

5 Earn Street
Riddrie
GLASGOW E.1

9. 1. 55

Dear Mrs. Riddell:

Many thanks for your welcome and informative letter which I received on my return from Ayr. My wife and I were spending a few days in the Burns country. We were staying in Alloway at the Burns Monument Hotel - perhaps you visited there if you have been to "Burns' Cottage". Very many thanks also for the enclosed photograph - a most pleasing picture and one which we are very proud to possess.

I received rather a thrill when I heard your voice on the telephone that Sunday from Dalmeilington - it was a great pity we had not made contact earlier. You have had a wonderful holiday and certainly there is a great deal of pleasure and excitement still in store for you before you return home. Now, the Ryburns.

Raeburn, Rayburn, Reyburn, Reburn, de Rabourne : these are all different spellings of the same name. The name, Ryburn, is derived from the lands of Ryburn in the Parish of Dunlop, Ayrshire. They seem to have been of a roving disposition for they settled in Aberdeen, Manchester and, of course, in New Zealand, Australia, the United States and Canada.

Andrew Ryburn was a Burgess in Glasgow 1430. David was also a Burgess; John, a Guild Brother; Thomas a Goldsmith 1463; Thomas, a Chaplain in the Cathedral of Dornoch 1594; Sir Henry Raeburn, portrait painter 1756 - 1823. The christian names common to the Ryburns seem to have been James, John, Thomas, Robert & William. Elizabeth is mentioned only once.

The Kintyre Ryburns escaped to Argyllshire in the 17th century from the ravages of Graham of Claverhouse who tortured and mutilated the Covenanters after the Battle of Bothwell Brig in Lanarkshire. One thousand of the prisoners were marched to Edinburgh where they were lodged in Greyfriars churchyard exposed to all kinds of weather. Two hundred and fifty were shipped to the Barbadoes but the ship never reached its destination as it went ashore on one of the Orkney Islands and all the prisoners were drowned. Aye, they were a cruel lot in those days. No wonder a band of Ryburns slipped over to Kintyre (30 miles distant) along with many other lowland families. Today in Kintyre there are still Armours, Ralstons, Smiths, Reids, Wallaces, Youngs - descendants of those who fled during the killing times. A large number of these were farmers and they were welcomed by the then Duke of Argyll as they brought more up-to-date methods in their farming : the highland farmers were rather lazy and their methods were old fashioned.

Some of the Ryburns owned farms but the "hungry forties" forced them to emigrate and those who remained fell on lean years. I, myself, am the last of the Ryburns born in Kintyre - there are no Ryburns now in Campbeltown. I left home when I was eighteen years of age. After my student days I became a teacher. When I retired in 1948 I was headmaster of Alexandra Parade School, one of the largest in Glasgow, roll some eleven hundred. So you will readily understand my chances of travelling very far abroad are very remote. Salaries of teachers in Scotland have never allowed of many extra travelling luxuries. We have had some lovely holidays on the Continent but our furthest destination was Switzerland - a wonderfully clean and wealthy nation.

I am a hybrid as my mother belonged to the Highlands and spoke Gaelic. Her people were in the same farm for over 600 years. It must have been gifted to the original Mathieson by Robert Bruce. Perhaps he was given shelter when he was in hiding in Kintyre,

Arran and Ayrshire. As to the Buccleuchs' family name being Ryburn, I'm afraid we shall have to take that to a vizandum. (

It seems to me the Ryburns having the christian name of James must have been the persevering members of the tribe. In the old Longw Church records of Campbeltown a James Ryburn is recorded as having gifted £50 to the poor of the town and an equal sum to some other deserving object. £100 in those days was a small fortune - the early years of the 19th century.

One day, during the war, a publishers' traveller came into the school. He showed me a series of Mental Tests, or should I say, Intelligence Tests. We are very strong on these in Scotland. He produced a dozen or so, all by different publishers. They had all individual names and one set was named the "Ryburn Intelligence Test" and naturally the traveller expected a large order of the latter - which he received. I learned afterwards that this Test was compiled by a headmaster in a Manchester school and that it was named after the district in Manchester where this school was built.

The early lowland settlers in Kintyre seem to have been of a religious turn of mind for, when they became established, they built a church but the Duke of Argyle did everything to obstruct their intentions. The stone was to be quarried from Island Davaar situated at the entrance to Campbeltown Loch. Now, this Island at ebb tide forms part of a peninsula with the mainland and the building stone was to be carted to the mainland by horse and cart. This the Duke refused. But nothing daunted, the women carried the stone from the Island, set it down on the mainland and the horses and carts took it to the building site. Some of the Ryburn women formed part of that noble band and thus thwarted and overcame the obstructions forced on them by the Duke.

Well now, I think I have exhausted the little bit of Ryburn history I know. Again thanking you and trusting you may have an interesting finish to your holiday and with every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) Duncan Ryburn

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(This letter was received by Mrs. Edith Joyce Riddell during her global trip with her husband, now both deceased.

She was the third daughter of Frederick Jabez Bennett Ryburn, late of Paterangi, Ohaupo.

Fred was the fourth son of James Ryburn who emigrated from Scotland via "May Shepherd" in 1866. This patriarch of his New Zealand line commenced farming in Clevedon and later took up about a thousand acres at Paterangi after marrying Mary Short of Clevedon.

The letter is now in hands of Mrs. Betty Randall Ahier, second daughter of Fred Ryburn, surviving three sisters and a brother of her generation.)