

L A doubly tragic loss

In 1831, George Baird aged 15, the son of a local famer, overwhelmed by curiosity went down a new coalpit. He was overcome by gas and James Murdoch, aged 25, was the first to try to rescue him. Both died and were buried in the churchyard.

James has no gravestone and left a widow, Mary, and six children to fend for themselves. Life proved hard and eventually most of James' family emigrated to America as Mormon 'handcart pioneers'. Their journey was arduous without horses and sadly Mary died to be buried alongside the wagon trail.

M As part of the churchyard improvements overseen by Lady Boswell, John Gibson recut inscriptions to 'renew' many old gravestones, which the minister deciphered. These included Rev John Shaw's 1643 stone **G** which is fixed onto the church.



N An engine of change

Stationmaster, Joseph Irvin dedicated himself to improving life in Auchinleck.

He helped create a town hall, public library, choral society, and a literary and debating club, as well as bringing gas lighting to the town. The whole community celebrated Joseph's golden wedding in 1893, revealing their affection for him but also how at this time only 1:1000 marriages endured so long.

The Boswell Trust was formed in 2010 to raise the profile of James Boswell with the ultimate aim of restoring the Boswell Mausoleum and opening a visitor attraction in the adjoining Old Church. The Boswell Project and Boswell Book Festival are the first steps in fulfilling this aim.

For further information, please visit www.jamesboswell.scot



Auchinleck's history in the Old Churchyard 5 Church Hill, Auchinleck, KA18 2AB

A parish since medieval times, Lord Auchinleck, 8th Laird of Auchinleck, father of James Boswell, created Auchinleck as a planned village in the mid-18th century.

By 1791, the parish contained 720 people whose lives focussed on the land **E** and traditional trades. **F J**

By the early 19th century, decorative wooden box making took off **H** after local craftsmen discovered the secret of making a hidden hinge. Coal mining and ironworking also brought rapid growth but, as accidents show, this could be at huge personal cost. **L**

Although many people left to make new lives beyond Scotland **B L**, by 1881 Auchinleck's population had increased to 6,681.

Auchinleck Old Churchyard Today

O The Boswell Quill by sculptor Harry Gray
The first public structure in Scotland to celebrate James Boswell (1740-1795) the great biographer, traveller, diarist, advocate, laird and celebrity interviewer, is inspired by an eighteenth century quill leaning against its inkpot. Words running down the Quill describe Boswell's first meeting with Samuel Johnson on 16 May 1763, one of the most important in British literary history.

The Churchyard Garden

Designed by Todd Longstaffe-Gowan
New landscaping, planting and sweeps of seasonal bulbs create a place of contemplation and beauty.

The Boswell Book Festival is inspired by Boswell's writing, being dedicated to biography and memoir, and takes place annually in May.

www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk

"The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas"
THIS PROJECT IS BEING PART-FINANCED BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT AND THE EUROPEAN UNION - Ayrshire LEADER 2014-2020 Programme.



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THE LIVES AND TIMES OF AUCHINLECK

A Gravestone Spotter's Guide
to the Old Churchyard



Rebellious, Resilient
& Resourceful



THE BOSWELL TRUST
www.jamesboswell.scot

A GRAVESTONE SPOTTER'S GUIDE TO AUCHINLECK OLD CHURCHYARD

A The Auchinleck Notables' monument celebrates, among others, the Covenanter Rev Alexander Peden, famed for wearing a disguise to escape the King's soldiers and William Murdoch inventor of gas lighting. An ingenious woodworker, Murdoch also created a proto-bicycle to ride to school and a hat so finely lathed it won him a position at the prestigious firm of Watt (inventor of the steam engine) & Boulton.

The monument was erected by John Gibson **M**, builder and the minister Dr Chrystal **K** composed its inscriptions.

B The chequerboard tiles, and star, square and compass are symbols used by the Freemasons.

Carvings of skulls, crossed bones, hourglasses and coffins signify that death will come to us all. **C**

Coats of arms display ancestry **C**. These Wallaces appear to claim kinship with Sir William Wallace. Just below their coat of arms is an instrument which according to legend Wallace used in 1297 to seal the Barns of Ayr before setting it on fire to kill the English soldiers camped inside.

D This coat of arms belongs to the Boswell Family.

E Winged faces represent souls and the belief in a Heavenly afterlife. Potted tulips symbolise Andrew Bruce's job as gardener and overseer of the Auchinleck Estate.

F These tools show James Samson was able to build and repair, as well as run, his mill.

H Auchinleck's last box-maker William Johnstone died in 1892. He worked with his son and granddaughter.

I Surely Ayrshire's oldest man? Matthew Tait was reportedly 123 when he died, having lived through the reigns of seven different monarchs. He married twice. One wife made him happy, the other sad - both are shown on his stone! Reputedly a teller of fortunes, who at the age of 100 could drink a cup of tea with his heels around his neck.

J The crown above the blacksmith's tools indicate that he was a member of the Incorporation of Hammermen.

K Auchinleck's minister for 68 years! James Chrystal's golden anniversary as minister was marked with portraits of him and his wife, painted by W H Johnston, son of the boxmaker **H**. His diamond anniversary was marked by building a new church tower.

