

GLEANINGS FROM THE BURGH ACCOUNTS.

1700-1720.

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Figures are generally considered to be dry and uninteresting, and the making up of accounts a dreary process; and so apparently thought the Town Councillors of this Burgh in ancient times. When asked in 1692 by the Convention of Royal Burghs to produce their Treasurer's Books for the five preceding years, the Council candidly answered that they had no Treasurer's Books. They apparently went over, periodically, the Accounts of the Treasurer and various Collectors, but they considered it sufficient to record that these had been received, seen and approved. The method of dealing with the Burgh Funds was not such as would lead to easy accounting, although the sums of money involved were comparatively small. Assessments for ordinary Municipal purposes were unknown in these days, and the Burgh's income was derived from the "Common Good." The Town Clerk, on 11th November, 1746, reported that after a careful examination of the town's Books he found the "Common Good" to consist of (1) the Common Maills or Feuduties payable to the Town and collected yearly by the Treasurer; (2) The Customs great and small, including the Anchorages. These were let by public roup at Martinmas yearly. (3) The grass and turf of the East and West Commons, including the loanings. These were also let by public roup annually, about 1st May, and (4) Three shops under the Tolbooth. The sea wrack thrown up on the shore, so far as the same could

not be claimed by proprietors bounding with the sea, was at one time roused annually, intimation of the roup being given by the "skellat bell."* In 1718, Archibald Black, the then tacksman of the wrack, "was stoped by Cornelius Robertson from gathering the said wrack and qch my Lord Bute's tenants carried away," and no attempt seems to have been made to roup the wrack for a considerable time after this date. The sums received in respect of these several items were not handed over to the Treasurer and by him disbursed. The practice seems to have been for the Town Council to pass "precepts" or orders on the Collectors or tacksmen for sums due by the Burgh to its various creditors, and after the deduction of the amount of these "precepts" the balance was paid over to the Council. One can readily understand that under such circumstances it would not be easy to arrive at a proper accounting. Prior to 1700, no accounts appear on the Council Records. The accounts for that year are the first to be written in the Council Minute Books, and these bear evidence of the difficulty in collecting the revenue of the Burgh. But before dealing with this phase of the accounts, it will be better to show the total income of the Burgh. I select the year 1702-3, as in the account for that year the details are more fully given. The charge is as follows:—

Imprimis the customes roused be Cornelius			
Robertson,	£106	13	4
It (em) the comon mail—less salary allowed			
Adam Ker,	50	0	0
It. the sea wraick roused Cornelius Robertson,	6	16	0
It. the Croft heads—Ninian Stewart, ...	0	16	0
It. the two Buithes,	8	0	0
It. the Comon grass,	6	0	0
It. the Comon turfe,	12	0	0
£190 5 4			

In addition to these items a small revenue was secured to the Burgh from the Cess "imposed upon the heretors and

* Throughout this paper, unless specially noted, Scots currency is meant. At this time twelve pounds Scots were equal in value to one pound stg.

inhabitants for paying the town's proportion of His Majesty's supply and land taxes." It seems to have been the custom to assess for rather more than was required to pay the Land Tax—the surplus being added to the ordinary Common Good income. In 1702-3 this surplus amounted to £30 2s. The total income for this year accordingly was £220 7s 4d Scots, or £18 7s 3d stg. With a similar income in 1700-1, the arrears due to the Burgh amounted to £86 6s, which the Council ordered the Treasurer to collect. But this was beyond the Treasurer's powers, for in 1701-2, the arrears increased to £145 17 8d. The following year the arrears had risen to £305 2s 4d, while for 1703-4 they were £360 2s 8d! When the arrears reached this sum the Council, apparently, thought it was time to stop the recording of their accounts, and they kept to this opinion for fifteen years. In 1719 they resolved to have another trial, and accounts were made up for the preceding ten years, but the committee in charge were not too particular in placing the various details in the proper year, and, e.g., under the year 1709-10 we find entries applicable to the years 1713 to 1716. What became of the arrears it is impossible now to say. In all probability the bulk would be written off as irrecoverable. In any case the Council dealt leniently with parties in arrear. Thus on 29th September, 1705, they had under consideration the arrears, amounting to £3, owing by Mr Robert M'Gilchrist who, "being called he declared that he advanced four pund ten shill. to the town for the cess of the tolbooth. They therefore considering the honesty of the man, and his being ane old Magistrate discharges him of the said three pund." But if the Council were satisfied with Mr McGilchrist's explanation, why did they not refund him the balance of £1 10s? The receipts show little variation from year to year, and the payments are much more interesting. There was no auditor in those days to interfere with the Town Council in their discretion of voting the public money, nor a Scotch Office to carefully scrutinise the Accounts. The difficulty of getting in the money lawfully due to the town was the only bar to the generosity of the Town Councillors. But except that it seems to have been the custom for the Burgh to pay the Common Maill or feu duty of the Provost and two Baillies,

the Councillors received no pecuniary benefit from the Burgh Funds.

A considerable number of the entries in the accounts under review are of payments in connection with the two public buildings then maintained by the Town Council, viz., the School and the Tolbooth.

The School was situated on the south side of the street now called Castle Street, and was built in 1680. But long before this date the erection of a School had been mooted. Patrick Stewart, schoolmaster, as principal, and James M'Niven, as his cautioner, were owing to the Kirk Session "fourscore merks," that is £53 6s 8d Scots "with certaine arents* and penaltie." The Session assigned this sum to the "Toun for supplie to build ane Schoolhouse." But the Town was owing to the Schoolmaster £30 Scots for three quarters salary. So on 5th November, 1673, the Magistrates and Council gave up Mr Stewart's Bond to him on condition that he gave a full dischaage for the salary then owing. Nothing seems to have been done in the way of providing a School till some three years later. At a meeting of the "Toun Court," held on 22nd May, 1676, the question of providing a Schoolhouse was under consideration, when "in regarde that the Toun is desolate of ane Schoolhouse for traneing and educating of children," the Magistrates and Council "agreed with Mr John Moor, younger, for building of the same off twenty foote in length within walls and seventeen foote in breadth from that gavill belonging to John Moor, elder, in Balskyte, who is obleist to build the same with ane gavill, ane newne door, ane newne window, four rough windowes, four bowell caissing† and broads for the windowes, ane timber door of fir with ane lock and key thereon, ane sufficient coupill‡ ribbs roof kauke and theick the same sufficie so it lye watterfacit|| and to deliver the key of the locked door to the toun." Mr Moor was to receive for his work

* Annal rents or interest.

† Bowell or bowall—a square aperture in the wall.

‡ Rafter. || Watertight.

the "piece of land now pertaining to the Burgh of Rothesay called Fauldinloy," which was situated in High Street near the Bush. Apparently Mr Moor considered the remuneration insufficient for he "quitt his bargane for building the Schoolhouse," and his work was undertaken—on 17th August, 1676—by Thomas M'Kinlay, Carpenter. The work was to be completed by him, to the satisfaction of "workmen whom the Magistrates" would appoint, by the 1st of November of the same year. The Town was to furnish "rough stones att the shore qrof some is led and the reste lying in the Key"—those lying at the "Key" were to be removed within a fortnight—and M'Kinlay was to have the lands of Fauldinloy* and "ane boll of meill."† M'Kinlay obliged himself to perform his part of the bargain under a penalty of £100 Scots. But notwithstanding the strict terms of the contract M'Kinlay took things leisurely. Presumably, he started operations soon after getting the Contract, for on 5th August, 1677, the Council instructed that a Charter of the lands of Fauldinloy should be given to him, but it was not till 12th December, 1679, that the Council nominated four men with one of the Magistrates "to goo alongst with Thomas

*It was not unusual for the Council to give a grant of land conditional on the grantee undertaking some duty which would otherwise fall to be performed by the Burgh. In the Maill Book for 1689 the following entries occur:—

William Hunter.—It (em) Ballachandouan beyond Meidnacaig and a peice att the foot of Faldmore given for upholding the tounes part of the Kirk tight and watterfast during the space of twenty ane yeires conforme to his fathers tack and faylzing thereof his fathers tack to expyre with all right thereto.

Patrick Moor.—It (em) his part of the fald called Mathew Beithes fald ane aiker half ane rood given for upholding the bridge at William M'Icherrans houss payeing sixteen penyes.

Neall Bannatyne.—It (em) the yarde beyond the lade for upholding the bridge upon the Milne Lade oyrwayes noe right yrto.

John Allan.—It (em) his part of Mathew Beithes fald ane aiker halfe ane rood paying sixteen penyes and upholding the Bridge att the old smiddy. (See also "Rothesay in the Seventeenth Century." by Mr A. D. Macbeth—Transactions of this Society, Vol. III., p. 51.)

†A boll of meal at this time was value for about £9 12s Scots or 16s Stg.

M'Kinlay and see if the sd. Thomas hes compleited the Schoolhouse builded, thiked and repaired the same according to condition, and if they find the same sufficient to receive the key from him." The inspectors did not think it necessary to show any unbecoming haste, and it is minuted that on 6th April, 1680, the "Provist, Bailies and Counsell having met Donall M'Lea, one of them who was appoynted to sight the Schoolhouse, made report to the Counsell, did fynd the sd. house sufficient built in the haill obleisments upon him conforme to his condition." Having at last got the School erected the Council had to keep it in repair, but the sums spent on it were not large. The first entries are for the year 1703-4, when this one appears, "to Archibald Sharp three seall articles for work and workmanship ane timber to the Schoolhouse." No sum is given, but from the other entries the amount paid seems to have been £14 14s 8d. Then on 3rd October, 1712, payment was ordered for "twelve fir dalies borrowed from the Earl of Bute to the use of the tolbuith and Schoolhouse," and also 30s "for lyme and a lock" for the Schoolhouse. More extensive repairs were required in 1715-16. During this year the following sums were spent:—

"For thatching and riging the School,"	...	...	£0 14 0
"For bands to the windows of the School and other iron work per accompt,"	...	...	0 16 0
"For breikius to the School" (no doubt for covering the earth floor),	...	...	0 5 0
"For stra to cover the School,"	...	...	1 0 0

In 1719-20, "6 Steucks of thatch to the School" cost 18s. If other payments were made for the School these do not appear in the accounts.

No dwelling-house was provided for the Schoolmaster when the School was built. Some communications had apparently passed between the Bishop of the Isles and the heritors for providing a house, for at a Meeting of Council, held on 7th September, 1680, "anent the laying doune of a way for furnishing of ane schoolhouse to the Schoolmaster conforme to ane agreement made by the Bishop of the Isles

and heretors of the parish, they with ane unanimous voyce thought fitt to burden themselves by way of cesse conforme to their valuation to raise yeirly the sum of twelve pund Scotts and yt. for the maill of ane house to the Schoolmaster yeirly, and in caise the Counsell shall think fitt to build ane house for the Schoolmaster's use any tyme hereafter." Towards the end of the seventeenth Century the rents of the houses in Rothesay varied from £16 to £4, so the house to be provided was a fairly good one. This rent was apparently paid for some years, as in the accounts for 1700-1 there is an entry "to Patrick Stewart, our last Schoolmaster, £12," and on 25th September, 1705, a precept was ordered for "three pund allowed for the two part rent to be payed to Mr Dallass." I can find no entry after this date for rent, nor anything to show that the Council considered the building of a house for the Schoolmaster. The Schoolmaster's salary paid by the Burgh was £40 Scots per annum,* and this sum seems always to have been paid, although occasionally the payments were in arrear. I have already given one instance of overdue salary, and a Minute of 24th October, 1689, shows the long-suffering and uncomplaining nature of Mr Stewart. "And sicklyke they (*i.e.* Council) have considered the caice of yr schoole and the poverty of the toune, and that they are awand three terms salary to Patrick Stewart, yr Schoolmaster, and he having refert himself in the Counsell reverence not only for tymes bypast but also in tyme comeing, therefore they have thought fit to give him twenty pund Scotts qch payes him all fialls dew to him preceeding Hallowday next, and give him ten merks quarterly in tyme coming."

Thus in times past did the Council encourage education.

The Town Council paid more attention to the Tolbooth. This is not surprising, for in the Tolbooth the Council met to deliberate over the Town's affairs, and in it the Magistrates dispensed justice. The Clock gave the people the time of day, while the bell was rung "dayly in the morning att six

*Of course he also had the fees, &c. See "Bute in the Olden Time," Vol. II., p. 286.

o'clock betwixt Michelmas and Patrickmes, and after Patrickmes till Michelmas att five o'clock and dayly dureing the year at eight of cloack at night." Originally there was no Tower or steeple for the Clock and Bell. But a new Bell was required, and ordered in 1686 during the Provostship of Mr John Glass and his energetic successor — Major David Ramsay—considered that it should have a proper belfry. Accordingly, on 16th September, 1687, the Council "takeing to ther consideration the absolute necessity of haveing a steiple built for carrying the new comon bell of this Burgh soe that the samen may be usefull to the haill inhabitants yrof as that they may hear not only the samen rung, butt alsoe the cloack strykeing yron. They doe therfore unanimously *una voce nemine contra dicente* statute and ordaine that the sd. steiple be built upon the westmost Gavill of the Tolbuith of this Burgh two ells square or thereby, and that the sd. steiple ryse in solid work before the pillars be sett yron ten quarters or thereby higher nor the solid work of the present belhouse is, and thereafter the pillars to be sett yron the height the bell requires that the samen Bell be rung with a wheill, and a handsome top with a piramide upon each quarter, And in regarde the seaseone of the yeir will not now admitt that the samen may be furthwith gone about, the same is to be superceided till March next, That necessar materialls be provyded, And in the mean tyme that the Bell may be usefull to the toune ordaines John Moor, Wright, imediately without any delay to goe about the hinging of the Bell in the Bellhouse as it now stands, And to furnish all necessar matterialls usefull thereto be the sight of the Magistrats, and to give in ane accompt yrof and his workmanship to the Counsell for wh (ich) he is to have satisfaction reasonably." The new Bell was cast by Alexander Wilson, Edinburgh, and the total cost of it was £159 14s Scots, nearly the whole of this sum being raised by subscriptions from the Burgesses. Major Ramsay having been superseded as Provost by Mr James Stewart, the Council evidently thought it necessary to pass a fresh Resolution to build the steeple, and on 17th March, 1688, the Council "takeing to ther consideration the necessity of a Bellhouse where the comon bell is to be hung, they with ane voyce ratifies, approves of the former act made by the late

Magistrates and Counsell, the 16 September last, and for effectateing thereof Mathew Moor hes undertaken to build the samen sufficient, and what he is to have for his paines he refers himself in the Counsell's pleasure what to give him, and in the meantyme they have thought fitt to give him forty merks (£26 13s 4d) of advanced money." On the same day the Council admitted "John M'Geatrick, Slaiter," to be a Burgess in consideration of his giving the "use of his boat for carying the free stones from Cumray for the use of the Bellhouse—the toune furnishing men and meit." They also sold the old bell to James Heriot, Baxter in Glasgow, for £12 Scots. The building of the Bellhouse occupied about eighteen months, and was apparently finished about Michaelmas, 1689, as on 11th October of that year the Council voted Alexander Robison £6 Scots as his salary for the preceding year in respect that while he had care of the clock it had not being going, and for the year then current voted him his former salary of £12, "a pair of shoes, a pig of oyle, and a quarter (41lbs.) candle" for which he was to ring the bell and attend the clock. At this time a pair of shoes cost £1 6s 8d Scots. The officer was also provided with a "livrie coat," the expense of which is detailed in the accounts under date 1713-4:—

"To John Smith, taylor,	£3 0 0."
"Payed for eleven elns of plaiden to lyn John Moor's livrie coat,	3 13 0."
"Payed for dying the officers lynning,	1 0 4."

On the ground floor of the Tolbooth were originally three shops which were annually farmed out by public roup to a tacksman. In April, 1690, the Council "thought fit in respect of the want of ane Clerk's Chamber to give to David Stewart, their Clerk, who is obleise to furnish a convenient chamber ane of the buithes under the tolbuith and that untill Whitsunday next, and allowes him to make choyce of any of the three buithes he thinks fitt." There is no evidence to show how long the Town Clerk occupied the "buith," but two years later the three shops were again let. In 1700 one of the shops was converted into a prison, as the following Minute of 29th April, 1701, shows:—"The two east buithes

under the Tolbuith set to John Barbor for a year after Whittsunday next, paying eight punds Scotts, and allowes John Barbor for the shop next to the stair qch was taken from him (though sett) to be a prison houss, four punds Scotts, and that for the last year." The sum of £13 was spent on "putting ane iron gate on the laigh prison house," but no further expense seems to have been incurred in fitting up the shop for its new purpose. From time to time sundry sums were spent on repairs, &c., to the Tolbooth. For example, 14s "to the glasser for setting up glass in the big window:" £2 "for lyme furnished at mending the Tolbooth:" £11 7s "to Archibald Sharp for mending the Tolbooth:" £3 "for gles to the Tolbooth:" £1 3s "for a choice dale and a halfe to the tolbooth." On several occasions a rope was got for the bell, the prices varying from 6s to 12s. Items in respect of the clock figure frequently in the accounts. Under date 10th November, 1701, the Council minuted—

"Forasmuch as John Moor hes undertaken to dress the tounes clocak they have agreed with the sd. John for the sum of twelve pund scotts, and therefore in the meantyme orders a precept to be drawn on Archball M'Lea, Treasurer, to advance to him six pund and is to get the oyr six pund qn the cloack is dresst who hes undertaken to fall about and dress the same imediately soe soon as possible."

This work was done as £12 was paid to John Moor, while at the same time Archibald Sharp was paid £1 6s for "covering the cloack." In 1714 Adam Muir was paid £4 6s "for dressing the knock," but the "dressing" does not seem to have been satisfactory, and in 1716 more extensive repairs were required. The main part of the work was apparently entrusted to a man called "Wear," but his Christian name or designation is not given. There was in Glasgow a clock-maker called David Weir. For many years he kept the Glasgow public clocks, but in 1713 the Glasgow Town Council "for certain causes and considerations" recalled his appointment.* Probably it was the same person who was employed by the Rothesay Town Council. The clock was evidently

*Extracts from Glasgow Records, 1691-1717, p. 500.

cleaned as there is an item "for oyle at the dighting of the Knock, 4s 8d." New dials were provided by "James Richardstone, dyaler, in Bucklyvie," and the dials were evidently painted by "John Cochrane and John Drysdale, painters in Edinburgh." The following items of this repair of the clock appear in the Accounts:—

Item for two choice deals and a halfe for the dyal brod,	£1 8 0
Item for ane hundred coffin nails to the Dyall Brod,	0 5 0
Item for seaven daills to the Knock house at 15s per peace,	5 5 0
It. ten cast of double plenshars and 60 tingles for the work,	0 8 0
Item 100 tingles to the said work,	0 8 0
Item ten cast of Spyken naills to the said work,	0 6 0
Item eight pound ten ounce of iron to make rods to the knock to help the mell,	1 7 8
Item for ane lock to the Knockhouse door,	0 12 0
Item for a gill of oyle to the knock,	0 4 0
Item given by the provests order to a man that sighted the Knock,	1 4 0
Given to Wear in pairt payment of (blank in Minute) for dressing of the towns clock. and for making her goe longer than she formerly went,	12 0 0
Item to Edward Stewart (Blacksmith) for making the palm and naills to the Knock,	0 12 0
Item to Edward Stewart for the palm to the Knock,	0 12 0

Then there were some extras:—

Item spent with the painters about the dyall brod,	£0 4 0
Item of expenses at agiveing with Wear anent the Knock,	0 8 6
Item to spent at buying timber for the apehouse,	0 2 6
Item expense with Wear & Ard. Sharp the time they wer makeing the knock and apehouse be the provost and baillies order,	0 17 0

While thatch was considered a sufficient covering for the School, the Tolbooth was slated with slates from Kames. The Accounts do not show what was paid for these slates, but 12s was paid to John Beith for "three tymes going to Kaims with his horse to "bring sclait to the Tolbooth," and another entry is "for Drink to the Drawers of the sclait to the tolbooth, £1 16s."

This latter entry suggests that the Town Council occasionally did a little in the way of entertainment. Following the general custom of Burghs a new Burgess was entertained by the Council, the cost, apparently, varying according to the social position of the Burgess. Thus when a Mr Kidd was made a Burgess the cost of the entertainment was only 12s; in Doctor Dickson's case, £2 10s. When the "Viscount of Garnock and Islangreg" were made Burgesses £5 6s was spent, while the making of a burgess (unnamed) cost £4 2s. Then there had to be some refreshments after the Customs, &c., were rouped—so we find such an entry as this—"Payed for drink the night of the roup, 10s." Elections were less exciting than now, but the Councillors did not hurry over the choice of the new Councillors or Magistrates.* At what hour the Council met for the Elections we do not know, but the evening was well spent—for a pound of candles costing 6s was burned—before the elections were completed. Then the Council adjourned to some favourite tavern to refresh themselves—the expense running on an average to about £1 18s. One such house was kept by the wife of Bailie Glass, and judging from the accounts paid it seems to have been a favourite place of call. One account paid to her amounted to £14 6s, but, unfortunately, no details are given.† Festivities of a more elaborate description was sometimes engaged in—Thus, "For twelve ounce of powder made use of at my my Lord's birth night, 12s." The Coronation of George I.‡ was fitly celebrated. Doubtless a banquet was held, and there was a bonfire, and probably other rejoicings. The entries in the Accounts are—"Paid the expenses be the Magistrates and Counsell on King George's Coronatione night £4 4s," and "For expenses disbursed on the King's Coronatione day and for bonfyre, £8," in all, £12 4s Scots.

*See Transactions of this Society, Vol. III., p. 28.

†The custom of having refreshments after Council meetings was not an uncommon one. The Town Clerk of Fairport "had got sic a trick of sippling and tippling wi' the bailies and deacons when they met (which was amaist ilka night) concerning the common gude o' the burgh, that he couldna weel sleep without" his glass of punch. *The Antiquary*, Ch. ix.

‡31st October, 1714.

From the Union of the Parliaments in 1707 till the passing of the Reform Act in 1832 Ayr, Campbeltown, Inveraray, Irvine and Rothesay joined in sending a Representative to Parliament. A Commissioner was sent from each Burgh to vote in the Election, which was held in each Burgh in turn. Ayr was the returning Burgh in 1708, and this Burgh's Representative was Colonel James Campbell, who was elected M.P. The Burgh evidently did not require to pay his expenses at the Election. The Election of 1710 was held at Irvine, when David Glass was the Burgh's Commissioner. The Council ordered Robert Wallace to advance to Mr Glass £16 Scots for his expenses—if he incurred more it was to be repaid. Rothesay's turn came in 1713, but only the Provosts of Inveraray and Campbeltown attended. The expense of their entertainment was £4 14s. Inveraray was the returning Burgh at the Election in 1715, and on 10th February of that year the Council appointed Provost James Stewart to be their Commissioner—"And they considering that yr Commissioner will be at considerable expense in going and coming to Inveraray, horse hire and a servant to wait upon him, they thought fitt that a precept be drawn on (blank) to advance eighteen pund Scots for present disbursement, and if he give out more he is to be reimbursed." The total expenses incurred in connection with the Provost's visit to Inveraray, as appearing in the accounts, were as follows:—

"Item payed per the Councils orders to the Provost when he went to Inverarie anent the Electione,	£6	0	0
Item payed out for his horse hyre,	...	4	0
Item spent for hyreing the provests horse,	...	0	10
Item payed of expenses when the Provost was going to Inveraray,	...	0	19
Item payed to the lad that went with the Provost to Inveraray,	...	1	10
		0.	

Dr. Oliphant, the Member of Parliament, having died, a new Election took place in 1719, again apparently at Inveraray, when Bailie M'Neill was commissioner. He was paid £12 while in addition £3 was paid "when the towns Commissioner wes sent to Inverarie,"

Blain says that during the Rebellion of 1715 the second Earl of Bute "was Lord Lieutenant of Buteshire, and commanded the Militia and fencible men of that shire and of Argyle at Inveraray, and preserved the quiet of the Country."* In all probability it was in this connection that the Provost for a second time in 1715 visited Inveraray. He left in October when the Council gave him a good send off. "Item of expenses payed out with the provest and Arran gentlemen when going to Inverarie, £1 10s." The Provost returned on 10th December, when the Council gave him a welcome home. "Item of expenses be the Provost with the townsmen at their return from Inverarie, £1 10s." The following entry probably applied to the second visit. "Item given to the Provost when he went to Inverarie, £12 5s."

Two entries in the Accounts for 1717-18 also deal with these troublesome times—

"Payed to Baillie M'Neill as a pairt of his money ordered to be payed to him for being officer in ane of the companys that went to Inverarie when beseidged conforme to his receipt dated the 3rd March, 1718, ordered to be payed to him by the Magistratts and Counsell,	...	£12	0	0."
"Payed to Bailie M'Neill as pairt payt. of his expenses at Inverarie the time of the Gairson yr pr. my Lord Bute's Order as Lo. Livtenant of the shyre of Bute pr. precept 27 July, 1718,	...	10	0	0."

Royal Burghs were then—as they still are—obliged to send a Commissioner to the Convention of Royal Burghs. Rothesay was not always represented at the Convention—sometimes it was excused, sometimes it was fined for its failure to observe the law—but when a Commissioner was sent it was expected that the Town would give him a sum to cover his expenses. The entries under this head are—

"Item to Provost Archball (Stewart) for attending the Convention of burrows, 1703 and 1704,	...	£40	0	0."
"Item given to the Magistrates to be given to Archibald Stewart as a gratuity for being their Commissioner to the burrows,"	...	13	4	0."

*History p. 226.

As Provost Archibald Stewart only attended one Meeting in Glasgow, while the second Archibald Stewart represented the Burgh at the Convention from 1711 to 1716, and attended six Meetings in Edinburgh, the sums paid to the two Commissioners do not seem at all proportionate. The second Archibald Stewart is not mentioned in the Town Council Minutes, and the only explanation I can suggest is that he resided in or near Edinburgh, and so did not incur any expense in attending the Convention.

Some other items are interesting :—

Half a pound of wax for burgess tickets cost 8s. The price of a skin of parchment for burgess tickets is illegible—the part being torn—but it was probably for the same purpose that the Clerk received “12s for parchment.” For “wryting fifteen burges ticketts qch were given in complemency” the sum of £9 odds was paid—the shillings and pence column being torn. The postage of “Mr Oliphant* the Burgh’s Commissioner letter” was 6s. The Cess collected had to be sent to Edinburgh. For “carreing the cess to Edinburgh two tymes” the Town Clerk received £4. But the Burgh was not always prompt in forwarding it by special messenger or otherwise, and then a messenger was sent to Rothesay for the Cess. When such a messenger came he was duly entertained—sometimes he was made a Burgess—but notwithstanding this hospitality he was not a welcome guest. This fact is borne out by a curious incident which occurred in 1705. Provost Archibald Stewart died in the spring of that year. The Collector of the Candlemas Cess had paid the Provost the money (£4 13s Stg.) then due so that it might be remitted by him to the General Receiver. At a meeting held on 3rd May, the Council thinking that the Cess had not been remitted, “and fearing a party to quarter,” ordered “as much to be raist of the readiest money belonging to the toun as would satisfy the same,” without prejudice to recover the amount from the representatives of the late Provost. Five days later they found that their fears had been unfounded, for a receipt

*Dr. Oliphant, M.P., from 1710-1715.

from the General Receiver was produced by a relative of the late Provost.

The Standard Measures belonging to the town were—
“a firlet for meal measure, a Beam, two broads and a bucket, a Custom Barrel for coals, a firlet and streak, an Iron ladle, a Corn peck and a half peck for Potatoes, and a Ellwand.”*
Some of these measures occasionally required to be repaired, hence the entries (1712-13) :—

“Item for a dale to make a bottome to the coall								
bairrell, 	£	0	16	o.				
“Item to Mr. Eachen for coupering the bairrell, ...	o	10	o.					
“Item for dressing the towns meall bucket, ...	o	4	o.					

To some of the inhabitants it mattered little whether the coal barrel was coupered or the meal bucket dressed, for they were dependent on charity to procure the necessities of life. To this poverty the Town Council were not insensible and they did something to alleviate it. They might have done more for they had the power to assess for the relief of the deserving poor. But Assessments were very unpopular, and so Rothesay, like the other Burghs of Scotland, left the care of the Poor to the Kirk Session. The Kirk Session of Rothesay did its best with the funds at its disposal,† but the Burgh assisted. The Council paid a “chirurgeon £4 Scotts yearly for his paynes to visit several poor people and others within the toun that are not able to pay him.” But if the salary was small his duties were not onerous, and on one occasion, at least, the “chirurgeon” found time to act as Collector in which office his services were valued at £8. Then the Burgh made grants from time to time. Thus—

“Item of Charity ordeaned to be given to Cowan								
(late) officer when he wes dying, 	£	5	o	o.				
“Item given for takeing care of Patrick Ker when								
dying, 	1	4	o.					
“Item of Charity given to Mr Muir ane old resider, ...	1	4	o.					
“Item of Charity given to Matthew Stewart, in Arran, ...	o	12	o.					
“Item to a poor distressed seaman, 	o	8	o.					

*Council Records, 10th February, 1763.

†See “Bute in the Olden Time,” II. 282.

The creation of a Statutory body specially charged with the care of the poor removed this duty from Town Councils, but it is interesting to note that the majority of the recent Royal Commission on the Poor Laws consider that Town Councils should again be associated in the work with which, in time past, they showed much practical interest.

A perusal of these accounts does not add materially to the information contained in the existing histories of our Burgh, but they enable us to get some idea of the finances and general working of the Town Council some 200 years ago. In these days of Municipal enterprise it may seem to us that the matters dealt with by the Town Council of old were somewhat petty and trivial. But we must remember that 200 years ago Scotland was a poor country, the Royal Burghs were in an impecunious state, and Rothesay was no exception. The people could not and would not stand assessments; "the pleasant game of borrowing and spending the public money had not been dreamed of," and so the Councilors had to exercise the strictest economy in making ends meet: And if these old Councillors were content to acquiesce in things as they found them, they managed to preserve the dignity and privileges of the Royal Burgh until, when the Century had run half its course, the decay of the Burgh was arrested, a progressive policy was inaugurated, and the almost depopulated town became the thriving seaport.

SIERRA LEONE IN THE SIXTIES.

NOTES FROM THE DIARY OF A J.P. AND MISSIONARY.

BY REV. C. T. BEALE.

[Read 14th February, 1911.]

I dare say no one here has been in the West Coast of Africa—indeed, if Colonial sayings be true, I am sure they have not—for, say the Colonists, "Nobody comes here who can help it—and of those who do come, nobody returns home alive." My own bit of knowledge, therefore, gleaned from the conversations, writings, and letters of those who actually spent their lives there, my father and grandfather, has a special interest. I might, if I liked, *take you in* to any extent! For instance, I might describe a Janneh, or a Tokka, or an Aku, or an Egba, and call them Ashantees, and few would know the difference. But you may rely upon my veracity. I will not attempt to say anything about the Ashantees, of whom I know nothing, but I will describe the races with whom my father really came in contact, and from them, their habits and country, you may learn something at least of the general character of the life on the West Shores of Africa—the then undisputed home of the malarial mosquito—the "White Man's Grave."

I will throw what I have to say into the form of a description of a journey. The starting point shall be my father's African home. Try then, please, to fancy yourselves 20 miles inland from the town and harbour of Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone. I will not, here, say a word about that city or about the general history or character of the settlement; some member of our Society skilled with