

Friends of Loudoun Kirk



**The Marriage of
John Campbell Kerr
and
Margaret Elizabeth Hannah
at
Loudoun Kirk
on
26th December 2009**



The latest Gathering of the Campbells of Loudoun took place on Boxing Day 2009. The venue was Loudoun Kirk, carpeted in snow, and the reason being the exchange of wedding vows between John Kerr, grandson of the late Lady Jean, and his delicious bride, Margaret Hannah.

The freezing temperatures were relieved by candles within the kirk, but all the warmth radiated from the families gathered for the latest celebration since the re-dedication of the kirk after the restorations. The Earl of Loudoun, Michael Hastings, sent his apologies, unable to make the trip from Australia at the time. However Don Williams, with his daughter Amanda, was able to make his first return to Scotland from Arizona, since the passing of his late wife Sheena, whose remains were later laid to rest in the crypt, united again with her family.

From the kirk the bridal party made the short trip to the ancestral home. The Campbells gathered at the castle for photographs as the sun lit up the snowy scene. John had the family tartan to protect him from the worst of the frost; Margaret simply radiated. The highlight, perhaps, was the towing of the matrimonial Rolls-Royce to the safety of the road.

The celebrations continued later at Bishopton's magnificent Mar Hall, dressed in all its festive finery, where the guests were treated to fine food, and entertained richly with music and dancing until the wee small hours and beyond.

As a footnote the family has since expanded, though it is John's sister, Britt Sutcliffe, who is responsible, her daughter Grace Margaret making her appearance on 28th July. Grace is the fifth grandchild for Madeleine Purdie, two daughters and a son to Britt, and a son and daughter to sister Emma. The kirk may well be in use once again, for baptismal purposes.

By Keith Roberts

The A.G.M. In May brought no changes to office bearers in the committee.

Chairman: Johnny Alexander

Secretary: Agnes Wilson

Treasurer: Gillian Hutcheson

Minute Secretaries: Britt Sutcliffe & Madeleine Purdie

The Walking Festival in May, saw a number of walkers into the Kirk and although we did not give a talk this year, we were there to answer questions and a number of leaflets were taken.

The History Fair in Troon was enjoyable and we had several visitors to our stand. This is an annual get-together for anyone interested in both history and family history. Talks on various subjects are also available for anyone to attend. I managed to go to a very enjoyable talk on aerial photography by David Cowley, (Aerial Survey Projects Manager,) of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS).

We have come a long way from the early 1900's when the RCAHMS starting making photographic records of heritage and industrial sites. For many years, their collection was not available to the public but now they have a searchable website <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/> where much of their collection can be viewed.

We are on the stand to offer information and promote Loudoun Kirk as a historic site but we often learn interesting things from others. One very curious question arose when assisting in a recent family history enquiry. The ancestor being researched is shown to have lived at 194 Polwarth Street, Galston. This could not be possible as it is an extremely short Street. A visitor to the stand at the fair, may have answered the question. She had been told that some of the census records showed the number of houses the census clerk had visited rather than the actual house numbers. So 194 would have been the 194th house visited.

Plans for our own new website , this has been on the back burner for some time.

However there has been many hurdles and although we have a new web address, <http://www.loudounkirk.org.uk> plans for bringing it up to date have been held up. Susan and Aaron who are our web-masters, lead busy lives and unfortunately part way through redesigning the website, Susan moved to another job and lost the use of the design programme she had planned on using. Hopefully all is not lost though, there is a possibility that not only can the website be redesigned but it is hoped that an added features of an interactive search of the kirkyard will also be achieved.

Forthcoming events:

Doors Open Day - 6th Sept 2010 The kirk will be open as usual 10am - 4pm

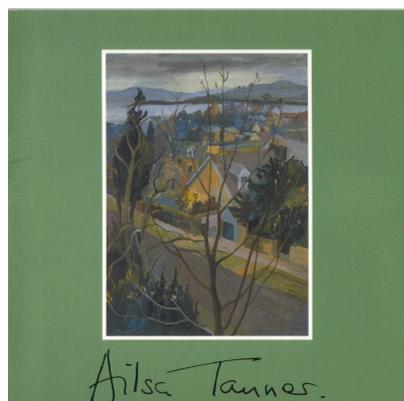
Ceilidh - 27th November 2010 Galston Community Centre @ 7.30pm

Members Night – to be arranged

Contributions to future newsletters would be appreciated also we are always in need of new committee members and if anyone is interested in becoming part of the committee, please let us know.

Email to: amwilson122@hotmail.com

Two Artists with connections with Kilmarnock, Loudoun Kirk & Helensburgh



Ailsa Tanner

Following up some family history enquiries has given me the opportunity to look further into the information I already had on the families and piece together a few more bits of interesting details. I made a brief mention of artist, Ailsa Tanner in a previous newsletter stating that her ashes are buried in Loudoun kirkyard beside her grandfather and *aunt*. I have been wrong in this, she is buried beside her grandparents and *mother*.

Daughter of Eleanor Allan Moore, (one of the famous Glasgow Girls art movement) & Dr Cecil Roberson and granddaughter of Rev. Hamilton Moore of Newmilns. Ailsa was born in 1923 in Kilmarnock and attended Kilmarnock Academy, she passed away in 2001.

A copy of an article written and researched by Donald Fullarton of the Helensburgh Heritage Trust with this newsletter is attached for further reading.

Edwin Douglas



A recent enquiry regarding a memorial stone in Loudoun Kirkyard

“by John Douglas, clockmaker, Galston in memory of his wife Mary Nuton (Newton) who died in 1803,”

led us to some very interesting information on John and Mary's family. Their grandson, James was a portrait painter and picture restorer in Kilmarnock whose son, Edwin became an artist of renown in Surrey.

A more detailed story of the Douglas family is attached thanks to information from Sally E Douglas and Valerie Martin of Findon Village, Surrey

In the beginning.....

On reflection, after 16 years since the friends of Loudoun Kirk was established and the major part of the work is completed, perhaps it's a time to consider those, who thanks to their historical interests have played a major part in achieving the goal.

Jim Mair & John McGill were the founding fathers of the organisation, recognising the potential in saving a local historic building which no doubt would have been allowed to deteriorate perhaps to a ruinous state. Sadly Jim is no longer with us.

Greta Roberts: A Consultant Town Planner whose knowledge and advice was well received at the start. Without her, in all probability, would have meant much more floundering if the organisation's plans were to get off the ground at all.

Belgian S.A.S. Veteran Paratroopers: Their support and interest in Loudoun Kirk, with their funding contribution, presentation of the S.A.S. Plaque, and visits to the Kirk have helped raise awareness of their presence in the area during the war and have helped make Loudoun Kirk just that little bit more special.

Susan Smith, still very much a supporter and worker in spite of now living in Cheshire. Perhaps one of the hardest workers and least recognised. Susan was responsible for my involvement in the organisation and has always been in the forefront with ideas and advice. Even after she moved down south, she continued to support events and act as our speaker when the need arose. She and her partner, Aaron, not only developed the website and wiki but were responsible for the designing and planning the Graveyard Survey & CD. She could be described as the backbone of the organisation because I feel sure without her and her encouragement; it's probable that the Loudoun Kirk project would never have been completed.

Drena Ferguson & Matt Kerr, our 'temporary' treasurers whose impeccable work kept us on the straight and narrow for about 10 years. Their dedication to producing timely and well organised accounts as well as their active support at events has to be praised. Sadly Drena died and Matt is now retired from the committee.

Johnny Alexander, dedicated to the project from the start, Johnny is still our chairman and on most occasions is our local historian. His knowledge of the people and the area has been appreciated by many visitors to the Kirk. Quietly working in the background, he is the ideal chairman who is most capable of pouring oil on troubled waters should the need arise.

Alan & Jan Strachan. For many years Alan & Jan, even though retired from the committee, were keen walkers who regularly visited the Kirkyard and cleared litter and debris left behind by the more unsavoury visitors. Sadly Alan died last year.

The members, all of the members, past and present have been a major part of the organisation and again without whom; the project would not have been completed. Not only with their support by their membership donations but just by being members. The amount of interest in the project was partly gauged by the number of members and was contributory in receiving funding from The Heritage Lottery Funds.

Donors, all the donations however large or small have not only provided the financial and practical support needed but have given us encouragement to carry on. Financial support has always been appreciated but those who donated their time, knowledge and energy are also much appreciated. Over the years there has been support for events such as the ghost walk which couldn't have taken place without the Glasgow Re-enactment Society, or the Mediaeval Fayres without the Axe Throwing, Spinning and various other shows/exhibitors etc.

Advisers, When a novice committee embarks on a major project, help in all areas is appreciated. Many hours were spent writing, e-mailing, phoning and meeting people and organisations who could give even the smallest morsel of advice and much was learned in the process.

Family Historians, We have a number of family history links within the Kirkyard and thanks to the website and wiki together with the Graveyard Survey and its resultant CD (which is still on sale), we have been able to link researchers for some of the families buried in the Kirkyard. The wiki is interactive and covers Loudoun and Galston parishes. It would also appear that some researchers have already made contact with other researchers through it.

The Public: With the exception of a contribution from the late Lady Barbara & her family to renew the gates at Loudoun Kirk, the funding has come from public monies through Historic Scotland, The Heritage Lottery Fund, SCORE, Awards for All to name but a few of the major contributors. Personal donations from the public have also made up a substantial contribution to the project and without public support as visitors to the Kirk and support for the events; the project would never have been completed.

Madeleine Purdie, The kirk was originally held in trust for Madeleine's son John and without transferring it to a newly formed Loudoun Kirk Preservation Trust, it would have been unlikely that repair work would have been carried out. Although still in control of the LKPT, she has worked with us to ensure the site was preserved and has encouraged her family to keep up the interest.

The Future: Each element has been made up like cogs on a wheel and to take any one of them out, the wheel could have ground to a halt. It is hoped that maintenance and care for the Kirk will continue so that all the years of public support will not be lost and the Kirk will be there for future generations to enjoy.

Those mentioned so far have been some of the founder members and although not there at the beginning, we could not omit:-

Alastair Hendry, is responsible for no less than changing our history. Without Alastair's meticulous research, we would still believe that Loudoun Kirk was about 250 years out of date. Proof has been provided that the Kirk was in existence at least around 1198 instead of the 1451 date which was first thought.

Gillian Hutcheson, our current treasurer. Her expertise as an accountant has rewarded us with a substantial amount of refunds from the Inland Revenue through the 'Gift Aid' scheme. She and her partner Keith have busy lives working and caring for a young family but in spite of that, she still finds time to support most of the planned events.

It's a very big thanks to *everyone* who played a part, however small, in making sure this lovely little historic building remains a place interest for the public to visit.

FINALLY

WE STILL NEED YOUR SUPPORT AND IF YOU HAVE AN

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO RENEW IT

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wiki : <http://loudounkirk.wetpaint.com/>

TWO ARTISTS

Two Kilmarnock born artists, with shared associations with LOUDOUN KIRK AND HELENSBURGH.



Ailsa Tanner

Granddaughter of Rev. Hamilton Moore of Newmilns and Eleanor Allan Moore, (one of the famous Glasgow Girls art movement). Ailsa was born 1923 in Kilmarnock and attended Kilmarnock Academy. She passed away in 2001 and her ashes are buried in Loudoun Kirkyard together with her grandparents and mother.

*The following is written by Donald Fullarton
Helensburgh Heritage Trust*

HELENSBURGH woman who earned a reputation as a fine art historian and painter, Ailsa Tanner, is particularly remembered for a book she described as ‘her life’s work’.

Her carefully researched catalogues for the centenary exhibition of the Glasgow Society of Lady Artists in 1982, followed by the West of Scotland Women Artists, remain essential sources of information.

Further investigation into the ‘Glasgow Girls’ then resulted in the beautifully illustrated and designed book on the artist Bessie MacNicol — a book which Ailsa published privately and launched in Helensburgh in 1998 under the title Bessie MacNicol, New Woman.

In a letter to me at the time she wrote: “I first became interested in the work of Bessie MacNicol when I was on the staff of Glasgow Art Gallery at Kelvingrove, and saw works by her, not hanging on the walls but tucked away in the stores.

“This was in 1954/5 when my mother was still alive. She is herself now recognised as a ‘Glasgow Girl’, and she reinforced my interest by remembering Bessie MacNicol’s work exhibited in Glasgow at the beginning of the century.

“In 1976 I was able to exhibit ten of her paintings in a loan exhibition ‘West of Scotland Women Artists’ along with the annual exhibition of the Helensburgh and District Art Club.

“I am proud to have been able to show so many of her paintings together for the first since her untimely death in 1904. In

1976 forgotten women artists were being rediscovered, and an important large exhibition was shown in Los Angeles.

“I have found many connections between Bessie MacNicol and Helensburgh. One of her closest women friends, Jenny Blackwood Brown, lived here, and in 1897 her future husband, Dr Alexander Frew, lived at Glendevon in William Street.

“His portrait was painted by her, probably in the cottage studio behind the house with its north facing window. She also painted his Helensburgh friends John Rennie and William Lamont.

“Her early death at the age of 34 robbed Scotland of a fine artist, recognised in her own day. She died in childbirth, and tragically two of her last paintings were titled ‘Motherhood’ and ‘Baby Crawford’.”

Ann Ailsa Louise Robertson was born in Kilmarnock in June 23 1923 but her family soon moved to Shanghai when her father, Dr Cecil Robertson, accepted a post in public health with the Shanghai Municipal Council.

Her mother and father both painted — indeed her mother was the distinguished artist Eleanor Allen Robertson (nee Moore) — but, because they lived abroad, their work initially was little known here. Ailsa, however, brought their work to light in 1997 at Milngavie’s Lillie Art Gallery, accompanied by a well-illustrated booklet ‘My Parents’.

All her research opened up neglected areas of Scottish painting, and she was generous with her knowledge and willing to share what she had learned with others.

Ailsa, for example, assisted Jude Burkhauser with the successful Glasgow Girls exhibition at Kelvingrove Art Galleries in Glasgow’s year as City of Culture in 1990, but did not accept credit. Her years of research on marine artists also helped A.S.Davidson complete his book ‘Marine Art and The Clyde’, which was published in 2001.

As well as arranging various exhibitions to run in conjunction with Helensburgh Art Club’s annual show, including ‘The Artist and the River Clyde’ in 1958 and ‘Helensburgh and the Glasgow School’ in 1972, she was also fundamental in establishing and running the Anderson Trust collection.

After returning from Shanghai, Ailsa went to school in Edinburgh, and when World War Two began she joined the Women’s Land Army, spending nearly three and a half years working on farms in the Tighnabruaich area. She enjoyed the country surroundings and became used to walking everywhere.

At the end of the war she was entitled to a war service gratuity and invested in a university course. Ailsa chose the strenuous double degree from Edinburgh, attending both Edinburgh School of Art and the university. She emerged five years later with an MA in Fine Art and a DA from the art school.

She obtained a post in the fine art department at Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, and it was here that she met Philip Tanner, the keeper of engineering at the time.

They married in 1956 and she left her post to live and work at their home in Helensburgh. She took great pleasure in the garden, which she designed herself, and was a passionate gardener.

The couple had three children — John, Bridget and Nora — and despite being a busy mum Ailsa continued to paint and carry out research. Family outings could be arranged to somewhere where she wanted to paint or where there was someone to be interviewed.

Her particular but not exclusive interest in landscape included rather derelict places and she could make pictures out of unlikely things. She was a member of the Glasgow Society of Women Artists and later was elected to honorary membership.

She was very much to the fore in art exhibitions and activities in the burgh, and was invited to open the Art Club's 50th anniversary show in 2001. Her own paintings were admired at these exhibitions and at shows in Glasgow, Paisley and elsewhere.

Ailsa enjoyed painting holidays with friends in Scotland and elsewhere. The painting classes she ran gave many people an introduction to painting or encouragement to persevere.

She also loved music, playing the piano and other instruments. She played the flute in Helensburgh Orchestral Society for many years, and was involved with various musical groups. Her other interests included architecture and learning Gaelic and Italian.

She was always recognisable, not least because she found a type of dress which exactly suited her, and she had a series made to the same pattern in interesting colours, always worn with an unusual pendant or brooch — she was known to her grandchildren as Grannie Pendant.

Always quiet and modest, Ailsa was clearly a

determined person and one who was much admired and liked. She died in the Jeanie Deans Unit at the town's Victoria Infirmary on November 19 2001.

- ~~€€€€€€€€~~This article draws heavily on an obituary written for the Helensburgh Advertiser by the distinguished Scottish artist Louise Annand. As a young artist in Glasgow in the late 1930s and early 40s she was a founder member of the New Art Club and the New Scottish Group. She was awarded an MBE in 1980 and in 1996 Glasgow University bestowed an Honorary Doctorate.

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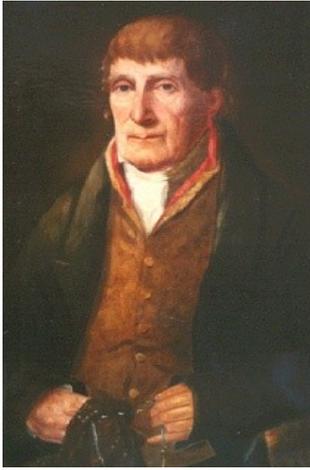
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1st generation

John Douglas (1759-1833)

Clockmaker, Galston

Painted by his grandson, James



3rd generation

Self Portrait of James

when he was 20 (1810-1888)



4th generation

Edwin James Douglas

1848-1914

Pictures printed by kind permission of Valerie Martin, <http://www.findonvillage.com/indeed.htm>

Edwin Douglas

The Douglas family was one of clockmakers, painters and photographers. Edwin Douglas was son to James, a portrait painter and picture restorer in Kilmarnock. Following in his father's footsteps, Edwin set up business as a portrait painter in Surrey. His uncle, John Douglas, owned a photographers business in Glasgow and Helensburgh and his great grandparents John Douglas, Clockmaker, Galston and Mary Nuton (*Newton*) are respectively buried in Galston Churchyard and Loudoun Kirk.

Many people, when they start researching family history, hope to not only learn a bit more about their roots but that they might uncover something of interest in their families. Simple names on a gravestone tell very little about the person or people, perhaps with their names and date of death there may be little else.

Near the Kirk there is a gravestone erected by John Douglas (clockmaker) to the memory of his wife Mary Nuton (*Newton*) It is thanks to Sally Douglas (3 x great granddaughter of John & Mary Douglas) for her family's story, her enquiry meant an exchange of information when we could learn a little bit more of the families associated with Douglas's.

John Douglas and Mary Newton came to Galston from Jedburgh around 1794, he was a master clockmaker. They had 5 children before Mary died in 1803, their eldest son, Gabriel, a clockmaker became owner & proprietor of the Portland Arms Inn, Troon. Their 2nd son, Walter moved Holytown, Bothwell, Lanarkshire also as a Master clockmaker & Jeweller

Gabriel's son James became a portrait painter and picture restorer in Kilmarnock and at an very early age he painted a portrait of his grandfather. He was a painter of some renown and his portrait of Lord Melville hung in the Royal Scottish Academy in addition he painted several pictures for the Duke of Buccleuch, Earl of Strathmore and Earl of Moray. His son Edwin also became a painter and the story of his life and work is told in great detail on the following website

<http://www.findonvillage.com/inded.htm>

Their families followed interesting careers including Artists, Snuff Box painter, Portrait painters, Genre painters and Picture restorers; plus Photographers (including portrait and carte-de-visite) and Innkeepers and Vintners in Scotland. A gt/grandson became a Minister of Religion in New York. One of the gt gt grandchildren became Chief of the Canberra, Australia Fire Brigade as well as a farmer & champion sportsman. Another became an air force pilot, Antarctic explorer and champion yachtsman.

After the death of his wife Mary, John married Agnes Allan in 1808 and had a further 6 children. He is recorded as living at Polwarth St, Galston. He died in 1833 and is buried in Galston churchyard.

Further information on the Douglas family can be found at:-

http://www.douglashistory.co.uk/history/Businesses/clock_and_watch_makers.htm

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