

WILLIAM McYLREA

1627-1692



BALLAUGH
ISLE OF MAN

<http://www.mylrea.com.au>

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Dr Diana Banks
P O Box 2207
Noosa Heads
Queensland 4567
Australia
dibanks@bigpond.net.au

WILLIAM MYLREA (1627-1692)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Diana Banks is a Mylrea through her mother's family. Several years ago, she began writing the biography of her great great grandfather, John Mylrea, who was born on the Isle of Man in 1823.

In the course of researching John's story, she became an accidental authority on a variety of Mylrea strands and she prepared a series of short histories in an attempt to find the web that links these families together. To date, she has produced narratives about:

- William McYlrea (Ballaugh) 1627-1692
- Nicholas Mylrea (Ballaugh) 1747-1823
- Three Daniels & a Thomas 1761-1934
- Thomas Mylrea, Tailor (Lonan) 1774-1853
- Thomas Mylrea, Farmer (Braddan) 1788-1860
- Basil Mylrea, Publican (Peel) 1791-1865
- Philip Mylrea, Stone Mason (Douglas) 1793-1861
- Frederick Thomas Mylrea, Military Man (London) 1803-1862
- The Brushmen of Bethnal Green
- Mylreas in 19th Century Lancashire

This particular story begins with William Mylrea who was born in Ballaugh in 1627, and ends with his great great great great grandson Richard Armstrong Mylrea who died in Australia in 1915. Covering almost three centuries, this story outlines eight generations in this branch of the Mylrea family tree whose lives were given to public service. A great deal more information about Richard Armstrong Mylrea and his forebears can be found in Frederick Thomas Mylrea, Military Man, published on <http://www.mylrea.com.au>

Diana began her professional life as a teacher in central Queensland, went on to become a scholar at several Australian universities, and later a senior bureaucrat in Federal government circles. She has postgraduate qualifications from both Melbourne University in Australia and Harvard in the United States and is an experienced writer although the Mylrea narratives are her first foray into biography.

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GLOSSARY

The Manx have several terms for high level officials that are unique to the island. The origins of the words, and the responsibilities they carry, are found in their Viking past.

SUMNER (SUMMOMER)

The servant of the various courts of the Isle of Man, both ecclesiastical and civil, and it was his duty after church service on Sunday to publish executions against debtors. He also collected the baron's tax levied on certain lands and paid to the Bishop, and for this purpose he went with a cart at harvest time and gathered from each farmer so many sheaves of corn, a goose, ducks or hens which were then publicly sold. When a person died intestate it was his duty to make an inventory of the goods and sell the same, dividing the proceeds among the next of kin, but he first obtained his own fees from the effects of the sale.¹

PARISH CAPTAIN

He was expected to raise his own militia from amongst the local men and it was their duty to guard the shoreline of their parish, and to light bonfires as a means of informing the parish of imminent invasion. The role had its origins in the time when the island was under constant threat of invasion (and this was so for many centuries) and border protection was devolved to the parishes.

TOWN CAPTAIN

Chief of Police

MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF KEYS (MHK)

An individual who was directly elected of the Manx government.²

DEEMSTER

A judge on the island, presiding over the courts both civil and criminal in both the Lord's and any Baronial courts. Although they had power over the whole island, in practice one sat in Northside courts and the other in Southside courts. They usually held office for life, though legally it was at the Lord's pleasure.³

Also

RECEIVER GENERAL = TREASURER

WATER BAILIFF = CUSTOMS

HIGH BAILIFF = CORONER

¹ <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/famhist/families/radclff.htm>

² <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/people/keys/list.htm>

³ <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/people/glossary.htm>

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On the Isle of Man, a remarkable tradition of civic leadership had its genesis in the 1600s with William McYlrea and his wife, Ann Christian. The couple married in Jurby in 1645. Over several generations, this family held positions of influence in the law, the church, and the military structures of the island.

First Generation

William Mylrea (1627-1692) + Ann Christian (c1627-1693)

William was born in the parish of Ballaugh and lived there for all of his life. The “best guess” to his parentage is that his father was Jon McYlrea, born around 1600. William was both parish captain, and a Member of the House of Keys, a position he occupied for twenty-one years, from 1669 to 1690. Both roles carried considerable responsibility for the well-being of the Manx people.

About Ann Christian, we know little. She was probably born in Jurby, the parish immediately to the north of Ballaugh, and probably a member of the *Ballamoar* Christians who also provided generations of civic leaders to the Manx people. Her father was Donald (Do, Daniel) Christian. It is not clear whether this particular branch of the family included Illiam Dhon (William Christian), a political activist in the 1600s, and several other Christians, notably Ewan, a religious and political leader on the island.

History does not reveal whether William was always destined to become a community leader and a man of some wealth, or whether his rise was due to the Stanley family. William almost certainly enjoyed their patronage as a result of his avowed loyalty after the Manx Rebellion of 1651 in which Illiam Dhon played such a significant role (which probably rules out this being Ann Christian’s family).

By the time he died in 1692, William had already passed on “the Mylrea estate” to his oldest son Daniel by way of a Marriage Settlement. This “estate” had its origins in the Dollough Quarterland of Ballaugh. William’s father was referred to as John de Dollough on his record of baptism so presumably the Dollough Quarterland was what William inherited (as the oldest son) when his father died. William is also recorded as purchasing land in the Corraige in 1678, and later swapping other land in 1683, and held other land in Jurby. William entailed “the estate” so that it passed to the oldest Mylrea son in subsequent generations.

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Second Generation

William and Ann are known to have had seven surviving children, because their wills identified most of them by name: Daniel, Thomas, William, Robert, Jane, Ann, and a third unnamed daughter. Their oldest child (Jane) was over 40 when her parents died, and the youngest (Robert) had passed his 20th birthday, a significant achievement to have so many offspring reach adulthood. Of these seven, two became the torch bearers for another generation of civic leadership.

Ann (born 1650) married John Bridson of Oristal, Malew. John was a farmer but of their nine children, three grew up to fulfil important roles in Manx life.

Daniel (born 1655) married significantly older widow Margaret Curlett als Parr. He was 24 and she 36. Margaret was a member of the Parr family, conspicuous for their service within the Manx clergy. Her father, Robert, was Vicar of Malew from 1633 to 1640, and Rector of Ballaugh from 1646 to 1673. He was appointed vicar general in 1646. Margaret's sister, Jane, was married to Thomas Christian, Daniel's uncle, so Daniel married his mother's sister-in-law, perhaps an indication of the importance of "connections" rather than true love.

At the age of 35, Daniel became the island's Attorney General (1690-1695) and in 1693, he was appointed a Deemster, shouldering that mantle until his death in 1724⁴.

Third Generation

Ann Bridson als Mylrea, the daughter of William and Ann, had three sons who took up public office:

- John (1674-1705) was Attorney General
- William (1683-1751) was Vicar of Marown, Lezayre, Bride, Rector of Ballaugh
- Paul (1693-1771) was Captain of Douglas, Deputy Searcher (Customs), merchant

Daniel Mylrea provided two children to carry on the family's tradition:

- Daniel II (born 1684) was Attorney General 1720 and in 1734 was made a Deemster, a position he held until his death in 1757

⁴ <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/people/law/deemstrs.htm>

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- Ann (born 1687) married William Christian of *Ballamoar*, Jurby, at various times Sumner General, Attorney General and Receiver General on the Isle of Man. In fact, William succeeded his brother-in-law, Daniel, to the post of Attorney General in 1735. Another example of “connections”?

Fourth Generation

Daniel Mylrea II married Lucy Parry and continued to live in Ballaugh. Several of their sons embarked on a life of service to the Manx:

- Daniel III (born 1716) - Receiver General and Water Bailiff 1758, Steward to the Dukes of Athol 1766, Deemster 1768-1775
- Thomas (born 1717) - Water Bailiff, Peel & merchant
- William (born 1722) pursued a life in Holy Orders – Curate at Andreas 1747-1754, Rector of Bride 1754-1760, Rector of Andreas 1760-1787, Archdeacon of Mann 1760-1787. Andreas was the richest living and reserved for the Archdeacon and so we see the transition of this Mylrea family to the parish.

Ann (born 1723), sister of Daniel III, Thomas and William Mylrea, married Captain William Callow of *Clough Bane*, Maughold. She died at the age of 39, after the birth of her eighth child.

Of the daughters of Ann Christian als Mylrea:

- Margaret (born 1708) married Thomas Christian of East Nappin, an MHK and parish captain
- Elizabeth (born 1716) became the second wife of Rev. James Wilks, a man of the cloth (Vicar of Michael, Vicar General, the Rector of Ballaugh) and civil servant (High Bailiff of Ramsey)
- Jane (born 1720) married Daniel Lace who was both an MHK (1748-1777) and a Deemster (1757)

Fifth Generation

Thomas Mylrea (born 1717) and wife Rose Savage had two surviving sons who took up military service:

- Daniel (born 1750), after the death of his first wife Leonora Heywood of the Nunnery, joined the Manx Fencibles and later became an officer in England’s Veterans’ Battalions, posted to Canada in the early 1800s. It was whilst returning from this

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assignment that Daniel carved his name into history as the hero in the epic tragedy, the wreck of the troop ship, *Harpooner*. He was by then almost 70 years of age.

- Thomas (born 1756) joined the British Navy and died whilst an officer on the warship *Monmouth* in 1783, possibly at the battle of Providien

William and wife Ellinor Gell had four sons, two whose lives were spent in the merchant navy (possibly slaving), and two given to the tradition of service:

- Daniel IV (born 1757) embarked on a life in the church, ultimately becoming the Archdeacon of Mann
- Thomas (born 1758) became an MHK (1809-1819)

William's daughters Lucy (born 1756) and Catherine (born 1768) married brothers John and Robert Quayle, the latter an MHK.

According to A.W. Moore, the Dollough was sold in 1777, which would have been in the time of William Mylrea and Ellinor Gell. The sale might have been prompted by William's ascent to the position of Archdeacon of Mann which led to his migration to the rectory at Andreas. By the late 1700s, this Mylrea family, now headed by William's son Daniel IV, held considerable lands in Andreas and these were settled in the early 1800s upon sons Daniel V and Thomas.

Elizabeth Wilks als Christian saw the family's tradition, first established by her great grandfather William Mylrea, continue through her son who had initially been destined for a life as a cleric but chose instead to join the British Army:

- Mark Wilks (born 1759), Governor of St Helena (1813-1816) during Napoleon's imprisonment, MHK (1810-1830). His second wife was Dorothy Taubman, daughter of the Speaker of the House of Keys.



⁵ Source: Wikipedia

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- Elizabeth's step-daughter, Margaret married Rev. Thomas Cubbon, Vicar General. Their son Mark Cubbon (later Sir Mark), no doubt greatly influenced (or assisted) by his uncle, became the Commissioner of Mysore and it was after him that the Cubbon Park in Bangalore is named.

Sixth Generation

Daniel Mylrea, son of Thomas, and hero of the *Harpooner* disaster, had one son:

- Frederick Thomas Mylrea (born 1803) joined the British Army and served with distinction in the Commissariat department of many of England's outposts around the world – West Africa, Canada, South America, Gibraltar, Ireland and Australia. He married Emily Garland.

Margaret Moore (born 1764), the grand daughter of Ann Mylrea and Thomas Christian of *Ballamoar* through their daughter Ann who married Richard Moore, married Robert Farrant, MHK in 1787. She also became the heiress to the *Ballamoar* legacy when Thomas Christian, her uncle, died without issue.

Seventh Generation

This was the generation that seemed to have just one direct descendant of William Mylrea and Ann Christian in a position of influence. Fifth generation Thomas Mylrea and Mark Wilks did not have children, the sons of Daniel IV (Daniel and Thomas) died young without children and their sister Susannah who married Dr Philip Moyle Lyons did not have children either. None of children of Frederick Thomas Mylrea opted for a life of service although things changed with his grandchildren.

The Mylrea mantle of service was passed to Mylrea Tellet Quayle, great great great great grandson of William and Ann, and descended from Lucy Mylrea and John Quayle. Born in 1839, over two centuries after William Mylrea, Mylrea Tellet Quayle was an officer in the British army and later an MHK (1874-1877).

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Eight Generation

Frederick Garland Mylrea, the son of Frederick Thomas Mylrea, and grandson of Daniel, the hero of the *Harpooner* incident, had twelve children of whom four devoted their lives in the service of others:

- Clarence (born 1866 in Sydney Australia) took holy orders and served as a missionary in India before returning to England to work as a cleric in several parishes
- William Percy (born 1870 in Prussia) was a British army officer and served in both the Boer War and World War I
- Alice May (born 1875 in London) was a missionary
- Charles Stanley (born 1876 in London) was a medical missionary in the Middle East. It is after him that the Mylrea Hospital in Kuwait is named. He received several honours from successive English monarchs for his humanitarian work.

All of these individuals died childless.

Rose Mylrea was the daughter of Frederick Thomas Mylrea and granddaughter of Daniel, hero of the *Harpooner* tragedy:

- Her son, Stuart Robertson (born 1865) into a wealthy pastoral family in Geelong, Australia, attended Sandhurst Military College, and eventually joined the Black Watch, his great grandfather's regiment. He was sent to South Africa during the Boer War and died there in 1900. He had no children.

In Conclusion

It would be nice to think that the principal motive of those members of the Mylrea family who achieved Manx office of some distinction was honorable public service, observes Michael Bridson, historian and direct descendant of William McYlrea and Ann Christian. However, he goes on, it would have been rare indeed in the seventeenth and especially the eighteenth century when patronage, self-interest and corruption abounded. The sons of Ann Bridson als McYlrea were hardly models of civic rectitude.

A.W. Moore observed that the Mylrea family “formerly one of the most influential in the island” had no male representatives. This was not entirely accurate for there were the great grandsons of Daniel Mylrea, hero of the *Harpooner* incident – two missionaries and two

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army officers, none of whom had children of their own. It is remarkable that in this family across the generations, so few of the children survived to adulthood and that those who did had no children themselves.

In Victoria, Australia, however, a single strand of this particular Mylrea clan lives on. These are the descendants of Richard Armstrong Mylrea, grandson of Daniel. Their lineage would be:

William McYlrea (1627-1692)
Daniel McYlrea (1655-1724)
Daniel McYlrea (1684-1757)
Thomas McYlrea (1717-1759)
Daniel Mylrea (1750-1822)
Frederick Thomas Mylrea (1803-1862)
Richard Armstrong Mylrea (1842-1915)

Armstrong (as he was known) arrived in Australia as a young man in 1859 and never left. Neither have his descendants.