

Dunbar Family

John Stevenson who contributed the article about James Smith of Threepwood also sent the following undated obituary which was given to him by another member Alice Wallace :-

**John Dunbar**

**Auchinleck – In Memorium**

Our obituary column today records the death of Mr John DUNBAR, which took place at Dunbar Cottage here, on Thursday last week, when he had completed his 85<sup>th</sup> year. Although a labouring man all his life (though possessing some property in houses) Mr Dunbar could trace his descent to the ancient Earls of Dunbar, who once held large possessions in Ayrshire, Galloway sand Clydesdale; and like all Scotsmen, was not a little proud of his long pedigree.

A life-long liberal in politics, he once, at a general election, cast his trowel from him, and drove like Jehu, and in his working garb, all the way from Maybole to Cumnock, to record his vote for the Liberal candidate, and was lustily cheered for his pluck and devotion to his party. Notwithstanding the ancient blood which coursed through his veins, however, what fame he had derived from his wife – a daughter of the late Major LOGAN of Knockshinnoch – who, though also an octogenarian, survives him.

Learned and well versed in general literature, she is a woman of fine taste; and through a long course of years has compiled the most wonderful and perhaps the largest volume of extracts in prose and verse which is a literary treasure of no ordinary value, and of deepest interest. Many will sympathise with the aged lady in the loss of the companion of along life, their golden wedding having been celebrated some six years ago, the Rev Dr CHRYSTAL, who married them, being present, and still surviving. Mr Dunbar's only surviving son has for years been a successful builder in Ayr, and who, with several sisters, have long shown the deepest devotion to their aged parents.

John Stevenson had indicated that John Dunbar died in 1890 - so I had a look at **John Dunbar's death certificate** on the Website at [www.scotlandspire.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspire.gov.uk) which shows that John Dunbar died on 24<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1890 in Dunbar Cottage, Auchinleck.

John was aged 83 and given as a mason (journeyman) married to Janet Logan. His parents were given as Alexander Dunbar, farmer, deceased and Janet Gray, deceased. His cause of death was chronic bronchitis (duration 1 year) and debility as certified by James Lawrence, M.D. John's death was registered by his son Alexander Dunbar, Prestwick

A quick look at the local newspapers at the Burns Monument Centre (BMC) showed that the undated obituary came from the **Cumnock Express** of 31<sup>st</sup> January 1890.

The BMC also holds the **Pre-1918 Monumental Inscriptions for Auchinleck Churchyard** which provided the following entry :-

No. 321

Erected by John Dunbar, mason, died 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan. 1890 aged 85, in memory of his father Alexander died 12<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1816 aged 76, mother Janet GREY died 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb. 1849 aged 84, sister Margaret died 4<sup>th</sup> June 1863 aged 54, wife Jessie Logan died 5<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1892 aged 83 ; Scroll "Vive Memor Lethi" (Probably translates as "Live remembering the Lethe" – which was the river in the afterworld)

(Reverse side) son John died Stewarton 8<sup>th</sup> Mar. 1875 aged 39, son Alexander died Prestwick 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1894 aged 58, son Hugh died 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. 1860 aged 19, son James died 4<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1848 aged 4, daughter Helen died 6<sup>th</sup> Sep. 1914 aged 75 (husband Bryce GRAHAM)

In the 1881 **British Census Index** – John and Janet S. Dunbar were living at Dunbar Cottages – John was aged 76 and born in Ayr. Janet was 71 and born in Edinburgh.

Scotlandspeople updates  
[www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk)

Modern marriage indexes

Modern marriage indexes are now online at the Scotlandspeople Website – the indexes now cover the period from 1855 till 2006. However, only marriage certificates dated 1855-1934 are available to view online.

Catholic Parish Registers

Roman Catholic (RC) birth and baptism records are now online at the Scotlandspeople Website and images of birth & Baptisms from 1703 to 1908 are available to view.

Catholic Parish Registers (CPR) comprise records of births and baptisms; marriages; confirmations; deaths and burials; communicants; sick calls; status animarum; converts; first confessions and sent rents. The records cover all Scottish parishes in existence by 1855 – before the introduction of civil registration; the records of the main Catholic cemeteries in Edinburgh and Glasgow and the records of the RC Bishopric of the Forces, which records all sacramental events for British service men and women serving in the armed forces worldwide. Under the provisions of Church Law, all faithful are to have sacramental information recorded in the registers of the parish. Record format and content varied over time, with the responsibility for the information gathered being placed with the parish priest - since there was no standard format prescribed, record keeping varied enormously from parish to parish and also from year to year. As a result, the information may be sparse, unreliable and difficult to read.

Approximately 700 registers have survived, the earliest dating from 1703, but most records only begin in the 30 years following the relaxation of legislation against Catholics in the 1790s. Catholic parish registers may record the date of birth or the date of baptism or both. The index will show both where available. Do not expect too much from CPR birth & baptism records. The amount of information recorded can be variable and in many cases will contain little information over and above that contained in the index entry.

At best you will get the name of the child, whether legitimate or not, date of birth and/or date of baptism, father's name, mother's name and maiden surname, place or parish of residence, occupation of the father and names (and sometimes occupations) of witnesses. At worst: the mother's name is not recorded at all between certain years, or the entry does not record the sex of the child and the name is ambiguous.

The Website has a list of extant CPR so you can check whether baptisms and births exist for the parishes and years in which you are interested. If the parish wasn't founded by the date you are looking for, you may have to look at neighbouring older parishes which covered larger geographical areas. If you are unsure of where a particular Catholic parish the Website has a section showing Catholic Parish Maps

You can use the information that you find on a CPR births & baptisms entry to further your search:-

- The parents' names (if both are recorded) will help pinpoint a marriage.
- Record any information on sponsors and their family connection (if any), since these can be invaluable in determining the correct line.
- Use the location of the birth or baptism to track the family through the census records.
- Bear in mind that it was quite common for families, in an era of high infant mortality, to name a subsequent child after a dead sibling, so check that you have the correct child's entry

[Editor's note - I had a quick search for information on the CPR birth and baptisms and found that the search screen is the same as that for the Old Parish Registers - which means that you can put in the surname of both parents. I knew my grandfather was born before 1908 - and his parents' names, so I searched for the surname Dolan (I used soundex for this) and put Hamilton in as the mother's name. Using this method I found a (previously unknown) brother of my grandfather, which enabled me to obtain his birth certificate - but I didn't have to use up lots of Scotlandspeople credits viewing Dolan birth certificates).