

## MAUCLINE MILLENNIUM PROJECT:

Speech made by Stroma Hamilton-Campbell – 24<sup>th</sup> June 2000

It is a great pleasure to be here to-day for Mauchline's Millennium celebration and Gala day. Many of you here will be fairly new to the village and you may not know very much of it's history. The name for instance, means in Ancient Gaelic: Plain with the Pool or Meadow of the Springs. It was once famous for its box ware and curling stones and latterly its coal mine but most of all for Robert Burns.

You may also have noticed some or all of the gates which used to be the entrances to the grounds of Netherplace House which stood there for 350 odd years. Netherplace had 4 drives, each with a lodge at the entrance, which we named by their positions, the Loudoun drive being just here. There were also Ayr, Kilmarnock and Mauchline. Campbells had lived on this land since the 16th century. Before Netherplace was built it is said that there was a house called High Cowfieldshaw in the field now belonging to Bogwood, between the railway line and the drive which we called the Ayr drive. There was a round of trees, now cut down, where the house is said to have been, but sadly no records exist.

We are Loudoun Campbells, cadets of the Campbells of Argyll, and in 1577 the then Earl of Loudoun granted the land known as Tenshilling side, to Hew Campbell of Cowfieldshaw, who built Netherplace, completed in 1620. As a child, I heard of a legend that says there was a tunnel running from Netherplace to Mauchline Castle and thence to Loudoun Castle - rather an impossibly long way I would have thought. I remember exploring the cellar in the expectation of finding the entrance, which I never did of course.

The first Campbells to live in the house were Covenanters and the flag which now hangs in the Kirk was found in the house during renovations in the early 1900s. The house was also extended at the end of the 19th century.

The main road from Glasgow to Dumfries used to run past the front of the house and along the Back Causeway, leading from Loudoun Street Toll Bar to Kilmarnock Road and Burns used this route into Mauchline from Mossgiel. He was often to be seen, book in hand walking past the house or down one of the quiet drives. Rabbie would water his horse at St. Michael's Well. The well was also used by the cattle drovers and the mess created upset the Campbell family, resulting in a gate being placed across the drive at Loudoun Street and it is believed that this is when the Spout was installed. A toll of one farthing was charged for each drover using the Spout until the cost had been recovered.

This was a time when Burns is said to have been at his most prolific. There was a falling out between the Campbell family and Rabbie who wrote 3 rude epigrams which were withdrawn after the first edition - one was entitled "epigram to a henpecked squirrel".

15 of the 18 Campbells of Netherplace were christened Mungo, the last being my father. One particular Mungo found by the Earl of Eglinton on his land and accused of poaching, shot him dead.

"Accident", said Mungo, who had tripped and fallen, discharging his shotgun.

"Murder" said the Earl's retainers, and he was subsequently found guilty and hanged in Edinburgh in 1770.

In 1845 the name Hamilton was joined to Campbell when William Campbell of NP died without issue leaving the house and estate to his cousin Charles Vereker Hamilton of Cairn hill, now Carnell

on condition that he took the family name. Charles was the second son of John Ferrier Hamilton of Cairnhill. William Campbell had two sisters, and one, Liliass set up a Trust with a bequest of £800, quite a lot in the 1840s - to be used for the poor of the Parish. £300 for the care of the old men and £500 for the old women.

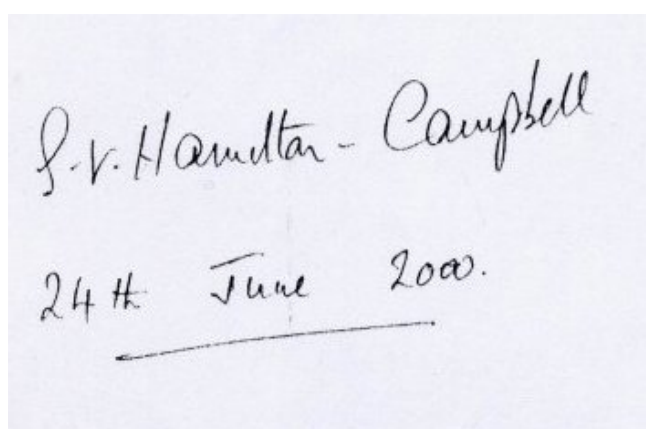
Charles, now Hamilton-Campbell was my great grandfather. He fought in the Silk Wars with the 12th Frontier force. His wife is the last member of the family to have been buried in the churchyard.

My grandfather, William, fought in the Boer War where he caught the T.B. that eventually killed him. He married an Angus from Ladykirk and they had 3 surviving children, my father and his 2 sisters. He died when my father was 5 years old. My father Mungo, who some of you will remember, fought with the Ayrshire Yeomanry in the Second World War taking over command in 1944, the 4th generation of his family to do so. He married my mother Every Finlayson, in 1937. She, now Every RoosmaleCocq, is here today and is a member of the Loudoun Spout Committee which has done such a wonderful job.

It was after the sudden death of my father in 1953 aged just 41, that the upkeep of the estate came to be too much and we had to sell up and leave. The estate was sold to Sir Claude Alexander and in due course was acquired by Mactaggart and Mickel, in whose houses many of you will be living and who have been most generous towards this project. They have provided generous funding and the use of equipment and manpower to search for the source before new pipes could be laid, which they also undertook. Much of the old pipe is now inaccessible being under houses or gardens and it took a year of detective work to trace it back and to find the old well, buried under the Mauchline Community Centre Car Park!

And to think it all started because Captain Anderson made a chance remark on leaving the Loudoun Arms one evening about the near demise of the Spout and took up Jim Davidson's challenge to do something about it!

This is a short history of Netherplace on whose land the artesian well known as St. Michael's Well springs, and feeds the Loudoun Spout. It is believed to be one of the oldest wells in the country and has been used by many generations of Mauchline people and will hopefully be used by many more, and is of course the focus of this Millennium Celebration.



J. V. Hamilton - Campbell  
24th June 2000.