



Background to Malig Mill
Sinclair street, behind Victoria Halls
By
Jim Chestnut



When I first 'discovered' the remains of Mallig Mill, which lies behind the Victoria Halls, hidden beneath the trees, I decided that I wanted to find out about its history and background.



The following pages are as a result of what I found.
Jim Chestnut Oct 2007-10-09

We can see very little remains of the former Corn Mill today, despite the fact that it played a central role in the history of Helensburgh and Milligs before it. The earliest date, is from Blaeu Atlas of Scotland, 1654 which has a reference to Milligs M

The earliest date on the remains is 1726, but the first miller we have a record of is Alex McNeilage, in 1776.

In the Helensburgh & Gareloch Times, 7th June 1922 there is a Council public notice (front page) about the ‘demolition of Malig Mill’. The Town Council offer a portion of the stones at the Malig Mill for the sum of 15s per cart or 10s per ton where they lie on the site. Interestingly the mill lade seems to have outlasted the mill.

There is another notice below that one ‘Notice to Debtors & Creditors. “*All persons who have not yet lodged claims against the estate of the late John Brown, Farmer & Merchant..*”.

A John Brown is listed as the last person to operate the mill. Presumably they are one and the same.

THE EARLY VILLAGE



The above map is one of the earliest found so far. It's from Blaeu Atlas of Scotland and is dated 1654. Its Title “*The Province of Lennox called the Shyre of Dun-Britton*” It shows what we know as Ardincaple Castle along with what appears to be symbols for churches. It's the name Mullig's M. that is interesting - **Is this what we know as Malig Mill?**

Moving on, in time, this rudimentary village was called Milligs, a name which belongs to the heartland of the later town, "Milnliggs" in its earliest form. The miln or mill therefore was the core of Helensburgh and Alex McNeilage, the miller in 1776, is in a sense the earliest inhabitant.

In the seventeenth century it was an £8 land of Auld Extent, an old Scots land-term, now largely meaningless, and belonged to the Macaulays. The decay of this clan set in at the end of the century and in 1705 its lands were sold off to Sir John Schaw of Greenock.

The following is a list of the lands making up modern Helensburgh and Rhu, as they existed at that time:

- The three merkland of Kirkmichael,
- five merkland of Drumfad,
- £8 Milligs plus milne and milne lands,
- multures and thirlages (old dues on land) of Stuck-,
- four merklans of Lagarie, Wester and Easter Ardincaple, and Middle Ardincaple with the lower fortalice (the ancestor of Ardincaple Castle),
- £4 land of Lettervoualbeg and Stuckie Leich (now Letrualt),
- lands of Blairvaryden (later, Blairvadden, now Blairvaddich) and Stucknadow, and the lands of Ardconnel (note Ardinconnel).

To equate and compare these obsolete land-terms, it is only necessary to know that the merk was equivalent to 13s 4d of the £1 Scots, which was itself one-twelfth of the £ sterling.

In 1753 Aulay Macaulay, seeing the continuing decay of his clan, sold Laggary and Blairvadden, i.e. virtually the whole of Rhu, to Dr George Macaulay of London.

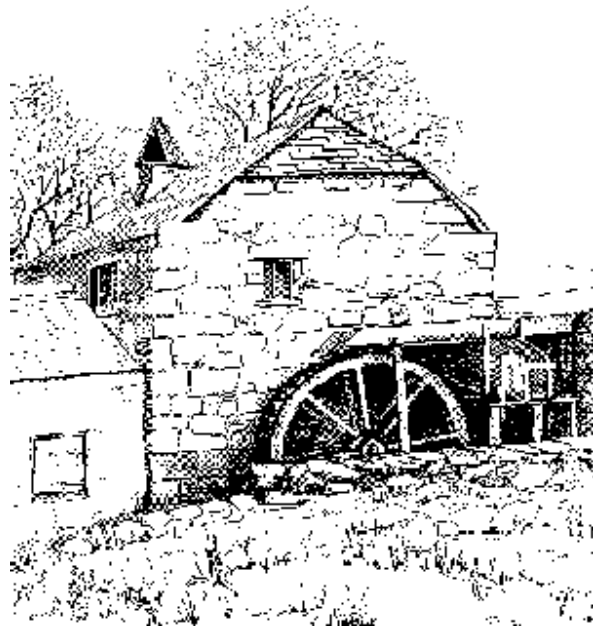
The year before this, however, a much more important sale was effected when Sir James Colquhoun of Luss, the eighth baronet, bought from the daughter of Sir John Schaw the lands on which he was to build Helensburgh. -" Included in the sale was:: -Mallig's Mill Helensburgh(Miligs town) and Rhu. The first hundred years by R.M.Laing

So what do we know?

Well, the remains of the mill, in Hermitage Park, just behind the Victoria Halls, have 3 date motifs. There are some structures but very little to show the size and scale of the mill. A fortunate find was the following image. It's not dated but it comes from a collection of photographs about Hermitage house Hospital, during the 1st World War. That dates it to pre 1920.



As can be seen in the above photograph there is a tall chimney and some building (above the rustic bridge). There is a banking on the right and a sluice can be seen running towards the buildings. This indicates that the mill used an overshoot watermill – as can be seen in the example opposite.



Certainly, some of the owners, appeared to live elsewhere in the town with the miller residing at the mill. At least at one point other people lived at the mill address (see 1864 below) and the old maps show a number of buildings.

Above the mill a dam, or lade, as it was known, was created to supply the power to the mill. A sluice joined the dam to the mill and sluice gates controlled the flow of water. This dam is long gone, the bowling green and tennis court are where the dam was. On the old maps you can see the mill layout as well as the dam. It also says, on the map that the mill building was in mill glen which suggests that it was lower than the dam making the most likely style of waterwheel what was called an overshoot wheel – that is the water would go over the waterwheel, as in the example on the left.

Since nothing significant remains of the physical building it is unclear whether the waterwheel was within the walls of the mill, or, attached to the side. See map for a layout of the mill. (map dated 1919)





There is a postcard, above, held in St Andrews University which shows the mill, with a tall chimney, to the rear of the Victoria Hall. Further to the right is the old Hermitage School.

By 1923 the mill is not listed the Helensburgh Directory and there is a postcard, below, dated around 1929 showing the remains of the mill – as a rock garden.

The Helensburgh & Gareloch Times of 7th June 1922 has a notice on the front page about the demolition of Malig Mill and offering some of the stones, from the buildings for sale. Just below this notice is one “All persons who have not yet lodged claims against the estate of the late John Brown, Farmer & Merchant, to do so. A John Brown is listed as the last occupier of the mill so maybe there was no one wanting to take over the mill. The Helensburgh & Gareloch Times July 22nd 1922 “...*the removal of the unsightly Malig Mill is progressing slowly...*”

Also in that newspaper is the following: “The bridges over the burn at Hermitage Park would shortly require overhaul. It was agreed to replace the existing footbridge over the mill-lade, north of the dam, by a concrete bridge and rail”



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ROCK GARDENS, HERMITAGE PARK, HELENSBURGH

L.L. WHITE LTD,
THORNHILL, HALFPA

This is the list of occupants of Millig mill. It's not complete but does give a sort of continuity to the mill's life

1776 Alex McNeilage, the miller

1834-1835 Millig Corn, Barley and Malt Mills. Robert Lennox was the miller and he lived at 3 Colquhoun street, in a 3 apartment ,3 bedroom house. He was listed as a Maltster -Preparer of malt for brewing

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1864 McKinnon & Campbell, grain merchants at 71 & 73 Sinclair st

1864 David Napier, a monumental worker, of 84 Princes street appears to be renting premises at 71 Sinclair st

1867 Alexander McCallum is listed as a miller at Millig Mill,Luss road.

1877 Lachlan McLaclan is listed as a flour & meal miller at Milligs Mill

1883-1884 R.S. MacFarlane & Sons, millers and grain merchants are listed as the owners of Malig Mill.

Alexander McColl, a miller, is listed as residing at the Mill. The address given is 76 Sinclair Street, Helensburgh. The MacFarlanes also had a shop at 2 Clyde st. Mac Farlanes home address was Braefoot,King st

1885 Alexander McColl, a miller, is listed as residing at the Mill, 76, Sinclair street.

1887-1888 R.S. MacFarlane & Sons, millers and grain merchants are listed as the owners of Malig Mill.

James Black, a miller, is listed as residing at the Mill. The address given is 76 Sinclair Street, Helensburgh. The MacFarlanes also had a shop at 2 Clyde st. Mac Farlanes home address was Braefoot,King st

1889-1890 R.S. MacFarlane & Sons, millers and grain merchants are listed as the owners of Malig Mill.

Alex McMillan, a miller, is listed as residing at the Mill. The address given is 76 Sinclair Street, Helensburgh. The MacFarlanes also had a shop at 2 Clyde st. Mac Farlanes home address was Braefoot,King st

1899-1900 Malig Grain Mills were on the telephone. There were only about 80 subscribers to the telephone at this time.

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1901-1902 R.S. MacFarlane & Sons, millers and grain merchants are listed as the owners of Malig Mill. Hugh Wylie, a miller, is listed as residing at the Mill. The address given is 86 Sinclair Street, Helensburgh. The MacFarlanes also had a shop at 2 Clyde st.

1904-1905 R.S. MacFarlane & Sons, millers and grain merchants are listed as the owners of Malig Mill. Hugh Wylie, a miller, is listed as residing at the Mill. The address given is 86 Sinclair Street, Helensburgh. The MacFarlanes also had a shop at 2 Clyde st.

1905-1906 R.S. MacFarlane & Sons, millers and grain merchants are listed as the owners of Malig Mill. Hugh Wylie, a miller, is listed as residing at the Mill. The address given is 86 Sinclair Street, Helensburgh. The MacFarlanes also had a shop at 2 Clyde st.

1907-1908 R.S. MacFarlane & Son, millers and grain merchants are listed as the owners of Malig Mill. Hugh Wylie, a miller, is listed as residing at the Mill. The address given is 86 Sinclair Street, Helensburgh. The MacFarlanes also had a shop at 2 Clyde st.

1911-1912 R.S. MacFarlane & Son, millers and grain merchants. Also had a motor garage at 86 Sinclair street

1915-1916 John Brown, miller and grain merchant. Resided at 86 Sinclair street

1919-1920 John Brown, miller and grain merchant. Resided at 86 Sinclair street

1921-1922 John Brown, miller and grain merchant. Resided at 86 Sinclair street

There is a plan, held at Helensburgh Library, for alterations to part of the Mill site. In 1912 plans were submitted to add stables to what appears to be the main building – this was dated 22nd April 1912. The left hand side of the main building had a hay store to the rear and a grain store to the front. 3 adjacent buildings were listed as:

1. Motor & Coachhouse
2. Motorhouse
3. Coachhouse

Clearly the Mill site was being used for other purposes. Sadly, there was no layout for the whole site.

Further to the demolition of the Mill there was also a story about "blasting the butress of the Malig Mill wheel" H & G Times oct 24 1923.