



## Clan Cathcart of Killochan Castle

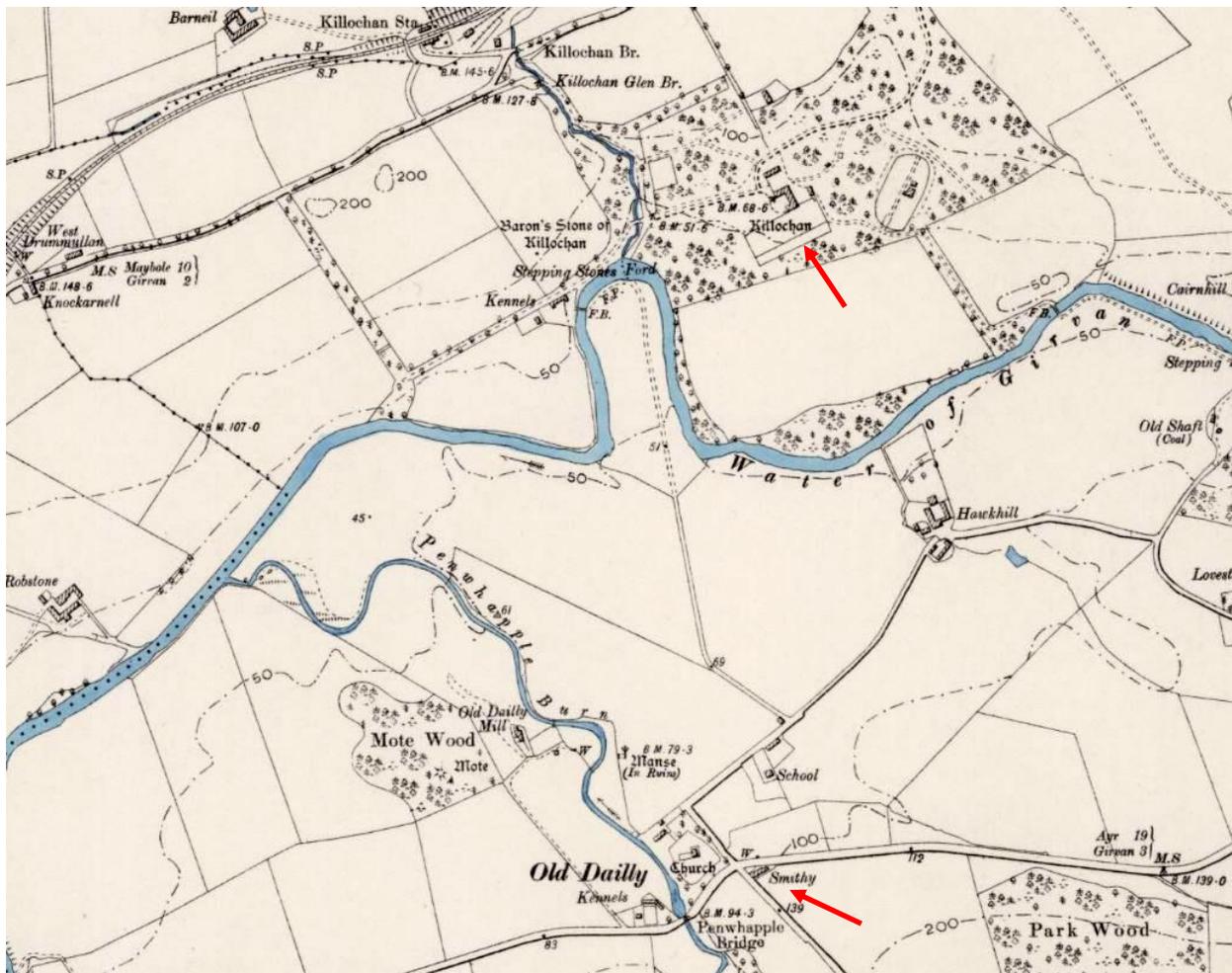
*We may have the Cathcarts of Carleton - Clan Cathcart – in our ancestry. The Cathcarts were strong supporters of the Covenanter movement, and are distantly related by marriage to Scottish hero King Robert the Bruce and his family.*

With Watsons found all over Scotland, and our Watson ancestors not living near Clan Watson ancestral lands, it is unlikely that our Watson ancestors were actually part of Clan Watson.

However, it is much more likely that our Cathcart ancestors were descendants of the Cathcarts of Carleton, and thus were part of Clan Cathcart.

In 1728, the earliest known John Watson married Jannet Cathcart of nearby Girvan Parish. I haven't found any specific information on her ancestors in the parish church records, however. Girvan records before 1733 have been lost, and Dailly Parish records don't go back to when parts of Girvan Parish were still in Dailly Parish.

But the Cathcarts of Carleton are one of the ancient families of Dailly Parish, having a long history in the area. Killochan Castle, located just outside of Old Dailly, is their ancestral home.



*Map of Old Daily (bottom center) and Killochan Castle (upper center). The John Watson who married Jannet Cathcart lived at the Smithy opposite the church at Old Daily.*

**Clan Cathcart History**

Clan Cathcart is a Lowland Clan with origins in the lands near the River Cart in Renfrewshire (“Caeth-cart” means the “strait of Cart”). The clan appears to date back to apparent progenitor Rainaldus de Kethcart, who was a witness to a charter of the king’s steward to Paisley Abbey in 1178. His son William witnessed a land exchange with Paisley Abbey in about 1200. Alan de Cathcart sealed the 1234 charter resigning the lands of Culbeth to the Abbot of Paisley. This Alan’s son William was one of the Scottish barons who submitted to Edward I of England. This William’s son Alan de Cathcart was a staunch supporter of Robert the Bruce in the Wars for Scottish Independence. Robert the Bruce – King Robert I – was King of Scots from 1306 until his death in 1329. He achieved Scottish independence from the English and consolidated much of present-day Scotland under his rule.

Alan de Cathcart followed Robert’s brother Edward Bruce in battle in Galloway, where they routed the English. He survived the Wars of Scottish Independence. His wife’s brother, Sir

Duncan Wallace of Sundram, was married to Eleanor Bruce, Countess of Carrick (roughly half of today's South Ayrshire) and Edward Bruce's granddaughter.

### **Killochan Castle History**

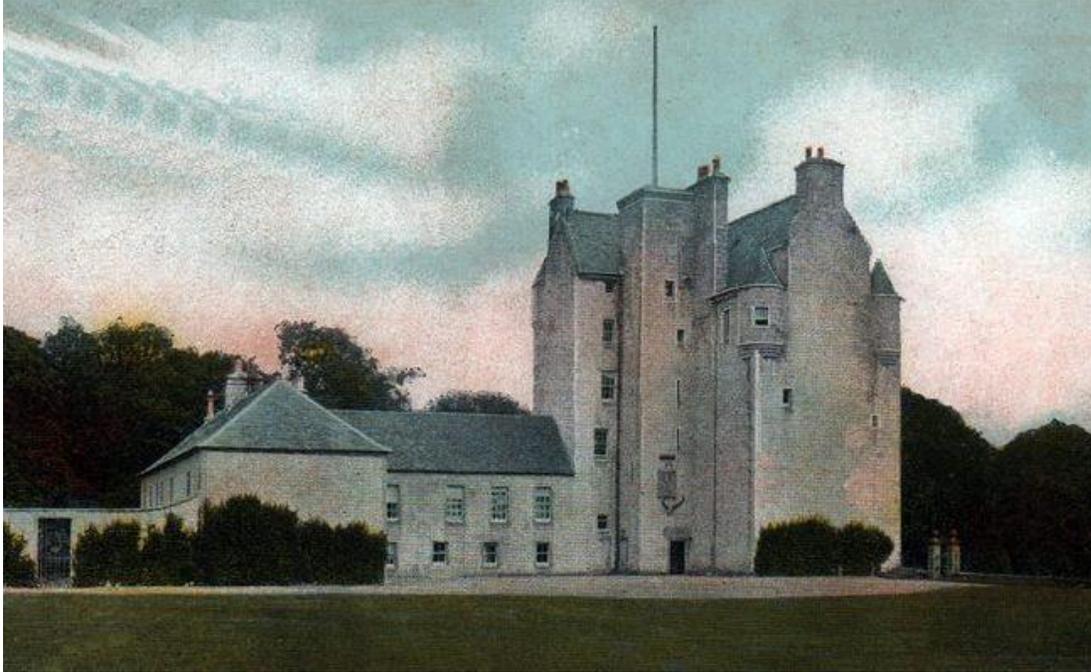
In 1324, King Robert the Bruce granted the lands of Killochan, near Old Dailly, to the Cathcarts of Carleton in recognition of their support.

A later Sir Alan de Cathcart acquired a number of additional estates in Ayrshire in the mid-1400s, and was granted the title Lord Cathcart. He was the first in a long succession of Lord and later Earl Cathcarts.

The current Killochan Castle was originally built by John Cathcart in 1586, replacing an earlier structure. Inscribed over the door is "This work was begun the 1 of Marche 1586 by Ihone [John] Cathcart of Carltovn and Helene Wallace his spouse". It is an L-plan, five-story tower house, generally regarded as one of the finest fortified houses in southern Scotland. A two-story wing was added in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



*Photo of Cathcart Castle, with High Craighead in the distance*



*1906 postcard of Cathcart Castle*

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Killochan was a Covenanter stronghold. The Cathcarts were one of a number of prominent families in the region who refused to sign the “Bond” by which those signing became responsible for their tenants staying away from the Covenanters. At great risk to the family, the Cathcarts routinely opened their dining room for services led by outed Presbyterian ministers and attended by their tenants and neighbors.



*Killochan Castle dining room in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*

The Highland Host, a group of about 10,000 men the majority of which were Highlanders, were sent to the western counties to wipe out the Presbyterians. In 1678, a garrison of 120 soldiers was ordered to attack Killochan Castle, but they were unable to breach its fortifications.

The Ayrshire Ordnance Survey Name Books 1855-1857 described Killochan Castle this way:

67

No. 21.

*1/2 of Dailly*

List of Names as written on the Plan	Various modes of Spelling the same Names	Authority for those modes of Spelling	Situation	Descriptive Remarks, or other General Observations which may be considered of Interest
Killochan	Killochan L Lo Killochan	Thomas Scott W. McCallach K. Brown Esq Ayrshire County Maps	SL-14/1	An old baronial mansion A plain and <del>high</del> <i>high</i> stands the residence of Sir John Cathcart whom it <del>is</del> <i>is</i> The kitchen garden is detached from the house a little way and something like the house too it is kept in very indifferent order - A figure cut in stone stands in the centre of the garden and is said to represent the "Comm- mion". The flower garden is rather tastefully arranged and is indeed the only thing about the place which is kept in in any sort of repair.
Hawkhill Hawkhill	Hawkhill Lo Hawkhill Lo	County Valuation List Thomas Scott W. McCallach Kennedy Dean Esq. Factor Rev. P. Richardson	SL-14/1	A very large farm standing <del>near</del> <i>near</i> the town office one acre stated and in good repair. Property of Sir John Cathcart.

*Ayrshire Ordnance Survey Descriptive Remarks for Killochan: "An old baronial mansion the residence of Sir John Cathcart. The Kitchen garden is detached from the house a little way and something like the house too it is kept in very indifferent order - A figure cut in stone stands in the centre of the garden and is said to represent the "Communion" - the flower garden is rather tastefully arranged and is indeed the only thing about the place which is kept in any sort of repair" [sic]*

The property remained in the Cathcart family for 630 years, until 1954.

### Cathcart Family Ties

Unlike Watson, the Cathcart surname is relatively rare in Scotland, and in earlier times it was primarily found in Ayrshire, where Clan Cathcart was based, and in Edinburgh. More than 600 years of Cathcarts obviously could not all live at – let alone inherit – Killochan Castle. Cathcarts have been found at a number of nearby sites in both Dailly and Girvan Parish records, including at Grangeston and Girvan Mains around the time that Jannet Cathcart was born.



*This 1755 map showed that (Girvan) Mains and Grangetoun (Grangetown) were not far to the west of Killochan and the Old Kirk of Daly (Old Dailly Church).*

The Killochan Cathcarts have a burial vault on the northeastern end of the ruins of Old Dailly Church. As one of the heritors of parish church in New Dailly, the head of the Cathcart family participated in the decision to build the current Dailly Parish Church and helped pay its 600 pounds construction cost in 1766.



*Cathcart family burial vault (fenced, left) at the ruins of Old Dailly Church*

Given the fact that Cathcart was a relatively rare name, and given the relatively low population of the area at the time Jannet Cathcart was born, and it is likely (albeit not proven) that Jannet Cathcart was a descendant of the Killochan Castle Cathcarts rather than someone who coincidentally shared the Cathcart name.

I'll also note that one of John Watson and Jannet Cathcart's gg grandsons was named Cathcart Wason, and one of their ggg grandsons was named John Cathcart Skene Wason, some examples of the Cathcart name surviving in the Watson family for years.

### **What Does This Mean for Us?**

If Jannet Cathcart is indeed a descendant of the Cathcarts, which I believe is likely but I will repeat is not proven here, then we have a distant connection to and a relationship by marriage with King Robert the Bruce and his ancestors and descendants.

Of course, after so many generations and marriages across seven centuries, half of Scotland is probably related to King Robert the Bruce in some way at this point.

## Clan Cathcart Paraphernalia

Even if we are descendants of the Cathcarts of Carleton, we would not be members of Clan Cathcart. Clan affiliation passes through the father's surname. Thus, if we are members of any Scottish clan, it would be Clan Watson or through Watson septs affiliated with either Clan Buchanan or Clan Forbes, and we would adopt their paraphernalia.



*The Clan Cathcart family crest (left) is emblazoned with the family motto, "I hope to speed". Elements of the Cathcart coat of arms (right) adorn the gate to Killochan Castle.*

There is no tartan registered for Clan Cathcart.

Prepared by Mark David Wasson  
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