

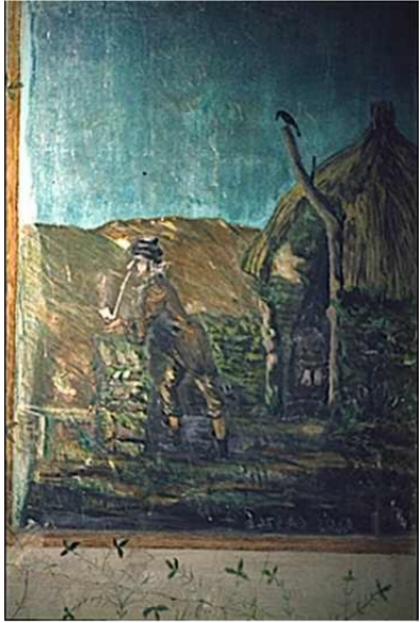
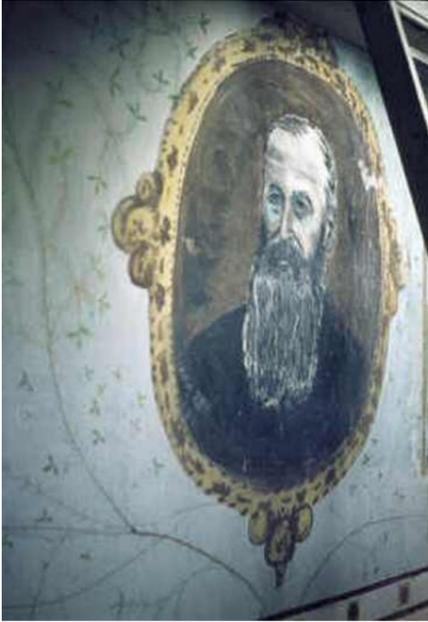
## Great Aunt Kate

Great Aunt Kate decidedly deserves a chapter to herself. She was an extremely accomplished woman, generous and community minded.



Most of my family view the self-portrait of Aunt Kate with distaste but I love it. She must have done quite a lot of painting. When I was in England with my son in 1974 we visited Tow Law where Great Grandfather was the pastor and where the Simpson family lived. On the landing to the third floor of the rectory was a painting by Kate of her father when her father

was the priest there. As well there was a small painting of an odd little man in front of his hut, smoking a long pipe.



*Reverend Michael Henry  
Simpson*

It is very likely that Kate did many other paintings but we will never know. But here is one from the booklet *“TRUTH TRIUMPHANT*



THE ARTIST'S LITTLE MODEL.

*From a painting by the Author.*

*Hang in The Royal Scottish Academy.*

But let Aunt Kate speak for herself. The following are excerpts from the address she gave to the Mayor and people of Middleton Borough in November 1936, at which she made several presentations and which the Mayor said would form a basis for the Middleton Museum.

Information about the bell is recorded in the chapter, *Alkrington Manor and Hall*. And the following refers to the Lever China and crystal goblets.

“The Lever China was originally presented by the Skyrack

Volunteer Infantry to its Captain and Adjutant, Darcy Lever of Alkington Hall about 1800, in recognition of his services to the Country.

The tea and coffee set of china, known as 'The Lever China' is unique, no other set of the same design having ever existed. This historic China bears two flags: One is the Union Jack that does not bear the Red Cross of Ireland, showing that it was made prior to 1801 when the Union of the Parliament was accomplished, binding Ireland more closely to the Empire. The china also bears the Yellow Flag of Darcy Lever's regiment, the Skyrack Infantry Volunteer.

When the china was passed on to Middleton Borough it contained 38 pieces including tea pot with lid and tray, sugar vase with lid, cream jug, slop basin, two cake plates, eleven coffee mugs, ten tea cups and eight saucers.



Aunt Kate also donated three crystal goblets to the museum. She describes them as, expressly made for Great

Grandfather. One had the Lever crest – a white cock on a golden trumpet with a monogram, D.E.L. for Darcy and Elizabeth Lever, below the crest. Another goblet has the Anchor indicating Darcy Lever's service in the Royal Navy, and the third goblet has different engravings on either side with a hunting scene and the words "John Booth and his little Hounds." There are no photos of this goblet.

Aunt Kate also presented the Borough with a portrait of Sir Ashton Lever but I have no idea when and by whom it was painted.



She mentions a handsome tea and coffee service in solid silver with the tray bearing an inscription, formed part of the presentation but this was converted into modern silver by a short-sighted avaricious person after the death of Darcy Lever. The

details of the circumstances of the presentation were therefore lost.

Aunt Kate notes that her mother could well remember the silver and her grief at its being melted down. She believed it to have been presented about the year 1802 when the Skyrack Corps was disbanded.

There are several other items among my memorabilia of Aunt Kate. These include ten Christmas cards dating from 1936 to 1948 each with her special message.

This picture of her is in the 1946 card.



One has a ten-verse couplet poem titled: *SWALLOWS*

*Swallows –My thoughts fly to you for the year is on the wing,  
As the swallows return to their nest in the spring.*

Its footnote – For the past two summers the same pair of swallows have built their nest in my garage, and hatched two broods each year of four young ones each time.

Aunt Kate had many talents and often dedicated them to community service. In 1938 she produced the *Longlevens School Song*. She wrote the words and her sister, Florence, Mrs. G. Kennedy-Chrystie, wrote the music. The school first performed it in 1938.

A government publication of the *Gloucester Home and Empire* was suspended throughout the country for the duration of the war. But from October 1939 to August 1940 Kate produced every month, *The Bridge Builder*, “as a link amongst friends, our neighbors and us.” These monthly publications were put together in a booklet that I own. The content is appropriate to the month in which each appears. It was suspended in September 1940 owing to wartime difficulties. The cover of the booklet is titled:

The Bridge Builder

“I Built a Bridge to Span the Tide”

(Next is a picture of a Bridge)

October 1939 – August 1940

K. Pearce-Ellis

I also have a 39-page booklet of hers:  
TRUTH TRIUMPHANT,  
Wild Jess (A tale of the Cornish Coast)  
Life and Legend By Kate A. Pearce-Ellis

Would that we had been able to meet this amazing  
woman.



Kate at home