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**LISTON, Esther Wilson, n. Murray**, born Newhaven, 11 August 1896, died Newhaven 15 April 1932. Fishwife. Daughter of Esther Murray, fishwife, and Henry Murray, fisherman. One of three children, Esther Murray was born at Newhaven and Couper Street schools, and at 15 when she was apprenticed to a dressmaker, then to a butcher. In 1923 she married George Liston, fisherman. He had served in the First World War, returning with damaged health, and died in 1932, leaving her to raise two sons, aged seven and five, on an 18 shilling weekly pension. The University sent her to the creel, something she had learned from her mother. She spoke of the weight of the creel – a basket filled with fish carried on the back, suspended from a linen strap around the forehead: 'At first I felt as if my neck was breaking. It's an art you know. I used to practise with a two-zone box of kippers, then I got used to it' (*Newhaven* 1998, p. 37). Three mornings a week, she would get up at 6am to go down to the crowded harbour where fishwives bought crates of fish at auction, divided them, then went into Edinburgh to sell them, each on her own territory.

Esther Liston also sang with the Fisherwomen's Choir, started in Newhaven in 1927, which performed in Scotland, London and in Norway. Through hearing her sing, the sculptor Julian Allen asked her to sit for a bronze bust (presented to the Newhaven Heritage Museum in 1995). Her life represents that of many women in fishing communities, some of whose names, photographs, traditional costumes and songs are displayed in the museum (see also Flucker, Barbara). BBC Scotland described her as the 'last working fishwife that went out with the creel' (1953) well before her retirement in her late seventies. The last surviving Newhaven fishwife is thought to have been **Frances Milligan, n. Clements** (1908–2000), who 'left school on the Friday when I was fourteen year old and on the Tuesday I had the creel on my back'. AWP

• Interview by author with George Liston, July 2002; Newhaven Heritage Museum, staff and volunteers; People's Story Museum, Edinburgh, Oral History Archive Tapes: Esther Liston T267/94 and N1, Frances Milligan T271/94. City of Edinburgh Council, (1998) *Newhaven: Personal Recollections & Photographs*.

**LISTON, Henrietta, Lady, n. Marchant**, born Antigua 1751, died Edinburgh 1828. Diarist and travel writer. Daughter of Sarah Marchant, and Nathaniel Marchant, merchant and planter.

Born into a large Scottish family in the West Indies, Henrietta Marchant had at least seven brothers, three of whom attended the University of Glasgow. In February 1796, she too was in Glasgow, to marry the Scottish diplomat Sir Robert Liston (1742–1836). They went to the United States, where her husband was ambassador, and from where she sent a series of lively letters home, then travelled in the Caribbean from December 1800 to April 1801. Her detailed journal recounts her impressions of Antigua, Dominica, Martinique, St Vincent, Montserrat and St Kitts, offering insight into the social lives of the white élite on the islands, but largely silent on the condition of the enslaved. In 1804, the Listons retired to Millburn Tower near Edinburgh, where Henrietta Liston, who collected botanical specimens, created an American garden. A late posting to Constantinople followed, and the Listons finally retired in 1821 to Millburn Tower, where Lady Liston died in 1828. DJH

• NLS: MS 5704, Liston Papers.

Innes, W. A. (1913) *The Matriculation Albums of the University of Glasgow*; ODNB (2004) (Liston, Sir Robert); Perkins, B. (1954) 'A diplomat's wife in Philadelphia: letters of Henrietta Liston 1796–1800', in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 11, pp. 592–632.

**LITTLE, Janet ('the Scotch Milkmaid'), m. Richmond**, born Nether Bogside, Ecclefechan, baptised 13 August 1759, died Loudoun Castle 15 March 1813. Poet. Daughter of George Little.

Not much is known about Janet Little's upbringing. She worked in domestic service for the Rev. Johnstone, then as head dairymaid at Loudoun Castle in Ayrshire, where her employer was Susan Henrie, daughter of Robert Burns's patron, \*Frances Dunlop. After the Henries' lease expired, she continued to run the Loudoun dairy. In 1792, Janet Little married labourer John Richmond (c. 1741–1819) and became stepmother to his five children. In the same year she published her *Poetical Works*, which sold about 800 copies by subscription. Patronised by Frances Dunlop, she experimented in various poetic styles, from formal English ('To a Lady, A Patroness of the Muse on her Recovery from Sickness') to satires on pastoral life ('The Fickle Pair'). She was accomplished in the Scots language, as in the Ramsayan 'On Seeing Mr – baking cakes' or the Fergusson-influenced 'On Hallowe'en'. She greatly admired Burns, and commemorated an apparent meeting with the 'bard', 'On a Visit to Mr Burns'. Her originality (and self-consciousness) is evident in 'Given to a

outwardly from marriage, offended those who deplored the double standard by which prelates prosecuted those advocating married clergy, yet lived in open disregard of the rule of clerical celibacy. MHBS

• Sanderson, M. H. B. (1987) *Mary Stewart's People* (Bibl.), (2001) *Cardinal of Scotland: David Beaton c. 1494–1546*; \*ODNB (2004).

**OLIPHANT, Carolina, Lady Nairne** [*Mrs Bogan of Bogan*], m. *Nairne*, born Gask, Perthshire, 16 August 1766, died Gask 26 Oct. 1845. Songwriter. Daughter of Margaret Robertson, and Laurence Oliphant, laird of Gask.

The Oliphant family was old and distinguished. Carolina Oliphant's grandfather and father were Jacobites. One of seven children, she was educated at home and read widely: she admired Thomas Campbell and Robert Burns (although not the more robust pieces) and persuaded her brother Laurence to subscribe to the 1786 edition of Burns. She was equally familiar with Scotland's song traditions, performed music to a high standard, and painted. In 1806, she married her second cousin, Major William Nairne (1757–1830), born in Ireland to a Perthshire Jacobite family. They moved to Edinburgh, latterly to Caroline Cottage in Western Duddingston where their son, William Murray Nairne, was born in 1808. She became Baroness Nairne in 1824 when the act of attainder affecting her husband's title was reversed. After his death, she spent 12 years in England, Ireland and, from 1834, continental Europe, with her son, her sister Mrs Keith, and her niece, Margaret Harriet Steuart. During this time she suffered the deaths of her niece, the poet Caroline Oliphant, her nephew Charles Steuart, and Lord Nairne, her only child. In 1843, she returned to Gask where she had a stroke and declined in health. She is buried in the chapel there.

Celebrated as 'The Flower of Strathearn', Carolina Oliphant is now remembered for her songs, although none appeared under her name while she was alive, for reasons of respectability. Her work shows knowledge of traditional idioms in words and music, making it eminently suitable for performance. It appeared in her lifetime under the pseudonym of 'Mrs Bogan of Bogan' in Robert Purdie's six-volume *The Scottish Minstrel* (1821–4). The writer was first named, with Mrs Keith's approval, in *Lays from Strathearn, by Carolina, Baroness Nairne, author of 'The Land o' the Leal, etc.'* arranged . . . by *Finlay Dun* (1846). Many pieces

deal with Scotland's past. The Jacobite 'Will ye no come back again?' laments the loss of 'Bonnie Charlie'. 'Castell Gloom' represents a country seat ruined through civil war. Despite her family's Episcopal affiliations, Carolina Oliphant wrote several Covenanting pieces: 'The Pentland Hills' condemns 'fell Claverhouse' and mourns the 'brave and martyr'd men' who fell at Rullion Green. 'Dunnottar Castle' celebrates the actions of Elizabeth Ogilvy in saving the Scottish regalia from Cromwell (see Fletcher, Christian). She often celebrated working people such as 'The Pleughman'. 'Caller Herrin' honours those who put their lives in danger at sea: 'Darkling as they faced the billows,/A' to fill the woven willows'. It has obvious sincerity although, like 'The Pleughman', its narrator is somewhat sanitised. There are also timeless pieces like the comic 'The Laird o' Cockpen' set to 'When she cam' ben, she bobbit' – Mistress Jean initially responds to the proposal with a decisive 'Na', later realising she was 'daft'. Carolina Oliphant's deeply held religiosity (an assiduous reader of devotional works and charitable donor, she was sympathetic to the Free Church) is evident in pieces such as the melancholic 'The Land o' the Leal', set to 'Hey tuttie tattie', commemorating Mrs Campbell Colquhoun's 'bonnie bairn'. Carolina Oliphant's work was long popular in performance. Despite a sentimental vein perhaps less appealing to a modern audience, its range and ambition merits renewed attention. vb

• NLS: MS 98r: Corr. etc.

Oliphant, C., Work as above.

Davis, L. 'Gender, genre and the imagining of the Scottish nation: the songs of Lady Nairne', online *Scottish Women Poets of the Romantic Period*.

[www.alexanderstreet2.com/SWRPLive/bios/S7038-Door.html](http://www.alexanderstreet2.com/SWRPLive/bios/S7038-Door.html)

HSWW (Bibl.); Kerrigan, C. (1991) *An Anthology of Scottish Women Poets*; ODNB (2004); Rogers, C. (1869) *Life and Songs of the Baroness Nairne*.

**OLIPHANT, Margaret, n. Oliphant Wilson**, born Wallyford 4 April 1828, died Windsor 25 June 1897. Writer. Daughter of Margaret Oliphant, and Francis W. Wilson, clerk.

Margaret Oliphant's literary aspirations were encouraged by her mother, from whom she inherited a deep understanding of Scottish culture, particularly of the ballad tradition. The family moved to Lasswade near Edinburgh, Glasgow and Liverpool, where she wrote her first novel, aged 17. Her autobiographical notes contain cameos of her youth in an introverted, lower-middle-class