

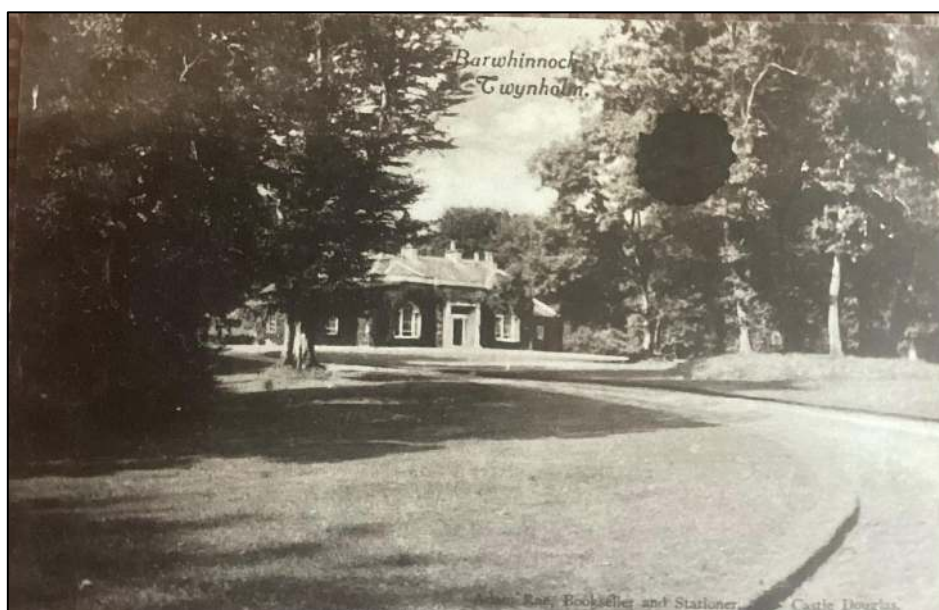
Researching the Country Houses of Galloway

The completion of their build was only the beginning of their story



Building Biographies:
A 2023 volunteer research project into the country houses
of Galloway

VOLUME 6: TONGLAND TO TWYNHOLM



With contributions from:

Lynda Mackie, Janet Quin, Will Williams and Sandra Williamson

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GALLOWAY GLENS
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Introduction

The Building Biographies project recruited volunteers to undertake research into some of the large country houses within Galloway¹. These imposing buildings have borne witness to centuries of history, standing through changing eras and shifting social and economic climates. Their walls have enclosed the lives of many, their grounds the lives of many more and they have fulfilled a variety of needs from homes, hospitals and schools, to war rooms and tourist attractions.

The decision to focus on country houses stemmed from their longevity and assorted histories: their status and sheer size making them notable features in the landscape which inspire the imagination and curiosity of locals and visitors alike. These are buildings which appear frequently in our landscape but their histories often remain unknown to the public. Many have been demolished or stand as ruins: a resource that disappears a little more with each passing decade.

For the project, each volunteer was given their own specific house to research, piecing together timelines from their initial construction through to how they stand today. Initially, the selection of houses to research was driven by location, with the catchment area of the Galloway Glens being the focus. Second to this, the aim was to avoid any that had already been subject to a significant amount of research. The resulting selection included houses that were still in use, ruinous or even demolished, featuring a variety of functions dating back to the 19th century or earlier.

As more volunteers signed up, however, the study area expanded to include all of Galloway (and even a few from Dumfriesshire) and the biggest influence came from the preferences of the volunteers themselves; many had specific areas or even houses that had already piqued their interest and so the list grew to encompass a sporadic mix of country houses from across the region.

Each researcher was given a Guidance Note outlining the main resources available online. People could visit their local library or archive centre but the choice of online resources kept the project open to anyone who might face constraints in attending such places in person.

By the end of the project, 32 volunteers submitted their findings as summary reports, which covered 42 country houses across Galloway. The volunteers included people from Dumfries and Galloway, Ayrshire, Glasgow and America. Their results revealed stories of the people who designed, lived and worked within these houses, stories which reflect both local history and connections to far-flung places during times of peace and war.

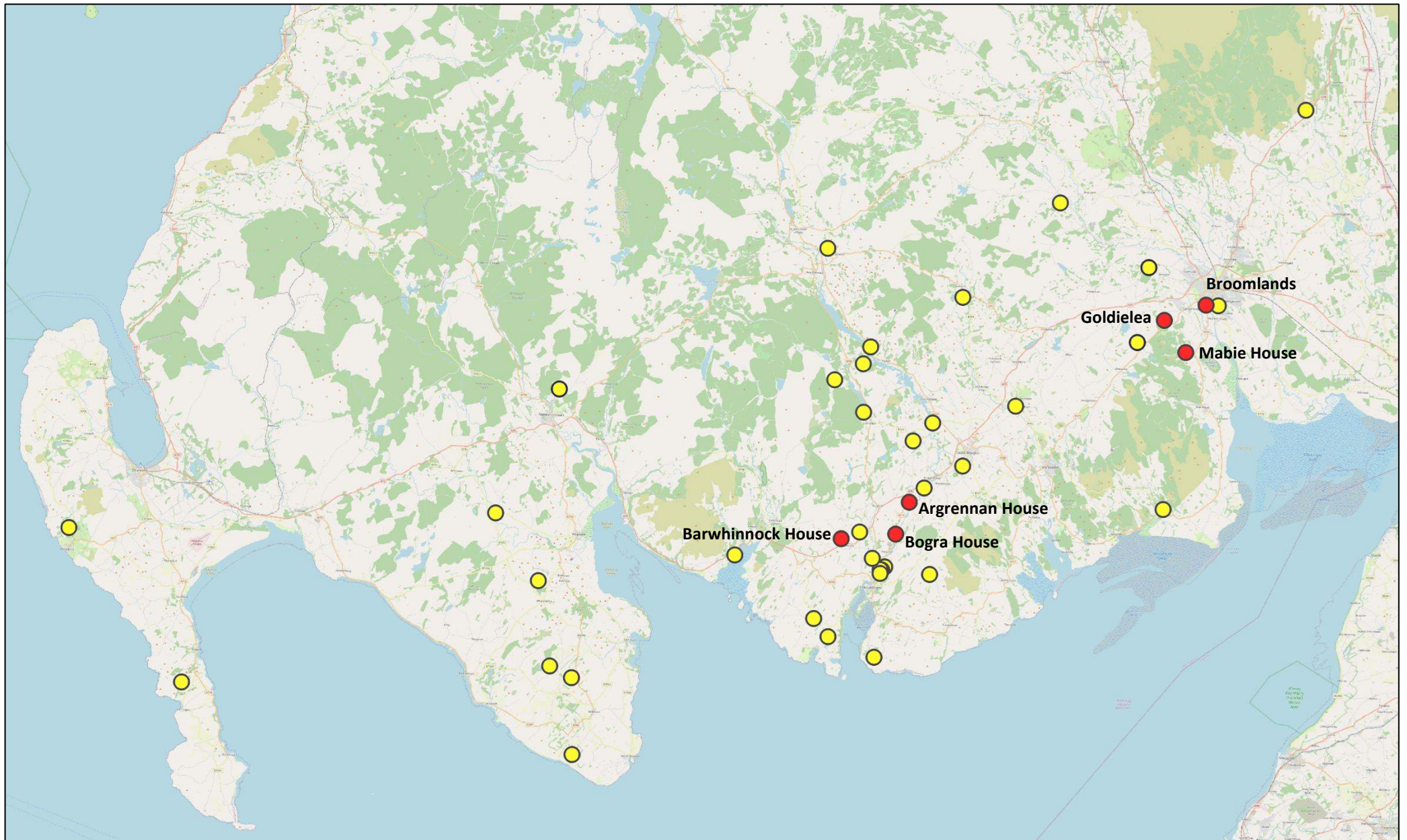
The volunteers' research has revealed the importance of recording these histories, and the origins of many bring to light a legacy that is not always acknowledged. After the abolition of slavery within the British Empire, the Slave Compensation Act of 1837 authorised a commission to manage the distribution of £20 million to compensate slave owners in the British colonies for the freeing of slaves.² Not all, but many of these country houses were initially funded with profits from slavery, with several connections to plantations in Jamaica.

It is important to record all aspects of our history and these houses seem able to reveal both the good and bad from our collective past. The passion and commitment shown by the volunteers in uncovering the stories of these houses has been inspiring, and they have created an impressive record which will be shared for many years to come.

Claire Williamson

¹ The Building Biographies project was undertaken in February to April 2023 as part of 'Can You Dig It', the community archaeology project of the Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership. Galloway Glens was a five-year initiative funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and 'Can You Dig It' was match funded by Historic Environment Scotland and delivered by Rathmell Archaeology.

² The Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery contains a database of their records - <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/project/details/>



Locations of houses researched during the Building Biographies Project – red marks the houses reported in this volume

Argrennan House, Tongland

by Will Williams

The house and its people

This research was done under the “Can You Dig It” project, a community archaeology project of the Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership. The project was delivered by Rathmell Archaeology and had been running various events since 2019 aimed at engaging people with their heritage. All the events are made available for free through funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic Environment Scotland.

There are two main sections in this report – the architectural description and then the social & cultural history i.e. the people that have/are living here.

The Architecture

This is extracted from Historic Environment Scotland [ARGRENNAN HOUSE \(LB17114\)](https://historicenvironment.scot/ARGRENNAN_HOUSE_LB17114)
(historicenvironment.scot)

Summary

Category - A

Group Category Details - 100000020 - See Notes

Date Added - 04/11/1971

Local Authority - Dumfries And Galloway

Planning Authority - Dumfries And Galloway

Parish - Tongland

NGR - NX 71463 58085

Coordinates - 271463, 558085





Figure 1 Credit: Strutt & Parker



Argrennan House

Photo © [Scottish Screen Locations](#)⁸

Description

This addition of the classical house built in 1818 is thought to be designed by James Gillespie Graham. It was an addition to the original house, built in the 1600/1700s?.

The original 18th century house, forms the rear wing of the 2-storey and basement rectangular west facing **1818 house**.

The east elevation survives intact, the main west elevation being largely obscured by the stair tower of the later house.

Rubble walling, polished granite margins; granite quoins, rusticated to northwest angle.

East elevation with central projecting bow with Venetian windows to basement and ground floors, tripartite to 1st floor. All other windows single light; all sash and case with 12-pane glazing. 2-bay north flank. Moulded eaves cornice, conical slate roof over bow; main roof piended and slated. Pair of coped axial granite stacks. Good cast-iron balcony to bow.

The 1818 house: It has 2-storeys, attics and basements; squared whinstone with polished sandstone dressings, raised angle margins. Long 7-bay frontage, wide pedimented central entrance bay; centre and end bays shallow advanced. Steps to paired Tuscan column porch with balustraded parapet; pilastered tripartite doorpiece with sidelights. Double-leaf doors with good semi-circular astragalled fanlight. To 1st, single light window with flanking 8-pane false sidelights. All windows single light, architraved; those to ground with consoled cornice. Sash and case with 12-pane glazing. Band course over basement; cill course to ground and 1st. Moulded eaves cornice, plain parapet; pediment over centre bay. Piended slate roofs, pair of central stacks; wallhead stacks to rear, all corniced. East flank: full-width 3-light bow, cast-iron balcony to ground. 3-bay West flank. North elevation with full-height square stair bay to centre with round-headed window; formerly coloured glass, now plain.

Interior: very high quality and well preserved. 18th century house has mostly original plasterwork and cornices, good marble and carved chimneypieces. Basement with groin-vaulted old kitchens. 1818 house has all original plasterwork and woodwork, good stair with elegant cast-iron balusters, landing with fluted Doric screen.

Statement of Special Interest

Although there is no documentary evidence to suggest James Gillespie Graham as the architect, the main elevation of Argrennan is almost identical to that of Mount Melville (Fife, now demolished) a James Gillespie Graham house of 1821, thus Argrennan is certainly not merely a copy.

B Group with Argrennan Lodge and Walled Garden.

[Argrennan, Stables | Canmore](#)

The owners and the occupants

Pre 1836 -	Gordons
1836 – 1915	The Ker Family
1863 – 1872?	The Gordon Family “in residence” before moving to Threave
1915 – 1984	The Aikman - Smiths
1983 – 2004	Robert Reddaway & Tulane Kidd
2004 – 2022	Alistair Flanagan
2022 to present	Argrennan Estate, an RSK company

And in more detail:

Pre - 1836

Argrennan, is maybe Gaelic and Norse. In the first, “ard”, a hill, and in the latter, “grennan” for green, applying to the appearance of land. In the Gaelic there is “grinean”, a green.

In 1799 the owner was Alexander Gordon of Campbelton, parish of Twynholm. The farms then were Argrennan and Nether Barncrosh. During the occupation by the Gordons the name had been changed to Deebank.

The farms are — the Mains of Argrennan, Nether Barncrosh, and Barstibly, etc. The greater part of the present house was built in 1818.

From 1818 to the present day, Argrennan has had relatively few owners.

William Gordon, the son of Alexander Gordon was in possession in 1819, so we must assume that the 1818 addition was done by the Gordon family.

1835 - 1864

William Gordon sold to Robert Ker, a West India planter, and a native of the parish of Kirkmabreck. Robert Ker altered the name from Deebank, back to the old one of Argrennan.

Taking a step back, on 20 Feb 1831, Robert Ker had married Elizabeth Ure, eldest daughter of the late James Ure, controller of Customs, Leith ([Robert Ker Esq \(1773-1854\) | WikiTree FREE Family Tree](#)).

They lived in Edinburgh until 1835 (deduced from birth locations of children).



Robert Ker & Elizabeth Innes Ker nee Ure

Previous to that Robert Ker had lived from 1789 to 1829 in Grenada, West Indies. Robert had made his wealth as a planter with his brother James in Grenada, although it must be said that in 1774/5 the family had moved to the area of Garlarg in Minnigaff Parish.

Their children were:

- Daughter, Margaret J Ker (1832 born, Edinburgh - 1842)
- Daughter, Mary Stewart. (1833 born, Edinburgh - 1834)
- Daughter, Elizabeth Mary. (1834 Edinburgh - 1856). Married James Comrie of Gategill, parish of Bogue
- Daughter, Antoinette (1835 born, Edinburgh - 1872).
- Son, Robert (1836 born, Edinburgh - 1892)
- Son, James George Innes Ker (1837 Argrennan - 1892 Devon).

As James was born at Argrennan, the assumption is that the family moved from Edinburgh to Argrennan during 1836/1837.

- Daughter, Mary Stewart Ker (1839 Argrennan – 1916 Argrennan – Buried Tongland)
- Son, James George Innes Ker. (Born 27 Dec 1837 at Argrennan House, died in Australia ([James George Innes Ker \(1837-1895\) | WikiTree FREE Family Tree](#)))

Robert Ker held the Barony of Argrennan and Grayscroft from 1831 until 1854. Robert Ker held the office of Extraordinary Director of the National Bank of Scotland along with several landed Gentlemen, for 12 yrs 1837 to 1849. He kept a Residence at 41 Melville Street, Edinburgh.

Robert Ker died in 1854, many years before his wife, Elizabeth, who died on the 24th August 1871.

Inscription on his Memorial tomb stone in Kirkyard at Tongland cemetery:

Sacred to the memory of Robert Ker, Esq'r of Argrennan, born 17th March 1773, died 22nd March 1854. Mary Stuart Ker, his daughter, born 13th April 1833, died at Trinity, 9th June 1834. Elizabeth his widow, who died 24 August 1871, aged 68, at the house of his son-in-law (more illegible)

([Tongland Kirkyard M.I. Listing – Stewartry Monumental Inscriptions \(kirkyards.co.uk\)](http://kirkyards.co.uk))



There was some dispute over his will that was sent for adjudication in the House of Lords in 1865 ([Robert Ker Esq \(1773-1854\) | WikiTree FREE Family Tree](#)). James Ker did not inherit Argrennan House.

On 7 April 1858, 4 yrs after his father's death, James Ker, then 20, left Liverpool on the "Marco Polo" for Australia



Marco Polo

He arrived in Melbourne and then travelled on the "Burra Burra" to Adelaide, for some reason, disembarking on 20 July 1858. He was married by the Very Reverend Dean Farral by Special Licence as reported in The Caledonian Mercury on 4 Dec 1862, Pg 4.

Another son, Robert Ker (1836 – 1892) remained at Argrennan and is remembered on a grave in Tongland Church. Robert may have inherited Argrennan House as he had lived there with his wife.

“Sacred to the memory of Robert Ker, of Argrennan, born 2nd July 1836, died 7th November 1892. Lord lift them up the light of thy countenance to shine upon him and give him peace and joy in the eternal Kingdom. Elizabeth Hester Rosetta, his wife, born Jan. 1842, died July 1915, interred at Brompton Cemetery. Also sacred to the loved memory of Louisa Elizabeth Innes, eldest daughter of the above Robert Ker of Argrennan, and widow of Captain Archer Musgrave, R.N., born 18th June 1859, died 15th April 1937. The face of death is

toward the sun of life. Also of Tom Musgrave, their son, 2nd Lieut. Irish Guards, who was killed in action at Cuinchy, 6th Feb. 1915.”



Also in Tongland kirkyard:

Sacred to the memory of Margaret Innis Ker, eldest daughter of Robert Ker, Esq., born at Edinburgh, died at Argrennan House, XXIX November MDCCCXLII, aged 11 years.



In 1901 census, Robert’s wife, Elizabeth M. H. R Ker (Elizabeth Hester Rosetta McAlpine Ker) is living in Argrennan House with 2 servants – Lucy Hodson (71) & Edith Boyle (20).

[\(\[Tongland Kirkyard M.I. Listing – Stewartry Monumental Inscriptions \\(kirkyards.co.uk\\)\]\(http://kirkyards.co.uk\)\)](http://kirkyards.co.uk)

And the grave of Lucy Hodson was added at the Ker grave are by “Mrs Ker” in 1913.



The Gordon Family 1864 – 1872?

The Gordon family resided at Argrennan from 1864 until 1872. In 1864 William Gordon remarried. He and his new wife, Margaret Steele, moved to Scotland, where he had been born. In the 1871 census they were living in Argrennan House in Tongland, Kircudbrightshire. [Mary Dorothy Miller \(annefield.net\)](http://annefield.net)

Taking a step back, William Gordon's first marriage was to Mary Dorothy. She was born 17 June 1823 in Bahia, Brazil, at the time a major port on the central coast of Brazil, and known now as Salvador da Bahia. She was the oldest child of Joseph Dundas Miller and his wife, Elizabeth Tomlinson. Although her parents were married in Cheshire, England, in 1821, by the time Mary Dorothy was born in 1823, they had moved to Bahia, one of the ports used by the family shipping company, Millers & Thompson. The first five children were born in Brazil before the family moved to Liverpool where the rest of the children were born.



Dorothy Miller

On 20 April 1847, when Mary Dorothy was twenty-three, she married William Gordon at St. Mary's Church, in Walton-on-the-Hill, just north of Liverpool. Notice of the marriage appeared in the *Liverpool Mercury etc.* on Friday, 23 April 1847:

"Married. Same day [Tuesday last], at St. Mary's Church, Walton-on-the-Hill, by the Rev. W. M. Falloon, William Gordon, Esq., to Mary Dorothy, eldest daughter of Joseph Miller, Esq., of Bootle."²

William Gordon was working for Joseph Dundas Miller in the shipping business; he was listed in the 1860 census as a Brazilian merchant. While in Brazil he got interested in diamonds and made a fortune dealing in them. He returned to Britain aged 30 with £250,000 in his pocket.

William & Dorothy's their first seven children were born in Liverpool and their last three in New Brighton, Cheshire, across the River Mersey from Liverpool where Millers and Thompson were headquartered. Mary Dorothy died 18 March 1860 in New Brighton, when she was only thirty-six, leaving William with ten children ages twelve to one.

It is also of great interest that in about 1867, William Gordon purchased a property near Castle Douglas which had belonged to the Douglas family since the 14th century; the property included Threave Castle, located on an island in the River Dee. In 1871-72 William had Threave House built on land overlooking Threave Castle but was still living at Argrennan house in 1871 according to the 1871 census. He was living at Threave House in 1881 (census)

According to "Scotland's Places",

The Threave architect who designed the house was Charles Kinnear of Peddie & Kinnear. His design is said to be based on Castle Fraser in Aberdeenshire in northern Scotland.

William died in 1899. Margaret, his wife, died in 1920.

His grandson, Alan Francis Gordon, b.1892, gave the estate to the National Trust for Scotland in 1948. Major Alan Francis Gordon was the younger son of Col. William Gordon, the oldest child of Mary Dorothy and William Gordon. The house, which overlooks the extensive Threave Gardens, was opened to the public in 2002. The house and gardens are visited by 60,000 people each year.

Other occupants in "residence" during the Ker ownership, as gleaned from Newspaper Archives:

Mr & Mrs Hutchinson

1887 Mr & Mrs Hutchinson, Argrennan
Galloway News and Kirkcudbrightshire Advertiser - Friday 02 August 1889

1890 Mr & Mrs Hutchinson, Argrennan
Galloway News and Kirkcudbrightshire Advertiser - Friday 01 August 1890

We know that the Ker family owned Argrennan until 1913. But there was a newspaper report of the house being on the market in 1894 - Argrennan House and estate for sale (*Dumfries & Galloway Courier and Herald - Saturday 08 September 1894*).

During the research contact was made with Sandra Innes Ker, a descendant of James George Innes Ker (1837 – 1892), who emigrated to Australia. It was a joy to be able to gain further insights to the Ker family and she has been sent a copy of this report.

The Aikman – Smiths 1915 to 1983

James Aikman Smith bought Argrennan House in 1915 and subsequently it was lived in by his two daughters, Christian and Annie. James was living in Edinburgh and he was the President of the Scottish Rugby Union and facilitated the purchase of Murrayfield for the SRU in the 1920s.

The Aikman Smiths are generally referred to as the Misses Smiths, as they were two sisters. They led quite a reclusive lifestyle at Argrennan House. Here are some newspaper references to their lifestyle

1915 Mrs Aikman Smith
Dumfries and Galloway Standard-Wednesday 27 October 1915

1918 Miss Chrisie Aikman Smith
Dumfries and Galloway Standard-Saturday 20 July 1918

1939 Mrs Aikman Smith hosted a wedding reception at Argrennan House
Dumfries and Galloway Standard - Wednesday 28 June 1939

1943 Mrs Aikman Smith advertising for gardener
Dumfries and Galloway Standard - Saturday 01 May 1943

1943 Mrs Aikman Smith – Prisoner of war Fund
Dumfries and Galloway Standard - Saturday 03 April 1943

1945 Mrs Aikman Smith Food Parcels
Dumfries and Galloway Standard - Wednesday 21 March 1945

1983 Misses Aikman Smith, Argrennan House, donate furniture for the opening of Shambellie House
Dumfries and Galloway Standard - Wednesday 10 June 1992

On the death of the two sisters, Argrennan was left to their brother Gavin Aikman Smith and afterwards, Gavin's son, Jim Aikman Smith ([CRSC : Clyde River Steamer Club Remembering a Legend: Jim Aikman Smith](#)) who was a solicitor with Brodies in Edinburgh.

Robert Reddaway & Tulane Kidd 1983 - 2004

Robert Reddaway, originally from the USA and Mr Tulane Kidd, also American, bought Argrennan House in 1983.

They restored so much of the house and the gardens and hosted many charity events, usually one each year. Two were for Scottish Opera and several for the Art Society, the Red Cross etc. Also many lectures and plays.

Many references to these events are in the newspapers:

1987 Bob Reddaway, Argrennan House gave a talk to the Friends of Broughton House AGM
Dumfries and Galloway Standard - Friday 11 December 1987

1994 Argrennan hosted a charity fashion show. Also the year in which Broughton House was transferred to NTS
Galloway News and Kirkcudbrightshire Advertiser - Thursday 29 December 1994

Bob gave a talk to the first meeting of the Kirkcudbright Literary Society on the renovation of Argrennan House
Galloway News and Kirkcudbrightshire Advertiser - Thursday 21 October 1993

1994 Argrennan House gardens open to the public
Dumfries and Galloway Standard - Friday 08 July 1994

1997 Argrennan House gardens open to the public
Dumfries and Galloway Standard - Wednesday 04 June 1997

1998 Sale of rare & interesting plants at Argrennan House
Dumfries and Galloway Standard - Friday 26 June 1998

Alistair Flanagan 2004 – 2022

Alistair Flanagan, bought the house in 2004 (Scotsman article by **Kirsty McLuckie** Published 2nd Sep 2021 - [Prestige property: Secret Castle Douglas stunner reveals its glory | The Scotsman](#))

He grew up in Crossmichael but never knew the house existed until he saw it advertised for sale. He had just sold his engineering business and was looking to relocate from Kent, England to be closer to family.

Alistair oversaw the fitting of a new roof to the main building, as well as the installation of a heating system, as thus far the house was heated still using the open fires in rooms, except for an oil-fired range cooker that had previously been installed in the Georgian Kitchen. He

also built the small complex of buildings that sit to the rear of the outbuildings, which contains a fuel store, borehole, and electricity generator.

He married his wife Gail in the house, holding the wedding ceremony in the large Dining room. This was not the only wedding performed during Alistair's tenure, as he opened the house to host weddings to a few guests throughout the Spring and Summer months. The setting, particularly the walled garden, could not be more romantic.

Argrennan Estate, an RSK company – 2022 - present

Having put the estate up for sale in the Autumn of 2021, Alistair sold to the RSK group in February of 2022. It is currently being used for conferencing and training for its internal companies. Their Argrennan's mission is to be a Home for all RSK employees, as well as a view over time to make the estate carbon neutral. Their head office is Spring Lodge, 172 Chester Road, Helsby WA6 0AR. The Managing Director is Angus Mill.

Acknowledgements

I greatly appreciate the information and discussions with the following.

Ms Claire Williamson in leading on the "Building Biographies" project and her guidance and support during the research.

Mr Ian Steele, Kirkcudbright

Mr Bob Reddaway & Mr John Curtis, Kirkcudbright

Mr Alistair Flanagan, Tongland

Mr Bob Morgan, Argrennan House

Mr Angus Mill, RSK, Argrennan House

Ms Sandra Ker, Australia

And to Sheila, my wife, for her patience, while I distorted family life with the hours of research and in listening to the stories of Argrennan House.

Bogra House, Tongland

by Will Williams

The house and its people

This research was done under the “Can You Dig It” project, a community archaeology project of the Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership. The project was delivered by Rathmell Archaeology and had been running various events since 2019 aimed at engaging people with their heritage. All the events are made available for free through funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic Environment Scotland.



There are two main sections in this report – the architectural description and then the social & cultural history ie the people that have/are living here.

This summary is presented in two parts – the built heritage and the social heritage

The built heritage

Bogra House <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk>

A Category B Listed Building in Tongland, Dumfries and Galloway.

Description

Latitude: 54.8763 / 54°52'34"N

Longitude: -4.0228 / 4°1'22"W

OS Eastings: 270310

OS Northings: 555374

OS Grid: NX703553

Mapcode National: GBR 0DB1.WS

Mapcode Global: WH4W5.5PNN

Plus Code: 9C6QVXGG+GV

Entry Name: Bogra House

Listing Name: Bogra House

Listing Date: 23 April 1990

Category: B

Source: Historic Scotland

Source ID: 350973

Historic Scotland Designation Reference: LB17116

Building Class: Cultural

ID on this website: 200350973

Location: Tongland

County: Dumfries and Galloway
Electoral Ward: Dee and Glenkens
Parish: Tongland
Traditional County: Kirkcudbrightshire

Circa 1921

Asymmetrical-plan, 2-storey house with stable/garage court to rear. Coursed rubble with contrasting smooth polished granite dressings.

S elevation: 3-bay symmetrical entrance front, full-height projecting square centre bay with pedimented doorpiece to ground, double-leaf studded timber door with prominent hinges. Above door, margined window with pointed arch pediment, parapet to projecting bay. Flanking porch 4-light canted window, single light window above. All windows margined, sash and case with upper part 6-pane, lower part single pane. W flank with full-height projecting round tower with corbelled parapet. E flank with 2 canted projecting windows. Granite band course at eaves, piended and swept slate roofs, tall polished wallhead stacks.

L-plan garage court adjoins to N in similar style and materials. Low garage range to E with cantilevered piend roofs. 2-storey N range with projecting centre bay with oculus and corbelled dovecot at gablehead. All with slate roofs.

Social history

Bogra House is a “country house” built by the Neilson family as a fishing lodge.

It was built during the life of Walter Montgomerie Neilson (Walter Junior) (1877 – 1951) who was living at Barstobrick at the time.

He was born at Queenshill House but that house burnt beyond repair in 1890, and the family moved to Barcaple. Barcaple was sold in 1928 (*The Scotsman* - Wednesday 31 October 1928) and later Barstobrick House that was built in 1939.

The Neilson family was notable for their contribution to industry and transport. It is appropriate here to appreciate this contribution. It is through their enterprise that they developed the wealth to enable their lifestyle, including Bogra House as a fishing lodge.

Walter Neilson 1751 – 1839

James Beaumont Neilson 1792 – 1865

Walter Montgomerie Neilson 1819 – 1889 (Walter Senior)

Walter Montgomerie Neilson 1877 – 1951 (Walter junior)

His grandfather **James Beaumont Neilson** (22 June 1792 – 18 January 1865) was a Scottish inventor whose hot-blast process greatly increased the efficiency of smelting iron. (Wikipedia).



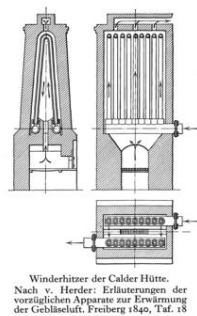
James Beaumont Neilson

James was the son of the engineer Walter Neilson, a millwright and later engine wright, who had been a partner of David Mushet in Calder Ironworks, Glasgow.

For James, experimentation showed that a temperature of 600° Fahrenheit reduced consumption to a third of that with cold blast, and enabled raw coal to be used.

James was born in Shettleston and was trained as an engine wright. After the failure of a colliery at Irvine he was appointed foreman of the Glasgow Gasworks in 1817 at the age of 25. Five years later he became the manager and engineer there, a position he held for 40 years.

While trying to solve a problem with a blast furnace at Wilsontown Ironworks, Neilson realized that the fuel efficiency of the furnace could be increased by blowing it with hot air, rather than cold air, by passing it through a red-hot vessel. Experiments were continued at Clyde Iron Works, leading to him forming a partnership with Charles Macintosh and others to exploit it. Patents were obtained for the system in 1828.



1840 illustration of a Beaumont Neilson blast stove

In the early 1830s litigation was successfully conducted against those who adopted his methods without licence. After that, Neilson and his partners licensed it widely at one shilling per ton iron made, a level low enough to discourage evasion. The royalties were initially low, but by 1840 were producing £30,000 per year from 58 ironmasters.

Certain infringers were intransigent. Between 1839 and the expiry of the patent in 1842 a considerable number of proceedings were brought. Neilson v Baird was heard in the Court of Session in 1843, in a trial lasting 10 days and costing £40,000. Further proceedings against Baird ended in the award of damages of £160,000.

James Neilson retired from Glasgow Gasworks in 1847. He bought an estate on Bute.

In 1850 he bought an estate at Queenshill, where he eventually died. He is buried in the family mausoleum at Tongland Kirkyard.



The Neilson burial – On plaque on back wall.....

“In Memoriam.

Barbara Montgomerie, wife of J B Neilson died 1843 aged 47 years.

James Beaumont Neilson of Queenshill, died 1865 aged 73 years.

Janet Ellen Henderson wife of Walter Montgomerie Neilson died 1877 aged 37 years.

Walter Montgomerie Neilson of Queenshill died 8th July 1889 aged 69 years.

Walter Montgomerie Neilson their son died 13th April 1951 aged 73 years”.

His grandson, Walter Montgomerie Neilson, erected Neilson's Monument to his memory on the hill at Queenshill in 1883.



Neilson's Monument near [Ringford](#), Kirkcudbrightshire

Canmore Site Name Barstobrick Hill, Neilson's Monument

Classification [Commemorative Monument \(19th Century\) \(1883\)](#)

Alternative Name(s) Giant's Dike Fort; Monument To James Beaumont Neilson

Canmore ID 64180

Site Number NX66SE 14

NGR NX 68760 60671

Datum OSGB36 - NGR

Permalink <http://canmore.org.uk/site/64180>

Erected in 1883 by Walter Montgomerie Neilson

Both in Glasgow and near Kirkcubright, James founded institutions for the education of working men.

James's son (Walter Senior) **Walter Montgomerie Neilson** (28 November 1819 – 8 July 1889)¹ was a Scottish locomotive and marine engineer and manufacturer. He was born in Glasgow.



Walter Montgomerie Neilson (Walter Senior)

Walter Montgomery (Walter Senior) was trained as an engineer in the Oakbank Foundry run by his uncle John Neilson. He also worked in the St Rollox Engine Works in Glasgow. He was a President of the Institution of Engineers and Shipbuilders in Scotland and a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers. Outside his professional career, he was involved in local politics, the military, and Freemasonry.

In 1843, he took over the running of a family business originally called Neilson & Mitchell, then Neilson & Co. The company was based in Hydepark Street in central Glasgow before expanding to include nearby Finnieston Street. The company started by building ship engines but quickly expanded to building locomotives, at the time a fledgling industry, but with the British empire still expanding, a very lucrative one. Neilson locomotives were exported all over the world and examples still exist in far off places like India, South Africa and New Zealand.

On the death of his father, James in 1865, Walter Senior inherited Queenshill, which was named after the resting spot of Mary, Queen of Scots, fleeing to safety after the defeat of her army at Langside in 1568. She rested at Culdoach cottage on the following night after crossing the River Dee over a makeshift bridge, which was then lifted to disadvantage their followers.

The locomotive business flourished and when Walter Senior finally retired in the late 1870s, the name changed again, this time to Neilson, Reid & Co. Walter had also supplied expertise and advice to the French builders of the Suez Canal.

Walter Senior was involved in local politics in Scotland and was also the Freemasons Grandmaster of Glasgow. He served as the second President of The Institution of Engineers and Shipbuilders in Scotland from 1859 to 1861. He served as a director of the Consolidated Copper Company of Canada in the 1870s. He was also elected chairman of the Technical College of Glasgow in 1872.

Walter Senior had married Janet Ellen Henderson on 14 March 1867, at the British Consulate in Livorno, Italy. Janet came from a Scottish family long associated with trading from the Tuscany region. They had two children, Elena Marion Montgomerie Neilson born in 1876 and Walter Junior in 1877.

Walter Senior retired to Queenshill and spent the harsh British winters at his property called Monte Picini near Florence, Italy. He died in Florence on 8 July 1889,¹ aged 69.

Returning to Walter Junior (1877 – 1951), he was living at Barstobrick when the Bogra House was built in 1921 as a fishing lodge for the Neilson family. The location was very significant, not only because the River Dee was a well established salmon fishery, but more importantly its location near the Bogra pool, with its fishing reputation.

There is a local story that the Neilson family were cursed because they did not acknowledge the contribution of one of the employers in the redesign of the steel making process. After a number of family misadventures, and to avoid further ones, it is said that there all the corners in Bogra House were constructed round. I did not manage to see inside so I cannot confirm this.

However, the heyday of Bogra as a fishing lodge was short lived as the Glenken Hydro Scheme was built in the 1930. This included a dam at Tongland for the lowest hydro station, with a river valley reservoir which would have changed the height, width and the dynamics of the Dee, near Bogra House and hence the fishing.

During the second World War, Bogra was commissioned for army use and accommodation in association with the Dundrennan army training.

Since the 1930s, Bogra House has been privately owned by two families, the current one being London based and it is essentially a family holiday house.

Acknowledgements:

I greatly appreciate the information and discussions with the following.

Ms Claire Williamson in leading on the “Building Biographies” project and her guidance and support during the research.

Mr Ian Steele, Kirkcudbright.

Mr Donald Henry, Tongland.

Mr Gavin Scot, Kirkcudbright.

Ms Elizabeth Mansefield, Tongland.

Dr James Mansfield, Tongland.

Mr John A Corrie, Tongland.

And to Sheila, my wife, for her patience, while I distorted family life with the hours of research and in listening to the stories of Bogra House.

Broomlands, Troqueer

by Lynda Mackie



OS ref: 296676, 574817

The estate of Broomland in Troqueer Parish was originally referred to as Broomland but by the late 19th century became Broomlands.

Broomland is described in the Ordinance Survey name books of 1845 as situated half a mile from Troqueer Church, a neat mansion of three stories high built in the modern style of architecture with Out Offices, a large garden and a small portion of ornamental grounds attached.

There were two cottages standing 5/8 of a mile from Troqueer Church, close to the road from Dumfries to New Abbey and one mile from Dumfries.

The property appears on Walter Newalls Map of The River Nith from Dumfries to Southernness.

All that now remains of the buildings is the original gatehouse and the stables which are now used as business premises for Rickson's Carpets.





Broomlands House was designed in 1820 by Dumfries architect Walter Newall 1780-1863 for Robert Taylor. Its design was very similar to Woodlands House at Newbridge on the outskirts of Dumfries also by Walter Newall.

The 1820 account book of Walter Newall is held by The Ewart Library in Dumfries ref GD131/N36 and lists the estimates quoted by a number of Dumfries firms for the building of Broomland Mansion House.

McCubbin and Geddes joiners £1864

Farries and Edgar £1103

Gregan and Crighton £1990

Thomson and Dunbar £1850

Crighton and Johnstone £1815.9.3

Alexander McWilliam £1550

Samson and McKay £1198

Neilson and Watson £1000

Estimates for Broomland Offices are not given but the contractors were William McGowan, McCubbin and Geddes and Farries and Edgar

The lodge estimate was £103, the stables £278 and the gate cost £25

The detailed cost per yard of the construction by Neilson and Neilson of the garden wall surrounding Broomland is also listed in the account book together with the charge for scaffolding amounting to £5.5.0

Robert Taylor 1780-1841 and his brother William Taylor 1763-1831 were wealthy merchants and plantation owners who had made their fortunes in Jamaica. The two brothers married Jane and Mary Burnside, the daughters of The Rev. William Burnside, the influential minister of St Michael's Church Dumfries. William Taylor had previously been married to Margaret Cunningham, the daughter of The Honourable John Cunningham and their eldest son, William Taylor had been born in Jamaica in 1799. He inherited his father's fortune which had been amassed through dependence on slave labour but gave it all up to fight for the cause of slave emancipation.

The Taylor brothers lived close to each other on the neighbouring properties of Broomlands and Troqueerholm which lay along the banks of The River Nith. Both estates were accessed not only by way of the road from Dumfries to New Abbey but also via the footpath which still stretches along the banks of The River Nith from Dumfries to Mavis Grove. This footpath passed by the properties of Troqueerholm, Broomlands and Redbank

The mansion house of Broomlands was demolished in 1968 to make way for construction of a housing development.

The two estate cottages at Broomlands were occupied by a gardener and a coachman.

The Taylor brothers were instrumental in establishing a Quoad Sacra Chapel of Ease at Laurieknowe Maxwelltown in 1829 which operated as an offshoot of Troqueer Church. Due to the rapid expansion of Maxwelltown there was concern that the masses were not attending services at Troqueer Church and a place of worship was required closer to their homes. The Taylor brothers funded the building and Dr John Begg, champion of the Free Church of Scotland and a major player in the Disruption of 1843, was called as the first minister.

When Dumfries was on the verge of bankruptcy in 1824 Robert Taylor loaned The Town Council £20,000. By 1827 at least £1,000 had been repaid but Robert Taylor required The Council to repay the entire loan by 1830, claiming he needed the money, probably for the construction of the Chapel of Ease. The Town Council was forced to sell off common land to avoid bankruptcy and disposed of the lands of Kingholm Quay to John Hannah of Hannafield whose mansion house, also built by Walter Newall, lay directly across from Broomlands on the opposite bank of The Nith. When John Hannah's heir died intestate his lands and property fell to The Crown. Dumfries Council applied for the lands and fortune to be returned to Dumfries for the Public good and so the land at Kingholm Quay once more became the property of The Town of Dumfries and remains so to this day.

When cholera was raging in Dumfries in 1849 Mrs Taylor, despite being resident in Edinburgh, donated to the provision of a soup kitchen for the relief of the poor. The soup provided was to be made from onions and rice rather than the traditional cabbage and barley and bread was to be provided also.

Another charity supported by Mrs Taylor was assistance for the deaf and dumb. On 24/6/1844 Thomas McMurray, a fireman resident at Redbank, which borders Broomlands, went with the gardener from Broomlands to swim in The Nith. When the Broomlands gardener was getting dressed on the river bank, Thomas McMurray got into difficulties and drowned in the river, leaving a wife and four children. Two hundred years later there continue to be fatalities in this stretch of the river.

Robert Taylor died in Edinburgh in 1841 and he and his brother William, with their families, are buried in St Michael's Churchyard Dumfries where their father-in-law presided as minister. In 1841 Broomlands lay empty, though still in the ownership of the Taylor family. A skeleton staff was in residence. Mary Broadfoot born 1787 was the lodge keeper. The cottage was occupied by the gardener, Hugh Paterson born 1806 together with his wife Janet born 1804 and their children, Jane born 1827, Ann born 1829, Mary born 1832, Janet born 1834, Alexander born 1837 and Hugh born 1840.

The Dumfries and Maxwelltown Horticultural Show established at Castledykes House at this time featured Hugh Paterson of Broomlands as a prize winner.

The second cottage, which lay within the grounds of the estate a short distance from the other cottage, was occupied in 1841 by Agnes Roan. She was a widow born 1789 and with her lived her children, James born 1824 who was an apprentice upholsterer, Mary born 1826 and Susan born 1839. The coachman was William McDowall and he and Hugh Paterson continued to work as gardener and coachman when the property was later occupied by James McKie.

Although Robert Taylor's widow lived in Edinburgh, after the death of her husband, she seems to have at first retained Broomlands as a country residence and after James McKie occupied the property in the mid 1840s she continued to be known as Mrs Taylor of Broomlands, so I suspect the property remained in the hands of the Taylors and was rented by James McKie.

William McDowall and Hugh Paterson continued as coachman and gardener during James McKie's time in the house.

William McDowall had been born in Dunscore in 1804. When the house changed hands, he and his wife Mary moved from Broomlands and took a position as ostler at The Golden Bull Inn Dumfries High Street. He was found dead on 22/10/1865 in the stables of The Spur Inn Dumfries High Street. Many private coachmen, when their services were no longer required, took positions as ostlers. The coachman who had been employed at Castledykes House, another Walter Newall designed house, became ostler at The Kings Arms in Glasgow Street Maxwelltown.

James McKie was the son of William McKie, who had been Provost of Dumfries 1827-1829. Provost McKie was a manufacturer and commission agent and involved in many local charities at the time, as was his son James. He was chief magistrate of Dumfries and died in 1838. James McKie of Broomlands was a solicitor and was a devoted campaigner for The Liberal Party. He remained unmarried and when he moved from Broomlands, about 1854, lived until his death in 1874 with his mother and sister Jessie McKie at Moat House, which stood beside Dumfries Academy. His sister Jessie provided the funds for the widening of the Buccleuch Street Bridge in 1889 and was a close friend of Provost Joseph Glover who named his daughter after her.

James McKie's brother, William McKie, was a manufacturer in Hawick and his younger brother, Thomas McKie, was an advocate. James McKie owned the land which stretched along the road from Galloway Street to New Abbey Road on which a thriving market garden was established. The land is now the site of a number of large villas which sprang up in the latter half of the 19th century.

On 29/09/1852 lead was stripped from the roof of the offices at Broomlands and more would have been stolen if the thieves had not been scared off by the dogs. The lead was discovered in a brokers shop in Dumfries and the description of the men who had sold it was that they were similar to navvies. On 25/05/1853, at Stewartry Criminal Court Kirkcudbright, four apparently respectable tradesmen from Dumfries were sentenced to 14 days imprisonment for the theft of 21 pounds of lead stolen from Broomlands. They had spent the money on spirits. In 200 years, nothing changes.

Perhaps it was more convenient for business reasons to move from Broomlands to the centre of Dumfries. James McKie did not maintain a large indoor staff, when he was resident at Broomlands, although William McDowall and his son Robert McDowall born 1828 acted as coachman and coach driver. The staff in the garden included Dickson and James Murray as well as Hugh Paterson.

Broomlands was purchased in 1854 by Mary Dalgairns, who had been born in Forfar in 1794. Her husband, Andrew Dalgairns, was already dead by 1841. The Dalgairns family were wealthy landowners in the parish of Aberlemno in Angus. Prior to her move to Broomlands she owned Balgavies House Aberlemno. Her cousin was William Dalgairns who served as medical officer in The Honourable East India Company in Bombay. Her

father, Charles Greenhill, and his mother, Charlotte Greenhill, were siblings. It may have been William Dalgairns medical background, or acquaintance with Dr Browne of The Crichton Royal Lunatic Asylum, which resulted in Mary Dalgairns, in partnership with Dr Browne, opening Broomlands as an asylum catering for lady mental patients. There was a deal of displeasure amongst the local community when she started this venture and she was accused of operating a lunatic asylum without a license.

The mansion house at this time had 18 rooms. The patients she housed were all women. Dora Hall had been born in England in 1821 and died in Stow Berwickshire in 1891. Catherine Mary Burn, who had been born in North Berwick in 1825, died at 24 Ann Street in Edinburgh's New Town of disease of the brain and epilepsy. Her father, John Burn, is described as of Kingston, so engaged in trade with Jamaica. Another patient boarding at Broomlands was Hope Paterson who had been born in America in 1824, though a British Subject. She died in Montrose Poor House 30/09/1864 and was suffering from paralysis. Hannah Jackson born in England in 1792 and also a patient died in Newington Edinburgh in 1869.

The lady patients were attended to by their personal Lady's maids. These were, Ann McLaughlan born Dumfries 1837, Margaret Taylor born Dumfries 1837 and Elizabeth Windram who had been born in New Biggin Forfar in 1782 and most likely travelled to Broomlands with Mary Dalgairns and her sister Elizabeth Greenhill. Acting as a nurse was Janet Johnstone, born 1832 in Troqueer. Other staff included a laundress, Catherine Carron born 1832 Balmaghie, a cook, Margaret Russell, born Temple Midlothian 1814 and Mary Milne a housemaid born 1810 in Forfarshire.

Also resident with Mary Dalgairns in 1861 was Elizabeth Henderson born in England in 1837 and a four year old boy, Charles Richardson, also born in England.

James Murray still lived in one of the cottages and was employed as a gardener, but the head gardener was Charles Duncan, a widower born in 1798 in Perthshire, whom Mary Dalgairns had probably brought with her. His son, Alexander Duncan, born in Mary Dalgairns home parish of Eassie in 1839 was the coachman. This change of staff must have come as a blow to the Murrays and McDowalls who suddenly were without homes or employment.

Mary Dalgairns died at Broomlands 6/11/1865 and Broomlands became the property of Walter Scott 1821-1899. He was the son of Robert Scott who had set up a hosiery business in sheds at Kingholm Quay where they spun yarn for the hosiery trade. The business expanded when Nithsdale Mills was established on the Dumfries side of The River Nith.

Walter Scott had been married to Betsy Walker in Ormskirk in 1845 and his children from this marriage were all born in Salford, the centre of the spinning and weaving industry. When his wife died in 1860 he returned to Dumfries and went into business at first with his brother in the Nithsdale Mills venture. In 1863 he married Elizabeth Mary Ann Gordon and built Troqueer Mills on the Maxwelltown side of the river and started to enlarge and improve Broomlands House, which was within walking distance of his mill. The Scott brothers were the biggest employers in Dumfries and Maxwelltown.

By 1871 Broomlands had increased in size from 18 to 24 rooms.

On the first floor there was a dining room with an anti-room off and a drawing room with access to a conservatory. On this level there was also a library, a sewing room and a billiard room. There was a bedroom and lavatory and a pantry for the use of table maids. On the second floor were four bedrooms, two dressing rooms and a bathroom. On the third floor were four more bedrooms, a bathroom and lavatory. The ground floor contained the kitchen, servants' hall, a scullery, two larders, a milk house and four servants' bedrooms. There was also a boot room, a milk house, a lavatory and wine cellar.

In 1879 Walter Scott diverted the public right of way from New Abbey Road to Troqueer Church, which passed over low ground and often became muddy. Walter Scott created a new path on higher ground and

laid down furnace ashes to create a path five feet wide. He erected iron gates along the length of the path where it crossed fences. He removed the old hedge, which had previously formed the boundary between the lands of Rotchell and Broomlands, and took the land into the lands of Broomlands. On this piece of ground he constructed his new stable block.

The stables, built by Crombie and Sons, were formed in a hollow square with the front facing Broomlands. There was a central archway 86 feet 2 inches wide with a clock tower. The stable block stretched backwards in line with the New Abbey Road 98 feet 5 inches. The square in the centre of the building was 60 feet by 1 inch by 43 feet 10 inches. At the front, to the East of the building, was a residence for the coachman, containing a kitchen, parlour and bedroom. On the other side of the archway was a store for grain. There was a stable, containing 2 stalls and 3 boxes, running parallel to the public road. There was also a washing house for vehicles, a harness room and an infirmary.

The North side of the building was occupied by a carriage house and byre. The East side of the building contained a fodder store, a stable and 4 stalls and a wood house, with the corner forming part of the coachman's house.

The building externally was of red sandstone in courses but rough faced, the inside being brick with a hollow space in the brickwork to prevent damp. The mason work was executed by Messr Crackston. The joiner work was done by Mr Scott's own men.

Just as the Taylors had been involved in charitable giving in Maxwelltown, so too was Walter Scott. The Maxwelltown Mission Hall Children's Outing was held at Broomlands. This was a whole day event when 260 children set off from Maxwelltown at 10.30 am marching behind a flute band and waving flags to walk to Broomlands for a day of sporting activities. They would have walked along the path by the Nith that ran from Maxwelltown to Broomlands.



By 1881 Walter Scott was employing 1191 people in his Troqueer Mill and 25 workers at his brickworks and farm. He retained a large indoor staff at Broomlands. There was a governess, Louisa Leite born England 1855, to take care of his children, as well as nurse Rebecca Guthrie born 1842 Maybole. The cook, Margaret Wallace, had been born in Penpont in 1843, assisted by a kitchen maid Agnes Kirkpatrick born 1863 in Keir. The two housemaids were, Margaret Meiklejohn born 1849 Wick and Mary Robertson born 1859 Kirkmahoe, who was the under housemaid. Annette Lawson born 1857 in England was the table maid and Margaret McLean born 1833 in Kilmore was the laundry maid.

Walter Scott sold Broomlands in 1889 to Lady Anne Findlay Anderson Ramsay, the daughter of General George Ramsay, the 9th Earl of Dalhousie. Lady Ramsay had married David Ewart 1894-1880. He was a colonel in the Indian Army. Her brother was Lieutenant Colonel Robert Anderson Ramsay.

The Ramsays were related to the Youngs who owned Lincluden House on the outskirts of Maxwelltown. It had originally been named Youngfield and it was there in 1880 that David Ewart died. His wife, the sister of Lord Dalhousie, moved to Broomlands.

Lady Anne Ewart had for many years employed Christian Mossman who had been born in 1798 near Montrose and moved up the ranks in the hierarchy of servants and by 1861 she was the housekeeper for the Ewart family. She had moved around the country with the Ewarts from Aberdeenshire to Inverleith Row in Edinburgh, Lancaster Gate Paddington London, Skene House Aberdeenshire and Lincluden House Dumfries and Galloway. The will of Christian Mossman, when she died at Laurieknowe in 1888 aged 89 makes interesting reading since she left £150 in bank accounts in both Scotland and England. In the absence of old age pensions at the time, perhaps Lady Ewart provided her with an income in her old age sufficient to support her. Had she saved the £150 in her accounts over a lifetime of service? David Ewart certainly left her nothing in his will. Christian Mossman retired to live in a rented property in Laurieknowe Maxwelltown where she was known as Mrs Mossman, a widow, despite the fact that she had never married. Lady Ewart died at Broomlands in 1891 from Parkinson's disease having only been resident at Broomlands for a year.

The property by this time had increased in size to 28 rooms. Lady Ewart employed two nurses to care for her, Mary McLean who had been born in Campbelltown in 1850 and Mary Singer born Inch Aberdeenshire in 1854. Her lady's maid was Swiss, Anna Moser.

The property was sold to William Paterson 1842-1914. He also owned Rockhall in Mouswald Parish. His grandmother, Jean Jardine, was the sister of William Jardine 1784-1843 the Co-founder of the firm of Jardine and Matheson. The firm had a policy of employing family members and William Paterson began his career with Jardine Matheson by working as a tea broker in Liverpool, before going to China in the early 1860s to work in Foochow as a clerk in the tea export business. He rose rapidly through the ranks in the firm and as well as exporting tea he was active in the opium trade carried on by Jardine Matheson between India and China, which made huge profits for the company. He was the honorary Danish Consul in China. He was made a partner in the firm in 1875. Like many European merchants in China at the time, he maintained what was known as a protected woman. These were Chinese prostitutes whom western men paid for their exclusive use. William Paterson had a relationship for about ten years with a Chinese woman called Wong Mui Kiu with whom he fathered five children. The relationship began in Foochow but he bought a house for her and the children in Hong Kong in 1885 just before his return to Scotland.

In 1886 he married in Edinburgh Isabella Johnstone Stewart 1865-1913 and at this time took up residence at Rockhall. The family bought Broomlands in 1896.

For the most part the indoor staff employed by The Patersons at Broomlands were local. William McMinn and Robert Rome were employed as gardeners and William Crosbie was the coachman.

William Paterson's sons were educated at Marlborough College and their mother died suddenly in 1913 when on a visit to them and staying in Bournemouth. William Paterson died shortly afterwards in 1914.

Broomlands was advertised for sale 16/03/1915 and was opened as a Red Cross hospital for wounded soldiers on 06/04/1916. There were originally 35 beds, increased to 45 beds by July 1916 and by August 1917 the garage had been converted to a ward accommodating a further 13 patients. The gardens were maintained by Joseph Skilling and Robert Jardine but there was no longer the need for a coachman, The number of soldiers being treated at Broomlands in 1917 amounted to 788.

The grounds of Broomlands in 1914 included 4 fields of 19.730 acres of grass and 13.625 acres of woodland and garden. The local community did a great deal of fund raising on behalf of the hospital at Broomlands throughout WW1 and many fetes and entertainments were held in the grounds for the benefit of the soldiers being treated there.

There is a record of a former patient of Broomlands Hospital on 07/10/1916 being found guilty of between 15th and 19th September falsely collecting subscriptions for Broomlands Hospital. Private James Gallagher of South Lancashire Regiment, who was reported as walking very lame, was sentenced to one month in prison for collecting £1.0.2 in Dumfries and 19/11 in Dalbeattie.

By 1920 the house was lying empty and grounds were in use by Dumfries and Maxwelltown Industrial School. Joseph Skilling was still employed as gardener and living in the lodge. One of the cottages was occupied by Peter Macintosh who was a labourer and the second cottage by John Wright who was employed by The Industrial School as pipe major of the school pipe band. The pipe band of The Industrial School was in great demand at fetes and public events and travelled far and wide to perform.

Robert Pattie, who was an auctioneer in Dumfries and Maxwelltown, acquired the property in 1921. As his business grew he moved from 5 rooms near his business premises in Buccleuch Street to Laurelbank House, a sandstone villa in Laurieknowe Maxwelltown. Robert Pattie renamed it Robertland after himself. When he moved with his family to Broomlands it reverted to its original name. His business was called Dunbar Sons and Pattie and as well as acting as auctioneers they carried out house clearances, acted as estate agents and were undertakers. Robert Pattie, like his father before him was a joiner to trade. Sales catalogues held in The Ewart Library Dumfries list a sale by Robert Pattie of the contents of libraries from a number of local country houses, including the library of Broomlands.

Robert Pattie did not employ any indoor staff prior to the move to Broomlands in 1921 and when he died at Broomlands in April 1932 his wife left Broomlands for a much more modest establishment at 3 Newall Terrace Dumfries.

Duncan Anderson, a retired coachman, occupied the lodge in the 1930s and Angus Macdonald, a gardener, lived in a cottage.

After the death of Robert Pattie the properties at Broomlands were acquired by George Sinclair Main, a retired chemist, and his wife Winifred. Before moving to Broomlands they had lived in a more modest house in Glencaple. When WW2 started George and Winifred Main vacated Broomlands House and took up residence in the lodge. The house was occupied by The War Department for the duration of the war. King Haakon of Norway dined at Broomlands in 1942 when large numbers of Norwegian soldiers were stationed in Dumfries.

After the war some of the land was sold to Robert Learmont, Kinmont, New Abbey Road, who rented it to David Johnstone, 5 Primrose Street Dumfries, who used part of the land as a rubbish dump. What had been the stables was purchased by West Cumberland Farmers, who used it as a store, a garage and petrol pumps.

Mrs Main moved to live in Rotchell Park and when she died the land in 1960 became the property of James Bell of Park Farm Dumfries. The mansion house fell into disrepair and by 1967 was deemed uninhabitable. The Lodge and garage became the property of Archibald and Edith Hogg and the stables continued to operate as a garage and store in the ownership of West Cumberland Farmers. When the mansion house was demolished in 1968, to make way for a housing development, the stables for a few years was in the ownership of Currie & Co of Auchinleck Ltd.

All that remains of Broomlands today is the original lodge and gatehouse which are B listed and the stables, built by Walter Scott, now operating as Rickson's Carpet Warehouse and Peak Physique gym.

Goldielea, Troqueer

by Sandra Williamson

GODIELEA HOUSE.

Parish Torqueer.

Category C Listed.

Goldielea house was built circa 1785. It is a mansion house and estate South West of the town of Dumfries, so called because it became the property of the Goldie family in the late 18th Century . It is a three storey, 5 bay mansion house with a basement and symmetrical flanking wings. It has a ground floor, 1st floor and eight bed chambers. Modified in circa 1857 and again in 1895 when a brick billiard room and glass house range were added to the rear . rendered with ashlar dressings. South-East elevation, steps to central Roman Doric-columned porch, cill course to upper floors, upper windows are now pedimented (circa 1895) and cut through main cornice. Corniced end stacks, plended roof, 2 storey, 2 bay wings also plended , linked to main block also plended. Linked to main block by recessed low linking windows with enlarged 3-light inserted openings. Circular rear stair turret, canted billiard room to left. Slate roofs. Within the interior is a cantilever stair with decorative cast iron balusters and panelled doors in door cases. The glass house is timber framed with some cast iron members.

It was further purchased in 1792 by Walter Riddell who was the younger brother of Robert Riddell of Glenriddell who lived in Friars Carse which was close to Robert Burns farm Ellisland. Walter Riddell re-named the mansion house Woodley Park in honour of his wife Maria Banks but unfortunately he was forced to sell it back to the Goldie family within two years of having bought it.

Although Robert Burns was not a great admirer of Walter Riddell he became friends with his wife Maria whom he thought had an intelligence and honesty about her so becoming a frequent visitor.

In 1891 the Estate was sold again and purchased by Balfour Brown KC Parliamentary lawyer who later died in 1921.

During World War 2 Goldielea became one of the main bases of the Norwegian army and provided the quarters for many of its soldiers. After the war it then became a hotel and in present day it is used as a Nursing and residential home with 47 residents. The nursing home was established in 1988 by Sandown Private Nursing Company.

There are former stables that were said to have been built with compensation money from the railway company when the viaduct was being built. The stables have three ranges built around a cobbled quadrangular courtyard, the latter enclosed at the north by a crenellated wall. Single Storey buildings with lofts. Rubble built with ashlar dressings. There is a symmetrical 5 bay South elevation articulated by advanced and taller central and outer bays. The West range has a gabled loft door and two cart openings to a courtyard. The East range now a domestic central door to the North wall. There are corniced stacks, roofed with graded slates.

The stables are a category C listed building.

The Godielea viaduct that runs through Godielea grounds which is a Category A listed building was designed by John Millar Junior who was born 1839 or 1840. He was the son of a railway engineer. He was only 19 when he designed it and he died in 1864 aged 24. It is an eighteen arch double track masonry viaduct on a curve and is 1011 feet long overall and 92 feet high .The viaduct formerly carried the Dumfries -Castle Douglas-Kirkcubright line of the (former) Glasgow and South Western Railway.It runs over the valley to the NW of Godielea House and within its policies . It opened on the 7th November 1859 as part of the Dumfries-Castle Douglas-Kirkcubright railway and the line closed on the 14th June 1965. While under construction there were 12 comfortable huts built on site at Goldielea to accommodate the workmen although the rents were high . These were later sold at auction along with a canal boat. There were also 9 travelling cranes with some of them at an elevation of 70ft for the purpose of raising and fitting stones. Hundreds of masons were employed for the building of the Viaduct and Craigs, Locharbriggs and Thornhill gave as much stone as they could yield. There were many accidents some fatal in the building of this viaduct. One interesting escapade was when a frog was discovered in solid rock when blasting. The explosion fractured the portion of rock where the frog was confined and which was fifteen feet in. The frog was secured and given to the resident contractor Mr Freeman at Goldielia . It had a more elongated mouth than the normal species and a protruding lump on t's back but it was ok and became brisk and alive !

Below are photos of Goldielea in the 50's and present day plus the viaduct as it is at present.



1950's



Present Day



Viaduct as present.

Mabie House, Troqueer

by Lynda Mackie



Mabie House Present Day



Mabie Estate Map 1795

Mabie House (Reference 294950, 570795) lies 3.5 miles from Dumfries on the A710 between Dumfries and New Abbey. The mansion house is presently operating as a hotel and the grounds are owned by The Forestry Commission and provide recreational activities for the general public. There are five walking trails through the forest ranging in length from 0.5 mile to 5 miles. There are also 3 mountain bike trails ranging in length and difficulty from 5. miles to 11.75 miles. In addition, there is a children's playground, a wildlife hide, barbeque facilities and ample parking. The grounds are well used by the local population and visitors alike.

We can trace references to The Lands of Mabie in the records of The Monks of Holm Cultram who held the land until it was taken from them by David 11 of Scotland, 1324-1371, and given to his supporter Walter Durrand. The Estate of Mabie included the farms of Mabie Mains, Halhead, Marthorn, Butterhole, Burnside, Townfoot, Midtown of Carruchan, Nethertown, Mossie, Craighill and the small farm of Lochaber. On the lands of Butterhole there once existed an extensive iron smelting site.

Robert, son of Herbert Herries of Terregles had charter of half the lands of Mabie in 18/6/1468 and Mabie remained in the possession of the Herries family until 30/10/1632 when the daughter of John Herries married Herbert Maxwell of Kirkconnell and the Kirkconnell family took possession of Mabie.

The Herries and Kirkconnell families were staunch Roman Catholics and due to their steadfast support of The Catholic cause in the early 18th century had their lands seized by The Crown.

In 16/1/1708, following The Union of The Parliaments, Colonel John Stewart of Stewartfield had sasine of the lands of Mabie. He was a professional soldier who joined The British Army after The Glorious Revolution and served in 1708 with The Duke of Marlborough. He was a burgess of Edinburgh and Glasgow and became Commissioner of Supply for The Stewartry of Kirkcudbright. Since he held lands in Stewartfield in Jedburgh as well as Mabie in Kirkcudbrightshire he was eligible to vote in elections for both Roxburgh and Kirkcudbrightshire. He became MP for Kirkcudbrightshire in the Parliament of 1708 in a contest where his opponent was the Pro Jacobite Maxwell of Kirkconnell. He was captured in 1710 by French pirates but released on parole and re-elected to Parliament in 1715. When he attended a by- election dinner in Roxburgh he became involved in an argument with Sir Gilbert Elliot, who was annoyed that Colonel Stewart had not voted for him. John Stewart threw a glass of wine in Gilbert Elliot's face and Elliot ran him through with his sword. He did not survive this encounter and died in 1726. Elliot was declared an outlaw but was later pardoned as he had friends in high places.

After 1726, when the clamour surrounding the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion had subsided, the Lands of Mabie once more were in the hands of The Maxwells of Kirkconnell. The seat of The Maxwells of Kirkconnell lies between Mabie and New Abbey and was originally a fortified tower house.

James Maxwell of Kirkconnell held the lands of Mabie until he unwisely once more sided with The Jacobites and followed Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1745. He escaped the country after Culloden and followed The Prince to France. His estates, including Mabie, were seized by The Crown. Whilst in France he wrote an account of The 45 and it remains a reference document for scholars today. He returned to Kirkconnell House in 1755 and when he inherited Carruchan Estate from his uncle he sold it and used the money to acquire Mabie once more. He spent a deal of money extending Kirkconnell House and employed French brick makers to create the bricks on his land for this purpose. By 1799 The Maxwells had to sell Mabie but retained the farm of Nethertoun.

The purchaser of Mabie was Richard Howat 1750-1834. He was the son of a wheel wright and had been brought up in Maxwelltown where his father and grandfather owned land and property in what was known as The Brig End of Dumfries. His father, Robert Howat, in 1803 made over the few acres of land he owned between The Brig End Maxwelltown and Cargenbridge in Troqueer Parish to his son Richard since he and his wife had only two children who survived into adulthood, Richard and his sister Mary Howat.

Richard was a carpenter and set off for India in 1781 where he is shown as a carpenter in Calcutta in 1792. He was not employed by The Honourable East India Company but his banker was John Palmer & Co who were regarded at the time as the most prominent Agency House in India. Richard's house and business premises in Calcutta were in close proximity to the impressive building from which John Palmer conducted his business.

In the late 18th century in Calcutta it was difficult to obtain furniture and many mansion houses built at the time by East India Company Officials and merchants had enormous rooms with little in the way of fine furniture. There was also a great demand for wheeled carriages. Richard Howat as a carpenter and with knowledge of carriage construction from his father was in the right place at the right time to make a serious amount of money. He was a friend as well as conducting business with Palmer & Co and left instructions for payment of £30 a month to be paid to a woman whom he describes as, "An old woman of 67 years," for the rest of her life. Like so many European merchants in China, The West Indies and India at the time, he obviously had a local woman to take care of all his needs in residence in his house in Calcutta.

He returned to Dumfries and after purchasing Mabie in 1799 married, in 1803, Helen Clark 1786-1855, the daughter of Samuel Clark, who had been the Commissary Clerk for Dumfries. The mansion house on the property dates from this time but was extended in the late 19th century. The Mabie Estate Map from 1799 shows only a small cluster of farm buildings where the mansion house stands today. By 1850 the OS map shows extensive upgrading of the house and gardens.

Richard Howat and his wife lived at Mabie in some style. As well as the mansion house there was a lodge, outbuildings with a carriage house and stables, with cottages for a gardener and foresters. They had no children and the entire estate of Mabie, together with over £50,000 in investments, Richard left to his nephew, Robert Kirkpatrick 1788-1863, on condition he changed his name to Howat, or forfeit the estate. For this reason, the family thereafter had the surname Kirkpatrick-Howat. Before Richard Howat died John Palmer & Co went bankrupt but just before this Richard Howat had moved his business to Cockerell's Agency in Calcutta. Palmer sent letters to his most prominent business contacts and friends including Richard Howat asking them to help him out and avoid bankruptcy but his entreaties to Richard Howat fell on deaf ears since Richard's main concern in correspondence with John Palmer was that the £30 a month continue to be paid to his "Old woman," in Calcutta.

Robert Kirkpatrick-Howat was the son of Richard Howat's sister Mary, who had married Thomas Kirkpatrick, who was a baker to trade. Terms of Richard Howat's will also demanded, that in the absence of a male heir, any female heir could only inherit if they married a man with the surname Howat. Terms of the will also demanded that land should be purchased from the capital that had been left to Robert Kirkpatrick-Howat. Following the death of Richard Howat in 1834, his trustees cast their net far and wide in search of suitable land. They eventually purchased land at Auchenreoch and Barncaillzie in Kirkpatrick Durham. There were also instructions in the will regarding the preservation of the orchard behind the mansion house and stipulation that the land in front of the house had to remain in grass, which continues to the present day, with a large lawn to the front of the house.

In 1834 the description of the estate was as follows.

£5 land of Meikle and Little Mabie

The 6 Merk land of Dullang

The 20 shilling land of Dalshinnie

Lands of Mossie, Butterhole, Hillhead, Marthorn, Lochaber & Holecroft.

The 20 shilling land of Craigbill of old extent with the mansion house of Mabie and offices and biggins, Yards, orchards, woods and fishings.

The mansion House, under terms of Richard Howat's will, could not be let, nor could any land be sold. Should the Kirkpatrick-Howats be concerned in any criminal activity, they would forfeit the estate. Should the heir have any personal debts, these could not be paid from the estate and the property would pass to the next in line to inherit, unless debts were paid within five years. Should an heir pay off a predecessor's debts in less than five years they could inherit, even if not in direct line to do so.

In 1834 Mabie was a well furnished opulent house. The cellar contained a serious stock of wines.

A half pipe of port wine valued at £30, 14 dozen bottles of claret £28, 5 dozen bottles of sherry £12.10, 8 dozen bottles of madeira, 9 dozen bottles of port wine, 7 dozen other bottles of port £8, 2 dozen bottles of madeira valued at £1.10, 4 dozen bottles of whisky £2.8.0, 2 and half dozen bottles of brandy at £7.10, 8 bottles of rum 16 shillings and 10 dozen bottles of porter at £3.

On the ground floor of the house there was a dining room, parlour, pantry, cleaning room, china closet, two servants' bedrooms, a kitchen and a servant's room next to it with two tables and seven chairs. There was also a laundry and a drawing room. Upstairs there was The Crimson Bedroom with closet and store, Scarlet Bedroom with a closet and store room and an additional four bedrooms named The Front Bedroom, White Bedroom, Chinz Bedroom, Drab Bedroom with a further store room and closet and an upstairs drawing room.

There was a stable with horses and a harness room and coach house with a small phaeton and a coach. For 32 years Adam Duff served as coachman for Richard Howat. When Robert Kirkpatrick-Howat took over from his uncle he demanded that the gardener, forester and Adam Duff the coachman, sign a document saying they would vacate their cottages by Whitsun of 1835. The widow of Richard Howat, Helen Clark, was appalled by this and sent a letter to Robert asking that Adam Duff remain as coachman and he remained living beside the coaches until he died in his daughter's house in College Street, Maxwelltown in 1872 aged 94. Helen Howat also requested that the gardener, James Farquharson, be kept in his post, but by 1841 James Aitken born 1798 Dumfries was gardener. Peter Nugent who had been born in Ireland in 1792 and was employed as a sawyer had moved to Colvend by 1851 and there was only one forester employed at Mabie.

Helen Howat had been allowed to remain in Mabie House for one year after the death of her husband. She opted to move into Dumfries to a house her husband had purchased for her in Castle Street where she remained until she died.

Robert Kirkpatrick-Howat had married in Canada Margaret Midgely Cockcroft 1796-1862 and they were living with their family in Chippawa Upper Canada where he was employed as customs officer. Two of their daughters died in Canada. Their eldest son, Robert Kirkpatrick-Howat 1830-1888, and their daughter, Margaret Kirkpatrick-Howat born 1829, had been born in Canada. Richard was born in England in 1836 and Alexander in Edinburgh in 1839. Lonsdale was born at Mabie in 1840 and Catherine in 1850.

Robert Kirkpatrick-Howat Junior married Amelia Rose Blewitt in Cheltenham in 1853 and their eldest daughter, Rose, was born in Nantes in France in 1853. She seems to have suffered from mental illness of some kind since in 1881 and 1891 she was described as a UK lunacy patient and staying in Monmouthshire Wales. Robert Kirkpatrick-Howat who had been born in France in 1854 died in St Helier Jersey in 1859. Eugenie who also was born in Jersey in 1859 went to New York in 1886 and married Robert Ellerson Baldershaw and lived in Crownsville Ann Arundel County Maryland but had no children. Guinevere who was born in 1860 died unmarried in Edinburgh in 1927. Richard who had been born in 1867 speculated on The Stock Exchange and lost a fortune when in his early 20s. His other claim to fame was being taken to court in 1898 by his housekeeper, Miss Margaret Davidson, for Breach of Promise. She was claiming £30 in wages she was due and £500 in damages. The arguments from both parties were found by the judge not to prove sufficient to rule in favour of either Richard or Margaret and Richard made a sharp exit from Scotland shortly after the case was heard and set off for America, where he died in Baltimore in 1926 and is buried in the same cemetery as his sister Eugenie.

Their father's brother Richard Kirkpatrick-Howat who had been born in 1836 had died on board ship in 1860 on his way to Calcutta. Their grandfather had died in 1866 and after the death of his father, Robert Kirkpatrick-Howat Junior, Reginald Kirkpatrick-Howat 1862-1942 inherited Mabie.

It would seem that around this time the Kirkpatrick-Howats were experiencing some financial difficulties so the house was advertised to be let furnished. Mabie was rented by Dame Janet Lucretia Wallace. She was the daughter of John Wallace of Cessnock & Kelly and the widow of Sir John Cunningham Fairlie of Robertland and Fairlie. The family were plantation and slave owners in the West Indies and had made a fortune. Before taking up the tenancy of Mabie she had lived in a variety of local mansion houses including Woodlands, Conheath and Dalscairth. She died in June 1877 aged 95 and the mansion house was again advertised to be let furnished.

Reginald Kirkpatrick-Howat was in 1881 a boarder in a school in Tottenham London where at 18 he was by far the oldest pupil there. When his brother Richard departed for America under a cloud Reginald took over the estate but lived in the lodge since the mansion house was tenanted by William Campbell an Edinburgh advocate. He was Lord Skerrington and had been born in 1855. He was the first Roman Catholic High Court Judge to preside in Scottish courts since The Reformation. He did not remain in residence in Mabie House for long and shortly after 1895 returned to Edinburgh and died at 12 Randolph Crescent in Edinburgh New Town in 1927.

The other estate employees in 1885 when William Campbell tenanted the house and Reginald Kirkpatrick-Howat occupied the lodge were Duncan McGregor, the gardener, James Paterson the gamekeeper and James Ballantyne the forester.

Reginald Kirkpatrick-Howat followed his brother Robert and sister Eugenie to America.

The estate became the property of James Johnstone Keswick 1845-1914 and by 1915 was occupied by his widow Marion Plumer Keswick. James Johnstone Keswick was the son of Thomas Keswick and younger brother of William Keswick. Their uncle was the founder of the company of Jardine Matheson who made their fortune in China and The Far East. They began trading in tea but by the middle of the 19th century shipped opium between India and China until the Chinese Government became so alarmed by the number of Chinese becoming addicted to opium that the trade was declared illegal. Jardine Matheson & Co built trade in other commodities and owned their own shipping fleet and expanded to operate from other countries including Japan. James Johnstone Keswick went to Japan on behalf of the company in 1870 and stayed for 26 years. He became a partner in the company in the 1890s He founded Hong Kong Land with his close associate Sir Paul Chater and was appointed unofficial member of The Legislative Council and Executive Council of Hong Kong. He was chairman of The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation. His nickname in Hong Kong and Japanese business circles was, "James The Bloody Polite".

He married Marion Parkes, the daughter of Harry Smith Parkes who had been British Government Minister in Tokyo and Peking. Her mother was Fanny Plumer and reputedly the first woman to climb Mount Fuji.

There were 18 rooms in Mabie House when the Keswicks were in residence. The Keswicks employed a larger number of indoor staff than had previously been the case when the house was occupied by the Kirkpatrick-Howats.

In 1921 Marion Keswick and her son James Douglas Keswick, who had been born in Yokohama in 1896, employed a cook, a kitchen maid, three house maids, a table maid, a hall boy and a lady's maid.

They also employed a gardener and an assistant gardener and a chauffeur. The Lodge Keeper ensured entry to the estate was restricted to those with permission to do so.

In 1943 Mabie Estate was sold by The Keswick Family and Marion Keswick moved to a house in New Abbey where she died in 1949 aged 89. About 1,100 hectares of Mabie Forest had been under the control of The Forestry Commission during WW2, prior to it being sold by The Keswicks. The woodland planted behind the house was not to be felled and there had to be phased felling of other areas of woodland. By the 1990s 300 acres of the forest was in public use and the people of Dumfries were opposed to any further felling of trees. The Forestry Commission set aside the paths for the public use we see today and felling operations were conducted in safe areas. The mansion House of Mabie was occupied by The Forestry Commission and the fabric of the building deteriorated. It was bought in 1980 by Rory McKail with a view to carrying out a programme of refurbishment and opening it as a hotel. Although this was a venue for jazz concerts the capital investment to refurbish the building was not available and it was sold in the 1990s to the present owners who have carried out extensive refurbishment of the public rooms and bedrooms. It is now run as a hotel and wedding venue.

Barwhinnock House, Twynholm

by Janet Quin



Description

Early 19th century. Classical house of unusual design for this area. 2-storey symmetrical house main elevation appears single storey, flanked by lower single storey bow-ended pavilions. Square coursed rubble S Front: 3-bay with flanking single bay pavilions. To centre, advanced bay has wide Tuscan columned doorpiece, corniced with blocking course. Recessed pilastered tripartite door with astragalled fan and sidelights, double-leaf door. Flanking door shallow bowed bays with Venetian windows with column mullions and wide archivolt. Sash and case windows with small-pane glazing intersecting in arched head. Bull-faced granite basecourse with smooth band above, moulded eaves cornice, parapet. Pavilions with single light 12-pane windows and piend roofs.

Rear elevation rubble, central full-height canted bay with pointed arch door and modern open porch. Windows single light mostly with 12-pane glazing.

Piended slate roofs. Tall corniced sandstone stacks with octagonal cans.

Interior: outstanding interior, tripartite glazed vestibule screen, exceptional hall with curved double staircase, fluted Doric screen to landing. Stair balusters fine cast-iron with roundels of classical figure groups. All main rooms have delicate plaster cornices and good marble chimneypieces. Tudor arch-headed astragalled glazed door under stairs gives access to library with a similar door (now fixed glazed) flanked by pointed-arch fanlights (that to right now with door opened). Good panelled doors, some Tudor arch-headed.

<https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/200350827-barwhinnock-house-twynholm>

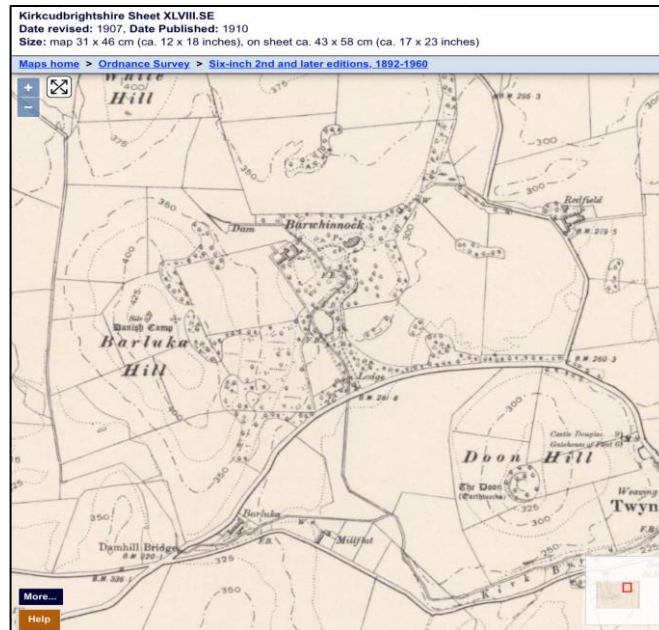
[BARWHINNOCK HOUSE \(LB16989\) \(historicenvironment.scot\)](#)

Buildings of Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway by John Gifford published in 1996 writes:

"... but the smartest early c19 villa is the single-storey Barwhinnock of c.1830, with Venetian-windowed shallow bows flanking the broad portico which opens onto the grandiose stair hall."

Barwhinnock House, as it presents today, looks little changed from the days of its original time of building almost 200 years ago. Perhaps a major factor in its continuous state of preservation and occupation has been its size: as Big Hooses go, the estate house is small in size but is attractive in its presentation and has unusual, interesting features.

Location



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Travelling westwards on the A75 Dumfries to Stranraer road, after you pass the western exit for the Twynholm bypass, Barwhinnock lies about half a mile further on the right side of the road. The House is beautifully secluded being sheltered by mature trees so that all the passerby will see is the almost 200-year-old lodge house at the entrance.



Background

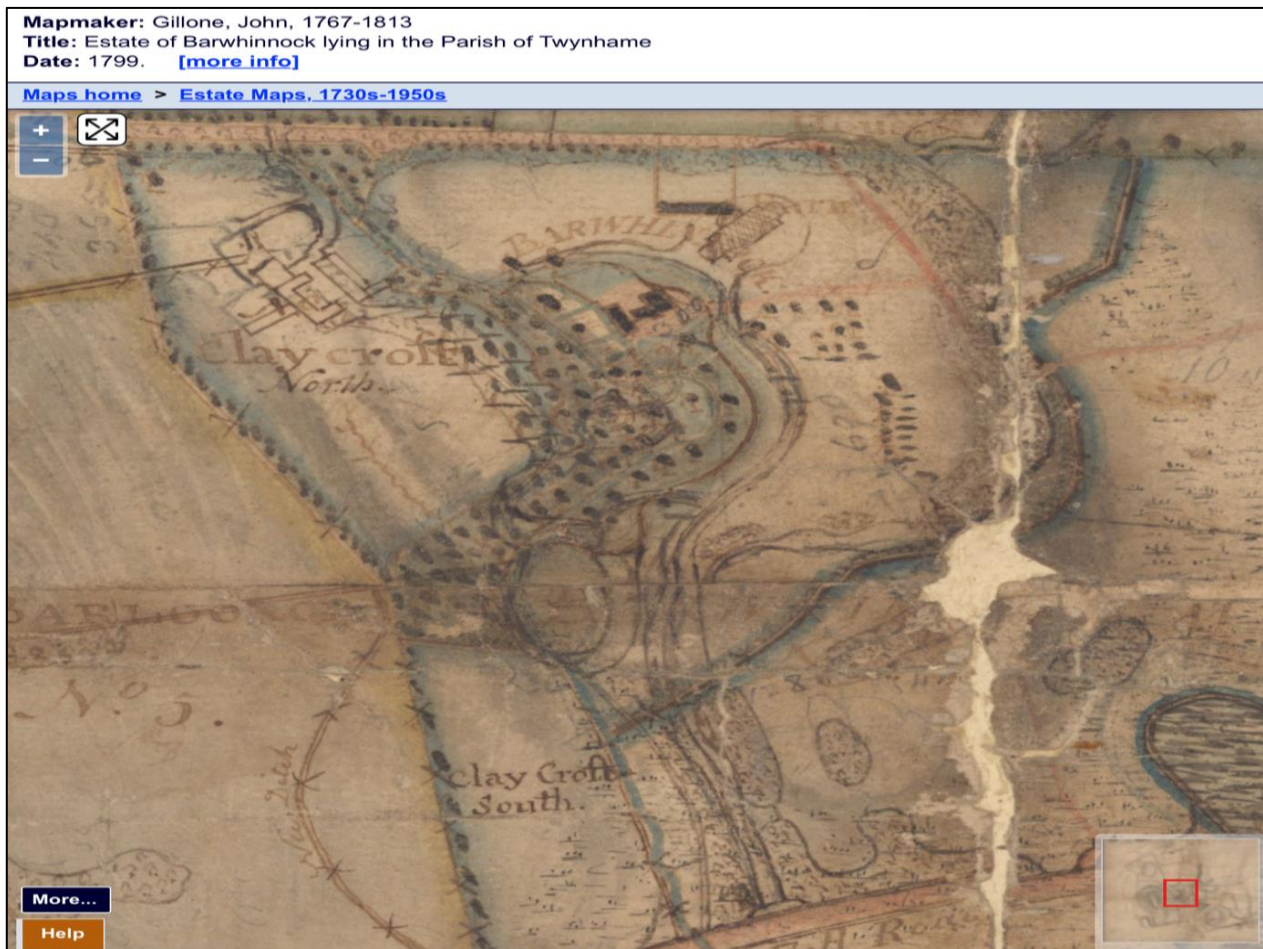
Prior to the erection of the present house there are references to the estate of Barwhinnock having been in existence for centuries. Tradition has it that it was part of the old barony of Twynholm and that the land was granted to the McMillan family by James II. Some reference books state categorically this was James II of Scotland who reigned in the 1400s whilst others state it was James II of England and VII of Scotland who was briefly king in the late 1600s. Given that James II of Scotland was in Kirkcudbright in 1450 this would seem a more likely possibility and there are references to McMillans of Barwhinnock from the 1500s onwards. A McMillan of Barwhinnock was said to have been a follower of Bonnie Prince Charlie in the 1745 rebellion and had some of his lands confiscated as a result.

In the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright the period between 1700 and 1800 saw many changes in agricultural practices and certainly towards the end of the century James McMillan was being recognised as being a sound innovator alongside Lord Daer whose father, the 4th Earl of Selkirk, was the major landowner in the parish of Twynholm and seen as a progressive in estate management and agriculture.

Evidence of this can be seen in the 1799 map of the estate drawn up by the locally renowned map maker of that time John Gillone.



At a time when the 1795 First Statistical Account reports a dearth of trees in the parish, here we can see that McMillan by 1799 had planted many trees on his estate and had already planned the very large and unusually shaped oval walled garden.



What is not certain is the exact location of the mansion house of that time which is reported to have burnt down. One suggestion was that this occurred in 1844 but other sources cast doubt on this. It would seem, however, to have been situated very near to the present house.

Meantime, while James McMillan was establishing himself as a respected, innovating landowner, the next generation were seeking challenges further afield. By 1800 a Robert McMillan went to Canada and the names of both Patrick Laurie McMillan and George McMillan are to be found as attorneys on the plantation of Iter Boreale which lies to the north of Kingston, Jamaica. Many families from all strata of Scottish society emigrated to many far-flung parts of the world and whilst the poorer would never have the means to return, those of more affluent backgrounds especially from the Caribbean and North America seem to have been able to make the crossing across the North Atlantic on many occasions.

James McMillan died in 1809 and by 1811, for some reason, we find the trustees putting an advert in the "Caledonian Mercury" for a roup (public auction) of the Barwhinnock estate of 455 acres estimated at a value of £18,000. The advert provides an interesting glimpse into those times.

"Coal and lime are imported and the produce of the estate exported at the harbour at Tarff which is not far from Barwhinnock. Convenient access to Kirkcudbright and Gatehouse. Barwhinnock has a superior situation. A great toll road runs through the estate."

Note: the Dee was navigable up river to the harbour at Tarff (Cumstoun). This was well before the bridge at Kirkcudbright was built and accounts for the distance quoted of 5 miles between Barwhinnock and

Kirkcudbright, as carriages etc would have had to go via the old bridge at Cumstoun, Lower Tarf, and the very newly (1808) completed Telford bridge over the Dee at Tongland.

Presumably Patrick Laurie McMillan (PL) returns from Jamaica and comes to some financial agreement with the Trustees, as the next reference we have refers to him as Mr McMillan of Barwhinnock.

Who built the new estate house and when?

As ever in history there are elements of facts and elements of conjecture and two facts which escape us are the date and architect of the building of the present Barwhinnock House.

When Patrick Laurie McMillan returned from his travels, we must presume he did so in a financially comfortable situation. In the various gazetteers and histories of the day he is recognised as a respected progressive in estate management. He took an active part in local and national affairs buying shares in the proposed Dumfries to Portpatrick railway line, being on the board of the Bank of Scotland and taking an active interest in the local Liberal Party.

As to the building of the new estate house at Barwhinnock I have found little certainty with suggested rebuild dates varying from the 1820s to 1844. Equally confusing is that the rebuild can be attributed to either Patrick Laurie McMillan (PL) or to his son in law, Major James Irving.

Some decades after either of these suggested dates PH McKerlie, a well-known historian of the area, in 1878 published his *History of the Lands and their Owners in Galloway* and this seems to have been the source of the suggestion that the person who commissioned the house was Captain Irving and that the house was built in 1844.

I believe this to be inaccurate but unfortunately it has been continuously repeated since the publication of this well-known book.

Why do I question this? *The case against Captain Irving...*

The Irving Family Memoirs attribute the building of the new house to Patrick Laurie McMillan rather than Captain Irving.

Captain Irving was initially an ensign in the Bengal Light Cavalry who did not marry PLs only daughter Margaret until 1845 when he was at home on leave. It would seem unlikely he would have built the house before a marriage contract.

His future life history does not suggest a tremendous affection for Barwhinnock.

It is possible that he and his wife Margaret added the two small wings on either side of the house soon after their marriage and this may have been the source for a possible false attributing of Captain Irving of having been the builder.

...And FOR Patrick Laurie McMillan

Unlike McKerlie various references of the time (for example *The Topographical Dictionary of Scotland* in the 1840s) report PL McMillan as proprietor and builder.

'Mansion Houses. The Houses of Compston and Barwhinnock have been built by the present proprietors' Mr Maitland and Mr McMillan. As the two local estate owners each has a dedicated 'box' in the centre of the recently built 1818 Twynholm kirk where they would be in full view of the rest of the congregation sitting in pews.

The Topographical Dictionary of Scotland (1846?) also refers to 'Barwhinnock, the residence of Mr McMillan, by whom it was lately erected, is also a handsome building.'

There are references to that period of Mr. McMillan's 'beautification' of Barwhinnock.

Was the 1834 map (below) of the estate commissioned on completion of such works?

Assuming, therefore, that PL was the instigator of the rebuild, the next question is to establish the "When."

In the "Irving Family Memoirs" it states that Barwhinnock was rebuilt in 1844 following a fire destroying the old house and while this may be possible it is unlikely. Other sources question this date.

For example:

The 1841 parish census i.e. the number of persons in the parish of Twynholm for around that time, record:

The partial decrease that has taken place since the census of 1831 is to be principally attributed to the circumstance, that, in 1831 extensive improvements were carried out on the estate of Barwhinnock, and as these are now completed the labourers who were engaged in them have removed with their families.

Population of Twynholm Parish: 1801 was 681
 1811 " 740
 1821 " 783
 1831 " 871
 1841 " 777

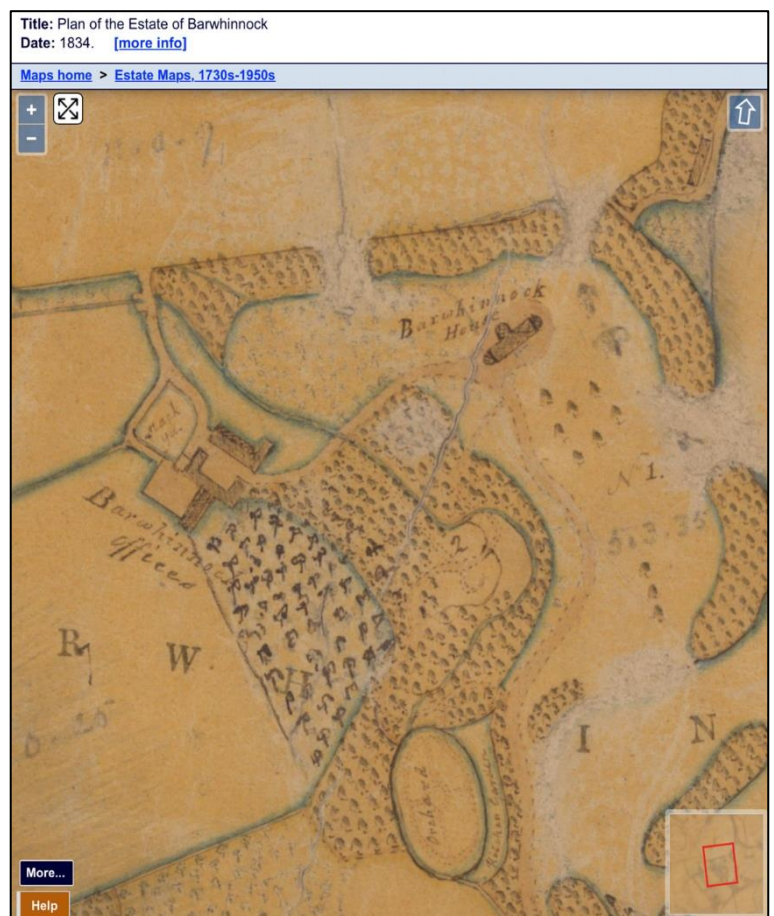
Note the spike of around 100 souls in the 1831 census followed in 1841 of a similar reduction. This suggests that extra manpower was specifically linked to Barwhinnock well before 1844.

Historic Environment Scotland in its Listed Buildings suggests the likelihood of the house being built at an earlier date than 1844.

My non-specialist examination of the estate map of 1834 would seem to show the position of the house to be in essentially the same position now.

Given the extensive works PL was undertaking on the estate and given his experience of living in the Caribbean, might it not be that he felt the time had come to do an upgrade? Did the old house burn down or might the 'beautification' not include replacing the old building with a much-admired new home?

Who knows ? But the fact is it was a new build of a size and appearance which was not the norm for Scottish architecture for its time.



The new estate house



This is the aspect of the House which greets you as you approach up the drive. The impression is of a modest sized house of one storey. We are led to believe that the original House did not initially include the two little wings on either side as shown here but there is reason to believe that these were added fairly soon after.



And this is the view from the rear where you get a slightly different impression of size showing that it does indeed have an upper floor.



And here is the impressive showpiece : facing you as you enter the front door you find the double curving stairways leading up to the bedrooms.

It is said locally that the plans of the house were inspired by a house PL had visited in the Caribbean. One possible explanation for the unusual (for Scotland) double stair might have been that it was a Petticoat Stair frequently found in the southern slave plantations in US: in the late 1700s/1800s ladies had hooped skirts which required lifting whilst ascending stairs and in order that the menfolk might not see their ankles there were separate stairways for the men and the women.

It is unlikely we will be able to ascertain the source of its inspiration but whilst it may be modest in size for an estate house of its time it is one with unusual character and charm.

Thus far I am not aware of anyone being able to confirm who the architect was.

Evolution of the house from mid 1800s to 2023

Without architects or plans of the original how can we establish more about Barwhinnock?

If we continue researching the McMillan family we find that in 1845 Margaret McMillan, the only daughter of Patrick Laurie and his wife Sophia Woodhall, married Captain James Irving from Gribton, Dumfries whilst he was home on leave. As a wedding present Patrick Laurie is reported to have given his daughter a very substantial sum of money and ownership of Barwhinnock, though possibly she did not inherit until PL's death in 1848. It is possible that while the new house was built by Patrick Laurie, Margaret's father, she and her new husband Captain James Irving felt the need to enlarge a little and added on the two low wings on either side of the main house.

James Irving was a Captain of 29th Bengal Light Cavalry and engaged in various conflicts until he returned from his spell of duty in India in 1852. According to the Irving Family Memoirs James (now Major) was *'bored by inactivity after so much excitement in India, he spent much of his time foxhunting in the west of England. This ended in tragedy when a horse fell and rolled on him making him more or less an invalid. He had to retire from the army and thereafter spent much of his time careering around the countryside with a four-in-hand.'*

Although he inherited Barwhinnock, a fine mansion in Galloway, he found Scotland far too cold after India so spent much of his later years in Devon.'

Newspaper cuttings in various Sporting Journals indicate him on the Board and as Judge especially in connection with gun dogs.

The reason why this is important in the Barwhinnock story is that he had little interest in living there. After Margaret and James were married in 1845, they were living in India and we will presume that the McMillan family continued living at Barwhinnock.

However by 1853 both of Margaret's parents had died, the Irvings had returned to England and on 7th March 1857 the house and estate were advertised in The Field :

'To Let furnished the Mansion House of Barwhinnock with Shootings etc. The house contains dining rooms, drawing room and library, six bedrooms, two dressing rooms, three servants bedrooms, butlers pantry, kitchen, hall etc. The offices consist of laundry and wash houses etc. The garden is in fullbearing and contains vinery and peach house. The shootings extend over 1000 acres and the tenant may have what grass lands he requires in addition to the lawn which goes with the house.

Barwhinnock is 3 1/2 miles from Kirkcudbright from which there is a direct steam communication for Liverpool and 10 miles from Castle Douglas to which a railway is in course of construction. The Dumfries and Portpatrick mail passes the Lodge twice daily. Entry Whitsunday.'

What a treasure trove of information we now have. We cannot only begin to get an idea of the building but discover that travel by sea from Kirkcudbright to Liverpool was the norm and the Castle Douglas railway was underway but not completed. Not to mention it having a fully mature garden with Mediterranean fruits.

1857

Alongside the impression of gracious living, we should remember that at this time lighting was pre-electricity and the house would have been lit by oil lamps and candles. There would have been no piped water and maids would be required to carry pitchers of water to bedrooms for personal washing. Every room would have an open fire requiring to be stoked. It was also pre flush toilets so chamber pots and commodes would have been the order of the day for house residents. It was pre-central heating, pre-washing machines and pre-motor cars.

Staff, of course, would not have been expected to be seen present in the family area except when tending to household needs. Every room would have a mechanical bell pull connected to either the kitchen or butler's pantry where on the wall would be a labelled array of bells which tinkled in response to a summons. Identifying which room required staff presence was then very straightforward. They would certainly not be expected to use the beautiful entry hall stairs as in these days any bigger house would have a 'back stair' for servants.

Consequently, even though Barwhinnock was a relatively small estate house, it would require a very large number of staff for the upkeep of day to day household care and a further large team for the estate and garden.

The outbuildings would include kennels for the gamekeeper's dogs, stables for the horses, carriage houses for various horse drawn vehicles, a joinery workshop and so on and a byre for cows providing milk for the house (hand milked, of course.)

James Irving died in 1873 but Barwhinnock stayed in the family for a further 40 years under the ownership of his wife Margaret Mcmillan/Irving who died in 1896 and was then succeeded by her son Norman. Although Margaret had a large number of children, the family seemed to be a bit dysfunctional and children again scattered to the four winds. There seemed no apparent feeling of affection or loyalty to the Twynholm estate except that apparently when the eldest son was overlooked and ownership passed on to a younger son, Captain Norman Irving, some friction was recorded (Irving Family Memoirs).

1879/1883 Kirkcudbright Advertiser

'Furnished House to let.

The Mansion House of Barwhinnock in the parish of Twynholm. Furnished, with Offices, Garden, Policy and Shooting over 800 acres. The Mansion House is Commodious and the Stabling, Groom's Rooms and Dog Kennels are very good. Salmon fishing can be had.

Barwhinnock is 2 miles from Tarff Station.'

Note, the railway to Kirkcudbright has now been completed.

1896

'Furnished Mansion House and Shootings to let. Beautifully situated and commodious. Water brought to the house by gravitation and a modern system of drainage is being carried out. The shooting is mainly low ground and grouse and blackgame come to the estate in autumn.'

The reference here to water and drainage is very probably the introduction of the flush loo to the house. By necessity, estates would have their own source of water (i.e. pre local authority piped water supply) and the Kirk Burn runs through the estate very close to the house and outbuildings. The reference to gravitation could refer to a brick-built water tank below the dam in the field above the farm steading.

Here we have a reference to water from the estate being piped to the house to provide, for the first time, a flush toilet. There being no sewerage scheme yet, the house would have had its own septic tank which I understand is still extant (as are still many from that era).

A remnant of former toileting arrangements is the little hut just below the old steading built over the burn containing two wooden toilet seats.

Possible footnote? toilet arrangements:

A similar shed and toilet seats was still in existence in the 1950s over the burn at the old sawmill in Twynholm village where Coulthard's haulage yard now is based.

Cottagers would have a dry pit 'up the gairden' next to the ash pit (shovelful of ash to eliminate smells and flies) and periodically this would be collected by horse and cart and spread on the fields for fertiliser. By 1919 a law was passed that all new build housing must include an indoor flush toilet but even in the 1950s there were a few homes in Twynholm village still without.

For drinking water there was a well a few hundred yards away to the northwest of the house at Bankend. In addition there is a spring at the back of the house which flows very close to the main house and likely contributed to household needs. The Lodge house was also served by its own spring and well. There was also a water pump in the steading.

'Sale of household, stable, garage accessories, garden and greenhouse plants and utensils'

Important Sale of Surplus Household Furniture, Stable and Garage Accessories, Garden and Greenhouse Plants and Utensils, &c.

There will be Sold, by Public Roup, at
Barwhinnoch Mansion House,
TWYNHOLM,
On **TUESDAY** First, 26th May,

THE following **SURPLUS HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, STABLE and GARAGE ACCESSORIES, GARDEN and GREENHOUSE PLANTS and UTENSILS, viz.:**

HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, etc., comprising a large collection of Furnishings of a very substantial class, **Mansion-House** Requisites, Photographic Appliances; Bicycle, Bicycle Stand, large Meat and Game Larder (4 ft. 4 in. by 4 ft. 4 in. by 7 ft. 6 in.), 2 50-Gallon Oil Cabinets, with Pumps and Hose, etc.

STABLE DEPARTMENT.—2-Wheeled Varnished Pony Cart (by Reid, Perth), brass mountings and rubber tyres; Varnished Luggage Cart, 2 Sets Silver-mounted Single Harness, Set Pony Harness (brown leather, brass-mounted), Driving Reins, Hunting Saddle, and numerous Sundry Articles.

GARAGE DEPARTMENT.— $3\frac{1}{2}$ inch Lathe (by Drummond), almost new, unless previously disposed of; Petrol Storehouse, Garage Bench, Do. Cupboard, 3 large Garage Lamps, small Wall Lamps, Davy Safety Lamp, Stepney Wheel and Cover, 2 large Brass Acetylene Headlights, Tail Lamp, 2 Accumulators, Lifting Jack, Tyre Pump, Tyres (in excellent condition), Vice and various Tools for Motor, Scales and Weights, etc.

GARDEN.—28-inch Pony Lawn Mowing Machine and Pony Boots, Hand Mowing Machines, Hand Watercart, Hand Barrow, Wheel Barrows, 56 Galvanised Wire Pea Trainers, 4 Do. Garden Arches, Span-roof Garden Frame (12 ft. by 6 ft., 3 ft. high), 4 large and small Frames (12 ft. by 6 ft. and 8 ft. by 6 ft.), 2 extra Lights for Do., 21-ft. Extension Ladder, Folding Steps, 135-ft. Garden Hose ($\frac{3}{4}$ inch), 1500 Bamboo Canes (assorted sizes), 250 Dahlia Stakes (some new, part Tasmanian Blue Gum timber), large number of Tools of all sorts, etc.

GREENHOUSE BEDDING PLANTS. — 1500 Echeverias (in boxes), 500 Single Bedding Begonias, 6 doz. Double and Single Pot Begonias, 4 doz. Pot Geraniums, 2 doz. Ivy-Leaf Geraniums, 11 boxes Variegated Bedding Geraniums, 6 doz. Single Dahlias (in pots), 13 Pots of Arum Lilies, Palms, Spiraeas, Ferns of sorts, Vallota Purpurea, and other Greenhouse Plants; Hive of Bees, 2 Bar Frame Hives.

Sale to commence with Furniture at Eleven o'clock Forenoon.
Terms—Cash.
WILLIAM WALLET, Auctioneer.

Barwhinnoch is two miles from Tarff Station and four miles from Kirkcudbright.
A Brake will leave Royal Hotel, Kirkcudbright, in time for the Sale.

Note the progression from horses to cars. This roup (public auction) was deemed of sufficient interest to local people to provide transport for it from Kirkcudbright.

1917 D and G Standard Sat 17 March

'Sale of Household Furniture and Effects belonging to the Trustees of the late Mrs Margaret Mc Millan of Barwhinnock.'

Sale of Household Furniture, &c.

There will be Sold, by Public Roup, at
BARWHINNOCK HOUSE Twynholm,
On WEDNESDAY, 28th March.

HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE and other **EFFECTS**
belonging to the Trustees of the late Mrs
Margaret M'Millan or Irving of Barwhinnock, com-
prising:

ENTRANCE HALL.
4 Mahogany Hall Seats, Round Table (marble
centre), Mahogany Grandfather Clock, Deer Horns,
Rugs, etc.

DINING-ROOM.
Antique Mahogany Sideboard, Mahogany Dining
Table, 9 Mahogany Chairs, 2 Easy Chairs, Half-
Round Table, Tea Caddy Table, Fire Screen, Fire-
Irons, Brussels Carpet, Skin Rug, Breakfast Stand,
with Spirit Lamps and 3 Covered Dishes.

DRAWING-ROOM.
Couch, Easy and Small Chairs, Chiffonier, Large
Ebonyed Open Cabinet, Small Tables, Carpet, Fire-
Irons, Ornaments, etc.
Stair and Landing Carpets.

LIBRARY.
Walnut Devonport, Large Round Inlaid Elm
Centre Table, Old Black Cabinet, Wicker and other
Chairs, Large Case with Stuffed Birds, etc., 700
Books; Ornaments; Carpet and Rug; and Curtains.
The Furnishings of 10 Bedrooms.

BUTLER'S PANTRY.
Tables, Chairs, Table and other Lamps, Tea and
Breakfast Dishes, Wine Decanters, Glasses,
Tumblers, Green Hook Glasses, Blue Finger Bowls,
etc.

Servants' Hall Furnishings.

KITCHEN AND SCULLERY.
Furniture and all Cooking Utensils.
Also, GARDEN UTENSILS, including Lawn Mowers,
Roller, etc.

Sale to commence at 10.30.
The Furniture, etc., will be on View on Friday,
the 23d inst., from 10 to 4 o'clock.

WILLIAM WALLET, Auctioneer.

Then finally in 1919 we find the end of the centuries old McMillan connection with Barwhinnock being put up for sale.

1919 12th July

'Very desirable Estate of Barwhinnock in the Parish of Twynholm for sale.

The Mansion House has 3 public rooms, 6 bedrooms, 1 dressing room, kitchen and servants quarters. The principal rooms are heated by radiators. There is a good water supply and the drainage is modern. Good walled garden and suitable cottages.

The estate including 5 farms extends to about 760 acres. Rental around £1022 and public burdens £118.

Lidderdale and Gillespie'

Note the development of radiators in the ground floor rooms cutting back on need for servants to be constantly carrying coal to stoke up open fires.

The next owner 1921-23 seems to have been William McKie, father of the local Tory MP Johnny McKie. There is a reference to a Miss McKie living at Barwhinnock around 1917 raising funds for the Heather Day Scottish Childrens League of Pity and in May 1920 an advert for a 'manservant (indoor) wanted at once, housework, waiting, good silver cleaner. Good references essential. Apply W McKie Barwhinnock.'

But whether or not they had rented prior to buying is not clear. However his tenure was brief, only being from 1921-1923.

1923 Scotsman 26th May: For Sale

'Desirable small property of Barwhinnock.

The Mansion House which is situated in a beautiful part of the country 5 miles from Kirkcudbright and 9 miles from Castle Douglas is in excellent state of repair. It has four reception rooms, 6 principal bedrooms, 2 dressing rooms, Bathroom etc, three servants bedrooms. Convenient Domestic Arrangements, Servants Hall etc. Telephone.

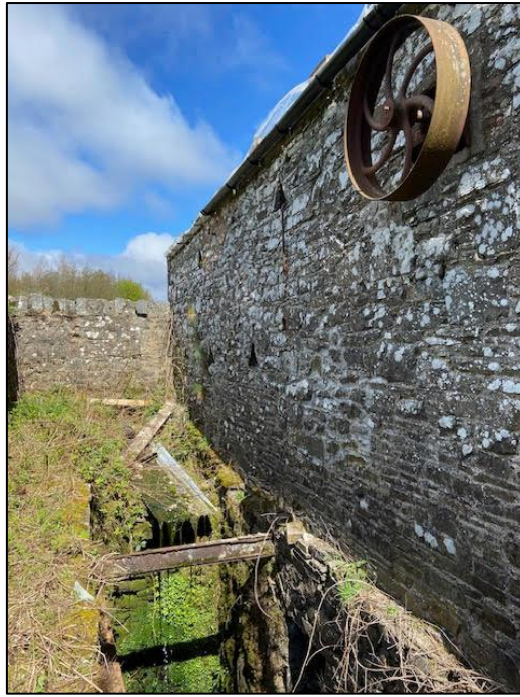
There is no basement. The drainage is modern and the house centrally heated. Gravitation water laid on. Water power for Sawmill and for electric light.

First Class stabling. Garage for two cars. Laundry.

Lodges. 3 Cottages and 127 acres of First Class land.

The mansion House is approached by an Avenue surrounded by beautiful policies. Productive walled kitchen garden with glass houses.'

We have mentioned the introduction of the flush toilet in the 1890s, the move from horse-drawn transport to use of cars by 1917, and here in 1923 we see the importance of two more modernisations in the installation of the telephone and installation of electric lights. The telephone would have lines to the manned Twynholm village telephone exchange. The power for generating electric lighting for the house was sourced from the mill lade to the water wheel at the farm steading. In other words both water and electricity were sourced within the estate and neither were on a 'public' supply. Note the mention of a bathroom.



This photo shows remaining evidence of the site of the original mill lade and water wheel with the pulley wheel above.

1923 -1935

Thus far I have no information on the new owners whom I believe to be a James Laing Wright but what is obvious from the sale description below is that the House and estate were well maintained.

1935 28th May

‘Attractive Country House and Land for Sale: The Mansion House of Barwhinnock Twynholm

Containing 4 public rooms, 5 bedrooms, 2 dressing rooms, 3 bathrooms, servants accommodation, recently modernised kitchen premises with Aga cooker, pantry, scullery etc. central heating, electric light.

Garage, Gardeners Lodge, Keepers Cottage. Well laid out walled garden with glass houses and good outbuildings.

The Mansion House and its interior decoration and other buildings are all in excellent condition. The House is in a sheltered situation in attractive policies which include 2 tennis courts and grass parks of around 130 acres.

Patrick Gifford, solicitor Castle Douglas.’

Further improvements and modernisation, this time in the kitchen. Out goes the old cooking range to be replaced by the more modern Aga though this would still be run on solid fuel. Internal modifications have been made to accommodate three bathrooms which suggests that by now it is linked to the local water supply. Might the electricity now be linked to the local grid? This is the first mention of tennis courts. Did the Wrights lay down these?

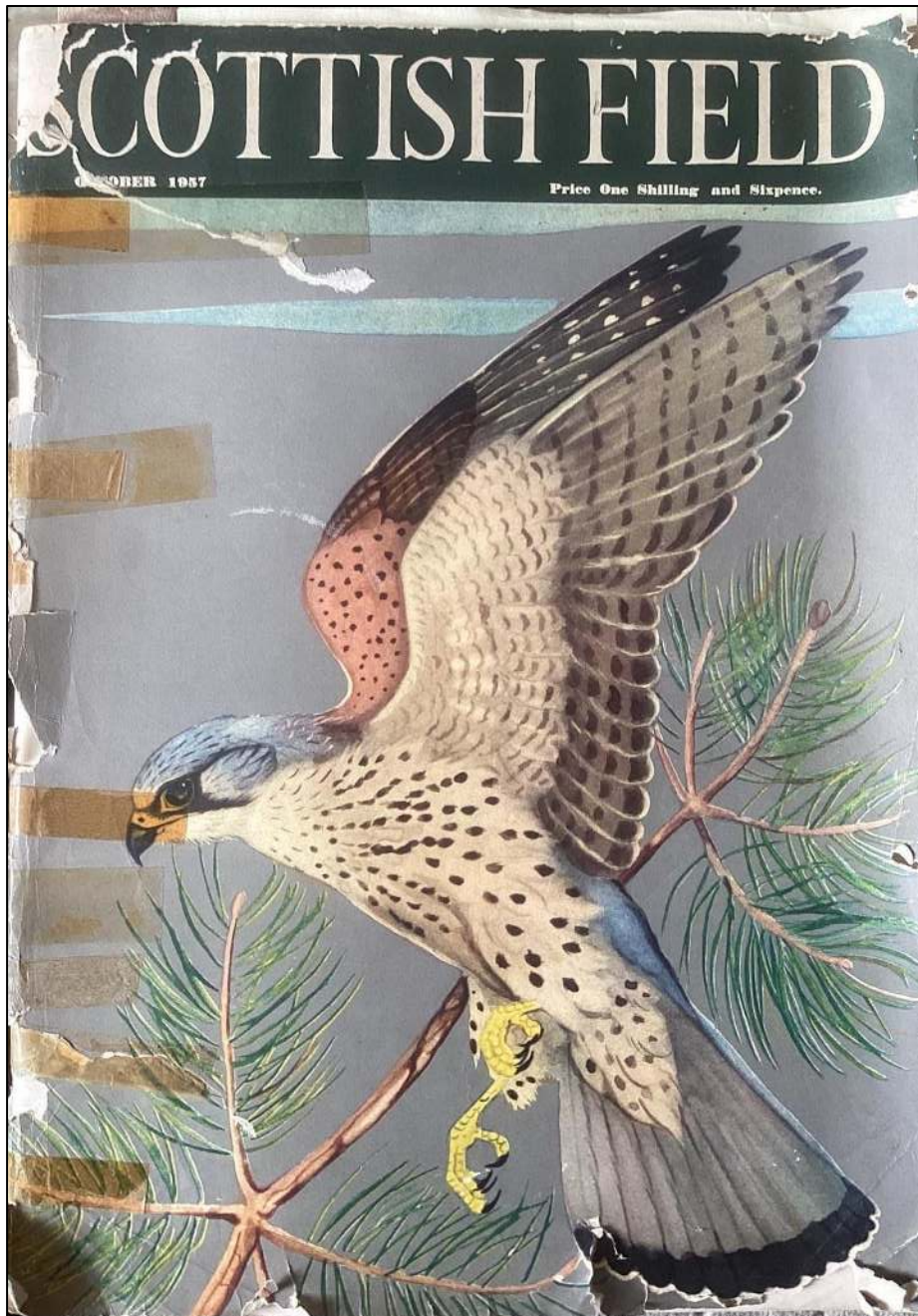
The new owner was Alexander Norman Murdoch. By now we are almost beginning to enter the era of living memory!

1935-1961 The Murdoch Family

Like many of the previous owners, Norman Murdoch was held in some standing in the local area and was a JP (Justice of the Peace). Mrs Murdoch was from the Mitchell tobacco family from Glasgow. They had a son Alastair and daughter Isobel.

During the 1939-45 World War Mrs Murdoch played an active part in fundraising for the local hospital, prisoners of war and so on. There are memories of fetes on the lawn.

On the death of his parents Alastair succeeded until the house and estate were sold in 1961. The following article was published in his time.



Unfortunately there are various mistakes in it but it nevertheless gives a flavour of the house.



Barwhinnock, near Kirkcudbright, was built in 1844 but has, in fact, all the charm and character of a small Regency house. It was built for a Major Irving, of the Bengal Cavalry, and his wife, Sophia, who evidently did not approve of the fashionable "Scottish Baronial" style

BARWHINNOCK IN THE STEWARTRY

*SHEILA FORMAN describes
an unusual Regency house*

BARWHINNOCK was built in 1844. By that time in Scotland the classical style of building was becoming outmoded and most people preferred to build their new houses in the fashionable mock Gothic form. Abbotsford, finished in 1824, was completely "Gothick." Indeed, Sir Walter Scott was perhaps the principal mover in the Scottish romantic movement which, by the middle of the 19th century, had pervaded architecture and music as well as literature. Major James Irving of the Bengal Cavalry and his wife Sophia, who built the present house, apparently did not approve of the new "Scottish Baronial" style and demanded an older classical

shape. Barwhinnock, however, is something of a surprise house, an individual fantasy within a mainly Georgian framework. Such fancy dress houses were common in Regency times in England, and possibly the architect of Barwhinnock (so far unknown) was English. In exact date the house is Early Victorian, but in character it is a true Regency house.

The front of the unpretentious exterior (the original design without the east and west wings was even smaller), a compact small building of simple proportions, suggests a slightly elevated cottage. But the two pillars on either side of the front door and the rather oddly



Barwhinnock from the north showing the Regency porch leading out of the projecting central portion of the house. The east and west wings were added soon after the house was finished

OCTOBER 1957—47

As indicated previously I do not think Barwhinnock was built in 1844 by Major James Irving whose wife was Margaret and not Sophia, who was his mother-in-law.

A winter view of lawn and woods is framed in the Venetian windows of the diningroom on the west side of the front door. The Venetian windows are characteristic of the sort of Regency whim to which the plainest Georgian building might be subjected



Also on the ground floor is the drawing room (left) with its high ceiling, one rounded wall hung with a tapestry and a Regency period chimney-piece. Cream-coloured paint adds height and space to this charming room

chosen Venetian windows are characteristic of the sort of Regency whim to which the plainest Georgian building might be subjected. The greatest surprise, however, awaits the visitor on opening the front door. For there, confronting him like the stage-set for a full-scale Italian opera, is a double-flight staircase curving up to a pillared landing on the first floor. Reminiscent of Robert Adam's later work, this horseshoe-shaped flight of steps has a wrought-iron balustrade ornamented with Greek medallions and the thin polished wood hand-rail of the Regency period. Across the marble hall, glass doors lead into a large, well-lighted garden room which opens on to a lawn at the back of the house. There are only two other rooms on the ground floor of the main part of the house—an elegant, high-ceilinged drawing-room with a curved north wall, timber wainscoting, a panelled door and Regency chimney-piece, and a more conventionally-shaped dining-room on the other side of the front door. There are three bedrooms upstairs, and the wings, probably added soon after the house was finished, provide three further bedrooms and the kitchen quarters.

Altogether, Barwhinnock is a most unusual small house which might have some whim or story behind it if only this could be uncovered. Was it the laird, Major James Irving, or the unknown architect who devised such Regency grandeur within such simple bounds? So far, there is no answer to the question. Barwhinnock was at one time part of the barony of Twynholm, but after this was broken up, is said to have been granted by James II to James McMillan. Another charter, dated 1614, shows the property then belonged to Andrew McMillan, and his grandson was the owner in 1642. In 1693, Margaret (née McMillan), wife of William Charteris, succeeded to Barwhinnock, presumably after the death of both her brother and nephew, the co-portioners, and from this time on the Charteris family there assumed the name of McMillan. The laird is said to have supported the Stuart cause in the '45 Rising and subsequently to have forfeited part of the estate and died in exile. His two sons, however, seem to have reclaimed the remaining property some years later. In 1819, Patrick Lawrie McMillan was the owner. He married Sophia Woodhall, and their only daughter and heiress married the builder of the present house, Major James Irving, second son of James Irving of Gribton.

Major Irving, who was attached to the Bengal Cavalry in 1829, served through the Afghan campaign and fought in the battles of Chillianwallah and Gazerat. He retired in 1852, so that he must have built Barwhinnock on leaves between active service after the previous house had been entirely destroyed by fire. He and his wife had a family of nine children, so it seems probable the wings were added to the house in their times. There is a charming oval-shaped walled garden sheltered by trees planted in the early 19th century. "Mr McMillan has also done much to beautify the lands of Bar-

whinnock by small plantations tastefully laid down, so as to give both ornament and shelter to a portion of the parish which was formerly bare and exposed," states the New Statistical Account of the parish of Twynholm. Three miles east of Kirkcudbright, this little village was visited for ten days by Edward I of England in 1300. Here he awaited provisions transported by sea for his long campaign against the Scots. During his visit the King made three offerings of seven shillings at the altar of the old chapel of Kirkchrist.

A Rural and Comparatively Remote Village

AT the time the present house of Barwhinnock was built in 1844 the parish was, as it still is to-day, mainly agricultural. There was a small mill in operation for carding and spinning wool and for dressing flax, but it was only patronised by the local farmers for their own private use. Steam navigation, a recent innovation at that time, had begun to change the old pattern of living in the Stewartry. Farmers found that with swifter transport to England there were new profits to be made. "It is a common practice for the farmers to buy large stocks of sheep in Autumn to eat off the turnip crop," the Statistical Account records, "and then to send them to Liverpool by steam when fat." The faster, cheaper boats also encouraged poaching by providing a ready market for game and rabbits in Liverpool and elsewhere. It was found easier, too, to import coal from Cumberland by sea than to pay the cost of haulage from the Scottish mines.

To-day, more than a hundred years later than these early Victorian days, the village of Twynholm is still rural and at least comparatively remote—as is most of the Stewartry to those who live nearer the spine of Scotland (but the natives will admit no adjective not wholly complimentary to this entrancing stretch of south-western country). The estate of Barwhinnock, smaller than it has ever been since its beginning, for the farms have been sold off over the years, is surrounded by rolling agricultural land. It is difficult to imagine that the quiet has ever been deeper, the peace more unbroken. The house, built small and tidy as a fashionable quirk, has now come into its own. It is convenient, comfortable and manageable in an age when large country houses are at a discount. And it has character and turn of the century to the well known local family of McKie (the father of the present Member of Parliament for Galloway being the buyer), and after this passed through various hands until it was bought by the present owner's father in 1935. It now belongs to Mr Alastair Murdoch, who lives there with his wife and family.



A dramatic horseshoe-shaped staircase leads up to the first floor from the small marble-floored entrance hall. The Regency wrought-iron balustrade is ornamented with Greek medallions

(Right) A close-up of the characteristically Regency balustrade shows the ornamentation of Greek mythical plaques. The staircase is a charming surprise to the visitor



OCTOBER 1957—49

Another inaccuracy: although the floor may look like marble in a photo, the floors in the entrance hall, passageways and some ground floor rooms are in fact sandstone slabs and likewise the curved stairway. For many years this hallway has had various patterns painted in black and white paint giving rise to the misunderstanding the floor was marble. On the other hand there are some fine marble fireplaces.

1961-1972 Alexa Bourne-May

1972-1978 Geoffrey Bourne-May

Barwhinnock was then sold to Major Bourne-May, Coldstream Guards, and his wife Alexa, only daughter of Lord and Lady Ardwall. Mrs Bourne-May was soon widowed and lived alone with the company of her two Borzoi dogs whose gravestones are to be found to the west of the house towards the farm steading. During various renovations to Twynholm kirk she donated the money to purchase a new small electric pipe organ to replace the old pedal organ. As she became more frail, her son Geoffrey Bourne-May, who had been living at Bardristane farm near Gatehouse, moved into Barwhinnock with his wife June and two sons to help care for his mother. Geoffrey was widely respected in the area for his involvement in local affairs particularly in the Gatehouse area.

The Bourne-Mays planted a number of rhododendrons which still grace the estate.

Perhaps the grass tennis court on the front lawn was converted to a croquet lawn at this time?

1978-1987 Michael Oakeshott and family

When Michael Oakeshott³ bought the estate in 1978 it was with the intention of breeding racehorses. It would seem that up until this time the lodge house at the entrance gate would have been occupied by the gardener / estate worker. However the lodge was now earmarked for the stable trainer and so Mr Emslie, the gardener who had lived there for 40 years, moved to a house in Twynholm but continued doing garden and estate work.

Sadly Mrs Oakeshott died suddenly, by now the three boys had flown the nest and the estate was once more on the market.

— 3 —	
Barwhinnock lies some 8 miles to the south-west of Castle Douglas and half a mile west of the village of Twynholm (which is by passed by the A75). The entrance to Barwhinnock is directly north off the A75 and the lodge and stone pillars stand at the entrance. A tarmac sealed drive flanked by Rhododendrons, beech and lime trees winds its way through the policies before emerging in front of the house and terminating in a wide gravel circle.	
DESCRIPTION	Barwhinnock is an outstanding example of a small and compact estate in a lovely situation which for its size can offer a great deal. The estate revolves around its unusual and yet highly attractive house around which there are lovely policies and woodland walks. A small livestock farming enterprise has been established and the estate is registered as an agricultural holding which has significant tax advantages. An exciting pheasant shoot has been built up and there is also duck flighting on the old mill pond.
BARWHINNOCK HOUSE	Barwhinnock House is in a beautiful and secluded location facing south-east over its own park. It is a classically proportioned house, built in the Regency style and containing a host of interesting features. Most striking is the horseshoe shaped double staircase leading from the front hall. The venetian windows, delicate cornices and curved walls are all unusual features which combine to give the house so much identity and character. In addition to the fine architecture, Barwhinnock is a very manageable, comfortable and easily run house all of which combine to make it an ideal family home. It has a precision-controlled central heating system which means that parts of the house can be isolated if required. It also has a modern and well equipped kitchen and the reception rooms and bedrooms are all of a good size. Some eight years ago all the lead and flashings on the roof as well as the rainwater goods were renewed and at the same time the roof was insulated. Rewiring was also carried out. Predominantly single storeyed the house is built of stone with a slate roof and the accommodation comprises: GROUND FLOOR Double glazed doors to INNER HALL with painted flagstone floor.

³ This was not Michael Oakeshott the well-known conservative philosopher who became Professor of Political Science at London School of Economics as seems to be implied in the Scotsman's sales brochure of Barwhinnock of 2018

DRAWING ROOM (25ft 9in × 19ft 6in)
with deep bow window and bowed rear wall. Ornate cornices. Modina marble fireplace with brass firegrate and glass fronted display cabinet.

DINING ROOM (25ft 9in × 19ft 6in)
with deep bow window. Ornate cornices. Black marble fireplace with brass firegrate. Built-in shelved cupboards and double communicating doors to Library.

STUDY (22ft × 15ft 9in)
Fireplace with marble mantelpiece and hearth. Glazed window and fanlights looking into Hall. French windows to garden.

LAUNDRY (15ft 3in × 10ft 4in)
with twin porcelain sinks. Fitted shelved cupboards and work surface and built-in deep shelved cupboard.

BRUSH CUPBOARD
under back staircase.

BATHROOM
with bath, wash hand basin and W.C.

KITCHEN (18ft 4in × 17ft)
containing oil-fired 4 oven Aga and Agamatic water heater with Portugese tiles on wall behind. Stainless steel sink unit and drainer with separate waste disposal unit. Elizabeth Anne floor and wall units and centre island with floor units and work surface. Xpelair extractor fan. Walk-in shelved store cupboard.

DOG ROOM/STORE
with sink and pulley.

BACK DOOR

LIBRARY (23ft 4in × 16ft 6in)
Double glazed and with Heatstream open fire with marble surround and timber mantelpiece. Row of low-fitted cupboards and bookcase.

Stair leading down to:

Coal Cellar, Wine Cellar with stone bins, fitted shelved Cupboard with perforated zinc doors, Log Shed and Boiler Room containing oil-fired Potterton boiler.

GROUND FLOOR WING

BEDROOM (19ft 4in × 15ft 4in)
with built-in hanging cupboard and communicating door to:

BATHROOM
with bath, wash hand basin, W.C. and fitted cupboard.

BEDROOM (14ft 3in × 13ft 4in)
with wash hand basin and fitted shelves below window.

BEDROOM (15ft 9in × 14ft 9in)
with communicating door to:

CLOAKROOM
with wash hand basin, W.C. and walk-in shelved cupboard.

BACK LOBBY
with fitted coat hooks.

Walk-in **GUN CUPBOARD** with fitted shelves.

FIRST FLOOR

Reached by very attractive horse-shoe shaped double staircase to give access to pillared landing with wrought iron balustrade. The staircase has beautifully carved wrought iron bannisters with Greek medallions and is surmounted by a mahogany handrail. There is also a back staircase giving access to the first floor and attic.

BILLIARD ROOM (22ft 8in × 16ft 9in)

BEDROOM (19ft 9in × 13ft 4in)
with fitted hanging and shelved cupboards and communicating door to:

BATHROOM

with bath, wash hand basin and W.C.

MASTER BEDROOM SUITE

comprising:

BEDROOM (20ft × 15ft 9in)

Curved wall with twin bow windows with window seats below. Double fitted hanging and shelved cupboards. Communicating door to:

DRESSING ROOM (13ft 9in × 10ft 9in)

with double hanging and shelved cupboards, and shelved cupboards below window. Further communicating door to:

BATHROOM

with bath, wash hand basin, W.C. and heated towel rail.

Shelved LINEN CUPBOARD and 2 separate AIRING CUPBOARDS and CUPBOARD containing hot water cylinder.

ATTIC BEDROOM (15ft 3in × 12ft 3in)

ATTIC BEDROOM (18ft 6in × 10ft)

with communicating door to:

BOX ROOM (15ft 6in × 10ft 9in)

with built in cupboard.

SERVICES

Mains water and electricity, drainage to septic tank. Central heating and hot water by 350,000 BTU oil-fired Potterton boiler with electric panel in house for controlling distribution of central heating and hot water. Hot water also by oil-fired Agmatic in kitchen and immersion heater. 1,200 gallon oil storage tank behind house.

GARDEN

To the south-west of the house lies the oval shaped walled garden along one side of which flows a Burn, which in turn flows through the policies and past the Lodge. The walled garden is a charming feature of the estate and contains apple and pear trees as well as a fruit cage in which are growing currants, raspberries and strawberries. Outside the walled garden is a potting shed of brick and slate construction. There is a lovely azalea/rhododendron walk from outside the walled garden beside the Burn to the house.

THE LODGE

Situated at the entrance to Barwhinnock and with a Burn flowing beside it the Lodge is an attractive single storeyed dwelling of stone and slate construction. The accommodation comprises: Living Room, Kitchen, 2 Bedrooms and Bathroom.

OUTBUILDINGS & FARM BUILDINGS

Reached by the back drive and situated between the house and the farm buildings is a timber framed double garage with corrugated asbestos roof and sides, concrete floor and double timber sliding doors.

The farm buildings are situated some 100 yards further along the back drive and can also be reached by a separate back drive leading directly off the A75 as can most of the fields.

The buildings are grouped mainly around a partly concreted yard and provide useful stabling as well as storage. They comprise: Hay Shed of stone/concrete block construction with corrugated steel roof, stone and slate range of meal store/implement shed, 4 loose-boxes with concrete floor and timber partitions and old cottage, modern cattle handling pens, loading ramp for horses and sheep handling pens and dipper.

THE FARM

In addition to being registered as an agricultural holding, Barwhinnock qualifies for grants and subsidies under the less favoured area status. The land is divided into 8 enclosures all of which have access to water and there are shelters in 4 fields. The fields have been limed, slagged and treated with calcified seaweed on a regular basis.

The farm is now carrying approximately 100 Blackface and Texel ewes. It is also run as a private Thoroughbred Stud Farm and most of the fences have a top-rail on them.

SPORT

For its size Barwhinnock is a suprisingly good sporting estate. The present owner has built up a highly successful and enjoyable pheasant shoot taking full advantage of the woods providing 7 separate drives. 200 pheasants have been reared in the past and 3 separate days shooting have usually yielded a total of about 135 birds.

The old mill pond situated in a field beyond the farm buildings makes an excellent duck flighting pond. There are also some trout in it and if more trout were introduced it should also be capable of providing enjoyable fishing.

LISTED BUILDINGS

Barwhinnock House is scheduled as a Listed Building Category A. The walled garden, Lodge and entrance pillars are scheduled as Listed Buildings Category B.

OUTGOINGS

Rateable Value:

Barwhinnock House	£2,336
Lodge	£371

CONDITIONS OF SALE

1. Barwhinnock House

- i) Some fitted carpets and curtains will be available for takeover by a purchaser(s) at valuation.
- ii) All light fittings are excluded from the sale.
- iii) The billiard table is excluded from the sale but the vendor might be prepared to sell this to a purchaser.

2. The Farm

A purchaser may be given the option to take over the sheep stock and all the machinery at valuation if required.

1987-2018 Major Rodney Haszard and Mrs Anna Serena Haszard

After the relatively short tenure of the Oakeshotts the estate was bought by the Haszards who came with their two children as new incumbents to Barwhinnock. Once again the family were very much engaged in ensuring the estate and house were well maintained. Not only did they maintain the fabric of the house they enjoyed the outdoor aspect of the estate and continued planting trees for wind breaks and extending large areas of snowdrops and spring flower coverage . Serena had a particular interest in the walled garden and both were interested in the history of the property.

After the death of her husband and children growing up to follow their own paths Serena put the estate up for sale. I feel the sales brochure gives a good idea of what Barwhinnock meant to her:

The Scotsman newspaper, 19th Apr 2018

Elegant regency home with gate lodge, stables, walled garden and 85 acres hits the market in the Scottish borders



This nineteenth century regency gem offers stunning architecture coupled with modern comfort, reports Kirsty McLuckie.

Described by John Gifford as a “deliciously smart country house villa” in his seminal book on Dumfries and Galloway in the Buildings of Scotland series, Barwhinnock, in Twynholm near Kirkcudbright is something of an architectural gem on a domestic scale.

That isn’t to say that it is small. The elegant regency house has seven bedrooms and comes with a gate lodge, outbuildings with stables, an oval walled garden and grazing and woodland of over 80 acres.



For the owner, Serena Haszard, a friend's description of the house as "a baby grand" is very apt. She bought Barwhinnock with her husband 30 years ago. She says: "We were looking for an architecturally interesting house with woods, water and land. It was love at first sight."

It is a very striking house. Built in 1830, it has all the beautiful symmetry of the regency style on the approach.



The central bay of three has the front door surrounded by a broad Tuscan columned portico while the flanking bays have Venetian windows and matching wings extend out from either

side. It is equally breathtaking inside as the tall entrance hall has a striking double staircase with castiron balusters decorated with acanthus leaves and eagles' heads, lit from a cupola above.

The Haszards bought it in the 1980s from the philosopher, Michael Oakeshott⁴, and Serena says that since then the task has been to maintain the property in perfect condition and to redecorate when necessary.

The house, for its age, is remarkably well laid out to suit modern living. Left of the entrance hall is the dining room, handsomely decorated with an ornate cornice and a black marble chimney piece.



On the other side is the drawing room with a bow wall at both ends and a Tuscan columned white and grey fossil marble chimney piece.

The window overlooks the lawns at the front.



The study, a beautiful room leading off the back of the main hall, overlooks the back garden and the waterfall.

⁴ see previous reference to Michael Oakeshott the philosopher



Three bedrooms and two bathrooms are in one ground floor wing. In the other, the morning room is next to the kitchen which has practical storerooms, a boot room and a wine cellar. Upstairs, there are three more bedrooms, two bathrooms and a games room. The master bedroom overlooks the garden and has a dressing room and ensuite.

It is a very light and peaceful house. Serena says one of her favourite parts of the day is: "Walking down the front stairs with the early morning sun streaming in or sitting in kitchen watching the red squirrels chasing each other round the crab apple tree."



However, with all the public space, it is also a party house and has many gatherings over the years.

The garden is an absolute highlight and the extensive planting which the Hanszards have undertaken over their years at Barwhinnock has added to the mature trees and unusual specimen shrubs that have been here for decades.

Serena says: "I like to walk through the woodland garden from early spring to see the build up to the crescendo of rhododendron colours in May.

The scent of the roses in the beautiful oval walled garden in June is amazing and we get vegetables for the kitchen from the walled garden too."

The snowdrops in February are spectacular and the grounds have been open, by appointment, as part of Scotland's Garden Scheme.

The wider acreage is let out for the summer months, so the paddocks and grazing provide all the privacy you would require without the need to maintain it.

Venture further out of the formal areas of the garden and it is the wildlife that Serena loves.

She says: "Walking round the woodland paths with my cocker spaniels we see roe deer and hares, while mallards and teal are nesting at the moment on the lochan."

"It is nice place to sit with a glass of wine, or we have lunch by the waterfall on a hot summer's day."

*Barwhinnock house is on the market for **offers over £1.2 million***



All Photos Knight Frank

2018 The Coulthard Family

When Serena Haszard put the estate up for sale in 2018 it was bought by a well-known local Twynholm Family who had known Barwhinnock from childhood. Hayton Coulthard Haulage Company started life in Twynholm with one lorry over 100 years ago, developed into a national and now international transport but has continued to be based in the village. Barwhinnock is now the home to Duncan Coulthard Junior (older brother of Formula 1 champion David Coulthard), his wife Monica and their children, all three of whom are currently employed in the family business.

Like so many of their predecessors the family is enthusiastically embracing the varying challenges of the estate.

Whilst the drawing room and dining rooms are furnished in a more formal tradition, the kitchen and morning room have been opened up to provide a large light filled area incorporating the modern kitchen and family relaxing area.



Following in Serena's footsteps, Monica is an enthusiast in the walled garden and the family all assist in estate maintenance. Son James has recently been given planning permission to convert what was part of the sawmill in the steading into a house.

The Oval Walled Garden and estate

As mentioned already in the 1799 map of James McMillan's time there is indication of an oval shape of the walled garden. This suggests that the garden was an original part of his interest in things agricultural and botanical and in the 1834 estate map is marked as The Orchard. Today the northern half remains an orchard surrounded by herbaceous borders whilst the southern half is under cultivation.



The wrought iron gate on the east side leading into the garden was forged at Twynholm smiddy by Bob Hamilton in the mid 1900s.

Mr Alex Emslie

Mention should be made of someone with a long connection with Barwhinnock and its garden: Mr Alex Emslie. Alex Emslie came to Barwhinnock as a gardener in 1937 and lived in the lodge at the entrance gate with his family until 1978 – over 40 years. Michael Oakshott, the new owner, bought the estate to breed racehorses and required the lodge for a stableman. Mr Emslie moved into a house in Twynholm but continued to work in the garden at Barwhinnock ... though he was dismayed at having half the walled garden temporarily being turned over to hens! This has since been restored to being an orchard.



This is a view of the vegetable part of the garden being prepared for spring planting. It is looking toward the south wall which has been heightened with brick to almost double the original wall size. The original glass houses were on the other, outer, side of this which was a south facing suntrap for fruit we would associate with a more Mediterranean climate. Alex's daughter Helen Emslie can recall nectarines and peaches thriving here in her childhood in the mid 1950s but by 1980s the glass house had become derelict.

Interestingly there is no evidence of heating pipes in the walls.

And here is the garden 'in full bearing' in June 2023.



Previously mentioned has been the planting of trees by James Mc Millan in the early 1800s and it is possible some of the beech and lime trees still standing on the estate date from that time. It was the norm at this time to plant various interesting non indigenous hardwoods for enhancement of property, as opposed to e.g. windbreak for cattle, some of which can still be found throughout the parish dating from then.



Note the Kirk Burn running round the entire west curve of the garden wall providing a constant water supply for a thirsty garden. It is probable that the burn was stone lined on the stretch between the steading and the lodge in the very early days of the development of the estate.

As mentioned previously, a natural water supply was essential in deciding the situation of an estate house. Even in the mid 1900s many local farms still had the farm dam which in the past would have provided power for the threshing mill and water for the milking cows and byre cleaning. Today few farm dams are to be seen. Earlier maps show the Barwhinnock dam and the threshing mill which in the pre-electricity time would have been powered by a water wheel. A mill lade would have been built to carry a head of water from the dam to the farmyard and by the early 1900s the water wheel would have been replaced by a hydro-electric turbine which powered the sawmill and electricity for the mansion house. The remains of this are still evident.

There was a wash house where in the early days everything was hand washed and hung to dry on the drying green. Water was needed for horses and house cows. And of course was needed for personal washing in the big hoose, dish washing, floor washing , and so on.

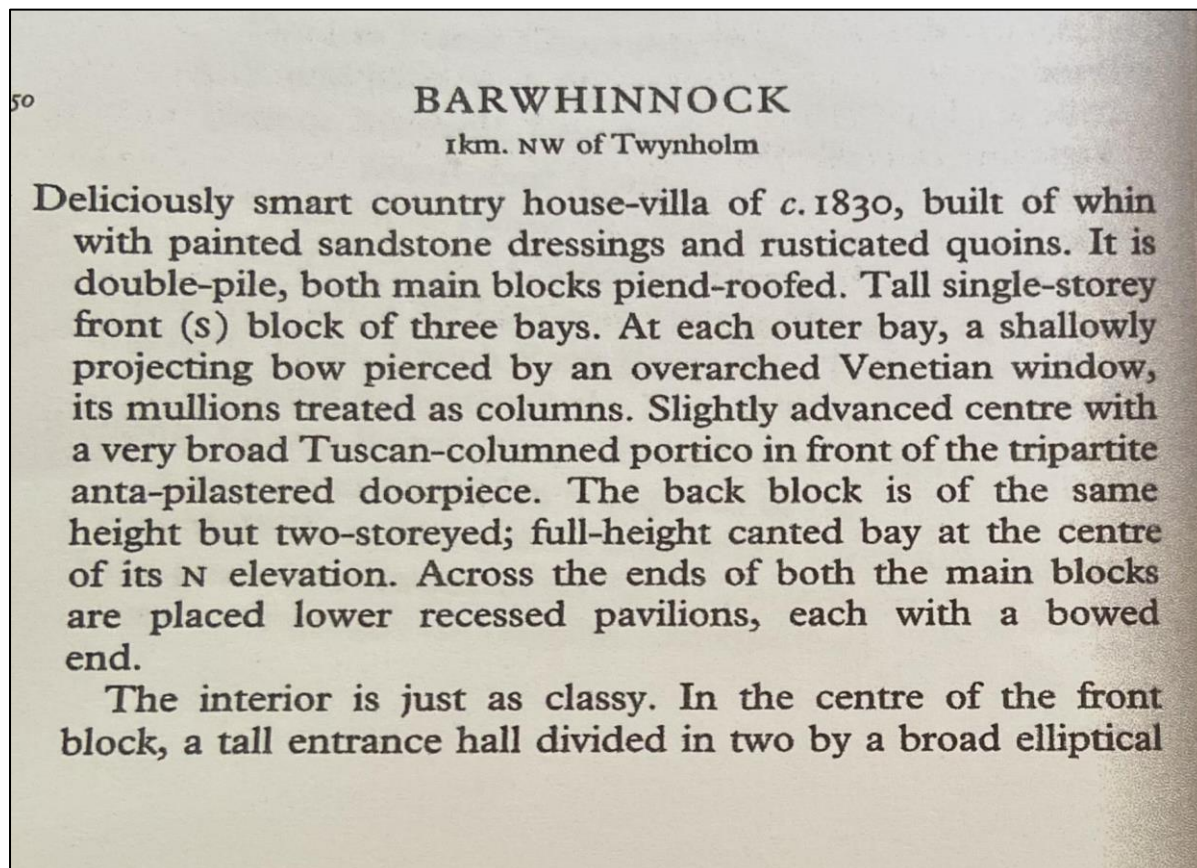
Happily the Barwhinnock dam is still there though with a slightly different remit: it has been stocked with fish.



Whilst different owners necessarily have had their own varying interests and focus, Barwhinnock seems always to have benefitted from having proprietors who consistently cared for it.

It is remarkable in the history of this house and garden is that while so many other estate houses fell into disrepair Barwhinnock has had a succession of owners who have committed themselves not only to the maintenance of the house but also to the garden and estate. How many estate houses have survived in such a good state of repair and modernisation as Barwhinnock? And the Barwhinnock walled garden must rate as one of only a few that have been in continuous use till today.

Here is the full report of John Gifford 's report on Barwhinnock in *The Buildings of Scotland*:



arch. Starting just s of this arch, the flights of the horseshoe-shaped stair, its cast-iron balustrades decorated with acanthus leaf and eagles' head motifs and with plaques bearing a relief of a boy feeding an eagle (cf. Brooklands). Behind the stair, a bowed wall up to the height of the narrow landing. At the back of the landing, a screen of slender Greek Doric columns *in antis* opens into the corridor which runs the length of the back block's first floor. Over the stair a shallow round cupola.

w of the entrance hall, the dining room, its s end bowed. Cornice with anthemion decoration on the flat; rinceau frieze. Black marble chimneypiece, the ends of its broad panelled pilasters carved with stylized foliage. The drawing room, e of the hall, has both ends bowed. Tuscan-columned chimneypiece of white and veined grey marble, perhaps a touch severe for the room's function. At the back of the entrance hall, an arched doorway into the ground-floor corridor of the back block. On the corridor's n side, three pointed arches into the library; the centre opening is glazed but is likely to have been a door; the one on the r. is now a door but was probably originally a window, like the one on the l., which serves as a fanlight over a bookcase inside the room. The library has a white marble chimneypiece, severe except for foliated consoles. The n end is a canted bay.

sw of the house, an oval GARDEN, also early c19, its walling of rubble except at the s end, where it is scooped up into a brick topknot. External brick facing at this end, where a glass-house has stood outside the garden. – Also early c19 the LODGE to the s. Piend-roofed, the broad eaves supported on flat mutules. e porch with a deeply recessed door. Decorative neo-Tudor patterned glazing.

Acknowledgements to various people who have assisted in a variety of ways in the creation of this article:

Claire at Rathmell Archaeology who provided access to the BNA British Newspaper Archive from which much of this article was gleaned.

National Library of Scotland: various maps.

The Coulthard family for providing archive material and being happy about visits to the estate.

Helen Emslie for almost 80 years' worth of facts, photos and memories.

Serena Haszard who, with her husband, had had an obvious interest in the history of the estate and was willing to share it with me, a complete stranger.

Kirsty Thom for the Petticoat stairs suggestion.

David Devereux for further information and clarification.

And, finally, my family who have given constructive feedback, proofreading, formatting and incredibly patient help in sorting out all my hopelessly nonexistent computing skills.

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