

West Stormont's  
**Auld Times**

#9 Autumn 2024



Broken bridge to the Isle of Lost Content



*Auld Times* is the journal of

The West Stormont Historical Society

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## TALKS & TOPICS

The new term got off to a flying start last month with Allan Kennedy's talk about adultery and attempted murder in 17th century Edinburgh, "The Persecution of Jean Lands". However, his multi-layered presentation also covered the whys and wherefores of choosing to publish this tale as a comic.

Not a graphic novel, mind you. A comic. History told in speech bubbles. For Allan it was a 'proof of concept' exercise; and he thinks it worked. There may have been a few in the audience thinking, "Ah hae ma doots", but generally it was well received.

The first of our Topic Nights is on Monday, 14th October at 7.30pm in Luncarty Church Centre. Discussing Prominent Local Women.

It will be preceded by the AGM.

Full details of the 2024/25 Programme is but a [CLICK](#) away.



The front cover illustration was inspired by meeting the Clarke sisters, Joan and Mary, a while ago. Their father was Grieve at Douglasfield Farm on Murthly estate in the Fifties. Their favourite picnic spot was on a wee island in a large pond. Now forlorn, forgotten, entirely neglected. A lovely spot for a bit of autumnal reflection.

### Scots Saws

Owre many grieves only hinder  
the work.

It came to mind. But thankfully I didn't spoil the moment by airing this . . .



## TOM HUXLEY

MICHAEL LAWRENCE



**T**om Huxley died peacefully at Perth Royal Infirmary on Friday 14 June 2024. He was 95.

Tom was a regular attendee at West Stormont Historical Society meetings for around twenty years and delivered public talks based on his research and writing of three local history books. His January 2006 talk was based on his book 'A Brief History of Two Perthshire Villages – Almondbank and Pitcairngreen'. In September 2008, the lecture topic referred to 'An Illustrated History of the Royal Naval Aircraft Stores and Workshops at Almondbank, Perthshire' and in February 2012, his subject was linked to 'Thomas Graham and his Perthshire Estates'.

Born in London in 1929, Tom spent the war years in the United States and Canada. His secondary schooling was finished at Gordonstoun and he was then called for National Service in the Royal Engineers. His education was completed at Balliol College, Oxford, where he read Zoology and graduated with first class honours.

Tom's working career was spent entirely in Scotland on conservation project work, initially with the National Conservancy Council and then the Countryside Commission for Scotland. He retired from the Commission in 1987 as Deputy Director.

Tom and his wife Helen renovated and lived in the Old Manse in Pitcairngreen from 1971 until 2016 when they moved into a smaller house in the manse garden. He is survived by Helen, twin sons Gervas and Philip, daughter Rebecca, six grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Tom will be missed by all his friends at the Historical Society, particularly for his intellectual curiosity and direct questioning, and for his insistence on the correct pronunciation of Lynedoch.

## ROBERT GRAHAM OF REDGORTON (1784—1859)

JENNIFER MCKAY

**T**homas Graham of Balgowan, Lord Lynedoch, the famous victor of Barossa, is well known in West Stormont; his heir, Robert Graham, possibly less so.

Robert was Lynedoch's second cousin, a son of John Graeme of Eskbank, and Mary Scott of Usan, members of the extended Graham family descended from the Marquis of Montrose. Robert's sisters, Elizabeth, Margaret, Christina and Mary never married and lived with their mother at the family's Edinburgh townhouse in Heriot Row. Sister Alexina married her third cousin, Anthony Maxtone of Cultoquhey. Robert never married and Alexina's eldest son inherited his Redgorton estate.



After attending Edinburgh's Royal High School, Robert studied Law at Edinburgh University. Consequently, he moved in Edinburgh's legal and literary circles at the tail-end of the Scottish Enlightenment. The famous names were long gone before Robert was called to the Scottish bar in 1805 but the spirit of the Enlightenment endured in the capital's literary and debating clubs. Robert was a member, and president in 1807, of the Speculative Society which gave members the opportunity to debate and hone their skills in rhetoric. It was here that he met his lifelong friends, the influential Whig lawyers Francis Jeffery and Henry Cockburn. Robert, along with Sir Walter Scott, was one of the 31 founding members of the Bannatyne Club, which fostered the serious study of Scottish history in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Although Robert had been called to the bar, he did little legal work. Rather, his time was taken up helping his father and other relatives with their estate management. He was sought after for his business acumen and excellent administrative skills. Once Lord Lynedoch's appointed heir, he changed the spelling of his surname from Graeme to Graham to please him. Lynedoch came to rely heavily on Robert, 36 years his junior, who accompanied him on lengthy tours on the continent from 1814 onwards.

Robert shared many of Lynedoch's interests: promoting agricultural improvements such as growing potatoes and turnips and improving livestock, especially horses. Robert was a director of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, for which he wrote reports on rural matters. Like Lynedoch he was involved in the military and was captain of a grenadier company in the Midlothian militia.

Despite his obligations to Lynedoch and his frequent travelling, Robert made time to return regularly to Edinburgh to see his family and many friends, always staying with his mother and sisters at Heriot Row, with whom, according to his Scotsman obituary, "he ever lived in the bonds of the closest affection".

Robert Graham and his circle were Whigs, who, broadly speaking, supported the abolition of the slave trade, the emancipation of Roman Catholics and the extension of the franchise. Under a Whig government, Francis Jeffery and Henry Cockburn drafted the Representation of the People (Scotland) Act 1832. Prior to the Act, around 5,000 men in Scotland had the vote; with the Act the number increased to 65,000. However, the ballot was not secret and voters continued to be vulnerable to intimidation by landowners and vested interests.

Around this time, Robert became actively involved in politics. At the 1832 general election, he chaired the election committee for the Whig candidate in Perthshire, the Earl of Ormelie, heir to the Marquess of Breadalbane. Robert courted the Gaelic speaking voters of highland Perthshire with election literature in their own language, although he, himself, had no Gaelic. Ormelie defeated the sitting Tory candidate, General Sir George Murray of Ochtertyre, a Peninsular War hero and former Colonial Secretary.

At the by-election in 1834, called when Ormelie succeeded his father and joined the House of Lords, Robert was the Whig candidate. The prime minister, anticipating that Robert would win the election, appointed him a Lord of the Treasury. Although defeated by Sir George Murray, he remained at the Treasury until the Melbourne administration fell. Henry Cockburn described Graham's response to his defeat as "hearty and manly".

Murray had been determined to regain his seat and the by-election was hard fought. After Graham's defeat, the Strathmore Journal, a Whig supporting newspaper, alleged that Murray's whippers-in had intimidated tenants who had pledged votes to the Whig candidate. This allegation provoked a furious reaction from the

supposedly bullied electors. Meetings of Tory voters were called in Muthill, Trinity Gask, Innerpefferay, Blackford, Logierait, Coshieville, Scone and St Martins. The language reported from the meetings was incendiary. The Strathmore Journal's criticism, the Tory voters claimed, had been "a gross malicious falsehood" and "an insulting and calumnious attack on the Tenantry of the county who had voted for Sir George Murray". Sir George's supporters felt their honour had been impugned by the assertion that they had caved in to pressure from the general's gofers and every chair of every meeting was instructed to complain in the strongest terms to the newspaper's editor.



**Weavers Hall, Crieff**

Whig supporters who called a meeting in the Crieff Weavers Hall. One speaker, "animadverted severely upon the conduct of those ... who violated solemn pledges to support the Liberal candidate". An example of intimidation was given thus: a tenant farmer who had been served with a fine of £19.00 for mismanaging his crop rotations was told the fine would be waived if he voted for Murray. It was claimed similar examples could be given from every parish in Perthshire.

Graham abandoned politics in 1834 to concentrate on agricultural improvements, country pursuits, reading and enjoying the company of family and his many friends, activities which he found more congenial than politics. He also travelled extensively, keeping diaries as he went. After a trip to the Rhineland and Switzerland in 1840, he wrote "Hints for Tourists" because his friends had asked so many questions. He acquired a reputation for 'an insatiable appetite for information' and 'strode vigorously through each locality he visited, to examine its scenery, antiquities and estates'; clearly the go-to man for travel tips.

In 1837, the Solicitor-General recommended Robert for a task which recognised these traits.

The government dispatched him to the western Highlands and Islands to gather information about the starvation referred to as the 'Destitution of 1837' which had been caused by crop failures in 1835 and 1836. His reports were to assist relief planning.

Before setting off, Robert was inclined to believe that the

severity of the problem had been exaggerated. On seeing the reality with his own eyes, he realised the distress had been underestimated.

He sailed from Glasgow to Oban on March 9<sup>th</sup>, accompanied by his second cousin, Robert Stewart of Ardvorlich, a Gaelic speaker and his interpreter. Over the course of two months, they visited parishes on the west coast as far north as Ullapool. There was no need to travel further north as the Duchess of Sutherland, being well aware of her bad press as a result of the Sutherland clearances, was providing money and meal for her tenants.

They criss-crossed the Minch spending spells of up to three or four days in centres such as Tobermory and Stornoway, where they spoke to landowners, estate factors and parish ministers. Robert was sure the ministers would have the best understanding of their parishioners' difficulties and he told his mother he had decided not to accept hospitality from "good society", choosing to stay in smaller houses or with ministers, to get closer to the people who needed assistance.

Robert concluded that, apart from poor weather ruining crops, there were underlying issues which needed government attention. The most salient, in his view, was over-population and he advocated assisted emigration as a partial solution. He was very critical of the lack of application of the Poor Laws. He also pointed to the lack of employment and the impossibility of the able-bodied poor, who were ineligible for parish support, to earn wages. The recent failure of the kelp industry and the collapse of the herring fisheries magnified these problems. Black cattle prices had also plummeted, so, all-in-all, there was very little money circulating in the areas he and Stewart visited.

Most days, Robert wrote letters, typically around 3,500 words long, to Fox Maule, the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department. These reports demonstrated conscientious and unbiased application to his task. He tells Maule where he is, who he has interviewed and recommends people to sit on the local relief committees. He details the numbers of destitute people, describes their circumstances and lists what they need in the way of meal for immediate consumption. He estimates the amount of seed potatoes and grain needed for planting the following year. He also found time to write regularly to his mother. These letters give us a glimpse of the man in his own words.

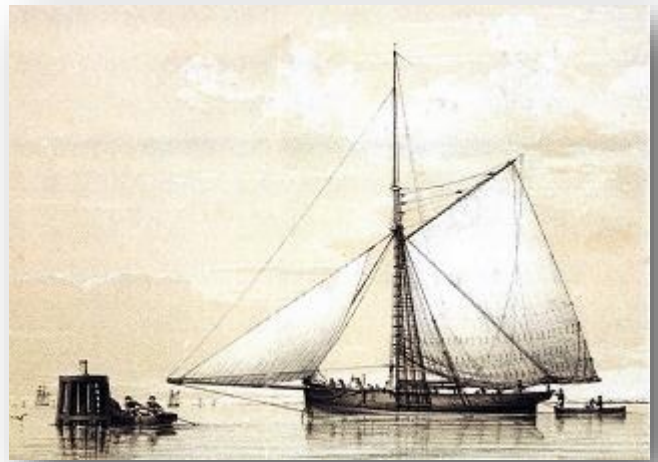
Oban 11 March 1837

"My dear Mother, we had a very good passage from Glasgow here. The swelling in my face is much diminished. We go by land to Fort William tomorrow and, in the course of the week, to Tobermory, where I shall expect to hear from you. Let me know if Maine got into or was blackballed, at the Club ... The hills of Mull are as white as

Mont Blanc. The weather looked dirty as we came down the Clyde; but has improved much on our trajet through the Crinan Canal, and at Easdale and Oban, the sea looked like a mirror. Adieu kindest love to all. Yours ever."

Tobermory 18 March 1837

"My dear Mother, I wrote you from Oban, but had not time to do so from Fort William. We went across from that, by the side of Loch Shiel and by Loch Eilt ... This was the country where Charles Stewart planted his standard in 1745, we passed a monument to celebrate the spot where the clans were first assembled at the head of Loch Shiel. Borrodale stands on the opposite side of the bay from the point where he landed, and it was the last house he was in before leaving the mainland for the isles. It belongs to a family of Macdonalds (Catholics) ... and we were as hospitably entertained by the present house, though it is Lent, as the Prince could have been by the former proprietor...."



To Fox Maule.

His Majesty's Revenue Cutter, *Swift*, Loch Tuath, Isle of Mull, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1837

"Sir, ... But there is one work which is more peculiarly fitting for the people of Iona, at which they would work most willingly, and one which no member of the British legislature who has ever seen the spot would think unworthy of being done at the public expense which I venture to suggest. The ruins of the celebrated Cathedral there are pretty well enclosed, but the Monastery is open to the world and is suffering especially by dilapidation; and the classic ground "which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery and virtue and over which" according to Dr Johnson, no frigid philosopher should stand indifferent or unmoved, is open to the constant intrusion of every kind. The cattle, sheep and pigs of the village wander among the tombs of our most ancient Kings and other illustrious men of the oldest ages whose remains lie here. The glebe of the new parliamentary minister comes up to the very bounds of the burying ground; and the former walls of its enclosure are level with the earth. Could the people of Iona make a better return for the public charity bestowed upon them, than by collecting materials for effectually enclosing the sacred ground?"

On Board HM Cutter *Swift* Loch Kishorn 3 April 1837

“We had an opportunity of enquiring into the details of these circumstances from some of the sufferers themselves; and I select a few cases in different classes as illustrations of the distress which is evidently too general in the district:

Duncan Martin has a small croft at Kyle, in which he grows principally potatoes; he has a wife and 8 children. His potato crop has almost entirely failed and he has none in his house for 14 days. He had come out to beg for meal; he had nothing but what he could get from his neighbours; sometimes he gets a few fish....

Duncan McKinnon, in the parish of Strath, a cottar, has no croft or cow. He sows no grain; he has a patch of potato ground where he planted last year 3 and a half barrels of potatoes and had only 3 barrels of produce. He has a wife and six children and has nothing to support them. No work to be had here.

Hugh McKenzie, in Strath, planted half a barrel and none of these grew. He has no cow and pays no rent. He has a wife and 5 children, one of them is lame. He has not 2d worth of provisions in his house.”

Barra 26<sup>th</sup> April 1837

“We entered one cottage between six and seven o’clock in the morning which had no latch and no hinges to the door; a yearling heifer occupied the first of two apartments and the other, which was almost without light and where there was only one bed of straw, contained four children – 2 boys, 2 girls – nearly quite naked and almost without a bedcover. The mother of the children, a widow, had gone 12 miles to Lochmaddy the day before in the chance of getting some potatoes from the factor. There was no food of any kind in the house, nor had the children any prospect of a meal before the return of their mother ....

We entered another cottage by a door about 3 feet and a half high. The inmates were gone, most of them, as we afterwards found from one of the boys of the family, to gather shellfish on the beach as the day’s provisions. The family consists of a man, his wife and five children. Nothing in the form of food was visible about the premises....”

Six years later, Lord Lynedoch died, aged 97, and Robert came into his inheritance. Although he had been closely involved in Lynedoch’s affairs and he knew about the renowned Gainsborough portraits of Mary Cathcart, Lynedoch’s wife, he had no idea where they were. Imagine then his delight, when he received a bill from London for their storage. He had them dispatched to Balgowan. Family tradition had it that he rode out to meet the delivery cart and opened the package before it reached the house.

In actions that speak to the man’s character, Robert bequeathed the larger portrait to the National Gallery of

Scotland, with the condition that it should never leave Scotland and he left the smaller version to his sisters.

His Scotsman obituary asserts that he was ‘greatly esteemed by his friends’ and that ‘tenants remember his endless acts of benevolence and kindness’. He was ‘known as a man of high-minded principle and scrupulous honour’.

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*Electioneering in Highland Perthshire*, Sheila Kidd, 2018



Half length copy of Gainsborough’s famous portrait of Mary Cathcart. Bequeathed to the National Trust by Beatrix Potter, Mrs William Heelis in 1944 .

Mary’s story features in the final talk of the 2024/25 programme:

**28 Apr: Chapelhill Village Hall at 7.30pm**

**From Russia With Love; The Cathcart Sisters & Perthshire**

**by Dr Nicky Small**



# THE RAMPAGE OF THE RASCALS

MICHAEL LAWRENCE

In May 1559, the skyline of Perth was dominated by the Kirk of St John the Baptist and dotted with busy chapels, nunneries and religious hospitals. And just outside the town walls there was a ring of friaries, priories and other monastic houses.



The Dominican (or Black Friars) Friary was founded in 1213 by King Alexander II and built next to the site of the ancient Perth Castle. The Dominicans were known as the Black Friars from their cassocks of a white tunic over which was a black mantle. In later years, the Kings of Scots developed the habit of staying with the Black Friars when visiting Perth. The monastery gave them the added protection of being in a holy place when in any danger.

The Dominican house was a large stone building, just north of the town wall towards the North Inch, arranged around a quadrangle with a fine tower, and housed thirteen friars. It contained cloisters and spacious apartments for the friars, state chambers, galleries, and a church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and St Dominic. There was also a burial ground, dovecot, a large orchard and two gardens – the Friar’s Croft and the King’s Garden. The entire property was surrounded by a high wall.

The Franciscan (or Grey Friars) Friary was founded by Lord Oliphant in 1460. It was a plain building just outside the

south east corner of the town on the east bank of the Tay. Their dress consisted of a simple grey gown and the Franciscans were known as the Grey Friars. The Franciscans took a vow of poverty and wandered freely amongst the people of Perth, surviving by begging. The friars had fishing rights on the Tay and extensive lands to the south of the town in the area known as Friarton.

The Carthusian Priory (or Charterhouse) was founded by James I and the building was completed in 1429. The Charterhouse monks were a silent order and often in apparent financial difficulty. Their cassocks were made of hair cloth worn next to the skin and covered with a white cloak and gown.

The Charterhouse stood to the south west of the town walls and its grounds extended from Craigie Haugh to the South Port and included part of the South Inch. The building housed thirteen monks and was oblong in shape, with a cloister along which were arranged the monk cells. Food was passed through a slit in the cell door. The monks dined together on Sundays and festival days but always followed the vow of total silence. They ate no flesh and fasted on one day each week when they only had bread and water. The Pomarium was the Charterhouse orchard.

The Carmelite (or White Friars) Friary was founded in 1257 by Richard, Bishop of Dunkeld, during the reign of Alexander III and was richly decorated but much smaller than the Dominican Friary. It was situated to the west of the town in the lands of Tullylumb and included gardens and orchards. The friars kept a large flock of pigeons and the area became known as Dovecotland. The Carmelite dress was a white cloak above a grey gown giving them the name White Friars.

Our Lady’s Chapel stood at the foot of the Northgate. St Laurence Chapel was in the Castle Gable next to the Dominican Friary and the Red Brig Port. The Chapel and Hospital of St Ann was on the south side of St John’s Kirk. The St James Chapel and Thomas-a-Becket Chapel were also on the south side of St John’s Kirk. St Paul’s Chapel and Hospital was just beyond Turret Brig Port on the western town wall.

St Catherine’s Chapel and Hospital was also west of the town wall in the area called Claypotts. Holy Cross Chapel was at the South Port. The Chapel of St Mary’s of Loretto was on the north side of Southgate, just inside the town wall by the South Port.

The nunnery of St Leonard was to the south west of the town. St Leonard’s Hospital and Chapel lay on the west

side of the old main road to Edinburgh and was linked to the nunnery. About a mile south of Perth, on the west side of the Edinburgh Road, stood the Chapel and Hospital of St Mary Magdelene.

From the mid-1520s, criticisms of the Catholic faith began to filter slowly into Scotland. Many Scots continued their education in Europe and were influenced by the teachings of Desiderius Erasmus, Martin Luther and, eventually, John Calvin on the current state of the Catholic Church. Their writing entered Scotland as early as 1525 through scholars returning from the continent and from the crews of fishing boats and mercantile ships docking in east coast ports including Perth. This trickle aroused enough suspicion for the Scottish parliament to pass a law against the import and possession of what they regarded as heretical books.

Erasmus railed against church wealth and corruption, the political influence of church leaders, and the lavish interior decoration of church buildings. Luther protested against the sale of indulgences by Pope Leo X (essentially cash for salvation) to fund the building of St Peter's Basilica in Rome, and the conduct of the Mass in Latin which the vast majority of congregations could not understand. Calvin questioned practices such as the Catholic assertion that communicants receive the actual body and blood of Christ in the Mass sacrament of bread and wine, the glorification of selected humans through the award of sainthood, and the recognition of miracles.

Luther translated the Bible into German and encouraged other Christian nations to follow with their own vernacular translation. He also promoted the belief that individuals should read and learn from the Bible without the need for any outside interpretation or direction by a priest or other ordained person. This challenged church supremacy on theological matters.

Luther's assertion that all men are free and equal in their relationship with God was particularly appealing to the craftsmen of Perth who were regularly reminded that they came behind the church, the landowners and the burgh merchants in the local status pecking order. Among the four great Scottish burghs, Perth was very much "a craftis toun" with a rich and diverse manufacturing base controlled by the craft guilds whereas the wealth of Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh was mostly generated by the merchant class.

The Perth craft guilds included skimmers, tanners, glovemakers, shoemakers, saddlers, armourers,

gunsmiths, blacksmiths, goldsmiths and silversmiths as well as the more typical town trades such as masons, carpenters, butchers, bakers and candle stick makers. Some of the Perth master craftsmen were amongst the wealthiest people in the town but they had minimal influence on the burgh council which was in the perpetual control of a handful of merchants who appointed their own successors. The craftsmen had been pushing for political representation for decades but had not managed to shift what the merchants regarded as "the beautiful order" of how civic matters were controlled.



**Craft symbols, Fleshers Vennel, Perth**

The Perth craftsmen also resented the land, money and abundance of fruit and grain held by the friars and monks in the monasteries that surrounded the town walls and the more radical guild members were prepared to take very public action when they believed this could produce both political and religious change. This included attaching a ram's head and a cow's rump to a statue of St Francis in a protest against the lifestyle of the Grey Friars.

The death of James V at Falkland on 14 December 1542 created opportunities for those impatient for religious change. James had married Princess Madelene of France and then Mary of Guise to strengthen Scotland's ties to Catholic France. The birth of James and Mary's daughter, Mary, on 8 December 1542, and the death of James, only six days later, was a game changer. The infant Mary, Queen of Scots, became a huge dynastic prize for both England and France. And there were Scottish aristocrats in the shadows who were keen to move Scotland's political axis away from the auld alliance with France and towards Protestant England.

Both the Charterhouse and the Dominican Friary were vandalised in the summer of 1543. The attack on the Charterhouse was sparked by a legal argument with James Gordon about the rights to the fruits of the Pomarium while the Dominican incident followed a dispute about



rents due. On the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1543, seven Perth burgesses and their servants broke into the house of the Blackfriars and stole chandeliers, candles, plates and drinking glasses and paraded the contents of a cooking pot down the Northgate to emphasise the high living standards of the friars.

Later in 1543, two burgesses were fined for reading a vernacular Bible and disputing the traditional Catholic interpretation of several passages. The Crown authorities decided to act and put an end to these protests. Cardinal David Beaton and the Earl of Arran, Regent on behalf of Queen Mary, arrived in Perth to punish religious protesters. Four men and a woman were convicted of heresy and sentenced to death. Their crimes included eating meat on a Friday, challenging a friar during a sermon, desecrating a statue and refusing to pray to the Virgin Mary during childbirth. Robert Lamb, James Hunter, James Raveleson and William Anderson, all craftsmen, were hanged on 25 January 1544 while Helen Stark, the wife of a craftsman, was drowned in the Tay.



At the elections of 1544, the craftsmen of Perth won a significant political victory when several of their representatives were elected as councillors and this practice was continued thereafter. The craftsmen had an ally in Lord Ruthven, a European educated Protestant sympathiser, who was elected as Provost for the first time in 1544.

During the 1550s an increasing number of tenants occupying ecclesiastical land and tenements began withholding their rent, provoking a flurry of law suits in the Court of Session. Perth burgh court records that “all and sindry” of Perth’s burgesses had refused to pay their

tiends to the church, despite facing possible excommunication. The burgh council turned a blind eye to the protest.

During the winter of 1558 into 1559, the people of Perth fully embraced church reform. In January 1559, a Beggars Summons was nailed on each of the Perth area monastery gates demanding that the friaries and priories be converted to service the needs of the blind, disabled, bedridden, widows and orphaned, and ordering all friars and monks to leave by Flitting Friday 12 May 1559 or risk eviction. This prompted the Regent and mother of the Queen, Mary of Guise, to issue a summons to a number of Perth preachers - John Christison, William Harlaw, and John Willock - to appear before her on Wednesday 10 May 1559 in Stirling.

A huge crowd of other preachers from across Scotland, including John Knox, gathered in Perth on Tuesday 9 May 1559 to support the preachers but they all decided not to proceed to Stirling. This non-appearance was regarded as an act of open defiance against a Crown order and prompted Mary of Guise to put the preachers to the horn i.e. declare them as outlaws.

John Knox was preaching to the converted when he spoke against idolatry on Thursday 11 May 1559 in the Kirk of St John the Baptist, a church full of altars and decorated with religious paintings and statues. At the conclusion of Knox’s sermon, a priest began the preparations for the celebration of Mass. A magnificent tabernacle was opened up, an ebony crucifix was disclosed, the candles were lit, the priests in full vestments knelt around the altar, and the chants began. Behind the crucifix was a huge painting of the martyrdom of St Bartholomew and the officiating priest prepared the wine and elevated a large consecrated wafer to the crowd.

A young man shouted “this is intolerable”. A nearby priest shouted “blasphemer” and gave the youth a cuff on the ear. A religious image was broken in the fracas and the congregation rose as one and destroyed the tabernacle and all other religious idols. The priests were seized and their vestments torn off. All of the religious images and decorations in the church were destroyed and the church furniture was smashed. The mob burned church records, stole treasures and provisions, and stripped the walls of all icons back to the bare stone. They looted sheets, blankets, beds and coverlets and soon raided the church kitchens for wine, beer, salt beef and cheese.

The protest spread quickly to the monasteries just outside

the town walls. The mob ran from St John's to the Greyfriars and on to the Charterhouse, the Blackfriars and Whitefriars and eventually to the nunneries and chapels. Altars, crucifixes, statues and all religious art and decorations were obliterated. After two days of rioting, looting and ruination, only the walls of all the religious buildings in Perth were left standing.

John Knox used the phrase 'rascal multitude' to describe the common people who ran amok in Perth and changed the nature of Scottish society, forever. Despite the destruction, the rampage of the rascals was not a bloody uprising. There were no accounts of death or even injuries in Perth. The rascals were largely peaceful in their treatment of the friars and monks. Some of the friars embraced Protestantism, becoming ministers in the new kirk. Others moved elsewhere in Scotland or left to remain in their order in a sympathetic Catholic country.

Mary of Guise died on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1560 by which time the old church order had been completely replaced by the Protestantism of the Scottish reformers. The majority of the Scottish nobility – the Lords of the Congregation – supported the church rebellion, and a provisional Scottish government was established. In August 1560, the Scottish Reformation Parliament established the Church of Scotland, renounced the Pope's authority with the Papal Jurisdiction Act, and declared the Catholic Mass as illegal across Scotland.

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## MILLHAUGH BRIDGE

ROS PEARSON

The old bridge over the Almond at Millhaugh has been the glory of the Glen for its beauty but also its handicap for the gradients of the route over it. This was the opinion of David Forrester who was the Minister of the Secession church in Logiealmond from 1886 to 1896, and who later wrote the history of the area. It is thought that the bridge was constructed about 1779. Good crossing points for people, horses and carts were few on this section of the Almond; none between Buchanty, 7 km upstream and Dalcrue, 8 km downstream. There were some fords but the Almond rises dangerously when in spate.

Millhaugh has some low ground on both banks suitable for farming. A mill powered by the river had been built here to process oatmeal by at least 1690 as it is marked on Pont's map of Scotland. Later a flax and then a cotton mill were also built. The bridge is the main route south from Logiealmond and, after 1866, led to the nearest railway station at Methven. It took agricultural produce and slates south and coal and other provisions north.



The old bridge's high single arch in the form of a semicircle gives the route over it slopes of one in ten, and this caused many problems.

*'I never passed over the high, picturesque structure with a full load, as I often had to do, without being in perfect terror till I had got safely to the other side.'* (Thomas Wylie).

*'It was, in time of ice, a terror for every funeral that had to*

cross it.' (David Forrester)

Designed for packhorse traffic and simple farm carts, it did not suit the greater weights of later years. More than once in the 1870s the traction engine with slate from Craiglea quarry broke through the surface and caused considerable traffic problems and costs in repairs to get the surface shored up and repaired.

There were petitions for the old bridge to be taken down and replaced with a more practical structure from the 1830s, but some valued the old bridge for its age and handsome design and who would fund a new one? The problem was not solved until the 1890s.

David Forrester was instrumental in getting an agreement although he does not mention it in his book, but Thomas Wylie's *Recollections* makes his contribution clear. He persistently lobbied the various authorities and it was eventually agreed to leave the old bridge and build a new level steel bridge for traffic, the one still in use. It was designed by Sir William Arrol and Co. and the cost was divided equally between Perth Council, Crieff Council and the local people who would benefit. The opening ceremony took place on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1894. It poured with rain but the company retreated to Millhaugh Farm for refreshments, speeches and toasts.

#### References:

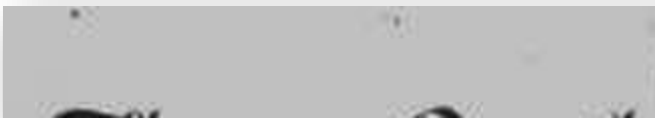
David Forrester, *Logiealmond*, 1944

Thomas Wylie, *Recollections and Traditions of Logiealmond*, series 1 and 2, completed 1932

British Newspaper Archive



Spotted in the Northern Ensign newspaper of 5<sup>th</sup> January, 1854:



“At Stanley, in Perthshire, the whole of the dogs have been poisoned by some unknown wretch.”

The Northern Ensign and Weekly Gazette was published in Wick and circulated in Caithness, Sutherland, Ross-shire, Orkney and Shetland. The quote is taken from the first edition of the newspaper. Had the editor been looking for a sensational story for the launch issue?

And how did he learn of it?



## WORKING MAN'S DIARY

PAUL MCLENNAN

Over the centuries, the folk of Murthly (well, ordinary people everywhere) have come across as gingerbread men or women. Baked as they are, even individually, from a flour sifted from church and statutory records — births, marriages and deaths, census snapshots, valuation rolls — how could it be otherwise? Mishaps and misbehaviours reported in the local papers might add a smile, a frown, a sly wink here and there, but essentially, they come across as thin, flat, two dimensional. More recently, cross-referencing with documents, accounts, leases, rents etc in the newly catalogued archive in Murthly Castle has thickened the mix in some cases. The occasional photo helps, as do family anecdotes; but the latter just as often add unwanted ingredients leading to the warning, May Contain Nuts.

What's lacking is the yeast of self-penned narratives, old letters, jottings and journals. Manna for the local historian, only rarer. During the Exodus it fell daily for the Israelites. It has fallen our way precisely twice.

The first is an account by Mary Donald Sutherland, born in March 1913 and the first bairn to be baptised in Murthly Church, of growing up in the village. An account sadly curtailed when fire destroyed the Inn (her father, Alastair, was the tenant) and the family left the village. The second is the diary kept from 1887 – 96 by Alexander Campbell, an estate forester. He worked six days a week with few holidays. His Sundays are generally covered by “at church”, and a reference to the weather (assuming “dull” or “very dull” is just that).

The foresters were more than woodsmen. The estate squad varied in size depending on the work, which covered everything that wasn't raising crops, tending livestock or gamekeeping. Taking care of Murthly's magnificent trees, woods and forests, yes. But also ditching, road mending, fencing, and grass cutting. Noting the changing seasons: from keeping busy in winter cutting and storing great quantities of ice for the Big House: to bringing in each spring by beating the castle's carpets. Responding to newly fashionable pursuits by laying a bowling green, a tennis court, a nine-hole golf course, even a cricket pitch in one of the grass parks.



Over the years, Alex in his daily one-liners found humour everywhere. He was never just emptying a cess pit but promoted to the Sewage Emporium; never howking loose stones out of a grass park, but carting diamonds.

Alex was born, out of wedlock, to Alexander Campbell and Margaret Swan on 7th July 1864, in Kilmorich, by Dowally. His first job on the estate was walking at the head of a horse pulling a lawn mower, aged 15. For 1/6d a day. Probably also had the fiddly task of lacing up the leather bootees used to protect the grass from hoof impact. Within a couple of years, he was working alternately between the castle's kitchen garden and the vegetable garden at Dalpowie Lodge. For 1/9d. By the summer of 1882, aged 18, the work was more varied and included actual forestry — "working oak coppice" — among routine labouring such as gravelling paths, and fencing. By that year's end his wage had risen. To 2/1d a day. Then in March 1883, he reached 2/10d a day. But that was his ceiling; the rate never changed until he left Murthly for a job in Abernethy in 1896. (Allowing for inflation, in today's coin that still wouldn't be much. Alex was working for the equivalent of £4 an hour.)

However, the estate had a motley collection of houses, cottages, even apartments in a pseudo Roman arch, that the lairds gave rent-free to workers. There are gaps in the record, but we know from the rental ledger for 1890 that Alex was living in one such, East Lodge, a saving of £4 per year.

In his diary years, Alex was young, single, occasionally a special constable, and actively involved with the Birnam Rifle Volunteers. He was sporty, enjoying highland games events in summer and curling in winter. Church was important to him; he rarely missed a Sunday service at Caputh, although occasionally he went to Spittalfield instead. On two occasions, he noted being invited into the manse after the Xmas service. The minister then was Rev. Theodore Marshall (later to become a Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland). He was also either a member of the Caputh choir or a brass-necked blagger, for he attended its summer picnic three years on the trot. To such far-off places such as the Pass of Killiecrankie. (A fair day's outing — 40 miles there and back — for a horse-drawn charabanc. Something like the photo below.)



Before starting on his diary, that is, before writing anything of his own, Alex began with a list. Behaviour any modern journaller would recognise. In this case, a list of tree species, "the correct nomenclature of native & imported timber on Murthly estate". He also copied out the Conditions of Sale from 1885 for an important rroup of timber, and began to write out the Particulars of Sale for the estates — which he would have found in a newspaper — when Sir Archibald had a rush of blood that year and put all of his holdings, Murthly, Strathbraan and Grandtully, the hale jing bang, on the market. (Sir was quickly reminded by the next in line, Walter Fotheringham, that the estates were still subject to the law of entail, and not his to dispose of.)

Most revealing of all, however, are the partial texts for two debating scripts. The subject of the first was "Poet or Soldier which have (sic) done the most good for Great Britain?" Which argued for the Soldier. In the second, the topic was "Whether was Sir Colin Campbell or General Havelock the greater General?" Arguing in favour of Campbell: drawn by the name, perhaps? These partial scripts — whether early drafts or copied from someone else — strongly suggest Alex was a member of the Murthly Mutual Improvement Association (Murthly MIA). This was a club for working men of the district looking to better themselves through discussion, formal debates and lectures. Part of a national, even international movement, the MIAs were an early form of lifelong education. They could be radical, liberal, closely associated with nonconformist religious movements, or not. Each had its own tone and tenor, its own articles of association; just thousands of small groups copying a basic idea. One surviving example, "Rules for the Management of Dunning Mutual Improvement Association", adopted 8 January 1882, had just three:

- i The annual sub shall be 3/-
- ii The library shall be open every lawful day from 9am -10pm. Non-members to pay 1/6d per annum to use the Reading Room
- iii A notebook shall be kept in which a member can propose the purchase of any book which *he* would wish introduced. (My italics.)

Not much is known of Murthly MIA as no formal records survive. (Although it certainly did not have a library or reading room. Just use of the school at Ardoch for evening meetings.) It was formed in 1879. One of its leading lights was Charles Scott, tenant of Bradystone farm, who acted as secretary, chairman and debater (perhaps not all at the same time). He emigrated to South Africa in 1886, found a reef of gold on his farm there and, true to the ethos of the MIA, taught himself geology, and formed a theory of a deep super reef that was eventually found 3,000 ft down by his son, decades later. Murthly MIA also made annual donations of £2 or £3 to Perth Royal Infirmary and held a dance in the school at the end of each debating season. In February 1896, a certain A. Campbell was one of several

singers, male and female, to entertain the company before the dancing started.

Did membership of the MIA spur Alex to begin his diary, on 1st January 1887? It's a (very) basic record of hard, repetitive work. Generally, one line per day. The most prominent character was the weather. Through it are interwoven key events, such as when the squad had to prepare the crypt beneath the chapel after Sir Archibald died. Although a more memorable date for Alex was 11 August 1892, when they were all given the day off on the occasion of a visit by the Scottish Arboricultural Association.

In those years the estate positively swarmed with the Great & Good, but of them the diary knows nothing and says less. Not even a mention for Sir John Everett Millais and Effie Gray then resident in Dalpowie Lodge (or Birnam Hall, as Sir Archibald insisted it be called) for six months of the year. Yet obviously he would have known they were there, would have doffed his bunnet if they had come into the garden while he was working. But Alex is not into gossip, just the facts. Although he had some feeling for the extraordinary . . .



This from 19th January 1895:

“Very severe frost. This day was rendered famous from the fact that a Curling match was Played on the Tay below Stenton. The Rinks were composed of Curlers from Murthly Castle Club. A novel feature of the occasion was the Cooking of lunch on the ice. Dancing was afterwards engaged in to the stirring notes of Bob Keay’s fiddle. Conspicuous @ the hop of the first Reel was an elderly lady of pleasing and substantial appearance who hoofed it right merrily.”

That small mention of Bob Keay . . . Something to leaven the mix of *his* story. Robert Keay was then a young gamekeeper, working from the kennels at Kingswood. His older brother, James, was one of Millais’ favourite ghillies, and a pallbearer at the artist’s funeral in Westminster Abbey in 1896. We hadn’t known of Bob’s fiddle playing but were aware that later in life he and his family lived in

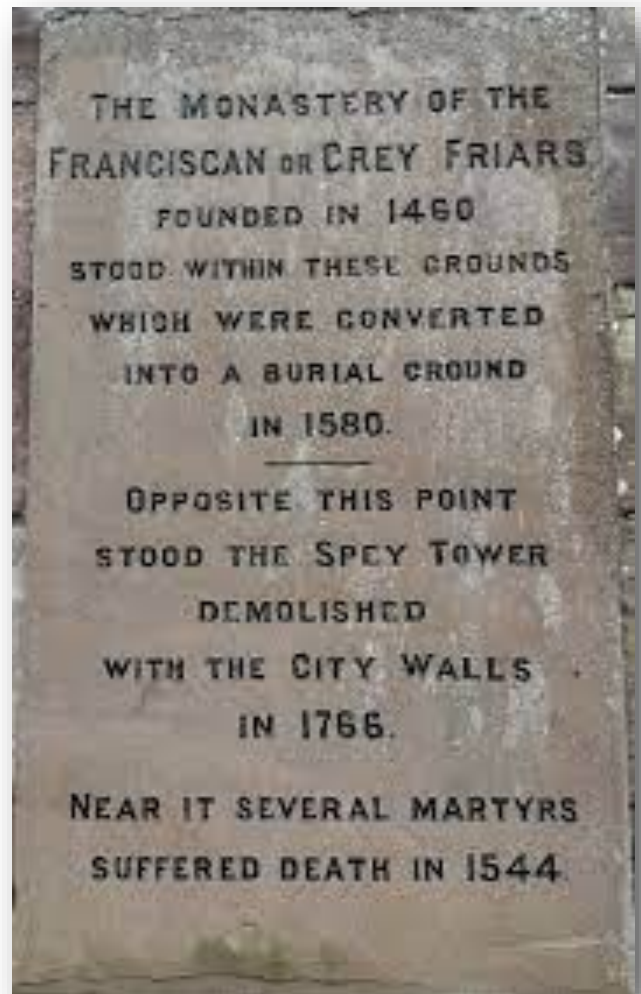
one of the apartments in the Malakoff Arch. Which, of course, had a dancehall in the crosspiece, scene of a many a fine ceilidh for estate folk. Nothing like being able to thump on the floor and cry, “Send up a fiddler!”

In a sense, everything interesting happened for Alexander Campbell after he left Murthly and 2/10d a day. Promotion to land steward, marriage to Mary Ann Stewart, a farmer’s daughter from Caputh in November 1896, and the births of their children all followed, and he lived until 1937. However, as far as we know his career as diarist ended. Pity that. We were just getting to know him.

#### Sources:

Thanks to Alex’s great great granddaughter, Ailsa Birchenough, for preserving and scanning the diary.

Information on Alex’s pay comes from Foresters Timebooks in the castle archive.



The several martyrs being the four craftsmen hung for heresy named in Michael Lawrence’s article (see p 9). And Helen Stark, who suffered death by drowning.