

Caledonian

Newcastle Family History Society Inc
The Scottish Special Interest Group Newsletter
No 3 **Candlemas 2024**

Failte!

Welcome to this Candlemas Newsletter!

A Scottish Emblem

The Scottish thistle is a resilient little weed that has always flourished throughout the land, but it was not until the 13th century that its place in history began.

A legend tells us that when the Norse king, Haakon, staged a surprise invasion near Largs on the west coast of Scotland, his Viking force planned to creep up on the sleeping Scottish clansmen and overcome them. To ensure their stealth, the intruders removed their footwear – that was their undoing!

Cries of shock and pain from one of the invaders who had stepped on a thistle woke the sleeping Scots. Grabbing their weapons they charged into battle and the rest, as they say, is history. The little thistle immediately became the clan's floral emblem. Just how much of this tale is true, we will probably never know, but we do know that by the 15th century, the Scottish thistle was being used as a national emblem.

The thistle has been described as having a 'defiant ability to flourish in spite of efforts to remove it' – a perfect emblem for the Scots, don't you think?



This edition was edited by Maree Shilling



With memories of Hogmanay and Burns night celebrations still with many of us, thoughts turn to the Scottish poet, Robert Burns, who penned the words for Auld Lang Syne. This song, traditionally sung to bid farewell to the old year at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve or Hogmanay, was written in 1788. Some of the lyrics were 'collected' rather than composed by the poet. Burns himself has said 'it is an old song of the olden times and which has never been in print, not even in manuscript until I took it down from an old man.'

But what kind of man was Robert Burns who became so beloved of the Scots?

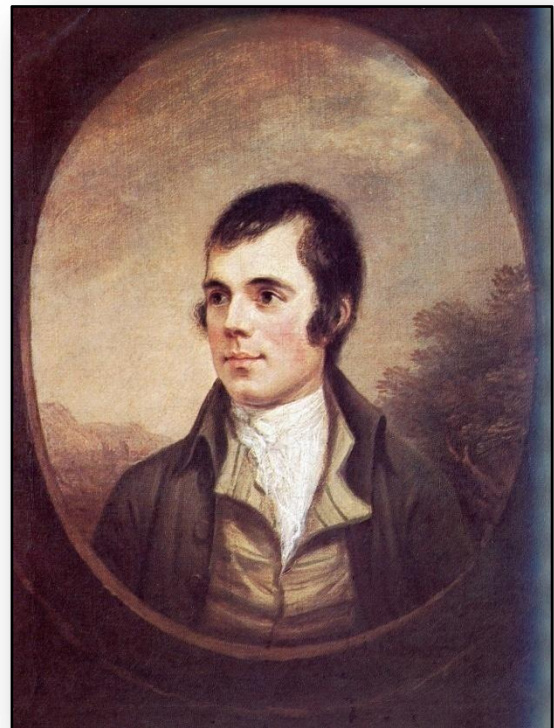
Robert Burns

Born the son of a farmer, Robert Burns entered this world on 25 January 1759 in a cottage built by his father in Alloway, Ayrshire. The building, which was basically one long room, provided accommodation for the family as well as some domestic animals and storage facilities. It still stands but today is now a museum dedicated to Burns.



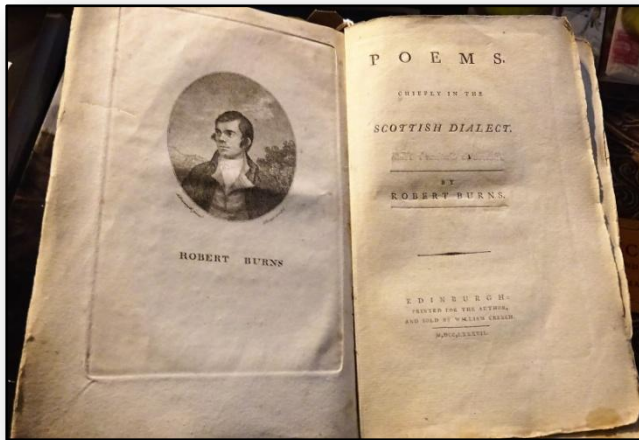
As a boy, Robert Burns received a basic education including a smattering of French and Latin. He was exposed to the works of English writers such as Shakespeare and Milton but he really enjoyed stories of the supernatural told to him by an old woman who sometimes worked on the farm. He witnessed the hard work of his farming father first on land at Mount Oliphant which he leased in 1766 and then on a farm at Lochlea in 1777. His father died in 1784, worn out and bankrupt. It was this experience that helped make Robert a rebel against the social order of the day and a bitter satirist.

After his father's death, Robert became a tenant on a farm at Mossgiel and his mother and siblings moved there to live with him. It was there that Robert enjoyed the company of a servant girl, Elizabeth Paton, who in 1785 bore his first child. This was just one of many encounters with the fair sex who obviously enjoyed his company as much as he did theirs. It was during the period of 1784-1785 that Robert developed his poetic ability turning to verse to express his love or friendship.



In 1786 Robert Burns met the woman who was to become the love of his life, Jean Armour. She soon became pregnant and Robert and Jean pledged themselves one to the other. However, Jean's father refused to allow her to marry in a church and she was persuaded by her father to go back on her promise to Robert. Hurt and enraged, he became involved with another woman, Mary Campbell, but she died soon after. On 3 September 1786, Jean Armour gave birth to twins out of wedlock.

Robert became disheartened with farm work and turned to the idea of publishing a volume of his poems to show his family and friends something he enjoyed doing. This he did in the small nearby town of Kilmarnock, publishing *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*'.



The Kilmarnock poems became an over-night success much to Burns' surprise and delight and in November 1786 he set out for Edinburgh to revel in his newly-found praise. Wine, women and song became his way of life for some months before he settled down on a farm in Dumfriesshire in the summer of 1788, the year of his marriage to his life's love, Jean Armour.

Although he was still a struggling tenant farmer, he corresponded with and sometimes visited a great variety of people who were very much 'above' him socially. He could hold his own in any company being a brilliant talker. One of the most important literary tasks he undertook during this time was really a labour of love as he did not receive any payment for the work. It was a collection of over 300 songs for the Scots Musical Museum and while Burns never claimed many of them as his own, experts say it is clear they must have been written substantially by him.

As well as songs such as *Green Grow the Rashes O*, his poems were often published in magazines and books, among them being *A Man's a Man For A' That*, *Address to a Haggis* and *To a Mouse*. It could be argued that one of Robert's greatest poems, and certainly his longest, was the tale of *Tam O' Shanter*. The 'hero' is Tam who is drinking at an inn while his angry wife waits at home for his return. On his drunken way home, riding his old horse Meg, he sees a coven of witches dancing wildly in the kirk at Alloway. Caught up in the fervour of their cavorting, Tam foolishly calls out his encouragement to the witches who, upon realising they had been seen, immediately give chase. As Tam and Meg reach the bridge over the River Doon, a witch grabs the horse by the tail and it comes away. The witches will not cross over water so Tam and his tail-less Meg reach home safely.



These scenes are two of the four engravings surrounding the statue of Robert Burns located in Ayr. They show the party at the Inn at the beginning of the tale and the narrow escape from the witches at the end.

The farm on the banks of the River Nith near Dumfries did not prosper and in 1791 Burns gave up the idea of earning a living from the land and became a full-time excise man. Although this work provided a steady income, it also allowed his hard drinking to recommence, something which had been his weakness for many years.

It was just a few years later on 21 July 1796 that Robert Burns died aged 37. He had contracted rheumatic fever having fallen asleep on the roadside in pouring rain and never recovered from that drunken episode. His funeral took place four days later, the day his son Maxwell was born. At first he was buried in a far corner of St Michael's churchyard in Dumfries with a simple freestone slab marking the place but as time went by, his friends and admirers decided something more fitting was required and set about organising the design of the mausoleum we see today. Robert Burns was laid to rest there in September 1817. He left a wife, Jean, and three children who were the only ones of their nine children to survive infancy. Seventeen years later, upon her death, Jean Burns née Armour was placed beside her husband in the mausoleum.



A vast number of Robert Burns' poems and songs will ensure he is never forgotten – many are as popular today as when they were written, and what would New Year's Eve be without *Auld Lang Syne*?



Robert Burns is memorialised around the world on at least 60 known memorials including statues, busts, fountains and buildings. Seen here is a statue of Robert Burns in Ballarat, Victoria; a bust of the poet on the wall of Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey and an Inn in the main street of Ayr dedicated to Burns and his famous poem, Tam O' Shanter. He will not be forgotten.



This n That

Born on 13th February 1728, John Hunter was a Scottish surgeon who had moved to London to study at St George's Hospital and developed such a flair for dissection that he is now considered the founder of scientific surgery. Does this explain the naming of our local major hospital?

Adoption was not recognised in the law of Scotland until 1930.



Dunnottar Castle near Aberdeen is now a ruined medieval fortress but in the 17th century it was the place where the Scottish crown jewels were hidden from Oliver Cromwell's invading army.

What's that Word?

- 1) What would your ancestor have done with a *pirm*?
a) Bore a hole; b) Wind thread onto a spool.
- 2) And what about a *coggie*?
a) Sail in it; b) Eat it.
- 3) If they were a *beadle* would they
a) Have been involved in pest control; b) Carried out duties in a church.

Answers can be found on this Newsletter's back page.

From a Scottish Album



Bridges in Scotland

Top to bottom:

1: Old Packhorse bridge at Carrbridge, gateway to the Cairngorms, built 1717

2: The second Tay rail bridge in Dundee, the first having been washed away 1879

3: The Firth of Forth rail bridge which connects Edinburgh with Fife

4: Sligachan bridge on Skye is now only used for foot traffic.



Salt – an Important Element of Life

Throughout history, salt has played an important role in many cultures where it was often used in rituals symbolising purity. It was used as part of Egyptian religious offerings and it was used as a method of trade and currency by the Phoenicians and other Mediterranean people. In some cultures, the mineral might be scattered around the entrance to a new home ensuring any evil influence might be kept at bay. Salt and history have been intertwined for millennia.

Salt has been the subject of many stories, fables, folktales and fairy tales and it is also mentioned in the Bible where Lot's wife is turned into a pillar of salt. Leonardo Da Vinci introduced salt in his painting of The Last Supper with Judas knocking over a salt container with his arm, seen by some as a portent of bad things to come.



In ancient Scotland, salt was added in the brewing of beer which would otherwise have been ruined by witches or evil spirits. In reality, the added salt prevented excessive fermentation in the brew and therefore avoided potential 'corruption'.

Beliefs and superstitions still abound today about salt. For instance, in 1933 the Dalai Lama was buried sitting up in a bed of salt while Sumo wrestlers entering the ring for a match still throw a handful of salt into the ring to ward off malevolent forces. Throwing a pinch of salt



over your shoulder to change bad luck into good is a common belief even today while offering bread and salt to visitors in many cultures is still seen as traditional etiquette. In Scotland, this is part of 'First Footing' when the first person to cross a threshold shortly after midnight on New Year's Day is welcomed, especially if they bring token gifts of bread, salt, a lump of coal and perhaps a wee dram of whisky!

Old Parish Registers

In Scotland, Statutory civil registration of births, deaths and marriages began in 1855. Before that year, you would need to search the Old Parish Registers (OPRs) if you are researching an early ancestor. Although approximately 3500 of these OPR volumes have survived, they are far from complete and indeed some parishes may have no OPRs at all. There are very few Free Church of Scotland or Catholic Church entries in the OPRs, most records are from the established church; the Church of Scotland. If you are lucky in finding that your ancestor's parish register is available, you can expect to find births and baptisms, proclamation of banns and marriages and deaths and burials up until 1855. But be aware there was no hard and fast rule about what should be entered into a parish register – it was up to each individual minister to record as much or as little information as he saw fit. Sometimes interesting additional information appears against an entry in a different hand, indicating a change of minister as in the example below.

PATRICK SPENCE workman, and Margaret Dickson his spouse, their son named JAMES was Born the Twentieth day of July and Baptised the — thereof. Witnesses: William Cass and Andrew Hay. Bap. Privately in their house by Mr R.B.

Written in the margin later in a different hand:

'This Marg. Dickson was executed in the Grassmercat of Edr., the 2d of September last for murdering her own child'.

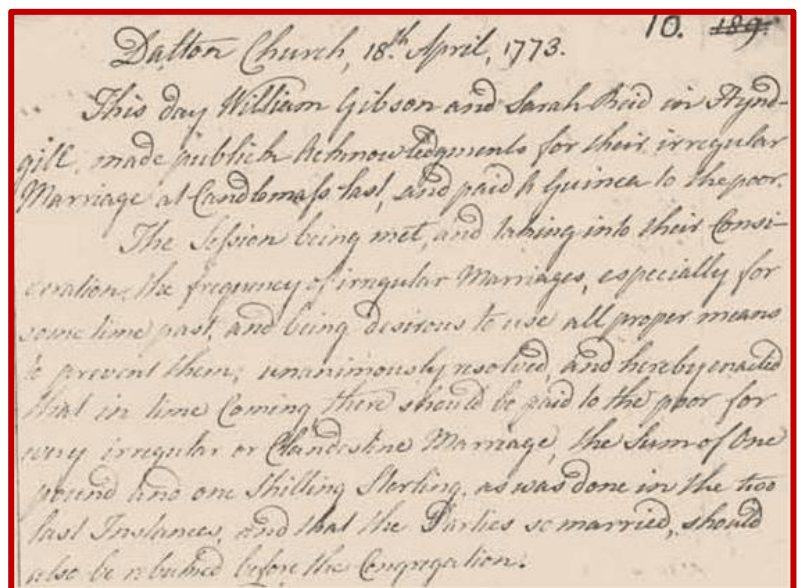
Transcription from OPR, Inveresk Parish, 20 July 1725.No 689/7, Fr 95

You can freely search indexes online at Scotland's People website, or some local Family History centres also have indexes available online.

Some irregular or clandestine marriage entries also appear in the OPRs. Following is a transcription of an OPR entry (spelling has been altered):

'This day William Gibson and Sarah Reid in Hynd-gill made public acknowledgments for their irregular Marriage at Candlemas last, and paid one guinea to the poor.

The Session being met, and taking into their consideration the frequency of irregular marriages, especially for some time past, and being desirous to use all proper means to prevent them, unanimously resolved and hereby enacted that in time coming, there should be paid to the poor for every irregular or clandestine marriage, the sum of one pound and one shilling sterling, as was done in the two last instances, and that the parties so married should also be rebuked before the congregation.'



Dalton Church, 18th April, 1773. 10. 1873

This day William Gibson and Sarah Reid in Hynd-gill, made public Acknowledgments for their irregular Marriage at Candlemas last, and paid 1^l Guinea to the poor.

The Session being met, and taking into their Consideration the frequency of irregular Marriages, especially for some time past, and being desirous to use all proper means to prevent them, unanimously resolved, and hereby enacted that in time coming there should be paid to the poor for every irregular or Clandestine Marriage, the Sum of one pound and one Shilling Sterling, as was done in the two last Instances, and that the Parties so married, should also be rebuked before the Congregation.

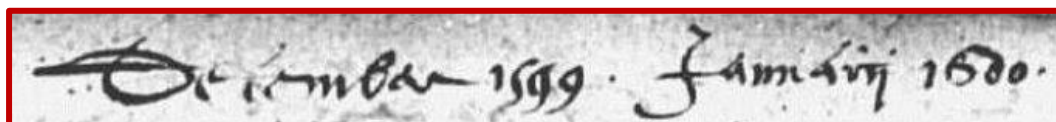
OPR for Dalton in Dumfriesshire, No 818/2

OPR death records can sometimes reveal interesting information which might have impacted the life style of your ancestor. The example below indicates a large number of deaths in the one month due to an outbreak of cholera. Also shown is where people were buried and in whose 'lair' or burial plot.

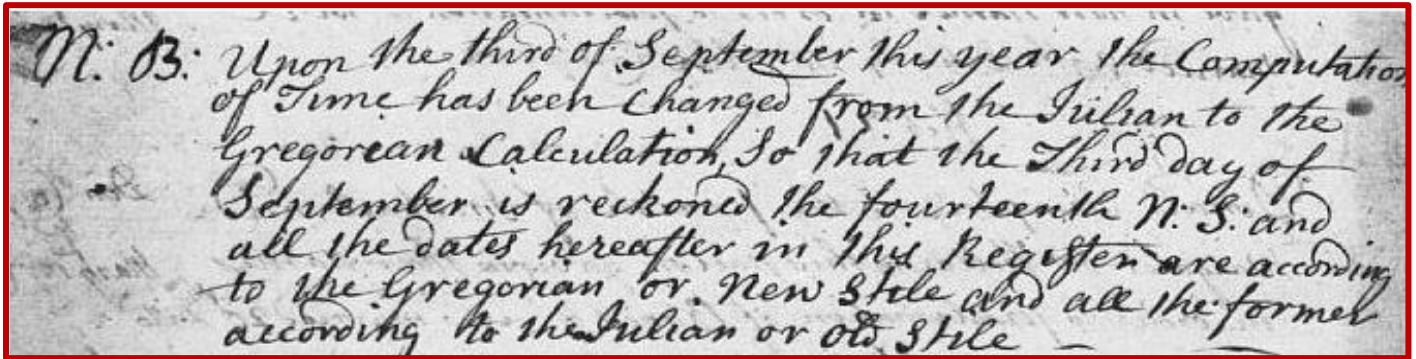
Date of Intermment		Male	Female	Name	Disease	Age	no	day	Where Interred
		5	1						
Oct ^r	4	1	"	Andrew Buchanan	Cholera	2	"	"	in William Buchanans lair
"	5	"	1	Isabella Stewart	"	19	"	"	William Watts "
"	6	"	1	Mariam Patterson	Decline	74	"	"	William Smiths " S.S.
"	"	"	1	Marg ^r Turnbull	Cholera	28	"	"	James Lymes " S.S.
"	"	"	1	William Smith	ditto	42	"	"	William Smiths " S.C.
"	"	"	1	Janet Burns	Mrs Neilson ditto	56	"	"	John Neilsons " S.S.
"	"	"	1	Marg ^r Wilson	Mrs Thomson ditto	66	"	"	Samuel Wilsons " N.S.
"	7	"	1	Mary Nicholson	Mrs Scott ditto	54	"	"	Baillies "
"	9	1	"	David Macnaught	ditto	55	"	"	William Pinkertons " S.S.
"	"	"	1	Helen Galbreath	Mrs Nichol ditto	48	"	"	George Scapiers " S.C.
"	11	1	"	Walter Macneair	Decline	50	"	"	College Servants "
"	12	"	1	Marion Anderson	Cholera	15	"	"	George Scotts "
"	"	"	1	William Anderson	Cholera	34	"	"	William Andersons " N.S.
"	13	1	"	Thomas Gemmell	Cholera	2	6	"	Baillies "
"	15	"	1	Isabella Peterson	Mrs Crawford Cholera	69	"	"	Adam Crawford's " N.C.
"	18	"	1	Cathren Sweet	Cholera	54	"	"	John Clerks " S.S.
"	"	"	1	Mary Keir	Mrs Eriar Cholera	67	"	"	Baillies "
"	19	1	"	David Brown	Decline	62	"	"	Mrs Ann McCallums " N.C.
"	"	"	1	Jean Wilson	Mrs Mastie Decline	70	"	"	George Monros " N.S.
"	20	"	1	Janet McDonald	Mrs Propbons	32	"	"	John Curries " N.S.
"	"	"	1	James Galloway	Jnr Cholera	34	"	"	James Galloways " S.C.
"	22	"	1	Jean Congleton	Domoid	21	"	"	Strangers " 2 of 17
"	23	1	"	Duncan Mackenzie	Decline	32	"	"	Peter Mackenzies " S.S.
"	24	"	1	Marg ^r Scott Burton	B. live	"	"	1	David Burtons "
		14	16						

OPR for Glasgow, October 1832, No 644-1/62

There were two significant events in Scottish history that we should be aware of because it affects dates written in the OPRs. The first was when James VI of Scotland proclaimed that the country should have 1 January as the first day of every year rather than 25 March. This was to come into being from the year 1600. In 1603 with the Union of Crowns, James also became James I of England but the English year remained with the first day of each year being 25 March until 1752. This changeover in some areas of the Scottish legal system created a problem, so 'double-dating' was introduced to avoid any misunderstandings. A page from an OPR for Edinburgh listing baptisms at the date of changeover is headed 'December 1599' and 'January 1600', thus covering both calendar dates.

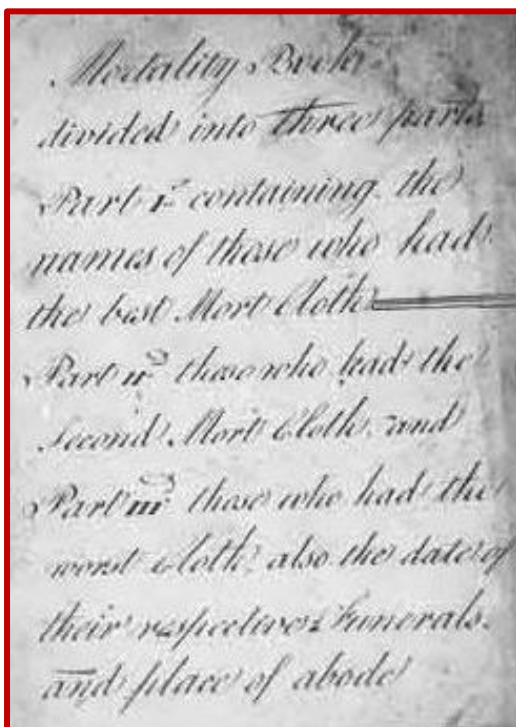


The second event affecting dates in OPRs happened in 1752 when Scotland along with England, Ireland and Wales formally adopted the Gregorian calendar, bringing them into line with European countries who had long ago replaced the old style Julian calendar with the new style Gregorian calendar. This required a correction of 11 days and Parliament decided that Wednesday 2 September should be followed by Thursday 14 September, so if your ancestor was born sometime between 3rd and 13th September 1752, I wonder just how their birth date was recorded?



N. B. Upon the thir of September this year the Computation of Time has been Changed from the Julian to the Gregorian Calculation, so that the Thir day of September is reckoned the fourteenth N. S. and all the dates hereafter in this Register are according to the Gregorian or New Style and all the former according to the Julian or Old Style

OPR for Inverary and Glenaray, No 513/2



Mortality Book
divided into three parts
Part 1 containing the
names of those who had
the best Mort Cloth
Part 2 those who had the
Second Mort Cloth and
Part 3 those who had the
worst Cloth also the date of
their respective funerals
and place of abode

Sometimes recorded in the case of death, will be an entry for the hire of a Mort Cloth (cover for a coffin during a funeral). Seen here is a surprising entry at the beginning of a parish Mortality Book showing there were three grades of Mort Cloth which would no doubt indicate there were three levels of hiring cost.

Transcription:

‘Mortality Book divided into three parts.

Part 1 containing the names of those who had the best Mort Cloth

Part 2 those who had the Second Mort Cloth and

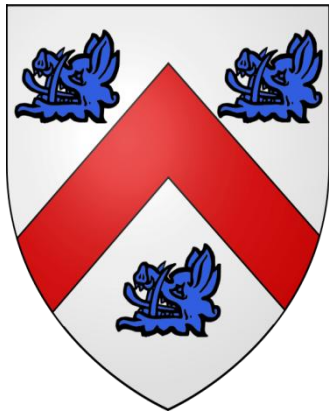
Part 3 those who had the worst Cloth,

also the date of their respective funerals and place of abode.’

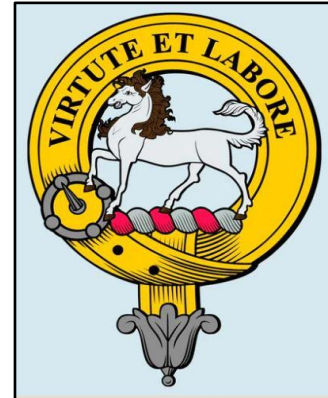
OPR for Shotts, North Lanarkshire, No 655/3



The National Records of Scotland, (NRS), is a non-ministerial department of the Scottish Government, which is responsible for such things as civil registration, the country’s census and family history records as well as being the national archive for historical records. They produce easy-to-follow guides and the examples used above were all sourced from the NRS holdings. Simply put ‘national records of Scotland’ into your computer’s search engine or enter www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/guides to find this worthwhile site.



Clan Motto:
Virtute et labore
(By valour and exertion)



It is thought by some that the ancestry of the family Cochrane began with a Viking warrior who decided to settle in Renfrewshire in the 9th century rather than return to his homeland after a raid. Turn the clock forward a generation or two and the story goes on to tell of a ferocious battle where one of the family was praised by his leader who said in his Gaelic tongue, 'coch ran' which for us translates as 'brave fellow'. We have no proof that this actually happened but the story certainly provides one explanation for the name. It is not until 1262 that evidence of the name appears on legal documents – in the first instance Cochrane was one of the names written on a transfer of land record.

In about 1350, Robert II of Scotland built a castle at Dundonald in Ayrshire to mark his ascension to the Scottish throne. That castle came into Cochrane hands around 1638 and it was from there that William Cochrane, 1st Earl of Dundonald took his title. The Cochrane line of Earls of Dundonald held the position of Chief of the clan right up until today with the Right Honorable Iain Alexander Douglas Blair Cochrane, 15th Earl of Dundonald carrying the clan's title. The Chief's shield (seen above) carries the heads of three boars. The clan adopted these animals as their heraldic beasts after an early Cochrane warrior killed three wild boars that had been terrorising the local countryside. The symbol represents the bravery and fighting ability of both man and beast.

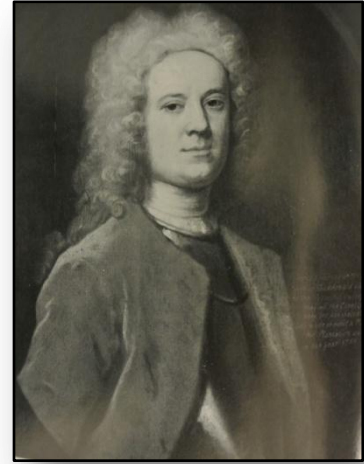


Today, members of the Cochrane clan are spread throughout Renfrewshire, Forfarshire, Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, Stirlingshire and Dundee city.

The Fighting Cochranes

Most of the Cochrane Earls were involved one way or another in battles during their lifetime; some just on their homelands while others were involved in warfare on the world stage. This involvement in military matters over the years gave the family the reputation of ‘the fighting Cochranes’.

The 8th Earl and clan Chief, Major Thomas Cochrane, was a nobleman, army officer and politician. He entered the army in 1713 and became a captain in the 27th Regiment of Foot in 1716. Two years later he rose to the rank of major and was Fort Manager at Fort St Philip on Minorca. He acceded to the title of Earl of Dundonald on the death of the 7th Earl, his cousin William Cochrane, an army officer who was killed at the Siege of Louisbourg, having left no issue. Thomas Cochrane married twice, his second wife, Jane Stuart, presenting him with a number of children and it is interesting to see where life took them, particularly his sons. The first son was Archibald, born 1748 who became an inventor and succeeded



Major Thomas Cochrane
(1691-1778)

his father in the earldom, the next son was Charles born 1749 who embarked on a career in the army, distinguishing himself during the American War of Independence but was killed shortly before the surrender. The third son was John, born 1750, followed by James Atholl in 1751 who entered the church and became vicar for Mansfield. The year 1753 saw the birth of Basil who made a fortune supplying the Royal Navy in India and Alexander Forrester Inglis, born 1758 entered the Royal Navy, rising in rank to be admiral of the white, an MP and a Knight Grand Cross of the Bath. These siblings certainly left their mark on history.



Admiral Thomas Cochrane
(1775-1860)

It was another Thomas Cochrane, the Major’s grandson, who became the 10th Earl of Dundonald and therefore, clan Chief following the death of his father, Archibald Cochrane. He was a naval flag officer of the Royal Navy and soon earned the reputation of being a daring and successful captain during the Napoleonic Wars; the French named him ‘Le Loup des Mers’ (The Sea Wolf). However, he was dismissed from the Navy in 1814 having been convicted of fraud on the Stock Exchange. This did not stop him from organising and leading the rebel navies of Chile, Brazil and Greece during their respective wars of independence through the 1820s. Pardoned by the Crown in 1832, he was reinstated in the Royal Navy with the rank of Rear Admiral of the Blue.

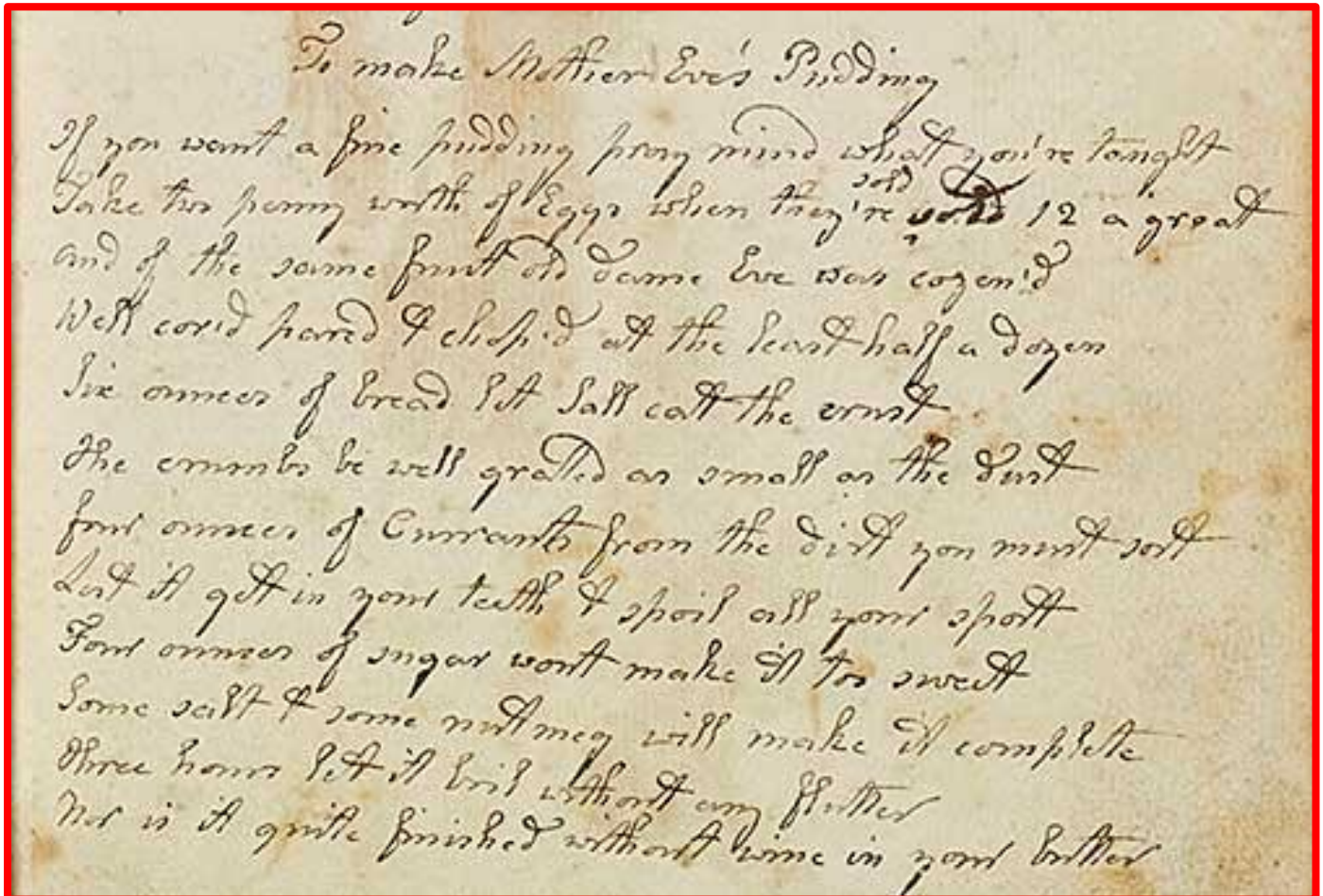
Several more promotions followed before his death in 1860. He was succeeded by his son, Thomas Barnes Cochrane, a captain in the British Army.

The life and times of these men have inspired writers such as C.S. Forester and Patrick O’Brian who have given us the fictional characters of Horatio Hornblower and Jack Aubrey as a glimpse into early naval life.



Mother Eve's Pudding

Among the treasures held by the National Library of Scotland is this Scottish recipe, possibly named for the biblical Eve. The way of writing and some of the words used can be problems for modern readers and although a translation has been attempted, there are some words that defeated us. Perhaps dear reader, your ability to decipher will fill in the spaces so we can all enjoy reading about this pudding.



To Make Mother Eve's Pudding

If you want a fine pudding pray mind what you're taught
Take two penny worth of Eggs when they're sold 12 a groat
And of the same fruit old dame Eve _____ cozen'd
Well cored, parred & chop'd at the least half a dozen
Six ounces of bread _____ cut the crust
The crumbs be well gratted as small as the dust
Four ounces of Currants from the dirt you must sort
Lest it gets in your teeth & spoil all your **sport**
Four ounces of sugar won't make it too sweet
Some salt and some nutmeg will make it complete
Three hours let it boil without _____
Nor is it _____ finished without wine in your _____

The first meeting for 2024 was held in the Society's rooms on Tuesday 13 February and with two of the attendees about to embark on Scottish holidays with their respective families, a friendly meeting offered suggestions of must-see places to visit, ways of searching out family information and general tips for a productive trip. We wish them Bon Voyage and look forward to hearing of their experiences in the wonderful land of the Scots.



What's that Word?

Answers to page 6 Questions

*A *pirn* is a spool.

*If you tried to eat a *coggie*, you'd better have steel teeth – it's a small boat.

*As for having a *beadle* amongst your ancestors, they'd be involved in duties associated with a church. Hopefully this didn't involve pest control, but you never know!

Your next issue of the **Caledonian** is already taking shape with some very interesting articles.

For instance: What was designed in Dundee turning that city into a place of discovery?

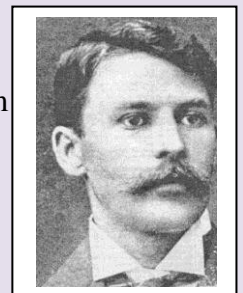
Ever wished you could live in a castle? Here are some suggestions.

Do you know of any invention designed by a Scot?

The number of examples may surprise you.

Who is this debonair young man? Is he a movie star, a character from a romance novel or some intrepid explorer?

These and other interesting questions will be answered in the Whitsunday issue of your next Scottish newsletter due out on 28 May 2024.



A thought to ponder:

Whit's fur ye'll no go past ye! (Whatever is meant to happen to you, will happen.)

