

BURGH OF KILSYTH.

Jubilee of the Burgh

1877-1927.



Addresses

BY THE PROVOST AND TOWN CLERK

in responding to the Toast of "The Burgh,"

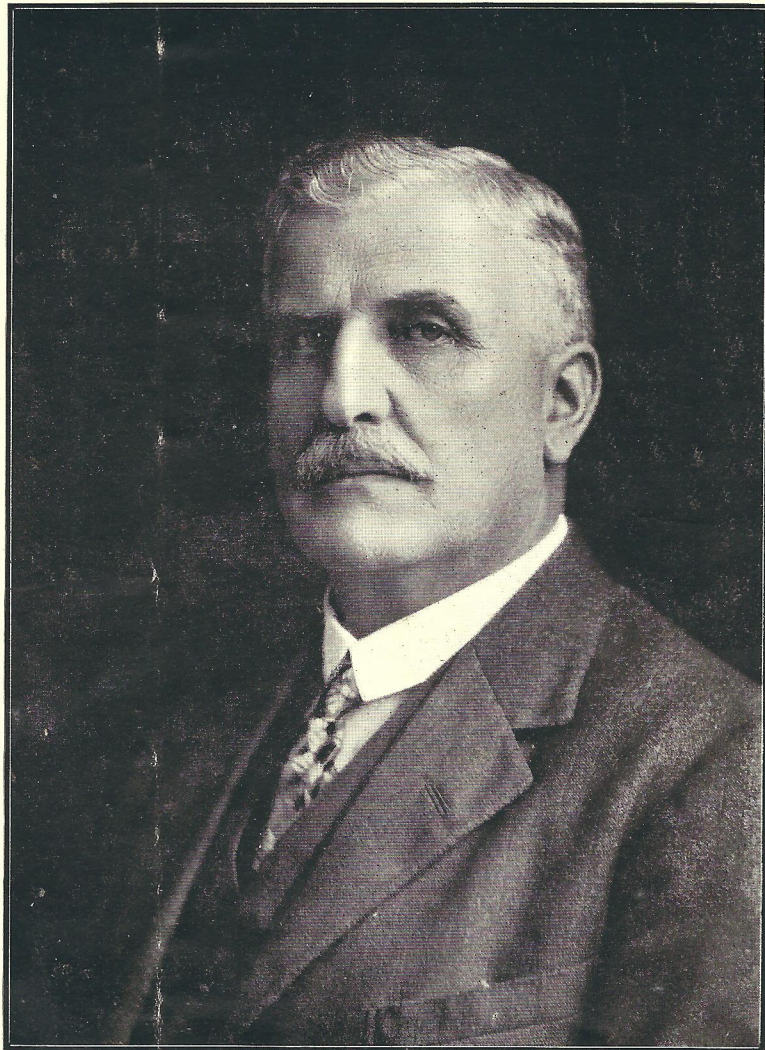
at the Commemoration Dinner, held

in the Masonic Hall, Kilsyth,

on October 20th, 1927.



Reprinted from the "Kilsyth Journal" of October 27th, 1927.



WILLIAM DONALDSON, Esq., J.P.
Provost—1927.

THE ADDRESSES.

Provost GILCHRIST, Falkirk, proposed the toast of "The Burgh of Kilsyth." In replying,

Provost DONALDSON said our Burgh was a most historic burgh, and one of which we were all proud—(hear, hear)—and he was sure that Provost Gilchrist in no uncertain manner had given us all the praise that was due to us. He thanked him for his kind and able speech, and also the

assembly for the manner in which they received it. Fifty years ago a petition was presented to the Sheriff for the formation of Kilsyth into a Burgh. At the first election necessary to form a Town Council, which took place on 6th February, 1878, 22 candidates stood for the nine seats. He was sure there were many people present who would be glad to hear these names read over.

COPY OF BALLOT PAPER.

1	ANDERSON. (Smith Anderson, Grain Merchant, Kilsyth),	101
2	DAVID BROWN. (David Brown, Coalmaster, Burngreen, Kilsyth).	210
3	JOHN BROWN. (John Brown, Contractor, Burnbank Terrace, Kilsyth).	291
4	BRYSON. (James Bryson, Blacksmith, Main Street, Kilsyth).	148
5	CAMPBELL. (Duncan Campbell, Engineman, Newton, Kilsyth).	124
6	CARMICHAEL. (David Carmichael, Grocer, High Craigends).	199
7	CARSTAIRS. (John Carstairs, Draper, Main Street, Kilsyth).	239
8	DICKSON. (Samuel Dickson, Gas Manager, Kilsyth).	128
9	ELDER. (Thomas Elder, Merchant, Townhead, Kilsyth).	196
10	FRASER. (John Fraser, M.D., Parkburn House, Kilsyth).	141
11	FREW. (David Frew, Joiner, Parkfoot, Kilsyth).	273
12	GLEN. (John Glen, Joiner, Main Street, Kilsyth).	218
13	GOURLAY. (James Gourlay, Engineer, Parkfoot).	95

Ballot Paper—Continued.

14	HAMILTON. (Robert Hamilton, Merchant, Burnbank Terrace, Kilsyth).	220
15	HISLOP. (John Hislop, Millboard Manufacturer, Burnside Cottage).	195
16	IRVINE. (Thomas Irvine, Manufacturer, Church Lane, Kilsyth).	171
17	LOCKHART. (Daniel Lockhart, Baker, Main Street, Kilsyth).	161
18	MURDOCH. (Robert Murdoch, Nailer, Parkfoot, Kilsyth).	124
19	RANKIN. (Peter Rankin, Portioner, Newton, Kilsyth).	183
20	SHANKS. (David Shanks, Engineer, Backbrae).	85
21	STEWART. (William Stewart, Enginekeeper, Craighends, Kilsyth).	108
22	WHYTE. (William Whyte, Manufacturer, Church Lane, Kilsyth).	299

The successful candidates were David Brown, John Brown, David Carmichael, John Carstairs, Thomas Elder, David Frew, John Glen, Robert Hamilton, and William Whyte. William Whyte was appointed Provost. Not one of these men, he was very sorry to say, was left to-day to rejoice with us on the celebration of this great jubilee. The valuation of the Burgh in 1877, he proceeded, was £12,000 and the population 5000, while to-day the valuation is £32,500 and the population 8000. In those days housing and sanitary conditions were very poor, lighting and roads were very bad, and the water supply was insufficient. The average house was a "but an' ben," in many cases a "but" without a "ben," the "but" being the living room and the "ben" a workshop for weaving, which, as we were all aware, was a great part of the industry in Kilsyth fifty years ago. To-day we were not far behind so far as housing was concerned. One hundred and fifty houses had been erected, and other 36 were in course of erection. The health of the Burgh was never better than at the present time, and to compare the sanitary conditions with those of fifty years ago, the town might well qualify as a health resort. We had a fever hospital, which, he was glad to say, was seldom occu-

pied. With regard to lighting, the gas works which had first been privately owned were bought in 1884 by the Town Council for £1700. At that time there were only 500 consumers for an output of 5,000,000 cubic feet per annum. Now there were 2100 consumers for an output of 53,000,000 cubic feet, and the gas works were fitted with the most up-to-date plant. The roads in the Burgh compared favourably with any in Scotland. In 1877 the water supply came from two springs, St. Mirren's Well and Craigamphal, but in 1902 a reservoir was constructed with a holding capacity of 40,000,000 gallons, which, with the combined supply of the same springs, gave the town an ample supply of splendid water. We had a splendid staff of officials, who had the interests of our Burgh at heart, and were untiring in their efforts to further its improvement. William Stevenson was the first Town Clerk, and acted in that capacity for four years, when he resigned. He was followed by R. M. Lennox, father of the present Town Clerk, who held the position till 1907, when W. Mackay Lennox was appointed. From 1902, however, W. M. Lennox had been practically Town Clerk. He was a man of great ability, and a born fighter, which many a one knew to their cost to-day. (Laughter and applause.)



The Town Clerk—Mr. W. MACKAY LENNOX.

THE HISTORY OF THE BURGH.

Mr. W. MACKAY LENNOX, Town Clerk also speaking to the toast, said he had received instructions to give details of the history of Kilsyth. He couldn't go back to the time of Noah, but would relate the history so far as authentic records existed. The old name of the Parish of Kilsyth, as we all knew, was "Monae-burgh" or "Monyabrugh," and within the Parish were the lands of Kilsyth. The village, or clachan, which existed at that time on the banks of the Garrel was called Burnside. Both the lands of Kilsyth and the Church of Monae-burgh are mentioned in a Charter by the Earl of Lennox confirmed by Alexander II., in 1217. This is the earliest reference to the Parish of Kilsyth in authentic records. In Timothy Pont's map dated 1654 the old village of Kilsyth is named Burnside. In 1649 a dispute arose between the Merchant Guild of Stirling and the merchants of Kilsyth and Burnside as to alleged encroachments on the privileges of the Stirling merchants. The matter was brought before the Convention of Royal Burghs at that time, and the Convention ordered the Guildry of Stirling to prosecute the offenders under a penalty of £20 if they did not. Kilsyth and Burnside referred to in these records were no doubt the portions of Kilsyth town which were in the East and West Baronies of Kilsyth, and on each side of the Garrel Burn which divided the two Baronies. William Livingstone became the owner of the lands of Kilsyth on the east side of the Garrel Burn in 1402. These lands were known as the East Barony. In 1565, Mary, Queen of Scots, for services rendered to the Crown created William Livingstone, the then proprietor of the East Barony, a baronet. At this stage he might tell them that Mary, Queen of Scots, had another connection with Kilsyth. When the Queen became affianced to the Dauphin of France, she sailed from Dumbarton on 7th August, 1548, with a French convoy, and along with her were her four Marys, Mary Beaton, Mary Seaton, Mary Carmichael, and Mary Livingstone of Kilsyth. Mary Livingstone was married after she came back with Mary, Queen of Scots, to Edinburgh, and her place was taken by Mary Hamilton, who was generally supposed to have been the fourth Mary mentioned in the song, and the authoress of it. But Mary Livingstone was certainly with Mary, Queen of Scots, during the whole time she was in France till she re-

turned to Scotland, and was one of the Four Marys. In 1620, he continued, Sir William Livingstone acquired the lands of the West Barony—the West Barony consisting of the present parish on the west side of the Garrel Burn—and these West Barony lands were cut off from the Parish of Campsie. In the same year James VI. of Scotland conferred power on Sir William Livingstone of Kilsyth, Baronet, to build a town within his Barony, and at the same time the King erected the future town into a free Burgh of Barony. This was to be the start of the Burgh of Kilsyth. It is believed, however, that Sir William did not exercise this power. In 1650 a most important English general arrived at Kilsyth in the person of Oliver Cromwell, and it was a poor Kilsyth after he had finished with it. Until recent years there existed a two-storey thatched bouse, with crow-step gables, on the north side of the Glasgow-Edinburgh Road, at Arnbrae, which went by the name of Oliver Cromwell's House. Cromwell laid waste the Castle of Kilsyth, on Allanfauld Farm, a short distance north of the Police Burgh boundary, and also laid waste Colzium Castle, the remains of which lie behind the present Colzium Mansion House.

The Livingston family, being staunch Royalists, suffered this serious disaster, and in addition had their lands laid waste, while even the furniture and effects of their tenants, which had been taken to the Castle for safety, were burned and destroyed. That was what Oliver Cromwell did for Kilsyth. In 1661, after the Restoration, the only recompense given the Livingstone family for all they had suffered in the cause of Royalty was that Sir James Livingstone was raised to the peerage under the title of Viscount Kilsyth and Lord Campsie. In 1680 a new Charter was received from the King creating the town and village of Kilsyth into a free Burgh of Barony, and following upon this Viscount Kilsyth feued out 45 steadings of ground, and thus came into existence the Burgh of Kilsyth as an actual Burgh. Each of these steadings contained 20 falls and the feuduty was 3/4. These feus were situated on both sides of the Main Street, Market Street, and part of Shuttle Street and U.P. Lane. In these old charters Kilsyth was spelt "Killsyth." As the Cockney would say: "there were more 'ells' in Kilsyth at that time." (Laughter).

As Viscount Kilsyth was out in the '15 Rebellion, he had to flee the country, and his Kilsyth estates were forfeited. The Livingstone family were accordingly in possession of the Estate of Kilsyth from 1402 till 1716—314 years, and thus ends chapter one of the history of Kilsyth.

The present Superiors of Kilsyth are the old Edmonstone family. Sir Archibald Edmonstone, the first baronet, purchased the Estate of Kilsyth in 1783 for £41,000. In 1826 a new charter was obtained from the Crown by Sir Archibald Edmonstone, which was written to the Seal and registered 20th September, 1826, and it is under this charter that the Burgh of Barony of Kilsyth really began to function as a Burgh. The boundaries of the Burgh of

Barony were the boundaries over which the Burgh School Board exercised their rights, and it was because of the existence of this Burgh of Barony that there were two School Boards in the Parish of Kilsyth—burgh and landward. Under the Charter of 1826 the Burgh was governed by a Bailie and four Councillors elected by the Burgesses on the first Friday of October in each year. Only burgesses were entitled to vote, and the qualification was the ownership of land or premises within the Burgh to the value of and not less than £5 a year. The first election took place on 6th October, 1826, only fifteen days after the new Charter was obtained. Sixty-seven Burgesses were present at the election, which was presided over by Sir Archibald Edmonstone. The election,



Colzium Mansion House (see Page 7).

which was opened with prayer, took place in the Parish Church. The first Bailie appointed was Matthew Stevenson, postmaster, and the first four Councillors, John Rennie, farmer, Dovecotwood; James Hay, farmer, Cuddiemyre (now changed to Currymire); William Paterson, smith, Kingston; and John Rankin, merchant. The first Town Clerk was John Burns, writer, Falkirk. That was the reason we asked Provost Gilchrist to propose this toast. (Laughter.) Under the Charter the Burgh was authorised to hold a market on each Friday, and two annual fairs in November and May. These fairs were entitled to last two days. The Town Council's meeting place was originally the old Mansion House of Kilsyth, in Church Street. The first business of the newly-elected Town Council was to issue a pro-

clamation requiring all burgesses and other inhabitants within the Burgh to pay particular attention to the removal of all nuisances from the streets and highways, and certifying that all persons found straggling on the streets, fields, and highways during the hours of divine service upon Sabbaths, or frequenting public-houses at improper hours on Saturday night or on the Sabbath would be dealt with according to law; also cautioning the inhabitants of the town by themselves or their children and all others from abusing or improperly using the public wells and water therein. On 14th April, 1840, the Act 3 and 4 William IV. was adopted in the Burgh with only two dissents for the purpose of attending to the paving, watching, lighting, cleaning, and water, and the rate to be imposed was fixed at the maximum

sum of 6½d. per £ of rental. The Local Authority to carry out the provisions of this Act consisted of the Bailie, one of the Councillors of the Barony, and five other Commissioners elected by the ratepayers. This Commission, however, seemed to have ceased to function, but why, when, or how he had not yet learned. In 1877, fifty years ago to-day, the Burgh adopted the General Police Act of 1862 after an open vote by those qualified, and the present Burgh came into existence. One election promise at that time was to the effect that a rate of 3d. per £ would never be exceeded in the Burgh. (Laughter.) The only thing the Commissioners under that Act received from the old Burgh of Barony was the right to a restricted use of the Town Hall and Council Chambers in the Market Square, and these rights were reserved to the present Town Council when this property was sold by Sir Archibald Edmonstone to the County Council. Since the inception of the Burgh it has had

FOURTEEN PROVOSTS.

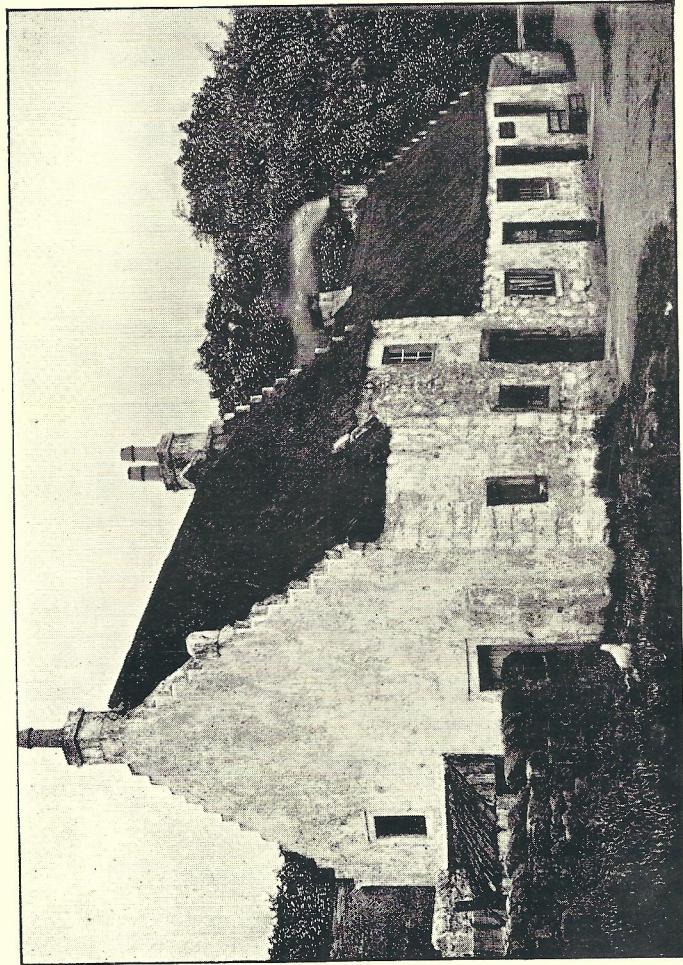
William Whyte,	3 years.
William Dobbie,	3 years.
Smith Anderson,	2 years.
John Glen,	6 months.
David Frew,	3 years.
Robert Hamilton,	3½ years.
William Wilson,	9 years.
John Stark,	3 years.
Robert Murdoch,	3 years.
John Barrowman,	3 years.
John Allison,	6 years.
John Cook,	3 years.
John Freebairn,	3 years.
William Donaldson,	Present Provost.

There might have been a fifteenth. After Wm. Wilson retired from the Town Council, in 1904, after nine years in the chair, Charles Grindlay, the Water Convener, was nominated for the Provostship and was elected, but withdrew his name. He was a shrewd, canny Scot and would have made a magnificent Provost, but would not take the honour. His name, however, had been perpetuated by the erection of a brass plate at the house at the reservoir, because he of all men knew more about the hills and springs and where to find water. (Applause.) The Provost of Falkirk, he proceeded, in referring to the Burgh, spoke about the seal of the Burgh which might have been impressed on the toast list. There was

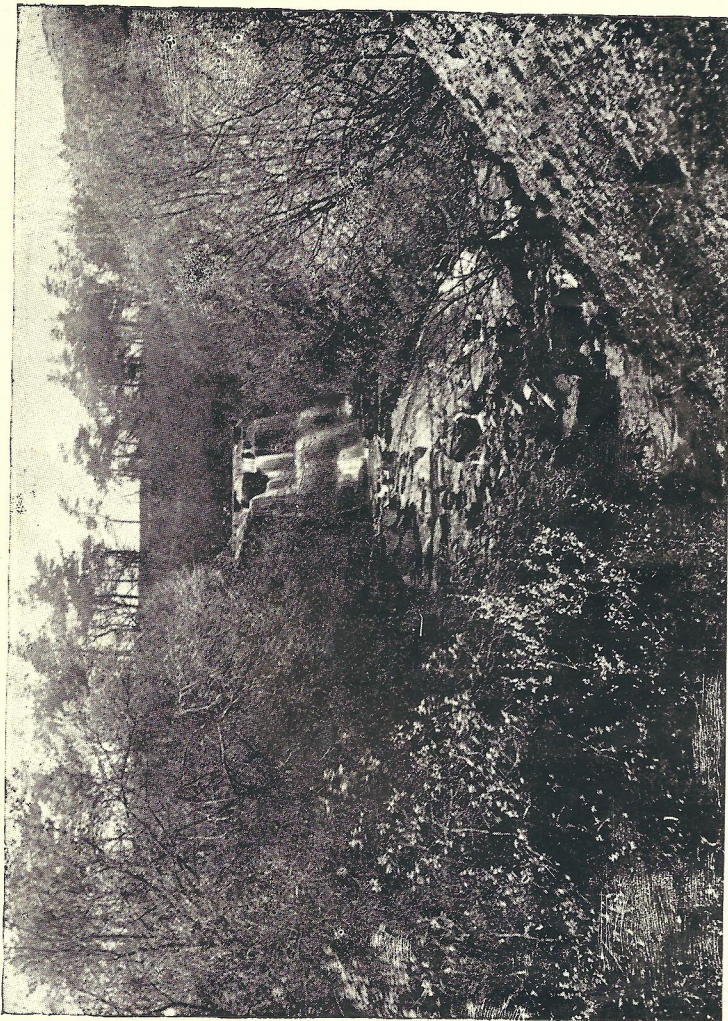
on the toast list a copy of the present seal of the Burgh, and the only seal which had ever been in use, but the Town Council, when the Police Act of 1892 came into force, had to obtain a seal to be used in connection with all documents of importance. A very fine seal was prepared and adopted, and it really contained an epitome of the history of Kilsyth. When this seal was ordered to be destroyed, he kept an impression of it, and hoped some day to hand it over to the Kilsyth museum. He had an impression of it before him, and the chief characteristics of it was five roundels, or circles. In the first circle was an armed Covenanter with drawn sword in one hand and open Bible in the other. This was to commemorate the Battle of Kilsyth in 1645 between Montrose with his Highlanders and the Covenanters under General Baillie. As a result of that battle, 6000 Covenanters perished. In the second circle there was a flourishing potato plant. Robert Graham, of Tamrawer, was factor on the Kilsyth Estate, and to him was the honour of first introducing the potato into Scotland. These potatoes were first planted in fields at Neilston within the Burgh of Kilsyth. Graham, besides being factor on the estate, was proprietor of the extensive farm of Tamrawer in the East Barony. It was now divided into Orchard, Auchencloch, Tomfyne, and Meadowside. Robert Graham's initials, and also certain carvings made by him, were still to be found next to the lintel on the old farm steading of Orchard. The third, or centre, circle was a church, to commemorate the two revivals in Kilsyth, the first under James Robb, in 1742-43, which influenced the whole of Scotland and lasted for nearly a year and a half, and the second under William Burns in 1839. This was the Burns who became the famous Chinese missionary. He thought the Town Council were unfortunate in not putting on the seal a representation of the local parish church which formerly existed in the churchyard at Kilsyth, or if there was no picture or sketch of it existing, a picture of the present Parish Church, which was a noble edifice and the finest building in the Burgh. In the fourth and fifth circles there were a handloom and a pithead, to commemorate respectively the weaving industry of Kilsyth, which was the chief industry till 1870, and the mining industry, which is now the staple industry. He thought the Town Council were unfortunate in adopting these representations of the industries, as they were

anything but heraldic. In addition to these circles there was in the centre chief a representation of a demi-savage, the crest of Livingstone, Viscount Kilsyth, and quite properly given the place of honour. In the dexter fess there was a camel's head and neck, and in the sinister fess a swan's head and neck, these being the crests of two branches of the Edmonstone family, the present Superiors, the latter crest being the correct crest of the Edmonstones of Duntreath and Kilsyth. On the base there was shown a thistle, indicative of "Scotland for ever." (Applause.) This seal was never used because of the fact that there was emblazoned on it, between the centre chief and the centre circle the initials "R.H." which referred to the Provost of that year, who was an exemplary and popular Provost. Some evilly-disposed people said that these initials "R.H." referred to the "Road to —," but the Provost retorted that they meant the "Road to Heaven." (Laughter.) The seal was never used, and after the next election it was

destroyed and a new seal obtained. A representation of that seal was to be found on the toast-list. In the centre of the seal there was a shield. On the dexter half there was the coat of arms of Viscount Kilsyth, and on the sinister half the coat of arms of the Edmonstones. In the first quarter was the open Bible to commemorate the revivals; in the second quarter the crossed swords to commemorate the Battle of Kilsyth; in the third quarter the crossed weaver's shuttles to commemorate the weaving industry—this was certainly a very much finer heraldic representation than the handloom in the original seal; and in the fourth quarter there was that most objectionable pithead to represent the mining industry. Referring to the photograph of the Provost on the toast-list, he said that was the representation of the last seal or medal struck to commemorate the jubilee of Kilsyth, and that was the history of the Burgh brought up to the date of the jubilee. (Applause.)



Cromwell's House, near Kilsyth.



Black Mill Falls.