

The Family Tree of Margaret Oliphant

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Margaret Oliphant, 1828-1897



*Mrs Oliphant in her thirties,
as interpreted by artist Janet Zeh
© Janet Zeh*

***She had "the Oliphant eyes...brown, glowing, and liquid,
full of laughter and light...."***

The Heirs of Kellie

Section 1. Introduction to the Oliphant Family Tree

The acclaimed Scottish novelist Margaret Oliphant was proud of her Oliphant heritage on her mother's side: she belonged to “an old, chivalrous, impoverished race.” She was born Margaret Oliphant Wilson on 4th April 1828. Later she added a second Oliphant to her name, by marrying her cousin Francis Oliphant in 1852. Generally she signed her fiction works “Mrs Oliphant”, and her non-fiction works “MOW Oliphant”.

During the Victorian era, Mrs Oliphant's novels were tremendously popular, many of them best sellers. She was critically acclaimed, and often compared to Jane Austen, George Eliot, and Anthony Trollope. In recent years, Mrs Oliphant has been rediscovered, and is once more acknowledged as one of the great Victorian writers.

Margaret's favourite childhood home was in Lasswade, Midlothian, from which they moved to Glasgow when she was age 6. When she was age 10, the family moved from Scotland to Liverpool; but once she reached adulthood, she returned to Scotland often, including an extended stay each summer or autumn. And of all her beloved Scotland, perhaps Margaret loved best the land of her ancestors, the ancient kingdom of Fife. As a reviewer once noted, she was “Fife to the fingertips” (*Scots Observer*, 14 June 1890).

This document is organized as follows:

Section 2 depicts the Oliphant Family Tree in two pages. The tree chart focuses on the direct line between Margaret Oliphant and her ancestors. However the side branches – siblings, first marriages, later generations, etc. are documented in Section 7.

Section 3 depicts the Wilson Family Tree in two pages. This rare document was kindly made available by Margaret Oliphant's great-great nephew, who also provided dates previously unknown, and more. Many thanks to **William Danvers Oliphant Valentine!** Mr Valentine, his brother, and their children/grandchildren, are the only living descendants of Margaret Oliphant - descended via her brother, Frank Wilson. Their path from Frank is shown in Section 7, entry **26c**.

Section 4 is a map, “A Corner of Fife”, showing that part of Fife which was home to Margaret Oliphant's forebears, and which is described in *The Heirs of Kellie* and *Katie Stewart*: the seaport towns and villages of Elie, St Monans, Pittenweem, and Anstruther; and the inland locations of Kellie Castle, Kellie Mill, Kilbrachmont, Overkellie, and Easter Grangemuir (this last being her forebears' place of business). To view a larger more detailed map, visit <http://visionofbritain.org.uk/> > Historical Maps > Ordnance Survey of Scotland First Series.

Section 5 separates fact from fiction in Margaret Oliphant's story, *The Heirs of Kellie* (1898), which is based on Margaret's 16th century ancestor Lady Jean Oliphant. The story tells how Jean fought for her “rights” to succeed to her father's estate (including Kellie Castle), and how her descendants became the Oliphants of Overkellie.

Section 6 separates fact from fiction in Margaret Oliphant's novel *Katie Stewart - A True Story* (1853). This novel takes place in the mid-eighteenth century, and is based on the true story of her great-great aunt Katie Stewart, who lived to an old age, and told her story to Mrs Oliphant's mother. Katie also told the love story of her sister Isabell, Mrs Oliphant's great grandmother. Although one or two names were changed, the story aligns well with our documented Family Tree. What is particularly interesting is that newly discovered documentation tells us Isabell's complete story – including what happened *after* the end of the novel.

Section 7 contains the Documentation for each entry in the Oliphant Family Tree. Most of the generations are well-documented by parish records and other documents. In the 16th century, and early 17th century, sometimes there is not sufficient evidence to validate a relationship, for example between father and son. In such cases, the reasons for presuming the relationship are given. There is also new documentation for the two Wilson generations above Margaret's father.

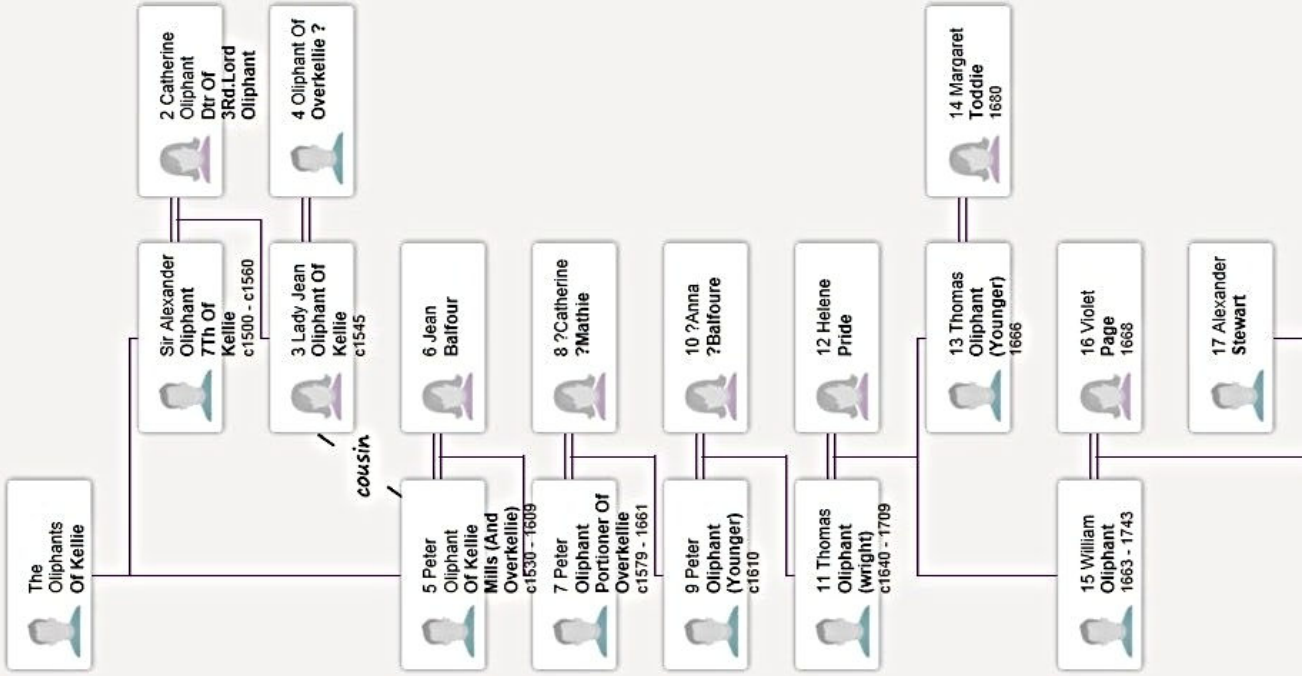
Personal note - my interest in Margaret Oliphant's family tree began after reading *Katie Stewart*, and wanting to know more about Katie's sister Isabell (Mrs Oliphant's great grandmother). From the story, it was not at all clear how Isabell was connected to the Oliphants. Also it appeared from the novel that Isabell's marriage was to a Philip *Landale* of Kilbrachmont, for whom no information could be found. Once I realized that during that time period, Kilbrachmont belonged to the Hamilton family, I searched and found evidence of Isabell's 1741 marriage to Philip *Hamilton* - evidence which included surprising information about what happened after the marriage. Even more important was the discovery of a marriage record which shows that Isabell Stewart had a second marriage in 1751, to Bailie Oliphant. Their son was Margaret's grandfather, William Oliphant.

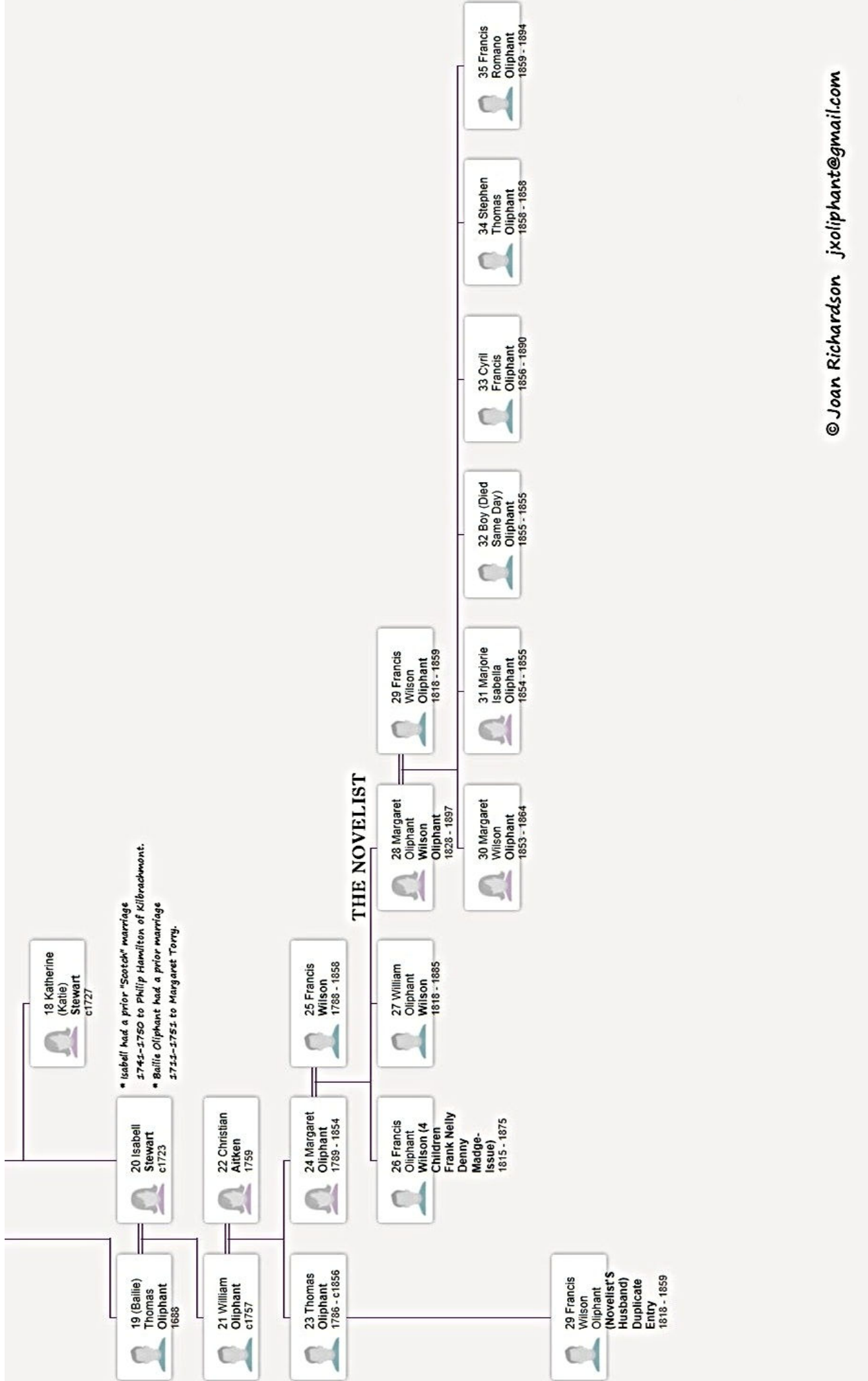
Some time after I had discovered Isabell's true story, and worked my way back from the 18th to the 16th century, a mutual friend put me in touch with Roddy Oliphant, the well-known Oliphant genealogist, who is brother to the Clan Chief. Roddy (who is an Oliphant of Condie) had previously written a short history on various Oliphant branches, including the Oliphants of Kellie, from their beginnings in the 14th century, to the last Kellie laird in the 16th century. Roddy had also done research on Margaret Oliphant's 19th century relatives, and then worked back as far as her mother's previously unidentified parents, William Oliphant and Christian Aitken. Not only was the William/Christian information important, but also Roddy's documentation provided valuable lessons on how to validate and document one's findings. He also shared with me two legal documents of Oliphant property transfers, which have been very helpful. And finally, his comments on my first draft of the Oliphant Tree and Documentation led to new insights about Margaret's forebears in the 16th century, especially with regard to Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills. Many thanks to **Roddy Oliphant!**

In building the Oliphant Family Tree, I used the website *Scotland's People* extensively, which has images of virtually all surviving Scottish parish records of births, marriages, and deaths. In addition I consulted a variety of historical books and documents, which are referenced as they occur in the Documentation (Section 7).

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FAMILY TREE OF MARGARET OLIPHANT, NOVELIST 1828-1897

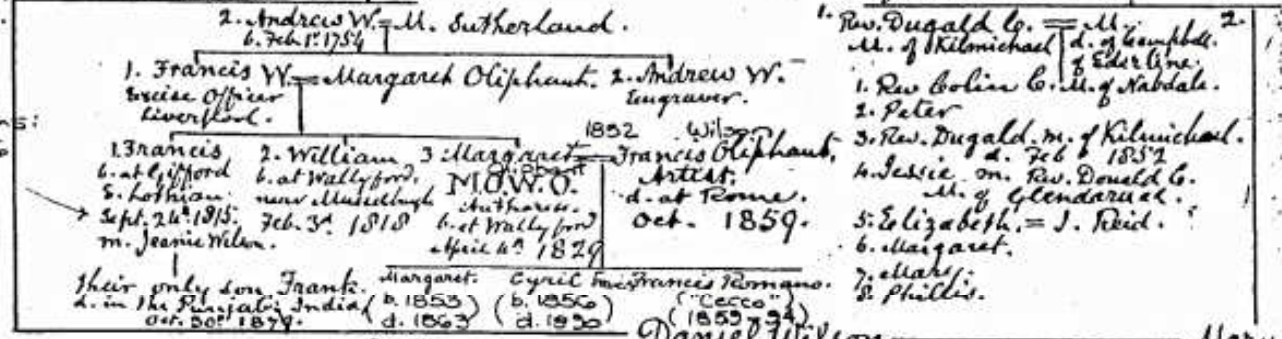




George Wilson
 Laird of Mylton, Pittenweem, ob. 1638.
 " Wilson ob. 1670.
 David Wilson: 1691
 John Wilson
 David Wilson
 Francis Wilson - Margaret Bleugh.
 Surgeon
 Pittenweem.

John Carswell

John Carswell
 of Carnassarie Moor
 near Lochawe.
 Colin Campbell - Mar
 of Ederline
 Patrick Campbell - Mary Co
 of Auchinellon.

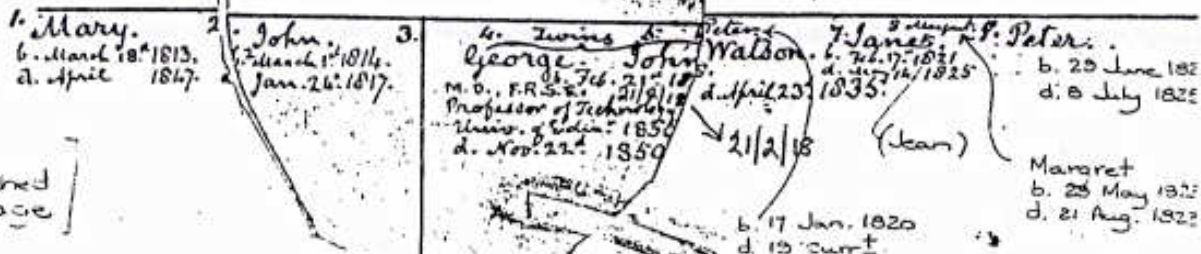


[Williams: c. 1816 - 75]

M.O.W.O. Williams b. 1823]

- 1. Elizabeth b. 25 Feb. 1780 d. 4 Jun 1781
- 2. Margaret b. 20 Mar 1782 d. 30 Mar 1786
- 3. Peter b. 25 Dec. 1785 d. at Edin. 26 Jan. 1864
- 4. Mary b. 23 Sept. 1787 d. May 1788
- 5. Helen b. 30 May 1789 d. at Edin. 30 Nov. 1851
- 6. John b. 17 Jun 1791 d. at Edin. 20 Dec. 1820

Archibald Wilson
 b. at Strachur Feb. 21 1784.
 d. - Edin. March 28 1843.



[infer from list of children attached to parents' marriage certificate]

- also 3 Jan. in list of children attached by Rev. John Duncan, D.D. to parents' marriage cert.

Daniel Wilson b. at Edin. Jan. 3 1816. m. - Glasgow Oct. 28 1840. by Rev. John Duncan, D.D.

Margaret Mackay b. at Glasgow, March 30. d. of Hugh Mackay, S. of Dani & Anne Elder. d. of Captain Wm Elder of ob. Nov. 16 1805.

- 1. Anne Eliza b. at London, Oct. 9 1841. d. - Glasgow Aug. 23 1842.
- 2. Jessie & Eleanor b. at Edin. June 2 1843. m. Captain John Bell. d. at St Helier's, Jersey, March 1 1877.
- 3. Oswald George Wilson Bell b. at Toronto, July 28 1874. d. at Kingussie Dec. 5 1902.

The descent of my father & his brothers from John Carswell, Bishop of the Isles through the Carswells of Carnassarie Moor, a property near Lochawe p. of Kilmartin, Argyleshire, was perpetuated by their being habitually termed Skechin Espie i.e. the Bishop's seed; a name not meant as complimentary by the Presbyterian gentry of Strachur on Lockfyne. D.W.

ell, Bishop of the Isles, 1566.

daughter of
Campbell of Kilmartin?

Mary Carswell.

Mary Campbell.

Robert Aitken — Agnes Jamieson. Robert Caldwell — Margaret Caldwell.

b. 1712
d. 1780.

John Aitken
b. at Lochwinnoch Nov. 10th 1733.
d. - Greenock.

b. 1715
d. 1780.

Jean Caldwell.
b. at Lochhead, Sept. 1741
m. April 1761.

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Margaret
b. Feb. 25 th 1762.
Surgeon R.N.
d. May 29 th 1804. | 2. John
b. Feb. 11 th 1764
d. 1766 | 3. Jean
b. 1766 | 4. Agnes
b. 19 th July 1769
d. 1791 | 5. Robert
b. April 9 th 1770
d. at Isle of St Thomas | 6. William
b. 1772
d. young | 7. Agnes
m. Capt. Kelso 1777
daughter Nancy
m. J. Rotman | 8. Elizabeth
b. Nov. 24
d. 1775 |
|--|---|--------------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|

Mary Campbell.
at Ederline. April 5th 1753.
at Margaret's House. May 20th 1799.
at Edin. Feb. 28th 1837.

8. Daniel
b. 1791
d. in America
1820.

9. Dugald
b. 2nd Sept. 1793.
d. at Edin. 10th May 1877.

Rev. John Russell = Jane
M. of Muthill
s. of Rev. John D.
of Kilmarnock
vide Burns "Holy Fair".
b. at Greenock 1783.
d. Glasgow 1826.

9. Thomas
b. at Greenock. 1779.
m. Margaret Fleming.
d. at Greenock, June 1856.
Peter, Christina, Thomas.

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| 1. John
b. at Muthill.
m. Jessie Duncan.
d. at Edinburgh.
1854 | 2. Catherine
b. at Muthill
d. Edin.
Apr 6 th 1839. | 3. James M.
b. at Muthill
d. at Edinburgh
April 9 th 1846. | 4. Alexander Russell
b. at Muthill 1825
m. Alice Stizaker.
at Liverpool.
now Very Reverend
Dean of Adelaide.
S. Australia.
d. May 20 th 1886. |
|--|--|--|---|

Janet Aitken.
b. at Greenock July 25th 1786.
m. Edin. June 2nd 1812.
d. - - Aug. 6th 1864.

10. Jessie Aitken. b. 1843 d. 1895
b. 15th July 1826
m. James Simons.
Jessie Georgina
b. 1843
(DNB)

11. (Jane) Russell
Jeanie Russell
b. 4th Sept. 1828.
m. Francis Wilson. [Langton: 1852]
d. at Thorda, Hungary.
23rd April 1870. ("Madge") ("Denny")

H.A.R. [other name]
d. at sea
aged 4 yrs 3 mos.

1. (Frank) Francis
b. 1854
at Birkenhead
went to India as C.S.
a youth of great promise.
died in the Punjab.
Oct. 30th 1879.

2. Jeanie Helen.
(Nelly)
Jeanie Helen
in D.W.'s
will (in
Toronto)
Jeanie Helen in
C.W.'s letter
b. 1855
[Williams: b. 1856]

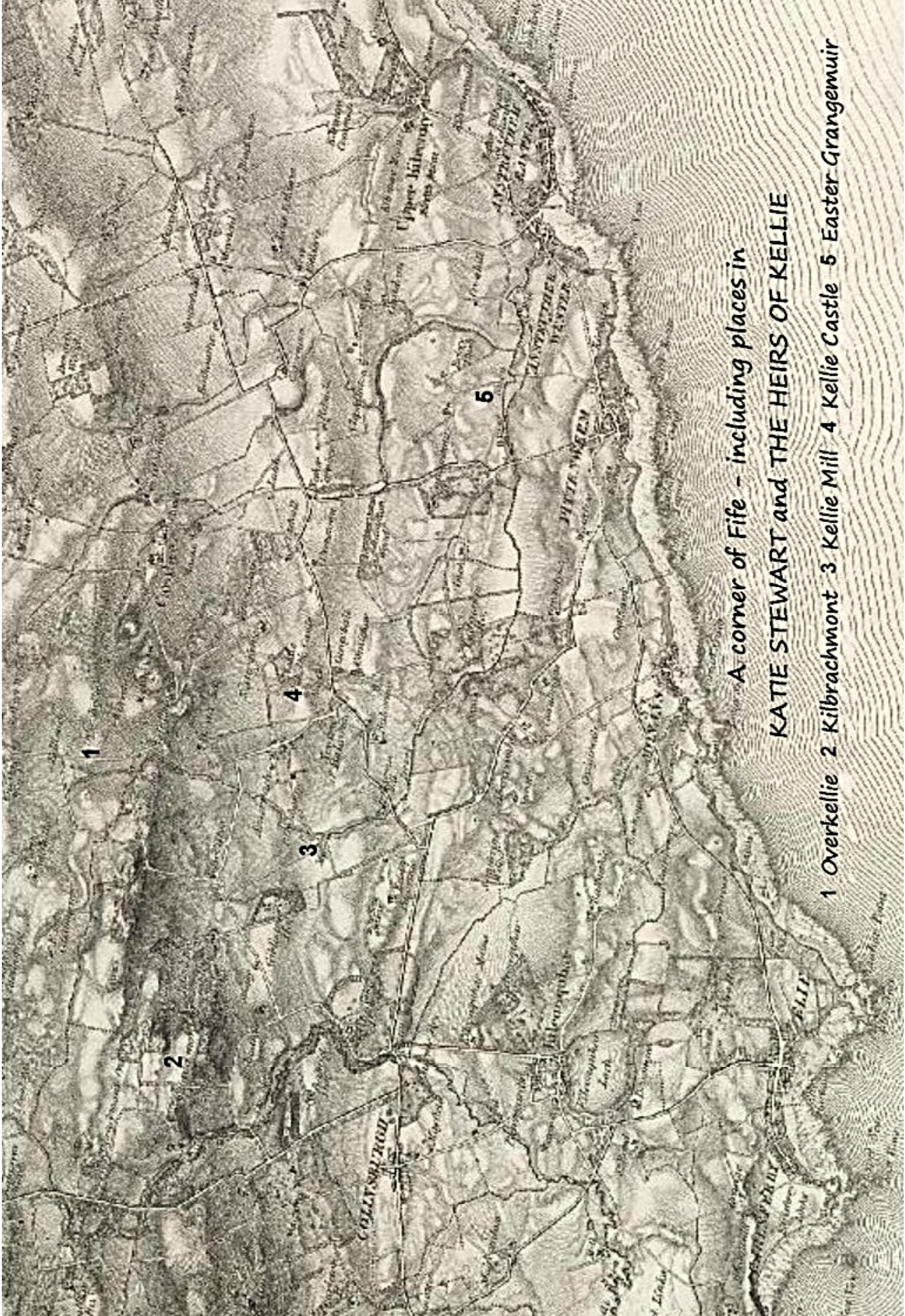
3. Margaret
Oliphant
= W.R.H.V. (1849-1907)
(m. 1893 1907)
William Roderick Harris Valentine
d. 1897

4. Janet Mary
(1865-1954)

3. Janie Sybil.
b. at Edin. March 18th 1846.
d. 1877 in Teignmouth, Eng.

Margaret Oliphant Harris
William Harris
Francis Cyril Oliphant (1897-1957)
|
issue

Bell.
1874
The Isles,
Lochawey,
actually
not
Frachur.



A corner of Fife - including places in

KATIE STEWART and THE HEIRS OF KELLIE

1 Overkellie 2 Kilbrachmont 3 Kellie Mill 4 Kellie Castle 5 Easter Grangemuir

Section 5. *The Heirs of Kellie, a tale of the 16th century:* Separating fact from fiction

Introduction

The Heirs of Kellie, An Episode of Family History is a story by Margaret Oliphant, first published in Blackwood's Magazine in March 1896, and later published in a collection of Oliphant short fiction, *A Widow's Tale and Other Stories* (1898). This is the story of a sixteenth century ancestor of Margaret Oliphant, Jean Oliphant of Kellie. The story had been told to Margaret by her mother, who as a little girl in Fife, at the end of the eighteenth century, had heard many tales of her Oliphant forebears. Margaret's mother's memory was very trustworthy – but in this case she was dependent upon the memories of others, repeating stories of the sixteenth century across two hundred years.

Jean Oliphant's story, as told in *The Heirs of Kellie*

Mistress Jean Oliphant is the young sister of Sir Walter Oliphant of Kellie, in Fife. He is old and ailing, and he must decide who shall be the next heir of Kellie. If he fails to name a successor, the next-of-kin would succeed. In Scotland, where either sex can succeed to lands and titles (if the estate is not entailed on an heir-male), his next-of-kin is his sister Jean - though he scoffs at the idea of naming her successor. The next-of-kin after Jean is his cousin Peter Oliphant of Overkellie, but Sir Walter does not look favourably upon him either. Finally as Sir Walter lies dying, Sir John Low, the "Curate of Pittenweem" (a priest before the Reformation), is with him for hours, whispering in his ear. Sir Walter dies that same day; and soon it becomes known that Sir Walter had named as successor Laurence 3rd Lord Oliphant, who is not of the Kellie line.

Many in Fife are unhappy at the news; and there is a feeling that trickery has been done - that Sir Walter, when he was dying, was mentally incapable of making any decision at all. Some believe Jean is the rightful heir, and now call her Lady Jean. Others believe that Peter Oliphant of Overkellie is the rightful heir. Jean asks Peter to fight for her; and Peter sets aside his own ambitions, and agrees to fight for her – but at law rather than with the sword. He sues on her behalf, but a year later the lawsuit is lost, and Lord Oliphant's son (the Master of Oliphant) occupies the castle in his father's name. The story states that many more lawsuits follow, presumably some of them on Peter's own behalf. Jean marries her gallant Peter, who eventually becomes reconciled to his loss. In another couple of generations, the Lords Oliphant have wasted their substance, and sold Kellie Castle. Mrs Oliphant concludes: "[They] sold Kellie Castle – to them a useless and unnecessary burden, though so dear to those who lost it...."

Jean Oliphant's true story – what we know

Without much documentation of the real Jean's life, it is far easier to say what is incorrect in the story, than what is correct: The old dying knight of Kellie was not a brother named Walter, but was actually her father, Sir Alexander Oliphant of Kellie. Sir Alexander is believed to have died

between 1559-60. Jean, and two sisters (who may have already married and left Kellie Castle), were immediate next-of-kin. Jean Oliphant and her sisters did indeed go to law, claiming heirship. The *Red Book of Scotland* (see Section 7) tells us that Jean resigned her rights to the estate in 1572. Presumably there was a settlement.

An interesting fact which differs from the story of the will, is that per the *Red Book*, Sir Alexander Oliphant (7th and last laird of the Kellie line) seems to have sold the Kellie estate to the 3rd Lord Oliphant in his lifetime, as part of his marriage contract with Catherine, Lord Oliphant's daughter. But apparently his nearest kin knew nothing about this until after his death. As in the fiction version, his next-of-kin must have felt trickery was involved, since they sued for their "rights".

Returning to Lady Jean, she did have a cousin Peter, who claimed heirship, but who was known as the laird of Kellie Mills rather than of Overkellie. (Note, both districts are very close to Kellie Castle and to each other.) Per the *Red Book*: "Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills became heir-male upon [Sir Alexander's] death, and to whom he was retoured heir on 31 October 1560, although his rights to these lands were reduced at the instance of Laurence, Lord Oliphant." Peter went to law on his own behalf¹, but eventually renounced all claims to the Barony of Kellie in 1606, along with his eldest son John, in return for a large compensation.

So how does Overkellie fit into Jean's story? Margaret Oliphant's family tradition was that after Sir Alexander died, and Jean left the castle, Jean married her cousin "Peter Oliphant of Overkellie". Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills did own lands in Overkellie², and apparently had the right to be styled "[laird] of Overkellie", as he had descendants who were styled "of Overkellie". In addition, Peter matches many other facts in the story: he was Jean's cousin; his name was Peter; he was heir-male to the Kellie estate; and he fought for his rights. It is virtually certain that Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills is the Peter Oliphant of the family tradition. Where the tradition breaks down is that seemingly he did not marry Lady Jean Oliphant of Kellie: per the *Red Book*, he was married to a different Jean - Jean Balfour.

It is possible that as the generations passed, Jean Balfour became confused in the family lore with Lady Jean Oliphant of Kellie. When Margaret Oliphant's mother first heard Lady Jean's story, it had been passed down for over 200 years. Among Lady Jean's adventures, there were two occasions when she took refuge in her cousin Peter's house. How likely that after a few generations of retelling, Peter's descendants should conclude that Lady Jean must be the same Jean who married Peter. See Section 7 for more discussion on Jean and Peter, and on the various "candidates" whom Lady Jean might have married.

¹ As discussed in Section 7, Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills was first cousin to Sir Alexander Oliphant, 7th laird of Kellie, and was his heir-male. Peter had the same aristocratic "roots" as Sir Alexander – both were great grandsons of Sir John Oliphant, 6th laird of Kellie.

² In 1570 Peter filed a lawsuit demanding that Andrew Clepen, Portioner of Pitcorthy, provide an overdue letter of Reversion to Peter Oliphant of the lands of Kellie Mills, the lands of Overkellie, and other lands. (Probably this means that Clepen had held mortgages on these lands, which had since been paid off, so that the letter of Reversion would provide Peter with clear title to these lands.) Per *National Archives of Scotland*, reference GD305/1/102/262.

Many scenes in *The Heirs of Kellie* are so vivid in their detail, that probably these reflect actual events, such as:

- The ex-priest and the Reformation minister vying for Sir Alexander's influence
- The Master of Oliphant disrupting Sir Alexander's funeral
- The Master of Oliphant pushing his way into the Castle with his rowdy men
- Jean, hiding behind a curtain, then galloping away on her pony to seek refuge with her cousin Peter.

The story of Margaret's ancestor Jean Oliphant was so compelling that it remained in the family consciousness for over 200 years - and now continues to live in Margaret Oliphant's short story.

The Heirs of Kellie can be found at Google Books or Internet Archive, in a PDF ebook called *A Widow's Tale and Other Stories*.

Section 6.

***Katie Stewart*, a tale of the 18th century: Separating fact from fiction**

Introduction

Katie Stewart (1853) is a novel by Margaret Oliphant, based on the true stories of Margaret Oliphant's great-great aunt Katie Stewart, and of Margaret's great grandmother Isabell Stewart. Margaret's mother had heard the stories from Katie herself, who lived to a very old age. Margaret writes that her mother's retelling was so vivid that sometimes Margaret felt she had lived these events herself, including seeing Bonnie Prince Charlie march through the streets of Edinburgh in 1745.

Katie's story, as told in the novel

Katie Stewart is the daughter of a well-to-do miller at Kellie Mill. The novel is mainly about her, and her life at Kellie Castle from the age of 8, as a genteel companion to Lady Anne Erskine. Once she is grown, she remains at the Castle another 10 years while her betrothed (who had been pressganged) is away at war. Throughout these 20 or so years, she also spends time with her family, first at Kellie Mill, and later at Anstruther Mill (aka Milltown or Milton).

Katie's story, so far as we know, was told exactly as it happened. A smaller, secondary story in the novel is that of Katie's sister Isabell - Margaret Oliphant's great grandmother.

Isabell's story, as told in the novel

Isabell Stewart is a shy, rather sad girl, who feels unloved, and seems unaware of her striking beauty. She is age 12 when the novel opens in 1735. At age 18, she is courted by the older Bailie Oliphant (Thomas Oliphant), "a dignitary of the little town of Anstruther...a man of substance and influence". She is also courted by young handsome Philip Landale of Kilbrachmont. Isabell does not know whether she can trust Philip; and she also worries about pressure from her parents to marry Bailie Oliphant. However Isabell and Philip do marry, and are described as happy in their home at Kilbrachmont.

Isabell's true story – deceived in her marriage

The additional parts to Isabell's story have been discovered recently from genealogical and legal records. First of all, Bailie Oliphant was married from 1711 to 1751, so that any admiration he showed Isabell around 1741 was not going to lead to marriage. Secondly, though Isabell did marry a "Philip of Kilbrachmont", his surname was Hamilton, not Landale: Isabell Stewart and Philip Hamilton of Kilbrachmont were married in 1741 per a "Scotch" marriage - meaning that there was no church marriage with clergyman, but only the couple making their vows in the presence of two witnesses. Such private marriages were legal, and in fact very common during this time period, but they were dependent on the husband's goodwill, to "do the right thing" and acknowledge the marriage openly.

One way of acknowledging a private marriage was to have the parish minister record it after the fact in the parish register, often in connection with a contribution to the poor. (In Section 7 of this document, entry 13 provides an example of this.) But if the husband was not in earnest, he might persuade his bride of the need for secrecy, using the age-old excuse that his family would not approve. Apparently something like this happened to Isabell. Before the year was out, Isabell found it necessary to sue Philip, in order to have the marriage recognized. The record of Isabell's lawsuit is per the *Scottish Record Society no.34 (1909): Consistorial Processes and Decrees, 1658-1800, entry 333*:

“Process of declarator of marriage &c. Isobel Stewart, spouse to Philip Hamilton of Kilbrachmount, and lawful daughter to umquhile Alexander Stewart, dyster and portioner in Milltown of Pittenweem in the shire of Fife, against the said Philip Hamilton, alleged marriage on 3 April 1741, Andrew Stewart, complainer's brother being one of the witnesses.”

No later record has been found – it is possible that after being sued, Philip agreed to recognize Isabell as his wife, whether or not they lived together again.

Isabell's true story continued – her second marriage

In 1750 Philip Hamilton died, freeing Isabell from her unhappy marriage. Then on 13th March 1751 Thomas Oliphant's wife of 40 years died in Anstruther Wester. A scant two months later, on 24th May 1751, Thomas Oliphant of Anstruther Wester married Isabell Stewart in Pittenweem. They had a son William - Margaret's grandfather - on a date unknown. (It is possible their haste to marry was because the baby was expected, or already born. See Section 7 entry 21 for more discussion about his birth.)

Perhaps Bailie Oliphant had been separated from his wife for some time. On 28 November 1743, he had transferred a property he had inherited from his father into his own name. He assigned the rent from that property to his wife Margaret Torry:

“Sasine in favour of Thomas Oliphant, wright, late burges of Anstruther Wester, of the subjects as in GD 62/286, following on a precept of Clare Constat by Sir Philip Anstruther of Balcaskie as son and heir of the deceased William Oliphant, wright in Easter Grangemuir, and Sasine propriis Manibus by the said Thomas in favour of Margaret Torry, his spouse, in liferent.” (Per *National Archives of Scotland, Document Reference GD62/353*.)

In May of 1751 Isabell was about 28 years old, and Bailie Oliphant was 62 years old. Despite the disparity in years, perhaps she was truly grateful to the town dignitary, that he still admired her and was willing to lift her up from her equivocal position to one of comfort and respect.

The novel's treatment of Isabell's story

Margaret Oliphant chose to end Isabell's story while she was still happy with Philip “Landale” (Hamilton). Mrs Oliphant gave Philip a fictional surname, yet she kept the estate's real name, Kilbrachmont – thus providing a clue to the true story. Knowing Isabell's full story explains the tone of certain passages in the novel: passages in which Isabell's sadness seems to foreshadow unhappiness in her future; and other passages in which Philip repeatedly flicks his riding whip - a rather unpleasant image for the suitor of a gentle, fragile young woman.

When Mrs Oliphant described the young bride at Kilbrachmont after her marriage, with what a sense of irony she must have written:

“And she sits there by her bright hearth, spinning fine yarn, and singing to herself as those sing whose hearts are at rest...with no dread or evil near her...” (p.107 in *Katie Stewart A True Story, and Other Tales.*)

Also Bailie Oliphant’s off-stage presence in the early part of the novel takes on new meaning: he had seemed to symbolize a threat to Isabell’s happiness - yet in fact, outside the novel, it is he who will raise her up from her unhappy situation. Mrs Oliphant knew, though her readers did not, that Thomas and Isabell came together as her great grandparents, forming an important link in the Oliphant heritage of which she was so proud.

Katie Stewart can be found at Google Books or Internet Archive, in a PDF ebook called *Katie Stewart A True Story, and Other Tales.*

Afterword – Margaret Oliphant and Scotch marriages

So many legal issues were prone to surface following Scotch marriages, that prudent parents would insist the young couple re-marry in church. Mrs Oliphant, perhaps harking back to Isabell’s experience, wrote several novels about complications stemming from Scotch marriages. For example:

In *Madonna Mary* (1866), Mary had been too young and trusting to have any doubts about the correctness of her runaway marriage. She was married at Gretna Green, among strangers; and when years later the blacksmith’s records of the marriage were destroyed by fire, she was left in an equivocal position. “For the first time she began to think of herself, and to see that she had been hardly dealt with. She began to resent her guardian’s carelessness....Why did not they see that everything was right? Why did not Hugh make sure, whose duty it was?” (*Madonna Mary*, 1867, Hurst & Blackett, volume 1 p. 27-28).

In *May* (1873), in a backstory before the novel begins, self-centered Tom Hay-Heriot has contracted a private (Scotch) marriage with a young virtuous woman of the peasant class, named Isabell, and has enjoined her to secrecy. After their marriage, Isabell becomes pregnant. Tom may intend to do the right thing eventually, but somehow time has gone by without his taking any action to safeguard her. After a hunting accident, he lies dying, but even then he does not have the courage to reveal the marriage to his father or sister May.

In *For Love and Life* (1874), near the end of the novel it is revealed that the squire of a large property, an unlikable but seemingly respectable married man, had contracted a Scotch marriage with someone else in his youth. Therefore his second marriage is invalid, bringing shame on his wife and children.

See also *The Mystery of Mrs Blencarrow* (1890) and *Sir Robert’s Fortune* (1895).

Section 7. Documentation supporting the Oliphant Family Tree

Preface

As anyone with very old relatives knows, it is not difficult to go back a good 100 years in one's family history. Margaret Oliphant's mother was in this position, born in 1789, hearing virtually all of the Oliphant family's Fife history of the 18th century, and some portions of their history of the 17th century and the late 16th century. Margaret Oliphant later wrote two fiction works based on the family history, as heard from her mother. (See Sections 5 and 6 of this document regarding *The Heirs of Kellie* and *Katie Stewart - A True Story*.)

Another person who loved the lore of Fife, specifically that of the East Neuk, was Walter Wood (1812-c1886), minister of Elie. He spent his later years gathering documentation of the people, places, and events of the East Neuk. Using this large collection of documents, he wrote the book *The East Neuk of Fife* (1862). Later he added new information, and reorganized the existing material. *The East Neuk of Fife, Second Edition* (1889) is the edition referred to in this document. (The *East Neuk* can be found online at Google Books and Internet Archive, as can most of the books and documents referenced in this documentation.)

Today, a Scottish genealogist of the 21st century – Gordon MacGregor - has his own mission for preserving the story of Scotland's ancestors, via the *Red Book of Scotland*. He has already completed the first part of this project in his 1000-page publication, *The Red Book of Perthshire*. This book also covers some families outside of Perthshire, including the Oliphants of Fife; and in fact Gordon's next publication will be *The Red Book of Fife*. Each book contains many ancient family trees, based on his exhaustive research, using virtually all Scottish-related ancient documents available at this time. Four other Red Books are in various stages of production. To learn more, visit the website: www.redbookofscotland.com.

Margaret Oliphant's forebears were originally of Kellie, and later of Overkellie. It appears that most of Overkellie went into other hands early in the 17th century, but the family seems to have kept a farmhouse and some land – perhaps this is why one Peter is described as a “portioner” of Overkellie (see entry 7 below). Mrs Oliphant tells us in *The Heirs of Kellie* that long after the Lords Oliphant had vanished from Fife, the Oliphants of Overkellie were still there. They were gone by her day; but she describes the farmhouse in detail - apparently having visited it herself - including the mantelpiece rudely carved with the Kellie arms and with the Kellie motto: *A tout pouvoir* (provide for all).

Overkellie is in the parish of Carnbee, as were some of the Oliphants' other properties and longterm leases of land. But the Oliphants always had their town houses in Anstruther Wester. See for example a quotation from the book *Records of...the Beggar's Benison and Merryland* (1892): “Thomas Oliphant [Bailie Oliphant] was one of the scions of the lordly House of Kellie. He owned lands in the parish of Carnbee, but like so many muirland squires he lived at Anstruther Wester.”

(*The Beggars Benison* goes on to add that “Mrs Oliphant, the distinguished Novelist, is allied through her mother to this branch of the family.”)

About Jean Oliphant of Kellie, and her cousin Peter Oliphant

Before continuing with this document, the reader may wish to review Section 5, which discusses Margaret Oliphant's short story *The Heirs of Kellie*. It tells the story of "Lady" Jean Oliphant, who according to family tradition, considered herself the heir to Kellie Castle upon her father Sir Alexander's death. The story also tells of Jean's cousin, described in the story as "Peter Oliphant of Overkellie", the heir-male to Sir Alexander. The real-life person who fits this profile was known as Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills. (But he did own lands in Overkellie too.) Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills was Jean's cousin, and he was heir-male to Sir Alexander.

In Mrs Oliphant's story, Jean Oliphant and Peter Oliphant marry, and are the direct ancestors of Mrs Oliphant's family line. It would be fitting to depict this on the Family Tree chart in Section 2. However historical documentation indicates that they each married someone else. It appears extremely likely that Peter alone is the direct ancestor of Margaret Oliphant - Jean being still an ancestor, but not in the direct line. This is how it is shown on the Family Tree chart. (Either way, Margaret Oliphant the novelist was a direct descendant of the Oliphant lairds of Kellie.)

Documentation for each entry on the Oliphant Family Tree chart

The oldest generations shown in this Family Tree rely on historical documentation of the 16th and early 17th centuries. Few parish records are available until we reach Thomas Oliphant (entry 11), whose descendants can all be found in parish records, and whose relationships to each other are proven by a variety of cross-checks, as laid out in this documentation.

The number to the left of each name below corresponds to the number on the Family Tree chart. In most cases the Family Tree chart shows only the direct line descending to Margaret Oliphant. However the side branches – siblings, first marriages, later generations, etc. are included in the Documentation below.

1. Sir Alexander Oliphant, 7th of Kellie

In 1537 Sir Alexander Oliphant succeeded his great grandfather, Sir John Oliphant (6th of Kellie), to the barony of Kellie in Fife, thus becoming 7th laird of Kellie. He had had a contract of marriage to a natural daughter of the Earl of Rothes, for which he sought a divorce. The divorce was not finalized until 1568 (after Sir Alexander's death), but meanwhile he married again, this time to Catherine, daughter of Laurence 3rd Lord Oliphant, either by 1542 (per *East Neuk* p. 258) or in 1551 (the date of the marriage contract per the *Red Book*). Given that his daughters by his second marriage seem to have been young women at the time of his death (1559-60), it is entirely possible he married by 1542, but postponed the marriage contract a few years, believing his divorce would come through.

Sir Alexander was the last feudal baron of the Oliphant Kellie line. Upon his death, the castle and lands went to the 3rd Lord Oliphant, who seems to have bought the estate during Sir Alexander's lifetime, in connection with Sir Alexander's marriage with the 3rd Lord's daughter Catherine. (The tradition in Margaret Oliphant's family was that Sir Alexander's will left the estate to the 3rd Lord Oliphant; and that the will was contested on the grounds that Sir Alexander was dying, not

mentally fit to make a will. In either case, there was suspicion of trickery.) The somewhat mysterious circumstances of the transfer of the Kellie estate to Laurence, 3rd Lord Oliphant were the subject of several lawsuits by his daughters and by his heir-male, Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills. Per the *Red Book*, Jean Oliphant reached a settlement in 1572; and Peter and his son reached a settlement in 1606.

**2. Catherine Oliphant, Lady Kellie - daughter of Laurence, 3rd Lord Oliphant
- wife of Sir Alexander Oliphant of Kellie [1]
- mother of Janet, Margaret, and Jean [3]**

After Sir Alexander died, Catherine married George Dundas of that Ilk; and later George Dundas built a house at Arniston for their son James. At Arniston House, Catherine displayed a large ornate tapestry, still existing today, which includes the Arms of the Oliphants of Kellie. This is a rare surviving example of the Kellie Arms as they looked at that period.

**3. Lady Jean Oliphant of Kellie - daughter of Sir Alexander Oliphant of Kellie [1]
and Catherine Oliphant, Lady Kellie [2]**

Jean Oliphant was the daughter of Sir Alexander and Catherine, and was probably born around 1545. (“Lady” was a courtesy title, given her at the time she declared herself the rightful heir of Kellie - per Margaret Oliphant’s family tradition.) Margaret Oliphant’s forebears, who were of Overkellie, believed that they were directly descended from Lady Jean, who married “Peter Oliphant of Overkellie”, though no supporting documentation for a husband of that exact name has been found - see entry 4 below. Jean was more likely a cousin/aunt figure to the three Peters in the Family Tree, than in the direct line descending to Margaret Oliphant. Either way, she was indeed an ancestor, and her story was so compelling that it remained in the family consciousness for over 200 years - and continues to live in Margaret Oliphant’s story *The Heirs of Kellie*. (See Section 5 for more of Jean’s story.)

4. “_____ Oliphant of Overkellie” – husband of Lady Jean [3], per family tradition

Margaret Oliphant’s family tradition was that after Sir Alexander died, and Jean left the castle, Jean married Peter Oliphant of Overkellie. As we search for Jean’s husband, there are several candidates (though the last two are not connected with Overkellie):

a. John Oliphant in Overkellie

East Neuk (p.259) says that Sir Alexander’s daughter Jean married a John Oliphant, whose father was Alexander Oliphant in Overkellie (in other words he lived in Overkellie, may even have been important locally, but was not the laird of the Overkellie estate). *East Neuk* mentions Alexander’s death before 1579. The existence of “Alexander Oliphant in Overkellie”, and evidence of his death around this year, is verified by an entry in *volume 16* of the *Scottish Record Society index*, showing his will was filed on 11 February in 1579/80. There is a similar record for “John Oliphant in Overkellie”, indicating a will filed 4 November 1579. Did Jean’s husband die the same year as his father? (Hopefully this was a

John of an older generation!) What makes John Oliphant a compelling candidate in the search for Jean's husband, is his association with Overkellie, which goes hand in hand with the Oliphant family tradition.

b. Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills (and Overkellie)

Per the *Red Book*, Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills had at least two direct descendants who were styled “[laird] of Overkellie”. It is very likely that Peter too was styled of Overkellie, along with his documented styles “of Kellie Mills” and “of Pittotter” (this last after the death of his father). In addition, what would make Peter a compelling candidate is that he matches many of the facts in the story *The Heirs of Kellie*: he was Jean's cousin; his name was Peter; he was heir-male to the Kellie estate; and he fought for his rights. The drawback is that per the *Red Book*, he was married to a different Jean - Jean Balfour. So he is excluded, unless Jean Balfour died early.

c. John Oliphant (or another Oliphant) of Kilmarone

There is *no evidence* for this theory – it is just one more example of how Jean could have married an Oliphant associated with Overkellie:

Per the *Red Book*, the Oliphants of Kilmarone also owned lands in Overkellie. (See entry 5 below for more details.) Thus another candidate would be John Oliphant, the younger son of the 2nd Oliphant of Kilmarone – or a similar Kilmarone relative. He seems to be of the right generation to have married Jean. The Kilmarones were an offshoot of the Oliphants of Kellie. As a younger son, he might have been given some Overkellie lands, which at least earlier, in 1516, were in the family.

d. John Oliphant of Stansgill

The *Red Book* says Jean married a John Oliphant of Stansgill (in Caithness) whose father was vicar of Foulis (and seemingly a relative of the 3rd Lord Oliphant, per other documentation online). This marriage is well documented. There is however a possible issue, in that the Latin for Jean is the same as the Latin for Janet, so that it is possible her sister or another relative is indicated.

e. John Muirhead of Shawfutte

An online genealogy site (motherbedford.com/muirhead) says Jean married John Muirhead of Shawfutte.

Of course it is entirely possible that Lady Jean had more than one marriage. In that turbulent era, highborn women were often motivated to marry again after being widowed, in order to protect their property and themselves.

- 5. Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills - great grandson of Sir John Oliphant (6th laird of Kellie)**
- **cousin of Jean Oliphant of Kellie [3]**
- **father of Peter Oliphant, portioner of Overkellie [7]**

Per the *Red Book*, Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills was first cousin to Sir Alexander Oliphant of Kellie. Their fathers were brothers - Peter's being John Oliphant of Pittoter, and Alexander's being Alexander Oliphant, younger of Kellie. Since Sir Alexander had no sons or brothers, and his uncle John was deceased, Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills was presumptive heir-male. Per the *Red Book*, "Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills became heir-male upon [Sir Alexander's] death, and to whom he was retoured heir on 31 October 1560, although his rights to these lands were reduced at the instance of Laurence, Lord Oliphant." Peter went to law several times, but eventually renounced all claims to the Barony of Kellie in 1606, along with his eldest son John, in return for a large compensation.

Per Mrs Oliphant, Peter had believed himself the next laird of Kellie, and was severely disappointed by the change in circumstances. However it appears that a portion of Kellie's lands were still his, as indicated by a lawsuit he filed in 1570, demanding that Andrew Clepen, Portioner of Pitcorthy, provide an overdue letter of Reversion to Peter Oliphant of the lands of Kellie Mills, the lands of Overkellie, and other lands. (Probably this means that Clepen had held mortgages on these lands, which had been paid off in Sir Alexander's lifetime, but that Clepen had failed to follow up with a letter of Reversion. This letter would provide Peter with clear title to these lands. Per *National Archives of Scotland*, reference GD305/1/102/262.) After the death of his father, John Oliphant of Pittoter, Peter was also known as Peter Oliphant of Pittoter. Regarding Overkellie: it is possible that Peter's great grandfather, Sir John Oliphant, 6th of Kellie, had divided the lands of Overkellie between his two sons, William Oliphant of Kellie (Peter's grandfather) and Peter Oliphant 1st of Kilmarone. William's share (very likely the larger share, since it seemingly included the lairdship) seems to have been passed down two generations without mention, before it is in the lawsuit given above.

Peter was probably the most affluent of the Kellie Oliphants, in the period after Kellie Castle went to the Lords Oliphant. It appears that his second son Peter is the same as "Peter Oliphant, portioner of Overkellie" [7], a direct forebear of Margaret Oliphant. Peter the portioner was a member of Scottish Parliament, which would have required that he belong to an affluent and influential family, such as that of Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills.

I am estimating the **birth** year for Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills as 1530. Peter **died** by 1609, per the *Red Book*.

6. Jean Balfour – wife of Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills [5]

Per the *Red Book*, Jean Balfour was Peter's wife. The Balfours were a prominent family. (No other records could be found for Jean.)

Some of Peter Oliphant's descendants were styled "of Overkellie". It is possible that as the generations passed, Jean Balfour became confused in the Overkellie family lore with Jean Oliphant of Kellie [3]. When Margaret Oliphant's mother first heard Jean Oliphant's story, it had been retold for over 200 years. Among Jean's adventures, there were two occasions when she took

refuge in her cousin Peter's house. How likely that after a few generations of retelling, Peter's Overkellie descendants should conclude that Jean Oliphant of Kellie must be the same Jean who married Peter.

**7. Peter Oliphant, Portioner of Overkellie - son of Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills [5]
- father of Peter Oliphant, younger [9]**

Per the *East Neuk* (p. 261), in the seventeenth century there were two Peter Oliphants descended from the lairds of Kellie, father and son, the father being styled “portioner of Overkellie”, meaning that he had a part interest in the estate of Overkellie. It appears that this elder Peter is the son of Peter Oliphant of Kellie Mills, as discussed more fully in entry 5.

Peter Oliphant was Member of Scottish Parliament for Anstruther Wester in 1649 per the *House of Commons Papers, Volume 62, part 2*, and also served a second term in 1651 per *The Scotch-Irish, Volume 2 (1902)*.

A parish **death** record in Anstruther Wester points to this Peter, given the date, his age, and the fact that he was a **bailie (dignitary/burgess/alderman)** of Anstruther Wester: “1661 September [died] Peter Oliphant bailie of this burgh aged 82”. This would put his **birth** at about 1579. (His elder brother John appears to have been born around 1578, per a gravestone inscription.)

Another document which identifies Peter as a bailie of Anstruther Wester, in this case spelled “beallie” (which Mrs Oliphant tells us is how “bailie” was pronounced), is a 1661 document *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*. Another 1661 document, *The Records of the Parliament of Scotland*, identifies him as “burgess” of Anstruther Wester, as well as Member of Scottish Parliament, indicating his appointment to a royal commission, along with many other dignitaries, to help the King collect an excise tax.

Perhaps it was this Peter who wrote the Overkellie “motto”. According to Mrs Oliphant's mother, the motto of the Oliphants of Overkellie was written by a Peter (Pate) Oliphant, and refers to the demise of the Oliphants of Kellie - their castle and lands having been lost to the Lords Oliphant. The Kellie motto had been *A tout pourvoir* (provide for all). Pate wrote a tongue-in-cheek motto for Overkellie, reflecting that the days of providing for all were in the past:

*Ayant pourvu,
Autant qu'a pu,
quoth Pate*

Having provided
as much as we could!
says Pete

He is possibly the same Peter Oliphant of Anstruther Wester named in a Pittenweem **marriage** record of 1605, to Catherine Mathie. (And there is a parish record for that couple's son David, baptized on 6 Nov 1614 in Pittenweem.) However since no birth or baptism record has been found for Peter's son Peter, there is no way to confirm that Catherine is his wife, and mother to his son, Peter Oliphant, younger.

8. Catherine Mathie – possible wife of Peter [7]

See above. (No other records found for her.)

9. Peter Oliphant, younger – eldest son of Peter [7], father of Thomas Oliphant [11]

This Peter is identified in *East Neuk* (p. 261) as the son of Peter Oliphant, portioner of Overkellie, and that his own son was Thomas Oliphant, a wright in Anstruther. This last fact is of great importance in connecting Peter with Margaret's family tree, since the next three generations of Oliphants after his son Thomas were also wrights in Anstruther Wester (the last being Margaret's grandfather).

In the absence of birth and death records, I am estimating his **birth** year as 1610.

Like his father, this Peter was Member of Scottish Parliament for Anstruther Wester - in 1665 per the *House of Commons Papers, Volume 62, part 2* (referring to him as "Peter Oliphant, younger, bailie"). So again like his father, he was a bailie in Anstruther Wester, an influential town dignitary.

This Peter is possibly the same Peter Oliphant of Anstruther Wester who had two (or more) children by Anna Balfoure (Peter, 1652, and William, 1654), per the Scotland's People website.

10. Anna Balfoure – possible wife of Peter Oliphant, younger [9]

See above. (No other records found for her.)

11. Thomas Oliphant (first generation of wrights) - son of Peter Oliphant, younger [9] - father of William Oliphant [15]

Thomas Oliphant in Anstruther Wester is the first person in this family tree to be described as a **wright** (builder/building contractor), per *East Neuk* (p. 261). Given that the next three generations of descendants are also described as wrights, it would appear that he was the founder of a lucrative family business. (Though it is said that a family tombstone from 1644 of his great-uncle, John Oliphant of Anstruther Wester, has a wright's square on the family arms. So it is possible that the family business was already established.) Thomas is mentioned in 1677 as furnishing timber for the rebuilding of Holyrood Palace, in addition to making molds for Holyrood which would serve as patterns for mason work. (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Volume 34.*)

In the absence of a birth record for Thomas, I am estimating his **birth** year as 1640.

We do have a **death year** for Thomas, 1709, per a legal document in which Thomas's son William transferred a property from Thomas into his own name on 12 May 1709:

“Sasine in favour of William Oliphant, wright in Easter Grangemoor, son and heir to the deceased

Thomas Oliphant, wright there, of the tenements of land in the Marygate of the burgh of Pettinweem and some acres of land on the outskirts of the said burgh, following on a precept of Clare Costat by Sir Robert Anstruther of Balcaskie.” (*National Archives of Scotland, GB 234, reference CS232 and CS232/O/1/27.*)

Note Thomas and his son William are described as **wrights** in Easter Grangemoor [**Grangemuir**]. Their descendants, too, are tied to **Grangemuir**, per various records. This appears to be the family’s place of business (probably a large workshop). The Grangemuir district is just north of Pittenweem and Anstruther Wester. Specifically the “Easter” (eastern) portion of Grangemuir is just north of Anstruther Wester, across Dreel Burn. This was probably a short walk or horse ride to work each morning.

Thomas continued to record family births and other events in the parish of Anstruther Wester, confirming that his primary residence continued to be in Anstruther Wester. (His descendants did the same, having their business at Grangemuir, but having their residence in the parish of Anstruther Wester.)

Per his children’s birth records, we know that Thomas was **married** to Helene Pride.

Thomas’s children by Helene Pride are:

Helene	25 Feb 1661	in Anstruther Wester	
William [15]	28 Jul 1663	in Anstruther Wester	(witnesses including William Hamilton)
Thomas [13]	18 Apr 1666	in Anstruther Wester	
John	24 Mar 1669	in Anstruther Wester	(witnesses including William Hamiltoune)
Helene	21 Dec 1676	in Anstruther Wester	(baptised 25 th)
			(This is their second Helene - the first must have died.)
Andrew	01 Jan 1672	in Anstruther Wester	(baptismal date)

FYI: the witness William Hamilton mentioned above may be the burgess of Anstruther Easter who owned the estate of Easter **Grangemuir** at that time. The estate was sold by his son upon his death in 1672 (per *East Neuk* p. 291).

12. Helene Pride - wife of Thomas Oliphant [11]

See above. (No other records found for her.)

13. Thomas Oliphant, younger

– son of Thomas [11] and Helene [12], younger brother of William [15]

Thomas was **born** 18 Apr 1666 in Anstruther Wester to Thomas Oliphant and Helene Pride, per parish register.

“Thomas Oliphant younger” **married** 18 Aug 1698 in **Grangemuir**, per an Anstruther Wester parish record dealing with contributions to the poor. (Wife’s name not mentioned, but his children with Margaret Toddie start a few months later.)

Thomas had thirteen **children** by Margaret Toddie:

Isobell Oliphant	27 Nov 1698 in Anstruther Wester
Thomas Oliphant	16 Feb 1700 in Anstruther Wester (Tho. younger's bro. William is witness)
Alexander Oliphant	11 Jul 1701 in Anstruther Wester
Hellin Oliphant	19 Mar 1703 in Anstruther Wester
John Oliphant	16 Mar 1705 in Anstruther Wester
William Olyphant	22 Mar 1708 in Anstruther Wester
G[e]orge Oliphant	17 Jan 1710 in Anstruther Wester
Rachell Oliphant	18 Oct 1711 in Anstruther Wester
James Oliphant	20 Nov 1713 in Anstruther Wester
George Oliphant	13 May 1716 in Anstruther Wester
Andrew Oliphant	12 Aug 1717 in Anstruther Wester
Peter Oliphant	20 Sep 1719 in Anstruther Wester (mother's name misspelled Boddie)
Andrew Oliphant	24 Dec 1721 in Anstruther Wester

(Birth/baptism dates per Scotland's People.)

14. Margaret Toddie

- wife of Thomas, younger [13], aunt by marriage to Bailie Oliphant [19]

Margaret Toddie was **born** 19 Feb 1680 in Anstruther Wester to Alexander Toddie and Isabell Pigtone, per Scotland's People. From the age of 18 until the age of 39 she was bearing children almost continuously. In various documents her name is spelled Toddie/ Tod/ Toddy, etc.

(Not to be confused with Margaret Torry/Torrie who was the wife of Bailie Oliphant [19], in the next generation.)

15. William Oliphant (second generation wright)

- eldest son of Thomas [11] and Helene [12], brother of Thomas Oliphant, younger [13]
- father of Thomas Oliphant (Bailie Oliphant) [19]

William was **born** 28 Jul 1663 in Anstruther Wester, parents Thomas Oliphant and Helene Pride, per parish register.

Per his children's birth records, we know that William was **married** to Violet Page [16].

Also there may be a mention in a parish register in Carnbee indicating that a William Oliphant was **married** on the 3rd of July 1687, which date would fit well. (But on Scotland's People, when I viewed the actual parish register, I could not find the entry!)

William's children by Violet Page (/Pedge) are:

Thomas Olyphant [19]	07 May 1688 (Baptised 12 th) Anstruther Wester witnesses Thomas Elder and Younger
Maria Oliphant	07 May 1690 (Baptised 12 th) Anstruther Wester witnesses Thomas Elder and Younger

Helen Oliphant	31 Jul 1693 (Baptised Aug 5 th)	Anstruther Wester (father designated as “William Oliphant in Grangemore ”) witnesses Thomas Elder and Younger
Margarett Olyphant	21 Feb 1695 (Baptised 27 th)	Anstruther Wester witnesses Thomas Elder and Younger
William Olyphant	21 Oct 1697	Anstruther Wester

The mention of **Grangemuir**, in daughter Helen’s parish birth record above, is one more validation of the connections between William and his father, and William and his descendants – all wrights in Grangemuir.

There is a **death year** for William, 1743, per a legal document in which William’s son Thomas [Bailie Oliphant] transferred a property from William into his own name on 28 Nov 1743:

“Sasine in favour of Thomas Oliphant, wright, late burges of Anstruther Wester, of the subjects as in GD 62/286, following on a precept of Clare Constat by Sir Philip Anstruther of Balcaskie as son and heir of the deceased William Oliphant, wright in Easter **Grangemuir**, and Sasine propriis Manibus by the said Thomas in favour of Margaret Torry, his spouse, in liferent.” (Per *National Archives of Scotland, Document Reference GD62/353.*)

16. Violet Page – wife of William Oliphant [15], mother of Thomas [19]

Violet was **baptized** 17 April 1668, daughter of William Page in Carnbee, per parish register. (Note, in some documents her name is spelled Pedge.)

17. Alexander Stewart – father of Katie Stewart [18] and Isabell Stewart [20]

Birth and death dates unknown. He is mentioned by name (apparently deceased) in his daughter Isabell’s lawsuit against Philip Hamilton of Kilbrachmont in 1741. (See entry **20**.)

In that lawsuit, the reference to Alexander’s business in Milltown of Pittenweem identifies him as a miller, as described in *Katie Stewart*. The reference to him as a “dyster” suggests that in addition to regular corn-grinding activities, Alexander may also have ground flax for thread, and set up a thread-making and thread-dying business on the premises. This sort of activity was becoming common in the 18th century, using the water wheel for power; and was a precursor to the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century.

18. Katie Stewart - daughter of Alexander Stewart [17], sister of Isabell Stewart [20], - great-great aunt of Margaret Oliphant the novelist [28]

Birth and death dates unknown. Per the novel *Katie Stewart*, Katie was 8 years old in 1735, thus **born** approximately 1727. See Section 6 for her story.

- 19. Thomas Oliphant**, known as “**Bailie Oliphant**” (third generation wright)
 - son of William [15], nephew of Thomas, younger [13]
 - husband of 1. Margaret Torry [19b] 2. Isabell Stewart [20]
 - father of William [21], great grandfather of the novelist [28]

Thomas’s **birth** record indicates he was born in Anstruther Wester, on 7 May 1688 to parents William Olyphant and Violet Page, per parish register. (Baptised on the 12th. Name spelled Olyphant only in this one record.)

Witnesses were “Thomas Olyphants Elder and Younger” (his grandfather [11] and his uncle [13]).

One of many references to him as bailie of Anstruther Wester is per documentation in a lawsuit (he sued a Peter Young in 1738): per *National Archives of Scotland, GB 234, reference CS232 and CS232/O/1/27*.

In *Katie Stewart*, Margaret Oliphant describes Thomas Oliphant as follows: “Beelye or Bailie Oliphant is a dignitary of the little town of Anstruther, on the coast – a man of substance and influence in his sphere.”

First marriage - to Margaret Torry [19b]

Per the Carnbee parish register, on 29 May 1711 “Thomas Oliphant and Margaret Torry were **proclaimed** pro secundo L.” In other words the banns were read for the second time. They would most likely have been married in the week after the third reading of the banns.

Thomas had seven children by Margaret Torry:

Marion Olyphant	24 Feb 1712	Anstruther Easter
Elisabeth Olyphant	14 Sep 1713	Anstruther Easter
William Oliphant	26 Feb 1715	Anstruther Wester (baptised 8th Mar)
		witnesses [Thomas’ father] William Oliphant and [Thomas’ uncle] Thomas Oliphant
Margret Oliphant	16 Sep 1716	Anstruther Wester
Isobell Oliphant	01 Jun 1718	Anstruther Wester
Violet Oliphant	14 Mar 1721	Anstruther Wester
Lewiza Oliphant	03 May 1723	Anstruther Wester father wright , in GrangeMuir ,
		witnesses [Thomas’ father] William Oliphant and [Thomas’ uncle] Thomas Oliphant

Another document which confirms places and relationships between generations, and which refers to Bailie Oliphant’s wife Margaret Torry, is a property Sasine (given in full in the entry for his father William [15]).

Second marriage - to Isabell Stewart [20]

On 13th March 1751 Margaret Torry, Bailie Oliphant’s wife of 40 years, died.

Two months later, on 24th May 1751, Thomas Oliphant of Anstruther Wester **married** Isabell Stewart in Pittenweem, per parish register. (See Section 6 for more of their story.)

Bailie Oliphant and Isabell had a **son** William, birthdate uncertain, in Anstruther Wester.

We do not have a death record for Bailie Oliphant; but per the book *Records of...the Beggar's Benison and Merryland (1892)*, which describes the doings of a famous gentlemen's club, the last member of the club died in late 1877. So member Bailie Oliphant **died** no later than 1877.

Bailie Oliphant must have been a colourful character - he was remembered long after his death. Among historical references to him are:

- In the book mentioned above, he is described as a founding member of a gentlemen's club remembered to this day: "The Beggar's Benison...was a Scottish Society, of an erotic and convivial nature, composed of the Nobility and Gentry of Anstruther and adjacent districts...." Per page 22: "Thomas Oliphant was one of the scions of the lordly House of Kellie."
- In the Rebellion of 1745, at the age of 57, Bailie Oliphant daringly took the Rebels' side, as documented in *A List of Persons Concerned in the Rebellion (1746)*, which describes him as "Thomas Oliphant, Wright, Late Baillie, and present Elder in the Church". Abode: Anstruther Wester. Parish: Anstruther Wester. His act of rebellion: "Assisted in carrying a Barrel of Gun Powder to the Rebels & drank the Pretender's Health." Where [is he] now: "At Home." This government list was used to convict many of those who had supported Bonnie Prince Charlie; and in fact some men on this list were hanged. Bailie Oliphant seems to have evaded punishment.

19b. Margaret Torry - first wife of Bailie Oliphant [19]

Birth record not found. **Death** record: "Margret Torry, spouse to Bayly Thomas Oliphant, in this burgh deceased, 13th March 1751," per parish register in Anstruther Wester.

20. Isabell Stewart - first marriage, Philip Hamilton of Kilbrachmont [20b] - second marriage, Thomas Oliphant (Bailie Oliphant) [19]

Birth and death dates unknown. Per the novel *Katie Stewart*, Isabell was 12 years old in 1735, thus **born** approximately 1723. Isabell's **first marriage** was in 1741 to Philip Hamilton of Kilbrachmont [20b], per a private ("Scotch") marriage ceremony, meaning that there was no church marriage with clergyman, but only the couple making their vows in the presence of two witnesses.

Sadly, in the same year Isabell found it necessary to sue Philip, in order to have the private marriage recognized. The record of Isabell's lawsuit is per the *Scottish Record Society no. 34 (1909): Consistorial Processes and Decrees, 1658-1800, entry 333*:

"Process of declarator of marriage &c. Isobel Stewart, spouse to Philip Hamilton of Kilbrachmont, and lawful daughter to umquhile Alexander Stewart, dyster and portioner in Milltown of Pittenweem in the shire of Fife, against the said Philip Hamilton, alleged marriage on 3 April 1741, Andrew Stewart, complainer's brother being one of the witnesses."

No later record has been found – it is very possible that after being sued, Philip agreed to recognize Isabell as his wife, even if they did not live together again. Isabell did not remarry until after his death in 1750.

Isabell's **second marriage** was in 1751, to Bailie Oliphant [19]. They had a son William [21]. See Section 6 for more of Isabell's story.

20b. Philip Hamilton of Kilbrachmont - husband of Isabell Stewart [20]

No birth record was found. "Philip Hamilton of Kinbrachmont" was **buried** 17th April 1750 in Kilconquhar, per parish register.

Philip had a son Robert by an earlier marriage (per *East Neuk*, pp 151-153). Robert (Robbie) was the last Hamilton laird of Kilbrachmont. It appears that father and son had run through the estate, and sold it to meet their debts around 1745. (Note that Robbie "went out" in **the '45**, and the associated expenses may also have taken their toll on the estate.)

"Robert Hamilton of Kilbrachmont, Esq. died at Anstruther Wester, and [was] buried in the aisle of the church at Kilconquhar the 13th of November 1769", per parish record.

21. William Oliphant (fourth generation wright)

- son of Thomas Oliphant (Bailie Oliphant) [19] and Isabell Stewart [20]
- father of Thomas [23] and Margaret [24]
- **grandfather of the novelist** [28]

Birth year estimated by me as 1751 - see the discussion further on of a mysterious register entry for his birth – it is possible that he was born *before* his parents' marriage in 1751.*

William **married** Christian Aitken on 20 December 1781, in Pittenweem, per parish register.

William's **children** by Christian were:

David Oliphant	02 Oct 1782	in Pittenweem	(baptised the 6 th)
Isobel Oliphant	16 Jun 1784	in Pittenweem	(baptised the 20 th)
Thomas Oliphant [23]	16 Dec 1786	in Pittenweem	(baptised the 31 st)
Margaret Oliphant [24]	06 May 1789	in Pittenweem	(baptised the 18 th) father a wright

It is unknown whether the first two children, David and Isobel, survived to adulthood. William is identified as a **wright** per his daughter Margaret's birth record.

There are several death records which could be his, but there is not enough information. One possibility is: 5th January **1821**, a mortcloth was bought for William Oliphant in Anstruther Wester, per parish register. This death record is of interest since the death is in the parish of Anstruther Wester. However without the age of the deceased, it could just as easily be a family

member, such as: his half-brother William; his father's brother William; his cousin William.

Also there is a possibility that he went away and eventually died somewhere else. Mrs Oliphant tells us in her *Autobiography* that her mother's father [William] was a "prodigal"; and we know that at times his daughter was raised by other relatives (see entry 22 below). It is possible that after his parents died (dates unknown), he may not have felt welcome by the remaining family members. If William's much older half-brother (also a William) still lived, then William was not heir to his father's property. Further, his half-siblings may have felt considerable resentment against him and his mother Isabell, given that their own mother Margaret Torry had been dead for only two months when their father remarried. William was the only member of the family line who did not live in Anstruther Wester – he lived in Pittenweem instead, per the children's birth/baptism records. (Also per the children's records, the witnesses were never Oliphants.)

***Regarding William's birth date:** There is a parish register entry for William's birth, 28 April, in Anstruther Wester. It shows his parents correctly, as Thomas Oliphant and Isobel Stewart. But the entry in the parish register is on the page for 1769. This year is "too late" for his birthdate, as we have evidence that he was married only 12 years later in 1781. Looking more closely at the "1769" birth record in the parish register, it can be seen that this entry has been added at the bottom of the page, in another hand from the rest of the page (which was written in a more educated hand). Looking at the page before, and the page after, we see the educated hand, probably the minister's. Only the one entry has the unknown hand. One explanation is that William's birth was not registered at the time he was born - either from carelessness, or perhaps he was born out of wedlock. (As previously discussed, Thomas married Isabell Stewart in great haste - perhaps baby William was already born.)

**22. Christian Aitken – wife of William Oliphant [21], mother of [23] and [24]
great-aunt of Annie Walker [22b]
grandmother of the novelist [28]**

Christian was born in Carnbee on 1 April 1759, to parents David Aitken and Margaret Whyte, per parish register. (There is a duplicate entry for her in the parish of Newburn, same date, same parents, except born in Newburn, also in Fife.) She was one of eight children.

Christian eventually separated from William, per Margaret Oliphant in her *Autobiography* (1899, p.13): "[My mother's] father had been a prodigal, and I fear a profligate, whose wife had not been able to bear with him... and [my mother's] youth had been a troubled and partially dependent one – dependent on relations on the other side..." For much of her childhood, Margaret's mother was dependent upon Aitken relatives whom she did not like.

**22b. Annie Louisa Walker Coghill - great niece of Christian Aitken [22]
- second cousin of Margaret Oliphant [28]**

Annie Louisa Walker, poet and novelist, was **born** on 23rd June 1836, in Brewood Staffordshire, the ninth and youngest child of Robert Walker (1789-1864) and his third wife Anna (or Anne), per

a 2009 academic paper¹ and per various biographical sources including Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annie_Louisa_Walker).

The relationship between Annie and Margaret is as follows: Annie's grandmother Isabel Aitken was born 29 Aug 1746 (baptised 14 Sep), to David Aicken (sic) of Monimail and Margaret Whyte, in Carnbee Fife, per parish register. Isabel was a sister of Christian Aitken [22]. Isabel Aitken married Andrew Walker on 1 Feb 1770 in Carnbee Fife, per parish register. Annie's father Robert Walker was born 9 Apr 1789 (baptised 23 Apr) to Andrew Walker and Isabel Aitken in Monimail Fife, per parish register. Robert was first cousin to Margaret Oliphant's mother Margaret [24]. Thus in the next generation, Annie Walker and Margaret Oliphant were second cousins.

Cousin Annie joined Mrs Oliphant's household by 1866, per biographer Merryn Williams (*Margaret Oliphant - A Critical Biography*, Palgrave Macmillan, 1986). Annie played an important role in Margaret's life, as her secretary, housekeeper, and beloved friend, until Annie's marriage.

Annie Walker **married** Harry Coghill (d. 1897) on 29 Jan 1884 in London, per the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* online. Her friendship with Margaret remained close after her marriage.

Cousin Annie was Margaret Oliphant's first biographer. After Margaret's death in 1897, Annie determined the best structure for telling Margaret's story, beginning with autobiographical passages, then letters, and adding in commentary. The result was *The Autobiography and Letters of Mrs MOW Oliphant, arranged and edited by Mrs Harry Coghill* (William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh/London, 1899). This complex task first involved assembling many autobiographical fragments, written "out of order" chronologically. Annie rearranged the fragments into the chronological order of Oliphant's life (but retaining the actual date-written of each entry). She then located and selected a large number of letters written by Margaret, to provide more biographical background. She interspersed her own comments to provide context, and ended with a moving description of Margaret Oliphant's last days. For discretionary reasons Annie omitted about a quarter of the autobiographical passages - usually passages on persons still living. (Mrs Oliphant herself authorized her relatives to make omissions as they saw fit - see *Complete Text*², page 130.)

Annie Walker Coghill **died** 7 Jul 1907 at Bath, per the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* online.

¹ *Mrs Oliphant, Mrs Harry Coghill and T.A. Walker: Three lives connected through the business of railway construction* by Owen E Covick (Flinders University, Australia, 2009.) Available at <http://www.flinders.edu.au/sabs/business-files/research/papers/2009/2009-1.pdf>. This interesting paper cites a 13-page unpublished manuscript on the life of Annie's father Robert Walker, written by R.G.H. Walker, a great grandson of T.A. Walker (Annie's brother) - R.G.H. being the custodian of the surviving papers and records of the Walker family. This paper sheds new light on the relationships of Mrs Oliphant, her brother Frank Wilson [26], Cousin Annie, and Annie's two brothers Thomas (T.A.) and Charles Walker. It provides information on how the Walker brothers were connected to Frank Wilson [26]'s railway clerk job in Hungary, after he fled England. It also indicates how Annie may have helped Fanny Tulloch (whose parents were deceased), to find a new home after Margaret's death. This paper appears to be in error, however, in associating Annie's Aitken heritage with Janet Aitken, mother of Margaret Oliphant's four Wilson cousins [26b]. As indicated above, Annie was related to a different branch of the Aitkens [22], located in Fife.

² The omitted passages were restored in *The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant - The Complete Text*, edited and introduced by Elisabeth Jay (Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1990).

23. Thomas Oliphant - son of William Oliphant [21] and Christian Aitken [22]
 - father of Francis (Frank) Oliphant [29] (husband of the novelist)
 - uncle of the novelist [28], brother of [24]

Thomas was **born** 16 December 1786 in Pittenweem, to parents William Oliphant and Christian Aitken, per parish register.

Thomas Oliphant was a crown glass-cutter, doing highly skilled cutting of stained glass. He appears to have had a glass-cutting business, employing many workmen. His son Francis (later the novelist's husband) learned how to handle stained glass from a young age, and became a painter of stained glass.

Thomas **married Margaret (Margery) McQueen** (not on the Family Tree chart) on 8 February 1810, per parish register.

Thomas had at least seven **children** by Margaret:

William Oliphant	23 Oct 1810	in Canongate, Edinburgh
Margaret Oliphant	26 Mar 1812	“ “
John Oliphant	07 Jul 1813	“ “
James Oliphant	09 Jun 1822	“ “
William HB Oliphant	25 Dec 1823	“ “
Thomas Walker Oliphant	09 Mar 1826	“ “

(The six children above per Scotland's People)

Francis Wilson Oliphant [29] 28 Sep 1818 at Gateshead, Durham.

(Francis was born in 1818, but was not baptised until 15 Sep in 1919, Gateshead St Mary, per *Margaret Oliphant - A Critical Biography* (1986) by Merryn Williams.) Note, the Wilson middle name is probably a tribute to Thomas's brother-in-law Francis Wilson (novelist's father).

At least four of the children survived to adulthood: Francis (Frank, the novelist's husband [29]), Thomas, John (an artist in Edinburgh, still known today), and Margaret (who married Charles Murdoch).

Thomas Oliphant **died** around 1856, per biographer Merryn Williams.

24. Margaret Oliphant – daughter of William Oliphant [21] and Christian Aitken [22]
 - **mother of the novelist** [28], wife of Francis [25], sister of [23]

Margaret was **born** 6 May 1789 in Pittenweem, to parents William Oliphant, **wright**, and Christian Aitken, per parish register.

Margaret was **married** 2 Feb 1810 in Canongate Edinburgh, per parish register:

“Francis Wilson glasscutter & Margaret Oliphant daughter of William Oliphant **wright**.”
 Witnessed by Thomas Oliphant glasscutter [her brother].

Her husband Francis Wilson was a clerk (Officer of Excise). The description of him as a glasscutter is in error.

Margaret had six children by Francis, per her daughter the novelist. Five are identified here:

Francis Wilson	[26]	24 Sep 1815	in Yester, East Lothian	per parish register
William Wilson	[27]	03 Feb 1818	in Yester, East Lothian	per parish register
Isabella Wilson		21 Dec 1820	in Prestonkirk, East Lothian	per Scotland's People
Andrew Wilson		11 Apr 1823	in Prestonkirk, East Lothian	per Scotland's People
Margaret Oliphant Wilson	[28]	04 Apr 1828	in Wallyford, East Lothian	(per biographers)

Isabella and Andrew died young. There was one other boy who also died young, probably born 1821-22.

Margaret had the Oliphant eyes, and passed them on to her daughter: “...beautiful liquid brown eyes, full of light and fun and sorrow and anger...” (per the *Autobiography* by her daughter Margaret Oliphant.) She knew Shakespeare and the poets by heart; and she knew the Oliphant family history by heart too. Her memory must have been remarkable, because when she told her novelist daughter the stories which Katie Stewart had told to her, she remembered so accurately a “side story” about the elopement of Lady Janet Erskine, that Lady Janet’s grandson, old Sir Ralph Anstruther, was astounded. The story had long passed from everybody’s memory – except Margaret’s.

Margaret **died** 17 September 1854 at her daughter’s home in St Pancras, London, per a notice in *The Scotsman*, 20/09/1854, and per biographer Merryn Williams.

25. Francis Wilson – father of the novelist [28], husband of Margaret [24]

Francis was **born** 3 May 1788 to Andrew Wilson, Officer of Excise, and Isobel Sutherland, in Edinburgh, per the College Kirk parish register. This relationship is confirmed by the Wilson Family Tree (Section 3).

His father’s occupation is of especial interest, because this was to become Francis’s occupation too. And in fact his grandfather, also, was an Officer of Excise, as indicated on father Andrew’s birth registration: Andrew Wilson [father] born 1st Feb 1754 to Francis Wilson [grandfather], Excise Officer, and Margaret Cleugh, per the Pittenweem parish register.

The position of Officer of Excise is described by biographer Merryn Williams (with reference to Liverpool), as being “in the Customs House as a clerk in the export department of the Excise Office.” Francis had held similar positions in several Scottish excise offices, before moving to Liverpool.

It is also of interest that Francis’s father was born in Pittenweem; and per the Wilson Family Tree (Section 3), his forebears were associated with Pittenweem, going back to the early 17th century, when his ancestor George Wilson was laird of Mylton [Milltown] Pittenweem.

Thus both of Margaret Oliphant’s parents had deep roots in Fife.

Francis **died** 28 Jul 1858 in Birkenhead, while staying with his son Frank, per biographer Merryn Williams.

**26. Francis Oliphant Wilson (Frank) - brother of the novelist [28], son of [24] and [25]
- husband of Jeanie Wilson [26b]
- father of Frank, Nelly, Madge, and Denny [26c]**

Frank was **born** 24 Sep 1815 in Yester, East Lothian to William Wilson, Officer of Excise, and Margaret Oliphant, per parish register (baptism on 26 Oct).

Frank Wilson **married** his second cousin, Jeanie Wilson, on 12 May 1852 in Edinburgh. The parish record is here given in full:

Francis Wilson, Clerk in the Bank of England, Liverpool, residing at No.24, Kenyon Terrace, Birkenhead, and Miss Jeanie Wilson residing at No.24, Society, Brown Square, Parish of Old Greyfriars Edinburgh, daughter of the late Archibald Wilson, grocer

The Kenyon Terrace address, off Grosvenor Road, was where Frank had been living with his parents, sister Margaret (the novelist), and brother Willie. Margaret, too, had just married, and was moving to London with her husband. Her parents and Willie followed Margaret to London that summer.

Frank and Jeanie had **four children** (see entry 26c).

In 1868 at age 52, Frank, who had worked for over 25 years at the Bank of England, suddenly fled to the Continent, followed by his wife Jeanie with their two youngest daughters. Margaret Oliphant wrote to her publisher Mr Blackwood: “My brother has been in bad health for a long time, and I fear it has affected his mind, for he has brought himself into a position which is simple ruin as far as one can see for himself and his family.” (Per *Margaret Oliphant - A Critical Biography* by Merryn Williams, page 91.) Jeanie’s niece Georgina Sime later wrote that Frank had signed as guarantor on a loan for a friend, who then defaulted on the loan; and in desperation Frank embezzled the money from the Bank, thinking to replace it out of his next quarterly salary. “...The abstraction of the money was discovered and the bank prosecuted.” (Per *Brave Spirits* by Georgina Sime and Frank Nicolson, privately printed [1952], distributed by Simpkin, Marshall, & Co: Chapter 2, “Recollections of Mrs Oliphant”, pages 41-42. This 30-page chapter includes a short biography of Margaret Oliphant, as well as interesting personal reminiscences.)

Frank had a breakdown after Jeanie’s death in 1870. He returned to England with his two little daughters, and lived dependent upon his sister Margaret for the rest of his life. Frank **died** 14 July 1875 at his sister’s home in Windsor, per her *Autobiography* (1899) page 248 (in a letter to her publisher Mr Blackwood).

**26b. Jeanie Russell Wilson - wife of Frank [26]
- sister-in-law of the novelist [28]**

Jeanie was **born** 4 Sep 1828 (registered as Jane) to Archibald Wilson spirit dealer [wine merchant]

and Janet Aitken in St Cuthberts Parish, Edinburgh per parish record.

Her father Archibald and Margaret Oliphant's father Francis were first cousins. Her three siblings were:

Sir Daniel Wilson (1816-1892), anthropologist, and a founder of Toronto University
George Wilson (1818-1859), professor of Technology, founder of the Scottish Museum
Jessie Aitken Wilson (1826-1909), married **James Sime**;
their daughter was [**Jessie**] **Georgina Sime** the novelist (JG Sime, 1868-1858).

Jeanie **died** on 23 April 1870 at Thorda, Hungary (where husband Frank was working), per the Wilson Family Tree (Section 3).

26c. The children and descendants of Frank Wilson and Jeanie Wilson **(descendants of Margaret Oliphant)**

None of Margaret Oliphant's children survived her, but she does have descendants, continuing into the 21st century, via her brother Frank:

Frank and Jeanie had four children. Three of these children were raised by his sister Margaret, beginning in 1868 with his son Frank, and adding the two youngest, Denny and Madge, after Jeanie's death abroad in 1870. In 1868 their eldest daughter Nelly went to live with Jeanie's sister, Jessie Sime, but was still partially raised by Margaret. In 1880 Nelly traveled to Canada and joined the household of her uncle Sir Daniel Wilson in Toronto, which seems to have been a successful arrangement.

a. Francis Wilson (Frank) was **born** 12 Apr 1854 at Grange Mount, Birkenhead, per family Bible. (Mr Danvers Valentine has kindly shared photocopies from three family Bibles.)

Supported and educated by Margaret Oliphant (with some help also from his uncle Sir Daniel Wilson), Frank took a first class in Civil Engineering at Cooper's Hill engineering college, and went out to India, where he worked as an engineer in the Punjab (per biographer Merryn Williams).

Frank **died** 30 Oct 1879 (from fever) in the Punjab, per the Wilson Family Tree (Section 3).

b. Jeanie Helen Wilson (Nelly) was born 11 Dec 1855 at Grange Mount, Birkenhead, per family Bible.

Nelly was still living in 1921, in which year she presented to Dr T Wilson Parry a painting of Callish. (This had been painted by Sir George Hardy to illustrate her uncle Sir Daniel Wilson's book on prehistoric man. The painting is now on display in the Wellcome Library, London.)

c. Margaret Oliphant Wilson (Madge) was **born** 13 Sep 1863 at Balls Road, Birkenhead, per family Bible.

Madge and her sister Denny (entry **d** below) were like daughters to Margaret Oliphant.

On 26 July 1893 Madge **married** William Roderick Harris Valentine (1849 – 12 Oct 1907) per family Bible, and per an announcement in the Windsor and Eton Gazette. William Valentine was a jute manufacturer in Lochee, Dundee.

Madge **died** 13 Aug 1897 (at age 33) per family Bible.

Madge and William Valentine had three children:

c-1 Margaret Oliphant Harris Valentine (Meg) was **born** 9 Sep 1894, per family Bible. She **died** (without issue) in 1976, per biographer Merryn Williams.

c-2 William Harris Valentine was **born** 22 Dec 1895 at Elmwood, per family Bible. He **died** (without issue) in 1971, per biographer Merryn Williams.

c-3 Francis Cyril Oliphant Valentine (Frank), FRCP, was **born** 26 Jul 1897 at Elmwood, per family Bible. He **married** Lady Freda Butler (1895-1989) on 26 Mar 1931, per *The Peerage*. Francis **died** 23 Mar 1957, per *The Peerage*.

Francis and Lady Freda had two sons:

c-3-1 William Danvers Oliphant Valentine was **born** 17 Apr 1933. He **married** Jennifer Gill (1945-) in 1972. They have **three children**.

c-3-2 Francis Anthony Brinsley James Valentine was **born** 3 Sep 1935. He **married** the Hon. Janet Weir in 1978. They have **two children**.

d. Janet Mary Wilson (Denny) was **born** 17 Feb 1865 at Balls Road, Birkenhead, per family Bible.

After the death of her sister Madge in 1897, Denny helped raise Madge's three children at the Valentine home in Lochee, Dundee. After William Valentine died in 1907, Denny raised the three children alone. At the time of their father's death, Meg was thirteen, William was eleven, and Frank was ten years old.

Denny **died** in 1954, per the Wilson Family Tree chart (Section 3).

27. William Oliphant Wilson (Willie) – brother of the novelist [28], son of [24] and [25]

Willie was **born** 3 Feb 1818 in Yester, East Lothian to William Wilson, Officer of Excise, and Margaret Oliphant, per parish register (baptism the 27th.)

Willie was a novelist himself, though not of great merit. His five novels are:

Mathew Paxton (1854)

A Good Time Coming (1859)

John Arnold (1862)

Andrew Ramsay of Errol (1865) – includes a character based on his sister Margaret as a child

Roderick (1871)

(Other novels attributed to him are actually by his sister Margaret Oliphant.)

Willie had studied to be a minister, and was ordained in the Presbyterian church at Etal, Northumberland in 1850. However after 18 months, his chronic alcoholism caused him to be unfrocked. He eventually moved to Rome, under the care of friends, and with the financial support of his sister Margaret.

Willie **died** in Rome on 24 May 1885 (per cemetery record), and is listed in Protestant Cemetery records as “Guglielmo Wilson”, but identified in English on his gravestone (number 1174).

28. Margaret Oliphant Wilson Oliphant, the novelist

Margaret Oliphant Wilson was **born** 4th April 1828 in Wallyford, Midlothian, to parents Francis Wilson and Margaret Oliphant. A birth record has not been found, even by expanding the search to broader criteria. However in a letter to a publisher, she confirms this date, which had been recorded in her father’s family Bible (per *The Autobiography and Letters, 1899, p. 316*). Other documentation, including census records, support this date.

Margaret was **married** 4 May 1852 to her first cousin Francis Wilson Oliphant [29], at St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Birkenhead. A certificate of their marriage is reproduced in the biography by Merryn Williams.

Her six **children** with Frank Oliphant are listed following entry 29 below.

She **died** 25 June 1897 in Wimbledon, per biographer Merryn Williams.

As mentioned earlier, during the Victorian era Margaret Oliphant's novels were tremendously popular, many of them best sellers. She was critically acclaimed, and often compared to Jane Austen, George Eliot, and Anthony Trollope. In recent years, Mrs Oliphant has been rediscovered, and is once more acknowledged as one of the great Victorian writers.

Among her best novels and stories, still reprinted frequently today, are:

From the Carlingford series:

The Rector and The Doctor's Family (1863)

Salem Chapel (1863)

The Perpetual Curate (1864)

Miss Marjoribanks (1866)

Phoebe Junior (1876)

Other: *Hester* (1883)

Kirsteen (1890)

Stories of the Seen and Unseen (a series of spiritual and ghost stories, in various editions, also often included in anthologies)

Mrs Oliphant is remembered today mainly for her fiction, but she was also a prolific critic, historian, biographer, travel writer, editor, and even poet on occasion.

Personally, family was everything to Margaret, and yet she lost her husband at a young age, and over time all six of her children, the last two near the end of her own life. In between the dreadful times of grief, she was warm and hospitable, much beloved by her family, and by her devoted circle of friends. Per the *Bookman*, September 1899 (written by her friend Blanche Warre Cornish):

“Of late years...she altered her hours, and wrote much while still in bed in the early morning. It was tacitly understood by her friends that her mornings were entirely undisturbed. Then the evenings! Who that has dined frequently there can ever forget the privilege? She was one of those rare women, equally beloved by men and women. She made us all welcome, she entertained us all, and she gathered together all the cleverest and brightest at her table....If she had a clever friend, or a man of mark as guest, she never forgot her humbler friends, and let them share the pleasure....No word of scandal ever rose at that board – much fun, much wit, and universal love and honour to the hostess.”

For anyone wishing to know more about the life and works of this brilliant writer, there is first of all her compelling autobiography, *The Autobiography and Letters of Mrs. M.O.W. Oliphant* (1899) available in PDF format online, at Google Books and Internet Archive. This same work is available from Amazon.com in print editions, such as the Cambridge Library Collection edition.

The Autobiography has also been published without her letters (but adding some diary material previously excluded), as *The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant* (1990), edited by Elisabeth Jay. In contrast to the 1899 publication, the various sections of her diary are presented in the order written, rather than in the chronological order of her life. It is available from Bookfinder.com.

The most current biographies are:

Margaret Oliphant. A Critical Biography (1986) by Merryn Williams. This well-researched biography provides an intimate portrait of Margaret, and a complete, well-rounded narrative of her life and works, including an interesting chapter on her evolving interest in women's rights. It is available in PDF format online at Internet Archive, or in print from Bookfinder.com.

Mrs Oliphant: A Fiction to Herself (1995) by Elisabeth Jay. This biography covers similar ground, but is organized differently, having a shorter Life up front, then chapters on various contexts in her works, which include additional biographical information. Available from Bookfinder.com.

Three impressive Bibliographies by John Stock Clarke are available in PDF format at www.victoriansecrets.co.uk/victorian-fiction-research-guides. (Numbers 11-Fiction, 26-Non-Fiction, and 33-Secondary Sources.)

29. **Francis Wilson Oliphant** (Frank) – **husband of the novelist** [28]

Frank was born 28 September 1818 in Gateshead, Durham, per biographer Merryn Williams.

Frank was an oil painter, who exhibited five times at the Royal Academy, London. He is better remembered today for his beautiful designs and execution of stained glass windows, such as those in the ante-chapel of King's College, Cambridge, those in the chancel of Aylesbury Church, and several in Ely Cathedral. Many of his designs, under Pugin, were used in the new Houses of Parliament. Anyone searching for his stained glass works online will find them under "Francis Oliphant", "Francis W Oliphant", and "FW Oliphant". His paintings have so far not been found online.

Frank **died** (of tuberculosis) on 20 October 1859 in Rome, per the cemetery record of his gravestone (number 507) in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome.

Margaret and Frank's six children:

30. **Margaret Wilson Oliphant** (Maggie) was **born** 21 May 1853 in St Pancras London, per biographer Merryn Williams. Maggie **died** at age 10 (of gastric fever) in Rome, on 27 Jan 1864, per the cemetery record of her father's gravestone (number 507) in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome.

31. **Marjorie Isabella Oliphant** was **born** 22 May 1854 in St Pancras, and **died** 8 February 1855 in St Pancras, per biographer Merryn Williams.

32. **Child Oliphant (male)** was **born** 21 November 1855 and **died** same day, 21 November 1855, in St Pancras, per certified copy of register of death. "Son of Francis Wilson Oliphant, Artist (Portrait Painter)." Cause of death: "Premature birth in the eighth month".

33. **Cyril Francis Oliphant** (Tiddy) was **born** 16 November 1856 in Marylebone London, per biographer Merryn Williams.

Cyril suffered from alcoholism, weak lungs, and general ill health. He obtained a secretarial post abroad in Ceylon in 1884, but had to return home after several attacks of fever.

Per the Dictionary of National Biography (his father's entry): Cyril "graduated B. A. at Balliol College, Oxford, in 1883, published in 1890, in the series known as 'Foreign Classics', a biography and criticism of the work of Alfred de Musset, which was notable for some well-rendered translations from the French."

Per the *Bookman*, September 1899: “The two sons were, with all their faults, a continual joy to [Mrs Oliphant]. Cyril’s tenor voice, his courtly bearing to the aged...often caused his mother’s sweet face to sparkle with pleasure.”

Cyril **died** 8 November 1890 in Windsor, per biographer Merryn Williams.

34. [Stephen] Thomas Oliphant was **born** 25 March 1858 in Marylebone, registered under the name “Thomas Oliphant”, per certified copy of register of birth. Father “Francis Wilson Oliphant”. Mother “Margaret Oliphant Oliphant formerly Wilson”.

He **died** 28 May 1858, nine weeks later, in Marylebone, registered under the name “Stephen Thomas Oliphant”, per certified copy of register of death. “Son of Francis Wilson Oliphant, Historical Painter”. Cause of death: “Open Foramen Ovale” [heart defect].

This child was not mentioned by Margaret Oliphant in her *Autobiography*. He was discovered by biographer Merryn Williams – see *Margaret Oliphant - A Critical Biography* (1986). The omission may be because in her *Autobiography*, Margaret focused her recollections of 1858 upon her husband Frank’s increasing illness from tuberculosis (of which he died in 1859). In telling this moving story, perhaps she could not bear to re-visit the other great sadness of that year.

In Margaret Oliphant’s fiction however, we hear of her grief for this child – *Lucy Crofton* (1860) is narrated in the first person by the central character, Clare Crofton. Clare is in a deep depression, mourning the loss of her baby, though doing her best to hide the depression from her husband and friends. Near the end of the novel her husband discovers Clare in a little room - her secret shrine to the lost baby.

35. Francis Romano Oliphant (Cecco) was **born** 12 December 1859 in Rome, per biographer Merryn Williams.

Per the Dictionary of National Biography (his father’s entry): Cecco “was born at Rome after his father’s death, graduated B. A. at Oxford in 1883. He issued in 1891 [the book] ‘Notes of a Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the Holy Land’ which originally appeared in the form of letters addressed to the ‘Spectator’. He was a frequent contributor to that and other periodicals, and largely aided his mother in the preparation of her Victorian Age of Literature 1892.”

Among his contributions was a light-hearted story, *Grateful Ghosts*, published in Blackwood’s Magazine in January 1886, and reprinted around 1910 in *Tales from Blackwood (Third Series, volume VI)*.

Cecco suffered from ill health and weak lungs, which was eventually diagnosed as tuberculosis (like his father). He had wanted a career in heraldry, but was not accepted because of his health. Finally in the last five years of his life, he found congenial part-time employment at the Library at Windsor Castle, usually dealing with matters of heraldry.

Per the *Bookman*, September 1899:

“Cecco at his best was a delightful companion, an erudite herald, with a power of assimilating knowledge, and a delightful gift of letter-writing, rare in these hurried days....He was wonderfully tender to children, and never forgot to send or bring little treasures from foreign lands to child friends....Mr Holmes [the Queen’s librarian], by [Her Majesty’s] express wish, employed Cecco at the Royal Library during his latter days, where he was able both to work and to enjoy himself at the time his health was so frail that an outsider would have hesitated to give him any appointment.”

Cecco **died** 1 October 1894 in Windsor, per biographer Merryn Williams.

A reviewer in Blackwood’s Magazine wrote in the December 1894 issue:

“Our readers have had evidence that the late Mr Francis Oliphant was a writer finely endowed with talent and manifold accomplishments; and he wanted nothing but the blessing of health to make for himself a prominent place in contemporary literature. With a bright and lively imagination, such as was seen to advantage in his playful tale of ‘The Grateful Ghosts,’ which will be still in the remembrance of ‘Maga’s’ readers, he combined a penetrating and appreciative critical faculty which is well represented by studies on Henryson and Dunbar in our own pages, and a fine touch in picturesque description which was very effectively used in his account of the Riviera, and in his little book on the ‘Holy Land.’ His delicate health, which but for his mother’s unremitting devotion must have given way earlier, debarred him from undertaking more arduous literary pursuits, which he was well qualified to have followed up.”

**Appendix A1.
Recent updates**

24 May 2013 – Section 7: new entry **22b**, Annie Louisa Walker Coghill