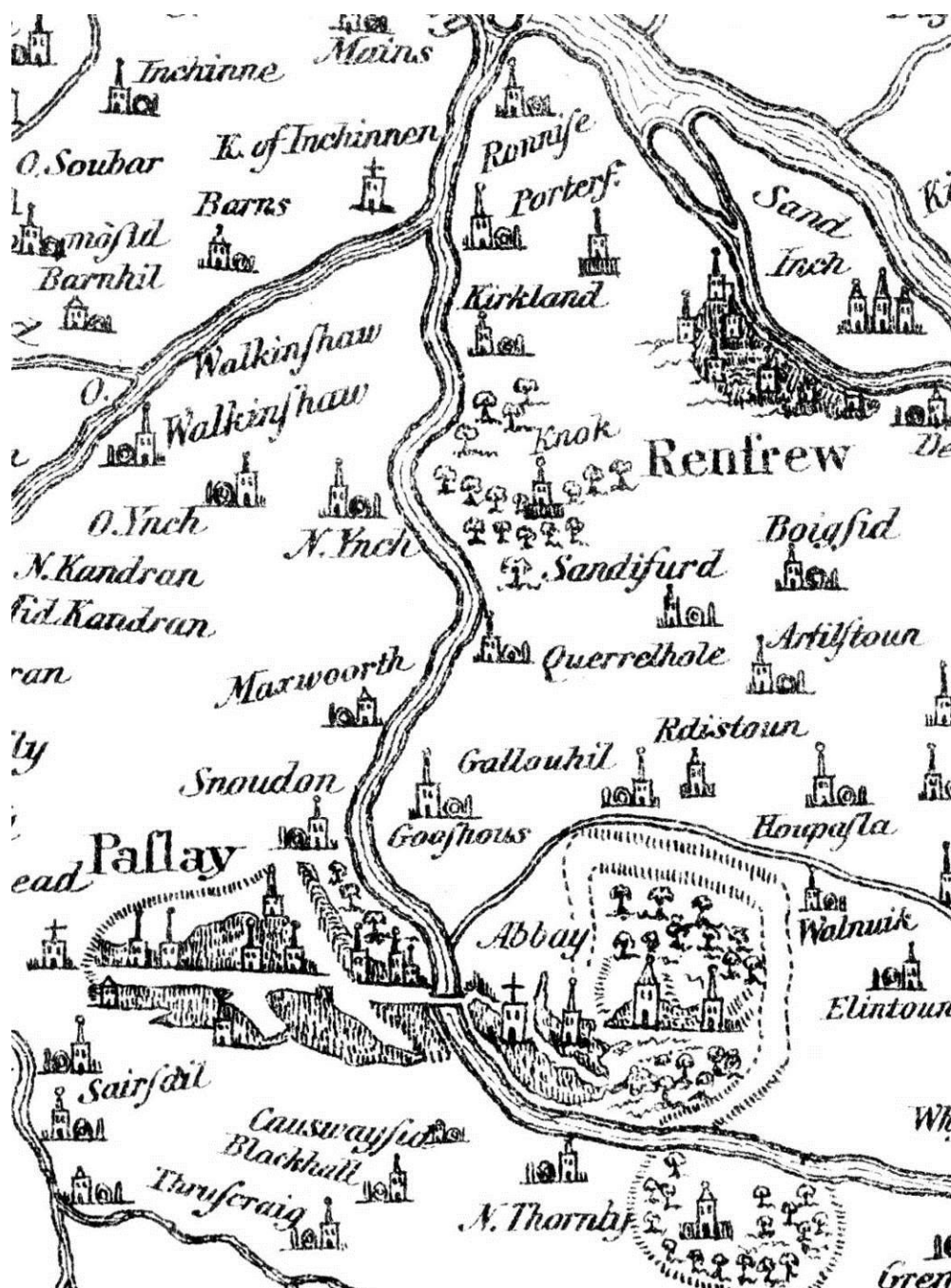


Renfrewshire Local History Forum



Journal
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As usual this Volume of the Journal contains a variety of contributions. Once again, it has proved very difficult to encourage conference speakers to contribute papers based on their presentations.

The first two articles are from the Conference at Paisley Abbey in 2013. To date, no papers have been received from the more recent Forum conference at Renfrew in 2014.

RENFREWSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY FORUM

covers the old County or Shire of Renfrew which is now split into the three main areas of Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, and East Renfrewshire, but also included parts of Glasgow and surrounding areas.

The Forum publishes research papers by members and articles connected with all aspects of the history and archaeology of the traditional county. We are always pleased to receive contributions. Contact: the Editor, Stuart Nisbet.

Views expressed in the Journal are those of the respective authors and not the Forum Committee.

Wider articles may be published at the discretion of the publications committee. Longer articles may be suitable for occasional publications by the Forum. We will be glad to supply full details of guidelines for contributors, which can also be found on our website:

www.rlhf.info

Cover Picture: A detail from an antiquarian reproduction of Blaeu's map of Renfrewshire (based on Pont's survey from the 1590s).

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**The Renfrewshire Local History Forum
Journal**

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1. Paisley: The Abbey and its Estate in the Middle Ages

Richard Oram

Although the parchment records of Paisley Abbey are amongst the most extensive of any to survive from Scotland's great medieval monastic communities, there has been remarkably little modern published research into the landed estate whose development they chart. After the great outpouring of antiquarian studies that were a product of the prosperity of Paisley in the later nineteenth century and the intense civic pride – and rivalry with Glasgow – which that engendered, interest in the abbey and its role in the historical development of west central Scotland faded. Instead, the abbey's records were mined as a source of information concerning the growth of the secular lordships of the Stewart lords of Renfrew, the knightly families whom the Stewarts planted as sub-tenants on their estates, and the wider process of colonisation in Scotland in which these families played a leading part.¹ The value of Paisley Abbey's records was always recognised but less for what it told us of the monks and their community and more for what it told us of their patrons and the wider secular society of later twelfth- and thirteenth-century Scotland. The aim of this essay is to reverse that focus and return attention to the abbey which was the target of the patronage – and sometimes hostility – of the lay lords of what became the shires of Renfrew and Dumbarton.

I cannot in this essay explore the growth of the totality of the Paisley estate or all aspects of the resources that it contained; that is an altogether too ambitious proposition for this exercise. Rather than provide a superficial outline of the entire portfolio of property interests, jurisdictions and legal or fiscal privileges, only the heart of the estate in what became Renfrewshire will be discussed here, although some reference will be made to the monks' interest in the Lennox lands – especially in respect of their fishing rights – and to their early properties in East Lothian and Roxburghshire. The main land-holding omissions are the significant properties and jurisdiction which the abbey acquired in Kyle-Stewart in the thirteenth century and the churches and revenues which it gained in the Clyde islands, Argyll and the Isles. Even with the Renfrewshire focus, some subjects will not be discussed in any depth (woodland and timber resources, for example), or altogether omitted (such as building-stone sources and fuel supplies). The chief missing guest at the feast, however, is the burgh of Paisley itself, the community that the abbey developed largely to enable it to capitalise on the economic potential of the surrounding region, as a market for the surplus produce of the district as a craft centre in which the surpluses and by-products of the lands of the abbey and its tenants could be converted into marketable goods. The abbey's jurisdictional rights, of which the burgh was part, but more especially the free barony and regality powers that it acquired in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and which gave the abbot the right to hold law-courts and hear cases including business normally retained for the king's courts involving any of the inhabitants of the abbey's lands, are subjects for

¹ This approach is exemplified in the work of the late Professor Geoffrey Barrow, best displayed in G.W.S. Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman Era in Scottish History* (Oxford, 1980), where families like the Stewarts, Crocs, Pollocks and St Martins are discussed, often through the charter evidence from the records of Paisley.

wider exploration elsewhere.² A full study of the monastery and its estate must await a far larger project.



Figure 1: Paisley and the Abbey (16th century view)

The Founding Endowment

Paisley Abbey's beginnings as a landowner were small but the prior of the mother-house at Much Wenlock in Shropshire from which the founding colony was sent north in 1163 had clearly been satisfied by its would-be patron, Walter I son of Alan, that they were adequate to support a functioning monastery.³ To sustain the community, which first was settled on the 'island beside Renfrew'⁴ before moving in 1169 to its permanent home at Paisley, Walter endowed them with one full burgage plot in his burgh of Renfrew, one salmon-net anywhere on the waters within his personal estate, six herring nets, and one boat,⁵ in addition to their island home. In contrast to the generous endowments provided by King David I for the abbeys which he founded,⁶ or even the smaller communities established by noblemen rather than royal patrons,⁷ Walter's arrangement seems paltry. In part, the smallness of the endowment is a reflection of his still comparatively minor status; his rise, and that of his Stewart descendants, accelerated from the 1170s. It was also in part a reflection of the relative

² See R.D. Oram, 'Monastic Gatehouses and Regality Jurisdictions: the Gatehouse as Representation of Secular Authority in Scottish Monasteries', in L. Dean and K. Buchanan (eds), *Representations of Authority* (London, 2014).

³ For Walter I and his Shropshire connections, see G.W.S. Barrow, 'The earliest Stewart fief', *The Stewarts*, x, pt. 2 (1956), 162-78; Barrow, *Anglo-Norman Era*, 13-14.

⁴ *Regesta Regum Scottorum*, i, *The Acts of Malcolm IV*, ed. G.W.S. Barrow (Edinburgh, 1960), no 254.

⁵ *Registrum Monasterii de Passelet* (Maitland Club, 1832), 2 [hereafter *Paisley Registrum*].

⁶ See, for example, the properties assembled by David I for his foundations at Holyrood, Kelso or Melrose: *Liber Cartarum Sancte Crucis* (Bannatyne Club, 1840); *Liber Sancte Marie de Calchou* (Bannatyne Club, 1846); *Liber Sancte Marie de Melros* (Bannatyne Club, 1836). For discussion of the Melrose endowment, see R. Fawcett and R. Oram, *Melrose Abbey* (Stroud, 2004), 20-23 and chapter 3.

⁷ See, for example, Hugh de Morville's arrangements for Dryburgh Abbey, discussed in R. Fawcett and R. Oram, *Dryburgh Abbey* (Stroud, 2005).

underdevelopment of the territory that became the centre of Stewart power before the end of the twelfth century. Perhaps more important, however, was what the Cluniacs demanded of Walter for the sustenance of their colony. Unlike the especially austere and secluded Cistercians whose early rule prohibited them from accepting sources of income that came from the labour of others – rents and renders, mills and milling-dues, churches and tithes – and instead required grants of extensive landed properties, the Cluniacs would take any gifts offered to them. For the first colony at Renfrew, therefore, a small landed base with some cultivation potential, coupled with extensive fishing interests and a potential source of cash income in the form of rents from what was still very much the fledgling urban settlement adjacent to Walter's castle at Renfrew, enabled them to deliver what Walter wanted; a future mausoleum to symbolise the link between his family and the lordship of Renfrew, staffed by a community of monks who would say masses and prayers in perpetuity for the spiritual salvation of himself, his wife, and his heirs.

Expansion

Growth from this small beginning was rapid as Walter I, his son Alan, and their principal vassals added to the founding endowment, giving landed property, mills, patronage of parish churches, fisheries and various financial and material rights and privileges. A charter of confirmation issued by Walter I c.1170 to bring all of these gifts under a single legal deed reveals how rapid the growth had been. It records a truly remarkable spread of interests scattered from the northern Cheviots and the East Lothian coast in the east to the shores of the outer Firth of Clyde in the west.⁸ Before the end of the century the influence of the monks had extended even further, reaching into Argyll and the Isles to the west, and north of the Clyde into Cowal and the Lennox.

Paisley's early charters show that, contrary to the popular image of monasteries endowed with great acreages of arable and pasture land, its endowment contained only a few blocks of real property on any significant scale. Much of the land it did possess lay remote from the abbey and was probably leased out rather than exploited for produce upon which the community sustained itself directly. Indeed, the portfolio of resources assembled for the monks in the 1160s and 1170s comprised more of allocations of cash or produce renders from Walter's personal income rather than substantial acreages of real property worked directly by the monks or their tenants. Certainly, a number of substitutions made by his son, Alan, indicate that portions of the receipts from the Stewart lands rather than portions of real property probably constituted the largest single source of cash income for the monks in the early decades of the monastery's existence. In the late 1160s, for example, Walter I endowed them with the tenth penny of all his rents from all of his lands except Kyle,⁹ a generous donation that grew in value as the Stewart estate became progressively more developed economically and yielded more revenue to its lord. By the early 1200s, Alan perhaps regretted his father's munificence and exchanged the monks' rights to this tenth of his receipts for a fixed annual rent of five merks of silver that the monks of Melrose paid to him for land at Mauchline in Kyle.¹⁰ Similar substitutions or exchanges were made in respect of

⁸ Paisley Registrum, 5-6, 7.

⁹ Paisley Registrum, 7.

¹⁰ Fawcett and Oram, Melrose Abbey, 230-231; Paisley Registrum, 14.

income from Alan's demesne mills (see below) but also involved areas of land that had formed part of the original endowment of the abbey. Such deals may have been sought as much by the monks as by their patron, permitting them to rationalise their landholding and to provide them with secure annual cash payments rather than fluctuating sums that depended upon the variable annual yield from the Stewart estates.

Arable Development

There is a deeply-entrenched traditional view – much of it the product of the monastic orders' own image-building - of monastic landed estates being cleared, developed and worked by the monks' own physical labour.¹¹ In respect of the consolidated land-holdings assembled by some Cistercian abbeys, there is a degree of reality in that vision, at least for the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,¹² for one special feature of that order was a class of quasi-monk – referred to as lay-brothers – who were men who lived a monastic existence but were not deemed capable of attaining the spiritual elevation of full monkhood. Instead, they supported the full 'choir' monks through their physical labour and it was through their efforts that the core arable properties around the monasteries were cultivated. Lay-brethren were not unknown in other orders, such as the Premonstratensian canons, and Cistercian approaches to land-development and management were also employed by communities of those other orders, most notably the Augustinians, but neither were a feature of the Cluniacs. Where Paisley acquired land it was as landlord and manager, not as a hands-on pioneer and developer. The abbot and his brethren might direct the process of clearance and development, and on property that was intended to form part of the demesne (that part of an estate that was retained in a lord's direct management to support him and his immediate household on its produce, in later Scots the 'mains' farms) ensure its cultivation to supply the primary food-produce needs of the monastery, but the labour in those operations was

¹¹ The 'myth' of monastic land-clearance and cultivation was first challenged by the French historian Robert Fossier in the 1980s and is discussed in depth by Constance Berman and Piotr Gorecki: R. Fossier, *L'économie cistercienne dans les plaines du nord-ouest de l'Europe*, *Flaran* 3 (1983); C. Berman, 'Medieval Agriculture, the Southern French Countryside, and the Early Cistercians. A Study of Forty-three Monasteries', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 76, pt.5 (1986); P. Górecki, *A Local Society in Transition: The Henryków Book and Related Documents* (Toronto, 2007). See also R.D. Oram, 'Prayer, property and profit: Scottish monasteries c.1100-c.1300', in S. Foster, A.I. MacInnes and R. MacInnes (eds), *Scottish Power Centres from the Early Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century* (Glasgow, 1998), 79-99; R.D. Oram, 'Breaking New Ground: the Monastic Orders and Economic Development along the Northern European Periphery c.1070 to c.1300' in *Religion and Religious Institutions in the European Economy, 1000-1800*, *Atti della Quarantatreesima Settimana di Studi*, 8-12 maggio 2011, a cura di Francesco Ammannati (Florence, 2012), 331-344.

¹² See discussion of the development of the Melrose estate, for example, in J. Gilbert, 'The monastic record of a Border landscape 1136 to 1236', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, cix (1983), 4-15; Fawcett and Oram, *Melrose Abbey*, 209-242. For the late and small Cistercian abbey at Balmerino in Fife, see R.D. Oram, 'A Fit and Ample Endowment? The Balmerino Estate, 1228-1603', in *Life on the Edge: The Cistercian Abbey of Balmerino, Fife (Scotland)*, *Cîteaux Commentarii cistercienses*, 2008, t. 59, fasc 1-2, 61-80.

provided by peasant tenants. Paisley Abbey presided over the reconfiguration of the landscape of its hinterland but the real driver behind that process was peasant land-hunger as Scotland's population expanded rapidly.

We can see the attitude of the Cluniacs towards acquisition of real property in Paisley's early portfolio. An early gain was of a carucate of land – a measure of arable acreage equivalent to what could be ploughed by a single plough-team (roughly 120 acres) - at Hassendean near Hawick in the central Borders.¹³ Further land nearby came possibly from the inheritance of Walter I's wife, Eschina,¹⁴ in the Beaumont valley in the northern Cheviots. Walter and Eschina granted Paisley another carucate of land there at Mow, with pasture for 500 sheep in the Cheviots adjacent to the farmland.¹⁵ A third sizeable block came in association with the church of Innerwick in East Lothian, where Walter gave them the mill of that town and a carucate of land.¹⁶ By the time of Walter II, this last property constituted a remote outlier in Paisley's estate and the monks exchanged it for a more viable possession at Hillington.¹⁷ All of these pieces of land were granted to Paisley as already developed arable properties, cleared and worked through the efforts of their peasant occupiers and their lay lords. The monks would draw rent from these properties, encourage their expansion and intensification of exploitation to increase their rental value, but they did not clear or cultivate the land through their own efforts or to meet their own domestic needs.

Closer to Paisley, the monks received similar grants in the early 1170s, principally one carucate that had previously been held by one of the Stewarts' tenants, the land known as 'the Drip' (now Dripps near East Kilbride),¹⁸ two carucates on the east side of the Cart next to the abbey, a block on the west of the river described as 'at the edge of the woods', a portion of ground described as 'below the monks' dormitory', and land previously occupied by another Stewart tenant, including a plot described as 'upon the rock where my hall had been built'. The measurement of most of this land in terms of carucates indicates that it was already mostly under cultivation at the time it was given to the monks. Indeed, rights to agricultural produce held by the church of Glasgow in Strathgryfe in the 1120s indicate that settlement of that district was widespread before the end of the eleventh century and it is likely that the rising ground at the southern and western edge of the carseland where the two Carts and the Gryfe joined the Clyde was anciently-settled, cultivated land. The monks also acquired several pieces of land on the agriculturally marginal carseland north and east of Paisley, territory where drier 'inches' rising from the estuarine mosses might have been isolated islands of arable in an otherwise uncultivated wetland environment. Their early holding here comprised

¹³ Paisley Registrum, 5. This carucate was exchanged for another in the manerium of Hassendean shortly after Walter I's death in 1177, when Hassendean was resumed by the crown as a royal property: *Regesta Regum Scottorum*, ii, *The Acts of William I*, ed. G.W.S. Barrow (Edinburgh, 1971), no 219 and Paisley Registrum, 254-5.

¹⁴ See G.W.S. Barrow, *The Kingdom of the Scots*, 2nd edition (Edinburgh, 2003), 325-6.

¹⁵ Paisley Registrum, 76; The grant was confirmed by King William between 1173 and 1177: *RRS*, ii, no 184. Eschina issued a further confirmation of this in her own right, probably after Walter's death in 1177.

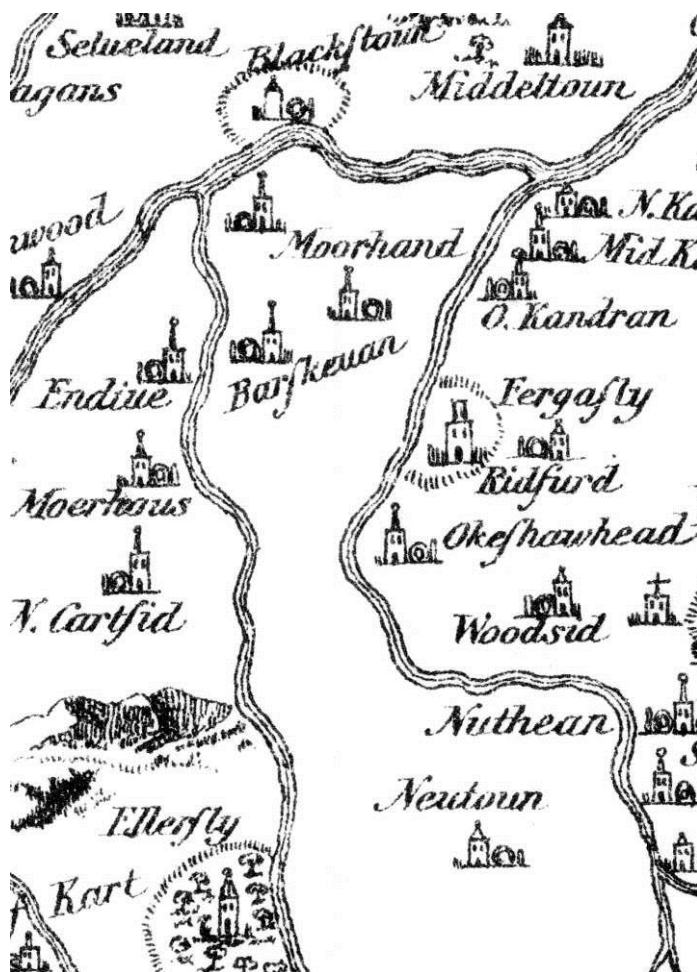
¹⁶ Paisley Registrum, 7.

¹⁷ Paisley Registrum, 20.

¹⁸ Barrow, *Kingdom of the Scots*, 317-8.

principally of the island beside Renfrew but included one carucate of land between the Black Cart and the Gryfe at the confluence of the two rivers.¹⁹ This last acquisition was consolidated in the time of Alan son of Walter I, possibly to resolve a conflict over possession between the abbey and an important family of Stewart vassals, the St Martins, who also had been given possession of the land by Walter I. By Alan's council and will, and with the consent of the St Martin heir Gilbert, Henry of St Martin gave the whole area later known as Fulton (most of which now lies under Linwood) into the undisputed possession of the monks.²⁰

Figure 2: Land between the Old Patrick and Candren Burn West of Paisley (16th century view)



Expansion of this area of potential arable exploitation came early in the 1200s when Walter II gave the monks the whole district between the Old Patrick Burn and the Espedair Burn to the south and west of Paisley.²¹ Much of this area had apparently been included within the Stewarts' forest and waste until this point and was not intensively developed, but the wording of his grant suggests that there had been mounting pressure from the monks or their tenants to allow the intensive and non-time-limited exploitation of this land to which they had previously only heavily regulated access (see below). Walter gave the monks the rights to make assarts – that is to clear the land for agricultural uses – to plough, and to fix permanent

settlements and make hedges and enclosures anywhere they wished within the bounds of the area. In that process, Paisley Abbey's property-managers – its chamberlain, stewards and bailies – and senior office-holding monks, like the granitar, terrar and cellarer who were responsible for the management of the demesne properties and the receipt of produce for the supply of the monastic

¹⁹ Paisley Registrum, 5-6.

²⁰ Paisley Registrum, 15.

²¹ Paisley Registrum, 17-8. Royal confirmation of this grant was received c.1213: RRS, ii, no 518.

household, oversaw the direction of the abbey's lay tenants in these colonising and clearance ventures; the drivers for expansion, however, were population-growth, land-hunger, and market demand locally and internationally for the produce the land could deliver.

The flow of property towards Paisley, however, was not necessarily permanent or uncontentious, nor was proximity to the centre of their chief patrons' lordship. Like all estate-owners, ecclesiastical and lay, the Stewarts changed their approach to the economic exploitation of their properties and developed it to reflect current social, political and economic pressures. Such pressures could result in collisions of widely divergent views between the abbey and its neighbours, but these were not necessarily meetings of irresistible force with an immovable object. Continuing closeness to the Stewarts meant that potential clashes over rival interests in portions of land could be easily resolved because of the simple fact of the monastery's juxtaposition with one of its principal patron's favoured residences. In the 1240s, for example, Alexander son of Walter II was seeking to enlarge the park associated with Blackhall and to incorporate within it an area on the west side of the Espedair Burn that his ancestors had given to the monks. The solution was an exchange, with the monks yielding the land at Paisley in return for an equivalent acreage next to the church of Inverkip, which was another of the abbey's possessions.²² In this arrangement, however, we see a portion of land that had been developed as agricultural property for some three generations being taken out of regular cultivation and reassigned as part of the Stewarts' deer-management activities. That change need not mark an end to all agricultural activities, for we know from elsewhere at this time that the land enclosed within parks might still be used for cultivation, pasture and hay-production, but it would have marked a shift to a new mode of management and a different regime of exploitation and regulation.²³

Mills and Multures

A key indicator of the scale and extent of arable development in the region is the evolving interest of the abbey in milling operations on its properties and in securing income from mills throughout the Stewart lordship.²⁴ Mills constituted one of the most lucrative resources in the monks' possession, a feature that distinguished most orders of monks and canons from the Cistercians, whose original strict rules prohibited from accepting sources of income that were derived from the labour of others.²⁵ Their principal value lay not in the fact that the monks could mill their own grain in them but in the obligation placed upon all

²² Paisley Registrum, 113.

²³ For discussion of parks and their management, see J. Gilbert, *Hunting and Hunting Reserves in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1979). The most detailed analysis of the changing nature of exploitation within a park is that of the English royal park at Clarendon in Wiltshire: T. Beaumont James and C. Gerrard, *Clarendon: Landscape of Kings* (Macclesfield, 2007).

²⁴ The place of mills in discussion of the expansion of arable in high medieval Scotland is explored in R.D. Oram, *Domination and Lordship: Scotland 1070-1230* (Edinburgh, 2011), 252-7.

²⁵ But it was a rule that was broken early, Melrose for example receiving the right to build a mill a water of Ayr from Walter I son of Alan in 1165; Fawcett and Oram, *Melrose Abbey*, 230.

tenants of the lordship in which the mill lay to have their grain milled in it – known as thirlage - and the payments – called multure – levied as a proportion of the grain. In most cases, the mill would have been leased at ferme, so the monks would have received a cash payment from their tenant miller rather than a bulk load of grain which they would then have had to store and sell on, but close to the monastery it is probable that the multures were taken in kind and used to boost the grain supplies of the monastic household.

One of the first mills acquired by Paisley was at Innerwick in East Lothian, which was in its possession by the early 1170s.²⁶ Lying over 110km east of Paisley on the opposite side of the country, it is unlikely that the monks exploited Innerwick mill directly and more probably fermed it out immediately for a money-rent. Renfrew mill, however, was also in the abbey's hands by that date²⁷ and it is likely that at least some of the grain multures from it were carted the short distance to Paisley. Walter I son of Alan, however, retained the mill of Paisley itself in his own hands, perhaps indicating that Blackhall had supplanted Renfrew as his principal residential and administrative centre. He did make various concessions to the monks from Paisley mill, granting four shillings annually from its revenues to pay for the provision of lighting for the monastic church, freeing them from the obligation to pay multure to mill their own grain there, and giving them the right to have their grain ground next after whatever happened to be in the hopper when their grain was brought in, unless Walter's own grain was being milled.²⁸ These already generous terms were augmented by a grant of a teind of multures from all of Walter's mills, which put a portion of the arable yield from the whole of the Stewart lordship into the monks' hands.

This last gift became a source of contention in the time of Walter I's son, Alan. Friction possibly arose over difficulties in securing payment or, as with Walter I's grant of the teind of his rents from all of his properties, simply because the scale of the payment had grown enormously as the Stewarts' lands had become more intensively exploited for agriculture. The issue was resolved by Alan's grant to them of the mill of Paisley at feuferme, with the rent set at an annual payment of four chalders of oatmeal and four and a half chalders of malted oats, to be paid at the feast of St Peter ad Vincula. The charter recording the arrangement notes that this was a final composition and that by it Alan and his heirs were free and quit of any payments from their other mills.²⁹

Although the abbey changed its approaches to land-holding in the later Middle Ages, shifting from direct management to the feuing out of property to its lay tenants, mills remained amongst the elements of the portfolio that were retained in closer control. Mills not only symbolised Paisley Abbey's lordship and jurisdictional powers, they also represented a dependable source of steady income in an age of socio-economic upheaval. They were, however, fragile resources, vulnerable to natural threats, as illustrated by the November 1447 chronicle reference to widespread destruction of mills within the Clyde catchment in a spate following early winter rains.³⁰ But maintenance, repair and rebuilding of mills was another burden on the monks' tenants and the replacement of damaged structures came cost-free to the abbey. For these

²⁶ Paisley Registrum, 5.

²⁷ Paisley Registrum, 6.

²⁸ Paisley Registrum, 6.

²⁹ Paisley Registrum, 13.

³⁰ Auchinleck Chronicle.

reasons, the monks and their post-Reformation Hamilton successors retained possession of the abbey's mill portfolio.

Upland Resources and Pasture Land

Where Paisley's monks might have taken a more direct interest in their estate was in respect of the grazing-land and livestock portfolios that they acquired and expanded in the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Traditionally in Scotland, discussion of monastic estates has again concentrated on the sheep- and cattle-management interests of the Cistercians, exemplified by the great livestock granges possessed by Melrose throughout the Southern Uplands,³¹ a focus in large part due to knowledge of Cistercian operations in this sector elsewhere in the British Isles and the generally better-survival of Cistercian monastic records of their livestock business. Until recently, less attention has been paid to the active interest of communities from other monastic orders in developing extensive livestock operations, but a growing body of research is transforming that picture.³² Paisley developed an early interest in upland zones where grazing resources were the basis of the local economy. One of the earliest and most significant of these zones was the grazing for 500 sheep that Walter I and his wife Eschina gave them at Mow in the northern Cheviots,³³ but it was dwarfed in significance by the upland possessions they acquired in the west.

Of great importance amongst the rights that Walter I bestowed on the monks were those that related to what he termed as his 'wastes' and his forest land. Neither of these terms carried quite the same meanings as they have in modern usage, 'waste' being applied to land that was not yet in some manner of intensive exploitation but which might be used seasonally and in a quite informal way, while 'forest' referred to land governed by specific laws relating to the management and hunting of deer and not necessarily to areas of extensive tree-cover. What Walter gave them was the teind of all income from his waste and from all land already designated as forest by c.1170 and which might in future be so designated. Perhaps of even greater importance was the access which he gave the monks to pasturage for their livestock in all of that land, alongside his own flocks and herds and those of his tenants. Possibly indicating that conflict had already arisen over competition for the available grazing, or to pre-empt such conflict, Walter stipulated that if he should wish to use the forest pasture for his own cattle he would have a sufficient area reserved for the monks' animals. Included in this guarantee of forest access for the monks was the right to graze their pigs there, a concession that points to the presence of significant oakwood, as the pigs were brought into such areas in the autumn to be fattened on acorns before they were slaughtered.³⁴ Walter, however, was clearly also using his forest land for its primary purpose as deer-hunting territory, granting to the monks a teind of all of his venison including the valuable

³¹ Gilbert, 'The monastic record of a Border landscape'; Fawcett and Oram, *Melrose Abbey*, 213-240.

³² Even relatively poorly-endowed non-Cistercian communities actively sought to expand their pasture resources. See, for example, Fawcett and Oram, *Dryburgh Abbey*, 150-156.

³³ Paisley Registrum, 76.

³⁴ Paisley Registrum, 6.

deerskins, reserving only the skins of deer killed in the close season (*in fermison*).³⁵

It was a substantial area of grazing-land that Alan son of Walter I gave to Paisley on the edge of the Renfrewshire moors in the upper part of the valley of the Locher Water around Moniabrock and extending west over Craig Minnan into the valley of the River Calder above Lochwinnoch.³⁶ While his father had given the monks seasonal and quite prescribed access to grazing within his forest areas, the land at Moniabrock had been carefully perambulated by some of Alan's senior tenants, the boundaries marked, and unburdened, exclusive access to the district granted to the monks and their men there. A major expansion of grazing opportunities came from Alan's son, Walter II, who before 1213 had disafforested a large block of land between the Maich Water and the River Calder west of the Moniabrock grazings.³⁷ This grant came as part of an exchange arrangement whereby the monks gave up one of their original properties, the island next to Renfrew, along with their rights in the afforested lands associated with Renfrew.³⁸

A significant part of these upland areas may have been retained at first in demesne by the monks as grazing for their own flocks and herds. Paisley, however, does not appear to have become a significant stakeholder in the Scottish wool- or leather-trade in the manner of Coupar Angus, Dundrennan, Kinloss or Melrose abbeys. This suggests that, like its arable possessions, these upland properties were mainly managed for rent income from lay tenants. Again, Paisley would have been keen to encourage expansion to maximise its returns from the property, but it is likely that they also maintained a close eye on stocking levels to avoid the danger of over-grazing by tenants who were equally keen to capitalise on the market demand for wool and hides.³⁹ Thus, while the abbey may have stepped back from direct exploitation of its extensive hill-pasture, it retained, as landlord, a close eye on the management of those properties.

Parish Churches and Teinds

Amongst the most important sources of income for the monks were the revenues of parish churches that had been appropriated to the abbey. Initially, like many other monasteries and religious corporations throughout western Christendom, the monks had received the rights of patronage in the parish churches which had been previously exercised by the usually lay lords who had founded and endowed the churches from their own resources. Patronage essentially gave the monks the right to appoint the parish priest but, while this might have been a useful way of strengthening local influence and political networks by favouring candidates associated with important local families, it

³⁵ For discussion of the 'ghost-name' Fereneze that emerged through misunderstanding of this technical term, see G W S Barrow, *The Kingdom of the Scots*, 2nd edition (Edinburgh, 2003), 315-6.

³⁶ Paisley Registum, 13. This act was confirmed by King William c.1195: RRS, ii, no 378.

³⁷ Paisley Registum, 17-18, confirmed by King William in RRS, ii, no 518.

³⁸ Paisley Registum, 19-20.

³⁹ Over-stocking and the resulting conflict with other users of common pasture resources appears to have been a major issue on the Melrose estate. See Oram, *Domination and Lordship*, 262-3.

brought little in the way of regular material benefit to them as patrons. The often substantial wealth associated with parish churches by the later twelfth century led to monasteries seeking to control directly some or all of that wealth. In the context of Paisley, it must be remembered that as the agricultural and pastoral exploitation of the region expanded, so too did the 'take' from those operations in the form of teind. Accordingly, the bishops in whose dioceses the churches were located were persuaded to annex their revenues to the patron institution. This move was formalised by a legal enactment assigning the resources of the church to the uses of the monks – signified by the phrase *in proprios usus* in the Latin text. At first it was the income that was regarded as attached directly to the parsonage, chiefly the garbal teinds (mainly the grain renders), which were annexed to the monastery, the remainder of the parochial income being assigned to a vicar who would serve the cure of souls locally in lieu of the rector or parson. These so-called perpetual vicarages, however, still accrued significant income from the lesser teinds and dues owed to the vicar for performing aspects of his priestly function. Already before the end of the thirteenth century and increasingly in the fourteenth century, monastic appropriators were seeking to have all or part of the vicarage revenues annexed in addition to the parsonage. Where only part of the revenues were annexed, the priest became known as vicar portioner but where the full range of parish income was diverted to the appropriator the bishops strove to ensure that an adequate stipend or pension was diverted back to the parish church to support a suitable priest financially and to enable that priest to fulfil the spiritual obligations of the cure of souls.



Figure 3: The Clyde at Inchinnan (16th century view)

The flow of churches into the hands of the monks began in the late 1160s when Walter I bestowed on them the church of the Stewart family's first holding in Scotland at Innerwick in East Lothian, and that of Legerwood in Berwickshire.⁴⁰ To these, he added the church of Cathcart and all the [un-named] churches of Strathgryfe with the exception of the church of Inchinnan, plus the two churches

⁴⁰ Paisley Registrum, 5, 7; Cowan, Parishes, 87, 129.

of Prestwick, later distinguished as Prestwick and Monkton.⁴¹ One of the Strathgryfe churches was apparently Kilbarchan, which was confirmed along with Cathcart and two other churches to the monks *in proprios usus* by Bishop Jocelin of Glasgow in c.1180.⁴² The Stewarts' vassals soon followed their lord's lead in making over the churches of their estates to the abbey. Around 1180 Peter son of Fulbert, lord of Pollock, granted the monks the church of Pollock.⁴³ At about the same date his brother, Helias of Partick, a clerk and subsequently a canon of the church of Glasgow, gave them his church of Mearns,⁴⁴ with Peter, as secular lord of both territories, confirming the grant of the churches to the abbey soon afterwards.⁴⁵ His confirmation was followed by separate acts of Bishop Jocelin of Glasgow which united the churches *in proprios usus* to the abbey.⁴⁶ The church of Neilston was added by William of Hertford, but his gift was made originally at ferme, effectively leasing it to the monks in return for a life interest in half of the garbal teind income from the lands of Thornton.⁴⁷ In the early 1200s, Robert Croc, lord of Crookston, quitclaimed any residual interest that he held in the church of Neilston, thereby giving the monks undisputed control over it.⁴⁸ Carmunnock was added to the portfolio c.1180 by another Stewart vassal, Henry son of Anselm, who also promised the monks the bodies of himself and his wife for burial at the abbey – which would bring future gifts from their heirs, to pay for requiem masses – and one third of his goods.⁴⁹ Inverkip – described as 'beyond the moor' – was given in c.1170 by Baldwin, sheriff of Lanark, a Stewart associate who was also a major tenant of the crown for an extensive lordship in southern Lanarkshire centred on Biggar.⁵⁰ A significant addition to this collection came from the crown, when King William bestowed the church of Rutherglen on the abbey,⁵¹ for burgh churches generally brought a higher level of income through greater teind income arising from the craft and trade activities undertaken in urban communities and also from the pious gifts of the burgesses. The value of that asset was realised c.1180 when Bishop Jocelin united the parsonages of Rutherglen and Carmunnock to the abbey *in proprios usus*.⁵²

It was not just in Renfrewshire that the abbey acquired interests in parish churches. Alan, son of Walter I, for example, attempted to give them Kingarth on Bute, together with all of its dependent chapels.⁵³ He was unsuccessful and the church remained a free parsonage in Stewart patronage into the fifteenth century.⁵⁴ In Kyle, Walter II added three churches originally offered as part of the founding endowment of his abortive Gilbertine priory at Dalmilling near

⁴¹ Paisley Registrum, 5-6, 7; Cowan, Parishes, 30, 150, 167.

⁴² Paisley Registrum, 109; Cowan, Parishes, 94.

⁴³ Paisley Registrum, 98, 99-100; Cowan, Parishes, 165-6.

⁴⁴ Paisley Registrum, 100; Cowan, Parishes, 145.

⁴⁵ Paisley Registrum, 98.

⁴⁶ Paisley Registrum, 99, 101.

⁴⁷ Paisley Registrum, 104-5; Cowan, Parishes, 154.

⁴⁸ Paisley Registrum, 105.

⁴⁹ Paisley Registrum, 105-6; Cowan, Parishes, 27-8.

⁵⁰ Paisley Registrum, 112; Cowan, Parishes, 89.

⁵¹ Paisley Registrum, 106-7; RRS, ii, no 221; Cowan, Parishes, 175.

⁵² Paisley Registrum, 109.

⁵³ Paisley Registrum, 15.

⁵⁴ Cowan, Parishes, 112.

Ayr.⁵⁵ These were Auchinleck, Dundonald and St Quivox.⁵⁶ Together with the main group in Renfrewshire and those in south-east Scotland these Ayrshire churches made Paisley one of the largest monastic appropriators in the kingdom. The significance of these annexed parishes as a source of income should not be under-estimated and the monks jealously guarded their interest in them. Following the Reformation, they formed a key component in the Hamilton lordship, giving the secular lords a significant source of additional income and major local power as patrons with the right to present ministers to the parishes they controlled.

Fisheries

Perhaps the most jealously-guarded of the abbey's possessions were the extensive fisheries that it possessed in the waters that ran through or beside their lands. From the outset in 1163, Paisley's patrons understood the value of fish to the monastery, both as a food resource and for trade to secure commodities that could not otherwise be produced on their estate. They were not alone in this, with most major Scottish monasteries receiving extensive fishing interests as part of their portfolios.⁵⁷ At one late-founded Scottish abbey, Balmerino on the south side of the Firth of Tay west of Dundee, control of important salmon fisheries on the river may have provided the monks with their largest and most reliable source of income throughout the community's existence.⁵⁸

Fishing interests were prominent amongst grants made to Paisley in the raft of properties and rights which Walter I gave as its founding endowment, with one net for salmon, six nets for herring, and one boat, all on the waters under his personal lordship at Renfrew, being assigned.⁵⁹ The confirmation of this grant by King Malcolm IV specified that the fishery lay between 'the island next to Renfrew' where the priory was located briefly before its move upstream to Paisley and Partick, a stretch of water approximately 8km in length.⁶⁰ The value of this fishery was such that when the monks gave up possession of the island they retained both the fishery and the right to make new fisheries wherever they wished on the waters around it.⁶¹ Salmon and fresh-water species occur most frequently in Paisley's records as the fish being exploited but the herring fishery in the Clyde estuary appears to have been of major significance in the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Indeed, so valuable and abundant were the herring that rights in the fishery were regarded as a significant resource to be gifted to other communities. Holyrood Abbey at Stirling, for example, had

⁵⁵ Paisley Registrum, 22.

⁵⁶ Paisley Registrum, 225-6; Cowan, *Parishes*, 9, 51-2, 178.

⁵⁷ For monastic fisheries on the Forth and the Tay, see R.D. Oram, 'Estuarine Environments and Resource Exploitation in Eastern Scotland c.1125 to c.1400: A Comparative Study of the Forth and Tay Estuaries', in E. Thoen, G.J. Borger, A.M.J de Kraker, D. Tys, L. Vervaet and H.J.T. Weerts (eds), *Landscapes or Seascapes? The History of the Coastal Environment of the North Sea Reconsidered* (Turnhout, 2013), 353-378.

⁵⁸ Oram, 'Balmerino Estate', 71-4.

⁵⁹ Paisley Registrum, 2.

⁶⁰ Paisley Registrum, 249; RRS, i, no 254.

⁶¹ Paisley Registrum, 18.

received a share in the Renfrew-based herring fishery from David I along with a toft in the burgh there.⁶²

Amongst the earliest gifts of fisheries were several named examples located to the south of the Clyde, with an important group on the Black Cart. The most important of these was that given by Alan, son of Walter I, who gave half of his fishery at the exit from the loch of Lochwinnoch, known today as Castle Semple Loch, along with the right to fish anywhere on the loch whenever Alan himself fished there.⁶³ Paisley was at pains to protect the value of its interests on the Black Cart, especially from the development of other fisheries there that might reduce the run of fish in the river. It is in this context that we should see the charter that they received from James the Steward in the 1280s which guaranteed the free flow of water down 'Kertlouwynok' between his *yair* or fish-dam at Auchindunan at the mouth of the loch and the monks' *yair* at the place called 'Lyncleyf'.⁶⁴ By this charter, James promised that neither he nor his men, nor any of their descendants, would construct 'any *yair*, impediment, fishery, obstacle or closure' that would in any way damage the monks' fishery, reserving only to himself the right to his own fish-dam at Auchindunan and to relocate it to any point between Lyncleyf and the loch-mouth.

No fish species is identified as the principal resource being exploited on the Black Cart, but from the records of most of the abbey's other fisheries it appears that salmon was the chief objective. Salmon was an in-demand commodity and the monks sought to expand their fishery for this species whenever opportunity presented itself. From the 1220s onwards, Paisley developed a portfolio of fishing interests on the north side of the Clyde in the Lennox and the sea-lochs to its west. Perhaps the first of these came shortly c.1225, when they received from Amlaimh, brother of Earl Maelduin of Lennox, the gift of the whole fishery for salmon specifically, but for other species also, in the Gareloch.⁶⁵ Around the same date they also secured what became one of their most important fisheries on the River Leven, beside where King Alexander II was developing his royal burgh at Dumbarton. This interest originated in a grant made by Robert Hertford, precentor of the cathedral-church of Glasgow, who had chosen to be buried at Paisley and who as thanks to the monks for receiving his body made over to them the fishery called 'Lynbren' that he had inherited on the Leven, along with its associated lands on the riverside.⁶⁶ This fishery, on the lower, tidal reach of the river near Dalreach, unlike the earlier fisheries further up the Clyde or the monks' recent acquisition in the Gareloch, was based on a fixed trap or *yair* rather than boats with draw-nets.⁶⁷ In his confirmation of Hertford's grant, made in 1225, Earl Maelduin confirmed the monks' right to fix the ends of their net on both banks of the river and extend it across the stream at whichever point on that section of the river seemed most suitable to them.⁶⁸ His confirmation, however, reveals that Hertford had only held one half of the fishery. The other half had been retained by Maelduin, but in a separate grant the earl made over

⁶² The Charters of King David I, ed G W S Barrow (Woodbridge, 1999), no 147.

⁶³ Paisley Registrum, 253.

⁶⁴ Paisley Registrum, 254.

⁶⁵ Paisley Registrum, 210.

⁶⁶ Paisley Registrum, 211-212.

⁶⁷ Paisley Registrum, 213-214.

⁶⁸ Paisley Registrum, 212-213.

that also to the monks.⁶⁹ The two halves of the fishery were consolidated by a royal confirmation in April 1228, which records that Hertford's half of the yair had been on the east side of the river downstream of the pool formed by the eastward meander of the Leven immediately north of Dumbarton.⁷⁰ The economic importance of the Linbren fishery to the monks should not be underestimated and their recognition of its value can be seen in the additional concession that they secured from Earl Maelduin that their fish-trap would be the only one constructed on the river along its entire course from Dalreach to Loch Lomond.⁷¹

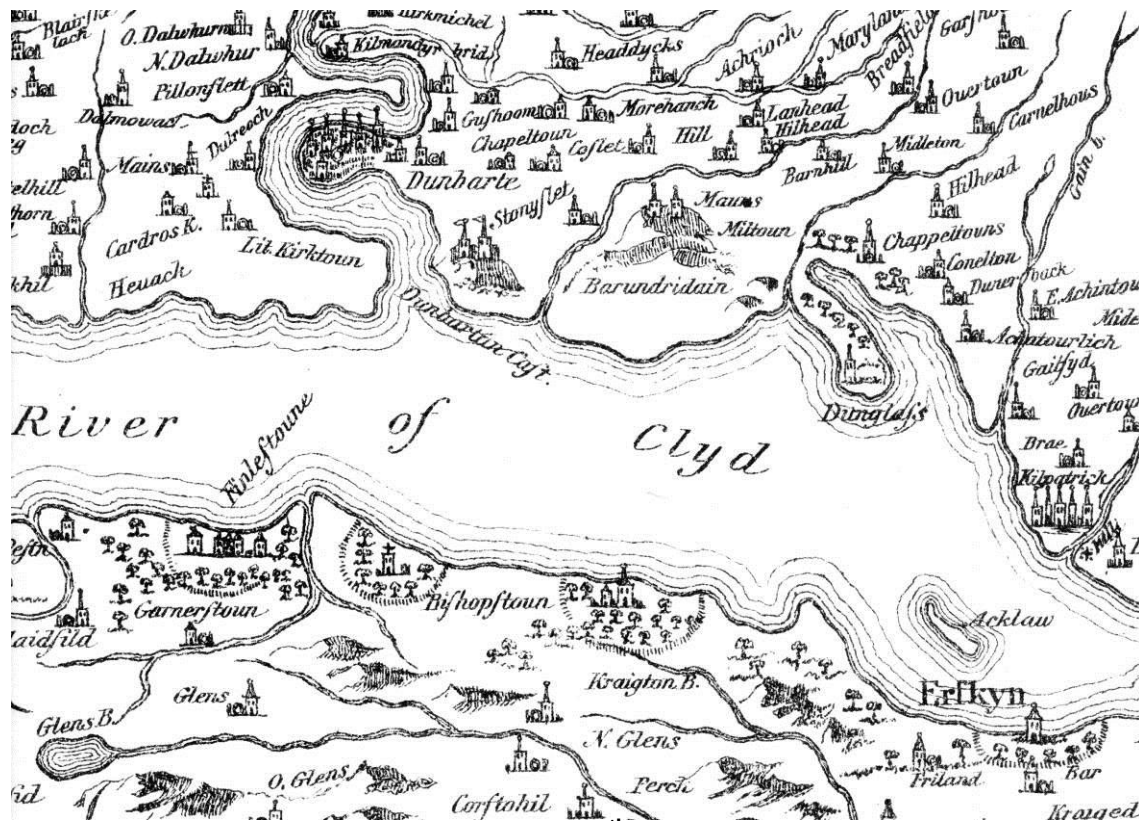


Figure 4: The Clyde and Dumbarton (16th century view)

Although referred to as a *iar* or *yare* by Earl Maelduin in his reconfirmation and extension of Paisley's rights and in King Alexander II's 1228 confirmation, the earl's original grant spoke in terms of a net and of the right to fix it across the river from both banks. This description suggests some kind of stake-net operation rather than the semi-permanent structures to which the label *yair* was already more commonly applied by the thirteenth century. A letter of licence made in the name of King Alexander III on 1 June 1250, however, gave the monks authority to rebuild and repair their fishing-pool on the Leven next to Dumbarton, with the important condition that in accordance with the laws and assises of the kingdom they leave a channel – referred to as the thread of the

⁶⁹ Paisley Registrum, 213.

⁷⁰ Paisley Registrum, 213-214. For the topography of the site of the medieval burgh and its long-running exposure to flood and erosion by the river, see Dennison, 'Burghs and Burgesses', 278-81.

⁷¹ Paisley Registrum, 217.

stream - to allow free entry and issue of fish through it.⁷² From this condition it seems that the nets of the 1220s had been replaced before 1250 by a more substantial structure, for the gap in mid-channel was a legally-prescribed feature of built yairs or fish-dams. The inclusion within the abbey cartulary amongst documents relating to the fishery of a royal precept of 1237 sent to William Bisset, Sheriff of Dumbarton, instructing him to ensure that a flow of water was maintained into the mill-pond of Dumbarton which had been constructed on the river, probably reflects the change in the form of the trap from net to dam and Maelduin's concession that no other fish-dam would be built on the Leven.⁷³ Its permanent character is confirmed in a 1273 charter of Malcolm, earl of Lennox, which gave the monks the right to take as much timber from his woods at Balloch and stone from anywhere nearer on his land, for constructing and repairing the fishery.⁷⁴

In addition to confirming the monks' possession of Linbren, in 1225 Earl Maelduin also granted them ubiquitous fishing-rights on Loch Lomond.⁷⁵ This was a netting operation; the earl gave the abbey's fishermen the right to dry their nets, build houses and fishing bothies – referred to as *scalingas* – anywhere on the loch's islands or shore. The regular confirmation of their fishing rights on the Leven and in Loch Lomond which the monks sought from the earls of Lennox into the 1520s underscores the importance of fish to the monastic economy.⁷⁶ Indeed, the last of the acts relating to the Linbren fishery preserved in the cartulary is a notarial instrument recording a formal process of *sasine* in the fishery undertaken 'in the place of the said fishery [...] where fishes are caught upon the banks of the [...] Leven'.⁷⁷ Paisley, moreover, had sought to extend its fishing interests whenever the opportunity arose. Such an opportunity occurred in 1452, when Robert, Lord Lyle, who was in urgent need of ready cash to enable him to pursue a claim to another property, granted them the *feuferme* of one third of his fishery known as 'Crukytshot', with associated pieces of land on the north side of the Clyde between Auchentorlie and Dumbuck.⁷⁸ The land given was for the purpose of erecting a building suitable for both storing the fish and providing accommodation for the abbey's men who were working the fishery. Lord Lyle also gave the monks access to an appropriate place alongside his own fishermen for the preparation, repair and drying of their men's nets, with access to his woods at Auchentorlie and Dumbuck to take wood for the poles upon which their nets would be hung. What is unclear is if the poles were for suspending the nets to dry them or if this was a stake-net fishery.

Like mills, churches and teinds, these fishing interests remained of far greater importance to Paisley than its traditional landed estate. As the defence of monastic fishing-rights elsewhere against encroachment by laymen in the later Middle Ages underscores,⁷⁹ the lucrative Scottish salmon-fishery was a coveted

⁷² Paisley Registum, 215; RRS, iv pt 1, no 1.

⁷³ Paisley Registum, 218.

⁷⁴ Paisley Registum, 216.

⁷⁵ Paisley Registum, 212-213.

⁷⁶ Paisley Registum, 219-220.

⁷⁷ Paisley Registum, 221-4.

⁷⁸ Paisley Registum, 249-252.

⁷⁹ See, for example, Oram, 'Balmerino Estate', 72; R.D. Oram, 'Cambuskenneth

economic asset. Post-Reformation, they again formed a key component of the Hamilton's income from the lordship of Paisley.

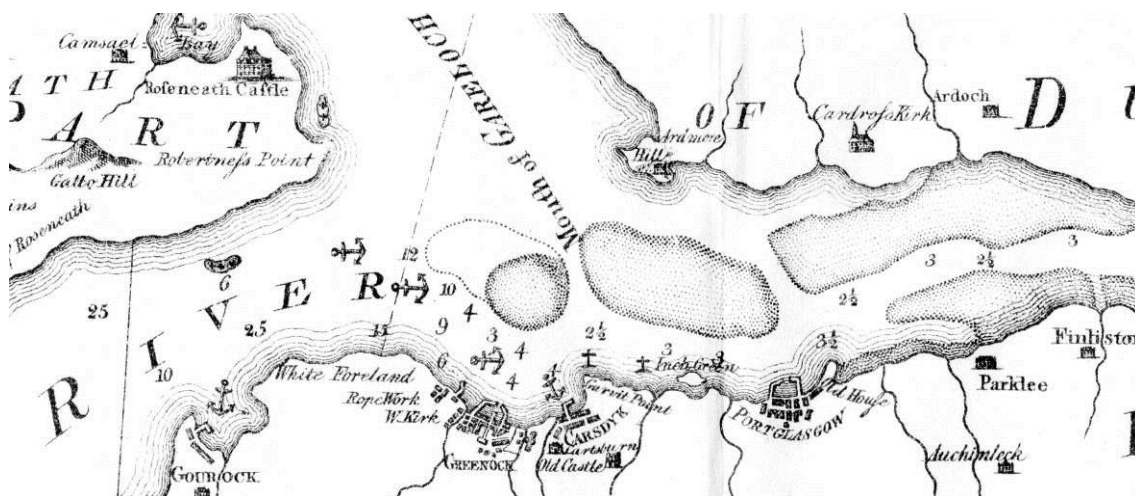


Figure 5: The Lower Clyde and Rosneath (18th century view)

Saltworks

The last element of the abbey estate to be considered here is its salt-production facilities. As a producer of substantial quantities of perishable commodities from its landed estates and fisheries, the abbey also needed secure access to a source of the only preservative available throughout most of northern Europe, salt. With the exception of the mineral salts from places like Droitwich in England, most salt produced in the British Isles in the Middle Ages was the result of the rapid-boiling of thick brine solution. Down to the end of the thirteenth century, the principal technique for obtaining that brine solution was through a process known as sleeching, where salt residues were flushed out of coastal or estuarine mud and the resulting liquid boiled in vessels suspended over wood or peat fires until the water had evaporated and crystals formed.⁸⁰ Salt was certainly being manufactured in this way from the carse muds of the inner estuary of the River Forth by the early 1100s and it is likely that suitable production sites were being exploited on the Clyde estuary by at least the same date. It was, however, on the Carse of Falkirk on the Forth that Paisley obtained its first saltwork, an operation that had belonged previously to Herbert the Chamberlain,⁸¹ and only quite late in the first quarter of the thirteenth century that the monks obtained their own local production site for salt. This was at Rosneath at the mouth of the Gareloch, probably on the shore above the muddy silts that accumulated on the southern end of Stroul Bay or, more likely, in Rosneath Bay proper. The saltwork came as part of a combined package gifted to Paisley by Amlaimh, younger brother of Earl Maelduin, which included the Gareloch salmon fishery.⁸² Amlaimh gave the monks the right to establish a saltwork anywhere they wished on his lands, with associated easements and pertinents *i.e.* free access to locally-obtainable fuel for the boiling process, a site for the monks' workers to live on and land to support them and for their pack

⁸⁰ For discussion of the salt industry in medieval Scotland, see R D Oram, 'The sea-salt industry in medieval Scotland', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 3rd series, ix (2012), 209-232.

⁸¹ Paisley Registrum, 6.

⁸² Paisley Registrum, 210.

animals and other livestock to graze. The saltwork disappears from view in the abbey records thereafter, but there is no reason to assume that it had failed or been disposed of, and later records reveal instead a proliferation of salt-manufacture sites around the inner reaches of the Firth of Clyde.

Conclusions

In this overview of the core of the Paisley estate, we have seen the development of an extensive and diverse portfolio of landed property, economic rights and dues, appropriated churches, and aquatic or maritime resources. That portfolio reveals how the monastery was a central player in a great wave of colonisation and land-development in the country bordering the southern and eastern shores of the inner Firth of Clyde, and how it helped to shape and direct that episode in the region's history. As a participant in this major colonial venture, the abbey could use its 'pioneer' status to acquire and maintain a long-lasting role as a shaper of regional development and key stakeholder in the local economy. Its involvement in the process from almost the outset in the 1160s meant that Paisley secured a breadth of economic interests that reflected the various possible routes offered regionally for specialisation. Rather than placing all of its efforts in one sector, the monks were able to benefit from a broad portfolio that reflected the full environmental range of its physical setting and regional geography. Its diversity gave Paisley a range of interests to be exploited directly for the commodities it needed for its basic feeding, clothing and shelter needs, or developed for market disposal to obtain the cash necessary to buy what could not be obtained locally. Both that diversity and its dispersal over the country from west to east also gave the monks a certain degree of protection from the vagaries of climate and weather, until the onset of the great era of profound climate-change that spanned the period from the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries that we know as 'the little ice age'. Even then, the spread of interests and absence of dependence on a single source of income gave the monks some general insulation from the drop in yields and catches which the more unpredictable environmental conditions entailed. As landlords, they may have had to tighten their belts, but their tenants probably experienced far greater and more traumatic impacts on their lives and livelihoods.

In the abbey's records, we have seen the progressive extension and intensification of settlement and agriculture on its properties, trends that signify the expansion of population and rising demand for the produce of the land. Most of what we see is a positive record of rising prosperity in an increasingly rigorously-exploited landscape, with little indication of the impact or costs of that development. We can, however, catch glimpses of the scale of landscape transformation involved, most notably in references to woodland and fuel resources. Even by the late twelfth century it seems that the once heavily-wooded or scrubland landscape of Renfrewshire and the Lennox was moving from one of tree-cover with clearings to one of clearance with isolated woods.⁸³ In the early thirteenth century, Walter II significantly enhanced the access to fuel-wood and building timber that the monks had received from his father and grandfather. As part of the deal whereby the monks exchanged their land at

⁸³ C.J. Neville, *Native Lordship in Medieval Scotland: the Earldoms of Strathearn and Lennox, c.1140-1365* (Dublin, 2005), 79-105; Oram, *Domination and Lordship*, 241; Oram, 'Balmerino Estate', 76-7.

Innerwick for Hillington, he gave them rights under the supervision of his foresters to collect firewood and cut building-timber in his afforested lands south of the White Cart.⁸⁴ Across the Clyde in the Lennox, similar extended rights in respect of the Loch Lomond oakwoods were being granted to the abbey by Earl Maelduin, gifts which point to the denudation of the land nearer to Paisley and a critical shortage there of suitable building material in particular.⁸⁵ Paisley was enjoying the profits from the clearance efforts of its peasant tenants, but by the thirteenth century it was perhaps already becoming clear that those profits had been won at long-term environmental cost and that future prosperity and growth were altogether less sure than they had seemed in the heady days of first expansion.

⁸⁴ Paisley Registrum, 20-21.

⁸⁵ For this general trend in medieval Scotland, see A. Crone and F. Watson, 'Sufficiency to Scarcity: Medieval Scotland, 500-1600' in T.C. Smout, (ed.), *People and Woods in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2003), 60-81; Oram, 'Estuarine environments', 360-363.

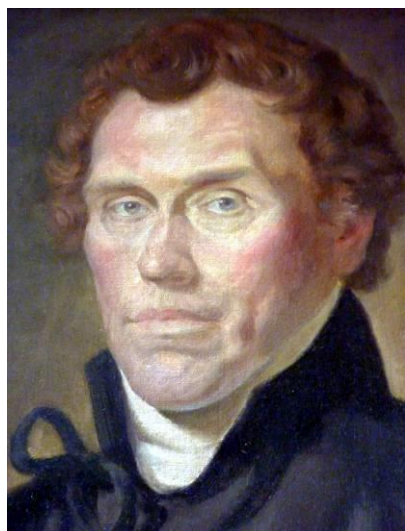
2. The Life and Times of Patrick Brewster

David Roberts

*Patrick Brewster was minister of Paisley Abbey Parish for more than forty years from 1817. During that time, the town experienced unheard of poverty and hardship, including the serious threat of starvation on a large scale. Brewster's active efforts to provide immediate help, and to find a long-term solution to the problem of recurring poverty, earned him a reputation, in some circles, as "Champion of the Poor".*⁸⁶

Patrick Brewster's life-long commitment to liberal causes such as Catholic Emancipation, Poor Law Reform and the People's Charter set him at odds with the ruling political establishment, as well as setting him apart from most of his contemporaries in the Church of Scotland. He suffered ostracism and persecution as a result, but continued, nevertheless, to denounce hypocrisy, oppression and injustice wherever he found it. He considered politics and religion to be inseparable, and his radical views were firmly based upon the twin pillars of his Christian beliefs and of his concern for the welfare of the people of Scotland. He was, altogether, a remarkable man – a hero to some, a dangerous scoundrel to others – but, in all events, impossible to ignore. His words and deeds helped to carry the reputation of Paisley far beyond the bounds of the town.

Figure 6: Patrick Brewster



Early Days

Patrick Brewster was born in December 1788 in Jedburgh, in the Scottish Borders. His father was rector of the Burgh Grammar School and Patrick later recalled that he was a high principled and noble-hearted man. He was the most important influence on his life.⁸⁷ Another important influence was his favourite book, Blind Harry's 'Life and Exploits of Sir William Wallace'. This proved to be particularly fitting for a minister whose home parish would later include Wallace's home at Elderslie for a period of more than forty years. He could remember shedding many a tear over his favourite hero's life. At the same time he gained his first impression of the Scottish aristocracy who,

as he said later, cut so sorry a figure in Scotland's toughest fight for national independence.⁸⁸

Patrick was the youngest of four brothers. The most famous proved to be David, later Sir David, Brewster. He is best-known as the inventor of the kaleidoscope

⁸⁶ Aiton, Rev John, A Tribute to the Memory of the Poor Man's Champion, being the funeral Sermon of the late P Brewster, in 'Paisley Pamphlets' Vol.38 (1859), Heritage Centre, Paisley Central Library (HCPCL).

⁸⁷ Paisley Independent (PI), 12th July 1856, in Patrick Brewster (PB) Scrapbook, Paisley Abbey. In the Paisley Advertiser (PA), 17th November 1838, Brewster had attributed his lifelong liberal or radical opinions, in part, to his venerated father.

⁸⁸ PI, 12th July 1856.

and for pioneering work in photography. He was the author and editor of many scientific papers and journals and is considered one of Scotland's leading scientists of the 19th century.

Patrick followed in the footsteps of many of the leading figures of the so-called "Scottish Enlightenment" such as David Hume, by teaching the sons of several noble or notable families. In 1817, however, he chose a different career path, when he became minister of the second or junior charge of the Abbey Parish of Paisley. He was selected for the position by the leading landowner of the parish, the Marquis of Abercorn. As Brewster said later, it was ironic that such a determined opponent of aristocratic privilege should have been chosen by one of the richest and most influential members of the ruling elite, rather than by the congregation.⁸⁹

The O'Connell Dinner

We do not hear much about Patrick Brewster until 1835, when he attended a dinner held in Glasgow to celebrate the achievements of the great political reformer and Irish patriot Daniel O'Connell. O'Connell was the hero of liberals and progressives, but hated by conservatives. Brewster ignored advice from some of his fellow ministers, who suggested that it would be dabbling too much in politics to attend the dinner, and did so anyway.⁹⁰ O'Connell had turned down an invitation from reformers in Paisley to visit the town during his visit to Glasgow, but changed his mind, possibly at Brewster's request. The following day, Brewster met him on the outskirts of the town, before proceeding in an open carriage through the streets to the Low Church where O'Connell made a speech. Although O'Connell was a Roman Catholic hero in a very protestant town, his speech seems to have charmed and mesmerised an enthusiastic audience.⁹¹

There was, as a result, an almighty "stooshie". The staunchly Tory Paisley Advertiser considered the whole affair a propaganda coup for O'Connell. Here was a Church of Scotland minister giving his support to a man who was a sworn enemy to the Protestant faith, who wanted to destroy the House of Lords and who wanted to destroy the British Empire by repealing the Union with Ireland.⁹² This was a gross distortion of the truth, but Brewster's fellow ministers soon joined on the bandwagon. The Reverend Dr Robert Burns – no relation, it seems, to the poet – said that O'Connell was the paid agent of the "Popish faction" whose object it was to overthrow the Protestant Church of Ireland. How could Brewster countenance such a man? As a result, with Dr Burns leading the prosecution, Brewster received the first of several censures in the church courts.⁹³ He was now branded by the conservative Church and political elite as a virtual renegade. Coverage in the newspapers gave him a high profile throughout the country. He was the kind of person people pointed at in the street with a shake of the head. Nowadays, he would no doubt have received an invitation to appear on television reality shows.

⁸⁹ PA, 16th January 1841.

⁹⁰ See PA, 19th Sep 1835, 26th Sep 1835 and 7th Nov 1835, when Brewster acknowledged that he had been advised not to attend.

⁹¹ PA, 26th Sep 1835 has a full report of the O'Connell meeting.

⁹² Editorial in PA, 26th Sept 1835.

⁹³ PA, 7th Nov 1835.

A lesser man might have been cowed into submission and silence, as his opponents wanted, but Brewster was made of sterner stuff. He felt wounded at first by public criticism, but soon regarded it as a badge of honour. He defended O'Connell, the "Great Liberator of Ireland", in the Press, and defended his own right to say what he wanted about political subjects.⁹⁴ He now became something of a popular hero to those who wanted change in Church and State⁹⁵, and embarked on a nationwide speaking tour of Scotland as a result, visiting venues such as Airdrie, Aberdeen and Kirkcaldy.⁹⁶ He had experienced his own Pauline conversion, not on the road to Damascus, but probably somewhere just off Gauze Street. At the age of fifty, he had found his political and religious life's mission.

"The Never-Ceasing Struggle for the Poor"

Patrick Brewster played a leading role in many of the great progressive causes of his day, despite the fierce criticism which came his way. As later Labour leaders such as Thomas Johnston recognised, he was one of the pioneers of the labour movement in Scotland, as well as helping to make Scotland a political stronghold for the Liberals throughout much of the 19th century.⁹⁷ One cause above all, however, became his abiding concern. As one early biographer of Brewster wrote:

"The arduous task he had set himself and from which he never swerved while he had life and strength – was the harassing and never-ceasing struggle for the poor and suffering. Like the prophets and apostles, he found it impossible to separate his duty as a Christian from his duty as a man towards his fellow men."⁹⁸

Poverty was all around him from the moment he first set foot as a minister in Paisley in 1817. It is impossible to convey either through words or through photographs quite how widespread and how wretched poverty was at that time in Paisley. Nor is it possible to convey the fact that matters became progressively worse, despite the fact that huge wealth was created in the town by the textile industry which made the name of Paisley famous worldwide. At a meeting in Manchester Town Hall in August 1841, the Reverend Archibald Baird, minister of the Secession Church in Paisley, tried to provide a picture of the miseries which the town had suffered during his sixteen years as a minister there:

"Every two or three years came a season of distress in the Paisley weaving trade. Four years before, Paisley had been for a period of almost four months without trade of any kind, during which time thousands were dependent for life's essentials on charity.

⁹⁴ Brewster defended himself in the Presbytery of Paisley, the Synod of Glasgow & Ayr, and the Commission of the General Assembly. See PA 24th October 1835, 16th April 1836 and 4th June 1836.

⁹⁵ Addresses supportive of his zeal for true religion and for his exertions on behalf of civil and religious liberty were reported on in the PA, 21st May 1836 and 17th Nov 1838.

⁹⁶ True Scotsman, 19th January 1839, 20th July 1839 and 17th August 1839.

⁹⁷ Chartist and Military Sermons by Rev PB, Edited and with an Introduction by Thomas Johnston, HCPCL.

⁹⁸ Biographical Sketch of the Late Rev PB, HCPCL, reprinted from Paisley Herald, 6th February 1864.

“From that time to the present, much privation has prevailed. Thousands of the poor were walking about without even these essentials. Masses of the people were in a state of most consummate wretchedness. For every one person asking aid in the town, three or four were suffering in silence. One mother said to him, with tears in her eyes, ‘We have borne it before, we will bear it again’. There were myriads of such cases. The head of one family admitted they had been without food or fire for thirty hours and must accept help, or perish”.⁹⁹ Patrick Brewster was present at the same meeting. He had witnessed the same miseries and, in recent years, had seen the town spiralling into even greater depths of wretchedness, as savings were used up, and clothes and any other possessions pawned in a last attempt to stave off starvation. To him, it was a matter of Christian duty to let the country know how bad things had become; to find out who or what was responsible for the calamitous state in which the poor had found themselves; and to find an urgent and lasting solution to the problem.

The Poor Man’s Champion

Patrick Brewster’s concern for the poor and disadvantaged began at home, in Abbey Parish, with attempts to make sure that all the aged and infirm within his parish should receive the life-saving support provided by a place on the poor roll, but soon extended to the poor and unemployed of Paisley and Renfrewshire as a whole, and then further still to encompass all of Scotland.¹⁰⁰ Prevailing opinion, at that time, was that poverty should be seen as a form of punishment, and that any support given should be so low that it would barely preserve life. This was true of the well-to-do, but was also the view of virtually every minister in the Church of Scotland, which was mainly responsible for providing poor relief.¹⁰¹ Brewster was almost alone in seeing this as bordering on a criminal betrayal of the principles laid down by the founding fathers of the Protestant Church. He was also virtually unique in arguing that the law of Scotland had always given everyone, including the unemployed, a right to a fair level of support when they hit upon hard times.¹⁰² This set him at odds with many within the Church, but also with the heritors or landowners, who not only paid the taxes which supported the poor, but also decided how much they should pay. The heritors of Abbey Parish thought that they were among the most generous in the country, whereas Brewster thought that they never paid enough. In any case, he thought, the system of voluntary charity could only provide a solution in the short term, and what was needed was a compulsory tax paid in just proportions by those who owned the land.¹⁰³ As a result, many angry exchanges took place at public meetings, and in the Church and civil courts, where Brewster argued the case of the poor and unemployed, earning their support and affection, but where the

⁹⁹ Report of the All Denominations Anti-Corn Law Conference, by a correspondent of the Morning Herald, as reported in PA, 21st Aug 1841.

¹⁰⁰ Brewster’s campaign is reported extensively in the True Scotsman, 19th September 1840; 26th Dec 1840; 2nd Jan 1841, and 6th Feb 1841. See also Brewster’s *The Legal Rights of the Poor of Scotland Vindicated*, in Paisley Pamphlets Vol 28 (1843).

¹⁰¹ This view is stated succinctly in an editorial in the PA, 30th Nov 1839.

¹⁰² Ibid. Brewster had drawn up resolutions arguing that the Heritors, Ministers and Kirk Session were under an obligation to provide for the unemployed “not as a donation of charity, but as a right of property”.

¹⁰³ Brewster set out his views on the Poor Laws of Scotland at a meeting of Presbytery in Sep 1840. True Scotsman, 19th Sep 1840.

powers of the law and of the privileged elite were stacked up against him. He felt that he often suffered persecution as a consequence, notably in the case which resulted in his suspension from his ministerial duties in 1842, and again in 1851, when influence was used to block his promotion to the position of senior minister in the Abbey Church. Just because Brewster had a persecution complex, it didn't mean that he wasn't being persecuted.¹⁰⁴ But Brewster was by no means an innocent at large in the world, and could happily employ questionable tactics in pursuit of what he felt to be laudable objectives. Before the Abbey Parish heritors met in June 1840, he made arrangements for the poor from Charleston, Johnstone and elsewhere to pack the meeting. When proceedings began, the Abbey was crowded with his supporters, who, although not entitled to vote, listened to his contributions with approving cheers, while drowning out his opponents with a storm of hissing and sarcastic laughter, hoping to intimidate them into making generous provision for the poor for the year ahead.¹⁰⁵

At the end of 1842, Brewster's long campaign on behalf of the poor seemed to have met with some success. By this time, the Government clearly felt that the response of the Renfrewshire heritors and county elite to the sustained and alarming crisis in Paisley during the previous year had been far from satisfactory, and that the mistakes made then could not be repeated. The Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, who had taken a keen interest in the crisis in Paisley, announced that a full-scale enquiry would take place into the poor laws of Scotland.¹⁰⁶ Sadly, however, the principles on which the new Poor Law was based did not reflect Brewster's idea of a Christian community founded upon rights and obligations. Instead, the new system, he felt, continued to condemn and virtually criminalise the poor for their poverty, as well as importing some of the most inhuman aspects of the English system, including the dreaded work-houses. To Brewster's mind, these were no more than bastilles administered by uncaring bureaucrats.¹⁰⁷ The fight for the poor must, of necessity, go on.

The Church and the Great Disruption of 1843

Patrick Brewster lived at a time of momentous political and religious events. These included the infamous "Peterloo Massacre" of members of the crowd at a peaceful reform meeting at Manchester in 1819; the passing of the Great Reform Act in 1832 which began the long process of bringing democracy to Britain; and last, but not least, the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843. It would take far too long to examine Patrick Brewster's opinions during the decade of contention which led up to Church splitting apart and the Free Church breaking away in 1843, but it was one of the most important events in Scotland, in the 19th century and is impossible to ignore.¹⁰⁸ Brewster was aware of deep

¹⁰⁴ Brewster was not alone in feeling that he was a victim of persecution. See, for instance, PA 17th Nov 1838; 30th July 1842; and Glasgow Citizen, 15th May 1852, reproduced in Newspaper Cuttings: Paisley & District 1845-58, (HCPCL).

¹⁰⁵ PA, 28th Dec 1839. Another example of Brewster's "sharp practice" was to arrange votes after most of his opponents had left the meeting. PA, 14th Dec 1839.

¹⁰⁶ PA 24th Dec 1842, reporting an article previously published in the Spectator. Peel had received a deputation from Paisley earlier the same month.

¹⁰⁷ The Plague of Patronage, Paisley Pamphlets Vol 23 No19, HCPCL.

¹⁰⁸ Brewster's views were set out in a stirring speech in favour of the abolition of patronage in the High Church, Paisley, reported in the PA, 16th Jan 1841.

failings within the Church of Scotland. He thought that the Church had become self-centred. Brewster's vision was of a unified National Church firmly rooted in the faith and love of all the people. He was sympathetic to the leaders and members of the churches which had left the National Church over the years, while the Church as a whole tended to be hostile towards them. He thought that the Church had forgotten the people. Dr Burns described the malaise in his autobiography:

"The people were ignored; and any allusion in our speeches in the church-courts to the popular mind was uniformly and contemptuously frowned down. The feeling, if not expressed, was nevertheless strong: Who are the people? We know them not; we are independent of them; we are the church not of the people but of the constitution. There was, too, a disinclination to do anything for the material interests of the working classes".¹⁰⁹

Brewster placed the blame firmly on the corrupting influence of the ruling class, the landowners. Through their powers of choosing ministers, they had installed those who preached submission every week to the powers-that-be. Only when that power was swept away could the Church recover.¹¹⁰

Patrick Brewster and Dr Chalmers

One of Patrick Brewster's most notable personal characteristics – whether for good or ill – was an almost complete lack of deference to those in authority. It is difficult to imagine, for instance, Brewster remaining silent, if he had been magically teleported from his pulpit to the Church of Scotland Assembly Hall in Edinburgh on 21st May 1988 when Margaret Thatcher delivered her famous "Sermon on the Mound". When Mrs Thatcher famously quoted St Paul that "if a man will not work, he shall not eat", surely he would have been unable to contain himself, and would have felt obliged to issue a stern rebuke to the Iron Lady. He was indeed involved in a similar, local event in late 1838, when the great Dr Thomas Chalmers addressed a meeting in the High Church in Paisley in favour of Church Extension – building new churches for the working classes at public expense. Dr Chalmers was the most respected public figure in the country, but in his speech he was critical of reformers of the present day, who mixed politics with religion. For Brewster, this was like a red rag to a bull. He detected hypocrisy at work, as Dr Chalmers had been consorting with Tory politicians while in London. He suspected that the revered Doctor in reality only disapproved of politics which opposed his own. Brewster challenged Dr Chalmers to his face and managed to outrage virtually everyone in the church.¹¹¹ He had instantly become even more of an outcast than ever. When the Free Church broke away in 1843, Brewster chose to remain loyal to the Church in which he had been brought up and to the ideal of a unified National Church envisaged by founding fathers. He continued to love the Church, even if it seldom seemed to love him in return.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Burns, Rev R F, *The Life and Times of the Rev Robert Burns DD FAS FRSE, Including an Unpublished Autobiography*, Montreal (1872).

¹¹⁰ In the middle of the Disruption crisis, and to the annoyance of the assembled audience, Brewster urged his scheme for the total abolition of patronage at a "Non-Intrusion" meeting in Paisley in Jan 1840. PA, 11th January 1840.

¹¹¹ PA, 22nd Sep 1838. See also Brewster's letter to Dr Chalmers, published in *Glasgow Chronicle and Edinburgh Mercury*, and in PB Scrapbook, Paisley Abbey.

¹¹² For his love of the Church, see the PA 17th Nov 1838; also *The Plague of*

Radical Politician and Chartist

Most people who have heard of Patrick Brewster are aware of him because he was both a minister and a Chartist, and such a combination was, to put it mildly, very unusual. Being a minister of the Establishment, and a radical politician, at the same time, was frowned upon by many, but, to Brewster, radical politics and reforming religion were inseparable. By the late 1830s, the country was in a mess. Both of the main political parties, Whigs and Tories, seemed to be offering the same solution to the country's economic woes. There was widespread frustration that passing the Reform Act in 1832 had failed to effect any worthwhile change, and opposition to the political establishment began to coalesce around the idea of a People's Charter, by which the interests of all the people rather than the rich and privileged would be represented in Parliament. Patrick Brewster soon identified himself as a leader of the Chartist cause, committed to its central idea of universal suffrage, or votes for all – or for all men, anyway.¹¹³ He remained firmly committed to Chartist principles for the rest of his life, but he was far from being the kind of political leader likely to provide inspiration across the full spectrum of radical political opinion.

Brewster's radicalism grew out of the poverty which he met with every day in Paisley. It seems to have begun around the time of the "Radical War" of 1820, with the grim reprisals which had followed, including the execution of the radical leaders Baird, Hardie and Wilson. He seems to have been haunted by the experience and was determined that ordinary working men should never again be goaded into useless sacrifices, whether by the underhand activities of government spies, or by the ill-judged words and actions of reckless leaders.¹¹⁴

A fault-line soon developed within Chartism. On one side were the so-called "moral force" Chartists, who insisted that the movement must commit itself to achieving its ends by peaceful, lawful means such as petitioning Parliament, public meetings and a free press. On the other side were those who were not willing to rule out armed revolt, whether as a last resort or otherwise. These were the "physical force" Chartists. Some Chartist leaders such as Feargus O'Connor adopted a more ambivalent line, often using language which seemed to condone the use of force, without actually recommending it. O'Connor addressed meetings in Paisley on a number of occasions, engaging Brewster in debate in the open air and elsewhere in the town. These were grand public entertainments, but also serious political meetings open to all classes of the community.¹¹⁵ Brewster confirmed his position as one of the leaders of the moral force cause in Scotland by urging support for his own "Calton Hill Resolutions" at a meeting and subsequent torchlight procession in Edinburgh in December 1839.¹¹⁶ His unbending commitment to lawful methods alone, however, met with vigorous opposition, even in Renfrewshire, and he was

Patronage, Paisley Pamphlets Vol 23 No 19, which was, in effect, his religious and political testament.

¹¹³ Brewster spoke at the first public meeting of the revived Renfrewshire Political Union. PA, 10th Nov 1838. The original Union had played a prominent role in the agitation in support of the Reform Act of 1832.

¹¹⁴ PA, 23rd and 30th Oct 1841.

¹¹⁵ PA, 12th January 1839 and 30th Oct 1841.

¹¹⁶ An account of the famous Calton Hill meeting, reproduced from the Edinburgh Courant, is in the PA, 8th Dec 1838

accused of unnecessarily dividing the movement.¹¹⁷ Unwilling to compromise, he and most of his Paisley friends felt obliged to take a back-seat in a movement which, they felt, had taken a wrong turning. As Brewster had foreseen, the Government soon found ample excuse to brand the movement in England and Wales seditious, and it was suppressed with the help of a predominantly tame Press, as well as a predictable mixture of intimidation, force and imprisonment. Chartism, for a time at least, was divided and dispirited.

Patrick Brewster, the Controversialist

Patrick Brewster was usually involved in one controversy or another, often several at the same time. The Dictionary of National Biography remarked of him that his life was one continuous succession of exciting disputes upon public questions, or with the heritors, the parish authorities or the Presbytery.¹¹⁸ He spent much of his public life debating with his fellow ministers on Church-related matters in the Presbytery and was never backward in putting forward his own views. When he protested against his suspension from ministerial and pastoral duties at the beginning of June, 1842, he did so in a speech lasting nine hours. When asked the following day, after an adjournment, how long he intended to speak for, he could only give the court an estimate within an hour or two.¹¹⁹

Brewster's skills as an orator were highly regarded, but it seems fair to conclude that he was not unaware of his own abilities. One newspaper report is quite revealing about what the Presbytery of Paisley was like in the years after the Great Disruption of 1843, when several of its most influential members had joined the Free Church:

"The Presbytery of Paisley occupies a position among the sources of public entertainment in town similar to that occupied by the tragedy of Hamlet among the plays of Shakespeare, and this individual, Mr Brewster, occupies the position in Presbytery which Hamlet occupies in the play. Fancy a performance of the play without Hamlet, then fancy a meeting of Presbytery without Mr Brewster. It is impossible. He ought to be a whole Presbytery and to enjoy all the rights and privileges himself. He should be Moderator. He should be sole speaker on both sides of every question, with no-one to contradict him but himself. He should be the reporter of his own speeches. Above all, he should have a newspaper of his own which, however, nobody else should be obliged to read."¹²⁰

Patrick Brewster: Social Reformer

Poverty, the problems of the Church and radical politics may have occupied much of Patrick Brewster's public life, but he also concerned himself with most of the other social issues of the day. As was said of him: "The cause which he knew not, he searched out".¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Divisions within the revived Renfrewshire Political Union were obvious from the outset. PA, 8th Dec 1838 and 29th Dec 1838.

¹¹⁸ The DNB attributed this to his "polemical spirit", traceable in his most famous published work, *The Seven Chartist and Military Discourses* (1843).

¹¹⁹ Report of meeting of Paisley Presbytery in the PA, 4th June 1842.

¹²⁰ Report in the *Glasgow Citizen*, 4th Dec 1852, reproduced in *Newspaper Cuttings: Paisley & District 1845-58*, HCPCL.

¹²¹ Aiton, Rev John, *A Tribute to the Memory of the Poor Man's Champion* (1859).

In the early 19th century, Scotland seemed to some to be teetering on the brink of a drink-fuelled abyss. Paisley played an important part in the early temperance movement and by the late 1830s, Brewster, as President of the local Total Abstinence Society, was in much demand as a temperance lecturer. He presided when the famous “Teetotal Tower” was opened at Sandyford in May 1840 to provide innocent amusement without the doubtful pleasures of alcohol.¹²² On another notable occasion he gave an open air lecture to a crowd numbering several thousand on the Gleniffer Braes, near his house at Craigielinn.¹²³ His liberal and humanitarian views were not confined to his own parish or back-yard. He was firmly committed to the abolition of African Slavery and served as a delegate from Paisley at a famous anti-slavery meeting in Exeter Hall, London in 1838, as well as helping to set up the Paisley Anti-Slavery Society.¹²⁴ His colleagues in the Church of Scotland proved fairly backward in this noble cause, but Brewster helped to bring about a change of heart in Presbytery, and then in the Church as a whole.

The Anti-Slavery Society contributed to the nation-wide crusade by petitioning Parliament against the notorious “apprenticeship” system which had replaced slavery with something almost equally bad. On 1st August 1838, Brewster delivered a moving sermon in the Abbey to celebrate success and “the delivery of 600,000 of their fellow brethren from bondage”.¹²⁵ His hatred of slavery encouraged him to invite some of the great figures of the emancipationist cause in America to Paisley. These included William Lloyd Garrison, considered by some to be the father of the movement, and the most famous of all, Frederick Douglass, both of whom lectured in the town. As was movingly observed, the white hands extended to them at public meetings were, for a change, offered in friendship rather than in anger.¹²⁶ In advance of his time, perhaps, Brewster had grave doubts about the wisdom and justice of the Church’s missionary activities overseas, believing them to be a front for commercial gain and colonial expansion. He believed that it would have made more sense for the Church to address problems at home first, including the injustice of large-scale evictions in the highlands.¹²⁷

He also denounced British foreign policy, including unjust and unnecessary wars in Afghanistan and China. To a temperance campaigner such as Brewster, the injustice of a war such as the so-called Opium War simply beggared belief. Thousands of innocent Chinese were slaughtered by a country armed with overwhelming modern weapons, while at the same time the Chinese government was forced to accept huge imports of opium from British India. The

¹²² PA, 9th May 1840.

¹²³ Glasgow Saturday Post, 23rd July 1853.

¹²⁴ PA, 10th February 1838. Brewster’s wife was active in an Anti-Slavery Bazaar by the Glasgow Ladies’ Emancipation Society. PA, 9th Dec 1837.

¹²⁵ PA, 4th Aug 1838. The sermon was published soon after by recommendation of the Glasgow Emancipation Society and the Central Negro Emancipation Committee, London. It was later published as one of Brewster’s Chartist and Military Discourses.

¹²⁶ PA, 1st Aug 1840, 21st March 1846, 4th April 1846 and 25th April 1846. Dr Burns extended the hand of friendship to Charles Lenox Remond at a meeting in August 1840.

¹²⁷ He expressed doubts about foreign missions at a Paisley Presbytery meeting as early as 1830. PA, 3rd April, 1830. On Highland evictions, see *The Perils and Duties of the War. European Freedom. Popish Conspiracy.* (1854), HCPCL.

whole episode cast a stain on the character of a supposedly Christian nation which, he considered, would last for generations.¹²⁸

The Struggle for European Freedom

During the 1840s and 1850s, Brewster turned his attention to events in continental Europe. In 1849, a public meeting in Paisley had agreed to petition the Government to do all in their power to aid the Hungarians in their fight for freedom against Imperial Austria. Brewster drew up a splendidly eloquent address to accompany the petition.¹²⁹ His reward came a few years later when he shared a public platform in the town with Kossuth, the exiled leader of the Hungarian national movement.¹³⁰ The national liberation movements in Hungary, Poland, Germany and Italy were part of a great progressive struggle, as he saw it, against the despotic empires of Central Europe, including the Papacy. Brewster felt that British statesmen had supported these oppressive regimes for too long, but that the people of Britain shared some of the blame for allowing them to do so.¹³¹

Brewster was not a pacifist. He advocated the arming and training of a million men in Britain to forestall the threat of invasion from both Russia and France. If war was to be waged, he felt it should be for a great principle and a worthy object, based on God's laws. He obliged people to think about events overseas, and about whether war was just. His own view was straightforward: Defensive war he considered a duty; aggressive war, a sin.¹³²

Patrick Brewster and the Papacy

In August 1851, a remarkable open air meeting took place near the present site of W H Smith's in the High Street in Paisley. Brewster shared a public platform with Father Gavazzi, a former priest, who achieved fame and notoriety lecturing on the injustices committed by his former masters, the Roman Catholic Church.¹³³ Modern listeners are uncomfortable with such a controversial subject, but in Brewster's time it was one cause which was likely to unite the middle and working classes in indignant condemnation, or most of them, at least.¹³⁴ Brewster had been unusual in the Church of Scotland in 1829 in supporting Catholic Emancipation, but he had now changed his mind, feeling that a resurgent Papacy posed a significant threat to the civil and religious liberties fought for and won by Protestant Europe.¹³⁵ For a time he was Convener of the Scottish Protestant Alliance.¹³⁶ He chaired and addressed meetings using

¹²⁸ PA, 30th May 1840; Wellington Weighed in the Balance, Paisley Pamphlets Vol 36 No6 (1853); The Indian Revolt, Its Duties and Dangers, Paisley Pamphlets (1857).

¹²⁹ PA, 18th Aug 1849.

¹³⁰ Paisley Herald, 21st June 1856.

¹³¹ As Brewster pointed out in The Perils and Duties of the War (1854); see also, Wellington Weighed in the Balance (1853).

¹³² The Perils and Duties of the War (1854).

¹³³ Glasgow Saturday Post, 30th Aug 1851.

¹³⁴ Public meetings in Paisley condemning "Papal aggression" resulted in a petition with 14,000 signatures sent to Parliament. Glasgow Saturday Post, 5th April 1851, 12th April 1851, 19th April 1851 and 26th April 1851.

¹³⁵ Brewster proposed the repeal of Catholic Emancipation at the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, Paisley Herald, 17th April 1858.

¹³⁶ See Appendix to The Perils and Duties of the War. European Freedom. Popish Conspiracy (1854); and report of an Orange Soiree in Paisley, Paisley Herald, 6th Nov

language which would now raise a few eyebrows and which would probably result in his prosecution under the anti-bigotry laws. He had undergone the personal trial, as he saw it, of having his eldest daughter convert to Roman Catholicism, yet he never considered himself a bigot and had no quarrel, he said, with individual Roman Catholics.¹³⁷

Figure 7: Patrick Brewster Monument (Woodside Cemetery)



The Voyage Home

Patrick Brewster died suddenly at home, at Craighielinn on the Gleniffer Braes, on 26th March 1859.¹³⁸ On the authority of Paisley Town Council, and with the consent of his family, he was granted the honour of a public funeral, in recognition of his service to the town and community of Paisley. Great crowds looked on respectfully on the day of the funeral, as Brewster's mortal remains were carried down Neilston Road from the South Church, through Charleston, where his efforts on behalf of the poor had made him a legend, and then to the Abbey itself.¹³⁹ Within a few days of the funeral, a proposal had been made to honour his memory with a monument in Woodside Cemetery, to be erected by public subscription.¹⁴⁰ Even in death, Brewster managed to find himself at the centre of controversy, as close friends and supporters argued over his political and religious legacy, and over the wording of the inscriptions which should appear on the monument.¹⁴¹ The statue is still there, although it seems to be showing a few signs of wear and seems to have lost the inscriptions which caused such a fuss.

Surely it was fitting that Patrick Brewster should have spent his last years at Craighielinn, only a short carriage ride from the home of his boyhood hero, William Wallace. He was a patriotic Scot, a conscientious Christian and a committed champion of the poor, who set a noble example as a moral, religious and political teacher in Abbey Parish for over forty years.

1858.

¹³⁷ The Perils and Duties of the War (1854).

¹³⁸ Paisley Herald, 2nd April 1859. The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography also contains a useful list of newspapers and other sources in which obituaries of Brewster can be found.

¹³⁹ Paisley Herald, 2nd April 1859 and 9th April 1859.

¹⁴⁰ Paisley Herald, 16th April 1859. See also a description of the monument in the same newspaper, 24th October 1863.

¹⁴¹ Paisley Herald, 5th Sep 1863 and weekly thereafter until 10th Oct 1863.

3. Old Paisley Graveyards and their Churches

Richard M Smith

Old graveyards are collective memorials, a community record in stone, more than mere areas of ground where people of centuries past lie interred. Their monuments contain histories not just of individuals and families, but of wider events and processes in our past, all the while remaining personal to the deceased: Epidemic, Child Mortality, War, Industrial and Agricultural Revolution, Empire, and Clearance. Add to this the characteristic air of serenity typically experienced in old graveyard surrounds, and there can be few more pleasant ways of spending a leisurely, or indeed constructive hour. Yet they face increasing challenges from the vicissitudes of time, neglect, and wilful damage – a situation compounded by the accelerating process of adjoining church closures. Central Paisley's graveyards are of such rich content and variety, with few, if any equals, but damaged and facing ongoing threat. This overview examines the origins, development, and present status of some ten sites, all within a ten minute walk of Gilmour Street Station.¹⁴²

Introduction and background

Paisley has a fascinating collection of old graveyards that pre-date the larger and still in-use Victorian-era cemeteries at Woodside and Hawkhead.¹⁴³ The latter were conceived as integral, aesthetic, parts of nineteenth century urban planning, lacking the denominational attachment of associated churches, in essence garden cemeteries on the Pere Lachaise (Paris, early 1800s) inspired London model.¹⁴⁴ While Woodside and Hawkhead themselves form important components of the town's historic environment, it is the older, neglected, and disappeared burial areas discussed here that arguably better reflect its historic growth. That is not, however, to say that the larger cemeteries are unaffected by the threats facing the others. There are few sadder examples of their combined influence than the northern (rear) section of Woodside.

Given ongoing deterioration and planned eradication at most sites, it is only by virtue of Mary Ann Semple's recording of Paisley graveyard memorials (c.1850) that we hold a relative wealth of information today.¹⁴⁵ Many of the inscriptions which she detailed have since disappeared. Few towns are so fortunate to have had such a scrupulous (and arguably curious – Mary was still a schoolgirl) transcriber. Though terminating fairly early in the respective histories of the graveyards concerned, Mary's lists include the majority of inscriptions, as by her period they were running out of lairs, and accordingly the spacious Woodside then Hawkhead were opened.

All the sites described here are connected with former churches, the majority of which, in consequence of dwindling attendance then closure, have been

¹⁴³ A note for explorers: care should always be taken and, particularly regarding the abandoned Oakshaw trio described, appropriate permission sought, when visiting what can be potentially hazardous places.

¹⁴⁴ For a recent guide see: John Turpin & Derrick Knight, *The Magnificent Seven: London's First Garden Cemeteries* (Stroud, 2011).

¹⁴⁵ Mary Ann Semple *Inscriptions on the tombstones in several of the churchyards in Paisley* (hand written lists, c.1850) held in PCL Archives: PCLLS 718A PC2378; see also her *Abbey Church Inscriptions*: PCL LS 718PA 2379.

converted to residential or commercial use, or stand empty awaiting the same, and another has been demolished. But while these attractive buildings usually lend themselves well to re-use, their adjoining, low-lying and almost 'hidden' graveyards do not. Having received few, if any, interments in living memory, any more recent attention from congregations generally ceased following their church closure.

Three detailed below in the Oakshaw Conservation Area serve as exemplars: Oakshaw West (originally Reformed Presbyterian), Oakshaw Gaelic – itself the centre of controversy over reinterments and proposed housing overlay in late 2005 – and Oakshaw East (commencing Anti Burgher). Meanwhile, the closure in 2010 of Castlehead (originally Relief) Church has increased threats to another important burial ground, perhaps best known as Tannahill's resting place. Other sites have vanished completely: Thread Street (again originally Relief) church and its small burial ground was cleared c.1970 for the construction of the Cotton Street Council buildings; and the rear-facing graveyard at Holy Trinity Episcopal, where burials are represented today by one recumbent headstone alongside the pavement. The graveyard attached to the former Abbey Close (originally Burgher) congregation has long lost its fronting church, but seems secure from future threat owing to its prime civic location between town crown jewels of the Town Hall, Abbey, and the River Cart. The three graveyards originating with Established (i.e. 'State') parish churches appear not unduly threatened, other than from inevitable weathering. Yet these themselves have undergone change, notably so the Abbey, and thus merit some attention below.

Survey

Abbey

Owing to location at the hub of a town centre subject to much alteration, the Abbey graveyard has lost much of its former stature. It has been a demise aggravated by the removal of the precinct wall, then an early twentieth century programme of laying remaining headstones flat, almost all of which now lie beneath the neatly mown grass. Any traces of seventeenth and eighteenth century burial enclosures have long gone; likewise contemporary large flatstones, many of which occupied the Abbey's former choir in centuries after its post-Reformation demolition, disappeared under the early 1900s choir-transept rebuild.¹⁴⁶ Fortunately they were amongst a total of over five hundred in the wider graveyard recorded by Mary Ann Semple of which a mere handful are visible today. One example, yards from the bus stops on Gauze Street, is dated 1799 and records the lair's intended use for one James Peacock 'Vinter in Paisley', his wife Jean Cochra(ne?) and their children.

During the rebuild and subsequent works, some, mostly medieval and early modern period flatstones, were rehoused as artefacts around the abbey nave and cloister walk. Along with other memorials in the Abbey interior these form a culturally valuable collection in national terms.

¹⁴⁶ Rev A. R. Howell. *The Restored Abbey of Paisley: its historic and architectural interest; a souvenir of the opening and dedication of the choir* 1st December 1921 (Paisley, 1928).

Abbey Close (originally Burgher)

In times when much social grievance centred in Dissenter denominations, the first (1733) Secession from the Established Church (of Scotland) quickly split. The flashpoint was a burgess oath (not an actual issue in Paisley) the swearing of which was deemed by the more hardline Seceders as servility to a 'corrupt' State and Church – these becoming termed Anti Burghers. More liberal-minded and better-off Seceders, meanwhile, tended to drift to the 'Burgher' side – though a blend of the types could be found in either, especially in rural districts where congregations were thinly distributed. Over a half-century (c.1750-1800) the Seceders were typically tradesmen and merchants, with good levels of prosperity. By c.1800 they saw a new generation of Anti Burghers shed their forbears' stern image, subsequently (re)uniting with the Burghers in 1820 as the 'United Secession', then with the Relief in 1847 as United Presbyterians.

The site was purchased, perhaps intentionally, facing the 'Establishment' edifice of the Abbey, and the first church erected by the Burgher Seceders in 1763 was a plain, box-like structure, relatively cheap to construct (religious Dissenters received no State 'endowment' to build their places of worship) but capable of seating large numbers of people over two, or sometimes three, sittings. Dissenter congregational income, typically for years burdened by an initial building fund, was often heavily dependent on seat-rents. Lairs in an adjacent burial ground were another, if lesser, revenue source. Rebuilt early the following century, the modern disappearance of the church, combined with modern landscaping of the vicinity, gives little indication that the Seceder burial ground was once a separate entity from the Abbey one. Some of the surviving two dozen or so memorials (out of approximately fifty described by Mary Ann Semple c.1845 and augmented by some later ones) record members of the founding congregation. One blackened headstone is designated, "the burying Place of Robert Hart and Catharine Campbell his Spouse and Their Children 1799 No. 69." The large obelisk memorial records mill magnate James Clark (1783-1865). Typical of his class, the wealthy, essentially self-made, 'new-money' man Clark sided with Seceders against an Established Church viewed as the defender of old, Reform opposing, elites.

Oakshaw Anti Burgher

The easternmost of three churches on Oakshaw Street converted to residential use, the present church (latterly named Oakshaw East) represents an 1826 on-site rebuild of another plain edifice erected around 1760 by Anti Burghers. Again lacking tower and spire, though given a Classically-styled frontage, such designs were functional and lend themselves well to domestic conversions today. To the rear, a sizeable and heavily overgrown graveyard has, like its converted Gaelic and Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPC) western neighbours, now no obvious entry. This affords some protection from vandalism, though few stones remain upright, with the majority under soil and vegetation. However the seclusion has again allowed unobserved decay and loss. Known as 'France's Kirkyard' after long-serving minister William France (1833-1880),¹⁴⁷ visible memorials include impressive wall tablets. One of these, a notable late 1700s example on the west wall, commemorates the family of reed maker John Cars, being surmounted by a Classical carving symbolising the departing spirit.

¹⁴⁷ Small, History, 516.

A cluster of c.1800 headstones around the upper section of the site tilt worryingly. Mary Ann Semple recorded some thirty-odd memorials, most of which still survived at the time of the Mitchells' 1960 surveys (itself only concerned with pre-1855 inscriptions).¹⁴⁸ The total, supplemented by a few post-1855 inscriptions, now appears reduced, with a number doubtless having fallen and become submerged beneath soil and vegetation.

Oakshaw Gaelic

By the later eighteenth century Gaelic-speaking Highlanders were migrating to Lowland towns in unprecedented numbers. For linguistic, cultural and social reasons, they preferred their own places-of-worship. With the provincial Lowland persona of Seceder churches attracting few Gaels, the Established Church drew them by building simple structures within existing urban parish boundaries and manning them with Gaelic-speaking incumbents. Such areas were by c.1800 becoming over populated and existing parish church provision was insufficient. Hence the term 'chapels-of-ease', or simply 'chapel', given these auxiliary parish church outlets. At the Disruption of 1843, like the vast majority of congregations in the Highlands, most joined the Free Church, though rarely retained their places of worship.

This oblong structure situated midway along Oakshaw Street has a typical Scots 'hipped' roof of the period indicated by a Latin inscription dated 1793. An added inscription of 1839 likely refers to the ornate porch. To the rear, in a line with the RPC and Anti Burgher grounds as described, a burial ground cleared of most memorials has been the subject of more recent controversy regarding private development. Firstly in the 1960s visible stones and associated human remains were transported 3 miles away to Hawkhead cemetery. However these numbered only a few dozen, now laid out in neat rows at Hawkhead. The majority, broken stones and bones, likely remain sub-surface. Portions of headstone can indeed be seen littering the lower (railway line) end of the site. Further speculation surrounded the burial ground in 2005. Like its neighbours, this wilderness graveyard lies behind a now-converted fronting church and is again enclosed on three sides by a wall.¹⁴⁹

Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPC)

The westernmost of the Oakshaw Street trio, built c.1800, with accompanying manse has been converted to flats. As at the Gaelic chapel, a church rear with steps leading down to the burial ground, now used as communal patio.

The 'Reformed Presbyterian Church' originated with diehard Covenanting elements living mostly in the rural South-West, folk opposing the Restoration regime of Charles II and brother James II (VII) during the 1660s-1680s. During these years they clashed often bloodily with the authorities, fighting small-scale battles against state troops, with many of their number also killed in cold-blood or transported. Accordingly, the congregations evolving from the once banned 'Conventicles' into the RPC (formed in 1743) tended to be robust and self-sufficient. Perhaps even more markedly than in close-linked Seceder

¹⁴⁸ J.F. Mitchell & S. Mitchell, *Renfrewshire Monumental Inscriptions (pre-1855)* Vol. 1 (Scottish Genealogical Society 2nd edition, 1992)

¹⁴⁹ The back wall has largely collapsed at the Oakshaw trio; at Gaelic, however, the railway line affords protection; the rear of the others is shielded by later development.

congregations, RPC kith and kin ties were particularly strong – members/adherents moving to big towns like Paisley quickly building their own church and rarely attending another.

Figure 8: Mural Tablet to Anne Mather



The expression 'Cameronian' is often used interchangeably for RPC churches/congregations. It derives from the regiment formed amongst RPC forbears in 1689, named after Covenanting 'martyr' Richard Cameron (d.1680). Some 1200 immediately went north and successfully defended the town of Dunkeld against 5000 Jacobite Highlanders – themselves fresh from destroying a government army at Killiecrankie. Their intended invasion of the South stopped in its tracks, despairing Highlanders reputedly claimed “they could fight with men but

not with devils” – good testament to the mettle of RPC folk.

The burial ground serves as a textbook example of the ravages of time and neglect. Within its boundary wall, the eastern side of which is punctuated by an ornamental garden tower of Rosebank House, the majority of headstones lie now wholly or partly submerged. Even the few stones which are visible are mostly broken and obscured by foliage. Several mural tablets are again preserved. One of these commemorates short-lived Paisley merchant Walter Symington (d.1837) and his long-surviving wife Lilius Stevenson (d.1877). Mary Ann Semple recorded some thirty-four memorials, most of which were visible to the Mitchells in the 1960s. Only around a dozen remain extant and legible today.

Oakshaw Trinity (High Parish Church)

Dominating the centrally elevated Oakshaw, locale of Paisley's Georgian elites and today recognised with “outstanding” conservation status, is the mid-eighteenth century High Parish Church, its Wren-like steeple visible for miles around. Well maintained, by virtue of its prominent position and continued church use, conspicuous within its surrounding graveyard is a large pedestal monument erected by Andrew Dunlop “Manufacturer in Paisley ... in memory of Marion Walkinshaw his spouse.” Yet an inscription on the scroll-flanked column above is now illegible due to weathering. Notable on the precinct wall is a line of mural tablets. One of these is a worn plaque recalling Ferguslie's hearty rural days, here long-lived farmer John Gibb (d.1836 aged 92) spouse Jean Reid (d.1821 aged 73) and daughter Jean “relict” (widow) of John Craig (d. 1857 aged 83).

**Figure 9: Monument to Hugh Carswell
(Laigh Parish Church)**



Downhill from the High Kirk, and slightly older, this simple T-plan structure with basic Gothic features was built as the Laigh (Low) parish church in the 1730s and now serves as Paisley Arts Centre. Around the building a maintained graveyard contains mostly pre-Victorian memorials. Large tablestones predominate, along with murals and headstones re-set against the walls. During the 1960s the Mitchells noted all of Mary Semple's inscriptions as surviving – a situation little if at all changed a half-

century on. In 1835 the Laigh Kirk was leased by the town magistrates to the United Secession (merged Anti Burghers and Burghers). A new parish church, named St George's, had been recently built (1819) – this being the nearby neo-Classical structure on George Street now converted to flats. The old Laigh building was sold to the Evangelical Union (EU) denomination whose inscription fronts the building. The E.U. ran its churches in poorer locales, its main emphasis being on Temperance. The cluster of Georgian-period tablestones on the west side mostly pre-date E.U. days, recording wealthy merchants and their families. Of the re-set headstones a large example recalls both Tarbet and Smith, residents of Barshaw House, just preceding the construction of the existing mansion by Robert Smith. Nearby, a large pedimented mural memorial erected by one John Mair "London Merchant" in memory of parents William Mair "Mason in Paisley" (d. 1765) and Marion Swan (d.1779) offers melancholy reflection on then-commonplace infant mortality: before heading south to the metropolis John Mair and his own wife Margaret Thomson experienced the "affliction of leaving here in the dust four of their children (William and Marion, twins, Alexander and William) with whom they hope to be found in the resurrection of the just."

Holy Trinity Episcopal

Like many Episcopal churches appearing in nineteenth century Scottish towns, Holy Trinity catered mainly for incoming Highland, Irish and English workers of Episcopalian/Anglican affiliation. A small burial ground to the rear of the church, depicted on the first edition OS map, was later covered by extensions. In the process bodies were reinterred, including some within the church crypt. Today, lying flat on a small grass area beside the street, the sole remaining headstone

commemorates Holy Trinity's first minister the Very Reverend W. M. Wade (d.1845).

Thread Street Relief

Nothing of the burial ground remains here, with the site having been cleared around 1970 in building operations for the Cotton Street Council offices. Prior to the demolition, the Mitchells had added another eight inscriptions to the same number recorded by Semple over a century before. Yet the admittedly small burial ground doubtless contained more interments. Its plain fronting church opened in 1806 was Paisley's second Relief Church congregation, following in time the same denominational sequence of Canal Street Relief (United Presbyterian – United Free – Church of Scotland). As with Oakshaw Gaelic, reinterments and a few intact stones went to Hawkhead Cemetery – though none there corresponding to the Mitchells' complete list could be observed by the writer.

Castlehead Relief

This recently (late 2010) closed church opened in 1781 as 'Castlehead Relief' and was later (with the opening of an adjacent canal) renamed Canal Street. Like most other Seceders, while Relief rationale was in theory the perceived Erastianism (State servility) of the Established Church, members usually came from aspiring but frequently disgruntled new classes. Not unusual for a Relief congregation, in early times Castlehead was known as the 'Weavers Church' – an occupational group famed for independence of spirit and by c.1800 folk experiencing hard times from factory mechanisation. As the stones tell, other occupations increasingly filled Canal Street's pews. In the nineteenth century a railway line (now the cycle track) dissected the cemetery, a bridge being built to link the two portions.

The building's closure has only increased concern about the large adjoining graveyard, arguably Paisley's most fascinating. Moreover as frequently the case in historic graveyard 'maintenance', regular lawnmower use most likely contributes to damage. The site rises up hill from the present cycle track, being enclosed by a boundary wall in gradual state of collapse. A range of stones within include a Victorian monument to Robert Tannahill (1774-1810), Paisley's famed 'Weaver Poet' whose tragic and relatively young life ended by self-drowning in a stream beneath the canal. Of particularly note are a range of memorials, mostly now tilting headstones of pre-1800 Georgian date, depicting trade symbols – standard practice for the era. Good examples include one of c.1790 for James Adam and family, the anvil denoting Adam as a "Smith" in Lyslesland, and another to baker James Spowart with carving of a baker's peel (long flat shovel) and brush beneath a wheat-sheaf. Over two hundred inscriptions were listed by Mary Semple, the number augmented later by Lochhead (c.1917), then in turn by the Mitchells' survey reaching a total of near three hundred. Later stones have again increased this figure. As elsewhere a number have fallen in the half-century since the last (i.e. Mitchells') survey, some in the process having broken and/or become partly submerged.

**Figure 10: Castlehead Memorial to Baker
James Spowart**



Denominational Difference

The survey above provides a physical record of the intermittent and erratic break up and eventual (if not entirely complete) reunion of Scotland's national church between c.1730-1930, which has become the stuff almost of parody. Popular misconceptions persist regarding the wider context of these events: for example, the confusion of pre-1900 Free Church congregations as synonymous with today's 'Wee Free' denomination of the name; or assuming that Free and United Free were different entities.

Offering Oakshaw East as a standard example, with little if any

upset to congregational life between c.1760-1930, its status changed from an Established Church (of Scotland) background, re-forming as Anti Burghers, becoming United Secession, United Presbyterian, United Free, and finally reintegrating into the Church of Scotland.¹⁵⁰ Research into the socio-economic and political impetus of Presbyterian dissent has been revealing, with historians contending its basis in terms including economic theory ('cliometric analysis') and/or nationalist sentiment.¹⁵¹ In truth it was likely a combination of several factors. Accordingly an outline consideration follows.

Dissent

Centuries of Scottish history from the Reformation of c.1560 onwards lends itself to popular portrayal as a nation religiously obsessed, compounded by a

¹⁵⁰ For an account of the Secession-derived Paisley churches see: Small, Robert History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church from 1733 to 1900 Vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1904).

¹⁵¹ See, for example: Callum G Brown, Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707 (Edinburgh, 1997); Peter Hillis, The Barony of Glasgow: a widow onto church and people in nineteenth century Scotland (Edinburgh, 2007) Previous research by Professor Hillis into the socio-economic makeup of Established vis-a-vis Seceder-derived membership was influential, becoming known as the 'Hillis question.' For angles on the Disruption, see the ten essays within: Stewart J. Brown and Michael Fry, Scotland in the Age of the Disruption (Edinburgh, 1997). Meanwhile, for an examples of clinical economic theory application, see: J W Sawkins and R Mochrie, 'Competition and Participation in Religious Markets: Evidence from Victorian Scotland', Review of Social Economy Vol. 66(4, 2008), 437-66; and also by the same authors: 'A bibliography of sources of quantative data for studies in the economic history of the Scottish Churches in the mid-nineteenth century', Records of The Scottish Church History Society Vol. 38 (2008) 45-81.

tendency to schism. Indeed a perusal of events connected with the Covenanting movement in its varying forms, and in turn the later appearance of obstinately sounding sects such as 'Anti Burghers' and 'Auld Lichts', seem only to confirm the nation's 'religious' proclivities as negative ones. Yet this view is overly simplistic. Professor Tom Devine amongst others sets the Reformation as the birth of modern Scotland, namely a time when lay control was taken of much property and functions of a moribund medieval Church, and embryonic social and education services systematically developed at parish level.¹⁵² Continuing the theme into the following century, the Covenanting movement in its two main stages – in essence Establishment then anti-Establishment – can be seen as robust responses to reactionary forces seeking (and between 1660-1685, managing) to revert to previous Crown-and-elite controlled Church-State settlements.

Moving on to post c.1750 times of peace, in an increasingly modernising and politicised society – witnessing considerable population movement, social mobility, and class conflict – Church movements splitting from the Established Church became focal points for varying interest groups. The congregations of these 'Seceder' denominations typically displayed strong social and career solidarity – the trademark weaver persona of the early Relief being perhaps the classic example – plus general 'anti-establishment' feeling. In 'Radical Renfrewshire' this was seen in the appearance of numerous Relief, Burgher, and Anti Burgher congregations. A systematic study of Renfrewshire's surviving CH2 and CH3 material has apparently yet to be undertaken.¹⁵³ However, based on that done elsewhere, an overall picture of elders and 'managers' at the self-funding Seceder churches representing upwardly mobile groups, as compared to more traditional and professional elements at Established (parish) Church outlets, would not be surprising. In early 1800s Scotland the Established Church was associated with Tory resistance to political reform and suspicion of working-class movements – the recent horrors of the French Revolution often cited as an example of empowered lower orders. By contrast, aspiring types, plus poorer including radical elements, each seeking empowerment including enfranchisement, tended to identify with dissenting forms of religion.¹⁵⁴ With hindsight, religious and political dissent often seemed but two sides of the same coin.

Over time, prosperity and widened cultural horizons saw divisions between the main Seceders healed in unions of 1820 and 1847, the latter as United Presbyterians. There were also practical reasons for this coming together: post-1832 widening franchise saw leading elements amongst these 'Voluntaries' form a strong Liberal bloc in local and national politics. The Clark family, for example, had links with 'Abbey Close' Burgher, where today an obelisk memorial commemorating thread entrepreneur James Clark (1783-1865)

¹⁵² T.M. Devine addressed the topic on the 450th anniversary of the Reformation. See, for example, his article within the January 2010 edition of the Church of Scotland's Life & Work magazine. Elsewhere, Devine (a 'Catholic-Agnostic') sees Scots' negative stereotyping of the Reformation and its key figures as but one evidence of their near 'universal historical illiteracy.'

¹⁵³ National Archives of Scotland classification codes for Church of Scotland and mainstream (Seceder derived and Free) Presbyterian Dissenters respectively.

¹⁵⁴ In contemporary material the term 'Protestant Dissenters' often serves as a synonym for Seceders.

nestles beneath a Paisley Town Hall, built with his nephew's bequest.¹⁵⁵ Nonetheless, in times when popular clergymen had loyal followings, the rare phenomenon of a Tory-denouncing Established Church minister could likewise draw the discontented into his personal fold – Brewster of the adjacent Paisley Abbey perhaps the nation's prime example.¹⁵⁶

As churches of Seceder origin became more mainstream, their poorer elements often left to join new radical alternatives, notably Chartists or Universalists.¹⁵⁷ Seceder diehards, meanwhile, remained as minute 'Auld Licht' groups. These enjoyed little success in Paisley. Instead traditionalists, opposing perceived corruption in both Established and the larger Seceder Churches, converged in Oakshaw's Reformed Presbyterian Church congregation, a movement-turned denomination based on State-denouncing seventeenth-century Covenanting ideals. The equation was made more complex by Established Church rupture in 1843, primarily over the reintroduction of patronage. Patronage was deemed by the Kirk's Evangelical wing as 'state subservience'. Patronage deprived congregations of the right to appoint their own minister. Parliament, now confined to London, was seen as reneging on a guarantee made in the 1707 Act of Union. The resultant 'Free Church' in time absorbed most Auld Lichts and the RPC (evident in memorials at Oakshaw RPC recording the congregation as Free Church from 1873). In time losing much of its old vigour, the Free Church joined with the United Presbyterians in a large national union of 1900. Faced with declining influence, the secularisation of former kirk session functions, and almost uniform theology, the eventual near full-scale union (or re-union) of the Established Church with these break-offs occurred in 1929. However, to reiterate: regardless of high level changes in bureaucracy and nomenclature, matters of daily congregational life – and death – continued largely uninterrupted for most of the congregations concerned.

In conclusion, consideration of the remaining denominational graveyards remain. Of all church communities displaying a markedly social-cultural identity, probably those rooted in a conspicuously Highland form of Presbyterianism were most distinct; Episcopal churches catering largely for incoming Anglicans from the Highlands, Ireland, and England; and Catholic congregations of mainly Irish provenance. In Paisley these were represented by Oakshaw Gaelic, Holy Trinity, and the Catholic St Mirin's church. But while little survives of cemeteries pertaining to Gaelic and Holy Trinity, it appears – if curiously – that neither St Mirin's nor indeed the wider Catholic community ever had their own within

¹⁵⁵ For a discussion of the family's rise, see: Valerie Reilly, '2. Coats and Clark. The Binding Thread of Paisley's History.' *RLHF Journal* Vol. 15 (2009).

¹⁵⁶ The Reverend Patrick Brewster, 2nd (in theory assistant) minister of Paisley Abbey from 1818-1859 campaigned for causes noted such as Catholic Emancipation, anti-slavery, anti-militarism, and Poor Law reform. Holding radical Chartist views, Brewster regularly clashed with Established Church elites who appeared fearful of dismissing him, yet conspired to prevent him from ever becoming the Abbey's principal minister. See: *The Paisley Prophet: Patrick Brewster*, John Murphy & Robbie Moffat (Palm Tree Books: Glasgow, 1997).

¹⁵⁷ See: J. Christadoulou, 'The Glasgow Universalist Church and Scottish Radicalism from the French Revolution to Chartism: A Theology of Liberation', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 43 (4, 1992) 606-618.

Paisley bounds, the nearest being St John's in Barrhead not opened until 1841. Accordingly it is not included in the survey above.

4. The Kilbarchan General Society

1765-2015

Helen Calcluth

From the mid-eighteenth century Kilbarchan Parish was a close-knit community of handloom weavers and farmers. Two friendly societies, the Farmers Society (1765) and the Weavers Society (1766), were established in the village to support their members in times of need and Kilbarchan General Society (1765), which soon developed into both a charity and a friendly society, was set up as a charitable organisation to support the poor of the village in times of hardship.¹⁵⁸ By 1830, although the Weavers Society and the Farmers Society no longer existed, the independent, self-help tradition of the village continued and no fewer than eight friendly societies operated in Kilbarchan.¹⁵⁹ Of all these numerous friendly societies, only the General Society exists today, two hundred and fifty years after its foundation.

Unless otherwise referenced information comes from the General Society's Minute Books and Treasurer's Books and from typed notes taken in the early 1970s from the first Minute Book which has since gone missing. All extant General Society books and documents are in possession of the Society.

Figure 11: Kilbarchan Steeple



Kilbarchan General Society is one of the oldest active charitable organisations in Scotland. For two hundred years it supported the poor of the village and gave financial support to its members who had fallen on hard times. From the mid-twentieth century, with the introduction of the welfare state, the Society's main purpose became outdated. However, the Society still has a large active membership and is a traditional close-knit social group with the interests of the village at its heart. For many years in the twentieth century the Society held a dinner dance for members and friends. This was the village's social event of the year. Today its annual Burns Supper is its main social event. The Society continues to use its

¹⁵⁸ Semple, William, in Crawford and Semple, A History of the Shire of Renfrew (Paisley, Alex Weir 1782) p.115.

¹⁵⁹ Fowler's Trades Directory, 1830-31, p190-91.

investments and fund raising activities to give support to local organisations and village events.



Figure 12: Kilbarchan General Society Committee (1978)

Two Hundred and Fifty years (1765-2015)

Kilbarchan General Society was founded on 20th December, 1765, when its Bond of Association was signed by 24 heritors, merchants and tradesmen in the village. The wealthier members could choose to pay a lump sum on joining the Society, and others could pay an annual fee of one shilling.¹⁶⁰ The first Preses (chairman) was the Parish Church minister, Rev. John Warner.

Founder Members, 1765

Rev. John Warner (Preses 1766)	Robert Caldwell, wright
John Speir, writer, Wardhouse	James Milliken of Milliken
John Barbour, sen., merchant	William Bryden, wright
John Barbour, jun., merchant	John How, surgeon, Dampton
William Barbour, merchant (Treasurer 1766)	Robert Stevenson, merchant
Humphrey Barbour, merchant	Alex Speirs, merchant
John How, merchant	Robert Sempill
James Semple, tenant, Middleton	William Napier of Clochoderick
Allan Speir, Wardhouse	John Birkmyre
Patrick Wilson, Bowfield	David Barbour
John Honeyman, flax dresser	Robert Barr, weaver
James Miller, merchant	James Cochrane, weaver

In 1765 the Society was established as a solely charitable organisation, but in 1774 the Articles of the Society were amended to include giving charity to its own members. The Society had become both a Charity and a Friendly Society. Money raised by the members could now be used 'for maintaining such of their own number, their widows and children, as shall by misfortune be rendered

¹⁶⁰ MacKenzie, R.D., Kilbarchan A Parish History (Paisley, Alexander Gardner 1902) p.186.

incapable of maintaining themselves', ¹⁶¹ but benefit could not be claimed until a member had subscribed for five years.¹⁶²

In the eighteenth century the Society met twice each year on the first Friday after Saint Barchan's Day in December and on the first Friday in June.¹⁶³ The Society worked to raise additional funds so that it could look after its members in time of need and contribute to the common good of the village community. The Society's finances were efficiently managed and each transaction was documented in the Treasurer's Book. Regulations within the Society were strictly enforced. In 1779 the Preses, John Harvie, was fined 1s (one shilling) for failing to call one of the half-yearly meetings and in 1785 twenty nine members were expelled for not paying their subscriptions.

The General Society's first charitable enterprise began in 1766. The Society established a weekly meal market at the Steeple to augment funds and provide a much needed service to the community. As an incentive to encourage farmers to bring meal to the market, a premium of £1 was offered to the farmer who brought the most meal to the market in the year, and a premium of 10 shillings was offered to the farmer who sold most meal in the year. The enterprise made a modest gain for the Society each year until 1772 when the market closed and the meal buckets and other appliances were sold by public roup for 11s.6d.

A main source of income for the Society from the early days before the general use of banks was lending out cash in the form of Bills and Bonds in sums of £5 to £50 to known organisations and individuals. The Society's funds were augmented by the interest accrued. By 1794 the Society had funds of four hundred pound and three pence.¹⁶⁴ The General Society did not make use of a bank until 1796 when an account was opened with the Union Bank, in Paisley.

From the 1850s to 1950s the General Society amassed a considerable income from investments. One major investment, which was also one of the most significant contributions of the General Society to the common good of the village, was the founding of the Kilbarchan Gas Company. In 1844 five village friendly societies – The Kilbarchan General Society, The Kilbarchan Friendly Association, The Sixth Society, The Seventh Society and The Friendly Society for Mutual Protection against Loss by Fire – united together to set up The Kilbarchan Friendly Joint Stock Gas Light Company. The aims of the founders of this company, known locally as the Kilbarchan Gas Company, were to give gas light to the village and, in so doing, augment the funds required to support the needy members of the participating societies. By 1913 the General Society had bought out the other friendly societies and was sole owner of the gas company. Johnstone and Kilbarchan gasworks merged in the 1940s and closed in 1955.¹⁶⁵

Another profitable investment was the purchase of stock in the Clyde Navigational Trust. Arrangements were made on 20th March, 1877, between Alexander Fullarton, the Society clerk, and James Caldwell, writer in Paisley, to take on a bond of £200 for ten years at four per cent interest. Further stocks

¹⁶¹ Semple, (1782), p.114.

¹⁶² MacKenzie (1902), p.186.

¹⁶³ MacKenzie (1902), p.186.

¹⁶⁴ Maxwell, P., Parish of Kilbarchan (1794) in Old Statistical Account of Scotland, p.496.

¹⁶⁵ Brown, J., The Story of a Small Town Gasworks (booklet).

were purchased in 1879. By 1884 the General Society's total funds were in excess of £1,000.

In 1932 the Society invested in a chain of office to be worn by the Preses on formal occasions. This gold chain was purchased at a cost of £200 from Messrs Edwards, jewellers in Glasgow, and must be a considerable financial asset today.

Charity payments to needy members were meticulously recorded in the Minute Books. By 1865, one hundred years after its foundation, the General Society had paid out £846 to the aged, and £306 to widows and orphans. Additional money had also been spent on support of the village community in times of hardship and the Society still had a total £482 on hand.

Sums of money paid out to members in charity varied according to need. In 1779 the sum of fifteen shillings was paid out on the death of member, Robert Hodgart, for his burial. Payment for burial of a deceased member appears to have been standard practice. In 1780 an annual sum of fifteen shillings for that year, and for the following five years, was awarded to a deserted wife with three children, whose husband had left the country. In 1791 two pecks of meal per week were given to another needy member. In 1796 money was given to a member's wife for a coffin, and ten shillings to another member's wife to buy clothes. In the same year fifteen shillings was granted to a member to assist him to the "Salt Water", presumably for recovery from an illness in the good sea air. In 1800, the Society purchased thirty pounds sterling worth of meal to be distributed within the village in a time of scarcity. In 1819 a cart of coals was given to a member's widow with a small payment of sixpence per week. In 1841 Peter McQueen a member of the Society who worked as a grocer, was granted a Bill of £100 from the Society to purchase a house in Johnstone. This was of great benefit to the member as a loan, but also a good investment for the Society.

In the 1790s, it appears that the number of charity payments was on the increase due to the rise of the cotton industry and the resulting downturn in the handloom weaving trade in Kilbarchan. In 1794 the annual membership subscription was raised to £1 to cover the increased expense. From 1813, it became common practice that, to secure a charity payment, a member had to swear an oath that he was destitute and had only the goodness of his family to support him. In 1817 aliment was fixed at between two and three shilling per week.

The following entry in the General Society Minute Book in 1865, one hundred years after the foundation of the Society, expresses the pride the members took in the charitable work of their forebears.

"It will be easily perceived what an amount of good the Society has done. Many a one has joined the Society in the *hey-day* and vigour of life, never expecting to receive any benefit from it, but having become reduced in circumstances by causes over which they had no control, or having been brought down by age and growing infirmities, rendering them unable to support themselves in that spirit of independence which they had hitherto done. They have fallen back on the Society and have received that which in reality is their own, and small as that allowance may have been, it has often in times been sufficient to prevent them from applying to the Parochial Board for relief. The Society has also cheered the heart of the Widow and made tears of joy trickle down her cheek as

she received her small donation from time to time. She had reason to be glad that her Husband when in the prime of life had entered the Society.”

Similar charity payments of aliment and donations continued. In 1866 the Society gave one ton of coal to a destitute member and paid the apprenticeship fee of one pound to a local dress maker on behalf of the daughter of a deceased member and some further subsistence payments of one shilling and sixpence per week. In 1887 forty shillings was granted to the son of a late member for the purchase of a cart. In 1900 the Society gave a gift to Mrs John Wilkie to celebrate her one hundredth birthday. In October 1914, at the start of WW1, a sum of twenty pounds was the first of a number of donations to the War Fund. Charitable payments to the needy continued to be made regularly well into the twentieth century when, for example, ten donations of three guineas were made to needy individuals in 1935.

In the 1930s donations were made regularly to local hospitals including the Royal Alexandra Infirmary, Renshaw Cottage Hospital, the Royal Eye Infirmary, the Royal Samaritan Hospital, and the Western Infirmary Glasgow, and to the Orphan Homes and the District Nursing Association.

Figure 13: Old Wooden Bust of Habbie Simpson



In addition to charitable works and investments, the Society also supported and sponsored both village improvements and local events. The Society was instrumental in providing the village with its Public Park, funded by public subscription and opened in 1888. Forty years later, the General Society approached the Parish Council requesting that the council take over the upkeep of the Public Park. The Council, however, was reluctant to comply with the request because the Orr Fountain, the merry-go-

rounds and the fences and seats in the park were all in a state of disrepair, and access roads to the park (Well Road, Gateside, and the lane from Gateside to the park) required maintenance. The Society arranged a public meeting resulting in the founding of the Public Park Committee. This committee raised money through dances, whist drives and door-to-door collections to complete the repairs demanded by the council and the Parish Council took over the park in 1929.

The Society's long involvement in Kilbarchan's Lillas Day celebrations is first recorded in an entry in the Minute Book of 1851. The General Society was asked to join other village societies in leading a procession round the village as part of the celebrations. The Society was especially active in the Lillas Day

celebrations in the 1930s. In 1935 the final instalment of £649, of a total of £1250, raised from the 1930s Liliass Days, was donated to the Royal Alexandra Infirmary in Paisley. A letter to Kilbarchan General Society from the Director of the Royal Alexandra Infirmary confirmed that the money raised had been used to install a bed in Ward 8, and the managers of the General Society were invited to inspect the commemorative tablet which had been placed over this bed. The General Society's involvement in Liliass Day celebrations has continued to the present day when the Preses of the Society has a place of honour in the annual Liliass Day Parade.

**Figure 14: James Gorman at Work on Habbie
in his Brass Foundry**



In 1932 when the statue of the famous Kilbarchan piper Habbie Simson was being repainted, it was decided that the lower part of the statue had deteriorated beyond repair. This original wooden statue of Habbie, carved by Archibald Robertson of Greenock, had overlooked the old village from a niche high up on the Steeple for one hundred years. The General Society planned to raise funds to replace it with a bronze statue. The estimated cost of a bronze replacement was between £400 and £600, but the Society had raised only £114 for the purpose. However, Joseph Gorman, a brass founder from Glasgow, took an interest in the project and saved the day. He was a member of the Society and offered to make a facsimile of the old wooden statue in bronze for only £100 on condition that the remains of the old statue could be transported safely to his

brass foundry in Glasgow. Gorman's bronze statue has stood the test of time and still takes pride of place in the niche on the Steeple today.

Since 1853 the committee meetings of Kilbarchan General Society had been held in a small room on the upper floor of the Steeple buildings, known as the Ladies Room. Kilbarchan General Society, along with the Seventh Friendly Society, the Gas Company, the Town Library and the Foresters Friendly Society had purchased the Ladies Room from Milliken Estate in 1889. The Kilbarchan General Society became sole owner of the Ladies Room in 1925 when the Society purchased the room (along with the old 1765 Kilbarchan Fire Engine) from the other societies. After repairs and renovation the room was ready for

use in 1926. Today the Ladies Room is still used for the Society's committee meetings, and houses a display of old General Society photographs, an old painting of Habbie Simson and the surviving painted head and shoulders of the original wooden statue of Habbie.

In 1935 Kilbarchan General Society erected a commemorative well to the memory of the Kilbarchan weaver-poet, Robert Allan, who was Preses of the General Society in 1803-4 and is the only Kilbarchan weaver to have a monument erected to his memory in the village. The well was unveiled by Mary Macgregor, the poet's great-grand-daughter.

**Figure 15: Robert Allen Memorial Well,
Church Street, Kilbarchan**



The Society's greatest service to the preservation of the old village was its efforts to force the Council to repair the steeple buildings. Kilbarchan Steeple had been built in 1755 to house the parish school and a meal market and donated to the village by James Milliken of Milliken Estate. In 1945, it was in need of extensive repairs and there was even talk of demolishing it. This historic building was saved from possible demolition when, through the efforts the General Society, it was scheduled as an ancient monument in 1949. As a scheduled monument, it could not be demolished. The Council estimated the cost of repairs at £12,000. In 1954 the General Society agreed to contribute funds of £2,500 to the Council for the necessary repairs and a further £500 towards cost of repairs to the Ladies Room.

From a membership of twenty four in 1765, the Society had grown steadily. In 1797 there was a membership of one hundred and thirty. In the Society's first published report in the Paisley and Renfrewshire Gazette it is stated that at the AGM in December 1876 the Society had two hundred and eleven members and had elected Alex Grant, the miller at Glentyan Mill, as Preses, Alex Purdon as Treasurer, Alex Fullarton, a handloom weaver, as Clerk and George Wilson as the Officer.¹⁶⁶ By 1885 the membership had increased to two hundred and fifty five.

Many members of Kilbarchan General Society considered their membership as a life-long commitment. When George Wilson, a grocer and spirit dealer with

¹⁶⁶ Paisley and Renfrewshire Gazette (PRG), 23rd Dec, 1876 - Report on the 1876 AGM .

premises in Steeple Street, died at the age of eighty three, an entry in the Minute Book in 1859 stated that he had attended fifty three Annual General Meetings of the Society. This long-term commitment to the Society by its members still continues. Six of the younger men shown in the photograph of the Committee members for 1978 are still active members of the Society, with Drew Connell (back row, second from right) being the Preses in 2015, the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Society

Today Kilbarchan General Society has a membership of almost four hundred and continues to give valued support to local organisations and good causes. The extant documents of the Society are still stored safely under lock and key in the wooden box which was purchased for one pound and five shillings when the Society was founded in 1765.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ PRG, 30th Dec, 1977.

5. A Map Which Changed History: Milliken Estate Stuart Nisbet

How early, and in what manner was the Renfrewshire landscape enclosed and improved during the eighteenth century? This article investigates how a traditional estate was transformed by a merchant returning from the colonies, based on the evidence of an early survey.

How much can we learn from a map? The map in Figure 16 is a curiosity, a unique portrait of the landscape. It is also a paradox. It shows two things at once: the landscape before and after improvement; Johnstone but also Milliken; a medieval tower and the merchant villa which replaced it; place names which have disappeared; a winding burn which is now straightened. The list goes on. Most oddly, it shows a great rectangular grid laid over the old landscape.



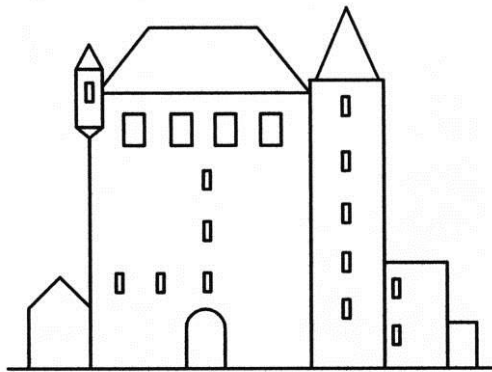
Figure 16: Milliken Estate (Based on Survey by John Watt c.1730)

The changes depicted on the map have caused confusion ever since it was drawn. It was surveyed for colonial merchant and retired soldier Major James Milliken. Like his estate, Major Milliken's personal origins are a paradox. Although latterly well-known in Renfrewshire and Glasgow (once he had apparently changed his career from soldier to merchant), nothing is as simple as it seems in the traditional history books, where landowners were celebrated as the elite of society.

There is a dearth of information about how the earliest improvements to the Renfrewshire landscape were funded and where the experience came from, but with Major Milliken, three connected events stand out. All originated in the 1660s, the decade of Milliken's birth, all were related to sugar, its cultivation, trading and processing. Firstly, Port Glasgow was founded in 1668 as Glasgow's deep water port. Secondly, from the same year, Glasgow's first sugar houses were built (one of which would later be owned by Milliken). Thirdly, sugar had already been imported to the Clyde for a generation from several Caribbean islands, mainly Nevis. Contrary to the popular view that Scots were absent from the Americas before the Parliamentary Union of 1707, the lower Clyde ports, such as Ayr and Irvine, had been trading with the Caribbean sugar islands since the 1640s.

Like our map, Major Milliken's background is controversial. Briefly, he was born near Largs in 1669 and spent his early life in Irvine. Contrary to the history books, instead of serving in the British Army, Milliken then spent his career cultivating sugar on Nevis, the same island where the Clyde's sugar came from. His original connection with the island was probably through his kinsman Hugh Montgomery of Skelmorlie, who was a partner in one of Glasgow's early sugar houses. Milliken worked his way up through the sugar plantation system, as an overseer and planter. His army 'rank', which he later used to enhance his status in Renfrewshire, was simply in the Nevis militia. Sugar cultivation was one of the most lucrative careers at the time. Milliken returned from St Kitts in the spring of 1729, in his fifties, as one of the richest men in Scotland. Running a sugar estate gave him the wealth and experience to purchase and develop a country estate at home.

Figure 17: Sketch of Johnstone Castle
(from Pont in 1590s)



The Map

The lands shown on the map, traditionally named Johnstone, had been owned since the early 1600s by Ludovic Houston, second son of Houston of Houston. On his return from the Caribbean, 'Major' Milliken purchased the lands from Ludovic's descendant, Houston of Johnstone. Although the traditional date for the purchase is 1733,¹⁶⁸ original correspondence shows that the estate had been acquired at least three years earlier

on Milliken's behalf, by his friend, partner, fellow sugar planter, and relative by marriage, William McDowall.¹⁶⁹ McDowall had already purchased Castle Semple in late 1726 and was well acquainted with Houston of Johnstone. His diary records him riding round Castle Semple Loch with Houston and Cunningham of Craigends in 1727.

Milliken renamed his newly acquired Johnstone estate after himself. Thereafter the Johnstone name persisted only on the south side of the Black Cart, where

¹⁶⁸ Semple, History of the Shire of Renfrew (1782), p.127.

¹⁶⁹ McDowall of Castle Semple wrote in April 1730 that he had purchased Johnstone on behalf of James Milliken. (Letters of Wm McDowall, National Library of Scotland).

the old tower of Easter Cochrane took on the Johnstone name. Fifty years later the name was fully consolidated on the south side of the Cart, when Johnstone became a planned town. However the change of names has been a source of confusion ever since.

Milliken sought to turn his newly purchased land into a country estate. To lay out his estate, he employed surveyor John Watt, the uncle of James, of steam engine fame.¹⁷⁰ Watt's account books show that he had been working at Castle Semple for McDowall since 1727 and carried out the survey for Milliken in 1730-1.

**Figure 18: The First Milliken House
(1750 sketch)**



Watt's survey is to a large scale, half way between the modern six and twenty five inch Ordnance Surveys. Figure 16 is a redraw of the central area of Watt's survey. The map shows the situation before and after improvement, with a random scatter of settlements, overlain by a vast 2km x 1km rectangular grid. At the time this grid was simply a proposal, but it became the scheme which was actually carried out. The grid can still be picked out on modern maps. Anyone driving from Johnstone to

Brookfield via Deaflockhill roundabout still passes around two sides of Milliken's rectangle (ABC on plan). The road BC on the northern boundary was diverted further north at the East Lodge in the 1790s.



Figure 19: Still House, Milliken's Sugar Works, Monkey Hill, St Kitts

The map also shows a number of things which have hitherto been lost. Most important is the location of the old castle of Johnstone. On Pont's survey in the 1590s, the castle was one of the largest in Renfrewshire (Figure 17). The castle is shown on the map (M1), but was demolished by Milliken within two years of the survey. It was replaced by Milliken's new mansion (Figure 18), built a short

¹⁷⁰ Sketch based on original Survey in Boulton and Watt Collection, Birmingham City Archives.

distance to the east (M2), with panoramic views over the countryside. In 1733, as part of his survey of Renfrewshire, John Watt took bearings from the roof of the new mansion, to distant features, including Glasgow High Kirk, Renfrew Steeple and Ben Lomond. To either side of Milliken's mansion were wings and offices.

This first Milliken mansion was destroyed by fire in 1801. The style of the mansion, including its prominent quoins, is mirrored in the ruined buildings on Milliken's sugar works at Monkey Hill, St Kitts (Figure 19). The second Milliken House was late Georgian, built in 1826 (M3), with fifteen bedrooms. It was accessed by a drive to the rear (west), but again faced east.

Figure 20: Milliken Doocot



The Gardens

The garden of the old medieval tower had been noted on Watt's survey, just south of the castle (G1). By the 1750s, the garden and large orchard was located directly south of the new mansion (G2) stretching as far west as the old garden, which became the orchard, and also south across the Kilbarchan Burn. In 1782 the meandering burn had been straightened and was described as running through the garden from west to east, playing over four pleasant cascades. Both early gardens (G1 and G2) were incorporated into the landscaped area fronting the second and final Milliken House (M3). This mansion looked across two circular ponds. The larger (eastern) pond is now drained, but was shown on Roy's map in the 1750s. Roy's map shows further ponds to the north of the first Milliken house (M2), on the Newfield Burn. The circular doocot in the garden (mentioned from 1782) survives in good condition (Figure 20), mirroring Milliken's circular windmill tower on St Kitts. The doocot stands on the site of the old steading of Yardfoot. The surviving two acre walled garden (G3) dates from the demolition of the first Milliken House and incorporates its stone features (Figure 22).

Figure 22: Entrance to Milliken Walled Garden



A RLHF field trip visited Milliken estate back in June 2004, at the invitation of the owners of the White House of Milliken. Nothing obvious remained on the site of the old castle of Johnstone (M1). However, now that its precise site has been rediscovered, it has great potential for excavation. The site of Milliken's mansion (M2), destroyed by fire in 1801, is evident as a terrace in a field, with

panoramic views to the east. A more prominent terrace also survives on the site of its replacement (M3), with three flights of steps leading down to the landscaped lawns and former ponds (Figure 21).



Figure 21: Steps leading down from site of final Milliken House

By 1886 Milliken estate still contained more than 1,500 acres and eleven farms (Mains, Barbush, Windyhill, Boghouse, Tweeniehill, Sandholes, Waterstone, Wheatlands, Pannel, Todholes, Milliken Mill, Over Johnstone and Nether Johnstone).¹⁷¹ However by the early 1920s it had declined to less than 500 acres and the second Milliken House (M3) was demolished. The remaining house on the estate, 'The White House of Milliken' (M4) grew out of the modest factor's house.



Figure 23: The White House of Milliken

¹⁷¹ 1886 Sales Brochure, Paisley Museum

The Milliken family didn't last nearly as long as their estate. 'Major' Milliken's son James II (Jamie) attended Eton and took over the estate on his father's death in 1741. The Major's grandsons, James III and Alexander, died in Venice and Paris, in their early 20's, while on Grand Tours. Their sister married into the Napier family and thereafter the Millikens were succeeded by the Napiers 'of Milliken'.

The author visited the Milliken - Napier estate on St Kitts (Monkey Hill) in 2007 and met the direct descendant of James Milliken, John Napier, who showed the author round the plantation. The sugar industry on the island, which had funded Milliken's improvements since the 1730s, had ceased in 2005 and Milliken plantation was gradually being sold off for real estate.

Overall, the map provides a unique example of the impact on sugar money in funding some of the earliest improvements to the Renfrewshire landscape.

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6. The Hay Family: Three Generations of Ministers in Renfrew

Helen Calcluth

Interest in the Hay family of ministers of Renfrew came about when the author was involved in research for Killallan Kirk Presentation Trust. One of the Killellan ministers was John Hay who later became the third of the three generations of Hay ministers in Renfrew.

The Hay ministers of Renfrew are reputed to be descendants of Sir Edmund Hay, 1st Laird of Talla, who died in 1463.¹⁷² William Hay, 4th Laird of Talla in Tweedsmuir, was the progenitor of a long line of ministers, including his sons George and Andrew, three of Andrew's sons and Andrew's grandson. Over a period of one hundred years, the first mentioned Andrew Hay, followed by his eldest son and grandson, were ministers in the Kirk of Renfrew.

Andrew Hay

Minister in Renfrew: from the Reformation to 1593

Andrew Hay was from a privileged background and is said to have studied at the Universities of Glasgow and Paris. By 1556, he was he was a Canon of Glasgow Cathedral and a Prebendary of Renfrew.¹⁷³ He joined the Reformers in 1559, and was among a minority of priests in Renfrewshire who retained their charge after the Reformation. He married Janet Wallace in the early 1560s and had five sons and two daughters. Three of his sons, John, Theodore, and Andrew entered the ministry.

By the 1560s Andrew Hay must have been regarded as a staunch Presbyterian. In 1566 he was accused of involvement in the historic murder, of David Rizzio, Mary Queen of Scots' private secretary and friend. As a result, Andrew Hay was confined in 'free ward' within the burgh of Dunbar and the surrounding two miles until 29th January, 1567, when he was freed by Queen Mary and returned to his ministry in Renfrew.

In 1574 Govan and Inchinnan Kirks were added in his charge. Andrew Hay was active in the Reformed General Assemblies. Over the years he attended thirty four General Assembly meetings, and was appointed its Moderator in 1573 and again in 1580. He was part of a committee of more than thirty clerics who produced the Second Book of Discipline in 1578.¹⁷⁴ Andrew Hay also held various positions of power and influence in the Church and state. In 1589 he was appointed by the Privy Council as a commissioner for the maintenance and defence of the true religion in Clydesdale.

Andrew Hay was Rector of Glasgow University for seventeen years. When he was appointed in 1569 the University was in a poor state and its academic reputation was low. Andrew Hay was instrumental in radical reforms and improvements to restore the University's academic reputation. He was a key-figure in drawing up the University's new constitution in 1573 and was

¹⁷² The Hay Family of Talla in Tweedsmuir Parish History at www.ajbhope.net/hay-family-of-talla-tweedsmuir/.

¹⁷³ This and subsequent university story: www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk.

¹⁷⁴ www.educationscotland.gov.uk/.../jamesandthekirk/religious tensions.asp.

instrumental in persuading Andrew Melville to become the University's Principal in 1574. Andrew Hay resigned as Rector in 1586 and died in 1593.

Rev. John Hay MA (1582)
Minister in Renfrew: 1593 - 1627

Andrew's eldest son, John Hay, graduated from Glasgow University in 1582 and, following in his father's

father's footsteps, was minister in Renfrew from 1593 until his death in December 1627. When the Presbytery of Paisley was founded in 1590, Renfrew Kirk was under its jurisdiction. Paisley Presbytery was diligent in stamping out superstition and witchcraft and in the pursuit and punishment of 'Papists' and others who did not attend church and those who committed sins such as swearing, and fornication.

In line with church policy, John Hay was conscientiously involved in putting pressure on parishioners who did not attend church and in bringing wrongdoers to justice. His rigor seems to have made him unpopular with at least one of his wealthy parishioners. The elderly Lady Jean, of Duchal, had moved to her dower house near Renfrew after the death of her husband, John Porterfield of Duchal. For years she refused to attend church or take Communion. When called to appear before the Paisley Presbytery in 1605, the reason she gave for her non-attendance at church was that she had a strong aversion to her minister, John Hay.¹⁷⁵

Even a fellow member of the clergy was brought to justice through John Hay's work for the Presbytery. Andrew Knox, a minister at the Kirk of Paisley (Paisley Abbey), was known and feared throughout the area as 'the Papist Catcher'. He was resolute in pursuing Papists and was often accompanied by men in arms. However, in a most unfortunate incident, Knox lost his temper and assaulted Gavin Stewart, a Paisley burgess, by striking him on the head with a large key. Knox was suspended and John Hay was one of the two ministers appointed by the Presbytery to take the matter in hand. The result was the humiliating of Andrew Knox. On November 19th 1604, in front of his parishioners in the Kirk of Paisley, he had to go down on his knees and confess his sin and ask God's forgiveness.¹⁷⁶

John Hay was twice married and had seven children. Like his father before him, he was a man of some influence in the church and community. He was Rector of Glasgow University (1594-6, 1599, 1600, 1603-11 & 1613) and was appointed by the Privy Council in 1605 as "constant" Moderator of the Presbytery of Paisley and the members had to "receive him as such under pain of rebellion". This warning to the members may have been because the Church perceived a threat of a return to Episcopacy and John Hay was regarded as a staunch Presbyterian.

¹⁷⁵ Metcalfe, W.M., *A History of the County of Renfrew* (Paisley, Alexander Gardner 1905), p.234-5.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.239 and Lees, J.C. *The Abbey of Paisley* (Paisley, Alexander Gardner, 1878), p.242-246).

Rev. John Hay, MA , (1613)
Minister in Renfrew: 1628 - 1649

deposed: 1649 - redeemed: 1663 Minister: 1668-68

John Hay's eldest son, also named John, was minister in Killallan Parish from 1616 to 1627. After a very brief spell in Paisley he was appointed to the Kirk in Renfrew Parish in 1628, making him the third generation of the Hay family to be minister in Renfrew. He married Agnes Forsyth and had two children. His daughter, Elizabeth, married a minister, Patrick Simson.

Paisley Presbytery had continued its persecution of Catholics and others who refused to take communion. However, during a brief period of respite in the early months of 1626, many Catholics in parishes governed by the Paisley Presbytery openly declared their allegiance to the "old religion". Unfortunately, this respite was short lived and vigorous persecution resumed.

The Persecution of the Countess of Abercorn¹⁷⁷

One of those who had confessed her faith and allegiance to the "old religion" was Marion, Countess of Abercorn, whose family and household were known to be secretly Catholic. The Hamiltons of Abercorn were the descendants of Claud Hamilton, the Commendator of Paisley Abbey who had been secular owner of the abbey lands. The family inherited the Abbey lands and property including the Place of Paisley and the Abbey Grange. This may have made them specific targets for the Presbytery. Both John Hay as minister in Paisley Parish and Andrew Hamilton as minister in Kilbarchan Parish were involved in the case against the Countess because she used her two residences, the Place of Paisley in Paisley Parish and the Abbey Grange at Blackston in Kilbarchan Parish.

During his brief ministry in Paisley in 1627, John Hay relentlessly pursued the Countess of Abercorn. One wonders how justified he must have felt when this led to her death four years later. His involvement began in 1627 when he was appointed to proceed with public allegations against the Countess in the Kirk of Paisley. He did not publicly admonish and humiliate her at this time because she had asked to discuss her doubts with members of the clergy. Her son, James Hamilton, 2nd Earl of Abercorn, who was the grandson of Claud Hamilton, had also been summoned to appear before the Presbytery, but did not attend. Like his mother, he too used avoiding tactics and asked for time to discuss his doubts with the clergy.

Two of the Countess's servants, Thomas Algeo, who was thought to be a disguised priest, and John Naismith had been interrogated by the Paisley Presbytery in 1626. Other servants were interrogated later. John Hay continued to publicly admonish Thomas Algeo at church services and finally he and other accused servants were excommunicated. Only John Naismith escaped excommunication because he promised to conform and all charges against him were dropped.

Proceedings against the Countess and her son continued. On 20th January, 1628, John Hay pronounced sentence of excommunication on the Countess of Abercorn. The Presbytery also instructed Andrew Hamilton, the minister in Kilbarchan Parish, to pronounce sentence of excommunication on the Countess, but he had more sympathy for the Hamilton family to whose favour he owed his

¹⁷⁷ Lees, (1878), p.262-282.

living and, probably with some support from the Archbishop of Glasgow, he avoided announcing the excommunication in his church.¹⁷⁸ For this dereliction of duty he was threatened with suspension by the Paisley Presbytery.

But this was not the end of the story. After her excommunication the Countess was imprisoned in the Tolbooth in Edinburgh where her health broke down. She was later moved to Cannongate Jail. From there, under certain conditions, she was allowed to reside in the castle of Duntarvie, near Linlithgow, which was owned by the Hamiltons of Abercorn. Eventually, in March 1631, she was allowed to return to Paisley where she died of ill health a few months later. The Earl of Abercorn was eventually excommunicated by the General Assembly in 1649.

Like his father and grandfather before him, John Hay was Rector of Glasgow University from 1640 to 1642. In 1634 he was appointed as a member of the Commission for Church Discipline and in 1637 as Moderator of Paisley Presbytery, but was soon deposed from this post because of his ambivalent views on church reform issues. He and John Crichton of Paisley, an admirer of the recently introduced Service Book, may have been among the few ministers in Renfrewshire who used the unpopular Service Book in their sermons.¹⁷⁹ By the late 1640s John Hay was falling out of favour with Paisley Presbytery because of his Episcopalian tendencies. He was deposed from his ministry in Renfrew in 1649, nominally on a charge of drunkenness, and he moved to Ireland as a preacher in Donegal. In his absence from Renfrew Parish, Patrick Simson the husband of John's daughter Elizabeth, took over the ministry of Renfrew Kirk. In 1661, soon after Charles II became king, Episcopacy was re-introduced in the Church of Scotland. John Hay was redeemed in 1663 because his Episcopalian views were now totally acceptable. Parliament awarded him £100 sterling on account of his sufferings and he was readmitted to the Church of Scotland and moved back to Renfrew as minister in 1668. He died within months of his return to Renfrew Parish.

Note on Sources: Unless otherwise referenced the information on the Hay family ministers is taken from Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae (Synod of Glasgow and Ayr), Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1920, p185

¹⁷⁸ Mackenzie, R.D., Kilbarchan A Parish History (Paisley, Alexander Gardner 1902), p.63.

¹⁷⁹ Metcalfe (1905), p.250-2.

**7. Index of Articles by RLHF published in Gryfe Advertizer since 2013
(A list of articles published since 2010 appeared in the last Journal)**

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Mar	Early Africans in Renfrewshire
April	The Barmufflock Mystery
May	Secrets of Johnstone's Washing green
June	The Monkey House, The Formakin Dream
July	Paisley Abbey Conference
Aug	Barytes Mines above Lochwinnoch
Sept	Wind and Water Power
Oct	The Old Peesweep Inn and the Peesweep Club
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