

John McDouall Stuart

1815 - 1866



Stuart's Memorial Adelaide

John McDouall Stuart, one of the most important people associated with South Australian exploration, was born in Dysart, Fifeshire, Scotland, on 7 September 1815. Educated at Edinburgh and attended the Scottish Naval and Military Academy and later graduated as a civil engineer. He arrived in South Australia in January 1839 and soon found work as a surveyor. Within a short time he bought his own instruments and horses and started out in business for himself. In 1843 he became a farmer but already was an excellent bushman and restless adventurer. After a year of farming he was glad to join Sturt's 1844 expedition, although they were stuck in the desert for six months. James Poole died and Stuart became second in command, drawing most of the maps as Sturt was almost blind. It was to be eighteen months later before they reached Adelaide again.

Later Stuart made several other expeditions before penetrating the desert areas beyond the salt lakes north of Port Augusta. During the 1850s there was a constant push for more discoveries to counteract the gold discoveries in Victoria which were draining South Australia of its male population. Not only did they search the Flinders Ranges for copper and gold, they were also looking for farming and grazing land and for several years the South Australian government kept men in the field for that purpose.

During these years Stuart was in the Northern Flinders Ranges surveying, prospecting and exploring, financed mainly by the Chambers brothers and his friend William Finke. In May 1858 Stuart set out, with one assistant, Mr Forster, and an Aborigine, on one of the most remarkable journeys in the whole of Australian exploration. They travelled four months, covered more than 2,000 kilometres, discovered huge tracks of good grazing land and had survived on rations which were supposed to have lasted for only six weeks before arriving at Streaky Bay. His last diary entry for that trip read, 'Saturday, 11 September. Arrived at Mr Thompson's station, Mount Arden. I cannot conclude this narrative without acknowledging that it was with the advice and assistance of my friend Mr Finke solely, that I undertook this exploration of the country.'

He continued, I therefore look upon him as the original pioneer of all my subsequent expeditions, in which our friend Mr Chambers afterwards joined. Stuart gave his maps and diary to the government and in return received.....nothing. The Royal Geographical Society of London rewarded him with a gold watch.

In April 1859 he went north again and it was on this trip that his assistant David Herrgott found artesian springs on 12 April and had them named after him. Many other springs were discovered on that trip which eventually led them to The Neale. Stuart's third expedition started on 4 November 1859 from Chambers Creek. His fourth expedition also started from Chambers Creek where they left on 2 March 1860, this time to find the centre of the continent. On 4 April the party crossed a very large creek 'with the finest gum trees we have yet seen. I have named it the Finke after William Finke. On 22 April 1860 he had reached the centre of Australia and wrote in his journal, that he would plant the British flag tomorrow, 23 April, at what he had named Mount Sturt.



On 25 April 1860 he wrote 'There is a remarkable hill about two miles to the west, having another small hill at the north end in the shape of a bottle; this I named Mount Esther at the request of the maker of the flag'. Esther Knowles was working at Moolooloo when Stuart arrived for his trip to find the Centre of Australia. When Stuart realised that he had not taken a flag with him it was Esther who made one for him. Refusing any money she was happy to have a suitable place named after her by Stuart.

Stuart's greatest achievement was the south-north crossing of the continent and back in 1861-62. The party, which included, among others, 19-year old John William Billiatt and Stephen King, left Adelaide on 26 October 1861 and reached the Indian Ocean on 24 July 1862. The next day the Union Jack, embroidered by Elizabeth Chambers with Stuart's name, was nailed on a tree, followed by three cheers for the Queen. On his return Kekwick, who had been again second in command, wrote to his brother from Mount Margaret Station on 30 November 1862, 'You will, I am sure, be very much pleased and gratified to hear of the safe arrival here of all our party, and the unbounded success that has attended Mr Stuart's third attempt to reach the coast'.

He went on to say that they had been away from Mount Margaret for forty-four weeks, but would remain at the station for some days to give the horses some time to recover before moving further south. Being well aware of the hopes and desires to have an overland telegraph connection with England, Stuart wrote in one of his reports that there would be a few difficulties in the way, but none which could not be overcome and make to repay the cost of such an undertaking.

As a result of this journey, the opening up of the Northern Territory was made possible, and a route discovered for an Overland Telegraph Line linking South Australia with England and the rest of the world in 1872.

In 1863 Britain added the whole of the Northern Territory to South Australia, a decision greeted with great enthusiasm by most South Australians. George Fife Angas though believed the new area to be too big a responsibility for South Australia.

Because of the severe hardships he suffered on his expeditions, Stuart was in poor health and tried to settle down at Moolooloo. He returned to Scotland on 25 April 1864, the same day the Henry Ellis left Port Adelaide for the Northern Territory with surveyors, settlers and officials. He lived with his sister and later moved to London with her

where he died on 5 June 1866 at the age of fifty. His funeral was attended by only 7 people. They included 4 relatives, 2 members of the Royal Geographical Society and Alexander Hay who happened to be in London at that time and read his death notice in the Times.

The name Alexandra Land which Stuart would have liked for the Northern Territory was never used. The transcontinental highway still bears his name. Stuart Terrace, Stuarts Well, Stuart Town, Stuart Park, Stuart Caravan Park and Central Mount Stuart are all named after John McDouall Stuart.



On his arrival back in Adelaide in 1862, Caroline Carleton, author of the Song of Australia, wrote,

Full many a weary league
Of hunger, thirst, and pain
Our brave explorer trod,
And traversed o'er again,
Before he reached the goal,
And cooled his burning brow,
And stayed his halting steps
Where the northern waters flow.

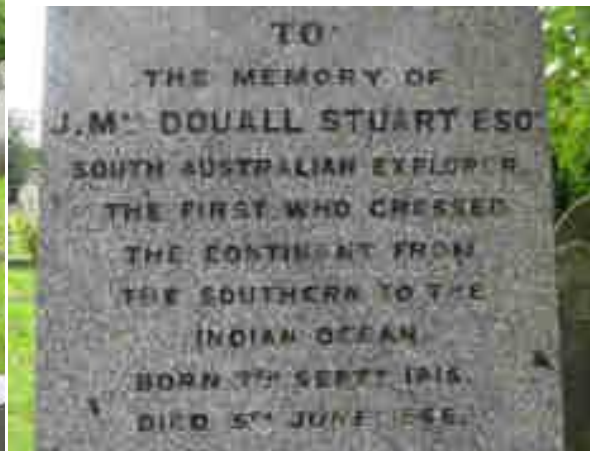
Grim silence reigned supreme,
Save alligator's plash,
Or sea-mew's shrilly scream,
Or ocean's restless dash;
Yet flashed that leader's eye,
And triumph filled his soul
As he heard the bird's discordant cry,
And saw the waters roll.

Ten years later, to mark the tenth anniversary of Stuart's historic trip, Carleton added another two verses.

Methinks t'were worth a life
To stand as there he stood-

Forerunner of a dauntless race,
Proud rulers of the flood.
Across the desert waste
He hears their hurrying feet;
He sees the flashing wires
That mighty empires greet.

His dream is all fulfilled,
Responsive echoes ring
Around the circling earth,
Sped on the lightning's wing.
And what hath he? - a distant grave;
Unblazoned is his name;
And what have we? - a beaten path
To honour, wealth, and fame.



Stuart is buried in the Kensal Green Cemetery, London.



John McDouall Stuart
1815 - 1856

Masonic History Articles

The Bush Tucker Mason

The Story of Brother John McDouall Stuart 1815- 1866

Australian explorer and Mason.

By W. Brother Bernard Williamson -Strong Man Lodge No. 45.

Brother Stuart was born in Dysart Fife Scotland where he trained as a civil engineer after being rejected for military service on account of him not being robust enough for that type of life, rather ironic when you see what fate had in store for him. In

1839 after finding his sweetheart in a compromising position with his best friend, he packed his bags and ran away to seek his fortune, ending up in Adelaide south Australia.

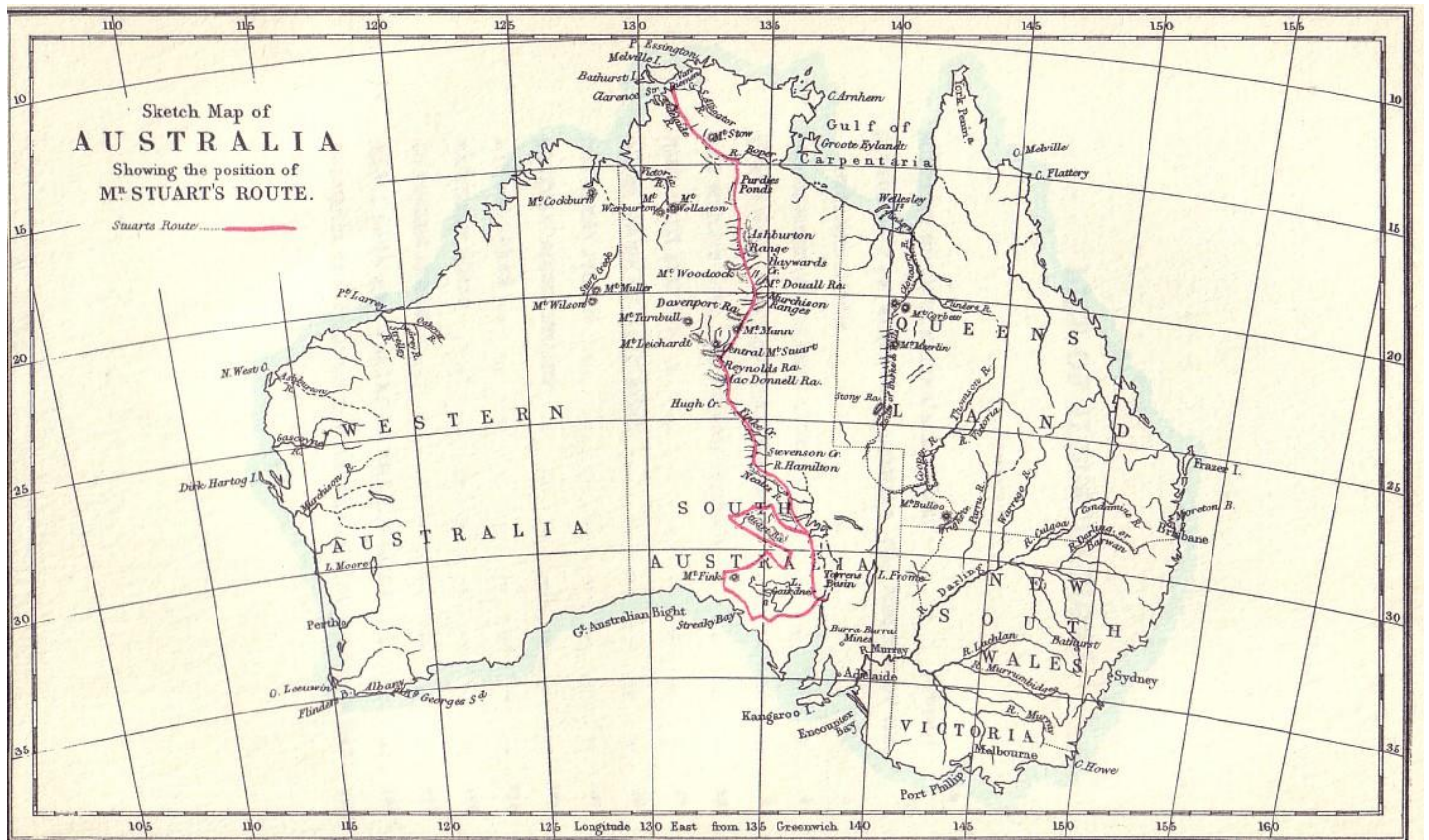
Following his trade, he quickly found employment with the Government's survey department, which was endeavouring to extend the grazing lands into the north of the colony. In 1844 he accompanied the Father of Australian Explorers Charles Smith on his last expedition to the Murray and Darling rivers. Stuart made the first of his own expeditions in 1858 where he built up a reputation as a first rate explorer. Contemporary reports reveal that "...he has a hardihood by nature to endure thirst and hunger, a good practical knowledge of Botany, Surveying, Astronomy, Medicine and he can shoe his own horse. He has the pluck of a giant in his puny frame."

In 1859 two things of interest happened to John Stuart, he was initiated into Lodge TRUTH no. 8 (Adelaide) S.C. and the Government of South Australia offered a £2000 prize to the discoverer of a route across the centre of the continent for the overland telegraph. This was to be an extension of the existing service from Europe and India. In February 1860 Stuart and his team set after the prize hotly pursued in March by a team headed by the legendary Burke and Wills. By the end of April Stuart's expedition had discovered the much sought after centre of Australia now named Central Mount Stuart where they built a cairn and raised the flag. In the 24 years since the first official white settlers had arrived in South Australia six different exploring parties had endeavoured to find this point, they all failed, a point to note in view of other discoveries made later on. (Modern Satellite mapping has discovered the actual centre to be 400 kms south.)

Stuart was forced to make many attempts to find the route and on the second of these he discovered watering holes for a future repeater station for the telegraph line, which he named Ketwick ponds after his 21/C. One day, whilst Brother John was standing at one of these ponds, a group of four Aboriginal tribesmen appeared on the far bank. He gestured to them to come over to take water and to share his food. After a while he was stunned when the eldest of the party proceeded to make Masonic signs. Stuart responded to these signs whereupon the other three tribesmen slowly and deliberately continued to make further Masonic signals. They then crossed the pond and clapped him on the back as they shared the water and food. A few days later when the Expedition was at another watering hole, a few miles away, they were confronted by a large band of armed tribesmen who attacked the party, however they threw their spears and boomerangs not to hit the explorers but near enough to warn them away from the precious water hole. When Brother John Stuart reported these incidents upon his return they were generally discounted as wishful thinking on his part, being a new mason he must have misinterpreted the tribal displays of the tribesmen which are known to be similar to Masonic signs.

However on another attempt to discover the route, the explorers found wheat growing where no white men were ever supposed to have reached, and at a place now called Muckaty Station the aboriginals' referred to the Rifles and Guns of the party as 'Muckaty' taken to mean muskets, a term long out of use for these weapons. Could it be that back in the 1700's Masonic explorers or Masonic convict escapees had passed through this region? I doubt that we will ever know and the mystery remains. Brother Stuart finally discovered a way across the continent by reaching the Indian Ocean at VAN DIEMANS Gulf on 25th July 1862. The return Journey was a nightmare, the sick staving expedition finally made the end of the trip on the 27th November. This last exploration nearly killed Brother Stuart who had Scurvy, Ulcers and Arthritis. Most of the return journey he was carried on a stretcher between two horses because he was so weak.

Brother John Stuart was awarded the Royal Geographical societies' Patron's Gold medal for his work. In 1864 sick almost blind and extremely lonely he moved to London to be cared for by his sister within a year his eyesight and his memory had completely gone and he died at the age of 50. In 1872 the overland telegraph line from Darwin to Adelaide was complete. His birthplace in Rectory Lane, Dysart is now the John McDouall Stuart Museum.



22 November, 2013 2:58PM ACDT

McDouall Stuart artefact up for auction

By Eloise Fuss and Sarah Tomlinson

A significant watch that once belonged to Australian explorer John McDouall Stuart is estimated to reach up to \$60,000 at an auction on Monday.

"He was awarded the watch on 9 May 1859 for explorations he did in 1858 to the north and west of Port Augusta," explains President of the South Australian based John McDouall Stuart Society, Rick Moore.

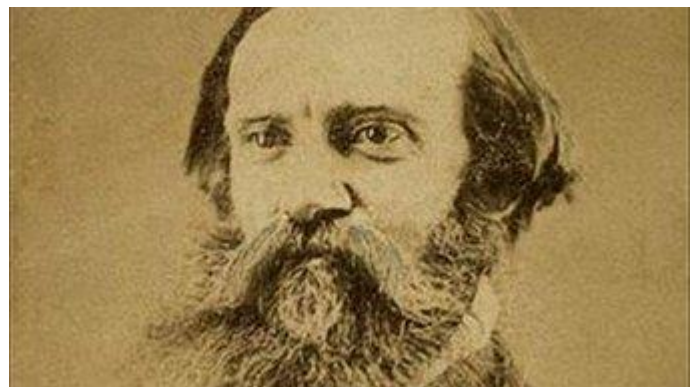
"It was a momentous exploration and opened up a huge tract of country otherwise unknown to Europeans."

Mr Moore says the watch is a valuable artefact and is encouraging the South Australian government to purchase it for displayed in a museum.

The ornate, 18 carat gold fob watch was awarded to Stuart by the Royal Geographical Society of London, and has been kept privately in Scotland for many years.

"When he'd finished exploring, he returned to his family in Scotland and probably from about 1865 onwards it was there."

But now the watch has returned to Australia and is being kept in a Sydney Auction house before it goes up for sale this Monday 25th of November.



Mr Moore says there is significant interest in the watch and expects it to fetch around \$60,000, and is advocating for the South Australia Government or another state body to make the purchase.

"South Australia is really the spiritual home of Stuart matters. Almost everything collectable about Stuart memorabilia is here in SA, and we think this watch belongs here too."

Mr Moore explains that after arriving in Australia from Scotland in 1839, as a recently qualified civil engineer, Stuart went on to become one of inland Australia's most acclaimed European explorers.

"In those days that was of immense interest, the world at large was fascinated with geography and exploration and they thought they knew just about everything to do with all the continents- except what was in the middle of Australia.

"There was enormous interest for 50-odd years about what was in the centre, and Stuart was the first European to reach there in 1860."

Mr Moore says the inscribed, valuable watch is not just a showpiece, but a reflection of the important role watches played for explorers during that time.

"A watch was a lot more than a showpiece in those days, in Stuart's case he would have navigated using a watch.

"Time is a key element of navigation and although he probably didn't take that watch away with him, because it was a very prestigious honour to win something like that, nonetheless a watch was a desirable thing."

Until now the watch has been in the possession of the Arthur family, which Stuart's sister married into.

"They have had it for a long time sitting doing nothing, and the current owner's deceased father had always made it clear he thought the watch should be in Australia for access for Australians to see," Mr Moore says.



Sold for AU\$ 85,400 (CA\$ 81,934) inc. premium

Alice Springs - 14 July, 2014 9:24AM ACST

Explorer statue to be erected

By [Emma Sleath](#) (Cross Media Reporter)

After four years in the 'long grass', a statue of John McDouall Stuart will be erected this week in Stuart Park

It was unveiled to the public four years ago, and then it was gone. But today, a statue that caused fierce community debate back in 2010, is back for good. Council have confirmed the statue of John McDouall Stuart will be erected this week in Stuart Park, and this time it's here to stay. (Plans to put the statue up this morning have been cancelled due to the rain...)

It's been well over a year since approval was given by the Northern Territory Heritage Council for the statue to be placed in the park.

Consent was given subject to the location being at the western end, although the reason for this has not been made public.

For sculptor Mark Egan, who was commissioned by one of the local Freemasons lodges to create the statue back in 2010, it's been a long road.

Out at his rural property, just south of Alice Springs, Mr Egan carefully painting the statue with an anti graffiti coating - a big job given the statue is around four metres high.



"Well, the whole thing made me a little bit disappointed because I put all that effort into it...a lot of it pretty much for nothing," he says.

"And then when the statue wasn't even really looked at, and then just shelved for who knows what reason, yeah, it was fairly disappointing."

The statue was gifted to council by the Freemasons as part of the town's 150th anniversary celebrations for McDouall Stuart's first expedition to Central Australia.

Although bound for a permanent home on the civic centre lawns, council changed the location to nearby Stuart Park following pressure from its Public Art Advisory Committee, who argued that it had not been consulted.

Other concerns emerged during a public meeting in the council chambers, including comments from some of the town's Indigenous population that they did not want to be reminded about a history involving white men with guns.

However, council had seemingly failed to consider that the less prominent location of Stuart Park was subject to conditions under the Northern Territory Heritage Act.

And so, following a brief unveiling on the council lawns, the statue has resided at Mark's rural property, just outside of Alice Springs, for the last four years.

"We all thought he was going to be staying here forever," says Mr Egan.

"[So] I'm a little bit excited that he's actually finally going up...I just hope he gets treated kindly in town."

"It's a good statue, I hope people like it and I think they will, once they forget about all the dramas."

But given that the Heritage Council approved the location back in March last year, why the delay in its installation?

One can only assume negotiations between the Alice Springs Town Council and the Freemasons have broken down - and the original arrangement that the Lodge cover the costs of installation and maintenance no longer applies.

Council CEO Rex Mooney says the decision was made to take on these costs in the interest of expediency.

"The Freemasons indicated that they didn't have any funds to support these expenses, and the council felt that it was going on too long, there had to be a decision made to erect the statue, it was gifted to the council, to the community, so the council took that proactive action and accepted those costs," he says.

The then Worshipful Master Les Pilton, who instigated the idea, is no longer at the helm of the McDouall Stuart lodge. And it's been reported by the Alice Springs News that at a council meeting this year, the executive suggested that the statue be given back.

But council have clearly decided to press on, a local building company was commissioned to construct the base, and the statue of John McDouall Stuart will be erected on top of it this week.

(As such, depending on which way McDouall Stuart is facing, the explorer credited with opening up Central Australia could be left with a permanent view of a somewhat questionable 'massage' centre.)

It's not the location that Mark Egan would have preferred, but the sculptor is happy his work will finally be going up.

"When all is said and done, more is said than done," he laughs.

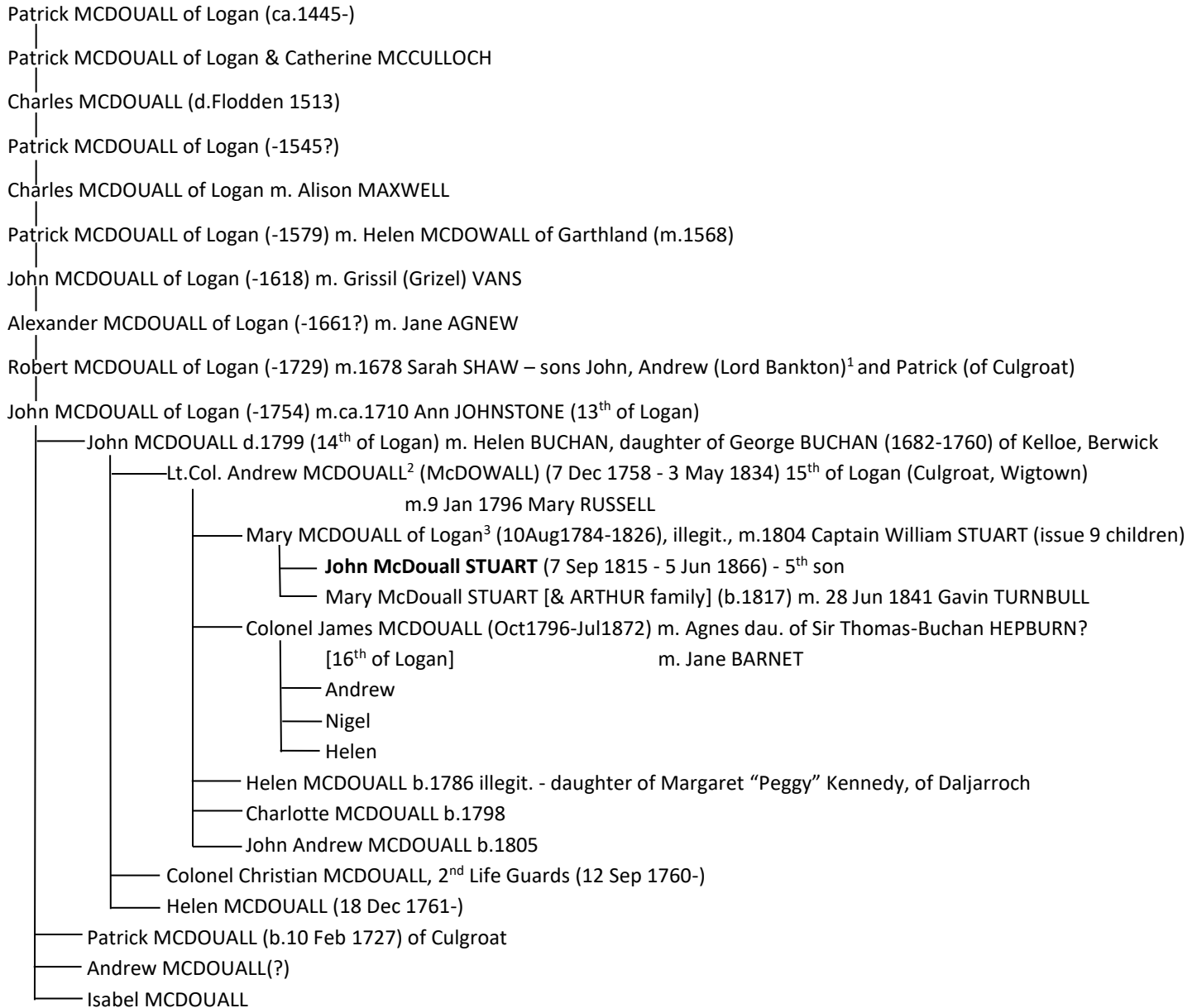
"I don't know, it's just damn annoying, you know, something so simple just make a statue...I think that's typical of the world today isn't it?

"Too much complication, too many rules and regulations...it makes you wonder whether it's all worthwhile in the end you know, like you'd think it would be so easy, it's just a bit of artwork and it's not easy."

Mary McDouall Stuart, John's sister



John McDouall STUART Family Tree



¹ Andrew, Lord Bankton, a Senator of the College of Justice and author of The Laws of Scotland, was the younger brother of John, 13th of Logan.

Andrew McDouall (Lord Bankton) c.1685 – 1760; Jurist. Born the second son of Robert McDouall of Logan (Dumfries and Galloway), McDouall was educated at the University of Edinburgh. He wrote a three-volume Institute of the Laws of Scotland in Civil Rights (1751-3) which is still quoted and made comparisons between the laws of England and Scotland. In 1755, he was appointed a judge of the Court of Session in Edinburgh with the title Lord Bankton and owned Bankton House in East Lothian.

² **Re: Lt Col Andrew McDowall (McDouall) of Logan** [2 sons, 2 illegitimate daughters].

« Reply #10 on: Saturday 15 May 10 10:05 BST (UK) »

Scotland's National Archives have documents relating to an illegitimate child of Andrew McDouall. The story of this child's conception is immortalised in the songs "Young Peggy" and "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon" by Robert Burns, who had met, and was fascinated by the young Peggy. The child, named Helen, was the daughter of Margaret "Peggy" Kennedy, of Daljarroch (eldest lawful daughter of the deceased Robert Kennedy of Daljarroch Esq). Peggy claimed she had secretly married Andrew McDouall, who denied the marriage and paternity. The case was taken to court, and initially won by Peggy, however, McDouall appealed the

decision, but Peggy died in 1796 before the ruling was made. The appeal overturned the original decision regarding the marriage, but awarded the sum of three thousand pounds to Helen, the child, to be paid by Andrew McDouall, thus confirming his parentage. There are quite a few references to this relationship available on the web particularly concerning the Robert Burns connection. Margaret Kennedy was my great, great aunt, she was the daughter of Robert Kennedy of Daljarroch and Grizel Cathcart (the granddaughter of Sir John Kennedy, 2nd Baronet).

³ Mother Jean McWilliam and then 26-year-old Capt. Andrew McDouall of Logan.

The Robert Burns poem "Ye Banks and Braes" is written about Miss Peggy Kennedy, the daughter of a landowner in Carrick. At seventeen Miss Kennedy was to be engaged to Captain Maxwell, M.P. of Wigtownshire however she fell for McDouall of Logan. Robert Burns wrote the poem "Ye Banks and Braes" about what had happened to young Peggy and the affair with McDouall.

Ye Banks and Braes (Robert Burns)

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon
 How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
 How can ye chaunt, ye little birds,
 And I sae weary, fu' o' care.
 Ye'll break my heart, ye warbling birds
 That wanton through the flowery thorn,
 Ye mind me o' departed joys,
 Departed, never to return.

Oft hae I roved by bonnie Doon
 To see the rose and woodbine twine,
 And ilka bird sang o' its love,
 And fondly sae did I o' mine.
 Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
 Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree
 But my fause lover stole my rose,
 And Ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

Young Peggy [In this ballad Burns, it is said, bade farewell to one on whom he had, according to his own account, wasted eight months of courtship. We hear no more of Montgomery's Peggy after that time.]

<p>I. Young Peggy blooms our bonniest lass, Her blush is like the morning, The rosy dawn, the springing grass, With early gems adorning: Her eyes outshone the radiant beams That gild the passing shower, And glitter o'er the crystal streams, And cheer each fresh'ning flower.</p> <p>II. Her lips, more than the cherries bright, A richer dye has graced them; They charm th' admiring gazer's sight, And sweetly tempt to taste them: Her smile is, as the evening mild, When feather'd tribes are courting,</p>	<p>III. Were fortune lovely Peggy's foe, Such sweetness would relent her, As blooming spring unbends the brow Of surly, savage winter. Detraction's eye no aim can gain, Her winning powers to lessen; And fretful envy grins in vain The poison'd tooth to fasten.</p> <p>IV. Ye powers of honour, love, and truth, From every ill defend her; Inspire the highly-favour'd youth, The destinies intend her: Still fan the sweet connubial flame Responsive in each bosom,</p>
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And little lambkins wanton wild,
In playful bands disporting.

And bless the dear parental name
With many a filial blossom.

Web Research Notes on Family

John McDouall Stuart, born Dysart, Fifeshire, Scotland, on 7 September 1815; Died 5 June 1866, age 50.

Fifth son of William Stuart, army captain, and his wife Mary, **née McDouall**

Wikipedia - "youngest of 9 children" (three died in infancy)

Mona Stuart Webster, who, in 1958, published the first full-length biography of her great-grand-uncle.

William, an ex-Army Captain, moved with his family to Dysart in 1812 where he was appointed as Customs Officer.

Both parents died when John was in his early teens, and he and his brothers and sisters were cared for by relatives and friends.

(The fifth son was given the maternal surnaming as a given name – hence the name John McDouall Stuart).

Mary McDOWALL is reported as being an illegitimate child of Colonel Andrew McDOWALL (1758-1834) of Logan, parish of Kirkmaiden, Wigtownshire.

Colonel McDouall of the 2nd Life Guards, Logan, Wigtownshire was born 1794, eldest son of Colonel Andrew McDOWALL and Mary RUSSELL, thus would have been an uncle of John McDouall STUART.

John McDouall STUART' mother Mary McDOWALL married William STUART in 1804, seems likely to have been born in the 1780s. Perhaps Mary RUSSELL was her mother, but Colonel Andrew McDOWALL is described by M'Kerlie as a 'libertine', thus my doubts about the identity of Mary McDOWALL's mother.

The "South Australian Advertiser", Dec 10 1860 p.3, records the Diary of Mr J.M. Stuart. It mentions that he named the McDouall ranges after Colonel McDouall of the 2nd Life Guards, Logan, Wigtownshire.

McDOWALL, Andrew (1758-1834), of Culgroat, Wigtown.

Published in The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1790-1820, ed. R. Thorne, 1986
Available from Boydell and Brewer

b. 7 Dec. 1758, o.s. of John McDouall of Logan, Wigtown by Helen, da. of George Buchan of Kelloe, Berwick. educ. privately; Grand Tour 1781. m. 9 Jan. 1796, Mary, da. of James Russell of Dumfries, 2s.; 1 da. illegit. suc. fa. 1799.

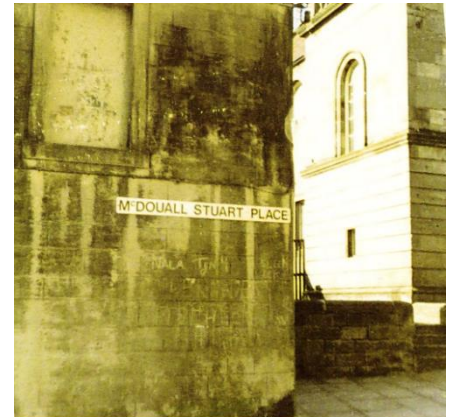
Andrew's father (according to Burkes Peerage and Gentry) was John McDowall (m. Helen Buchan). John had a sister Isabel and a brother Patrick (b. 10 Feb 1727 at Logan). If 'my' William McDowall is not the illegitimate son of Andrew, then it is possible that he is from Patrick's line. However, I have been unable to find any information relating to this Patrick.

Parents John McDouall and Hellen Buchan [IGI extracted]

Andrew McDouall Christened 8th December 1758 Kirkmaiden by Drummorie, Wigtown

Christian McDouall christened 12th September 1760 Kirkmaiden by Drummorie, Wigtown

Helen McDouall christened 19th December 1761 Kirkmaiden by Drummorie, Wigtown



**McDouall Stuart Place
In Dysart, Fife**

From Bruce McDowall:

Many years ago, I read some books on Australian explorers, including Mona Stuart WEBSTER's book on John McDouall STUART. That was before I became interested in family history, and at that time assumed the McDouall had

nothing to do with my name of McDOWALL. How wrong could that assumption have been, especially as I was to find from my Scottish cousins that the oral family history is that we came from the Logan line.

I've just received a parcel of information from the John McDouall Stuart Society - material in their collection, but not available on their website. It contains some very useful information to tie in with my other info', especially some of that supplied by descendants of the STUARTs. It also has some conclusions at odds with my reading and interpretation of original sources, and a couple of factual errors.

My best candidate for the mother of John McDouall STUART is:

Kirkmaiden OPR, 1784:

Mary, illegit daur of Andrew McDowall, Esqr & Jean McWilliam born 10th Augt bapt 6th Septr.

(my transcription)

This Mary McDOUALL would have been 20 in 1804, when it seems Captain William STUART married his Mary McDOUALL and started a family. She has been claimed by one American researcher as being her ancestor, but has no evidence that I'm aware of other than the coincidence of an actual baptism record. Of course that also applies to my proposal! There is always a chance that the individual one is looking for was not recorded in a parish baptism register.

The child born by Margaret KENNEDY in 1794 was not only too young, but her name was Helen, and she married another.

Mary RUSSELL, who Andrew McDOUALL did marry, can also be ruled out - timing and other reasons.