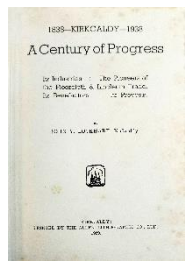




Kirkcaldy - Its Origins and its Progress A Salute to Lachlan MacBean and John Y. Lockhart



Readers may be forgiven for thinking that we have possibly placed this final story in the wrong place – probably believing that it should have been the first – not the last! It is a reasonable argument, although the fact that the threat to the Volunteer's Green was the catalyst for the formation of *Kirkcaldy Civic Society* in 1974, that probably still gives our first object (*The Volunteers Green*) the right to the first place.

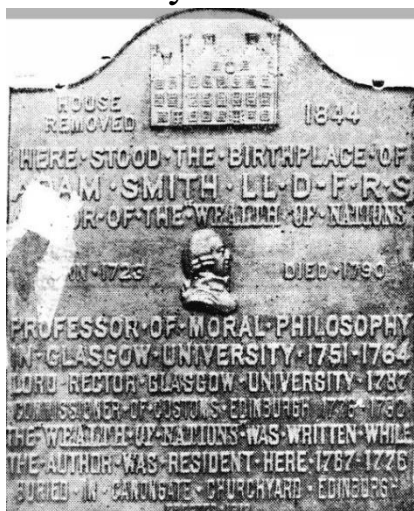


All through these objects mention has been made of the one time owner of the *Fifeshire Advertiser* – Lachlan MacBean (1853-1931) and the suggested debt the town owes to the relentless research, writings and support, he lavished on Kirkcaldy. In the early years of the 20th century, MacBean produced a major work, *The Kirkcaldy Burgh Records*, which was completed, finalised and published in 1908. The book gives a clear insight into the town's history from its earliest days, both listing and commenting on important and decisive moments taken from the prime source - the Burgh Records. In addition, he utilised the Church Records to paint as full a picture as he could. The sheer volume of work involved is a tribute to MacBean's tenacity and his love for the town. This is further illustrated by Object 25 which covered MacBean's 1911 Pageant, held in what is now Ravenscraig Park involving 500 children, depicting in ten segments, the history of Kirkcaldy.

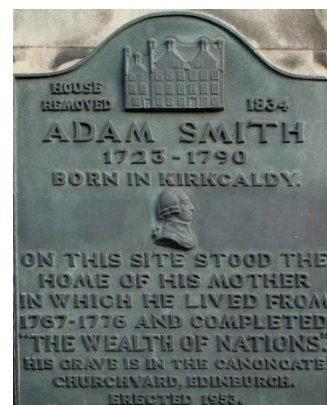
A second book which was published in 1939 was entitled *A Century of Progress 1838-1938* and the author was John Y. Lockhart. Lockhart was an interesting character who became a recognised authority on the town's history and geology. The significance of the title is that in 1838 the railway had not yet arrived and it was not until 1847 that Michael Nairn opened his first floorcloth factory. From the introduction of these two factors, the town exploded into an industrial powerhouse and it was indeed the gateway to a century of undisputed progress with the town's name carried to every corner of the globe. John Y. Lockhart died in 1943 and was referred to by the *Dundee Courier* on the 26th November as a “keen antiquarian who took an active interest in the historical associations of the town and was an acknowledged expert on Adam Smith, Pet Marjorie and others”.



Many will be familiar with the plaque outside 220 High Street which makes mention of Adam Smith's house and work. The original plaque was provided by Mr William Black, the Vice-President of Kirkcaldy Naturalists Society, and was unveiled by Provost Kilgour on the 19th November 1919. Following the unveiling it was Mr J.Y. Lockhart who, in the Swan Memorial Hall, read tributes to Smith which had been prepared by three academics – Dr. J Bonar, Professor J Shields Nicholson and Lord Haldane. Lockhart must have had a sore throat by the end of that effort!



Some readers may not be aware that there were errors in the content of the original plaque which were uncovered by another local historian – P.K. Livingstone – he of Boys Brigade fame. A replacement plaque was unveiled on the 23rd November 1954 by Sir Alexander Gray – the Professor of Political Economy at the University of Edinburgh. That is the plaque seen today. Perhaps its 70th anniversary could be marked in some way? Lockhart, prior to his retiral, operated a carpet and linoleum shop in Hunter Street.



It seemed fitting to weave the narratives of these two important works into a summary of the town's early history before examining the 100 years in which Kirkcaldy became an international name – built principally on the *Queer like Smell* - but there was and is far more to Kirkcaldy than that! The books have been of immense help throughout the *50 Objects Project* – mostly to check dates and the spelling of names but they have been our companions and this Object, as well as hopefully being informative, is a wee tribute to the authors.

In his preface MacBean explained that “Rich in public interest as are the manuscript records of the Burgh of Kirkcaldy, no portion has yet been published in book form. This is the more surprising since their value was revealed as far back as 1862 by the publication of extracts in the *Fifeshire Advertiser*. These extracts by Mr Alexander Gibson, Kirkcaldy's then Town Clerk,

**DEATH OF
MR ALEXANDER GIBSON,
JOINT TOWN-CLERK OF KIRKCALDY.**

In our obituary of to-day it is our melancholy duty to record the death of Mr Alexander Gibson, Joint Town-Clerk of the Burgh, which took place at his residence in Nicol Street early on Wednesday morning. Mr Gibson had not been at his office, in the Town House, since about the middle of June.

attracted considerable attention, and, in several cases, cuttings from the print were pasted into scrap books. The examination of the manuscripts for this volume has brought to light many interesting entries not transcribed by Mr Gibson, including a whole series from 1562-1582, which latter year was long thought to be the earliest date from which written records had come down to us”.

It transpires that the manuscripts were stored in a vault below the then Town House (latterly the Marks & Spencer store on the High Street). It appears that, not unnaturally, the ink was faded on many of the pages but in parts the writing was remarkably neat and clear. MacBean then explained that the content of the book “was compiled to place the ascertained events of the history of the Burgh in a form in which they can be readily referred to and the extracts from the original documents at the end of the book were designed to throw further light on a narrative which often lacks detail where detail is most desired”. His preface concluded with some further works which he suggested would shed further light on life in old Kirkcaldy. These were:-

- *The History of the Church and Parish of Kirkcaldy* – the Rev. John Campbell.
- *Presbytrie Books of Kirkcaldie* – Rev. William Stevenson.
- *Biographical Dictionary of the Eminent Men of Fife* – M.F. Conolly (1866) – having referred to this book it would seem that to be considered eminent, all that a man needed was a horse!
- *Fife and Kinross* – the Chapters on the Parishes of Kirkcaldy, Abbotshall & Dysart – Mr A.H. Miller.
- *The 1794 and 1846 Statistical Accounts*. The 1846 segment on Kirkcaldy was compiled by the Rev. John Alexander. Alexander has featured in several of our previous Objects. He was of course the Parish Church Minister who led the congregation out of the Parish Church in the 1843 Disruption. He was the first Minister of Kirkcaldy Free Church in Tolbooth Street before it moved to St. Brycedale.

It is probably fair to say that MacBean and Lockhart paved the way for P. K. Livingston and Duncan Glen to follow. Duncan Glen was almost unique in his writings on Fife and Kirkcaldy in that he would weave songs, odes, ballads and poetry, into his writing which added a little stardust to his words.

Having set the scene and our intentions we can now move on to what the team believe to be MacBean's *Magnum Opus*.

MacBean commences with the description that “Round a pleasant bay, on the northern or Fife shore of the Firth of Forth lies the ancient Burgh of Kirkcaldy. To its earliest inhabitants the site must have seemed ideal, for it faced the south. It was protected by a considerable stream at either end, there was a high terrace or raised beach behind, which screened it from the north wind, and in front there lay, at low water, a broad stretch of level sand, with sufficient depth at high water to float their light coracles. From the East Burn to the West Burn or Teil, the flat ground below the terrace extended for a mile and a half, and the width was sufficient for a double line of houses and gardens flanking the highway which has become the busy High Street.

He very quickly moves onto the derivation of the name which he argues comes from the periods when Fife was occupied by Picts, Britons and Gaelic-speaking Scots. MacBean himself was a fluent Gaelic speaker and maintains that, at that time, it was known as Ca'ir-Caldon – *the town of the Caledonians*. He supports his argument with Ca'ir being the Briton's word for a city and illustrates this with the first syllable for places such as Carlisle and Kirkintilloch. The second part, Caldon, appears in Dunkeld – known in ancient times as Dun-Calden – *the fort of the Caledonians*. Interestingly, the Burgh records show the town's name recorded as Kirkaladinit, Kirkaladin, Kirkcalthin, Kirkaldyn, before finally settling on Kirkcaldy. He dismisses the once held belief that the name came from the *Kirk of the Culdees* maintaining that there is no evidence that the Culdees were ever established in the area.

MacBean argues that the earliest nucleus of the town was neither a church nor a castle but the sheltered cove at the mouth of the East Burn where Kirkcaldy Harbour still stands. “In the course of the generations the town extended westwards, and even before the advent of Christianity its centre may have been half a mile from the harbour, just below the hill on which now stands the Parish Church. Here, when Burgh life began, came to be placed the Market Cross, the Joug, and the Tolbooth or Town Hall, and from this spot, inhabitants ascended Kirk Wynd, firstly to the church and then beyond it to the *Loaning* or *Common Loan* which led on to the countryside”.

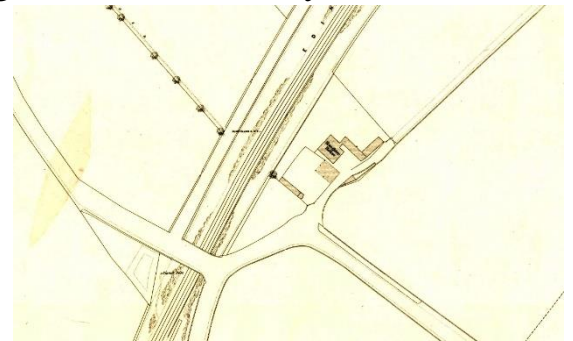


Extent

He then turns to what was once the extent of the “Shire” or district of ancient Kirkcaldy. He maintains that it was once far more extensive than it is now. He quotes as evidence “because it included the farm of Goatmilk, near Leslie”. Glenrothes Airfield, standing on what was once part of Goatmilk Farm, gives an idea of the original size of the parish.

Moving away from the Parish and looking at the town's own lands it is easy to see where great expansion in the boundaries has taken place over the centuries. Originally these lands stretched inland for little more than a mile reaching the farm of Hayfield which has also been known as both Hungerfields or Hungerhimont. However, the Burgh itself only extended from the West End of the High Street to the Port Brae basically consisting of one street except, we are told, for a street further up the hill running parallel to part of the High Street – it is now known as Hill Street but in earlier times as Hill Vennel.

Behind these houses lay land which belonged to the Burgh. This was the town's *Common Muir* and through this, following what is now Carlyle Road, ran a path, known as the Loan, which led to the countryside. The *Muir* had a well which was of great benefit to the grazing cattle. Writing in 1908, MacBean indicates that *Loan Wells Green*, *St. Mary's Green* and the *Volunteers Green* were all that remained to the town's once broad estates. Now, in 2024, only the third named remains – the others simply being consigned to no more than names in history.

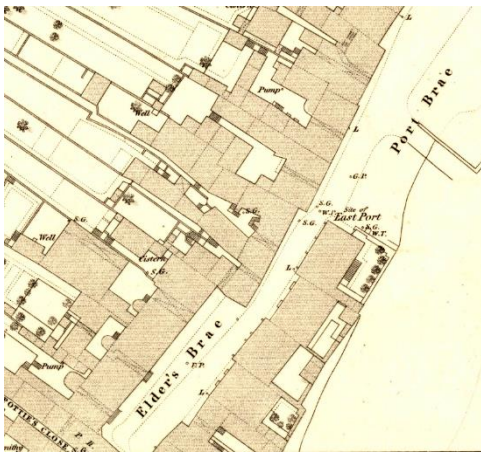


At the top of the Loan stood the *Thorn Tree* where, in ancient times, the Burgh Courts were held. Nearby was the Gibbet with the spot being referred to as Gallow's Neuk. The site is now known as Mount Pleasant and that gives the reader an indication of where centuries ago the town and the Burgh lands ended.

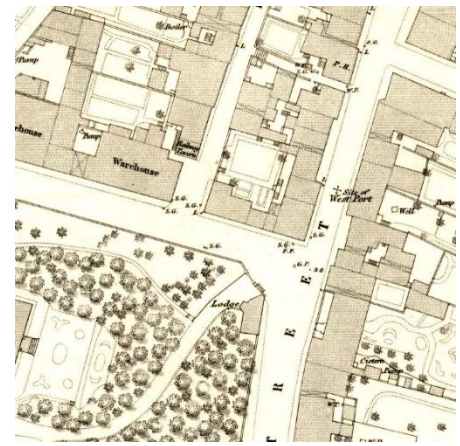


Boundaries

It would be a mistake to think that *Common Ridings* are restricted to the Scottish Borders. In Kirkcaldy, once a year, the Magistrates, followed by a great procession of townspeople, rode around the town's boundaries. The Magistrates were met at various points by the lairds of the surrounding districts and any disputes were discussed and settled. It is reported that from time to time these occasions “led to tumults between the people of Kirkcaldy and the villagers of Pathhead”.



Protection for the town was afforded by wooden gates or Ports on three sides. The sea was expected to provide protection on the fourth. Two of these gates, the East Port and the West Port, were situated at either end of the High Street and a map is reproduced here showing the site of the gates.



The third gate does not require a map as it was situated at the top of Kirk Wynd. The gates were closed at nightfall. “The gardens stretching down towards the sea or up to the fields were well enclosed and it was impossible for suspicious characters to enter the town when the gates were shut”.

The Naybours

MacBean writes that “judging from the length and the smallness of the population, we must believe that the houses were by no means crowded, and that there was ample room behind for yards and garden ground. As proof of the limited numbers of the population it is significant that the resolutions of the Town Council did not come into force until they had been approved by a majority of the free Burgesses of the Burgh”.

This in some ways indicates that Kirkcaldy had an early system of referendum with its constitution affirming that nothing could be enacted by the authorities unless it had been ratified by the “maist part” of the “naybouris”. Make no mistake, it was not everyone who would be

recognised as a neighbour in Kirkcaldy. The neighbours were in fact the free Burgesses – and the other inhabitants (unfreemen) were literally nobodies – having neither rights nor opinions. MacBean used the words “the caste of free Burgesses” when referring to matters such as their having the right to graze cattle on the *Common Muir*, being able to engage in any trade or vote on public questions.

It is hard to believe that “work done by unfreemen could be seized and confiscated by any burgess, and even the very 'person' of the unfreeman could be seized, without warrant, and hauled off to prison. Moreover, from the commercial point of view the town was one great trade's union. All work or material coming into the burgh, or going out, was liable to be seized on suspicion, and sometimes the town's officers were empowered to search all houses for unfreemen who might be engaged in work which could have been done by burgesses. Any burgess found harbouring unfreemen for such a purpose was liable to a fine”.

It was apparently possible, although not easy, for an incomer to become a Burgess. It mattered not a jot how long an unfreeman lived in the burgh - that would not elevate his status – but some things never change - *as siller nicht dae it*. It was therefore possible to achieve this status providing he paid a reasonable sum or, as an alternative, by marrying a *freeman's dochter*.

It was of course possible to be admitted as an *Honorary Burgess* and this continued into the 20th century finally coming to an end with the reform of local authorities in 1976. The story of burgesses is contained in Object 12 – *The Freedom of the Burgh*.

An example of Honorary Burgesses was given in the following:- “it is recorded under the date 1643 that, at the *Curia Burgalia Burgi de Kirkcaldie tenta in Pretoria ejusdem* - a ceremony took place.

This suggests that, when writing in Latin, the councillors referred to their little Tolbooth as Pretoria. Quite why we have no idea but what is certain is in 1643, seemingly on the same day, the following were sworn in as Burgesses and Freemen.

- Archibald, Marquis of Argyle.
- Johne, Earl of Wemyss.
- David, Earl of Elcho and Syklyk.

- Earl of Cassills.
- Lord Kennedy.

We are a tad unsure as to how many people are actually mentioned above. David, Earl of Elcho, is certainly a member of the Wemyss family but when googling Syklyk - this leads us to the Home family in the Borders! Likewise, Cassills is a castle in Ayrshire which was build as the home of the Kennedy family. All we can say is these were the names contained in the burgh records. The assumption must be that these appointments may be a precursor to the *Burgh Charter* of 1644 when the town secured Royal Burgh Status and was freed from the control of the Abbot of Dunfermline.

This control from Dunfermline had been established towards the end of the 11th century when King Malcolm 111 had purchased the *Shire of Kirkcaldunt* from the Earls of Fife – it was then gifted to the monks of Dunfermline Abbey to help defray the costs of their new church. Kirkcaldy had to pay revenues to Dunfermline.

1128 and 1130 saw two charters being drawn up by David I on behalf of his father. The first referred to the *Schyre of Kircalethin* and the latter to the *Schire of Kirkcaldy*. This 1128 charter is deemed to be the first written mention of the town. The town became a *Burgh of Barony* in 1340 but remained under the control of the Abbot of Dunfermline. The town was able to join the *Convention of Scottish Burghs* in 1574. This Convention was important in that it pursued the privileges and protected the interests of Scotland's principal trading towns. The town's representatives at the 1574 Convention are given as William Lamb and John Halkett. In 1644, Charles I renewed the royal burgh status and gifted nearly 9 acres of common land to the town for the *bleaching of linen, the drying of clothes and finally recreation* – all in perpetuity.

The Town's Lands

The most visible sign of the differences between the freemen and unfreemen was the fact that the former could feed their cattle on the *Burgh Muir* while the latter had to pay rent for the privilege. However, if the freemen did not pay *scot and lot* then he to would have to pay *girse mail* or grass rent just like unfreemen. This phrase *scot and lot* was a municipal charge used mainly in Scotland for poor relief. MacBean suggests it was a way in which the

townspeople encouraged the growth of public spirit.

Part of the *Burgh/Common Muir* was let and had farm steadings thereon but the greater share was reserved for the townsmen's cattle. It is said that the town had four important posts with three of these being – the Minister – the Schoolmaster and the Town Clerk. The fourth was the Common Herd. Who, you ask? The Common Herd had to pass through the town at “*four hours in the morning*” collecting the neighbour's cattle as he went, then driving them to the *Muir*, where he kept them until the evening. As with all local government functions, right up to the present, the post became more important and it was then necessary to hire an assistant. This assistant went through the streets, just prior to the arrival of the Common Herd, both in the morning and the evening, blowing his *suys* or *trumpet of the town*, thus alerting the townspeople to either put out or prepare to bring in their cattle. It seems that the *Muir* was used for much more than pastoral purposes given that it supplied Kirkcaldy with thatch to roof the houses and peat to serve as fuel. It seems that at one stage Burgesses were able to take as much as they required but, through time, the supply became limited. This led to Burgesses being restricted to one day's peat-casting or turf-cutting in a year.

How the Land was Lost

The town's lands had stretched inland to the Easter and Wester Muir Houses. The Easter Muir was by 1908 partly covered by the mansion and policies of Dunnikier. Further west was Temple Hall. Nearer to the town was what was known as the *North Common* and the lands of Hayfield all extending down to the Hayfield Burn. From the burn, stretching to the top of the slope where *Beechwood* now stands was the *Middle Common* which took in the farm of Spithead. The final portion was the *South Common* which ran from the top of the slope all the way to the head of Kirk Wynd. The town's Bennoch Cemetery is, or was, part of the *South Common*. The question has to be posed as to how the town's land was lost?

“In early times, a part of this land was set apart for the use of the minister, and other sections were leased or sold and built on. When the town was reduced to poverty by the Civil War certain of the *Burgh Acres* were let. However, it was during the 37 years from 1723 to 1759, that the burgh lands were alienated. The harbour had been wrecked by a storm in 1717, and the town was unable to face the cost of re-building it. It is believed that this was

the chief reason for the disposing of the last and greatest portions of its land”.

MacBean takes time to explain that initially the lands were not sold but feued. In simple terms feu duty was an annual rent paid by a tenant to the owner (Superior) of a feu (a piece of land). To be feued the land was auctioned normally going to the highest bidder. In those days the Superior to the feu would undertake to pay all the taxes out of their annual feu duty and this is exactly what transpired with the burgh lands. These taxes were light and so it seemed that such a condition was not unreasonable. Where the problems came from was that, as the years passed, the value of money and the tax assessments altered but the feu duty remained static. Therefore it soon became the norm for the taxes to be larger than the duty received! As the Superior to the feu of these burgh lands this was not a situation to the Council's liking.



The town's *Prime Gilt Box Society*, which was founded in 1591, had feued much of the lands of St. Mary's. They suggested that, instead of paying more tax than feu duty received, why not hand over the land as freehold? Thus the Society became the owners of the St. Mary's without paying a purchase price and this process was repeated with other feuars until it almost all went. It could be said that the burgh lands went for a song.



Government

When Malcolm III presented the town to the newly erected church of Dunfermline, in simple terms, the town lost its independence. For over 600 years the town had to, as MacBean writes, *acknowledge the over-lordship of the Abbot or his successors*. For 400 years of this period the town's magistrates were his nominees and representatives until, in 1451, the over-lordship was relinquished. That said - *The right of appeal from the Bailie's Court to Dunfermline was retained*. This subservient position was not to the liking of the good folk of Kirkcaldy, especially after they were able to nominate their own magistrates. In reality, it took until the Charter granted

by Charles I to finally regain the town's independence.

The earliest records that MacBean makes mention of were from the period 1562-1566. They reveal that by this period the connection with Dunfermline was little more than nominal. Once per year, the inhabitants (burgesses) and the magistrates met together in a public assembly. The purpose was to arrange the town's affairs, sometimes in great detail. These assemblies were often held in the open air, normally at the *Thorn Tree* previously mentioned, but in the course of time were held in the Tolbooth. The burgesses never lost their right to sit with the Council but through time *they adopted the custom of appearing only through their representatives, the deacons of the various trades, an arrangement which was adhered to until the Council was reconstructed under the 1833 Reform Bill.*

In the period mentioned above no trace was found of a Town Council. It was the Bailies who dispensed justice and they even went as far as making laws in the *Burgh Court* which then required the burgesses to give their consent to them. Again, in time, the free citizens would chose a *jury or assyse* on the spot and give them the power of enacting such measures as the town required. It appears that it was not until 1582 that laws started to be seen as being made by *the baillies, counsall, and communitie assembled.*

Provost

Kirkcaldy was a town which was not in favour of having a Provost – they were loathe to have their power/liberty in the hands of one man. Instead there was a system where two Bailies watched over the town's affairs with the theory that the influence of one would be counterbalanced by the other. There were people in Kirkcaldy who hankered after a Provost – as it was believed that this would give Kirkcaldy equal status and an equal footing with towns which had a Provost. To counteract this, in 1588, the Town Council, the Magistrates and the Community, entered into a solemn league and covenant in the form of a *Pledge against Provostship.*

However, in less that 100 years the town had a new constitution with the power to appoint a Provost and indeed one was duly elected. This was Robert Whyt whose name at times was spelt as Quhyte. He served until 1564 before being replaced by Alexander Herd. However, the forebodings of those who had signed the *Pledge against Provostship* were realised. In 1673,

“one of the members of the Town Council, John Hutchison by name, ventured to remark in the course of a debate that the Provost (Hendrie Boswell) had spoken nonsense. For this, John was at once clapped in jail and, soon afterwards, was tried for his temerity. He made an attempt to deny or tone down his remark, but was found guilty by a subservient jury and ordered to pay a fine of £10, besides making a public acknowledgement of his rashness and begging the Provost's pardon”.

But, the sanctity of their office threw a halo around the Bailies as well as the Provost, for, in the days before the election of a Provost, a too independent burgess refused to take off his hat to one of the Bailies and was at once committed to jail. He was tried, convicted of the offence, and threatened that if it were repeated he should be banished from Kirkcaldy. The very Town Council which passed the resolution against ever having a Provost ordered a disrespectful burgess to *ask ye Bailie's forgiffness and to craif his pardoun thairfor and promis never to commit ye lyk again to him nor na vther of ye Baillies*.

The Recording Angel

As mentioned above one of the four important figures was the Town Clerk. The holder of this post was paid the handsome salary of £10 per annum. That said, there were certain onerous considerations with one being that he could not leave the town without the consent of the Bailies while, to some, a second consideration might be even more arduous in that he had to open meetings of the Council with a prayer.

The Councillors

The councillors themselves were strictly dealt with if they failed in their duties. If they failed to attend a meeting of the Council or any other public function – they were promptly fined. Attending burials was particularly mentioned. It was not only those in authority who had to remember their duties to Kirkcaldy. All householders were liable to be punished if they showed inattention to their civic duties. MacBean reports that one of the bailies had to adjourn his Court because of *ye absens of ye maist pairt of ye nyboris qua suid be present* and ordered that *ye officers to poynd ye absentis but favour*.

Quaint Crimes

“The administration of justice was conducted with a quaint combination of common-sense and punctilious regard for precedents, with results that were sometimes bizarre. Troublance or disorderly conduct was the most common offence and the penalty imposed usually showed more imagination than the ordinary 5/- fine or three day's imprisonment of modern days” (1908). This is demonstrated by:-

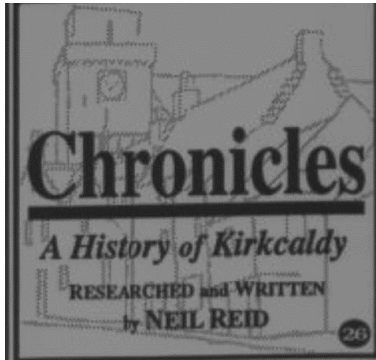
Quite frequently the offender was ordered to *beg the pardon of the offended, either in church or at the cross and if the offended party was a minister or a magistrate, the offender may well have to go down on his knees in the public street and ask forgiveness*. For the more heinous crime there was always the joughs, a neat neck-band of iron fastened to a pillar near the cross. This was situated at the widest part of the High Street to the west of Kirk Wynd. There was also punishment by way of the *Stool of Repentance* in the church and finally there was the gibbet on the moor for the most extreme cases.

MacBean gave some examples of what he referred to as quaint crimes. It is difficult to believe but even courting was at one time an offence! It is said that in 1625, when Puritanism was at its height, a certain 'Baxter' (a baker) was sentenced to be scourged through the town of Kirkcaldy if he should ever again be found in the company of a named young woman.

Another crime was then common in the town and according to MacBean still existed in 1908. This crime in bygone Kirkcaldy was punished as a crime of the deepest dye – *the practice of buying for the purpose of selling at a higher price*. The townsfolk referred to this as *regreating*. Actually, the buyer had an issue as well as the seller because by paying a higher price he was preventing his neighbours getting such goods and he would be referred to as a *forestaller*. “*For this unneighbourly exhibition of enterprise, fines, joughs and banishments, were usually inflicted. It is doubtful, however, if this practise was ever stamped out*”

Superstition and Crime

Another crime of the time was witchcraft and MacBean records that the first such trial took place in 1604. This was a case where the jury came to the view that the accused was not a witch but a deceiver who pretended to be



one – she was banished from the town. For a short spell we can move away from Lachlan MacBean's work and look at an item which was published in the *Fife Free Press* of the 9th October 1992. This was part of a series by the paper's Neil Reid under the heading “The Chronicles of Kirkcaldy”. This particular segment dealt with witchcraft and *Neil's conclusion was that Kirkcaldy avoided the worst excesses of the 17th century where*

amongst a time of fearful tortures and burnings at the stake, those suspected of witchcraft in Kirkcaldy were more gently treated.

Neil's research indicated that most suffered a term of imprisonment although one couple did meet what was termed “a fiery end”. Here are some of Neil's findings:-

- The 1604 case mentioned above was one *Dorothie Oliphant* – banished and forbidden to return on pain of death.
- In 1616 *Helen Birrell* had to carry out public repentance before the pulpit. It is not certain if this was for witchcraft or accusing another of witchcraft. However, 10 years later, Helen and two others were detained in the steeple accused of witchcraft.
- In 1621 *Marioun Rutherford*, who had been accused 24 years previously, was again accused and imprisoned in the Tolbooth.
- 1621 was also the year when *Alison Dick* was first accused of witchcraft and sentenced to two months incarceration in the steeple with another spell following in 1623.
- It was 10 years later when *Alison Dick* and her husband *William Coke* found moves against them becoming more intense. It was claimed that William had “put down” many ships and that Alison had driven a woman mad by simply touching her. It was also claimed that she had caused the death of a man at sea by cursing him.
- The pair were taken into custody with Alison initially implicating her husband and then admitting to her part. On November the 19th they were taken to the moor and burned at the stake. The cost to the church and the town was £34. It seems that during 1623 they had been told to stop living such a *vitious and licentious lyff* and were also sentenced to stand in the joughs for six hours the following Saturday. A warning was given that they could be banished if their behaviour did not improve. Quite possibly that would have been a better fate than the

one that ultimately did befall the couple!

Kirkcaldy, however, excelled in the number of her executions as well as in their frequency, the Town Council and Kirk-Session going hand in hand in the matter. In 1636 Wm. Coke and Dick Alison, two old men, were burned at the stake, on the Burgh Muir, for witchcraft—the town and Kirk-Session, as usual, bearing the expense between them. The official accounts being in Scots money look a rather formidable sum, but when reduced to English money only amount to about £3.

An article was uncovered in the *Fife Herald* of the 25th November 1875 which had been submitted by *Whinstone*. It was in relation to witchcraft but erroneously referred to Alison Dick as a man – calling him Dick Alison! It did however explain that the £34 was in Scot's

coinage which made it the equivalent of £3 sterling. Included in the bill were 5/7d for the coal, ½d for a barrel of tar, 4/10d for transport for the executioner and 15/10d for the executioner's fee. That comes to £1-06-03½ if our arithmetic is correct.

The Church

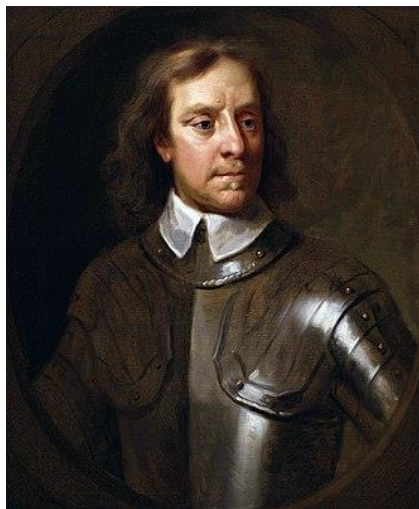
MacBean then moved onto the church. Then as now he was able to state that the tower of the old church still looks down on the High Street. He considers that in olden times it was a centre of municipal life and places it just behind the Tolbooth itself. While it is a common complaint today that many churches stand idle and useless every day except Sunday, he points out that the utilitarian spirit of Kirkcaldy saw the wastefulness of this. In the decades after the Reformation, and possibly even before it, the broad aisles of the building were used by men of different trades as a commodious workshop. The Town Council put a stop to this sacrilege in 1582 with the guilty parties being forced to clean up the church, plus the Beadle was ordered to ensure that the windows were cleaned every Saturday night.



The kirk-yard dykes were mended and *all dansing and running through the toun on Sunday during the time of preaching or prayers* was forbidden. It seems that walking through the streets after ten o'clock was also forbidden. We presume this relates only to a Sunday! According to MacBean, the townsfolk went to church for morning prayers every day, for the Council's ruling for the quartermasters was that they should meet and take their orders every morning after prayers in the church. (It does not elaborate on who the townsfolk were.)

At the Reformation, and perhaps in the period before it, the Town Council took charge of the church buildings. Almost overnight in 1560 Scotland, through its reformation, had become a Protestant country as prior to that it had been a typical devout Roman Catholic nation. During the reign of Charles I quasi- Episcopacy was, by Royal favour, the established church government in Scotland. This was submitted to by the people of Kirkcaldy, but when changes to the Sunday services were attempted, the town took a leading part in resisting the policy. The Town Council sent a Commissioner to vote in the General Assembly of the Church. They also set about training burgesses in the use of arms.

It was in 1638 that the town subscribed to the National Covenant which opposed the introduction of episcopacy and patronage in the Presbyterian church. Sadly, according to MacBean, support for the Covenanting cause cost the town over 200 men at the battle of Kilsyth. The continuing Civil Wars saw the 'wealth' of Kirkcaldy being placed in Dundee for safety but



was captured there by General Monck. The shipping of the town was almost entirely lost by war and storm. It is said that by the Restoration of the Stuarts in May 1660 the town had only a dozen registered ships. It was claimed that between 1640 and 1644 there had been close to 100. MacBean writes that “the soldiers of Cromwell treated the citizens in a hectoring fashion, the alienation of the common lands was begun, and ultimately the town was so reduced that even some of the magistrates forsook the town. In the long history of the town its enthusiastic espousal of the cause of religious freedom from 1639 – 1660 is the only gleam of romance and it was fruitful of disaster”!

It is therefore understandable that all this led to the feuing of the burgh lands and this was of course exacerbated by the destruction of the harbour by a storm in 1717.

In 1660, the Stuart dynasty was restored to the throne and Episcopacy was re-established. This was in no small way thanks to the efforts of James Sharp who co-operated with the English Bishops for this purpose. He had actually signed the National Covenant in 1638 and in 1648, as the town's information

panels reveal, he was appointed the Minister of Crail. It was in December of 1660 that he was consecrated as Archbishop of St. Andrews.

During his tenure, MacBean records a spat between the Archbishop who was backed by both the King and his Chancellor, Lord Rothes and Kirkcaldy's Town Council. The Archbishop was backing David Pearson as the town's Minister while the Council persisted with hearing other candidates and finally chose a Mr A. Malcolm. Of course, in the end, the Archbishop triumphed but when Sharp was murdered, by Covenantors on Magnus Moor in 1679, Kirkcaldy Town Council had to hire horses to attend the funeral. In spite of the town's leanings against the King's Episcopalian policy, the Councillors were forced to pass a resolution against the Covenanters and to raise a guard of thirty men to protect the town from them – ostensibly protecting them from themselves!

MacBean indicates from entries in the Annals that the observance of the Sabbath, in the 17th century, was never as strict as the Presbytery and Synod would have liked. In particular, they never quite managed to prevent Sunday working at the salt pans. However, Sabbath-breaking was seen to be a disgraceful thing. MacBean discovered an entry in the minutes of the *Weavers' Society of Linktown* that an Alexander Paterson had been charged with no less a crime than *a breech of the Lords day by drinking drames. At a meeting of the masters and some members he was found guilty and they agreed that he should be fined according to his fault and a vot being stated and rols cald he was found lyble of eightpence as a fine laid upon him for the abov fault and this be marked in the Book.*

Education

We are told that, after civil government and religion, it was education which was the most important factor in old Kirkcaldy. One of the earliest extracts from the Annals shows that the Council got the Minister to open a school and gave him protection against any rivals. In spite of this monopoly one person did try to open what would have been an opposition school. The result was that the Town Officer was sent to close it. Every child had to pay the burgh schoolmaster 20/- Scots per year, whether they went to his school or not. Almost unbelievably, in the case of parents refusing to pay, the Bailies were ordered to *poynd the bairnis*, that is, impound the children and keep them as security for payment. As MacBean pointed out “the poor

Bailies would probably have their hands full attending to the wants of the impounded urchins. The Kirk Session willingly assisted the Town Council in this work of education with contributions of money and by their attendance at visitations to the school. The eventual rules of the town's school were drawn up by the authority of both the Magistrates and the Minister, and although the two parties quarrelled over the appointment of a master in 1707, they generally co-operated in a very friendly way, as indeed they ought, seeing that the Magistrates were very often members of the Kirk Session”.

Trade

Kirkcaldy was from the first a trading town and its ambition was always to become a great trading centre. The mills at the East and West ends of the town were important producers in the earliest annals of the town. Meal and malt making, salt making, ironwork, weaving and the ordinary trades of the tailor, shoemaker, flesher and baker, appear to have been practised in the burgh from very remote times. In 1573 there were six salt pans in Kirkcaldy. In less than 100 years they increased to over twenty, but now (1908) there is only one. A bit of research from a map of the time reveals the site of this last salt pan and it is reproduced here for interest. In 1584 when the Government, in its eagerness to get revenue, threatened to put an export duty on salt, Kirkcaldy joined hands with the towns on the south side of the Forth to oppose *yis new inventit doutie set down opoun ilk chalder salt tra'sported furth of the contrie*, which was likely to damage *ye wellfair of ye toun* and ultimately it was abolished.



The coal from under the Burgh lands appears to have been wrought from early times, for we find the town arranging for filling up some of the pits in 1582. Coal for the town's use or for export was also brought in from Dysart, and we find the Laird of St. Clair in 1585 requesting the town to resume this trade which had been paralysed by the great plague of the previous year.

In their dealings with trade, the Town Council was strongly protectionist and rather inclined to grandmotherly legislation. The prices of beer and bread (both considered the necessities of life) were fixed by a simple resolution of the Council. Strangers were forbidden to sell bread in the town. Edinburgh merchants were a source of anxiety to Kirkcaldy shopkeepers and the Council resolved that *no Edinburgh merchant could be allowed to sell in Kirkcaldy in smalls, but only in greats*, that is wholesale, the retail trade being reserved for local tradesmen. It seems that 'stranger' candle makers were only allowed to sell at the cross.

The town's different trades or handicrafts were incorporated and had a great influence in preventing injury from outside competition but could also take part in the affairs of both the Town Council and the Parish Church. In the case of the church several of the crafts had their own gallery or loft/lafts.

The weavers of Linktown being outside the burgh were not allowed to sell their goods in Kirkcaldy except, like the candle makers, at the cross and then only after paying a tax for the privilege. Outsiders themselves formed incorporations of their own and received charters. Quaintly, as a condition to join, most crafts sought a payment of £4 Scots and half a gallon of ale.

Object 12 – *The Freedom of the Burgh* made reference as to how the Council was elected until 1834 and it is worth repeating a portion here to show the power of the Incorporated trades:-

In terms of the makeup of the governance of the town in the late 18th century it was in the hands of the Town Council, the heritors and the incorporated trades. The Council numbered 19 in total with 10 nominated by the incorporated trades, 6 from the sailors and 3 from the merchants. The concerns of the Council of the time were; education, church, trade and industry. It was not until 1834 the nominated Town Council was abolished and the heritors had the power to elect councillors but, even at that, it was not until 1850 that the secret ballot to elect councillors was introduced.

The Market

MacBean declares “that as an ambitious commercial centre, Kirkcaldy was proud of its markets and it seemed nervous about the attendances. There is a record of a bitter complaint against the farmers of the district, who

absented themselves from that institution, to the *grait hurt and dampnage of this burgh*”.

A weekly market was granted by Edward I in 1304 and this is taken as the starting date of the Links Market. Although a weekly market had been granted it would appear that every day there were stalls around the cross for the sale of goods. It was here and here alone where wares from outside the town's boundaries could be purchased with price, quality and quantity, being supervised by the Bailies.

The Harbour

As previously mentioned, “the position of the town marked it out as a seaport but MacBean suggests that it has never quite lived up to its ideal in this respect. Yet, the port of Kirkcaldy was a notable one in early times. It was from Kirkcaldy Harbour that James V set out on his voyage to France for a wife, and during the stirring times of Charles II the port was frequently mentioned as being that from which commissioners set out for Holland or to which exiled nobles returned. In order to maintain the marine trade and character of the town it was at one time a rule that no one should be eligible to act as a Town Councillor unless he had a certain amount of money sunk in shipping”.

Kirkcaldy had a wide sea trade and mention is made, in the records of the Synod and Presbytery of Kirkcaldy, of sailors falling into the hands of Moorish pirates: while, on the other hand, British privateers were invited to bring their prizes into Kirkcaldy!

The harbour itself was not well situated for larger vessels which suggests when the site was originally chosen it was probably as a fishing village. As vessels grew in size the town constructed piers and removed rocks and sand to enlarge the harbour. Taxes were also imposed and these, along with church-door collections, were intended to secure a good harbour.

There is an item in the Synod of Fife recorded in 1669 – during the reign of Charles II which is of interest. A supplication is the act of begging or asking and the item read:-

Supplication of the Burgh of Kirkcaldy

The Lord Archbishop and Synod taking to their consideration the supplication of the magistrates and town counsell of Kirkcaldie, for a collection to the building of a new harbour of the said burgh, which work was interrupted throw the troubles of the time; they grant that the said supplication, provyding the petitioners find security that what money is collected for that end, and deliverit to them, sall be expendit on the said work; and appoint that all the ministers within the dioces collect for the said harbour as soon as conveniently they may.

Before the end of the 18th century the town has disposed of almost the last of its acres to secure money for a harbour extension. A large scheme was also carried through in the middle of the 19th century and at the time of writing this tome (1908), MacBean was able to indicate that “the beginning of the Twentieth Century finds a still larger extension going on. Those outlays were probably remunerative enough. In the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries the town had an extensive and profitable trade with Holland and sixty years ago the whale-fishing vessels and those trading with Flanders and the Baltic added materially to the wealth of the town”.

Public Health

This segment was probably one of the most interesting as it was reactive but harsh. While there was no Sanitary Inspector or Medical Officer great care was taken especially when the town faced the threat of epidemics of plague or *ye pest*. There seems to be a tried and tested approach to such issues to try and minimise the consequences of these dreadful diseases which thankfully have now been eliminated.

When the approach of these diseases was first seen – the town was divided into four quarters and each was placed under the control of six quartermasters. They operated in pairs and each pair were entrusted with the whole power of the Town Council. No one was allowed to enter or leave the town without permission, all back-gates leading to the country were locked and anyone visited by a relative from outside the town was heavily fined. In short, isolation was practised in old Kirkcaldy in its strictest form.

The other modern requirement of notification was, even then, equally strictly enforced. The Council ordered that *quhat person saever happenis to*

tak seikness within yis toun, yat ayr ye gud man or gud wyffe of ye hous qr ye sick persoun beis sall reweill ye same immediatlíe ta yaer qrter maisteris, or twa of yaem, to ye effect ye toun may be perseine yrof.

What followed on from the notification by the authorities was the immediate removal of the sick person to the town's Muir. They were forbidden to return under pain of direct punishment. This looks brutal but it was done on the principle of the greatest good for the greatest number and it was seemingly carried out with the greatest severity. It is recorded that it was ordered that all who returned from the Muir without leave should be branded and, if they persisted, should be hanged!

“But while fighting disease in this strenuous way, Kirkcaldy appears to have had no resident medical man, and, when one did appear, he could not be allowed to enter without a passport. At last the Council resolved to let the “chirurgiane” and his family come in and live in the town, but then he was not to be allowed to go out of the gates and when a man was injured at the harbour it required a special resolution of the Town Council before the doctor could be allowed to go and see him”. A chirurgiane is defined as a surgeon.

“In the course of years the plague passed away, but the Magistrates remained more careful of public health than they would have been before the visitation. Heaps of dirt on the Loan and in the streets were no longer tolerated and cattle were not allowed to walk up the water channels. Street improvements were also begun, *ilk naybour* being obliged to do the work *forneinst his awn dure*”.

Ye Pure

The care of the poor was another department of municipal government, although there was neither Parish Council nor poor rates. The fines imposed in the Burgh Court and several other perquisites fell to ye poore. There was an order of the Council that a poor man who could not pay his rent might have voluntary help by one of the neighbours. The only approach to a Parish Council was the appointment of keepers of ye pure folkis box – a type of committee to dispense the town's charity. But by and by the ship owners and mariners established a box to help their own poor and the various crafts followed suit.

Names and Designations

In this section, the author, writing almost 120 years ago makes mention of what is termed Kirkcaldy surnames which have become almost extinct in the burgh. In alphabetical order were the following names:- Balcanquell, Balmain, Balsillie, Colzear, Dempsterton, Halkheid, Hog, Littlejohn, Shoolbred, Spens and Touch.

These were followed by what were described as others which were still prominent in the district:- Buist, Balfour, Birrell, Crombie, Dalzell, Dow, Dowie, Flockhart, Gourlay, Hutchison, Heggie, Kellock, Kilgour, Lockhart, Melville, Maisterton, Oliphant, Ramsay, Russell, Stocks, Torrance and Young.

This segment concluded with remarking “that in ancient times the predominance of certain surnames must have been an inconvenience, seeing the houses bore no numbers to give distinct addresses. Such distinctions as *younger* and *elder* were therefore freely used and even such additions as *easter* and *wester*”.

External Relations

“During those early days Kirkcaldy was a self-contained little republic with peculiar laws and traditions of its own and feeling its way towards a just system of politics. But, of course, it could not escape having relations with the outside world. Beyond the town's gates there grew on the Links, or Sea Commonly, a few scattered hamlets which came to be called Westburn, Inverteil, the Milntown, the Newtown and the Linktown. The inhabitants of these places were looked on with no kindly eye by the privileged burgesses of Kirkcaldy and their communications with the indwellers was kept under strict supervision.

At the east end of the burgh stood the small village of Pathhead between whose inhabitants, and those of Kirkcaldy, a feud had existed from prehistoric times. At a very early date it was decreed by the Town Council of Kirkcaldy that the people living outside, in Linktown and Pathhead, should be carefully excluded from the privileges of burgesses”.

Some of these restrictions were that they were to be allowed no divots or turf from the town muir, nor could they always get access to Kirkcaldy itself. The other side of the coin was that, if a free burghess of Kirkcaldy went to live in either of these communities, he lost his freedom and became an alien. It would seem that the idea of a villa in the suburbs was not for those far off days!

The Town Council would attempt to prevent the inhabitants of these two places from engaging in any craft that might compete with those of Kirkcaldy's burghesses – *to ye grait abuis and hurt of ye priviledges of yis burgh*, but, failing in this, they strictly prohibited them from bringing their goods into the town for sale except under severe restrictions.

MacBean relates an example of how these ancient restrictions could have dramatic effects. In 1583, during the hearing of a case before the Bailies, they were informed that a material witness was outside the West Port. It transpired that he could not come into the burgh as there was a sentence against him which would almost certainly lead to his arrest. As the magistrates were anxious to have his evidence – the court was adjourned to the West Port and the witness, standing outside the gate, gave his testimony. “This occurrence is probably unique in the history of jurisprudence”.

The Burgh and the Nation

MacBean did not dwell overlong on this section restricting himself to:- Its central position brought Kirkcaldy into intimate relations with all the great national movements. It was involved in the civil and religious conflicts of the 16th century and took the Protestant and Presbyterian side. The town's nearest neighbours, Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange and the Laird of Raith, were leading reformers and were in arms against the Queen Regent in 1559. From 1582 onwards James VI, being then sixteen years old, was the centre of a series of intrigues, which led to frequent meetings of Parliament and the Convention. To each of these, as well as the General Assembly, Kirkcaldy sent duly instructed commissioners.

The marriage of James VI to Princess Anne of Denmark cost the town dear. The King, in 1590, having received a dowry of £20,000, lent it at interest amongst the burghs of Scotland. Kirkcaldy's share was one-fifth of the whole and the Town Council, in its turn, lent out the money among its

citizens but never got much of it back, thus incurring a serious loss!

“Throughout the long contest of the Commons of Britain against the usurpations of the Stuart Kings, the position of Kirkcaldy was a trying one, for the sympathies of the town were entirely with the Covenantors, and, as already mentioned, it took an active part against the aggressions of the King and Court, suffering enormous losses in men and money”.

Then and Now

The final section on the history of the ancient burgh was penned close to 120 years ago. The author's reflections are well worth quoting as, in the few paragraphs, MacBean demonstrated, as befits a wordsmith, how far the town had come. It was all progress:-

Kirkcaldy has passed through many changes since the days here described of auld lang syne and its population has increased more than ten fold. The old burgh did not cover half the space between the East and West Burns; today it extends half-a-mile beyond the one and two miles beyond the other and it has spread over its ancient hinterland, covering the “common muir” with stone and lime and invading the estates of Abbotshall, Raith, Bennoch, Dunnikier and the ancient possessions of the St. Clairs.

The waters of the East Burn, supplemented by those of long buried and forgotten burns that crossed the ancient burgh – Balcanquhal Burn, Halkett's Wynd Burn and others – are no longer available and even, were they still running pure, they would be insufficient for the modern population, for whose wants a constant torrent flows down from the great artificial lakes formed at the foot of the Lomond Hills.

The burgh that was once plunged into darkness merely because the chandlers tried to create a corner in the tallow market is now illuminated by electric light and electric tramcars sweep over the ancient Thorn on the Muir, where the townsmen held their “Heid Court” and the gibbet reared its grim form at the head of the Loaning.

The “dwellers on the Links”, as well as the householders in the Baron Burghs of Dunnikier and Abbotshall, have been made fellow citizens of the royal burgh. By Steamship, by railway, by telegraph and telephone, the once

exclusive burgh is in communication with the great outside world, whose incursions no quartermasters nor even a *dosoun of daillis** can now prevent. It is no longer *old Kirkcaldy*; the householders are no longer the *naybouris* but the *electors* or the *ratepayers* – but the town and townspeople of today still inherit privileges and peculiarities from their predecessors. (*appears to mean a dozen partners – i.e. a dozen quartermasters).

The Annals of Kirkcaldy

Following on from the early history, MacBean devotes 16 pages in bullet point form of important dates in the town's development. It is clearly impossible to include them all and so a number are included which, if nothing else, gives a flavour of the work. It also provides dates for some of the items mentioned previously. No attempt at detailed explanations is given here – these, we repeat are simply key points. We also have to state that the choice of items had to be subjective. It does not mean that they are more important than those omitted – quite simply, a line had to be drawn somewhere. Even in the following abbreviated form it is clear that Kirkcaldy has had a rich and sometime turbulent past – which is sometimes all too easily forgotten.

- 1075 - Malcolm III grants the “Shire of Kirkaladunt, along with other gifts to the Church of Dunfermline.
- 1240 – David de Bernham, Bishop of St. Andrews, bestows the Church of Kirkcaldy on Dunfermline Abbey, the Abbot to provide Vicars.
- 1304 - Abbot and Convent of Dunfermline inform King Edward that they obtained from King David a town called Kirkcaldy, and as it is one of the most ancient burghs in Scotland – they ask that it have a weekly market.
- 1305 – On March 28th King Edward grants Kirkcaldy a weekly market and also a weekly fair at the octaves of Easter. An octave is the eight day period leading up to the celebration of Easter or Christmas. Easter Day and Christmas Day are referred to as the octave days.
- 1470 – Ravenscraig Castle sold by James III to William St. Clair, Earl of Orkney, in exchange for lands in Orkney. The castle had been started in 1459 by James II. Following his accidental death at Roxburgh it was completed by his widow, Queen, Mary of Guildress, in 1463.

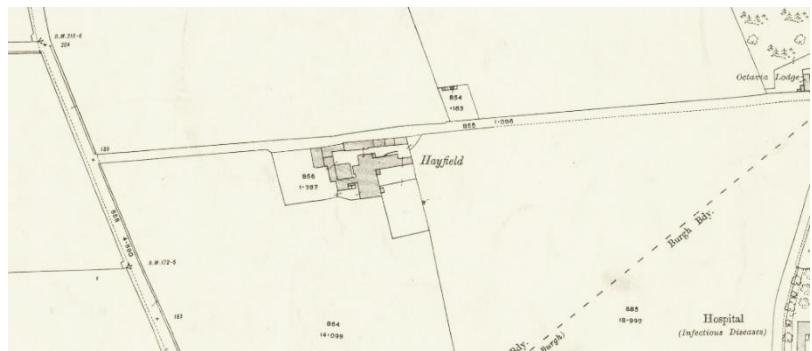
- 1527/1529 – Frequent conflicts between Moultray of Seafield and Melville of Raith. In an earlier year one of the Mountrays had been murdered near Seafield Tower by one of the retainers of Raith. For this murder the Melvilles had to pay twelve merks per year for Masses in Kirkcaldy Parish Church for the repose of the soul of the murdered man.
- 1546 – Assassination of Cardinal Beaton; Henry Balnaves, poet and reformer, a native of Kirkcaldy and Melville of Raith implicated.
- 1548 – Sir John Melville of Raith is executed on a charge of treason.
- 1559 – Kirkcaldy burnt by French Soldiers of the Queen Regent, (Mary of Guise), who were ravaging the coast of Fife on account of its leanings to the Reformed faith. They were stopped by the appearance of Argyll and a few hundred men at Dysart.
- 1560 – the Scottish Reformation - Kirkcaldy Parish Church gets a minister in place of a vicar. First minister is George Scott of Abbotshall – Kirkcaldy's first protestant minister.
- 1573 – Kirkcaldy has 23 salt pans.
- 1579 – an Act is passed by the Scots Parliament. It ordained that there should be a fine of twenty shillings for *gaming, playing (gambling), passing to taverns and alehouses, selling of meat and drink and wilful remaining from the Parish Kirk in time of sermon or prayers on a Sunday*. The fine was to be used for the relief of the poor in the parish.
- 1582 - The Bailies and Council of Kirkcaldy arrange with the minister, David Spens, to open a day school in the town.
- 1583 – The Town Council complains of unfreemen practising crafts outside the Burgh boundary on the lands of Abbotshall.
- 1584 – The black plague is brought to Fife by a ship which docked at West Wemyss. The disease spread death and panic in Kirkcaldy with infected persons sent to the moor. The town was described as being in a state of siege. 300 die during the 3 months the epidemic lasted.
- 1583 – John Mitchelson appointed the town's first schoolmaster. The following year an opposition school opened by James Moreyson ordered to be closed.
- 1591 – The shipowners of Kirkcaldy establish a box for the relief of those of their number who may fall into distress. (The Prime Gilt Box).
- 1594 – Burgesses going outside Kirkcaldy to live in Pathhead and the Links to lose their privileges.



- 1616 – the population of the Burgh is said to be 3,147.
- 1626 – Janet Pirie, Janet Stark and Helen Birrell *deteyned in the steeple* on charges of witchcraft.
- 1633 – Alison Dick and her husband William Coke, burned for witchcraft.
- 1636 – Charter, confirming the privileges of the Burgh, signed by Charles I but not yet presented to Parliament.
- 1637 – The National Covenant for defence of religious liberties signed in Kirkcaldy.
- 1644 – the Charter signed by Charles I confirmed by Parliament.
- 1648 – The parts of the Burgh Moor nearest the town converted to arable and let for £72:6:8d
- 1649 – Owing to the increase in population, the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy, agrees an additional church is necessary and arrangements are made for the erection of the Church of Abbotshall.
- 1650 – By this date it was said that during the Civil War, Kirkcaldy had lost 53 ships and 480 burgesses.
- 1651 – English soldiers quartered with the Burgesses.
- 1652 - The Stool of Repentance in the church pulled down by English soldiers. Also confirmation given from the Parliament of the Commonwealth that the inhabitants of Kirkcaldy can choose their own magistrates.
- 1656 – Kirkcaldy now has only 12 ships and only half belong to Kirkcaldy people.
- 1658 - Robert Whyte, *Burgess of Kirkekalde*, chosen as Provost. At this time they were also given a Deaconry over the trades. (In Scotland this was an administrative body who oversaw and regulated trade guilds).
- 1660 – A Kirkcaldy vessel bringing the old National Records back to Scotland, after the Stuart Restoration, flounders and the records are lost.
- 1662 – Lord Rothes, President of the Privy Council, decrees that to help Kirkcaldy's recovery no man shall become a freeman unless he has expended 500 merks on ships.
- 1664 – Provost Alexander Herd fined for brewing at home thus evading the Council's tax on brewing designed to help the town.

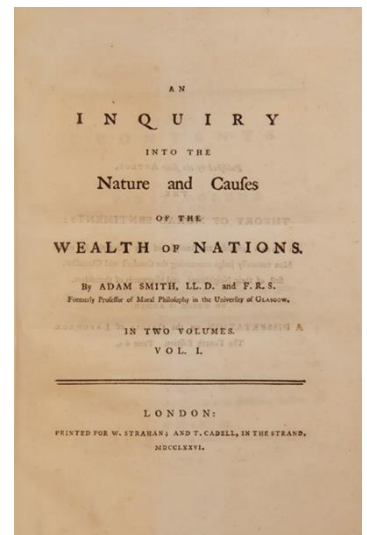


- 1673 – Kirkcaldy now has 23 ships.
- 1688 – Moor and common loan let for £68 10s. Kirkcaldy's debt in these hard times is 60,000 merks or £3,333.
- 1689 – Petition to King William setting out the poverty and losses which were caused by the Town's opposition to the tyranny of the Stuarts. Losses were said to be £800,000 Scots or in sterling £66,666. King William and his Government reduced the tax assessment on Kirkcaldy by £1,000.
- 1703 – James Oswald, the town's Dean of Guild, buys the estate of Dunnikier. By 1706 he is elected Provost.
- 1707 – Kirkcaldy, Dysart, Kinghorn and Burntisland are joined together in electing Members of Parliament. The same year, with the Union of the Crowns, trade was badly affected by the English restrictions on Scottish trade.
- 1715 – a party of Highland Jacobites take tribute from Kirkcaldy and loot the town.
- 1723 – the town feus the Wester Muir houses to James Oswald, Hungerfield (Hayfield) to Dr Hay and parts of the Middle Commonty near Spithead to Bailie Williamson.
- 1725 – Robert Ferguson of Raith buys Abbotshall Estate.
- 1728 – The Council forbids the sale of butter, cheese, eggs or poultry before 7.00am in the market.
- 1733 – interesting statistic – the quantity of cloth woven in Kirkcaldy was 177,740 yards.
- 1736 – this was covered in our blog – James Stark, Collector of Excise in Kirkcaldy, robbed by, amongst others a Pathhead man named Wilson. His Edinburgh execution led to the Porteous Riots.
- 1738 – the Council believing the town's cross, *no manner of use*, pulls it down and rouns the stones.
- 1740 - On Hansel Monday, 13 children playing below the Bonnet Rock on the seashore at Pathhead saw the rock suddenly fall – 11 were killed.
- 1746 – In January during the Second Jacobite Rebellion, Kirkcaldy has to pay a tribute of £35.
- 1776 – Adam Smith publishes his seminal work – *Inquiry into the*



Wealth of Nations.

- 1784 – Cotton spinning introduced to Kirkcaldy. By 1792, 110 persons were involved.
- 1785 – The town's first bank – the Bank of Scotland was opened.
- 1792 – back to shipping and the town has – 26 square rigged vessels, 1 sloop and 2 ferryboats. They carried 225 men and the total value of the ships was £30,000.
- 1793 – Flax spinning by machinery introduced. Kirkcaldy district had 2,000 weaving looms and the value of the produce said to be £110,000.
- 1800 – A public Subscription Library was introduced.
- 1810 – Alexander Thomson bequeaths £780 for aged indigent and for children's fees. Note one known to us some research required.
- 1811- Act of Parliament giving the Burgh Trustees power to pave and light the streets. The year *Pet Marjorie* died.
- 1825 – Chamber of Commerce and Manufacturers established in Kirkcaldy.
- 1828 – The gallery of the Parish Church Collapses when Edward Irving is preaching – 28 killed.
- 1829 – Philp's Trust for the education and clothing of poor children established.
- 1838 – Kirkcaldy Savings Bank established.
- 1838 – *The Fifeshire Advertiser* established by J. Jeffers Wilson.
- 1843 - Corn Law controversy – Richard Cobden and John Bright address public meeting in Kirkcaldy.
- 1843 – The Burgh School erected on Loan Wells Green. (Now Adam Smith College).
- 1868 – Kirkcaldy and Dysart Waterworks formed.
- 187 - *The Fife Free Press* Established.
- 1876 – The Royal Burgh extended to include Bridgeton, Linktown, Dunnikier Road district, Pathhead, Sinclairtown and Gallatown. The population now over 20,000.
- 1889 – Movement for the erection of a public hall as a memorial to Adam Smith initiated by Provost Beveridge. The first seeds were sown in a letter from Beveridge to the *Fifeshire Advertiser*.
- 1890 – Provost Beveridge dies, leaving £50,000 to provide Kirkcaldy with a public park, public hall and public library. The Beveridge Park



was opened on the 24th September 1892 by Mrs Beveridge. In 1899 the Adam Smith and Beveridge Halls were opened by Andrew Carnegie.

- 1890 – Cottage Hospital presented to the town by Michael B. Nairn.
- 1894 – Sheriff Court buildings erected.
- 1894 – Burgh School rebuilt by Michael B. Nairn.
- 1897 – Construction of the Victoria Viaduct to connect Kirkcaldy and Pathhead begun.
- 1899 – Infectious Diseases Hospital completed and opened.
- 1901 – Police buildings and prison erected at a cost of over £26,000.
- 1902 – Extension of Kirkcaldy and Dysart Waterworks – the total cost to date of the system is £220,000.
- 1903 – Electric Light and tramways introduced by the Corporation at a cost of £95,000.
- 1904 – Michel B. Nairn created a Baronet. (Still a commoner but can use the prefix Sir).
- 1905 – Parish Council Buildings erected. Still standing – here is a photograph – who knows where?
- 1906 - Tramway extension opened connecting Kirkcaldy with Wemyss Tramways.



Again we would remind readers that above list is subjective – it really has to be. Possibly even worse is the fact that it was executed by only one of the team. It would have been impossible for all three to sift through every entry and then voting on its inclusion or otherwise. All that can be said is, that even only using this modest selection, it demonstrates that Kirkcaldy has a history worthy of celebration. Lengthy it may be but Kirkcaldy's story deserves to be told.

The book then devotes several pages to statistics relating to the population over the centuries, some of which are included here. In the figures, the *Parliamentary Burgh* includes Linktown as well as the Royal Burgh itself. The *Municipal Burgh*, which only appears after 1881, is defined as the old Royal Burgh plus Pathhead, Sinclairtown, Gallatown and Linktown.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Royal Burgh and Parish excluding Abbotshall.</u>
1650	6,090+
1660	2,990

1755	2,296*
1795	2,673
1801	3,248
1811	3,747
1821	4,452
1831	5,034
1841	5,275
1851	5,797

+This was prior to the formation of the new Abbotshall Parish in 1650.

*Unable to explain this fall.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Parliamentary Burgh and Parish</u>
-------------	---------------------------------------

1851	10,636
1861	11,088
1871	12,844

<u>Date</u>	<u>Parliamentary Burgh</u>	<u>Municipal Burgh</u>
-------------	----------------------------	------------------------

1881	15,054	23,431
1891	22,341	27,151
1901	22,341+	34,064
1908	-	39,000*

+We can only presume this to be a typing error (not ours!)

*This is an estimate.

Next on the agenda is a list of the Town's Provosts from the first in 1658 – Robert Whyt, through to 1906 where we have Robert Craufurd Munro Ferguson of Raith.

The full list is contained on a beautiful wooden board in the Town House adjacent to the Council Chamber. Normally *Doors Open Day* presents the opportunity to view it along with the Town Bell and other artefacts. It would serve little purpose to mention everyone so, again, random names have been chosen on a subjective basis and are shown below.

1670 - *Matthew Anderson* –Re-elected 1676,1677,1678,1679,1680,1684 and 1685. His daughter, Isobel, married Captain James Oswald who purchased Dunnikier Estate in 1703.



1682 - *John Williamson*, the last Provost before elections were suspended by James II.

1687 – *John, Earl of Balcarres*. He was nominated by James II.

1706 - *Captain James Oswald* – The purchaser in 1703 of Dunnikier Estate. Captain Oswald married Isobel, the daughter of Matthew Anderson, the first named on this list.

1738 - *Dr. Robert Hay* – He of Hayfield Road fame.

1793 - *Walter Fergus* – He of the many streets named after him in central Kirkcaldy. He was re-elected in 1797,1802,1808,1812,1818,1822 and 1826.

1795 - *George Morgan* – The father of the George Morgan who was killed in the 1826 fatal duel with David Landale.

1814 - *William Swan* – The father of the Patrick Don Swan who served as Provost for a total of 37 years.

1835 - *David Landale* – He of the fatal duel fame.

1841 - *Patrick Don Swan* – The first of his record breaking 37 years. He was re-elected in 1843, 1845 and 1860 – he retired in 1886.

1886 - *Michael Beveridge* – He of the Adam Smith Halls and Beveridge Park fame.

The section is completed by a list of those who have represented Kirkcaldy in Conventions and Parliaments. As mentioned previously the town was first represented at the Convention of Royal Burghs in 1574 so naturally it is William Lamb and John Halkett who are the first to be mentioned. In fact, John Halkett, features regularly in the early years and by 1582 he seems to have been knighted. Some of the names mean nothing in themselves but their locations are of interest. Others have names which through the passage of the centuries are still familiar in Kirkcaldy. Once again a random sample are given below:-

1645 - Robert White of Purin.

1669 - John White of Collistoun.

1702 - James Oswald of Dunnikier.

1708 - John St. Clair.

1722 - John Leslie of Stenton.

1774 - John Jonstone of Donovan.

1780 - Sir John Henderson of Fordell.
 1790 - Major-General Charles Hope of Waughton.
 1796 - Sir J. St. Clair Erskine.
 1830 - Lord Loughborough.
 1835 - John Fergus of Strathore.
 1841 - Lieutenant-Colonel Sir R.C. Ferguson of Raith.
 1862 - Roger S. Aytoun.
 1875 - Sir George Campbell.
 1892 - J.H. Dalziel. Dalziel served as the Town's Member of Parliament until 1921. He was knighted in 1907, given the Freedom of Kirkcaldy in 1917 and elevated to the Peerage as Baron Dalziel of Kirkcaldy in 1921. Having no children he was the one and only person to hold the title.

Extracts From The Records of the Burgh of Kirkcaldy

The hope had been that this Object would be completed by quoting verbatim many of the extracts from the Records. However, this was not to be. The early Records were written in 17th century Scots and were often problematic in trying to ensure we were grasping the correct meaning. MacBean had understandably offered no translation of the various excerpts. The idea of these Objects has been to be both interesting, informative and certainly were not intended to create a need for cerebral gymnastics. For this reason the very earliest entry is given in full – which might explain the problem better than these words. After that, we have simply taken what we consider interesting elements from the entries rather than the full wording. As the centuries pass it becomes far easier to grasp the meaning so the extracts become fuller. There are close to 300 pages and all we can do is provide a sample – after all, it is not an academic thesis we are trying to create. It also has to be said that it is a form of torture trying to type these non-dictionary words and phrases. We hope and trust that the following will give a flavour:-


- The fensit court haldyn in the Tolbooth of Kyrcauld, the xiiij of December in the zeir of God ans thousand VC Lxii zeris, Wilyem Vilson, bailye, sittand in jugement, sutis callit, absente patent. Thwe quhilk day Jhon Kay, be interloquitor of court, is fownd nerast & lauchfull air to James Kay, his fader, nayne vthis.*

The quhilk day Jhon braidvod is made freman and hes maid his eitht to the town and hes put him in the bailyeis will. We suspect that this is a court held by Bailie William Wilson, in the Tolbooth, on the 14th December 1562. It

would appear that John Kay has been proven to be the nearest and lawful heir to his father James Kay. On the same day, John Braidwood, has been made a freemen and taken his eighth (oath) and the Bailie has then added him to the list of Freemen. Without wishing to continue the team's woes this has taken over 20 minutes for a single segment - simply not sustainable in the time we can dedicate to each object. That said, the first had to be covered as fully as possible and we hope that has been achieved.

- In 1584 we see that *Findis gud that thair be provydit for service of the tounschipe ane common swesche and ane handsenyie*. It has been agreed for the benefit of the townspeople that a drum and a banner/flag be purchased. A swesche was a small drum used to attract public attention.
- On the 25th July 1584 the plague has arrived and *it is ordys the toun to be devydit qyarterlie and ilk quarter to have saxe quarter maisteris*. The plague was believed to have been carried by a ship which had landed in West Wemyss harbour. This was the town being divided into quarters with each quarter to have six quartermasters. We learn later in 1584 of the potential penalties inflicted on those who attempted to return after being put out to the Muir due to sickness. This could be that *thai sall be bruntt with ane burning irne upon the cheik, or paume off the hand within sight of the baillies and counsall, and this act to be signifeit to thame pretend ignorance*. Not much fun having the cheek or palm burnt with an iron in front of the Bailies which was intended to stop people trying to return, claiming ignorance of the rules.
- On the 26th March 1590 – *Jhone Duff of his own proper confession became entret in the court buk, nocht to resort nor remane in this toun ont tyme heirefter under the payne of lynning his lugis*. Poor John Duff, as a result of his own confession, he has been banished from the town under pain of *lynning his lugis*. *Lynning* is certainly losing and *lugis* is a house/shelter/tent. Would he not have lost his shelter anyway if he was banished?
- The 7th September, 1591 - The Prime Gilt Box was instituted:- *At the Burgh of Kirkcaldy the sevent day of September VC, four scor elevin zeiris in the presence of Robert Hay and Johne Halkheid, baillies of the said burgh of Kirkcaldie; and the interponand thair decreit and*

authoritie heirto. The two bailies by their authority, added their decision to the records, allowing the Society to be constituted.

- The 16th May, 1592 sees a new statute and order *that na persones dwelling in the Links nor Pethaid, nor yet the goodman of the Eist Mill, win nor laid ony fiffatis at the mure under pane of xxs unlaw.* So, those in the Links, Pathhead and the East Mill are getting no divots from the Muir. No idea what the penalty is – unless it is excess law?
- In the same year we see an attempt to clean up the burns. *That na wasching be at comoun burnes, nor clothe bleching, nor fische wasching, nor na uther kynd of fyling, nor misusing thairaff under the paine of dowbill onlaw, speciallie at the rid burne that na middings nor stray to mak middings be laid be-west James Stangis barrin door.* So, no washing or bleaching in the burns and certainly no fish washing or other kind of fouling. This is especially true at the *rid burne* – so take care around Redburn Wynd that you do not make a midden or leave stray to make a midden west of James Stangis's barn door. It transpires onlaw is a fine so for this it is a penalty of a double fine.
- 25th February, 1596 – *The baillies and counsall ordains Alexr Boswell, their thresaurer, to gif to Mr Henry Bavarage, skuilmaister, the sowme of twentye merkis to buy ane gowne and other necessarys to the said Mr Henry.* The Council has ordained that the Schoolmaster – Henry Beveridge, is to get the sum on 20 merks to buy a gown and other necessities.
- 8th May, 1598 – The church needs dusting! *It is ordanis that the Bellman, James Kilgour, to soup the Kirkis daskis thair ilk Setterday on eiven under payn of tynsall of his office.* James has to soup (sweep) the Church furniture on a Saturday but in an organised manner and if not done properly - *payn of tynsall* – is loss of job.
- 5th June, 1598 – *that nae skabbit horss be presentit on the comontie under the payne of ten marks.* No horses suffering from scab to graze on the common with a penalty of 10 merks.

- 14th October 1622 – an assault of Whytescausway! *The complaint maid be Catherine Seatone agains Richard Boswell; alleging that upon the ? day of September lastwes, scho (she) being coming down Whytescausway in quyet and sober maner and the said Richard being following hir at the bak, onbeset hir and maist cruellie and unmerciefullie strak and dang hir with a staff upon the bak, heid and shoulderis and thairby maid hir sa unable that hes never sensyne bene bedfast.* Catherine Seaton going down Whytescausway in a quiet and sober manner is struck, most cruelly and unmercifully, on the head, back and shoulders by Richard Boswell. Catherine has ever since been in bed. It was difficult to be certain of the penalty after he confessed to the crime. *And in sowme of uther v. lib. as assythment to the pairtie offendit.* Assythment is/was a payment by way of compensation but whether this was by money or the loss of Boswell's liberty we are unable to say
- January 1662 – *Decernes and ordanis David Campbell, merchant burgess of the said burghe, to conent and pay to James Gib, mariner thair, the soume of twentiw ane pound aucht shilling Scottis money, as the pryce of threttie nyn pound and ane halfe of guid and sufficient tabaco.* The Council have decreed that a Burgess merchant, David Campbell, is authorised to pay a mariner, James Gibb, twenty one pounds eight shillings for thirty one and a half pounds of good tobacco.
- In January 1664 it would seem that the Council are unhappy with the candle makers whom it would seem have left the town in the dark by selling the tallow to seamen. For this 'crime' they were placed in front of the magistrates to presumably be fined. One thing we did not anticipate was the word egregious appearing in writing from the 17th century. In fact, on checking, the word was already in use from the 16th century - meaning outstandingly bad – so what had happened? *It being complained be the inhabitants that the candlemakers of this burghe has regreitted the haill tallo of the burghe by pynding of the same and selling it to sea, so that ther can be nae candle for firnishing of the inhabitants and communitie, qlk the council considers to be ane very eggregious wrong, tharffor they do remit the fineing and unlawing of the saidis candlemakers to the magistrates.*

- April the 24th 1665 sees the Bellman and those who succeed him that they make two proclamations when in Hill Vennel – one to the west and another to the east. This is now Hill Street. *Appoynts the present Bellman and all others succeeding his to this office, that in all tyme coming, that when they use ony proclamations, they use ane in the west pairt o' the Hill Vennel most comodious, and ane other in the eist pairt thereof be eist of George Burn.*
- 22nd September, 1673 – The Burgh Coat of Arms – *Appoynts Matthew Anderson or Robert Chapman to cause the Lord Lyon to matriculate the burghes seals and armes, and what expense they shall disburse to be repayed to them. This is a direct reference to the granting of the Town's Coat of Arms in 1673 which features an Abbey with three pyramids.*
- 10th August, 1674 – following hot on the heels of the Town's Coat of Arms came the appointment of the Town's piper: – *Taking into consideration the petition of William Cruikitt, pyper, craving to be admittit comon pyper of this burgh upon such terms and conditions as they might pleis appoynt, quhairby he might have ane honest lyflehood to himselfe and famillie; they unanymouslie grantit to him his desyre.* The piper gets his wish fulfilled in order that he might have an honest livelihood for himself and his family
- The 7th June, 1679 saw a decision to mount a guard from 8.00pm until 4.00am. It seems that there were rebels in the Western Shires. Thirty men were to be on duty. *Resolved that there shall be ane gaird keiped this night and heirafter, ay, and quhill the present commossion (commotion) be quieted, by the insurrection of some rebels in the western shyres; and to that effect ordaines threttie men to be nytlie, and to enter at aught hours at nyt, and to com aff at four in the morning.*
- The 4th October, 1686 saw the Provost produce a letter from the Lord Chancellor suspending the election of councillors. *In heast-affectionate friends, wheras his sacred Majesty has by his Royal Letter, dated at the Court of Winsoir, the twelfth day of September instant, signified that all elections in Royal Burrows be suspended until his*



royal pleasure be known theranent.

- The new century saw issues with poor behaviour which led to the appointment of 20 constables and the appointments and penalties would be by proclamation by drum and also from the pulpit and lectern. *Takeing to their serious consideration the great abounding sins of cursing, swearing, excessive drunkenness and other immoralities committed in this place and that the supressing therof would tend very much to the glory of God and the good of the place have elected constables in the several quarters (20 names). Which persons so nominat the Town Council recommends that the Magistrates convene and give them instructions after the form which has been done in Edinburgh, and ordains intimation of the said instructions be made through the town.*
- 22nd September, 1715 – The council are taking action during the First Jacobite Rebellion. *The Council lykways considering the imminent danger the nation is threatened with through the invasione by ane popish pretender and his accomplices, thefor ordain ane gaird be kept, and the persones following be officers (three for each of the four quarters) and recommends to the Magistrates to cause to repair the gaird house.*
- 8th May, 1721 – Once again the condition of the streets are causing concern and the Council wish the dunghills to be removed. *The Magistrates revive former act of Councill for removing of dunghills from the street, and appoint the droum (drummer) to intimate the same, certifying each transgressor they shall pay 40s in case of failure.*
- 12th June 1721 – *Robert Cunningham, Town Clerk of Kirkcaldy, by the providence of God being dead, the Magistrates and Councill being met, have by a majority of votes chosen William Charters, now Clerk of Queensferry, to be their Town Clerk, with the burden of collecting of the cess.(a tax or exaction raised on the basis of land value)*
- 12th March, 1722 – *The Magistrates and Council ordain the treasurer to buy coats for the officers.* No mention of who the officers are.
- 23rd December, 1723 – *The Councill appoints John Cunningham as*

the piper and staffman of the town. Mr Cunningham is appointed both the piper and a constable of Kirkcaldy.

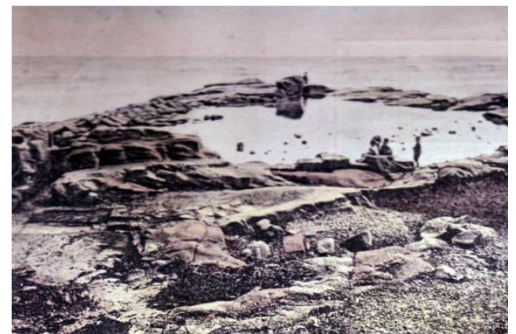
- 8th March, 1725 – *The Provost reported that the staffman had refused to obey his orders and therefore the Council dismiss him from his office. The Provost was certainly John Jeffrey and we assume Mr Cunningham was the individual who refused to obey his orders.*
- The 26th January, 1727 sees the death of George I to be replaced by George II. *The Provost having received the melancholy news of the death of our late sovereign King George, and the precept from the Sheriff for proclaiming King George the Second, which was accordingly done on Thursday last with the usual demonstrations of joy, and ordains the proclamation to be recorded in the Council book.*
- The 21st August 1734 sees a proposal to remove the Market Cross and replace it with a well. *It being proposed to pull down the Cross and have a public well there, the Council recommends John Brymer to enquire anent the expense of bringing a lead pipe from the School well and manse well to the Cross.*
- On the 10th November, 1735 we see a novel way of ensuring that everyone (burgesses?) helps repair The Path. *Resolved that the whole inhabitants shall either goe themselves when required by the constable or furnish a man to assist at the reparation of the Path.*
- 12th March, 1739 – *The Council, considering the great benefit the town may receive by an annual mercat for linen cloath and other goods, they appoint the same to be held on the first Wednesday of July, and to be custom free for three years, and recommends to the Magistrates to give the necessary intimation and proper encouragement and to report from time to time.*
- 21st April 1740 – A councillor is stolen or at least press-ganged! *The Councill of Kirkcaldy, considering that John Barker, present councillor of this burgh and present master of the James of Kirkcaldy has been lately pressed and even detained aboard the Turpio, to the great loss of the town in being deprived of his assistance as a councillor to manage the affairs of the burgh, and that the merchants*

of this place concerned in the ship and cargo being suffers by not having the cargo distributed to their rights. Clearly the Town wants its councillor returned and the merchants whose cargo has been lost are not over happy – they agreed to write to the Judge Admiral seeking the release of Barker and damages in respect of the lost cargo.

- 13th January, 1746 – it is the Second Jacobite Rebellion and the town has had to pay a levy of £35 to a Mr Douglas who had arrived in Kirkcaldy with a group of Highlanders. *The Provost acquainted the Council that on the 16th Day of December last Mr Douglas came to the town with a strong party of Highland men to levy the contribution and had demanded thirty five pounds sterling, which the magistrates, with several members of the Councill, called to advise there anent judging (after considering) could not be avoided and the same had been paid accordingly, and a receipt was given.* It transpires that the Town's treasurer had no funds and had to borrow 1,000 merks from a Mr Dundas. Mr Dundas was given a receipt and the money was to be repaid at Whitsunday next (15th May).
- The Forth Ferry - 8th January, 1753 – *The Councill considering that there are frequent disputes between the masters and crews of the two passenger boats with regard to their turns and berths on the passage, enacted that in all time coming the boat that happens to be first in harbour here or at Leith shall have the benefit of the next berth or turn on the passage.*
- 20th March, 1774 – the first water supply. *The Committee for bringing water from the Latch to the street well signed the subscription paper.* The Latch/Guy's Latch appears to have been near the top of Whytescauseway close to where the Sheriff Court stands today. A latch, in this instance, is a small stream running through boggy ground and it seems the water would be diverted to a well on the High Street.
- The Cross removed - 1st July 1782. *Considering that the stones in the Cross are in great disrepair, and that the large stone at the Cross called the fish-stone is broke, and it would be expensive to repair the Cross, therefor ordain the Cross and fish-stone be removed, and recommend the Magistrates to cause the same to be done, and the fish and cheese in time coming to be weighted in the town's weigh-house.*

- To Light the Streets - 1st November, 1785 – *Reported that the inhabitants had made a considerable subscription for the expense of purchasing lamps to light the streets empower the Magistrates to let (take) the street dung and apply the money received towards the expense of lighting the lamps.*
- The Post - 23rd February 1791 – *Recommend that Magistrates to write to the Postmaster General to promote a seven day's post to this town and the coast of Fife.*

- Even today the Bucket Pats are spoken about. Here is a little history of these now vanished popular spots. 19th September 1796 - *In consequence of the alteration and improvement making on the harbour, the scite of the two eastmost salt pans belonging to Mr Oswald, and lately taken down, and also the bucket pot, which supplied the said two salt pans with water, were surrounded and included in the addition to the harbour, and Mr Oswald with a view to promoting the prosperity of the Burgh, consented to the said bucket pot being taken down, on condition of the town becoming bound to rebuilt the same whenever he or his heirs should rebuilt the said pans and have occasion therefor, and upon the spot where the former bucket pot stood.*



- An Honour to Edward Jenner - 26th December, 1808. *The Councill unanimously resolve that the thanks of the Magistrates and Town Council be given to Edward Jenner, M.P., F.R.S.E., for the discovery of the vaccine inoculation from which such important benefit to mankind has already resulted, and from which more extensive blessings are still to be expected; as a mark of respect he is requested to accept the freedom of this burgh. (First vaccine for Smallpox).*
- A Steamboat for the Ferry - 13th May 1820 – two licenses held by the owners of Pinnaces to be replaced by one for The Jug and another for the Dumbarton Castle. *In consequence of the apparent advantage of having a steam boat ply betwixt Kirkcaldy and Leith or Newhaven, the Council appoint the Magistrates a Committee to get up two of the*

licenses from the owners of the Pinnaces and the license The Jug and Dumbarton Castle in their room (place).

- 4th August 1840 – The Council authorise the Magistrates to grant a sum not exceeding £7 to the Letter Carriers of the Burgh for the purpose of procuring them scarlet coats.
- Interesting item mentioned on the 14th April 1847. *A petition was presented to the Council from certain individuals, 76 in number, craving that the public be admitted as spectators to the Council Meetings, and the Council, having considered the same, Mr Henderson moved that the public be admitted for the period of four months, the Chairman always having the power to request the public to be withdrawn from the Council-room. Mr Marshall seconded the motion. It was also moved by Mr Ronald and seconded by Mr Malcolm, that the public be refused admission. The roll was called and the votes marked, the motion was then carried by a majority of 12 to 3.*
- 31st March 1868 – *The Provost reported that the Telegraph Company had taken an office in Kirkcaldy for the extension of their telegraph, and the Council agree to give the Company the necessary authority for crossing the street with their wires.*
- 14th August, 1876 – *The Clerk reported that the Royal Assent had been given to the Burgh Boundaries Bill on the 24th July, 1876.*
- 24th October, 1876 - The End of the Old Royal Burgh – *Treasurer Innes moved that this meeting, being the last ordinary meeting of the Council preparatory to the Kirkcaldy Burgh and Harbour Act of 1876 coming into operation, agree to place on the record of their proceedings, a resolution expressive of the personal worth of Provost Swan, and of the great interest he has for many years taken in the affairs of the Burgh, and in acknowledgement of the extensive improvements effected under his auspices and by his exertions, as well as the various important services rendered by him to the Corporation and to the community generally. The Clerk stated that under the Kirkcaldy Burgh and Harbour Act, which comes into operation on the 31st, the whole Council goes out of office on the election of their successors next month, and that this was the last ordinary meeting of Council under*

the existing constitution of the Burgh.

- 25th January, 1884 – the shooting practice of the 7th Fifeshire Rifle Volunteers is causing concern – *Councillor Johnston moved that considering the shooting on the foreshore between Ravenscraig and the harbour is accompanied with danger to the public, and is an encroachment on the public's right of walking on the sands, the Town Council should petition the Commissioners of Woods and Forests to have their lease with the 7th Fifeshire Rifle Volunteers determined at Whitsunday next (May 1884). Councillor Tait moved an amendment that in respect of the lease expiring at Whitsunday, 1885, no action be taken and he promised to use every endeavour to get another suitable place for a range as soon as possible and move from the present range. There voted for the motion, 11, and for the amendment, 8. The motion was carried.* Little surprise in that Councillor Tait was an officer in the Volunteers and of course, in time, he became Provost.
- The Gift of a Hospital - 31st December 1887 – a letter was received from Mr M.B. Nairn – *The want of a Cottage Hospital for purely medical and surgical cases has now been long felt in this town and neighbourhood and in order to provide such an institution I beg to offer for the acceptance of the Town Council the sum of £3,000 for the special purpose of erecting, equipping and towards the maintenance in perpetuity, of a medical and surgical Cottage Hospital for the town and district. It is my desire that the proposed Hospital should be built on what remains unfeued of the grounds of Ravenscraig belonging to me.* In time Michael Nairn added to the hospital which served the town until the opening of the Victoria Hospital.
- 17th June, 1899 – *This date, the new Fever Hospital was formally opened – cost £13,700.*
- The 14th May 1900 – *Councillor Howie moved that the Council proceed at once to establish both tramways and electric lighting, and that it be remitted back to the Committee with powers to proceed with the work, including the power to engage an engineer and to incur all the necessary and initial expenditure, but with the understanding, that before the contract for the building of the power station, the construction of the tramways and the introduction of electric light is*

entered into, the Committee shall report to the Council. The motion was seconded by Councillor Kilgour. Councillor H. Brodie moved that the town do not take up the undertaking, but not finding a seconder his motion fell. Councillor Howie's motion was therefore declared carried and the meeting resolved accordingly. (Cost of electrical supply £63,948 and of tramway undertaking £89,403).

- 30th November, 1900 – *The adopted scheme of electric lighting provides for the lighting with arc lamps of the tramway route from the west end of Links Street to the Cottage Hospital.*

It is fully appreciated that there are great moments in the town's history which have not been included above. Quite simply, time forbids the luxury of adding more and thereby giving a fuller picture of what the Burgh Records contain. With the task of producing an object every month the team are quite restricted in what can be included and this is a prime example. The above is a fraction of the material contained in MacBean's book. It was, it would seem, the one time Town Clerk, Alexander Gibson, who started the ball rolling with his publication of extracts in 1862. That early exploratory work was built on and majestically enhanced by Lachlan MacBean in his labour of love. Next month, Part 2 will cover his successors – John Y. Lockhart through to Duncan Glen. As we never tire of writing – Kirkcaldy has a long and varied history – and its story deserves to be told. This object is not about Kirkcaldy now – it is about how Kirkcaldy got here.

* * * * *

Acknowledgements

As acknowledged in the text, the principal source for this story has been the publication:- *The Kirkcaldy Burgh Records* by Lachlan MacBean, published in 1908 by the Fifeshire Advertiser.

All the individual newspapers used are credited in the text with the information being obtained from *Find my past Newspaper Archive* in partnership with the British Library.

Mapping – All maps are reproduced with the kind permission of the *National Library of Scotland*.

Fife Cultural Trust through its library and Museum Service provided permission for the use of the photographs on pages 1(4) and 10(2)

The images shown on the following pages are from our own collection. (*Kirkcaldy Civic Society*)– 2 (top), 15(bottom).16, 27, 28,30, 31(top), 33, 39,43.

We would, as always, acknowledge the assistance given to us by the staff of the Local Studies Room in Kirkcaldy Library.