

**National Records of Scotland, Transcription of a Letter from John Mitchell,
Collector of Excise, to Robert Graham of Fintry, Commissioner of Excise, 24 July
1796**

Dear Sir,

Upon my return home, today, having been in the Country all last Week, attending Revenue Courts, [I] found poor Burns was no more, [he] dyed on Thursday.

The memory of so uncommonly rare a Character is to be regarded, at his Funeral tomorrow. Having Cavalry and Infantry here they are to attend, in Mourning, and our Volunteers to fire over his Grave.

He, with difficulty, came to the Excise Office on the 14th. (the Collection day) & got his sallary. From his weak state [he] was urged not to come, but he would, saying, Once more he hoped to be able to go & draw it from me, at the proper place, & I shall not soon forget his appearance & manner, reduced & shattered as he was, in the extreme, his Wit & Humour remained, as one instance, some of the officers, as he thought, looking at his Hat, says he, I believe there is no Stamp, in the Crown but pleads exemption, as being in quest of a Crown of Glory. To me he remarked, I'm only 36, 10 of which only I have been in the world, &, in that time, all I shall say, My good Sir, I have not been idle.

By your favors, of the 20th., [I] am much obliged for your attention, regarding Mr Penn succeeding to the Vacancy. He has long given proof of being a capable officer, & has long had a Footwalk, hence a preferable claim to any, in this Collection.

I shall, by to morrow's Post, officially acquaint the Honourable Board & propose the arrangement, as, in my opinion, most conducive to the Interest of the Revenue.

Respectfully, I am,

Your obedient, humble Servant,

John Mitchell

Dumfries,
Sunday,
24th. July, 1796

(Graham of Fintry papers, GD151/11/26/46)

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