

F.O.L.K. NEWSLETTER

April 2001

Kirk repairs at Standstill

Last year saw the success in applying for the Heritage Lottery Grant. All was thought to be going exceedingly well and initial information said that work at the kirk was due to start January of this year.

Unfortunately, this was not to be.

The payment of the grant in arrears would mean that the Friends would have to pay the contractors at the end of each month before receiving the grant money. To do this a bridging loan would be required. As we are dealing with a ruined kirk and it's graveyard there would be little value as collateral against a loan, a guarantor would have to be found. Various companies have been approached and have refused. East Ayrshire Council has been approached, but a decision has not been made.

Further problems were encountered as to the work schedule specifications and the content of the tenders. A meeting in conjunction with the architect and Historic Scotland is scheduled for the near future.



Fig 1: Un-named gravestone at Loudoun Kirk

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Loudoun Kirk's Lost Gravestones

In recent times, the last fifty years or so, a number of interesting and antique tombstones recorded in earlier accounts can no longer be found in their original positions. One such stone was raised in memory of Janet Little, acclaimed as the "Scottish Milkmaid". She was in service to Mrs Dunlop of Dunlop who rented Loudoun Castle in the 1790's with her daughter Mrs Henri and her French refugee husband. Janet remained at the castle and was employed in the dairy for the rest of her life, marrying a local widower with five children, John Richmond a labourer on the estate.

Janet Little was on of the many literate Scottish peasantry of the 18th century who were inspired by Robert Burns, the Ploughman Poet, to try their hands at versifying. Her little book of verse, published in 1792 had some local renown and was brought to the attention of Burns by his friend and patron, Mrs Dunlop. He seems to have thought her effort unremarkable to the displeasure of Mrs Dunlop and considered the verse epistle addressed to him "a modest composition, part poetic and part prosaic". Present day study of her work bears out his opinion. She visited Burns at Ellisland to find him laid up with a broken arm, an event which provided her with the subject for another poem.

Her tombstone, which is located near the gable of Loudoun Kirk, is inscribed:

"In memory of John Richmond
who died August 10, 1810 aged
78 years; and Janet Little,
his spouse, who died March 15,
1818, aged 54 years and five
of their children."

Like many other thought vanished memorials it was found embedded in the turf of the kirkyard, saved from the ravages of weathering and the unwelcome attentions of latter-day vandals whom the Friends of Loudoun Kirk now make every endeavour to repel.

By Jim Mair

Editors note

The book can be found online at
<http://www.lib.ucdavis.edu/English/BWRP/Work/LittJPoeti.htm>

Riddle-me-Riddle

What is greater than God,
Was here before God,
Rich people want & need it,
Poor people have it,
If you eat it, you die

Answer at bottom of page by Britt Kerr

Internet Site

A new web site hosted by East Ayrshire council, has now been launched at

www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/folk/

The site was designed by Steven Wilson of the Conduit Project.

The older web site is still in existence but has been moved to www.geocities.com/loudkirk/. The site will give you a list of any forth-coming events organised by the society.

F.O.L.K. can be contacted online via

FOLK122@hotmail.com

Review of 2000/2001

- Sept Annual participation in Doors Open Day, giving people the opportunity to see inside the kirk. Watch out for Doors Open Day (Ayrshire) 2nd Sept 2001.
- Nov The biennial ceilidh which had dancing to the sounds of the Ian Thompson Ceilidh Band. A Spring ceilidh is under review.
- Dec The first Members night was held at the Barr Castle in Galston, with guest speaker Anne Geddes, from the Baird Institute. The members were treated to a slideshow on Covenanting in Ayrshire, followed by an informal cheese and wine and a chance to explore the museum within the keep. The success of the evening will see a continuation of the event later in the year.
- Feb The end of the month brought a visit from the Kyle & Carrick Civic Society for a guided tour of the Kirk. An enjoyable time was had by all and a kind donation of £32 was received.

ANSWER: NOTHING



Leeks and Sops in Wine
(Serves six)

Slyte soppes. Take white of lekes and slyt hem, and do hem to seeth in wyne, oile and salt. Tost brede and lay in disshes, and cast the sewe aboue, and serue it forth. (CI. IV. 82).

8-12 leeks, depending on size
2 tablespoons olive oil
Sprinkling of Salt
1 bottle (75cl) white wine
3-4 slices soft-grain white bread, freshly toasted.

Even if Chaucer's franklin did not eat leeks for breakfast, he would have found this classy version of 'sops in wine' a treat. Monks certainly did, especially in Lent when they often had only bread sops and water for supper-officially. Although simple, this was not a poor man's dish. Poor people used whole leeks, and could not afford white wine when broth was forbidden. Olive Oil and white bread were luxuries too. Slice the white parts of the leeks thinly. (Keep the rest for everyday pottage) Simmer the sliced leeks, oil and salt in the wine until the leek slices are soft. Meanwhile, break or cut up the toast into small pieces and divide them between six soup bowls. Cover them with the leek slices and hot wine. Serve as soon as the toast sops have softened.

Extract taken from "The Medieval Cookbook" by Maggie Black.

Friends of Loudoun Kirk wish congratulations to Madeleine and Jim Purdie on their marriage, February of this year.

Don't forget the A.G.M.

To be held 7th May 2001 at 7pm,
Newmilns Church Hall. All Members welcome.

Membership Renewals

Membership remains at £5 annual and £25 Life. Please could you fill out the **new** membership forms and return them to the address given at the bottom of the front page.