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Edited by **D. M'NAUGHT**, Kilmaurs.



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## P R E F A C E.

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WE have again to congratulate the Federation on the continued success of the *Chronicle*, as evidenced by the sale of the whole of last issue, and the very flattering reception it met with from the press.

New arrangements have been made in the publishing department, and the editorial staff has been strengthened, with a view to the future extension of the serial and the increase of its value as a Burns Repository.

The appeal made to the Clubs this year has produced most satisfactory results, almost the whole of the first imprint having been subscribed for before the date of issue. We are well aware of the difficulties the Club officials have to contend with in bringing business matters before constituencies, the majority of which meet but once a year; but we trust that the success of their efforts this year may convince them that these difficulties can be surmounted.

We again thank our contributors for their kindly assistance, and beg to assure them that, but for them, the *Chronicle* could not have achieved the prosperous position it now occupies.

D. M'NAUGHT.

SCHOOLHOUSE,  
KILMAURS, 1st January, 1896.

## MORE MAUCLINE TOPOGRAPHY.

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ROBERT BURNS, with his brother Gilbert, entered into the occupancy of the farm of Mossgiel at Martinmas, 1783, which continued till the month of June, 1788, when the Poet entered on the lease of Ellisland. Mauchline and her people bulk largely in the early career of the Poet. Yet how little does he himself tell of his acquaintances there, or of the places he frequented! Poet he was—an intense admirer of Nature—but unfortunately for the student of his life and works he was no historian or archæologist as these terms are generally understood.

My purpose then will be, as one who has all his days lived in the quiet, pleasantly situated town of peculiar fame, and whose privilege it has been to know many of her people and to hear many of their tales, to try and throw some light on some points which may be of interest to many who are seeking towards a better knowledge of our Scottish Bard, his associates, and surroundings in the Mossgiel district. But let me premise that the task is no easy one, for even with respect to the most outstanding places and people there is a lack of reliable information. How much more difficulty, then, must there be with places of which we have only the slightest indication in the Poet's writings? Take, for example, Mossgiel, which might fittingly be called the "other shrine." Readers of Burns all know, or at least ought to know, that the house of Mossgiel (or Mossgavil as it was anciently called) was a very superior residence for its time, having been specially appointed by Gavin Hamilton as a summer house for himself and family; and that the present house is not only greatly altered, but, with the exception of one particular, is altogether different from what it was in the Poet's day. Yet how many know what Mossgiel was like then, or what have been the nature of the alterations since Burns's time, and when such alterations were made.

Among the illustrations will be found two views of Mossgiel. On the authority of Mr. John Wallace, factor to Major General Sir Claud Alexander, Bart., of Ballochmyle, I am enabled to state that, previous to 1858, the steading had undergone no change for a great many years, so far as he could trace.



*Mossgiel. —No. 1.*

The first is that of Mossgiel prior to 1870. In 1858 the farm steading was remodelled, the walls of dwelling house being heightened about four feet, the windows about one foot, and the roof covered as formerly with straw.

The reader will notice, in the foreground of the picture, the stones and lime laid down towards the next alteration, which took place in the year 1870, when the walls of the dwelling house were further raised and the roof slated as it now stands. The building at the west-end of the dwelling house was added in 1883, and is used as a cheesehouse.

The hedge in front of the house is said to have been planted by Burns and his brother Gilbert, and from its appearance, this is very probable.

I will now proceed to deal with Mauchline and her people in Burns's time, begging the reader to recollect that absolute correctness is nearly impossible, and earnestly hoping that what I may submit will stimulate further research, so that, as far as possible, we may hand down to posterity all that remains of Burns-Mauchline lore as it has been left to us at the end of one hundred years.

Of all the persons and places connected with Burns and Mauchline, the first place must be given to Gavin Hamilton and "the Castle." It was here, in the business chamber of his



*Mossiel.*—No. 2.

friend, it is said, that the Poet was married to Jean Armour; some asserting the ceremony was performed by Gavin himself, others that John Farquhar was the presiding J.P.; and it was in this same room Burns wrote "The Calf." The latter statement we may receive without question, but not so the former, but of this more anon.

The residential portion of the Castle has undergone little alteration within the memory of Mauchline's oldest inhabitants—the only difference being the addition to the west, which was erected as a nursery for the family of Gavin's son, the Bailie. It would be of interest to know to what family Gavin Hamilton belonged—if he was, as the Poet says,

"Surnamed like his Grace,  
Perhaps related to the race."

From Cunningham we learn that he was descended from the Hamiltons of Kype in Lanarkshire; and from Chambers we get the following incident:—

"It is related of the Laird of Kype, that he was once paying a visit to the Duke of Hamilton, when his Grace inquired in what degree he was

related to the ducal house, and whereabouts in the family tree the race of Kype was to be found. 'It would be needless to seek the root among the branches,' answered the haughty Laird, who, perhaps, had some pretensions to be of the principal stock of the Hamiltons, or knew, at least, that the claims of the ducal house to the chieftainship were by no means clear."

And from an edition of the Poetical Works of Robert Burns, published by William Paterson, Edinburgh, we learn that Gavin's grandfather was at one time curate of Kirkoswald, and that his father was also a writer in Mauchline, inhabiting the old castellated mansion known as the Castle. Whether he had any brothers I have been unable to learn, but he had a sister, or, more correctly, a half-sister, Charlotte, who was born at the farm of Braehead, in the parish of Mauchline, at that time the residence of Peggie Chalmers, her cousin, whose mother is said to have been sister of Gavin's stepmother.

It was at Harviestone Burns first met Charlotte Hamilton, and it was in her honour he wrote "*The Banks of the Devon.*" She was married to Dr. Adair, who accompanied Burns on that tour, and who ultimately settled in practice at Harrogate, where his wife died. Gavin died on the 8th day of February, 1805, leaving three sons, so far as I can make out,—Alexander, who was known as the Bailie, and who resided in the Castle, and whose widow (second wife) died there about 14 years ago; John, who was sometime factor to the Earl of Loudon: and Dugald, called after Professor Dugald Stewart, who became village doctor, and resided in Beechgrove, where he died on 28th May, 1863, leaving two daughters, Mary and Nora. Nora became the wife of Major Adair, who was the grandson of Charlotte Hamilton. With their removal to the south, the connection of the Hamilton family with Mauchline ceased to exist. That the Poet's friend and patron was a man of superior parts, endowed with the perceptive power of recognising genius, that he possessed a fair share of the world's gear, and held an honoured name (unmonumented though his memory be) there is no doubting. That he proved himself to be one of the Poet's best friends and gave him much valuable assistance towards the publication of the first edition, is clearly apparent; but beyond that, and what has already been said, not forgetting his connection with Daddy Auld, we know next to nothing.

Returning to the question of where Burns was married, and by whom, let me say, that the latter cannot be deter-

mined, for the reason that the marriage certificate was destroyed. But the former is deserving of some little examination, in view of what has been said by some recent writers. The common belief is that Burns was married to Jean Armour in Gavin Hamilton's chambers, and on the principle that what everybody says must be true, the assertion merits sifting. On looking into the question, I can find no foundation whatever for the belief. On the contrary, I am inclined to believe, in the light of other data, that Burns's marriage was not celebrated in Gavin Hamilton's chambers, much less by Gavin Hamilton; and one of my reasons is that such an action would have been very impolitic on Gavin Hamilton's part (who was by no means a man to be afraid of any consequences depending), which reason can easily be understood by those who know anything of the position in which he stood in relation to the Holy Willie section of the Mauchline Kirk-Session at that period. Further, Miss Caldwell, a lady now dead, but who, for many years, lived in the house opposite Nance Tannock's, used to say that Mrs. Alexander, John Richmond's daughter, with whom she was personally acquainted from childhood, often told her that Burns and Jean Armour were married in John Ronald's, who, it will be remembered, was the carrier between Glasgow and Mauchline. There was a man of that name who kept a public-house in Loudoun Street, on the site now occupied by Thomas Learmont's house and baker's shop. But I have been unable to get any corroboration of Miss Caldwell's statement. All the same, it is a very probable one, coming, as it does, almost at first hand, from the tongue of the daughter of him who must have known more of the private life of the Poet than any of his contemporaries.

But there is another statement on record which demands careful consideration. It is made by Mr. Gunnyon, and is as follows :—

“Further along the same street or lane as that in which Nance Tannock's stands, and in the direction of the Churchyard, stood a public-house, which has been demolished and the site included within the Churchyard walls. At that time the Churchyard was imperfectly enclosed, if enclosed at all. It was in this hostelry that Burns was married by a Justice of the Peace. . . . There used to be a thoroughfare between the Churchyard and the Priory, the residence of Gavin Hamilton, now occupied by an addition to that mansion, by which one could, in a step or two, pop

out of the Priory into the public-house before-mentioned, or into the Church. By this way, Burns went and came when he wrote the famous notes of the sermon preached by "The Calf." And by this way stepped Gavin Hamilton when he acted as a witness to Burns's irregular marriage by the J.P., the Laird of Gilmilnscroft."

From the accompanying photograph the reader will readily perceive the situation of this public-house, of which Gunnyon speaks. The house on the immediate left is a continuation of Nance Tannock's. The wall immediately beyond, and in a straight line with house in the picture, is the present Churchyard wall. It was near the end of this wall, just at the point where the little carriage house in the picture stands, that the front wall of the public-house mentioned formerly stood. That there were houses, at least two, most likely more, extending along this line, and into the present Churchyard about sixteen or seventeen feet, is apparent to the most casual observer. Not only do the stones of which the present wall is built show that they were previously used for window and door purposes, but the railing of the Armour's burying place shows undoubted signs of having been supported by the walls of one of these houses. But more, old Sandy Marshall, a local Burns enthusiast, well known to visitors, tells me that he remembers these houses, and particularly the one at the end of the street and nearest the Castle. This was the public-house kept, within Sandy's memory, by one Hugh Morton, and the whole top flat of this house was used as a hall for dancing and singing purposes; and old Sandy further informs me that he is positive that it was in this hall, on the Mauchline Race night, Burns first met his Bonnie Jean, his dog being the mutual friend, as the story goes. The entrance to this hall was by an outside stair at the end of the house nearest the Castle, and immediately contiguous to the window of Gavin Hamilton's chambers, which could easily be reached, as Gunnyon says, by a thoroughfare between the Churchyard and the Priory, but which would be obliterated by the addition to that mansion. This thoroughfare, however, seems to me to raise a difficulty. The tombstones adjoining the Castle mark the burying place of the ancient family of the Campbells of Auchmannoch, and it is highly improbable that there would be a thoroughfare over their graves. Yet the memorials may be there, not marking the place where the bodies of that family were laid, but only in

memory of, as is the case with Daddy Auld's tombstone, which has been removed from where his remains were interred, his body having been buried in ground which is presently occupied by the Parish Church, erected about the year 1829. Be this as it may, I think that such a thoroughfare is unnecessary, for on a close examination of the wall (the wall nearest the churchyard) of Gavin Hamilton's house, I find traces of something answering to the description of a doorway. The lintel is quite apparent, and the stones with which the opening has been



*Mauchline Castle.*

built up show that they are of a later date than the lintel rybats, and scuntions of the doorway. This doorway is at the east end of the residential portion of the Castle, and entered into the chambers of the Poet's patron, and gave direct means of reaching (by the pop out and in of Gunnyon) both Hugh Morton's and the Church, for it is only a few paces from either place. Every evidence, then, supports the statement made by Gunnyon, that it was in Hugh Morton's Burns was married. To identify the precise locality of Burns's marriage may appear to outsiders a somewhat trivial question, but every Burns student will appreciate the necessity of being as minute as possible in everything relating to Burns, for the purpose of accumulating rebutting evidence to the many falsehoods and misrepresentations which have been set afloat regarding almost every incident of his life.

The place most likely next to engage the attention of the visitor to Mauchline is 'The Jolly Beggars' Howff, better known by the name of Poosie Nansie's Hostelry, and this not because Burns was a frequent visitor there, but because it was within its walls that the Poet found the source of the inspiration which has rendered "The Jolly Beggars" immortal. The house, in its general lines, has not undergone any alteration since I remember,



*Poosie Nansie's.*

but there must have been changes in its internal arrangements since Burns's time—the extent and nature of which cannot now be determined. It is generally held, however, that the apartment where the

“Gangrel bodies held their splore,  
And drank their orra duddies,”

still preserves much of its original form. In Burns's time it was simply a travellers' rest, or common lodging house, and therefore cannot possibly answer to the many fancy sketches that have been scribbled about it, as the place where

“The pint stoup clattered,”

and where

“ The commentators  
 Thick an’ thrang, and loud an’ lang,  
 Wi’ logic and wi’ Scripture,  
 They raise a din, that, in the end,  
 Is like to breed a rupture  
 O’ wrath that day.”

In Burns’s day, it was kept by George Gibson and his wife, Agnes Ronald, possibly a sister of the John Ronald previously mentioned. Their daughter was the “Racer Jess” who figures in “The Holy Fair.” There are no lineal descendants of the family as far as I can learn presently residing in the neighbourhood. Poesie Nansie’s stands at the end of the Cowgate, nearest the churchyard, the gable of the house being separated, only by a narrow road and at that time narrower than now, from where John Dow’s public-house stood, where

“ Burns cam weary frae the pleugh  
 Tae hae a crack wi Johnny Doo,  
 At nicht’s at e’en.”

Jean’s father’s house was immediately behind John Dow’s, and separated from it by a very narrow road branching to the right. The old house where James Armour lived has been long demolished, a new two storey house, with shop underneath, having been erected in its place. James Armour seems to have been a man of importance in his day. A mason by trade, it is said he contracted for and built that residence of the Marquis of Bute, situate near Old Cumnock, called Dumfries House, though known in the district by the name of Loch Norris. I have been unable to learn anything of the family from which he sprung, but it is only of late, with the removal of the late Dr. Thomas Armour and family from the farm of Stairaird, that the Armour connection with Mauchline has been severed. Mrs. Arnott, their sister, who lives in Glasgow, is the only one of that family left.

But a curious discovery has been lately made with respect to Jean’s mother. In the Armour’s burying place there is an old stone, which goes to show that her name was Smith, and that her brothers, like her husband, were masons by trade. It will be remembered that, when Jean was sent to Paisley, she resided there with a relation of the name of Andrew Purdie, a wright.

The inscription on the stone explains itself. It is as follows :

“This stone was erected by John and Adam Smith, masons, to the memory of their father, Daniel Smith, who died at Mauchline, 29th July, 1756, also of Mary Rouchis, his spouse, who died in the year       , also the corpses of four of Adam Smith’s children, viz., John, John, Thomas, and Euphane Smith, and six of his grandchildren, Robert Armour and Mary Armour, Jean Purdie, Andrew Purdie, Alexander Purdie, and Jean Purdie.”

It is evident from this inscription that Jean Armour’s grandfather’s name was Smith, and it is a question of local interest whether she was of the same family as have made themselves famous in connection with the fancy woodwork in the district ; for Andrew Smith, the grandfather of the present William Smith, was famed for his chiselling powers, as is evident from his lettering on Daddy Auld’s memorial stone. The fact of the burying places of the two families being alongside each other is at least significant.

Let us now direct our attention to Nance Tannock’s, where Burns declared he would drink the Premier’s health

“Nine times a week.”

Leaving Poosie Nansie’s, the road leads towards the left to the Cross ; and then straight in front, to the north-west, is what is called the New Road. In the opening, between James Lambie’s shop and George Calderwood’s shop, stood the business premises of James Smith, “the sleest pawkie thief” of Burns. Often have I heard my lately departed friend, Sandy Train, a collateral relation of Joseph Train, the supplier of notes to the great Sir Walter Scott, declare to tourists, that it was from that particular spot, pointing to it, where a press once was situated, that Smith brought forth the dram for Burns on more than one occasion. It was here Smith had his shop, and what is stated is not impossible. But turning to the left, Nance Tannock’s is reached ; and almost over against it, the house where Burns is reputed to have “taken up hoose” with Jean, as the Scotch expression goes. Nance Tannock’s is pretty much as it was in the time of Burns, the only exception being that the windows of the ground flat have been widened for business purposes. It was here that the Poet often dandled his bairn, and recited some of his finest productions. Nance Tannock seems, from all accounts, to have been a respectable

person, working and watching, as every widow woman ought to do, for her living. To bring her into "ken" I submit the following which I have heard from the best authority. After her death (the death date I have not been able to determine, but she appears to have been alive in 1820, for the house had



*Nance Tannock's.*

at that time the license, according to Hew Ainslie) her son, Robert Weir, a sawyer by trade, continued to occupy the same apartments. He had a son, "Jock" (illegitimate) by Kirsty Wilson, who again had a son to James Smith, "sleest James" as the Poet calls him, who was called by the name of William, and who died about 33 years ago. He served as a boy with Gilbert Burns at Mossgiel, and in his latter days was the village postman, and many stories are told of his pawkiness in that capacity, but space will not permit. One fact may be of interest to those who know old Sandy Marshall, to whom I have previously made reference. Sandy, when a boy, kept bullfinches, and when away on errands of weaving, either at Newmilns or Darvel, William Smith used to take care of the birds, teaching them to whistle as he had previously taught old Sandy to read and write.



*Plan of Mauchline (with references.)*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>A New Road.<br/>           B Cross.<br/>           C Earl Grey Street.<br/>           A and B were opened up about 80 years ago. Previous to that time the road for conveyances between Kilmarnock and the South was by the dotted line and the streets F and E.<br/>           D The Bellman's Vennel.<br/>           E The Cowgate.<br/>           F Loudoun Street.<br/>           G Back Holm, opened about 60 years ago, in place of old way, which passed No. 14, and lay as near as can be determined on line dotted.<br/>           H Tanyard.<br/>           J Rope Factory Yard. There used to be a Quarry at bottom of same.<br/>           K Bleaching Green.<br/>           L Burgher Well—an old institution in Mauchline. There used to be an opening in Wall, by which road P was reached.<br/>           M Knowe.<br/>           N Highway in Burns' time from Mauchline to Muirkirk.</p> | <p>O Present approach to Netherplace.<br/>           P Old Road from Kilmarnock to Mauchline, passing close to what in Burns' time was front door of Netherplace.<br/>           1 Parish Church.<br/>           2 Castle.<br/>           3 Hugh Morton's Public House and Ball-room.<br/>           4 Nance Tannock's.<br/>           5 House where Burns "took up house" with Jean.<br/>           6 Dr. Dougald Hamilton's Drug Shop.<br/>           7 Brownlea House.<br/>           8 Johnny Doo's.<br/>           9 House where Jean lived.<br/>           10 Poosie Nansie's.<br/>           11 Beech Grove, the residence of Dr. Hamilton, Gavin's son.<br/>           12 Site of old Manse, where Daddy Auld lived.<br/>           13 House between which and house on other side of A James Smith lived.<br/>           14 Site of Elbow Tavern.<br/>           15 Netherplace.<br/>           16 "The Place" in Burns' time. Mary Morrison's mother lived here.</p> |
|---|--|

We will next proceed to the house which Burns took for Jean in their second dilemma. The reader will see from the plan of Mauchline (specially sketched for this article by my friend, Mr. Charles Heberer, artist, a native of St. Louis, America, who has, for these last few months, been studying Burns for art purposes) in what position the house exactly stands. At present the house has two apartments, kitchen and room. I am informed that the Poet only rented the kitchen. It is in its original form, but nothing else remains of interest. This house Burns rented for Jean in the month of February, 1788, and it was in this house she gave birth to the second twins, on the 3rd of March, previous to the month of August, when, according to the Kirk Session records, she and the Poet were publicly rebuked and possibly re-married (but there is no proof of the fact) according to the ecclesiastical law. This statement may surprise many who hold that these twins were born at Willie's Mill, where Burns had procured an asylum for Jean with his friend, William Muir; but from a poem by Alexander Tait, in a collection of poems and songs printed and sold by the author only, of date 1790, I quote the following lines, which point in the same direction:—

“ Mackenzie he does her deliver  
In Mauchline ‘Toun.’ ”

Mackenzie was then a doctor in the village, and is identified with the “Common Sense” of the Holy Fair, and the correspondence of the Poet.

Proceeding along the Back Causeway and across Grey's Brig, which spans the River Chalk, which was running in Burns's time, a large house of two storeys is seen on the right, and it was here, I have been informed, that the widow of “Clinkum Bell” (the grandfather of the late Hugh Gibb) lived and died. Right opposite was the residence of Clinkum's successor, Jasper Henderson, who is mentioned by Hew Ainslie. In close proximity is the Knowe, a place associated with James Humphrey, the “blethering b——.” It was here this worthy, who died as late as 1844, contradicted the Burgher preacher in connection with a verse of Scripture he had quoted. An old pump (wooden) used to stand in the centre of this open space, but it has long since disappeared. James Humphrey's burial place is alongside of the Armour's burying place, of which a

photograph is given, showing in the immediate distance, through the railings, the window of the house Burns rented for Jean.



*The Armour's Burying- Place*

The little stone in the foreground is that from which I copied the inscription bearing on the family of Jean Armour's mother.

James Humphrey's remains lie just alongside the base on the left of the picture.

There are only other two places remaining worthy of remark, viz., the Elbow Tavern and the Bleaching Green. Their relative positions can be seen from the plan, of which I have made previous mention. With regard to the Elbow Tavern, I have little to say. The fact of its existence in Burns's day was well known in Mauchline, but no report of anything connecting the Poet with it was current here, up to the recent unearthing of Joseph Train's gossiping communication on the subject to Sir Walter Scott. It is sufficient to



*Elbow Tavern.*

say that no serious argument, in my opinion, can be founded on such an unstable and flimsy premise as the one indicated. That such a place existed cannot be denied, and its situation in relation to Castle and Church can be seen from the accompanying photograph.

The tavern stood where the ruined wall is seen in the picture. As for the Bleaching Green, the story that Burns had here his first conversation with his future wife is well known, and needs no rehearsing. It occupied a part of the extent of ground lying between Netherplace House, or Cockleshaw, as it used to be called, and the Castle and Churchyard. It was contiguous to Netherplace, and bounded on the west by the

then main road between Kilmarnock and Dumfries, and on the east by what was, in later days, a rope factory and tanning yard.

I may be allowed to say, by way of conclusion, that I will be glad to answer any Burnsiana query addressed to me in elucidation of this article, or explain, *in propria persona*, the topography of the Mauchline district to any enthusiastic visitor.

JOHN TAYLOR GIBB.

