

THE REID SAGA

INTRODUCTION.

This saga is based on information obtained from the family tree prepared by Cousin Bee (Mrs A.M.G.Hall) in 1945, inventories and documents relating to the sale of Kilmardinny and Broomknowe and on the recollections of my cousins and myself.

THE GREATER GRANDPARENTS.

The oldest recorded ancestor on the family tree is Robert Reid of Thochray, Dunkeld, Perthshire, who was probably born at the end of the 18th century. Cousin Bee maintains that delving back further produced stable lads! A large portrait of him was left to me but due to its size given to Cousin Peggy at Glencrosh in 1961 to hang next to a portrait of his wife. On Peggy's death the portraits were taken over by her sister Elsa Dalziel.

His eldest son, Alexander Reid of Govan married twice. He had ten children by his first wife, Mary and six by his second wife, Elizabeth between 1824 and 1855. He died at Strone, Argyll in 1874. His eldest son by the first marriage, Alexander (born 1824), died in Australia from snake bite presumably around 1850. The second son, Peter (born 1825), headed up a large section of the family tree and was grandfather to my cousin William Hall, Bee's husband. The third son was Thomas, my grandfather. then Elizabeth (born 1832), Mary (born 1834), Margarat, John, Ann and another daughter.

Thomas Reid was born on May 25 1831. He went to school at the High School of Glasgow. He was something of a scholar as at age 10 in Fourth Class he won second prize for mathematics and a prize for latin, in Sixth Class third prize for writing and the following year second prize for french. (These books are in our mahogany bookcase). About 1858 he married Elizabeth White Thomas and proceeded to have nine children between 1860 and 1870. They lived at Ibrox Hill, Glasgow and in 1880 they bought Kilmardinny House and estate at Bearsden, northwest of Glasgow. Thomas was an entrepreneur and industrialist, taking full advantage of the many opportunities of the vast industrial growth in the second part of the 19th century. He was chairman of the British Linen Bank, a director of the dyers, United Turkey Red and a colleague of Alfred Nobel. From 1893 to 1900 he was Chairman of Nobel's Explosives, the company set up by Alfred Nobel to manufacture and market dynamite in Great Britain and the colonies. (It is interesting to note the very significant inventions made by Nobel. Nitroglycerine was invented by Sobrero in Turin. It was an oil and difficult to handle. Nobel turned it into an extrudable paste by mixing it with kieselguhr, into a rubbery compound with nitrocellulose and most important discovered the way to detonate it with fulminate of mercury. His final success was establishing its manufacture all over the world through local partners). By 1895 Thomas must have been close to retiring but appears to have kept up his directorships to the end. Apparently alternate years he visited Alfred Nobel in Sweden or Germany. One year he took his daughter, my aunt Isabella MacTavish with him as companion. Nobel presented her with a lady's dressing

case. The bottles were capped with the latest and rarest new metal - aluminium! Thomas died at Kilmardinny on July 5 1900 aged 69.

HOUSES.

Thomas and Elizabeth lived in Ibrox Hill, Glasgow. In 1880 they bought Kilmardinny at Bearsden, 6 miles from Glasgow.

Kilmardinny House was for many years the residence of Robert Dalglish, Esq., M.P. for Glasgow, who spent a large sum in planting trees and shrubs and in laying out walks to beautify the property. There is a collection of his leatherbound books in our secretaire. Thomas Reid bought it in October 1880 and the family moved up from Ibrox Hill, Glasgow. The family grave is still located at Ibrox Hill and includes my father's grave.

The Kilmardinny estate extended to 117 acres and included a lake of 8 acres. The house comprised 12 bedrooms, 2 dressing rooms, 2 nurseries and some 9 servants rooms. We have the inventory of sale dated 6th October 1880 and a lovely photo album with views of the house and grounds. When Thomas Reid died in 1900, the estate was sold for £25,000.

Elizabeth Reid, with my father and maybe other members of the family moved to Helensburgh on the Gareloch. Later she moved to Broomknowe House at Rhu. We have a number of photos of cousins taken around 1906. My mother, Jean Beckett Allan, joined them as housekeeper and companion to my grandmother. They lived there until Elizabeth Reid died on December 20 1919. Broomknowe was sold shortly after. We have a copy of the inventory of Broomknowe dated 4th December 1919 showing how the furniture and silver was divided up amongst my father (CT) and his sisters, Elizabeth (EP), Madge, Alice, etc. We can trace all our "Reid" silver, china, books and some of the furniture to this list.

MY PARENTS

My father, Charles Thomas, affectionately known as "C T", was Thomas Reid's second son., born November 3 1861 in Glasgow. He would have gone to school in Glasgow but at age 13, he joined his elder brother, Alexander, at Moredun House, Fettes and stayed until he was nearly 18 in 1879. Later he studied law and became a Writer to the Signet, the Scottish equivalent to a senior solicitor. My mother once mentioned that he had been a good latin and greek scholar. When the family moved to Kilmardinny in 1880 he apparently got into a number of scrapes with his brothers; catching fish in the lake, getting the groom to take them to market and with the money buying whiskey. One night one of the brothers was so stewed that he had to be dressed in his dinner jacket and supported into dinner. He must have been placed at the other end of the table from Grandma Reid, who was quite a martinet. What followed in the next twenty years is speculation, but Alexander was sent to Florida to manage an orange plantation and my father went off to Adelaide in Australia. He would have returned when Thomas died in 1900 and from then lived with his mother, Elizabeth, until her death at Broomknowe in 1919. The next year in May or June (aged 58), he married Jean Beckett Allan, (aged 31).

My mother, Jean, was born in Ayr, February 12 1889. Sadly little is known of her early life. Her father was a skilled coach painter with all its intricate embellishments. (Maybe some of Chary and Gordon's talents come from him!) One tale my Mother told me was that many of the Spanish sailors from the Armada were shipwrecked on the Ayrshire coast and this explains why many people from these parts, including my mother, had such fine noses. When she was a young girl she spent a holiday near Loch Linnhe on the west coast. She was so enamoured with the beauty of the area that she resolved to call her daughter Onich, after the little fishing village and her son, Linnhe. Around 1914, aged 25 she joined Grandma Elizabeth's household as housekeeper and later as companion. All my cousins who met her at that time speak very highly of her. In years to come she became a very close friend and companion to her sister-in-law, Elizabeth Prangle of Bexwell Rectory.

After marrying in June 1920, they appear to have stayed shortly at Ravenswood House at Rhu, but soon after were househunting in Nairn, 16 miles from Inverness. By December they had moved into Seacraig, a fine Scottish stone house in the residential part of Nairn and a short walk to the Golf Links. Each winter they went to the south of France for a couple of months to avoid the worst of a Scottish winter.

In December 1925 my mother gave birth to a stillborn child and shortly after to everyone's surprise, on the 23rd I was born. A close family friend, Major Frances Skeet, insisted I be baptised in the local Catholic church "in periculo Mortis". On March 5 1926 I was christened into the Church of Scotland by the Rev A.H. Forbes, Minister of Cawdor. A good insurance policy!.

UNCLES AND AUNTS.

All I know about Alexander, my father's elder brother, was that due to high spirits and maybe some scandal he was sent off to Florida soon after leaving Fetes in 1876 at the age of 16 to grow oranges. He died in Tallahassee in June 1892 aged 32.

Likewise I know little about Thomas William, who was born on October 11 1866 and died on April 1904 or William John, born on June 22 1868 and died on July 14 1926.

When I was in the navy and based at Rosyth in 1944 I visited Aunt Letty in Edinburgh. She must have been William John's wife and mother of the twins, Dick and Laurie.

Aunt Alice, born on November 19 1869 married Robert MacMillan, who held extensive lands around Moniaive, Dumfriesshire. She was a talented watercolourist and I remember many of her paintings hanging in the drawing room at Bexwell Rectory. I never met her but later become close to the MacMillan cousins.

Aunt Elizabeth was the aunt I spent most time with, As she lived in Norfolk my mother was a frequent visitor from London. She was born on September 24 1872 and would have spent her childhood at Ibrox Hill and Kilmardinny. She married the Rev Charles William Prangle. They lived at Potter Heigham and

in 1911 moved to Bexwell Rectory, Downham Market, Norfolk. Charles Prangley died in 1928 but my aunt lived on at the Rectory until her death on October 1 1940, aged 68. It was at Bexwell that I spent all my Christmas holidays from the age of 5 in 1930 until 1940. Living in a flat in London or away at boarding school, it became a second home - in the country. The lovely old house stood in 2 acres of beautiful grounds with stables, outhouses, chicken run, kitchen garden and a 5 acre field. It was heaven for a small boy. Adjoining the garden was Bexwell Church, a well-preserved Saxon church, built several generations before the Norman Conquest. Charles's grave is in the churchyard and the wooden cross from Charles Dux Prangley's grave in the Somme is placed in the church. Each Sunday Aunt Elizabeth arranged the order of the hymns for the church and always played the organ. She loved doing jigsaw puzzles and had a collection of fifty or more all cut out of three-ply. When London was severely hit by bombs in 1940 my mother moved down to Bexwell and was with Elizabeth when she died on October 1 1940. She stayed on with Mary the daughter to wind up the estate and the house was taken over as an RAF officers mess at the end of 1941.

Margaret Jeffrey Reid, always known to me as Aunt Madge, was born on July 25 1870, the youngest of my father's sisters. She married Colonel Octavius Rowe and they lived at the Royal Crescent, Bath. They had no children. I was sent off several times in my youth to visit Aunt Madge and before I went into the Navy in 1943 was given a quiet talk by Uncle Octo on the avoidance of "women of the night". Aunt Madge was wonderful in the way she kept up with all her nephews and nieces, my cousins. She was a mine of family information. Sadly I was too young and uninvolved to have picked her brains. She died in a private home in Bath in 1956. Most of the cousins turned up for her funeral and reading of the will. This was the first time I had met many of them.

I never met my mother's sister or brother. I corresponded with her sister after her death in 1950 but then lost touch. Her brother, Robert, emigrated to Dunedin, New Zealand between the wars. I met his daughter, Rhona, when she visited London in 1952 but never had an address in New Zealand.

THE COUSINS.

The DUPPREES lived in Brighton, where James was chairman of Brighton United Breweries. I often spent a weekend with them when I was training at HMS King Alfred at nearby Hove in the summer of 1944. James wife, Mary Ethel, known as P.V. and her sister Margery Reid, who never married, was known as "Marnie". In later years James Dupree was elected Master of the Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards with his portraiat in full regalia adorning the ace of spades. They have two children, David and Jennifer. I attended Jennifer's wedding to Roberto Mercadel in London on October 20 1962.

The GRAHAME REIDS, were known as the twins, Dick and Laurie. I have a photo of them aged about 6 taken at Broomknowe in 1905. Dick had entered the Royal Navy and at one point in the war was Senior Naval Officer, Trincomallee, Ceylon. In 1943, he was training commander at HMS Victory, Portsmouth and when I volunteered for the navy, he arranged that I should do my initial training in the Portsmouth command rather than in Chatham - not that it made any difference to my future naval career. When training I was invited a couple of times to spend the weekend with them at Portsmouth. I did not see Dick again during my three years in the navy. Laurie was the family lawyer and administered Thomas Reid's estate until it was finally wound up around 1965. His family lived in Glasgow and we only met at family weddings. Both twins died in 1970 within two months of each other.

Elsa, married to Ralph DALZIEL, was Aunt Alice's eldest daughter. They lived in Dumfriesshire and I met them several times when visiting Peggy at Moniaive. I first met Bobs and Ken (Thomas) DALZIEL, their sons, at Glen Crosh, Moniaive in the summer of 1935. My mother and I stayed with Peggy at Woodlee, next door, after visiting the World Fair at Ibrox Park, Glasgow. It was the first time I had met the MacMillan cousins and Jane was a three months old baby in her pram! Bobs, Ken and I spent endless days damming and playing in the Moniaive burn on the south side of the road. My lifelong love of damming burns must have been fostered from this first encounter. In later years I met Bobs and Ken at family weddings or when visiting Peggy at Moniaive. I should mention that in 1935 Aunt Alice had just died and two of the MacMillan uncles were living at Glen Crosh.

Peggy MACMILLAN FOX, Aunt Alice's second daughter, was the cousin I was to see the most over the years. She was born in 1900, a few months before Thomas Reid died. She would have spent much time at Broomknowe as a young girl and remembered my father well. She was the family custodian of information especially after Aunt Madge died. When we regrouped at family weddings, I learnt a bit more about the family history, its intrigues, its skelitons and its glories. During the summers of 1955 to 1957 we rented from Peggy the keepers cottage at Glen Crosh and spent wonderful holidays with the children, making hay, picnicing and doing all the things that are possible on a farm. The most memorable visit was for the wedding of Patricia Macmillian, her niece, to Martin Menist on November 9 1963. The wedding was at Ayr, the reception at the Race Club and that evening Peggy gave a superb buffet supper for the "oldies". As the buffet was laid out in the dining room the evening before, the central heating was turned off and Oh it was cold in November. Along with Iain and Gordon we spent a lovely week with Peggy in July 1969 on our way to live in Akron, Ohio. Whenever we

visited Europe in the next few years we always spent a few nights with Peggy before flying from Prestwich to Toronto and on to Cleveland. The last time I saw Peggy was in 1972. Her daughter, Jane, who I had first seen as a baby in 1935, was sometimes at home in Glen Crosh when we were on a visit. I remember one lovely visit around 1972, when the ladies busy with their embroidery and sewing talked over all the goings on in the locality and sieved through all the family gossip. Now, of course, Jane and Anthony with their sons are living at Glen Crosh and ably manage the farms and estate.

Most times that we visited Peggy we would go to Jock and Rachel for tea at the Holme of Dalhquirn, one of the MacMillan hill sheep farms behind Moniaive. Jock, Aunt Alice's son, had four daughters whom we knew quite well and were fortunate to go to Pamela and Patricia's weddings, both of which were great family reunions for me. For a number of years Patricia lived in Beaconsfield near our home at Gerrards Cross, so we got to know her well and she was always a welcome visitor.

Aunt Alice's third daughter was Alice Mary, known as Bee. Bee married William Reid Hall, who is also a cousin through Peter Reid, my great uncle. I spent a wonderful Easter holiday in 1948 at their home, Melyniog, Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain, just inside the Welsh border. The time was spent riding with their daughter, Margaret, making fireworks with Robert and blowing up tree stumps with explosives prepared by Cousin Bill. One day we drove over to see the old Hall residence, Pentrehelyn, which had become too big to manage and was no longer occupied. This was a wonderful break from my studies at Oxford. We subsequently all met up again at Robert's and Margaret's weddings. Robert's daughter, Nicky, came to visit us in Australia in 1989 and 1993 and was a very welcome visitor.

The PRANGLEYS lived at Bexwell Rectory, Norfolk. My father's sister Elizabeth was born on September 24 1872 and oftened talked of my father who was her senior by only 11 years. She married the Reverend Charles Prangle and for some years they lived at Potter Heigham. In 1911 they moved to Bexwell Rectory. They had four children; Dux who was killed as a young Lieutenant on the Somme in 1917. - Gertrude, who married Oscar Cooke, - Tom, who emigrated to South Africa and - Mary, who spent a lot of time with my mother and was almost like an older sister. After the war she emigrated to South Africa and we lost touch.

BEXWELL RECTORY

As a young boy I spent every Christmas and some summer holidays at Bexwell from 1930 to 1941 staying with my Aunt Elizabeth, Mrs Prangley, nee Reid, my father's sister. I still have vivid memories of the house and the garden.

The Prangleys (The Rev. Charles Wilton Prangley and Elizabeth Prangley) moved from Potter Heigham, where he was the vicar around 1914. They bought Bexwell Rectory and he held the living of Bexwell Church. He was very high church and held a communion service every morning with two services on Sundays. He died around 1928 and was buried in the SW corner of the churchyard.

They had four children; Dux who was killed in the 1914-1918 war, Tom who emmigrated to South Africa, Gertrude and Mary. A stone cross was erected down the lane from Flint's farm in memory of Dux and the Pratt's son from Ryston Hall.

My aunt lived on till 1940. On her death my mother, who was her executor, Mary and myself moved to Bexwell from London to wind up the estste and avoid the bombing in London. For wartime, we lived well with a well-stocked garden, 30-40 chickens and two families of rabbits for the table (Belgium Hare X Flemish Giant). Occasionally pheasants from Flint's farm would wander over and we would entice them into the netting eclosure for fruits and then catch them.

Late 1940an evacuee family from London were boarded with us and in 1941 the construction engineer in charge of constructing the RAF base parked his caravan nearthe backdoor. Towards the end of 1941 the house was sold to Mrs Ruby Pope of Crimplesham Hall, who planned to split it up into flats. I believe , however, that it was requisitioned for the RAF.

THE HOUSE.

I dn't know how old the house is but it appears to have been built in at least three periods. The oldest part was on the north side and consisted of two rooms downstairs (the schoolroom and a store room) and two bedrooms upstairs. The next addition was the Jacobean-looking main hall and kitchen quarters. The south side - morning room, dining room and drawing room with the big bay window - were added later. In the '30s there was only one inside lavatory/bathroom which was in the tower above the pantry. Around 1938 a lavatory was added at the end of the passage to the greenhouse on the west side. The garden and kitchen staff used an outside lavatory at the west end of the north side of the house. Electricity was installed around 1937 and the telephone in 1938. Before electricity large paraffin lamps were lit at dusk in the big rooms and we each took a candle to bed.

THE GARDEN.

Looking south from the door at the bottom of the stairs was a large lawn running to the edge of the haw-haw wall overlooking Flint's farm. There was a fir tree near the wall which was planted when Mary was born

in 1913. On the left of the lawn was a huge beech tree and on the other side a lovely mulberry tree. A shrubery on the right of the lawn separated the flower garden which was walled-in. Over this wall to the west about 1/4 acre had been fenced off from the field and was the vegetable and soft fruit garden. There were a series of outhouses comprising a harness room, stable for three horses and two coach houses which were used as a garage and coal shed. The garden was looked after by Mr. Lister who also drove the car. His wife was the cook and there was also a parlourmaid.