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STIRLING CASTLE PALACE

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KING OF THE CASTLE:
STIRLING CASTLE'S LANDSCAPE SETTING

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1 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 KINGS AND CASTLES

When we were quite young children, in the days when children still played games, a favourite was King of the Castle. It was the simplest of games; someone got on a hill and, shouting 'I'm the King of the Castle' tried to repel boarders by pushing them off. Of course, the boarders only wanted to get on because of the challenge. And perhaps, after all, it was just boys who played such simple games? In any case, the game makes a simple equation between kings, castles and hills; we were better landscape historians than we knew.

The report is an attempt to make sense of the relationship between one hill (Stirling Castle Rock), its surroundings, some monarchs and the monarchs' successors as controllers of the hill and the landscape, successors who include the British army and (more recently) Historic Scotland, Stirling Golf Club and 'the tourist industry'. The report builds on earlier work but time has precluded any deep examination of the medieval evidence beyond what is already published. And it has also limited examination of the period since about 1900 – though I comment on some very recent developments. It concentrates on the 17th to 19th centuries.

Chapter One looks at the broad periods of the administration of the castle landscapes, recognising that administrative change reflects deeper cultural and economic change and so new attitudes to resources, to aesthetics and to power. These linkages are not all followed through but each has had its impact on the landscape – on what was done to it, what was preserved from the past, what was neglected.

Chapter Two is much narrower in focus. It concentrates on the access routes into and out of the castle and some of those traversing its vicinity; route-ways are, of course, the most obvious of linkages in any landscape, concrete – though perhaps also symbolic. I try to dispel the myth that the 'passage of 1531' issued from one or other of the sally ports – and offer what I am convinced is a more satisfactory solution to that problem. I look at the Ballengeich Road – though the public pathways, the Back Walks, are considered in the next chapter.

Chapter Three considers sites and specific areas, considering each of a series in some detail. There is, inevitably, some overlap between these and the general issues in Chapter One. Coverage is not consistent and I present more detail for sites where I am proposing a new view, as with the Haining. No attempt is made to consider all the archaeological sites (for which see Canmore). Nor, I am afraid, is there any extended discussion of the literature of castle landscapes, in Scotland or elsewhere.

My main objective has been as much to locate documentary sources for the landscape which exists today, the one presented to the modern visitor, as to recover the landscape of 1542. At least the modern landscape is there, on the ground, to act as a guide and a check on the documentary sources and if that concrete evidence conflicts with the sources, it is likely that we are misreading them or have missed some important clue. But I hope that, in understanding the present, we are in a better position to begin to strip away the accumulated layers and to recover the landscapes of the past.

There are a number of illustrations, mainly my own photos, though a few are downloaded from websites *etc.* which are acknowledged individually but care should be taken in circulating the report. Any opinions expressed are my own and are not attributable to Historic Scotland. References are generally provided via footnotes in the text to a reference list at the end. It will be appreciated that this is 'work in progress' on a big and complex subject. It is a contribution to a project which will never be completed.

2 CHAPTER TWO: PROUD CORTEZ

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The castle is at the summit of a hill, above the town and surrounding countryside. Sites of this kind were as important for their socially dominating position as for any military advantage¹. The castle would have been visible from afar whilst an undeveloped gap between castle and town, corresponding to the modern Esplanade, Valley and Kirkyard, ensured that the visitor approaching from the town saw the eastern façade, with its four impressive towers, from a distance, a view described as ‘the whole outward beauty of the place’ in the early 1580s². Contrary to a widely-stated cliché, there was no question of the populace ‘huddling for protection below the castle’; the gap provided ‘social distance’ and kept the people in their place, at arm’s length.

The more prestigious buildings in the town, particularly the kirk, were situated high within the urban area. Probably the upper parts were more socially prestigious from the beginning, though this can only be conclusively shown from later records. So, the town’s social profile mirrored its physical profile, with the castle at the top, the urban elite in the middle and the poor at the bottom of the long hill³.

The earliest documents refer to the royal lands in the vicinity and a park is first recorded at some time between 1165 and 1174, carved from the earlier royal demesne lands⁴. In the 13th Century a New Park was established at St Ninians but the old one was reinstated within a century or so⁵. Amongst the park’s many functions was to provide another vantage point from which the castle could be appreciated and an appropriate setting onto which it looked; it is striking that, whilst modern suburbs can be seen from the castle’s royal interiors, the old town is almost invisible. In 1506 the

¹ Much of the discussion in Creighton, 2002, on the landscape settings of early medieval English castles is relevant here. See also Driscoll, 1998; Dennison, *et al.* 1998.

² NAS E37/2 Inventory 1581x 1583 mentions ‘the foure roundis of the foir entries qlk is the haill utwart beautie of the place’; the façade of that period is now within the early 18th Century defences and three of the towers have been truncated.

³ Harrison, 1985.

⁴ (REGESTA II) pp. 206-7.

⁵ Miller, 1922; Gilbert, 1979 pp. 82-3; Harrison, 2006.

Crown granted the part of the park now broadly corresponding to the built-up area around Victoria Square to the town in exchange for the Gowane Hills. The area granted was peripheral to the castle vistas and in any case remained agricultural for centuries. The exchange gave the Crown control of the sight-lines from the castle to the bridge, which increasing fire-power had now brought within range of castle-based artillery⁶. So, the demands of the royal presence influenced the location and form of development of the town whilst some potential agricultural land in the vicinity was set aside for royal use. This Crown land adjacent to the castle was not subject to the magistrates and council of the burgh but was controlled by a royal official who, by the later 16th Century, was known as the constable of the castle; so, the Park, Gowane Hills and the braes around the castle, together with an area around modern Barn Road called Castlehill, were together known as the Constabulary. It is this area which is the main focus of this Report.

From the 12th Century, following wider European models, the Scots Crown had encouraged the growth of towns, including Stirling. The reasons included the expectations that towns would, in turn, stimulate the economy, trade focussed in towns was more readily taxed than trade diffused across the entire country and towns also provided convenient foci of royal administration⁷. But towns in the immediate vicinity of royal residences were also useful for providing supplies, accommodation and services for the court and Stirling certainly did so, right through to the 17th Century⁸.

This report builds on work in my earlier report ⁹ and, in particular, has looked at some of the 18th and 19th Century sources. These have helped to elucidate some aspects of the 16th and 17th Century situation and also, I hope, will help in understanding what survives today, either as obvious landscape features or as archaeological potential.

A few key factors emerge. From an early stage, the recreational facilities of the castle lay mainly to the west and south (though some, such as the 16th Century tennis court)

⁶ Renwick, 1884, pp. 69-71; Sadler I, pp. 203-4, Sadler to Privy Council, 20th May 1543, stating that there was no artillery in the castle able to cover the bridge.

⁷ Lynch, 1992, pp. 62-4; McNeill and MacQueen, 1996, pp. 196-8.

⁸ The town's role will be discussed more fully in a forthcoming paper in *Forth Naturalist and Historian*.

⁹ Harrison, 2005.

were within the town. Water was in short supply within the castle and 'thirsty' activities were located outside, which also allowed more space for *e.g.* gardens. Stables within the castle would have involved space, bringing in fodder and water, taking out manure; stables outside the castle could be incorporated into the landscape setting as a handsome architectural feature –and surely were, at least from the early 1530s. Again and again, this interplay of the practical and aesthetic is seen to be at work.

That is also seen in the changing locations of the main outdoor entertainments; broadly, as these became less war-like and bloody and more ritualised, symbolic and intimate, there was a need for the audience to be nearer to the action. So, I suggest, they moved from open ground removed from the castle, where they had been in the 15th Century, first to a site just below the west side of the castle (the Butt Park) and then to The Valley, where Queen Mary's Baptismal Triumph was presented.

If that change took place over 100 years or so, others have taken 500 years – and continue today. Royal and courtly demands were dominant until 1603 but did not stop suddenly then. There was the constant expectation that James VI would return, Charles I and Charles II had work done both on the buildings and within the landscape (presumably) with a view to emerging royal tastes and the possibility of a royal return. But, by the later 17th Century, military demands became paramount, on the landscape as on the buildings; they remained so until 19th Century, though the royal past and potential was not forgotten. By the late 18th Century, however, public leisure and (increasingly) tourism became drivers of change. The original early 18th Century Back Walk was extended round the castle and to the Gowane Hills in the 1790s.

There are records of grain and hay grown within the royal lands from the medieval period – leisure and practicality had always to be interwoven. In the 18th Century, as the former royal lands were let on agricultural leases, it remained necessary to restrict the activities so as to be able to accommodate army camps and exercises and, at least by the mid-19th Century, it was recognised that some effort should be made to preserve signs of former royal use, such as the Knott. Paradoxically, it is the withdrawal of routine grazing which has brought about one of the major landscape changes of the last century or so, the extensive growth of trees on the braes around the castle and on the

Gowane Hills (which were grazed until within living memory). A landscape which once had multiple uses is not best preserved by dedicating it to only one.

2.2 ARCHITECTURE

I do not propose to consider architecture in any detail, merely to highlight a few points, some raised by new documentary finds. Firstly, the major elements of James IV's extensive work at Stirling were the King's Old Building, Great Hall and the towered forework. At Stirling James reserved the major external impact for the entrance, as he did at Linlithgow (where the entrance was still on the east side) and as perhaps already existed at Edinburgh. This great Stirling forework was described as 'the whole outward beauty of the place' in the 1580s¹⁰. Fawcett suggests that its classical and perhaps imperial connotations look forward into the renaissance rather than back, as other parts of James's building work did, to the medieval period¹¹. The clear space between castle and town ensured that the approaching visitor could see this spectacle to best advantage. Significantly, then, though James V was to move the entrance at Linlithgow to the south and radically remodel the entrances at Falkland and Linlithgow, the Stirling forework was left substantially unchanged until the late 17th Century when, under military pressure, its sad truncation began.

My next point concerns the views of and from the royal apartments. The town is almost invisible as is seen in this view from the terrace – which, incidentally, strikes me as a much pleasanter place for brief exercise than the cold, drafty and sunless Lion's Den.

Garitours (watchers on the wall-heads) were members of the castle staff through the 16th Century, emphasising the military role of possible wall-head walks (perhaps further adding to the drama of the buildings against the sky). This importance is highlighted by Stirling's being at the terminus of chains of beacons, running north from the Border areas and which clearly relied on long-range inter-visibility¹². At some time

¹⁰ NAS E37/2 Inventory 1581x 1583 mentions 'the foure roundis of the foir entries qlk is the haill utwart beautie of the place'.

¹¹ Fawcett, 1994, particularly pp. 314-7.

¹² Acta Dominorum Concilii, p. 171, 1523, Beacon fires to be made ready at Stirling Castle and the high craig beside Stirling, on Arthur's seat, at Largo Law and at Binning Craig, near Linlithgow, to give warning of

during the 17th Century, as telescopes became available, those views would become longer and the watchers more effective.



Figure 1: View from terrace of palace towards the town; from inside the palace it is extremely difficult to see anything of the old town. (Photo: JGH).

The view from the castle which we know was aesthetically most important was the one from the west. The description will be well-known to readers of this Report, emphasising the pleasantness of views of the garden, the park with its deer, the distant rivers and the ‘many great stone houses’¹³. I must here emphasise that this conflicts with the traditional view of the western carselands as a waste of peat-moss and marsh and recent work has shown that the peat bogs were always discrete one from another and the landscape had been settled for centuries if not millennia; there were no mosses

attack, part of more general preparations for war. King to be protected in Stirling; see also Brown, 1893, p. 25 for a similar chain in 1455. It is interesting that no likely castle site further west would have been visible from Edinburgh and that between them their views take in much of the most fertile land in Scotland.

¹³ Paton, 1957, p. 310.

for several miles west of Stirling¹⁴. It was aesthetically pleasing because it was a landscape of prosperity.

Another aspect of the castle generally is that there seem to be views and aspects which are intended to be appreciated from a distance (the view from the west being the most striking) and others which could only be appreciated when close to – detailed features of the stone-work, details of colour and texture of the stone and so on. These were intended, surely, for the intimate appreciation of monarchs and courtiers.

2.3 THE WIDER LANDSCAPE UNDER JAMES V

In my earlier report I considered some general and some very specific aspects of the landscape setting about 1540¹⁵. The main sporting and leisure facilities lay to the south and west. The jousting yard, which had formerly been within what is now the built up area around Victoria Square, had probably been moved to what is now the Butt Park in 1507 or shortly after. Lists were constructed for the king in Stirling in 1529 and in 1543 the lists 'under Stirling Castle' were extended; these would almost certainly have been in the Butt Park¹⁶. For the rest of his reign, James regularly exercised in the lists at Stirling, perhaps less often at St Andrews; lack of records of him doing so in Edinburgh may, in part, be due to the equipment being stored there, so that no costs were incurred for transport.

Under James V, however, the major celebrations (coronation of de Guise, for example) were marked by pageantry in Edinburgh; it was following loss of the Great Hall at Holyrood that Mary's Baptismal Triumph and the Baptism of Prince Henry, with both indoor and outdoor components, were held in Stirling.

The Park and Gardens provided food, sport and vistas and a sense of control over a rich landscape producing an abundance of prestigious and varied food. And although records of medieval monarchs actually hunting in parks are few (Gilbert found only one positive reference) there would have been no question of moving live deer from

¹⁴ Harrison & Tipping, submitted; Harrison, forthcoming.

¹⁵ Harrison, 2005, particularly pp. 74-88.

¹⁶ TA V p. 381; TA VI, p. 225; the lists got other attention e.g. in 1537-8, Paton, 1957, pp. 227-8.

Falkland to Stirling for any other purpose! On the other hand, at no time was the park only about keeping deer and hunting; there are records of hay being cut, of grain being harvested, of armies being camped, of military draft oxen being pastured; stud horses and brood mares were kept, some of the horses clearly of good quality. The Loch (drained about 1800) was stocked with ornamental swans and herons but, if James fancied roast swan, he could indulge himself readily. The gardens are on record from the 15th Century but were surely not new then – again, their situation allowed them to be seen from above (as noted in 1583, above); I suspect that conduits would have brought water from the Park Loch to the garden. The stables, outside the castle like other thirsty, space-consuming and potentially messy functions, were integrated as a landscape feature. Access was provided by a road, either newly constructed or radically improved in 1531 (see Access/ passage of 1531).

Even the Gowane Hills, acquired by the Crown in 1507 for pragmatic military reasons, was turned to use for grazing and there is later evidence of sand being found there. And sand was quarried from holes scattered across the eastern parts of the park (those least visible from the castle); these sand holes were also used for buildings in the town, of course, and the ready availability of good sand was essential to keeping building costs down.

2.4 THE LANDSCAPE UNDER MARY AND JAMES VI

There is little to be said about the period from 1542 to Mary's return from France when, we must assume, jousting and hunting and such sports were in abeyance or at least less prominent on the agenda. On her return, it was Stirling's economic and political significance, surely, which brought about an important change. John Erskine, later earl of Mar and already keeper of the castle, was granted the captaincy, with the park and garden, the Raploch, Gallowhillis (Gowane Hills) and pertinents for life in 1561, grants confirmed in 1566, when the Park Loch is also specified; he was to pay £100, was to act as forester of the park and was allowed the pasture of six horses in the park¹⁷. General management of the park seems to have been reorganised under Robert Cunningham,

¹⁷ RSS V, 901; RSS V, 2977; NAS, Mar and Kellie, GD124/11/1 sasine for John, Earl of Mar, for office and lands etc.

keeper of the Park, doubtless directed by Mar¹⁸. Before too long, the Erksines were treating much of this land as virtually private property.

The other great change of this period, already mentioned above, was the move from the Butt Park to the Valley for the outdoor pageants and festivals held in Stirling. The events at the Justinflats to 1507 had been bloody battles, tilting in lists at the Butt Park was sport, albeit potentially violent. But by the 1560s the entertainment was more akin to intimate drama or even to proto-masque and required the audience, as they were becoming, to be close to the action. Perhaps, too the Butts became less available as Mar took over. The assumption that The Valley was just the space now between Esplanade and Kirkyard is usually justified by the presence of the so-called Ladies Hill, from which it is alleged The Ladies watched the events. In fact this was almost certainly The Lady Hill, with a shrine to the Virgin whilst the ladies could be as near as the men for the entertainments now provided (I suspect that they had never been far from the ringside, even in the days of greatest violence). So, perhaps the events actually took place in The Play Yard, now at the top of Barn Road.

From the 1580s the Erskines got control of another area, the Haining, which is discussed in some detail under Sites. That area, between the garden and the town's Kirkyard, had formerly been waste but they now converted it into a garden, terracing parts of the steep brae and, of course, linking it to their new mansion in Stirling, Mar's Wark. Late in the century (mainly 1590s) records begin to appear of a new stable block around King's Stables Lane in the town; it is not clear if the old ones had now gone out of use, had been taken over by Mar or continued in parallel with the new ones to meet increased transport needs. And, at much the same time, records appear of artisan servants being given charters to build houses, within the constabulary, close to the castle; those which can be identified were in the Barn Road area.

Following James's departure in 1603, closely followed by his wife, children and many of the leading courtiers (including Erskine of Mar) it was probably several decades till houses like Mar's Wark were ruinous – but they were less used and there was quite a rapid decline in the noble presence in Stirling¹⁹. However, the Haining gardens and

¹⁸ Grove, D. p. 15.

¹⁹ Harrison, forthcoming.

orchards continued in use into the 18th Century (see Sites/ Haining). James's sole return visit provoked a good deal of building and other work and though the details have been lost by damage to the documents, the expenses of work on the 'Palace and Park of Stirling' was broken down as £1937 for the Park Dyke and £13,479 Scots for the Castle/ Palace²⁰ (see Sites/ Park Dyke).

2.5 CHARLES I, *INTER-REGNUM*, CHARLES II AND JAMES VII

It is difficult to believe that the Erskines did much to maintain the park for most of this time and their financial difficulties, particularly following some serious political mistakes in the 1640s, would have pressured them to maximise the income from the park – as from their other assets. Obviously, the most interesting project was work on the gardens in the 1620s which, I suggested in my earlier report, probably resulted in the creation of the Knot in something like its present form, on a site previously used as a garden. That may have been a consequence of an unrecorded intention of Charles to spend more time in Scotland (and that might, in turn, have been the impetus for William Alexander to build his new mansion in Stirling from 1629). Whether it also temporarily revitalised interest in Mar's Wark is unclear.

Certainly, by that time, attitudes to parks were changing. They were no longer seen as a wilderness area but were increasingly designed to be seen from the house and as the setting of the house, the trees carefully disposed, 'water features' and other aspects deliberately placed and so on; they were being integrated with the house as the landscape park replaced the deer park. Gardens, too, were changing – and might now be the site of entertainments, banquets, picnics and so on²¹. And both James VI and Charles I hunted regularly in parks, the hunt doubtless organised in new ways. But how far that was reflected in changed design at Stirling is doubtful. In any case their interest was brief and its influence not likely to have been profound.

During the early 1650s both the Scots and Cromwellian army used the park as a military camp – on a scale, surely, which had not previously been seen. But interest

²⁰ Imrie & Dunbar, 1982, p 31.

²¹ Welsford, 1927 pp. 168-171 for an entertainment in the garden at Althorp for Anna and Prince Henry on their journey south; Quest-Ritson, pp. 28-30.

again wanes with the Restoration– or at least the sources seem to dry up, apart from a few passing mentions of Mar's interest in the gardens of the Haining. Then, in a flurry of activity which resulted in considerable internal work (and probably provoked the Earl of Argyll to secure a new Stirling mansion for himself) on July 1671 the Lords of the Treasury issued a warrant to Sir William Bruce, Master of the Works to 'visit' the park dyke and 'take present course for effectual repairing of it, for the use his Majestie designes it'. He was then to make the best bargain for the work²². Charles was evidently taking a personal interest in the matter – and trying to regain effective control of the castle from Mar, though many years of trying were to result in failure. There is no direct evidence of what use Charles intended to make of the park, though his ideas would probably have followed the trend, noted earlier, to make former deer parks into ornamental parks, now well under way. There appears to have been a radical reconstruction of the park dyke but there are few details and even the total spent on it is unclear²³ (see Sites/ Park Dyke) Meanwhile, Mar (under financial pressure) sold the Raploch to Cowane's Hospital, in settlement of a debt.

But, even as he commissioned this work, Charles was considering strengthening Stirling though it was to be under James VII that the work of militarising Stirling gained pace. Certainly, by the 1690s, Stirling as royal residence was clearly an idea of the past and for the next 200 years, the demands of the army would profoundly influence not only the castle but also the surrounding landscape.

2.6 THE MILITARY PERIOD

Charles, earl of Mar, captain and keeper of Stirling Castle, had supported James VII but nimbly leapt onto the Williamite bandwagon in 1689 – and then died. His son, the famously Bobbing Jonny, was probably more intimately connected with Stirling than any of his immediate predecessors, albeit mainly through his cousin and namesake, John Erskine, whom he appointed as his deputy and who lived in the castle. However, since early 18th Century reports emphasise that only 'vestiges' of the former gardens were to be seen, they must already have been neglected for some time.

²² Kinross House Papers, NAS, GD29/92 Warrant to repairs at Edinburgh and Stirling 20th July 1671.

²³ E36/32 Accounts of the Master of Works, 1674-9; E36/31 p. 20 ff accounts paid 1677 to 1679; E36/34 item 20, 24, 34, 35 for the other workmen

Mar's forfeiture after the 1715 rising generated documents which help to clarify his tenure in earlier times. The Haining had become personal property and, like much of the rest of his private estate, was recovered by family members (much of the income, in fact, surely followed the earl into his exile). But he had held the park, gardens, Butt Park and Gowane Hills as Keeper of the Castle and had used some of the income to support the fabric. This right was simply transferred to his successors as governors (as the office was now known) and it was an important part of their emoluments. Traveller's reports show that, by the very early 18th Century, the garden/ Knott was reduced to 'vestiges' – so the neglect did not begin with Mar's forfeiture.

But Mar's Wark had been ruinous for decades. A lease of the Haining, which had probably been run as a market garden, expired around the turn of the century; with no great house to support to support it and no likelihood of capital investment in it, that too went into decline. Almost immediately after taking over, the first Governor, Lord Rothes leased the park, gardens, Butts and Gowane Hills as ordinary farm land; there were some restrictions on ploughing land not previously ploughed and this and later leases provide that tenants had to make land available to the army for exercises, drills, camps and other military purposes. When James Christie sought to be awarded the lease in 1739 he complained that the dyke was almost ruinous, the park overspread with broom and the grass ruined with fogg; the meadow or lay ground was overspread with water as the ditches had not been cleaned 'these 100 years' and he asked for a long lease, at a low rent, permission to plough more land – and promised that, if he got this (which he did) he would rectify the problems (which he probably didn't)²⁴.

Whilst the 18th Century leases throw up interesting details such as this, it is likely that they resume the pattern of leases previously granted by Mar for some time previously. Typically, the governor leased to a single fairly wealthy individual who then sublet to others. A major use of the park, recorded from the late 17th Century to the mid-19th, was grazing cows belonging to the townspeople (but, again, with an obligation to lease grazing to the army if required). The processes are considered in more detail under the various headings in Sites.

²⁴ NLS MS 17603 f. 81-82 memorial and a proposal by James Christie dated 1739 regarding the Park.

The arrangements changed very little until the later 18th Century when, it seems, the chief tacksman (lessee) took up residence at what is now the King's Park Farm, but still subletting parts of the grazing; there was very limited arable, on account of the pressures of military requirements, though the carse ground, below the farm, was almost certainly in arable. Cattle coming to Stirling's Latter Fair seem to have grazed on the Gowane Hills in the early 18th Century but the Fair failed (probably some time in the 1770s and perhaps after a move to the King's Park) as did attempts to revive it²⁵.

But, from about that time on, though the military presence continued unabated, the tourist period began to make an impact.

2.7 THE TOURIST PERIOD

The early stages of the tourist period overlapped with the later military phases. Two factors seem to have provided the impetus for Stirling to 'do something' about civic improvements in the later 18th Century. There were increasing numbers of quite prosperous inhabitants, including some retired from Empire and other business interests. And there was an initial trickle of tourists, in search of Romance in the land of Ossian and Mountains. The French wars of the 1790s must have increased that trickle to a stream; there was now a fairly comfortable hotel and agriculture prospered during the wars. The 1790s saw the extension of the Back Walk round the castle and onto the Gowane Hills and the following decade saw further extensions to walks and provision of other facilities (see Sites below). Other initiatives, following soon after, were the creation of the race course. Certainly by the mid-century public access to areas such as the Knot was formally recognised as a right.

Many of these were local initiatives, though they called for the agreement of 'government' when they involved the land around the castle or the Gowane Hills. The successive Governors still received their rent as part of their emoluments, the land was formally administered by the Barons of Exchequer of Scotland, though, from the early years of the 19th Century, with some 'on the ground' advice from the Office of Woods and Forests, a Whitehall department administering the Crown lands elsewhere in

²⁵ Stirling Council Minutes, Index, 10 Nov 1779; an attempt to attract the cattle fair back to the King's Park by lowering customs is to be tried; *ibid*, 26 May 1780 a stance for cattle at the King's Park for the Latter Fair has been agreed.

Britain²⁶. In the early 1820s, Sir Martin Hunter, the Governor, was collecting a rather nice £425 pa and does not seem to have had any expenses to deduct at all²⁷. Indeed, he had no incentive to incur any expenses on improvements since he could grant leases only for so long as he held the office, an insecurity of tenure which would also deter the tenants from improving. Only in the early 1850s were the Crown Lands taken from the control of the Barons and put fully under the Office of Woods and Forests whilst, when Hunter had finished his term, no new governor was appointed to what had become a sinecure²⁸. The Office of Woods and Forests took a much more active interest and commissioned a series of Reports on the lands which provide a pretty clear view of the situation about 1850. They were determined to increase revenues and knew that the way to do that was through improvement and investment, through suitable tenants in suitable tenancies. However, as will be seen under the various headings (particularly King's Knott and Park Dykes) their advisers were not unaware of the 'heritage' value of the landscape²⁹. But there was certainly a danger that systematic improvement would do more harm than neglect – and that misguided 'restoration' would do more harm than either.

The reports make clear that there was still conflict over use of the land and a diversity of uses. Mr Caird was perplexed about what could be done about the various rights the public had of access to the land, which had to be accommodated to with styles and walls; he was even more perplexed by the continuing rights the military had, to use the land. And he was most perplexed of all by the stench of the castle drains, representing a valuable fertilising resource which was so noxious than nobody could really use it.

If the transfer to the Office of Woods and Forests had significant impacts, the arrival of the railways had much greater impacts on Stirling and its environs. Stirling grew at an unprecedented rate. Much of the land closest to the Park was owned by Cowane's and Spittal's Hospitals, Stirling charities which developed substantial suburbs on feued

²⁶ Parliamentary Papers, 1830 XX, Woods and Forests, pp.165 -175.

²⁷ Parliamentary Papers, 1833, XXXIV, Woods and Forests, p. 30; Parliamentary Papers, 1831-2 XXVII, p. 612, repairs for royal palaces and public buildings in Scotland 'hitherto defrayed out of the Hereditary Revenue of Scotland under the superintendence of the Barons of exchequer of that country'.

²⁸ NAS CR4/324 Report on the duties of the Barons of Exchequer and the transfer to Office of Woods and Forests.

²⁹ Particularly Parliamentary Papers, 1852-3, vol L and LI, Woods and Forests.

lands adjacent to the park; to maximise their income, they feued large plots with restrictive rules, ensuring a uniform, high-class development. The occupants, whether working or retired, were certainly the main force for the development of golf and curling clubs (and probably for the abolition of the boisterous race-horse meets, which folded about 1854). There was an astonishingly vigorous debate about public access issues in mid-19th Century Stirling. Rev Dr Charles Rogers co-sponsored the Valley Cemetery, the outdoor, sober educational sculpture garden, its paths carefully linked to the older Back Walks and the Castle Esplanade and he thundered against 'dissolute persons' who frequented the Valley. But he found he found plenty of opposition from equally vehement people arguing, in essence, for civil rights and wider public access.

But since that time, the story of the Back Walks and Gowane Hills has been largely one of neglect, its effects exacerbated by the gradual removal of grazing. It is, perhaps, surprising that Stirling has done little to develop more modern equivalents of the Victorian walks. There they still are, declining behind trees and occasionally vandalised by inappropriate 'improvements' (see The Gowane Hills below) and scarcely even promoted as an existing resource. This is in part, presumably, because so many car-borne visitors arrive at the Esplanade, visit the castle – and then vanish. Coach-borne visitors, on the other hand, seem often to head straight for the shops. Even for those, as many locals as visitors, who do take a stroll, it is difficult to appreciate the walks as parts of a designed landscape – and I would have to confess to having only begun to recognise the 'hanging gardens of the Haining' whilst preparing this report, though I have known the area closely for 30 years. The Park, too, now dominated by golf, is threatened by ever more greens, tees and drains, presumably a response to increasing demand in an age of wealth and leisure, whilst the Public Park at the eastern extremity must be only a shadow of its late Victorian or Edwardian heyday.

3 CHAPTER THREE: ACCESS TO, AND AROUND, STIRLING CASTLE

3.1 MAIN APPROACH

The main approach has always been from the town via Castle Wynd (recorded from 1380/1)³⁰ and it is suggested elsewhere that this upper part of the town was always the more prestigious area, site of the main markets, of the kirk and school *etc.* Above what is now the school, however, the approach crossed more or less open ground, kept clear both for defensive reasons, to create 'social distance' and so that (from the early 16th Century, at least) the eastern façade could be seen.

The main change which must be mentioned is the intrusion of the esplanade, following a request discussed by Stirling Council on 30 June 1804, that the land in front of the castle drawbridge might be levelled for a parade ground and exercise area; the council agreed on certain conditions, particularly with regard to public access work proceeded until about 1808. The council's permission was necessary as the ground lay within the burgh and came under the jurisdiction of the magistrates. The terms on which the agreement was given were vague and in the 1850s the town council threatened to take back the Esplanade if the army persisted in creating difficulties about the Valley – and the army quickly backed off.

The purpose of the esplanade was to provide both for training and to provide displays of marching, drill *etc.*; that, of course, was entirely consistent with the town's desire to expand its tourism industry (for which see *e.g.* Back Walk) and steps to the Esplanade from the Walks had been provided by 1820 (Woods Map).

However, it might not be altogether fanciful to link this back to earlier and other contemporary uses of the gap between castle and town. It has, for a millennium, been the site of the town's main burial ground, it was certainly used for royal rituals in the 16th Century, there was probably a shrine to the Virgin on the Lady Hill (the name always used in the 17th Century) and there are records of bonfires there, both to mark royal events and for the burning of witches. There were also gardens, notably those

³⁰ RMS I 639 burgage 'in vico castris' 1380-1.

associated with Mar's Wark and linking down the hill to the Haining (qv). So, the gap was dedicated to ritual and formal roles, to order and display throughout its recorded history – and military exercises are not out of place in such a sequence.

3.2 THE POSTERNS OR SALLY PORTS

Two posterns provide egress from the Nether Bailey, one to the north opening towards Ballengeich and one on the south, opening just inside the park dyke. A road or track approaches the northern one running diagonally up the slope though its upper end is obscured by debris and its lower end has been truncated by the cutting for the modern road in 1808³¹. The track is between 2.5 and 2.7 m wide and the blocked gate, over which is an inscription calling it the Sally Port, is 0.85 metres across and 1.68 in height³². The gate to the south is said to be 4' 8" (1.42m) wide, has a segmental arched head and broad chamfers on the arrises. RCAHMS suggests that this 'may possibly be the gate built in 1530 (sic) to give access to the Park,' noting that it is of 16th Century date, as is the entire wall round the Nether Bailey, though perhaps on an older line³³.

However, neither gate would be convenient for regular use whilst both would function well as sally ports, since both must have opened into deep wells, below the general ground level of the Nether Bailey. They would be easy to guard as well as difficult to access from outside, particularly the northern one which is at the top of a horrifyingly steep slope, so dangerous that I decided against even trying to approach it. Neither gate is wide enough to admit a horse nor high enough for a rider on a horse. It is thus very unlikely that either is the access to the Park referred to in the 1530s. It is not clear which postern was involved when the army built a platform at the Sally Port in 1689. The northern one is seen on Slezer's sketches, Dury's plan of 1708 and also on the Plan of the Town of 1746; an angled length of wall runs out from the main line to enclose a space between the outer and the inner gate, the surviving one now blocked up. The

³¹ Stirling Council Minutes, 25 April 1808; to improve and repair road at Castlehill and Ballengeich; the council to apply to government for the removal of the necessaries of the castle; *ibid*, 8 Oct 1808; £100 to be paid for improvement of the road at Ballengeich.

³² Visit by JGH and Stephen Digney, 9 March 2007.

³³ RCAHMS, 1963, p. 218-9; *ibid* p. 183. Though RCAHMS refers to a gate being built in 1530 the actual record is to making 'a passage down from the castle to the Park' (TA V, p. 436).

surviving southern gate has a round-topped, segmental arched head and the illustration suggests that the outer gate on the north was similar. The Sally Port inscription on the north is clearly 19th Century and was presumably inserted as a means on interpreting the building – though few tourists can ever have got close enough to read it!



Figure 2: Track leading from the N sally port.



Figure 3: Northern postern seen enclosed by an angled section of wall on Dury's Plan (Image: NLS).



Figure 4: The southern postern as seen from the Low Back Walk; the Outline surrounds the pipe; the slope is too steep and dangerous for a closer shot. (Photo: JGH).

3.3 BALLENGEICH ROAD

A road or path of some sort is shown through Ballengeich on all the military plans (see *e.g.* Laye's Plan, Fig. 6, p. 28). The northern Sally Port (qv) must have given access to this and then to the Gowane Hills. However, the present road, cut much more deeply into the soft earth and rock, was created in 1808;

- 25 April 1808; to improve and repair road at Castlehill and Ballengeich; the council to apply to government for the removal of the necessaries of the castle.
- 8 Oct 1808; £100 to be paid for improvement of the road at Ballengeich ³⁴.

The demand to improve the route would have been caused both by the growth of the village of Raploch, to the north and by building of the Drip Bridge over the Forth in the later years of the 18th Century and other improvements to the roads to Doune, Callander and the north, following on Wade's lead.

At a point just north of the Ballengeich Pass there has been a flight of steps going down the brae to the Raploch and known locally as the Soldiers' Steps. They are shown on the 1896 OS and are said to have been removed by the Council as they were dangerously steep. That is less surprising than the fact of their having been constructed in the first place!

3.4 THE 'PASSAGE' OF 1531

The Treasurers' Accounts record a payment of £5 to John Bog to make a passage down from the castle of Stirling to the Park in 1531 (sometimes erroneously given as 1530)³⁵. Bog is given no designation but as a John Bog was a senior official of the stables, given a sword by the king, sent to France to buy horses and as there was contemporaneous work taking place on the stables at Stirling, there can be little doubt about his identity. And, of course, that suggests that the 'passage' might link to the stables, which stood at

³⁴ Stirling Council Minutes Index.

³⁵ TA V, p. 436.

the northern end of what is now the Butt Park. It is sometimes suggested ³⁶ that this passage was via one or other of the two Sally Ports though that seems improbable on various grounds (see Sally Ports above).

There is, however, a route clearly visible on the South Brae, trending from the point where the High Back Walk cuts through the west dyke of the Haining, diagonally down the slope; jumbled stones and undergrowth mean that it cannot presently be located where it should intersect with the Low Back Walk. This route is clearly the one mentioned in a number of 17th Century documents which refer to William Ewing's House which was said to stand:

in the territory of the burgh in the Castlehill thereof on the east side of the Park Dyke now called Haining Dyke, between the King's Gate leading down to the port of the said dyke on the north, the common bray on the south and the old barn of Umquil Patrick Lundy als Porter and the nuik of the yard of umquil Jon McKie and three great stones lying in the king's gate on the east parts³⁷.

The road is clearly shown on all the military plans of Stirling and even on Wood's Map of 1820. Between the castle entrance and the south brae/ Haining Dyke area, the road on the maps consistently passes two structures which are so close to the site described in the documents that it is tempting to identify them as the house and barn referred to. One is clearly on thinner ice in suggesting that this is the house shown on Slezer's view; Chambers, in 1830 suggests that the Slezer house was the Earl of Mar's gardener's house, which was 'on the Haining Brae head' as this one is (see Sites/ Haining). Since Ewing and the Cunninghams, 16th Century park keepers, were closely related, there need be no contradiction. The plans indicate that, beyond the foot of the brae, the road crossed the Butt Park to cut through the Park Dyke towards its north western corner. A modern road, giving access to the houses, is clearly the remains of the route and is known locally as the Minister's Path, being on ground historically

³⁶ RCAHMS, 1963, p. 219.

³⁷ SCA, Burgh Register of Deeds, B66/9/1 p. 154-156; 26 June 1629, service of William Ewing as heir of late William, in Raploch, his father; of all and whole the tenement of land; Ewing produced a sasine dated 14 Day Nov 1612 bearing the late William to be infeft therein by resignation of Archibald Cunningham of Ladyland and the original sasine describes the property in similar terms.

called the Priest's Raploch. The road, of course, gave convenient access from Castle to Stables by a safe route and there are indications that it was also used as a convenient route for people coming to Stirling from the river crossing at Drip³⁸. But the route would become redundant as, firstly the stables went out of use, second the High and Low Back Walks were constructed and thirdly better roads were constructed via Ballengeich and Raploch Road.



Figure 5: The road constructed by John Bog in 1531, leading to the stables. (Photo: JGH).

³⁸ NAS Stirling Sheriff Deeds, SC67/7/30 bundle 1706, 4th bundle for Craigforth v. Hamilton and the way from the Raplochburn, through the Butts to the Castlehill.

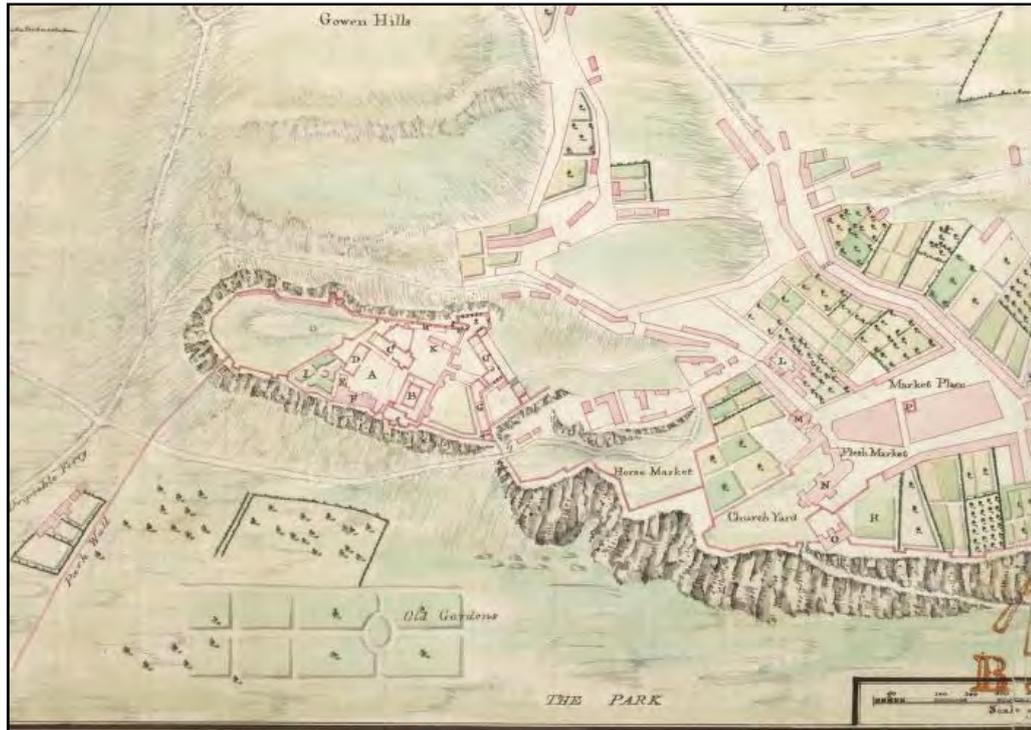


Figure 6: Laye's plan of 1740 (detail) is just one to show the road passing the two houses, descending the brae and crossing the Butt Park. (Image: NLS).



Figure 7: Slezer's View from Lady Hill; the house on the left is arguably William Ewing's former house. (Image: JGH).

4 CHAPTER FOUR: SITES

4.1 BACK WALK

Ronald provides a convenient summary of the property divisions and history of the Back Brae and Back Walk³⁹. The initial walk, more or less from the site of the present Highland Hotel to the west side of the Lady Hill, was inspired by Mr Edmondstone of Cambuswallace in 1724, though the town council and others subscribed to the costs, including some tree planting on the brae; a suitably-inscribed seat was positioned just above Cowane's Hospital to commemorate the foundation. In 1791 the walk was extended down to the Burgh Gate and through the 1790s, the High Back Walk was extended right round the castle, across the Gowane Hills to the bridge⁴⁰.

This extended walk was soon included in guide books and reports by visitors. The most fulsome praise came in 1802 when Campbell described it as:

conducted with great art and admirable contrivance, that commands prospects of which language cannot convey any idea that would not fall infinitely short of the grandeur which is everywhere presented to view.

Already, trees planted along the lower walk meant that the climbing visitor ascended 'through the wooded precipice, till ... we clear the umbrage; when all at once, the Grampian mountains burst into view. There was even the frisson in being amongst 'the jutting rocks that seem ready to precipitate themselves from the mouldering connection with each other, the rugged appearance of the steep beneath us'⁴¹. Such rapturous write-ups indicate, as much by their tone as their content, that the extended walk was intended to capitalise on the taste for the romantic and picturesque and may well have been part of an agenda to launch Stirling into the tourist market. Success in such a venture would have been helped by travel restrictions during the French wars

³⁹ Ronald, 1899, pp. 231-5.

⁴⁰ Ibid; Stirling Council Minutes, 5 Feb 1791, proposal to extend the walk; *ibid*, 8 Feb 1792, garden walls collapse due to work for Back Walk; 13 Jan 1798, payments for additions to take walk to south side of Castle and to Gowane Hills; 13 Oct 1798, final payment for the extension round castle to bridge.

⁴¹ E.g. Sutherland, 1794, p. 200 and pp. 104-5; Campbell, 1802, pp. 75-6 and pp. 79-80.

whilst financing the later phases of the work would have been easier due to the high war-time prices for farm produce. Presumably, as part of that Romantic agenda, a grotto seems to have been created, under the south side of the castle, just within the crown land seen on both Wood's Map of 1820 and 1st Edition OS. These were gentle walks for genteel people, walks to fill the time as much as to exercise the limbs, suitable for ladies and valetudinary gentlemen.

A surprising impact of the walks was on the castle drains, which had hitherto discharged down the south brae, where blackened soil and other midden deposits testify that this was ancient practice. Following representations from the burgh, at an uncertain date, two tanks to receive the sewage of a garrison of 500, were built at the foot of the slope, though plans that they should be regularly emptied for use on the King's Park Farm were unrealistic as the job was so nauseous; in consequence, the offence was simply moved from the High to the Low level, probably until proper drains were installed in the castle, about the 1870s.

Two further initiatives came in 1805. In April proposals were made for what is now called the Low Back Walk, through the Haining and Butts to the Raploch; there must have been an earlier walk of some sort as far as the Butt Well, but the extension took it through the government property below the castle. In October, plans were proposed to make a road from Craigforth, by the south side of the castle (now Raploch Road)⁴². These, of course, would connect with the new road through Ballengeich created in 1808 (q.v.). Later improvements and maintenance are recorded including a payment for styles in 1822⁴³. The styles seem to have been at the intersection of some of the property boundaries, including where the High Walk went through the Haining Dyke to enter the Crown property; they were necessary, *inter alia*, to allow public access whilst preventing stock from straying (see below). The distinctive gate (known to local children as *The Greasy Gate* and on which they spat as they passed) was removed (for

⁴² Stirling Council Minutes, Index, 24 April 1805; a plan for carrying a road through the Haining and Butts to the Raploch, the council to correspond with government and with Mr Erskine of Mar; *ibid*, 5 Oct 1805; plans made to apply to make a road from Craigforth by the south side of the castle.

⁴³ Stirling Council Minutes, Index, 10 May 1817, improvements to Back Walk at cost of £10; *ibid*, 13 June 1822, repairs to walk and styles, £5.

no discernible reason) some years ago, evidently with no consideration of its historical, folkloric or aesthetic significance.

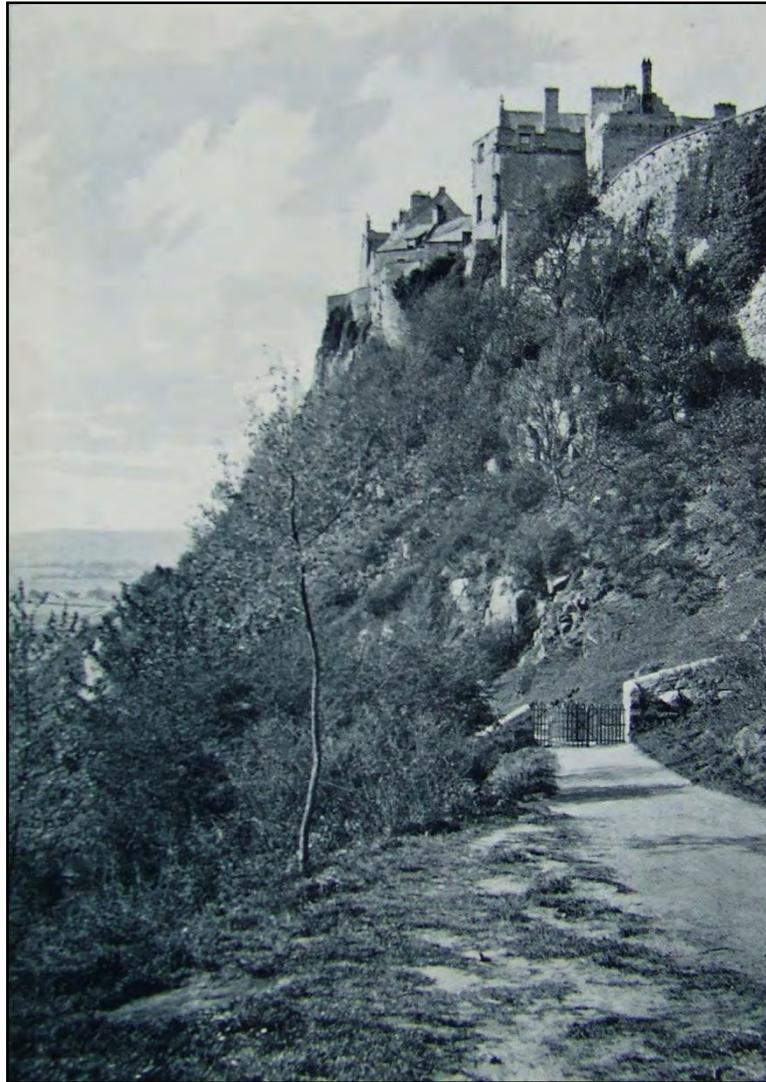


Figure 8: The Greasy Gate, situated where the path enters the military property, allowed public access whilst controlling grazing stock.

The arrival of steam boats (mainly day trips from Edinburgh) from 1813 does not seem to have had much impact on the plan whilst the arrival of the railway in Stirling in 1848/9, did little to disturb the original scheme of phases 1 and 2. But when, for example, the new Cemetery was laid out in the Valley in 1857-8, it was deliberately linked to the existing walks and the approaches to the castle and intersected by more serpentine walks and promenades through the 'educational sculpture garden'

provided for the edification of the new, much more 'mass market' visitors, again often day trippers⁴⁴.

A major landscape change has been the growth of trees such that it is actually now quite difficult to get more than glimpses of the views of Menteith and the mountains. There had been some trees south of the original walk⁴⁵. Some of these may, like some of those on the Haining Brae (q.v.), have been fruit trees. By 1802, Campbell was able to 'emerge' from the shade of the trees, probably somewhere about the Ladies Hill, where there is a vantage point projected out from the main line of the walk, to see the Vale of Menteith and the mountains beyond. Photos of the brae under the castle itself taken in the late-19th or even early 20th Century, show it to have been scrubby but treeless.



Figure 9: Castle c.1900 showing the scrub-covered south brae and the contrast with the tree-covered Haining brae. (Image: JGH).

These braes round the castle were included in the 18th Century leases of the Park, Butt Field, Knott and Gowane Hills and grazing would ensure that tree growth was prevented. No wall is shown on Wood's map dividing the Butt Park from the brae so that stock in the field would have grazed the slope, necessitating the styles mentioned above. As Charles Rogers' comments reported in discussing the Gowane Hills make

⁴⁴ Harrison, Old Town Cemetery, unpublished reports, 2001.

⁴⁵ Ronald, 1899, p. 234 for trees in 1767.

clear, even in the second half of the 19th Century, the livestock were providing a military service, their munching destroying cover for the approach of The Enemy. So, the trees destroy two layers of the past meaning of the landscape, the designed landscape which provided sudden and surprising visions of splendid views in a historic setting. But also, surely, the 16th Century and earlier landscape, when these slopes were equally treeless, when the inhabitants of the castle looked down and saw what is now the Low Back Walk area as a part of the Butts and the Lists.

On the other hand, the modern trees do good service in partially hiding some of the suburban developments (Castle Business Park, Garden Centre at Craigforth and so on) which are destroying not just the designed landscape but the very reason for its existence, the stunning views in a historic setting.

4.2 BUTT PARK

This seems to have been the usual Victorian name for the field below the castle. The 16th Century lists were probably constructed here. The ground either side of the path is generally fairly level. It was amongst the lands granted to Erskine in the 1560s and as the tacks become available in the 18th Century, was let along with the King's Park, Gowane Hills *etc.* But, without the wall, it would effectively extend right up the hill to the foot of the castle rock, much as the Haining also included both haugh and brae. It appears to have been grazed rather than arable but there are few details. The wall which now divides it longwise appears only between 1820 and 1858 (and probably consequent on Mr Caird's report of 1850). That would cut the brae off from the field and so prevent grazing on the brae, initiating the scrub and tree growth below the castle which has now become woodland.

4.3 BUTT WELL

The Butt Well is fed from springs arising on the upper part of the western march of the Haining. It appears that the outflow stream has been diverted to confine it to the Butt Park and then piped; recent (2007) work has been carried out to prevent seepage and marshiness.

The name is not likely to be older than the use of the Butt Park as butts, probably in the 16th Century. It is reasonable to assume that its use was ancient but no records of it have been found before the 19th Century and, in consequence, nothing to confirm its use by the occupants of the castle. Fleming writes of it being a convenient morning's walk for town's people, who would drink the water; women took clothes to wash and then dried them on the Haining grass below. He also tells of parts of the seating being over 40 years old in his day.

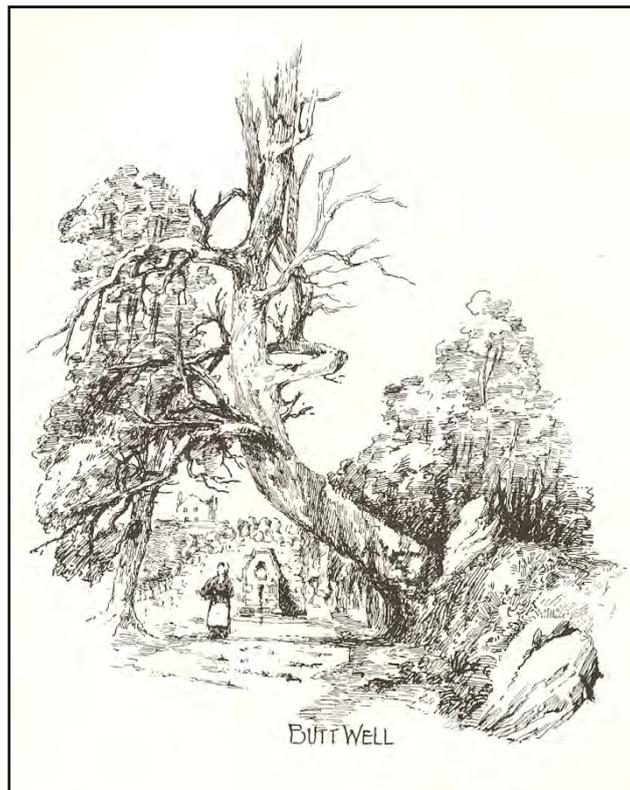


Figure 10: Butt Well in the 19th Century view (Fleming, 1898); the tree in the foreground is still there. (Image: JGH).

The Low Back Walk (q.v.) was probably put through the dyke to continue to Raploch in 1805. In 1826 the Town Council instructed the office bearers to watch over the town's interests with regard to the water of the Butt Well whilst in 1842 they resolved that a new stone well was to be built, to replace the Butt Well, which was broken ⁴⁶. A Parliamentary Report of 1852 noted that effluent from the castle drains polluted the water from the well and the Reporter pondered means of preventing this as the well

⁴⁶ Council Minutes, Index, 18 Aug 1826; office bearers to watch over the town's interest with regard to water of the Butt Well; *ibid*, Butt Well, 20 June 1842, a new stone well to replace the Butt Well, which is broken.

supplied the village of Raploch⁴⁷. Raploch, then confined to the northern sections of Raploch Road, was a growing community at that time; it is not clear how the water was got to Raploch and certainly, in its journey, it would have to cross the Raploch Burn/Bridge Mill Lead, somewhere near the modern fire station. It would become redundant for that purpose when Raploch got piped water, probably in the later 19th Century.

4.4 HAINING

The Haining is now usually used as the name of a rectangular field bounded by the King's Knott, the Butt Park and Royal Gardens. Historically, and for the purposes of this note, it is treated as part of a larger unit, including the now-wooded slope (the Haining Brae) forming its southern side and extending up to the Back Walk near the Kirkyard.

Haining is a word applied to several sorts of enclosures and processes but is most often associated with enclosure to preserve grass which is to be cut for hay. However, Gilbert discusses related words in relation to enclosures for stock and even as traps for deer in parks (1970, p. 220) whilst, as noted elsewhere, there are records of hay cut and of hay fed to the deer at Stirling. In 1582 the 'haugh and brae' of the Haining which 'had been waste past memory of man' were granted to Anabella Murray, countess of Mar⁴⁸. The bounds are described and include the Rude Croft (on part of which Royal Gardens now stands) the 'garden hedge' (*i.e.* the boundary with the King's Knot area) and parts of the Valley and Kirkyard. In about 1570 the then earl had begun work on Mar's Wark, in the town, which also had a substantial garden adjacent to the Valley and this Haining unit would greatly extend it. It is a reasonable assumption that the ground had formerly belonged to the Crown, though there is a slight anomaly, in that case, in that it was legally within the burgh. There is no explanation offered for why it was waste in 1582 nor of its earlier history.

⁴⁷ Parliamentary Papers, 1852 LV, Woods and Forests, p. 109.

⁴⁸ RMS V, 390.

A new grant of 1620 to the earl includes 'rupem lie *Heuche* alias *lie Hanyng* bondan. ad pomarium regis (*gairdine*) contiguam ad hortum magni edificii le Newark in Stirling; ...'⁴⁹ confirming that the haugh and brae are the Haining and that they link between the king's garden and the garden of the New (Mar's) Wark in Stirling.

The Erskines probably fairly quickly created or recreated a garden on the site. Hew Clerk, gardener in Haining of Stirling, is recorded in 1626 and the previous year, Hew Clerk, gardener to Lord Mar in Cambuskenneth, had lost his house by fire⁵⁰. In 1652, John Edmondstone, gardener in Haining, was servitor to the earl of Mar⁵¹. And in 1685 the then earl granted a tack to John Edmondstone, younger and his spouse, of the houses and yards (gardens) formerly possessed by John Edmondstone, elder, gardener, his father.

These were defined as:

all and haill the houses upon the haining braehead of Sterling ⁵² ... *with the haining brae and orchyaird under the Brae called the haining yairds together with the Kitchen yaird upon the west side of our great Ludging in Sterling and with the over and under growth of the saids yairds and orchyaird.*

Edmondstone's duties were to include supplying vegetables and herbs for the earl and his household when in Stirling and an obligation to uphold the dykes and look after the fruit trees, planting replacements as required⁵³. However, it appears that Edmondstone or members of his immediate family also had interests in the grazing of the Park, which will be considered under the heading King's Park Farm.

Like the rest of the Mar properties and rights, the park and Haining were forfeit following 1715 and in 1717, the earl of Rothes, as the new governor of the castle,

⁴⁹ RMS VII 2125.

⁵⁰ SCA, Stirling Burgh Court, B66/16/6 31 May 1626; SCA, Stirling Kirk Session Minutes, 25 Oct 1625.

⁵¹ SCA, Stirling Burgh Register of Deeds, B66/9/6 p 32 r.

⁵² See William Ewing's House.

⁵³ SCA, Stirling Burgh Register of Deeds, B66/9/14 p 331 tack by Charles, Earl of Mar to John Edmondstoun, younger and Margaret Paterson, his spouse.

endeavoured to set new leases on the park, Butts *etc.* but Edmonstone's widow protested that no lease should prejudice her liferent right of the Haining from the 1685 lease⁵⁴. Not only did the widow, Margaret Paterson, maintain her hold on the tenancy, but Mar's family, Erskine of Grange and Erskine of Dun, managed to retain the property (as they did much of the rest of the estate). And in 1727 Paterson won a further victory when she saw off a complaint by these two lords of the Court of Session that she had neglected the orchard and the dykes, which were now ruinous⁵⁵.

Presumably she was dead by 1734 when Grange and Dun set 'all and hail the Hayning yards Brae dwelling houses with the office houses presently ruinous lying on the South side of the Castle of Stirling within the parioch and sheriffdom thereof' to Christopher Russell, merchant. It was accepted that the fences (any sort of enclosure including a dyke) were ruinous and need not be further repaired whilst the house would be set in order and was then to be maintained. Russell, a merchant, then sublet to William Graeme⁵⁶.

In 1719 William Eason, described as the keeper of the Haining yard, possessed by William Edmondstone, had complained of servant boys shaking the trees to steal the fruit and, even more bitterly, that when he caught one of them, the others returned and assaulted him⁵⁷. But it is clear that by the 1730s the orchard, which must have been created between the late 16th and mid-17th Century, probably quickly after the initial grant, had gone to ruin and was neglected again. However, a century later, Chambers describes the Haining Brae, noting that at the Butt Well, the public walk 'runs upon the very terrace,' remains of a garden could still be seen 'in a very warm and delightful spot' and that old people could recall fruit trees on the brae above⁵⁸. Wood's Map shows the area with trees, right up to the Haining Dyke and Butt Well.

⁵⁴ Fife Record Centre, Markinch, Rothes Papers, A/AAF40/30/3 Stirling Castle, 1717. Item 22 At Stirling 30 Jan 1717

⁵⁵ SCA Burgh Court Vouchers, B66/25/779/3 bundle 1726; answers by Grange and Dun 1726; NAS Mar and Kellie, GD124/6/205 absolutor to Paterson on complaint by Grange and Dun, 1727.

⁵⁶ NAS, Stirling Sheriff Deeds, SC67/49/14 p. 34 sub-tack; SCA Stirling Register of Deeds, B66/9/17 p 59 for tack by Grange and Dun to Russell.

⁵⁷ SCA, burgh court vouchers, B66/25/779/2, 30 July 1719, Eason against others.

⁵⁸ Chambers, 1830, p. 52.



Figure 11: The public walk 'on the very terrace' of the Haining, with the Butt Well in the background; note the tree also seen on Fleming's view (Fig. 10 p. 37). (Photo: JGH).

Recalling the requirement to supply herbs and vegetables to the earl, it is clear that the brae above the wall is far too steep to have been cultivated though trees could have been planted in pits whilst there are a number of retaining walls, which could represent the remains of terracing. Rogers describes the area as having been 'hanging gardens' and proposed it should be restored as such⁵⁹.

The western march dyke extends from the boundary wall for the Snowdon Cemetery, via the now-lost *Greasy Gate* (above), down the brae to the Well and then divides the Haining Field and Knot from the Butt Park. The eastern march runs up as a series of massive boulders from just above Royal Gardens to approach the Back Walk just above Cowane's Hospital. On the steep sections, both consist of massive boulders, as does the base of the western march near the Butt Well, though the top is of a different, slighter build. And whilst there are two main lines of paths, similar to the others along the brae,

⁵⁹ Rogers, 1876, p. 112 and p. 116. Fleming (1898, p. 118) also refers to the terraces above the walk as having been part of the garden.

there is another line of quite a different pattern; it joins the main western about 50m above the Butt Well area and runs diagonally up the slope to a point just below where two paths meet, close to the north end of the Valley Cemetery and there are massive boulders on the downward slope. It is not fanciful to suggest it as part of an older scheme.



Figure 12: Terracing above the path near the Butt Well, possible remains of the 'hanging gardens.' (Photo: JGH).

The lower slope and field (and the Mar's Wark Garden behind the mansion house above) were well suited to cultivation and the southern aspect would have made the entire site suitable for fruit; indeed, fruit trees were also grown elsewhere on the south brae⁶⁰. The growth of trees below the path since that time means it is now generally more shaded but the photograph shows trees and shrubs have greatly extended in this area since c. 1870 whilst even photos taken c. 1900 show a wall dividing field from brae (e.g. Fig 9, p. 34). The Haining was still the property of the Erskine family in the late 19th Century but I understand now belongs to Stirling Council.

⁶⁰ Stirling Council Minutes Index, 16 May 1770; grass parks at the Back Braes to be let, young fruit trees not to be damaged.

4.5 GOWANE HILLS

There is no historical information about the Gowane Hills prior to 1507 when they were taken from the town of Stirling by the Crown in exchange for a part of the King's Park. I have previously suggested that this was done as artillery had become sufficiently powerful to cover the bridge from the castle, a circumstance in which full control of the ground and sight lines was desirable. However, even more than other parts of the area, the archaeological importance of the Hills must be emphasised. There is a vitrified fort at the northern extremity and Digney had argued that the hills might have been the site of the original settlement of Stirling, an oppidum of the Roman or post-Roman period, a possibility which should not be compromised until it has been fully investigated. It is improbable that Albany and others were beheaded here and the so-called 'Heading Stone' appears to be a butcher's block, found on the site of a former shambles on the ground below and it is frustrating that the 'beheading' myth is presented whilst the fort is ignored.



Figure 13: Path bulldozed through the ramparts of the Iron Age fort. (Photo: JGH).

The Jacobites established a battery on the Gowane during their siege of the castle in January 1746 – the site now desperately overgrown with whins. There are occasional records of turf cutting, arable and grazing on the hills in the early modern period and (at least by the early 18th Century) of cattle coming to Stirling's Latter Fair being grazed there. But the fair failed in about the 1770s.

Grazing, at least, would help to control tree growth and so was a matter of primary importance to the sight lines. Following the forfeiture of the Earl of Mar, the Gowane Hills were leased along with the King's Park, Butts and Knott, though the prime tenant seems always to have sublet the hills. At least one of the tacks allowed the tenant 'dead sand' from the hills where available – and the obvious site would be the very crumbly rock, where the modern road goes through the Ballengeich pass.

In 1798, as the High Back Walk was extended round the castle it was also taken to the Mote Hill and the Bridge ⁶¹ and the walk is mentioned in the various guide books *etc.* The Walk, where it crossed the hills, seems to have been fenced in and there are still concrete blocks with iron posts alongside some of the older paths on the northern side. In 1827 Stirling Council proposed planting the hills with trees a notion revived by Rogers in 1851; he derided the fears of the army that the trees might provide cover for an advancing enemy. 'When our ironclads are smashed and sunk', he laughed, did they imagine a few trees were going to make any material difference to their capturing the fortress ⁶².

In a report drawn up in 1850 the Gowane Hills were described as 'a precipitous strip of rocky pasture with a few acres of arable land interspersed' sublet by the nominal tenant, whose main holding was King's Park Farm. The reporter comments on the public right of access which he clearly thought was detrimental to the value⁶³.

⁶¹ Stirling Council Minutes, Index, 13 Jan 1798; John McDonald, contractor, paid £30 for making additions to the Back Walk around the Gowan Hills and on the south side of the castle; *ibid*, 13 Oct 1798 final payment of £20 8s 4d made to McDonald for making the new walk round the castle to the bridge.

⁶² Stirling Council Minutes, Index 27 March 1827, Gowane hills to be planted with trees and council will subscribe 10 guineas. Rogers, 1876, pp. 115-6.

⁶³ Parliamentary Papers, 1852-3, LV, Woods and Forests, p. 106.

Grazing continued until at least the immediate post WWII period but, since that time, tree growth has become extensive and has visibly advanced during the last 30 years; scrub is quickly approaching woodland in many areas. This is seriously compromising both the archaeology and the landscape heritage, the open views which were the hills prime purpose for 450 years. Mysteriously, despite being told about these issues on several occasions, Stirling Council planted trees in recent years on one of the areas of rig and furrow, where trees had not spontaneously appeared, bulldozed new paths across the hills and deepened old ones, without archaeological supervision or even a proper survey and cutting through the ramparts of the vitrified fort (fig 14 above). Field walking on the disturbed ground of the rig and furrow found sherds of green-glazed earthenware and other pottery up to and including 19th Century material, all indicative of manuring and consistent with the documentary records above.

4.6 KING'S KNOT

There has been a good deal of discussion about the site of the 16th Century gardens and whether those of James V occupied the site of the modern King's Knot. The point is of some importance since, as Grove explains, the 17th Century painting by Vosterman and the early 18th Century cartographic evidence suggests that the gardens then stood further north than the present Knot, on or close to the Butt Field. The Knot is not depicted in its present location before 1746, when it is labelled as 'Knot or Flower Garden'. Grove considers it at least possible that the Knot was only constructed in the early 18th Century⁶⁴.

Loveday comments in 1732 on 'vestiges' of 'very fine gardens' south of the Castle, 'which are still very plain'. Sibbald had used a similar phrase in 1706 and Defoe who visited about 1720 writes of 'large gardens' that had had walks and grass plats in an old-fashioned style but were still 'plain to be seen'. These comments taken together seem to preclude any major work in the late 17th or early 18th Century⁶⁵ - and if we suppose that they refer to gardens on another site, we must ask what has become of them.

⁶⁴ Grove, 1989.

⁶⁵ Loveday, *Stirling Antiquary*, vol 2, 230-1. Sibbald 1707 (1892), p. 44-5; Defoe, quoted Grove, 1989, p. 26-7.

The entire garden was assigned to the earl of Mar along with other lands to pay for the upkeep of the castle from the 1560s. A grant of the Haining to the Countess of Mar in 1582 says that it was bounded on the south by the garden hedge and in the early 17th Century it was bounded by the king's 'pomarium' or orchard, called the garden; other bounds of the Haining included the Rude Croft and a spring or well, clearly the Butt Well ⁶⁶. This can only refer the modern Haining area (see Haining) and confirms that the garden was on the Knot site in 1582. From Vosterman's main viewpoint, high on the bluff on the south-west side of the King's Park, where the length of the town and the Park Loch (mid-right of painting) can be seen, the modern Knot is obscured since it is in a hollow and it would be a natural step to 'cut and paste' this feature to the Butt Field, which is visible. The garden was described as a *pomarium* in 1582 and the Knot is clearly unsuitable for fruit trees supporting the 'conventional' creation date for the Knot as a feature of 1627-8 ⁶⁷ - a date which also allows time for the original feature to be reduced to 'vestiges' by the early 18th Century.

After Mar's forfeiture in 1715/6 the park and garden were amongst assets assigned to the newly appointed Governor of the castle, initially lord Rothes⁶⁸. From the early 1740s the first leases in the public records refer to the Knot as part of that unit ⁶⁹ though it seems not to be explicitly called the King's Knot until the 1760s⁷⁰. The stories about the Knot being the site of the 'Round Table' need not be further discussed here. Jonathan Foyle suggests that a raised, mound-type knot would be expected in this position in the later 16th Century so that the bold design could be appreciated from above; herb gardens and fussy detail were more appropriate to the immediate vicinity of the house ⁷¹.

⁶⁶ RMS V, 390, 16 April 1582; *ibid*, 1583, 29 Aug 1588. See also RMS VII 2125 3 Feb 1620 general grant to Mar of entire earldom including 'rupem lie *Heuche* alias *lie Hanyng* bondan. ad pomarium regis (*gairdine*) contiguam ad hortum magni edificii le Newark in Stirling; ...'

⁶⁷ RCAHMS, 1963, p. 219.

⁶⁸ Rothes Papers, Fife Record Centre, Markinch, A/AAF40/30/3 relates to Stirling Castle, see particularly items 22; also NLS, Ms 17603, f. 79r.

⁶⁹ NAS, Stirling Commissary Court Register of Deeds, CC21/13/13 p. 440-444, for tack including the Park, Knott, Butts etc dated 1744.

⁷⁰ The first record of a 'Knot' found is from 1745 when the Butt and Knott were leased for grazing (SC67/49/17 p. 439); the earliest reference to the King's Knot found is 1767 in a similar grazing lease (CC21/13/14 p. 13 ff Dated 28 Nov 1767, tack by William Buchan).

⁷¹ *Pers com*; my thanks are due to Jonathan for his interest and suggestions.

Though it continues to be mentioned in leases into the 19th Century, there are few signs of it being used for anything other than grazing. Chambers describes the Knott as 'a marshy piece of pasture ground... completely desolated, so far as shrubs or flowers are concerned' though there were reports of the memory of a cherry tree which stood at the corner of one of the parterres but which had been destroyed long ago. He describes the structure and various features he interprets as canals and also differentiates what he calls The Queen's Knote to the west⁷² and is, more or less, followed by other writers of tourist literature of the 19th Century.

In 1842 Loudon includes a brief description and a plan of the area and his King's Knott looks very similar to the modern one but another report in his *Gardeners' Magazine* says:

*The circle called the Queen's Knote has been by some considered a miniature of the other (i.e. King's Knot); but, on a minute examination, it indicates nothing at present but a plain surface with a few old mole hills, of which it has a proportion along with the other parts of the field, and of which various figures might easily be constructed by a fertile fancy*⁷³.

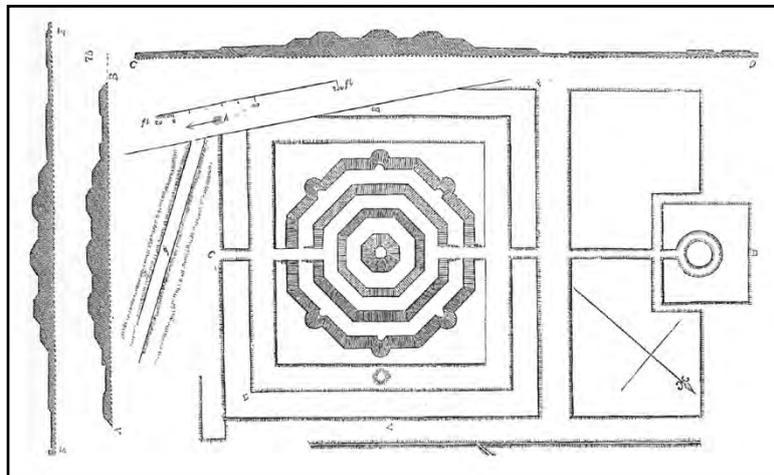


Figure 14: Loudon's Plan from the Gardener's Magazine of 1843; in spite of scepticism about the Queen's Knot, parts of it are shown.

⁷² Chambers, 1830 p. 22.

⁷³ Loudon, J.C., 1842, p. 596-606; Drummond, J., 1843, p. 604 quoting report by Messrs Drummond.

In 1850 Mr Caird, who had been commissioned to advise about the King's Park Farm, said that the field called The King's Knot needed to be drained but, as it was always to be kept in pasture, he saw no need to level it or 'disturb the surface, or interfere with any of the old landmarks of this field of ancient royal sports' and that removal of stagnant water was all that was required. He also thought that a stone wall should be built round the Knot and Curling Pond fields, which were 'much resorted to by the public' so that styles would have to be provided⁷⁴.

There was work on the Knott between 1866 and 1868, probably the 'considerable improvements' mentioned in Grome's Ordnance Gazetteer⁷⁵. Rogers is probably referring to the King's Knot rather than the entire park when he says that by 1870 it was 'surrounded with a low parapet wall and railing, unseemly excrescences were removed, and the place otherwise adorned'⁷⁶.

4.7 KING'S PARK FARM

Royal use of the Park is considered in the more general section of this Report. This entry will consider the gradual transformation of much it, with some adjacent areas, into a commercial farm and the subsequent partial dismemberment of that farm.

The process began with the grant to John, Lord Erskine, keeper of Stirling Castle, of the captaincy of the castle, with the park, garden under the castle wall, the lands of Raploch and of Gallowhillis (Gowane Hills) for life. This was confirmed by later grants when some of his rights and liabilities are more carefully spelled out. Basically, the grant, along with more extensive lands in the Lordship of Stirling, was intended to defray his costs in staffing the castle and (at least partly) in maintaining it⁷⁷. There are few indications of use for the next century or more and the brief resurgence of royal interest under Charles II is considered in the general section.

⁷⁴ Parliamentary Papers, 1852 LV, Woods and Forests, pp. 108-9.

⁷⁵ NAS Ministry of Works, MW1/321 and MW1/368; items not examined due to time pressure.

⁷⁶ Rogers, 1876, pp. 111-2.

⁷⁷ RSS V, 901; RSS, V, 2977; NAS GD124/11/1 8 Aug 1566 sasine for John Earl of Mar of the Sheriffdom of Stirling and the park, garden and Gallowhillis etc.

By the later 17th Century, however, it appears that John Edmonstone 'in Haining' (for whom see Haining) was tacksman of the Park; his tack (lease) would have been from Mar himself. He certainly sublet all or parts for grazing, both for the cows of the inhabitants of the town and for cattle coming to the fairs or otherwise passing through in droves *etc.*, a fact revealed in various claims about strays, disagreements about dues and so on⁷⁸. He might have put part down to arable, though there were later restrictions on which parts and how much could be ploughed. In 1696 there was a complaint before the Privy Council of Scotland that the tacksman of the park of Stirling had refused to let the grazings to the military except at exorbitant prices; he was ordered to do so at the price charged for the last three years⁷⁹.

Following Mar's forfeiture the lands continued to be part of the emoluments of the governor of the castle and were leased by them, several of the tacks and subtacks being recorded in the Stirling Sheriff Register of Deeds. Most of the lessees were men of some means from Stirling and the vicinity and sublet (they were preferred as primary tenants as they were less likely to become insolvent whilst subletting to others divided their risks). In 1739 the tenant asked that he be allowed to plough some of the land, as had been permitted in Holyrood park for some years past, he explained. Later tacks generally forbid ploughing of areas not previously ploughed and specifically on the areas of the High Park (broadly the golf course), probably as these were to be available for army camps, exercises *etc.*; camps, of course, imply latrine pits, cooking areas and so on. There is certainly extensive rig and furrow on the golf course and it is probably datable, on this evidence, to broadly the later 18th Century. Exercises imply spent shot, perhaps practice trenches and breastworks and the whole range of military works. And, as might be expected, they also meant disputes with the tenants who complained of their being excluded, their stock disturbed and so on. There is little doubt that the main agricultural use was for grazing though there was some arable, even on the Gowane Hills; on the other hand, it would be surprising if the carse ground was not

⁷⁸ SCA, Stirling Burgh Court, 22 Oct 1691; *ibid*, 23 Sept 1706; SCA, burgh court vouchers, B66/25/779/1 bundle 5; NAS Stirling Commissary Court, CC21/19/1 bundle 3, claim by Edmondstone against others;

⁷⁹ NAS, Privy Council Acta, PC2/26 16 April 1696; see also PC Decreta, f. 178.

under arable. But during these decades there is no sign of a single 'farm' – indeed, there was no single tenant who needed one⁸⁰.

In 1767 George Pollock, tenant in Throsk (east of Stirling on the carse) took a tack of the laigh park of the meadow, 'divided from the rest of the King's Park by ditches and palings' for 16 years, there were restrictions on ploughing *etc.* as above but a requirement that he should maintain the houses (buildings) and dykes ⁸¹. And in 1806 Charles Pollock, described as principal tacksman of the park by a lease dated 1803, sublet a part of the High Park to Peter McDiarmid, who was already in possession, with the usual restrictions though adding that he is to have right to use the 'usual watering place' and a duty to maintain the house on the High Park ⁸². Pollock had also sublet the Gowane Hills and the other subsidiary areas to others⁸³. In 1820 Mr Pollock's name appears beside the 'Farm House' at the site of the modern King's Park Farm on Wood's Map.

In 1821 Daniel Connel took a 19 year lease ⁸⁴ which expired in 1840 when a new lease was given to a Mr Tennant. He was in difficulties and left in 1846 when Peter Dewar took over. However, Tennant (and perhaps earlier tenants) had complained of the extensive rights of public access across much of the farm as well as the requirement not to plough parts required for army camps and reviews, complaints continued by Dewar. Both also demanded compensation for expenses they had incurred in making improvements and also wanted abatements in respect of the right of public access; these involved right to walk on the racecourse and along the cliffs of the high park, access to the Knot, a path through the Bow Butts (*i.e.* Butt Park) and walks on the Gowane Hills but, it was emphasised, the public wandered far more extensively than this so that scarcely any part of the farm was not compromised, except for the carse ground (the fields either side of the A811 as it heads west from Stirling). In

⁸⁰ Key documents include; NLS royal letters and other items concerning feu and other rights in Stirlingshire, 17603 f 71r-82v, 1706-1722; Fife Record Centre, Rothes Papers, A/AAF40/30/3/22 tack of Park, Butts, Gowan Hills etc by Lord Rothes as governor, 1717; Fife Record Centre, Rothes Papers A/AAF40/30/3/2 agreement about use of the park, 1732; NAS, Stirling Sheriff Deeds, SC67/49/26 p 176 tack dated 1765.

⁸¹ NAS, Stirling Commissary Court, CC21/13/15 p 137-140 subtack by William Buchan to George Pollock.

⁸² This might refer to the farm or to the 'Herd's Hoose' which was much higher up the ridge.

⁸³ NAS, CC21/13/25 p 158, subtack of Park of Stirling dated 1806 by Charles Pollock.

⁸⁴ Parliamentary Papers, 1833 XXXIV, Woods and Forests, p. 30.

consequence, no part of the High Park was now ploughed, though the reporter thought it excellent turnip ground. In practice, the tenant took in the cows of the town to graze, very much as had happened in the later 17th Century.

Consequent on Caird's report of 1850 extensive drainage work was carried out, the farm buildings improved and extended (compare Woods Map and 1st Edition OS), styles erected to admit the public whilst preventing stock from straying. The reporter also made recommendations about the Park Dyke and the King's Knott which are considered under those specific heads.

Caird found the encroachments by the army and the public altogether exceptional but thought that another exceptional circumstance, the vicinity of Stirling and the garrison, offered compensations both in terms of potential markets and the availability of 'fertilising substances'. Apart from manure available from the town (parts of which were dumped in old sandpits in the eastern parts of the Park), there was material from the castle, collected in tanks (as discussed under Middens, below). However, use of this material was limited as it was so offensive. He made various recommendations about how the problems might be ameliorated and the resource better used and thought that the farm should be run as a dairy and market farm, supplying the town⁸⁵.

Even in the 1890s, the Ordnance Gazetteer describes the park as being used as drill ground and public park and notes the disused race-course but makes no mention of the golf course (p. 384, col.1). Golf is now the most obvious of the leisure activities in the park. The game was being played in the park by 1603, though there was presumably no 'course' at that time and golf may well have been amongst the causes of 'trespass' complained of or accommodated to be the farmers. The first Stirling Golf Club was formed in 1869 and there then existed several clubs (Ladies and Gents) with their own courses and even their own club houses until the mid-20th Century⁸⁶. Drainage work was projected in 1909⁸⁷ and a new 18 hole course opened on 29 June 1912, Mrs Irvine

⁸⁵ Parliamentary Papers, 1852-3 LVI, Woods and Forests, p. 521; Parliamentary Papers, 1852-3 LV, pp. 57-8 and pp. 105-116; Alexander Connal, tenant, King's Park Farm, was an elector for the county of Stirling in 1832, Roll of Electors, 1832, London.

⁸⁶ McCutcheon, 1999, 58-9.

⁸⁷ NAS RHP2934 Plan of drainage improvements of golf course, 1909.

Robertson driving the first ball⁸⁸. However, neither course nor club house are marked on the 2nd Edition OS (1898) whilst in May 1893 the Commissioners of Woods and Forests had granted two leases, one to Stirling Town Council of 23.5 acres of the King's Park to be used for public recreation only (now the tennis courts, football fields and children's play area) and one to Peter, John and Andrew Dewars of the King's Park Farm, comprising the Park, Butts, Fisher Row and a portion of the Gowane Hills⁸⁹ so that the farm continued on much the same ground, if not the same economic basis, as formerly. The high part of the farm (now the golf course) had probably not been ploughed since the later 18th Century and golf may have been amongst the trespasses complained of by the tenant in the 1850s. Both park and golf course are still rented from the Crown Estate Commissioners, the successors to the Office of Woods and Forests; the King's Park Farm has recently been sold by them and there have been discussions (local press, *passim*) about the golf course also being sold. Golf is currently probably the biggest threat to the archaeology of the Park, with new greens and tees being made and other works carried out, seemingly with little restriction; rig and furrow is particularly vulnerable. Trees have been planted both on the margin of the park/ course areas and elsewhere, mainly to suit the club whilst ancient paths are made virtually unusable by golfers.

4.8 CURLING POND, SHOOTING RANGE, PUBLIC PARK

Mr Caird's Report of 1850 says that the King's Park Farm included two fields on the right of the road, first the King's Knott and then the Curling Pond field. It is not clear which field he means and certainly no part of the Butt Park would be suitable for curling, surely, and this is probably an error. From 1879 the Office of Woods and Forests granted the right of using two curling ponds in the King's Park for 21 years at a rent of 5s pa⁹⁰. Curling ponds are shown on 2nd Edition OS close under the cliff face on the low part of the farm, on an area where there have been quarrying operations at some time.

⁸⁸ McCutcheon, 1986, p. 127.

⁸⁹ PP1899 XVIII, Woods and Forests, p. 26; the Dewar family had had a lease of the farm since 1848, PP 1852-3 LV pp. 57-8.

⁹⁰ Parliamentary Papers, 1880 XIX, Woods and Forests, p. 77.

The OS shows shooting ranges in the general area of the homesteads. I assume that these are military in origin but have no specific data. At the eastern extremity of the King's Park, along Park Terrace, is a small public recreation park with tennis courts, football pitches and children's play area and a very modest 'garden' area. This is not shown on the 2nd Edition OS and probably originates from an agreement with the Office of Woods and Forests in 1897 to lease 23 ½ acres of the King's Park to the town to be used solely as a public recreation ground; the area continues to be leased from the Crown Estate. The land must have been formerly been part of the King's Park Farm ⁹¹.

4.9 KING'S PARK; PARK DYKE

Gilbert discusses possible changes in the outline of the Stirling Park from the 12th Century to the later medieval period and assumes that, like other parks, it would have had a pale or dyke from the start, both to define it and to keep in the deer or other stock ⁹². I have suggested that an area to the south (Cunningknows/ Coneyhill) might at one stage have been a warren, though positive evidence is lacking. One might argue that St Thomas Well and other sites towards Cambusbarron might once have been within the park.

Records of repairs to the dyke appear from time to time but are often entered along with other work so that it is impossible to be sure how much work was involved. However, though the details have been lost, almost £2000 Scots was spent in anticipation of James VI's return visit in 1616 – for comparison, masons were being paid £3 per week each for further work in 1618⁹³. There was further extensive work on the dykes for Charles II in the 1670s, perhaps as part of a redesign of the entire purpose of the park to satisfy new aesthetic demands – though, equally, perhaps uncompleted ⁹⁴. In 1707 Sibbald wrote:

⁹¹ Parliamentary Papers, 1899 XVIII Woods and Forests, p. 26.

⁹² Gilbert, 1979, p. 82-3. There is some reason to believe that, contrary to Gilbert's belief, the Old Park at Stirling was reformed so early as the 1370s rather than by James IV.

⁹³ Imrie & Dunbar, 1982, p 31; *ibid* p. 108.

⁹⁴ E36/32 Accounts of the Master of Works, 1674-9; E36/31 p. 20 ff accounts paid 1677 to 1679; E36/34 item 20, 24, 34, 35 for the other workmen

The South part of it (the Castle) stands upon a high Rock almost Perpendicular, and beneath it is the Royall Park, being very large, and surrounded with a good Stone Wall, on the North East part of which Park, there is an Orchard, and the Vestiges of a large and spacious Garden.⁹⁵

In spite of which, by 1722 the dyke was again said to be ruinous ⁹⁶. Although tacks continued to demand that tenants should maintain the dykes in 1850 Mr Caird found all the dykes and fences to be inadequate in various ways and suggested remedies.

Then:

The old boundary wall, which surrounds nearly the whole estate, is in many places very much dilapidated, and the tenant has been several times fined for the damage done by his stock trespassing in gardens and lands of his neighbours. I propose to repair this wall, so as to be a sufficient fence, but not to rebuild it. It has originally been a very high, heavy wall, probably the enclosure of a royal deer park, and the expense of rebuilding it thoroughly would far exceed its benefit for the farm. As the boundary wall of a royal park, it is for the Board to determine if it should be fully restored.⁹⁷

The accounts for this and subsequent years show that extensive dyking was done and there is specific reference to the perimeter wall. There is no reason to believe that this was a 'restoration' – though examination of the existing dyke suggests that some rather good stone has been incorporated and, as economy was clearly in his mind, old stone would certainly have been reused. There is evidence, too, of some later repairs, including one section made of what appear to be cobble sets! However, one extended section, east from St Thomas Well by Back o Dyke, is presumably of older build.

An aspect of the dyke not previously noted is its relationship with the Raploch Burn. Until construction of the motorway the burn, which rises above Cambusbarron, met the dyke close to its western extremity and then followed its outer edge to the vicinity

⁹⁵ Sibbald, 1892 (1706) pp 44-5.

⁹⁶ NLS MS 17603 f. 81-82 memorial and a proposal by James Christie dated 1739 regarding the Park.

⁹⁷ Parliamentary Papers, 1852-3 LV, Woods and Forests, p. 109.

of the modern fire station where it was diverted north, to flow into the Forth near Kildean ⁹⁸.



Figure 15: Park Dyke at St Thomas Cemetery; note the massive stones just below the top and the absence of a formal coping.

Close to the fire station a lead was taken off, running along the side of the Raploch lands to feed the Bridge Mill dam, which was probably established in the 12th Century. This, Stirling's first 'civil engineering project' must have been a major undertaking. It continued in use till the mid-19th Century. No attempt to investigate it has been reported (for example during recent road works). Was the dyke or the burn the primary line? Why is the burn on the outside when a burn on the inside would help with stock-proofing?

⁹⁸ The burn, which flows rapidly and copiously to the motorway, is now a mere damp ditch to the east, so the water must have been diverted elsewhere.



Figure 16: The Raploch Burn, flowing towards the motorway, meets the park dyke and turns to follow its outer side.

4.10 KING'S PARK; RACE COURSE

Remnants of the race course are still a prominent feature of the park and form one of the regular walks. Horse races had been held elsewhere in and about Stirling in the 17th and early 18th centuries and the location of mid-18th Century events is uncertain⁹⁹. Races were run in the park from about 1805, typically around October time and became important local events, attracting large crowds, with associated stalls, souvenirs, a ball and betting. The course appears on Wood's Map of 1820. A grandstand was completed in 1841 and there was energetic support from some local 'gentry'. However, there was strong opposition from local religious groups and, following the death of Ramsay of Barnton, a key supporter, the races were last run in

⁹⁹ Council Minutes Index, 3 Dec 1763; a five guinea plate to be offered as an inducement to the Hon Society of Hunters to run a race; *ibid*, 28 June 1776; a race meeting promoted by the gentlemen of the town given subscription of 5 guineas.

1854¹⁰⁰. In 1850, in his Report on the King's Park Farm, Mr Caird mysteriously mentions both the old and the new race courses¹⁰¹.

4.11 KING'S PARK; WOODLANDS

Although Pont and Blaeu indicate trees in the park, it is impossible to be sure about the conventions applied. Neither Roy (c. 1750) nor Grassom (1817) indicate trees but they are both small scale.

Apart from a belt of recent planting along the eastern march of the golf course, a single block of conifers within the course and a few other, isolated trees and such planting as there is in the Public Park area, there are two main areas of woodland in the modern park. One, focused on the cliff to the north, seems to have been called Pox or Fox Wood (allegedly from the Pollock family who were tenants in the late 18th and early 19th Century) and the other, called the Broad Wood, along the more southern margin¹⁰².

Trees in medieval parks were traditionally pollarded to allow use of the timber whilst controlling browsing by deer; lopping might also be used to provide forage for the stock. There are records of people cutting withies for building work in the 17th Century. A tack of the park in 1745 allowed the tenant to cut the grass in the woods whilst a slightly later one allowed the tenant to coppice the 'swaggy arns, gray sauchs and the like', the species (alder, willow) indicating that these were woods on wet ground, perhaps around the loch ¹⁰³.

Current discussions about sale of (parts of) the Park seem largely to ignore the woods, which are an important element in the landscape and have scarcely been investigated. Pox Wood and the northern parts of the Broad Wood both appear to be 'ancient

¹⁰⁰ Sloan G. et al.1986, provides the main summary; Council Minutes Index, 27 Dec 1804, 5 Oct 1805, 4 Oct 1806, 3 Oct 1807, 27 July 1809 for races with prizes run at harvest time; seems to be in mid-October; *ibid*, 3 June 1829 the Stirling races have been given up and the Earl of Mar has asked the council to countenance them for the future; he has offered a plate of £50 and will apply for the king's plate if the gentlemen are interested.

¹⁰¹ Parliamentary Papers, 1852-3, Woods and Forests, p. 106.

¹⁰² Morris, DB, 1936, p. 105.

¹⁰³ NAS, Stirling Sheriff Deeds, SC67/49/17 p. 439; *ibid*, SC67/49/18, p. 236.

woodland' with oaks and ash trees, some bluebells, wood rush and wood anemones; there is a colony of Yellow Star of Bethlehem close to the poly-tunnels at the Homesteads. Further east, whins and elder are probably more recent invaders. There were actually children playing in the Broad Wood on 24 March 2007, making dens, hiding, climbing, laughing and free of their parents. Surely, this is an astonishing and wonderful event in a world where children are usually so constrained and enclosed?

4.12 KING'S PARK; OTHER

Apart from grazing of the town's cows, there are few records of public use prior to the 18th Century, though there are reports of people going for walks in the park (usually for Sabbath breach) and of people cutting rushes, withies and so on. 10 Nov 1779; an attempt to attract the cattle fair back to the King's Park by lowering customs is to be tried.

- 26 May 1780 a stance for cattle at the King's Park for the Latter Fair has been agreed.
- Aug 1831; cattle show to be held in Stirling in 1833 by Highland Society of Scotland.
- 4 Aug 1831; cattle show to be held in Stirling in 1833 by Highland Society of Scotland.
- 15 Dec 1832; street dung to be taken to King's Park.

There are also records of the town's waste being deposited in the park, though as this was street manure (mainly from stables and byres) it would have a market value and be stored till sold.

- Dung depot at Sandholes 3 April 1832.
- Depot for street dung to be removed to near the wall of the King's Park 15 Dec 1832.
- 27 Mar 1838 to pay rent for a new site for the street dung.

4.13 CASTLE MIDDENS ETC.

The sections of the South Brae under the main buildings of the castle have a rich, black soil, in contrast to the browner clays either side. There are quantities of green-glazed-ware, oyster shells, china with regimental insignia and a mass of other detritus and the cascade must have begun at the time when the site was first occupied, provided a landing site for Friar Damian 500 years ago and clearly continues (in the form of cans, plastic bottles and so on), to this day. The earth to the north, on the Ballengeich side, is similarly darkened and, if the grass were cleared, pottery and so on would surely be found, under a similar deposit of modern material, of course. I have previously mentioned the opportunity this material might offer for archaeological investigation.

In 1808, when the road through Ballengeich was improved, the government had been requested to alter the arrangements for the effluent from the 'necessaries' on that side (see Access/ Ballengeich). It was probably at this time that the discharges were put into two pipes, leading to two tanks in the Butt Park area (and actually shown on 1st Edition OS); the northern received most of the washing water and the water drained from the roofs and this received little 'offensive matter' but the southern 'receives nearly the whole offensive matter from the castle in a semi-fluid form'. The garrison was stated to number 500. And whilst efforts had been made to ameliorate the problems, both the mess and the stench were a public nuisance, so offensive that the farm workers, who had been expected to clean the receptacles and take the contents for the fields, refused to do so and, perhaps exacerbated by consequent overflows, there was some pollution of the Butt Well (qv). The reporter suggested means of ameliorating the problem¹⁰⁴ though it is doubtful if it could really be solved until proper drains were installed, perhaps in the 1870s.

¹⁰⁴ Parliamentary Papers, 1852-3 LVI, Woods and Forests, p. 521; Parliamentary Papers, 1852-3 LV, pp. 57-8 and pp. 105-116; Alexander Connal, tenant, King's Park Farm, was an elector for the county of Stirling in 1832, Roll of Electors, 1832, London.

4.14 RAPLOCH, FISHER ROW

In 1696 six cottages were built on land in the Raploch area, below the north western end of the Nether Bailey of Stirling Castle, each allocated a couple of acres of land. Several burned down in the early 18th Century but one block was still shown on the 1st Edition OS (1858) whilst there are several 19th Century illustrations¹⁰⁵. In 1866 Cowane's Hospital disposed the land to the Crown and it was included as part of King's Park Farm by 1898. Since Fisher Row sometimes appears in records of the farm after that date, I am including this note.

4.15 STABLES AND WASHING

The main 16th Century royal stable block was on the brae above the modern fire-station where a row of houses now stands. There were a number of practical advantages in this and the buildings, which were radically rebuilt in 1551, were serviced by the 'passage' which John Bog built down the brae; they would have been a pleasing set of buildings as seen from the castle; the king's washing green was a little lower down the slope. In the later 16th Century, new stables appear in the vicinity of King's Stables Lane, in the Top of the Town¹⁰⁶.

It is now clear that there was more provision of stables within the town than I previously thought, perhaps not for the king's horses but for those of the courtiers; also that, when unusual numbers of horses were to be provided for, temporary stables might be built in or around the town¹⁰⁷. And, as noted above, at times the royal stud was Stirling based.

There is also something of a mystery about stabling during the military period. Whilst infantry would require stabling only for the officers, cavalry units were sometimes based in Stirling and would clearly need stabling of some sort. The castle was unsuitable due to the demands for water, fodder *etc.*; but where the stables were is unclear.

¹⁰⁵ Harrison, 1984; Harrison, 1988.

¹⁰⁶ Harrison, 2005.

¹⁰⁷ Harrison, forthcoming.

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