

The Genius o' Glenlair

(A wee bit doggerel tae celebrate the Year o' Maxwell 2006)

*When James Clerk Maxwell was a lad,
His questing mind fair deaved his Dad;
For "What's the go of it?" he'd speir,
An' hammer on till a' was clear.*

*They ca'd him 'dafty' at the scule,
An' that, ye'd think, was awfie cruel!
He didna' mind, he was apart
Constructing ovals o' Descartes!*

*He played wi' colours blue an' green
An' red, enhanced by dubious sheen;
An' took the earliest colour photo,
As good as ony Blake or Giotto.*

*He analysed the rings o' Saturn,
Resolving their striated pattern,
Predicting weel their composition
By calculus and long division.*

*Redundant in the Granite City
An' spurned by En'bro', mairs the pity,
He ended up awa' doon South,
Nae doot they thocht him gae uncouth!*

*He liked tae doodle lines o' force,
Wi' charge an' current as the source;
As much at hame wi' rho an' phi,
E, H an' B an' J forbye!*

*Through these he saw the radiant licht,
An' workit at it day an' nicht;
His mind roamed far whaur ithers durn't,
An' hit upon displacement current.*

*Syne back tae Galloway he repaired,
He had tae go – he was the laird!
By day conferring wi' the ghillie,
By nicht researching willy-nilly!*

*At last frae Cambridge cam' the call,
Doon tae thon hallowed Senate Hall,
Where, tho' he held the dons in thrall,
They didna follow him at all!*

*Blithe son o' Gallovidian hills
O' birk-clad slopes an' tumbling rills,
Wha rose through intellect sublime,
Tae comprehend baith space an' time;*

*Great Scot! wha's words in prose an' rhyme,
Inspire us yet o'er vales o' time,
In this thine eponymial year
Thy soaring spirit we revere!*

Professor Keith Moffatt, FRS 16 Dec. 2006