The Scott Newsletter appears twice a year.
It is published by the Walter Scott Research Centre
at the University of Aberdeen.

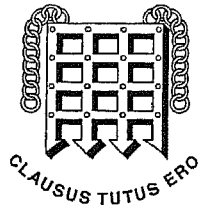
The minimum subscription is for four issues, and costs £5,
or £10 for libraries

Payment must be made in sterling—by cheque or credit card
(Visa or Master Card): please quote card type, number, expiry date,
and the name as it appears on the card.
Cheques should be made payable to 'The University of Aberdeen'.

Contributions and subscriptions should be sent to the Editor,

Dr Alison Lumsden,
Department of English,
University of Aberdeen,
Aberdeen AB24 2UB, Scotland.

e-mail: alison.lumsden@hotmail.com
Fax: 01224 272624



THE SCOTT NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 37 **WINTER 2000**

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

After this issue of the Newsletter, the Editor (in preparation for retirement to full-time novel-editing) will be vacating the chair in favour of Dr Alison Lumsden. Alison has been for some years the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels' invaluable Research Fellow, and in autumn 2001 she will be taking up a lectureship in the English Department at Aberdeen. However she is already a member of the Department, and correspondence should be addressed to her at the usual Aberdeen address.

The retiring editor would like to thank all subscribers for their support, and especially all those who have submitted contributions over the years. The *Newsletter* was set up in 1982 after the second international Scott Conference in Aberdeen. Its policy was approved by the business meeting at the business meetings of successive conferences: Edmonton 1987, Edinburgh 1991, Aberdeen 1995, and Eugene 1999. The *Newsletter* will no doubt be perceived as flourishing, electronically as well as in more traditional form, when we all meet again in 2003 for the seventh conference, hopefully in Konstanz, and when it is confidently expected that *Count Robert of Paris* will top the customary Popularity Poll!

DEAD LETTER? A WALTER SCOTT MANUSCRIPT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Caroline McCracken-Flesher

How many letters did Walter Scott write? Scholars are still counting. Certainly he was prolific enough that letters still show up in unexpected places—my recent trip to the University of Wyoming's American Heritage Center yielded not only a range of uncatalogued Scott first editions, but also a slim little folder hiding a brief autograph letter.[1]

[1] The letter is catalogued under Fitzhugh Collection, PR5334 A6 1831x (Toppan Rare Books Library, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie). I thank Jane Millgate for her expertise in determining that the letter seems genuine. Most particularly, I thank Anne Marie Lane, Curator of Rare Books at the American Heritage Center, for drawing my attention to the manuscript and Rick Ewig, director of the AHC, for permission to quote the letter in its entirety.

Length is no indicator of importance, however. The missive was sent to Jane Porter, Scott's childhood friend and the author of *The Scottish Chiefs*,[2] just over three weeks before the author left on his trip around the Mediterranean in belated hope of recovery from the first few of his many strokes, and while he daily awaited in London the call to embark.[3]

Porter had written as follows, in a letter now held at the National Library of Scotland.[4]

> Esher—Surrey—Octr: 5th—1831
>
> Miss Jane Porter hears with concern, that Sir Walter Scott is about to pass through London in his way to Italy, in quest of health. That he needs to have such an object in his journey, she only unites with all who know his name, in a most sincere regret; while, with the same general orison, she puts up hers also, that he may find what he seeks; and bring back, like King Hezekiah, lengthened days, but to a happier consummation.—[5]
>
> But the object of this little note now, is, not only to freight his sails with the very best wishes of two at least of his old Scottish acquaintances of the High School-yards, but to enquire whether he

[2] Porter's *The Scottish Chiefs* appeared in 1810, and is sometimes considered a precursor for Scott's historical novels, although the DNB brusquely observes: 'The tradition that Scott acknowledged in conversation with George IV that this book was the begetter of the Waverley novels must be regarded as apocryphal.' Ian Dennis does not question the tradition, but sardonically notes: 'It has sometimes been claimed—though perhaps never more confidently than by the author herself—that Jane Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803) and *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810) are the first true historical novels.' See *Nationalism and Desire in Early Historical Fiction* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1997), 9.

[3] Scott suffered his first of probably five or more strokes on February 15th 1830. He left Abbotsford 23rd September 1831, arrived in London 28th, waited there until 23rd October when he travelled on to Portsmouth, and finally embarked 29th. See Edgar Johnson, *Sir Walter Scott: The Great Unknown*, 2 vols (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 2: 1194, 1195, 1198, 1200. Scott's voyage took him to Malta, then Naples, overland to Rome and Bologna, by boat to Venice, through Germany to Nimeguen where he suffered another stroke, and so via Rotterdam to London (arrived June 13 1832) and on to Abbotsford (July 11). See Johnson, 1219–50 and 1263–65.

[4] Jane Porter, letter to Sir Walter Scott, 5 October 1831, NLS MS 5317, ff. 185–6v. My thanks to Dr Iain Brown and the trustees of the National Library of Scotland for permission to quote this letter in full.

[5] In II Kings 20. 1, 17, 18, King Hezekiah lies 'sick unto death', but his prayers are answered with extended life. However, he is shortly warned by Isaiah that 'Behold the days come, that all that *is* in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD'. Isaiah goes on: 'And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.'

ever received a sett [*sic*] of books, called "The Narrative of Sir Edward Seaward, &c." which she forwarded to him some time in the month of last June, at the especial desire of the Owner of the original M.S:–That she did not write with them at the time, importing this tribute of literary respect from the person in question, Miss Jane Porter feels she will be giving Sir Walter Scott only too sufficient an apology for such omission, by her informing him now, that she was then only become a Mourner for her dear and honoured Mother:– How dear to her Daughters hearts, how lamented by them, only those can know who knew that most revered among women!—from her Gracious Sovereign to many of his "poorest subjects", she was revered.

–Sir Walter Scott may remember her, when he was a Youth!— She delighted in remembering him:—and as her faculties never failed her one moment, to the hour of her death; even to the age of Eighty-five, she enjoyed conversing with him in his books; and talking of his Boy-days, with those about her who appreciated the same gratification, but who had never see the Author.—This venerable parent, and friend, was born in the memorable year 1745; on the Day of the Duke of Cumberland's march through her native city, Durham, to the eventful field of Culloden!—and, on the 18th of June, 1831,—the anniversary of the important Day of Waterloo, she was taken from this world of still awful expectancy!—Having always been impressed with a foreboding that as "She came into the world in so troubled a Public Time, she would be called to quit it, in some season of similar commotion!"—But thanks be to God,—what ever has been the stir in Europe, nay all over the Globe, as well as in this little Island, she yet laid down her venerable head in Peace!— and with prayers for her Country, and for her children near and distant, gently resigned her meek soul into her Saviour's promised "Safe keeping!"—

Miss Jane Porter does not apologize to Sir Walter Scott, for this mention of her ever revered Mother, to him.—Because Miss Jane Porter knew, and respected his honoured and pious Parent:—and, "of Such, is the Blessd kingdom of Heaven!"—

Porter's letter reached Scott at Sussex Place, where he was staying with his daughter Sophia and her husband John Gibson Lockhart. He replied next day in the letter now held at the University of Wyoming. The transcription below draws on Alan Bell's version produced in 1975.[6] My reading is not identical with Bell's, so in places where we differ but I am confident of my reading, I enclose the transcription in square brackets; in

[6] The letter in Wyoming is accompanied by a copy of Bell's transcription of November 28th 1975. This bears the note: 'MS. University of Wyoming. (See their letter—a xerox copy—...21 Nov 75 in Survey files [of the Letters of Sir Walter Scott].' Unfortunately, all the good efforts of Dr Iain Brown of the NLS cannot locate a copy in those incompletely catalogued materials.

places where I consider Bell's reading questionable, but have no better suggestion, I enclose it in angle brackets.

Dear Mrs Porter

I rec ly [recently][7] received the valued voyages of Sebright and was much interested in the narrative and if I had time I would be ungrateful to an unpardonable degree in neglecting to express my thanks + satisfaction But besides the hurry <attending> on a long journey on short notice I have to plead that my head like Trinculos stomach in the Tempest is not by any means ~~'~~constant[8] and that my hand has contracted a habit of stammering which makes my manuscript difficult either to read or ~~read~~ write

I am however always
that is what the ~~w~~ malady has left of me
my kind and very del [delightful] friend
you[r] faithful wellwisher
Walter Scott

Porter's letter is franked the night of October 5th, Scott's undated missive the late afternoon of October 6.

What lends Scott's brief letter interest? Jane Porter reflects the national concern with Scott's health—though she draws a perhaps unfortunate analogy in her wish that the author may recover 'like King Hezekiah', whose heirs subsequently fell into Babylonian slavery. As a very old friend, she tells Sir Walter of her family grief and presumes upon his sympathy. And as an author and Scott's predecessor in national fiction, she inquires whether he has received books she sent in friendship and as a professional courtesy. Scott's reply is uncharacteristically unsatisfactory. He utters only commonplaces about his satisfaction in receiving Porter's (misnamed) books; he makes no reference to Porter's loss of a mother her letter implies he knew well (the Porters lived in Edinburgh and visited frequently with the Scotts until 1803); he dwells on the state of his own health.

I would suggest that it was precisely the relevance of Porter's letter to his own concerns that produced such a perfunctory response from Walter Scott, the Author of Waverley. The volumes Porter forwarded rejoiced in the title: *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative of His Shipwreck, and consequent Discovery of certain Islands in the Caribbean Sea: with a detail of many extraordinary and highly interesting Events in his Life, from 1733 to 1749, as written in his own Diary*, edited by Jane Porter.[9] But the Na-

[7] Bell gives 'sa-ly'.

[8] Scott misremembers *The Tempest*. Stephano begs: 'Prithee, do not turn me about; my stomach is not constant.' See 2.2.114–15 (*Riverside Shakespeare*).

[9] The NLS copy carries the imprint: 'London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longman, 1832'.

tional Library of Scotland's Catalogue reads cryptically: 'edited [or rather written] by Miss Jane Porter'. According to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, these volumes are 'doubtless largely, if not wholly, fictitious'. Porter's source apparently was challenged immediately on the volumes' 1831 publication, but Porter asserted 'that the diary was genuine, and had been placed in her hands by the writer's family'.[10] Most interestingly, 'When pressed on the matter, she said "Sir Walter Scott had his great secret: I must be allowed to keep my little one."' In later years, she continued to assert the volume's authenticity. Her 1841 edition referred 'to a report of the Royal Geographical Society to prove that the islands were not imaginary', and when her eldest brother died, his tombstone—which the DNB points out was 'doubtless written by Jane'—asserted that he was the author.[11]

Scott, verging toward death and anxiously considering the posthumous operations of literary authority, may have been in no mood to recognise or engage another's intimations of mortality and playful elisions of authorship. When Scott received Porter's letter, not only was he embarking on a rigorous journey in what he surely knew was the unlikely hope of recovering his health, he was embroiled with his publisher, printer and son-in-law in a battle for possession of the literary authority his games of anonymity had always elided yet appropriated through the Author of Waverley. With Scott about to die, Cadell and Lockhart, in particular, were anxious to fix and retain the value of Walter Scott's works through an edition both collected and complete. That end in mind, they began to question the author's literary judgement and direct his practices more aggressively than ever before, Cadell arguing that in *Count Robert of Paris* Scott's pregnant warrior in combat has 'cast a gloom over me which I cannot get rid of ... it will injure all your works to the extent of many thousand pounds'.[12] And the battle over *Count Robert* was being fought up to the moment Scott left the country. Fourteen days before Scott left Abbotsford, he received a letter from Cadell stressing: 'I have marked the *first mention* of [Brenhilda, the warrior] being *enceinte*, as well as all allusions to it afterwards', and arguing strenuously for edition out her pregnancy because '*it is of vast importance to all your works*'.[13] Cadell attempted to terminate Scott's now (supposedly) devaluative voicing and thus to control the property that was 'Walter Scott, the Author of Waverley'. He aimed to draw a commercially viable end to Scott's productivity.

[10] The DNB draws on *Notes & Queries* 1st Ser. vol. 5 (1852): 10, 185, 352, where contributors cite and question Porter's claims.

[11] A correspondent to *Notes and Queries* obscures the issue further when he suggests that Ogilvie died after his sister: *Notes and Queries* 1st Ser. 5: 185.

[12] Robert Cadell, letter to Walter Scott, 6 May 1831, NLS MS 3918 ff. 25–6.

[13] Robert Cadell to Walter Scott, 9 September 1831, NLS MS 3919 ff. 126–7.

Not surprisingly, Scott resisted. On 13th September, Grierson pithily summarises, 'He sends the third volume of Count Robert. He cannot correct it as Cadell seems to think necessary. He cannot cut according to objections which he does not think necessary. He will take his chance and Cadell cannot expect him to do more.'[14] Scott increasingly registered interference from his publisher as an encroachment on his preferably happily indeterminate authorial subjectivity—a threat to his ongoing practice and to his afterlife as a nationally significant author.

We can see the extent of Scott's unease in the Jedediah Introduction to *Tales of My Landlord, Fourth and Last Series* (*Count Robert* and *Castle Dangerous*). Scott rapidly produced this piece on the brink of his departure. On October 7th—one day after he responded to Porter—he anxiously awaited the proofs.[15] Here, a failing Jedediah's ownership of Peter Pattieson's manuscripts is challenged by an upstart brother, Paul Pattieson.[16] The two tussle over who has the right to speak in Peter's place, and ultimately the manuscripts are silently borne away and pirated abroad. Control is wrested from Jedediah, who once served to mediate between author, tale and audience, and appropriated for apparently market interest almost as an inevitable result of his declining powers. Touchingly, then, the piece ends with Scott stepping out from behind Jedediah's mask to offer his own farewell to a faithful audience as he prepares to leave British shores in search of health. Scott clearly figures his knowledge that through failing health he is losing authority past, present and future. He is eager to reassert himself as the Author of Waverley in the moment he bids farewell to authorship.

At this moment, with authority slipping from his hands as life itself slips away, Scott has no time to sympathise with another on her loss, no energy to consider another death, no taste for the Hezekiah analogy that figures him in perplexed relation to his successors, and no inclination to play more games of authorial anonymity. Rather Scott reiterates his concerns of the present moment in lines that recall his Jedediah Introduction. It reads:

> I will not swagger about an indifference to the termination of my disorder, which I do not really feel; but I may be permitted to hope, that the powers of my mind, such as they are, may not have a different date from those of my body; and I may again meet ~~the~~ [my] patronizing friends, if not exactly in my old fashion of literature, at

[14] Summarised in H.J.C. Grierson's notes for the centenary edition of Scott's letters, NLS MS 1752 ff. 377–8. Grierson references Stevenson Collection volume 5 f. 178.

[15] See Grierson, NLS MS 1752 ff. 401–2.

[16] Scott's revised proofs read 'Pattison': NLS MS 23052.

least in ~~the fashion of~~ some branch ~~not~~ [neither] too heavy for my mind, nor yet so dull as to make it said, that—

Superfluous lies the veteran on the stage.[17]

Throughout his letter to Porter an unusually self-obsessed Scott avoids and ignores the concerns of his unfortunate correspondent. Porter had the bad luck to articulate three of Scott's primary worries when she wrote to him in October 1831 of his decline and successors, her mother's death, and her own authorial indeterminacy. Scott perhaps appreciated the coincidence too much. Thus her letter produced not a sympathetic response but a lament for his failing health and an odd assertion of his continuance: 'I am however always / that is what the ~~w~~ malady has left of me / my kind and very del [delightful] friend / you[r] faithful wellwisher / Walter Scott.'

Scott turned Porter's missive into a dead letter except insofar as it allowed him to review and revise the ongoing narrative of his own, hastening social and literary demise.[18]

SCOTT, MELROSE AND *SAINT RONAN'S WELL*

Richard D. Jackson

J.G. Lockhart's account of the genesis of *Saint Ronan's Well* in his *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott* is well-known. He says that, after the less than favourable reception in Britain of *Quentin Durward*, in the instant that Scott found himself encouraged to take up the trade of story-telling again, he sprang back to Scotland. Lockhart writes:

[17] Lockhart suggested the Jedediah Introduction to Cadell. See Cadell's Note Book, NLS MS 21043, f. 116 (Friday 16 September 1831). NLS MS 23052 clearly shows that Scott revised it before he left. That set of proofs bears his emendations, here indicated by strike throughs and square brackets. The introduction was edited again by others (see NLS MS 3777 ff. 124–48; ff. 103–23; ff. 76–101. Lockhart provided the most substantial revisions: ff. 124–48.

[18] For a full consideration of the dynamic between discourse and death in Scott's late writing, see Caroline McCracken-Flesher MS chapter: 'Last Words or Lost Words? The Ownership of National Authorship in Walter Scott's Late Novels'. Delivered as a seminar to the Scots-Irish Research Network, Glasgow-Strathclyde School of Scottish Studies, Glasgow, 25 Nov. 1999. My thanks to Murray Pittock.

A conversation, which much interested me at the time, had, I fancy, some share at least in this determination. As he [Scott], Laidlaw, and myself were lounging on our ponies, one fine calm afternoon, alongh the brow of the Eildon hill where it overhangs Melrose, he mentioned to us gaily the *row*, as he called it, that was going on in Paris about Quentin Durward, and said, "I can't but think that I could make better play still with something German". Laidlaw grumbled at this, and said, like a true Scotchman, "Na, na, sir – take my word for it, you are always best, like Hélen MacGregor, when your foot is on your native heath; and I have often thought if you were to write a novel, and lay the scene *here* in the very year you were writing it, you would exceed yourself." – "Hame's hame," quoth Scott, smiling, "be it ever sae hamely. There's something in what you say, Willie. What suppose I were to take Captain Clutterbuck for a hero, and never let the story step a yard beyond the village below us yonder?" - "The very thing I want", says Laidlaw; "stick to Melrose in July 1823." – "Well, upon my word," he answered, "the field would be quite wide enough – and *what for no?*" – (*This pet phrase of Meg Dods was a Laidlawism.*) – Some fun followed about the different real persons in the village that might be introduced with comical effect; but as Laidlaw and I talked and laughed over our worthy neighbours, his air became graver and graver; and he at length said. "Ay, ay, if one could look into the heart of that little cluster of cottages, no fear but you would find materials for tragedy as well as comedy. I undertake to say that there is some real romance at this moment going on down there, that, if it could have justice done to it, would be well worth all the fiction that was ever spun out of human brains." He then told us a tale of dark domestic guilt which had recently come under his notice as Sheriff, and of which the scene was not Melrose, but a smaller hamlet on the other side of the Tweed, full in our view; but the details were not of a kind to be dwelt upon;- anything more dreadful was never conceived by Crabbe, and he told it so as to produce on us who listened all the effect of another *Hall of Justice*. It could never have entered his head to elaborate such a tale; but both Laidlaw and I used to think that this talk suggested St Ronan's Well ... .[1]

This account was written some fourteen years after the events that it describes took place. In it Lockhart not only purports to recall verbatim what Scott and Laidlaw said but places his own retrospective order, emphasis and interpretation upon the conversation. Lockhart was slightly deaf. When, a little over a month earlier, on 6 June 1823, Maria Edgeworth sat at Scott's dinner table at 39 Castle Street she found that Lock-

[1] John Gibson Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* (Edinburgh and London, 1837–38), (henceforth cited as Lockhart), Vol. 5 (1837), pp. 284–5.

hart, who was there too, 'sat taciturn in the ivory tower of his deafness'.[2] It is also as well to remember that, as Sir Herbert Grierson says, Lockhart's *Life of Scott* contains 'a somewhat surprising element of what appears to be sheer invention of a picturesque and dramatic character'.[3]

The issue of location is important. When Laidlaw began his contribution to the conversation by referring to Scott's 'native heath', he may not have been thinking specifically of the environs of Melrose but more generally of Scotland, the setting of the author's successful early novels, as opposed to the France of *Quentin Durward* or Scott's suggestion of Germany as a continental alternative. In *Rob Roy* Helen MacGregor inhabits the Highlands rather than the Borders. Even in Lockhart's account it is Scott himself who then floats the idea that he might 'never let the story step a yard beyond the village below us yonder'. Melrose was close to his home and during the autumn of 1822 and spring of 1823 he continued to take an interest in progress with the repairs to Melrose Abbey that he had persuaded Lord Montagu, uncle of the young 5th Duke of Buccleuch, should be undertaken to save the building from further decay.[4] In *Saint Ronan's Well* Scott describes Marchthorn, the county town of the shire, as being 'about fourteen miles distant from Saint Ronan's'. Jedburgh, the county town of Roxburghshire, was in Scott's day about the same distance from Melrose, which is also in Roxburghshire.

In his February 1832 *Introduction* to the Magnum edition of the novel[5] Scott says that 'The scene chosen for the Author's little drama of modern life was a mineral spring, such as are to be found in both divisions of Britain, and which are supplied with the usual materials for redeeming health...'. This is a generalised statement; but in *Note H* on *Meg Dods* Scott writes that 'St Ronan's, since this veracious history was given to the public, has revived as a sort of *alias*, or second title, to the very pleasant village of Innerleithen upon Tweed, where there is a medicinal spring much frequented by visitors'. It is true that from the beginning of the 19th century the reputed restorative powers of the mineral spring at Dow's or Doo's Well (Dove's Well) just above Innerleithen turned the

2 Maria Edgeworth to Mrs Ruxton on 18 June 1823; quoted in Edgar Johnson, *Sir Walter Scott: The Great Unknown* (London, 1970), (henceforth cited as Johnson), Vol. 2, p. 813.

3 H. J. C. Grierson, *Sir Walter Scott, Bart. A New Life*. (London, 1938),. Ch.1, p.1. Christopher Johnson in his Essay on the Text of *The Abbot* (The Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels, 10 (Edinburgh University Press 2000), p. 378) refers to Lockhart as 'often a zealous inventor of legends and falsehoods concerning Scott'.

4 Johnson, *op. cit.* Vol.2, p. 799.

5 Quotations from the Introduction and Note are from the Border Edition of *St Ronan's Well*, ed. Andrew Lang (London, 1894), Vol. 1, p. xviii and Vol. 2, p. 321.

town into a choice retreat for invalids. The popularity of the spa was greatly increased by the publication of *Saint Ronan's Well* in 1824. Doo's Well was promptly renamed St Ronan's and by 1826 the spring was furnished with a pump-house with a verandah containing subscription rooms.[6] Since then readers have inevitably tended to associate the novel with Innerleithen although other places such as Gilsland and Moffat have also been suggested as prototypes.

Mark Weinstein, in the Essay on the Text in his edition of the novel for The Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels,[7] says that Scott's original name for St Ronan's was St Duttrocks. There is no such saint. The name sounds like an amalgam of two genuine saints, St Duthac and St Dunstan with 'rock' replacing 'stan(e)'. The authors of *Melrose 1826*, published in 1978 by the Melrose Historical Association,[8] say that 'from the early days of the burgh, several springs were consecrated as St. Mary's, St. William's, St. Helen's, St. Dunstan's etc. and were thought to be effective in the relief of troublesome ailments'. An entry under the heading of 'St Dunstan's Well' in *The Name Sheets of the Parish of Melrose*, which were produced as a result of an Ordnance Survey of 1858-1860, reads as follows:

> This is a consecrated well situated in a field a short distance to the west of the village of Melrose – It is a mineral spring, and was formerly much frequented for it [sic] medicinal properties but it is not used in that way now.[9]

Scott's depth of knowledge of local history, which he demonstrated in *The Monastery* and *The Abbot*, means that he was probably aware of this fact. In the *Catalogue of the Library at Abbotsford*, published in 1838,[10] there is an entry that reads 'Rev A Milne Description of Melrose'. This is a reference to a little book that was first published in 1743 and reprinted several times thereafter. *A Description of the Parish of Melrose in answer to Mr Maitland's Queries sent to each Parish of the Kingdom* was written by the Rev. Adam Milne who succeeded Robert Wilson as min-

6 *Collins Encyclopaedia of Scotland*, ed. John and Julia Keay (London, 1994).

7 *Saint Ronan's Well*, ed. Mark Weinstein (The Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels, 16 (Edinburgh University Press/Columbia University Press, 1995) (henceforth cited as Weinstein), p. 388. Quotations from the text of the novel are from this edition.

8 *Melrose 1826*, ed. D.M. Hood (Galashiels, 1978), p. 39.

9 *The Name Sheets of the Parish of Melrose* (The National Archives of Scotland, West Register House, Edinburgh. Ordnancy Survey Name Books, Roxburghshire, Survey of 1858–1860) RH/4/23/217.

10 *Catalogue of the Library at Abbotsford* (compiled by J.G. Cochrane and issued by the Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1838; henceforth cited as *Catalogue*), p. 16.

ister in the parish of Melrose in 1711 and remained there until his death on 8 June 1747.[11] In the list of Scott's allusions to historians and historical material contained in his book *Sir Walter Scott and History*[12] James Anderson lists four works produced by Scott in which Milne's book is mentioned. In it Milne wrote:

> There have been several consecrated Wells about this Place; whether they have been frequented as medicinal I know not, such as St Helen's, St Robert's, Duddingston or rather St Dunstan's. Dunstan's and Eldun Wells are still made use of by the Country People as a sovereign Remedy against Cholicks.

The first chapter of *Saint Ronan's Well*, in which Scott describes the old village of Saint Ronan and the 'mineral well about a mile and a half from [it]', establishes the date as 'about twenty years since' although references in the text imply any time between 1803 and 1818.[13] The Cleikum Inn, situated in the old village, to which Scott refers later as 'the Aulton', was once the house of Sir Reginald Mowbray. In the same chapter he says that the house was situated:

> upon a spot of ground more level than was presented by the rest of the acclivity, where ... the houses were notched as it were into the side of the steep bank, with little more level ground about them than the spot occupied by their site ... three terraces, descended ... almost to the banks of the stream.

Milne wrote:

> About a Mile and a half from the Town of Melrose to the East, stands Old Melrose ... the situation of the Place is most pleasant and agreeable, being almost surrounded with Tweed.

The Ordnance Gazeteer of Scotland, published in 1885, states that two and a half miles east of the modern town of Melrose is:

> a promontory formed by a loop of the Tweed ... which is known as Old Melrose ...The banks of the river all round are lofty, wooded and rocky, and from them the ground rises in a smooth grassy ascent to a small plateau occupied by the modern mansion of Old Melrose.[14]

[11] Rev. A. Milne, *A Description of the Parish of Melrose in answer to Mr Maitland's Queries sent to each Parish of the Kingdom.*. Printed by T.W. and T. Ruddimans. Sold by John Paton Bookseller in the Parliament-close, MDCCXLIII.

[12] James Anderson, *Sir Walter Scott and History* (Edinburgh, 1981), Appendix, p. 158. The references listed are *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Borders* (IV, 199); *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (99); *Somers Tracts* (IV, 296); and *Chronological Notes of Scottish affairs, 1680–1701* from the diary of John Lauder, Lord Fountainhall, 99).

[13] Weinstein, p. 442.

In the modern Melrose today, at the foot of the main street leading to the Market Place, there is a short lane called St Dunstan's Lane that leads to St Dunstan's Park. Scott's change of name to Saint Ronan and his later production of the *Note* that appears in all post-Magnum editions have effectively drawn public attention to Innerleithen and away from Melrose.

The site near the River Tweed originally occupied by Cistercian monks was at Old Melrose. They then moved a few miles up-river to build the Abbey that was particularly dear to Scott as a venerable symbol of Scotland's past. By 1590 its devastated remains had not only been neglected but over the years had been despoiled of stone for building purposes by the inhabitants of the Melrose that grew into the market centre of Scott's time. In the novel the ancient village of Saint Ronan has become similarly decayed and its Castle, now the Cleikum Inn, has become a symbol of the past set aside by a new road and fashionable society developments. Meg Dods does all she can to preserve the old building and its traditional values in the face of competition from the modern moral turpitude of the inhabitants of Saint Ronan's Well. In doing so she performs a similar function to that of Caleb Balderstone in *The Bride of Lammermoor* who, for all his foolishness, tries to maintain a façade of continuity of traditional values in the decaying fortress of Wolf's Crag in the face of the greed and corruption represented by the villagers of Wolf's Hope.

Another passage in Lockhart's account that is worth attention is that in which Scott says to Laidlaw:

> "What suppose I were to take Captain Clutterbuck for a hero, and never let the story step a yard beyond the village below us yonder?" "The very thing I want," says Laidlaw; stick to Melrose in July 1823 ...". Some fun followed about the different real persons in the village that might be introduced with comical effect.

C. S. M. Lockhart, in his book *The Centenary Memorial of Sir Walter Scott*, quotes a letter written to him in July 1870 by Andrew Currie, a sculptor who lived in Darnick, in which he relates an anecdote told to him by a Mrs Smith:

> Mr Currie writes:- By the way, Captain Clutterbuck's niece (Tib Smith, my next-door neighbour) gave me the other day an affecting

[14] *Ordnance Gazeteer of Scotland*, ed. Francis H. Groome (Edinburgh, 1885).

> account of Sir Walter's dress and appearance for the last time in Darnick. [15]

This is an indication of a connection between the fictional character introduced by Scott in *The Monastery* of 1820 and a real person in the parish of Melrose who was either the prototype for the Captain, an inhabitant of the village of Kennaquhair (ie. Melrose), or was nicknamed after him. The idea that Clutterbuck was based upon a real person was first suggested at least as early as 1825 by Robert Chambers in his *Illustrations of the Author of Waverley* in which he identifies a Captain O----n as the prototype.[16] Scott, in his November 1830 Introduction to *The Monastery* for the Magnum edition, felt it necessary to disclaim such a suggestion. He wrote:

> While I am on the subject, I may add that Captain Clutterbuck, the imaginary editor of the Monastery, has no real prototype in the village of Melrose or neighbourhood that ever I saw or heard of ... I was therefore a good deal surprised when I found the antiquarian captain identified with a neighbour and friend of my own, who could never have been confounded with him by any one who had read the book, and seen the party alluded to.[17]

Scott refers to Chambers' suggestion as an 'erroneous identification'. Nevertheless Chambers' account is very convincing. He says that Captain O-----n is 'a gentleman well known in Melrose as "an amateur cicerone of *the Abbey*"' and that his description of this man's characteristics have been gathered from natives of Melrose who have been acquainted with him. He differs from Clutterbuck only in that

> he never was engaged in foreign service, having merely held some rank in a provincial corps of volunteers ... he is a staid, elderly person, about fifty,—dresses like a gentleman,—that is, a Melrose gentleman,- and parades about his native village with a swagger of

15 C.S.M. Lockhart, *The Centenary Memorial of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* (Virtue and Co., London, 15 August 1871; henceforth cited as *Centenary*), p. 66. Andrew Currie was the sculptor of the monument to James Hogg inaugurated near St Mary's Loch on 28 June 1860. Isabella (Tibbie) Smith, wife of James Smith whom she married in 1843, appears in the 1871 Census as living in Darnick aged 54. Her death certificate (1898 aged 82) gives her parents as Adam and Harriet Stevenson MS Wilson. Harriet Wilson was sister to Margaret Wilson who married Adam Ormiston in September 1816. Tib Smith can therefore be said to be Adam Ormiston's niece.

16 Robert Chambers, *Illustrations of the Author of Waverley, being Notices and Anecdotes of real Characters, Scenes, and Incidents, supposed to be described in his Works*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh, 1825), pp. 201–6.

17 *The Monastery*, ed. Andrew Lang, Border Edition (London, 1893), p. xxvii.

> military gentility in his air ... he possesses as much property in the neighbourhood of Melrose as would entitle him to the honourable appellation, Laird; but in his case that enviable title is merged in the more romantic and splendid one of Captain, of which he is, perhaps ambitious ... .

This gentleman, says Chambers, persists in abstinence from personal labour but has made himself an 'expert' in the Abbey where his eloquence will

> expand over crypts and chancels, naves and arches! With what an important sound will the point of his walking cane ring against the tomb of Michael Scott! Old David Kyle, who kept the head inn at Melrose ... was in the frequent practice of calling upon Captain O. for the purpose [of pressing] his knowledge into the service of his guests. He can tell a good story, after a few glasses, and is an excellent hand at a song. 'The Broom of the Cowdenknows' is his favourite song and his best.

In his *Memoirs* of Scott Lockhart describes how on 28 October 1820, the birthday of Sir Walter's eldest son and the day of the Abbotsford Hunt, the company adjourned to Abbotsford for dinner where they were entertained by songs from James Hogg, Robert Shortreed and others including

> a weatherbeaten, stiff-bearded veteran, Captain Ormistoun, as he was called (though I doubt if his rank was recognised at the Horse-Guards), [who] had the primitive pastoral of Cowdenknowes in sweet perfection.[18]

The authors of *Melrose 1826* tell us that:

> Adam Ormiston is a name well known in the annals of Melrose; he was always addressed as 'Captain' Ormiston, though in truth his rank had never been other than Sergeant in the local militia or volunteers ... . He married Margaret Wilson in 1816, somewhat mature in years at the age of 55 and perhaps already fulfilling Lockhart's description of him as 'a weatherbeaten, stiff-bearded veteran'.[19]

In his edition of *Saint Ronan's Well* Mark Weinstein reports that 'Early on Scott leaves a space after "Capt.", which the first edition fills in with "MacTurk".'[20] There is a certain similarity in the descriptions of Captain Clutterbuck of Kennaquhair in Clutterbuck's own Introductory

18 Lockhart, Vol. 5 (1837), p. 16.

19 *Melrose 1826. Op. cit.*, p. 68.

20 Weinstein, p. 388.

Epistle to *The Monastery* and Captain MacTurk of Saint Ronan's in the third chapter of *Saint Ronan's Well*. Clutterbuck is on half-pay and has achieved this status by following the example of a Captain Doolittle, also on half-pay, 'who walked every morning in the open street, which formed the high mall of our village, in a blue coat with a red neck'. MacTurk, who is made to dress and speak like one of the many clansmen who came to Edinburgh in 1822 for the visit of King George IV, is 'a Highland lieutenant on half-pay' who 'always wore a blue coat and a red collar'.

Lockhart's intention in highlighting certain aspects of the July conversation was to suggest that it may have provided the inspirational genesis of *Saint Ronan's Well*. As Mark Weinstein points out, this cannot have been the case because by July more than half of the first volume had already been written. He continues by arguing that 'it is probable that after a rapid start, Scott curtailed his work during the summer, finishing the first volume in late August or early September'.[21] Before July 1823 Scott had already introduced the comical character of Captain MacTurk, ironically called the Man of Peace, in the third chapter of his novel thus providing another link between this novel and the village of Melrose and suggesting that he may have been teasing Laidlaw when he pretended that a new idea had just occurred to him. Ormiston was born in May 1761 and died at the age of 75 in October 1835. He was, therefore, still alive in 1830 and as regards Scott's denial in the Magnum, one is tempted to think that he would say that.

In the Historical Note in his edition of the novel[22] Weinstein comments on a possible source of the legal crisis that besets Clara Mowbray. He refers to an article by John W. Cairns in which he describes a long legal case involving John William Henry Dalrymple and two women: Johanna Gordon, with whom, while in Scotland, he had formed a liaison involving promises of marriage; and Laura Manners with whom he later contracted a regular marriage in England. Cairns argues that this affair 'fed into aspects of the plot of *Saint Ronan's Well*' in that in 1820, after twelve years of widely-known litigation, the final stage of the proceedings came before the First Division of the Court of Session in Edinburgh where Scott was one of the clerks. Apart from the case of Clara Mowbray, Lord Etherington, father of both Tyrrel and Bulmer, contracts an irregular marriage in France followed by a public marriage in England; and Lady Binks has to go to the Commissary Court in Edinburgh to prove her marriage to Sir Bingo. Weinstein cites as further evidence the fact that Scott refers more than once in his manuscript to Clara Mowbray as 'Laura'.

[21] Weinstein, pp. 376–9.
[22] Weinstein, pp. 443–4.

Weinstein says that, in the absence of information about the local 'tale of dark domestic guilt' to which Scott referred, the argument put forward by Cairns is convincing. But the Dalrymple case was a childless, high-class, London and Edinburgh, public scandal and could not be said to be one in which 'the details were not of a kind to be dwelt upon'. There is a much more 'domestic' and village feel about the conversation as reported by Lockhart. Was there then indeed a more recent, non-national, Border case that was also reverberating in Scott's mind together with that of Dalrymple as after July he resumed work on *Saint Ronan's Well*? Lockhart places the local tale of guilt in 'a smaller hamlet on the other side of the Tweed' from Melrose. As the companions were standing on the Eildons, this 'hamlet' would surely be Gattonside, a settlement on relatively high ground that included a number of mansions including Gattonside House, The Pavilion, and Allerly occupied by people of such social standing as Sir Adam Ferguson, Lord Sommerville and Sir David Brewster.[23] Scott himself, however, is said to have referred to 'the village below us yonder' and to 'that little cluster of cottages'. This would be a more appropriate description of the settlement of Darnick which is also visible from the Eildons although is on the same side of the Tweed as Melrose.

The Session minutes of St Cuthbert's Kirk, Melrose, are kept in The National Archives of Scotland in Edinburgh.[24] The minutes for 25 May 1823 read as follows:

> It having been represented to the session that Helen Milne at Darnick left the Parish, sometime in the latter end of last season, and returned this spring with a child—the Session thinking it their duty to enquire thereunto, order their officer to summon the said Helen Milne to compear before them next Lord's day in order that the particulars thereof may be investigated.

Helen Milne duly appeared on 1 June:

> Compeared also Helen Milne from Darnick and said that she had brought forth a child on the 29th Decr last, begotten by William Rea, to whom she says she was married at Lamberton Toll, three months previous to the birth of the child; but she could give no satisfactory evidence of the marriage, that she had never since seen her alledged [sic] husband, and knows nothing about him or where he is.

The case was taken up again on 15 June:

[23] *Melrose 1826*, pp. 63–5.
[24] St Cuthbert's Kirk Session Minutes. The National Archives of Scotland. CH 21/386/5.

> The Session resuming the consideration of the case of Helen Milne, consider her statement so strange and seemingly incredible, and therefore think fit not to admit her to sealing ordinances [the Lord's Supper], till time may throw some further light upon this dark case.

There, as far as the Kirk Session goes, the affair seems to have ended. Nevertheless, the significance of these entries is apparent when we appreciate that Lamberton toll-bar, which was some three to four miles NNW of the town of Berwick, vied for some time with Gretna Green as a place for couples involved in runaway marriages.[25] Because of a change in English law in 1754, English couples seeking a quick marriage were obliged to cross the border into Scotland where under Scots law the position was much more relaxed. Clara Mowbray had sexual intercourse with Francis Tyrell and was then deceived into a 'mock', runaway marriage by Valentine Bulmer pretending to be Tyrell. Helen Milne seems to have gone through a similar experience with one man—the missing William Rea. Her 'dark case' and 'strange and seemingly incredible' statement can be appropriately described as involving 'dark domestic guilt'.

Is it possible that any legal considerations that may have resulted from Helen Milne's experiences 'came under [Scott's] notice as Sheriff'? There is no record of any case resembling that of Helen Milne, or indeed of Clara Mowbray, in John Chisholm's book *Sir Walter Scott as a Judge* or in the annals of the Sheriff Court of Selkirkshire upon which his book is based.[26] After 1819 Scott personally disposed of very few cases leaving increasing numbers to be dealt with by his friend Charles Erskine as Sheriff-Substitute. This post had, in Scott's day, the same legal standing as that of the Sheriff-Depute, itself a post whose designation was synonymous with Sheriff and Sheriff-Principal.

The absence of this kind of evidence in the Selkirkshire papers is, however, not surprising because if the case arose in 'a little cluster of cottages' constituting a hamlet full in the view of the companions while they were on 'the brow of the Eildon hill where it overhangs Melrose', then it must have occurred in the parish of Melrose in which Abbotsford, Gattonside and Darnick are all situated. As already stated, this parish is part of Roxburghshire and the appropriate location for a case occurring there would have been the Sheriff Court of Roxburghshire in Jedburgh and not the Sheriff Court of Selkirkshire in Selkirk where Scott was Sheriff-Depute—a post to which he had been appointed while living at

[25] *Ordnance Gazeteer of Scotland* (Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and London, 1885).

[26] John Chisholm, *Sir Walter Scott as a Judge* (Edinburgh, 1918) (henceforth cited as Chisholm). The documents of the Selkirk Sheriff Court are in the National Archives of Scotland (SC 63/1/1-9 and SC 63/10/30.

Ashestiel which is situated in Selkirkshire. No documents in the Minute Books and other records of the Sheriff Court of Roxburghshire in Jedburgh[27] provide any relevant information.

It is more likely that the case 'came under his notice' on a personal basis because, as a Sheriff, Scott was known to possess relevant legal knowledge and expertise and because he lived about two miles from Darnick. The Session seem to have thought that time would throw further light upon the matter and the Minister who signed the minutes of the Melrose Kirk Session was the Rev. George Thomson, father of the tutor to Scott's children from 1812 to 1820. Thomas Boston, a slater in Gattonside who was an elder of the Kirk and therefore attended Session meetings, had been a witness at the baptism in 1774 of John Milne, one of Helen's brothers. Scott greatly coveted Darnick Tower, which was founded by the Heitons about 1425 and was now owned by an Edinburgh carpenter and builder called John Heiton whose son Andrew was a witness at the christening of Isabel Milne in 1790. Scott wanted to convert this old peel into an armoury and was jestingly dubbed, by the villagers of Darnick, who had responded well to his idea of forming a corps military volunteers, the Duke of Darnick.[28] Tom Purdie, Scott's factotum, was a frequenter of Shusie Harper's public-house in the village where gossip doubtless abounded.[29] Darnick was also the home of Scott's builder, John Smith, who was responsible for several major buildings and bridges in the parish and was also the architect of the Rev. Thomson's church. It was with advice and practical offices from Smith that repairs to Melrose Abbey began in 1822 with work continuing for the next year or so.[30] It is likely that in one way or another the Milnes's circumstances became known to Scott and is conceivable that an approach was made to 'the Shirra' as the local 'Magistrate' by or on behalf of the family as a possible avenue of ascertaining the legality of Helen's 'marriage' and the whereabouts of William Rea, her missing 'husband' and the father of the baby that she had been left holding.

If this is how the affair came to Scott's notice, the name William Rea or Rae would have caused him to remember a case that had indeed come under his notice as the Selkirkshire Sheriff although this one was not so recent and had nothing to do with domestic circumstances. In his book John Chisholm[31] describes how in 1814 James Anderson, the farmer of

[27] *Minute Books of the Sheriff Court of Roxburghshire.* National Archives of Scotland, SC 62/1/8.

[28] Lockhart, Vol. 4 (1837), p. 346.

[29] *Centenary*, p. 66.

[30] *Melrose 1826, passim.*

[31] Chisholm, p. 84. The papers relating to this case are in the Selkirkshire Sheriff Court documents in the National Archives of Scotland, SC 63/10/22.

Whitslaid, with the concurrence of the procurator-fiscal, brought an action against William Rae and John Oliver both herds at Shaws, a settlement just outside Selkirk and no great distance from Darnick.The action was for damages for killing Anderson's valuable pointer dog. The herds said that on a previous occasion they had seen the dog running amongst their lambs some of which were later found dead, apparently as a result of being bitten by a dog. On this occasion the dog was running among the lambs causing them to scatter. They therefore fell upon the dog and despatched it.

The actual papers relating to the case that was formally addressed to Scott reveal that it was considered to be a serious one. It was brought to court not only by Anderson but by George Rodger, the Procurator Fiscal, who signed the 'Answers' to the Defence put forward by the defendants. The summons was issued 'in His Majesty's name' and Rae and Oliver were accused of being guilty of 'crimes of a heinous nature'. They should, therefore, not merely pay cash reparation to the owner but 'ought to be otherwise punished in their persons as a terror to others to commit the like offences in the time coming'. Charles Erskine decided to consult Scott and on 2 March 1814 he issued an interlocutor, or interim decision, saying that 'having advised with the Sheriff Depute' the defendants should produce a proof of the circumstances set out in their defences and that the pursuer should produce a conjunct probation as to whether the dog could have been secured without killing it and whether it had a collar at the time or was known to belong to Anderson. A proof was begun which seemed to bear out the statements of the herds but there was no evidence that the dog had been seen actually worrying the sheep. The case was adjourned and after the lapse of some considerable time Erskine ordered the proof to close on a certain date. No more evidence was led and there were no further proceedings.

There are several aspects of the case that deserve to be mentioned. In summoning one of the witnesses the Court's agent, William Dunlop, spells Rae several times as Rea. It is evident from the documents that Anderson regarded Rae as the main offender and there are hints that this defender has 'been in the practice of killing dogs belonging to different persons'. Anderson states that 'in the recent case Bryden against Hutson, which was of a similar nature to the present and was first agitated before your Lordship, the Court of Session found the Defender liable'. The accusation also includes a suggestion that Rae and Oliver beat the dog to death with sticks. It is probable that a case involving such cruelty is likely to have remained lodged in the retentive memory of a dog lover such as Walter Scott. It is interesting that in the chapter of *Saint Ronan's Well* entitled 'A Death-Bed' Scott steps personally, and somewhat extraneously, onto the page with an anecdote that has the appearance of unconscious mental or psychic activity. Scott writes

> I have heard of a sheep-stealer who had rendered his dog so skilful an accomplice in his nefarious traffic, that he used to send him out to commit acts of felony by himself, and had even contrived to impress on the poor cur the caution that he should not, on such occasions, even seem to recognise his master, if they met accidentally. Apparently, Lord Etherington conducted himself upon a similar principle ... .

In July 1823 Lockhart had no knowledge of the novel upon which Scott had made a start and may simply have remembered a connection being made between one of Scott's cases as Sheriff and a story of 'dark domestic guilt'. Are there, then, any further facts that might place Helen Milne's 'dark case' of involvement with William Rae in the context of such a story'? Helen was born in Darnick on 3 September 1786 and her parents were John Milne, a Labourer, and his wife Alison whose maiden name was Haliburton. There may have been a family connection between the Raes and the Milnes in that Alison Haliburton, who was born in Melrose in June 1747, was the daughter of John Haliburton and Alison Rae. Helen's death is recorded in the statutory civil registers of births, deaths and marriages that district registrars in Scotland have compiled since 1 January 1855 and are in the care of the Registrar General in New Register House, Edinburgh. The Melrose civil register tells us that Helen Rae, widow of an unnamed Labourer, died in Darnick on 15 March 1860 at the age of 74 and was buried in Melrose Churchyard. Her son William Rae was the informant.

The Melrose old parish registers[32] tell us that Helen's parents were married on 20 October 1770 and that between 1772 and 1790 they had two sons and four daughters of whom only one, Isabel, baptized on 5 November 1790, was younger than Helen. Another daughter, Elizabeth, was baptized on 6 October 1782 and the Kirk Session minutes for 4 July 1813 record that Elizabeth Milne had 'brought forth a child (born on 6 June 1812) by William Dobson a Dyer'. On 11 July 1813 we read that Dobson, a married man, wrote a letter to one of Elizabeth's brothers agreeing to provide maintenance for the child and that she was rebuked and absolved. However, on 4 May 1823 the church officer, or Beadle, was instructed to summon Elizabeth to appear for the second time before the Kirk Session and on 18 May she confessed that she was with child by James Vair, a gardener residing at Huntly Burn.

---

[32] For a printed version of the earlier years of these registers see also *Melrose Parish Registers 1642–1820*, ed. C.S. Romanes (Scottish Record Society, 1913).

On 25 May Vair confessed to fornication 'some time in the end of last October' but claimed that he was not sure if he was the father of the child. It was at this same meeting of the Session that Helen Milne was summoned to appear before them on the next Lord's day. Elizabeth's child was born on 8 June 1823 but was not baptised until 25 July 1825 after Vair had professed his penitence to the Session on 4 July 'for the sin and scandal of fornication' when he was rebuked for the last time and absolved. It is evident, therefore, that the phrase 'dark domestic guilt' was indeed applicable to the inhabitants of this cottage in Darnick in the month of May 1823. By this time both parents of Helen and Elizabeth Milne were dead, John Milne having died on 21 June 1801 and Alison Milne on 19 December 1812, a little over five months after the birth of Elizabeth's first illegitimate child. Their eldest brother, John, who succeeded as head of the family, had died aged 38 in 1814.

The Yarrow old parish registers tell us that William Rae, herd at Shaws, and his wife Margaret Elliot had a daughter in July 1803 and that between then and August 1819, while he was at Shaws, they had three more daughters and three sons. Thereafter both he and his wife are untraceable. If Rae was twenty years old when his first child was born, he would have been born about 1783. Helen Milne was born in 1786 and would have been 36 at the time of her runaway marriage. If she had to run away to give birth to a child and to go through a form of marriage ceremony, there must have been important reasons for behaving in such a secretive fashion. No other relevant Rae or Rea seems to have impinged upon Scott's Selkirkshire judicial career. The herd's eldest son John, born in 1805, married Euphemia Rutherford in Yarrow in December 1827 and two of their children, born in 1829 and 1835 show that John was at these dates a shepherd at Shaws. We shall, however, probably never know if Helen Milne's William Rae and the herd of Shaws were really one and the same person.

Elizabeth Milne died at the age of 54 in Darnick, unmarried, on 24 August 1837. In later years Helen Milne's son William became a communicant of the Melrose Kirk and married an Isabella Beattie. They had three daughters. Their son, also called William, died in Darnick in 1866 at the age of 16 of typhoid fever but his parents later moved to Galashiels where his father became a joiner foreman in a wool factory. William Rae died in Galashiels in 1883. On his death certificate his father is described as '—Rae deceased' which he very probably was although 'departed' might have been more appropriate. The marriage of one of William's granddaughters is recorded in 1910 in the parish of Morningside, Edinburgh, so that some of Helen's descendants may still walk the streets of Scotland's capital city.

To sum up, although the village of *Saint Ronan's Well* is, of course, a fictional creation and no attempt should be made to equate it in any precise way with a real place, there are grounds for believing, on the basis of tradition and some parish and other registers still extant, that Melrose, as well as other fashionable spas, may have been in Scott's mind when he began to write his novel in the month of May and that the lives of local inhabitants and the July conversation on the brow of the Eildon hill had an effect upon his thinking regarding the evolution of the novel and its catastrophe.

SIR WALTER SCOTT AND THE POLITICS OF HISTORY

On 5 and 6 May 2000, the UCLA Center for 17th- and 18th-Century Studies and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library sponsored a conference at the Library on 'Romantic Enlightenment: Sir Walter Scott and the Politics of History'. The organisers were Robert Maniquis and Frederick Burwick, and the following papers were given: Jane Millgate, '*The Lay of the Last Minstrel*: The History of a Book'; J. H. Alexander, 'The "Amanuensis of History" in the Franco-Burgundian Novels'; Judith Wilt, 'Public Actions, Secret Knowledge: Nation-Making in *Quentin Durward* and *Anne of Geierstein*'; Frederick Burwick, 'Conflicting Histories in the Waverley Novels'; Ina Ferris, 'Sentiment, Pedantry, and the Scene of History'; Harry E. Shaw, 'Scott and Sexual Politics'; David Hewitt, '*The Heart of Mid-Lothian* and "the People"'; Robert Maniquis, 'The Invention of the Anglo-Saxons: Racial Imagination, the Authority of the Conquered, and How Sir Walter Scott Started the American Civil War'; and Tara Ghoshal Wallace, 'Imperial Englishness'.

END