

John Faed RSA

The Gatehouse Years

David I. A. Steel

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The Stewartry Museum  
Dumfries and Galloway Museums Service

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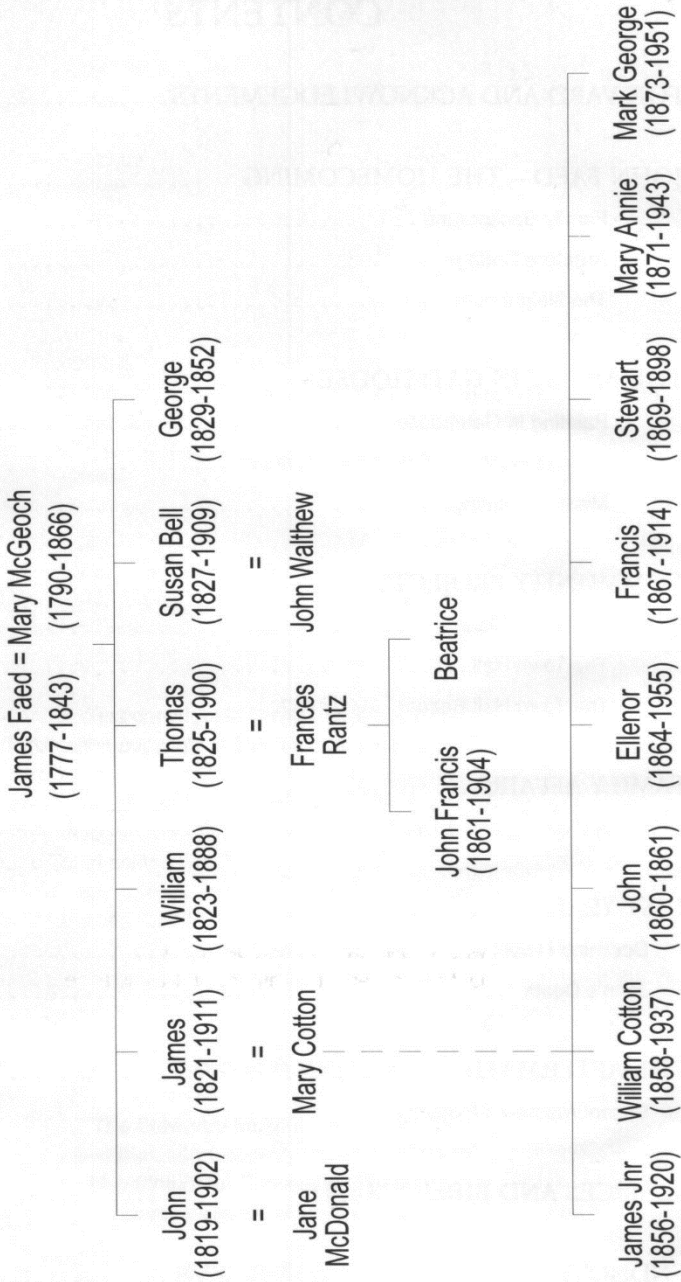
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# CONTENTS

FORWARD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
JOHN FAED - THE HOMECOMING	6
Family Background	6
Ardmore Cottage	6
The Neighbours	7
THE ARTIST IN GATEHOUSE	8
Painting in Gatehouse	8
Kirkcudbrightshire Fine Art Association	11
Missing Paintings	13
COMMUNITY PROJECTS	13
The Town Clock	13
The Town Hall	14
The Town Hall Bazaar	15
FAMILY AFFAIRS	16
A Wedding and a Death	16
LAST YEARS	18
Declining Health	18
John's Death	21
THE AFTERMATH	22
Susan Walthew's Executry	22
SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	25
ENDNOTES	27

# THE FAED FAMILY



## FORWARD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The year 2001, falling as it does between the centenary of the death of Thomas Faed and that of his brother John, provides an opportunity to reflect on a remarkable family of artists born in Gatehouse of Fleet in the early nineteenth century. Of the six children of the millwright James Faed and Mary McGeoch, five had their work exhibited at the Royal Academy (RA) and the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA). Drawing on largely unpublished material, most of it local, this essay seeks to throw some new light on John, in particular, and his sister Susan in their later years in Gatehouse.

The story of this artistic family has been comprehensively documented in the late Mary McKerrow's biography *The Faeds*, published in 1982 and in her contribution to *Kirkcudbright 100 years of an artists' colony*, published in 2000. However, little has been written so far about their life in Gatehouse in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is hoped that this brief account of the Faeds may result in the uncovering of further material in the period leading up to the centenary of John's death in October 2002.

I am particularly indebted to Dr David Devereux of The Stewartry Museum, Dumfries and Galloway Museums Service not only for his advice on earlier drafts but also for undertaking the publication of this work. I would also like to thank the Stewartry Area Committee of Dumfries and Galloway Council, The Friends of The Mill on the Fleet and The Murray Usher Foundation who have generously funded this publication.

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# 1. JOHN FAED - THE HOMECOMING

## Family Background

In 1819 James Faed married Mary McGeoch, whose family farmed at Girthon Kirk and settled at Barlay Mill on the outskirts of Gatehouse of Fleet. Between that year and 1829 they had six children: John, James, William, Thomas, Susan Bell and George. When John, the eldest son of James Faed left Barlay Mill in 1840 to develop his artistic career in Edinburgh, it might have marked the beginning of the end of the family's connection with the Burgh. In 1843 John's father died and his brother Thomas, then aged 17 came to Edinburgh to attend art classes. Before long, the whole family was in Edinburgh. In the 1851 census we find Susan keeping house for her brothers Thomas, described as an historical painter, and William, miller and grain dealer, at Fettes Row. John, described as a portrait painter, and his wife, Jane were living in Duncan Street, and their mother, Mary was in Comely Bank with her sons James and George, both recorded as engravers. Thomas, and later John, would move to London. However, it was John's return to Gatehouse in the last 30 years of his life and his contribution to the Burgh, which has done most to cement the Faed family association with this small town in Galloway.

## Ardmore Cottage

We know that Mary, the artists' mother spent her last years at Fleetbank, Gatehouse, the house nearly opposite the present day Episcopal Church. When she died on 15 November 1866, John, who had only recently settled in St John's Wood, London, had nowhere to call his own in Gatehouse. He seems to have been determined to build himself a holiday cottage there as quickly as possible. On 29 July 1867 the local landowner, H. G. Murray Stewart, granted him a feu to a piece of ground, 80ft in front and 150ft backwards, being a part of the Gatehouse farm, immediately adjoining the feu of the late Thomas Campbell. The feu duty was a modest £1 per annum<sup>i</sup> Building work must have commenced soon after as the Valuation Roll for 1868-9 refers to a cottage and garden belonging to John Faed, 38 St Johns Wood Park, London as "unfinished for part of year".

The site, chosen by John, on the rising ground above Gatehouse afforded views up the valley of the Fleet beyond his childhood home at Barlay Mill and also over the town to the hills and Fleet estuary beyond. The former view is captured on canvas in the popular *Trysting Place*, the latter in his many views of the town, most notably the *View over Gatehouse*, gifted to the inhabitants of the Burgh. John named the house he built Ardmore Cottage, and lived here until his death in 1902. His sister Susan stayed on in the house until she died in 1909.

Writing in 1909 to prospective purchasers of the property, the family lawyer, R. S. Glover wrote "I should think it would take £150 or very nearly that sum to put the house in order, including cost of bath etc, as the whole place requires papering and painting."<sup>ii</sup> We can, perhaps, assume that in 1909 the house remained much as it had done in John's time, comprising, according to Glover, of:



“Dining room, drawing room, three bedrooms (one with large dressing room), servants’ bedroom, studio, (18ft 8in by 17ft) room off it, kitchen, pantry, scullery, box room, small cloak room, large attic over studio, WC. Outside, stable (two stalled) coach house, coal house, laundry, garden ground in front of house... There is gas in the house, which has a sewage system of its own. There is no bath, but there is sufficient water pressure to allow of one being put in. The house faces the south west and gets the morning sun except in winter, when the rising ground behind shelters it till the forenoon. The woodwork of the windows etc requires painting but otherwise the house is in good repair. The title is quite good and clear of burdens.”<sup>iii</sup>

## The Neighbours

Ardmore was not the first house to be built on the “cut”, the road which had been constructed in 1820 to take the main road away from the Cally policies. In 1844 Thomas Campbell, a grocer in Gatehouse had feued a plot there and built a house called Hill Cottage. In 1850, James McKean, a Gatehouse man, who had been a successful builder in Manchester, feued a plot next to that of his sister, Mrs Campbell and erected a substantial villa called Braeside. Like John Faed, Campbell and McKean were members of the Free Kirk. Thomas Campbell was the first treasurer and James McKean, who for many years was the Provost of Gatehouse, was also an elder of the Church for 15 years until his death in 1879.

While Ardmore remained in the Faed family until 1909, John and later Susan would see a number of changes in the owners and tenants of the neighbouring houses. Hill Cottage had been let from 1855 until it was sold in 1880. Braeside had changed hands in 1880 and again in 1886. Mrs Harriet Copland owned it from 1888 to 1893. By coincidence, it was Mrs Copland’s great uncle, Viscount Kenmure, (John Gordon) who had given early encouragement to the young John Faed when he gave the boy his own painting materials on a visit to Gatehouse. John records:

“No amount of language could convey the satisfaction and delight I had in carrying that box home. I had never even seen a cake of water colour in my life before, but to be the possessor of such a number of colours was wealth indeed.”<sup>iv</sup>

John obviously maintained his contacts with Mrs Copland and her family because he records that on his autumn holiday visits to Barlay Mill from Edinburgh, he painted “several of the county people.”<sup>v</sup> His list includes Mrs Copland of Colliston, her sister, Louisa, and Louisa’s husband, Rev. James Maitland D.D., for many years the Minister of the parish of Kells.

In 1893 Braeside was purchased by John Moodie, manager of the Halifax Bank in Yorkshire, who was to become a friend of John, and, as Provost of the town, took the initiative to complete the project which was to be the artist’s most significant contribution to the town.



Hill Cottage was purchased by a Miss Margaret McCutcheon in 1880. Her great nephew, Alexander McCutcheon, born there in 1906 would marry Francis Rattray of Roseville House whose forbear, William Campbell had not only introduced John to his house with its many family portraits, including two by Sir Henry Raeburn, but had also introduced him to the painting of miniatures on ivory. John recorded:

“It would be difficult to say how much I owe that family, for besides the artistic improvement I derived from their good pictures, I was deriving various mental qualities, which were of value to me in the outer world, I was so soon to enter.”<sup>vi</sup>

## 2. THE ARTIST IN GATEHOUSE

### **Painting in Gatehouse**

John records that:

“After building our house at Gatehouse it was our habit of spending about six months of the year at Ardmore. This was done successively for 8 or 10 years, but, finding that the class of subjects I was then engaged with required country models, and Gatehouse could supply them of all ages, in perfection, I finally resolved to leave London, which I did in 1880.”<sup>vii</sup>

At the 1841 census, shortly after John left for Edinburgh, the population of Gatehouse had reached a total of 1832 inhabitants. The new town, developed by James Murray of Broughton, employed substantial numbers in cotton spinning and weaving but by 1881 the town’s industry was in decline. The population had by then fallen to 1288. The 1881 census records John Faed, aged 61, described as historical painter, living at Ardmore with his wife, Jane, aged 60. There was also a housemaid, Agnes Martin, and a Gatehouse-born cook, Margaret McGowan. By 1901, the year before John’s death, the population had fallen again, to 1013.

On his return to Gatehouse, John continued to paint actively, increasingly drawing his subjects from the countryside about him, views from Ardmore being the subject of many works. Perhaps, too, he was able to paint more for pleasure than to earn a living. He continued to exhibit both at the Royal Academy and Royal Scottish Academy, although it was occasionally a hazardous business consigning pictures from Gatehouse. In 1891 he wrote to the Secretary of the RSA:

“I thank you very much for taking the trouble of sending telegram to assure me of the safe arrival of my pictures, about which of course I was very anxious.

No doubt the “strike” had something to do with it, as they were nearly 5 days instead of 12 hours on their journey.

Wishing our exhibition all success”<sup>viii</sup>

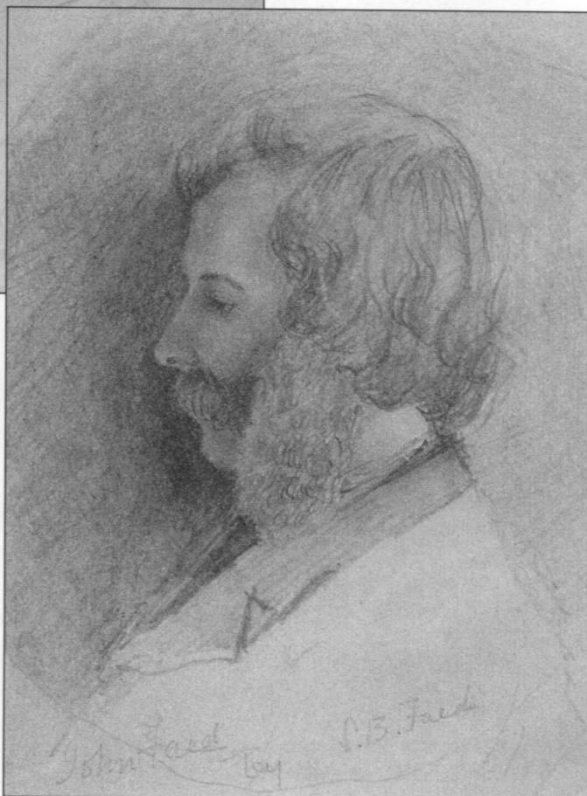
John was opposed to the RSA including prices in its catalogues and preferred enquirers to refer in person to the artist. This may in part have been because dealers would not tell him to whom they had sold his works and he thus did not know of their



Photograph of Ardmore and Gatehouse-of-Fleet (C. 1900) Ewart Library, Dumfries



Pencil Sketch of Susan Bell Faed  
by John Faed (date unknown)  
The Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright  
courtesy of Mr. L.W. Rutherford



Pencil Sketch of John Faed  
by Susan Bell Faed (c. 1860)  
Gatehouse Town Council Collection,  
The Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright

whereabouts. In 1883 he wrote to George Hay, the Secretary of the RSA with regard to his small landscape *On a Summer Afternoon*:

..... "I have no great wish to part with it. It was done more with a view of a careful study of nature and truth than as a landscape subject and judging of the estimate formed of it by the Hanging Committee, it could not have been very high as they hung it any how.

The enquirer can be informed that I would not part with it under £30."<sup>xix</sup>

1883 was also the year that John exhibited *The Poet's Dream* at the RSA. It had been shown in London in 1882 with a mixed reception. He replied to the Secretary of the RSA, in connection with a request for pictures for an exhibition to be held in Germany:

"In reply to your circular anent the Munich exhibition I beg to say that I should like to send my picture of the *Poet's Dream*. I have no other at present which I would care to send."<sup>x</sup> The work is perhaps best described in the lines written on the back of the canvas by the artist himself:

"The youthful poet in rapt fancy sees  
Those airy forms that seem to shape a story,  
To others, they are clouds stirred by the breeze,  
But shrouded in a weird and fitful glory."<sup>xi</sup>

## **Kirkcudbrightshire Fine Art Association**

In 1885 when Gatehouse Town Hall, the project with which he was so closely connected, had been successfully opened, John turned his attention to the promotion of the Kirkcudbrightshire Fine Art Association of which he was persuaded to become the President. The Committee included artists such as E.A. Hornel, Thomas Blacklock, W.S. MacGeorge, F.R. Coles and other members of what became known as the 'Kirkcudbright School'. In their letters to Hornel, preserved at Broughton House, Kirkcudbright a number of the young artists record the support and encouragement they received from John Faed.

He provided a number of pictures for the Association's exhibitions and also persuaded other members of the family, including his sister, Susan, to exhibit. However in her case there was a hurdle to overcome. The Association consisted of "male professional and amateur artists."<sup>xii</sup> F.R. Coles wrote to Hornel:

"I saw Faed yesterday and he means to send the "Poets Dream"- hooray! perhaps three others. He asked if he should be allowed to send any of Miss Faed's paintings. I suggested she should become an Hon. Member first; but perhaps some arrangement could be come to."<sup>xiii</sup>

All went well. In a letter to Hornel, who had returned to Kirkcudbright at the age of 21 in 1885, Faed wrote that he had had a telegram from his sister saying that she had sent two pictures from London, so he would not need the two Susan Faeds which John had given him as well.<sup>xiv</sup> However, the catalogue for the Association's first exhibition held

in Kirkcudbright in December 1886 shows that the hanging committee, of James Guthrie and George Henry, had recognised her talent as all four of Susan's pictures were exhibited. The exhibition also contained *Oh Why Left I My Hame* by his brother Thomas, work by his brother James, pictures by his nephew J. Francis Faed, as well as his own contributions, described by the Kirkcudbrightshire Advertiser as "certainly the feature of the exhibition"<sup>xv</sup>

The young Galloway artists also received John's support in the face of criticism of their new painting style as the following letter from MacGeorge to Hornel shows:

"I had a letter from Faed last night in answer to mine in regard to the art critiques. He says that the people who will believe such notices are not the people to whom you have to appeal - he simply advises that no notice be taken publicly or otherwise of the criticism as it would make the critics of so much more importance - he advises you and others to go manfully to work and dispute the position which the critics place you in, and show them that you can, and do intend to paint nature".<sup>xvi</sup>

In the summer of 1887 the Association held its first open exhibition in the Town Hall in Castle Douglas. This time the exhibition was not only enhanced by a number of John's and Thomas' works, including Thomas' *Going to Church under Difficulties*, (the property of John), but there were also pictures by James, James junior and William Cotton Faed for sale. John also lent a painting, *A Cottar's Garden*, Kirkcudbright by E.A. Hornel.

John liked to spend time in the summer at Carrick near Gatehouse. It was perhaps at this time that he wrote the following undated letter to Hornel from Carrick Cottage, where he had been painting views of the Fleet Bay:

"Very sorry to have missed you and your friend when you called. My wife and I had gone down to this cottage by the sea, just two days before. It is the bonniest place in its way in all Scotland and very enjoyable in this fine weather."

The letter, which mentions MacGeorge, Mouncey, Coles and other "artist friends" concludes:

"If any accident brought you near you must come and see this lovely shore. I look upon it as a reflection on the character of any local artist than he is unacquainted with this bonny bit of Borgue shore."<sup>xvii</sup>

It would be nice to think that it was John who inspired Hornel and so many other artists to draw their inspiration from the light at Carrick.

The Association held its second open exhibition in Dumfries, in the summer of 1888. Again there were contributions from John, Thomas and James as well as William Cotton Faed and James junior. This exhibition included Thomas' most celebrated work, *The Last of the Clan*. At the final exhibition, which was held in Dalbeattie in 1889, we find that among the patrons were Miss Copland of Colliston and Sheriff Jameson of Ardwall. Among the Faed pictures on display was *View of the Fleet*, property of H.D. Glover, John's solicitor.<sup>xviii</sup>

## Missing Paintings

On 2 November 1896, R. S. Glover, (who had taken over the law firm and bank agency in Gatehouse on his father's death in July 1896), acting for John, wrote to the Superintendent of Police, Liverpool regarding three pictures, which John had sent to an exhibition in Lancaster a year earlier. During the exhibition he had received a letter from one 'Robert D. Aldwich', stating that he was an auctioneer in Liverpool "and was frequently entrusted with works of art for public auction or private sale". John agreed to Aldwich's selling the pictures (valued in the catalogue at £200) on his behalf but despite repeated requests for information about the sale of the pictures, had not received any reply. Unfortunately, he was unable to take matters further owing to ill health.<sup>xix</sup>

Glover's intervention elicited a speedy response from the Liverpool police regarding the suspected theft of the pictures. By 26 November 1896, when Glover sent a telegram to the Chief Constable in Liverpool, the action had obviously moved to Birmingham and the alleged perpetrator's name was given as Aldrich:

"Instruct Birmingham Police to institute proceedings, stop sale of pictures and arrest Aldrich."<sup>xx</sup>

Glover then set off immediately for Birmingham despatching another cable to the Chief Constable:

"Send all letters etc. relating to Faed's pictures to R. S. Glover at Station Hotel, Birmingham."<sup>xxi</sup>

At the Liverpool City Quarter Sessions, Robert Davey Aldrich was found guilty of the theft of pictures and sentenced to five month's imprisonment from 26 January 1897.<sup>xxii</sup> Glover was pleased to get the news from Liverpool though it was not possible to retrieve the Faed pictures due to differences between the English and Scottish legal systems. As he explained to the Chief Constable:

"Our criminal authorities refused to grant the warrant you required on the ground that the crime was committed in England, as, in the circumstances we advised our client to let the case drop."<sup>xxiii</sup>

Presumably the pictures had been sold by Aldrich and could not now be recovered from the purchasers.

## 3. COMMUNITY PROJECTS

### The Town Clock

The Gatehouse Town Council Minute Books record, on 30 January 1867, that Provost McTaggart:

"suggested that some steps should be taken to endeavour to raise means to have a Town Clock. Messrs McKean [John's neighbour at Braeside] and Cairns [agent for the Union Bank] are appointed to look out for a site for the clock and the probable cost of a clock. Mr McTaggart is appointed to endeavour to raise a subscription to meet the same".<sup>xxxiv</sup>

It was not long before John became involved in the project. On 26 December 1868 it

was minuted that:

“some little difficulty has arisen as to the selection of the proper site for the erection of the tower, and in order to free the committee from the imputation of pleasing themselves to the prejudice of the public, that the following gentlemen be appointed to the subcommittee to select a site for the tower viz. H.G. Murray Stewart Esq., John Faed Esq., T. Pilkington Esq.,”<sup>xxv</sup>

H.G. Murray Stewart was the Laird of Cally and holder of the town’s feus while Thomas Pilkington was the Clock Tower’s architect.

At a meeting of the Magistrates and Town Council and Committee for the Erection of a Town Clock, which took place on 4 February 1869, “Letters were read from Mr Pilkington and Mr Faed strongly recommending the Head of the town. Mr Murray Stewart stated that he approved of the decision come to by Messrs Faed and Pilkington and that the meeting determine to ask the authority of the Road Trustees to erect the tower on the place to be pointed out by Mr Murray Stewart.”<sup>xxvi</sup>

## **The Town Hall**

In September 1881 John became involved in the project for which he is best remembered: the building of Gatehouse Town Hall. At a meeting of the subscribers to the Town Hall Fund, Dr James Nichol Cox, who had been elected Provost on the death of James McKean presided and laid before the meeting a list of subscriptions amounting to £309.14s.3d. The meeting elected the following committee to carry out the scheme:

John Faed, RSA of Ardmore, Chairman

Provost Cox, Secretary

H.D. Glover, Treasurer<sup>xxvii</sup>

A year later the sum subscribed had risen to £483.<sup>xxviii</sup> However, problems arose over the site of the new hall with some favouring a site at the top of the town by the Murray Arms, owned by Mr Murray Stewart and others favouring a site in the middle of the town which was not the Laird’s. At a meeting of the Town Hall Committee in November 1883, John presiding, Provost Cox proposed resigning, as the committee was not likely to agree on the site. It was reported that:

“Mr Faed expressed his surprise and regret about the steps taken by Provost Cox and thought the only thing they could do was for the whole committee to resign and leave it entirely to the Provost to carry out any idea he might have in regard to the scheme, seeing he had had all the work in connection with lifting subscriptions etc. for which he deserved very great credit. The meeting agreed to this unanimously and then adjourned.”<sup>xxix</sup>

While Provost Cox got on with purchasing a site, obtaining an architect and hiring contractors, John began his large picture of the town. In January 1885 he wrote to George Hay, Secretary of the RSA:

“I herewith send for our exhibition two portraits as my only contribution



to the Academy. For the last 9 months I have been engaged on a picture for a Town Hall 12 by 18ft and my time has been mainly occupied by it alone. I hope our exhibition will prove a good one and wishing it a great success.”<sup>xxx</sup>

One of the portraits, which John had sent for exhibition, was that of his friend Dr James Nichol Cox.

The new Town Hall was formally opened on 11 August 1885 by Thomas Faed. James Faed was also present and John’s wife and sister Susan drew back the curtains to reveal John’s View over Gatehouse. The press report of the opening drew attention to the arched recess at the back of the Hall, “in which has been placed the splendid picture of which Mr John Faed has so generously made a gift to the town.” It noted too that there was:

“ample wall space for hanging pictures of local scenes or portraits of local celebrities. One of the first to be placed in it will, we believe, be that of Dr Nichol Cox, the energetic Provost of the Burgh and the indefatigable promoter of the Town Hall enterprise. Mr J Faed has done him the honour to transfer his genial features to canvas.”<sup>xxxix</sup>

A minute of 1897 records that the Town Hall picture was insured for £1000.<sup>xxxii</sup> Such was the influence of the painting that, when it was suggested by “an outsider” that the mill dam at the top of the town be drained, because of its insanitary state, the press reported that neither the local authority nor the public “would listen for a moment as it would destroy one of the principal ornaments of the lovely landscape, which has been so finely delineated by our townsman, the celebrated John Faed RSA.”<sup>xxxiii</sup>

## **The Town Hall Bazaar**

John Moodie, John’s neighbour at Braeside for the last nine years of his life, had originally come to Gatehouse about 1860 as the Bank of Scotland’s first accountant there. This was the start of a banking career, which had taken him as far as India, before ending in Halifax where he retired at the age of 55. In November 1894 John Moodie was elected to the Town Council and in November 1896 he became Provost. An outstanding matter was the continuing debt on the Town Hall which stood at £768 15s 3d made up of £600 borrowed on bond and £168 15s 3d due to Dr Cox as Treasurer of the Provisional Committee. The Council Minutes recall that because of the continuing deficit:

“the committee cannot recommend the taking over of the Hall at present. It is evident, however, that were the bond wiped off (the interest on which amounts to £24 per annum) the property might with advantage be taken over by the commissioners and become a source of revenue to the Burgh.”

<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Now, with the help of his neighbour, John Moodie, John Faed was to become involved in a final act of benefit to the people of Gatehouse. Under Provost Moodie’s direction it was eventually decided to hold a bazaar to raise sufficient funds to clear off the debt. The detailed organisation was left in the hands of the town clerk, R. S. Glover, who writes, “We’re all well and hearty, working like niggers for a Bazaar”.<sup>xxxv</sup> Both James

junior and Susan Faed contributed pictures for the bazaar which was to be held on 18 and 19 August 1899. However, the star attraction was John's smaller version of his Town Hall painting which was to be raffled. The bazaar was opened by Sheriff Jameson and the winner of the picture was local builder Tom McGaw, junior. The bazaar was a great success, raising £881. 0s. 5d. and the Town Hall was soon transferred to the Burgh. One of the Council's first acts was to fix the tariff for the uses of the Hall including "a charge of 2 pence per head for parties viewing the painting by Mr Faed."<sup>xxxvi</sup>

In April 1900 R. S. Glover wrote to the Norwich Union Fire Insurance Company to insure some items of his own furniture and a picture by John entitled *Bedouin Buyer and Armour*. Was this an appropriate gift for all Glover's work in ensuring a successful outcome to the transfer of the Town Hall?

## 4. FAMILY AFFAIRS

### **A Wedding and a Death**

John's sister, Susan had spent much of her life keeping house for her brothers and looking after their mother. But, on 12 February 1887 *The Dumfries and Galloway Standard* contained an announcement of the marriage which had taken place on 2 February at St Marks, Hamilton Terrace, St Johns Wood, between Alderman John Walthew JP of Wood Hall, Stockport and Susan Bell, only daughter of the late James Faed. Sadly the marriage was short-lived for John Walthew died on 2 April 1889.

John's brother, William was the only one of James and Mary Faed's six children who did not follow an artistic career. He had left for Australia in 1851, and had established himself as a sheep farmer. William died in Australia on 29 December 1888 shortly after his return from a visit home. George Sproat, on 1 January, just after John had received a wire informing him of his brother's death, described him as being "pretty much shocked and put about"<sup>xxxvii</sup> William's executors' view that he had intended his sister Susan to be his main beneficiary, and the length of time taken to settle the estate (which turned out to be less valuable than anticipated) as well as prior claims on the estate by Thomas, contributed to tension within the family. In addition there were difficulties between James' family and the executors; John Faed, Dr James Nichol Cox and H. D. Glover. The following statement which was made by Dr Cox and sent to Susan Walthew at Ardmore in January 1896 went to the heart of the problem:

"At the time of making his final settlement Mr Faed believed himself to be worth between £20,000 and £25,000 sterling and had he known that his estate would not realise more than half that sum he would undoubtedly have bequeathed the whole to Mrs Walthew."<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Informing Thomas, in March 1891, that the trustees had at last received £1,000 from Australia, Glover recalled that, under William's settlement, his trustees were to supplement Susan Walthew's annuity "in the event of their being satisfied that she has not received a sufficient allowance from her husband's estate".<sup>xxxix</sup> Glover wrote to Thomas:

“Assuming that Mrs Walthew gets the £200 provided by her husband’s settlement (which by the way is a miserable pittance considering his means) what sum do you consider the trustees of your late brother should give your sister annually to supplement her annuity? Your brother’s wish was to be generous to her and the trustees wish to bear this in mind.”<sup>xi</sup>

In April of that year the trustees sent Susan Walthew a draft for £200.<sup>xii</sup>

In April 1892 H. D. Glover wrote to her at 19 Great King Street, Edinburgh, in the following terms:

“The trustees of your late brother intended to make you a second payment of £200 but your brother, Mr Thomas Faed, has reminded them that their duty is to pay debts before legacies. They have therefore resolved to make no more payments to the Beneficiaries until the estate is realised. The trustees would feel very sorry if this would put you to any inconvenience, but Mr Tom says he will make you any advances you may require.”<sup>xiii</sup>

The result was that the trustees had first to pay Thomas back £4,000 which William had owed him and for which Thomas had an IOU plus £788. 6s.3d. interest. James was obviously unhappy too at this turn of events. In July 1893, in reply to a letter from James, H. D. Glover wrote to him thus:

“Mr Tom’s claim has made a big hole in the funds, but the trustees could not help themselves. The IOU was a perfectly legal document, upon which the creditor was entitled to interest. Certainly it has been a good investment for your brother.”<sup>xliii</sup>

James’ children, in turn, were pressing the executors for payment. On 30 September 1894 Glover had written to Dr Cox:

“Mr Stewart Faed has asked his uncle for £15 from Mr William Faed’s Trust. I presume you will not object to this. It seems his father will not pay his class fees. I will write out a minute to keep matters straight.”<sup>xliii</sup>

Matters came to a head in the autumn of 1895 when the trustees proposed to pay Susan an annuity of £300 per annum. James’ family objected via their lawyers J. & J. Milligan; the trustees sent a memorial to Sheriff Jameson for his opinion and John stepped in, in an attempt to settle matters. H. D. Glover wrote to Susan:

“Your brother and his co-trustees are anxious to have the trust closed. They met yesterday when Mr John proposed ‘that Mrs Walthew be asked if she would accept £2,200 in full of all her claims under her brother’s settlement’. If you agree to this arrangement, and the residual legatees concur, then the trust may be closed on the trustees getting discharge. Would you agree to this proposal?”<sup>xlv</sup>

James’ family was reluctant to agree and only accepted on the grounds of John’s ill health and “the probable injury which might be done to him were he and his co-trustees taken into Court.”<sup>xlvi</sup> On 29 February 1896 R. S. Glover was able to write to John with the good news that the trust was now closed and that “your nephews and nieces have all received their shares of the estate and discharged the trustees.”<sup>xlvii</sup>

## 5. LAST YEARS

### Declining Health

John did not always keep the best of health in his latter years. In the series of letters to E.A. Hornel largely concerned with the Kirkcudbrightshire Fine Art Association, John also alludes to various health problems including back pain. He writes in November 1886 that he hopes to be over to Kirkcudbright “as soon as my miserable back will allow me, but at present I cannot move an inch with pain”.<sup>xlviii</sup>

A fortnight later he writes:

“...the only comfortable position I have is lying still in bed. Dr Cox has been applying his remedies for a week, but I don’t know one bit of improvement.. I will delay writing to the secretary until tomorrow in case a miracle may be performed by the ointments which the Dr has more faith in than I have.”<sup>xlix</sup>

He was unable to preside at the opening of the Association’s exhibition in Kirkcudbright in December.

However, he obviously got over the back trouble as he writes in June 1887 that he will drive over to Kirkcudbright to see Hornel.

‘...I hope you have got over the fatigues of the Jubilee. We had a hard day’s work here yesterday. The whole affair went off successfully. I came home at 6.30 having been out from 10 in the morning, very tired.”<sup>1</sup>

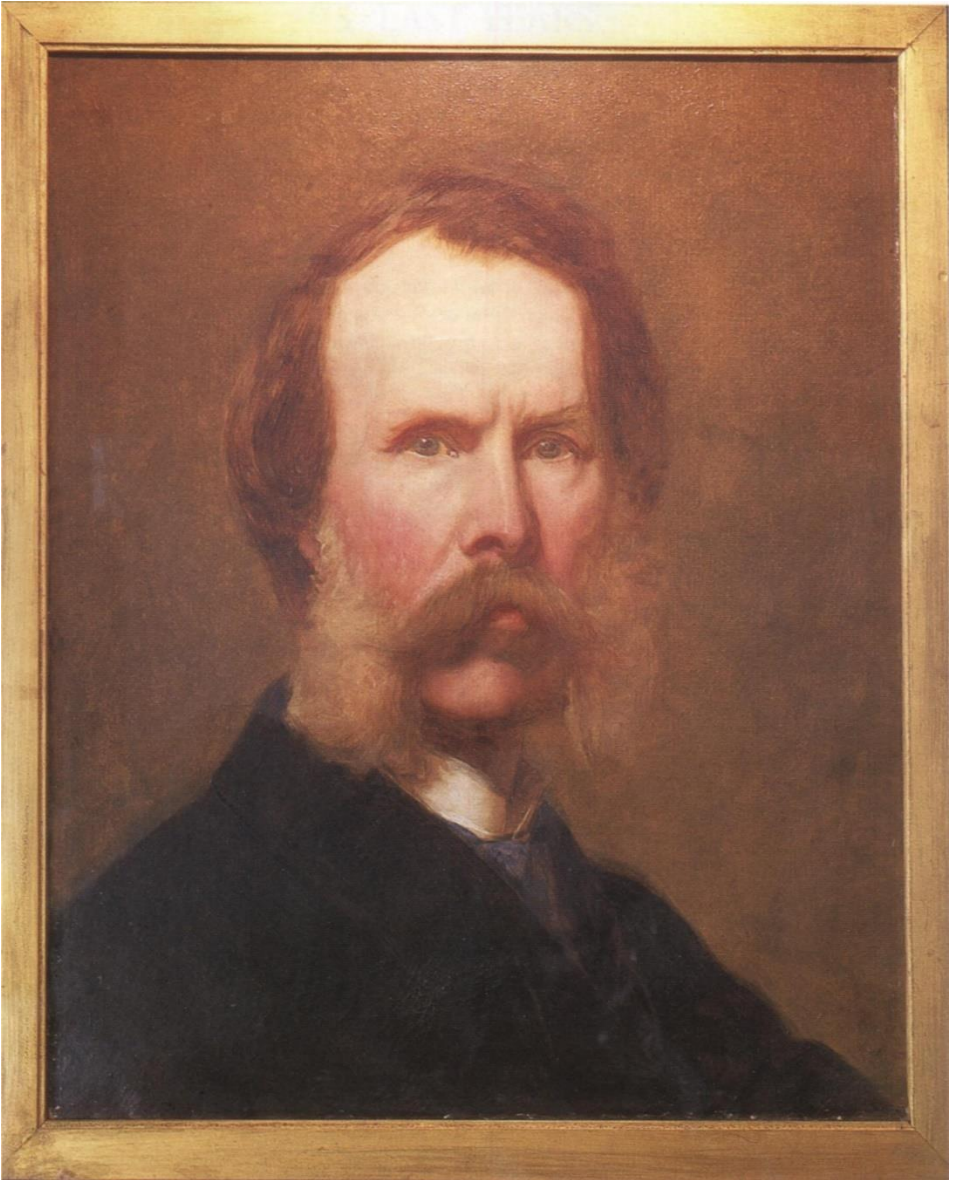
In December 1890 we learn that the new town councillors were sworn in, in the presence of John Faed, one of the JPs of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright. Like the Campbells, the McKeanes and Dr Cox, John Faed was a Free Kirker. The Session minutes of 29 September 1885 record the voting lists for three new elders being opened, it was found that Mr John Faed, Mr John Fergusson and Mr Alex McLellan had by far the greatest number of votes.” However, only McLellan and Fergusson accepted. In 1888 James Nichol Cox became an elder.<sup>li</sup>

During those later years in Gatehouse John provided illustrations for a number of works including the frontispiece for George Sproat’s *The Rose O’Dalma Linn and other Lays O’ Gallowa*, which Sproat had dedicated to him and Malcolm Harper’s *The Bards of Galloway*, published in 1888 and 1889 respectively.<sup>lii</sup> In a series of letters to Thomas Fraser, John pressed the Dalbeattie publisher for information on the technical details of the illustrations required for *The Bards of Galloway*. Sproat, too, wrote to Fraser informing him that John was looking to see “if there was not a better process of reproduction than lithography of his illustrations.” He continues “So the pictures are being done afresh by [the] new and very expensive process of photography.”<sup>liii</sup> In a letter to Hornel, Harper enclosed a proof of John Faed’s illustration to the *Birken Tree* and indicated that John was “thinking of doing another from Nicholson’s Brownie”<sup>liiv</sup> In the event, this subject was chosen by Hornel as *The Brownie of Blednoch* (1889).



Photograph of Dr. Cox and family in Gatehouse Town Hall,  
before John Faed's "View over Gatehouse".

*The Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright — original photography by James McA dam,  
courtesy of Mrs S. Prentice*



**Self Portrait in oil by John Faed (date unknown),**  
*Gatehouse Town Council Collection, The Stewartry Museum. Kirkcudbright*



After a marriage lasting nearly 50 years, John's wife, Jane, died on 27 September 1897. His friend George Sproat noted what a great blow Jane's death was to him.<sup>17</sup> For the last years of his life, his sister, Susan, came to live with him at Ardmore. On 17 August 1900 Thomas died in London. In a letter to Susan, Thomas Newbigging, the author of *A Nook in Galloway* wrote: "His warm and sympathetic genius, not wanting in kindly humour, has left us much that will keep his memory alive." In what might be described as an epitaph to the Faed brothers he concluded his letter thus "To us who know Gatehouse of Fleet and its neighbourhood and love it all so very dearly, it has the added attraction of being the birth place of your brothers."<sup>18</sup>

One of John's last public acts was to petition the local authority, along with his neighbours John Moodie of Braeside and William Learmonth, the tenant at Hill Cottage, to place a gas lamp at the end of the road leading to Ardmore. Needless to say the request was approved.<sup>19</sup>

## John's Death

In November 1900, John wrote to George Hay, Secretary of the RSA, providing some corrections for the Academy's obituary notice for his brother, Thomas, and, while the handwriting is quite legible, there are some indications of frailty)<sup>20</sup> Although he last exhibited at the RSA in 1895 and became an Honorary Retired Academician in 1896, John continued working until the end, dying at Ardmore on 22 October 1902 at the age of 83 with his sister, Susan, at his side. He is buried beside his wife in Girthon Cemetery. On 24 October the *Kirkcudbrightshire Advertiser* contained both an obituary and an appreciation by "F R C", presumably F. R. Coles. On 31 October the paper contained accounts of the sermons dedicated to John's life in both the Free Church and Girthon Parish Church. R. S. Glover wrote to a client:

"One of our oldest and most prominent men has passed over to the great majority this last week, in the person of Mr John Faed. We were all so proud of our great man, who had done so much for Gatehouse and Galloway."<sup>21</sup>

This time Glover had a reasonably straightforward task in handling the executy because, with the exception of a legacy of £50 to Mrs Faed's niece, Jane Haining, Ashley Villa, Queen Street, Castle Douglas, John left his entire estate to his sister, Susan. In total John left £10,418 made up largely of cash in the bank and railway shares. We see from his executy that he must have begun to save money in Edinburgh early on because in 1845 he had purchased a life policy for £100 with the Mercantile Life Association and, in 1849, he had purchased a policy for £499 19s. with the Edinburgh Life Assurance Company which was worth £675 8s at the time of his death. In 1871, shortly after building Ardmore, he had purchased £2,000 preferred ordinary stock in the South Eastern Railway and a further £1,200 in 1872. These holdings were valued at £2,340 and £1,404 respectively at the time of his death. In 1878 he had purchased £1,000 preferred stock in the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway valued at £1,530 at the time of his death. He also held 70 ordinary shares in the



Company. Finally, he held £200 5% preferred stock of the City Property Investment Trust Corporation Ltd., Glasgow valued at par.

At his death John owed £139, of which £93 6s. was due to Dr James Nichol Cox, the rest being made up of small sums to Smith and Murray, joiners; G.M. Stark, chemist; Thomas Jardine, plumber and other local shops and tradesmen. There was also a sum of £4 due to the United Free Church sustentation fund and wages due to Jessie Donaldson, the cook and Alice McKay, the housemaid.<sup>lx</sup>

With the exception of one outstanding matter, the whole estate was wound up by February 1903 with Messrs Glover charging £87.7s.1ld. The outstanding item was The Poets Dream , which John had left to the Royal Scottish Academy. R. S. Glover wrote to the First Lord of the Treasury seeking remission of duty on the picture, which John had gifted to the Academy on 8 September 1902.<sup>lxi</sup> Early in 1904 he was able to write to Susan Walthew at Ardmore:

"I have much pleasure in enclosing herewith copy of a letter which I have received from the Treasury granting remission of all duties in respect of Mr Faed's gift of 'The Poet's Dream' to the Royal Scottish Academy. I am forwarding the original to the Inland Revenue authorities in Edinburgh. This is a good augury for 1904!<sup>lxii</sup>

Susan continued to live at Ardmore until her death on 19 May 1909 at the age of 83. Meanwhile, the McCutcheon family continued to live at Lochlyoch, the new name given to Hill Cottage in 1904. Mr Moodie died at Braeside in 1911 and his wife in 1917.

## 6. THE AFTERMATH

### **Susan Walthew's Executry**

As soon as Susan died, R. S. Glover sent telegrams to her surviving brother, James at 7 Bamton Terrace, Edinburgh and to James' children, William, at Gorey, Jersey; Mrs Brechin (Ellenor Faed), at Glencaim, Fountainhall Road, Edinburgh; James junior at Abbeyfield Road, St Johns Wood, London; Mark at 7 Barnton Terrace, and Dr MacMillan (Mary Faed's husband) at Addiscombe, Prestwich, Lancashire. He wrote, separately, to Frank Faed at 7 Barnton Terrace informing him that he had been appointed, along with himself, one of Mrs Walthew's executors. He also wrote to the Rev. John Stewart of Girthon, informing him that the funeral would take place on the following Saturday at 2pm at Girthon Cemetery and asking him to conduct the usual service as Mr McGlashan, the Free Church Minister "will not be home by that date". Finally, he wrote to his brother John Glover WS, in Edinburgh, "Mrs Walthew died today, so we'll have a fair estate to wind up there. If Ardmore comes to the market it is quite on the cards that mother may buy, but more of that anon".<sup>lxiii</sup>

The inventory of Susan's estate amounted to £14,811 .10s.2d. made up largely of cash on deposit as most of the railway shares, which had been losing value, had been sold

in 1908. With the exception of legacies of £100 each to Dr Cox's daughters and £200 to her great niece, Beatrice, and legacies to each of James' children, the main beneficiaries were James' son, Mark and the children of Mary and her husband, Dr MacMillan. They would receive the residue after all the other legacies had been paid. Obviously, Mark's brother, William Cotton Faed felt he should receive more because he wrote, "I wish you'd try and get my two brothers to let their shares in Ardmore go to James and me".<sup>lxiv</sup>

However, this was perhaps the least of Mr Glover's worries. While the whole estate appears to have been wound up amicably in the end, things got off to a difficult start. In her will, Susan had left three named pictures to Mary MacMillan and also the right to choose six pictures. However, at a three-and-a-half hour meeting of the executors and family held at Ardmore after the funeral, it appeared that matters were not so straightforward. R. S. Glover later described the meeting as the most disagreeable one I ever attended in my 22 years of professional experience, and that is saying a good deal."<sup>lxv</sup> Mark, it appears, stated that some of the pictures had, in fact, been given to him:

"These pictures had a slip pasted on the back, which slip bore that the pictures were now Mark's property and this Mrs Walthew had signed in each case. A heated discussion took place as to this action on Mark's part, and eventually Mark said that he would waive his claim. When it came to the choosing of the pictures bequeathed to Mrs MacMillan, she said she would not decide until her husband came to Ardmore, but that she would not touch one of the pictures with a slip of Mark's on it."<sup>lxvi</sup>

R. S. Glover busied himself with the winding up of the estate and preparing for the sale at Ardmore. Mary and Alice Mackay received their board and wages and Nellie Patterson her wages. Tradesmen's bills were settled including those of James McMichael, butcher; G.M. Stark, chemist; Gatehouse Gas Company; Smith and Murray, joiners and John Fergusson, draper. Arrangements were made to add the following lettering to the family headstone in Girthon Cemetery:

"Sacred to the memory of Susan Bell Faed, widow of the late John Walthew Esq. J.P., of Wood Hall, Stockport and sister of John, James and Thomas Faed, who died at Ardmore, Gatehouse on May 19th 1909 aged 83 years."

It is interesting that there is no mention of William or George Faed on the inscription.

To one enquirer about the house Glover wrote: "The house contains a WC but there is no bathroom." To another he wrote: "There is no croquet lawn, nor is the ground suitable as such."<sup>lxvii</sup> Other inquirers included Thomas Rouet, James McKean's son-in-law. George Sproat was expected to be one of the bidders for the house. When, eventually, the day of the sale came, Ardmore was knocked down to Mrs Glover for £802 and the majority of the house contents sold for £270. In a subsequent letter to James junior we learn that the engraving of *Evangeline* for which he had put in a bid, was sold to George Sproat for £4 10s. The portrait of Jane Faed in the dining room was

sold to Stobie, cabinet maker in Dumfries for £14 (Mark was subsequently to offer him £22). In a letter to C.C. McGeoch, at Broomfield, Upper Brook Street, Manchester, Glover wrote, “The portrait of Mrs Faed senr, the mother of Thomas Faed and his brothers was purchased by Mr Osborne, cabinet maker, Kirkcudbright, and is now, we understand, in the possession of Mr E.A. Hornel, artist, Kirkcudbright”<sup>lxviii</sup> It hangs to this day in the dining room at Broughton House.

So after 40 years Ardmore and many of its contents past out of the family. Mark Faed, however, would return to the area on a number of occasions to organise sales of Faed pictures. He would also call his house at Blackhall, Midlothian, ‘Ardmore’. Perhaps the celebrations, which took place in the year 2000 to mark the centenary of the death of Thomas and the “Homecoming” exhibition, which acknowledged the role of the Faeds in the development of the Kirkcudbright School, will see a movement towards the creation of a permanent memorial to the Faeds in the town to which they, and John in particular, contributed so much.

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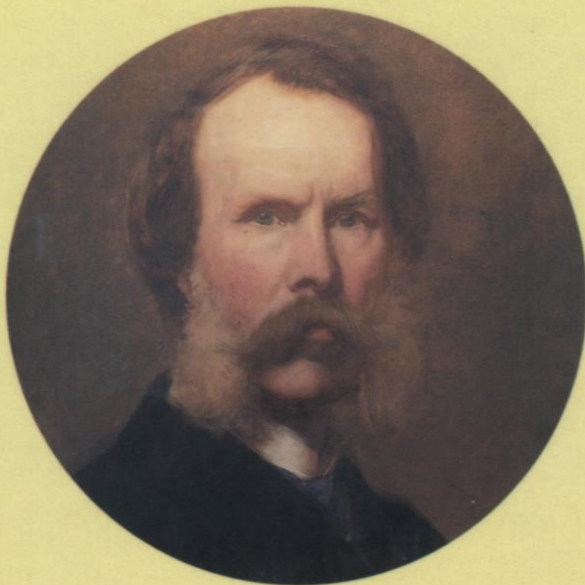
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Self Portrait in oil by John Faed (date unknown),  
*Gatehouse Town Council Collection, The Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright*

Front Cover: "The Little Seamstress" oil painting by John Faed (1890)  
*Gatehouse Town Council Collection, The Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright*



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