



## WHITBURN

**W**HITBURN adopted the Police Acts in 1861, and under the provisions of the Burgh Police Act of 1892, took for the Common Seal a representation of a stage coach with the motto "*Onward*." Stage coaches were the principal means of travelling before the introduction of railways, and as Whitburn was the principal station on the coach route between Edinburgh and Glasgow, which was the third to be established in Scotland (the first being between Edinburgh and Leith in 1610, and the second between Edinburgh and Haddington in March 1678), the Town Council decided to commemorate the old coaching days on their Burgh Seal.

Robert Chambers in his "Domestic Annals of Scotland," gives the following abridged extracts from the "Privy Council Records" and from "Memorabilia of the City of Glasgow, selected from the minute books of the Burgh."

In July 1678 "William Hume, merchant in Edinburgh, appears to have set up a stage coach between his own city and Glasgow, encouraged thereto by the liberality of the two municipalities. The city of Glasgow undertook to pay four hundred merks annually for two years. Hume proposed that his conveyance should carry only six passengers, at £4, 16s. Scots each in summer, and £5, 8s. in winter (respectively 8s. and 9s. sterling), being at the rate of 2s. 8d. a mile in summer, and 3s. in winter. The privy council, on his petition, gave him an exclusive privilege for seven years, and assured him against his horses being pressed for any kind of public service." This does not appear to have been successful, and Chambers tells us that another attempt was made in October 1743: "We have seen that an abortive attempt was made in 1678 to set up a stage coach between Edinburgh and Glasgow. Nothing more is heard of such a scheme till the present date, when John Walker, merchant in Edinburgh, proposed to the town council of Glasgow the setting up of a stage coach between the two towns, for six persons, twice a week, for twenty weeks in summer and once a week during the rest of the year, receiving ten shillings per passenger, provided that he should have the sale of two hundred tickets guaranteed. This effort was likewise abortive.

"It was not till 1758, when the population of Glasgow had risen to about thirty-five thousand that a regular conveyance for passengers was established between the two cities. It was drawn by four horses, and the journey of forty-two miles was

performed in twelve hours, the passengers stopping to dine on the way. Such was the only stage coach on that important road for thirty years, nor during that time did any acceleration take place. A young lady of Glasgow of distinguished beauty, having to travel to Edinburgh about 1780, a lover towards whom she was not very favourably disposed, took all the remaining tickets, was of course her sole companion on the journey, entertained her at dinner, and otherwise found such means of pressing his suit, that she soon after became his wife. This was, so far as it goes, a very pretty piece of stage coach romance ; but, unluckily, the lover was unworthy of his good fortune, and the lady, in a state of worse than widowhood, was, a few years after, the subject of the celebrated Clarinda correspondence of Burns."

The writer of the "Old Statistical Account" alleges that Whitburn obtained its name from the settlement, beside a stream running through the parish, of several families of the name of White, but Chalmers in his "Caledonia" says, with reference to this stream, that it was "obviously named Whiteburn in contradistinction to Blackburn, which, on the eastward runs at no great distance."



## WHITHORN

**W**HITHORN was created a Royal Burgh by King Robert the Bruce, and received a Charter of Confirmation from King James IV. in 1511. It is famed as being the cradle of Christianity in Scotland. Here it was that St. Ninian, who was a Prince of Cumberland and had gone to study in Rome, landed about the year 397, and here he established the principal seat of his mission. The Seal of the Burgh commemorates this, showing a figure of St. Ninian enthroned, with his right hand raised in front in blessing, and his left hand resting upon a bible. On each side is a fetter consisting of two round links joined by an oblong one, and also on each side is a spray of leaves possibly intended for laurel. Round about are the words "*S comuni civitatis burgi candidi casa.*"

In the "Life of Ninian" by Ailred of Rievaulx, translated by Dr Metcalfe, we are told that after Ninian landed "he chose a site for himself in the place which is now called Whithorn. This place is situated on the shore of the ocean, and, running far out into the sea is enclosed by the sea itself on the east, west, and south, the way being open to those who could approach it only on the north. Here therefore, by the command of the man of God, the masons, whom he had brought with him, built a church, before which, they say, no other had been built in Britain of stone. And inasmuch as he learned that the most holy Martin, whom he always venerated with wondrous affection, had now passed away from the earth to the heavens, he was careful to dedicate it to his honour." The holy Martin mentioned here was St. Martin of Tours, who was Ninian's instructor in things monastic. Regarding the church which Ninian built, Sir Herbert Maxwell says that the "novel structure would earn the title of White House, or Candida Casa, from its contrast with the dark native dwellings of mud and wattle." The name of the Burgh is from the Old English *hwit erne*, meaning "white house," and is a translation of Candida casa. St. Ninian died on the 16th September 432, and was buried in his church at Whithorn. From that period, Dr Taylor tells us, the church "became the shrine of its famous founder, and continued to be the resort of many a royal and noble pilgrimage down even to the Reformation." He adds that the day of St. Ninian's death "for ages

was celebrated as a festival in honour of the virtues and labours of this primitive bishop, whose memory is still preserved in Scotland by the numerous churches, chapels, and caves which bear his name."

The fetters on the Seal apparently represent the chains of superstition from which Ninian freed his countrymen, while the laurel sprays would indicate his triumph over the powers of darkness.

The late Principal Cunningham of St. Andrews University, in his "Church History of Scotland," mentions that the Arms of the See of Galloway bears a figure of St. Ninian as a frocked and mitred bishop, but he adds that "we cannot so picture to ourselves the holy man, but rather liken him to these poor but ardent apostles who went forth from the shores of Tiberias to preach the gospel to every creature."



## WICK

**W**ICK was erected into a Royal Burgh by King James VI. on 25th September 1589 at the request of the then Earl of Caithness, and has for its Seal a representation of St. Fergus in an open boat on the sea, being rowed by two rowers. The saint has a glory round his head, and his left arm is outstretched. Above is the motto "*Nisi Dominus frustra*," which is the same as that of Edinburgh.

Dr Skene in his "Celtic Scotland" tells us that for many years St. Fergus was a bishop in Ireland from whence he went to the west of Scotland. Thereafter he went to Caithness where he preached to, and converted, the people. From Caithness he journeyed to the district of Buchan, where, having rested at a place then called Lungley, and now known as St. Fergus, he built a basilica there and dedicated it to himself. From Lungley he finally journeyed to Glammis where he built another church, and where he died. The church of Wick is dedicated to him. An ancient image of him with, however, the features obliterated, clothed in a monkish habit and standing on some kind of animal, used to be in the church, but in 1841 it was removed to the jail, surely a sad commentary on the briefness of saintly glory. The Seal evidently refers to his different voyages while carrying the gospel message.

The name of the Burgh is pure Norse, meaning a bay, and in early times the place was much frequented by the Norsemen.

Quite recently the Burgh of Pulteneytown was amalgamated with Wick for municipal purposes.



## WIGTOWN

**I**T is said that Wigtown was erected into a Royal Burgh in the reign of King David II., probably in 1341, when it was made the chief town of the Earldom of Wigton, which was conferred on Sir Malcolm Fleming, the ancestor of the family of Wigton, but the title became extinct in 1747. All the original charters were lost, and it was re-erected into a Royal Burgh by King James III. in 1469.

As it is a seaport the Seal bears a three-masted ship on the sea. Each mast has a flag flying to the left. On the prow there is a flag flying to the right, and on the stern a larger flag flying to the left. This last flag has a cross in the corner. In the right hand corner of the Seal the sun is represented shining.

The name seems to come from two Saxon words *wic*, a village, and *ton*, a hill, thus meaning a town placed on a hill.



## WISHAW

**W**ISHAW came under the provisions of the various Police Acts in 1855. Situated, as it is, in the centre of the coal fields of Lanarkshire, and having a large engineering industry, under the Burgh Police Act of 1892, a Common Seal was adopted emblematic of these industries. The Seal is oval, having in the centre a female figure seated representing industry. In her right hand she holds the sceptre of power, and in her left a retort, emblematic of smelting, while lying beside the chair is a cogged wheel, significant of engineering. The chair in which the figure is seated has no symbolic, or other meaning, but is simply intended to be typical of an old Scottish chair. Entwined round its arms are scrolls with the words "Mining" and "Smelting." On each side of the chair are sprays of laurel symbolic of the adorning of successful industry with the laurel wreaths of victory, while beneath is the Scottish Thistle.

I may mention that with regard to the retort, in the impression of the Seal kindly sent to me by the Town Clerk, and also in the impression on the Burgh notepaper, the object the figure holds in her left hand appears like a bag, probably a mistake made by the engraver, and, indeed, the late Marquis of Bute in his recent work appeared to think it was a bag and calls it "a bag of money." As I was in doubt as to what it was really intended to represent, I again communicated with the Town Clerk, who in his turn, communicated with Mr Cullen, architect, the designer of the Seal, who sent an enlarged drawing of the Seal and remarked "I may point out that the figure holds in the right hand a sceptre, and in the left a retort emblematic of smelting." Accordingly, in the above representation of the Seal I have drawn a retort taken from the before mentioned sketch.