

People in Logie Fenham



© Blairlogie Archives

Fenham after restoration in 1980s.

The early records of the land and buildings of **Fenham** are intertwined with the history of the **Telford Family** in **Blairlogie**. The ownership of the land and buildings that nowadays comprise the separate properties of **Telford House**, **Nethercraig** and (to an extent) **Fenham**, were all parts of the holdings of the **Telfords**.

John Telfer/Telford is recorded as building himself a cottage on **Telford's Feu** as early as 1728, and still, in 1825, the land, house, barn and stable known as **The Bog** in the East of **Blairlogie** is recorded as being owned by **John Telford**, wright of **Blairlogie** – a direct descendant of the **John Telfer** of 1728

These **Telford** lands, called **The Bog**, lay immediately to the West, and possibly overlapped the lands known as **Boghead of Blairlogie**. This property of **Boghead of Blairlogie** (the long-standing name of what is now **Fenham**) became the subject of a change of ownership in 1825, when it was purchased by another **John Telford** – a member of the extended family of the **Telfords** of **The Bog** next door. This **John Telford** was a nephew of the **John Telford** of **The Bog**, and he was a banker. He was a partner and cashier at the **Stirling Banking Company**, and he and his wife **Jane Wright** met through this banking connection. **Jane Wright** was related to **Peter** and **John Wright**, two of the other partners in the **Stirling Banking Company**.

The land purchased by **John Telford** and his wife **Jane Wright** or **Telford** comprised 1 acre and 45 falls of land, with a house, and it was called **Boghead of Blairlogie**. They purchased it from **William Bute**. Prior to this purchase by the **Telfords**, the house on the land had been occupied by **Ralph Moir**, a gardener and tenant of **William Bute**.

This piece of land formed a part of a larger area known as **The Boigs**, owned in the latter part of the 18th Century by **Archibald Edmond**. Ownership of **The Boigs** was passed down by inheritance firstly to **Thomas Edmond**, **Archibald's** son, and then again to **Archibald Shearer**, **Thomas's** nephew. **Archibald Shearer** is recorded as being a gardener and "sometime wheelwright", and his holding included a house and yard (formerly a byre and sheepyard). **The Boigs** was bounded to the North by the old **Menstrie** to **Stirling** road, to the South by the new Turnpike Road, to the West by the boundary of **The Bog**, and to the East probably as far as the confluence of the old and new roads to **Menstrie**, thus possibly incorporating the lands on which **Blairlogie Park** now stands.

In June 1827, **Mrs. Elizabeth Spittal** or **Dundas**, the wife of **Robert Bruce Dundas** of **Blair**, the Feu Superior of the lands at that time, granted to **Archibald Shearer**, the privilege of "winning stones" in the **Craig of Blair**; a right already granted to his grandfather **Archibald Edmond** as far back as 1744 by **Adam Bennet** of **Blairlogie**. However, in May 1805, **Archibald Shearer** had sold the western section of these lands to **William Bute**, and it was from **William Bute** that **John Telford** bought this section of **The Boigs** called **Boghead of Blairlogie** in 1825. The extent of the land appears to conform to the extent of the **Fenham** lands today.

However, shortly after this purchase, the **Stirling Banking Company** ran into problems. When it first admitted to an "embarrassment" in its finances in February 1826, it obtained an advance of £85,000 from the **Bank of Scotland**, but this only staved off the bankruptcy that followed in August 1826. Despite this setback to their finances, the interest of **John Telford** and his wife **Jane** in **Boghead of Blairlogie** continued until the middle of the 19th Century. Although **John Telford** moved first to **London** around 1834, and emigrated to **New Zealand** with his sons **John** and **Thomas** in the 1850's, he established a life interest in the property for his wife **Jane**, who stayed in **Scotland** with her other children **Eliza**, **William**, **Cecilia**, **Jane**, **Margaret** and **Hugh James**. There is a Charter of Confirmation of this Life Interest for **Jane Wright** or **Telford** recorded in 1852, although it is not clear whether she continued to live at **Boghead of Blairlogie** or rented out to tenants after the family split up. It is recorded, however, that by 1852, **Jane** was living in **Glasgow**, and she died in **Paddington, London** in 1856.

It is probable that this Charter of Confirmation was obtained to establish the basis of **Jane Wright's** ownership to facilitate the sale of **Boghead of Blairlogie** in the late 1850's to **Mrs. Mary Wedderburn Morries Stirling** of **Blackgrange**, when it thereby became part of the **Gogar Estate**.

It seems likely that both towards the end of **Jane Wright** or **Telford's** ownership, and again, during the ownership by **Mrs. Morries Stirling**, the property was rented out to tenants, but full details of these tenancies have not yet been established. The evidence for such an "absentee landlord" role by **Mrs. Morries Stirling** is recorded in December 1876, when she disposed the property known as **Boghead of Blairlogie**, at her death, to her son **John Morries Morries Stirling**; for, at that time, the address given for both **Mrs. Morries Stirling** and her son **John** is given as **9, South Eaton Place, London**. Interestingly, **Mrs. Morries Stirling** in this dispolement reserved to herself the right, for

herself and her successors, to run and maintain water pipes through the land disposed to her son, and, also, if necessary, to build and maintain a cistern. There is no evidence extant however, of her having invoked this right.

It is possible that the changing ownership of **Boghead** was not matched by the tenants, because the 1871 Census Records include **Janet Moir**, a widow and gardener of 71 years, assisted by her servant **Isabella Wright**, as being in occupation at **Boghead**. Could these be the descendants of the **Ralph Moir**, recorded as being the tenant back in 1825?

John Morries Morries Stirling actually inherited the **Gogar** properties, including **Boghead of Blairlogie** on his mother's death in 1893. He was an interesting man. Born in 1845, he had advanced ideas from an early age. He was the first to instal milking machines on the farms of the **Gogar Estate** and he also invented a process for hardening the rails for railway lines under the brand name "Mr. Morries Stirling's Patent Rails". He also continued to use **Boghead** as a tenancy investment, and the 1881 Census Records show occupancy by tenant **William McGowan**, a 50 year old millworker, with his wife **Mary McGowan**, also 50, and their children **Anne** (26) a millworker, **Jane** (23) in general service, **Andrew** (20) a cooper, **William** (15) another millworker, **Alex** (13), also a millworker, **Mary** (11) a scholar, **George** (9) a scholar and **Hunter** (4). They also included **Mary's** mother-in-law **Ann Sneddon**, an 80 year old widow in their household.

But, by the time of the 1891 Census, the tenants had changed to **John Jeffrey**, a 69 year old gardener, with his wife **Margaret Jeffrey**, aged 62. This is the same **Jeffrey Family** who had previously lived next door in **Orchard Cottage**, with their two children **Janet** and **Maggie**; but it is clearly a different **Jeffrey Family** from that recorded at **Boghead**, just ten years later, in the 1901 Census, which shows a new **John Jeffery**, a 47 year old gardener, with his wife **Mary Ann** (47) and son **David Jeffrey** (16) as the then tenants.

He planned for the future, and as early as 12th October 1898, he formally bequeathed the property known as **Boghead of Blairlogie** - all as described before – in his Will, to **Mrs. Helen Jane Hamilton Blair** or **Barbor of Gogar**. It is believed that she was a cousin. **Mrs. Jane Hamilton Blair** or **Barbor**, at the time that the Will was made in October 1898, was recorded under the name **Mrs. C. J. Barbor**, and her address was given as **5, Palmerston Road, Dublin**. However, she had clearly reverted to a version of her earlier name by the time that the provisions of **John Morries Morries Stirling's** Will were invoked in 1913, and her address is then registered as **Arlesdene, Hoddeston, Hertfordshire**.

Later, yet still under the ownership of **John Morries Morries Stirling**, the 1911 Census gives the tenants at **Boghead** as **Thomas Watt**, a farmer, with his family consisting of his wife **Sarah Watt** (29) and their children **Jeannie** (7), **Alexander** (2) and **Thomas** (8 months). **Boghead** was also the home to their family servant **William Drummond**, a single man of 40 years.

Mrs. Jane Hamilton Blair or **Barbor** of **Gogar**, on inheriting the **Gogar Estate**, continued as a non-resident landed property owner, renting out the properties of the **Gogar Estate**. Shortly after her ownership of **Boghead of Blairlogie**, as part of the estate, was confirmed in 1913, she married **Gilbert Lewis West**, a solicitor and that marriage took place in 1916. Thereafter she is referred to in all official documents as **Mrs. Jane Hamilton Blair** or **Barbor** or **West**! By the end of the 1914 -1918 war, as owner of the **Gogar Estate**, she is listed separately in the Valuation Rolls of that period as owning, **Gogar House, Gogar Mains Farm, Gogar East Farm, Gogar West Farm, Cotkerse House, Cotkerse**

Cottages, Dumyat Cottage, and, of course, **Boghead of Blairlogie**. These ownerships and estate tenancy arrangements lasted until **Mrs. West's** death in 1941, when her properties continued to be administered by her Trustees until near the end of the Second World War in 1944. She had established these Trustees by a Settlement in 1929.

Returning, however, to the specific history of **Boghead of Blairlogie**, **Mrs. West** entered into a tenancy agreement at the onset of her ownership with **Alexander McDonald**, a miner, who then lived there with his wife and children - **Richard, Danny and May** – until the house was sold by the Trustees of **Mrs. Helen West** in 1944. **Helen West's** Trustees were **John Parker Watson**, solicitor, and **Gilbert Lewis West**, **Helen's** husband, and it was these two Trustees who handled the sale of **Boghead** to **Alexander Sharp Drummond** described as a Plate Welder, and his wife **Barbara Vass Drummond** for the sum of £300 in May 1944. The **Drummonds** had lived at **Powis Lodge** before buying **Boghead**.

The sale of **Boghead** was occasioned by a requirement on the Trustees to “disburden the subjects hereinafter disposed of the Bond and Disposition in Security for the sum of £40.000” Presumably this disburdening attached to most of the properties in **Helen West's** estate, and, judging by its sale price, not **Boghead** alone!

The ownership of **Mr. and Mrs. Drummond** lasted only until 1946, when the property was sold to **Mrs. Margaret McPhee**. She appears, initially, to have lived by herself in **Boghead**, but in 1951, she rented an extension section to the West side of her house to **John McDiarmid**, listed as a retired gentleman. He, in turn, installed **Archibald McDiarmid**, a gardener and presumably a relative, as the occupant of this side section of **Mrs. McPhee's** house. This joint occupancy by **Mrs. McPhee** and **Archibald McDiarmid** lasted until 1972, when **Mr. McDiarmid** was replaced as the side wing lodger by **Mr. Martin**. After he left, the side section of rented space was vacated and fell into disuse.

Shortly after taking ownership at the end of the Second World War, **Mrs. McPhee** established a residential caravan park in the extensive grounds of **Boghead**, and this existed for several years. This park may have reflected the shortage of houses at the end of the war, for many of the occupants are known to have later emigrated to countries such as Australia and New Zealand.

Latterly, after the departure of **Archibald McDiarmid**, **Mrs. McPhee** lived alone at **Boghead**, with her chickens in the outhouses to keep her company until 1980, when she died, and the house and grounds were sold to **Dan Ramsay and Sons Ltd**, a company of property developers. They developed plans not only to renovate and extend **Boghead**, but also to build additional houses in the grounds.

These plans for the “rehabilitation plus” of **Boghead** caused some disquiet on the part of



one or two traditionalist **Blairlogie** residents, and one such resident went so far, between 1981 1983, as to lobby the Planning Authorities, The National Trust for Scotland, and even **George Younger** – at that time, **Scottish Secretary** and a Cabinet Minister.

As their plans for redevelopment of the site faltered, **Dan Ramsay and Co** eventually sold the house and site in 1983.