

Port Glasgow's Landed Gentry and Gentlemen Farmers
By
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1. Introduction to the Estates

This piece of writing attempts to tell some of the stories about six old estates that lay to the east of Port Glasgow in the nineteenth century and eventually got swallowed up in the town in the twentieth century. Initially the estates lay in Kilmacolm Parish before being incorporated by Port Glasgow as Port Glasgow moved eastwards. The stories will deal with the topics of brutal murders, infanticide, great wealth and great poverty, mainly in the times of the mid to late nineteenth century when Port Glasgow was rapidly changing as industry grew, and outside influences such as the railways made their mark.

Three of the estates (Fyfe Park, Nether Auchenleck and Carnegie Park) were coastal estates belonging to gentlemen farmers. They stretched from the western boundary of Fyfe Park Estate at the Clune Brae Burn to the Carnegie Park Estate boundary at the east side of the present-day cemetery at Heggies Avenue. These smallish estates of about twenty-five acres or so were owned by men who made their living market gardening or rope making.

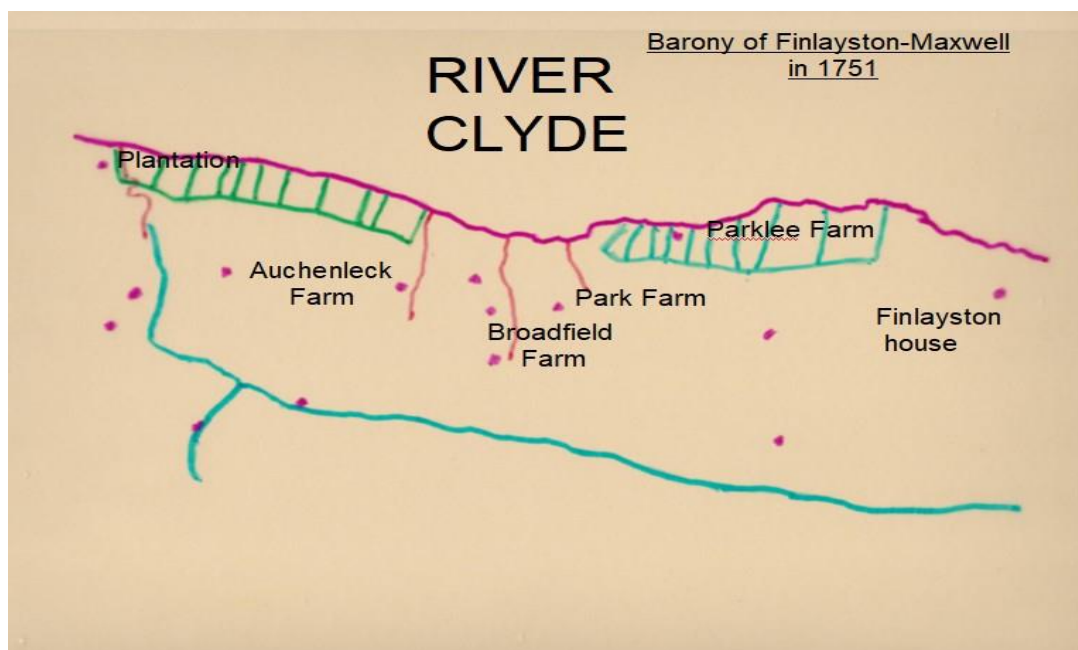
The other three estates (Broadfield, Woodhall and Broadstone) belonged to what was commonly called landed gentry. These larger estates of up to sixty acres lay to the south of the River Clyde in the slopes that steeply rose from the river edge. These were owned by very rich men who had money from large industrial enterprises, or lived off the rents of the farms attached to the estates. They distinguished themselves by the large houses they lived in and the sports they followed.

None of these estates now exists. Port Glasgow, as a town built and positioned on a narrow coastal strip on a raised beach left over from the Ice Age, tried to accommodate the growth in population resulting from a booming economy after the start of the nineteenth century.

Port Glasgow was hemmed in by the river to the north, the hills behind it, and by Greenock to the west, so the town could not move north, south or west. The best expansion land was to the east. The old boundary for the town had been the Kilmacolm Parish boundary that went from the River Clyde, through Clune Park (formerly Plantation) and up to the top of Clune Brae. An often-used expression to describe this expansion was that the Port was “slipping up the Clyde”. The town boundary was pushed back east to Heggies Avenue in 1915 and further to eventually to swallow all six estates.

2. A Chronology of the Six Port Glasgow Estates

The history of the grounds taken up by the six estates goes back to the times of the Barony lands that were held by nobles and their families. The main Barony (Finlaystone) in this part of Renfrewshire was that owned by the Dennistouns.



The essentials of Roy's Map 1751

In 1406 a daughter of the living Baron married a Maxwell, and as part of the dowry a barony was carved out of the Finlaystone-Maxwell Barony

for the newly weds. This Barony of Nether Finlayston stretched west of the burn that flows from the south to the River Clyde past the east side of the modern Clune Park School to Inchgreen in the west. This was renamed the Barony of Newark. Eventually the Burghers of Glasgow set up the Port of Glasgow in the Barony from 1668 after striking a deal with Patrick Maxwell of Newark.

The land to the east of this new Barony and Port Glasgow was still very rural. The map above shows the essence of Roy's map drawn in 1751 of the Finlayston Estate east of the Newark Barony. Where the three coastal estates were to appear there is Auchenleck Farm. There is also a farm called Broadfield, but there are no sign of any gentry estates.

The coastal estates appear to be created after 1767 as the result of the springing up of a new local industry that was set up by a Port Glasgow entrepreneur, Mr Hamilton of Wishaw, who owned Newark Estate. He started and encouraged the market gardening industry in 1767 when he leased the foreshore as far as Inchgreen. He feued one-acre plots at £40 a year and a £2 feu. Newark Castle gardens were let out as market gardens, the gardeners living in the castle. Hamilton himself had a willow plantation at Bogston

Port Glasgow became famous for its fruit. There were seven market gardeners at least. Charles Williamson occupied the Castle garden in the Newark Barony which extended from Blackstone to the Glasgow tollhouse. William Foot (famed for his plums) had his garden from Ashgrove Lane to Clune Brae foot in the Newark Barony. The high walls suited wall trees. John Yeats had Carnegie Gardens (one of the coastal estates), was set up along the River Clyde's bank in the Finlaystone Barony. All market gardeners brought their fruit daily to the Steamboat Quay for the Glasgow trip on the Helensburgh boat. The quicker transit to Glasgow, which became possible when river steamers commenced, caused great activity in this business.

So the market gardening seems to have initiated the creation of the three coastal estates with their flat ground and many burns. They appeared all to be about 25 acres in area each. These were west to east, Fyfe Park, Nether Auchenleck and Carnegie Park.

Substantial houses were set up on the three estates. We have a description for Carnegie Park:

TO LET, FURNISHED, ENTRY IMMEDIATELY, THE HOUSE
AND OFFICES OF CARNEGIE PARK,

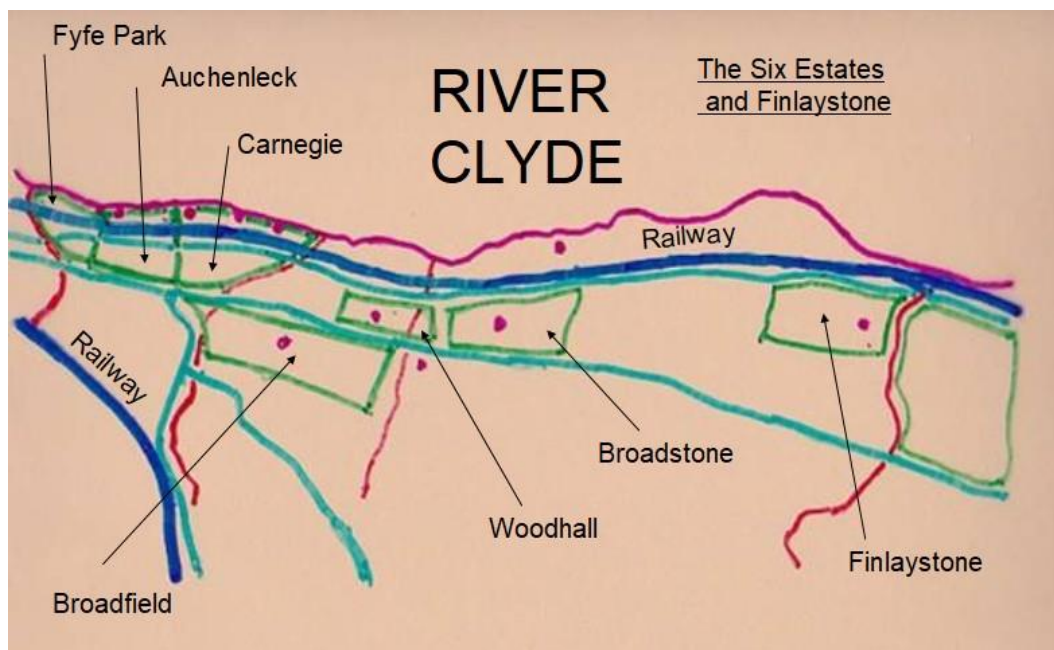
Consisting of: three public rooms and five bedrooms, with kitchen, pantry, larder, washing house and laundry, cow house, &c. The house is pleasantly situated on the banks of the Clyde, within a mile of Port-Glasgow.

For particulars, apply to J. Foster King, Esq., or James Lade, Writer, Port-Glasgow.

10th October, 1846, Greenock Advertiser.

Fruit growing lasted for at least seventy years till the coming of the railways diminished the fruit business from 1841. Fruit was still an income for Carnegie as can be seen by the following prosecution

1899 12th October. THEFT OF FRUIT AT PORT GLASGOW.
Four lads from Port-Glasgow named Robert M'Allister, John Bell, James Herrington, and Donald Livingstone, were charged with stealing six lbs. of apples and pears from the Carnegie market garden occupied by Mr Alex M'Laren on Tuesday, 3rd October. Accused pleaded guilty. The Fiscal (Mr William Auld) stated that accused had been caught in the garden. One of them had a basket in his possession full of apples. The lads were off work that day on account of the rain. Justice Tannahill said that this common offence must be put down. The sentence was 5s fine each or three days imprisonment, and if any other lad was brought up he would be whipped. *Greenock Telegraph*



The six estates outlined in green

The three so called gentry estates had very different origins. These three estates were Broadfield, Woodhall and Broadstone.

Broadfield Estate was the first of these larger estates to be created. It is noted that the Finlaystone Estate granted to the Broadfield feuer, Dr Mollison, was about one hundred and eight acres in extent. A large house was built in 1762. This was lived in till a new mansion house was built about 1800, incorporating the older house in the back. This house remained till it was demolished about 1948-9. The estate had extensive stabling and even a family tomb.

Woodhall Estate was carved out of the Broadfield Estate by a local ship-owner who built a modern mansion there in 1866. It was about 56 acres in extent.

Broadstone Estate was about 30 acres and was carved out of Oakbank Farm, one of the farms that supported the Broadfield Estate. It was created by a local business man, John Birkmyre, who was a partner of the Gourock Ropeworks. John had the house or castle built in 1871 and it lasted through to the 1970s.

These three estates were distinguished by the signs of opulence of their houses and the pastimes of their owner

3. Broadfield, Woodhall, and Broadstone Estates and their Magnificent Houses

One of the major feature differences between the coastal estates and the gentry estates was the size and extravagances seen in the large houses of the gentry estates.

Starting with Broadfield Mansion, the oldest of the houses.

The Broadfield name was originally applied to a farm forming part of the Barony of Finlaystone, the rental of which, in 1495 was £26. In 1762 the 13th Earl of Glencairn let for fifty-seven years 108 Scots acres of the lands of Broadfield and Blackston to Dr. Molloson of Port-Glasgow at a rent of £22 on which he built a house, forming the back part of the present house. A Blackston House shows up on Roy's map but there are few records of the house itself. It appears to be to the south of Broadfield.

The Rev. Mr Brown, in his Statistical Account of the parish in the 18th century, claims Dr Molleson's work on the estate as

“the most remarkable piece of improvement in this parish. On the farm of Broadfield he has built an elegant house. He has judiciously subdivided and enclosed the lands with thorn-hedges and belts of planting. Though of a shallow soil, it now yields a plentiful crop of oats, barley, beans, and grass of various kinds. His garden produces the plants and flowers common in the climate, and he raises many from foreign countries which are useful in the line of his profession as a Doctor. These improvements do much honour to his judgment and taste. The lands were in a state of nature within these thirty years.”

The estate was supported by four farms. They are Park Farm, Oakbank Farm (56 acres), Parklea Farm (60 acres) and Parkhill Farm (110 acres). Broadfield was then renovated round about 1800 by the Crawford Family.

A military fact about Broadfield was that in the 1850s and before there was a gun emplacement on the ridge to the west of the house that had six iron guns. It was understood the guns were there to protect Dumbarton Castle from attack from the river.



Broadfield House in 1893 (Unknown)

A photograph of 1893 gives a good overview. The estate and house were situated on the coast of the Parish of Kilmacolm, near the main road leading from Renfrew to Port Glasgow, and overlooking the River Clyde.

The mansion was built in the beginning of the 19th century (circa 1800), and was long occupied by Mr. John Crawford of Park. The main entrance is a very handsome porch, with Corinthian pillars and pilasters and a very elegant iron balustrade. The windows were sheets of plate glass. There is filigreed ironwork shown in a fence around the base of the building and flower boxes on each of the middle floor windows at the front and side. The roof also has a surround of fine cast iron filigree at two levels.

The house is surrounded by many fine old trees and an extensive view of the river and of the Dunbartonshire coast may be obtained from the upper windows of the mansion.

Broadfield in 1918 was bought by the consul for Greece and when he died in 1923 it became the Broadfield Hospital. It was stated as 60 acres. It was bought in 1929 by Paisley Council and used as a mental asylum along with Broadstone House that will be discussed later.

Woodhall

This estate was created in 1866 by Mr Blackwood who was a co-owner of the shipbuilding firm Blackwood and Gordon who were situated at where Lamont's Yard was in Port Glasgow.

Blackwood's fortunes rose when Blackwood & Gordon, in 1860, removed from Paisley to Port Glasgow. Their move from Paisley was in order to build larger ships. They purchased a portion of what had been the gardens of Newark Castle, and formed a shipyard. In 1862 an engine shop was added to Blackwood & Gordon using the Springfield walled garden on the Newark estate.

This yard was typical of what at the time was considered the best method of conducting shipbuilding, in so far that it was self-contained having a dock for fitting-out purposes and a boiler shop and foundry. For a time this method was successful, but gradually specialisation took place.

Large businesses grew up for constructing engines or boilers and castings, with which firms whose annual output was small could not compete. As machinery became more complicated and expensive, engineering could only pay if the machinery was fully employed, and this could not be done if only a few sets of engines were built in a year. The firm continued till 1885 when it failed. Blackwood later managed to revive the company in 1887. He died at Glenclune in 1891 having sold Woodhall prior to that and having stayed there for twenty five years.

In 1864 there were no thoughts of failure. The Blackwoods were living at Glenclune, a house on the Fyfe Park Estate near Clune Brae that overlooked his new shipyard. He decided he would build a dramatic mansion. He agreed to create an estate out of the Broadfield Estate and build a mansion there and so he called in a young English architect to construct the mansion for him. He was Frederick Thomas Pilkington (1832-1898). He was aged 34 when he designed and built Woodhall Mansion. He at this time was considered one of the leading, avant-garde architects in Scotland.

Frederick was born in Stamford (Lincolnshire, England), the son of an architect who took his family to Edinburgh in 1854 when Frederick was 22, setting up an office in the New Town. The young Pilkington studied mathematics and logic at the University of Edinburgh but, despite being an excellent student, seems never to have got round to graduating. His wife died in childbirth in 1861 when Frederick was 29 and he married again just five months later.

Fredrick Thomas Pilkington moved from England in 1854. That was the year after John Ruskin gave his first public lecture on architecture and painting in the city. Pilkington never met Ruskin but he took in and used Ruskin's ideas.

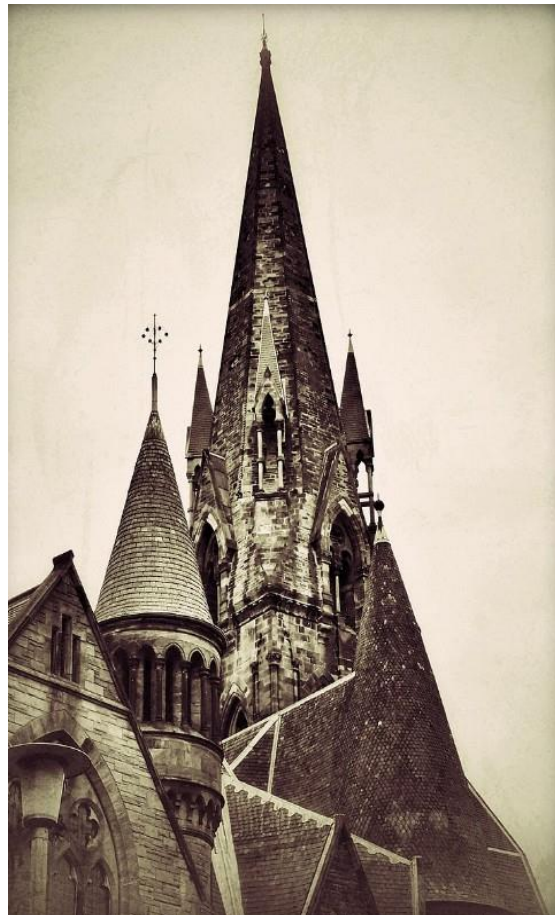
Ruskin wanted Gothic architecture with its plentiful ornateness. "The Gothic stands out in prickly independence, and frosty fortitude, jutting into crockets, and freezing into pinnacles; starting up into a monster, there germinating into a blossom: anon knitting itself into a branch, alternately thorny, bossy, and bristly, or writhed into every form of nervous entanglement; but even when most graceful, never for an instant languid, always quickset; erring, if at all, ever on the side of brusquerie."

Pilkington is said to have worked as inspiration came to him, often getting up in the middle of the night to sketch ideas. He had a taste for music and fine furniture. On 10 March 1861 Pilkington's first wife died in childbirth, and he married Elizabeth Copley from Ely five months later, first with a house at 27 St Bernard Crescent and then at 14 Cumin Place later in the same year.

Pilkington designed 18 churches, the majority for the Free Church of Scotland. He built quite original churches, surmounted by over heavy perhaps, sharp steeples, in Kelso, Irvine and Dundee.



Irvine Church (Unknown)



Barclay Church Edinburgh (Unknown)

His masterpiece, however, is the Barclay Free Church of 1862-64 in Edinburgh

He was an architect in Edinburgh from 1855 to 1883 when he went to London. He also built large houses before Woodhall such as Woodlea House



Woodlea House (unknown)

Woodhall was built in the same Gothic style that was described as “bolshie, bloody-minded and perverse. And nobody was bolshier, etc., than Frederick Pilkington (though he may not have so considered himself). Nobody was less concerned about the canons of good taste. Edinburgh — where Pilkington’s practice was based — still is full of his ferocious, bizarrely scaled, restlessly detailed clinics and houses and churches”

The cost of Woodhall was £50,000 or £60,000 to build. The architectural beauty is evident from the photograph. A feature of the interior decoration was the ornate hand carved staircase and panelling and stained glass. The rooms were spacious and dignified. It included stables and lodges and amounts to 56 acres laid out in attractive avenues and there was an ornamental pond.



Woodhall Mansion (unknown)

The house was sold after Thomas Blackwood's firm got into difficulties in 1887. In 1914 it was empty and offered for £20,000 and then £10,000 and in 1934 at £4750. It eventually was bought by the Port Glasgow council and knocked down in 1936 to make way for social housing.

In the 1950s the site of the mansion was taken over by St Martin's church and a modern church eventually built there.



St Martins Church (Unknown)

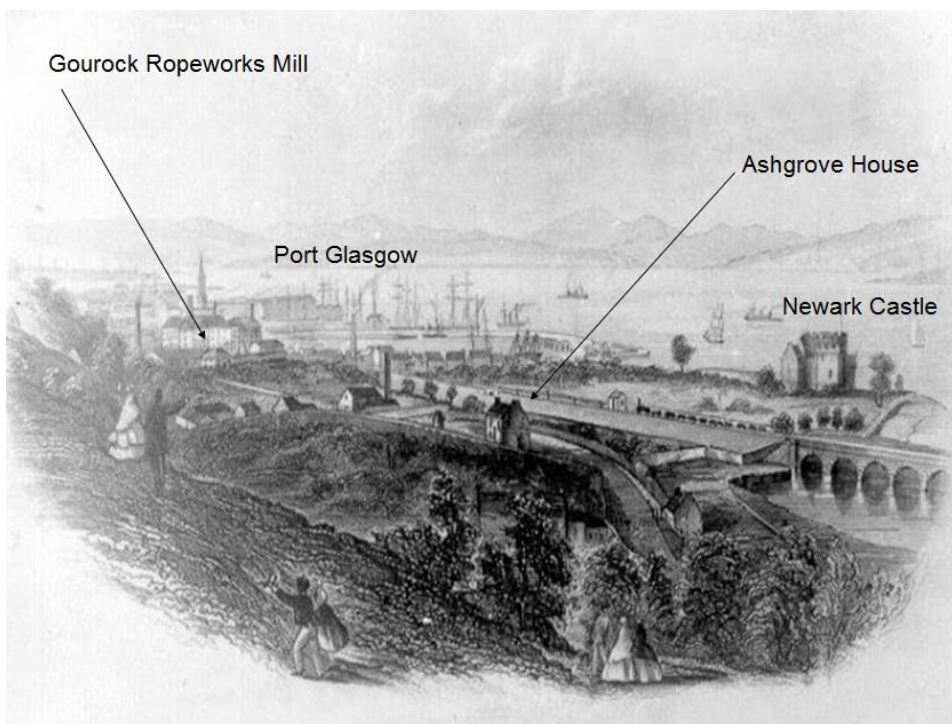
Broadstone

During the course of the nineteenth century Port Glasgow was the site of two or three powerful companies of international reputation. One of them was the Gourock Ropeworks that made canvas, sailcloth and rope goods.

It originated as the Port Glasgow Rope & Duck Co., which was founded in 1736 in Port Glasgow. In 1797 it merged with the Gourock Ropework Co. (founded 1777) to form the Gourock Ropework Co. with its headquarters in Port Glasgow. William Birkmyre was associated with the company until he retired in 1860. In 1818 he was made a partner.

The company gained a world-wide reputation in the manufacture of ropes, canvas and sailcloth. By the late nineteenth century the company was under the control of the sons of William Birkmyre. These were Henry Birkmyre (1832-1900) and his brother, John, who had become partners in the firm in 1853.

William Birkmyre lived at Ashgrove House till 1862, not far from the Gourock Ropeworks and brought up his children there (including Henry and John). He died suddenly there in January 1862 aged 59.



Ashgrove House (McLean Museum)

Ashgrove House was not a small house by any standard. It contained a dining room, a drawing room, a parlour and a store room. For sleeping arrangements it contained seven bed-rooms (one with a dressing room). There also was a bath-room and a kitchen. The house was surrounded by orchards. There were the Castle gardens and the Springhill walled garden of Mrs Montgomerie.

John and his family moved out from Ashgrove House on his father's death in 1862 and moved to Glenclune where we find him in 1865, living next door to the Thomas Blackwood family before they moved to Woodhall in 1866.

Glenclune was a large self-contained villa consisting of a dining room, a drawing room, 4 bed rooms and a servants' room. There was a kitchen, a bath room, and other conveniences. It had a beautiful view of the Clyde, and is situated within a mile of the railway station and less than half a mile to the Gourock Ropeworks where John worked with Henry.



John Birkmyre (unknown)

About 1870 John decided he would build a family home to match his wealth and position. He bought an estate of about thirty acres that was majority of the land of Oakbank Farm. This was immediately east of the Woodhall estate of Thomas Blackwood with the entrance driveway coming from the Middle Road that led to Glasgow.

He then looked for an architect to fulfil his vision of a baronial mansion. He chose David Bryce (1803–1876). John wanted a house with the some of the character and style of Newark Castle and not the very modern

Woodhall Mansion. He would have looked at what David Bryce (who was 67 in 1870, compared to Frederick Pilkington who was 34) had done previously, and the latest example to study was Ballikinrain Castle.



Ballikinrain Castle (unknown)

David had designed and built the Castle in 1868 for Sir Archibald Orr-Ewing, (1818–1893) a Conservative Party politician. Sir Archibald had commissioned David Bryce to design a new house in the Scottish Baronial style, for his 4,500-acre estate.



Broadstone House

Broadstone House is a Baronial Renaissance house with details based on Newark Castle. The building was originally constructed with greyish-pink, square-necked sandstone. It had a high entrance tower, turreted on the north-west, with some finely carved and inscribed eaves and dormers, and the rather special stone-framed conservatory, part of which, octagonal in plan had a glazed dome and one cupola.

In 1870 when the house was built a more modern spelling was used for the message from Newark Castle. “The blessing of God is herein,” inscribed over the main doorway of Broadstone; and on a tablet above the door inside the hall is the inscription: “This house was built by John Birkmyre and Helen his wife in the year of our Lord, 1870. Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain who build it.”

The house is set in a large estate



The Estate and House (Unknown)

Broadstone was a bare hillside of farmland. The estate became richly wooded, and the well-trimmed lawns were nowhere bettered. John Birkmyre’s wife with her own hands planted nearly every tree on the estate, assisted by her gardeners and foresters. It was one of the pleasures of her life to see these trees come to full fruition, and become the habitation of the birds, as well as providing abundant cover for ground game.

How could John Birkmyre afford to build such a large house as Broadstone?

Fortunately there is evidence that can let us know how. In the Glasgow University Archives there are detailed recordings of the business arrangements within the Gourock Ropeworks. They show how individual partners shared in the returns for their investments from the company. In the case of Gourock Ropeworks detailed annual earnings are available. For the six years from 1885 to 1890 they give real insight.

First of all who owned the company? At the beginning of 1885 there were four partners and their share of the company was as follows

Colin Campbell	33.0 %
John Birkmyre	29.3 %
Henry Birkmyre	29.3 %
William Birkmyre	8.0 %

(In 1886 Colin Campbell died and his two sons, William Middleton Campbell and Henry Campbell) split Colin's shares. Each has 16.5%)

How do you make the calculation of who gets what each year? At the end of each trading year the company balanced liabilities and assets and if there are profits (as there should be) the partners would share them amongst themselves in proportion to their stock ownership.

Gourock Ropeworks Company Board seems to be prudent. It did not want the total profit for each year to be given out to the directors because they wanted reserves left in case the company suffered a setback during their next fiscal year. So they set the stock value of the company for the end of each year to be £150,000 pounds. After you took that £150,000 off of the gross cash in the company what was left is what the directors could share from that year.

The gross profits, the amount to be shared and John Birkmyre's share are as follows for the six years.

Year	Gross Profit	Amount To share	John Birkmyre at 29.3%
1885	£186,000	£36,000	£10,500
1886	£162,000	£12,000	£3,500
1887	£153,750	£3,750	£1,100
1888	£175,200	£25,200	£7,400
1889	£198,000	£48,000	£14,000
1890	£181,000	£31,000	£9,100

So in total John Birkmyre receives £46,600 over the six years. This gives him over £7,750 per year. This is equivalent to approximately, in modern values, £775,000 per year

So there was plenty of money for John's Broadstone Castle,

Eventually Broadstone House was not lived in by the Birkmyres. Broadstone House was bought by Paisley Corporation in 1929, to cater for mentally deficient women and juveniles, and from then on both it and Broadfield House were run as a single hospital of whatever name. It served for many years as a psychiatric institution, when it was known as Broadfield Hospital, It was transferred to the National Health Service in 1948 and was closed in 1985 and the building was sold by auction in 2001. Now known as *The Castle*, its refurbishment was to form the centrepiece of the Castlebank residential development began in 2001 by Muir Homes. However, in 2004, a fire reduced the house to a shell (it was gutted by fire in July 2007 as well) and restoration is not expected to be complete before 2020.

4. Prominent Citizens who lived on the Estates and their Legacies

Fyfe Park Estate

This estate had two noteworthy owners who contributed to the town, and in one case, to the world.

The first family of note were the Fyfes. The Fyfes were very much involved with the Fyfe Park estate in its creation and gave their names to the Estate. They had lived there from the 1770s and were in the business of ropemaking or ropespinning.

Robert Fyfe, who died in 1859, was a frustrated inventor. Robert Davie, a well known Port Glasgow historian, told the story of seeing in 1840 the first propeller driven ship, the *Archimedes* pass up the river on her first trip to Glasgow. "A few days thereafter I was out at Fyfe Park, and speaking to old Mr Robert Fyfe, ropespinner, about the *Archimedes*, he said, 'I will show you a screw steamer'. So he brought a model, about two feet long, which he had made many years before, covered all over with dust, and his idea of a screw propeller was one the whole length of the boat placed in the bottom, reaching from stem to stern. It commenced very small at the stem, increasing in diameter until it reached midships, when it became gradually smaller again towards the stern."

He was also a very down to earth type of a man. He became a Councillor in Port Glasgow. Councillor Fyfe was then made a Bailie to dispense justice to the law-breakers of the town. He opened his first Court with prayer, and the first case brought before him was a woman charged with breaking the peace. The Bailie fined her half-a-crown, and paid it himself. An account of the eccentricities of a Port Bailie was published in all the newspapers. People sneered and called the Bailie a foolish old man, but he was considered quite a big piece of the salt of the earth.

One of his sons, Councillor William Fyfe, who lived at Fyfe Park Estate, was a prominent business man. His grandfather and father were ropemakers at Fyfe Park. He himself was a painter. He had a shop in Dockhead then a shop in Bay Street at the foot of Customs House Lane. He was an elder in the Parish Church and a superintendent in the Parish school. He was six years a Councillor and then a Baillie in the town. He reached the good age of 62 and was twice married. He died in 1877.

The Fyfe family will return in these stories later but not in a pleasant way.

A second family lived on the Fyfe Park Estate and the member who is of interest was James M'Intyre, a famous builder of Blockade Runners for the American Civil War.

He served his apprenticeship in Barclay Curle and Co. in Glasgow. He was the manager of the ship department. He became best known as a as an iron ship builder. He started business in a shipyard in the Port Glasgow Wet Dock with Mr Kilpatrick. The Bay Yard, which is the property of the Port Glasgow Harbour Trust, has had many tenants. In 1864 Kirkpatrick & McIntyre commenced. They built several fine blockade runners during the American Civil War. Two of them had very appropriate names, *Let Her Rip* was a sleek paddle steamer of 800 tons, with the following dimensions. She was 231 foot long, 26 foot width and 12 feet deep. Her engines were 180 H.P. She was intended for the Nassau trade. There was also *Let Her Run*. Another ship they built was the *Alexandria* which was a paddle steamer that plied on the Thames. Kirkpatrick & McIntyre failed in 1865 although the name lasted till 1867. There were at the time one or two unfinished ships on the stocks. The trustees looked about for someone to take over the vessels and complete them, and arranged with Messrs. William and John Hamilton to do this. They remained in the Bay Yard till 1873. M'Intyre became associated with Hamilton and Co. He also was involved with Smith and M'Intyre with whom he launched a steam yacht.

In June 1877 James M'Intyre died suddenly at Fyfe Park. He was born in 1827. He was at work measuring a yacht with a member of the Board of Trade. He was unfortunate enough to fall among the ship's ballast. Dr Grieve and Doctor Crawford were called and Mr M'Intyre was taken to his house in Fyfe Park. He never rallied, and died. Mr M'Intyre reached the good age of fifty.

The following is a list of most of the ships he built:

- GREYHOUND, 1863, Kilpatrick & McIntyre Port Glasgow, Steamship

The ss Greyhound's fate was typical of blockade runners.

In 1864 in Nassau the last American arrival brings intelligence that the *SS Greyhound*, which was built by Messrs Kirkpatrick & M'Intyre, Port-Glasgow, and engined by Messrs Caird and Co. here, had sailed from Nassau on her maiden trip for Wilmington. It had been built for Robert Little and he had sold it to Liverpool Shippers. In 1865 it had been captured and the *SS Greyhound* was sold in New York for \$110,000. It was 583 tons and captured whilst trying to run the blockade

- ARRAN CASTLE, 1864, Kilpatrick & McIntyre Port Glasgow, Paddle Steamer.
- ERIN, 1864, Kilpatrick & McIntyre Port Glasgow, Paddle Steamer.
- ALEXANDRIA, 1865, Kilpatrick & McIntyre Port Glasgow, Steamship.
- WILLIAM TAYLOR, 1865, Kilpatrick & McIntyre Port Glasgow, Steamship-
- ECLAIR, 1865, Kilpatrick & McIntyre Port Glasgow, Passenger Cargo Ship.
- LEIKA, 1865, Kilpatrick & McIntyre Port Glasgow, Yacht
- LEVAN, 1866, Kilpatrick & McIntyre Port Glasgow, Steamship.
- UNDINE, 1866, Kilpatrick & McIntyre Port Glasgow, Passenger Ship.
- HOPEFUL, 1866, Kilpatrick & McIntyre Port Glasgow, Steamship.
- JACINTH, 1866, Kilpatrick & McIntyre Port Glasgow, Steamship.
- SALADO, 1866, Kilpatrick & McIntyre Port Glasgow, Clipper.
- LAKE CONSTANCE, 1867, Kilpatrick & McIntyre Port Glasgow, Barque.

In 1867 his daughter was given the honour of launching a ship. There was a launch at Kilpatrick and M'Intyre Co of Port Glasgow of a clipper barque of 500 tons and length of 125 feet. It was named the *Lake Constance* by Miss Isabella M'Intyre who lived at Fyfe Park. This ship was the third of its design built by the ship yard.

- RIVER AVON, 1867, Kilpatrick & McIntyre Port Glasgow, Barque.

Nether Auchenleck

There was only one house on the estate. The estate was owned by various landowners over time, who enjoyed the house and quiet surrounds of the river.

Carnegie and Carnegie Park

Owned by an absentee landlord who leased the estate for market gardening and dairy produce. There were three houses on the estate, Kilburn Cottage, Carnegie and Carnegie Park.

Broadfield

One of the most famous persons to be associated with Port Glasgow was General Sir Francis Reginald Wingate



Lord Kitchener and General Wingate (Wikimedia Commons)

General Sir Francis Reginald Wingate was born at Broadfield House on the 25th June 1861, the seventh son of Andrew Wingate a textile merchant of Glasgow, and Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Turner of Dublin.

The family had lived at Broadfield since before 1845, a period of fifteen years or more, and all Sir Francis's sisters and brothers were born there. He was in a family of twelve.

Jane, his eldest sister married the Rev. Thomas Beaumont Walpole of St Mary's Church, Port Glasgow in 1867. This appears to be a very romantic wedding. Beaumont, as he was usually called, had helped establish St Mary's Episcopal Church in Port Glasgow which was supported by the Wingate family. Beaumont's wife died in 1865 in Port Glasgow. Jane, at this time, had moved to Jersey in 1862 so Beaumont had to go to Jersey to woo and marry Jane for his second wife and bring her back to Port Glasgow. Beaumont died in 1871 in Port Glasgow.

Two brothers (Richard and William) and two sisters (Bessie and Agnes) moved to India and one brother (Frederick) became a tea planter in Ceylon.

Sir Francis's father died in 1862 and the family moved from Broadfield in 1862 to Jersey. He became the Sirdar of the Egyptian Army. Sir Francis lived till 1953. Queen Victoria was godmother to one of his daughters.

A second family who stayed at Broadfield were the Somervilles who were related to the Birkmyres and in partnership in the owning of the New Lanark Mills. They stayed at Broadfield in the 1880s

No matter who stayed at Broadfield there was always a strong love of fox hunting and Broadfield was a major stop or starting point for the Renfrewshire and Lanarkshire Hunt.

Woodhall

This estate was created by Thomas Blackwood in 1866 and he lived there with his family for about 21 years.

Thomas Blackwood was born in 1819, the son of Walter Blackwood and his wife Christina Craig. His wife, Jane, was from Campsie in Stirlingshire and was 17 years his junior. He was born in Inchinnan. He had six sons: Walter (1860s), Thomas (1864), John (1868) born Woodhall, Matthew (1871), Robert (1875) and Alexander (1874). He had four girls Janet (1865), Christina (1866) born at Glenclune, Jane (1867) and Margaret (1872). Of the ten children five were born at Woodhall. They lived well as they had five servants.

Thomas was a shipbuilder and master iron founder, employing 630 men and 114 boys in 1881 in Blackwood and Gordon. In 1867 Mr Gordon had died, and the large concern was, until a few years ago, carried on under the sole proprietary of Blackwood. He was of quiet, unassuming disposition, and was deservedly held in the highest esteem by all classes of the community. He was a member of Princes Street U.P. Church, the schemes of which were always benefited by his large-hearted liberality. His demise removes one of the oldest and most familiar names from the list of Clyde shipbuilders.

He built many ships but his business got into trouble in the period 1885 to 1887. It appears that when this happened he may have had to leave the mansion at Woodhall and move into Glen Neuk. I think his business finally failed in 1891. Sometime after his death his widow moved to Forsyth Street in Greenock. He obviously has to get his credit the choice of the architect of the House.

Thomas Blackwood was well known in the town but did not appear to join in with his two neighbours in their pursuits of fox hunting and shooting. He was well liked but quiet.

Broadstone

John Birkmyre built and occupied his estate in 1871. The family had been long associated with the town.

Henry Birkmyre (1762- 1844) was the first Birkmyre to come to Port Glasgow. He worked as a handloom weaver in Kilbarchan, where in 1785 he married his first cousin Agnes Birkmyre. After their marriage, Henry and Agnes attended Burntshields Burgher Church. The baptisms of three of their children, Jean in 1786, John in 1788 and Agnes in 1791, are recorded in Burntshields Church records.

In 1792 the family moved to Port Glasgow where Henry took up employment in a sailcloth manufactory. A fourth child, William, was born in Port Glasgow in 1802. The Birkmyres prospered in Port Glasgow. Henry soon rose to the position of foreman in Gourrock Ropework Co. and was made a partner in the firm in 1814. His portrait, which still exists, was said to have hung in the company's boardroom.

Henry sent his younger son, William, to Glasgow to be trained by city merchants. This early training paid off and, following in his father's footsteps, William was appointed as a manager in the rope works.

In 1831 William married Margaret Aitken. William was regarded as a shrewd businessman and laid the foundations of the future success and world-wide expansion of Gourock Ropework Co. He retired in 1860 and died in 1862 in Ashgrove, the family home at the bottom of Clune Brae in Port Glasgow. Henry, his son, was born in 1832. Henry had five siblings: Archibald Birkmyre, Agnes Lithgow (born Birkmyre) and three other siblings. Two of William's sons, Henry (b.1832) and John (b.1836) became partners in Gourock Ropework Co. A third son William (b.1838) spent some time in India, and pursued a political career, becoming MP for the Burgh of Ayr. A younger son, Adam (b.1848), attended to the family's business interests overseas. Under the brothers' control, Gourock Ropework Co. became renowned world-wide as manufacturers of rope, sail cloth and canvas.

All four brothers became extremely wealthy and were generous benefactors in the local community. Henry was instrumental in founding Clune Park U.P. Church in 1878. In 1881, he diversified his interests and bought New Lanark Mills from the then owner, Charles Walker. Under the Birkmyre family, Gourock Ropework Co. owned David Dale's new Lanark Mills for the next 65 years till 1946.



Gourock Ropeworks (Unknown)

John, in 1870, appointed David Bryce, a renowned architect, to build his baronial mansion, Broadstone House on the hills above Port Glasgow. In 1905 Mr. and Mrs. John Birkmyre, of Broadstone, decided to build a hospital, which was much needed, as the hazardous nature of shipyard employment results in many accidents, and the advances of modern surgery for the cure and relief of many diseased conditions were not

available except in the large hospitals of Glasgow and Edinburgh. The Broadstone Jubilee Hospital, as it is called received its name from the fact that the donors had decided to establish this institution in commemoration of the jubilee of their wedding. The hospital was opened in 1907, and the cost of the buildings and equipment was about £35,000. The endowment fund from gifts by the donors and many others amounts at present to £39,679. This, with the annual subscriptions, enabled the institution to be kept up, and every necessary adjunct to improve its efficiency provided. The first visiting surgeon was Mr. Archibald Young, later Regius Professor of Surgery in Glasgow University.

William, the third brother, spent time in India and pursued a political career, becoming MP for the Burgh of Ayr. He gifted Birkmyre Park (later known as the Public Park) to the town of Port Glasgow. Adam owned Shallott (now part of St. Columba's School buildings) and various other properties in Kilmacolm. In 1897, he gifted recreation grounds, now Birkmyre Park, to Kilmacolm village. He also had interests in Calcutta in India and in Switzerland, where he died in 1906.

John Birkmyre was born in Port-Glasgow on the 9th of October, 1834. When he reached school age he was sent to Buchanan's School in the Lodge Close in King Street, afterwards known as the Burgh School.

When a lad of between fourteen and fifteen years of age, John entered the works of his father, the late William Birkmyre, who as Provost of the Burgh controlled in no small measure the destinies of Port Glasgow. The boys John and Henry worked hard. Henry was assumed as a partner, and so also was John while he was still under twenty years of age.

William Birkmyre taught a large Sunday school class in the old Bouverie Hall. When William died in 1862, John took up the good work and over forty years when at home he has scarcely missed a Sunday night from his class in the old Bouverie school-room. During that time he has had the pleasure to see the families of three generations attend his class.

No day in the whole year gave Mr John as much pleasure as when the past, the present, and the future members of his class had their annual trip to Broadstone. A large marquee was erected on the grounds where refreshments were provided in abundance. The girls were there with their skipping ropes. There was a band dispensing music, and a constant stream of brakes and carriages may be seen. All Bouverie turned out on these occasions, and they were all made welcome.

This was just the same as the yearly outing his wife used for years to give to the children of St John's Church and School during the days of the good old Father Daniel Conway, and later in the days of Fathers M'Carthy and Ritchie. But so numerous had the children of St John's become that the good priests found the responsibility too great to let so many youngsters loose on the broad acres of Broadstone, and so that happy day in the lives of the children of St John was in consequence brought to a close.

These annual events were taken note of outside Scotland. Mr and Mrs John Birkmyre were on a stay in Rome they were presented to the reigning Pope in the Vatican, and his Holiness granted them his blessing for he said they had been good to his people in Port-Glasgow.

John Birkmyre was for many years President of the Port-Glasgow branch of the Liberal Association, and had with him as colleagues Joseph Russell and the Robert Duncan. On the historical occasion when Mr Gladstone declared for Home Rule for Ireland, John and Robert Duncan found it necessary to resign their connection with the Liberal Party, and they then both became members of the newly-homed Liberal Unionist Association.

John was a keen sportsman that loved the sports of the gentry such as Fox hunting and shooting especially.

There is a dark side to the Gourock Ropeworks and that was the association of one of the company's partners with money earned from slavery. This was Colin Campbell mentioned in the share analysis earlier. His father, Colin Murdoch Campbell, long the worthy head of the house of Campbell had been born in 1782 and died in 1863. Colin Senior also was a partner in the Gourock Ropeworks. His wife was painted by Henry Raeburn.



Janet Millar, Mrs Colin Campbell of Colgrain

He bought in 1836, from the late James Dennistoun of Dennistoun, Colgrain, near Cardross, a fine estate. Colin Murdoch Campbell. paid for this having been given compensation in 1836 for the release of 1200 slaves. The compensation was valued at £57,519. His holdings in detail were three estates in British Guiana, one in Grenada, one in St Vincent, and three Trinidad estates.

Three or four times a year there was a Demerara ship travelling into Greenock to unload sugar. The Campbell's properties in Demerara, British Guiana (now Guyana) were the sugar growing estates of Enterprise, Doorenhag, Annandale Endeavour (half share) and Aurora (three sevenths share). When the African slaves had been freed they began bringing in Chinese "coolies". As the West Indian sugar trade declined so did the fortunes of the firm of John Campbell Senior and Company. The firm finally broke up in 1858.



Camis Eskin- Earliest Mansion on Colgrain Estate

The Colgrain estate is sited across the River Clyde, just north of the Gourock Ropeworks.

It had been for 500 years in the care of the Dennistoun family. The house was built by the family who bought the estates of Colgrain in 1351. The main part of the present building was erected by the Dennistouns in 1648. This was the same Dennistoun family that had split up Finlaystone to create the Barony of Newark in 1406 for the Maxwells. Colin, the partner in the Gourock Ropeworks inherited this estate and his shares in the Gourock Ropework when his father died in 1863.



Present Mansion on Estate, used by Colin and William Campbell

William Middleton Campbell, son of Colin, inherited his father's estate and his shares in the Gourock Ropeworks in 1886. Born in 1849 William was educated at Eton College. He was a Justice of the Peace for the County of Dumbarton, one of HM Lieutenants for the City of London. He was a banker and Governor of the Bank of England between 1907-1909. These families were wealthy in the extreme

Colin Murdoch Campbell died in 1863 at Colgrain, worth £169,350
Colin Campbell II died in 1886 at Colgrain, worth £680,890

John Birkmyre, in comparison, died on 1 November 1910, with a net worth of £431,108 8s. 10d.

By means of comparison, there were just twenty-eight half millionaires in Scotland during the period 1880 to 1939. Thus the inheritors of these family fortunes seem to have been some of the wealthiest merchants in Scotland during the colonial period.

5. The Coastline Estates, Baby Deaths and Timber Pond Drownings

A sinister set of happenings along the three estates was the discovery of dead bodies on the shore. These ranged from young babies to adults, and were often discovered by those roaming the beaches in the three Coastal Estates.

In the 1850s and 1860s there were many families that were large and staying in the smallest of cramped accommodation. Food was hard to get and for some families a breaking point was sometimes reached. People did not always want the next baby and took drastic actions to rid themselves of their extra burdens.

One brutal way out for having too many children was infanticide. The baby was taken along the shore out as far as Carnegie and either left to die or drowned in the River. The *Greenock Advertiser* reported the crimes on these occasions.

In 1855 there had been a child exposure crime and death and the guilty party had been apprehended, but the newspaper (*Greenock Advertiser*) had covered in detail another crime involving one of the three coastal estates, Carnegie.

“On a Monday, between one and two o'clock in the afternoon, a little boy when taking a walk along the shore in the neighbourhood of Carnegie Park, about a mile to the eastward of Port-Glasgow, discovered the dead body of a male child, about six weeks old, lying on the shore at high water mark. The body was examined by medical men who believe that the post mortem proves the infant was thrown into the river and drowned when in perfect health and, from other facts it seems that the guilty party must have been either its mother or a female employed by her.

“It has been learned that late on the evening of the previous Saturday a female, of between twenty and twenty-five years of age of ruddy complexion, wearing a white straw bonnet, with a wreath of artificial flowers inside of its front, dark shawl, and a dark coloured dress, with a white petticoat, and carrying a child, an umbrella, and a bundle, called at a small huckstry shop near the foot of Clune Brae, and asked for something to prevent the child from crying, and having been provided with a little sugar for that purpose, she proceeded towards Clune Brae.

“The next day (Sunday) the umbrella which she carried (which has been identified), and also some loose clothes, were found near the hedge on the top of that brae. This makes this female a prime suspect for the murder of the infant; and we do most sincerely hope that she will be discovered and brought to justice. This dreadful crime of child murder has become alarmingly frequent of late and we regret to say that in our own town and neighbourhood we have

had more than a proportion of cases of a like kind which have happened throughout the country”.

The newspaper never reported if the lady suspect was ever found.

These acts of cruelty did not go away and in 1864, on a May Wednesday afternoon between 4 and 5 o'clock, some boys, while playing at the shore, near Fyfe s Park, found the body of a female infant nearly opposite Fyfe Park House. The body was nude and in an advanced state of decomposition and may have spent six weeks in the water. The police removed it to the Police office, where Drs Reid and Freeland saw it. They think it is about a fortnight old. It was naked. The body was considerably bruised. No newspaper report again of anyone arrested for the crime.

Another use of the lonely beaches and the nearness of the River was reported, and that was for suicides in 1857. A 50 year old dead woman was found on the beach. It was reported in the *Greenock Advertiser*:

“On Saturday mornning two fishermen found a body lying on the shore near Carnegie Park, in the vicinity of Port-Glasgow which had evidently been left there by the receding tide, and had apparently not been long in the water. It was that of a female of about 50 years of age, with full round face, fresh complexion, and light brown hair. It was poorly attired in a black merino wrapper, a lilac gown, under a printed bed-gown, and a black cap. In the pocket of the dress was found an envelope, addressed, to Mrs Mac_____ but, unfortunately, the remainder of the name is torn away. A woman answering the description called at a lodging house in Port-Glasgow on Thursday evening, and was received by the inmates. She said that she was the wife of a joiner in Greenock, who had proved unfaithful to her, and seemed to be in a melancholy state. She left, on Friday morning, to go to Paisley to call on some friends, and was not seen afterwards. The body was buried last night in the parish churchyard of Port-Glasgow.”

Other deaths occurred on the shoreline of the three coastal estates and these were also tragic but accidental. Weekends, warm summer nights and high tides were times for children to be free from school and find things that were considered adventurous and could be enjoyed. One great pastime was to swim in the timber ponds that in the 1860s were constructed from Fyfe Park to Carnegie and up the river. They had been

put there for storing timber from Quebec and Mirimachi in Canada to mature the timber but also to wait there for the time they were to be used.

Unfortunately accidents happened. The *Advertiser* reported:

“On a Saturday afternoon in September 1880 a crowd of boys was swimming in the river near the Fyfe Estate in one of the timber ponds full of timber. A fourteen year old boy was there named Joseph Kelly who was a son of a heckler who worked in the Gourock Ropeworks. Along with several companions he was sailing on one of the logs at about 7p.m. and toppled into ten feet of water and somehow got under a raft of timbers. His companions were helpless to assist him. His cap rose to the surface but he was not to be seen. His friends tried to get him back but they failed. Mr Fyfe of Fyfe Park was alerted by the boys’ shouts. He and his son in his boat tried to find him but he also failed to rescue him. The boy was eventually retrieved after an hour but he was lifeless. His body was taken to his father’s house in Gillespie Lane.”

Why were Timber ponds set up?



Remains of the Timber Ponds

The timber trade had grown since the American War of Independence to such an extent that from this period till well on in the century Port Glasgow was the principal port on the Clyde for the importation of North American timber.

In 1825 it amounted to 19,650 tons, and increased in 1834 to 27,975 tons. Timber had been arriving since the sixteenth century from Norway and the Baltic in deals, but by the nineteenth century it began to come in logs the whole length of the trees, which were squared. They were discharged through portholes in the bluff bows of the ships into the harbour. At first winches worked by hand were used, and then steam-driven ones, which were bolted down to the decks of pontoons.

Timber measuring was an extensive, and for long a lucrative business. The measurers rented the ponds which stretched from Port Glasgow to Langbank. There were about 34 of these ponds at one time. As the logs were hauled out of the ship their dimensions were noted and each had a number cut into it. Iron holdfasts called dogs were driven in and chains passed through the rings. Rafts of the logs were thus formed, and were towed up to the ponds and kept there till required by the various shipyards and sawmills on the river. This business was rather speculative. Occasionally in winter, if there was a high south-west wind and unusually high tide, the logs would break loose and scatter all over the river, which resulted in a heavy loss to the measurer.

Saw-milling became a large business. It and measuring gradually decreased after 1890, when the custom of importing timber in deals came into fashion again.

Yellow pine was imported from Miramichi, on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and St. John's, New Brunswick. This was the pine used for the rafters for Broadfield House. This continued till 1864, when the timber had been either all cut down or was too far back to pay for transporting to the point of embarkation. After this yellow pine, oak and elm came from Quebec and in 1870 the importation of pitch pine from Delaware in the Southern States, and afterwards from Pensacola in the Gulf of Florida.

So timber ponds were thought of as revenue earners for the three coastal estates but this also caused disputes when they were being set up. Timber ponds were still being installed in the late 1860s. At Nether Auchinleck next to Fyfe Park Estate, Andrew Hair, who owned the estate, let to R.B.Hagart, a timber measurer, a piece of shore ground. This was four acres and was leased at £9 per acre per year for a timber pond. Mr Hagart

was to measure off the area and mark it with posts or stobs (corrupted in Port Glasgow speech to “stabs”) and he proceeded to do so.

Robert Fyfe, a rope maker, who was the owner of the Fyfe Park Estate, stated that no-one but he had rights to this coastal ground and as Mr Hagart erected the stobs, Mr Fyfe demolished them and threatened to continue to do so. The sheriff asked the litigants to produce their proof of right to the disputed ground and that no more actions should be taken till this was done. The timber pond was completed so one assumes the dispute cleared up

6. Poaching, and Fyfe Park’s sad involvement

As has been stated hunger in the towns was driving people to creative ways to put food on the table. This section deals with local poaching and tells of the grim stories of two murders that involve the farms above Port Glasgow and also the involvement of one of the families of Fyfe Park in both murders.

History had made poaching a high punishment crime. In 1706 it was represented to the Privy Council by William, Earl of Glencairn who had the Finlaystone Estate that “the game suffer extremely in the Shyre of Renfrew,” because of the want of a legal protector, and accordingly the Privy Council forthwith appointed the noble Earl to the honourable position of Master of the Game for the County, with full power to enforce the penalties against all transgressors.

What kind of laws could he judge on? The game that came under his protection were “does, roes, hairs, plovers, black-cocks, grey-hens, muircocks, partridges, wild ducks or draiks, teeles, herons, or any such kind of fowlis,” as also “salmon, trouts, and smolts.”

The law was very clear and explicit. None had any right to kill game except noblemen and gentlemen with a valued rent of £100 Scots, and their servants. All others, “common fowlers or shooters,” were to be severely punished if they infringed this right. And severely punished many of them were by fine and imprisonment. If a farmer sought to protect his crops by killing and taking a rabbit or two, the noble Master of the Game showed him the power of the law. In one day, in 1716, no fewer than fifty-two tenant farmers and others in the parish of Kilmacolm were charged before the sheriff for poaching.

An Act was then passed declaring it illegal to shoot hares, under a penalty of £20 Scots. In 1775 we find Walter M'Gown, servant to Glencairn, and John Rankin, servant to Porterfield, adjudged to pay this fine. They had both killed hares by their masters' orders, in spite of the law.



The Gamekeeper

These laws to protect the game meant a need for gamekeepers. A good nineteenth century job description follows:

“A Gentleman Sportsman does not require a gamekeeper who is the best shot in the District. He is not needed for the purposes of killing game, but the preserving and protection that the Gentleman Sportsman employs him, and to support that protection he should have great knowledge of the life practices of every sort of game predators, with their habitats, their methods of hunting the game; and not only know, but be unrelenting in catching the most subtle and cunning of them.”

Preservation of Game from Poachers.

Poachers were classed as four chief types. There is the systematic town poacher, who comes out infrequently, and does not often go back to previous sites. Then there is the poaching gent who also is an infrequent participant. The regular rural poacher is next, who is the main threat in West Renfrewshire; and the last is the poaching farm labourer, whom employers try to keep their eyes on, and who would lose his job if caught. In the fields above Port Glasgow, on farms such as Devol and Laigh

Auchenleck poachers were always on the loose. Grouse, rabbits, hares, and partridges are chiefly netted by them, but guns are also used.

The six eastern Port Glasgow Estates (Fyfe Park, Nether Auchinleck, Carnegie, Woodhall, Broadfield and Broadstone) all jealously guarded their gentry privilege of the ownership of all the game that inhabited their estates.

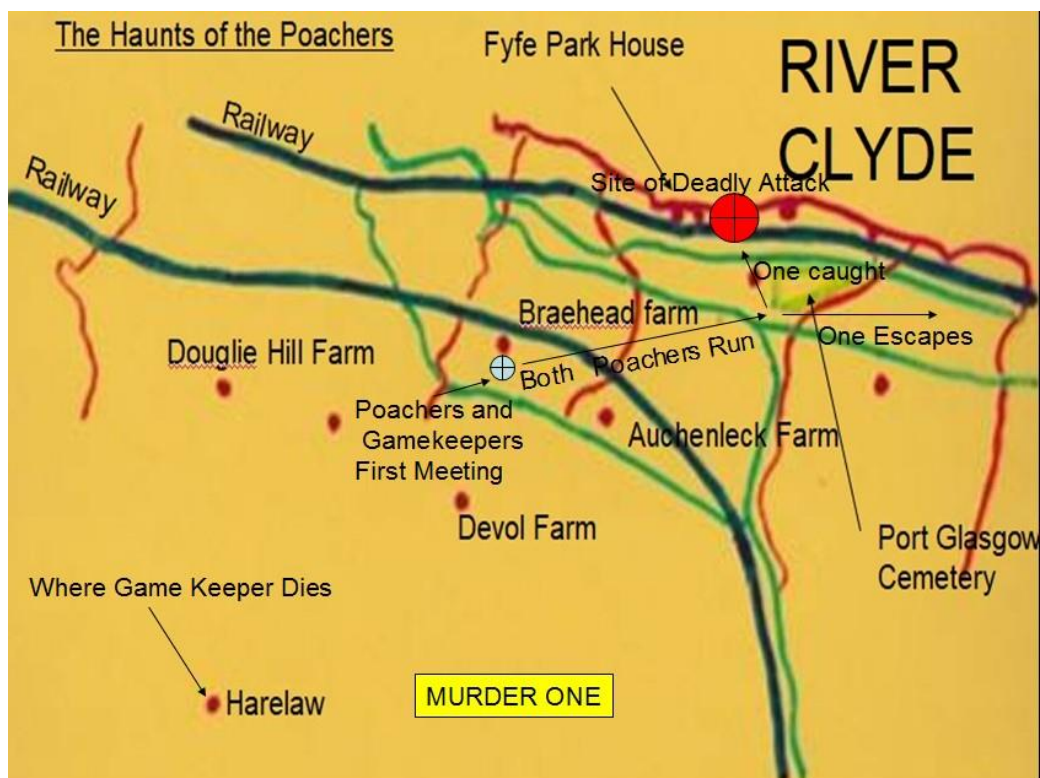
They guarded this privilege by having professional gamekeepers who patrolled the estates widely, fully armed with shotguns and handcuffs. In Victorian days poaching was thought of as a way to beat hunger caused by poverty, and determined poachers knew the dangers of being caught and the very hard sentences handed down by magistrates, who in their sentencing dealt severely with those found guilty.

The gamekeepers ranged much further than the six gentry estates. They also took in farms such as Parklea, Parkhill and Park to the East and Devol Farm and Dougliehill Farm up to the Mill Dam and Harelaw Dam. Poachers knew this but still poached. This resulted in two tragic incidents that involved the Fyfe Park Estate and the Fyfes themselves.

The first murder and Mr Fyfes involvement

In November 1869 early in the morning James Riddell , head gamekeeper, and James Fairbairn, assistant gamekeeper on the shooting grounds of Matthew Brown Esq. of Greenock at Harelaw in the South West of Port Glasgow, heard that snares had been set out on Devol Farm on the previous evening by poachers. The keepers went to the spot and saw the snares in place. They waited until the two poachers came and visited the snares. A covey of partridges rose and warned the poachers.

The gamekeepers then tried to arrest them. The poachers turned and ran towards the east. At the Clune Brae Toll House the poachers split up with one going east along the cemetery and the second down towards the shore towards the large house known as Springbank where Henry Birkmyre lived. James Riddell followed the one going to the east and James Fairburn went after the one for the shore.



Fairburn gained on the poacher, and soon they had reached the large house on the shore called Carnegie Park and he was almost able to catch hold of him. Before he was able to the poacher stooped, picked up a large rock and threw it at Fairburn striking him on the temple and knocking him to the ground senseless. The poacher escaped. Fairburn regained consciousness and was on his way home when he met James Riddell who also had lost his poacher. James Fairburn told Riddell he did not feel badly hurt but when he reached home he became badly unwell. He lay on the bed and became unconscious. Dr Taylor was called and put on leeches. This did not help. Other advice was sought but with twenty four hours he was dead.

Dr Wallace and Dr Taylor did a post mortem at Harelaw and found Fairburn's skull had been smashed in and an artery bursting led to the death.

The police arrested two men in Port Glasgow. David Hunter, a notorious poacher and Patrick M'Ilene. David Hunter was suspected as the stone thrower.

A key witness was Robert Fyfe of Fyfe Park Estate. He said he was taking a walk to Duncan M'Laren's place along the shore. It was about 7.30 p.m. He said that David Hunter was the person who passed him. The

next day three men came past him from Port Glasgow and Mr Fyfe recognised one of them again as David Hunter.

A rafter on the shore said that on the night of the killing a man borrowed his jacket “to avoid the gamekeepers” and then with two other men came back with it the next day. He pointed out in court that that man was David Hunter.

The jury took 15 minutes to convict the prisoner but the Judge was lenient as the action was not premeditated and sentenced David Hunter to five years in prison.

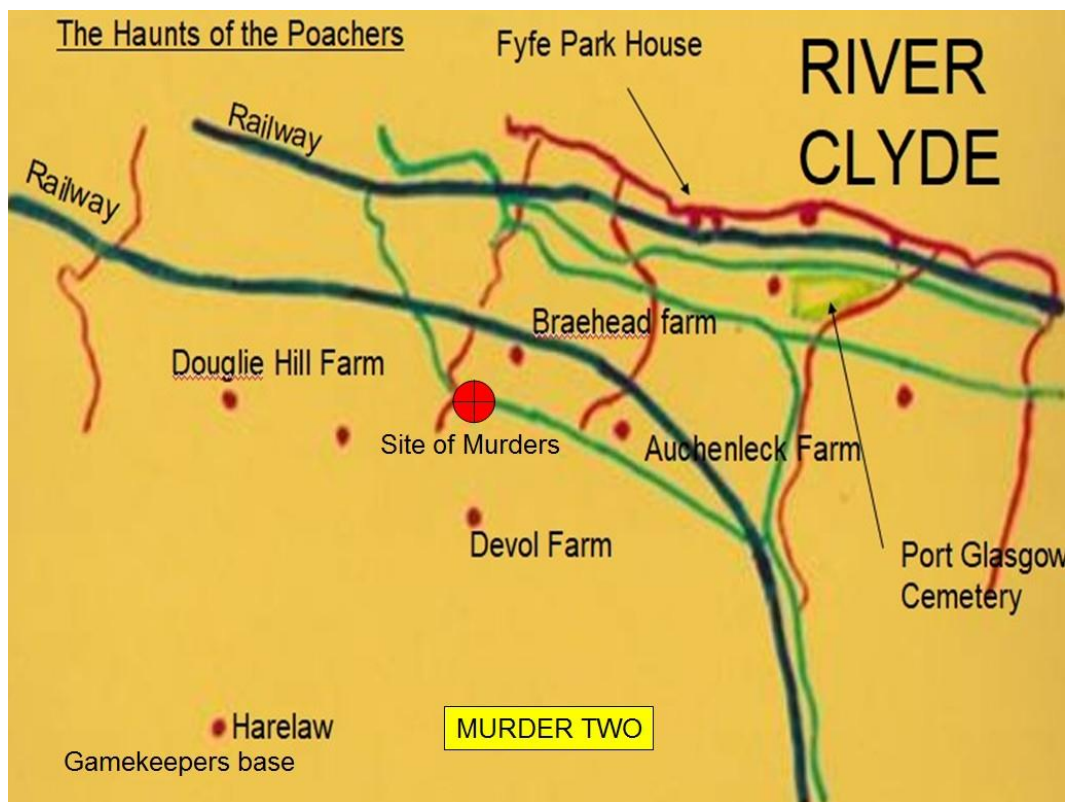
A murder fourteen years later and Mr Fyfe’s involvement again

Fourteen years later from the first poacher murder on the Saturday night of February 3rd 1883 Port Glasgow folks were taking their usual look at the shop windows of Church Street and Princess Street, with the usual crowd of promenaders – bright and cheerful looking. The Police as usual, took under their protection all grown-ups whose legs were too wobbly for straight walking. This form of protection was extended to sixteen men and one woman, but that was the ordinary course of events on a pay Saturday night fifty years ago. Nothing unusual had happened to cause undue excitement and shoppers and promenaders took their homeward trend, satisfied that nothing would disturb their extra hour in bed on the following morning.

In this frame of mind, Mrs Lyle of Laigh Auchenleck, in company with James Sweenie, a farm lad, wended her homeward way. While crossing a field in order to lessen the journey, she came on a spectacle which horrified her—lying on the path she saw the apparently lifeless body of a man. A hasty examination showed that the man had come to his death through foul means, after which the two hurried in consternation to the farm house and informed Mr Lyle of their discovery.

Mr Lyle and Sweenie at once set out towards the town for the purpose of informing the police, and at 10.15 they arrived at the office. Captain Sloan was in charge, and to him Mr Lyle breathlessly related his story. In a few minutes Inspector Hooper, Constable Alcorn, and Dr Crawford, under the guidance of the farmer and his servant, set out for the spot. On their way they crossed a different field from that where the body as seen by Mrs Lyle lay. The feelings of the party had naturally been much shocked by what had been told, but judge of their intensified horror on discovering a second body in their way to view the first.

The second dead male body was lying in a pool of blood with beside it, a short distance away, a large discharged brass-barrelled pistol. The second body was lying face downwards, and on examination was recognised to be that of Robert Fyfe, gamekeeper.



Second Murder Site

Robert Fyfe, the head keeper, was a man of 41 years of age, and was a native of Port-Glasgow. He was the son of Mr Fyfe of Fyfe Park. He was in the employment of Mr George Richardson of Ralston, who held a lease from Sir Michael R.S. Stewart of the shootings over Douglichill and Harelaw. He left a widow and four small children, the youngest being two years of age. His wife was the daughter of Mr Riddle the Grieve, or overseer, at Ralston, who looked after the local farms. Mr W, Fyfe, joiner, was a brother of deceased. The second body was of David M'Caughrie who was a young man who had been brought up in Houston in East Renfrewshire. David M'Caughrie was only seventeen and his widowed mother stayed at Paisley.

They had both been shot in the head. The bodies were moved to Port Glasgow and placed in the vault underneath the Parish Church.

The remains of the two unfortunate men—Robert Fyfe and David M'Cochtrie—were buried the Port Glasgow Cemetery. Prior to the funeral the bodies were laid out in a side room at the entrance to the Town Hall, the arrangements being conducted by Mr Peter Wright. The relatives of the two men had agreed to allow the public to sympathise with them, and the company which assembled in the Town Hall was an exceptionally large one. The cortege passed up Princes Street, down Church Street and out by Bay Street, the inhabitants lining the way in thousands with the utmost quietness and order.

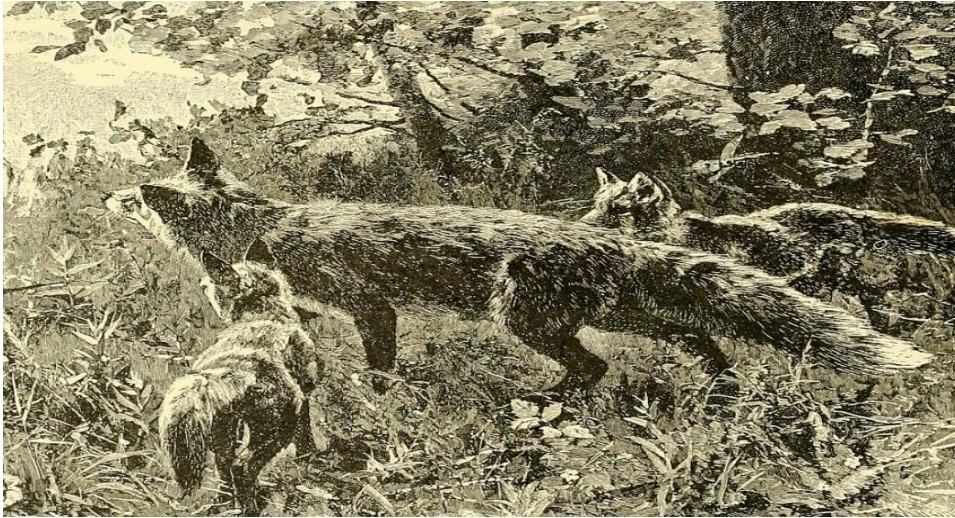
Three men were arrested. They were Martin Scott, James Kyle and Harry Mullen. They were all from central Greenock. Three months after the crime Mullen and Scott were hanged within the walls of Glasgow Prison by William Marwood, the executioner who had travelled up from England to do the task.

Aggressive Gamekeepers

Not all gamekeepers were victims. Some could be very aggressive. One in particular was John Wilson. John, a gamekeeper, residing at Hairlaw, in the parish of Kilmacolm, was charged with having assaulted, to the effusion of blood, on the 4th day of October, 1877, Matthew Adam, engineer, Kilmacolm, in a field on the Pannytersal Farm, belonging to Mr Long, farmer, Kilmacolm. The accused had been previously convicted of assault. It appears that the prisoner was head gamekeeper on Mr Reid's estate at Hairlaw, and the case arose out of the prisoner Wilson attempting to eject Adam from Mr Long's field. The Sheriff characterised it unjustifiable, and sentenced John to pay a fine of £5, failing payment, 21 days imprisonment. The fine was paid.

He was not the only one. Charles Wilson, gamekeeper, residing at Hairlaw, as was the previous gamekeeper, in the parish of Kilmacolm, was found guilty of assault in 1833, where he, "in or near a grass field, excitedly and feloniously attacked assaulted John Crighton, tailor and clothier, residing in Port Glasgow, and did seize hold of him by the collar or upper part of his coat, and did violently pull and drag him about, whereby the said John Crighton was hurt and injured in his person". This may not have been the best person to assault as John Crighton was the Provost of Port Glasgow.

7. Broadfield and Broadstone's Enthusiasm for Fox Hunting and Game Shooting



There were two different sports that set the gentlemen farmers apart from the landed gentry and these were fox hunting and game shooting on moors. These two sports required areas of ground of hundreds of acres and very large expenses for those who took part. The sheer scale of these undertakings and the set up, preparations, movement of people and the amount of ground covered was all way beyond the resources of our gentlemen farmers. It is even more remarkable when you realise the work required for each hunt that four fox hunts would be completed inside a week or so with all the logistics that involved

Fox hunters shared the sentiments of the following poem:

“Of all our British manly sports
Fox-hunting is the best;
In spite of wars and petty jars
That sport has stood the test.”

Fox hunting in the 1850s to at least 1900 was able to use very large tracts of the East Renfrewshire farmland. The local hunts seemed to go west as far as Devol Glen in Port Glasgow looking for their foxes. Some of the farms involved in such a hunt starting in Finlaystone would have been:

Finlaystone Estate and its farms, 3000 acres;
Broadfield and its farms, Parkhill and Parklea, over 200 acres;
those not owned by the Hunt, but allowing access, amounted to at least 2000 acres.

The Fox and Hounds of the Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire Hunt

The Hunt that used these lands was the Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire Hunt. It was mastered for at least forty years from the 1840s by Colonel Buchanan, who owned the Finlaystone Estate.



The Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire Hunt (Book of 1874)

When the Hunt was set up a small set of byelaws was implemented, and listing a few of them shows the preparations needed for a single hunt:

1. It is ordered that the Treasurer shall send up a hogshead of London porter, six dozen strong Beer, five dozen Port wine, and one dozen Sherry.
2. It is also ordered that the Treasurer shall send up six or eight gallons French Brandy put into a Dutch case.
3. It is ordered that the Treasurer shall send up forty stone of cracklings before the Meeting.
4. That all the Members of the Hunt shall be obliged to buy the uniform from a reputable Tailor before the first Meeting, and that no Member shall go to the field during the Meeting without it, under a penalty of paying one guinea for each offence.
5. It is desired that Hunt Master shall each day during the Meeting have a dinner provided at thirty shillings—each of the gentlemen present to pay two shillings. If the number does not amount to fifteen, the difference to be made up to the hunt Master by the Treasurer; and if they exceed that number, the money to be disposed of as the Members shall think proper.

Meets were held in several places at the most convenient times for the farmers. They were held when the farmer could tolerate the Hunt after harvest time was completed.

The meets were centred on one location for that day. Many locations were chosen. There were Castle Semple, Howwood, Broadfield, Finlaystone, Neilston, Blair Castle, Eastwood Toll and Waterside House, to name but a few. Broadfield and Finlaystone and eventually Broadstone were considered prime sites.

Hunts were organised, and for their size they seemed to have a very short window for their season. An example is the 1852 season

1852, 20th February *Fox and Hounds*: “The Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire fox-hounds will meet on Saturday, the 21st instant, at Castlesemples; on Tuesday, the 24th, at Howwood Toll; on Saturday, the 28th, at Broadfield—each morning at a quarter before eleven.”

This was during the time of the Wingates living at Broadfield.

The number of riders for a day’s hunt was quite large. One hunt in 1872, starting from Bishopton Station had upwards of a hundred horsemen and a number of followers on foot. Many of the participants would come from afar. For instance the Broadfield, the Broadstone the Finlaystone people from the west and the Paisley and Glasgow people, such as the Paisley Coats family, to the east. They would hire special trains to transport their horses, and complained that at New Years it was difficult to get a train because of the holiday season.

Another Hunt met at Broadfield House in 1887. They met on a Saturday at 11.30, at the Hunt’s most western fixture. The train brought the sporting divisions from Glasgow, Paisley, and the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire, to Langbank, in higher numbers than usual. It must have been a large flotilla of people. They then had to make their way along the middle road to Broadfield.

The Hunts themselves were dependant on flushing out a fox and letting it run in front of trained hounds, followed by the Huntsmen on their very expensive horses. The routes were not precisely laid out but as a result of previous experiences carriages were placed so the occupants of the carriages could view the wandering chase. In Finlayston there was an east and west covey where foxes could be found and another favourite finding place was Devol Glen.

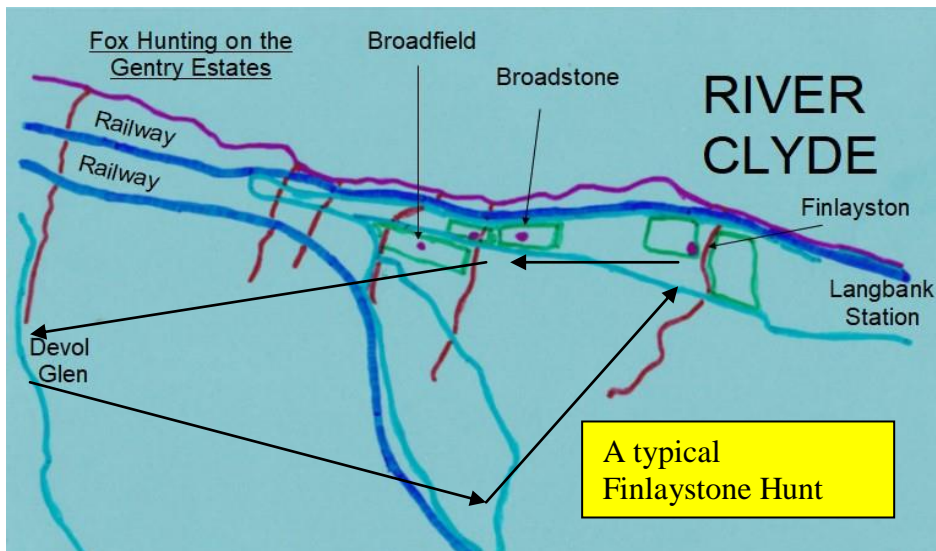
The Hounds were very well trained and came from as far as Neilston for a Hunt. There could be about 37 hounds in a pack. They were ferocious. One master of the hounds is quoted as saying.

“If you have a wife and family, for goodness’ sake don’t go so near my hounds, as, if you do, they will eat both your horse and yourself.”



The Hounds

The following map shows you the East Renfrewshire lands, the three local estates, and an idea of a hunt.



They sometimes had three runs—the first a hunting one, the second a racing one, and the third a sporting one over the best of the country, with fences.

Broadfield from the beginning of the 1800s, along with Finlaystone, hosted frequent hunts no matter who was the tenant or owner at the time. When John Birkmyre bought and built his estate he then joined in at least as a rider.

What made a season successful?

The 1884 season with the Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire Foxhounds drew to a close and would remain so till farmers had once more cleared the ground of their summer crops, and winter again in its snowy clothes welcomed the Hunt to ride again. The last hunt had been completed and it only remained for a semi-private meeting at Broadfield to wind up matters, and for one and all to bid good-bye to the Hunt master, Col. Buchanan, and Harry Judd, huntsman, and express congratulations on the highly successful season. During the season the hounds had killed 20 brace of foxes, and had run 16 brace to ground. The season that year ended at the end of March

Broadstone was the Main Grouse Shooting Estate.

It is well known that located in the Renfrewshire hills, mainly on Duchal Moor, was once a narrow gauge railway line, known y locals as the Grouse Railway Line. The line was about five miles long and crossed hundreds of acres of boggy moorland in the hills between Lochwinnoch and Kilmacolm. It was constructed in 1922 by shipping magnate Henry Lithgow and it provided rail access to the shooting butts for field sportsmen from all over Britain who descended on the moors to test their shooting skills against the fast-flying game birds which skimmed low across the heather to escape the cracking guns.

What had he to do with Broadstone and its shooting issues? Well, Henry's mother was a Birkmyre and the Birkmyres had their grouse moors long before the Lithgows.

It was a sport that John Birkmyre loved. It cost a lot of money. For game to be 'preserved' and the sporting ground or water to be cared for, gamekeepers, stalkers, ghillies and water bailiffs were required. Moors that were looked after held better stocks of grouse – four or five times the unkept level – and that converted into higher rentals. So vermin and predators were killed, heather burnt, and grit put out. Conservation of grouse meant continuing war on its predators. The red kite, for example, was once quite common but was exterminated because of its reputation as a killer of young grouse.

Lodges had to be provided, especially as families rather than just males started to arrive for the season. Some of the accommodation was quite grand; draughty castles, such as Balmoral, were renovated. But money smoothed the way, as did permanent and seasonal employment (as beaters say), and there was no serious objection to the enthusiasm for grouse.



Red grouse

8 The Overwhelming of the Coastal Estates by the Railway and others

The Coastal Estates were very heavily impacted by the railway after 1841 and also by need for a cemetery for Port Glasgow about 1860.

The Caledonian Railway Company had been given special Parliamentary powers to purchase land without being able to be turned down. This land was for the use of the railway. In July 1875 the power was to end in August. They used their vanishing power to acquire ground at the east end of the town from the Fyfe Park Estate to Nether Auchinleck. It was for goods and mineral traffic. It joined the siding at Fyfe Park to the goods station at Robert Street.

Again the railway interfered with the Fyfe Park Estate in 1877. They compulsorily purchased land from the Estate and built a branch line, advanced a loan to the Harbour Trust for the purpose of installing a swing bridge, erecting a steam crane and laying lines to meet the branch line. This then supported berthage for minerals.

In 1879 there was the purchase of Fyfe Park including the old rope walk, by the Caledonian Railway company from Mr Fyfe, Port-Glasgow. The property is contiguous to the company's railway system in the east end of the town,

In 1858 Carnegie lost the majority of its lands to the town. Mr Wood, the farmer at Carnegie Park applied for an interdict to stop the construction of the cemetery without settling costs with him. He was overruled

In 1859 at the ordinary Court, Sheriff Tennent pronounced an interlocutor¹ granting the application of the magistrates of Port-Glasgow for opening a new burying ground on the lands of Carnegie Park, about a mile eastward of Port-Glasgow. The plans for laying out the ground, which is about six acres in extent, and the graduated scale of fees, were prepared by Mr James Salmon, architect, Glasgow. The site is admirably adapted for the purpose, as the ground, which is on the south side of the Glasgow road, slopes gradually towards the river. It has been provided that the one half of the cemetery can only be appropriated for interments during limited periods or for perpetuity, the remainder being left open to the public

9. Woodhall and its Shipyard Opportunity

In 1905 a large project was proposed for the Woodhall Estate. On the 3rd November the *Port Glasgow Express* reported:

“The country-side was thrown into a state of excitement a few days ago by the announcement that a well-known firm of shipbuilders on the Thames were in Port-Glasgow making inquiries as to the feasibility of obtaining facilities for transferring their business to this district...

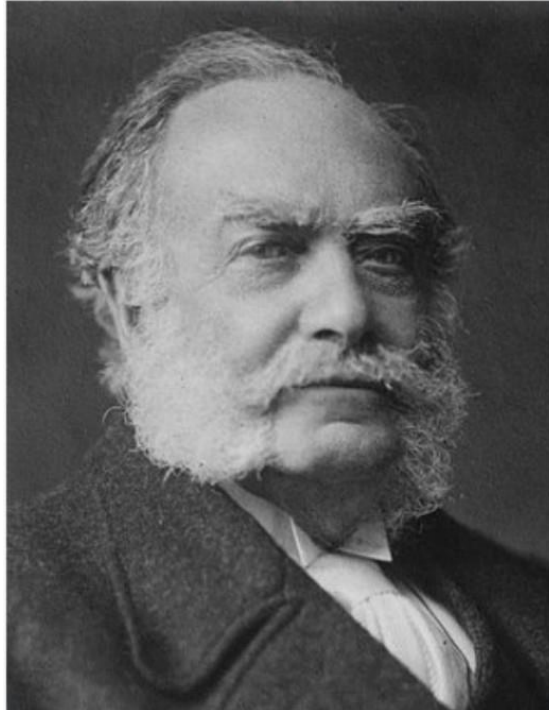
“Ground adjoining the eastern boundary of Port-Glasgow, known as Woodhall Estate, has been prospected, and it is understood that it really impressed the visitors.

The firm's special line of business is the construction of torpedo-destroyers and other light craft, and they employ from one thousand to fifteen hundred men.”

¹ In Scots Law, an interlocutor is a court order.

The name of the firm who did the prospecting out Woodhall way was Messrs Yarrow of London.

Alfred Yarrow



Mr Yarrow preferred to deal with northern rather than with southern workmen, for "they are more frugal and thrifty, and devote less time to pleasure and amusement," so that they form "a better class of employee over all." There was a workforce of 1800 in Poplar. Wages ran to 12s an hour higher than anywhere else. Night rates were considered too high due to the unions. The capital cost for the move would be £300,000.

On 4th November 1905 Mr Yarrow arrived in Port Glasgow in company with several other men. They all proceeded to the land at Woodhall in the east end of the town. Mr Yarrow himself, the principal of the firm, left the Mid Harbour in a steam launch and closely inspected the foreshore of Woodhall. What is more to the point, Yarrow was still engaged in boring the ground at Woodhall, and if the torpedo destroyer shipbuilders did not come here there would be disappointed people here.

After his visit to Port Glasgow on Saturday Mr Yarrow visited the Battery Park in Greenock. He had been told that the owners are resolved not to sell the land. It is intended to keep it as a public park.

On 8th November Mr Yarrow visited Belfast. He visited the Lagan and the Musgrove canal. Belfast commissioners had offered a considerable tract of reclaimed land close to the Harland and Wolff yard.

There was also an approach by Leith near Edinburgh, where land was offered at Seafield, between South Leith and Portobello. There are also extensive railway sidings at Seafield.

Woodhall Estate with its extensive foreshore was a candidate. On 9th November Yarrow visited the site again. An inspection was carried out by a group of civil engineers.

Greenock wanted to be a candidate too. Provost Denholm of Greenock was in London to meet Yarrow to discuss moving the yard to a site next to the James Watt Dock

The Belfast papers have them offering to take seven vacant acres on the Lagan, and Provost Denholm was in London trying to persuade Yarrow to take the five acres down at the Garvel Dock. Whatever chance Belfast may have, Greenock was hopelessly out of it, for Yarrow had made it known that the entrance to the place across dock gates etc., would not suit their book.

By 18th November Port Glasgow was pulling out all the stops.

The Greenock and Port Glasgow Tramway Company were prepared to extend the tramway system to Woodhall on a suggestion by Mr Yarrow. This would require the road under the railway bridge at Blackstone to be lowered four feet to allow trams to pass under. The costs would fall on the Tramway Company.

Other candidates such as Berwick also wanted the mouth of the Tweed to be considered a possible shipyard by Yarrow.

By 30th November there were some possible blockers in the frame. It was rumoured that John Birkmyre at Broadstone had made a substantial bid for the Woodhall Estate but that it was not accepted.

By 21st December the Woodhall site was rejected. Negotiations had been terminated. Yarrow's said they may remain on the Thames in Poplar.

By 12th January 1906 Messrs Yarrow are likely to fix on a site in Scotstoun, near Glasgow, to the east of Messrs Shearers new shipyard

It is fully expected that the new Yarrow's shipyard will be finished by February 1907 and will begin shipbuilding on the Clyde. Which it did.

10. Transformation of the Six Estates by House Building

At the end of the nineteenth century all the Estates were changing, and those changes accelerated without any slow down as the world entered the twentieth century. The movement westwards started from Clunepark, as did market gardening one hundred years before.

In 1881 Clune Park School was built, and then the Church. East of here was still considered quite rural. So rural in fact that Springhill House was lived in by a Birkmyre, and in 1889 the land was quiet enough in nature for an Orphanage to be built known as Carnegie Park Orphanage. The style of the homes of the children was English Domestic Gothic, while that of the central hall was Elizabethan, the three harmonising well together, reflecting the greatest credit on the good taste of the architect, Mr James B. Stewart, Greenock and Glasgow. The ground extended to two acres, divided by a broad terrace and carriage drive, with the slope in front laid out in grass and shrubbery, while the rising ground to the carriage drive and behind the buildings was formed into a playground and kitchen garden.

Then the major changes accelerated. In 1900 tenements called Carnegie Park Gardens were built along Glasgow Road and ate into the estate of Nether Auchenleck south of the railway.

In 1915 The Glasgow Road scheme of tenements built by Lithgow, the great shipbuilder – Bruce Street, Clune Park Street and Wallace Street etc. – took away part of the Fyfe Park Estate south of the Railway, but a more important action was the movement of the Port Glasgow town boundary out to Heggies Avenue and the Carnegie Burn.

In 1921 Fyfe Park Terrace tenements were built. This was a second bite out of Nether Auchenleck south of the Railway. At the same time the town's gas works were being built on the shore on Nether Auchenleck. So Nether Auchenleck in practice disappeared.

In the 1920s the three estates of Woodhall, Broadfield and Broadstone still existed, but two, Broadfield and Woodhall, were up for sale.

In 1929 Broadfield House was sold to the Paisley local authority and the house was used for an asylum along with Broadstone House, and known as Broadfield Asylum.

In 1935 the Port Glasgow Council bought Woodhall Estate, pulled down the mansion house, built the scheme of four apartment blocks known as Brightside, Pleasantside and Sunnyside and the Council built similar houses in Woodhall. So Woodhall Estate was gone.

In 1937 the building of Kelburn Terrace north of the railway was completed and again the Council built long tenements. This meant that Carnegie Estate was gone, since the cemetery was extended south of the railway.

In 1940 the King George V Playing Fields were opened, and Parklea Farm that had been part of the Broadfield Estate was gone.

From 1940 to 1945 the Monck Camp was built on Carnegie land at the top of the cemetery and when the war was over this became the third part of the cemetery.

In 1945 Woodhall Halt railway station was finally opened after being promised for more than one hundred years.

In 1946 house building started in earnest on the Broadfield Estate. By the early 1950s Broadfield House was torn down and over three hundred post-war, mostly four apartment, houses built on its ground, with eventually Park Farm being built over by similar modern houses.

In 2001 Broadstone Estate was sold and house building begun on the estate grounds.

In 2007 Broadstone House was fatally damaged with fire but the expensive houses round it continued to be built.

11. The Summing Up

The six estates had wonderful histories and many people loved living on them, some in relative splendour and some in great splendour. They had seen infanticide, great sporting days, murders, fatal accidents, the influences of great industries such as ropeworks and shipbuilding, and yet managed at times to live idyllic nineteenth century rural lives. They are

now remembered in great part by their names on streets and housing estates and it is only fitting that they also should be remembered in some detail by the histories of the people who lived there and their activities.

Acknowledgements

Newspapers:

The Greenock Advertiser

The Greenock Telegraph

Book: *Runs with the Lanarkshire & Renfrewshire Fox-Hounds, and Other Sporting Incidents* by Stringhalt (1874)

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