

James Buist (1795-1880): 'A Wise man of the East': The remarkable life of a Fifer, Farmer and Philanthropist

By His Fourth Great Nephew, Michael T. Tracy

“On Tuesday afternoon, Mr. James Buist, Kirktonbarns, was entertained to dinner in the hall of the Royal Hotel, on occasion of his retirement from active business as a farmer...In proposing the toast of the evening, the Chairman said ‘Croupiers and Gentlemen, I now call upon you to drink to the health of a much respected guest. To the retirement of Mr. Buist from the scene of farming is like the removal of an ancient landmark. Few have been the days during that long period in which the tall form has not been seen stalking across his fields with his weedock in his hand and his weather hat on his head.’”¹ Thus ran the front page of the *Fifeshire Journal Newspaper* for Thursday, 29 September 1870 giving a small glimpse of the accomplished Fife farmer, businessman, investor, and benefactor one James Buist, Esquire.

Early years

The future farmer, philanthropist and benefactor was born on Saturday, 11 July 1795 at Orkie farm in Kettle Parish, Fife.² He was the last son of George Buist, a tenant farmer and his second wife Christian Ballingall. He grew up without knowing his father as he was only two years old when his father died. Young James would receive 600 pounds sterling that his father willed to him upon his death.³ His mother, Christian Ballingall Buist left Orkie farm after her husband’s death in circa 1797-1799 because the lands were turned over to her step-son, Henry Buist. She lived with some of her children namely Janet, Katherine, Thomas, Margaret, Robert and young James Buist on another estate of her husband’s in Forgan Parish, Fife named “Kirktonbarns.” She lived there for the next 37 years until her death in 1834. Upon her death Kirktonbarns was willed to her last surviving son, James Buist.⁴ James Buist matriculated at United College, St. Andrews University student in 1810 to study Latin and Greek. Records show that he continued with Latin and Greek in 1811/12 and also started studying Mathematics and Logic however there is no record of him ever actually graduating from the University.⁵ Like many students of the period, he did not complete a full degree course.

As a young man, James Buist traveled not only around Scotland, but in England as well. There is evidence of his travels to Alnwick, Northumberland, England in the year 1816 at the age of 21. In his travel journal of 1820 he writes, “A description of Alnwick from Scots history of the borders as I took it when in this neighborhood in the year 1816. Alnwick Castle the chief seat of the noble family of Northumberland is situated in the neighborhood of the town, upon a lofty eminence, which enhances the dignity of its appearance.”⁶ Alnwick is a market town in Northumberland, England and he visited Alnwick Castle. The Castle is the seat of the Duke of Northumberland, built following the Norman Conquest in about 1096. After Windsor Castle, it is the second largest inhabited Castle in England.

¹ *Fifeshire Journal Newspaper*, Thursday, 29 September 1870

² Baptismal Record of James Buist, 12 July 1795, Kettle Parish Records, Old Parish Records 435/00 0030 0103, National Records of Scotland Register of Deeds, Burgh of Falkland, 1738-1798; University of St. Andrews Library B25/4/1; Pages 407-426

³ Will of Christian Ballingall Buist, 19 February 1835. Wills and Testaments (SC20/50/8) Cupar Sheriff Court. National Records of Scotland

⁵ Biographical Register of the University of St. Andrews, 1747-1897. Smart, Robert N. St. Andrews: 2004, Page 124

⁶ Travel Journal by James Buist, 20 July-August 1820, University of St. Andrews, Special Collections Division, Call Number ms37856, Page 16



Alnwick Castle, Photography Courtesy of Britainexpress.com © Britainexpress.com

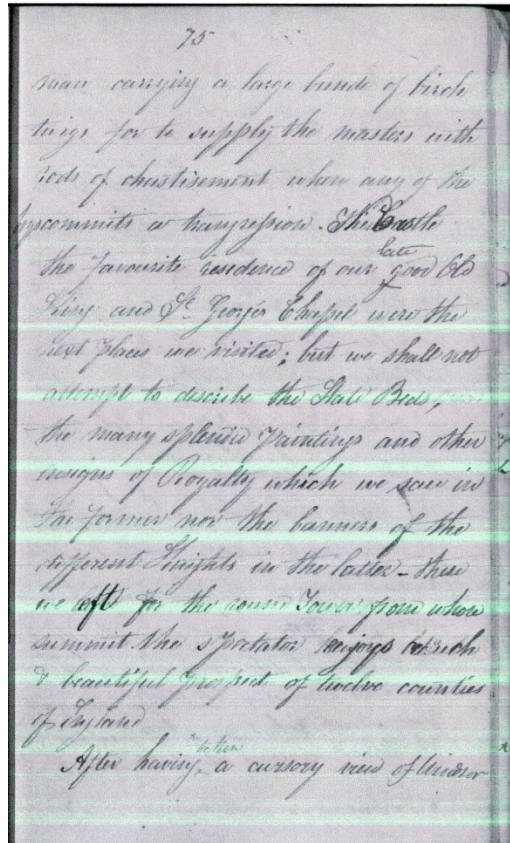
In the “Observations Made in a Journey through a part of Scotland and England” he wrote a journal of his experiences and places he visited while journeying from Edinburgh to Walton upon Thames in the county of Surrey, England beginning from Thursday, 20 July 1820 until sometime in August of the same year. He was 25 years old. Traveling on the Union Stage Coach line, Buist gives the reader a clear concise glimpse of the areas geography, climate, history, agriculture and incidents along the way. He stated that the object of this excursion was to visit Mr. J. Rupell who resided at Walton upon Thames some 17 miles southwest of London. Buist wrote of Haddington, East Lothian, “the country became more of a Moorish soil, however the fields were well cultivated and enclosed with hedges which were neatly formed. Every Friday there is held here one of the best Corn Markets in Scotland.”⁷ He also describes in detail about, “only object that attracted our attention was the horsemanship of a drunk barber. At one time he galloped around the Coach, then from one side of the road to the other side of the road, all the while maintaining a command of his horse, which was exceptional. He continued to amuse us in that way for some miles before we landed at Newcastle which was about eleven at night.”⁸ While at York, England Buist writes about eating at a local inn stating, “We were greeted with an elegant dinner, the bill however was a sad enemy to the purse!”⁹ He while in London on Sunday, 30 July 1820 wrote, “The Castle (Windsor) the favorite residence of our late good old King and St. George’s Chapel were the next places we visited... The Tower from whole summit the spectator enjoys a beautiful prospect of twelve counties of England...”¹⁰

⁷ Travel Journal by James Buist, 20 July-August 1820, University of St. Andrews, Special Collections Division, Call Number ms37856, Page 8

⁸ Travel Journal by James Buist, 20 July-August 1820, University of St. Andrews, Special Collections Division, Call Number ms37856, Page 19

⁹ Travel Journal by James Buist, 20 July-August 1820, University of St. Andrews, Special Collections Division, Call Number ms37856, Page 44

¹⁰ Travel Journal by James Buist, 20 July-August 1820, University of St. Andrews, Special Collections Division, Call Number ms37856, Page 75



Travel Journal of James Buist, Sunday, 30 July 1820, Photograph Courtesy of University of St. Andrews, Special Collections Division, © University of St. Andrews, Special Collections Division

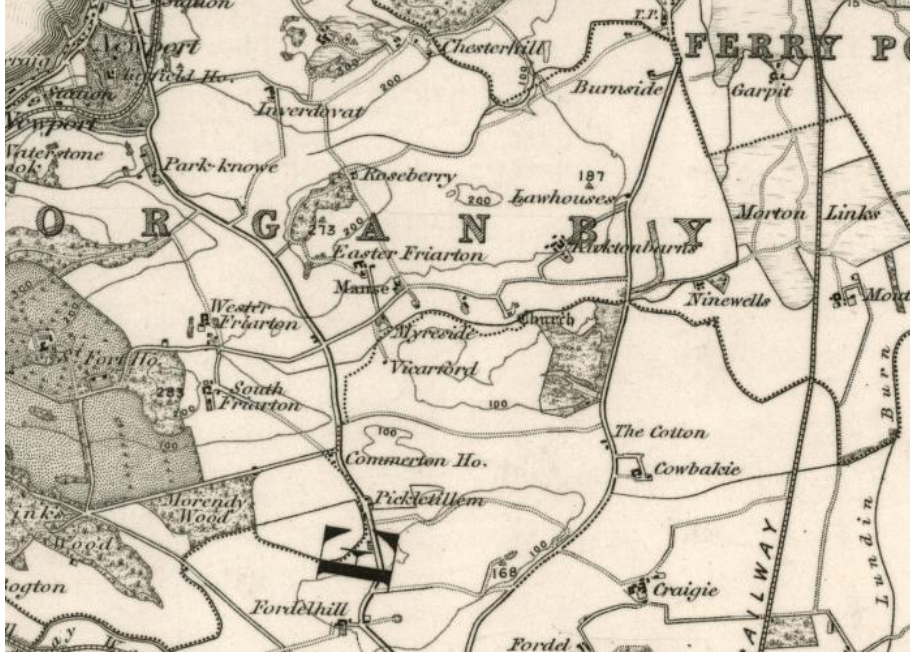
Farming

After his school courses and traveling, James began managing and farming the estate of Kirktonbarns. The county of Fife is known as the "Kingdom," a title derived from its association with the Kings of Scots from the 11th century. It is more largely surrounded by water than any other county in the mainland of



Kirktonbarns, Forgan Parish, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy

Scotland and has extensive manufactures and rich soil for farming. Kirktonbarns located in the Parish of Forgan is a principal farm and the soil is light but fertile. During the lifetime of James Buist the estate of Kirktonbarns consisted of about 774 acres of land.



Forgan Parish, Fife, Scotland 1888 © National Library of Scotland, Map Division

James Buist never married and lived with his older sisters Katherine and Margaret Buist at Kirktonbarns. His older brother Thomas Buist was long deceased by this time and had he survived would have been the proprietor of the estate of Kirktonbarns. James and his sisters Katherine and Margaret Buist are listed in the 1841, 1851 and 1861 censuses for Kirktonbarns, Forgan Parish, Fife. In the 1841 Census, James Buist is listed as being 45 years of age, a farmer along with his sister Katherine Buist age 50 and sister Margaret Buist age 45. (Fig.1)¹¹

Parish of Forgan		1841		Parish of Forgan		1841	
PLACE	HOUSE	NAME and BIRTHDAY, SEX and AGE of each Person in the Family at the Time of the Census	AGE	OCCUPATION	SEX	NAME and BIRTHDAY, SEX and AGE of each Person in the Family at the Time of the Census	AGE
Kirktonbarns	1	James Buist	45	Farmer	M	James Buist	45
	2	Margaret Buist	45		F	Margaret Buist	45
	3	Katherine Buist	50		F	Katherine Buist	50
	4	John Buist	45		M	John Buist	45
	5	John Buist	15		M	John Buist	15
	6	James Buist	10		M	James Buist	10
	7	Margaret Buist	10		F	Margaret Buist	10
	8	James Buist	5		M	James Buist	5
	9	Margaret Buist	5		F	Margaret Buist	5
	10	John Buist	5		M	John Buist	5
	11	Margaret Buist	5		F	Margaret Buist	5
	12	James Buist	5		M	James Buist	5
	13	Margaret Buist	5		F	Margaret Buist	5
	14	John Buist	5		M	John Buist	5
	15	Margaret Buist	5		F	Margaret Buist	5
TOTAL in Page 13		11				11	
Parish of Forgan		1841		Parish of Forgan		1841	
PLACE	HOUSE	NAME and BIRTHDAY, SEX and AGE of each Person in the Family at the Time of the Census	AGE	OCCUPATION	SEX	NAME and BIRTHDAY, SEX and AGE of each Person in the Family at the Time of the Census	AGE
Kirktonbarns	1	James Buist	45	Farmer	M	James Buist	45
	2	Margaret Buist	45		F	Margaret Buist	45
	3	Katherine Buist	50		F	Katherine Buist	50
	4	John Buist	45		M	John Buist	45
	5	John Buist	15		M	John Buist	15
	6	James Buist	10		M	James Buist	10
	7	Margaret Buist	10		F	Margaret Buist	10
	8	James Buist	5		M	James Buist	5
	9	Margaret Buist	5		F	Margaret Buist	5
	10	John Buist	5		M	John Buist	5
	11	Margaret Buist	5		F	Margaret Buist	5
	12	James Buist	5		M	James Buist	5
	13	Margaret Buist	5		F	Margaret Buist	5
	14	John Buist	5		M	John Buist	5
	15	Margaret Buist	5		F	Margaret Buist	5
TOTAL in Page 14		11				11	

Fig. 1. 1841 Scotland Census, Forgan Parish, Fife listing James Buist © National Records of Scotland Crown Copyright

¹¹ 1841 Scotland Census for Kirktonbarns, Forgan Parish, Fife, Scotland: Enumeration District Number 2, Page Number 13

He was elected as a member of the St. Andrews Literary and Philosophical Society on Monday, 5 November 1838. The Literary and Philosophical Society was founded in 1838, “when it was announced that several Gentlemen connected with the University and the City of St. Andrews, being desirous of establishing a Literary and Philosophical Society, are anxious to receive the names of those Gentlemen, who are disposed to countenance such an institution. Beside the general object of promoting Literary and Philosophic research the Society would especially have in view the establishment of a museum in the University. Signed by George Buist, among others.”¹² James Buist was also a member of the Scottish Midland Agricultural Association serving on the Fife District Committee during the 1870s.

The Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland

The Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland was founded in Edinburgh in the year 1784. The Society’s aim was to promote the regeneration of rural Scotland, and organized ploughing matches, harness competitions as well as cattle and bull competitions. James Buist was admitted to the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society in the year 1842 at the age of 47.¹³ He studied their agricultural publications and applied many of their recommendations to his own farm estate. He also participated in competitions where he would show his cattle and bulls and would enter them in any Fife competition shows held throughout the Shire. These included various oxen, short haired cows and bulls. He was highly supportive of this Society and was to remain an active member for the next 38 years. There is a record of his bull winning five pounds in the competition of 1849.¹⁴

James Buist and his two sisters were listed in the 1851 Census for Forgan Parish, Fife. James Buist was listed as being 55 years of age, a farmer of 650 acres of land and his sisters Katherine Buist was listed as being 63 years of age and Margaret Buist being 60 years of age. (Fig.2)¹⁵

¹² Biography of Literary and Philosophical Society of St. Andrews, at National Archives of Scotland. National Archives of Scotland, indexed online at <http://www.nas.gov.uk/onlineCatalogue/Person> code: STA81

¹³ Prize Essays & Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland. New Series Volume 4.8. William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh, 1843, Page 853

¹⁴ Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland. July 1849-March 1851. William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh, 1851. Page 272

¹⁵ 1851 Scotland Census for Kirktonbarns, Forgan Parish, Fife, Scotland: Enumeration District Number 2, Page 4

Upon the death of his brother the Reverend Dr. George Buist in 1860, James Buist inherited the property of Lawpark in South Street, St. Andrews.¹⁷ He did not move into the estate until after his retirement from farming and the sale of Kirktonbarns in 1870.

Cupar Corn Exchange Company

In the late 1850s a large trade was being done at Cupar in the selling, processing of wheat and other grains, and a covered building was needed for the weekly corn market. On Friday, 24 January 1860 eight local men one of which was James Buist, Esquire agreed to form a company responsible for these objects and on Monday, 13 February 1860 the Cupar Corn Exchange Company was officially incorporated. James Buist, Esquire was one of its founding Directors and it is one of Scotland's oldest companies. The site was chosen in the center of Cupar at the crossroads between the Bonnygate, St. Catherine Street and the Crossgate. According to the *Caledonian Mercury* on Friday, 26 July 1861, "yesterday, the foundation stone of the Cupar Corn Exchange was laid with masonic solemnities..."¹⁸ The Cupar Corn Exchange Company is still in existence today.

James Buist and his two sisters were listed in the 1861 Census for Kirktonbarns, Forgan Parish, Fife listing James as being 64 years of age, a farmer of 580 acres, employing 12 men; his sisters Katherine Buist age 70 and Margaret Buist age 69.¹⁹ In less than three years his sister Katherine Buist would die on Monday, 22 February 1864²⁰ and his last surviving sister Margaret Buist would die on Sunday, 25 March 1866 at the age of 75.²¹

In the year of 1865 in Scotland there occurred a great plague that affected farmer's cattle and livestock. At the time it was known as "Rinderpest." This was an infectious viral disease of cattle that spread throughout Scotland and England between 1865 and 1866. The *Fife Herald Newspaper* on Friday, 2 November 1865 reported, "Kirktonbarns, Parish of Forgan, tenant James Buist, Esquire, 3 cattle died and many other affected."²² By the end of 1866 the plague had suddenly ended and there are no records of how many of James Buist's livestock it had killed.

During this same time period, James Buist was also a Director for the Eastern Bank of Scotland. The bank was founded in 1838 and according to the *Dundee Courier Newspaper* dated Thursday, 10 April 1862, "the annual general meeting of the shareholders of the Eastern Bank of Scotland was held here yesterday, James Buist, Esquire; one of the Directors, in the chair."²³ During the following year (1863) the Eastern Bank of Scotland was acquired by Clydesdale Bank.

In the evening of Life

James Buist is listed in Westwood's Parochial Directory of 1866 for the Parish of Forgan, Fife. He was noted as "Farmer of Kirktonbarns, by Ferry-Port-on-Craig." (Fig.4)²⁴

¹⁷ Will of Rev. Dr. George Buist, 21 April 1830. Wills & Testaments (SC20/50/31) Cupar Sheriff Court. National Records of Scotland

¹⁸ *Caledonia Mercury Newspaper*, Friday, 26 July 1861

¹⁹ 1861 Scotland Census for Kirktonbarns, Forgan Parish, Fife, Scotland: Enumeration District Number 2, Page 9

²⁰ Death Record of Katherine Buist, 22 February 1864, Forgan Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 431/00 0003, National Records of Scotland

²¹ Death Record of Margaret Buist, 25 March 1866, Forgan Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 431/00 0014, National Records of Scotland

²² *Fife Herald Newspaper*, Thursday, 2 November 1865, Page 2

²³ *Dundee Courier Newspaper*, Thursday, 10 April 1862, Page 2

²⁴ Westwood's Parochial Directory for the Counties of Fife & Kinross. A. Westwood. Edinburgh: John Menzies. 1866. Page 85

DIRECTORY.		FORGAN.		85	
<p>The POST OFFICE for the entire Parish, the extreme eastern portion excepted, (which is Ferry-Port-on-Craig) is Newport, Thomas Webster, Post Master— Letters from all parts arrive on week days (from Dundee) at 6.30 and 11.30 A.M., and are despatched at 9.20 A.M., 4.30 and 6.30 P.M. On Sundays letters arrive at 9.30 A.M., and Office closes at 11 A.M.</p>					
BAKERS.					
Rhoad, Alexander, Easter Newport	Grieve, David, Scroggiele	Keay, Alexander, Fiam	[on-Craig		
Young, Andrew, Newport		Keay, Thomas, Niarveilla, by Ferry-Port-			
BLACKSMITHS.					
David, George, Newton		Knox, Andrew, Upper Friarion			
Martin, John, Tayfield Smilky		O'Flaherty, William, Easter Friarion			
Melville, John, Easter Newport		Rhoad, Henry S., Woodhavan			
Murdoch, David, St Fort Smilky		Scott, James, Craighad			
BOOT AND SHOEMAKERS.					
Fleming, James, Wester Newport		Stewart, Henry, Bee, Home Farm, St Fort			
Johnston, James, do		Wilkie, William, Macton, by Ferry-Port-			
Keay, David, Scogdale		on-Craig			
Keay, Robert, Easter Newport		Williamson, Thirft, Scroggiele, by Ferry-			
Sturrock, William, do					
BUILDERS.					
Brown, James, Newport		Anderson, Mrs E., Wester Newport			
Harris, W. & T., Easter Newport		Archibald, Miss, do			
Just, George, Wester Newport		Brodie, Mrs, Easter Newport			
GASTERS AND LAND LABOURERS.					
Barnard, And., Kempton, Easter Newport		Dorward, Mrs, Flewry Cottage, Newport			
Brown, William, Easter Newport		Forrest, William, Newport			
Forrester, Robert, do		Gilman, Kenneth, Easter Newport			
Grant, James, Tayfield		Hampton, John, do			
Mathewson, Oliver, Easter Newport		Harris, Miss, St Phillana, do			
		Jackson, John, do			
		Junk, Mrs David, sen., Wester Newport			
		Kilgour, Mrs Andrew, do			
		Lee, Miss Margaret, do			
		M'Gillivray, Flaky, do			
		Mackie, Mrs, do			
		Malville, John, do			
		Malville, Miss, Woodmuirhouse, Wester			
		Mathewson, Mrs R., St Phillana's			
		Miles, Mrs Alexander, Wester Newport			
		Murray, George, Easter Newport			
		Riost, Mrs, Wester Newport			
		Roid, Miss Ann, do			
		Rolger, James, Easter Newport			
		Rogers, James, Wester Newport			
		Shepherd, James, do			
		Shepherd, John, Easter Newport			
		Webster, Mrs, St Phillana's			
		Wilson, Misses, Easter Newport			
FARMERS.					
Arthur, John, Sea-Mills, Newport		Barry, Geo., [Lobbing] Wester Newport			
Blair, John, Werrin		Conacher, William, St Fort House Garden			
Brown, Archibald, Laverdavast		Edington, Arch., Tayfield House Garden			
Brown, William, Newport Inn		Grant, John, (Market) Woodhavan			
Buddle, Robert, Connewhead		Grant, J., (Market) Wester Newport			
Buist, Jas., Kirktonbarns, by Ferry-Port-		Grish, J., (Market) Wester Newport			
		Grish, John, (Lobbing) Tayfield Mains			

Fig. 4. Westwood's Parochial Directory for 1866

On Tuesday, 27 September 1870 James Buist, Esquire retired from farming as reported in the *Fifeshire Journal Newspaper* on Thursday, 29 September 1870. The emphasis which this Fife farmer placed on the value of education, and of applying business practice and science to agriculture was evident during the speeches made at his retiral dinner. At that, given in his honor, the *Fifeshire Journal* went on to state:

“When our friend commenced his career as an agriculturist, farming in Fife was in a different state from at present. He was one of the first to introduce into the county the system of sheep farming, which has so wonderfully changed the character of our lighter soils...Even most sparing and frugal and self-denying in his own habits, he had dealt out his means with a liberal hand in aid of his friends, and in the assistance of the children of poverty. After numerous toasts and loud cheers of the evening it was time for Mr. Buist to rise and speak. ‘Mr. Chairman, Croupiers, and Gentlemen, I have to express to you my most sincere thanks for the signal demonstration of your respect for me on this occasion... It so happened at our commencement that there were several eminent farmers in our locality who were called **“the wise men of the east.”** They engaged in the business of the farm in the most sturdy manner, while showing the greatest good neighborhood to their neighbors whenever they might meet in carrying them along with them in every manner of way according to their varied circumstances. This tended very much to promote agriculture in the neighborhood, so that my neighbors and many others throughout the county have so acted according to the spirit of the times...If it be a matter of great importance to have competent physicians, lawyers, teachers, clergymen; if it be a matter of great importance to have science flourish among us, since even our material prosperity depends so much upon it; if it be a matter of greater importance that a high culture should be possessed by those who are to rule among us in the many departments of thought and activity, the efficiency of our Universities must be of extreme importance...Our Scottish Universities have had a noble history. Really, perhaps, in the world no institutions have had a nobler history; and I believe they are as sound and true as ever...”²⁵

Sometime in early October of 1870, James Buist sold Kirktonbarns. A farm roup (auction sale) was held at Kirktonbarns on or about Thursday, 20 October 1870 and the *Fife Herald* reported “As was

²⁵ *Fifeshire Journal Newspaper*, Thursday, 29 September 1870

to be expected from the high reputation that Mr. James Buist has, there was a large turnout for the roup. His cattle brought respectable prices and horses which were very superior went as high as 364 pounds." (Fig 5)²⁶



Fig. 5. Kirktonbarns, Forgan Parish, Fife
Courtesy of Dr. Iain Macintyre, 16 May 2013

James Buist, Esquire it seems even in his later years never really retired from farming. He raised Clydesdale horses at Kirktonbarns, even though he no longer owned and operated the estate. By 1871 he spent mostly the remainder of his life at Lawpark, St. Andrews, the former estate of his brother, the Rev. Dr. George Buist but on occasion went back to his old estate of Kirktonbarns to look at his Clydesdales and add help where needed.

A Large Benefactor

Mr. Buist, throughout most of his entire life made many charitable donations mainly to the Church of Scotland. Due to his strong belief in the Church and because of his brother's life-long commitment to the Church, he donated large sums of monies to missions, church events, church fundraisers with little acknowledgement. He also donated to the University of St. Andrews and other universities across Scotland. *The Central Press of London Newspaper* for Friday, 5 December 1873 reported: "the sum of 1,000 pounds has been contributed to the fund of the London Missionary Society by Mr. James Buist, of Lawpark cottage, St. Andrews. This is the third 1,000 pounds that has been given or bequeathed from St. Andrews during the past few years."²⁷ This equates, in terms of purchasing power to 232,000 pounds in 2014 in terms of purchasing power or a staggering 3.7 million pounds as calculated by Retail Price Index. (Ref. <http://www.measuringworth.com>.) He also contributed to many mission funds of the Church of Scotland. In the year 1876 for example he gave a sizeable donation to the India Mission Fund. *The Morning Post Newspaper*, dated Friday, 17 March 1876 stated, "Mr. James Buist of Lawpark, St. Andrews, has handed over to the Rev. Dr. Herdman the sum of 6,000 pounds as a contribution to the India Mission Fund of the Established Church of Scotland."²⁸

The old benefactor had another remarkably generous contribution to give which was probably unparalleled at this time. According to the *Dundee Courier Newspaper* dated Thursday, 11 March 1875: "We understand that Mr. James Buist has intimated to the Congregational Committee of the Town Church his resolve to bequeath the entire estate of Lawpark for the purpose of augmenting the stipend

²⁶ *Fife Herald Newspaper*, Thursday, 20 October 1870

²⁷ *The Central Press Newspaper*, Friday, 5 December 1873, Page 6

²⁸ *The Morning Post Newspaper*, Friday, 17 March 1876, Page 6

of the second minister of St. Andrews parish.”²⁹ This was the parish where his brother Rev. Dr. George Buist had been minister, and he had inherited Lawpark from him. He also in 1876 founded and established a bursary for St. Mary’s College, St. Andrews in remembrance of his brother Rev. Dr. George Buist who was a Professor at the college. The annual value was 20 pounds tenable for three years.³⁰ This bursary continued being active until about 1889, some nine years after his death.



James Buist Portrait 1870s, Photograph Courtesy of The Church of Scotland
© The Church of Scotland

James Buist, Esquire made out his Last Will and Testament on Saturday, 8 July 1876. In the following years he made out codicils to the Will on Monday, 24 June 1878, Monday, 16 September 1878 and again on Sunday, 9 March 1879. The trustees to his Last Will and Testament were the following: Peter Christie, farmer; David and John Ballingall, farmers at Dunbog; John Dun, agent at Cupar; Andrew Buist, nephew and proprietor at Berryhill (since deceased); John Inglis and George Dun, farmer at Ballgonie.

Sometime in 1878, James Buist also set up with the University of St. Andrews a bursary fund. According to the *Fife Herald*: “Dr. George Buist, to whose memory a bursary was lately founded by his brother, James Buist, Esquire of Lawpark.”³¹

His health began failing and he quietly passed away on Saturday, 10 April 1880 at his home at Lawpark, St. Andrews at the age of 84. The cause of death was listed as “Climacteric decay,” (Natural causes, old age).³² He was buried in the Buist family liar in Forgan Cemetery, Forgan Parish, Fife on Thursday, 15 April 1880. (Fig. 6)³³

²⁹ *Dundee Courier Newspaper*, Thursday, 11 March 1875, Page 2

³⁰ St. Andrews University Calendar for the Year 1907-08. Edinburgh. Blackwood & Sons, 1905, Page 326

³¹ *Fife Herald Newspaper*, Thursday, 29 August 1878, Page 5

³² Death Record of James Buist, 10 April 1880, St. Andrews Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 453/00 0054, National Records of Scotland

³³ Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy, Forgan Cemetery, Forgan Parish, Fife, Scotland, October 2003 ©2010 Michael T. Tracy



Fig. 6. Forgan Cemetery, Forgan Parish, Fife
Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy

The *Fifeshire Journal Newspaper* reported: "Our obituary column of today records the decease of a gentleman who was highly esteemed in this neighborhood, namely Mr. James Buist, of Lawpark. The deceased was half-brother to the late Reverend Doctor Buist, so long one of the ministers in the town church here. He came to live at Lawpark some years ago, having then retired from an active agricultural life. Mr. Buist has from time to time given large sums of money to charitable objects, especially to those connected with the Church. We understand that the property of Lawpark is left to aid in increasing the emoluments of the second charge in this parish. Mr. Buist was a member of session, and took an interest in Church matters whilst able. He had been in failing health for two or three years, and without any serious change in his condition he quietly passed away on Saturday morning. The remains of the deceased are to be interred in Forgan churchyard today."³⁴

As stated, James Buist, Esquire was a major benefactor of his time to the Church of Scotland and it seems even after his death. Years and even decades later, the Church of Scotland still acknowledged a "Buist Fund" or "The Legacy of the Late James Buist" who gave at least 7,000 pounds each year to the Fund and Legacy itself after death. According to the Church of Scotland Home and Foreign Mission Record of May 1, 1891, "These funds fall to be kept intact, in respect of a Legacy and Donation from the Late Mr. Buist of Lawpark, 7,000 pounds."³⁵

His Last Will and Testament would be reported in various newspapers in Scotland and even in the United States. According to the *New York Times*, "Mr. James Buist, of St. Andrews, Scotland, bequeathed \$35,000.00 to missions."³⁶ The *Edinburgh Evening News* reported, "Munificent Bequest. By the will of the late Mr. James Buist, Lawpark, St. Andrews, the following handsome bequests have been left: To the Home Mission Scheme of the Church of Scotland 6,000 pounds; Endowment Scheme 1,000 pounds; Colonial Mission 1,000; Jewish Mission 500 pounds; Ministers Widows Fund 1,000 pounds; to the City of St. Andrews for permanent improvements 1,000 pounds; and to relatives 1,500 pounds. After providing for two annuities of 20 and 50 pounds, the residue of the estate from 28,000 to 30,000 pounds is to be equally divided among four schemes of the Church, viz., the India, Home, Colonial and

³⁴ *Fifeshire Journal Newspaper*, Thursday, 15 April 1880, Page 5

³⁵ The Church of Scotland Home and Foreign Mission Record. Church of Scotland. R & R Clark, Agents, Edinburgh. 1 May 1891, Page 126

³⁶ *New York Times Newspaper*, Sunday, 5 September 1880

Endowment.”³⁷ To put this into today’s context in terms of purchasing power this is worth around 3.6 million pounds in 2013 or gives an income value equivalent of 29.6 million pounds (Ref. <http://www.measuringworth.com>.)

James Buist, Esquire asked for little during his lifetime, but gave all in return. As he himself said upon his retirement in 1870, referring to the “Wise men of the East,” of how they transformed the landscape of farming in Fife, while showing the greatest good neighborhood to their neighbors, James Buist, Esquire was one of these “Wise men of the East.” In grateful esteem and recognition by his 4th great nephew.

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³⁷ *Edinburgh Evening News*, Friday, 23 April 1880

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