



# 1ST MARQUIS OF MONTROSE SOCIETY

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## SOCIETY AGM 2009

On Saturday 23 May members of the society gathered at St Giles Cathedral for the annual dedication at the Montrose Memorial.

Following this the group was treated to a tour round the nearby Parliament Hall, a privilege not normally accorded to the general public, and a visit to the nearby Market Cross in the High Street.

22 members and friends squeezed into the alcove in the Chapman Aisle in St Giles to admire the wonderful memorial, depicting a recumbent Montrose, and to listen to a moving address given by our chairman Malcolm McVittie. The nearby practicing choir doing its best to drown him out, but thankfully not quite managing to. The white marble statue of Montrose, recently cleaned, looked magnificent and the society marked the occasion by laying at its foot a bunch of red roses and forget-me-nots.

After that we all made our way down to the Royal Scots Club in Abercromby Place where

the AGM was to be held.

The meeting commenced at 12.30pm and included the usual reports on the state of the society, financial and otherwise, by the chairman and the treasurer. Minutes of the meeting will be distributed to the membership in due course.

Following a simple buffet lunch Norman Paterson addressed the group to give an illustrated talk on the early history of Dunfermline and the Abbey, focussing in particular on Malcolm and Margaret and exploring the link between them and the early English Royal family. This interesting subject was one which most present had never before contemplated and it prompted a lively discussion after the presentation.

A fascinating talk, and a very worthwhile day, was brought to a close with a vote of thanks from the chairman to all those in attendance.



With St Giles as a backdrop the members gather on the steps for a group photograph.

## **The Women in Montrose's Life**

**Some time ago Nivon Russell suggested that the Society should broaden our interest beyond the military campaigns which are the obvious feature of any study of Montrose's life. Many of you will be aware of the slim volume edited by Robin Bell "Civil Warrior" which contains the complete poetical works of James Graham, First Marquis of Montrose. Equally you will be aware of Phinella Henderson's excellent pamphlet on the contemporary images of Montrose. It was also suggested that there may be some interest in studying the women who feature in Montrose's story. This is not a fishing expedition for scandal because we know that the Covenanters tried very hard during his life time to find evidence of scandal with which to smear him but failed. They could only come up with a collection of letters to him in his youth from various young ladies littered with "Arcadian compliments".**

**From your knowledge of the story of Montrose you will be aware that his mother, who died when Montrose was very young, is alleged to have consulted witches who predicted that her son would trouble all Scotland. His sisters married various significant Scots of their time. Lilius married the Colquhoun of Luss but he promptly ran off with her younger sister Katharine to the continent. She was never heard of again. It is suggested that this disappearance led to Montrose abandoning his young wife for a tour of the continent in search for Katharine. But it is more likely that he was due to do the European tour as most young noblemen at that time would have done and it co-incided with Katharine's disappearance. Margaret Graham married Archibald Napier of Merchiston. Her daughter-in-law Lady Elizabeth Napier provided the necessities of life for Montrose when he was imprisoned before his execution and almost certainly arranged for his heart to be removed from his trunk as it lay in the felon's grave in the Meadows. Montrose had a half brother, Harry, sired after his mother died, and he grew up to be one of Montrose's most trusted lieutenants. Who was his mother?**

**I always feel that one of the saddest people in Montrose's story is his wife Magdalen Carnegie. I know that this view is not shared by all members of the Society! They married very young, when he was only 17, and had two sons before Montrose departed to the continent in 1632. This was their only brief period of happy married life in Scotland spent mostly at the home of her father the Earl of Southesk at Kinnaird. She subsequently bore him one more son and a daughter. Do any of you know the daughter's name or who she married or indeed what became of her? One of Magdalen's sisters Katharine married the Earl of Traquair who closed the gates in the face of the fugitive Montrose after the Battle of Philiphaugh.**

**Once you start to scratch the surface the list of ladies is endless, from King Charles' Queen Henrietta Maria, to Elizabeth the Electress of Bohemia, to Miss Pett the daughter of James Pett who made young Montrose's golf clubs when he was at university. Who is Miss Pett? Answers on a post card please! If I have got any of this wrong please let me know but I think this an area worthy of study and the Duke of Montrose stands ready to help us with such material as he has available.**

**Malcolm McVittie**

## **Society Membership**

**At the Annual General Meeting the importance of increasing the membership of the Society was stressed. An increase in the number of members could have a variety of beneficial effects. At a very simple level an increase in the number of members would mean an increase in the revenue of the Society through increased subscriptions. The greater the numbers of members that we have, the more ideas there are for activities to pursue in the interests of the Society. New members will probably bring with them great knowledge of the story of Montrose and other areas of expertise such as presentational skills to better promote the Society and its aims and achievements. More members mean a wider field of contacts to enable to Society to exert greater influence.**

**Wherever you find friends or acquaintances who seem to have an interest in the Great Marquis, don't be shy, sign them up and bring them along at the next opportunity. In fact, one of the reasons that I joined the Society was an opportunity to enjoy sharing my interest in Montrose with other like-minded souls without embarrassment and to learn from others and that has certainly been my experience. As Chairman, I am very keen to pursue the idea promoted by Phinella Henderson that we should lead a drive to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the James Graham in 2012. We can do so very much more convincingly if we promote ourselves as a Society with a strong and vibrant membership across not only Scotland but also across the Scottish diaspora. To that extent we will pursue the opportunity of promoting the Society to sympathetic clan societies during the "Homecoming".**

**Any ideas that you may have to further boost membership, and also to increase the level of participation, please let us know.**

**Malcolm McVittie**



The Montrose Memorial in the Chapman Aisle, St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh

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## Philphaugh Weekend—Autumn 2009

Arrangements are now well in hand for the Autumn gathering at Philphaugh in September. Visits are planned for the 5th and 6th of September with members gathering first of all on the evening of Friday 4th September at the George and Abbotsford Hotel, Melrose.

Guided tours have been organised to Abbotsford House, the former home of Sir Walter Scott, and Philphaugh battlefield, as well as a visit to the nearby Newark Castle, scene of one of the bloodiest massacres in the history of the civil war.

It is not too late to come on the tour but, if you haven't done so already, do get in touch with our chairman Malcolm McVittie to register your interest. These are always great social weekends; make sure you don't miss it!

## Earl of Southesk joins the society

The society is privileged to announce that the Earl of Southesk has joined the 1st Marquis of Montrose Society. All those scholars of Montrose will be familiar with the prominent part which was played by this noble family in the story of Montrose.

Members of the council hope that they may be able to welcome the Earl to some of the future society events.

## New Council Member Appointed

Council is delighted to announce that James Hair has accepted an invitation to join the society council. James, from Thurso in Caithness, is a relatively new member but he expressed a willingness to help with the organisation of the society and agreed to step on to the council. He is a very welcome addition and hopefully may be the start of a new trend.

(YES.....that was a strong hint)!!

## Society looks ahead to Anniversary of Montrose's Birth

**Society member Phinella Henderson raised the point at the AGM that the 400th anniversary of Montrose's birth is only 3 years away and she suggested that the society should be thinking now about what we should be doing then to recognise the occasion.**

**This is a very valid point and council will be discussing this subject in the months ahead to agree what we should be doing to mark this significant event.**