

THE SCOTS CANADIAN

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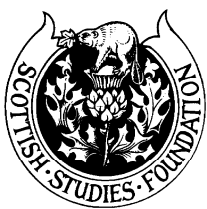
Summer 2023

TRUTH OR TREASON?

The University of Guelph's unique collection of documents from the Jacobite period is now on display on-site and online

On April 3rd, the University of Guelph's Archival and Special Collections hosted the launch of a major new on-site and online exhibit, *Truth or Treason? Sources for the Study of the Jacobites*. Attended by 70 people in person and 50 people online, it featured a talk by Prof. Leith Davis of Simon Fraser University. The physical exhibit will be on-site in the library's Special Collections area until March 1, 2024, as well as being posted online.

In 1965, the University of Guelph's history department was launched with W. Stanford Reid from McGill University as its first Chair. Reid was anxious to find a field in which already established Canadian universities were not active and, in view of his fascination with his Scots ancestry, came up with the idea of Scottish Studies. This was aided by a \$400,000 donation from the MacDonald Stewart Foundation presented by David MacDonald Stewart of Montreal, whose family were heirs to a fortune made in the tobacco trade.



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With these funds Reid and his team set about purchasing rare books and documents in Scotland, including a rare collection of Jacobite materials which were acquired in 1975 — the largest collection outside the UK.

After the so-called "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 in England, which led to the deposition of the Stuart King James II and the accession of his daughter Mary and her husband, William, Prince of Orange and ruler of the Netherlands, the Jacobite movement (from Jacobus, the Latin name for James) posed a serious challenge to the legitimacy of state structures throughout Scotland, England and Wales, and Ireland.

Guelph's Jacobite Collection boasts an outstanding array of Jacobite-related materials that speak to the complexity of that movement, the deep divisions it generated, and broad alliances in which it was implicated.

Today, the collection includes over 450 Jacobite and anti-Jacobite works including Jacobite histories, biographies, fictional accounts, speeches, sermons, polemics, satires, chapbooks, broadsides, letters, manuscript materials, and artifacts.

Separate from the Jacobite Collection the University's Archival & Special Collections also holds related complementary materials such as Scottish chapbooks containing Jacobite songs, ballads, and poetry popular in the 19th century, and materials related to other contemporary political, religious, and socio-economic events including the Darien colony scheme in 1698-99, and the Act of Union with England in 1707.

The provenance of the materials varies but bookplates represented in the collection include those of Sir Ian Zachary Malcolm, the 17th Laird of Poltalloch, a member of Parliament, and Chieftain of Clan Malcolm/MacCallum; Duncan MacNeill, the

Dr. Kevin James

Professor of History, University of Guelph
& Scottish Studies Foundation Chair



Professor Kevin James giving the opening address at the Jacobite Exhibit Launch on April 3, 2023. The exhibit will be on display until March 1, 2024.

1st Baron Colonsay; book collectors Alasdair Campbell of Kilmartin and John Whitefoord Mackenzie; and the Scottish-American industrialist, Andrew Carnegie.

Making full use of the Digital Archive Room at the University of Guelph, which was funded by the Scottish Studies Foundation in 2018, digitization of the Jacobite Collection began early in 2022. Thanks to support from Kevin James, Scottish Studies Foundation Chair & Professor of History, and Curtis Sassur, Head, Archival & Special Collections, the Jacobite exhibition was curated by a team of students who worked on curation, design, installation, and promotion.



Prof. Leith Davis of Simon Fraser University gave the keynote talk: "Female Rebels: Gender in the 1745-46 Jacobite Uprising."

Haverings

P.B. Grant

Haverings: Plural noun. "Absurd, pointless or maundering talk; babblings"

A warm welcome to what I hope will be the first in a regular column for the newsletter. For reasons that will become obvious, I've decided to call it *Haverings*. As you can see from the definition above, this wonderful Scottish word has a pejorative meaning, but I prefer to view it in a positive light, insofar as the column presents an opportunity to move from topic to topic, exploring subjects that are of interest to me and that I hope will be of interest to you. Think of them as a collection of observations on all things Scottish, from a personal perspective. While I'll draw on my own experiences, I promise not to let the autobiographical get in the way of the universal. I don't think of myself as the kind of writer who, three hours in, looks up with surprise to discover the room has emptied. "Only connect," urged the English author E.M. Forster — and we won't hold his nationality against him, because the good man's mantra is sound. Through my forthcoming haverings, I look forward to connecting with you over the coming months.

What can you expect over the course of those months? I have a few potential topics in mind, ranging from reminiscences of growing up in Greenock, on the west coast of Scotland (no bed of roses), to the vagaries of

Scottish humour (a subject close to my heart), to the Scottish music scene of the 1980s, which as a singer/songwriter, I was involved in. Canada will creep in, too: I moved here in 2003, so expect a few comparisons between my new(ish) country of residence and my homeland. As a malfunctioning husband and father, I also plan on sharing a few observations on family life, particularly with how it compares to my boyhood in Scotland in the 1960s and '70s.

A word of caution ahead of time: I'm not a "shortbread and kilt" type, so I don't plan on indulging any of those twee and tired Scottish clichés. When I teach Scottish literature, I tell my students that the truth about Scotland lies somewhere between *Braveheart* and *Trainspotting*. As any Scot will tell you, it's a land of opposites with a darkly dichotomous atmosphere: for every heart-stopping glimpse of ethereal beauty, there are muckle middens to wade through. Only in Scotland would they call a brutal headbutt a "Glasgow Kiss." This is another way of saying that I'll be covering good and bad in trying to present a fair picture of Scotland according to an exile who spent most of his life there and may resettle at some future date, if only in the form of fertilizer.

P.B. Grant is one of our newest board members and is currently an Associate Professor of English at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

International Review of Scottish Studies to be published by EUP

The International Review of Scottish Studies (IRSS) is the leading interdisciplinary journal for international scholarship on Scottish history and culture, with a mission to create a space for scholars of all career levels exploring Scotland's past and present, and so we are pleased to announce an ambitious new direction for its production which will be in place after completion of the 2022 issue (Vol. 47).

The resulting change is that, starting in mid-2023, the journal will be published by Edinburgh University Press (EUP) with two issues being produced each year. It is hoped that the prestige associated with EUP and the doubling in the number of issues will attract more submissions and provide the opportunity for issues to be built around specific themes.

From 2023 on, members will receive a token which will allow them to access an online version the journal and will also be entitled to a discounted price on print copies.

Major Donation Received



Shirley Laurena Grant

The Scottish Studies Foundation is humbled and honoured to announce that it had been the beneficiary of a bequest from the estate of the late Shirley Laurena Grant of Oakville, Ontario, who passed away at 94 years old on March 22, 2022.

Shirley and her husband, the late Gordon McLeod Grant, were long-time supporters of the Foundation and of the Scottish Studies Program at the University of Guelph.

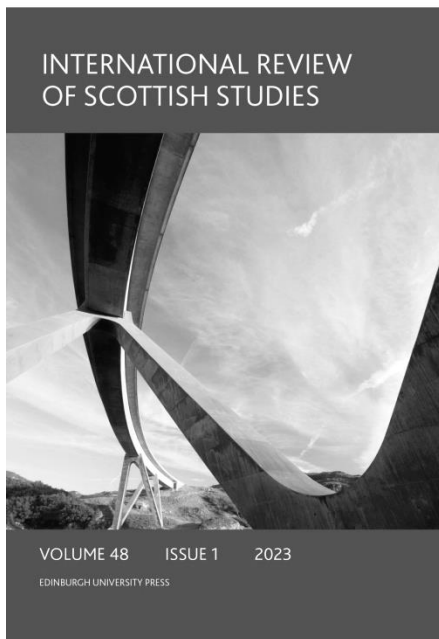
Her bequest, which totals \$226,671.68, will be transformative in providing support to Scottish Studies students and in keeping the Scottish tradition at the academic level alive in Canada, both of which were so important to Shirley and Gordon.

Born in Toronto, Shirley was the daughter of the late Ernest and Lorena (née Wisner) Warren. She was raised in Stratford, Ontario and later travelled with her family to many military bases as an RCAF wife, always with a cheerful smile to all. She later settled in Oakville and enjoyed her long lived marriage of 70 years with her beloved Gordy.

Our appreciation for this generosity will remain with us forever and we send our sincere condolences and best wishes to the Grant family.



The Clan Grant Crest



*The latest cover of the IRSS.
The issue will be released later this year.*

From the President

Dear fellow members,

On behalf of all of us on the Board of Directors, thank you for your support, contributions and encouragement.

As I mentioned previously, our focus is now concentrated on providing Scottish Studies students with financial support and in this regard we are working with the Centre for Scottish Studies at the University of Guelph on a student internship program which will pay Scottish Studies students to work on projects such as digitizing the University's unique collection of Scottish books, manuscripts and documents while continuing their studies. The University's Scottish Studies Foundation Digital Archive Room has been put to good use since its launch in 2018 and Scottish Studies students have played a key role in projects such as the Jacobite Exhibit mentioned on page 1.

Since 2021, we have had to find ways to replace our normal in-person activities and we are pleased to have been able to provide a series of online talks on Zoom which have been enthusiastically received by our members and supporters worldwide and I thank all of the presenters who have volunteered their time and expertise to share the results of their fascinating research. It has been great to see so many of our members participating in these sessions, especially during the Q & A segments which the presenters have been telling me that they really enjoy.

Over the last 12 months these talks included *Records of a Nation: Identity and Knowledge of the Falkland Islands* which was presented on Saturday, May 28, by University of Dundee PhD candidate Chloe Anderson-Wheatley who is based in the Falkland Islands.

Then on Saturday, June 11, University of Dundee PhD candidate Remigio Petrocelli presented a paper titled *The Italian Community in Inter-war Scotland* which drew on various Italian and British contemporary primary sources including consular documents, MI5 reports and press cuttings, which focused on Italian diaspora and fascist initiatives in Scotland.

On Saturday, September 17, Andrew Jones PhD from Atlanta, Georgia, gave a talk titled *The Revival of Evangelicalism: Mission and Piety in the Victorian Church of Scotland*. In the 18th and 19th centuries church independence was a major issue and when the Patronage Act of 1712 was passed and local lairds were given power to appoint ministers to their local kirks over the heads of their congregations, many parishioners saw this as state interference and mobilized to have this overturned. In 1843, this

culminated in what became known as "The Disruption" and in his talk Andrew Jones looked at the aftermath of this event which was a dominant feature of the Scottish political and religious landscape until the 1920s.

This year, on Saturday, January 14, Dr. Elizabeth Ewan presented her talk *A Brewing Storm: Alewives in sixteenth-century Inverness*. This talk looked at the lives of the brewsters and alewives as they appeared in the surviving town court records of Inverness, 1556-86, and examined what they can reveal about women's contributions to urban society. It described the colourful life of Elspeth Barnet, a domestic servant who went on to spend her adult life in the brewing trade.

Then on Saturday, February 11, fellow board member, Dr. Kate Ashley (Acadia University), gave a talk based on her latest book: *Robert Louis Stevenson and Nineteenth-Century French Literature: Literary Relations at the Fin de Siècle* (EUP, 2022). The presentation examined French literature from Stevenson's perspective and Stevenson from a French perspective. It also considered how nineteenth-century French writers and critics approached Stevenson, and how Stevenson became a model of artistic innovation in France.

Most recently, on April 22, Dundee University PhD student Loretta Mulholland presented an overview of the chronology of the life of the Victorian travel writer Isabella Bird (1831 – 1904), one of the 19th century's most remarkable women travellers. Her intrepid global travels and her subsequent travel books made her famous at home and abroad. By 1890, Isabella's fame was established as both a traveller and a missionary advocate. She was made a fellow of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in 1891 and a fellow of the Royal Geographic Society, to which no woman had previously been admitted. She travelled through Canada to Japan, Korea and China, funding on her way three more hospitals as well as an orphanage in Japan. On her return to Britain she published books on both Korea and China, which were illustrated by photographs she herself had taken on her journeys. The talk included details about Isabella's books, her travels, photographs and letters. These are held in the National Library of Scotland (NLS) in Edinburgh, as part of the John Murray Archive.

Fascinating morsels of information always seem to emerge from these talks. For example, it turns out the Falkland Islands is one of the few places outside of Scotland to have a stretch of water called a loch. It's known as Brenton Loch and it's situated on the isthmus on which the settlements of Darwin and Goose Green are located and

which were populated by Scots in the 19th century.

This prompted me to search where else we might find some other lochs — loch being the Scottish name for a lake or sea inlet.

Over the years, I had numerous occasions to be in New York and so became familiar with "The Loch" in Central Park, one of the Park's most peaceful spots. I also recalled coming across a Loch Raven in Baltimore County, Maryland — a huge reservoir that provides drinking water for the City of Baltimore and most of the county. However, I was surprised to find out that there are several lochs on the south coast of the main Hawaiian island of Oahu, named as South East Loch, Merry Loch, all in the vicinity of the United States naval port of Pearl Harbor.

Then in Canada, there is a lake called Loch Garry in Glengarry County in Eastern Ontario, named by settlers of Clan MacDonell of Glengarry, Scotland. Similarly, lakes named Loch Broom, Big Loch, Greendale Loch, and Loch Lomond can be found in Nova Scotia, along with Loch Leven in Newfoundland, and Loch Leven in Saskatchewan.

Again during the talks, a number of participants suggested some Scottish Country Dances that could go along with the talks. Kathleen McMorrow thought that Liz Ewan could illustrate her talk with the dance tune *The Ale Wife and her Barrel*, based the 18th-century *Caledonian Pocket Companion*, created by James Oswald. And during Kate Ashley's talk, Robert Lockhart let us know that there was a dance called *Modestine's Romp* — a delightful dance tribute to *Modestine*, the donkey in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Travels with A Donkey in the Cevennes*.

Also, during Kate's talk, we learned that the first French translation of Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* was made in Quebec from a pirated American edition of the book. It was made by Jules-Paul Tardivel, an American of French-Canadian descent, who moved to Quebec, stopped speaking English, immersed himself in French-Canadian culture, and called for Quebec to become an independent French speaking nation.

One more snippet of information — during Loretta's talk on Isabella Bird, we were pleased to hear from Anne Brusby who is a friend of Harmony Richardson from Edinburgh. Harmony was Isabella's Great Great Aunt and she hopes to meet up with Loretta very soon.

I'm so glad that contacts like this have been made and that our Zoom Talks have generated so much fascinating discussion.

So once again, thank you for your support, best wishes and have a great summer.

David Hunter

Alice Munro and Robertson Davies Scottish Border Connections

By Douglas Gibson

The *View from Castle Rock* is the 2006 book by Alice Munro that I was exceptionally proud to publish. Exceptionally, because it was dedicated in Alice's words, "to Douglas Gibson, who has sustained me through many travails, and whose enthusiasm for this particular book has even sent him prowling through the graveyard of Ettrick Kirk, probably in the rain."

I have a very happy history (not always in the rain) with Alice. It began with our very first meeting, in London (the Ontario one). With the help of an introduction by our mutual friend, Harry J. Boyle, I went to lunch with her there in 1974. I planned to sit worshipfully at her feet. But I soon learned to my horror that Alice was so "blocked" that she was no longer writing.

Many, many people — friends, booksellers, other writers, and even publishers — were telling her that it was foolish to try to make a career out of writing short stories. She should stop that and become a novelist. Impressed by their unanimous conviction — which was indeed unanimous and very confident — she was trying to write a novel. But it wasn't working. In fact, things were so bad that she found herself unable to write at all.

I was horrified. "But, Alice, you're a great short story writer. That's what you must do!" I went on to say that as a publisher I would always be proud to publish her short stories,



Alice Munro

and that she could forget about writing novels, because I would never ask her for one. The advice caught her ear. And in 1976 I published *The Progress of Love*, and after that I went on to publish all of her short story collections, all the way to the Nobel Prize.

Which brings us to *The View from Castle Rock*, her 2006 collection. It is, of course, a superb book, and it tells us a lot about the Scotland that Alice got to know, both in her travels and her reading, and above all in her tracking down of great stories about her Laidlaw ancestors in the Scottish Borders, in the Ettrick Valley.

For almost all of us, the most interesting of Alice's relatives is the remarkable William Laidlaw, who was born around 1700. His remote farm was at the very western end of the Ettrick River, and was sourly but realistically called "Far Hope." In the local Scots this became "Phaup," and our man was known as "Will o' Phaup."

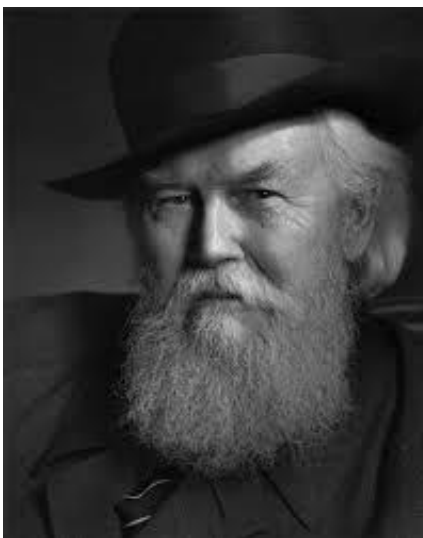
The small town of Ettrick lies on the river of that name. In the midst of the Ettrick Kirkyard, Will's tombstone grandly declares "Here lyeth William Laidlaw, the far-famed Will o' Phaup, who for feats of frolic, agility and strength, had no equal in his day..." His agility and strength soon showed. He leaped over rivers. On land, as a young shepherd he sprinted about the hills, herding surprised sheep. Once he headed west over the hills to Moffat — remember that name — where on a whim he entered the public race that was the feature of the local Fair. During the race, in Alice's words of what we might call running commentary "his country breeches fall down. He lets them fall, kicks his way out of them, and continues running in nothing but a shirt, and he wins." Scandal! All this in front of the delightedly shocked "leddies."

He marries in due course and produces children, who two hundred years later gave us Alice Laidlaw, who went on to marry

James Munro. But we learn more about Will. He is not only a great athlete, he's a bootlegger and a heavy drinker, and a troublemaker. Above all, he has a mystical side to him. He meets with fairies and evil spirits. He has to protect his children from ghosts. And he sponsors wide-ranging discussion groups at his far-away farm.

One of the free-thinkers who sparkle in these outspoken groups is the man who wrote his "frolic, agility and strength" obituary, his son-in-law James Hogg. I could write a whole book about this man, "The Ettrick Shepherd." In fact, many whole books have indeed been written about him, this self-educated shepherd lad from Ettrickhall Farm in the Ettrick Forest, who became a major literary figure.

As his fame grew as a writer, in the days when Edinburgh and its magazines ran the English-speaking world of literature, this rough figure from the hills met everyone. John Galt (the Scottish novelist and first



Robertson Davies



John Galt

superintendent of the Canada Company), William Wordsworth, Lord Byron and Sir Walter Scott, everyone.

Over time he became hugely successful as the Edinburgh-based author of many articles and book reviews. He was also a well-known poet. His poem, "Charlie Is My Darling" actually became a popular Jacobite song, long after Bonnie Prince Charlie was gone. But his most lasting achievement was the 1824 novel, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. It continues to attract readers of all sorts, and its popularity continues to grow to this day. The memorable title certainly helps.

A word now about old Scottish farming practices. The Oxford Dictionary defines the word "Bothy" as a hut or cottage. More helpfully it goes on to describe it as a "one-roomed building in which workmen are lodged." On small farms, such as the one where Robert Burns grew up (visited now by millions at Alloway, in my home county of Ayrshire), the family simply huddled together, squeezing the livestock behind the nearest wall, so that the heat of the horses and cows could help to warm the chilly thatched farm buildings.

On larger farms, when single workmen became officially part of the farm team, they were lodged in a separate building called a bothy. It was in no way luxurious. But it produced its own bachelor lifestyle, often mildly scandalous. It also created a new form of literature called "Bothy Ballads."

By an amazing stroke of luck, we now all have the opportunity to visit an old bothy, one on *The Southern Upland Way* — a coast-to-coast walking trail across Scotland, which winds through the Borders from the North Sea all the way west to the coast, ending near the ferry that splashes its way across to Larne in Northern Ireland. Right in the middle lies a place that should now be a famous attraction. It is the bothy on the *Way*, at Over Phawhope (map reference NT 182082).

The reason for its fame is that it was occupied by the Laidlaw family for many generations. Then in 1818 James Laidlaw



James Hogg

(1763-1829) the grandson of Will o' Phaup, sailed with his family from Leith to Canada. From Quebec City they travelled to what is now Ontario. Many generations later, Alice Ann Laidlaw was born in rural Wingham, in Huron County, Ontario, on July 10, 1931. On her marriage she became Alice Munro. In 2013 the much-admired writer won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Details of her writing life are given in the excellent biography *Alice Munro: Writing Her Lives* by Robert Thacker published by Emblem in 2011, with a daring final reference in the copy (that, modest cough, was written by me) at the back of the book: "We also follow the slow but steady upward trajectory of her triumphant writing career as, story by story, book by book, prize by prize, she gains fame around the world, until rumours of a Nobel Prize begin to circulate..."

Many Canadian admirers of this world-famous figure have been attracted to visit the old Laidlaw farm in the Scottish Borders, where the ancient sheep farm can still be visited. In my 2014 book, *Stories about Storytellers*, I give specific directions to anyone in Scotland who might be interested in this chance to visit the past. After speaking admiringly of my patient wife Jane, I note that ... "we interrupted a visit to Scotland to explore the setting for Alice's then-forthcoming book, *The View from Castle Rock*. We knew that Alice's ancestors, the Laidlaws, came to Canada in 1818 from the Scottish Borders. We had also learned from the first version of the manuscript that the earliest known Laidlaw relatives, born around 1700, lived at the very end of the Ettrick Valley, at a farm named Far Hope. We were sure that we could find it." The book goes on to give precise directions.

The Ettrick River flows roughly from west to east into the North Sea about halfway between Edinburgh and the English border. From the town of Peebles we drove south until we met the Ettrick Valley. On the way we passed Tushielaw (Alice, I remembered from the manuscript, on her own exploration had caught a bus from Tushielaw — not a name to forget).

Following the river west we were among wild, lonely, bare hills, sheep country for many generations, ever since the medieval forest that once sheltered William "Braveheart" Wallace's guerillas was felled,



Over Phawhope Bothy

leaving no trace but the name "Ettrick Forest." The only place that had even a cluster of houses, and a small grey school, and a church, was Ettrick itself. There, in the graveyard by the Kirk, we found the grave of William Laidlaw of Far Hope, locally called "Phaup." The tombstone of course memorably declares: "Here lyeth William Laidlaw, the far-fam'd Will o' Phaup who for feats of frolic, agility and strength, had no equal in his day."

Beside it lay the grave of the man who wrote the epitaph, Will's grandson, James Hogg. I copied the wording down carefully for Alice's book. Inside the spare Presbyterian kirk I noted that the first man from the parish to die in the First World War was a Robert Laidlaw, who shared a name — and no doubt, bloodlines — with Alice's Canadian father.

Jane and I returned to the car and headed west with mounting excitement. Now the Ettrick River was narrowing to the point that we could imagine Will 'o Phaup trying one of his legendary leaps across it. Soon the farms were falling away, the road becoming a track. We parked the car and started to walk in to Potburn, the farm that lies before Far Hope. To our relief, Potburn proved to be deserted, occupied only by sparrows and finches, although the curtains in the windows hinted at recent occupancy. Now the buildings of Far Hope were in plain sight.

"Far Hope" indeed. It was supposedly the highest farm in Scotland, a designation that held no prospect of rich land. Our map told us that the hills that rose right behind the low stone house were the spine of Scotland. Just over their tops the rainwater drained west into the Solway, and the Atlantic, a fact that I was able to pass on to Alice.

The old farm buildings were a surprise and a delight. Usually a visit to a 300-year-old farm site will produce either a heap of rubble showing only bare outlines or, perhaps worse, a working farm, where literary intruders are not routinely welcomed, by man or dog. Miraculously, Far Hope is preserved

in something close to its original state, and is unoccupied, yet at the same time open to all comers as a "bothy" (a rough sleeping hostel) on the walking trail known as the *Southern Upland Way*.

Inside, a literary tourist can pace the rough stone floor, seeing the original kitchen layout around the fireplace, and can easily imagine the old family's straw bedding in place. A stroll around the silent outbuildings reveals where the horse was stabled, and the milk-providing cow. Sheep pens, the farm's *raison d'être*, are prominent, and the Ettrick provides running water at the door.

Before we left, I wrote in the visitor's book an account of Alice Munro's career, and its links to this small, humble place. I hope that many Canadians — and Americans, and other world visitors familiar with Alice's work, especially *The View from Castle Rock* — will tear themselves away from the fleshpots of Edinburgh and make the pilgrimage to Far Hope.

So now we must spread the word that this fine ancient stone farmhouse associated with a great writer with links to Scotland is open to visitors. It may not be another Alloway, for Burns admirers. Or another Abbotsford for lovers of Sir Walter Scott. But it will never be forgotten by the countless Alice Munro fans around the world who learn about it and excitedly visit the Ettrick Valley.

But there is more. At the old Laidlaw farm right beside the Ettrick, we know that one of the most historic literary sites in Scotland lies there, because of its link with Alice Munro. Amazingly, another site linked with a great Canadian author lies just to the west. For just over these hills — right there — near Moffat, is the territory that in the 18th century was home to the family of Robertson Davies.

I had the good fortune to edit and publish many of the magnificently bearded Davies varied works, although I was too late to publish *Fifth Business*, the 1970 novel that created a sensation and made this Toronto man a figure of world renown. I also missed *The Manticore* (1972) his next novel, but I did edit and publish the third novel in the Deptford Trilogy, *World of Wonders*, in 1975.

That title neatly summarizes what it was like to enter the world of this great literary figure, who was also the founding Master of Massey College at the University of Toronto. I knew him well, worked on all of his later books, carried his coffin on a cold December day, and spoke at the memorable funeral celebration that was televised right across Canada.

I sometimes visit his grave in Mount Pleasant Cemetery, fifteen minutes walk from our house. (Anyone keen to visit his grave will find it near the centre of the half of the Cemetery that lies East of Mount Pleasant Road, in Section 35, Lot 76, right

beside his father's stone, which is large and suitably impressive for Senator Rupert Davies.)

But we must turn back to his family, and its roots in the Scottish Borders. Amazingly, these Border ancestors had nothing to do with the great novelist's Scottish-descended MacKay mother. No, it is on the Welsh Davies side that the Marchbanks appear, a name for us to remember. From Davies family records we know that James Marchbank (mentioned as marrying Janet Mitchell) was born at Nether Fenton, but his forefathers belonged to Kilpatrick Juxta, near Moffat. There is Marchbank Wood and Marchbank Farm.

My Scottish-born friend Patricia Main has researched this area very thoroughly. Near Moffat is astonishing territory. It is surrounded by mountains. To the east we have Ettrick Pen (2,270 feet) just above the stream we know well. To the north stands Hart Fell (2,650 feet). To the west, just beyond Beattock is the Queensberry Range at 2,285 feet.

A fascinating old road (now labeled the A708) runs north-east from Moffat towards Selkirk, Peebles and eventually Edinburgh. It runs along what is called Moffat Water Valley. The dramatic geography here is indicated by the fact that the Grey Mare's Tail Waterfall foams alongside it.

The sword-clanging history is demonstrated by the fact that along the valley lies the famous hidden pass named "the Devil's Beef Tub," where stolen herds were hidden away by the Border Reivers. These were the armoured men who for centuries made their living by secretly riding, in the dark, to steal their neighbours' cattle. Preferably English cattle, but not always.

We know that Robertson Davies was very aware of the importance of his ancestors. In her expert biography, *Robertson Davies: Man of Myth* (1994), Judith Skelton Grant gives detailed charts of ancestors, including "James Marchbank 1778-1848 of the hilly districts near Moffat, Tweedside, Yarrow and Ettrick." Very significantly, she writes that "For Davies these great-aunts and uncles are larger-than-life figures, struck sharply into his imagination by his father's tales, and their personalities and lives are vigorously present in his mind, even though he met them only briefly or not at all."

So we can only imagine the extent of his pleasure in making much of his Marchbanks ancestors. We know without a doubt that they were important to him. Astonishingly, he wrote newspaper columns — even books! — under the pen name "Samuel Marchbanks."

Elizabeth Marchbank (1822-1877) played a central role here by marrying William Robertson, bringing that name into the family in the middle of the 19th century. And

we all know how vital the name "Robertson" was to become.

We know a little about the name Marchbanks; another version is "Marjoribanks." We also know that farmers routinely took the name of their farm for the whole family. Boys in my class in Dunlop were often known by their farm names, "Big Bourock," or his young brother "Wee Bourock." The records tell us that the Marchbanks who concern us lived near Moffat. Pat Main's tireless researchers have found, with the aid of records from the Scottish National Library, mentions of Marchbank farmers in the census, and a collection of farm buildings on the southwest side of Moffat. Even an old Marchbank school.

A kind Scottish authority who works for Dumfries and Galloway gives even more precise directions to the original Marchbanks farm. It lies, apparently, just south-west of Moffat, on the southern outskirts of Beattock. It is an old farm, with many ancient buildings attached, and even a smaller farm, Upper Marchbank, just to the north. To be precise, this old farm, with its important link to Canadian literature, lies very near Beattock, between the farms of Biggarts and Cauldholm. Just as our Ettrick Valley site takes us very near the Southern Upland Way walking trail, so this farm lies close to the *Annandale Way Trail*.

The literary nostrils start to quiver when we learn that this was near Beattock. Because W.H. Auden made Beattock the centrepiece of his classic poem from the 1930s called *Night Mail*. It includes the famous lines:

*Pulling up Beattock,
a steady climb:
The gradient's against her,
but she's on time.
Past cotton-grass
and moorland boulder
Shovelling white steam
over her shoulder,
Snorting noisily
as she passes
Silent miles
of wind-bent grasses.*

To find where the old Marchbank farm lies today, after many generations and many mapping changes, is fascinating. It would certainly be fun to roam around there today as literary tourists. And it seems certain that these Marchbank ancestors of Robertson Davies lived near Moffat, just over the hill from the Laidlaw bothy at Ettrick.

That forbiddingly steep hill is less forbidding when we remember the Will o' Phaup scaled it before winning his near-naked race at Moffat. And there are rumours of smugglers using those very slopes.

Never underestimate the importance of Scottish smugglers. They are often central

figures in Scottish history, as records of battles on the beaches of Troon reveal.

In his 1999 book *The Scottish Nation* T.M. Devine flatly states “Where the Scots excelled was in undercutting their English rivals by developing smuggling on a grand scale. Indeed, smuggling was by no means confined to the American trades but became the great growth industry in Scotland during the decades after 1707.” So don’t allow anyone to say that the Scots got nothing out of the Union with England.

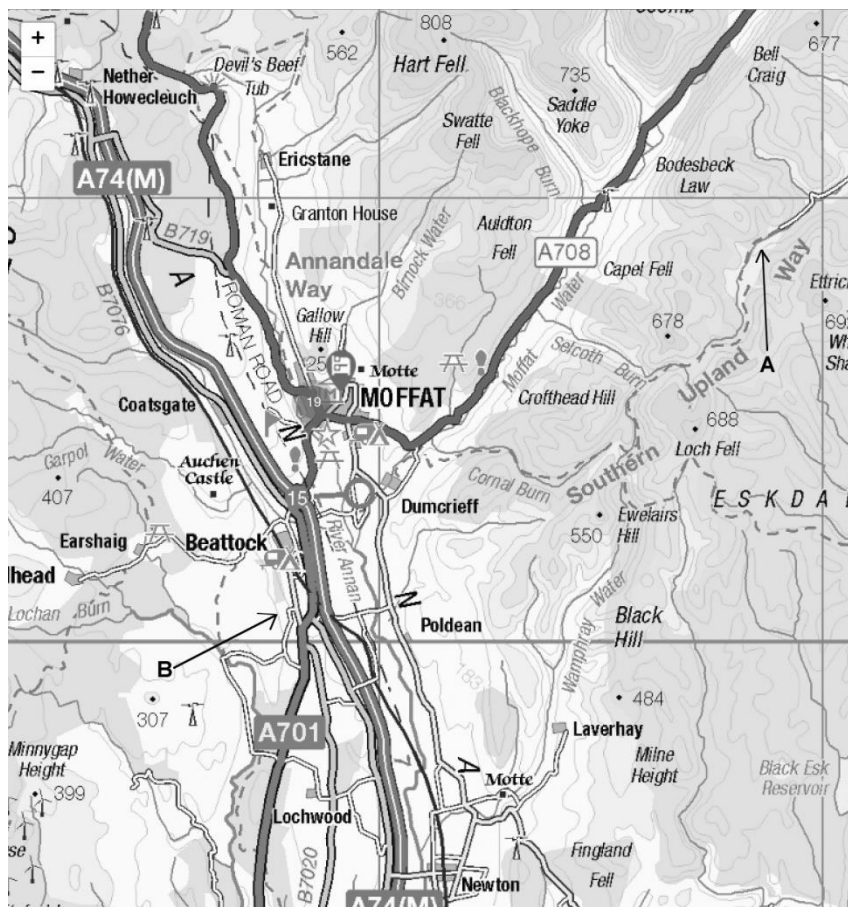
We know too that Robert Burns himself spent the last years of his life working as an exciseman, based in nearby Dumfries. His role there, which included leading troops that exchanged musket fire with smugglers as they captured the *Rosamond* of Plymouth in the Solway (the smugglers escaping from the captured ship by wading away across the flat Solway sands), meant that he was in the region, not far from Moffat. Knowing the history of Will o’ Phaup we are struck by the stories of smugglers swooping over those same hills from Moffat with their cargo of choice, which might be brandy, or even tea. Anything on which taxes were due, taxes that Scots were notably reluctant to pay.

I had hoped to work up to an astounding

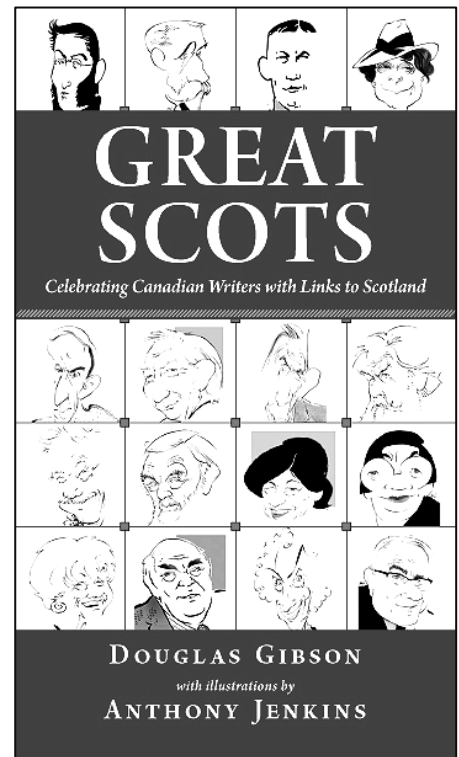
climax with a story about W.O. Mitchell, and his family’s farm just outside my village of Dunlop. Certainly readers of his most famous book, *Who Has Seen The Wind*, will recall the moment after young Brian’s father dies. The grieving Scottish granny takes down the family Bible and reads, “This is Maggie Biggart’s book. It was given to her on her wedding day in Dunlop, Scotland – May – 1832.”

Dunlop is a small place of around 700 people, and I knew every farmer, including some Biggarts. But W.O.’s people left for Canada, eventually Saskatchewan, so completely and finally that even the books by his son Orm and his daughter-in-law Barbara have not been able to solve the mystery of the exact location of the old Dunlop family farm.

So we are left without a dramatic climax. But we do have the delightful news that two of Canada’s greatest all-time literary figures — Alice Munro and Robertson Davies — have ancient family farms in the Scottish Borders within hearty hiking distance of each other.



A: Over Phawhope B= Kilpatrick Juxta/ Marchbank Farm



In 2022, former publisher-turned-author Douglas Gibson donated the rights to have his latest book, *GREAT SCOTS: Celebrating Canadian Writers with Links to Scotland*, published by the Scottish Studies Foundation to be used as a fundraiser for the Scottish Studies program at the University of Guelph. We are excited to have received the first batch of books from the printer, all of which have been carefully inscribed by Doug. The book is full of fascinating anecdotes from Doug’s research and his career in publishing.

It features 35 writers with links to Scotland, from Sir Alexander Mackenzie to Joseph Boyden, and is illustrated by co-author Anthony Jenkins who served as editorial cartoonist, caricaturist and writer with the *Globe and Mail* for four decades.

This very personal book, often involving Canadian authors that Gibson knew well, is a lively and important one. It is striking that several of the writers featured, like Sir Alexander Mackenzie and John Galt, wrote important books set in Canada, long before Canada existed as a country.

Beautifully designed by Gibson’s old friend, the legendary Kong Njo, this major book will delight readers of Canadian Literature at its best.

The price of this captivating new book is \$30 (including delivery) and it can be ordered via our website:

www.scottishstudies.com

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