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Research and  
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**Ulster-Scots Trail for  
North Down & Ards**

9

# Ulster-Scots Biographies

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## Robert Blair (1593 – 1666)

Presbyterian Minister of Bangor Abbey

Effectively the “Leader of the Ulster-Scots” and Eagle Wing minister

Associated sites: Bangor Abbey / Groomsport

See: Bangor Abbey / Beatrix Hamilton’s memorial / Stained glass list of ministers at First Bangor Presbyterian

### 1. Background in Scotland

Blair was born in 1593 in the small port of Irvine in Ayrshire. His father was a merchant; Robert had three older brothers. Around 1600, he was deeply moved by the preaching of an English minister who was passing through Irvine en route to Ulster; Blair recalled the sermon later in life in his autobiography.

He went to Glasgow University and became a Professor there; his students included his later Ulster colleagues Rev James Hamilton and Rev John Livingstone. In 1623 he left the university and, even though he considered an invitation to move to the French Huguenot capital of La Rochelle, he decided – reluctantly – to come to Bangor, having been invited by Sir James Hamilton.

### 2 Life in Ulster

Blair met the Dean of Down, John Gibson, at Bangor; when Gibson died just a few weeks later Blair succeeded him at Bangor Abbey. Blair worked closely with Robert Cunningham of Holywood, and both men trained young James Hamilton who became the future minister of Ballywalter. All three were involved in the Sixmilewater Revival which swept through the Ulster-Scots communities of Antrim and Down in the late 1620s – and which occurred between two revivals in Scotland, at Stewarton in Ayrshire and at Kirk O’ Shotts in Lanarkshire.

Blair recounts many fascinating stories in his autobiography – of an accidental fire which started in his lodgings might have burned down a large part of Bangor, and of a demon-possessed man who arrived at the Abbey armed with a knife to murder Blair.

Blair married Beatrix Hamilton, the daughter of an Edinburgh merchant – “a very gracious, modest, wise, prudent and beautiful woman, every way meet to be a minister’s spouse and helper”.

Through the early 1630s the opposition of the Bishops towards the Presbyterian ministers grew intense, but Blair suffered a personal tragedy in November 1633 when his wife died, leaving three children. He married again – his second wife was a Katherine Montgomery.

Blair, along with Hamilton, John Livingstone and John MacLellan, sailed for America on Eagle Wing from Groomsport on 9 September 1636. Whilst at sea Blair’s baby son William fell seriously ill, and died the very night that the ship returned to Ulster. Their stay there was a short one, and in early 1637 he returned to Irvine.

### 3. Return to Scotland

Scotland was in turmoil and a series of dramatic events – including a riot in Edinburgh started by Jenny Geddes, the sister of Blair’s first wife – led to a huge popular rising in “Scotland’s National Covenant”. The Presbyterians took control of Scotland, and Blair became Moderator of the General Assembly in 1648, and later was appointed as Chaplain to the King.

### 4. Death and burial

The Presbyterian control of Scotland was short-lived, and following the “Restoration” of 1660 most of Scotland’s ministers, including Blair, were ejected from their pulpits. For a time Blair lived close to his old Ulster colleague James Hamilton at Inveresk in south Edinburgh. Hamilton died in March 1666 and Blair died on 27 August of that same year. Robert Blair was buried at Aberdour in Fife where his old monument can still be seen on an outside wall of the church.

## The Colvilles

Succeeded the Montgomeries as the main family in Newtownards and Comber

Associated sites: Newtownards, Mount Stewart

See: Memorial in Newtownards Priory

### 1. Background in Scotland

The Colville family traces its origins to Scotland in the 1100s, when Philip de Colville settled there following the Norman Conquest.

### 2. Colvilles in Ballymena

The first Colville to come to Ulster was the famous Dr Alexander Colville. He had been a Professor of Divinity at St Andrews University in Fife before coming to Ulster in 1630. He may have been invited to Ulster by Bishop Robert Echlin, whose mother was Grissel Colville.

Dr Colville was made Rector of Skerry in 1634 and built Galgorm Castle near Ballymena. He was a wealthy man, but was accused by his neighbours of "selling himself to the devil". A servant-girl was arrested at Irvine in Scotland, accused of "raising the devil" – she said that she had learned how to do so from Dr Colville "who used to practice it".

### 3. Colvilles in Newtownards and Comber

His son Robert Colville joined the army and in 1651 was a Captain. He married four times. He was knighted some time between 1675 and 1679, and bought the Montgomery estates at Newtownards and Comber.

Sir Robert Colville rebuilt the ruined Montgomery home "Newtown House" which had been accidentally burned down in 1664 "by the carelessness of servants". He built "one doubled roofed house, stables, and coach-houses, and all other necessary or convenient edifices for brewing, baking, washing, hunting, hawking, pleasure-rooms or pigeon houses". He also built a private chapel at Movilla cemetery.

(A relative, Alexander Colville, was brought from Scotland to become Minister at the Presbyterian Church in Newtownards on 26 July 1696. He moved to Dromore in 1700, where he died in his pulpit in 1719. His grandson, Maturin Colville, was killed by his own deserting soldiers during the American War of Independence around 1779.)

### 4. Death and Burial

Sir Robert Colville died in December 1697, with a memorial at the Priory in Newtownards. His third wife, "Lady Rose" died in June 1693 and was buried at the Priory with a similar memorial. Their son Hugh died in 1701 aged 25, with a similar memorial. By 1744 the memorial inscriptions had been removed from the family tomb; Harris described "...A large Tomb of the Colville Family (to a descendant of which the town now belongs), stands in the North Isle, raised five or six feet above the Floor, but naked of any inscription..."

Hugh's daughter Alicia Colville (1700 – 1762) sold the estates to Alexander Stewart in 1744 for £42,000.

### Sources:

The Montgomery Manuscripts  
The Colville Family in Ulster, Ulster Journal of Archaeology Vol 5, Belfast 1899  
Ancient and Present State of the County of Down, Walter Harris (Belfast 1744)

## The Coopers

One of the first families to arrive from Scotland - tenants of Sir Hugh Montgomery

Associated sites: Ballyhaslin townland

See: John Cooper 1608 grave, Whitechurch, Ballywalter

### 1. Background in Scotland

Cooper is a common name throughout Scotland, and the specific origins of these Coopers is unknown. However, it is likely that they had come from Galloway or Ayrshire.

### 2. Life in Ulster

A grave at Whitechurch outside Ballywalter, tucked in at the side of the surrounding hedge of the old part of the graveyard marks the grave of a William Cooper, son to John Cooper of Ballywalter, who died in 1805 aged 27. It was uncovered in summer 2009 by two of the caretakers – Michael Birch and Ian Larkin. At the top of the headstone is a Masonic square and compass symbol and other decorative carvings. At the bottom is a later, and remarkable, inscription:

“The Burying Ground of John Cooper, died 1608 Age 92”

Early records show that in 1617 a James Cooper was recorded as being a tenant of Hugh Montgomery's, at Ballyhaslin (just a few miles from Whitechurch graveyard), and presumably they were related – possibly father and son, or perhaps grandfather and grandson. It is likely that an entire Cooper family had been among the first settlers to accompany Hugh Montgomery to the Ards.

John Cooper was therefore born in 1516, lived through the Scottish Reformation and the preaching of John Knox, and the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. He probably came to Ulster with his family around 1606 as an elderly man of 90 years.

This long-forgotten grave inscription is one of the most important evidences of the first Ulster-Scots.

### Sources

The Scots in Ulster, their Denization and Naturalisation, Rev David Stewart DD, (Belfast, 1954)

## Robert Cunningham (15XX - 1637)

One of the first Chaplains at Newtownards Priory

First Curate at Greyabbey

Associated sites: Newtownards Priory / Grey Abbey / Kirkistown Castle

See: memorial at Grey Abbey

### 1. Background in Scotland

Robert Cunningham was a chaplain to the Earl of Buccleuch's regiment during the wars in Holland. He returned to Scotland with the regiment.

### 2. Life in Ulster

He came across from Scotland in 1615 and was ordained by Bishop Robert Echlin on 9 November that year becoming the minister at Holywood and Craigavad. In the Ulster Visitation Book for 1622, Cunningham is described as "resident at Holywood—serveth these cures, and maintained by a stipend from Sir James Hamilton—church repaired in part".

When Robert Blair arrived at Bangor in 1623, he and Cunningham "spent many hours – yea days – in prayer". John Livingstone wrote that Cunningham was 'the one man to my discerning, of all that ever I saw, who resembled most the meekness of Jesus Christ in all his carriage, and was so far revered by all, even the most wicked, that he was oft troubled with that Scripture "Woe to you when all men speak well of you"..."??

Cunningham endured the anti-Presbyterian policies of the Bishops, including Echlin who had originally ordained him to Holywood. Throughout the early 1630s the opposition steadily intensified. When four of his colleague ministers decided to sail for America on Eagle Wing, Cunningham opted to remain in Ulster. Just before their departure, Samuel Rutherford wrote to Cunningham saying "...I know not, my dear brother, if our worthy brethren be gone to sea or not. They are on my heart and in my prayers... their remembrance breaketh my heart".

### 3. Return to Scotland

In February 1637, a Frank Hill of Castlereagh informed the anti-Presbyterian authorities of the whereabouts of many of the Presbyterian ministers, who then fled to Scotland and arrived at Irvine in Ayrshire. In just a few weeks there, Cunningham "had many great experiences of God's goodness, and much peace in his suffering. He spake

much well to the Presbytery of Irvine who came to see him...".

In his last moments, he took his wife's hand and prayed "Lord, I commend to thy care her who is now no more my wife", and died. In a letter dated 7 March 1637, Rutherford wrote of "the dying servant of God, famous and faithful Mr Cunningham".

### 4. Death and Burial

He died at Irvine, Ayrshire, on 29th March 1637, saying on his death bed "...I see Christ...". A memorial stone to Cunningham is at Irvine Parish Church, with the following inscription:

"Erected Anno Dom 1824?to?the memory of?The Rev Robert Cunningham?Sometime Minister of the Gospel?at Holywood in Ireland, who for?his faithfulness to the cause of?CHRIST, was expelled from his?charge by the Bishops and died?in exile at Irvine on the 27th of?March 1637?He was eminently distinguished?for meekness and patience and?zeal in his ministry"

Robert Blair composed the following memorial poem, a Latin translation of which is also on the stone at Irvine:

Here rests – O venerable name –  
The dust of Robert Cunnigham;  
Ah! What a mind was there concealed,  
By Christian loveliness reveal'd  
And what a soul of heavenly worth,  
Inspir'd that frame of fragile earth,  
None to the proud, with holier awe  
Thunder'd the terrors of the law;  
And none with more persuasive art  
Cheer'd the disconsolate in heart  
But, Oh! Intent his God to praise  
He shorten'd his terrestrial days;  
For, preaching Jesus Crucified  
He others and himself outdid

## Robert Echlin (1576 – 1635)

One of the first Scottish Bishops in Ireland

Bishop of Down and Connor 1613 – 1635

Associated sites: Ardquin Church / Ardquin Abbacy / Castleboy

See: Ardquin Church / Ardquin Abbacy / grave at Templecranny, Portaferry

### Background in Scotland

The Echlin family were "considerable barons and one of the chiefs of the ancient families in the shire of Fife". They can be traced in Scotland back to 1296, when they signed the "ragman roll" in opposition to Robert the Bruce at Berwick Upon Tweed. Their family estate was at Echline near Linlithgow. They sold that estate to the Dundass family around 1449, and relocated to Pittadro in Fife.

### Birth and early Life

Robert Echlin was born at Pittadro in 1576. His parents were Henry Echlin of Pittadro (1525 – 1594) and Grisell Colville (1546 – 1607, from Cleish in Kinross; the Colville family would also have important 17th century connections in Ulster). He had two older brothers, William and David. David Echlin became King James VI & I's personal Physician. William married Margaret Fordell-Henderson, who was arrested in July 1649 on suspicion of witchcraft, and who mysteriously died by poisoning while in prison. Robert graduated from St Andrews University in 1596, and was appointed the Minister of Inverkeithing near Edinburgh in 1601.

### Arrival in Ulster

In 1612, King James VI of Scotland and I of England and Ireland appointed a "fellow countryman" of Echlin's called James Dundass as Bishop of Down and Connor. However Dundass died just one year later. On 18 May 1613 the King made Robert Echlin a free denizen of Ireland and he was appointed as Dundass' successor as the new Bishop of Down and Connor. Echlin chose the ancient monastic site of Ardquin near Portaferry as the location for his manor house, which was completed in 1620. Ardquin was already an important site before Echlin's arrival – on 4 July 1605 an "Inquisition" was held there before William Parsons, the Surveyor General of King James I to assess the ownership of lands in Ulster.

### Presbyterian Ministers in Ulster

The blossoming Ulster-Scots settlements of Antrim and Down encouraged a wave of Presbyterian ministers to come across the water, and Echlin was Bishop of the two counties. In 1613, Echlin admitted the first Presbyterian minister in Ulster – Edward Brice from Drymen, near Glasgow – to Ballycarry near Islandmagee. Even though Echlin was an Church of Ireland Bishop, he had studied at a famous Presbyterian university and in his early years in Ulster he showed sympathy towards Presbyterianism, and ordained many of the early Ulster-Scots ministers like Robert Cunningham of Holywood. When Robert Blair arrived at Bangor in 1623, he warned Echlin that he was opposed to the Church of Ireland system. Echlin's reply was "I hear good of you, and will impose no conditions upon you; I am old, and can teach you ceremonies, and you can teach me substance".

However in 1626 Echlin began to oppose these same ministers, "privily to lay snares" and in 1631 (with the support of other Bishops in Ireland) began to suspend them.

### Death and Burial

Echlin followed the instructions of other Bishops in Ireland in opposing the Presbyterian ministers. In November 1634, four of them were permanently deposed. However, he was wracked with guilt for doing so. Just eight months later, as Echlin lay on his death bed, his doctor "...asked his patient to say of what he particularly complained, to which the latter replied "its my conscience, man!" The doctor immediately exclaimed "I have no cure for that!" Maxwell afterwards reported this circumstance at Newtown House, and the first viscount, then an old man, recommended the doctor not to repeat it in other quarters; whereupon, his daughter-in-law, Jean Alexander, who was a zealous presbyterian, cried out—" No man shall get that report suppressed, for I shall bear witness of it to the glory of God, who hath smitten that man (Echlin) for suppressing Christ's witnesses..." - Montgomery Manuscripts p140

Echlin died at Ardquin and was buried on 17 July 1635 at Templecranny, Portaferry, County Down. An Echlin family tomb is there to this day.

### The wider Echlin family

Many other Echlins came to Ulster. In 1628, Robert's son, John Echlin bought the neighbouring ancient church of Castleboy, just outside Cloughey, from Sir Henry Piers. It has been an important location for the Knights Hospitallers (the Knights of St John of Jerusalem) during the Crusades. John then leased it to a cousin, also called Robert Echlin. It is said that during the 1600s, there were six different clergymen called Robert Echlin in Ulster.

### Misc

- Robert Echlin's son, Hugh, was killed at Caledon in 1641 with his son (also called Robert) and "with all his faithful Irish servants".
- Charles Echlin, great grandson of Bishop Robert Echlin, bought Rubane House outside Kircubbin in 1735/36 and changed the name of the house to "Echlinville".
- In the late 1700s the family developed a variety of cooking apples of the same name. Saplings are available from the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale Farm, Kent.
- The Echlinville Volunteers were raised in 1779, commanded by Captain Charles Echlin. Rev William Steele Dickson was their chaplain, and later their Captain.
- This is John Echlin's deposition arising from the 1641 rising: John Echline of the Inch in the Countie of downe Esquire sworne & examined deposeth and saith That since the begining of the present Rebellion That is to say in or about the begining of January 1641 Hee this deponent hath beene & is forcibly deprived robbed or otherwise dispoijled of the possession rents issues proffitts arreres of rents and benefite & interest of his farmes (as they might haue been soild) and freehould Landes: and of his due debts howshold stuffe horses Mares Cowes sheepe and other goodes and Chattells of the value & to his present Losse of Seven thowsand nyntie eight powndes 13 s. 4 d. ster And that he is like to be deprived

of and loose the future proffits of his freehold Land worth Lxxviiij li. per annum, vntill a peace be established: By and by the <a> meanes of the grand Rebell Patrick Mc Cartan of Loghenellen in the County of Downe and his souldjers or partakers & others Joh: Echline Jur 19o July 1643 Will: Aldrich Hen: Brereton

### See:

- The Abbacy and church at Ardquin
- List of Bishops at Bangor Abbey
- Templecranny Graveyard
- Rubane House / Echlinville
- Castleboy ruins outside Cloughey
- Echlinville Volunteers medal at the Ulster Museum (cover of Gravestone Inscriptions Vol 15)

### Sources:

- Genealogical Memoirs of the Echlin Family, Rev John R Echlin MA (Edinburgh, 1882)
- Memoirs of the Ancient Family of the Echlins of Pittadro in the County of Fyfe in Scotland, now transplanted to Ireland, George Crawford (Glasgow, 1747)
- The Montgomery Manuscripts, Rev George Hill (Belfast 1869)
- The Life of Mr Robert Blair, William Row (Edinburgh 1848)
- A True Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rev Patrick Adair (Belfast 1866)

## Sir James Hamilton (1559 – 1644)

Founding Father of the Ulster-Scots

Associated sites: Bangor and Killyleagh, plus all villages within his estates

See: Raven Maps at North Down Museum / Bangor Castle / Killyleagh Castle, Portrait in Castle Ward / Bangor Abbey

### 1. Background in Scotland

Hans Hamilton (1536 - 1608) was the first Protestant minister in Dunlop, Ayrshire, where you can still see his church, his mausoleum and also the significantly-named Clandeboye School buildings, all of which date from the early 1600s. He and his wife Janet had six sons - James, Archibald, Gawin, John, William and Patrick - and one daughter, Jean.

### 2. St Andrews and Dublin

James Hamilton was educated at St Andrews University when Andrew Melville was Principal there. Having built a reputation as "one of the greatest scholars and hopeful wits in his time", James became a teacher in Glasgow.

Around 1587 he left Scotland by ship and due to storms unexpectedly arrived in Dublin. He decided to stay there and established a school – "The Free School" - in Ship Street. Hamilton was its master and he employed fellow Scot and fellow pupil of Meville's, James Fullerton, as usher. One of their pupils was the eight year old James Ussher, who went on to become the Archbishop of Armagh. Fullerton and Ussher are buried alongside each other in St Paul's Chapel of Westminster Abbey in London.?

In 1591, Queen Elizabeth 1 established Trinity College in Dublin, and the first Provost noted that Hamilton had "...a noble spirit... and learned head..." and persuaded the two Scots to become Fellows of the College. Ussher, then aged 13, followed them to Trinity. Hamilton was made Bursar there in 1598.

### 3. Agent of the King

Both men were agents for King James VI of Scotland, providing him with information about Elizabeth 1's activities in Ireland, and perhaps even tampering with the mail to keep the King, and themselves, informed. They were so successful that they gave up their academic positions to take up appointments at the royal court.

Hamilton was appointed Scottish agent to the English court of Elizabeth 1st, was involved in the negotiations for James VI's succession to the English throne, and eventually brought official news of Elizabeth's death to Scotland. Fullerton was knighted when King James VI of Scotland became King James 1 of England - at the Union of the Crowns - in 1603.

### 4. The English Colony of Sir Thomas Smith.

At the Royal Court, an Englishman called Sir William Smith was sent to Spain by the new King. Smith had inherited a grant to land in east Ulster from his late uncle, Sir Thomas Smith. Sir Thomas had attempted to colonise the Ards and north Down in 1572, but it failed. Sir William Smith had hoped to persuade the new King to re-grant his uncle's land to him, but in having to go to Spain he revealed the opportunity to Hamilton. A later source wrote that Sir William Smith had been "...tricked out of it by the knavery of a Scot, one Hamilton...".

### 5. The O'Neill estate

Hamilton's inside knowledge and Royal connections allowed him to intervene in the Montgomery/O'Neill plan, which was to share O'Neill's estate equally – and secured for himself one third.

### 6. Life in Ulster

He built a house at Bangor, on the site of the present Bangor Castle, and was knighted in 1608. In 1611, the Plantation Commissioners surveyed the town and wrote that "Sir James Hamylton, Knight, hath buylded a fayre stone house at the towne of Bangor... about 60 foot longe and 22 foote broade; the town consists of 80 newe houses, all inhabited with Scotysmen and Englishmen...". He also built the Tower House in 1637.

Settlements: Hamilton's tenants built Bangor, Groomsport, Holywood, Dundonald, Killyleagh, Killinchy, Ballywalter, Ballyhalbert, a settlement called "New Comber" (which was the subject of a BBC TV programme "Map Man") and

much of what is today east Belfast. The original 1625 Thomas Raven maps of his estate can be seen at North Down Museum.

Churches: Hamilton restored Bangor Abbey and brought John Gibson to be Dean of Down in 1609. He also brought Rev Robert Cunningham to be minister at Holywood in 1615. When Gibson died in 1623 he was succeeded by Presbyterian minister Robert Blair. Hamilton famously offered to Blair that he would not kneel for communion as long as he could do so inside his own pew, out of public view.

James Hamilton restored or built churches at Comber, Ballyhalbert, Ballywalter Holywood, Dundonald, Killyleagh and Killinchy. The churches at Ballyhalbert and Ballywalter, along with Inishargy, were combined and in 1704 a new building was erected at Balligan. The original Ballyhalbert roof timbers are visible there today.

## 7. Description

The Hamilton Manuscripts give the following description "...he was very learned, wise, laborious, noble (especially to strangers and scholars), so there is great ground to judge he was truly pious, as he was certainly well principled... his younger education seasoned him well; He was observedly a great studier of the Scripture and an enemy to profaneness... he was very charitable to distress'd people that came in great numbers from the upper countrys. He was of a robust, healthfull body, and managed to the best advantage ; died without sickness unexpectedly ere he finished his will..."

He married three times, first to Penelope Cooke, then to Ursula (daughter of Edward 1st Lord Brabazon) and finally to Jane Phillips (daughter of Sir John Phillips of Picton Castle in Pembrokeshire). Jane was the mother of Hamilton's only son, also called James. The Hamilton Manuscripts say "...His two first ladies proved but little comfortable to him, and his putting away of his second lady was not with general satisfaction to his friends and

contemporaries..."

In 1641, with tensions rising in Ulster between the "native" Irish and the Scottish and English settlers which culminated in the 1641 Rebellion of October of that year, James Hamilton returned to Scotland to build both Clandeboye School and a mausoleum to his parents in the grounds of Dunlop Church, Ayrshire.?

## Sources:

The Hamilton Manuscripts

The Life of the Learned Sir Thomas Smith Kt, John Strype, 1698

A True Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 1623 – 1670, Rev Patrick Adair (Belfast 1866)

The Story of Comber, Norman Nevin, 1984

The Life of Mr Robert Blair, William Row, edited by Thomas M'Crie, (Edinburgh 1848)

## Rev James Hamilton (1600 - 1666)

Ballywalter Minister / Eagle Wing Minister / Overseer of Solemn League & Covenant  
Associated Sites: Bangor Abbey / Whitechurch / Groomsport

See: Bangor Abbey / Whitechurch inc 1644 datestone / 1626 datestone in Ballywalter main street on community centre

### 1. Background in Scotland

James Hamilton was the nephew of his namesake, Sir James Hamilton. He was born in Ayrshire in 1600. His father, Gawin Hamilton, was drowned in a boating accident on the River Bann and was buried at Coleraine. Young James went to live with relatives, and attended Glasgow University where he graduated in 1620. One of his professors was Presbyterian firebrand Robert Blair.

### 2 Life in Ulster

Blair continued at the University until 1623 when was invited to Ulster to become minister at Bangor Abbey. Young Hamilton had beaten him to it, having been estate manager for his uncle Sir James since graduation. Friendship renewed, Blair (and Holywood minister Robert Cunningham) privately tutored young Hamilton for the ministry. One Sunday in 1625, Blair gave Hamilton the opportunity to make his preaching debut at Bangor Abbey – much to the surprise of Sir James and his wife who were in the congregation. He was offered a full-time pulpit at Ballywalter, was ordained by Bishop Robert Echlin, and Sir James restored the ruined Whitechurch building there. In 1626 Hamilton took charge.

### 3. Depositions and Eagle Wing

Like his Presbyterian colleagues, Hamilton felt the full opposition of the Bishops during the early 1630s. In August 1636 five of them were all summoned to a public meeting in Belfast with Bishop Henry Leslie. They chose young Hamilton to speak on their behalf, which he did with such skill that the Bishops were infuriated and stopped the meeting. Two days later the ministers were all “deposed” from their churches.

The day after Sir Hugh Montgomery’s funeral, Eagle Wing set sail. Four ministers – Hamilton, Blair, Livingstone and McLellan – were onboard. They never reached America but returned to Ulster, and all four ministers went back to Scotland.

### 4. Dumfries

Hamilton became Minister of St Michael’s Kirk in Dumfries, but was soon back in Ulster in 1644. His job was to “administer” the Solemn League and Covenant across the entire Ulster-Scots population – which, after about 6 weeks of a 12 week schedule, had attracted 16,000 signatures.

### 5. Kidnap and Imprisonment

Following the completion of his task, he set sail from Donaghadee but the boat he was in was taken by the MacDonnells and Hamilton found himself and his fellow passengers held hostage in remote Mingary Castle on Tobermory. He was freed in May 1645, but was again seized, this time by Cromwellian forces, and was imprisoned in the tower of London for two years.

### 6. Edinburgh, Psalter and Public executions

Once again free, he became Minister of Old Kirk in Edinburgh in 1648. Around this time he was involved in the production of the 1650 Scottish Psalter – a Psalms collection which remained as the standard in Presbyterian churches in Scotland and Ireland until the 1930s. In 1655, the people of Ballywalter asked for him to come back, but he was unable to do so.

When the monarchy was restored at the “Restoration” in 1660, and with the introduction of renewed anti-Presbyterian persecution, Hamilton was again “deposed” from his pulpit. The Crown began to arrest high-profile Presbyterians, the first of whom was the Marquis of Argyll. He was publicly executed in Edinburgh on 27 May 1661 - Hamilton courageously prayed with him before his beheading.

### 7. Death and Burial

Hamilton lived out the rest of his life in south Edinburgh near Inveresk in poverty, and died on 10 March 1666. He has no known grave. His son Archibald Hamilton became minister of Benburb, Armagh and Killinchy, and welcomed King William III to Carrickfergus on 14 June 1690

## Henry Leslie, Bishop of Down and Connor (c. 1580 - 1661)

Bishop of Down and Connor

Opponent of Presbyterianism

Preached at Hugh Montgomery's grand funeral

Henry Leslie's associations with North Down and the Ards might seem somewhat tenuous in the sense that there is no evidence that he lived there for any substantial period of time. Yet he made such a significant contribution to the shaping of faith and practice in this area in the late 1620s and 1630s that he must be included.

### Background

Henry Leslie was born around 1580, the son of James Leslie and grandson of the 4th Earl of Rothes. He was therefore one of a number of influential clergymen in early seventeenth-century Ulster with a Fife background. According to one pedigree of the Leslie family, Henry's father married as his second wife a daughter of William Hamilton of Newcastle. If so, then he would have been related by marriage to one of the most powerful families in County Down.

### Ireland

Leslie moved to Ireland in the 1610s. He was ordained a priest in 1617, and moved swiftly through a succession of increasingly important benefices. Henry's brother George was also a minister in Ireland, serving as rector of Ahoghill, County Antrim.

Henry Leslie was ambitious and was prepared to use what could be described as rather underhand means to achieve clerical promotion, as when he attempted to replace fellow Scot James Spottiswood as bishop of Clogher. In 1625 he preached before the King at Windsor and was rewarded with a royal chaplaincy. His advance through the clerical ranks continued with his appointment as Dean of Down in 1627.

### Conflict with Presbyterians

Leslie was 'High Church' in his theology and a strong supporter of episcopalianism. This naturally brought him into conflict with many of the ministers in his diocese who were Presbyterian in outlook. In fact it may be

observed that it was not until after Leslie's appointment as dean of Down that pressure began to be brought to bear on the likes of Robert Blair in Bangor and Robert Cunningham in Holywood.

Leslie pressurised the hitherto reluctant Bishop Robert Echlin to take action against Presbyterian ministers in his diocese. Leslie found a strong supporter in John Bramhall, bishop of Derry, who in 1634 wrote that the clergy in Down diocese were 'absolute irregulars, the very ebullition of Scotland'.

In the autumn of 1635 Leslie succeeded Echlin as bishop of Down and proceeded to tackle the issue of nonconformity in his diocese with even greater zeal. Eventually through using various means to deprive them of their livings, and after a great struggle, Leslie forced out the Presbyterian ministers.

In September 1636 Leslie preached at the funeral of Sir Hugh Montgomery, 1st Viscount Ards, one of the biggest events in the early seventeenth-century settlement in North Down and the Ards. William Montgomery of Rosemount later wrote that the sermon was 'learned, pious and elegant'.

In 1637 Leslie claimed to have 'fought with beasts' in reference to his disputes with the Presbyterian ministers. However transitory his achievement had been, he had succeeded in removing the non-conformist clergymen in his diocese.

In 1638 he condemned the National Covenant as well as the Presbyterian practice of meeting in simple, unadorned meeting houses. Leslie held to the view that churches should be places of beauty as this would provoke true reverence.

Despite his achievement in stamping out nonconformity

among his clergy, as well as his success in improving the finances of his diocese, Leslie failed to realise his ambition of restoring Down Cathedral.

After the outbreak of the 1641 rising he was one of the first to flee to England for safety. He later claimed that he and his son had suffered losses of at least £8,000. Many of his horses, he said, had been taken by followers of Viscount Ards and Sir James Montgomery. Throughout his exile he remained a committed Royalist. At the Restoration he was appointed bishop of Meath, a rather less troublesome diocese than Down. By now he was in his 80s and he died in April 1661; he was buried in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin.

**Visit:**

Newtownards Priory where Leslie preached at the funeral of Sir Hugh Montgomery.

## John Livingstone (1603 – 1672)

Revivalist preacher, Minister of Killinchy

One of the four ministers who commissioned “Eagle Wing”

Associated sites: Killinchy, Groomsport, Holywood

### 1. Background in Scotland

He was born at Monyabroch/Monieburgh near Kilsyth, Scotland, on 21 July 1603. His father William was a minister. John Livingstone was a student of Robert Blair at Glasgow University – Blair later became the minister of Bangor Abbey. Livingstone’s first church role was as assistant minister in Torphichen between Glasgow and Edinburgh, but in 1627 he was “silenced” for his Presbyterian views. He became a chaplain to Sarah Maxwell, the Countess of Wigtown – who not long after became Sir Hugh Montgomery’s second wife.

### 2. Kirk o’ Shotts Revival – life in Ulster

He became well-known following a famous religious revival which began at Kirk O’Shotts on 30 June 1630. The preacher had fallen ill and at short notice Livingstone stood in. 500 people were converted. In August he accepted an invitation from Sir James Hamilton to become minister of Killinchy, having been encouraged by Rev Robert Cunningham of Holywood.

At Killinchy, Livingstone wrote that the local Ulster-Scots people “...were generally very ignorant, and I saw no appearance of doing any good among them; yet it pleased the Lord that in a short time some of them began to understand somewhat of their condition...”. He became involved in the “Antrim Meeting” which had begun around 1625, and which had also seen major religious revival in Ulster.

### 3. Opposition, Holywood Revival, Deposition and Eagle Wing

Throughout the early 1630s, the Bishops began to oppose the Presbyterian ministers – first in 1632, then in 1634 and finally in 1636. Regardless, of opposition, revival was felt again. Referring back to the Kirk O’ Shotts experience, a later writer recorded that “About two or three years after, such another, and a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit attended a sermon of his at a communion in Holywood in Ireland, where about a

thousand were brought home to Christ...” (from History of the State and Sufferings of the Church of Scotland, William Crookshank, Edinburgh 1812).

Livingstone began to explore the possibility of emigrating to America. In July 1634 he wrote to John Winthrop, the Governor of Massachusetts to see if Ulster-Scots Presbyterians would be welcome there. In January of the following year, Winthrop’s son visited Ulster and encouraged them to emigrate.

A few months later Livingstone married Janet Fleming in Edinburgh on 23 June 1635.

On 9th September 1636, the day after the grand funeral of Sir Hugh Montgomery, Livingstone boarded “Eagle Wing”, bound for America, with three other ministers – Blair of Bangor, McLellan of Newtownards and Hamilton of Ballywalter. Also onboard from Killinchy were Michael Colvert and his pregnant wife – she gave birth at sea, Livingstone conducted the baptism and the child was named “Seaborn”. Eagle Wing didn’t reach America but returned to Ulster, and the ministers returned to Scotland where they each played critical roles around the time of Scotland’s National Covenant. Livingstone rode through the night to take copies of the Covenant to London.

### 4. Minister of Stranraer, and the returns to Ulster

He became Minister of Stranraer in July 1638, and many of his Killinchy congregation travelled across the water to hear him preach. Livingstone wrote that: ‘Some of our friends out of Ireland came and dwelt at Stranraer; and at our communions, twice in the year, great numbers used to come – at one time 500 persons – and at one time I baptised 28 children brought out of Ireland’. Following the 1641 Rebellion and the arrival of the Scottish army in 1642, Livingstone returned to Ulster in May 1643 for three months, preaching every day. He was back again in 1645, and finally in 1656 when he stayed four around 10 weeks.

### 5. Death and Burial

He became minister of Ancrum in 1648, where he remained until the "Restoration". The anti-Presbyterian persecution which was immediately introduced by King Charles II caused Livingstone to leave Scotland for Holland, where he died in Rotterdam on 9 August 1672.

### 6. Misc

Livingstone wrote a series of biographies of his fellow Ulster-Scots ministers which were published as "Memorable Characteristics and Remarkable Passages of Divine Providence, exemplified in the lives of some of the most eminent ministers and professors in the Church of Scotland. Collected by Mr John Livingstone, late Minister of Ancrum". The ministers he wrote of included Robert Blair of Bangor, Robert Cunningham of Holywood and James Hamilton of Ballywalter.

John Howie wrote in 'The Scots Worthies': "Since our Reformation commenced in Scotland, there have been none whose labours in the Gospel have been more remarkably blessed with the downpouring of the Spirit in conversion work than John Livingstone."

### Sources:

Biography of Livingstone by Jack Greenald on "The Covenanters in Ulster" website  
The Scots Worthies, John Howie, (Edinburgh 1779)

## David M’Gill (15XX – 1633)

One of the first Chaplains at Newtownards Priory

First Curate at Greyabbey

Associated sites: Newtownards Priory / Grey Abbey / Kirkistown Castle

See: memorial at Grey Abbey

### 1. Background in Scotland

David M’Gill was a son of David McGill of Nisbet, the Lord Advocate of Scotland during the reign of King James VI. M’Gill’s wife, Elizabeth Lindsay, was a niece of Hugh Montgomery’s wife Elizabeth.

### 2. Life in Ulster

He became a chaplain to Sir Hugh Montgomery, who had invited M’Gill to Ulster to be a chaplain at the restored Priory in Newtownards, along with a relative, Rev James Montgomery and David Maxill.

Sir Hugh repaired the nave of ruined Grey Abbey for use as a parish church around 1626, and that same year installed David M’Gill as its Curate.

### 3. Death and Burial

David M’Gill died on 14 October 1633. He was buried at Grey Abbey, where his memorial stone is set high on the south wall of the Abbey.

- M’Gill was succeeded at Greyabbey by Rev James Montgomery, who married his widow – “...Mr James succeeding to Mr David aforesaid in his bed... he also filled the said Mr David’s pulpit as Curate in Grayabby...”. Montgomery remained as curate until 1643

- David M’Gill’s son, James M’Gill married Jean Bailie of Inishargy - they lived both at Kirkistown Castle and Ballynester, Greyabbey. James M’Gill bought Kirkistown Castle from James Savage around 1660 and “improved the place very much”, also building a nearby windmill, the stump of which still survives. James M’Gill died 26 July 1683.

- Two of their sons were killed in King William III’s army - Captain James M’Gill was killed on 7 April 1689 at Portglenone bridge and Captain Hugh M’Gill was killed at Athlone on 19 July 1690. Captain Hugh McGill had been recorded as an overseer of Henry Savage’s will, dated 31 August 1655.

- Hugh M’Gill’s daughter, Lucy McGill, was born on 3 November 1685 at Castle Balfour in County Fermanagh. She married William Savage of Audleystowne and Kirkistone, who died in 1733. In 1744 Lucy was recorded as still living at Kirkistown Castle, where she lived until her death.

### Sources

Montgomery MSS

Savage Family in Ulster

Harris

Cloughey History (provided by Lindsay Young of Falkirk; downloadable from [www.cloughey.org.uk](http://www.cloughey.org.uk))

## John McClelland / McLellan / M'Clellan

Principal of Montgomery's school in Newtownards

Lay preacher and Eagle Wing Minister

Associated sites: Newtownards Priory / Groomsport

See: Newtownards Priory

### 1. Background in Scotland

The McClellands / MacLellans were based at Kirkcudbright in south west Scotland with various branches across Galloway. At one point there were fourteen different Knights in the family. Sir Robert MacLellan was Baron of Kirkcudbright in the early 1600s; MacLellan's Castle still stands today in Kirkcudbright town centre.

### 2. Life in Ulster

During the Plantation of the west of Ulster, another Sir Robert MacLellan was granted lands in Co Londonderry. Hugh Montgomery's eldest daughter married Sir Robert MacLellan of Kirkcudbright.

Around 1620, John MacLellan arrived from Kirkcudbright in Scotland, to become the schoolmaster at Montgomery's "great school" in Newtownards. He was the son of Michael MacLellan, the Burgess of Kirkcudbright. John McLellan was a Presbyterian, and was a lay preacher who "occasionally officiated in the pulpits of Presbyterian ministers in the district". Like the other Presbyterian ministers, he was opposed by the Bishops. After one of the "depositions" which drove the ministers from their pulpits, MacLellan went to Strabane where he lodged in the home of a William Kennah and his wife. They were fined £5 for having given MacLellan shelter.

### 3. Eagle Wing

On 9 September 1636 John McLellan sailed on Eagle Wing to America. He was described by his colleague and fellow Eagle Wing passenger Rev John Livingstone as "a most streight and zealous man; he knew not what it was to be afraid in the cause of God, and was early acquainted with God and his ways ."

After the return of Eagle Wing, MacLellan returned to Kirkcudbright where he was appointed minister in 1638. He "became an eminent minister of Christ, and so lived for a considerable time; yet died before the sad revolution...". This "sad revolution" was the Restoration

of the monarchy in 1660. MacLellan is known to have returned to Ulster for a time in 1644.

Adair records that "he was endued with a more than ordinary spirit, not only of ministerial authority and boldness in his Master's work, but of a singular sagacity, whereby from Scripture he did frequently foretell events anent the church and particular persons who were enemies to the church of God; insomuch that his ordinary hearers, observing his warnings coming to pass, would declare it was dangerous to provoke Mc McClelland to speak against them...".

The Montgomery Manuscripts record that MacLellan, "...the pastor of Kirkcudbright, together with Mr. Samuel Rutherford and Mr. John Livingstone, were denounced by a commissioner from Galloway at the meeting of Assembly in 1640, as being great encouragers of private gatherings at night for the purpose of reading scripture and engaging in prayer... without the allowance of minister or elders, the people had begun to convene themselves confusedly about bed-time in private houses, where for the greater part of the night, they would expound scripture, pray, and sing psalms, besides discussing questions of divinity, whereof some sae curious that they do not understand, and some sae ridiculous that they cannot be edified by them... Mr. Henry Guthrie brought in a formal complaint against these practices, which, it was charged, had become very general throughout the west and south of Scotland..."

## Lady Elizabeth Montgomery (15XX – 16XX)

First wife of Sir Hugh Montgomery

Key role in the success of the settlement

Associated sites: Newtownards, Greyabbey and Comber

See: Newtownards Priory

### 1. Background

Born Elizabeth Shaw, she was the eldest daughter of James Shaw (d 1593) of Greenock, and sister of John/James Shaw (d 1620) who came to Ulster in 1606.

### 2. Marriage and Children

Married Hugh Montgomery of Braidstane around 1587  
They had 5 children, the two oldest were born in Scotland, with the others probably born in Ulster

- Hugh Montgomery, 2nd Viscount of the Great Ardes (died 15.11.1642)
- James Montgomery of Rosemount (died July 1661)
- Mary Elizabeth Montgomery (married Sir Robert McLellan of Kirkcudbright)
- Jean Montgomery (married Patrick Savage)
- George Montgomery (Born in Newtownards)

### 3. Life in Ulster

Elizabeth migrated with her husband and children, and her brother John/James to Ulster in May 1606. Her Uncle Patrick Shaw, and her sister Christian/Christina (who married Patrick Montgomery) also came to Ulster at around the same time. From the surviving records it is clear that Elizabeth was as fully involved in the planning and running of the new settlement, in particular when Sir Hugh Montgomery was away in London:

“...Sir Hugh and his Lady's example, they both being active and intent on the work (as birds, after payring to make nests for their brood), then you might see streets and tenements regularly set out, and houses rising as it were out of the ground (like Cadmus's colony\*) on a sudden, so that these dwellings became towns immediately...” Montgomery Manuscripts p 60

News of bumper harvests in Ulster in 1606 and 1607 led to a surge of new settlers “...who came over the more in number and the faster...”, and Elizabeth Montgomery rose to the challenge:

“...This conference gave occasion to Sir Hugh's Lady to build watermills in all the parishes, to the great advantage of her house, which was numerous in servants... the millers also prevented the necessity of bringing meal from Scotland, and grinding with quairn stones (as the Irish did to make their graddon) both which inconveniencys the people, at their first coming, were forced to undergo...”

She also introduced a novel scheme of bartering for new tenants who had arrive from Scotland with little money but some livestock:

“...Her Ladyship had also her farms at Greyabbey and Comber as well as at Newtown, both to supply new-comers and her house; and she easily got men for plough and barn, for many came over who had not stocks to plant and take leases of land, but had brought a cow or two and a few sheep, for which she gave them grass and so much grain per annum, and an house and garden-plot to live on, and some land for flax and potatoes, as they agreed on for doing their work, and there be at this day many such poor labourers amongst us; and this was but part of her good management...”

She also pioneered early Ulster-Scots textile industry, specifically linen and wool production, the local manufacture of which reduced the value of Scottish imported “breakens” or tartan:

“...for she set up and encouraged linen and woollen manufactory which soon brought down the prices of ye breakens and narrow cloths of both sorts...”

### 4. Restoring Newtownards Priory; building “Newtown House”

The first ruined church to be restored by the Scottish settlers was Newtownards Priory. It was here that Elizabeth Montgomery demonstrated her skills and vision for the new settlement, as Sir Hugh was regularly away

from Newtownards, attending to other duties:

"...In process of time the rest of that church was repaired, roofed, and replenished with pews (before his death), mostly by his Lady's care and oversight, himself being much abroad..."

With the Priory restored for worship, the Montgomeries then restored part of the adjacent ruins into a home for themselves, called "Newtown House". It was again Elizabeth Montgomery who "fully finished" the building by 1618:

"...This was a work of some time and years, but the same was fully finished by that excellent Lady (and fit helper mostly in Sir Hugh's absence), because he was by business much and often kept from home, after the year 1608 expired ; yet the whole work was done many months before Sir Hugh and she went to London, Ao 1618, as the dates of coats of arms doth shew in the buildings, and as old men, who wrought thereat, told me..."

Newtown House was destroyed by fire "by the carelessness of servants" in 1664.

### 5. Death and Burial

Elizabeth Montgomery died between two key dates - sometime after the marriage of her oldest son Hugh, which took place in either 1620 or 1623, and before her widower husband Sir Hugh Montgomery remarried. Elizabeth Montgomery was buried in Newtownards Priory.

Sir Hugh Montgomery's second wife was Sarah Maxwell, Countess of Wigtown, who he married in 1630 following a visit he made to Scotland that year. He

"...brought her to Newtown, to fill up the empty side of his bed... but she not liking to live in Ireland... after some months stay, returned to Scotland, and did remain therein, which obliged his Lordship to make yearly summer visits to her, and to send divers messages (by his son George) to persweade her Ladyship to return and cohabit with him..."

She was not to be persuaded, so Sir Hugh sent her a page-boy called Edward Betty or Beattie - a dwarf with golden curly hair described as "...the prettiest little man I ever beheld. He was of a blooming damask rose complexion; his hair was of a shining gold colour, with natural ring-like curls hanging down, and dangling to his breast..."

Sarah Montgomery died on 29 March 1636, aged 60, and was buried at Holyrood in Edinburgh. By now aged 76, Sir Hugh's final visit to Scotland was to attend her Sarah's funeral, but on the way back his coach overturned and he suffered a number of injuries – "the pains whereof reverted every spring and harvest till his own fall".

### Misc

- George Montgomery was the youngest of Elizabeth's children and was his mother's favourite – "he was in his youthhood indulged by her in his pleasures". Later in life she was matchmaker when she "designed for his wife" Grizel MacDowall, daughter of the Laird of Garthland near Portpatrick.

- Elizabeth Montgomery's niece, Elizabeth Lindsay, married David M'Gill who became the first Scottish chaplain at Newtownards Priory in 1607, and later became the Curate of Grey Abbey.

\* In Greek mythology, Cadmus was a Phoenician prince who founded the city of Thebes as a Phoenician colony in the Greek mainland which was said to have brought civilization to the country

### Sources:

The Montgomery Manuscripts  
History of the Town of Greenock, Daniel Weir, 1829  
Genealogical Notes anent some Ancient Scottish Families (chapter on the Shaws of Sauchie) David Marshall, Perth, 1884

## Hugh Montgomery II (1597 – 1642)

2nd Viscount of the Great Ardes; military commander during 1641 Rebellion

Associated sites: Newtownards and Comber

See: Newtownards Priory, Mount Alexander in Comber

### 1. Background in Scotland

Hugh Montgomery was the eldest son of Hugh Montgomery, the Sixth Laird of Braidstane, and Elizabeth Shaw. He was born around 1597.

Little is known about his life. The Preface of The Montgomery Manuscripts records that "...The memoir of the second viscount is unfortunately lost, at least for the present, having been probably carried away to Australia by the author's lineal descendant, captain Frederick Campbell Montgomery, who settled in that colony about the year 1835..."

After a "liberal education" he travelled abroad, including to Italy.

### 2. Life in Ulster

He returned to Ulster, and in 1623 married Jean Alexander. She has gone down in history as a "vehement Presbyterian". Her father was Sir William Alexander, who had been tasked with planting Nova Scotia in Canada – at that time it was an area larger than Great Britain and France combined. (In 1616 Sir William had bought 2000 acres in Portlough, Donegal, from Sir James Cunningham – but he lost the land in 1633 because "he had allowed a mere Irishman to obtain 1 quarter of the town of Mullaliglishe".)

Their marriage was solemnized at Kensington Church in London on 3 August 1623. As a wedding gift, a home called Mount Alexander was built by Sir Hugh Montgomery at Comber, and named in honour of the bride's family.

Upon the death of Sir Hugh Montgomery in 1636, Hugh Montgomery II became the 2nd Viscount of the Great Ardes, and moved back to the parental home of "Newtown House". He was appointed to the Irish Privy Council in 1637. He continued to manage the Scottish estates his father had bought; in July 1637 he received rents for Killintringan and in November 1639 for Port Spittal, both

close to Portpatrick. His third son, James, was born at nearby Dunskey Castle in 1639. Dunskey was an empty, allegedly haunted (by a "brooney"), castle owned by the Adairs of Kilhilt which Sir Hugh Montgomery had bought around 1626.

When Sir William Alexander died, bankrupt, in 1640, his widow – Janet Erskine, Countess of Stirling - moved to Mount Alexander and is believed to have spent the rest of her life there. She used a walking stick which was made from a broken bow that King Charles I had given to the Montgomeries. She was still alive in 1656, and when she died was buried at Newtownards Priory in the Montgomery vault.

### 3. The 1641 Rebellion

He became a Colonel during the 1641 Rebellion, which began on 23 October, commanding 1000 men and five troops of horse - most of which he funded personally at a cost of £1000.00. His brother, James Montgomery of Rosemount, also led a regiment during the Rebellion. Writing from Mount Alexander on 31 December 1641 (recorded in The Montgomery Manuscripts on p 309 – 310) Hugh Montgomery's description of scale of the Rebellion was shocking:

"...we are kept exceeding busy with the rebels, whoe burne and kill within a myle and a half to this place; insoemuch as from the Newry to this, ther is not a Scotts or Inglishe dweller; this being thirty four myles; nor from Downpatrick to Killyleagh, nor from thence hither.

There was a massive refugee migration to the safety of the Ards:

"...The people that are fled of the countys of Armagh, Fermanagh, Tyrone, Monaghan, and these of this county itself, from the Newry all the way to this place, ar soe burdensome that in trueth we much fear ther will be scarsety..."

His frustration at the lack of State support from London or Dublin is clear:

"...all the supply of armes I have had from the beginning hes come unto me out of Scotland, by the means of a private friend of myne, who is well knowen to your lordship; from the Lords Justices and State heer I have only had a matter of 100 musquetts... but if the armye be long a coming, the shorter the provisions will be every day. The more ground the rebels gain on us, the shorter our store must be..."

Many such reports reached Scotland, and the Scottish army arrived at Carrickfergus on 2nd April 1642 to defend the Ulster-Scots.

Hugh Montgomery II "continued to take an active and successful part in suppressing the rebellion until the time of his death".

#### 4. Death and Burial

He died suddenly at Newtownards on 15 November 1642 and was probably buried at Newtownards Priory. He was succeeded by his eldest son, who was also called Hugh Montgomery. He became the 3rd Viscount of the Great Ardes and, in 1661, the First Earl of Mount Alexander.

#### 5. Misc

His second son, Henry, died young. His fourth child, and only daughter, Elizabeth, married her cousin William Montgomery, the author of *The Montgomery Manuscripts*.

His wife Jean died in 1670. In 1836, some workmen at the Priory uncovered a number of old tombstones, including one which was thought to be to a "John Alexander", but more probably "Jean".

#### Sources

Oxford DNB entry for Sir William Alexander  
*The Montgomery Manuscripts*  
 Memorials of the Earl of Stirling Rev Charles L Rogers, (Edinburgh 1877)

## Sir Hugh Montgomery (1560 – 1636)

Founding Father of the Ulster-Scots

Associated Sites: Donaghadee, Newtownards, Greyabbey

See: Manor House, Donaghadee (site of original house) / Donaghadee Parish Church doorway memorial / Greyabbey memorial to William Montgomery on which Sir Hugh is named / Newtownards Priory / Newtownards Market Cross

### 1. Background in Scotland

The Montgomeries were one of the most powerful families in Scotland, with many titles and large estates dating back to the 1100s. Adam Montgomery was the Fifth Laird of Braidstane in Ayrshire, and his eldest son was Hugh Montgomery. Braidstane Castle was situated between the villages of Dunlop and Beith.

Hugh was born in 1560, was educated at Glasgow College and went to France where he spent some time at the Royal Court. He then moved to Holland and became Captain of Foot of a Scottish Regiment, under William 1 of Orange-Nassau (King William III's great grandfather) fighting against the army of King Philip II of Spain – whose troops included an Englishman called Guy Fawkes!

### 2. The Cunningham Feud

When his father died, Hugh returned to Scotland to become the Sixth Laird of Braidstane and married Elizabeth Shaw, daughter of the Laird of Greenock. His fighting skills were used again when he became involved in the generations-old feud between the Montgomeries and the Cunninghams (led by the Earl of Glencairn). Hugh Montgomery claimed that one of the Cunninghams had insulted him, and challenged him to a duel, but Cunningham fled - first to London and then to Holland. Montgomery tracked him down to the Inner Court of the Palace at The Hague, drew his sword and with a single thrust aimed to kill him. Luckily for Cunningham, the sword hit the buckle of his belt and saved his life - but Montgomery, thinking he had killed Cunningham, put away his sword and while he was leaving the Palace was arrested and imprisoned at Gevangenpoort in the Binnenhof.

Stationed there was a Scottish soldier - Sergeant Robert Montgomery - who came to visit Hugh in prison, and they came up with a jailbreak plan. Robert arrived at the prison dressed as a wealthy Laird with property in

Scotland, to court the daughter of the prison Marshall in order to get the key to Hugh's cell. The plan was so successful that within a few days they were married in the prison, with Hugh Montgomery performing the ceremony according to Scottish law. The wedding guests had drunk so much wine that Hugh, Robert and his new wife were able to slip away unnoticed to a pre-arranged ship which took them to Leith, near Edinburgh.

### 3. The Return to Scotland

Hugh's return to Scotland saw him receive a severe reprimand from King James VI, but thanks to his own strong relationship with the King and the support of his influential brother George Montgomery, Hugh was back in favour. George had left Scotland as a youth and had become Dean of Norwich in 1602, a privileged position which he used to gather information about English politics which he then passed back to King James's court in Scotland. So Hugh Montgomery also had considerable influence with King James VI, and when Queen Elizabeth 1 died in the spring of 1603 he accompanied James to London for his coronation ceremony.

The Con O'Neill estate came to Hugh's attention when O'Neill's wife offered him half of their lands – if Hugh could spring Con from jail in Carrickfergus and secure a Royal Pardon from the new King. In a re-run of the plan he had used in Holland, Con was sprung from prison by a Thomas Montgomery, a neighbour of Hugh's and was brought to Braidstane where their deal was finalised. En route to London, to gain the Royal pardon and approval of the land deal, James Hamilton intervened and secured 1/3 of the land for himself – perhaps as payment for favours owed.

The negotiations led to George Montgomery being appointed Bishop of Derry, Raphoe and Clogher, and from Spring 1607 he brought lowland Scottish settlers into west Ulster – many months before the "Flight of the Earls".

#### 4. Life In Ulster

Hugh Montgomery was knighted in April 1605, and went on to lead a massive migration from south west Scotland into the Ards and north Down. He initially settled at Donaghadee where he built a "low stone walled house", but soon moved to Newtownards where he restored the old Priory, and converted an adjacent building into his family home, which was named "Newtown House". By 1610 he could muster 1000 able fighting men; by 1611 the Plantation Commissioners reported that "...Sir Hugh Montgomery, Knight, hath repayed part of the abbey of Newton for his owne dwelling, and made a good towne of a hundred houses or there aboutes, all peopled with Scottes." The Market Cross in Newtownards is the second on the site, the first having been built under Montgomery's direction as a replica of the Market Cross in Edinburgh.

Settlements: Hugh Montgomery's tenants established Donaghadee, Newtownards, Greyabbey and much of Comber, as well as rural townlands surrounding these towns and villages.

Churches: Montgomery built or restored six churches (Donaghadee, Greyabbey, Comber, Kilmore, Newtownards and Portpatrick) and he gave each three gifts: a bell, a 1603 Geneva Bible and a 1603 Common Prayer book, each with the Braidstane coat of arms in gold leaf on the front cover. One of the bells in Greyabbey Parish Church to this day is nicknamed "Old Gomery" – it is said to be a replica of the 1626 original.

Donaghadee / Portpatrick: Montgomery established the Donaghadee/Portpatrick trading route for the settlement, and in 1626 he attempted to rename the towns as Montgomery and PortMontgomery respectively. The new names didn't catch on, but a datestone recording this event survives in a private collection in Donaghadee to this day.

Sport: he established a "great school" in Newtownards, which had a green for the students to enjoy archery, golf and football. These are the first references to both golf and football in Ireland.

#### 5. Description:

The Montgomery Manuscripts describe Hugh as a man of "middle stature", "ruddy complexion and had a manly, sprightlie and cheerful countenance" and that "his temperament was sanguine, for his body and nerves were agile and strong, beyond any of his sons or their children".

He also is described as "being of a sound vigorous constitution of health... seldom having sickness, because he was greatly sober and temperate in meat and drink, and chaste also, and used moderate exercises..."

He was fond of country sports, hunting deer, foxes and even wolves. Also listed in The Montgomery Manuscripts are pastimes like fishing, golf, tennis, archery and even football – "...but would not play for sums of money..."

He was made Viscount Montgomery of the Great Ardes on 3 May 1622.

#### 6. Death and Burial:

Hugh Montgomery died on 15 May 1636, and was given what may have been a Scottish State funeral in Newtownards on 8th September 1636; a highly detailed account of it is recorded in The Montgomery Manuscripts. The funeral service was conducted by Bishop Leslie, the Bishop who had desposed the Presbyterian ministers just a few weeks previously on 12th August. The morning after the funeral, 9th September 1636, four of these ministers (Blair, Hamilton, McClelland and Livingstone) set sail from Groomsport Harbour on board the "Eagle Wing", bound for the New World with 136 other Ulster-Scots settlers.

#### 7. Misc:

- Hugh Montgomery's coat of arms (a fleur de lis and hand above a crescent) can be seen today as part of the crest of Ards Borough Council, and in the school badge for Regent House Grammar School, Newtownards.
- in the mid 1800s an original painting of Sir Hugh Montgomery was said to be in the possession of a Mrs Sinclair of Belfast.
- Braidstane Castle was demolished in the late 1700s, but some of the stones were used to build farmhouses which can still be seen today, called "Broadstone".

#### Sources:

The Montgomery Manuscripts  
A Genealogical History of the Family of Montgomery, Thomas Harrison Montgomery (Philadelphia, 1863)  
Memorials of the Montgomeries, William Fraser (Edinburgh, 1859)

## Sir James Montgomery of Rosemount (1600 - 1651)

Second son of Sir Hugh Montgomery; established the first house at Rosemount

Educated at St Andrews

Restored Portaferry Castle; bought Quintin Castle

Died when he was "by pirates shot", one of whom was a tenant from Quintin Castle

Sir James Montgomery was the second son of Sir Hugh Montgomery and his wife Elizabeth Shaw. He was born at the family seat at Braidstane in Ayrshire in 1600. Of his early life little is known, but he probably came to Ulster as a young boy with his father in 1606 or shortly thereafter. His boyhood would have been spent in that part of Newtownards Priory that his father had restored as the family home. He was educated at St Andrews and was renowned as someone of considerable learning, no doubt broadening his knowledge considerably through his travels across Continental Europe, before continuing his studies at the Inns of Court.

Following the marriage of his sister Jean to Patrick Savage of Portaferry, James assisted his brother-in-law with developing Portaferry from a fishing village into prosperous town. His undoubted abilities saw him, while still a young man, appointed a gentleman usher of the privy chamber and a member of the privy council, as well as being granted a knighthood.

In 1629 Sir Hugh presented his son James with the gift of a small estate at Greyabbey and another in the barony of Castlereagh. In 1631 James married Katherine Stewart, daughter of Sir William Stewart of Newtown Stewart and their son William, later to be one of the first historians of the Ulster Scots, was born in 1633. James built a home for his family at Greyabbey. In his 'Description of Ards Barony' of 1683 William Montgomery described this house as

A double-roofed house with four flankers, stables, and all needful office houses, all slated and built after the foreign and English manner with outer and inner courts walled about and surrounded with pleasant gardens, orchards, meadows and pasture enclosures under view of the said house (called Rosemount, from which the manor thereof taketh name.

It was completed in 1634 and 'only some small convenient additions of building and orchards' had been added since then.

Following the outbreak of the 1641 rising James Montgomery raised and armed his own regiment. One of the castles that he garrisoned was the old Norman stronghold at Dundrum. The next decade proved to be one of considerable unrest in Ireland and James played a leading role in events in County Down. After the death of their parents in 1643 and 1644, Sir James raised the orphaned Savage children at Rosemount. Hugh Savage was raised alongside William Montgomery, till 1649 when James and William fled to Scotland following Cromwell's arrival in Ireland.

Because he was considered to have failed to wholeheartedly embrace the Covenants, he was banished from Scotland in January 1650, sailing for Holland. He returned to Scotland a few months later along with Charles II to fight the Cromwellians. This campaign was a disaster for the Scots. James himself was forced to flee to Edinburgh and from there he travelled to London under an assumed name and disguised as a merchant.

Thinking the journey overland to be too hazardous, James boarded a coal barque to sail down the east coast of England.

In March 1651 Sir James was sailing from Newcastle-upon-Tyne to London when the ship he was in was attacked by pirates near Flamborough Head, East Yorkshire. He was struck in the neck and shoulder by a 4lb cannonball which left "a gapp incurable". The pirates boarded Montgomery's ship, and one of whom turned out to be "one of the Smiths, followers of Mr Savage of Portaferry" – ie, from Quintin Castle. Montgomery "was a friend to all the relations he [the pirate] had in Lecaile, and the Ardes". The pirates were eventually captured and all of them (17 of whom were Irishmen), including Smith of Quintin, were hanged at Harwich.

## Lady Jean Alexander / Montgomery (16XX – 1670)

2nd Viscountess of the Great Ardes

“Vehement Presbyterian”

Associated sites: Newtownards and Comber

See: Newtownards Priory, Mount Alexander in Comber

### 1. Background

One of eleven children, she was the eldest daughter of Sir William Alexander and his wife Janet Erskine, who later became the Earl and Countess of Stirling. William was a poet and a friend of King James VI of Scotland; he assisted the King with a new version of the metrical Psalms. William Alexander was also a “gentleman usher” to King’s son, the young Prince Charles.

### 2. Marriage

Jean Alexander married Hugh Montgomery in 1623, a marriage which had been arranged around 1618 when her father and Sir Hugh Montgomery, 1st Viscount of the Great Ardes, were in London. Both men were ambitious and visionary colonisers – Hugh Montgomery in Ulster and William Alexander in Nova Scotia.

Their marriage was solemnized at Kensington Church in London on 3 August 1623. After the wedding they initially lived in Newtownards:

“...The new wedded couple were comely and well bred personages, who went that summer with Sir Hugh (now Viscount) Montgomery and his Lady, to their new built and furnished house aforesaid in Newtown...”

As a wedding gift, a home called Mount Alexander was built by Sir Hugh Montgomery at Comber, and named in honour of the bride’s family.

### 3. A “Vehement Presbyterian”.

Faith was an important element in her life, but whilst her husband and parents were committed Anglicans, Jean was described as a “vehement Presbyterian”. She also had a talent for creative writing is said to have “inherited a portion of her father’s genius, which she exhibited by composing sacred verses”.

Presbyterians faced increasing persecution in Ulster in the late 1620s and 1630s, at the hands of the Bishops.

Bishop Robert Echlin of Ardquin, the Bishop of Down and Connor who had driven the Presbyterian ministers from their pulpits and congregations. A famous example of Jean Alexander’s stance in support of the Presbyterians is often quoted, from July 1635:

“...Dr. Maxwell attended bishop Echlin during his last illness... during one of Dr.

Maxwell’s visits to the death-bed of bishop Echlin, he asked his patient to say of what he particularly complained, to which the latter replied “its my conscience, man!” The doctor immediately exclaimed “I have no cure for that!” Maxwell afterwards reported this circumstance at Newtown House, and the first viscount, then an old man, recommended the doctor not to repeat it in other quarters; whereupon, his daughter-in-law, Jean Alexander, who was a zealous presbyterian, cried out – “No man shall get that report suppressed, for I shall bear witness of it to the glory of God, who hath smitten that man (Echlin) for suppressing Christ’s witnesses”. These ‘witnesses’ were the presbyterian ministers, Dunbar, Welsh, Blair, and Livingstone, whom the bishop had recently deposed...”

### 4. Remarriage

Her husband, Hugh Montgomery, 2nd Viscount of the Great Ardes, died suddenly on 15 November 1642. Throughout the last year of his life, he had commanded a defensive force of 1000 men to protect the Ulster-Scots against the Irish rebellion which had begun in October 1641. In April 1642, reinforcements from Scotland arrived, under the command of Major-General Robert Monro.

Jean married Monro, either in 1644 or 1653. When Cromwell came to power, Monro was arrested in 1648 and was imprisoned for five years in London.

The Mount-Alexander estate had been confiscated by Cromwell, but upon Monro’s release the “...property of

his wife, the dowager Lady Montgomery, and his stepson Hugh Montgomery, third Viscount Montgomery, was restored, and Monro evidently spent the rest of his life in their household at Comber in co. Down. In later years he was described as ‘honest, kind Major-general Munro’...”.

When Jean’s father Sir William Alexander died, bankrupt, in 1640, her mother – Janet Erskine, Countess of Stirling - moved to Mount Alexander and is believed to have spent the rest of her life there. She used a walking stick which was made from a broken bow that King Charles I had given to the Montgomeries. She was still alive in 1656, and when she died was buried at Newtownards Priory in the Montgomery vault.

### 5. Death and Burial

Jean’s son, Hugh Montgomery III, died in 1663. At his funeral service in Newtownards, Dean Rusk referred to Jean’s early Presbyterian influences on her son “...who stated on that occasion that the deceased nobleman, in becoming, as he did, a faithful churchman, had risen superior to the prejudices of his early education...”. The next year “Newtown House” was destroyed in an accidental fire.

Jean Alexander “died in harvest, 1670”, and is thought to have been buried at Newtownards Priory. In 1836, some workmen at the Priory uncovered a number of old tombstones, including one which was thought to be to a “John Alexander”, but more probably “Jean”. Monro died in 1675.

### 6. Misc

- Jean had worked hard to raise her son, Hugh Montgomery III, the 3rd Viscount of the Great Ardes and first Earl of Mount Alexander, as a Presbyterian – “...when her son, the third viscount, succeeded to the estates in 1642, he certainly appears to have been also imbued with presbyterian principles...”. In a letter he wrote to the Scottish General Assembly on 20 June 1643,

he referred to the early ejections of the Presbyterian ministers: “...the violent acts of prelates in driving away some of our best ministers...”. However as years went on he moved towards a Church of Ireland and Royalist position.

- In 1645, “...James Gordon came to Comber as the Presbyterian minister, mainly through the influence and exertions of the Lady Jean Alexander...”. In 1649, when her first granddaughter was born, Jean found that Gordon was a Presbyterian even more vehement than herself! She pleaded with him to baptize the child, but Gordon refused to do so unless the child’s father – Hugh Montgomery III – stood on the penitential stool and recanted his support for the Church of Ireland. Montgomery refused to do so and the baptism was eventually carried out by Rev Matthews of Comber parish church. Gordon was arrested in 1663 for his involvement in “Blood’s Plot”, but Jean intervened and negotiated that he live out his sentence in Comber.

- In 1679 the manor and Lordship of Mount Alexander (two thirds of the original estate) was sold to Sir Robert Colville for £9780. The Montgomeries retained the house, farm buildings and a few townlands. By the late 1700s the male family line died out and the estate became the property of the Ards Peninsula-based Huguenot families of de la Cherois (Donaghadee) and Crommelin (Carrowdore).

### Sources

A True Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 1623 – 1670, Rev Patrick Adair (Belfast 1866)

The Story of Comber, Norman Nevin, 1984

The Montgomery Manuscripts

Memorials of the Earl of Stirling Rev Charles L Rogers, (Edinburgh 1877)

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography entry for Robert Monro

## Patrick Montgomery of Creboy / Craigboy (15XX – 1629)

Brother-in-law of Sir Hugh Montgomery

Associated sites: Templepatrick and Craigboy, south of Donaghadee

See: coat of arms from original house, now on the wall of a new house on the Craigboy Road / Templepatrick graveyard

### 1. Background in Scotland

Patrick Montgomery was originally from Blackhouse near Largs, north Ayrshire. The family estate was at Skelmorlie-Cunningham. His father was John Montgomery of Braidstane – so Patrick was possibly a cousin of Sir Hugh Montgomery, the First Viscount of the Great Ardes. The two men married two sisters – Hugh married Elizabeth Shaw of Greenock, and Patrick married her younger sister Christian/Christina – so they were also brothers-in-law.

When Con O'Neill was sprung from Carrickfergus Castle, he was whisked across the North Channel by Thomas Montgomery of Blackstown (a farm adjacent to Braidstane Castle) in "a small bark". They landed at Largs, where they were greeted by a welcoming party led by Patrick Montgomery. From Largs they travelled to Hugh Montgomery's castle at Braidstane to finalise the O'Neill/Montgomery deal before traveling to London to seek the approval of Montgomery's friend, the new King James I.

### 2. Life in Ulster

After the deal was completed, and the O'Neill estate was divided into three ways between Con O'Neill, Hugh Montgomery and James Hamilton, Patrick Montgomery received a grant from Hugh Montgomery for Creboy/Craigboy, just south of Donaghadee. This included the old church, well and graveyard of Templepatrick, which the local Irish told the incoming Scots had been the place where St Patrick originally landed\*. Patrick Montgomery was granted the townlands of Ballyhannode and Ballogortevil in 1616. These names are now extinct.

Patrick Montgomery died in 1629, leaving three sons:

- Hugh, who died in 1630
- John, a Lieutenant-Colonel in the army who was killed in the Battle of Dunbar on 2 September 1650
- Patrick, who sold two thirds of the family's Scottish estate in 1663. (This Patrick's son John, sold all of Creboy on 27 December 1716 and returned to live on the

remaining one third of Skelmorlie)

In 1683, William Montgomery recorded this description of the house at Creboy:

"...about a mile and a half from the Town Southward is Patrick Montgomery Esq., his house of Creboy slated, seen far at sea, having Orchards and inclosures about it, and within a mile an a half are quarries of slate, which are used at Belfast, Carrickfergus, and elsewhere..."

### 3. Misc

- the Ulster-Scots quickly began to export grain to sell in Scotland – supplying Galloway, Ayrshire and Argyll with grain which was cheaper than grain grown in Scotland. By 1672, the importing of cheaper grain from Ulster was outlawed by the Protection Acts passed by the Scottish Parliament. In 1703 a Mr Alexander of Blackhouse was appointed to collect fines from illegal importation. A list of those who were fined included a "Muire in Portoferrie". See Montgomery MSS p 73

- Templepatrick graveyard features prominently in *The Scot in Ulster* by John Harrison (Edinburgh 1888). His romantic description of the graveyard concludes with "...the names are very Scottish... it is a burying-place of the simple peasants of County Down, who are still, in the end of the nineteenth century, as Scottish as they were when they landed here nearly three centuries ago..."

### Sources:

The Montgomery Manuscripts  
Description of Ardes Barony, in the County of Down, William Montgomery, 1683  
*A History of the County of Down*, Alexander Knox, 1875  
*The Scot in Ulster*, John Harrison, 1888  
*A Genealogical History of the Family of Montgomery*, Thomas Harrison Montgomery (Philadelphia, 1863)

## The Shaws

Family who were intermarried with the Montgomeries, and who became major tenants of theirs in Ulster

Associated sites: Craigboy / Templepatrick Ballywhiskin / Ganaway

See: coat of arms from original house, now on the wall of a new house on the Craigboy Road / Templepatrick graveyard / site of original farm at Ganaway

### 1. Background in Scotland

The earliest records of the Shaws are from the late 1200s, in the troubled period which saw the rise of William Wallace and Robert the Bruce. In 1284 a John de Shaw is recorded in the register of Paisley Abbey. The "Ragman Roll" of opponents of Bruce, dated 1296, includes Fergus del Shawe, Symund del Shawe and William de Shaw.

The Shaw estate was near Greenock, a coastal town on the west side of Glasgow, along the mouth of the River Clyde. The Shaws had owned the lordship of Wester Greenock since the time of King Richard III (1337 – 1406), and from the early 1400s were known as the "Shaws of Sauchie".

William Schaw (1550 – 1602) was grandson of Sir James Schaw of Sauchie. On 21 December 1583 he was appointed by King James I of Scotland as his "Master of Works" for all of the royal palaces and castles in Scotland, and was involved in major refurbishment works at Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh, Dunfermline Abbey and Stirling Castle. He accompanied the King to Denmark to meet his new wife Anne of Denmark. Schaw was highly influential in the development of Scottish Freemasonry and wrote "The Schaw Statutes" which were published around 1598. He has an impressive memorial at Dunfermline Abbey.

The site of the original Shaw castle is today the public park, Well Park, in Greenock, which includes John Shaw's well, which is dated 1629. Wester Greenock remained as the Shaw family seat (later the Shaw-Stewarts) until 1754 when they moved five miles south to Ardgowan, a magnificent country estate. Ardgowan is still owned by the Shaw-Stewarts, and offers a range of corporate hospitality services. In 1851 the Shaw-Stewarts donated Well Park to the people of Greenock.

### 2. The Shaws in Ulster

In the early 1600s, the head of the family was James Shaw of Greenock.

7 November 1605 – James Shaw's son John Shaw (who is also called James Shaw in some of the early records) and Patrick Montgomery were appointed as attornies to act on behalf of Hugh Montgomery in the division of Con O'Neill's estate. John Shaw is described in The Montgomery Manuscripts as one of Hugh Montgomery's "prime friends"

May 1606: One of the first group who accompanied Sir Hugh to Ulster was his wife's uncle Patrick Shaw who later became Laird of Kelseland. Kelseland / Kelsoland was an estate which dated back to Hugh de Kelso in 1296 – the Shaws of Greenock acquired it in 1624.

The Montgomeries and Shaws were closely related through marriage:

- Sir Hugh Montgomery married James Shaw's eldest daughter Elizabeth Shaw
- Sir Hugh's sister Jean Montgomery married Patrick Shaw, second son of John Shaw of Greenock. They were buried at Skelmorlie near Largs, Scotland, with an impressive memorial
- A third sister, called either Christian or Christina, married Patrick Montgomery (originally of Blackhouse near Largs, who later moved to Creboy or Craigboy near Donaghadee). Patrick was the son of John Montgomery of Braidstane, and died in 1629, leaving three sons – Hugh (the eldest, died in 1630), John (an army officer who was killed in Scotland and the Battle of Dunbar in 1650) and Patrick (who sold off most of their original Blackhouse estate in 1663).

19 July 1616 – Sir Hugh conveyed to John Shaw two townlands called Ballycheskeve (Ballywhiskin?) and Ballingamoye (which is Ganaway, just south of Millisle), which the 1623 Inquisition found Shaw “in peaceable possession of”. A Donaghadee rent roll of 1718 records a John Shaw still at Ganaway.

1617: a Patrick Shaw of Ballywalter and a William Shaw of Ballykilconan received letters of denization.

1636: The Market Cross in Newtownards (to replace the original which burned down) was built and included the Shaw coat of arms was (still may be) on one face of the Market Cross in Newtownards. John Shaw of Greenock took part in Hugh Montgomery’s funeral procession, and at the service Newtownards Priory was dressed with the coats of arms of the Shaws and the Maxwells (in memory of Sir Hugh’s two wives and their families).

6 October 1639 : a William Shaw of Newtownards was one of five men (along with Sir James and John Montgomery, and Patrick and Henry Savage) eight townlands (M Mss p 94)

1670: Hugh Shaw of Kilbright died in 1670. His son, Captain Hugh Shaw, was an army officer in 1649. (M Mss p 252)

### 3. The move to Ballygally

1613 - As the Scots settlement in east Ulster expanded, some of the original Montgomery tenants moved to County Antrim. James Shaw (who may have been the John Shaw mentioned above – the names “James” and “John” are both used in the early records ) and his wife Isabella Brisbane moved to County Antrim, to Ballygally / Ballygelly and Ballytweedie. In 1613, a “John Shaw of Ballygally, Gent.” is recorded on a County Antrim jury. They built Ballygally Castle, north of Larne, in 1625. Some of the cut stone is said to have been brought from Scotland.

“Over the main entrance door to the Castle, leading to the tower is the inscription “1625 – GOD.IS.PROVIDENS.IS.MY.INHERITANS”. Above this is a shield with the coats of arms of the Shaw and Brisbane families and the letters J.S and I.B. which represented their initials. James Shaw, a native of Greenock, Scotland, came to Ireland in 1606 to seek his fortune. After Shaw came to the Ballygally area in 1613, he came into possession of a sub-grant of land, at the low rent of 24 pounds Sterling yearly, from the Earl of Antrim. It was on

this land the castle was built.” – from the Ballygally Castle Hotel website.

Isabella is said to have been killed when she fell from a window at the top of the castle, which her ghost haunts to this day.

### 4. Back in Scotland

1650: Hugh Montgomery III sold the family’s Braidstane lands to Sir John Shaw of Greenock in 1650. The Shaws “continued occasionally to reside at the old castle here till after 1700”.

1657: the Shaws expanded their estates – James Shaw, the son of James Shaw of Ballygally married his cousin Elizabeth Brisbane and so acquired the Brisbane estate in 1657.

1671: The same James Shaw acquired the estate of Over Kelsoland. On 26 Feb 1686 King James II wrote to James Shaw to collect fines which he had been charged with due to “his wife’s persistent attendance at Presbyterian conventicles”.

### 5. The 1700s and 1800s

William Shaw was Provost of Newtown (Montgomery Mss p 250). In his will of 1707 he left the lands of Ballyganoway, Ballywhisker and Carradorn (Ganaway, Ballywhiskin and Carrowdore?) – as well as Ballymacravanny and Cahard – to his son John.

In 1744 there was still a house near the market cross in Newtownards with the Shaw coat of arms on the front – “a star in the middle with three cups, and the crest a phoenix” – believed to have been originally built by John Shaw.

The last of the Ganaway Shaws, Henry William Shaw, died at Glen-Ebor (off the Old Holywood Road, Belfast) in November 1867.

### Sources:

The Montgomery Manuscripts  
History of the Town of Greenock, Daniel Weir, 1829  
Genealogical Notes anent some Ancient Scottish Families (chapter on the Shaws of Sauchie) David Marshall, Perth, 1884  
Ulster Journal of Archaeology, vol VII, April 1901

## The Stewarts of Mount Stewart

From Macgregor outlaws to eminent Ulster gentry.

Associated sites: Mount Stewart

See: Mount Stewart, Scrabo Tower

### 1. Background in Scotland.

The name "Stewart" in Scotland has a special pedigree, regularly associated with Royalty and the elite of Scottish society – from politicians and lords to military heroes. Until now, the assumption has been that the Stewarts of Mount Stewart were descended from Scottish ancestors the Stewarts of Minto and the Earls of Galloway. However, recent research has shown this to be untrue.

Before coming to Ulster, the family had actually been called MacGregor, but the name was outlawed so they changed it to Stewart!

### 2. Life in Ulster

The Ulster link begins in Donegal, where in 1610 an Alexander McAula from Dumbartonshire (near Helensburgh, Firth of Clyde) was granted 1000 acres near Moville on the Inishowen Peninsula. However, the Plantation Commission reported the following year that "Alexander McAula of Durlinge; 1000 acres; appeared not, nothing done". So an Alexander Stewart bought the patent for 1000 acres from McAula.

Alexander's son John Stewart obtained grant of "Stewart's Court" from King Charles I in 1629, and of land at Ballyveagh. John built Ballylawn Castle (between Manorcunningham and NewtownCunningham), and his wife is believed to have been Barbara Stewart. Her father was another Scot, Sir William Stewart, who had built Ramelton in Donegal and Newtownstewart in Co Tyrone.

John Stewart's son William Stewart was born 1667 and became a Lieutenant-Colonel in Mountjoy's dragoons. He had 3 children: Thomas, Martha and Alexander.

### 3. Alexander Stewart (1699 – 1781)

Alexander Stewart was born at Ballylawn. He became MP for Londonderry and married his cousin Mary Cowan in 1737. They moved to the Ards and, using some of his wife's family fortune (inherited from her brother who had been Governor of Bombay) they bought the estate of Mount Pleasant on the Ards Peninsula from the Colville family for £42,000 in 1744. They changed the name of the estate to Mount Stewart.

Their eldest son, Robert Stewart, became an MP in 1769 and a Peer in 1783. He acquired a series of titles throughout his life - Baron Londonderry (1789), Viscount Castlereagh (1795), Earl of Londonderry (1796) and Marquis of Londonderry (1816). He died on 8 April 1821 and was buried at Newtownards Priory in the family tomb.

### Misc

Scrabo Tower was built by the people of Newtownards as a memorial to Robert's grandson, Charles William Vane, the 3rd Marquis of Londonderry.

## James Traill (1595 – 1663)

Tutor of James Hamilton's only son

Became a renowned soldier

Associated sites: Killyleagh

See: Tullykin townland near Killyleagh / Memorial inside Killyleagh Parish Church

### 1. Background in Scotland

He was born in Scotland (probably Blebo in Fife, just 5 miles from St Andrews) on 15 October 1595. His brother Robert Traill (1603 - 1676) was the famous minister at Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh. James had a degree in theology from Leiden University in the Netherlands, and spent time with the Ambassador to Paris. Robert Traill also spent time in France, joining James there in 1625 and staying until around 1630 - he was later described as a "Grim Geneva Minister".??

### 2. Life in Ulster

Around 1610 Colonel James Traill (possibly Robert and James' father) acquired 1000 acres in Knockninny in Co Fermanagh during the Plantation. The other major grantees in Knockninny were the Balfour brothers - second cousins of the Traills - who built Castle Balfour in Lisnaskea around 1620

Around 1633, Sir James Hamilton appointed Traill to be tutor for Hamilton's only son "...He choosed for him a very learned, discreet, and religious master, one Mr. James Traill...".

### 3. Life on the Continent

The son was "...to travel some years for his improvement, which he did the length of Rome, very safely and successfully, and returned with great improvements in such things whereunto his genius allowed...".

So James Traill showed young Hamilton jr, the ways of continental life. Traill wrote to Hamilton sr. from Paris in October 1633, summarising their trek around France. The letter says that young Hamilton started his day at 7am with two hours study of French or Latin, then classes in dancing and fencing, then oral French, followed by an hour of translation. Once he had a grasp of French he was going to move on to study "logic and mathematics". At the start of the day and at the end were his "duties of piety". Traill went on to outline a proposed "circuit of

France", plus a trip to Geneva and Italy - Florence and Rome in particular.?

### 4. The return to Ulster – and exile in Scotland

When they came back, Traill joined Oliver Cromwell's army and rose to Lieutenant Colonel. Cromwell said of him "If only I had 10,000 James Traills, I would drive the Pope out of Italy" - a country that Traill was already very familiar with!?

Traill married Mary Hamilton (daughter of James Hamilton's brother John - and therefore a cousin of Hamilton jr.) in 1647. However in 1649 James Traill had to leave Ulster "...on account of malignants..." and went to stay with his brother Robert in Edinburgh. Robert also knew the Hamiltons well - he and Rev James Hamilton (who was another cousin of Hamilton jr.) were both ministers in Edinburgh at this time, and signed the Solemn League and Covenant together on 11 April that same year. They also both accompanied their friend and colleague James Guthrie to the gallows in 1661 when he was executed by order of King Charles II.

### 5. Retirement in Ulster

Some time in the 1650s, James Traill's payment for his military service was said to be "...land in lieu of his back pay and this land near Killyleagh he named Tullochinn. The last portion of this property was sold in 1770, by his grt grandson, the Rev. Hamilton Traill, who died in 1795, aged 75." The land was part of the Killyleagh estate which was by now owned by his former protégé, James Hamilton jr.

Hamilton jr. wrote his will on 18 June 1659, naming Lieut-Col Traill as one of his executors, and died just two days later on 20 June 1659. He was buried at Bangor Abbey.

### 6. Death and Burial

Traill himself died about four years later, on 18th May

1663 and was buried at Killyleagh. There is a large memorial to him inside Killyleagh Parish Church, just down the hill from James Hamilton's castle - and where the Rowan Hamiltons still live today.

The inscription on the memorial reads:

"Heere lyeth the body of Lef. Col. Jam(es) Traille who having severall years faithfully served his mast. in ye warr against ye Irish Rebels departed th(is) life at Tollachin 18 May 1663, haveing had issue by his wife Mary Traille als Hamilton, daughter to John Hamilton of Hamiltons Baun in ye county of Ardmagh, Esqr., broth(er) to ye Right Honl. ye Lord Viscount Claneboys; 4 sons & 8 daughters, James, John, Hans, James, Jane, Ann, Mar(y), Mathelda, Sarah, Ellenor, Magdalen, Margaret. Here lieth the body of Elizabeth Trail alias Read of Hollypark who departed this life 10 Jan 1818. And also near to this lies the remains of her husband, the Revd. Archibald Hamilton Trail of Hollypark, Killinchy, who departed this life 16 Apr 1844 in the 89th year of his age."??

James Traill is a perfect example of a sophisticated, driven Ulster-Scot, who was as comfortable in his youth with the Ambassador in Paris as he was in later life in his townland outside Killyleagh in County Down.

**Sources:**

The Hamilton Manuscripts

## The Blackwoods (1591 - 1798) DRAFT

The Blackwoods were one of the early Ulster-Scots families who grew in influence and status, eventually acquiring major Hamilton lands in both north Down and around Killyleagh.

### 1. Background in Scotland

The Blackwood name has a long pedigree in Fife, particularly around Dunfermline, which has been a burgh of the Scottish monarchy since around 1125. King Robert the Bruce was buried at the Abbey there in 1329 and in 1588 King James VI made Dunfermline a Royal Burgh.

Adam Blackwood (1539 - 1613) was one of the most important figures in the family. He was a strong supporter of Mary Queen of Scots, who had funded his education in Paris and Toulouse. His brothers Henry and George also settled in France; when firebrand Presbyterian George Buchanan wrote his *De Jure Regni Apud Scotos* (1579) which advocated limiting the power of the Scottish monarchy, Adam Blackwood published *Pro Regibus Apologia* (1588) rebutting Buchanan's arguments.

### 2. Life in Ulster and John Blackwood (1591 – 1663)

A relative of Adam Blackwood, possibly a cousin, was John Blackwood (1591 – 1663). He was born in Fife and came to James Hamilton's flourishing Bangor. Hamilton's work in Co Down had won him knighthood in 1608. Blackwood became a wealthy merchant and Provost of Bangor.

(An Inquisition at Downpatrick of 13 October 1623 lists "Bally-liddy" as one of the townlands owned by James Hamilton, but there is no mention of any Blackwoods among the major landholders on the Hamilton estate at that time).

John Blackwood's wife was Janet Clarke, and their son, also called John Blackwood, was born in 1625. John snr was buried at Bangor Abbey in 1663, where his tombstone can still be seen today.

### 3. John Blackwood (1625 – 1698) and Ballyleidy Estate

In the 1625 Thomas Raven maps of the Hamilton estate, "Ba;Leede" is shown as vacant land, surrounded to the north and east by marshland, to the west by a dense wood, and to the south by land owned by Hamilton's great rival, "Lord Mongumre". Most of the Raven maps include the names of tenants, suggesting that the Blackwoods did not become tenants at Ballyleidy until after 1625.

Nearly fifty years later in July 1674 John Blackwood bought Ballyleidy from Sir James Hamilton's grandson, Henry Hamilton the 2nd Earl of Clanbrassil (c.1644-1675). Blackwood married Anne Wanchope (on 28 November 1617 a James Wanchop was recorded as being a tenant of Sir James Hamilton at Ballygraffan, near Rubane in the Ards Peninsula).

In an Inquisition held at Downpatrick on 9th April 1662, John Blackwood was named as one of a group of "good and lawful men of the county" and that "Ballylidie" was a townland of 120 acres (conveniently this was exactly the same area as all other surrounding townlands listed in the Inquisition!).

Blackwood was Church Warden at Bangor Abbey, and in 1693 he and John Cleland raised the steeple of the building. A memorial at the Abbey commemorates this.

John and Anne Blackwood's daughter Margaret married John Saunders, Provost of Newtownards. The Saunders' gravestone can be seen today, a red sandstone memorial built into the wall at Movilla Abbey.

The Blackwoods had a son who was also called John Blackwood.

#### 4. John Blackwood (1662 – 1720) and the expansion of the Blackwood Estate

The Blackwoods quickly became major tenants on the Hamilton estates. A 1681 Rent Roll of tenants on the estates lists the following:

- Whitechurch – John Blackwood – yearly rent £8
- Ballymccormick & c – John Blackwood – yearly rent £14 s10 d0
- Ballyleedy– John Blackwood – yearly rent £28
- Bangor Town – James Blackwood – yearly rent £0 s9 d0
- Bangor Town – James Blackwood – yearly rent £3 s19 d4
- Bangor Town – John Blackwood – yearly rent £7 s3 d0
- Bangor Town – John Blackwood – yearly rent £3 s1 d0
- Island McKee (Mahee) – John Blackwood – yearly rent £4 s0 d0

The Blackwood estate was expanded when the family inherited the townlands of Whitechurch, Ballymacormick, Ballyvernon and 80 acres and Ballymullan. They also purchased the townlands of Ganaway, Ballydoonan, Cardy, Ballyboley, Ballygrangee as well as parts of the townlands of Ballymucky, Ballyblack, Ballymacconnell, Ballyholme, Drumhirk, Magherascouse, Ballymullan and Ballyferris.

John Blackwood's memorial stone can be seen at Bangor Abbey.

#### 5. Sir Robert Blackwood of Ballyleidy (November 1694 – 1774)

Created Baronet 1 July 1763. Married Joyce Leeson

#### 6. Sir John Blackwood of Ballyleidy (1721 – 1799) first Baron Dufferin

Married Dorcas Stevenson of Killyleagh, whose lineage went back to the first Hamiltons in Ulster. She was the heir the Earls of Clanbrassil and Viscounts Clondeboye. Sir John was an opponent of patronage and is said to have declined an Earldom and Marquisate. He is also said to

have cited his family motto – “Per Vias Rectas” (“By Straight Paths”) when offered patronage. Blackwood was elected as MP of Killyleagh in 1761; in 1765 he was granted £1200 to “erect a pier at Killeleagh” and in 1768 he was elected MP for Bangor.

#### 7. Sir John Blackwood and the 1798 Rebellion

He was again elected to Parliament on 9 January 1798. In what has been described as a “spirited letter” to Lord Castlereagh dated 15 January 1798, Blackwood protested at the manner in which Castlereagh had addressed him, angrily claiming that Castlereagh had:

“...condescended to summon me in the style as to one of the vassals of the administration... I have the pride of feeling my own independence, a pride I would not barter for any honour, station, place or pension in his power to grant... I will not permit the interposition of any Lord Lieutenant without expressing my indignation at such treatment...”

Sir John Blackwood was described in a letter written at Newtownards on 20th June 1798 by a Colonel Atherton to General Nugent, commanding officer of the government forces, as a “friend to the United Irishmen” :  
-

"I have had tolerable success today. We have burned Johnston's house at Crawfordsburn mills at Bangor, destroyed the furniture of Par Agnew, James Francis and Gibson and Cambell's (Not finished yet) at Ballyhome burnt the house of Johnston at the demesnes near Bangor, the house of James Richardson and John Scott at Ballymacconnell mills, burned the houses of McConnell, Miller and James Martin, a captain and a friend of McCullough hanged at Ballynahinch. We hope you will think we have done tolerably well. Tomorrow we go to Portaferry or rather to its neighborhood. Ought we not to punish the gentlemen of the county who have never assisted the well disposed people, yeomanry etc.? For my own part, a gentleman of any kind but more particularly a MAGISTRATE, who deserts his post at such period ought

to be I shall say not what. Mr Echlin of Ecclinville, Rev Hutchinson, Donaghdee, Mr Ker, Portavo, Mr Ward, Bangor, are now and now only to be found. List of inactive magistrates, or rather 'friends' to the United Irishmen: Sir John Blackwood, John Crawford of Crawfordsburn, John Kennedy, Cultra etc. But among others Rev Hugh Montgomery of Rosemount who is no friend to the government, or its measures..."

#### **8. Sir James Stevenson Blackwood, 2nd Baron Dufferin (1755 – 1836)**

His oldest son Robert (1752 – 1786) was killed by a fall from his horse while travelling from Ballyleidy to Killyleagh, so Sir John was succeeded by his second son, James Stevenson Blackwood (1755 – 1836).

Seemingly in defiance of his father, James was a friend of Lord Castlereagh and Lord Hillsborough and a supporter of the Union. He is thought to have been a Sergeant of the government forces at the Battle of Ballynahinch. He became 2nd Baron Dufferin in 1799; he was buried at Killyleagh Parish Church where there is a large memorial to him.

#### **Summary**

The Blackwoods were one of the most important families among the early Ulster-Scots, and quickly rose to become a powerful dynasty. In later generations their descendants included Royal Navy hero Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Blackwood (1770-1832) and the remarkable Frederick Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood (1826-1902), the first Marquis of Dufferin and Ava. (perhaps add short bio here?)

#### **Related sites:**

Blackwood memorials at Bangor Abbey  
 Blackwood memorials at Killyleagh Parish Church  
 Saunders / Blackwood gravestone at Movilla Abbey  
 Ballyleidy / Clandeboye Estate  
 Killyleagh Castle  
 Belfast City Hall – memorial to Lord Dufferin

#### **Sources:**

PRONI  
 A bibliography of works relating to Dunfermline and the west of Fife, Erskine Beveridge (Dunfermline, 1901)  
 History of the Irish rebellion in 1798: William Hamilton Maxwell (London, 1854)  
 The Hamilton Manuscripts  
 Bangor Abbey – through Fifteen Centuries by Canon James Hamilton MA  
 With thanks to Lola Armstrong



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