

The Botanist of Galloway

Andrew Heron of Bargaly d.1740
Mary Grahame c1665 – 1705

Galloway, Scotland

Andrew Heron was the third son of **Andrew Heron** of Kirroughtree (1617-95) and **Jean Dunbar** of Machermore (1623-96). Exactly when and where he was born is unknown. **Mary Grahame** was his first wife and they married in c1683. She was the daughter of **William Grahame** (b 1645) of Floriston, a place 2 miles south of Gretna Green.

For their first three years together Andrew and Mary lived at his parents' property, *Kirroughtree House* and then became tenants at the family property called *The Mains* (home farm) of Larg, about half a mile from *Kirroughtree House*. On May 15th 1691 after 7 years there, they moved to their own property *Bargaly* that Andrew had inherited from his father. This was to avoid the interferences of relatives that had begun to squabble over the Larg property. Altogether Andrew and Mary had about five children: Andrew, William, Jane or Jean, and **Patrick** (1690) born at *Kirroughtree*, and Margaret probably born at *Bargaly*.



Kirroughtree House (built 1719), Newton Stewart, Wigtownshire, now a hotel. Photo: Euan McGillivray 2007

The *Bargaly Paradise*

Andrew had a talent for botany and in about 1691 commenced a large-scale planting of the Bargaly Valley, later known as *Bargaly Paradise*. In Julian Rogers' book¹ it is described:

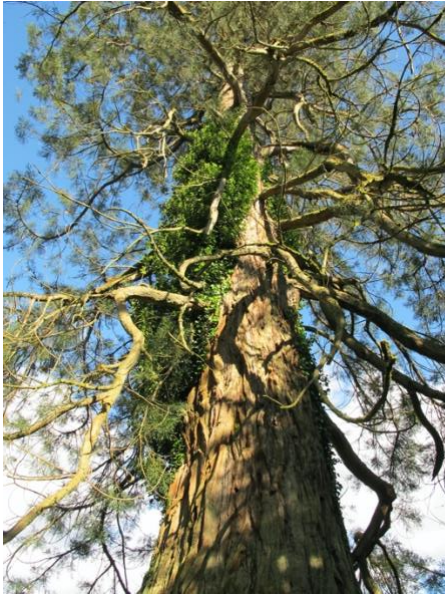
'The valley of Bargaly is a wild glen traversed from end to end by a little river called the Palnure Burn, which takes its rise in the high marshy grounds of New Galloway and ultimately falls into the river Cree near Wigtown Bay. It winds along a rocky bed between precipitous hills rising, both on the east and west, to a height of some 600 feet. The river bank is fringed with trees throughout its course and here and there, in the loops of the stream, are flat patches of green meadow land which become narrower and less frequent as the site of *Bargaly House* is approached. At this point the hills draw together and increase in steepness, the stream flowing in a narrow ravine between the frowning heights of Craig's Head and Doon Hill which screen the valley completely from east to west.'



Above: The Palnure Burn with *Bargaly* seen through the trees, looking up to Craig's Head and Doon Hill. Photo: Euan McGillivray 2007



This page and the next: The beautiful trees and wildflowers of the *Bargaly Paradise* in springtime. Photos: Euan McGillivray 2014



Bargaly Paradise in spring. Photo: Euan McGillivray 2014

In 1693 the orchard dyke entry and gate were built and in 1694 fruit trees were planted. Also that year, *Bargaly House*, designed by Mr. Hawkins, was completed on a site 30 feet or so above the stream:

'In front is a stretch of open ground some 6 acres in extent surrounded by a carriage drive which, at its lower point, falls somewhat steeply towards an old Roman bridge over the river. Behind the house to the north is situated the "great dyke" as it was called, built in 1693, to shelter the garden and orchard.'²

The house was very simple in design (two wings were added after Andrew died) and built from local materials. The stone came from a quarry on the east side of the garden. On the hillsides and around the house Andrew planted oaks, beeches, hornbeams, flowering ashes, limes and variegated hollies (some hollies 26 feet high). Some of these trees grew to enormous sizes. When measured a century after being planted, one hornbeam measured 10 feet in circumference and an oak tree measured 12 feet in circumference and 60 feet high. A description of the plantation can be found in Loudon's *Arboretum et Fruticetum Britannicum*³.



Left: *Bargaly House* Photo: c1902
Source: *The History of Our Family - The Rogers of West Meon* Julian Rogers 1902. Below: Sundial in the *Bargaly* garden said to be made by Andrew Heron. Photo: Euan McGillivray 2007





Left: *Bargaly House*. Below: An exotic Monkey Puzzle tree at *Bargaly*. Photos: Euan McGillivray 2007



From where Andrew's expertise came is not known. He may have consulted Evelyn's *Sylva* an influential publication widely used in England at the time. He was certainly well respected as a botanist and was referred to in at least two contemporary books: *The Practical Husbandman* by Robert Maxwell (1757) and *Treatise on Husbandry and Gardening Vol.2* p169 by Bradley (1726).

Money trouble

Where money was not spent on building a lavish house, it was certainly poured into the plantations and garden. But Andrew's passion for gardening was not matched by the same interest in managing his accounts. Not long after Mary's death, Andrew found himself in financial trouble and was forced to seek the assistance of his nephew Patrick of *Kirroughtree* who had inherited the *Kirroughtree* property from his father, Andrew's brother. Patrick of *Kirroughtree* has been described as 'a hard and unfeeling man'⁴ who schemed to take *Bargaly* from his weak uncle and reunite it with *Kirroughtree*. Seeing his uncle in a vulnerable position, Patrick loaned Andrew more and more money until it became obvious Andrew could not pay it back. It was then that Patrick and Andrew came to a dubious agreement, and without professional consultation drew up a document that made *Bargaly* security for the loans. The principal debt and the collateral could be passed from father to son.

Andrew was unable to obtain any help from his eldest sons Andrew or William so the debt was passed to the next son Captain Patrick Heron living in Lymington in the south of England. Andrew considered Patrick at least had the means to pay as he had married **Ann Vining**, the daughter of wealthy merchant **John Vining**, and he was situated far enough away from his manipulative cousin to be able to manage a fair repayment arrangement.

Patrick v Patrick

In 1728, after receiving professional advice, Captain Patrick made an unexpected trip to Scotland where he had the terms of the initial documents altered without the consent of his cousin, Andrew's nephew Patrick of *Kirroughtree*. The documents were then taken back to England. Nephew Patrick was furious when he found out

the alteration meant that *Bargaly* was now not automatically the security for the debt. So, he decided to vigorously pursue the debt adding interest upon interest and wrote to Captain Patrick in London with specific demands for settlement. He offered to give his cousin a direct conveyance of the estate if he would drop his objections and pay the debt.

Captain Patrick refused to pay which brought great stress and embarrassment upon his father Andrew, who wrote to his son several times between 1728 and 1730 imploring him to accept Patrick of *Kirroughtree*'s deal. Captain Patrick would not reply. Here is his final letter in 1730:

'I am favoured with yours after a long silence. I had no expectation of hearing any further from you, but that you had laid aside the concerns about me or anything that belongs to me, since you had laid a foundation for making me miserable when I believed ye was to be my Deliverer and the Retriever of my Family. It is needless for me to explain how I have been used and disregarded since, and how it has brought me. As for you, my Nephew (Patrick of *Kirroughtree*) speaks so diminitively of you as the falsest and one of the vilest men in the world, and how much you sunk his credit in London by that Disappointment ye gave him.¹⁵

No more was heard of Captain Patrick Heron until that year when he embarked for America leaving his father exposed to the scheming of Patrick of *Kirroughtree* who subsequently claimed *Bargaly* in lieu of the debt. Captain Patrick never involved himself again with *Bargaly* and had no doubt revealed himself to be most unreliable and dishonourable. Patrick of *Kirroughtree* would eventually lose *Bargaly* to Captain Patrick's sons who in their turn would squabble over rightful ownership of the property.

Andrew and Mary's children

Andrew's sons were a disappointment to him. The eldest son Andrew was described as musically talented but 'inattentive and full of pleasure'⁶. He ended up dying of an opium overdose in Ireland, the result of a practical joke, supposedly. The second son William made his money from the slave trade as a wholesale African merchant, buying and selling human beings! At the age of 25 he came home to *Bargaly* ill, and died of tuberculosis.

Andrew Heron had tried to keep his son Patrick on the straight and narrow by buying him commissions in the army, but as was shown by the sorry loans scandal, and other events of his life, Patrick turned out to be disloyal and as irresponsible as his brothers. This continued through Patrick's life when he fled to Nova Scotia, abandoning his wife and children to escape arrest in England, later remarrying and dying in Nova Scotia.



Captain Patrick Heron, Andrew's third irresponsible son. Source: *The Family Papers of J.E.T. Rogers*

Burial at *Bargaly*

Andrew's first wife Mary died in June 1705. Two years later on April 1st 1707, Andrew married widow and first cousin Margaret McKie of Larg. They had three children: Jean, Nicholas and Elizabeth. Margaret died on 22nd February 1735, after which Andrew married Elizabeth Dunbar, another first cousin. She is buried with him. Andrew died in 1740. Well before his death, Andrew had a tomb built for himself and his wife near the house in the garden at *Bargaly*. On one side of the tomb are the initials A.H. and on the other side E.D. The tomb is listed as a Grade B historic monument in Scotland. It was restored in 1929 by the Duke of Bedford.



Andrew Heron's tomb at *Bargaly*. Left and below left: in 2007. Photo: Euan McGillivray. Below right: in 1931 after the Duke of Bedford's restoration. Source: *The Family Papers of J.E.T. Rogers*.



Ann Hurley

2020

See my story **Conduct Unbecoming** for more about his son Patrick Heron.

hurleyskidmorehistory.com

Notes:

¹ Rogers, Julian Clarke - *A History of Our Family (Rogers of West Meon) 1451-1902* (1902) p72

² Rogers, Julian Clarke - *A History of Our Family (Rogers of West Meon) 1451-1902* (1902) p73

³ Loudon, John Claudius - *Arboretum et Fruticetum Britannicum Vol. 1* - (1838) -Google Books

⁴ Rogers, Julian Clarke - *A History of Our Family (Rogers of West Meon) 1451-1902* (1902) p78

⁵ Rogers, Julian C. - *A History of Our Family (Rogers of Westmeon) 1451-1902* (1902) p 86

⁶ Rogers, Julian C. - *A History of Our Family (Rogers of Westmeon) 1451-1902* (1902) p75

Other resources:

British Newspaper Archive (British Library)

Heron, James *The Herons of Galloway*

Scotland <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~heron1/>

Imrie, Mrs Blair - *Andrew Heron of Bargaly* (Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History & Antiquarian Society, Transactions and Journal of Proceedings 1935-6 Shirley, Mrs E Ed.)

McKerlie, P.H. - *History of the Lands and their Owners in Galloway* (1878)

Rawlyk G.A. *Patrick Heron* - Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online
<http://www.biographi.ca/index-e.html>

Somerville, Andrew R - *The Ancient Sundials of Scotland* (Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 1987)

The Mausolea Monuments Trust UK