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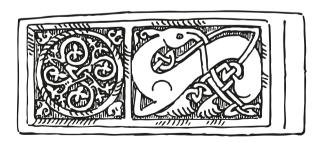
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This is the Wamphray cross-slab taken from the article 'The Early Church in Dumfriesshire' by W.G. Collingwood, in Volume 12 (1926) of these *Transactions*.

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Research Grants

The Society may make small grants for excavation or research. Applications should be made prior to 28 February in each year to the Hon. Secretary. Researchers are also reminded of the Mouswald Trust, founded by our late President, Dr R.C. Reid, which provides grants for work on either side of the Solway for projects falling into the approximate period 1000 BC to AD 1000. Enquiries and applications for grants to the Mouswald Trust should be made to Primrose and Gordon, Solicitors, 1 Newall Terrace, Dumfries DG1 1LN. The Society may also be able to assist with applications for funding from other sources.

THE TRUCKELL PRIZE

In 2009, the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society established The Truckell Prize, commemorating the late A.E. Truckell and his outstanding contribution to local studies in Dumfries and Galloway. The prize was open to undergraduate or postgraduate students from the Crichton Campus, Dumfries for a research paper on a human or natural history topic relating to the geographical area covered by the three former counties of Dumfriesshire, Kirkcudbrightshire and Wigtownshire. In its first five years the prize was awarded on two occasions.

The Society has now revised the terms of the prize as follows:

- The prize is open to all-comers (with the exception of previous winners of the prize) for an original, unpublished (and not submitted for consideration for publication elsewhere) research paper on a human or natural-history topic relating to the geographical area covered by the three former counties of Dumfriesshire, Kirkcudbrightshire and Wigtownshire. Entries, or earlier versions, which have been openly published in conventional print or on-line (in e-journals, blogs, etc.) will not be considered. Entries from researchers at an early stage in their careers are encouraged.
- Entries must meet the editorial standard required by these *Transactions* to qualify. The current Notes for Contributors are available on the Society's website: www.dgnhas.org.uk.
- The winning paper must be made available for publication as an article in these *Transactions*. Copyright in the published paper will be held by the Society, and any other further publication must be approved by the Society.
- The prize will be awarded annually. Entries may be submitted at any time but the deadline for submission is the first day of October each year.
- The prize-winning author will receive £500. Where two or more entries are regarded as of equal merit, the Society reserves the right to recognise joint winners, splitting the cash prize accordingly.
- The decision of the Society in the award of the prize is final, and is not subject to appeal.

For further information and to submit entries, please contact the Chair of the Society's Research Sub-committee, Dr David Devereux, 6 Woodlands Avenue, Kirkcudbright, DG6 4BP. E-mail: devereuxdf@gmail.com.

¹ For further information on his life and achievements see Obituary: Alfred Truckell MBE, MA, FMA, FSA, FSA Scot (1919–2007) in Volume 81 (2007) of these *Transactions*.

ANSTRUTHER DAVIDSON, M.D. (1860–1932): A DUMFRIESSHIRE BOTANIST IN CALIFORNIA

Gary D. Wallace1

Anstruther Davidson practised medicine in Dumfriesshire in the late 1800s. He was also was an accomplished naturalist, collecting specimens with fellow members of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society (hereafter referred to as the Society). Davidson left Dumfriesshire and went to the United States in 1889. This is a brief account of Anstruther Davidson's contributions to the Society and his contributions to science, especially botany, in California.



Figure 1. Anstruther Davidson. Image used by permission of the University and Jepson Herbaria Archives, University of California, Berkeley, 7 January 2016.

Anstruther and his brother Thomas Davidson, also a medical doctor, emigrated to the United States and settled in Los Angeles, California, in 1889. No evidence has yet been found to explain why they left Scotland or why they went specifically to California. Davidson left an area with an annual rainfall of about 40 inches in Dumfriesshire to one with about

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15 inches of rain annually in southern California. Here in southern California, deserts, Chaparral (shrubland) and mountain forests were all close at hand and teeming with plants, not only new to him but many entirely new to science. Davidson is considered to be one of the best and earliest resident authorities on the native plants of southern California. The author became aware of Davidson's considerable field experience gained before he came to California, while preparing an article on Davidson's southern Californian botanical research.² This present article contains some information previously published in that earlier article which focussed on his contributions to the botany of southern California.

Anstruther Davidson was born in Watten, Caithness, Scotland on February 19, 1860. He graduated from the University of Glasgow with a C.M. (Chirurgiae Magister) an M.B. (Medicinae Baccalaureus) with honours in 1881, and his M.D. degree by thesis in 1887. His specialty was dermatology. By 1882 Davidson had moved to Thornhill. Dumfriesshire, where he maintained a general practice until 1888. He was elected to the Society in January 1883, when living in Thornhill³ but is later listed as residing in Sanguhar, where he moved in 1884.4 There is no record that Davidson ever served as an officer of the Society. Davidson's interest in local flora and natural history are evident by his recorded conduct of field excursions and publications during that period.5 Some of Davidson's herbarium specimens collected in Scotland are still in the Society's collections now held in Dumfries Museum. Davidson is mentioned in the transcript of a talk to the Society given by Mrs. Mary Martin in January 1986 on 'Botanical records from the last century, the people who made them rather than the plants'. 6 Many of the collections cited for taxa by Scott-Elliot in the Flora of Dumfriesshire 7 are attributed to Davidson. Scott-Elliot lamented that Davidson's collections were no longer available for reference since he took most of his specimens with him to California when he left Scotland. For many years Davidson maintained a private herbarium in Los Angeles, which included his own Scottish collections as well as his Californian specimens together with specimens given to him by friends both in Scotland and in California. Through a series of mergers, Davidson's specimens are now in the herbarium of Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden (hereafter RSA) in Claremont, California. Over 150 specimens collected by Davidson, and representative of the species listed in Scott-Elliot's Flora of Dumfriesshire, are among those deposited at the RSA. Most of the Scottish specimens in Davidson's herbarium were collected by him, although other collectors are represented, including James Fingland, with whom Davidson collaborated when living in Thornhill⁸ who is also listed by Scott-Elliot.

In 1897 Anstruther Davidson married Alice Jane Merritt (1859–1931). They may have met either as members of the Wild Flower Club associated with the Southwest Museum near Los Angeles, or when both were serving on the Executive Committee of the Southern

² Wallace 2014.

³ Davidson 1887a.

⁴ See list of Society members published in *TDGNHAS*, Series II, 3 (1884) 108.

⁵ See Davidson 1881, 1887a, 1887b, 1888, 1890, 1891a, and 1891b.

⁶ A transcript of this talk was kindly provided by Joanne Turner of Dumfries Museum, by email on December 16, 2014.

⁷ Scott-Elliot 1896.

⁸ Davidson 1887a.

California Science Association (SCSA). Alice was also interested in plants and wrote *California Plants in their Homes* published in 1898. They had two sons, Ronald Anstruther Davidson (1899–1965) and Merritt Thomas Davidson (1902–1991). Alice died on 4 July 1931 followed by Anstruther on 3 April 1932. Anstruther had sustained internal injuries from being hit by a car in January of that year. Both are buried in the Hollywood Forever Cemetery in Los Angeles. Anstruther's brother, Thomas, also died in Los Angeles, on 28 November 1932.

W.L. Jepson, a prominent Californian botanist of the time, described Davidson's appearance after a meeting in 1901: 'typical Scotchman in many ways, wears pointed English beard, fair complexion, bald head, tall, and slender rather than stout.' Joseph Ewan, a botanical historian who visited him just two months before his death, described Davidson's demeanor: 'He is a man full of interest, not shelved, nor cynical, nor disappointed with life, but a trifle melancholy, and above all, full of sifted wisdom.'

In California, Davidson greatly expanded his collecting and publishing activities as well as maintaining his contacts with other individuals interested in the sciences. He was a founding member of the Southern California Science Association in November 1891 which later became the Southern California Academy of Sciences (SCAS) in 1896. He served as President of the former organization from 1892 to 1894. He then served as Vice-President and Treasurer of the SCAS and was elected a Life Member and Fellow. The Botanical Section of the SCAS was established about 1896 and Davidson served as the Section's chairman for a long time from 1904 until 1931. He was elected a corresponding member of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia in 1894 and was an honorary member of the Entomological Society. Anstruther Davidson was an integral part of the scientific community in Los Angeles as evidenced by his participation in a celebratory event for Andrew Carnegie, held in March, 1910 at the Hotel Maryland in Pasadena. The industrialist and philanthropist was on a tour of California, visiting facilities he had financed including the Mt Wilson Solar Observatory near Pasadena. Davidson appears in photographs taken at the Hotel Maryland in Pasadena with fellow Scots Andrew Carnegie and John Muir, the naturalist and environmentalist (see Figures 2 and 3).

Dr Davidson was a practising physician from 1887 until 1932. He and his brother Thomas accepted the charge of the medical and surgical department of a large copper mining company near Winslow Arizona in 1898. Davidson later published portions of a flora of the region. The Davidsons returned to Los Angeles when their contract expired. Davidson was one of thirteen founding members of the Los Angeles Dermatological Society and served as its first President in 1929. He was listed as a Professor of Dermatology at the University of Southern California from 1911 until 1919 and was a fellow of the American Medical Association.

Davidson made numerous donations of all types of specimens to the nascent Los Angeles (County) Museum of History, Science, and Art now known as the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum. He served on the Board of Governors of the museum for

⁹ Davidson, A.M. 1898.

¹⁰ Jepson 1901.

¹¹ Ewan 1934.

twenty-two years. Davidson published around ten papers on entomology, often on the life history of bees or their parasites. He served as Curator of Botany at the Southwest Museum near Los Angeles for a few years in the early 1920s.



Figure 2. Davidson (left) at Hotel Maryland in Pasadena with fellow Scots John Muir the naturalist and environmentalist (centre) and Andrew Carnegie financier (right). Image courtesy of the Observatories of the Carnegie Institution for Science Collection at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

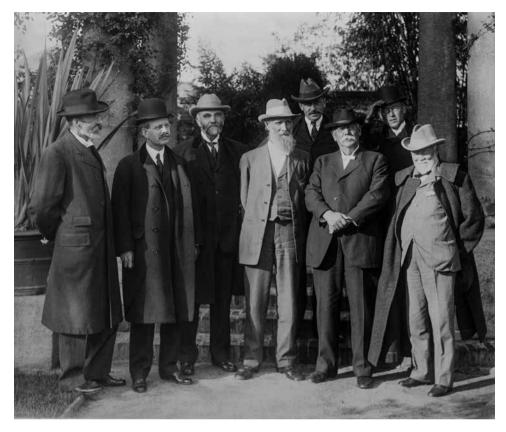


Figure 3. Davidson, Muir and Carnegie with naturalist and astronomer members of the Southern California Academy of Sciences. Image courtesy of the Observatories of the Carnegie Institution for Science Collection at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Davidson's frequent local travels, keen eye and collecting led to his publishing the first checklists of the flora of Los Angeles within just a few years after his arrival. He assembled an extensive herbarium which was used to document and compare newly found specimens. He eventually published about seventy scientific papers on the native plants, new plant taxa, and vegetation of southern California. He also published several papers on the plants of Clifton, Arizona. Davidson was meticulous about collecting voucher or type specimens of all of the noteworthy species he encountered, especially if he thought they might be new species. Regrettably his specimen labels on his Californian collections, like those on his Scottish collections, usually had scant information. He gave his specimens herbarium accession numbers which were usually written on their labels as he mounted them to file in his herbarium. Davidson did not use consecutive collection numbers as is now the custom. Often his herbarium accession numbers are mistaken for collection numbers.

Davidson donated the bulk of his personal herbarium of approximately 8,000 specimens to the herbarium of Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History in September 1930. This entire collection was subsequently transferred to the RSA in 1986. In all, Davidson described sixty-seven new plant taxa, of which twenty-two are still recognized as distinct taxa at some rank. All of his type specimens are deposited at the RSA. Davidson's best remembered contribution is his co-authored *Flora of Southern California*. It was the standard flora for the region for over ten years.

Anstruther Davidson's contributions to botany, particularly to that in California, were recognised by specialists all over the country. Fourteen plant taxa were named after him. A list of the plant taxa named in his honour and their current names (in brackets), if different, follows:

Acrolasia davidsoniana Abrams. Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club, 32(10), (1905) 538. (= Mentzelia congesta Torr. & A. Gray).

Aletes davidsonii J. M. Coult. & Rose. Contributions from the U.S. National Herbarium, 7 (1900) 107. (= Cymopterus davidsonii (J.M. Coult. & Rose) R.L. Hartm.).

Arabis davidsonii Greene. Leaflets of Botanical Observations and Criticism, 2(3) (1911) 159. (= Boechera davidsonii (Greene) N.H. Holmgren).

Atriplex davidsonii Standl. North American Flora, 21(1) (1916) 57. (= Atriplex serenana Abrams var. davidsonii (Standl.) Munz.)

Calochortus davidsonianus Abrams. Illustrated Flora of the Pacific States, 1 (1923) 441. (= Calochortus splendens Douglas ex Benth.).

Capsella procumbens (L.) Fries var. davidsonii Munz. Manual of Southern California Botany, (1935) 199, 598. (= Hornungia procumbens (L.) Hayek).

Collinsia davidsonii Parish. Zoe 4 (1893) 147. (= Collinsia bartsiifolia Benth. var. davidsonii (Parish) Newsom).

Eriogonum davidsonii Greene ex J.A. Clark. Contributions from the United States National Herbarium, 1(7) (1893) 244.

Lotus davidsonii Greene. Erythea 1(10) (1893) 207. (= Acmispon nevadensis (S. Watson) Brouillet).

Malvastrum davidsonii B.L. Rob. Synoptical Flora of North America, 1 (1897) 312. (= Malacothamnus davidsonii (B.L. Rob.) Greene).

Phaca davidsonii Rydb. North American Flora, 24(6) (1929) 362–363. (= Astragalus preussii A. Gray var. laxiflorus A. Gray).

Picradenia davidsonii Greene. Pittonia 4 (1901) 240. (= Hymenoxys odorata DC.).

Salvia davidsonii Greenm. Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 41 (1905) 246.

Scrophularia davidsonii Pennell. Notulae Naturae of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, 43 (1940) 8. (= Scrophularia parviflora Wooton & Standl.).

¹³ Davidson & Moxley 1923.

Likewise, twelve taxa of Hymenoptera were named after Davidson. A list of the Hymenoptera taxa named in his honour and their more current names (in brackets), ¹⁴ if different, follows:

Andrina davidsoni Vireck & Cockerell. Proceedings of the United States National Museum, 48 (1914) 52.

Brachycoma davidsoni Coquillett. Entomological News, 5(6) (1894) 170-172.

Centris hoffmanseggiae davidsoni Cockerell. Bulletin of the Southern California Academy of Sciences, 3(9) (1904) 160. (= Centris hoffmanseggiae Cockerell).

Crabro davidsoni Sandhouse. Annals of the Entomological Society of America, 31 (1938) 1. (= Crosocerus annulipes annulipes (Lepeletier and Brulle)).

Dianthidium davidsoni Cockerell. Bulletin of the Southern California Academy of Sciences, 3(1) (1904) 5. (= Anthidium ulkei ulkei (Cresson)).

Halictoides davidsoni Cockerell. Bulletin of the Southern California Academy of Sciences, 1(10) (1902) 140. (= Dufourea davidsoni (Cockerell)).

Hemiteles davidsonii Ashmead. Entomological News, 7(10) (1896) 320. (= Gelis davidsonii (Ashmead)).

Megachile davidsoni Cockerell. Bulletin of the Southern California Academy of Sciences, 1(6) (2002) 70. (= Chalicodoma davidsoni (Cockerell)).

Nomada davidsoni Cockerell. Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, 55 (1903) 575–576.

Osmia davidsoniella Cockerell. *Canadian Entomologist*, 37(11) (1905) 370. (= *Osmia texana* Cresson).

Perdita davidsoni Timberlake. University of California Publications, Entomology, 28 (1964) 235.

Xenoglossodes davidsoni Cockerell. *Bulletin of the Southern California Academy of Sciences*, 4(2) (1905) 28.

Few individuals made such significant contributions to the collecting of and knowledge of the flora and fauna in the formative years of scientific research in southern California. California can be grateful for Anstruther Davidson's legacy of collections and publications and acknowledge the background and stimulus to these achievements provided by his friends and colleagues in the Society in Dumfriesshire, Scotland.

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¹⁴ based on Krombein et al 1979.

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THREE ANCIENT BATTLEGROUNDS

Martin Allen¹

This article discusses the whereabouts of three Dark Age battlefields. The first is that of Tribruit or Tryfrwyd, named as the tenth of Arthur's battles and therefore dating (if not merely legendary) from the fifth century, and fought according to a recent theory² beside the River Tweed near the village of Broughton. The second is that of Arfderydd or Armterid, fought in 573 near Longtown, in which a British prince named Gwenddoleu was defeated by his cousins Gwrgi and Peredur.³ The third is that of Degsastan in which, in 603, a force of Gaels led by Aedàn mac Gabràin was defeated by Æthelfrith's Northumbrians, possibly near the Dawston Burn which flows into the Liddel Water eight miles above Newcastleton.⁴

Tribruit

From Broughton, on the A701 between Moffat and Edinburgh, a tortuous minor road heads roughly east to join the B712 near Stobo Castle. A mile from the village it passes Dreva Muirburn, simply 'Muirburn' on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey six-inch map, and then crosses the lower slopes of Dreva Hill to pass Dreva Farm (NT 140360). South of the farm the land slopes down steeply to the River Tweed. Across the river, the farm overlooks an area of flat land roughly the shape of a segment of orange, its curved side formed by the river, its straight side by the foot of the far slope. On this flat land stands the ancient stone shown in Figures 1 and 2; it stands 5ft tall, alone in a square of bare ground surrounded by willow biomass, close to the river and almost immediately opposite the farm. The theory advanced by Andrew Breeze is that this area is the site on which, according to the ninth-century *Historia Brittonum*, the battle of Tribruit was fought.

Breeze notes the occurrence of *Trywruid* (in modern spelling, *Tryfrwyd*) in the thirteenth-century *Black Book of Carmarthen*, evidently the same name as *Tribruit*. In the Dark Ages, as in our own, spelling lagged behind changes in pronunciation. Kenneth Jackson has drawn attention to a general softening of consonants dating from the fifth century; it is likely that the *Historia Brittonum* author, while writing *Tribruit*, would have spoken it in a manner approaching the modern pronunciation with the -b- and -t softened to v- and -d.

¹ Durisdeer Schoolhouse, Thornhill, Dumfriesshire DG3 5BQ.

That of Andrew Breeze, 'Historia Brittonum and Arthur's Battle of Tribruit' in *TDGNHAS*, Series III, 80 (2006), pp.53–58. That article is the source of all references to Breeze in the part of the present article headed 'Tribruit'.

³ Myles Dillon and Nora K. Chadwick, *The Celtic Realms*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967, p.81. These authors refer to the battle as 'of Arthuret', the modern name of the parish in which Longtown is situated.

⁴ Sir Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, Third Edition 1971, p.77. Stenton rejects the identification of *Degsastan* with Dawston on linguistic grounds, regarding identification of the site as 'best left an open question'.

⁵ Kenneth Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain*, Edinburgh, University Press, 1953, pp.548–9 etc.

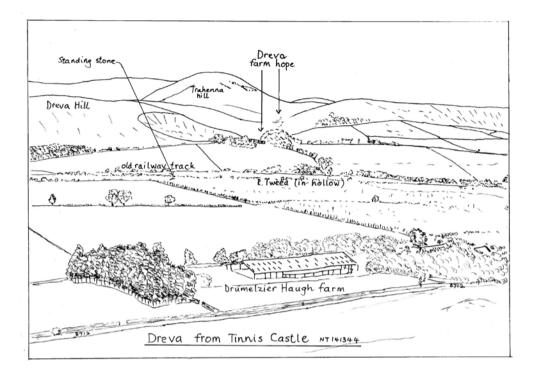


Figure 1. Dreva from Tinnis Castle. Drawing by the author.

Breeze's theory rests, in part, on derivation of the name Dreva from *Tryfrwyd*. He recognises the modern name as Brittonic in origin: indeed it could be a Cumbric ancestor of Welsh *(y) dref-fa*, 'the settlement place' (which he rejects, being unaware of any instance in Wales of that noun-suffix combination), or possibly *(y) dref fach*, 'the small settlement', named in relation to a larger settlement nearby.⁶

Breeze cites various authorities' attempts to translate *Tryfrwyd*: 'pierced through', 'bloodstained', 'battle', 'breakthrough' — all except for his preferred choice of 'many-coloured' suggestive of fighting, and so raising the possibility that the place took its name from the battle.

Breeze alludes to seventeenth-century spellings of Dreva as *Draway* and *Drevay*, but these forms do not imply pronunciation to rhyme with 'tray'. It was then usual in placenames to use -ay to represent a final neutral vowel or *schwa*, the sound of the two letters a in 'agenda': the island of Barra was spelt *Barray* on John Speed's map of Scotland, published in 1610. The final y probably originated as a scribe's flourish, but has persisted to affect both the pronunciation and spelling of some names including that of Galloway.

⁶ For readers unfamiliar with the Welsh language: (1) single *f* in Welsh has the sound of *v*, and *dd* sounds like 'th' in 'this'; (2) a feminine singular noun beginning with a mutable consonant, such as *tref*, has that consonant softened after the definite article *y*; (3) the same rule applies to an adjective following a feminine singular noun, so *bach* after *tref* becomes *fach*.

In discussing the possible transformation *Tryfrwyd*<*Dreva*, Breeze gives examples of Welsh place-names in which initial *D*- replaces initial *T*- without the influence of a preceding definite article, and provides explanations for the loss of the second *r* in *Tribruit/Tryfrwyd* and of the final consonant. The resulting forms would be **Dribui* or **Dryfwy*, the underlined diphthong weakening to a mere *schwa*.



Figure 2. Standing Stone near the River Tweed at Grid Reference NT 139355. Dreva Farm is on the skyline, hidden by the trees immediately to the left of the stone. Photograph by the author.

Breeze holds that the name refers to the flat land beside the river, long divided into fields, now mainly pastureland but partly planted with willow. But this interpretation is open to objections:

- (a) Geographic: All the features with *Dreva*-names on the six-inch map the farm, the 'hope' behind it, the hill and the crag on its south-west side lie on the north side of the Tweed, but the flat land is on the opposite, south, side.
- (b) Linguistic: from *Historia Brittonum* Breeze quotes the site of Arthur's tenth battle as *in litore fluminis quod vocatur Tribruit*, and suggests that the Latin is ambiguous: that the relative clause might qualify either *litore* or *fluminis*, as indeed it could; but since the two nouns are grammatically interchangeable the relative clause naturally qualifies the one that immediately precedes it *fluminis*, not *litore*: it is the river, not the land beside it, that is called *Tribruit*. To support his different resolution of the supposed ambiguity, he refers to the phrase *traethev Trywruid* (modern *traethau Tryfrwyd*) in the *Black Book of Carmarthen*, and cites the opinion of other authorities that the literal meaning of *Tryfrwyd* is 'many-coloured'; consequently that *traethev Trywruid* does not refer to a river but means 'many-coloured strands' (in the sense of shores or riverbanks). However, given the uncertain derivation of *Tryfrwyd* it is likely by the Dark Ages to have been no longer a meaningful adjective but simply the name of a river, its literal meaning long lost. *Traethau Tryfrwyd* therefore meant 'the banks of the Tryfrwyd' with no description of the banks themselves.
- (c) Textual: *Historia Brittonum* locates six others of the sites of Arthur's dozen battles in relation to rivers. If his tenth battle was fought beside a river, especially one as significant as the Tweed, the name given would have been that of the river rather than of a fairly small area on one of its banks.

That brings me to my final point. Breeze has justified his placing of the battle on that area by deriving Dreva from Tryfrwyd; I should like, very tentatively, to take this a stage further by suggesting that Tryfrwyd may also be the root of Tweed. The Celtic name contains all the phonemes of the modern one, viz. $T^{****}wyd$, or, more likely, since the accent of the Celtic name fell on the first syllable, $Try^{****}d$ with the sound of w substituted for r. Modern Welsh would sound the y of the first syllable like English u in 'cut', a fairly recent development; the spelling Tribruit shows it to have had an i sound. The awkward cluster of remaining phonemes could have been omitted to suit Anglo-Saxon tongues and ears.

Tryfrwyd<Dreva would have been a gradual development, changing imperceptibly with the speech of the local population: we have only to hear recordings from the 1940s and 1950s to realise how our own speech has changed in a few decades. Tryfrwyd<Tweed would have taken a different and more abrupt course, of adaptation by Anglian settlers of a 'foreign' name to their own speech. Jackson shows that the Anglo-Saxons substituted their own sounds for the 'difficult' phonemes in the words (including, of course, names) that they borrowed⁸ — a practice that is still with us, as in en-suite pronounced 'on sweet' and Pwllheli as if spelt 'Pwtheli' — which might explain substitution of w for r, the two sounds being acoustically close. At any rate, the sound of w was there when Bede wrote of the river in the early eighth century as tuidi, which became Twéode when his work was translated

^{7 &#}x27;remote, enclosed place' or, as here, 'remote valley': Margaret Gelling and Ann Cole, *The Landscape of Place-names*, Stamford, Shaun Tyas, 2000, p.133.

⁸ Jackson, op. cit. p.195.

from Latin to Anglo-Saxon in c. 890.9

Why, then, did the ninth-century author of *Historia Brittonum* name the river *Tribruit/Tryfrwyd* if it had become *Tweed* a century or more before? And why did the older name persist to occur in the *Black Book* as late as the thirteenth? One possibility is that the two names were used by different groups, like *Falklands* and *Malvinas* for the same group of islands in our own day. Another is that the authors of those books did not know that the two names referred to the same river: that the account of Arthur's battles, passed down through the centuries by oral tradition, had become merely legendary, the names and whereabouts of the rivers lost in obscurity.

Arfderydd

The battle of Arfderydd was the subject of an article by W.R. Gourlay in these *Transactions* for the year 1929–1930.¹⁰ Much more recently, Andrew Breeze has revisited the subject, turning his attention to the origin and signification of the name by which the battle is known.¹¹

It was fought between British factions — 'members of the Cymric race' in the words of Gourlay, who reports the opinion of the eminent nineteenth-century historian W.F. Skene that the battlefield was 'between the Knowes of Arthuret and the lands on either side of the Carwinley Burn which flows near Liddel Strength'. The Knowes of Arthuret are hillocks about 200 yards south-east of Arthuret Church (NY 380677) and are known to be the site of the battle of Solway Moss in 1542. Skene's mention of Liddel Strength (NY 402742), nearly a mile north of the Carwinley Burn, suggests that the fighting extended that far, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the Knowes.

Gourlay quotes from the tenth-century *Annales Cambriae* this entry for the year 573: 'The battle of Arterid between the sons of Ellifer and Gwendoleu the son of Kediau: and in this battle Guendoleu [sic] fell: Merlin became insane'. Leaving Merlin aside for the moment, Gourlay's identification of the protagonists takes us back to Coel Hen or Old King Cole, the 'merry old soul' of the nursery rhyme,¹² an ancestor of the leaders on both sides. Gwendoleu was a cousin of Ellifer's sons Gwrgi and Peredur, all members of the junior branch of Coel's posterity; the best-known of the senior branch was Urien, the ruler of Rheged. Coel is believed to have reigned in the Kyle district of Ayrshire at the time of the Roman abandonment of Britain and to have given his name to the district, but the whereabouts of Rheged are uncertain. It is widely held to have extended along both sides of the Solway Firth; however, Tim Clarkson, while considering the possible locations, does not exclude that possibility but dismisses 'the conventional placing of Rheged in

⁹ Eilert Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names*, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 4th Edition 1960, p.483.

¹⁰ W.R. Gourlay, 'The Battle of Arthuret, c. 573 A.D.' in *TDGNHAS*, Series III, 16 (1929–30), pp.104–112.

¹¹ Andrew Breeze, 'The Name and Battle of Arfderydd, near Carlisle' in *Journal of Literary Onomastics*, 2 (2012), pp.1–9.

¹² According to Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_King_Cole, accessed 26 September 2015) the nursery rhyme probably derives from ancient Welsh.

the shorelands of the Solway Firth as an unproven hypothesis whose frailties need to be acknowledged'. 13

The bone of contention was *Nydd yr ehedydd*, 'The Lark's Nest', now widely accepted as referring to Caerlaverock, although it may seem strange that a battle for possession of a fort at the mouth of the Nith should have been fought beside a different river some twenty miles away. Gourlay did not venture an opinion on the matter, but the identification with Caerlaverock fits in with his analysis of the cause of the conflict. The Roman withdrawal from Britain in the previous century had left its east coast open to Anglian colonisation. By the time of Arfderydd the Angles had established a powerful kingdom in Northumbria and were expanding westward along the main river-valleys. Gourlay states that Gwendoleu's brother Nudd ruled the upper valley of the Tweed, and he suggests that the brothers may have made an alliance with Nudd's Anglian neighbours which could have led to extension of their territory to the Solway.

Modern historians disagree on interpretation of the ancient documents, none seeming to favour Gourlay's confident assertion of the battle's wider strategic importance in delaying the westward advance of the Anglian colonists. Clarkson¹⁴ makes no mention of a supposed British-Anglian alliance and notes that Nudd was a fairly common name: although Gwendoleu is known to have had a brother of that name, he was not necessarily the Nudd mentioned as the father of Dreon, a participant in the battle who '[cannot] be placed in a specific geographical context'.

Breeze's article leads from a survey of the references in ancient literature to *Arfderydd* and its protagonists to consideration of the meaning and signification of the name, and thence to location of the battlefield. He interprets the name *Arfderydd* as originally that of a stream. He gives examples from Wales and Scotland to illustrate two features of the Celtic names of streams and rivers: first (surprisingly!) that they often contain allusions to heat or fire; second, that many have names referring to tools (sharp ones, in his examples) or weapons. The first element of the name is identical to Welsh *arf*, 'weapon, tool', from the Latin plural *arma*, 'arms'. The second is Welsh *terydd* 'burning, ardent, fierce' from Latin *torridus*. In the previous section we noted that several of Arthur's battles were named from rivers, and Breeze gives the more recent examples of Bannockburn, the Marne, the Imjin and others; Arfderydd perhaps belongs to that category.

The stream which Breeze identifies as *Arfderydd* is the Carwinley Burn, a rushing torrent in winter and the first significant tributary of the Esk above its confluence with the meandering River Lyne. The burn takes its modern name from the homestead of Carwinley on its bank, formerly *Caer Gwendoleu*, Gwendoleu's stronghold. It forms the northern boundary of the modern parish of Arthuret, the transformation *Arfderydd*<*Arthuret* due, no doubt, to a mistaken belief that Arthur must have been involved in an ancient battle whose name seemed to resemble his own, despite the fact that the victory credited to him at *Mons Badonicus* had been won some seventy years earlier.

This brings us to the battlefield. Breeze cites 'the statement in the fragmentary life of

¹³ Tim Clarkson, *The Men of the North*, Edinburgh, Birlinn Ltd., 2010, pp.68–75.

¹⁴ Ibid. pp.88–99.

Kentigern [...] that the forces met in an open space between Liddel Water and *Carwannock* or *Carwanolow*, normally regarded as Carwinley'. Although the space is no longer open but abundantly wooded, the description is geographically precise and clearly refers to the area shown in Figure 3 as extending downward from the 300ft contour to a loop formed by the Liddel Water, River Esk and Carwinley Burn. In that loop an army could be trapped, hemmed in by the precipitous descent to the Liddel Water on one side, the deep gorge of the Carwinley Burn on another, and between them the flat land in the curve of the Esk which was probably a marsh. Somewhere there Gwendoleu's forces were defeated as they sought to defend his stronghold, and he himself was killed. Gwrgi and Peredur had won the battle and, if Gwendoleu was indeed in league with the Anglians, perhaps a check to their westward advance. But, as we shall see in the next section, it was not to last.

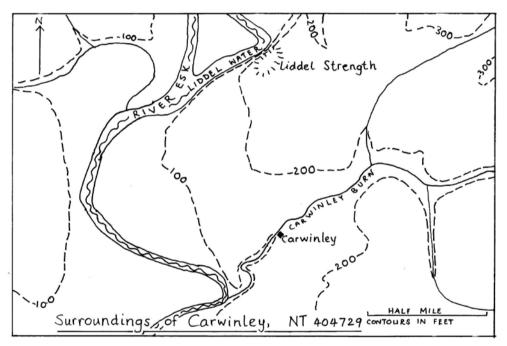


Figure 3. Surroundings of Carwinley. Sketch map by the author.

Finally, Merlin. The Merlin who lost his reason at Arfderydd was probably real — real enough for Nikolai Tolstoy to have constructed an account of his later life as a wild man, magician and prophet in the hills above Moffat. The twelfth-century life of Kentigern mentions 'a prophet Lailoken' who suffered the same misfortune on the same occasion; the two names, like Kentigern and Mungo, may refer to the same person, who clearly could not have been an older contemporary of Arthur as represented in legend and romance. 'Merlin's Grave (Supposed Site of)' is marked on the 1900 Ordnance Survey six-inch

¹⁵ Nikolai Tolstoy, *The Quest for Merlin*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, Sceptre Edition 1988, chapters 4ff. The account of Merlin's death is on pp.214–5.

map¹⁶ at NT 134345, at the south-western end of the area of flat land which, as we saw in the previous section, may be the site of the battle of Tribruit.

Degsastan

An article on Degsastan, by A.D. Murray, appeared in these *Transactions* for the year 1894–5.¹⁷ The 'famous old battlefield' which he describes is Dawston Rig in Liddesdale. He mentions one other site claimed as the battlefield — Dalston, near Carlisle — but regards Dawston Rig as the more likely.

Stenton, as we have seen, regarded identification of the site as 'best left an open question', rejecting the derivation *Degsastan*<*Dawston* on philological grounds. Such a derivation, however, would probably involve fewer etymological gymnastics than those proposed in this paper for the two derivations from *Tribruit*, and so is at least possible. According to Stenton the battle was Æthelfrith's successful repulse of an attack by the Scoto-Irish king Aedàn, and was fought at 'a place in English territory called Degsastan'. He continues: '... thenceforward the Britons of Strathclyde remained the only serious rivals of the Angles of Bernicia for the possession of the Scottish lowlands'.

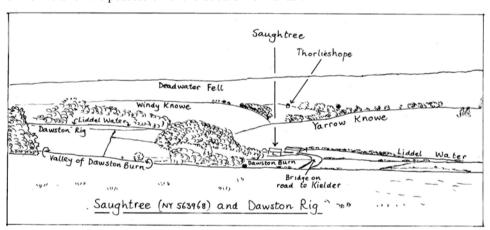


Figure 4. Saughtree and Dawston Rig. Drawing by the author.

If identification of Dawston Rig with *Degsastan* is correct, it was probably not 'in English [i.e. Anglian] territory' until after the battle was won. It is in a region dominated by high moorland which would have offered little inducement to would-be settlers, and Clarkson regards it as 'so remote that any association with a great battle seems inconceivable'. ¹⁹ Bede describes the site of the battle as 'a famous place', ²⁰ as Dawston would have been because, although in wild country, it was a strategically important junction of routes linking the

Peebles-shire Sheet XVI.NW, online at < https://maps.nls.uk/>.

¹⁷ Alexander D. Murray, 'A Famous Old Battlefield' in *TDGNHAS*, Series II, 11 (1894–5), pp.89–96.

¹⁸ Stenton, loc. cit.

¹⁹ Clarkson, op. cit. p.114.

²⁰ Bede, History of the English Church and People, I.34.

upper valleys of the rivers Tweed, Tyne and Esk — routes that still exist, although of less importance than formerly. Dawston Rig is bounded on its west side by the B6357, which runs from Bonchester Bridge (on the Rule Water, a tributary of the Tweed) and continues down the valley of the Liddel Water to approach its confluence with the Esk. At the hamlet of Saughtree, immediately south of the Rig, a minor road diverges to enter the catchment area of the Tyne. This road crosses the watershed to follow the Kielder Burn (much of its valley now beneath Kielder Water, a large reservoir) towards its confluence with the North Tyne near Bellingham.

The main features of the immediate surroundings of Dawston Rig are shown in Figure 4, the eastward view from a point above Saughtree on the track of the former Riccarton Junction—Hexham railway line. Dawston Rig is a spur separating the valley of the Dawston Burn from the upper valley of the Liddel Water. The B6357, which is out of sight, now follows the Dawston Burn valley but the older road descended to Saughtree from the crest of the Rig, as shown on William Roy's military map of the 1750s. The continuation of the B6357 southward from Saughtree is also out of sight. The road to Kielder, after crossing the Dawston Burn and skirting the Saughtree farm buildings, heads north-east along the Liddel Water valley between Dawston Rig and Windy Knowe. It then curves to run southeast, crossing the watershed into England. Deadwater Fell lies beyond its south-eastward continuation, its details omitted because the photograph on which the drawing is based was taken when (as so often) distant features were obscured by mist.

Murray suggests that Aedàn, his force numerically stronger than Æthelfrith's, may have fought in alliance with the British.²¹ Dawston would have been well placed for a Scottish-British rendezvous, the Scots perhaps taking what is now the route from Glasgow to Bonchester Bridge by way of Carluke, Peebles, Selkirk and Hawick and then that of B6357 southwards; the Britons from further south (Rheged?) coming up the Liddel Water valley, possibly reinforced by others from what is now Ayrshire. Dawston Rig may have been chosen as the ideal and easily-defendable base camp for a major assault on Anglian territory, as it would have been if Æthelfrith, no doubt apprised of that intention, had not got there first. Possession of the high ground of Dawston Rig was the key to the battle, overlooking the approaches from north, south and east, while any assault from the high ground to the west would have been frustrated by the intervening Dawston Burn valley.

So it was that, thirty years after Arfderydd, the Anglians gained the victory that gave them entry to the south of Scotland.

Whatever the etymology of the first element of *Degsastan*, apparently the possessive of an otherwise unrecorded personal name **Dægsa* or **Degsa*, the final syllable is clearly the Anglo-Saxon ancestor of modern 'stone'. In 1919 the local medical practitioner, Dr Evans, wrote: 'At the lower or south end of the Rig stands a rough, flat stone about 4 feet 5 inches high with a grave beside it. The grave is comparatively shallow, 20 inches; it is 10 feet long and 2 feet broad, carefully built of large stones on the floor, roof and sides; and its long axis runs east and west. The upright stone had fallen down, but was raised some years ago when the grave was examined'.²² Recent attempts to find these features have failed: a

²¹ Murray, op. cit. p.94.

²² Dr Evans in *The Border Magazine*, February, 1919, quoted by John Byers, *Liddesdale*,

local resident, Dr Geoffrey Kolbe, writes: 'I have made attempts to find the grave, but to no avail. It is on Saughtree farm, which is owned by Andrew Douglas and his wife who is a keen local historian, but she did not know of the grave either'. Since the upright stone had fallen at some time prior to Evans' investigation it may well have fallen again, making the monument, if it still exists, hard to find.

Degsastan: another view

Here too, Andrew Breeze has advanced an alternative theory:²⁴ that the name *Degsastan* refers to the standing stone beside the River Tweed that we noted above, near the village of Drumelzier, illustrated in Figure 2, and marked by the Ordnance Survey at NT 139355.

Breeze's theory is based on his interpretation of the first elements of both *Degsastan* and nearby *Dawyck* (NT 169352) as derived from *Degui*, the well-attested early British form of the name David, which as *Dewi* still exists in Welsh alongside *Dafydd* as its pet-form and as the name of the sixth-century bishop who became Wales's patron, *Dewi Sant*. For *Degui* as the first element in *Dawyck*, Breeze points to a possibly analogous Herefordshire placename, Dewchurch, in which the personal name (there that of the saint) likewise precedes an English descriptor.²⁵ While the place-name *Degsastan* seems to mean 'Degsa's Stone' Breeze rejects the personal name *Degsa* as un-English and finds no evidence for a Cumbric or Welsh origin. Our source for the place-name is Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, which, as Breeze points out, contains a number of misreadings of Celtic names: *Degsa*, he suggests, could be a misreading for *Degui*, the three downstrokes of *ui* mistaken by a scribe for *sa*. The original name of the site would thus have been **Deguistan*.

Breeze's theory thus rests on the assumptions that *Degsastan* is a corruption of a phrase meaning 'David's Stone', that Dawyck is 'David's Village' and that the two Davids are one and the same. A point in favour of his choice of site is the presence there of the standing stone mentioned above. It appears prehistoric and was evidently more firmly founded than the fallen stone reportedly found in the early twentieth century on Dawston Rig.

If Aedàn's objective was the lower Tweed valley there are two possibilities to consider. If intending to start from Dawston he would have descended to Hawick and would then have followed the River Teviot to its confluence with the Tweed at Kelso. If on the other hand he had joined the Tweed valley somewhere upstream of Drumelzier his intended route would simply have followed that river downstream. The two sites here considered for Degsastan are far apart; Drumelzier is 35 miles north-west of Dawston, but both are virtually equidistant from the mouth of the Tweed.

Historical and Descriptive, Galashiels, John McQueen & Son Ltd, 1952.

²³ Personal communication by email, 21 October 2013.

²⁴ Andrew Breeze, 'Degsastan 603: Locating a Battlefield' Scottish Historical Review (forthcoming). I am grateful to Professor Breeze for allowing me to see this paper in advance of publication.

²⁵ But, for Dawyck, see W.F.H. Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place-names* London, Batsford, 1986, p.79. Classifying Dawyck among names containing Anglo-Saxon *wic*, 'village', of the first element he writes 'the quest for an etymology is highly speculative, the Old English words *da* "doe" and *dawe* "crow-like bird, jackdaw" being the most likely candidates ...'

Conclusion

Following the Celtic tradition I have presented these three battlegrounds as an interlinked triad. The battles of Tribruit and Degsastan are both believed by Professor Breeze to have been fought on the same flat land beside the River Tweed; the supposed site of Merlin's grave on that area provides a link with the battle of Arfderydd at which he is said to have lost his reason. That battle and the battle of Degsastan are also connected, the former (according to Gourlay) as a thwarted Anglian attempt to reach the Solway shore, the latter as the victory which enabled the Anglians to succeed in that venture. By the middle of the eighth century much of our own region had become a part of the Kingdom of Northumbria; when Bede wrote his *History* early in that century an Anglian bishopric already existed at Whithorn.²⁶ Much evidence of Anglian penetration into our region still exists, such as the crosses in Ruthwell Church and near the Nith Bridge at Thornhill.²⁷

²⁶ Bede, op. cit. III.4 and V.23.

²⁷ See D.J. Craig, *The Distribution of pre-Norman sculpture in South-West Scotland* (Durham: https://etheses.dur.ac.uk/1553/, 1992>).

MICHAEL McGORTH AND THE CLAN AFREN

Alan Milliken¹

During his reign, David II (1329–71) appointed at least four captains and chiefs of clans in the greater Galloway region: Gilbert McGillolane, captain of the Clan Connan; John McKennedy, captain of the Muintercasduf; Michael Mcgorth, captain of the Kenelanen, and Donald Edgar, captain of the Clan Macgowin. Of the four captains, Gilbert McGillolane and Michael McGorth were recognised as 'captains of parentela', a term which conveyed rights and powers over their kin and relations. Michael Mcgorth is described as 'captain of his relations the Kenelanen'. It has been generally accepted that Mcgorth is an accurate spelling of the original name copied from a now lost charter. However, there is some evidence to suggest the name might well have been a transcription error for Mcgeith, modernised to McGhie, an old established family name in Galloway. The principal seat of this family was located in the parish of Balmaghie in Kirkcudbrightshire and its earliest known chief, Gillemichael Mc[G]eth, appears in the Rolls of Submission and Homage, commonly called the Ragman Roll, in 1296. It is possible that he was the leader of the Clan Afren, which is discussed further in this article, along with the name Kenelanen.

The chancery record for the charters appointing Gilbert McGillolane, John McKennedy, Michael Mcgorth and Donald Edgar have all been lost, and they might well have been amongst those rolls that perished in a shipwreck in 1660, when a substantial part of the Scottish legal record was being returned to Edinburgh². Fortunately, their names are preserved in indexes and calendars of the contents of registers and lost charters held by the Scottish crown since the reign of Robert I, king of Scots. The corpus of this record was published by Maitland Thomson in Appendix II of the Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum, which came from several sources. The first is a list in Latin of the contents of the register of lost charters called the 'Index Cartarum', better known as the calendar of lost charters, which formed Index A in Appendix II.3 The index is an octavo book, which is known to have been compiled during the period between 1554 and 1579, when James Makgill of Rankeilor was Lord Clerk Register. It is usually dated to about 1579, when the last entry is recorded. The original charters are believed to have been granted by David II sometime before the battle of Neville's Cross in 1346. Maitland Thomson also printed a parallel column called Index B, which is based on William Robertson's 1798 edition, An Index, drawn up about the year 1629, of many Records of Charters. This index, referred to as Robertson's Index, was created from an index of charters found in the British Museum,

^{1 1}a Brown Street, Armadale, West Lothian, EH48 3LB.

Webster, Bruce: Scotland from the Eleventh Century to 1603 (London, 1975), p.130.

Thomson, John Maitland (ed): Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum, The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland A.D. 1306–1424 (Edinburgh, 1984), Vol. I, Appendix 2, Index A. The contents of his list were compiled from a calendar of Crown charters from the reign of King Robert I to Mary, Queen of Scotland preserved with the National Records of Scotland, reference SRO1/1.

a transcript of which was made by Robertson from the Harleian MS 4609 in 1793. It commenced in the reign of Robert I in 1309 and finished with the reign of James I in 1413. The following year in November 1794, another index of charters came into the possession of Register House (the National Records of Scotland), which either disappeared or had been lost by the time Thomson revised Robertson's Index. It is believed to have been compiled at the hand of Sir John Hamilton of Magdalens, Lord Clerk Register between 1622 and 1632.⁴ Importantly, A.A.M. Duncan has drawn attention to the fact that it is clear from Robertson's preface that he himself made no use of it for his edition.⁵ Instead, he took the view that although the Harleian transcript was considerably more modern than the year 1629, and the whereabouts of the original seemed unknown, the discovery of the index in November 1794, to him, appeared to be the very index from which the Harleian transcript had been copied and yet, he chose not to print this edition.⁶ Against this background, Thomson faced a formidable task of reviewing a transcript and not the original itself.

Fortunately, in the National Records of Scotland there exists a different version of the Harleian MS 4609, a calendar of Crown charters 1309–1424, hereafter referred to as SRO1/33.7 With this and Thomson's revised edition of Robertson's Index, which was collated with the Harleian MS transcript, now in the British Library, and other verified extracts from the lost rolls issued between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, we now have a substantial body of records that can be compared between Index A and Index B, and Thomson's supplementary footnotes. It includes many references to the transcript and notes from the lost rolls by Thomas, earl of Haddington, in National Library of Scotland (Haddington MS)⁸ and Harleian MS 4609. From these two Indexes, we have preserved:9

Index A (Index Cartarum)

Carta Gilberti Megillolane quod sit capitaneus de tota parentela sua.

Carta Michaelis Mcgorth quod sit capitanus de parentela de Kenclanen.

Carta Joannis Mckenedy quod sit capitanus Mintircasduf.

Index B (Robertson's Index)10

Carta anent the clan of Clenconnan and who should be captain thereof. Galloway. Carta anent the clan of Kenelman.

Carta anent the clan of Muntercasduff, John McKennedy captain thereof.

Carta to Donald Edzear, of the captainship [of] Clanmacgowin.

⁴ See Maitland Thomson's introduction, pp.viii–ix. He suggests the Harleian MS 4609 was transcribed by James Anderson, editor of *Diplomata Scotiae*, see footnote 1.

⁵ Duncan, Archibald A. M: Regesta Regum Scottorum, Vol. V: The Acts of Robert, King of Scots, 1306–1329 (Edinburgh, 1988), p.215.

⁶ Robertson, William: An Index, drawn up about the year 1629, of many Records of charters, Granted by the Different Sovereigns of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1798), p.vi.

⁷ National Records of Scotland, catalogue reference SRO1/33.

⁸ Advocates MS 34.2.1, Special Collections at the National Library of Scotland.

⁹ Thomson, John Maitland (ed): *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum*, The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland A.D. 1306–1424 (Edinburgh, 1984), Vol. I, App. 2, Index B, nos. 912, 913, 914 and 982.

¹⁰ Robertson, op.cit., pp.39, 57.

In his introduction to the Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum, Thomson observed that in relation to both Indexes — the Index Cartarum and Robertson's Index — they are full of obvious and multifarious blunders when compared and gives some of his own examples.¹¹ In the list above, it will be noted, when Robertson copied the name 'Muntercasduffe' in the Harleian MS, the letter 'e' was dropped in his edition. Maitland corrected this in a footnote. A comparison between the Kenelanen notation in the Index Cartarum and Robertson's copy is another example. In the former, the 'c' in 'kencl' appears to have been miscopied for 'e' in 'kenel', found in both Robertson's Index and SRO1/33.12 'Kenel' is an anglicised form of the Gaelic term *Cenél*, broadly meaning 'kindred of' or 'people of'. The second element in Kenelanen, 'anen' also appears to have been miscopied to 'man'. This has led one eminent scholar, Professor W.J. Watson to say Kenclanen is meaningless, but that Kenelman may be for Cenél Maine, Maine's sept, which was the name of a sept in Ireland.¹³ Kenelanen may appear to be meaningless, but it is not beyond recovery, if it is accepted the original name has suffered some degree of copying error by the clerks responsible for compiling the Index Cartarum and the now lost Index, the source of the Harleian MS. If correct, both 'kenel' and 'kenel' can be reconciled if the letter 'c' is a transcript error for 'e' and 'kenel' was the original form used by the royal clerk in the lost charter of David II. Similarly, one or both the elements 'anen' and 'man' may also have been miscopied.

In his article, *Gaill, Gáidheil, Gall-Gháidheil and the Cenéla of Greater Galloway,* Dr McWhannell posits a similar suggestion made by Watson that the 'Kenclanen', otherwise 'Kenelman', may represent the name *Cenél Maine*. ¹⁴ Both draw a further link with the Cenél Maine in Ireland, where the name Maine is associated with the Cenél Maine, a branch of the Southern Uí Néill dynasty, and the Uí Maine of Connacht. ¹⁵ It seems to me that there is a more simplistic explanation to the name 'Kenclanen', where the second element may simply have been a transcript error for 'afren'. Both begin with the letter 'a' and share 'en' at the end. For the letter's 'n' and 'fr' they are only a single stroke away from being recovered if the letter 'n' had been hastily noted for 'fr', in which case, 'anen' would then become Afren. If this had been the original form used in the lost charter of David II, the name 'Kenelanen' would become 'Kenelafren' and in the context of the history of Galloway, this clan can be identified with Clenafren, Cenél Afren, who played an important role in the political affairs of Galloway in 1296.

The Clan Afren receive special mention in the diplomatic papers of Edward I, king of England, who negotiated a truce in June 1298 between Philip IV, king of France,

¹¹ Thomson, op.cit., Vol. I, p.ix.

¹² National Records of Scotland, SRO1/33, p.86.

Watson, W. J.: The Celts (British and Gael) in Dumfriesshire and Galloway in Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society, 3rd Series, Vol. XI, p.139

¹⁴ McWhannell, D. C.: Gaill, Gáidheil, Gall-Gháidheil and the Cenéla of Greater Galloway in Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society, Vol. 87, pp 98.

¹⁵ Byrne, Francis J.: *Irish Kings and High-Kings* (Dublin, 1973), pp.92–93. See also O Croinin, Daibhi: *Early Medieval Ireland* 400–1200 (Edinburgh, 1995), pp.61–62.

and himself, to the exclusion of Scotland. In February 1296, envoys from Scotland had negotiated an alliance with France called the 'Auld Alliance', which Edward I refused to accept; he regarded Scotland as part of his own domain. He made an appeal that no aid should be given to the Scots, and 'especially, as some of his Scottish knights and others his liegemen and household, who before and after the time of the truce were in his service with banners displayed against Philip IV and had since deserted him'. As proof of their homage, Edward I included four documents or instruments, the homage and the fealty of John Balliol, king of Scotland, which were both dated 1292, the instrument containing the resignation of John Balliol of his kingdom, and renunciation by him, the clergy, nobles and communities of Scotland for their league with the king of France at St Andrews in August 1296, and lastly, the instrument of submission taken by the Clan Afren at Wigtown in June 1296. It may be inferred from the latter that the Clan Afren were amongst Balliol's liegemen, singled out by Edward I for particular rebuke at their lack of faith and loyalty to him, implying that other clans in Galloway had remained loyal to him in 1296.

The name Clan Afren is discussed more fully in Dr McWhannell's article What's in a Name? Reflections on the names and origins of the Clenafren of Galloway, where he suggests several possible derivatives, including, Gabráin, Ghabhráin, Aifrinne, Amhráin and Shamhrain.¹⁷ It is not within the scope of this article to consider the various suggestions posited, except to draw attention to the copying errors identified by him in Joseph Bain's transcript and translation of the instrument mentioned above, written in French for Edward I, which lists the names of the greinours, the chief men of the Clan Afren in 1296.18 In relation to Bain's copy, it is worth noting the introductory comments made in the supplementary volume to the Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland. Here, the editors credit Bain with being a pioneer in his own day, in the publication of Scottish records preserved in the Public Record Office (National Archives) and British Library in London by calendaring them in large qualities (four volumes), a daunting task, which remains today an important source of medieval records for scholars. They also highlight that the scale with which he produced his calendars was not equalled by his standards of scholarship and the number of flaws contained in them. Citing in summary the deficiencies in his work, they include: the omission of a number of other documents in the Public Record Office; wrong dates assigned to documents; giving misleading references to new documents with old documents already in print; and the misreading of the script and mistranslations of the original languages, particularly of documents in French.¹⁹

With that in mind, in Bain's transcript of the leading men of the Clan Afren, namely, Gillenef M'Gillherf, Neel and Gilchryst M'Ethe, Dungal M'Gilleueras, Duncan

¹⁶ Bain, Joseph: Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland 1272–1307 (Edinburgh, 1884), Vol. II, p.253.

¹⁷ McWhannell, D. C.: What is in a Name? Reflections on the names and origins of the Clenafren of Galloway in West Highland Notes and Queries, November 2011, series 3, no. 17.

¹⁸ Bain, Joseph: Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland A.D. 1272–1307 (Edinburgh, 1884), Vol. II, p.98.

¹⁹ Simpson, Grant C. & Galbraith, James D. (eds): *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland A.D.* 1108–1516 (Edinburgh, 1970), Vol. V, Supplementary, p.vii.

McGillauenan, Adam McGilleconill, Gillespic and Cuthbert McEuri, Kalman and Michael McKelli, Hoen and Cuthbert McEthe, Achmacath McGilmotha and Michael McGilmocha. Dr McWhannell identified several errors, including 'Neel McEthe', whose lineage name appears as 'McEhe' in the original French document. This name is immediately followed by 'Gilchryst McEthe', which Bain correctly transcribed. It would appear, he considered M^cEhe to be the same name as M^cEthe. Bain appears to have made another transcript error in the lineage name of 'Hoen McEthe', which Dr McWhannell suggests is a transcript error for McEl-he, as there appears to be a suspension mark between 'El' and 'he'. Bain's transcript of the name 'Neel M'Ethe' may in part be due to his awareness of the name Gillemichael Mac Ethe. He first appears in the original list of landowners from the sheriffdom of Dumfries, who rendered homage to Edward I on 28 August 1296, as 'Gilmyhel mac Eth', which Bain copied in error as 'Gilmighel Mac Ethe'. 20 The following year in 1297, Edward I thanked Dovenald fitz Can, 'Gille Michel Mac Gethe' and Maurice of Stobhill, for putting down his enemies and retaking castles in their own country.²¹ Gillemichael appears to be the same man whose name has been transcribed by Bain as 'Gilmychel McBeth' in a document recording the names of twelve jurors, assembled to inquiry into the lands and behaviour of John de Hirdemanston in 1303-4.22 Gillemichael's lineage name provides one of the earliest attempts to pronounce and translate the Gaelic personal name Aed or Aodh, meaning fire, which in Galloway are found solely in English documents, as Eth. Ethe or Gethe from 1296 onwards.

The sole reference to Michael M^cgorth's name is the Index Cartarum and of the four captains, he is the only one for which no other reference can be found to establish his identity in the medieval records of Scotland.²³ However, if his name has suffered some degree of miscopying, the name of 'Michael Mageth' could offer a realistic comparison. The most likely transcript errors in M^cgorth to have occurred in the Index Cartarum are with the letter's 'o' and 'r', possibly copied in error for 'e' and 'i' and if the case, the original charter may have recorded a name almost identical to 'M^cgeith'. In this style, it is one of the earliest variant forms used for the name McGhie, later adopted by the McGhies of Balmaghie. M^cgeith appears in the name of 'Gilbert Makgeith' of Portincork, also spelt as 'Makgeich' in 1492.²⁴ Other early examples, include, 'Gilbert McGeth', collector of

²⁰ National Archives of United Kingdom, C47/23/3.

²¹ Stevenson, Joseph: Documents illustrative of the History of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1870), Vol. II, p.177.

²² Bain, Joseph: Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland A.D. 1272–1307 (Edinburgh, 1884), Vol. II, p.198.

²³ For Gilbert McGillolane see *The McClellans in Galloway* by D. Richard Torrance (Edinburgh, 2003), p.3. For John Mckennedy, see *The Kin of Kennedy, 'Kenkynnol' and the Common Law* by Hector L. MacQueen in Medieval Scotland, Crown, Lordship and Community by Alexander Grant and Keith Stringer (eds.) (Edinburgh, 1993), pp.276–96. For Donald Edgar see *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum*, The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland A.D. 1306–1424 (Edinburgh, 1984), Vol. I, App. 1, no. 56.

²⁴ Burnett, George (ed): The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland 1488–1496 (Edinburgh, 1887), Vol. X, p.771. See also, Paul, James Balfour (ed): Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum, The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland A.D. 1424–1513 (Edinburgh, 1882), Vol. II, no. 2107.

customs in the burgh of Kirkcudbright in 1331,²⁵ 'Gilbert Macge lord of Balmage' in 1426,²⁶ possibly the same 'Gilbert M'Gy of Balmagy', whose fine for the non-presentment of Finlay M'Makyn was remitted at the justice ayre at Wigtown in 1456 and at Kirkcudbright in 1460.²⁷ He appears to have been the father of 'William M'Gye of Balmacye', confirmed in certain lands by the king in 1482.²⁸ From these examples, it will also be observed how over time, the 'g' in 'Mageth' has been accentuated, probably from the Gaelic 'Mag Eth', which cognates with 'Mac Eth', meaning son of Áed or Aodh.

As 'Michael Mageth de Scotia', he, along with Sir Eustace de Maxwell of Caerlaverock and Duncan McDowall, were all pardoned on 20 August, 1339, by Edward III, king of England, after they had joined the Scottish campaign against Edward Balliol and his claim to the Scottish throne.²⁹ Sir Eustace Maxwell had been the king's principal magnate in east Galloway, while Duncan McDowall was his principal supporter in the west of Galloway.³⁰ Both men and their followers, including Michael Mageth, had supported the Balliol cause, but defected to David II's side, only returning after Balliol gained the upper hand in his struggle to become king of Scotland.

It is unclear when Michael Mageth was eventually won over to David II's cause, but if the identification with this Michael is correct, it probably happened sometime prior to 1346, when David II rallied support from Galloway for his invasion of England. The identification with Michael Mageth raises other questions: could this Michael also have been the same 'Michael MacGethe', one of twenty-five jurors, who heard the claims of Robert Bruce, earl of Carrick, into his privileges and lands in Annandale at an inquisition held at Dumfries on 31 August, 1304?³¹

This article offers another approach to identifying the names M^cgorth and Cenelanen, and proposes that in their original form, they referred to the names M^cgeith and Kenelafren. If the transcript errors are indeed reconciled, I suggest that there is scope for a revised history of the McGhies of Balmaghie and the Clan Afren or Cenél Afren in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. At the head of the Clan Afren, we would find Gillemichael MacEth and later Michael Mcgeith, barons of Balmaghie and captains of their kindred (parentela) the McGilleserf, McGilleandrews, McGilleadamnan, McGilleconell, McEnri (son of Henry), McKelly, McEl-he, and McGilmotha. It is striking, this list contains the names of several saints widely celebrated in Scotland, namely, St Serf, St Andrews and St

²⁵ Stuart, John, and Burnett, George (ed): The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland 1264–1359 (Edinburgh, 1878), Vol. I, p.374.

²⁶ Paul, James Balfour (ed): Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum, The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland A.D. 1424–1513 (Edinburgh, 1882), Vol. II, no. 87.

²⁷ Burnett, George (ed): The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland 1455–1460 (Edinburgh, 1883), Vol. VI, pp.209, 641.

²⁸ Paul, James Balfour (ed): Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum, The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland A.D. 1424–1513 (Edinburgh, 1882), Vol. II, no. 1516.

²⁹ Macpherson, D., Caley, J., and Illingsworth, W. (eds.), *Rotuli Scotiae* in Turri Londonensi et in Domo Capitulari Westmonasteriensi Asservati, 1291–1377 (London, 1814), Vol. I, p.571.

³⁰ McCulloch, Andrew: Galloway: A Land Apart (Edinburgh, 2000), p.68.

³¹ Bain, Joseph: Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland 1272–1307 (Edinburgh, 1884), Vol. II, p.412.

Adamnan, suggesting a stronger natural tie with Scotland than Ireland. It would also put the McGhies on the same footing as the McDowalls and McClellanes, chiefs of two of the oldest clans in Galloway, and raises the question, whether the baronies of Balmaghie and Balmaclellan in Kirkcudbrightshire were created at about the same time?

As a name, Balmaclellan is not on record before 3 January 1380, when 'Gilbert McLellane, lord of Balmaclellane' recorded a discharge to Sir Archibald Douglas, lord of Galloway, acknowledging receipt of £80 paid in full at the hand of Dovenald McIndoly, minister of Buittle, in the name of Sir Archibald, for certain unnamed lands resigned in his favour³². Gilbert McLellane of Balmaclellane is possibly the same Gilbert MacGillolane appointed captain of the Clan Connan by David II.³³ It was Archibald's son, also called Archibald, who in 1408 granted certain lands in the barony of Balmaclellan to Alexander Gordon of Stichill, his esquire.³⁴ There is no record of a royal charter creating either Balmalcellan or Balmaghie baronies prior to 1400. However, it could be argued that the grant of the captaincy of Clan Connan and Cenél Afren (if I may) also indicates a confirmation of either a new endowment of land or grant of hereditary lands and other privileges in return for royal service for both Gilbert McGillolane and Michael Mcgorth (or Mcgeith), and their kindred in Galloway.

Conclusion

Few Scottish clans can authenticate their eponymous ancestor back beyond 12th century and the Clan Afren is no exception. However, of all the old native clans in Galloway, the Clan Afren is the only one for which there exists a full list of the lineal heads of kindred, providing some insight into the structure of other clans in southwest of Scotland. It seems unlikely the 'chief men' (*greinours*) were all captains of their own kindred, but were those who represented the heads of each lineage within the clan and attended its council of leaders under the captaincy of its clan chief. If the identification with 'Kenelanen' is correct, they were probably one of the last clans in Galloway, if not the last, to have been ascribed the Gaelic term 'Cenél' in official records. After the appointment by David II of Sir Archibald Douglas as lord of Galloway in 1369, the history of Clan Afren becomes one of decline. The McGhies of Balmaghie still continued to retain their ancestral lands, along with the McKellys of Barskeoch and Gategill, whilst others, found themselves reduced to the status of tenant under new landowners with no hereditary rights, husbandmen renting and tilling the land they and their ancestors had occupied for generations.

³² Manuscripts of the Duke of Hamilton, Historical Manuscript Commission (London, 1887), 11th Report, app. VI, pp.204, 209.

³³ McCulloch, Andrew: Galloway: A Land Apart (Edinburgh, 2000) p.212.

³⁴ National Records of Scotland, RH6/219.

REASSESSING THE GALLOWAY LEVELLERS

Alistair Livingston¹

On 21 April 1724, the Caledonian Mercury produced a 'first rough draft of history' when it reported that several hundred people in Galloway, roused to action by the oratory of a mountain preacher and 'big with that ancient Levelling Tenet' had demolished enclosures which were a grievance to them. The report appeared to capture the essence of their actions so well that the Galloway Levellers' opposition to enclosure has come to define their uprising. However, when examined more closely, the Levellers' dyke-breaking activities emerge as only part of a more complex and even contradictory series of actions which can best be understood as having an origin within political and economic changes rooted in the later seventeenth century.

The suggestion² that a ban on the import of Irish cattle imposed in both England and Scotland in 1667 had the effect of stimulating the development of market-led capitalist livestock farming in Galloway has implications for our understanding of the Galloway Levellers' uprising of 1724. It is generally accepted³ that the Levellers' actions were those of a traditional peasantry reacting to dispossession from the land. The specific grievance they were reacting to was the recent construction of enclosures by landowners taking advantage of an increase in the cattle trade with England which followed the Union of 1707. By taking direct action against the new enclosures, the Galloway Levellers were attempting to preserve an essentially medieval form of farming and land use described by Oram as⁴

... a complex pattern, where systems of transhumance that supported a pastoral economy geared in some areas principally towards dairying were juxtaposed with zones of intensive arable cultivation. This was a pattern that survived down to the early nineteenth century, but has since been lost in the successive programmes of progressive enclosure of the Galloway landscape and commercial re-afforestation of the uplands.

However, there are two aspects of the Galloway Levellers' actions in 1724 which show they were doing more than simply reacting to the process of enclosure. Firstly, their protestations of loyalty to King George I in conjunction with their strongly anti-Jacobite rhetoric and their actions against Jacobite landowners reveal a commitment to the Revolution Settlement of 1689, the Union of 1707 and the English Parliament's 1701 Act of Succession which led to George I's accession in 1714. Politically this placed the Levellers

¹ Alistair Livingston was a Member of the Society until his untimely death on 3 November 2018 after a short illness. This article is his winning entry for the Society's Truckell Prize for 2017.

² Livingston 2009.

³ Johnston 1946; Smout 1969; Donnachie and Macleod 1974; Leopold 1980; Whatley 2000; Aitchison and Cassell 2003; Davidson 2003.

⁴ Oram 2000, p.250.

in the Hanoverian and Unionist camp as supporters of the *status quo* which the Jacobites wished to overturn. Secondly, by seizing and slaughtering over 100 allegedly Irish cattle, the Levellers were effectively supporting a law which benefited a capitalist system of land management pioneered by the Heron family of Minnigaff after 1688. Thirdly, although difficult to prove conclusively, the initial stimulus for the Levellers' actions may have been a combination of rent rises and evictions for arrears rather than the construction of cattle enclosures

From the first-hand accounts written by the Kirkcudbright Collector of Customs, James Clerk, it is clear that the Jacobite Basil Hamilton and Irish cattle attracted significant attention from the Levellers. Writing to his brother, Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, on 6 May (Old Style, 17 May New Style) James Clerk stated that⁵

They [the Levellers] threaten to come into this town and oblige the officers of the Customs to go with them to assist them in seizures of Irish cattle that they pretend to find among the Enclosures ...

Writing again on 20 May (Old Style, 31 May New Style) he informed Sir John that⁶

Upon Wednesday last a party of 100, all armed, came into town driving before them about 53 Black Cattle which they had, after throwing down the dykes, brought in the name of Irish cattle. They demand us to assist them in retaining said cattle ... We thereupon refused to meddle in the affair ... upon which they drove them out of town and slaughtered each one [of] them in a barbarous manner ...

In May, the Earl of Galloway in a partly indecipherable letter to Sir John Clerk informed him that⁷

... upon Tuesday the 12 May [Old Style, 23 May New Style] current they slaughtered near Kirkcudbright 55 or 57 cattell belonging to Hugh Blair of Dunroad notwithstanding he made appear they were bred in Britain, and they have used some of Basil Hamilton's cattell after the same way and manner upon Saturday morning last, and since that time hes carried of tuo parcells more belong to two other ...

The Levellers also seized and slaughtered Irish cattle from Netherlaw Park in Rerrick parish. Altogether, possibly as many as 200 Irish cattle were seized and slaughtered by the Levellers.

The longest of the Levellers' actions took place over five days in May when dykes belonging to Basil Hamilton (or more correctly and legally, his mother — see below) 'were thrown down upon the marches of Milntoun of Dunrod, Ring, Castell, Overlaw, and Bombie'. On 13 May (Old Style, 24 May New Style) James Clerk provided his brother with a dramatic account of the destruction of the enclosures on Bombie Muir: 9

⁵ Prevost 1967, p.199.

⁶ Ibid., p.201.

⁷ Ibid., p.201 fn.28.

⁸ Morton 1935, p.261.

⁹ Prevost op.cit., p.200.

... I saw them yesterday between the hours of 8 &12 in the morning coming in bodies, from all quarters, meeting about 12 at the place of Rendezvous ... making in all a body upwards of two thousand ... they fell vigorously to work to Mr Hamilton's large dyke, for in the space of three hours they levelled with the ground seven miles of stone dyke in length. After this ... I saw them perform wonders, and before they halted brought down another four miles of dyke to the ground.

Morton described the same incident:10

A large number of them gathered on Bombie Moor, and, still hoping that the gentlemen would come and discuss terms, they engaged in wrestling and other amusements. The other side did not appear, and, enraged at this, the Levellers demolished more dykes and seized some sixty cattle on the pretence that they were Irish cattle, some of which they killed and cooked at Auchencairn, and the remainder at the Old Abbey of Dundrennan.

Ye Jacobites By Name

Considering the case of Basil Hamilton first, Morton helpfully included the Levellers' own explanation for the destruction of Hamilton's dykes taken from *An Account of the Reasons of Some People in Galloway, their meetings anent Public Grievances through Inclosures*:¹¹

... lately the said Mr Basil Hamilton hath cast out thirteen families upon the 22nd of May instant who are lying by the dykesides. Neither will he suffer them to erect any shelter or covering at the dykesides to preserve their little ones from the injury of the cold, which cruelty is very like the accomplishment of that threatening of the Jacobites at the late rebellion [1715], that they would make Galloway a hunting field, because of our public appearance for his Majesty King George at Drumfries [sic], and our opposition to them at that time in their wicked designs ...

The Levellers' demolition of Hamilton's dykes between Tuesday 23 May and Saturday 26 May would therefore seem to be a direct response to the eviction of 13 families on 22 May. On the other hand, according to their letter to Major Du Cary¹² the destruction of Hamilton's dykes followed a breakdown in negotiations between the Levellers and the Commissioners of Supply on 7 May (Old Style, 18 May New Style) which had been facilitated by Lieutenant Colonel William Maxwell of Cardoness and Patrick Heron II of Kirroughtrie. That Hamilton's dykes were the target of the 'enraged' Levellers suggests that he was blamed for the breakdown in negotiations between the Levellers and the 'gentlemen'.

Where he appears in contemporary sources and in later accounts of the events of 1724, Basil Hamilton does so as a landowner. The only source which qualifies this status is a

¹⁰ Morton op.cit., p.237.

¹¹ Ibid., p.244.

¹² Ibid., p.250.

court case quoted at length by Morton¹³ where on 27 January 1725 the Hon. Basil Hamilton brought a complaint at the instance of Lady Mary Hamilton of Baldoon, and himself as her factor against 23 named Levellers for damages done to the lands belonging to the complainer over five days in May 1724. Legally, Basil Hamilton did not own any land; the legal owner of his estates was his mother, Lady Mary Hamilton. What had happened is that along with 15 other landowners from the Stewartry and Dumfriesshire (but none from Wigtownshire) he had joined the Jacobite rebellion in 1715. As a rebel against the Crown, Hamilton's lands were forfeited.

By 1722, Hamilton had four children, two sons and two daughters. Now legally an adult, married and with a family, Hamilton no doubt wished to take a more active role in the management of his lands. That he was able to do so without risking forfeiture was the result of a deal done between George Lockhart of Carnwath and Robert Dundas, Lord Advocate. On 23 May 1722, Lockhart, who was an active Jacobite, wrote to James Stuart, the Old Pretender: 14

About two years agoe, when the Commission of Enquiry was rampant, I gave the advocate [Robert Dundas] something like an assurance that if he would preserve Mr. Basil Hamilton and some other honest mens estates from being forfaulted, I would take care so to manage matters that he should be elected for this shyre in opposition to Mr. Baird, a creature of the Dalrymples; and as the advocate did from thence forward act a friendly part to them, and that therto in a great measure the preservation of these familys is owing, I thought my self obliged in justice and honour to support him. I am hopfull you'l approve of my conduct, when you know it proceeded from so good a design and had so good effects.

Szechi¹⁵ provides the context for Lockhart's letter. Lockhart had represented Edinburghshire (Midlothian) as Member of Parliament 1708–1715, but was then exposed as a Jacobite, allowing John Baird, David Dalrymple's son-in-law, to hold the seat 1715–1722. Lockhart remained a formidable force in Midlothian politics. This led Lord Advocate Robert Dundas of Arniston to make a private deal with Lockhart. In exchange for Dundas showing leniency towards Basil Hamilton, Lockhart agreed not to stand in the 1722 election, which Dundas then won. Dundas held the seat until 1737.

Hamilton's forfeiture was not legally removed until 1733. Before Lockhart's intervention on his behalf and without the Lord Advocate acting 'a friendly part' towards him, there was a risk that if Hamilton had taken a more active role in the management of his estates, the legal pretence that his mother remained their owner would be exposed, leading to forfeiture. Reassured by Lockhart's deal with Dundas, Hamilton began improving his lands, building new dykes and reviving his family's cattle trading traditions. Hamilton also began evicting tenants for rent arrears. As the largest landowner in the central Stewartry, owning 27 farms in Kirkcudbright parish, 14 in Twynholm, 8 in Borgue, 5 in Kelton and 5 in Rerrick, Hamilton's vigorous approach to the management of what were now effectively his lands

¹³ Ibid., pp.259-261.

¹⁴ Aufrere 1817, Vol.2, p.88.

¹⁵ Szechi 2006, pp.112–114.

¹⁶ Livingston 2009, p.77.

unsettled the tenants and their cottar sub-tenants. Of the 23 Levellers pursued for damages by Hamilton, acting for his mother Lady Hamilton, on 27 January 1725, 17 lived on farms owned by the Hamiltons in Kelton and Kirkcudbright parishes.

Lady Mary Gordon of Kenmure's husband William was beheaded on Tower Hill. London, 24 February 1716 for his leading part in the 1715 Jacobite rebellion. Although his estate was forfeited. McKerlie¹⁷ states that it was 'so encumbered with debt and claimants that the government allowed his widow to make of it what she could.' Mackenzie¹⁸ gives a slightly different account, stating that the forfeited estate was put up for sale and that 'the kindness of her friends' allowed Lady Kenmure to purchase it. She then 'managed the property with so much judgment and economy' that when her son Robert became 21 in 1735, she was able to pass it on to him debt free. Like the Hamiltons, this suggests that Lady Kenmure would have been prepared to evict tenants who fell behind with their rent. Certainly in June 1724, Robert Wodrow¹⁹ noted that David Warner, who had been in Galloway for several weeks, had told him that many of the Levellers were tenants who had been pursued for bygone rents and that one of the Levellers' leaders was a tenant of Lady Kenmure who had been threatened with eviction. Another of the Levellers' leaders was 'Mr Cluny, the deposed curate who draes their papers'. Lady Kenmure had farms in Tongland parish, including Nether Barcaple (now Valleyfield) along with Dunjop and Barncrosh. Wodrow's 'deposed curate' was Hugh Clanny, former minister of Kirkbean parish. His wife was Rachel McMeiken who, along with her sister Mary, had inherited High and Low Barcaple.²⁰ Hugh Clanny would therefore have known Lady Kenmure's tenant, who may even have been his neighbour at Barcaple.

The third Jacobite landowner to receive the unwelcome attention of the Levellers was George Maxwell of Munches in Buittle parish. Along with his brother William, George Maxwell joined the local Jacobites in 1715 and was captured at Preston on 14 November 1715. In 1811, then aged 91, John Maxwell of Munches wrote a letter to William Herries of Spottes in Urr parish which included his childhood memories of the Levellers. Maxwell's letter was included as footnote in the New Statistical Account for Buittle parish: 22

That same year, many of proprietors enclosed their ground, to stock them with black cattle, and, by that means, turned out a vast number of tenants at the term of Whitsunday 1723, whereby numbers of them became destitute, and, in consequence, rose in a mob; when, with pitchforks, gravellocks, and spades, they levelled the park-dikes of Barncailzie and Munshes at Dalbeattie, which I saw with my own eyes; the mob passed by Dalbeattie and Buittle, and did the same on the estates of Netherlaw, Dunrod, etc., and the Laird of Murdoch, then proprietor of Kilwhaneday, who turned out sixteen families at that term.

¹⁷ McKerlie 1878, 4, p.64.

¹⁸ Mackenzie 1841, 2, p.390.

¹⁹ Wodrow 1843, 3, pp.157–160.

²⁰ Livingston 2009, pp.60–63.

²¹ Mackenzie 1841, 2, p.383.

²² Crosbie, 1845, p.206.

Maxwell's father had died 12 May 1724. He was a Roman Catholic, related to the Maxwell earls of Nithsdale. A Roman Catholic chapel was maintained at Munches. The young John Maxwell could therefore have been staying at Munches for his father's funeral in May 1724 and witnessed the Levellers destroying the dykes there. John Maxwell's aunt Catherine was married to Robert Neilson younger of Barncaillie, which would explain Maxwell's knowledge of the Levellers' actions there.²³

However, the Neilsons of Barncaillie were also a Roman Catholic family of long standing. Robert Neilson elder (died 1732) was alleged to have prohibited the burial of five 'martyrs' shot on Lochenkit Moor in 1685 'even threatening to arrest anyone who interred them as abettors to their so-called crimes'. Neither Robert Neilson nor George Maxwell are included in the list of landowners the Levellers accused of turning out their tenants. As the Levellers themselves admitted in June 1724 'There were indeed some other dykes thrown down, but that was the effect of the people's rage, which in general we did not approve of. The levelling of dykes at Munches and Barncaillie may have been instances of 'unapproved' levelling. Although John Hepburn, minister of Urr had died in 1723, his militant followers known as the Hebronites were still active. Fraser provides an insight into Hepburn's anti-Catholicism, directed against John Maxwell of Munches' uncle John in 1719:27

John Maxwell died unmarried at Buittle, in the beginning of the year 1719. He was buried in the kirk of Buittle, but was afterwards raised by the Whigs of Urr, who carried the corpse to a knoll in a moss in the lands of Meikleknox, where they set the coffin on one end, and let it fall to the ground, with all its weight. From that place he was carried by his friends to the church of Terregles, and buried there.

A group of Levellers did assemble near Parton church²⁸ but did not level the dykes of the Roman Catholic Glendinnings of Parton, although this may have been because they were 'attacked' there by 'some gentlemen and their servants.'

Irish Cattle

In 1724, customs officers in Dumfries were 'scandalized by a daring innovation which had sprung up, especially at Kirkcudbright, of importing Irish cattle, and they sorely bewailed the connivance given to it by the County gentlemen and their tenants'.²⁹ As customs officer in Kirkcudbright, James Clerk was in a position to investigate his colleagues' concerns but, even when presented with 53 allegedly Irish cattle seized by the Levellers in May 1724, he refused to 'meddle in the affair'.³⁰ Since Prevost notes that many of James Clerk's letters to his brother Sir John were begging letters and that James had spent an inheritance of 15,000

²³ Livingston 2009, p.88.

²⁴ Stark 1903, p.38.

²⁵ Morton 1935, p.253.

²⁶ Ibid., p.247.

²⁷ Fraser 1873, 1, p.xxxii.

²⁸ Morton 1935, p.251.

²⁹ McDowall 1986, p.556.

³⁰ Prevost 1967, p.201.

merks by 1722,³¹ he may well have been bribed by the cattle smuggling County gentlemen.

The partially unreadable letter from the earl of Galloway to Sir John Clerk³² says that the Levellers seized for slaughter 55 or 57 cattle belonging to Hugh Blair of Dunrod in Borgue parish as well as some belonging to Basil Hamilton and two other landowners. All of these cattle were alleged to be Irish. The 53 allegedly Irish cattle James Clerk mentions would appear to be those belonging to Hugh Blair. Morton gives 60 as the number of allegedly Irish cattle belonging to Basil Hamilton on Bombie Muir which were seized and slaughtered.³³ An unknown number of allegedly Irish cattle were seized from Netherlaw in March 1724 and slaughtered.³⁴ Altogether, at least 100 cattle were seized and slaughtered by the Levellers in 1724.

In her study of capital punishment in Scotland between 1740 and 1834, Bennett³⁵ found that 49 people were hung for livestock theft in that period, 14 before 1755. After 1800, the death sentence was reserved for only the most serious cases, giving an example where the 'excessive theft' of 30 sheep resulted in a death sentence rather than imprisonment. The 'excessive theft' of over 100 cattle and their subsequent slaughter should have led to the hanging of several Levellers in 1724, but it did not. This strongly suggested that the cattle the Levellers claimed had been illegally imported from Ireland really were Irish cattle. This also suggests that the Levellers were acting on very accurate information about the provenance of the cattle they seized. To have stolen and slaughtered a legitimate herd of cattle would have been a fatal mistake for the Levellers involved.

As with the Levellers' anti-Jacobitism, their interest in Irish cattle entangles the events of 1724 with Galloway's seventeenth-century past. Briefly, summarising Livingston, 36 before the English Parliament imposed a ban on the import of Irish cattle in January 1667, followed by the Scottish Parliament in March 1667, every year several thousand cattle from Ulster crossed the North Channel en route for markets in England. Some of these cattle originated in lands acquired by Galloway landowners as part of the Plantation of Ulster. The Murrays of Broughton in Wigtownshire and the McLellans of Bombie in the Stewartry were the most significant of Galloway's Ulster landowners. The ban on Irish cattle stimulated the development of a substitute trade in cattle from Galloway, most notably by the Dunbars of Baldoon and, after 1688, by the Herons of Kirroughtrie. Galloway's cattle trade was therefore already well established before the Union of 1707 in Wigtownshire and Minnigaff. It might, therefore, appear that it was the expansion eastwards of the cattle trade into the central Stewartry in the years immediately prior to 1724, which provoked a dramatic response from the 'Galloway' Levellers. The illegal import of Irish cattle would fit with this hypothesis. Landowners who were new entrants to the cattle trade might have been tempted to rapidly build up their cattle herds through the surreptitious addition of Irish cattle.

³¹ Ibid., p.198.

³² Ibid., p.201.

³³ Morton 1935, p.237.

³⁴ Ibid., p.250; Leopold 1981, p.6.

³⁵ Bennett 2016, p.45.

³⁶ Livingston 2009, pp.15–31.

However, evidence from the Kirkcudbright Sheriff Court records³⁷ shows that there was a cattle park at Netherlaw in Rerrick before 1688 and at Dunrod and Laigh Borgue before 1698. The park dykes levelled in 1724 to gain access to Irish cattle at Netherlaw and Dunrod had been in existence for at least 36 and 26 years respectively. In 1688, Netherlaw was owned by Robert Maxwell, second baronet of Orchardton and in 1724 by his grandson Robert, fourth baronet of Orchardton. In 1698, Dunrod and Laigh Borgue were owned by Hugh McGuffog-Blair and in 1724 by his son, Hugh Blair. Although they were a Roman Catholic family, the Maxwells of Orchardton had inherited the McLellans' Ulster lands through the marriage of Robert, first baronet of Orchardton, to Margaret McLellan, only child of Robert McLellan, first lord Kirkcudbright.

The evidence for a cattle park at Netherlaw in 1688 comes from a letter Robert Maxwell, second baronet, written from Killyleagh, on Strangford Lough, in Ireland to his nephew regarding the management of the cattle park there which was 'not to be set for ploughing'. Maxwell lived in Killyleagh after marrying Anne Hamilton, Countess Clanbrassil in January 1668.³⁸ Netherlaw is immediately adjacent to Abbey Burnfoot bay and only 500 metres from Port Mary bay. Netherlaw was therefore in an ideal situation if Maxwell wished to quietly transfer cattle from his Irish lands to his Galloway lands. Maxwell also asked his nephew to call his debtors to account 'and pursue them for what is owing'. One of the debtors was William Johnston 'herd in the park of Netherlaw'. Johnston provides a connection to the Borgue cattle parks and, through his son Robert, with a possible leader of the Levellers.

The evidence for cattle parks in Borgue comes from contracts between Hugh Blair-McGuffog and William Kingan for the herding of Dunrod park and the maintenance of its dykes and with Robert Gordon likewise for the Laigh Borgue park, dated 31 March and 1 April 1698 respectively. In 1724, Hugh Blair-McGuffog's son Hugh Blair owned the Dunrod park which was levelled and from which the Levellers seized and slaughtered 53 Irish cattle. In February 1693³⁹ Hugh Blair-McGuffog and William Johnston 'in Netherlaw park' were in dispute regarding their co-partnership and Johnston agreed to pay Blair-McGuffog £180 before Lammas. The origin of the dispute between Johnston and McGuffog-Blair is revealed in a letter Johnston sent to George Maxwell of Munches in 1705 from Ballywillwill in County Down. Robert Maxwell had set Netherlaw in tack to Johnston in 1685 but then 'broke' the tack in favour of Blair-McGuffog:⁴⁰

I have much to get from Sir George Maxwell [of Orchardton]. He cased take a cow and a bulock out of the Parke and killed them when my Leddy Nidsdil was in Kirkcudbright as also 1000 marks penalty, Sir Robert [Sir George's father] was bound in for the performance of the bargain he maid with me for the Netherlaw Parke and 200 marks a year he maid me pay Ruscoe (Hew M'Guffock) by breaking his own tack to me.

William Johnston had moved to Ballywillwill in May 1699, assigning his 'all and sundry

³⁷ Reid 1950, deeds 1265, 3182, 3183.

³⁸ Lowry 1867, pp.118,139.

³⁹ Reid 1950, deed 2147.

⁴⁰ Johnstone 1909, p.329.

debts' to his brother-in-law Captain James McDouall of Gillespie, Old Luce parish.⁴¹ From a rather confusing account,⁴² William Johnston appears to have had a younger son called Robert who was living at Nether Barcaple by 1713, when he married Mary Wallace and had several children. He would have been Lady Kenmure's tenant there and Hugh Clanny's neighbour — and possibly one of the Levellers' leaders.

More certainly, Hugh McGuffog-Blair of Rusko and Dunrod had a long-standing involvement in Galloway's cattle trade. As McKerlie⁴³explained, Hugh Blair of Kildonan, youngest son of James Blair of Dunskey, Portpatrick parish, married (date unknown) Elizabeth McGuffog, only child of William McGuffog of Alticry and Rusko and assumed the surname McGuffog. After Elizabeth's death, Blair-McGuffog married David Dunbar I of Baldoon's second daughter Margaret in 1688. The Hugh Blair of Dunrod who had his Irish cattle seized and dykes levelled in 1724 was the second son of this second marriage. Before David Dunbar I's death in December 1686, McGuffog-Blair and Patrick Heron I (1642–1721) had been partners in the management of the Baldoon cattle parks. As with William Johnston and Netherlaw, McGuffog-Blair's partnership with Patrick Heron I ended in 'differences' which they attempted to settle in 1691.⁴⁴

Significantly, although the Levellers included the Herons of Kirroughtrie among the landowners they accused of depopulating Galloway with their cattle parks, they did not accuse the Herons of illegally importing Irish cattle. The Herons had an integrated system of land use and ownership which allowed them to produce a steady flow of cattle for the English market from their own resources. In contrast, when Lord Basil Hamilton sought to revive his family's involvement in the cattle trade in 1697, he had to seek permission from the Scottish Privy Council to re-stock the Baldoon parks with 120 Irish cattle. In 1669, Hamilton's grandfather David Dunbar I was fined a total of £330 sterling by the Privy Council for importing 1.200 Irish cattle, some of which he sold in England. 45 In 1682, an English magistrate seized a drove of Dunbar's cattle alleging they were Irish and had them 'knocked on the head and killed' despite Dunbar's drover stating that the cattle had been bred within a mile of Baldoon.⁴⁶ Dunbar's illegal importation of 1,200 Irish cattle in 1669 strongly suggests that his 3.75 square mile cattle park at Baldoon, where he could keep 'about a thousand bestial', 47 was already in existence and had originally been constructed to facilitate the pre-1667 legal trade in Irish cattle. After the ban, as Symson described, Dunbar would 'buy from the country' additional cattle to make up the 'eighteen or twenty score' he would send to England in August or September. Or rather (see above) Patrick Heron I and Hugh McGuffog-Blair would do so for him.

The weakness of the Dunbar system was its reliance on being able to buy up additional cattle from other landowners and/or their tenants to form a drove. If there were not enough additional cattle available or their price was too high, the temptation would be to make up

⁴¹ Reid 1950, deed 3356.

⁴² Johnstone 1909, p.328.

⁴³ McKerlie 1877, 3, pp.39–41.

⁴⁴ Reid 1950, deed 1940.

⁴⁵ Whyte 1979, p.124.

⁴⁶ Symson 1823, p.41.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

the numbers with Irish cattle. Although the Dunbar system provided a new outlet for locally reared cattle, it did not lead to a major break with the medieval pattern of farming described by Oram above. The break with the patterns of the past came with the Heron system in which 100 square kilometres of Minnigaff, combining upland and lowland farms, was given over to specialised livestock farming. In the Heron system, unlike the Dunbar system which relied on the traditional or medieval farming pattern to produce cattle for export to England, land use was rationalised or 'modernised' to maximise the output of cattle. By 1697, unlike Lord Basil Hamilton, the Herons had no need to import Irish cattle to build up their stocks.

If the Heron system was a more rational approach to land use, why did some landowners in 1724 need to illegally import Irish cattle? In the case of Hugh Blair of Dunrod, the likely answer is provided by McKerlie. Hugh McGuffog-Blair's son, William McGuffog, the eldest son of his first marriage, inherited Rusco and the upland farms in Anwoth and Kirkmabreck parishes with the remaining lands in Borgue divided between the remaining four sons. In 1724, the only farms Hugh Blair owned were Dunrod with its cattle parks and Kissocktown beside Brighouse bay in Borgue parish. Hugh Blair, unlike his father, did not have access to upland farms to stock his cattle park, but did have immediate access to the sea and Irish cattle.

Finally, the earl of Galloway's letter to John Clerk⁴⁹ implies that a fourth herd of Irish cattle were seized by the Levellers. If there was a fourth herd, it would most likely have been grazing in Alexander Murray's park at Cally, which was levelled.⁵⁰ This large park 'feeds one thousand bullocks, that [Murray] sends once every year to the markets of England'.⁵¹ Later in the century, Murray's son, James, owned nearly the whole parish of Girthon, but in 1724 Alexander Murray's land holdings were Broughton in Wigtownshire and Cally estate. However, following the plantation of Ulster in 1609, the Murray family acquired 65,000 acres around Killybeg in Donegal. In 1627 the Donegal lands were held by John Murray, earl of Annandale, who took cattle from his Irish tenants in lieu of rent and sold them in England, bringing the cattle across the North Channel to Portpatrick.⁵² The Murray lands in Donegal are therefore likely to have been the source for many of the Irish cattle which reached England via Galloway and Dumfriesshire before the 1667 import ban was imposed. The Cally cattle park was close to Fleet bay so had a similar location to the Dunrod and Netherlaw parks.

Conclusion — the Levellers Reassessed

In their An Account of the Reasons of Some People in Galloway, their Meetings anent Public Grievances through Inclosures the Galloway Levellers indicated that they were not

⁴⁸ McKerlie 1877, 3, p.40.

⁴⁹ Prevost 1967, p.201.

⁵⁰ Morton 1935, p.238.

⁵¹ Macky 1723, p.239.

⁵² Haldane 1997, p.163.

absolutely opposed to enclosure:53

... the Gentlemen should enclose their grounds in such parcels that each may be sufficient for a good tenant and that the Heritors lay as much rent on each of these enclosures as will give him double the interest of the money laid out on the enclosures. If he cannot get this enclosure set to a tenant whom he may judge sufficient, he may then lawfully keep that ground in his own hand till he finds a sufficient tenant, taking care that the tenant's house be kept up and that it may be let with the first opportunity and that a lease of twenty-one years be offered. This will considerably augment the yearly rent of the lands and the tenant will hereby be capable and encouraged to improve the breed of sheep and black cattle and the ground, which without enclosures is impossible.

In his discussion of the Galloway Levellers' uprising, Davidson⁵⁴ describes this publication as displaying 'a high degree of tactical intelligence: stressing loyalty, legality and offering a solution to Jacobitism, illegality and unreasonableness of the landowners' by the Levellers. This raises an important question: did the Levellers' actions display a similar 'high degree of tactical intelligence'?

If the levelling of Roman Catholic landowners' dykes at Munches and Barncaillie, which was probably the work of the Hebronites, was not approved by the Levellers, then the answer is yes. Despite their key entrepreneurial role in the development of capitalist livestock farming, the dykes of the Heron family were not levelled in 1724. While the dykes of Alexander Murray's cattle park in Girthon were levelled, Lieutenant Colonel William Maxwell's cattle parks at Cardoness close by were not. Dyke-breaking was a tactic. The Levellers strategy did not involve the wholescale destruction of enclosures. Rather, landowners who were raising rents and evicting tenants with arrears had their dykes levelled. To achieve maximum public support within the locality and beyond, the Levellers highlighted their actions against Jacobite landowners, cattle smugglers and those, like Thomas Murdoch, who had evicted several families at once.

In emotive language, the Levellers linked the construction of cattle parks with a Jacobite conspiracy to depopulate the countryside of King George's loyal subjects. Despite attracting the sympathy of King George himself,⁵⁵ this claim was nonsense. Alexander Gordon of Earlston (1650–1726), who had leased Airds of Kells to Thomas Murdoch in 1718, was one of Galloway's foremost Covenanters. Morton devoted a whole chapter of his book *Galloway and the Covenanters* to Alexander Gordon and his family.⁵⁶ Thomas Murdoch's father Patrick had been fined as for his alleged involvement in the battle of Bothwell Brig and his aunt Elizabeth Murdoch was Lieutenant-Colonel William Maxwell's mother.⁵⁷ Furthermore, although there is no reason to question the Levellers' accusation that Thomas Murdoch forced several families off the land in Kells and Kirkpatrick Durham parishes, later evidence from Airds of Kells shows that the 'clearance' was not permanent.

⁵³ Morton 1935, p.243.

⁵⁴ Davidson 2003, p.219.

⁵⁵ Whatley 2000, p.202.

⁵⁶ Morton 1914.

⁵⁷ Livingstone 2009, p.37.

McKerlie⁵⁸ lists Upper and Nether Airds, Bennan Hill, Ringour, Mossdale, Quarterland, Park, Nook, Boatcroft and Bridgecroft as the farms and crofts on Airds estate in 1799. Anderson⁵⁹ shows that the first bridge over the Dee between Duchrae (now Hensol) estate and Airds was built after 1737. The bridge and a building next to it are shown on Roy's 1755 Military Survey. Any 'clearance' of Airds estate by Thomas Murdoch was therefore short-lived and at least one new croft was established after 1737 and before 1755.

Donnachie and Macleod reflecting on the Levellers' uprising, describe it as containing a 'weird mixture of fact and fantasy which lends to the whole affair a considerable element of mystery'. Some of the mystery can be traced to the Levellers themselves who appear to have conducted an effective public relations campaign, presenting their actions as a response to the recent construction of depopulating enclosures. But if the Levellers were not reacting to an early instance of the 'Lowland Clearances' what were they doing? Writing from a Marxist perspective, Davidson has argued that the defeat of the Jacobites at Culloden in 1746 marked the end of a 'bourgeois revolution' in Scotland which had begun in the 1690s. Davidson defines the 'bourgeoisie' as including not only urban and rural capitalists, but also a wider group including 'small commodity producers in the towns, yeoman farmers in the countryside, shopkeepers and tavern owners in both — whose aims by no means coincided with those of the capitalist class as such'. Significantly, Davidson points out that in the conflicts which marked the transition from the traditional feudal economic system to the new capitalist one, it was this wider group rather than the inner core of capitalist entrepreneurs who physically engaged in 'revolutionary' activity.

Without necessarily accepting the full thrust of Davidson's argument, it is possible to see Galloway's Levellers not as part of 'The Peasant Reaction to Rural Change'62 but as members of a rural community which had been radicalised through opposition the Stuarts in the seventeenth century. Faced with the challenge of a Stuart revival in 1714/5, this community chose to identify with Scotland's nascent bourgeoisie against the Jacobites who represented the old order — the 'feudal system of government' as Adam Smith would later describe it. A key feature of local resistance to the Jacobites was the arming and training of volunteers which began after a meeting at Dalmellington held 18 March 1714 and which was overseen by Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell of Cardoness. Despite a lack of official sanction, In October 1715, the defence of Dumfries relied on 2000 of these armed 'Whig' volunteers, including a contingent from the Stewartry. The recent existence of these defenders of Davidson's 'bourgeois revolution' goes some way to explaining the ability of the Galloway Levellers to organise and arm themselves so effectively in 1724.

Significantly, in early May 1724 the Levellers entered negotiations with Lieutenant-

⁵⁸ McKerlie 1878, 4, p.77.

⁵⁹ Anderson 1936, p.221.

⁶⁰ Donnachie and Macleod 1974, p.52.

⁶¹ Davidson 2003, p.11.

⁶² Smout 1969, pp.324–331.

⁶³ Rae 1718, p.42.

⁶⁴ Szechi 2006, pp.107–109.

⁶⁵ McDowall 1986, p.526.

Colonel Maxwell and Patrick Heron II.⁶⁶ These negotiations may have been the 'underhand dealing' with the Levellers Patrick Heron II was suspected of.⁶⁷ Likewise, Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell would not have been troubled by the Levellers' anti-Jacobitism. The Levellers were willing to accept the intervention of these representatives of the local bourgeoisie and halt their actions. However, Basil Hamilton was not prepared to compromise with the Levellers, provoking the destruction of his dykes so vividly described by James Clerk and which was followed by a renewed outburst of dyke-breaking, at least some of which was 'not approved' by the leaders of the Levellers.

Smout described the Galloway Levellers' uprising as 'the first instance in Scottish history of a popular rural movement with the character of class war'. 68 However, the Levellers were not a rural proletariat engaged in a struggle with capitalist landlords. If there was a class war, it was being fought between Scotland's rising bourgeoisie and their feudal superiors, represented by the Jacobites. Locally this struggle had an economic aspect with the Dunbar system in competition with the Heron system. While both had capitalistic elements, the Heron system contained the seed of future developments as the eighteenth century unfolded while the Dunbar system was rooted in Galloway's seventeenth-century past. Although they will always be known for their dyke-breaking, by taking action against the smuggling of Irish cattle and against local Jacobites, the Levellers were effectively aligning themselves with a modernising process which, within a century, would erase all traces of Galloway's medieval farming past from the landscape. The process was not complete by the 1780s, when John Kennedy, James McConnell, Adam and George Murray left the Glenkens for Lancashire⁶⁹ (Livingston, 2016), but the capitalist market economy was already well established in Galloway. While they may not have intended this outcome, the Galloway Levellers played a part in this revolutionary change.

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⁶⁶ Morton 1935, p.242.

⁶⁷ Wodrow 1843, 3, p.158.

⁶⁸ Smout 1969, p.325.

⁶⁹ Livingston 2016.

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DAVID GORDON (1774–1829) AND THE FIRST STEAMBOATS ON INLAND WATERS¹

Pat Jones²

David Gordon was the youngest son of Alexander (later Sir Alexander) Gordon of Culvennan and Greenlaw, who is credited with supervising the construction of the Carlingwark Canal in 1765 (when he was aged 18), and improving the river Dee in 1784, so as to facilitate navigation by boats carrying up to 25 tons of marl (a lime-bearing clay) to farms between Castle Douglas and New Galloway. Research for a previous Transactions article,³ included establishing whether the necessary technical expertise existed within the Gordon family to develop the much-reduced carrying trade, and maintain the navigation works, after the death of Sir Alexander in 1830.

David Gordon was born on 26 March 1774, and through his father's activities would have become very familiar with all aspects of water-borne trade and its limitations, which probably explains his later interest in transport improvements. He emigrated from Scotland early in life, and in 1799 settled in New York, where he entered into partnership with John Munro, trading — not very successfully initially — as merchants and insurance brokers. In March 1802 they made a composition with their creditors for 15 shillings in the pound, payable by instalments, the last of which fell due on 8 September 1803. During this period John Munroe died, and following the loss of a ship, David Gordon became bankrupt, but he appears to have repaired his finances following litigation in February 1805.⁴

David Gordon's second son Alexander was born in New York on 5 May 1802; his brother-in-law Maxwell Hyslop resided with the family there, learning the trade, and falling £500 in debt to him. In 1803 Maxwell entered into partnership with his brother Wellwood Hyslop at Kingston, Jamaica, trading as M. Hyslop and Company. Various commercial transactions took place between Hyslop and Company and David Gordon, 'of a very complicated and intricate nature', until a bitter dispute followed the seizure by the Royal Navy of the Hyslops' ship *Agnes* and its cargo, part of which belonged to Gordon. In 1807 Gordon witnessed the first trials of Fulton's steamboat, which he considered had 'every reasonable hope of success'. His family is said to have returned to Scotland in

¹ An early version of this article was circulated to members of the Railway and Canal Historical Society's Waterway History Research Group as RP 49.

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⁴ See Appendix 1

From a letter written by Professor Renwick, of Columbia College, to Frederick De Peyster, read at the New-York Historical Society in August 1858, and reproduced in *The Historical Magazine, and Notes and Queries concerning the Antiquities, History and Biography of America*. New York, August 1858, pp.227–8. "In the spring of the year 1807, I had the pleasure to hear from David Gordon, at that time a merchant in this city, afterwards much distinguished in England as a civil engineer, an account of Fulton's trial-trip, and to learn from him that there was every reasonable hope of his success."

1807, but *Longworth's American almanac: New-York register and city directory* (1808) lists David Gordon, merchant, residing at 52 South Street.⁶ On 28 December 1808, while still in New York and the Hyslops in Jamaica, Gordon raised an action in the Scottish Court of Sessions, alleging that the Hyslops owed him £6,000. Both Gordon and one of the Hyslops subsequently returned to Scotland, where they engaged in litigation that eventually reached the House of Lords.⁷

David's son Alexander attended Edinburgh University, and there is an entry for him in the matriculation indexes for 1817–1818, when he would have been 15 or 16 years old. There are no other details in the index. Dr Jean Lindsay writes: 'It would not have been unusual for a boy of 15 to have a place at university and matriculate a little later; I take it that "matriculation" would mean he had passed exams to the university standard'. In the early 1820s Alexander worked with his father on a number of early road locomotive designs, following their 1819 experiments with the use of compressed gas as motive power. In 1820 and 1824 they published designs for steam-powered locomotives; both David and his son were involved in setting up associations to promote road locomotives.⁸ David obtained a number of patents, including one in 1819 for a 'portable gas lamp',⁹ and another in 1822 for improvements and additions to steam packets applicable to naval and marine purposes, which consisted of boxing the paddle-wheels, by which plan their efficiency was improved; vessels could be made suitable for use on canals; and the paddles of naval vessels made proof against shot. A description of this patent follows¹⁰

To DAVID GORDON, late of Edinburgh, but now of Oxford-court, Cannon-street, London, for certain Improvements and Additions to Steam-Packets and other Vessels, part of which Improvements are applicable to other Naval and Marine Purposes

THESE improvements consist first in a mode of boxing in the paddle-wheels of such vessels as are propelled by their agency. Fig. 4, [see Figure 1] is a side view of a vessel in which the paddle-wheel is enclosed within a case, but the side of the case is removed in this figure, in order to shew the wheel within. The case is intended to fit the wheel so as to leave a very small space round it sufficient only for its freedom of action. The wheel is inclosed by the case on its side, also above and in front, or towards the bow of the vessel, with the exception of a small aperture a, which is recommended to be entirely under the level of the water's surface. That part of the box which is immediately beneath the wheel is enclosed by a boarding, b, leaving the hinder part open for the escape of the tail-water. By thus enclosing the wheel within a box, and leaving only the small aperture in

⁶ Alan Levitt, in a letter dated 18 October 2011: 'The site is now occupied by City-owned public housing, and faces the F.D.R. Drive, which was partially built on the in-fill of rubble from the Blitz that was used as ballast in returning ships that had carried war material to Britain.'

⁷ See Appendix 2.

⁸ Chrimes (2002), pp.261–2.

⁹ See Appendix 3.

¹⁰ From The London Journal of Arts and Sciences Vol. IV, 1822, pp.174-6.

front, and the opening behind, the water cannot escape from the paddles either laterally or downwards, but is obliged to enter at the aperture, a, and be fairly driven out behind the paddle-wheel.

By these means it is considered that the most effective operation of the paddlewheels will be obtained, and hence the vessel propelled forward with an increased power; and also that the wheels will be protected from external injury, and be less impeded by back water. The revolution of the paddles may be effected by means of a steam-engine, or any other power which does not form a part of this invention; and the wheels may be placed in any part of the vessel.

Fig. 5 [see Figure 1] shews another sort of vessel, more particularly adapted for inland navigation, in which the paddle-wheels are placed at the stern; or only one paddle-wheel may be employed in this situation, the enclosure being provided as above described. A channel is proposed to be formed along the bottom of the vessel, like an inverted trough, extending from the bow to the entrance into the box. This vessel is intended to be steered by two rudders, one placed on each side of the wheel, and both connected by jointed rods, so as to be moved by one lever or tiller.

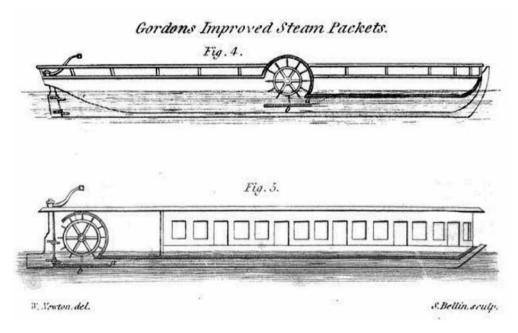


Figure 1. Gordon's improved steam packets.

The patentee says, "I do not make claim to the invention of placing paddle-wheels at the stern of the vessel, or to the employment of a longitudinal channel through the vessel to conduct the water to the paddle-wheels: but I confine my claim to the enclosing of paddle-wheels in cases where the water is only suffered to enter

through an aperture in front, and with the case or boarding extending underneath the paddle-wheels, as near as may be, not to impede their action, at the same time that the hindermost part of the paddle-wheel case is left quite open to allow the back water to escape freely.

The aperture, *a*, is proposed to be guarded by a grating, or bars of metal placed edgeways to prevent any floating substances from driving against the paddles; and also a sluice, or shutter, is proposed to be provided so as to regulate the aperture according to the velocity of the wheel, or the roughness of the water in which the vessel is navigated."

Inrolled, July, 1822.

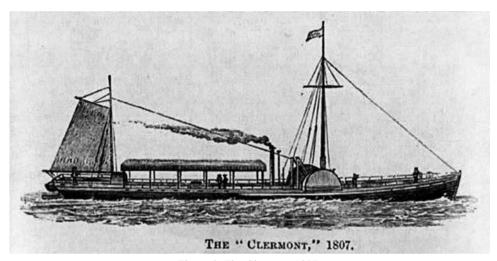


Figure 2. The Clermont 1807.

In 1883, U.S. Navy Rear-Admiral George Henry Preble wrote

In 1822 David Gordon, of London, obtained a patent for certain improvements and additions to steam packets applicable to naval and marine purposes, which consisted of boxing the paddle-wheels, or enclosing them in a case, by which plan the vessel can be easily made proof against shot.¹¹

Perhaps Preble gave more credit to Gordon than is his due; Gordon would have been familiar with Fulton's development of *Clermont* on the river Hudson during 1807–8, which included boxing the vulnerable paddle-wheels, and protecting them within sponson decks fore and aft. The vessel illustrated as *Fig.4* in Figure 1 lacks that protection, and its rudder would have almost certainly been too small. *Clermont's* rudder was too small as built; she could only just turn around in the wide river at New York. The illustration in Figure 2 shows her with boxed paddle-wheels, sponson decks, and enlarged rudder

¹¹ Preble (1883).

controlled with a tiller. The tiller provided insufficient leverage; it was replaced by a wheel, and thereafter she could turn around in the smaller river 160 miles upstream at Albany. Gordon's 'improvement' was potentially most useful on shallow inland waterways, where turbulence created by conventional paddle-wheels was perceived to be damaging. *Fig. 5* in Figure 1 shows essentially an improved version of Symington's unsuccessful *Charlotte Dundas* of 1801.

Efforts to develop smaller steam engines to drive road vehicles led to their application to canal boats. The first trials were probably carried out by John McCurdy in 1826 from London to Oxford and in 1828 from London to Manchester. McCurdy was a contemporary of David Gordon, who also undertook trials in his canal steamboat on the Liverpool Manchester and Birmingham Canals in 1828. ¹² An account of David Gordon's steamboat trial was written by his son Alexander Gordon in 1831. ¹³

In the month of September 1828, the late Mr Gordon, having completed a Canal Steam Boat, according to his patent specified in February 1822, proceeded to ascertain and amplify its importance for Canal navigation on the Liverpool Manchester and Birmingham Canals.

The directory of the various canal properties, along which he wishes to pass, being satisfied that his boat was so constructed, that the bottom and sides of the Canal were perfectly safe, from any injury on account of the Paddle wheel, received from each, permission to navigate free from tonnage, for as long a time as was necessary to complete his projected voyage, to his own satisfaction.

The boat was 70 feet in its extreme length and 7 feet broad, such size being able to pass through all the Canals in the Kingdom. About ½ of the Tonnage by weight, and not quite as much as ½ by measurement, of the Boat was occupied by the Engine and Boiler. The Power was applied at the stern, and the Model now presented to the Institution is a pretty accurate incitation of the stern and Paddle Cases.

A pair of high pressure engines equal to 10 horsepower were attached to the Paddle Shaft. The Steam was passed through a condenser, without admixture with the condensing water. The condensing water was supplied without a pump, from the water thrown up by the paddles. This was collected in small tin gutters fixed at the inside of the Paddle box, above the Paddle Shaft, and was so abundant that there was not one tenth part of the Steam blown off.

The Paddles were made of wrought iron with plate iron floats, and were completely enclosed, with an iron casing both at the bottom and sides of the Paddle box.

The water was propelled backwards from the stern so that the reflux was considerably less than is occasioned by the common monkey boat where dragged with equal speed. The paddles drew the water from the front and discharged it backwards, making 15 or 20 small waves instead of the usual hollow and large

¹² Weaver and Weaver (1983).

¹³ See Appendix 4 for Alexander's obituary.

wave succeeding it. At the same time the iron casings by which the Paddles are enclosed prevented the agitation in the water below the boat, and at the sides, which the Paddles would otherwise occasion; and they are also serviceable in protecting the Paddles from the injury they would sustain by coming in contact with the bottom or sides, by striking against the locks or bridges, or by being struck in passing by the other boats on the Canal. The principal object Mr Gordon had in view, was to construct a boat which would not injure the Canal.

Upon referring to the model it will be seen that the water upon which the Paddles were to act, flowed into the Paddle box by an opening only sufficient for the required quantity of water, (and excepting at this point, the bottom of the boat was entire). The Paddles striking upon the water in these Chambers, propelled the boat without any water being displaced except in a horizontal direction, that is into the boats wake, no concussion took place either downwards to injure the bottom of the canal, or sideways to injure the embankments.

The only injury then, which the Canal could sustain, was from the quantity of water displaced by the boat itself. This was no more than what any other Canal boat of the same cross sectional area of water displaced, would do at the same speed. Indeed the water drawn from the bows and forced backwards tended in my opinion¹⁴ to lessen that very much.

This experimental voyage of 600 miles and upwards, made it sufficiently evident, that the Canals did not suffer in any way. This was the object sought, for it is perfectly obvious that if canal navigation be carried on by Steam power, the economy will be great, notwithstanding the sacrifice of power in the closed paddle box, made to gain the above object.

The voyage from London to Manchester was accomplished at the rate of 3 miles an hour, which is the usual speed of the fly boats, and it was not thought advisable to go beyond their speed, the more so, as by keeping to their speed the Comparative Cost of "hauling" by horses, and of towing by steam, could be more accurately ascertained. But on the return to London the speed was nearly 4 miles per hour.

In passing through the tunnels the Steamer went at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour, excepting at Preston Brook tunnel, where in consequence of her towing a heavy coal-laden barge, her speed was reduced to $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles per hour. The average speed of the flyboats through the Tunnels propelled by leggers (as the men are called) is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour.

It may be proper here to notice the loss of life attending the use of these leggers in the tunnels. Among men no ways notable for sobriety, the navigation of dark tunnels from ½ a mile to 1½ mile in length, must be a dangerous proceeding, but when these leggers have to lay on their backs, on a narrow plank, and exert all fours to propel the boat, the danger is very great, and the proceeding is attended with great loss of life.

¹⁴ This implies Alexander Gordon was present during at least part of the experimental voyage. Unfortunately the model he 'presented to the Institution' has not survived.

By taking the average Cost of 'haulage by horses' as stated by Captain Bradshaw to be 3/8th of a penny, per ton per mile; a tolerably Correct estimate of the savings which would be effected by the substitution of steam for horse power may be formed by engineers. It is not enough to say that 5/6th would be saved, if the steam boat was always accompanied by another canal boat of the same tonnage.

Many circumstances prevented Mr Gordon's introduction of Steam power on Canals, into general use; particularly the largeness of the Capital required, for a large capital is absolutely necessary, to contend successfully, against the great Carriers, who consider that their capital being already employed, they are well enough without further speculation. Time and personal exertion on Mr Gordon's part were necessary to overcome the prejudice engendered by long established Custom, and Mr Gordon's long and painful illness terminating in his death, cut short a work which bid fair to be prosperous, and which still if pursued by Canal owners must lead to a very profitable result.¹⁵

Acknowledgements

This article greatly benefited from contributions by members of the Railway and Canal Historical Society; Jean Lindsay, Hugh Potter and Alan M. Levitt, who is a resident of New York City and provided material regarding David Gordon's activities there. I am extremely grateful for their help. The research was initially undertaken to establish whether the necessary technical expertise existed within the Gordon family to manage the much-reduced carrying trade, and maintain the navigation works, after the death of Sir Alexander in 1830. He was succeeded by his eldest surviving son, Colonel James Gordon (1771–1843), who could have sought assistance – if needed – from his nephew Alexander, who was elected an 'Associate' of the Institution of Civil Engineers on 10 April 1827, and became a 'Member' on 17 February 1835. Clearly, 'technical expertise' was available within the family.

Appendix 1

From: Reports on Cases of Practice determined in the Supreme Court of Judicature of the State of New-York; from April Term 1794, to November Term 1805, both inclusive. New-York, I. Riley, 1808. (February Term 1804) pp. 324–7. And: New-York Term Reports of cases argued and determined in the Supreme Court of that State, New-York, Isaac Riley & Co., 1805. (Albany, February 1805) pp. 299–300.

David Gordon, survivor of John Munro and David Gordon against J.B. Church.

ASSUMPSIT* on a policy of insurance. The plaintiff and his deceased partner were brokers, and effected the policy in question, without naming the party interested, and describing themselves as brokers, only by the customary marginal

¹⁵ Institution of Civil Engineers reference OC 71. Reproduced by permission of Mike Chrimes, the Institution's Director of Engineering Policy and Innovation.

insertion of their names as such. It was, however, generally known, among the underwriters, that this, and several other policies on the same risk, were on account of a charitable association in Scotland, the trustees for whom had given the orders. In March, 1802, the plaintiff and his partner made a composition with their creditors for 15s. in the pound, payable by instalments, the last of which was at 18 months, and not due when this action was commenced. The others had been paid. On the l0th of April following, the vessel not having been heard of for a year, a loss was claimed as for a missing ship, averring the interest in the trustees. The defendant admitted the justice of the demand, but contended he had a right to set off the amount of the last instalment. The only question was whether he was so entitled or not. ...

... No set-off can be allowed in this case. The suit is on a policy which the plaintiff effected, as a mere trustee, for a charitable society in Scotland, and the case warrants us in concluding this was known to the defendant when he subscribed the policy.

*Assumpsit: an action at law, wherein the plaintiff asserts that the defendant undertook to do a certain act and failed to fulfil his promise.

Appendix 2

From: Cases decided in The House of Lords on appeal from the Courts of Scotland, 1824. William Blackwood, Edinburgh; T. Cadell, and J. Butterworth and Son, London, MDCCCXXVIII. (June 16 1824) pp. 451–461.

With the view of carrying on their trade between Kingston and New-York, Hyslop and Company purchased an armed vessel called the Agnes. This vessel they sent to New-York, where she arrived at a time when Wellwood Hyslop was there. Gordon was desirous to have taken a third share of her; but it was found that he could not do so consistently with the Registry Acts. He, however, joined as a partner in a cargo which was shipped on board of her for Bermuda. At that time St Domingo was engaged in hostilities with Britain, but was at peace with America; and an agreement was entered into by Wellwood Hyslop, (which, after his departure from New-York, was subscribed by Gordon as his attorney), by which it was arranged that the Agnes should convoy an American ship, the Huntress, to St Domingo in safety. She accordingly did so; but this having been discovered at Bermuda, she was seized by a British ship of war, together with her cargo, and condemned for illegally acting as the convoy of a neutral vessel to a hostile port; and, in consequence of this, it was stated that the underwriters, who were not made aware of the above agreement, refused to settle for the loss. An appeal was afterwards taken against this condemnation, and a compromise was made by the captors, who agreed to give up the vessel on payment of a sum of money.

Appendix 3

The use of gas for lighting developed during the early years of the 19th century. In 1819 David Gordon had established the London Portable Gas Company at Clerkenwell to market a lamp fuelled by compressed gas, under a patent he and Edward Heard had jointly taken out that year. The gas was made from oil, not coal, compressed into copper cylinders, and sold at about £3. 2s. 6d. for 1,000 cubic feet. This included delivery by cart, loan of lamps, and collection within 7 miles of the works, which remained in production until 1834.¹⁶

Portable gas lighting was not confined to domestic use; Steven Brindle writing on Marc Brunel's tunnel under the River Thames notes that 'Tunnelling began on 28 November 1825... At first the work was lit by candles, but from March 1826 Marc introduced lamps lit from gas canisters.'¹⁷

Appendix 4

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers

Volume 30 Issue 1870, pp. 435–436.

OBITUARY, ALEXANDER GORDON, 1802–1868.

MR. ALEXANDER GORDON was the second son of Mr. David Gordon, the inventor and patentee of the system of compressing gas and using it in a portable form, and the grandson of Sir Alexander Gordon, of Culvennan, Greenlaw, Castle Douglas. He was born at New York (where his father at that time resided) on the 5th of May 1802. At the age of five years he returned with his father to Scotland, and was subsequently educated at the Edinburgh University. In early life he was much employed by Telford, and was on intimate terms with the Messrs. Bramah. Donkin, Field, Simpson, and other members of the Institution. For many years he was agent for Mr. B. Napier, the marine engineer at Glasgow, and he was also manager of the portable gasworks in London, until they were abolished. Mr. Gordon devoted himself principally to the construction and management of lighthouses, especially in the colonies. In 1833 he introduced a polyzonal arrangement, both dioptric and catadioptric, constructed by M. Maritz, of The Hague; and, in the same year, the catadioptric apparatus of Fresnel, which he adopted for lighthouse purposes, and which he exhibited at a meeting of the British Association at Edinburgh in the following year. This he followed up in 1834 by patenting a holophotal apparatus; and in 1842 he designed and erected the original great sea-light in an iron tower at Morant Point, Jamaica, the first of many of a similar character. In the lighthouses erected by Mr. Gordon, he preferred using multiple reflectors, so that if through accident or carelessness one or two of the lamps were extinguished, there were still sufficient left to maintain the light. In 1837 Mr. Gordon published a treatise on locomotion, which passed through three editions, and was translated into several languages. He also, in 1845, patented a fumitic propeller.

¹⁶ See http://marysgasbook.blogspot.com/2009/08/london-portable-gas-company.html>.

¹⁷ Brindle (2005).

Besides the branches of engineering already enumerated, he designed and superintended the construction of the South Australian Company's swing bridge at Port Adelaide, which was made at the manufactory of Messrs. Easton, Amos, and Sons. Mr. Gordon was one of the originators of the Polytechnic Institution with Sir George Cayley and several other gentlemen, the object of the Institution being, at that time, entirely scientific. He was highly esteemed in private life; and many of his pupils acknowledged that they owed their success in life to the instruction and advice received from him.

He was elected an Associate of the Institution on the 10th of April 1827; was transferred to the class of Members on the 17th of February 1835, and contributed a Paper on "Photography, as applicable to Engineering," in the year 1840. After that date he frequently took part in the discussions at the evening meetings. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Mr. Gordon died at Sandown, Isle of Wight, on the 14th of May 1868, in the sixty-seventh year of his age.

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McVITIE'S BISCUITS — A DUMFRIES CONNECTION

James Grierson¹

This paper relates to the establishment of McVitie's Biscuits in Edinburgh in 1830 by Robert McVitie of Dumfries. The growth of the business to world-wide status and its recognition as a household name owes much to the sound foundations laid down by the founder but also to the enterprise shown by his younger son, Robert McVitie Jnr who transformed a small manufacturing and retail bakery to operate on an industrial scale. McVitie's was fortunate, whether by luck or good judgement, that it had some exceptional directors who drove the business forward. In particular Sir Alexander Grant who succeeded Robert McVitie Jnr made the business more profitable and became a noted philanthropist. In contrast to Grant, who had a hands-on approach and saw himself as first and foremost a baker, Peter Macdonald, who succeeded Grant's son, was a lawyer and showed remarkable business acumen. He realised that the business had grown too large for an individual to control and brought in management consultants to advise on a suitable structure while also rationalizing the range of products. The business has continued to operate successfully despite changing conditions, and the name McVitie's is synonymous with quality — all dating back to a young baker from Dumfries almost 200 years ago.

The early years

No plaque reminds the passer-by of these glories, although there should be one, for those who invent biscuits bring pleasure to many. — Alexander McCall Smith (Author).

Dumfriesshire and Galloway has laid claim to many favoured sons and daughters, some by birth; others by association with the area. They include poets Robert Burns and William Nicholson; Scottish essayist, Thomas Carlyle; playwright and novelist J M Barrie; writer S.R. Crockett; illustrator Jessie M. King; scientist James Clerk Maxwell; 'father' of the American Navy, John Paul Jones; missionary Jane Haining; civil engineer Thomas Telford; and founder of the Trustee Savings Bank, Rev. Henry Duncan. All commendable and worthy of note, and to these could be added the name of Robert McVitie, Dumfries-born founder of the iconic brand that bears his name — McVitie's Biscuits.

One of the problems of researching local history is that, 'regardless of how deeply the records are mined', what remains is the known, the unknown and the unknowable. And so it is with the records of the earlier years of the McVitie family.

William McVitie (1766?–1842)² is assumed to have been born in Dumfries but no records of his birth have been located. Certainly a William McVitie was born at Dalscone

¹ Member of the Society. Hannahville, 87 Moffat Road, Dumfries, DG1 1PB.

² Dumfries OPRs, register of deaths, William McVitie 14/09/1842.

farm in Dumfries and baptised on the sixteenth of August in 1772³ but this does not accord with his death in Edinburgh at the age of 76 in 1842 and so must be reluctantly discarded. The matter is further confused by the fact that he is shown as being 70 years of age in the 1841 census and this would accord with the birth but confirmation is lacking. Likewise his wife Jean or Jane Green's (1770?–1846)⁴ birth remains a mystery although it is possible that she was born on the island of Grenada where her family had substantial interests. The date of their marriage has remained elusive but they are recorded as being married in inventories relating to the sale of slave plantations in Grenada and in their son Robert McVitie's (1809–1883) death certificate.⁵

There are a number of McVitie births recorded in Dumfries in the early 1800s: James McVitie (1802) son of William McVitie – residenter; Thomas McVitie (1805) son of William McVitie – merchant; Margaret McVitie (1807) daughter of William McVitie – merchant and indeed a marriage for the latter, but none of which can be tied conclusively with William McVitie and his wife Jean Green as neither the wife's name nor location is given in the records. Nevertheless it is possible that the James McVitie referred to above is a son, as there is a James McVitie mentioned in the sasines relating to property transactions in Edinburgh in 18356 where he is referred to as a son and described as an excise officer in Campbeltown.

William McVitie was initially a farmer, and, at the time his son Robert was born, had a joint tenancy of Nunholm farm with his brother-in-law William Green. He was also a poet and friend of Sir Walter Scott who named the business agent in *Rob Roy* after him⁷ (see endnote 1). His son Robert was born in 1809 at Nunholm farm in Dumfries, then occupied by William McVitie and his family, and William Green (?–1811) his widower brother-in-law (see endnote 2). In 1810 William Green decided to return to the island of Carriacou, Grenada, where he had business interests, and as a result sold his share of the tenancy to William McVitie for £800.

Although Robert's death certificate describes his father as William McVitie (deceased) farmer there is no record of him farming elsewhere and, in an indenture of 1821, dealing with the disposal of a slave estate, he is described as a merchant.⁸ This indenture deals with the sale and settlement of Prospect Plantation and a parcel of land in Grenada and there is a further sale and settlement of a plantation and parcel of land in the Bayaleau area of Carriacou, contained in an indenture dated 31 August 1829.⁹ The McVities were participants, due to the relationship between the Greens and Bells who were Mrs McVitie's relations, as were a number of other families.

In 1824 an action was raised against William McVitie and his wife Jane Green or McVitie by Simon Simpson (sole Trustee of the late William Green) for non-payment of

³ Dumfries OPRs, register of births; William McVitie 16/08/1772.

⁴ St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh OPRs, register of deaths; Jane McVitie 14/2/1846.

⁵ Statutory Register of Deaths, Edinburgh; Robert McVitie 21/11/1883.

⁶ Abridgement Summary, property transfers from Thomas McVitie dec. to William McVitie.

⁷ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

^{8 &}lt;a href="https://agenealogy.html">https://agenealogy.html https://agenealogy.html</a

^{9 &}lt;a href="https://agenealogyhunt.blogspot.co.uk/2010/06/part-289s-smith-robertson-genealogy.html">https://agenealogyhunt.blogspot.co.uk/2010/06/part-289s-smith-robertson-genealogy.html.

the £800 previously agreed for the purchase of the deceased's share of the tenancy. No defence was offered for the failure to make payment. In 1825 further action was taken by Simon Simpson in the Supreme Court of Judicature of Grenada resulting in costs being awarded of £521 and damages of £3624 against the McVities.

It was after this case and the financial burden that it must have imposed, that the McVities braved the 8½ hour coach journey from Dumfries to Edinburgh ¹² and started trading as provision merchants about 1830 at 129 Rose Street, Edinburgh, in premises inherited from William McVitie's brother Thomas. In addition to this property, William inherited a house at Sciennes in Edinburgh. ¹³

One of the first acts of the family on arrival in Edinburgh was to turn the basement of the property they had inherited into a bakehouse. He This was so that Robert McVitie (1809–1883) could utilise his talents as a baker, as he had completed his apprenticeship with a baker in Dumfries before the move. Before business was fully underway a further problem arose when William McVitie was put into the Canongate prison for failing to meet a bill drawn by James Smith of Beoch, now of Noblehill, Dumfries. In this case William was innocent as James Smith had previously agreed, by a deed made in 1821, that William would have no liability. As a result William took legal action to recover £29/14/9 due plus damages. Despite such misfortunes Robert McVitie managed to create the brand that continues to bear his name: he was successful in his field and was able to expand the business after his father and mother retired. In 1842 William McVitie died during an outbreak of cholera in Edinburgh and his wife died in 1846, with her death attributed to 'old age'.

In 1844 Robert McVitie married Catherine Gairns¹⁶ (1821–1871) who was comparatively wealthy: her inheritance enabled him to underpin his business expansion. They had four children: William Gairns McVitie (1850–1919);¹⁷ Robert McVitie (1854–1910);¹⁸ Jane Green McVitie (1848–1936)¹⁹ and Catherine Mary McVitie (1859–1943).²⁰

It was Robert McVitie's intention that his sons should succeed him and to ensure that they were well-prepared for this role, he sent then to the Continent to study methods of baking production and also French and German. In a rather surprising development William, the

¹⁰ Decreet, Simon Simpson v. Jane Green or McVitie and William McVitie (1824), National Records of Scotland.

^{11 &}lt;a href="https://agenealogyhunt.blogspot.co.uk/2010/06/part-288s-smith-robertson">https://agenealogyhunt.blogspot.co.uk/2010/06/part-288s-smith-robertson>.

¹² Dumfries Weekly Journal 30/04/1830.

¹³ Abridgment Summary, inherited property from Thomas McVitie.

^{14 &}lt;a href="https://www.ewht.org.uk/visit/street-stories/rose-street">https://www.ewht.org.uk/visit/street-stories/rose-street.

¹⁵ Decreet William McVitie v. James Smith, National Records of Scotland.

¹⁶ Edinburgh OPRs – register of marriages, Robert McVitie and Catherine Gairns.

¹⁷ Death Certificate, William Gairns McVitie, 9/12/1919. Walthamstow East Sub-District, Essex

^{18 &}lt;www.gravestonephotos.com/requestee/gravephoto.php>.

¹⁹ Edinburgh OPRs, register of births, Jane Green McVitie 26/12/1848; Death Certificate, Jane Green McVitie 24/07/1936.

²⁰ Birth Certificate, Catherine Mary McVitie 24/10/1859; https://www.pittonandfarley.co.uk/facilities/sports.

elder of the two brothers, declined to follow his father into the business and instead became a journalist. This was quite contrary to the accepted norm of Victorian society where such successions in business were almost considered pre-ordained. In any case he seems to have had limited success in his chosen profession: the 1881 census gives his occupation as a clerk, resident in a boarding house and in the 1901 census he is described as a journalist and still living in similar accommodation.²¹ He died in Walthamstow in 1919 (see footnote 5).

However, Robert Jnr was to prove a worthy successor to his father and took the business to new heights when he eventually took control. In 1890 he married Elizabeth Louise Thompson (1860–1926)²² and had a stroke of good fortune when his wife's sister Mary Catherine Thompson (1867–1928) married Edward Graham Guest (1869–1962), a fellow baker in 1892.²³ Robert and his brother-in-law co-operated with one another and in 1898 formed a partnership — McVitie, Guest — to carry out bread-making and catering activities²⁴ The McVitie daughters had little involvement with the business, although Jane McVitie is shown in the 1881 census as a baker's daughter. In the 1891 census she is shown as a clerk at the bakery but by 1901 she is shown as living on her own means. However, by 1911 she is shown as a 'Director of a Public Company'. Catherine married Francis Weston (1862–1941), a surveyor and auctioneer, in 1898, and relocated to London.

In the meantime Robert Snr continued to develop the business and introduced Vienna bread to Edinburgh from a recipe brought from the Continent by his younger son, which proved a great success. He also took the opportunity of describing the firm as 'Boulangerie Francaise et Viennoise' to differentiate his business from other more downmarket establishments.²⁵

In the 1860s Robert McVitie expanded the business but by the 1870s the boom period was over and all manufacturers were experiencing difficult trading conditions as a result of foreign competition, aggressive marketing by competitors, chains making their own biscuits, and high overseas tariffs. His answer was a pragmatic one, which must have been forced on him by the business difficulties of the time, as it meant giving up sole control of his business. The action taken in 1875 was to employ Charles Price, a former traveller with Cadbury's, to undertake marketing, on the understanding that if he were successful he would become a partner in the business. Price was successful and as promised became a partner in 1888 when the name of the firm was changed to McVitie and Price.²⁷

What is surprising, in retrospect, is that although Robert McVitie Snr was deemed to be a highly successful baker and businessman, there is little evidence of this being

²¹ Census information, William Gairns McVitie. Ewart Library, Dumfries.

²² Marriage information, Robert McVitie and Elizabeth Louise Thomson, 1890; Ewart Library, Dumfries.

²³ Birth Certificate, Edward Wilson Graham Guest.

²⁴ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

²⁵ Ibic

²⁶ see Forster, Margaret (1997), *Rich Desserts and Captain's Thin: A Family and Their Times*, 1831–1931. Chatto and Windus, London.

^{27 &}lt;a href="https://etslookagain.com/tag/mcvitie-price">https://etslookagain.com/tag/mcvitie-price.

the case. In the 1870s he employed 6 men, 4 boys and 3 women²⁸ which hardly gives the impression of a dynamic enterprise, even though Carr's of Carlisle viewed him as a serious competitor at this time. Likewise, his will published in 1883 sheds no light on his business affairs but shows a total personal estate of £1505/3/8 gross less debts and funeral expenses of £1434/13/2 leaving the net value of £70/10/6.²⁹ A further revision took place on 8 November 1884 as some debts that were deemed irrecoverable proved sound, but this only resulted in this net value being increased to £161/7/2.³⁰ It may of course have been the result of judicious succession-planning as Robert Snr had suffered ill health for two years prior to his death and this would have provided ample time to make the necessary arrangements.

It is by no means unusual for sons succeeding the founder of a business to be unsuccessful. This can occur for a variety of reasons: lacking the flair and entrepreneurial spirit of the parent; being more suited to an alternative vocation but circumstances dictating otherwise; or being under the control of a dominant parent, where they were unable to develop their own approach. Fortunately in the case of Robert McVitie Jnr none of these limitations occurred. He studied hard and developed an encyclopedic knowledge of the bakery industry, supplemented by the insights he gained from the visits paid to the Continent and to the United States. He also published two books: Bread Cakes and Biscuits for Diabetics and Bread and What it Lacks.31 On his father's death, however, he came into his own and stamped his authority on the firm. In 1884 he was successful in winning the gold medal at an international exhibition in Calcutta for shortbread, oatcakes and biscuits, However, he realised that his resources were too thinly spread with such a wide range of products and decided to concentrate on biscuits. As a result he stopped making bread, as there was a high level of waste, and concentrated on the manufacture of biscuits, which could be stored for some time. However, he retained an interest in bread-making and the bread and catering activities formerly performed by McVitie and Price were carried on from 1898 by McVitie, Guest and Co.

A visit to the United States in 1887 inspired him to introduce American methods of manufacture and to build a factory in Edinburgh in1888. In 1894 the factory was destroyed by a fire but instead of being devastated by this event, he made Alexander Grant, his right-hand man, the manager of a temporary replacement in Yorkshire³² and later manager of the re-built Edinburgh factory, which was claimed to be the most up-to-date of its kind in Britain. Always aware of the advantages of mechanization, he patented an application for depositing or dropping jam on biscuits³³ and a further application was made for an improved device for opening hermetically sealed cans, canisters etc. In 1902 a new factory was built at Harlesden, in north-west London, to supply his growing English market. Initially this proved a bridge too far and it required the combined efforts of Alexander Grant, by then

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Robert McVitie's will, 9th February 1884.

³⁰ Corrective and Additional Inventory for the above dated 8 November 1884.

³¹ Adam, James S (1992), The Business Diaries of Sir Alexander Grant by Adam, John Donald Edinburgh.

³² Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

^{33 &}lt;a href="https://www.google.co.uk/patents/US921874">https://www.google.co.uk/patents/US921874.

General Manager, and Robert McVitie to eventually achieve profitability by 1905. Indeed this would not have been achieved had it not been for a superhuman effort from Alexander Grant, who travelled to London from Edinburgh on a sleeper-less night train every week for three months to address shortcomings at the factory.

As Alexander Grant progressed to become General Manager in 1901, Charles Price (1857–1934) retired from the firm. This seems strange as he was only 44 years old and in normal circumstances would have been expected to continue. Regardless of the reason, he then devoted himself to politics and eventually became Liberal MP for Edinburgh Central, which he represented from 1906 to 1918. What is less well-known was that Charles Price was a man of strong Christian conviction and in the year of his death purchased Quinta Hall and 52 acres of land in Weston Rhyn, Oswestry (where he was brought up) to be used as a Christian centre. It was used for many years by Dr Barnardo's charity, but is still in use today serving its original purpose.³⁴ It would be interesting to know if Robert McVitie Snr engaged in philanthropy but the records do not give any indication. Perhaps he felt that running a business was sufficient use of his time, coupled with the need to invest in his fledgling business. What is known is that his competitors, Carr's of Carlisle, did help the community and were considered model employers, but theirs was paternalism with a hard edge. Every apprentice had to promise not to go to taverns (as well as not to gamble or visit the playhouse) and every journeyman had to take a pledge not to touch alcohol. 35 Eventually Carr's reached the same commercial conclusion as McVitie's in deciding that their future depended on the manufacture of biscuits, and resolving to dispose of their bread-making facilities and their shops. In so doing, they acted in contradiction to their much-vaunted Christian principles and behaved with appalling cruelty and lack of humanity. As soon as the bread-making was sold, John Sanderson the Principal Baker was sacked despite having worked for the firm for 50 years. After he remained unemployed for five weeks, the firm took him back but only as a labourer on a reduced salary. The combination of lack of status, lower earnings and inconsiderate treatment proved too much and he committed suicide.36 In contrast when McVitie's moved out of bread manufacture, it was transferred to McVitie, Guest and Co. and one of the employees involved was Alexander Ross, who had been foreman at McVitie's. In Robert McVitie Jnr's will Ross was described as a Director and bequeathed 1,000 shares in the company.³⁷ There is only one record of a donation by Robert McVitie Jnr in all the internet sources consulted and that is for £50 to the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in 1903. This was in response to the Government's refusal to fund a Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, while offering relative generous support to English ventures.³⁸ His will indicates that he had left nothing to charity as he has been 'a proportional and systematic giver' and it would appear that he acted in accord with Alexander Pope's admonition 'do good by stealth and blush to find it fame'. Records indicate that he was a quiet, industrious, and conscientious man and the patron of several charities. In his will he left £227,454 and, after providing for his widow and various family members, he rewarded members of his staff and employees with quite substantial bequests.

^{34 &}lt;a href="https://quinta.org/the-history">https://quinta.org/the-history.

³⁵ Forster, op.cit., p.55.

³⁶ Ibid., p.176.

³⁷ Robert McVitie Jnr.'s will, 17 October 1910.

^{38 &}lt;a href="https://sites.scran.ac.uk/voyage_of_the">https://sites.scran.ac.uk/voyage_of_the _scotia/scotia/vsdoc-010.htm>.

What Robert McVitie achieved was to change the business from an artisan method of production to an industrial process, resulting in lower costs, higher productivity, greater market share and enhanced profits. In so doing he increased employment levels from scores to hundreds and set the course for future expansion. However, he had always been of a weak disposition and the pressure of the new factory brought about his death at the early age of 56. He married Louisa Elizabeth Thompson in 1890 but there were no children and so ended the role of the McVitie family in the management of McVitie and Price. He had moved to London to manage that end of the business and bought a small mansion at Northchurch, near Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. But his ties remained with his home area of Edinburgh and he was buried there in the Dean Cemetery in 1910, with his wife following him in 1928. The loss of the driving-force of the firm could have represented a crippling blow but waiting in the wings was a dominant figure who would take the firm to greater fame and fortune. It was now time for Alexander Grant to take the reins and stamp his personality on the firm while engaging in acts of philanthropy which would establish him centre stage and result in an award of a baronetcy.

The Grant Years

If you are trying to create a company, it's like baking a cake. You have to have all the ingredients in the right proportion. — Elon Musk (Business Magnate).

The change in control from Robert McVitie went smoothly, which was not surprising as Grant was McVitie's chosen successor and heir apparent. He had worked closely with his employer and was his trusted associate who had rendered exceptional service in making the Harlesden factory profitable. He was also said to have invented the 'Digestive' biscuit in 1892, which was one of McVitie's most profitable lines (endnote 4).³⁹ Over the years he had become a skilled manager with a knowledge of the business inside-out; a marked change from the callow youth who had come to Edinburgh from Fife seeking work in 1886. He had arrived at McVitie's shop and, when told there was no job available, had said 'it's a pity as I'm a fine, fell baker' (endnote 5). He had also lifted a scone on his way out and added 'onyway ye canny mak scones in Edinburgh'. Robert McVitie was amused at this and hired him on the spot. 40 Although he started at the bottom, he came under the control of Alexander Ross, the foreman, and demonstrated that he was indeed a hard-worker and a very fine baker. He was soon appointed assistant foreman. However, this phase came to an end when he purchased a business and set up on his own behalf in Inverness. The business failed for a number of reason but mainly because he did not yet possess the necessary business skills or adequate capital to sustain it during the difficult start-up period. He was forced to return cap-in-hand to McVitie to ask for his old job back. McVitie, understandably was reluctant to agree, but Ross put in a good word for him and he was re-engaged.⁴¹

Perhaps, because McVitie had no son of this own, he developed a close working relationship with Alexander Grant and in the foreword to his *Diaries*, Grant claims that the

^{39 &}lt;a href="https://scottish-places.info/people/famousfirst3815.html">https://scottish-places.info/people/famousfirst3815.html.

^{40 &}lt;a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digestive">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digestive biscuit>.

^{41 &}lt;a href="https://www.referenceforbusiness.com/history2/48/United-Biscuits-Holdings-plc.html">https://www.referenceforbusiness.com/history2/48/United-Biscuits-Holdings-plc.html>.

two men who shaped his career were Thomas Stuart the baker in Forres, to whom he had been apprenticed, and Robert McVitie 'who was more like a father to me'. 42 In accordance with the late Robert McVitie's wishes a limited company was established with capital of £150,000 and Grant was given 5,000 shares and put in charge. It might be thought that Grant would be content with taking control of the day-to-day operations and a substantial stake in the firm, but this would be to underestimate his ambition. In 1916 he went to the Royal Bank of Scotland and secured a loan to buy the other shareholders out in order to make himself sole owner.

The First World War placed considerable strains on the business with shortages of supplies and labour problems. In addition, it was called on by the Government to use its knowledge and production facilities to supply 'Iron Ration' plain biscuits and, to meet this demand, a new bakery was opened in Manchester in 1914. However, with the return to normality the firm provided biscuits for the Oxford Arctic Expedition of 1924 and they were well received. In addition the 'Chocolate Digestive' Biscuit was introduced in 1926, followed by the 'Jaffa Cake' in 1927. Innovation had proved crucial in gaining new markets and Alexander Grant had proved a master at this with the launch of the two additions to his existing range.

Now, wealthy and successful, Grant engaged in benevolent and philanthropic works including giving £200,000 to establish a Scottish National Library in Edinburgh, £150,000 to Edinburgh University, £10,000 for banqueting silver etc. for Holyrood House and various other donations. ⁴³ Public honours accrued and he was given the Freedom of Edinburgh and the Freedom of Forres and Nairn. Ultimately followed the greatest honour of a baronetcy when in 1924 he became Sir Alexander Grant de Forres. ⁴⁴ This caused some controversy as he had provided Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald with a Daimler and a private loan of £40,000 of McVitie Shares. Macdonald was devoid of any private income and stated that this was given to him by his good friend 'so that I may not require, whilst absorbed in public duties to worry about income.' ⁴⁵ Inevitably, his baronetcy was construed by many as a reward for his patronage and while it was proved that the decision was made by the previous government and predated MacDonald's appointment, it cast a shadow over the award.

With Sir Alexander Grant's death in 1937 ended one of the most important periods in the history of the firm and it was left to his son to take matters forward. Sir Robert McVitie Grant (1895–1947) was named after Robert McVitie Jnr as he had played such an important part in Sir Alexander Grant's life as employer, mentor and close friend. Sir Robert took charge on his father's death and no doubt worked manfully in promoting McVitie and Price but was placed in an awkward position. His father had been a dominant figure in the firm until his death in 1937 and, as a result Sir Robert had had few opportunities for delivering his own policies until later years. In addition the outbreak of the Second World War resulted in restricted supplies and as a result the range of biscuits was cut from about 370 in 1939 to

⁴² Adam, op.cit.

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

⁴⁵ See Morgan, Kevin (2006) Ramsay Macdonald, Haus Publishing Ltd., London.

10 in 1945. He did however invent 'MacVita' which competed with Scandinavian hardtack and which has remained popular Finally, the death of Sir Alexander Grant resulted in a substantial death-duty liability, as the firm was still owned outright by him, and this imposed a heavy financial burden. Sir Robert recognised that the only solution was to arrange a merger with another firm and he would have concluded this arrangement with McFarlane, Lang and Co. of Glasgow had he not died before the necessary action could be taken.

Despite the financial difficulties caused by Sir Alexander Grant's sole ownership, Sir Robert continued the philanthropic tradition established by his father but still died a wealthy man, leaving an estate amounting to £1,033,234.46 In view of his premature death in 1947 it is indeed fortunate that he had named Peter MacDonald, the firm's legal adviser, as his chosen successor. In a strange twist of fate, Robert McVitie Snr died at the age of 74 and his son, Robert Jnr. died without issue at the early age of 56. Alexander Grant died at the age of 73 in 1937 and his son Sir Robert McVitie Grant, a bachelor, died at the early age of 52. With no one to inherit the title it became extinct within a short period of little more than 20 years.

The appointment of Peter Macdonald (1898–1983)⁴⁷ as the firm's legal advisor was, no doubt, a gesture of friendship as much as a commercial decision, as the MacDonald family and the Grants had been friends for many years. Indeed Peter MacDonald and Sir Alexander Grant were near neighbours in Hermitage Drive in Edinburgh. What does of course represent a great leap of faith is making Macdonald chairman and managing director of McVitie and Price in 1947. As far as is known he had no commercial experience and certainly no knowledge of biscuit manufacture. In fact he was the antithesis of what had gone before. Both the McVities had been closely involved in the practical side of manufacture and Sir Alexander had always prided himself as being first and foremost a baker. His son had also worked in the business before succeeding his father.

In actual fact the appointment was an inspired choice. MacDonald brought a critical eye to bear on all aspects of the business and achieved remarkable success. Where Sir Alexander had been reluctant to cede control and was involved in the *minutiae* of the company, Macdonald preferred to delegate — indeed he had little option as the firm grew with further acquisitions. Likewise, where the firm had liked to boast of the number of types of biscuits it produced, he concentrated on the most profitable ranges and dropped those that were poor sellers. Having amalgamated with Macfarlane, Lang and Co. in 1948 under the name of United Biscuits, other acquisitions quickly followed — William Crawford and Sons (1962), William Macdonald and Sons Ltd (1965) and Meredith and Drew (1967). Although he made remarkable progress by raising the profit from £450,000 in 1948 to £5,000,000 by the time he retired in 1967, he was aware of his limitations and called in management consultants McKinsey & Co. to review operations. Their recommendations were the complete integration of all activities and it fell to Hector Laing (Sir Alexander Grant's grandson) to take the reins and implement the plan. Macdonald received a knighthood in 1963 for political and public service. Like his predecessors he donated to charities but

^{46 &}lt;a href="https://forres-gazette.co.uk/Features/Memory-Lane/Sir-Alexander-Grant-and-Forres">https://forres-gazette.co.uk/Features/Memory-Lane/Sir-Alexander-Grant-and-Forres>.

⁴⁷ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

without publicity. In his will he left £396,407 which is not noted for any prurient interest but mirrors the fact that he was an employee of the business and did not reap the largesse that his predecessors had received from the ownership of the company.

The End of an Era

A brand for a company is like a reputation for a person. You earn reputation by trying to do hard things well. – Jeff Bezos (Entrepreneur and Investor).

After a distinguished military career during the Second World War, Hector Laing joined the family firm and became a director in 1947. A period of unparalleled expansion followed and during his term of office as chairman, Kenyon, Son and Craven was added to United Biscuits (1968) as was Keebler, a major American biscuit manufacturer (1974), Terry's of York (1982), Ross Young, a frozen food company, (1988) and Wimpy and Pizzaland. Most of the integration went smoothly but by moving outwith their area of expertise in biscuit manufacture, they had made a classic mistake. This was rectified by the disposal of the non-biscuit activities and also Keebler, which proved difficult to absorb. The final disposal of the snacks division took place in 2012 when brands Hula Hoops and KP Nuts were sold to Intersnack of Germany. 49

Over the years United Biscuits took an increasing share of the market and by 1968 they had 14% of the packaged cake trade. Integrating William Macdonald meant that they had also acquired 20% of the chocolate biscuit export market. Growth continued unabated and by 1969 they were the largest biscuit manufacturing company in Europe. The success came at a price as with rationalization a number of factories had to be closed — South Shields in 1973 with the loss of 823 jobs, and MacFarlane, Lang and Co. at Osterley, West London with 2,000 job losses. This caused Hector Laing considerable soul-searching as he had taken an enlightened approach to worker-participation and found it difficult to reconcile greater mechanization in the search for efficiency with its impact on his employees.

Hector Laing was knighted in 1978 and became a life peer in 1979 as Lord Laing of Dunphail.⁵⁰ It was always his hope to equal his grandfather's business success but in the end it was generally agreed that he had surpassed him. In 2013 United Biscuits was sold to Yildiz Holding of Istanbul for over £2 billion and as result created the third largest biscuit firm in the world. Brand names are crucial in the fight for market-share and McVitie's is one of the best-known and best-liked. The new owners were not slow to capitalize on this and in 2014, United Biscuits rebranded all its sweet biscuits under the McVitie name. It seems likely that, having survived for almost 200 years, the McVitie name will be around for a considerable time yet. All started by a young man from Dumfries working in a basement in Edinburgh.

^{48 &}lt;a href="https://letslookagain.com/tag/mcvitie-price">https://letslookagain.com/tag/mcvitie-price.

⁴⁹ Ibid

^{50 &}lt;a href="fttps://www.scotsman.com/news/obituaries-lord-land-of-dumphail-1-813966">fttps://www.scotsman.com/news/obituaries-lord-land-of-dumphail-1-813966.

Endnotes

- (1) The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography states that William McVitie was a failed poet and a copy of one of his poems in the Carlisle Museum in the form of a chap-book; a cheap book printed for the purpose of being sold by hawkers round the doors. It is perhaps worthy of comment that there are a number of his poems still on sale on the internet and there is a recent reprint of his poem *Whisky* in 2010.
- (2) It is assumed that William Green was a widower as there is no mention of his wife, and his will of 1811 leaves his estate to his son and daughter. He returned to the island of Carriacou, Grenada and died there in 1811, following an accident with a blunderbuss which burst and fractured his hand. Infection set in and this proved fatal.
- (3) It is possible that there was a degree of estrangement between William and his family following his decision to become a journalist and leave the family business. His brother Robert Jnr. pre-deceased him and was quite generous in his will to other members of the family and employees, but his brother is notably omitted.
- (4) The claim is made that Alexander Grant invented the digestive biscuit but this is quite untrue. Various claims have been made, for example that it was invented by two Scottish doctors in 1839 as an aid to digestion, whereas Huntly and Palmer claimed that Dr William Oliver invented the 'Bath Oliver' the first digestive biscuit in the eighteenth century and that the recipe was acquired by them in the nineteenth century. The earliest record is an advertisement in the *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* in 1829 for 'Abernethy's Celebrated Digestive Biscuits'. There is also an advert for 'Buss's Digestive Biscuits' in the *Morning Post* of 24 February 1836.
- (5) The term 'fell' in this context means 'keen' or 'eager'. It is the Scottish use of the word.

QUEEN OF THE SOUTH CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY, 1881–1892

Ian Gasse1

For the eleven years from spring 1881 to spring 1892 Dumfries had two quite separate consumer co-operative societies: the Dumfries and Maxwelltown Co-operative Provision Society (hereafter DMCPS), established in 1847,² and the Queen of the South Co-operative Society, (hereafter QOSCS), which began trading in early April 1881. In April 1892, at the instigation of the Scottish Section of the Co-operative Union³ and as a result of its policy of encouraging the amalgamation of geographically contiguous societies, the two societies merged to become the Dumfries and Maxwelltown Co-operative Society, and, according to a report in 1893 'the amalgamation of the two ... societies ... proved a decided success.' In fact, as we shall see, both societies experienced a downturn in their fortunes from the late 1880s and the merger appears to have made substantial economic, as well as administrative, sense.

The single minute book of the QOSCS, covering the period from May/June 1882 to the merger in 1892, has fortunately survived. Using this source, combined with reports from the two Dumfries local newspapers of the time, and augmented by statistics from the reports of the annual Co-operative Congresses, it is possible to trace the development of the QOSCS throughout the eleven years of its life as a separate co-operative society.

No account of the society's origins or of its founders' commitment to the wider Cooperative movement appears in the minute book, as it commences over a year after the society's foundation and thirteen months after it began trading. A narrative can, however, be assembled from reports in the *Dumfries & Galloway Standard & Advertiser* (hereafter *DGSA*) in late 1880. A short piece, published in late November, reported 'the opening of a new provision shop for Dumfries to be conducted on the co-operative principle' and noted that 'members of the society should receive dividends on their purchases as well as on their shares.' A second report, the following week, stated that the new society 'was fairly set on foot at a meeting on Saturday evening last, when fifty members were enrolled, and it was named the "Queen of the South Co-operative Store Company (Limited)". In mid-December there appeared a longer report of a public meeting in Dumfries Market Hall, held 'under the auspices of the newly formed "Queen of the South Co-operative Store Company (Limited)" for the purpose of hearing addresses on the principles and practice of co-operation', with speakers from the Central Co-operative Board and the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society (hereafter SCWS), the latter having been founded in 1868 to

^{1 10} Lovers Walk, Dumfries, DG1 1LP.

² For the origins of this society, see Gasse (2017).

³ The Co-operative movement's national co-ordinating body, established 1869–1873.

⁴ Scottish Section Report 1892–3 to the Co-operative Congress of 1893.

⁵ Dumfries Archive Centre, Ewart Library, Dumfries; Acc.No.GGD273.

⁶ DGSA 27/11/1880.

⁷ DGSA 4/12/1880.

provide a reliable source of supplies for Scotland's numerous independently established co-operative societies. Mr J. McNair, the Co-operative Board's secretary, spoke about the history of co-operation in Britain, citing the example of the Rochdale Pioneers, who had started with £28 of capital but who, by 1880, had a share capital of £300,000, even after paying 'thousands upon thousands of pounds ... in ... profits', a statement which elicited cheers from the 'large' audience. He went on to talk about the successes of both the Leeds and Paisley societies, stressing that they 'were supported by working men' and that 'the working men of Dumfries could secure similar results', a remark which again brought cheers of approval from his audience.

However, the appeal to the audience's pockets, as well as to their local pride and sense of self-worth, was accompanied by references to the bigger picture of co-operative enterprise, such as the 'handsome business premises ... reading rooms and splendid libraries for ... members' that the movement had established, and to its larger ambitions, to create 'a more equitable distribution of the wealth of the country', although 'not', McNair emphasised, 'by any system of pulling down, but by levelling up, by getting working men to help themselves'. 'They aimed,' he went on, 'at cultivating habits of prudence and thrift among working people ... urging on them especially the importance of doing business on the cash principle' and he ended with a further appeal to local chauvinism by saying that 'it was impossible for a co-operative society to fail if managed by an energetic and capable committee', a conclusion that brought further cheers.

Mr W.J. Stewart, from the SCWS, explained how co-operation was partly about removing the 'middle-man' between producers and consumers, as '[c]o-operative societies sought to bring the producer and consumer together, to remove the profits of the agent, the merchant and the retailer'. The SCWS was now active in Denmark, Ireland and the USA, he continued, in order to purchase products directly for co-operative societies, thus helping to ensure that 'a store could flourish in the midst of keen competition'. Questioned about how non-members might benefit from shopping at the new store, both the speakers and the chairman, Roderick Niven, stressed that non-members would be entitled to a payment of dividend on their purchases, though at half the rate paid to members. Indeed, the principle of paying dividends on purchases, as well as on shares, seems to have been the vital differentiating feature of the new society, in comparison with the long-established DMCPS, which at this stage paid dividend only to its shareholders. 'Although we had in Dumfries a company who called themselves a Co-operative Store Company,' Niven had said in his opening address, he felt 'they were as far from co-operation as any of the merchants in the town', a remark which elicited cheers from the audience. Thus, notwithstanding those parts of the speeches highlighting the financial benefits of co-operation to working people, there appears to have been some genuine concern amongst at least some members of the audience – as well as the society's committee members — to create a society that was, as they saw it, more properly 'co-operative' than the DMCPS, because its customers would not have to invest in shares in order to benefit financially.8 In theory, this would make the

⁸ DMCPS was established, like many other early societies, under joint stock company law before there was any legislation offering co-operative societies legal protection. Consequently the tendency was for these earlier Scottish co-operative societies to pay dividend solely to shareholders, see Potter (1891) and Lucas (1920). DMCPS was not formally registered as

new society more accessible to the poorer households of Dumfries, and within days of the meeting the society was reported to have 110 members.⁹

The formation of the QOSCS comes at the end of a period of considerable co-operative activity in south-west Scotland, which developed, as elsewhere, following the passage of two Industrial and Provident Societies Acts in 1852 and 1862, providing co-operative societies with some status and protection, and a legal framework for their activities. A society was formed in Dalbeattie in 1860;¹⁰ and in 1861 a comparatively short-lived Dumfries and Maxwelltown Equitable Co-operative Society was established.¹¹ Co-operative societies were also set up in Annan (1867), Wanlockhead (1871), Langholm and Stranraer (both 1873), Carronbridge (1880) and a Dumfries Co-operative Meat Supplying Society opened in 1875. However, the establishment of the QOSCS, in 1881, came barely a decade before the emergence of budget-based national grocery chain stores, for example, Home & Colonial and Lipton, which provided significant retail competition to co-operative societies across the country from the early 1890s.¹² Lipton opened its first store in Dumfries in March 1890 and appears to have had an immediate impact.

Beginnings and early prosperity

The QOSCS began trading, from brand new premises at 6 Nith Place, at the beginning of April 1881. By May 1882 it was able to report, for its first year of trading, ending 17 April (a 58 and a half week year), on 'the favourable results which have attended the society's transactions since its formation'. Total sales were over £4,000 and a dividend of 1s 4d per £1 was payable on members' purchases, as well as 8d per £1 on non-members' purchases. The membership had reached 141, and the annual meeting, on 6 May, authorised the committee to explore establishing a bakery, as well as the opening of a branch store in neighbouring Maxwelltown. The membership had reached 141 is a sale of the committee to explore establishing a bakery, as well as the opening of a branch store in neighbouring Maxwelltown.

For the next five years the society continued to prosper. Annual sales rose each year, from £4,259 at the end of 1882 to just under £10,000 in 1887. Profits increased year-on-year until 1887, the dividend was consistently well over 2s per £1 per half-year from 1883 onwards, and membership more than doubled in five years, to 349. Fuller details are set out in Table 1, though it is perhaps worth recording that the three main sources for this information — the society's minutes; the reports of quarterly, half-yearly and annual meetings published in the local press; and the figures published in the Co-operative Congress annual reports,

a co-operative society until 1884, and this earlier failure to pay dividend on purchases - the 'Rochdale system' — may account for some of the hostility at the QOSCS public meeting, as well as for William Maxwell's dismissal of co-operation in Dumfriesshire as 'providing nothing to build on', see Maxwell (1910). In a previous article it was wrongly assumed that the DMCPS had paid dividend on purchases from its foundation in 1847 (Gasse 2016).

⁹ DGSA 18/12/1880.

¹⁰ Some records of this society are held in the Dumfries Archive Centre, Ewart Library.

¹¹ It began trading in July 1861 from 154 High Street, Dumfries, and was still in existence in 1866.

¹² See Fraser (1981).

¹³ DGSA 6/5/1882.

¹⁴ DGSA 10/5/1882.

are not fully comprehensive or entirely consistent in the information they provide. The *DGSA* reports, which seem mainly to have been supplied by the society rather than written by newspaper staff, are often more informative than the minutes, but the figures in the Congress reports do not always tally exactly with what appears in the newspaper or the minutes. However, whilst some details may be inaccurate, the general trend is clear.

Date	Annual Sales	Annual Profits	Annual dividend-per £ [members / non-members]	Members
May 1882	£4000-0-0	£219-3s-3d	1s 4d / 8d	141
May 1883	£4541-0-0	£389-16s-9d	2s / 1s	195 (Aug)
May 1884	£6352-0-0	£455-13s-3½d	5s 1d / 2s 6½d	234
May 1885	£8028-0-0	£856-0s-7½d	4s 8d / 2s 4d	313 (Dec)*
May 1886	£8370-0-0*	£1100-0s-0d*	5s 1d / 2s 6½d	328 (Nov)
May 1887	£9909-0-0*	£1399-0s-0d*	5s 6d / 2s 9d	349 (Dec)*

Table 1. Queen of the South Co-operative Society: Sales, profits, dividends and membership, 1882–1887. Sources: QOSCS Minutes and reports in DGSA, May 1882–May 1887; asterisked figures are taken from the annual Co-operative Congress reports.

From the outset, the core activity of the society was as a grocery store serving the working-class households of Dumfries, stocking a wide range of provisions typical of such stores in the late nineteenth century. Goods ordered by the society during June 1882 included flours, coffee, cheeses, ham, jam, ground rice, ginger, pepper, sardines, tinned salmon, split peas, cornflour, mustard, lime cordial, pipes, soap, soap powder and other cleaning materials. Thereafter the society lodged its orders in a separate order book, which has unfortunately not survived, but there are references to the supply of other goods at subsequent committee meetings, including potatoes, onions, oatmeal, butter, eggs, bacon, oranges, tea, sugar and tobacco. Goods were sourced from a range of local and national suppliers, including the SCWS, though as late as 1889, the society's store manager was claiming that QOSCS purchased comparatively little from the SCWS.¹⁵

By mid-June 1882, the society's committee had decided to open a bakery, secured premises, and persuaded the Hawick Co-operative Society to 'lend ... a man for a few weeks', so that by mid-July the society was able to report a profit of £6-13s-7d from its bread sales over the first fortnight of the bakery's activity. ¹⁶ It appointed a permanent foreman baker in August, and subsequently introduced a regular delivery service for bread

¹⁵ In newspaper correspondence with the organising agent of the Traders' Defence Association for Scotland.

¹⁶ OOSCS Minutes 10/7/1882.

and groceries – 'with the view of increasing sales'. A horse and van were purchased to facilitate this in summer 1884. In 1885 decisions were taken to start a savings bank, and to open a boot and shoe department, with a cobbler appointed in September of that year. The selling of coal followed in 1886.

The society's early financial success and the expansion of its activities prompted the consideration of where to invest its surplus funds. There were calls by some committee members to acquire additional or larger premises, and locations in Friars Vennel and Assembly Street were considered, as was the extension of the shop at Nith Place into the neighbouring property. Eventually, premises at 14–16 High Street were identified, though it took several months to complete the necessary alterations and the move did not actually take place until Whitsuntide 1885. But, in looking back over its first four and a half years of trading in May 1885, the society could reflect on a considerable range of achievements, and, at its May members' meeting, the president, Roderick Niven, was able to point out that it 'had sold goods to the extent of £22,000 and distributed in profits over £2,000.'17

At the same time, the society's committee was still looking to expand and was also concerned that the membership should contribute more in the way of custom. At the 1883 annual meeting, while congratulating the members on the 'very satisfactory' position of the society, Niven suggested it could be improved 'if those who bought little or nothing patronised the shop better' and, at the following annual meeting in May 1884, the committee stated that it 'would earnestly impress upon the shareholders the desirability of patronising their own business as largely as possible, and thereby fully participating in the benefits derivable therefrom.' An analysis of the value of purchases by members over the preceding six months (see Table 2) revealed that only fourteen of the 238 members had spent more than £30 at the store, while 55 (over 20%) had spent less than £5. In fact, as highlighted later, some members had joined the society merely to receive a guaranteed 5% interest on their investment.

Number of members (238)	Value of purchases	
14	Between £30 and £50	
40	Between £20 and £30	
79	Between £10 and £20	
50	Between £5 and £10	
35	Between £1 and £5	
20	Less than £1	

Table 2. Queen of the South Co-operative Society: The value of members' purchases, November 1883–April 1884. Source: QOSCS Minutes, annual meeting, 10 May 1884.

¹⁷ DGSA 9/5/1885

¹⁸ OOSCS minutes 11/5/1883

¹⁹ DGSA 17/5/1884

Membership, management and development, 1881-7

The membership of the society, assuming its committee was broadly representative, was mainly from the lower middle-class, artisan and working-class sections of Dumfries society. Roderick Niven, president from 1881 to 1886, was a power loom manager. His committee in 1882 included the treasurer, James H. Brown, a clerk, based at the local tweed-manufacturing Troqueer Mills; Arthur Cunningham, a frame knitter; James Elliot, a stocking maker; Peter McIntyre, a millworker; Farquhar McRae, a millworker; George Crichton, a winder; Andrew Roddan, a plumber and gasfitter; and William Farquharson, a gardener. The secretary, from August 1882 until May 1891, was John Gibson, a former commercial clerk and drapery salesman. Other committee members during the 1880s and 1890s included three other millworkers, two compositors, two wool sorters, an architect, a draper, a foreman mender, a plasterer, a porter, a postman, a school board officer, a sergeant from the local barracks, a shopman, a spinner, a slater, another stocking maker, a tailor, a tuner and a writer (solicitor).

The society's committee, comprising eleven members, including president, vicepresident, secretary and treasurer, met weekly throughout the year and there were quarterly meetings of the whole membership, in February, May, August and November. The annual and half-yearly meetings, in May and November, received business reports and, from November 1883, determined the amount of dividend to be paid. The May meeting included the election of the main office-holders for the full year, and of two committee members for six months, but a rule change in November 1882 had the office-holders' remuneration decided at the February meeting for ratification at the May meeting. Two other members of the committee were elected, each to serve for six months, at the February, August and November meetings. Two auditors, who did not serve on the committee, were also elected in May to serve for a full year. Additional 'special' committee and general meetings were held from time to time; the former often for the appointment of personnel, the purchase of particular goods in large quantities, such as flour before an impending price rise, or the disciplining of staff; the latter for senior personnel appointments or rule changes. Committee meetings were generally well attended throughout the whole period from June 1882 to April 1892, with at least six and generally eight, nine or ten of the committee present. On only two occasions was a quarterly, half-yearly or annual meeting inquorate. Meetings were advertised at the store, by handbills and/or through adverts in the local press.

The society's store was run by a manager, who was accountable to the committee. From 1881 until autumn 1891, David Keppie held this position, and thereafter John Anderson, who was promoted, against the recommendation of the committee, from store salesman. There was also a permanent shop committee and a range of ad-hoc sub-committees set up for specific short-term purposes, such as the feasibility of opening a bakery, the purchase of a horse and van or to oversee the conversion of the High Street premises.

Staff appointments, apart from message boys or temporary junior staff, which were delegated to the manager, were decided by the committee, as were wage levels and pay increases, the disciplining of staff, the granting of holidays and the arrangements for the

²⁰ According to Johnston's Directory of Dumfries, Maxwelltown, etc. (1882).

working day. Stocktaking was another duty of the committee, as was the ordering and pricing of goods. Occasionally, there was friction between the committee and Keppie, such as over the time taken for his meals, and on one occasion a more serious disagreement regarding unannounced access to the shop premises by committee members, which led to serious disagreements within the committee (see below). Occasionally also, there was friction between the committee and some of the society's members over decisions on wage levels for senior employees, such as the foreman baker and the shop manager, with unsuccessful attempts made to have these decisions determined by members' meetings, rather than the committee

The general behaviour of both the committee and the membership indicates no particularly enlightened or progressive attitude in their role as managers or employers. Staff appear to have been treated conventionally as employees and there is seldom any indication of concern for their well-being,²¹ apart from the relatively trivial matter of offering Christmas gratuities. Pay rises and requests for holidays, which were made on an individual basis rather than by the workers collectively, seem to have been refused almost as often as they were granted, and the awarding of a weekly half-day holiday, initially requested by some of the shop men in September 1884, was only agreed in August 1887. The sole reference to a trade union in the minutes was as late as autumn 1889 during a national Scottish bakers' strike.

This raises the question of the politics of the QOSCS and, specifically, their awareness of, and commitment to, the wider Co-operative movement, whether in Dumfries, Scotland or Great Britain. It also begs questions about their interest in trends in the retail sector, as well as concerns about campaigns by private traders' associations opposing the Co-operative movement, and the response of the movement towards these campaigns. There is little in the minutes or in the newspaper reports to suggest that many of the committee or membership had a particular interest in these issues. Invitations to take part in conferences or activities outside Dumfries, whether initiated by the SCWS or the Co-operative Union, were generally ignored or allowed to 'lie on the table'. Even the opening of a SCWS depot in Kilmarnock was greeted with indifference by the committee, with no-one prepared to second a proposal to send a delegate. Further, on two separate occasions the committee resolved to discontinue its subscription to the *Co-operative News*; the second time following a move by two members to insist the society actually sell the paper in order to promote the idea of co-operation.

However, the QOSCS had from the outset established a relationship with the SCWS, following the latter's active involvement in the public meeting that helped establish the society in December 1880. The society had an investment in the SCWS, which the DMCPS at this stage did not have, and the QOSCS also sought guidance of one kind or another from the SCWS during its early years. The society's balance sheet for the quarter ending 16 October 1882 showed an investment of £34-9s-10d in the SCWS, rising to £41-12s-11d

²¹ An exception was a request by the committee to have Keppie treat one of the employees 'gently', QOSCS minutes 15/5/1883.

²² OOSCS minutes 5/6/1882.

the following quarter.²³ In addition, in its first annual report, in May 1882, the committee, after congratulating the membership on 'the favourable results which have attended the society's transactions', went on to say that it hoped the results would 'tend to lessen the want of confidence displayed by the general public in the co-operative movement' and that 'co-operation can be successfully conducted in Dumfries as well as elsewhere'.²⁴

Communication with other societies during the early years appears to have been confined to seeking practical guidance over the QOSCS accounts and the 'borrowing' of a baker, both from Hawick Co-operative Society, and the selling of bread to the smaller Carronbridge society. This again suggests a predominantly local focus, on developing the society as a business, by the society's members and committee, with little consideration given to the larger ambitions of the Co-operative movement and its grander social and educational aspirations. Indeed, this seems not to have been uncommon amongst Scottish societies at this time, as illustrated by the report of the Co-operative Union Scottish Section to the 1884 Annual Co-operative Congress held in Derby:

We regret the apathy still prevailing among the members of the stores on the question of education. Competition as to which society shall show the largest dividend appears to be the all-absorbing thought of the majority of those who have the management and direction of societies' affairs.²⁵

Historians of the late nineteenth-century retail sector tend to confirm this trend within societies, that 'the mass of the members were more interested in money than in social development; it was the dividend, and the use to which it could be put in managing a family's finances, that was the real inducement to co-operate.'26 However, two QOSCS soirées, in January 1886 and March 1887, indicate a more developed relationship with other societies, at least in southern Scotland. The guest speaker in 1886 was a Mr Barrie, the secretary of the Hawick Co-operative Store, which had originally been started by local Chartist stocking makers in 1839; and the following year the speaker was John Anderson, the secretary and manager of the Selkirk Co-operative Society, formed in 1846.²⁷ The dichotomy of practical local focus vis-à-vis encouraging interest in the wider movement was reflected at both of these soirées, which act as a fitting conclusion to this early part of the society's existence, before the greater economic challenges of the late 1880s made their mark.

At the first soirée, the president, Niven, spoke of the 'very trying circumstances' in which the society had been founded (though without, explaining what these circumstances were) but he went on to say that the society had then 'progressed very satisfactorily indeed and had obtained a very good footing in Dumfries, which would not be easily overturned.'28 At the second soirée, the new president, Joseph Black, highlighted the financial successes of the society, with sales rising from £54 per week in the first year of trading, to £202 per

²³ QOSCS minutes 11/11/1882 and 3/2/1883.

²⁴ DGSA 6/5/1882.

²⁵ Annual Co-operative Congress Report (1884) Scottish section, 31.

²⁶ Johnson (1985) 127.

²⁷ Maxwell (1910) 80-84, 91-94.

²⁸ DGSA 23/1/1886.

week by early 1887, and with shareholders benefitting 'to the extent of about £4000' over the same period, with total dividends of £3,720 and interest paid of £242. He likened the QOSCS to 'a forest tree gaining fresh strength every year and striking deeper root into the soil'.²⁹

But at both of these soirées, the visiting speakers delivered addresses that reflected on the possibilities of the wider movement, as well as on the practicalities of running and expanding co-operative stores. Mr Barrie praised the QOSCS on its achievements. His observation, that '[f]or so young a society there was a very great deal of skill in its officers', was greeted with applause from the audience. He went on:

The whole workings appeared to be thoroughly satisfactory; and although not such an old society as the Hawick one, still in many respects the Queen of the South seemed to be, if not beyond, at least quite equal to it.

However, he also spoke of the opportunities that might stem from productive, as opposed to distributive, co-operation, and urged his listeners to use their utmost endeavours to bring about a 'happier time' for society at large through further developing the Co-operative movement.³⁰ The following year, Mr Anderson urged QOSCS members 'to make their local store as perfect an organisation as it was possible for them to do' and to:

use it as an educative agency where principles of thrift and economy were inculcated and instilled, and where business habits were acquired, which would fit them and enable them to grapple with those obstacles standing in the way of the realisation of those higher forms of co-operation of which as yet they were only upon the threshold.

His more practical advice covered the calibre and stability of the society's committee, the continued loyalty of the members and the limiting of the use of credit, but he ended with a return to a vision of the co-operative future – 'the dawn of a better day' – and a quotation from Burns, which was greeted with 'loud applause'.³¹

Early financial difficulties

However, there were already signs that things were not going as well financially as the annual reports appeared to indicate. Each committee meeting received a report on the society's bank balance, and while from June 1882 to the end of the summer of 1885, the balances show the society in credit, from 4 September of that year the balance is shown as overdrawn, often by several hundred pounds, for twenty-two consecutive weeks to 15 February 1886.

Two early, and continuing, problems for the QOSCS were, first, the use of credit by the society's customers — something the society called 'overdealing' — and, second, the fact that a significant number of members purchased shares in the society principally for the guaranteed 5% annual interest paid on them, without making many, if any, purchases

²⁹ DGSA 26/3/1887.

³⁰ DGSA 23/1/1886.

³¹ DGSA 26/3/1887.

from the society's store. Clearly, this did not help the society's turnover or profits. There was also the expense of acquiring and moving to new premises in 1884–5, which led to additional outlay.

Regarding the problem of 'overdealing', as early as June 1882 members were being asked to clear their outstanding balances as soon as possible, though the committee appeared reluctant to take a firm line on this, because of the attendant risk that they might begin to lose members. This led 'after a long discussion' to the resignation of one committee member, when it was agreed 'that Mr Keppie does not ... press shareholders to pay up'.

But the problem was serious enough for a sub-committee to be formed to revise the society's rules, and a new rule governing credit was 'unanimously agreed' at the November 1882 quarterly meeting.³² The problem persisted, however, as a further rule revision was undertaken less than twelve months later, in the autumn of 1883, but another discussion on Rule X, in February 1884, left it unchanged.³³ Instead, adverts for a new share purchase and loans were displayed in the store from late 1884.

Whilst the problems associated with the granting of credit were not at this stage threatening the existence of the society, they were clearly affecting cash-flow. Actions were taken throughout 1885 seeking to reduce members' outstanding balances. 'Overdealing' was thus clearly widespread and, in order to prevent any serious impact on the society's finances, the February 1885 quarterly meeting granted the committee extended powers to borrow and lend. This was followed in June with an approach to the British Linen Bank for an overdraft of £500, and at the August quarterly meeting the committee was authorised to start making use of this facility. But the issue stubbornly remained and returned to committee and other meetings throughout 1886 and 1887, the years of the successful soirées and confident speeches about the society.

The issue of credit confronted most if not all co-operative societies at this period and, despite the exhortations of the Co-operative movement's leadership, credit was widely used by working-class members as a way of dealing with 'times of hardship'. Having noted that in 1886, 511 of the 946 registered industrial and provident societies in England were giving credit, Johnson argues that: 'the pressure for credit facilities came entirely from store members, and societies individually had to yield to this pressure in order to retain the custom of established members and gain that of new entrants to the movement.'34 This seems to have been the case with the QOSCS; and the society attributed most cases of unofficial credit taken by members during 1886–7 to 'want of work in the winter time'. The society was concerned to retain, as well as expand, its membership, whilst at the same time remaining economically viable. In the late 1880s this became increasingly difficult.

³² Rule X: section 1, any member having an unpaid balance after six weeks to be charged interest at 5% until debt cleared; if unpaid beyond six months share capital to be used to pay off debt.

³³ Perhaps because the society needed to retain its membership so as to maximise its financial assets to cover the expense of moving to the larger High Street premises at Whitsuntide 1885.

³⁴ Johnson (1985) p.137.

The later years

The society's trading figures for the years after 1887 saw a decline, relatively gradual at first, but with sales falling steeply in 1891, and profits steadily reducing over the four years, as can be seen in Table 3 below.

Date	Annual Sales	Annual Profits	Annual dividend-per £ [members / non-members]	Members
1887	£9909-0-0	£1399-0-0	5s 6d / 2s 9d*	349
1888	£9370-0-0	£1234-0-0	5s 6d / 2s 9d*	343
1889	£9052-0-0	£1031-0-0	4s 8d / 2s 4d*	333
1890	£9031-0-0	£946-0-0	No figures available	336
1891	£7869-0-0	£680-0-0	3s 10d / 1s 11d*	297
1892	N/A	N/A	No figures available	N/A

Table 3. Queen of the South Co-operative Society: Sales, profits, dividends and membership, 1887–1892. Source: Figures taken from the annual reports to the Co-operative Congresses, except for those marked with an asterisk, which are from QOSCS minutes and/or DGSA newspaper reports.

However, the figures also show that membership remained more or less constant after reaching a peak of 349 in 1887, until 1891, when it fell by over 10%. The society was continuing to recruit well during these years, with 46 new members in 1887, 33 in 1888, 57 in 1889, 36 in 1890, and even 43 in 1891, but it was also apparently losing members at an equivalent rate. From November 1888, a new category of 'ready-money' member was introduced as a means of increasing membership. This enabled poorer individuals and households to attain membership based on their cash purchases, rather than expecting them to find the wherewithal to purchase a share. In December 1888 the committee recognised that it was losing a significant number of members and the secretary was instructed to find out why this was happening. Unfortunately, no record appears in the minutes of his findings, but in August 1891 another attempt was made to ascertain why people were leaving the society.³⁵

Cash-flow was also becoming an increasing problem, despite the £500 overdraft facility. At the annual meeting in May 1889 Andrew Roddan suggested the society should obtain a bond as an alternative to the expense of the overdraft. From June 1887 financial reports to the committee ceased always to include the society's bank balance, and from November 1887 the society was once again overdrawn more often than it was in credit. In 1888 it was

³⁵ The secretary was asked to write to two recently departed members, seeking their reasons for leaving, asking them to reconsider, and offering to 'remedy as far as possible any legitimate cause of grievance'.

overdrawn for 20 of the 37 weeks when the bank balance was reported,³⁶ and in 1889 this rose to 37 out of 45 weeks.³⁷ Following Roddan's reference to the overdraft in May 1889, the shop manager submitted a plan to reduce shop expenses but the only immediate action was the dismissal of one of the salesmen, who had already been deemed unsatisfactory. The rest of the plan, whatever it involved, was delayed, and, in fact, the society took on further expense by agreeing to establish its boot and shoe department in separate new premises.

Two other suggestions to improve the society's finances were made: viz. increasing members' share capital, and accepting £20 loans from members. Neither appears to have been taken up straightaway but neither was likely to address the scale of the problem, which was still not being fully acknowledged either by the committee or by the general membership, though some questions were raised at the November half-yearly meeting.³⁸ Yet dividend or bonus was still being paid at relatively generous rates, even though this meant using the contingency fund to cover it. However, by early 1890 there were signs that members were at last beginning to acknowledge the difficulties. At the quarterly meeting in February, former committee member Roddan proposed, unsuccessfully, that 'ready-money dealings' be encouraged through a joint initiative with DMCPS. A statement was read from the British Linen Bank about the society's overdraft and Sidney Roebuck moved that the society obtain a bond to remedy its financial position ahead of the annual meeting in May. At the following March meeting, the society's president highlighted the continuing decline of the society's takings and proposed an enquiry at a future meeting where suggestions could be put forward to reduce the society's expenses. In early April it was agreed that shareholders' purchases be examined and compared with their share capital, but a move to enquire about the interest being paid on the overdraft and to explore the possibility of a bond failed to gain support. Despite all this, there was still 'a large majority' on the committee supporting the 2/- in the £1 dividend, albeit that the money was paid from the contingency fund.

But the 1890 annual meeting also agreed to establish a small committee³⁹ 'to investigate into the whole cause of the diminution of drawings or sales'. The report of this committee, in August, led to some serious disagreements and resignations, although the precise nature of the disagreements is unclear. The adoption of the report, moved by the president, Lake, was accepted by only fourteen votes to eight, with several abstentions, and at the following committee meeting Lake resigned as president and committee member, presumably in response to the comparatively hostile reaction to the sub-committee's report. The newly-elected committee member Pirie also resigned and withdrew from the society. Furthermore, when Donnelly, now chairing the committee as vice-president, proposed at the September meeting that the sub-committee report be discussed the following week, the society's treasurer, J.H. Brown, and committee member William Farquharson, 'moved that we have nothing to do with it', and at the next meeting both they and committee member Andrew

³⁶ The maximum amount overdrawn in this period was £146-4s-3d.

³⁷ The maximum amount overdrawn reached £425-19s-4d, close to the society's overdraft limit.

³⁸ Alex Pirie wanted to know 'why the business had fallen away nearly a fourth', and Andrew Roddan 'why debts were increasing when membership and capital were stationary'.

³⁹ Comprising president Henry Lake, secretary John Gibson, and past and present committee members Donnelly, Pirie and Roddan,

Young refused to take part in the discussion and withdrew from the meeting. The remaining committee members discussed the proposals and adopted recommendations for reporting to the November quarterly meeting.

A central issue seems to have been about the relationship between some committee members and the manager concerning the shop management, with the sub-committee recommending 'the shop committee be discontinued and any member of committee to examine [the shop and/or books] when he chooses', presumably to ensure the shop was being managed efficiently. This dispute had first arisen in early 1886, when committee member Roddan had unsuccessfully challenged the manager's right to prevent committee members inspecting the shop unannounced, but the issue remained unresolved. However, the absence of a full explanation makes it difficult to be clear about exactly what was involved, and, following another unsuccessful attempt by the former president, Lake, to persuade the society to accept the sub-committee report at the November quarterly meeting, the matter was dropped and the shop committee re-established.

At the same time, the problem of members' debts continued and in September the committee approved a report by the store manager to deal with members who had 'broken the rule as to the extent of credit'. Later in the month it was agreed that members with only a small share capital, who had not purchased from the shop for some time, be removed from membership and the amounts involved transferred to the contingency fund. Other indications of financial difficulty included the delay in purchasing stock for the boot and shoe department because of insufficient funds; further discussions on members exceeding their share capital and being in debt to the society; a debate on how to reduce the overdraft; and a request to the SCWS to sell £200 of the society's shares. Furthermore, the decision in October to print 500 postcards to send to the society's suppliers, in order to clarify the society's accounts with them, indicates that the society's financial management was in some disarray. Despite all this, the committee still agreed a half-year dividend of 2/- in the £1

Towards amalgamation

However, at the committee meeting of 29 December, the society decided to try to raise more capital from its shareholders, and on 8 January 1891, a circular was issued informing members that the society needed 'to replace a very considerable sum which has been repaid to Shareholders, who simply had Shares and Loan Deposits invested on account of receiving Five per cent thereon and who did not purchase Goods.' Shareholders having £5 of shares were requested to raise their shareholding to £10, and those with less than £5 were informed they would not be able to take their dividend 'until the sum is made up', though with a proviso that this rule could be waived 'in cases of distress or emergency'. The circular also emphasised the safeness of the investment and reaffirmed the interest rate of 5%.

A committee meeting on 26 January noted an increase in share capital but the financial difficulties continued and in May the society was reminded by its bankers about its overdraft and agreed, subject to the approval of the annual meeting, to apply for a bond of £800. Approval was duly given when it was announced that the British Linen Bank 'declined to

continue allowing the overdraft unless good personal security was supplied'. A bond for the loan, offered for eight years at 4% interest, was signed in June.

To meet its increasing financial difficulties the society began a review of its rules at a special committee meeting in July in an attempt to tighten up loopholes and limit 'overdealing'. However, before recommendations could be made there was a flurry of membership withdrawals, with a dozen in a single week in mid-August.⁴⁰ This was compounded a month later by the resignation of the shop manager, Keppie, following which there were more than twenty membership withdrawals, many of whom were connected to Keppie, but also including former committee members.

The reasons for Keppie's resignation are not recorded either in the minutes or the local press, but, coincidentally perhaps, one of the proposed new rules⁴¹ stated that 'The shop manager shall be appointed by the committee who shall fix his salary or any increase of the same.' It is difficult to imagine what else the opening sentence of a rule about the appointment of a shop manager might say, but the relationship between Keppie and the committee seems to have reached breaking point. The minute book indicates he had not always been a model of efficiency and he had clearly been guilty of some misdemeanours. It is also clear he believed he should be allowed to manage the shop as he saw fit, and not necessarily as committee members felt he should, hence his stance on shop access in 1886. Further, in August 1891, a disagreement between Keppie and former committee member Alexander Walker came to light, which was reported in the local press. An explanation was sought and in the ensuing discussion, the minutes record 'a good deal of wrangling' between Keppie and the society's vice-president James Kennedy, but 'the matter was allowed to drop'.

Keppie's resignation and his disputed replacement, ⁴² by former shopman John Anderson, added to the society's difficulties in late 1891. Despite offering only half dividend to members who had been 'overdealing', the society had to approach the bank again in November for a further overdraft 'to tide over the dividend'. However, the society was by this time at least making a trading surplus again, and was able to put the remaining profit, after paying the dividend, into the contingency fund. But the problem of members' debt remained and in December the committee resolved to contact all those whose debt was greater than their share capital, threatening legal proceedings 'should immediate payment not be made'. The long drawn-out rule change, which might have addressed the debt problem more comprehensively, was, however, abandoned.

As a result of these continuing difficulties, a proposal to amalgamate with the Dumfries and Maxwelltown Society, suggested by James Deans of the Cooperative Union in February 1892, was eagerly grasped, and was passed unanimously at a committee meeting on 8 February. A meeting with the committee from the 'Old Store', as DMCPS was known, was fixed for 13 February, and just over a fortnight later, on 3 March, a special general meeting unanimously passed a resolution in favour of the merger:

⁴⁰ These include members who had had close ties with the society in earlier years, for example, by providing music at the soirées.

⁴¹ Rule 22.

⁴² The committee and the membership disagreed over the appointment.

... this meeting approves of the principle of the amalgamation of the Dumfries and Maxwelltown Co-operative Society Ltd and the Queen of the South Co-operative Society Ltd ... [It also agreed] that it be remitted to the committee with full powers to formulate and arrange the details of a scheme of amalgamation to be afterwards submitted to another special general meeting. '43

On 21 March the committee approved the articles of agreement drafted by a joint committee of the two societies and arranged a special general meeting, to be held on Tuesday 29 March, for the members to determine whether or not the amalgamation should proceed. It was further agreed to invite Mr Deans to address that meeting.

As well as listening to Deans speak on the advantages of amalgamating, the meeting also heard the detailed amalgamation proposals. The name of the new society would be the Dumfries and Maxwelltown Co-operative Society, and the two former societies would cease to exist as separate entities on 19 April, with the new society commencing trading on 20 April. The two societies' stock would be neutrally valued by the SCWS and the new society would be credited with all the assets of the two societies. All members of the former societies would become members of the new society, with their current shares and other financial circumstances carried forward, but the dividend for the current six months would be paid by each society on the basis of their separate results. The books and accounts of each society would be audited by the other society, and 'as soon after amalgamation as possible a special general meeting of the society shall be called to revise the rules'. Finally, the first committee of the new society would comprise five members from each society and this equal representation on the new committee would continue for at least six months after amalgamation. On these conditions thirty-one members of the society voted for the amalgamation, with two voting against. A subsequent general meeting of the QOSCS on 12 April confirmed the amalgamation and John Donnelly, John Hanby, Robert Heggie, James Kenning and George Wilson were selected to represent the former QOSCS on the new society's committee.

The QOSCS and the Dumfries working class

Whilst the QOSCS could not be described as in the vanguard of the wider Co-operative movement, the society was established to offer what its more committed members, like its first president, Niven, believed was a more genuine and accessible form of co-operation than currently existed in Dumfries. The early trading success suggests this was substantially appreciated by some of the town's working-class households, but, whatever the 'trying circumstances' of the society's early years, 44 the QOSCS was not formed at a time, like the 1840s (with its acute poverty, food riots and cholera), when there was especial hardship, or with an agenda of challenging existing traders, as the DMCPS did, seeing itself in 1846–7 as standing up to the 'monopolies' of the town's flour, bread and oatmeal traders. By the time of the QOSCS formation in 1881, the Co-operative movement was very largely accepted in Victorian society and seen as a prime example of working-class self-help, a view endorsed by Niven, when he described the QOSCS members as 'a great many people

⁴³ QOSCS minutes 3/3/1892.

⁴⁴ DGSA 23/1/1886.

in Dumfries ... looking after their own interests'.45

However, even in the 1880s defending co-operation and the working-class communities it was designed to support, continued to be necessary as co-operative societies became subject to the renewed opposition of established commercial traders, because of what the latter deemed to be the 'unfair competition' of the dividend. This caused some traders to form or join Traders' Defence Associations (TDAs), like the TDA for Scotland, which was 'exceedingly active ... in the West of Scotland', ⁴⁶ particularly targeting Kilmarnock and Paisley, and turning its attention to Dumfries in late 1889, focussing on the QOSCS. This intervention followed a letter from store manager Keppie, published in the *DGSA* in November 1889, ⁴⁷ in which he attempted to 'correct' what he regarded as a misunderstanding or misreporting by the newspaper, following the November half-yearly meeting. In the event, this led to a fairly prolonged correspondence, stretching into January 1890, with the Glasgow-based organising agent of the TDA for Scotland, Robert Walker. Keppie did not always have the best of the argument, though he certainly stood up for co-operation, and the newspaper's editor terminated the correspondence on 11 January, suggesting 'nothing fresh' was likely to come from continuing it.

But the QOSCS had already shown that its solidarity with its working-class membership was less than wholly reliable when, in September 1889, the Operative Bakers National Federal Union of Scotland began national action for a 55-hour week and agreed overtime rates. A report in the DGSA of a public meeting in Dumfries, organised by the union, included the following:

Complaint was made of the action of the committee of management of the Queen of the South Co-operative Society as being in antagonism to the Trades Union principles professed by a large body of the membership. They have accepted the men's terms as to hours, and are prepared to pay overtime for extra work. But it is also part of the bakers' demand that non-society men shall not be employed. The Queen of the South employs two, one of whom belongs to the Union but the other refuses to join. The committee have therefore advertised for a second non-union man. It was stated at the meeting that this was believed to be the only instance in Scotland of a co-operative store, drawing its membership from the artisan classes, setting itself in opposition to Trades Unionism.⁴⁸

It was anticipated that some members of the society would raise this issue at the next quarterly meeting on 21 November and the QOSCS committee debated whether or not trade unionism should be a separate item on the agenda, ultimately deciding against this. However, the local press clearly expected a confrontation and sent reporters along to cover a QOSCS meeting for the first time ever. In the event, the most controversial aspect of the meeting was the press presence, which provoked a debate about whether they should be allowed to stay. They did stay and were responsible for the report that led to Keppie's response and subsequent correspondence with the Scottish TDA. The point,

⁴⁵ As above

⁴⁶ As noted in the report of the Scottish Section to the 20th Co-operative Congress in 1888.

⁴⁷ DGSA 27/11/1889.

⁴⁸ DGSA 12/10/1889.

however, remains that the society did not see fit to show solidarity with the trade union and compel their foreman baker, store manager Keppie's brother, either to join the union or face dismissal. Indeed, it advertised⁴⁹ for a second non-union baker, though eventually relenting and taking back their former employee, the union member Robert Callander.

Solidarity with the wider Co-operative movement, as indicated by QOSCS relations with other co-operative societies, was also mixed. Whilst the formation of the society involved the SCWS, and the society invested in the SCWS from the outset, the record of purchasing goods from 'the Wholesale' was mixed. In his correspondence with the TDA, Keppie suggested the amount was quite small and the SCWS representative, a Mr Anderson, attended QOSCS meetings quite frequently to encourage them to buy more. Relations with other societies in southern Scotland — Hawick and Selkirk — during the earlier years, possibly under the influence of Niven, were fairly well developed but there was initially some hostility towards the DMCPS,⁵⁰ a feeling that was reciprocated in the early years. A proposal from QOSCS that the two societies collaborate in the curing of pork was decisively rejected by DMCPS in August 1887.⁵¹ At the same time, the relationship was by then at least partially one of mutual recognition, with the DMCPS president, Samuel Cairns, appearing as a platform guest at the 1886 and 1887 QOSCS soirées, and in July 1888 representatives of the two societies met to consider joint action against the Scottish TDA

The legacy of amalgamation

But, as we have seen, it was the economic challenges of the later 1880s and early 1890s that brought the two societies together, even if the initiative for this came from the Co-operative Union, rather than the societies themselves. QOSCS's trading history in the late 1880s and early 1890s has been covered in some detail, but the DMCPS was also facing tougher trading conditions at this time, as reflected in its annual sales figures.⁵²

Amalgamation seems, then, to have been the solution to the two societies' trading problems in 1891–2 and, whilst one casualty of the merger was the end of the regular inclusion of sales figures in the new society's minutes, the quarterly meeting of the new society in May 1893, just over a year after the merger, shows the society apparently in robust health. Several names from the QOSCS are still evident in the attendees and committee members, with John Donnelly, Robert Heggie, Sidney Roebuck, George Wilson and Andrew Young still active. The half-yearly takings were reported as £7,468, equivalent

⁴⁹ In The Scotsman.

⁵⁰ It was not regarded by some as a genuine co-operative society because of its failure to offer dividend on purchases until 1884, when it finally registered as a co-operative with the Scottish Registrar of Friendly Societies.

⁵¹ DMCPS members backed a motion that 'this society have nothing whatever to do with the Queen of the South'.

⁵² In 1889 total DMCPS sales amounted to £16,902, giving a weekly average sales figure of £325. In 1890 these had fallen to £12,859 and £249 and by 1891 they were £11,062 and £212. The weekly sales figure for early 1892, prior to amalgamation, was down to £173. As noted earlier, the first Lipton store opened in Dumfries in March 1890, offering a discounted range of basic goods. This clearly had an impact on both societies.

to an annual figure of almost £15,000, and the net half-yearly profit £892, equivalent to well over £1,700 for the year. The new society was welcoming 12 new members, and a drive in the country was planned as a social event for the summer. The future for consumer co-operation in Dumfries appeared secure, with co-operative trading remaining a strong element in the town's economic, social and cultural life, despite the presence of Lipton and other newer competitors.

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A LIBERAL MP AT WAR: PERCY MOLTENO 1914–1918

David Dutton¹

Historians have long recognised the damage inflicted on the British Liberal party by the First World War, but they have found it harder to agree upon the nature of the damage that was incurred. Many have now discarded the old idea that the war dragged the party into an ideological cul-de-sac where its fundamental principles and values proved unable to cope with the demands of total warfare in the twentieth century. After all, the pre-war party had already abandoned much of the baggage of laisser-faire economics and had accepted the need for a wider role for government in society and the economy. Furthermore, most Liberals appear to have responded flexibly and imaginatively to the impact of the war. Nonetheless, there remained some Liberals who were unconvinced of the need for British participation in the conflict and whose ideological red lines could not be crossed. This article offers a case-study of the wartime career of Percy Molteno, Liberal MP for Dumfriesshire, 1906–18.

The proposition that the First World War inflicted severe, almost fatal, damage upon the British Liberal party is difficult to challenge. The contrast between the state of the party at the outbreak of hostilities in 1914 and at the return of peace a little over four years later could scarcely be more stark. In 1914 the Liberals had been continuously in power for nearly nine years. These had been productive years that had witnessed the introduction of a range of reforms, including old-age pensions and insurance schemes for sickness and unemployment, which cumulatively laid the foundations of the modern welfare state. A roll-call of the government's leading ministers — Henry Campbell-Bannerman, H.H. Asquith, David Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, Edward Grey and R.B. Haldane — leaves little room for doubt that this was one of the most distinguished administrations of the twentieth century. Since 1906 the Liberals had emerged victorious from three successive general elections and, despite no longer having an independent parliamentary majority, the party had little reason to expect to lose the support of the Labour and Irish Nationalist parties that sustained it in power.

By the end of 1918 the situation could hardly have been more different. Some Liberals remained part of the governing coalition that had emerged victorious from the so-called 'Coupon' election that December and the Prime Minister of that government, David Lloyd George, remained of course a Liberal. But it was the Conservative party that now held the whip hand, tolerating a Liberal premiership only for as long as it offered electoral advantage. Meanwhile, independent Liberalism, still led by Asquith, had been reduced to under 30 MPs in the new House of Commons.² Nor can this situation be dismissed as a temporary setback. Never again would the Liberal party, standing on its own, be in a

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² A precise figure remains elusive as the allegiance of a handful of Liberal MPs was purposefully vague.

position to form a government. Indeed, notwithstanding occasional minor revivals, the size of the parliamentary party would be steadily eroded over the decades that followed, reaching a nadir of just five MPs in 1956.

If, however, the reality and scale of the impact of the First World War is beyond dispute, explaining what happened poses a greater challenge. Historians have offered a range of competing theories, the most immediately compelling the idea that the war posed a series of ideological difficulties with which the historic Liberal party could not cope. Put simply, the successful waging of the war required the abandonment, or at least the suspension, of most of the principles and values that lay at the heart of the Liberal creed. 'It was their principles', writes the distinguished Labour historian and peer, Kenneth Morgan, 'which the very fact of total war, with the unbridled collectivism and the "jingo" passions which it unleashed, appeared to undermine.' What place was there in such a conflict for the freedom of the individual and his conscience, for the freedom of the press, for free trade and a free market, for internationalism and a self-regulating economy, even for a belief in the rationality and essential goodness of mankind?

Yet this theory is more attractive in outline than when subjected to detailed analysis. The most striking fact about the coming of war in August 1914 is not the damage it did to the Liberals, but the fact that it left both party and government largely unscathed. The actual declaration of hostilities, which at one point seemed likely to bring Asquith's administration to its knees, was accompanied by just three ministerial resignations, none of them of sufficient significance to disturb the government's equanimity.⁴ In the House of Commons the majority of Liberal MPs were persuaded that the country's obligations to France and the German violation of Belgian neutrality left Britain with no alternative but to intervene. Nor was this simply a passing moment of Liberal pragmatism. Contemporaries noted a dramatic change in the mood of the House of Commons as members of all political persuasions put their differences to one side and united to face the external enemy. Richard Holt, Liberal MP for Hexham, who had recently led opposition within his own party to Lloyd George's 1914 Budget, described the extraordinary change that came over parliament. 'The feeling [was] almost unanimous and several bills passed through all stages by 6 o'clock which at any other time would take a couple of full days to get second reading alone.'5 Writing at the end of November, Cecil Harmsworth, MP for Luton, confirmed the situation described by Holt. 'In the H of Commons we are and have been ever since the outbreak of war a united family. There are no whips on the doors and the Division bells have not sounded for months. It is a joy to be able to get home most days for dinner.'6

During the first months of conflict, the ever-escalating demands of the war compelled the Liberal government to enact a series of measures which, in terms of abstract principle, seemed to fly in the face of traditional values. The Defence of the Realm Act (August 1914)

³ K.O. Morgan, *The Age of Lloyd George: The Liberal Party and British Politics, 1890–1929* (London, 1978), p.58.

⁴ Viscount Morley (Lord President of the Council), John Burns (President of the Board of Trade) and Charles Trevelyan (Parliamentary Secretary at the Board of Education).

⁵ Liverpool Record Office, Holt MSS, 920 DUR 1/10, diary 28 August 1914.

⁶ A. Thorpe and R. Toye (eds), *Parliament and Politics in the Age of Asquith and Lloyd George: the Diaries of Cecil Harmsworth, MP, 1909–1922* (London, 2016), p.175.

swept away many of the freedoms of the individual; the freedom of the press was inevitably curtailed in the interests of national security; the internment of enemy aliens represented a necessary response to the public mood. After May 1915 it was a predominantly Liberal Coalition which set the legislative agenda, and it was the question of recruitment to the armed forces — the ultimate Liberal dilemma of whether a man could be compelled to fight, and quite possibly die, for his country — which dominated that agenda. The National Registration Bill of July 1915 was widely interpreted as preparing the way for full-scale conscription; the so-called Bachelors' Bill of January 1916 introduced compulsion for unmarried men; and the Military Service Bill of May 1916 provided for all men between the ages of 18 and 41, irrespective of marital status, to be conscripted. Meanwhile, Reginald McKenna's budget of October 1915 had violated the very ark of the Liberal covenant, the doctrine of free trade. What is striking, however, is the readiness with which these measures were embraced, albeit without enthusiasm, by the majority of Liberal MPs at Westminster and even more by the wider party in the country.

Each of these developments provoked a small measure of Liberal dissent. But divisions inside the party reflected constantly changing political alignments, too fluid to represent a straightforward split on ideological lines. As one recent writer has noted, 'it is hard to imagine a group of Liberals more diverse in their wider political opinions than those who came to embrace conscription'. A more fundamental split occurred in December 1916 when Asquith was replaced as Prime Minister by Lloyd George. Liberals were forced to choose where their loyalties lay and for the next seven years there existed in practice two rival Liberal parties, competing against one another while the Labour party made startling progress, largely at Liberal expense. A.J.P. Taylor once argued that this 1916 split reflected 'a division long a-growing' along class lines. But Taylor's assessment was essentially impressionistic. Detailed research has failed to reveal any clear differentiation between the two factions on generational, occupational, class or ideological lines. The key factor in determining allegiance in December 1916 was an assessment as to which of the two Liberal luminaries was the more competent war leader. Answers to this question cut across all other patterns of division, placing Liberals of every hue in each camp.

The conclusion must be that, whatever damage the First World War did to the long-term fortunes of the British Liberal party, that damage cannot easily be explained in ideological terms. The view of the war creating an ideological cul-de-sac for an individualist political philosophy does not in general hold water. Yet there remains a danger of throwing out the ideological baby with the predominantly pragmatic Liberal bathwater. For a small number of MPs, representative presumably of a wider body of Liberal opinion in the country, the war did indeed create a crisis of values and ideas with which they found it almost impossible to cope. The experience of Percy Alport Molteno, MP for Dumfriesshire 1906–18, offers an instructive case-study.

A. Wyburn Powell, 'Liberal Defectors in the First World War', *Journal of Liberal History* 95 (2017), p.18.

⁸ A.J.P. Taylor, 'Politics in the First World War' in Taylor (ed.), *Politics in Wartime* (London, 1964), p.32.

E. David, 'The Liberal Party Divided, 1916–1918', Historical Journal 13 (1970), pp.527, 529, 531.

Molteno was born in Edinburgh on 12 September 1861, the son of John Molteno, an Anglo-Italian immigrant to South Africa who later became the first Prime Minister of Cape Colony. His Scottish birth resulted from his father's decision to visit the United Kingdom in 1861. After schooling at the Diocesan College at Rondebosch, Percy read law at Trinity College, Cambridge and was then called to the Bar at the Inner Temple. After practising law for several years in Cape Colony, he moved to Britain. He fell in love with Bessie Currie, daughter of a prosperous shipping magnate. After marrying her in September 1889, he was given an apparently senior post in Donald Currie and Co., managers to the Castle (later Union Castle) shipping line, but in practice had to fight hard to establish himself in the business. He eventually rose to become Company Chairman and sought to exploit the full potential of South Africa's agricultural exports through the use of refrigeration, whose methods he refined and greatly improved. By the end of the century he had become 'seriously wealthy', largely as a result of his marriage. He

In the 1890s, Molteno watched the deteriorating diplomatic situation in southern Africa with mounting concern and, using his contacts in Britain and the Cape, did his best to avert armed conflict. When the Boer War nonetheless broke out in 1899, his stance was openly that of a 'pro-Boer' and he became chairman of the South Africa Conciliation Committee. His business interests prospered during the war but, at the end of hostilities and following the death of his father-in-law, the company was sold to Cunard and Molteno withdrew from the shipping trade to devote himself to humanitarian efforts in South Africa. But the war also did much to determine Molteno's subsequent stance and attitudes in British politics.

Among the friendships formed with politicians who took the same line as Molteno over the war was that with Robert Reid, Liberal MP for Dumfries Burghs (1886–1906) and subsequently, as Lord Loreburn, Lord Chancellor in the Liberal government that took office in December 1905. It was to Reid more than anyone else that Molteno owed his selection as Liberal candidate for the adjoining constituency of Dumfriesshire. He was duly elected to parliament in 1906 and, though his majority was never entirely comfortable, retained the seat until 1918. He rapidly became a prominent figure on the governing

¹⁰ Percy Molteno's biography was written by his friend and contemporary, F.W. Hirst, but was never published. By the time of its completion in the late 1930s, the Molteno family ruled that publication should be delayed. Once the Second World War had broken out, Molteno's rigid commitment to free trade and his strong support for appeasement soon came to appear inappropriate and out-of-date. The war also produced a paper shortage, affording a further practical argument against publication for the time being. The biography, at around 350,000 words, is over-long and it now appears dated in approach and interpretation. Hirst's own Liberalism was probably too close to Molteno's own to make him an ideal choice as biographer. But the work, which may be found in galley page proof form on the Molteno family website <www.moltenofamily.net/biographies/a-man-of-principle-the-life-of-percyalport-molteno-m-p-by-francis-hirst>, provides easy and invaluable access to a large number of Percy Molteno's private papers, the originals of which are housed in the archives of the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Hirst never gave his biography a title. But the title adopted by the Molteno family — A Man of Principle: The Life of Percy Alport Molteno has been followed in this article. The present author is grateful to Mr Robert Molteno for permission to quote from his great uncle's papers and for helpful comments on this article. 11 Robert Molteno, on-line introduction to Hirst's biography, p.1.

party's radical wing, a position that left him uneasy about key aspects of the government's programme, domestic and foreign, especially once H.H. Asquith succeeded Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister in April 1908. In particular, Molteno emerged as a critic of Sir Edward Grey's foreign policy which, he feared, ran the danger of committing Britain too closely to France and Russia, with potentially disastrous consequences for the country's future freedom of action.

The years after 1910 tended to be dominated by domestic issues — the constitutional crisis over the powers of the House of Lords, legislation to introduce insurance schemes for sickness and unemployment, industrial unrest, the campaign for women's suffrage and, above everything else, the passage towards the statute book of an Irish Home Rule Bill and the resulting possibility of civil strife on the streets of Ireland and even on the British mainland. By late July 1914, however, more perceptive minds were coming to see that the worsening diplomatic situation in continental Europe, following the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, the Archduke Franz-Ferdinand, in the Balkan town of Sarajevo on 28 June, had the potential to kick all such matters into the political long grass. Molteno, who had been active in the Liberal Foreign Affairs Committee since its creation in December 1911, was among eleven signatories to a resolution forwarded to Foreign Secretary Grey on 29 July. This expressed the view that 'in no conceivable circumstances' should Britain depart from 'a position of strict neutrality' in relation to the war that had by then broken out in the Balkans and called upon the government to 'give effect to this view while continuing to offer its good offices in every promising way to secure the restoration of peace'. 12 Molteno spelt out his personal position in a letter to a Dumfries friend the following day:

We are going through a most critical and difficult time in regard both to Ireland and the European situation. We [his group in the Commons] are doing everything to secure this country should not be dragged into this miserable affair. It is monstrous that a set of cut throats like the Serbians should be allowed to endanger the peace of Europe, and it would be supreme irony, and indeed a crime of the first magnitude, if we were dragged in.¹³

It is generally agreed that Grey's speech to the House of Commons on the afternoon of 3 August was the crucial factor in ensuring that the parliamentary Liberal party entered the war essentially united and of one mind. Cecil Harmsworth wrote in his diary of 'Sir Edward Grey's great speech in the H of C explaining our position'. He continued: 'It amounts to this that in view of the obligations to France we have already incurred in connection with the Entente Cordiale and our long-standing obligations in regard to the independence of Belgium the Government has found it necessary to make a firm stand.' The impact of the speech was dramatic. According to Harmsworth, 'the small group who pleaded for our neutrality yesterday [3 August] is now silenced. The invasion by Germany of the rights of Belgium has brought everybody into line.' George V noted that public opinion had been

¹² C. Hazlehurst, *Politicians at War, July 1914 to May 1915* (London, 1971), pp.36–7.

Molteno to a 'trusty friend' 30 July 1914, Hirst, op.cit., p.428.

¹⁴ Thorpe and Toye, op.cit., p.164.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.165.

'entirely changed' by Grey's speech and that now 'everyone is for war and our helping our friends'. ¹⁶ Quite how His Majesty assessed the collective mood of his subjects is unclear, but the Fabian Beatrice Webb, who was probably better placed to judge, concurred. 'The public mind', she recorded, 'was cleared and solidified by Grey's speech. Even staunch Liberals agree that we had to stand by Belgium.'¹⁷

Yet this was not the whole story. Grey's speech was short on specific arguments as to why Britain would have to enter the war. He made it plain that Britain did have obligations to France, but was vague as to what these were and how they had been contracted. 'For many years', said the Foreign Secretary, 'we have had a long-standing friendship with France ... But how far that friendship entails an obligation ... let every man look into his own heart, and his own feelings, and construe the extent of the obligation for himself ... The House, individually and collectively, may judge for itself.' The Tory Leo Amery, impatient for Britain to declare war without further delay, found Grey's speech 'as a statement of British policy on the eve of a great war ... narrow and uninspiring'. A recent critic of the Foreign Secretary offers a damning assessment of his 'great speech': 'Grey's elliptical manner of speaking, his inability to simply come out and say what he meant, had long infuriated ambassadors trying to tease out an understanding of British policy. This speech would be no different.' Certainly, some Liberal MPs remained unimpressed. According to Charles Trevelyan,

[Grey] gave not a single argument why we should support France. But he showed us he had all along been leading her to expect our support and appealed to us as bound in honour. However I want to record here that the Liberals, very few of them, cheered at all, whatever they did later, while the Tories shouted with delight.²¹

John Annan Bryce, Liberal MP for Inverness, was of the same mind:

I believe the great body of opinion in this country is for maintaining our neutrality in this war, and the striking evidence of that was that during the whole course of the speech of the Foreign Minister this afternoon there was not one single cheer from this side of the House. The whole of the cheering came from the other side.²²

Furthermore, Grey's speech did not mark the end of the day's parliamentary proceedings. Though most front benchers now left the Chamber, the Speaker under pressure from Philip Morrell, MP for Burnley, agreed to allow an evening adjournment debate. Reflecting the

¹⁶ C. Pennell, A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland (Oxford, 2012), p.34.

M. Cole (ed.), *Beatrice Webb's Diaries*, 1912–1924, vol. 1 (London, 1952), p.25; Pennell, op. cit., p.34.

¹⁸ Viscount Grey of Falloden, *Twenty-Five Years*, vol. 3 (London, 1935), pp.303–4.

¹⁹ J. Barnes and D. Nicholson (eds), The Leo Amery Diaries 1896–1929 (London, 1980), p.106. Amery later added: 'I found it so long and dull that I more than once fell asleep.'

²⁰ S. McMeekin, July 1914: Countdown to War (London, 2013), p.366.

²¹ D. Marlor, Fatal Fortnight: Arthur Ponsonby and the Fight for British Neutrality in 1914 (London, 2014), p.111.

²² Ibid., p.113.

jingoism that was beginning to permeate the ranks of the Conservative party, Amery wrote of 'a string of the radical crank section [who] aired their protests against our interfering with Germany's "right" to march through Belgium'. The historian cannot afford to be so dismissive. The ensuing debate revealed that a significant number of Liberal (and Labour) MPs had not been convinced by Grey's performance and retained doubts about the legitimacy of British intervention in the European war. Molteno was prominent among the dissenters.

He argued that 'as a supporter of the Government that came into power as a Government of peace, and with a sense of my responsibility to my constituents, I do not feel that I can keep quite silent on this stupendous occasion, when we are asked practically to assent to a course which may involve us in this terrible war.' He questioned whether Britain's national interests were at stake:

No part of this country has been invaded at present; no vital interest in this country has been attacked. Yet we are asked to assent to war with all its terrible consequences. The Government have no right to plunge this country into this war for anything short of our own vital interests.

But what about Britain's international obligations? Molteno exposed the contradictions in the government's position. Grey had said that Britain was not under any formal obligations to another country, but had then implied that she had no choice but to intervene. Furthermore, in a succession of statements since 1913 both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary had sought to deny the existence of secret agreements concealed from parliament. 'Yet we are now told that our obligations, though not obligations of Treaty or of agreement, are so strong and so binding that we shall be compelled to take up arms in defence of France. I complain that we, who are supporters of His Majesty's Government, should have been led into this state of false security on this most vital and important question.' Molteno even questioned whether the 1839 guarantee of Belgian neutrality now compelled action in that country's defence, arguing that a subsequent treaty of 1870, which had itself expired, would not have been necessary had the original commitment of 1839 been binding.

But at the heart of Molteno's critique lay a broader indictment of the government's behaviour which would be central to his case, and that of men who thought like him, against the so-called 'old diplomacy', throughout the war and beyond, developing into a campaign for the 'democratic control' of British foreign policy. He sensed 'a continuation of that old and disastrous system where a few men in charge of the State, wielding the whole force of the State, make secret engagements and secret arrangements, carefully veiled from the knowledge of the people, who are as dumb driven cattle without a voice on the question'. Looking back on the momentous events of July and August 1914, Molteno was convinced that he and parliament as a whole had been wilfully deceived by the government he had been elected to support:

I believed that the leaders of the Liberal Party were pursuing our well-established policy of freedom from foreign entanglements and making no secret engagements

²³ Barnes and Nicholson, op. cit., p.106.

²⁴ House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, vol. 65, col 1848–53; *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser* (hereafter *Standard*) 5 August 1914; Hirst, op.cit., pp.432–4.

which would compromise it. Our Debates on armaments were conducted on this basis, and nothing was said in Parliament by Grey, Asquith or anyone to warn us of liabilities being incurred, which should have been known to Members of Parliament who were asked each year to vote the strength of our armed forces; otherwise Parliamentary control is a farce.

I was shocked beyond measure when Grey enumerated a long list of commitments which in his opinion obliged us to support France in a way we could not get out of. And this after he had up to then stoutly maintained that we were not in any way committed to go to war. Yet now he argued that we were so committed that we could not in honour get out of it. I heard all this with nothing less than horror. The House of Commons had been grossly deceived; all our hopes of peace had been ruined without our knowledge or consent.²⁵

Molteno strove until the last possible moment to avert the catastrophe of war. In the final hours before the expiry of Britain's ultimatum to Germany on 4 August, the Liberal Foreign Affairs Committee passed a resolution strongly urging the government to continue negotiations with Germany with a view to maintaining British neutrality. Such efforts were, however, in vain. So, as had happened at the outbreak of the South African War in 1899, Molteno found himself at odds with the policy of the British government, even though this time that government was composed of members of his own party. But opposing the Boer War, a conflict that bitterly divided British opinion, was one thing; opposing war against Germany in 1914, when majority opinion seemed overwhelmingly supportive of the British government's stance, was quite another. MPs who had argued against British involvement to a supportive audience only a few days before found their message falling on stony ground once hostilities were declared. Molteno seemed to appreciate the changed situation, using the pages of the *Dumfries Standard* to address his constituents:

Now that our country is at war it is incumbent upon everyone to do their best to aid the authorities in every possible way and to put forth all their energies to support our people who have gone to the front, so that there may be an early and successful issue to the stupendous efforts which the nation is now called upon to make.

It would, he insisted, be 'altogether impossible and wrong' to enter upon controversy at this time. Only with the restoration of peace would it be time to ascertain how the catastrophe of war had come about. For the moment, it was the duty of everyone 'to do what he can to ensure the national safety'. Indeed, 'it is our privilege, as well as our bounden duty, to do everything in our power to ensure success for the efforts of our military and naval forces, who are now risking their lives in defence of our country'. ²⁶

There is no reason to question the sincerity of these sentiments. For example, Molteno actively encouraged recruiting drives in his constituency. But this did not mean that he was fully reconciled to the government's position and he was always concerned about the impact any attempt to match the scale of continental armies would have on the

²⁵ Molteno, 'My Views on the Origin of the War', Hirst, op.cit., pp.440–1.

²⁶ Molteno to Editor, Standard 8 August 1914.

domestic economy. In addition, there were other aspects of the government's war strategy that continued to trouble him. What, he asked the like-minded Gordon Harvey, MP for Rochdale, was Britain actually fighting for? What would happen once Belgian liberty was restored and France was no longer in danger?²⁷ But it was not clear where those who were not prepared to follow slavishly the government's line should look for leadership. The resigning cabinet ministers, Lord Morley and John Burns, showed no interest in leading a dissident faction. Morley, indeed, had pledged to 'do nothing, by speeches or letters, to embarrass [his former colleagues] in any way in carrying out what they consider to be proper and necessary'. 28 Lloyd George, who with his own pro-Boer past had once appeared to be the natural champion of radical Liberalism, had clearly changed his allegiance and indeed was in the process of becoming a particular bête noire as far as Molteno was concerned. Briefly, Molteno placed his hopes in the Colonial Secretary, 'Loulou' Harcourt, but the latter soon reconciled himself to the government's position.²⁹ Many government critics moved naturally towards the Union of Democratic Control, founded in September 1914, where fundamental misgivings about British participation in the war could be largely disguised behind a campaign about the way the war was being fought and the objectives for which victory was sought.³⁰ The UDC served as something of a melting pot as Liberal and Labour dissidents came together in common cause, offering disillusioned Liberals a relatively gentle transition into the evolving Labour movement, Molteno, however, while sharing many of the UDC's objectives, never joined its ranks and showed no inclination to transfer his political allegiance to Labour.

Perhaps inevitably, Molteno's instinct was to turn for leadership and guidance to Loreburn, even though the former Lord Chancellor had left front-line politics in 1912 and was no longer in the best of health. A meeting with Loreburn in January 1915 saw the two men in agreement that Grey, Asquith and Lloyd George had deceived not only parliament but also their own cabinet colleagues. Loreburn argued that once the war was over their behaviour should be exposed and made known to the country at large. He thought that a new Liberal party could be formed and candidates found to stand in as many constituencies as possible — 'men who would vote according to what they thought right and not merely in accord with the Party Whips or Ministers'. The two men also discussed the possibility of launching a weekly magazine to propagate their views, an ambition that led to the appearance the following year of the journal *Common Sense*. The support of the possibility of the possibility

Even at this early date Molteno and Loreburn began to speculate that the government might enter a coalition with the Conservatives in order to cover up the diplomacy which

²⁷ Molteno to Harvey 21 August 1914, Hirst, op.cit., p.443.

²⁸ Pennell, op.cit., p.45.

²⁹ M. Webb, 'Lewis Harcourt's Political Journal 1914–16: A New Source for the Liberal Party and the First World War', *Journal of Liberal History* 87 (2015), p.49.

³⁰ M. Swartz, The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics during the First World War (Oxford, 1971); S. Harris, Out of Control: British Foreign Policy and the Union of Democratic Control, 1914–1918 (Hull, 1996).

³¹ Molteno diary January 1915, Hirst, op.cit., p.448.

³² Hirst, op.cit., p.449; K. Robbins, *The Abolition of War: The Peace Movement in Britain* 1914–1919 (Cardiff, 1976), p.110.

had led the country into war. By May this development had come to pass. After a Commons statement by Asquith giving 'no reason whatever why this course should be taken', Molteno was among about 80 Liberal MPs who met in a Commons committee room to discuss the situation. 'Great hostility to a Coalition was expressed' and the decision was taken to invite Asquith to address his party colleagues in private. But the Prime Minister was scarcely more forthcoming than he had been in the chamber:

It did not amount to a great deal as he said he could not give the reasons for the course taken, except that it was done to avert a discussion in the House, which would have been disastrous in the critical state of things now existing ... If the Liberal meeting took an adverse view of the Coalition, he said he would not go on but would resign ... He did not like the idea of a Coalition ... but a situation had arisen which he had not contemplated when he expressed the view that a Coalition was undesirable.³³

Asquith survived but, on reflection, Molteno judged that 'we have witnessed the end of the Liberal Party'. ³⁴ This, of course, was an exaggeration, but Molteno had witnessed the end of the last purely Liberal administration in the country's history. More immediately, his concern focused on the belief that the change of government would facilitate a degree of state control and direction that was unacceptable to any true Liberal. Molteno feared that it was Lloyd George's 'intention to force the hand of the new Cabinet on the question of compulsory labour and conscription'. It was clear, he went on, that 'Lloyd George is going over to the Tories', seeing his chance to secure the premiership for himself with Conservative support. 'It is said that he and his co-conspirators have determined to get rid of Asquith, whose own weakness is proving fatal to his position.'³⁵

For the time being, however, Molteno was cautious about adopting a stance of open opposition to the new administration and he did not record a vote when the National Registration Bill came to the Commons in July. A letter sent to *The Nation* the previous month, reminding readers of the 700th anniversary of Magna Carta and suggesting that the rights enshrined in that venerable document were being infringed, was published discreetly under the name of 'a Liberal MP'. His most significant contributions to parliamentary debate were on the subject of finance. In reasoned interventions he used the example of previous wars to suggest that the government needed to raise a higher proportion of its war expenditure than it had so far done from increased taxation. In addition, the vast sums of money that were being expended by the armed forces needed to be closely monitored in order as far as possible to eliminate waste. When it came to war strategy, Molteno regretted the abandonment of the traditional British 'way of warfare'. It had been, he believed, a mistake to send an army to the continent instead of relying, as in the past, upon the fleet and the subsidising of continental allies. 'By this Continental policy we are exhausting ourselves

³³ Molteno diary 19 May 1915, Hirst, op.cit., p.459. A very similar account is given in the diary of Alexander MacCallum Scott, Liberal MP for Glasgow, Bridgeton: Hazlehurst, op.cit., pp.275–6.

³⁴ Molteno to Charlie Molteno 20 May 1915, Hirst, op.cit., p.459.

³⁵ Molteno diary 10 June 1915, Hirst, op.cit., pp.464–5.

³⁶ *The Nation* 19 June 1915, Hirst, op.cit., p.465.

³⁷ Standard 21 July 2015.

at such a rate that we shall quickly come to an end of our resources, whereas if we had relied upon the Fleet alone, we could have afforded that expense for an indefinite time.'38 This made it imperative that the war should be won as quickly as possible and Molteno was understandably uneasy about the diversification of Britain's military resources. The launching of a new campaign based on the Greek port of Salonika in October 1915 filled him with anxiety, especially as he understood that the operation was opposed by British military experts and owed its continuation largely to French political pressure.³⁹

But if Molteno had so far been careful to moderate his public opposition to government policy, the introduction of the first Conscription Bill in January 1916 transformed matters. In the Commons he argued that the bill would deprive the nation of liberties secured under Magna Carta and the Petition of Rights which had provided that no man should be placed under military law or sent abroad for military service without his consent. 'We are asked by this Bill', he complained, 'to abrogate those fundamental liberties.' Molteno's rueful conclusion was that 'we have no organised Liberal Government in power'. He also clashed with the Deputy Speaker who accused him of failing to keep to the issue at hand.⁴⁰ As Molteno recorded in the privacy of his diary, great pressure was exerted upon dissident Liberals such as himself to toe the party line:

[John] Gulland [who had succeeded Loreburn as MP for Dumfries Burghs and who had been appointed Liberal Chief Whip in January 1915] spoke to me before the Second Reading. He suggested that the majority would be a very small one, evidently hinting that I should abstain.⁴¹

What Molteno appears not to have anticipated was the hostile reaction to his stance from among his constituents. In an open letter to 'Kirkconnel Men Serving the King', the Rev. C. Forbes Charleson declared his desire to follow the example of J.M. Barrie who had thrown a divot at Lord Rosebery, 'not because I am angry or even impatient, but because he [Molteno] has come in between us and the war for a moment, or rather between you and the end of the war'. Sir E. Johnson Ferguson was evidently outraged. 'Apparently Mr Molteno is anxious to protect the cowards and slackers from being compelled to do what better men have already done voluntarily.'

But far more important was the reaction of Molteno's constituency association as conveyed to him by the Chief Whip:

He told me he had been down to Dumfries on the preceding Saturday. There he had heard that a meeting of my committee was to be held to consider my action, and he had deprecated their having any meeting or taking any action against me. However on Thursday the 19th [actually 20 January] he again spoke to me. He said he had heard there had been a meeting of my Executive, and he would show

³⁸ Molteno to Charlie Molteno 5 November 1915, Hirst, op.cit., p.476.

³⁹ Hirst, op.cit., pp.473, 478.

⁴⁰ Hirst, op.cit., p.481; House of Commons Debates, 5th Series, vol. 77, cols 1541, 1550.

⁴¹ Molteno diary 26–30 January 1916, Hirst, op.cit., p.483.

⁴² Standard 22 January 1916. As a student Barrie was reputed to have thrown a clod of earth at Rosebery — and missed.

me a Resolution which it was proposed to put before the meeting of the Central Committee which had been called for Wednesday, January 26th, in Dumfries. This resolution I had not previously seen, nor had I heard anything of it or of the meeting of the Committee. He said he would be very glad to do anything he could for me in the circumstances, and that if I would vote for the Third Reading or abstain, he would use his good offices to stop further action. Of course he suggested he was friendly in what he was doing. I said the suggestion did not appeal to me at all.⁴³

At a meeting of the Central Committee of the Dumfriesshire Liberal Association on 26 January, two resolutions were passed unanimously. The first, expressing unabated confidence in Asquith as Prime Minister and satisfaction that the government was now in the hands of ministers representing all political parties, was only mildly and indirectly critical of the local MP. The second, however, referred directly to Molteno's recent conduct:

While recognising the conscientious motives which have inspired his action, the Central Committee have observed with great regret the votes given by Mr Molteno against the Military Service Bill, and they feel it to be their duty to represent to him their strong conviction that these votes were opposed to the opinion of the vast majority of his supporters and of the constituency as a whole. In these circumstances, and in view of the very serious crisis in our country's history, they trust Mr Molteno may feel able in future to give a generous support to the Government in regard to all measures which they consider necessary for the prosecution of the war.⁴⁴

Molteno was evidently shaken by this public reprimand from his constituency party. He suspected impropriety in the way the matter had been handled, noting that some of his own known supporters on the committee had had no advance notice of the resolution — 'it was evidently to be sprung on the Committee' — and he wondered how Gulland had become aware of what was going on. 45 But he was not prepared to compromise his principles and when, in May, the government's second Military Service Bill sought to extend conscription to married men, Molteno was again one of a small group of Liberal MPs in the opposition lobby. In a memorandum drawn up at this time, he justified his stance in reasoned terms:

We have drifted into a dangerous state of things from the point of view of our national interests ... Nothing has been shown to the House during the course of the debate to prove that we have not got all the men we could spare, or who are fit to fight. It seems to many of us that every man now taken is either unfit physically, or his going to the Army is a greater injury to the country than his remaining and serving it in the position which he at present occupies. 46

But his response to renewed evidence of disquiet in his constituency was ill-judged. In a letter to the *Standard* he pointed out that the Association's resolution of 26 January had itself expressed opposition to 'general' conscription. The newspaper, however, would have

⁴³ Molteno diary 26–30 January 1916, Hirst, op.cit., p.483.

⁴⁴ Standard 26 January 1916.

⁴⁵ Molteno diary 26–30 January 1916, Hirst, op.cit., p.483.

⁴⁶ Molteno memorandum 17 May 1916, Hirst, op.cit., p.485.

none of the MP's sophistry:

In his interpretation of the resolution of the Liberal Committee the hon. member would turn a rebuke for not supporting the Government into a mandate to oppose them. The context and the circumstances in which the resolution was passed clearly indicate that what was in the mind of the committee, when they voiced their opposition to 'any form of general conscription', was permanent conscription: compulsory military service as part of our settled constitution, apart from the exigencies of war ... No effort in verbal interpretation will suffice to wrest a request to support the Government into a warrant for a vote designed to defeat and overthrow it.⁴⁷

The *Standard* also spelt out the implications of Molteno's behaviour for his status as a constituency MP. At this time the life of the existing parliament had been extended only until the coming autumn. It was therefore possible that a general election might be held within a matter of months. In these circumstances, the newspaper suggested that it was desirable to reach 'a clear understanding' about the future relations between the constituency and its elected representative. While no-one would wish to force Molteno to adopt views which he found distasteful or restrain him from expressing 'in his individual capacity' any views which he might hold,

it would be the height of unreason to expect that nine thousand electors would be content to suppress their own opinions in order to return again to Parliament a gentleman, however admirable and able, who deliberately and consistently opposed them.⁴⁸

'It has been a very hard time', judged Molteno, 'for those who cannot pocket their consciences, and simply vote for anything they are told, and let the responsibility lie upon the Government.'49 What he could not, however, ignore was the significance of apparently losing the support not only of his constituency organisation but also of the newspaper which for so long had been a standard-bearer of Liberalism in South-West Scotland.⁵⁰ The backing of both had been crucial in sustaining Robert Reid (Loreburn) in his opposition to the Boer War a decade and a half earlier.

As far as Molteno was concerned, matters continued to deteriorate. The destructive stalemate at Verdun 'demonstrated how impossible it is for either side to advance'.⁵¹ This made talk of fighting the war to a finish 'sheer madness'.⁵² As the months passed, he became ever more convinced of the error of conscription. 'It has disorganized our whole system', he complained. 'There is a grave shortage of steel, and munitions are beginning to suffer. The railways cannot keep up their services, as locomotives cannot be repaired,

⁴⁷ Standard 13 May 1916.

⁴⁸ Standard editorial, 6 May 1916.

⁴⁹ Molteno to Charles Paisley, Langholm 18 May 1916, Hirst, op.cit., p.488.

⁵⁰ The death of the *Standard*'s long-serving and supportive editor, Thomas Watson, on 9 April 1914 had been a particular blow for Molteno.

Molteno to Charlie Molteno 30 March 1916, Hirst, op.cit., pp.505–6.

⁵² Molteno to Charles Roden Buxton 7 October 1916, Robbins, op.cit., p.111.

much less built. Ships cannot be discharged for want of labour.'53 Yet all this paled against the emergence at the end of 1916 of Lloyd George as Prime Minister in place of Asquith. In the words of Molteno's biographer, 'next to the outbreak of war and the invasion of Belgium, Mr Lloyd George's triumph may justly be regarded as the most tragic event in modern history'. 54 The composition of the new Prime Minister's Conservative-dominated War Cabinet could scarcely have been worse:

Now we have a Ministry of extremists. We are to be governed by Curzon, who nearly brought India to a rebellion, by Milner, who actually brought South Africa to a rebellion, and by Carson, who actually brought Ulster to a rebellion.⁵⁵

But, against the odds, over the course of 1917 the public mood shifted perceptibly if not dramatically in Molteno's direction. It was a difficult year for all the allied powers. In France widespread mutinies rendered the national army incapable of serious military action for several months. Meanwhile, at least before Georges Clemenceau's assumption of power in November, the whole French parliamentary system looked more fragile than at any time since the outbreak of hostilities. In Russia two revolutions not only transformed the country's political structure, but also highlighted the intense deprivation to which the population at large had been subjected. By the end of the year the Russian war effort was effectively at an end. After the Battle of Caporetto in November, the same seemed to be the case in Italy. By comparison, the British experience was relatively mild. Overall, public morale remained surprisingly positive. The army experienced no collapse of discipline comparable to what happened in France and Russia. Nonetheless, by the autumn, as the British offensive at Passchendaele ground to a standstill in the Flanders mud, more and more citizens, high-placed and low, had reached the same conclusion as Molteno that it was time for the government to adopt a radically different approach. A profound mood of pessimism was becoming apparent.⁵⁶ Lloyd George's stated goal of a 'knock-out blow' was not only an illusion in that it was extremely unlikely to be achieved; it was also a dangerous illusion since such an outcome, however remote, would leave Germany and its allies permanently aggrieved and the resulting peace precarious in the extreme.

In these circumstances Molteno began to consider the possibility of a substitute government to replace the existing Lloyd George–Bonar Law Coalition. But the question of leadership remained a problem. Ever since his supersession by Lloyd George, many dissident Liberals had looked hopefully, but unavailingly, to Asquith to fill this role. The former Prime Minister declined absolutely to adopt a stance of outright opposition to the government, wary of opening himself up to the charge of disloyalty in wartime. In any case, Molteno could not see Asquith in the guise of saviour, granted the failures of his government and his readiness to surrender free trade, free military service and free speech.⁵⁷ Suddenly, an unlikely, but credible, potential leader emerged in the person of the Marquis

⁵³ Molteno to Charlie Molteno December 1916, Hirst, op.cit., p.506.

⁵⁴ Hirst, op.cit., p.508.

Molteno to Merriman n.d., Hirst, op.cit., p.509. Curzon as Lord President of the Council and Milner as Minister without Portfolio were members of the War Cabinet. Outside that body Carson was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty.

⁵⁶ B. Millman, Pessimism and British War Policy 1916–1918 (London, 2001).

⁵⁷ Hirst to G. Harvey 3 November 1917, Hirst, op.cit., p.514.

of Lansdowne, the veteran former Unionist Foreign Secretary and, until December 1916, a member of the governing coalition. At the end of November 1917 Lansdowne went public over the misgivings about British war policy that he had been nurturing for the previous twelve months. In a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* (*The Times* having refused publication), Lansdowne argued that the war was in the process of destroying British power. Nothing could be achieved in continuing the elusive quest for outright victory which could possibly compensate for the loss which 'winning' would entail. Lansdowne called for the enunciation of a very limited, but realistic, programme of war aims and for Germany to be invited to open negotiations for peace.⁵⁸

Molteno was determined to take advantage of the change of mood brought about by the Marquis's initiative. 59 Within a matter of days Richard Holt's diary struck a more positive note than hitherto:

On Tuesday I had a small party at House to discuss situation. Leif Jones, Sir C. Seely, Sir W. Collins, G. Collins, Bliss, Nuttall, Arnold, Brunner, Haydn Jones [Liberal MPs for Rushcliffe, Mansfield, Derby, Greenock, Cockermouth, Holmfirth, Northwich and Merioneth respectively], Molteno and one or two others. All very dissatisfied, decided to welcome 'intelligent, patriotic and active opposition'.⁶⁰

Encouraged also by President Woodrow Wilson's enlightened statement of his bases for a future peace, the celebrated Fourteen Points, issued on 8 January 1918, and with support coming from the journal *Common Sense*, Molteno and like-minded colleagues formed a delegation which called at Lansdowne House at the end of the month. The so-called Lansdowne Committee then organized a series of conferences at the Essex Hall beginning on 28 February. One of Molteno's constituents wrote enthusiastically:

I was present at the Essex Hall today and was delighted to hear you speak so ably on behalf of peace by negotiation. Surely with the assistance of Lord Loreburn you could further the movement very much by a series of meetings in Dumfriesshire. I am writing to a number of my friends in the county on the subject.⁶¹

By the spring of 1918, however, the Lansdowne movement was running out of steam, even though occasional meetings at the Essex Hall continued until October. Partly this resulted from its own internal problems; partly it followed a major development in the war itself. Leadership remained an issue for the government's critics. When Hirst speculated on the possible composition of an alternative administration, the paucity of talent available was only too apparent. The suggestion of Holt as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Arthur Ponsonby Foreign Secretary lacked real credibility. Lansdowne himself was a figure of distinction, but had first served as a junior minister under Gladstone as long ago as 1868

⁵⁸ Lansdowne's letter is reprinted in Lord Newton, *Lord Lansdowne: A Biography* (London, 1929), pp.466–8.

⁵⁹ Molteno to R. Holt and G. Harvey 1 December 1917, Hirst, op.cit., p.515.

⁶⁰ Liverpool Record Office, Holt MSS, 920 DUR 1/10, diary 3 December 1917.

⁶¹ Archibald Waddell, Cummertrees (near Dumfries) to Molteno 7 March 1918, Hirst, op.cit., p.520.

⁶² London School of Economics, Courtney MSS 12/196, Hirst to L. Courtney 28 January 1918.

and, at 72 years of age, was evidently approaching the end of his political career. Much the same could be said of Loreburn. Even without such difficulties of personnel, dissident Liberals such as Molteno had to take account of a changed military situation after the Germans launched their offensive on the Western Front in March. Freed from military commitment on the Russian front, it was the enemy's last desperate gamble to secure victory before American participation in the war became decisive. Though the offensive brought Germany closer to success than at any time since 1914, it soon lost momentum and, from the summer months onwards, it was the Allies who had the prospect of victory in sight. In the closing stages of the conflict, state-backed propaganda consciously evoked memories of German brutality in the first months of the War in order to harden a popular desire for retribution. Multiple British clergymen used earlier enemy atrocities, real and imagined, against innocent Belgian women and children as a way of opposing pacifists and conscientious objectors. A 'German Crimes Calendar' for 1918 even depicted a different atrocity for each month of the year.⁶³

In this situation Molteno needed to turn at least one eye to the domestic political scene. It seems that he underestimated the scale of the challenge that would face him. 'I rejoice to see your name in Hansard', wrote Gordon Harvey at the end of 1917, 'and to observe that you are always on the side of sense and moderation.' But Harvey then raised an important point. 'I wonder how your constituents are regarding you — I hope with returning warmth and admiration.' 4 Yet the closer Britain now came to outright victory, possibly even the 'knock-out blow' of which he had only recently been so contemptuous, the more difficult it was for Molteno to uphold the 'sense and moderation' of which Harvey had written. A wartime general election seemed a distinct possibility for much of 1918. In the event, Lloyd George dissolved parliament just three days after the Armistice in November. Polling day was set for 14 December.

The position in Dumfriesshire was complicated not only by the considerable extension of the franchise occasioned by the Representation of the People Act (1918), but also by the prospect of significant boundary changes, with the existing county and burgh seats being amalgamated into a single constituency. Even if the local Liberal Association was prepared to overlook Molteno's errant parliamentary voting record, it was by no means clear that he would be the party's choice to contest the new constituency. He faced the probability of a challenge from the Burghs MP, John Gulland, who was still the Liberal party's Chief Whip. As far as Molteno was concerned, the fact that, in terms of numbers of voters, the new constituency was dominated by those of the old county seat left his own position 'an impregnable one as between Liberals'.⁶⁵ No-one, he suggested, 'will venture to contest my Liberalism and Radicalism. If there has been any criticism of my action it appears to be that I was too much of a Radical and insisted too strongly upon Liberal principles — in fact that I would not put Liberal principles into cold storage.'⁶⁶ This may have been the case, but it took little account of the jingoistic mood that swept the country in the wake of

⁶³ J. Horne and A. Kramer, German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial (New Haven, 2001), pp.320–1.

⁶⁴ Harvey to Molteno 26 December 1917, Hirst, op.cit., p.516.

⁶⁵ Molteno to his agent, David Paterson 18 October 1918, Hirst, op.cit., p.529.

Molteno declaration to supporters October 1918, Hirst, op.cit., pp.529–30.

victory over Germany. Molteno had 'no fear whatever that if the truth could be known I should be supported; and I want an election in which the truth can be spoken, and not an unreasoning rush in the flush of war excitement'. ⁶⁷ In fact, not only was such an election unlikely to materialise; Molteno would not even have the opportunity to contest it. When the new Liberal Association met on 23 October, it decided by 54 votes to 31 to nominate Gulland as Liberal candidate for the forthcoming contest. Hostility to Molteno's war record was apparent, one delegate declaring that 'Mr Molteno unfortunately had voted against the war and had we allowed the Germans to enter France ...' before being brought to order by the Chairman. ⁶⁸

Molteno was understandably devastated by this outcome and believed that the county had not been properly represented at the meeting because of problems with wartime transport. 'I may say that I have had letters from the county saying how impossible it was for many to get to the meeting owing to the restricted rail service.' In these circumstances Molteno felt unable to accept the vote as truly representing the views of the new constituency's Liberal electors. Consequently, he determined to stand, if need be as an independent candidate. ⁶⁹ The *Standard* regretted this decision 'on both personal and public grounds'. There would, it argued, be 'an end of representative government if the rule of the majority were not recognised'. The paper dismissed Molteno's arguments about transport difficulties and pointed to a deeper reason for the rejection of the county's sitting member:

The estrangement between Mr Molteno and the Liberal Association is not of such recent growth as the alteration of the boundaries of the constituency. It dates back to the beginning of 1916, when the central committee formally remonstrated with him for opposing the war measures of the Government, and he deliberately disregarded their protest. In the small muster of supporters now we see a sequel which is not surprising.⁷⁰

In the event, Molteno soon realised that his own position was hopeless. The Conservative candidate, Major William Murray, was standing in support of Lloyd George's coalition government, an administration which large numbers of voters were ready to back for having brought the war to a successful conclusion. The best that Molteno could hope for by standing was to split his own party's vote. The verdict of the Conservative-supporting *Courier and Herald* was both partisan and brutal, but contained nonetheless elements of truth:

What Mr Molteno's policy may be, or what cause he proposes to serve, frankly we do not understand ... He owns no leader, is opposed by his own party Whip, has been rejected by his local Association, and, as far as we can make out, he agrees with nobody about anything. He plays a lone hand, ploughs a lonely furrow — a sort of political Robinson Crusoe Throughout the war he has opposed and obstructed each and every measure designed to aid us in our struggle with the

Molteno to Paterson 7 October 1918, Hirst, op.cit., p.529.

⁶⁸ Standard 26 October 1918.

⁶⁹ Molteno to Bertram McGowan, Secretary, Dumfriesshire Liberal Association 25 October 1918, Standard 2 November 1918.

⁷⁰ Standard (editorial) 2 November 1918.

Hun. If his present policy is in any sense consistent with that which he has pursued during these recent years, so fateful for us all, we hardly think this community will be willing to entrust him with the equally fateful tasks awaiting the new Parliament.⁷¹

Speaking to the London Liberal Federation on 18 November, and with the case of his own Chief Whip no doubt in mind, Asquith announced that he would not countenance any Liberal candidate standing against another Liberal who had been approved by his local association. 'Liberal against Liberal is to my mind fratricidal, indeed suicidal.'⁷² Three days later Molteno wrote to friends and supporters to announce that he had decided after all not to offer himself for nomination, as this would merely make a present of the seat 'to the corrupt and scandalous Coalition'.⁷³ The *Courier* insisted that there was probably not another constituency 'throughout the length and breadth of the Kingdom, except perhaps in the west of Ireland' that would accept Molteno as its candidate, 'so notorious and evil is his war record'.⁷⁴ In fact, invitations came in from Ayrshire and Bute, Leith and Glasgow Central. Molteno turned down all such offers and refused to speak publicly during the election campaign. Out of sympathy with the prevailing mood of revenge and retribution, his spirits were at a low ebb. To Lord Morley he wrote that,

the Liberal Party is suffering now for the betrayal of all its vital principles by its Leaders, who went over bag and baggage to the enemy. The moral basis of Liberalism has fallen out of the bottom of the ship, which is now becoming engulfed.⁷⁵

Even had Molteno rather than Gulland secured the Liberal nomination, it seems inconceivable that he would have retained his seat in parliament. Very few candidates, deprived of the so-called 'Coupon' — the notorious letter of endorsement signed by Lloyd George and the Conservative leader, Andrew Bonar Law — managed to defy the prevailing tide. Gulland himself was easily defeated by his Conservative opponent. 76 The same fate befell almost all those Liberal MPs with whom Molteno had made common cause during the war years. Some of these dissident radicals now made their way into the Labour movement. Molteno, by contrast, would remain active in Liberal politics until his death in 1937. Lord Loreburn tried to raise his friend's spirits. 'You are young and will I hope have a long and busy share in the making of a new England [sic]. And it will be no disadvantage to you that you will merely be a looker-on for the next year or two, though in the public interest I regret even that brief interval.'77 In fact, Molteno's parliamentary career was at an end. He stood, unsuccessfully, for Kinross and West Perthshire in the General Election of 1923, but otherwise confined himself to extra-parliamentary activity. In the post-war era Molteno's brand of Liberalism appeared curiously dated, even to many fellow Liberals. A letter he wrote in 1919 to his wartime associate Richard Holt (also defeated in the Coupon

⁷¹ Dumfries and Galloway Courier and Herald (hereafter Courier) editorial 6 November 1918.

⁷² Courier editorial 20 November 1918.

⁷³ Hirst, op.cit., p.532.

⁷⁴ Courier editorial 26 October 1918.

⁷⁵ Molteno to Morley November–December 1918, Hirst, op.cit., p.533.

⁷⁶ Full result: W. Murray 13,345, J. Gulland 7,562.

To Loreburn to Molteno 22 November 1918, Hirst, op.cit., p.532.

Election) may stand as an epitaph to Molteno's political creed:

Liberal principles are as necessary as ever and likely to reassert themselves, but as Morley very well said in [18]99, 'if the Liberal Party abandons Peace, Economy and Reform, what will they be but a body without a soul'. There was no moral basis in the Liberal case as put by the Leaders at this last election ... [Asquith] had given away beforehand the whole Liberal case and had preached undiluted Jingoism for four years and had always ostentatiously professed that he had no principles. He was not in principle a Free trader, he was not in principle a free service man, nor was he in principle a Free press man, or in principle anything which we had regarded as essential in a Liberal ... I think some of us ought to come together and draw up a manifesto of what we think should be done to reorganise the Liberal Party on true Liberal lines.⁷⁸

It was perhaps a forlorn hope.

⁷⁸ Liverpool Record Office, Holt MSS, 920 DUR 14/27/245, Molteno to Holt 28 January 1919.

ADDENDA ANTIQUARIA

SOME OLD ROADS IN AND AROUND KIRKCUDBRIGHT

Alex. D. Anderson1

The following notes are based on observations made by the writer over a period of over fifty years and of the more recent study of a survey plan of the burgh and surrounding area made by John Gillone, land surveyor, in1776. The plan is in the Stewartry Museum in Kirkcudbright but the writer was fortunate in being given an accurate copy of this plan made in 1969 by Mr George Nicholson, a local landowner and farmer (see Figure 1).

The principal roads shown outside the town are:

- 1. Millburn Street and its extension northwards to Carse. This would continue to join the main Stewartry road system at the east end of Old Tongland Bridge.
- 2. A branch from this road marked 'Road to Boreland' but probably continuing further.
- 3. Silvercraigs Road and a continuation marked 'Road to Buittle Bridge'.
- 4. The 'Nine Stiles Walk' the old road to Auchencairn.
- 5. The 'Bullet Road' to Dundrennan.
- 6. The road from the High Street at the Tolbooth to Great Cross.

Regarding the accuracy of the 1776 plan, considering the later record of John Gillone, his involvement would seem to inspire confidence. He was later 'County Surveyor' to the Stewartry Road Trustees and engineer of a proposed extension of the Carlingwark Canal to Glenlochar.² However, it is necessary to take into account the methods available to him at the time. Jeffrey C. Stone has pointed out that a plan by John Gillone published in 1794 in the *Statistical Account* was inaccurate in parts up to 10%.³ This plan was to a small scale.

It is likely that the built-up area in Kirkcudbright burgh and Millburn will be accurate as this would be measured by chain. The scale is given in Scots chains and to avoid problems with this, any measurements on the plan have been based on the measured distance between two surviving fixed points, namely the road junction at Townend (beside the hospital) to the Mill Burn. This allows measurements to be applied to the Ordnance Survey Explorer 1:25 000 map.

On 30 April 1800 and again on 14 October 1800, the Earl of Selkirk successfully petitioned for certain roads to be closed by the Stewartry Road Trustees including some of the routes considered.⁴

¹ Fellow of the Society. 2 Mount Pleasant Avenue, Kirkcudbright, DG6 4HF.

² Pat Jones, personal communication.

³ Stone, J.C. 'The Early Printed Maps of Dumfriesshire and Galloway', *TDGNHAS* Vol. XLIV (1967), p.189.

⁴ Minutes Books of the Road Trustees of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, 30/4/1800, vol.3, p.298 and 14/10/1800, vol.3, p.404.

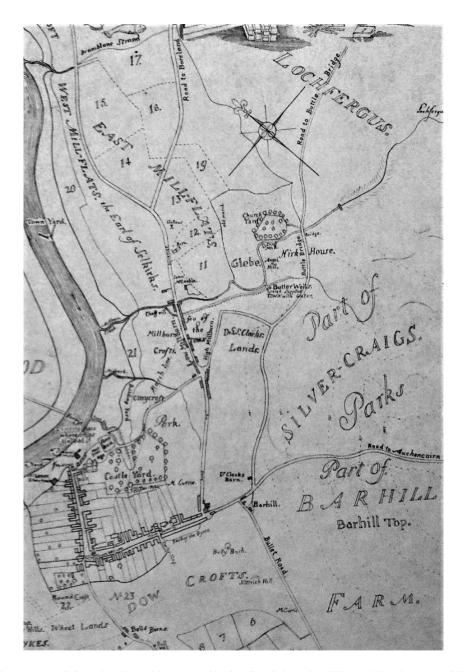


Figure 1. Detail from the *Plan of the Town of Kirkcudbright* by John Gillone, 1776. Courtesy of The Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright (copied from a tracing of the original held in the museum, made by G. Nicholson 1969).

1. Millburn Street to Old Tongland Bridge

This road is designated on Roy's map⁵ as 'High Road from Kirkcudbright to Dumfries'. Millburn Street ends as the access road to a block of flats shortly after crossing the Mill Burn but continues as a footpath (part of which was used as a rope walk in the nineteenth century) leading past the back of St Mary's Garage to a point on the present 'Millflats' (street) adjacent to a telephone kiosk. Measurement of the 1776 plan shows that this is the point where the road forked, the right fork being the 'Road to Boreland' (see below) while the left fork has been completely obliterated by housing developments in Millflats, Victoria Park and Tongland Road. The plan shows it as far as the Boreland Burn but beyond this it would appear that it was approximately on the line of the present A711 as far as Carse, beyond which the 1920s Ordnance Survey⁶ shows a road round Carse to the old Culdoach Smithy on the east side of Old Tongland Bridge. This road still exists in part as a private road and possibly field boundaries. There may have been some alterations when the railway was built. Here it joins the old road to Kelton Hill and the Dumfries road. The old bridge also gave access to the road to New Galloway and Ayrshire. This whole section of road would be superseded by 1808 by the new (Telford) Tongland Bridge and the present A711, Tongland Road. The road to Rhonehouse was improved between 1769 and 1772 as part of an effective diversion of the Old Military Road via Tongland and Cumstoun Bridge to Twynholm.

2. Fork at Millflats to Boreland and beyond

The right-hand fork (at the telephone kiosk) referred to in the previous section climbed along the side of the steep bank below the present golf clubhouse (see Figure 2). Part of this route can still be detected ascending the bank, marked by a notice board (not relevant) and two trees, with a width of about 7 feet (2 metres). The modern footpath is higher up the bank. The old road continues until it is obliterated by earthworks relating to the golf clubhouse access and Stirling Crescent but can be picked up again just inside the golf course boundary opposite the middle of Stirling Crescent. It continues beside the fence to Belmont. Here it meets Burnside Loaning and the Drumblane Strand burn and continues as a rough vehicular road up to the green keeper's depot. From this point the 1920s Ordnance Survey indicates a footpath following the north-west and north-east field boundaries and this route thence to Jordieland. However, on the 1776 plan this road is labelled 'Road to Boreland', and as the part north of the Drumblane Strand stops at the title block for the map it is possible that there was a branch in the path at the north corner of the present golf course leading to Boreland.

3. Silvercraigs Road and 'The road to Buittle Bridge'

The High Street line continues up the Barrhill to a junction near the present caravan site entrance. A branch to the right is shown (see section 5 below) followed by a branch to the left. The road and housing details in this area have been considerably altered in the last century and it is difficult to relate the plan to what is on the ground today. The plan shows a road in a position comparable to the present day Silvercraigs Road which runs beside a stone dyke at the upper boundaries of what are now the caravan site and the public park. There is a parallel rough vehicular track on the high (east)

⁵ Roy Military Maps of Scotland 1747–65, National Library of Scotland web site https://maps/nls.uk.roy.

⁶ The historical OS maps are on the National Library of Scotland web site https/maps/nls.uk>

The date of Old Tongland Bridge is uncertain but it was certainly there in 1777. The date stone is possibly incorrect and may have been recut when the bridge was widened around 1959. It was built in the early eighteenth century and must have had a predecessor on the same or possibly another site.

side of apparently recent origin. On the plan a road is shown joining in on the low side from High Millburn. The main road on the plan continues across the Mill Burn and past 'Kirk House' and the 'Church Yard' and is designated 'Road to Buittle Bridge' and any trace of it has probably disappeared in the present cemetery, but the Ordnance Survey Explorer 1:25 000 map shows a track leading to Lochfergus which may be part of this road, However, near the Mill Burn, Silvercraigs Road joins the road which now extends from the top end of St Cuthbert Street (Gelston Road, B727) and which now supersedes it. This road follows one of four optional lines referred for decision to a committee by the newly formed Stewartry Road Trustees in 1797. The same meeting also refers to part of the road already being made.⁸ This may have been a private venture by Lord Daer on the St Mary's Isle estate. The 'Road to Buittle Bridge' shown on the plan, continuing from Silvercraigs Road, would be superseded by this new road.

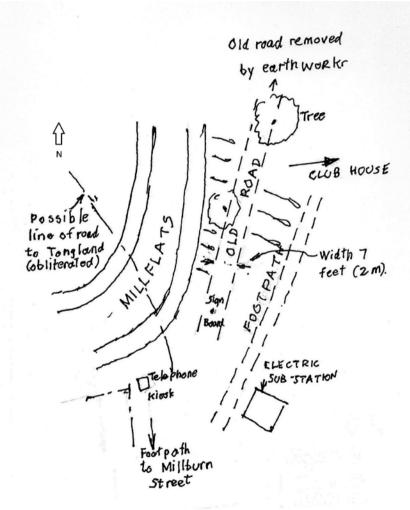


Figure 2. Sketch plan of old road at Millflats (not to scale).

⁸ Minutes Books of the Road Trustees of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, vol.1, pp.53-85.

4. The road to Auchencairn (The 'Nine Stiles Walk')

This road survives as a footpath from Barrhill to a point on the present road to Auchencairn which may be its continuation to Buckland Bridge and on to Auchencairn via Bombie and Kirkcarswell. The present footpath begins at a gap between two properties on Barhill Avenue and is signposted as a core path and town walk. In 1964 the writer (then much younger and fitter) made records of the road and the results of these are appended as Figures 3a to 3e. It should be noted that the dimensions shown are in feet. As they are naturally approximate a conversion of 3 feet to 1 metre is sufficiently accurate. This area has been substantially altered by a housing development in the 1960s. Just before it reached the first stile it was crossed by the remains of a road or footpath which may be part of route 5 (see below) or possibly a later footpath. There was no sign of this in 2019 and the dyke and stile itself have also disappeared. Past the site of the first stile it makes a diagonal ascent of a steep bank where a 'hollow way' or 'gote' has formed (see Figure 4) Such features occur on 'natural' (unmade) roads and there is an example at the Gote of Anwoth, between Goatend and Old Anwoth Kirk near Gatehouse, on the line of the original Old Military Road. Such features are more frequent in southern England where they are known as 'hollow ways'.'

The rest of the present road from the B727 at Kirk House may have been made as part of the improvements referred to in section 3 above.

5. The 'Bullet Road' to Dundrennan

On the plan this road is shown running from Barhill directly towards Sandside. It is not shown beyond this but presumably would continue thence along the foreshore. However, nearly the whole area which it would traverse has been built over, not only recently but also as shown on the 1900 Ordnance Survey. As the alterations do not extend beyond the Cannee access road an inspection was made (without entering) of the field south of this road but nothing obvious was visible. However, there is a field gate on the Cannee road which might, or might not be on the original line.

6. The road from the High Street at the Tolbooth to Great Cross

This road is shown on the plan passing the west gable end of the Tolbooth and thence by a slightly sinuous route to Great Cross with various enclosures. However, this area has now been completely redeveloped and all traces of the road beyond the Tolbooth must have been obliterated.

Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful for the encouragement given by the editor of the *Transactions*, Dr David Devereux and for taking the photographs; also to The Stewartry Museum for permission to photograph the plan; and to the writer's daughter, Mrs Christine Collins, for support, patience, transport and dealing with computer problems

⁹ The term 'gote' also seems to have been used for a narrow passage between buildings. The writer's father (1900–59) who had lived in College Street, Maxwelltown, Dumfries, recollected that the original Well Street (now moved to the edge of a car park) had been known as 'The Goat' (sic) although he could not explain the origin of the name.

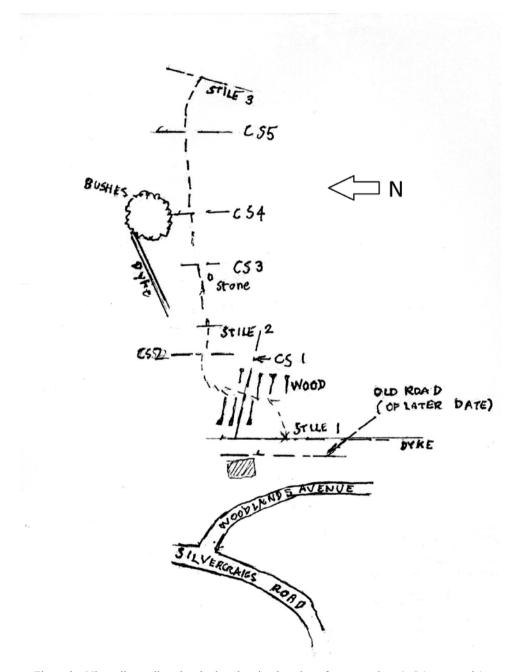


Figure 3a. Nine stiles walk – sketch plan showing location of cross sections 1–5 (not to scale).

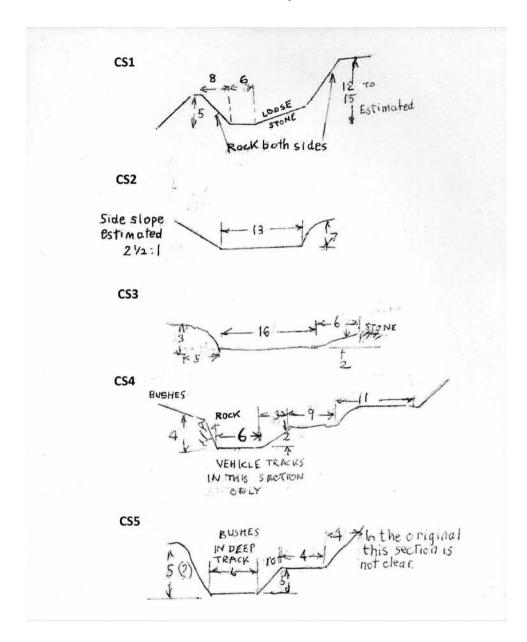


Figure 3b. Nine stiles walk – cross sections 1–5 (not to scale).

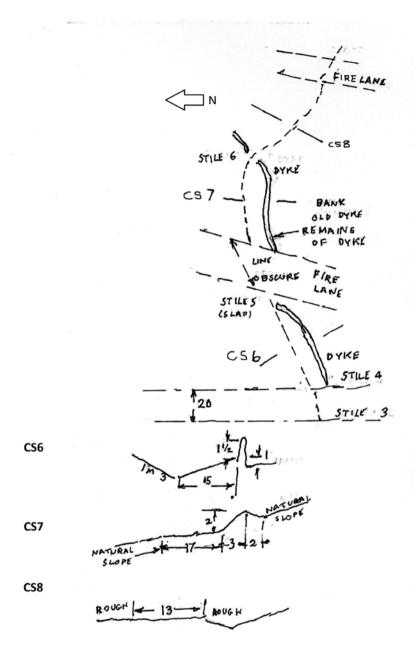


Figure 3c. Nine stiles walk – sketch plan with cross sections 6–8 (not to scale).

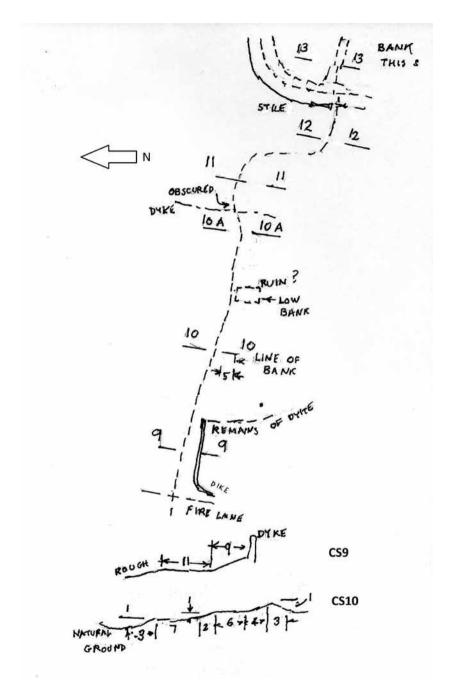


Figure 3d. Nine stiles walk – sketch plan showing location of cross sections 9–13, with cross sections 9–10 (not to scale).

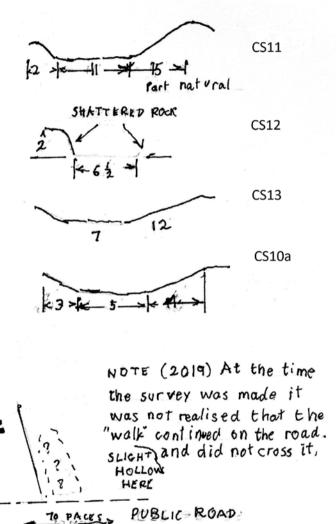


Figure 3e. Nine stiles walk – cross sections 10a–13 (not to scale).



Figure 4. View of the gote or sunken way above Woodlands Avenue looking south-west downhill, towards the town.

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Dumfriesshire: A Frontier Region by Andrew McCulloch. Edinburgh: Birlinn. 2018. xii + 586pp. £30. ISBN 978-1-919247-628-2 (hardback).

This extensively researched and immaculately referenced volume should be considered as the companion work to the author's earlier *Galloway:* A Land Apart,¹ which was published in 2000. Any reader who has made reference to the Galloway volume will have a good idea of the scope and detail to expect from this new publication. There have been no previous county histories of Dumfriesshire. The closest parallels are Sir Herbert Maxwell's *History of Dumfriesshire and Galloway*² and William McDowall's *History of Dumfries*,³ both originally written in the nineteenth century: the one covering a larger geographical area and the other a lesser one. Even the Wikipedia article on 'Dumfriesshire' comes with a warning that its contents are 'largely based on the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition' which was published in 1911, so the publication of a history of Dumfriesshire is timely to say the least.

The author gives full credit to the 'invaluable assistance' of the resources held in the Ewart Library, Dumfries and to the archivist, Graham Roberts, specifically. The book was published with financial support from the Friends of the Archives. However, the contribution of Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society is also fully acknowledged as the Society's *Transactions* have provided a major source of information and numerous articles published from the early twentieth century to the present day are referred to. In particular the work of R.C. Reid and A.E. Truckell is regularly cited. The Bibliography provides a particularly comprehensive reading list on the subject of Dumfriesshire from its earliest settlers to Brexit and the possibility of a second Scottish independence referendum.

The book is helpfully structured, with each chapter devoted to a discrete historical period within which sub-headings identify the topics to be discussed. This framework, along with the well-constructed index, means that, for the faint-hearted reader, the book can be approached as a source of reference rather than as an extended read. Nevertheless, it is an enjoyable and sustaining read and the reader completes it with a sense of achievement as well as a broadened historical perspective. It may not be effortless but it is 'readable' in the positive sense of this overused term.

In the Preface the author says, 'I admit that some of my conclusions may be controversial or at least not in line with received thinking.' It is therefore a personal perspective that we are being offered and occasionally a lively and pugnacious one. All books are the work of their individual authors despite drawing on common sources of information and the character and personality of this author does gradually reveal itself. Comparing this book with work on similar topics, the writing style recalls that of R.C. Reid but with considerably greater vividness at times when academic dispassion makes way for original opinions and turns of phrase. Elizabeth I's promise to return Mary to the Scottish throne was 'pure spin'; lord Torthorwald 'unfortunately proved to be a waster'; lord Maxwell was a 'habitual trimmer' and a 'professional turncoat'.

'The Beginnings' makes brisk progress from the clearing of the ice sheet to the Vikings in twentyseven pages but as we enter the mediaeval period the complications of character and motivation of the protagonists come into focus and the narrative takes off. This is when the de Brus family first

¹ McCulloch, A. (2000) Galloway: A Land Apart. Edinburgh: Birlinn.

² Maxwell, Sir H. (1896) A History of Dumfries and Galloway. London: W. Blackwood and Sons.

³ McDowall, W. (1867) A History of Dumfries: with notices of Nithsdale, Annandale, and the Western Border. 1st edn. Edinburgh: A. & C. Black.

enters the stage and there follows a meticulous analysis of the feudalisation of first Annandale and then Nithsdale.

The period of the Wars of Independence and the emergence of Robert the Bruce's kingship is covered in the necessary detail and we gain familiarity with the people, places and events — although the author does not exactly over-explain. This is not an introductory text but a useful compendium of the present state of knowledge. Clear-eyed character studies of the main protagonists such as Wallace, Robert the Bruce and Edward I emerge as the author builds a picture from the historical facts that admits assessment of their motivations and personal characteristics. He allows the events of their lives to cast an objective light on their stories and actively seeks to avoid hagiography. Thus he has a willingness to challenge stereotypes as portrayed in what are in his words '[t]he ballads of starry-eyed romanticists'. In particular there is a nuanced appreciation of Bruce which challenges the tradition of the 'one-dimensional national hero figure' that ignores several inconvenient facts about his intentions and conduct.

The detailed and geographically inclusive narrative of the Wars of Independence at first seems to extend the remit of the work beyond Dumfriesshire but it is necessary to illustrate just how significant the people and places of the county were to these larger historical events in Scottish history.

Following the conclusion of the Wars of Independence and the disputed kingship of Scotland the arrival of the Black Death paradoxically generates another change in illumination as the character of the towns of Dumfriesshire and the life of their inhabitants comes into focus. The stage is now peopled by the ordinary as well as the extraordinary characters of history.

The subtitle, 'A Frontier Region' is extensively demonstrated as the three districts of the county are batted between Scotland and England, between royal control and grants to nobles and magnates and from hand to hand between these powerful families. The warring and insecurity seems relentless with scarcely a decade passing in the mediaeval to early modern period that some, if not all, of Dumfriesshire is laid to waste — 'a blackened wilderness' in the author's own words. If a hierarchy of historical misfortune were to be argued in relation to the experience of the counties of Scotland, surely Dumfriesshire must figure highest in the ranking.

Even with Scotland and England at peace by the late 1500s, this only served to create greater opportunities for internecine feuding. Following the Union of the Crowns in 1603, when James VI & I resolved to put an end to lawlessness at both his borders, Dumfriesshire remained, predictably, the last outpost of conflict and destruction.

The confusing convulsions of religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are delineated and well-explained, although the author clearly has his own strongly held views: at the passing of the Act of Classes in 1649, 'Thus was established a fundamentalist clerical dictatorship supported by a hard core of unrepresentative narrow-minded extremists.'

Following the Union of 1707, the rapid spread of 'civilisation' to this frontier region is outlined. This was contingent on the establishment of peace (but for the interruption of the two Jacobite Rebellions) and the rule of law. Occasionally, the author's personal investment in this interpretation of history emerges. A lawyer by profession, this is his comment on the abolition of hereditary jurisdictions, a lesser known consequence of the 1745 rebellion: 'But the days of such arbitrary justice were over, and the new breed of lawyers who presided over the local courts could be relied on to take their duties more seriously and apply the law with greater fairness and impartiality.'

By the end of the eighteenth century, we no longer recognise the war-torn Dumfriesshire of the long centuries of conflict and destruction. The author's view of it is revised to this: 'Throughout the time of the Scottish Enlightenment, Dumfries was second only to Edinburgh in the field of artistic endeavour, while it surpassed most other towns of similar size in Scotland as an intellectual centre.'

Little wonder that Robert Burns might choose to live here, but he enters the narrative only briefly and a Burns enthusiast would perhaps take issue with the outline of his life, and especially of his death, in the town.

The agricultural development of Dumfriesshire figures large in the closing chapters. It is transformed from a frontier region into a farming region and this process is obviously a topic close to the author's heart and also his personal knowledge and experience: the detailed genesis of the Scottish Milk Marketing Board and the conditions that brought it about being one example of his grasp of this topic. Another is the intricacies and changing policy directions of the Common Agricultural Policy over time and its intended and unintended consequences for farming in Dumfriesshire. There is little trace of authorial detachment when, anticipating a future where food scarcity will reduce its availability for import, he predicts: 'As the need becomes ever more acute, many of the self-indulgent nostrums which restrict farmers ability to manage their land to best advantage will have to go by the board ...'

The final chapter, 'The Land' at first appears misplaced as it contains a significant amount of polemic and ends rather suddenly with a review of the merits and demerits of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act of 2016. However, on reflection, it is a good fit with what has emerged as the principal theme of the book itself — the ever-changing pattern of the people who have held, won, owned or controlled the land of Dumfriesshire.

The traditional, often nineteenth century, county history was a compendium of known information, arranged chronologically. However, given the level of historical detail now available this would be a marathon to compile and write, let alone to read. What distinguishes this history of Dumfriesshire is the reader's gradual realisation that this is not just an assemblage of facts given equal treatment and weight but a work of careful selection and individuality deriving from the author's own character and predilections.

Elaine Kennedy.

Elshieshields: The Story of a Scottish Tower, 1245–2016 by Ann Shukman. Ann Shukman. 2018, 127pp. £14.99, ISBN 978-1-5272-1929-8 (paperback).

This is a most attractive little book, with a cover which does full justice to a particularly fine example of a Scottish tower house, and should quickly attract the attention of any potential reader with an interest in the architecture of Scotland. There are 127 pages, incorporating over thirty illustrations, consisting of photographs, paintings, family trees and a map, and the whole volume is well-designed and beautifully printed in an attractive format. To tell the story of a Scottish tower which has already had a life of almost 800 years, in such a modestly sized book is a daunting task, but the opening 'personal introduction' quickly draws the reader into the tale and gives an early indication of the author's skill at interweaving information about the building, its various occupants and their places in Scottish history.

Ann Shukman is candid in admitting to a lack of knowledge about some aspects of Scotland and its people. Her affection for Scotland however is apparent in her treasured recollections of idyllic family holidays in the Campsie Fells, which came to an abrupt end after the tragically early deaths of her mother and stepfather. Her subsequent experiences of Scotland as a young woman, were very different from those of her childhood and were influenced by visits to the island of Eigg which was owned by her grandparents and was operated as a sporting estate. Today, most readers will probably empathise with her youthful lack of enthusiasm for the practice of killing birds in the name of sport.

Despite having Scottish genes on her mother's side of the family, a working life in English Universities, an academic interest in Russian literature and a strong commitment to the Church of England made Ann Shukman feel 'a stranger in a strange land' when she visited Scotland as a young adult. Her uncle Steven Runciman's purchase of Elshieshields tower in 1966 enabled her to visit him there most summers, but those visits gave her little insight to life in rural Scotland and tended to be mere stop-overs on the way to and from events at the Edinburgh Festival. Everything changed suddenly, both for Ann and for Elshieshields, in November 2000, when she inherited the property following the death of her uncle.

The new owner of Elshieshields was faced with a daunting task. Many of us have at some time in our lives had to sort out the affairs and property of our elder relatives, but few of us have had to deal with the volume of art, books, furnishings, correspondence and items of such greatly varied scale, style and value, that were crammed into every room, cupboard, attic and a damp cellar in this relatively small Scottish tower house. Ann Shukman's academic background helped her to distinguish between items of possible value, sentimental value, historic value and those of lesser worth, and to recruit properly qualified experts in a variety of fields to help her with valuation, disposal, repair, restoration and relocation. In the course this work, she found papers, collected by her uncle that gave her valuable information about her relatives and about previous owners of the property. These papers included letters, the existence of which had previously been unknown to her, from the mother that she had lost at such an early age and from her great-grandparents. She soon became engrossed in every detail of her inheritance, and found herself gradually becoming committed to its restoration and conservation as her permanent home and a tranquil retreat for prayer and contemplation. Many hours of diligent research, a Glasgow University course in Scottish Cultural Heritage, and interviews with a range of local and national historians helped the author to undertake detailed investigations into a variety of archives containing references to the former owners and occupiers of Elshieshields, revealing a mass of information about their lives and deeds, both fair and foul, which led to the writing of this book.

Books about castles or towers often feature battles, sieges, royal visits and partial or total destruction. Some historic buildings however seem to survive with neither controversy nor prominence in national history and to have simply functioned as family homes for much of their existence. Elshieshields seems to fall into that latter category and is therefore in some ways rather harder to write about. An arson attack and some lurid accounts of a sixty-year long feud between the Johnstons and the Maxwells add some spice to the story however, and remind us that a family home still had to be defended in these troubled times. A ghost is reported to have appeared and some theories are advanced about its origins, together with the steps that were taken to hopefully facilitate its peaceful and final departure.

Ann Shukman has set out to trace her building's occupants, and to tell the detailed story of the fabric of the building, as far as is possible from the recorded facts that pertain to the people that created, defended and maintained it. This has worked well, and her many interlinked references to the history of Scotland in general and south-west Scotland in particular, are useful and informative. Wherever possible, quotations have been made from contemporary writings which give character and authenticity to the text. The inventories that are reproduced in the closing chapter are invaluable both for the social history they provide and for the richness of the Scottish vocabulary therein, skilfully translated into English by Cathy Gibb.

The inclusion of plans of the layout of each floor of Elshieshields would have been a useful aid to understanding how the building and its various extensions worked, and how the accommodation in the two towers compares, both in scale and in character with the various later extensions. An index would also have been helpful. It should be noted that references in the text to 'Kirkcudbright' seem to mean 'The Stewartry of Kirkcudbright', rather than the former county town.

Elshieshields: The Story of a Scottish Tower, 1245–2016 by Ann Shukman is a welcome addition to the list of books that describe individual castles and tower houses in detail. It will appeal greatly to anyone with a general interest in the buildings of Scotland, and to all those who have a particular interest in the local history of the area around Lochmaben. Members of the families of the Johnstons, Maxwells, Edgars, Dicksons, Byrnes and a few others will find things that will occasionally shock them, sometimes inspire them, but always fascinate them.

David R. Collin.

NOTICE OF PUBLICATION1

ARO31: Brian Hope-Taylor's archaeological legacy: Excavations at Mote of Urr, 1951 and 1953 by David Perry with contributions by Simon Chenery, Barbara Crawford, Derek Hall, Mhairi Hastie, Davie Mason, Richard D. Oram and Catherine Smith. Illustrations by Dave Munro, Christopher Fyles and Jennifer Simonson.

This publication brings the research at Mote of Urr into the public domain after more than half a century since Brian Hope-Taylor undertook his excavations at the site. The foreword addresses Hope-Taylor's legacy, and a new and detailed discussion of the history of the Mote and its ownership complements the account of the fieldwork, which is illustrated with archive photographs. The finds and samples are also described, and the concluding discussion updates our present knowledge of the history and archaeology of the Mote.

Published online by GUARD Archaeology Limited, Glasgow at http://archaeologyreportsonline.com/reports/2018/ARO31.html.

Phyllis M. Bone: Animal Sculptor by Elizabeth Cumming (text) and John McKenzie (photographs). Edinburgh: Georgian Antiques. 2018. 64pp. £10.00, ISBN 978-1-5272-2522-0 (softback).

This booklet was published to accompany an exhibition of drawings and sculpture by Phyllis Mary Bone RSA (1894–1972) arranged by Georgian Antiques as part of the 2018 Edinburgh Festival. Despite being the first woman to be elected a full member of the Royal Scottish Academy, Phyllis Bone's work is not widely known, and Elizabeth Cumming's introduction to her life and career provides the most extensive account published so far. Though based in Edinburgh, she was a regular visitor to Penninghame House, near Newton Stewart in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1949 she decided to move permanently to Galloway, settling in Kirkcudbright, where she had artist friends. She remained here until her death.

Available from the publisher or from Kirkcudbright Galleries, Kirkcudbright.

Archie Sutter Watt: A Galloway Artist by Christopher Andreae. Dumfries: Archie Sutter Watt Trust. 2018. 128pp. £22.00, ISBN 978-0-9554737-4-6 (hardback).

Written by art author Christopher Andreae this richly-illustrated, colour hard-back book has been published by the Archie Sutter Watt Trust to celebrate the artist's creative life and influence. It was launched in Kirkcudbright Galleries at an exciting exhibition entitled *An Artistic Affinity: William Gillies, John Maxwell, Archie Sutter Watt.* This celebrated the work of three Scottish artists who influenced creativity through their art and teaching. Archie Sutter Watt (1915–2005) first came to our region in 1950 to teach art at Dalbeattie High School. He remained here for the rest of his life, becoming one of the region's most distinguished artists and an influential teacher to a younger generation of artists.

The book is available from Kirkcudbright Galleries, the Whitehouse Gallery Kirkcudbright, Gracefield Arts Centre, Dumfries and selected book outlets.

Notice of publication of works relating to the interests of the Society and the remit of the *Transactions* is welcomed. Please send this to the Editor. Reviews of these publications may follow in a future volume. Members of the Society who are interested in contributing reviews should contact the Editor.

6 October 2017 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING **Dr David Hannay** The Story of Bagpipes and their Music

The first meeting of the Society heard an excellent lecture by Dr David Hannay on *The Story of Bagpipes and their Music*.

He began by providing an interesting summary of the history of bagpipes from their beginnings as reed pipes in India to their slow spread west across Europe. Bagpipes could be found in many countries including Germany, France and Spain.

In Medieval Britain bagpipes are mentioned in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, and in Rosslyn Chapel the carved angels play bagpipes. In Tewkesbury Abbey bagpipes were used in religious music in the fourteenth century.

By the fifteenth century there were bagpipes in the Scottish Highlands. The pipes were used to commemorate events and were meant to be used outdoors. They had no military marching use as there were no roads until General Wade's were built. The music was not written down, and learning the pipes was very skilled, taking about seven years; the actual teacher was very important. The pipes were banned after Culloden in 1745, but the need for Highland soldiers meant that they were legalized again in 1782. Thereafter, music was written down, piping contests were encouraged and bagpipes became popular. A little local interest was provided by Angus Mackay from Raasay, who in 1835 won a piping prize, later becoming piper to Queen Victoria, but unfortunately ended up in the Crichton Hospital in Dumfries. He is commemorated by a memorial at Glencaple. The pipes diminished as providers of religious music (angels now used harps) but retained an important military function leading Scottish troops until the late twentieth century. Numbers have now declined and the pipes have a much reduced role.

Discussion then moved on to how bagpipes and bellows pipes diverged. Bellows pipes certainly existed by the seventeenth century, as a painting by Van Dyck shows, and a manuscript of music from 1733 was found in Perth. The pipes were more suited for indoor use, but were eclipsed in Scotland by the bagpipe; only in Northumberland were the bellows pipes retained. In the mid twentieth century an interest was revived particularly in the Lowland pipes. Even pop groups such as Runrig have adopted them.

Dr Hannay played both the bagpipes and bellows pipes and then provided recorded evidence of many types of pipes and music, this was much enjoyed although Highland bagpipes played in the day centre were quite deafening!

The lecture was much appreciated as shown by the large number of questions afterwards. The chairman summed up the talk as being like no other, with expert playing as well as giving us an excellent history.

J.M.B.

20 October 2017

Dr John Crawford (Leadhills Heritage Trust) Leadhills Reading Society and a Wider World

After a long career working in libraries and studying their historical evolution, Dr John Crawford was well placed to address members of the Society on the subject of the *Leadhills Reading Society and a Wider World* at their meeting on 20 October. Indeed, he has been associated with the Leadhills

Library since 1969 and is currently Chairman of the Leadhills Heritage Trust.

Dr Crawford began his talk by setting the Leadhills experience in a broader context. The eighteenth century witnessed significant changes in the world of books, including the beginnings of commercial publishing and the emergence of a wider reading public. Dr Crawford introduced his audience to the idea of 'intensive' reading being replaced by 'extensive' reading — i.e. the practice of a small number of books being read and re-read was superseded by a range of books being read perhaps only once each by any given reader. In this climate libraries flourished and by 1800 there were more than 100 publicly available libraries in Scotland. These took a variety of forms, including around 50 working-class reading societies. It is these which are Dr Crawford's particular interest and he described the subscription library as 'Scotland's gift to the modern information society'. Typically, working-class libraries of this era might have had a five-shillings entrance fee and an annual subscription of two shillings and six pence — not inconsiderable sums in the eighteenth century. The fact that ordinary working men were prepared to pay them stands as testament to their thirst for knowledge.

Two key contemporary ideas enabled libraries such as that at Leadhills to flourish. The first was 'associationism', the joining of a collective body in pursuit of a particular set of common objectives; the second 'mutual improvement', which implied that more could be attained, or in the case of libraries learnt, as part of a group than by the solitary individual. Taking his story from Benjamin Franklin's Junto Club in America to Allan Ramsay's Easy Club in Scotland, Dr Crawford arrived at the village of Leadhills in South Lanarkshire. Lead had been mined in the area since the Middle Ages, but organized industry dates from the seventeenth century. James Stirling (1692–1770), to whom there is a memorial in Greyfriars Kirkyard, was a mine manager and a distinguished scholar in his own right. He encouraged the miners to build their own cottages and to grow vegetables. A genuine philanthropist, he anticipated by about 60 years many of the activities of Robert Owen in New Lanark and it was probably he who founded the Leadhills Library in 1741, making it, as Dr Crawford confidently asserted, the world's first working-class subscription library. The library had a set of rules which included the right to exclude a member for unseemly behaviour. A first printed catalogue dated 1800 suggests that the library then had around 1000 volumes. Membership fluctuated between about 60 and 100 members. The last major catalogue from 1904 indicates a holding of 3805 volumes. The library ceased to function in the 1960s, but now offers visitors a fascinating insight into a working-class manifestation of the Scottish Enlightenment. The miners clearly believed in what a later generation would call 'life-long learning'.

Dr Crawford described some of the library's surviving treasures. Its oldest book dates from 1673; there is a fine collection of first editions; and the library banner is the oldest in Britain and recently featured on television's Antiques Roadshow. The library remains very much a 'work in progress' and Dr Crawford outlined plans for the future, including on-going maintenance of the library building and the conservation of its holdings. At the end of his fascinating talk the speaker responded knowledgeably to a number of questions from an appreciative audience.

D.D.

3 November 2017 Jim Logan Between the Tides

About eighty members and visitors gathered to hear a talk by marine biologist Jim Logan, entitled *Between the Tides*. In his talk the speaker aimed to give an overview of the extraordinary variety of wildlife that can be found between the high and low watermarks on the Solway coast. Our area is particularly rewarding, partly because of the wide variety of coastal habitats, ranging from mudflats through sandy and shingle beaches to rocky shores, and partly because the tidal range, from 6 to 9 metres, is the second largest in Britain, thus providing a huge intertidal zone.

Salinity can vary considerably, due to freshwater streams and rivers that discharge into the Solway, and the speaker pointed out that some seaweeds, for example, can tolerate almost non-saline water, and also drying out, whereas others require a strictly marine environment. Rock pools, which might seem to provide a good place to observe wildlife, can be a difficult habitat for marine species as in hot weather the pool dries and salinity rises, whereas heavy rain will dilute the seawater.

The speaker then described the various types of molluscs to be found. These include the little winkle, which spends most of its life above the tideline but takes to the sea to breed, whereas the edible winkle requires daily immersion in seawater. The familiar limpet grips to rocks using a huge foot muscle, and scavenges weed by scraping the rock surface. Dog whelks feed on other sea creatures such as mussels or barnacles by drilling a hole in the shell and then liquefying the organism inside by injecting digestive juices. The native European oyster is no longer found on the Solway coast, but there is a thriving colony and oyster fishery at Loch Ryan.

Jim Logan then moved on to describe crustaceans, such as crabs, which range from the large edible crab (complete with piecrust-like shell), to the tiny pea crab, which lives inside mussels, feeding on material gathered by its host. Barnacles, despite appearing to resemble small limpets, are in fact crustaceans which feed on plankton by opening up plates in the top of the shell. Other intertidal creatures include starfish, sea anemones, and sea urchins. Fish are generally observed in rock pools, and species include the blenny, goby and butterfish, the last so named because of its slippery slimy skin.

The speaker concluded by mentioning sea-creatures that may become stranded on the shore. Most notable are various species of jellyfish, some of which are harmless but others, such as the lion jellyfish, can inflict a powerful sting that can even be fatal for children.

The evening concluded with an extensive question-and-answer session, and it was suggested that the Society might ask Jim Logan to lead a sea-shore wildlife walk in the summer.

J.H.B.

17 November 2017

Dr Martin McGregor (University of Glasgow) Robert Bruce: In Life and Death

And they shall see his face: In search of Robert Bruce.

Dr Martin McGregor from the History Department of the University of Glasgow presented a most erudite and enjoyable lecture to the society on Friday 17 November 2017.

Dr McGregor took as his early inspiration Professor Geoffrey Barrow's seminal work, Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland and he has since become a leading authority on Bruce and the period in which he lived. Professor Barrow recounted the Bruce story but also tried to get close to the man himself. Dr McGregor continued this theme in his lecture. He noted the element of ambivalence towards Robert Bruce prevalent in Scottish society when compared to figures such as William Wallace and Robert Burns. Bruce was a complex character in a complex period of history. It is unlikely that any king before or since has shown such an intensity of relationship to the land of Scotland and its people. He travelled to every corner of the realm throughout his life and his firsthand experience was put to good use. He was brought up as a leading feudal nobleman and could perhaps have looked forward to a life of plenty. This proved not to be the case and Robert Bruce suffered great personal hardships whilst on campaign and 'on the run'. He lost all four of his brothers and his sister was imprisoned in a cage for many years. He suffered from ill health, especially in his later years. Despite this, Barbour, his first biographer, could describe him as humane, generous and firm. To these characteristics Dr McGregor added courage, patience, a willingness to learn, humour, generosity and magnanimity and he supported his lavish praise by examining events throughout Bruce's life, especially post Bannockburn 1314. He answered the critics who have accused Bruce of

being a warmonger by asking whether Bruce had any choice. Once he became King he was met with opposition and intransience both by the King of England and by many nobles within his own realm. Nevertheless he was accepted by his people, as demonstrated by the meteoric rise from a handful of supporters in 1306 following his seizure of the throne to an army of 10,000 to 15,000 men just two years later.

Dr McGregor continued to scrutinise Bruce's character using examples showing the wry humour Bruce possessed in his responses to a visiting papal legate whilst utilizing his diplomatic skills in finally achieving legitimacy and national independence in the eyes of the English King Edward III, as shown by the treaties of Edinburgh and Northampton in 1328.

After the discovery of the skeleton of King Richard III in a Leicester car park new technology was able to reconstruct his face. In 1818 a tomb, buried in front of the High Altar of Dunfermline Abbey, was discovered and examined. It was believed that the skeleton was that of King Robert Bruce and a plaster cast of the skull was taken. This plaster cast resides in the University of Glasgow and led to Dr McGregor and others pursuing the idea of using the same technology to reveal Bruce's face. The main issue was whether, in fact, the skeleton from Dunfermline Abbey really was that of King Robert Bruce. Historians were divided on this matter but Dr McGregor gave a convincing argument that the skeleton was indeed that of King Robert.

And they shall see his face! And we did.

S.Mc.C.

1 December 2017

THE JAMES WILLIAMS LECTURE

Phil Abramson (Archaeologist, Environmental Support & Compliance, Ministry of Defence) From Barrow to Bunker: Archaeology on the MOD Estate

On 1 December 2017, 59 fellows, members and guests of the Society heard a fascinating James Williams Memorial Lecture given by Phil Abramson on the archaeological and cultural heritage on the Ministry of Defence Estate. Since 2004, the speaker has been one of a team of five Archaeology Advisers in the MOD Historic Environment Team. He is based in Catterick, with responsibility for MOD sites in Scotland, the North of England and the military bases in Cyprus.

In total, the MOD estate covers 240,000 hectares or 1% of the UK land surface, equivalent in size to all National Trust properties. It contains 1000 listed buildings, 750 scheduled monuments, 10 World Heritage Sites and 6 battlefields. The remit of the speaker and his colleagues includes the full range of British history from Neolithic and Bronze Age barrows (there are 240 barrows on Salisbury Plain alone), through Iron Age hillforts, Roman marching camps and villas, Mediaeval sites, Napoleonicera buildings, First and Second World War sites, right up to the impressive concrete remains of the ill-fated Blue Streak missile programme of the late 1950s and early 1960s, and on to the famous 'golfballs' of RAF Fylingdales. Installation of the latter in the 1960s was vigorously opposed by many on the grounds of their disruptive visual impact on the landscape, and their demolition in the late 1980s equally opposed as the loss of a striking and familiar feature of that same landscape. The bases on Cyprus contain a number of remarkable Roman and Byzantine ruins.

The remit of the MOD Historic Environment Team is firstly to assess any impact on Heritage whenever a new build is proposed, and it was clear from his lecture that any concerns are treated seriously with every effort made to avoid damage. The Team also has a stewardship role, ensuring that as far as possible there is no deterioration in the properties under their charge. The role of Stewardship extends to disposal of MOD land. (It is planned to reduce MOD holdings by 30% over the next few years.) Lastly, of course, the Team must ensure value for money in any works undertaken to preserve heritage. One project particularly close to the speaker's heart, as evident when

he described it, is Operation Nightingale, a programme that draws in soldiers wounded, physically or mentally, in recent conflicts into on-site archaeological digs and similar hands-on archaeology. It has proved immensely beneficial to the men and women participating, not least ending any sense of isolation and making them once again members of a team. The audience were reminded of the long tradition of military archaeologists such as Pitt Rivers, Mortimer Wheeler, O.G.S. Crawford and T.E. Lawrence.

In a wide-ranging review of various historical sites on MOD land, the speaker had an engaging way of involving his audience by showing a series of untitled slides and asking the audience if they recognised them (which some knowledgeable members generally did), before moving on to discuss the site's significance and the problems it presented. One such was Fort George, near Inverness, a site of considerable tourist interest but also an active military base serving the Black Watch. Numerous Martello towers are on MOD land, but recent restoration of one cost £180,000 and they are of now essentially structures without a purpose (although the speaker showed a slide of one Martello tower, not on MOD land, that had been converted into the last word in desirable seaside bungalows!) A bastle on MOD land had cost £30,000 to restore but is situated so deep within its military site as to be inaccessible to the public and to be of no use to the military. On the other hand, Dymchurch Redoubt, built in the Napoleonic era, has found a use as a 'room clearance' training facility for soldiers, known officially as FIBUA or 'Fighting In Built-Up Areas' training facility, and unofficially among the troops as FISH — 'fighting in someone's house'. By use of disposable light-weight windows and doors, the actual historical site emerges unscathed after each 'battle', but serves a useful purpose.

One distressing, for antiquarians, example the speaker showed was the fate of the 'Sandhurst Blocks'. These buildings date from the late 1930s and were constructed as an aid to recruitment in the build-up of military forces just prior to the start of World War II, replacing the older disjointed training sites (one hut for sleeping, another for ablutions, a third hut for eating ...). A total of seven of them were built, of good quality materials in a striking and architecturally accomplished Neo-Georgian style, to house 640 men. They did prove an aid to recruitment in their time, but were seen in our era as prison-like disincentives to recruitment. In the end, one was listed and preserved, the other six demolished as refurbishment would cost more than a rebuild in the style of university halls of residence.

The final site shown was the somewhat forlorn Phoenix Cinema, a listed building on the now closed RAF Leconfield, a base for Fighter Command and then Bomber Command during the War. A recording of a mission briefing given in the cinema still survives.

F.T.

12 January 2018

Julia Gallacher (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)
From Grouse, Nightjars and Geese to Kites and Tree Sparrows — how are they fairing and what is RSPB Scotland doing to help?

Julia Gallagher, RSPB conservation officer in Dumfries and Galloway, gave a talk entitled *From Grouse, Nightjars and Geese to Kites and Tree Sparrows* — how are they faring and what is RSPB Scotland doing to help? The title of her talk presupposed that the birds listed require special treatment.

The black grouse was a new bird to Julia when she came to mainland Scotland to be based in an office in Crossmichael after 16 years' service with the RSPB in Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and the Uists. Most of the leks are a good hour from her home as it is a bird of marginal land. Studying them represents a challenge because it is necessary to be up and at the site before dawn. Listening for the call is the first objective. As light comes up the red brows are visible. It is a beautiful bird. Fierce battles take place with much hissing and dancing. In contrast the grey hen is only spotted if flushed while walking through grass; when they freeze their cover is well-nigh perfect. Counts are being

conducted in Scotland. The bird is doing well in the north of Scotland, but not so well right across the south. In Dumfries and Galloway three bad springs caused numbers to go down from 111 to 84 in 2016.

In assessing the birds' needs, catkins, willows and rowans are found to be important, as are good grass and heather, for which farmers/landowners can apply for funding to manage through Government schemes for the last five years. Grazing is encouraged, as long as it is not overdone. The land manager can't do everything and so a part-time project officer is planned to advise on management in the Galloway glens. Staff here and in the Borders meet to discuss and assess the efficacy of the various policies as part of the Southern Scotland Conservation Strategy led by the Game and Wildlife Conservancy Trust.

Julia had studied nightjars in Sherwood Forest. Here they are on the outer edge of their range. In the daytime their camouflage is excellent. Late summer evenings are when interested people take up positions at Longbridgemuir, for instance, to listen for the chirring and attempt to estimate numbers of this migratory bird. To her cost Julia did not listen to advice on coping with midges. A National Survey was conducted in 2004. For 15 years the estimated number was 20 birds. In 2016 numbers jumped up to 44 and the bird is coming back to the New Abbey area. Tree-felling has helped as the bird needs open glades. Good forest management is essential in the Galloway Forest Park and a dedicated core area has been set-aside for them.

Greenland white-fronted geese, a migratory species, visit the region in winter. There are two specially protected areas, one at Stranraer and one at Loch Ken. Numbers have declined because of poor breeding seasons. There was an improvement in 2016. Studied routes, taken by migrating birds, accompanied the illustrations to the talk.

The red kite story is one of successful reintroduction in Dumfries and Galloway. The feeding station in Galloway continues because it is a tourist attraction. The bird is spreading out into Dumfriesshire. There is a twitchiness on both counts. A project officer is no longer required as the birds are not now monitored. Wind farms have raised worries for the safety of the birds. Studies have proved that they are better at avoiding turbines than we think.

Tree sparrows are a bird much-favoured by Julia. They are neater and shyer than the house sparrow. Their call is softer. 'Chocolate cup-cakes' was her description. Many in the audience responded positively to her question seeking to know how many claimed that the bird came regularly to their garden feeders: this proved the current situation in winter. They rely on seed provision. Ash trees, willows and Scots pine are important. Bird boxes with small holes are encouraged for the nesting season: 150 were erected last year and workshops have been held so that children and their families can help to make up boxes. Studies of bird boxes with the tell-tale dried grass and feather lining have proved that those near rivers are used more than those in drier spots. A farmer near Lockerbie, for example, engages in nature-friendly farming by leaving half of one side of a hedge uncut as cover for nesting birds and he places bird boxes on each fence post to suit this gregarious little bird. After the talk Julia noted where the bird was to be found; proof that monitoring is on-going.

A question on the fate of the bean goose brought a response from a member of the audience who said that the bird could be seen in the Castle Douglas area until the mid-1980s in bad winters. It was also pointed out that as from 18 January 2018 there are two species of this goose, the Taiga and the Tundra Bean Goose.

M.W.

26 January 2018 Dr Fiona Moir Natural and Manufactured Yarns

Friday 26 January's talk was from local spinner, weaver and dyer, Dr Fiona Moir. Many members were expecting to learn more about local sheep breeds and spinning wheels, but they were in for a

surprise. Rather alarmingly Fiona began her talk by demonstrating the burn test — how fibres react to the flame of a match. Some turn to ash, others bubble and melt, and they all smell different. With a bit of practice this technique can be used to distinguish between different fibres.

Fiona went on to explain that fibres can divided into those that are produced naturally and those that are man-made. The most well-known natural fibre is wool, produced by the twenty or more native British sheep breeds and other non-native varieties. Sheep come in an assortment of shapes and sizes and produce a range of wools from fine for garments to very coarse for carpets. Fibre also comes from goats, dogs, rabbits and the camelid family, with herds of alpaca and llama being found in Dumfries and Galloway. Silk also comes into the natural category and Fiona explained that the silkworm produces a liquid protein which hardens when it comes into contact with the air. It is extruded through a spinneret in its mouthpart, and the continuous thread is used to form a cocoon.

Natural fibres also include those of vegetable origin, such as cotton. The plant seeds are inside the cotton, and the two need to be separated in order to obtain something worth spinning. Considerable quantities of water and pesticides are required to grow cotton, and chemicals are necessary for the bleaching process, so cotton is not considered to be an environmentally friendly fibre. However, it is possible to find beige organic cotton, which is less damaging to the environment. Flax is another vegetable fibre, along with sisal, kapok, hemp, ramie and nettles. Though the latter are the type found in the Himalayas, not of the common garden variety!

Moving on to synthetic fibres, Fiona produced another surprise — they are not a recent discovery. People first attempted to make synthetic fibres in 1665, and the first artificial silk was produced as early as 1855. Nylon, along with several other similar fibres, was developed during the 1930s as a bi-product of the petroleum industry. Milk protein, which many modern day hand spinners consider to be a relatively recent invention, was first introduced in 1935. Polyester, acrylic and spandex all appeared in the 1950s.

Their petroleum origins mean that these synthetic fibres are based on a finite resource. By the 1990s interest was growing in something more eco-friendly. China pioneered the development of bamboo fibre, and tencel, a fibre made from wood pulp, was first produced in 1995. Synthetic fibres made from protein also emerged, for example, soya, a bi-product of tofu production. After breaking down the proteins into cellulose, the result is forced through a spinneret, mimicking the silkworm. These synthetic fibres can be chopped up, given a crimp and dyed to enhance the result. Ingeo, made from corn, is another renewable resource. However, if land that could be used for growing crops for human consumption is instead used to produce crops to be converted into textiles — is this sustainable use of resources?

The modern day textile industry also makes use of recycled polyester, for example plastic bottles are melted, air-dried and spun to form a fibre.

And what of the future? Genetic engineering has already produced a goat that bears spider genes, and whose milk can be spun, and we are all being encouraged to focus more on reusing, recycling and repurposing. Fiona concluded by encouraging members to consider the environment when they purchase fibre and fabric and to do a little research to find out how things are produced before buying.

S.R.

9 February 2018

David R. Collin

Life and Death on Little Ross

At its meeting in Dumfries on Friday, 9 February 2018, around 70 members and guests of the Society gathered to hear a lecture entitled Life and Death on Little Ross, by Kirkcudbright historian David Collin. The lecture explored in particular the history of the lighthouse which stands on Little Ross island at the mouth of Kirkcudbright Bay.

David has recently published a book on the subject and began his talk by explaining that he was prompted to write it following the fiftieth anniversary of the infamous Little Ross island murder, which attracted much media interest. He felt this presented the island in a rather negative light and ignored the invaluable and literally life-saving service which the lighthouse and its many keepers have given to ships and their crews since it came into operation in 1843. David's book aims to redress the balance and a detailed history of the building and operation of the lighthouse provided the basis for his talk

A lighthouse on the island was first proposed in print in 1792 by the Rev. Robert Muter, then Kirkcudbright's parish minister. Capt. James Skelly took up the project and in 1819 supervised the construction of two beacons on the island as navigational aids for ships entering Kirkcudbright Bay, which were useful in daylight but unlit at night. Further losses of ships and their crews, particularly in a severe storm in 1835, and local pressure eventually persuaded the Commissioners of the Northern Lights to build a lighthouse. The famous lighthouse-building Stevenson family were engaged on the project; Alan Stevenson designed the lighthouse and the keepers' accommodation and ancillary buildings. Both the principal keeper and his assistant had walled gardens on the island, where they were expected to grow most of their vegetables. Thomas Stevenson was resident engineer on the island, supervising the construction work which was undertaken by Robert Hume of Gatehouse. Bricks used in the construction were made in Hume's brickworks at Gatehouse.

The lighthouse came into service on 1 January 1843. The first lighthouse keeper was Thomas Ritson; previously he had been keeper at the Mull of Galloway. Between 1842 and 1960, 61 Principal and Assistant Keepers served on Little Ross, many with their families. David presented some fascinating biographical details of several of the keepers. Amongst these was Joseph Dick, appointed assistant keeper in July, 1867. Born locally, Dick had been an apprentice gardener on the Earl of Selkirk's estate at St Mary's Isle. He served on Little Ross for two years, and then went out to Japan to help the engineer Richard Brunton establish a lighthouse service there. He worked at several Japanese lighthouses, training local keepers. In 1914, William Begg was appointed principal keeper. He had a strong interest in ornithology and made valuable records of bird observations on the island. He contributed articles and reports to *The Scottish Natural Magazine* and wrote regular columns for the *Galloway Gazette* and the *Manchester Guardian*. George Mackie was Begg's assistant, and he kept a diary which his granddaughter has transcribed and kindly made available for David's research. In this he gives a clear impression of daily life on the island and notably the difficulty of obtaining basic food supplies at reasonable cost during the First World War.

Little Ross drew the attention of the national press in 1960, following the murder on the island of Hugh Clark, the relief keeper, by assistant keeper Robert Dickson. Shortly after this, the lighthouse was automated and left unmanned. However, the keepers' houses were leased in 1986 and restored by the tenants. Very recently the island was put up for sale and attracted a great deal of media interest.

Members were very appreciative of David's presentation and clearly impressed by the depth of his research, both in the background to the construction of the lighthouse and in the biographies of many of the keepers and their families who served there.

D.F.D.

23 February 2018 MEMBERS' NIGHT **David Dutton Munich after Eighty Years**

On the annual Members' Night, David Dutton, one of the Society's Vice Presidents, gave a lively and thought-provoking talk on the Munich Crisis of September 1938. He first displayed a photograph of the famous document, signed by Neville Chamberlain as British Prime Minister and by Adolf Hitler,

Chancellor of Germany, which the former flourished on his return home saying 'Peace for our time.' It stated clearly that their two nations desired never to go to war again and that consultations should be employed to settle any other questions, yet war followed in less than a year.

Chamberlain was later accused of appeasement in the face of an international bully but this term had previously been understood to imply the ensuring of peace by negotiation. A year later he was to be condemned as weak and duped by Hitler. In 2000 a poll revealed that the British rated him eighteenth among their twentieth-century prime ministers, superior only to Anthony Eden. He has no memorial even in his native Birmingham. He was often accused of appeasement in a derogatory sense by later politicians and justification of his actions seemed detrimental to their careers.

In fact the principles of British foreign policy had been determined by the Cabinet in March 1938 after the Anschluss or German annexation of Austria. The British government concluded that Czechoslovakia was an indefensible creation which ignored the principle of national self-determination adopted by the Versailles peace treaty. Britain's main strength was her navy but Czechoslovakia was land-locked. France was evidently unwilling to honour her treaty with Czechoslovakia and Soviet Russia was geographically too distant to act. The British Cabinet had decided not to risk war to prevent Sudetenland Germans joining with Germany. In addition Britain was ill-prepared for war in 1938 and the population wanted peace rather than a repetition of the horrors of the First World War.

As diplomatic negotiations had made no progress by summer 1938 Chamberlain sent the former cabinet minister Viscount Runciman to visit Germany but without result. He then took the very unusual step of inviting himself to visit Hitler and agreed provisionally that Sudetenland should be separated from Czechoslovakia. He did not expect German implementation to follow quickly, but Hitler demanded immediate occupation. Lord Halifax and the British Cabinet objected but Chamberlain declared that it was extraordinary for the British to be preparing for war over 'a faraway country'.

Hitler then invited Chamberlain to visit Germany again to the open delight of the members of the House of Commons, where he received the message, and the approval of President Roosevelt of the USA. He secured minor concessions from Hitler and the famous piece of paper. He received more than 40,000 grateful letters and King George invited him to join him on the Buckingham Palace balcony to receive the acclaim of the London populace.

David Dutton asked the audience if, with hindsight, they thought that Chamberlain's visits to Germany were justified. He said that in 1938 most political commentators did not realise that Hitler's underlying intentions extended far beyond reuniting all ethnic Germans. Like most of his generation Neville Chamberlain had been deeply scarred by the First World War although he had been too old for active service. Britain had suffered three quarters of a million deaths and Chamberlain believed that in war there were no victors. The death of his closest friend and cousin had caused him to stand for Parliament in 1918. He had been an impressive social reformer and was disappointed that as prime minister he had to concentrate on foreign affairs.

The Spanish Civil War had emphasised the effects of aerial war on civilians. Contemporary commentators forecast enormous numbers of civilian casualties in the first few weeks of hostilities as it was believed that 'the bombers will always get through'. As Chancellor of the Exchequer Chamberlain had persuaded the government to develop the defensive power of Hurricanes and Spitfires to protect the British population from air raids because he had realised that it would not be possible to compete with Germany's production of bombers. Might he have increased expenditure on defence? He realised that a balanced national economy would be a vital factor in any war.

In addition Chamberlain knew that as late as March 1918 Germany might have won the First World War and that the international situation in 1938 was even less favourable to Britain. The USA was aloof, Fascist Italy was already Germany's ally and Japan was likely to join them, so a war on three fronts was a possibility. The independent British Dominions might not support Britain. France seemed to be the only potential ally. Chamberlain believed that if Britain had time to build up her resources Hitler might not risk war but by 1939 the Chancellor had proved himself untrustworthy.

Finally David Dutton asked the audience to consider what their decisions might have been in 1938.

9 March 2018

Dr Joana Valdez-Tullet (Historic Environment Scotland) Scotland's Rock Art Project

Joana began her talk by saying that the Scottish Rock Art Project (ScRAP) is a five-year project to enhance our understanding and knowledge of Scotland's rock art. It is run by a team of four, of whom two work full-time. They are assisted by several partners including The University of Edinburgh, Kilmartin Museum, local authorities and teams of volunteers, and are funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Joana went on to explain that rock art is found all over the world, with the oldest dating back to Neanderthal times. Many people will be familiar with the figurative form which shows animals, but a lot is abstract and consists of geometric shapes. This is where the rock art of Scotland with its carved circles and cup-and-ring marks can be placed, but this form is more difficult to understand. It may not only have been carved, it may also have been painted, but the paint has long since been lost. It is between 6000–4000 years old, dating to the Neolithic and early Bronze Age. Dating is difficult as the remains have been exposed to the elements for millennia and are consequently weathered and eroded. Experts rely on the type of motif, the carving technique and what other monuments in the vicinity to date the art. However, this is not wholly reliable as earlier carvings are sometimes incorporated into more recent monuments and motifs are carved onto older monuments long after the latter's construction!

Historians first became aware of rock art during the early nineteenth century, but they were less interested in the environment that it was found in, and more concerned with its meaning. The Canmore database hosted on the Historic Environment Scotland website holds records for many panels, but not all. The locally held Historic Environment Records hold further records, as do other local organisations. All these are gradually being transferred to Canmore.

Joana described how Scottish rock art forms a third of that known about in Britain and Ireland and is part of the wider Atlantic Rock Art grouping, all showing similar motifs. Little is known about who made the carvings or why, they are understudied and undervalued. There are various reasons for this, the panels are often in remote areas so are hard to get to, covered in moss or buried in the ground so hard to find, and the marks are often hard to see.

Various theories are put forward as to their purpose, from maps of the stars to marking places for rituals to the less likely such as messages from outer space and images of cow pats! One problem with their interpretation arises from their simplicity, and it is likely that one shape has several meanings. At Kilmartin in Argyll it seems that the art has a relationship to the landscape. Excavations have suggested that the art was not carved and then left, but that it was connected to the life of the community.

The study of rock art is hampered by a variety of factors: there are few regions where it has been fully studied so there is no detailed dataset; records are not all in one place, e.g. Canmore; some records have images, others do not; grid references are not all accurate and not all records give information about all the features.

The Scottish Rock Art Project intends to build a better understanding by using the same methodology to improve the records, raising public awareness and protecting the rock art from development. They hope to do this with the help of local communities and by establishing teams of volunteers. Their research has three themes, to look at the relationship of the art to the land, asking why that location was chosen, how does it relate to other monuments, and what vegetation existed at the time; to look at the re-use of the carvings and to ask how we use and value rock art today. The project will train ten community teams who will visit the sites, fill in gaps in the records and create a consistent digital record. The recording form is detailed, and the teams will also use GPS, photography and photogrammetry techniques. The latter will lead to the creation of 3D models which often show up more than can be seen on the original artefact. The finished database will be available to all, academics as well as non-specialists, and the team hopes that it will encourage communities to place greater value on their rock art and perhaps inspire a creative response such as new forms of interpretation and trails.

24 March 2018

Derek Alexander (Head of Archaeological Services, National Trust for Scotland)
The Heart of Galloway: recent archaeological work on NTS properties at Threave and
Rockcliffe

Derek Alexander began his lecture with a general view of archaeology on the NTS estate. The NTS is the third largest landowner in Scotland, with 76,000 hectares. NTS has care for about 300 listed buildings and some 100 other scheduled sites. The small permanent archaeological team is supplemented by archaeological contractors assigned to specific sites. Volunteers are widely used, and 'Thistle Camps' of 12 to 14 people have the dual purpose of learning about different methods, and at the same time helping with specific excavations.

Conservation is the prime reason for excavations. Many sites are threatened by development works, erosion, weather, uncontrolled growth of natural species, and burrowing of animals. Developments may threaten historic and prehistoric buildings and sites, but at the same time may open the way to survey, excavation and discovery, often of great significance. This is important in the essential objective of management of change.

From the first survey and excavation of sites by the NTS in 1993, the full range of survey and excavation techniques has been used, including dendrochronology, and radiocarbon dating in the scientific examination of artefacts.

Derek went on to present recent work at sites in our region. Broughton House in Kirkcudbright has been in the care of the NTS since the mid-1990s. A prominent feature is the way the building is set back from the street line today. This is a feature of the rebuilding of the house around 1730. Prior to this, the house projected directly onto the street. The cellars of the present house occupy the space beneath the present entrance court. Later phases of the building's extension were identified from survey plans.

The garden extends from the house to the river. Work in that area has brought to light numerous examples of medieval pottery dating from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, showing much earlier habitation on the site than might be surmised from the house as seen today, As a side issue, it was mentioned that the prominent artist, E.A. Hornel, who lived in the house, was an enthusiastic collector of antiquities, including some brought from Dundrennan.

Derek next expounded on the changing face of Threave estate. Maps displayed showed the extent of the 607 acre estate in the nineteenth century and onwards. The Gordon family built Threave House in the Baronial style in 1871–73. The design owed something to Castle Fraser in Aberdeenshire, including the prominent observation tower. By this time, the coming of the railway had divided the estate, with the new house on the south and the ancient castle on the north.

The old castle, as seen today on an island in the river Dee, was built in the 1370s by Archibald the Grim, third Earl of Douglas and Lord of Galloway. The castle was besieged twice, the first time by the forces of James II, and then in 1640 when Robert Maxwell, 1st Earl of Nithsdale, held it for King Charles I against a Covenanting army.

The 14th-century tower is defended on two sides by a perimeter wall, with the river providing defence on the other sides, with a small harbour for access.

The name Threave is identified with 'tref', a possibly 6th-century but more likely 9th-century Brittonic or Old Welsh place-name, indicating the site was occupied long before the present tower and fortifications. Excavations in the 1970s uncovered large earlier buildings underlying the present outer wall and extending beyond it. These were identified as a hall and perhaps kitchens and stables.

A copy of McCartney's splendid map of 1771 was projected. This showed in great detail fields, plough lands and other features before the changes of the nineteenth century. Kelton House or Kelton Mains is also shown on the map. Built by Robert Johnston, one-time Provost of Dumfries, in 1720, it can still be seen today in its more developed form. Its dating seems to correspond with that of the Bridge of Dee bridge — possibly the same architect was responsible for both.

Overlooking the crossing between the river bank and castle is Meiklewood Hill. Excavation of crop marks on top of the hill revealed an enclosure of Roman–Iron Age date. Similar excavations of a D-shaped enclosure on Little Wood Hill nearby produced charcoal samples dating to the period 44BC to AD85. Crop marks on Lodge Island have also been investigated and may indicate Dark Age or Medieval occupation there.

The Mote of Mark at Rockcliffe looks over the water to Rough Island. It was subject to excavation around 1913 and again in the 1970s. Knowledge of the site was increased by more recent excavation, with the benefit of improved techniques. Examination of the vitrified ramparts gave an impressive view of their extent and construction. Other sections were opened to investigate internal features and ditches. Artefacts were dated as being from the 6th to 7th centuries, with the possibility of some being imports from France. The site was seen as offering potential for further excavation in the future.

Derek was thanked for his very informative talk on the work of the NTS and on local sites in particular, with appropriate visual aids to illustrate his subject.

D.F.D.

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