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J & A Taylor, Engineers, Ayr (date unknown)

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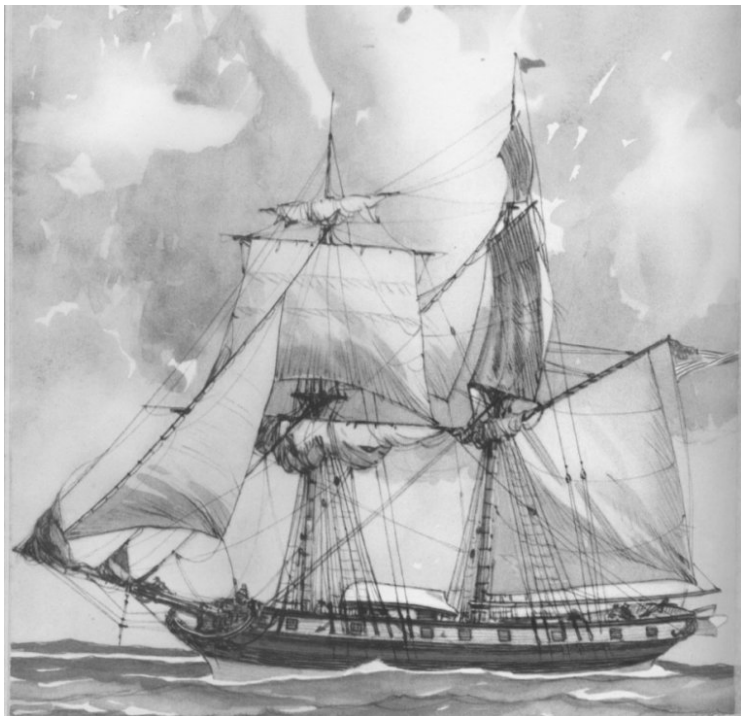
The cover photograph was supplied as a digital image by Jan Munachen of Perth, Western Australia. It is discussed in the article on page 7.

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The Bequest of Captain John Smith

Captain John Smith was a merchant seaman who lived in Newton upon Ayr in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He was a comparatively wealthy man when he died (on 19th November 1817), leaving a personal estate of £2764.¹ According to the conventional adjustment for inflation, this is equivalent to £87,094 today, but this calculation considerably misrepresents his wealth.² Most of his money was on deposit, with the balance consisting of rents due to him. At 5 per cent, which was the yield on his promissary notes, the annual income was about £138, much above that enjoyed by the majority of tradesmen and professional men at the time. Whereas the sum of £87,094 today would yield only £4355 at 5 per cent before tax (if that rate could be found), not much more than half the national minimum wage which from 1st October will be £4.50 an hour, amounting £8190 a year based on a 35 hour week. This is an illustration of how incomplete and distorted a picture can be given by inflation adjustments over extended periods.



A late-18th Century brig

Smith was skipper of, and had shares in, a number of brigs built by the partnership of Robert Ralston and Robert Smith, which possessed a timber and ship-building yard on the Newton shore of the river Ayr.³ He was probably the John Smith who, with Dr Robert Smith, was a trustee of Robert Smith the partner. Both partners died in 1806 and their business was wound up. Captain John Smith had shares in *Ocean* and *Favorite* [sometimes spelt *Favourite*]. There were also shares held by John Smith, probably the captain, in *Juno*, *Hercules*, and *Britannia*. The inventory of his personal estate shows that he had a one-sixteenth share in *Favorite* at his death, then valued at £40.

These boats were generally described as 'brigs' (see illustration), although the term 'brigantine' sometimes appears.⁴ Their principal business was the carriage of coal from Ayr to various Irish ports – most frequently Dublin; Portaferry, Drogheda, Waterford, and Cork also occur. There were voyages further afield: to Pictou, Montreal, Quebec, Riga, Stockholm, and Memel. From Ireland they often returned with limestone to Ayr, or carried this to Barnstaple, Portsmouth, or Southampton, returning to Ayr with cargoes of timber or bark.

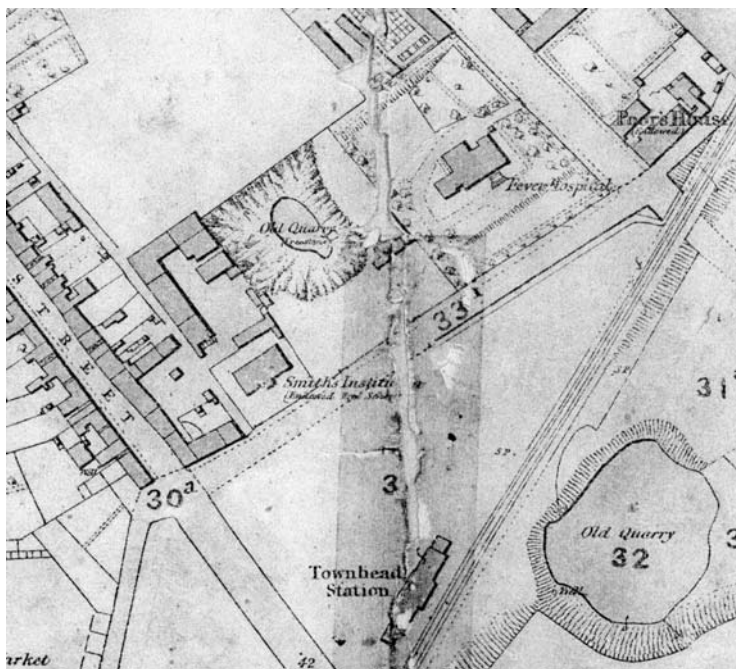
Apart from his earnings as skipper, which are not known, he enjoyed a substantial return on his shares in the boats. *Hercules* repaid its shareholders in full in four years, and in eight years dividends amounted to 230 per cent of the cost of the boat. Whether in addition he enjoyed any inheritance from Robert Smith is not known.

Captain Smith was married to Jean Chalmers. When his will was drawn up in May 1817, they had no living children. He left the whole of his personal estate to his wife 'in liferent', to be put on deposit or invested in property to provide an income, which, as remarked above, would have been substantial. After her death there were some family and other bequests to be made, amounting to £440, and the residue, possibly as much as £2324 and much later described as 'fully £2000', was left to provide for the education of the children of the poor.

His will stipulated that:

The yearly rents arising from the said purchased lands or interest of the said Jean Chalmers my spouse shall be applied by ... the Provost two Baillies & ministers of the Established Church of the Burgh of Ayr for the time being and their successors in place and office ... for the purpose of educating or assisting in the education of certain poor children in the Burgh & parish of Ayr whose parents live therein and are unable to educate them to be nominated by the said Magistrates & Ministers from time to time and these children thus to be presented shall only be taught to read English, Writing, and what is called the five common rules of Arithmetic so that they may be fitted for the common occupations of life. But if the managers of this fund shall at any time find a Young person whose parents live within the said Burgh & parish of Ayr whom they may think possessed of uncommon abilities and who shall discover a strong inclination for learning are hereby allowed to apply what proportion they may think proper of the said rents or interest for the instructing of such Young person in what other branches of education they may think proper.

So generous was this bequest that 27 years later it was still the greatest of the many 'posthumous benefactions to the poor' with which Ayr 'abound[ed]', exceeding in value those of many with higher positions in society, including Sir Robert Blackwood, Lady John Campbell, and Mrs Crawford of Ardmillan.⁵ According to the account in the *NSA*, the bequest was applied to the funding of an existing school for poor children, in place of the subscriptions which had provided for it hitherto, and which was taught in a vacant room in the poorhouse of Ayr. Elsewhere it is stated that 'Smith's Institution' was established in 1825, again in the poorhouse, where in 1838 'William McDerment single-handed taught 245 pupils'.⁶ A new building was erected nearby for the school in 1842, "one of the largest and most commodious schoolrooms in the County" measuring 54 x 26 x 17 feet, to which a second storey was added in 1867; by which time 300 scholars paying a penny a week and 70 poor children enrolled free were taught by a staff of three teachers and two pupil teachers.⁷



First Ordnance Survey (1857) 1:2500 (here approx. 1:3000)

Smith's Institution was named on the first Ordnance Survey map of 1857 (see illustration showing the Townhead of Ayr – Kyle Street is on the left, Mill Street top right, and Smith's Road, later Smith Street, runs between at an angle to the railway line). The group of buildings immediately above it and to the left of the quarry are the premises of J &

A Taylor, Engineers (see the article on page 7), while the ‘Poor’s House’ can be seen on the extreme right.

Following the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872, Smith’s Institution became the responsibility of the Ayr Burgh School Board, and in 1884 it moved into new premises in Holmston Road; in 1930 its name was changed to Holmston School. Holmston Primary School is in the same building today.⁸

According to Rob Close, Smith Street, formerly Smith’s Road, owes its name to the institution endowed by and named after Captain John Smith.⁹ Although otherwise long forgotten, he was a significant benefactor to the poor of Ayr, to whom thousands of children owed their basic education between 1825 and 1872.

¹ National Archives of Scotland, SC36/48/13, inventory and settlement of John Smith, 6th July 1818.

² Bank of England, ‘Equivalent contemporary values of the pound: a historical series 1270 to 1999’, adjusted by David McClure for inflation from 1999 to 2002.

³ Various journals and ship’s books are to be found in the National Archives of Scotland: CS96/654 to CS96/668.

⁴ ‘Brig’ was initially an abbreviation of ‘brigantine’. By the end of the eighteenth century they referred to two different types of two–masted rigging. *Lloyd’s Register* of 1790 includes ‘brig’ but not ‘brigantine’, which appeared as a distinct rig in the *Register* of 1834. This information was taken from David R. MacGregor, *Merchant Sailing Ships: Sovereignty of Sail 1775–1815*, London 1985.

⁵ *New Statistical Account of Scotland*, Vol. V, 81. The Ayr parish account was written by Rev. Robert Auld and Rev. Alexander Cuthill.

⁶ John Strawhorn, *The History of Ayr: Royal Burgh and County Town*, Edinburgh 1989, 196.

⁷ *History of Ayr*, 196.

⁸ *History of Ayr*, 197–200, and 221.

⁹ Rob Close, *The Street Names of Ayr*, AANHS, Ayr 2001.

David McClure

J & A Taylor, Engineers, Ayr

Our cover illustration shows the workforce at J & A Taylor’s Townhead Works, Ayr, probably towards the close of the 19th Century (see also the map on page 6). It was submitted to us by Jan Munachen, of Perth, Western Australia, who is interested in learning more about the company. It is probable that one of the men in the photograph is a Munachen.

The Townhead Works were in Smith Street, Ayr. Land here was first acquired by John and Andrew Taylor in 1847, from the Ayr merchant banker James Morris, and the Taylor brothers acquired additional land in 1854 (from James Potter) and in 1856 (again from James Morris). They also disposed of land, in 1856 and 1869, to G & J Muir, whose Kyle Foundry was built adjacent to the Townhead Works. The 1857 1:500 OS Map shows a ‘machine shop’ behind the original Smith’s Institution, accessed from the lane (still in existence) which runs behind and parallel to Kyle Street on the north–east side: this is presumably the first workshop of J & A Taylor. The other buildings, both of the Taylors

and the Muirs, postdate the survey of this map, which shows the site between Smith's Institution and the old Fever Hospital as a disused freestone quarry, with a ruined engine house.

An extensive note on the business is found in *Ayrshire Historical Commercial & Descriptive*, published in 1894:

'One of the firms engaged in the engineering and millwrighting industries of Ayrshire is that of Messrs J & A Taylor, of Townhead Works, Ayr. This notable and thoroughly representative house was founded in 1847 under the auspices of its present proprietors. The business has its headquarters in premises covering a large area of ground, and comprising spacious buildings and sheds laid out upon a convenient scale and plan, and admirably adapted to all the purposes of the engineering industry and the commercial operations associated with the same. All the various departments of the Townhead works are equipped with the most improved and powerful machinery for the class of work carried on, and the whole establishment affords an exposition of that remarkable industry of making machinery by machinery. Messrs J & A Taylor have a very good equipment of lathes, planning and drilling machines, boring, slotting and shaping machines, punching and shearing machines, &c., &c., all constantly at work on their premises, in the production of those goods for which the house has gained a national renown. A considerable number of hands are employed, and the industry is carried on throughout with a degree of vigour and active progress in its several stages that speaks well for the perfect organisation, development and effective value of all its working resources. Messrs J & A Taylor have exceptional productive facilities, and they are consequently in a position to produce first-class work on the shortest possible notice. Their manufactures in all the modern designs and types of cranes, wheels, hauling machines for slip-dock purposes, dock gates for harbours, stationary engines, shafting, pulleys, &c., &c., are highly esteemed both at home and abroad for soundness of materials, excellence of constructive detail, and faultless workmanship. The engineering output of the firm represents careful accuracy and finish, as well as the highest condition of efficiency in action and effect, and in all their parts and details these productions exemplify a care that ensures the finest finish and quality that can be secured in any class of mechanical apparatus of the several kinds. Repairs are undertaken and executed with precision and despatch. We may mention, as indicating what the firm is capable of achieving, a few of the more noteworthy contracts that have recently been carried into effect by Messrs J & A Taylor. Among these may be classed two twenty-ton cranes for the Harbour Trustees of Ayr; engines, boilers and shafting for the extensive boot manufactories of Messrs John Gray & Co., Maybole; T A Gray, Maybole; James Ramsay, Maybole; John Lees & Co., Maybole; R Dobbie & Co., Ayr; A Cuthbert & Son, Ayr; William Alexander & Sons' sawmill; hauling engines and gearing for Ayr Slip Dock; hauling engines for George Taylor & Co., Annbank; coal-screening machinery for the Dalmellington Iron Co.; William Baird & Co. Ltd; the Garrockhill and Duchray Coal Co.; engines for Messrs Templeton & Sons' mill, Ayr; and Wyllie & Co., manure manufacturers, Ayr; two powerful disintegrators for the Carron Iron Co., Falkirk; and one disintegrator for Messrs William Baird & Co. Ltd., Lugar. It is not using language of too laudatory a character to say that the firm's entire business is conducted with energy and enterprise. Messrs J & A Taylor are constantly

extending the scope of their operations and adding new features to a long list of notable productions; and by the merits of their engineering and millwrighting output, and the honourable straightforwardness of the firm's commercial dealings, they have won the confidence of a far-reaching connection, and have established upon a sound basis a trade whose volume and influence are constantly increasing throughout the length and breadth of the county.¹

¹ Anon, *Ayrshire Historical Commercial and Descriptive*, London, 1894, 39-40.

Rob Close

The Mercury Safety Air Gas Company Ltd.

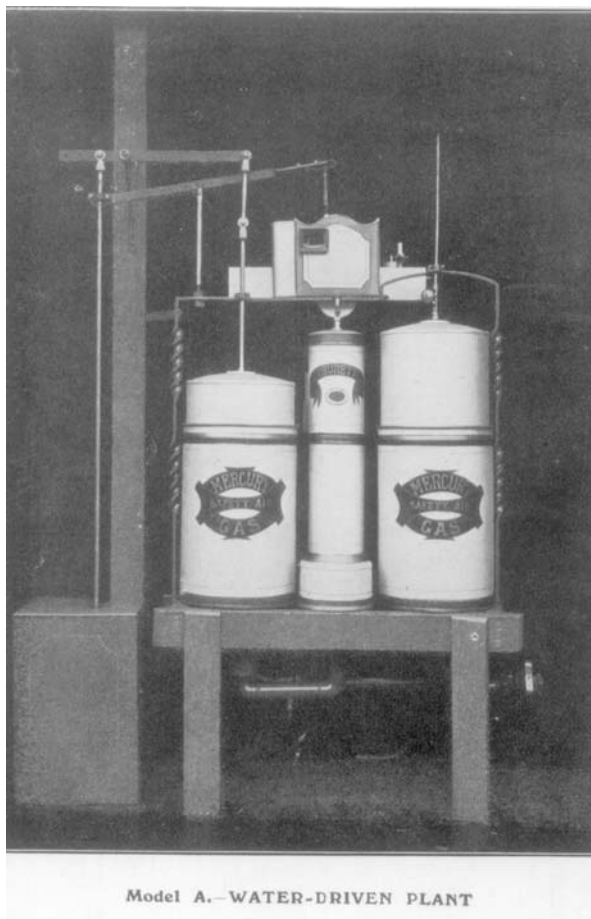
In *Ayrshire Notes 16*, the present author describes two rival gas works operating in Newmilns and fighting it out in great contention. The burgh was a source of amusement for the people of the neighbouring villages through its claim to have two of everything, signifying its public utilities and civic institutions. However in this case the correct number vaunted was three. The two establishments mentioned in the earlier article produced coal gas, but just off Main Street a small factory also known as the 'gas works' was in business.

The Mercury Gas Company resembled in entrepreneurial flair many small firms in Ayrshire towns that were trading successfully in national and international markets. In time many were gobbled up by predators or had their product replaced by modern equivalents or new sources of energy, but the Mercury had a healthy existence during the first decades of the twentieth century under the ownership and direction of John MacPherson. First described as a plumber he later, when he had established his company, transmogrified himself into a gas engineer. Both designations were appropriate when it came to buying in the cylinders and machined parts for the apparatus and linking them with the necessary mechanism and pipes.

The plant provided heating and lighting to premises in isolated localities, such as farms and country houses, not attached to the main gas supplies, or to customers who chose to be independent of the town gas companies. It was suitable for schools (such as the Grammar School, Pocklington, East Riding of Yorkshire), reading rooms (such as Drymen, Stirlingshire) and small businesses, such as the Premier Tanneries in Glengarnock. Plate 1 shows the more popular model of water-driven plant that could be adapted to supply households and premises with the required number of lights or heating apparatus. A 150 light plant was installed at Drumshoreland Hospital, near Broxburn, West Lothian. The architect of the hospital approved it for its 'special feature of conveying its own air in the pipes, thereby saving the air in the rooms from being robbed of oxygen which is so essential for sick rooms. [It] is quite a triumph from a health point of view, and should commend itself to all public and private institutions where a pure atmosphere is valued.'¹

The system had clear economic advantages over coal gas, which cost around 3s 6d (17½p) per 1000 cubic feet. At the same period the Mercury was run on a mixture of air and

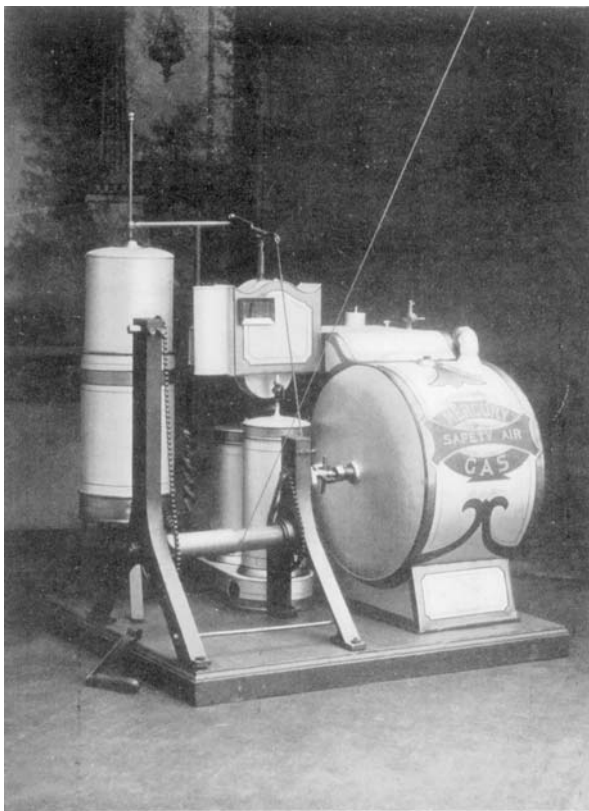
petrol, 97½% air to 2½% petrol, operated by a small water engine with a pressure of 20 lbs. In one test, using a quarter of a gallon of petrol, costing at that time about 1s (5p) a gallon, '219 cubic feet of air gas were made and consumed through ten burners throughout the house, using 36 gallons of water costing 0.216 pence, less than a farthing.'² Advantages of the system were the elimination of condensation and, as a safety gas, it eradicated all chance of asphyxiation or explosion in any apartments where the gas burned. No unpleasant odours were produced and, as an automatic plant, it turned itself on when one light was ignited and stopped working when the last light was extinguished. If circumstances prevented the use of



water or it was not available the plant could be operated by weight and pulley as shown in Plate 2.

Plate 1

All the standard equipment necessary for lighting, heating and cooking could be operated from the installation: lights, radiators, boilers, cookers, irons, gas fires and even ironing machines, which were given a favourable report by Mr Watson of the Loudoun Laundry Co. Another satisfied customer further afield, but in the same line of work was the D & J Tullis Laundry in South Africa. Some of the wide range of products offered by the



Model C.—WEIGHT-DRIVEN PLANT

company are shown in Figures 1 and 2, but every type of domestic and industrial appliance used in the coal gas industry could also be used in the Mercury system.

Plate 2

The widespread and international utilisation of the Company's plant is indicated by the addresses of a selection of its clients:-

Oil Well Engineering Co., Cheadle, Manchester

Burmah Oil Co., Burmah
Hall, Leslie & Co., Buenos Aires, Argentina
Mr Buchanan, Tobago
Mr Harry Moore, 8-10 Petit Dock, Ghent, Belgium
Fumigalli & Co., heating engineers, Genova, Italy
M. Ruffenacht, Rue de Versailles, Paris
Cuckney Church, Nottinghamshire

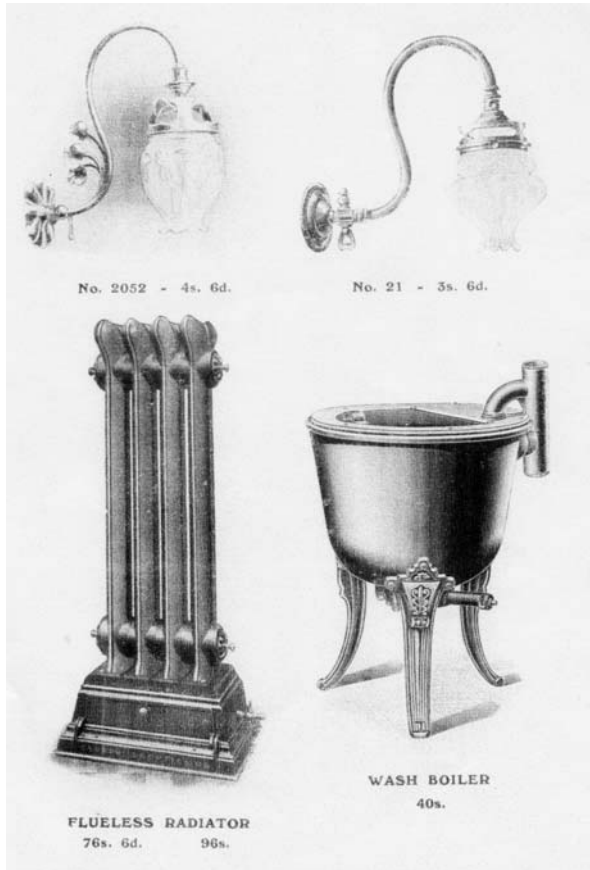


Figure 1

After quick growth following the launch of the business with prospects of further improvement, the company settled down into a regular steady trade. It displayed its various models and techniques at many industrial exhibitions winning awards, including the prestigious gold medal at Manchester in 1910. An office with a showroom was opened in

Bath Street, Glasgow, moving later to West Regent Street, while the works remained throughout in Newmilns. An undated price-list of the company's products is shown in

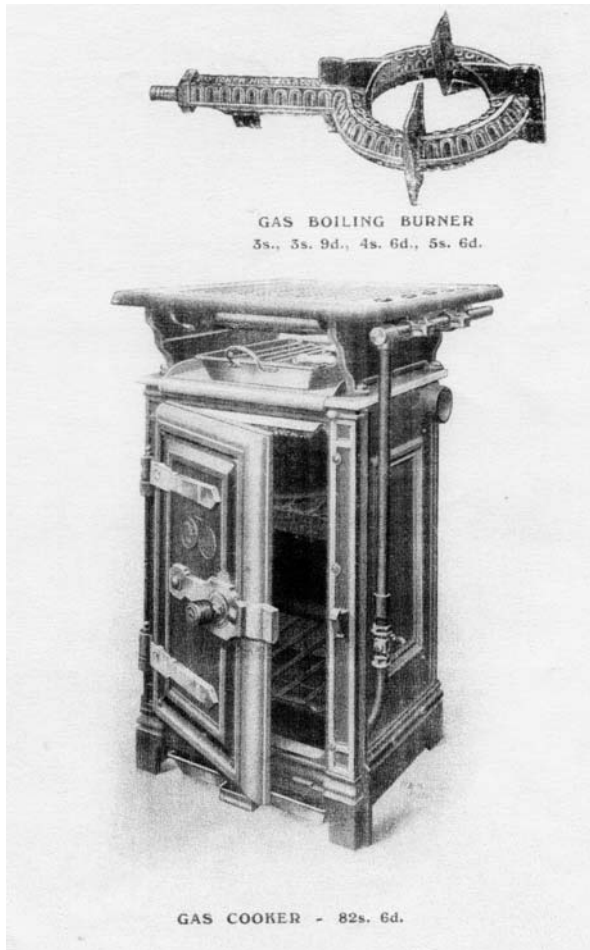


Figure 3, and it maintained a stake in the market until the outbreak of the Second World War.

Figure 2

The company, regardless of the appeal of its product and its competitive edge, could not hope to survive without an enlarged sales force and an increased works capacity. Branch factories in areas most suited for commercial development might have nourished further growth, but alternative systems of motive power and lighting in rapidly expanding coal gas and electricity enterprises contributed to the company's stagnation. The

cleanliness, efficiency and safety of the company's gas plant might have maintained a niche in the market, but the pre-war development of bottled gas, including Calor Gas, endangered the Mercury's on-site mechanical system. Without access to the company records, the ebb

PRICE LIST

— OF —

MERCURY SAFETY AIR GAS PLANTS

No one in want of a really good light should fix on a gas plant until they have seen the "MERCURY," and we should be pleased to send an expert to consult, advise, and give estimates.

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 20-Light Plant ... | £27 .10 0. | £25 0 0 |
| 30-Light Plant ... | £38 .10 0. | 37 10 0 |
| 40-Light Plant ... | ... | 50 0 0 |
| 50-Light Plant ... | ... | 62 10 0 |
| 60-Light Plant ... | ... | 72 0 0 |
| 70-Light Plant ... | ... | 78 15 0 |
| 80-Light Plant ... | ... | 90 0 0 |
| 100-Light Plant ... | ... | 112 0 0 |

Prices for the above Plants made in Copper specially quoted

Special Burners, 4s. each | Mantles, 4s. 6d. per doz.

Burners, Mantles, and Globes extra on all fittings

A pressure of 20 lb. per square inch is necessary to operate the Water-Driven Plants. Any pressure beyond that can be easily adjusted.

Always state water pressure when ordering.

Prices specially quoted for Weight-Driven Plants according to height and number of pulley blocks.

Above prices f.o.r. at Works.

A sum of 30s. to 50s. charged for packing according to size of plant, but credited in full if cases and straw returned carriage paid to Works.

An extra charge is made for fitting Plants, according to distance.

and flow of its business activity cannot be traced. It remained a family concern with limited prospects for expansion even with its widespread commercial outlets.

Figure 3

Many small businesses, unless they acquired government orders, suffered eclipse during the Second World War. The Mercury Safety Air Gas Co was already in decline and the last references to its existence lie in the valuation rolls for the Burgh of Newmilns &

Greenholm for 1940. What was described as the company's premises at Main Street from 1911 onwards as a workshop had by 1940 become merely a store. By the end of the war it was recorded as vacant premises, which soon after were cleared of all residual equipment and materials to be converted into the local fire brigade station.

At one time the 'gas works' had formed part of a small industrial complex alongside Thomson's aerated water factory and Todd's stocking-making workshop, all within a typical townscape of domestic housing, retail shops, factories and workshops. Most people lived by or near their place of work in small, self-sufficient communities. The trend towards the much-acclaimed economies of scale in business endeavour soon gave the coup de grace to most small forms as the move to larger units accelerated. These were located at a distance, and the social and economic structure of small towns and villages was weakened or disintegrated. The Mercury Gas Company characterised the enterprise and acumen of a period of industrial development unlikely ever to be repeated.

¹ William Baillie, architect, Glasgow, quoted in the business brochure of the Mercury Safety Air Gas Co Ltd., p.14.

² Brochure of Mercury Safety Air Gas Co Ltd., p.2.

Jim Mair

Reminiscences of Kildonan House, Barrhill

Kildonan House, near Barrhill, was the home of Captain the Right Honourable David Euan Wallace (1895-1942), who was an MP for many years, and briefly Minister of Transport in 1939. Captain Wallace came to Kildonan from his maternal home of Glassingall, near Dunblane: he inherited the lands of Kildonan from his millionaire uncle, William Weir, whose fortune had been made from coal mining and mining engineering. It was a condition of Wallace's inheritance that he should build a house, and live on, the estate.

Wallace was determined that his life on the Ayrshire moors should be luxurious, and he employed the Glasgow architect James Miller to design an enormous house, in a Cotswold style, in which he could enjoy his wealth. Work on the house began c.1910, but it was unfinished when the First World War broke out. The house was not completed until after the War, by which time the social conditions necessary for the maintenance of such a grand style of living had been ruptured, and there had also been a rupture in Wallace's own domestic circumstances.

At the age of 18, Wallace had married Lady Idena Sackville, and they had two sons, David John (born in 1914) and Gerald Euan, known as Gee (born in 1915). However, while Wallace was away on war service, his wife formed a close friendship with a Major Gordon. After an ultimatum from Wallace, she chose Gordon, so that a divorce was arranged, and Lady Idena married Major Gordon, only to be widowed within a year. She went on to have several husbands, including the Hon. Jocelyn Hay, with whom she lived in Kenya, where they were among the instigators of the infamous Happy Valley set.

Wallace's second wife was Barbara, daughter of the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens. They had three sons: John Peter (born in 1923), Peter John (born in 1924) and William Weir ('Billy'), born in 1926. The second Mrs Wallace always associated Kildonan with her husband's first wife, and in 1937 the family moved permanently to Lavington Park in West Sussex.

The above information was provided by Marie Mortimer, and acts as background to these reminiscences of life at Kildonan between the wars written in 1991 by Margaret Heard (formerly Margaret Davidson)

'My father came from Logie Almond, Perthshire, in 1922. He was under-keeper to Dan McPherson, the head keeper, who lived in Cluny's Cottage with his parents and sisters. The Nursery Bothy was my father's house until he married in 1928 and set up home in the bothy at Whitecairn, next door to Peter Gibson, where I was born in 1930. Dan McPherson died in September of that year, and my father was made Head Keeper, then moving to The Kennels, where my mother died in 1932. We stayed there until 18th January 1938, when we moved to Lavington Park, Captain Wallace's new estate. John McCrae, the Head Gardener, and John Linden also went to Lavington. My father remained there until the break-up of the estate in 1942, after the death of Captain Wallace from cancer of the liver earlier that year. In all he served the Wallace family for 21 years.'

'Kildonan was the Wallace family's Scottish retreat, where they came for "The Season". Two special trains were chartered to transport all their retinue and luggage for the "glorious twelfth" and the shooting season. All their servants came from the London house; all the invited guests came, with their children and personal servants, to stay for several weeks. Mistress Milne was Cook-Housekeeper, Brewster was butler, Nanny Heath looked after all the boys, and Church was the chauffeur. Adler was the groom, Frank Edwards acted as chauffeur-valet, Florence was the housemaid, and Miss Knight was Mrs Wallace's personal servant.'

'Life was full and the guest list very impressive: Viscount Ridley, with his wife and their sons Mark and Nicholas; Duff and Lady Diana Cooper; the Dudley Wards; Mr Peter Lord; Lord Sefton; Lord Lonsdale; Lord Allendale; Captain Margeson; Sir John Millbanks; Lord and Lady Astor; the Duke of Marlborough; the Tennants of the Glen, as well as members of the Lutyens family. As well as providing sport for these guests, my father also had to play the bagpipes around the dining room table in the evening before dinner!'

'The estate was factored by Mr John Park, of 85 Bath Street, Glasgow. He was a fine man, and gave me five shillings each time he called! The day-to-day management of the estate was in the hands of John McDowell, assisted by three keepers, four gardeners and various foresters and saw-mill workers. Other staff were enrolled from around the village of Barrhill.'

'Mr David Wallace came of age in 1935. There was a party and presentation on the lawn in front of Kildonan. He joined the Diplomatic Service, as his bad eyesight made him unfit for service with the army. He married Miss Prunella Stock, daughter of the founder of the League of Health and Beauty: he wore a tie with pink elephants on his wedding day. I believe that he was killed in Greece in 1942 or 1943.'¹

‘His brother, Gee Wallace, who was eleven months younger, was a bit wayward. He served his time with the Royal Air Force, but also caused his father distress by his support for Oswald Mosley and the British Union of Fascists. He married a war widow whose husband was later discovered to be alive and a prisoner of war: he was killed in an air crash off Madagascar in 1942 or 1943.’²

‘Two of the sons of David Wallace’s second marriage were also killed during the Second World War. John Wallace was in the Army, and was killed in France, aged 20, in 1942 or 1943. His brother Peter Wallace was in the Royal Air Force. He managed to bring his damaged plane back to Britain, after have sustained damage over Europe, but died of the wounds he received. He was only 19.’

‘Emmanuel Shinwell, the long serving Labour MP, put a notice of remembrance for the Wallace Boys in *The Times* each year. His connection with them evaded me, but it was a very touching thought.’

‘The youngest son, Billy Wallace, was a friend of Princess Margaret, but suffered from indifferent health, married fairly late in life, and died, without issue, in his forties.’

‘Mrs Barbara Wallace was a widow for about 10 years after the death of Captain Wallace, and then she married an American, Herbert Agar, who also predeceased her, and she continued to live at Beechwood, the dower house to Lavington Park, until she died in c.1987. Mrs Wally Clayton was her helper until the last.’

‘Kildonan itself served as a convalescent home for officers during the second world war. Later it was a Catholic convent and school. I come back and feel saddened by what was, and those who were so great but have gone almost unremembered as if they had never existed. After 1938 I believe the tenant farmers were given the chance to buy their farms, and some did, but I have no first-hand knowledge of the final break-up of the estate.’

We are grateful to Marie Mortimer, of Gowlands Cottage, and Pat Lorimer, architect, for allowing us to use these reminiscences.

¹ Major David John Wallace was attached to the Special Operations Executive, and was working with the 10th Greek Division, one of the strongest anti-German resistance forces in Greece. He was killed on 17th August 1944 at the Battle of Meninas, and is buried in the village cemetery at Paramythia. Information from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website, cwgc.org

² Wing Commander Gerald Euan Wallace served with the RAFVR. He died on the 20th August 1943, and is commemorated on the Alamein Memorial in Egypt. Information from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website, cwgc.org

Alexander Waters, mason and builder, Sundrum

I came across the following in the *Ayr Advertiser* for Thursday 6th September 1894, 5g, and thought it was worthy of a wider audience. I would be pleased to hear from anyone who has further information on Waters.

‘An interesting figure has been taken from our midst by the death of Mr Alexander Waters, mason and builder to Col. Hamilton on the estate of Sundrum. Mr Waters died at Woodhead on Thursday last after a somewhat protracted illness. Mr Waters, who was a man of colour, was a native of Jamaica, having been born about sixty–five years ago, on the estate in that island then owned by Col. Hamilton, and on which Mr Waters' father was employed. In order that young Waters might have the benefit of an English [*sic*] education and learn a trade, Col. Hamilton with consent and approval of the boy's parents caused him to be brought to this country, the intention being that he should in due course return to Jamaica to fill a position on Col. Hamilton's estate. On the boy's arrival here, he was boarded in Ayr and sent to Newton Academy. Subsequently he learned to be a mason and builder. Instead of returning to Jamaica, as originally intended, young Waters chose to remain in this country. He married and settled down on the estate of Sundrum, where he worked at his trade, ultimately becoming mason and builder on the estate, a position which he occupied for many years prior and up to the time of his death. He proved a worthy and faithful servant to the Hamilton family, by whom and by the tenants and by his fellow–servants and workers on the estate as well as by the general community he was deservedly held in high esteem and regard. Tall and erect, he had a somewhat military bearing, and he was a genial, kindly man of singularly gentlemanly manners and address. He kept up correspondence with his father and other relatives in Jamaica. At Woodhead he cultivated the tobacco plant from seed sent him from Jamaica and he occasionally smoked the tobacco leaf thus grown by himself. He is survived by his father, who is still in Jamaica; and in this country his loss is mourned by a widow and family. A large company attended the funeral at Coylton churchyard on Monday to pay their last tribute of respect to the deceased.’

The 1881 Census records Waters as 49, and his wife, Elizabeth, as 51. She was born in the parish of Old Cumnock. There were two children at home in 1881, a son, Alexander aged 11, and a daughter, Agnes, aged 9.

Rob Close

William Murdoch

The Man Who Lit the World

On the A70 road leaving Cumnock, heading towards Muirkirk, you pass through the little village of Lugar. Sitting on the right hand side of the road, the last house before leaving the village is Bello Mill Farm. The farm has little to distinguish it from other buildings along this country road. Closer inspection, however, of the front wall of the farmhouse reveals a metal plaque that states: ‘This house is the birthplace of one of Scotland's most prolific inventors, William Murdoch.’

Largely forgotten now, Murdoch saw and developed coal gas as a commercial means of lighting and in consequence changed the standard of life for millions for ever.¹

William Murdoch was fascinated by coal. As a growing boy, he found tending his father's cattle a dull and tedious task. His active mind needed exercise. The coal he found, or dug from the hills near his home in Ayrshire, provided that exercise. Not coal in itself, but the changes that occurred when it was heated. A cave (which is still there) in the bank of the river Lugar, which flows below his father's farmhouse, became the makeshift laboratory for William's investigations. He carried out various experiments and studied the bubbling vapours seeping from the coal, especially the intense light produced when the smoke burst into flame. If this could be controlled, thought Murdoch, it could supply a far superior source of light than was then available. Until then the only form of lighting was provided by oil lamps and candles. Life would now be much easier and safer for everyone. Ironically, when Murdoch did manage much later in his life to perfect gas lighting, it was to enable him to work on an entirely different project. His breakthrough came many miles from his native Scotland, while employed as a mining engineer in Cornwall.

William Murdoch was the second son of John Murdoch, who had served as a master gunner in the British army. William was born on the 21st August 1754. His grandfather had also been a master gunner with the army, and the signatures of both William Murdoch's father and grandfather are preserved among the records of the Royal Artillery Depot at Woolwich. William learned his trade from his father, a skilled millwright, and became a very proficient tradesman in his own right. He decided to expand his knowledge and in 1777, when only in his early twenties, he walked from his home in Ayrshire to Birmingham. His mission was to expand on the knowledge he had gleaned in the cave on the Lugar, and to obtain employment in the famous Soho Engineering Works, owned by James Watt and Matthew Boulton. As it happened, his fellow Scot Watt was not present at the works on the day that Murdoch presented himself for interview.

One story, perhaps apocryphal, recounts that William, nervous at meeting Matthew Boulton for the first time, dropped his top hat. The unusual noise made when the hat hit the floor attracted Boulton's attention. On examination Boulton found that the hat was made out of wood. Murdoch admitted that he had turned the hat on a lathe at home, on a machine he had designed himself. Anyone who has ever used a wood lathe knows that turning a circular shape is not too difficult. This young man, however, had designed and successfully built a machine that could produce oval-shaped patterns. Impressed by his ingenuity and skill, Boulton offered him a job on the spot.

In a short time William proved his worth to the company, with Boulton describing him as the 'finest engine erector' he had ever seen. James Watt had also taken an interest in the young Scot and they appointed him as their Senior Engine Erector in the company's most important area, Cornwall. Murdoch² was at this time only twenty-five.

When William moved from Birmingham to Redruth, at the heart of the Cornish mineral mining area, one of his first tasks was to establish a foundry and engineering workshop in that town for Boulton and Watt. His days were taken up with his employers' business, building, installing and maintaining the Watt steam engines. These were widely used in the Cornish lead and copper mines to prevent flooding. His evenings however saw William working on the many ideas that surged through his active mind. Although he enjoyed a lifelong friendship with both Boulton and Watt, on one occasion he did rebel.

Annoyed by their continual opposition to his obtaining patents for his inventive ideas he went back to Scotland. He returned to England a year later at the request of Boulton and Watt, and rejoined their firm in 1779 at a greatly increased salary. Murdoch was later to become a partner in the business.

In 1780 Murdoch signed an agreement to act as Superintendent and Engineer for the Soho Works. His brief however saw him making journeys to various parts of the country, including Cornwall. Despite his high level of intelligence, Murdoch was not personally ambitious and what was best for his employers remained uppermost in his mind. Over the years many other engineering firms tried to tempt Murdoch away from Boulton and Watt. He stayed with them until he was in his mid seventies. Even then he did not entirely sever his connection with the firm he had first joined fifty-three years previously.

In his spare time Murdoch experimented with building a road vehicle that could be driven by steam. Some years previously Watt had lodged a patent for a steam-driven carriage but had not submitted any detailed designs. Murdoch's carriage was a three-wheeled vehicle with a steam boiler heated by a spirit lamp. In 1784 he demonstrated the completed vehicle. The engine worked well enough to frighten the rector of Redruth Parish Church! His experiments were carried out at night on a lane that ran alongside the church. As the rector finished locking up the church one evening, this noisy, fiery machine appeared from the dark. The poor man fled without waiting to find out what it was.

Knowing that the engine worked, Murdoch tried to get his employers interested in building a full-size model. They turned him down so firmly that he abandoned any further experiments. However, a local man from Redruth, Richard Trevithick, did develop and patent the first full-size steam-driven carriage in 1802. Murdoch's original model is still on display in the Birmingham Museum, and yet another of his early machines has been preserved at the Science Museum, London.

Later, Murdoch took out patents for a process that extracted a composition from coal that could be used for painting boats. This would prevent barnacles attaching themselves to the hulls. Another improvement he patented around this time was a process for producing coal-tar dyes. These were not developed for practical use until nearly a half-century later. Murdoch also invented the long D Slide valve that would eventually replace the complicated gearing system of Watt's early engines.

While working at Redruth, Murdoch met and married a Miss Ann Paynter, daughter of a mine captain. They had two sons, William born in 1788 and John born in 1790. Ann died shortly after the birth of John, at the early age of 24, leaving William to bring up the two boys.

Having abandoned his work on the horse-less carriage, Murdoch resumed his experiments on obtaining gas from coal on a commercial basis. Using a hand-built retort constructed in his garden and a series of pipes and burners, Murdoch in 1795 successfully lit by gas his house in Redruth.

Owing to the success of the gas lighting at Redruth and his employers' enthusiasm, a more ambitious system of gas lighting was installed at the firm's Soho Works. This also proved a winner and other factory owners became interested in the new form of lighting. When a prominent Manchester mill-owner, George Augustus Lee, of Phillips & Lee, cotton

spinners, ordered Murdoch's lighting, the invention really took off. Visitors to Phillips & Lee's mill were so impressed by the gas lighting that orders poured into the Soho Works. Boulton & Watt's firm made a fortune, but Murdoch himself did not benefit, as he would have done had he patented the invention. The Royal Society did, however, recognize his achievement and he was awarded the Rumford Gold Medal for his work in this field.

As the desire for gas lighting spread it was only a matter of time before gas works were being built in many parts of the country. Pall Mall in London was the first street to be lit by gas in January 1807.

Murdoch had a house built for himself at Sycamore Hill, Handsworth, Birmingham, and the house was lit by gas supplied from the Soho Works. When he died in 1839 at the age of 86, he was buried in the cemetery at Handsworth Church, beside his two partners and friends, Matthew Boulton and James Watt.

Although William Murdoch did not make a fortune from gas, his peers held him in high esteem. In 1882 the National Gas Institute founded the Murdock Medal. This is awarded periodically for inventions that bring improvements within the gas industry. Both the Art Gallery at Birmingham and the Royal Society in Edinburgh possess portraits of Murdoch by John Graham-Gilbert. On 29th July 1892, to celebrate the centenary of gas lighting, a bust of Murdoch by D W Stevenson was unveiled by Lord Kelvin in the Wallace Monument, Stirling. Nearer home there is an obelisk erected to his memory in Auchinleck Church cemetery.

The Shah of Persia, Nassred-din, however, bestowed the strangest and probably the greatest honour conferred on William Murdoch. He declared Murdoch to be the reincarnation of Marduck, the Persian God of Light.

The Material in this article has been compiled from the Dictionary of National Biography, material at the Baird Institute, Cumnock (East Ayrshire Council), and various web sites.

¹ There is a Murdoch Exhibition in the old Gas House at Culzean Castle and Country Park, Ayrshire.

² Throughout his English career Murdoch's name is usually spelt Murdock, which appears to represent the usual English inability to come to terms with a Scottish '-ch'.

George Wade

National Monuments Record of Scotland Mapped and Online

It has never been easier to find out about the traces that past human habitation, worship and work have left upon the landscape. Whether cairns, incised rocks, castle ruins or the remains of industrial workings, most are to be found in the database of the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS). Since June 2002 CANMAP has provided an

online searchable map of Scotland on which all sites in the database have been plotted. Through this, users can identify a site of interest, and find out what information the NMRS record contains. Often this includes references, providing a route for further enquiry.

Accessing CANMAP

1. Go to the website of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), www.rcahms.gov.uk
2. Click on 'Start a search using CANMORE/CANMAP'.
3. The 'Login to CANMORE' page is displayed. On the first visit it is necessary to register to use the database. There is no charge for this, and once registered you will be able to proceed by entering your username and password on this page and clicking 'Conditions accepted'. Note that the copyright of data obtained from CANMORE is the property of the RCAHMS. It may be used in personal research, but acknowledgement must be made in any output that it was derived from information compiled by and/or copyright of RCAHMS.
4. The 'CANMORE search' page is displayed. There is a form on this page allowing the NMRS database to be searched directly. You can either search the whole database or restrict your search to one of three categories: archaeology, architecture and maritime. Information should be entered in one or more fields of the form. The fields are: name of site or building; OS 1:10,000 map sheet; NMRS site number; council area (from a drop-down list); former region (from a drop-down list); parish (from a lengthy drop-down list); collection (from a drop-down list); keywords. You can opt to have the results listed in order of map sheet or NMRS name.
5. Two alternatives to the search form are offered on the 'CANMORE search' page: 'Search using the CANMORE mapping service, CANMAP'; 'Search using the Aerial Survey'.
6. If you select CANMAP, a new browser window is opened with an outline map of Scotland in a panel on the right, and a scrollable window of guidance notes on the left. There is a bar of selectable tools below the map. The operations performed by these tools are: zoom in; zoom out; select a single NMRS site; select multiple NMRS sites; return to table of results; clear selection; zoom to map of Scotland; return to the previous scale; pan by moving the map; pan to north; pan to east; pan to south; pan to west. Although zooming provides a continuous band of magnification, the underlying maps are at a series of discrete scales: initial scale – all Scotland and major urban areas; 1:3,000,000 – cities are shown as orange dots; 1:1,500,000 - towns are shown as orange dots; 1:500,000 – villages are shown as

orange dots; 1:250,000 – Ordnance Survey coloured maps with NMRS sites depicted by blue dots; 1:75,000 – Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 coloured map, reduced, with NMRS sites shown as blue dots as before; 1:20,000 – Ordnance Survey black and white mapping, with NMRS sites again shown as blue dots. As the magnification is progressively increased, what may appear in some areas as a mass of blue dots will be resolved, until a single site may be selected with the crosshairs of that particular tool. The NMRS record for the site will then be displayed in the panel on the left of the screen, with information presented under these headings: [name]; location; archaeology notes; collection summary; references.

7. Experiment with CANMAP and you will soon find it easy to use.

Three Examples

In the following I have selected three sites and summarised the information found in the NMRS database through CANMAP. Two were recorded in the (Old) Statistical Account, while the third my curiosity led me to seek out recently. No right of access is implied in the remarks which follow

A Fort on Castle Hill, Largs

According to the second report for the parish of Largs, submitted 'By a Friend to Statistical Inquiries', '[a]bove Hailley ... are the remains of an ancient fortification, which is still called the Castle-hill.' This is marked on OS Landranger Sheet 63.

The site is NMRS number NS25NW 2 and is described as a fort, 190 feet by 120 feet, occupying the summit of Castle Hill. The archaeology notes mention traces of a stone rampart, and a distinct trench–line for the base of a wall. The remains of a possible hut circle mentioned in a survey in 1964 were dismissed, in a survey of 1983, as 'merely a fortuitous swelling'.

There are two references, including John Smith, *Prehistoric Man in Ayrshire*, 1893, 4.

An Iron Forge near Townhead of Greenock, parish of Auchinleck

In his account of the parish of Auchinleck, Rev John Dun wrote: '[a]t the head of [Ayr's] moss, which extends 5 miles in length, and 1 in breadth, there are the remains of an iron forge, erected at a great expence by a Lord Cathcart, but suddenly given up, even when bar iron was manufactured there.'

The name of this site is Tarrloch Ironworks, NMRS number NS62NW 12. According to the archaeology notes, the ironworks is assumed to date from 1732. It appears as 'Furnace' on Roy's map (1747-1755) and on a map of 1775 as 'Forge' with the symbol of a ruin. Although little remains of the structure, there are fairly substantial earthworks, showing a lade, a pond, a masonry–lined channel for a water wheel, and footings for the furnace and another building.

The map of 1775 referred to in the notes is presumably the Armstrongs' map of Ayrshire. The word 'Forge' certainly appears on this, but the symbol is not that used

elsewhere on the map to depict a ruin, and it could not be assumed from this that the works were disused in 1775. One reference is given: J H Lewis, 'The charcoal-fired blast furnaces of Scotland: a review', *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.*, 114, 1984, 439, 464-5.

Wallace's Stone

This will be found on OS Landranger Sheet 70, near the B7024 south of Ayr. The stone lies in a walled enclosure, a short way down and to the right of the lane to Blairston Mains.

Wallace's Stone is NMRS number NS31NW 16. It is described as 'a recumbent monolith, 6 ft 2 in long by 3 ft 5 in at one end narrowing to a rounded end at the other, and bearing an incised cross.' The incision was popularly believed to be of Wallace's sword, rather than a cross. Its appearance suggests 10th to 12th Century.

There are six references, including Robert Bryden's *Etchings of Ayrshire Castles*, James Paterson's *History of the counties of Ayr and Wigton*, Edinburgh, 1863-66, vol 2, 345, and Smith's *Prehistoric Man in Ayrshire*.

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RCAHMS

David McClure

Hunky Dory

As far as I know, so far, this has nothing to do whatsoever with Ayrshire, but surely the editor can indulge himself occasionally.

We have a friend in Norway who is a fan of the John Rebus novels of Ian Rankin, set in Edinburgh. They have been translated into Norwegian, and she reads them in that language. In one book, I forget which, Rebus/Rankin uses the expression 'hunky dory', meaning, of course, that everything is fine, and going along swimmingly. However, its use at this point also includes a reference to the 1971 David Bowie album, 'Hunky Dory', so the expression is not translated into an appropriate Norwegian idiom, but left as 'hunky dory'. What does it mean, she wanted to know, and where does it come from?

The first question is easily answered: the second less so. If there is a point to this little article, it is perhaps to illustrate the ways in which the internet has revolutionised research. According to World Wide Words, www.worldwidewords.org, quoting from the Random House *Historical Dictionary of American Slang*, the expression seems to date from the 1860s, and to have been first used by a 'popular variety performer named Japanese Tommy'. It is suggested that the term derives from the Japanese word for a broad road, dori, prefixed by the earlier Dutch-American word hunky, denoting something that was fine, splendid or satisfactory (the meaning has become more specialised these days!), and may have been an American sailors' word for 'an imagined street of earthly delights'.

But what, I wondered, of Japanese Tommy? Quickly putting him into Google, I discovered that his real name was Thomas Dilverd, and that there is a photograph of him in

the music hall archives held at the University of Austin, Texas. Putting Thomas Dilverd into Google, I discovered that he was recorded in England at the time of the 1881 Census, and through the 1881 Census CD-ROMs, I was able to trace him to 2/4 Rodney Street, Wigan, where he was one of six boarders in the house of Ann Jones, a refreshment house keeper, originally from Denbigh in North Wales.

Of her boarders, three were described as 'Dramatic Artist (Actor)': Harry Douthwaite, aged 14, from Leeds; John Thompson, aged 25, from Tasmania; and Dilverd, aged 39, and born in America. A fourth boarder was James Millword, dramatic agent, aged 38, married, and from Manchester. It would seem that Japanese Tommy was, in 1881, part of a group of performers who were touring Britain. My next task is to ask the library service in Wigan if there are any reviews of his performances in the town and, oh, I must write to Norway with the answer to the easier question. Finally, I wonder, did his tours of the British Isles ever bring him to Ayr?

Rob Close

Book Reviews

David R Boswell, My Very Dearest Sweetheart - Boswell before Boswell – Letters of the Lady Elizabeth Boswell (1704 to 1711, and 1733).

Bath, Oxmuir Script, 2003.

ISBN 0 9545347 0 0. £15.00. Available (at £17.00 inclusive of postage) from D Boswell, Oxmuir Script, Balmuto, BATH BA2 OHD

David Boswell is the current chieftain of the Boswell of Auchinleck clan, being the heir male of the family. He is not a descendant of the great literary writer, James Boswell, whose line became extinct, but of Bozzy's grandfather, also James Boswell (1672-1749). This James was married in 1704 to Lady Elizabeth Bruce (1671-1739), daughter of the 2nd Earl of Kincardine, and it is her correspondence that makes up this most interesting volume. Lady Elizabeth addresses most of her letters to her husband, James, but some are addressed to her son, John, who became President of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh, and there is one from James to Lady Elizabeth. The letters have been in the Boswell family for years, and David Boswell has spent much time in transcribing them and finding out about the people and places that are referred to.

The book, which is well presented in almost 200 pages, comes with twenty illustrations depicting the main characters, places associated with them, and examples of their writing. There is also a useful family tree of the Boswells and Bruces of the period and an index.

The letters themselves form an interesting insight into life in the early eighteenth century. There are many references to local places and people, as well as the wider social circle that the Boswells were involved with. Discussion on the induction of a new minister for Auchinleck is made, as well as leases on various parts of the estate. The letters have

been organised into groups, of different subjects, and each chapter has a preamble in which David Boswell places the letters in context with the family and the wider Scottish history.

My Very Dearest Sweetheart makes a most interesting contribution to the study of Ayrshire's eighteenth century history. Few family papers from this part of Scotland have been published in recent years, and this collection allows historians to look at how things were in the county at the time. Although the letters are in the main personal correspondence between Lady Elizabeth and her husband, the content is wide enough to give us an appreciation of life in the eighteenth century country house, complete with its responsibilities. It is also refreshing to have a new book about the Boswells that does not major on the great biographer himself, and from a different cache of family papers than the Malahide collection that is now held by Yale University in America.

Dane Love

Frank Beattie, **Kilmarnock Memories.**

Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 2003.

ISBN 0 7509 3236 8. 200 b&w illustrations. £11.99.

Johnnie Walker whisky, Saxone shoes and BMK carpets are well-known across the county and abroad. Less well-known, but also distributed across the world, are Barclay locomotives and engineering feats by Glenfield and Kennedy. All these companies had their origins in the same Ayrshire town – Kilmarnock. For this book, local journalist Frank Beattie has selected more than 200 pictures to tell the story of the town, its people, industries, churches and parks. Readers will see images of the town centre before it had its heart ripped out by 1970s developers. Also featured are the town during wartime and at work and play. Take a journey through time and discover the Kilmarnock that was, as well as the Kilmarnock we know today.

Martin Bellamy, **Millport and the Cumbraes.**

Stroud, Tempus, 2003.

ISBN 0 7524 2790 3. 200+ illustrations. £11.99. Available (post free) from the publishers, Tempus Publishing Ltd, The Mill, Brimscombe, STROUD, Gloucestershire GL5 2QG.

The history of Millport and the Cumbraes is rich and varied. For many people the mention of Millport conjures up images of the heady days of the Clyde as a holiday paradise with its pleasant climate, friendly atmosphere and wide range of attractions. However, there is more to Millport and the Cumbraes than the seasonal visitors and the tourist trade.

This collection of 200 archive photographs, taken from the collections at the Museum of the Cumbraes, provides a glimpse into all aspects of island life over the past 150 years. For the permanent residents of the island the winter storm damage, suffered as a result of Great Cumbrae's exposed location in the middle of the Clyde, was a far cry from the holiday season sunshine. Images of the school and working day, be it farming, fishing or shipping, show life on the island as it was out of season.

We are introduced to many colourful characters, from affluent industrialists to the town's cave dweller, 'Fern Andy'. Records of numerous societies provide a unique insight into the hub of island life and the real community spirit. The island's contribution to two world wars is remembered and, of course, the piers, beach amusements, cafés and hotels recalled by so many take their rightful place in this collection. The book ends with photographs of the rugged island of Wee Cumbrae which lies just to the south of its larger neighbour and possesses its own distinctive character.

Millport today remains one of the best preserved Victorian towns in Scotland and *Millport and the Cumbraes* is a unique testament to the history of the town and the Cumbrae islands. This is Martin Bellamy's first book for Tempus. He grew up on the Clyde coast at Helensburgh and worked for five years as the Museums Curator for North Ayrshire Council (during which time he hosted a Federation swap-shop at the North Ayrshire Museum in Saltcoats). He is now Research Manager with City of Glasgow Museums.

Andrew Strathern and Pamela J Stewart, **Minorities and Memories: Survivals and Extinctions in Scotland and Western Europe.**

Carolina Academic Press, Durham, N. Carolina, 2001.

This book explores the historical expression of identity in Scotland based on fieldwork of two academics from University of Pittsburgh, which was carried out during 1996–2000, mostly in Ayrshire. It embraces a plethora of topics relative to farming, including the changing scene of the labour requirements over the last two centuries and the seasonal demand variations. The inheritance of farm tenancies is discussed along with the contribution of the large estates. The leisure pastimes, including curling, and the social awareness of the agricultural community within the general population are included in this anthropological study.

Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies

Swap Shop

This year's Swap Shop of the Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies will take place at 2 p.m., on Sunday 26th October 2003, in the Baird Institute, Lugar Street, Cumnock. The meeting will follow the usual format: giving a chance to representatives of member societies to discuss in an informal setting matters of mutual interest. There will be tea and biscuits, and an opportunity to see the facilities, and collections of archives and artefacts that East Ayrshire Council hold at the Baird Institute.

The Baird Institute is in Lugar Street, in the centre of Cumnock. There is plentiful off-street car parking in the town, especially in the car park adjacent to Tanyard and the new Health Centre. Cumnock is well served by buses from Ayr and Kilmarnock, and the Baird Institute is but a few steps from the bus station.

An application form is enclosed, and we look forward to seeing a good representation of the county's heritage societies.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions to the Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies are now due, and a renewal form is enclosed. We would, of course, always be pleased to hear of other historical, heritage, family history and conservation societies throughout the county who should be members of the Federation.

Subscription rates for 2003–2004 are unchanged at £15 for Societies, and £10 for Individuals. Cheques should be sent, together with the completed form, to Rob Close, 1 Craigbrae Cottages, Drongan, AYR KA6 7EN.

News

Eagle-eyed readers will have noticed that, in the event, the Federation decided not to proceed with a public lecture at the end of 2003. After the busy period at the end of 2002, it was felt that the officers needed a rest – it was either that or resignation. It is now envisaged that we will hold another Troon Conference in 2004, and pick up the lecture series (hopefully, again with financial support from the Society of Antiquaries) in 2005, and so establish a pattern for future years.

We are still looking for someone to take over as Secretary!

Diary

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| AANHS | Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society. Meetings in Carnegie Library, Ayr, at 7.45 p.m. |
| AFHS | Joint Meeting of Ayrshire Family History Societies, hosted by Troon @ Ayrshire FHS. |
| ASA | Alloway & Southern Ayrshire Family History Society. Meetings in Doonfoot Primary School, Abbots Way, Doonfoot at 7.30 p.m. |
| BHS | Beith Historical Society. Meetings in Beith High Church Hall, Beith, at 7.30 p.m. |
| CSD | Catrine Sorn & District History Society. Meetings in A M Brown Institute, Catrine, at 7.30 p.m. |
| EAFHS | East Ayrshire Family History Society. Meetings in Gateway Centre, Foregate Square, Kilmarnock, at 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 | Joint Meeting of LDHS and L&NA. Dunn Memorial Hall, Largs, at 7.30 p.m. |

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| 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. |
| L&NA | Largs & North Ayrshire Family History Society. Meetings in Largs Library at 7.30 p.m. |
| MHS | Maybole Historical Society. Meetings in Maybole Town Hall, High Street, Maybole, at 7.30 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, West Kilbride, at 7.30 p.m. |

September 2003

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|----------|------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Mon 1st | MHS | Dane Love | Covenanters |
| Mon 1st | SHS | John McGill | William Wallace – Whose Local Hero? |
| Tue 9th | L&NA | Elizabeth Mortimer | Merchant Traders |
| Tue 16th | T@A | Alastair Dinsmore | Glasgow Police – 175 Years of History |
| Thu 18th | ASA | Elizabeth McInnes | The Genealogical Society of Utah |
| Thu 25th | BHS | Pauline Megson | Beith: A Hidden Architectural Gem |
| Tue 30th | KDHG | Peter Yeoman | James VI & I: The Crowning Glories |

October 2003

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| Mon 6th | KCCS | Donald Reid | Doon Valley Bygones |
| Mon 6th | L(MS) | William Burns | Developments at Hunterston |
| Mon 6th | MHS | Major Shaw | Sources for Military History |
| Mon 6th | SHS | George Hewitt | Way Down Yonder in New Orleans |
| Tue 14th | KDHG | David Caldwell | The Scandinavian Heritage of Scotland after 1263 |
| Tue 14th | L&NA | Rufus Ross | Doc Holliday |
| Thu 16th | PHG | David Rowan and Alisdair Cochrane | Liber Communitatis – Prestwick Court Book 1470 |
| Thu 23rd | Largs | Chris McLeod | Hand Weaving |
| Tue 28th | WKAS | Robert Maund | The Scottish Council for National Parks |
| Tue 28th | KDHG | Robert Mackenzie | Kindertransporter and Britain's Generosity |
| Thu 30th | BHS | Elaine MacFarlane | Fighting in the Cause of Freedom: Scotland in the Great War |

November 2003

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| Mon 3rd | L(MS) | T C McNeill | The new Orkney/Shetland Ferries |
| Mon 3rd | MHS | Kevin Wilbraham | The Early Story of Poor Relief in Scotland |
| Mon 3rd | SHS | | Kittochside – Scottish Museum of Country Life |
| Mon 3rd | KCCS | Catriona Morrison | Access to the Countryside |
| Thu 6th | PHG | Peter Berry | Prestwick Airport |

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|----------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Tue 11th | KDHG | Ted Cowan | The Scotching of America: Tartan Day and the Arbroath Declaration |
| Tue 11th | L&NA | John Millar | Scots Poor Law |
| Tue 18th | T@A | Elizabeth Carmichael | Digital Ancestors – Scottish Family History on the Web |
| Thu 20th | ASA | Susan Smith | Loudoun Kirk |
| Tue 25th | KDHG | Michael Moss | The Kennedys and Culzean |
| Tue 25th | WKAS | Gary Nisbet | Glasgow Buildings' Statuary |
| Thu 27th | BHS | Ann McCorquodale | Doulton Figures |
| Thu 27th | LDHS | Rachel Miller | The Eglinton Jug |
| December 2003 | | | |
| Mon 1st | MHS | Tom Barclay | Cromwell's Ayrshire |
| Mon 1st | SHS | J Grant | The Transatlantic Liners |
| Mon 1st | KCCS | Ian Johnson | Ayr Local Plan |
| Mon 1st | L(MS) | | Members' Night |
| Thu 4th | PHG | Sheena Andrew | Round Old Ayr |
| Tue 9th | KDHG | Chris Rollie | Burns and Birds |
| Tue 9th | L&NA | | Members' Night |
| Thu 18th | LDHS | Jim Hunter | The Somme Re-Visited |
| January 2004 | | | |
| Mon 5th | KCCS | Bobby McVey | Integrated Transport Strategy |
| Mon 5th | SHS | Ian Macdonald | David Dale of Glasgow |
| Tue 6th | KDHG | Liam McIlvanney | Across the Narrow Sea: The Language, Literature, and Politics of Ulster Scots |
| Mon 12th | L(MS) | Philip Currie | Recent Research at Millport |
| Tue 13th | L&NA | Jill McColl | Ardrossan Library Resources |
| Thu 15th | ASA | | Members' Night |
| Tue 20th | KDHG | John McGill | The Campbells of Loudoun |
| Tue 20th | T@A | Andrew Dinwoodie | Scrapbook Leads to New Horizons |
| Thu 22nd | LDHS | William Gibb | John Dunmore Lang – Evangelical Enigma |
| Tue 27th | WKAS | Gillian Smart | The Wildlife Importance of Kirktonhall Glen |
| February 2004 | | | |
| Mon 2nd | L(MS) | Speaker from RN Faslane | Underwater Navigation |
| Mon 2nd | SHS | Mr Goldinger | The Table Top in Scotland and Stockwell China Bazaar |
| Mon 2nd | KCCS | Suzanne Roberts | Clean Coast Scotland |
| Tue 3rd | KDHG | Elaine McFarlane | Death, Mourning, and Commemoration in 19th Century Scotland |
| Thu 5th | PHG | Graham Humphreys and Jean Lockley | Henry Who? |
| Tue 10th | L&NA | Alistair Tough | <i>title to be confirmed</i> |
| Tue 17th | KDHG | Gilbert T Bell | Woodrow Wilson in Scotland |
| Tue 17th | T@A | Ian Johnson | Ayrshire Lifeboats History |
| Thu 19th | ASA | Ian Kennedy | A Policeman's Lot |

Tue 24th WKAS George Sloan

West Kilbride Horticultural Society – Past
and Present

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|-------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Thu 26th | BHS | Donald Reid | Dr Henry Faulds of Beith: A Pioneer of Fingerprints |
| Thu 26th | LDHS | Bernard Aspinwall | The Roman Catholic Experience in North Ayrshire 1840–1920 |
| March 2004 | | | |
| Mon 1st | SHS | Dane Love | The Covenanters |
| Mon 1st | KCCS | Malcolm Robertson (<i>tbc</i>) | Art in Public Places |
| Mon 1st | L(MS) | D M Munro | The Scotia National Antarctic Expedition |
| Tue 2nd | KDHG | Martin Milner | Thomas Lord Howard de Walden: Arms and the Man |
| Thu 4th | PHG | Members | Pot–Pourri – Your Very Own Choice |
| Tue 16th | AFHS | Elizabeth Mortimer | Testaments |
| Tue 16th | KDHG | Christopher Whatley | Looking beneath the Kilt: New Ways of Interpreting 18th Century Scottish History |
| Thu 25th | LDHS | Russel Coleman | Three Towns By–Pass Archaeology Project |
| Tue 30th | WKAS | Alistair Tait | A History of Scottish Jewellery |
| April 2004 | | | |
| Thu 1st | PHG | Alisdair Cochrane and David Rowan | Prestwick History Group – Twenty Years On |
| Mon 5th | L(MS) | H Logan | Women and Shipbuilding in Greenock |
| Mon 5th | SHS | Robert Mackenzie | Kindertransporter and Britain’s Generosity |
| Tue 13th | L&NA | <i>tba</i> | |
| Thu 29th | BHS | Ken Colville | The St Columba Voyage 2003 |
| May 2004 | | | |
| Thu 6th | PHG | Members | Blether of 2004 |

The next diary will be published in the next edition of *Ayrshire Notes*. Society secretaries are reminded and encouraged to send details of their programmes to Rob Close as soon as they are known.

P.S.

Our Man in Baghdad?

Rageh Omaar, the BBC’s Somali–born world affairs correspondent, familiar to us all for his broadcasts from Baghdad against a background of war, is married to Nina Cuninghame, daughter of Sir John Montgomery Cuninghame of Corsehill. The baronetcy takes its name from the estate in Stewarton parish, Ayrshire.

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