

Ion Campbell Bell Jamieson

Born 17th June 1883, fourth surviving son of Robert James Jamieson SSC, Town Clerk of Bo'ness since 1866, and Isabella Richardson, daughter of an Edinburgh silversmith and niece of two Provosts of Perth (William Imrie 1855-61, and Thomas Richardson 1878-80). Ion also had three sisters.¹

Ion and his twin brother Eric took part in the Children's Procession in July 1897², and by 1901 were apprenticed to a stationer.³ Eric later worked in his father's office, and in May 1915 was appointed clerk to the Pensions Committee and interim Clerk to the Dean of Guild Court in the absence of his elder brother Andrew (now Town Clerk in succession to his father) who was serving with the Naval Division.⁴ On 11th August 1917 Eric was commissioned in the Argyll and Southern Highlanders as Second Lieutenant and was killed in action 11 days later.⁵ Ion was appointed interim secretary of the newly established Bo'ness and District Photographic Society in November 1909, but no other reference has been found for him before his move to the Borders.⁶

On 8th July 1915 Ion married Mary Bruce, born 18th November 1890, third daughter of John Bruce of a Borders farming family and Elizabeth Haig, and aunt to my mother, Florence Bruce Steven, nee Dorward (to whom he was always known as 'Unk').

From an as yet unknown date but probably before 1915, Ion was Factor to the estates of the Earl of Lauderdale at Lauder until 1918⁷, and then of the Earl of Lindsay at Kilconquhar⁸. There he started a Scout group, and was Junior Warden of the newly established Masonic Lodge Balcarres No. 1240, and Mary was involved in the local branch of the Women's Rural Institute (WRI).⁹ By 1922 they had retired to Langshaw near Galashiels, where he bred dogs (retrievers then West Highland terriers), ducks, hens, turkeys, and rabbits,¹⁰ while Mary, (appointed JP in 1941¹¹) became a leading light in the local WRI.¹² Both involved themselves in village life, raising money for local causes (Ion was fined a nominal £1 in June 1923 for running an illegal prize draw to fund the Langshaw village hall¹³), and exhibiting and judging at local shows. Ion was also appointed secretary of the revived Galashiels and District Kennel Club at the end of April 1925.¹⁴

He presumably started collecting country dance steps before moving to Langshaw, but no reference has yet been found. In February 1927 he led the first of five country dancing lessons in aid of the Lauderdale Sports Club funds.¹⁵ On 10th June 1931 Scottish Dances were played by the Studio Orchestra on the Home and Foreign wireless stations (Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen, 1040 Kc/S, 288.5M) with Mr Ian [sic] Jamieson giving brief descriptions of the dances.¹⁶ Three years later those playing the parts of gipsies at the Pageant of Ercildoune held at Carolside near Earlston, performed various Scottish Country Dances including "The Three Sheepskins", one of the collection of dances "rediscovered by Mr Ian [sic] Jamieson of Langshaw".¹⁷

By the beginning of 1935 he had a demonstration team of dancers called the Langshaw Bondagers who represented Scotland at the English Folk Dance Festival in the Albert Hall, London.¹⁸ In August of that year, when they danced at Abbotshill,

Galashiels in aid of the Nurses Fund, they were named as Misses Easton, McVicar, Kerr and Noble, and Messrs Geddes, Crozier, Noble and Easton. Mr George Noble accompanied them on the melodeon, and the programme consisted of dances collected by ICBJ including “The Scotch Bonnet”, “Barley Bree”, “The Three Sheepskins”, “The Earl of Hume’s Country Dance”, “The Shepherd’s Crook” and “The Morpeth Rant”.¹⁹ In July 1936 they appeared for the first time in Hawick at the Langlands garden opening in aid of the Scottish Branch of the Queen’s Institute of District Nursing.²⁰ A year later they performed at a garden party in Roslin for members of the Congress of the International Association for European Folk Lore and Ethnology meeting in New College, Edinburgh:

“The feature of the afternoon’s entertainment was a display of authentic Scottish Country dancing given by a team of six farm workers, organised by Mr Ion C.B. Jamieson.

The dancers, three men and three girls, who came from the district of Langshaw, wore the old time “bondager” costume, which dates from the days when farm servants were “bonded” to their masters.

The girls wore short, full, brown skirts, bound with coloured braid and printed cotton blouses with aprons. Round their heads were tied cotton cloths fastening under the chin, and over them were worn wide-brimmed black straw hats trimmed with sprigs of heather.

The men were in brown dungarees and khaki shirts.

The dances, Mr Jamieson explained, had been collected in the Borders where they had been handed down from father to son for generations. The first on the programme “The Three Shepherds” dated from the seventeenth century. Those taking part in it used to dance round three sheepskins laid on the ground. If they were able to do so without touching them they were considered to be sober, and if not, drunk.

Other dances on the programme included “Barley Bree” and “The Flowers of Edinburgh”. They were performed to the accompaniment of a melodeon.”
(The Scotsman 19th July 1937)

Having some pieces of his work, the family knew that Ion painted china, but references indicate that Mary did also.²¹ In December 1927 there was an exhibition in Galashiels of pottery “decorated and fired at Langshaw by Mr and Mrs Ion C.B. Jamieson”. A six-place dinner service painted in the early 1930s is still in regular use. Mary was an accomplished seamstress, demonstrating and displaying her work regularly at WRI meetings, but apparently Ion was too. An exhibition held in October 1939 to raise money for troops in World War II included a “very striking” embroidered picture of Blakehope, (still in the possession of a member of the family) “the work of Mr Jamieson, and another fine picture of Bondagers by Mrs Jamieson formerly of Langshaw and now of Caddonfoot”.²²

Ion and Mary had no children. Their final home together was a large house, Blakehope, next to Caddonfoot Church near Galashiels, to which they moved in 1936, and where the Steven family had many happy holidays in the early 1950s.

Ion died on 11 August 1953, and, after moving to Innerleithen to be near her unmarried sister Florence, Mary died on 23 May 1975.

Notes

1. Ancestry website.

Jean (1875-1958) married Herbert Ramage C.A. (1876-1940)

Andrew (1876-1961) married Mary Elizabeth Davies and had one daughter

Robert (1879-1973) married 1907 Annie Johnston Thomson, emigrated to Canada, 1909, and had two sons and one daughter

George (1881-1932) married 1908 Euphemia Henderson Burnett, and had two sons and two daughters

Wilf(reyda) (1886-1972), singer and singing teacher, lived in St Andrews with 'Queenie' Cathles, piano teacher

Hazel (1888-1972) married Surgeon Lt. Andrew Moir Grey and had one daughter, Avril (1917-2016) who married 1942 Squadron Leader Stanley Sloan W.S. (1904-1970) and had a son and a daughter

2. *Falkirk Herald* 26 June 1897

3. Ancestry website

4. *Falkirk Herald* 15 and 22 May 1915

5. Ancestry website and Commonwealth War Graves Commission

6. *Falkirk Herald* 6 November 1909

7. *The Scotsman* 4 September 1918

8. *East Fife Observer* 11 April and 6 June 1918, 3 January 1919, 17 June, 25 November and 9 December 1920

9. *The Scotsman* 5 April and 13 September 1922, 18 August 1923; *Berwickshire News & General Advertiser* 5 January 1926; *Dundee Courier* 3 December 1926 and 25 June 1927

10. *Southern Reporter* 20 March 1941

11. e.g. *The Scotsman* 9 July 1929; *Southern Reporter* 3 April, 28 August, 30 October, 19 November 1930, 20 February 1936

12. *Southern Reporter* 30 April 1925

13. *Edinburgh Evening News* 14 June 1923

14. *Southern Reporter* 30 April 1925

15. *Southern Reporter* 17 February 1927

16. *The Scotsman* 10 June 1931

¹⁷. *The Scotsman* 9 July 1934

¹⁸. *Southern Reporter* 24 January 1935

¹⁹. *Southern Reporter* 29 August 1935

²⁰. *Hawick News & Border Chronicle* 10 July 1936

²¹. *Southern Reporter* 20 May 1926 and 8 December 1927

²². *Southern Reporter* 19 October 1939

Jane Watkinson
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