

NEW CUMNOCK

AULD KIRKYARD MINISTERS HERITAGE TRAIL

A rich heritage waiting to be discovered and enjoyed...



newcumnockheritage.com

M1

REV. HEW CRAUFURD

Born: 1628 Died: 1692 Minister: 1653-1692



Spouse:
Euphame
Cunningham
(widow of
William
Cunningham,
minister of
West Kilbride)

Children:
Hugh, John,
Patrick

In 1653 Hew Craufurd of Auchinames (Renfrewshire) was ordained as the first minister of the parish of New Cumnock. These were turbulent times for the kirk of Scotland, his new church at New Cumnock was completed in 1659, the year before the restoration of Charles II.

The Stuart monarch was soon interfering in church affairs and in 1662 the Rev. Craufurd like several hundred other ministers was 'outed' from their kirks for refusing to conform to Episcopacy.

Ministers began to preach at illegal open-air meetings, known as 'conventicles', in the surrounding fields and valleys. Such meetings were soon outlawed and in 1683 Hew Craufurd was banished to Ireland for his refusal to stop attending conventicles.

He returned to New Cumnock in 1688 and served as minister until his death four years later. His sons continued to live at Garrievie (now Mansfield). It is not known if the Rev. Hew Craufurd lies buried in the Auld Kirkyard.

A Memorial Plaque was kindly gifted through a generous offering raised at the New Cumnock Parish Church *Songs of Praise* gathering of church congregations from across Ayrshire.

M2

REV. THOMAS HUNTER

Born: 1665 Died: 5 January 1760 Minister: 1706-1757



Spouse:
Christian Ker

Children:
Joseph, Mary

Spouse:
Jean Welsh

Thomas Hunter married Christian Ker, daughter of provost of Sanquhar and was later an assistant to the minister at Sanquhar before in 1706 being called to New Cumnock.

His tenure didn't start well, with the heritors refusing to pay his stipend for the first four years. However, despite his dispute the Rev. Hunter served the parish of New Cumnock for over 50 years.

The keeping of baptism records began in his first year and the honour of being first in the New Cumnock baptismal register fell to Ellison Stewart. His wife Christian died in 1745 and five years later 85 year-old Thomas married Jean Welsh.

Rev. Hunter demitted from his duties in 1757 and passed away three years later. He lies buried in the family plot next to the Auld Kirk walls. Several generations of his family lived in the fine farmhouse at East Polquhirter in the east of the parish including Dr. Thomas Hunter.

REV. JAMES YOUNG

Born:
29 July 1711

Died:
1 August 1795

Minister:
1758-1795



Spouse:
Elizabeth
Hunter

Children:
James, Robert,
Marjory and
Marion (twins),
Robert, Janet,
Elizabeth,
Margaret
Crawford,
Alexander,
Elizabeth
Penelope,
Katherine,
Mary, Patrick

Born in Falkirk his spouse Elizabeth Hunter was the daughter of the minister of Kirkconnel and together they had 13 children.

The Rev. Young is remembered as 'Jamie Goose' in 'The Kirk's Alarm', Robert Burns' caustic attack on several Ayrshire ministers.

Jamie Goose!

*Jamie Goose, ye made but toom roose,
In hunting the wicked Lieutenant*

In 1790 he compiled the First Statistical Account of the parish and noted a population of 1200 with 12 Dissenters from the church.

He reported on the working of coal, lime, lead and wodd (graphite) in the parish and also remarked '*the air is generally healthful, witness the long lives of many who have died above 90, or near it.*'

The Rev. Young died in 1795, aged 84 and like his predecessor he too rests in a family plot aside the walls of the Auld Kirk.

REV. WILLIAM REID

Born:
Unknown

Died:
28 February 1829

Minister:
1796-1829



Spouse:
Mary Allan

The Rev. Reid suffered the wrath of John Logan, friend of Robert Burns, and other heritors when he proposed to cut down trees in the glebe which he claimed were '*going fast to decay and rendered the manse uncomfortable from damp and smoke*'. The case went to the Court of Session (1799) which came out in favour of the minister.

This was a difficult time for the Church of Scotland and national schisms fractured the congregation of the Auld Kirk with some parishioners joining the Reformed Presbyterians (New Cumnock) or, Burghers (Old Cumnock) or Anti-Burghers (Auchinleck).

The Rev. Reid served the parish for 33 years before passing away in 1829 and lies buried against the kirkyard wall, the last of the Auld Kirk ministers to be buried here.

M5

REV. MATTHEW KIRKLAND

Born: 1798 **Died:** 27 July 1846 **Minister:** 1835-1843 **Free Church Minister:** 1843-1846



Spouse:
Anna Smith

Children:
Isabella

Born in Carmunnock, Glasgow he served as minister of the parish of New Cumnock from 1835 until 1843 and during that time compiled the 2nd Statistical Account of the parish of New Cumnock (1838).

Here he remarked "In the year 1832, an elegant new church was erected voluntarily by the heritors, owing to the inadequacy of the old place of worship to afford accommodation to the increased population' – now over 2000 souls.

The Rev Kirkland left his congregation at the Disruption of 1843, the great schism in the Church of Scotland which resulted in the formation of the Free Church of Scotland.

The first free kirk (later replaced by the Arthur Memorial Church) stood here on Castlehill and Matthew Kirkland its first minister. A memorial stone once stood in the grounds of that church (left), but sadly is now gone. The Rev. Kirkland's 'dust is entombed in Gorbals Churchyard, Glasgow'.

This Memorial Plaque here in the Auld Kirkyard was kindly gifted by Mr. Russell Brooks of Ayrshire Memorials.

REV. ROBERT MURRAY

Born: 30 May 1817 **Died:** 26 November 1894 **Minister:** 1843-1893



Spouse:
Unmarried

Born in Eddlestone, Peebleshire the son of a shepherd he was presented to the parish by John, 2nd Marquis of Bute. His elder brother the Rev. James Murray was minister at Old Cumnock.

Both men found themselves in the position of 'preaching to pews almost empty' such was the impact of the Disruption of 1843 and the formation of the Free Church in Scotland. Eventually fortunes improved and many of the strayed flock flocked back to the parish church. The Rev. Murray was a minor poet and published a book "*The Day spring from on high and other poems*".

*Thoughts are like clouds - as sunshine on the hills,
They come and go; though we court their presence
E'er so much, they will not stay to bless us*

A memorial in the parish church honours him as 'An earnest scholar, a faithful pastor, a loving and gentle minister'. The Rev. Murray never married but a relative, 11 year old John Murray, is remembered on his headstone that rests against the wall of the Auld Kirkyard.

M6

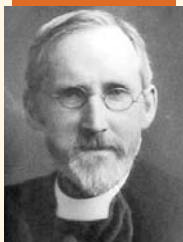
M7

REV. JAMES MILLAR

Born:
10 April 1857

Died:
5 March 1921

Minister:
1894-1919



Spouse:
Grace
Underwood

Children:
Archibald,
Grace

Rev. Millar from Eastwood came to New Cumnock in 1886 as assistant to Rev. Murray.

The following year he married Grace Underwood but sadly she died less than three years later, soon after the birth of their second child.

The Rev. Millar was an accomplished musician and a German scholar. He wrote texts on church music and translated religious works from German into English.

The Rev. Millar resigned in 1919 and died at Lancaster two years later. His remains rest against the Auld Kirkyard wall and although the original family headstone has been damaged a new plaque marks the spot.

M8

PASTOR JAMES ADAIR

Born:
1862

Died:
1 October 1896

Baptist Church Pastor:
1893-1896



Spouse:
Janet Brown

Children:
James,
Maggie,
Henrietta,
Marion,
Isabella,
Janet

Born in New Cumnock in 1862, he lived with his family at Lanemark Row, or Knowetop as it was known. As a young coal-miner he emerged as the leader of the local Baptist community and by 1893 was known as Pastor Adair

He tried to spread the word about his church activities including writing to the Cumnock Express. The editor however, was clearly suspicious of this 'common working man - a collier without any credentials - doing the work of ministry as he did last Sabbath in the presence of two or three hundred crowd' and he refused to publish the letter.

In 1896, personnel tragedy struck when the pastor's wife Janet died in childbirth and James died soon after leaving six orphans behind. Sadly, their new-born daughter Janet did not survive.

In 1900 the first Baptist Church of New Cumnock was finally erected, described by local historian George Sanderson as 'a fitting tribute and memorial to Pastor James Adair of Knowetop'.

Three other children died in their teenage years and lie buried in the Auld Kirkyard with their parents. The two surviving sons emigrated to Nova Scotia, with James' brother Major Adair.

MINISTERS OF THE AULD KIRK

1653-1692

Hew
Craufurd

1653

1697-1701

James
Gilchrist

1697

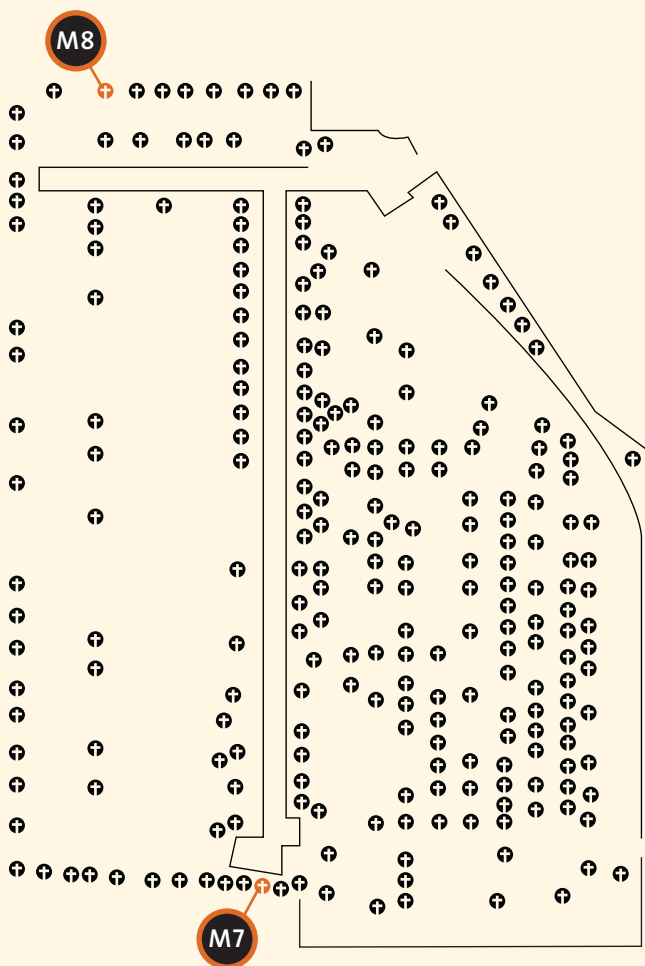
1706-1757

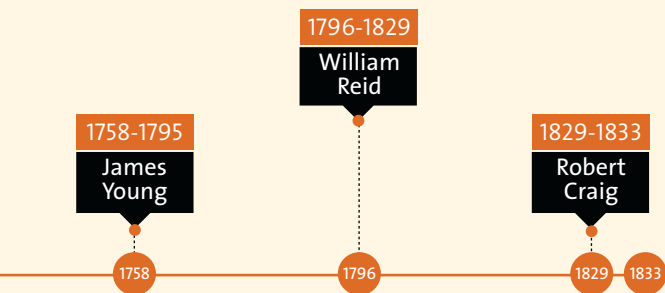
Thomas
Hunter

1706

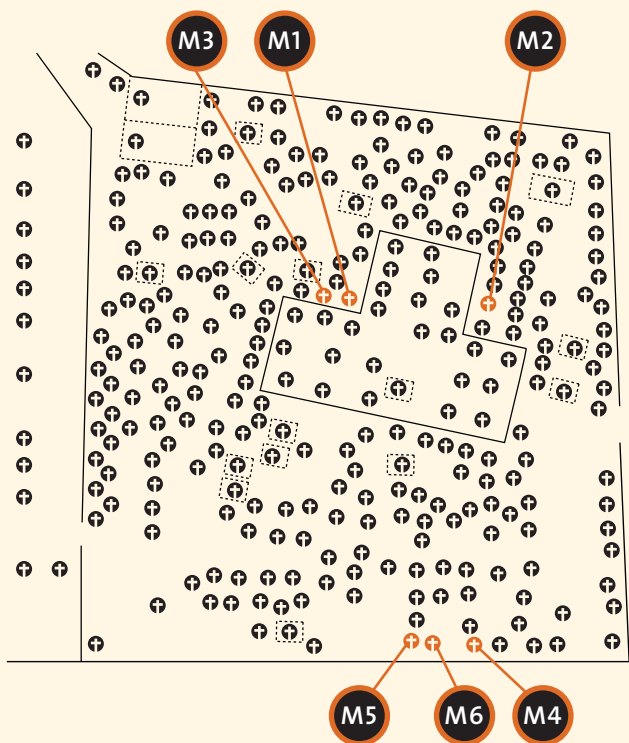
THE AULD KIRK MINISTERS HERITAGE TRAIL LOWER GRAVEYARD GUIDE

M8





THE AULD KIRK MINISTERS HERITAGE TRAIL UPPER GRAVEYARD GUIDE



Visitors should exercise caution within the vicinity of the headstones and Auld Kirk ruins. Thank you.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Leaflet was produced by Members of New Cumnock Parish Church and New Cumnock Liaison Group.

The New Cumnock Liaison Group and our partner East Ayrshire Council would like to acknowledge the support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Barr Environmental through the Landfill Communities Fund.

