

JOHN J. MCGAVIN

The Kirk, the Burgh, and Fun

Earlier this century a cartoon in the humorous magazine *Punch* showed the following scene (located in Scotland on a Sunday afternoon): an urchin with cap askew, hands in pockets, and not a care in the world is walking along a country lane, whistling. An elderly Scottish gentleman hearing this says: 'Wheesht, laddie! We'll have nane o' these continental sabbaths here!' It would not have been funny had it not also at the time reflected a real, and more than residual, suspicion of the Latin enormities which were always threatening to debase the Lord's Day in Presbyterian Scotland. Such sentiments were still felt in my own childhood. 'Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh is the day that the Lord thy God hath given thee. In that day shalt thou do no work, neither thy ox nor thy ass, thy manservant nor thy maidservant...' or, more briefly: 'Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy'. I have not checked to see how close these quotations are to the Bible because their accuracy is not the point: they had the *force* of scripture. I quote them from memory after thirty years, having imbibed them from my late-Victorian grandmother, along with other strange moral hierarchies and equivalences such as the notion that being a speedy (but not a slapdash) worker is the acme of human aspiration, and an associated warning: 'Slow at the meat: slow at the work'. Such saws were not always mutually consistent of course: while being warned to eat up my food quickly in case I turned out to be a slow worker, I was also reminded that Mr Gladstone had advised that each mouthful be chewed thirty times.

The advantage of being a grandmother in the old-fashioned nuclear family was that she had all the power with none of the responsibility. Parents felt that they had to respect her wishes even if they disagreed with her beliefs, and up to a point they were led to enact her principles even if they did not feel them as strongly. In not casting aside or denigrating older mores even when they personally did not wish to follow them, parents were not simply keeping familial harmony. They were expressing moral aspirations for their chil-

dren in the terms they themselves had received as children; they were defending the family against cultural pressures which were genuinely perceived as threatening it. They were also trying to keep control of change in society, in themselves, and in their children, by reinvigorating sites of control which they had experienced when young and which thus represented the continuity of their own identity.

However, though the language of control and respect for the sabbath might remain the same, individual words change their meanings. While one generation only reads a book on Sunday for recreation, the next translates that educational permission into a trip to a museum, and the next generation, while retaining the notion of the trip, translates that respect for cultural artefacts into a respect for the passing glories of the countryside, and thus within two generations the charabanc trip which would have been grossly disrespectful to the sabbath becomes a way of showing respect not just to the day but to a sabbatarian tradition enacted even if not theologically accepted.

I make no apology for this semi-personal introduction, though it does require justification. It derives from the bemused frustration I feel when reading the wealth of sabbatarian records which the Records of Early English Drama (REED) enterprise has turned up. What is inevitably missing from them is the *particularity* of experience which such ideological assertions were designed to occlude. Cultural history has to explore those *individual* motives, resentments, rebellions, self-deceptions, aspirations, and so on, about which cultural documents have needed to be silent in order to say what they do say. The silenced messiness of cultural movements as they are lived through should not be silenced a second time by a historiographical preference for the generalizable. On examination, Scottish Reformation sabbatarianism proves to be more rickety, more heterogeneous, and chronologically more complex than the assertiveness of the documents themselves would suggest. The local focus of REED work helps us towards a subtler articulation of the individual with the institutional. However, it is also the subject matter of REED's activity which makes it suitable for such historical investigation because it is in the area of entertainment, more generally of 'fun', that the relations of the individual and the institutional are most varied, most dependent on individual psychology and particular experience, and in which the individual experience is most apt to attract, and be resistant to, forces of social control.

It is striking how little we rejoice in each other's enjoyments and how we get upset by other people's chosen forms of recreation. Pleasure is that area of life most mapped with the contours of prejudice, incomprehension, and self-interest, and second only to language itself, most shot through with issues of

gender, class, age, belief, and so on. It is not merely difference in taste which accounts for resentment of other's pleasures. It is the practice of pleasure itself. It shows people rapt, focused, evidently unmindful of those other constraints with which we or society would wish to bind them. And so from their rapture emerges our sense of the ludicrousness of golf; the interminability of cricket; the moral collapse represented by computer games; the sexual exhibitionism of other people dancing with each other; the apparent threat offered to the social fabric by a drum sounding in procession down the High Street; the danger to one's dignity of a Robin Hood or abbot of unreason; the blasphemy of bagpipes played on Sunday afternoons for people who do not want to go to church twice on that day; and finally, if one is honest, that rapture evokes the pain of exclusion from the group of people who are enjoying themselves, a pain which recalls childhood memories of not being invited to join a game or awakens fears of the exclusions which one has created for oneself in adult life. Recreation reveals social heterogeneity, group exclusivity, and personal resistance to control. It is the natural target of an institution trying to gain power or identity; it is the laager of conservatism. More than anything it provides the site on which society redefines itself and the means by which that redefinition is resisted or achieved.

'Fun' in the burgh and presbytery of Haddington in the years from the end of the 1580s through the accession of James I was subject to a complex web of social forces: it was acted upon by several major interest groups having different kinds of power, different conceptions of the ideal place for recreation in society, different types of tradition or past authority on which to draw, and different institutional needs and goals. To make things more complex, the number, nature, and prominence of the interest groups varies depending on what kind of record you are reading. If one looks at the presbytery records, which are essentially those of an institution still trying to achieve power and to fashion its identity against other groups, one sees kirk, burgh, gentry, and the people clearly demarcated as the main players. If one looks at the burgh records, however, the distinctions between kirk and burgh and between burgh and gentry are made much less prominent, and one finds other divisions to be important, eg, between the crafts and the rest of the burghal officers; between the town and the country; between residents and itinerants; between those whose actions are and are not conducive to order and the maintenance of the status quo; between official employees and those who seem to be encroaching on their preserve. Underlying these larger forces are the complex personalities of individuals: of ministers who are sometimes clearly in the wrong profession; of ministers who are even afraid of the inquisitorial system

which they themselves practise; of young men for whom defending ancient right is really an excuse for kicking over the traces; of gentry who try to square the demands of family honour and tradition with the changing power structures in the locality; of magistrates whose concern for the prestige of their burgh relative to neighbouring towns is a supervening principle of policy; of teachers on the make and trying to find some form of patronage. Recreation, in its widest sense, from games of skill or chance through music to popular drama, provides a focus for all these institutional and personal pressures in the highly charged and subtly changing society of Haddington and its region, East Lothian, in the last years of the sixteenth century.

On 16 April 1589 the presbytery decided to take action against the youth of Haddington for various disorders committed by them. In the first instance only an admonition was envisaged. The following account of the process, which is still comprehensible despite the damage to the manuscript, comes from the *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1587–96*:

The *quhilk* day ye Brethrene *conferring* and *resoning* the abusis th[...] creip in be ourseing ye insolence of ye 3outh in chusing robene hui[...] *vyer* *prophane* playis vsit vpon the *saboth* day in *contempt* of god & his [...] for repressing thairof appointis *alexander* forrester Mr thomas makgy Mr w[...] Hay and Iamis gibsone to accompany Mr Iamis Carmichaell to ye bu[...] of Hadingtoun for to admonische thame desyring that ye saidis playis Be thair authoritie may be dischargit *wit/in* thair boundis.¹

This admonition by the minister of Haddington, Carmichael, and several other ministers from the presbytery area evidently led to confrontation, for a week later, on 23 April, the presbytery decided to take further action against the youths and summoned them to appear at the presbytery

for thair misbehaiour in tyme of exercyse *sumtyme* *wit* lauchter *lycht* & *oncumlie* *Iestouris* vnsemelie for *yat* place speciallie *quhen* any thing was spokin be any of the brethrene tending to ye noting & reprufe of *yair* insolency *yair* or at *vyer* tymis in thair vntymous pastymis As also ye saidis *personis* tumultuouslie assembling tham selfis at ye kirk duir & *entrie* to ye seat of ye Elderschip first Iamis steuersonne spak in publick audience & heiring of all to Iamis Gibsone saying / Our doingis is honeste n[...] 3ouris in cutting of ye *puir* *manis* clok And ye ar bot ane flytter vnmeit to oppine 3our mouth amang Ministeris Nixt Nicoll aytoun spak to ye Minister of hadingtoun saying we ar *cumit* to enter ane *seruand* of [ours] & being admonischit to be quyet he *ansuerit* ye [find] falt *wit* vs *quhen* we *cum* to ye kirk and *quhen* we byd at hame.²

This confrontation must have taken place a few days after the admonition, at the midweek exercise at which members of the presbytery, both ministers and senior elders, engaged in formal and lengthy commentary and argument on passages of scripture.³ If anything, such exercises, even more than the church service, must have represented to local society the special preserves and new institutional protocols and disciplines of the Presbyterian Church. The young men had neither delayed their response nor offered it indirectly. Despite this, the apparently amicable end of the business is recorded a week later on 30 April 1589:

the submission
of (...) youth of
hadingtoun

The *quhilk* day compeirit nycoll aytoun alexander seytoun & george thomsone *with* the rest of ye 3outh of the toun of hadingtoun thair *complicis quha* gaue in thair submission in wrytt *quhairin* was declairit that thay had done nathing in contempt nather wald thay *continew* any pastyme *quhair*of sould any sclander or offence be *geuin* And as for thair *minstrallis* throw the toun *quhilk* thay haue alreddy vsit that was callit pasche playis abbot of onresone roberd houd & sic *vyer prophane* playis thay neuer vsit ye *effectis yairof* and gif thair said *minstrallis* throw toun hes bene offensyue to ye brethren thay ar hartlie sorie for the *samen* As for *yair cuming* to ye kirk the last exercyse day thay *ansuer* that yay come nather for tumult derision or scorne Bot as for Iamis *stevinsonis wordis* thay dissalow and *condampne* the *samen* and hes repruifit him for his rasche behaiour And finallie *quhatsoeuer* had bene offensyue in *yair gestier* behaiour & countenance thay offer *yam selfis* in ye will of ye Elderschip to *onderly quhatsoeuer* yaj will enione vnto thame *Quha* being all removit The brethrene accepit *yair confessioun* & submission in gud *pairt* be resone of *yair* modest behaiour alsweill in tyme of *prophesie* at exercyse as befoir *yam selfis* (Callit thame agane) gaif thame sundrie admonitionis to behaue *yam selfis* wislie & modestlie publiclie and *preualie in tymis cuming without* geuing offence & sclander The *quhilk* thay *promeis* to do.⁴

What is significant about this episode of sabbatarian infraction and subsequent control is the range of different considerations which evidently directed the actions, accusations, defences, and eventual reconciliation of the two parties.

First, what had actually gone on in the streets was a matter of dispute. If the young men are to be believed, the presbytery were mistaken in interpreting the 'minstrallis throw the toun' as 'pasche playis', that is, plays celebrating superstitious festivals (not just Easter plays), 'abbot of onresone roberd houd

& sic vyer *prophane playis*'. The young men objected to what they regarded as over-interpretation. Whatever the truth, both parties clearly understood that, in the context of litigation, profane plays were unacceptable: consequently they could be used to blacken any practice one disliked and one had to reject the appellation of profane playing with its implication of papistry whether it was justly applied or not.

Second, the young men took their complaint to the seat of the presbytery itself and made mocking gestures at the time when all the ministers were engaged in interpreting the Bible to one another and to the eldership. Though the outcome of the process may have been to the satisfaction of the kirk, evidently the presbytery was not so much in control of the town that it could not be bearded in its own den by another interest group.

Third, a potent element in the dispute was the character of one of the ministers: one of the young men, James Stevenson, alluded to a current scandal that the Rev James Gibson had drawn a sword on another man and cut his cloak. However, in making the accusation Stevenson was careful not to use it as an attack on all ministers. Indeed he carefully affirmed the status of the ministry by claiming that Gibson was unworthy of it. Instead, his accusation was a device by which Gibson's colleagues might be reminded of a weak point in their own power group. This technique, used frequently by the presbytery itself, must have backfired. The episode of the assault was as yet uninvestigated and therefore the claim was potentially slanderous. Consequently, when reconciling themselves to the kirk, the group pointedly disowned this accusation and claimed to have reproved the accuser for making it. This was also a carefully balanced response: the young men thus reserved to themselves the right to judge and criticize their own and they retained their group identity even as they acknowledged the kirk's greater power.

Fourth, the disorder prompted by objections to the minstrelsy seems to have taken on a more formal, traditional, and disruptive character as tension mounted: one of the men, Nicoll Aytoun, is reported to have said during the disorder at the kirk door 'we ar cumit to enter ane *seruand* of 'ours'. Who was this servant? Why was he left unnamed? Why should he need to be brought into the church? And why should this be the cause both of further admonition to be quiet and subsequently of Aytoun's ironic remark that the presbytery couldn't be satisfied since they complained when the youth came to church as well as when they stayed away? Although the account given in the Presbytery Minutes is understandably weak on detail or description, it suggests to me one of those forced intrusions into church of a figure of misrule such as Stubbes complained about in his *Anatomy of Abuses*, published only

six years before: 'they go to the Church (I say) & into the Church, (though the Minister be at praier or preaching)'.⁵ In Stubbes' account such intrusions involve pipes, drums, bells, the swinging of handkerchiefs, dance, and confused noise which distracts and delights the congregation. The 'lustie Guttes' who accompany the lord of misrule then go off to the churchyard to their summer halls, arbours, etc, for feasting. The account which Stubbes gives is extremely detailed and implies an event of considerable colour, organization, and variety, in which the many servants of the lord of misrule have a special livery as well as other adornments, and carry with them hobby-horses and other monsters such as dragons. However, the language of such folk activity is adjustable to its specific context. As the REED volume, *Lancashire*, shows, intrusions into church were not always so elaborate, they might involve fewer people, take different forms, and they could be more pointedly personal than Stubbes' generalized account of a common abuse suggests. Contrast, for example, the intrusion at Holcombe in 1626 with that at Winwick 1596/7.⁶ The former, despite its late date, was evidently a traditionally organized event falling in the months between spring and autumn. It involved the illicit opening of the church door, followed by the mock summoning of the parishioners to worship with a bell, and it then centred on a parodic sermon. The latter, however, was far from traditional in inception or temporal location and was geared towards disruption rather than parody, though an element of parody may have been involved in the action itself. Its motivation was personal animosity between one William Taylor and his new curate.⁷ It was part of a campaign of harassment. It took place in December and involved Taylor coming into church at the second lesson behind a piper 'very Contemptuously & disorderlye' into the said Church flying & laughinge'.⁸ By comparison, Haddington's threatened intrusion into the kirk lies somewhere between these two events. It would have seemed seasonal and traditional since it involved a number of young men, took place in April, and was carried out in the context of previous complaints about apparently traditional activity. On the other hand, we do not have the records which would show whether such intrusions were indeed part of Haddington's seasonal misrule, and we cannot know how seasonally festive it would have looked since the presbytery clerk did not record the appearance of the young men. More than anything (and in keeping with the clerk's own sense of recording priorities), it evidently had a specific, pointed, and non-festive significance. In context no one could have considered this event simply in terms of seasonal profanities. Its clearly oppositional meaning within the dispute about the youths' 'mizstrallis throw the toune' was extended by Aytoun's ironic, apposite, and overtly anti-Presbyterian

remark about church attendance.⁹ Festivity had changed to mockery and recrimination but then began to turn into something staged: resentment had become a culturally loaded action which pointedly, but dangerously, confirmed the presbytery's claim that the minstrels were identifiably profane and implicitly papist. The language of popular resentment or disorder is capable of subtle inflections and was here showing its power of incrementality. And yet within a week all seems to have been turned again to harmony. The possibility that this event was a Scottish instance of the dissenting misrule sometimes found in England, though interesting, is less so than the special dynamics of the dispute within which it played a part.

Perhaps the matter was resolved within the week following this altercation because both sides were conscious that events had begun to get out of hand, that the episode was creating deeper enmities than were felt and deeper than could be afforded by either party. Just as the Rev James Gibson's brawling had weakened the presbytery's reputation so there were probably some hotheads among the youth from whom the others wished to disassociate themselves. Neither party appears to have presented a wholly unified and unassailable front to the other. This is characteristic of the way in which personality impinges upon policy at such a local level. The submission of the youth to the presbytery the next week was marked by the readiness of the presbytery to accept their confession 'in gud pairt', to remember their modest behaviour during other times of exercise and their demeanour during the case itself. This apparent generosity of spirit reflected the presbytery's sense of what was practical. Impecunious, anxious about low attendance at kirk, and obsessed with its own quality control mechanisms, it was also fighting on several fronts – it was trying to prevent one local gentleman, the laird of Samuelston, from putting on a threatened traditional May play and, in a protracted series of negotiations, to stop another, still more influential figure, Lord Seton, from holding his traditional Sunday market – so the ministers were probably only too glad to find that the youth were willing to make formal acknowledgment of the kirk's institutional rights and practical power.¹⁰ The youth, though constituting a distinct group in the dispute, were probably quite conscious that, although they had made enough of a point to save face and to ensure lenient treatment by exposing weakness in the other side, they could not carry the matter much further and that it had slipped away from misbehaviour towards issues of politics within which sphere they did not constitute a separate power. How many burgher fathers, one wonders, had serious discussions with their sons between the altercation at the kirk door and the resolution a week or so later? This instance of the kirk enforcing sabbatarian-style prohibitions,

and doing so within a fortnight, proves on analysis to have involved a much subtler and inexplicit negotiation of power between groups of people living in the same town and not quite sure of which way the tide of history was flowing.

What is missing from this account, of course, are the deeper structures of power within which these institutions and individuals negotiated their relative standing. The young men could look to tradition; Lord Seton in defence of his market could look at rights granted by a past king; but the presbytery could look to the laws and acts of parliament and to kings of revered memory who had instituted sabbatarian and festive bans. In particular, the kirk could look to the burgh of Haddington's own submission to such prohibitions, a submission they were careful to record near the start of their first volume of Minutes. In 1583 the provincial assembly of Lothian had decided to remove the seat of the presbytery from Haddington and to divide it between the two rival towns of Dalkeith and Dunbar 'vpon sum sinister information' that the burghers and gentlemen of Haddington were not doing their duty.¹¹ It is more than likely that this was a case of local power politics. Dunbar, in particular, was a town with which Haddington was regularly in dispute.¹² The burgh responded with a supplication that this reorganization should not take place. To retain the privilege of being the chief burgh in the area, the magistrates obliged themselves and all Haddington's citizens to observe the strictures of sabbatarianism together with abolition of festival days, associated plays, bonfires, singing of carols, and the wearing of any special clothing which might appear to revere such days. This formal obligation had been registered and provided security for all subsequent kirk activity.¹³ In other words, sabbatarianism as a general ethos had been embraced by the burgh in order to secure *secular* prestige.

If one can sense in such episodes the rival interests of power groups rather than the exercise of principle, one must also acknowledge that individual involvement in traditional celebrations might derive from a variety of motives. It is clear that some profanation of the sabbath did reflect theological sympathies: one man summoned for unspecified sabbath breaking was eventually proved to have said to the minister who rebuked him: 'faith I will sie ye day *quhen* we sall lay ye qwhytt surples on *3our* bakis *with* longe stavis' – evidently he wasn't a Presbyterian!¹⁴ On the other hand, for some, any popular celebration was probably more important for its oppositional than its traditional or licensed character. The minstrels whom the youth of Haddington brought onto the streets were, from the dating of the case (16 April 1589), probably celebrating Easter, which had fallen on 30 March. The reconciliation achieved subsequently

did not mark a cessation of such activities in the region. Five years later the presbytery were chasing up some young men who had taken out the drum to celebrate May Monday in neighbouring Tranent. One of the men, William Steinston, unlike the others who appeared to answer for their offence, showed the presbytery nothing but 'stubburnes and impenitencie'.¹⁵ But before we turn him into a resolute defender of traditional liberties we should note that this is also the man who, laughingly, threw his cloak over an acquaintance who was engaged in raping a woman in the churchyard. He then railed 'dispitefully' at the minister who rebuked him. In fact he was due to be excommunicated for *this* offence, so he must, like the others, have temporized with the kirk session over the May celebrations.¹⁶ In the end he begged the kirk's pardon humbly on his knees and avoided excommunication. A Nicol Steinston, mail-maker in Tranent and perhaps this man's father, was reported in 1589 to have defied the presbytery over their attempt to stop the Sunday market in Tranent.¹⁷ There may, therefore, have been a family objection to Presbyterian changes, but it is hard to avoid the feeling that William Steinston was just a bad lot who would have supported any form of oppositional or disruptive activity.

Equally, sabbatarianism emerges as a form of defence to which some ministers had resort when the presbytery's visiting inspectorate discovered their inadequacies. When first investigated, the Rev Walter Hay was found to be 'maist occupyit *wit* mechanik laubouris' involving wheels for spinning lint.¹⁸ He was also an amateur surgeon and distiller of aqua vitae (for his own use, of course). His wife was accused of dancing at marriages and banquets on the Lord's Day. When trouble surfaced again fourteen years later during a visitation of Hay's kirk at the Bothans, Lord Yester offered evidence of profanation of the sabbath by Hay.¹⁹ But when given the usual chance to reply at the visitation, through commentary on his parish, Hay turned the accusation back, inveighing bitterly about sabbath breakers who went to plays and pastimes and played hand tennis on the kirk wall. Similarly, the Rev John Gibson, accused of having struck John Weilland, reviling him, and tearing his clothes, so arranged it that the day of his trial would also be the day on which the court dealt with a charge of sabbath breaking against one of his own parishioners whom he claimed had been playing at skittles.²⁰ Such accusations were an important part of personal defence in an inquisitorial climate. They could not be ignored; they deflected attention and parried an attack; they implied moral rectitude and pastoral enthusiasm; and they were tools readily to hand in a society where church-going was still a minority interest.

More subtle still is the way in which accusations of sabbath breaking could

be used to force a resolution of secular problems. In 1593 there was a serious local dispute between the Setons of Tranent on the one hand, and the Hamiltons of Preston and the Cockburns of Ormistoun on the other. Neither side would give assurance of safe passage to the other and so it was dangerous to travel between parts of the presbyteries of Haddington and Dalkeith in which the lands of these lairds lay. The Haddington presbytery was trying to keep the dispute under control. However, it received little help from the brethren in Dalkeith. The Rev Alexander Forrester, who was appointed to get their assistance, 'gat na *ansuer* of yame' except that they sent one of their number to go with him to get advice from Edinburgh.²¹ It seems that the Dalkeith presbytery were less happy to take on their local gentry than the Haddington ministers, who were old hands at conducting a war of attrition against the Setons for suspicion of papist sympathies. When nothing had happened after a couple of weeks, the Haddington presbytery thought it time to apply force. They were careful how they applied it. Walter Hay got the task of working on Lord Seton but James Gibson was sent, not to the laird of Ormiston, who lived within the presbytery of Dalkeith; he was sent to the presbytery of Dalkeith itself 'to desyre yame to send summe of *yair* brithring to ye Laird of ormistoun and (my emphasis) to *complaine yat yaj tak nocht* ordor *wit* ye profanatioun of ye saboth be ye pladayis of prestoun and ormistoun'.²² Sabbatarianism thus provided a means of pressuring a neighbouring presbytery into action designed ultimately to achieve concord between secular forces.

If the 'fun' of my title has somehow disappeared beneath a sea of special pleading, petty power mongering, and hypocritical self-defence, that is precisely the point. The records through which one looks for REED activity are the products of people who talk about fun rather than doing it. Their historical value is the greater for that. Until at least 1603, and against constant pressure from the presbytery, the laird of Samuelstoun managed to maintain, or at least not to prevent, a local May play, known as *The Trick of Samuelstoun*. The whole countryside convened to this play, which was a notorious profanation of the sabbath. It had a popular life of its own in that the presbytery seems to have acknowledged that while the laird should have done more to prevent the play, he could not do all, and they were reduced to searching after the principal actors and persecuting the playwright. We now know who this author was because on 28 June 1598 he was required to deliver his text for inspection to the very minister who had himself been responsible for Haddington's plays twenty-four years earlier, in 1574, when he was also the burgh's schoolmaster: the Rev James Carmichael, who was now the leading minister

in the presbytery.²³ The author was a John Brounsyde, and he was told after inspection of the play 'not to attempt the lyke in tyme cumming' without giving prior notice to the presbytery.²⁴ It is not too far-fetched to propose that this is the same 'Burnesyde' who some years later set up an unofficial school in the Nungate, just over the river and outside the walls of Haddington, to which all the country children were sent by their parents in preference to the official burgh school, which was failing and from which they had to be forced by the burgh's threat of heavy fines.²⁵ Brounsyde evidently found a livelihood but in the rural communities and on the edge of town. The forces of burghal and ecclesiastical authority based in the town of Haddington could, and did, eventually get to him but not before he had achieved some toleration from the gentry and sponsorship by the people.

The cultural history of this period has to embrace the larger institutional forces and broad cultural changes of the Reformation. But local studies of groups and individuals wrestling with immediate problems and mixed motives assist and refine that history particularly in showing the complex relation of individual to institution in the area of sabbatarianism. At what other level could one find the instructive irony by which Carmichael, teacher, minister, and burgh play director comes after a generation to judge the work of Brounsyde, would-be teacher, independent scholar, and marginal playwright supplying the traditional pleasures of country people whose grandmothers had not yet learned to say: 'Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy'?

Notes

- 1 *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1587–96*, Scottish Record Office: CH2/185/1, f 25. Loss of text (indicated by <...>) is due to damage to the top right corner of the folio in the range of 5–25mm. The word 'dischargit' here means 'officially ended'.
- 2 *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1587–96*, f 25. The damaged word is certainly 'nor' [= than], ie, 'our doings are more honest than yours'. Additionally, the word 'exercyse' here means 'exposition of scripture'; 'Iestouris' means 'gestures'; and 'flytter', 'quarreller'.
- 3 The length was a problem even for the ministers and elders. More than once they officially determined that the first speaker should take no more than forty-five minutes and the reply no more than fifteen because some of them had a distance to travel home after the meeting.
- 4 *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1587–96*, f 25v. The word 'compeirit' here means 'appeared in court'.

- 5 Phillip Stubbes, *Anatomy of Abuses in England in Shakespeare's Youth, A.D. 1583*, Frederick J. Furnival (ed), New Shakespeare Society (London, 1887–9), 147.
- 6 David George (ed), *Lancashire*, REED (Toronto, 1991), 26 and 112.
- 7 George, *Lancashire*, 341.
- 8 George, *Lancashire*, 112.
- 9 This can be compared with the transition from the language of disruptive action into ironic speech in the 1390 Scone charivari recorded by Walter Bower in his *Scotichronicon*. See John J. McGavin, 'Robert III's "Rough Music": Charivari and Diplomacy in a Medieval Scottish Court', *The Scottish Historical Review* 74:2 (1995), 144–58, 154.
- 10 If anything, maintaining authority seems to have got more difficult for the Haddington presbytery in the early years of James' reign as king of England. The records of 1603–6 indicate several instances of outright defiance and contempt for the clergy's rebukes. The problems with one of the presbytery, the Rev Walter Hay, peaked at this time when he contracted marriage with someone of whom the presbytery disapproved. He was accused of dereliction of duty; fathering an illegitimate child by his servant; only transacting and recording in the kirk session such business as he pleased; failing to administer communion more than once in five years; breaking the sabbath, and so on. One man whom he rebuked from the pulpit replied that he would not receive a word out of Walter Hay's mouth any more than Walter Hay would receive a fart out of his arse (9 April 1606: *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1596–1608*, Scottish Record Office: CH2/185/2, nf).
- 11 *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1587–96*, f 18v.
- 12 This rivalry has continued down the centuries as a glance at the graffiti on a desk in Edinburgh University Library recently proved!
- 13 Recorded 4 December 1588: *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1587–96*, ff 18–20.
- 14 13 February 1605: *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1596–1605*, nf. This was Thomas Robertson of Kirkbank, who was summoned for profanation of the sabbath 16 January 1605 and subsequently drew out the process for as long as possible through a combination of not appearing at the presbytery and then showing insufficient humility which meant that the presbytery itself postponed his case until he was better disposed.
- 15 6 June 1604: *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1596–1608*, nf.
- 16 Steinston was summoned for this latter offence 2 July 1604 and was still impenitent 18 July when excommunication was threatened. His request for pardon was made 25 July 1604: *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1596–1608*, nf.
- 17 13 August 1589: *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1587–96*, f 38.
- 18 Between 30 July and 13 August 1589: *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1587–96*, f 38.

- 19 19 May 1603: *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1596–1608*, nf.
 20 The account, which is somewhat damaged, is given in the entry for 12 August 1601: *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1596–1608*, nf. As was not infrequently the case with the Presbyterians, the dispute, whatever its original motivation, turned on dress. Gibson and others were at the goodwife of Athelstanford's house when John Weilland came in. The dispute (modernized) went as follows:

Gibson: Errant knave! Should thou come here to shake thy tail?

Weilland: I came not here to offend any man.

Gibson: Errant knave! Are you come here to shake your breeches with your satin doublet?

Weilland: Why may I not wear this satin doublet as well as you wear black clothes? It cost you nothing.

Gibson (rising from behind the table and hitting Weilland): Are you comparing yourself to me, knave?

At this point John Baptie separated them and as he was doing so, a fourth person, John Reid, got involved, calling Weilland 'cursed knave' or 'forlorn knave'. Gibson then, between two others, grabbed Weilland by the clothes and tore his jacket, saying, 'I will pull you all in pieces'.

- 21 6 June 1593: *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1587–96*, f 78.
 22 13 June 1593: *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1587–96*, f 79.
 23 5 July 1598: *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1596–1608*, nf. This ultimately abortive attempt to establish a tradition of play is discussed at length in my article 'Drama in Sixteenth-Century Haddington', in Sydney Higgins (ed), *European Medieval Drama 1997* (Turnhout, forthcoming).
 24 9 August 1598: *Haddington Presbytery Minutes 1596–1608*, nf.
 25 'The samein day it wes complenit be maister william bowie scolemaister yat ane (...) Ignorant personis of yis brucht quhidder vpoun Ignorance or malice h(...) bairnis fra his scole & hes causit ane callit burnesyde tak vp ye form(...) scole in ye nungait & hes put yair bairnis to him as thocht yaj culd be ler(...) yair nor in his scole / quhilk ye [counsall] magistratis & counsall vnderstand(...) done be sum evill disposit personis vpoun malice to disgrace our awin sc(...) as in yame lvis hes yairfor statute & ordanit yat na pers(...) burg(...)tant within ye said brucht put ony of yair bairnis or s(...)ent g(...) said scole in nungait or ony vyer scole within ane Myle (...) cuming And gif ony be at ye said scole presentlie to tak (...) fourtie schillingis ye first fault fyve lib. ye nixt f(...) & tynsell of yair burgesschip & fredome for euir desuper (...)' 26 December 1606: *Haddington Council Book: 1603–1616*, Scottish Record Office B30/13/3, f 39. The loss of text (...) is due to damage along the right hand edge of the folio varying from 12mm to 56mm in extent.