



THE AGNEW ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER NO. 9 - APRIL 1988

CHIEF'S MESSAGE

Every year sees our situations change and the time that we have available for the things we like doing varies. In April 1978, I was in the army, unmarried and doing a job that took three days a week, leaving me plenty of time for "extra mural" activities. Ten years ago, I met with Douglas Agnew, who you will know of as the author of "The Whites of their Eyes", to discuss the formation of our Association, and we adopted the present constitution over a pleasant tea in the Army and Navy Club in London.

Since then things have moved on. We have a strong Association with nearly two hundred members in the main Association and thriving branches in North America and in Australia. We have held gatherings in Australia, Scotland, and the United States. We have published a book and we have newsletters published in America and Britain.

Now we seem to be entering a period of change and consolidation. My wife and I have two adorable and exhausting girls and my legal practice now demands seven days a week and late nights, to say nothing of the angelic dawn chorus! We, sadly, have less time for the work of the Association, than we did when it first started, but no doubt as the young grow up, we will again be able to give more time to the clan.

Similarly in the United States, Lois Schieck has devoted a great deal of time and energy to expanding the US branch into such a successful venture. She too is finding the demands on her time harder to meet and will, I hope, take things more easily. Pat Alexander, who has set a shining example of Newsletter editorship, has had to lay aside the AGnewsletter due also to her other pressures; and Colonel Jack Agnew has resigned as Co-convenor in the USA. In Australia, Vi Coulthard has laid down the reins of Commissioner and Ray Agnew has taken over as Convenor. One thing that does not change is the welcome that any member is given at Lochnaw Castle by Del Agnew and her team of co-trustees.

We should not be distressed if the Association cannot continue to expand at the rate it has done or be disappointed if we cannot keep the old momentum going. The Association is strong enough to take time to consolidate, to tick over for a few years until some other members find that they are blessed with a little spare time to pursue the things that they would like to do. The tenth anniversary is a time for reflection, consolidation and re-grouping - to use a military phrase - so that the next generation can take over and guide us into the next century, which is only a dozen years away.

I would like to take this tenth anniversary message to say a public thank you to all the members of the Association who have done so much to make us what we are today. If I am to name one, I would have to name all the members and would just say "thank you" to you all.

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE CHIEF

Sir Crispin Agnew of Lochnaw was a member of a British Military expedition which climbed Mt. Everest in 1976. Yet another Agnew is tackling it this year as part of an Australian expedition to mark their bicentenary, and he has chosen the same route as Sir Crispin used 12 years ago.

Major Brian Agnew, based at Canungra in the Gold Coast hinterland, left in February with a team of 25 Australians, including three other Queenslanders, to climb the 8848 m Mount Everest. "It will be fun", he said, "when I'm not petrified with fear".

It will be the ever present danger of avalanches, inching up ice walls and the below freezing temperatures. As well as negotiating the ice falls from the Khumbu Glacier where blocks of ice as large as houses come crashing down. More mountaineers have died there than anywhere else on Mount Everest.

Major Agnew said: "There are a whole host of philosophical reasons for doing it, but the challenge is one of the main things. "Also it's awe inspiring to see nature at its mightiest. Experienced sailors are aware of the mighty forces of the sea. It is a similar thing in the mountains." He also said that mountain climbing was in his blood - it must be the Agnew blood!

"Everest is the big one," he said. "Even though it's been ~~climbed many-a-time, it still remains a very difficult mountain.~~ For a mountaineer, it is the ultimate."

The plan was to use the route Sir Edmund Hillary took in 1953 to reach the summit before or by late May. But they had also planed another route, the West Ridge, as an alternative.

A MEMORABLE DAY FOR AMERICAN AGNEWS

In last year's newsletter we published a letter from Sgd. Andrew Frederick, a local historian, explaining how he wished to upgrade the grave of General James Tanner Agnew who was killed in battle in 1777 near Philadelphia. He is one of only 3 British generals buried in America and although he was eventually laid to rest in a small burial ground belonging to the De Benneville Family, the graveside has been badly neglected.

Mr. Frederick raised the funds, to which the Agnew Association of America contributed 250 dollars, to upgrade the gravesite and mark it appropriately. He then organised the most tremendous ceremony to mark the inauguration of the improved graveyard on 4th October 1987, which was the 210th anniversary of General Agnew's death.

Ten members of the Agnew Association attended the ceremony and had a wonderful afternoon. The occasion was certainly colourful with members of the First Continental Regiment of Foot, the Royal Welsh Fusiliers of America and the 43rd Regiment of Foot in 18th century dress. A reception was given in the house where General James Agnew died and where his blood still stains the floor to this day.

General James Agnew's grave has now got almost national recognition; it will be kept well and is permanently marked with a prominent noticeboard. Thus, this has been one of the most important events of the year for the Agnews.

AMERICAN CONVENOR RESIGNED

Jack Angew has resigned as convener of the Agnew Association of America. We thank him for his contribution and look forward to his continued membership of the Association. A new convenor is to be appointed soon.

AGNEWS GATHER IN AMERICA

The second American Agnew gathering will be held in Williamsburg, Virginia over the weekend of 23-25 September this year. Virginia is lovely at that time of year and the colonial style of Williamsburg will look its best. In addition, the gathering will benefit from being held in conjunction with the Scottish Games at William and Mary College.

Anyone interested in attending this gathering should contact Lois Schieck for further information:-

Mrs. Lois Schieck
Apt. 105
4614 N. Park Ave.
Chevy Chase, Md. 20815.

BEST WISHES TO LOIS

Agnews from all over the world have met Lois Scheick at the various gatherings and have come under the spell of her charm and quiet enthusiasm. Unfortunately, she has been in hospital this year and has had a major operation. We sincerely hope that her pain has been relieved and that she is on the road to a full recovery. Needless to say, Lois is still working avidly as Secretary for the Agnew Association of America, and for the Agnew Association as a whole.

THE NEW CONVENOR IN AUSTRALIA

Following the resignation of Vi Coulthard as Commissioner in Australia, Ray Agnew of South Australia has been appointed Convenor of the Agnew Association in Australia. Ray has already done a lot for the Agnews in Australia and organized a

family gathering a few years ago. He has also attended both gatherings in Scotland and has been a most enthusiastic and helpful participant.

Ray's wife, Claudia, is a teacher and is also in her final year of study for a Graduate Diploma in Professional Development. Their two sons help on the farm when available to do so. Otherwise Richard has recently completed a trip round the world in which he spent a lot of time in America and wishes to thank all the American Agnews who were so hospitable to him. He also had a two week tour of Europe and a week to recuperate in Hawaii. Meanwhile, his brother, Tim, has recently completed Honours in Politics and is going to do a course in Journalism.

Ray is busy as a member of his local council, Progress Association and as a Church Elder. Now we wish him luck with his latest appointment as Convenor of the Agnew Association of Australia.

THREE AGNEW COLONELS

1) WHO WAS COLONEL JOHN VANS AGNEW?

From childhood I have been fascinated by my Vans Agnew ancestors, and in particular by my Great Grandmother - Margaret Vans Agnew Bruce.

Margaret was born in Edinburgh in 1846. She was very small, elegant and a talented artist and musician. She sailed with her parents to Australia, arriving in Melbourne in 1854. Her father, John Vans Agnew Bruce traced his descent from "one of the oldest families in Galloway - the Agnews of Barnbarroch". He was an experienced engineer and manager, building roads and railways in Scotland. In Melbourne he soon formed the company of Cornish and Bruce and won a Government contract to build the Melbourne-Sandhurst (Bendigo) Line. He became successful and a great benefactor to the Hospitals, Churches and orphanages in the city. He died suddenly at the age of forty-one in 1863, at his home St. Olive's in Essendon, and his funeral was described in great detail in the newspapers of the day.

His daughter Margaret returned to Scotland in the 1860's in order to complete her education. One condition her family made before embarking on the voyage, was that she should be accompanied by a maid and a cow for fresh milk.

Whilst visiting her Aunt Florence Robertson at 5 Northumberland Street, Edinburgh, she met a Robertson cousin - a young doctor, Donald Robertson. His father had left Edinburgh in the 1830's to practice medicine in Thornton le Dale, Yorkshire. Donald was tall and handsome, a keen cricketer and rode to hounds. They were married at St Martin's in the Field, London in 1869, and came to live at Houndgate Hall, Pickering - which is the family home today. They had eight children, several of whom were given the Vans Agnew name. My Grandfather, another Donald, was one of the youngest children. They planned to sail to Australia, and a

cabinet maker had made all their trunks, when very sadly, following the birth of her eighth child, Margaret died in 1880 - she was thirty-four years old.

My Grandfather was also to die in his thirties, and so the family history was to be lost for many years until I started to make enquiries. With help I have now discovered who Margaret's Grandparents were - Colonel John Vans Agnew and Catherine Robertson of Edinburgh. They had two children, Florence born in 1820 and John born in 1822. One unsolved mystery - why did their son John add Bruce to his surname? His sister Florence on her Marriage Certificate states she is the daughter of John Vans Agnew, and on her Death Certificate, her father's name is given as - John Vans Agnew, Colonel in the Army deceased.

Who was Colonel John Vans Agnew? I have tried to trace his name on Army lists, but with no success. He does not appear to be the son of Sir John Vans Agnew MP, as his son John died before his father in 1812. Nor does he appear to be John Vans Agnew who died in Macclesfield in 1825; he is the same generation, but died unmarried. Could he be the son of Patrick Vans Agnew and Grace Hawthorne? I have no record of their children.

In Major Douglas Agnew's excellent book "The White's of Their Eyes", Chapter XI, there are two references to a John Vans Agnew. The first reference is to him having been made a Brigadier Major by Arthur Wellesley (Duke of Wellington) before taking Ahmednagar. The second reference is in a letter from Arthur Wellesley written from Patan in November 1803 - praising this officer to his relative Major General Patrick Agnew of Lochnaw.

I would very much like to solve this mystery, and if anyone reading these notes can help me, I would be very pleased. Once and for all I would like to know just who was Colonel John Vans Agnew - my Great Great Great Grandfather?

Susan M S Jackson
(Nee) Struan Robertson

Houndgate Hall
Pickering
Yorkshire, England.

2) COLONEL HERBERT C. AGNEW, O.B.E. Born 1880. Died 1949

Herbert Agnew's father was Sir Stair Agnew, KCB, the Registrar General of Scotland and a son of the Seventh Baronet of Lochnaw. As an officer in the Royal Engineers Herbert Agnew served in India with the Madras Sappers and Miners from 1901 to 1923. Before the First War he played three times in the winning team of the South India Polo Tournament. His war service was in Mesopotamia. In 1919 he married Enys Wason, who had been brought up at Merton Hall in Wigtownshire. Their first married home was a stone sump-house on the bank of the Tigris in Iraq. The oldest of their three sons was born in Bangalore, India.

In 1923 Herbert Agnew returned to England to serve as a Chief Engineer at York and Salisbury. He retired from the army in 1936 and moved to Bonjedward House in the Borders of Scotland. When the Second War broke out Herbert Agnew was recalled as Chief

Engineer to Northern Command. A riding accident in youth resulted in increasingly severe arthritis and he retired from active service to be Colonel Commandant of the Border Cadet Force. He died in 1949 and Bonjedward House is now lived in by his eldest surviving son.

Bonjedward House is a small country house of honey-coloured rough sandstone, built about 1790. The Georgian style includes a central cupola which lights the hall. In 1857 Bonjedward became the dower house of the Marchioness of Lothian. At this time the wing was added and the outbuildings and garden wall enlarged. Herbert Agnew bought the house from the Lothians and exercised his knowledge of engineering in making it a modernized family house which can be run without staff. These days Mrs. Margaret Agnew would agree that "run" is the right word, as there are four floors and two main stairways. The Ghost, who is an early-Victorian lady in a grey silk gown, has not been seen since the conversion from gas to electric lights.

3) COLONEL DAVID AGNEW AND HIS WIFE, JANET

A potted biography

David Agnew, descended from the 8th Baronet of Lochnaw, was a tidy and methodical man. Janet was quick-witted and fun-loving. They lived for each other and for their family, and they lived through two world wars and through long periods of separation.

Janet May Dilkes Malden was born in India in 1893 and she had two sisters and five brothers. Home from India - her parents remained out there - she spent six years in London in the care of her Grandparents. She went, with her elder sister Madge, to the Baker Street Church of England School for Girls. She loved her school, and was always top of her form - which worried her mother who had a horror of 'Blue stocking young women'. In fact her mother wrote telling her not to work so hard. "This surely must be unique" Janet wrote in her notebook years later "a parent imploring her child NOT to work!".

At the age of 12 she rejoined her Mother who had returned to England, and in 1911 she spent a year studying music and German in Duesseldorf. At the end of that year she joined the family in Winnereaux near Bologna, and while there saw Bleriot in his Byplane land on the beach. It was the first aeroplane she had seen.

In 1913 her Mother died of cancer, and she took over the household duties at her father's vicarage. At the outbreak of war in 1914 she went to St. Thomas's and started training to be a nurse. It was a 4 year course. "While in hospital during the war, I remember 2 Zeppelins being brought down in flames over London. A dreadful sight. We watched these silver cigar shaped objects lit up by searchlights, and suddenly they burst into flames. From the darkness of the night beneath came up a roar of triumph from the Londoners. I COULND'T rejoice, I could only think of those poor men burning inside."

Janet continued working at St. Thomas's Hospital after the war was over. Then in 1921 a tragedy occurred. Her elder and most favourite sister died of Influenza, followed, within days, by her husband. This left five small children (eldest 13, youngest 3) to be cared for. Janet gave up her job; her father came out of retirement and took a living at the parish of Little Grandsden, and together they set about bringing up Madge's children.

In 1925 her other sister, Faith, came home and took over the responsibilities. Janet went to Iraq to nurse. While there she joined the local hunt - they hunted Jackals - and who was Master of the Basra pack of hounds but David Quentin Hope Agnew.

On August 28th, 1928, they were married at Little Grandsden.

David Agnew spent most of his career in India. It was almost by accident, he used to say, that he joined the Indian Army. After passing the Army Entrance Exam in 1917, he had to fill in a request to join a Regiment. "What do you think of the Indian Army?" he asked his father, after reading the list of questions. "India? Great place. Plenty of shooting, plenty of fishing," his father replied. So David entered the Indian Army.

Born in London at the turn of the century he went with his parents to Gibraltar when he was three. His father - Quentin Agnew - held the post of Military Secretary to the Governor from 1903 to 1905. Back in Wigtownshire in 1906, the family stayed first in Fortpatrick and then (as soon as it had been built) in the House of Knock. He went to a prep school in Perthshire (Ardvreck), then entered the R.N. College of Osborne in 1912. From there he went to Dartmouth, but left the Navy in 1916 due to eyesight problems. For a little over the one year he then spent at Clifton College, he worked hard to pass the Army Entrance exam.

Almost at once he went out to India where he was commissioned (December 1918) and joined the Q.V.O. Corps of the Guides.

In 1919 he saw active service in the 3rd Afghan War (1st Cavalry Brigade Signal Troop), after which he joined the Indian Signal Corps until, in 1921, he was permanently posted as Company officer to 98th Infantry at Baroda.

The 98th Infantry later became the 4/19th Hyderabad Regiment, of which he was Adjutant from 1927 to 1931. It was during this period that he met and married Janet.

In 1935 David passed the exam into Staff College, and the family (Andrew aged 6, Jock aged 2) moved to the Staff College at Quetta. They were there for the Great Quetta Earthquake of May 31st 1935.

The 'quake' occurred in the middle of the night. Between them they rushed both children out of the house. In the morning they could see the result - the city of Quetta, a mass of rubble and ruins with a pall of dust over the whole place. "There was an awful and uncanny silence. It was dreadful to think of all those people buried in the ruins. The civil administration had crumpled up, and the army under General Karslake took over."

Janet reported at once for nursing duties (she received a Viceroy's Certificate for her work), and David (as part of the Staff College effort) organised a reception and collecting centre for the homeless. Eventually, the doctors decided that all European women and children should be evacuated (the smell had become overpowering), so Janet and the children left for Karachi and then England, but returned later the same year.

In 1939 the whole family went home - then David returned to India alone, and commanded the 6/19th Hyderabad Regiment in 1942. From 1943 to 1947 he took up various senior Staff appointments in India and Burma. He was mentioned in Despatches in 1944, and that same year was promoted Colonel.

In 1948 David retired from the Army with a small pension and the family was fully united at last. They built their home together at Anwoth, Gatehouse of Fleet. They made a garden that became a local beauty spot. David joined the Royal Observer Corps, and served as Group Officer in charge of Posts and Personnel in the Stewartry. He joined the Gatehouse Town Council, and was Provost from 1959 to 1962. Both jobs put him in touch with a great number of local people - and that was something he really valued.

Colonel David Agnew died on April 27th 1975. Janet died in September 1981 having never lost her remarkable sense of humour.

A DEADLY AGNEW TALE

From about 1885 to 1927 Colonel Gerald Agnew (7th son of Sir Andrew Agnew, 7th Bart of Lochnaw) lived at Easter Warriston House, Edinburgh, now the Warriston Crematorium.

This house was built in 1808 by Andrew Bonar on the site of the old Warriston House in which John Kincaid of Warriston was murdered in 1600 by his beautiful young wife Jean Livingstone.

There is a note in Andrew Bonar's hand:-

Warriston 1808	June 21	Broke ground for new house.
	July 18	Foundation laid
	Nov. 9	Slates and lead on roof finished
1809	Apl. 7	Slep'd in new house

When Andrew Bonar died in 1826, Easter Warriston became the property of William, one of Andrew Bonar's sons, and father of Margaret Cuninghame Bonar, who in 1870 married Colonel Gerald Agnew. To begin with they lived in Dublin where Gerald Agnew was Adj. Gen. of Musketry, but when he retired they made Warriston their permanent home.

In 1927, on the death of Gerald Agnew the house became the property of Edinburgh Council and was adapted by Sir Robert Lorimer into the present Crematorium. In the area of the adjacent Ferry Road there is still an Agnew Terrace, and Bonar Place.

Colonel and Mrs. Agnew are buried in the nearby Warriston Cemetery.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF BREAKING THE SABBATH

Dr. G. Marie Agnew-Marcelli, who has done so much research on the early records of New York State, has kindly sent this contribution for our newsletter - thus cementing the alliance between our associations.

In Essex County Court Records, Dr. Marcelli came across a court action against the eldest son of John Agnew her great-grandfather whereby his son Samual John was fined for contravening the amended Laws of 1877 for Hunting on the Sabbath. Dr. Marcelli writes:-

"Essex County is in the Adirondack Mountains in northern New York State close to the Canadian border. As early as 1825 it began to develop iron mines, tanneries, boot making and clothing operations which attracted large numbers of immigrants. From research I am carrying out on some forgotten records I rediscovered in the old Court House, the vast majority of those arriving between 1817 and 1855 were "Irish". Ulstermen predominated and included a large number of master craftsmen of the types sorely needed in a developing area just emerging from frontier status. The largest group was the tailors, then boot and shoemakers, boatmakers, carpenters, etc. One of those who appeared at the Court House to make his declaration of intention to become a citizen in 1843 was a 23 year old master tailor from County Antrim, John Agnew - my great-grandfather. So far little more has been learned of his history except that his father had been born in Scotland and his mother in Ireland so that he was not long from the Agnew ancestral shores. No trace has been found in passenger lists of arrivals at American ports and - it is increasingly likely that he was among the hundreds of thousands of Scots and Ulster Scots who came to the States by the long-forgotten northern route through Canada. (I think you would enjoy the discoveries I am making in these old records with their occasional details of the trip from Canada by foot, canoe, river bateau, and - finally - lake schooner down Lake Champlain).

This immigrant John promptly married a local girl - interestingly descended from the Ulster Scot group that had come to Boston 1718-1720 and been shoved up on the New Hampshire Indian frontier as a buffer for the Boston Puritans. She was down four generations from one of the survivors from under the walls of Derry and of a group that were militantly Presbyterian. Immigrant John and his wife had 8 children, 6 of whom survived to adulthood. The eldest son was named Samuel John which gradually became S. John and then just "John". It is this John who was the subject of a court action. Like most Americans - even the wealthy Dutch patroons - this son had been apprenticed to a trade which was, curiously not tailoring, but tinsmithing. Since immigrant John was an astute business man who accumulated substantial land and mortgage holdings it may be assumed that tinsmithing in an area with much mining and railroading must have had a bright future for him to direct his eldest son into it. Papa died in June of 1878 at age 59, his wife, Mary Ann, having predeceased him by 6 years. With two minor sons and lots of assets Papa John's estate was many years in the settling but

(Samuel) John by the autumn of 1878 had taken over his father's business property and set up a tinsmithing operation which was later translated into a mercantile operation handling all manner of hardware. Thus, that fall our miscreant was an unmarried 23-year old with his own business and bright prospects of a comfortable inheritance. Whether this led him to a bit of Irish cockiness and defiance or whether he was unaware of the 1877 statute which brought hunting under the Sabbath "blue laws", the available record does not indicate. In an area where even today hunting is regarded as almost a Constitutional "right" by longtime residents, it seems unlikely that there could not have been a great deal of community awareness and discussion of this legislative action. However, the levy of "costs" suggests there was a trial and the assumption that John had a defence - albeit an unconvincing one. Since immigrant John - unlike his numerous "Irish" neighbours - had not a single court or legal action entered either on his behalf or against him, it would appear that he was scrupulously careful during his 35 years of residence in Essex County to avoid anything which would entangle him in what was an extremely litigious society. This means he paid his debt on time, appeared regularly at church, avoided every land and business snare and kept a very civil tongue - at least in public. Above all, as an "Irishman" he threaded through the legal and social "minefields" carefully lest he fall afoul of the "English" i.e. the old New Englanders who tended to dominate both politics and society. He seems to have been a bit of a "canny" Scot rather than "Irish" for he apparently acquired many "English" friends who sponsored his citizenship and shared his active commitment to the Masonic Order. Although there is evidence of clannishness with both "Irish" and "Scots", it seemed confined to family and personal relations. He never overtly declared such kinship by sponsoring any immigrants for citizenship or giving them mortgages, etc. His son, John, seems early to have run afoul of the minor laws and certainly never demonstrated his father's financial acumen. (Samuel) John eventually married in 1882, at age 26, a sixteen-year old who seems to have been a bit of a minx. The first child arrived promptly, if not a wee bit early, and many followed. His wife outlived him by many years and married, as her second husband, a distant cousin 20 odd years her junior. It seems fair to say that given the extent of the woods in Essex County John was unlucky to have been hauled up on such a charge and this same lack of good fortune plagued him in business throughout his life - no luck o' the Irish in this tale."

A "BURR" STICKS

- by Swanzie, Lady Agnew of Lochnaw

Since first I heard the name of Blennerhasset and the macabre story attached to it, I have wondered why no film, play or novel has not been based upon the events concerning the Blennerhassetts of Ohio.

There I was mistaken for Norris F. Schneider, in a monograph entitled Blennerhasset Island, lists no less than eleven American novels between 1892 and 1964, drawing on the numerous reviews and articles in historical journals such as The American Whig Review, for April 1848 or the Blennerhasset Papers of 1861. One Author,

Nellie Whan Peppers (1964) chose to make Margaret, The young Mrs. B., central to her book.

Margaret was born in 1772 to Robert Agnew the 3rd incumbent of Howlish Hall, near Bishop Auckland, County Durham; the great-granddaughter of Sir James Agnew 4th Bt., and granddaughter of Brig. Gen. James Agnew of Hewlish Hall, killed in an ambush at Germanstown on 11th June 1777 and buried in the old cemetery of Philadelphia (see last newsletter).

Margaret's father had married Catherine Blennerhasset, daughter of Conway Blennerhasset of Castle Conway Kilbrin in County Kerry, Ireland. Thereby lay the misfortune to be visited upon an innocent girl and the saga to be developed from it.

The Blennerhassets originally came from Flimby Hall, Cumberland; but moved to Ireland during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Many relations remained in Britain and Harman, brother to Catherine was on a visit there, when his sister asked him to accompany her daughter from school on her vacation in Ireland. The journey took some days. Uncle and niece were thrown together and arrived back man and wife in the spring of 1796. He was 31 and she 18 years old.

So great was the scandal within the family that Harman sold the Conway estate to his cousin, later Lord Ventry, and escaped to America landing in New York on August 1st, 1796 after a voyage of 73 days from Gravesend, London.

Soon after their arrival they visited Philadelphia and finally Pittsburg, where a letter of introduction to Judge Dudley Woodridge of Marietta, Ohio, took them down river in 1797 to view land in the Northwestern Territory set aside for officers of the Revolutionary Army.¹ There, in the romantic vein, Harman chose an island, in mid-river and purchased the 170 acres for \$4,500.



MARGARET BLENNERHASSETT



HARMAN BLENNERHASSETT

¹ P.S. Norris F. Schneider - Blennerhasset Ohio Historical Society, 1966.

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The sale of Conway estate was said to be the equivalent of \$160,000 - giving the Blennerhassets the opportunity to build a mansion commensurate with the splendid houses of the aristocracy from which they came. The mansion was completed in 1800 with a frontage of 184 feet facing an uninterrupted view upstream of the great Ohio river. Slaves were employed, an expert gardener from England laid out lawns, a two-acre flower garden and the typical fruit and vegetable enclosure of Old England.²

Extravagant living and unwise investment saw the fortune rapidly dwindle and to escape the ignominy of failure Harman accepted Aaron Burr's invitation to join an expedition to Mexico.

Aaron Burr's credentials seemed impeccable. He had risen to eminence as a lawyer in New York and by 1792 was elected to the Senate at the age of 34 years. In 1800 he was nominated along with Jefferson for Republican presidency. Jefferson was elected on the 36th ballot of the House of Representatives. There was so much bitterness and recrimination engendered by the contest between the two candidates that Burr's name was blackened and a final libellous accusation led to a duel between Burr and a General Hamilton, in which the General was mortally wounded. Indicted for murder in New York and New Jersey, Burr's career was at an end. He left for the West and at Marietta ran into Harman Blennerhasset. Harman proved an eager supporter of Burr's plan to invade Mexico "where he would break the shackles of Spanish oppression"³, and the hegemony over the lower Mississippi and find wealth for himself and his followers.

Burr attracted the disaffected settlers to the west of the alleghenies who felt Congress was not supporting their need to have the Mississippi open for trade. After the crisis with Spain had been resolved and the Mississippi opened once again, Burr lost the impulse towards a break away of the Western Territories from the Union. His plan to attack New Orleans and separate the west by war led to his "trial on the charge of levying war against the United States".⁴

The headquarters for the expedition was centred on Blennerhassets Island and Marietta the centre for recruitment and the provision of boats and supplies.

The General Assembly on December 6, 1806 "passed an act which provided for the arrest and imprisonment of anyone hostile to the United States and gave the governor power to use the militia of Ohio to capture suspects".

Blennerhasset became alarmed and decided to escape down the Mississippi leaving his wife and children to make their way when the opportunity offered. Burr and Blennerhasset were arrested. Both were finally acquitted but thereafter the fortunes of Blennerhasset plunged towards penury. The mansion was vandalised, and finally burned; the gardens fell into neglect and were flooded by the river.

2 op. cit. p.7-8.

3 Op. cit. p.18.

4 Op. cit. p. 20.

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Margaret Blennerhasset left the only memorial in her poem "The Deserted Isle"

"To thee fair isle, reverts the pleasing dream;
Again thou risest in thy green attire:
Fresh, as at first, thy blooming acres seem:
thy groves, thy fields, their wonted sweets respire;
Again thou art all my heart could e'er desire.
O why, dear isle, art thou not still my own?
Thy charms could then for all my griefs atone."

5 **The Widow of the Rock, and Other Poems**, by a Lady,
published in Montreal in 1824.

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AGNEW SOUNDS ON RECORD

The many people who attended the Agnew Gathering in Scotland in 1985 will remember Jock Agnew's most interesting recital of the small pipes. These pipes, which originate from the Borders, are encouraging Musicians to put together arrangements that make intriguing use of their distinctive sound. Hence, Jock Agnew, as a member of the group "Blackwater Folk", has made an exceptional Long Playing record. The twelve tracks of this L.P. "CELTIC FRINGE" include a varied combination of instrumentals and vocals, many of which appear on record for the very first time.

Jock Agnew, from Gatehouse of Fleet, in Galloway, plays the Small Pipes, Mandolin and Anglo Concertina. "Sam" Allen (originally from Edinburgh) provides Autoharp, English Concertina and vocal input. Alan Lake, from South-west England, plays the Hammered Dulcimer, Guitar, tin whistle and also provides vocals.

"CELTIC FRINGE" the name of the record, has a mix of songs and tunes from Scotland, Ireland and Wales, as well as melodies that have their roots in the Borders. Included in this mix are both traditional and modern melodies.

For a copy of this unique record, write to **Jock Agnew, 11 Ulting Lane, Langford, Maldon, Essex CM9 6QB, England.** Price £4.50 plus 75p postage (UK); £1.00 postage (overseas).

See back page of newsletter.

POOR LUCKIE AGNEW

In the course of history, Galloway long remained a peripheral and separate region - a back-water where pagan customs and superstitions persisted until very late. The belief in witchcraft is one such aspect.

Local or personal misfortune sought an explanation by seeking out the perpetrator, (usually a poor and isolated woman of the community) by whose public death the satanic spells would be exorcised.

William Todd (1774-1863), minister of Kirkmaiden Parish in the Rhinns of Galloway, collected local tales and his manuscript was used by Joseph Thain (1779-1852) to record "Galloway Traditions" for the Galloway Register.⁶ Amongst these tales is recorded the names of three witches: Luckie Agnew, Luckie Lymehurn and Meg Elson. Joseph Train appends a verse on Meg Elson, detailing the means she used to cause mischief and misfortune, which might also have been attributed to poor Luckie Agnew. [Note the use of 'Luckie' to emphasise the exercise of unnatural power over the community.]

Kirkmaiden dames may crouslly craw
And cock their nose f' canty,
For Maggy Elso's now awa
who lately bragged sae vaunty --
That she could kill each cow or ca'
And make their milk fu' scanty,
Since death's gi'en Maggy's neck a thraw
They'll a' hae butter plenty,
In lumps each day.

⁶ Innes Macleod: Discovering Galloway, John Donald Publishers, 138 St. Stephen Street, Edinburgh, 1986, p. 270.

* * * * *

EXPLORE THE RHINNS OF GALLOWAY

In the Scots Magazine of July 1987, Tom Weir describes a visit to the Mull of Galloway and the great lighthouse standing 210 ft. high. On the way he scrambled down the cliffs, sat amongst the sea-pinks watching the acrobatic flight of the kittiwakes, the glides of fulmars and the cliffs like a moving frieze of guillemots and razorbills.

The water below was so clear, he could see parties of auks paddling underwater in pursuit of fish. A bird-watcher's paradise! At the lighthouse the children of the three Keepers were only too pleased to welcome the visitors to the most southerly point of Scotland.

No mention is made in that article of the richness in antiquity, from the Mesolithic to the Iron Age or of the indications of the early church in holy wells and early Christian stones of Kirkmaiden Church. The hilltop forts and headland brochs, medieval motte and baileys, and later tower houses and stone

⁷ Tom Weir: It's Glorious Galloway pp. 403-408, The Scots Magazine July, 1987.

castles indicate the early prosperity of the east coast of the Rhinns overlooking the sheltered waters of Luce Bay. Shelter from the prevailing southwest gales, accounts for the wealth of rhododendrons and azaleas and semi-tropical palms for which Ardwell House Gardens and Logan House are well known.

A guide to the Rhinns and what to see, is set out in the admirable Guide: Discovering Galloway. Lochnaw Castle is included in the numerous tower houses of Galloway, and mention is made of an even earlier castle on the island in the Loch sacked by Archibald the Grim in 1390.

8 Innes Macleod: Discovering Galloway, Edinburgh 1986, The Rhinns, pp.245-273; Lochnaw p.253.

* * * * *

BOOK REVIEW

"Worlds Apart"

The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought,
1550-1750

by Jean-Christophe Agnew

Writing as a cultural and intellectual historian but drawing freely and creatively on a wider range of other disciplines, Professor Agnew has produced an ambitious study of the social meaning of the marketplace and its relationship to the theatre in early modern England that challenges and stimulates, though some may question details of his argument and evidence. Although ranging back to the meaning and place of the market and theatre in the economy and culture of the Hellenic and medieval worlds, his central argument is focused on the years between 1550 and 1650 when, as part of the transition to capitalism, England experienced the disruptive and transforming power of a new type of market economy which broke traditional boundaries and restraints, and introduced new legal and social relationships. Agnew sees the financial liquidity of a market culture producing a social liquidity which raised severe problems of individual and societal coherence and identity.

Up to this point Agnew's thesis follows familiar, if sometimes disputed lines, but by far the most original feature of his book is the powerful argument for seeing the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre as a proxy form of the new problematic relationships of the market society. As actors and playwrights shifted from ecclesiastical and civic drama to professional entertainment, London's theatres provided visions of what to many seemed 'a world turned upside down'. The theatre offered a mirror and a metaphor of the confusions suffered by people as the new exchange values made an impact on their lives. In support of his case,

Agnew employs a subtle reading not only of plays but of mercantile tracts, courtesy literature, character guides and popular chapbooks which he presents as providing a commentary on an emerging 'commodity world' in which the 'man in business [was] but a Theatricall person' (p.97) who adopted a series of masks to gain his own advantage. Agnew concludes this, the longest and most valuable section of the book, with a discussion of Puritan opposition to the theatre, and the stage's caricatures of the Puritan. Agnew's focus is on Puritan objections to players as estate-less individuals whose acting of many roles reflected the contemporary social confusions from which Puritans offered a way of escape through faith and labour.

The final quarter of the book continues the examination of this metaphor of the theatre into the period 1650-1750, where Agnew sees the growth of a culture of the marketplace as part of a more leisured, consumer society. Here, he is on more familiar and well explored ground, but in pursuit of his theme, he looks to philosophers, essayists and novelists more than dramatists, and uses his juxtaposition of theatre and market to say much that will be of interest to students of eighteenth-century literature and political philosophy.

Agnew describes his work as 'a history of meanings and feelings broadly defined' (p.xii) and as such it is highly successful, but in employing the broad canvas he has inevitably ignored many regional and local variations in the rate of economic and social change. Much of his argument seems most valid for London and its immediate hinterland. Throughout the book, English and British are used interchangeably, although Scots do not feature except in the final quarter. In spite of his subtitle, Agnew acknowledges that the culture and thought which he examines are drawn almost exclusively from this side of the Atlantic (p. xiii). Only in an epilogue, where he explores Melville's *The Confidence Man* (1857) as a metaphor of the 'free market economy', does he examine a genuinely American perspective on his theme, and even here the discussion reads more like a 'trailer' for a promised second volume than an integral part of the present study. The book lacks a bibliography, but a fair index provides a guide to the copious notes.

Cambridge University Press, 1986
OSBN O 521 24322 X, case.



SIDE A

- TWA BRAW BARNIS (OR THE TWINS WELCOME TO THE WORLD).
- BELLS OF ABERDOVEY. ● FOR IRELAND I'LL TELL NOT HER NAME. THE COBBY. ● MINGULAY BOAT SONG.
- THE SPINNING WHEEL. ● PLANKTY IRWIN/BODDACH A LANDER AND PRIMROSE GIRL.

SIDE B

- SOLDIER'S RETURN. ● DONAL OG. ● SEIGE OF SEBASTOPOL, HEY CA' THRO'. JENNY NETTLES.
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