Abstract: This report seeks the Committee’s approval to adopt a strapline for Angus to be used to clearly locate and identify the county through a variety of promotional and marketing channels and to give the Angus Ahead Campaign the focus of a “unique selling proposition”.

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

a) note the report by Professor Ted Cowan (Appendix 1) that from a marketing viewpoint validates Angus’ claim as “Scotland’s Birthplace”; and

b) agree to capitalise on this unique selling proposition by adopting “Scotland’s Birthplace” as a strapline for the county for use in marketing and promotional activities, signage and other promotional material carried out by the Angus Ahead campaign.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The committee is referred to Article 31 of the minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 12 June 2003 which considered Report No 679/03 by the Chief Executive seeking the Committee’s agreement for renewal of the A92 and A90 road signage to reflect the Angus Ahead campaign corporate branding.

2.2 The Report indicated that a Committee of Champions had been established to drive forward the Angus Ahead campaign comprising some of the county’s business, tourism and community leaders. Since January 2003, the Angus Ahead campaign logo had been updated and new corporate branding had been introduced throughout a number of new and existing promotional items. As part of the re-branding of Angus Ahead, the Champions Committee had agreed to recommend replacement of the road signage throughout Angus to reflect the new corporate style and identify with the county’s unique selling point as an attraction to visitors. Consultants had been appointed to produce a new Angus Ahead logo and a draft design was drawn up using “Angus – Scotland’s Birthplace” as the strapline to highlight the distinct heritage and culture of Angus from the Pictish Battle of Dunnichen through to the Declaration of Arbroath.

2.3 Having heard various members on the proposed signage, the Infrastructure Services Committee agreed:

(i) to approve, in principle, the replacement of the four gateway road signs on the A90 trunk road and A92 entering and existing the County;

(ii) to ask the Champions Committee to re-consider the strapline “Angus – Scotland’s Birthplace”; and

(iii) to note that a further report would be submitted to this Committee.
2.4 Reference is also made to Article 35 of the Minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 16 October 2003, which authorised the appointment of Sunsol Business Consultancy to ensure that the strapline branding exercise is taken to a final stage.

2.5 The following report explains the steps that have been taken to choose an appropriate marketing strapline and why, in the opinion of the Economic Development Manager, “Scotland’s Birthplace” is viewed as being the most applicable for promotional use.

3 STRAPLINE

3.1 Angus Ahead is the area marketing campaign set up with a mission “to raise awareness of the strengths, characteristics and opportunities of Angus locally, nationally and internationally”. It is led by a Committee of Champions, made up of 21 business, tourism, youth and community leaders and has four main objectives:

- To encourage a civic pride
- To increase investment
- To maximise tourism and heritage potential
- To promote the distinct culture and natural beauty

3.2 As part of that mission the Angus Ahead Champions identified the need for a strapline to clearly locate and identify Angus.

3.3 The Angus Ahead Campaign marketing strategy recognises that further development of the specific Angus brand and its image is vital to the achievement of these aims; and the development of a unique strapline is a key component of this process.

3.4 It is envisaged that the strapline would be used not only on road signage, but also on the portal website [www.AngusAhead.com](http://www.AngusAhead.com) and as part of the marketing campaign to promote Tartan Day “welcome home”.

3.5 To facilitate the development of a short list of three to put forward to Angus Council, a marketing company, Sunsol Business Consultancy, was appointed to organise a branding workshop.

3.6 It was envisaged that three potential straplines would then be brought forward from the workshop and submitted to the Council for final approval.

4 BRANDING WORKSHOP

4.1 A branding workshop was held in December 2003 at Glamis Castle and facilitated by a senior advertising director with experience across major national and campaigns. It was attended by the Angus Ahead Champions, Angus Council Marketing and PR teams, SET and Angus & Dundee Tourist Board. Well over 100 potential straplines were devised across seven categories – general, business, heritage, people, nature, living and attractions. Votes were counted and weighted to reflect 1\textsuperscript{st} to 5\textsuperscript{th} preferences of each person – The top 10 lines were therefore as follows:
Angus. Naturally 65
Angus. Scotland’s Birthplace or Birthplace of a Nation 31
Angus. Welcome home 21
Angus. The real Scotland 14
Angus. Ahead for business 14
Angus. Discover your past, build your future 12
Angus. Ancient & proud 12
Inspirational Angus 11
Angus. From sea to summit 7

4.2 In considering the top 3 potential straplines the Champions felt that whilst Angus: Naturally could be used easily to market across the tourism, business and community sectors it fell down significantly because it did not give Angus that unique selling proposition (USP) - that aspect of Angus that would allow the county to stand out, to be different from others. The USP can also be used to provide a focus for, and therefore improve the effectiveness of any promotion activities.

4.3 The second strapline selection Scotland’s Birthplace or Birthplace of a Nation however fulfilled the requirements of a USP. There are three significant reasons for considering the use of either of these statements as a strapline as evidenced in the paper by Professor Ted Cowan given in Appendix 1. The following extracts from this paper explain these reasons:

1. “Angus was the setting for a battle of tremendous significance which may be said to have blocked potential Anglian/Northumbrian/English expansion to the north at a crucial historic moment. The English had been pushing aggressively northwards for some considerable period, but their expansionist ambitions were ended once and for all at Dunnichen. Had they been victorious on that occasion it is possible that Pictland would have become English and that the later merging of the Picts and the Scots into the nascent kingdom of the Scots would never have taken place.”

2. “Perhaps Angus’s main title to ‘Scotland’s Birthplace’ derives from the historical fact that it was part of the ‘Heartland’ of the Kingdom of the Picts. In the mid-ninth century (traditionally 843, according to Andrew de Wyntoun’s Metrical Chronicle of Scotland c. 1420)) Kenneth mac Alpin, King of Dalriada, moved eastwards into Pictland and established a new entity sometimes known as the ‘Kingdom of the Picts and the Scots’. “

Most historians are agreed that the beginnings of the Scottish nation can be traced from this ‘union’ of the Picts and the Scots.

3. “The third claim that Angus has deserved title to the accolade of ‘Scotland’s Birthplace’ derives of course from the Arbroath Declaration which, in the past twenty years has become associated with Tartan Day,…….”

“It is a gratifying irony, representing as it does appropriate reciprocation, that the American Senate (March 1998) should assert that the American Declaration of Independence is modeled upon the papal letter of 1320 since that missive was dubbed the Scottish Declaration of Independence……………….”

Many eminent historians cite the Arbroath Declaration of Independence as a key influence on the democratic constitutions of world states as well as the US Declaration of Independence and this gives Angus a unique claim.
The third potential strapline **Angus: Welcome Home** was considered too focused solely on the visitor market to be adopted as a general strapline for the county. However it was ideal for the Tartan Day campaign and thus Tartan Day “welcome home” was created as a logo for the marketing and promotional material for this festival.

In conclusion, the Angus Ahead Champions felt that the concept of Angus as the birthplace of a modern Scotland should be further investigated as a potential strapline. After considerable background investigation into validation of the claim that Angus can be regarded as the Birthplace of Scotland, the nation as it is today, the Angus Ahead Champions recommend that Angus Council adopt either **Angus: Scotland’s Birthplace** or **Angus: Birthplace of a Nation** as the strapline for the county to be used across a range of marketing and promotional material across the tourism, business and community strands of the Angus Ahead Campaign.

### VALIDATION OF CLAIM

In view of the understandable concerns of Councillors voiced previously, it was felt that clear evidence should be sought to validate any strapline claiming the concept of Angus as Scotland’s birthplace. It was subsequently agreed that expert opinion be sought and Professor Ted Cowan, of Glasgow University’s history department was approached to consider the matter.

Professor Cowan is also joint Director of the Glasgow Strathclyde School of Scottish Studies. He taught at the University of Edinburgh 1967-1979 and was Professor of History and Chair of Scottish Studies at the University of Guelph, Ontario, 1979-1993.

He is a well-known journalist and broadcaster and has published widely on various aspects of Scottish history. He is author of “For Freedom Alone”, acknowledged as the definitive book on the Declaration of Arbroath. On three occasions he has delivered keynote addresses at the Tartan Day academic conference in Washington DC and was the keynote speaker at the first Tartan Day Dinner in Scotland last year.

He produced a summary report to champion the use of this strapline for Angus and is prepared to act as its authenticator (see Appendix 1).

Professor Cowan has highlighted, amongst other things, that the promotional, touristic and commercial opportunities afforded by the American decision should not be ignored. To this end he has supplied plausible arguments to justify the label “Scotland’s Birthplace” used in a mythic or metaphorical rather than a purely historical sense. From a marketing viewpoint the strapline “Scotland’s Birthplace” would, in the opinion of the Economic Development Manager, be viewed as the most applicable and powerful for promotional use. Any associated historical debate would only accentuate the potential to promote Angus and the validation from such an eminent historian as Professor Cowan provides an assurance for the Council and the Committee of Champions that the claim is justified. This would enable this unique aspect of Angus to be harnessed in a range of promotions including Scotland’s Tartan Day, which is a strategic priority of the Angus Ahead campaign.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The paper produced by Professor Ted Cowan together with the necessary research work was commissioned at a cost of £800 exclusive of VAT. This amount will be met from the Economic Development Revenue Budget for 2004/2005. The expenditure was approved under Chief Officer Delegated Authority being exempt under Financial Regulations Section 16.3.2.b (specialist services). The commission and cost provided value for money in terms of the provision of authoritative advice at a relatively low comparable cost for such commissions.
6.2 Article 14 of the Minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee held on 14 October 2004 instructed officials to develop comprehensive programme proposals for tourism road signage. The new strapline will be incorporated in new “welcome” signs as part of this tourism road signage programme. Allowance has been made for this overall signage programme expenditure within the Economic Development Capital Financial Plan for 2004/2008 within the Tourism Signage/Projects provision that is:

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7 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 The Directors of Finance, Law & Administration and Leisure Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

9 CONCLUSION

9.1 This report recommends the adoption of “Scotland’s Birthplace” as the preferred strapline which, it is felt would provide the most powerful from a marketing viewpoint. Whilst this may be considered controversial in some quarters, it should be noted that with Professor Cowan’s validation, we can strongly evidence this claim as being unique for Angus. Adoption of this strapline would provide the Angus Ahead Campaign with a distinct and powerful promotional tool that will attract attention to future marketing efforts.

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

DVMD/MM  
07 March 2005

A B Watson OBE  
Chief Executive
Angus – Scotland’s Birthplace
By Professor Ted Cowan

Angus – Scotland’s Birthplace - Arguably nowhere in the country can claim this appellation with total or convincing accuracy. Argyll is often credited with being the nation’s ‘heartland’ or ‘cradle’. Glen Trool in Galloway is dubbed ‘The Cradle of Scottish Independence’ because of Bruce’s first victory over the English there in 1307 in what was a skirmish rather than a battle. Both Newstead, near Melrose, and Meigle claim to be the oldest places in Scotland while others would argue for Fortingall, or with greater archaeological support, Skara Brae in Orkney. But of course none of these places were in Scotland proper when they first came into being and so would not rate according to the Atkinson argument who believes, as do I, that ‘if any place in Scotland can claim to be the Kingdom’s birthplace it must be Forteviot or Scone’. As it happens both of the last mentioned were in the province of Angus in Pictish times and in the ninth century both places were in the kingdom of Alba.

My assumption in writing the submission on ‘Angus – Scotland’s Birthplace’ was that the major claim to this metaphorical title arose from the historical circumstance that the Declaration of Arbroath was issued from Arbroath, Angus in 1320. After all, this whole promotion of Angus was inspired by the celebration of Tartan Day, an anniversary dreamed up by Mrs Jean Watson of Nova Scotia, Canada, in 1987 and totally ignored in Angus, as in the rest of Scotland, until the Americans also adopted it in 1998. Senator Trent Lott who introduced Senate Resolution155, was self-confessedly as much influenced by Mel Gibson’s Braveheart as he was by any knowledge of Scottish, or for that matter American, History. His assertion that the American Declaration of Independence was ‘modelled’ on the Declaration of Arbroath cannot be sustained and is completely bogus. Nonetheless the promotional, touristic and commercial opportunities afforded by the American decision should certainly not be ignored. What I seek to do in my report is to supply plausible arguments to justify the label ‘Scotland’s Birthplace’, used in a mythic or metaphorical rather than a strictly historical sense. As a matter of fact I remain confident that the case for Angus adopting this title is quite convincing, even if not all share that view. I might add that from 1987 to 1993 I was heavily involved in the campaign to have Tartan Day adopted nationally in Canada and that on three occasions I have presented the keynote address at annual Tartan Day Academic conferences in Washington DC.

The Arbroath Declaration is without doubt one of the most important Scottish documents ever penned. What I try to suggest is that Arbroath was the birthplace of the idea of Scotland and Scottishness. It was Angusians who first claimed the modern significance of the Arbroath Letter. Although some historians and commentators had noticed its importance it was really local antiquaries who first alerted the world to the document’s true significance.
J. M. M'Bain believed that ‘Arbroath’ ‘asserted for all time the independent nationality of the Scottish people’. He thought it one of the most remarkable documents in ‘Scottish National History’, questioning whether there was anything anywhere with which it might be compared ‘in its stalwart assertion of national independence and the democratic spirit which inspires it’. In firmness and fervour, he opined, the Declaration had not been surpassed in his own century. ‘The Declaration of Arbroath breathes the spirit which never yet has been conquered, and it established for all time the nationality and independence of the Scottish kingdom, which never again was questioned, even in the darkest days of subsequent history’. He was followed by another parish chauvinist, J. Brodie, who entitled his publication - little more than a pamphlet - About Arbroath: (Fairport of Scott's "Antiquary") The Birthplace of the Declaration of Scottish Independence, 1320 (Arbroath 1904). His title said it all, for his discussion was exceedingly brief though it included a chunk of poesy by one A. T. Mathews:

When William's Abbey, noble pile,  
Stood unsurpassed in Britain's isle,  
When vows were ta'en within her wa's  
To stand or fa' for freedom's cause –  
When Bruce wore Bonnie Scotland's croon  
And knights and nobles thronged the toon,  
'Twas then Arbrothock led the van  
'Gainst England's might - Rome's impious ban.

He was in no doubt that the man who defeated ‘English pretensions to the suzerainty of Scotland’ and papal diplomacy, was Abbot Bernard de Linton, who was for long, and is still in the Arbroath Pageant, identified, traditionally and erroneously, as the author of the Declaration.

Otherwise the mythologisation of ‘Arbroath’ has proceeded nicely, largely unaided by the literati. What should be noted, however, is the extent to which the significance of the document has been advanced and publicised by local advocates in Arbroath itself without much obvious input from professional historians who generally shied clear of any serious investigation of the letter until the lead-up to the 650th anniversary in 1970. It was the Burns Federation, not the Scottish Record Office, that, in 1949, initiated the idea of making a copy of the Declaration of Arbroath available to every secondary school and training college in the country, two years after the launching of the annual Arbroath pageant. It could thus be argued that the main interest in the Arbroath Declaration was populist, in the best sense of the word, or even democratic, until a new generation of more sympathetic historians emerged in the 1950s and 1960s. Despite the efforts of the latter, many misunderstandings remain, most commonly that ‘Arbroath’ was an oath or covenant of some kind, signed, rather than sealed, by those involved, as a result of a great parliament or convention held at the abbey. It is often said, incorrectly, to have been sent to the pope at Rome, rather than to Avignon. If such is the case in the homeland it is hardly surprising that confusion about the document reigns in other parts of the world as well.

But none of this negates the crucial significance of the Arbroath Letter. It made a supreme and original appeal to the Scottish constitution in the section which articulated for the first time in European history the contractual theory of monarch, that just as a King of Scots was elected by his own subjects so he could be deposed by them if he stepped out of line. No other person or nation at this time was so explicit on this essential notion. The Letter then went on to make the immortal and inspirational claim that:
For so long as a hundred of us remain alive, we will never on any conditions be subjected to the lordship of the English. For we fight not for glory nor riches nor honours, but for freedom alone, which no good person gives up except with his life.

Those words are as iconic as they are resonant with all who value true freedom and independence for individual and nation alike. It must be stressed that nowhere else on the planet were such claims being made so explicitly at that time. It is in this context that ‘Scotland’s Birthplace’ is most appropriate and most worthy of celebration, for it is there and then that the idea of Scotland and Scottishness is so beautifully articulated for the first time but in truly international terms, appealing to universal beliefs about human liberty and individual dignity. Some such labels as ‘Place of Scotland’s Coming of Age’ or ‘Scotland’s articulation of national identity’ do not quite cut it.

Also, as all involved in this project must be aware, it is presumably important to avoid slogans that could be appropriated by any single political party. One problem is that the SNP was the first party to whole-heartedly embrace Tartan Day in the US. Yet ownership of the Arbroath Declaration is vested in every single Scottish citizen; it is not the property of any particular group. This would be far more obvious if Scottish History was not treated with such scant regard in this country. In certain quarters the Scottish Past appears to be regarded with an element of fear, or at least anxiety, lest it stoke the fires of Independence. Thus ‘Angus – Scotland’s Birthplace’ is allowable while ‘Angus – Birthplace of Scottish Independence’ is presumably not! Hence, despite my fascination for the Arbroath document, my attempt to suggest some other possible historical reasons to claim the designation. Hence it can be claimed the battle played a role in safeguarding Scotland’s birth, let alone her birthplace!

Angus has, at different times been a province, mormaership, earldom, county, district, perhaps even a kingdom, and possibly a tribal or kindred name. It has two other distinct claims to be regarded as the birthplace of Scotland. In addition to the aforementioned Declaration whose inspirational words have now echoed around the world. The first is marked by the Pictish victory over the Angles or English at the battle of Dunnichen in 685. Secondly it constituted an essential and crucial component of the infant kingdom of the Picts and the Scots after the Scottish ‘takeover’ of Pictland in the mid-ninth century.

Angus was the setting for a battle of tremendous significance which may be said to have blocked potential Anglian/Northumbrian/English expansion to the north at a crucial historic moment. On 20 May 685 Bruide King of the Picts defeated Ecgfrith King of Northumbria at the battle of Dunnichen or Nectansmere. It has been claimed that the victory is commemorated on the splendid Pictish stone in Aberlemno kirkyard. The English had been pushing aggressively northwards for some considerable period, but their expansionist ambitions were ended once and for all at Dunnichen. Had they been victorious on that occasion it is possible that Pictland would have become English and that the later merging of the Picts and the Scots into the nascent kingdom of the Scots would never have taken place.

Perhaps Angus’s main title to ‘Scotland’s Birthplace’ derives from the historical fact that it was part of the ‘Heartland’ of the Kingdom of the Picts. In the mid-ninth century (traditionally 843, according to Andrew de Wyntoun’s Metrical Chronicle of Scotland c. 1420)) Kenneth mac Alpin, King of Dalriada, moved eastwards into Pictland and established a new entity sometimes known as the ‘Kingdom of the Picts and the Scots’. In the short term the move resulted from the savagery of Viking attacks on both the Scots in the west and the Picts in the east. A chronicle entry states that in a battle with the Vikings in 839 the flower of the Pictish nobility was destroyed, thus, presumably, creating a power vacuum which the Scots, hard-pressed themselves, were only too happy to fill. Later traditions refer to Kenneth’s conquering of the Picts. The reality was probably somewhat different since there
had been interaction between the two peoples for several centuries, peaceful as well as military, inter-marriage as well as internecine strife, and it seems likely that some sort of assimilation was pretty far advanced by the ninth century. However most historians are agreed that from the so-called ‘union’ of the Picts and Scots, the beginnings of the modern Scottish nation can be traced.

The historical kingdom or province of Angus seems to have extended from the Tay to the Dee, thus including the Mearns with which it is often paired in modern accounts. The present district of Angus, however, was at different times part of the kingdom of Fortriu – often a synonym for the kingdom of the Picts south of the Mount – though it also formed the northern portion of the kingdom of Alba at the end of the ninth century. This matter is extremely fraught and complex though its investigation can prove rewarding. What is incontrovertibly significant in the present context is that Angus can boast so many highly significant concentrations of Pictish monuments (particularly of Class II stones) – at such sites as Meigle (admittedly in Perthshire), Brechin, St Vigeans and Aberlemno, the last situated suggestively close to the magnificent vitrified fort on Finavon Hill, probably built around the time of Christ but possibly re-occupied in the historical period, a structure commanding an incomparable vista of the Howe of Angus and the Braes of Angus which lap the Grampian Mountains. Angus can also boast a significant density of Pictish placenames, notably those containing the element *pit* – farm – as well as a remarkable cluster of souterrains – structures partially or wholly underground which have been identified as storage cellars. Pictish fortifications were as diverse as those represented by the Brown and the White Caterthuns and Dunnottar Castle, already occupied when Agricola led his legions to the first great defeat in Scottish History at Mons Graupius when the Caledonians made a futile attempt to prevent the Romans transforming their homeland into a desert. According to traditional Scottish historiography the Picts simply disappeared at the end of the ninth century but modern scholarship would rather argue that they hung on to endow a kingdom which already under Kenneth mac Alpin was aggressively expanding its frontiers southwards towards the Borders and the Tweed. Out of Pictish strength the modern Scottish kingdom was born. There are undoubtedly difficulties involving ancient and modern nomenclature with specific reference to ‘Angus’ but it is important that too rigid an interpretation of the strictly historical evidence is avoided. It is not the fault of the Picts that Angus no longer bestrides the Tay or the North Esk!

The third claim that Angus has deserved title to the accolade of ‘Scotland’s Birthplace’ derives of course from the Arbroath Declaration which, in the past twenty years has become associated with Tartan Day, and which has already been discussed to some extent above though some further comment may not be out of order. It is a gratifying irony, representing as it does appropriate reciprocation, that the American Senate (March 1998) should assert that the American Declaration of Independence is modeled upon the papal letter of 1320 since that missive was dubbed the Scottish Declaration of Independence, by Arbroath chauvinists it should be noted, very early in the twentieth century, in due homage to the emotive document of 1776. The uniqueness of the Arbroath letter is such that it does not require the reinforcement of American accolade. I have already attempted, in a book and three articles, to explain something of this remarkable document, exploring the relevance of the deposition clause, hitherto largely doubted or ignored by academic criticism, and have sought to investigate the inspirational roots of the celebrated freedom passage, nowadays so often quoted if imperfectly understood. The recognition of 6 April, the anniversary of the Arbroath letter, as National Tartan Day in the US, although welcomed in that country by people from a wide range of backgrounds not exclusively Scottish, has proved highly controversial among the chattering classes in the Auld Country. Although the campaign to observe a ‘Scottish Day’ originated in Canada and has now impacted upon Australia and New Zealand as well (albeit on a different date), it would appear to be alleged American usurpation of the occasion, which has particularly stuck in critical craws. It therefore seemed appropriate to investigate something of the origins of Tartan Day and the remarkable blossoming of interest in what many of the celebrants worldwide would regard as an obscure document emanating from an unfamiliar period and a country, which only a minority have ever visited. The burgh of Arbroath is now enjoying wider global familiarity
than at any time in its history while the document in which it is forever enshrined is attracting unprecedented interest. That there should apparently be a desire to deny that interest in the darker recesses of certain political factions, as well as in those of the media and academia, is almost beyond belief, if not entirely unpredictable. Certain it is that no more inspirational document, none more redolent of Scottish aspiration while appealing to the universal values of independence, freedom and the dignity of the individual, was ever penned in the whole of Scottish history, than the letter which was dated at Arbroath on 6 April 1320.

Other topics that might be developed are as follows.

The christianisation of Angus which was targeted by a number of noted saints and holy men. Graham-Campbell thinks that Restenneth Priory, founded by Nechtan King of the Picts when he adopted Christianity in 710, contains ‘the oldest fragment of church architecture in Scotland’ (p146), a bold and somewhat rash, if an interesting claim. Many places could offer fierce competition, not least Brechin, which displays Coptic influence. Also Meigle may be one of the oldest settlements in Scotland, for it claims to have been there in Roman times and the Arthurian associations, such as the Guinevere Stone are suggestive. Another point that could be manipulated is that when Nechtan accepted Christianity he received a gift of some holy relics from Hexham which purported to be the bones of St Andrew. Thus we could argue that Scotland’s patron saint came to us by way of a Pictish king in Angus! Furthermore his name was Angus son of Fergus, who before a battle traditionally fought at Athelstaneford in East Lothian experienced a vision in which he was told by St Andrew to use the symbol of a cross in the sky against his enemies. All of this falls into the realm of legend as does the later fabrication about St Rule bringing the saint’s relics from Byzantium to the shores of Fife. It is worth noting also that some of Scotland’s oldest historical writings, in the form of annals or chronicles, were made in the scriptorium at Brechin.

A technical point is that Angus, historically, contained more than ages than anywhere else in Scotland, an institution imported from Anglo-Saxon England. Twelfth century Scottish kings regarded Angus as ‘a kingdom within a kingdom’ and thus of particular importance and significance. Montrose was the first Scottish Grammar School where it is known that Greek was taught; a pupil was Andrew Melville the father of Scottish Presbyterianism. James Graham Marquis of Montrose (executed 1650) leader of the Royalists during the Covenanting Wars was one of the greatest generals in Scottish History. There is scope too, if desired, in Dundee which was of course part of Angus but which I have ignored in this presentation. William Wallace was traditionally educated there.

Other ‘firsts’ for Angus might include Patrick Bell’s reaping machine and Hugh Watson’s role in the pioneering of the Aberdeen-Angus breed. J. M. Barrie of Peter Pan and Kirriemuir fame is currently personified in Moviedom by Johnny Depp in Finding Neverland. It would also be worthwhile to make something of John Jamieson the Forfar minister who was inspired by Professor Grim Thorkelin of Copenhagen, with the encouragement of George Dempster of Dunnichen, to undertake the project which resulted in his Scottish Dictionary (1808). This was not only the first-ever dictionary of the Scots language; it was also an incomparable assemblage (though it is no longer recognized as such) of folklore, customs and folk belief.

Finally some of the earliest recorded games of golf in history took place in Angus. Enough for now! Perhaps a wee book is required on Scotland’s Birthplace!

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EJC
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