

# The search for our Carlisle Origins

by James Michael Fleming

© 2020

## Introduction

**William Carlisle** emigrated from England to Australia in 1804 as a free settler. He was a successful farmer, missionary, school master and coach painter who married twice and produced two sons and two daughters. He and his family were part of the first permanent European settlement in New Zealand for four years from 1816 before returning to Australia. He died and was buried at Rylstone NSW in 1852 aged about 70 years. But the details of his origins have eluded numerous researchers for decades. This report outlines my research efforts to achieve a breakthrough.



**Jim Fleming** is a retired Customs Manager and lives on Sydney's lower north shore. He began researching his family history in 1983 and has been a member of the Society of Australian Genealogists since then. Aside from genealogy he was enjoying travelling and singing baritone in two choirs - before COVID19 interrupted those activities.

**Researching:** Bowen, Flowerdew, Gardner, Gordon, Grady, Hanrahan, Jolliffe, Kemp, Kessey, Murphy, Poulton, Press and so many more!

**Website:** <http://jimfleming.id.au/up/index.htm>

I am regularly updating my website, so Like my Facebook page to keep up to date. Click the icon below.

Find us on 

# The search for our Carlisle origins

by Jim Fleming

© James Michael Fleming 2020

## Contents

Introduction.....	1
What we know.....	3
William Carlisle in Australia.....	3
William Carlisle in England.....	5
Evidence and analysis.....	7
William Carlisle and Ann Scarborough.....	7
Children of William and Ann.....	8
Residency records.....	8
Burial records.....	10
Marriage records.....	10
Signature analysis.....	11
Summary.....	11
English baptisms.....	11
Malcolm family link.....	12
The Malcolm family.....	13
Search for William junior.....	15
Search for William senior.....	15
Summary.....	16
Outcomes.....	17
Conclusions.....	17
William Carlisle and Ann Scarborough were unrelated.....	18
Links to the Malcolm family.....	18
Background research.....	19
The 1825 Malcolm letter.....	19
Napoleon, Nelson and the Knight.....	20
Sir John Malcolm.....	20
The Four Knights of Eskdale.....	20
Chronicles of Muckledale.....	21
The Malcolm family of Burnfoot.....	22

## What we know

The main aim of this research project was to find the origins of William Carlisle who arrived in NSW in 1804 and who built a successful life there. The first task was to compile everything that I knew about him, to look for clues and leads.

### William Carlisle in Australia

William Carlisle emigrated from England aboard the convict transport ship *Experiment* that sailed from Portsmouth (England) in early December 1803. She was part of a convoy of merchant ships bound for Africa, India, the Caribbean and Australia that was under the protection of the British naval sloop *Pylades*. The *Experiment* carried 136 female convicts, 2 male convicts and nine settlers (with their families) under the command of Captain Withers.

Less than two weeks later, the *Experiment* returned to Portsmouth, having sustained significant damage in a gale while 16 leagues to the west of the Scilly Isles (off the tip of Cornwall). Having repaired the topmast and the bowsprit, she sailed again on 2 January 1804 as part of another large convoy protected by the British naval ship *Corageux*.

One of the nine other settlers who travelled with William Carlisle was Thomas Gordon, who brought his wife (Alice Smith) and four children (Charles 13, Mary Ann 12, Alice 7 and William 3). After a stop in Rio de Janeiro for a month, the *Experiment* arrived in Sydney on 24 July 1804. Just 3 weeks later, Governor King granted 100 acres of land at Mulgrave Place to all of the nine settlers on board. William Carlisle's land was next to that of Thomas Gordon. He named it *Malcolm Farm*.

1232	Mr. Gordon 100	S. by Sea	S. bounded on the E. by the Sea & on the W. by the Common & on the S. by the Common.
	Mr. Carlisle 100 Malcolm Farm	S. by Sea	S. bounded on the E. by the Sea & on the W. by the Common & on the S. by the Common.

An extract from Governor King's Land Grant Register for 16 July 1804. Source: Ancestry.com

William must have been an adult at this point because the Governor would not grant land to a child. This means that William must have been born in or before 1788 at the very latest.

William improved this land and farmed it successfully for many years. He initially lived with the Gordon family<sup>1</sup> and probably advised and assisted Thomas Gordon on the intricacies of farming. Gordon was a shoemaker, not a farmer.

In August 1809 William sold 25 acres to James Vincent for 50 pounds – a good return after just 5 years. The following month he bought 50 acres from Thomas Gordon (next door) in exchange for a working bullock cart and harness. This was the first of William's many subsequent dealings in re-conditioned carts and carriages.

Two years later, William married Thomas Gordon's daughter, Mary Ann (now aged 18). She was a very pious young woman under the influence of the Reverend Robert Cartwright. When her new husband failed to match her level of piety, she regretted the marriage and kept him at arm's length.

<sup>1</sup> Letter dated 9 March 1817 from the Reverend Robert Cartwright to the Reverend Josiah Pratt, MS-0056/051, CMS number 69, Timble number 51, Marsden Archive, Hocken Collections, University of Otago Library, Dunedin, New Zealand. [https://marsdenarchive.otago.ac.nz/MS\\_0056\\_051](https://marsdenarchive.otago.ac.nz/MS_0056_051)

Their daughter Amelia Carlisle was born on 29 January 1813, but her mother died two weeks later without reconciling with William. He subsequently came to regret this difference between them, so much so that he turned right around and became very pious indeed. He was persuaded by Reverend Cartwright to undertake missionary work in the Pacific.

*Mr C(arlisle) though a moral character was at that time unacquainted with the Gospel and averse to its precepts, which became a source of much uneasiness to his wife insomuch that I was informed she repented of the connexion from a consciousness that she had not been married in the Lord. She was however very faithful to her husband, and when she could not prevail upon him to unite with her in her devotions, she told him that she was free from his blood. In this she persevered to the last, and a short time before she died she told a friend of hers that she hoped her death would do what her Life could not effect which the event proved. Poor Carlisle was for some time inconsolable, having discovered when too late the treasure he had lost. ... I judged he would be an acquisition to the N.Z. Mission and at length ventured to make known my opinion to him and to urge him to engage in the work.*

Reverend Robert Cartwright to Reverend Josiah Pratt, 9 March 1817<sup>1</sup> above

It seems likely that his baby daughter Amelia was initially cared for by her grandmother and aunt, both named Alice Gordon. Amelia lived for another 63 years.

Three years later, William married Elizabeth Blackman on 7 January 1816. Surprisingly, he then left her and his daughter behind while he travelled to Rangihoa in New Zealand to spend most of the year as part of the settlement established a year earlier by the Church Mission Society – Anglican missionaries led my Reverend Samuel Marsden. William returned to Sydney in December.

In April 1817 he returned to New Zealand, but this time he took his new wife and his 4-year-old daughter Amelia. They were accompanied by Amelia's uncle (Charles Moltson Gordon) and his wife Maria Lees. They all remained there for about three years during which William and Elizabeth produced two sons: James (1817) and John (1819).

In late 1819, Samuel Marsden visited the missionary station at Rangihoa and found fault with nearly everyone there, especially William Carlisle and Charles Gordon. They had had the temerity to write to his superiors in London a year earlier pointing out some of the unaddressed problems faced by the settlers. Marsden sacked them both and ordered them back to Sydney.

William returned to *Malcolm Farm* for the next couple of years but carried on correspondence with the Church Missionary Society leaders in London in search of another appointment as a missionary. Elizabeth gave birth to their third child, a daughter: Henrietta (1821).

He was convicted around this time for selling illicit rum – somewhat contradicting his self-image as a very pious man. He then applied to the NSW Governor for the position of Superintendent of Convicts at Bathurst, a post recently vacated by his brother-in-law, James Blackman. He was unsuccessful because of his rum conviction.

In June 1822 he sold one of his two 50-acre farms at Richmond to Edward Smith Hall for 200 pounds. Hall subsequently sub-divided it into 5-acre blocks that he offered for sale individually. In the same month, William sailed as a missionary for New Zealand again, aboard SS *Vansittart*, this time accompanied by Mr W Hall. His entreaties to London must have succeeded, but his mission did not last long. He was back in Australia the following year when he put his other 50-acre farm at Richmond up for sale.

A year later, in April 1824, he placed several newspaper notices that sought to restrain his wife from business and financial dealings in his name. The problems in his marriage were now apparent to all. Later that year all members of his family were recorded on the Settlers and Convicts List as living in Sydney where William was occupied as a coach painter. Soon after, however, Elizabeth left William to live permanently with John Roberts, a bullock driver of Richmond. Her daughter (Henrietta) and step-daughter (Amelia) accompanied her, but her two sons stayed with William. They then carried on his coach painting business in Bathurst Street for several years. He was still operating his coach manufactory in 1832.

In 1831 William bought 8 roods of land in Cambridge Street Sydney from Ann Bartlett for 12 pounds and sold it again on the same day to James Cooper for 19 pounds! It seems that his piety did not stand in the way of unscrupulous business practices.

In September 1835, his 22-year-old daughter Amelia was married by William's adversary, Reverend Samuel Marsden, to George Waples.

By 1844 William was employed as a tutor for the children of John and Elizabeth Nevell at *Carwell* near Rylstone NSW. The first European to explore this area had been William's brother-in-law (James Blackman junior) in 1821. John Nevell was a son-in-law of James Vincent (who had bought 25 acres at Richmond from William in 1809).

Four years later James Vincent was buried at Carwell. Finally, William Carlisle died at Rylstone and was buried in that same cemetery on 27 July 1852.

The *Carwell* Burial Book records his age as 70 years. That is the only one of the many Australian records for William Carlisle that gives any indication of his age or birth date. It implies that he had been born in about 1782. Unfortunately, none of the documents in Australian archives gives any hint about his birthplace or the names of his parents.

### **William Carlisle in England**

In 1804, people could not just set sail for NSW with the intention of settling there. It was a penal colony that was controlled by the English military. Nevertheless, persons who wished to emigrate to NSW as free settlers could apply to the authorities in England for permission. William Carlisle (of Westminster, London) applied by letter dated 14 September 1802. He described himself as 34-year-old with a wife and 4 children. He claimed that he was experienced in the farming business and could also turn his hand to carpentry.

A year later, he re-submitted his application, this time in conjunction with Thomas Gordon and JS Freeman. He now described himself as a 38-year-old farmer with a wife and four children.

The information in these letters implies that William was born in either 1765 or 1768. That would make him about 14 to 17 years older than the 1852 Rylstone NSW burial record suggests. Furthermore, the William Carlisle who came to Australia on the *Experiment* was a single man. The author of the 1802 and 1803 letters cannot be the same person as the 1804 emigrant.

Nevertheless, there is an apparent connection between the two William Carlises. Both of them were associated with Thomas Gordon, the 39-year-old shoemaker who emigrated on the *Experiment* with his wife Alice Smith and their four children. William Carlisle the letter-writer wrote the 1803 letter in conjunction with Gordon. William Carlisle the emigrant lived with the Gordon family when he arrived in Australia and married Mary Ann Gordon in 1811. It is apparent, therefore, that William Carlisle senior (the letter-writer) was associated in some way with William Carlisle junior (the emigrant).



**The Carlisle family's residence in 1802 was**

**1 Marlborough Mews on Blenheim Street (now Ramillies Street) near Great Marlborough Street**

Carlisle's referee (Mrs. Gibbs) lived at 30 Queen Ann Street while Thomas Gordon's referee (Mr. Commiford Baker) lived at 15 George Street, Grosvenor Square.

Most researchers have concluded that they were father and son. But an age difference of 14 to 17 years seems too little for William senior to be the father of William junior. It is noteworthy, however, that William senior aged 4 years in the year between the two letters! It is very possible that he was understating his age because he thought that the authorities might be looking for younger emigrants. It is also possible that William junior was less than the 70 years old that he was said to be when he died in 1852. When we combine these two factors, it reduces (but does not entirely eliminate) any doubts that William senior was the father of William junior. It is also possible that William senior was an uncle or cousin of William junior.

Two related questions arise. If William senior was a farmer, how was he able to live in London? And would an experienced farmer want to emigrate to NSW? Perhaps he was a farmer who was able to leave his farm in the hands of an overseer or husbandman. But, as a comfortable farmer living on farm or farm-lease income in London, why would he wish to emigrate? And why would his son (who stood to inherit the land) wish to emigrate? These questions throw into doubt the claims by William senior to be a farmer. It seems more likely that he was actually a husbandman (who leases farm-land but does not own it). Perhaps his lease had expired, forcing him to consider his options.

In any case, we are left with the question of why William Carlisle senior did not emigrate. One researcher has suggested that he may have died, but it seems unlikely that this occurred in the two months between the second letter and the *Experiment's* (first) departure in early December 1803.

Rather than dying, perhaps he changed his mind about emigration. But I think that it is much more likely that his emigration application was rejected by the authorities. Perhaps his fears of being perceived as too old were realised when he came face-to-face with a decision-maker. He may have been older than he claimed.

William junior did emigrate. It seems that Thomas Gordon served as a pseudo-guardian and mentor for William. They had a complementary skill set. While Thomas Gordon's skills as a shoemaker were in high demand in NSW, where work boots tended to wear out within just a few months, he may have lacked a knowledge of farming. But if approved, he was to be granted 100 acres of prime agricultural land to farm. It made sense for him to join forces with William Carlisle junior (who did have such skills) to boost his chances of emigration approval; and to provide farming advice and assistance when the time came.

In summary, the following information is all that we have to go on in searching for the Carlisle origins:

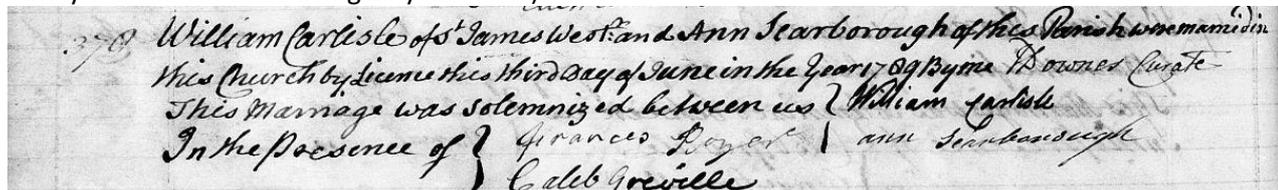
- that William senior was born about 1765 or earlier;
- that William junior was born sometime between 1782 and 1788;
- that William senior had three other children;
- that they lived at 1 Marlborough Mews, Blenheim Street, Great Marlborough Street in London (according to the 1802 letter); and
- that they were acquainted with Thomas Gordon and JD Freeman (co-signatories to the 1803 letter).

## Evidence and analysis

Many Carlisle researchers have concluded that William Carlisle senior is the person of that name who was married to Ann Scarborough; and that she was, therefore, the mother of William Carlisle junior. Researchers Margaret and Les Carlisle have advanced an alternative theory that the Carlisle family originated from Dumfries shire (in southern Scotland), just 20 miles north of the English city of Carlisle. I will analyse these theories below.

### William Carlisle and Ann Scarborough

The basis of this theory is that a William Carlisle married an Ann Scarborough in St George's Church, Hanover Square in 1789. The church is just 400 metres from Blenheim Street (where the Carlisle family was known to be living 13 years later).



The record of the marriage of William Carlisle and Ann Scarborough in the Register of St George's Church, Hanover Square, on 3 June 1789

While this is an interesting record, there were other persons named William Carlisle in London at this time. How can we be certain that the groom was our William Carlisle senior, the letter writer? Furthermore, it is notable that this marriage occurred seven years after William junior was supposedly born (1782-88). For these reasons, this record is unconvincing without some strong corroborating evidence. For example, is there evidence that William (Ann Scarborough's husband) had a son named William who was born around 1782-88? Is there evidence that William and Ann had three other children by 1802 (as we know - from the letters - that our William senior had)?

### Children of William and Ann

I searched the online records at FindMyPast and Ancestry.com to find children born between 1780 and 1802 whose parents were William and Ann Carlisle. I found:

1. Robert Carlill was baptised at Welton with Melton, York on 22 June 1784. But there were no siblings apparent.
2. William and Ann Carlisle of Frodingham (Lincolnshire) baptised Sarah in 1784. Then William and Elizabeth baptised George 1791, Thomas 1794 and Mary 1797. There is no record of a child named William; and the mother's name is wrong for 3 baptisms.
3. William and Ann Carlisle of Manchester baptised Mary 1792, Robert 1794, Thomas 1796, Hugh 1799 and Mary Jane 1802. There is no record of a child named William; and Mary Jane was born in Manchester when our William senior was known to be living in London.
4. William and Ann Carlisle of Topsham (Devonshire) baptised William Searle Carlisle 1792, Elizabeth 1796, and John 1799.

Numbers 1, 2 and 3 can be ruled out for the reasons stated above. Number 4 has only three (not four) children by 1802. Furthermore, William Searle Carlisle would have been just six years old when our William junior was granted 100 acres of land in NSW by Governor King. So, this family can be ruled out too.

Furthermore, William Carlisle and Ann Scarborough lived at 73 Jermyn Street London in 1792<sup>2</sup>, so they would not have had children baptised in York, Lincolnshire, Manchester or Devonshire. It is likely that any children would have been baptised at either St George's Church, Hanover Square (where they had married in 1789) or St James Church, Piccadilly (which is in Jermyn Street).

I found no evidence that William and Ann Carlisle had any children, let alone one named William.

### Residency records

I searched London residency records (including directories and rate books) aiming to trace where William and Ann lived over the years. I knew that they lived at 73 Jermyn Street in 1792 and that William senior sent his 1802 letter from Marlborough Mews, Blenheim Street off Great Marlborough Street. If I could locate William and Ann at another address in 1802, that would show that they were not the parents of William junior.

I was also on the lookout for a neighbour named Mrs. Gibbs (William's referee in the 1803 letter).

There are several 1795 and 1796 records in the Westminster Rate Books for a William Carlisle who lived on the Strand in the Parish of St Mary Le Strand. There is no record for a William Carlisle in Jermyn Street. Had our couple moved from Jermyn Street to the Strand, or are these records of a different William Carlisle? It is notable that a person with the Gibbs surname lived on this same street "to Xtmas 1795". The Carlisle family left this address at Christmas 1796.

The image shows a handwritten entry from a rate book for the year 1795. The entry is written on a grid and includes the following information:

35	Gibbs	1	5	1	5	3	3	1	3
35	Rich <sup>d</sup> Bolton	1	5	1	5				
40	Wm Carlisle	1	3	4	1	3	4		

Additional handwritten notes include "2<sup>d</sup> Dum" and "to Xtmas 1795" written above the numbers in the first row.

**A Carlisle and a Gibbs family were near neighbours on the Strand in 1795**

<sup>2</sup> Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 8.0, 09 July 2020), September 1792, trial of RICHARD STANIFORTH (t17920912-47). <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?div=t17920912-47>



William and Ann Carlisle lived at 73 Jermyn Street in 1792

I found 1801 Rate Book records for two William Carlises.

1. The first was at 8 Clipstone Street in the parish of St Marylebone. He was also recorded there in 1800, 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1807.
2. The second was at Maddox Street in the parish of St George Hanover Square – but he is not recorded at that address in any other year.

We can rule out the first one because his residency in Clipstone Street covers 1802 when our William senior was living in Marlborough Mews, Blenheim Street. This other William Carlisle is probably the one who subsequently lived in Berners Mews (1808 – 1809) and John Street (1809-1810). All of these addresses are in the parish of St Marylebone.

It is quite possible that the Maddox street record does relate to our William senior. It is only 300 metres from Blenheim Street where William senior was living in 1802.

A William Carlisle lived in Mill Street in the parish of St George Hanover Square between 1810 and 1813. This is a short street that joins Maddox Street right next to the parish church of St George Hanover Square.

It seems possible that a single William Carlisle resided as follows:

- 1800 – 1807 - 8 Clipston Street in the parish of St Marylebone;
- 1808 – 1809 – Berners Mews in the parish of St Marylebone;
- 1809 - 1810 – John Street in the parish of St Marylebone; and
- 1810 – 1813 – Mill Street in the parish of St George Hanover Square.

The person who lived on the Strand in 1795 and 1796 could be either the 1801 Maddox Street resident or the Clipstone Street resident (who subsequently resided in Berners Mews etc.).

This information does not allow us to identify with certainty where William and Ann lived in 1802. They may have been living at 8 Clipstone Street; or Marlborough Mews in Blenheim Street; or neither. There is nothing compelling to link any of these residency records to either William Carlisle and Ann Scarborough; or to William Carlisle senior (the letter writer). This research has not, unfortunately, answered any of our questions.

#### Burial records

A search for London burial records that could relate to William Carlisle senior found two possibilities. The first was buried at St George Hanover Square on 30 June 1821 aged 57 years and lived in the workhouse. The second was buried at St Paul Covent Garden on 17 October 1823 aged 57 years and lived at Leg Alley. These records could relate to William (Ann's husband); and/or to William the letter-writer; or be completely unrelated.

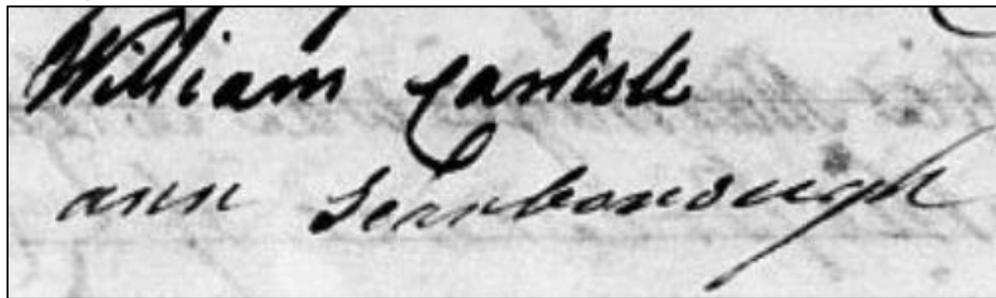
I was not able to identify any burial records from this area for Ann Carlisle (nee Scarborough).

#### Marriage records

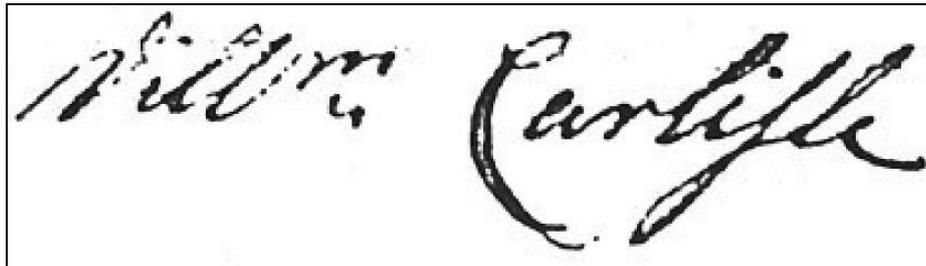
A William Carlisle married Mary Ann Ferguson at St Marylebone on 26 January 1805. Three years later, in 1808, a William Carlisle married Mary Abbot in St George's Church Hanover Square. While it is unlikely that either of these records relates to our William senior, they do demonstrate that there was more than one person of that name in the area at this time.

### Signature analysis

When William Carlisle married Ann Scarborough, they both signed the Register with their own hand. William senior signed the 1802 letter. If they were the same person, these signatures should match, but there are differences.



William Carlisle's 1789 signature (Marriage Register)



William Carlisle's 1802 signature (letter)

The most significant difference is that in 1802 William senior wrote an old-fashioned *j* for the *S* in Carlisle, whereas the 1792 signature features a modern *S*. There are also significant differences in the *C* and the *R*; and minor differences in the *W* and the *L*s. All of the 1802 *L*s are looped, but none are looped in the 1792 signature.

It is also notable that the 1802 signature is fully joined up, but the 1792 signature has several small gaps. For example, the 1792 *l*s (in both William and Carlisle) are separated from the previous letter. Also, there is a small gap between the *S* and *L* in Carlisle.

While these differences are subtle, when considered together they suggest that the signatures were made by two different people.

### Summary

The 1789 marriage record proves that they existed but, despite a fairly rigorous search and analysis of the available evidence, there is nothing to suggest that Ann Scarborough's 1789 groom wrote the 1802 and 1803 letters. Nor is there any evidence that William and Ann had any children. Finally, the 1789 marriage signature differs from the one on the 1802 letter. This means that there is no evidence to support the Carlisle/Scarborough theory.

### English baptisms

I decided to search English baptism records in the hope of identifying the origin of William junior. I was looking for a William Carlisle born between 1780 and 1788 whose father was William. I reasoned that our William was unlikely to be older than the stated 70 years at his death in 1852 (because, in my experience, most death ages at that time are overstated and very few are understated), but I nevertheless allowed for him to be as old as 72. I also reasoned that he could not be born later than 1788 because it would be very unlikely that the Governor of NSW would, in 1804, grant 100 acres of land to a person younger than 16 years old.

Each search was carried out using wildcards to ensure any curious spellings were captured. So, I used “W\*m” instead of “William” and “Car\*I\*!” instead of “Carlisle”. This facilitated the capture of abbreviations for William and of spellings such as Carlyle, Carlile, Carliles, Carrile and even Carleill.

With those parameters, I identified the following possible baptism records. In each case, the father is also named William Carlisle.

1. 3/10/1779 at Rylstone, Yorkshire;
2. 21/10/1781 at Liverpool, Lancashire (father a mariner);
3. 3/11/1782 at Baildon, Yorkshire (father from nearby Esholt); and
4. 26/8/1787 at Broadhempston, Devonshire – m. Susanna.

The first one is slightly outside my criteria, but I included it because of the place of birth, which coincidentally, has the same name as Rylstone NSW (where our William died 72 years later). This has to be a coincidence because the NSW town was not named by our William.

The second one is unlikely because William’s (assumed) father, William senior, was said to be a farmer, not a mariner. But the other 3 are all possible. The third one fits best with our William’s stated age at death.

Now, it is possible that William senior was not the father of William junior. He may have been an uncle or cousin. Accordingly, I widened the search to include all William Carlisle baptisms between 1780 and 1788. This revealed a number of additional records:

- A. 27/4/1783 at Staverton, Devonshire (f Bartholomew m Mary);
- B. 18/5/1783 at Hallgate Zion Independent, Cottingham, York (f George m Ann);
- C. 31/7/1784 at Chipping, Lancashire (f John a curate);
- D. 18/9/1784 at Kendal, Westmoreland (f John m Ann) – born 21/11/1783;
- E. 16/5/1785 at Cathedral St Peter, Sheffield, York (f Joseph m Mary);
- F. 28/12/1785 at Ramsey, Isle of Man (m Cathne); and
- G. 25/11/1786 at Chipping, Lancashire (f John a vicar) – 1784 one must have died.

This search identified a large number of possibilities and I was not able to identify any of these as more likely than any other.

### **Malcolm family link**

An alternative theory of the Carlisle family origins has been developed by long-time researchers Margaret and Les Carlisle. They proposed that the Carlisle family may have originated from the area around the Malcolm family’s farm *Burnfoot* in southern Scotland.

The basis of this theory stems from a letter that William Carlisle (the emigrant) wrote in about 1825 addressed to the Attorney General in NSW. The letter asked the Attorney General to intervene in a custody dispute between William and his wife in relation to their daughter, Henrietta. The Attorney General wisely chose not to interfere, merely recommending that William lay his case before the Governor.

For our present purpose, the subject matter of the letter is less important than the preliminary remarks made by William. In particular, he notes that, on his arrival in NSW in 1804, he was “*strongly recommended to the notice of Governors King and Macquarie by Admiral Malcolm of the Navy and his brother, the Reverend Gilbert Malcolm*”. It was normal practice for new arrivals in the colony to bring letters of introduction from influential acquaintances.

## The Malcolm family

It is clear that the admiral referred to is Admiral Sir Pulteney Malcolm, since the other brother of Reverend Gilbert Malcolm to reach that rank (Admiral Sir Charles Malcolm) did not achieve it until 1837 ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Malcolm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Malcolm)).

In 1730 the Duke of Buccleuch had given Sir Pulteney Malcolm's grandfather, the Reverend Robert Malcolm, the lease of a house and sheep farm at *Burnfoot*, on the north bank of the River Esk, four miles upstream from Langholm<sup>3</sup>. He hoped that this would supplement the Reverend's meagre income as Minister of the neighbouring parish of Ewes. Reverend Malcolm also leased the adjacent farm, *Dowglen*. His eldest son (George) managed both farms.

Pulteney Malcolm was born at *Dowglen* on 20 February 1768, the third son of George Malcolm of *Burnfoot* (a sheep farmer) and his wife Margaret<sup>4</sup>. She was a sister of Admiral Sir Thomas Pasley and had grown up at Craig, just across the River Esk from *Burnfoot* and *Dowglen*.

Pulteney Malcolm followed his uncle into the navy and was appointed Lieutenant in 1783 (aged 15). He distinguished himself in service on the Jamaica station. From 1798 he served as Captain of the *Suffolk* and the *Victorious* in India. He returned to London briefly in August 1803 before commanding the *Royal Sovereign* in the Mediterranean from January 1804. He was appointed Rear Admiral in 1813; knighted in 1815; promoted to Vice-Admiral in 1821; and served as Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean fleet in 1831 and 1833. He died in 1838. Both the Royal Navy frigate HMS *Malcolm* and Pulteney Street in Adelaide were named after him.

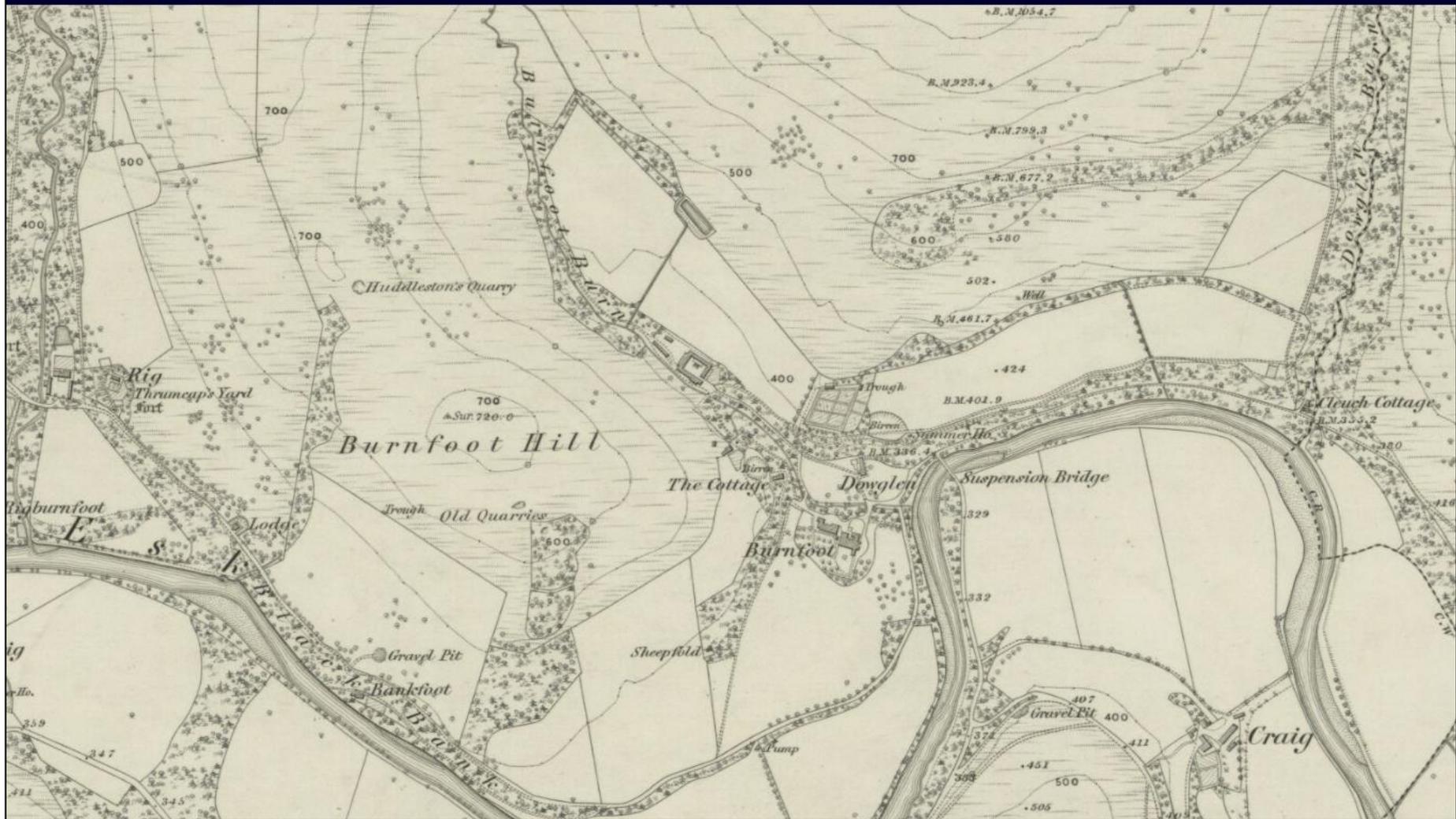
Reverend Gilbert Malcolm was 7 years younger than his brother. He had a full education and studied at Trinity College Cambridge where he later became a Fellow. In 1806 he became the Anglican rector of Toddenham (Gloucestershire) where he remained until his death in 1855.



**Admiral Sir Pulteney Malcolm and the Reverend Gilbert Malcolm [National Galleries Scotland]**

<sup>3</sup> Napoleon, Nelson and the Knight, Dumfries & Galloway Council. Note that there are other places called *Burnfoot* in the general area, including an estate 1 mile east of Ecclefechan and a farm near Hawick. These other places are not associated with the Malcolm family.  
<http://www.futuremuseum.co.uk/collections/features/online-exhibitions/napoleon,-nelson-and-the-knight/sir-john-malcolm.aspx>.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret (Peggy) Pa(i)sley was a granddaughter of Charles Elphinstone, the 10<sup>th</sup> Lord Elphinstone, and a great-granddaughter of John Fleming, the 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Wigtown.



1843 map of the area around Burnfoot, Dowglen and Craig, 4 miles upstream of Langholm, on the north bank of the River Esk in Dumfries shire  
[National Library of Scotland]

Reverend Malcolm and Captain Malcolm must have written their references for William Carlisle during the 4 or 5 months that Pulteney Malcolm spent in England at the end of 1803. That date coincides with William Carlisle's second letter of application to emigrate to NSW that was dated 3 September 1803. It is conceivable that Reverend Gilbert Malcolm travelled from Cambridge to London to greet his celebrated brother who had been abroad for 20 years. In that case, the two William Carlises and the two Malcolm brothers would all have been in London simultaneously.

But how did the Carlises know the Malcolm brothers well enough to gain these valuable written references? It is unlikely that a fleeting acquaintance would have inspired William junior to subsequently give the Malcolm name to his farm at Richmond NSW. It seems likely, therefore, that the Carlisle family was previously associated with the Malcolm family in some way. Perhaps the Carlisle family had originated around Langholm in Dumfries shire, like the Malcolm family.

#### Search for William junior

I searched several online indexes looking for a Scotland baptism record for William Carlisle junior, the emigrant (whose was born between 1782 and 1788). ScotlandsPeople finds 12 records between 1770 and 1790. Only two of these had a father named William. Both of these are over 60 miles from the Malcolm family farm near Langholm.

William Carlyle and Janet Birkmire who married at Paisley (Glasgow) in 1774 baptised their son William on 15 September 1776. They had 7 other children: Janet 1775, John 1778, Robert 1780, James 1782 Thomas 1784, Elisabeth 1790 and Jane 1792. All were baptised at Paisley (about 90 miles from Langholm).

William Carlisle and Katharine Mitchell baptised their son William on 18 October 1774 at Bunkle and Preston. They had 6 other children: Janet 1763, John 1765, Agnes 1768, Alison 1770, James 1772 and Robert 1777.

Both of these Williams are several years older than we expect for our William, the emigrant. But there are three other baptisms that are nearer the expected birth date:

- 1/01/1785 at Dumfries f. David (4 other children 1783-96);
- 2/12/1787 at Dumfries f. John (3 other children 1784-92);
- 8/10/1788 at Kirkpatrick Fleming f Thomas m Cathrin Johnstone (4 other children 1790-98).

Janice Goldie (Cultural Services Manager of the Ewart Library in Dumfries) identified the 1788 baptism as the most likely candidate in a 2004 letter to family researcher Margaret Carlisle. She preferred this one over the two in Dumfries because "Kirkpatrick Fleming is much nearer to the Malcolm family home in Burnfoot". It is 17 miles from Burnfoot, while Dumfries is 32 miles.

#### Search for William senior

William senior (the letter-writer) gave his age as 34 in 1802 and 38 in 1803. This implies a birth year of 1765 - 1768 but I suspect that he was older than he admitted.

A search on ScotlandsPeople finds the following possibilities in Dumfries shire:

- 27/4/1755 at St Mungo (24 miles from Burnfoot) f. Walter;
- 31/5/1759 at Dumfries (32 miles) f. Thomas;
- 2/1/1763 at Hoddum (21 miles) f. James;
- 13/9/1763 at Graitney (Gretna) (18 miles) f. Manasseh;
- 25/6/1766 at Annan (22 miles) f. Adam m. Philadelphia Carruthers; and
- 10/4/1767 at Dalton (24 miles) f. William.

We know that William senior was married with 4 children in 1802, so I searched ScotlandsPeople in an effort to identify a likely marriage<sup>5</sup>. There were only two possibilities.

The first is to Janet Birkmyre at Paisley Burgh and Abbey (in Glasgow, 90 miles from *Burnfoot*) on 11 June 1774. This couple subsequently had 9 children born between 1775 and 1792, all baptised at Paisley Burgh. One of their children was William, baptised 15 September 1776.

The Carlisle/Birkmyre marriage took place just 11 years after the two 1863 baptisms listed above, which would rule them out.

The William who was baptised in 1759 would have been just 15 years old in 1774 (too young to marry) but would have been 43 when the 1802 letter was written, not 34 as claimed. The 1755 baptism would have been old enough for the 1774 marriage, but even older in 1802. Furthermore, this couples' son William was born in 1776, making him 6 years older than our William Carlisle junior, the emigrant.

In my judgement, it is unlikely that this family is the one we are looking for.

The second marriage possibility is to Agnes Crookshanks (16 November 1799 at Canongate, Edinburgh). But the records reveal only one child for this couple: William Carlisle baptised at Canongate on 10 March 1801. This couple would not have had 4 children by 1802; and their son William is much too young to be William the emigrant.

### Summary

In my judgement, the marriage research failed to find any useful information.

The most likely baptism records for William junior (the emigrant) are the two in Dumfries (1785 and 1787) or the one in Kirkpatrick Fleming (1788). The most likely baptism records for William senior are the 1763 ones (Hoddom and Graitney). But none of these were closer than 17 miles from the Malcolm family farm at *Burnfoot*.

According to ScotlandsPeople records, 13 of the 17 children of George Malcolm and his wife Margaret were baptised at either Langholm or Westerkirk between 1762 and 1777. The baptisms of the remaining four (David 1778, Charlotte 1779, William Ogilvy 1781 and Charles 1782) are not in the index<sup>6</sup> even though other Westerkirk baptisms are recorded during this time. It is feasible, then, that the baptism record of William Carlisle junior (born 1782-88) has been lost in a similar way.

Despite a concerted effort I have not been able to definitively identify any Scottish baptism or marriage records that relate to either William senior or William junior. Therefore, I have not been able to definitively establish a pre-1803 link between the Carlisle and Malcolm families.

Perhaps the answer can be found in the following quote from the memoirs of Thomas Beattie of Muckledale (1736-1827), a farmer who knew the Malcolm family.

---

<sup>5</sup> A William Carlisle and Bridget Wylie baptised three children between 1793 and 1803 at Graitney (or Gretna) even though there is no record of their marriage in Scottish records. Their children were John 1793; William 1796 and David 1803. But we know that our William senior was in London in 1802 and 1803, so this couple is ruled out.

<sup>6</sup> The existence of these four is known from subsequent records, such as marriage, census and death.

*“both Sir John and Sir Pulteney get many young men into situations in the East Indies and the Navy ... Gilbert is a respectable clergyman in England and has (got) some of our young scholars into situations.”* Thomas Beattie of Muckledale<sup>7</sup>

It is possible that William senior (then 34 – 38 years old) contacted Captain Pulteney Malcolm on his 1803 return to London seeking support for his emigration application. Pulteney was then 35 years old, so it is quite feasible that they were near-contemporaries who knew each other from school or church back home near Langholm, Dumfries shire.

If so, it is likely that William senior was one of the 1863 baptisms, but my search has failed to find a record of his marriage or the baptism of his children. William junior may have been his son; or a nephew or cousin from back in Scotland.

## Outcomes

There are lots of records that relate to people who were living in the Westminster area of London around 1802-1803. None of these provides any evidence of a link between our William Carlisle and the person of the same name who married Ann Scarborough at St George Church Hanover Square in 1789.

Records in the Westminster Rate Books around 1803 show that there were almost certainly two different people named William Carlisle living in the area (if not more). Subsequent marriage records support that finding. It is possible that William senior (the letter-writer) was a recent arrival in 1802, while William and Ann were long-term locals.

There are ten English baptism records that could be for William junior. Three of these had a father named William. None of these seems more likely than any of the others to relate to our William junior.

There are three baptisms in Dumfries shire (Scotland) that could be for William junior. Of these, the most likely was baptised at Kirkpatrick Fleming on 8 October 1788. His parents were Thomas and Cathrin (Johnstone) who had 4 other children: John 1790, Jean 1793, Catherine 1796 and Elizabeth 1798.

There are two 1763 baptisms (at Hoddum and Graitney) in Dumfries shire that could be for William senior.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to conclude that these records definitively relate to either William senior or junior. While they could relate to them, it is not possible to say with confidence which (if any) are relevant.

## Conclusions

This research provides a range of evidence that allows us to make a conclusion about any possible relationship between our William Carlisle and the person of that name who married Ann Scarborough in 1789. It does not, however, provide a basis for reaching any other definitive conclusions. Nevertheless, I have outlined below my (now better-informed) theory about our Carlisle origins.

---

<sup>7</sup> “Chronicles of Muckledale” *being the Memoirs of Thomas Beattie of Muckledale 1736-1827*, Edited by Edward J Cowan, <http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.hss.ed.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Cowan-The-Memoirs-of-Thomas-Beattie-op.pdf>

### **William Carlisle and Ann Scarborough were unrelated**

This research has allowed me to confidently conclude that William Carlisle (who emigrated from Westminster in London to NSW in 1804 aboard the *Experiment*) was not a son of William Carlisle and Ann Scarborough who married in Westminster in 1789. There is no evidence that William and Ann had any children at all, let alone one named William. In any case, William (the emigrant) was apparently born around 1782, seven years before William and Ann married. Furthermore, the William Carlisle signature that was applied to the 1789 marriage register differs significantly from the signature that was applied to the 1802 letter that sought permission to emigrate.

### **Links to the Malcolm family**

There may well be a link between our Carlisle family and the Malcolm family of *Burnfoot* farm near Langholm in Dumfries shire, Scotland (two members of which supplied William with references in 1803).

It is conceivable that William senior was baptised at either Hoddum or Graitney in 1863. He may have been acquainted with Pulteney Malcolm (5 years his junior) in childhood through school, church or neighbourhood.

William junior (possibly a son of William senior) may have been acquainted with Gilbert Malcolm (about 7 years his senior) in a similar way. We know from his letters and subsequent employment (in both New Zealand and NSW as a school-master) that William junior was well-educated. It is possible that Gilbert Malcolm was employed for a short time as a pupil-teacher<sup>8</sup> by a local school that was attended by William junior (around 1788-1792).

William senior claimed a knowledge of farming in his 1802 and 1803 letters. William junior proved himself to be an accomplished farmer once he got to Australia. Perhaps their family had a small farm near the Malcolm family farm *Burnfoot*.

If the Carlises did, in fact, come from Dumfries shire, then William senior may not have been the father of William junior. I was unable to find a record of such a relationship (albeit there are known gaps in the baptism records for Westerkirk where the Malcolm family children were baptised). If William senior was not William junior's father, then he must have been an uncle or cousin.

Perhaps something changed around 1802 that prompted William senior to move to London. For example, the family's farm lease may have passed to someone else on his father's death; or for some other reason (such as disability due to injury). In any case, he went to London and sought permission to emigrate.

We know that William senior did not emigrate. I am inclined to think that his application was rejected due to his age or perceived disability. Nevertheless, William junior was accepted. Perhaps his farming experience (in the absence of William senior) was considered vital to supplement the shoemaking skills of Thomas Gordon.

---

<sup>8</sup> A pupil teacher was a young person who planned to be a teacher and who spent part of his or her time in preliminary education undertaking teaching duties under the supervision of the head-teacher. This teacher training program was in wide use before the twentieth century, as an apprentice system for the teaching profession.

## Background research

### The 1825 Malcolm letter

*To His Honor the Attorney General*

1825?

*The Memorial of Wm Carlisle*

*Respectfully Sheweth*

*That your Mem<sup>o</sup> came a Free Settler to this Colony in the Experiment in 1804 and was strongly recommended to the notice of Gov<sup>r</sup> King but more particularly Gov<sup>r</sup> Macquarie by Admiral Malcolm of the Navy and his Brother the Reverend Gilbert Malcolm. That about nine years since Mem<sup>o</sup> married his present wife who for some time has behaved in a most insolent and very abusive manner frequently asking him to give her a writing of separation which at length she made Mem<sup>o</sup> life almost a burden and as he wished to know her real motive for such extraordinary conduct, he gave her a bungling kind of writing. She then immediately showed herself in her true colours by openly living with and cohabiting with John Roberts a sawyer and Bullock driver at Richmond Township. Your Mem<sup>o</sup> was well informed prior to parting with his unfortunate wife of a criminal connection existing between them for a long time but could not prevent it. Mem<sup>o</sup> having got three young children and reflecting what a horrid state of Adultery and drunkenness the vile seducer has caused his wife to plunge into - - has several times intreated this unnatural woman who has no regard for her children to return to her home and family but all in vain. Mem<sup>o</sup> has got a Girl about five years old that he is extremely desirous of placing in the school - patronized by Lady Darling and the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Hill had been so kind to promise Mem<sup>o</sup> to take the child into the school. But here again Mem<sup>o</sup> strongly opposed by his unfortunate wife who has the child in her charge and will not part with it without an order to that effect. As he has a short time since applied to the Magistrate of Windsor to oblige his wife to return to her family but on Ac<sup>t</sup> of the supposed validity of the separation paper they did not think proper to con(sent?) with his earnest solicitation. Mem<sup>o</sup> having now consulted Mr Solicitor Allen who has told him the paper in question was not valid he therefore most humbly intreats your kind interference to save a young family from impending ruin. And your unfortunate Mem<sup>o</sup> as in duty bound will ever pray etc etc*

*W<sup>m</sup> Carlisle*

*To His Honor the Attorney General*

*Etc etc etc*

*Recommend Wm Carlisle to lay his case before his Excellency the Governor.*

*(signed)*

*10 May*

## **Napoleon, Nelson and the Knight**

### **Sir John Malcolm**

Major-General Sir John 'Jock' Malcolm (1769 – 1833) was a Scottish soldier, Statesman, and in later life a historian. Born at Burnfoot, Dumfries shire, he served in the East India company. Having distinguished himself at the Siege of Seringapatam in 1792, he was engaged in Diplomatic roles, overseeing several treaties with Persia. He would later go on to become Ambassador to Persia, Resident of Gwalior (1803–1804) and Governor of Bombay 1827–1830. As a historian he wrote extensively on India and Persia, publishing several books which became influential on thinking on the region.

After his death, an impressive obelisk commemorating his life and achievements was constructed, which today towers above Langholm in Dumfries shire.

### **The Four Knights of Eskdale**

In 1730 the Duke of Buccleuch gave Sir Pulteney Malcolm's grandfather, the Reverend Robert Malcolm, the lease of a house and sheep farm at Burnfoot, on the north bank of the River Esk, four miles upstream from Langholm. He hoped that this would supplement the Reverend's meagre income as Minister of the neighbouring parish of Ewes.

#### **Note 1**

*This description does not fit the Burnfoot Estate that is 1 mile East of Ecclefechan. The latter is 15 miles DOWNSTREAM of Langholm; and not on the Esk.*

#### **Note 2**

*It also does not fit the Burnfoot (near Hawick) that is  
a) on R. Teviott, not Esk; and  
b) 23 miles upstream of Langholm, not 4.*

Shortly after Robert's death in 1761, his son George married Margaret Pasley, the second youngest child of a neighbouring family. They began their married life in the small house of Douglan, Burnfoot. George had intended to follow his father into the church, but a slight speech defect precluded this, so he took up farming.

Over the next twenty years the couple had 17 children, ten sons and seven daughters, all but one of whom survived into adulthood. Unfortunately, George's farming income did not increase with the number of his children, and he was bankrupt by 1780.

As a result he was forced to find careers for his children when they were still very young. Fortunately, he was a man of considerable charm and he had influential patrons. Four of his sons went into the Navy, two into the East India Company, two became independent merchants in India, one an Anglican priest in England, leaving one to take up local employment in Scotland.

Four of them, James, Pulteney, John and Charles, achieved knighthoods and became known as The Four Knights of Eskdale.

<http://www.futuremuseum.co.uk/collections/features/online-exhibitions/napoleon,-nelson-and-the-knight/sir-john-malcolm.aspx>

Copyright: Dumfries & Galloway Council

## Chronicles of Muckledale

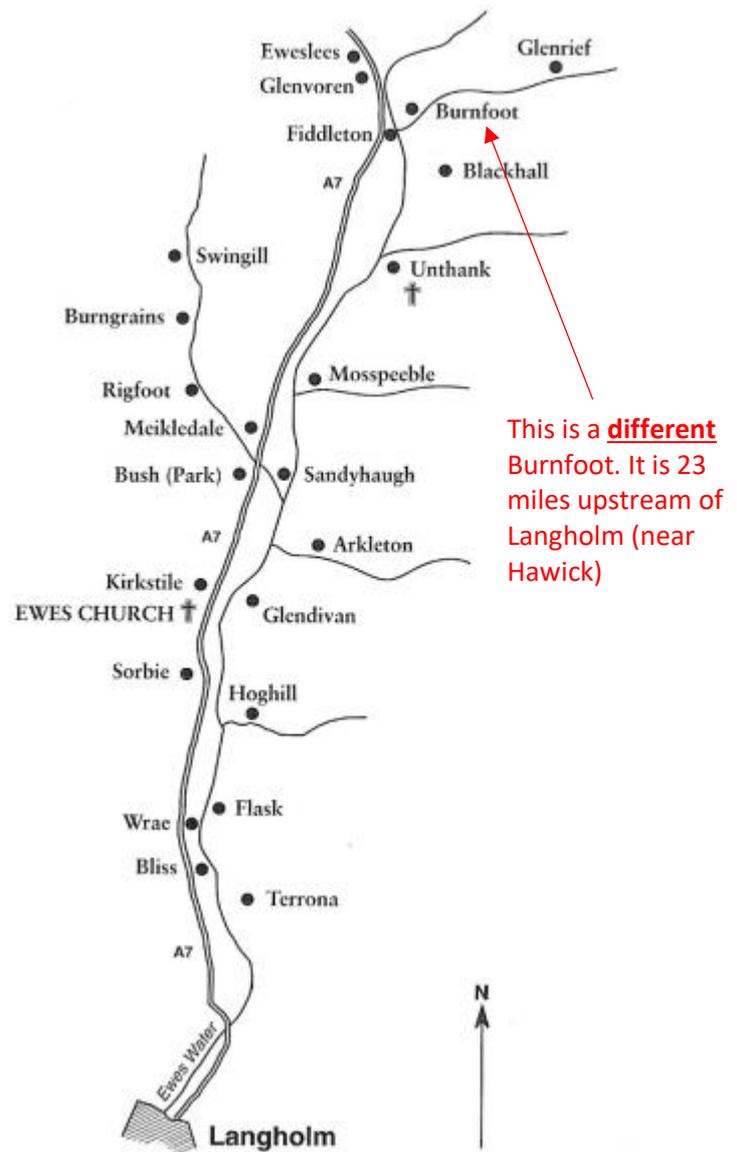
20. Robert Malcolm (1687-1761) became in 1717 minister of Ewes in which parish he is said to have founded four alms houses for poor families. His son, George, who helped him farm Burnfoot of Ewes, later taking it over, married Margaret Pasley or Paisley of Craig which, conveniently for courtship, is directly across the Esk from Burnfoot. Her brothers were General Sir Charles Pasley and Admiral Sir Thomas Pasley who fought alongside Governor George Johnstone of the Westerhall family at the battle of La Praya. George Malcolm and his wife Margaret produced seventeen children including the famous ‘Four Knights of Eskdale’: Colonel Sir James Malcolm; Admiral Sir Pulteney Malcolm; Vice Admiral Sir Charles Malcolm; and General Sir John Malcolm, plenipotentiary to Persia and governor of Bombay, whose conspicuous monument, erected 1835, stands tall on Whita Hill, Langholm. On all of these remarkable achievers see ODNB. See also Malcolm, J. Malcolm - Soldier, Diplomat, Ideologue of British India. The Life of Sir John Malcolm (1769-1833), Edinburgh, 2014.

---\*\*\*---

Although Mr Malcolm in Burnfoot died insolvent his sons, by the patronage of the Westerhall family and other friends, are now the first rate and most useful men in our country; 3 of them are knighted. Sir John is in the East Indies, a General. Sir Pulteney is an Admiral [and] resides mostly at Irvine, below Langholm; and both Sir John and Sir Pulteney get many young men into situations in the East Indies and the Navy Sir James is in the Army and Charles, the youngest, is Captain of a Man of War. Gilbert is a respectable clergyman in England and has some of our young scholars into situations.

“Chronicles of Muckledale” *being the Memoirs of Thomas Beattie of Muckledale 1736-1827*, Edited by Edward J Cowan,

<http://www.dumfriesandgalloway.hss.ed.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Cowan-The-Memoirs-of-Thomas-Beattie-op.pdf>



## **The Malcolm family of Burnfoot**

From: <https://www.burnfoot.net/home/history>

Towering over Langholm, in the Scottish border country, stands Whita Hill. On top of Whita Hill stands an obelisk, 100 feet high and visible for many miles around. Every summer at the Langholm Common Riding festival, a hundred horsemen ride up the hill from Langholm, circle the obelisk three times, and slip and slide down the steep incline back to Langholm.

Not many Langholmmites, however, and even fewer visitors, are aware that the obelisk was erected in 1835 in honour of one of Eskdale's most famous sons – Major General Sir John Malcolm GCB (1769-1833). But it also serves as a memorial to the whole remarkable Malcolm family of Burnfoot.

**On the North bank of the Esk river, four miles upstream from Langholm, lies the house and sheep farm of Burnfoot.** In the 18th century it belonged to the Dukes of Buccleuch, as did (and still does) much of the land in Eskdale. In 1730 the “tack” (lease at nominal rental) of Burnfoot was given to the Reverend Robert Malcolm, to supplement his stipend as Minister of the neighbouring parish of Ewes. Robert Malcolm had been born in Fife and had come to Ewes in 1717. He may well have gained the tack through the influence of his brother-in-law John Campbell, the Duchess of Buccleuch's factor at Langholm.

**The Reverend Robert brought his family over to Eskdale from Ewes and placed them in a small rented cottage on Douglen farm, about 200 yards north of the present site of Burnfoot House.** (‘Douglen’ and ‘Burnfoot’ are names of some antiquity; Douglen being mentioned in a charter of lands in Eskdale dated 1342, and Burnfoot appearing, as ‘Bourfoote’, in the Blaeu map of Dumfries shire dated 1654). So, besides riding over the hills to take services at the Ewes church, Robert began to “run a flock of ewes on Douglen hill”. **Across the river from Burnfoot lay the farm of Craig, belonging to the Pasley family, whose eldest son was the same age as Robert's son George (1729-1803).** There was no bridge across the river, but it was easily fordable at most times of the year. The children of the two families would have swum and frolicked on the sandbank where the river bends from north to east opposite Burnfoot. George would have had plenty of opportunities to meet Margaret Pasley (1742-1811) – “Bonnie Peggy Pasley” – the second youngest of the Pasley children. And shortly after his father's death in 1761, he married her.

They began their married life at Douglen. George had intended to follow his father into the church, but a slight speech defect precluded this. So he took up farming. He had been included in the ‘tack’ of Burnfoot in 1758, and must have fancied himself as a sheep farmer, for he wrote a treatise on the subject which was included in Thomas Tennant's ‘Tour of Scotland’, published in 1762. But George and Margaret's main claim to enduring fame was their astonishing fecundity. Over the next twenty years they produced 17 children – ten sons and seven daughters, all but one of them surviving to maturity. Unfortunately, George's farming income did not increase with the number of his progeny, and his financial straits were exacerbated by an unsuccessful foray into the wine trade, which bankrupted him in 1780, and left him in debt for the rest of his life. He was forced to “place” his sons in careers when they were still very young. Fortunately, he was a man of considerable charm – his portrait by Raeburn suggests a “ladies' man” – and he had plenty of influential patrons. Chief among these were the Johnstone family, who owned the neighbouring property of Westerhall. Sir William Johnstone, the 5th baronet, a long serving MP and later a director of the East India Company, had the good sense to marry Frances Pulteney, the niece of Lord Bath, who was said to have inherited over one million pounds. His younger brother George (‘Governor’) Johnstone, had been Governor of West Florida before the American War. Through them and through the good offices of Margaret's brother

John Pasley, a London merchant, the sons were well “placed”. Four of them went into the Navy, two into the East India Company, two became independent merchants in India, one an Anglican priest in England, and only one took up local employment in Scotland. Four of them, furthermore, achieved knighthoods, but that is another story (see ‘The four Malcolm Knights of Eskdale’).

Then there was the problem of accommodation. Douglen became more and more inadequate to house George and Margaret’s burgeoning family. So in 1768 they built and moved into a house on the site of the present Burnfoot House – slightly larger than Douglen but still little more than a cottage. Here they lived with their surviving daughters (one of the seven had died in infancy, another aged seventeen; one later married, but soon returned to Burnfoot a childless widow). Gentry they may have been, and infinitely better off than many in Eskdale, but they were impoverished, and must have led a Spartan life by the standards of to-day.

Still, some of the ten sons prospered, and sent home money to pay off George’s debts and ease the lives of the family at Burnfoot. In 1800, when George was becoming frail, Margaret’s brother John Pasley tried unsuccessfully to negotiate the purchase of Douglen farm from the neighbouring Johnstone family, fearing that on George’s death the Duke of Buccleuch might not renew the tack of Burnfoot Farm. But when George died in 1803, the Duke extended the tack for another ten years.

In 1807 Margaret and her daughters were joined at Burnfoot by her eldest son Robert, back from India after a career in the East India Company. As eldest son he might have been expected to take over the running of Burnfoot and Douglen farms from his eldest sister Agnes. But Robert was a sick man, and Agnes was a much stronger character. She continued to control affairs at Burnfoot with considerable efficiency for more than twenty. In 1810 her sister Mina, a charming and generous character, moved out to a cottage specially built for her on the side of the hill about 100 yards to the west of the main Burnfoot house (the ruins of this cottage still stand, though covered in undergrowth). There she started a tutorial establishment for several of her nephews – sons of brothers who were living, or had died, in the East.

After Margaret died in 1811, and Robert in 1813, there was further concern that the tack of Burnfoot might be lost, but once again it was extended, in the name of Agnes and Mina, though Agnes remained in charge of the farms. She was assisted in running the property by the Nichol family (shepherds who later became stewards at Burnfoot and Craig farms).

Margaret’s second son, James, was still serving in the Marines at the time of her death. When he eventually retired in 1832, he took the nearby Eskdale farm of Milnholm, and lived there as a widower until his death, aged 82, in 1849.

Her third son, Pulteney, leased Irvine, a property about three miles south of Langholm on the right bank of the Esk, in 1811, while he was still a serving naval officer. He would stay at Irvine on his visits to Scotland, and on his retirement in 1834, he came to live there – also as a widower, his wife Clementina having died in 1830. But he was also interested in acquiring Burnfoot and Douglen. In 1822 he purchased Douglen farm from the Johnstone family for 2900 pounds, inclusive of wood valued at 600 pounds, rent 100 pounds, with “29 years purchase” terms (i.e. 29 times the estimated annual income). At some point he also took over the tack of Burnfoot farm from Agnes and Mina. In the 1830s he negotiated the purchase of Burnfoot from the Duke of Buccleuch, for 4500 pounds, plus interest, but the deal was not completed until November 1838, shortly after his death.

Pulteney's only surviving son and heir, William Elphinstone Malcolm, then an undergraduate at Trinity College Cambridge, had ambitious plans for the property. He purchased Craig farm from his cousin, Colonel Dirom (a son of General Alexander Dirom, who had married Magdalene Pasley) to add to Burnfoot and Douglen, and made some immediate extensions to the Burnfoot building and stables, perhaps shrewdly going to Europe in 1840 for a grand tour while the builders were at work. He persuaded his uncle Charles (Admiral Sir Charles Malcolm 1782-1851), recently back from India and a widower, to house-sit for him while he was away. Throughout the second half of the 19th century W E Malcolm gradually extended the house and gardens to the form we see to-day (see 'The History of Burnfoot House'), and generally became a pillar of the Langholm community. He married Mary Douglas of Cavers in 1857, who produced a daughter, Mary, in 1859, but died tragically in childbirth. He married again in 1866 but had no more children.

When W E Malcolm died in 1907, a few days after his 90th birthday, the fortunes of the Malcolms of Burnfoot had reached their apogee. The farming area covered Burnfoot, Douglen and Craig. In addition to her Burnfoot property, Mary had inherited from her mother the great estate of Cavers near Hawick. To cap all, she had produced a son and heir to both properties – Archibald Palmer Douglas.

Unfortunately, these hopeful prospects were short lived. Already, in 1881, as W E Malcolm had grown old, the three farms had been leased to J. C. Little (who also farmed Burnfoot on Ewes). Two World Wars and a depression greatly reduced the resources of the family, and when Mary died in 1949, aged 90, the death duties payable on her estate were fatal to the family's fortunes. Her son had pre-deceased her, so her eldest grandson, James, took over Cavers, and her youngest, John, Burnfoot.

John found Burnfoot House in a dilapidated state. The museum was a mess, and dry rot was found in the northern wing. John pulled it down and used the rubble to fill the cellar. In 1951 he sold Craig to J.C. Little's son James. In 1961 he married and moved with his wife to Pink cottage (100 yards to the west of the main house). Finally, in March 1962 John sold the main house to Colonel Robertson McIsaac. In May of the same year he sold the Burnfoot farm to the owners of the neighbouring Westerhall estate and moved with his wife to the South of England. The original Douglen building had been pulled down in 1950/51 and was replaced in 1962 by a modern cottage (which still stands) for John's mother to live in – she died in 1967.

So ended the Malcolm family's 232-year connection with Burnfoot – and Eskdale.