GENERAL

Johnston

c.1140 Larghes. Gaelic *learg*, side of a hill, with Pictish suffix of place, "*-ais*".
Gogo. Perhaps Norse *gauk a,* "cuckoo stream".

CGA, T-MJ 436

"Plan of the New Town of Largs, the Property of Thomas Brisbane, in parish of Largs, co. Ayr, by Alexander May", 1810.

Census, 1841

Population increase attributed 'to the influx of about 500 persons for the benefit of sea-bathing.'

William Davidson, Observations on the Climate of Largs, with Notices of the other principal Watering-places on the Clyde, and their general Characteristics, Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal, lxix, 1848, 32-39
[Article in Ayrshire, General, at Holidays]
.... Before the establishment of steam-vessels, the parish was rather a sequestered spot ... The town proper, as far as the Broomfields or elevated portion of the beach is much exposed during spring to east winds, which blow down the Gogo and Brisbane glens; the Crescent less so, while the villas erected to the north of the Noddle river are almost altogether defended by the wooded banks behind, although they are somewhat open to the north. The houses and villas extend along the shore for about a mile and a half, are generally elegant and tasteful in their architecture, which, combined with the green and beautifully shaped hills on the background with the ocean scenery, render the locality extremely beautiful at all seasons of the year. The town proper is very ancient, and consists of a series of streets, several of them narrow, running at right angles to one another or east and west, and north and south. Cottages of moderate dimensions for the summer visitors would enhance its value as a watering-place, as there is rather a deficiency of such accommodation."

C1851, 602, book 9

Remarks of the Minister of the Parish.
"The 'occupation' column not always filled up. In this and in the other Enumeration Books there are a considerable number of unimportant inaccuracies, but not such as to affect the correctness of the return. It is believed that the parishioners severally have been desirous to afford correct information and that the Enumerators made every exertion to prevent mistakes, and were all anxious to discharge their duty aright. The number of uninhabited houses is large for the population, but it is accounted for by the circumstance that this is a watering place, and many of them are furnished and let for a longer or shorter period in summer and autumn to families who come to the sea-bathing."

Imp Gaz, II, 299 [1857/1865]

"A large part of the inhabitants depend mainly on rents and profits drawn from summer visitors."
The Colm's Day Fair, now of diminished importance, was anciently "a grand rendezvous of Highlanders and Lowlanders for the mutual exchange of their commodities, and probably exhibited more grotesque scenes of manners and traffic than any which can now be witnessed in Scotland."
"… and altogether, the town is well worthy of a repute which it obtained at the very commencement of the era of steamboat navigation, and has continued to possess to the present day, as a favourite summer

resort of families from Glasgow and other seats of manufacture on the Clyde."

KWP Sa 7.1.1865, 4f — [Largs Burying Ground case].
"Some 30 or 40 years ago, it [i.e. Largs] doubtless was a favourite resort of the inhabitants of Glasgow for sea-bathing, but the fashion has now completely changed, as seen by the numerous towns and villages which have since sprung up all along the Argyleshire coast, and Largs now lives only in the remembrance of its departed glories. Indeed, it is in evidence that during the last few years only two small villas have been erected by a retired sea-captain".

ASH Sa 4.7.1868 3e has extracts from "Largs as a Watering Place", in Hereford Journal, 20.6.1868:
Water running down streets - washing in the streets - no railways and hence no riffraff ("tagrag and bobtail"). See ASH files.

ASH 29.4.1876 — Reports first meeting of Police Commissioners.

EG 18.3.1910 — Details of Burgh extension.

LMWN, W 12.4.2017, 28 — Electricity, 1928.

R H Bruce Lockhart, My Scottish Youth, London, Putnam 1937, 60
"During my last summer term at Beith I widened my horizons by a visit to Largs, a pleasant town on the Ayrshire coast, which to-day serves as a kind of Margate for Glasgow. From its shores Clyde-built vessels, from the Queen Mary to the smallest motor-boat, may be seen testing their engines on a measured mile between the town and Wemyss Bay."

Bernard Fergusson, The Watery Maze, Collins, 1961
This history of Combined Operations HQ includes a report of the June 1943 Conference at Largs at which Combined Ops prevailed over General Headquarters with regard to the choice of a site for the first continental landings in World War 2.

Riach, p? — Contains report (not detailed) of weekly entertainments put on in the Dunn Memorial Hall during WW2 for the many servicemen/women stationed in and around Largs.

ACC, FC 13.11.1947, 1351 — Boundaries of the Burgh were extended with effect from 16th May 1947.

Scots Magazine, vol 78, no.1, October 1962, 72
"I hope Provost Acheson wins the Battle of Largs 1962. Some of the Council wish to pare down the £12,800 plan prepared by Brigadier Alasdair MacLean for a pageant next year to celebrate the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Largs. The local Liberal party are also campaigning against the pageant, and getting a good deal of support. It is of little importance whether the Battle of Largs is celebrated or not, although I am all for recalling decisive events in our history. It is of importance, however, that a Scottish holiday resort should have the courage and imagination to stage a pageant of this sort. If Largs does go ahead I am quite sure their enterprise will pay a really handsome dividend." [James S Grant]
Scots Magazine, Vol 78, no 2, November 1962, 168

"Commemoration of the event causes uproar in the bonnie stone-built town. Provost Herbert Acheson, a man of imagination and daring, is still of the opinion that the proposed eight-day pageant will be the biggest event of 1963 in the West of Scotland. No doubt Scotland can do with largeness in its events: except for the Festival, little eventuates that is not niggling and undersize as a small firework show on a wet night. Ratepayers, however, mindful that rates went up by 1s 9d this year, are perturbed about possible loss. The resulting difference of opinion may perhaps go down in the records as the Second Battle of Largs."

SRC, L&R 15.7.1981, 1054 — VIKING FESTIVAL. First was in 1980: SRC offering £500 to that for 1981.

BURGH OFFICIALS

TOWN CLERK

John MORRIS, 1899 — Appointed. Troon Times, F 17.3.1899, 4h
Peter MORRIS — fl 1920s: he was off ill from Dec 1925 to Sept 1926. The interim clerk was F J THOMSON.

Fl.1949 — J. Dunlop BELL

James C W NICOL — 1946-48 Joint Town Clerk. He was a partner in Love & Williamson. Went to Kilmarnock, and from 1966-1975 Town Clerk, Kilmarnock.

John G YOUNG — Fl. 1961, see e.g. ref in EG, F 7.4.1961, 212a

BURGH SURVEYOR

John Guthrie BAXTER — Died 27.4.1918 (C&I 1919)
George ARKIESON — fl 1920s, 1930s

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

PROVOST

Mrs J J E MORRIS — 1944-1947. [Died 24 August 1952. AA Th 28.8.1952, 8e] [The Knowe, Largs. Councillor with 1 gap, since 1920. Her husband, died c.1919, had also been Provost]

FREEMEN

1. King Haakon of Norway

2. Alexander Simpson, 87, senior partner in family firm, publishers of the Largs and Millport Weekly News. (AA, Th 4.7.1963, 26ab)

TOURISM

Robert Reid (Senex). His account of a trip to Largs to stay at Haylie House in 1782 is reprinted in no.33 (Winter 2000) of the Largs & North Ayrshire Family History Society Newsletter.

David C Kerr, 'McKellar's Boats', in Scottish Local History, 53, Winter 2001,18-24, 'looks at steamer services to Largs from 1813 to 1890.'

ACC, TPC 8.7.1947, 895 Approval given to stable, New Street, for beach ponies. Mrs J. McWhirter, 144 Butterbiggins Road.

ARCHAEOLOGY

CHAMBERED TOMBS [MARGARET'S LAW: HACO'S TOMB]

Henshall NS 209586. Clyde Group. The burial chamber stands on a shelf of the hillside which rises from the seashore, between the 100' and 150' contours. The chamber was once covered by a large cairn called Margaret's Law, which was completely removed in 1772. The cairn had been supposed to be natural, but was "found to be a collection of stones, containing upwards of 15,000 cartloads, in the centre of which were discovered five stone coffins." [OSA, xvii, 516-7, 1796]. An earlier account records that in moving the cairn "they came at length to three long flat unhewn stones which were covers of three deep stone coffins." [OSA, ii, 365, 1792].

The chamber is orientated SES-WNW with the entrance facing uphill to the east. It is 22' long by 3-4' wide and has probably been divided into three compartments. When found there were evidently three capstones in place. Today only one remains, over the intact inner part of the chamber; the outer part has been much disturbed and ruined.

The innermost compartment is 6' by 4'2" internally and 4'1" in height. It is built of massive slabs of quartz conglomerate. The south side stone is 7'9" long and up to 1'9" thick, the N side one 8' and about 1'. The end stone, fitted between, is 4'4" long. There is a neat fit at the SW corner, but at the NW corner there is a small gap widening above ground level. These three have fairly flat inner edges and more or less level upper edges at about the same height. The capstone, of pebbly sandstone, rests on the N stone and on three small stones on the S stone. It appears to have been broken at the west end. It is 6'6" by 8'3" by 1'1" thick. There is a slight dip to the south. Across the east end of the compartment there is a substantial septal stone which supports the east end of the side slabs. Immediately outside is a 2nd septal stone, only 11" high, its function being to support the W ends of the next pair of side slabs of the chamber. These are (1) 6' by 2'10" high by 1'3" thick and (2) 6'7" by 3'6" by 1'6" thick, being considerably lower than the westernmost pair of side slabs. The width of this compartment is 3'5". The south side of the chamber is continued eastwards by a still lower side slab, 3'4" long and circa 1'3" high, which doubtless once had dry walling rising above it. The 1' wide gap between the orthostats of the south wall was filled by a small boulder; east of the orthostats the chamber wall is continued by dry masonry of fair sized neatly set slabs, remaining three courses high on the N side. The chamber wall has been destroyed east of the second orthostat. Across the east end of the chamber there is a flat rectangular sectioned slab, 4' by 1'3" wide and 1' deep, which was found with some walling above. No septal slab was found at the east end of the central pair of side stones, where one might be expected, but it may well have been destroyed when the adjacent side slab was removed.

HILLFORT, CASTLEHILL

Kerr — On northern edge of park is Castle Hill, an Iron Age hillfort. Not much remains, but a ditch topped by a low rampart can still be seen. c.500BC to 200AD.

LITERATURE, &C

AA, Th 18.9.1851, 1f — Hugh Craig's poem about the Gogo, ADDRESS TO AN AYRSHIRE RIVER. See ref.

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