company; prior to its transfer to the School Board it had been run by a committee which consisted of two of the directors of the company.[7]

Some schools owed their existence to the benevolence of landed estate owners, who either gifted the premises or endowed the school. These include Lady Jane Hamilton's School in Ayr which was gifted by Captain Hamilton of Rozelle, and Kay's Endowed School in Kilmarnock, which was founded under a deed or settlement by the late Alexander Kay, insurance broker in Glasgow, and obtained premises on a feu disposition from the Duke of Portland. The school was erected in 1868 and later changed its name to Bentinck Street Primary School. The file contains a layout plan of the school with an elevation plan. The teacher in 1869 was Peter Anderson, aged 22, who had formerly taught at Newton-on-Ayr.[8]

Lady Jane Hamilton's School, which still stands in Charlotte Street in Ayr, was founded under a deed executed on 16th November and recorded on 13th December 1842. It was established in freehold premises and run by trustees who included Captain Hamilton, the Provost of Ayr and the ministers of Ayr, Newton-on-Ayr and Wallacetown. This file has a coloured block plan of the layout of the school in 1869, although the original building was erected in 1842, with an adjacent teacher's house. By 1869 the teacher was Marion Scott, aged 26, who had previously taught at Thornhill.[9]

Benevolence was not limited to the towns. The Duchess de Coigny was responsible for the founding and endowing of several schools in the Carrick district of Ayrshire. Ballantrae Parochial school was founded using the interest from £500 left by the Duchess to educate poor children. The schoolroom was built about 1810, but the return notes that the house itself was built over a century previously (i.e. c.1739), and in need of repair. By 1849 Ballantrae had two male pupil teachers. It became a junior secondary school after World War II, and was downgraded to a primary in 1964.[10]

The Marquis of Ailsa too gave the use of many of his buildings for schools, such as at Maidens, where the buildings were also used as a reading room in the evening during the week. They belonged to the Marquis and were let to the school on a yearly basis, with no rent being paid. The school was also used for religious services on Sundays. The buildings were erected in 1880 but the school itself did not start until 1892 as they were unable to secure the services of a teacher.[11]

The school at Rowantree, which was later taken over by Barr School Board, also owed its origin to the Marquis of Ailsa. The Board were allowed to use the premises for a school but they would revert to Lord Ailsa if they were unoccupied for 23 years. The buildings themselves were erected in 1864.[12]

Minishant Public or Parochial School originally belonged to William Paterson of Monkwood, and was established about 1780 as Culroy Sessional School. The school

premises were gifted by Paterson while the school itself was run by a committee composed of two heads of families of the district.[13]

Many of today's schools have their origins in the system described above. Many more have disappeared, such as Littlemill Public School which was run by Coylton School Board. The original school consisted of two cottages converted into a temporary building which was leased from Merry & Cuninghame, iron and coal masters. The new school was built in 1878 on land leased from R A Oswald of Auchincruive. The building was capable of accommodating 200 children. The teachers in 1878 were William Guthrie, who had originally been at the Dalmellington Iron Company's school at Benwhat, and Mary Cullen. The school was formed in response to the opening up of ironstone and coal fields in the vicinity. It became a junior secondary after World War II, reverting to primary status in 1961.[14]

Over time, due to falling school roles and changes in the population, many schools became too small to continue and Ayrshire County Council had a programme of closure and amalgamation in the early 1960s, when many of the schools named above disappeared. This process has continued to the present day and many schools have been closed both by Strathclyde Regional Council (the education authority, 1975-96) and since 1996 by the three Ayrshire unitary authorities.

These records form an important county-wide research tool, which can be used profitably in conjunction with the records, such as minute books, of many of Ayrshire's School Boards, and successor authorities, held by Ayrshire Archives. One such is Kingsford school, in Stewarton parish, which closed in the 1980s, its complete sets of log books and admissions registers now held at Ayrshire Archives.

**Jane Jamieson**

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# Memories of the War Years

I was born in Saltcoats on 30th August 1926 and lived at 14 Montgomerie Crescent, right on the sea front where, from the upstairs lounge window there was an excellent view – over the Firth of Clyde to Arran, Kintyre and Ailsa Craig. At the start of the war in September 1939 I was 13 years old, and had just moved into Ardrossan Academy Secondary School. On the Monday morning we were all assembled in the school hall and told that the country was now at war with Germany, air attack was to be expected and that the gas masks – which had been issued some time before – were now to be carried at all times. We were then informed that the school was to be closed until all the windows had been covered with crossed paper strips and sandbag blast walls built round outside. (These were later replaced with brick walls). We would be informed when to return. I do not remember how long this unexpected holiday lasted but I spent some of the days on the beach in front of our house, holding sandbags open for the men to fill and then tying them up. Men then carried the bags off the beach to Post Office vans on the esplanade which carried them away to where they were required.

Food rationing came in very quickly and wasn't too bad at first; the rations progressively getting less as the years went by and previously unrationed items coming under control. On returning to school, we boys spent our gym periods digging up the surrounding grass borders ready for planting potatoes. The ground was hard clay and certainly gave us good exercise turning it over. With his experience of conditions during the First World War, my father also had much of the back lawn at home dug up to grow potatoes and vegetables, and I was involved in that as well.

With the war came the blackout; all street lights were out and all windows had to be covered with curtains that would stop the slightest glimmer of light getting out. Internal lights had to be switched off before an outside door could be opened, as a shaft of light out into the garden or street was a criminal offence. The blackout was strictly enforced by the local Ayr Raid Warden and the Police. Our Warden was the Rev. Symington who lived along the Crescent; a huge man with a booming voice who kept our area in pitch darkness. The blackout, of course, had its hazards. When out on dark nights, we carried masked torches to assist in finding our way about. Luminous armbands were available, and worn; but you still bumped into people. Lamp posts and similar structures were marked with white paint and luminous bands, but I still remember walking into a lamp post near our house, nearly knocking myself out and having an enormous black eye for days afterwards. The few motorcars in the district had shaded lights but were not often on the road at night, and when out in the dark were driven very slowly. Even a bicycle had to have a mask over its light, making it quite useless for seeing where you were going and only useful to indicate one's presence to other people. Our doctor, Doctor Campbell, who lived on Ardrossan Road, never used his car at night, but cycled to all emergency calls as he considered it safer all round!

Apart from rationing and the blackout, I do not remember the war affecting us very much, till 1940, with the fall of France and the Battle of Britain. I remember that I was playing football at lunch time in the school playground when word came round that Paris had fallen to the Germans. Then came Dunkirk, and the French giving up: I remember being very depressed by all this bad news. One likes to be on the winning side, but we never had any thought of giving up, or that we might lose the war. Churchill's speeches were great stuff. We really did believe in him, and would have done anything he asked of us: fight on the beaches, blood and sweat, toil and tears. He got the country roused, stirred us to activity and down to fighting a long, dirty war. When he spoke, everyone crowded around the radio to listen.

With the invasion scare, all beaches were blocked with steel poles, often old railway track set in concrete, with old wire strung between the poles, to stop troop-carrying aircraft landing. Fields suitable for aircraft landings were blocked with old cars, carts and farm machinery. Later on, the only aircraft I actually saw shot down was one of our own, a Boulton Paul Defiant. It was engaged in towing a drogue target for the Merchant Navy Gunnery School at Seamill and was hit in the engine by a stray shot. It dumped the drogue and spluttered over Saltcoats to make an emergency landing on the wired beach at Ardeer without hitting anything. After repairs it could not be flown off and had to be dismantled and taken away on an RAF 'Queen Mary' road trailer.

Early in 1940, Barrage Balloons appeared over the ICI explosives factory at Ardeer and seemed to mark out the factory's position for miles around, but daylight raids were not common this far north. On a number of occasions there were accidental explosions at Ardeer and some of the workers were killed but, as the explosive manufacturing parts of the factory were well separated with grass covered sand dunes between each unit, these explosions were contained and minimal damage done. In the middle of one night a violent thunder storm broke out. I got up to see the lightening, which was quite spectacular, and saw a number of the barrage balloons being struck, bursting into flames and falling to the ground. Another day, one broke loose and drifted low over the town, trailing its cable across the roof tops, before disappearing out to sea.

The LDV (Local Defence Volunteers, later to become the Home Guard) was formed at this time, and provided us with a rich source of interest and entertainment. We knew the men and although the situation was serious, things had to be taken with a sense of humour otherwise we would never have got by. First of all it was armbands with the odd tin hat, pikes, shotguns, the occasional First World War souvenir revolver re-appearing from the back of a drawer and anything else that came to hand and could be used to inflict serious injury on the enemy. Battledress uniforms were eventually supplied to the Home Guard along with other military equipment. The great day came when they were issued with American Army First World War .300 calibre rifles and .5 calibre Thompson sub-machine guns. These came in boxes directly from the American arsenals. The guns had been packed and the boxes then filled with grease. Each man had to pull a rifle or tommy-gun out of the grease and take it home with him to pour boiling water over until it became clean, then take it back to the drill hall to learn how to use and maintain it. Years later, while at sea, I was told that at the time these rifles were bought from the Americans and brought down to the

docks. They were not all loaded onto one ship, which could have been lost, but divided among every ship leaving an American port for Britain. No matter what the cargo was, each ship had to provide a spare cabin or store room to take a certain number of cases of guns and ammunition. In this way, the risk of loss was minimised, and most guns reached Britain.

The Home Guard soon became a properly established and efficient service. My father's partner, Mr Jim Laughland of West Kilbride, who had been a very young Royal Artillery major in the First World War, became the major in charge of the units around Saltcoats, Ardrossan and West Kilbride. Among the ranks, alongside the boys and men in reserved occupations, were many old soldiers, bringing a lot of much-needed experience to the units. We heard many entertaining stories of their antics. At the same time as the Home Guard was formed the Royal Navy formed a 'Coast Watch' service of older men with First World War experience. This service was small and is often completely forgotten. The men were armed with ancient rifles, had no uniform but an armband, and patrolled the beaches at night. Norrie Duncan the draper from Saltcoats, an ex RNAS pilot, was one of them. I don't know how long the service lasted.

In a more serious mood, Home Guard units buried 40-gallon drums of some mixture of petrol, tar and oil in grassy road embankments out of town. If required, an explosive charge could be fired to throw a sticky sheet of flaming material over any tank or other vehicle on the road. I think they called this device 'Fougas'. Permanent roadblocks were constructed at various places around the town, sited where they could not be easily by-passed. The walls were about 4 feet high and 3 feet thick, and were built out across the road from opposite sides to about two-thirds of the width and perhaps 30 feet between them. Small gaps at the sides allowed pedestrians passage without going out onto the road. Any vehicle approaching had to slow right down to zigzag through the blockage. Holes in the road – normally covered – could take cut-down sections of iron railway track to close the road completely if required. These sections were stacked inside the barriers, ready for use. When required, these barriers were manned and controlled by the Home Guard.

At the time of the Battle of Britain, I was on holiday at Whiting Bay in Arran. Here, on the west coast of Scotland, life went on much as normal. There was little army activity, some ships came and went in the Firth, and hardly an aircraft was to be seen. The weather was very good and I climbed Goat Fell for the first time. We listened to the radio, and read the papers, otherwise we hardly knew there was a war on, and what momentous affairs were taking place in the south of England.

When Italy declared war on Britain after the fall of France, many of the Italian restaurants and ice-cream cafés in Saltcoats and Ardrossan had their windows smashed during the night. There was absolutely no need or excuse for this action. There were many Italian families in our area, some who had been residents for generations; quiet, friendly and hard-working people wanting absolutely nothing to do with fascist Italy. Mr Banaldi was very annoyed and upset: he had served in the British Army in the First World War, and still had his window broken.

The Clydebank air raids came during the winter. My father was in the ARP [Air Raid Precautions] and worked in the Report Centre, which was in what was the Old Parish Church and is now the North Ayrshire Museum. He was there certain nights on standby

duty, and when the alert went – an eerie sound, if ever there was one – he went out to the Report Centre, while we (my mother, my brother and myself) moved into a downstairs bedroom with one window, which was supposed to be safer, and was equipped with all the equipment thought to be necessary. The window was laced with crossed paper strips and had two layers of heavy curtains to contain any flying glass that might come into the room; two beds were placed along the outside wall, out of line with the window.

At times we could hear the 'rum-rum' of the unsynchronised German bomber engines and the bangs of the guns at Hawkhill Farm, Stevenston (now the site of the Morrisons supermarket). There was also some firing of a heavy AA-gun based at HMS *Fortitude*, the naval base at Ardrossan harbour. The German bombers attacking Clydebank did not come from Germany and over the North Sea, but from bases in western France. They flew up the Irish Sea, getting a good fix on their position from the lights of neutral Dublin, then on to the Firth of Clyde, where they came over the coast in the Saltcoats area, heading for Greenock, Clydebank and Glasgow. At times the guns fell silent and we could hear the never-to-be-forgotten sound of a Merlin engine as one of our few night fighters came over – Defiants or Hurricanes at that time, and not much use at night with no radar to guide them, although I do remember some bursts of machine-gun fire in the night sky. One Heinkel HE111 was shot at by a fighter somewhere near Paisley and eventually came down in a field near Dunure. Looking out during these air raids, which we were not supposed to do, we could see the glow in the sky to the north as Greenock and Clydebank burned. One bomber dropped a stick of bombs across Irvine; perhaps they were looking for Ardeer. I cycled over the next day with a friend to view one of the bomb craters in the front garden of a house near Irvine Royal Academy. A road now covers the spot where it fell. I do not remember any searchlights in use during these raids; perhaps they didn't have any in our area.

We didn't have any evacuee children in our area as Saltcoats was in a neutral zone: not high risk, but being on the coast close to Ardeer and the naval base at Ardrossan, not considered a safe area for evacuation.

Although well-schooled in 'careless talk costs lives', we boys had a good idea of what was going on locally. We all had bicycles and cycled all over the district, turning up for a look where there was any military activity going on. One of the great secrets of the time was when the new Cunard liner *Queen Elizabeth* came down the Clyde from John Brown's shipyard and lay off Greenock. How could you hide a ship of that size? We all knew she was there, and we watched the sea off Arran, hoping to see her doing her trials, as we had seen the *Queen Mary* doing her speed runs some four years earlier. But it was not to be: the *Queen Elizabeth* slipped down the Firth one night and set off for New York at high speed without any of the usual trials.

One night in February 1940 our sleep was disturbed by distant rumbling explosions from the sea. We heard the next day, from a local girl who worked at HMS *Fortitude,* that during the night HMS *Gleaner* had detected, and sunk, a U-boat off Pladda Island. This was *U-33*. In due time, oil came ashore, perhaps from the U-boat, and blackened the sea-walls and rocks; the first of many oil slicks to come onto the beaches during the war years. Among the oil on the beach at Saltcoats, I found a German sailor's hat with 'Kreigsmarine'

on the band. As it was covered in dirt and oil, I left it there; how, now, I wish I had kept it. The ensign of the *U-33,* which was recovered by Navy divers who went down to examine and identify the wreck, is now in the Imperial War Museum in London, where I saw it hanging over the main stairway many years ago.

By this time, the Russians and the Americans had entered the war, but I do not remember hearing of their entry, only a gladness that we were no longer alone. I think one of the most depressing times of the war was when Japan attacked Malaya; the battleship *Duke of York* and the battlecruiser *Repulse* were lost, and Singapore fell. I remember feeling here we go again, more disasters, where and when is it ever going to begin to go our way.

Living on the sea-front at Saltcoats during the early war years there was much to be seen out of our front windows. We had a powerful tripod-mounted telescope in the upstairs lounge, through which we could examine the many ships going up and down the Firth, or training in the waters near the Ayrshire coast. Submarines would pop up for a few shots at a towed target, and dive again. Escort vessels would hunt the submarines and drop a smoke float or a grenade when they thought they were over a submarine, which would respond by releasing a smoke candle to indicate its exact position. All the great ships of the Royal Navy came to the Clyde at that time, and I saw many of them. The *Nelson* or *Rodney* (impossible to tell which), *Hermes, Hood, Argus* and *Furious* are some I remember along with the old battleships which all looked the same at a distance, and the new King George class which, as they came out of the builders' yards, came to do their trials in the safe waters of the Firth. They test-fired their 14″ guns down the Kilbrannon Sound, sounding like distant thunder to us on the Ayrshire coast.

The *Queen*s and other great liners, such as the distinctive French *Pasteur*, with its huge single funnel set close behind the bridge, were frequent visitors. One lovely Sunday evening there was much unusual fighter aircraft activity, then the *Nelson/Rodney* appeared by the Cock of Arran, steaming down the Firth. She was followed by a grey column of great liners in line ahead. A gathering of so many such ships probably had never happened before or since. As they disappeared over the horizon and into the night, we knew that something great was about to happen, and that the days of retreats and defeats must be over. In due time we heard of Operation Torch, the Allied landings in North Africa, and the subsequent clearing of the enemy from there.

All through the war, because of its situation and safe waters, the Firth of Clyde and the surrounding land was a great training area for all three services. Early on we had the Commandos and Poles training hard all over the place. The Commando HQ was in the Hollywood Hotel on the north side of Largs and the men, because they were commandos, did not live in barracks or camps but were billeted in private houses all along the Ayrshire coast. The Polish army was reformed in Scotland; many units were based in Fife and Ayrshire. The Poles were always very polite and well-behaved, although speaking little English. Always clean and smart, they marched through the towns with a strange step and swung their arms across their bodies in, to us, a most unusual way. Always, as they passed the First World War memorial in Saltcoats, they marched to attention, eyes right or left, while the officers saluted. Great men to have on our side and they served with great ferocity

and élan. After the war many were, unfortunately, unable to go home to Poland under Communist rule, and were offered British citizenship, and came to live in Scotland.

For years, when there was nothing else, the old aircraft carriers *Furious* and *Argus* were the duty training carriers on the Clyde, when not pressed into operational service elsewhere. They were later joined by 'Woolworth' carriers, training and working up before operations. These were small aircraft carriers, based on welded merchant ship hulls, and thrown together in great haste in American shipyards. They did the job for which they were built, but one, HMS *Dasher*, which had a history of cracked welds and leaking pipes, blew up and sank when approaching the Cumbrae Heads, with the loss of some 400 men. I was away at school when this happened, but returned to find the beaches closed, covered in much wreckage and oil. Submarines from the base at Holy Loch often dry-docked at Ardrossan. Amongst them was HMS *Thunderbolt,* which eventually went missing. Just before the start of the war, as HMS *Thetis,* she had sunk in Liverpool Bay during trials, with the loss of all onboard except on officer who escaped to the surface at great risk to give the alarm, and was picked up by the rescue ship above, which he had not known was waiting there.

On the sea wall at Ardrossan Harbour there was mounted a naval gun, probably of 4″ calibre, though whether for defence or training I do not know. It certainly did quite a lot of training and frequently fired solid practice shot across the bay at a towed target. The low trajectory rounds bounced four or five times before finally sinking into the sea. Each time it fired it made a very satisfactory boom, much to the annoyance of our teachers. In due time, tank landing craft started to appear from their bases at Troon and Lamlash, running up on the beaches at Saltcoats and Stevenston; sometimes getting stuck and stranded until the next high tide. The Ayrshire Dockyard at Irvine was an important repair yard for these craft.

Early on Swordfish naval aircraft from the Fleet Air Arm station at Abbotsinch, now Glasgow Airport, frequently flew low over the town and the nearby waters to practice dropping inert torpedoes. At the beginning an old three-funnelled Free French destroyer, *HO3,* was based at Campbeltown and came out to act as a target ship for these aircraft and was later joined by one of the old four-funnelled ex-American destroyers after it was no longer fit, or required, for more active duty. One time a torpedo was set too shallow: they were supposed to pass under the target, but this one punched a hole in the side of the old four-funnelled destroyer, which just managed to limp into Campbeltown Loch and run up on a sandy beach. Eventually the Swordfish from Abbotsinch were replaced by twin-engined Beaufort aircraft, although the Swordfish continued to be seen practicing deck landings on the training carriers. The Beauforts were much larger and noisier, and appeared to use Saltcoats bay as a landmark and continued to dive low over the town on their way out to see, levelling off very low over the water on their run out towards the target ship. One time I saw one banking just off the shore and he dipped his port wing into the water, causing a column of spray to shoot up into the air. I thought he was a goner, but he staggered up and recovered to fly on, a very lucky man and I expect he kept a bit higher in future. Another Beaufort was not so lucky; three were coming towards the coast when the leader suddenly dived down and crashed into the Busby Reservoir, killing all the crew. My friends and I cycled up to watch the salvage operations. One of the first Mosquito aircraft crashed

somewhere in the Firth. To try and conceal its all-wood construction, all the beaches were closed to the public, and searches to recover pieces of the plane carried out. Even so, we boys managed to collect some very thin plywood and some wing frames. My bits lay in the garden shed for many years until eventually woodworm took its toll and they had to be destroyed.

During the early years of the war, on fine Saturdays my friend and I cycled from Saltcoats to Prestwick, where he collected eggs from a farming relation. While in the area we visited Monkton Airfield, now Prestwick Airport. Monkton was initially a grass field elementary flying school. We climbed over the ordinary field fence and walked among the Tiger Moths and Battles of the flying school, until somebody told us to clear off. Once it opened, we included Heathfield – RAF Ayr – in our itinerary, admiring the various types of aircraft on display close to the road. Here there was barbed wire, so we couldn't get any closer. By this time most boys were experts at aircraft recognition and were keen to add new types to their lists of those seen. At Heathfield there were, amongst others, Spitfires, Beaufighters, a huge Stirling bomber and one very rare bird indeed: a four-engined De Haviland Albatross passenger aircraft, of which only a few were built. It was constructed of wood, and the Mosquito was a direct descendent.

There was a disastrous crash at Heathfield one night when a Liberator transport, returning 22 civil ferry pilots to America, failed to fly on take-off, just cleared the old bridge on Heathfield Road and crashed into the field between the road and some council houses. All on board were killed: we saw the last of the wreckage being cleared away. A month or so before this incident another disaster occurred. Another Liberator, again with 22 returning ferry pilots and crew on board, took off at night from either Prestwick or Heathfield and flew into the hills of Arran, near Goat Fell. Again, all on board were killed. I was in Arran at the time. For some reason the bodies were brought to Whiting Bay, and on the day of the funeral the whole population turned out to line the road as the coffins were carried past on the backs of local lorries, covered in the Union Flag or the Stars and Stripes, on their way to the cemetery at Lamlash. A propeller blade from this aircraft is on display in the Arran Heritage Museum at Rosaburn, Brodick.

Just before the war my brother, who was some years older than me, had with my assistance built a small flat-bottomed dinghy which we kept in the back garden and launched from the beach on a trolley, though never on a Sunday, as father was an elder in the Landsborough Church. At the start of the war, all boats had to be registered with the Navy and could not be used for pleasure. We applied to HMS *Fortitude* at Ardrossan for a permit to use our dinghy for fishing during daylight hours. This was duly granted and an identification number allocated, to be painted in large letters on either side of the bow. When the weather was suitable, we went fishing in the summer evenings and on Saturdays, but again, despite the war and food rationing, never on a Sunday! At that time, before indiscriminate commercial trawlers swept it clean, Saltcoats bay was teeming with fish and in two hours we could easily pull in sufficient cod, whiting, mackerel or flounders to fill a box with all we required. On coming ashore we distributed the catch among our friends and other families, as per father's instructions, making our deliveries by unlit bicycle in the twilight.

Clothes rationing soon came in, with coupons required for new clothing and material. All clothing had to last longer, and leather patches on jacket elbows were soon the norm for us boys. Growing children did get, I think, an extra allowance of coupons, while I, as the younger brother, could always see in use what I would be wearing in the future. Coal for domestic use was scarce, and rationed by the coalmen who supplied the houses. The gas pressure was reduced to conserve supplies and, I think, the electrical voltage was also reduced: certainly, electric fires didn't seem to put out the same heat as before the war. Much wood, in the form of wreckage, scrap wood from ships, and bits of trees was washed up on the beach in front of our house. After school, my friend and I collected wood from the beach on a bogie and took it to our back garden where we sawed it up and shared it out between our two households. It all helped. Bath time came once a week, when we were allowed three inches of none-too-hot water.

Coming back from the cinema one evening during the blackout, I passed two ladies standing talking on the pavement. I heard a snatch of their conversation: 'It's terrible, and so many men lost.' Although by then well used to losses and military setbacks, I wondered what further disaster could have struck the country. When I got home, and listened to the news on the wireless, I learned that HMS *Hood,* while in action against the German battleship *Bismarck,* had blown up, with the loss of over one thousand men; there were only one or two survivors. This was a grievous blow as the *Hood* had been considered the pride of the pre-war Royal Navy, and we could not afford to lose any of our big ships. It was with great satisfaction that our trust in the Royal Navy was justified when, less than a week later, one of the Navy's Swordfish aircraft – those that we had seen training out in the Firth – put a torpedo into the *Bismarck*'s rudders, bringing this might battleship to bay. She was quickly battered to destruction by the big guns of the battleships HMS *King George V* and *Rodney*.

As time went by, things on the home front got worse and grimmer. Rationing was tight, if fair, and under civilian rations we were fed and clad sufficiently and, although perhaps hungry at times, we didn't starve. Spam, snook and Ulster fry were frequently on the menu. Slowly things began to change. There were more aeroplanes – ours – in the sky, and more escort vessels and carriers in the Firth. Huge convoys passed up river from America, some with many ships all looking exactly the same – the Liberty ships had arrived in service, replacing the many losses of earlier years.

My brother, in a reserved occupation, ran a dance club in his spare time, with records, amplifier, turntable, &c. He was often asked to take his equipment on Saturday evenings to various service sites to provide dance music for the troops, with local girls or servicewomen providing the partners. When he was short of assistance, I was pressed into service to lug the gear and help generally. I remember going one pouring wet winter evening to the anti-aircraft site at Hawkhill. It was a mixed battery, so there were plenty of girls. The dance hall was a large Nissen hut, which probably served as the mess during the day. Beer flowed freely, all the dancers were in khaki, some rather wet from the rain. All the men were wearing ammunition boots with large tackets, while the girls wore wellington boots or heavy shoes. The concrete floor was muddy and covered in spilt beer. Despite the

incessant rain outside and the clammy, smelly atmosphere inside, they all seemed to be having a good time as they, literally, ground their way around the dance floor.

I then left Saltcoats to attend a school at Forgandenny in Perthshire, returning home only for the holidays. At school, we led a very isolated and enclosed life, with intense study: it was not much fun. Although training aircraft from Scone and Errol could be seen overhead all day, and we suffered the effects of rationing, we were far from the war. We also did tattie howking with Italian prisoners of war; there were many Italian prisoners in the area, working on the farms. In the evenings they appeared to wander around quite freely and told us that they had never wanted to fight their friends the British and were very happy to have been captured in the Western desert, and be out of the war. At sixteen, I joined the school Air Training Corps squadron and rose in two years to be a leading cadet. Apart from the technical training – I was in radio and armaments - we trained hard for war, with drill, musketry, &c. The big bonus of ATC membership was that we got out of the school grounds on route marches and visits to nearby airfields, such as Scone, Errol or Donibristle, where we dined in the men's mess halls. This was schoolboy heaven, with huge helpings of food, though you had to eat everything you put on your plate: no leftovers permitted. The downside came after these meals, when the RAF NCO who had charge of us marched us around the airfield while he rode a bicycle. While with the school ATC I also did two fortnight-long summer camps at RAF stations. These were most interesting; we learned a lot, not all of it good, while living and working with the men, who were very tolerant of us cadets, forever in their way and forever asking questions.

After sitting the usual exams in the summer of 1944, I left school just before I was eighteen and, from choice, I joined the Merchant Navy as a Deck Apprentice on the SS *Baron Herries,* registered at Ardrossan, and belonging to H. Hogarth & Sons of Glasgow. And so I started my training for what turned out to be my only employment in thirty-seven years at sea.

**Robert Fullarton**

# General George Smith Patton III (1885–1945)

"Old Blood and Guts" and his Scottish Connections

George Smith Patton was born in San Gabriel, California, on 11th November 1885, attended Virginia Military Institute (continuing a long family tradition), then transferred to the United States Military Academy and graduated in 1909, receiving a commission as a cavalry officer. In 1910 he married Beatrice Banning Ayre, a wealthy American heiress. He became a career soldier in the US Army, and in World War I was a senior commander of the new tank corps seeing action in France. Patton is more famously known for being a leading general in World War II, commanding both corps and armies in campaigns in North Africa, Sicily, France and Germany between 1943 and 1945. At the close of the war he was an advocate of armoured warfare but was re-assigned to the cavalry. He died in a motor accident in Heidelberg, Germany, on 21st December 1945.

So where is the Scottish connection? There are actually two, both on his paternal side, the first being with Mauchline in Ayrshire, and the other with Pitsligo in Aberdeenshire, but to find them we must go back four and five generations in America respectively. George S Patton III was the son of a lawyer and district attorney born George William Patton (1856-1927), who changed his name to George Smith Patton II in 1868 in honour of his own father, the Confederate Army Colonel George Smith Patton. The latter, the first George Smith Patton, was born in Fredericksburg, Virginia, in 1833, graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1852 and, after initially training and practicing as a lawyer, joined the 22nd Virginia Infantry on the outbreak of the American Civil War. He was killed at the battle of Opequon (3rd Battle of Winchester) on 19th September 1864.

George S Patton I's father had been John Mercer Patton, who was born in Fredericksburg in 1797, studied firstly medicine, then law, and was admitted to the bar. He opened a law practice in Fredericksburg, and was elected to the House of Representatives in 1830, serving until 1838. He became a senior councillor of Virginia and served as Acting Governor for a short time in 1841. He moved to Richmond, Virginia, where he continued practicing law until his death in 1858. He was the third (of seven) child of Robert Patton and Ann Gordon Mercer, who were married on 16th October 1792 in Fredericksburg.[1]

Robert Paton (so spelt) was born at Cowfieldshaw in the parish of Mauchline, and was christened there on 23rd September 1750.[2] He was the son of Robert Patton and Jennet Gibb, who were contracted to be married in the parish on 28th December 1738.[3] He emigrated from Glasgow to Culpeper, Virginia, c.1769-70; he was indentured for five years to the great Scottish mercantile syndicate of William Cunninghame and was based at their depots in Culpeper, Falmouth and Fredericksburg, all in Virginia. In 1777 he was placed in charge of their depot in Culpeper. About 1800 Robert used his accumulated wealth to build a stately mansion, White Plains, overlooking the Rappahannock River. The family name appears in Deferences in the organization in 1808 of Fredericksburg's first Presbyterian

Church; they had previously been Scottish Episcopalians. He died in Fredericksburg on 3rd November 1828 at the age of 78.[4]

Robert Paton's wife, Ann Gordon Mercer, was one of the five children of Hugh Mercer and Isabella Gordon, who had married in America. Little is known of Isabella Gordon, but Hugh Mercer was a son of the manse, from Pitsligo, near Rosehearty in Aberdeenshire. He was born in 1726,[5] son of the Reverend William Mercer and his wife Ann Monro, daughter of Andrew Monro, Sheriff Clerk of Elgin. William Mercer and Ann Monro had been married on the 18th June 1723 at Drainie, Moray;[6] William was himself the son and grandson of ministers (Thomas Mercer of Todlaw and Smiddyburn and John Mercer of Kinnellar, Aberdeenshire, respectively).[7]

Hugh Mercer attended Marischal College in Aberdeen, and graduated a Physician. During the '45 Mercer joined up with Pitsligo's Horse on the side of Bonnie Prince Charlie, serving as a surgeon. His cousin Thomas was Lord Forbes of Pitsligo's aide-de-camp. Both men were at the battle of Culloden, managing to escape after the defeat of 16th April 1746. Thomas evaded capture, and died in 1770, while Hugh became a fugitive.[8] After months in hiding he bought passage on a ship sailing for America and settled near what is now Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, where he continued to practice medicine for eight years.

When General Braddock's army was decimated by the French and Indians in 1775, Mercer was deeply affected by the same butchery that he remembered from Culloden. He came to the aid of the wounded and eventually took up arms again, this time in support of the army that a few years previously had been hunting him. He served, this time, as a soldier, and rose to the rank of colonel, and during this period developed a life-long friendship with another colonel, George Washington, and also befriended several Virginia men. After the French had been ousted and the colonial troops disbanded in 1760, Mercer moved to Fredericksburg, and began anew his medical practice. He became a noted businessman in the town, buying land and involving himself in local trade. He became a member of the Fredericksburg Masonic Lodge in 1767, and sat as its Master a few years later.[9] In 1775 Mercer resumed his military career once more, this time as a colonel in the 3rd Virginia Regiment during the American Revolution, but was soon promoted to Brigadier General in the Continental Army. He died on 12th January 1777 from multiple bayonet wounds received at the Battle of Princeton nine days earlier.

**Dave Killicoat**

1 *Fredericksburg Herald,* 18th October 1792.
2 Mauchline OPR, vol. 604, frame #124.
3 Mauchline OPR, vol. 604, frame #104.
4 *Fredericksburg Herald,* 5th November 1828.
5 Pitsligo OPR, vol.452.
6 Drainie OPR, vol. 130; Pitsligo OPR, vol. 452, frame #78.
7 *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae.*

[8] A Livingstone, C W H Aikman and B S Hart, eds., *No Quarter Given – The Muster Roll of Prince Charles Edward Stuart's Army 1745-46*.

[9] Two other members of the same lodge, Washington and James Monroe, would later become American presidents, and at least eight were generals of the American Revolution.

# Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies

The Federation's 2008 **Annual General Meeting** was in April, and held at the Arran Heritage Museum at Rosaburn, Brodick. Around 30 members and friend enjoyed an excellent day at this well-run and fascinating museum.

At the A.G.M., Stuart Wilson stood down after many years service as chairman; Kathryn Valentine from Largs stepping up to replace him. We know that Kathryn will be a worthy successor to Stuart, and are also pleased that Stuart will remain with us on the committee. Stuart's work for the Federation has been unstinting over many years, and the committee is considering ways in which we can formally mark our appreciation of his work.

Alisdair Cochrane and Ian Macdonald have resigned from the committee, and we are sorry to see them go. There are, therefore, vacancies on the committee. The work isn't onerous, the five or six meetings a year usually workmanlike, and the atmosphere relaxed and humorous. Please speak to Pamela if you'd like to join the committee.

By the time this edition of *Ayrshire Notes* hits the streets, the biennial **Troon Conference** will also be in the past. It is on Friday 12th September, in the Walker Halls. This time we are organising the conference jointly with the Scottish Records Association, and the subject is researching the history of nonconformist churches in Scotland. As an experiment, the conference is being held on a Friday, as it is easier to attract many of the SRA's professional members to a weekday event, rather than to one at the weekend. We have an interesting roster of speakers, and look forward to an interesting and educational day.

The next event is the annual **Swap Shop**. This is being held on **Sunday 5th October** in Dundonald, beginning at 2 p.m. The meeting will be in **Dundonald Church Hall**, and there will also be a visit to **Dundonald Castle** and its Heritage Centre. Details will be sent separately to member societies and individuals, but all are welcome. The Swap Shop is an opportunity for local historians to come together and chat informally about issues of common interest, to discuss speakers and visits of interest, and just to spend an afternoon among like-minded colleagues.

Finally, **subscriptions** for 2008-09 will be due soon, and notices will be sent to members. The subscription rates remain unchanged.

# Diary of Meetings of Historical Societies

| | |
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| AANHS | Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society. Meetings in Carnegie Library, Ayr, at 7.45 p.m. |
| ASA | Alloway & Southern Ayrshire Family History Society. Meetings in Alloway Church Halls, Alloway, at 7.30 p.m. |
| BHS | Beith Historical Society. Meetings in lounge of the Eglinton Inn, Beith at 8.00 p.m. |
| CSD | Catrine Sorn & District History Society. Meetings in A M Brown Institute, Catrine, at 7.30 p.m. |
| DHS | Dundonald Historical Society. Meetings in Dundonald Castle Visitors Centre, Dundonald, at 7.30 p.m. |
| EAFHS | East Ayrshire Family History Society. Meetings in Gateway Centre, Foregate Square, Kilmarnock, at 7.30 p.m. |
| FHS Joint | Joint Meeting of Ayrshire Family History Societies. Gateway Centre, Foregate Square, Kilmarnock, 7.30 p.m. |
| KCCS | Kyle and Carrick Civic Society. Meetings in Loudoun Hall, Ayr, at 7.30 p.m. |
| KDHG | Kilmarnock & District History Group. Meetings in Kilmarnock College at 7.30 p.m. |
| Largs HH | LDHS Hakon Hakonsson Lecture. In Vikingar!, Largs at 8 p.m. |
| Largs Jt | Joint meeting of LDHS and LNAFHS. In Largs Museum at 7.30 p.m. |
| LDHS | Largs and District Historical Society. Meetings in Largs Museum at 7.30 p.m. |
| L(MS) | LDHS, Marine Section. Meetings in Largs Museum at 7.30 p.m. |
| LNAFHS | Largs & North Ayrshire Family History Society. Meetings in Largs Library, Allanpark Street, Largs at 7.30 p.m. |
| MHS | Maybole Historical Society. Meetings in Maybole Castle, High Street, Maybole at 7.30 p.m. |
| NCHG | New Cumnock History Group. Meetings in New Cumnock Community Centre at 7.00 p.m. |
| PHG | Prestwick History Group. Meetings in 65 Club, Main Street, Prestwick, at 7.30 p.m. |
| SHS | Stewarton Historical Society. Meetings in John Knox Church Hall, Stewarton, at 7.30 p.m. |
| TAFHS | Troon @ Ayrshire Family History Society. Meetings in Portland Church Hall, South Beach, Troon, at 7.30 p.m. |
| WKAS | West Kilbride Amenity Society. Meetings in Community Centre, Corse Street, West Kilbride, at 7.30 p.m. |

**September 2008**

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| Mon 1st | SHS | Pat Anslow | Chile and Argentina |
| Thurs 4th | Largs HH | Ted Cowan | The Battle of Largs and the Western Approaches |
| Tues 9th | LNAFHS | Josephine Bell | Quarriers |
| Wed 10th | DHS | Valerie Reilly | History of the Paisley Shawl |
| Tues 16th | T@A | Robert Laird | An Ayrshire Farming Family |

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| Thurs 18th | ASA | Tom Barclay | Smuggling in the Carrick Area |
| Thurs 25th | BHS | Geoffrey Palmer | Jamaica and the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade |
| Tues 30th | KDHG | Tom Copland | From the Rochdale Pioneers to the Present Day |
| **October 2008** | | | |
| Thurs 2nd | PHG | John Kellie | Unknown Egypt |
| Mon 6th | L(MS) | Hugh Kerr | Kayaking around the Islands |
| Mon 6th | SHS | Irene McMillan | The Dick Institute and Its Collections |
| Mon 6th | KCCS | John Russell | Ships of Ayr |
| Wed 8th | DHS | Solveig McCulloch | Childhood Memories of Wartime Norway |
| Thurs 9th | AANHS | Ewen Smith | Two Hundred Years of the Hunterian Museum |
| Thurs 9th | EAFHS | John McGill | Cessnock Castle |
| Tues 14th | KDHG | Leslie Brown | Saving the *Maid*, Loch Lomond's Paddle Steamer |
| Tues 14th | Largs Jt | John Gallacher | Sir Thomas Lipton |
| Tues 21st | T@A | Members | Who Do You Think You Are? |
| Wed 22nd | CHS | Morag McNicol | The New Museum of the Cumbraes |
| Thurs 23rd | AANHS | Tom Barclay | The Cromwellian Citadel of Ayr |
| Tues 28th | KDHG | Colin McKie & Peter Drummond | Kilmarnock Town Centre Conservation Area: A Historical Perspective |
| Tues 28th | WKAS | Liz Colquhoun | West Kilbride Museum |
| Thurs 30th | BHS | Charles Gallacher | Cracking the Code |
| **November 2008** | | | |
| Mon 3rd | L(MS) | Norman Brown | Calmac Vessels |
| Mon 3rd | SHS | Gerry Hearns | Dreghorn Dig |
| Mon 3rd | KCCS | Tertia Barnett | Scotland's Rural Past |
| Thurs 6th | PHG | Alasdair Malcolm | Prestwick – Golf's Second Home |
| Mon 10th | CHS | Ian Maclagan | The Story of X-Craft Miniature Submarines |
| Tues 11th | LNAFHS | Lesley Richmond | Women of Glasgow University |
| Tues 11th | KDHG | Bill Fitzpatrick | Armistice and Beyond |
| Wed 12th | DHS | David B Smith | What is Criminal Justice For? |
| Thurs 13th | AANHS | Eric Graham | Clyde-built in the American Civil War |
| Thurs 13th | EAFHS | John Millar | White Slaves with Black Faces |
| Mon 17th | LDHS | Ann Cameron | The Good, the Bad and the Insolent: Local Registrars |
| Tues 18th | T@A | Clare Paterson | Using University and Business Archives for Family History Research |

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| Thurs 20th | ASA | Neil McNaught | Alloway Church: 150th Anniversary |
| Tues 25th | WKAS | John McInnes | The Rocks Around us: Scotland's Scenery |
| Tues 25th | KDHG | Jean Eadie | Empire Exhibition Scotland 1938 |
| Thurs 27th | AANHS | Ian Campbell | The Rise and Fall of Small Town Tram Systems |
| Thurs 27th | BHS | Denis Rattenbury | Ayrshire Smugglers. Begins at 6.45, with St Andrew's Night Supper |
| **December 2008** | | | |
| Mon 1st | SHS | Jim Steel | The Language of Family History |
| Mon 1st | KCCS | Karen McLure and Kenneth Sinclair | Parks: Where Do We Go From Here? |
| Mon 1st | L(MS) | --- | Members' Night |
| Thurs 4th | PHG | Jean Lockley and Graham Humphreys | Once Upon a Time – Local Tales |
| Mon 8th | CHS | Alastair Chisholm | The Wee Ferries |
| Tues 9th | KDHG | Tony Poland | The Battle of Culloden: an Archaeological Perspective |
| Wed 10th | DHS | Bill McGregor | Clyde Ships |
| Thurs 11th | EAFHS | --- | Members' Christmas Evening |
| **January 2009** | | | |
| Mon 5th | KCCS | Peter J Westwood | The History of Burns Cottage 1740-2008 |
| Mon 5th | CHS | Ewen Donaldson | The Story of Glasgow's Botanic Gardens |
| Mon 5th | SHS | John Miller | The Smugglers Who Saved a Language |
| Thurs 8th | AANHS | Jack Hunter | The History of the Ballantrae Estate |
| Thurs 8th | EAFHS | David Killicoat | Maybole Database |
| Mon 12th | L(MS) | tba | |
| Tues 13th | KDHG | John Miller | White Slaves with Black Faces |
| Thurs 15th | ASA | Alistair Hastings | Robert Burns and His Connection to Kirkoswald and Maybole |
| Mon 19th | LDHS | Iain McCrorie | Largs Pier |
| Tues 20th | T@A | Iain McCrorie | Caledonian MacBrayne |
| Thurs22nd | AANHS | Tom Morrall | A Unique Aspect of Burnsiana |
| Tues 27th | KDHG | Nigel Willis | Glasgow Necropolis |
| Tues 27th | LNAFHS | Chris Paton | DNA |
| Tues 27th | WKAS | Ian Lennox | Bees |
| Thurs 29th | BHS | Harry Doyle | The Sea Wolf: Admiral Lord Cochrane |
| **February 2009** | | | |
| Mon 2nd | KCCS | Ann Bontke | Exploring Collections |

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| Mon 2nd | L(MS) | Neil Stuart | Vessels on Video |
| Mon 2nd | CHS | Alastair Durie | A History of the Scottish Seaside: Sun, Sand and Windbreakers |
| Mon 2nd | SHS | Jim O'Neill | Fenwick Weavers |
| Thurs 5th | PHG | Jim Goodlad | Clyde Islands |
| Tues 10th | LNAFHS | Ronnie Scott | Glasgow Necropolis |
| Tues 10th | KDHG | Lorna Davidson | The Pauper Apprentices of New Lanark |
| Wed 11th | DHS | Marion Montgomery | Scottish Songwriters Through the Ages |
| Thurs 12th | EAFHS | G Stewart | Dundonald Castle |
| Thurs 12th | AANHS | Geoff Moore | Aspects of Research at Millport Marine Research Station |
| Mon 16th | LDHS | Frances Wilkins | Smuggling in Cunninghame in the 18th Century |
| Thurs 19th | ASA | Ann Cameron | Moving Images and Family History Archives |
| Tues 24th | WKAS | Stuart Fraser | Recycling and Composting |
| Tues 24th | KDHG | Tom Barclay | The Smugglers of Troon, Loans and Dundonald |
| Thurs 26th | BHS | Duncan Watt | The Art of Conservation |
| Thurs 26th | AANHS | Jean Harrison | Smail's Printing Works at Innerleithen |
| **March 2009** | | | |
| Mon 2nd | SHS | Tom Barclay | The Smugglers of Troon, Loans and Dundonald |
| Mon 2nd | L(MS) | Brian Searl | HMS *Britannia* |
| Mon 2nd | KCCS | John Burnett | Celebrations in Ayrshire |
| Mon 2nd | CHS | Tom Nixon | Scotland's Other Poet: Robert Tannahill of Paisley |
| Thurs 5th | PHG | Members | Pot Pourri |
| Tues 10th | KDHG | Adrian Cox | Rowallan Old Castle |
| Tues 10th | LNAFHS | Elizabeth Carmichael | Digital Ancestry |
| Wed 11th | DHS | Jim Grant | Shipbuilding in Irvine |
| Thurs 12th | AANHS | Mark Gibson | The Craigengillan Estate |
| Thurs 12th | FHS Joint | Mrs J Barr | General Roy, the 18th Century Mapmaker |
| Thurs 19th | ASA | Irene Hopkins | On The Street Where You Lived |
| Mon 23rd | LDHS | John C Brown | Fifty Years as Astronomer and Magician |
| Tues 24th | KDHG | Elaine McFarland | Scottish War Memorials from the Picts to the Present |
| Thurs 26th | BHS | Stewart Gough | The Goatfell Murder |
| Tues 31st | WKAS | Mrs Gillespie and Mrs McGill | Bonnet Making in Stewarton |

**April 2009**

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| Thurs 2nd | PHG | David Rowan and Alisdair Cochrane | Prestwick Shops Over the Years |
| Mon 6th | CHS | Richard Sutcliffe | Butterflies in Scotland |
| Mon 6th | SHS | Ian Macdonald | The Richmonds of Riccarton: Their Emigration to Australia |
| Wed 8th | DHS | Charlotte Rostek | Dumfries House – A Work in Progress |
| Thurs 9th | EAFHS | Robert Ferguson | Collecting Costumes of the Past |
| Tues 14th | LNAFHS | Dane Love | Lost Ayrshire |
| Thurs 16th | ASA | Andrew Grey | 1935 Spithead Review: My Father's Old Cine Film |
| Tues 21st | T@A | John Steele | HMS *Dasher* |

**May 2009**

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| Thurs 7th | PHG | Members | Blether of 2009 |
| Mon 11th | SHS | David Clement | Stewarton and Dunlop Place Names |
| Thurs 14th | EAFHS | --- | AGM |
| Thurs 21st | ASA | Andrew Donaldson | Saving Old Photographs for Family History |

# Rob's Book Club: an occasional series

I've just finished reading *Family Secrets* by Derek Malcolm, published by Hutcheson in 2003 and in paperback by Arrow in 2004. In this very readable memoir, Malcolm unpicks his parents' great and tragic secret: that his father had shot his wife's lover, had stood trial for murder at the Old Bailey and been acquitted, in perhaps the first, and one of the few, cases where a jury has allowed sentiment to outweigh the evidence: a rare occasion on which a British jury has espoused the concept of a *crime passionel*. That in happened in 1917, while Douglas Malcolm was a serving army officer, and the victim was foreign, half-Jewish and regarded by many as either a procurer or a German spy, or both, must go a long way towards explaining the attitude of the jury.

Some aspects of Douglas Malcolm's life, other than this brief period of notoriety, would, I felt, be of interest to Ayrshire historians.

He joined up in 1914 with the Royal Horse Artillery, and was attached to the 42nd East Lancashire Division, seeing service with them at Gallipoli, and then in the defence of the Suez Canal. Here "[h]e was attached to the Ayrshire Gun Battery because they were so short of officers that only four of their own were left after Gallipoli. ... [T]his battery was the only one remaining that had enough horses to be properly mobile." [pp. 94-5, ppk ed.] Derek Malcolm then quotes from his father's diary: "Our battery mostly consisted of miners and they behaved awfully well and were as cool as anything, being accustomed, I suppose,

to explosions in mines. They cut the dead and maimed horses clear and went on with what was left and, of course, this sort of thing makes one sick. I told one driver to get the team moving and he said in his curious Scotch accent – 'I canna, I canna ... I canna drive na mair. I have only two fingers left on my right hand', and he proceeded to show me his mangled hand in quite a matter-of-fact way ..." [p. 96]

As the name may suggest, Douglas Malcolm, too, was of Scots descent, though born in London in 1883. His father, James Robert Malcolm, had been born in Dundee in 1839, the son of a solicitor, and had, with his brother, established a successful jute business with offices in London, Dundee, St Petersburg, Hamburg and Riga. Links with the Malcolms of Poltalloch (Argyll) are inferred in the book, but never specifically fleshed out: one for the genealogists.

Towards the end of his life, bitter and lonely in a Sussex nursing home, Douglas Malcolm, a fervent huntsman and golfer in his younger days, became "a croquet player of some cunning. ... he and I played croquet together, forming a partnership very few could beat. Cheating seemed to be an integral part of the game and we were the local experts. It was a brief interlude in his life during which he was as happy as I had ever seen him." (pp. 208-9)

[The editors are always pleased to receive other instances of serendipitous Ayrshire references.]

Obituaries in the national press this year have included the jazz trumpeter Tommy McQuater, who died on 20th January, aged 93. **Thomas Mossie McQuater** was born in Maybole on 4th September 1914, and in his early teens worked in a joinery shop, and played with the Maybole Brass Band. He subsequently moved to Glasgow, playing in the house band sat Green's Playhouse, and also worked on transatlantic liners before moving to London in 1934, "part of an extraordinary exodus of Scottish musicians whose impact continues to the present." He became a central figure in the London jazz world, performing and recording with many of the jazz greats. "A spry man, he enjoyed company, retaining his impish sense of humour to the end."

**Nicol Jamieson Peacock**, who died aged 77 on 19th July, found fame in a very different sphere, as one of Britain's leading scientists of nuclear fusion, perhaps best known for his role as the leader of a British team which went to the Soviet Union in 1969, during the cold war, to probe and validate a controversial break-through in fusion research claimed by Moscow. Peacock's team showed the claim to be accurate, and the process – the tokamak or toroidal chamber with magnetic coils – is still used in main lines of fusion research. Peacock was born on 7th February 1931, in Darvel, where his father was an engine-fitter, and his mother a lace weaver. He was educated at Mair's School, Darvel J.S. and Kilmarnock Academy, before graduating in physics from Glasgow University. From 1956 he worked in the nuclear industry, firstly at Aldermaston and, from 1965 until his retirement in 1996, at Culham Laboratory in Oxfordshire.

Sources: Peter Vacher, “Tommy McQuater” in *The Guardian,* 26th January 2008; Jes Christiansen, “Nicol Peacock”, in *The Guardian,* 7th August 2008.

# AANHS Publications

Publications of the Ayrshire Archaeological & Natural History Society (AANHS) are available from Ronald W. Brash MA, Publications Distribution Manager, 10 Robsland Avenue, Ayr KA7 2RW. Further information about the AANHS and its publications will be found on the society's website: **www.aanhs.org.uk**

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| 34 | The Loans Smugglers (Wilkins) 144 pages | £4.50 |
| 33 | Dr John Taylor, Chartist: Ayrshire Revolutionary (Fraser) 112 pages | £4.00 |
| 32 | Ayr and the Charter of William the Lion 1205 (Barrow) 20 pages | £1.00 |
| 31 | Tattie Howkers: Irish Potato Workers in Ayrshire (Holmes) 192 pages | £4.50 |
| 30 | The Early Transatlantic Trade of Ayr 1640-1730 (Barclay & Graham) 104 pp. | £4.50 |
| 29 | Vernacular Building in Ayrshire (Hume) 80 pages | £4.50 |
| 28 | Historic Prestwick and its surroundings, 64 pages | £2.50 |
| 27 | Ayrshire in the Age of Improvement (McClure) 192 pages | £4.00 |
| 25 | The Street Names of Ayr (Close) 128 pages | £5.00 |
| 24 | Historic Alloway, Village and Countryside: A Guide for Visitors | £2.00 |
| 23 | The Last Miller: The Cornmills of Ayrshire (Wilson) | £3.00 |
| 22 | The Rise and Fall of Mining Communities in Central Ayrshire (Wark) | £1.00 |
| 21 | A Community Rent Asunder: The Newmilns Laceweavers Strike of 1897 (Mair) | £2.00 |
| 20 | Historic Ayr: A Guide for Visitors, 2nd ed. | £2.50 |
| 19 | Robert Reid Cunninghame of Seabank House (Graham) | £1.00 |
| 18 | Cessnock: An Ayrshire Estate in the Age of Improvement (Mair) | £2.00 |
| 15 | The Port of Ayr 1727–1780 (Graham) | £2.00 |
| 14 | Smuggling and the Ayrshire Economic Boom (Cullen) | £2.00 |
| 13 | Tolls and Tacksmen (McClure) | £1.50 |
| 12 | The Cumnock Pottery (Quail) | £2.00 |
| 11 | Robert Adam in Ayrshire (Sanderson) | £1.50 |
| 10 | The Barony of Alloway (Hendry) | £1.50 |
| 9 | Plant Life in Ayrshire (Kirkwood/Foulds) | £1.50 |
| 6 | A Scottish Renaissance Household (MacKenzie) | £1.00 |
| | Antiquities of Ayrshire (Grose, ed. Strawhorn) (reprint) | £2.00 |
| | Mauchline Memories of Robert Burns (ed. Strawhorn) (reprint) | £2.00 |
| | Armstrong's Maps of Ayrshire (1775: reprint, 6 sheets) | £12.00 |