

# Friends of Loudoun Kirk



L-R: John Kerr (Godfather to Lewis), Damion Baker (Godfather to Thomas), Emma Wright with Lewis, Rev Graeme Wilson, Britt Sutcliffe with Thomas, Yvonne Flisch (Godmother to Thomas), Ewen Sutcliffe

We are delighted that Britt & Ewen Sutcliffe and Emma Wright chose Loudoun Kirk for the Christening of their children on Sun Sept 9th 2007. Needless to say, Thomas Arthur Sutcliffe & Lewis Alexander Wright-Kerr were unaware that was such a historic event. The service was conducted by the Rev. Graeme Wilson of Galston Parish Church. John, Emma & Britt are the grandchildren of the late Lady Jean Campbell of Loudoun Castle who is interred in the vault at Loudoun Kirk together with many of their ancestors. It is good that the kirk is now being used for more happier occasions. Unfortunately due to commitments at work, Emma's husband, David was unable to attend.

## CEILIDH

Don't forget to come to the FOLK annual Ceilidh which is on 24th Nov 2007 in Galston Community Centre, Orchard Street, Galston at 7.30pm until 11.30pm. The tickets are £7.50 per adult inclusive of supper. Children of all ages are welcome and discounts will apply.

Enquires to: Agnes Wilson, 14 Armour Terr, West Donington Street, Darvel, Ayrshire KA17 0AP  
 Tel: 01560 321813  
 E-mail: amwilson122@hotmail.com

## WEDDING PLANS



Michael, Earl of Loudoun and patron to the Friends of Loudoun Kirk is to be married to Margaret in March 2008.

We wish warmest congratulations to them both

## DOORS OPEN DAY

Doors Open day was held on September 4th this year and as usual there was a good number of visitors to the kirk, including several overseas visitors. Thankfully the Kirk still continues to be an interesting place to visit and we are pleased to have the opportunity to be able to promote the historic interest in the site. For us it not only gives us a chance of talking to people about its history but also we learn a great deal from many of the visitors.

We are also pleased that we can make use of the building in perhaps a less tourist like interest but for the purpose in which it was intended, in that there is the opportunity of holding small services such as Christenings and Weddings.

## WHO DO YOU KNOW?

Can anyone help with some of our current enquiries? We often get enquiries, for family history or local history. If anyone can help with the following queries, please contact Agnes at the address/tel/email given on this newsletter.

**Ladyton House** Ladyton Mansion, as far as we know was built by Col. James Dempster (1802-1892) - Does anyone have further information on this Mansion House.

**Gallacher**: Some of the Gallacher family are buried in Loudoun Kirkyard, Bernard Gallacher came originally from Ireland as an agricultural labourer and one of his descendants, Catherine had a sweetie shop, first in Dale St, then later in Henrietta Street, Galston around 1900.

**Yeudall**: Further information is requested on Thomas Yeudall who was a soldier based in Sorn Castle in the late 1700's and one of his descendants was James Alexander Yeudall, provost of Galston and are ancestors of the Yeudalls still living in Galston.

# Genealogy

Those of you with interests in tracing your ancestors may find it useful to visit our wiki site [www.wetpaint.loudounkirk.com](http://www.wetpaint.loudounkirk.com) Wikis are popping up in many areas now (Wiki is Hawaiian for quick) Wikis are interactive and give everyone the chance to add their knowledge to a site and along with Wikipedia and Wikimaps there are numerous Wiki sites—all interactive. You can share information with other researchers, add information, edit it, delete it if you change your mind, use it as a forum where you can request information or answer someone else's query.

Our wiki site is in addition, and compliments our main website. We have tried to give everyone the opportunity to add their stories, local knowledge or any interesting article which could relate to Loudoun and Galston parishes. Initially it was intended only for Loudoun Kirk information, but many of the people buried in Loudoun Kirk were from Newmilns, Galston, Hurlford etc so we have extended the area to take in Loudoun & Galston parishes.

If you haven't yet started working on your family history, it's a lot easier now if you have access to a computer. You can book time on a computer in the library if you don't own one, it's also recommended that you join a family history society, our local society is East Ayrshire Family History Society, who meet every Thursday evening in the Gateway, Kilmarnock. You can borrow books, use their computers and get all the advice you'd ever need. It's friendly and everyone there has an interest in genealogy and with some luck, you may meet up or be put in touch with others researching the same families as yourself.

We are happy to help with any Loudoun/Galston parish family history, just contact us.

Meantime here are some wiki sites to give you an idea:-

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki> - the free encyclopedia

<http://wikimapia.org> Worldwide maps, some of high definition so that houses and cars are clear. If you've got friends overseas, check out the map for their area, you may just see their house. (<http://wikimapia.org/#lat=55.61239&lon=-4.37994&z=14&l=0&m=a&v=2> - This is Loudoun Kirk on the wikimapia - unfortunately the higher definition maps are still not available for this area)

<http://loudounkirk.wetpaint.com> - this is our own wiki site so if you've some reminiscences to relate, join up, add a new page and type.

[http://www.werelate.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://www.werelate.org/wiki/Main_Page) This is a genealogy wiki and I have added a number of GEDCOMs for some of the people buried in Loudoun kirkyard. You do need a family history programme to export and import GEDCOMs. A GEDCOM is a way of sending your family history details to someone else's family tree, you can be selective of which parts of your tree you wish to "export" or if you want to see someone else's tree, "import" into a family history file. It's better to create a new file for importing other information.

Not a Wiki site but free to use site is FREECEN, the 1851/1861 census are transcribed for Loudoun and 1851 census is for Galston (I have just completed the transcription of the 1841 Galston census on behalf of FREECEN but it has to go through numerous checks before it finally appears online).

Alistair Hendry has been responsible for the thorough research into the history of Loudoun Kirk and provided us with a brief outline of his findings which was printed in our leaflet a few years ago. His research continued and he has now provided us with a version of the history which we think will answer a few more questions.

### LOUDOUN KIRK—ITS EARLY HISTORY

Between 1162 and 1189, while he was High Constable of Scotland and held Cunningham and Largs from King William the Lion, Richard de Morville granted to James, son of Lambinus, the lands of Loudoun.

For his residence and as the base for his authority, James constructed the great mound overlooking the Hag Burn and set his wooden castle upon it. Shortly afterwards he established a small church (Loudoun Kirk) dedicated to St Michael to provide for the spiritual welfare of the people of Loudoun. In time the wooden castle was replaced by a stone structure, but on its destruction in 1528, the next Loudoun Castle was erected a short distance to the west.

The Loudoun estate passed through marriage first in the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the Crawford family, then at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> to the Campbells who held it for centuries. Over time, its owners frequently played major roles locally and nationally.

Loudoun Kirk served the whole parish of Loudoun. Its form was typical of an early Pre-Reformation parish church. Its alignment was east to west. It was small (approx. 19m long by 8m wide), stone built, with a thatched roof to begin with, with a few small windows to cut down as much as possible on draughts (there was no glass), a single door, probably at the western end of the north side, again to assist shelter from the prevailing SW winds. Inside at the east end, within a small chancel area, stood the altar, at which Mass was celebrated, and beside it a bench for the priest and a cupboard for the sacred vessels. The nave floor would have been earthen or slabbed – there were no seats for the parishioners.

The bulk of the revenues of Loudoun Kirk (together with those from other 13 parish churches in Cunningham) were not applied to the needs of the Kirk or parish but had been appropriated by Richard de Morville to support his newly founded Kilwinning Abbey. It was, however the responsibility of the Abbey to supply a vicar or curate to attend to the spiritual needs of the parish.

Loudoun Kirk continued through the War of Independence and may well have seen some of the participants in the conflicts of Wallace and Bruce on the eastern fringes of the parish – but documentary evidence for this period is lacking. After the death of the curate Hugh Crawford before 1465, complaints were being made to the Papal Court in Rome that Kilwinning Abbey had been taking too large a proportion of Loudoun Kirk's revenues and for too long, and some priests in Rome began to apply for some of these revenues – and the requests were being granted. But although we know the names of several of these applicants, there is now way of knowing how many of them ever set foot in Loudoun Kirk. The real work here was carried out by the curates.

In 1491, James IV elected Newmilns into a free burgh of barony and around 1530, to meet the needs of its growing population, a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary was built there. William Wilson, the curate at Loudoun Kirk, now had two places of worship to attend to, with the help of his parish clerk, Murdoch Nisbet. At the Reformation, the existing chaplain, Rankin Davidson, was approved as a reader by the General Assembly and allowed to continue to minister at Loudoun Kirk and Galston. In 1574, because of the shortage of ministers, parishes were grouped together and Loudoun, Kilmarnock and Riccarton were put under the ministry of Mr Robert Wilkie, aided by his reader, James Hall.

In 1601, Sir Hugh Campbell was created Lord Campbell of Loudoun, Baron Loudoun of Loudoun, and when he died in 1622, a burial vault was constructed for him beneath the floor of the chancel in front of the altar. This vault became the resting place of later members of the Loudoun family.

At a still unknown date, Loudoun Kirk lost its status as parish church, and the chapel in Newmilns was upgraded to parochial status. In 1898, the third Marquis of Bute, at the east end of the ruins of the old Kirk, created the elaborate family vault, which has been restored and consolidated in recent years through the dedication and hard work of the Friends of Loudoun Kirk, supported financially by Historic Scotland and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The kirkyard has been the resting place of the Loudoun parishioners for centuries and among many others are to be seen the graves of Janet Little, milkmaid and poetess, and Thomas Fleming, Covenanter, as well as the memorial to the tragic Lady Flora Hastings.

Alastair Hendry  
FOLK 2007