

# history

## SCOTLAND

Vol. 18 No. 3 May/June 2018



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*History Scotland* was launched in October 2001 at the Royal Museum in Edinburgh by Professor Christopher Smout, Historiographer Royal, who is now one of the magazine's patrons. It is backed by the Scottish history and archaeology professions with leading representatives from a variety of different disciplines on the Editorial Board.

Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in Historical Abstracts and America: History and Life and the British Humanities Index

# history SCOTLAND

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Volume 18, Number 3

May/June 2018

## FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to the May/June issue of *History Scotland*, where as usual, we've packed the magazine full of articles, news, research and opinion from the country's finest historians, archaeologists and museum professionals.

This month's in-depth reads cover a wealth of topics, ranging from a devastating 17th-century famine, through to the welcome Scotland gave to World War I Belgian refugees, and on to an ambitious but ultimately tragic circumnavigation of the globe by a young tobacco heir in a Clyde-built yacht.

We also present a selection of beautiful Piranesi prints which portray the faded splendour of Rome at the time the exiled Stuarts were living there, and explore a double maritime tragedy which united Scotland and the USA in grief but forged a bond which endures to this day.

The *History Scotland* team is putting the finishing touches to a new, year-long series which starts in the next magazine, presenting the latest research on the lives of Scotland's little-known Stewart queens. Pre-order your copy by visiting our website ([scot.sh/hsqueens](http://scot.sh/hsqueens)) or sign up for a subscription to save money on the cover price, see pages 50 and 63 for our latest offers.

Rachel Bellerby  
Editor, *History Scotland*

## MEET THE CONTRIBUTORS



**Dr Jacqueline Jenkinson** is senior lecturer in History at the University of Stirling. She has published widely on the history of minority populations in Britain during the First World War including articles and book chapters on Lithuanians, and colonial black and south Asian peoples, as well as Belgian refugees.

*The latter topic is the subject of Jacqueline's latest research, which starts on page 35, exploring the welcome which Scotland gave to Belgian refugees in World War I.*



**Kevin Hall** is a mature PhD student at the University of Edinburgh. He graduated with an MA (Hons) Scottish History in 2015 MSc by Research in Scottish History (with distinction) in 2017.

*On page 16 Kevin explores the causes and consequences of a famine which devastated large areas of Scotland in 1623.*



**Dr Lindsay Neil** trained at the University of Edinburgh Medical School, where he graduated in 1965. He served in the army for many years, being a veteran of the first Gulf War, before working as a GP in Selkirk for 20 years.

*In his article on the search for Selkirk abbey (page 44), Lindsay sifts the difficult and fragmentary evidence in an effort to recover the lost location of Scotland's first Benedictine monastery.*

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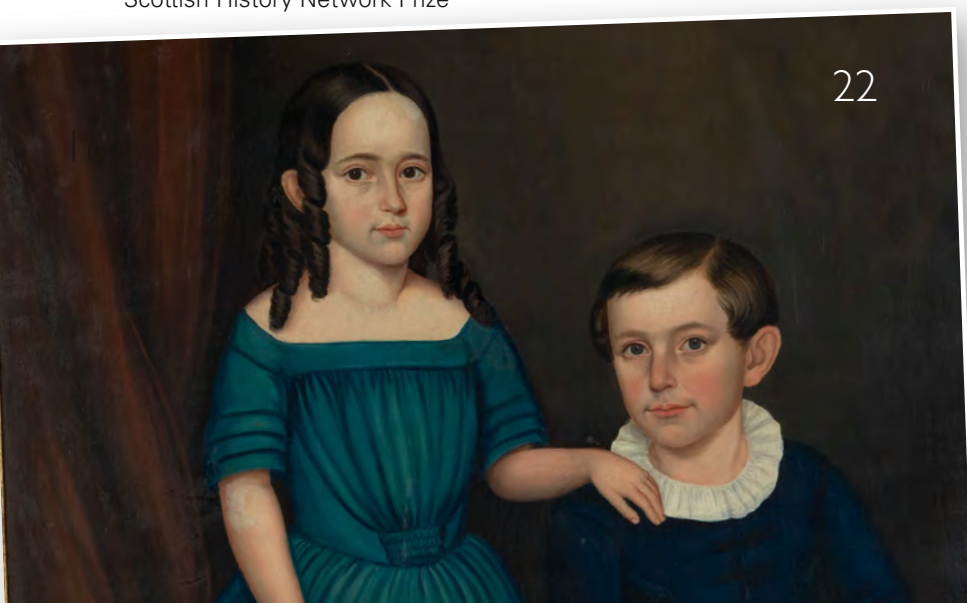
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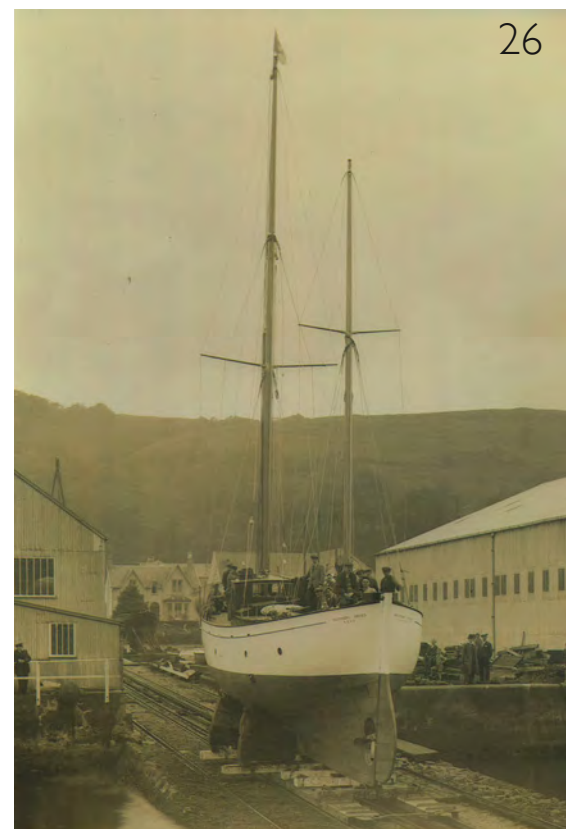


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*"He was of course (like many great people) ahead of his age and so he suffered more perhaps than most from the restrictions of his day..."*

Charles Rennie Mackintosh, page 11



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## Early Scottish Silver exhibition to tour

A major exhibition produced by National Museums Scotland will tour the country during 2018, with the support of the museum's research partner The Glenmorangie Company



Scotland's *Early Silver*, currently on display at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, shows for the first time how silver, not gold, became the most important precious metal in Scotland over the course of the first millennium AD. During 2018 the exhibition will tour to Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis, Banff in Aberdeenshire and Kirkcudbright in Dumfries & Galloway.

A new phase of the partnership will see the research focus move on from the first millennium AD to examine the archaeological evidence from the 9th to 12th centuries which underpins the formation of the nation state of Scotland. This will enable researchers to explore objects and evidence of the period, bringing new knowledge and research techniques to bear on a critical period in Scottish history.

The work will address important questions about how the kingdom of Scotland was created and its connections with the Anglo-Saxon world, Ireland and Scandinavia. The results of the research will be published in a new book and widely disseminated elsewhere.

The announcement coincides with the appointment of a new holder of the post of Glenmorangie research fellow, working within the museum's department of Scottish history and archaeology.

Dr Adrián Maldonado is a graduate in medieval history from Harvard University, with a PhD in medieval archaeology from the University of Glasgow.

**Website:** [www.nms.ac.uk/silver](http://www.nms.ac.uk/silver)

*Look out for an interview with Dr Maldonado in the next issue of History Scotland, on sale 9 June.*

## 'Ground-breaking' research will explore land use after the Clearances

A Moray student is to undertake new research into the fate of farms which were set up on marginal land after the Highland Clearances



Stephen Worth from Findhorn is the first University of the Highlands and Islands student to be awarded a Carnegie-Caledonian PhD scholarship and is one of only 19 recipients in Scotland this year. Administered by the Carnegie Trust, the award will help to cover Stephen's fees and research expenses for three years.

Stephen is using the scholarship to undertake 'ground-breaking' research into the fate of farms which were set up on marginal land after the Highland Clearances. He decided to follow his passion for history and archaeology after retiring from a 38-year career in the Royal Air Force. He completed a BA (Hons) in archaeology at Moray College UHI before gaining an MSc in archaeological practice with the University of the Highlands and Islands archaeology institute at Orkney College UHI. He is now completing his PhD through the university's Centre for History, with support from the Archaeology Institute.

Speaking about being awarded a Carnegie-Caledonian PhD scholarship, he said: 'It has taken some time to sink in just how fortunate I have been to receive this scholarship. The Carnegie Trust only award a limited number of scholarships each year to students from all the universities in Scotland. I feel very honoured to have been selected from all the potential candidates.'

'I was unaware that I am the first student from the University of the Highlands and Islands to have achieved this and realise that, firstly, I must thank all the lecturers and staff who have supported me throughout and, secondly, seize this opportunity to undertake this research and fulfil a lifelong dream'.

## Abbey strand buildings to be transformed

Historic buildings which form part of the palace of Holyroodhouse complex are to be transformed into a new learning centre

The historic abbey strand buildings, which between the 17th and 19th centuries were a weapons store and housed debtors and impoverished families, are now under protective cover as work starts on a new learning centre.

For centuries these buildings have been closely associated with the history of the palace of Holyroodhouse, and some of Edinburgh's most colourful characters have passed through their doors – from medieval monks and royal courtiers, to debtors hiding from the law.

The first part of the works, to remove the harling and dry out the exterior, is being carried out behind a nine-metre-high scaffolding wrap that tells the story of the close relationship between the palace, abbey strand and the city of Edinburgh.

The learning centre, created under the direction of Burd Haward Architects, will occupy the majority of the ground and first floors of the abbey strand buildings

and will provide spaces for school groups, families and adults to explore the history of the palace of Holyroodhouse and the Royal Collection. The work is part of Future Programme, a £10 million investment by Royal Collection Trust to enhance the visitor experience at the Palace.



The strand buildings under their scaffolding cover, which portrays the history of the palace and its surroundings



## William Gordon Burn Murdoch (1862-1939)

Jo Wolf introduces a Scotsman who achieved two world firsts whilst on a whaling expedition to the Antarctic



On a sailing vessel bound for the Antarctic in 1892, William Gordon Burn Murdoch had an unusual but apparently foolproof method of conjuring the wind. In flat, airless weather, he wrote, 'we

resort to the bagpipes and play half-a-dozen pibrochs and a lament or two, to bring up a fresh breeze'.

The ship that Burn Murdoch was travelling on, the *Balaena*, was one of four vessels that made up the Dundee Whaling Expedition of 1892. His travelling companion was his good friend, William Speirs Bruce. Officially, Burn Murdoch was acting as medical assistant to Bruce, who was the ship's surgeon; they had joined the expedition on impulse, partly for the amazing opportunities for scientific discovery, and partly for the thrill of adventure. On their arrival in the Antarctic, Speirs Bruce dedicated himself to wildlife watching while Burn Murdoch sketched the towering ice floes in pencil and watercolour.

Aside from the grisly purpose of the expedition, which was to harvest baleen and seal pelts, both Scotsmen were utterly entranced by their surroundings. Beneath the midnight sun, they lingered for hours on the deck of the anchored ship as the rest of the crew slumbered below. They took samples of sea water, marvelling at thousands of tiny crustaceans 'each with its own costume and colour, varied and harmonious...'

Financially, the Dundee Whaling Expedition was a failure. However, for Burn Murdoch and Speirs Bruce, it was a life-changing experience. When they returned home, both were fired with a lifelong passion for the polar regions. Burn Murdoch proudly claimed to be Antarctica's first ever 'artist in residence'; he had also fulfilled another ambition, which was to be the first person ever to play the bagpipes in the Antarctic.

William Gordon Burn Murdoch was made a Fellow of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in 1906. More information about the RSGS can be found at [www.rsgs.org](http://www.rsgs.org)

Quotes: *Edinburgh to the Antarctic* by W G Burn Murdoch (1894)

## 500 Years of Scottish Women

Explore more than five centuries of remarkable Scottish women in our new collected digital edition, which brings together curated content from previous issues of *History Scotland* magazine, showcasing the achievements of Scottish women from various walks of life.

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- The rivalry that shaped a century between the House of Stewart and the House of Tudor
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Explore five centuries of Scottish women in this special digital guide

# THE GRAND TOUR

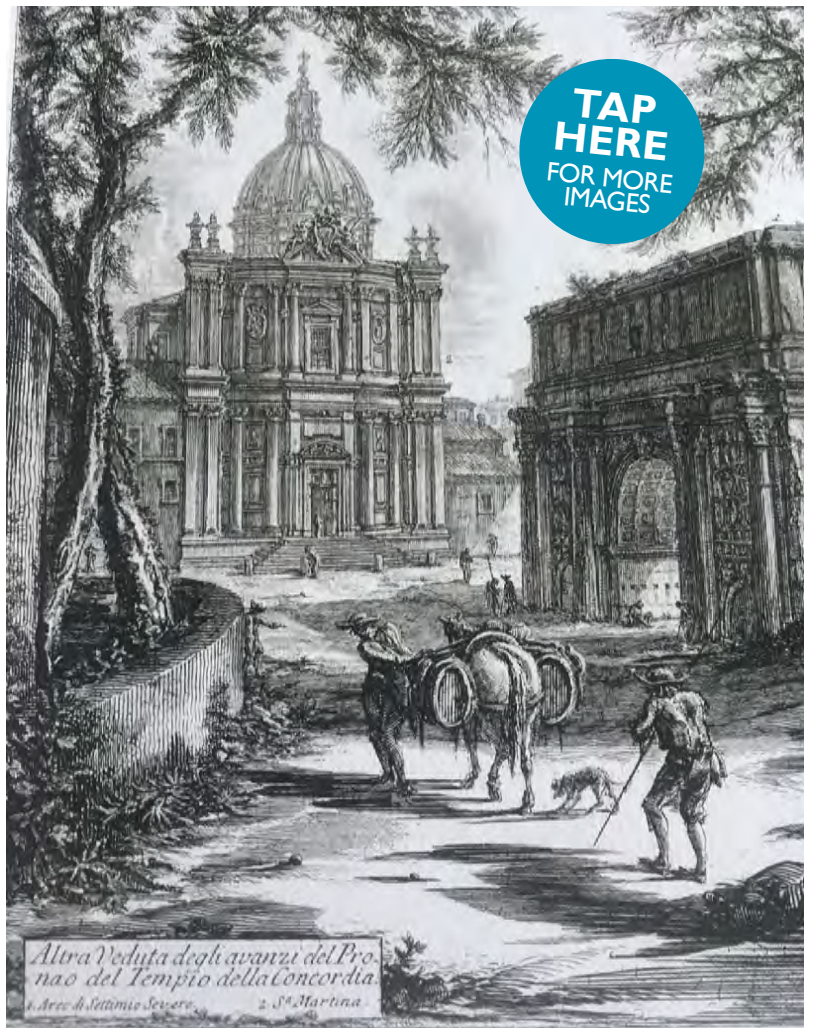
## Giovanni Battista Piranesi's *Vedute di Roma*

Alison Burke presents a unique selection of Piranesi prints which portray the faded splendour of 18th-century Rome, at a time when it was home to the exiled Stuart court



Prince Charles Edward Stuart, popularly known as the 'young pretender' or Bonnie Prince Charlie

*Altra veduta degli avanzi del Pronao del Tempio della Concordia* (Another view of the pronaos of the Temple of Concord). The view shown is actually the temple of Saturn with the arch of Septimius Severus in the background (1774)



When you enter the world of Giovanni Battista Piranesi, the grand master of 18th-century engraving, you become lost – lost in an exquisite dream of thousands, hundreds of thousands, of lines magically working together to recreate the splendours and theatricality of ancient Rome. However, the true splendour of Piranesi's *Vedute di Roma* (Views of Rome) is best appreciated through looking at early editions of his prints, when the line of the copperplate etching is fresh and crisp and the level of detail is mesmerising. This is exactly what you can do at a new exhibition at Blairs Museum in Aberdeen with the display of 30 prints that are as fresh today as the day they were printed.

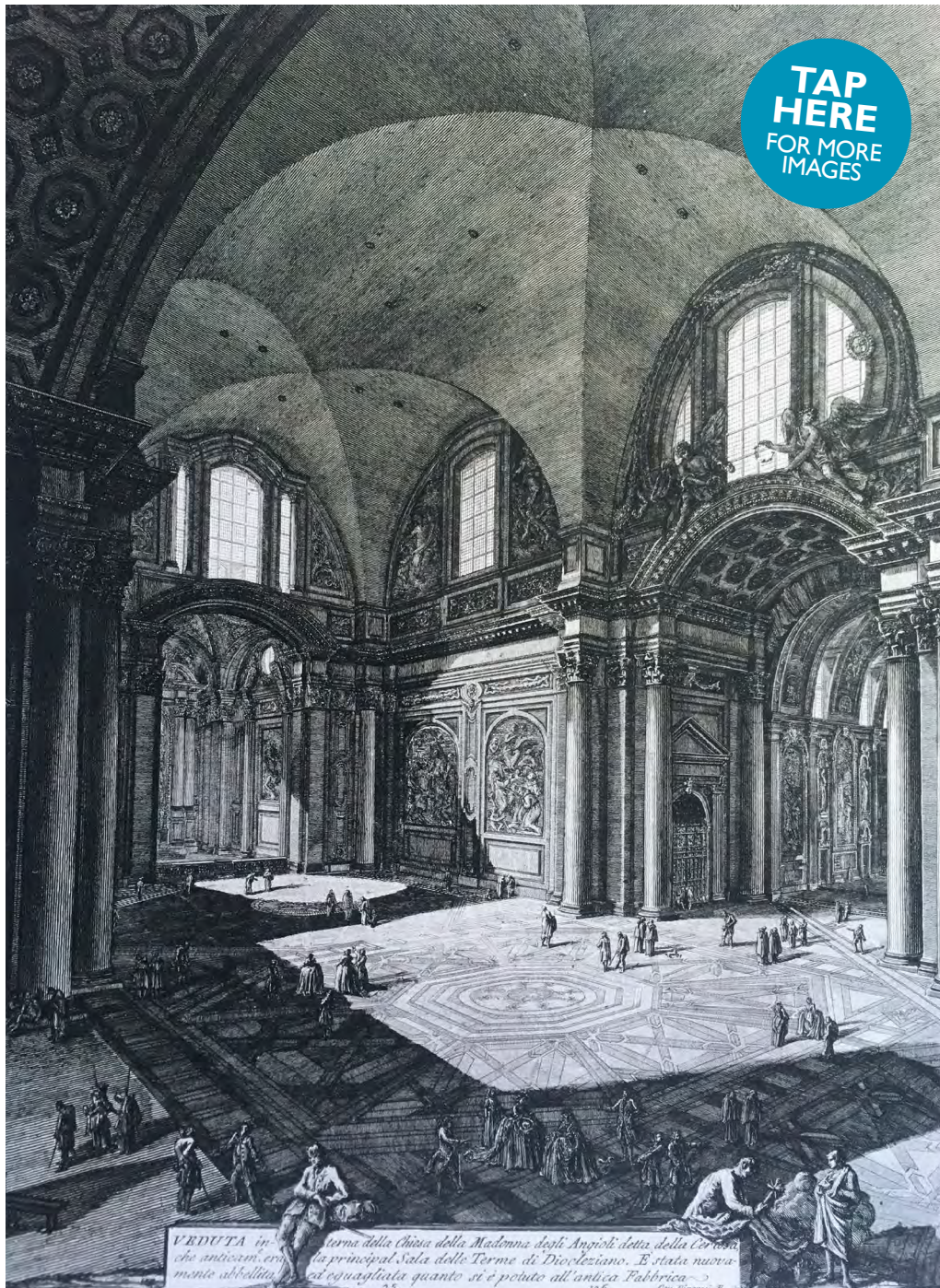
The prints were gathered at the Roman Catholic Church of The

Incarnation in the remote, but once vibrant, parish of Tombae in Glenlivet, Tomintoul. The original owner was Father James Gordon Robson, who served in Tombae between 1956 and 1962. He died in 1975. In his will he left the prints to the Roman Catholic diocese of Aberdeen to be used for church purposes within the diocese. They are therefore now the property of the diocese, which has offered the

prints for exhibition.

Piranesi began his *Vedute di Roma* in 1747 and they became his lifetime's work. At his death in 1778, the collection included 135 views by Giovanni Battista and two by his son Francesco. The Tombae collection includes 59 prints of the ancient buildings from Rome and Tivoli. However, what makes this collection so mesmerising is the condition of the prints. According to Blairs





Museum curator Dr Alison Burke: ‘They are in remarkable condition. It is almost as though this exhibition is the first time they have been exposed to view. Their condition allows the viewer to appreciate the finest detail of Piranesi’s art, everything can be seen, even the little touches of everyday life of Roman ladies peeking out from windows, to Cicero or guides conducting their clients on the Grand Tour, down to the most intricate architectural detail, even a defecating dog in the Roman Forum is easily seen.

‘Looking back from the 21st century, the charm of Piranesi

***Veduta interna della Chiesa della Madonna degli Angeli detta della Certosa che anticamente era la principal Sala delle Terme di Diocleziano (Interior View of S. Maria degli Angeli), 1776***

is not just his documentation of ancient Rome, that is valuable enough given the devastating impact of the following two centuries on the architectural remains, but how he presents the 18th-century experience is fascinating. Certainly, Piranesi’s Rome looks very different to the Rome of today, the level of the ground, for example, is much higher in Piranesi’s time, so that massive Corinthian columns seem to sink into the earth. To the 18th-century tourist, Rome either emerges from or is being swallowed by the ground on which it stood. “Empires come and empires” go is surely what

confronted them.

‘This is made more potent though the placing of everyday 18th-century life amongst the ruins. For example, In the *Veduta degli avanzi del Foro di Nerva*, a classically dressed 18th-century Roman mother carries her baby whilst a frock-coated tourist seems to caper beside a Corinthian column. In *Veduta del piano superiore del Serraglio delle fabbricato da Domiziano a uso dell’ Anfiteatro Flavio, e volgarmente detto la Curia Ostilia* a fancifully-dressed lady tourist seems to point her fan excitedly to the view as her chaperone follows her gaze, the arch of Constantine the Great has become a meeting place for locals to chat and goats to doze. This vision of contemporary life set amongst the remains of a long-lost empire, all at a time when Europe was gearing up for revolution and change makes these prints truly immersive’.

The opportunity to display the Tombae prints has encouraged Alison to consider the complex relationship between the north-east of Scotland and Rome: ‘There is a fascinating and complex relationship between this area of the north east of Scotland, the travelling of the Catholic and/or Jacobite supporting north-east aristocracy and aspiring artists to Rome, the hosting of the Roman Catholic Stuart family in Rome, and the Grand Tour undertaken by men (and women) of means to immerse themselves in the art and architecture of the ancient world’.

### The Stuarts in Rome

Rome, of course, was a natural destination for Jacobites of the north east, not least because the Stuart court was located there. Charles Edward Stuart was born in Rome in 1720 and returned there after his exile from France. His brother Henry Benedict Stuart, cardinal duke of York, spent his life within the Papal States and became cardinal-bishop of Ostia and Velletri and dean of the College of Cardinals. Henry, Charles and their parents are buried together in St Peter’s Basilica.

A good example of north east Catholics following the Stuart court and emigrating to Rome after the failure of the ’45 is the antiquarian and architect James Byres (1734-



**Henry Benedict Stuart, born in exile in Rome in 1725 and buried at St Peter's Basilica**

1817) of Tonley in Aberdeenshire. A celebrated antiquarian scholar and art dealer, he acted as a Cicerone, an antiquarian guide for the 'grand tourists'; and was closely associated with Piranesi. Piranesi's etchings were specifically undertaken for this discerning tourist market. At a cost of 2.5 paoli per print, they were the affordable, must-have art purchase for the Grand Tourists. Indeed, Piranesi dedicates one of his plates in *De Romanorum magnificentia et architectura* to Byres in recognition of their friendship and their business collaboration.

The relationship between Piranesi and the Roman Catholic Church is also fundamental to Piranesi's success and legacy. Arthur Hinds in his seminal work *Giovanni Battista Piranesi: A Critical Study* draws attention to two letters written by Piranesi that refer to papal subsidies. In 1757 Piranesi refers to 1,200 scudi (£300) received from pope Benedict XIV towards the publication of *Antichità Romane* and in 1760 he refers to a papal gift of 1,000 scudi presumably received from pope Clement XIII who also made Piranesi a knight in 1765, after which he signs his plates Cavalier Piranesi sc. After the death of Piranesi's son Francesco, the copperplates were purchased from the publisher Firmin-Didot in Paris by the Camera Apostolica in 1839 and given to the Calcografia Camerale which was established in 1738 by pope Clement XII. Indeed, the British Museum Library's edition with Firmin-Didot titles

plates was presented to the museum as a gift from pope Pius IX in 1865.

The exhibition of the Piranesi prints along with the permanent collection at Blairs Museum brings all these various strands together. The first section contains the paintings of the royal Stuarts, with James Francis Edward Stuart and Maria Clementina Sobieska flanking their sons Charles Edward and Henry Benedict. The watch of Bonnie Prince Charlie and Jacobite memorabilia give a personal touch to the Stuart display.

The story of Catholicism hidden in the Braes of Glenlivet where Tombae is located forms the second section, with objects from the secret seminary of Scaln on display. Finally, 30 of the Tombae Piranesi prints form the third section of the exhibition before giving way to the atmospheric and monumental St Mary's Church. The intention is that 30 of the prints will be displayed from April to October in 2018, and these will be exchanged with the remaining prints from April to October 2019.

Alison explains the rationale behind the display of the prints: 'The exhibition is in two phases. In part one, from April to October 2018, we are inviting our visitors to see themselves as a "Grand Tourist" from Jacobite-era Scotland visiting the Eternal City. Firstly, visitors meet the Stuarts in exile in

Rome. Then, through the Piranesi prints, visitors will make their way from the Capitoline Hill through the triumphal arch to the Roman Forum. From the Augustan centre, they then move through the bath complexes of three emperors before ending at the Theatre of Marcellus.

'In Part two of the exhibition from April to October 2019, the journey will be through the monumental buildings of St Peter's Basilica, the Colosseum and the Pantheon before reaching the fantastical Imperial villa at Tivoli, where Piranesi brings his sense of antiquity, architecture, engineering, theatricality and imagination to riotous frenzy'.

*'The Grand Tour: Piranesi's Veduta di Roma Part 1' opens in spring 2018 at Blairs Museum. The Museum is open at weekends: Saturday 10 am-4.30 pm, Sunday from 12 noon-4.30 pm. Admission charges apply: Adults £3.50, Concessions £2.50. For more details e-mail: curator@blairsmuseum.org.uk; tel: 01224 863 767 and follow: www.facebook.com/BlairsMuseum*

**Veduta degli avanzi del Foro di Nerva (View of the Forum of Nerva), Actually the Forum of Augustus (erroneously called Forum of Nerva) 1757**

**Inset: The prints contain a high level of detail**

**Blairs Museum, Blairs Estate, South Deeside Road, Aberdeen AB12 5YQ; website: www.blairsmuseum.com**



# CHARLES RENNIE MACKINTOSH

## *Making the Glasgow Style*

**Alice Brown** introduces a new, temporary exhibition at Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum which presents the legacy of Charles Rennie Mackintosh through a variety of mediums including stained glass, mosaic, metalwork and textiles

*'C.R.M. ("Tosh" as he was called among us)... always contended very strongly that every age has its own spirit to express, its own truth to tell, and that no trammels of set opinion or fixed standards of beauty should ever be allowed to fetter the freedom of an artist to express himself. He was of course (like many great people) ahead of his age and so he suffered more perhaps than most from the restrictions of his day...'*

Extract of a letter from  
Alice Talwin Morris, 20 October 1939

**T**hese words, written almost 80 years ago by the widow of designer Talwin Morris, provide a rare insight into the personality, character, work ethos and passions of her friend – and one of Glasgow's greatest sons – the architect, designer and artist Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868–1928).

The 1890s expressed a new, exciting, spirit. That decade saw an energetic and radical outpouring of new ideas across all the arts in Europe, but particularly in design, architecture, dress and ways of seeing and representing the world. In Glasgow, this decade gave birth to the Glasgow Style, a distinctive variant of Art Nouveau centred on the Glasgow School of Art. At the heart of it was the work of 'The Four': Mackintosh, his future wife Margaret Macdonald, her younger sister Frances, and Frances' future husband James Herbert McNair.

Alice's letter accompanied an initial gift of seven important early artworks by The Four to Glasgow. She made an even larger donation seven years later – including work by her husband who from 1893, until his untimely death in 1911, had been the Mackintoshes aesthetically like-minded friend as well as the artistic director for Blackie & Sons

publishers. Morris was the link through which Mackintosh was commissioned by Walter Blackie to design his domestic masterpiece, the Hill House in Helensburgh. The Morris donation to the city's civic museum collection launched a rediscovery and appreciation of the Glasgow Style. Fast forward to the present – 2018 – when the groundbreaking work of Mackintosh is celebrated for the 150th anniversary of his birth.

Glasgow Museums commemorates this significant anniversary with a major new temporary exhibition at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum. Spanning Mackintosh's lifetime by following a chronological narrative, the exhibition presents his work in context to Glasgow, key predecessors, influences and Glasgow Style contemporaries. The dynamic and entrepreneurial creative spirit in the city in the late 19th and early 20th centuries is captured, showcasing the rich diversity of designers and artists, educators, institutions, manufacturers and industrialists then working in Glasgow and in design and technical education of that time at the Glasgow School of Art.

This exhibition showcases the very best of Glasgow's internationally

**Pinks by Charles  
Rennie Mackintosh**



important civic collections, drawing from both those of Glasgow Museums and the Mitchell special collections and archives. A number of these civic works have never previously been on public display, and the majority have not been shown in Glasgow for 30 or more years, including a significant number of works from the Morris gift.

More than 250 objects, including some important loans, reveal the full spectrum of media worked, including: stained glass, glass, ceramics, mosaic, metalwork, furniture, textiles, stenciling, needlework and embroidery, posters, books, interior and tearoom design, and architectural drawings. The act of making and working up designs is communicated across this breadth of media, both through the exhibition and the accompanying event programme, to truly engage and inspire audiences of all ages to go out afterwards and make, create and be different.

*Alison Brown, Curator, European Decorative Art from 1800, Glasgow Museums and curator of the exhibition 'Charles Rennie Mackintosh – Making the Glasgow Style'*

*Charles Rennie Mackintosh – Making the Glasgow Style* is at Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum until 14 August. Opening hours: Mon–Thu; Saturday 10am–5pm; Friday & Sunday 11am–5pm. Tickets: Adult £7/£5 conc. Under 16s free. Tickets with gift aid donation available.

[www.glasgowmuseums.com](http://www.glasgowmuseums.com)



# The Howff

## Dundee's City of the Dead

We report on a community project to investigate a 400-year-old burial ground which is home to a number of rare gravestones

**L**ocated in the heart of Dundee, the Howff is one of Scotland's oldest urban cemeteries, just a two-minute walk from the hustle and bustle of the city centre. The cemetery's collection of carved gravestones and tombs are of national importance, second only in diversity, age and quality to Greyfriars in Edinburgh. In recognition of this, in 1963 the Howff was protected as a class 'A' listed building. Nonetheless, time and modern pollution are taking their toll on this extraordinary legacy of fragile sandstone carvings. Now an ambitious new grassroots project is determined to save the Howff's heritage for future generations and,

in the process, is making some remarkable discoveries.

### History of the old burial ground

The Howff occupies the grounds of historic Greyfriars, a Franciscan friary which was founded on the outskirts of medieval Dundee during the 1280s, traditionally by Dervorgilla of Galloway who was the mother of king John Balliol. As the provincial centre of the Franciscan Order in Scotland, Greyfriars was a significant and wealthy foundation. In addition to the conventual buildings and a church, which from the 14th century housed the mausoleum of the powerful earls of Crawford, the

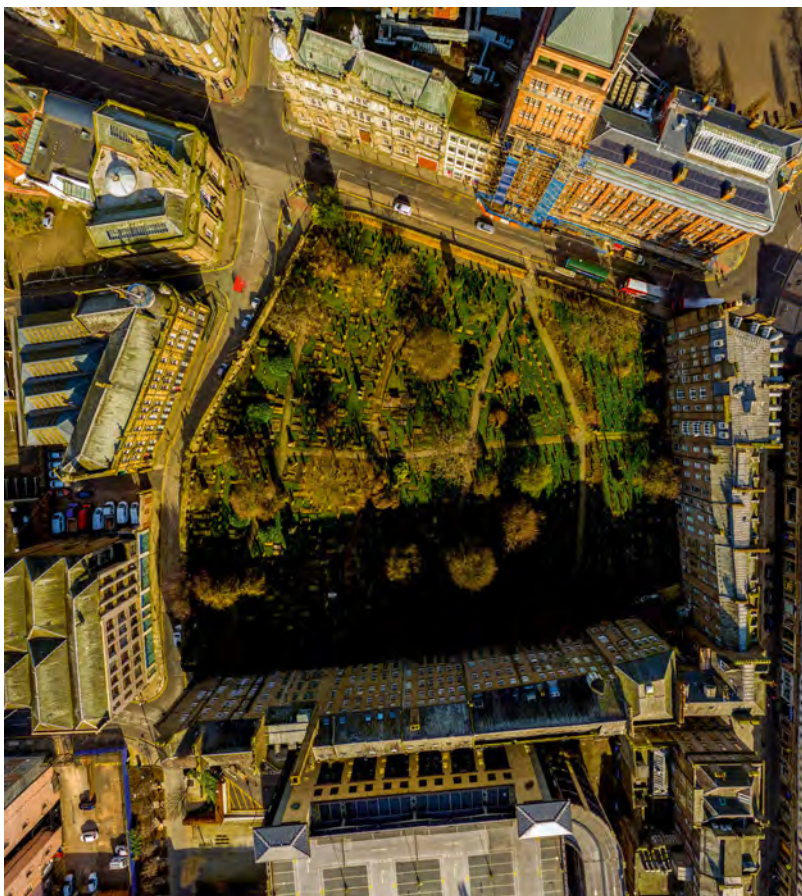
friary incorporated a school and was the site of several important political meetings.

It was a grant by Mary Queen of Scots on 11 September 1564 that established civic burial rights within the Howff. The queen's letter of grant was instigated due to concerns about overcrowding at the graveyard of St Clements Kirk, which was within the confines of the city walls near the market place, and the threat of spreading disease this could cause.

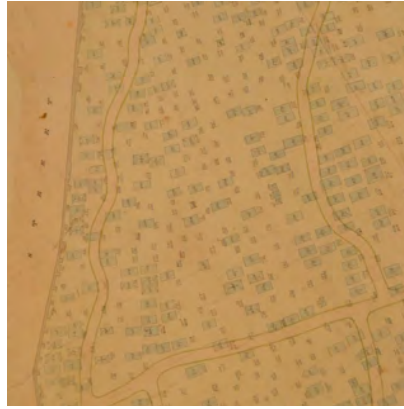
The cemetery contains 1,751 memorials of various shapes and sizes within its two acres. Due to the rapid expansion in Dundee's population during the 18th and 19th centuries there may be a minimum of between 60,000 and 80,000 people buried within the site. The oldest stones, dating as far back as 1577, have some of the most ornate and detailed memorial carvings dedicated to everyday people from the period. Taken as a whole the memorial carvings are a nationally important collection of Scottish folk art and represent an extraordinary legacy from generations of Dundonian craftsmen and women working, living and dying in the city.

In February 2014, local residents concerned by the rate of decay on many of the sandstone memorials came together to form the Dundee Howff Conservation Group (DHCG). The aims of the not-for-profit DHCG are to record all the memorials in forensic detail and to make this information available online, for anyone to use as a resource for research and to help promote public understanding of Dundee's extraordinary heritage.

For the stone recording to proceed the group were aware that a new accurate map of the cemetery



Aerial view of the inner-city historic graveyard surrounded by buildings in Dundee city centre



had to be produced, in order to note the location of all the stones correctly and to start creating an individual record for each stone. Simon Goulding as chairman of the group approached Dundee City Council, the owners of the cemetery, and requested funding to support a detailed mapping and recording project. In 2016 the City Council granted funds to allow the project to go ahead. As winter was setting in the group decided that the mapping should take place in early spring 2017 and would contribute to Scotland's designated 'Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology'. Dr Oliver O'Grady of OJT Heritage, a Perthshire-based archaeologist and research specialist, and Alex Birtwisle of Atlas Geophysical Ltd, were commissioned to undertake the mapping project, and to give professional guidance to the group's members, who also took part in the survey as volunteers and received technical training.

This was not the first time that a mapping programme was attempted. In 1832, the then hospital master, Peter Dron, was requested by the town council to tidy the deteriorating burial ground as storms had uprooted trees, damaging numerous

**Historic gravestone in the Howff, Dundee**

**1832 plan of the Howff**

**New plan of the Howff based on the team's survey**

**Community volunteers taking part in the mapping survey with Dr Oliver O'Grady (far left)**

headstones. The ground within the cemetery was also uneven and the headstones were placed in ad-hoc locations. This was the start of a lengthy Victorian project in which a large hand-drawn plan was produced of the cemetery by the town's architect. All the memorials were added to this first plan, which included the assignment of a unique identifying number to each stone. Strange as it may seem to modern conservation principles, these numbers were then carved onto the corresponding gravestones and the map was adjusted each time a headstone was erected. This process continued until the burial ground closed in 1880.

With the arrival of Dr O'Grady and his colleagues in Dundee, a week-long mapping exercise began in April 2017, the first detailed recording of the site's plan since the 19th century. The group split into two teams, both using a robotic total station and survey-grade GNSS plotting equipment. This allowed each stone to be precisely mapped to within millimetres and turned out to be a highly involved research process. The teams used copies of the 1832 map to orientate themselves and had transcriptions of the monument inscriptions to hand. This allowed the team to cross-reference and ensure that the mapped data correlated with the historical record. It became clear that certain areas of the old map did not coincide with the current layout of the headstones and paths. This led the group to the conclusion that, after the original map was drawn, major changes were made with the relocation of numerous burial markers and re-routing of paths into a more orderly fashion. In total the team recorded nearly 5,000 data points which were

used to produce a new and highly-detailed plan of the graveyard. A high-resolution version of the new map will be made publicly available through an online GIS resource. Once completed this online resource will provide a multi-layered map that visitors will be able to interrogate and use for research purposes. Over time it is planned to incorporate a database of information about each stone and the people memorialised in the carvings, with images and more about the history of the burial ground.

During the mapping programme, there was also an exciting surprise discovery. Dr O'Grady noticed a coped-stone burial marker, which was partially buried in the ground and covered with a thick layer of moss. The distinctive form and apparent reuse of this stone for inscriptions carved in 1603 and the 18th century indicated that this was in fact the remains of a much older monument, medieval in date and apparently pre-dating the establishment of the graveyard in 1564. Similar coped stones found in Scotland, of which there are around 90, usually date to the 12th and 13th centuries, and are related to an earlier type known as 'hogback' stones, which are thought to have developed during the 9th to 10th centuries via Viking-age Anglo-Scandinavian influences. The newly recognised grave-marker proved to be a major discovery for the project, one which was only made possible due to the concerted attention that was given to every stone during the mapping process. Shortly after the survey was completed the group's focus turned to the immediate priority of assessing the conservation requirements of this significant new discovery. Simon again applied for funding on behalf of the Group,

this time to the city's common good fund for financial support for an archaeologist and stone conservator, to excavate around the stone and provide a professional conservation assessment. In November of last year, the grant money was confirmed, allowing for this exciting stage of the investigations to go ahead.

### Medieval stone excavation

The last medieval stones to be discovered in Dundee were uncovered during building works in and around St Mary's Kirk on the High Street, between 1838 and 1842. After their discovery, these stones were placed in the stores of the McManus, Dundee's excellent art gallery and museum, until 2013, when they were removed and placed in the steeple of St Mary's Kirk. This was part of a separate conservation and community education project led by Christina Donald, curator of early history at the museum, who has been consulted as part of the new Howff programme.

On 10 December 2017, Dr O'Grady returned to the Howff, this time to help the group excavate around the medieval stone. A trench measuring 15cm deep and 25cm wide was dug around the stone revealing the sides of the carved monument. Members of the public were invited to visit as previously unseen carvings began to emerge at both ends of the stone. The following day, Will Collier, a stone conservator from Graciela Ainsworth Ltd, joined the team and painstakingly removed the moss that had obscured large parts of the



stone's surfaces. This allowed Will to assess the on-going deterioration of the stone, to reveal the full extent of the carvings and advise on suitable long-term preservation methods. At one end of the stone a carved roundel panel became visible, within which there was what appeared to be a skull or head and bone – probably representing a 'Memento Mori' symbol associated with a 17th-century reuse of the grave-marker. At the other end, carved lettering emerged in the form of a damaged monogram that incorporated the capital initials 'C', 'L' and 'R' set into a larger letter 'M'. This is possibly a reference to Christian Lindsay Rutherford, wife of the master of Dundee Grammar School, who was memorialised in a 1603 inscription

**The medieval coped-stone, which had remained unrecognised for centuries**

**Medieval coped-stones in St Mary's Steeple, Dundee**

recorded on the stone during the 19th century, but now sadly lost.

During the early 19th century a Dundonian by the name of James Thomson realised that the stones were starting to decay, so he embarked on a lengthy programme of recording the epitaphs. This project was later concluded by a local historian and antiquarian named Alexander Lamb. The works of these antiquarians were published in two books, copies of which are retained in the rare collections unit of Dundee Central Library. The team were therefore very fortunate that the two inscriptions on the medieval stone had been recorded before delamination removed most of the wording. The first inscription was carved in Latin, dated 1603, and was translated:

*'David Lindsay placed this stone in remembrance, of his wife, Christian Rutherford, adorned by piety and virtue and accomplished in Greek, Latin, and French literature. She died 9th November, 1603, aged 40 years'*

The second, later inscription read:

*'In memory, of John Ferguson, mercht. [merchant], Dundee, who died October. 1770, aged sixty years; and his spouse, Margaret Ramsay, died February. 1781, aged sixty year[s]. Revised in 1812 by their son Joseph, mercht., Dundee'*

Only a very small fragment of the 1603 inscription survives, but thankfully two panels of the Ferguson's inscription were still in place when revealed by the careful conservation works. Who were these people and why had they reused an old medieval grave stone? The preliminary answers to this intriguing historical puzzle turn out to be quite extraordinary.

### David Lindsay

Unfortunately, at the time of writing there is little know about Christian Rutherford of the 1603 inscription, however her husband David Lindsay appears to have played an important role in early modern Scottish history. The first stages of research into Lindsay have revealed a fascinating story, linking the find in the Howff

## FUTURE AND ONGOING PROJECTS

The group is always looking for volunteers and have a number of projects currently ongoing:

- Recording of the burial markers via written documentation
- Forensic & 3D photography of the burial markers
- Transcribing historical burial books relating to the Howff

If you would like to participate in any of these activities e-mail Simon Goulding: [info@dundeehowff.org.uk](mailto:info@dundeehowff.org.uk) and if you would like to follow their progress you can visit the

group's Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/DundeeHowff](http://www.facebook.com/DundeeHowff)

The authors would like to thank the officers of Dundee City Council for their continued support and consent to undertake work within the Howff, Dundee City Common Good Fund for grant support, and all the members of the public that have followed developments online and visited during the excavation.

Lastly Simon Goulding would like to thank the dedicated voluntary members of the DHCG.



*National Biography*).

After the stone had been examined and recorded it was covered in a temporary membrane and soil to protect it from the winter climate until further recording and preservation works are carried out later this year. Once these next stage works are completed, in consultation with Dundee City Council and Historic Environment Scotland, the group hope to ensure the long-term survival of this rare stone and make more information about it publicly available. These discoveries have also helped win for the Howff the accolade of being voted one of Archaeology Scotland's 'Hidden Gems', part of celebrating the Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology. The DHCG have shown how local groups can work very well in partnership with experts from several different disciplines and combine this professional advice to achieve advanced collaborative research findings. The mapping programme and the subsequent discoveries made during the project are an excellent illustration of the positive power of grass-roots community heritage projects to engage and educate people about their inter-city heritage.

*By Dr Oliver O'Grady (OJT Heritage) & Simon Goulding (DHCG)*

to major national historical events and even royalty. David was born in 1575, the son of Colonial John Lindsay, laird of Edzell in Angus, a branch of the Lindsay earls of Crawford. He was educated at St Andrews University and graduated as a Master of Arts. In 1597 he left his post as master of Montrose grammar school and took up the same position at Dundee, and it was here that he met and married Christian Rutherford, the widow of the former schoolmaster. Archives suggest that as the new school master, David complained of not being properly paid, which might go some way to explaining why he opted to reuse an old grave-marker for his late wife's memorial. It is also worth considering whether David had in mind his ancestral connections to the Lindsay earls of Crawford, whose family mausoleum in the Greyfriars friary, was by then occupied by the Howff burial ground. Was the gravestone for David Lindsay's first wife sourced from an old stone memorial lying amongst the ruins of the medieval friary, the ancestral burial place of the Lindsays? This may help explain the 2017 discovery.

Between 1604 and 1618 David Lindsay was the minister of Dundee parish. On 10 April 1619 his career began to take off, when he was elected as the bishop of Brechin. On 18 June 1633, he was

present at Holyrood Palace at the coronation of Charles I and was given the honour of placing the crown on the monarch's head, reflecting his political favour as a strong proponent of the crown's primacy over the kirk. In 1634 he was admitted to the Scottish privy council and became a justice of the peace and a commissioner of the exchequer. That same year he was transferred to the bishopric of Edinburgh. However, David's high-powered life began to quickly unravel during the late 1630s, and in 1637 he was present at St Gilles Cathedral, Edinburgh, when infamously the new Scottish Book of Common Prayer was read to the congregation. This caused outrage among protesters inside the church, and David Lindsay became a target of violence during the riot that ensued. Accounts suggest that he had to be escorted from the kirk by armed guards, all the while under a barrage of wooden stools and stones. In 1638, he refused to submit to the authority of the covenanters' general assembly and in December that year he was deprived of office and excommunicated. Shortly after this David Lindsay fled over the border to England, where he died at Berwick c.1639 or 1640 (for more information about David Lindsay readers are directed to David Stevenson's excellent 2004 entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of*

**Excavation of the medieval stone underway, Simon Goulding (left) and Dr Oliver O'Grady (right)**

**Newly-discovered carved lettering on the medieval stone, possibly the initials of Christian Lindsay Rutherford who died in 1603; the revealed medieval stone at dusk**



## FURTHER READING

*Dundee and the Reformation*, J. H. Baxter (Abertay, 1960)

*Old Dundee, ecclesiastical, burghal and social, prior to the Reformation*, A. Maxwell (Dundee, 1891)

*Dundee: An Illustrated Architectural Guide*, C. McKean & D. Walker (Edinburgh, 1993)

'Lindsay David (c. 1575-1639/40)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, D. Stevenson (Oxford, 2004)

*Historic Dundee: the archaeological implications of development, Scottish burgh survey series*, S.J. Stevenson & E.P.D. Torrie (Dundee, 1988)

# THE GREAT FAMINE OF 1623

**Kevin Hall** explores the causes and consequences of a major but overlooked 17th-century famine, whose impact on Scotland may well have been even more devastating than that associated with the more famous dearth of the 1690s

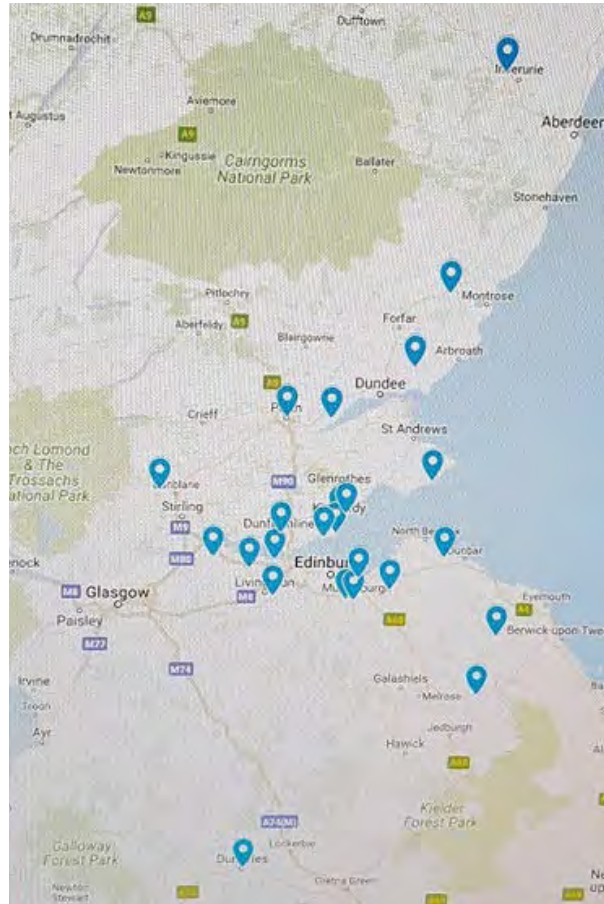
**E**ven in academic circles, very little is known of the great famine of 1623 and its impact upon the Scottish population.

In the 1970s, Michael Flinn touched briefly on the subject in his benchmark work *Scottish Population History from the 17th Century to the 1930s*, and more recently, in an excellent paper published in the *International Review of Scottish Studies*, Laura Stewart assessed the impact of the famine upon the largest and most prosperous burgh, Edinburgh. Be it as it may that Edinburgh was then the largest urban area within Scotland, its population would not have exceeded more than 25,500 during the 1620s. That is less than three per cent of the entire population of c. 900,000. What then, was the impact of this famine upon the rest of Scotland, and upon ordinary Scots?

This short feature, taken largely from my MScR dissertation *Famine and the Cradle King: The 'Ill Years' of 1621-24*, will attempt to shed a little light on the famine's demographic impact. Perhaps though, it would be prudent to firstly examine the causes of the great famine, both actual and perceived. The 1620s were right at the beginning of a period dubbed 'the little ice age' by the Dutch geologist Francois Matthes. Throughout Europe, the decade was one of frequently wet, rainy and miserable summers, with fierce storms and strong winds being the norm during winter. It is recorded that in the early part of the decade the Bosphorus straits were frozen over for a short time, theoretically enabling the bold to walk from Europe into Asia.

## 'Evel Wedder', trade disputes and the sins of the masses

Whilst not a literal 'ice-age', it is true that mean temperatures during this period would have been much lower than those experienced just a



**Areas affected by the 1623 famine, which devastated communities from the borders to Aberdeenshire**

few decades previously. With lower temperatures, storm force winds and near incessant rain battering the landscape, famine was a frequent event throughout the 1620s for much of Europe. In Italy, three short periods of localised famine were recorded in the 1620s. And in England, in what was to become the last serious incidence of famine there, the scarcity of food wreaked havoc upon the populations of Lancashire and Cumbria, with further – less serious – outbreaks of dearth recorded in Cornwall and Sussex.

Then, as is mostly true today, Scotland experienced even worse weather than our southern neighbours, with the storms being more frequent and affecting larger portions of the country. Research by Alan MacDonald and John McCallum has highlighted just how

tumultuous the weather of the early 1620s really was. By looking at the disruption caused to kirk session, presbytery and synod meetings by non-attendance due to adverse weather over a ten-year period, they found that much of Scotland endured near incessant storms between 1619 and March 1622.

The structure of the church of Scotland demanded a system of regular, well-attended meetings to disseminate information and function efficiently, and so non-attendance without due cause was frowned upon and offenders castigated and fined, sometimes quite harshly. Offering the excuse that the weather had prevented one's attendance would not necessarily suffice, even if a claim of sickness was made too. For instance, at the presbytery of Ellon in Aberdeenshire, the excuse offered by David Rattray in February 1623 for his non-attendance was not accepted and he was fined ten shillings. He had said that he was unable to attend 'be reason of his seikness and storm of wedder'. The next month, the excuse offered by Adam Read and John Anderson, that they were 'not abill to travel' due to the 'storm of wedder and spaitts of watt', was accepted and the two were not called to speak further on the matter. This seems to be because the presbytery had considered the topography of their respective parishes and the distances they would have to cover to attend. Both were ministers of larger, rural parishes and so would have faced greater difficulty in attending.

The church of Scotland, and indeed the privy council, recognised that the weather Scots were experiencing was 'untimely and unseasonabill'. All over Scotland, ministers called upon their congregations to engage in periods of solemn fasting, in the hope that their pious display of public humiliation would appease





God enough to prevent famine from occurring. The minister of Tynninghame in East Lothian asked the Lord for ‘seasonabill weather and ane guid harvest’ for he felt that the weather of 1621 was threatening ‘great dearth and famyne’. And indeed, he was right, for the famine did come, and many of his congregation would perish.

The minister of Tynninghame shared the view of most within the church that famine would come about because of God’s wrath, in response to the sins of the population, and in particular, those who sought to avoid observance of the sabbath and attend church regularly. The minister of North Leith was one of the most explicit in expressing the perceived correlation between sin and divine wrath. In August 1621, he called upon his congregation to endure an eight-day period of fasting, saying:

*That a public fast and humiliatioun should be kept vpon the Lords day and aucht dayis, concerning the fruits of the ground, that it wald pleis the Lord of his mercie to send and continue goode vedder to the vining and ingathering of the same and that he plague vs not with famein as justlie he may do according to our sins.*

There were others, though, who

saw a far greater offence than the sins of the ordinary people as being the cause of the famine. For the presbyterian chroniclers David Calderwood and John Row, it was the presence of bishops in Scotland which so outraged God. Following a national call to fast issued by the bishops at a meeting in St Andrews in 1623, Calderwood noted that:

*Immediatlie efter the fast was endit, that same night, the 7 of Julie, there was such a fire in the heaven, with thunder and fire-flaught, that the hearers and beholders thought verilie that the day of judgement was come.*

This fast and humiliation had angered God, not appeased him, and that was because of the origin of the call, being from the bishops. Prelates had no right to speak for the people or advise them in spiritual matters, and so God was clearly demonstrating his anger at the bishops. Row claimed that the bishops were wholly ignorant of God’s work, saying that ‘secure sinners

***The Dance of Death (1493) by Michael Wolgemut. Such images served to remind people of the fragility of life***

doe not observe the operation of his hands’. Of course, such perceptions are nonsense, but we should not view 17th century opinions through a 21st-century prism.

The evil weather had undoubtedly played a part in causing the famine, but so had an economic dispute between the privy council and the burghs. At a particular convention of the royal burghs held in Edinburgh on 10 February 1619, the delegates sent by eighteen different burghs were in attendance mainly to discuss the implications of the recently-imposed import duty on all forms of victual. An import duty had been set at a rate of ten shillings per boll (a boll was the basic measure of dry goods in early modern Scotland). The most commonly-grown form of victual in Scotland at the time was bere, which is a hardy and durable type of barley. The price of bere at the time of the import duty’s imposition was around £5 per boll, so a ten shilling tax would have made this staple foodstuff cost ten per cent more. The burghs argued that the ‘hail cuntrie may be thairby dampnifet and hurtt’ as they would have to pass on the increased costs to the customer. The privy council rightly said that Scotland was then a net exporter of grain, so therefore did not need to import, and thus the duty’s impact would be minimal. Along with this, the council claimed that by unnecessarily importing grain, the merchants would be draining the economy of a most vital commodity, gold and silver coins – hard cash. The council feared ‘a grit

## ***The poor were firmly placed into one of two categories, deserving and underserving***

penuritie and scarstie of moneyis’ and so would not relent and repeal the tax. The import duty on victuals not only stood, it was increased in 1621. By November 1621, the council was aware of the fact that Scotland was facing a grain shortage due to ‘a most untymous laite and unseasonable harvest, quhilk [which] is liklie to produce grite scairstie’

and so they took the decision to ban exports of victual (with exception of wheat, as it was seen as being ‘not the common bread of the multitude’). Strangely, the duty on imports stood for another four months, until March 1622. Any merchants who intended to export wheat were instructed that they would have to import two bolls of a lesser quality victual into the country for each boll of wheat that they exported. At last, something was being done, but was it enough?

### Poor relief in 1620s Scotland

Anyone seeking assistance during the famine would have encountered the kirk session of whichever parish they happened to reside at the time. The kirk session of the 17th century had extensive powers, and acted as a *de facto* court for many civil and moral crimes, as well as being the central point of distribution for poor relief. At the time of this famine, Scotland’s poor law was still very much in its infancy, having only entered onto the statutes in 1575. The Scottish poor law was as much an act of suppression as one for the provision of poor relief, and was also a near mirror image of the earlier English poor law. Both laws were drafted with the main aim of suppressing vagrants and beggars; in fact, the title of the Scottish act was the ‘Act anent the punisement of strang and ydle beggaris and provisioun for sustentatioun of the puyr and impotent’.

The poor (of Scotland and England) were firmly placed into one of two categories, deserving and undeserving. The deserving poor, largely comprising older people, cripples, women and children, were to be offered support; and in times of crisis, a tax or stent would be imposed within each parish to raise funds for the local deserving poor. The undeserving poor, on the other hand, were to be punished. In fact, in England, a petition signed by some prominent members of parliament was delivered to the English privy council, demanding that vagrants and other illicit sojourners be sold as slaves. In practice, an undeserving pauper could expect to be moved on, sent back to their own parish, flogged or even hanged, depending on the number of times they had transgressed. The deserving poor

Death takes an abbess as a horrified nun looks on. *Danse Macabre*. XV. *The Abbess* by Hans Holbein



would be issued with tokens, or badges, marking them out as being worthy of assistance and denoting their right to residence in the parish.

The amount of money that the deserving poor would receive, and indeed the regularity with which they would receive it, varied greatly from one parish to another. The level of poor relief given to an individual (or a mother with ‘bairnes’) was subject to continuous assessment, and quite often came with several preconditions. For example, in Aberdeen (perhaps the most efficiently organised of all Scottish urban areas during the 1620s, in terms of poor relief at least) five stringently-enforced rules would have to be adhered to in order to receive, and to maintain, poor relief payments. It is worth listing them here, to gain an idea of what was expected from the poor, before looking at what happened to those who did not comply:

- 1) They had to observe the Sabbath, and ‘all of thaim keep the kirk’
- 2) None of them could beg (this

rule differs with numerous parishes throughout Scotland, where others could become ‘licensed beggars’)

3) They could not shelter anyone in their house without permission, be they either ‘poore or rich stranger or tounis folk without the knowledge and license of the magistrate vnder the paine to be banish’

4) They would instantly forfeit their pensions if they were caught stealing

5) And lastly, they were to receive their pensions after a successful recital of the catechisms, such as being able to answer the question: What is the chief end of man? To which the answer is, ‘to glorify God...’

There were few who dared to transgress, as the consequences were severe and life-changing. For example, in June 1618, a blind woman called Margaret Bailye was discharged of:

*hir quarterlie almes of fourtie schillings quhilk she had out of the session sen the XXIX day of December 1616 because that support wes gevin to hir with condition that*

*sche sould not be sene begging in this burgh and yet it is declarit be dyvers of the elders and deacons that sche is ordinarlie sene begging*

Whatever became of poor Margaret will never be known, as she disappears from the records at this point. It is likely that she did not survive the great famine which was to come just a few years later, at least without the support of alms or a pension. Even those poor given a regular pension by the kirk were not guaranteed to survive, as tens of thousands of poor Scots would perish in two catastrophic years, 1622 and 1623.

### The death-toll and the famine's impact

In her benchmark work on the famine of the 1690s, Karen Cullen found evidence in some areas of Scotland of a mortality increase more than 200 per cent from the norm (in the early modern era, it was usual to expect at least three per cent of the population to die each year, or 30 per 1,000 of population). In most affected areas of the 1690s famine, the death toll increased by at least 50 per cent. However, in the great famine of 1623, several parishes recorded a mortality rate more than 400 per cent above average, and some even surpassed that.

In his *History of the Kirk of Scotland*, David Calderwood describes how 'manie poore came to Edinburgh for succour, of which number some died in the streets'. Edinburgh, being the most affluent burgh in the nation and in very close proximity to the busiest port, Leith, would have obviously been a magnet for the starving and destitute. But scenes of the dead being found in the streets were not unique to Edinburgh. In nearby Canongate, the old parish registers record that 'four puir bodyies' were found in the streets in July 1623. These were found just days after a 'puir man' turned up dead on another Canongate street. Across the Forth in Kinghorn, the kirk session minutes for June 1623 record that many poor folks were to be found 'deid in the streetis' and the cost of burying the dead in Kinghorn began to outstrip the resources of the kirk session, which still had to provide for the living poor. By July 1623, much

## The church of Scotland, and indeed the privy council, recognised that the weather Scots were experiencing was 'untimely and unseasonabill'

of the kirk's expenditure was on burial, not on the living, as the poor in Kinghorn died at an alarming rate.

Fife suffered appalling loss of life during the great famine, with the coastline suffering particularly heavily. In Burntisland in 1623, the local grave-maker, Andrew Orrok, reported to the kirk session that he had buried '329 persones' between 6 April and 9 November. The kirk accepted his figures and paid him in full. 329 people dying in the space of 217 days means that an average of eleven people in Burntisland were dying each week. It is worth putting that into context. In the UK today, the mortality rate is around 0.9 per cent, or nine deaths per thousand of the population each year. In early modern Europe, the mortality rate was around 30 per 1,000 of population each year. The current population of Burntisland is around 6,300. If today's population in Burntisland was unfortunate enough to experience 17th-century mortality rates, then we could expect to see 189 of them die each year. That is still some way below the 329 listed above, and of course, the population in 1623 was much lower than it is today.

Of course, many of the deaths in Burntisland – and in most burghs – would have been incoming poor, or migrants. Along the coastline from Burntisland is the burgh of Kirkcaldy, whose kirk session was feeling overwhelmed by the number of migrants arriving in search of food. By the summer of 1623, the session decided that 'uncouth beggars sall not be langer tolerat to abyde in the towne mor 48 houris' and a small team of men would be employed to ensure that the migrants did move on. Some of the poor migrants were obviously too weak or sick to move on, and the death toll in Kirkcaldy was nothing short of horrific. The number of incomer deaths was so appallingly high that a macabre

Even those who ministered to the dying were not exempt from the ravages of famine



census of the dead took place, so that the kirk session could estimate just how much money they owed to the treasurer, who had purchased the winding sheets for all the unknown dead. On 7 October 1623, the session paid £2 to 'maister james for gathren together the names of the persounes departed' between that date and shrove tuesday. He later reported that 151 incomers had died, which means a death on average every 35 hours. The following week the treasurer was partly reimbursed for his expenditure on burials, as the minutes record that '58s 3d of the collection' was 'resaved be Johne palmer in pairt payment of ane gryt soume auchtand (owing) to him for furnishing the poore folks wynding scheits'. This payment would have accounted for no more than five winding sheets, as even the cheapest would usually cost between ten to twelve shillings. The authorities in Kirkcaldy were having to pay for poor burials on credit, such was the extent of death within the burgh. The kirk session thought it expedient to employ their own parish poor in preparing the incomer dead for burial. Washing, cleaning and winding the dead became a compulsory stipulation for receiving support for many alms recipients during the great famine, and as unpalatable as it may sound to us, it may have helped save their lives.

Just how many did die, and over what expanse or geographical range? Sadly, very little is known

of the famine's impact north of the Mounth. The crisis did impact upon the Highlands, and we know this from various lowland sources, such as the burgh council of Stirling, which, when instructed by the privy council to implement a poor law stent (tax) in 1623, said that they would do so on the proviso that they were to be given assistance to 'deale with the heilan poore' who were migrating into the burgh *en masse*. The map on page 16 highlights parishes and burghs which have been found to have suffered high loss of life, and/or a dramatic decline in birth rate.

As Michael Flinn noted in *Scottish Population History*, there are only a few surviving burial records for the 1620s, as the early modern kirk was not so assiduous in maintaining burial records as they were baptism records. However, the baptism records can help us a great deal in developing an understanding of this crisis, as we shall soon see. For now, let us concentrate on burial records, and entries in kirk session minutes which give details of burials.

Starting in the north east, in Aberdeenshire, the burgh of Inverurie would have had a population of approximately 650 people in the 1620s. A population of this size would expect to bury around 20 citizens each year, or one or two people per month. Yet the burial records for this parish show that 38 deaths occurred in 1622 and 51 deaths in 1623, equivalent to fourteen per cent of the population dying in just two years.

In Dunfermline, the population loss was even greater than the near fifteen per cent experienced at Inverurie, with almost 20 per cent of the population perishing in 1623 alone (442 deaths from an estimated population of 1,600). To add further to Dunfermline's woes, the town endured an horrific fire in 1624, which prompted calls for monetary aid from all over Scotland, to help the town's rebuilding.

In Kelso, in Roxburghshire, the death toll for 1623 was 417 souls, equivalent to approximately fourteen per cent of the population, with a further 131 dying in 1624, which is still something like 41 'excess deaths' above norm. And in Dumfries the death toll for the first

A typical 17th-century symbol of mortality from a gravestone in Greyfriars Kirkyard, Edinburgh



ten months was staggering, with 488 souls perishing. The Dumfries records end in November 1623, so it is highly likely that the death toll was considerably higher – perhaps including the clerk of the kirk session, who would have recorded the deaths of others. Typhus seems to have been the most likely cause of death for most in Dumfries and evidence of this could be taken from the accounts of the tolbooth's prisoners' deaths in 1623 (they all died within days of one another).

In the parish of Tynninghame, in East Lothian, the fragmentary session registers for 1623 (there are gaps of more than six months) record the deaths of twelve parishioners. And yet the same kirk session registers from January 1619 to December 1621 record the deaths of just 29 parishioners, suggesting an average mortality rate of just ten per year. When we consider that the near seven months absence in the Tynninghame register covers the peak mortality period of July/August/September, where death tolls escalated in every other parish, then we can only imagine the awful scenes unfolding in Tynninghame.

In the tiny parish of Yester, again in East Lothian, the famine's impact can be seen from the devastating toll upon one poor family, the Ordingtons. The family were regular recipients of poor relief in the months leading up to the crisis. In June 1623, the session recorded an expense of sixteen shillings 'to by ane winding scheit to ane of Sandie ordingtouns bairnes'. Sadly, just over a month later, another entry records a sum of twice that amount 'for twa winding scheits to twa of Sandie

ordingtouns bairnes'. The family lost three children within the space of 36 days. The Ordington family were just one of thousands of families across Scotland to lose one or more of their children at the height of this famine, for this crisis could, with some justification, be referred to as 'Scotland's Passover'. In Burntisland, so many infants were perishing that the kirk sanctioned the purchase of a 'littil beir for the young puir anes'. A bier is a common coffin, or vessel for carrying coffins on. In Kelso, children accounted for over half of the incomer dead, and many other parishes record excessively high levels of infant mortality too.

### Baby boom turning to passover

In the years leading up to crisis, the nation's economy was more robust than it had been for some time, with one eminent early modern historian describing the period between 1600 to 1620 as 'the doing-nicely-thank-you' years. It is hardly surprising, then, to see that a mini baby-boom occurred between 1620 and 1621, with most parishes in Scotland experiencing a surge in baptisms. During my research, I looked at the baptism registers of 23 burghs over the same ten-year period (1618-1627). In 22 of the 23, the birth rate for the year 1621 was considerably higher than average, a reflection of the fact that Scotland was doing well at the time.

Things were to change rapidly though, as foul weather, trade disputes and less sophisticated methods in agriculture brought about catastrophic famine. And one of the consequences of famine was a sudden decline in birth rate. Of

## *In most affected areas of the 1690s famine, the death toll increased by at least 50 per cent*

the parishes which are known to have suffered high mortality, and have surviving baptism registers for this period, the birth rate fell by at least 30 per cent from average (Dunfermline's was down 38 per cent in 1624, and Kirkcaldy's fell by 30 per cent in the same year, for example). What then of the parishes where only baptism registers survive? Did they experience such decline?

After excluding the figures for 1623 and 1624 – those years immediately following the dearth years of 1622-1623 – the average over the other eight years can be taken as a baseline birth rate. In 1623, eleven of the 23 burghs experienced a birth rate 30 per cent lower than normal, and in 1624, twelve of the 23 had a 30 per cent (or higher) decline. Some burghs, such as Perth, Errol and Kirkcaldy, experienced a decline of 30 per cent or more in one year, but narrowly missed the margin in another (Perth's fell by 26 per cent in 1624, Errol's by 26 per cent in 1624 and Kirkcaldy's by 29 per cent in 1623). When placing the two years

1623 and 1624 together, eighteen of the 23 burghs, or 78 per cent, experienced a decline of 30 per cent in one or both years.

It is estimated that over half of these burghs would have experienced a population loss of near fifteen per cent, and if that was true for all of Scotland, then over 64,000 (many infants included) would have died as a direct result of famine. 1622 and 1623 should surely be remembered as the saddest of times in Scottish history, the years of 'Scotland's Passover'.

*Kevin Hall is a mature PhD student at the University of Edinburgh. He graduated with an MA (Hons) Scottish History in 2015 MSc by Research in Scottish History (with distinction) in 2017. He is also archivist for St Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh, and a member of the congregation there. He is married, with three daughters, and one very loving but bossy granddaughter.*



### FURTHER READING

*Famine in Scotland: The 'Ill Years' of the 1690s*, K. Cullen (Edinburgh 2010)

*Scottish Population History from the 17th Century to the 1930s*, M.W. Flinn, D. Adamson and R. Lobban (Cambridge, 1977)

*Prices, Food and Wages in Scotland, 1550-1780*, A.J.S. Gibson and T. C. Smout (Cambridge, 1995)

*The Government of Scotland 1560-1625*, J. Goodare (Oxford, 2004)

*Gray, T. Harvest Failure in Cornwall and Devon: The Book of Orders and the Corn Surveys of 1623 and 1630-1* (Institute of Cornish Studies, 1992).

*The Old Poor Law in Scotland: The Experience of Poverty, 1574-1875*, R. Mitchison (Edinburgh 2000)

'Poor Relief in Edinburgh and the Famine of 1621-1624', International Review of Scottish Studies, 30 (2005), L.A.M. Stewart, 5-41



## ONLINE RESEARCH

We continue our series on online research with a round-up of websites for historians

### 1. National Library of Scotland Maps

A collection of high resolution images of more than 200,000 historic maps of Scotland, England and Wales, covering centuries of history. You can browse by place, mapmaker, or select a historic map overlay to superimpose onto a modern map, in order to explore changes to an area. There are also military maps, aerial surveys, coastal charts and town plans.

<https://maps.nls.uk>

### 2. Echoes From The Vault

A blog written by staff at Special Collections, University of St Andrews. The blog posts are often inspired either by an anniversary or the acquisition of a new item for Special Collections. The posts include images of the people and items featured and there is often information about how researchers can use the material mentioned for their own studies.

<https://standrewsrarebooks.wordpress.com>

### 3. Revealing The Hidden Collections

Explore details of more than 2,000 collections which between them comprise 1.8 million items held by university museums around the country. University partners have created three types of records to assist the public in identifying collections of interest: collection level descriptions, item-level records, and photographs.

[www.revealing.umis.ac.uk](http://www.revealing.umis.ac.uk)

# BARE BOARDS AND SCOTCH CARPETS

## Neatness and comfort in the 18th-century home

**Vanessa Habib** explores the history of the Scotch carpet, produced by Scottish handloom weavers for more than two centuries, which has carpeted both humble and grand houses, from Edinburgh to London

**F**loor coverings in all their variety and colour have been little studied and since many of them were susceptible to wear and damage we can now only guess at the impact they had in a room when new, or look at paintings of interiors where the freshness of pattern has been preserved. Scotch carpets, for example, are still so little known that the name is often thought to refer to any carpet made in Scotland. In fact they were a specific flat woven carpet with a long history, a popular domestic furnishing for at least 200 years from the 1720s onwards.

Originally made in and named after various locations in the wool-growing areas of Scotland, for example Hawick carpets or Kilmarnock carpets, they became generally known as ‘Scotch’ after exports flooded into England and further afield in the later 18th century, the name reflecting a degree of national identity after the union of Scotland and England in 1707, and perhaps also commenting on the desirability or otherwise of these utilitarian mat-like floor coverings from north of the border.

As parlour carpets or ‘bedsides’, however, they provided a colourful covering for the floor affordable for the first time to many different kinds of home, particularly for the growing number of those of the ‘middling sort’, the homes of tradesmen, merchants and the professional classes. Their appearance in a room must have

been as marked as the arrival of wallpaper. Early on they were also admired and purchased by members of the gentry as the carpeting of a whole house became a possibility. A carpeted floor became synonymous with comfort to such a degree that a room viewed with ‘bare boards’ was the one most closely connected with poverty, if not destitution.

Tradition has it that weavers from Dalkeith in Midlothian took their skills of coverlet weaving to Kilmarnock in the early 18th century to encourage trade among the local people. Charlotte Maria Gardner, related to the second earl of Kilmarnock, was particularly involved in this project. Though now long forgotten, the Dalkeith Carpet Manufactory (below) subsequently advertised in the *Caledonian Mercury* in April 1763 its large assortment of ‘the very best SCOTS CARPETS, both ingrained and common colours; also coverings of all kinds for the navy or hospital beds’. It may be that the Scotch carpet as a floor covering developed from the traditional Scottish Overshot coverlet in which thick coloured woollen yarns were floated



**Above and top** Scotch carpet from Mellerstain House, Berwickshire laid in the Manchineel bedroom and showing the buttoning effect designed to secure two layers of cloth lying one above the other

over a plain weave base. Kilmarnock, meanwhile, became a centre of carpet weaving, later producing prize-winning carpets in the great international exhibitions.

### The appeal of the Scotch carpet

One of the most appealing qualities of Scotch carpets, particularly in comparison with matting, was the number of colours which could be included in the design and often a border in a complementary pattern would be added. In addition, they were woven in strips of varying widths and could therefore be made to cover an entire room, neatly fitting around a hearth or into a window recess. One drawback with imported oriental carpets, though much more luxurious and expensive, was the difficulty of finding the right size. Bales of Turkey carpets were regularly advertised as they arrived in port – one consignment ‘consisting of greater Variety of Sizes than common, of lively Colours, and divers curious new fashion’d Patterns; many fine Carpets,

**Surviving part of the** Carpet Manufactory





(heretofore much wanted) four Yards Square, extremely useful for Dining-Rooms etc and others from three Yards and half to four Yards and half broad, and from four Yards and half and five to nine Yards long; with Hearth and Bed-side Carpets of excellent Patterns and Fineness' (*London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 25 January 1739).

The frequency of these advertisements and the number of Turkey carpets described in house sales in London underline the growing wealth of the city. Scotch carpets, though much more modest, had also found their way south. In the *Daily Advertiser* of 15 February 1743 Roger Hendley, Coffee Man, at his dwelling house at the Berkley Square coffee house ('with a Carpet at the Door') was offering 'about a hundred Turkey, French, English and

**Portrait of John and Louisa Stock (1845) by Joseph Whiting Stock (1815-55) Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch**

Scotch carpets' for sale, with his household effects. In Bob Harris and Charles McKean's pioneering study *The Scottish Town in the Age of the Enlightenment 1740-1820*, the transformation of urban society with its demands on new goods and services and investment in manufactures and commerce show how wealth was also moving north.

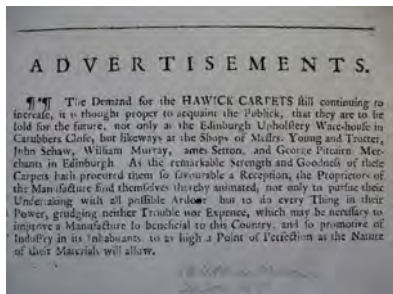
In Edinburgh, the Board of Trustees for Fisheries, Manufactures and Improvements, established in 1727, had embarked, with some argument, upon a national policy to develop the linen trade, but some money was set aside for support to the coarse wool manufacture. The Scots had their own worsted trade, particularly in serges, which were exported, and tartan, in effect a fine multi-coloured chequered serge. The

coarser parts of the fleece were well-suited to making carpets and weavers took the opportunity to try the market, encouraged by a bounty offered by the trustees for working up a certain number of yards of wool and worsted cloth. The Hawick Carpet Manufactory was one of these (overleaf). Their goods were brought in from the country to the crowded Old Town where the latest ideas for furnishing were on show in upholsterers warerooms. Commissions for particular colours or designs could be placed by prospective purchasers.

A manufacturer renowned for creating fine colours was Thomas Gilfillan in Stirling. His cash book and ledger has survived in the National Records of Scotland and gives details of the daily routine of a busy provincial wool manufactory. They record the dyes he used. An entry for Thursday 1 August 1765, for example, records a typical day dyeing spindles of carpet yarn green, red, scarlet and black:

*'Dyed this Day as under Viz 5 Spy 11 hesps yarn Green weight in the grease 33 ¼ lb when dyed 25 lb taking 3lb 2oz Allum 25lb Fustick 2lb 4 1/4oz Vitriol 3 ¾ oz Indigo 8 Spy yarn Reed weight in the grease 59lb when Dyed 39 3/4lb taking 4lb 15 ½ oz Allum 4 lb 15 1/2oz Argol 4lb 15 1/2oz Aquafortis 17lb 6 1/4oz Madder 2 Spy 3 hesps yarn scarlet weight in the grease 11 lb when Dyed 9 lb Tarrd 14lb Carpet yard weight when dyed 11 ½ in all 20 1/2lb taking 3lb 1 1/8oz Argol 3lb 13 1/2oz Aquafortis 2lb 4 7/8oz Cochineal 26 Spy 1 hesp yarn Black weight in the grease 142lb when dyed 106 1/2lb taking 26lb 10oz Logwood 26lb 10oz Shoomake 26lb 10oz Coperas'*

Sometimes customers brought in their own wool to be dyed and woven – lady Campbell of Gargunnoch ordered a carpet, 8 ½ yards by 6 yards, from her own yarn to be dyed green and white, which



was put in the loom in November 1769 (needing some of Gilfillan's yarn to complete the order). Many of the Stirling carpets were simple two-colour combinations, for example black and yellow, black and red, red and green or blue and yellow. None seem to have survived from this early date, but if they were woven as double cloths, that is with two layers of cloth interweaving with each other, the effect on a floor would have been very striking, warm and comfortable.

Gilfillan's venture in Stirling was followed by that of James Young, a prize-winning dyer who had been supported by the Board of Trustees, and his son Robert Young who is described as 'Carpet Manufacturer to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales' in 1793.

### Carpets for a cold climate

Scotch carpets became so popular later in the century that the journalist Edward Topham, resident in Edinburgh for a few months in 1774-75, declared that 'the sale which these Carpets meet with in England is astonishing: you find them in every house from the highest to the lowest...' Perhaps more pertinent to the Scots was his comment 'They have been, in a great measure, the means of rendering the houses here so comfortable, and are the best securities against stone buildings, stone staircases and a cold climate'. But as the city grew there were also moves to attempt more luxurious carpet-making locally, for example Brussels and Wilton carpets, which were roughly twice the cost and pile carpets, or Turkey carpets, which the Board of Trustees were eager to encourage 'As they consume a Deal of Wool, can be made of the Coarsest Wool when of a good Colour may be made by either Men or Women ...' The Edinburgh upholsterers

Young Trotter and Cheape went to considerable lengths to bring expertise to Scotland, particularly the commissioning of new and elegant patterns.

Despite this, Scotch carpets continued to be popular, even evolving in style, with larger and more exuberant patterns which are often seen in paintings of American interiors (page 23). And it is in America that these carpets are still enthusiastically rewoven for the houses for which they were originally purchased. The Winterthur Museum in Delaware alone has a collection of over 100 pieces rescued from demolished buildings or gifted by enthusiastic owners.

Later innovations such as James Templeton's chenille weaving process pioneered in Glasgow and Richard Whytock's printed tapestry carpet in Edinburgh enabled carpets to be woven with an almost unlimited number of colours and with a soft velvety pile that brought a feeling of luxury to even the smallest home.

They often echoed the patterns of grand oriental carpets, or the court carpets of Europe, for a fraction of the cost. In Kilmarnock a kind of Scotch carpet with three interwoven layers of cloth mimicked this style. Still with a flat surface, the three-ply carpet was often commended for its utility, practicality and restraint in design.

The complex history of the wool and worsted trades in Scotland have often been overlooked in the face of competition from linen and cotton which were supported nationally by patronage and statute. Scotch carpets found their way not only across Britain and to many destinations in northern Europe but to North and South America. The National Trust of Scotland have helped to revive the vernacular tradition of small weaving workshops, where a master weaver would have a repertoire of patterns and cloths to hand, by recreating a Scotch carpet for Hugh Miller's cottage in Cromarty. It is likely that many original pieces of these flat woven carpets still survive unrecognised in country houses and museum collections.



'The Butifyer ...' A satirical print ridiculing Lord Bute (Prime Minister of Great Britain 1762-63) and all things Scottish and Hogarth's support for him. To the left a sizeable building with a sign 'SCOTCH CARP PIT MANUFAC'

Advertisement for the Hawick Carpet Manufactory, *Caledonian Mercury* 20 September 1755

Detail of John Wood's Plan of Dalkeith 1822 showing the Carpet Manufactory and Dye House close to the River Esk

### Acknowledgement

I am indebted to Annette Carruthers for bringing the satirical print (above) to my notice and to Ian Gow and Dr Joe Rock for their insights into the richness of Scottish material culture. The rare Scotch carpet at Mellerstain House is still laid in the Manchineel bedroom ([www.mellerstain.com](http://www.mellerstain.com))

Vanessa Habib is a textile historian and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. She has held a Mohair Research Board Scholarship, a Worshipful Company of Drapers Fellowship and a Winterthur Fellowship and is a strong advocate for closer links between conservators, curators, historians and archaeologists and participation through the Docent scheme (for continuing study) for volunteers in Museums and Art Galleries.





# The Hallmarking Archive of the Incorporation of Goldsmiths of Edinburgh

**Elsbeth Morrison** and **Matthew Shelley** introduce an archive which contains the biographies of more than 7,000 goldsmiths, mint workers and apprentices who, over the centuries, have produced finely-crafted and highly-prized gold objects

**T**he Hallmarking Archive of the Incorporation of Goldsmiths of Edinburgh links us back to the lives, work and stories of some of Scotland's most remarkable craftsmen. They satisfied the desires of royalty, nobles, gentry, merchants, clergy and anyone else with sufficient wealth for objects of beauty, including wonderful jewellery and other personal items.

From candlesticks and dining services to chalices and altar crosses, the capital's gold and silversmiths helped gild palaces, castles, great houses, churches and other buildings.

As people close to the great events and figures of their times, some had lives as sparkling as the diamonds, emeralds and sapphires used in their work. George Heriot III (1563-1624) was goldsmith to Anne of Denmark, the queen of James VI/I. He accompanied them to London where he diversified to become moneylender to the king and financier to the court. Part of his wealth went into the founding of the Edinburgh school (for the children and grandchildren of tradesmen) that still bears his name.

Less fortunate was James Mosman (fl.1557-73) a goldsmith who was among those attempting to hold Edinburgh Castle for

Mary Queen of Scots after her defeat at Langside. He was hanged for high treason and coining money for Mary's cause.

The Hallmarking Archive, which is free to access online, holds information on these people and many others. Despite being a male-dominated environment the records do make mention of some women.

Just one female goldsmith is mentioned in the 16th century, Grissel (or Jean) Finlayson, Mrs Thomas Annand, who in 1591 continued the lease of her late husband's goldsmithing booth beneath the Edinburgh tollbooth. However it is likely that other widows kept businesses going with the help of journeymen and apprentices.

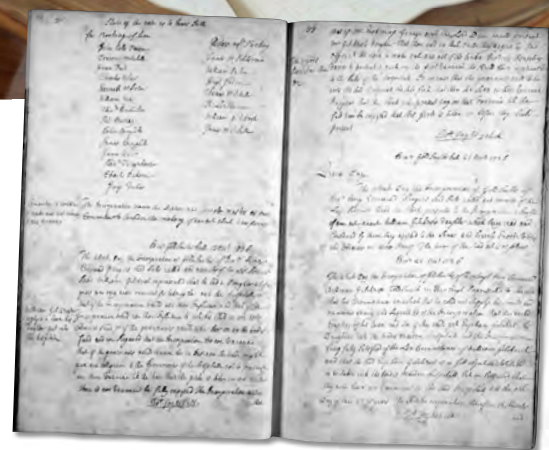
In 1792, Mrs Tait (mother of the deceased goldsmith Alexander Tait) came to the attention of the Incorporation for encroaching on the Incorporation's privileges by making gold work and silver work within the city while not a freeman.

In total the database has biographies of over 7,000 goldsmiths, mint workers, apprentices and journeymen of Edinburgh from the 12th century to the 1980s. Many are illustrated with examples of their mark and sometimes with images of their work.

Owners of antique gold and silver can match the hallmarks to those on the database to discover who made them and when.

The archive is also a magnificent family history resource. This is because of the quality of the information and also because the business tended to be dynastic. Sons of masters were encouraged to become apprentice goldsmiths and enjoyed financial incentives when they applied for the freedom of the Incorporation.

From the 16th century onwards the names Craufuird, Denneistoun, Mosman and Heriot recur through several generations. Researchers, sometimes with the help of Incorporation archivist Elspeth



**From top: Incorporation archivist Elspeth Morrison; the records contain biographies of thousands of craftsmen; tea kettle and hallmarks created by Incorporation members**

Morrison, have often uncovered stories with a profoundly human dimension.

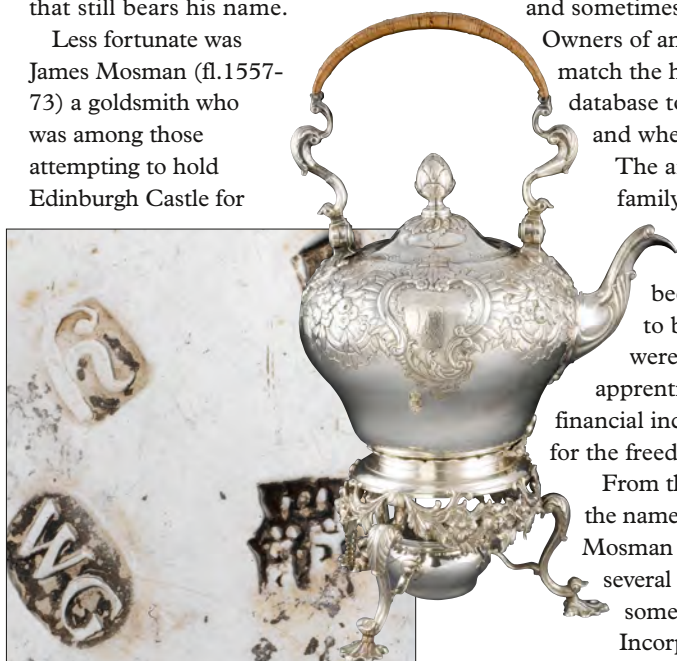
The Incorporation in its present form dates from 1687 when it was granted a royal charter by James VII/II. Its minutes are packed with detail about its members. But its roots, and the archive, go back far further. The goldsmiths were incorporated by the Edinburgh magistrates in 1586. They had already separated from the hammermen (workers of non-precious metals) by the late 15th century.

Nowadays the Incorporation (which also runs the Assay Office) sees one of its prime functions as being the guardian of valuable records about a trade that played a significant role in Scottish society. It was for this reason that the archive was created by the bringing together and digitisation of vast quantities of data.

One of the key contributors was Henry Steuart Fotheringham who was responsible for many of the biographies and attributed marks to early makers whose details were absent from the surviving records.

*The archive can be accessed at [www.incorporationofgoldsmiths.org](http://www.incorporationofgoldsmiths.org)*

*The archivist can answer many enquiries for free (the Incorporation makes a charge for anything above half an hour, but thanks to digitisation most take moments) and can be contacted at [archivist@incorporationofgoldsmiths.org](mailto:archivist@incorporationofgoldsmiths.org)*





# THE SOUTHERN CROSS CIRCUMNAVIGATION

**David I. Hutchison** tells the exhilarating but ultimately tragic story of David Guthrie Dunn and his ambitious quest to circumnavigate the globe during the early 1930s in the small Clyde-built yacht, *Southern Cross*

**W**orld voyagers are the elite of modern travellers, and the circumnavigators in small ships are the nobility of the elite.

– Donald R Holm, 1974

The yacht *Southern Cross* was designed for the young tobacco heir David Guthrie Dunn to sail round the world with two university friends in 1930. It was one of the few circumnavigations by small yachts during the early part of the 20th century, but sadly never got the recognition it deserved.

The voyage was not undertaken with any record or recognition in mind, but to allow the young graduates to gain experience exploring the oceans and cultures of the world before embarking on their chosen careers. Unlike many of the small boats used in such voyages, *Southern Cross* was specially designed by one of the leading naval architects of the day, and the trip was well-

funded by her millionaire owner. During long stopovers the crew had plenty of time to relax, explore and become acquainted with all the fascinating characters they invariably encountered. Their leisurely passage across the Pacific afforded a unique insight into the life and survival of isolated island communities at the height of the Great Depression in the early 1930s.

The story of this extraordinary yacht is all about connections. There were significant links between Dunn’s home at Largs, the southern cross constellation and the town of Brisbane in Australia. Furthermore, during their three-year voyage the crew came across many people with connections to the Clyde, Largs and even the small village of Sandbank where the yacht was built.

### **Southern Cross**

John Dunn was a tobacco merchant and partner in the prominent Glasgow tobacco

### **The route *Southern Cross* took around the world**

manufacturing company F & J Smith, which became part of Imperial Tobacco in 1901. The imposing Knock Castle at Largs was acquired by Dunn as a family home in 1915. He had two sons, David Guthrie and John Jnr, the eldest who was destined to inherit the family fortune. Tragically he drowned in a boating accident in 1924 so David Guthrie at the age of 18 was placed under the guardianship of the trustees until he inherited the family fortune on his 25th birthday.

D. Guthrie Dunn, as he was known, was able to indulge in his great passion for yachting. He was an accomplished sailor, active member of the prestigious Royal Clyde Yacht Club, and became one of the most prominent young yachtsmen on the Clyde. He named two of his elegant racing yachts *Southern Cross* due to a fascination with the constellation and the southern ocean. ‘Southern cross’ is the most commonly

known and easily identifiable group of stars in the southern hemisphere and was of great importance to the early island-hopping Polynesians who used memorised star maps to navigate.

### Yacht and crew

While Dunn was still a student at Cambridge University he finalised his plan to build an ocean-going cruising yacht to sail round the world. His third *Southern Cross* was specifically designed by the renowned firm of Scottish naval architects G.L. Watson & Co for the challenging voyage. This sturdy 51-foot yacht was built at the boatyard of Alexander Robertson & Sons Ltd., Sandbank, which was well known for the quality of its workmanship.

There were two cabins and a fine stateroom for the owner. The comfortable walnut-panelled saloon had ample space for dining, entertaining guests and additional accommodation. Located next to the wheelhouse, the galley had a big oil-fired stove and plenty of storage space. One rather unique piece of equipment was the large Kelvinator electric compression refrigerator and ice-maker. Domestic refrigerators were still a novelty in those days, even in the mansions of the well-to-do, so precious few would have been fitted on small yachts. There was an extensive library aboard



*Southern Cross* at anchor in Bora Bora

which had books on all the great circumnavigations, foreign travel, nautical almanacs, pilot information and three large leather-bound folders which contained all the charts needed for the trip. Entertainment was provided by a cine projector, wireless, gramophone, piano in the saloon and of course the three semi-accomplished musicians on board.

Penman repairing sails in his Tahitian 'pareu'

Dunn, at the age of 24, undertook his grand adventure with two friends. James Shackleton from Yorkshire studied at Cambridge with Dunn and was the navigator on the voyage. W.G. Penman from Dumfries was an experienced Clyde yachtsman who studied engineering at Glasgow University, so naturally he became the ship's engineer.

*Southern Cross* was launched into the Holy Loch on 18 August 1930 with her name and RCYC (Royal Clyde Yacht Club) proudly painted on her stern. A few days later the crew embarked on a challenging shakedown cruise to St Kilda to learn the ropes and evaluate the vessel's ocean-going performance.

### Largs-Brisbane connection

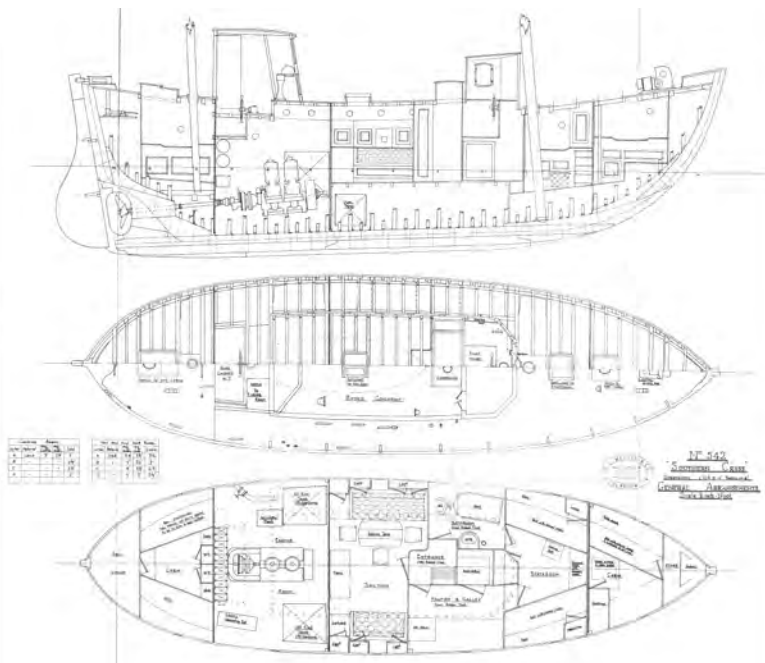
Dunn planned to head for Brisbane, Australia due to all its family, historic and scientific links with his home town of Largs. Several

newspapers referred to Dunn's relatives in Brisbane and the name 'Brisbane' features quite prominently around Largs.

The town of Brisbane was named after Sir Thomas Brisbane from Largs, the famous soldier-statesman-astronomer-navigator, who was the 6th governor of New South Wales (1821-25). After one disastrous Atlantic crossing with his army regiment in 1795, his ship ended up off the coast of Africa rather than the West Indies. As a result, Brisbane resolved to learn more about astronomy so he could navigate at sea. While on medical half pay from the army (1805-11), his early interest in astronomy developed into a lifelong pursuit. Sir Thomas Brisbane built a private observatory at his home, Brisbane House, in 1808. There were only two Scottish observatories in operation at the time and his was by far the better equipped. Dunn's Knock Castle home was built on part of the old Brisbane estate, so this nearby observatory would have been a great inspiration while he was learning to navigate on the challenging west coast of Scotland.

Books and equipment from Brisbane's private observatory at Largs were taken out to Australia and used to establish his second observatory at Parramatta on the outskirts of Sydney in 1822.





**Plans and layout of the *Southern Cross***



***Southern Cross* at anchor opposite the Brisbane Botanical Gardens**

It famously became known as ‘the Greenwich of the Southern Hemisphere’, where sea captains had their ships’ chronometers calibrated.

In conferring the medal of the Royal Astronomical Society on Sir Thomas Brisbane in 1828, it was noted that the first fruits of colonisation were in so many lands rape and violence towards its ‘unoffending inhabitants’ but that in Australia through the work of Brisbane, the first triumph of colonisation was the peaceful one of science and useful knowledge for the future

The studies/observations carried out in his private observatories at Largs and Parramatta made a significant contribution to major advances in celestial navigation which took place over the next 100 years. Undoubtedly, *Southern Cross* would have benefited from these developments while navigating in the southern seas.

*Cross* set sail from Sandbank on her 31,000-mile voyage round the world with the three young yachtsmen. However, it was a rather embarrassing start as they narrowly escaped colliding with a large yacht anchored nearby.

During the early part of the trip across the Bay of Biscay they fought the full fury of the sea for three days and had to seek sanctuary in the picturesque fishing town of Corcubi3n, on the north-west tip of Spain. During this first real test of man and boat, the ship behaved admirably, but the crew had great difficulty lowering sails in those stormy

conditions and could not use the sextant to get an accurate position.

Some vital equipment was damaged during the storm so the sailors had to wait three weeks in Tenerife for spare parts to arrive by steamer from England. A new friend from the Yacht Club organised an exciting camping trip by mule into the mountains to see the snow-capped Pico del Teide, which at 24,600 feet is the third-highest volcano in the world. To commemorate this daring winter expedition they left a message in a bottle inside an impressive 20-foot cairn they built at the campsite in the valley below. Countless flash photographs of their monument were taken and they pledged to return one day.

*Southern Cross* eventually set off on the 3,100 mile Atlantic leg from Tenerife to Trinidad on 16 December. The mariners spent an enjoyable Christmas at sea and feasted on sausage, eggs and spinach with plum pudding for dessert, but otherwise, had a pretty uneventful crossing. The crew jubilantly celebrated their safe passage with iced beer when they sighted Tobago, dead on course, on 8 January 1932.

While at anchor in Kingston Harbour, Jamaica they had an interesting encounter and poignant reminder of the strong links to their home waters on the Clyde. They were moored near the famous yacht *S.Y. Nahlin*, which was owned by the jute heiress Lady Yule and built by John Brown & Co at Clydebank in 1930. This elegant 296-foot steam yacht, which required a crew of around 50, had the same designer as *Southern Cross* and was built the same year. Needless to say, Dunn and his crew were only too happy to accept Lady Yule’s kind

**The crew (centre) James Shackleton, Guthrie Dunn and W.G. Penman**



## Round the world – Sandbank to Brisbane

On 26 October 1930, *Southern*



invitation to lunch aboard what was regarded as the premier British yacht of the day. Incidentally, the magnificent *S.Y. Nahlin* is currently owned by vacuum cleaner magnate Sir James Dyson.

Their passage through the Panama Canal in late February was a memorable experience thanks to an exceptionally knowledgeable American who had been working at the canal since 1908, but even he had never piloted such a small boat as *Southern Cross*. They spent a particularly enjoyable evening with one of the original gold prospectors in the canal zone who had become a legendary fishing and wildlife expert. The sailors listened intently to his fascinating stories, and armed with all this new knowledge they very excitedly set off on the next leg of their great adventure towards the Galapagos on 7 March.

**Major renovation underway in Brisbane, courtesy James Penman**

They finally had some success fishing using a simple hand line, and regularly feasted on tuna and red grouper. They briefly stopped at the Cocos Islands to search for the legendary treasure which was buried there for safekeeping by the Peruvian cathedrals in 1820. However, despite having a rudimentary map their venture was unsuccessful. After *Southern Cross* arrived at the Galapagos on 16 March there was plenty of time to explore at length several of the islands on horseback. The crew photographed a wide variety of breathtaking wildlife and clearly enjoyed meeting the population at large.

On their way to the Marquesas, Dunn celebrated his long-awaited 25th birthday on 30 March, when he acquired full control of the family inheritance. A magnificent birthday dinner prepared by Shackleton consisted of hors d'oeuvres (shrimps, sardines, eggs

and potato mayonnaise), chicken, potatoes and peas, followed by suet pudding and coffee. A good strong wind the next day helped them cover 94 miles, which was a new record for *Southern Cross* in the 'doldrums'. However, the wind soon died down and they began to run short of food during this gruelling 3,300-mile passage, so they were forced to dine on curried porridge for several days. Early in the voyage they had miraculously discovered that if you put enough curry powder in anything it became quite edible.

On 26 April a large group of the local Kanaka population at Hiva Oa, in the Marquesas, came aboard to welcome the yacht. The cheerful islanders enjoyed the entertainment laid on for them, with Dunn playing the piano and music from the gramophone. They particularly appreciated the cold beer and even took some ice away in a big thermos. In stark contrast, the crew had a rather chilling trip to see the centuries-old cannibal sacrifice amphitheatre at Atuona, which had terracing for 1,000 people, an impressive stone throne for the king and a large pit for the poor victims. Fortunately for the crew, the last case of cannibalism on the island was in 1876. Several days later they met the crew of the recently-arrived schooner *Northern Lights* and were surprised to discover her captain was from Greenock, the port of registry for *Southern Cross*. Not only that, but the schooner's diminutive, bow-legged cook came from Sandbank, and had amazingly attended her launch.

Due to poor or limited soil and an over-reliance on coconut palms on most of the remote Pacific islands, overpopulation was always a great threat. The main coconut plantation on Hiva Oa was struggling to survive after the price of copra (the coconut's dried white meat) halved at the start of the Great Depression (1929-39), so the island was more dependent on agriculture and trading.

Some days later, on the remote Takaroa atoll, they had an even bigger party with 50 to 60 on-board. A few of the elders were invited below to drink cold beer and smoke, while on deck the children enjoyed ice cream, made simply from tins of condensed milk. This time

**While Dunn was still a student at Cambridge University he finalised his plan to build an ocean-going cruising yacht to sail round the world**

## During the early part of the trip across the Bay of Biscay they fought the full fury of the sea for three days

Penman provided the star musical performance of the evening, playing the banjo until 3am. The next night there was a welcome invitation to see the local native dance troupe, but as it turned out most of them were visiting a neighbouring island so it ended up more of a barn dance with everybody joining in, some less enthusiastically than others. The islanders used to survive simply on coconuts and fishing, but due to the low price of copra they needed to rely more on pearl diving.

When the crew arrived at the port of Papeete, Tahiti on 17 May they were surprised to find many British-registered yachts in the harbour, and were delighted to pick up mail from home. They enjoyed island life so much that they decided to have a bowsprit fitted here rather than in Australia. As this work was being carried out the sailors had time to explore the island and the crew were very generously entertained on many occasions by the British vice-consul and his family. Fortunately,

Tahiti was an important trading centre and had a burgeoning tourist industry so it was able to survive the worst of the Great Depression, when exports from Polynesia fell by 60% between 1929 and 1933.

*Southern Cross* enjoyed leisurely stays at many exotic islands on her long passage across the Pacific via Rarotonga, Samoa, Fiji and New Caledonia. However, as they approached Brisbane they were keen to reach their destination and while cruising along at a very respectable 7¼ knots on 14 October they broke their record, covering 161 miles. To celebrate arriving at Brisbane on 18 October 1931 they had a good meal, smoked their stash of reserved cigarettes and drank some well-earned champagne out of their old beer-mugs.

Miss Betty Philp, daughter of the late Sir Robert Philp, premier of Queensland and a friend of Dunn, took great delight in entertaining the crew and introducing them

to the yacht clubs and everybody ashore. The films from Kodak arrived, so Dunn was able to show some of his cine film of the voyage at the yacht club.

Dunn had to return to the UK by steamer to attend to all the legal formalities relating to his late father's estate, which he inherited on his 25th birthday. In the meantime, *Southern Cross* was laid up to be extensively overhauled.

### Round the world – Brisbane to Sandbank

Five and a half months later, on 13 April 1932, the crew met up again to resume the adventurous voyage, but their Brisbane departure was delayed due to extra repair work. It was not until 30 June that a large crowd of friends and well-wishers finally waved them off.

*Southern Cross* reached Cairns on 12 July, where they re-stocked and got the radio fixed again. A friend kindly organised a wonderful train trip into the interior to see the vast sugar plantations and majestic scenery at Barron Falls. After leaving Cairns, *Southern Cross* was navigated carefully along the Great Barrier Reef so they were able to visit many small islands on their way. They set sail from Thursday Island for the East Indies on 25 July, and for the first time felt they really were homeward bound.

The crew particularly enjoyed the rich multi-cultural heritage of Bali and Java, but it was very hot and sticky so even sleeping on deck was difficult. Several weeks were spent in Surabaya looking for a new radio set, and then getting it installed properly. There was plenty of time for sightseeing, which included an exciting plane trip to see the active Mount Bromo crater. They relaxed and enjoyed 'the sheer luxury of their existence', but with the work complete they very reluctantly left Surabaya on 1 September.

At Home Island on the Cocos (Keeling Islands), the crew explored and visited several big plantations to see how copra was processed. Dunn organised an



*Southern Cross* at anchor in Soller, Mallorca 2013



*Southern Cross* launch at Robertson's Yard

### Southern Cross trophy

The renowned Glasgow jeweller Robert Stewart, silversmith to queen Victoria, was commissioned by D. Guthrie Dunn in 1930 to produce a finely-crafted sterling silver model of *Southern Cross*, which was hallmarked in 1932. The mast is 60cm high and the detail so fine that you can see all the fittings and beautifully coiled ropes on the deck. In 1965 Dunn's cousin Miss Elizabeth B. Mathieson donated the magnificent Southern Cross trophy to the Ayr Yacht Club to be presented to the winner of the 'Ailsa Craig' offshore race. At this time the trophy was valued at £1,000.



on 19 December. An enjoyable Christmas was spent with one of Penman's friends from Dumfries. On Boxing Day Dunn went off to visit Mr Ramsey, an 85-year-old ex-diamond miner, whose father had built his Knock Castle family home. Later, Dr Wilson, a surgeon from the City of Canterbury, came aboard and excitedly informed them that he had actually seen *Southern Cross* being built, and was a keen admirer of Robertson's Yard at Sandbank. Dunn decided that they needed to attempt an ambitious 70 day non-stop passage home due to all the extra time spent on repairs. They finally set off for the challenging southern Atlantic leg of their voyage on 16 February.

While cruising along at 5.5 knots on 7 March they had a series of sail and rigging mishaps. Even with all hands on deck an entire day was spent sorting out the problems and checking the rest of the rigging.

Worse followed. During heavy seas on 8 March 1933, around midnight, Dunn stood on the stern to set a sail and was accidentally lost overboard. From James Shackleton's log:

*We did all that we could possibly do to save him but everything was against us. Nor did we give up the search until it had become hopeless – and more than hopeless.*

After clearing the decks the yacht set sail for St Helena, arriving with a forlorn crew on 16 March to make an official deposition about the accident at the coroner's office.

### Epilogue

A memorial service took place at St John's Church, Largs on 27 March 1933 and was attended by many prominent Clyde yachting dignitaries. D. Guthrie Dunn left

his entire estate of £1.2 million to Mrs Agnes Stevens, who was the housekeeper at Knock Castle for 20 years. In his memory the Dunn Memorial Hall was gifted to the church.

Mr Thomas Stark Brown, legal representative for the trustees of the Dunn estate, decided that a replacement crew would be sent out to St Helena to sail the yacht back. A beautiful wreath in the shape of an anchor, which was suspended from the pulpit during the memorial service, was laid on the sea near where the young yachtsman drowned. After nearly three years a rather weather-beaten *Southern Cross* returned home to Robertson's boat yard at Sandbank on 8 July 1933.

The surviving crew could not come to terms with the tragic loss of their dear friend and skipper, so they never talked much about their experience, even to their own families. Furthermore, the crew were surprisingly reluctant to give newspaper interviews throughout their long voyage and as a result, no comprehensive account of the voyage was published. Sadly, Dunn's paintings, photographs, cine film and typed log/diary of the voyage were all lost.

During World War II, *Southern Cross* was requisitioned to test radar systems in the Irish Sea. In the late 1960s she was owned by the Hull Fishing Vessel Owner's Association and used as a sail/navigation training vessel. The yacht has undergone several major renovations over the years and as a result of the careful custodianship of several owners she is still sailing today.

*David I. Hutchison examined the history of Southern Cross as part of his ongoing research into the iconic yachts built at Alexander Robertson's renowned boatyard at Sandbank.*

outdoor cinema show behind the governor's house one evening. These were the first moving pictures ever to be seen on this remote island and even though the event was not widely publicised everybody turned up in their colourful gala dress. The show, featuring Charlie Chaplin and Felix the Cat, was such an immense success that a baby born that night was named Guthrie Dunn in his honour.

When *Southern Cross* arrived in Port Louis Mauritius on 23 October the crew immediately noticed the exceptionally strong 'French' influence in the town. The sailors had an extremely interesting trip to see a sugar cane research facility and saw thousands of seedlings, all in carefully-labelled pots, the result of experimental cross-breeding. Nearly all the ships in the harbour were foreign registered so it was 'disheartening to see that no British ships are used to transport our sugar, especially as the British taxpayer is giving Mauritius a preference'.

After a relaxing stop in Durban, *Southern Cross* arrived in Cape Town

## On their way to the Marquesas, Dunn celebrated his long-awaited 25th birthday on 30 March, when he acquired full control of the family inheritance



### FURTHER READING

*The Circumnavigators: Small Boat Voyagers of Modern Times*, D.R Holm (London, 1974)



# THE LOSS ON ISLAY'S SHORES

In the centenary year of two World War I maritime disasters which took place off the coast of Islay, **Les Wilson** tells the story of how out of adversity, bonds between this Hebridean island and the United States of America were forged which endure to this day



**T**he island of Islay, in the Inner Hebrides off Scotland's west coast, lost 200 men during World War I – but, in 1918, the conflict came crashing onto the shores of the island itself. Two ships, carrying American soldiers bound for the Western Front, sank off Islay's coast. Islanders risked their lives to pull men from the waves, fed and clothed survivors and made painstaking efforts to recover and identify the victims. Unable to bury their own war dead, they were determined to treat these fallen strangers with dignity and honour.

The convoys that crossed the Atlantic, bringing more than a million US soldiers to the battlefields, were at their most vulnerable as they funnelled through the North Channel – the narrow passage between Scotland and Ireland. These waters were the hunting ground of German submarines. The wrath of the U-boats had reached its height

in the spring of 1917, when 413 British, allied and neutral ships were sunk during April alone. By 1918 the tide of war had begun to turn against Germany's submarines, but they were still a formidable force when SS *Tuscania*, a Clyde-built luxury liner requisitioned as a troopship, left New York harbour on 24 January.

On board were more than 2,000 US soldiers, and nearly 400 British merchant sailors employed by the Glasgow-based Anchor Line. The twelve ships of Convoy HX-20, bound for Liverpool, followed a carefully-coordinated zig-zag course to confuse enemy U-boats.

As it approached the north coast of Ireland, the convoy was joined by eight British destroyers to escort it on the dangerous final stage of the voyage. And dangerous it was. In heavy weather, shortly after dawn on 5 February, Kapitän Wilhelm Meyer, commander of submarine UB-77, glimpsed the convoy through his periscope. For hours the U-boat

**Survivors of the *Otranto* disaster bid farewell to the islanders**

**Funeral of *Tuscania* victims in the hastily-prepared cemetery at Port Mor**

**A *Tuscania* funeral procession leaves Port Charlotte**

played cat-and-mouse with the convoy – sometimes hunter, and sometimes quarry to the escorting destroyers. In the early evening Meyer finally attacked. He recalled:

*My hands trembled as I moved the sighting apparatus, because I knew that if I stayed much longer where we were, the submarine would be rammed and sunk. Suddenly a ghostly shadow crept across the sighting mirror. Then atop this shadow appeared the outline of a smokestack. I recognized this shadow*





as the largest transport. I immediately ordered two torpedoes fired... the crew and I listened in suspense for many minutes. Then a terrific detonation told us that we had hit our target.

A torpedo had struck the *Tuscania* amidships. When Thomas Smith, a boatswain's mate from Glasgow, heard the explosion he said to a friend, 'They've got her now'. Smith's laconic observation was chillingly, but not surprisingly, fatalistic. Merchant seamen had no illusions about the peril they faced on every voyage, and knew that several ships were sunk every day by German U-boats – four others on the same day as the *Tuscania*.

Three destroyers and a flotilla of minesweeping trawlers rushed to the stricken *Tuscania*, but not all men were rescued. On that pitch-black night, a relentless swell drove overcrowded lifeboats onto the cliffs of Islay's Oa peninsula. Boats were smashed, tumbling men into the freezing sea. A few stumbled ashore and made it to remote farmhouses to raise the alarm, and local farmers and shepherds rushed to the shore to drag men to safety. Many were rescued, but 126 bodies were eventually washed ashore.

The islanders – their numbers depleted by those serving abroad or already dead – went to incredible efforts to gather, attempt to identify, and bury the victims with dignity. The afternoon before the first mass funeral four local women began to sew a six-foot-long American flag, based on a small photograph in an encyclopedia. The flag was finished at 2am. the following morning and was carried at the funeral by an American survivor. It is now in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C.

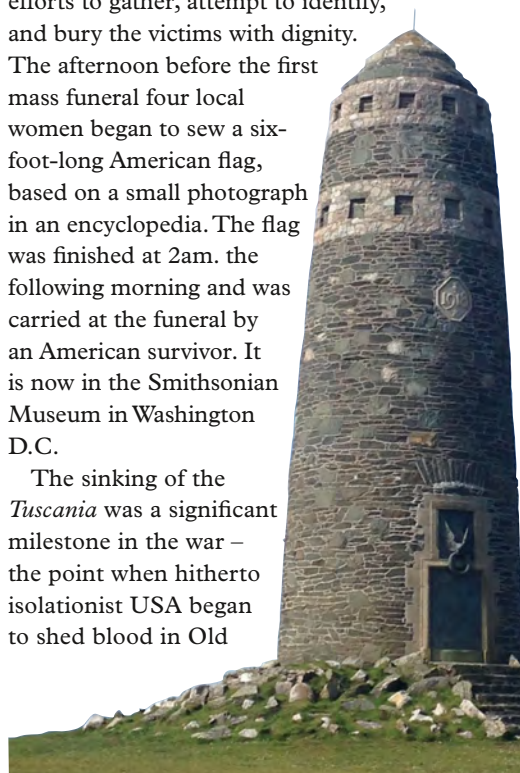
The sinking of the *Tuscania* was a significant milestone in the war – the point when hitherto isolationist USA began to shed blood in Old

**Captain Ernest Davidson in his cabin on the *Otranto***

**Searching the *Ontario* wreckage**



**The American Monument, built to commemorate the American soldiers lost on SS *Tuscania* and HMS *Otranto*, on the Mull of Oa, Islay**



Europe's wars. Portland newspaper *The Oregonian* reported that the sinking prompted a 'spike' in recruitment, and three days after the sinking more men enlisted than on any other day since America had declared war on Germany.

### **The *Otranto* tragedy**

Nearly eight months later – during which 50 more Islay men died in battle – HMS *Otranto* left New York as the flagship of Convoy HX-50. The *Otranto* was a luxury liner that had been pressed into service as an armed merchant cruiser. Its task was to lead and defend the convoy but, at the last moment, it took on board 701 soldiers and two American YMCA officers. With 380 crew, the *Otranto* had 1,083 souls aboard as it steamed past the Statue of Liberty.

The sighting of two German U-boats off Nantucket prompted captain

Ernest Davidson to steer a northerly course that would take the thirteen-strong convoy into rough winter weather. For days the ships were battered by storms. By the time they approached Britain, no accurate sighting had been taken for three days, and none of the ships knew exactly where they were.

On Sunday morning, 6 October, the rain and cloud lifted briefly. Troopship SS *Kashmir* could be seen half a mile away on the *Otranto*'s port side. As Captain Davidson snatched a quick breakfast, land was spotted – but was it Ireland, or Islay?

If it was Ireland, the *Otranto* needed to turn to port to sail round it before entering the North Channel. If it was Islay, their route lay to starboard. The *Kashmir*'s officers thought the land was Islay, but on the *Otranto* the Officer of the Watch decided it was Ireland. The two ships were now on a collision



course. Transfixed by the sight of the dangerous coast, nobody on *Otranto's* bridge kept an eye on the *Kashmir*. A senior English judge would later be highly critical of the *Otranto's* 'bad look-out'.

Returning to the bridge, Captain Davidson did all he could to avoid the collision, as did the captain of the *Kashmir*. Their desperate efforts cancelled each other out. The *Kashmir* – 9,000 tons of Clyde-wrought steel – bore down on the *Otranto* at fourteen knots. Flung forward by an enormous wave, she axed a huge gash – sixteen feet deep – into the *Otranto's* port side, crushing men to death in an amidships canteen. A second wave drove the bow further in, breaching the boiler rooms and drowning the crewmen who manned them. Without power, the crippled *Otranto* was relentlessly driven towards the perilous coast of Islay. Soldier James Harmon recalled:

*We had no hopes – to jump into the sea meant death, for one could not live long in such a mad sea. The lifeboats were useless, as they had been crushed to pieces. We could see a great high cliff, not more than a half-mile away, but no hope there, as we knew we would be dashed to death against the rocks.*

And then, through the Force 11 gale, HMS *Mounsey* – a Yarrow's of Glasgow-built destroyer, commanded by lieutenant Francis Craven – approached. In a remarkable and heroic feat of seamanship, Craven brought his 900-ton destroyer alongside the wallowing hulk that was more than twelve times its size. Through a megaphone he urged soldiers and

crewmen to jump onto his deck for their lives. Some fell between the ships and were crushed, others were swept off the *Mounsey* by giant waves, but Craven crammed about 600 men into his tiny ship. Only when it was in danger of capsizing did Craven turn the now severely damaged *Mounsey* for Belfast harbour.

More than 400 men remained on the *Otranto* when a great wave flung her onto a reef off Kilchoman Bay, breaking her back. Thrown into the water, men were crushed to death in a maelstrom of wreckage. Only nineteen survived, many of whom were dragged from the sea by shepherds, farmers and on-leave soldiers who risked their lives in the crashing waves.

Local people tended the survivors for days before help came. Sergeant Malcolm MacNeil, the most senior civil official on the island, made painstaking efforts to identify each battered body as it came ashore: 'Unidentified nude body. Head, and legs from knees gone. Description for identity impossible'.

His notebook, gifted to the Museum of Islay Life by his grandson, the former British cabinet minister and secretary general of NATO, Lord George Robertson, makes grim reading.

Once again, the people of Islay dropped everything to tend survivors, gather bodies and bury them with dignity. But, in 1920, America decided to repatriate their Islay dead. Only one American, lost on the *Tuscania*, remains on the island, according to the wishes of his family.

Twice during 1918 the people of

**The first mass funeral of *Tuscania* victims at Kilnaughton, near Port Ellen. An American survivor can be seen carrying the hand-sewn American flag**

**A firing party of local volunteers fires a salute over the graves of *Tuscania* disaster victims at Kilnaughton, near Port Ellen**

Islay took strangers into their midst and treated them as their own, tending the wounded, and burying the dead. In America, grieving families responded to that kindness. Beneath the storm-clouds of war, a sense of shared humanity was felt across the wide Atlantic Ocean.

*This year American descendants of survivors are joining the people of Islay for events on Islay that will mark the tragedies. For details see: <https://www.100islay.com>*

*Les Wilson is a writer and documentary maker. His book about the Islay tragedies, 'The Drowned and the Saved', is published by Birlinn. His documentary for BBC ALBA 'Call air Cladach Ile' (The Loss on Islay's Shores) will be transmitted on 29 April at 9.00pm.*



## FURTHER READING

*The World Crisis, Volume III, 1916-1918, Winston S Churchill (London, 1950)*

*The Passing Legion, How The American Red Cross Met The American Army in Great Britain the Gateway to France, George Buchanan Fife, (London, 1920)*

*These Men Are Worth Your Tears, Islay and Jura in World War I, Stuart Graham (Islay, 2015)*

*Many Were Taken by the Sea, Professor R Neil Scott (Maryland, 2012)*



## REFUGEES WELCOME HERE

# Caring for Belgian refugees in Scotland during the First World War

**Jacqueline Jenkinson** uncovers the fascinating story of how Scotland, and Glasgow in particular, responded to the influx of Belgian refugees during the First World War, thousands of whom came to Britain in order to escape German occupation of their homeland

**G**ermany's invasion of Belgium on 4 August 1914 was swiftly followed by Britain's declaration of war against Germany to defend Belgian neutrality. Belgian civilians began a move to the coast and towards the borders with France and neutral Netherlands seeking refuge from the German military assault. Civilians fled their homes under real threat of violence – over 5,500 Belgian civilians of all ages

were killed in unprovoked attacks, in many cases in mass executions, by German troops.

The first arrivals to Britain came within days of the outbreak of the war in August and were those who made their way individually, escaping the first German advances. In September, the British government followed the lead of the Belgian government, which announced that all foreigners would be given the same assistance as native Belgians,

**Refugees leaving Belgium (c.1917-19)**

when secretary of the local government board Herbert Samuel announced that all Belgians in Britain would be entitled to the same relief as native Britons. The number of refugees arriving in Britain increased dramatically in October 1914 after the surrender of the garrison city of Antwerp to German troops following a week-long siege. This was followed by the rapid fall of the port of Ostend. German occupation of the whole Belgian coastline led to the

*Within days, refugees were settled in the homes of local families and in hotels, hostels and grand houses in Glasgow and in towns and villages around west and central Scotland such as Paisley, Rutherglen, Hamilton, Dumbarton, Helensburgh, Crieff, Falkirk and Perth*

main outflow of refugees to France, the Netherlands and Britain.

In the first weeks of the war the London exhibition arenas of Alexandra Palace and Earls Court, workhouses and hotels had been set up as receiving and dispersal centres for Belgian refugees by the charitable war refugees committee, reliant on public support for what was seen as a just cause to help innocent victims of German wartime aggression; however, the numbers of arrivals was so great by October that the local government board decided on immediate and direct dispersal of refugees. Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow were key areas for dispersal for refugees arriving via Dover, Folkestone and Hull.

### **Glasgow's response**

During the course of the First World War, Glasgow received close to 19,000 civilian refugees. This was around eight percent of the 240,000 refugees who came to Britain. The main body of Belgian refugee arrivals in Britain came in the period from October 1914 to mid-1915, although others came later in the war, often via refugee camps in the Netherlands and France. The arrival of refugees peaked in the first three months of 1915. There was a steady outflow of men of military age going back to Belgium and adults called up for war work in Belgian factories set up in France, however refugees were moved around the Britain for work and resettlement purposes so that Scotland had new arrivals of Belgian refugees in all the war years.

The day after the fall of Ostend, Thursday 15 October, Glasgow lord provost Thomas Dunlop held a meeting with Glasgow corporation magistrates who constituted the wartime committee for the relief of distress at which it was agreed to 'accommodate temporarily and feed about 3,000 refugees'. This group of refugees – half of them straight from Folkestone – came to Glasgow by train on Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 October. They were received and registered by staff at the Mitchell library and at St Andrew's halls. The city's magistrates quickly became a formal committee involved with fund-raising as well as the administration of relief efforts for Belgian refugees arriving in Scotland. Magistrate Alexander Walker became the full-time treasurer and honorary secretary of the Glasgow corporation Belgian refugee committee.

In the same way that Belgian refugees were distributed around Britain, the refugees who came to Glasgow were also dispersed. Within days, refugees were settled in the homes of local families and in hotels, hostels and grand houses in Glasgow and in towns and villages around west and central Scotland such as Paisley, Rutherglen, Hamilton, Dumbarton, Helensburgh, Crieff, Falkirk and Perth and to villages such as Strahaven, Slammanan and Aberfoyle.

### **Links with wider Scotland**

A difficulty for those running

the Glasgow corporation Belgian refugee committee was that many parts of Scotland had been designated wartime 'prohibited areas' which meant that no 'aliens' could be settled in them due to military considerations, in particular fear of a German invasion from mainland Europe. For Scotland this meant the whole of the east coast was designated as a prohibited area for aliens, hence Scotland's three other main cities of Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee could not house Belgian refugees. To overcome this difficulty the committee held regular mass meetings to solicit financial support from representatives of Scotland's local authorities and members of the many local Scottish refugee relief committees.

For example, in early 1915 Glasgow corporation was asked by central government to find homes for a further 5,000 refugees. In response, the corporation committee called a meeting of over 200 local authorities and local Belgian refugee committees at Glasgow city chambers. Dundee's lord provost Sir William Don pledged that his city would do all it could and had already raised £20,000. As a result of this meeting, numerous refugee homes and hostels were opened in Glasgow and financially supported by donation from east coast areas. Dundee, Edinburgh and Aberdeen and smaller towns such as Wick and Dunfermline paid for the rent, furnishing and upkeep and for the costs of feeding and clothing the refugees accommodated in these hostels situated in Glasgow.

The Glasgow corporation Belgian refugee committee also printed annual calls for donations from across Scotland. These yearly appeals for funds and in kind help were publicised in the regional press. For example, an appeal from the Glasgow corporation committee to assist 'in money or in kind' to the townfolk of Grangemouth, a prohibited area which could house no refugees, was printed in the local press on 20 February 1915.

Another successful fund-raising effort was to send committee

members around the country from the borders to the highlands – over 70 locations were visited per year – to address public meetings and solicit funds from individual subscribers. These initiatives attracted donations ranging from £1,000 from Glasgow trades house in June 1916 to five guineas given by the trout anglers club of Edinburgh in November 1915, to 7d given by ‘little Chrissie Kelly’ at Christmas 1914. Regular monthly subscriptions were also pledged from individual Scots around the country.

Assistance in kind came from church congregations and clergy. The Roman Catholic church took the lead among Christian denominations in support of the predominantly Catholic Belgian refugees. Catholic clergy and their parishioners in Glasgow and the surrounding area housed hundreds of refugees. St Patrick’s, Dumbarton (under the auspices of father Hugh Kelly) accommodated 200 refugees and at St Mirin’s, Paisley, Belgian priest Father Alphonsus Ooghe acted as an interpreter and took in another 200 refugees. It is likely fathers Kelly and Ooghe worked in collaboration in support of Belgian refugees since they were known to each other, having both worked in parishes in Dumbarton and Paisley. In Glasgow the convents of Notre Dame, the Little Helpers and the Little Sisters of the Poor and the convent at Dalbeth also provided accommodation to refugees.

Support was also given by other Christian denominations, for example two church of Scotland and three salvation army homes in Glasgow housed refugees. Episcopalian, congregationalist and baptist congregations also made financial donations to the Glasgow corporation Belgian refugee committee. In central Scotland, three church of Scotland and united free church presbyteries (Bathgate, Linlithgow and Falkirk) formed the churches’ refugee committee, with the intention of preparing houses for refugees. By March 1916 the committee had provided seventeen houses occupied by 60

Belgian refugees in the village of Slammanann (around five miles from Falkirk). By war’s end they had accommodated 83 refugees at Slamannan and 64 in Cumbernauld.

There were also regular donations by companies, including Scottish banks, which placed collection sheets in their branches, from university students, including St Andrews students’ union, and from gentry such as the duchess of Sutherland, who gave £5. Meanwhile trades unions donated large regular sums, for example the Lanarkshire miners’ county union gave two amounts of £180 and £87 in December 1915, while the national union of Scottish mineworkers in Dunfermline gave over £130 a month earlier.

The Glasgow corporation committee also followed the conventional charitable route by setting up a volunteer ladies’ committee which organised regular fund-raising events including flag days, music and sporting festivals and sales of lace work made by refugees. There was also a scheme introduced in March 1915 for Scottish school children to give regular weekly donations via a little pledge card to increase funds. By May, over £1,700 was raised through the collection card scheme including donations amounting to almost £100 from the pupils at schools in Aberdeenshire, Ayrshire and Edinburgh. These activities helped meet the Glasgow corporation committee’s estimated running costs of £1,000 per week (£87,000 in today’s values when the mid-point war year of 1916 is selected).

Substantial funds were raised at all levels of society in Scotland to support Belgian refugees. By the end of the war the Glasgow corporation committee had raised £208,000 (the equivalent of £12.3 m today) and expended £193,000 (£11.4 m). A further £170,000 (£10 m) was raised around the rest of Scotland via the hundreds of local Belgian committees which supported refugees settled in their areas, although any shortfall in their funding arrangements was offset by the Glasgow committee in much the same way as the local

government board did for local Belgian refugee committees in England and Wales.

### How this differs from elsewhere

The Glasgow and wider Scottish response is unique in that, as just indicated, all the costs of supporting and housing the refugees living in Scotland were met by donation within Scotland. Elsewhere in Britain funding came from central government via the local government board (LGB) which made payments to cover all the costs of the central war refugees committee and its local committees. The war refugees committee was the largest charitable organisation providing housing and support for Belgian refugees. Its activities and workforce were taken over

*The Refugee* by  
Norah Neilson Gray  
(1882-1931)



by the local government board as numbers of Belgian refugees coming to Britain increased by autumn 1914.

In December 1914 the LGB formally acknowledged the Glasgow corporation Belgian refugee committee as the Scottish advisory committee. This too was a unique arrangement. By this time the LGB was directly responsible for Belgian relief in England and Wales, while in Ireland these arrangements were conducted by the Irish LGB. However, the Scottish LGB, which had devolved control over poor law and health matters, did not play an equivalent role; that responsibility was taken by the Glasgow corporation committee.

The Glasgow/Scottish response was different to elsewhere in part because of the municipal pride of Glasgow corporation and the wider population living in the 'second city of empire', who felt a sense of obligation to make a national contribution to the war effort. Also, Glasgow corporation was used to working autonomously and had pioneered many local welfare reforms since the late 19th century to try to tackle the impure water

**Departure of first contingent of Scottish Belgian Refugees to Belgium on SS *Khyber* from Hull, 16 December 1918**



supply, the overcrowding and the poor standards of housing for Glasgow's citizens.

Glasgow corporation proved adept at harnessing nationwide Scottish support for its efforts via national appeals, local visits and an unremitting drive for subscriptions running in parallel with a programme of one-off events. This activity was combined with the pride felt by fundraisers throughout the Scottish population that they were able to

support Belgian refugees without looking to central government for assistance. Overarching this was the belief (a common factor around Britain) that supporting the Belgian refugees who fled to Britain following the German invasion of their neutral homeland was a moral, just cause.

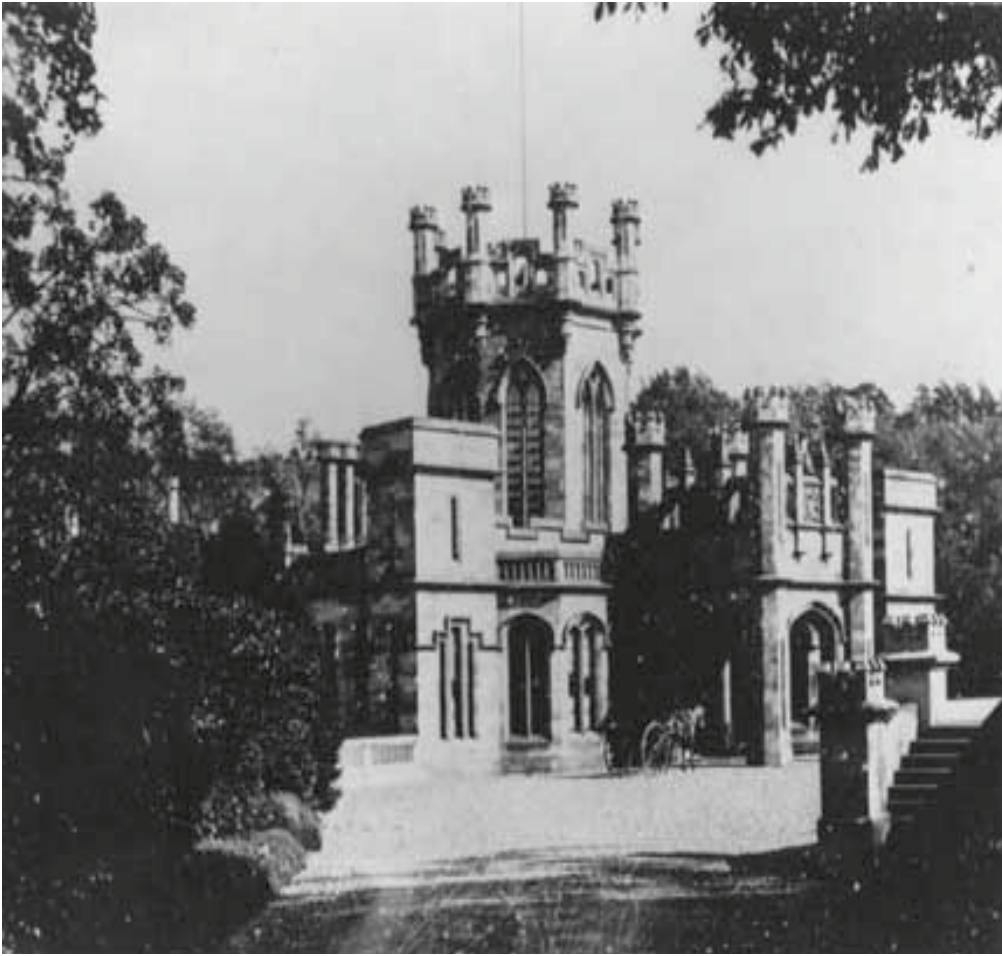
### Who were the refugees?

Glasgow was the only sizeable reception area outside England with close to 20,000 refugees (eight per cent of Britain's Belgian refugee population). 4,500 (two per cent) lived in Wales and 3,000 (1.25 per cent) in Ireland, while around 210,000 (around 88 per cent) of all Belgian refugees settled in England. The government created a centralised system for registering Belgian refugees in November 1914 and it is from this registration process that the figure of around 240,000 refugees living in Britain is obtained. The Glasgow corporation Belgian refugee committee maintained registration records which survive in part for 1914 and early 1915 in Glasgow city archives and have been digitised, allowing some analysis to be made of the general make-up of the Scottish Belgian refugee population.

The Glasgow registers recorded 8,238 refugees in 1914/15. Of these, there were 4,515 males and 3,708 females (there were

**Belgian regimental band on a Glasgow visit outside Kirkcaldy Belgian Home, 1918**





fifteen incomplete records). There were 2,209 children aged under sixteen, with roughly equal numbers of girls and boys. Refugees' ages on arrival ranged from one to 86, with an average age of 26. The majority of refugees were single, 4,609 (however this includes children), 3,391 were married, and a further 170 were widowed. Most refugees who settled in Scotland came from predominantly urban areas.

The three most common occupations among refugees on arrival in Scotland were clerk (95 male and nineteen female), fitter and labourer. The Glasgow registers also recorded significant numbers of skilled workers among the refugees including turners, engineers and cabinet-makers. Fisherman and farmer were also among the most common male occupations. The most common employment type recorded by Belgian women on arrival in Scotland was in domestic service. There were also 32 nuns, eight priests and two pastors.

### Welcoming refugees

Belgian refugees in Scotland were warmly received and well treated. For example, a group of 250 refugees was given a hearty breakfast, a formal reception and a pipe band welcome on their arrival in Glasgow on 5 January 1915. However, the same report which recorded this event wryly noted that the corporation committee's work was complicated when people who had accepted responsibility of caring for families 'became tired of their guests and handed them back'.

Schooling for Belgian refugee children was swiftly arranged following the increase in arrivals from mid-October 1914. The Glasgow corporation school board made its first enquiry into arrangements for Belgian refugee children on 10 November 1914 and within six weeks reported all Belgian children were now being schooled, with the majority in voluntary schools (privately-funded Catholic schools which were not supported from the rates). Belgian refugee parents were also able to request places at

local (non-denominational) publicly-funded board schools through written application.

The Glasgow school board further resolved that no fees were to be charged for Belgian children and that where possible books were to be provided. Belgian children were also placed at some of Glasgow's most prestigious private schools, including Allan Glen's, Glasgow high school for girls and Hutchesons' grammar. Other towns made similar education arrangements, in Paisley the Roman Catholic community set up a school for Belgian children and at Notre Dame school in Dumbarton a temporary teacher was hired in October 1914 on a salary of £4 a month to teach Belgian children.

Not all the friendly interest in Belgian refugees was of the practical kind. Artist Norah Neilson Gray (1882-1931), one of the 'Glasgow girls' and a wartime nurse in the voluntary aid detachment who served in France during the war, painted a sympathetic portrait, *The Belgian Refugee*, of an anonymous adult male refugee who fled to Scotland from Liège which is held in Glasgow's Burrell Collection.

A survey of press reporting suggests that the surge of sympathy among the general public for the plight of 'Poor little Belgium' and the refugees settled in Scotland was largely maintained throughout the war. Positive press coverage was aided by government guidance to prevent negative or inflammatory newspaper reporting through so-called 'D' notices. The first was issued in July 1916 and instructed the press not to print any stories about Belgian refugees evading either work or military service. A second D notice in October 1916 prevented any reporting of trials involving Belgian refugees. Before that point newspaper accounts did include reference to Belgian refugees who had broken the law.

For example, in February 1916 Joseph Jolly, aged fifteen, was sentenced to three years in Wellington reformatory in Penicuik, Midlothian for stealing a number of table covers from his employer at a large wholesale warehouse in Glasgow. A member of the Glasgow Belgian refugees

**Calderwood Castle, home to Belgian refugees supported by the town of Dunfermline**

committee attended the trial and gave a statement on behalf of Jolly's father who was in court, to say that he supported the decision for his son to be sent to a reformatory. A third D notice in May 1918 instructed the press not to print stories describing the Belgian refugees as 'aliens' at a time of mounting xenophobia to enemy foreign nationals.

### Local Concerns about Belgian Refugees

Alongside this broad support for refugees, three areas for concern were voiced during the time of the Belgian refugees' stay. These were housing shortages; the perceived threat to wage levels from this new reserve army of labour; and the question of military enlistment.

#### *Housing*

While some Belgian homes and hostels were maintained throughout the war, there was a move towards the settlement of refugees into private accommodation as their stay became long term. For Belgians in employment, paying rent was a sign of independence. However, concerns were raised within the broader Glasgow corporation and in the press that Belgian refugee occupation of private housing was having a negative effect on local access to housing. This was first raised in May 1915 when baillie Mason of the refugee committee reported to the corporation that about 230 houses had been given over to Belgian refugees and stated he was unaware of any complaints about the scarcity of houses being

accentuated by the provision for refugees, noting all the houses taken over had been empty.

In January 1916 independent labour party leader John Wheatley, who was also a Glasgow councillor, questioned whether the Belgian refugee committee housing policy was removing 'good' housing from local residents and asked whether the committee had approached the government for permission to erect new houses to accommodate the Belgian refugees. Baillie Smith for the committee replied that they had received no information that their policy had caused any citizen to be turned down for a house or put out of a house to accommodate refugees. By summer 1916 the committee reported that Belgian refugees were housed in over 400 properties around Glasgow; by 1917 this had risen to 700 homes.

#### *Employment*

Early trade union and wider local concerns about the possibility that Belgian refugees could become a replacement labour force undercutting local workers was quickly addressed. On 23 October 1914 baillie McMillan, addressing a meeting of the full Glasgow corporation, noted that the Belgian refugee committee would be careful not to put refugees in trades where there were men of 'our own' idle.

The following day LGB secretary Herbert Samuel set up the Hatch committee following pressure from trade unions over this potential threat to wages. The Hatch committee reported in December 1914. The government accepted its recommendation that Belgians should only be employed at the same rates of pay as native Britons and that refugees were only to be employed via labour exchanges. A general meeting of Glasgow corporation had already been informed by baillie Mason of the corporation refugee committee that Belgian refugees in employment 'located all over the country' were getting 'trade union rates of wages'. Public unease about the presence of adult males among the refugees was first addressed in November



**Glasgow's Mitchell library, where the first mass arrival of Belgians was registered and welcomed**



*While some Belgian homes and hostels were maintained throughout the war, there was a move towards the settlement of refugees into private accommodation as their stay became long term. For Belgians in employment, paying rent was a sign of independence*

1914 when the LGB gave the Glasgow corporation Belgian refugee committee powers to 'deal with certain difficulties that had arisen' regarding the presence of men of military age in Glasgow. A notice produced by the committee calling on Belgian males aged eighteen to 30 in Scotland to volunteer for active service in the Belgian army prompted fifteen men to report for enrollment on the first day.

As time went on the recruitment process was formalised. The British government opened negotiations with the Belgian government in exile (under the control of king Albert I) over conscription and in March 1915 Belgian males aged eighteen to 25 were called up. In January 1916 this was extended to Belgian males aged eighteen to 41 (although this was not yet compulsory) to mirror the expanded British call-up arrangements. In July 1916 the Belgian government imposed compulsory conscription on all males aged eighteen to 41 to tie in with new British arrangements. On the back of such arrangements the government 'D' notice of July 1916 mentioned above was passed to prevent news stories being published about Belgian refugees evading military service.

### Repatriation and the end of support for refugees

Once war was ended, central government acted swiftly to bring to an end the economic costs entailed in supporting Belgians with the implementation of a repatriation programme utilising plans in place since 1917. The Glasgow corporation committee's

remit over Belgian refugees in Scotland extended to repatriation, albeit many refugees from around Britain headed for London at the end of the war hoping to leave more quickly via the capital.

Three main contingents of refugees numbering 2,846 left Scotland in December 1918 and January 1919. A further group quit Scotland in March 1919. Returning refugees were allowed to retain their bed, bedding and small furnishings up to a weight limit of 300 pounds. All were given a pair of boots and a set of warm underclothing for the winter departures. By April 1919 the corporation committee reported only 480 refugees remained in Scotland. Few Belgian refugees stayed on permanently after the war, with Scottish census figures showing only a small increase in Belgian residents from 137 in 1911 to 194 in 1921.

A meeting was held in April 1919 to formally signal the end of the work of the Glasgow corporation Belgian refugee committee. Herbert Samuel, former president of the local government board and home secretary, attended on behalf of the government. Samuel recognised the unique role that Glasgow and Scotland as a whole had played in supporting Belgian refugees:

*Scotland, he said was distinguished from the rest of the United Kingdom in respect that they had been able to defray the charges of maintaining the Belgian refugees without any subsistence from the government.*

In 1920 the official government *Report on the Work undertaken by the*

*British government in the reception and care of the Belgian refugees* put it more simply: 'Scotland took a very prominent part in the reception and care of the refugees.'

Those who gave their services as organisers of Belgian refugee relief in Scotland were rewarded with official recognition in Britain and Belgium. Glasgow city assessor Alex Walker, secretary and treasurer of the corporation refugee committee, was awarded the CBE. Belgian honours were given to refugee committee members around the country including Paisley, Perth and Wick. Four ladies' committee members of the Glasgow corporation Belgian refugee committee, all wives of magistrates on the committee, were awarded the MBE in 1920 in recognition of their work. The women were identified by their husbands' names in press coverage. Alexander Walker's wife was joined in receiving this honour by Mrs Thomas Irwin, Mrs James Stewart and Mrs Thomas McMillan.

### Conclusion

Tangible indications of the First World War Belgian refugee presence are minimal. Trees were planted in various places in Scotland by grateful Belgian refugees in gratitude to their hosts, none of which appears to have survived, although there are photographs of the plaque dedicating the 'Belgian tree' planted in Queen's park in Glasgow in 1917.

Hospital records show a similar tree was planted near the Victoria infirmary where injured Belgian soldiers were treated in autumn 1914. In April 1915 over 500 Belgian refugees then living in Paisley attended a similar tree planting ceremony at Barshaw park, in celebration of the birthday of king Albert I of Belgium. During a speech, the convener of the ceremony, Camille Berck, a widowed 62-year-old hotel keeper from Liège who appears in the Glasgow Belgian refugees' register alongside his two daughters, Therese and Anna aged 38 and 37, gave a message to the whole people



Mrs Alexander Walker, Mrs Thomas Irwin; Mrs James Stewart and Mrs Thomas McMillan of the ladies committee of the Glasgow corporation Belgian refugee committee. From the Glasgow corporation journal, the *Baillie*, Glasgow City Archives

in Scotland were received and registered in October 1914.

When war ended Belgian wartime refugees overwhelmingly left Scotland willingly to return to their liberated, war-torn homeland. Their five-year presence in Scotland, which had provoked massive press interest and occupied so much local Glasgow and national Scottish charitable fund-raising effort, was quickly forgotten. At a time when incoming refugees are given a more mixed reception by government and the general public, the history of the wartime support for Belgian refugees in Scotland is worth remembering.

*Dr Jacqueline Jenkinson is senior lecturer in History at the University of Stirling. She has published widely on the history of minority populations in Britain during the First World War including articles and book chapters on Lithuanians, and colonial black and south Asian peoples, as well as Belgian refugees. Her monograph on the 1919 seaport riots, Black 1919: Riots, Racism and Resistance in Imperial Britain, was published in 2009 by Liverpool University Press.*

of Paisley which was reproduced on 17 April 1915 in the *Paisley and Renfrewshire Gazette*:

*We shall never forget how we have been welcomed here. The proverbial Scottish hospitality has not lost its old reputation ... We ask them to believe that we are not ungrateful and that we shall never forget them. We shall tell our children that the people of the British Isles came to the help of their parents in distress during this monstrous war.*

There was a financial legacy as a result of the fund-raising activities in support of Belgian refugees around Scotland. Treasurer Alexander Walker reported in April 1919 that the committee had raised £208,000 and expended £193,000 with the accounts yet to be closed. In January 1920, following a few months of final accounting and in keeping with the humanitarian motivations which led to the substantial donations from across Scotland in support of Belgian refugees, £5,000 was given to the

Scottish branch of the save the children fund, £500 to the Serbian refugee fund, £2,000 was donated to the Anglo-Belgian union and £500 to the Belgian orphan fund. A further £5,000 was given to Scottish hospitals and charities.

Six major hospitals in Glasgow were given £500 each and £500 each was given to the lord provosts of Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh to pass on to their local hospitals. A further £6,500 was dispersed over the next few months, mainly in smaller amounts to hospitals the length and breadth of Scotland. Plans for a memorial 'to commemorate the advent of the Belgian refugees in Scotland' reached a design stage but were not taken forward by the Glasgow committee.

A longer lasting legacy of the presence of Belgian refugees in the city is provided via the Belgian refugee registration records held in Glasgow city archives situated in the Mitchell library, the same building where the first mass arrivals of Belgian refugees



## FURTHER READING

*German Atrocities: A History of Denial*, J. Horne and A. Kramer (New Haven, CT, 2001)

'British responses to Belgian refugees during the First World War', special edition of *Immigrants & Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora*, 34:2 (2016), ed. J. Jenkinson, 101-231

'Belgian Refugees in Britain during the First World War', *Immigrants & Minorities* 18:1 (1999), T. Kushner, 1-28

*Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National and Local Perspectives during the Twentieth Century*, T. Kushner and K. Knox (London, 1999)

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

'A Wave on our Shores': *The Exile and Resettlement of Refugees from the Western Front*, *Contemporary European History* 16:4 (2007), P. Purseigle, 427-44.

## Spotlight on... Monifieth Local History Society

Established in 2000, this local history society exists for people interested in collecting, researching and presenting material connected to the history of the town of Monifieth in Angus.

Monifieth has a long and interesting history and was an important Pictish centre. A church was established here in 574 AD and most probably some form of worship had taken place on the site before then. The hamlet of Monifieth expanded due to the establishment of a foundry in 1800 which was later to become known as J.F. Low's foundry by the sea. At its peak its buildings covered fifteen acres and employed around 2,000 people. The town was also the home of several Dundee 'jute barons' who built mansions in the clean air, away from the city.

In 2004 the society acquired the lease on a property on the town's High Street, which is now known as the House of Memories and acts both as a meeting place for the society, and a venue for community groups in the area. Members enjoy regular talks and trips, and over the years have been involved in several local history projects, most notably establishing House of Memories as a heritage centre for the town.

The society is now a registered Scottish Charity and has



Left: replica of a Pictish cross at the society's House of Memories; above: members meet regularly for talks and outings; the House of Memories, a heritage hub and meeting place

members across Scotland and further afield. New members are always welcome and current UK annual single membership is £15.

The society's website: <https://monifiethhistorysociety.co.uk> has details of upcoming events, as well as an archive of articles written by members relating to local stories and memories, and a virtual tour of the House of Memories.

## Street directories

In his latest genealogy guide, **Ken Nisbet** explains how to use street directories for exploring the lives of our ancestors



Many readers will have watched the BBC's four-part series *A House Through Time* about the history of those who lived in a house in Liverpool from the early 19th century through to the 21st. Whilst

the researchers had used many of the basic resources such as birth, marriage and death certificates and the census, they also used resources which might not be so familiar.

Street directories are a great source of information for exploring the lives of our ancestors. The National Library of Scotland has made available as a free resource digital copies of over 700 of these: <https://digital.nls.uk/directories> covering the period 1773 to 1911. The directories are divided into those covering Scotland as one country or county, those covering individual parts of counties, and finally town directories. The directories do not just contain lists of names. For example, *Russell's Morayshire Register* for 1850 has details of the days on which fairs, cattle markets and trysts were held (covering all of Scotland), the

state of the fiars-prices (the average price of various types of grain grown in each county which was agreed by a sheriff), the rules for ascertaining the weight of hay and cattle, stamp and legacy duties, and a list of the banks in Scotland with the name of the bank manager or agent (Aberdeen, population 71,945, had eight banks and the market day was Friday).

In part two of the register there is a listing of the commissioners of supply for Morayshire and Nairnshire and the justices of the peace. The register also lists the farmers in each parish with the name of their farm.

Part three of the register, titled parochial statistics, lists information on various parishes, including the extent of each, its boundaries, patron and minister's name, the stipend, details of the parochial school, the heritors of the parish and the members of the parochial board.

For example, in 1851 the ferry boat men across the river Spey in 1851 at Abernethy parish were Charles Fraser at Gartin and Peter Grant at Belliefurth.

If we look at a town directory to show

the level of detail, in the alphabetical list of names of the *Greenock Post Office Directory* 1905-06, I find my great-grandfather 'Nisbet, Alexander, clerk, Victoria cot, 94 Belville Street'. The trade section of the directory lists all the trades in Greenock, for example, there were ten basket and toy warehouse keepers, with names and addresses.

The post office directories continued until the 1950s and local libraries will usually hold a full run of the copies for their town.



Ken Nisbet is Secretary of the Scottish Genealogy Society and of the Scottish Association of Family History Societies and is on the user group for the Family History Centre in Edinburgh. He is a regular lecturer to Scotland's family history societies. He has written a number of books, all of which are published by the Scottish Genealogy Society, and tutors some of the classes the society runs.



# WHERE WAS SELKIRK ABBEY?

Responding to a previous feature in *History Scotland*, **Lindsay Neil** sifts the difficult and fragmentary evidence in an effort to recover the lost location of 12th-century Selkirk abbey, Scotland's first Benedictine monastery

**M**ystery has always attended the site of Selkirk abbey. As the first abbey established in Scotland in the early 12th century, one can be forgiven for feeling that its existence has been overlooked, or at least not given the importance it deserved. One may also ask why it has never been seriously looked for. The country is dotted with ruins attesting to the many abbeys which followed Selkirk's, but of the first there is not a trace, not a stone nor a folk memory pointing to where it was. Since its establishment, not one sod of earth has been turned over in an effort to find it, although much has been written. As the abbey was only in Selkirk for fifteen years, perhaps this could account for the mystery.

There are, however, abundant historical references and many hints as to where it was sited that one can pull together to infer its location. It is admittedly all conjecture without hard proof – what would be termed

'circumstantial evidence' in a court of law. However, one can at least get a fairly clear idea of where it was built, and where it was not, from weighing up what is known.

The popular tradition in Selkirk, often repeated, is that the abbey was located at the site of the ruined Lindean kirk two miles from the town. Despite the detailed and comprehensive defence of this theory published by Frank Harkness in the September/October 2017 issue of *History Scotland*, there is no historical or archaeological evidence to support it, and considerable reason to be sceptical. In fact, several pieces of key evidence point to the abbey having been close to, or part of, Selkirk itself.

### **Unravelling the mystery**

In 2013 a limited community archaeological project in Selkirk was undertaken to confirm the site of Selkirk's castle and look for traces of its wooden structure. This was supervised by Northlight Archaeology. Traces

**The top end of the 'Clocksorrow' ravine. It carried the outflow from the Haining loch and was quite sufficient to drive a mill**

of the castle were not found but instead the original Haining tower house was rediscovered.

In the course of the work, a search of records was undertaken to see if there was any historical evidence that the castle site had been previously occupied, in particular what relationship it had with the pre-12th century church which existed before the abbey came to Selkirk. This inevitably involved an examination of what was known about the foundation of Scotland's first abbey.

What emerged from that investigation was confirmation of the existence of an original and separate Culdean church and some hitherto unobserved and unrecognised evidence for the location of the subsequent abbey when it was founded sometime between 1109 and 1113. So after this time there were two churches in Selkirk, each following its own doctrine.

No physical evidence has ever been discovered to help identify the abbey's site, but Selkirk was acknowledged

by David I as 'an old town' and had had a Culdean church at least from the 7th century. The finding in 2016 of the outline of a putative medieval church under the Selkirk 'Auld Kirk' site by ground radar lends credence to the possibility that this was the site of the early Culdean church. It is hoped that future excavation of this site may reveal dating material.

### The Christian environment to 1150

In order to assess the historical evidence for Selkirk abbey's location, it is worthwhile to sketch the religious background at the time. Church politics and royal patronage were important in the early history of both northern England and the Borders and then, as now, there was some enmity between the Roman Catholic and other churches in their practices of Christian doctrine. It was the 'Culdean' church, the Celtic one, which was dominant in Scotland from the 7th century and was long-established in Selkirk. Much later, Selkirk abbey, founded in the 12th century, was Roman Catholic. Along with others, it was an offshoot from the parent Benedictine abbey at Tyron in northern France. There was therefore potential for disharmony between rival churches in Selkirk, and so it subsequently proved to be.

Christianity had been in Ireland

since about 400 AD and it was introduced into the Scottish mainland around 650 AD. Iona had become the centre of Culdean Christianity since its founding by Columba in 563 AD and the practice and underlying religious philosophy over the years had evolved separately from the influence of Christianity as practiced and spread from Rome. Evangelism, simplicity and monasticism characterised the Culdean approach and from Iona monastic settlements were established in Scotland and north-east England, at this time the kingdom of Northumbria. The Culdeans were essentially ascetic, charitable and democratic, whereas the church of Rome was wealth-seeking, didactic and hierarchical.

King Oswald of Northumbria, along with his boyhood friend, a monk called Aiden, was brought up as a king-in-exile on Iona. Oswald succeeded to his Northumbrian kingdom in 634 AD. He was unsympathetic to Roman religious attitudes and wanted to extend the Culdean church further. Accordingly, Aiden was dispatched to Melrose from the newly-founded monastery at Lindisfarne in order to create a monastery there, which he did sometime after 635 AD. This was the monastery at Old Melrose, of which very little remains. Lindisfarne,

already thriving, was under the defence of nearby Bamburgh castle, traditionally the seat of the Northumbrian kings. Melrose had no such protection, but its site was readily defensible, surrounded on three sides by the Tweed and on its fourth side by a defensible wall.

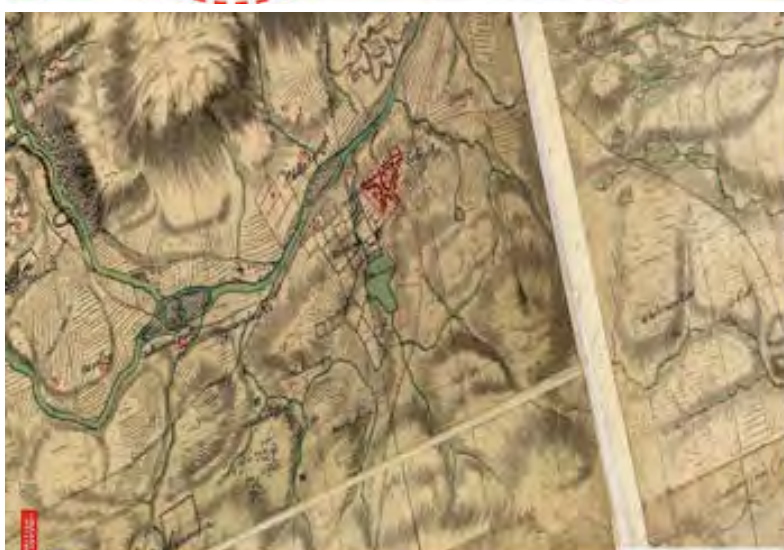
Kenneth MacAlpin burned Melrose monastery down in 749, presumably to assert his regal sovereignty, although in truth the reason is not clear. Invading Danes sacked Lindisfarne in 793, after Northumbria had ceased to be a kingdom and there was no longer protection from Bamburgh castle. Religious settlements were highly vulnerable. Both monasteries were subsequently rebuilt but, importantly, Melrose monastery would still have been extant when the Roman Catholic religious establishments were founded by David, earl of Huntingdom – the future David I – at the beginning of the 12th century.

Earl David, who ruled a large parcel of territory straddling the Anglo-Scottish border, was brought up in both England and France and was accustomed, and adherent, to Roman Catholic religious practice. Up until that time the Culdean church had been the only one operating in the Borders. In order to secure a significant religious profile and to attract learned scholars to Scotland generally, he was keen to found an abbey somewhere in his own land. He chose Selkirk.

David approached Tyron, where an offshoot of the nearby Benedictine monastery at Chartres had been founded. His aim was to secure the help of the monks there in founding the abbey in Selkirk for all the benefits it would bestow and also to meet the renowned St Bernard, then in Tyron. He hoped to gain divine approval for his actions. The Tyronensians were willing to support him and in 1109 the monk Radulphus was sent to Selkirk, along with thirteen artisans, by Benedictus, the first abbot of Tyron. It appears that Selkirk abbey was built by 1113 with the help of these artisan monks, and Radulphus was replaced by Benedictus in 1115. A Tyronensian monk, Gaufridus Grossus (Fat Geoffrey) relates in his 1135 writings that David had come

**Detail from Johannes Blaeu map 1654 (copied from Timothy Pont c.1590). It shows the 'Howdenburn' running from Millstead into the 'Meeting of the Waters' where the Yarrow and the Ettrick join. The upper river is the Yarrow. After joining, the combined river is known as the Ettrick**





to Tyron in 'about 1108' to meet St Bernard and returned to Selkirk abbey 'which he had already founded'. According to Gaufridus, David never did actually meet St Bernard because he died before David got there. St Bernard died in 1117, so King David must have gone to Tyron after that. It was known that the other offshoots of the Tyronensian order in Wales, Scotland, Ireland and western France were inaugurated simultaneously with the parent abbey at Tyron. Fat Geoffrey's date of 1108 for David's visit is therefore possibly wrong, or maybe indicate that David went twice. Perhaps Selkirk was founded in 1108 or 1109, and functionally completed c. 1113. About ten years later, in 1124, David succeeded as king of Scots.

It is important to recognise that these were very troubled times. Selkirk, owing to the royal presence, was one of the half dozen or so most important towns in Scotland. It was a centre of Scottish government where the king, from the safety of

Selkirk castle, both administered his kingdom and hunted in Etrick Forest, his exclusive royal hunting ground. Religious centres were largely unprotected and therefore vulnerable, meaning that the sensible thing to do in order to protect them against possible attack was to site them near to an existing stronghold. Sir James Dalrymple, in his history of the Scottish church, wrote in 1705 that David founded abbeys 'calculate[ed] to propagat the Romish religion in this kingdom upon the ruines and suppressions of the Culdean churches and monasteries'. He also relates that John, the Catholic bishop of Glasgow, in whose see the abbey at Selkirk was sited, had been driven out of the Borders owing to local opposition to Catholicism and sought refuge in Tours. He was peremptorily ordered back by the pope and later again by David I in 1138. Sir James's opinion was that the new abbey would have been molested 'but for the protection afforded them by the prince's castle

**Scottish Town Plans 1847-95 + superimposed modern street map. The area ringed to the left of the old town is suitably level and contains Kilncroft/ Heatherlie Park. The Clockie burn, now culverted, flows through the middle of the same area. It is here that the likeliest site of the abbey. The town as it was until the early 19th century can be seen to be quite separate from the area ringed which was only build on in the last 150 years**

**Roy's Map of Selkirk, 1747. It shows the steam underlying the map name 'HowdeenCastle' going into the Etrick, where the Howdenburn presently goes. The road is seen going up Yarrow after going past the 'Meeting of the Waters'. The putative site of the abbey would be in the cultivated area to the left of Selkirk**

of Selkirk, *under the shadow of whose walls* (my italics) they commenced to rear their holy fane!'

It is accordingly logical to search for evidence for Selkirk abbey near to David's castle and not so distant from the town as to be in an indefensible position if attacked, particularly by the opposing factions of the Culdean monks in Melrose and by antagonistic Selkirk people.

### **What made Selkirk attractive?**

Among the considerations and criteria for establishing a new abbey laid down by St Benedict at Monte Cassino were (1) divine inspiration, (2) fear of attack by outlaws etc, (3) proximity to the patron or protector, (4) unopposed ownership of the land on which to build, (5) a water supply and (6) an area of sparse population.

Most commentaries on Selkirk's past rely heavily on the comprehensive *History of Selkirkshire* by Thomas Craig Brown. Published in 1886, it predated the 1911 publication of James Curle's discovery of the Roman Fort at Trimontium (Newstead) eight miles from Selkirk near the main north/south Roman thoroughfare of Dere Street, running through the Borders roughly where the present A68 lies. The Roman fort at Oakwood, discovered in 1949, puts Selkirk in a direct line between there and Trimontium, so there must have been a road linking the two and indeed there are traces of one.

As yet the 'Locus Selgovensis' mentioned by Ptolemy and in the Ravenna list has not been positively identified. The large tribal settlement on Eildon Hill North was abandoned by the occupying tribe or cleared by the Romans when establishing Trimontium and is thought to have been the tribal capital of the Selgovae tribe. The Roman practice of designating a 'parlaying' site for annual meetings to settle local matters and trade with local tribes was widespread in the Roman empire in areas where they occupied land alongside the indigenous tribes. Examples include 'Locus Maponensis' (for the Maponi and probably the Lochmabon stone); the Manau stone, the locus for the Manau (Clackmannan stone); Dun Meatae (Meatae tribe, Dumyat

near Stirling); and Dun Votadini (contracted to Dun Eidinn and changed to Edinburg by the Anglo-Saxons settlers). Therefore one does not have to look far to explain the 'old town' of David, nor how Selkirk got the 'Sel' part of its name.

Selkirk was therefore a known place from early times and probably the Roman term 'Locus Selgovensis' was modified and transferred to the present Selkirk. This is also likely to be how the Solway got its name. It is therefore unnecessary to import an unpronounceable word 'Scheles', derived from the ancient Anglo-Saxon language and put forward by Thomas Craig Brown, to account for the 'Sel' part of Selkirk.

For water supplies to the abbey, the Blaeu map of 1654 (page 45), depicting Timothy Pont's sketches of about 1590, shows a substantial stream emerging from the Haining Loch in Selkirk and running down the steep ravine called the 'Clock Sorrow' into the Ettrick. This would have been an adequate source of water for an abbey's needs were the abbey established nearby and would also have provided water power to a mill (referred to later). The stream is not now so prominent; the Haining Loch was lowered by seventeen feet in 1662, locally held to have been because a child of the Haining family had fallen in and drowned. It would have provided an adequate water supply in the 12th century.

Besides being an important town the most pressing reason for Selkirk to be chosen was the presence of its royal castle and the protection it promised. There is also sufficient flat or sloping ground available nearby to the castle on which to site the abbey and it was in the 'protected' area of the king's own hunting ground.

### Why did the Abbey leave and move to Kelso?

Given that antipathy was shown to the bishop of Glasgow, in whose see Selkirk abbey was, provoking his flights for safety to France, it is clear that the Roman Catholic attempts to compete with the Culdean church were not welcomed.

David I, after succeeding to the Scottish crown, moved his court and entourage from Selkirk to Roxburgh castle sometime in the 1120s. The



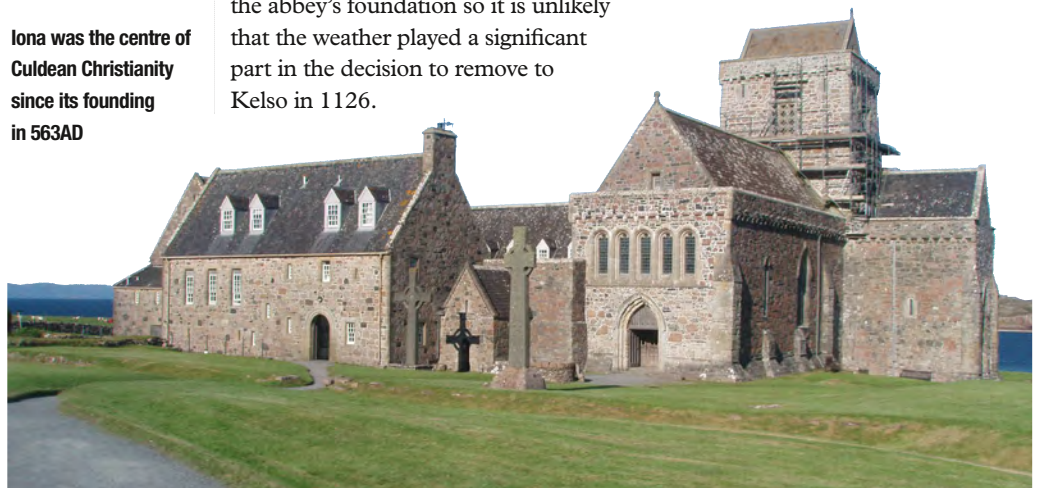
13880.- KILSO. RUINS OF ROXBURGH CASTLE.

### Ruins of Roxburgh castle, to which David I and his court moved after he succeeded to the Scottish crown

abbey, having lost the guaranteed protection of the castle and the king's presence in Selkirk, followed him to Kelso in 1126. During the brief time the abbey was in Selkirk, the hostility of the Culdean church and local opposition, referred to above, was obviously significant. We can only surmise that the monks at the abbey were threatened, as their bishop had been, and took the first opportunity to safeguard themselves and the abbey by moving away to Kelso to be again under the king's protection at nearby Roxburgh castle.

The poor weather is sometimes cited as being the reason for going to Kelso but the extended phase of warm weather known as the 'medieval warm period' (c.950-c.1250) coincided with the abbey's foundation so it is unlikely that the weather played a significant part in the decision to remove to Kelso in 1126.

### Iona was the centre of Culdean Christianity since its founding in 563AD



### Abbey location

The evidence for the abbey's location is sparse, but relating evidence from the surviving charters to early maps, and considering the defensive imperative for it to have been close to the castle, it could be conjectured as below that the abbey was somewhere in the lower part of present-day Selkirk (see map 1, page 46).

The criteria that the Benedictines enunciated as prerequisites for a successful abbey establishment were referred to earlier. By siting an abbey in lower Selkirk, David would have met all these criteria. Divine approval for founding an abbey must have seemed assured, since others were doing it all over Europe and David would not have wanted to miss out

(point one). Selkirk, being within the king's own exclusive hunting ground of Ettrick Forest, was as safe an area as was possible at the time (point two). Selkirk castle, with its military garrison and where the king frequently resided, would be only 300 yards away from the abbey, making it secure (point three) – Lindean, two miles distant, could not have afforded the same level of protection (see map 2). The land for the abbey was granted to the monks by the king and was therefore owned by them (point four). The water supply was assured from the Clockie burn, and was in fact sufficient to run a mill until 1820 (point five). Up until the late 19th century, the lower part of Selkirk was largely unsettled (point six). The Benedictine criteria were therefore all met.

In founding the abbey, David granted substantial property to the monks. Thereby he created two towns, Selkirk Regis (of the king, the old part) and Selkirk Abbatis (of the abbot, the new part), sufficiently distinct to be referred to by separate names. Identifying the boundaries of the land grants has hitherto caused considerable trouble and confusion to historians, but by examining the grants and relating them to the topography of the land we can get a much better idea of where the abbey likely was. There were three charters and all said much the same with regard to land boundaries. Besides the substantial grants of land around Selkirk (1119 charter), the local area granted was bounded on the west by the 'rivulet that falls into Yarrow' terminating at the eastern end at the rivulet that 'falls from Crossinmara into Tweed' (possibly Faldonside). There is an additional bit, which was originally misleadingly translated as 'beyond the said rivulet that falls into Yarrow, a certain particle of land between the road which leads from the castle to the abbey and Yarrow, that is, towards the old town'.

The charter of removal of 1147, written over 30 years after the abbey was built, is more specific in mentioning the piece of land beyond the rivulet and says: 'quondam particulam terrae inter viam quae venit de castello at super veterem abbathiam cadet in eodem rivulo, et Gieruam'. The Latin word 'super' in this context can mean 'beyond'



when taking the accusative. The translation of this passage would then become 'that particle of land between the road which comes from the castle and beyond the old abbey (which) falls in the same way by the rivulet, and Yarrow'.

These clues point to the land being described here as the present Howdenhaugh, which lies south of the 'Meeting of the Waters' (where the rivers Ettrick and Yarrow join) and part of which lay just beyond the Howdenburn debouchment in about 1600. The road thus described also strongly hints that the abbey was somewhere close to and to the west or northwest of Selkirk 'old town'.

The 'road from the castle' could have been the old driveway into the Haining which meets the present

**Modern-day view of the Lindean Churchyard, which local lore has it, was the site of the abbey. It is about two miles from Selkirk's 12th-century castle and too far away to be protected by it**

**Blaeu's 'Teviota' map of 1654, showing the earlier course of the Howdenburn 'the stream that falls into Yarrow' at the meeting of the Yarrow and Ettrick**

Ettrick road opposite the supposed site of the old 'village' of 'Larriston'. There are the traces of an ancient road on Howden Hill heading towards Howden and Yarrow which could be the one referred to in the foundation charter.

The crucial piece of evidence is this: reference to the Blaeu map with Pont's drawings of c. 1590 shows that the best candidate for this western boundary is in fact the stream called the Howdenburn which at that time went into the Ettrick/Yarrow confluence at the Meeting of the Waters and could be said to debouch into either Yarrow or Ettrick. Over time, and shown in General Roy's map of 1747, this stream has changed course and now goes into the Ettrick 1,400 yards



In the next  
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downstream. Thus there is no need to invent a transposition of names of the rivers as suggested by Thomas Craig Brown. The Ettrick and Yarrow do not need to have swapped their names in order to confirm the veracity of the charters, and the 'rivulet that falls into Yarrow' can be identified as the Howdenburn. The identity of this 'rivulet that falls into Yarrow' has puzzled commentators but on the understanding that the course of the Howdenburn changed, the land grants in the foundation charter make perfect sense.

The unexcavated site of the known medieval village of Larriston might have been part of 'Selkirk Abbatis' which might have spread over the existing part of Selkirk in the Heatherlie/Kilncroft/Mill Street area. This latter part of town was, until the 1800s, largely separate from the main part of Selkirk (that is, 'Selkirk Regis') and substantial connection to the rest of Selkirk was only made during the 18th and 19th centuries. Kilncroft, as a name, may be a persistence of a corrupted 'Kil' element indicating a holy place. There was also a reference in Selkirk in 1505 to the 'Batts' being granted, along with Heatherlie and Kilncroft, to Ker of Yair. In the same grant is eighteen acres east of the Millburn, 'on morisons hill' – in other words chunks of land, all in one area to the west and northwest of Selkirk, including one significantly called the 'Batts'. This is a possible corruption of 'Abbatis' although 'batts' are found all over Scotland near to churches and were remnant names of sites on which archery was practised by law after Sunday church.

There is no church recorded nearby to this area, circled on the map on page 46, to account for the 'kil' or

'batts' names persisting. They could instead be an echo of the abbey church.

Interestingly, the Glasgow diocesan rent rolls from the early 14th-century record that Selkirk Abbatis consisted of sixteen cottages, three breweries and a mill, together occupying at least ten acres. The abbot's Selkirk was therefore quite sizeable. There is not a scintilla of evidence that these were accommodated at Lindean. In any case, the construction of a mill lade to run the mill in Lindean would have been an immense undertaking compared to simply using the existing Haining 'Clockie' burn in Selkirk. The Clockie burn supplied water for all of Selkirk until 1706 and powered a corn mill until 1800.

## Conclusion

In order to clarify where Selkirk's abbey was, it will be necessary to undertake a series of excavations both at Lindean and in Selkirk itself. Owing to the extensive building development in Selkirk, an opportunity may not present itself for the foreseeable future.

But even without archaeological investigation, analysis of the existing historical evidence – especially the need for protection from Selkirk castle, the unrecognised change in the course of the Howdenburn and the corrected translation of the Latin in the charters – points quite clearly to the abbey having been in the Heatherlie/Kilncroft/Murison Hill part of modern Selkirk.

*Dr Lindsay Neil trained at the University of Edinburgh Medical School, where he graduated in 1965. He served in the army for many years, being a veteran of the first Gulf War, before working as a GP in Selkirk for 20 years. He has had a lifelong interest in archaeology and history, particularly pertaining to the Scottish Borders.*



## FURTHER READING

*History of Selkirkshire*, D. Douglas (Edinburgh, 1886)

*Flowers of the Forest*, ed. J. Gilbert (Selkirk, 1985)

*Scottish Miscellanies*; Melrose Parish, A. Milne (Edinburgh 1769)

*Roman Scotland*, D.J. Breeze (Newcastle, 1979)

*Chronica de Mailros* (Edinburgh, 1835)

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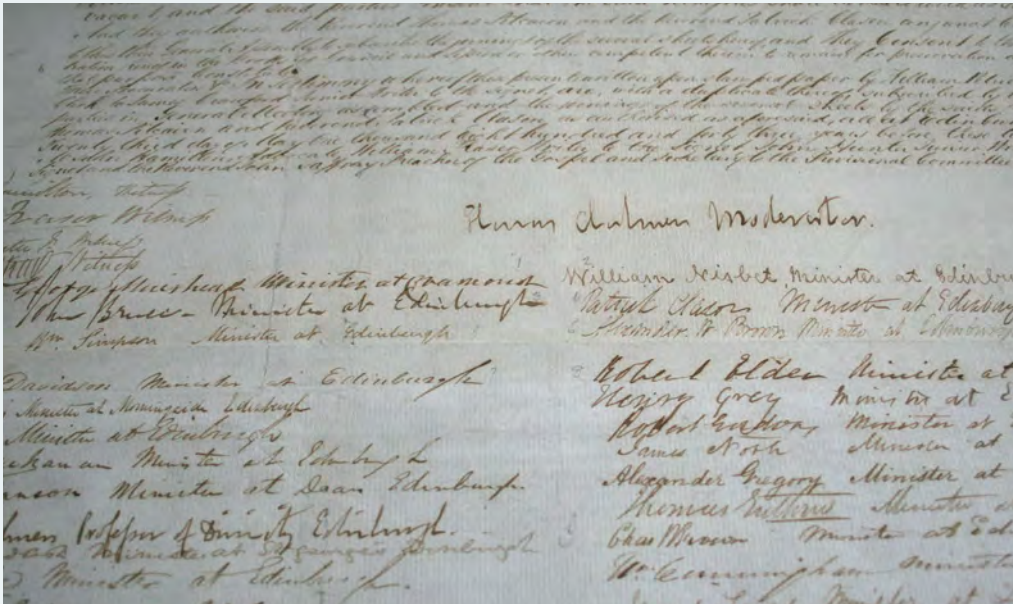


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# The Free Church's birth certificate, 1843

Dr Tristram Clarke spotlights a document which marks a dramatic event in history when the Church of Scotland was torn apart following the 'ten years' conflict'



and privileges of membership of the church of Scotland. Cannily they asserted their entitlement to benefits from the Widows' Fund. David Octavius Hill painted the assembled throng, emphasising the sacrifice of worldly interest that the ministers were making when they quit their parishes by depicting Dr McFarlane of the West Parish, Greenock, signing his name. McFarlane was said to have been given the honour of doing so because he occupied the richest living in Scotland.

The order of the signatures on the actual document reveals Hill's artistic creativity, because the first to sign was Thomas Chalmers, the moderator of the breakaway assembly and architect of the Disruption. He was followed by the Edinburgh ministers, while McFarlane's signature is found further down among those of his brethren of the presbytery of Greenock. It made sense in the crowded space to call forward ministers from each presbytery to sign. Their numbers varied enormously between presbyteries: one in five clergy quit the church in Dumfries but three-quarters in Ross. In time some 470 ministers joined the Free church, which sprang into life nationwide with astonishing energy, helped materially by the committed laity who followed their ministers out.

Hill shows one Act of Separation, but there were in fact two, the second specially made for registering in the books of council and session, for 'preservation' and in order to have the authentic document available in case of any legal challenge. Like countless other legal documents before and since, it forms part of a rich seam of Scotland's story in National Records of Scotland.

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**Act of Separation and Deed of Demission, 23 May 1843 (NRS, RD15/32/347)**

This year sees the 175th anniversary of one of the key moments of Scottish history, when in 1843 the church of Scotland was split down the middle and lost almost half its ministers and many of its members. The resulting formation of the Free church had a huge and lasting impact on Scottish life. This momentous event is recorded in the Act of Separation and Deed of Demission, a remarkable document that is preserved with other legal records in Register House.

The Disruption, as it came to be known, had been a long time in the making, the culmination of clashes over the right to choose parish ministers. The Evangelical wing of the church of Scotland believed that the members of the church congregations should be able to elect their own ministers. Opposed to them across an increasingly acrimonious divide were the Moderate clergy and their lay supporters, who accepted or asserted that patrons of parishes had the legal right to appoint ministers. In a series of test rulings

in disputed cases, the court of session repeatedly decided in favour of the patrons against popular claims. Government also failed to reconcile the opposing camps. The 'Ten Years' Conflict' from 1833 onwards had to be resolved one way or another, and some form of split within the established church became increasingly likely.

The moment of separation was carefully staged. When the annual general assembly gathered in St Andrews Church, George Street, Edinburgh on 18 May 1843, the outgoing moderator Dr David Welsh produced a Protest signed by 203 of the assembled ministers and elders. It declared that they were to withdraw and to take steps 'for separating in an orderly way from the Establishment', a move forced on them by the interference of the civil powers in the church's affairs. The protesting ministers and elders then withdrew and processed to a hall at Tanfield, Canonmills.

A few days later, on 23 May, some 386 ministers gathered there to sign the Act of Separation and Deed of Demission, by which they resigned their livings and gave up all the rights



## An influential historian

*Laura Stewart examines the first full study of Robert Baillie's life and career which seeks to the understand the man whose writings have proved vital to studies of covenanted Scotland*

*The Life and Works of Robert Baillie (1602-1662). Politics, Religion and Record-Keeping in the British Civil Wars*

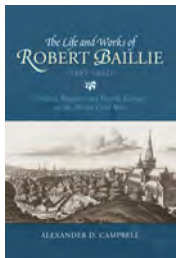
A.D. Campbell

Boydell Press, 2017

270 pages

Hardback, £75.00

ISBN: 9781783271849



'Our maine feare to have our religion lost, our throats cutted, our poor countrey made ane English province'; 'The English were for a civill League, we for a religious Covenant'; 'bot a lame Erastian Presbyterie'. Civil

war historians will immediately recognise the words of Robert Baillie, the Scottish cleric and polemicist. Baillie had a quote for almost every occasion and this, as Alexander Campbell's fine new study observes, has resulted in historians busily mining his copious writings for pithy one-liners instead of studying what he actually thought. Campbell's first book goes a goodly way to rectifying the problem. His thematically-structured account represents a clear advance on Francis McCoy's 1974 biography, revealing much more coherently how Baillie's thought evolved over several decades.

Baillie's apparent 'moderation', combined with the accessibility of David Laing's authoritative 19th-century edition of the *Letters and Journals*, has encouraged historians tacitly to treat Baillie's opinion as that of 'the covenanters'. Campbell rightly asserts that covenanters were not 'ideologically homogenous' and teases out some of the differences, especially on key questions such as where authority lay in the church. Given the religious and political fragmentation that became a hallmark of the English civil wars, calling the covenanters 'hopelessly divided' seems too strong, at least before the protestor-resolutioner split occurred in 1650 (p.4). The covenanter leadership really was good at maintaining an outward show of unity and its disintegration, although rooted in earlier events, had a lot to do with the actions of Charles II. Somewhat contra the overall argument, Campbell's elucidation of Baillie's orthodox Calvinism, as well as his commitment to a monarchy limited by law, suggests that

positive shared principles, not simply common enemies, kept the covenanter elite together.

This does not mean doubts and disagreements were absent. Baillie spoke for a wider constituency when he expressed fears that the abjuration in 1638 of both the unpopular reforms to church worship known as the Perth Articles and, far more controversially, the episcopal office itself, would mean that 'all shall be abjured who practised them' (p.149). Yet abjured they both were, along with the Prayer Book. Defences of the Stuart church in the 1620s and 1630s, as Baillie's own writings indicate, primarily accentuated obedience to authority in matters about which scripture offered neither prescription nor proscription. As Campbell helpfully makes clear, the problem for Baillie was that nonconformists like that other great chronicler of his age, David Calderwood, were risking schism, as well as erring on the side of novelty, by making practices many regarded as adiaphoric into a tenet of faith. Baillie advocated obedience to the lawful commands of the monarch and here, again, he was in line with other covenanters: the debate lay in what was meant by 'lawful' and who was fit to judge. If what John Coffey has called Baillie's 'pretty haphazard' output (p.118) coalesced around any coherent principles, they were the attainment of unity and the preservation of orthodoxy through obedience to legitimate authority. Chapter five concludes with a telling anecdote about a dispute between Baillie and a group of his parishioners who, in 1643, ventured to inform him that they thought a sung conclusion to the psalms was 'popish' and 'superstitious' (p.168). Baillie was genuine in his fretting about heterodoxy, but there is also an impression that the minister of Kilwinning resented his flock getting above themselves and expressing their own opinions.

More detail of this kind would have enlivened a book that is, in some ways, more a biography of the Baillie archive than Baillie the man. What's missing are the newsy observations, made to his cousin and life-long correspondent, William Spang, that give readers the tingly feeling of being in the room while remarkable people are doing remarkable things. Baillie was at the forefront of Scottish politics for over a decade. He was a first-hand observer of events in civil war England and an actor in London's presbyterian publishing circles. Although it is

justifiable to focus the book on Baillie's thought, it seems a shame not to take the opportunity to reassess Baillie's evolving relationships with his political associates, notably Scotland's most powerful politician, Archibald Campbell, marquis of Argyll, and his contribution to presbyterian politics while he was resident in London. The assertion that Laing has helped reduce Baillie to 'caricature' by silencing his 'distinctive voice' (pp.225, 226) flags up an occasional tendency to overstate the case.

This brings us to questions of significance and legacy. Campbell nicely brings out how Baillie laboured to conserve what he knew to be an important record of tumultuous times. Careful analysis of sources that have been ignored nuances what we know about Baillie's views. Exposition of Baillie's engagement with writers and polemicists from England, New England, and continental Europe shows how Scottish presbyterians developed their arguments in relation to wider debates. Consideration of how future writers made use of Baillie illuminates later rivalry for 'ownership' of his legacy. These are notable insights. A conclusion of only five pages' length does not, unfortunately, return to a crucial point raised in the introduction, namely, how Baillie influenced both memory of the civil war era and historical analyses of it. This was not simply a matter of remembering, but of constructing and reconstructing competing versions of the past. What is Baillie's value for historians? It is partly that Baillie spoke not, as Campbell suggests, with a 'distinctive voice', but with multiple voices that self-consciously addressed multiple audiences. We can recognise, too, the very human contradictions in a man who sought to 'douse' the 'flames' of 'religious schism', while simultaneously tooling up for the fight against 'the Roman Antichrist'; who gave voice to 'aspirations for peace' and advocated obedience to authority, while also urging prosecution of a war in England against his king (p.230). Campbell's endeavours to bring out the richness of the material produced by his subject will ensure that historians take renewed interest in Robert Baillie.

*Laura Stewart is a lecturer in early modern British history at the University of York. Her second monograph – 'Rethinking the Scottish Revolution: Covenanted Scotland, 1637-1651' – was published in 2016.*

# Exploring Glasgow's past

*Michael Meighan delves into a volume which draws attention to Glasgow's complex history, and how that history has shaped its importance to Scotland's – and Britain's – future*

## *Glasgow – A History of the City*

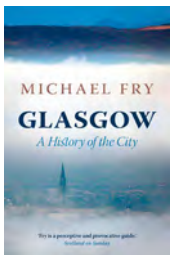
**Michael Fry**

Head of Zeus, 2017

448 pages

Hardback, £25.00

ISBN: 9781784975821



There is no doubt that Glasgow has had its highs and lows. It has seen international recognition while simultaneously achieving a reputation for slums, ill-health and violence. Glasgow

has made huge strides despite years of industrial decline but controversially, Fry's introductory statement that 'in Glasgow, violence lies just underneath the surface' (p.xviii) sets the tone of his book.

Fry describes how Glasgow's commerce began by bypassing English embargos on trading with the colonies. It was then in a good position to take advantage of the Treaty of Union that allowed the growth of a 'warehouse economy', bringing in goods and then distributing them to Europe and the growing empire. Further, the United Kingdom government decreed that any colonial produce must be landed in Britain before re-export. This suited merchants well, particularly in the trade in sugar and tobacco, to the extent that it became necessary to develop Port Glasgow and then Greenock to serve the needs of the city. It was then that the seeds of the Clyde as a great seafaring port were sown. Fry also re-addresses the long-ignored history of those merchants in the slave trade.

He describes how manufacturing grew in a logical way from a home weaving industry through the commercial development of dyes and rubberising with the names of Mackintosh and Tennant to the fore. Then, through applied research in chemicals and the serendipitous availability of ironstone and coal, these experiments led to iron smelting and steel manufacture which in turn gave the opportunity for the west of Scotland to lead the way in shipbuilding, locomotive manufacturing

and related industries. Fry tells us that Glasgow's growth in trade and its status as a 'state within a state' was due to patricians, those entrepreneurs who turned Glasgow into a great municipality by bringing their skills to the city council.

On the other hand, the author also reminds us that, in a very familiar scenario, much of their work – particularly in the replacement of Glasgow's slums – was undone by corrupt bankers whose actions in the collapse of the 1878 City of Glasgow Bank brought trade and construction in the city to a standstill. Thousands of small businesses went to the wall.

With the growth of the Labour Party, that paternalistic society was to become a great democratic municipality, but Fry reminds us that these councillors were not exempt from criticism. As power corrupts, the solid Labour power base encouraged self-serving junketing and favouritism in appointments and at times was seen to promote sectarianism and turn a blind eye to crime.

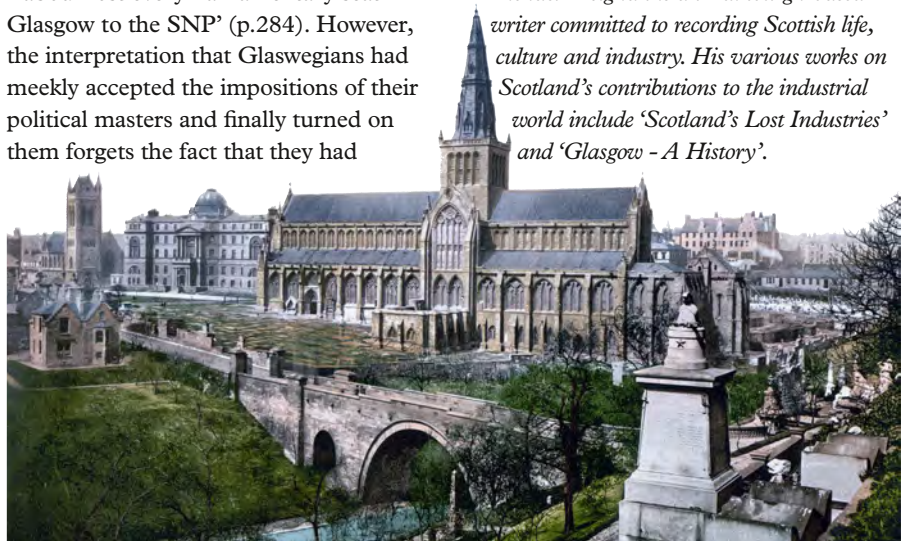
While this contempt for the electorate was growing in the west of Scotland Fry believes that many Labour party members were also rejecting the Blair/Mandelson project in London: 'While the voters had long been apparently biddable, at last they turned on their political masters. In the general election of 2015, Labour lost every Parliamentary seat in Glasgow to the SNP' (p.284). However, the interpretation that Glaswegians had meekly accepted the impositions of their political masters and finally turned on them forgets the fact that they had

successfully shown their teeth on at least two occasions. In 1994, Glasgow-based Strathclyde Regional Council carried out a referendum with 97 per cent of respondents rejecting water privatisation. In 1989, Margaret Thatcher's Conservative party was badly burned in their heavy-handed attempts in imposing the new community charge, the poll tax, which was met with anger and opposition in Scotland before being dropped.

Fry is at home debunking myths and opening wounds and I do agree that Glasgow's era of revolution and the 'Red Clydesiders' was greatly exaggerated, but it is unfair to suggest that Glaswegians meekly accept diktats of any politician. When given a worthy and fair cause they have been known to stand up and be counted. In these strange and fluid political times it is a lesson to be taken seriously.

There is controversial, thought-provoking material in this book but it is not a complete history of the city. Perhaps the depth of views on politics has prevented Fry from fully exploring Glasgow's culture; its theatre, its cinema, its writers, its sport and its place in science and medicine. These are only briefly touched on and it emerges more as a political and social history.

*Michael Meighan is an Edinburgh-based writer committed to recording Scottish life, culture and industry. His various works on Scotland's contributions to the industrial world include 'Scotland's Lost Industries' and 'Glasgow - A History'.*



St Mungo's Cathedral, Glasgow, c.1890-1905



# Land o' Cakes

*Liz Trevethick enjoys a new study of life in Aberdeenshire from the 18th century onwards, with a particular focus on a 1913 cookery book from Huntly and the local families that led to its creation*

*Strathbogie, the Gordons and the 'Land o' Cakes'; the story of the Huntly Cookery Book*

**Janet Starkey**  
 Deveron Arts, 2017  
 348 pages  
 Paperback, £17.50  
 ISBN: 9781907115318



*Strathbogie, the Gordons and the 'Land o' Cakes'* is really three books in one: a cookery book; a description of life in and around Huntly from the 18th century onwards; and a brief history of

humankind with connections to Huntly.

The *Huntly Cookery Book* was created in 1913 by local families as a fundraising project for the Town Band, 'an instrument used to recruit Volunteers for the Gordon Highlanders'. (p.7) In *Strathbogie, the Gordons and the 'Land o' Cakes'*, Janet Starkey places the *Cookery Book* in several contexts, including historical, political, archaeological, religious and domestic (to name but a few). The depth of research undertaken and attention to detail is impressive, making this a useful reference tool. Statistics, dates, and price comparisons (supported by a thorough glossary, indices, endnotes and bibliography) are all utilised to fully explore life and food in and around Huntly.

The *Cookery Book* itself provides an interesting snapshot of food and society in the early 20th century. The author makes it accessible with detailed explanations of comparative ingredients, weights and measures, adding missing instructions and elucidating existing ones. The recipes are presented in sections, covering meal courses and household tips which, with the accompanying explanations, could easily be reproduced or used today. Adverts for a variety of products and merchants are added for extra interest. Details of the donors provide interesting links to local properties and businesses, along with connections to the Scottish diaspora.

Starkey's work provides a description of life and customs in Aberdeenshire, using

extensive research to supply a detailed account of activity at all levels of society. This is supported by the inclusion of numerous personal accounts and memories, bringing the dryer facts and, at times overwhelming, detail alive. Quotes about everyday practices and customs are fascinating, and create a vivid picture of a time when fairly harsh living and working conditions existed alongside the drive towards modernity and globalisation. Changes in land ownership and management, production of resources, economy and population migration are recorded alongside descriptions of festivals, cooking practices and traditions of hospitality.

As a brief history of humankind, it is extraordinary how many links the author has made to major historical events and developments. Examples include the ancient sanctity of the host/guest relationship, the East India Company, the advancement of aviation (the First Great Aeroplane Exhibition and Flight in the north of Scotland featured at Huntly Annual Show in 1910) and, of course, World War I. It demonstrates that such small communities did not exist in isolation, but were indeed affected by seemingly unrelated events around the world. Janet Starkey supports her discussions with detailed background information, making this an ideal general reference work.

While reference is made to 'poor typesetting or proof-reading' (p.136) in *The Huntly Cookery Book*, it is hoped that a future edition of *Strathbogie, the Gordons and the 'Land o' Cakes'* has its own frequent proof-reading errors corrected. Otherwise, the book stands as a comprehensive work of research in which the author's dedication to, and enthusiasm for, her subject is clear. In addition to food being vital to all humankind, there is something of interest for everyone within its pages.

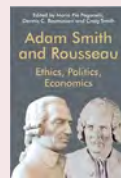
*Liz Trevethick is Curator of Large Collections at the Highland Folk Museum in Newtonmore. She has previously worked for South Shields Museum and Roman Fort, York City Archives and Mount School in York, developing her already extensive knowledge of crofting, building maintenance and repair.*

## RECENTLY PUBLISHED



**Septimius Severus in Scotland: The Northern Campaigns of the First Hammer of the Scots**  
 by Simon Elliott  
 ISBN 978-1784382049  
 Greenhill Books, £19.99

In the early 3rd century Severus, the ageing Roman emperor, launched an immense assault on Scotland that was so savage it resulted in 80 years of peace on Rome's most troublesome border. The book shows how his force of 50,000 troops, supported by the fleet, hacked their way through the Maeatae around the former Antonine Wall and then pressed on into Caledonian territory up to the Moray Firth.



**Adam Smith and Rousseau: Ethics, Politics, Economics (Edinburgh Studies in Scottish Philosophy)**  
 by M Paganelli, D Rasmussen, C Smith (eds)  
 ISBN 9781474422857

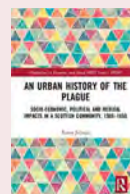
Edinburgh University Press, £80

This collection brings together an international and interdisciplinary group of Adam Smith and Jean-Jacques Rousseau scholars to explore the key shared concerns of these two great thinkers in politics, philosophy, economics, history and literature.



**Anglo-Scottish Sleepers**  
 by David Meara  
 ISBN 9781445672328  
 Amberley Publishing, £14.99

David Meara tells the fascinating story of these icons of Britain's railways, offering a history of the service, including the motorail operation, as well as stories and anecdotes from those who use the sleepers.



**An Urban History of The Plague: Socio-Economic, Political and Medical Impacts in a Scottish Community, 1500-1650 (Perspectives in Economic and Social History)**  
 by Karen Jillings  
 ISBN 9781138192829  
 Routledge, £115

This book examines the incidence and effects of plague in an early modern Scottish community by analysing bureaucratic, medical and social responses to epidemics in the north-east port of Aberdeen, focusing on the period 1500 to 1650. While Aberdeen's experience of plague was in many ways similar to that of other towns throughout Europe, certain idiosyncrasies in the responses articulated within the city make it a particularly interesting case study, which challenges several assumptions about early modern mentalities.

**Hidden history**



# Commemorating Cambrai

**Neil McLennan** shares stories gathered during a trip to France and Flanders with his father to commemorate World War I and Scottish connections on the Western Front

**O**ne battle that did not receive any 'official' attention in recent Scottish commemoration was the battle of Cambrai. This was disappointing given the key role Scottish regiments played in this battle and the losses they suffered there. My father and I took a trip to France in November to attend commemorations of this battle.

Our visit began at a well-known pilgrimage stop, Ypres. The third battle of Ypres received vast attention as part of official centenary commemorations.

When walking into Tyne Cot cemetery, the sight of 11,954 graves is staggering. These graves are one thing, but the wall at the back of the cemetery with the names of those 35,000 with no known grave is even more overwhelming. In the middle of the cemetery stand two German pill boxes, the very objectives for which British forces fell. Standing proud close by are both the Cross of Sacrifice and the Stone of Remembrance.

## Remembering Scots of World War I

The Scottish connection continued as we drove into Ypres, where we stopped at another new memorial, The Scottish memorial at Frezenberg. This is the only memorial on the Western Front dedicated specifically to all Scots and those of Scottish descent who fell in World War I. It also remembers the men of the Scottish African Brigade who fought as part of the 9th

(Scottish) Division. It is a bold statement, with soldiers and pipers standing by a Celtic cross.

That night we paid our respects at perhaps the most bold of British memorials, the resplendent and respectful Menin Gate. We were privileged to take part in the ceremony, laying a wreath for the fallen and also reading the epitaph as part of the official proceedings that night.

Following commemorations in 2017 to mark war poet Wilfred Owen being in Edinburgh we paid our respects at Ors Communal cemetery. We also visited the point on the Sambre Oise canal where Owen fell in action and the Forester's House from where he wrote his last letter home.

Owen is buried along with 58 others in a tiny Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery at the back of a French civilian cemetery. The Ors British cemetery, just next to where Owen fell, contains 102 graves, of which eleven are Highland Light Infantrymen who died on the same day as Owen, with just one week of the war to go.

It was, however, another war poet whose grave we were heading to visit and on arrival in Cambrai we immediately undertook a recce of the key areas we planned to visit over the next couple of days.

On 20 November we were privileged to join locals and

**The UK and France united in remembrance**

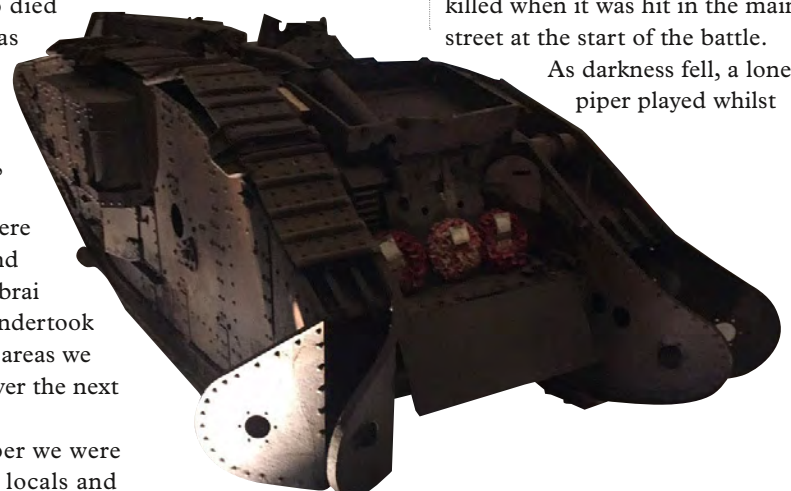
**A re-enactment procession recreates the bravery of those who fell in the battle of Cambrai**

**The tank 'Deborah' which is kept by the town of Flesquières**

visitors in the town of Flesquières. Here the tank 'Deborah' was kept in an old barn for visitors to view. It has now been moved to a purpose-built museum just next to Flesquières cemetery. However, another tank was in place in the barn for the start of the evening's commemorations.

Following a lecture next to the tank a large crowd gathered to watch a procession down Flesquières main street. Re-enactment officers dressed as tank crew led the procession followed by a pipe band, representing Scottish soldiers who backed up the tanks in the battle of Cambrai. Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, Gordon Highlanders and Seaforth Highlanders all followed this new technology into battle in what was thought to be the struggle that would break German lines. Just before reaching the cemetery, the tank crew picked up a lantern which they then marched to the burial ground, laying it at the graves of the men of 'Deborah' who were killed when it was hit in the main street at the start of the battle.

As darkness fell, a lone piper played whilst





two red flares were lit behind the cemetery wall to mark the beginning of the battle which resulted in 44,000 Commonwealth and 45,000 German casualties. It was a haunting start to the commemorations.

The following day we visited the grave of Scottish war poet Ewart Alan Mackintosh. Historian Colin Campbell has done a splendid job sharing his life story. However, Mackintosh's death was, until recently, a bit of a mystery. We have been able to add some information.

My great-grandfather had been next to Mackintosh when he fell in action and had often told the story to my father: moving towards the German-held town of Cantaing, the Seaforths had been in a sunken road. 2nd Lt Mackintosh and private McLennan went ahead of the men with a Lewis Gun to look for enemy targets. Mackintosh was hit directly through the head as he looked for targets. 100 years on we laid a wreath at his grave at Orival Wood cemetery. Here 283 fallen lie, including eight German graves.

The town of Cambrai put on an emotive range of events and on the night of Mackintosh's death



a concert at Cambrai cathedral showed the townspeople's respect for those who liberated their lands and fell in foreign fields.

### Family connections

Our final stop before heading home was to Abbeville Cemetery to commemorate an act of courage, without which I would not be here. My father tells the story of great-grandfather McLennan being injured at Cambrai on 23 November 1917 far better than me:

*Roderick McLennan had been hit as a German plane strafed British lines. He struggled back with blood pouring from his wound soaking his tunic and Mackenzie tartan kilt and apron. He was saved by a private from the Royal Scots who left his trench and carried him to safety. The soldier turned out to be his cousin Kenny Scougall [Kenny was the family name: Private George Scougall, 1/9th Royal Scots, who were on the right of the 1/7th Argyll's] who had no idea whom he had rescued until back at the dressing station. He was awarded the Military Medal for his action. Unfortunately he succumbed with the flu epidemic of 1918.*

War poet Wilfred Owen died

**Kenny McLennan laying a wreath at the grave of war poet Ewart Alan Mackintosh in Orival Wood Cemetery**

**Paying respects at the Seaforth Memorial, Cantaing**

on 4 November 1918 with a week of the war to go. George Scougall died the following day. He is buried at Abbeville communal cemetery extension in France and commemorated on the Pitlochry war memorial in Perthshire. Abbeville contains the graves of many who died in one of the three military hospitals in the area in late 1918, some from the Spanish flu which took as many lives as the war itself.

## Historic hotels

Our hotel for the night in Ypres continued the commemoration theme. **Ariane Hotel** in the centre of Ypres is not only well-placed for the town itself but also contains its own museum with uniforms and artefacts from the area, well presented in the hotel reception, alongside an extensive library of books from which guests can borrow. However, we sadly only had one night as we were heading onto Cambrai.

**Manoir le Louis XXI** had been a château before World War I. Dating from the 18th century, it was destroyed by war, has since been rebuilt and now offers bedrooms in the house and also a spacious studio-apartment gîte. Masnieres is within easy reach of all the Cambrai battlefields and cemeteries.

The château sits just along the road from a wonderful Canadian memorial resplendent with caribou (it is not just at Beaumont Hamel this can be found) and also the bridge over the canal where a British tank collapsed the bridge whilst crossing it.



Discover more events and exhibitions on our website: <http://scot.sh/HSxevents>

## TALK

### Illicit Whisky Chaser, 21 May

Baldernock Local History Group welcomes Dr Clare Wilson (University of Stirling) for a talk titled 'Illicit Whisky Chaser' at 7.30pm in Baldernock Church Hall. £2 donation requested to cover hire of hall. For enquiries contact Paul Bishop on tel: 0141 956 2577

## FESTIVAL

### Festival of Museums, 18 to 20 May

Museums around Scotland will be taking part in Festival of Museums, with talks, exhibitions, 'museums at night' events, historical re-enactments and activities for all ages relating to the arts and science.

Web: [www.festivalofmuseums.co.uk](http://www.festivalofmuseums.co.uk)

## EXHIBITION

### Rip it up: The Story of Scottish Pop, 22 June to 25 November

From the early days of the dancehalls through the Seventies and New Wave, *Rip It Up* explores how Scottish pop emerged and evolved, spotlighting both global stars and local heroes. The exhibition will be brought to life through original stage outfits and instruments, many loaned by the artists themselves, plus memorabilia, props, film and music.

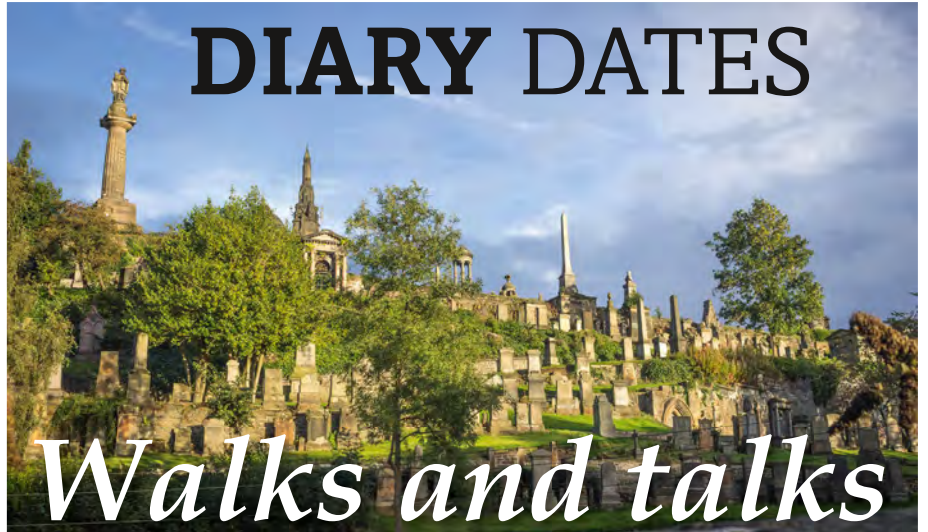
National Museum of Scotland, Exhibition Gallery 1, Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1JF; tel: 0300 123 6789; website: [www.nms.ac.uk](http://www.nms.ac.uk)

## TALK

### Kirk Session records, 19 May

The Scottish Genealogy Society hosts a talk on making the most of kirk session records for discovering more about the lives and times of our ancestors.

Scottish Genealogy Society, 15 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL; tel: 0131 220 3677; website: [www.scotsgenealogy.com](http://www.scotsgenealogy.com)



A new season of history and archaeology outdoor events begins as we enter the summer months, with events including history tours, guided walks and an archaeological dig

**Friends of Glasgow Necropolis** has two free guided walking tours, on 5 and 27 May. Visitors are invited to walk this historic burial ground and explore the architecture and memorials, as well as hearing the stories of some of the 50,000 people buried here. Book at [glasgowneropolis.org](http://glasgowneropolis.org)

**The Scottish Local History Forum** has a 'walk and talk' event on 28 June at the Tall Ship, Riverside in Glasgow. Following a guided tour of the ship, attendees will take a guided tour of Govan Old Church with Professor Driscoll of the unique collection of early medieval stones carved in the 9th to 11th centuries. Tickets are £20 (non-member)/ £15 (SLHF member). Book at <http://scot.sh/slhfevent>

Come along to an InsightTour at **Stanley Mills** in Perthshire on 12 May to find out how this former textile mill is being conserved and will shortly become accessible to the public, almost thirty years after it closed the doors on a 200-year history of textile production. The mill will also be open to the public throughout the weekend, as part of National Mills Weekend. To book a place on the tour visit: [scot.sh/hsstanleytour](http://scot.sh/hsstanleytour)

Archaeologists will attempt to locate the site of a 7th-century monastery at **Coldingham Archaeological Dig** between 19 June and 1 July. Videos, live streams, virtual artefacts and blogs will be shared on the project website to allow members of the public to get involved: [digventures.com/projects/coldingham](http://digventures.com/projects/coldingham)

## EVENTS SPOTLIGHT



### Scots in Italy Artists and Adventurers

until 3 March 2019

Celebrated as the centre of classical and modern European civilisation, Italy held many attractions for eighteenth-century Scots. Featuring 55 artworks from across the National Galleries of Scotland, this exhibition explores the Scottish experience of Italy in the 18th century, a period when fascination with the country reached its height.

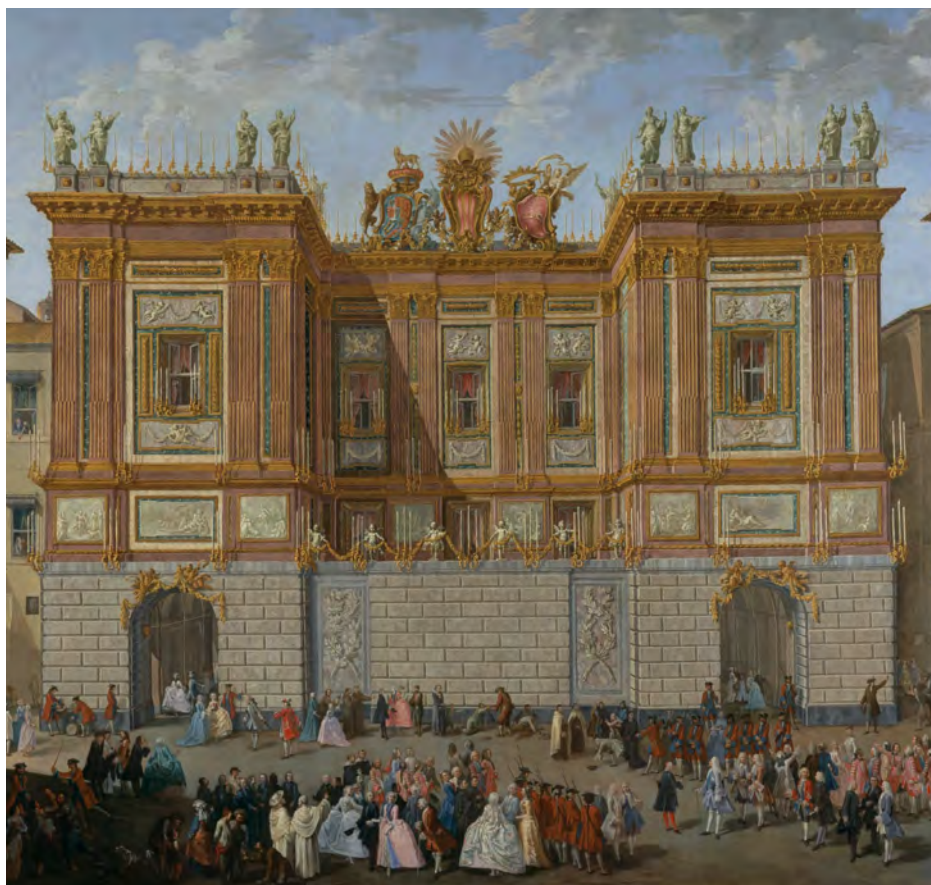
Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JD; tel: 0131 624 6200; website: [www.nationalgalleries.org](http://www.nationalgalleries.org)

# Canaletto and the Art of Venice

11 May to 21 October

*Canaletto & the Art of Venice* presents a spectacular selection of 18th-century Venetian art, with Canaletto's greatest works shown alongside paintings and works on paper by Sebastiano and Marco Ricci, Francesco Zuccarelli, Rosalba Carriera, Pietro Longhi and Giovanni Battista Piazzetta.

Palace of Holyroodhouse, Canongate, EH8 8DX; tel: 0303 123 7306; website: [www.royalcollection.org.uk/visit/palace-of-holyroodhouse](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/visit/palace-of-holyroodhouse)



From top: *Prince James receiving his son, Prince Henry, in front of the Palazzo del Re, 1747, about 1747-48*  
• *Canaletto, The Mouth of the Grand Canal looking West towards the Carita, c.1729-30, from a set of twelve paintings of the Grand Canal*

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## SEMINAR

### Edinburgh 19th-century research seminar, 31 May

The University of Edinburgh is the venue for this seminar (4pm-6pm) with Elly Grayson (University of Edinburgh) – JM Barrie's 'Margaret Ogilvy': Appropriating the biography and conceptions of storytelling; Guy Hinton (University of Newcastle) – Representing the wars of the 1850s and 1880s, followed by Dan Haverty (University of Cork) – 'These Were My Means?': Nationalist appropriation of Irish republicanism.

2.13 Old Infirmary, 1 Drummond Street, Edinburgh; e-mail: [edinburgh19thcentury@gmail.com](mailto:edinburgh19thcentury@gmail.com)

## TALK

### Borders Family History Society AGM, 27 May

The society's AGM will be followed by a talk on political disturbances in the borders by Norrie McLeish. Starts 2.30pm.

St. Peter's Church Hall, Parsonage Road Galashiels TD1 3HS

## WALK

### Arthur's Adventure, Mondays in June

Come along on a 'more challenging' guided walk to learn about Arthur's Seat's turbulent past, created by fire and ice. Find out about the people who lived and worked in the Park from 7,000 years ago through to the present day.

Runs 4, 11, 18 and 25 June, 1pm-4pm. Free – booking essential. Tel: 0131 652 8150; e-mail: [rangers@hes.scot](mailto:rangers@hes.scot)

## TALK

### Ever to Excel Discovery Afternoon, 19 May

Donating to a University like St Andrews makes world-class research possible. Explore some of this research with experts in the Enduring Gifts gallery at the Museum of the University of St Andrews. They will highlight the impact that the donations of St Andrews' most generous benefactors have on research today: from art history to medicine.

Free, but booking essential. Tel: 01334 461660

# To what extent did Robert the Bruce play a significant role in helping Scotland gain independence?

In his winning entry in the Scottish History Network School Essay Prize, **Conlan McPherson** discusses the role of Robert the Bruce in helping secure Scotland's victory in the Wars of Independence.



**Bruce in a National Museum of Scotland display. Inset: Conlan pictured with his teacher John Sherry**

Scotland was within Bruce's grasp. Overall, taking advantage of English mistakes played a key part in Bruce preparing for a strong independent country as being able to defeat his Scottish enemies without an English presence allowed him to enforce his position as king. However, his excellent leadership and consequent victory over the English at Bannockburn achieved independence from English rule as it pushed the English out of every corner of Scotland.

Historian Fiona Watson believes that Robert Bruce's excellent leadership was the defining reason for Scotland becoming an independent nation. The battle of Bannockburn (23-24 June 1314) was a decisive and resounding victory for Bruce. Under his leadership, the Scots used the terrain to their advantage and defeated an English force considerably larger than their own. This victory, according to Watson, secured Bruce's position as king of Scots as he 'was now master of all Scotland'. However, although Bannockburn was an important triumph for the Scots, it did not end the war. Edward II escaped from battle and continued to deny the existence of an independent Scotland and maintained that he was still overlord. As a result, Bruce continued to fight but this time it was no longer a war of independence but a war for recognition.

Further evidence of king Robert's effective leadership is seen during the Great Raid of 1322, which culminated in the battle of Old Byland. The Lanercost Chronicle records that Scottish forces 'devastated almost all of Northumberland with fire'. After defeating the earl of Richmond at Byland, Bruce advanced towards Edward's position at nearby Rievaulx, forcing him to flee. Sir Thomas Gray, son of an important English knight who fought in the wars, writes, 'the Scots were so fierce

**T**he brutal execution of William Wallace in 1305 ultimately left Robert Bruce, earl of Carrick to continue Scottish resistance to king Edward I of England. Bruce proclaimed himself king of Scots in 1306 and was crowned by bishop Wishart at Scone. Throughout his reign (1306-1329), king Robert fought successfully to re-establish Scotland's place as an independent country. Bruce's attainment of Scottish independence was fundamentally down to three key, and related, aspects: Bruce taking advantage of English mistakes; his successful use of diplomacy; and the most crucial factor, his excellent leadership.

Historians such as Angus Konstam argue that taking advantage of English mistakes was an important reason for why Scotland eventually achieved independence. On 7 July 1307, king Edward I died while on his way to crush the Bruce forces and was succeeded by his son, Edward II. With the English army at the border, Edward II's first mistake was to withdraw with his father's body back to Westminster for the funeral, as this allowed Bruce, whose kingship at this time was on the verge of collapse, to regroup from previous defeats.

Furthermore, Konstam argues that Edward II, in remaining in England for three years, gave 'Robert Bruce a breathing space, just when he needed it most. The Scottish king would make good use of this vital reprieve'. This is important as Bruce was able to turn his attention to his Scottish enemies to prevent the threat of a coup which would damage his plan for an independent country, and so began the 'Herschip of Buchan'.

Bruce marched into the Comyn heartlands with a force, according to Scottish chronicler Walter Bower, of 3,000 men. He employed a scorched-earth policy, destroying crops and Scottish castles. This is significant as when each castle fell he denied the English a bastion of defence to try and dismantle an independent Scotland. With the north-east secure, the king was then able to mount a series of successful attacks on English strongholds in the south. One by one, English garrisons fell to Robert or his famous lieutenants, Douglas, Randolph and Edward Bruce (the king's brother). Edward II's mistake compounded his initial mistake, in that he did not reinforce his garrisons in Scotland.

By the beginning of 1314, only Stirling castle and Berwick remained in English hands and an independent

and their chiefs so daring, and the English so cowed, that it was no otherwise between them than as a hare before greyhounds’.

This is paramount, as faced with continual raids on their lands, and feeling that the crown did nothing to protect them, northern English lords made private arrangements with Bruce. As part of these agreements Bruce partly achieved his main aim – English recognition of Scotland as an independent country, albeit Edward still refused to recognise him. Overall, Bruce’s leadership was key to the achievement of Scottish independence as his resounding victory at Bannockburn pushed English forces almost completely out of Scotland. However, with Edward’s denial of Scotland’s independence Robert’s successful use of diplomacy, was also key to victory.

Successful use of diplomacy was crucial to securing Scottish independence, according to G.W.S Barrow. On 6 April 1320, the ‘Declaration of Arbroath’ was handed to Sirs Adam Gordon and Edward Maubisson for delivery to pope John XXII at Avignon. The letter is an elaborate argument detailing the reasons for Scottish independence and justifying king Robert’s usurpation of the throne in 1306. Barrow states it was ‘the most eloquent statement of the case for national independence to be produced anywhere in medieval Europe’. The letter, often quoted by historians, shows the Scottish people’s desire for freedom and their determination to keep that freedom.

Ronald McNair Scott writes, ‘The impact on the pope was immediate ... he sent a letter to Edward II exhorting him to make peace with the Scots’. This is important as papal recognition forced England into negotiating with Scotland, showing that Robert the Bruce would, alongside his total control of Scotland, have documents recognising the country’s independence. However, peace talks collapsed by 1322 and the countries resumed conflict, meaning Bruce had not yet achieved a recognised independent country. It was not until after the deposition of Edward II in 1327 that Bruce was able to negotiate recognition for Scotland

with England’s new regent, Roger de Mortimer.

The treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton, signed in 1328, brought an end to the war and acknowledged the independence of Scotland. Fiona Watson writes, ‘in return for an acknowledgement that he and his heirs should be free to enjoy the kingdom of Scotland without having to pay homage for it, the Scottish king agreed to pay £20,000’. Overall, Bruce’s successes in diplomatic situations were pivotal for gaining independence as he had won the war of recognition with the ratification of the treaty in which England acknowledged Scotland as independent. However, Bruce’s leadership and victory at Bannockburn put him in a position of strength to demand recognition as king.

To conclude, Scotland gained its independence as a direct result of Robert the Bruce’s excellent leadership. His victory at Bannockburn turned the tide and routed the English from every corner of Scotland. In essence, Scotland was a free and independent country. However, Bruce’s successful use of diplomacy, as well as taking advantage of English mistakes, ultimately led to Scottish independence being recognised by England in the treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton in 1328. Thus, king Robert I of Scotland was instrumental in helping Scotland gain independence.



## FURTHER READING

*Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland*  
G.W.S. Barrow (Edinburgh, 2005)

*Bannockburn: Scotland’s Greatest Battle for Independence*  
A. Konstam, (London, 2014)

*Robert the Bruce: King of Scots*  
R.M. Scott (Edinburgh, 2014)

*Robert The Bruce: Pocket Giants*  
F. Watson (Stroud, 2014)

# MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

## poetry garden to be created in St Andrews

Plans are underway for a piece of neglected land in the St Andrews conservation area to be transformed into a history garden, with a large statue of Mary Queen of Scots.

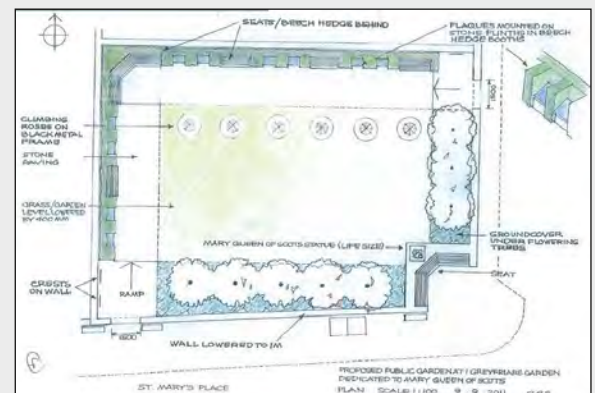
The garden, on the corner of Greyfriars Garden and St Mary’s Place in St Andrews, Fife, has lain derelict for over 20 years. Now, the recently-formed community group Poets’ Neuk has learned that its application to register an interest in buying the garden has been approved by the Scottish Government.

The plans (shown below) celebrate the site’s recorded connection with Mary Queen of Scots. Poetry by and about the Queen will be featured in the garden, and, in time, a life-size statue of the Stewart queen will be a centrepiece, surrounded by flowering trees, climbing roses and a series of poetry plaques mounted on stone plinths.

Using the community right to buy legislation, now extended to urban areas, a group of local residents supported by twelve major voluntary organisations in the town, submitted their two-stage application in December and January.

The proposed garden, in the centre of the ancient Royal Burgh, is on the site of the medieval Greyfriars monastery. This piece of land was granted to the community of St Andrews by Mary Queen of Scots on 17 April 1567, a few months before her forced abdication. Since then, the site of the monastery has passed through many hands.

The plans for the garden reflect its medieval history and will aim to return the land to community use, provide an extra resource for townspeople and an additional site of interest for visitors to the town.



Plan of the proposed garden, with life-sized Mary Queen of Scots statue

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Subscription details on page 50  
Join History Scotland and save!

July/Aug issue: on sale 9 June 2018

History Scotland is published bi-monthly by  
Warners Group Publications ISSN: 1475-5270  
Printed by Warners (Midlands) plc,  
The Maltings, Bourne, Lincs PE10 9PH  
Distribution by Warners Group Publications plc

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# FINAL WORD

## The James I Charterhouse Project



**Paul Wilson**, a project leader on the James I Charterhouse Project, talks to *History Scotland* about this new initiative, which is focusing archaeological, historical and technological research onto the city of Perth, to give a unique insight into the precariousness and richness of life at the heart of this medieval town

### What is the Charterhouse Project?

It is a remarkable interdisciplinary collaboration between the three academic institutions: the University of Stirling, University of the Highlands & Islands and Glasgow School of Art. Along with the public and political interest we have generated via press and media we are demonstrating that beyond the immediate niche academic benefits there is enormous potential for economic regeneration via history and tourism in Scotland and the UK. So public engagement is pivotal and core to the project.

### Who's doing what?

Historical archival research is being carried out by academics at University of Stirling and the University of the Highlands and Islands, with archaeological research by Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust. Then, the interpretation, artificial intelligence, big data processing, and cultural memory will be carried out by University of Stirling.

Glasgow School of Art are contributing their expertise in visualisation and simulation, including virtual reality and augmented reality and how we deliver the 'super-high-definition' data to the new burgeoning generation of 360 consumer devices. Finally, the University of the Highlands and Islands has been developing exciting new tools for teaching and knowledge transfer for the classrooms and our 'university of the 21st century'.

### How will you engage your audiences?

We're seeking to develop IT models, formats and techniques which will be universally available, for innumerable sites and subjects. The technology will allow a 24/7 international audience, via the web and social networks, to see and hear (as it actually happens) and interact and share with the project as it develops – the information flowing into and out of the project system in real time.

Sites and entire towns can now be rapidly digitally mapped in 360, enabling the exploration of these throughout the ages, so beyond the James I Charterhouse project there are important further legacy aspects – enabling the re-formatting of the system to tell other important historical stories.

### What does this mean 'on the street'?

We're aspiring to make the inaccessible truly accessible, to inspire impassioned interest for even the most disinterested, and focus the world's attention on the tragic life of James I.

Historical screen fiction has catapulted international interest in British history into the stratosphere and has generated huge economic benefits for Scotland, but unlike *Game of Thrones*, *Outlander* and *Braveheart*, ours is a very real story, and in combining this astonishing narrative with future 360 mixed technologies, we're confident we will captivate everyone, including those who simply aren't interested in history.

[www.kingjames1ofscotland.co.uk](http://www.kingjames1ofscotland.co.uk)