



Shadows of the Past

Ayr's Myths, Legends and History

As part of Once Upon a Time in South Ayrshire, Shadows of the Past... Ayr's Myths, Legends and History is a self-led journey where you will encounter life-sized character silhouettes and experience Ayr and Alloway like never before!



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Once Upon a Time in
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Shadows of the Past: Trail Locations

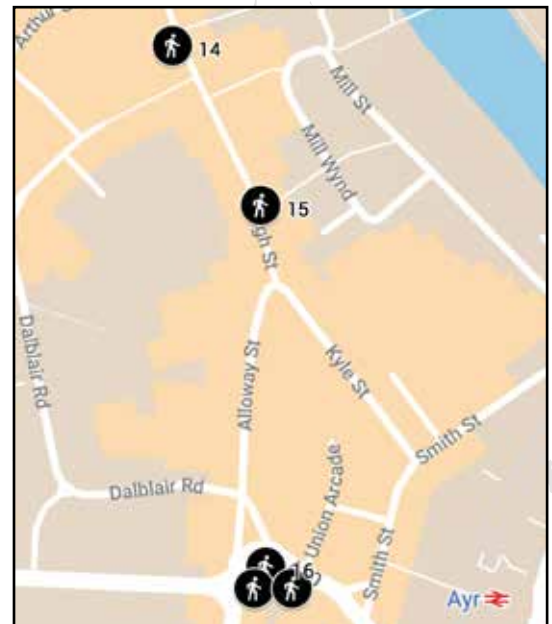
If you are viewing this booklet online, you can select a trail location title from the numbered index below to go directly to the illustrated story. If you would like to listen to the story, scan the information boards at each trail location or visit our website: destinationsouthayrshire.co.uk/shadows-of-the-past

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AYR National

Issue 7797



THE QUEEN NEEDS AN AYR

Mary Queen of Scots visits the West Coast

By Kirsty McConnell

5th August 1565

The Royal Burgh of Ayr has seen salacious crowds, all hoping to catch a glimpse of the beautiful, young, and most fashionable twenty-year-old Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, as she partakes on her Royal progression through the West of Scotland, following her recent return from France.

Previous to the Queen's arrival in Ayr, Her Royal Personage and her entourage have spent a great deal of time touring the country, of which it is said the Queen is a big fan - meeting her subjects up close and personal. If the rumors are true, it is highly suspected that our Queen is looking for her next King, after the tragic death of her first husband Francis II, King of France.

Crossing the Clyde from Dunoon to the Ayrshire coast on the 31st July, staying the night at Lord Semphill's Southannan Castle. A height of luxury castle, complete with straight to moat loos and stunning loch views, near Fairlie. Closely followed by her visit to Hugh Montgomerie, 3rd Earl of Eglinton at the Earl's castle. Where it looks like the pair had a cosy dinner for two.... and the lords and gentlemen of the district accompanied the Queen.

Having continued on their tour, passing through the Town of Irvine and following the coast to Ayr. The Provost, and Magistrates of the Royal Burgh of Ayr greeted the Queen and her entourage as they passed over the Auld Brig and entered the town, before the Queen was welcomed by Sir Matthew Campbell of Loudoun, Ayr's golden boy and Sheriff. We can't help but wonder how our lowly Loudoun Hall compares to the castles and palaces the Queen is used to. When told of the history of the building, the Queen learned of its original owner, a well-known trader with France, the queen exclaimed:

*" J'ai essayé le poisson salé de cette
région pendant que j'étais en
France. J'ai trouvé cela tout à fait agréable "*

Which, to those of us who do not speak French translate to "I tried the salted fish from the region while I was in France. I found it quite pleasant!" High praise indeed from her Majesty. After a quick visit to St John's tower, lighting a candle as a solid display of faith, it was time for our Lady to depart. We at the Ayr National wish her safe passage on her journey to Edinburgh....and luck with her quest to find a suitable Nobleman to sire our Country's future King.

God Speed Lady Mary!



Loudoun Hall

LOUDOUN HALL WAS BUILT AROUND 1513 AND IS THOUGHT TO BE THE OLDEST HOUSE IN AYR. AFTER ITS RENOVATION IN 1948 BY ROBERT HURD, IT BECAME A POPULAR VENUE FOR CLUBS TO HOST EVENTS. ONE SUCH CLUB WAS THE AYR FOLK CLUB WHO HOSTED AN ARRAY OF FOLK BANDS AND MUSICIANS. AT THIS TIME THE AYR FOLK SCENE WAS BRIMMING WITH TALENT SUCH AS TANNANZIE, SPEEDY AND IAN, PETE AND HEATHER HEYWOOD, DOUGIE BELL, PETE AND PEGGY SEEGER AND BILLY CONNOLLY (WHO AT THE TIME WAS KNOWN AS A MEMBER OF THE HUMBLEBUMS) TO NAME A FEW.

IN 1976, CONNOLLY PERFORMED HIS PARODY 'IF IT WISNAE FUR YER WELJIES' OR 'THE WELLY BOOT SONG' ON STV TO THE TUNE OF THE CLANCY BROTHERS 'WORK OF THE WEAVERS'. INSPIRED BY THE AYR FOLK CLUB'S HISTORY AT LOUDOUN HALL AND ONE OF SCOTLAND'S BEST COMEDIANS, WE DECIDED TO ADD OUR OWN LYRICS TO 'THE WORK OF THE WEAVERS'.

CAN YOU MATCH THE WORDS TO THE TUNE? GO ON! HAVE A GO AT SINGING ALONG!
PERHAPS YOU'LL WANT TO TRY WRITING YOUR OWN LYRICS TOO.

Loudoun Hall

*Loudoun Hall has been here since the 16th century
They think it may have been built in 1513
Built with rubble and slate, it's as high as three stories
500 years it's stood tall, Loudoun Hall*

*Back then there wasn't a toilet, people shouted 'Gardy Loo'
Into the Boat Vennel, their waste is what they threw
Be careful not to get any on your head, you better move
I'm glad they've got a loo inside Loudoun Hall now*

*There's merchants and there's sheriffs who lived at Loudoun Hall
The dwelling of James Tait and then Sir Hugh Campbell
There was even folk music played here an' all
Folky folk came to listen at Loudoun Hall*

*It was known to host the members of The Ayr Folk Club
There were banjos and fiddles and even some drums
Back then Billy Connolly played in The Humblebums
Everyone and their mum danced at Loudoun Hall*

*Now the Ayr Phoenix Folk Club is on Academy St.
Risen from the ashes to nurture the folk community
But people still remember the 60s/70s scene
When they played for love and peace at Loudoun Hall*

*Loudoun Hall has been here since the 16th century
They think it may have been built in 1513
Built with rubble and slate, it's as high as three stories
For many more years it'll stand, Loudoun Hall*

STORY BY ANNALIESE ROSE BROUGHTON
ILLUSTRATED BY JAZZ BUCHANAN



The Burning

by Neil Boyle



Reverend William Adair was an outstanding and devout man, a Covenanter who believed in the word of God so much, that he gallantly fought in the battle of Mauchline Muir.

Adair felt it was a horrendous endeavour to slaughter fellow Scots on the battlefield but what was at stake was a set of ideals. It was God's work he did. One of Adair's comrades told of how he had heard Adair citing scripture aloud as he plunged his sword into his enemies and was seen saying prayers as he executed dying soldiers in the battlefield. When he swung his sword on the battlefield of Mauchline Muir and then Dunbar, Adair swung with faith - knowing that the Kirk party and those opposed to the engagement would lose. Once the Covenanter movement took control (for a time) in Scotland in the mid 1600's, Reverend Adair turned his attention to a new enemy of the church: The Witch.

At the time of his arrival in Ayr in 1656 Adair was already a decorated war veteran and a respected Reverend - honoured to look upon the newly built Auld Kirk as its first Minister - spreading the word of God as a representative of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

The very day that Adair arrived in Ayr there was a public hanging of a Witch. A middle-aged woman who was stood on the gallows only to fall and hang in front of him. Adair found the screaming congregation of people more repulsive than the hanging woman. Something about this death haunted him. From that moment on Adair had to drink double at night as he could sometimes hear the woman's neck breaking and the jeering crowd. It made him ponder on his past actions as he sat alone at night, comforting himself that no man is without their demons. And he did right by his God and his Church.

When he came to be judged he would be welcomed into the Lord's Kingdom.

Adair enjoyed an evening stroll along the sands of Ayr's shore. He would ponder many things as gazed onto the horizon. One evening he was strolling down the beach when he spotted a girl sitting on her own. Adair approached her and pleasantly greeted her:

“Hello”.

“Good evening,” said the bonnie girl. She was maybe fifteen years old with bright eyes and gave off an air of intelligence with their alert stare.

“It’s unusual to see a young woman down here alone, may I sit?”

“Please do. I come here to admire the view. Look you can see Ireland.”

Adair smiled as he observed Arran before them. “And how do you know this?”

“I plan to sail there one day.”

“My goodness you are a bright one. I think God is looking down on you and smiling.”

“God isn’t looking down on me sir. He let my mother hang and then burn, and my father succumb to the plague. If there is a God, then he is as sick as the plague he unleashed on this world.”

Adair was almost speechless. He had never heard anyone speak like that in his life.

“God works in mysterious ways my dear. We must have faith in his plans,” he declared.

“Can I ask you something?” Adair nodded, transfixed, not knowing what this young girl will say next.

“How can anyone believe that it’s right to kill an innocent woman, with a family, in the name of a God that you cannot even prove to be real? She cared for sick children with herbs. She was kind and good. There are no witches. Only women with knowledge of the land and how to use it. Her executioners are the true evil.”

There was a deadly silence as Adair stared at the girl who calmly admired the view. Adair stood up and moved away from the girl. She has been sent to test me! “How dare you question God. If you question God, then you must worship the devil like your mother before you!” Adair stormed off leaving the girl planted in the sand watching the sun set. At peace with her words.

On a sticky summer’s day, amidst a congregation of supposed civilised people shouting and spitting. The hangman arrived and walked up the stairs, his feet banging on the oak gallows. He laid his hands on the wooden lever. The girls’ hands were tied together, and she looked up and admired clouds one last time and then down to the crowd. Here she saw Reverend Adair staring back at her.

The hangman yanked the lever to the crowds glee and the girl dropped to her death at the end of a rope.

Illustrated by Lori Isabella McColl

Covenanters

Covenanters were members of a 17th Century Scottish religious and political movement, who supported a Presbyterian Church of Scotland. For 25 years, the Covenanters suffered brutal persecution and were cruelly suppressed. The Ayr Martyrs, hung in 1666, are buried in the Kirkyard of Ayr’s Auld Kirk.

To Edward

I have left this letter in our secret spot we had as children. I didn't know where else to find you. I know you will not find it since you cannot be seen in Ayr again, but I wrote it anyway. I had to tell you. I need to get this off my chest as I am so angry at you. I cannot begin to tell you how mad I am at you. I must tell you how selfish you and your actions have been. As your sister, I am allowed to hate you so vehemently and speak so honestly. To get yourself banished, banished Edward! You were drummed out of the town, with the whole town watching. Mother hasn't stopped crying and Father has been having hushed conversations with members of the council, all of which he has walked away from with his head hung low, wringing his hands and sending cursed words out into the world!

I hope you are happy now. You know how seriously William Neisbit has taken his role of 'keeper of the Town. How much he is trying to keep the plague from entering Ayr. And you go and do something so stupid as to talk to the Bleyth sisters from Irvine. A town known by all to be absolutely ravished by the Black Death. I hope your 5 minutes of fanciful flirtation was worth you and your family's utter ruination! Did you know they batted their eyelashes and whispered sweet nothings into the Guards ear to even be allowed past the gate?! The guard was later sent marching over the bridge too. Those girls deserve to be branded and scourged for their actions. A pity be upon them! I have been told if they try to return, they will be hanged. Hanged! As could you if you come back to Ayr.

Provost Richard Bannatyne has fallen victim, as well as some other members of the council. There have been more wooden luges erected at the Foul Mure beyond Carrick Street where they have been hospitalising the confirmed infected away from everyone else. They call them hospitals but they're just huts for people to die in.

There was a knock on the door last night. We were visibly forced out of the house and the Clengers came in and set the house on fire. We have no home anymore. They were worried in case you were infected and had brought it into the home. We are lucky we weren't thrown into the luges with the rest of them. We are being housed in the school room, and if we're still okay in 10 days we can be released. But released where?! We have no home! Neisbit gave father some money as compensation, with a great to-do about how the cast to the town would be horrific. I felt like spitting in his face!

You're my brother and I should always love you, but your selfishness has ripped this family apart. One day you will reckon with Our Lord, and I hope he finds forgiveness easier than I can.

I do hope this letter finds you.
The now only child of the Naismiths,
Margret.



The Ashes of Witches

The river is still, a mirror reflecting the sky.
Not a ripple, not a quiver, not a wave.
The air has a taint of burning, but you would need to be
told,

That it was the flesh of the women cried witches.

A grudge, a disagreement, a fear of the unknown.

A pointed finger and a whisper behind hands.

Herbs and remedies and healing.

No sentence or judge, only the verdict of guilty.

An audience, who jeer as the pyre is built higher.

The accused on the stand, they light the fire.

The ashes, the bones, and teeth.

All swept together.

Gather the cinders, leave nothing behind.

Don't stop. Don't breathe. Don't think.

They'll come back alive as soon as you blink.

But everyone knows, they can not cross the water.

So pour the remains into the river.

With grey swirls on the surface and clouds of smoke in
the air.

Disrupting the calm, but calm they will be.

As the women are sent out to the sea.



The Legend of the Lowe Sisters

LONG AGO IN AYR, THERE LIVED TWO MAIDEN SISTERS, ISOBEL AND MARGARET LOWE. BOTH SISTERS WERE BEAUTIFUL, SO BEAUTIFUL THAT IT WAS A MYSTERY TO ALL WHO KNEW THEM AS TO WHY THEY HAD NEVER TAKEN HUSBANDS, DESPITE THE MANY, MANY SUITORS AND PROPOSALS TO THEIR FATHER OVER THE YEARS.

THE WEALTH AND REPUTATION OF THE LOWE FAMILY HAD SEEN PROPOSITIONS OF MARRIAGE FOR THE SISTERS FROM SUCH A YOUNG AGE, THAT UPON THEIR 6TH BIRTHDAY THE SISTERS MADE A PACT; THEY WOULD NEVER MARRY UNLESS THEY WERE TRULY IN LOVE.

MANY YEARS PASSED BUT THE SISTERS HAD KEPT THEIR PROMISE. THEIR PARENTS HAD LONG SINCE DIED, AND THE LOWE FORTUNE WAS LEFT WITH THE SISTERS, BUT THE MAIDENS REMAINED UNMARRIED.

THAT WAS UNTIL ISOBEL FELL IN LOVE, AND SOON SHE WAS BETROTHED TO BE MARRIED TO A SOLDIER WHO WAS FIGHTING FOR THE KING. HE HAD BEEN GONE FOR FIVE YEARS, FIGHTING AGAINST THE ENGLISH BUT VOWED TO RETURN TO HER TO BE WED.

ON THE WINTER EVENING ISOBEL'S SOLDIER WAS TO RETURN FROM WAR THE SILENCE OF NIGHT WAS BROKEN ONLY BY THE ROAR OF THE RIVER AND THE HOWL OF THE WIND, AS LIGHTNING LIT THE EMPTY BLACK SKY, AND THE HEAVENS OPENED.

THE PALE MOONLIGHT SILHOUETTED THE ARC OF THE SOLITARY WOODEN BRIDGE CONNECTING EITHER BANK OF THE RIVER AYR, WHICH THIS NIGHT WAS DANGEROUSLY ROCKING TO AND FRO, BATTERED FROM THE WIND AND THE LASHING OF THE RAIN. MANY A STORM THIS BRIDGE HAD CONQUERED, BUT THIS NIGHT WOULD SEE ITS LAST.

THE SOLDIERS ARRIVED ON SHORE, AND WEARILY DEPARTED THEIR SHIP, GRATEFUL TO BE ON LAND ONCE MORE. ISOBEL'S LOVE, DESPERATE TO FIND SHELTER FROM THE STORM, MADE HIS WAY TO THE TOWN UNTIL HE REACHED THE FOOT OF THE BRIDGE. APPREHENSIVELY, HE TOOK HIS FIRST STEP.

THE CREAKING OF THE BOARDS BENEATH HIS STEPS LEFT HIM ANXIOUS, BUT COURAGEOUSLY HE CONTINUED FORWARD, HEAD BENT LOW AGAINST THE ELEMENTS THAT BATTERED HIM ON ALL SIDES.

ISOBEL, EXPECTING HIM THIS NIGHT, HAD BEEN SAT BY THE WINDOW STARING OUT TOWARD THE RIVER SINCE DAWN, DESPERATE FOR ANY SIGN OF THE MAN SHE LOVED. HER HEART SWELLED AS SHE SAW HIS FIGURE ON THE BRIDGE, SILHOUETTED BY A FLASH OF LIGHTING, MAKING HIS WAY HOME TO HER.

SUDDENLY, ALL RELIEF VANISHED AS ANOTHER STRIP OF LIGHTNING RIPPED FORTH FROM THE DARK CLOUDS, STRIKING THE BRIDGE WITH AN ALMIGHTY CRACK, LOUD ENOUGH TO WAKE THE DEAD.

IN HORROR ISOBEL WATCHED AS THE BRIDGE BEGAN TO CRUMBLE AND SPLIT.

ISOBEL RACED OUTSIDE TOWARDS THE RIVER, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE.

THE BRIDGE HAD GONE, AND ISOBEL'S SOLDIER PLUNGED INTO THE TORRID RAPIDS BELOW. ISOBEL REACHED THE RIVERBANKS IN TIME TO SEE HER SOLDIER, CASPING AND THRASHING AGAINST THE CURRENT BEFORE IT DRAGGED HIM UNDER FOR A FINAL TIME.

AND SO, WITH THIS, BOTH SISTERS KEPT THEIR CHILDHOOD PROMISE.

NEVER TO MARRY UNLESS FOR LOVE.

IT IS SAID THAT THIS NIGHT ISOBEL'S HEART TURNED AS COLD AS THE WATER THAT STOLE HER SOLDIER FROM HER AND SHE NEVER LOVED AGAIN.

THE SISTERS, WISHING NO ONE TO FEEL THE SAME HEARTBREAK, GAVE THE MONEY TO THE TOWN TO BUILD A NEW BRIDGE. ONE MADE OF STONE AND MADE TO WITHSTAND THE CRUEL STORMS OF WINTER. IN TRIBUTE TO THE SISTERS' GENEROSITY, THEIR LIKENESS WAS CARVED ON EITHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE.

MANY SAY YOU CAN STILL HEAR ISOBEL'S SOBS WHEN NIGHT FALLS, ALONG WITH THE SOOTHING SOUNDS OF MARGARET TRYING TO COMFORT HER SISTER.



STORY BY KIRSTY MCCONNELL

ILLUSTRATED BY JAZZ BUCHANAN

99p

17th

Century LIFE

ALL THE
HOT GOSS!

NEXT WEEK:

17TH CENTURY BEAUTY
MAKE YOUR FACE
ROUNDER & STRAIGHTER
NOSE IN 6 EASY STEPS!

MEET ^{women}

'THE REAL WITCHES OF AYR'

**WATCH OUT
MAGGIE'S
ABOUT!**

UNBIASED REPORTING
WE THINK IT'S ONLY FAIR
THE WITCHES OF AYR
HAVE THEIR SAY!

WHAT THE DEVIL!

BY ANNALIESE ROSE BROUGHTON

LOCAL WOMAN ERECTS HOUSE WITH UNHOLY CREATURE

LIKE US, YOU'VE PROBABLY SEEN PEOPLE BUILD INCREDIBLE HOUSES WITH THE HELP OF A TEAM OF EXPERTS BUT HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF SOMEONE TAKING ARCHITECTURAL TIPS FROM THE DEVIL? THEY SAY THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAIL, BUT THIS SOUNDS TOO SCARY TO BE TRUE!

ONE OF OUR TRUSTED SOURCES HERE AT 17TH CENTURY LIFE TOLD US THEY SPOTTED LOCAL WOMAN MAGGIE OSBORNE (56) ERECT HER HOUSE WITH THE HELP OF A "RED MAN WHO HAD HORNS ON THE TOP OF HIS HEAD". NOW WE AREN'T EXPERTS, BUT HALLOWEEN WAS A FEW MONTHS AGO. THIS IS NO MAN OUT GUISING BUT A DEVIL IN DISGUISE - AND NOT A VERY GOOD ONE BY THE SOUNDS OF IT.

BUT "WHO MAKES DEALS WITH THE DEVIL?" YOU MAY ASK, WELL, THE ONLY ANSWER IS: A WITCH.

**YOU READ IT HERE FIRST -
LOCAL WOMAN MAGGIE
OSBORNE IS A WITCH**

WHAT MAKES A WITCH?
98 PERCENT OF YOU SAY
A WITCH IS A
WOMAN WHO:
- IS IMMORAL
- BLASPHEMES
- HANGS HER WASHING

"I'VE BEEN EXCLUDED
FROM THE FELLOWSHIP
OF THE CHURCH UNTIL
THEY PROVE MY
INNOCENCE."
ELIZABETH WALLACE

**"I CONFESSED AFTER
BEING TORTURED"**

**'THERE'S NO
SMOKE
WITHOUT FIRE'**

"MY NEIGHBOUR BRUSHES
OUR CLOSE WITH A
BROOM MADE OF A STICK
AND HEATHER. IS MY
NEIGHBOUR MAGGIE
OSBORNE?"
CONCERNED NEIGHBOUR,
36, AYR HIGH STREET

**YOUR THOUGHTS
WE ASKED OUR
ALL-IMPORTANT
READERS WHAT WE
SHOULD DO ABOUT
THOSE PESKY
WITCHES!**

"MY CROPS HAVEN'T BEEN
THE SAME SINCE THAT OLD
WOMAN MOVED INTO THE
COTTAGE AT THE BOTTOM
OF MY FIELD."
FARMER, 42, A NEARBY FARM

**"LAST THURSDAY I WENT
SHOPPING AND SAW A WOMAN
BUYING CAT FOOD. I THINK IT
COULD'VE BEEN MAGGIE."
CAMMY, 27, DALMILLING**

next week:

**MINISTER LIFE
WE FIND OUT WHAT
IT FEELS LIKE TO
HAVE A STATUE
ERECTED OF
YOURSELF!**
DESIGN BY ALEX GUNN

**WE SENT OUT A LOCAL REPORTER TO ASK YOU A
BURNING QUESTION...
HAVE YOU SEEN 'MYSTERIOUS MAGGIE'?**

Muckle Nanny

Written & Illustrated by Hali Campbell

The "Wicked Toun o' Ayr".

None thanked Burns so kindly for damning the capital of his native county to immortal fame. My mither never forgave him the slight, not even in her twilight years, well after the bard's bonny turn o' phrase brought worldwide celebrity to our crooked wee corner of the globe.

*Oh Robertson
that tongue was mean.
But aye, you, and
for aye,
Oh, they're no' auld
times o' Ayr.
For, there they'll think
you a' dowie!*

As a lad and wicked denizen of the old toun myself, I took considerable pride in Ayr's infamy. These days I am well past my prime, but sitting by the fire, chewing on the stem of my pipe while the wind blows fierce outside, I find myself reminiscing on those early years of the present century. In those days, the town of Ayr had a very different character from which it now possesses. It occurs to me that while my own face has grown, quite unfairly, craggy, lined, and toothless with the years, Ayr has only grown fairer - clipped and primed for the coming twentieth century.

I preferred the auld toun when she hadn't quite shaken off her ancient features. I can still recall, with alarming alacrity, the tight knot of fear coiling in my stomach when chance would have my gaze fall upon the dungeon clock of the auld tolbooth. The lidless eye, which crowned the gallows and oversaw many a doomed man to hang, haunted no small number of my nights as a bairn.

But of all Ayr's wicked terrors, there were none more fearsome than Muckle Nanny.

With age and wisdom, I look upon her with great affection now, but as a lad - and one, I'm not ashamed to admit, so cowardly and prone to flights of fancy as I was - the mere sight of her was enough to freeze the marrow in my bones.

In those days, the auld toun consisted of one street, that which we now call High Street, and between this and Isle Lane stood the auld Market Cross. It was here round which the fish wives with their creels of fresh catch would congregate with cries of "Caller haddie!"



My mither

often quipped that the notoriety of the fish wives was not unlike that enjoyed by the ladies of London's gossiping Society Papers, for while the fishermen of the burgh were renowned as brave, hardy men, their wives were even more so.

Quarrels were a regular feature of the market. A great deal of my youth was spent watching

with morbid delight as arguments quickly dissolved into gutter fights. Such scuffles were almost always settled by the fishermen's better halves, for police held little authority among them.

Muckle Nanny cut a fearsome figure; broad in every direction, with forearms thick as tree stumps and a voice like a Peninsular sergeant. She far exceeded the average height of the fish wives and could comfortably meet the gaze of the tallest trader at market (if they in turn were brave enough to keep from shrinking under hers). When a brawl was at its hottest, she would stride into the thick of it like a giant and, catching the miscreants by their scruff, shake the fight out of them.

It is here that I recant my own experience with the Giantess of the Fish Cross. I cannot recall the details of the quarrel I found myself caught up in, but I suspect more than two of us were involved. Our real error was staging our fight in the heart of the Fish Market, a mistake we'd come to regret deeply, for no sooner had the first punch been thrown did Muckle Nanny come barrelling down upon us with all the suddenness and terror of a landslide. I felt myself plucked from the ground and the air shaken out of my lungs until my ears rang.

We made no such mischief again. Nanny was, in truth, the Goliath among the Philistines of the Fish Cross, and as I trembled four feet off the ground in her great meaty paw, I proved myself no David beneath her wrath.



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43 NEWMARKET

Turnbull's
by
Graeme Rennie

2nd August 1973

Everyone comes to Turnbull's for their school uniform. A brand-new blazer sat at the top of the drawer, ~~staring~~ staring at me, telling me in no uncertain terms that summer was over. Underneath, the wooden drawers slide open with a smoothness that somehow was in keeping with the rest of the shop, smooth, classy, timeless.

"Mum, no one even wears blazers anymore," I told her in vain. "That's not what your teachers said," she insisted.

There was no point in arguing. Coming to Turnbull's for a uniform was about as sure a thing as the sun rising and setting. It was a real highlight for my mum. She loved the service, people making a fuss over us, measuring me for my blazer, talking to my mum about what she had been up to. I didn't look forward to going back to school (who does?) but even I'll admit I enjoyed being made to feel like a movie star for an afternoon. How often do you get fitted clothes?

My mum was the youngest of 4 girls, so she only ever ~~had~~ got hand-me-downs from her siblings, so I think she did this for me partly because she never got it herself.

The assistant wrapped my blazer in brown paper and tied it with string, it looked like a present that I wouldn't want to open.

A bell sounded as someone else came into the shop, another kid being told in no uncertain terms that playtime was over. I turned round to see who it was.

No way. No, no no. Not Jamie from Geography!

That obviously wasn't his real last name, I just didn't know what his real name was because he wasn't actually in any of my classes. Ok, he wasn't even in my year either.

But I knew he took geography because I saw him go into that class once and I know he's called Jamie because a teacher shouted at him

once. So, he's Jamie, from Geography.

What are the chances that the most handsome boy in the world goes to my school? I'm so lucky! And then what are the odds that he comes to Turnbull's for, wait, is that...he's getting a blazer too!

What are the chances that we both need blazers and we're both getting them fitted at the same time on the same day?

I just need to play it cool, I think. Should I say hello?

No. Just walk past and say nothing maybe just nod at him, show him you're mysterious and aren't just a wee girl. Maybe I should -

"Charlotte, do you need any new pants while we're here? I remember you said the other day that they were a bit worn out?"

Turnbull's wasn't a small shop. But when mum shouted that to me from across the shop floor while I waited at the counter, it felt like I was standing in a phone box with Jamie from Geography. And not in a good way.

Jamie from Geography looked at me and laughed. It annoyed me ~~when~~ that even when he's laughing at me, he's still the most handsome boy in the world.

The bell rang again. Thank God. Another person coming in for their blazer. Something to take attention away from me while I focused on trying to make my face go back to its normal colour and not this beetroot shade that I was suddenly wearing.

I looked to see who it was.

Stacey from science.

Where is this going? Oh now...

Well, at least Jamie stopped laughing at me, it's hard to laugh when someone has their tongue in your mouth isn't it.

I told you. Everyone comes to Turnbull's for their school uniform.



26 Boys
33

Illustrated
by
Torie Cassidy

The Grain Exchange



The Grain Exchange, or The Corn Exchange as it was once known, sits on the site of Ayr's old Meal Market where grains such as wheat and barley were traded by local farmers. It is known that merchants came from far and wide to sample grains as early as the 16th century, though an exact date is hard to find. In 1843, the impressive structure you see before you replaced the old market and provided space for the Clydesdale Bank and, in more recent times, a nightclub by the name of 'Suburbia'. Looking at the beautifully restored building today, it is hard to believe it lay idle and dilapidated for long periods of time.

In 2019, after a £1million regeneration project, The Grain Exchange, named in honour of its heritage, was restored to its former glory. Since then, the building has operated as a multipurpose market and creative hub, giving artists the opportunity to sell their beautiful creations and offer workshops to the public. In addition to this, the site is one of adoration for those that pass by on Ayr High Street.

"Hi, I'm Kevin McCloud and on this latest episode of Grand Designs, we've come to Ayr, Scotland. We've also come to the year 1652. Oliver Cromwell has decided to build a new church near the town's centre after he seized the original church to be used as a military stronghold. We caught up with Oliver before we came to Ayr to look at how the construction is coming together."



"Oliver, can you tell us a little about this project and why you wanted to build this new church?"

"Thanks Kevin, can I just say, first of all I'm a big fan of the show. Grand Designs and The Crown, they are my two favourite shows."

"Yeah so I'm in the military and this lovely town of Ayr is actually pretty important in terms of looking after British interests. So, I sent my troops there to take over the town and find the best vantage point to protect a base there. That just so happened to be the area around St. John's Church near the sea. So, there were some teething problems at first and..."



"... by teething problems do you mean that you left the local people without a church because you turned it into a military fortress?"

"The church was in a great position from a military strategist's point of view Kevin, what was I supposed to do? Anyway, the point is I am building this wonderful town a brand-new church. Hopefully the angry letters will stop now."

"Oliver is not funding this project from his own pocket. His budget is 1000 marks, the equivalent of £56, or nearly £12,000 in 21st century money when adjusted for inflation. Oliver, what is the overall plan you have with building this new church?"

"I'm a simple man. I want to subjugate the Scottish people but also allow them to enjoy a nice, new, modern church at the same time."

"Will you be doing any of the work yourself?"

"Haha! Of course not Kevin, I've seen enough people on your show trying to build things when they have no idea what they're doing. No, I'll be subcontracting this to the local people and I'm sure they'll do a fantastic job."

"And do you expect to stay within your budget?"

"If we don't then heads will roll. Haha! I'm joking of course."

"No, but seriously, this is a significant amount of money we have put forward, so we fully expect it to be enough. I'm actually staggering the payments so I can be sure of the job quality. 20% payment when the foundations are laid, 20% when it's half built and full payment upon completion of the church."



"What do you hope the legacy of the church will be when it's completed?"

"Well in a perfect world Kevin I'd love for it to still be here 400 years after it's been built, but that's just probably wishful thinking. I won't be staying in the town myself to see it being used in all its glory, but some of my men are big fans of Ayr, and keep this between us but a few have told me they're planning to propose to their girlfriends and settle down there, so they'll be able to take their families to the church for many years."

"Perhaps a church still being here in 400 years is pretty fanciful, but one thing is for sure, the Auld Kirk is a welcome addition to Ayr."



One Dark Night by Neil Boyle

Outside the Auld Kirk of Ayr at night in 1828.

The two men tiptoe into the Auld Kirk at midnight. They pass through the lychgate and into the burial grounds. A horse and cart can be heard clattering down the main road nearby. The moon showers light over the cobbled stone of the Auld Kirk and the graves in the grounds which the men sneak past. The two men come to a halt. One reveals a ratty piece of paper from his inner pocket. He squints his eyes and scratches his head, whispering to his companion.

ROBERT

"I can't read this, John."

John tuts and snatches the piece of paper to examine it.

JOHN

"It's upside down ya numpty... And it's soaking!"

John squints his eyes trying to read.

JOHN

"Why the hell is it wet?"

The two men look at each other, Robert nervously bites his fingernails.

ROBERT

"I used it to wipe the table at the inn."

John glares at him.

JOHN

"Why did you do that? We can't see the name now!"

John throws the wet piece of paper back at Robert. An eery gust of wind passes through the graveyard as the men stand looking around. Robert puts his hands in his pockets to reveal a dry piece of paper. He casts his eyes upon it and clears his throat.

ROBERT

"John. Look."

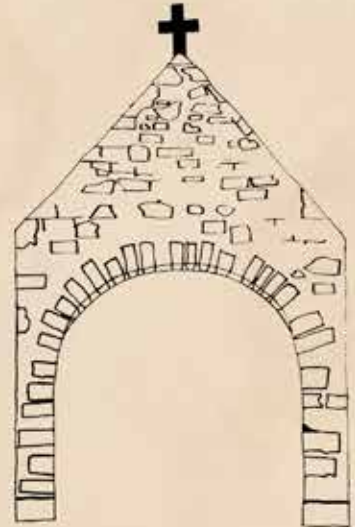
He hands the piece of paper to John who examines it and rolls his eyes.

JOHN

"Can you stop being an idiot for just two hours? I want my ten pounds to take this body to Edinburgh."

ROBERT

"Ten? I thought it was eight?"



JOHN

"Err, I meant eight after taxes an all..."

Robert nods and looks around the graveyard and gets a chill.

ROBERT

"Is it true that they cut the bodies open in Edinburgh?"

JOHN

"Aye in the name of Science. You know, we should consider ourselves lucky to be part of this. Me and you are two gentlemen at the forefront of the medical revolution!"

Robert hawks up phlegm and spits it out like a grunting warthog.

ROBERT

"Right, let's go and dig up this body. Maybe it's still warm."

A thin layer of fog now covers the graveyard. A dog barks in the distance. The two men roam around the graveyard like two foxes at night seeking out food. John stops to read the piece of paper once more and Robert clatters into the back of him.

JOHN

"Don't walk so close behind me!"

Robert removes his hat and wipes sweat from his brow; he looks nervous.

ROBERT

"I don't like it here John, this place scares me."

John reads the name on the paper out loud.

JOHN

"Isobel Melley...How do I know that name?"

ROBERT

"Maybe just familiar."

John now takes his hat off and wipes the sweat from his brow. The eerie silence is broken by the two men's footsteps. They approach a grave with wide eyes, at the head is a huge piece of granite. The two men stop with a confused frown on their faces. They look at each other then back to the metal structure entombing the grave, at first glance it looks like a giant bird cage protecting the grave.

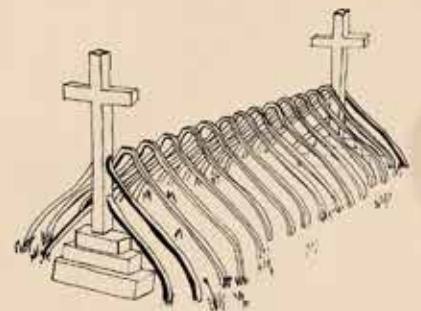
ROBERT

"What is that..."

JOHN

"No idea."

John grabs the metal structure over the grave. He yanks at it with both hands. It doesn't budge.



JOHN
"That's solid."

ROBERT
"Come on put your back into it."

JOHN
"Why don't you come help before I rattle your face into it!"

Robert runs to the other side and the two men heave and ho, pulling and pushing the metal structure to no avail. The two men take a moment to pant and catch their breath. Taking off their hats to wipe their heads they look round at the other graves, to see that several other graves have the same structure over them.

JOHN
"What the hell is going on? What are these?"

ROBERT
"John I've got a bad feeling about this. What if these metal gates are keeping the dead from rising again! I don't want my brains eaten!"

Robert begins to slowly move back in fear he might wake the dead.

JOHN
"Robert don't be silly, the people in these graves are dead."

At that convenient moment a deep voice comes from behind them in the darkness.

CONSTABLE FRED
"You there. Stop where you are!"

The two men let out a high-pitched scream and turn around like spinning tops. Standing behind them are two men, a police constable with a baton grasped in his hand and a little man with a moustache.

CONSTABLE FRED
"Mr Melley I think you're right. These two look like a couple of grave robbers."

John and Robert have one last defeated look at one another.

Mr Melley
"Thank God for the Mortsafe or you two would be off with my wife!"

JOHN
"We should have planned this better in the pub..."

The end.



Illustrated by Urtë RusteKaitë

The Proposition

by Neil Boyle

The last few weeks before he died, Cornelius Anderson wasn't himself. It is argued that he wasn't, in fact, himself for years and that 'his condition' had deteriorated over time. His neighbour had said that he looked demented in the weeks leading up to his death and one night not long before he was found dead, screams and shots could be heard coming from his house. One thing that is certain is that the mystery surrounding his death on the 4th of June 1670 in Ireland was unsettling. It took eight men two days to uncover his charred corpse from his incinerated house. Every single remaining section of wall in his home had seven names scratched into them; James Smith, Alexander MacMillan, James McMillan, John Short, George MacCartney, John Graham and John Muirhead. They said from what it looked like it would have taken Anderson years to do that to his home. The man who discovered Anderson's body in the living room said it was like nothing he'd ever seen...

it felt like he was in a waiting room to hell.



The court room was alive with the mumbling of voices. The noblemen who were to pass judgement arrived back into the courtroom and looked upon the twelve men, chained and dirty. A man ordered quiet in the room - and silence there was. One of the noblemen fixed his robes and looked down his long stern nose to the prisoners before him.

“We here in the town of Ayr are a people of morals and faith. We live and die by the word of God and for you in front of me... Well, you fight against this. On the battlefield your ideals were defeated and now, on this day in court, you have refused a chance to repent. This court has decided that James Smith, Alexander MacMillan, James McMillan, John Short, George MacCartney, John Graham, John Muirhead and Cornelius Anderson, on refusing to re-join the church and refute the covenant will be hanged in Ayr until you are dead.”

The room remained silent as the nobleman decreed that two others would be hung in Irvine, and the remaining two in Dumfries. The prisoners all had their heads bowed, some of them shaking. On the wooden floor, underneath their feet, their tears formed small puddles.

Cornelius Anderson raised his head and looked the judge dead in the eyes: “I speak for us all when I say we will never betray our ideals, Sir.” All the men were silent.

The court room erupted, some in outrage, some in support and others with the excitement of a public hanging.

In the cell that night the moon cast scintillations of light through the bars and onto the brick floor. The jail was only a mere one-story high at the bottom of the Tollbooth so the men could see out and look down onto the street. The cell was quiet with the men’s terror. Eight of them sitting in darkness and in silence.

“I can hear you all sitting with your thoughts. Someone speak! I think we should break out of here,” Cornelius said. No one spoke for a long pause.

“I’m not risking my life on the battlefield to run away now. I’ve accepted my fate,” said JamesMcMillan.

“Aye. I agree. There’s no use in running now, we’d only get caught and it’d be worse for us.”



The men let out grunts of resignation and agreement.

“Where are your balls! These are not the men who I fought with on Rullion Green - only weeks ago. Where are the men who screamed and slashed their swords in the face of adversity? Because they are not here!” shouted Cornelius.

The guard rattled the cell for quiet.

“Where would we go? What would we do? Scotland is not Presbyterian. We have lost. And how do you propose we escape!?” said George MacCartney as he pulled his beard. “As long as we are together it doesn't matter. We are opposition. We are protest. As long as we breathe and we hold to our beliefs our voices will be heard. In life and in death.” James began to hit a metal cup on the floor, a tap growing to a rhythm. George joined, stamping his feet. The rhythm grew in pace and Cornelius began to tap too. Now making significant noise, the beat pulsed like a racing heart, a statement expressing their togetherness. And for a brief moment they were united in the sound. For a glimmer, forgetting their fear.

The guard slammed the metal doors open. “You lot better stop this noise, or we will make you suffer.” Cornelius stands up and faces the guard. “Would you kill us twice you dog!?” In that moment the guard met Anderson's face with a haymaker blow to the face, dragging him out of the cell leaving the men screaming and banging their cups louder in protest.

Many hours later Anderson lay alone in a cell, beaten to a pulp. His face swollen and missing more teeth than he had before. The cell door opened slowly with a creak. Anderson whimpered thinking the guards had come back for more. The Nobleman who had passed judgment on him and his companions entered and sat on the bench in the darkness, lighting a pipe. All Anderson could see were the whites of the man's eyes and the red of the burning tobacco. “I have a proposition for you. Within these walls I can tell you I support your cause, but my hands are tied. You have many supporters in this town, but we must be seen to act. You should know that I fought for you, but you leave me in a difficult position.” The man puffs his pipe.

“Hangman William Martin has refused to hang you. So has the hangman in Irvine. Both men have been thrown in prison but in these trying times we must have order and men must abide by the laws.”

“What do you want from me,” said Anderson. His swollen eyes not moving from the ground.





“We must have an execution. And soon. But the powers that be will settle for seven men, should the eighth perform the task.”

The man puffs his pipe again, observing Anderson’s reaction. “We will make sure you are comfortable in life. You’re married with two sons, aren’t you? Surely they wish to see their father again.”

“And if I refuse?” Anderson replied in a low quiet voice.

“This matter is bigger than you or I, Anderson. You do not all need to die. Live to fight another day”.

On the 27th of December 1666, seven accused men stood on the town gibbet in Ayr. A quiet, sombre crowd of people turned out to watch the men be hanged on the freezing cold morning. More supporters of the men’s cause than had been expected, as nobody cheered. The seven men stood in a row behind the noose. While Anderson sat in the tollbooth until he was called upon. That morning he drank one full bottle of whiskey to calm his nerves. The nobleman watched with his cold stare and gave Anderson a nod, as he walked along the path to the gibbet. Drunk and stumbling, a man had to hold him up. When he arrived on the gallows, he didn't make eye contact with the men who pleaded with him and cursed his name. As the coarse noose was pulled over each man’s head tears filled Anderson’s eyes and, one by one, with seven pulls of the wooden lever his comrades were all dead. The crowd stayed silent as the men’s corpses were carried away.

Cornelius Anderson disappeared into the crowd.



A Woman's Fateful Knight

by Neil Boyle

In the spring Heather nervously waited beyond the barns of Ayr (which the English had been using as their barracks), where a beautiful meadow met a small pond, overlooked by the pigs and cows grazing in the land immediately next to the barns. She fiddled with her dress as she leaned against a tree and waited. She did this every day for three weeks, even when it was raining. As a breeze rustled the leaves of the tree, she would warm herself with the memories of their meetings the days before.

Alexander approached on his horse. Heather always knew he was near because she could feel the vibrations of his horse in the trunk of the tree but still, she pretended not to know he was there until he dismounted his horse. He walked to the edge of the pond and picked up a stone.

"If I can skim this stone all the way to the other side then we should be married," he proclaimed.

Heather watched as he swung his arm back and whipped it forward releasing the stone on to the pond's surface. The stone skimmed and lost momentum halfway.

She smiled. "You shouldn't make such bets when you don't know if I'd agree to it or not."

Alexander fell to his knees before her as if he had taken a sword through the heart. She embraced him and he clung to her waist like a little boy.

The rain fell heavily, and
the pond sprung to life
with a million
intersecting ripples. They
sat under the tree
together and watched in
silence.

Alexander looked at
Heather.

“The English nobles
have invited us to attend
a meeting in the Barns
for a truce.”

Heather continued to
watch the water as she
spoke. “They can’t stop
Wallace; he has the heart
of the people.”



Heather lifted her heavy eyes to Alexander. “The English don’t want a truce, they want blood.”
Alexander placed his hand over her womb. “All will be well; they wouldn’t send up unarmed noblemen if this were true. Peace will be with us, and the English will be gone. I have hope for tomorrow.”

When the day turned to evening and a pink blanket had been pulled over the sky Heather began to wonder where her love was. She hadn’t known Alexander to be late. She hadn’t felt the familiar vibrations of his horse on the ground. Nothing felt familiar this evening. She looked past the long grass and through the trees, wondering if he was still at the barn meeting the noblemen. She would be in trouble, surely, if she was caught eavesdropping on the meeting but her growing worry trumped this concern.

Heather made her way to the barns.

She knelt behind one of the heavily built, thatched roof, wooden structures. She could hear muffled voices from within and pressed her ear against the wood but still could not make out the words.

Crawling along to an opening at the back where she could see into the barn, she placed her eye over the hole. Heather’s view was blocked by a man standing in front of the hole, but she could make out muffled screams of men echoing within the barn. She adjusted her position and focused on the ground where she could make out the feet of the other men, but she was confused by what she saw. Seven pairs of feet were not touching the ground. As she thought to move herself to find a better position, the man blocking the view moved slightly and she saw...

Heather’s eye darkened with the view of seven hanging Scottish noblemen and knights. In horror she followed a pair of feet up to the noose tied to the rafter, to the strangled head of her beloved Alexander. His lifeless face next to six others dangled with only the sound of rope rubbing against wood. Heather fell back and covered her mouth as her lungs exhaled her shock.



Heather dragged herself up, she thought about entering the barn - she wanted revenge. But she knew that there was nothing she could do alone. She started along the path that the noblemen had ridden on to their deaths. Barefooted and broken Heather ran and ran. The mud for the now heavy rain was thick and she slipped and fell so much her dress became black as the road. But still she kept running until a man rode towards her on a horse. She said to herself, if it was an Englishman, she would pull him from his horse and strangle him to death right there.

As the man approached, she recognised him, the horse slowing to a halt. Heather placed her dark red eyes on him. It was William Wallace himself, riding to the meeting. "You are riding to your death," cried Heather. "Seven of your men have been hanged in the barn and they wait for you."

Heather was surprised to see how shaken he was by the news as Wallace dismounted his horse. "Get on my horse, I'll take you back to town."

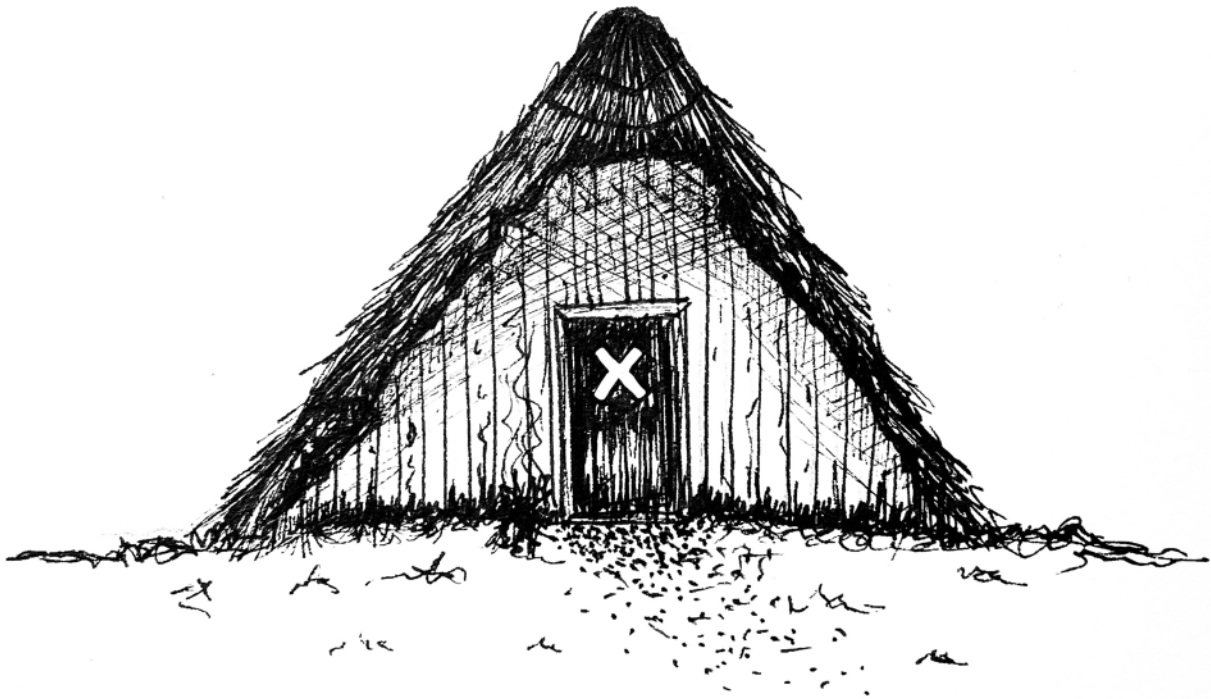
Heather pushed away from him. "I'm going to burn them all alive!" Wallace jumped back on his horse. "Great minds think alike but you won't be alone in your revenge. Paint a white mark on each door where the English that slaughtered our men sleep, then we will know. I will return with fifty men, and we will burn them all and watch the fire. Stay out of sight."

Wallace rode away. Heather knelt and placed her hand on the ground for balance, closing her eyes as tears streamed down her muddied face. She tried to compose herself and after a short while Heather walked back to the barns and, one by one, she listened at the doors and marked on each a white mark where the English were. Before long she had marked them all, and began to gather sticks, twigs, and branches from the woods, stacking them up around the barns. Panting like a dog she never stopped, not once, not for a single beat.

Two hours had passed, and she had already quietly stacked branches by five barns of sleeping Englishmen before Wallace and the men arrived, shocked that one woman managed all this alone.

“You have been busy, I see,” Wallace said with a smile, as he and his men assisted Heather in finishing the task. They stealthily managed to stack all the branches without attracting any attention. Although, there were a few times soldiers had to be stopped from barging in as they overheard the English in the barns saying foul slurs towards the slain Scotsmen.

Ten horsemen valiantly rode passed to light the kindling and set fire to the barns. Wallace, his men, and Heather set themselves up nearby awaiting the men running out, watching as the barns set alight and slowly burned. Wallace clutched his sword as the flames climbed the barns and one by one the Englishmen ran out screaming only to meet their deaths. On Heather’s request they let the men on fire burn. Barn after barn went up in flames and the English were slaughtered at the hands of Wallace and his companions.



Just as the English running out of the barns began to overwhelm Wallace and his men, the Monks of the nearby Monastery joined their efforts. On the strict instruction from the Prior, the monks were to annihilate the English with no mercy to avenge their cruel betrayal. Wallace was glad to see the monks, though savage with their swords, riding as far as five miles in the hunt for some of the English who had managed to escape.

In the morning, when the smoke had cleared, Wallace and his men gathered the bodies of the dead to burn. As he searched the remains, Wallace discovered Heather's body lying on top of an English nobleman with her hands around his throat. She had strangled him to death, but not before he had plunged a dagger into her side. Wallace had her body taken away, washed and a proper burial arranged for her. Had it not been for her, he surely would have died upon his late arrival to the barns that day. He would remember her bravery for the rest of his days.

TAM O'SHANTER INN Established 1749

Story written by
Anneliese Rose Broughton

Illustration by
Jazz Buchanan

"Who's that?"

"That man! Leaning up against the lamp."

"Did you say Tom?"

"Tam, ah, I think I've heard of that man."

"A dram? What's that?"

"I fancy a lemonade, come to think.
So, remind me, how does this poem go?"

"Couldn't he have called her on his phone?"

"Wasn't her name Meg, the horse he rode?"

"Ah, yes, then he saw witches dancing at the church."

"Kirk? As in Captain?"

"That's not a word I've heard... How much is the lemonade?"

"Have you ever thought about what Tam might do?"

"Yeah, in 2022."

"Maybe he'd buy two suppers fae The Blue Lagoon. Text his wife and say,
"I'm on my way home." Because of course in 2022, Tam has a phone.

"Heat the plates, I've been to the chippy."

"Hope the bus comes soon it's a wee bit nippy."

And Tam as he waits only ten minutes at the station
Wouldn't know how lucky he was to avoid that sorry situation

- and a lifetime of nightmares."

"That version seems a bit boring though."

"Tam grabs a chippy and rides the MEG-a-bus home"

"Well, if you want more excitement, read the poem"

"Who?"

"Ach, aye, that's Tam."

"Naw, Tam."

"Aye, Tam fae the Rabbie poem, he liked a dram."

"A snifter, a swally, a wee drink."

"Well, he got drunk and headed home.
He was late and worried his wife would moan."

"It was 1791, and that wasn't known."

"That's right it was, she galloped through the mirk."

"Kirk."

"No kirk as in church, it's a Scots word."

"£1.20...thank you."

"What if he was here now?"

"Aye, it is a wee bit, I know."



Burns the Farmer

Written by Rebecca McCallum Scapley

Ah wis a puir faitherless lad fae Lochlie, an Maister Burns brocht me wi him when they cam here tae Mossgiel Ferm. He wis aye luikin oot for me, even hefting me up oan his shouthers ane day as we cam hame frae the field. Ah wis the wee ane of all the lads on the ferm - the runt of the pack, the ane that aye got his erse kicked in a fecht. But still, ah wis a richt pawkie wee lad, an gleg wi it. Ah kenned if ah ettled tae fin ma place, ah'd need tae fin summat mair nor fechtin tae win the day.

Sae ane nicht ance aw us lads were in the loft oer the stable where we slept, ah twistit ma lips an pullit unco faces. 'Girnin Davie' they callit me, an lauched themsels til the tears cam frae their een. I wis cuttin sic a caper and loupin oer the wooden boards that the auld yin doon the stair cam up tae tell us aff fer makin sic a din - an on the Lord's Day tae!

We aw were thrashit fer oor ain guid by the maister, but efter it, he wis richt kind and said we ainly needit summat tae keep us oot o mischief. Sae that wis how it startit that I learnt the English frae him. The ither twa were na gey gleg an ettled tae be awa, but ah wis jist fine wi it.

Once a week, on a Sunday nicht, efter prayers, Maister Burns aye lets me stay doon frae the loft an teaches me tae speak sae fine like ony gentleman. He hears me read aloud frae his buiks an leaves me tae study oer them whiles he swings back on his chair an writes.



He writes poems an is even having a buik o his ain published. He tellit me he's written a poem about all o us here at Mossgiel, an ah get a mention in it tae. 'Wee Davock' he calls me, an a like that even better nor 'Girnin Davie'.

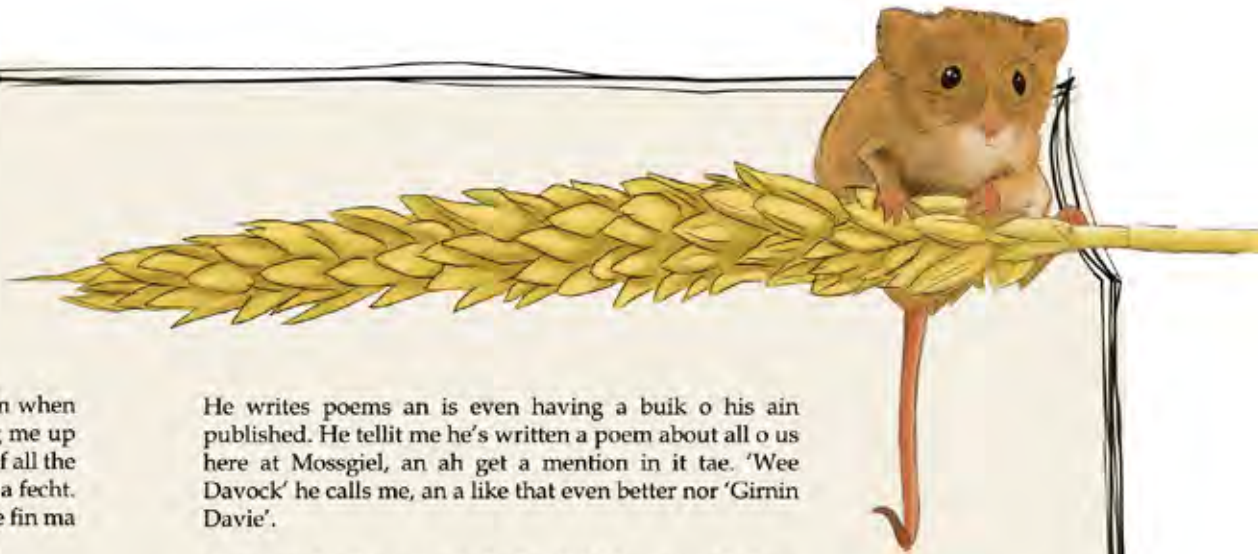
Aye, now that I can speak the English I have grand plans. Nae mair fechtin fer wee Davie Hutcheson fae Lochlie! I still have a guid Scots tongue in my head though and can use it tae. Ane o the other lads, Willie Patrick, wis aye at me fer liking the buik learning mair than fechtin in the yaird. But I callit him a lang-leggit loon wi a face lik bleared sowans, an Gaudsman John near brak his breeks wi lauchin an wouldna let Willie say a word agin me ony mair that nicht, nor fecht me neither.


Instead he tuik us baith aside an tellit us o what happened that day on the field while he was gaudin the horses for Maister Burns, wha was mindin the ploo. They cam upon a wee mousie that rin oot o its bield, an Maister Burns callit tae John tae stoppit the horses an turned the ploo aside. He widna move on til he'd seen the mousie rin awa oer the riggs towards the foggage around the edge o the field.

'He'll be makin a rhyme on it, nae doot,' ah said, an the ither twa lauched at the thocht o a poem for a wee mousie. But I gat the last lauch fer Maister Burns read oot some verses o it to John - and John said he couldna understaun near hauf o it.



Illustrated by Hali Campbell





Burns The Laver

Written by Rebecca McCallum Scapley

Ma mither aye minds me tae keep ma ain counsel, sae ye willna be hearing ony gossip frae me. Hairst time is busy enough onyways, nae time tae be staunin aroon clatterin. Ahve tae walk oer tae Mount

Oliphant tae help wi the hairst this day's morn, afore the sun is oot his bed. Aye, an the walk back - i the derk o evening tae. But mind, ahm nae wi lane the walk back. Young Rab frae Mount Oliphant aye taks me hame.

It's the custom heareabouts tae partner lad an lass thegither at hairst time, working the field at ane time. Rab taks the weeder-clips an ah walk ahint him gaitherin the stalkies. It's simple enough but hard efter a while. Ah cover ma hair wi a cloot tae keep the stour frae it, but ane time we flung ousels oan the foggage tae tak a bite o summat, twa three curls brust oot an Rab leans oer tae tuck them back in trigly. Ah near turnit red wi the shame o it but luikin aroon naebody hae mindit it. Ah ate ma bit bread an Missus Burns' fine yowe-milk kebbuck whiles Rab sate on a patch o sedge grinnin lik a loon an slappin his hauns on his breeks.

They say he's a queer-lik lad wi mony fancies, fond o his faither's buiks an trampin lang hours his lane oer the fields. He disna mind takin time oot tae see me hame tho, his lang legs stridin ahead, an ah have tae maist rin tae keep up wi him. An yet he slaes his

pace ance we get near the hoose an looks laggardly, draggin his heels i the dirt. Ah times hae tae gie him a push tae be aff.

Ah nivir kenned a lad be sae blate an bashfu afore - maist o them ainly want aye thing an are nae best pleased when ye say them nay. But Rab he taks ma haun sae doucely an pluckit oot the thistle burrs an nettle stings frae ma fingers. An when ah sing for the sheer joy o the sun an the day, ah hear him whistle sae sweetly in tune wi me. He says he kens o the laird's son wha wrote the words tae the tune, an he can dae as weel if no better. But I dinna mind much o it, lads are aye boastin this or that. 'Fair words butter nae parsnips', as ma mither aye says.

He's an unco chiel richt enough. An ah'll tell ye a tale as shaws it. It was near enough the derk o the day, wi the sun glimmering oot oer the trees an the shadows stretching lang oer the field. We'd had a weary day o it an I was fain tae be aff awa hame. But there wis ane patch o bear-corn left an a big burr-thistle i the midst o it, a stalk near as thick as ma wrist, tapped wi a croun o prickles. Rab he casts the weeder-clips aside an stauns in a maze starin at this muckle thistle.

Nell, he says, Nell, ah canna touch the thistle.

Why no? (I wis fair snappish wi him fer the wanting tae be aff)

It's the symbol of Scotland, he says, an it's richt dear tae me just this moment.

Like ah said - an unco chiel. But ah think ah love him aw the same.

Illustrated by Hali Campbell



Burns the Exciseman

Written by Rebecca McCallum Scapley



She was called the "Rosamond", and everyone all along the Solway coast knew her. Da especially was hoping for something in the hold, or at least a sniff of it. We'd all been waiting for the fair weather so she could make land. Everybody was poised to help, and even us young folk caught something of the excitement, tearing up and down the path to the beach a dozen times a day.

But fair weather is hard to come by that early in the year, and by the time the weather improved, the Excise had caught wind of the ship hanging up and down the coast and set their sights on her and her gear. One Crawford in particular, got up a band to try to take her, but they were pushed back by those on board.

So, Crawford, he sent to Dumfries for more help - Dragoons, four and twenty of them, while he patrolled the roads hereabouts. They hit upon the idea of rowing out to the ship, and they searched the coast for every available boat. Strangely they found every boat in town or village was out of action. The country folk knew that theirs would be the loss if the ship was taken and weren't minded to aid the Excise in gaining what should have been theirs, so they stayed in their boats rather than help the government.

The support from Dumfries arrived promptly - with their red jackets and rattling sabres, mounted on fine horses that put our dusty mares to shame. The Dragoons caught the eye of all the ladies in town, and more than a few of the boys as well, who stamped up and down the closes brandishing sticks and wishing themselves old enough to enlist. In all, there were forty-four mounted men, in three divisions, headed up by members of the Excise, including a man called Burns, who had stopped by our door to crave a glass of water after his long ride.

By this time, the "Rosamond" had drifted a little further down the coast and foundered on a sandbank. All us boys watched from a distance as



the Dragoons mustered on the beach. I and a few other lads ran down to get a closer look. At first, they tried to make the assault on horseback, but they were soon halted by the quicksand along the shore and had to pull back. They all dismounted, and the horses stood patiently by. One of the men spotted me and beckoned me over. As I drew nearer, I saw it was Burns. He asked me to hold his horse for him, for she was not as well trained as the others and likely to run away. 'Her name's Jenny Geddes...and like me she's mair suited to tramping the roads than nonsense like this...' he said with a smile as he walked back to join the others. Despite the fact he'd come to foil our plans, I liked the man. He had an honest face, and a frank way of talking that made me feel like a man grown, and not a beardless lad.

They drew their swords and pistols and waded into the water; all the while being shot at from the ship. The way the ship had stuck on the sand, she couldn't bring her big guns into use. The Dragoons were chest high in the water by this point and moving with remarkable speed. At one hundred yards or thereabouts, we saw with disappointment the crew leaving their posts and leaping over the other side of the ship.

I could see Burns clambering up the side of the ship, but he soon disappeared out of sight. Later we found out that the departing crew had staved a hole in the port side with their cannon so we had to be satisfied with this small act of vengeance. There was an article in the paper a week after the incident, stating that the ship was to be repaired before being auctioned off.

I later heard a rumour about Mr Burns, that he had bought four small cannon in the auction, and sent them off to France to help with the revolution there. It would be like the man I met, who didn't seem altogether at ease with his government position, but then, it would have jeopardized his job prospects so maybe it was but a tale.

Illustrated by Hali Campbell



The Muckle Cauldron

Written by Rebecca McCallum Scapley

Is it a tale of witches you're speering after now? Ach, awa wi you, you've had all ma tales. Well, mebbe not all. You've heard about the brounies and the bogles, and you know well enow to poke a hole in your eggshells so as the witches canny use them to sink ships. And about elf-shot cattle that sicken and dinnae thrive when a witch puts a spell on them. But I've ane tale left that you've no heard. Pull up that wee stool then and mind you dinnae stop peelin those tatties. When I wis a wee lassie, I was aye slipping off to do ma ain thing, or threepin at the auld folks to tell me a story - aye, jist like you now, altho I flatter mesel that I'm no as auld as they yins.

But this time, I'd been caught and told to clear out the auld threshing barn. It was a richt stoorie place - fu o spiders. So I wisnae best pleased and I didnae tak ower much time wi ma task. I carried out all the sticks and stalkies to the midden at the back o the yaird, and swept a bit stoor an oose oer the threshold. This still left a wheen o trashtrie frae the hoose at the far end, and I amused mesel by luikin through it. Maist o it was trashed - a luggie that had tint it's chain, a yoke wi a muckle crack in it, twa bits o a bowl I mind ma sister brak on the hearth. But there was ane thing that caught ma een - a muckle great cauldron, fat and blackened wi fire. It had unco marks around the rim, and seemed to grow in size before ma verra een. All o a sudden the air aroun me grew derksome an I shivered in the cauld. I ran oot the barn screaming o bogles and lang leggity beasties.

They gathered roun and speired at me what the matter was but not ane o them ever minded seeing the cauldron afore. All but the auldest auld yin who noddod and minded a story she'd heard as a wee lassie, jist like I was. A loon wha minded the plough was makin his way hame frae the smiddy, an the road took him along towards the auld Kirk o Alloway. It was an eerie place then as it is now, wi hoolets an siclike cratur, an weel kent as a place o ferlies an unco doings. The nicht was mirk, the rain was plashing and spattering doon, an the wind squalling among the trees. As he drew close to the Kirk he noted a bricht glow glimmerin roun the auld stanes. His thochts turned to witches, and the verra Deil himself, wha was said tae sit in state in the ruins.

Noo there are twa thochts as to why he did what he did next.

Ane says that the Almichty above gave him courage; anither has it that he'd got unco fou at the Smiddy. For whatsoever reason, he took ae step towards the Kirk, an anither, an reached the windae afore he knew what his ain feet were daein.

An eerie glow cam frae a fire made up in the middle o the ruins. The place was empty. He heard a sougning noise frae ahint him, and turned tae see derk shapes o men, and wimmin, in the field by the Kirk. Ane by ane, they each pullit up a stalk o the ragwort and cried out some word or words that he didnae catch. An ane by ane each rose into the sky wi shouts and skirls. The ploughboy was left alane.

The flames frae the fire still danced though, sae he loupit up through the windae an drapt doon intae the empty Kirk. Atop the fire he saw a muckle cauldron, black as pitch. The contents seethed and jouked - heids o bairns no yet blessed by a meenister, lang banes o those hangit on a gibbet, an ither fousome things. He seized the side of the cauldron an rocked it back an forth on its chain, makin the foul liquid spill oer the lip. He poured oot the contents onto the hearth an unhooked the jinkin chain. Empty noo, the cauldron didnae seem sae heavy, sae he raised it oer his head and tuik it hame, where it stayed in his faimly doon through the years tae this day.

The ithers aw laughed an clappit the grandame for the tale, an slipped back awa tae field and fireside. Ma fricht almaist forgotten in the sun, I spiered an see the muckle cauldron for herself. She hirpled oer the yaird an in at the barn. The corner was still derk an fu o shadows. A wee mousie rin oot oer the stanes but she paid it no mind. The cauldron sat there, lowring at us.

"Thon's but a gey guid parritch kettle," grannie said, an seized it by the handle to swing in the crook of her arm. She scoured it and rinsed it, and set it on the hearth and cooked her sowans in it on the morn. An afore ye ask, she didna dee til some years after that, an ne'er took ill afore her last. Sae mayhap it was but a tale. An what happened tae the cauldron ye ask? Whit did ye think ye were peeling tatties intae?



Some facts you may not know about the infamous Robbie Burns!

First of all, he never actually referred to himself as Robbie, even though he is often called 'Robbie Burns' or 'Rabbie Burns' by others. He went by other variations of Robert including Rab, Rob, Robin and even 'Rantin' Rovin' Robin'. In one letter he even used 'Spunkie' as a sort of signature and symbol to sign off the letter. In fact, his second name wasn't even Burns! It was actually Burnes, but he preferred the Ayrshire spelling without the 'e' and chose to shorten his last name at the age of 27.

As well as his name and his words, his likeness has also become infamous. After Queen Victoria and Christopher Columbus, Robert Burns has more statues dedicated to him around the world than any other non-religious figure. More than 60 across the world, with 20 official memorials in Scotland. Monuments dedicated to the poet can be found in America, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and France. He was even pictured on a bottle of Coca-Cola in 2009, becoming the first person to appear on a commemorative bottle of Coca-Cola.

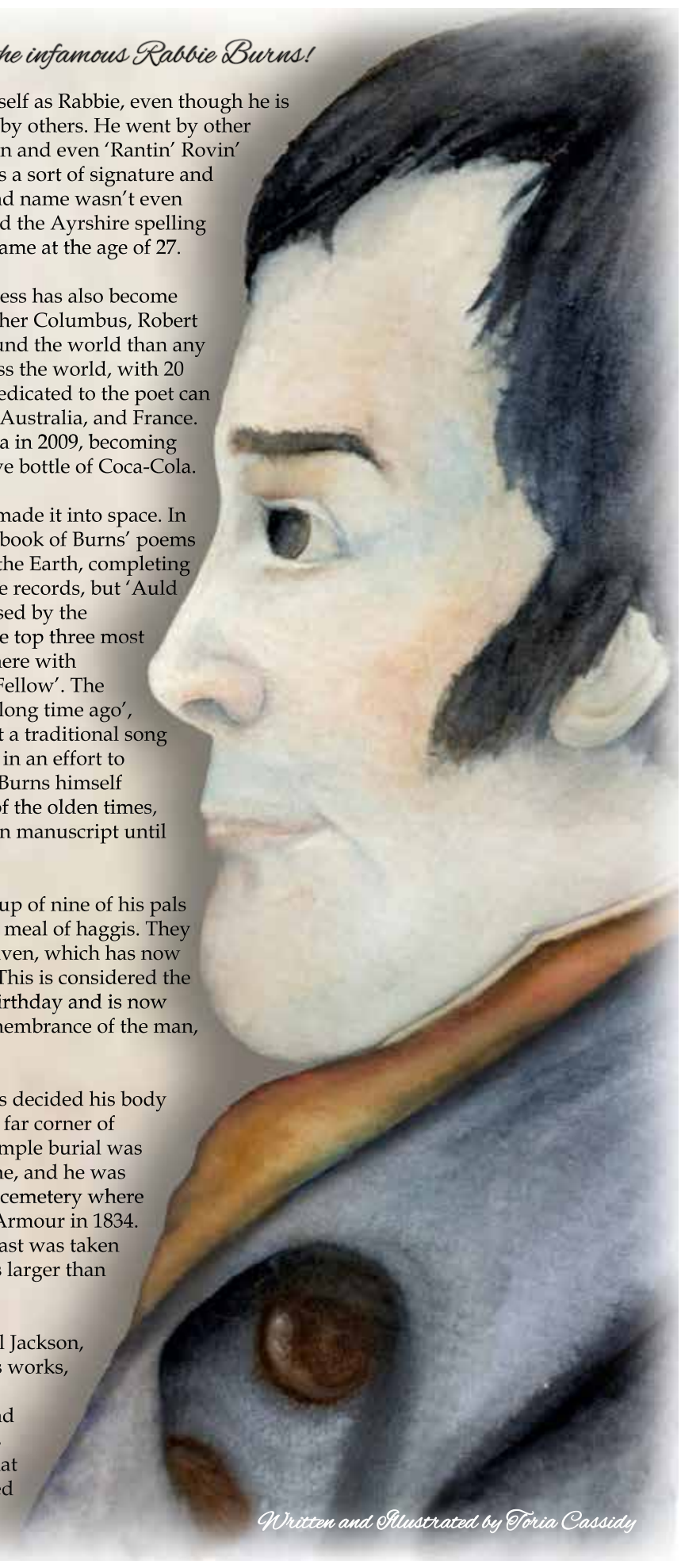
Reaching far and wide, his words have also made it into space. In 2010 astronaut Nick Patrick took a miniature book of Burns' poems with him on his 5.7-million-mile trip around the Earth, completing 217 orbits! Surely that must have broken some records, but 'Auld Lang Syne' certainly has. The song is recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records as one of the top three most popular songs in the English Language, up there with 'Happy Birthday' and 'For he's a Jolly Good Fellow'. The song, whose title means 'old long since' or 'a long time ago', was not an original work by Robert Burns but a traditional song which Burns wrote down, adding new lyrics, in an effort to preserve the Scots oral tradition and culture. Burns himself described 'Auld Lang Syne' as 'an old song, of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript until I took it down from an old man's singing.'

Five years after his death, in July 1801, a group of nine of his pals gathered in Alloway to remember him over a meal of haggis. They recited his works, and a tribute speech was given, which has now become known as "The Immortal Memory". This is considered the first Burns Supper which was moved to his birthday and is now celebrated Annually all over the world in remembrance of the man, his works, and the wider Scots culture.

Another decade and more passed, and it was decided his body should be moved from its resting place in the far corner of St. Michael's Churchyard in Dumfries. The simple burial was thought to be insulting to his memory by some, and he was moved to The Burns Mausoleum in the same cemetery where he was eventually joined by his widow Jean Armour in 1834. While they were moving his body, a plaster cast was taken of his skull for study, which found that it was larger than the average man's.

As a love for his work lives on, even Michael Jackson, The King of Pop, expressed a fondness for his works, it is even believed that he was working on a Broadway musical based on Burns' works, and began an unreleased album setting the Bard's poems to music. It has also been suggested that Jackson's 1983 hit single 'Thriller' was inspired by Tam o'Shanter.

Written and Illustrated by Toria Cassidy



Burns Worldwide

Global connections to Robert Burns

The Canadian National Anthem: 'The Maple Leaf Forever', was written by Alexander Muir in 1867 and is believed to have drawn some inspiration from the tune of 'A Red, Red Rose'.

When asked what his greatest creative inspiration was, American music legend Bob Dylan, named Burns' 'A Red, Red Rose', the lyrics of which had inspired him more than any other source in his life.

Robert Burns was the eldest of seven children and fathered twelve, so it's no wonder he has at least one notable descendant; American Fashion Designer Tommy Hilfiger. However, he said it was never discussed among his family as they were embarrassed by the connection due to tales of Burns' drinking and womanising.

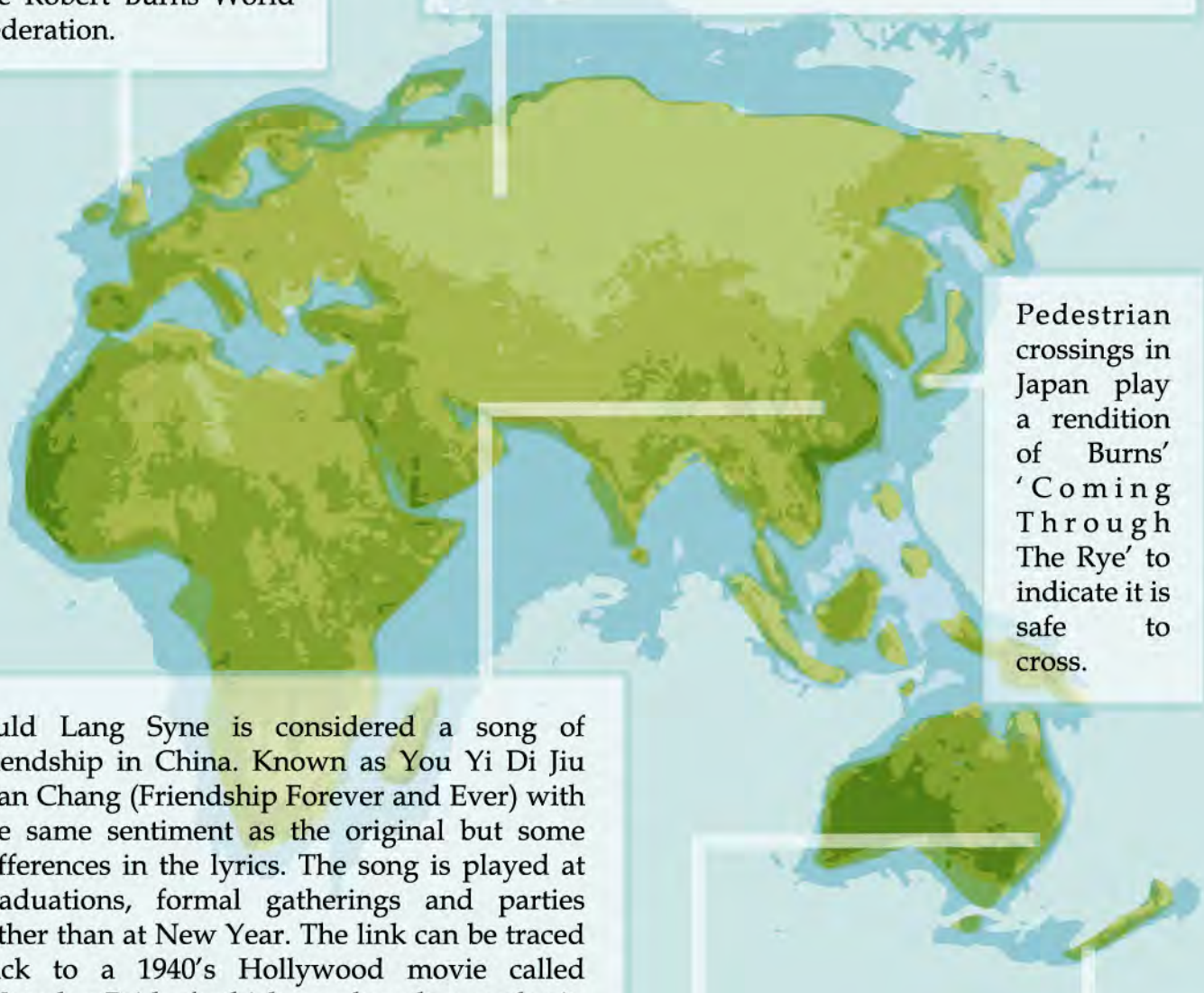
The city of Atlanta, Georgia in the United States, is home to a life-sized replica of the Alloway Cottage which Burns was born in. It was Built by the Burns Club of Atlanta in 1911 and still stands today. The interior of the cottage is also a close replica, divided in to the traditional three areas: butt, ben and byre.

American President, Abraham Lincoln, had a lifelong admiration for the work of Robert Burns, with some claiming that the poet's work had a key role in helping Lincoln win the American Civil War and abolish slavery. He could recite his poems by heart. America's 18th President, Ulysses S Grant, was also a big fan - making a trip to Ayr to pay homage to Robert Burns and often quoting Burns' poems during battle in the civil war.

The Bard's songs were popular with those keen to abolish the institution of slavery. He was often quoted by American Abolitionist Frederick Douglass. Also Martin Luther King, who used Burns' "Man's inhumanity to man" line in one of his speeches in 1966.

There are Burns Clubs scattered across the globe, but the very first one, known as The Mother Club, was founded in Greenock in 1801. There are now more than 250 around the world connected to the Robert Burns World Federation.

In Imperial Russia Burns was translated into Russian and became a source of inspiration for the ordinary, oppressed Russian people - he became known as 'the people's poet' of Russia. The former Soviet Union was the first country in the world to honour Burns with a commemorative stamp in 1956, marking the 160th anniversary of the poet's death. The first British stamp featuring the bard was not until 25th January 1966.



Pedestrian crossings in Japan play a rendition of Burns' 'Coming Through The Rye' to indicate it is safe to cross.

Auld Lang Syne is considered a song of friendship in China. Known as You Yi Di Jiu Tian Chang (Friendship Forever and Ever) with the same sentiment as the original but some differences in the lyrics. The song is played at graduations, formal gatherings and parties rather than at New Year. The link can be traced back to a 1940's Hollywood movie called 'Waterloo Bridge' which was hugely popular in China after the Second World War. The love story features a beautiful scene of the two stars dancing to Auld Lang Syne.

The town of Mosgiel, near Dunedin in New Zealand, is named after Burns' farm in Ayrshire.

Burns' 'My Heart's in the Highlands' was translated and adopted as the marching song of the Chinese resistance fighters in the Second World War.

The oldest existing Statue of Burns is believed to be in Camperdown, Australia. Carved by John Greenshields in the 1830s, it was shipped to Australia in the 1850s and has remained there since.

For Alexander the medieval Brig O'Doon always held a special appeal.

Its steep arch of stone appeared to leap across the River Doon like a galloping steed, framed by billowing, yellowing greens and deep burgundy reds - it is no wonder it featured so prominently in Burns' Tam o'Shanter Poem! Despite being fascinated by the poem from a young age, Alexander Goudie didn't make his first visit to the brig until his late 50's and was instantly struck by its cinematic scale and intimidating quality, the perfect setting for this nightmarish tale. He'd expected it to be smaller somehow. Pictures he'd seen had not done it justice!

Standing on the North bank in his green tailored 3-piece tweed suit and bunnet, he snapped some pictures on his compact Canon. Of course, like other photos he'd seen, these wouldn't truly capture the grandeur before him, that was still to come. He always drew out his camera with reluctance, preferring to capture his subjects in sketches and in-person sittings.

'Now the real work begins, he thought to himself, extracting a well-used A3 sketch pad and pencil from his shoulder bag. 10 minutes on a small cluster of weeds on the bank. 15 on the treetops. And another few on the rippling river. Hastily capturing snippets of the Autumn Day in doodles and scrawls. Details which would feed into the whole, to capture the scene and paint the vivid images of Tam's race across the bridge.

He could almost hear the screech of the witches and ghouls pursuing Tam and trusty Meg as they fled across the ancient stones.
Hooves clattering on the cobbles.

Written by Toria Cassidy
Original sketches by Alexander Goudie

And his mind wandered back to a tale he often told his three children. Of an Isobel Gowdie, a Nairn woman who confessed to witchcraft in 1662, immortalised in the symphony *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* by James MacMillan. Surely, she was a relation!

Alexander was fond of telling stories, especially the creepy and macabre. Scaring his son Lachlan on a Sunday trip to Girvan with tales of the bloated body found by the lonely lighthouse on the water's edge. As an art teacher he would start his classes with a vivid tale to stir the imagination, leading some parents to complain he was giving their children nightmares!

But no story he told would inspire his own art as much as the apocryphal Tam o'Shanter poem, "a gothic tale, strewn with vivid and awesome images", which had captured his imagination since childhood. Capturing these scenes in all their grim and haunting glory would be a challenge, one he would relish.

This research trip had been successful, he thought to himself. And there would be many more to come. But, now to Troon for a family Seafood feast of lobster - and a tall glass of white wine to swirl visions of hooves on stone, stormy nights, and devilish beasts through his mind.

