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**Relief in bronze of John Galt
by Robert Bryden 1904**

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Cover illustration

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Robert Bryden (1865-1939) was born in Coylton. He began as an apprentice architect in Ayr before going to study art in London, where he worked for many years before returning to Ayr (John Strawhorn, *The History of Ayr*, Edinburgh 1989, 204). John Galt (1779-1839) was born in Irvine, the son of a sea captain. He produced several novels, the best-known being *Annals of the Parish*, describing events in the life of a parish minister in an imaginary Ayrshire town (John & Julia Keay, eds., *Collins Encyclopaedia of Scotland*, London 1994, 411-412).

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Old Rome: Hiding Burns to Hidden Hamlet

As the July of 1789 drew to a close, Robert Burns was in hiding. On the 30th of the month he wrote an angry letter to his Mauchline friend John Richmond, a clerk in the office of the lawyer Gavin Hamilton:

My D^r Richmond,

My hour is now come.—You and I will never meet in Britain more.—I have orders within three weeks at furthest to repair aboard the *Nancy*, Capⁿ Smith, from Clyde to Jamaica, and to call at Antigua.—This, except to our friend Smith, whom God long preserve, is a secret about Mauchlin.—Would you believe it? Armour has got a warrant to throw me in jail till I find security for an enormous sum.—This they keep an entire secret, but I got by a channel they little dream of; and I am wandering from one friend's house to another, and like a true son of the Gospel 'have no where to lay my head.'—I know you will pour an execration on her head, but spare the poor, ill-advised girl for my sake; tho', may all the Furies that rend the injured, enraged Lover's bosom, await the old harridan, her Mother, until her latest hour! May Hell string the arm of Death to throw the fatal dart, and all the winds of warring elements rouse the infernal flames to welcome her approach! For Heaven's sake burn this letter, and never show it to a living creature.—I write in a moment of rage, reflecting on my miserable situation.—exiled, abandoned, forlorn.—I can write no more.—let me hear from you by the return of Connel.—I will write you ere I go

I am, D^r Sir, Yours here & hereafter

Rob^t Burns

Old Rome Foord

30th July

1786¹

The history behind the writing of the letter is well known. Burns was hiding from James Armour, a Mauchline builder whose daughter, Jean, he had made pregnant. Although Burns and Jean Armour had entered into an irregular marriage, mutually agreeing to be man and wife, her parents were against any union—probably on financial grounds—and James Armour had mutilated the document the two had drawn up. He apparently had heard of the Burns's intention to publish his poems and he had taken out a warrant to force Burns to support the child Jean was imminently expecting.² Burns for his part fully expected to be arrested as he had insufficient funds, and he had drawn up a few days before a deed of assignment leaving all his goods, including the profits of his forthcoming book, to his brother Gilbert to be used for the raising of an earlier illegitimate child. This move was undoubtedly motivated by spite at the opposition of the Armour parents, but during these

days Burns swithered over his feelings for Jean. He was still deeply infatuated with her but also annoyed by what he saw as her acquiescence in her parents' actions. He had, in the event, determined on two things: not to contract a regular marriage with her and to emigrate to Jamaica. However, the day after he wrote to John Richmond, his *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* appeared, and he reneged on both resolutions, at least partly because of its reception and his subsequent lionising by Edinburgh society.³

Less well known is the history of the place from which Burns was writing. Burns labels it 'Old Rome Foord'. It was on the Fairlie estate, at the northern end of Dundonald Parish and on the banks of the River Irvine, about two miles north of Dundonald village and three-and-a-quarter miles south-west of Kilmarnock. As a stop on Burns's fugitive itinerary it made sense, both because of its proximity to Kilmarnock on the eve of him becoming a published author through the press of John Wilson in Kilmarnock, and because of the distance it placed between himself and Armour's wrath. According to one source, Burns had even sent his packed chest to Old Rome Foord ready for his departure for Jamaica.⁴ He was staying with his aunt, Jean Broun (or Brown), his mother's half-sister, and her husband James Allan, who was a joiner and general mechanic on the Fairlie estate in the same district.⁵ Coincidentally, the Fairlie estate had had an earlier contact with Burns's immediate family as it was there that his father, William Burnes, upon coming to Ayrshire from his native Kincardineshire via Edinburgh in the 1750s had first worked as a gardener for Alexander Fairlie of that Ilk, a noted agricultural improver in the county.⁶

The 'Foord' element in the place name as given by Burns represents the Scots pronunciation of 'ford'.⁷ Earlier editions of Burns's letters gave the place name as 'Forest', and there is a history of interpreting 'foord' as a corruption of this word, repeated most recently by Maurice Lindsay in *The Burns Encyclopaedia* who additionally speculates that it is a corruption of 'Fairlie'.⁸ But that it was a phonetic spelling by Burns of the Scots word for 'ford', variously spelled 'fuird' or 'foord', can be seen from his 'Address to the Deil' where he rhymes it with 'boord' and 'hoord' (English = 'board' and 'hoard').⁹ This is the only time in his poems the word is printed like this. The other three usages are printed as 'ford', but the pronunciation Burns intended can be seen from the rhyming couplets of 'Tam o' Shanter, when the hero rides

cross the ford,

Whare, in the snow, the chapman smoor'd.¹⁰

Lying on the road between Kilmaurs and Ayr, Old Rome Foord was evidently an ancient crossing of the River Irvine, although by the time of Burns's stay, there was almost certainly a bridge.¹¹ As late as the early twentieth century, the farmer at the present farm of Old Rome could remember the entrance to the ford on the south side.¹² Even nowadays when the water is low and runs clear, locals can point to the flat stones in the riverbed where the ford was, some dozen yards upstream from the present bridge.

It is not only this evidence which supports this interpretation. The place name also exists as 'Rumford' (*Statistical Account* 1791-99); 'Romeford' (map of 1809); and 'Romford' (John Thomson's *Atlas of Scotland* 1832). The variations in the spelling of 'Rome' in the place name also indicate that its pronunciation differed from the modern

standard English one for the city of Rome. In the earliest occurrence of the name traced by the present writers in Blaeu's map of Kyle of 1654 it is given as 'Old Room'.¹³ 'Room' (or 'roum(e), rowm, or 'rum') is defined in *The Scottish National Dictionary* as being:

A piece of land for which a certain rent was paid to the landowner, a farm a tack, an arable holding, a croft, the exact meaning varying according to the type of farming practised e.g. on Sh[etland]. and on the mainland of Scotland in earlier times such areas were frequently divided among sub-tenants, cottars, part-time employees, etc.¹⁴

Table 1 Census returns for Old Rome 1841, 1851, 1881.

	1841	1851	1881
Form of name	Census	Census	Census
Total population	Oldrome 261	Old Rome 204	Old Rome 34
		[44 born in Ireland]	
Occupations			
Miner	68	44	
Blacksmith	2	1	
Servant	2		
Pauper	1	1	
Ag Lab	1	2	1
Tailor	1		
Engineman	1		
Grocer	2		
Disteler [<i>sic</i>]	1		
Apprentice Sadler	1		
Apprentice Blacksmith	1		
Teacher	1		
Farmer	1		
Spirit Dealer	1		
Pauper Coalminer		3	
Muslin Seamstress		3	
Pauper/Ag Lab		1	
House Servant		1	
Coal Master's Clerk		1	
Engine Worker		1	
Pithead Man			1
Hammerman			1
Gamekeeper			1
Needle woman			1
Gen Labourer			1
Retired Miner			1



Blaue's Map of Kyle 1654

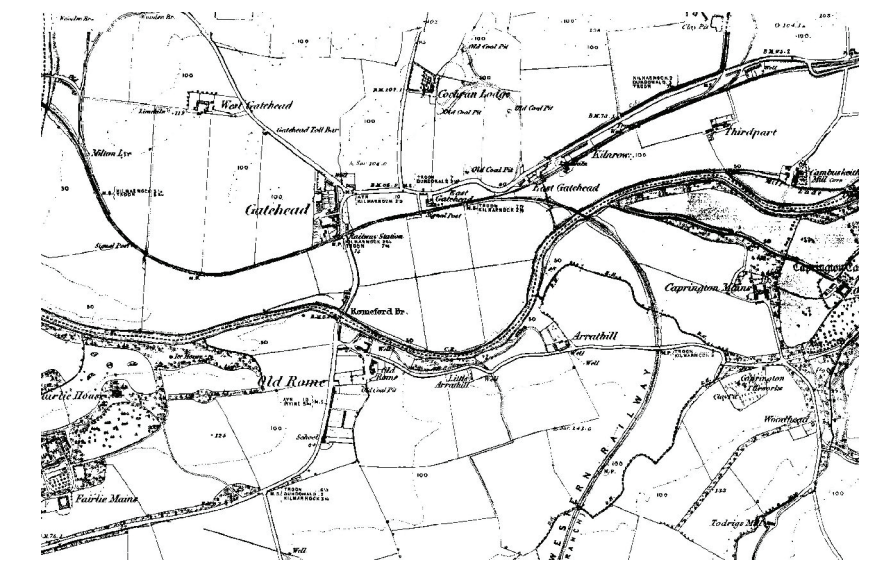
Even today Old Rome is pronounced among local Scots speakers as 'Aul Rim',¹⁵ but from Burns's time onwards the spelling became accepted as 'Old Rome'. The 1841 census has 'Oldrome' which is 'Old Rome' by the time of the next decadal census. The confusion doubtless arose as the city of Rome itself existed in Scots, among other variations, as 'Roome' from the mid-sixteenth century onwards.¹⁶ Although the word 'room' in the sense defined above can be found being used as late as 1818 by Scott in *Heart of Midlothian*,¹⁷ educated people, such as Burns, evidently approximated what they were hearing to the standard English spelling of the city of Rome.¹⁸ The name 'Old Rome' apparently points to its ancient status as a piece of land rented out for farming,¹⁹ a process—to judge from the Scots names of the surrounding farms and places—that took place in the district in the later medieval period when the older Brythonic and Scots Gaelic had disappeared from the tongues of the people in the area.²⁰

The name apparently applied to the cultivated land on the higher ground above the River Irvine's southern bank, as can be seen from older maps such as Roy's Military Map of 1747-1755.²¹ By Burns's time, it would appear, the hamlet of Old Rome also existed, for it was to it, some three years after Burns took refuge with her, that his aunt moved with her seven children when her husband died in 1789. Their former house, according to one of Jean Allan's grandsons, 'where Burns spent some of his evenings', was 'an isolated cottage' which was 'outside the village, and within the policies of Fairlie estate'.²² The description is precise. The policies, like the village, are distinguished as a separate area within the Fairlie estate, which implies that the Allan cottage stood within proximity of the original mansion house, as 'policies' is a Scots word for the enclosed grounds of a large house or the park of an estate. The village, however, was some distance from the mansion. The first statistical account, published in 1793, notes that because of the nearby coal pit 'a village, named Rumford, has of late years started up close by Fairlie Bridge. It contains at present 74 inhabitants'.²³ A map of 1807 shows it consisting of a single row of cottages standing on the brae above the southern bank of the river, alongside what is now the A759, Kilmarnock to Troon road. It continued to grow, and the 1841 census gives a total population for the hamlet of 261 (Table 1). The 1860 O.S. map appears to show that it had expanded to two

rows, with a much shorter one behind the original one. The gardens of the rows extended as far as the line of the hedge bounding the present field where they formerly stood.²⁴ In addition a schoolroom had been built with a house for the teacher, and Dundonald parish church evidently maintained a mission station in the hamlet, for in 1837 it, along with a similar one in the miners rows at nearby Shewalton, contributed nineteen shillings to parochial funds.²⁵

Table 2. 1841 census, Old Rome distillery

Surname	First name(s)	Sex	Age	Occupation	Where Born
Mill	Jane	F	55	Disteler [<i>sic</i>]	Outside Census County
Andrew	Margaret	F	20		Ayrshire
Andrew	Adam	M	13	Apprentice Sadler	Ayrshire



O.S. 1860

In addition to the coal mine, there was a distillery at Old Rome. It was on the south bank of the Irvine, between the river and the minor road which leads to Caprington via Arrothill farm. According to H. Charles Gray in his history of the Scottish whisky industry, the distillery was founded in 1812 and its first owner was James Fraser. However, after his tenure it changed ownership often and appeared to struggle financially. Despite the Old Rome Distillery Co. being founded in 1826, the firm went bankrupt that same year.²⁶ On the other hand, the pit was evidently productive in the early years of the nineteenth century. Its entrance was in the declivity in which the present farmhouse of Old Rome stands and about a hundred yards behind the farm out-buildings. Some of its coal was sold locally, but

a quantity of it was exported to Ireland. A branch railway line to serve it was planned in the early nineteenth century. The intended line appears on the map of 1807 which shows the route of the proposed horse-drawn railway between Kilmarnock and Troon.²⁷ It still appears in John Thomson's map of Ayrshire published in 1832 which had been compiled from estate plans by the surveyor William Johnson in 1820,²⁸ but it was evidently never built. Perhaps the topography made it prohibitively expensive, for it was to have its own bridge downstream from the existing road bridge, and the route, which was to run parallel to the western side of the present road before swinging south-east towards the pit, would probably have entailed an extensive embankment leading to a cutting and a further road bridge over it. However, the opening of a railway station in the new mining hamlet of Gatehead, which was built some time in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, on the opposite bank of the Irvine, would eventually obviate the need for it.²⁹ The agricultural improvements and the coal mining evidently made the Fairlie estate sufficiently prosperous at the turn of the eighteenth century to finance the building the present mansion house in about 1803, known locally as 'Five Lums' because of its quintet of chimney stacks.³⁰

The distillery continued to have a chequered history. It was acquired by James Mill in 1829, whose family by 1841 evidently also farmed Fairlie Gates as Mills are listed in the census as residing there.³¹ The distillery remained with this family but it was again bankrupt in 1840,³² although the owner may have hoped to revive it, for in the census of the following year Jane Mill in the distillery house gave her occupation as distiller (Table 2). However, by 1851 the distillery was definitely defunct for the census listed it as 'The Old Distillery', and the head of the household was a victualler. The 1841 census possibly shows the hamlet in its apogee. The following year the Ayrshire volume of the second statistical account described the extensive workings of Old Rome pit:

The depth of the shaft is 37 fathoms, and cuts through four different seams in the following order:

At the bottom of the shaft is a seam of blind or charred coal, 3 feet 4 inches in thickness; 13 fathoms above, there is one of common coal, of the same thickness; 8 fathoms above that, one of 6 feet; and 2½ fathoms higher still is one of 2 feet 8 inches.³³

However, the early 1840s were troubled years for Old Rome. In the nineteenth century miners were often under pressure to work a longer darg (Scots for 'a day's work') for their pay while the wages themselves fluctuated wildly, reflecting the price received for pig iron by the ironmasters, also the dominant owners of the coal mines. Their power was such that they could raise and cut wages at will. In the early 1840s miners' pay was at its all-time low in the nineteenth century.³⁴ The threat of it being further reduced brought the Lanarkshire miners out on strike early in August 1842. To support themselves, they took to raiding local farms for food, and in response troops and police were positioned throughout the Lanarkshire coalfield. The miners sent deputations to other coalfields, including those of Ayrshire, to enlist more strikers in their cause.³⁵ On Wednesday 14 September about 600 miners, mainly from Stevenson and Kilwinning, gathered at two in the morning outside the pits in Gatehead and Kilmarnock, stopping the men there from working. Doubtless flushed

with success, the strikers retired to Old Rome gardens—probably those which were cultivated by the miners in the area behind the rows. There the miners of the district heard, according to the *Kilmarnock Journal*, addresses ‘urging them to insist upon the increased wages, and reduction in weight of out-put of coal, from the masters.’³⁶ The masters had ideas of their own. The Ayrshire Sheriff, William Eaton, in consultation with the police, called out the Ayrshire Yeomanry, some of whose commanders belonged to mine-owning families: Major James Fairlie, Sir James Boswell, T.S. Cunningham of Caprington, and William Hamilton of Braehead. The presence of the Yeomanry seemed to stop any acts of vandalism directed against pit workings, though the *Kilmarnock Journal* opined that ‘we cannot believe that any operatives connected with the county’ would engage in such lawlessness, but felt that this might be the case with ‘desperadoes from the east’—evidently intending the Lanarkshire miners.³⁷ Certainly not all Ayrshire miners were anxious to get involved. Some days after the Old Rome rally the miners at Caprington turned out to defend their pit against attack.³⁸ An entry in the Dundonald parish records suggests why the miners at Old Rome might have had particular reason to be interested in the agitation. It noted that from June to September of 1842, Old Rome had suffered from unemployment and fever, and ‘the minister is allowed £2 for distribution’.³⁹ Matters did not improve quickly. The following year Dundonald parishioners were again taking a collection for ‘unemployed colliers’ at Old Rome.⁴⁰



The area today, looking across the River Irvine from near the old ford. Old Rome Farmhouse is to the left and the former school buildings are higher up on the right. The miners rows stood beside the latter, at the top of the field in which the sheep are grazing.

By 1851 eleven per cent of the Ayrshire population was Irish born.⁴¹ At Old Rome the percentage of those Irish-born in that same year was significantly higher, at 21.6 percent almost double that of the county (Table 1). Given that the Ayrshire immigrants, who were most often Roman Catholics, were used in the dirty jobs associated with industrialization—mining, ironworks and labouring—the high percentage of Irish natives is testimony to the social standing of the hamlet. The many miners and their families who came and went at Old Rome unfortunately remain largely anonymous to history, but some insight into their lives might be glimpsed through Patrick (or Peter) Quigly (1824-1881). Quigly was born to

Irish immigrant parents in Paisley. By 1841, when he was 17, he was working as a carder in a cotton mill, presumably near where he lived in Anderston, Glasgow. In 1850 he was married in St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Kilmarnock, and a year later the census shows Quigly (or Quegley) living with his wife and his baby son and his father-in-law in Mill Street, Crookedholm, where he was working as a coal miner. Evidently illiterate, when his daughter, Catherine, was born in 1857, Quigly registered the birth by signing his X mark, a device he would use again when registering the death of an infant son in 1872. Catherine had been born at Holmes Colliery, Galston, undoubtedly Quigly's workplace as he gave his occupation as that of a coal miner. Like most west of Scotland miners, he would live in accommodation owned by his employers all his life, hence he would frequently move houses as he changed jobs. By the 1861 census Quigly was living at Old Rome where he again is listed as being a coal miner. His family now consisted of five children: John (10), Rebecca (8), Samuel (6), Catherine (4), and Mary (5 months). Ten years later the family had moved to Knowehead Rows, Galston, where Quigly again supported his family as a miner. In addition to the two adults, there were six children living in a house that had only one room with a window. When he died aged 57 after a week-long bout of pneumonia, he was living in Dalziel Street, Motherwell.⁴² These are the bare bones of an existence extracted from official records by a genealogist, but the privations and rootlessness of Quigly's life, and those other Old Rome miners whose residency was doubtless as equally transient, may be imagined.

It would seem that at least towards the end of Peter Quigly's stay at Old Rome, and possibly earlier, he would have had to cross the Irvine to the pits nearer Gatehead. The 1851 census shows that the Old Rome pit was on the decline by the mid-century with the number of miners living in the hamlet having diminished from sixty-eight in 1841 to forty-four, a reduction of thirty-five percent (Table 1). In the 1860 O.S. map the pit is marked as 'Old Coal Pit', indicating that it had already closed by that date, when Quigly and his family were still living in the hamlet.⁴³ Certainly by 1875 Old Rome was in terminal decline, as was found by Archibald Adamson in his *Rambles Round Kilmarnock* of that year. After passing the entrance to Fairlie House while walking from Dundonald to Kilmarnock he found:

Beyond, on the brow of a steep brae, where the road swoops down and crosses a fine bridge that has recently been erected over the Irvine in place of the old structure, I passed Old Rome, a row of ruined cottages of mean appearance that were at one time occupied by a colony of colliers, who left the place when the pits in the neighbourhood became "worked out." The prospect from the bridge is very pleasing, and I need not say that I lingered sometime to enjoy it. The river comes sweeping round a bend after washing the bank of the beautiful estate of Caprington and turning the wheel of Cambuskeith Mill; it is then skirted by a hanging wood, passes the remains of Old Rome distillery, purls beneath the bridge, and rolls round a curve on its way to the sea.⁴⁴

By the time James Gillespie, the Dundonald parish minister, published his parochial history in 1939, the colliery was only a memory of 'an older generation'; the miners rows

had existed until ‘comparatively recent times’; and the distillery buildings had finally been taken down ‘a few years ago’. Only the small school and the attached schoolhouse still existed as two dwelling houses.⁴⁵

The association with Burns would give Old Rome its moment of historical fame, though no-one would realise it at the time. But its story is more than that of an accident of biography. It touches on many themes of central concern in the history of the nation, from the development of roads and agricultural land, preserved in the etymology of its name, through enlightenment improvers to industrialization and its associated processes such as the improvement of transport, the migration of labour, the education of the workforce, the emergence of class and the rise of trade unionism. The name still lives at present. The farm which had been built in the previous century on the south bank of the Irvine had its name changed from ‘Pate’s Hole’ to ‘Old Rome’ during the tenancy of James Todd which had begun at some point around the mid-nineteenth century.⁴⁶ It is in this farm, with many of its out-buildings transformed into self-catering accommodation for the new industry of tourism, that the name remains to puzzle the more curious holidaymaker attracted by its reputation as a destination,⁴⁷ or occasionally to distract momentarily a car-traveller hurtling along the Kilmarnock to Troon road. All that remains of the hamlet are the former school buildings on a bend of the road, still in use as houses, probable testimony to their superior construction compared to that of the miners rows. Even deep ploughing in the now empty field where the latter once stood fails to show evidence of their existence.⁴⁸ It has joined Ayrshire’s lost and hidden hamlets.

**Paul Crankshaw
Neil Dickson**

- ¹ DeLancey Ferguson (ed.), *Selected Letters of Robert Burns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp.18-19.
- ² In the event, Jean Armour had twins.
- ³ See e.g., Catherine Carswell, *The Life of Robert Burns* (1930), Canongate Classic edn (Edinburgh; Canongate, 1990), pp.164-9; Maurice Lindsay, *Robert Burns: The Man, His Work, The Legend* (London: Robert Hale, 1954), pp.114-17; James Mackay, *Burns: A Biography of Robert Burns* (Darvel: Alloway Publishing, 1992), pp.191-5; Robert Crawford, *The Bard: Robert Burns, A Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2009), pp.179-181, 219-237.
- ⁴ ‘Burns and Old Rome’, *Kilmarnock Standard*, 1 July 1903, p.6; the lapse of time should not necessarily count against this source as the writer clearly had access to oral sources. James Mackay, however, is doubtful that Burns went as far as packing his chest, despite Burns’s own reference to it: Mackay, *Burns*, p.242.
- ⁵ Maurice Lindsay, *The Burns Encyclopedia*, 3rd edn (London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1996), pp.8, 275; it is available online at: <http://www.robertburns.org/encyclopedia/index-o.shtml> [accessed September 2008].

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- ⁶ William Fairlie, formerly of Fairlie near Largs, had purchased Little Dreghorn from the Fullartons some time before 1689. His son changed the estate name to Fairlie, thus making the family Fairlie of that Ilk. The estate passed from the family in 1885: James H. Gillespie, *Dundonald: A Contribution to Parochial History*, 2 vols (Glasgow: John Wylie & Co., 1939), vol. 1, pp.192-3.
- ⁷ *The Scottish National Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Scottish National Dictionary Association, 1956), vol. 4, p.199; the *Dictionary of the Scots Language*, giving the entries of *The Scottish National Dictionary*, is available online at: <http://www.dsl.ac.uk/dsl/> [accessed September 2008].
- ⁸ Lindsay, *Burns Encyclopaedia*, p.275.
- ⁹ 'Address to the Deil', stanza 12.
- ¹⁰ 'Tam o' Shanter', lines 89-90.
- ¹¹ This is an inference from the report in the first statistical account, published some seven years after Burns's visit, which assumes that the bridge (called Fairlie Bridge) is an established physical feature but that the mining hamlet was a recent addition to the area: quoted below in the text at n. 23. The bridge certainly appears on the map of 1809.
- ¹² Gillespie, *Dundonald*, vol. 1, p.262.
- ¹³ Joan Blaeu *Atlas novus* (Amsterdam, 1654), vol. 5; available online at: <http://www.nls.uk/maps/atlas/blaeu/page.cfm?id=86>
- ¹⁴ *The Scottish National Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Scottish National Dictionary Association, 1968), vol. 7, p.480; see also n. 7.
- ¹⁵ This is how it is pronounced by the present farmer at Old Rome, Mr Alan Elliott, February 2007, and by the father-in-law of one of the present writers who had worked as a schoolboy on an Ayrshire farm in the early 1950s.
- ¹⁶ Also as: Rom, Roym; Rowme, Rwme.
- ¹⁷ Cited in *Scottish National Dictionary*, vol. 7, p.480; see also n. 7.
- ¹⁸ What is intriguing about Burns's orthography is that he spells 'foord' phonetically, but not the other two words in the place name. Perhaps, in the age of enlightenment, educated persons were predisposed to find some local link with the presence of the Romans in Ayrshire.
- ¹⁹ Lindsay, *Burns Encyclopaedia*, p.8, glosses the word as meaning 'a small farm'.
- ²⁰ 'Irvine', the name give to the river flowing through Old Rome, was probably of Brythonic origin, possibly meaning 'the white river', from yr (white) (g)wyn (river). It exists as 'Yrewyn', c.1149 (George Mackay, *Scottish Place Names* (New Lanark: Lomond, 2000), p.49). 'Dundonald' is Scots Gaelic for 'Donald's fort'.
- ²¹ <http://geo.nls.uk/roy-lowlands/> [accessed September 2008].
- ²² A. Jack to the editor, 16 March 1887, *Kilmarnock Standard*, 19 March 1887, p.3. James Jack in a letter to the *Kilmarnock Standard* suggests that the Allans had begun their married life in the village as their second child's baptismal certificate (dated 12 April

- 1778) states that James Allan was ‘wright at Old Rome’ (*Kilmarnock Standard*, 20 March 1887). However, this description is capable of more than one interpretation.
- ²³ *The statistical account of Scotland: Drawn up from the communications of the ministers of the different parishes. By Sir John Sinclair* (Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1793), vol. 7, p.625; the Dundonald Parish account is available online at: <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-99/Ayrshire/Dundonald/> [accessed September 2008].
- ²⁴ This can be seen by comparing the 1860 O.S. map with the satellite image available at [Flashearth.com](http://www.flashearth.com) (<<http://www.flashearth.com/>>). The coordinates of Old Rome are: latitude; 55° 35’ 26.9” N; longitude 4° 33’ 12.0” W.
- ²⁵ ‘Dundonald Heritors Records’, 1842-1895, cited in Gillespie, *Dundonald*, vol. 2, p.569.
- ²⁶ H. Charles Craig, *Scotch Whisky Industry Record* (Dumbarton: Index Publishing, 1994), cited in <http://www.dcs.ed.ac.uk/home/jhb/whisky/dists.html> [accessed September 2008] (this source wrongly gives Craig’s name as ‘Grey’). Craig lists the owners as follows: 1812-21 James Fraser; 1825-26 John Ramage; 1826 Old Rome Distillery Co., also White & Wilson ; 1826 White & Wilson went bankrupt ; 1827-29 James Forrester ; 1829-30 James Mill ; 1831-34 Jane Mill ; 1837 James & John Mill ;1840 Went bankrupt.
- ²⁷ Reproduced in I.M. Mackintosh, *Old Troon and District: An Historical Account* (Glasgow: Holmes and McDougall, 21972), facing p.48; the map is available online at: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com:80/~genmaps/genfiles/COU_files/Sco/AYR/neelee_rly-kilmar-troon_1807.htm [accessed September 2008].
- ²⁸ John Thomson, *Atlas of Scotland* (Edinburgh: J. Thomson & Co., 1832); available online at: <http://www.nls.uk/maps/early/547.html> [accessed September 2008]
- ²⁹ This dating is suggested by Archibald R. Adamson, *Rambles Round Kilmarnock with an introductory Sketch of the Town* (Kilmarnock: T. Stevenson, 1875), p.94, who states that ‘Gatehead has sprung into existence within the last fifty years’; available online at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/kilmarnock/> [accessed September 2008].
- ³⁰ Rob Close, *Ayrshire & Arran: An Illustrated Architectural Guide* (Edinburgh: Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, 1992), p.51; Dane Love, *Ayrshire: Discovering a County* (Ayr: Fort Publishing Ltd, 2003), p.230. If the supposition about the proximity of the Allan cottage to the original mansion is correct, then it may have been about then it was demolished to clear the grounds for the grand new house.
- ³¹ That it was the same family seems almost certain for the senior members of the farming family, were born outside of Ayrshire as was Jane Mill. Judging by the ages given, probably the distiller (aged 55) was either the mother or an aunt of the farmer (aged 35).
- ³² See n.26.
- ³³ *The statistical account of Ayrshire by the ministers of the respective parishes* (Edinburgh 1842), vol. 5, pp.668-9; available online at: <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1834-45/Ayrshire/Dundonald/> [accessed September 2008]; cf. Samuel Lewis, ‘Dundonald’, *A topographical dictionary of Scotland : comprising the several counties, islands,*

cities, burgh and market towns, parishes and principal villages with historical and statistical descriptions (London: S. Lewis, 1846), pp. 320-49, available online at: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=43435> [accessed September 2008].

- ³⁴ Alan B. Campbell, *The Lanarkshire Miners: A Social History of their Trade Unions 1775-1874* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1979), Fig. 2, p.248.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.248-50.
- ³⁶ *Kilmarnock Journal*, reprinted in *The Times*, 20 September 1842.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸ *Ibid.* The Caprington pit was prone to flooding (witness its pump preserved in the Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh), and it may have been the threat of irreversible damage to the source of their livelihood, rather than more equitable relationship with the employers, which persuaded its miners to turn themselves into a defence force.
- ³⁹ 'Heritors Records', 1842-1895, quoted in Gillespie, *Dundonald*, vol. 2, p.417; the two most common diseases in the nineteenth century with fever as a symptom were typhoid and scarlet fever.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.391.
- ⁴¹ John Strawhorn, *Ayrshire: The Story of a County* (Ayr: AAHNS, 1975), p.119.
- ⁴² <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~patrickpeople/ourfamily%20htm/824.htm> [accessed September 2008]
- ⁴³ O.S. 1860 <http://www.old-maps.co.uk> [accessed September 2008] (Grid Ref: 239148, 636055).
- ⁴⁴ Adamson, *Rambles Round Kilmarnock*, pp.93-4; see n.29 above.
- ⁴⁵ Gillespie, *Dundonald*, vol. 1, p.262.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.* The 1851 census lists the farm as 'Old Rome Farm' and the 1881 as 'Oldrome (Farm House)'. James Todd was the farmer in both censuses. The 1860 O.S. map also designates the farm as Old Rome. The building was originally a single-storey one, the upper storey being added much later.
- ⁴⁷ The website of Old Rome Farmhouse Hotel is: <http://www.oldrome.co.uk/> [accessed September 2008]. The use of 'Old Rome Way' for a street in Gatehead is merely picturesque and bears no relation to any geographical reality.
- ⁴⁸ Oral information, February 2007, from Mr Alan Elliott, the farmer at Old Rome.

William Hamilton of Ladyland

Captain in the Scottish Navy

The Macleans had gone. They had gone to join Dunbar's host on the hills, above Killiecrankie, leaving their prisoner in the damp window-less dungeon of Mull's Duart Castle. His grief was immeasurable, not only because of his miserable circumstances, but also for the loss of the father he loved. He had seen him die bravely, just a few days before, as a result of a cannon ball. Realising that his ship had fallen to the enemy, Captain William Hamilton had died, shouting to the gunner to set fire to the gunpowder room. 'Don't give up the ship' is an ancient tradition, and his ship, the *Pelican* of Glasgow, was not to be taken by the French. Young William Hamilton was never to forget his father's brave heart and it would always be a source of inspiration to him.

Captain William Hamilton of Ladyland, near Kilbirnie, had been commissioned in March 1689 by the Scottish Parliament to take command of the newly appointed frigate *Pelican* (of 18 guns). Because of his reputation as a successful privateer, both he and his old associate Captain John Brown of Irvine were appointed as the first two captains in a developing Scots navy: Brown was appointed to the 12-gun frigate *Janet*. Hamilton had been one of the first three men to be given a commission by Charles II to act as a Scottish privateer during the Second Dutch War (1665-67). His commission, registered by the Scottish Privy Council on 18th September 1665, was as commander of the *Rothés* of Leith (22 guns). This war, intended to end the Dutch domination of world trade, had resumed the conflict between Britain and Holland, with France and Denmark allied with the Dutch. Later, a further 25 commissions were issued, until some 60 Scottish ships were commissioned: during the period of hostilities, April 1665 to August 1667, these Scottish privateers took a total of 108 enemy prizes. On the 27th March 1666 the *London Gazette* reported that Hamilton had gone to sea and, despite having seven of his men killed, had captured three prizes. He had sailed from Leith in the middle of March and soon encountered a group of Dutchmen heading to the north. Of these, he took three – the *Brewery* of Flieland, the *Falcon* of Amsterdam and the *Hoogh Boam*. These ships, together with the one cargo of wine, were valued at over £3,500 sterling. On his return towards Leith, Hamilton captured another Bordeaux-bound ship. One of the smaller ships was sold to Walter Gibson, a merchant in Glasgow, renamed the *Ewe and Lamb*, and become one of Gibson's most regular ships transporting banished felons to the American colonies. On one occasion, the most active flotilla of the short war, comprising the *Rothés* (Hamilton), *Bruce* (John Acheson) and *Lamb* (Brown), were brought to action by a Dutch man-of-war, who heavily outgunner them, forcing them to flee after sustaining damage. Both Hamilton and his old colleague Brown's ships were so badly holed that Brown had to transfer his crew to a prize, while Hamilton's prize sunk at the entrance to Leith harbour.

Hamilton's share of the prizes was the highest at 22 ships of all sizes. Perhaps the most valuable of all these ships was the 400 ton *Charity* as, along with her cargo of potash,

turkey leather and furs, she fetched at least £4,000 sterling. It has been estimated that Hamilton's total earnings from captured ships was well over £12,000. His last prize was a ship called *La Tour de la Monde*, and this was valued at £1,500. He was undoubtedly a hero of the privateer war.¹

Captain William Hamilton belonged to a branch of the ducal family of Hamilton, who owned the lands of Ardoch, near Kilwinning. He was the 7th of Ardoch, becoming the first of Ladyland, when he purchased that property about the middle of the 17th Century. In 1662 he married Janet, the daughter of John Brisbane of Brisbane, and they had two sons, John and William. Records show that he demolished the old tower house of Ladyland and built a new two-storey building with slates on the roof in its place.² He was faithful to his Protestant belief and refused to take the 'Test' before Charles II's Ayrshire Commissioners in 1684 and was one of many who were consequently disarmed. However this does not appear to have affected him, as two years later, he was appointed as a Commissioner of Supply for Ayrshire.³

On 12th March 1689 the deposed King James VII & II landed at Kinsale in Ireland with a French army, thus endangering the reign of King William and Mary who sat on his recently vacated throne. With the aid of Richard Talbot, Earl of Tyrconnell, his expanding army of 6,000 trained soldiers soon captured Dublin. They then swept their way through the country driving hundreds of Protestants before them into the sea and to the defensible cities of Londonderry and Enniskillen. As they were unable to get close enough to Derry to make a breach in the walls, in April it was decided to lay siege to the town. One hundred and five days of siege were to follow before the suffering citizens of the town were finally relieved. Two days after James landed in Ireland, a Convention of Estates was hurriedly held at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. The situation was clear and the following day, the Parliament declared for William. This caused Viscount (Bonnie) Dundee to ride north – 'whether the spirit of Montrose might direct' – to form a Jacobite army. At the same time, the Duke of Gordon raised King James's colours at Edinburgh Castle, whilst pointing his guns down the Royal Mile. It was clear that strong measures had to be taken immediately. They had to suppress Dundee's rising in the north and regain possession of the castle. In addition, they had to prevent the Jacobites in Ireland from sending over reinforcements, and also to help the distressed Protestants in Ireland. The possibility of a future invasion made it all too clear that Scotland had to have command of its western seas. Parliament commissioned Sir James Montgomery of Skelmorlie, John Anderson of Dowhill, Glasgow, and John Boswell of Kirkcaldy to calculate the charge of the hire of ships on a monthly basis, and to place a value on the ships against future damage or deterioration. On 21 St March steps were taken to put to sea two hired frigates, the *Pelican* and the *Janet*, both of Glasgow: both had just been built at Greenock, and belonged to two Glasgow merchants, Walter Gibson, who had bought the prize *Ewe and Lamb* from Hamilton in 1666, and Robert Campbell. Walter Gibson was the last provost of Glasgow to be appointed by an Archbishop, and was waiting to stand down as King William now required the provost to be nominated by the Council. With an eye to trade, he had instigated the clearing away of some of the broom that grew intensively along the banks of the Clyde and replaced it with the first commercial quay complete with a crane and customs' scales. The new quay at

Broomielaw served the gabarts and barges which passed up the 14 miles of un-navigable river with cargoes from the relatively deep water ports of Greenock, the New Port of Glasgow and Crawford's Dyke. Campbell was also a Glasgow merchant interested in trade with the colonies. He owed the estate of North Woodside, and was the second son of the well-known ex-Provost, Colin Campbell of Blythwood, and had himself been Dean of Guild twice, in 1679 and 1687. By his second wife, who was the eldest daughter of James Dunlop of Garnkirk, he had a daughter, Janet, who inherited his estate when he died in 1694, and it is probable that his new ship *Janet* was named after her.

Although regular shipbuilding did not commence until John Scott's yard was established in 1711, the Greenock water front had seen many ventures come and go. Some of these early shipyards lasted only a few years, and a number of them would have been single ship yards. All that was required to build a wooden ship was a saw-pit and a steam-box. The two-man saw-pit would have been dug into the ground with one man at ground level and the other at the bottom of the pit. Planks, after being dragged down the beach by a horse, would be steamed inside the steam-box for 24 hours until they were supple, and were then bent according to the shape required. Although described as frigates, both *Pelican* and *Janet* would have been designed with trade in mind. Ship owners require their vessels to carry as much cargo as possible at the least draught so that they could visit shallow water ports. Consequently they would have been relatively slow in comparison with the naval frigates of the day. However, they had to be well-armed and carry sufficient men to man the guns, because of the possibility of being attacked by pirates and foreign privateers.

As parliament could not obtain guns and ammunition from Edinburgh Castle, which was still held by Gordon, they had to obtain them from other sources. The Jacobite John Trotter, who was later hanged on Leith sands for supplying rebels sheltering on Bass Rock, had his cannon balls and granadoes confiscated. Previously, for unexplained reasons, Sir Patrick Maxwell of Newark, had removed weapons from Gibson's ship, while it was anchored at Port Glasgow, and he was ordered to return them immediately. In addition, Hamilton and Brown were ordered to commandeer any guns they could find on other ships in the Clyde, while, on 23rd April, Major Arnot, deputy governor of Dumbarton Castle, was directed to deliver to the frigates forty firelocks and one hundred great shot. Brigadier-General Balfour was recommended to deliver to George Hamilton of Binnie, Commissary General, one hundred swords, sixteen firelocks and such a quantity of cannon balls as he shall think necessary for the two frigates, while the keeper of arms at Stirling Castle was also ordered to deliver 100 grenades to the ships. Provisions for their voyage were supplied from a captured French ship and Hugh Montgomery, merchant, was paid the sum of £295 19s 7d sterling as the balance of his account for the out-rigging of the two frigates.

On 13th April Captain Edward Bryce and a company of foot soldiers boarded the vessels. On the same day, Hamilton and Brown were commissioned to cruise on the western coasts from the point of Corsewall to the Isle of Skye, and to fight and sink all ships belonging to James. They were further to destroy all birlinns or boats which could be used by the enemy to transport troops to Scotland. In June the two armed cruisers of the Clyde finally put to sea with orders to operate as part of the English naval squadron in the western seas under Captain Rooke on HMS *Dartmouth* (205 tons, 32 guns). Unfortunately, while

detached from this flotilla they fell in with a French squadron off Ireland as it was carrying soldiers to Mull. The contest that followed resulted in the sinking of the *Janet* and the capture of the *Pelican*, with great loss of life. The *Pelican* could not have been more than 100 feet long with a maximum width of around 30 feet, giving a deck area of about 2,500 square feet. She carried a crew of 120 men plus a contingent of Bryce's company of foot soldiers. On the deck there were 18 guns using up a space of around 150 square feet, with the boats, masts and other fittings occupying a similar space. With a total deck space of 2,000 square feet available each man would have only around 15 square feet to engage with enemy boarders. A battle could only have been fought with armed men in the rigging, firing muskets and throwing down grenades, whilst men armed with pistols and swords attempted to board after each cannonade and guns were being reloaded.

It was on Wednesday 10th July, whilst they were cruising between the Mull of Kintyre and Carrickfergus Lough, that they sighted to the southward three sail of ships, which they took to be the English naval squadron, and, on coming closer, observed them to look like English-built ships, carrying the English flag and colours. Believing they were coming among friends they were preparing for the salute when it was realised that these were enemy ships, and that retreat was impossible. They were three French men-of-war, with, on board, a battalion of Irish soldiers from Colonel Porsil's regiment of foot and 300 MacLeans of Mull going to join Dundee near Killicrankie. The biggest of the French ships carried 36 guns, while the others had 30 and 24 respectively.

The battle started immediately, and they fought it with all the gallantry and resolution imaginable for over an hour. As they were taken by surprise they would not be in a high state of readiness for a sea battle. The guns which had been supplied to them were probably muzzle-loading guns. This necessitated the loader to mount the barrel of the gun outside the ship, exposing him to musket shot from the enemy. Such guns had to be prepared in advance of any conflict and only fired once in close-quarter situations. It was also usual to have the decks cleared for recoiling guns by towing the ship's boats astern. The two lesser frigates engaged *Janet* until her mainmast was shot down and they began to board. Despite having had his right arm shot off by a cannon ball, Brown continued to fight resolutely, and continued giving directions and orders, until he received seven musket bullets in his body, the last of which killed him. His lieutenant, Campbell, maintained the fight with the same gallantry, until being over-powered by the enemy. After much fighting, the enemy boarded the *Janet* and found Campbell lying on the deck, shot through the right thigh, the right shoulder and left arm. On board only fourteen men remained alive, eight of them wounded and disabled.

The two frigates now joined with the larger one, and all three fell upon the *Pelican*. Hamilton had fought well against the single frigate, but his ship had been much battered and in shreds, and now the two biggest ships came alongside and endeavoured to board. Being better equipped for a close fight than the *Janet*, Hamilton and his men fought for a considerable time, until he had been boarded three times, but had managed to repulse the enemy on each occasion. However, the forecastle and steerage were now torn open by the violence and frequency of the enemy's shot and hand grenades, while there were also many injuries among the men, so that when the enemy boarded, in great numbers, for the fourth

time, Hamilton realised that he, and his ship, had lost the battle. At this point, therefore, he gave the order to blow up the ship, being hit and killed by a random cannon ball fired by the third ship, just as the command was given.

Therefore, the ship fell into enemy hands.⁴ There had been 120 men on board, but only 30 were found alive, and most of these were wounded and badly disabled. In this action the Scots lost two captains and 156 men, while the enemy lost one captain, two lieutenants and 218 men, with many wounded. Hamilton's second son, William, who was writer on board, was captured and taken to Duart Castle by the MacLeans.⁵ On 16th October 1689 he secured his release, paying the ransom with his own money. Shortly thereafter he joined Lord Hyndford's Dragoons, serving as a lieutenant on the continent for a number of years, before retiring on half pay. He made his home at Gilbertfield near Cambuslang, and there lived the life of a country gentleman. Turning his hand to poetry, he is today remembered for an elegy on his dog 'Bonny Heck', and 'Wullie was a Wanton Wag', which he passed on to Allan Ramsay, who included it in his famous *Tea-Table Miscellany*. He also abridged and modernised Blind Harry's *The Wallace*, and although at first it was a literary failure, it became, in time, the second book, after the bible, in many Scottish homes. Inspired perhaps by the heroic death of his father, William Hamilton of Gilbertfield passed on a tale of valour that inspired first Burns, when he wrote 'Scots Wa' Hae', and secondly the author Randall Wallace, when he wrote the screenplay for the film *Braveheart*. William Hamilton of Gilbertfield, poet and son of a brave Ayrshire sea captain, died at Cambuslang on the 24th May 1751.

Jim Binnie

¹ Susan Mowat Database.

² After Hamilton's death, Ardoch and Ladyland were inherited by his eldest son, John. He moved to Ireland and sold the estates in 1712.

³ Commissioners of Supply were established in each of the counties of Scotland in 1687, originally to collect the Land Tax. They later came to carry on much of the local government of their areas, until the establishment of county councils by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1889.

⁴ The *Pelican* was re-captured in Dublin Bay on 19th April 1690 by Sir Cloudesley Shovel on board HMS *Monk*. As she was considered unsuitable for service as a warship, she became a fire ship, before eventually being used as a breakwater at Sheerness.

⁵ The other prisoners from the *Pelican*, including Captain Hamilton's nephew, Claud Hamilton, were taken to Kinsale, where they were confined in shackles on board an old hulk in the harbour. After eight months Claud Hamilton was given parole to carry a letter to King William requesting an exchange of prisoners. This required a long and brave journey on foot through very dangerous country, but was successful, and the men of the *Pelican* were released in exchange for an equal number of Irish prisoners, captured at Enniskillen.



Gordon Killicoat 1921 – 2008

Born in Adelaide, South Australia Gordon and his brother returned with their mother to her native Ayr in 1926 after the death of his father in one of the first fatal accidents between a motorcar and a locomotive in Australia. He was educated at Ayr Academy where he became both School Captain and a leading member of the Army Cadet Force. He left school at the outbreak of war in 1939 and trained as a signaller and engineer before being posted to North Africa and Italy with the Royal Artillery. His war ended as a Provost Marshall in a small town in the north of Italy in 1946.

In post-war Scotland there was a desperate shortage of qualified teachers and Gordon went to Jordanhill College under the emergency training scheme where he learned that the sister of a friend of his in Ayr was also training. Thus he met his future wife Isabel and they married in Ayr in 1949 before commencing their careers as peripatetic teachers of Physical Education in the remoter parts of Aberdeenshire. Gordon also continued his forces career with the Civil Defence and was the leading local training officer until its disbandment.

In 1953 Gordon was asked to move to Inverurie Academy as Principal Teacher and he spent the rest of his teaching career in this one school until retiring in 1983. He became a much-respected member of staff although many of his pupils might admit that this respect was somewhat tainted by fear until their later years at the Academy. He was not a 'nine to five' teacher and working evenings and Saturdays was the norm, never the exception. It was well known that the school could field up to 15 full teams at football (or cricket) and hockey on any one morning. His passion for sport and teaching was obvious to all and his great pleasure was to pass on his skills to pupils and watch them excel, particularly in badminton. Latterly he became one of the first Guidance Teachers in the country, actually helping to design the training course. He enjoyed this challenge very much and at the same time discovered that Aberdeenshire had the highest incidence of asthma in Scotland. He realised

that the best possible exercise for asthmatics was archery and, to ensure that his own skill level was the best possible, trained to become a National Coach.

Retirement to Ayrshire brought with it a new passion. Because of the family name supposedly coming from Cornwall, Gordon was encouraged by his Australian cousins to take up the search and find out more about the family history. At the same time Isabel was not to be left out and started her own search which was centred mainly in Ayrshire and Lanarkshire. In common with every job Gordon tackled, if it was worth doing then it had to be done well and his passion for passing on his skills and knowledge along with his ability as a teacher could not be suppressed.

Gordon first joined Largs & North Ayrshire FHS but finding others interested in their family history in the Troon area he became a founder member of Troon & District FHS who celebrate their 20th anniversary in 2009. In conjunction with firstly the Opportunities in Retirement FH Group and then T&DFHS he organised and helped compile the full transcriptions of the gravestones in the old kirkyards in Kyle. He was co-ordinator for the 1881 Census for Ayrshire which was part of the national project and has now been published on CD-ROM. In 1995, after a very happy and close 46 years of marriage, Isabel died fairly suddenly and Gordon's sole interest became family and local history. He passed on this interest by holding many family history courses throughout South Ayrshire and was very pleased to help in the formation of East Ayrshire FHS, Alloway and South Ayrshire FHS and Maybole Historical Society. With so many diverse interests he was also a individual member of AFHS. Not content with helping others in the local area, Gordon regularly attended Family History Fairs in Scotland, Gateshead, York, Preston and Scarborough with a stand which was designed with the sole purpose of helping others with their Scottish research. It was usual for him to be at the stand from the time the fair opened until after it officially closed without a break, during which time it anything between 150 and 200 queries would be answered or contact details taken for relevant information to be sent out at a later date.

Gordon attended regular meetings and events until he had to accept full time care after a stroke at New Year 2007. He passed away peacefully on 5th October 2008 just two months after the very first of the next generation of Killicoats, his great granddaughter Emily, was born.

The Poor Harvest of 1782 as reported in the OSA

‘[W]e’ve just had the worst harvest in living memory’, David Archer in *The Archers*, BBC Radio 4, 2nd January 2009.¹

When they sat down to write their contributions for Sir John Sinclair in the 1790s, a number of ministers took the opportunity to record their observations on the harvest of 1782 and its consequences.² This occurred during a long spell of colder weather, called by some

the 'Little Ice Age', which culminated between the mid-sixteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries.³ According to Grove it had important consequences, particularly for agriculture in high latitudes and at high elevations; in England at the coldest times the growing season was shortened by one to two months compared to the present day. In this period of lower temperatures the weather in 1782 was particularly bad, causing food shortages and high grain prices throughout the country.⁴ Its effect was greatest in the Highlands, where people were reduced to starvation, and by January of 1783 'many came down to [the parish of Tarbat in Ross-shire] and other parishes of the low country, in search of provisions for their families; as the season advanced, their wants and numbers increased, and multitudes from the heights of both Ross and Sutherland might be daily seen traversing the different parishes, supplicating supplies of meal or corn, in any quantity, for their money; and a pitiable case it was, to see persons so young, and otherwise vigorous, in this condition, having hunger and distress of mind painted in their countenances.'⁵

Although the degree of hardship in Ayrshire was not so great, there is evidence in the OSA of scarcity in some parts of the county alleviated by relief schemes and charitable works. Remarks upon that year can be found in the statistical accounts for the Ayrshire parishes of Beith, Fenwick, and Kilwinning in Cunninghame, Galston and Muirkirk in Kyle, and Ballantrae, Colmonell, and Kirkoswald in Carrick (the relevant passages are reproduced in full below). This is only eight parishes out of a total of 47; if the poor harvest was significant in Muirkirk, Galston, and Fenwick, why not in Tarbolton, Mauchline, and Dalmellington? Given how dramatically some of the ministers depict the events of that year, one may wonder that the majority of the Ayrshire incumbents did not mention it at all, but as in all matters, the OSA accounts are very disparate, reflecting, we may suppose, the capacity, diligence, experience, and interests of the individual ministers.

Fortunately within this small group the extremes of the county are to be found, from the fertile fields of Ballantrae on the shores of the Firth of Clyde, to the high moorland pastures of Muirkirk. Indeed Ballantrae prospered as others from inland counties, suffering 'the almost entire loss of the crops', came to the south and west to purchase seed corn and live cattle. The violent winds which, according to the minister of Kilwinning, from late August affected that and other parishes bordering the sea appear to have blown after the Ballantrae harvest was gathered in. The parish received an economic boost, from which stimulus to trade it continued to prosper in the ensuing years. The two other Carrick parishes in the list, Colmonell and Kirkoswald, also fared well. In Colmonell the harvest was over before the early frost, while Kirkoswald had a surplus of the 1782 crop of oat-meal to export.

Fenwick, Galston, and Muirkirk are to a large degree moorland parishes, where, even in the best year, the growing season begins late and finishes early. In 1782 the early snow found the crops still in the ground. Much of the corn was destroyed, though it seems the straw was adequately nutritious for cattle. There was increased charity for the poor, and both Rev. William Boyd in Fenwick, and Rev. John Shepherd in Muirkirk give credit to the 'white pease' which was imported in place of corn.

In Beith two charitable societies and the kirk session provided funds for the purchase of meal. This was sold at the market price to the inhabitants in general, and at ½d per peck

cheaper to the poor, though this was hardly a great concession if the market price was 14d to 18d a peck, as reported by the minister of Kilwinning.

Whether the poor harvest of 1782 caused any lasting distress is not revealed by these accounts. None of the ministers reflected on its consequences, other than Rev. William Donaldson in Ballantrae with increased prosperity to report. But many farmers must have lost income without grain to sell, and from the loss of seed-corn for the following season; most inhabitants will have found that feeding their families cost more; and the poorer will have had an inferior, though possibly adequate, diet.

Today in the case of a hard winter it is usual to look at death statistics. During the period concerned, however, the numbers of deaths were not consistently recorded, and the only information found for individual years in the OSA is shown in the following table. If Dreghorn was representative of the county, we could point to an increase in 1782-1784. However Irvine, the only other parish with figures for 1781 and 1782, shows peaks in 1781, 1784, and 1790 attributed by the minister to smallpox in the first case and to both smallpox and fever in the other two.

Year	Dreghorn	Irvine	Kilwinning	Stewarton	Galston
1781	12	137			
1782	18	78			
1783	19	79			39
1784	23	145		54	44
1785	10	117	22	40	24
1786	3	89	24	55	24
1787	8	112	39	82	28
1788	12	116	39	48	35
1789	15	97	27	57	26
1790	20	165	42		41
1791			44		
1792			36		

Despite the absence of statistical information, the descriptions of the harvest of 1782 and its immediate consequences in the eight reports provide a picture of a notable weather event over 200 years ago, that does not seem so very distant from dismal summer and autumn of 2008.

OSA Extracts

Ballantrae

Rev. William Donaldson [Vol. I, pages 103–113]

[112] The circumstances of the people have been increasing since the year 1782. That season of scarcity, instead of affecting them in the manner it did other parts of Scotland, rather tended to better them. There was an excessive growth of grass in the summer of that year, and the crops in this parish and to the southward are in general early.

That year they were reaped before the frost and the snow set in. The great plenty of hay made the cattle sell to advantage, and the almost entire loss of the crops in the inland counties, occasioned the inhabitants of these counties to come to the south and west for seed for the ensuing season. This gave them an idea of a corn trade, which, together with the increasing demand for live cattle since that period, and consequent rise in their price, has made a great alteration for the better in the farmers circumstances, and given a spirit of [113] improvement and demand for farms in a tenfold degree to what it used to be.

Beith

Rev. David McClellan [Vol. VIII, pages 314–328]

[322] There are three charitable societies in Beith; two of those commenced in 1772. One of them has £220 of stock and the other £370. The third commenced in 1784, and its funds amount to £300. The advantage of these institutions has already been sensibly felt, by those of the poor who are entitled to their charity. The funds of these societies, are deposited in the public banks for security. In 1782 and 1783, the funds of the two first mentioned societies, together with £40 furnished by the Kirk Session, were employed under the direction of a Committee, in purchasing grain and meal for the use of the inhabitants. The meal was sold to the inhabitants in general, at the market price; but to the members of the societies, and to the poor ½d cheaper per peck, by proper persons appointed to this office, who received a small allowance for their trouble. From the 28th of October 1782, to the 14th of September 1783, above 1000 bolls were sold in this manner. As the object was to secure plenty, a premium of 6d per boll was given for 230 bolls of the above quantity, which had the desired effect.

Colmonell

Rev. James Mochrie [Vol. II, pages 57–70]

[62] Harvest usually commences about the middle of August; and is generally over by the end of September. In 1782, when much damage was sustained in other places by an early frost, the crops upon Stinchar were generally cut down before it appeared. Great quantities of potatoes are raised in the parish, and answer very well, even in the wildest parts, where other [63] crops do not.

Fenwick

Rev. William Boyd [Vol. XIV, pages 51–66]

[55] The farmers begin to labour, as soon as the weather in the spring will permit, though, from the wetness of the soil, they must be later than those who live in the drier lands farther down the country.[footnote]

[Original footnote] The following is the time when one farmer began to cut down his corns; and from his situation, it may be reckoned nearly the average of the parish:

1780	14th September	1786	20th September
1781	24th August	1787	1st October
1782	7th October	1788	16th September
1783	3d September	1789	12th September
1784	5th October	1790	26th September
1785	7th September		

[Original footnote to paragraph concerning Rental on page 62] In this late soil, the year 1782 was very hurtful. The snow fell before all the corns were cut down. The greatest part were in the fields, and greatly destroyed by the frosts. Few, if any, preserved seed for next year. The meal of course was bad, some very bad. The only relief which we, [63] and many of our neighbours had, was in the white pease, which, from the price that took place at that time, were disposed of, and considerable quantities of them came W [sic]. It ought not to be omitted here, that Lord Glasgow gave a donation, at that needful season, to all the parishes where his different estates are. To this parish, he sent 20 guineas, to be given to such poor as were not upon the ordinary funds.

Galston

Rev. George Smith [Vol. II, pages 71-83]

[76] The harvest of 1782 was remarkably late, a great quantity of snow having fallen before the crop was cut; and the corn was picked out from among it, in the best manner it could. In several fields the grain was covered with frozen snow, and hardly any part of the crop was to be seen.

Kilwinning

Rev. Thomas Pollock [Vol. XI, pages 142-177.]

Failure of the Crop in 1782

[153] Different causes, no doubt, contributed to this failure, in different parts of the country: But in this parish, and in others immediately on the sea coast, the chief cause of its failure was owing to a very severe west wind, about the middle, or towards the latter end of the month of August, which continued with the utmost violence for a considerable time. The corns had their roots loosened, and were otherwise much damaged by this storm. From being in general very green, when it happened, in a few days afterwards they grew white, but never filled. Snow also, in such parts of the parish as were at the greatest distance from the sea, fell earlier, and in greater quantities, than ever had been known at that season of the year. A boll of well ripened oats yields, at an average, from 17 to 20 pecks of meal, and even, sometimes, more: But, in 1782, the boll of oats, [154] of 16 pecks, yielded only from 10 to 12 pecks of meal. The price of the peck of meal that year, was from 14d to 18d. The parish produces grain almost equal to the consumption of its inhabitants, though more than one third of it be in pasture.

Kirkoswald

Rev. Matthew Biggar [Vol. X, pages 474-500]

[474, original footnote] It deserves to be recorded, to the honour of this worthy clergyman, that his statistical account was drawn up under all the disadvantages of blindness, which has not however impaired his energy of mind, or damped his zeal, for promoting the good of his country.

[492] The principal export from the parish, to the manufacturing towns, is oat-meal and bear. In the year 1783, there was exported from this parish, of crop 1782, which failed through almost the whole of Scotland, above 1200 bolls of oat-meal. At present, there are above 1500 bolls of oat-meal exported annually, to the manufacturing towns, besides bear and potatoes.

Muirkirk

Rev. John Sheppard [Vol. VII, pages 598-614.]

[604] Good and bad Seasons

No particular incident has marked the seasons here for years past. The common calamities [605] which affected the country, in general, and its highest parts in particular, in the year 1782 were severely felt here.[footnote]

[Original footnote] In this parish, severe frosts in the harvest months, heavy rains, snows, and frost again, reduced the corn, while on the ground, or in the sheaf, to the state of barley during the first stages of malting. The meal still retained an unnatural and disagreeable sweetishness, and in colour resembled coal or peat-ashes. The straw, by the above process, was discoloured, and, when dry, seemed deprived of every vegetable juice, appeared tasteless, and void of nourishment. Physicians, and some who were no physicians, declared both grain and straw to be unwholesome, and prognosticated diseases and death to men and cattle. Yet it is remarkable, none of those direful consequences ensued, and the cattle, in particular, never appeared healthier, or more stout for labour than in the spring immediately following. The same all-governing power which permitted the calamity to take place, seeming to interpose to prevent or suspend its natural and so much dreaded consequences. Possibly, too, the nourishment of the grain was arrested in the straw, but though this will account for the healthiness of cattle, yet, by no means, for that of the species. Much praise is due to the humanity of those who, in this season, so strenuously and successfully exerted themselves to save their fellow men from famine and from hunger, in those parts of the kingdom where the fruits of the earth were entirely blasted or destroyed, by bringing grain from the more fruitful fields of richer countries in happier climes. Much also is to be ascribed to the exertions of those who brought sovereign aid to those parts of this country, where the calamity was still felt, though not so severely. A species of white field pease imported, became very seasonable supply to this parish, especially in the spring months, and moderated in a great degree, the threatened calamity. Upon the whole, it may be affirmed that dearness of meal, but not absolute scarcity, and the destruction of seed grain, were the only material inconveniencies which this part of the country suffered from the unfortunate season 1782.

David Courtney McClure

¹ David Archer is played by Timothy Bentinck, 12th earl of Portland, a title with an Ayrshire connection. In the 19th century the duke of Portland was the fifth largest landowner in the county. William Henry Cavendish-Scott-Bentinck, 4th duke (and 5th earl) of Portland married the Ayrshire heiress Henrietta Scott in 1795. He and his son were noted agricultural improvers and promoters of early industrial development. See J. T. Ward, 'Ayrshire Landed Estates in the Nineteenth Century' in *Ayrshire Collections* vol. 8, AANHS 1969, 96-99. The ducal title was extinguished following the 9th duke.

² Sir John Sinclair (ed.), *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, Edinburgh 1791-1799 [OSA].

³ Jean M. Grove, *The Little Ice Age*, Routledge 1990.

- ⁴ Henry Hamilton, *An Economic History of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford 1963, 376. Ian Morrison, 'Evidence of Climatic Change in Scotland before and during the Age of Agricultural Improvement' in *Scottish Archives*, vol. 1, 1995, 13.
- ⁵ OSA, vol. VI, 432; quoted by Hamilton.
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Kilmarnock and District Choral Union

The Kilmarnock and District Choral Union celebrated their sixtieth anniversary on St Andrew's Night, 2008, with a performance of Handel's *The Messiah* in the Grand Hall, Kilmarnock.

The Choral Union was formed in September 1948 through an amalgamation of the Henderson Choral Society and the Lyric Choir. They gave their first performance on 31st March 1949, also in the Grand Hall, and first performed *The Messiah* in December 1949, and a performance of this piece was given almost annually until 1994. (The performance in 2008 was, however, their first rendition of the full work for fourteen years.) The pattern set by these first concerts – that of two a season – has been continued ever since. The Spring concerts have featured a variety of works, from single pieces such as Verdi's *Requiem* to shorter pieces such as Faure's *Requiem* and modern pieces like John Bell's *Seven Songs of the Virgin*.

The Choral Union's first conductor was Wilfred Emery, who was also, when appointed, Organist and Master of Music at Glasgow Cathedral, and a member of staff at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Emery remained as conductor until his sudden death in May 1964. Conductors since then have been Julian Dawson (1964-75), George McPhee (1975-84), William Kean (1984-99, and again from 2007 to date), David Henderson (1999-2001), James Mathieson (Chorus Master, 2001-03), and Mark Evans (2003-07). Of these, it is the long-serving and popular Bill Kean who has done most to give the choir its present character.

As well as singing in the Grand Hall, and at various churches and halls throughout Kilmarnock and beyond, the Choral Union has also, over the years, sung with the Glasgow Cathedral Choir and the chorus of the Scottish National Orchestra, and made recordings with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. The Choral Union has also had many soloists who went on to make glittering careers in both oratorio and opera and we hope that by continuing to engage students and people at the start of their musical lives we encourage classical singers of the future.

The Choral Union tries to appeal to lovers of purely classical repertoire – a link with its origins in church musical societies – as well as reaching out to audiences who just enjoy the thrill of listening to a full choir and orchestra, or to those who relish the more intimate setting of carols with an organ accompaniment in a church. It is to be hoped that the Choral Union will continue to flourish, and play a full part in the cultural life of Kilmarnock and Ayrshire.

Kilmarnock and District Choral Union Recordings with the BBC SSO

1966: Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, conducted by James Loughran.

1966: Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, conducted by Julian Dawson 1968; *Missa Solemnis in B*, conducted by Julian Dawson

1969: Vaughan-Williams' *A Sea Symphony*, conducted by Julian Dawson

Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies

Notification is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies will be held on Sunday, 17th May 2009 at 2 p.m. in the Vennel Local History Centre, Glasgow Vennel, Irvine. As always we hope that there will be a large turn-out of society members and friends.

We keep the formal business to a bare minimum, allowing everyone time to chat, and to investigate the excellent resources held at the Vennel. We will also, of course, be presenting the John Strawhorn Quaich for 2009.

Fuller details will be mailed to all members in due course, but please keep this date free.

Pamela McIntyre, Secretary

A Burns Supper in Kilbirnie 1906

First Course	Green kail soup, fu' platefu's A skiklin' o' nowte-tail bree Baps an' breid tae chew tae get up a drooth
Second Course	Kabbielow fillets wi' labster crowdie Bannock fluke an' oyster sauce
Third Course	Royal Scotch Haggis (an' noocht else)
Fourth Course	Bubbly Jock Rostit, plump, short-legged, fat-breisted, lang-waived Howtowdies, stoved; Skinned tatties, hale an' champit; mashed neeps an' carrits an green meat thro'ither an furrin green peas for fowk wi' sic like tastes
Fifth Course	Cutlets o' porkers an' grumphie ribs, grilled, wi' tamatie jooce Stewed taits o' mutton wi' royal sauce
Sixth Course	Sir Loin o' Beef (Bawshaw's best Heilan' nowte), rostit, wi' tatties an' veeg'tables o' a common sairts Fat wather hogg, boiled wi' Auchenhaive agricultooral sauce
Seventh Course	Bunny pie, hot; Rump steak pie, loo'; Tatties, carrits, peas
Eighth Course	Sautet bul' tongues, cauld Sidelins o' ham, cauld tae

Ninth Course	Burns Puddin' o' Immortal Fame Crab Tairt; Aipple Hurchin'
Tenth Course	Chancellor Puddin'; Stewed Plooms; Peers an' Figs; Trimlin' Tammie Sliderum
What's Next	Flichens o' aitfarls an' weel-hain'd kebbuck, auld an' moolie, in whangs an' flaps Aipples, orangers, nits, raisins, graipes, ginger an' sic like fling-ma-jeeries

Diary of Meetings of Historical Societies

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.
CHS	Cumbrae Historical Society. Meetings in Hiccups Lounge, Millport, at 7.00 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, Allanspark 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.

T@A	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.		

March 2009

Mon 2 nd	SHS	Tom Barclay	The Smugglers of Troon, Loans and Dundonald
Mon 2 nd	L(MS)	Brian Searl	HMS <i>Britannia</i>
Mon 2 nd	KCCS	John Burnett	Celebrations in Ayrshire
Mon 2 nd	CHS	Tom Nixon	Scotland's Other Poet: Robert Tannahill of Paisley
Thurs 5 th	PHG	Members	Pot Pourri
Tues 10 th	KDHG	Adrian Cox	Rowallan Old Castle
Tues 10 th	LNAFHS	Elizabeth Carmichael	Digital Ancestry
Wed 11 th	DHS	Jim Grant	Shipbuilding in Irvine
Thurs 12 th	AANHS	Mark Gibson	The Craigengillan Estate
Thurs 12 th	FHS Joint	Mrs J Barr	General Roy, the 18 th Century Mapmaker
Thurs 19 th	ASA	Irene Hopkins	On The Street Where You Lived
Mon 23 rd	LDHS	John C Brown	Fifty Years as Astronomer and Magician
Tues 24 th	KDHG	Elaine McFarland	Scottish War Memorials from the Picts to the Present
Thurs 26 th	BHS	Stewart Gough	The Goatfell Murder
Tues 31 st	WKAS	Mrs Gillespie and Mrs McGill	Bonnet Making in Stewarton

April 2009

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

May 2009

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

Rob's Book Club: an occasional series

- One of the features of the last *Ayrshire Notes* was an article by Robert Fullarton on growing up in wartime Saltcoats. Growing up in 1950s Saltcoats is the subject of Janice Galloway's splendid memoir, *This is Not About Me* (Granta Publications, 2008, £16.99), one of the most vibrant, humorous and touching books ever to have been written about Ayrshire, telling how Galloway began to find the voice that would make her one of our best poets as she grew up with a 'boozy accident-prone' father, 'reluctantly pragmatic' mother and an outgoing elder sister with a 'stream of boyfriends, snappy dress sense and matching temper.' There is much poignancy too in Stephanie Wood's *From Atina to Ayr*, a privately-published account of the well-known Mancini family, and their journey from rural Italy to prize-winning ice cream makers. The story of Scotland's relationship, not always an easy one, with our big Scoto-Italian community has been explored in a number of recent books, but Wood's personal family account adds much to our understanding of that relationship. Not an easy book to track down, but Phillip Mancini at the Royal Café in Ayr may be able to suggest sources. This issue's final book comes with a hefty £35 price tag. It is Felicity Jack's *Putting Queensland on the Map: Robert Logan Jack* (University of New South Wales Press, 2008). Robert Logan Jack (1845-1921) was a geologist who explored much of Queensland, prospecting for minerals. He also discovered the Great Artesian Basin, which provided the water which sustained Queensland's important sheep-farming industry. His great-granddaughter's book concentrates mostly with his time in Australia, but Jack was born in Irvine, and the first chapter deals with his Ayrshire background and early life in Irvine, before he first sailed to Brisbane in 1877. Copies (signed!) are available from the Vennel Local History Centre, Irvine.

- The collapse and closure of Woolworths, as well as creating some big gaps in our High Streets, also generated a fair crop of reminiscence. One such was 'The Wonder of Woolies' by the novelist Jenny Colgan in *The Guardian* of 28th November 2008. Colgan had a Saturday job in the Prestwick Woolworths during the 1980s, and brings her usual sly humour to her account of the job, the people she met – the manageress 'had the single imperiously high mono-bosom that seems to be disappearing from the British landscape, and the tight steel-grey perm that will be with us for as long as there are small provincial towns' – and the centrality of Woolworths to all our lives. Meanwhile, BBC Radio 4 gave us, in serial form, the story of the much-travelled Charlie the Elephant, who spent some years at Butlin's, Ayr, before being transported by rail to another of Billy Butlin's establishments in England. He is, apparently, now stuffed and in a Brazilian Museum, but his time in Ayr could make a useful *Ayrshire Notes* project for someone.

- A review in a national newspaper of Stewart McLaughlin's self-explanatorily titled biography *Harry Allen: Britain's Last Hangman* (True Crime Library, 2008), says that Allen was 'born in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire' and 'earned a place in history as the joint-last hangman in Britain, before capital punishment was abolished in 1965.' Allen kept a journal, of which the sale by auction generated additional press coverage in October 2008, 'which paints a fascinating picture of a man who clearly took pride in his work.' In Scotland, Allen's best-

known ‘client’ was Peter Manuel, hanged in July 1958. A quick search of Wikipedia suggests, however, that Harry Barnard Allen was born on the 5th November 1911 at Denaby Mains, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, was brought up in Ashton-under-Lyne, and died on 14th August 1992 in Fleetwood. But, although it gives English registration sources for Allen’s two marriages and death, it does not do so for his birth.

- Stuart Wilson draws our attention to a previously unmentioned Ayrshire place-namesake. This is Kilmarnock Head, New Brunswick. It is said that in 1760 a James Boyd, a native of Kilmarnock, set out for North America, with goods to trade provided by his brother. He made landfall at Indian Island on Passamaquoddy Bay, where he established a trading house. In 1767 he was granted land in the same area: 1000 acres, whence 26 families, totalling 125 people, emigrated and settled. He named a rocky headland this his land grant Kilmarnock Head, commemorating his birthplace.

- From *Absolution* (Michael Joseph, 2007), Caro Ramsay’s Glasgow-based detection novel:

‘You not from round here’ she asked, fishing.

‘No, Skelmorlie.’

‘Now that’s a one-horse town.’

‘Yes, and the horse died of boredom.’

Collection of Medallions by Robert Bryden

South Ayrshire Council Museums and Galleries Services has a collection of uni-faced bronze medallions by Robert Bryden, mounted on three panels. They are not presently on display, and were seen and photographed by arrangement with Elizabeth Kwasnik, Museums and Galleries Officer. The medallions are approximately 5½ inches in diameter.

List of subjects.

Panel A: 6 medallions in 3 rows of 2.

Rev. Charles Greig McCreid DD, Moderator of United Free Church 1907-1908

The Right Rev S Marcus Dill DD, Moderator of the Church of Scotland 1912

The Rev J King Hewison DD, Antiquary & Man of Letters

The Right Rev Joseph Mitchell DD, Moderator of the Church of Scotland 1929

Rev John Thomson of Dailly & of Duddingston, Landscape Painter 1778-1840

Rev Roderick Lawson, West Parish Church Maybole, Author and Lecturer Died 1907 Aged 75



J King Hewison

Panel B: 12 medallions in 3 rows of 4.

One medallion has been temporarily removed.

Sir William Arrol, Pontifex Max

Sir Joseph Baron Lister of Lyme Regis PC OM DCL DD FRCS FRS etc etc 1847-1914

Joseph Train, Antiquary 1779-1852

Robert Munro MA MD LLD, Archaeologist, Born 1835 Died 1920

William Thomson Lord Kelvin, Obiit AD MCMVII [Aged] 83

William Symington, Inventor of Steam Navigation, Lived 1761-1831

John Boyd Dunlop, Inventor of the Pneumatic Tyre, Born 1840

Judge David Alec Wilson, Biographer of Carlyle

Anthony Milroy MD FRFPS DPH MCMXXX

Sir Robert McAlpin Bart. JP, Born Anno Dom 1847

John Kelso Hunter, Artist, Born 1802, Died 1875

Panel C: 12 medallions in 3 rows of 4.

One medallion has been temporarily removed.

James Edward Shaw DL JP County Clerk of Ayrshire

Colonel Norman Kennedy SO Prt. & Glasgow Chr of Commerce

Brevet-Colonel TC Dunlop TD ADC 1934

Major Clarence IA Dubs An Dom MCMXXVI

Rev Henry Alexander Fairlie, Minister of Kirkmichael from 1866 till 1909

Rev W Phingillieson MC MA HCF, Minister at Ayr First Charge

Rev Alexander Taylor MA, Educationist & Lecturer

William Murdoch, Inventor of Lighting by Gas 1754-1839

John Galt, Novelist, Died AD 1839 Aged 60

Samuel Scott JP MRSAL Aetat 74 An Dom 1927

FH Clarke MB CM



One of the panels of medallions by Robert Bryden

Preserving Scotland's Rich Milestone Heritage

The Milestone Society is holding a conference on 'Preserving Scotland's Rich Milestone Heritage' in the David Marshall Lodge, Aberfoyle, on Saturday 30th May, from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. There is a nominal charge of £5.00 to cover a welcoming cup of coffee and expenses. Lunch can be purchased at the venue. Among the four or five talks will be a presentation on behalf of the Loch Lomond National Park on the extensive preservation work on the milestones around the park carried out by volunteers.

For further information contact the conference coordinator Terry Keegan, 01299 832358 or assistant coordinator Nigel Bishop, 01786 841250.

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

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 Tacksman (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