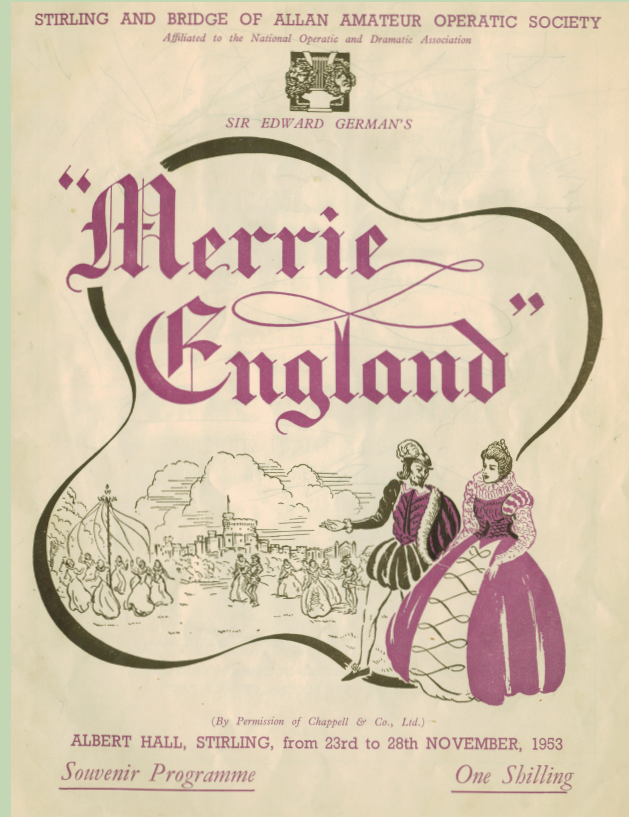


*the Forth  
Naturalist  
and Historian*

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Comma Butterfly

Roy Sexton

THE FORTH NATURALIST and HISTORIAN

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# *the Forth Naturalist and Historian*

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## THE FORTH NATURALIST AND HISTORIAN

The Forth Naturalist and Historian (FNH) is an informal enterprise of Stirling University. It was set up in 1975 by several University and Central Regional Council staff to provide a focus for interests, activities and publications of environmental, heritage and historical studies for the Forth area, comprising now local authority areas Stirling, Falkirk and Clackmannanshire.

Since then the organisation of an annual environment/heritage symposium called *Man and the Landscape* has been an important feature.

The annual *Forth Naturalist and Historian* has published numerous papers, many being authoritative and significant in their field, and includes annual reports of the weather, and of birds in the locality, plus book reviews and notes. These volumes provide a valuable successor to that basic resource *The Transactions of the Stirling Field and Archaeological Society, 1878-1939*. Four year contents/indexes are available, and selected papers are published in pamphlet form, while others are available as reprints.

In addition a 230 page book *Central Scotland – Land, Wildlife, People*, a natural history and heritage survey, was produced in 1994 and is available in the form of a CD-Rom, *Heart of Scotland's Environment* (HSE).

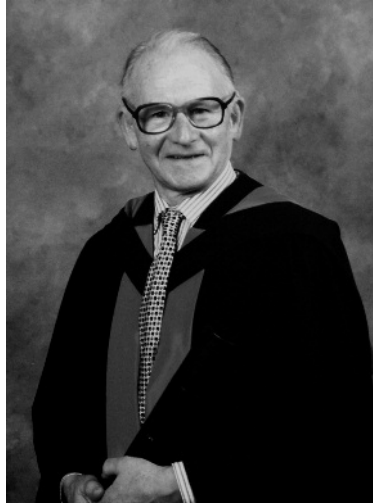
Other FNH and associated publications still in print include – *Mines and Minerals of the Ochils, Airthrey and Bridge of Allan, Woollen Mills of the Hillfoots, The Ochil Hills* – landscape, wildlife, heritage – an introduction with walks, *Alloa Tower and the Erskines of Mar*, and the *Lure of Loch Lomond* a journey round the shores and islands. Several of these are in association with Clackmannanshire Field Studies Society.

FNH publications are listed on the internet British Library (BLPC) and by booksellers e.g. Amazon, Bol, Barnes and Noble.

Offers of papers/notes for publication, and of presentations for symposia are ever welcome.

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**Lindsay Corbett, 1923 - 2007**

Lindsay was born and brought up in Glasgow, beginning his career in the Mitchell Library. He moved to London, working in the Library of the Institute of Mining and Metallurgy before moving to the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston. In 1973 he was appointed Depute Librarian to Stirling University and settled in Alloa.

Lindsay was a founder member and a keen supporter of the Clackmannanshire Field Studies Society. This interest was followed by his early involvement in a joint venture between Stirling University and Central Regional Council Education Department to raise interest in the natural and historical environment of the Central Region. Supported by Robert Innes, Director of Extra-Mural Education at Stirling University and Ian Collie, Director of Education of Central region, a group of University and Council staff began to work informally in 1975 and eventually set up the Forth Naturalist and Historian Editorial Board.

Lindsay was one of the prime movers on the Board, holding the joint posts of Secretary, Treasurer, Editor and salesperson for over thirty years. He guided the group through its early years, helping to establish an annual symposium and the publication of an annual journal. In addition, his expertise in editing and publishing enabled the Board to support local groups, individuals and businesses in publishing books, pamphlets, postcards and maps. Lindsay has also held the post of chairperson of the Board and was instrumental in gaining charitable status. He was key to gaining the support of British Petroleum who have helped finance the Forth Naturalist and Historian journal for over thirty

years. Lindsay was also deeply involved in fieldwork and research on numerous local projects including the work of the Clackmannanshire Field Studies Society, mining in the Ochils, the restoration of Alloa Tower and the Woodland Trust, to name but a few.

The University of Stirling recognised his commitment and achievement in 1995, awarding him the honorary degree of Master of Arts. The members of the Forth Naturalist and Historian Editorial Board acknowledged his Herculean efforts on their behalf in 2003, electing him as their first Honorary President. Lindsay will be sadly missed by all who knew him. The success of his efforts will continue to bear testament to his lengthy and deep commitment to promoting interest in the natural and historical environment of his local area.

Lindsay is survived by his widow, Nancy, and two sons to whom we extend our sincere sympathy.

**ROBERT DICK OF TULLIBODY:  
BAKER, AMATEUR NATURALIST AND VICTORIAN ICON  
People of the Forth (15)**

Margaret Mercer and Roy Sexton

**Samuel Smiles and Robert Dick**

Samuel Smiles was born in Haddington in 1812, one of eleven children. In spite of his humble origins he obtained a medical degree eventually becoming the village doctor. After a career as a political reformer he was propelled to international fame by the publication of *Self Help* in 1859. This book which preached industry, thrift and self-improvement became an instant success selling more than 250,000 copies including translations into many languages (Wintle, 1982). Although *Self Help* was a practical guide the key to Smiles' success was to turn the biographies of celebrated men into an inspirational medium that awakened in readers their own potential and instilled in them the desire to succeed. One such icon was Robert Dick of Tullibody.

In *Self Help* Smiles only refers to him briefly:

*Not long ago, Sir Roderick Murchison (President of the British Association and the Royal Geographical Society) discovered at Thurso, in the far north of Scotland, a profound geologist, in the person of a baker there, named Robert Dick. When Sir Roderick called upon him at the bakehouse in which he baked and earned his bread, Robert Dick delineated to him, by means of flour upon a board, the geographical features and geological phenomena of his native county, pointing out the imperfections in the existing maps, which he had ascertained by travelling over the country in his leisure hours. On further inquiry, Sir Roderick ascertained that the humble individual before him was not only a capital baker and geologist, but a first-rate botanist. "I found," said the Director-General of the Geographical Society, "to my great humiliation, that this baker knew infinitely more of botanical science, ay, ten times more, than I did and that there were only some twenty or thirty specimens of flowers (from the British flora) which he had not collected." Smiles continued "It is the glory of our country that men such as these so abound .... And even in the lowliest calling the true worker may win the very loftiest rewards".*

The entry is short because Sir Roderick Murchison's address to the British Association in 1858 which drew attention "To the man I am proud to call a distinguished friend" was only made just before the publication of *Self Help*. Smiles subsequently selected a few examples from *Self Help* for more detailed biographies; amongst these were George Stevenson (1875), Josiah Wedgwood (1894), James Nasmyth (1885), Boulton and Watt (1865) and Robert Dick (1878).

Dick was an unassuming man with an aversion to recognition. He was happy for others to use his plant and fossil finds without attribution. It was only at the insistence of Professor Balfour of Edinburgh University that he wrote up his discovery of Holy Grass (*Hierochloe odorata* L.). As a consequence



we are almost entirely indebted to the industry of Samuel Smiles who in the 12 years after Dick's death recovered hundreds of letters from his sisters and scientific associates. Without him there would be little trace of Dick's accomplishments.

### **Robert Dick's Formative Years in Tullibody**

Robert Dick is said to have been born in January 1811 the second of four children born to Thomas and Margaret Dick (nee Gilchrist) an excise officer at Knox's Cambus brewery. The couple were married in 1807 at Cupar in Fife and their first child Nancy (Agnes) was born and christened in Tullibody later that year. However neither Robert nor his younger sister Jane's births are recorded in Alloa Parish records though the last born James b 1815 is included. The family lived at 24, Main Street, Tullibody (Figure 2) which was demolished in 1958 during the village's redevelopment. According to the Rev Thom (1907) it was a plain two storey building which originally had a pantiled roof but was not embellished with ornamentation as illustrated in Smiles' book. Robert attended the Tullibody Barony school which was partly maintained by the Abercromby family. The two storey building had a lower school room with the teacher's quarters above and an unenclosed play area on the roadside. Robert was picked out by his tutor Mr Macintyre as a very able student and according to the Rev. Crouther Gordon his father like all good Scots of his day aspired to see his laddie "college bred". In later life Robert wrote fondly of his "auld dominie" recalling that "every morning before the business of the day began he used to pray that teachers and scholars might all be taught and that discipline might be followed with obedience".

Sadly Robert's life was to change dramatically when at the age of seven his mother died and two years later in 1820 his father remarried Margaret Knox the Brewery owner's daughter. Excise regulations did not allow the inspection of a relative's business and so his father was transferred to Mr Dall's Distillery (later Glenochil distillery) at Menstrie. The family moved into a house just north of the works, on the east bank of the Damsburn and on the south side of the old Hillfoots road (Morris, 1908). Robert attended the subscription school at Menstrie which comprised a school room and master's house in two cottages which were taken down in 1875 to make way for a new school's playground. According to Smiles' account Robert made little progress under his new teacher Mr Morrison who had only one arm and was disparagingly described as "not having the limbs to fit him for anything else". This contrasts with an ex-pupil's description of Morrison as "a strict disciplinarian who was much respected" (Morris, 1908).

Robert and his siblings did not get on well with their new mother who soon had a family of her own. She was very hard on her step-children and Robert never forgot how she beat his younger brother until he could not stand. To keep away from the house he roamed the hills developing an interest in the natural world making collections of minerals and plants. Even then he was persecuted for wearing out his boots and was forced to walk bare foot. Later he

was to confide in Charles Peach about this unhappy period. "...All my naturally youthful spirits were broken ... to this day I feel the effects ... it is this that makes me shrink from the world".

At the age of thirteen instead of being sent to college he was apprenticed to Mr Aikman a prosperous baker in Tullibody. The shop with chimney and ovens behind occupied the corner site where the Post Office now stands and there was a grain store across the road. When the shop was renovated in 1950-2 the sandstone blocks from the coal fired ovens were used to help build the foundation for the garage at 2, Ochil Street.

Mr Aikman was a kindly man who was to remain in contact with his apprentice throughout his life. He provided the flour for Robert to set up business in Thurso and later hinted that he might like to return to Tullibody to take over the bakery when he retired. Apprentices lived over the bakehouse and worked for their keep. Robert was charged with getting up at 3 am to light the three ovens and once he was strong enough to carry the basket of loaves, he was sent on deliveries to Blairlogie, Bridge of Allan and Lipney. Using borrowed books he developed an interest in the natural history of the surrounding area. One biographer (Morris 1918) suggested that while making his deliveries to Drumbrae and Bridge of Allan "his quick eyes would spy out ... the chickweed wintergreen *Trientalis europaea* and petty whin *Genista anglica*". A century later these plants can still be found along the path near the Cocksburn reservoir. Later in life when attempting to collect all the flora of the British Isles he asked his sister to send him water crowfoot *Ranunculus aquatilis* which he recalled grew in the Devon river.

Thomas Dick and family left Cambus in 1926 when appointed Supervisor of Excise in Thurso. Robert remained and upon the completion of his apprenticeship took a boat from Alloa to Leith finding work as a journeyman baker before transferring to similar positions in Glasgow and Greenock. At his father's suggestion he travelled north in 1830 to start a business in Thurso which only had one baker at the time. After the construction of an oven he set up shop in Wilson's Lane opposite his father's house. Bread was very much a luxury in these parts and initially Robert specialised in biscuit making aided by Annie MacKay his lifelong housekeeper. His sister Jane helped in the shop and after the family moved away to Haddington he corresponded with her for the rest of her life. Fortunately she kept all these letters which form the basis of much of Smiles' account. Robert was never to return to Tullibody though he kept in touch through correspondence both with Agnes who returned to the village and his father who eventually died at "Dovecot" in Cambus. In Peach's obituary in the John O'Groat Journal he states that Robert helped rear the families of his sisters who became widowed. He was also elected a "corresponding member" of the Alloa Archeological Society in 1863.

### **Botany and the Discovery of Holy Grass**

Robert bought his flour from a merchant in Leith who was persuaded to send him books and a microscope packed in the centre of the bags. These

included the *Gardener's Dictionary* and the *British Flora*. He had plenty of leisure time and after his bread was ready he left the sales to his housekeeper spending the rest of the day reading and wandering. He took up botany in a most resolute way spending the spring and summer in excursions finding and documenting the local flora, particularly the ferns and mosses. Robert mapped out the county into districts and resolved to examine them all. This required great dedication and involved walking massive distances. In a letter to his sister he described one such excursion to Morven Hill on which he was to find alpine ladies mantle (*Alchemilla alpina*). He set off at 2 am to cover the 32 miles from Thurso (of which only 18 were by road) crossing many bogs and moors until he eventually reached the top of Morven by 11 am. The return journey was started at 2 pm and was not completed until 3 am the next morning.

Dick's chief botanical contribution was the re-discovery of *Hierochloa odorata* (*H. borealis*) the Northern Holy Grass. This plant had originally been included in the *British Flora* on the authority of George Don (1764-1814) who added more new species to the list of Scottish plants than anybody since. Don too has a local connection having botanized during his apprenticeship as a clock maker in Dunblane (Morris, 1908). Eventually he took up gardening and became head gardener at the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh (RBGE) writing *Herbarium Britannicum* in 1804. He kept a large collection of wild plants in a "Systematic Garden" associated with his house in Forfar. Unfortunately he had a disconcerting habit of mixing up garden (alien) and indigenous wild plants. After his death a number of Don's claims could not be substantiated and in Sir Joseph Hooker's popular *Students Flora*, 43 of his "reputed discoveries" were relegated to the appendix (Morris, 1908; Butler, 1981). Dick's discovery of holy grass growing on the banks of the Thurso river helped rescue Don from calumny. Although surprised by the discovery Robert was too bashful to rush to print. It was about 20 years later that a young botany student noticed it in Dick's herbarium and reported the discovery to Professor Balfour at Edinburgh. Although initially sceptical Balfour was convinced as soon as he received a specimen and the record was published in the *Annals of Natural History, Edinburgh* 1854.

Holy grass has since been found in a number of wetland sites in both Scotland and Northern Ireland. There is a local colony on Vane Farm SSSI on Loch Leven in Kinross. The name is thought to have been derived from the practice of strewing it on the floors of Nordic churches where it perfused the atmosphere with its attractive scent. It is interesting that according to the *Atlas of the British Flora* all the recently discovered sites in Orkney are near old Norse churches.

According to Morris' (1908) account of *Noteworthy Local (Stirling) Botanists*, Dick set out to collect all the wild plants of Caithness. In achieving this he found a number of rarities including pyramidal bugle, (*Ajuga pyramidalis*), Scottish primrose (*Primula scotica*), Baltic rush (*Juncus balticus*) and shady horsetail (*Equisetum pratense*). Not content he tried to extend his herbarium further to all the British native plants. English species were obtained by

exchanging Caithness plants for southern species collected by many of the famous botanists of the period. The RBGE has many herbarium sheets of *Hierochloe odorata* attributed to Dick which had been supplied under this exchange scheme. Dick wrote he had 3000 different specimens altogether and Morris reported in 1904 that they were still well preserved and kept in a case provided by public subscription. The herbarium has survived and will form part of a commemorative display in the new Caithness Horizons visitor centre.

### Fossil Fish and Hugh Miller

Dick first became interested in fossils in the old red sandstone rocks around Thurso in 1835. Apparently he had attended three lectures given by a Mr Keir in Thurso (Williamson, 1967) and then read Mantell's *Wonders of Geology*. However his enthusiasm was really fired by the purchase of Hugh Miller's *Old Red Sandstone* (1841) with its descriptions of the Scottish fossil fish which abound in the Thurso area.

Hugh Miller was the son of a sea captain born in Cromarty in 1802. Although very successful at school his master boxed him about the ears once too often and he left to become a journeyman stone mason. As a result he developed an interest in the winged fossil fish he found in the rocks and what at the time were thought to be turtles but were later shown to be heavily armoured fish. In his famous book *Old Red Sandstone* he wrote of his finds "*creatures whose very type is lost, fantastic and uncouth, and which puzzle the naturalist to assign them even their class; boat-like animals, furnished with oars and a rudder; fish plated over, like the tortoise, above and below, with a strong armour of bone, and furnished with but one solitary rudder-like fin; other fish less equivocal in their form, but with the membranes of their fins thickly covered with scales; creatures bristling over with thorns; others glistening in an enamelled coat, as if beautifully japanned. All the forms testify of a remote antiquity – of a period whose fashions have passed away.*"

Ill health caused by 10 years inhaling silica dust led Miller to change career to banking. His book *Scenes and Legends of the North of Scotland*, was a big success. Sir Roderick Murchison founder of the Geological Society read the geology chapter and soon the two were correspondents. Miller moved to Edinburgh where he had a prominent role in the founding of the Free Church during "The Disruption". He became the editor of *The Witness* newspaper which did much to swing political opinion against the current rights of patronage. Miller started to write articles about fossil fish in *The Witness* and these formed the basis of *Old Red Sandstone*. He became the leading populariser of geology during a period in which there was intense public interest and geology books outsold novels 5:1. In 1834 Louis Agassiz the leading Swiss authority on fish fossils addressed the British Association meeting in Edinburgh. Sir Roderick Murchison introduced Miller's fossils to the great man, some of which were quite new to Agassiz and he later named them for either himself or for Miller.

Robert Dick was one of the many inspired by Miller's book and once again he started walking the length and breadth of Caithness in pursuit of fossils.

This time he was encumbered with “a 3 lb of iron chisels in his pockets, a 4 lb hammer in one hand and a 14 lb smiddy hammer in the other”. He sent the first of hundreds of letters and specimens to Miller on the Union Steamer from Thurso to Leith in March 1845. Some of these first discoveries were valued by Miller who began to modify his accounts and reconstructions as more complete fossils were found. Robert could be quite critical and wrote “Your Edinburgh Professors can put on their spectacles next time they travel North. If they wish to be respected they must be more particular”. In the third edition of *Old Red Sandstone* (1846) the evidence for the “development theory” that there was a gradual progression in fish size and complexity from the Silurian through the ORS to the Carboniferous had to be amended because Dick found a massive *Homosteus* (then called *Asterolepis*, Saxon, 1967) in the oldest ORS beds. Agassiz calculated it was 12 feet 5 inches long.

The two were to eventually meet in Caithness in 1845 and their excursions together with other information provided by Dick were documented in Miller’s articles and *The Cruise of the Betsy*. One such account is preceded by the following introduction: “Let us accompany Mr Dick in one of his exploratory rambles. The various organisms which he disinterred I shall describe from specimens before me, which I owe to his kindness,—the localities in which he found them, from a minute and interesting description, for which I am indebted to his pen”.

Robert shunned publicity and in a note with a dozen more specimens wrote “Be a good man and do not speak about me by name. I am a quiet creature and do not like to see myself in print at all”. Most of his best specimens were sent to Miller who later wrote “he robbed himself to do me service”.

*Coccosteus* was amongst the fossils sent to Miller. It belonged to the group of fishes known as Placoderms whose head and thorax were covered by articulated armoured plates. *Homosteus milleri* (called *Asterolepis* by Dick and Miller) had a massive skull the size of a horse and bones up to one inch in thickness (Saxon, 1967). Placoderms were the first jawed fish and became extinct by the end of the Devonian. *Osteolepis* and *Holoptychius* were fossil lobed finned fish or Sarcopterygians which are thought to be ancestral to the first land tetrapods and modern amphibians. They had primitive lungs that allowed them to survive in stagnant water. Their paired lobed fins contained rod shaped bones surrounded by muscle allowing them to walk underwater. Dick also found fossil *Dipterus*, an extinct genus of lungfish.

While “the young men of Thurso who are interested in the improvement of their minds” were encouraged by the John O’ Groat Journal to visit Holburn Head to observe Mr Dick’s fossil beds, the uneducated seem to have thought Dick very odd and rather simple. A newspaper article in March 1851 ridiculed them. It had been reported that a fire burned in the centre of Loch of Calder (probably a Will o’ the Wisp) for several minutes which according to Brawlbin superstitions predicted an unusual calamity. Apparently Robert Dick who had been collecting in the vicinity was warned by the locals who “thought this individual is *no vera wise*”. This was “because he is seen hammering at stones

and rocks, and because he sometimes tells ... that he is taking out of the stones what was thousands of years ago alive and swimming about in water, in the shape of fish”.

### Glaciation and boulder clay

Agassiz revisited Scotland in 1840 this time to address the Glasgow meeting of the British Association. With him he brought the revolutionary proposal of Venetz and de Charpentier that the glaciers of the Alps had once been more extensive and their movement accounted for the spread of the crystalline rocks from the Central Alps across the great Swiss plain to the flanks of the Jura mountains (Geikie, 1905). It was suggested that landforms in northern latitudes were shaped by the actions of ice rather than cataclysmic floods. During his visit Agassiz recognized features in the Scottish landscape which were also consistent with glaciations and proposed that “not only glaciers existed in the British islands but that large sheets of ice covered the entire surface”. At first his conclusions were regarded as rank heresy by the older conservative geologists who could hardly contain their contempt for this youthful observer (Geikie, 1905). The theory proposed that the erratic rocks perched on mountain sides, often far from their original strata and the large boulder clay deposits which covered much of Scotland were carried there by glaciers. Lyell had earlier proposed an alternative “drift” theory that envisaged that the land had been inundated during long periods of subsidence and the clay sediments and sea shells were deposited from it. The large erratic boulders (like Samson’s Button in Tullibody) were carried by icebergs that floated over the land dropping rocks picked up from the icebound edges of frozen continents.

Miller had seen sea shells in the boulder clays at Wick while travelling to Orkney but lacked time to collect them. He realized their significance and mobilized Dick to cast light on the controversy (Williamson, 1967). Once again Robert undertook long treks (two of over 50 miles) constantly driven by his compelling curiosity. Details of the marine shells, scored rocks and polished stones were described in a series of letters to Miller which he in turn wrote up in *The Witness*. Robert had previously collected shells from the Caithness coast and realized that those he found in the boulder clay were living species from deeper water. The proximity of the deposits to the current shore line raised the prospect that sea birds had carried them there and he continually sought new sites that were higher and further inland. His observations proved to be ambiguous. For instance at Freswick besides abundant broken shells he found “a considerable variety of stones in the clay section that were all rubbed, grooved or scratched”... “they included pieces of flint, and chalk, granite, quartz, greenstone, together with a belemnite fossil”. While the shells were consistent with a marine origin both they and the small stones were worn and scored which Dick believed was evidence of a glacial origin. Miller provided the following explanation: “*The agent which produced such effects could not have been simply water whether impelled by currents or waves. No force of water could have scarred such distinct well marked lines on such small stones. The blacksmith, let him use what strength of arm he may, can not bring his file to bear on a minute pin or nail,*

*until he has locked it fast in his vice ... the smaller stones must have been fastened (in ice) ere they could have been scratched".*

In 1880 Dick's observations on the Caithness shelly boulder clay together with those of his friend Charles Peach (see below) were reinvestigated by the Scottish Geological Survey. They discovered that the score lines or striae on the basal rocks of eastern Caithness and the direction of transport of local erratics were both in a SE to NW direction. As a consequence they proposed that the shells, chalk, flints and fossils were scoured from the bed of the North Sea by an ice sheet which moved onto land from the Moray Firth and deposited the material across the plain of Caithness. They suggested that glaciers which originated on land to the south of Caithness initially moved east into the Moray Firth but were then deflected northwestwards by the greater force of the ice sheets they met radiating from Scandinavia. The lack of banding in the clay itself also suggested it was derived from land based glacial action and not deposition from some past sea which covered the landscape (Peach and Horne, 1881).

### **Miller's suicide**

The discovery of fossils of extinct fish as well as failure to find living species fossilized in the sandstone beds raised questions about accuracy of the biblical account of the creation. Miller as a prominent member of the Free Church found himself in a difficult position and had to concede that the account in Genesis was symbolic. He believed, as did many scientists of the time, that the fossil record represented a series of separate special creations and subsequent mass extinctions. He interpreted the six days of creation as being synonymous with geological periods which had been sublimed into representative visions of the progress of creation. Miller famously shot himself after correcting the proofs of *The Testimony of the Rocks* on Christmas Eve 1856, leaving a scribbled note for his wife and children. Robert was devastated and wrote to his sister "I thought it was the end of all things. I am more shocked than I can tell. I can not look on a stone without thinking of him". He believed that his friend's insanity resulted from the conflict between meeting the exigencies created by his position as both a scientist and religious journalist. However several of Miller's biographers believe that he was comfortable with the borderline he trod between the biblical literalists and those geologists who saw no role for God (Knell and Taylor, 2006). Dick's own views were remarkable for their time. In a letter to his sister commenting on *The Testimony of the Rocks* he wrote "Of one thing you may be sure, the earth as we have it was not made in six ordinary days. The earth is making yet. It is still in the course of creation". Unlike Miller, Dick lived long enough to be confronted by Darwin's theory of evolution. He appears unimpressed "I have no wish to meddle with Mr Darwin's notions". Later he confessed he "might have spoken rashly for in truth I have never read one of his books and the reviewers of them may have twisted his meaning to suit their purposes".

The question of the importance of Dick's contribution to Miller's reputation as a geologist has never been authoritatively researched. It is particularly

difficult because of Dick's requests for anonymity. Some of Miller's biographers do not mention him though there is plenty of evidence from Miller's own hand that this is a serious oversight. Perhaps the best placed to make the judgment are the palaeontologists who can evaluate the importance of Dick's fossil finds. In 1963 a genus of fossil fish was named *Dickosteus* "after the Thurso baker whose early geological explorations of Caithness greatly promoted the study of Devonian fishes" (Miles and Westoll, 1963).

### Charles Peach

During the latter stages of his life Robert struck up a friendship with a kindred spirit Charles Peach. The two had much in common. Peach had humble origins as a revenue coastguard whose job was to stop smuggling. This occupation resulted in him being moved periodically round the coast from Norfolk to Dorset to Cornwall and finally to Wick. Peach's obsession was rock pool invertebrate zoology and his expertise soon came to the attention of men of learning. In contrast to Dick, Peach was not a retiring character and whilst working in Cornwall he went to a British Association meeting at Plymouth to present a paper. This was astonishing not only because of his position but because he had only attended one formal lecture in his life. In the presentation he showed that the rocks of Cornwall contained fossils, contrary to the opinion of experts like Murchison and Pryce. Subsequently he presented his studies at a series of BA meetings building scientific respect and acquaintances.

Peach relates that Dick "was a household name to him in Cornwall" and in 1853 upon taking up a position in Wick he sought him out in his bakehouse at Thurso "as he felt assured he was a man after his own heart". The two clearly enjoyed one another's company and had long discussions "in front of the fiery furnace" and many outings together sharing their common interests and broadening one another's range of knowledge.

Peach made some remarkable fossil discoveries in the Durness limestone and Sir Roderick Murchison Director General of the Geological Survey journeyed north to investigate. While in Thurso he sought information about the location of fossil beds from Dick but unfortunately Robert was unable to leave his ovens to see him. Murchison was more successful on his next trip to Caithness and accompanied by Peach spent a fascinating day discussing the local geology with Dick. It was during this meeting that Robert made the model of Caithness in flour to explain its geology which so impressed Murchison. At the 1858 BA meeting in Leeds Sir Roderick spoke about "The results of researches among the older rocks of the Scottish Highlands" referring to both Peach's and Dick's finds. He subsequently addressed a public meeting in Leeds Town Hall which really turned into a eulogy of Dick and led Samuel Smiles to include him as an example in *Self Help*. Peach sent Dick the newspaper reports of the lecture and in reply he received a few scribbled stanzas which have become known as the *Song of a Geologist*. It was widely sung at geological meetings and has recently been republished (Edinburgh Geologist, 2004). The following verses are an extract:



Hammers an' chisels an' a'  
 Chisels an' fossils an' a'  
 Resurrection's our trade; by raising the dead  
 We've grandeur an' honour an' a'

Hammers an' chisels an' a'  
 Chisels an' fossils an' a'  
 The deeper we go, the more we shall know  
 Of the past an' the recent and a'

This publicity was not welcomed by Dick and he was bothered by increasing numbers of callers at his bakery. The merely curious were turned away while the scientists like Wyville Thompson were granted access to the inner sanctum ... the bakehouse. His attitude clearly upset the townsfolk and the following is an extract of his obituary in the *Northern Ensign* newspaper .... "For it was not everybody that Mr Dick would honour with the sight (of his collection) or even with conversations. Retiring to a degree and even at times repulsive in manners, Mr Dick was considered extremely antisocial ... and not a few who visited Thurso solely to see his collections left without their object, including a member of the reigning dynasty of France".

The next year Peach attempted by letter to get Dick to present some of his findings at the Aberdeen meeting of the BA his reply was "when you go to Aberdeen I hope you will not speak of me at all. People bothered me so much last year after Sir Roderick made his speech that I have no desire for a repetition".

Throughout this period Robert suffered both a decline in health and in trade. When he went to Thurso there was only one other baker but by 1862 there were six and there was not the trade to support them. His position was not helped by the impression in the general populace that this reclusive man who walked the moors collecting mosses and stones at night was mad. Others avoided his shop because he desecrated the Sabbath, collecting his fossils rather than attending the Kirk. Ironically he was too moral for business. He declined the offer of supplying the wealthier houses whose occupants were becoming acquainted with his fame because he knew it would cause hardship to other bakers. He confided in a letter to his sister Jane in May "I have lost much and am still loosing and what is worse I am loosing my health. I have not had a days health since last February and goodness knows that if I had to take to my bed all would be over". He regretted not giving up his shop and taking up some other occupation. His sister had suggested he might return to Bannockburn to set up business there but he declared he had a dread of weaving places ... "Weavers often suffer great misery and the stoppage of trade is clear ruin". Besides the situation of bakers in the Stirling area appeared no better and in one letter he refers to a newspaper sent by his sister describing the suicide of a baker's wife from Alva.

## Debts, Death and Memorials

In the last three years of his life Robert increasingly suffered from crippling rheumatism, failing eyesight and a bad chest. For significant periods these prevented him from pursuing his passion. When the rheumatism abated he was still able to walk 30 miles in search of herbarium specimens and fossils for the collections of Wyville Thompson and Sir Roderick Murchison. His letters to his sister reveal periods of intense depression when his failing business and poor health got the better of him.

On March 9th 1863 a steamer the Prince Consort with £45 worth of Robert's flour in her hold struck the quay in Aberdeen harbour. After the passengers were removed she broke her back as the tide receded and the flour was soaked. Because the negligence of the crew could not be proved the cargo was uninsured and Robert was responsible for the payment. He attempted to sift the sand out of the flour but this resulted in further loss of trade. He wrote to his sister "I am injured for ever. I'll never make an extra farthing from my trade here. The bakers are in swarms now. I am old and my strength and sight fail me. Before I had hardships quite enough but this crowns everything. I am stupid with grief". As a result of this plea Jane lent him £20. Initially he seems to have successfully concealed his plight from his friends but eventually he approached John Miller a native of Thurso who spent most of his time in London asking him to offer Sir Roderick Murchison "in quiet way" his fossil collection so he could pay off the debt. He wrote "those drunken blackguards of the steamer have ruined me, I am a beggar, not in word but in fact". Miller offered to give him the money but Dick did not want charity so his friend bought the fossils himself. These were later kept at Burgo House, Bridge of Allan but eventually on John Miller's death they joined the fossils Dick had given to Hugh Miller in the National Museum of Scotland.

For a brief period "the vengeance" abated and Robert set out with renewed vigor to replace his fossils. Unfortunately in February 1864 fate was to deal another savage blow. His sister Jane who had been his lifelong confidant died unexpectedly and left him devastated. He later wrote to his brother-in-law that he had not lifted a hammer in three months.

On the 29th August 1866 Robert made what was to be his last fossil collecting expedition. Overcome by nausea and giddiness he managed to stagger back to the bakehouse, the local residents thinking he was drunk. In a pathetic last note to Peach, who was now in Edinburgh, he wrote "I fear I can not write to you at all. I have been for four months unable to do anything for swollen limbs. Water on the chest in fact and lest I should die I only notice you. I am very poorly so excuse me. No rest night or day believe me". After he had been seriously ill for two months John Miller called on his old friend. He was horrified at his condition and immediately summonsed a doctor and sent his housekeeper to nurse him. The doctor's advice was to give up work and engage a journeyman to run the business. Robert's condition deteriorated and he became delirious imagining he had bread in the ovens and insisting on being carried down to view them. Eventually his suffering ended on December

24th 1866, exactly ten years after the death of Hugh Miller.

On 27th December there followed a rather bizarre obituary in Wick's *Northern Ensign* under the heading "Death of a remarkable man". Having explained his scientific fame it goes on: "among the people of Thurso and neighbourhood Mr Dick was long looked upon as partially insane. By and by it began to be whispered that men of great influence were visiting the mad Thurso baker.... Among the peoples of Thurso Mr Dick was personally unknown. We believe he was seldom in the street during the day for many years and in these exceptional circumstances he recognized no one. His closing days were dark indeed, suffering from dropsy Mr Dick had little in his comparatively humble abode either of a social or physical character to cheer him and he passed away after much painful agony".

Stung by the implied criticism that they did not appreciate their local genius and let him die a pauper, the people of Thurso hit back with a rebuke in the *John O'Groat Journal*. The long article details Dick's accomplishments including an account by his friend Charles Peach and goes on to state "We regret to find it insinuated that the people of Thurso did not appreciate Mr Dick ... that he died for want of common comforts and necessities of life and that during his life he was treated by his town with contempt. All this is reckless libel full of stupid blunders written in the most wretched taste ... It was utterly untrue that he was uncared for in his last illness Mr John Miller was most assiduous in his attention to his comfort".

The outcome of this publicity was a funeral attended by virtually all the town and the biggest band Thurso ever mustered. To make amends the people of Thurso set up a memorial fund which was used to erect a massive granite obelisk in the cemetery.

The *Alloa Journal and Clackmannanshire Advertiser* carried a long obituary in the Dec 29th 1866 issue including extracts from the *Northern Ensign*. Tullibody was slow to acknowledge its famous son. Although articles appreciative of Dick's work were contributed to *Transactions of the Stirling Natural History Society* (Morris, 1908) there was nothing to commemorate him in his home village. In December 1917 a note appeared in the *Stirling Journal* under the nom-de-plume "onlooker" (apparently a Caithness man) suggesting a commemorative tablet should be placed in front of the house where he was born. David Morris the town clerk of Stirling and the Rev Thomas Miller of Alloa parish inserted a joint letter in the local papers asking for subscriptions which were duly received. A pink granite stone was purchased and inscribed

*In this house was born January 1811*

*Robert Dick*

*Baker of Thurso; Botanist and Geologist : whose life spent in pursuit of Science amid many difficulties is an inspiration and example.*

It was unveiled on Sept 21st 1918 in the presence of many dignitaries. Rather appropriately the main address was given by Benjamin Peach FRS

whose classic work with the Geological Survey had provided the framework for the geological structure of Scotland. He was the son of Dick's great friend Charles Peach and probably the last man left who had the privilege of visiting Dick in the bake-house at Thurso.

Smiles' biography, the naming of the genus *Dickosteus*, the obelisk and a museum in Thurso and a radio play transmitted in 1949 were all worthy tributes. However perhaps the most appropriate memorial to Robert Dick is an isolated, detached, natural pillar of rock in the Grand Canyon next to the Darwin Plateau and Huxley Terraces, which according to Wharton (1912) bears the name Dick Pillar, from Robert Dick, the baker-geologist of Thurso, Scotland, who gave such material assistance to Hugh Miller in his studies of the Old Red Sandstone.

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Figure 1 Portrait of Robert Dick from the biography by Samuel Smiles published by John Murray 1878.

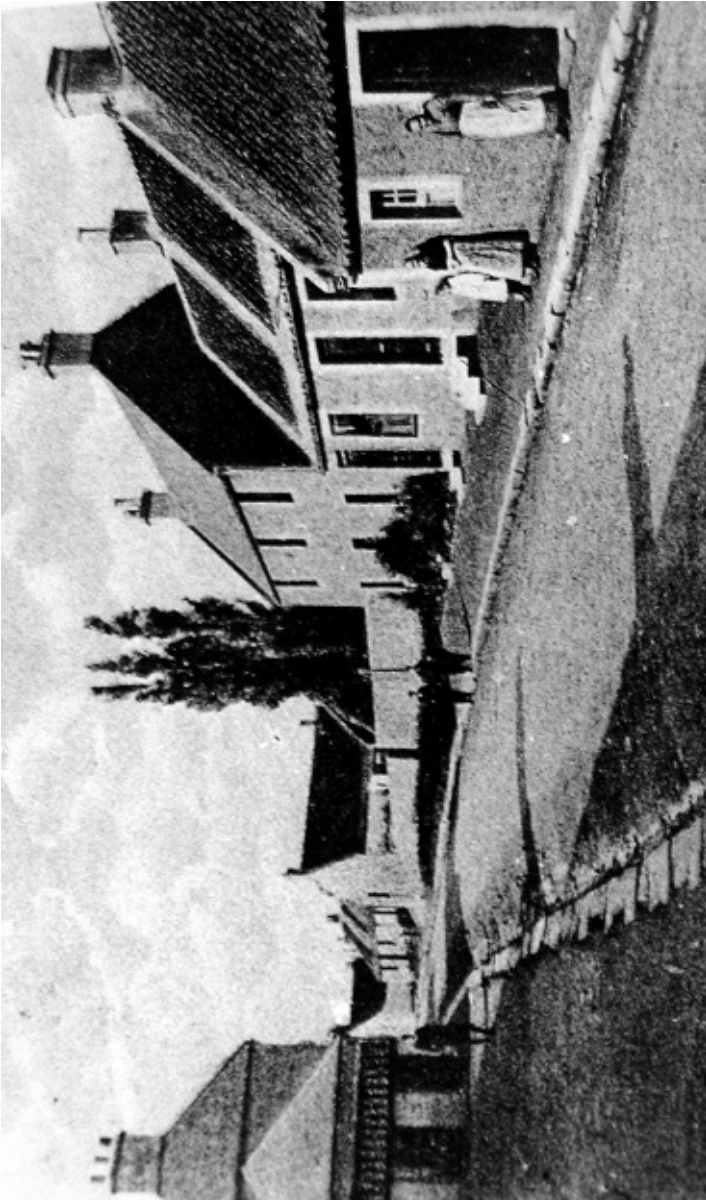


Figure 2 Robert Dick's childhood home is the two-storey house on the right hand side of the old Main Street, Tullibody. The photograph is taken from where the Coronation tree now stands, all these houses have been demolished (reproduced with the kind permission of Clackmannanshire Libraries).



## LOCH LOMONDSIDE'S FORGOTTEN WATERWAYS

John Mitchell

It is a curious fact that in the 18th and 19th century annals of engineered waterways designed to assist commercial boat traffic on Loch Lomondside, information is more readily obtained on the grandiose schemes which never progressed beyond the drawing board than the small-scale canals and other water-works that were actually carried out. Although every one of the proposed major schemes failed to attract the financial backing needed to proceed, during their planning stage they were subject to feasibility reports which are still available for study. By contrast, few details have survived on the completed lesser projects and in consequence they are not widely known.

This paper draws attention to four of these poorly documented Loch Lomondside waterways, all of which came into use before the carrying of travellers, raw materials and manufactured goods by water was taken over by road and rail.

### The Inchfad Whisky Distillery Canal

Dating back to the second half of the 18th century, the earliest of the four waterways described served a licenced whisky distillery established on Inchfad, an island just off the eastern shore of the loch. Virtually nothing of the distillery's history has been passed down, although it is on record that the first man to take charge of the venture was Duncan Macfarlane, a direct ancestor of the present Macfarlane family at Balmaha. Baptismal entries for Buchanan Parish indicate that he took up residence on the island in 1764/65 after the birth of the third of his eight children. Following his death in 1783, he was succeeded in the post by his eldest son John (1). It could have been either father or son who was responsible for the excavation of a short canal leading from the water's edge to the distillery and incorporating a sheltered harbour set back from the shore. This facilitated boats bringing in grain to the distillery and the taking away of the finished product to secure premises on the mainland.

Before a boundary change made in 1797 which left Inchfad outside of the government defined Highland Region, the distillery enjoyed a much lower rate of taxation than those in the more economically developed southern half of Scotland (2). In common with the other small whisky producers on the highland fringe who lost out by the boundary shift, Inchfad found itself having to compete on equal terms with the well established and larger distilleries in the more populated parts of the country, something that could account for this local enterprise's decline and eventual closure.

With the distillery gone, both the canal and the harbour silted up through lack of use [Plate 1a]. Local recollection backed up by an aerial photograph confirms that the lower half of the canal was cleaned out and the inner harbour



modernised with concrete surrounds in the early 1950s. After the island changed hands some ten years later, the harbour again fell out of regular use and allowed to fill with sediment. Following yet another change in ownership of the island, during the late 1980s work commenced on re-opening the facility to provide safe boat moorings for the present-day Distillery Cottage.

### The Inverarnan Steamer Canal

In 1840 the steamboat partnership of David Napier and John McMurrich investigated the possibility of extending their Loch Lomond passenger service between Balloch and Ardlui to Inverarnan, a couple of miles beyond the head of the loch. For tourists and others intending to travel by horse-drawn coach still further into the highlands, the inn at Inverarnan was the staging post for Oban, Ballachulish and Killin. The lower reaches of the River Falloch conveniently covered most of the distance from Ardlui to Inverarnan, but due to the difficulties presented by a particularly sharp bend in the river, it was found that a cut would be needed for steamers to reach the proposed new terminus near the inn. Work on constructing the 500 yard long canal, turning basin and landing stage commenced in 1842, with completion by 1844. For reasons yet to be fully explained, the exclusive use of the Inverarnan Canal almost immediately fell into the hands of rival steamboat owners, before the two concerns settled their differences and amalgamated into the one company in 1845 (3).

**LOCH-LOMOND AND LOCH-CATRINE.**

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**NORTH & WEST HIGHLANDS.**



THE

STEAMERS,



**“Prince Albert,” and “Water-Witch,”**

WILL SAIL EVERY LAWFUL DAY

**FROM BALLOCH,**

*In connection with Dumbarton Steamers and Railway, at the following hours:—*

**From Glasgow—at 7 and 9-15 a.m., and 4 p.m.**

**From Balloch, foot of loch—at 9 and 11 a.m., and 6 p.m.**

**From Inverarnan top of loch—at 7-45 a.m., 12-30 and 3 p.m.**

**Arrives at Balloch—10-30 a.m., 3-15 and 5-40 p.m.**

**Glasgow—12-30, 5-15, and 7-40 p.m.**

The Loch Lomond Steamboat Company ran its sailings from Balloch to Inverarnan to connect with stage coach services to several highland destinations.

Navigational problems arose through sand and gravel continually accumulating at both the river mouth and the entrance to the canal which - when water levels were low - made it difficult for the paddle steamers to reach Inverarnan. By the late 1860s the company seems to have given up the struggle, retreating back to Ardlui. Any chance of a regular steamer service to Inverarnan being reinstated ended when the long-distance coaches operating in this part of Perthshire were withdrawn in the face of competition from the newly opened Callander & Oban Railway.

Today the steamer turning basin at Inverarnan is partially in-filled, the canal itself obstructed with fallen trees [Plate 1b].

### **Wards Scow Canal**

Wards Tile Works producing field drainage tiles or pipes was well placed, sitting as it did over a thick bed of estuarine clay laid down when the immediate post-glacial Lomond Valley was an arm of the sea. As close as can be ascertained, the business was set up sometime between the publication of the *New Statistical Account* for Kilmarnock in 1840 - when it was stated there were no manufactories in this essentially rural parish - and the *National Census* of 1851 listing master mason James Cross and six other men employed in tile making at Wards. The first edition of the Ordnance Survey map covering Kilmarnock (surveyed in 1860) shows not only the tile works buildings, but a 400 yard long canal providing a link for the shallow-draught scows operating along the navigable lower reaches of the River Endrick accessible from Loch Lomond (4). The digging of the canal from the tile works to the river probably paid for itself, as all of the clay extracted would have been used in the kilns. According to local information, production at the works continued on and off into the early 20th century, although the carriage of the field drainage tiles had by then switched from by water to the roads.

After falling into disuse and becoming overgrown [Plate 2a], Wards Scow Canal was cleaned-out in 1981 to allow small boats to be brought up from the river to be moored by the present house.

### **The Balmaha Wood Distillation Works Lighter Wharf**

It was around 1830 that the firm of Turnbull & Co. of Glasgow established a wood distillation works at Balmaha, their main product pyroligneous acid was used as a mordant in the colouring process of cloth. Both the incoming raw material from the loch-side woodlands and the outgoing barrels of distilled acid destined for the textile factories in the Vale of Leven and elsewhere were usually transported by boat (5). To assist in the unloading of the wood at the work's stack yard, narrow channels faced with timber were cut into the adjoining marshy ground to create berths for the steam lighters which came into service on the loch from the 1860/70s [Plate 2b]. Put out of business by foreign competition and the development of directly applied dyes not requiring a mordant, the wood distillation works closed down in 1922, the stack yard wharf left to fall into disrepair and the water channels to choke-up

with aquatic vegetation.

From time to time other cuts have been made in these same loch-side marshes to be used as sheltered moorings for the Balmaha boatyard.

### **Acknowledgements**

My thanks to all of the local residents who generously shared with me their own and family reminiscences relating to waterways on Loch Lomondside. Also to Norman Tait for preparing the photographic illustrations for publication.

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Plate 1a The stretch of canal leading from the long gone Inchfad Whisky Distillery to the re-opened harbour on the island has all but disappeared (Fiona Baker, courtesy of the Friends of Loch Lomond).



Plate 1b Abandoned around 1870 and now hemmed in with trees, the Inverarnan Canal was built to accommodate the early paddle steamers in service on Loch Lomond.



Plate 2a Heavily overgrown, Wards Scow Canal just before it was opened-up in 1981.

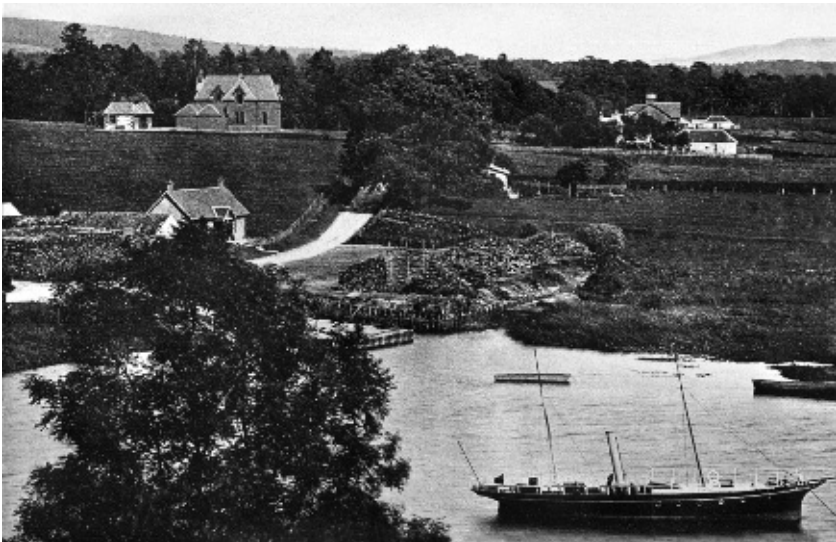


Plate 2b In this photograph from the early 1900s, the steam lighter berths for the wood distillation works at Balmaha can be seen on the far side of the bay (A.J. Macfarlane collection).

## THE ROYAL COURT AND THE COMMUNITY OF STIRLING TO 1603

John G. Harrison

Work on the interiors of the palace at Stirling Castle has stimulated interest in the courtly life of the period around 1540 when the main phase of palace construction was under way. I have been fortunate to be involved in the research on which I will draw freely in this paper<sup>1</sup>. Links between town and castle have endured since the twelfth century and were an obvious choice of topic when I was asked to give the inaugural lecture for the Stirling Local History Society in October 2006. In that lecture I identified four main periods in the relationship;

the royal period to 1603.

a post-royal interval from 1603 to the 1640s.

the garrison period from the 1640s to the 1960s.

the tourist period, overlapping with the garrison from about the later eighteenth century to the present.

In this paper I shall concentrate on the royal period, mainly in the sixteenth century, since that is the best documented period and the main focus of the research for the palace project. The main objective is to examine the relationship with the court from the perspective of the community and its inhabitants<sup>2</sup>. But, examination of the local records also revealed significant new information about the organisation of the court.

The castle is at the summit of a hill, above the town and surrounding countryside, a type of site as important for its socially dominating position as for any military advantage<sup>3</sup>. The castle would have been visible from afar whilst an undeveloped gap between castle and town, corresponding to the modern Esplanade, Valley and Kirkyard, ensured that the visitor approaching from the town saw the eastern façade from a distance, a view described as 'the whole outward beauty of the place' in the early 1580s<sup>4</sup>. Contrary to a widely-stated cliché, there was no question of the populace 'huddling for protection below the castle'; the gap provided 'social distance' and kept the people in their place.

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Historic Scotland for permission to draw on work (Harrison, 2005) undertaken for them and also to my colleagues on the Stirling Palace Academic Research Committee (SPARC) and others at the annual reviews of the project for insights, suggestions and lively discussions.

<sup>2</sup> For Stirling Castle itself, see Fawcett 1995; for the Great Hall and court rituals in Stirling see Fawcett ed. 2001; for Scots court life generally see Dunbar 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Much of the discussion in Creighton, 2002, on the landscape settings of early medieval English castles is relevant here. See also Driscoll, 1998; Dennison, *et al.* 1998.

<sup>4</sup> NAS E37/2 Inventory 1581x 1583 mentions 'the four roundis of the foir entries qlk is the haill utwart beutie of the place'; the façade of that period is now within the early eighteenth century defences and three of the towers have been truncated.

The more prestigious buildings in the town, particularly the kirk, were situated high within the urban area. Probably the upper parts were more socially prestigious from the beginning, though this can only be conclusively shown from later records. So, the town's social profile mirrored its physical profile, with the castle at the top, the urban elite in the middle and the poor towards the bottom of the long hill<sup>5</sup>.

The earliest documents refer to the royal lands in the vicinity and a park is first recorded at some time between 1165 and 1174, carved from the earlier royal demesne lands<sup>6</sup>. In the 13th century a New Park was established at St Ninians but the old one was reinstated within a century or so<sup>7</sup>. Amongst the park's many functions was to provide another vantage point from which the castle could be appreciated and an appropriate setting onto which it looked; it is striking that, whilst modern suburbs can be seen from the castle's royal interiors, the old town is almost invisible. In 1506 the Crown granted the part of the park now broadly corresponding to the built-up area around Victoria Square to the town in exchange for the Gowane Hills. The area granted was peripheral to the castle vistas and in any case remained agricultural for centuries. The exchange gave the Crown control of the sight-lines from the castle to the bridge, which increasing fire-power had now brought within range of castle-based artillery<sup>8</sup>. So, the demands of the royal presence influenced the location and form of development of the town whilst some potential agricultural land in the vicinity was set aside for royal use. This Crown land adjacent to the castle was not subject to the magistrates and council of the burgh but was controlled by a royal official who, by the later sixteenth century was known as the constable of the castle; so, the Park, Gowane Hills and the braes around the castle, together with an area around modern Barn Road called Castlehill, were together known as the Constabulary.

From the 12th century, following wider European models, the Scots Crown had encouraged the growth of towns, including Stirling. The reasons included the expectations that towns would, in turn, stimulate the economy, trade focussed in towns was more readily taxed than trade diffused across the entire country and towns also provided convenient foci of royal administration<sup>9</sup>. But towns in the immediate vicinity of royal residences were also useful for providing supplies, accommodation and services for the court. It is thought that in Peebles, for example, establishment of a new burgh followed closely on the establishment of a royal castle<sup>10</sup>. The royal manor of Falkland was granted to Mary of Gueldres (wife of James II) in 1451 and in 1459 some 22 plots of land nearby were feued to people who were obliged to provide accommodation,

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<sup>5</sup> Harrison, 1985.

<sup>6</sup> [Regesta II] pp. 206-7.

<sup>7</sup> Miller, 1922; Gilbert, 1979 pp. 82-3; Harrison, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Renwick, 1884, pp. 69-71; Sadler I, pp. 203-4, Sadler to Privy Council, 20th May 1543, stating that there was no artillery in the castle able to cover the bridge.

<sup>9</sup> Lynch, 1992, pp. 62-4; McNeill and MacQueen, 1996, pp. 196-8.

<sup>10</sup> Dixon et al. 2003.

food, stabling, fodder etc for a total of 250 people and horses when required<sup>11</sup>. Thereafter, Falkland became a favoured royal residence. On the other hand, James III was over-hopeful in making Port of Menteith into a Burgh of Barony in 1467 'to improve the supply situation during hunting expeditions'<sup>12</sup> since clearly the burgh never functioned.

Aberdeen was not often on the royal itinerary but the court was there for Christmas 1497; instructions were issued to bakers, brewers, fleshers, fishers, stablers, candlemakers, cordiners, tailors, skimmers and fuel suppliers to be prepared whilst merchants were to lay in suitable supplies of spices, wine, wax and other luxury items<sup>13</sup>. But Stirling was in a very different situation. It was regularly visited by all adult monarchs from the twelfth century to 1603, visits ranging from hours to weeks whilst several child monarchs were brought up in Stirling. In Stirling the royal residence was of the first rank and must almost always have been ready to receive a visit at short notice, whether visits for pleasure and relaxation, visits to deploy political or military might, visits for religious observance and so on.

Supplies and accommodation were problematic for all peripatetic courts. Chatenet describes the frequent, sudden moves of the French court of the sixteenth century, facilitated by well-organised arrangements for purveyance and allotting quarters, whether within the chateaux themselves or in near-by towns or even in barns, tents and other make-shifts. In England, by the time of Henry VIII, the full court had become so vast that the king generally moved within a limited compass along routes fixed well in advance and even so left many of the administrative departments in Westminster. A great deal of work over the past twenty years or so now allows a much more profound understanding of the Scots court of the period in the context of wider European models; we can begin to distinguish what was distinctively Scots from what was the norm of the wider European courtly culture and procedure<sup>14</sup>.

James IV had established the Chapel Royal in Stirling between 1501 and 1505 and until the Reformation Stirling became the main focus of the royal religious life where the adult James V almost invariably spent Easter, the main feast of the Christian year. James V, who had around 30 houses and lodgings, spent up to 40 % of his nights in Stirling in the early part of his adult reign but the adult Mary made only a few (mainly brief) visits and the adult James VI used Stirling mainly on summer hunting jaunts<sup>15</sup>. Information about supplies

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<sup>11</sup> ER, Vol vi. pp. lxxviii-lxxix; RMS, Vol ii, pp. 706-728.

<sup>12</sup> Gilbert, 1979, p. 42. Such patterns were widespread; for example, in France, the town of Blois grew up following establishment of the chateau and many courtiers had lodgings there, Chatenet, 2002, p. 88.

<sup>13</sup> Blanchard et al., 2002, p. 140. Boardman, 2002, p.204 and p. 449 note 5.

<sup>14</sup> For example for France see Chatenet, 2002; for England, Thurley, 1993; for Scotland see, for example, Dunbar, 1999, Hadley Williams ed. 1996; Edington, 1995; Thomas, 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas, 2005, p. 244; Guy, 2004; Juhala, 2000, p. 132.



and lodgings for the Scots court is sparse but is usefully discussed by Dunbar<sup>16</sup>.

The full court of the adult James V extended to around 350 named people and there were certainly others, hangers on, suitors and so on. The great rituals of court life (the baptismal festivals organised by Mary and by James VI are the key Stirling examples) would have drawn in even bigger crowds<sup>17</sup>. A visit might be part of a major progress, accompanied by a vast retinue, followed by a cavalcade of local gentry; but the Scots court, which made many informal moves, was more mobile than its contemporaries in England and France and the limited number of major residences meant that return visits were fairly frequent and did not always involve the full court<sup>18</sup>. Frequent moves meant that probably most of the residences, even quite minor ones, were kept furnished and in a state of near-readiness at all times, reducing the need to move furniture, take down hangings and so on<sup>19</sup>. Stirling might also be occupied by one or more of the satellite households. It was a jointure house for the queens of James II, III, IV and V who each had her own household, smaller than the king's but of similar structure; most used Stirling both before and after their spouses' deaths. And James V, Mary, James VI, Lord James (illegitimate son of James V) and Prince Henry (elder son of James VI) spent all or parts of their infancy and childhoods in Stirling, each with his or her own household, again smaller than an adult monarch's but on a similar model.

Even if there was no royal presence, the castle was not abandoned as there was a permanent staff, including keepers of the park and gardens, probably some stable staff and some of the laundresses as well as a very variable number of guards<sup>20</sup>. Some of these people would have lived in the castle but many probably lived elsewhere, often within the constabulary area, some near the stables at Ballengeich close to the modern fire-station. This was a rural situation but these families, some of whom held their posts over several generations, were closely tied to the burgh community, for example by marriage<sup>21</sup>. From the early sixteenth century, some of the staff of the Stirling-based Chapel Royal had

<sup>16</sup> Dunbar, 1999, pp. 182-191.

<sup>17</sup> Lynch, 2001, pp. 15-22 provides a summary of these events.

<sup>18</sup> Itineraries, becoming fuller and more reliable with time, have been published for James II (McGladdery, 1990, pp. 158-9), for James IV (Macdougall, 1988, pp. 313-5); Thomas, 2005, pp. 245-6 gives fuller details for James V for 1538 whilst an Appendix in Thomas (1997, pp. 386-423) gives recorded detail for the whole adult reign; Hay Fleming (1897, pp. 515-543) has details for Mary, which are discussed by Furgol (1987) and can be supplemented by Guy (2004). Juhala (2000, Appendix 4) gives the itinerary for James VI from Nov. 1597-Oct. 1598 and Anna of Denmark from April 1598-Oct. 1599.

<sup>19</sup> Harrison, 2005 pp. 14-5; NAS SP2/4 p. 304, for letter about the plenishing of the house at Perth.

<sup>20</sup> Walter Cunningham had been appointed gardener in 1525, NAS GD124/10/9, 3 Aug. 1525.

<sup>21</sup> Harrison, 2005, pp. 86-7, pp. 93-4. Thomas (1997, Appendix 1) identifies 15 members of the household of James V as being 'in Stirling'. But, as Thomas is aware, the list is not exhaustive, does not include other royal households (e.g. Margaret Tudor) and those named were not all contemporaneous. There were similar staffs at other regular royal residences (Dunbar, 1999).

houses in Stirling (though their work would sometimes take them elsewhere). The staff to be employed by Lord Erskine as keeper in 1523 were listed as a constable, watchman, garitours and porters whilst in 1561 his son employed the constable, keepers, porters, watchmen, garitours, gardeners and 'other office-men' and when Mar died in 1572 he owed the watchman, porter and gardener of Stirling £31 10s wages for the Whit term<sup>22</sup>. It is likely that this sum would include costs for their assistants. In the later sixteenth century a new stratum of local staff appear, including several artisan-servants (a cook, a baker, a wright or carpenter and others) and some of these got charters to build houses close to the castle, within the constabulary, where the Castlehill suburb developed<sup>23</sup>. Earlier Christian Ray, whose services as Maid of Honour to the dowager queen Margaret Tudor were recognised in 1524 by a land grant, had property in Stirling and Robert Spittal (who is discussed in more detail below) had appeared in court to support her in a dispute<sup>24</sup>.

Many of those who accompanied the itinerant court, perhaps particularly the more humble, slept in the castle, close to their places of work. There was some limited accommodation for senior nobles within the castle though this was a huge privilege and (again as happened in France and England) even they might sometimes take lodgings in the town<sup>25</sup>. This must have become increasingly problematic as households and retinues became larger since any senior noble attending court would have a considerable following. During the sixteenth century some courtier families acquired houses in the more favoured towns, particularly Stirling and Edinburgh. These were, of course, subsidiary to their main houses, situated on their rural estates. Stirling's Mar's Wark provides a prime example<sup>26</sup>. These households would have been hugely swollen when the court was in town but must have had some permanent staff. In spite of suggestions that there may have been as many as 20 courtly houses in Stirling, more or less contemporary records suggest a more limited list;

Lord Fleming's son and heir purchased a tenement in Stirling in 1472, though he sold it to the council in 1473<sup>27</sup>.

The Campbells of Argyll had a house by 1495<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Act of Parliament for the safe keeping of the king, 1523; NAS Mar and Kellie Papers GD124/11/1 Copy Gift under the Privy Seal of the office keeper of Stirling Castle, with the endowments etc, 1561; NAS GD124/3/11 Testament and inventory of John, Earl of Mar, Regent of Scotland. RSS V 900, 901, 2977. Garitour, a watchman on a tower or wall.

<sup>23</sup> Morris, 1927; Harrison, 1985; Harrison, 2005.

<sup>24</sup> Cook, 1898, pp. 75-6. Fleming, 1906, p. 30.

<sup>25</sup> For France and England see Chatenet, 2002, pp.63-75 and Thurley, 1993, pp. 67-77 respectively; for Scotland Dunbar, 1999, pp. 197-201.

<sup>26</sup> Dunbar, 1999, p. 201

<sup>27</sup> Renwick, 1884, pp. 39-41 and pp. 184-5.

<sup>28</sup> SCA B66/25/51 10 April 1495 charter of land on the north side of the market gate of Stirling between the land of the Lord Argyll on the west and lands of late John Schaw on the east. This is not the modern Argyll's Lodging but probably adjacent to the south. The Campbells had had houses elsewhere in Stirling even earlier, see HMC, 4<sup>th</sup> Report (1874) pp. 483-4 for a house as early as 1302 and again in 1430.

An agreement was signed in the 'hospitium' of Alexander, lord Elphinstone in 1529<sup>29</sup>.

The Earl of Montrose had a house on Baxter Wynd and adjacent to the Dean of the Chapel Royal's house in 1544<sup>30</sup>.

Mar's Wark, built for the Regent Mar, was probably begun about 1570 and work was still ongoing when the Regent died in 1572, when wages were owed to the workmen<sup>31</sup>.

All these families had strong local connections. The Elphinstones, Campbells and the Erskines of Mar all had accommodation within the castle, corresponding to official royal duties. These three families, as well as the Grahams of Montrose, had major estates in the locality. So, these houses would not just provide a base close to the court but also, on occasion, for influencing the political and economic life of the town for their own ends or for keeping in touch with their local contacts and power bases; significantly, the business done in Elphinstone's 'hospitium' was a renunciation of the mill of Kippenross at Dunblane and the witnesses included Robert Bruce of Airth, Robert Bissatt of Quarrell, Thomas Colquhoun and Mr John Sinclair, person of Comrie, all more or less local men.

Support for the 'short list' is provided by records of marriages and baptisms in the town in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century<sup>32</sup>. Between 25 Nov. 1585 and 23 Feb. 1595 a total of 181 marriages are recorded in Stirling; 25 of 181 men and 6 of 181 women, a total of 31 marriages (17 %) have a demonstrable royal or noble link or involve people working within the castle. But 14 of these people were involved with the Mar or Argyll households, five were royal servants and six were people who worked in the castle e.g. as gunners etc; that leaves only six to divide between a scatter of other noble households, all bar one featuring in the list of proprietors above. The baptismal roles (from 10 April 1587 to 29 March 1592) are less useful as most parents and witnesses are simply named, without designation; only one parent from 564 baptisms and very few of the 1000 or so witnesses are described as belonging to a noble household and these include a varlet to the king (twice) the earl of Mar (three times) three servants in the Mar household and one each in the households of Graham of Montrose, the Master of Elphinstone's and Lady Argyll. This sparse list does tend to confirm the limited list of noble households involved.

But the clearest support for the 'short list' is provided by people appearing before the kirk session of Stirling between 1598 and 1645, mainly accused of fornication and similar matters<sup>33</sup>. The four royal servants all appeared in 1603

<sup>29</sup> NAS Elphinstone papers GD156/9/ Item 14/2 dated 28 Jan. 1529.

<sup>30</sup> SCA B66/25/113, Jan 29 1543/4 William Earl of Montrose's property, adjacent to north side of the burgh.

<sup>31</sup> Gifford and Walker, 2002, pp. 727-8; Testament of the Regent Mar, GD124/3/11.

<sup>32</sup> Register of Baptisms and Marriages, *Scottish Antiquary*, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895.

<sup>33</sup> SCA, Stirling Kirk Session Minutes, CH2/1026/1 to CH2/1026/3 cover the relevant dates. After 1645 the garrison begin to make a significant impact.

or earlier. There were 47 members of the Mar/Erskine households with a maximum of four in any year to 1610 but there was then only one year with three, three with two and many with none at all; There were 15 from the Argyll/ Campbell households but they tail off even more steeply with only spasmodic single appearances from as early as 1605. Other households rarely have more than one and account for only 21 of the 88 appearances including a son of the earl of Stirling in 1633 whilst the earl's new house was being built in Stirling. The figures argue strongly for the dominance of the Mar and Argyll households during the late royal period and for their rapid rundown thereafter, being almost eclipsed by 1620, despite these families both continuing to have a presence as landowners in the area.

It is likely that some of the other nobles later described as having accommodation in Stirling, such as the Regents Morton and Lennox, actually rented accommodation in the town as need arose as did visiting envoys and ambassadors<sup>34</sup>. Prior to the Reformation monasteries and friaries provided one option. Edward I had stayed at the Blackfriars of Stirling after his victory at Falkirk in 1298 and Scots monarchs regularly used monastic accommodation at Holyrood, St Andrews and Dunfermline<sup>35</sup>. Lord Graham occupied lodgings at the Blackfriars in Stirling in the 1560s<sup>36</sup>. In 1470, the Abbot of Dunfermline had a lodging on Broad Street, Stirling<sup>37</sup> and Alexander, abbot of Cambuskenneth, had a house in the Back Row in the mid 1540s; both of these houses could provide accommodation for courtiers and other important visitors<sup>38</sup>.

Others took lodgings in private houses. Sir James Hamilton of Finnart lodged in the town whilst involved with work on the palace in the late 1530s<sup>39</sup>. In 1543, once the young Queen Mary was moved to Stirling, Cardinal Beaton was not allowed to lodge in the castle, for security reasons, but had to find lodgings in the town – and her opponents even wanted Marie de Guise, the queen mother, to do so and only be admitted to see her daughter occasionally and under guard<sup>40</sup>. The Bruce of Auchenbowie house survives from about this period and traditions that Darnley lodged there or in William Bell's house are credible if unproven. Several local landowners who were only marginally involved with the court also had houses in the town. Craigengelt of Craigengelt, a laird of modest means, had a very substantial Stirling house and garden. Forrester of Logie Lodging seems far too grand for its very modest,

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<sup>34</sup> Chambers (1830, p. 32), mentions the houses of the earls of Morton, Glencairn and Lennox as well as a house allegedly occupied by Darnley and Prince Henry – though this last was actually built many years after Darnley's death.

<sup>35</sup> Dunbar, 1999.

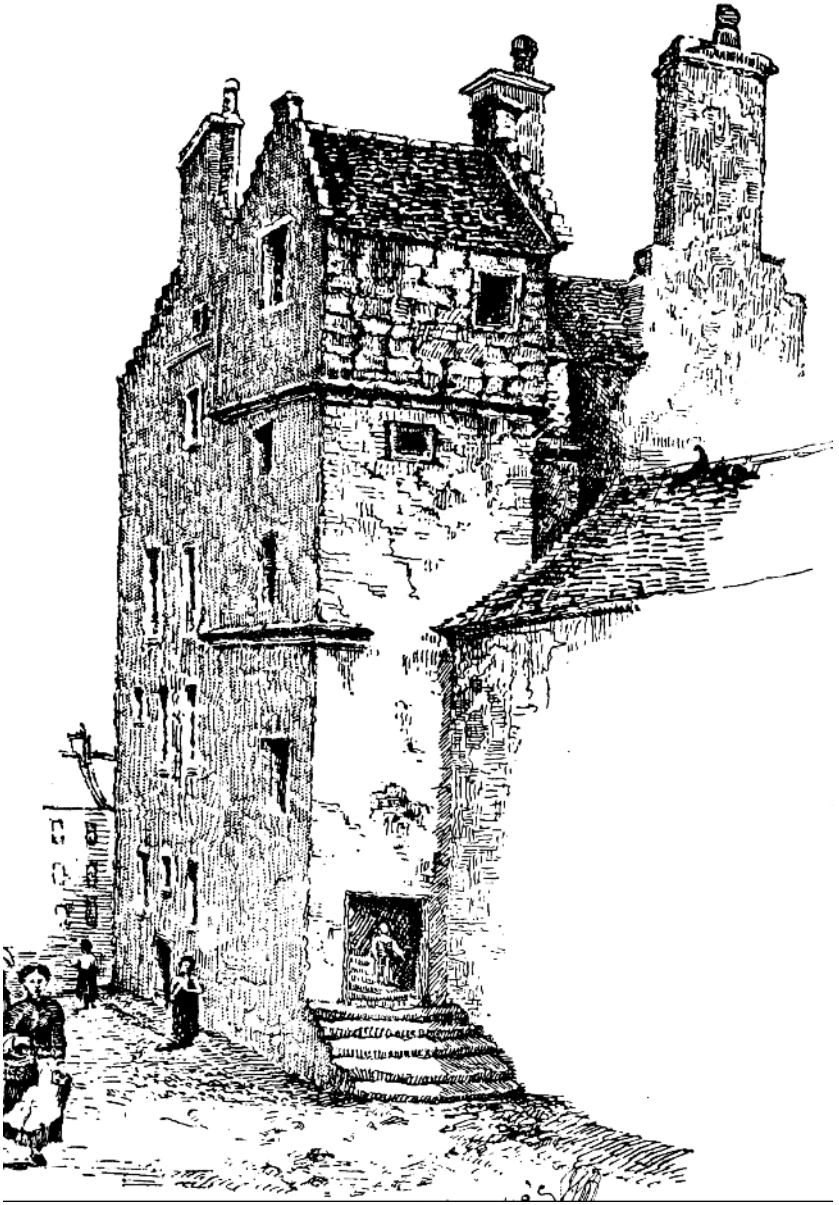
<sup>36</sup> Kirk, 1995, p. lxxvi.

<sup>37</sup> *Stirling Protocol Book*, p. 3, Renwick, 1884, p. 256.

<sup>38</sup> SCA B66/1/24, p. 62; *Stirling Protocol Book*, p. 30, 22 May 1476; SCA, Burgh Register of Deeds, B66/9/1 f. 88 for tack originally dated 1568 with obligation to serve the lodging of the abbot of Cambuskenneth when in Stirling.

<sup>39</sup> TA, Vol vii, p. 482.

<sup>40</sup> Sadler I, p. 245, to Henry VIII, 31 July 1543; L and P, Vol. 18(2) no. 20, 10<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1543.



Forrester of Logie Lodging seen from St Mary's Wynd. To the right of the tower was a hall of two storeys (Fleming, 1902).

local owner and may well have doubled as accommodation for courtiers<sup>41</sup>. In 1571 half a dozen nobles, including the regent, with many others, were lodged in the town, perhaps all in the same house, when it was attacked and some captured<sup>42</sup>. In March 1578 Lord Glamis was going down the Castle Wynd to his lodgings in the town when he was murdered<sup>43</sup>. Ambassadors and other foreign envoys usually stayed in Edinburgh but, if they came to Stirling, might also be lodged in the town as evidenced by a payment to the 'good-wife of the house where the Herald of Flanders was lodged'<sup>44</sup>. When Throckmorton came to Stirling (in 1561) he found the gates of the castle closed against him and had to find lodgings in the town<sup>45</sup>.

Quarters were allocated by royal or burgh officials. When the king was in Jedburgh for a justice ayre in 1529 the burgesses of Jedburgh were to supply lodgings as allocated by John Lawson, a royal official; a proclamation was made and Lawson visited premises with two of the magistrates, though on this occasion, they met some fairly stiff resistance from a local chaplain who resented his goods and space being taken<sup>46</sup>. Diplomats were typically allocated lodgings in Edinburgh and were watched over by officials of the Lyon Court, their movements fairly closely constrained<sup>47</sup>. When James VI made his return visit to Scotland in 1617, clean, properly-equipped lodgings were commanded for the royal train in the various burghs and similarly for Charles I visit in 1633 magistrates of all the towns were to make stables, lodgings and supplies available ready for the visit; if there was not enough stabling, stalls and mangers were to be made in barns, whilst 'country men' who followed the cavalcade were to make their own arrangements for accommodation in gentlemen's houses or otherwise, leaving the town for the official party. And in the mid seventeenth century, when Charles II was in Stirling, the Committee of Estates, following ancient precedent, ordered all strangers to be removed from the town, 'to the effect houses and lodgeings may bee had for these that are to attend the King and the affairs of the public'<sup>48</sup>. So, systems were in place to provide accommodation for courtiers and their horses – though there is

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<sup>41</sup> Fleming, 1902, pp. 157-164 includes an illustration; for a plan see Harrison, 1994, p. 25. The land was probably divided from a larger tenement belonging to Forrester of Garden about 1535, SCA B66/1/2 f. 19r (1535) disposition by Forrester of Garden to John, his son, of land in Mary Wynd. This house had a 'great hall' and chamber of dais as well as a tower.

<sup>42</sup> CSP, II, 1563-1569, p. 680; Forbes (1857) may well be right that this was the rather grand house with a wooden frontage on a prestigious site at the top of Broad Street.

<sup>43</sup> Lynch, 2001, p. 18.

<sup>44</sup> Brown, 1893, p. 37.

<sup>45</sup> Guy, 2004, p. 210.

<sup>46</sup> NAS GD40/2/9/33; charge by James V dated 9 June 1529 to the provost and bailies of Jedburgh. Concern about refusal to sell goods to the king went back to medieval burgh laws, SBRs, 1868, p. 119.

<sup>47</sup> Harrison, 2005, pp. 40-41 and pp. 90-96.

<sup>48</sup> RPC, Vol x, p. 683-4 (Edinburgh and surroundings was to provide for 5000 men and 5000 horses); Nichols, 1828, iii, p. 328; NAS GD90/2/66 1633 note of preparations for receiving the king in Scotland; Renwick, 1887, p. 198.

scope for much more work in archival sources to elucidate the detail.

For supplies and services, the park could supply some fresh venison and there were gardens for herbs, vegetables and fruit. Fish-ponds supplemented salmon from the river, whilst swans and herons were kept at the Park Loch; they were mainly ornamental but might also have ended up on the royal table. Coneyhill and Kenningknows are modern names for areas adjacent to the park; the names suggest that there has been a warren supplying rabbits, a prestigious item served only at the highest tables in the royal household even in the late sixteenth century<sup>49</sup>. By the 1620s there was a doocot, providing pigeons for the table as well as dung for the royal gardens<sup>50</sup>. The protection and management of these wild or semi-wild resources was the business of many of the specialised local staff already mentioned. The park, doocot, gardens, fishponds and so on were fashionable and handsome landscape features, looked down on from the castle. In a world of shortage they put the monarchs at the centre of lands which they controlled and which produced an abundance of varied, exotic and prestigious food<sup>51</sup>.

There were also extensive Crown lands in Stirlingshire, known as the Lordship of Stirling. These lands and their incomes were assigned to the royal spouses and widows who had Stirling Castle as their jointure or dower house. About 1541 these lands paid £370 pa in money plus very approximately 17 tonnes each of barley and malt, 9 tonnes of wheat, 4 tonnes of oats, 30 salmon, 90 capons and 600 loads of coal<sup>52</sup>. The wheat, which all came from Bothkennar on the lands beside the tidal Forth, was particularly important as it was little grown locally but was essential for making the leavened wheat bread, favoured in high-status households. Added to that, people gave the king gifts of food, sometimes quite substantial quantities of delicacies, ranging from lampreys to venison, geese to swans, whisky and wine<sup>53</sup>. For the baptismal feast of Prince Henry, James VI seems to have put out a general request for gifts of food and wine, with a seat at the feast as a *quid pro quo*<sup>54</sup>. In preparation for Charles I visit in 1633 the tenants of the royal lands in Stirlingshire were ordered to pay their rents with their best produce, magistrates in all the towns visited were to

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<sup>49</sup> 'Coney' and 'cunning' both refer to a rabbit. Positive documentary confirmation of a warren has not, so far, been found. For rabbits as prestigious food see; NAS, Exchequer Records E34/36 Scheme for the King's household, 1582 which indicates that they were supplied only to the highest tables; NAS E 31/16 Household of Anne of Denmark, 1598, 13th Aug. 28th Sept. 13th Oct.

<sup>50</sup> Imrie and Dunbar, 1982, p. 178, p. 253; it is not clear if the doocot was an innovation.

<sup>51</sup> Williamson, 1997, p.92-117. The park's other functions included; army camp, pasture for horses and draft animals, wood and materials supply, tournament ground etc.

<sup>52</sup> ER Vol. xvii, pp. 710-3; there were additional dues, both in cash and kind, which had been assigned to servants for wages and some disputes about exactly what was due; the coal, for example, had not been delivered for some time. See also NAS E40/10 for detailed rental of the crown lands south of Forth in 1541.

<sup>53</sup> Cameron, 1998, p. 265.

<sup>54</sup> *True Accompt*, 1984, Notes.

arrange for deliveries of fish and 'fed beef' whilst game in areas to be visited was to be protected, in case the king chose to hunt<sup>55</sup>.

But local purchases were essential. Thurley and Chatenet describe the formal systems for procuring supplies in England and France. In Scotland, there are occasional records of messages sent ahead as the court moved about for preparations to be made for provisions etc, for example, a message sent to the Isles when James V was on his northern naval expedition or the instructions issued for the Christmas visit to Aberdeen, mentioned above<sup>56</sup>. And there were regular suppliers. Robert Githan is recorded as a baker in Stirling, supplying the court in 1531 and Walter Scott, is mentioned as baker in 1522 and 1535. Walter 'Wat' Scott was supplying the 'common bread' for de Guise's household in Stirling in 1543 and in Feb. 1545, Walter Scot, baker and burgess of Stirling, was to bake bread for the queen 'as pertains to his office to do'; in 1546, the queen's bread was supplied by Isobel Broun at Walter Scott's request, perhaps as he was himself dying<sup>57</sup>. So far as supplies were provided by local traders 'on demand', they must have been identical with what was available for others to buy and purchases of beer, vinegar, soap and other mundane items which figure so prominently in the Household Books, were not for the monarch's own use. In an emergency in 1585 it was noted, in a rather shocked tone, that officials had to send into the town 'for the king's owen diett'<sup>58</sup>. More exotic items, particularly wine, were sometimes supplied from central stocks at Edinburgh and distributed to the other residences as needed<sup>59</sup>. Gifts and home produce, as noted above, would have further contributed to the distinctive character of the royal diet.

There may have been a re-organisation of supplies following James V's first marriage. A master flesher to the queen's house was appointed in a ship-board grant on the day before James V and Madeleine landed at Leith in 1537<sup>60</sup>. Between 1538 and 1542 a William Bell who was a groom in the royal larder, received wages and livery<sup>61</sup>. He might be the same man who, in 1541, was paid for a coffer to contain the king's books at Stirling. In 1546-7 a contract was made with William Bell to supply meat in Stirling and around the same time he held the moneys needed for building the town walls. In June 1548 letters were sent to Bell and Walter Cousland to attend the council to receive instructions about providing supplies for 'the Frenchmen' whilst in January 1549 he and the sheriff of Clackmannan were to give in their lists of the taxable lands in the area. In August 1549 Bell was paid £216 for butter supplied for Edinburgh Castle. In 1550 Bell was described as merchant and provisioner to the queen

<sup>55</sup> NAS GD90/2/66 1633 note of preparations for receiving the king in Scotland.

<sup>56</sup> Murray, 1965, p. 18.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas, 1997, Appendix 1; NAS E33/3 July – December 1543; Renwick, 1887, p. 40 and 42.

<sup>58</sup> Bannatyne Club, 1835; Calderwood, *Historie of the Kirk of Scotland*, Wodrow Soc. Ed. Vol iv, p. 390.

<sup>59</sup> Bannatyne Club, 1835.

<sup>60</sup> RMS ii, 2260.

<sup>61</sup> TA, Vol vi, p. 429 and 438; TA Vol vii, p. 128, p. 333, p. 476; TA Vol viii, p. 76, p. 96. p.101.



and was paid for goods supplied whilst in 1558 he was ordered to restore goods taken illicitly from Cambuskenneth. Bell seems to have been a member of the Stirling merchant guild and was briefly a member of town council and he also ran Stirling's tennis court, see below<sup>62</sup>.

Others also had contracts to supply the court. For example, in 1548 a Stirling flesher had an agreement to supply meat to the household of an ambassador<sup>63</sup>. In 1568, Andrew Hagy, the provisioner of the king's household, was to supply food and drink only to those on the household list for Stirling. In 1570, James earl of Moray owed £666 to James Marshall in Stirling, 'furnisar' or 'supplier' to the king's house, and owed William Fairbairn in Stirling £243 for coal for the king's house<sup>64</sup>. Alexander Durham had been a servant in the queen's spice house in 1538-9. In January 1543 he was paid for white taffeta he had supplied for the baptism of Mary, Queen of Scots<sup>65</sup>. After the king's death he became an increasingly prominent administrator in de Guise's household and in September 1554 she paid him £500 as part of a greater sum; he was one of many members of her household to get a payment following her death<sup>66</sup>. By the early 1560s, sometimes now described as 'argentier' he was receiving and distributing considerable sums and also regularly supplying the queen's household with provisions and other items and was sometimes described as clerk of the expenses<sup>67</sup>. Then, in 1566, Alexander Durham younger was repaid alms he had given 'by special command of the king and queen'<sup>68</sup>. It is probably the younger man who, around this time was appointed as collector of the Thirds of the Benefices and after Mary's deposition, was associated with the households of the regents Moray and Mar, sometimes still described as the argentier and with a significant control over revenues<sup>69</sup>. In 1570 he was owed very substantial sums for supplying silverware and food both for Moray and the king. After Moray's death, his widow asked that all costs incurred by Alexander Durham in Stirling in supplying ale, wine, bread, meat, fish, spice and other items, should be paid as part of the legitimate expenses of Moray's

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<sup>62</sup> Murray, 1965, p. 44.; NAS E34/13 agreement between Andrew Fairny of that Ilk and William Bell [undes] to supply the Queen with meat, July 1547-July 1548; Renwick, 1887, p. 52 and p. 61 for Bell as tax gatherer in Stirling; TA ix, p. 204, p. 275, p. 330; NLS Crawford of Balcarres Adv ms 29.2.5, receipt for payment to William Bell, merchant and provisioner of the Queen, 12 July 1550. TA Vol xi p. 402. For Bell as councillor see Renwick, 1887, p. 61-3 and p. 276-7.

<sup>63</sup> Renwick, 1887, p. 52.

<sup>64</sup> NAS GD124/11/4, for instructions to Earl of Mar as keeper, 5 May 1568; HMC, 6<sup>th</sup> Report, p. 647. A James Marshall had been a member of de Guise's household at her death, TA Vol. xi, p. 26. Hagy is recorded supplying fabrics to the court in 1569 (TA Vol xii, p. 154) but does not otherwise appear in the treasurer's accounts for the period.

<sup>65</sup> TA Vol vii p. 131. TA viii, p. 165.

<sup>66</sup> TA Vol x p. 240; TA Vol xi p. 26.

<sup>67</sup> TA Vol xi p. 21, p. 23, p. 26, p. 75, p. 76, p. 159; NAS E30/11, my thanks to Michael Pearce for this reference.

<sup>68</sup> TA Vol xi p. 492.

<sup>69</sup> TA Vol XII p. 119, p. 129, p. 251, p. 303; BM Ms Royal 18b VI f. 230-231.

office as regent. Durham's role extended to a degree of financial control and he was also supplier and agent for the households of the earls of Mar and others. Durham (probably the younger) was a burgher, had property in the burgh and he and his wife are buried in the kirk<sup>70</sup>.

Like Durham, Bell had a significant financial role, at least in the town and locality, revenue gathering giving them some protection against the risks of long-overdue accounts. It seems that a more French system of procurement had been instituted – along with the French term *argenterie* for the official responsible for supplies – and continued well after any significant French presence at the court<sup>71</sup>. A document from 1582 suggests a return to the old, piecemeal systems of the days of James V. Goods were to be bought at sensible, market prices for cash, if possible. But if there was no cash and goods had to be bought on credit, the prices charged by the purveyors were to be even more closely checked by the Steward, who was also to supervise purchases and to oversee the storage of meat, herring, wine and other goods and their distribution within the household. He was to co-ordinate with the master household, the comptroller and others and to keep proper records<sup>72</sup>.

Courtly needs extended beyond food. Robert Spittal was perhaps Stirling's best-known royal supplier, records dating from 1509 to 1541. He was tailor to Margaret Tudor and James IV and supplied clothes to James V. He was rewarded by gifts of lands and his wealth is indicated by his building several bridges in the area. He is never described as a burgher but probably lived at least part of the time in Stirling where he had property and established an almshouse<sup>73</sup>. Jonat Tenant, ancestor of Stirling's John Cowane, was a trader in her own right and supplied cloth for the household of Queen Margaret Tudor – though it took her at least eight years to get payment<sup>74</sup>. Luxury trades must have benefited from even the occasional presence of the court. In 1575 a brodinster or embroider owned part of what would later become Argyll's Lodging whilst in 1601 Janet Cunningham, servant to Lady Argyll's gentlewoman, confessed fornication with Donald Christison, lady Argyll's brodinster. Intermittent records of brodinsters continue to about 1630<sup>75</sup>. John Aickin, goldsmith, valued some items in 1549/50, John Hudson, goldsmith, is recorded in 1589/90 and in 1592; Robert Paterson, goldsmith appears between 1602 and 1613 and John Hudson, goldsmith in 1617, the last record of a

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<sup>70</sup> Renwick, 1887, p. 48; See e.g. HMC 6th Report (1877), p. 647 and p. 657; RCAHMS, 1963, p. 138. Cook, 1905, pp. 39-40.

<sup>71</sup> Purveyance systems helped to smooth out variations in market prices and so stabilise costs and were used by several Scots noble households, Brown, 2004, p. 81 and p. 293, n. 30.

<sup>72</sup> Thomas, 1997, p. 31 and Appendix B.

<sup>73</sup> Cook, 1905.

<sup>74</sup> Renwick, 1887, pp. 54-5. Isobel Williamson, a late 15th century Edinburgh woman, also supplied cloth to the court, see Marshall, 1983, p. 50 and DNB (2005) 'Isobel Williamson'.

<sup>75</sup> SCA, Kirk Session Minutes, CH2/1026/1 12th Feb. 1601; *ibid*, 24 Dec. 1613; Renwick, 1887, p. 148.

goldsmith in Stirling<sup>76</sup> The decline in brodinsters could be due to changing fashions as lace replaced embroidery but loss of goldsmiths is more probably attributable to the loss of courtly patronage.

Locally-mined coal was supplied for the fires in the castle. Some came from the royal lands as part of the rent, the best-recorded mine being at Skeoch, near Bannockburn, but there were other sources. Marie de Guise had coal shipped in from Alloa on her arrival in summer 1543 whilst David Sibbald was described as collier to the queen dowager in 1546; again, there seems to be an adoption of a contract system as he had a regular contract to supply her with coal in Stirling for the year 1546-7<sup>77</sup>.

The town also supplied services of various kinds. During the reign of James V, tennis courts were available for all the main residences including Stirling<sup>78</sup>. The Stirling court (called a cachepull- or cachepell-yard) was operated by William Bell (whose role in providing supplies was noted above) from about 1532 and was in a courtyard later called Bell's Yard, off modern Baker Street, rather than in the castle. It was presumably open to the public though some of the expenses for construction, maintenance and equipment were met by the Treasurer whilst in 1540, the Pursemaster paid William Bell for balls which the king 'tynt' ie lost 'in his cachepeill'<sup>79</sup>. In France, by the late 16th century, tennis was so popular that there were said to be more tennis courts than churches<sup>80</sup>. The Stirling tennis court continued to function well into the seventeenth century, so it was not entirely reliant on royal and noble support<sup>81</sup>.

Another service provided within the town was education. Jacques Collumbell was one of the minstrels, recorded from 1538 to 1542. His two sons' boarding and clothes at school in Stirling was paid between Lammas 1540 and

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<sup>76</sup> Renwick, 1887, p. 58; Stirling Registers, 17 June 1592 for John Hudson, goldsmith; *ibid* baptism, Feb 8 1589/90 John Hudson, goldsmith, is witness to baptism. SCA, CH2/1026/1 29 July 1602, Robert Paterson, goldsmith, fornication; RPC Vol X p. 10 for Robert Paterson, goldsmith, burgess; SCA, B66/16/2 burgh court 23 June 1613, Robert Paterson, goldsmith; CC21/5/2 4 June 1617, testament of John Gibb, cutler, burgess, owed to John Hudson, goldsmith in Stirling, £18 as balance of a greater sum.

<sup>77</sup> Harrison, 2005, pp. 73-4; Renwick, 1887, p. 44, p. 46. He is probably the David Sibbald, carter, who had carried her goods, bedding etc prior to the king's death, TA Vol vi – Vol viii *passim*.

<sup>78</sup> Dunbar, 1999, pp. 205-8.

<sup>79</sup> SCA, B66/1/4 f. 175 and f. 179v; TA Vol vii, p. 168; Thomas, 1997, Appendix 1, William Bell ; Harrison, 2005, pp. 88-9.

<sup>80</sup> Chatenet, 2002, p. 126.

<sup>81</sup> Bell probably died in 1573, still in possession of his tennis court; SCA B66/1/6 p. 17 1573 for William Bell's own catchpuill; for his testament *ibid* p.18 and p. 32; SCA B66/1/6 p. 6 1573 William Bell delivers the keys of the lodging, yard and ketchpill of Stirling to Malcolm Drummond of Borland in terms of their contract. He also admits receipt of 100 merks of the 800 merks due; See SB6/3/1a for the contract referred to; NRAS 3094/185 for William Bell in Stirling involved with teinds of Nairn, 1561-2.

Lammas 1542; presumably their father travelled with the court<sup>82</sup>. When the Regent Mar died in 1572 he owed £33 6s 8d (50 merks) to Mr Thomas Buchanan for his fee for teaching at the school. Buchanan, nephew of the more famous scholar George, was a man of some standing, as recognised by his being consulted on national educational issues and this payment of 1572 might indicate that he was already, as he certainly was later, a salaried official of the royal household himself, in parallel with his role at the school<sup>83</sup>. The chance of having courtly and noble (if not royal) pupils would certainly enhance the standing of the post of head teacher of the school and so, presumably, help to secure better teaching for local boys.

The basic transport needs of the court were met by horses from the royal stables and by regular liveried carters paid by the load, such as David Sibbald, just mentioned. Senior courtiers would have their own horses. But Stirling was often called on to supply transport for special needs such as to carry coal from the shore to the castle when Marie de Guise first moved into the castle in 1543 or to bring up fireworks secretly, at night, for the baptism of Prince James in 1566<sup>84</sup>; stabling and fodder have already been mentioned and adequate supplies were essential for the peripatetic court. Building projects would also have been a source of employment – though major projects were rare and, unfortunately, for sixteenth century Stirling they are poorly recorded. Specialists marshalled from elsewhere for major projects would require accommodation whilst there would be less skilled work for local people and demand for supplies of stone, sand, lime and timber, all needing to be transported to the site by local labour<sup>85</sup>.

There are no sources which can allow us to quantify the costs and benefits of the royal presence for the town and its economy. Most records refer to benefits – to money paid for goods and services and so on. They can hint at the downside. It might have been an accident when James V killed the park keeper's wife's cow with a gun. It was predictable that the courtly japes of the Abbot of Unreason would lead to damage to property – though at least the damage to Gilbert Brady's house was paid for<sup>86</sup>. There are no records of formal 'entries' to Stirling but a procession through the town to celebrate the victory of the King of France against the emperor, organised at short notice and in which Marie de Guise took part shortly after taking up residence with her

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<sup>82</sup> Thomas, 1997, Appendix A; TA Vol vii, p. 271, p. 328, p. 413, p. 438, p. 482; TA Vol viii p. 55, p. 93.

<sup>83</sup> NAS GD124/3/11 testament of John, Earl of Mar; Hutchison, 1904, pp. 28-33.

<sup>84</sup> NAS E33/3 extraordinary expenses, p. 24 for coal shipped from Alloa and carried to castle. TA Vol xii, pp. 403-9 for ten carts to carry the fireworks at night 'for fear of knowledge'.

<sup>85</sup> Paton, 1957 has the relevant accounts.

<sup>86</sup> TA, Vol i p. clx and p. 270 (1496) for Gilbert Brady's house in Stirling damaged by the Abbot of Unreason; CRA, B66/1/24 p. 140 mid 16th century sasine for Castle Brady, which stood at the south west corner of 'Broad Street' and continues in record at least through the 17th century.

daughter, could clearly have been very disruptive<sup>87</sup>. The most famous attempts to capture the castle (those of the period of the Wars of Independence, for example) did not relate to its being a royal residence. But, from time to time, the royal presence was a factor; the Douglasses are said to have burned the town in revenge for the king's murder of their kinsman in the castle in 1452 and there were recurrent (if less damaging) raids, many directed at capturing and manipulating child monarchs, particularly James VI.

The Crown could commandeer accommodation or horses or goods and so on – this was not a free market which local people could choose to ignore if they wished. There was the promise of payment but it took Jonat Tenant eight years to get payment whilst on one occasion Marie de Guise had to pawn her own hat to cover her expenses. Powerful, capricious customers are not an unmitigated blessing<sup>88</sup>. In 1547 new regulations were instituted for claims against the court and nobility for supplies of merchandise, bread, ale, fodder and other supplies, to be passed via the Provost rather than complaints being made directly; there were serious penalties for infraction and clearly this was a contentious area<sup>89</sup>.

One factor to emerge strongly from the evidence is that the burghal and courtly communities were not two distinct entities. The schoolmaster and the gardeners, the purveyancers and the maid of honour, the baker and the laundress, the tennis court keeper, the tailor and the noble householders all had feet in both camps. In 1615 Agnes Bowye was described as mistress laundress to His Majesty and widow of Francis Galbraith, servant in His Majesty's pantry when she gave £20 sterling (a very considerable sum) to Stirling kirk session 'for the love she bears to this city' to establish pensions for two poor, elderly women<sup>90</sup>; here was a family which had done well out of royal service and was closely tied to the local community. The boundaries were blurred – and were blurred even more by the sexual relationships apparent from the kirk session evidence. And it is also striking that the records, so often fragmentary, indicate links between these people; Durham's managerial role spanned several households, Spittal the tailor represents Ray, the Maid of Honour, the schoolmaster teaches the nobles' sons, whilst the noble and courtier householders, with their local estates and linkages, used the town's lawyers, as well as its goldsmiths and embroiderers. Stirling's merchants would, in any case, have travelled to European sea ports. But the courtly presence exposed far more of the inhabitants to Scots and European intellectual and aesthetic influences, particularly given the close ties between the crown and the local clergy. Even if, at times, the crown acted to repress diversity and discussion, the royal presence contributed to a livelier intellectual

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<sup>87</sup> Dickinson, 1942, p. 21.

<sup>88</sup> Renwick, 1887, p. 49; the earl of Argyll also pawned goods in security of a debt in 1549, *ibid* p. 57. Dennison for Aberdeen p. 140 also highlights the difficulty of getting payment.

<sup>89</sup> Renwick, 1887, p. 46.

<sup>90</sup> SCA Stirling Kirk Session Minutes, Kirk Session CH2/1026/2, 19 Jan 1615 and 13 June 1616.

milieu than would otherwise have been the case<sup>91</sup>.

Economically, the castle and court and the noble households were supported by rents and taxes garnered from across Scotland but spent locally. Considerable sums were involved. In 1522, during the minority of James V and when he was in Stirling for an extended period, the salaries of the keeper, constable, footmen, captain and others totalled around £1250 Scots per annum plus expenses<sup>92</sup>; this takes no account of the senior servants, courtiers and officials, cooks, nurses and so on. It is true, as Boardman has pointed out, that an occasional royal visit in course of a royal progress called for suitable 'propines' or presents. But these were not necessary during the routine presence of the court whilst, at the baptism of Prince Henry a modest return was made when 'largesse' was scattered from the castle walls<sup>93</sup>. Stirling, like any other royal burgh, had to contribute to the royal coffers through taxation; but unlike many others, Stirling had a chance to get something back and there must have been a net inflow in many years, at least. But several factors would serve to protect local businesses from over-dependence on courtly patronage. The demand was intermittent, with short- and long-term fluctuations. The peak, surely, was from 1529 to 1536 when James V spent from 27 to 44 per cent of his nights in Stirling; from 1537 to his death in late 1542 the range was from 1 to 28 % but the average only 13 %. Thereafter, Stirling was home for Marie de Guise, for royal minors and the setting for two major extravaganzas, the baptismal festivals for the Princes James and Henry. Throughout, the political capital was Edinburgh, where parliament and the courts met, ambassadors were based, the Exchequer and Privy Council usually sat and so on; not only monarchs but regents including Arran, de Guise, Moray, Morton and even Mar, based themselves in Edinburgh where their households consumed much of the royal revenue. There was not so much left for the household of a child monarch in Stirling<sup>94</sup>. We have seen that nobles who had Stirling houses had them largely for local reasons. But the greater number of nobles, prelates and others who had Edinburgh houses had them for national reasons. It was the

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<sup>91</sup> For example, Cambuskenneth Abbey, both the town's friaries, various chapels in the vicinity and the parish kirk all benefited from royal patronage whilst several local clergy and others were burned for heresy in 1539 and James VI disputed with Patrick Simpson, the minister of the town who he had himself nominated; these pre- and post-reformation links form a huge topic deserving separate treatment.

<sup>92</sup> NAS GD124/10/6, copy of ordinance for keeping of the king, 3 Aug. 1522; NAS124/10/8, extract act of parliament anent keeping of the king's person in Stirling Castle, 2 Sept. 1523. The footmen also had liveries supplied, leaving more of their wages free to spend; the exchange rate for £s Scots to £ Sterling was around 3:1 at this period.

<sup>93</sup> Boardman, 2002, p. 204 and p. 449 note 7. The gifts Stirling gave to Charles I on his 1633 visit, were expensive but not ruinously so. For 'largesse' see Meikle (ed.) Vol ii p. 185.

<sup>94</sup> From July 1543 until her departure for France, the infant Mary queen of Scots lived mainly in Stirling. It was her mother's dower house and de Guise had the revenues of the Lordship of Stirling though that was probably dwarfed by the revenues she received from France. De Guise spent a good deal of time in Stirling prior to her appointment as Regent but her main base was Edinburgh thereafter.

best place for networking – and its merchants, lawyers, landlords and others, had the certainty of a steady demand for their goods, services and accommodation.

There was scarcely time for Stirling to become dependent on the court's presence in the brief window of the late 1520s and early 1530s, a period long forgotten by the time the court finally departed in 1603. Thereafter, some luxury trades faded from the scene, the great noble households shrank then vanished, the halls of the lodging houses fell silent or were converted to other uses. But there is no sign of a sudden collapse of the economy. Stirling survived to face a new series of challenges in the seventeenth century.

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## THE STIRLING HEADS AND THE STIRLING SMITH

Elsbeth King

The re-presentation of the royal palace within Stirling Castle has been many years in the making and it is time to consider the contribution of the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum to the end result.

Stirling does not have a particularly good record of caring for its antiquities and historical artefacts. The carved oak charter chest, 1636, from Cowane's Hospital was carried off by the Jacobites in 1746, served as a meal chest for over a century, and was only recovered at auction in 1882. The key of Stirling, taken by Bonnie Prince Charlie at the same time, was only returned in 1961, courtesy of the collector Captain Charles A. Hepburn of Red Hackle Whisky, Glasgow, who purchased it at auction. The frame carved from the Wallace oak of Elderslie in which the letters of the European liberators Garibaldi, Mazini, Kossuth, Blind and Blanc were exhibited in the Wallace Monument, was purchased in a junk sale by a private citizen who intended to make a bathroom mirror of it. The purchaser died and the letters and frame were recovered in 1998. The architect's drawing for the National Wallace Monument was seriously 'mislaidd' and recovered in 1999. All of these artefacts are in the Stirling Smith.

Referring to the disappearance of Stirling's antiquities before his time when Cowane's Chest was recovered in 1882, a correspondent wrote to the Dean of Guild as follows:

'There is nothing surprising... after what we know of the Stirling Heads and other relics which have been recovered. Our forefathers place a little value upon these things, and were as likely to utilise an old oak chest for a corn bin as a butter shop to use old manuscripts for wrapping around butter, which has been found out on more occasions than one.'<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, attitudes have not changed with the times, and rescue operations for Stirling's material culture are still mounted by the Stirling Smith when resources permit.

Antiquities outwith the museum have also suffered. The Heading Stone on the Gowan Hill was for long used by a butcher at the Old Bridge as a block for chopping off the horns of sheep, prior to its rescue in 1888.<sup>2</sup> In the *Forth Naturalist and Historian*, Vol. 29, J. Malcolm Allan described how the town of Bridge of Allan lost two museums and their collections.

The loss of artwork and artefacts from Stirling Castle over the last 400 years has not been assessed in any detail. Items of considerable value from the Castle "from which thrown out among other woodwork during some repairs" still appear in auction house catalogues today<sup>3</sup> and disappear without trace. The

more recent military history of Stirling Castle has been obliterated in favour of Renaissance-style re-display. There is now no trace of the pikes and other instruments taken from the radical weavers of 1820. The Diary of Helen Graham 1823-1826, daughter of Lieutenant-General Samuel Graham (1756-1831) of Stirling Castle, recounts how the children of the Castle re-enacted the Battle of Bannockburn, playing with the pikes of the weavers. The objects were still in the castle when the Diary was published in 1956, as was the collection of antiquities shown to visitors in the Douglas Room, from the 1860s onwards.<sup>4</sup> All have since disappeared.

The loss of artefacts from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries pales into insignificance when the destruction of the original Renaissance fittings is considered. The popular present day press fables<sup>5</sup> about the dismantling of the ceiling of the King's Presence Chamber for safety reasons in 1777, and the gathering together of the Stirling Heads two hundred years later, is one which is very economical with the truth.

The closest contemporary comment which can be obtained are the Stirling Lines of Robert Burns, scratched on a pane in Wingate's Inn (now the Golden Lion Hotel). Burns visited Stirling on 27 August 1787 when he had dinner with Lieutenant Forrester of the Castle garrison, Dr David Doig of the Grammar School and Christopher Bell, a singing teacher. This was fully ten years after the destruction of the ceiling with the Stirling Heads, but the condition of the Castle left a profound impression on the poet:

*Here Stewarts once in glory reign'd,  
And laws for Scotland's weal ordain'd;  
But now unroof'd their palace stands,  
Their sceptre fallen to other hands;  
Fallen indeed, and to the earth,  
Whence grovelling reptiles take their birth;  
The injur'd Stewart line are gone.  
A race outlandish fill their throne;  
An idiot race, to honor lost –  
Who know them best despise them most.*

This critique almost cost Burns his employment as an exciseman.

A report on the destruction, filed with the Society of Antiquaries in 1828, fully fifty years after the event, was not less passionate:

'The whole ceiling was destroyed and dispersed in different directions. A gentleman who witnessed this barbarity states that, on the day the ceiling was pulled to pieces by the workmen who were employed to repair the roof of the Palace, beautifully carved heads, larger than life, supposed to be of the Scottish (sic.) Sovereigns, their Queens, and men of renown in the kingdom – among them the effigy of Sir William Wallace – were rolled down the streets from the Castle. Several bakers seized on some of them, and heated their ovens with

them. Others found their way into the jail, where the prisoners amused themselves with bedaubing them with red paint, ochre, and other colours; whilst a few only out of many scores fell into the hands of those who appreciated their value.<sup>6</sup>

Ten years previously in 1817, Jane Graham (1767-1846), wife of Lieutenant-General Samuel Graham and sister of the novelist Susan Ferrier published a splendid folio volume *Lacunar Strevilenense*, with her own drawings and written descriptions of thirty-eight of the then surviving Stirling Heads. The report of 1828 concerned a panel in Jane Graham's possession, measuring five feet six inches high, by two feet in width, which was purchased from a woman in Torbrex, who had obtained it from the sheriff-substitute of Stirling, who in turn had obtained it from Stirling Castle. The panel featured a carved portrait, thought to be that of James V, with a thistle, fleur-de-lis and crown below. It is quite unlike the wainscot panelling now in the Stirling Smith collection, and has not been deposited in any public collection.

The author of the 1828 report, Major General Sir James Alexander KCB (1803-1885) was a Stirling man and a regular contributor to the Society of Antiquaries. A Stirling antiquary of the next generation, David Buchan Morris (1867-1943), Town Clerk, wrote an account of how some of the Stirling Heads came to be in the Tolbooth. Ebenezer Brown, Governor of Stirling Prison in 1777 met a young girl with a bundle of firewood which contained interesting shapes. He hastened to the Castle, and rescued thirteen of the Heads from being chopped into firewood. These were housed in the jail, then passed to the burgh council in the same building.<sup>7</sup>

Jane Graham's book of 1817 ensured that the existence of the Stirling Heads were at least known among antiquarians. The Society of Antiquaries managed to secure three for their museum collection in Edinburgh. In 1843, John Waddell, a Gunner and Driver of the Royal Artillery in Stirling Castle, advertised for sale sets of miniature (eight and a half inches in diameter) Stirling Heads, suitable for the 'Hall of the Antiquary or the Withdrawing room of the Modern Gentleman'<sup>8</sup> but these were so rare that no set has found its way into a public collection.

For most of the nineteenth century, there was no public display or general knowledge of the Stirling Heads. John Lessels (1808-1883) architect of the new Smith Institute, working with Alexander Croall (1804-1885) its first curator, and the Smith Trustees put this to right in the fabric of the building. The collection of twelve heads remaining in the council chamber in the Tolbooth was gifted to the Smith Institute. To demonstrate their use as ceiling ornamentation, the heads were cast, and the casts built into a panelled ceiling measuring 50 by 28 feet in the Reading Room of the Institute. Additional ornamentation included shields with the Stirling Wolf and the Old Bridge from the arms of the Royal Burgh and the monogram of Thomas Stuart Smith. The contract for all the plasterwork, and the production of this special ceiling was in the hands of John Craigie of Stirling, who had executed the plaster work of most of the Victorian

villas in Stirling and the country houses in the district. The Smith was his last job before retirement.<sup>9</sup>

The decorating contractors were the esteemed Edinburgh partnership of Bonnar and Carfrae. The groundwork of the ceiling panels were turquoise, the whole being enclosed in bands of soft red, and the Heads and other woodwork were stained to look like oak. The Reading Room walls were painted in 'drab Etruscan' to harmonise with the ceiling.

When the new Smith Institute opened on 11 August 1874, the general public had the opportunity of inspecting the Stirling Heads for the first time, and seeing their use in a ceiling setting. The Heads, created for a royal palace and dispersed in private hands, were at last in the public domain, and being treated with respect. They were displayed in the Small Museum (now the Lecture Theatre) opposite the Reading room. This initial donation attracted several others. Purchases were also made, and in 1924, an intensive fundraising campaign took place to secure an additional twelve Heads from Langton House in Berwickshire. Prominent people in the area were asked to make pledges to a guarantee fund to secure the purchase, an operation successfully concluded in June 1925, when an event was organised to celebrate their acquisition for the Smith Institute.<sup>10</sup> This brought the total to 28 of the 38 recorded by Jane Graham in 1817. The printed letters of appeal, the written responses and the subscription calculations are part of the Stirling Smith's archive.

The fifteen fine carved oak panels, purchased by Provost George Christie at Nancy Lucas's sale in 1876 and presented to the Smith Institute, came from wainscot panelling in Stirling Castle. Michael Bath in *Forth Naturalist and Historian*, Vol. 29, dismissed them as a pair of wardrobe doors on the mistaken assumptions that the Lucas family sought to deceive and that the Provost was gullible.

Provost Christie (1826-1904) is commemorated by the Christie Memorial Clock in Allan Park, Stirling. He was a smart businessman, who guided Stirling through the local government reforms of 1870. More important still, he persuaded Thomas Stuart Smith to bequeath his fortune to establish a museum and art gallery in Stirling; Smith's original preference was to support the Artist's Benevolent Fund. Within a month of writing his Last Will and Testament, Smith died, and Stirling had the prospect of a gallery, thanks to Provost Christie.

The story of the dismantling of the panelling to accommodate it in the Lucas household was well known in the community, and as the sale took place after the death of Nancy Lucas (1810-1876), the last member of the family, there was no financial interest on her part.

The fifteen panels are small in size (264 x 355 mm) and must have been part of a very large arrangement to require them to be removed from their setting. The Lucas family home, Marieville, was a large Georgian structure of three storeys and many rooms, built by physician and surgeon Dr Thomas Lucas

(1754-1822) in 1810. He built it in the area which became known as Upper Bridge Street. After his daughter Nancy's death, the house and grounds were sold to the Roman Catholic Church. The house was demolished and the present St Mary's R.C. Church was built on the land.

Dr Lucas's diary is an important local history source for Stirling<sup>11</sup> and his work book, with its record of patients and prescriptions is in the national archive.<sup>12</sup> He was a precise individual, meticulous in his notes on contemporary events, and personally very acquisitive. He managed to privatise a public well by building his wall around it in 1809.

His records of the pageant processions of the Shoemakers and the great Bannockburn demonstration of 1814 are invaluable, as is his record of the garden and orchard on his land. When his fruit crop was badly damaged in 1821 he knew that the culprits were the sparrows which nested in the thatched houses belonging to Dr Buchan on Upper Castlehill.

His son James Lucas who collected the panelling from the Castle did so after his father's death, otherwise we would have a detailed diary record. James Lucas was a Stirling solicitor who was chiefly known for his interest in antiquities, and who contributed information to the local press under the name *Sterlinense*. In 1835 he fought and won an important case against the builder of Valley Lodge house, who wanted to encroach on the public land on Castlehill known as 'The Valley', now the Valley Cemetery.<sup>13</sup> With his legalistic and forensic attention to detail, it is unlikely that he would have been mistaken in the matter of panelling from Stirling Castle. The iconic painting of Stirling by Johannes Vosterman (1643-1699) was also in his collection and was sold in the same sale. There is also no indication of any interest in wishing to communicate information about the panelling or the painting. The Lucas family were very private people, brought to public attention through their posthumous house sale and the manuscript material acquired by W.B. Cook of the *Stirling Sentinel* in the early years of the twentieth century.

An additional carved figure from Stirling Castle in the Smith's collection takes the form of a robed figure, 500 mm high, kneeling with a crown at his feet. A heraldic historian, the late Dr Patrick Barden noted that the crown was Scottish, and prior to the time of James V when the imperial arches were added. He identified the figure as representing the Earl of Fife, who served at the inauguration of most kings of Scotland, and postulated that any carved scheme depicting a Scottish coronation would have included members of the royal family, the bishops of St Andrews and Glasgow, and the Abbot of Cambuskenneth.<sup>14</sup> Such information deserves further investigation, contextualisation and acknowledgement.

There is bountiful evidence that wainscot panelling, both plain and carved, was the stylistic preference in Scottish aristocratic houses of the sixteenth century. The carved examples from Stirling Castle in the Smith collection are less elaborate than other panels of the same date from town houses in Edinburgh and Dundee, in the collection of the Museum of Scotland. However,



the Stirling panels bear a remarkable resemblance to the panelling thought to be from the royal palace at Dunfermline, now in Pitfirrane House<sup>15</sup>, only 27 miles distant from Stirling. Although the present arrangement was constructed in the nineteenth century, the thirty eight carved panels in the window embrasures are contemporary with, and similar to, the fifteen in the Smith collection. James VI drank his farewell to Dunfermline and to Scotland from the Pitfirrane Goblet before riding south in 1603; the Halkets of Pitfirrane were the nearest beneficiaries in the break-up of Dunfermline palace and monastic complex. The last of the Halkets of Pitfirrane died in 1951.

If the panelling in Stirling was arranged similar to that of the 1828 report on the now-missing panel, there would have been quantities of plain panelling below each head. It was undoubtedly the size and quantity of this to which Agnes Lucas had objected.

For almost a hundred years, the Stirling Heads were part of the Smith Institute collection, and Stirling's public heritage. During that time – until 1969 – they were advertised in the annual guide books to the burgh, as one of the main attractions of the Smith Institute. They were loaned to important exhibitions, such as the Glasgow International Exhibition of 1901<sup>16</sup> and the Scottish Art Exhibition organised by Stanley Cursiter at the Royal Academy, London in 1938. Conservation was also undertaken. The Heads purchased in 1925 were repaired by Robert Cowie of Edinburgh, using oak from the Duke of Gordon's town house in Castle Wynd 'which was almost identical in use and texture'. All traces of paint and varnish were removed. Between April and October 1927, Cowie also removed the paint and varnish from the Heads given to the Smith in 1874, and at no cost.<sup>17</sup> This was the generation which believed that Classical sculpture was unpainted, and that only the prisoners in the Tolbooth would have been so uncouth as to apply paint to the carved wood.

Given the depredation and destruction which goes with military occupation, the survival of the 31 Heads and 15 panels in the Smith collection is a minor miracle. The collateral damage to the Smith itself, through use as a barracks in two World Wars, was substantial. The Stirling Ceiling of 1874 was severely damaged in 1945, and had to be dismantled completely in the early 1970s.

With the poor condition of the building after the War, pressure was put on the Trustees to return the Heads to Stirling Castle. Much of this was exerted by R.B.K. Stevenson of the Museum of Antiquities (now the Museum of Scotland) and it was believed that the ceiling in the King's Presence Chamber was to be reconstructed. Interestingly, there was never any question of the three Stirling Heads in the Museum of Antiquities being returned, and these are still on show in the Museum of Scotland today. 1997 saw another change in Historic Scotland's plans as regards the Heads. At a lecture in the Smith, Richard Fawcett said that as they were 'too valuable' as works of art, they would be displayed in gallery conditions and replicated for the purposes of the ceiling in the King's Presence Chamber. In 2003 the contract for reproducing the Stirling Heads was advertised.<sup>18</sup>

In 1997 in the Smith, the plaster Stirling Heads from John Craigie's ceiling were re-cast by sculptor Tim Chalk in fibreglass,<sup>19</sup> and painted to demonstrate the aesthetic change which colour brings. Only through the use of colour can the finer details of the carving be seen at a distance. These have been part of the Smith's interpretive displays for ten years, and it is good to know that Historic Scotland's conservators have recently recognised that the Heads were indeed painted.

If the same effort could be expended on locating and securing material which has gone missing from Stirling Castle, and looking at Scottish woodwork rather than French tapestries, the end result might be an interpretative scheme with some credibility. Without the Smith's care and curation of 1874-1970, Historic Scotland would have had a great deal less with which to work, and the large team presently involved in developing the Castle displays have due cause for gratitude to the past efforts of the few Smith curators.

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- 15 I am grateful to the geneologist Sheila Pitcairn, the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust and the Dunfermline Golf Club for allowing access to, and permission to photograph, Pitfirrane House and its panelling.
- 16 International Exhibition Glasgow 1901. Official Catalogue of the Scottish History and Archaeology Section, p.211.
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- 18 *The Scotsman*, 25 February, 2003.
- 19 The series can be inspected at <[www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk)>, together with the wainscot panelling and other artefacts in the Stirling Smith collections.



Figure 1 Head from the Stirling Castle panelling.



Figure 2 Head from the Pitfirrane House panelling.



## MUSEUM HALL, BRIDGE OF ALLAN

John Murphy

*In the Forth Naturalist and Historian volume 29, Malcolm Allan contributed a paper on the Macfarlane Museum of Natural History, Coneyhill. One of his first lectures on the subject was at the Annual General Meeting of the Welsh Trust, 1986. This was followed by a paper from John Murphy on the cultural history of Museum Hall, the text of which is given here.*

The stated intention of John Macfarlane, founder of the Macfarlane Museum of Natural History, was to combine with the Museum a large hall which could be used in providing amusement and instruction to the inhabitants. In 1886, to secure the necessary funds, the Trustees obtained the co-operation of several public-spirited gentlemen. The countenance and help of several of the ladies naturally followed. Their deliberations resulted in the famous three-day bazaar of April 1886, which was 'of a sale of such work as taste and skill created of their gentle arts won from their friends'. It was held in the new public halls in Stirling – the Albert Halls. The bazaar was given an Eastern aspect, and the stalls were arranged to resemble the Alhambra in Granada, being named Barcelona, Andalusia and Madrid. The opening on successive days was by J.C. Bolton, MP for Stirlingshire, Colonel Stirling of Kippendavie, and Lawrence Poor, Chief Magistrate. First day entrance was two and six, no small sum in 1886. £500 was also contributed by the YMCA, for the use of the lesser hall, £450 of that to be returnable and £50 to be kept for – and these are the words – 'tear and wear'. Work on the Museum Hall proceeded apace under the architect, Mr William Simpson. Style was said to be early French Gothic. The stone work at the front is from Polmaise. The roof is of Scotch slate, from Luss. The walls have been decorated with beautiful replicas of the Elgin Marbles, which used to hang in the old museum (see Allan, 2006).

The opening was in September 1887, with a grand *conversazione*, to which the leading inhabitants were invited by the Trustees. At the chairman's opening address, he said, "in the course of my life, I have seen men elevated to distinguished rank through no other quality than their vitality, which has enabled them to outlive their seniors and their compeers alike. My position as the so-called chairman of the Macfarlane Trust is due to a similar unfortunate accident, and to no great deserving on my part. That is, I have survived all the original Trustees, and being the first Trustee appointed, I now – as the oldest – take the Chair at our meetings. Hence I now have the distinction of making a short opening address." He then goes on to say, rather strangely, "I suppose the building was first intended for a residence, for several families, and that its dedication as a museum is now an afterthought. The internal arrangements have made ample accommodation for the collection itself, and ample central space has been provided for lectures and entertainment of an educational, instructive and of course elevating character." The audience sang "God Save

the Queen", led by Miss B. Ruff. Provost Yellowlees then spoke. Amongst other profundities he said, "I do not think a *conversazione* is a place for formal speaking." The audience responded "hear hear". That did not stop Provost Yellowlees. "With your approval, I shall now offer you a few gleanings from the field of which our chairman has already gleaned." He goes on for another half-hour. But he says, "we have an impression that Bridge of Allan wants something to shake it out of its present dormant position. Nature has done much for it, but in late years art has done remarkably little for this beautiful, fashionable spa. I express the hope that this museum will make us as popular a resort as Baden Baden." He ended, "I apologise for intruding so long on your patience." Long shouts of "hear hear". Mrs W. Pullar sang, with much feeling, *Love Has Only Eyes*, and the encore was *Home Sweet Home*. Below this account in the *Stirling Journal* was an advertisement for the blood purifier *Old Dr Andrew Simpson's American Sarsaparilla*. Five year old whisky was eighteen shillings a gallon, and natural sherry – non-intoxicating – one and four a bottle. There were also adverts for the supply of calling cards, depilatories, and worms in children.

Well and truly launched, the hall was the major social centre for the district for nearly a hundred years. The 1914-18 War saw its occupation by the rough and rude soldiery, as did the 1939-45 War. There are many good stories of serious and comic incidents of these times, including one about a bustard, a large bird like a turkey. At one stage during the war, there was a signal sent to a dinner where there was a young lieutenant of the HLI, to say that his men were either rioting or mutinying in the Museum Hall, and he had to go there hotfoot. And when he got there, he found to his amazement and horror that the sergeant major was trying to reduce the men into a state of order by whirling a large, stuffed bustard over his head. The men were advancing on him, hurling all other kinds of birds as projectiles, and using some of the other exhibits as well. After each occupation, major rehabilitation was required. In 1928, the Public Interest Association held a two-day bazaar. In February 1939, the hall was purchased for a thousand pounds by the Trustees, a group of townspeople led by Mrs Irwin of Westerton. John McKay's notebooks observe that the YMCA looked for their £450 in vain. In 1950 the Burgh Council bought the halls for public use. In 1961 there was a major reconditioning. In 1975 it passed with all the other Burgh assets to Stirling District. By 1977, it began to be considered redundant.

In 1935 the hall was short of funds, and the electricity board – as electricity boards will do – cut off the supply for a debt of £44. One Miss Beattie Christie and others proposed to organise a *café chantant* to raise funds. It never came off, and the only result was that Beattie Christie was left with the bill that the electricity board sent to her. No good deed goes unrewarded.

So much for the history. Among the great social occasions, the Bridge of Allan Amateur Operatic Society used the hall for forty years. The society seems to have been founded in 1907. 1908, '09, '10 were the great years. The principal parts were taken by local people, who became famous in their various roles.

The most sensational being the Chancellor in *Iolanthe* as played by the Reverend Hamish Mackenzie of Chalmers Church. Can you visualise subsequent ministers hopping about in wig and gown? I'm sure this must have been a lot for Edwardians to take in. *The Pirates of Penzance* in March 1914 was the last performance for nearly ten years. 1923 and '24 saw revivals of the Society under the secretary Mr David Fyfe, and the conductor Mr R.C. Almaston. In 1926 they presented *The Gondoliers* with Mr George Davidson as the Duke of Plazatoro. The exception to the War years was that in 1917, Chalmers Church presented an operetta – *The Birth of the Union Jack* – in which Britannia was played by Jeannie Edgar and St Andrew by Carrie Watt. I've never been able to establish much about the Society's productions in the thirties, and shortly after the War it was amalgamated with Stirling to become the Stirling and Bridge of Allan Amateur Operatic Society.

## Music

In the nineteenth century, there was a flourishing Choral Union whose conductor was John Erskine, stationer, bookseller and house agent. The earliest concert was in 1882, and the centenary was in 1982. There's a photo of 1897 which showed John Erskine, conductor. The old music hall was demolished in 1902 to make way for the newsagents, McDonalds, then Gideon's, and now a supermarket. In 1926 the Australian Lady's Pipe Band visited, and it's said that an excellent concert was provided on a Saturday night in Museum Hall. Unfortunately, there was a poor attendance. A pipe rendering of *Loch Lomond* was greatly encored, as was *Scotland in Australia* sung by wee Molly Innes. Adverts in that issue of the *Stirling Journal* include Exide batteries for clockwork at McNab's, Woolsey pure wool underwear from McCulloch and Young's, and farola puddings and Artines for relief.

The Orpheus choir visited in 1922-23, '32 and '49. It's interesting to note that in October 1952, the funeral of Sir Hugh Robertson was conducted by his lifelong friend, the Reverend Archie Jamieson, who resided at the Allan Water Hotel. In December 1930 the Scottish Orchestra performed under its conductor Nikolai Malkov. In 1933 the Alloa Burgh Band gave a performance in the Memorial Park. In 1939 a *March Journal* reports that Bridge of Allan's newest musical combination, the Strathallan Chamber Orchestra, gave its second concert under Mr William Kitchin. In 1945 the Polish Military Band was to perform in the Pullar Park on a March Sunday. Owing to unfavourable weather the concert was given in the Museum Hall; the audience manifested warm appreciation in no uncertain manner. In 1949, the Cork and Seal (now U.G. Closures) Choir, with their practice in the October of that year, entertained the Deputy Mayor of Invercargill with *Auld Scots Sangs*.

But all these were mere side-shows to the golden age of music in Bridge of Allan, which probably dawned in the mid-'20s, and ran for some near fifty years. In 1924 the Bridge of Allan Public Interest Association, under the presidency of W.L. Pullar, aided and abetted by Dr Welsh and others, launched a series of concerts which attracted European celebrities not to be heard outside



of London, Glasgow or Edinburgh. For a small town, the prestigious performances were quite incredible, and the programmes read like a musical legend. 1925 saw Corto Tibor and Pablo Casals at a mere £300. In 1926, Elizabeth Schuman and Myra Hess, and as if that were not enough, that was followed by Maurice Ravel, the French composer, and Arthur Rubenstein. In '45-'46, the Bridge of Allan Music Club was set up, a successor of the earlier Public Interest Association concerts. One of the leaders in this should be mentioned. This was Mrs Jesse Kerr, who did outstanding work in establishing quite high standards in music. We should refer also to the supporting work that was done by Dr Neil Reid, County Medical Officer, in later times. On the 16th of October 1952 the *Stirling Journal* headline read "Kathleen Ferrier Again Captivates" – she'd been here in 1950 – "Full House Thrilled by Superb Singer". Gerald Moore was a frequent visitor. A January 1953 headline reads: "Brilliant Lecture by Gerald Moore: The Accompanist Speaks." Reflecting that he didn't speak at other times. No prima donna, or great violinist, was there to steal his thunder. In '58, a Viennese pianist. In '62, a Romanian pianist. In '65, the Smetana Quartet. In '64, the Strathallan Singers. Checking these dates in the *Stirling Journal*, other significant dates leapt to the eye. Kathleen Ferrier shared the limelight in 1952 with a new minister who was inducted into Chalmers Church, none other than the Reverend Willie McDonald. 1953, as well as these mid-European pianists, saw Chalmers Church Dramatic Club rehearsing *Arsenic and Old Lace*. The heyday of the great Bridge of Allan concerts were glittering occasions, patronised by a well-fed, well-read, well-dressed society from far and near. Evening dress and fine furs were the order of the day. The smell of camphor mothballs was all-pervasive. There were plenty of buses right to the hall doors, for those who were not deposited by car or carriage. Seating was not reserved, but God help anyone who sat in the wrong seat. In 1978 as part of the Stirling Festival, the Roseneath Ensemble performed five Tennyson songs by William Kitchin. In 1972 the Music Club moved from the Museum Hall to the MacRobert, where Peter Katyn gave a concert. Other great names of this post-Museum Hall period are John Ogden and Janet Baker. It is said that Elizabeth Schwarzkopf wept here – according to Neil Reid, she was generally temperamental. 1985 saw the end of the Music Club, and the last concert cost £1500. I think we may have seen the end of an era.

## Dancing

Up to December 1933 the Merchants' Annual Ball was one of the great social occasions. The catering was by Allison's, the festoons and draperies by Graham and Morton, and the music by Fitzpatrick's. Change came in December 1953 when the Merchants' Association Annual Ball moved up to the Allan Water Hotel. The *Stirling Journal* reports it: "A gay company patronised the Allan Water Hotel last Friday". In 1925 the Badminton Club held a fancy-dress ball, and in wartime years dances were held for various charities. In February '46 a dance was held in Museum Hall in aid of the Red Cross Sanatorium Scotland. In 1951 and again in '54 Jimmy Shand provided the music. I have it on good authority that on one occasion, when takings were a bit thin, Jimmy Shand

forewent part of his fee for the charity concerned. In 1951, faced with the expensive upkeep of the hall, the Burgh tried a commercial venture, and the *Stirling Journal* reports at first: "It will be welcome news to enthusiasts in the District that the Museum Hall has been taken over on a six-month contract for Saturday night dances." Quite the reverse, Saturday night dances were not welcome news for the adjacent residents, who reacted with protests and tales of disturbances. The bucolic bacchanalia of the Young Farmers were notorious, and disturbed the pre-Sabbath celebrations and slumbers of the adjacent manse, containing a future Moderator and family. The words of the Psalmist, "joy cometh in the early morning", were of little consolation here.

### Drama

In 1925 the Scottish National Players visited. In 1930, they visited again with *The Grenadier Rizzio's Boots* – an historical impertinence – and *Diplomacy and Draughtsmen*, a Clydeside comedy. In 1933 and '36 there was Daphne Waddel's Children's Theatre, with *The Magic Acts*. In '38, Bridge of Allan Dramatic Club was established by a few locals who had played with the Dunblane Club. In 1946, there was a Dramatic Club Festival. Stirling Amateurs presented *Count Albany* and *Gibbie Proposes*. 1950 saw the start of the Dundee connection. Dundee Rep made spring and autumn visits in '51, '52 and '56, with such plays as *The Shop at Sly Corner* and *The Holly and the Ivy*. In May '56, Mrs Mary Thom of Westerton was the winner of the Scottish Community Drama Association one-act playwrighting competition.

### Old People's Welfare

No account would be complete without mention of the Old People's Welfare Christmas dinners. The Old People's Welfare Committee probably started as the Provost's Fund in the late forties under Provost Turnbull. By the early fifties the dinner had grown so big that it had to be held in the Museum Hall. These dinners were financed by grants and locally raised money. For instance, the *Stirling Journal* of 14th October '52 records: "The Provost's Fund benefited by £50 from an old time dance held in the Museum Hall, and from a whist drive held in the Masonic Hall. Judging by the prize list, most of the gents were ladies. The Christmas dinners were indeed great occasions. No expense was spared. Local personages were in attendance. Some lent china, some lent charm, and some gave help with food – and, I suspect, at times with the drink as well, which flowed liberally.

### Public Occasions

The hall was of course the main focus for public occasions up until 1970; for nearly a hundred years. Elections, prize-givings, coronations, the Festival of Britain, Chalmers Centenary. The only documented occasion that has been found of a political one was in December 1933. The *Stirling Journal* reads: 'Mr Tom Johnston, MP, addressed a sparsely-attended meeting on trade and unemployment.' Interpreting, the sparseness was probably due not just to the

subject, but the appearance of a yet-unrecognised Labour star in a traditionally Tory town. By 1941 the *Stirling Journal* reported the town's approval for the local MP. It says: "No more suitable and popular a Secretary of State for Scotland could have been found by Mr Churchill". The MP was, of course, Tom Johnston. In September 1918, there was another event. Major Fox of the Scots Guards had a better audience when he told the tale of his captivity and escape from Germany, and the title was 'A Nation Beyond the Pale'.

### **Ballet and Badminton**

The St James' Ballet Company visited in 1949, the Ballet Rambert in '51 and '59. In 1956, the Ballet Minerva were here. The fifties seem to have been the decade of ballet.

Badminton was played in the Museum Hall, certainly from before 1935. The pre-War setup is described as a very happy club, with great age range from seventeen to seventy plus. It was not regarded as being so high-falutin as the tennis club. Even so, entrance could be highly selective. It is recalled that in the early thirties, two young ladies were proposed. Half the members supported, half opposed. Some resigned, the rest went to Dunblane. My wife and I have memories of joining in 1961; obviously, by that time they'd altered the criteria. At that time there was a jolly, mixed crowd, but they took their badminton very seriously. The first necessity before playing was to find the canvas mat, and roll it out as a protection over the dancefloor. And even before you did that, I think you had first to find the caretaker, which wasn't always easy.

That is my presentation, for which I am indebted to Ella McLean the mother of Bridge of Allan's history; to Dr Neil Reid a supreme raconteur of the same; to Bill Kitchin the authority on music; to Mary Robertson Smith, quondam Provost and guardian of the town's traditions; to Stirling District Libraries; to fellow members of the Welsh Trust and particularly to Malcolm Allan who launched me in the right direction, even if I did not always follow it. But I must finish with the words of Viscount Wavell who said of his poetry anthology, "I have gathered other men's flowers, and nothing but the thread that binds them is my own".

### **Epilogue**

By 1970 the Hall's Dancing Years were over. The new MacRobert together with the old Albert Halls were more than adequate for concerts, operettas and drama. And finally the new Community Centres made ample provision for badminton and indoor games.

Yet a brave local group, involving some famous names, soldiered on for a few years with the slogan "Save the Museum Hall". This was flogging a dead horse, or really trying to resurrect an age that was gone. The Museum Hall had had its day, or rather its era – and what colourful and glorious era it was.

Various and ingenious uses were suggested, such as National Museum for Forestry – none proving practical. These were years of dilapidation and decay.

Finally the building has been taken over by a developer to be turned into flats. The Welsh Trust (for Preservation of Bridge of Allan's Heritage) recommended that some of the interior's treasured features, such as the stained glass windows and parts of the replica Elgin Marble frieze, should go to the Smith Institute.

Historic Scotland, oblivious as often to local knowledge and wishes, have insisted the windows stay in situ.

It defeats John McFarlane's wishes and intent to educate Bridge of Allan people and tastes. It means cloistering them away from the people they were meant to benefit in a tenement of private flats, where only the tenants and visiting Historic Scotland officers can see them. They will also be lost to the wider Scottish public.

This is burial of our history, not preservation and promotion.

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*The 1986 AGM of the Welsh Trust was a stirring meeting. The Bridge of Allan Local History Society was established on that night, and ran for nearly twenty years, such was the interest which was aroused by the lectures of Malcolm Allan and John Murphy on that occasion. A tape recording of the 1986 AGM has been deposited in the collections of the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum. This article was constructed from a transcription of John Murphy's lecture by Thomas Christie, the Smith's Administrator, and has been edited for publication in the Forth Naturalist and Historian with the approval of the author.*

## Reference

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Figure 1 Museum Hall, Bridge of Allan. *Malcolm Allan Collection.*

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## BOOK REVIEW

### **Cowane's Hospital Garden (The Guildhall) Stirling.** Private publication.

Almost a decade ago Stirling NADFAS (National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies) initiated a project to publish an account of the history of Cowane's Hospital Garden. Four members, Marjory Lumsden, Audrey Hancock, Carol Green and Mary Eastop, were appointed and began work researching documents and illustrations. It was finally completed in April of this year (2007) and a book produced which was formally launched in a ceremony held at the Guildhall.

John Cowane (1570-1633) was a merchant from a wealthy Stirling family who owned ships supplying goods to King James at Stirling Castle; honey, prunes, saffron, spices and wool, between Stirling and Campver in Holland. He ran a shop in Broad Street, was a money lender and a farmer. In 1611 he was elected as a Stirling Councillor and Baillie. In 1624 he became Dean of Guild, and from 1625 to 1632 was a Member of Parliament, and was the most influential man in Scotland. He died aged 63 leaving a fortune. Forty thousand merks were given to provide an almshouse, or "hospital" for "twelve decayed Gild Briether".

The land beside the Church of the Holy Rude was cleared and Cowane's Hospital was built on the south side of the church. Between 1637 and 1649, with interruptions caused by the Civil War, famine and plague the "yaird" (garden) was levelled to make a walking green. Trees were planted and the "out walk" was laid with the "hewin' stones" which still remain. The old town wall was on one side and the Church on the opposite side, with the cemetery to the West. The walking green was probably made by scything the grass and weeds already on the plot. In the style of that time the green was divided by strip beds the width of a man's arm cut into the grass as in the yards of medieval gardens. Vegetables and weeds (for salads), and medicinal herbs were grown to provide a system of self sufficiency for the household, and exercise for the inhabitants. There may have been bee-hives and chickens in a small orchard of apple, pear and bullaces. A midden would have been made in the furthest corner of the yard for the disposal of all household and human waste as well as garden waste. Water was provided by a well (no longer in existence) in the paved yard in front of the building.

A gardener was appointed by the Masters in 1667. William Stevenson remained at Cowane's for forty years his job also entailed ringing the bell at six o'clock morning and evening. He planted a mixed hedge to make a vandal proof barrier, possibly where the Old Town Jail wall is now. In 1702 the gardener ordered from Holland a rather fanciful list of plants:- apricot and peach trees, double yellow roses, jasmine and "July flowers" (gilly flowers) or pinks, all at a cost of 22.08 pounds Scots which included freight and customs charges.

In 1673 a sundial, by John Buchanan, was set up in the garden, later to be dismantled when a bronze dial was made by Andrew Dickie (clock maker of Stirling). In 1702 stone balustrades were set up on the "high walk". In 1710 William Houston (gardener) advised the Masters to "write to Thomas Harlaw, gardener to the Earl of Mar" for advice on a plan to re-lay the garden as a bowling green. In 1712 Thomas Harlaw devised a plan which included re-siting the sundial, making new borders and the new parterre and bowling green, possibly modelled on a very similar plan at the Earl of Mar's Alloa garden (sadly no longer in existence). Over the next twenty years seats beside the bowling green were provided, as were bias bowls, six oak trees and many flowers for the parterre beds and the borders. This is the plan as it still exists in Stirling. The bowling green is the second oldest in Scotland. The protection of the garden from intruders and vandals was and still is a problem. Gates, fences, walls and hedges have all been tried, without success.

In the course of time gardeners followed gardeners making small changes in the bedding plants. etc., and the popular game of bowls continued to give pleasure. Highland dancing and band concerts were also held on the green. The gardens developed with the availability of new plants, it was now a pleasure garden rather than a subsistence garden as in the past.

Cowane's Hospital was no longer an almshouse, the elderly men preferred not to live in the house because the rules were very restricting, curtailing their independence. A summer-house was built in 1770 at the east end of the yard, and a "necessary house" and "middings" (toilets) were built, neither exist now. Cowane's Hospital was and still is used by the Guildry of Stirling and in 1724 became known as The Guildhall.

A new prison was built in 1806 (now the 'Old Jail') and a high wall was built to divide it from the Guildhall garden.

The garden attracted many distinguished visitors, and in 1842 a visit by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert was attended by seventy Guild Brethern in the Guildhall.

By 1846 the garden maintenance was taken over by the Town Council, to work with the gardeners. An ornamental fountain was set up beside the bowling green in 1862, but by 1866 it was removed (lack of water pressure perhaps). In 1880 a complaint from the Prison Commissioners for Scotland stated that the "Guildhall Bowl-house has been erected against the prison wall and the Patrons shall be obliged to remove it and also any plants against the wall".

In 1883 the bowling green at this time was kept by Mr Wands who collected "all the pennies collected to play on the green". In 1886 a letter to the Patrons asked if they would sell part of the bowling green to add to the prison grounds. The Patrons declined.

In 1894 Dr Paterson of Bridge of Allan offered a fig tree to be planted at the Guildhall where a similar tree had grown for some years. A fig tree still exists against the wall of the Guildhall (now heavily protected by a cage against vandals). A flagpole was erected in 1894 to attract tourists to the garden where a new shrubbery had been planted.

Two world wars then intervened, and records were lost. However the gardens were kept in spite of difficulties, but by 1946 the Guildhall Bowling Club sent a letter to the Patrons to consider having alterations made to the bowling green to make it a square in accordance with the regulations of the Scottish Bowling Association. The Ministry of Works considered the proposal and deferred action – it was felt that the proposed extension would encroach on the garden, cause removal (again) of the sundial and "adversely affect the historic features of the garden." They recommended that "the Cowane's Hospital and grounds shall be scheduled in the terms of the Ancient Monuments acts".

In 1960 the borders were cleared out and bush and climbing roses were planted, also 1200 tulips were planted, with myosotis, all at a cost of £97. Two years later an electric mower was purchased and the Club were permitted to bowl on Sundays from 2.30 to 5.30 pm. By 1970 it was agreed that labour intensive plantings should be replaced by 750 roses, and a "curfew gate" be installed for the protection of the gardens and green. By 1986 after prolonged pressure the bowling green was extended into the parterre to achieve the regulation size. This required the sundial to be moved again, and new paths laid, causing the loss of a large part of the garden and the loss of the original balanced plan of 1710. A decade later (1996) the bowling green fell into disuse. By this time the Town Council and Cowane's Trust were given the task of upkeep.

Now the garden and bowling green and surroundings have fallen into an unkempt shadow of its former self. The bowling green is approaching its 300th Anniversary, surely a cause for celebration and refurbishment?

The garden forms part of the curtilage and setting of an A listed and Scheduled Building, an historic component of the historic landscape of Stirling, and part of the tourist route to the Castle, the Church of the Holy Rude, Mar's Wark and Argyll's

Lodging. The regeneration of Cowane's Hospital Garden should be a priority, part of the regeneration of the historic core of Stirling. The garden forms an essential element in the history of the Castle Rock; if it is allowed to degenerate it will be a substantial loss to Stirling and Scotland.

The book can be consulted for further reference at The Library Stirling, The Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum, The Library of Scotland, the Library of the Botanical Gardens Edinburgh, The British Library, the Stirling University Library, The Guildry Stirling, and others.

Mary Eastop



