



Patrick Don Swan



Superlatives are used like confetti throughout all aspects of modern life. Exaggerated praise, especially for the seemingly mundane, dilutes the truly outstanding in all shapes and forms. There seems to be a headlong rush into upgrading the ordinary and downgrading the extraordinary in the pursuit of what is described as a level playing field.

In the long history of Kirkcaldy Town Council there have been any number of outstanding figures who have helped shape and mould the 'Lang Toun'. These men and women, in the years between 1582 and 1976, gave their services for free having as their only motivation the town's best interests. Financial reward was not/could not be a prime driver.

Since 1976, and the re-organisation of local government, councillors are handsomely paid on the basis that remuneration should help attract a better quality to their ranks. It is up to each reader to determine whether they believe, in the near 50 years since the advent of paid councillors becoming the norm, that towns and cities are better run, money better spent, and services more effective.

This month's 'Object' is a man whom very few, if any, who have served Kirkcaldy, can stand comparison with. In fact, on reflection, none can. We have often stated that, for a significant part of the 19th century,

Patrick Don Swan strode the municipal stage like a colossus, without our necessarily backing up the statement.

The time has come to recount his story and to record the benefits which, especially as Provost, he gave and brought to Kirkcaldy in both its original and then extended form. Make no mistake, not only did Patrick Don Swan give his services for no pecuniary reward, he also liberally used his own finances to bring improvements to the town. There is always the argument that he could do so given his wealth – but like many other philanthropists – he did not have to!

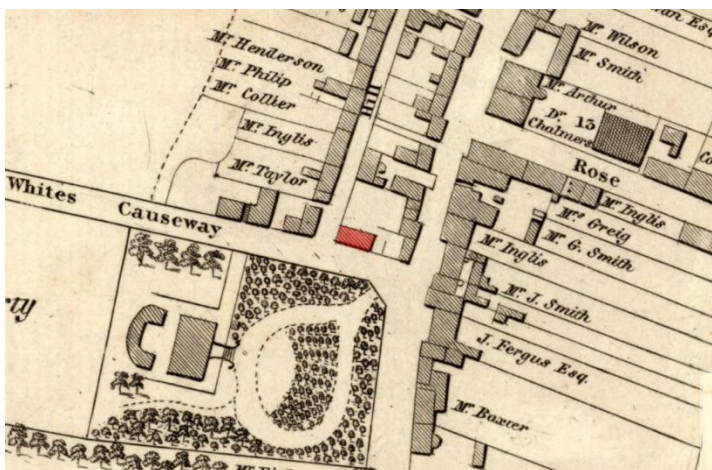
His reward was simply improving Kirkcaldy and the lives of the townspeople and he did that in no small measure! Perhaps his die was already cast and predetermined, as his father William Swan had taken a deep interest in local affairs. He held the office of Provost of Kirkcaldy three times in 1814-15, 1820-21 and 1830-31.

William Swan was a native of Crail but found his way via Leven to Kirkcaldy where he became a successful merchant and shipowner. His trade was importing flax and spinning it into yarn. He married Margaret Hutchison from Wemyss on the 17th November 1807 and together they had eight children. The Church Registers, which predate the 1854 legislation, are often fraught with issues – in this case the marriage is recorded in both Wemyss and Kirkcaldy, so our best guess is Kirkcaldy banns and a Wemyss

wedding. The couple had a total of eight children in less than 11 years:-

- Patrick Don Swan 19/08/1808
- Sophia 11/02/1810*
- Thomas 27/03/1811
- William 01/10/1812
- Alexander 04/09/1814
- David 03/12/1815*
- Robert 22/06/1817*
- James 07/03/1819*

*The only daughter and three boys did not reach adulthood.



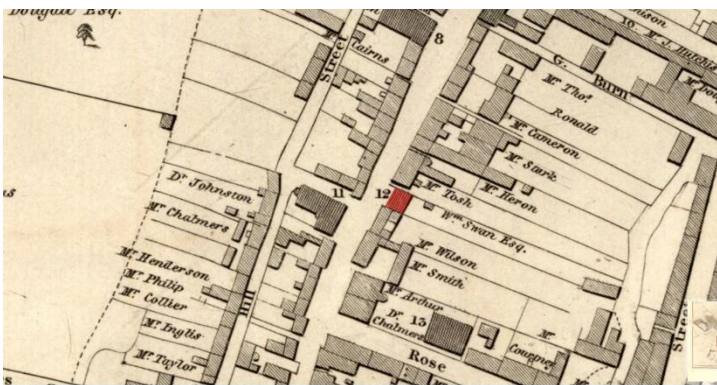
Patrick was born in his parent's house which was in Whites Causeway and is believed to be the property which sat just below the entrance to Hill Street. A map of the area is shown with the property itself highlighted in red.

Patrick was born two months premature and was considered to be a weak and puny baby with some doubts as to whether he would survive. He certainly did and grew into a tall strapping man but, for much of his early years, he had a premonition that his would be a short life. He never insured himself as he believed to do so would not be a good bargain for any insurance company.

It was at this stage, months after Patrick was born, that the Glasgow Bank made the decision to open a branch in Kirkcaldy with their securing a property on the High Street. The bank had only commenced business on the 15th May 1809. Included in the list of partners, announced in the *Caledonian Mercury* of the 18th, was none other than Walter Fergus, merchant of Kirkcaldy. His Kirkcaldy address stood out in a plethora of London and Glasgow based individuals. For interest, we reproduce the list of partners and it gives an indication of the circles in which Walter Fergus moved. Interesting to note that the bank was a partnership and not the safer limited liability style which became the norm in later decades.

NOTICE
THE GLASGOW BANK COMPANY commence
business at their Office in Glasgow, the 15th day
of May current.
Their Notes will be signed by
W. B. CABELL, Cashier—and
ROBERT BROWN, Accountant.
The Agents in London are,
RANSOM, MORLAND, & CO.
And in Edinburgh,
THO. KINNEAR & SONS.
The Names of the Partners are as follow, viz.
Right Hon. Charles, Lord Kinnaird.
William Morland, Banker, Pall Mall, London.
Henry Boase, do. do. do.
Samuel Nicholson, Merchant in London.
Thomas Haydon, do. in do.
Walter Fergus of Strathore, Merchant in Kirkcaldy.
John Baxter of Idvies, Merchant in Dundee.
William Roberts, Banker in do.
James Dennistoun, Merchant in Glasgow.
Robert Blair do in do.
Peter Macadam of Easter House, do. in do.
William Taylor, Merchant in do.
John Tennent, Brewer in do.
Alexander Mc Gregor, Merchant in Liverpool.
John Grundy, jun. Woollen Manufacturer in Bury,
Lancashire.
W. B. Cabbell, Cashier.
Robert Brown, Accountant.
Glasgow, May 9. 1809.

The bank approached William Swan to act as their Agent and he accepted the position which allowed him to move to the Bank House on the High Street. It may well be that it was Walter Fergus's influence which saw William appointed. He continued to manage his business along with his bank duties. John Wood's 1824 map of Kirkcaldy, shown here, once again comes to our



aid and the Glasgow Bank building is highlighted in red.

Patrick's early schooling was at the Burgh School where 100 years earlier Adam Smith had been a pupil. The headteacher at the time was considered both aged and weak and several of the burghers got together with the intention of funding and opening an alternative school. This was duly opened in Hill Place very close to its junction with Oswald's Wynd. It was apparently known as 'Laverock's School'. William Swan was instrumental in bringing Edward Irving as Master. Irving, who went on to become an outstanding preacher, had been the Master of the Mathematical School in Haddington before moving to Kirkcaldy in 1812. He studied for the ministry during his period in Kirkcaldy and was ordained in 1815.

Swan and the other magistrates were acutely aware of the shortcomings of the Burgh School and managed to 'bribe' the existing headteacher to retire. It was the Parish Minister, Mr Martin, who interviewed and suggested acceptance of his replacement who was none other than Thomas Carlyle. Carlyle was, in 1816, initially engaged for one year at a salary of £80. He immediately struck up a friendship with William Swan and young Patrick was moved back to the Burgh School. Carlyle was also engaged as a private tutor to Patrick which turned into a lifelong friendship. In later life Carlyle was often a guest at Swan's Kirkcaldy and Springfield homes. However, despite William Swan's best efforts, Carlyle resigned his post in October

1818 and left for Edinburgh. It was not long before Patrick left Kirkcaldy to attend Edinburgh University taking up residence with an aunt during the period.

Patrick had always been viewed as a serious and diligent scholar and matters were no different at University. He benefited from the tuition and friendship of Carlyle and the description portrayed was of Patrick being a painstaking and successful student. As he had achieved in Kirkcaldy, some prizes came his way in elocution and other branches.

Despite his successful education the world of teaching or academia was not for Patrick – his ambition was to join his father in the flax business

which he duly did in 1825 at the age of 17. Again, John Wood and his map allow us to highlight the site of the flax business.

His brother, Thomas,

was working on a part time basis both in the Glasgow Bank and the family firm.



William Swan passed away in 1833 leaving Patrick, at the age of 25, as the principal of the firm. With the death of William the bank offered the post of Agent to Thomas but Patrick induced him to reject the offer and stay with the family firm on a full time basis. Sadly, Thomas only outlived his father by

seven years. There can be little doubt that the deaths of a sister, four brothers and his father, had a profound effect on Patrick and possibly explains why in later life he gave up both his time and wealth to help the town and its people. This was our working hypothesis but later in our research we came upon the major driver.

It appears that at some point, following the death of William Swan, the business became Swan Brothers (Patrick and Thomas). What is without question is that it expanded and extended to such a degree that William and Alexander were assumed as partners in the firm and for almost 50 years it was one of Fife's, never mind Kirkcaldy's largest enterprises. There was a spinning mill in Coal Wynd, another in Kinghorn, yet another in Dundee, a mill in Linktown, a bleachfield at Tyrie and a mill in Cowan Street. Also, into the equation were several sailing ships which imported the raw flax. The firm's offices were for many years at the top of Rose Street.

It was in 1834 that Patrick Don Swan first joined Kirkcaldy Town Council. At that time Kirkcaldy lived up to its soubriquet of the Lang Toon. It was still several decades before the neighbouring areas of Pathhead, Sinclairtown, Gallatown and the Links, became part of the extended Kirkcaldy. The town literally ran the mile from the bottom of the Arcade to the East Bridge. The population at the time was around 4,000. It was a time of change for the town, especially in terms of the harbour. Its long history as a seaport was gradually drawing to a close and

although there was still around one hundred sailing craft their number was firmly on the wane. The ships which remained were mainly connected with whaling or the linen industry with Swan having a foot in both camps. We reproduce a piece from the *Fifeshire Journal* of the 4th

James Aytoun, flaxspinner, Abbot hall; Alexander Beveridge, shipowner, i'irkakly; Thomas Beveridge, merchant, do; William Beveridge, manufacturer, do; William Black, writer, do; Alexander Crombie, ironmonger, do; James Cumming, bookseller, do; James Dick, Jun. candlemaker, do; Alexander Malcolm, Sen. shipowner, do; Alexander Malcolm, Jun. wood-merchant, do; Alexander Murray, printer, do; David Nicol, residenter, do; Thomas Russell, engineer, do; Patrick Don Swan, merchant, do; John Thomson, writer, do; John Wemyss, writer, do; William Wishart, merchant, do.

Journal of the 4th October 1834. It lists the men standing for election to the Town Council the following month

– and there is Patrick D. Swan amongst a plethora of the great and the good.

It is always difficult to be certain when records are sparse but there is one belief which is certainly incorrect. It is often advanced that when Patrick joined the Council – his father was the Provost – thereby creating the rare occurrence of father and son serving on the same council. However, William Swan died in 1833, so while that was impossible, there is no question that the 1823 badge from the Provost's chain was worn by each.



In 1837, following the death of Colonel Patrick Don of Springfield, Patrick Swan inherited Springfield Estate near Cupar. We have indulged

in some research here as becoming the proprietor of this modest estate enrolled Patrick amongst the 'county gentlemen'. One benefit was his appointment as a Justice of the Peace and a Commissioner of Supply. He certainly gave to the county a considerable portion of the time he did not devote to his own burgh. He had to have made an impact as, ultimately, he was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of the county.

So who was this Colonel Patrick Don? He died on the 23rd of January 1837. We find in *The Perthshire Constitutional and Journal* of the 25th January, that he had been in poor health for some time - "his constitution broken in the service of his country". He had joined the army at a young age and appears to have served for a lengthy period in the East Indies. On retiring from the army he returned to his native county where he took a deep interest in the affairs of Cupar Parish.

His birth was traced to the parish of Crail where he was born to William Don and Anna Blair on the 16th May 1756. He married on the 17th December 1809 to Katherine or Catherine Millie from Dysart. They appear to have had no issue.

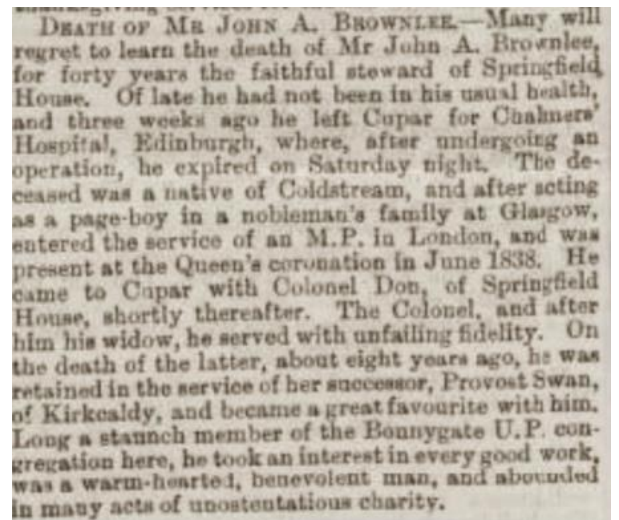
However, a sister, Elizabeth Don, was unearthed and she had married a William Swan, again in Crail, on the 24th April 1772. This would appear to be the connection as four children were born to the couple:-

Agnes 28/02/1773
William 11/12/1774*
Barbara 18/11/1781
Patrick 14/03/1784

We are convinced that this William* is the father of Provost Patrick Don Swan. The limited information prevents certainty but this theory seems highly plausible and probable.

Swan may have inherited in 1837 or perhaps he had to await the death of the Colonel's widow in 1868.

We tend to favour the latter when we establish there is a mention of Provost Swan in the *Fifeshire Journal* of 10th October 1878. The article related to the death of a John A. Brownlee who had been the Steward at Springfield House for upwards of 40 years. It mentioned that he



DEATH OF MR JOHN A. BROWNLEE.—Many will regret to learn the death of Mr John A. Brownlee, for forty years the faithful steward of Springfield House. Of late he had not been in his usual health, and three weeks ago he left Cupar for Chalmers' Hospital, Edinburgh, where, after undergoing an operation, he expired on Saturday night. The deceased was a native of Coldstream, and after acting as a page-boy in a nobleman's family at Glasgow, entered the service of an M.P. in London, and was present at the Queen's coronation in June 1838. He came to Cupar with Colonel Don, of Springfield House, shortly thereafter. The Colonel, and after him his widow, he served with unfailing fidelity. On the death of the latter, about eight years ago, he was retained in the service of her successor, Provost Swan, of Kirkcaldy, and became a great favourite with him. Long a staunch member of the Bonnygate U.P. congregation here, he took an interest in every good work, was a warm-hearted, benevolent man, and abounded in many acts of unostentatious charity.

had served the Colonel, then his widow, and after her death was retained by Provost Patrick D. Swan. Newspapers of the time make many mentions of Colonel Don's widow in connection with farming and gardening at Springfield House between 1837 and 1868. The possibility exists that the widow had life-rent of the estate, although Swan was the owner, but it remains conjecture. This would have allowed him to inherit, if not occupy, as articles on the subject clearly state that he inherited from Colonel Don – not the widow.

The year 1837 saw a local man suffering transportation to Australia for a period of seven years. The *Perthshire Advertiser* of the 28th September 1837 carried a report that:- David Millie Arnot, bleacher, Pathhead, was found guilty of a breach of trust in that in the May and June of that year he appropriated 2,200 spindles of yarn belonging to Patrick Don Swan for his own purposes.

18. DAVID MILLIE ARNOT, bleacher, Kirkcaldy, was accused of breach of trust and embezzlement, in so far as having, in May and June last, been entrusted by Patrick Don Swan, with several spindles of yarn for the purpose of being bleached, which in place of being re-delivered to the said Patrick Don Swan was appropriated by the panel to his own use. The panel pled guilty to one of the charges, and was sentenced to seven years' transportation.

Swan had sent the yarn to Arnot for bleaching. This snippet was extracted from a full report of the trials held at

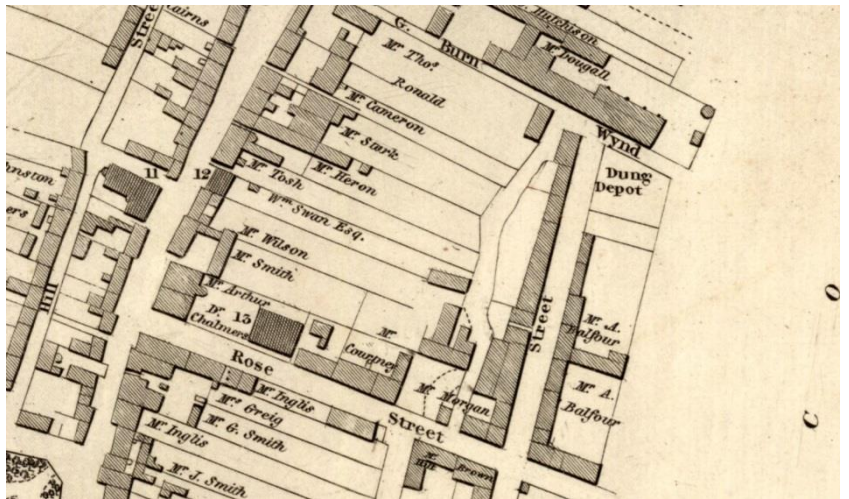
Perth Circuit Court that week. Twelve of the sixty cases related to Fifeshire inhabitants. The incidence of transportation, for up to 14 years, for often seemingly innocuous 'crimes', is quite staggering. The family followed the father to Australia and one son certainly made a name for himself in the world of biscuits – more to follow in a later Object!

Returning to the main narrative, if the truth be told, the council appeared to have done very little to improve Kirkcaldy over the first few decades of the 19th century. Their main preoccupation appeared to be selling off the acres of the town's common land which, in fairness, was not restricted to Kirkcaldy. Kirkcaldy does at least have the excuse that initially it was done to raise money to repair the harbour

after a great storm in the mid 1700s. That said, as mentioned in previous narratives, Kirkcaldy fell foul of court rulings in this endeavour. The only remaining portion of the 8.172 acres granted to the town by Charles I in 1644 is the Volunteer's Green.

The town was a far different one when Patrick Swan joined the council to the one he eventually left. Most water came from wells which were fed from the high ground above the town. Drainage could hardly be described as anything other than primitive. The sloping ground allowed the burns to be used as sewers carrying the refuse into the Forth. Refuse was piled up beside doors and the sanitary arrangements normally consisted of throwing the contents into channels of stagnant water lying in the street. The council employed men to remove such refuse and carry it to the dung depot which lay at

the junction of George Burn Wynd and Cowan Street. Again, a portion of John Wood's map is attached showing the site. An adjacent property is shown as Mr Balfour's mill



which in time Swan took over the ownership of – doubtless workers could enjoy the healthy tang of a melange of dung and the sea!

On his entry to the council he did not make immediate waves. He was well known in the town

and considered to have good business acumen and abilities. He took a deep interest in the affairs of the council which his father had presided over. In 1837 he was proposed for the post of Treasurer although the proposal was defeated. Whether because of this or not, he did not stand for re-election in 1837 and returned entirely to his business life. That said, the connection between the Swan family and the council was not broken as his brother, Thomas, was elected in his place.

As mentioned previously, Patrick Don Swan, became

a Justice of the Peace and the appointment was first mentioned in the *Fife Herald* of the 25th January 1838. He was certainly in good company as two other Kirkcaldy men were appointed at the same time. One was banker, George Anderson, with the other being David Landale of the 'last duel' fame. David Landale was Provost in 1835 and George Anderson followed him in 1836 and was again elected to the Chair in 1839. Patrick Don Swan followed them in 1841. A little

NEW COMMISSION OF THE JUSTICES OF PEACE FOR THE COUNTY OF FIFE.—In the new Commission of the Peace for this county, the following gentlemen's names appear to have been added as Justices:—

John Adamson, Esq. of South Collarrie.
 Alexander Adamson, Esq. of North Priory.
 George Anderson, Esq. banker, Kirkcaldy.
 John Barren, Esq. of Baron Hall.
 John Elliot Drinkwater Bethune, Esq. of Balfour.
 George Birrell, Esq. manufacturer, Dunfermline.
 David Carswell, jun. Esq. of Rathillet.
 Alexander Corstorphine, Esq. of Pittowie.
 Andrew Corstorphine, Esq. of Kingsbarns.
 Alexander Craig, Esq. of Kinghorn.
 James Dingwall, Esq. of Tarvitmill.
 Dr Daun of St Andrews.
 David Dougald, Esq. of Scotsraig.
 Edward Ellice, jun. Esq. M.P.
 William Erskine, Esq. St Andrews.
 James Farnie, Esq. proprietor, Burntisland.
 William Forsyth, Esq. of Clayton.
 David Fleming, Esq. of Myreside.
 Dr James Guthrie of Newburgh.
 William Erskine Gulland, Esq. of Stripeside.
 John Halket, Esq. R.N.
 James Horsburgh, Esq. of Frith.
 John Jobson, Esq.
 Robert Inglis, Esq. manufacturer, Markinch.
 William Inglis, Esq. of Templehall.
 David Landale, Esq. of Kirkaldy.
 John Miller, Esq. of Kinsleith.
 John Miller, Esq. of Sunnysbank.
 George Moon, Esq. of Russelmill.
 John Peter, Esq. of Kirkland Works.
 James Swan, Esq. of Riggs.
 Patrick Don Swan, Esq. Kirkcaldy.
 James Speed, Esq. merchant, Burntisland.
 Andrew C. Stephen, Esq. of Saline.
 George Tod, Esq. of Luthrie.
 James Thom, Esq. of Cattochill.
 Robert Walker, Esq. of Pittencrieff.
 Patrick Wallace, Esq. of St Andrews.
 William West, Esq. of Foxton.
 James White, Esq. of Arrgask.
 David Yool, Esq. manufacturer.

snippet from the newspaper shows the names of two of the men.

Patrick's brother, Thomas, died in 1840 and once again despite thorough searches of the Church Registers we failed to locate his death being recorded. Enough is enough and a search of the

burials in Kirkcaldy's Old Kirk graveyard produced the answers! William Swan died on the 24th August 1833 with Thomas passing away on the 20th September 1840. Both are recorded as being merchants. The records and the gravestone also suggests that; Sophia, Robert, David and James, are contained in what must be more than one lair, although no dates of death are recorded.



On the death of Thomas, Patrick was asked to return to the council and, in November 1841, he was unanimously elected Provost. One of his first actions as Provost was one which was characteristic of the man. There was a severe trade depression in 1842 and many men were thrown out of work. Swan, on his own initiative, employed a large number of these men to improve the streets in parts of the town. At the next meeting of the Town Council he not only secured authority for his actions but managed to recover the sum of £30 from the Corporation funds to offset some of the wages he was paying. There can be little doubt that this act of benevolence, and a zeal for improvements during his first year as Chief Magistrate, would stand him in good stead with members of the public.

In the same year the Provost took up the matter of

harbour improvements. Trade had been falling off and to some extent the limited accommodation for vessels was to blame along with the fact it was rather exposed and therefore liable to silting up. In August of 1842 a Committee of which he was convenor recommended that the piers should be extended and a breakwater constructed. The cost was estimated at £40,000. Also at this stage rather than the Town Council being the harbour managers, a new supervisory body, The Harbour Commissioners, was brought into being. The commissioners were to be elected by the townspeople of Kirkcaldy with the assistance of a further two commissioners from the County of Fife. The elected Provost would serve as Chairman. Sadly, the breakwater was seriously damaged by a storm soon after its construction and surprisingly not replaced/repaired.

After this extension was completed although retaining an active interest in the harbour, never in the remainder of his periods in office did Swan embrace any further large-scale schemes for improving or extending it. In 1878, there was a very strong lobby for improving or replacing the harbour. Despite almost a year being spent in heated debate, both for and against the proposal, the Provost retained a neutral stance. He based his position on the belief that he was too old to administer such a huge undertaking.

On the 16th January 1843 a youthful Provost Swan chaired a meeting in Bethelfield Church with the

KIRKALDY.

ANTI-CORN-LAW DEPUTATION.—On the forenoon of Monday last, Messrs R. Cobden, M.P., Colonel P. Thompson, and Joseph Bright, a deputation from the English Anti-Corn-Law League, addressed a public meeting, held in Bethel-field chapel, on the subject of the Corn-laws. Monday being a holiday, the chapel was well filled: the celebrity and talent of the speakers may be, no doubt, given as one of the reasons for the great number present, which comprised sections from all parties and classes of the community. Be-

purpose of securing support to agitate for the abolition of the Corn Laws. The meeting was addressed by two of the

major figures supporting abolition – Richard Cobden and John Bright. Eventually abolished in 1846, and covered in past stories, the laws protected British landowners by setting minimum prices and taxing what would be cheaper imported corn. Provost Swan instituted the first Freedom of the Burgh Award to Cobden to recognise his outstanding work in the campaign.

In 1845 there was an unseemly dispute over the ringing of the town bell (this was the original town bell, not its replacement of 1882). The town bell was housed in the steeple of the Town Hall (see Object 28) and for many years had been rung prior to the various services of the Parish Church.

However, the 1843 Disruption meant that the majority of the inhabitants were no longer adherents of the Established Church. The bell was on Council property and was therefore under the control of the Provost and Magistrates. Provost Swan was one of the leading lights in the new Free Church and that may have led to the Council stopping the bell calling the Parish Church congregation to worship.

Two meetings were held in the Town House in response to the Council's action. The *Fife Herald* reported that “there was exhibited such conduct as

reflects no great credit on those who bear the name of Magistrates. The council were determined that the town bell should not be rung on Sundays, exclusively to suit the hours of the Established Kirk assembling for worship”.

Matters rapidly descended into chaos with the Church, through its Minister, Mr Brydon, serving a summons on each individual Council member. To counter that there was even talk of the Council approaching the Court of Session to give them exclusive right to the use of the town bell.

The *Fife Herald* of the 20th February went as far as suggesting that Provost Swan had resigned during the second meeting. By the following week the same paper reported that some of the Council members had thought better of their actions and that hopefully peace would soon be restored. The article ended by hoping that Swan would soon return to his place – which clearly he did.

That said, it must be possible/probable that this episode led to the decision covered in the following paragraph. There can be no doubt that as the *Herald* pointed out “they had neither added to their influence, honour or popularity”. Error of Judgement

THE BELL CONTROVERSY.—The simple interrogatory, “Who'll toll the bell?” familiar in the nursery rhymes of our country, has been again re-agitated here by our savans and ecclesiastics. The inhabitants generally have taken no public or prominent part in the controversy, in the settlement of which they consider they have no particular local or general interest. We understand the Town-Council some time ago had given it a quietus by passing a general order to ring the town bell at a certain hour on Sunday to suit all sects or creeds of the Christian Church here, both Established and Voluntary. This resolution appears to have been either rescinded or not rigidly adhered to; for the bell controversy has again revived, and has become a grave subject of strife and unseemly contention among our burgh officials. The Kirk-session and the members and office-bearers of our churches of various denominations have also entered with zest into the spirit of the controversy. The Town-Council, in the meantime, at a late meeting passed a resolution in opposition to the views entertained by the Kirk-session, to exercise full or undivided authority over the tolbooth bell. The friends of the Established Church state that a resolution passed by the Council on the subject is illegal, and that, besides, they have the right of prescription for the space of two hundred years, during which time the bell has been rung only for the Established Church. On this plea they have resolved to raise an action of reduction against the Magistrates and Town-Council, each of the members of which have been served regularly with the notice. It is reported that Provost Swan, at the meeting on Friday evening, was so much dissatisfied with the untoward position and the working opposition on the bell controversy, that he resigned his office as provost of the burgh.

by Provost Swan?

Patrick Don Swan signified his wish to resign from the Provostship in 1845 but remained on the Town Council for a further year. At that point he resigned altogether to allow him to engage all his energies in consolidating and extending the family firm.

In April 1850 Provost Russell resigned from his position following the failure of his substantial works. Swan was co-opted to the Council in April of 1850 with the sole intention of placing him in the Provost's chair in the November. However, the proposal to elect him was not carried through and it appears that, while remaining on the Council, he did not attend any meetings for the rest of the term resigning again in November 1850.

It was not until 1853, after a three year absence, that he returned to the fold and from then until his final retiral in 1886 was a continuous member.

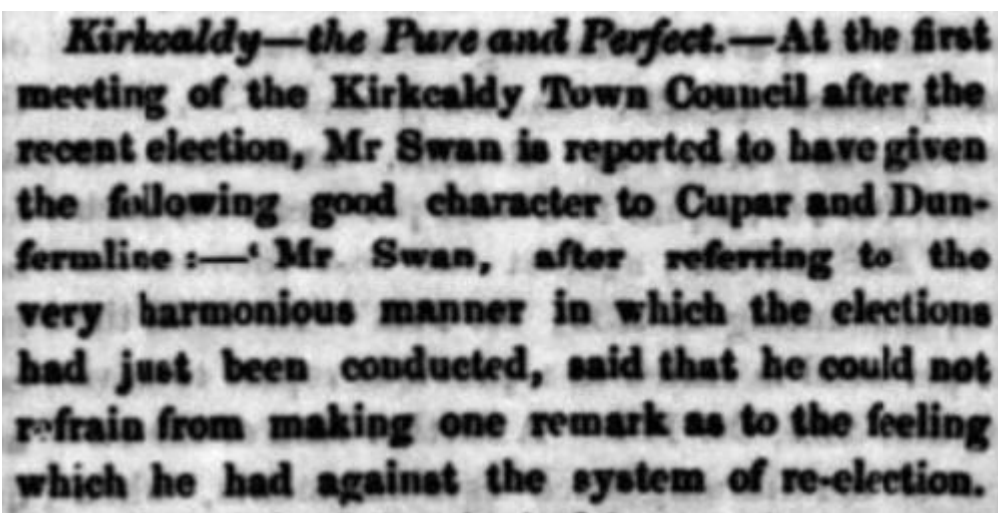
The Provosts who occupied the post between his first and second terms were:-

- Samuel Davidson 1845
- Thomas Russell 1847
- Edward Sang 1850
- Henry Beveridge 1853
- James Birrell 1859

While the essence of this narrative is to extol the virtues of Provost Swan, it is not a blinkered

narrative. We have perhaps seen “the toys being thrown out of the pram” on leaving the Council in 1850. He was certainly a tad naughty in 1856 when he torpedoed Henry Beveridge's re-election as Provost. Given the thrust of his argument, it is all the more surprising that in time he spent 26 consecutive years as the Provost.

The article in question appeared in the *Fifeshire Journal* of the 13th November 1856 and relates to



Kirkcaldy—the Pure and Perfect.—At the first meeting of the Kirkcaldy Town Council after the recent election, Mr Swan is reported to have given the following good character to Cupar and Dunfermline :—' Mr. Swan, after referring to the very harmonious manner in which the elections had just been conducted, said that he could not refrain from making one remark as to the feeling which he had against the system of re-election.

the first meeting of the Council after the elections. The heading was *Kirkcaldy – The Pure and the Perfect*. “After

having referred to the very harmonious manner in which the Kirkcaldy elections had been conducted he said he could not refrain from making one remark as to the feeling he had against re-election. He acknowledged that he had been a transgressor in this respect in times past, but latterly he had kept aloof from office on this very ground. Mr Drysdale would bear him out in saying for long no re-elections were allowed in Kirkcaldy and the consequence at the time was that affairs were conducted in a very healthy manner, while in Cupar and other places where the Magistrates never changed, the utmost rottenness and mismanagement prevailed. In Dunfermline, the Provost was never changed – the

same individual lived and died as Provost. Now, it must strike many that Mr Swan, Kirkcaldy, reading a lecture to other burgh councils is very much like Satan reproving sin. However, this affords another illustration of how difficult it is for other burghs or individuals to see themselves as others see them”.

Goodnight to Henry Beveridge's hopes of another term! It has to be said that given the reign that commenced four years later it was a case of “do what I do – not what I say”. Takes a little polish off the good Provost Swan?

It was in the decade between 1850 and 1860 that Patrick Swan came to become recognised as a leading light in the town and it also saw St. Brycedale becoming his home. In the late 1840s the town suffered from a severe depression in trade and there were many failures. Chief amongst these was the extensive business of the afore-mentioned Thomas Russell who had been the Provost as recently as 1847. This led to his estate and mansion house of St. Brycedale being put up for sale and it was Patrick Don Swan who secured the purchase. For close on 40 years it was the scene of enjoyable gatherings and private meetings on some proposed improvement to the town, or to the Free Church, and also schemes to improve the moral welfare of the community. It



would seem that the whole family resided in St. Brycedale, not just Mr Swan. That said, by 1860, when Provost Swan started out on his marathon innings as Civic Head, it was only himself and Alexander who remained alive and living in the house.

Over 40 years later, as his life drew towards its close, Provost Swan entertained an idea to leave the house and the grounds as a gift to the burgh. However, as we shall see this proved not to be feasible.

Death was never far away from this particular family as was proved yet again between 1855-1859. In January of 1855 his mother passed away and four years later he lost his brother, William, at the relatively young age of 47. William appeared to be a modest and amiable man and managed to find his way into Matthew Forrest Connolly's magnum opus – *The Biographical Dictionary of the Eminent Men of Fife of Past and Present Times, Natives of the County or Connected with it by Property, Residence, Office, Marriage or Otherwise.*

Astonishingly, it was only William, from the family, who found his way into the tome which, once again, raised speculation as to exactly what in Connolly's eyes constituted being 'eminent'.

The book was published in 1866 but a little research reveals that the entry was copied, word for word, from the *Fifeshire Advertiser* of March 1859. The snapshot certainly gives an indication of the family's

character and is worth repeating here:-

"An active partner of a leading firm, that of Swan Brothers – a firm that would be accepted, even in the greatest marts of commerce, as a type of all that is upright and honourable in the character of the British merchant – Mr Swan was necessarily widely known and it is only repeating the general sentiment that he was as widely respected. Mr William Swan gave special attention to the shipping department of his business and was warmly loved and respected by the captains and crews of the several vessels owned by the firm – his personal attentions to their wants and comforts being unceasing. For every case of charity, private or public, Mr Swan, like his brothers, had the free hand and open heart; indeed, with him the assisting of the unfortunate was a daily habit, and with all this giving there was a characteristic absence of the least appearance of ostentation".

There is a body of opinion that the year 1860 brought the dawn of a new era to Kirkcaldy. In this year Patrick Don Swan allowed himself to be nominated for the position of Provost and in November of that year he was duly elected. He appears to have entered into improving the town with a vigour and for close on a generation he was the centre of influence in the burgh. His public work was not confined to matters municipal. His money and influence remained as a support to the Free Church and he showed the keenest interest in education in the town. He worked tirelessly to improve the roads and the streets, also lending his

influence for almost every movement intended for the betterment of the inhabitants. Without question his personality brought order and dignity to Council proceedings. Very quickly bye-laws were brought into force for better regulation of the town's streets.

He very soon began to encourage habits of thrift and temperance amongst the townspeople. He did the former through a long association with the Savings Bank movement and the latter by attempting to reduce the number of licenced premises in the town.

1862 saw him taking up the important work of widening and also reducing the gradient of the narrow and steep thoroughfare known as the Path. The Path at the time was the main access to Kirkcaldy from the north and east. The steep and winding slope always led to difficulties both ascending and descending with the issue never being fully solved until the opening of the Victoria Viaduct some forty years later.

THE PATH.

THERE can be no doubt that a great improvement has been effected by the widening of the Path, and as Mr M. Nairn states in his letter addressed to the Council, it has done more to join Kirkcaldy and Pathhead than any Act of Parliament could ever do. These Acts are good and necessary things in themselves, but without material help to begin with they are of little use; and it was well, therefore, before getting a Burgh Extension Bill passed, to widen and improve the highway between the most important sections of the new burgh. The improvement has been carried out at a great deal of trouble and expense; but thanks to Provost Swan, Mr M. Nairn, and some others, the work is accomplished and most of the money subscribed. But there is still a hundred or two wanting, and we hope this will soon be forthcoming. A little generous effort would do it. The Pathhead Feuars have given £100, and the Kirkcaldy Town Council £50. A very few more handsome subscriptions would clear the Path entirely of debt; and form the nucleus of a fund for further improvements in the same direction.

ELECTION OF MAGISTRATES.—The Town Council met on Thursday evening last week, when all the new Councillors were present, and took the usual oaths. Mr P. D. Swan was, as we had anticipated, elected Provost. Bailie Watson, Bailie Spears, and Treasurer White were all re-elected to their respective offices. The proceedings were conducted with the greatest decorum, and, we believe, this will be found a feature characteristic of the new reign, the former scenes and rows which made our Council meetings notorious having very little chance of being repeated under Provost Swan. Except appointing a small committee to co-operate with the magistrates in watching after the safety of the Sands Road, there was no other business transacted by the meeting.

CHURCHING OF THE COUNCIL.—Our new Provost, it is well known, is a zealous Free Churchman, but this did not hinder him announcing on Thursday evening to the councillors that he intended to observe the old custom, by going to the Parish Church on Sabbath first. This liberality of the Provost had the effect of calling out the great majority of the council, and for many years the "kirk" has not been so well attended as it was on Sabbath last.

The Provost was re-elected in 1863 and again in November of 1865. This meant that it was the fifth time he had been elected as Chief Magistrate. There can be little doubt that the people of Kirkcaldy recognised Patrick Swan as an important, valuable and

impressive figurehead. It was decided that he should be the recipient of a public dinner to recognise his achievements and in particular to being elected Provost for a fifth term.

A lengthy but interesting article appeared in the *Fifeshire Journal* of the 16th November 1865. It was a report of the Magistrates elected to the County Burghs following the elections earlier in the month.

PROVOST SWAN AND KIRKCALDY AFFAIRS.

SIR,—On the 10th instant, Provost Swan, on being elected again to the office, committed a very glaring act of inconsistency. He thanked the Council and Electors for the honour of being returned to the Provostship, because it was the third time he had been elected; whereas, in 1856, when Provost Beveridge was unanimously re-elected, he, (Mr P. D. Swan), stood up and stated that he objected to the Chief Magistrate being re-elected, and when reminded by Messrs Hill and Fletcher of

All the expected place names were included although Anstruther operated two Councils – Easter and Wester and Kilrenny is surprisingly mentioned as a separate burgh. The Kirkcaldy paragraph reports that the first meeting of the new Council was held in the Town Hall on Friday the 10th with:- “Bailie Beveridge presiding. Councillor Spears proposed that Patrick Don Swan be re-elected as Provost of the burgh. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Whyte and carried unanimously. Councillor Ireland proposed that John Barnet should be re-elected as Bailie. The motion was seconded by Councillor Innes and carried. The Dean of Guild's Council were re-elected. Dr. Young, Dr. Stoddart, the Dean of Guild and Mr James Beveridge, were elected Inspectors of the slaughter-house. Captain Isles and Captain Young were appointed assessors of the Admiralty.

The first advertisements/notice for the dinner were traced to the *Fife Herald* and the *Fifeshire Journal* on the 7th December. That appearing in the *Herald* is far

PUBLIC DINNER TO PATRICK DON SWAN, Esq., PROVOST OF KIRKCALDY.

MR SWAN having been ELECTED for the FIFTH time PROVOST of KIRKCALDY, it was resolved, at a MEETING held in the TOWN HALL, Kirkcaldy, on the 28th ult., that there should be a Public recognition of the services rendered by him as Provost, and with that view he should be invited to a PUBLIC DINNER. Mr SWAN having accepted of the invitation, the DINNER WILL TAKE PLACE in KIRKCALDY on FRIDAY the 15TH DECEMBER CURT.

Dinner on the Table at 5.30. Tickets, including Wines, 10s 6d each, to be had at the GEORGE and NATIONAL HOTELS, Kirkcaldy. Gentlemen intending to be present are specially requested to supply themselves with Tickets not later than TUESDAY the 12TH CURRENT.

Sir ROBERT ANSTRUTHER, Bart., M.P., in the chair.
W. R. SPEARS, Hon. Sec.
Kirkcaldy, 1st December 1865.

clearer and is reproduced here. The dinner including wine was to cost 10/6d or slightly over 50p. The strange thing is that the venue is not mentioned – perhaps it was envisaged/assumed that it would be held in the Town Hall. It can also be seen that the notice was signed

by W.R.Spears as the Hon. Sec. which is surprising as he was the Town Clerk at the time.

Further information was found the following week in the *Dundee Courier* of the 12th. The venue is to be the Corn Exchange and we learn that special trains are being run from Dundee and the south, in order that all Provost Swan's friends can be present.

The Scotsman of the 13th had a completely different layout to the advertisement and included the fact that “Ladies” tickets were available at a cost of 3/- for the platform”. Again, this advertisement is attached for interest. The Lord-Lieutenant, Sir Robert Anstruther Bart., had agreed to preside over proceedings.

PUBLIC DINNER
TO
PATRICK DON SWAN, Esq.,
PROVOST OF KIRKCALDY.

Mr SWAN having been elected for the fifth time Provost of Kirkcaldy, it was resolved at a Meeting held in the TOWN HALL, KIRKCALDY, on the 28th ult., that there should be a Public Recognition of the Services rendered by him as Provost, and with that view he should be invited to a PUBLIC DINNER. Mr SWAN having accepted of the invitation, the Dinner will take place in the

CORN EXCHANGE, KIRKCALDY,
On FRIDAY the 15TH DECEMBER CURRENT.

Chairman.
SIR ROBERT ANSTRUTHER, Bart.,
Lord-Lieutenant of the County.

Dinner on the Table at 5.30. Tickets, including Wines, 10s. 6d. each, to be had at the George and National Hotels, Kirkcaldy. Ladies' Tickets, for the Platform, 3s. each, to be had by applying to the Secretary; and as a limited number only can be issued, early application is necessary.

Gentlemen who have already subscribed, and those intending to be present, are specially requested to supply themselves with Tickets immediately.

W. R. SPEARS, Hon. Secy.
Kirkcaldy, 9th December 1865. 6770

The function took place on the afternoon of Friday the 15th December and there were over 200 guests present. The hall was decorated with evergreens, hothouse plants and flags. The guest list was not restricted to being a *Who's Who* of Kirkcaldy and Fife, with many of those mentioned coming from further afield.

**PUBLIC DINNER IN HONOUR OF
PROVOST SWAN, KIRKCALDY.**

On Friday night, Provost Swan, Kirkcaldy, was entertained to a public dinner in the Corn Exchange, there. The chair was occupied by Sir Robert Anstruther, Bart., M.P., the Lord-Lieutenant of Fifeshire: and there were about 200 gentlemen present. The hall was gaily decorated with flags, flowers, and evergreens, and additional interest was given to the proceedings by the presence of a large number of ladies, who occupied the gallery at the north end of the hall opposite the chairman. On the right hand of the chairman were—Provost Swan, Captain Oswald of Dunnikier, Rev. M. G. Bryden, Mr H. B. Fergusson, Dundee; Mr Lawson of Burnturk, Mr Dewar, Duofermline; Mr Eywater, Wemyss Castle; Professor Swan, St Andrews; Messrs Renny and Small, Dundee. On the left—Sir David Baxter, Mr Alexander Swan, Rev. H.

After the loyal toast it was Sir Robert who spoke at some length on the Provost as a person and civic head. He pointed out "that they were not giving a dinner because they had to, rather it was given in order to thoroughly, genuinely and cordially, to express our feelings of esteem and regard for the man". Other quotes included "he is lavish, not only in money, but of time and of brains – of all, indeed, which in any way could improve the prosperity and happiness of this place – and I do not think it is too much when I say that the Burgh of Kirkcaldy has not just honoured him, but it has honoured itself by now having elected him five times to be its Chief Magistrate".

Swan's reply to the Chairman's kind words did indeed ring a chord with what had been written in relation to his brother William who, as mentioned earlier, had passed away in 1859. He gave the credit for many of the reforms which had been carried out to his late brother, in whose mind they had originated. The Provost confessed that of the

reforms which the brothers had discussed, to date only a few had been carried out. He highlighted three outstanding items which were on his 'to do' list. These were a good road at St Brycedale, a good road to Pathhead and, possibly of most importance, a good supply of water for the town. These lay in the future but were at least on the agenda.

The dinner went on to take the normal shape for the time, in that there was an inordinate number of toasts and replies to toasts. They were of many and varied topics such as the "Educational Institutions of the County". The danger of these things would appear to be that each toast was accompanied with strong drink.

It was rather obvious that the alcohol imbibed had an effect, with the Rev. Jamieson of Pathhead Free Church at one point arising, interrupting, and complaining during the Rev. Brydon's toast to "The Clergy of all Denominations". Quite what his complaint was about was difficult to ascertain due to the noise levels. Jamieson was determined to be heard and the audience did not want him heard! The Chairman was heard to say that he wanted "no sectarian discussion introduced". The Rev. would not sit down until Swan's long time Lieutenant was sent

Rev. Mr JAMIESON, Free Church minister, Pathhead, here rose, amid great uproar and cries of 'Programme,' to address the meeting. He said—I state, first of all, broadly and unequivocally, the Church consists of all believers—(cries of 'Order.' and uproar.) —at the same time, we have just had reference made to varied regiments in the army, but I must say, distinctly and unequivocally, that it is the most distinguished that stands by its colours in the hour of danger. (Hisses, applause, and uproar.) Standing in my position, and seeing present many Free Church ministers in the county of Fife, I have to state my distinct belief that the Free Church of this—(Renewed uproar, cries of 'Put him down,' 'Disgrace,' 'Programme,' &c.)

The CHAIRMAN pleaded for order, but requested Mr Jamieson to introduce no sectarian discussion. (Hear, hear.)

Mr JAMIESON proceeded to make further remarks amid renewed confusion, in the midst of phrases like the following :—' Allow me to speak a few minutes;' ' I wont be put down;' ' You wont allow a man freedom or independence to express an opinion.'

The uproar having lasted for a few minutes,

for in the shape of Bailie Barnet - "The Rev. resumed his seat".

No sooner had that rumpus had died down when a gentleman of the local press insisted that the toast to "the Press" should have followed immediately after the "Pulpit" - which clearly it did not. In the midst of his harangue, the band struck a lively air, which

Mr JAMIESON, however, had scarcely sat down when a new disturbance arose, by a representative of the local press insisting that the toast of the 'Press' should come after the 'Pulpit.' In the midst of the harangue, the band struck up a lively air, which completely drowned the voice of the speaker.

On order being restored, the business of the evening was proceeded with by Mr J. T. Oswald, of Dunnikier, proposing 'The Chairman.' In doing so he hoped that as Sir Robert Anstruther had done them the honour of being present that night, they would endeavour to show him by the manner in which they would join in drinking the bumper he was about to dedicate to his health how much it was appreciated. After passing some high eulogiums on Sir Robert as a private gentleman, and as Lord Lieutenant and M.P. for the county, he gave the toast, which was drunk with all the honours.

This dinner to Provost Swan, of Kirkcaldy, on Friday last week, is alike gratifying as a fit recognition of municipal and social worth, and as a great success in carrying out a good institution characteristically British—for we in these islands never care to do anything generous or noble, without, if at all possible, having a good feast in honour of it. Never was this time-honoured practice more deservedly carried out than when about 250 gentlemen from all parts of Fife, and from Dundee and Edinburgh, and elsewhere, assembled at Kirkcaldy to do honour to the worthy Provost of the "Lang Toun." Sir Robert Anstruther occupied the chair, the duties of which he discharged with an affability and kind of *abandon* which produced the happiest effect in the gathering. All passed off pleasantly, if we except the *hiatus* which was created by a rev. gentleman whose sad want of judgment and a sense of propriety seemed to have lately carried him beyond himself, as the report in another column will testify.

completely drowned out the speakers. The Chairman called for "Bailie Barnet to assist me in the maintenance of order" - which the Bailie certainly achieved. The impression is never far away that when things, of all dimensions, needed fixing - Barnet was the 'fixer' in whatever fashion was required.

With order restored the toasts were completed with only those on the original list allowed to speak. Quite what Anstruther and Swan made of these events is unclear but perhaps it was just an example of the gentry at play. We reproduce remarks from the Fife Herald of the 21st December 1865. At a public dinner given in favour of Dr. Schmitz, the Headmaster of Edinburgh High School, mention was made of the disorderly proceedings. As the say bad

news travels fast!

“In the course of the evening, a number of popular airs were played by the band of the Kinghorn Artillery Volunteers; and a Glee Club, under the leadership of Mr Locke, Dunfermline, sang a number of glees and songs”.

So ended the first public recognition event for Provost Swan.

In his reply the Provost had rightly judged that the last mentioned improvement was the most urgent. It would be wrong to suggest that Kirkcaldy had no fresh water supply until the late 1860s. Bailie Black wrote an article for the *Fifeshire Advertiser* on the 22nd March 1889 on the town's water supply. It was part of a series entitled *Public Men on Public Matters*. The Bailie mentioned that “the *Kirkcaldy Burgh Trust Act* had been passed in 1811 and shortly thereafter water was piped from Raith for the service of the old royal burgh: and forty-four years thereafter the Dunnikier water-works were completed for the benefit of a part of the outlying district”. The Bailie went on to explain that both of these proved serviceable as far as they went, but conjointly they were scarcely adequate for the needs of one third of the population. The bulk of the inhabitants had therefore, up to that time, no other means of supply than that which they obtained from



public and private wells, which was often scant in amount, and in most cases polluted to a greater or lesser extent by surface sewage”.

In the article the Bailie mentioned that the need for better water supply was driven by “the terrible scourge of Asiatic Cholera which visited our shores with fearful effect twice within the first part of the present century”.



Something had to be done and on this basis the Council took matters in hand and in this endeavour were joined by Dysart. The plan was to store water at the gathering area of the Lothrie Stream which lay

near the foot of the Lomond Hills. The proposition was explained at many meetings in the two burghs but did not receive universal acceptance. In fact the plan met with hostile, bitter and determined, opposition in some quarters. The first suggestion that a water supply as such be provided surfaced in 1864. At that stage a sub-committee was formed to investigate the possibilities.

The *Fifeshire Journal* of the 3rd August 1865 reported that on the 31st July a meeting had taken place in the Town Hall. The meeting, chaired by Provost

**THE SUPPLY OF WATER FOR KIRKCALDY.
PUBLIC MEETING.**

A public meeting of the inhabitants of Kirkcaldy and Dysart was held in the Town Hall, Kirkcaldy, on Monday evening, to hear the report of a Sub-Committee, lately appointed, for procuring a more adequate supply of water for household and other purposes, and also to take into consideration the desirability of taking definite steps for that object. The hall was well filled by representatives from the three interested parishes—Kirkcaldy, Abbotshall, and Dysart. Provost Swan occupied the chair; and on and around the platform were—Captain Oswald of Dunnikier; Bailies Barnet and Beveridge; Messrs John Sang, Alexander Beveridge, W. R. Spears, Robert Douglas, Robert Lockhart, Daniel Hendry, John Findlater, Thomas Hendry, J. Cusin, John M'Leod, Ninian Lockhart, M. Nairne, David Stenhouse, Dr Morrison, Thomas Whyte, L. Chafille, Robert Heggie, John Lockhart, William Watson, and others.

Swan and supported by Captain Oswald, was packed to the rafters and contained representatives of the three parishes involved:- Kirkcaldy, Abbotshall and Dysart. Camilla Loch had been an earlier possibility but samples of water sent for analysis to a Dr. MacAdam in Edinburgh had suggested it was "second class water of an inferior quality". It was also suggested that there might be difficulties in carrying the water to Gallatown and Dysart.

The Committee then directed their attention to Lothrie. John Sang, the eminent engineer, had examined the site and determined that with a little damming a large supply of water could be stored. Again, a sample was sent to a Professor Penny in Glasgow and Dr. MacAdam in Edinburgh for analysis. Their reports indicated that the "water was of first class quality and well adapted for domestic and manufacturing purposes". It was estimated to cost £40,000 with the ability to supply 20,000 persons. The initial idea had been to supply the water through a joint stock company but that was superseded by using a general assessment. Bailie Barnet suggested that the highest assessment would be 1/6d in the £, but a sliding scale of 3d or 4d in the £ was more likely. An attempt to secure the supply from Loch Leven had been rejected by the landowners in the area.

Ultimately, the meeting unanimously resolved to take steps to have the Lothrie water introduced; to carry out the undertaking by means of an assessment on the properties in the Parliamentary Burghs of Kirkcaldy and Dysart, such assessment to

be levied at the lowest practicable rate; but in order to afford any facility for borrowing on reasonable terms, powers to be taken for a rate not exceeding 1s 6d per pound on the rental value; and that, in order to carry out the scheme, an Act be applied for in the next session of Parliament. After a few words from Captain Oswald, the meeting terminated with three cheers for Captain Oswald and Provost Swan.

The 17th January 1867 allows us to look at the opposition or at least to the choice of site. It was the Daily Review (Edinburgh) of that date which

ANOTHER GREAT WATER MEETING.—On Tuesday night a public meeting of the ratepayers of Dysart, Kirkcaldy, and Abbotshall, was held in the Corn Exchange, Kirkcaldy, for the purpose of re-considering the two rival water schemes. The hall was crowded to the very door, and Mr John Hogarth, West Mills, who was called to the chair, was accompanied to the platform by Mr Henry Beveridge, banker, Mr Lennie, shoemaker, Mr John Stocks, Mr W. Kennedy, Pathhead, Mr William Stocks, author of "The wine of Cana," and several other gentlemen of known Camilla propensities. The Chairman opened the meeting by endeavouring to show that the Camilla was the best of the two schemes for the wants of Kirkcaldy and dis-

reported on a public meeting on the 15th in the Corn Exchange to "consider the present state of the water question". The meeting was called by John Hogarth, as Convenor of the Working Men's

Committee. With Hogarth in the chair it became a diatribe of criticism of Lothrie and the promotion of Camilla. His anger was aimed at:-

- There was undue haste.
- There had been discourtesy by the Water Commissioners.
- The difference in cost was £21,000.
- Camilla was 3 miles away – with Lothrie 9 miles distant.
- Iron pipes were required for Lothrie with cheaper clay ones sufficing at Camilla.

The former Provost Henry Beveridge spoke in favour of Camilla – but he firstly had to refute any suggestion that his stance was motivated by vindictiveness against Provost Swan. Readers may recollect that Swan had prevented the re-election of Beveridge a decade before.

A Mr Crichton from Pathhead claimed that Pathhead's inhabitants did not want water and had no intention of paying for something they did not want.

The meeting was also addressed by Provost Swan who spoke about a meeting he had had with Professor Penny and another unnamed authority on water in Scotland. From the conversations he was now more convinced than ever that the Lothrie scheme was the one to follow. He went as far as saying, to great applause, that if the costs ran over the budget he would pay the excess himself rather than let the project fall. He was quite happy to see a neutral engineer appointed to consider the two schemes as long as the costs were shared by the rival promoters.

It was a most acrimonious meeting but in the end a motion was passed that the meeting believed that a report on each scheme should be submitted by an independent engineer to a committee based on an equal number of supporters for each scheme. Presumably, a chairman would have the casting vote.

The *Dunfermline Saturday Press* of the 15th September 1866 carried an article which made it clear where the Council stood. They reported that a meeting of the Water

THE WATER QUESTION.—On the evening of Thursday, a meeting of the Water Committee was held in the Town Hall—Provost Swan in the chair. The committee's report on the investigation of the Lothrie and Camilla Water schemes were read at the meeting, also a report on the quality of the Lothrie water, by Professor Penny, of Glasgow. The meeting after deliberation, unanimously resolved to adopt the latter scheme. A committee was then appointed to confer with the proprietors on the pipe track, and also with the mill-owners on the stream, with a view to compensation. It was then proposed to apply to next session of Parliament for a Bill, and it was stated that in all probability the scheme would be completed in the course of two years.

Commissioners had been held the previous Thursday with Provost Swan in the chair. Reports were read on both schemes and it was unanimously resolved to adopt the Lothrie Scheme. A committee was appointed to confer with the proprietors of the land where the pipe track was to be laid and also with the Mill-owners on the stream with a view to compensation. It was hoped that the Bill might be before Parliament in the next session and that in two years time the project would be completed.

It is perhaps appropriate to mention that Hogarth, a mill owner, was the principal promoter of the Camilla Scheme and seemingly had a vested interest. In fairness though, he had both a Lockhart and J.T. Stocks on board so it was no one man band! It is also fair to say that a report in the *Dundee Courier* of the 29th October 1866 on a meeting of ratepayers in Linktown had been read a report by a civil engineer, Mr Carstairs of Balwearie, who had given a glowing report on the Camilla option. The fact that the cost was circa £17,000 which was much cheaper was attractive, but Provost Swan was clearly not going to be swayed by cost alone. He was convinced that in the longer term Camilla could not meet the volume required.

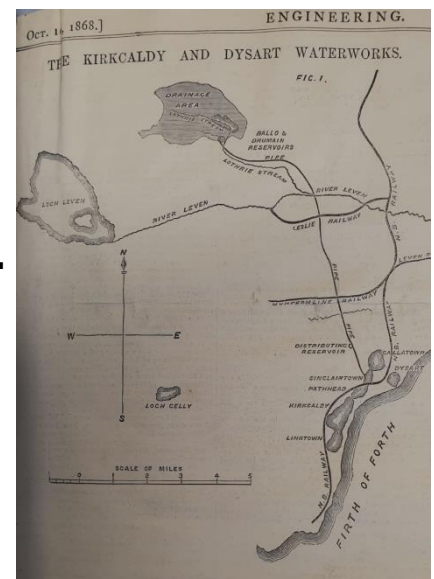
KIRKCALDY.

THE WATER SUPPLY.—A meeting of the Local authority was held in the Town Hall on Monday night—Provost Swan in the chair. The Provost submitted a report from Professor Penny, of Glasgow, on the qualities of the waters contained in the various wells in the town, reporting several of these to be so much contaminated with organic and decayed vegetable matter, as to be wholly unfit for domestic use. Although no definite decision was come to, it is expected that at least three of the wells will be closed immediately.

Perhaps an article carried in the *Fifeshire Journal* of the 17th January 1867 will explain the seriousness of the position. At a meeting of the authority, chaired by Provost Swan, a

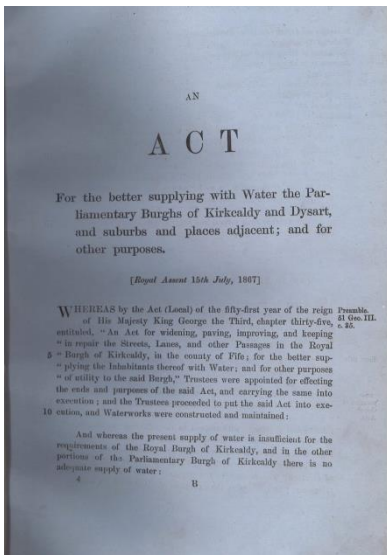
report was read which had been compiled by Professor Penny. It stated that an examination of wells in the town showed that three were so badly contaminated that the water was unfit for human consumption and may have to be closed.

The *Fife Herald* of the 16th March 1867 reported that the Bill had been presented to the Parliamentary Referee. The preamble (of the Bill) stated that the current supply was inadequate for a rising population and the trades and manufacturers of the burghs. It stressed that a "larger supply was absolutely necessary". The Bill sought authority to build an aqueduct through the parishes of Falkland and Leslie; a reservoir to be called Drumain on the west side of the Lothrie Burn; another reservoir called Ballo on the same burn and an aqueduct connecting the two at a point near Holl farm steading. A main pipe was to connect pipework in the parish of Leslie to that in the parish of Dysart. In Dysart a holding reservoir was to be built on the lands of Carberry Farm and from there distribution pipes would run to Kirkcaldy and Dysart.



Thanks to Susan Birnie of Fife Cultural Trust we have been able to include a drawing showing the route of the proposed supply. For those in Glenrothes it can be seen that the pipe crosses the River Leven in what is now the Town Park where the Lothrie now flows into the pond. Originally the Lothrie ran into the Leven and the pipe which carried the water can still be seen close to the Cow Bridge. The drawing shows the pipes on their journey through/over rivers and railway lines before reaching Carberry.

Provost Swan, some members of the Town Council and several country gentlemen, were in attendance to give evidence if required. This was possibly due to the fact that there "might be opposition from a committee of inhabitants but, as no appearance was made by them, the Bill passed the Referee as an unopposed measure". Given the Referee was able to confirm there was no opposition it would therefore go formally before the



Chairman of Committees of the House of Commons as an unopposed bill. The Bill received Royal Assent on 15 July 1867.

The *Fife Herald* carried a report in its edition of the 16th April 1868 of an event which had taken place in the Lomond Hills the previous Monday. This was the cutting of the first sod in the construction of

KIRKCALDY AND DYSART WATER-WORKS.—On Monday, a commencement was made to the execution of this important undertaking, which is to supply one million gallons of water per day to the towns of Kirkcaldy and Dysart, being at the rate of fifty gallons daily to each inhabitant. Soon after midday, Provost Swan, of Kirkcaldy, came upon the ground at Drumain, about three miles north-west of the village of Leslie, accompanied by Provost Normand, of Dysart, and the Works Committee of the Commissioners under the Water Works Act, together with Mr Tullis, of Rothes; Mr Wylie, of Prinlows; Mr Robert Hutchison, Kirkcaldy, and a few other gentlemen. The exact position of the embankment of the Drumain reservoir having been set out by Mr Sang, the engineer of the work, Mr Mathieson, of Dunfermline, the contractor, handed a spade to Provost Swan, with which, in a most workmanlike manner, he cut the first sod, and filling the barrow, wheeled it along the plank to the tipping place, amid the cheers of a considerable body of spectators. It is hoped that within a year the Lothrie water will be brought into and distributed over the burghs of Kirkcaldy and Dysart. The supply is most abundant, even for a great increase of population; the quality is also very fine. According to the report of Professor Penny, of Glasgow, there are only 7 grains of dissolved ingredients in the gallon, of which 1.66 grains are organic matter, and the hardness is 3½ degrees.

the Drummain Reservoir which was three miles north-west of Leslie. It fell to Provost Swan to use the spade to cut the sod. There were several dignitaries present which included the Water Commissioners, Provost Normand of Dysart, Mr Tullis of Rothes, Mr Wylie of Prinlaws and Robert Hutchison of Kirkcaldy. John Sang, the engineer who had laid out the scheme, was in attendance along with Mr Mathieson of Dunfermline who was the contractor. That was the first action in the plan capable of bringing one million gallons per day to Kirkcaldy and Dysart. The article indicated that it would be around a year before water would be distributed in the two burghs.

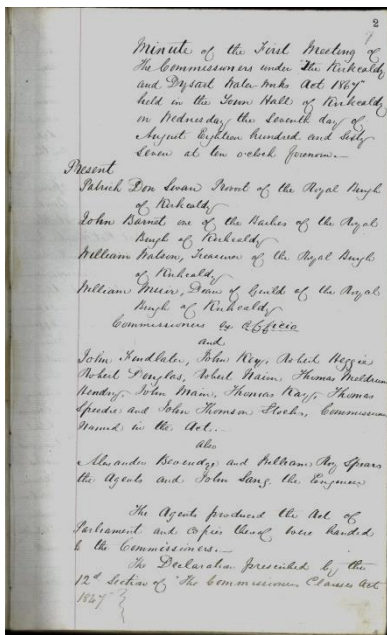
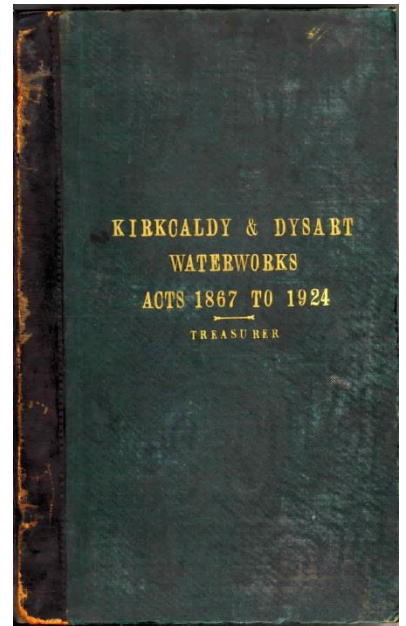
KIRKCALDY AND DYSART WATER WORKS.—On Tuesday the Lothrie water was brought into the Dysart pipes in order to test the joints of the pipes; and again on Thursday, when a fire plug was opened at the Cross, and in an instant a column of water arose in beautiful style, throwing the precious fluid high over the hoary bartizan of the Town House, giving its begrimed visage such a washing as it never before received from the hands of man.

One of the most charming articles was in the *Fife Herald* of the 22nd April 1869 and featured testing in

Dysart. "On Tuesday, water was brought into the Dysart pipes in order to test the joints of the pipes; and again on Thursday, when a fire plug was opened at the Cross, and in an instant a column of water arose in beautiful style, throwing the precious fluid high over the hoary bartizan of the Town House, giving its begrimed visage such a washing as it had never received before from the hands of man".

The Provost and Council had been resolute and persisted with the scheme despite the opposition and difficulties. The benefit of water available without having to use a burn or a well must have

brought an incredible improvement to the lives of many. The use of fresh water would also go a long way to eliminating water-borne diseases which had at one time been rampant. The minute book of the *Kirkcaldy and Dysart Waterworks Act 1867-1924* is full of details of the original and subsequent acts. It was also of great interest to look over the minute book



of the Water Commissioners which commenced with the minutes of their first meeting which was held in the Town Hall on the 7th August 1867. The names of the commissioners can be seen on the page which is reproduced here. The only surprise was that the Provost of Dysart is not numbered

amongst them. Perhaps the thinking was that two Provosts was one too many.

By great good fortune an article was found in the *Peoples Journal* of the 31st May 1873 which added some detail. The article related to a visit to the reservoirs by the Provost and Councillors of Cupar. They were considering their own water scheme and were the guests of Provost Swan and John Sang. John Sang was to be appointed the Cupar engineer. During the visit and

VISIT TO THE LOTHRIE WATER WORKS.— Provost Swan of Kirkcaldy having invited the Provost, Magistrates, and Council of Cupar to visit the Lothrie water works on Saturday, the response that morning was very adequate. The Provost, one or two of the Bailies, and several of the Councillors, accompanied by Mr Morrison, one of the Procurators-Fiscal for the county; the Burgh Fiscal (Mr Simpson Philp); the Clerk of the Police Commission (Mr W. A. Taylor), Mr Innes and Mr Hodgson, proceeded by train that morning to Leslie, thence to the Lomonda, and were favoured by, upon the whole, a very excellent day. Provost Swan, who had carriages provided for the party at Leslie, joined it himself, with Mr Balfour and Mr Sang, C.E., at Markinch, and left nothing to be desired in making the visit one of profit and pleasure. He takes a natural pride in the Lothrie water works, because to no man in Kirkcaldy more than to himself is due the credit of having, amid much opposition, carried them through.

subsequent lunch, the Provost spoke about some aspects of the project which were interesting. We discover that there were three filter beds of sand and gravel and a residence had been built for the keeper. 750 gallons per minute could be passed through the pipes and the storage area covered 120 acres. The area had been in the possession of three estates; Ballo, Balbirnie and Strathendry. All three secured exclusive rights to fish from the reservoirs which had been stocked with trout. There was also sailing on the reservoirs courtesy of the three estates.

Provost Swan mentioned the Camilla alternative but made it clear that, in his opinion, it would not produce an adequate supply. He alluded to the heavy costs and delays incurred by the opposition to Lothrie. He went as far as suggesting that had it not been for the heavy costs he would in all probability have enlarged the reservoir. He foresaw that further works would be needed as the town expanded.

He also mentioned that compensation claims for damage to the land during construction was costly. Some amounted to several thousand pounds and there was much correspondence with, Henrietta, the Countess of Rothes. This is not surprising as the pipe route went through much of her land.

His ire was reserved for an unnamed estate who continually complained, about almost everything and anything, and had made claims in excess of £4,000. Yet shortly after completion the estate was put up

for sale highlighting the “sylvan beauties of the water, fishing, shooting and sailing being on hand”. The price secured was substantially higher than had it had no water feature!

We also learn that Kirkcaldy sold water to manufactures at 4d per 1,000 gallons. The Provost told his guests that in the previous year this had brought in over £800. This figure illustrates that by paying £800, industry had consumed 4,800,000 gallons in 1872.



CONTEMPLATED IMPROVEMENTS IN THE BURGH.—We understand that the large house on the north side of the High Street, and east of the Kirk Wynd, occupied by Mr Robert Knox, spirit-dealer, has been purchased by Bailie Watson, on behalf of the town, for £300, with the view of taking down the property, so as to increase the outlet of the Kirk Wynd at the High St. This step has been in contemplation ever since the property was put into the market—the traffic through the Kirk Wynd, which is considerable, being greatly impeded, and rendered dangerous by the very narrow entry from the High Street.

The Provost had certainly also ensured that road improvements were not neglected. There was a narrow and dangerous entrance to Kirk Wynd from the High Street. The

Fife Herald devoted some column inches in its edition of the 6th August 1863. We learn that a large house on the north side of the High Street and east of Kirk Wynd had been purchased by the town for £300. The property had been put up for sale by Robert Knox, a spirit dealer. The intention was to pull the building down to “increase the outlet of Kirk Wynd to the High Street”. It was mentioned that “the traffic through the Kirk Wynd which is considerable was being greatly impeded and rendered dangerous by the very narrow entry from the High Street”.

An article adjacent to that mentioned above would have been comical had it not been serious! Apparently the ship, *Christopher Newton*, had arrived in the port on the Saturday with flax destined for Swan Brothers. On the following Tuesday, a sailor, "slightly under the influence of drink fell overboard. Another two members of the crew of the same vessel also met with the same fate on the same day. Fortunately, the men were easily got out of the water. The occurrence caused some alarm in the neighbourhood of the harbour".

Previously, the *Fife Herald* had reported on the 4th December 1862 that Provost Swan had carried out improvements and widening in Coal Wynd and to defray the cost the Council agreed to provide the sum of £20.

The year 1869 saw a range of road improvements carried out and the creation of a new wide road which replaced what was little more than a track. This road, which became St. Brycedale Avenue, was by far the most handsome work of this nature. Prior to the creation of this road "there used to be a narrow and crooked lane, scarcely deserving the name of a road, but now there is a wide level avenue under the trees of St. Brycedale forming the finest highway in the whole County". The Provost gave a significant strip of St Brycedale policies to allow the improvement to be carried out. The strip meant that an impressive avenue of trees were now on the public side of the boundary wall which helped

KIRKCALDY — TOWN IMPROVEMENTS. — Great improvements are about to be carried out at the back of the town. Through the liberality of Provost Swan, who, it will be remembered, paid upwards of £1000 towards the improvements lately executed at the foot of Newton, another boon is to be conferred upon the inhabitants by the widening of the top of the Kirk Wynd and the road leading along the back of the town from the Burgh School to the road leading to the railway station. From the main entrance of the grounds of St Brycedale to the top of the Kirk Wynd, and along the whole of the north-western boundary, Provost Swan is to give up a large strip of ground to the town; and in order to complete the improvements in this quarter the

create a splendid avenue. It was the *Scotsman* of the 28th April 1869 which elaborated on the undertaking:-
"Through the liberality of Provost Swan who, it will be remembered, paid

upwards of £1,000 for improvements lately executed at the foot of Newton, another boon is to be conferred on the inhabitants by the widening of the top of the Kirk Wynd. Also to be widened is the road along the back of the town from the Burgh School to the road leading to the railway station. From the main entrance to the grounds of St. Brycedale to the top of the Kirk Wynd, and along the whole of the north-western boundary, Provost Swan is to give up a large strip of ground to the town; and in order to complete the improvement to this quarter, the Provost has also, we understand, purchased a portion of the nurseries adjoining his own property. The nursery wall on the other side of the road is to be altered and the school railing made to run parallel with it. When the whole of this scheme is carried out, a straight and narrow promenade of nearly a mile in length – extending from Abbotshall Parish Church to the head of Coal Wynd – will be in the possession of the town". It is so easy to forget that, at one stage, St. Brycedale Avenue was the back of the town. Much of the area was still taken up by Messrs. Sang's nurseries.

It would be a mistake to suggest that these works were all by virtue of Provost Swan alone. In most of these endeavours he was assisted by the Road Trustees and other public spirited gentlemen. Patrick Swan seemed to have had the capability to gather like-minded philanthropic gentlemen together. He was a leader and he gave ungrudgingly of his time and money to improve the town. However, as a matter of principle he generally tried to get the Council to subscribe some small part of the cost, but the chief burden was borne by him. An article by Lachlan MacBean, Editor of the *Fifeshire Advertiser*, suggested that Provost Swan had spent some £4000 of his own monies on road improvements to the Path, St. Brycedale Avenue and Bennoch Road.

TESTIMONIAL TO PROVOST SWAN—
A STATUE AND A FOUNTAIN.

It was with feelings of sincere pleasure we learned a few weeks ago of an intention on the part of some of our leading men to show their respect for our worthy Provost, Mr Swan, by presenting him with some suitable testimonial. There is no one of our citizens that we know of, whose long public career, as well as his many private amiable qualities, would more entitle him to such honourable distinction.

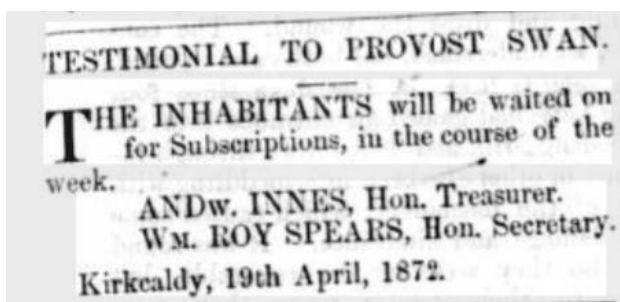
In 1872 friends and fellow citizens conceived the idea of recognising Provost Swan with some form of permanent testimonial. The idea was taken up and one of the earliest suggestions was that a statue might be erected over a public fountain which was a nod to the water supply system which Swan had championed and seemed an idea worthy of consideration.

Kirkcaldy is notoriously weak in celebrating and recognising her sons and daughters via this medium.

As has been mentioned before, the only one we are aware of is the statue which adorned the Philp Hall. It was of the good Bailie himself and was flanked by two angels. When the hall was demolished, the poor Bailie ended up on the Council coup and for some unfathomable reason the two angels were presented to Provost H.A. Nicholson's wife (Kirkcaldy Town Council Minutes). It should be kept in mind that the hall was Common Good property and the statues were dealt with in a seemingly cavalier fashion.

Anyway, after dismounting from our hobby-horse, we can record that the idea seems to have been dropped in favour of a life-size portrait. The thinking was that it would be used "to show future generations the outward appearance of the man who for so long had held the highest civic office in the town".

The result was a large portrait presenting a striking likeness of the Provost, painted by Norman MacBeth, R.S.A. The work was exhibited in the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh; and in October 1874 it was to be presented to the Provost as "a testimonial of his estimable private worth, his many munificent acts and valuable public service".



Starting in the April of 1872, advertisements appeared in the papers explaining the purpose and seeking donations. A committee had been formed which consisted

of Bailie Barnet, Andrew Innes and Wm. Roy Spears. A stipulation was that donations per individual would be limited to one guinea. This clearly favoured the wealthy but in time the lists were opened on a much wider basis to allow more modest contributions. This was achieved by placing subscription sheets in many of the town's public works premises and was put in place in December with the closing date being set for the end of the month.

We are still trying to puzzle out what happened to the idea of a fountain. It was clearly well to the fore in the 15th May edition of the *Fifeshire Advertiser*. It

THE PROPOSED TESTIMONIAL TO PROVOST SWAN.

THERE is to be seen in the shop-window of Bailie Barnet the beautiful design of a magnificent memorial fountain to our excellent Provost. We believe the design is the production of a Glasgow firm of architects, who have thus quite gratuitously given the Testimonial Committee an idea of what a fountain would be. The structure rises from a basin 30

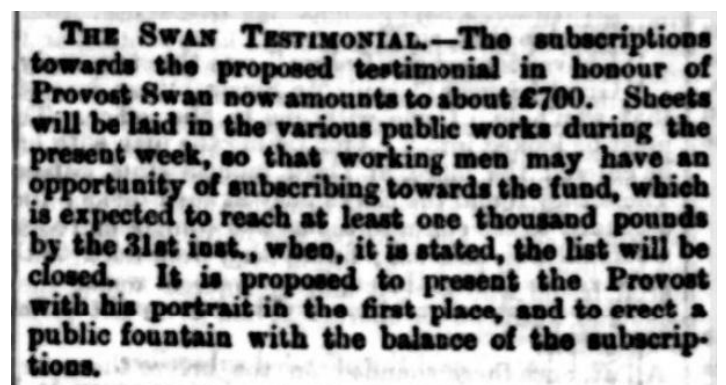
made mention that a model of the proposed fountain was on display in the shop window of John Barnet's shop on the High Street. It was described as "the beautiful design of a

magnificent memorial to our excellent Provost". The design was produced by a Glasgow firm of architects who had given the Testimonial Committee an idea of what the fountain might look like. The structure would rise to a height of some 32 feet from a basin which would be 30 feet in diameter. There were to be three terraced basins each smaller than the next with four panels under the second basin. The architect's suggestion was that one panel would display a portrait medallion in bronze of Provost Swan with the others containing suggestions such as; the inscription plate, the arms of both Kirkcaldy and

Dysart, the names of those associated with the inception of the water supply etc. A lion was proposed as a finial for the canopy over the top basin. It was suggested that freestone would be the stone of choice along with granite shafts. As well as being ornamental it would be practical with drinking taps in the bottom basin and below that troughs for dogs and horses to drink from. The estimated cost would be £650 but this could be cut back if desired.

The paper itself wrote an excellent accompanying piece remarking:-"Were the proposed fountain erected to this excellent design, Kirkcaldy would have something else to look upon other than chimney-pots, crooked streets, and architectural confusions. Strangers would be filled with admiration in looking upon an admirable specimen of fountain architecture. It will be seen that, if this design were executed, there would be a comprehensive allusion to the history of the famous water supply which has been the source of Kirkcaldy's prosperity in these latter days. Portraying, as it would do, the union of Kirkcaldy and Dysart in this one particular at least and immortalising the originator and main-spring of the scheme, it would not only be a fitting memorial to Provost Swan and a recognition of his many services but it would also be a superb crowning part of the greatest sanitary reform we have yet begun and completed".

The *Fife Free Press* of the
14th December 1872



THE SWAN TESTIMONIAL.—The subscriptions towards the proposed testimonial in honour of Provost Swan now amounts to about £700. Sheets will be laid in the various public works during the present week, so that working men may have an opportunity of subscribing towards the fund, which is expected to reach at least one thousand pounds by the 31st inst., when, it is stated, the list will be closed. It is proposed to present the Provost with his portrait in the first place, and to erect a public fountain with the balance of the subscriptions.

included along with the information mentioned above stated clearly and unequivocally that:-“it is proposed to present the Provost with his portrait in the first place and to erect a public fountain with the balance of the subscriptions”. It shows as the appeals often did that the running total was now close to £700.

It is irritating and annoying, not to mention embarrassing, that we cannot discover when and why the idea of the fountain was dropped. One of the difficulties is that the testimonial was not Council driven but by the committee. Therefore, it is not possible to search minutes and so all that is open to us is the scanning of newspaper articles – which to date has been a forlorn effort. However, at the 11th hour, we stumbled on the answer and it is provided later in this narrative.

We did find, during that attempted research, that Provost Swan had once again rejected the notion to stand for Kirkcaldy Burghs in Parliament. The *Fifeshire Journal* of the 6th October 1873 had reported that the incumbent, Mr Aytoun, did not wish to seek re-election the following year.

The article, speculating on Swan's refusal, suggested that the reason might be “there comes a time in all men's lives when they cease to have ambition except for the comforts they have at hand and the respect of attached friends”. They believed that the Provost had reached that stage, but the compliment being paid to him that he had the qualification and

claims to be considered as the candidate would be a source of pride. In the end, Robert Reid won the seat in 1874 beating James Townsend Oswald. Both are in print saying that if Swan stood, they would withdraw their candidature. Reid died the following year and that saw Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant General of Bengal, taking the seat which he held until 1892. Campbell had as much of a connection with Kirkcaldy as Reid had had – nil.

PRESENTATION & BANQUET TO PROVOST SWAN.

The testimonial to Provost Swan, in acknowledgment of his estimable private worth, and his many and great public services to the town, was, so far as it has yet taken form, presented to that gentleman at a banquet of cake, wine, and fruit, in the Town-Hall, on Monday afternoon. As our readers are aware, the only portion of the proposed testimonial yet completed is the magnificent full-length portrait of the Provost, from the easel of Mr Norman Macbeth. R.S.A.

The presentation of the portrait took place in the Town Hall, on the afternoon of the 12th October 1874, at a Cake, Wine and Fruit Banquet. The *Fife Herald* was there and carried a report in its edition of the 15th of the month.

The portrait was to be hung in the Council Chamber and it is still in the possession of Fife Cultural Trust and is reproduced here. There were over 100 guests present and the room was laid out with three long tables and a cross table at the top. The top table consisted of the Provost, Robert Hutchison of Braehead, Samuel Davidson, the Rev. Bryden and Norman MacBeth, the artist.

It was Bailie Barnet who acted as Chairman and set the scene with "time has rolled on, and we have ever found the Provost intent on doing good, so much so that we are here met again to give tangible

expression and acknowledgement of his many exertions and beneficent acts”.

The event commenced with a number of toasts which were all enthusiastically responded to - Barnet was certainly the man for the job as he pointed out that he had a long association with the Provost and he felt that “he was in a position to speak from real knowledge and experience and that he spoke from the heart when I say that no man could have the interests of any town more than Provost Swan has for Kirkcaldy”. His words do read as if sincerely spoken and included - “All along these years, and months, and weeks, and days, the ruling aim of his life appears to me to have been to promote the good, the happiness, and the comfort of the community”. Then “time, talents, exertions, money, have been liberally and freely given for the general want and improvement of the district”.

It seems that his close relationship with the Provost afforded him the opportunity to know things which were perhaps unknown to the public at large:- “Many, many, of the good deeds and beneficent acts of Provost Swan are performed quietly and privately none knowing anything of them save, God, himself and their recipients, but sometimes they crop out and reveal to us the large hearted generosity which promoted them; and we honour, we revere, we respect and esteem, Provost Swan for his kindness and benevolence

PRESENTATION OF PORTRAIT TO
PROVOST SWAN.

IT is intended to Present the PORTRAIT in the COUNCIL ROOM, Kirkcaldy, on MONDAY, the 12th OCTOBER Current, at THREE P.M. Subscribers wishing to be present will receive Tickets of Admission by applying to the Honorary Secretary on or before the 10th.
Wm. ROY SPEARS, Hon. Sec.
Kirkcaldy, October 2. 1874.

so freely and lavishly given”.

The portrait was unveiled and carried a plaque indicating that:-



This portrait of Patrick Don Swan, Esq., of Springfield, Provost of Kirkcaldy, was painted at the request of upwards of 400 subscribers, in order to be placed in this hall as a testimonial of his estimable private worth and many munificent acts, and valuable public services.

Kirkcaldy 12th October 1874.

Provost Swan made an excellent reply in which he was moved by the presentation and the words spoken. Just possibly we find out what drove the man when we read an element of his response. In some ways it is a little sad but his words were:-

“Through his connection with the Council and with the support of the inhabitants, he had been able to do something for the community, but it had been a very pleasant thing for him to do:-

Most of them had firesides to look to and work for, but it had been so ordained that he did not have that and, therefore, as the feelings of a man's heart must go out towards something, his heart had gone out towards the good people of

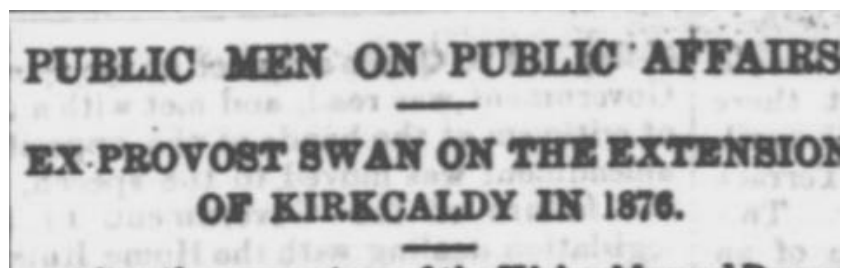
Kirkcaldy.

That then was the history of much that he had been able to do for the town, and of the time he had been able to spend for the good of the public. He had done what he had done very much for himself; it had been very pleasant to work for the public, and if rewards had come from the community, he had, of course, the more reason to be thankful, but whether public dinners or testimonials came or not, he would still have found his life's work in seeking to accomplish what lay in his power for, as he had already said, he had nothing else bar these objects to put his heart upon".

There were of course more toasts and more speeches before the event closed with the singing of the National Anthem. The one disappointment which shone through his remarks was that the town's boundaries were not yet extended and it was something he and the Council would be pursuing as soon as possible.

There is a strong argument that the major public celebrations of Patrick Don Swan in 1865 and 1874 sowed the seeds of the two major undertakings associated with the Provost. The first, stemming from 1865, was the water supply which stands as the pinnacle of Swan's achievements. The extension to the town's boundaries under the *Kirkcaldy Burgh and Harbour Act of 1876* came into sharper focus after the 1874 Testimonial.

Both of these two great measures had beneficial and important influences on the growth and prosperity of the town. It is often difficult, for today's generation, to appreciate how decisions made 150 years ago had a massive and lasting impact on the town. An article written some years ago argued that if Robert Burns had only written "A Man's A Man" - it would have been enough. The same could be said that if Swan had only driven these two measures - these alone would have secured his reputation. The latter had the immediate effect of trebling Kirkcaldy in size and by definition promoted it to a higher rank among Scotland's towns. There was a second benefit and possibly a more important one which was to extend their ability to collect revenue in what became an extended burgh. This placed in the Council's hands the power and means to carry out long desired and long overdue reforms and improvements. It would be easy to cover newspaper reports relating to all the various meetings which were held in relation to the proposal, but sometimes you get lucky and this we did. We mentioned earlier the series "Public Men on Public Affairs". Deciding to investigate the series - to our delight we discovered that, in April of 1889, ex-Provost Swan had recounted his recollections of the extension of the Burgh. This allows us to give the thoughts of the prime driver 13 years after inception. We have to say that the initial hostility in some quarters appears to have been somewhat



diluted but the fact is, with the exception of Dysart, he carried the day. The *Advertiser* mentioned that this was one of the few times the Provost wrote directly for the Press and it came in the last year of his life:-

Once the Water Act had been passed and the advantages springing from it were seen, attention slowly turned to extending the boundaries of Kirkcaldy. The aims were two-fold and were, firstly, to get improvements carried out in the district and, secondly, to give the town a position in the country which its size would entitle it to. To be honest, we were surprised just how small the original boundaries were. Swan writes that the boundaries had been set in 1811 and had remained unaltered. "they included the part between the sea and a line a little north of the High Street, along from Coal Wynd via the Manse and through St. Brycedale to the back of Mr Fergus' property, following generally the line of an old road to the West Mill where Kirkcaldy had to

With an increasing population, and the growing trade and manufactures of the town after the introduction of the Lothrie water, it was impossible that this state of things could be allowed to go on very long, and the attention of Mr Spears, myself, and others who had been taking an interest in the passing of the Waterworks Act, was drawn to the matter. I consulted with Mr Robertson, the Parliamentary agent who had acted for us in getting that Water Act passed, and he said there would be no difficulty at all in getting the municipal boundaries of Kirkcaldy extended so as to take in the whole Parliamentary Burgh of Kirkcaldy—that is, Linktown and the district to the north of Kirkcaldy; but, as he pointed out, Pathhead, Sinclairtown, and Gallatown were parts of the Parliamentary Burgh of Dysart, and Dysart being a rival burgh there might be some difficulty in getting any part of it included in the municipal boundaries of Kirkcaldy. Mr Robertson also informed us

once pay multure".

He pointed out that there was "only a small part within the ancient royalty liable for taxation and, of course, very little money could be raised for improvements. Besides, there was at that time very little fixed

government for the outlying parts of Dysart and Kirkcaldy. There were these old small burghs each with its Provost, two Bailies and a Treasurer – and in the case of Kirkcaldy, a Dean of Guild – all elected by the Town Councils of each Burgh. But these Magistrates had no jurisdiction outside the Burgh boundaries. Then, in the Pathhead district, there was a Baron Bailie appointed by the Laird of Dunnikier; and in Linktown, a Baron Bailie appointed by the Laird of Raith. In Pathhead there was the Feuars' Hall, the Feuars of Dunnikier being the body that took most charge there, looking after the streets and so on. The upkeep and cleaning of the streets in Linktown was managed by a body of Police Commissioners. The only other form of government that existed was the police appointed by the Commissioners of Supply for the County”.

The Provost went on to say that this state of affairs could not continue in a neighbourhood which was benefiting from an increased population, trade and industry all driven by the Lothrie Water. He, along with the Town Clerk, W.R.Spears, and some others who had been involved in the Lothrie Scheme, made contact with the Parliamentary Agent who had assisted with the Water Act. This Agent, Mr Robertson, indicated he saw little problem in extending Kirkcaldy's boundaries to the Parliamentary boundary which would encompass Linktown and the area to the north of the town. However, he saw potential issues with; Pathhead, Sinclairtown and Gallatown, which were in the Parliamentary Burgh of Dysart. Given Dysart was a

rival there might be some difficulty in getting any of these parts included in Kirkcaldy.

Mr Robertson also pointed out that not only would the inhabitants require to be consulted, but also the neighbouring landowners. He suggested that, if Lord Rosslyn cared to stand up in the House of Lords and oppose the scheme, then it would have no chance of passing – at least in the case of Pathhead.

At several Council meetings the proposal was the subject of much discussion. Eventually, the overall opinion was favourable to the idea. A committee was formed to discuss the scheme with the public bodies in Kirkcaldy and consultation was also to be carried out in Linktown and Pathhead.

The question was brought before the Town Council of Kirkcaldy and considered at several meetings, the members being generally in favour of a change being made. A committee of the Council was appointed and the different public bodies were consulted, all being quite favourable to the change. Several meetings were also held with our friends outside the old burgh, both in Linktown and Pathhead. Some influential people in both districts saw clearly the advantages of the proposal, and we on our part showed every disposition to do justice to these districts. In some of the meetings a fear was expressed that Kirkcaldy would just try to rule it over the other districts, and that they would have no chance even in electing their representatives, but would be swamped by the votes in Kirkcaldy. It was to meet that that it

“Some influential people in both districts clearly saw the advantages of the proposal and we, on our part, showed every disposition to do justice to these districts. In some of the meetings a fear was expressed that Kirkcaldy would try to rule it over the other districts, and that they would have no chance in even electing their representatives, and would be swamped by the voters in Kirkcaldy. It was to meet that concern that it was resolved to have three

wards, all as equal as possible, each having the same number of representatives, and each having the same rights and privileges; the only favour being done to Kirkcaldy was that as it was in the centre the meetings of the new Town Council would be held in the Town Hall there”.

The Ex-Provost admitted that there had been much initial opposition but after full explanations and numerous meetings he believed that people came to see that their only objective was to unite with the ability to secure improvements by one large community.

Dysart continued to be stubborn and Swan admitted that “if there had been any other way of carrying out the objective without interfering with Dysart Parish it would have been done, but even at that time the Sinclairtown people were more connected with Kirkcaldy than Dysart, obtaining their gas from Linktown and not from the Dysart gas works. Besides, as we pointed out at the time to our Dysart friends, it would be impossible for the little burgh clustered round Dysart harbour to rule over a large and growing community like Pathhead and Sinclairtown. If they were to be one burgh, the centre of government would have to be moved west to St. Clairtown, and a new town hall built there”.

While accepting that Dysart did not like it, he felt that they understood what was being proposed was the best for all parties. He stressed that the neighbouring proprietors, Mr Oswald and the Earl of

Rosslyn "acted in the most cordial way and, instead of opposing, they supported our movement. In this way it came about that the Kirkcaldy Burgh and Harbour Act was passed without any opposition and it is now clearly seen what a blessing it has turned out to be for the whole district".

was the best for all parties. The neighbouring proprietors, Mr Oswald and the Earl of Rosslyn, acted in the most cordial way in the matter, and, instead of opposing, they supported our movement. In this way it came about that the Kirkcaldy Burgh and Harbour Act was passed without any opposition, and it is now very clearly seen what a blessing it has turned out to be to the whole district.

After the Bill had become law, all parts of the new burgh, from Gallatown in the north to Morningside in the west, set themselves to carry out the provisions of the Act, with a spirit of fairness that did credit to all concerned. Each of the wards sent in one-third of the new Council, and the Magistrates were elected so that each of the wards had a share. During the

Looking back, he pointed out that all parts of the extended burgh carried out the provisions of the

Act with a spirit of fairness that did credit to all concerned.

- Each of the wards sent in one third of the Council members and the magistrates were elected so that each ward had a share. During the twelve years which had passed he highlighted:-
 - Both the Second and Third wards had supplied a Provost.
 - Both the First and Second wards had supplied a Treasurer.
 - All three wards had supplied Bailies and Deans of Guild.
 - Under the new Act the Police Commission had the powers to borrow £10000 for paving. Both First

and Third wards badly needed re-paving and under the direction of Bailie Black both wards were re-paved simultaneously.

- The roadways were improved in the principal thoroughfares and the lighting and cleaning put on a proper footing.
- The police who had been under the control of the county were now under the control of Kirkcaldy's Magistrates.

“Indeed, I have no doubt that it will be universally admitted that as a result of the passing of that Act has been a very considerable improvement in the comfort and well being of the community, as well as adding to the size and importance of the town. As to the districts which were then included, it was always my great desire to deal with them not only fairly but generously and I found the same feeling in all who worked with me in the Council”.

As we all know Dysart continued to plough its own furrow until it was incorporated into Kirkcaldy in 1930. The period after the coming together was a narrative of improvements which was demonstrated by a score of new streets, chiefly on the glebe lands to the north of the old burgh; and, as mentioned above, an extensive and complete system of paving for the footpaths was completed along with an impressive and competent drainage system being established. The principal thoroughfares were re-causewayed from end to end. There are still some streets where cobblestones can be seen – towards the top of Whytescauseway and the portion of the

Path which is now used as a work's car park. They form the most uncomfortable surface to drive over, but were certainly robust. These years must have created the feel of a new, improved place to live.

The passing of the 1872 Education Act had wholehearted support from Provost Swan. The Act necessitated the setting up of a School Board and it almost goes without saying that the Provost was elected Chairman. Longevity is a word which can most certainly be attributed to Swan as he held this position until his retiral. During this period there were many elections, often keenly contested, for

Prizes for Religious Knowledge given under the Swan Memorial Fund were awarded to:—Ex-VI.—Alex. Cruickshanks, Fred. Hardie, David Kinloch; Jessie Barnet, Jeannie Clark. Standard VI.—Ronald Storrar, William Beveridge, Douglas Gibson; Eliza Boak, Rebecca Campbell, Bella Weir. Standard V.—James Tabrum, Scott Nimmo, Frederick Lowe, George Angles, Alexander Inglis; Jessie M'Connochie, Maggie Ramage. Standard IV.—Robert Tabrum, Peter Connell, Angus Bryson; Harriet Mollison, Jemima Barnet. Standard III.—Lewis Grant, Robert Hutchison, Andrew Black; Annie Douglas, Maggie Law, Maggie Mitchell. Standard II.—J. Bremner, Tom Renton, Frank Livingstone; Effie Wallace, Maggie Inglis, Louisa Hardie. Standard I. and Infants — James Fyfe, Elizabeth Dowie, Ada Landale, Annie Lowe, Georgina Little, Randal Williamson, Emma Arnott, Mary Mollison, Mary Bryce, Jeanie Wishart, May Hardie, Norah Cullen.

membership of the Board. However, all parties shared common ground in supporting the Provost as Chairman. In 1889 he wished to retire altogether, but was induced to remain as a member, if not Chairman. The Board had met

for the first time on the 7th May 1873 and, under Provost Swan's chairmanship, the first two Board Schools, the West and East were built. All his life he took an interest in education and provided monies from his private means to improve the efficiency of the Burgh School. For many years he provided prizes for the school children and shortly before his death he arranged for the sum of money which was left after paying for his portrait to be invested as a fund to supply prizes for religious knowledge.

This can be confirmed as it was discovered in the

Fife Free Press of the 13th July 1889 that at the Burgh School these prizes were awarded from the "Swan Memorial Fund". Make no mistake – it was not one or two prizes as the attached snippet shows. Similar presentations were reported at the East and West Schools in the same edition. Having ploughed through reams of articles referring to 'Provost Swan' it was strange to see him referred to as 'Ex-Provost Swan' when attending these presentations. On the positive side, we now know what happened to the funds intended for the fountain!

We also noted in the *Inverness Courier* of the 3rd of December 1874 that Provost Swan had given £1,000 towards an extension being built at his old university. £65,000 had been raised from the £100,000 target and at that time only the Duke of Buccleuch's £2,000 had been larger and the Marquis of Bute only matched Swan's contribution.

The *Fifeshire Advertiser* had a lengthy retrospective on Provost Swan in its edition of the 20th April 1878. This item was found towards the end of the research for this narrative and it was a relief to see that most of the points covered in the article had been already unearthed. The edition included a free copy of a lithograph of Provost Swan and the little 'advert' relating to it is reproduced here. Quite why this date was chosen is a bit of a mystery as his 70th birthday was on the 2nd September of the same year. Some of the text



included - "He was a leading spirit in the town through his weight of personal character and extensive mercantile transactions". Also, "He was never known to use an unbecoming expression or use a word that would hurt the feelings of a human being". Even at that stage he had been elected Provost on 10 occasions and his term already far exceeded the 16 years of Walter Fergus and the 13 of David, Earl of Leven. Once again, the acrimony of the water issue raised its head being described as having "evoked the keenest feeling and the most intense excitement of any question in this generation".

We had made an earlier mention of the harbour question and the Provost wishing to remain neutral when it became a hot topic in the 1870s. Put simply, ships were larger and steam propulsion was the coming thing. Shipbuilding through John Key had become a significant part of the industrial landscape. The problem was that the harbour was too small for the new larger ships which restricted trade by more modest ships having to be used. In south-east gales the size of the waves could render the outer basin useless and could sometimes prevent the opening of the dock gates. Something had to be done and there was great agitation from those with shipping interests but, of course, the funding of improvements was a thorny issue for many of the population. A report was called for and no less a person than Thomas Stevenson, of lighthouse fame, visited the town, spoke to many of the interested parties, and went over five separate plans for

remodelling the existing harbour or building a new one altogether.

Stevenson had studied plans presented by Mr George Robertson, a civil engineer, Mr Carstairs, Mr Malcolm, Mr Nairn and William Stocks. Stevenson came down firmly on the side of Mr Robertson, but that was not an end to the matter. A full report on the plans which were discussed at a meeting between the Harbour Commissioners and the Town Council was carried in the *Fifeshire Advertiser* of the

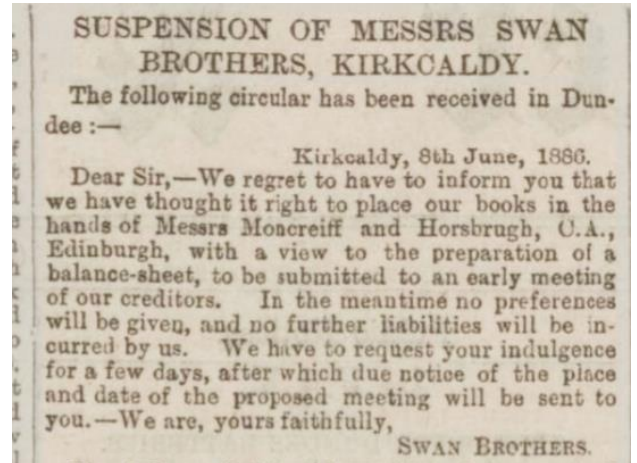
RESULT OF THE HARBOUR PLEBISCITE.—For the last two days a good deal of excitement has taken place in regard to the plebiscite in connection with the extension of the harbour. The voting commenced on Tuesday morning at nine o'clock, and terminated at 8 p.m. Two or three placards were distributed throughout the district both for and against the harbour. A large concourse of people took place in the evening in front of the Townhouse, thinking that the poll would be declared that evening, but it was not till Wednesday, a little after 2 p.m., that the poll was made known to the public. For the harbour there voted 672, and against the harbour 1213. The rental given for the harbour was—proprietor, £13,700 18s; tenant, £15,021 1s 11d; against the harbour—proprietor, £19,246 4s 7d; tenant, £18,199 1s 4d. There were 41 spoiled papers. It will be observed that the supporters of the harbour have suffered a terrible defeat. It is a great pity, however, that the vote has turned out against the extension of the harbour, as it is now becoming quite deserted. No large vessels can enter except at spring tides.

12th October 1878. The proposal for an extension/replacement will feature in a later Object on the history of the harbour and so only an outline is given here.

The matter did not rest with Stevenson's report. There was to be a plebiscite and the *Dundee Courier* of the 1st

November brought the news that 672 people had voted for the harbour proposal and 1,213 against. The people had spoken but as the paper commented "it is a great pity, however, that the vote has turned out against the harbour extension, as it is now becoming quite deserted. No large vessels can enter except at spring tides". Could Don Swan have exerted his influence towards supporting the project rather than remain neutral? There was certainly a huge vote against the proposal but perhaps Swan could have turned it around. Instead, it was not until 1909 that the harbour was extended.

The 10th June 1886 saw what might well have been the straw that broke the Provost's municipal back. It was the *Dundee Courier* who broke the news in their edition of that date. The headline was "Suspension of Messrs Swan Brothers, Kirkcaldy. The article commenced with a circular which had been received in Dundee:-



Dear Sirs – We regret to have to inform you that we have thought it right to place our books in the hands of Messrs Moncrieff and Horsburgh, C.A., Edinburgh, with a view to the preparation of a balance sheet, to be submitted to an early meeting of our creditors. In the meantime no preference will be given and no further liabilities will be incurred by us. We have to request your indulgence for a few days, after which due notice of the place and date of the proposed meeting will be sent to you. We are, yours faithfully,

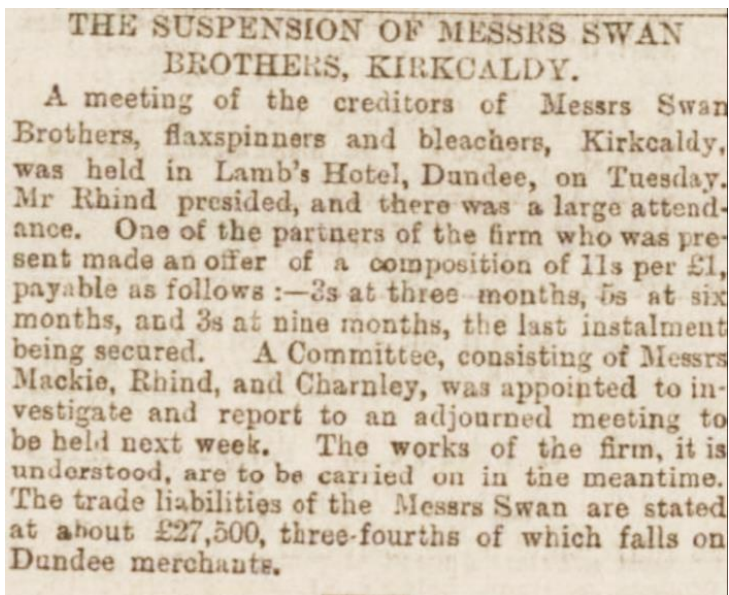
Swan Brothers

Kirkcaldy 8th June 1886”

The article went on to speculate that the trade liabilities would amount to around £30,000 but it was hoped that the assets would be able to offset much of this figure. It was suggested that around two thirds of the debts would fall upon Dundee

creditors or the London firms they were agents for. It was mentioned that the firm had been trading since around the start of the century. Swan Brothers themselves had only commenced trading around 1833 after the death of William Swan Snr. The article ended as many later ones did in extending sympathy for Patrick Don Swan.

The following week a further report was in the same



THE SUSPENSION OF MESSRS SWAN BROTHERS, KIRKCALDY.
A meeting of the creditors of Messrs Swan Brothers, flaxspinners and bleachers, Kirkcaldy, was held in Lamb's Hotel, Dundee, on Tuesday. Mr Rhind presided, and there was a large attendance. One of the partners of the firm who was present made an offer of a composition of 11s per £1, payable as follows:—3s at three months, 5s at six months, and 3s at nine months, the last instalment being secured. A Committee, consisting of Messrs Mackie, Rhind, and Charnley, was appointed to investigate and report to an adjourned meeting to be held next week. The works of the firm, it is understood, are to be carried on in the meantime. The trade liabilities of the Messrs Swan are stated at about £27,500, three-fourths of which falls on Dundee merchants.

newspaper in relation to a creditors meeting which had been held on the 15th of June in Lamb's Hotel, Dundee. One of the partners of Swan Brothers had made an offer of paying 3/- in the £ in 3 months time, a further 5/- per £ in 6 months, and finally a

further 3/- at the expiry of 9 months. In all, that would account for just over half of the £27,500 debt being repaid. The meeting appointed from their number, Messrs. Mackie, Rhind and Charnley, to investigate and report. The amount due to Dundee merchants was now put at three quarters of the debt. At this point the works of the firm were still in operation.

THE FAILURE OF MESSRS SWAN BROTHERS, KIRKCALDY.

An adjourned meeting of the creditors of Messrs Swan Brothers, spinners and bleachers, Kirkcaldy, was held in Lamb's Hotel, Dundee, on Wednesday. The Committee appointed at last meeting reported that they could not recommend the creditors to accept the offer of 11s per £1 made by one of the partners of the firm. The offer was then withdrawn.

The *Dundee Courier* of the 24th June reported on a further meeting held the previous day, once again in Lamb's Hotel. The committee appointed to investigate

and report could not recommend acceptance of the offer, which was then withdrawn. The partners present agreed that they would sign a Trust Deed in favour of J. Rhind and D. Mackie. This was felt to be the way forward and that the winding up of the business might produce a higher return than the 11/- on offer. A small Committee was then appointed to assist the trustees. The article ended on the ominous note that the works were likely now to close.

large establishment, and sometime afterwards he assumed in partnership his manager, the late Mr David Stark. He was a shrewd and sagacious gentleman, thoroughly conversant with all the details of the large business; but most unfortunately for him—and for the Provost, we also believe—he was a shareholder in the ill-fated City of Glasgow Bank, and was heavily involved in consequence; indeed, so seriously did he feel the position in which he was so suddenly placed by that yet memorable national disaster that his health gave way under the blow. Provost Swan is

The *Fife Free Press* had added a bit more detail in its edition of the 12th June. Great concern was expressed

for the workforce which consisted of both men and women and between Kirkcaldy, Kinghorn and the Tyrie Bleachfield, employed around 700 hands. After the death of his brothers, Provost Swan, had assumed his Works Manager, David Stark, as his partner. Sadly, Stark was caught up in the ill-fated collapse of the City of Glasgow Bank (not the same as that where William Swan was Agent). This

MESSRS SWAN BROTHERS.

THE REPORTED suspension of Messrs Swan Brothers, flax spinners and bleachers, has fallen upon the community with a shock of surprise, the like of which it has not received for many a day. The report became public in Kirkcaldy on Wednesday, but was known the previous evening in Dundee, where most of the large creditors are. A circular bearing that day's date was issued by the firm intimating, with regret—deeper, we quite believe, than any words could express—that they had considered it right to place their books in the hands of a firm of accountants,

was one of the great banking scandals of the 19th century. The bank collapsed in October of 1878 and as there was no limited liability it bankrupted all but 254 of its 1,200 shareholders. Creative accounting, in an extreme form, was to blame and the seven directors were charged. For ruining so many lives, two served a jail term of 18 months the other five 8 months. The paper went as far as to say that Stark never recovered from the financial blow and died soon afterwards.

The partners at the time of the collapse of Swan Brothers were; Provost Swan, Alexander Davidson, David Brown and Monteith Graham. The paper described them as "young men of influence, energy and business aptitude". Davidson must have been a

under the blow. Provost Swan is now advanced in years, in fact beyond the period when he should be actively engaged in business; but he is ably supported in the firm by Mr Alexander Davidson, Mr David Brown, and Mr Monteith Graham (who only lately joined the partnership), all young men of influence, energy, and business aptitude, and who may be expected to leave no stone unturned to sustain, even through the present difficulty, the good credit of the firm. For a good name that of Swan Brothers was second to none in this country,

position of confidence. It would be quite impossible to estimate the benefit, in the shape of steady employment to so many hundreds of workpeople, the circulation of money, &c., which the community, through these long years, has derived from the firm. Years gone by, when the great local industry of to-day—the manufacture of flocloth—could claim but the one solitary work in Pathhead, the Messrs Nairn's—the Swan Brothers were the commercial life of the town,

long serving staff member as, on the 4th June 1870, *The Fife Free Press* reported a celebration in the George Hotel where Alexander Swan, Kinghorn, presented him with a gold watch as a wedding gift. A silver salver was presented to his intended.

The paper went on the pay tribute to the firm and what it had done for Kirkcaldy in the way of steady employment to hundreds of people over the years and the benefit to traders that the wages had

brought. It went on to point out that the current great local industry of the day – floorcloth and linoleum had but one factory at Pathhead when “Swan Brothers were the commercial life of the town”. Again it was hoped that a way could be found of saving the firm and thereby preventing a devastating loss of employment taking place.

By the time the paper went to press on the 26th June the thunderclouds had not just gathered but had opened up. The works would be closing and the stock and assets sold. The report suggested that this would bring in the accountant's estimate of 12/10d in the £. In other words 1/10d, or roughly 10p, more than the original offer of 11/- which had been made by the partners earlier. “The decision to close the large works has been met with profound regret throughout the district and, following so closely on the stoppage of other public works in Kirkcaldy, the effect will, it is feared, be seriously felt in the community. Most of the hands were paid off at Kinghorn some days ago, and the mills there are at a standstill. Yesterday, work was brought to a close at the Coal Wynd Mills and Tyrie Bleachfield. The stoppage of these works throws a large number of people idle, many of whom, unable to find other employment, will be rendered helpless. Sincere sympathy continues to be felt and expressed for our honourable, highly-esteemed, and kind-hearted Provost, who has been so long at the head of the concern, and likewise for the other members of the firm.

THE AFFAIRS OF MESSRS SWAN BROTHERS—THE MILLS TO BE CLOSED.

An adjourned meeting of the creditors of Messrs Swan Brothers, flaxspinners, Kirkcaldy, was held in Lamb's Hotel, Dundee, on Wednesday. It was intimated that the Messrs Swan Brothers had resolved to wind-up their firm under a trust-deed, and Mr John Rhind and Mr Mackie were elected trustees, five of the other creditors being appointed a Committee to advise with them in realising the estate. It is expected that the works will be closed shortly and the stock sold. The Committee who were appointed at the former meeting reported that they believed the works had been fairly valued, and that the full dividend of 12s 10d per £ brought out by the accountants would be realised. The decision to close the large works of the firm has been received with profound regret throughout the district, and following so closely upon the stoppage of other public works in Kirkcaldy, the effect will, it is feared, be seriously felt in the community. Most of the hands were paid off at Kinghorn some days ago, and the mills there are at a standstill. Yesterday, work was brought to a close at the Coal Wynd mills, and Tyrie bleachfield. The stoppage of these works throws a large number of people idle, many of whom, unable to find other employment, will be rendered helpless. Sincere sympathy continues to be felt and expressed for our honourable, highly-esteemed, and kind-hearted Provost, who has been so long at the head of the concern, and likewise for the other members of the firm.

work will be rendered helpless”.

Swan Brothers was a partnership and so limited liability did not come into the equation. The dangers

EXTENSIVE PROPERTY SALE—PURCHASE BY THE TOWN.—On Wednesday, the extensive flax and tow spinning mills, known as Coal Wynd New Mill, and North, or Malcolm's Mills, with warehouses and other subjects, situate in Coal Wynd, Kirkcaldy, also all the machinery, &c., therein contained, as lately possessed and in use by the Messrs Swan Brothers, were exposed for sale at the upset-price of £13,000. There was no offer, and the subjects were afterwards put up in two lots, but without inducing a purchase. The extensive offices and warerooms at the top of Rose Street, as lately occupied by the same firm, with the property adjacent, were also offered for sale, upset price £2700, but without bringing an offer. At the same time the property known as Park Spinning Mill, also lately occupied by the firm of Swan Brothers, was offered at the upset price of £1700. After some competition this lot was knocked down for £1800 to the Police Commission, as representing the town, for the purpose of carrying out an important extension on the present slaughter-house accommodation of the burgh.

of unlimited liability were never demonstrated more sharply. As 1886 came to a close and 1887 dawned the local papers carried reports on the sale of the Swan Brother's properties. The snippet carried by the Fife Free Press shows that difficulties were incurred in the sale of the buildings. The Coal Wynd and

Rose Street complexes failed to find a buyer although the town's Police Commissioners bought the Park Spinning Mill for £1,800 to allow an

extension to the slaughter-house. In the January of 1887 the same paper reported on the outcome of a three

KINGHORN.

SALE OF MACHINERY.—The sale of the machinery and plant of the flaxmills, Kinghorn, belonging to the sequestrated estate of Messrs Swan Brothers, was concluded on Friday, having extended over three days. Prices were low. The sale of the machinery apart from the buildings has put a stop to flax-spinning as an industry in this place, at least for the present.

day sale relating to the Kinghorn works. The report mentioned that prices had been low and remarked that the sale of the machinery and the buildings had brought about the end of flax-spinning in Kinghorn.

Although he had all but retired from an active interest in the business Provost Swan remained a partner. The stoppage had the effect of stripping him of all his possessions. The Provost appears to have lost everything and that included the Springfield Estate. The 5th July 1887 saw a report in the

Fifeshire Advertiser indicating that the Provost's Springfield property had been sold for £11,000 to a Mr Munro from Kelso. He would not see one penny – all would go to the creditors.

The mansion-house and estate of Springfield, near Cupar, and which belonged to ex-Provost Swan, has been purchased for £11,000 by Mr Munro, a Kelso gentleman, who is to reside upon it.

The Fifeshire Advertiser later noted in his obituary "it was, indeed, the first stroke to sever his connection with this world, and with rare meekness and humility he accepted the discipline in that light. From that day forward earthly concerns sat lightly on his spirit. Through the kindness of friends he was enabled to pass his few remaining years free from care in the old house at St. Brycedale, which was kept for him until his death".

It is perhaps therefore understandable that on Monday, the 11th October 1886, Provost Swan's letter of resignation was read out at the full Council meeting. In fairness, he had wanted to make the move earlier but had always acceded to requests to remain. His letter dated the 6th October was short and addressed to W.R. Spears, the Town Clerk:-

Dear Sir – I have to intimate to you, in terms of Section 26 of the Act III and IV., William IV., cap.71, that I hereby resign the offices of Provost and Councillor of the Burgh of Kirkcaldy, held by me as at the period of the annual retirement of the Council in November next. I am, Sir, yours most faithfully'

Patrick D. Swan

The Provost's remarks were carried in the Fifeshire Advertiser of the 16th. He indicated that he could not do otherwise than resign. He had given the fullest consideration of his colleague's pleas to continue but it could not be. He had served the town since 1834 and, in all but a few of these years, he had been a Councillor or Provost. He mentioned that he had had a long working day and that various close friends had encouraged him to "have a time of quiet retirement and a calm sunset". He went on to remark that "I wish to say that during all that time I have had great pleasure in working with my fellow Councillors, and I hope that good work has been done". He indicated that he would continue to have the greatest interest in the welfare of Kirkcaldy and suggested that he would be very glad if he "could assist with advice or otherwise. I may be able to do something, perhaps, but at any rate I cannot remain in the position I am now placed. I desire now to return my warmest thanks to you all, and to rejoice with you that our work for the town has not been in vain, and I wish to express my desire that Kirkcaldy in the future will continue to prosper".

RETIREMENT OF PROVOST SWAN.

THE resignation of Provost Swan has been accepted by the Town Council of Kirkcaldy, and in less than three weeks he shall have ceased to hold the honourable position that he has so long adorned. It is well-known that the Provost has long desired to retire, but hitherto his townsmen could not be got to yield to his wish. They knew too well the value of his services to part with them readily, and it is a good sign that those who know the work of the town best—many of them being themselves men of great intelligence and ability—have been the most anxious to retain the Provost at the head of affairs. Now, at last the Corporation has given its reluctant consent to the Provost obtaining the repose which he has so well earned, but it has done so with much hesitation, much regret, and no little solicitude regarding a future in which the members will lack the guidance of his experienced judgment and the weight of his authority.

It was Bailie Douglas of Douglas & Grant who spoke to say that this was not the time to say too much but that it fell to him to move that the letter be accepted. His comments were what most would be thinking – big shoes to fill and who could do it? In

the end it fell upon the shoulders of Michael Beveridge.

Bailie Stocks seconded the motion remarking that not only had he been a friend of the Provost, but also his father. He went on to say that he moved that "I should like to suggest that we record in our minutes our high sense of the great debt of gratitude that the town owes to Provost Swan, and that a copy of this minute might be formally made out and sent to him. Bailies Douglas and Stocks along with the Clerk (W.R.Spears) were elected as a committee to draft the minute to be presented to Provost Swan. In his business-like manner the Provost then remarked that he would still be in power to organise the forthcoming elections and the meeting simply moved on – as it had to.

The Fife Free Press of the 21st January 1889 reported on the death of Provost Swan which had occurred at 1.00 am on Tuesday, the 17th January. He died at home without any obvious pain. He had been ill for some weeks. There had been an improvement but this was followed by a relapse. He had been attended throughout by his physician, Dr. Gordon.

With the death occurring on the Tuesday and the funeral taking place on the Friday, the paper was able to capture all the events in one edition.

The paper reported that he had remained calm and tranquil all through the last illness. His last public

appearance had been on the 12th October when he had been present at the granting of the Freedom of the Burgh to the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava.

Naturally, the paper launched into a lengthy tribute which encompassed many of the improvements and benefits to the town associated with the late Provost. One of the most striking paragraphs was the admission that "it would be impossible here to recall his many, varied, and great services, to the community during that long period, or even to take note of all his benefactions". The team can confirm that was most certainly the case – it is well nigh impossible to do justice to all that he was connected with and achieved.

The expansion of both industry and housing attributed to the Lothrie Water scheme and praise for the extension of the boundaries received many column inches. The religious element of his life was also a prominent feature, not only from his support for St. Brycedale Church, but through his character and assistance to those in need.

The article suggested that he had a premonition that his life was reaching its conclusion and he expressed a "desire to be awake when the last messenger arrived, and to pass consciously from this to the land beyond the flood".

The funeral took place on Friday the 20th at 1.00 pm with the coffin being carried through the private gate from St. Brycedale to the church. This was

THE FUNERAL SERVICE

The remains of deceased were yesterday laid beside kindred dust in Kirkealdy Church-yard. The funeral was public, and the entire community joined in the mournful event, all the shops in the burgh being closed at noon for a period of two hours, the factories being also stopped earlier than usual for the dinner hour, and the public schools dismissed.

Previous to one o'clock, on the invitation of Bailie Black, who officiated as senior magistrate of the burgh in the absence through illness of Provost Beveridge, the members of the various public bodies in town, including the Town Council, School Board, Water Commission, and Harbour Commission, assembled in the Town Hall.

indeed a public event with shops closing for two hours from noon. The factories had an earlier than normal lunch break along with the schools being dismissed. The service was conducted by not only the Rev.

William MacDonald of St. Brycedale but also the Rev. Dr. Walker of Dysart and the Rev. Campbell of the Parish Church. The public bodies, the Town Council – School Board – Harbour Commissioners and Water Commissioners met at the Town Hall and marched to St. Brycedale which was packed to the rafters.

The funeral procession left the church and travelled via "Townsend Place, Oswald's Wynd and entered the *Silent City of the Dead* via Church Lane with the Rev. Dr. Baxter officiating at the grave, conducting an impressive service".

The procession order was:-

- The Relatives.
- The Presbytery.
- The Congregation's office bearers.
- The Public Bodies.
- School boys of the 6th grade of the schools.
- The General public.

Although there were no immediate family, there were Swans present amongst the pall-bearers, who were:-

- Professor Swan, St Andrews.
- Rev. Jas. Stalker, Glasgow.
- Bailie Swan, Kinghorn.
- Geo. Swan, Snr., Kirkcaldy
- Thos. Swan, Kirkcaldy.
- T. Hutchison, Kirkcaldy.
- Ex-Bailie Douglas, Kirkcaldy.
- J. Johnston, Wemyss.

Wreaths were then laid over the grave by:-

- Children of the West School.
- Teachers of the West School.
- Children of the Burgh School.
- Children of the East School.
- On behalf of Provost Beveridge.
- Mrs Elder of Adelaide House.
- The Misses Nairn.
- St. Brycedale Sabbath School Teachers.
- Mrs Hallyburton and Mary Ann Storrie.
(Servants to the late Provost).

“The Town Bell, the Parish Church Bell, and that of St. Brycedale, tolled forth in measured peals during the funeral, deepening to many the solemnity of the service, the time and the place”.

As Provost, Michael Beveridge, was unable to attend due to an illness. It was Bailie Black who organised the day. Black had kept the Provost updated with his plans and the only suggestion made by Michael Beveridge was that the whole Town Council should

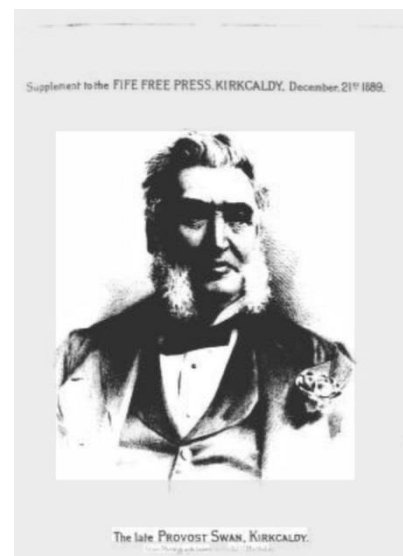
attend the Sunday Service in St. Brycedale. Little did he know that before long he would be making the same journey from Beechwood!



The extensive article ended with the fact that each copy of the edition included a photograph of the late Provost which had been taken by a Mr Rennie.

A copy of the photograph is

reproduced here in its original published form. The text indicates that it was taken on his 82nd birthday which suggests there is an error somewhere. He would not have been 82 until the following year. It is of little consequence as it provides an excellent likeness of the late Provost in his later years.



The *Fife Free Press* of the following week carried details of the services on the first Sunday after Provost Swan's death which saw tributes paid to his memory in many, if not all, the local churches. St. Brycedale saw their former minister, the Rev. James Stalker, return to the pulpit to lead the service. Stalker had also been a pallbearer and his sermon was an excellent one which is well worth the reading. Quite possibly, due to his earlier connection while minister at the original Free Church in Tolbooth Street and then St. Brycedale, he knew the Provost better than any other man outside of municipal circles.

In the afternoon the service was taken by the St Brycedale minister the Rev. W.J. Macdonald.

The Parish Church saw the morning service taken by the minister of Abbotshall – the Rev. B.B. Begg, with the Rev. Campbell then taking the afternoon service in his own church. At all four services – the late Provost was the central theme.

As mentioned earlier, touching and appropriate references were made to the Provost's life and

passing and the snippet shown here makes reference to the extent of the churches involved. It is quite astonishing to look at the list and see just how many churches the town and district once boasted.

Feeling and appropriate references were also made to the event by the Very Rev. Dean Johnston in St Peter's Episcopal Church; Rev. Dr Baxter in Loughborough Road (U.P.) Church; Rev. A. M'Millan in Abbotshall Free Church; Rev. John Clark in Union (U.P.) Church; Rev. G. M'Hardy in the Congregational Church; Rev. I. E. Marwick in Bethelield (U.P.) Church; Rev. Mr Campbell, Markinch, (preaching for Rev. Mr Coutts, Pathhead Free Church); Rev. Robert Jackson in Pathhead E.U. Church; Rev. Mr Stevenson in Whytescausway Baptist Church; Rev. Mr Fairweather of Dunnikier Free Church; Rev. W. Milne, Inveriel, (preaching in Dysart Free Church for Dr Walker); Rev. W. Guthrie, Dysart, (U.P.) Church, &c., &c. In other churches in the town and district, irrespective of denomination, appropriate addresses were also made to the event.

So, how is the man remembered in Kirkcaldy? We have Swan Road which seems to have been, and still is, what successive Councils consider to be an adequate accolade to the sons and daughters of the town who have made an impact locally, nationally or internationally. There was a suggestion that a statue might have been raised at the foot of Kirk Wynd – but of course that never happened. Kirkcaldy remains statue-less which for a town of its size is remarkable. We discount the "Sower" or "Spirit of Kirkcaldy" at the Town House – it

commemorates no one!

By the generous donor of the hospital a site was also recently given for a public building of another kind, which is to be known as the Swan Memorial Institute, and be used as the meeting-place for Christian-fellowship of the young men of the town. The site, as our readers are aware, is in Kirk Wynd, and is consequently one of the most central in the whole burgh. Funds for the new building, which may cost about £3000, are at present being raised in the town, and for such an object—one which the late Provost Swan had so very dear at heart—one also which will redound so much to the credit of all who

What did happen was the erection of the Swan Memorial Building which for many years housed Kirkcaldy Y.M.C.A., of which Provost Swan was the first President. This tribute was quickly off the mark with deliberations underway by early

1890. The Provost's name can still be seen emblazoned on its frontage. The building was a

combination of subscriptions, fund raising activities, and it goes without saying – Michael B. Nairn. The story of the building will be included in a later Object so the amount of detail given

here is restricted.

AN INTERESTING SALE.—On Thursday and Friday the effects of the late Provost Swan were disposed of by public roup. Some of the late Provost's friends being anxious to secure the articles as relics the prices realised were very good. An effort was made to secure for the congregation the silver trowel with which the late Provost laid the foundation-stone of St Brycedale Free Church, but it was ultimately purchased for £4 7s 6d by a private party. Treasurer Yule secured the trowel with which the late Provost laid the foundation-stone of the new Town Hall for £1 12s 6d. The mallet used for the same purpose in connection with the Gallatown Free Church was secured by Mr M'Gowan, watchmaker. The easy chair in which the Provost generally sat was purchased for Mrs Nairn of the Priory, for £3 10s. The silver brought prices ranging from 3s 8d to 9s 4d per oz., the latter price being paid for a beautiful tea set, consisting of teapot, sugar basin, and cream jug, by Mr D. J. Wilson, banker. The only wine that brought anything like a price was the old port of 1858 vintage, which realised 10s 6d per bottle.

The *Fifeshire Journal* of Thursday, May 8th 1890, recounts the sale of the late Provost's effects the previous Thursday and Friday. Many of his friends were anxious to secure articles as relics and the article

indicates that prices were good. Rather than mention individual items we attach the article itself. The only comment would/could be that, after all he had done for St. Brycedale Church, they could not/did not wish to stretch above £4.7.6d to secure

Kirkcaldy, 7th Feb., 1890.
DEAR SIR,—I have the pleasure of informing you that at a recent meeting of the subscribers to the Provost Swan Fund it was resolved to apply the fund in hand, after meeting certain payments, to assist in the erection of a hall, in connection with the Young Men's Christian Association, at or near the foot of the Kirk Wynd, or other suitable place, on condition that the hall be called the Swan Memorial Hall, and that the marble bust of Mr Swan, now in possession of the subscribers, with a suitable inscription, be placed in a conspicuous position of the hall. It is impossible to say what sum will be handed over to your association, but it will not be less than £600.—I am, dear sir, yours truly,
W. R. SPEARS.
John Forrester, Esq.,
President Y.M.C.A.

the trowel with which he laid the foundation stone of the building. In the spirit of fairness the Church did have a stained glass window installed which, given Swan's deep religious convictions is a worthy memorial.

MEMORIAL WINDOWS.—We understand that a beautiful stained-glass window is about to be placed in St Brycedale Free Church in memory of the late Mr Robert Nairn. It has been on exhibition in one of the London art galleries for some time, and the design is said to be a striking work of art. It is also proposed to have a large memorial window erected in the same church in honour of the late Provost Swan.

THE PROVOST SWAN MEMORIAL. — This memorial stone, erected in the old Parish Churchyard, at the head of the grave of the late Provost Swan, has now been completed. It is a very large and elegant stone. The memorial contains the names of the late Provost's father and mother, and their family of eight—Patrick Don, Sophia, Thomas, William, Alexander, Robert, David, and James. There is also an excellent medallion portrait of Provost Swan in bronze, which has been executed by our late townsman, Mr Taylor, sculptor, Edinburgh (who, by the way, has just finished a fine statue of the late Lord Primate of Ireland for Armagh Cathedral). As we formerly mentioned, the architects for the memorial are Messrs Sydney, Mitchell & Aitken, Edinburgh, and the contractor is Mr James Slater, Edinburgh.

The *Fife Free Press* of the 25th October 1890 advises that "The memorial stone, erected in the old Parish Churchyard, at the head of the late Provost Swan, has now been completed. It is a very large and elegant statue. The late Provost's father

and mother and their family of eight are all listed. There is an excellent medallion portrait of Provost Swan in bronze which has been executed by our former townsman, Mr Taylor, Sculptor, Edinburgh. The architects were Messrs. Sydney, Mitchell and Aitken of Edinburgh, and the contractor was James Slater of Edinburgh".

There has been a significant amount of consideration given to how this Object should end. There were many excellent quotes to choose from but, in the end, the words of James Stalker were the ones selected. They come from part of the sermon he

preached in St. Brycedale on the Sunday following the Provost's death. They fit because they talk about Kirkcaldy and we hope we have demonstrated that Patrick Don Swan was in many ways the embodiment of Kirkcaldy:-

“A child of this place, he held Kirkcaldy in his heart, he knew it through and through; he was never more delightful than when talking about its history, the connections of its families, and the characters who flourished in it in bygone days. He took his place at the heart of everything, not by struggle, but as the man born for the position; and the whole population, down to the youngest and the poorest, felt they had part and lot in him”.

and

“A few famous names do not make a great century like ours. You require a multitude of men, moved by the spirit of the age; and some of the unknown amongst them may be essentially greater than those whom fortune flings to the top.

Acknowledgements

Patrick Don Swan by Lachlan MacBean published by the Fifehire Advertiser (1893)

Gavin Grant of *Fife Cultural Trust (Museum Service)* for photographs of the Provost's badge and the Norman MacBeth Portrait.

Andrew Dowsey of *Fife Cultural Trust (Archives)* – access to and copies of the 1875 Water Act, The Water Act Minute Book and Initial Meeting of Water Commissioners.

Susan Birne of *Fife Cultural Trust* who located the sketch of the water pipe-track.

Bill Fiet for photographs from his postcard collection of the Reservoir and Whytescauseway.

Tom Reid for his unfailing and thorough checking of grammar, layout and spelling.