



NICHOLAS  
MYLREA jnr

1747-1823

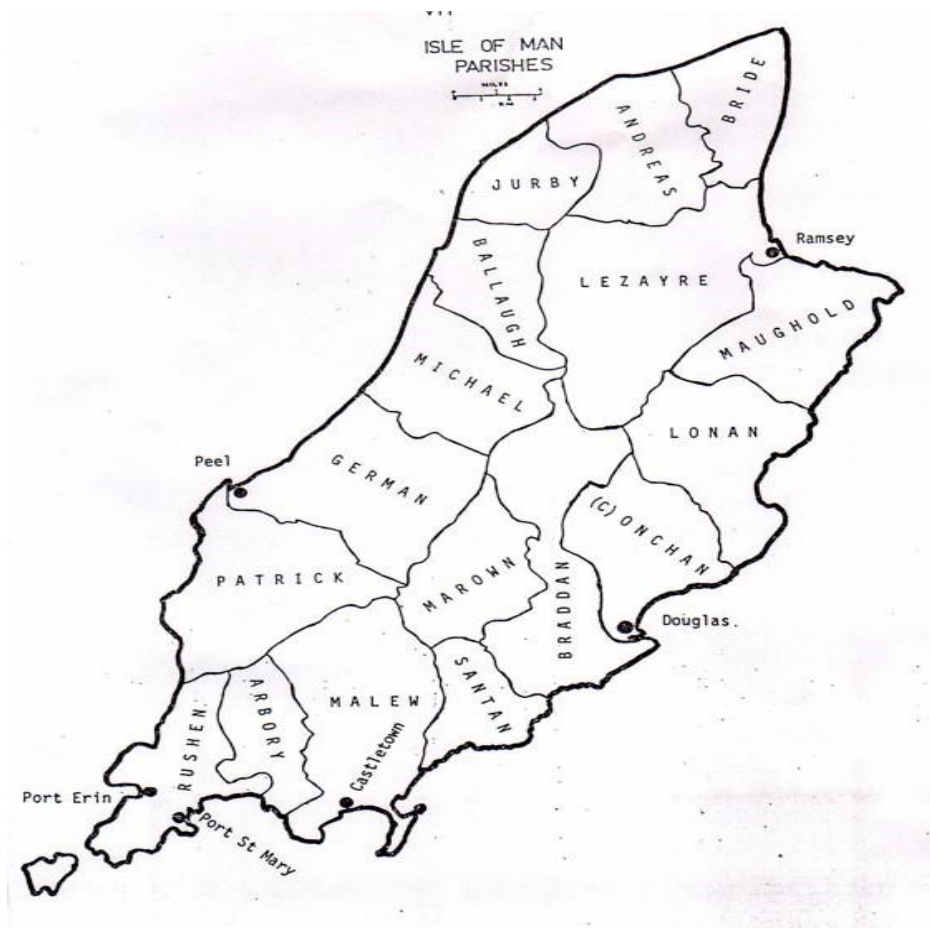
BALLAUGH  
ISLE OF MAN

<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



Source: <http://woods atlas1867.webs.com>

**NOTE:** The spelling of the name MYLREA is a major stumbling block in all Mylrea genealogy. So far, I've come across more than 30 variations included MYBREA, MYHEA, MYBRED, MYBRIA, MYLRIA, MYBREA, MYBREY, MILRAY, MEYLREA, MCYLREAN, MILREA and BYLREA.

**A**BOUT 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, and in the course of researching John's story, she became an accidental authority on the variety of Mylrea strands. The result has been a series of short histories of these different Mylrea families, partly to celebrate their lives but also to look for the links that might bind them together. These histories are showcased on the website <http://www.mylrea.com.au>

The online collection is regularly updated when new information comes to light. Today, the following histories can be found there:

- William Mcylrea (Ballaugh) 1627-1692
- The Fatally Flawed Family of Fildraw 1600-1800
- The Mylreas of Douglas & District 1600-1900
- Fathers & Sons: One Mylroie Clan (Lonan) 1653-1900
- Edward Mylrea snr (Lonan) 1743-1784
- Nicholas Mylrea jnr Farmer (Ballaugh) 1747-1823
- Three Daniels & a Thomas 1761-1934
- Thomas Mylrea, Farmer & Preacher (Braddan) 1788-1860
- Basil Mylrea, Mariner & Publican (Peel) 1791-1865
- Philip Mylrea, Stone Mason (Douglas) 1793-1861
- Frederick Thomas Mylrea, Military Man (London) 1803-1862
- John Mylrea 1852-1921
- The Brushmen of Bethnal Green
- Mylreas in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Lancashire

This story could have started at any point in time because the tale of Nicholas's clan goes back to 1495, the earliest surviving land record for the Isle of Man, and stretches forward to today. Nicholas was chosen because he was different to his ancestors, and to many of his descendants. The evidence strongly suggests that he was a rather feckless and profligate fellow, with little regard for his family's wellbeing. He started life in a relatively privileged position yet he died with nothing, worse he left a family crippled by debt.

This story owes much to the Manx National Library & Archives (MNLHA) which has preserved the many documents used to piece together Nicholas's story. A huge debt of thanks is also due to Robert Cannell whose transcriptions of early Ballaugh land records helped enormously in efforts to establish the origins of Nicholas's Mylrea clan, and Robert's fulsome advice in deciphering the early entries is greatly appreciated.

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 and researcher, although the Mylrea narratives are her first foray into biography. Her book about her great great grandfather is published in the USA with the title: *On Some Lonely Shore: John Mylrea in Australia*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Publisher: <http://www.lulu.com>

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# EARLY SETTLERS

In 1747, Nicholas Mylrea jnr was baptised in the parish of Ballaugh on the Isle of Man. His parents were Nicholas Mylrea snr and Jony Cowin. He was their oldest son, and thus heir at law to the family's estate.

These Mylreas were a farming clan, as their forebears had been for nearly three centuries. They were first recorded in Ballaugh in 1495, and they probably hailed originally from Michael, the parish on the southern border of Ballaugh. Farmers in that time followed a tradition of mixed and small-scale agriculture; they were not literate, mostly because there was little time left (or a need) for formal learning, driven as they were for a need to make their lands productive. Given the extent of their land holdings in those early centuries, the Ballaugh Mylreas were relatively comfortable in an economic sense.

For the study of Manx family history in the earliest of times, the land records are by far the most fruitful resource because the majority of the inhabitants, if they were not mariners, occupied land of some kind. The records were rent books because all Manx land "holders"<sup>2</sup> were in reality tenants of the Lord of Mann who had – not surprisingly an abiding interest in his income:

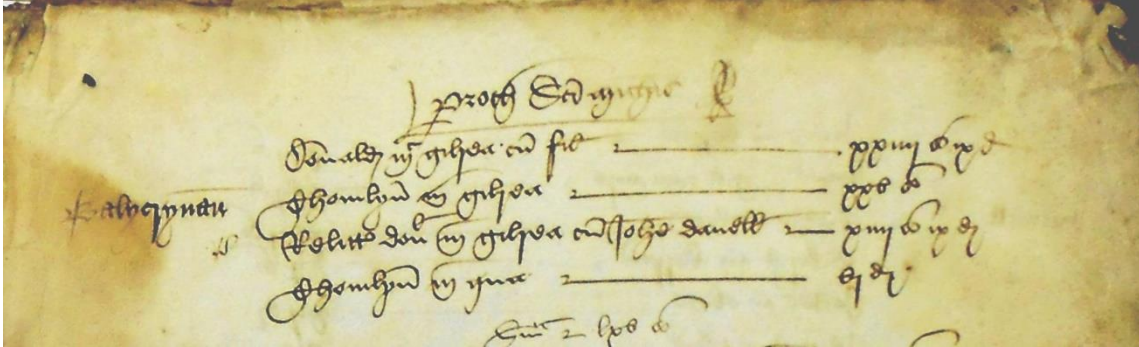
- Manx Manorial Roll
- Libri Vastarum
- Libri Assedationis
- Knowsley Lease Books
- Composition Books

The accounts were kept from before 1500, and while few of those have survived intact, the ones that do provide the names of the early occupants of the island. The earliest entries are in the 1495 Manorial Roll (or Liber Assedationis), which listed the location, the tenant/s, and the rent they paid. For example, in the image below, an extract from the 1495 record for the parish of Michael shows 6 tenants on 4 quarterlands in the treen of **Balycrynan**:

- Donald Mc gilrea with son who paid an annual rent of 24s 9d
- widow of Thomlyn Mc gilrea 25s,
- relict of Donl ilrea with John Danell 14s 9d

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<sup>2</sup> No-one actually owned land on the Isle of Man except the Lord of Mann, but tenants had certain rights including the capacity to pass on their tenancy as an inheritance

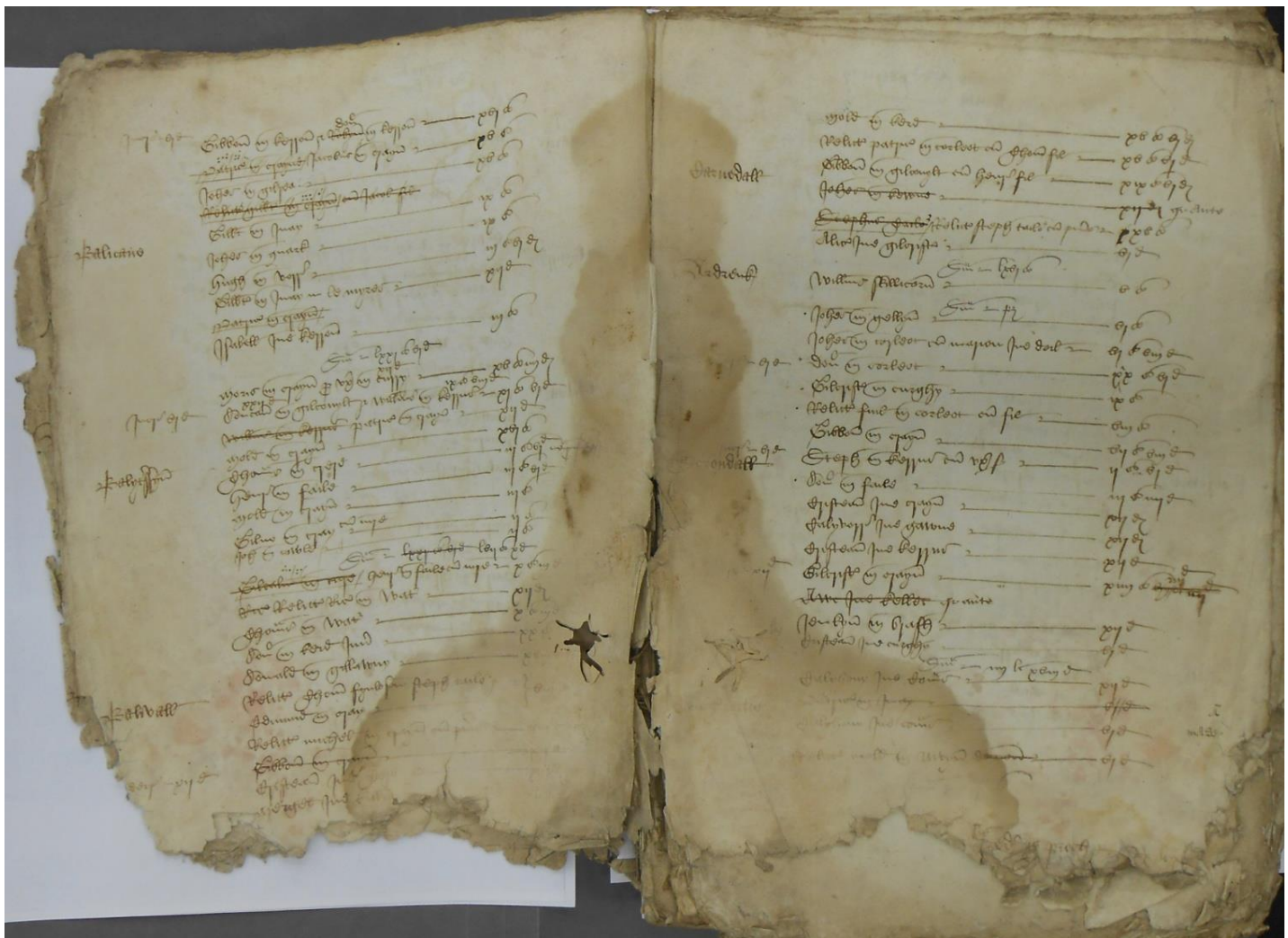


It is evident that the surviving pages of the 1495 annal for Ballaugh have suffered irreparable damage yet a large proportion of the entries are still legible<sup>3</sup>. It clearly shows that there was only one tenant with the surname Mc yilrea. This was John. On the right hand page, line 9 records John Mc yilrea as tenant in the treen of **Balicane**, paying 15s annually to occupy a quarterland which would later become known as the *Dollagh* (Black Lake)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> image provided by Robert Cannell

<sup>4</sup> Quarterland names were not entered into land records until centuries later



The Manorial Roll continued to show John as the tenant up until 1511 but in 1513, the entry changed to “widow of John Mcgilrea and Donald son”, a confirmation that John, the original tenant, had died. The 1515 entries for Balyough<sup>5</sup>:

*Balycane*

*From the Widow of John Gilrea with Donald, son, for 1 tenement and half a quarter of land 1s )  
 And )  
 for a 4th part of one quarter of land 5/- demised to them. )*

16s

**The Deemsters**

The **Balycane** holding with an annual rent of 16s enjoyed three centuries of occupation by the one Mylrea clan through hereditary title, the title that had been originally acquired by John some time before 1495. This clan spawned what was known as the Deemster Mylreas, a powerful family that produced over the generations Deemsters, Attorneys General, and Archdeacons and that tended to be distinguished by the oldest son being baptised Daniel, a variation of the name Donald.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/fulltext/manroll/bh.htm>



From 1495 to 1777, the names of the 11 stewards of the stewards of the **Balican** quarterland: John, Donald, John, Raynold, Donald, John, William, Daniel, Daniel, Daniel, Daniel

During the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Mcgilrea men began to appear as tenants in other parts of Ballaugh. They might have been descendants of the original John through his son Donald or a second son, or recent arrivals – there is no way of knowing with any certainty:

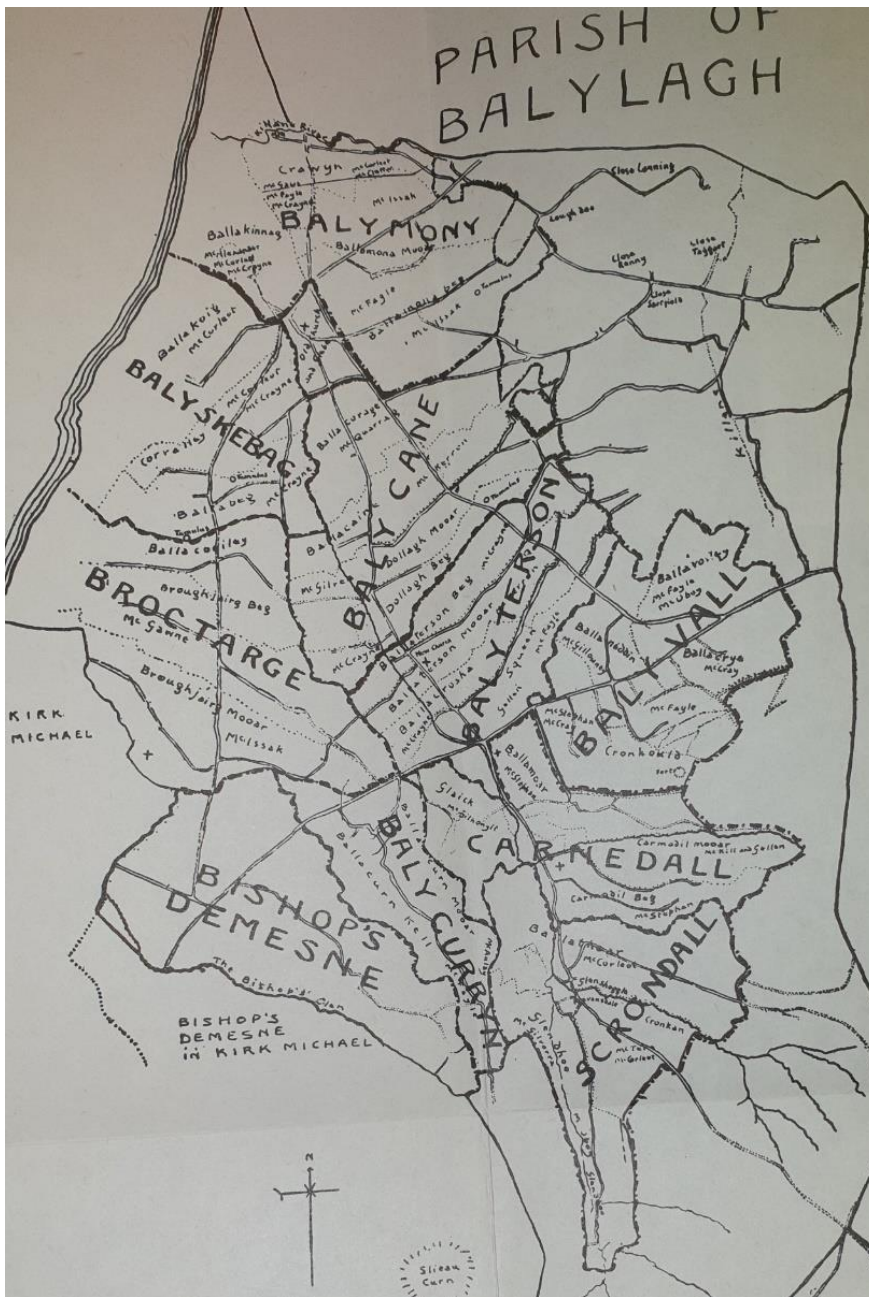
– B  
**allatersin**, to the south-east of **Balican**, became a Mcgilrea holding in the 1530s, with the initial Mcgilrea tenant named Donald. Was it the original Donald expanding his farmland, or another Donald altogether? On balance, it is more likely that the original Donald did indeed expand into **Ballatersin**, then passed at least part of that holding on to his second son who was named Donald jnr. By the early 1600s, the Ballatersin estate had passed out of the family through lack of male heirs when it descended to a daughter who married and the lands became the right of her husband's.

– I  
In the south of the parish, Gibbon Mcgilrea briefly appeared in the 1530s on **Scrondall** treen (he also occupied a cottage). It is highly likely that Gibbon was a second son of the original John and died without issue so his tenancy passed on to his nephews, Donald and John in 1539.

– A  
And later, a John Mcgilrea was one of three tenants of a 15s quarterland in **Balymon** for three decades, starting in the 1550s, and this holding was again probably expansionary rather than a new citizen of Ballaugh. This John was probably the son of the original Donald, and grandson of the first recorded Mcgilrea in Ballaugh, John

The records over the centuries demonstrate that the Deemster Mylrea clan understood the power of land, and they expanded their holdings beyond Ballaugh, as they pursued their influential positions in other parts of the Isle of Man – in the parishes of German, Malew, Andreas and Maughold.

Nicholas Mylrea jnr was descended from the Deemster clan, but it was not a linear relationship. His more immediate forebears came from a second son John Mcgilrea (his 5x great grandfather) who married an heiress, Alice Gawne, prior to 1600. Alice had received a quarterland in **Broctarge**, to the west of the Mylrea's **Balican** holding in 1586.



**Ballaugh in 1515**

JJ Kneen, *The Place-Names of the Isle of Man*

### ***Ballacooiley***

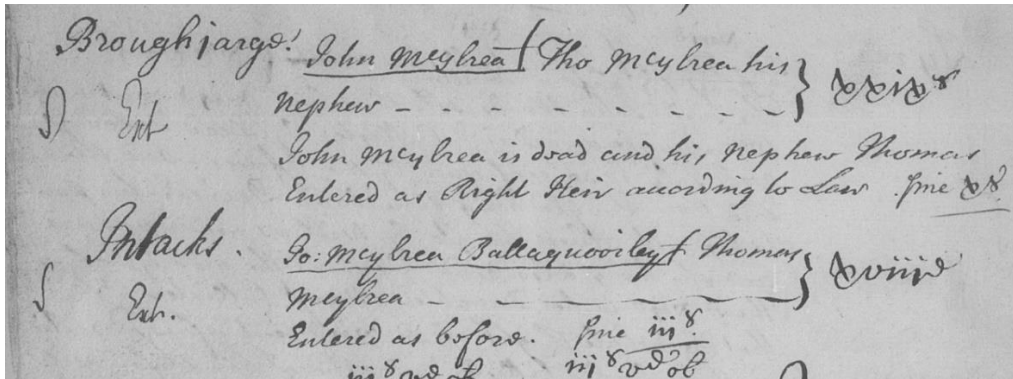
The Gawnes had occupied all of the quarterlands in **Broctarge** during the 1500s, but evidently for this particular quarterland, the clan reached a situation where there was no male heir and so Alice, the daughter of William, became the heir-at-law. She remained the sole tenant of the quarterland until 1619, after which John Mcylrea was listed as the only tenant. In fact, Alice had died in 1617 but the record keepers were slow to note her absence. In 1604, her grandfather John Gawne endowed a 20d intack on Alice and John and this is how John was confirmed as her son.

In all probability, Alice's husband was the John Mcgilrea who died in 1600. He died intestate, and the Letters of Administration simply mentioned that his child had an uncle named Donald Mc ilrea<sup>6</sup>. With this scant information, it seems that John was the younger brother of Donald who was, by then, the heir at law to the *Dollagh* quarterland. Ironically, both patriarch Raynold and matriarch Ellin also died in 1600, leaving their oldest son Donald as steward of the family's estate.

The **Broctarge** quarterland was known as *Ballacooiley*, and it attracted an annual rent of 14s 6d. The name is Manx for "the farm of the nook"<sup>7</sup> and the lands covered about 100 acres in a narrow strip stretching from the north-west coast of the island into the middle of Ballaugh, comparatively large by the standards of the day. As with many Manx words, the spelling of the estate varied greatly over the years, including: *Ballna ny quooley*, *Ballaquooley*, *Ballacooley*, and *Balna cooleh*<sup>8</sup>. These variations appeared on birth and death registers, in deeds and in census records. The baptism of Ann, daughter of Thomas Mcylrea, who was the great grandfather of Nicholas jnr, was recorded:

*Ann Irea, daughter of Thomas Ballnecooley, baptised 4 Sept., 1673*<sup>9</sup>

This Mylrea branch occupied *Ballacooiley*, passing from father to son, for a little over 200 years until the heir at law, John, died without issue in 1739, and the estate passed to his oldest nephew, Thomas Mcylrea.



From 1586 to 1870, the names of the 9 stewards of the **Broctarge** quarterland – (Alice), John, John, Thomas, John, Thomas, John, John, Thomas 1870

Nicholas Mylrea jnr was descended from the *Ballacooiley* clan but again, it was not a linear relationship. His father was Nicholas, a younger brother of Thomas, the individual who inherited *Ballacooiley* in 1739 when the family had no direct male heir.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/wills%20collection/john-1600.html>

<sup>7</sup> JJ Kneen (1970) *The Place-Names of the Isle of Man with their origin & history*

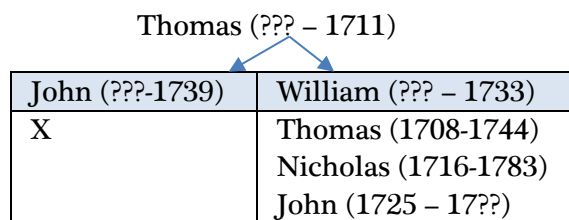
<sup>8</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/thomas-nicholas-1740.html>

<sup>9</sup> Ballaugh Parish Records

# NICHOLAS snr

1716-1784

Nicholas snr was the second of three sons of William Mcylrea and Katherine Cowle. As a younger son, William himself had not been heir at law to the *Ballacooiley* estate, that title going instead to William's brother, Thomas. William and Katherine had a third son named John, who left Ballaugh and became a cooper in the northern parish of Maughold.



William's eldest son Thomas eventually inherited *Ballacooiley* when his uncle, John, steward of the estate for 16 years after his father Thomas died, died without issue. The newly installed steward of *Ballacooiley*, Thomas, was instrumental in Nicholas taking possession of an estate in his own right when, in 1740, he sold to his brother *certain parcels of the quarterland of Ballacoraig with a small parcel of Intack lands in the curragh* for £11<sup>10</sup>. These were tenancies that Thomas had purchased some years previously for £7/10/-<sup>11</sup>.

It is an open question why Thomas sold his earlier acquisitions to his brother. On the one hand, he might have realised he had enough to do as steward of *Ballacooiley* without taking care of the *Ballacorriage* lands as well. On the other, he might have needed the money to keep his not unexpected legacy afloat. Given Thomas's subsequent land transactions, that seems the more likely explanation.

## ***Ballacorraige***

The quarterland of *Ballacorraige* is in the **Balicane** treen, the treen where the Mylrea clan first appeared in the 1495 Manorial Roll, and where the Deemster Mylreas continued to hold the original tenancies.

Nicholas's purchase serves as an indicator that he was a young man of substance. He was 24 years old and marriage to Joney Cowin was still some years away, yet he had

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/thomas-nicholas-1740.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/thomas-purchase-1733.html>

independently secured his own future. He seems to have received nothing from his parents although both named brother John in their wills<sup>12, 13</sup>.

Further evidence of the character of Nicholas was his guardianship of his nephew, John, who was only 6 years of age when his father, Thomas, died at the age of 36, just eight years after he had inherited *Ballacooiley*. Twenty-four year old Nicholas ensured that the estate continued to run efficiently, and helped the boy consolidate the debts left by his father<sup>14</sup>. Perhaps a testament to Nicholas's guardianship is that the *Ballacooiley* estate remained viable for the next hundred years or so, largely under the stewardship of John after he came of age, until he died at the age of 76.

Nicholas snr married Joney Cowin in 1746. Joney was the daughter of John Cowin and Margaret Cottier. Her parents were married in Ballaugh in 1719, and Joney was baptised there in 1724. She was an heiress by the time she married Nicholas, having received a part of *Ballacorraige* quarterland when her parents died in the early 1740s<sup>15</sup>. There was as well a substantial tenancy in the same area of *Ballacorraige* that she had become entitled to in 1742<sup>16</sup>. The rents for the two pieces of quarterland that belonged to Joney were about three times more than the rents that Nicholas had owed, and together they held about one fourth of the *Ballacorraige* quarterland. They might have been regarded as "landed gentry" by their neighbours.

The couple had eight children, including a set of twins, who naturally enjoyed what were the most frequently used of all Mylrea first names:

- Nicholas jnr (1747)
- William (1749)
- John (1752)
- Daniel (1752)
- Mary (1754)
- Ann (1756)
- Katherine (1759)
- Thomas (1762)

As was common in those days, several did not survive their childhood and in this family it was three sons - the Christmas Day twins, John and Daniel, who died of smallpox at

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/wills%20collection/william-1733.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/wills%20collection/catherine-cowle-1758.html>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/johnnich-mortgage-1752.html>

<sup>15</sup> LV 1742; also 1741-1 A 85 COWIN Margaret d 1 pAr 1741; husb John exor; son John, Wm, Thos, Philip; dau Joney; witt Nichs Corlet at sea; husb John dead by probate - dau Joney exex (her uncle Wm Cowin pledge) &

1741-1 E w COWN John d 26 Apr 1741; son John, Wm, Thos + Philip (each 40s inc legacy from mo); Adam Cain owes him 40s; dau Joney (lands lately purchased - she to discharge debts) exex; pledge Wm Cown uncle Jony + John Killip Lezayre; 1753 Nich M cylrea h/o Jony; 1764 Philip Cown being of weak judgement and the exex wanting to discharge legacies pays 30s to bro Thos

<sup>16</sup> NSM May 1742 125 Phil + Jony Kneal Nich Corlett + Joney Cown ass dated 11 Nov 1741; Philip Kneal (Andreas) + sons Wm + Philip exors of my late decd wife Elinr Kneal assign for £7 being the consideration money due on a bill of mortgage bearing date 9 Nov 1739 [NSM Oct 1740 78] given me the sd Philip Kneal

the age of about 3 months, and William who died when he was 16 years of age. He was buried in the Old Ballaugh Church Yard where his Memorial Inscription reads:

*Hereunder lyeth the body of WILLIAM MYLREA who died the 12<sup>th</sup> of Janry. 1765 aged 16y.*<sup>17</sup>

The three daughters - Mary, Ann and Katherine married – Mary to Robert Clague, Ann to Matthias Oates, and Katherine to William Quayle.

Thomas, the youngest child, went to Liverpool, probably after his father's death. His parents mentioned him in their respective wills, and his mother's 1795 will<sup>18</sup> is the only evidence of his continued existence and the existence of his children. Nothing further has been definitively established about Thomas.

Nicholas Mylrea jnr, named after his father, as the oldest son in the family was heir-at-law to the *Ballacorraige* estate. The estate now comprised the fields that his father had purchased in 1740, with the tenancies his mother had received in the 1740s, and one field in the curagh that Nicholas snr had purchased in 1768 adjoining a field he already held there<sup>19</sup>.

Given the fine qualities that Nicholas snr displayed, it is a mystery why things could have gone so terribly wrong for his son, Nicholas jnr.

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<sup>17</sup> Memorial Inscriptions Ballaugh Old & New. IOM Family History Society.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/wills%20collection/joney-cowin-1795.html>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/nicholas-purchase-1768.html>

# NICHOLAS jnr

1747-1823

The most common means of passing a tenancy from one generation to the next on the Isle of Man was through a Marriage Contract for, or a Settlement upon, the oldest son. Nicholas jnr was 27 years of age when, on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1774, his parents committed in the Marriage Contract for their son to provide:

*all and singular our whole estate of houses, garden and garden lands, buildings and edifices thereupon erected at present or hereafter may be erected thereon with all and every appurtenances and privileges appertaining to their said estates with Quarterland and Intack land situated in the parish of Ballaugh .....<sup>20</sup>*

The intended bride was Margaret Kneen, whose parents, William and Catherine (Cowley) Kneen, also gave a land endowment:

*all and singular their property and interest in & unto their whole Intack land situate in the foresaid parish the sum being three distinct parcels commonly known and distinguished by the names Ellan Beg; another of Croit e Churry and the third by the name of Cooil ne Isingun Nigh*

Nicholas jnr was a fortunate young man. Not only was he entitled to about one fourth of the *Ballacorraig* quarterland but also he was marrying a woman whose family had something substantial to contribute to the union. The young couple embarked on married life with a fine portfolio of tenancies in Ballaugh (and some bedding and a cow), and the prospect of more to come when their respective parents died. The couple controlled an estate with an estimated value of £300, a considerable amount in 1774, although small in comparison to the proceeds of the sale in 1777 of the neighbouring Mylrea estate, the *Dollagh*, when distant relative Daniel sold it for nearly £3,000<sup>21</sup>, a demonstration of how extensive the Deemster Mylrea holdings had become.

Over the next two decades, seven children came into the family of Nicholas jnr and Margaret, six of whom survived to adulthood:

- William (1777)<sup>22</sup>
- Margaret (1778)
- William (1781)
- Catherine (1784)

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/nicholas-margaret-1774-marriage.html>

<sup>21</sup> See <http://www.mylrea.com.au/stories/FREDERICK%20THOMAS%20MYLREA%20b1803.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Ballaugh burials 1777-1781 do not list the death of the first William

- John (1786)
- Thomas (1789)
- James (1792)

Nicholas's wife Margaret died in December 1810 when she was 59. By then, the oldest three children were married and had children of their own:

- Margaret married John Moughtin (a farm worker) in 1803;
- William married Elinor Caine in 1806; and
- Catherine married James Kneen (a blacksmith) in 1805.

The daughters and their husbands lived in the adjacent parish of Andreas while William and his wife resided in Ballaugh, presumably with his parents. The three youngest of the family – John, Thomas and James - were still bachelors, James aged 18 when their mother died.

By 1810 however, things had gone terribly wrong for Nicholas jnr and what's more, the trouble had started well before then.

### **Family Animus**

Nicholas snr died in 1784, ten years after his son married. His will revealed that he held his oldest son in very low regard, bequeathing him two pairs of breeches and a coat, and forgiving his son's debts to him (which included both money and corn). Because he was heir at law to the *Ballacorraige* estate, his inheritance was assured but Nicholas snr had more to say about his son:

*If in case his eldest son Nicholas Mylrea would make any disturbance with the Executive in respect to any matter or thing that he was to be excluded in the legacy that was left him.*<sup>23</sup>

On first sighting, the rancour towards Nicholas jnr in his father's will is perplexing. The Marriage Contract for Nicholas jnr had established the orderly transmission of the family's lands so in many respects, there was nothing left for his father to say. Yet he chose to use his will to make his attitude towards his oldest son perfectly clear. He "put it on record", so to speak.

Another decade passed and Nicholas's mother Joney died in 1795. Her will was a three-page affair, itemising many, many bequests to family and friends yet she left her oldest son just sixpence, the smallest legacy for anyone on her list<sup>24</sup>, and whatever she left his children (small in comparison to her other grandchildren), had to be paid by Nicholas out of "money or cash" that he owed her. Joney died in Peel where she lived with her daughter Ann Oates, having abandoned her Ballaugh home after her husband's death even though she was entitled to remain at *Ballacorraige* to be cared for by her son and his wife.

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/wills%20collection/nicholas-1784.html>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/wills%20collection/joney-cowin-1795.html>



What had happened to turn his parents so strongly against him? What could have caused the profound displeasure directed towards their oldest son? The best guess is that Nicholas jnr had behaved appallingly. Given the apparent resourcefulness of Nicholas snr in acquiring his own lands once his older brother had inherited *Ballacooiley*, the source of the antipathy towards Nicholas jnr probably related to money, given the mention of debts in both wills.

Margaret's will makes interesting reading<sup>25</sup>. Her first bequest was to John, her fourth child (the second son in the family), to whom she left "*her part of the boat and her part of the herring nets*". She left her daughters Margaret and Catherine her clothing and the wool and feathers in the house, and to her niece Ann Kneen, she left a spinning wheel. The two youngest sons, Thomas and James, were left "*all the rest of her goods and effects moveable and immoveable*". William, her oldest son, mentioned at the end of her will, was to receive one shilling (the same amount she left to each of the witness of her will) and such a bequest more a token than a slight for he was, after all, heir to the family estate. Husband Nicholas jnr was executor but left nothing of substance. Margaret chose to distribute all of her possessions to her children and a niece rather than leave them to her husband. Perhaps Margaret too was disenchanted with him. More evidence of how incorrigible he truly was emerged over the decade after her death.

### Debt Burden

To say that Nicholas jnr was a poor money manager would be an understatement. To say he was wilful, feckless and profligate might be nearer the mark. There is no evidence that Nicholas snr ever mortgaged or sold the tenancies he had acquired from his brother in 1740, nor those that Joney brought into their marriage.

Within a year of his father's death, Nicholas jnr took his first mortgage. The timing was not a coincidence, for now he had possession of half of *Ballacorraige*, as his 1774 Marriage Contract had dictated. The significance of his father's 1784 will now comes into sharp focus because it's clear that Nicholas jnr had been borrowing (and not repaying) funds from his father. "*..... whatsoever money his said son Nichs owed him and ..... whatsoever corn his said son owed him*. Clearly, with his father gone, Nicholas had to find another source money, and in a decade, Nicholas borrowed nearly £70, against two of the fields contributed by the Kneens to the Marriage Contract, and another from his parents.

1785	Mortgaged <i>Kneen's Croft</i> to Ballaugh Church Rector & Wardens for £12 <sup>26</sup> (rent = 6 ½ d) <b>Repaid 1806</b>
1789	Mortgaged <i>Nich Mylrea's Flatt</i> to Thomas Teare for £32 <sup>27</sup> <b>Repaid 1808</b>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/wills%20collection/margaret-kneen-1810.html>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/nicholas-mortgage-1785.html>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/nicholas-mortgage-1789.html>

1795	Mortgaged <i>Ellan Beg</i> to Thomas Kermod for £24 <sup>28</sup> 10d) <sup>29</sup> <b>Repaid 1806</b>	(Intack 16 - rent = 1s
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After his mother died in 1795, it became evident that Nicholas had also borrowed from her. Her will gave voice to her son's debts *I give and bequeath unto my grandchildren children of my son Nicholas ... shillings between them to be paid out of the money or cash that is in my said son's hands and sixpence legacy to my said son Nicholas.*

On the other hand, when his mother died, Nicholas had the entire estate at his disposal so he embarked on more mortgages (£120+) resulting in a total debt of nearly £200 over various parts of the estate by 1806. Of necessity, sales of parts of the estate started to appear in 1806 and were probably just sufficient to meet the outstanding mortgages.

1805	Mortgaged <i>Croite e Curry</i> to William Mylechraine for £20 <sup>30</sup> <b>Repaid 1808</b>	(rent = 6½d)
1805	Mortgaged <i>The Flatt</i> to James Taubman for £60 <sup>31</sup>	
1806	Mortgaged <i>Nicks Fields</i> (several parcels of land) to John Cowley for \$42 <sup>32</sup> <b>Assigned to Thomas Kelly 1824, Repaid 1825</b>	(rent=2s 6d)
1808	Sold <i>Ellan veg</i> to Daniel Cowle for £86 <sup>33</sup>	(rent = 1s 10d; intack #16) <sup>34</sup>
1808	Sold the <i>Croit &amp; the Acre</i> to John Cain for £94 <sup>35</sup>	(rent = 7 ½ & 2d)
1810	Sold <i>Kneensland</i> to James Bennett for £12/12/- <sup>36</sup>	(rent = 3d)

For 25 years, Nicholas mortgaged and then had to sell *Ballacorraig* fields. The land sales in 1808, and the later sale in 1810, disposed of the holdings that were the Kneen's contribution in the 1774 Marriage Contract and put the mortgage against the Mylrea component into the hands of Thomas Kelly. His oldest son William was now caught up in this deadly debt spiral. As the heir-at-law, he became a key player in a convoluted process in 1808, preceding the two 1808 sales, that were intended, no doubt, to keep the estate out of the hands of the mortgagors. But he immediately became obliged to take further mortgages in his own name to keep the estate in the family. Unfortunately, the momentum of the death spiral when Nicholas was the pilot was unstoppable.

Debt had dogged the family for two generations, thanks to Nicholas jnr. In 1817, never long out of the limelight, Nicholas jnr found himself in jail in Castle Rushen because he owed Ann Kegg £8. He still had the temerity to appeal to the Chancery Courts for

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/nicholas-mortgage-1795.html>

<sup>29</sup> LV 1830 – mortgage recorded as cancelled (24 yrs after cancellation was documented in Mortgage Document)

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/nicholas-mortgage-1805.html>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/nicholas-mortgage-1805.html>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/nicholas-mortgage-1806.html>

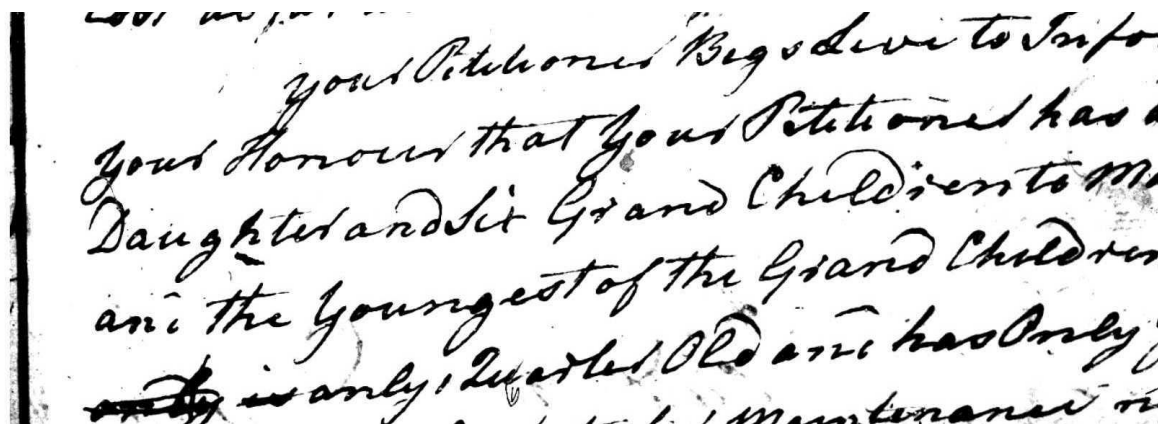
<sup>33</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/nicholas-sale2-1808.html>

<sup>34</sup> Recorded LV 1832

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/nicholas-sale3-1808.html>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/nicholas-sale-1810.html>

liberty, on the grounds that his daughter (actually his daughter-in-law) and the children needed him<sup>37</sup>.



your Petitioner Begs leave to Infor  
your Honour that your Petitioner has a  
Daughter and six Grand Children to Mr.  
and the youngest of the Grand Children  
is only 12 months old and has only  
12 months maintenance

By the time he died in 1823, all of his children had left Ballaugh one way or another. Three were living in Andreas, a fourth had gone to Bride and heir-at-law William and youngest son James had died in tragic circumstances in 1816.

Even in death, Nicholas jnr continued to cause trouble. He died intestate, and his widowed daughter-in-law, Elinor, was left with the obligation to settle his estate<sup>38</sup>. Predictably, he was still in debt, when his assets amounted to £55/13/4 while his debts were £113/19/2. Elinor had no recourse but to seek the Court's permission to encumber her 12 year old son's already heavily mortgaged *Ballacorraig* with yet another mortgage in order to settle Nicholas's obligations of about £58/-.

Although it's not possible to divine when Nicholas's problems began, nor indeed what they were, it is possible to say that his financial disasters did not die with him but instead, travelled on through the lives of his oldest son and heir-at-law, William, and into the life of his grandson, William jnr.

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/nicholas-petition-1817.html>

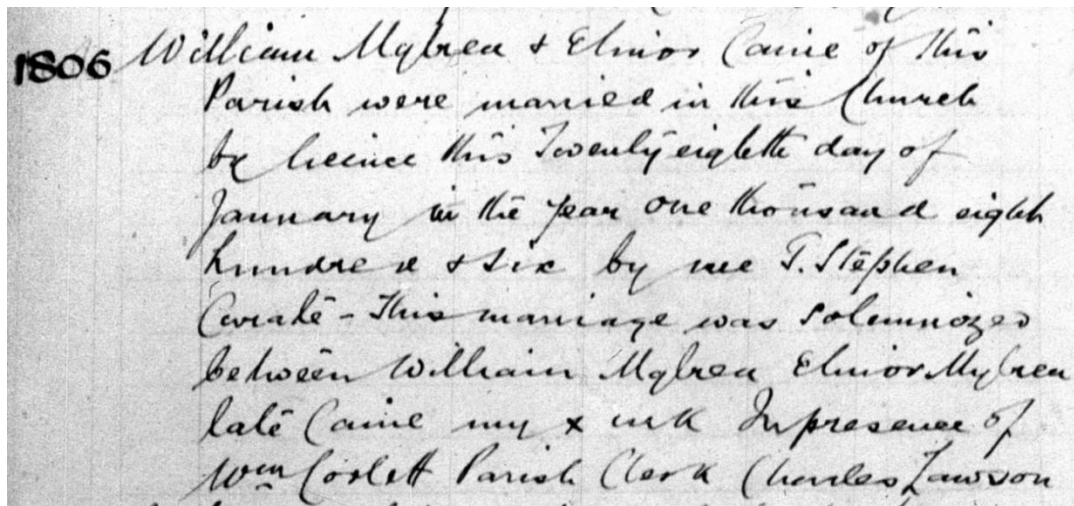
<sup>38</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/eleanor-petition-1827.html>

# WILLIAM

1781-1816

**W**as William the hapless victim of his father's financial irresponsibility or was he a willing accomplice? Oldest of four sons, he was heir-at-law to the *Ballacorraige* estate in Ballaugh. His mother's Kneen family had also contributed lands to the Mylrea holdings via her Marriage Contract. At the time of the marriage, the collective value of the lands in the Contract was about £300 although parts of the estate were already mortgaged by the time William came of age.

When he was 25, William married Elinor Caine in Ballaugh.



1806 William Mylrea & Elinor Caine of this Parish were married in this Church by licence this Twenty eighth day of January in the year one thousand eight hundred & six by me J. Stephen Curate - This marriage was solemnized between William Mylrea Elinor Mylrea late Caine my x with In presence of Wm Corlett Parish Clerk Charles Lawson

## BALLAUGH MARRIAGE REGISTER

While we know a lot about William's paternal heritage, we know little about his maternal line. Several young women of that name were born in Ballaugh and surrounding parishes between 1780 and 1785, the most likely window for her birth, although without other information, it is impossible to identify which might have become William's wife. Later documents hint that she came from the parish of Michael, when the guardians of her children (William and John Cain) were recorded as coming from that parish. These men were probably her brothers but there is nothing in any official documents to confirm this. So without conclusive evidence, Elinor's origins remain a matter for speculation.

William and Elinor had six children in the ensuing decade:

- Anne (baptised 1<sup>st</sup> February 1807)
- Jane (baptised c1809)
- Elinor (baptised 5<sup>th</sup> December 1811)
- Margaret (baptised 25<sup>th</sup> July 1813)

- William (baptised 13<sup>th</sup> June 1815)
- John (baptised 15<sup>th</sup> March 1817)

Manx parish records are a valuable resource but they are not infallible. For example, Jane, William's second daughter had no parish record of baptism yet legal papers associated with their father's estate named all but John who was born after their father's death, and it is the order of the daughters - Ann, Jane, Ellinor and Margaret - that gives an indication that Jane was born between Ann (b1807) and Ellinor (b1811). As well, William the fourth child and baptised in 1815 was described as the son of William Mylrea and Ellinor Cannel in the Ballaugh parish register, clearly either an error by the vicar or by a later transcriber (although examination of the register suggests that the original document exists).

## Intrigue

As the oldest son, William snr was always destined to receive *Ballacorraig* estate, mortgages and all. There was no Marriage Contract for William when he married Elinor Caine in 1806 but four years later, in May 1810, and six months before his mother died, his parents were the parties in a Deed of Settlement in which they "gave" to William:

*the whole of our estate both Quarterland and Intack, all and every our whole estate of houses and gardens situate on said estate in present possession*<sup>39</sup>

The estate was now implicitly valued at about £500, which was nearly double the value of what had been contributed by the Mylreas and Kneens in 1774. To an external observer, it would appear that in the 36 years since Nicholas jnr and Margaret married, the family had prospered and their holdings had become more valuable. But nothing could have been further from the truth.

What makes this 1810 Settlement on William bizarre is that Nicholas and Margaret might not have had any land to pass on to William. The records show that William was already the owner of the lands, the result of a convoluted sale-purchase process. Two years earlier, Nicholas jnr sold a large parcel of *Ballacorraig* land for \$345 and the price-tag suggests a lot of land - one might guess that it was the entire Mylrea estate. The purchaser was Ann Crow and the financial transaction was for

*sixty pounds British thereof to be paid on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of May next and the remainder part of the said consideration money on 12<sup>th</sup> November next*<sup>40</sup>

However, two months after the sale to Crow was executed and before the second payment was due, heir-at-law William Mylrea purchased the lands back:

*proportion and part of the Quarterland of Balla Corraig situate in Ballaugh and lately purchased by me from Nicholas Mylrea and Margaret Mylrea otherwise Kneen by a Deed of Sale*<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/nicholas-settlement-1810.html>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/nicholas-sale1-1808.html>

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/william-purchase-1808.html>

Crow mentions in the Sale contract with William that he was her nephew. So, Nicholas sold the estate to his sister-in-law Ann Crow, then she sold it back to her nephew three months later. She made no profit on the deal, and the entire sequence of events took place in a window. Thus, William was already the “owner” of whatever Nicholas had originally sold to Crowe, which makes the 1810 settlement on William a somewhat odd arrangement. In sum:

- 1808, 30th April    Nicholas sold *the whole of our part of the Quarterland of Ballacorraige*” to Ann Crow for £345
- 1808, 6th<sup>th</sup> July    William purchased from Ann Crow for £345 *all and singular the whole of my (Crow’s) proportion and part of the Quarterland of Ballacorraige situate in Ballaugh aforesaid and lately purchased by me (Crow) from Nicholas*
- 1810, 3<sup>rd</sup> March    Nicholas & Margaret Kneen settled on William *the whole of our estate of lands both Quarterland and Intack all and every our whole estate of houses and gardens situate on said estate in present possession”*

Ann Crow was evidently an obliging participant in some kind of Grand Plan. Perhaps it was a means of protecting William’s inheritance from Nicholas’s creditors? Whatever the motivation of the parties, it seems that the 1810 “settlement” was for the lands that William had already “purchased” two years previously! This sequence of events lacks an obvious logic but perhaps the answer to why they took place at all lies in their timing?

Motives aside, having apparently come into possession of *Ballacorraige* twice, in a matter of two years, William also became saddled with his father’s mortgages over those parts of the estate that remained in Mylrea hands. On the same day in 1810 that William had the estate settled on him, he borrowed £200 from Thomas Kelly, probably to consolidate the existing mortgages (and any other debts) into one transaction<sup>42</sup>.

- 1810, 3<sup>rd</sup> March    William mortgaged *the whole of our proportion one part of the Quarterland of Ballacorraige*<sup>43</sup> (rent = 9s 5½ d)

Early in 1816, William sold off another two pieces of the estate<sup>44</sup>:

1816, 5 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Sold <i>Nicholas Mylrea’s Flatt</i> to Thomas Cowle for £11/5/- <sup>45</sup> (rent = 2d)
1816, 6 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Sold land to John Craine for £10/10/- <sup>46</sup> (rent = 1½ d)

<sup>42</sup> LV 1817

<sup>43</sup> LV 1830 – mortgage noted as cancelled

<sup>44</sup> LV 1819

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/william-sale1-1816.html>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/william-sale2-1816.html>

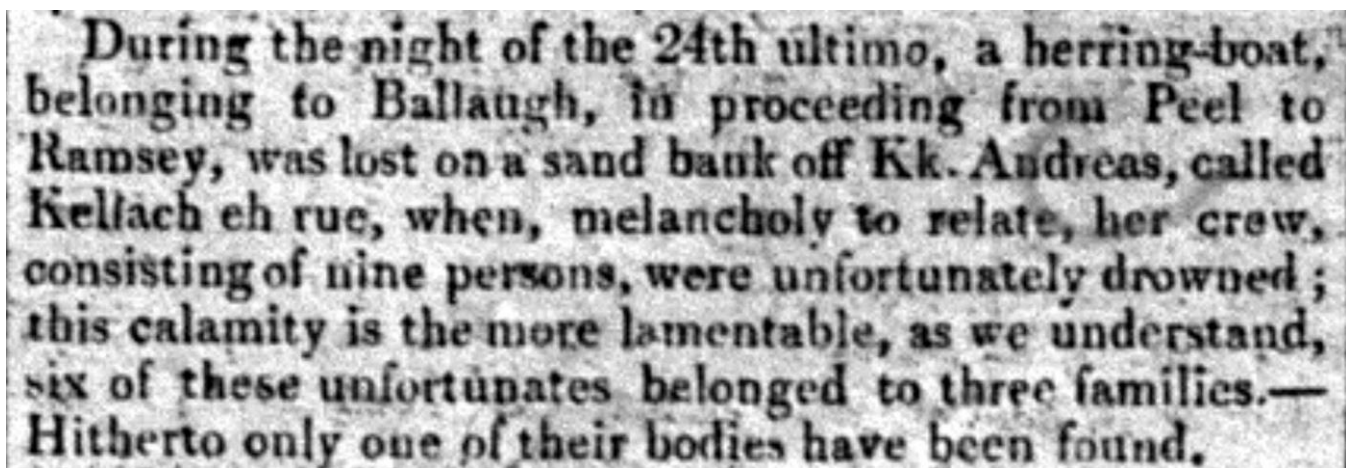
It was one thing to consolidate debt into one parcel; it was another altogether to be able to meet the interest payment thereon. These two sales, amounting to £21/15/-, small in comparison to the £200 mortgage with Kelly, might have been to defray the mounting interest bill.

Then utter tragedy struck.

### *Felicity*

It was quite common for Manx farmers to go fishing in winter when the weather rendered farm work nearly impossible. A family still needed an income.

On the night of October 23, 1816, William Mylrea was drowned, lost when the fishing smack, *Felicity*, foundered off the coast of Andreas<sup>47</sup>. It seems reasonable to suggest that the smack was the vessel left by his mother to William's brother, John. Also on board were six young men from Ballaugh, including William's youngest and newly-married brother, James, and his cousin's husband, John Callister<sup>48</sup>. All three of their wives were expecting babies, in two cases their first child.



During the night of the 24th ultimo, a herring-boat, belonging to Ballaugh, in proceeding from Peel to Ramsey, was lost on a sand bank off Kk. Andreas, called Kellach eh rue, when, melancholy to relate, her crew, consisting of nine persons, were unfortunately drowned; this calamity is the more lamentable, as we understand, six of these unfortunates belonged to three families.— Hitherto only one of their bodies have been found.

William jnr, William's heir-at-law, was not yet 2 years old when his father died, leaving another four children ranging in age from about 9 years to 3 years of age, and a sixth child on the way. Not to be overlooked was also the continued presence of Nicholas jnr. As was the practice on the Isle of Man, guardians were appointed for the boy to ensure the proper conduct and protection of his inheritance – *Ballacorraig* (or what was left of it). The Spiritual Court named Thomas Kermeen and William Cain, the latter perhaps Elinor's brother although there is no evidence of that, to shoulder this responsibility.

While the guardians had some oversight of the estate, they had no obligation to pay the bills or provide the labour. Consequently in 1821, the widowed Elinor had no choice

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<sup>47</sup> Manx Advertiser, November 7, 1816 p3

<sup>48</sup> Attachment 1: Luci's story is a narrative about what happened to John Callister's widow after her husband's death in the wreck of the *Felicity*

but to turn to Thomas Kelly again for an additional mortgage, this time for £25, against her own equity in the already heavily mortgaged *Ballacorraige*<sup>49</sup>. She must have felt it was her duty to protect her young son's inheritance, even if paying the annual interest was all that could be achieved. By 1821, Elinor was juggling debts of almost \$270 over the estate:

- mortgage taken out by Nicholas jnr over *Nicks Fields* in 1806 for £42
- mortgage taken out by William snr over *Ballacorraige* in 1810 for £200; and
- mortgage taken out by Elinor over her part of *Ballacorraige* in 1821 for £25

All this while there were no adults to keep the estate in a productive state, Elinor with six young children and her reprobate and aging father-in-law to care for, and the annual Lord's Rent still due.

The guardians of William jnr were soon obliged applied to the Chancery Court for permission to further encumber the estate<sup>50</sup>. Their objective was to clear mortgages that were about to lapse, the most pressing one the £200 to Thomas Kelly taken by William Mylrea snr in 1810. Permission granted, they went again to Thomas Kelly and borrowed a £284<sup>51</sup> so this was another debt consolidation exercise<sup>52</sup>. William jnr had still not reached double figures in age and his entire legacy was indebted to the tune of £284!

To compound what must have been the enormous pressures on Elinor, the dead hand of Nicholas jnr continued to sit heavily on her shoulders. It is not clear whether he was ever released from prison, but when he died in 1823, intestate, the burden of settling his estate fell to his widowed daughter-in-law. It is no surprise that £57/5/10 was still owing after his meagre assets had been taken into account so, in 1827, Elinor once again returned to the Courts, this time for permission to borrow further against the already heavily mortgaged *Ballacorraige* land<sup>53</sup>.

Court permission was granted, but no-one was willing to provide more funds so Elinor's only recourse was to sell off part of *Ballacorraige*. To do this, she needed the permission of the Courts, offering this assessment:

*the lands being subject to a mortgage to Thomas Kelly for the sum of two hundred and eighty-four pounds British in whose possession the said lands and premises now are to pay and discharge the interest, and are so deteriorated and reduced in value that the rent is scarcely more than sufficient to pay the annual interest*<sup>54</sup>

Elinor's petition was given and land was sold at public auction as decreed by the Court. The *Ballacorraige* lands sold to John Keig, for £351<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/eleonor-mortgage-1821.html>

<sup>50</sup> [http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/william-petition-1824\(2\).html](http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/william-petition-1824(2).html)

<sup>51</sup> LV 1830 records the settling of the 1816 mortgage with Kelly, and the new 1825 mortgage with Kelly. The difference is that the earlier entry indicated that Kelly held a mortgage over 2/3 of the lands; this later one was for 100% of the lands

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/william-mortgage-1825.html>

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/eleonor-petition-1827.html>

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/eleonor-petition-1828.html>

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/william-sale-1832.html>



*William Mylrea to John Keig*

*Under a decree of the Court of Chancery bearing date the 7<sup>th</sup> February 1828 the said lands were ordered to be sold and John Keig having become the purchaser is now entered by virtue of a deed of sale granted by John Cain and William Cain, guardians of William Mylrea, a minor, heir at law of the said William Mylrea deceased and Ellinor Mylrea widow and bearing date the 13<sup>th</sup> March 1832.*

The outcomes of this transaction were not registered until two decades later but land dealings were never required to be registered immediately and it was often the case that a subsequent transaction triggered the registration of an earlier transaction for the same tenancy. A good example is William's sale of Intack 16 to Daniel Cowle in 1808, but which wasn't registered until 1832 when Cowle sold the tenancy to someone else.

16 }  
1-10 }  
Wm Mylrea }  
1-10 } 2-5  
Dan Cowle }  
June 10<sup>o</sup> Entered by virtue of  
a Deed of Sale Dated  
14<sup>th</sup> June 1808  
4 }  
4<sup>o</sup> }  
Dan Cowle } 1-4  
4<sup>o</sup> }  
Philip Mylreane }  
June 4<sup>o</sup> Entered by virtue of a  
Deed of Sale Dated  
21<sup>st</sup> June 1826  
16 }  
1-10 }  
Dan Cowle } 2-5  
1-10 }  
Philip Mylreane }  
June 10 Entered as before

Thomas Kelly's receipt was dated 1852:

*Know all men by these presents that I Thomas Kelly of Ballamanaugh in the parish of Jurby do hereby own and acknowledge to have received and be fully paid the principal interest, cost and charges due .....<sup>56</sup>*

And an 1852 Liber Vastarum entry confirmed that William's debt had been annulled.

*Thomas Kelly to William Mylrea*

*The said mortgage to Thomas Kelly is cancelled and the said William Mylrea the mortgagor is re-entered*

While the term "re-entered" sounds promising, the reality is administrative ie. William needed to be re-entered as the owner so he could legally sell the land to anyone. But if the sale was to clear the debt to Kelly, then why did Kelly take so long to record that fact? The answer is that the purchaser Keig had died in 1850 and the lands needed to be transmitted to his sons. In 1851, a Thomas Keig was the occupant of *Ballacorage* (sic), farming 240 acres, an area that confirmed that the estate was one of the largest in the parish. Thomas and his brother Robert were the sons of John Keig, to whom the "*lands of the estate of Ballacorriage*" were willed by their parents, John and Mary (who died in 1851). In 1861, Robert was farming 73 acres on Ballacorage (sic) while there were many other farmers also listed on *Ballacorage*, a sign that the original estate had been broken up and sold off.

Manx records can be confusing at times, and the issue of what, if anything, William Mylrea was entitled to after the 1832 auction is a case in point. William was a minor at the time (he would have been 17 years of age), but he applied to the Courts a month after the auction. His petition said he was "*desirous to have guardians assigned over him for the protection of his property*"<sup>57</sup> and his mother and Thomas Caine were duly sworn in.

No documents survive to tell of the fate of young William and his family. One possible explanation is that they simply walked away. When the first census on the Isle of Man was conducted in 1841, neither William nor anyone else from his family was living in Ballaugh. No burials were registered for them in Ballaugh, nor marriages, although the sisters would have been aged between 19 and 25, and likely in service or married. It is highly likely that the oldest of the children, Ann, married James Corlett in 1836 in Lezayre<sup>58</sup>. The others, including the matriarch Elinor, left Ballaugh (and possibly the Isle of Man) without a trace.

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<sup>56</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/william-mortgage-1825.html>

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.mylrea.com.au/DEEDS/William-petition-1832.html>

<sup>58</sup> 1836 marriage Ann Mylrea & James Corlett in Lezayre; children Ann, Margaret, James, Mary Ann 1861 census Ann Corlett (wife of James) aged 54, born Ballaugh; died 1870 Milntown

D 3 Sacred / to the memory of / Annie / wife of James  
CORLETT / of Ramsey / who died Dec. 29th 1869 / aged  
62 years / Also Margaret DAVIES, / daughter of the  
above / who died May 26th 1880 / aged 39 years /  
Also, James CORLETT, / husband of the above / who  
died Aug. 2nd 1888 / aged 79 years.

## Epitaph

Established in 1740 by Nicholas snr when he purchased land from his older brother, the *Ballacorraige* estate was enlarged substantially when he married Joney Cowin, and again in 1774 with Margaret Kneen's dowry. After the death of Nicholas snr, these lands were steadily eroded and the Mylrea family struggled to keep their heads above water, continually close to drowning in a sea of debt that originated with Nicholas jnr, plagued his son William during his brief period as steward of the estate, and inevitably washed over William jnr.

The irony is that the lands in total were probably quite valuable, worth over £500, if sales over the years are a guide:

- *Ellan Beg* (£86)<sup>59</sup>
- the *Croit & the Acre* (£94)<sup>60</sup>
- *Kneensland* (£12/12/-)<sup>61</sup>
- *Nicholas Mylrea's Flatt* (£11)<sup>62</sup>
- land (£10/10/-)<sup>63</sup>
- public auction of lands known as *Ballacorraige* (£351)<sup>64</sup>

Yet, in the end, all the estate was gone, a century after Nicholas snr had first paid his brother Thomas £11 for the original holding. There is no doubt that the culprit for desperate circumstances his family found themselves in, and could not escape, can be sheeted home to the continued misbehaviour of Nicholas Mylrea jnr. After that, the family borrowed to pay off earlier mortgages and then took more mortgages to meet their growing interest bill until the weight of their financial obligations was too great to bear. The result was a new family, the Keigs, on the estate, and the Mylreas destitute.

# THE OTHER SONS

There were, in addition to William the ill-fated heir-at law of Nicholas Mylrea jnr, three other sons. Each managed to escape the parish of Ballaugh and make their own way in the world. Their children went even further afield, and they grew up to make their mark in various ways.

## JOHN (1786-1877)

John was the second son of Nicholas Mylrea jnr and Margaret Kneen. He was born in 1786 in Ballaugh, and married Elizabeth Garrett in Andreas on 18<sup>th</sup> April, 1819. Elizabeth's father was Ewan Garrett, a tailor in Andreas and John might have learned his trade from his future father-in-law. John might also have needed to establish himself before he could ask Elizabeth to marry him or perhaps he had to wait for her to achieve the age of consent for she was eleven years younger than he was.

There is no way of knowing when John went to Andreas. However, the reasons behind his migration were probably multiple. His father's antics would have made living in Ballaugh untenable; as the second son, he had no inheritance to look forward to; his older sisters living in Andreas could have encouraged him to go their way (in real terms, a journey of only a few miles); younger brother Thomas might have already been there; and the death of his other two brothers in the wreck of the *Felicity*, which could have been the fishing smack left to him by his mother in 1810, might have given him a pressing need to start afresh somewhere else. Or he might simply have arranged an apprenticeship with a tailor in Andreas. Whatever the motivation, his migration marked a shift from life on the land to the "soft" trades, away from outdoor work to indoor work, and he was the only one of the brothers to take such a route.

John and Elizabeth had ten children who came along at regular 2-year intervals between 1819 and 1840<sup>65</sup>:

- James (baptised 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1819)
  - Catherine (baptised 8<sup>th</sup> August 1821)
  - John (baptised 28<sup>th</sup> September 1823)
  - Jane (baptised 30<sup>th</sup> January 1825)
  - Elizabeth (baptised 11<sup>th</sup> September 1827)
  - Eliza (baptised 24<sup>th</sup> March 1830)
  - Susan (baptised 5<sup>th</sup> August 1832)
  - Mary Ann (baptised 18<sup>th</sup> January 1835)
  - John (baptised 10<sup>th</sup> September 1837)
  - Margaret (baptised 11<sup>th</sup> December 1840)
-

Today there is no sign of the house that John Mylrea, the tailor, Elizabeth his wife and their large family occupied. From census records, it seems to have been along the Bayr ny Hayray (Road to the Ayres), about 2 kilometres south of the village of Andreas and near Ballachurry farm<sup>66</sup>. Their neighbours were a mixture of individuals - farmers, farm workers, even the surveyor of highways - who lived in a small collection of five or six houses. Today, all except Bird Cottage have gone, or are in an advanced state of dereliction.



A DERELICT COTTAGE ON BAYR NY HAYRAY

For a family of 10 children, it is a testament to the care that they received that only one child, Susan died while the other nine Mylrea offspring all reached adulthood. Of the daughters, their pathways have not all been easy to discover:

- **Catherine** married John Quirk in 1845 and the family soon migrated to England. There were at least eight children.
- **Elizabeth** probably married William Moore (a tailor at the time) in 1854 and lived her life in Ramsey. She also had at least eight children.
- **Mary Ann** had a child (Mary Ann) out of wedlock in 1857 in Ramsey and died later that year. The child lived with her Mylrea grandparents then went into service in Leigh. What happened to her after the 1881 UK census is unknown.
- Jane *might* have married John Thompson in 1846
- Eliza and Margaret left no discernable trace

As for the sons:

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- **James** left the Isle of Man in his 20s, between 1841 and 1844, and went to the USA. On arrival, he lived with a James Garrett, in Rochester in upstate New York. Rochester in those days was a boom town, specialising in the clothing industry, and thus a major destination for tailors and dressmakers. Both Jameses worked as tailors for the same employer for several years after James Mylrea's arrival in Rochester. James's cousin John (son of Thomas) also lived in Rochester at the time so it is feasible that the two young men had planned their migration together, these Mylrea cousins had not set out together for the brave new world because, in the 1841 census, James was still living in Andreas while John was no longer on the island. He was five years older than James and so it is more likely that he had ventured away first.

James married Elizabeth Adams and the couple had two children, Elizabeth and Alfred. The family remained in the Rochester area but after the death of Elizabeth's two unmarried daughters, this little twig of the Mylrea tree died off.

- Their second son, **John**, was baptised in 1823. Although the narrative of his young life lacks a great deal of detail, he left for Australia, probably in his teens. He became a wealthy publican during the Victorian gold rushes of the 1850s, and later a pioneer pastoralist in the northern frontier of the colony of New South Wales, now known as Rockhampton. He had 11 surviving children, and many of his descendants can be found in the central Queensland district today. On his death certificate, his birth was recorded as March 1823 and his homeland as the Isle of Man. His biography, *On Some Lonely Shore*, was published in 2015.
- Their third son, born in 1837, was also named John. Giving a child the same name as a living older child in the family was not unheard of on the Isle of Man, but it is more likely that the Mylrea family knew they'd never see their second son again and so gave this third son his father's name. **John II**, became his father's apprentice after James (who was his father's apprentice) left for the USA. It is reasonable to think that James's departure was expressly to make way for John II as his father's apprentice. John II became a tailor. In 1868, he married Jane Elizabeth Kewley and had 10 children. His family remained in Andreas then disbursed as all families do, two of his sons making their way to Australia but by then their uncle, John I, had died.

Family patriarch, John snr, and his wife Elizabeth Garrett continued to live in Andreas, where John died in 1877. He was 90 years of age. Elizabeth died two years later, in 1879. She had been living in Ramsey, in all probability with her daughter Elizabeth.

### **THOMAS (1789-1869)**

Thomas Mylrea was the third son of Nicholas Mylrea jnr and Margaret Kneen. He married Jane Teare in Andreas on 21<sup>st</sup> April, 1814 at the age of 25. In all probability, he had already left Ballaugh to make his home in Andreas where his older sisters, Margaret and Catherine, had both married over a decade previously. Catherine's husband, James Kneen, was a blacksmith so perhaps Thomas went to Andreas to learn the trade because he too became a blacksmith.

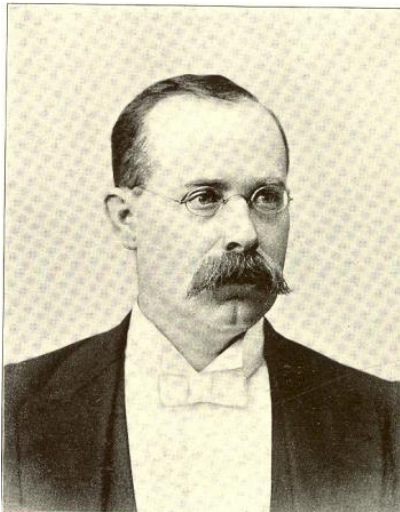
Their first child, John, was baptised in Andreas on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1814. Some time after John's birth, Thomas and Jane went north to the parish of Bride and there they had a second son, William, baptised on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1820. Both sons left the Isle of Man, and went to the United States of America. Jane died in 1860 in Andreas, and the following year Thomas was living and working as a farm labourer in Maughold. In 1869, at the age of 80, he died in Andreas where his older brother John, the tailor, still lived with his wife Elizabeth although their two older sisters Margaret and Catherine had since died.

- John went first to the United States in the early 1840s. He was a blacksmith like his father and listed in the 1844 Rochester Directory. Later, as MILREA, he was listed in the 1847 and 1849 Directories. His cousin, James Mylrea, was also living in Rochester by that time. In the 1840s, Rochester was America's first boom town and home to a boom industry, the manufacture of clothing - so John as a blacksmith and James as a tailor would have easily found work.

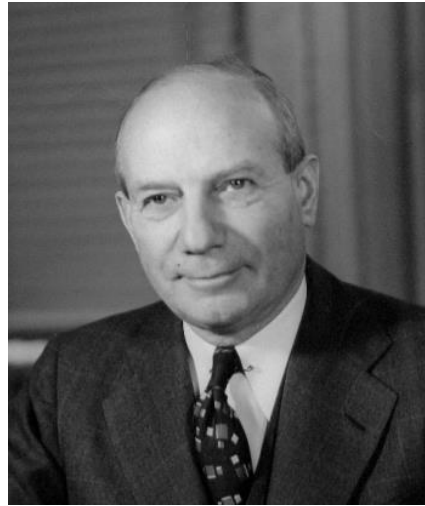
At the age of 36, John returned to the Isle of Man and married Catherine Quayle in Bride in May 1850. The young couple went almost immediately to the United States on the *Ellen*, arriving in New York on 13<sup>th</sup> July<sup>67</sup>. They travelled on to Rochester where John was subsequently listed in the city Directories as a machinist. Their first son, William Henry Mylrea, was born in Rochester in 1853 and another son, Charles E., arrived the following year. The couple then moved to Wisconsin in 1856 where their daughters Jane C. (1857) and Susan Jane (1861) were born. Sadly, Jane died when she was about 2 years old.

This change in John's occupation in the 1850s might have been a hint that he harboured an ambition to be "something better". And indeed, his children certainly achieved heights unheard of before in this Manx family.

John's son, **William Henry** Mylrea, received a university education and went on to be a renowned lawyer, politician and businessman<sup>68</sup>. In three generations, this particular Mylrea branch had gone from Manx blacksmith to Wisconsin Attorney General. William Henry married Minnie Ostrander in about 1884, and they had two children, John Dudley and Susan. John Dudley did not have children and so the Mylrea name no longer flourished from this branch of the Mylrea tree. William Henry Mylrea died in 1916.



William Henry Mylrea  
1853-1916



John Dudley Mylrea  
1885-1963

**Charles E.** did not marry, and lived with his parents in Wisconsin until their deaths after which he went to live with his sister, Susan, who had married and was living in Los Angeles. He died at the age of 77

**Susan** had also received a university education, an extraordinary gift in those days from parents who themselves must have been extraordinary people. She married clergyman Edwin Knight Holden in 1886, and they had no children. Susan died in 1952, when she had reached her 91<sup>st</sup> year.

John Mylrea, born in 1814 in the parish of Bride on the Isle of Man, father to William Henry, Charles E., Jane C. and Susan Jane, died in Wisconsin in 1901 at the age of 87. He was described in the local press "*In all his life, social and business relations, the name John Mylrea was a bond of integrity and sterling manhood*". It is a sadness that after just one generation in the United States, John had no grandchildren to carry forward the legacy left by John Mylrea the Manxman.

- William, the second son of Thomas and Jane, also married a Kate Quayle. He did so in 1857 in the state of Ohio when he was 37 years of age.

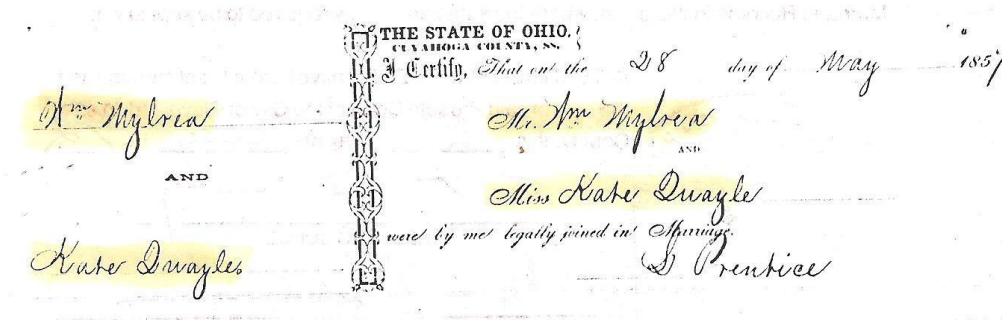
In 1850, Kate<sup>69</sup> was in the USA, and living in Rochester, New York. Another resident in the same house was James Milroy, a tailor. The census record showed that both had been born on the Isle of Man, Kate in 1832 and James in 1820. The head of the household was another Manxman, William Stanford, and Kate and

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James were both boarders. There can be no doubt that Kate was the future wife of William Mylrea from Bride, and that James was William's cousin from Andreas.

William and Kate married in Ohio, a state to the south of New York. How they met, and why they married in Ohio can only be guessed at. William's older brother John had been in Rochester in the early 1850s then gone to live in Wisconsin. William would also go to Wisconsin so their Ohio sojourn might have been brief.



#### MARRIAGE RECORD FOR WILLIAM MYLREA & KATE QUAYLE, 1857

While his brother John chose a life of manual labour as a blacksmith and then a machinist, William became a farmer. He purchased land in Adams County, Wisconsin for \$2,600 (a not inconsiderable amount in those days) in 1864, around the time that their second son, Harrison Duncan, was born<sup>70</sup>.

Another boy, Walter, had been born into the family in 1863, and he and Harrison followed in their father's footsteps to become farmers. Walter did not marry but Harrison had seven children, and several of his sons passed on the Mylrea name which flourishes today in the United States. Their father transferred the farm to them in 1889, nine years after Kate died in 1880.

William lived into his 80s, and when he died, the local press described him: *He was known far and wide as a model farmer ..... by everybody, Mr Mylrea was regarded to be an upright, honourable man and by those who knew him well, was most highly esteemed.*

This Indenture, Made the first day of April in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixtyfour between David M. Klatoh and Harriet S. Klatoh, his wife of Adams County and State of Wisconsin parties of the first part and William W. Myers of Kilkbourn City in Columbia County and State of Wisconsin party of the second part

Witnesseth, that the said parties of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of Twenty two hundred dollars to them in hand paid by the said party of the second part, the receipt whereof is hereby confessed and acknowledged, have given, granted, bargained, sold, aliened, conveyed, released, confirmed, and by their heirs do give, grant, bargain, sell, remise, release, alien, convey and confirm unto the said party of the second part his heirs and assigns forever, all the following described real estate situate lying and being in the County of Adams and State of Wisconsin to wit: the South half (1/2) of the North West quarter (1/4) and the West half (1/2) of the South West quarter (1/4) of Section No. Thirty five in Township No. fourteen North of Range seven (7) East containing one hundred and sixty acres according to Government Survey be the same more or less

Together with all and singular the Hereditaments and Appurtenances therunto belonging, or in any wise appertaining; and all the estate, right, title, interest, claim or demand whatsoever of the said parties of the first part, either in Law or Equity, either in possession or expectancy of, in and to the above bargained premises, and their Hereditaments and Appurtenances, TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said premises, as above described, with the Hereditaments and Appurtenances, unto the said party of the second part, and to his heirs and assigns forever. AND THE SAID David M. Klatoh for himself his heirs, executors, and administrators, do give, grant, bargain and agree, to and with the said party of the second part his heirs and assigns, that at the time of the executing and delivery of these presents, he will seized of the premises above described, as of a good, sure, perfect, absolute and indefeasible estate of inheritance in the Law, in fee simple, and that the same are free and clear from all incumbrances whatever,

and that the above bargained premises, in the quiet and peaceable possession of the said party of the second part his heirs and assigns, against all and every person or persons, lawfully claiming the whole or any part thereof, the will forever WARRANT AND DEFEND.

In Witness Whereof, the said parties of the first part, have herunto set their hands and seal the day and year first above written

Sealed and Delivered in presence of

J. S. Strand  
N. Ramsay

W. S. Luten Notary Public  
1864

D. M. Klatoh  
Harriet S. Klatoh

STATE OF WISCONSIN, } ss. Be it Remembered, That on the first day of April  
County of Columbia } A. D. 1864 personally came before me the above named David M. Klatoh and Harriet S. Klatoh his wife to me known to be the persons who executed said Deed, and acknowledged the same to be their free act and deed for the uses and purposes therein mentioned.

J. S. Strand  
Notary Public Columbia County Wisconsin

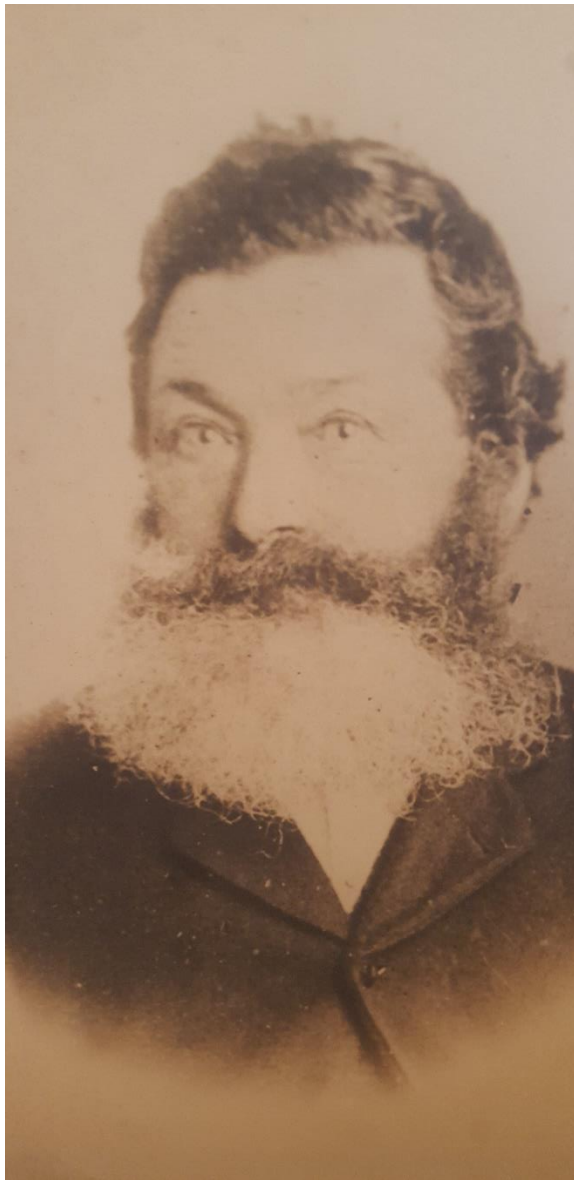
### JAMES (1792-1816)

James was the fourth and youngest son of Nicholas Mylrea jnr and Margaret Kneen. He was 24 when he married Catherine Kelly on 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1816, the wedding taking place in Jurby which hints at the possibility that James, like older brothers John and Thomas, had already left Ballaugh. Four months later, James was dead, drowned in the wreck of the *Felicity* that claimed his oldest brother William and his cousin's husband, John Callister. Others on board were Daniel & Thomas Boyd, James Corlett and John Cowell and they too died that night. The only one of these men to have a burial record was James, confirming the newspaper report that only one of the bodies of those aboard had been found.

James would not have known that he and Catherine were expecting a child, a little boy who was born the following year. James's son was named James, and although his mother remarried in 1820<sup>71</sup>, James jnr retained the name Mylrea. He married

Eleanor Caley in 1839, and the couple had eight children. They made their home in Lezayre where James jnr had a farm in Slieu managh.

Their surviving sons James Arthur and John Thomas both married and lived well into their 70s, still in Lezayre and still farmers. They had 11 children between them, the great grandsons of James Mylrea who drowned in the wreck of the *Felicity*. Today, several of his descendants continue to live on the Isle of Man. In the nearly 200 years since James drowned, this tiny twig on the Mylrea family tree survives.



**JAMES ARTHUR MYLREA**  
1852-1925  
(Grandson of James Mylrea )



**ALFRED ARTHUR MYLREA**  
1886-1966  
(Great grandson of James Mylrea)

# Postscript

Nicholas Mylrea jnr has been portrayed in an favourable light in this narrative yet there exists the faint possibility that the wrong conclusions have been drawn about his behaviour, in relation to the reasons for his poor financial management and its consequences. The implication has been that Nicholas jnr was either a weak manager or blighted by an expensive habit, perhaps gambling. Without more personal information, such as letters or observations by him or others, it is impossible to be categorical about the root causes of his misadventures.

A kind interpretation is that this Mylrea family did not have an underlying personal problem that plunged them into debt, rather they were victims of the farming life. Perhaps in the case of Nicholas jnr, he tried desperately to hold on to *Ballacorraig*, the estate that his father had established, ignoring common sense that whispered that the estate was economically unviable. Thus, by hanging on for too long, Nicholas jnr created a financially impossible situation for himself and his family. His oldest son, William snr, perpetuated the lost cause – but he was already tangled in this impossible situation. Perhaps he too was desperately hanging on to the estate for *his* son, William jnr, in defiance of increasing debt. William jnr then found himself mired in debt by the subsequent actions of his mother and his guardians who might have been trying to keep *Ballacorraig* afloat for the boy after his father's untimely death.

On the other hand, the wills of Nicholas's parents and his wife are not kind to him which strongly suggest that he had caused significant problems in their lives.

Mylrea indebtedness was also not unique to Nicholas jnr. His uncle Thomas died prematurely and left the family estate, *Ballacooiley*, with debts that Nicholas snr helped bring under control since Thomas's heir-at-law was just six years old at the time of his father's death. That heir-at-law was John Mylrea, a cousin of Nicholas jnr. John too took his estate into a degree of indebtedness, but not sufficient to lose the family estate altogether. That dubious honour went to John's grandson who, in 1868, was forced to surrender the *Ballacooiley* estate to the bank because of insurmountable debt levels against the lands.

There was as well Daniel Mylrea, the last male in the Deemster line, a nephew of the powerful but unmarried Daniel Mylrea. Young Daniel, already up to his ears in debt, sold off his inheritance which was the collection of Mylrea holdings, including the *Dollagh* in Ballaugh. After 300 years, his debts forced the sale of the estate in 1777.

While William and his family have disappeared from the pages of history, the lives of Nicholas's other three sons have remained visible to the present day; John's descendants are in Australia and the UK, Thomas's descendants are in the United States, and James's remain on the Isle of Man. In each of these three families, some returned to farming.

# ATTACHMENT 1

## Luci's Story

*Luci is a descendant of Nicholas Mylrea snr. Catherine Oates, his grand daughter, married John Callister who died in the wreck of the Felicity in 1816, along with two of his wife's cousins, William and James, the sons of Nicholas Mylrea jnr. Catherine remarried after the tragedy and had quite a large family. Her great great grand daughter Luci lives in Australia. In Luci's words:*

My great-grandfather was Charles Thomas Keig. He was the grandson of Catharine Oates, who was the daughter of Ann Mylrea and Mattias (or Matthew) Oates.

Catharine had married John Callister in 1816 but soon after he was killed in a shipwreck. His Letters of Administration state: "Smack 'Felicity' of Peel wrecked in Lane Mooar, KK Andreas". Catherine and John had a posthumous son, and he was named John. It seems he was sent to live with another family, and a John Clark was listed as his guardian.

A few years after the wreck, in 1818, Catharine married Daniel Keig of Ballaugh. They had seven children: Ann (b1818), Elizabeth (b1819), Thomas (b1821), William (b1822), Catherine (b1826), John (b1826), and Robert James (b1830). Robert James was my great-great-grandfather.

He married Ann Eliza Quayle, apparently in the US, where their only child Charles was born. He was still a US citizen when he died, which the US authorities recorded as the death of a US citizen overseas. There is also a nice obituary on [trove.nl.au](http://trove.nl.au).

But they didn't stay in the US. Little Charles has been baptised back in Ballaugh as a one year old, before the family moved to Melbourne, Australia. I have not been able to establish exactly when that occurred, but Charles married his Australian-born wife Margaret Rodger in 1880, in Williamstown in Melbourne. Charles went on to have a successful drapery business in Williamstown, and he and Margaret had eight children, six surviving to adulthood including my maternal grandfather Norman Rodger Keig (b1887).

*Mr. Charles T. Keig, who died at his home in The Strand, Williamstown, in his 82nd year, was associated with many progressive movements for the advancement of that district. He was a past president of the local mechanics' institute and of the Williamstown Bowling Club. His wife, who was an active worker for charity, predeceased him by two months. The principal of the firm of C. T. Keig and Co., drapers; of Ferguson street, Williamstown, who was well known in Flinders-lane', business circles. Mr. Keig is survived by three sons and two daughters*

*The Age, 7<sup>th</sup> June 19.*

*The late Mr Keig as a young man was employed at the drapery establishment of E. Mc Robert and Co., Nelson place, and in the eighties commenced business on his own*

*account in Ferguson street, where he built up the present soft goods connection, with a branch at Newport, and the largest in this city. He was a keen business man, a model employee and a courteous gentleman. At the graveside was probably assembled the most representative gathering of soft good warehousemen ever seen in this city. All of the old pioneer Flinders Lane firms, together with the specialty "houses" created since the war period, were represented, and in every instance it was the "big men" of the firms that attended the obsequies. Amongst these commercial men were many who had done business with "Charlie Keig," as they affectionately termed him, for over a period of more than half a century. The late Mr Keig was the oldest master draper' actively engaged each week in buying for his emporium.*

***The Age, June 12 19.***

Norman married my grandmother, Dora Mary Vallins (b1890), after WW1 in 1920. They had two daughters, seven grandchildren and 15 grandchildren. Unfortunately, Norman never lived to meet his grandchildren: he died in 1931 from complications of being gassed in the war. My mother was only three at the time.