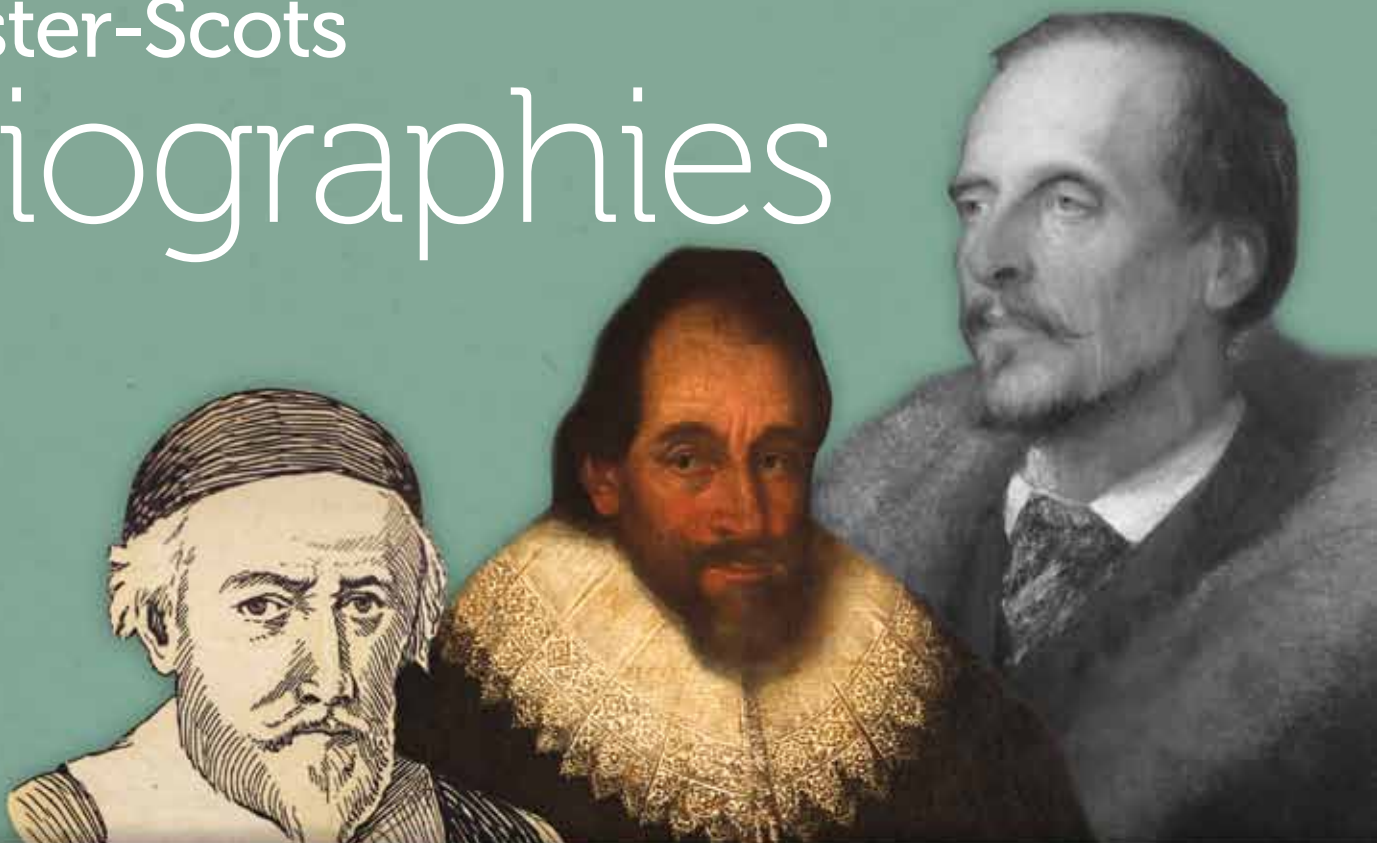


The Ards & North Down



Ulster-Scots Biographies



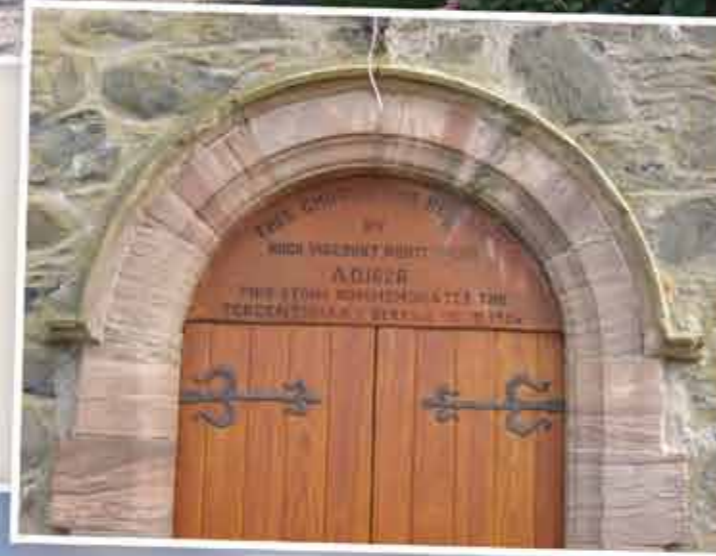
Ulster-Scots Biographies: The Ards and North Down



This publication sets out biographies of some of the most prominent individuals in the early Ulster-Scots story of the Ards and north Down. It is not intended to be a comprehensive record of all those who played a

part. Anyone interested in researching their roots in the region may refer to the short guide included at section 7. The guide is also available to download at www.northdowntourism.com.

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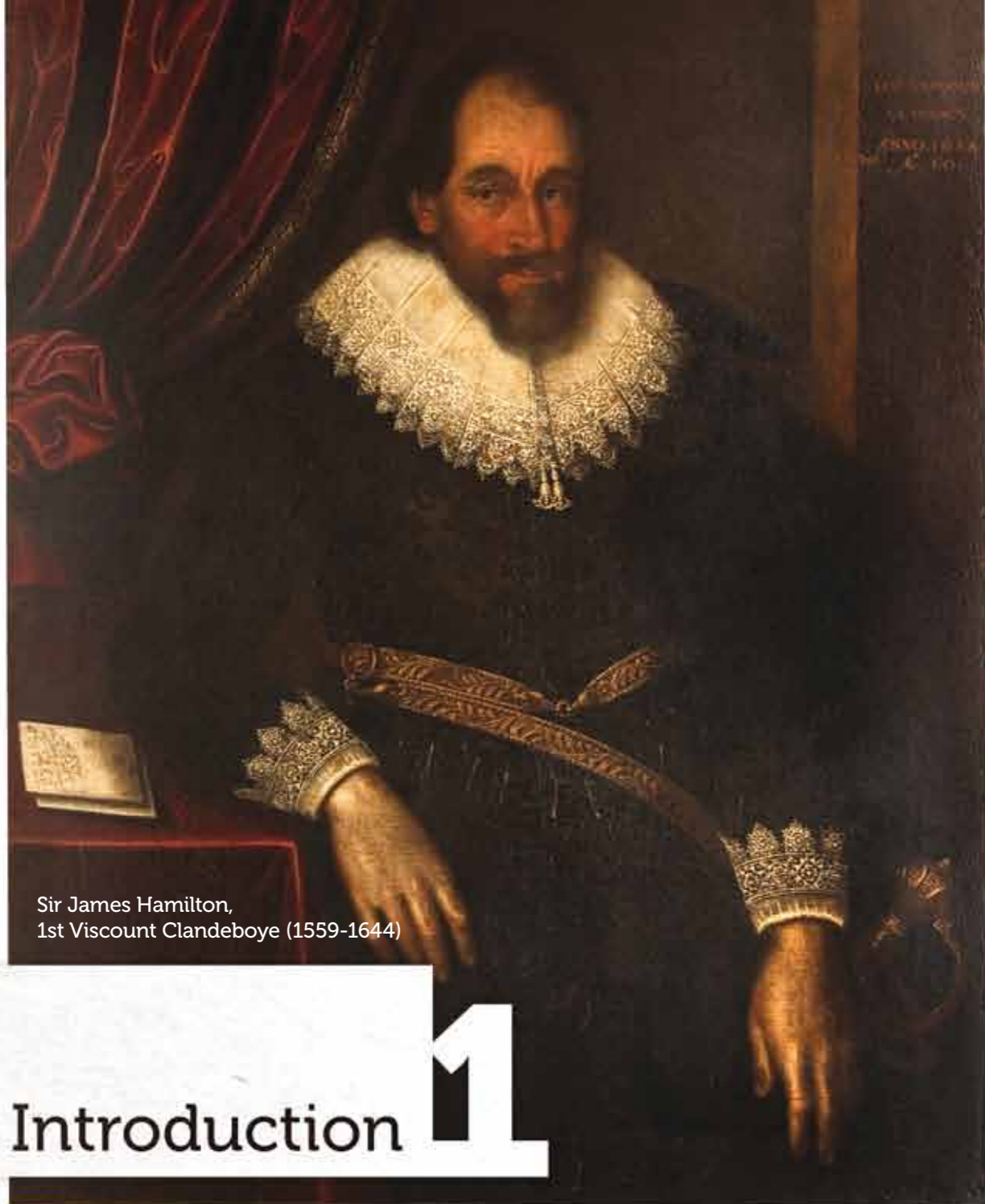


The 'founding fathers' of the Ulster Scots

2



Shore at Donaghadee - landing place of the first Ulster-Scots



Sir James Hamilton,
1st Viscount Clancarty (1559-1644)

Introduction

1

There have been cultural, social and economic links between Scotland and Ulster since time immemorial. The distinguished historian G.M. Trevelyan has called the associations between the two regions 'a constant factor in history'. The story of the Ulster-Scots in the Ards and north Down begins properly when two men from Ayrshire, James Hamilton and Hugh Montgomery, acquired a large portion of the Clancarty O'Neill estates in north-east County Down.

Hamilton and Montgomery then advertised their new estates to their wider families and other Scots and in May 1606 the first boatloads of Scottish families arrived at Donaghadee, ready to start a new life. First dozens, then hundreds, then thousands poured in. In his acclaimed book, *The Narrow Ground*, A.T.Q. Stewart wrote, 'They created the bridgehead through which the Scots were to come into Ulster for the rest of the century'.

Most of these settlers had well-known lowland Scottish surnames, which they brought to Ulster for the first time. From Anderson to Young, the first recorded examples of many Ulster-Scots surnames can be found in the early manuscripts and graveyards of the the Ards and north Down.

The early Scots in Ulster are not mysterious unknowable figures - there are plenty of good sources available which, when pulled together, paint vivid pictures of these people and their achievements. The more is uncovered about them, the more obvious it becomes that Ulster was not merely a Scottish colony - it was in many ways an extension of Scotland. The cultural ties established in the early 1600s are still evident today and nowhere more so than in the Ards and north Down.

Sir Hugh Montgomery, Viscount Ards

The Scottish laird who pioneered the settlements in County Down

Background in Scotland

The Montgomerys were one of the most powerful families in Scotland, with many titles and large estates dating back to the 1100s. Adam Montgomery was the 5th laird of Braidstane in Ayrshire and his eldest son was Hugh Montgomery. Braidstane Castle lay between the villages of Dunlop and Beith. Born in 1560, Hugh 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 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!

The Cunningham Feud

When his father died, Hugh returned to Scotland to become the 6th laird of Braidstane and married Elizabeth Shaw, daughter of the laird of Greenock. (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'.)

His fighting skills came to the fore again when he became involved in the generations-old feud between the Montgomerys and the Cunninghams (led by the Earl of Glencairn). Hugh Montgomery claimed that one

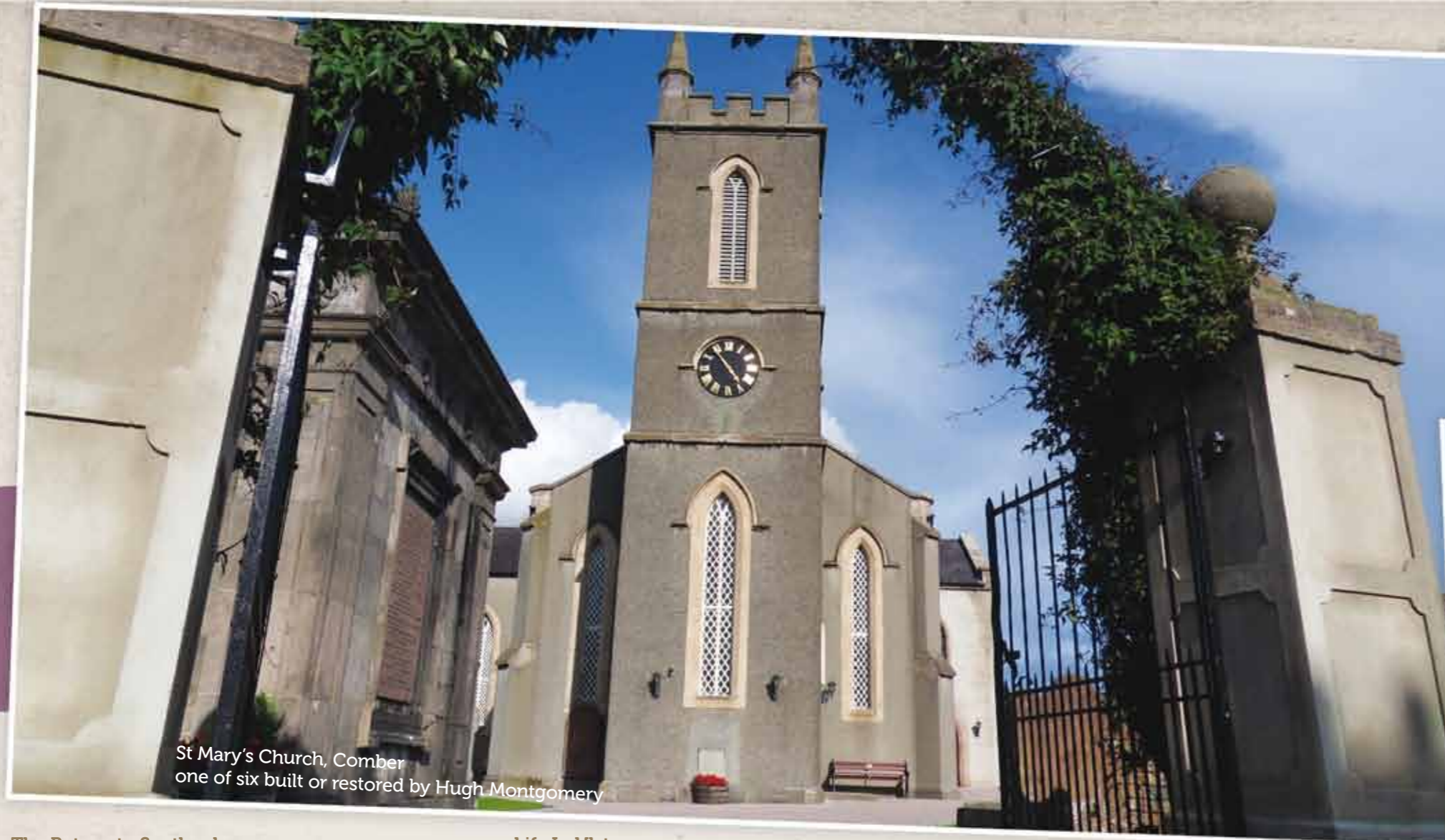
of the Cunninghams had insulted him, and challenged him to a duel, but Cunningham fled - first to London and then to Holland.

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. Fortunately for Cunningham the sword hit the buckle of his belt which saved his life. Montgomery, thinking he had killed Cunningham, put away his sword but 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 to gain access to the key to Hugh's cell. The plan was so successful that within a few days the couple were married in the prison, with Hugh Montgomery performing the ceremony according to Scottish law. The wedding guests drank so much wine that Hugh, Robert and his new wife were able to slip away unnoticed to a waiting ship which took them to Leith, near Edinburgh.



The Market Cross in Newtownards, replica of the one in Edinburgh

The Old Priory:
restored by Hugh MontgomerySt Mary's Church, Comber
one of six built or restored by Hugh Montgomery

The Return to Scotland

Hugh's return to Scotland saw him receive a severe reprimand from King James VI, but thanks to his strong relationship with the King and the support of his influential brother George Montgomery, Hugh was soon 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 the court of King James VI in Scotland. So Hugh Montgomery also had considerable influence with King James and when Queen Elizabeth 1 died in the spring of 1603 he accompanied him 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 Hugh had used in Holland, Thomas Montgomery, a neighbour of Hugh's, sprang Con from prison and brought him 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 a third 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 - several months before the 'Flight of the Earls'.

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 first 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, 'Newtown House'. By 1610 he could muster 1000 able fighting men.

In 1611 it was reported that 'Sir Hugh Montgomery, Knight, hath repayed part of the abbey of Newtowne 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 cross 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 and Newtownards in County Down and Portpatrick in Scotland) and 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 Church of Ireland is to this day 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 attempted to rename the towns 'Montgomery' and 'Port Montgomery' respectively. The new names did not catch on, but a datestone recording this event survives in a private collection in Donaghadee to this day.

Sport: Montgomery established a 'great school' in Newtownards with a green for the students to enjoy archery, golf and football. These are the first references to both golf and football in Ireland.

Description

The Montgomery Manuscripts describe Hugh as a man of 'middle stature', 'ruddy complexion and with a 'manly, sprightlie and cheerful countenance' and indicate 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. *The Montgomery Manuscripts* also list his pastimes including fishing, golf, tennis, archery and even football - 'but he would not play for sums of money'. He was made Viscount Montgomery of the Great Ardes on 3 May 1622.

Death and Burial

Hugh Montgomery died on 15 May 1636 and was given what could be described as a Scottish State funeral in Newtownards on 8th September 1636; a highly detailed account is recorded in *The Montgomery Manuscripts*. The funeral service was conducted by Bishop Leslie, the bishop who had deposed 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.

Associated Sites

Manor House, Donaghadee (site of original house)
Church of Ireland, Donaghadee
Newtownards Priory and market cross
Grey Abbey

Sir James Hamilton, 1st Viscount Clandeboye (1559-1644)

The schoolmaster and spy who became one of the wealthiest landowners in Ulster

Background in Scotland

Hans Hamilton (1536-1608) was the first Protestant minister in Dunlop, Ayrshire, where you can still see house, church, 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.

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 arrived unexpectedly 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 Melville, 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 beside each other in St Paul's Chapel of Westminster Abbey in London. In 1591 Queen Elizabeth 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. Hamilton was made Bursar there in 1598.

Agent of the King

Both Hamilton and Fullerton were agents for King James VI of Scotland, providing him with information about Elizabeth I'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, was involved in the negotiations for James VI's accession 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 I of England - at the Union of the Crowns - in 1603.

The English Colony of Sir Thomas Smith

From the Royal Court the King sent an Englishman called Sir William Smith to Spain. 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 failed. Sir William Smith had hoped to persuade the new king to regrant 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'. 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 secure one third for himself.

Life in Ulster

Hamilton built a house at Bangor, on the site of the present Bangor Castle, and was knighted in 1608. In 1611 it was noted 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 and a settlement called 'New Comber'.

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 told Blair that he would only 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.

Description

The Hamilton Manuscripts give the following description of James: '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'.

James got married three times, first to Penelope Cooke, then to Ursula, daughter of Edward, 1st Lord Brabazon and finally to Jane Philips, daughter of Sir John Phillips of Pictou 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 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. He died in January 1644 and was buried in Bangor Abbey in a specially constructed vault.

Associated sites

Killyleagh Castle
North Down Museum (Raven Maps)
Castle Ward (portrait)
Bangor Abbey



Clandeboye School -
built by Hamilton on his return to Ayrshire



The maypole in Holywood -
one of Hamilton's settlements



Bangor Castle -
site of Hamilton's original home



Major landowning families

3

Scrabo Tower across Strangford Lough

The Colvilles

Successors to the Montgomerys as the main family in Newtownards and Comber

Background in Scotland

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

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 she had learned how to do so from Dr Colville, 'who used to practice it'.

Colvilles in Newtownards and Comber

Alexander's son Robert Colville joined the army and by 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 burned down accidentally 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, pleaserooms or pigeon houses'.

(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.)

Death and Burial

Sir Robert Colville died in December 1697 and was buried in a vault at the Priory in Newtownards. His third wife, 'Lady Rose', died in June 1693 and their son Hugh in 1701 aged 25. In 1744 Walter Harris wrote: '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.

Associated sites

Tomb in Newtownards Priory
Mount Pleasant (today Mount Stewart)



Mount Stewart

The Stewarts of Mount Stewart

From MacGregor outlaws to eminent Ulster aristocrats

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. However the ancestor of the Stewarts of Mount Stewart was actually a MacGregor who had changed his name to Stewart after the name MacGregor had been outlawed in Scotland in the early 17th century.

Life in Ulster

The Ulster link begins in County Donegal, where in 1610 an Alexander McAula from Dunbartonshire was granted 1000 acres in the precinct of Portlough in the east of the county. However it was reported the following year: 'Alexander McAula of Durlinge; 1000 acres; appeared not, nothing done'. In 1618 Alexander McAula sold these lands to an Alexander Stewart, believed to have been a son of John Stewart, formerly MacGregor, of Lagry in Dunbartonshire.

In 1629 Alexander's son John received a new grant of his lands in Donegal which were from then on to be known as the manor of Stewarts-Court. By this time there was a castle, known as Ballylawn, on these lands.

A small portion of this castle survives. It is from this line that the founder of the Stewarts of Mount Stewart descended.

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.

Associated sites

Mount Stewart
Scrabo Tower

The Blackwood family

An important settler family that rose to become a powerful dynasty

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.

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 Sir James Hamilton's flourishing Bangor. Blackwood became a wealthy merchant and also served

as Provost of Bangor. His wife was Janet Clarke and their son, also called John Blackwood, was born in 1625. John senior was buried at Bangor Abbey in 1663, where his tombstone can still be seen today.

John Blackwood (1625-1698) and Ballyleidy

On Thomas Raven's maps of the Hamilton estate of 1625, '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 50 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 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.

Either this John Blackwood or his son, also John (1662-1720), was churchwarden at Bangor in 1693 when the height of the steeple was raised. A memorial at the Abbey commemorates the part played in this by Blackwood and fellow churchwarden John Cleland. John and Anne Blackwood's daughter Margaret married John Saunders, Provost of Newtownards. The Saunders' gravestone can still be seen today, a red sandstone memorial built into the wall of the ruined abbey at Movilla.

The expansion of the Blackwood Estate

The Blackwoods quickly rose in influence and status, acquiring major Hamilton lands in both north Down and around Killyleagh. A 1681 rent roll of tenants on the Hamilton estate includes the following information:

- Whitechurch - John Blackwood - yearly rent £8
- Ballymccormick & c - John Blackwood - yearly rent £14 10s
- 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 in 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.

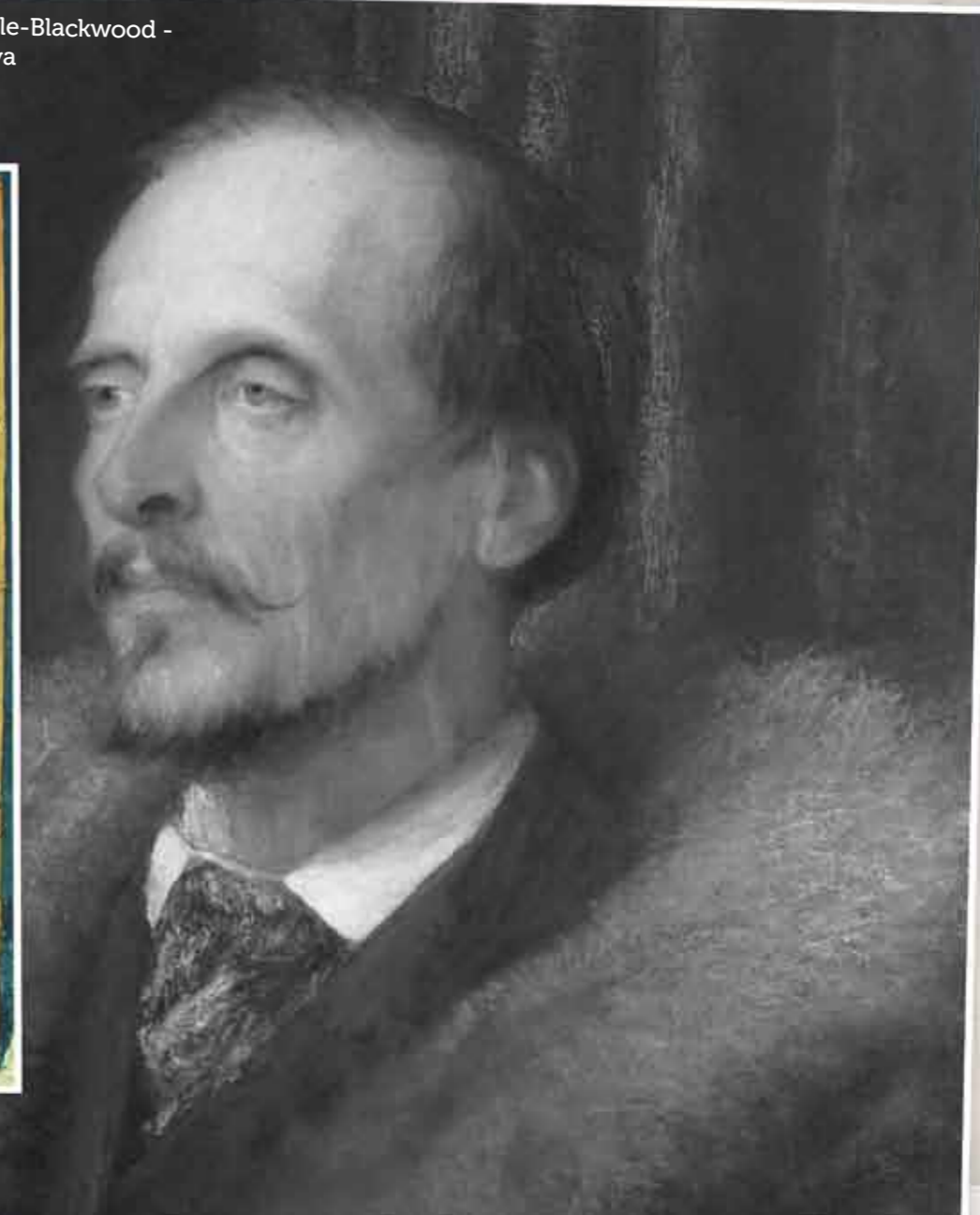
The Blackwoods were one of the most important families among the early Ulster-Scots and rose to become a powerful dynasty. In later generations their descendants included Royal Navy hero Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Blackwood (1770-1832) and the remarkable Frederick Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood (1826-1902), the 1st Marquis of Dufferin and Ava.

Associated sites

- Blackwood memorials at Bangor Abbey
- Saunders/Blackwood gravestone at Movilla Abbey
- Ballyleidy/Clandeboyne Estate



Frederick Temple Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood - the 1st Marquis of Dufferin and Ava



The Montgomerys

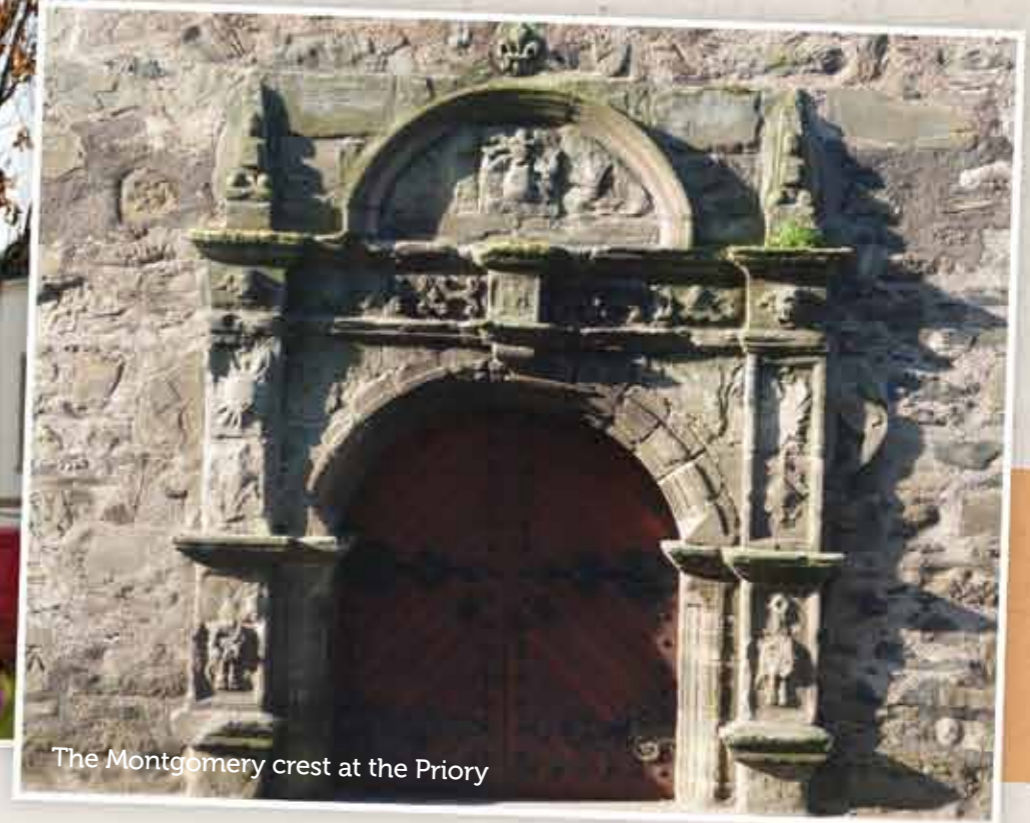
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Grey Abbey - view from south east



Comber Square



The Montgomery crest at the Priory

Lady Elizabeth Montgomery

The first wife of Sir Hugh Montgomery who played a role in the success of the settlement

Background in Scotland

Born Elizabeth Shaw, she was the eldest daughter of James Shaw of Greenock. She was the wife of Hugh Montgomery of Braidstane and together they had five children; the two oldest were born in Scotland, with the others probably born in Ulster - Hugh, who went on to become the 2nd Viscount of the Great Ardes, James, who settled at Rosemount, Mary Elizabeth, who married Sir Robert MacLellan of Kirkcudbright, Jean, who married Patrick Savage, and George.

George 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.

Life in Ulster

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

Her grandson William Montgomery of Rosemount wrote, 'Sir Hugh and his Lady's example, they both being active and intent on the work (as birds, after

paying 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 ... on a sudden, so that these dwellings became towns immediately'.

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 arrived 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 newcomers 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 the early Ulster-Scots textile industry, specifically linen and woollen 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'.

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

Death and Burial

Elizabeth Montgomery died between two key dates - some time after the marriage of her eldest son Hugh, which took place in either 1620 or 1623, and before her widower husband Sir Hugh Montgomery remarried in 1630. She was buried in Newtownards Priory. Sir Hugh Montgomery's second wife was Sarah Maxwell, Countess of Wigtown. 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 perswade 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 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'.

Associated sites:

Newtownards Priory
Greyabbey
Comber



The Priory - probable resting place of Hugh, 2nd Viscount

Hugh Montgomery (1597-1642), 2nd Viscount of the Great Ardes

Heir of the Montgomery estates and military commander during the 1641 Rebellion

Background in Scotland

Hugh Montgomery was the eldest son of Hugh Montgomery, the laird of Braidstane, and Elizabeth Shaw. Relatively little is known about his life. In the preface of *The Montgomery Manuscripts* it is noted 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' young Hugh travelled abroad, including to Italy.

Life in Ulster

He returned to Ulster and in 1623 married Jean Alexander, daughter of Sir William Alexander. As a wedding gift Sir Hugh Montgomery built the couple a home called Mount Alexander at Comber, named in honour of the bride's family. On 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, 'Newtown House'. He was appointed to the Irish Privy Council in 1637.

The 1641 Rebellion

He became a Colonel during the 1641 Rebellion, which began on 22 October, commanding 1000 men and five troops of horses - most of which he funded personally at a cost of £1000. His brother, James Montgomery of Rosemount, also led a regiment during the Rebellion. Writing from Mount Alexander on 31 December 1641, Hugh Montgomery's description of the 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 ... 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'.

Death and Burial

Hugh died suddenly at Newtownards on 15 November 1642 and was probably buried at Newtownards Priory. He was succeeded by his eldest son, also called Hugh Montgomery, who became the 3rd Viscount of the Great Ardes and, in 1661, the 1st Earl of Mount Alexander. The 2nd Viscount's fourth child and only daughter, Elizabeth, married her cousin William Montgomery, the author of *The Montgomery Manuscripts*.

Associated sites

Newtownards Priory
Mount Alexander in Comber



Greyabbey House, Rosemount

Sir James Montgomery of Rosemount (1600-1652)

The first builder of Rosemount who was killed by pirates

Early life

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 after. 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.

Settles at Rosemount

In 1629 Sir Hugh gifted his son James 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. Their son William, the chronicler of the family's history and 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' have been added since then.

1641 Rebellion

Following the outbreak of the 1641 Rebellion James Montgomery raised and armed his own regiment. One of the castles 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 wholeheartedly to embrace the Covenants, James 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, he boarded a coal barque to sail down the east coast of England.

Death

In March 1652 Sir James was sailing from Newcastle-upon-Tyne to London when his ship 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 turned out to be 'one of the Smiths, followers of Mr Savage of Portaferry' - i.e. 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. A fine monument was erected to Sir James' memory in Grey Abbey.

Associated sites

Rosemount
Grey Abbey

Lady Jean Montgomery, nee Alexander (-1670)

2nd Viscountess of the Great Ardes and 'Vehement Presbyterian'

Background in Scotland

One of 11 children, Jean 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 the King's son, the young Prince Charles.

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 solemnised 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, Sir Hugh built a home called Mount Alexander at Comber, named in honour of the bride's family.

A 'Vehement Presbyterian'

Faith was an important element in Jean's life, but while her husband and parents were committed Anglicans, she was described as a 'vehement Presbyterian'. She also had a talent for creative writing and 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. A famous example of Jean Alexander's stance in support of the Presbyterians is often quoted, from July 1635: 'No man shall get that report suppressed, for I shall bear witness of it to the glory of God, who hath smitten that man for suppressing Christ's witnesses'. This was in response to an attempt to hide Bishop Ecllin's deathbed expressions of regret for having persecuted Presbyterian ministers in his diocese.

Remarriage

Jean's 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 imprisoned for five years in London. Cromwell had confiscated the Mount Alexander estate, but on Monro's release the property of his wife, the dowager Lady Montgomery, and his stepson Hugh Montgomery, 3rd Viscount Montgomery, was restored and Monro

SIR WILLIAM ALEXANDER
WRITER.
STATESMAN, COLONIZER.
HIS EFFORTS TO CREATE A NEW
SCOTLAND IN THE NEW WORLD
LED TO THE ROYAL CHARTER OF
NOVA SCOTIA 1621.
ATTEMPTS AT SETTLEMENT 1622-3.
THE CREATION OF THE ORDER
OF KNIGHT-BARONETS OF
NOVA SCOTIA 1624-5.

Jean's father, Sir William Alexander, planted Nova Scotia with Scots during the 1620s

evidently spent the rest of his life in their household at Comber in County 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 Montgomerys. She was still alive in 1656 and when she died was buried at Newtownards Priory in the Montgomery vault.

Relationship with her son, the 3rd Viscount of the Great Ardes

Jean had worked hard to raise her son, Hugh Montgomery III, the 3rd Viscount of the Great Ardes and 1st 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 baptise 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.

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.

In 1679 the manor and Lordship of Mount Alexander (two thirds of the original estate) were sold to Sir Robert Colville for £9780. The Montgomerys 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).

Associated sites

Newtownards Priory
Mount Alexander in Comber

Comber - from Raven Maps 1625





William recovered Rosemount estate following its confiscation by Cromwellians

William Montgomery (1633-1707)

Landowner, prolific writer and family historian

Family background

William Montgomery was born at Aghintain in County Tyrone in October 1633, the son of Sir James Montgomery of Rosemount, County Down, and Katherine Stewart, daughter of Sir William Stewart of Newtown Stewart, County Tyrone. His paternal grandfather was Sir Hugh Montgomery, 1st Viscount of the Ards. His mother died in 1634 and he seems to have spent part of his early life at Newtown Stewart Castle, the home of his paternal grandfather.

1641 Rebellion

His early life was eventful and he has left us an account in his own words of the outbreak of the 1641 Rebellion:

'I aspired to be a man as soon as I could; and therefore had a picke, and a muskett made to my size: and on ye 23d of October, 1641, was in ye Garden performing ye postures of my Arms with my grand father Sr Wm Stewart's foot company; himself viewing his soldiers & their Arms, & exercising them; when about fower houres afternoon (to our amazement) a man half stript, came with a Letter, signifying ye Insurrections, Murthers, and burnings, on all sides, committed by ye Irish.'

Upon hearing this news William Montgomery was taken for his own safety to Londonderry and then on to Scotland. He later studied at the universities of Glasgow and Leiden and was fluent in Latin, French, Greek and Dutch.

Rosemount estate

His father was killed by pirates in 1652 and William spent much of the 1650s trying to recover the

Rosemount estate, which had been confiscated by the Cromwellians. Eventually the estate was recovered following the Restoration of 1660. He held a number of public offices including Member of Parliament for Newtownards from 1661 to 1667, High Sheriff of County Down and Justice of the Peace.

Family historian

William Montgomery wrote prodigiously, though apart from two dissertations published in Leiden in 1652, his writings seem to have been intended primarily for his family's benefit. He was the author of a collection of papers that were published as *The Montgomery Manuscripts*. It is from these writings that we know so much about the early Scottish settlements in County Down. Among his other writings was a topographical description of the Ards peninsula (1683, updated in 1701) and a fascinating document entitled 'A treatise of men's rights to dispose of tombs which themselves have made and dedicated'.

Family

In 1660 he married his cousin Elizabeth Montgomery, whose father had been the 2nd Viscount of the Great Ards. They had one son, James, who inherited the estate following his father's death in 1707. In 1717 mounting debts forced the Montgomery family to sell the Rosemount estate to a distant cousin, William Montgomery, a descendant of John Montgomery of Gransheogh, a cousin of the original Sir Hugh Montgomery.

Associated sites

Rosemount
Memorials in Grey Abbey

5

Notable Individuals and Families



Templepatrick Graveyard

Patrick Montgomery of Creboy or Craigboy near Donaghadee

Brother-in-law of Sir Hugh Montgomery

Patrick Montgomery was originally from Blackhouse near Largs, in north Ayrshire. The family estate was at Skelmorlie-Cunningham - Skelmorlie Castle is still inhabited today. His father was John Montgomery of Braidstane - so Patrick was possibly a cousin of Sir Hugh Montgomery, the 1st 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, Thomas Montgomery of Blackstown (a farm adjacent to Braidstane Castle) whisked him across the North Channel 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 continuing to London to seek the approval of Montgomery's friend, the new King James I.

Life in Ulster

After the deal was completed, and the O'Neill estate was divided 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 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 and 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'.

Associated sites

Craigboy, south of Donaghadee
Coat of arms from original house, now on the wall of a new house on the Craigboy Road
Templepatrick graveyard

The Shaws

Related by marriage to the Montgomerys and major tenants of theirs in Ulster

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 King James I of Scotland appointed him his 'Master of Works' for all of the royal palaces and castles in Scotland and he 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*, 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, 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. The Shaw-Stewarts still own Ardgowan which offers a range of corporate hospitality services. In 1851 the Shaw-Stewarts donated Well Park to the people of Greenock.

The Shaws in Ulster

In the early 1600s the head of the family was James Shaw of Greenock. On 7 November 1605 James' son John Shaw (who is also called James Shaw in some of the early records) and Patrick Montgomery were appointed as attorneys 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'. In May 1606 one of the first group members who accompanied Sir Hugh to Ulster was his wife's uncle, Patrick Shaw, who later became laird of Kelseland. Kelseland or Kelsoland was an estate which dated back to Hugh de Kelso in 1296 - the Shaws of Greenock acquired it in 1624.

The Montgomerys and Shaws were closely related through marriage: Sir Hugh Montgomery married James Shaw's eldest daughter Elizabeth; 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).

On 19 July 1616 Sir Hugh conveyed to John Shaw two townlands called Ballycheskeve (Ballywhiskin?) and Ballingamoye (now Ganaway, just south of Millisle), which the 1623 Inquisition found Shaw 'in peaceable possession of'. A 1718 Donaghadee rent roll records a John Shaw still at Ganaway. In 1617 a Patrick Shaw of Ballywalter and a William Shaw of Ballykilconan received letters of denization.

The market cross in Newtownards (replacing the original which burned down) was built and included the Shaw coat of arms which was (and still may be) on one face of the market cross in Newtownards. John Shaw of Greenock took part in Hugh Montgomery's funeral procession. 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).

The move to Ballygally

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) 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

used in the building is said to have been brought from Scotland.

Back in Scotland

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

The 1700s and 1800s

William Shaw was Provost of Newtown. In his will of 1707 he left the lands of Ballyganoway, Ballywhisker and Carradorn (Ganaway, Ballywhiskin and Carrowdore?) and 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 built originally 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.

Associated sites

Site of original farm at Ganaway
Market cross in Newtownards

The Market Cross in Newtownards



The Coopers

One of the first families to arrive from Scotland

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.

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 of John Cooper of Ballywalter, who died in 1805 aged 27. At the top of the headstone are a Masonic square and compass symbol and other decorative carvings. At the bottom is a later, remarkable, inscription: 'The Burying Ground of John Cooper, died 1608 Age 92'. This grave was rediscovered recently by local men Ian Larkin and Michael Birch.

Early records show that in 1617 a James Cooper was recorded as a tenant of Hugh Montgomery at Ballyhaskein (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!

Associated sites

Headstone to John Cooper (d. 1608) in Whitechurch graveyard, Ballywalter
Ballyhaskein townland



Whitechurch graveyard, Ballywalter

James Traill (1595 - 1663)

Renowned soldier and tutor of Sir James Hamilton's only son

Background in Scotland

James Traill was born in Scotland (probably Blebo in Fife, just five 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'.

Life in Ulster

Around 1610 a James Traill (possibly Robert and

James' father) acquired 1000 acres in Knockninny in Co Fermanagh during the Plantation, though he subsequently sold these lands to an Englishman, Sir Stephen Butler. The other major grantees in Knockninny were the Balfours - second cousins of the Traills - who founded Lisnaskea. Around 1633 Sir James Hamilton appointed Traill tutor for Hamilton's only son - 'He choosed for him a very learned, discreet, and religious master, one Mr. James Traill'.

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 the ways of continental life. Traill wrote to Hamilton senior 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 and end of the day 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.

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) 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 (another cousin of Hamilton junior) 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.

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 great-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, now Earl of Clanbrassil. Hamilton wrote his will on 18 June 1659, naming Lieutenant-Colonel Traill as one of his executors, and died just two days later on 20 June 1659. He was buried at Bangor Abbey.

Death and Burial

Traill himself died nearly four years later on 18th May 1663 and was buried at Killyleagh. There is a large memorial to him inside Killyleagh Church of Ireland, 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.

Associated sites

Tullykin townland near Killyleagh
Memorial inside Killyleagh Church of Ireland



Killyleagh Church - site of memorial to James Traill

Colonel David Boyd

Soldier in Holland and settler in County Down

One of the men who came from Scotland to Ulster with Hugh Montgomery in 1606 was David Boyd. To give him his full title, Colonel David Boyd of Tourgill (also spelled Tourgil or Tuyirgill) was the youngest son of Robert Boyd, the 5th Lord of Kilmarnock. The Boyds lived at the original Dean Castle outside Kilmarnock, on an estate which had been granted to them by King Robert the Bruce for their service at Bannockburn in 1314.

Military Service in Holland

David Boyd is known to have served in a Scottish regiment in the wars in Holland in the 1580s. Hugh Montgomery also fought in Holland at the same time.

Boyd of Tourgill

He had letters of legitimation under the Great Seal on 11 July 1582 and a grant of the lands of Tourgill (a region to the north-east of Largs in north Ayrshire) on 8 August 1598. Boyd, named as David Boyd of Tourgill, also appears among a list of 12 Scottish nobles who were witnesses to the 'Contract between King James VI, Ludovick Duke of Lennox and Hugh fifth Earl of Eglington for the marriage of the Earl and Gabriela Steuart, Sister of the Duke' dated 10 and 13 April 1598.

His niece Marion Boyd was the wife of another major Ulster landholder, James Hamilton, the 1st Earl of Abercorn. Colonel Boyd's sister, Egidia or Giles, was the wife of the head of the Montgomery family, Sir Hugh Montgomery, the 4th Earl of Eglinton.

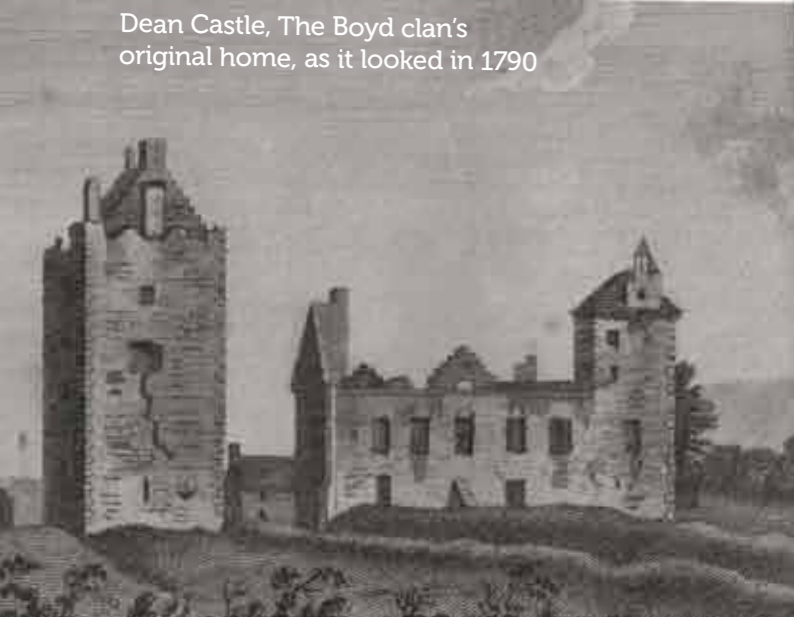
Family Feud

Boyd was twice the victim of attempted murder. In April 1599 he was 'set upon and wounded ... in the High Street of Glasgow' by his cousin Adam Boyd, who on 31 July later the same year also attempted to murder him at Kilmarnock.

Marriage and the Ross family of Kilmarnock

He married a wealthy widow, Margaret Wallace. Her former husband, George Ross, had the title of Hayning/Hanyng/Haining, an estate along the Cessnock River

Dean Castle, The Boyd clan's original home, as it looked in 1790



near today's Riccarton and Hurlford villages. She was known as the 'Dame of Hayning' and had one daughter, Maria Ross, to her first husband.

Life in Ulster

Boyd arrived with Montgomery in 1606 and soon was granted lands. Con O'Neill directly granted him Ballymacarrett, another parcel of land near Glenmachan at the old church of Knockcolumbkille and a townland called 'Ballymurty'. Boyd also secured seven townlands from Montgomery, totalling 1000 acres, just to the north of Greyabbey.

The family residence was built in the townland of Ballycastle, possibly where Ballycastle House is today, on the Mount Stewart Road. Boyd is also said to have had lands near Glastry. Despite his estates in Ulster, Colonel Boyd was Provost of Edinburgh in 1613. The precise date of his death is unknown but is thought to have been some time before 1623.

Children

He is known to have had one son, Robert Boyd, who after his father's death continued to occupy the lands Montgomery had granted. A John Boyd, possibly Robert's son, was in possession of land at Drumfad near Millisle in 1676. Colonel David Boyd may also have had a daughter, Jane, and another son, Thomas. A Thomas Boyd was elected Member of Parliament for Bangor in 1651; another died at Portavogie in 1660.

Boyd's seal

David Boyd's seal is in the collection of the National Museum of Scotland. The inscription reads 'S' COLON DAVIDIS BOYD DE TOURGIL' and is believed to date from 1599.

Associated sites

Ballycastle near Greyabbey

Edinburgh today - Boyd was Provost here in 1613



The Ross family

Early settlers who survived the upheavals of the 17th century

Background in Scotland

The links between towns on the west coast of Scotland and County Down were strong in the early 17th century and many of the settlers on the Hamilton and Montgomery estates came from ports such as Irvine, Largs and Ayr. Among them were two brothers, James and Robert, sons of Alexander Ross, a wright/carpenter and Burgess of Irvine.

Life in Ireland

In 1617 these brothers received grants of denization so they could enjoy the same rights as English subjects in Ireland. Sir James Hamilton leased Portavo, Ballyfotherly and the Copeland Isles to Robert Ross, and Ballyminetragh to his brother James. Like a number of other families who took advantage of the opportunities presented to them by the settlements in north-east County Down, the Rosses prospered and built up a substantial landholding of their own. It is thought they brought other Scottish families with them such as the Kyles and the Stevensons, who also settled at Ballyminetragh. When Alexander Ross died in 1620 the family sold their Ayrshire property and focused their energies on north Down. Robert Ross quickly became a close ally of Sir James Hamilton, who described him as 'our welbeloved Robert Rosse'.

The Rosses also survived the upheavals of the 1640s and 1650s. In 1644 Robert Ross signed the Solemn League and Covenant at Holywood indicating his support for Presbyterianism. In 1653 Robert 'Rosse' was among those Scots in the 'Little Ardes, Gray Abbey, and Lisborough Quarters' identified by Oliver Cromwell's troops for transplantation to Connacht, though this scheme was never put into effect.

In 1659 the following occurrences of the name Ross appear in the list of poll tax payers in County Down:

- George Ross, Ballow, Bangor
- James Ross, Portavo, Bangor

- John Ross, Ballylishbredan, Dundonald
- Robert Ross, Lismore, Slanes
- Robert Ross, Portavo, Bangor

Portavo and the Ross family

In 1671 James Ross of Portavo was High Sheriff of County Down. Several letters written by him, either singly or jointly, in relation to different aspects of the management of the Hamilton estate in the late 1670s, were published in *The Hamilton Manuscripts*. In the 1681 rental record of the Clanbrassil estate the following lands were in the possession of James Ross: Portavo, Ballow, Ballyknocknegowney, Kileene, Ballylisanaskeagh, Ballyregan and Ballykeele.

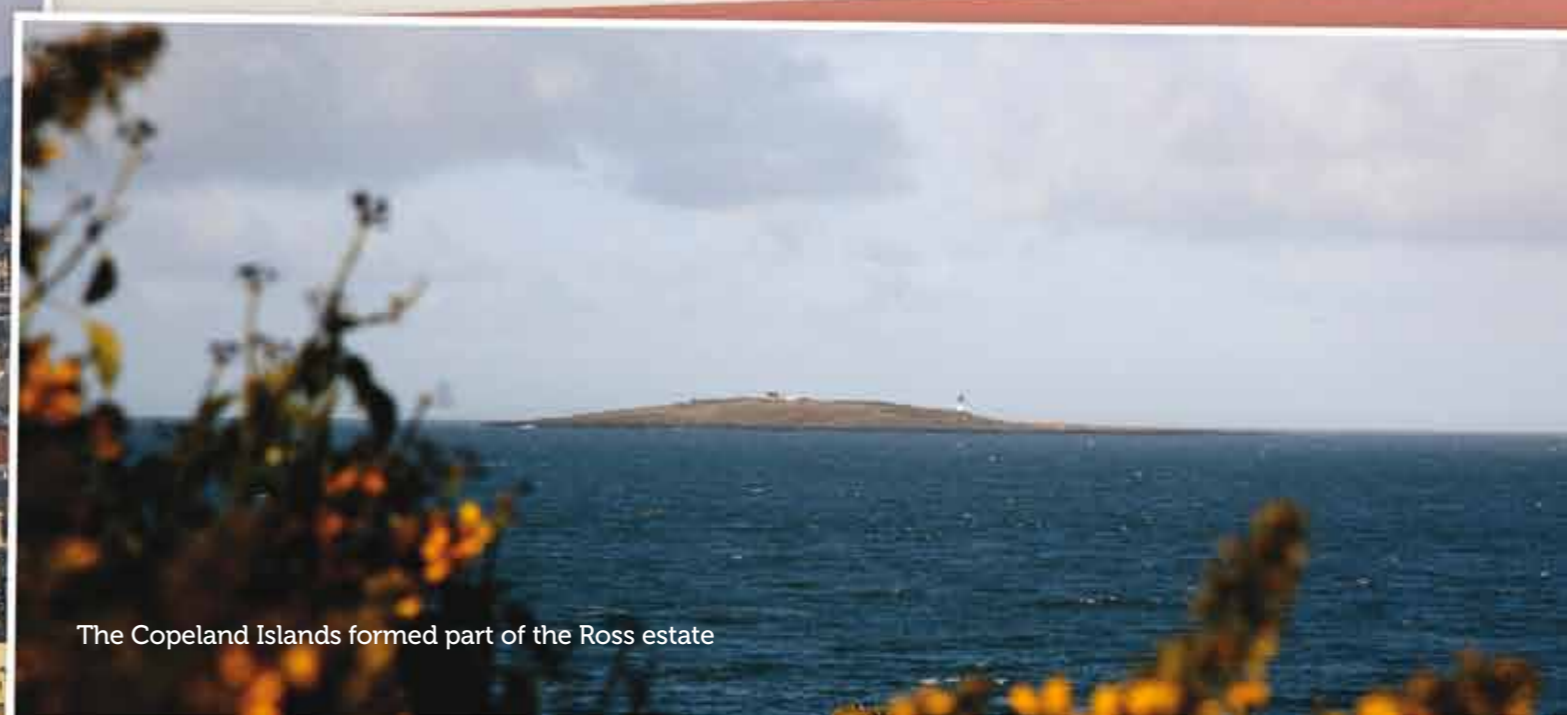
William Montgomery included Portavo, then in the possession of James Ross, in his description of the Ards from 1701: 'his great house called Portavo, and large office houses - all of stone, brick, and lime, slated; gardens walled in and fenced orchards and pastures - all his own erection since K. Ch. Ye 2nd's the happy restoration'. The Copeland Islands also formed part of the Ross estate and Montgomery noted that it was a convenient place for a deer park. As James Ross had no heirs of his own, he had the property conveyed to his cousin George Ross.

In the 1720s the property was in the possession of Captain James Ross. A colourful character, he was something of a spendthrift and ran up major debts forcing him to sell off parts of the estates in the 1740s. He died in 1755 and three years later Portavo and what remained of the estate was sold. Not long afterwards the Ker family came into possession of Portavo.

(For more on the Ross family and Portavo read Peter Carr's excellent volume *Portavo, an Irish Townland and Its Peoples. Part One: Earliest Times to 1844* (2003).)

Associated sites

Portavo



The Copeland Islands formed part of the Ross estate

Bishops and Ministers



Bangor Abbey - where Blair was minister

Robert Blair (1593-1666)

Presbyterian minister of Bangor and leader of the Ulster-Scots

Background in Scotland

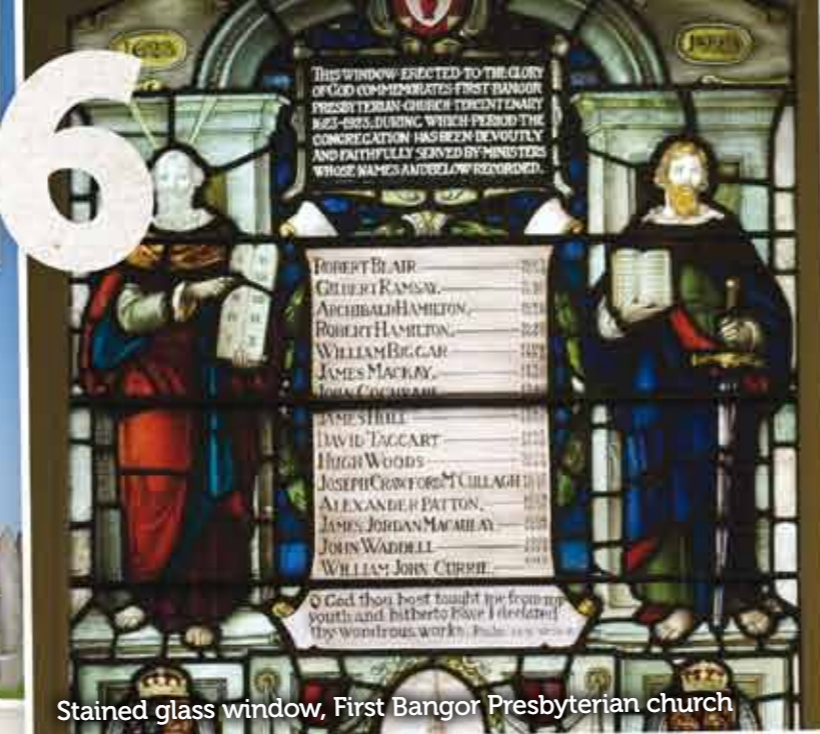
Blair, the youngest of four brothers, was born in 1593 in the small port of Irvine in Ayrshire. His father was a merchant. Robert had three older brothers. Around 1600 he was deeply moved by the preaching of an English minister who was passing through Irvine en route to Ulster; Blair recalled the sermon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

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. He worked closely with Rev. 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 how 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'.



Stained glass window, First Bangor Presbyterian church

Through the early 1630s the opposition of the bishops to the Presbyterian ministers grew intense. Compounding this Blair suffered a personal tragedy in 1633 when his wife died, leaving three children motherless. He married again - his second wife was Katherine Montgomery.

Blair, along with Hamilton, John Livingstone and John MacLellan, sailed for America on the *Eagle Wing* from Groomsport on 9 September 1636. While at sea his baby son William fell seriously ill and died the very night the ship returned to Ulster. The family's remaining stay was a short one; in early 1637 Blair returned to Irvine.

Return to Scotland

Scotland was in turmoil and a series of dramatic events - including a riot in Edinburgh started by Jenny Geddes, reputed to have been 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. He was later appointed Chaplain to the King.

Death and burial

The Presbyterians' 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, Rev. James Hamilton, at Inveresk in south Edinburgh. Hamilton died in March 1666 and Blair on 27 August that same year. He was buried at Aberdour in Fife where his old monument can still be seen on an outside wall of the church.

Associated sites

Bangor Abbey, including the memorial to Beatrix Blair, nee Hamilton
First Bangor Presbyterian - stained glass list of ministers Groomsport from where the *Eagle Wing* sailed

Robert Cunningham (-1637)

The army chaplain who became the first Protestant minister of Holywood

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.

Life in Ulster

Cunningham 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 he 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'. Rev. John Livingstone of Killinchy 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'.

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'.

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'.

Death and Burial

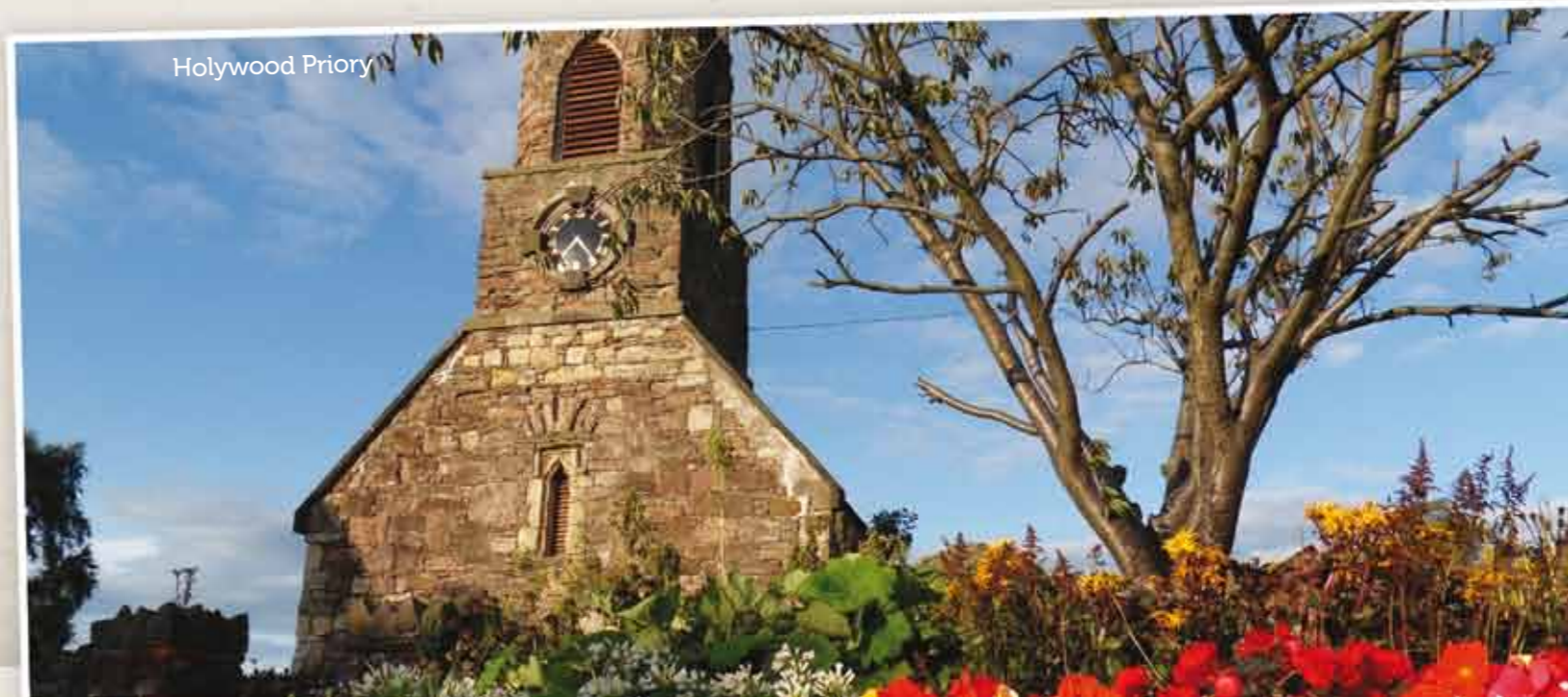
He died at Irvine, Ayrshire, on 29th March 1637, saying on his death bed 'I see Christ'. A memorial stone to Cunningham at Irvine Parish Church has the following inscription:

'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 Cunningham;
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*

Associated sites
Holywood Priory



Holywood Priory



St Andrews University

Robert Echlin

One of the first Scottish bishops in Ireland

Background in Scotland

The Echlin family were 'considerable barons and one of the chiefs of the ancient families in the shire of Fife'. In Scotland they can be traced 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 the personal physician of King James VI of Scotland and I of England and Ireland. 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 appointed a 'fellow countryman' of Echlin, James Dundass, 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 appointed him Dundass' successor

as Bishop. 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 cross the water. In 1613 Echlin appointed the first Presbyterian minister in Ulster - Edward Brice from Drymen in Stirlingshire - to Templecorran near Islandmagee. Even though Echlin was a Church of Ireland bishop, he had studied at a famous Presbyterian university and in his early years in Ulster had shown sympathy towards Presbyterianism, ordaining many early Ulster-Scots ministers such as 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) 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 he lay on his death bed, his doctor asked what was ailing him, to which the bishop replied 'its my conscience, man!'. The doctor immediately exclaimed 'I have no cure for that!'. Maxwell afterwards reported this at Newtown House and the first viscount, then an old man, advised the doctor not to repeat it to others. This prompted his daughter-in-law, Lady Jean Montgomery, nee Alexander, who was a 'zealous presbyterian', to cry 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'.

The wider Echlin family

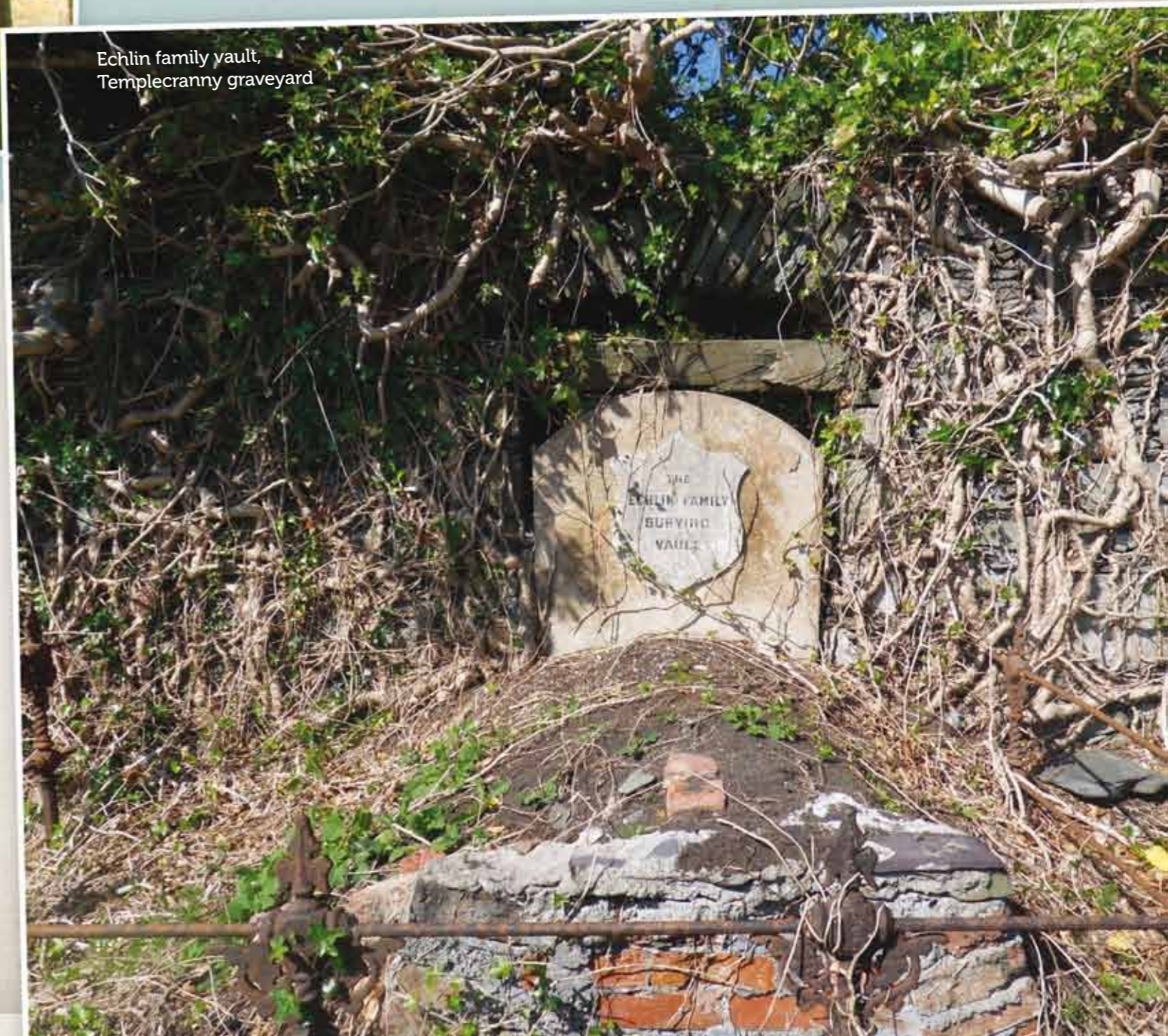
Many other Echlins came to Ulster. In 1628 Robert's son John Echlin bought the neighbouring ancient church

of Castleboy, just outside Cloughey, from Sir Henry Piers. It had 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.

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. The Echlinville Volunteers were raised in 1779, commanded by Captain Charles Echlin. Rev. William Steele Dickson was their chaplain and later their captain.

Associated sites:

- The Abbacy at Ardquin
- Echlin vault and church ruins in Templecranny graveyard
- Rubane House/Echlinville
- Castleboy ruins outside Cloughey



Echlin family vault, Templecranny graveyard



James Hamilton (1600-1666)

Presbyterian minister of Ballywalter and overseer of the Solemn League & Covenant

Background in Scotland

James Hamilton was the nephew of his namesake, Sir James Hamilton. He was born in Ayrshire in 1600. His father, Gavin Hamilton, was drowned in a boating accident on the River Bann and 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.

Life in Ulster

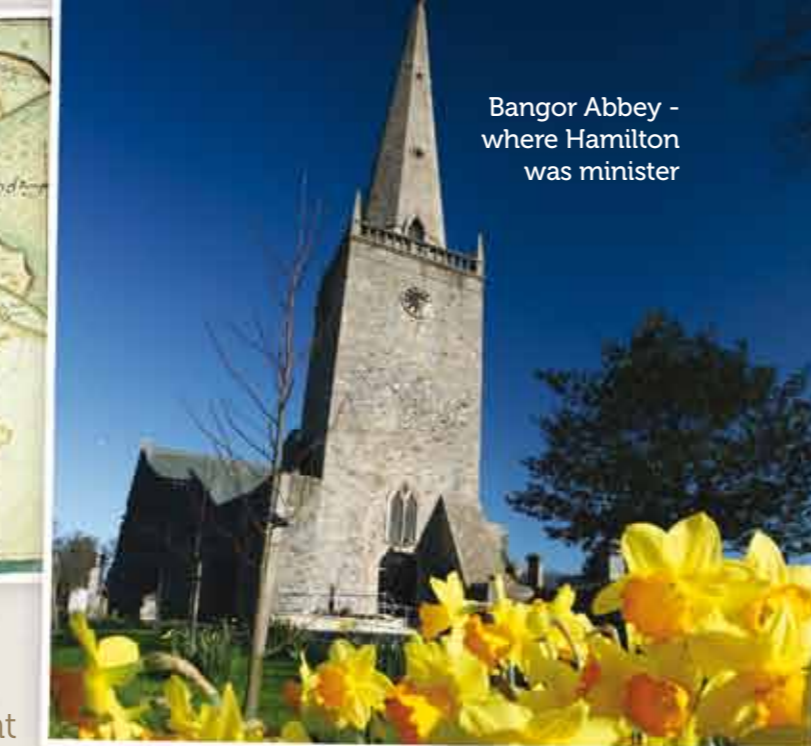
Blair continued at the University until 1623 when was invited to Ulster to become minister at Bangor Abbey. Young Hamilton had beaten him to it, having been estate manager for his uncle, Sir James, since graduation. Friendship renewed, Blair (and Holywood minister Robert Cunningham) privately tutored 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.

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 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, the *Eagle Wing* set sail. Four ministers - Hamilton, Blair, Livingstone and McLellan - were onboard. They never reached America but returned to Ulster and subsequently all four went back to Scotland.

Dumfries

Hamilton became Minister of St Michael's Kirk in Dumfries but was soon back in Ulster in 1644. His job



Bangor Abbey - where Hamilton was minister

was to 'administer' the Solemn League and Covenant across the entire populace - which, after about six weeks of a 12-week schedule, had attracted 16,000 signatures.

Kidnap and Imprisonment

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

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 to them 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 beheaded in Edinburgh on 27 May 1661 - Hamilton courageously prayed with him before his execution.

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

Associated Sites

Bangor Abbey
Whitechurch graveyard

Henry Leslie (c.1580-1661)

Bishop of Down and Connor and opponent of Presbyterianism

Background in Scotland

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 17th-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 in the Ards, himself brother of Sir James Hamilton. If so, then he would have been related by marriage to one of the most powerful families in County Down.

Career in 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 was ambitious and prepared to use what could be described as rather underhand means to achieve clerical promotion, such 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 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 non-conformity in his diocese with even greater zeal. Eventually by 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 17th-century settlement in the Ards and north Down. 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 fleeting 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.

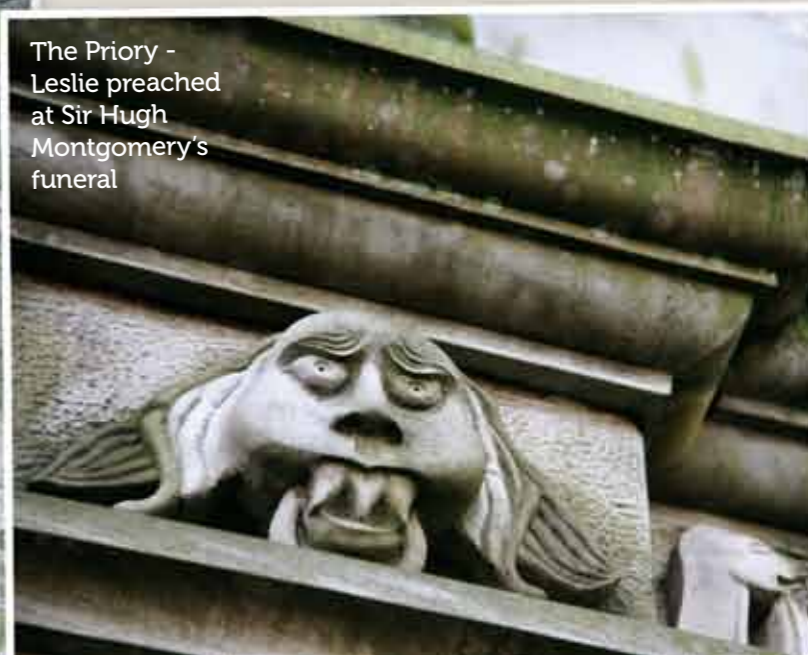
Despite his achievement in stamping out non-conformity among his clergy, as well as his success in improving the finances of his diocese, Leslie failed to realise his ambition of restoring Down Cathedral. After the outbreak of the 1641 rising he was one of the first to flee to England for safety. He 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 then he was in his 80s and he died in April 1661; he was buried in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin.

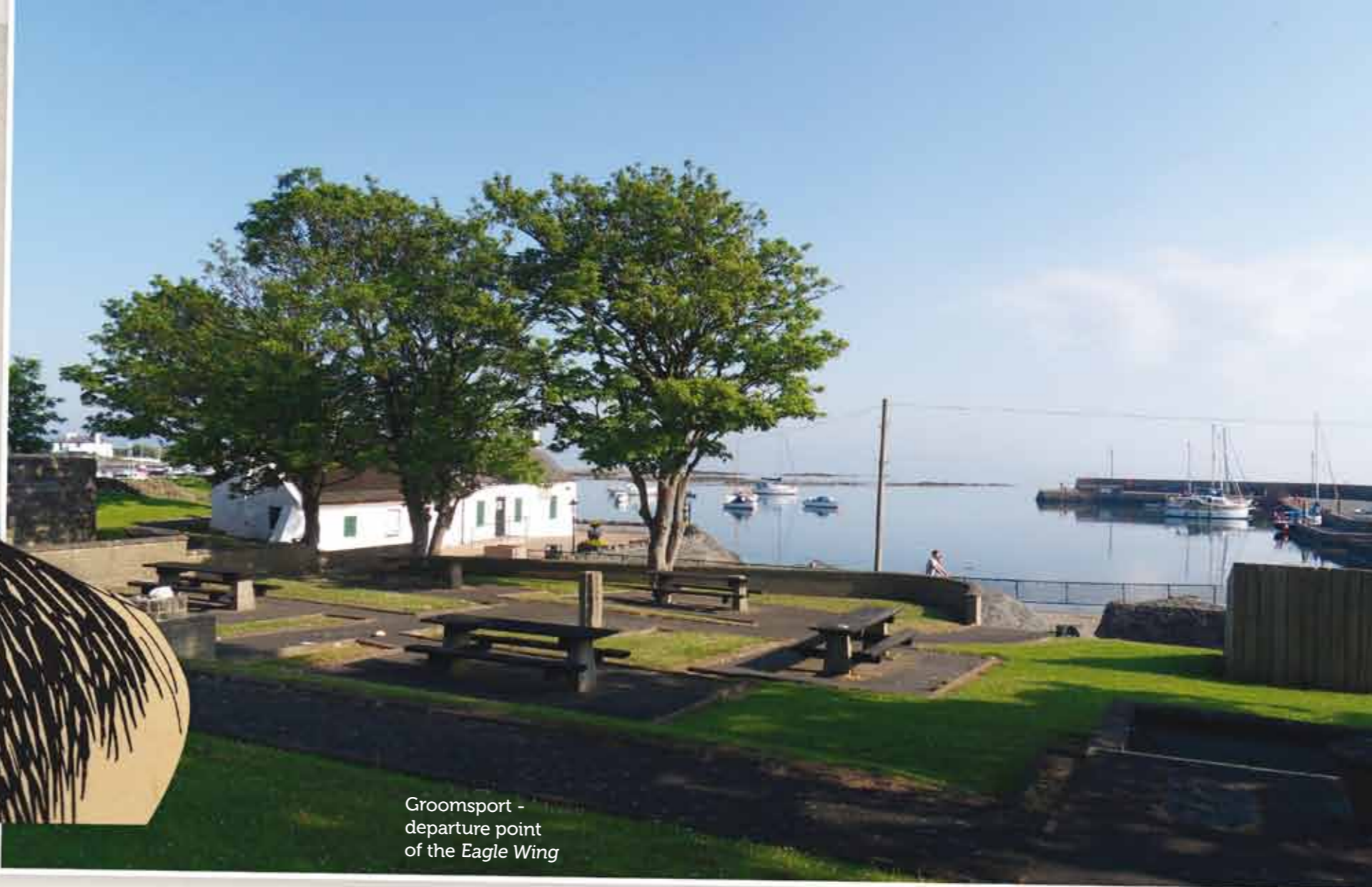
Associated sites

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

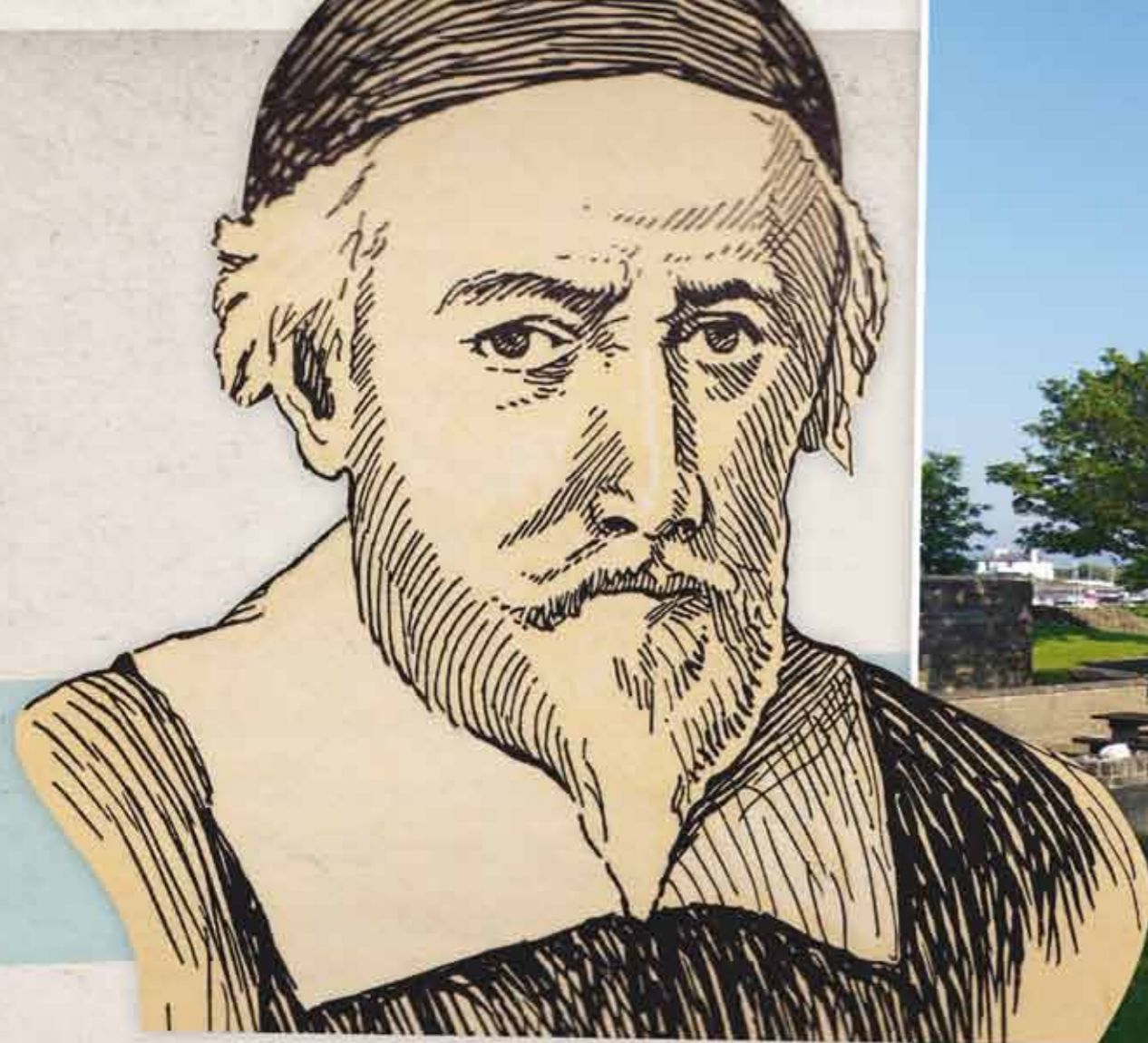


The Priory - Leslie preached at Sir Hugh Montgomery's funeral





Groomsport -
departure point
of the *Eagle Wing*



John Livingstone (1603-1672)

Revivalist preacher and minister of Killinchy

Background in Scotland

John Livingstone was born at Monyabroch/Monieburgh near Kilsyth, Scotland, on 21 July 1603. His father William was a minister. John 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 Wigton, who not long after became Sir Hugh Montgomery's second wife.

Kirk O' Shotts Revival - life in Ulster

Livingstone 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 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.

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'.

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 the *Eagle Wing*, bound for America, with three other ministers - Blair of Bangor, McLellan of Newtownards and Hamilton of Ballywalter. Also on board from Killinchy were Michael Colvert and his pregnant wife, who gave birth

at sea. Livingstone conducted the baptism and the child was named Seaborn. The *Eagle Wing* did not reach America but returned to Ulster and the ministers then 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.

Minister of Stranraer and the returns to Ulster

Livingstone became Minister of Stranraer in July 1638 and many of his Killinchy congregation travelled across the water to hear him preach. He 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 for around 10 weeks.

Later life

He became minister of Ancrum in 1648, where he remained until the 'Restoration'. 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'.

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.

Associated sites

Killinchy
Groomsport
Holywood



McGill bought Kirkistown Castle from James Savage

David McGill

One of the first chaplains at Newtownards Priory and the first curate at Grey Abbey

Background in Scotland

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

Life in Ulster

He became a chaplain to Sir Hugh Montgomery, who had invited McGill to Ulster to be a chaplain at the restored Priory in Newtownards along with a relative, Rev. James Montgomery. Sir Hugh repaired the nave of ruined Grey Abbey for use as a parish church around 1626 and that same year installed David McGill as its Curate.

Death and Burial

David McGill 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. McGill was succeeded there by Rev. James Montgomery, who married his widow. In *The Montgomery Manuscripts* it is written '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 McGill's son, James McGill, married Jean Baillie of Inishargy - they lived both at Kirkistown Castle and Ballynester, Greyabbey. James McGill 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. He died on 26 July 1683.

Two of the McGills were killed in King William III's army - Captain James McGill on 7 April 1689 at Portglenone bridge and Captain Hugh McGill 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 McGill's daughter, Lucy McGill, was born on 3 November 1685 at Castle Balfour in County Fermanagh. She married William Savage of Audleystowne and Kirkistown, who died in 1733. In 1744 Lucy was recorded as still living at Kirkistown Castle, where she remained until her death.

Associated sites

Newtownards Priory
Grey Abbey including memorial to David McGill
Kirkistown Castle

John MacLellan

Principal of Montgomery's school in Newtownards and lay preacher

Background in Scotland

The McClellands/MacLellans were based at Kirkcudbright in south-west Scotland with various branches across Galloway. At one point there were 14 different knights in the family. Sir Robert MacLellan owned Kirkcudbright in the early 1600s; MacLellan's Castle still stands today in Kirkcudbright town centre.

Life in Ulster

Around 1620 John MacLellan arrived from Kirkcudbright to become the schoolmaster at Montgomery's 'great school' in Newtownards. He was the son of Michael MacLellan, burgess of Kirkcudbright. John MacLellan 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 the bishops opposed him. 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 giving MacLellan shelter.

Eagle Wing

On 9 September 1636 John MacLellan sailed on the *Eagle Wing* to America. He was described by his colleague and fellow passenger 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 the *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.

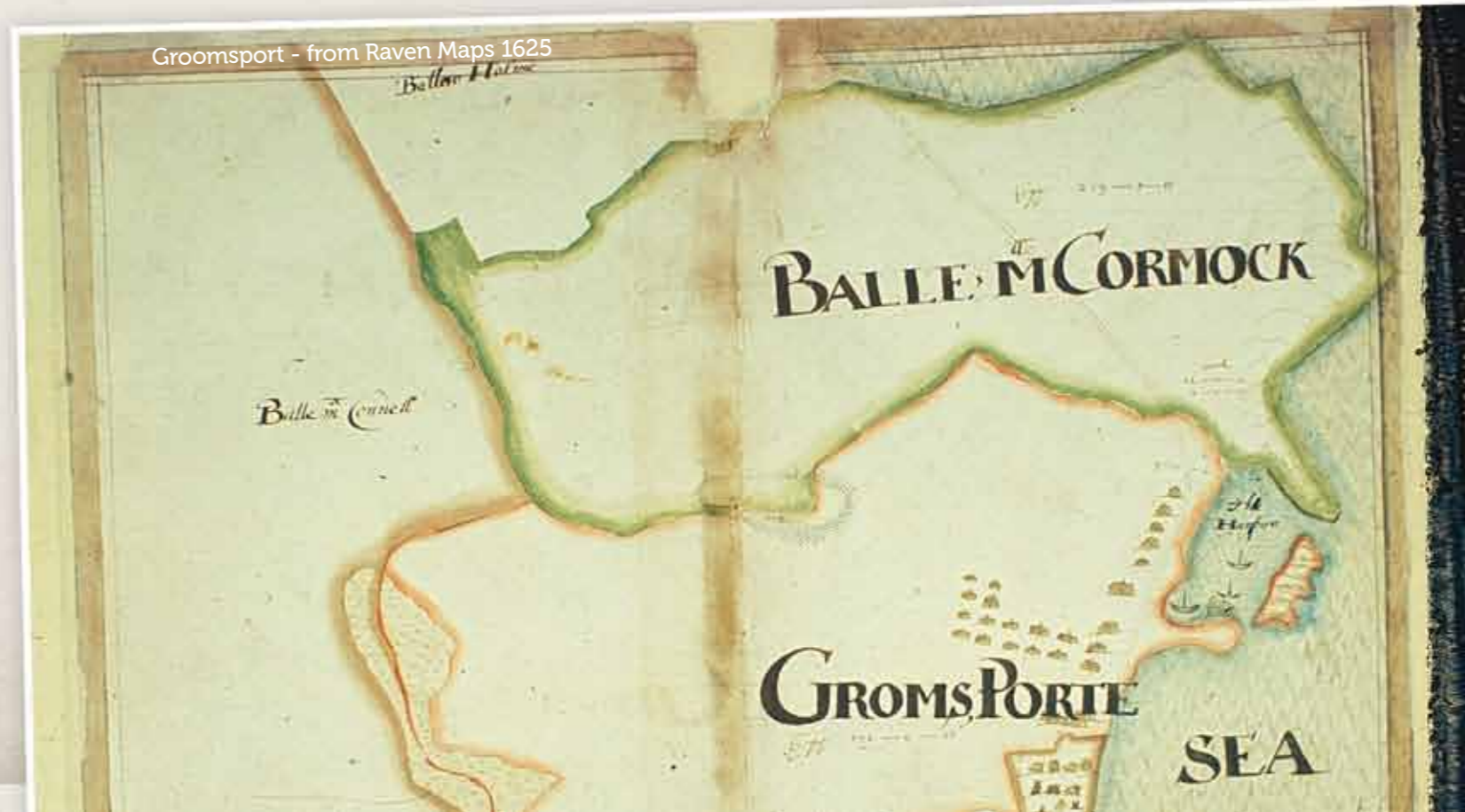
MacLellan is known to have returned to Ulster for a time in 1644. It is recorded that 'he was endued with a more than ordinary spirit, not only of ministerial authority and boldness in his Master's work, but of a singular sagacity, whereby from Scripture he did frequently foretell events anent the church 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 of MacLellan that: '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'.

Associated sites

Newtownards Priory
Groomsport

Groomsport - from Raven Maps 1625



Donaghadee's landmark lighthouse



Andrew Stewart

Presbyterian minister in Donaghadee and the first historian of the Ulster-Scots

Andrew Stewart

Presbyterian minister in Donaghadee and the first historian of the Ulster-Scots

Early life

Rev. Andrew Stewart, perhaps the earliest historian of the Ulster-Scots, was minister of Donaghadee from 1645/46 to his death in 1671. He was the son of Rev. Andrew Stewart senior who had been minister of Donegore and who died in 1634. Stewart junior was educated at St Andrews where he was awarded a Master of Arts degree in 1644.

Ministry in Donaghadee

His period as minister of Donaghadee was eventful. In 1661 he was ejected for refusing to conform to the episcopal form of church government. He remained in the area, ministering to those who dissented from the established church. In 1663 he was imprisoned in Carlingford Castle for suspected complicity in Thomas Blood's plot to overthrow the government. He died in 1671 and was buried in Donaghadee churchyard.

Stewart was the author of an unfinished *'History of the Church of Ireland as the gospel began, was continued and spread in this island under our Lord Jesus Christ,*

after the Scots were naturalised'. In it he made his oft-quoted remark that the early settlers from England and Scotland were the 'scum of both nations'. This comment must be understood in the context in which it was made, for Stewart was more concerned with demonstrating how much things had improved since the earliest days of the settlement than damning the original settlers.

The missing memorial

A memorial to Stewart once existed in Donaghadee churchyard though its present whereabouts are something of a mystery. It was included in Walter Harris' *Antient and present state of the county of Down* in 1744, but seems to have been missing by the middle of the 19th century. The inscription read:

'Here lyeth that pious and faithful servant of Jesus Christ Mr Andrew Stewart, late minister of Donaghadee, who died the 2nd of January 1671 and of his age the 46.'

It also included a coat of arms and a verse in Latin.

Associated sites
Donaghadee

A short guide for people researching their roots in the Ards and North Down

Interest in researching Irish ancestry has never been greater and no townland in Ards and North Down has been untouched by migration, whether through immigration or emigration. This short guide identifies the main sources you can use to explore your family history, suggesting a number of suggested steps to help lead you in the right direction. For more help with your genealogical research visit www.northdowntourism.com and download a more detailed pdf guide.

Getting started

The best starting point for your research is within your own family. Almost every family has at least one member with an encyclopaedic knowledge of family marriages, offspring and where ancestors lived etc. Collect as much information as you can on names, dates and places relating to your family, write it down and begin to plot out the skeleton of a family tree. Although occasionally someone may give you misleading information, you will be pleasantly surprised to find how often an elderly relative's recollections prove accurate.

Research sources

Civil registers of births, marriages and deaths provide basic family history information but their usefulness will depend on the period being researched. Civil or state registration of all births, deaths and marriages began in Ireland on 1 January 1864. By law non-Catholic marriages, including those conducted in a government registry office, had to be registered from 1 April 1845.

Organisations to contact include:

- General Register Office of Northern Ireland - www.groni.gov.uk
- The Ulster Historical Foundation, which has indexed virtually all civil marriages for North Down and Ards; these are available on a pay-per-view basis via the website www.ancestryireland.com.
- The Ireland Civil Indexes 1845-1958 - www.familysearch.org (database: <http://pilot.familysearch.org/recordsearch>). The International Genealogical Index (IGI), which the Mormons have created, is also available from this source.

Census records

Unfortunately census records only offer information post-1901. The Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) has these on micro film, reference MIC/354.

7 Researching your Ulster-Scots roots

The National Library of Ireland and Canada's Library and Archives are currently digitising the 1901 and 1911 census returns for Ireland and will make these available, free of charge, at www.census.nationalarchives.ie.

Church Records

Church records often provide a wealth of information including registers of baptisms, marriages and burials. For a listing of available records for Ards and North Down, see the Ulster Historical Foundation's 1994 *Guide to Church Records*. You can view an updated version in the Public Search Room at PRONI. Ian Maxwell's publication *Researching Down Ancestors* (Ulster Historical Foundation, 2004) also includes a full listing of church records for County Down.

You can inspect the majority of surviving pre-1900 church registers for Ards and North Down at PRONI. Catholic records are usually available only up to c.1880 but records of congregations in some other denominations may be available well into the 20th century.

The Ulster Historical Foundation has indexed most surviving pre-1900 Catholic records for Ards and North Down. It has also indexed nearly all civil marriage records from 1845 to 1921. You can access these on a pay-per-view basis via the Foundation's website www.ancestryireland.com or in person at the Foundation's Research Centre at 49 Malone Road, Belfast. This source also offers information on graves and resting places along with inscription information, available at www.historyfromheadstones.com, which also includes maps showing the locations of graveyards in Northern Ireland.

The North of Ireland Family History Society has indexed a large number of church records. For more information visit the Society's website www.nifhs.org. Details of the North Down & Ards branch of the Society are available at www.nifhs.org/ndards.htm.

How to find the homestead where your ancestors once lived

The Primary or Griffith's Valuation, 1848-64, is the earliest comprehensive listing of property in Ireland, giving a complete list of occupiers of land, tenements and houses. Accompanying Griffith's Valuation are annotated Ordnance Survey maps showing the location of every property recorded in it. The website www.askaboutireland.ie provides a free search facility for Griffith's Valuation.

Acknowledgements

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