

Friends of Loudoun Kirk

OCTOBER 2003

All Quiet At the Kirk?

Now that the work on the Kirk is almost complete and the gates have been replaced, it must be a relaxing time for the Friends of Loudoun Kirk. WRONG!

With the continued work at the Kirk the interest in the group has grown considerably. We still deal with the usual raft of group visits, tours, talks and genealogy enquiries. There also remains projects uncompleted.



Since the completion of the Grave Survey, 3 stones have been destroyed and others vandalised. The council still will test the stones stability and will topple those in danger of falling. With this in mind we have been working closely with Susan Buckham from the Carved Stones Association in a project to record the condition of the headstones themselves.

A group of volunteers are in the midst of this complicated task. Their aims are to record exact positions of the stones and what forms of erosion are present, factors may affect their deterioration. The results will be entered into a database with similar recordings in hope to help preserve the memorial stones for future generations.

There are 3 main types of erosion apparent in head stones:

- 1) Differential - The loss of tiny particles of stones over time almost like sand, cause through the absorption of water in the stone and exposure to the elements.
- 2) Delamination - The separation of stone along it's natural planes and faults allowing the stone to break away in sheets.
- 3) Contour - Working a stone's surface often weakens the stone, often the ornate sections separate from the rest of the stone.

Ceilidh Alert

29th Nov, 7.30pm
Galston
Community
Centre. Tickets
£6

We wish to assess the impact of the stones position, exposure, the angle that it sits, stone type, covering of lichens or pollution, vegetation, water run off etc. This information may determine the best way of protecting the stones and managing the site. More help is needed, and if anyone is interested in helping and would like further information on the survey please feel free to contact me.

New Contact Details
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Restoration

This year we were asked to participate in a series of events that promoted awareness in preservation. In conjunction with the BBC 2's "Restoration" outreach programme, we ran events through August and September.

August 10th

Ruth Urquhart



F.O.L.K. was pleased to welcome Daily Record's psychic counsellor, Ruth 'the Truth' Urquhart, for her unique perspective on the Kirk and its environs. More to follow.

August 24th

Family Day at the Kirk

We wish to thank East Ayrshire Family History Society for their assistance in bringing genealogy to life in the situ of the Kirk, where they provided guidance on how to research your family tree.



September 7th

Doors Open Day

Always well attended – Doors Open day this year was no exception. We held our usual tours of the Kirk but we were delighted to be joined by local artist Matt Cairns who was working on his current painting of the Kirk which was on display beside his previous work, prior to restoration. Print copies can be ordered from the artist through the committee.

September 21st

Medieval Fayre

Tied in with Scottish Archaeological Month we held a Medieval Fayre within the Kirk walls. Graveyards traditionally were a place of markets and so turning back the clock we had various stalls among the stones. We were lucky to have the talents of Fire & Sword re-enactment group, World of Wings falconry, Axe throwing (including an impromptu visit from the Scottish axe-throwing champion) and demonstration spinning and weaving. There was an opportunity to try your hand at quill writing, traditional games and exploring the midden heap. Although damped by the weather this year, we wish to organise a similar event next year. Anyone wishing to join in on the organisation of such an event would be most welcome.



Photographs of the mediaeval fayre, on the back page, have been printed at a very much reduced quality of print due to the high costs of colour reproduction, however better quality photographs will be available on the website and by e-mail on request

John Campbell aged 13 ½ deceased

John Campbell, lived with his aunt and uncle, Alexander Campbell and Jane Roxburgh. His father, James was an tailor in Galston and he and his wife Marion Gilmour suffered the loss of several of their children whilst they were quite young, John apparently was known around the local farms and was nicknamed “Wee Jimmy¹”. He was fortunate to have survived into his teens, then disaster struck, he and his dog were drowned.

The Friends of Loudoun Kirk are frequently asked for help in tracing ancestors and we are happy to help where we can. So when, in late September, a request for information on young John Campbell was made, we made an effort to help the enquirer as we normally would. Unfortunately the lady was a bit vague in what she wanted to know but her daughter called in later in the day to collect the result of the research. Again there was a fair amount of uncertainty about what information she wanted. Although his parents and siblings had been found together with several other members of the family, she didn't appear interested in any of the family, nor in the kirk and when pressed further, she admitted her only interest was in John Campbell. However she was astounded to learn that his parents were James Campbell and Marion Gilmour, as her maiden name was “Gilmour”.

This is her story;

Whilst attending to her horse at neighbouring stables to Loudoun Kirk, one horse in particular hated dogs with a vengeance so when the horse started causing a commotion, the source was traced to a boy and his dog. The young lady was given the names of John Campbell and Jane Roxburgh and was shown how the boy and his dog drowned. She felt compelled to follow up the story and paid a visit to Loudoun kirkyard and sure enough there is a gravestone by Jane Roxburgh in memory of her husband, Alexander Campbell & their nephew John Campbell who died age 13 ½. The boy in the stables was John Campbell, he died in 1868.

Intrigued by the story, further investigation and research showed that John's death was registered as “congestion of the lungs”, this could be a possible result of being in the water. A query was put in Rootsweb (a family history research forum), in search for other members of the family. E-mail came from a lady in Canada who thought she was related to James Campbell and Marion Gilmour, John's parents. She was told the story of John Campbell's ghost and although she knew nothing of a drowning, she has given us some other very interesting information.

A substantial amount of work has been put into the preparation of this particular family tree and it is still bringing up surprises. Young John Campbell's cousin, John W Campbell, also married a Marion Gilmour (*this* was the gt grandmother of the lady from Canada) and it's this Marion's mother who was Isabella McAdam, daughter of *William McAdam*, a farmer in Troqueer, Dumfriesshire. The lady in Canada also informs us that her gt grandmother was, according to her grandmother, related in some way to John Loudon McAdam who gave his name to “Tarmacadam”. John L McAdam is buried in Moffat and at one time leased an estate in Dumfriesshire, he had a son and grandson both by the name of *William*. William McAdam & Dumfriesshire is all we have at the moment, this could be only a coincidence. There can be no assumptions in linking families, it all has to be proven, but we are happy that Loudoun Kirk now has its very own ghost story and if what we've been told is true, then we may well have a connection to a very well known gentleman. As far as we know John Loudoun McAdam's gt grandparents were James McAdam (1662) and Janet Crawford of Loudoun Castle.

By Agnes Wilson

¹ This information came from John Campbell himself

Spiritual Tour

The afternoon of Sunday 10th August was blessed with blue skies and unbroken sunshine, features not envisaged after a grey start to the day. More importantly we were blessed with the presence of Ruth Urquhart, leading Scottish psychic, taking time out from her busy schedule as a broadcaster, author and columnist, who brought her unique skills to assist with our delving into the past at the historic Kirk.

Ruth brought her trusted tools, a pair of divining rods and a rose crystal pendulum. These were given to two volunteers to operate, guided by the deeper vibes, which Ruth could sense. After testing that the tools were receptive in their novice hands we began our tour. Ruth had taken a walk round the Kirkyard in the advance of the company gathering. By 2pm around 20 had assembled, a mixture of FOLK members, sceptics and others with an interest in the local history.

Our first stop was at the memorial to Lady Flora Hastings. Ruth had sensed that Lady Flora was not present but that she had been both yellow and swollen at the time of her death. Any photographs which we had seen were not in colour but of course the liver complaint and swollen belly had been well documented. The crystal pendulum was put to good use and by judicious querying and interrupting of the responses through the pendulum, we were able to accept that Lady Flora told us that she was not buried at Loudoun. Instead she had been cremated and her ashes scattered on water, possibly in the vicinity of Bute. Furthermore Ruth also picked up that Lady Flora had been in the habit of completing tapestry samplers, although perhaps surprisingly nothing of her poetic talents. Clearly we have some leads to follow when next we have access to the family archives.

In her pre tour walk Ruth had sensed blackness and sounds of hammering, mentioning a colliery, near the south-west wall of the graveyard, and that was our next stop. The divining rod had their first outing, crossing at 3 separate points on the pathway between the boundary wall and the grass. Two of these were close together and after some discussion among the group it was agreed that this could mark the spot of a known colliery disaster in which 2 lives had been lost, one mine shaft being not far distant. The message given to Ruth was that these 2 men desperately sought recognition for their plight. It is hoped that FOLK can liaise with groups known to be seeking to place a memorial. Several members of the audience confirmed the feeling a presence at the 2 spots in question.

Ruth then stopped at a headstone laid flat in the grass. She suggested that she was picking up milk and then that the girl buried beneath had been a milkmaid. She had stopped at the stone of Janet Little. After discussion amongst the group during which the group during which the tale of the local poet was related to Ruth, who had no prior knowledge, the pendulum again provided some fascinating responses. It was confirmed to us that Janet had indeed met Rabbie Burns but only once, and that the meeting had been at Loudoun and not Ellisland. The bard did not like her poetry.

The north-east corner of the Kirkyard contains some large areas with no evidence of burials. The diving rods were put to good use, identifying 4 separate possible burial sites, one of which is confirmed from our own previous survey and for which the headstone now lies buried, although we do have photographic and inscription records. Again some further research on these locations may bear fruit.

Whilst in the Kirk Ruth managed to discern that the 3 separate urns in the Kirk were in the presence of members of their families. This fact was not then known to either to our spiritual guide or indeed to many of those gathered. We vacated the Kirk to conclude our tour by seeking out the possibility of another vault below ground. Starting from mid point of the rear wall of the main Kirk building, the rods directed us to a point adjacent to the rear of the Lady Flora memorial. This may mark the end of a second vault, pre-dating the existing family crypt.

Finally the possible burial outside the cemetery walls was raised. Ruth took us back to the south-west corner. The rods produced nothing positive but we did locate pieces of broken and inscribed headstone. Whether this confirms a burial or an act of vandalism with stones being broken and thrown over the wall remains to be seen, but again we have more information to follow through.

By Keith Roberts