



Cally Story

The development of the parks and pleasure grounds of Cally by the Murray family



ADVERTISEMENT
THE great Road from Ireland running
house of Fleet, the conveniency of
discharging vessels of a moderate burden,
yearly, and Mr Murray's right to hold a wa
him to think it a favourable place to build
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Nic Coombey



View over Gatehouse of Fleet by Robert George Kelly showing the grounds at Cally in 1852.

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Introduction

When Robert Heron visited Cally in 1792 he was greatly impressed by the surrounding grounds, declaring that they ‘are laid out and decorated with great taste’ and ‘no expense has been spared to accommodate them to the stately elegance of the house’.

Cally Story provides an account of the development of the parks and pleasure grounds by the Murray family and reveals how an 18th century designed landscape has evolved to meet current needs, but remains as a special place to be explored.



Approach to Cally

The grounds at Cally were laid out for artistic effect and included architectural features, gardens, woods and parkland. Today they are recognised as a valuable historic environment that provides a setting for Gatehouse of Fleet Conservation Area and adds to the landscape character and scenic qualities of the Fleet Valley National Scenic Area. Cally is so special that it is designated in ‘An Inventory of Designed Landscapes in Scotland’ highlighting its national importance and the care it needs to protect it for future generations.

A visitor in 1876 noted that ‘Mr. Murray Stewart, with a liberty which is commendable in the highest degree, and worthy of imitation by others, permits strangers to have access to the grounds of Cally’. Today there are many opportunities to access the former parks and pleasure grounds of Cally including footpaths, a horse riding trail and the National Cycle Route 7. Cally Palace Hotel grounds and golf course are available to resident guests. Woodland, farmland, Cally Gardens plant nursery, recreation grounds and a number of private dwellings have all been absorbed into the landscape. Although the original designed landscape at Cally is now largely hidden by forestry planting, much of the structure and many features are still recognisable and easily found. Despite the obvious changes to the landscape the grounds continue to provide valuable habitats for wildlife. The veteran trees in a parkland setting, complex burns crisscrossing through the woodland and a variety of hidden buildings, each with their own story, contribute to the air of respectable antiquity that is so special to the landscape quality of the Fleet Valley National Scenic Area.





***Cally
Palace
Hotel***

***Gatehouse
of Fleet***

***Car
Park***

Cally Gardens

Motte

***Murray
Centre
Car Park***

Cally Woods are managed by Forestry Commission Scotland for recreational use and there are many opportunities for public enjoyment including views of the abundant wildlife. The grounds offer a variety of easy waymarked walks accessible from the car park in the centre of Gatehouse and the car park at the Murray Information Centre near the entrance to Cally. There is also a horse riding trail and part of National Cycle Route 7 passes through Cally Woods.

Early History

Cally Motte, a well preserved 12th-century earthwork in the woodland near the main entrance, is the earliest evidence of people living at Cally. Now surrounded by woodland, it marks the location of a wooden castle on the summit of a five metre high artificial mound, which would once have had a commanding defensive position overlooking the Fleet Estuary.



The first mention of Cally Estate in written archives is from the 14th century when the lands were held by John Craigie of Dalmeny. By this time the house is likely to have been a tower house similar to Cardoness Castle which can be seen on the other side of the Water of Fleet. Later in the same century, the estate passed by marriage to the Stewart family who then sold it before becoming associated with it again when Donald Lennox married the widowed Elizabeth Stewart in 1430.

The Motte provided a strong defensive position in the 12th century.

The lands of Cally remained in the Lennox family until 1658 when the male heirs failed to claim their inheritance and it was taken up by Anna Lennox. She was married to Richard Murray who was to inherit the family estate of Broughton, Wigtownshire and later the Irish estate of Killibegs in Donegal. Their eldest son John Murray III inherited the estate in 1690 but died 14 years later when his younger brother Alexander Murray II took over the estates of Broughton, Cally and Killibegs.

Blaeu's Atlas Novus was based on a manuscript map surveyed in 1594 by Timothy Pont. Blaeu used symbols to represent features in the landscape and the map shows a bridge over the Water of Fleet, and a tower house, 'Kelly', is shown surrounded by trees and a stockade, which was the symbol for enclosed parkland. The remains of the tower house are located on the west side of Cally Lake.



'The Middle part of Galloway, which lyeth betwene the rivers Dee and Cree' Blaeu's map of 1654. The area is orientated with west at the top of the map.

Black Cattle

Alexander Murray II inherited the estates at a time when the farming landscape was changing in Galloway. The landscape would have included many small farming settlements called fermtouns that relied on a system of arable rigs surrounded by lands used for rough grazing. This was communal living and subsistence farming in a largely uncultivated and unenclosed countryside where rents to the landlords were paid in kind with labour or produce.



The landscape and climate was ideally suited to a pastoral agricultural system for breeding hardy polled (hornless) black cattle which were generally known as Galloways. They were highly prized because they fatten readily and are less wild and quarrelsome than horned black cattle. Because of their good nature they were easy to drive and

many thousands of cattle were sent from south west Scotland every year to fatten in Norfolk and Suffolk for the London markets. The demands of the English market meant livestock production became commercialised and landowners cleared the fermtouns to develop large cattle parks in Galloway from the later 17th century.



View from Lady Anne's walk
by H.J. Moule

Galloway cattle are still a popular breed in the district.

Macky commented on his visit in 1722 that the Kirkcudbright district ‘provided the finest pasture for sheep and small black cattle’ and that ‘a handsome seat call’d the Caily, belonging to Alexander Murray of Broughton’ had ‘a large park, which feeds one thousand bullocks, that he sends every year to the markets of England’.

Drovers, or Jobbers, would buy cattle and send off droves of several hundred, preceded by a Topsman who made arrangements for their rest and feeding at different stations along the way. Droving was a risky business as the letters of Thomas Bell show when, in 1745, he purchased ‘a fine drove and vastly fatt, their number is 500’ from Murray of Broughton. The drove arrived in England just as a serious outbreak of cattle plague occurred. ‘The distemper amongst the cattle rages more and more: it is now over almost all Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, so that we have no place to fly to....God knows what we will do’. Bell purchased the drove for £1449 and incurred travelling expenses of about £300. All was lost although Thomas Bell returned to Scotland and managed to avoid bankruptcy.



Galloway cattle at Cally Mains Farm about 1900

Alexander's Aspirations

The Act of the Union that abolished Scotland's Parliament and combined its national government with that of England meant Alexander Murray II could make the most of opportunities offered by the growth of Britain's expanding empire. He was the Member of Parliament for the Stewartry between 1715 and 1727 and in 1726 he married Euphemia Stewart, daughter of James the 5th Earl of Galloway, an influential neighbouring landowner in Wigtownshire. A number of property deals and building projects were undertaken in the first half of the 18th century and in 1740 he purchased a town house in Kirkcudbright which he named Broughton House.

Alexander Murray II clearly had ambitions to develop a new mansion and gardens at Cally and made enquiries about appointing William Adam, one of the leading architects of the day. Adam replied to Alexander Murray of Broughton in 1742 concerning his request 'to attend you at your house and there to concert a plan of what you propose



to be built betwixt the two Pavilions you have already done with the laying out of some grounds'. The extent of the grounds to be designed was 'to be no more than the Gardens about the House & Avenue'. The proposals for a 'Great House' at Cally were not fulfilled. Euphemia died in 1750 and Alexander Murray II died the following year leaving the Cally Estate to his son James Murray.

**Broughton House,
Kirkcudbright is now
in the care of National
Trust for Scotland**

Roy's map of 1747-55 shows the enclosure of large parks with lines of trees on some field boundaries, marked as red lines. The building surrounded by an enclosure at Gatehouse of Fleet is likely to be Alexander Murray's modest mansion, which was located near the present parish church, and a route leads south from this point to what appears to be a pair of pavilions in front of a garden area. An enclosure around three buildings and trees is located immediately to the east of the pavilions and may be an early walled garden or a home farm with associated planting. A single line of trees running north-south from Gatehouse appears to be on the line of the future 'Cally Avenue' while the old military road is clearly marked on its east-west route and joining it from the south is a road from Kirkcudbright.



Roy's military map

A Favourable Place

James Murray inherited the estates in 1751 and, the following year, married his cousin Lady Catherine Stewart, so strengthening the ties between the Murray and Stewart families. James Boswell, the biographer of Samuel Johnson, met the couple in 1762 and described James Murray as a ‘most amiable man, [who] has very good sense, great knowledge of the world, and easy politeness of manners’ and Lady Catherine as ‘very beautiful and, what is more, very agreeable, being possessed of the most engaging affability’.

Lady Catherine took in to her household a daughter, Ann, who was born the year before their marriage and a natural child of her husband. Ann Murray was brought up at Cally and married William Stewart in 1770. Lady Catherine took a special interest in Ann and her husband who initially lived as farm tenants on the Cally Estate before moving into his family home at Shambellie with their 15 children.

James Murray and Lady Catherine had a daughter of their own called Alicia who became sick as a child and died during a visit to Rome.



James Murray by
Sir Joshua Reynolds

James Murray, like his father, was keen to make improvements to the estate and instructed Isaac Ware to produce a grand Palladian design for a Cally mansion. The design was never built although drawings were published in 1756, the same year that James Murray sold his town house, Broughton House, in Kirkcudbright.

The Stewart family provided guidance for the new developments at Cally and in 1759 acted as intermediaries for a design by Robert Mylne. In a letter sent to Lord Garlies, James Murray's brother-in-law and cousin at Galloway House, Mylne wrote 'I have sent you as you desired me, a sketch for Mr Murray's house' and enclosed a drawing of an enormous four-storey house. James Murray was Member of Parliament for Wigtown 1762-68 and Stewartry 1768-74 and by 1783 he had risen to the rank of Receiver General (Senior Customs Officer) for Scotland. These roles meant he was a frequent visitor to London where no doubt his aspiration increased while mixing with the English nobility and also gave him the opportunity to supervise the detailed design of the mansion by Robert Mylne. The mansion, eventually completed in 1765, was a scaled down version

Dumfries Weekly Journal
August 1777

ADVERTISEMENT.
THE great Road from Ireland running through the Gatehouse of Fleet, the conveniency of the harbour there for discharging vessels of a moderate burden, the fairs that are held yearly, and Mr Murray's right to hold a weekly market, induced him to think it a favourable place to build a village at; in which view, he caused two streets to be laid off for building upon, in such manner as to give every house the benefit of a good garden behind it, and for which he has received an adequate feu-duty.
Though this place is but in its infancy, yet the greatest part of the two streets have been feued out, and upon which a number of remarkable good houses have been built, and several useful manufactures have been established there, so that the village is now in a very thriving condition, and by far the most considerable within many miles of it.
Mr Murray, in terms of his rights, intends very soon to establish a weekly market; and as he is very desirous to have the two streets built out, so he hereby gives notice, That, in order to encourage industrious manufacturers, shop-keepers, and tradesmen, to settle at this village, he will be ready to grant feus to such as apply for ground for a house and garden, till the two streets are built out, and for which, in place of the feu-duties that would be reasonable, he will only ask an acknowledgement of one shilling yearly for ever.
For further particulars, enquire at Mr Murray the proprietor, at the Cally, or Mr Bushby, the Clerk of Dumfries.

of the original design and may have incorporated the two flanking pavilions.

In the late 1760s Murray's planned town development at Gatehouse of Fleet had started and was supported by a number of manufacturing ventures including tanneries, breweries and soap works. James Murray moved into the new mansion and the old house in the developing town was demolished and the stone used to build a new inn (Murray Arms). In an advertisement to encourage settlement in 1777 Gatehouse was reported as being in a 'very thriving condition'.

Dignity and Fortune

A gentleman's position in society was measured by his lands, farms, transport and manufacturing ventures and schemes to benefit his tenants. It was however his house, parks and pleasure grounds which were the prime badge of status.

In 1792 Robert Heron described Cally House as 'a large modern building' surrounded by grounds that matched the 'dignity and fortune of the proprietor'. A fashionable house and garden that lay at the heart of James Murray's social identity included a large deer park 'inclosed within a high and well built wall and plentifully stocked with fallow-deer'. A taste for the gothic style included the desire to create the illusion of an ancient medieval park stocked with wild game. Regarded as survivors of Scottish native wild oxen, the white cattle of Cadzow were particularly sought after and James Murray purchased some stock from the Duke of Hamilton. Pure white except for black muzzles, hoofs, ears and tips of the horns, they exhibited their wildness chiefly in their avoidance of man and roamed through the wooded park with herds of fallow deer to complete an idyllic scene.



Cadzow cattle

A gamekeeper looked after the herd of deer and lived in a lodge behind Barrhill. His duties included both feeding the deer and culling surplus animals in the autumn when the venison would be distributed amongst the estate workers.

Colonel Murray-Baillie

Following the death of Alexander Murray III in 1845, the deer and white cattle were sold but twenty-five years later a visitor noted that the 'walks through spacious lawns and woods, where the deer are reclining under the milk-white thorns, afford many pretty snatches of scenery'. By this time the herd of fallow deer were kept in the deer park a mile to the south of the mansion while a few roe deer remained in the woods around Cally House.



Deer continued to play an important part in the social life at Cally when Colonel Murray-Baillie formed the famous Cally

Buckhounds which afforded unrivalled sport to many in the area during the early 1900s.

Today fallow deer are occasionally seen but you are more likely to startle a roe deer in the woodland.

Roe deer

A Point of View

The Stewart family is likely to have influenced the design of the grounds surrounding Murray's new mansion. Lady Catherine's brother, John Lord Garlies, was a noted improver and planter who admired the work of 'Capability' Brown. It was James Ramsay, a landscape gardener of repute, who provided designs to alter and extend the parkland at Cally. His work was similar to 'Capability' Brown's 'landscape' style. The entire policy was enclosed either within a belt of woodland or lines of trees adjacent to the river: smooth contours providing open rolling parkland, with scattered groves and clumps of trees, a flat body of water and unsightly features masked or planted over with woodland.



Ainslie map showing the features of 'landscape' style grounds at Cally

Ramsay is credited for adding new elements including a gothic 'Temple', built in 1779 from stone quarried nearby. Located on rising ground immediately to the east of the road linking Girthon and Gatehouse, the square tower with a castellated top was designed to impress passing traffic.



The pointed arch openings faced the road below while the false openings to the side were designed to provide a pleasing feature viewed from the distant mansion. The 'Temple' was used as lodgings for William Todd for ten years while he was in charge of James Murray's drove cattle. However, in 1792 he left his employment at Cally for the lure of the high wages that could be earned at the newly constructed cotton mills in Gatehouse of Fleet.

Cross Cottage is another curious building; it is thought to have been a chapel. While the elevations nearest the mansion and its approach road have an arched doorway and a stepped gable end with a cross on top, the other elevations are much plainer. Perhaps this too was a worker's cottage dressed up to impress visitors to Cally.



The 'Temple'

When Robert Heron visited Cally in 1792 he was certainly impressed and sang its praises. He declared 'The circumjacent grounds are laid out and decorated with great taste'. But forty years later when J C Loudon published the results of a gardening tour he had a different point of view stating that the grounds at Cally are 'not all in that high and finished taste that we expect to find them'. The inward focus of the 'landscape' style had become unfashionable and Loudon's disappointment in the grounds seems to be a reflection of the new taste for distant views of wilderness to be incorporated into the scene. He suggested that the grounds would be greatly improved by removing some of the woodland to open up views beyond the river 'to the mountains and their rocky summits on the one hand, and the sea on the other'.

Family Affairs

When William Cuninghame visited Cally in 1786 he noted that the 'house is very large and elegant' but that 'none of the family [were] living there at present'. He had arrived at an awkward time, just after James Murray had eloped with Grace Johnston and had appointed 'commissionaires' to run his estates. Grace Johnston belonged to a family with many connections with the Gatehouse area. Her grandfather had been the minister at the local Parish Church in Girthon and her father, after a spell in the West Indies, had become a successful London merchant who purchased land to the west of Gatehouse before buying an estate near Dumfries. Her brother, Peter Johnston, had been a Member of Parliament for the area and she had become the governess for Murray's daughter.

Lady Catherine continued to live at Cally and in July 1787 wrote to Ann Stewart of Shambellie requesting the family not to speak of her husband 'as long as his frenzy remains'. However, Grace continued to live with James Murray as his wife and they had four children together: Grace, Euphemia, Alexander and James. They eventually returned to Cally and the house was enlarged to accommodate the extended family.



Elevation of house by Thomas Boyd in 1794 when pavilions were raised to add rooms for the extended family.



In 1795 the Stewartry County Election was being contested between a Tory and a Whig candidate. Gordon of Balmaghie, the Tory, was of modest property, however as the uncle of Grace Johnston he had the full support of the influential James Murray. Robert Burns supported the Whig candidate and wrote a number of Election Ballads lampooning the supporters of the Tory and making several references to James Murray and his relationship with Grace Johnston, depicting him as a man with poor moral judgement;

‘And there’ll be Murray commander,

And Gordon the battle to win,

Like brothers they’ll stand by each other

Sae knit in alliance and sin.’



Robert Burns' statue

The Whig candidate was successful on this occasion giving Robert Burns another opportunity to mention Murray's infidelity in an election victory ballad.

Thomas Murray, an unrelated author and publisher in Edinburgh, remembered Grace Johnston as a kind and generous lady. He was born in Gatehouse and after his mother's death the younger members of his family were taken into the Cally household. His youngest brother, William, and sister Mary were educated and supported by the Murray family. James Murray had consulted the most eminent lawyers to assist him in settling his estate and when he died in 1799, Cally was left to Alexander, his 5 year old son from his extended family. Grace Johnston remained at Cally for many years but before her son, Alexander, came of age she appears to have left for London with Mary employed as her maid.

New Nursery

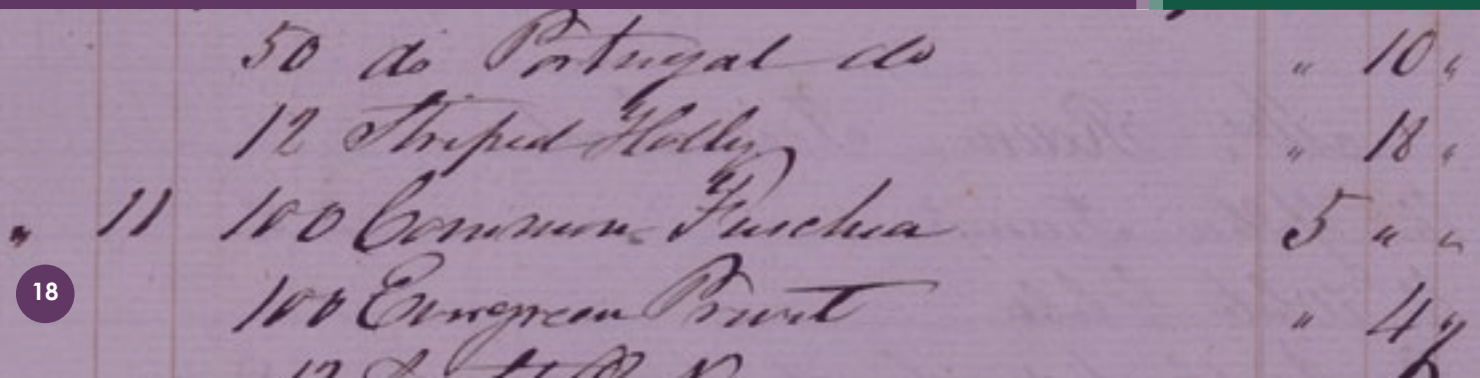
The large walled garden is an important element of the Cally grounds which appears to have been built at the same time as the house. In 1768 James Murray entered into a partnership with a tannery and reserved the right 'to have and take upon the premises from time to time....such part of the spent bark belonging to the Tannery as they shall have occasion for and incline in their Hot houses and gardens at the Cally'. A gravestone at Old Girthon Parish Church depicts a hoe, rake and spade and commemorates the death in 1775 of Robert Glover, one of the early gardeners at Cally. When William Cuninghame visited Cally in 1786 he was refused admittance into the walled garden but peeping over the wall he established that 'the walls inclosed two acres of ground, having two cross brick walls running across it, one having a hott house for stone fruit and another for grapes; walls around 13 or 14 feet high and well covered'.

The walled gardens were noted for producing apricots, figs, grapes and nectarines as well as common fruits equal to any in the country and when the family were away the gardens supplied abundant fruit to the surrounding areas as far as Dumfries.

In 1797 James Murray let a strip of land immediately south of the town to James Credie who was a gardener at Cally. The grounds were to be used as orchard, kitchen garden or nursery for 57 years. One of the conditions was that James Credie must make available good quality plants for use on the estate at prices that were comparable with other respectable nurserymen in the country. The business flourished supplying hand tools, seeds and plants to local landowners and farmers and expanded to open a nursery in Kirkcudbright.



Striped holly



When James Credie died the business was taken over by David Credie who became a prominent member of the Gatehouse community holding the position of Provost for many years. When David Credie died in 1850 the nursery closed down.

Now Cally Gardens, a working nursery that specialises in unusual perennials, is located in the walled garden. Visitors to the nursery can wander amongst established plantings of several thousand varieties, and choose from a selection of several hundred in the sales area. Alternatively, plants can be purchased through a mail order catalogue.



Cally Gardens

256

*Mr. Scarsion, Gardener, Cally,
Care of the Trustees of St. G. & S. Murray, Bury, Broughton*

1844	allay	2 lbs Irish Sweet Turneps	1 8
		10 1 Blue Scotch Mous	3
June		2 Dutch Sweet Turneps	3 4
		1 Scotch Sweet size of Mr Scarsion	5
		2 Dutch Sweet at 1/8 each of do.	3 4
		Light of By Cash	10 4
		<i>Ledger Folio 347</i>	
1850		<i>The Trustees of St. G. & S. Murray of Broughton</i>	
July 7		40,000 Larch 3 yrs Transp.	20
		3000 Oak 3 do. do.	2 5
		500 Scotch Fir 3 do. do.	2 13 6

Extract from ledger, Credie Nursery

Power and Ornament

The water courses that crisscross the Cally grounds have been manipulated to serve the needs of the estate. They once provided water to power mills, supplied water to estate houses, created scenic features such as Cally Lake or were combined with walls as boundary fences to restrict the movement of stock. Great changes were undertaken in the 1820s using tenants from the Killibegs estate in Donegal.

Managing an estate from afar can cause many problems, especially when disasters strike, such as the bad weather conditions causing crop failures in the Donegal area in the mid 1740s. Unlike many other absentee landlords, Alexander Murray II sent relief to his Irish tenants to help keep them on his estate. There was, however, a great exodus to the south of Ireland where food was more plentiful or



to a new life in North America. The loss of tenants created problems later when falling income from their rents made the estate unprofitable for the landlord.

Perhaps to avoid the mistakes of his grandfather, Alexander Murray III

tried a different strategy to solve the hardships caused by bad weather, a typhus outbreak and potato failure in the early 1800s. He brought 200 of his tenants over to Cally where they were employed on various improvement schemes.



The numerous burns and Cally Lake provide an ideal habitat for the local otters, which, in the past, were hunted on the estate.

Cally Lake is first depicted on Ainslie's map of the Stewartry published in 1797. It is likely to have formed part of the design by Ramsay and was originally fed by Townhead Burn. When the burn was diverted, in an attempt to increase water available to power a mill, it seems to have resulted in the lake drying up. This may explain its absence from the Thompson map of 1820. The Irish workforce diverted water from Waulk Burn so that it passed under Kirk Burn and cut through Barrhill along Ass House Strand. This water fed a cistern providing water for Cally Mansion and filled the newly enlarged Cally Lake. Later the water from Ass House Strand was also used to feed the Laundry and to power the Cally Mains threshing machine installed in 1839.

The Water of Fleet was canalised in 1824 using the manpower from the Killibegs estate and the ingenuity of the factor, Alexander Craig. Initially a deep narrow trench was dug by hand and then the Water of Fleet was diverted into it so that the power of the water coming down the valley could cut a wider channel.

The piers of the swing bridge built across the new canal by James Faed can still be seen, although the lodge house constructed at the same time has been removed.



Road Building

The development of the grounds surrounding Cally has influenced the development of the route between the Parish Church at Girthon and Gatehouse of Fleet. It initially formed the eastern boundary of the early pleasure grounds and deer parks but the designed landscape was soon extended east to stretch beyond the road. By the time of James Murray's death, the road effectively cut the grounds in two. Woodland belts and avenues were planted to hide it from the house and grounds.



By 1806, the trustees acting on behalf of the minor Alexander Murray III, planned to move the road to the east 'in order to avoid the steep pull over the Gallowhill', although the desire to take public traffic off the Cally Avenue must have been a contributing factor. The new route required significant road and bridge works to divert the military road alongside Bush Burn to rejoin the Ann Street entrance into Gatehouse of Fleet. Although the new route enabled Cally Avenue to become a private drive, the public road was still mostly located within the parks and pleasure grounds.

When Alexander Murray III came of age in 1810 there were great celebrations at Cally. These were marred only by a tragic accident, when one of the rusty cannons, being fired as part of the rejoicing, ripped apart and fatally injured a man. Alexander Murray III began to take great interest in improvements to the estate and an alternative road was soon being considered.



Bush Bridge by H.J Moule

Sandgreen carriage drive on the route to the beach house at the shore with its avenue of trees still unchanged.

By 1819 the route was relocated further east to incorporate the turnpike road from Kirkcudbright and four years later the 'cut' was built providing a new entrance into the town via the eastern end of Front Street (High Street). Although through traffic had finally been removed from within the grounds, the Cally Avenue route through to Girthon remained a right of way.



Drives and walks were also developed within the grounds providing numerous pleasure routes for horse drawn carriages or pedestrian use. An underpass was even constructed to allow unhindered access between the mansion and the walled gardens. At Bush Bridge a low level timber bridge was constructed through the arch of the road bridge to reveal a small but dramatic view of cascades of water feeding Bush Burn.



Lady Anne's walk by H.J. Moule



Many of the streets in Gatehouse were named after members of the Murray family including Ann Street, Horatio Square, Catherine Street and Digby Street.

He was asked to provide information for the Hon. Montgomerie Stewart which compared the number of gardeners in 1849 with the previous staffing levels under Alexander Murray III four years earlier:

‘Under the late proprietor of Cally, the average strength to keep the Gardens and Pleasure grounds in excellent order as above noted, was 6 Journeymen Gardeners, two of whom were appointed foremen – one for the forcing department and the kitchen garden, the other for the Pleasure Grounds, these young men were kept in lodgings at the Garden. Also 6 active labourers – one man with a horse and cart for carting coal, manure, gravel and tan etc. 1 Boy for carrying fruit and vegetables, etc, and for cooking to the young men in lodgings’.

‘At present there are employed 7 journeymen, one of whom is foremen, 1 labourer, 1 carter and 1 boy for most of the year for the purpose above stated’.

The much reduced staffing levels must have made life very difficult for the head gardener and he left Cally soon afterwards. The staffing numbers later increased and the gardens continued to be well maintained and produce fruit. In 1885 Mr Charles Fergusson submitted 60 varieties of pear and apple from the gardens to the Apple and Pear Congress. The congress report observed that it was ‘a good collection of fruit, containing fine specimens’.



Pear



Apple

Dig for Victory

In 1858 Horatio Granville Murray Stewart married Anne Elizabeth Wingfield Digby, daughter of Rev J D Wingfield Digby. Horatio died in 1904 and had made provision for his wife so she could move out of Cally when the estate was inherited by his cousin Colonel James William Baillie of Illston Grange Leicestershire. Colonel Baillie adopted the name of Murray becoming Colonel Murray Baillie, but instead of moving to Cally House he took over Cushat Wood and let out the big house. Colonel Murray Baillie died in 1908 and Cally passed to Major Frederick David Murray Baillie, later to become the second Colonel Murray Baillie, who continued to let Cally house. Miss Elizabeth Evelyn Murray Baillie, later to become Mrs Murray Usher, inherited Cally in 1924 and she moved into Cushat Wood with her mother Mrs Murray Baillie. Cally house continued to be let, the final tenant being the Maharaja of Jind (1930-32).



Cally Palace Hotel 1938

By the early 1930s the last bobbin mill had closed and Gatehouse was suffering from falling employment. Mrs Murray Usher was aware of the need to provide employment and in 1933 she sold Cally House and grounds to the Forestry Commission who in turn sold the house to a Mr Stewart. He owned the Palace Hotel at Fort William and the Cally Hotel welcomed its first guests in 1934.



Evacuees in the walled gardens

During World War II the hotel was used as a residential secondary school for wartime evacuee children from Glasgow. It was a mixed school of two hundred pupils, with equal numbers of boys and girls. The school was well equipped for all their needs. It had its own chapel, medical wing, kitchen facilities and walled garden where they could 'dig for victory'. There were good sporting facilities and the evacuees competed with the local schools. The school teachers were also residents and provided an excellent education during the difficult war years. Boys who were old enough joined the local Home Guard and were often called out to fight the heath fires in the hills behind Gatehouse. On some occasions they were called out to search for enemy aircraft that may have crashed in the area - often the aircraft would be burnt out and they never found any enemy survivors.

When the war ended the mansion was sold and reopened as an hotel. It is now owned by the McMillan family and its beautiful scenery, peaceful and relaxed ambience and the impeccable level of service make the Cally Palace Hotel a very special place to be.

Valuable Resource

The extensive woodlands planted at Cally were laid out for artistic effect with the woodland belts enclosing the grounds on the boundary and screening the changing road network or any other perceived defects. However the trees have also always had an economic purpose with the tannery and later bobbin mills in Gatehouse providing a ready market.

The woodlands consisted of mixed deciduous trees which were replanted with similar species after they were felled so that the extent of the woods remained relatively unchanged throughout the 19th century. Woodlands advertised for sale on the Cally Estate in 1797 were described as old woods 'mainly of oak but also ash, birch, plane, alder, etc'. A century later a report on woodland situated in and around the Cally Park notes that the trees had an average of 100 years growth and were predominantly oak but also included ash, sycamore, beech and elm.

When the grounds were sold to the Forestry Commission in the 1930s, the woodland was felled and much of the grounds including the grass parks were replanted. The extent of woodland greatly increased but its character



was largely retained by adopting similar species to those previously planted. Oak was the main broadleaf species along with sycamore, ash and beech. The conifer varieties planted included Sitka and Norway spruce in the wetter and more exposed sites and Scots pine on the drier knolls. Larch was used as a nurse crop.



Nesting herons

Felling timber, Cally
by A R Sturrock

The old avenue trees were removed as the grounds were extended or forestry plantations were planted but some evidence of them still exists, most notably the old beech trees at Girthon and the elm trees on the track to Sandgreen.

Trees such as oak, beech and horse chestnut were also planted around the house and walled gardens. Some of these trees may have survived from planting in the 1750s but most of the veteran trees that can be seen around the



Irish Yew

hotel and on the golf course are remnants of the mid 19th-century vogue for planting newly discovered and exotic specimen trees. Edward Barrett, the local school teacher, was a keen botanist and is believed to have been responsible for the selection of many of the fine trees and shrubs planted about Cally House between 1860 and 1873. Old photographs show young trees planted near the house and a significant number of exotic species still remain and accompany the earlier less exotic planting.

The increasing age of the trees means they are valuable for biodiversity providing a home for red squirrels and many varieties of nesting birds. The woodlands at Cally remain an important element of the designed landscape providing a distinctive setting for the Cally Palace Hotel, Gatehouse of Fleet and the surrounding landscape.



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