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Miss Christian MacLagan, pioneer Victorian antiquary and archaeologist: her early life, family and social context

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ABSTRACT

Christian MacLagan (1811-1901), from Stirling, occupies the intersection of amateur antiquarianism and modern archaeology. Although not Scotland's earliest female archaeologist, she pioneered the compilation and publication of prehistoric sites, using her own plans and fieldwork. This paper examines her previously undocumented social background and the roots of her maternal family, the Colvilles, and their fortune in the colonial indigo trade in Bengal. Colville links with Annfield estate, Stirling and Laws, Monifieth, are noted. A large Calcutta-derived legacy in 1859 enabled MacLagan to circumvent many conventional restrictions on women.

INTRODUCTION

Christian MacLagan has been credited as Scotland's 'first female archaeologist', but this is a debatable title.[1] She was a forceful, opinionated woman, who was profoundly conscious of the legal restrictions on her sex, and that she was denied educational opportunities open to men. She exists in the overlap between the amateur antiquary and the dawn of systematic archaeology, but belongs fully to neither. MacLagan[2] acts more as a transitional figure, an 'archaeo-antiquary', or 'antiqu-ologist', if such an intermediate subject ever existed. She adopted archaeological methods such as comparative plans, when appropriate, without relinquishing an antiquarian's use of written sources, local traditions and her own considerable creativity.[3] In short, MacLagan trod an interdisciplinary path, using any and all tools available to her as a lone woman unaffiliated with male academia. Dr Murray Cook is excavating some of her sites around Stirling, and her other fieldwork has been quite fairly assessed by Sheila Elsdon.[4]

Historic Environment Scotland has now erected a commemorative plaque to MacLagan, formally recognising her contributions to Scottish archaeology (Illus 1), but her own background has received little attention. This paper examines MacLagan's personal life, which in turn, inevitably influenced her work. It is important to stress that it does not attempt to place her against any theoretical or gender studies context but, more conventionally, assembles archive research into a chronological narrative of her life outside archaeology. Her story is partially reconstructed by critically and scrupulously 'dis-aggregating' or recombining traces embedded in apparently unconnected sources. As feminist archaeologist M L S Sørensen says, female pioneers 'often do not behave as we "desire" them to … [they] are still burdened by the [researcher's] need for

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This paper is in memory of Catriona Cross, née MacLeod

Illus 1 Plaque marking MacLagan's contributions to archaeology, erected outside her home in 2019 in Windsor Place, Stirling. (Photograph by Morag Cross)

emotional empathy and … desire to find … a specified political commitment'.[5] The present writer's approach was liberated by accepting that MacLagan's attitudes, where known, covered a span from surprisingly modern to unsympathetic and disagreeable. For me, she is easier to admire than to like.

MacLagan had a strong tendency to self-contradictory behaviour and therefore it can be misleading to uncritically accept her own estimation of herself. She frequently complains of suffering multiple slights and not receiving sufficient academic recognition because she was female. However, MacLagan chose not to take several opportunities to present her own papers, her artistic rubbings of sculptured stones were nationally exhibited and publicly praised, and she had the support of numerous eminent, male, contemporaries. She did indeed receive setbacks, but it seems valid to look at the various reasons for them. They were not all due to automatic sexual discrimination – though she certainly endured certain published indignities with vigorously outspoken resilience.

MacLagan could bear grudges against former friends for decades, and frequently mentions such resentments, but comes across as an intensely conflicted character. She withheld payments, and even took people to court over money, when a more conciliatory approach might have worked far better.[6] Most importantly for her archaeological legacy, she fell out with senior members of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, although the reasons for this are apparently unrecorded. The circumstantial evidence and timing, however, suggest that it was personal rather than based on her gender. In some cases, her lack of interpersonal skills foiled her ambitions, but she always attributed it to being an 'inferior' woman.[7] Her doughty, unapologetic and boldly assertive nature overshadowed 'the true value of her work', and may have caused potential allies to simply avoid dealing with her.[8]

She repeatedly exercised 'elective' rather than 'necessitous' obstinacy. In church and legal matters, MacLagan often dissented, by choice, from professional counsel. She obviously faced, but was rarely subdued by, her inherent handicap of 'femaleness' in an age regulated by, and patterned after, men. In contrast, when in pursuit of intellectual goals, and regardless of gender norms, she could be deeply pragmatic.

Embarking on archaeology, she actively sought experienced mentors, knowing they would inevitably be, unlike herself, of the 'privileged' sex. Likewise, her work appeared in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries* under her own sole authorship, and not, as has been erroneously claimed, alongside a male sponsor's name. Papers by male contributors (or a shorter precis) were also 'communicated', that is, 'read aloud', by others if the writer was physically absent from the evening meetings in Edinburgh.[9] MacLagan's finished efforts were hers alone, requiring no masculine imprimatur or co-authorship to appear in the *Proceedings*, and the Society never required that from her.

As will be shown, the truth is much more nuanced than MacLagan's severely uncompromising opinion of her own treatment. Early archaeologists, all men, cultivated personal visibility in institutions, and at meetings. As a woman, MacLagan was denied access to many such collegiate and male academic spaces, but her reaction was to compensate by conforming closely to existing male academic paradigms.[10] By following accepted standards of knowledge presentation (which included references, plans and quotations) she downplayed (but never hid) her gender, and wished to be judged on her work alone. She was acutely self-aware that she was trapped by a 'corseted ceiling' of male-imposed precepts, and used both the church and archaeology as orthodox and innovative outlets respectively for her restless intellectual energy.

JOURNALISTS AND OUTRAGEOUS CLERICS

Christian MacLagan was the third of six children (four survived) born to George MacLagan, a distiller, at Underwood, Longcroft, near Denny, on 25 June 1811.[11] Her mother, Janet Colville, came from a reputable and educated Dundee family of newspaper publishers – one sister married a doctor, four brothers sought fortunes in India, and another joined the printing firm.[12] MacLagan was named after her paternal grandmother, Christian being a very popular female name until it was adopted as a male name in the 20th century. Her three siblings were Frederick (1809–59), Thomas (1813–45) and Jane (1817–29).

While the Colvilles were instrumental in Christian MacLagan's later life, her immoral and libidinous grandfather, Revd Frederick MacLagan (1738–1818) must have loomed large. Her *Dictionary of National Biography* entry states that she was Frederick's biographer,[13] but it was her far more morally upright great-grandfather, Revd Alexander MacLagan of Little Dunkeld, that she actually studied.[14] The ministry was virtually a hereditary profession, and clerical families often intermarried. Revd Frederick MacLagan was a third-generation clergyman,[15] but was ousted from Melrose for adultery. The Melrose parishioners suspected his own bride, Christian Turnbull, had been pregnant and their marriage backdated from 1764 to 1763 to compensate.[16] Revd MacLagan's affair with a servant (lying in ditches with her, and fabricating a marriage) produced two children, but the General Assembly of 1785 dismissed the witnesses as malicious.[17] His published self-defence failed to convince his congregation, and he quit Melrose in 1788.[18]

The colossal scandal forced him to enter 'trade' as an itinerant barley-buyer for James Haig's whisky distillery at Lochrin, Edinburgh.[19] Several times between 1796 and 1798, Revd MacLagan molested Mrs Haig, a vulnerable alcoholic who lived with a nurse. He attacked both women due to his 'rather libertine disposition … Tripping [the nurse's] foot … he endeavoured to hold her down in the shrubbery; … after a struggle she got [free] … it was his way with every woman he could get hold of.'[20]

Ministers were customarily the social lynchpins of the parish, enjoying immense influence, spacious homes and regular stipends. Revd MacLagan's total disgrace meant that only one daughter married, and none of his sons attended university, as would have been generally expected.[21] Despite her grandfather's debauched reputation, Christian MacLagan asserted that he influenced her love of history.[22] Underwood (her birthplace, now rebuilt) faces the Antonine Wall and the Roman sites at Seabegs Wood (Canmore

ID 46800, 46786, 46788), and Revd MacLagan lived at 'Hayfield', a very common place-name. It was either just north of Dennyloanhead or at Cambusbarron, on the western outskirts of Stirling.[23] Family connections (with the Colquhoun owners)[24] and the former minister's business links probably encouraged her father, George, to rent the distillery at Underwood.

'Miss MacLagan's' executors said: 'Of course, we were aware of the scandal with reference to Reverend Mr MacLagan … [It's in] the *Scots Magazine* [and] he published a pamphlet in his own defence … Miss MacLagan … never spoke to us – for obvious reasons possibly – regarding her grandfather.'[25] Her friend, the feminist author Charlotte C Stopes, wrote: 'Her father and grandfather were both interested in Roman camps, and [took her] to old forts and collecting various antiquities … she carried home in her pinafore a large quantity of scorched corn.'[26] As both men died when she was only seven, MacLagan could be ignoring an inconvenient reality, and idealising her dangerously flawed grandfather. Instead of a long, laudatory dedication, as was usual for ministers' tombstones, his marker in St Ninians churchyard followed the older, more discreet style of just using initials (stone now missing).[27]

Many women's lives in this period are inevitably seen, at one remove, through male proxies, or subsumed by their husbands. This is especially ironic in MacLagan's case, as she protested against her own second-class status many times. As unmarried daughters traditionally cared for their mothers, she probably behaved as expected, and acted as Mrs MacLagan's companion. Her autobiography, mentioned in her obituaries, was most likely lost when her lawyers' office was cleared out,[28] but brief snippets survive. MacLagan said of her cousin, visiting around 1817, 'Our greatest portrait painter Raeburn in painting Helen MacLagan asked permission to keep a copy as of the most beautiful woman he had ever seen.'[29] The current writer's enquiries suggest that he never painted Helen, a Perthshire farmer's daughter. MacLagan's recollections are sometimes unreliable, and embroidered with her own fond-imaginings. This biography was almost certainly not 'destroyed by her relations', embarrassed at 'revelations' – her lengthy, acrimonious court battles were already in the national press, and her own publications contain numerous sharp and acerbic remarks on various male associates.[30]

GROWING UP IN STIRLING – AND ALSO IN EDINBURGH

Underwood distillery suffered various financial troubles between 1807 and 1818.[31] MacLagan's father's estate (in partnership with his brother), had just been released from sequestration when he died in 1818.[32] Such bankruptcies were a social disgrace, yet another blemish to the MacLagan name. Janet Colville became legal guardian to her children, including one-year-old Jane (referred to as 'Jean'), and probably moved to Braehead Farm, beside St Ninians Church, outside Stirling.[33] Hayfield was not available, being occupied by a terminally ill relative, who left nothing to the widow.[34] MacLagan's other grandfather, an enterprising printer, Thomas Colville senior, died in 1819. He is credited with Dundee's first local directory, and in partnership with his son Alexander, he published the popular *Dundee Weekly Advertiser* for several years.[35] Alexander continued in business in Glasgow from *c* 1827 until 1836.[36]

The family becomes harder to trace in the 1820s, but her sons required to be educated, and Janet Colville had fallen out with her family in Dundee.[37] The MacLagans may have been distantly related to a Stirling landowner, William Turnbull of Forthbank, but the link is unclear.[38] Stirling, with such social acquaintances and schools, was their natural destination. Wester Livilands estate had owned both Braehead Farm and Livilands broch (Canmore ID 47274) until the 1820s.[39] It is plausible that MacLagan was intrigued by this series of walls, barely 0.5km from her doorstep. The broch has been re-examined by Dr Murray Cook of Stirling, with MacLagan's status as 'arguably Scotland's', or 'the UK's first female archaeologist' on the publicity.[40] This claim is discussed below.

MacLagan may have attended an informal infant's school in St Ninians village, as they were common at the time, but when older she could have received a more 'official', structured education. Stirling had both 'English' and 'Writing' schools in the 1820s, which accepted girls. Most pupils attended both simultaneously. 'In 1827, there were about 200 pupils – girls as well as boys.'[41] She may even have witnessed public hangings as a child: 'To hear her speak of the execution of … Baird and Hardie [in Broad Street], the Radical Martyrs, the booming of the Castle guns when George III died …'; these local events of 1820 made an indelible impression.[42]

Janet MacLagan's 11-year old daughter, Jane, developed an 'almost incurable scrofulous disease committing great ravages of her nose, cheek and almost every joint'.[43] To access better treatment for this tubercular condition, the family moved to Edinburgh early in 1829, where MacLagan's cousin, David Colville Carruthers, was studying medicine.[44] In addition, MacLagan's uncle, Frederick MacLagan senior, was now a successful baker, magistrate and town councillor there.[45] The family lived in various flats on the edge of the New Town in Claremont Street (now Saxe-Coburg Street). Despite Carruthers's efforts, young Jane died, and was buried at St Cuthberts in March 1829.[46]

The MacLagans stayed in Edinburgh from *c* 1829 until 1834,[47] where MacLagan, when a teenager, could also have obtained further schooling – she was exceptionally well-informed, and cites extensive sources in her own work. She was also a competent artist, a worthwhile feminine 'accomplishment' that she put to academic, rather than decorative use. Elsdon suggests her grandfather's ecclesiastical library was available, but this is unlikely – valuable assets like books were usually sold, especially during a 30-year retirement like the Revd Frederick's.[48] Her mother's family were printers in both Dundee and Glasgow,[49] but such cities were inaccessible to a lone teenage girl, so it remains a possibility that she undertook further study in Edinburgh. An alternative possibility is that MacLagan continually accumulated knowledge, where she could, across her lifetime. This is discussed below.

Mrs MacLagan was presumably supported by her brother-in-law, or her own brothers. MacLagan's uncle moved to upmarket Frederick Street in 1832, an indication of his growing prosperity.[50] His unmarried sister, Christian MacLagan senior, was living nearby, and later acted as his housekeeper/servant.[51] She was single possibly due to her father's reputation, and may represent yet another, belated, victim of his aberrant behaviour.

Dr Carruthers describes the 'bold affronteurs' [insults] of some Dundee cousins towards his aunts, and previous estrangement between Mrs MacLagan and her own mother.[52] 'Whatever animosities formerly existed between [Mrs MacLagan] and our Dundee family [her own mother and sisters], had all been forgiven and forgotten.'[53] Carruthers later fell out with 'Mrs M' when he failed to follow her career advice – she wanted Carruthers to avoid India, where 'I might interfere with her own son's favour', or advancement.[54] He notes her distant manner, and difficulty making friends in Edinburgh.

The MacLagans 'took the waters' at Leven in 1830, for MacLagan's health. Dr Carruthers was the Colvilles' only male relative in Scotland, and consequently he protested that the women were emotionally over-reliant upon him.[55] MacLagan was, from childhood, living in an entirely female domestic environment, and various familial divisions had caused longstanding resentments. Mrs MacLagan's sister, 'poor, defenceless … Aunt Jane', fled a Dundee cousin's 'shocking and barbarous' abuse (probably bullying) to find refuge in Edinburgh in 1829. 'All along she had poured forth to Mrs M[acLagan] the unnatural conduct of [the female relatives] … indeed she could [not] think of anything else.'[56]

The youthful MacLagan inhabited this febrile atmosphere, seeing her own mother, aunt and cousin Carruthers plot revenge – the Colville brothers 'would soon be home again [from India] and avenge [Jane's] wrongs – wrongs not to be forgiven'.[57] Aunt Jane had been coughing blood, and her rapid death was 'a sacrifice to the inhuman pride' of her cousin, rather than due to disease. This lesson in nurturing grudges, pride and victimhood possibly reflects MacLagan's later

determination to defend her own personal dignity as she saw fit, and her own ability to nurture minor slights for decades.

BENGAL AND THE INDIGO TRADE

Margaret Brown, MacLagan's maternal grandmother, died in 1831 at the Carrutherses' Dundee house.[58] Her influence on MacLagan is unknown, but would surely have informed her other significant female relationships. The Colville printers demonstrate Dundee's proverbial dependence on 'jam, jute and journalism', but it was indigo, not jute, that enabled MacLagan's later publications. Indigo cultivation was so profitable it was nicknamed 'blue gold', and was the ubiquitous dye for naval uniforms. This is another area of Scottish Imperial trade that would repay examination.

Since the 1800s, Mrs MacLagan's brothers, John, David, William and Thomas Colville, had been indigo planters in Krishnagur, Bengal, and had children by Indian women.[59] Thomas returned a rich man and purchased considerable property in late 1834, including Laws estate near Monifieth.[60] Thomas built himself a lavish mansion 'in the style of Elizabeth' in 1835, although his stay there was brief.[61] He sold Laws to his brother William in early 1837.[62] Thomas moved permanently to Annfield House in Stirling in 1838 (Illus 2).[63] It bordered Wester Livilands (site of Braehead Farm, MacLagan's childhood home), where the recently excavated 'lost broch' is situated. Laws held yet another ancient monument to inspire MacLagan – the eponymous hillfort (Canmore ID 33450) overlooked the house.[64]

The MacLagans had left Edinburgh by April 1834, suggesting that Mrs MacLagan's returned brother was subsidising her. It was probably his 'indigo money' that enabled her to join him in the leafy and salubrious southern fringes of Stirling near Annfield. MacLagan, now 23, would have had to re-establish herself within a new social circle. In or before 1835, her elder brother Frederick had joined the family firm of 'Colville, Gilmore and Co' (the title varied), merchants, of Kolkata (formerly Calcutta).[65] He became an assistant indigo planter in Krishnagur (or Krishnanagar), a small town on the Janlangi River in north-eastern India. His younger sibling Thomas arrived to join him in mid-1835.[66]

The MacLagans feature in the memoirs of fellow planter George Anderson (1889), whose brother once owned Laws estate.[67] William's two illegitimate Scots–Bengali daughters, Mary and Helen, were baptised with his surname in 1827.[68] They accompanied him home and received large financial settlements.[69] A contemporary

Illus 2 Annfield House about 1990, before redevelopment as a care home. (Courtesy of Stirling Council Archives)

newspaper mis-identifies an Indian servant at Laws as Black, but the household must have been a cultural shock for the sheltered MacLagan if, and when, she ever visited Laws.[70] A fourth uncle, David, also had a mixed-heritage daughter (Margaret Maria Colville, born India, 1812),[71] who married a noted English botanist (see below).

Besides Dr David Carruthers, her cousins included two spinsters (printer Alexander's daughters, Christian Ann and Margaret Colville) in Crieff.[72] MacLagan's petty vanities included allowing others to assume her (non-existent) kinship with the famous MacLagan physicians in Edinburgh. According to Dr Robert Craig MacLagan (1839–1919), 'Miss M told me that her aunts claimed a cousinship with [his grandfather]. Note, that this, cannot possibly, so far as my knowledge goes … [be] first cousins.'[73] Her lawyer agreed: 'There is certainly no evidence whatever to support' any relationship.[74] The distinguished Edinburgh clan (including Sir A D MacLagan, Archbishop W D MacLagan and General Sir R MacLagan) were indeed entirely unrelated to the their Stirling namesakes.

Illus 3 Elizabeth Kerr Colville, MacLagan's younger aunt and fellow author, probably taken in the 1860s. (Private collection, photograph by Morag Cross)

THE COLVILLES OF ANNFIELD, STIRLING AND LAWS, MONIFIETH

When MacLagan's uncle, Thomas Colville, returned home from Kolkata, he made a socially acceptable match with a friend's daughter, their massive age-gap notwithstanding. In 1837, aged 52, he married 19-year old Elizabeth Kerr, another extraordinary woman (Illus 3).[75] She, like MacLagan, has her own entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* as the (admittedly obscure) historical novelist Roxburghe Lothian.[76] MacLagan and Elizabeth's relationship appears to have been distant, but the latter was privately educated, fluent in French, Italian and Spanish, and had lived in England and Jersey.[77] Her husband had had a longstanding relationship with one 'Bibi Bachan' in Bengal, to whom he left money in 1851, with the knowledge of his wife.[78] Elizabeth came from a Hull shipbuilding family,[79] and like the Colvilles, had relatives in Dundee. Her later aspirations to ancestral links with the Dukes of Roxburghe, however, cannot presently be verified.[80] Elizabeth had enjoyed an exceptional education and travels so it would have been natural for MacLagan to have been wistful about her own opportunities, even if the childbearing hazards of married life were not to be envied.

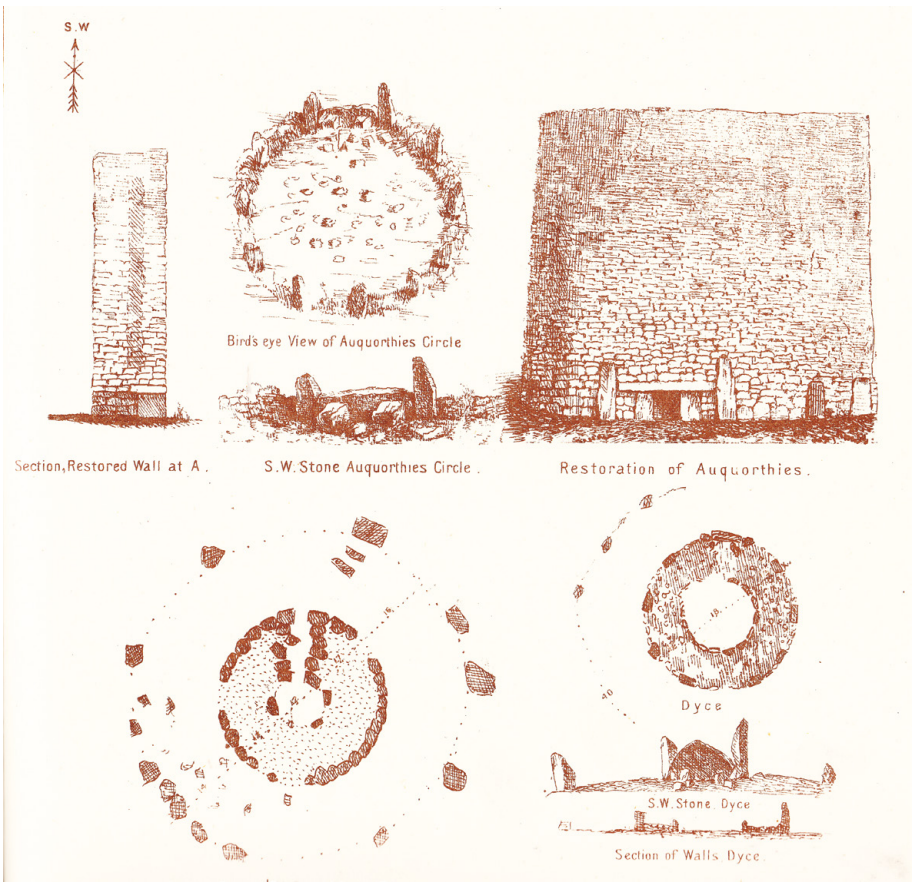
Although MacLagan's other uncle, William Colville, had bought Laws in 1837, he continued to travel between his mistress in Kolkata and their daughters in Forfarshire.[81] Meanwhile, MacLagan was close to Thomas and Elizabeth's young family at Annfield. Their first son was accidentally 'overlaid' (smothered) in 1839, and thus began the series of stylistically similar family tombstones at Holyrude (Stirling), culminating in MacLagan's own gravestone.[82] The baby and his father lie under a grand assemblage north-west of the church.[83]

MacLagan was inevitably dependent on her brothers' remittances and the generosity of Mrs

MacLagan's brother at Annfield. She and her mother are described as having 'independent' means in the 1841 census, and being 'annuitants' in 1851.[84] Christian MacLagan's name is frequently mis-spelled – in the 1851 census, she is 'Christiana' but both 'Christian' and variants like Christine were popular girls' names until the 20th century, and there was no gender ambiguity implied.

SELF-EDUCATION IN STIRLING – FOR WOMEN

MacLagan held many unorthodox opinions about the origins of hillforts and other ancient monuments.[85] She read widely in support of her ideas, which are ingenious but highly eccentric, and very much unique to her. Her belief in stone circles and chambered cairns as ruined houses (see Illus 4) was bizarre even before Daniel Wilson's 1851 *Prehistoric Scotland*, where they are firmly identified as ritual structures.[86] Although she felt snubbed by male contemporaries, it could be posited that she was actually treated with considerable deference due to her sex. For instance the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland awarded her the newly created honour of 'Lady Associate' in 1871, in admiration of her very first paper, 'Round castles … of the Forth' (see below).[87] This new accolade, which she herself proudly quoted on her title pages, was



Illus 4 MacLagan's own illustration of her theory that stone circles like Aquhorthies were the ruins of (non-existent) brochs (MacLagan 1875: pl 28; courtesy of Morag Cross).

a visible mark of the Society's esteem, rather than an ephemeral footnote. She could as easily have been totally repudiated due to the smothering sexism then prevalent. A man with identical 'stone circle' theories to hers would, arguably, have met similar opposition but she, characteristically, did not agree.[88] She was, nevertheless, courageous in ensuring her voice was still heard, by publishing her own material, which was a rare and costly undertaking for a woman in that period.

Where did MacLagan gain her impressive learning, beyond the schoolroom? During her five years in Edinburgh, she could have benefited from the several subscription libraries and other libraries there.[89] The Colvilles were saturated in literature; for instance, they published the first historical guide to Dundee, and another family member sold books.[90] Her mother belonged to Stirling Subscription Library, which in 1844 had 22 female subscribers, around one-sixth of its total membership.[91] The catalogue contains 1,400 books but the local newspaper stated there were 5,000.[92] They included both *Statistical Account* series, which MacLagan used heavily in her own publications.[93]

'Stirling School of Arts' (founded *c* 1826) encouraged women, through 'forwarding your own moral and intellectual advancement by … popular lectures'.[94] In 1844, '[t]he ladies of Stirling [who once] regularly attended the lectures' were invited to 'resum[e] their subscriptions'.[95] It owned over 1,000 'recent publications of the arts and sciences'. Glasgow professors taught subjects that were not traditional for women such as explosives, astronomy and the relevance of religion to modern science. MacLagan surely attended the biblical archaeology series in her own church, on Palestine, Roman cities and Palmyra. By 1863, female education had progressed sufficiently for 'a young lady, Miss Blyth of Edinburgh … eminently qualified … in the sciences' to offer 'a course of scientific lectures … no male ear will be allowed … ladies only need apply for tickets'.[96] This sounds purpose-made for MacLagan's proto-feminist inclinations.

Being a committed and very devout Presbyterian, another route to learning was through the church. MacLagan chafed against the artificial limitations of the socially mandated 'woman's spheres' of home, faith and charity. She duly exploited this religious outlet to the fullest. She and her mother were congregants of Stirling's Revd Alexander Beith, and she also belonged to Stirling's 'Female Society for the Relief of Aged Indigent Women' from 1835 to 1840. This had an entirely female membership and elected board. 'Miss MacLaggan' was among those 'visiting members' who would distribute small pensions and coal to their 40 clients,[97] funded by collections made during sermons by guest preachers. MacLagan was elected secretary for two terms, from 1838.[98] Revd Beith had initially refused to give the fundraising address in 1839, although his wife was president. However, it was MacLagan, as secretary, who successfully 'again invited [him] to preach', raising a large collection.[99] Stirling's medieval Holyrude Church was gravely overcrowded. Having quit the Female Society, MacLagan may have participated in fundraising for the construction of Beith's new North Church from 1840. It opened in 1842, with the Colvilles and MacLagans as founder members (they followed Beith's congregation between his various churches).

CHASM THROUGH THE SOUL – THE 1843 DISRUPTION

MacLagan was heavily influenced by the opinions of several men throughout her life, including her pastor, Revd Alexander Beith (Illus 5), and historians David Laing, Joseph Anderson and John Stuart. Their relationships were sometimes stormy, but she was to the very end always her own woman. Beith was charismatic yet dogmatic; the ideal foil for MacLagan, and they veered from allies to antagonists over the next 33 years. Despite his newly erected building, Beith left the Established Church of Scotland in May 1843 in the cataclysmic dispute over parishioners' rights to appoint their own ministers. The 'Great Disruption' saw 473 clergymen relinquish their stipends, homes and status on points of principle. All of Stirling's ministers and most

Illus 5 Calotype of Revd Beith taken in April 1845, by D O Hill and R Adamson, part of their series of Free Church ministers. (Image © The University of Edinburgh, Shelfmark: Coll-1073, vol 1: f25r)

of the parishioners 'came out', making Stirling 'the most pronounced non-Establishment burgh in Scotland'.[100] The MacLagans followed suit, and Thomas Colville became an elder of Beith's new congregation. Revd Beith appears in David Octavius Hill's famous composite portrait, *The Disruption Assembly* (1843–66), the first ever compiled from photographs. In a striking coincidence, Hill's wife, sculptress Amelia Paton, later became friends with MacLagan, and was left money by her.[101]

MacLagan probably found a focus for her formidable energies within this new, nationwide denomination. Although it is harder to situate MacLagan within a factually based female narrative in the 1840s, Beith acknowledged women's 'soft power': 'Female adherence to the interests of our Church … with such success – may be traced to the … influence of the wives and daughters of the manse … [it was] mighty.'[102] The types of charity work considered a middle-class woman's 'proper place and sphere of action' were listed by Revd Beith.[103] His wife visited female prisoners, helped manage the parochial infant school and Female Association, and was treasurer to both.[104] As she later became Mrs Beith's landlord, MacLagan and Julia Beith were obviously sufficiently acquainted to work together at close quarters.

The 'Hungry Forties' saw the Highland and Irish potato famines, rural destitution and forced emigration. MacLagan and her mother spent most of the decade at Southfield, beside the Colvilles of Annfield (Mrs MacLagan's brother), and their putative relations at Forthbank.[105] The family's only recorded archaeological links appear in 1842, when the St Andrews Literary Society accepted vitrified stonework from Laws hillfort, a site 'hitherto unnoticed by the curious'. Did a youthful MacLagan ever visit its 'stones in a state of fusion'?[106] Meanwhile, Thomas Colville donated 'Roman wheat from Castlecary' to the Free Church's museum in 1846.[107]

Female congregants were expected to assist in fundraising, and the North Free Church had financed yet another new church by 1844. They then decided their 'Sabbath School … should be attempted on a larger scale … the ladies … should be requested to lend their aid'.[108] MacLagan's longstanding concern for children's religious instruction and their general education is well attested, and she donated to the Industrial School Building funds in 1861 and 1864.[109] She also sponsored several Christmas 'soirees' for the mission Sunday School pupils ('their annual treat', during which the sombre minister mirthlessly 'exhorted them … to fear and reverence the Lord') in the mid-1860s.[110]

Thomas Colville, MacLagan's maternal uncle, was a leading citizen and church elder of Stirling, sitting on committees for the new cemetery, savings bank and Ragged School.[111] At a mock-chivalric fête in 1849, Thomas's party included his wife's relatives, 'the Misses Kerr of Meigle House'.[112] If she ever enjoyed such functions as his guest, MacLagan could have

learned of carved stones, like those at Meigle in Perthshire, from any landowners also in attendance.

A DECADE OF DEATHS

MacLagan's younger brother, Thomas, died in April 1845 aged 32, and his epitaph at Krishnagur avows 'he was much esteemed and respected'.[113] MacLagan's uncle, the Edinburgh baker Frederick MacLagan, her cousin Dr David Carruthers and his mother, MacLagan's aunt, also died within a few years.[114]

As with all the Colville siblings' wills, MacLagan and her mother Mrs Janet MacLagan (née Colville) are noticeable by their absence – generous legacies are left to the already-wealthy relatives, but the MacLagan females are never once mentioned. This strongly hints that Janet, and possibly MacLagan, had irrevocably fallen out with their close family. William Colville of Laws (Mrs MacLagan's brother) deeded his daughters Mary and Helen £10,000 each,[115] and fully acknowledged their mother 'Beeby Colville' with £50 per year (*bibi* – Hindi for lady, wife, or in colloquial English, 'mistress'). He also left his unmarried sister an identical allowance, so it was a substantial sum.[116] The unexpectedly broad scope of Victorian attitudes to race and legitimacy is shown by (part-Bengali) Mary's wedding to a retired East India Co army officer and barrister, Henry James, in June 1845.[117] It took place in the fashionable Marylebone Church, London, and MacLagan was fully informed as several notices appeared in the Stirling and Dundee newspapers.[118] The couple resided in the same prestigious Regent's Park street later inhabited by George Eliot,[119] and then spent several decades in the imposing Royal Crescent, Cheltenham.[120] This suggests that Mary's social acceptance among the provincial spa's numerous colonial retirees was cushioned, or at least nuanced, by their mutual Indian experiences, and her moneyed status.

Many indigo growers, like Colville, Gilmore & Co, closed down during a financial crisis with the Union Bank of Calcutta in 1847–9.[121] 'William Colville [was] bankrupt. … within a couple of hours of embarcation [for Scotland] he died having fallen down dead in a fit in his bathroom … [I saw] the blue marked apoplexy on his countenance, and hear[d] the sad lament of his children's mother.'[122] He died in September 1848, aged 66,[123] the stress of his financial problems probably having contributed – he was not, as has been outlandishly asserted, assassinated.[124] He lies in the (recently restored) Scottish Cemetery, Kolkata.[125] William bequeathed 'Christian MacLagan, £50, as long as her brother, Frederick MacLagan, is unable to provide for her', emphasising Frederick's continuing responsibility for her, and MacLagan's (reluctant?) dependence on her sibling.[126] Frederick somehow recovered from the calamitous bank crash, the effects of which reached London.[127] He prospered on his own, and by 1849, at 'Loknathpore … a fair factory with excellent house was his own property'.[128]

One of William's children predeceased him and this caused problems.[129] Under Scots law, his daughter Mrs Mary James could not inherit his landed property because she was illegitimate (her ethnic origins were legally irrelevant). She received his £20,000 cash investments (now worth at least £2m)[130] but it was her Colville cousins in Crieff who legally inherited, and sold, Laws estate.[131] William's complex finances inevitably caused family disputes, taken to court over the next decade.[132]

More importantly for MacLagan, her influential uncle Thomas died at Annfield early in 1851, depriving her of a prominent local relative.[133] He joined his baby son under a large tomb-chest, gravestone and crest in Holyrude Cemetery.[134] Annfield was sold, including furniture from Trotters of Edinburgh, a 'Travelling Barouche' and its bay carriage horses.[135] The newly widowed Mrs Colville promptly left Stirling for London, Brussels and Dresden.[136]

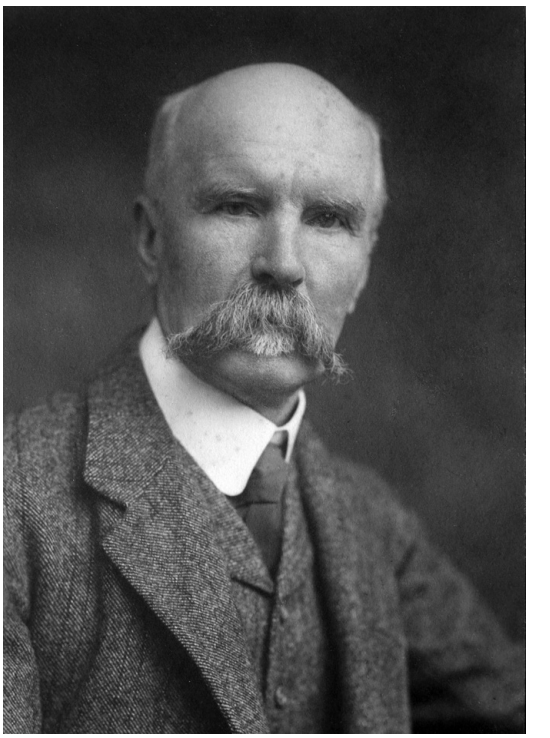
Alexander Beith (now 'Revd Dr') organised 'Collectors, from among the ladies' to raise funds for the Foreign Missions of the Free Church in 1851 – a project for the MacLagans?[137] Despite supporting this evangelism abroad, she made 'some spiteful remarks' about her Anglo-Indian cousin Margaret's high-class marriage of 1853.[138]

Modern relatives thought MacLagan sounded 'a nasty character'.[139] Margaret M Colville (1812–84; child of bachelor David Colville and 'a native woman')[140] wed botanist Arthur H Blechynden, well-known as the secretary of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India, at Fort William, India in 1853.[141] Frederick MacLagan, a longstanding Society member,[142] witnessed the ceremony. The groom was himself the grandson of an Indian Muslim *bibi*, though this was so common as to be unremarkable.[143] Blechynden exchanged plant specimens with Sir Joseph Hooker at Kew Gardens and was known to Charles Darwin.[144]

MacLagan had now seen two Indian cousins make aspirational matches, the Crieff spinsters inherit Laws, and her widowed younger aunt, Elizabeth K Colville, travel abroad. Meanwhile, she continued as her mother's dutiful housekeeper/companion, living frugally on annuities and performing 'good works' in a small provincial town. Elizabeth K Colville decided, advantageously, to marry her first cousin, E F Coulson of Bath, in December 1853.[145] Coulson was proprietor of Bellaport, Shropshire and High Sheriff of Merioneth, where he owned Cors-y-Gedol estate.[146] He made his stepson, Hugh Kerr Colville (sometimes 'Ker', 1847–1930; Illus 6), his heir – as did MacLagan (he is often mistaken for a non-existent nephew, who is mis-named 'Colvin').[147]

MacLagan later commissioned her own house from the architects Hays of Liverpool, who first appear in Stirling *c* 1851−2.[148] They designed a larger Free North Church building, opened in 1853 for Dr Alexander Beith (present Baptist Church, Murray Place).[149] Messrs Hay also built the Ragged School extension (1855), a mansion (Viewforth) for the Free North member Peter Drummond, and the High School's gabled range of 1854.[150] Her brother had contributed £10 for the latter, suggesting that he, Frederick, was a former pupil.[151]

From 1850 to 1852, MacLagan was probably engaged in the fundraising for the Hays' more ostentatious new North Church. Dr Beith himself disingenuously 'refrained' from initiating a third church building, but it opened in February 1853, to a capacity crowd. The pulpit allowed 'that great desideratum in Scotland, the full view of the minister' when preaching the Word.[152] She was one of the all-female 'collectors' assigned to local districts, and who ingathered specified funds from the congregants there, under the 'guidance' of male Deacons. Her fundraising for additional church monies in 1854 far exceeded that of her colleagues – as an inveterate overachiever, she raised an impressive £26, against an average of about £5.[153]



Illus 6 Hugh Kerr Colville, MacLagan's heir and cousin, born at Annfield. (Private collection, photograph by Morag Cross)

Through her mother's continuing membership, MacLagan was still accessing the subscription library. The 1855 catalogue contained renowned archaeologist Daniel Wilson's very latest research, *Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, and his *Prehistoric Man*, of 1862, was later was added.[154] There were a small number of books by, and about, women, although these were mostly novels, with some

historical biographies. Their existence possibly indicates the subtle agency of the (all-male) committee's wives, so MacLagan had some authorial models before her. They included scientist Mary Somerville, distant and nearby travellers Hester Stanhope and C B Stewart respectively, local historian Jane Graham and essayist Anne Grant of Laggan.[155] Out of around 2,280 books in 1855, approximately 7.5% were by women, although it has not been determined if that is on a par with other similar collections.

The MacLagans changed addresses several times during the 1850s. She lived at Irvine Place from *c* 1855 to 1858, and her mother nearby, but separately, perhaps suggesting that sharing rooms caused domestic tensions.[156] These refined Georgian villas housed Stirling's rising professional classes.[157] MacLagan was finally liberated by two successive personal tragedies, the deaths of her mother and brother. Janet Colville MacLagan died aged 78 at either Melville Terrace or Pitt Terrace (sources are conflicting) in July 1858, of heart disease that had 'continued for several years'.[158] As her mother's principal carer (although a neighbour actually reported the death), MacLagan's activities would inevitably have been restricted. Mrs Janet MacLagan's stone in the Mar Cemetery[159] repeats the coped, recumbent portion of Janet's brother Thomas Colville's elaborate Holyrude memorial. It would also form the model for Christian MacLagan's own stone.

Meanwhile, MacLagan's remaining sibling Frederick, in Krishnagur, contributed to the fund for survivors of the Indian Rebellion against British rule in 1857.[160] The uprising shook the establishment, even in Stirling, and Dr Beith preached against it that October. He published his apocalyptic sermon; his 'solution' to such 'Divine displeasure' was the rapid conversion of India to Christianity,[161] an idea the MacLagans already supported in any case.

COLONIAL INDIGO 'EMANCIPATES' ONE WOMAN

It was her brother Frederick's demise that empowered MacLagan, financially and socially. He died from a liver abscess in May 1859, and was immediately buried in the Episcopal Cemetery, Kolkata.[162] His diagnosis was common, and does not necessarily imply alcoholism or, indeed, indicate any investigative post-mortem in the Indian heat. 'McLagan was energetic, prudent and careful, eventually acquiring a considerable estate which he left to his sister … residing in Stirling … [A colleague] was his executor and wound up his affairs.'[163] It was this enormous windfall of 260,000 East India Company rupees that allowed MacLagan to become her 'true self' at the age of 48,[164] and utilise her preceding decades of study. It amounted to £26,000 when granted in November 1859, more than the Laws heiresses had received.[165] Using the relative prices of 1860, that amounted about £2.4 to £2.8 million pounds in today's value, following the more realistic and conservative estimates available.[166]

From the 1860s MacLagan's own words survive, she comes into sharper focus, and circumstantial speculation decreases. She both enjoyed and complained about this new life which was gifted to her in middle age and built upon the labour of others. She was enabled to pursue her exceedingly niche and esoteric interests, thereby encountering men who had opinions more factually founded than faith-based, compared to hers. MacLagan wanted to be treated as she saw herself, a 'gender-neutral' scholar, regardless of her sex, and she largely achieved this. However, it appears to the present author that she often lacked the objectivity to recognise the special allowances made to accommodate her, and the genuine respect in which her achievements were held. It seems that her abrasive and brusque personality, not her gender, caused many problems, because other women interacted with the same churches, architects and Society of Antiquaries officers without the same trouble.[167] For any researcher into her life, MacLagan is an intriguing, and infuriating, tangle of frequently self-contradictory words and actions.

What did MacLagan do next? She increased her servants from one to two. Next, she lent £7,000 to Fife landowner J T Oswald of Dunnikier, in 1860, secured against the lands of Bogie, Kirkcaldy.[168] She now described herself

as a 'landed proprietor'.[169] Oswald repaid the loan, with interest, in 1875.[170] The 1861 Stirling census shows MacLagan hosting Jane Morison, a 'landed proprietor' who lived with a relative, Grace Rutherford at Milnathort, Kinross.[171] In a remarkable coincidence, during the 1871 census, MacLagan is staying at Rutherford's home.[172] This was obviously a longstanding friendship, but little else is known of it. They were probably connected through the Free Church, to which Morison also belonged.

THE CONFIDENT CLIENT AS LITIGIOUS BUILDING PATRON

As a priority, MacLagan commissioned her own home from Liverpool architects J, W H and J M Hay (see above), which she quickly turned into a self-inflicted drama (Illus 7). This house is a previously undocumented work by the Hays and as such is a valuable new discovery.[173] MacLagan purchased three building lots in Clarendon Place in March 1860.[174] Her next-door neighbour was a son of the religious publisher Peter Drummond, for whom Messrs Hay had built the Stirling Tract Depository and his mansion, 'Viewforth'. Furthermore, Drummond ensured that the Hays won the Free North contract: 'It made their name and … won generous praise' in the press, and thereafter they received many more Scottish commissions.[175] Her choice was almost inevitable, and either John or William Hay duly planned two large, semi-detached houses, which faced in opposite directions to ensure her privacy. She let the second house to ensure an income, and commissioned a window (now removed) from Edinburgh glass artists Field and Allan, costing £15.[176] As Daniel Cottier worked there *c* 1862–4, it could have been his work, showing a yellow sunflower or corn-stook against a plainer background. MacLagan reputedly made the two sculpted timber fire-surrounds herself[177] –Mrs C C Stopes witnessed her other carved handiwork, so the attribution may well be true.

In mid-1861, MacLagan moved into 'Ravenscroft', a name she had invented. The ground was once 'Roodcroft', thus supplying the suffix, and she temporarily held Bogie, adjoining Ravenscraig Castle in Fife.[178] As the dower house of Queen Mary of Guelders, this possibly appealed to MacLagan's feminist sensibilities, and suggested the 'raven' theme. She had not yet begun her archaeological career, but when her

Illus 7 MacLagan's half of Ravenscroft is on the left, and Revd Beith's part lies on the right. (Photograph by Morag Cross)

gardeners excavated a 'skeleton about 15 inches beneath the surface' in May 1861, it must have excited her curiosity.[179]

The Hays avowed that MacLagan had hired them in 1860 to oversee the tradesmen and accounts, and work proceeded smoothly until she received the final bill for £142 in late 1861, when she argued with them and left £82 unpaid.[180] They sued her in June 1863, when she cited the Hays' 'faulty' masonry and 'insufficient, careless' drainage as justification for withholding payment.[181] The Hays accused MacLagan of casually altering the plans herself, rendering any guarantee on their part invalid. By January 1864, MacLagan counter-claimed £750 damages from the Hays for their 'culpable negligence', as well as the £2,416 build costs.[182]

Against this, the Hays blamed MacLagan for personally employing the incompetent subcontractors and said that she 'herself most improperly made alterations' and 'authorised the [approved] plans … to be deviated from'.[183] This meant that MacLagan was independently re-designing the plans and breaking her contract, which enabled the architects to win the case. The Liverpool practice undoubtably suffered from 'failure of supervision' (which MacLagan had alleged), 'result[ing] from chronic over-commitment' to distant Scottish sites.[184] John Hay was also suffering from terminal cancer while Ravenscroft was underway, and other contracts likewise went unfulfilled. MacLagan was a victim both of circumstance and of her own pugnacious refusal to accept the offered external arbitration. This does not seem to be due to any particular disposition against women in general by the Hays, or by the court, in this instance.

Number 19 Clarendon Place was over-sized for a single occupant, but the adjoining villa, number 21, was also enormous (three public rooms and seven bedrooms),[185] suggesting that it was purpose-built for Dr Beith and his large family. A modern 'urban myth' maintains that MacLagan visited a male paramour via a connecting internal door,[186] but this totally implausible. A less likely liaison is hard to imagine – a devout woman in her fifties, sensible of her reputation, and her pastor (aged 62), the latter living with his wife and at least four other adults in the 1860s–70s.[187] It is possible that MacLagan, who was later estranged from Beith, has been confused with a later inhabitant of Ravenscroft.

The family of the deceased printer Alexander Colville (another uncle) was living in Stirling in 1860, and his widow died at Bridge of Allan in 1862.[188] Her daughters, Margaret (born 1823) and Christian Ann Colville (born 1825), had already inherited Laws estate, which was heavily burdened with debt. Its rapid sale enabled them to live in modest gentility for the rest of their lives.[189] These cousins, formerly resident in Crieff, were contemporaries of MacLagan (despite reducing their ages by around seven years in every census).[190] As they now stayed nearby at Blairlogie[191] and, like her, attended a dissenting church, they were probably among her social circle.

MacLagan was rather financially acute and was not intimidated by the idea of challenging authority. In 1863, she and her neighbours appealed against the council's rateable valuations of their homes. Her rates were reduced from £70 to £60 per year, mid-range for Clarendon Place.[192] She also pursued any funds remaining from the family indigo growers: '13 June 1860 … a fund of some considerable amount … ought to go to the heirs of Mr William Colville [of Laws]. Who these are might be a nice point in law.'[193] This was rather confrontational and disingenuous of her, as the inheritors were her Crieff and Annfield cousins, as she was well aware from several previous family lawsuits. Now having the means, MacLagan began making more regular donations to causes dear to her, such as the Religious Tract Society, to promote Christian literature.[194]

THE 'MARYKIRK SAGA' BEGINS

There is still no sign (from internal evidence) that in the early 1860s MacLagan had begun compiling her major work, *The Hillforts, Stone Circles and other Structural Remains of Ancient Scotland* (published 1875).[195] She was otherwise absorbed with the Hays' court case and, above all, creating a suitable commemoration for her late

brother. Dr Beith, however, truly overstepped the mark and she was, quite rightly, greatly offended when he tried to appropriate her generosity for himself. 'In 1861 I had a strong desire to establish in Krishnaghur … a Foreign Mission of the Free Church [but] that district … was already occupied … This was a disappointment but … an intimation of the Lord's will … I resolved to [pay for] a mission in Stirling.'[196] She told Dr Beith, who 'highly approved', in spring 1862, and he counter-proposed that 'I should build a church in Southfield [the newest part of the town] … his removal to [such] a smaller church and lighter charge would probably add many years to his life … I stated that [this] would not accomplish my purpose … for the poor and neglected.'[197] This was astonishingly egocentric of him, at the very least. Her advisors disapproved of Beith's narcissistic, mercenary and self-serving scheme, as 'ruinous to the Free Church cause in Stirling … From that time … it was never again mentioned by me to him.' This was the origin of a forthcoming rift in their once 'most intimate friendship'.[198]

The funding, and above all, the management, of MacLagan's Marykirk became a local *cause célèbre*, and need only be summarised here.[199] She chose to endow a new mission church in St Mary's Wynd, a congested slum area. Dr Beith already ran the local Cowane Street mission and in 1864 he began raising money for an adjacent school.[200] Beith wanted to use her funds for his own project, but MacLagan was convinced that he had appropriated her plan of evangelising St Mary's Wynd. She declared 'it is notorious to all … that [Beith's] operations were never carried on'.[201] A previously trusted male had possibly promoted her ideas as his own, to her evident, quite justifiable, annoyance ('obstacles … so perseveringly thrown in my way').[202] The exact truth is unclear, given that both were equally strong-willed, as we only have (the newspaper's published) half of the story. If Beith was expecting MacLagan to be an easily suggestible, ladylike innocent after the stereotypes of the age, she was to prove a rather more Amazonian foe.

In 1865, the Church's Home Mission Scheme promised 'ample' assistance for her proposed £1,000 donation.[203] Beith was already using the Scheme, and had bought a school site in Cowane Street. Rather than two competing plans, Beith asked MacLagan join with him, as a school was far more urgently required than another church. It was 'obvious … that a smaller building is found quite sufficient as a temporary basis', which could serve as both school and chapel.[204] Headstrong MacLagan ignored such caution, and appointed trustees including the Church's own funding/property secretary. Others were the Provost of Kirkcaldy, where she held land, her lawyer David Nicoll from Leven, and the eminent surgeon James Young Simpson. This is the first recorded link between MacLagan and Simpson, who was already widely praised as an amateur antiquary and was a staunch Free Churchman. They signed a deed in March 1865, laying out her plans for the intended church.[205] It was vital that a minister was appointed as soon as possible, that communion was dispensed, and that the Free Church headquarters grant-aided the mission work. Without doubt, her scheme was taken seriously and this is a clear example of sober, reputable gentlemen furthering, rather than rebuffing, her purposes. MacLagan came to 'edit out' such positive reactions, which contravened her narrative of being forever thwarted by male arrogance. She clearly suffered setbacks in erecting and endowing a church, and seems to have experienced them as a test of her faith. Yet, in the present author's view, she unwittingly and constantly handicapped herself, by taking the harder path. She already had enough hurdles (of law, finance, probity and etiquette) to overcome as a lone woman, a glaring anomaly when dealing (via her male trustees) with ecclesiastical councils designed to consider the masculine interest as the natural order.

Numerous committee meetings then followed. MacLagan believed that Beith held too much influence, because he had 'already shewn himself as hostile' to any outreach work not under his control.[206] Dr Beith represented the 'projected church as virtually a gift to his [own] congregation'.[207] MacLagan repeatedly emphasised that an impartial Presbytery committee should manage the project to avoid personal rivalries, but the multiple parties inevitably fell out.

DESIGN BY PILKINGTON, BELL – AND MACLAGAN

'Believing that God would remove obstacles', MacLagan appointed new trustees in August 1866, and building began (Illus 8).[208] Her new representatives, unlike the first set, included two local Free Church elders – one, John Todd, was a neighbour in Clarendon Place. MacLagan purchased her preferred ground in St Mary's Wynd between June 1865 and 1866.[209] She most likely failed to consult the existing Cowane Street Mission, because they suggested another site, 'securing the close proximity of church and school'.[210] Instead, MacLagan forged ahead and bought a most unfeasible, inaccessible cliff-face,[211] used as a garden, due to its gradient (for her belief in the spiritual purity of rock, see below). Both the competing evangelist groups prioritised preaching and prayer, rather than physically ameliorating living conditions. Nevertheless, the schoolroom (prior to compulsory education) would have been of far greater practical use. She considered that the area required immediate intervention, having 'laps[ed] into practical heathenism' (undoubtedly untrue!).[212]

The aims of this landlady and her tenant were quite incompatible. Beith supported a modest, multi-purpose school, but using her money. Naturally, MacLagan resented his dictates, and wanted non-churchgoers to hear the Gospel in her planned Marykirk. She asked the Beiths to leave Ravenscroft, thus forcing the Free North Congregation to purchase a new manse, for £1,290, in December 1865.[213] MacLagan had probably switched her attendance to the South Free Church by now (membership not traced), as relations with Beith were obviously untenable.

By late 1866, MacLagan was already estranged from the 'in-house' Free Church architects, Messrs Hay, and the utilitarian Cowane Street school was designed by William Mackison,

Illus 8 Roof of Marykirk; its polychrome striped façade is just visible beside ruined Cowane's House. Shown in 1949. (Image © Historic Environment Scotland (Aerofilms collection). SC1269308, edited)

who belonged to her opponent Dr Beith's congregation.[214] A significant finding of this project has been the identification of a previously unrecognised church by a major architect, F T Pilkington, and his partner J M Bell, whose work is only now being reassessed.[215]

In March 1865, before MacLagan's friendships had deteriorated over Marykirk, Beith's daughter in Ravenscroft had advertised a 'Bazaar for Dr Bonar's New Church in Kelso'.[216] Revd Horatius Bonar had engaged Frederick Thomas Pilkington, the proponent of a powerfully idiosyncratic, spiky, staccato and over-scaled Gothic. Pilkington, who happened to bear the names of MacLagan's brothers, had long been a preferred Free Church architect. He also had a record of women's patronage (for Moray Free, see below), namely Barclay Free Church (1862–4), on Bruntsfield Links, Edinburgh, financed by Mary Barclay. Its first minister was James H Wilson, whom MacLagan asked, along with Dr Bonar, to preach at Marykirk's opening service. These invitations show that she had carefully considered, and viewed, other Pilkington buildings.[217] The crowded grouping of the Barclay Church gables was scathingly likened to 'a congregation of elephants … and hippopotamuses with their … posteriors turned to … the Links'.[218] Professor J S Blackie further scorned 'the most disorderly building in the city … a woman like the Church … would look … squeezed by the wings'.[219] This crude sexism inadvertently mocked Miss Barclay, and also Helen Thomson of Westbarns, who had endowed a territorial mission like MacLagan's in Canongate, Edinburgh, in 1862. For the latter, Pilkington duly produced the modest Moray Free Church, again for a (deceased) female client.

Pilkington was 'a rogue architect', a 'one-off', rather like MacLagan herself in archaeology.[220] Some shared sensibility of being outside the mainstream may also have appealed to her. Both the Misses Thomson and Barclay were safely dead when Pilkington worked on their behalf; MacLagan was alive, vocal and opinionated. She was not associated with Pilkington's only two previous projects near Stirling, namely the Scottish National Institution at Larbert (hospital, 1861–4), and Glassingall House, Dunblane (for C J Henderson, 1864).

CONSTRAINED BUT SPIRITUAL: AN INADEQUATE SITE

MacLagan was undoubtedly fascinated with the mystical properties of stone, which seems to have been a personal, rather than a wider popular, cultural obsession. She used proverbs and biblical quotations in her writing, all relating to some eternal truth embodied in rock. Stirling's inhabitants were popularly known as the 'sons of the [castle] rock', but even as a Stirling 'daughter', what silent message she saw petrified there is unclear. Her motto, 'Books lie, but the stone is true', appears on the title page of her book, *Chips from Old Stones*, of 1881.[221] Stirling native Robert Kidston (1852–1924) later became a prominent geologist, but her interest was spiritual, not scientific. This will be further discussed in a sequel to this article, dealing with her archaeology.

Where Marykirk once stood, the sheer rock face has been cut back and terraced, but this may well have been influenced by her own private theology. 'The stone … used is the whin … quarried from the foundation.'[222] Her church literally grew from the very rock beneath it. The stone was merely rearranged, in situ, in a new form to honour God. The engineering required to underpin the building was her deliberate, and unnecessarily expensive, choice, swallowing 20% of the build costs. By dismissing other nearby, and flatter, locations, she was characteristically unwilling to compromise. She exercised her right to spend her own money as she chose, and to express her ideas of divine truth in materials hewn from the living hillside.

Pilkington and his partner, J M Bell, produced plans (now lost) by December 1866, and the technical challenges were obvious.[223] The church was 'about 20 feet above … the wynd … a good deal of quarrying will be required [for] a level floor … [Due to] the rising ground, the architectural features are concentrated on the front gable, …

The lower portion of the front is pierced by six trefoil headed lights … [above] is a large circular window with interlacing triangles … The total is … £1430, of which about £300 will be expended [on] the foundations.'[224] Pilkington and Bell were known for distinctive, quirky mouldings, discordant proportions and polychrome stonework. Marykirk displayed 'a very ingenious use of [masonry] lines and bands',[225] although it was otherwise quite mundane, and lacked a spire (Illus 9).

The plans were displayed in the shop of her trustee, John Christie, and tenders were invited in April 1867.[226] The church, which seated 400, opened on 2 April 1868. MacLagan 'declined to accept' Beith's offer to preach,[227] inviting instead his clerical predecessor from Dumfries, along with her advisor Sir J Y Simpson, and Reverends Bonar and Wilson.[228] Beith reciprocated by asking them to boycott Marykirk, but 'it need not be said, [they] did not comply'.[229] MacLagan's relations with Beith must have been absolutely frigid.

The church has been overlooked, probably because it was not illustrated in any way. As it adjoined Cowane's House, a notable antiquity, this is inexplicable, unless MacLagan's strange aversion to photography (see below) played a part.[230] Marykirk 'will be seen from a great distance', because the 'commanding site … forms a conspicuous object when approaching Stirling'.[231] Surely, this symbolic visibility, shared with her beloved hillforts, and its allegorical growth from the cliff-face, attracted her to this precipitous location. The building itself was not a long-term success, due to its constricted site and the impoverished locality (see below).

Illus 9 The corner of Marykirk appears in this view of Cowane's House by female photographer, Isabella Wright. The only known image of the church itself. (From the collection of the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum)

COMMUNITY ASSET OR PRIVATE FIEFDOM

Further difficulties followed, and Dr Beith's faction was reappointed.[232] MacLagan was forced to continue paying for temporary staff, and rejected one potential cleric (Revd Andrew) because he was related to her opponents.[233] This was a fatal mistake from which the esteem accorded her as a kirk benefactress never recovered. The Free North considered their handover agreement 'violated' after she blocked Andrew's appointment and consequently felt that they were not 'morally or legally bound' to honour it.[234] From March 1872, the Free North manifestly withheld their agreed contribution of £80 per annum, which would have complemented MacLagan's annual £100.[235]

MacLagan evidently also had great difficulty relinquishing control of a building in which she was so emotionally invested ('my property … at my disposal').[236] She fiercely repudiated 'aspersions cast upon my character, and … mis-representations … of my motives. I want … to diminish, not increase, my personal influence.'[237] Nevertheless, she did admit that from 1868 to 1872, 'services have been regularly conducted, and missionary operations carried on … under my supervision'.[238] 'Certain new complications … [have] arisen through the action of Miss MacLagan', who tried to prevent Beith's Cowane Street school holding Sunday services, in rivalry to Marykirk.[239]

MacLagan was legally ingenious, and deadly earnest, in blocking Beith's participation, and wresting away his control of the school/mission's activities. Marykirk was only conveyed to its managers on nine conditions: for example, that they simultaneously took over the school, its use being narrowly specified (its 'promoters', probably Beith's party, had also to immediately clear its debts).[240] Marykirk was to be the sole place of worship, thus excluding Beith, whose name she strikingly omits.[241] It should be noted that the school was built before the 1872 Education Act, and was a charitable provision by the church. Both institutions were finally placed under one (compromise) incumbent, Revd Charles Wedderburn, in early 1873.[242] An officially invited preacher 'was refused the use of Marykirk by Miss MacLagan … although [it was] no longer private property', because he was speaking at her rivals' school afterwards. 'Dr Adam was compelled to go home from Stirling without discharging the duty.'[243] Her friends were even accused of corrupting voting lists for elderships.[244] This was almost turn-about, the open trading of mean-spirited offences, each to inconvenience the other. Again, it appears quite particular to the parties themselves, who all participated, rather than being especially gender-biased.

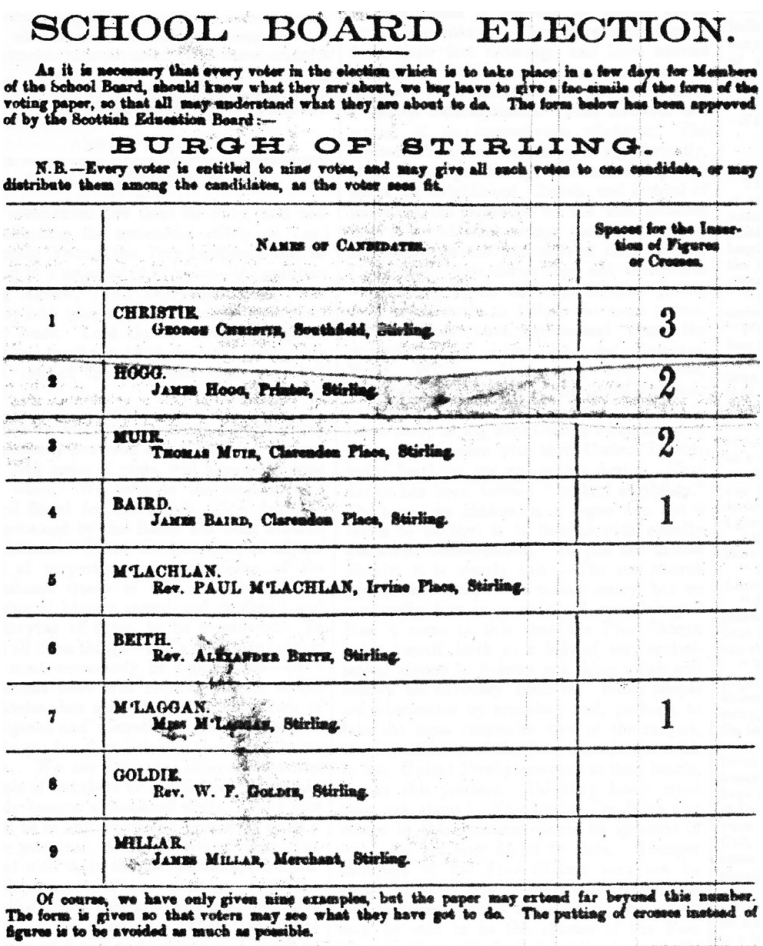
This conflict was also rooted in MacLagan's hubris and her habitual refusal to listen to professionals, as if it would challenge her self-belief. She rebuffed the advice of her chosen architect, Pilkington, apparently not having learned from her own 'mis-interventions' at Ravenscroft. Marykirk 'is wrongly seated … against the mind of the architect. The seats are placed the wrong way and … accordingly uncomfortable'.[245] 'The person who is now proprietor' (MacLagan) snubbed requests for alterations, and prohibited any internal changes, no matter how essential.[246] Probably in retaliation for this, MacLagan was, literally, cast out of the building, either in person, or in writing. She was outraged by 'the insult done to me … in ejecting me and my friends from two pews of my own church … [which] the Session have condoned'.[247]

Although religion was taken as seriously as politics, MacLagan had still knowingly alienated many of the elders and worthies in several congregations. Reports included the phrases 'nearly six hours' discussing … Marykirk', 'a long list of correspondence … equal to three sermons', and the sardonic 'settlement … seems as near at hand as ever'.[248] The town's establishment was openly MacLagan-weary, and the burgh council (pro-Beith) expressed the tired hope that 'after dragging [the litigation's] weary length through [six courts] in future they would have more gospel and less law'.[249]

WOMEN GET A VOTE – IN 1873

Under the 1872 Education Act, primary school attendance became compulsory, controlled by a nationwide system of district school boards. It is a little-known fact that women were first permitted to vote in 1873 in order to choose these important committees. They received 'for the first time the right to exercise the franchise … so long withheld … Lady voters' [conduct] will be keenly scrutinised, and will do much to advance or retard … a Parliamentary Franchise.'[250] Explanatory notices appeared in the press in February 1873, outlining the candidates' qualities to first-time female voters: 'To the Electors … Ladies and gentlemen … every Elector should … vote according to his or her conscientious … feelings.'[251] MacLagan was a longstanding supporter of female suffrage, but could not have expected to see her name printed on a 'fac-simile … of the voting paper, so that all may understand what … to do'.[252] Official candidates, like her ecclesiastical opponents, Dr Beith and the Provost, were listed, along with 'M'Laggan, Miss, Stirling' (Illus 10).

She was the only woman on the 'specimen' list although she was not actually standing for election. Her inclusion must indicate that she was (even theoretically) viewed as a potential



SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION.

As it is necessary that every voter in the election which is to take place in a few days for Members of the School Board, should know what they are about, we beg leave to give a fac-simile of the form of the voting paper, so that all may understand what they are about to do. The form below has been approved of by the Scottish Education Board:—

BURGH OF STIRLING.

N.B.—Every voter is entitled to nine votes, and may give all such votes to one candidate, or may distribute them among the candidates, as the voter sees fit.

	Names of Candidates.	Spaces for the Insertion of Figures or Crosses.
1	CHRISTIE. George Christie, Southfield, Stirling.	3
2	HOGG. James Hogg, Printer, Stirling.	2
3	MUIR. Thomas Muir, Clarendon Place, Stirling.	2
4	BAIRD. James Baird, Clarendon Place, Stirling.	1
5	M'LACHLAN. Rev. PAUL M'LACHLAN, Irvine Place, Stirling.	
6	BEITH. Rev. Alexander Beith, Stirling.	
7	M'LAGGAN. Miss M'Laggan, Stirling.	1
8	GOLDIE. Rev. W. F. Goldie, Stirling.	
9	MILLAR. James Millar, Merchant, Stirling.	

Of course, we have only given nine examples, but the paper may extend far beyond this number. The form is given so that voters may see what they have got to do. The putting of crosses instead of figures is to be avoided as much as possible.

Illus 10 This sample or model electoral list appropriated MacLagan's name, but she was never a candidate. *Stirling Journal* 28 February 1873, p1. (Courtesy of Stirling Council Archives)

challenger. It could have been a cynical mockery of MacLagan's pretensions, but it was certainly an unsought invasion of her privacy. She was never an electoral candidate, quite possibly due to the public humiliation she suffered during the Marykirk affair. She must, however, have been among 'a large number of ladies who exercised their privilege of voting for the first time'.[253]

A RADICAL DESPITE HERSELF?

As mentioned, the Free North party had broken their binding monetary commitments after MacLagan barred their preferred minister's election. After five years, the congregation owed £400 (at £80 per annum) towards general running costs.[254] This seems to have caused another major turning point in her life. In 1875, she began acutely ironic court proceedings to 'have … Marykirk restored to her as her [own] property'.[255]

The irony was this. The Free Church had been founded to end patronage, whereby the principal heritor (landowner) could legally force a dissenting or hostile parish to accept his (or her) choice of minister. Now MacLagan was acting in defiance of those same principles, although in accordance with her own, unyielding, notions of personal integrity. The managers had certainly violated their financial obligations, so she would invoke the archaic heritor's control as practised in the Established Church. This is another, major, instance of MacLagan's self-contradictory behaviour, which seems to have been innate to her character, rather than due to particular instances of sexual discrimination against her.

The local newspapers reported the monthly Presbytery and Kirk Session meetings verbatim, and the Marykirk itself, in a well-meant but unnecessary gesture, was analysed and criticised. MacLagan lost any privacy, and obviously felt intensely misunderstood, if not deracinated. In 1875–6 she brought a legal challenge against the General Trustees of the Free Church, who included grandees like the Earl of Kintore, two advocates and the Lord Justice Clerk. She won her case, primarily because she was unopposed, as Marykirk's officials declared that they did not have the funds to defend themselves.[256] MacLagan, nevertheless, paid a great personal cost in 'a conflict of more than ten years, [which] created more personal bitterness in this locality than ever the Disruption did'.[257]

Some less amenable aspects of MacLagan's severe and intractable personality now emerged more forcefully. The entire original congregation left voluntarily on 27 August 1876, feeling it was unethical to worship in a disputed building. Her letters were 'of so peculiarly an offensive character', that she tactlessly told the Marykirk officials she was due some thanks for her 'patience during the[ir] long delay' in leaving,[258] and she then 'refused to hold any communication whatever'.[259]

The exiled worshippers had the Presbytery's 'deep sympathy'[260] and within weeks had erected a prefabricated iron church. In an astonishing volte-face, MacLagan promptly offered the 'rather notorious' Marykirk to their competitors, the old-established Church of Scotland.[261] This private appropriation of a church built for public benefit was the harsh culmination of longstanding resentments nursed by MacLagan. Possibly she felt she had no further spiritual home in the Free Church, and that her brother's tribute (Marykirk itself) should leave as well. She had already been accused of setting 'a bad precedent for laymen and laywomen to build churches without consulting the ministers of the parish'.[262]

This blow to the MacLagan reputation, once tainted by ancestral bankruptcy and scandal, must have hurt, painfully. The Provost himself demonstrated an extraordinary antipathy towards her, even by contemporary standards of misogyny. He 'had no sympathy … that she was [inspired] by … piety [otherwise] she would have left [the congregation] in peace … she was animated by a woman's cunning and a woman's desire for revenge … on the Free Church and just conceived how she could best annoy them.'[263] This was, quite rightly, recognised as outrageous by her lawyer, who said the Church Presbytery [senior committee] 'sits silent to hear a respectable lady vilified … accused of everything that is un-Christian, and unladylike'.[264] These insults against her were never challenged or corrected

by the Presbytery, which was, at the very least, 'un-Christian' of them.

A PRIVATE RETIREMENT IN PUBLIC

Revd Beith's retirement in 1876 may have been hastened by the stress of local church politics, but it is not difficult to empathise with MacLagan. At least she now had had the moral support of a friend, Jessie Colvin, who had shared her home since 1873. A scathing editorial, titled 'Ecclesiastical Aggression', from December 1876, blamed the entire row on 'that well-meaning but capricious lady, Miss MacLagan, whose fatal gift of a church … cause[d] more harm than good'. MacLagan's 'persistence in identifying herself with Marykirk' was attributed to 'gratifying [her own] ambition', which tainted her 'sincerity … piety and earnest desire to do good'.[265] This implicit charge of sinful pride might be the reason that she refused to be photographed, and for her conspicuously anonymous gravestone (Illus 11).[266] It uses a generally inaccessible script, Greek, to proclaim her identity as a literal Christian, in the language of the New Testament. It is hoped to discuss the semiotics of her tombstone in due course. By hiding her image, and overdoing the conspicuous self-effacement, she sought to ensure that nobody could ever again accuse her of seeking self-promotion. But, by exercising reverse vanity, MacLagan almost excised herself from history, save for her progeny of choice, her publications.

The years 1876–8 saw intermittent criticisms of MacLagan's motives, frequently expressed by proxy. It was easier to target her male advisors and supporters than to malign a virtuous woman too openly, but she still suffered markedly. The town council and Provost were firmly on the exiled parishioners' side, and against MacLagan. Although Marykirk now belonged to a different denomination, the infighting continued as before. The abuse in the Church of Scotland of 1877 matches any modern online 'trolling'. 'The Marykirk case … has ended in an exhibition of spite, paltry motives and second-class ecclesiastical snowballing … more narrow minded bigotry and intolerance could not well be found.'[267]

Illus 11 The inscription on MacLagan's tombstone in Greek letters reads simply, 'Christian', her name and her faith. (Photograph by Morag Cross)

When one Established Church cleric attacked MacLagan, her friends responded: 'The [minister's] profitable reading of the Sermon on the Mount [about humility] depends on the capacity of the reader … Was [the] object to save more souls or secure more stipend?'[268] In his defence, the minister's side condemned a MacLagan supporter as 'a wicked and malicious malingerer … [among] shallow-pated coxcombs … using claptrap words'. [269]

Throughout the dispute, both parties were subject to equally offensive comments – for example, 'a contemptible lying diatribe'.[270] Heightened emotions were provoked by the unforeseen need to maintain yet another expensive building, and the sudden redrawing of accepted boundaries to re-allocate the compulsory church taxes, or 'teind'.[271] The state church was beguiled by 'a gifted horse' (Marykirk) 'which spread destruction' like the wooden beast of Troy.[272] In 'grasping at Free Church edifices', they were 'tempted by the bait held out to them of Marykirk'.[273] MacLagan, it was true, had 'entirely ignored' existing clergy, and presented the Presbytery with her own 'constitution and boundaries for a new parish', angering those who should have been her allies.[274] Again, she was snidely accused of creating new church parishes 'for the glorification of Miss MacLagan'.[275] Her actions could variously be seen as foolishly impractical and extravagant, or bloody-minded and vengeful, or proof of a forceful woman's indomitable resolution and power. The author sees them as simultaneously naïve, rash and, above all, an example of misconceived beneficence. They were the result of MacLagan's continual, obdurate refusal to accept wiser professional counsel when it infringed her pre-set course. Her stance, and apparent lack of self-awareness in taking it, can however be viewed with some empathy. She was reluctant to admit error or defeat whenever it could be misinterpreted as 'feminine weakness'. To yield to the clerical 'greybeards' was a concession too far, and she did not submit. MacLagan abstained rather than concede – she quit the stage. Her metaphorical retreat from church life, in order to recover some agency over her own public portrayal, must have been inevitable.

MARYKIRK – DARING TO TRANSGRESS, OR MISDIRECTED EXPENDITURE?

It might be asked if MacLagan was taking a 'man's role' in establishing 'her own church', but that is to misread the situation. The matter was above gender distinctions, and concerned ecclesiastical regulations. The Free Church was established in 1843 fundamentally to escape the control of wealthy landlords, or any other over-influential patron – male or female. MacLagan intended to hand over the entire building and finances to the Free Church, but, as stated above, found it near-impossible to personally surrender her creation. She was as if *in loco parentis*, and too vested emotionally and financially to resign Marykirk easily. The financing of new buildings was, indeed, a (rather expensive) route to equality of commemoration – money being a very gender-fluid commodity. Many women demonstrated such conspicuous piety, for instance the Misses Barclay and Thomson already mentioned. Mrs Ellen Peter (née Craigie, died 1890) paid for the 'Peter Memorial Church', Stirling (now St Columba's, opened 1902), and sisters Barbara and Mary Walker donated both land and money for St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh (opened 1879; its towers are called after them). MacLagan's wish to finance a place of worship was thus entirely within a woman's recognised purview; her subsequent interactions were, as a moneyed and privileged woman, almost always at her own discretion.

In such a poor parish, Marykirk provided surplus capacity, without the necessary finances or population to sustain it. 'It was a most worthless gift … very difficult to improve, cut out of the solid rock.'[276] The ministers would receive only 'starvation stipends', due to the poverty of the parishioners.[277] The Established Church's Baird Trust endowed Marykirk, and spent large sums remedying the deficiencies of the rising ground. It was sneeringly called '[a] poverty-stricken church … damp and built partly underground; it was bad to hear in, badly ventilated, and not properly heated … a toy building … The Iron Church was a splendid affair in comparison.'[278] It was obviously not Pilkington's finest essay, but

MacLagan was solely to blame for its self-defeating location. Despite losing the court case, the Free North was 'gratified' that their flatter Cowane Street school location was 'at last acknowledged' as far superior, whereas 'the Marykirk erection' occupied a 'most unsuitable', steep and cramped site.[279] It became a storage unit in the late 1940s, and was demolished *c* 1954, an ignominious end for a rare Pilkington building.[280]

However, hers was a carefully curated, and only partial, withdrawal from municipal life. She played no further part in enhancing Stirling's streetscape, although it is contended that she built working-class housing (currently unverified; maybe an intended project, never fulfilled).[281] This was one of several philanthropic 'schemes fully worked-out, which only her increasing bodily infirmities' prevented her fulfilling.[282] MacLagan did, openly and without ever hiding her sex, publish a remarkable series of studies and meditations on the origins of standing stones, megalithic tombs and early medieval sculptures. Repeated, offensive journalistic imputations that in Marykirk she aimed to 'gratify the ambition of a private individual',[283] memorialising her own vanity and committing the sin of pride, caused her to concentrate on academic pursuits. There, with her powerful intellect and chafing against the restricted access to Edinburgh's male-only Antiquaries library, she soon found further controversy.

SUMMARY

The second part of MacLagan's activities, her fieldwork among ancient monuments, will be considered in another paper. Her prehistoric researches fall somewhere between archaeology, in their serious attempts at scientific analysis, and antiquarianism, with her self-taught and eccentric theories. Her hypotheses were largely superseded by contemporary textbooks, which were available to her a decade before she had commenced her own work. She disregarded Daniel Wilson's seminal *Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, which contained the latest thinking and belonged to MacLagan's subscription library by 1855.

She has been claimed as Scotland's first female archaeologist, but however 'archaeology' is defined, as distinct from 'antiquarianism', her fieldwork cannot be dated, by her own writings, earlier than 1866. Lady John Scott (née Alicia Spottiswoode) was the first 'Lady Associate' of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1870, a category specifically invented in recognition of both her own, and MacLagan's, contributions to the discipline.

MacLagan became an Associate in 1871. Nevertheless, Lady John published her excavations in Berwickshire between 1864 and 1868, pre-empting MacLagan by years, and therefore must be viewed as the earlier pioneer.[284] There may be others even older, and as yet unrecognised, but MacLagan was not 'the first'.

Lady John's 1864 paper on excavating cists,[285] written by her in the first person, was 'communicated', or read aloud to the meeting by J Y Simpson, as she was not, by convention, present at the all-male gathering. As with MacLagan's articles, the man's name merely records the fact that he 'performed' the text on the appointed evening (Monday, 8 February 1864),[286] not that his 'support' was required for its publication.

It is worth quoting the Society's rare acknowledgement of women's contributions to fieldwork and study from 1864. During a Society *conversazione* (literary gathering, which for once admitted 'ladies'), vice-president Cosmo Innes delivered his address to both sexes:

> Ladies and Gentlemen … Let me say how much our Society – representing … the intelligence of Scotland … owes to the kind influence of women. When ladies like … Lady John Scott, help us with drawings and … interesting communications of discoveries … men the most inert are shamed into exertion and activity.[287]

She may well have been unaware of such peers in 1864, but MacLagan was not the only woman interested in physically unearthing the past.

MacLagan felt patronised by male academics, but she was often received positively and with due consideration, even in situations that

were non-traditional and seldom experienced by women. For instance, she secured two groups of eminent Marykirk trustees and inspired the Antiquaries' new membership category, and the Free Church acquiesced, against professional advice and at her insistence, to her vertiginous church site. MacLagan, or her bank account, held sway over any masculine misgivings. An ultimate, sincere tribute was the selection of her rubbings of 'Celtic' stones by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. These were displayed at the grand opening of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and Antiquaries Museum, and the concurrent major Royal Archaeological Institute conference in 1891.[288] Her own view of her treatment was not entirely objective, made worse by her knowledge that she was as intelligent as any man around her. However, she had been hampered by the constraints of opportunities for education in Georgian Scotland – for she lived until the age of 26 in the pre-Victorian era. She used some archaeological approaches of statistics, measurement and comparison, within a more customary antiquarian framework of traditional written sources, and scholarship deemed authoritative partly because of its male authorship.[289] It is intended to discuss these issues in future.

Sharing a home with sisters or friends was an extremely common and practical way for single Victorian women to reduce expenses with decorum and propriety. Equally important, they could also secure platonic but congenial (or at least, tolerable) company. MacLagan's housemate, de facto secretary and lady's companion, Jessie H Colvin, duly moved from Dumfriesshire to Stirling in 1873.[290] She was equally vested in religion, girls' education and their moral welfare. Miss Colvin's well-to-do brother William (with whom she previously lived) had donated the iconic bronze ram on its granite plinth to the town of Moffat.[291]

MacLagan had a conventional early life for an 'impoverished gentlewoman', made exceptional by her own dauntless, determined and principled adherence to her own decisions. She acted as she thought proper, rather than trying to win friends or curry favour, which saw her exercise her ruthless streak when necessary. Her earlier biographer, Sheila Elsdon concurs in this assessment of her 'inflexible mind-set'.[292]

She certainly possessed formidable self-confidence in her own judgement, even when it was clearly wrong. She wasted money taking her architects to court and failed to recover the costs of remedial work for which she, or arguably they, may have been responsible. It would have been cheaper, if less satisfying, to pay their bill or accept the contracted arbitration. She evicted her own minister Dr Beith from Ravenscroft, chose an 'impossible' site for Marykirk, rearranged T F Pilkington's seating plans and interfered in two ministers' elections. She finally caused the working-class congregation to quit the building. She herself left the North Free Church, though it is unclear at present where she then worshipped. She was fearless, even against her own interests, in taking the senior Free Church laymen to court, and pressed her unasked-for building upon a reluctant Church of Scotland. She also supplied her choice of new parochial boundaries, ignoring any existing church districts already there. All of this meant suppressing her pride after adhering to a rival denomination for over 33 years, and exercising a steely, if unsympathetic, resolution to act as she considered best fitted her personal goals. Her self-belief was 'so much part … of her sense of personal rectitude that she refused … any contrary arguments … [she] would have antagonised others', and 'made many enemies'.[293] Whether this can be retrospectively identified as an autistic-spectrum trait is an unanswerable point.

Her relative anonymity, and lack of any portraits, might perhaps be explained by two cruel, cutting lines in the 1876 *Stirling Observer*. Questioning her hidden motives for building and controlling a church – and there may be some truth in it – the writer quotes: 'Who builds a church to God and not to fame, will never mark the marble with his name.'[294] This is implicitly accusing her of the deadly sin of pride, of MacLagan's innate confidence transformed into arrogance or hubris. It was even more blatant and publicly damaging when her humanitarian gesture was attacked and ridiculed. The toxicity surrounding the Marykirk

affair would have broken the strongest soul, and so it did with MacLagan. She applied her talents elsewhere.

T E Lawrence was once described as 'backing into the limelight',[295] and likewise MacLagan's later life shows her both craving appreciation, if not admiration, for her scholarship, and simultaneously hiding in full view. Even though women could give lectures at Stirling's Archaeological Society, MacLagan refrained and asked Miss Colvin to speak on her behalf. This veiled presence was continued in her gravestone – her inscription, in Greek letters, omits her surname, leaving her visible yet subtly obscured (Illus 12).

The loss of MacLagan's autobiography means that her family background must be inferred from other sources. She was never photographed, as was noted above.[296] Her father's bankruptcy and her grandfather's scandalous reputation affected the family's social standing and reputation. This certainly did not discourage her from speaking her mind when necessary. Elsdon calls her 'a woman of strong convictions who did not hesitate to mention them at every conceivable moment'.[297] The Colville family played a major part in her financial and emotional well-being, and she benefited from the profits from the Bengali indigo plantations they owned. MacLagan may not have thought of her money as being earned through the backbreaking toil of Indian labourers, but indigo dye paid for a Stirling church and a series of literally groundbreaking Scottish historical publications.

The mixed-heritage Colville cousins married well in 1845 and 1853, when British society had far more conservative attitudes towards ethnicity than are general today. Their bourgeois social status may be an object lesson in being cautious about the range of such views in the past. One cousin was extremely prosperous, landed and upper-class, the other more middle-class but still rather comfortably settled. Clearly there were other factors at play, requiring further research. However, it shows the wholescale transfer of modern assumptions or theories about Victorian racism do not automatically apply to such individual cases. Despite all her abstract support of female empowerment, MacLagan was still a product of her age and society, and she chose an already affluent male relative as her heir. Her numerous female cousins, whatever their ethnicity, received no bequests from her in 1901.

Illus 12 Tombstones of Christian MacLagan (nearer camera) and her mother, Janet Colville, with Holyrude Church in the background. (Photograph by Morag Cross)

It will be possible to say more about her academic achievements in future when I would like to cover her astonishingly productive later life and her prodigious archaeological labours. However, it was first necessary to explain how she financed her travels, which all depended on the labour of Bengali workers in colonial India. MacLagan's attitude to them is not recorded, except as subjects for religious charity, but she seems to have had little hard knowledge about the colony. She made fleeting references to 'a relative' (her brother) and his benevolence towards his employees, but she had no reason to criticise him. It seems likely she shared the usual contemporary views of 'white privilege' at a distance. That is, India produced useful trade goods 'over there', and it would be an act of mercy by MacLagan to 'improve the wretched lot' of its people. This meant assuming that British ideas of religion, education and commerce were naturally superior and that it was right to impose them on top of any indigenous Indian ways of doing the same things.

This portrayal of MacLagan's formative years has aimed at placing her substantial written output and her extensive preparatory fieldwork into a more balanced narrative. It has been an attempt at sceptical and restorative, rather than creative and subjective, biography. She posed an irresistible research challenge, by apparently emerging fully formed out of nowhere. By not necessarily fitting into a modern feminist agenda, MacLagan was, like all of us, a creature of her time who was sufficiently imaginative to recognise some socially imposed restrictions, yet accepted others as 'natural'. Judged by today's terms, her fieldwork and interpretation of monuments – to be covered later – ranged from hopelessly mistaken to admirably objective. She cannot always live up to such hyperbolic modern claims that she was the 'first female archaeologist in Scotland/in Britain/the world', because she was not 'the first'. Despite MacLagan's attempts to hide her own face and the loss of her handwritten autobiography, it is hoped that some of her footprints can be traced again on the paving-stones of Stirling.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is dedicated to my late mother, Catriona Cross, née MacLeod, in fulfilment of a long-standing promise. Firstly, profound thanks to John Harrison, Stirling historian, who first mentioned MacLagan to me; secondly, MacLagan's family, Rosi and Andrew Skirving, for their continued kindness and trust, the late Tom Colville, and especially the late Mrs Mary Colville; my gratitude also to Dr Mairi Davies, Historic Environment Scotland, for generously reading a draft; Professor Elisabeth Okasha, descendant of MacLagan's solicitor, J W Barty; Dr Hugh Buchanan, formerly of Ravenscroft; David Dunbar, Stirling; Julia Roberts, for her thesis on early female archaeologists; Pam McNicol and Neil Dickson, Stirling Council Archives, for their unfailing assistance; staff of Stirling Central Library and Stirling University Archives; Dr Murray Cook, Stirling Council Archaeologist; Elma Lindsay, Stirling; Michael McGinnes, Dr Heather Carroll and Nicola Wilson, Stirling Smith Museum; Rafael C Siodor, University College London, Special Collections; School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh; David Henry, Pinkfoot Press; Aliki-Anastasia Arkomani, Asian Studies, British Library; Darwin Correspondence Project, Cambridge; Dr Alison Rosie, National Register of Archives for Scotland; and over many years, the staffs of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (now RMS) Library; Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (now Historic Environment Scotland); Glasgow University Library, Special Collections; Mitchell Library; Scottish Records Office, now National Records of Scotland; National Library of Scotland; Special Collections, Edinburgh University Library.

NOTES

1 MacLagan has been designated as Scotland's and/or Britain's first female archaeologist, but the author considers such claims to be demonstrably inaccurate. Only her status as 'the earliest in Scotland' is considered here.

For similar descriptions, see King et al (2003: 15); King & McGinnes (2018: 78); National Wallace Monument (2017: 17); Cook (2019: 94).

2 As MacLagan's surname is rendered with different spellings in both personal and official sources, and the rare examples of her own signature are indeterminate, the form 'MacLagan' has been adopted throughout this paper. This conforms with the writer's previous entry on MacLagan in the *New Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women* (Cross 2018).

3 Marsden (2020) usefully examines the distinctions between and models of historical, antiquarian and archaeological enquiry in Scotland. MacLagan's archaeological career will be considered in Cross (forthcoming).

4 Elsdon (2004).

5 Sørensen (1998: 34–5).

6 Discussed further in Cross (2020a, 2020b).

7 Stopes (1901: 217); Cross (2020a, 2020b).

8 Elsdon (2004: 1).

9 MacLagan's first publication (a letter to the secretary) appears without any intermediary's name, both in the Society's mss minutes and in the printed volume, MacLagan (1872b: 178); RMS, Soc Ants Mins 13 March 1871, no. VII. Male authors were also 'communicated' *in absentia*, such as Anderson (1874) (minutes 1868–80).

10 Sørensen (1998: 38–41).

11 NRS, McLaggan-Colvill 1805; MacLagan 1811; father's occupation CS40/25/81, CS238/MC/8/7.

12 Thomson (1847: 345–7); Colville Papers.

13 Millar (1912: 531).

14 Stopes (1901: 218); *Stirling Observer* 1901; NRS, GD50/184/118, Memorandum … with regard to the Heir-at-Law of the late Miss Christian MacLagan of Ravenscroft, Stirling, p1.

15 Scott (1917: 188–9).

16 Hoad (2010: 8).

17 Hoad (2010: 8–10); *Scots Magazine* 1785: 272–3.

18 MacLagan (1785); Hoad (2010: 11–12).

19 NRS, GD31/555/1, pp2, 3–4; GD31/555/2, p1.

20 NRS, GD31/555/1, pp6, 12.

21 NRS, GD50/184/118, Memorandum … enquiries … with regard to the Heir-at-Law of the late Miss Christian MacLagan of Ravenscroft, Stirling', 3–8; Scott (1917: 188–9).

22 Stopes (1901: 215); Millar (1912: 531).

23 OS 1865, Hayfield shown south of Muirhead; OS1/32/8/73; OS1/32/27/77–8.

24 *Abr Sas* 1804, 1805, 1807; NRS, Colquhoun 1823: 42.

25 NRS, GD50/184/118, Letter, 8 November 1901, from J W Barty, solicitor, Dunblane to Dr R C MacLagan, re Rev Frederick MacLagan, other enquiries.

26 Stopes (1901: 215).

27 Mitchell & Mitchell (1972: 186, No. 440); SA, CH2/337/10, p201.

28 E Okasha, pers comm.

29 NRS, GD50/184/118, Memorandum … enquiries … with regard to the Heir-at-Law of the late Miss Christian MacLagan of Ravenscroft, Stirling', p8.

30 Elsdon (2004: 1, 4).

31 For example, NRS, CS42/10/31; CS238/MC/8/7.

32 NRS, CS40/25/81; *Edinburgh Gazette* no. 2501: 183.

33 NRS, CS235/M/44/6/3; Millar (1912: 531). Of several possible candidates for 'Braehead', that at St Ninians has been assumed to be the most likely.

34 NRS, McLaggan 1820a, 1820b.

35 Thomson (1847: 345–6); SBTI 2016a, 2016b.

36 SBTI 2016c, 2016d.

37 Colville Papers.

38 SA, Index Card for 'Underwood'; NRS, Colquhoun 1823: 42.

39 NRS, Rind 1814: 376; CS34/21/45.

40 Cook & McCormick (2016).

41 Hutchison (1904: 147).

42 *Stirling Observer* 1901.

43 Colville Papers.

44 PO Directory 1829: 115, 'M'Lagan, Mrs' in Saxe Cobourg Pl, Claremont St.

45 *Scotsman* 1834; *Caledonian Mercury* 1809, 1837.

46 NRS, MacLagan 1829.

47 PO Directory 1829: 115; 1833: 57.

48 Elsdon (2004: 16).
49 SBTI 2016b, 2016c, 2016d.
50 PO Directory 1831: 119; 1832: 122.
51 NRS, Census 1841a.
52 Colville Papers.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Colville Papers; NRS, Brown (1831).
59 Colville Papers; Mason et al (1828: 162). John also worked in Anjeer and Batavia (Jakarta) on Java. Mason & Owen (1819: xlvii); NRS, Colville-Millie 1830.
60 Anderson (1889: image 4); return date *Abr Sas* 1834a; purchases Laws, *Abr Sas* 1834b.
61 Thomas at Laws, *Abr Sas* 1837a, 1837b; Cumming (1843: 44) wrongly gives William, not Thomas, as builder; *Dundee Advertiser* 1835.
62 William's purchase begins January 1837, completed June 1838, *Abr Sas* 1838b.
63 Thomas at Laws, *Abr Sas* 1837b; at Stirling, *Abr Sas* 1838a, 1838c.
64 Neish (1857: 441); Cumming (1843: 29, 45).
65 Smith (1835: 429; 1838: 325, 431).
66 *Friend of India 1835*.
67 *Abr Sas* 1834b.
68 BIOB 1827.
69 Colville Papers; Anderson (1889: images 4 and 5); Gloag et al (1863: 25–8).
70 *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 1897.
71 BIOB 1815: in this baptism register, Margaret's single, Indian mother 'Ann' is misleadingly listed as David's wife. See also note 140 below.
72 Fordyce (1858: 412); NRS, Census 1851b; SBTI 2016c, 2016d; BIOW 1852: 353–4. For more on Crieff cousins, see also note 131 below.
73 NRS, GD50/184/118, Typescript account by Dr R C MacLagan, Edinburgh, recording visit on 11 February 1896, to Christian MacLagan in Stirling; sent to J W Barty, solicitor, Dunblane.
74 NRS, GD50/184/118, Memorandum … enquiries … with regard to the Heir-at-Law of the late Miss Christian MacLagan of Ravenscroft, Stirling', p10.
75 *Hull Packet* 1837; *Gentleman's Magazine* 1837.
76 Maxwell (2006).
77 Coulson (1877: v–vi, ix).
78 Colville Papers.
79 ERA, PE46/26, p35.
80 Acton (1868), inserted sheet titled 'Correction, by desire of Mr and Mrs Coulson, to face page 38': Coulson (1877: vii).
81 Colville Papers.
82 Colville Papers; SA, PR/SG/10/2, 113–14, 581. 'Miss C MacLaggan', purchases 2 lairs, September 1858.
83 NRS, Colville 1839; SA, PR/SG/8/1, p164. See Stirling Council Archives Blog (2019) for Annfield headstone, noted in Holyrude Kirk Session Minutes, 7 April 1851.
84 NRS, Census 1841b, 1851a.
85 For instance, 'upright binding stones' in walls became stone circles like Stenness: MacLagan (1875: 5–6).
86 Elsdon (2004: 26–7, 53, 58–9); Wilson (1851: chs 3, 5; 1863, vol 1: chs 1, 3, 4).
87 MacLagan (1872a).
88 Cross (forthcoming).
89 This has not been investigated for this paper.
90 NRS, Colville 1828.
91 Masson (1844: vi–vii).
92 *Stirling Observer* 1845c.
93 Masson (1844: 63–8).
94 *Stirling Observer* 1847c.
95 *Stirling Observer* 1844b.
96 *Stirling Observer* 1863a.
97 SA, PD68/1/2, January 1837.
98 Ibid, 7 January 1838, 3 January 1839.
99 Ibid, 7 November and 5 December 1839.
100 Beith (1877: 127).
101 Cross (forthcoming).
102 Beith (1877: 75–6).
103 Beith (1867: 171–2).
104 Ibid: 140, 172.
105 NRS, Census 1841b; addresses given in SA, CH3/786/14, Nos 139–40; CH3/786/15, Nos 139–40.
106 *Fifeshire Journal* 1842.

107 *Witness* 1846.
108 SA, CH3/786/6, 47.
109 *Stirling Observer* 1861, 1864.
110 *Stirling Observer* 1866c.
111 *Stirling Observer* 1844a, 1845a, 1846, 1847a, 1847b.
112 *Stirling Observer* 1849.
113 Holmes & Co (1851: 37). Birth actually 1813, not 1815 as stated on memorial.
114 NRS, MacLagan 1845: 704; *Dundee Courier* 1847; NRS, Carruthers 1849: 231.
115 Measuring Worth (2020), calculates range of values. The lowest estimate for the modern worth of £10,000 in 1845 would equal £996,000 in 2019; the next highest estimate for the modern value of £10,000 would be £8.2m. Depending on the methodology chosen, the results may vary enormously.
116 Fordyce (1858: 412).
117 *Dundee Courier* 1845; England & Wales Marriages, James-Colville 1845.
118 *Stirling Observer* 1845b; *Dundee Advertiser* 1845.
119 *Dundee Advertiser* 1845; *Times* 1850; Fordyce (1858: 412).
120 English Census 1861, 1871, 1891.
121 *Friend of India* 1847: 545; *North British Daily Mail* 1849; *London Gazette* 1848; *Calcutta Review* 1848: 170–5, 181.
122 Anderson (1889: images 5 and 6).
123 *Dundee Courier* 1848.
124 Malcolm (1910: 320); Scottish Cemetery (2015).
125 KSHT (2008); Scottish Cemetery (2015).
126 Fordyce (1858: 412).
127 Sinha (1971); Cooke (1863: 191–7).
128 Anderson (1889: image 72).
129 Fordyce (1858: 411–13); Milne & Shirreff (1858).
130 Measuring Worth (2020) for £20,000 in 1845 at today's values gives a range of at least £1.9m to £2.1m, increasing depending on method of comparison selected.
131 Crieff cousins: see Gloag et al (1863: 26–7); *Abr Sas* 1849a, 1849b; Services of Heirs 1849. See also note 72 above.
132 Fordyce (1857, 1858); Gloag et al (1863); *Dundee Courier* 1862.
133 NRS, Colville 1851: 534, 537; BIOW 1852: 337, 339.
134 SA, PR/SG/8/1, p164; see also Stirling Council Archives Blog (2019), Mrs E K Colville applies to erect monument, April 1851.
135 *Scotsman* 1851.
136 Colville Papers.
137 SA, CH3/786/6, 109.
138 Colville Papers.
139 M Colville, pers comm.
140 Colville Papers: 'David never married. He left an illegitimate daughter [by] a native woman. William Colville educated and brought up Margaret who married a nurseryman in Calcutta, a man of considerable property.' See also note 71 above.
141 BIOM 1853.
142 Agricultural Society (1842: 16; 1846: xi).
143 Robb (2006: 176–9, 182–3, 191).
144 Hooker and Blechynden as colleagues: Blechynden letters 1870, 1875; Blechynden known to Darwin: Darwin Correspondence Project Letter No. 8492.
145 *Stirling Observer* 1853c; M Colville, pers comm; Maxwell (2006).
146 Burke (1879: 376); *Eddowes's Journal* 1868; *North Wales Chronicle* 1868.
147 *North Wales Chronicle* 1868; *Stirling Observer* 1901, article mistakes her cousin H K Colville as a (non-existent) nephew, 'Mr Colvin'.
148 Walker (2002: 103).
149 *Stirling Observer* 1853a.
150 *DSA*, Hay Biography: 'J, W H and J M Hay (The Hays of Liverpool)', Biographical Report. www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200314. Accessed 15 August 2020.
151 *Stirling Observer* 1853b.
152 *Stirling Observer* 1853a.
153 SA, CH3/786/8, 201, 203.
154 Taylor (1855: 82, no. 83); Jack (1869: 43, no. 163).
155 Stewart No. 177, Graham No. 180, 'Stirling … heads, folio', in Taylor (1855: 74). Mrs Grant lived briefly in Stirling before MacLagan was born, and held advanced

ideas about women's suffrage. Grant's books are Nos 76–7 in Taylor (1855: 30). King et al (2003: 11–12).

156 NRS, Valuation Roll 1855a, 1855b; NRS, McLagan 1859; *Stirling Observer* 1858a, 1858b, 1858c.

157 Gifford & Walker (2002: 87).

158 NRS, McLagan 1858; *Stirling Observer* 1858a.

159 MacLagan purchased lairs Nos R30–1; SA, PR/SG/10/2, 113–14, 581.

160 *Friend of India* 1857.

161 Beith (1857: 4–7, 16–19).

162 BIOD 1859.

163 Anderson (1889: image 72).

164 MacLagan was 48 in November 1859, the earliest date she could have received her legacy.

165 BIOW 1859a, 1859b.

166 Measuring Worth (2020).

167 Female donors to, and correspondents with, the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland will be covered in the second paper on MacLagan's archaeological career. Their interactions appear altogether less fractious than MacLagan's.

168 *Abr Sas* 1860.

169 NRS, Census 1861a.

170 *Abr Sas* 1875.

171 NRS, Census 1861a.

172 NRS, Census 1871c.

173 Cross (2020a); now added to *DSA*, Hay Biography (see note 150 above).

174 NRS, RS59/312, f131v–132v.

175 *DSA*, Hay Biography.

176 NRS, CS244/983, Closed Record p8.

177 H Buchanan, pers comm.

178 *Abr Sas* 1860, 1875.

179 *Dundee People's Journal* 1861.

180 NRS, CS244/983, Closed Record, 4–6; CS244/623, Closed Record, p4, condescendence III: p7, answer 3.

181 CS244/623, Closed Record, p7.

182 NRS, CS244/983, Closed Record, 3, 8.

183 Hays blame MacLagan's private subcontractors, NRS, CS244/623, Closed Record 8, 10, pursuers' plea v; CS244/983, Closed Record p7, answer 6: p10, Pleas … for Defenders; see also Cross (2020a).

184 *DSA*, Hay Biography (see note 150 above); Cross (2020a).

185 *Stirling Observer* 1866a.

186 D Dunbar, pers comm.

187 NRS, Census 1861b, 1871a.

188 Slater (1860: 1245); NRS, Colville 1862.

189 Services of Heirs 1849; *Abr Sas* 1851a, 1851b; Peter (1856: 252).

190 NRS, Census 1871b.

191 Slater (1878: 1592).

192 *Stirling Observer* 1863b.

193 Colville Papers.

194 *Religious Tract Society Reporter* 1865; 1868; 1875.

195 MacLagan (1875).

196 *Stirling Journal* 1870.

197 Ibid.

198 Ibid.

199 Summarised in Cross (2020a).

200 *Stirling Observer* 1865c; SA, CH3/786/8, 306–7, 310–11.

201 *Stirling Journal* 1870.

202 Ibid.

203 SA, CH3/786/6, 253*; Stirling Journal* 1870.

204 SA, CH3/786/6, 233.

205 *Stirling Observer* 1865a; *Stirling Journal* 1870, foot column c.

206 *Stirling Journal* 1870.

207 Ibid.

208 Ibid.

209 NRS, CS46/1876/1/30, 3–8, 21.

210 *Stirling Observer* 1865c: resolution 4.

211 Cross (2020a, 2020b).

212 *Stirling Journal* 1870.

213 SA, CH3/786/8, 330–1; *Stirling Observer* 1865d.

214 SA, CH3/786/8, school architect, 302, 310–11, 314–15; his congregational membership, 268, 270.

215 *DSA*, Pilkington & Bell Biography: 'Architectural practice 1867–77', Report. www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=100142. Accessed 1 February 2021; *Prospect* 1989.

216 *Stirling Observer* 1865b.

217 Cross (2020a, 2020b). *DSA*, Pilkington Biography: 'Frederick Thomas Pilkington', Biographical Report. www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200795. Accessed 12 December 2020.

218 Dixon (1972: 15); the much quoted, unflattering words by J S Blackie appear in full in *British Architect* 1888.
219 Ibid.
220 Leitch et al (2011: 5), quoting H Goodhart-Rendel's phrase, 'rogue architects of the Victorian era'. See also *Prospect* 1989.
221 MacLagan (1881: title page); Stopes (1895: 226).
222 *Stirling Observer* 1866b.
223 *DSA*, Pilkington & Bell Biography (see note 215 above).
224 Ibid.
225 *Stirling Observer* 1868.
226 *Stirling Observer* 1867.
227 *Stirling Journal* 1870.
228 *Stirling Observer* 1868; *Stirling Journal* 1868, 1870.
229 *Stirling Journal* 1870.
230 Discussed further in Cross (2020b) and specifically Cross (2020c), along with MacLagan's use of photography in recording the Arniebog Roman carving.
231 *Stirling Observer* 1866b, 1868.
232 *Falkirk Herald* 1868.
233 *Scotsman* 1872a, 1872b; SA, CH3/786/8, 437–40.
234 SA, CH3/786/8, 421, 437–8, 440, 482.
235 Payments agreed February 1872, SA, CH3/786/8, 421; respective paid and unpaid sums, NRS, CS46/1876/1/30, 17, 28–30; *Scotsman* 1874; *Edinburgh Evening News* 1874.
236 *Stirling Journal* 1870.
237 Ibid.
238 NRS, CS46/1876/1/30, p13.
239 *Glasgow Herald* 1872.
240 *Scotsman* 1870; *Falkirk Herald* 1871; NRS, CS46/1876/1/30, nine conditions, 14–18; mission's building to be debt-free, 15, 18–19.
241 NRS, CS46/1876/1/30, sole place of worship, p16: Beith not among administrators, 14–15.
242 *Dundee Courier* 1873; *Alloa Advertiser* 1873.
243 SA, CH3/786/8, 441–2.
244 Ibid.
245 *Stirling Observer* 1876a.
246 *Stirling Observer* 1876a, 1876c.
247 *Stirling Observer* 1876d.
248 *Alloa Advertiser* 1872; *Falkirk Herald* 1872.
249 *Stirling Observer* 1876e.
250 *Stirling Journal* 1873c.
251 *Stirling Journal* 1873a.
252 *Stirling Journal* 1873b.
253 *Falkirk Herald* 1873.
254 *Edinburgh Evening News* 1874; *Falkirk Herald* 1874; *Stirling Observer* 1876c.
255 *Stirling Observer* 1876c; NRS, CS46/1876/1/30, 3, 9, 30.
256 *Falkirk Herald* 1876; *Dundee Courier* 1876a.
257 *Stirling Journal* 1875.
258 *Stirling Observer* 1876c.
259 *Stirling Observer* 1876b.
260 *Dundee Courier* 1876b.
261 *Dundee Courier* 1876c, column b, top.
262 *Stirling Observer* 1877b.
263 *Alloa Journal* 1876.
264 *Stirling Observer* 1876i.
265 *Stirling Observer* 1876g.
266 Cross (2020c).
267 *Stirling Observer* 1877c.
268 Ibid.
269 Ibid.
270 Ibid.
271 *Stirling Observer* 1876f.
272 *Stirling Observer* 1877b.
273 *Stirling Observer* 1877a, 1877b.
274 *Stirling Observer* 1876f; 1877b.
275 *Stirling Observer* 1876g.
276 *Stirling Observer* 1877b.
277 *Stirling Observer* 1876i, 1876j.
278 *Stirling Observer* 1876j. 'Toy building' refers to its squashed, tiny site, which is even more obvious today when the site lies empty.
279 SA, CH3/786/8, 469.
280 SA, VR/SBC/49, 1953–4, p329; VR/SBC/50, 1955–6, p341; SBC/39/1/3, No. 4192; Cross (2020b).
281 Millar (1912: 531). Extensive investigation has not yet revealed any associated sasines or building records.
282 Stopes (1901: 216).
283 *Stirling Observer* 1876h.
284 Spottiswoode (1864, 1868); Stuart (1864, 1868).
285 Spottiswoode (1864).

286 Minutes of Meeting, printed as 'Proceedings of Society, 8th February 1864', see Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (1864: 212, 222).
287 Innes (1864: 211).
288 The attendees and reporters were unanimous in praise of MacLagan's skill in capturing the medieval reliefs; *Scotsman* 1891a, 1891b, 1891c.
289 Marsden (2020) considers the emergence of such disciplinary specialisation.
290 Unfortunately, very little is recorded about their household. 'Lady's companion', or live-in amanuensis and personal assistant, was one of the few 'seemly and decent' occupations seen as befitting middle class 'spinsters'.
291 Scotsman 1875.
292 Elsdon (2004: 104).
293 Elsdon (2004: 1, 4).
294 *Stirling Observer* 1876g. Quotation from Alexander Pope's *Moral Essays* (1731–5), Epistle III: line 285.
295 Knowles (2007: 31).
296 Cross (2020a, 2020b, 2020c).
297 Elsdon (2004: 4).

ABBREVIATIONS

Abr Sas: *Abridgements of Sasines*
BIO: British India Office
BIOB: British India Office, Births and Baptisms
BIOD: British India Office, Deaths
BIOM: British India Office, Marriages
BIOW: British India Office, Wills & Probate
DSA: *Dictionary of Scottish Architects* (http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/)
ERA: East Riding Archives
KSHT: Kolkata Scottish Heritage Trust
NLS: National Library of Scotland
NRS: National Records of Scotland
OS: Ordnance Survey
RBG: Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
RMS: Royal Museum of Scotland Library
SA: Stirling Archives
SBTI: Scottish Book Trade Index

REFERENCES

DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

Note: Citations with date in parentheses are listed under References; those with no parentheses round the date are listed under Documentary sources or Newspapers and periodicals.

Abridgements of Sasines

1804, no. 4702, Lands of Underwood disponed to trustees of sequestrated Blair & Martin, distillers there, with consent of Ann Semple, Archibald and Hugh Colquhoun, 27 February, *Stirling 1781–1820.*
1805, no. 5041, Ann Semple and Archibald Colquhoun, seised in liferent and fee of Underwood, 30 July, *Stirling 1781–1820.*
1807, no. 5510, Hugh Colquhoun, seised in Underwood, in security of bond by Thomas Graham, 21 April, *Stirling 1781–1820.*
1834a, no. 1683, Thomas Colville, lately of Calcutta, now in London, seised in Craigie, Dundee, 30 December, *Forfar 1831–40*.
1834b, no. 1686, Thomas Colville, seised in Laws, disposition by trustees of Patrick Anderson, 31 December, *Forfar 1831–40*.
1837a, no. 3320, James Guthrie, seised in Craigie, on disposition by Thomas Colville, 7 December, *Forfar 1831–40*.
1837b, no. 3338, Thomas Colville and Elizabeth Kerr, seised in Craigie, 14 December, *Forfar 1831–40*.
1838a, no. 3621, Thomas Colville, formerly of Laws, presently at Annfield, dispones ground, Dundee, 6 June, *Forfar 1831–40*.
1838b, no. 3641, William Colville, in London, seised in Laws, on disposition by Thomas Colville in January; *Forfar 1831–40*.
1838c, no. 3831, James Hunter, seised in Craigie, on disposition by Thomas Colville, now residing at Annfield, Stirling, 5 October, *Forfar 1831–40*.
1849a, no. 2025, Assignee of William Colville, seised in Laws, on disposition by Margaret and Christian Ann Colville, in Crieff, 7 September, *Forfar 1846–50*.

1849b, no. 2125, Margaret and Christian Ann Colville, heirs portioners to William Colville of Laws, their uncle, seised in Laws, 13 November, *Forfar 1846–50*.
1851a, no. 456, James Neish, Dundee, gets assignation of bond & disposition for £11,000 over lands of Laws, 7 August, *Forfar 1851–55*.
1851b, no. 457, James Neish, Dundee, gets assignation of bond and disposition for £3071, over lands of Laws, 7 August, *Forfar 1851–55*.
1860, no. 3166, Christian MacLagan gets security for £7,000 from J T Oswald, held against Bogie, Kirkcaldy, 15 May, *Forfar 1856–60*.
1875, no. 4499, Christian MacLagan discharges bond by J T Oswald for £7,000, secured over lands of Easter Bogie, 19 May, *Forfar 1875*.

British India Office archive at the British Library [NB: 'Calcutta' is now Kolkata]

BIOB 1815 Colville, Margaret Maria, baptised 2 July, Fort William, Calcutta. Parish Register. *Bengal: Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1812–15,* IOR/N/1/9, 141.
BIOB 1827 Colville, Mary and Helen, both baptised 20 February. Parish Register. *Bengal: St Andrew's Calcutta 1814–43,* IOR/N/1/59, 50.
BIOD 1859 MacLagan, Frederick died 8 May; Register of Burials, Episcopal Cemetery, Chowringhee, Calcutta, Parish Register. *Bengal: Baptisms, Marriages, Burials January–June 1859*, IOR/N/1/95, ff257r.
BIOM 1853 Blechynden, A H married Colville, M, 19 March, St Paul's Cathedral, Fort William, Calcutta, Parish Register. *Bengal: Baptisms, Marriages, Burials January–June 1853*, IOR/N/1/83, p128.
BIOW 1852 Colville, Thomas, Will and Testament, Supreme Court, Fort William Bengal, Probate Granted 17 September, *Bengal Wills 1852*, Parts 3–4, IOR/L/AG/34/29/86, 337–58.
BIOW 1859a MacLagan, Frederick, Probate/ Administration granted 18 June, cancelled November 1859, *Bengal Wills 1859*, Parts 1–2*,* IOR/L/AG/34/29/99, 480–1.
BIOW 1859b MacLagan, Frederick, Probate granted 10 November to Christian MacLagan, 260,000 EIC rupees, *Bengal Wills 1859*, Parts 3–4, IOR/L/AG/34/29/100, 472–3.

Colville Papers

Small group of family letters, notes, transcribed by the late Mrs Mary Colville. Private collection.

Darwin Correspondence Project

Letter No. 8492. Letter, from Sir J D Hooker, Kew, 29 August 1872, to Charles Darwin; originally containing enclosure from John Scott, 30 July (1872), Botanic Gardens, Howrah, India, in which Scott discusses Blechynden; letters now separated, full transcript of both at: Darwin Correspondence Project, 'Letter no. 8492', Cambridge University Library, https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-8492.xml. Scott's enclosure is Ref No. DC/156/1075 at RBG, Kew (RBG's catalogue precis omits Blechynden, and is wrongly dated 1871) http://www2.calmview.co.uk/Kew/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=DC%2f156%2f1075. Accessed 25 June 2021.

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PE46/26, 35. All Saints Marriage Register, July 1837–May 1839, Sculcoates Parish. Kerr, Elizabeth of Sculcoates, and Colville, Thomas of Hull, 3 October 1837. PE46/26, in data set *Parish Marriages: Yorkshire*. www.findmypast.co.uk. Accessed 14 August 2020.

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James-Colville 1845 James, Henry and Colville, Mary, 2nd Marriage Quarter 1845, Registration District Marylebone, County London, vol 1, 244. *England & Wales Marriages 1837–2005.* www.findmypast.co.uk. Accessed 15 August 2020.

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Brown 1831. Brown, Margaret, buried 19 May. *Old Parish Registers: Deaths, Burials, Howff and New Burial Grounds, Dundee*. Ref 282/260: 65 (paginated as 62).

Carruthers 1849. Carruthers, Mrs Margaret, née Colville, Dundee, died 30 January. Documents reg. 20 February 1850. Inventory. Dundee Sheriff Court SC45/31/9, 230–45.

Colquhoun 1823. Colquhoun, Ann née Semple, widow of Hugh Colquhoun of Underwood. Documents reg. 17 September. Inventory; Settlement. Stirling Sheriff Court SC67/36/7, 31–45.

Colville 1828. Colville, Susan, née Todd, widow of John Todd, bookseller, Arbroath. Documents reg. 7 August. Inventory; Settlement. Forfar Sheriff Court SC47/40/4: 601–8 (paginated as 599–607).

Colville 1839. No. 37, Colville, Baby, died 24, buried 27 March. *Old Parish Registers: Deaths, Stirling*. Ref 490/80 114, p114 (paginated ff111v–112r in hard copy; p114 in digital image caption).

Colville 1851. Colville, Thomas of Annfield, Stirling, spouse of Elizabeth Kerr Colville. Documents reg. 2 September. Inventory; Trust Disposition, Settlement; Deed of Assumption; Testament. Stirling Sheriff Court SC67/36/31: 533–63 (paginated as 542–72).

Colville 1862. Colville, Henrietta, age 69, died 1 February. Statutory Registers: Deaths: Perthshire 1862. Ref 374/3 (paginated as 1).

Colville-Millie 1830. Colville, John, merchant, late of Batavia, and Millie, Elizabeth, wed 15 October. Old Parish Registers: Marriages, Dysart, p50. Ref 426/70 50 (paginated as f24V).

MacLagan 1811. MacLagan, Christian, born 25 June, baptised 26 July. *Old Parish Registers: Baptisms, Falkirk.* Ref 479/50 465 (paginated as 230).

MacLagan 1829. MacLagan, Jane, age given as 10 [she was actually 11], died 3 March. *Old Parish Registers: Deaths, St Cuthbert's* 1820–54. Ref 685/2 490 349 (paginated as 182).

MacLagan 1845. MacLagan, Frederick, baker in Edinburgh. Documents reg. 29 November. Inventory. Edinburgh Sheriff Court SC70/1/66, 704–7.

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McLaggan 1820a. McLaggan, William, at Hayfield, parish of Saint Ninians, son of late John MacLaggan, farmer at Castlehill, Perthshire, died 24 April. Documents reg. 28 October. Inventory; Testament Testamentary. Stirling Commissary Court CC21/6/101, 7388–91.

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