

Maitland of Freugh

Balgreggan House

Seven miles south of Stranraer the comparatively modern village of Sandhead lies at the top of Luce Bay. Just to the west and above Sandhead are the lands of Balgreggan, a name which features on some of the oldest maps of the county.

It was inevitable that while preparing an article concerning the general history of Balgreggan, I would need to delve deeper into the history of one of its landowners.

The lands of Balgreggan were added to the McDouall of Freugh estate sometime in the mid-17th century. John McDowall, who married Lady Elisabeth Dalrymple, in 1725, and was Provost of Stranraer in 1734, appears to have been the person responsible for the construction of Balgreggan House.

According to various descriptions,¹ the house was a remodelling of an older house, partly of 1672, by Robert Adam sometime between 1725 and 1730.



Balgreggan House. Historic Environment Scotland -canmore.org.uk.

John's eldest son Patrick (1726–1803) became the 8th Earl of Dumfries, inheriting the title from his Uncle William, Lady Elisabeth's brother, when he died in 1768. Being resident in Dumfries House² near Cumnock, Patrick sold Balgreggan House and the Freugh estate (except for East and West Freugh farms) to Capt. Hon. Patrick Maitland, on 17th Nov. 1775.

It is worth noting that about the same time, another branch of the Maitland family acquired the Galloway estates of McDouall of Garthland, which provides some slight confusion for the researcher.

Stoneykirk Church

The churchyard around the old Stoneykirk Parish Church was mapped by me in September 1997 with a lovely lady called Betty Allan from New Luce, who was the recording co-ordinator. The graveyard contains a total of 440 stones. Three stones against the east and south church walls record the deaths of various members of the Maitland of Freugh family.

The resulting work, published in 2001 by DGFHS³ records their inscriptions at nos. 4, 4a and 6. Due to illegibility, the text contains a number of omissions, which this article intends to rectify.

The Maitland family

Patrick Maitland was the 7th son of Charles Maitland, 6th Earl of Lauderdale and Elizabeth Ogilvy⁴. His younger brother (the 6th son) was Capt. Fredrick Lewis Maitland RN whose third son of the same name, rose to the rank of Rear Admiral. On 15th July 1815 as Captain of *HMS Bellerophon*, he accepted the surrender of Napoleon Boneparte.

Born in 1734, Patrick married Jane Maitland whose father was Capt. Thomas Maitland of Fife. Her mother was Mary Martin⁵. Jane had been married previously, on 4th April 1768, to John Leslie the 11th Earl of Rothes, Fife. So when he died in 1773, she became the Countess Dowager of Rothes. Patrick and Jane were married on 25th September 1774, and the following year acquired the Freugh estate and Balgreggan House.

They had three children. Mary Turner, was christened on 12 July 1775 at Ratho, Edinburgh; Elizabeth was born 27th January 1779 at Balgreggan, and christened on 17th February, but died sometime in that year,⁶ and Patrick's son and heir, John, was born on 19th April 1780. Mary Turner died, unmarried at the age of 85 on 3rd Jan. 1861, at her home, Rose Cottage, in Portobello, Edinburgh.

The Freugh estate included several tenanted farms and smallholdings which provided income for the landowner. One such lease agreement is described below.

At Whitsun 1786, before witnesses Patrick Henderson, Writer, and William Matheson, servant, Patrick agreed to the renewal of 19-year Tack (Lease) for the lands of Moss Croft with Isabel McNarie, relict of Andrew McDouall,⁷ late tenant, and her son Andrew. The payment was to be £4 sterling annually, by equal proportions at Whitsunday and Martinmas, with a rick hen⁸ out of each dwelling house and two stone of Meal in lieu of multure formally paid to the Miln of Clayshant.⁹ She could grind her corn where she pleased, and was at liberty to cut peats in the Moss of Kildrochet.

The Hon. Patrick Maitland, who was made a Deputy Lieutenant of the County, died on 14th May 1797. (Patrick Maitland of Garthland died in August 1791).

His son John, then age 17, succeeded. On 5th July 1802 he married Jane Maxwell the third daughter of Sir William Maxwell of Monreith¹⁰ and Catherine Blair. Sir William had Monreith House built in 1791 in the Georgian style, very similar to Balgreggan.

Together John and Jane had five children: Patrick, b.26 Sept 1803, Catherine b.1805, William b.1806, John b.1807, and Anne Margaret, b.1811

John did not live long to enjoy his inheritance. He died in May 1811, age 31 leaving the estate to his eight-year-old son, Patrick. (During his minority, The Earl of Galloway acted as his guardian). His youngest daughter, Ann Margaret died, age 21 on 7 June 1832. His older daughter, Catherine

remained unmarried and lived in the family home until her death age 85, on 10th Sept. 1894. In 1824 his other son John, age 17, had joined the East India Company to make a career with the Madras Artillery. More of him later.

On 20 October 1844, at the age of forty-one, Partick married Matilda Frances Harriet Buchanan, age twenty. The newspapers reported '*The happy pair, we observe by the Peerage, are connected to many of the noblest families in Scotland*'

Patrick's younger brother, William, joined the Royal Navy spending most of his career out on the Indian Station. After distinguishing himself in one particular action in 1841 he was promoted the following year to the rank of Commander and given command of the steamer '*Spiteful*'. However, on 10 August 1846, at the age of 40, he failed to recover from a tropical disease which he had contracted a few years earlier and died on board his ship.¹¹

Patrick, over the next 48 years as Laird of Freugh, was involved, with other local gentry, in the affairs of the county. He was President of the Dumfries and Galloway Agricultural Society, one of the Stewards, with his brother William, at the annual Lochryan Regatta, and a Director of the Portpatrick Railway Company.

In a public notice dated 30 Dec. 1851 he declared that he had exclusive rights to oyster fishing in the Bay of Luce and that any person fishing without his permission would be prosecuted. An article in 'The Field' explains that a discovery had lately been made of extensive oyster beds in Luce Bay which were larger and of superior quality to those in Loch Ryan. The notice was challenged by John McLelland, a fisherman in Tyrawley (Terally), Kirkmaiden, who had continued to trawl without a license. The matter was taken to the Sherriff Court two years later where Sherriff Urquhart found in favour of the fisherman.

Not satisfied with the decision, Patrick took his claim to the Court of Session. He maintained his right to the whole of Luce Bay by virtue of a charter dated 5 March 1707.¹² The court's final ruling, based on the lack of definition of the geographical limits to his claim, was that they were unable to grant an interdict of trespass on an undefined place, so Patrick lost his case.¹³

Patrick and Matilda had three sons and a daughter. John, the oldest son was born on 10 Dec. 1845. When his father, Patrick, died on 8 April 1859, he succeeded to the title, but died ten years later, 5th July 1869 at the age of 23, after a short illness. Perhaps in order to meet the cost of Death Duties, the house and shootings of 8,000 acres were advertised to let, but it, seems, with no bidders.¹⁴ An auction of various livestock had been held ten years earlier, perhaps for the same reason. His younger sister, Janet Evelyn Sinclair had died in 1864, age only 12. William, the next brother, born on 8th May 1854 assumed the title at age 15, after his brother's death. The youngest son, Patrick had decided to emigrate to America. At the age of 18 (or 21) he embarked aboard SS *Devonia*, sailing from Glasgow to New York.¹⁵ It appears that he died on board ship on 11th Nov. 1877.¹⁶

Three years later, William also decided to go to New York, perhaps with the intention of returning after inspecting his brother's grave. Unfortunately he died on 2nd Jan. 1881, age 26, only a day after his arrival.¹⁶

The estate passed to his uncle, Lt Gen. John Maitland¹⁷ who had returned from India to retire to Bath, Somerset. His mother, Matilda, remained in the house, together with her Cook/Housekeeper, Ladies maid, House maid, Kitchen maid, and Coachman, until her death on 27th Mar. 1894, age 88.

It was she who, as '*sorrowing wife and mother*', has the gravestone (no 6) erected in memory of her husband and their children.



Stoneykirk Church.

Balgreggan House remained empty for some time until the Freugh estate was put up for sale in 1902 in one of three lots (excluding the oyster beds!). The house was finally demolished in 1966.

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March 2025

Notes

1. Historic Environment Scotland - canmore.org.uk and the Ordnance Survey Name Book Sept 1847.
2. Dumfries House was built between 1754 – 59 by John Adam for William Crichton Dalrymple, 5th Earl of Dumfries. The house and title were inherited by his nephew, Patrick McDouall-Crichton whose daughter Elizabeth Penelope, married John, Lord Mountstuart, eldest son of the 1st Marquis of Bute.
3. Wigtownshire Memorial Inscriptions. Stoneykirk and Kirkmadrine. DGFHS Dumfries, 2001.
4. Based on the records confirming that both Fredrick and Patrick were sons of Charles, 6th Earl of Lauderdale.
5. Old Parish Records Kemback, Fife OPR 433/1 Jean Maitland's birth in 1748 at Rumgally. No further details of her parents could be found.
6. Old Parish Records, Stoneykirk OPR 898/1 1744-1819. Item 4. Elisabeth appears to have been buried at Stoneykirk but is not mentioned on the memorials.
7. Andrew and Isobel were my 5xgrandparents. The tack came up for renewal again in 1843 (19x3) when John McDowall wrote from Canada advising his brother James '*not to humbug with the Capten aney longer*'.
8. A Rick or Reek hen – A fowl or hen paid as part of rental for every house with a hearth - The Concise Scots Dictionary.
9. Until the Thirlage Act of 1799 tenants were required to use the estate mill to grind their corn. In this case it appears that not only did the tenant have a choice, but the miller was relieved of the duty of paying the portion due to the estate.
10. The 7th of Monreith was Sir Herbert Maxwell, Bart. MP (1845 -1937) author of 'The History of Dumfries and Galloway' 1896, and other works. His grandson, brother of the 8th Baronet was Gavin Maxwell, author of 'Ring of Bright Water'.
11. Announcement in Glasgow Courier, 12 Nov. 1846
12. A Charter of 1707 (Queen Anne) would have been granted to Patrick McDouall. Could this have been a minor inducement to support the Act of Union?

13. The Galloway Advertiser and Wigtownshire Free Press.15 Jan.1852; 'The Field' 10 Nov.1853 p.497; Dumfries and Galloway Standard, 26 Dec.1860.

14. Liverpool Albion, April, May, July and August 1869.

15. *SS Devonian*, built at Barrow in 1877 for the Anchor Line continued Atlantic crossings until 1893. NY Times Article 20 June 1877 p.8.

16. His death was reported in the Shipping and Mercantile Gazette, London, 10 Dec.1877.

17. John was the youngest son of Partick and Matilda. No birth record is found except for what is given in the military records. He was born in 1807 and joined the Madras Artillery in 1824, with a lieutenant's commission. Rising through the ranks, he became a major-general in 1868 and a lieutenant-general in 1877. In 1849 he married Arabella Jane, daughter of Rev. Joseph Wright in Madras. He died at home in Bath, Somerset on 16th March 1881, age 74. Exeter and Plymouth Gazette Daily Telegrams, 1 Mar.1821 and Galloway Advertiser and Wigtownshire Free Press, 24 Mar.1881.