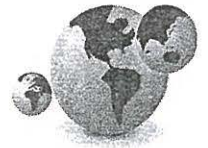


BALFOURS ON WESTRAY, ORKNEY ISLANDS, 1560 TO 1959

Ian's paternal ancestors as shown on 'The Balfour Family Tree' immediately above this chart, are highlighted here in orange.

The narrative and charts are from 'Westray Roots - the Family History Newsletter for Westray Folk Everywhere', Issue 39 in December 2000.

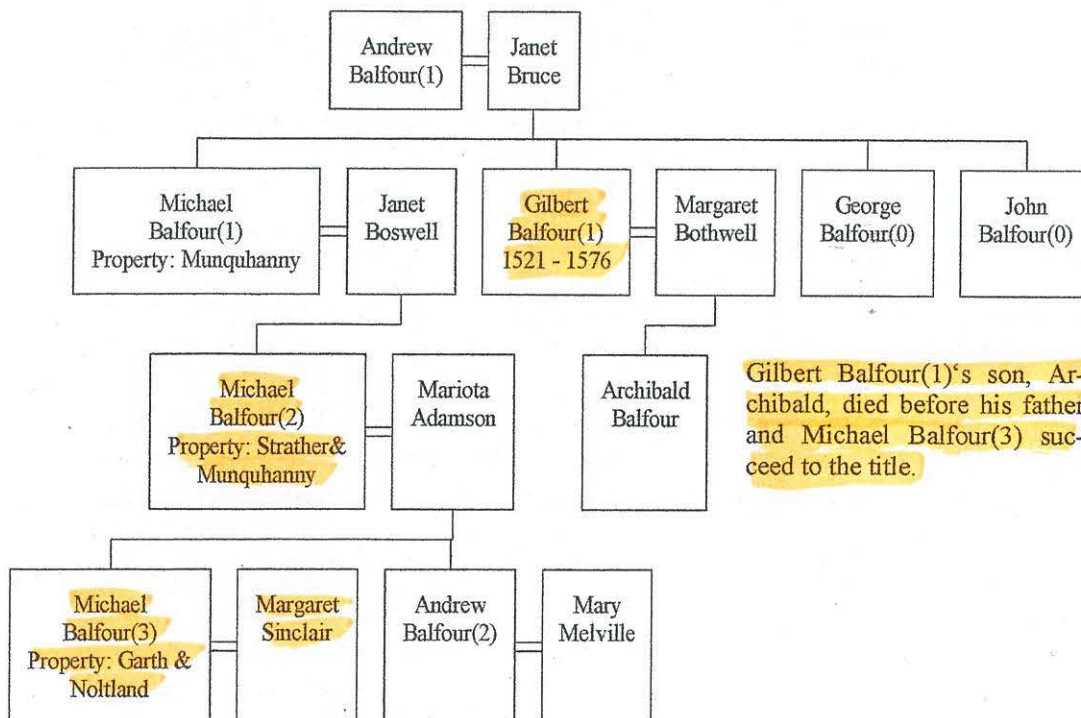


In 1546 he, along with two of his brothers, was implicated in the murder of Cardinal Beaton. Afterwards they were besieged in St Andrew's Castle and upon its surrender were sentenced to a period at the oar of a French galley. It is interesting to note that their chaplain and partner in crime, John Knox, later described the three as "men without God who had neither fear of God nor love of virtue, further than their present commodity persuaded them."

Members of the Balfour family were resident in Westray from 1560 until 1959, when the name died. The first Westray resident of the family was Gilbert(1), a younger son of Andrew Balfour(1) of Munquhanny (Fife) and his wife, Janet, a daughter of Sir Alexander Bruce of Earlshall. From all accounts this Gilbert(1) seems to have been one of these rare personalities who need the ever-present thrill of danger to sustain them through life.

Sir Gilbert(1), married Margaret Bothwell, a sister of Adam Bothwell (1536 - 93) who became Bishop of Orkney in October 1559. Margaret was the daughter of Francis Bothwell and his wife Catherine Ballendine. Catherine was the great aunt of the first Ballendines of Stenness. In 1560 Gilbert(1) obtained feu of the following lands in Westray from his brother-in-law, the Bishop. They were Kirbister, Noltland, Bakka, Fribo, Garth, Clett, Uea, Rackwick, Aikerness and Ma-

Descendants of Andrew Balfour(1)





bak. Also included were Papa Westray, Pharay and some land in Stronsay. It must have been about this time **he started building Noltland Castle.** It is probable that Gilbert(1) also obtained lands in Birsay as he is designated "of Birsay" on 11th October 1560 when he, along with his two younger brothers George and John, were present at the granting of sasine to Duncan Scollay and his wife. During the following year Gilbert(1) and John were again on record. In 1566 John was Sheriff Deputy of Orkney.

Sir Gilbert(1) probably resided more at the Court in Edinburgh than on his Orkney estates for the next we hear of him he is Master of the Household of Mary Queen of Scots. When the Queen's unfortunate husband, Henry Lord Darnley was murdered early in February 1567, Gilbert(1) was reputed to have played a prominent part. Later in the same year he returned to Orkney where he appears as Sheriff of Orkney and Governor of Kirkwall Castle. He was noted for his quarrels with his brother-in-law, the Bishop, and his refusal to admit the refugee, the Earl of Bothwell, husband of the Queen, to the safety of Kirkwall Castle.

Kirkwall Castle

Lord Robert Stewart, afterwards Earl of Orkney, succeeded in 1568 in compelling Bishop Bothwell to give up bishopric estates in exchange for abbacy of Holyrood in Edinburgh. A little later his greedy eye must have fallen on the Balfour estate for the Parliament of 20th August 1571 found Sir Gilbert Balfour(1) guilty of treason and his estates were forfeited. Two months later Gilbert(1) was in command of a hundred men of the Queen's party in Edinburgh. In November 1571 he was in charge of an attempt to capture Inchkeith, and in April 1572 at the head of twenty harquebusiers, he captured Blackness

Castle and held it on behalf of his ill-fated sovereign. Meantime back in Orkney the Privy Council ordered Lord Robert Stewart to hand over the Castle of Noltland to its rightful owner. When Sir Gilbert(1)'s schemes finally collapsed with the defeat of his royal mistress, he fled abroad to Sweden, and entered the army. Here again his old love of intrigue and danger rose to the surface. He became involved in a plot against the king, was discovered, and paid with his life in August 1576. He was probably about 55 years of age. **His only son Archibald was by this time dead, and his Orkney estates passed to his great nephew, Michael(3).**

Sir Michael Balfour(3) outlived his father, Michael(2), and in 1592 succeeded his grandfather, Michael(1), to the estate of Munquhanny in Fife. Michael(2) was a descendant of King Robert the Bruce through his mother, Janet Boswell of Balmuto. His wife was Mariota Adamson, daughter of Patrick, Archbishop of St Andrews.

Sir Michael(2) does not seem to have been any more popular than his uncle for, on 23rd December 1597, we read of a complaint preferred against himself and his sons, by the leading isles folk. His sons were Sir Andrew Balfour(2) of Strather and Munquhanny who married Mary Melville of Halhill in 1589, and Michael Balfour(3) of Garth in Westray.

In 1593 Michael(3) married Margaret, daughter of Malcolm Sinclair of Quendale in Shetland. About this time George Sinclair, a younger son of the Laird of Quendale, obtained the estate of Bu' of Rapness in Westray. No doubt Margaret came over with her brother, perhaps his housekeeper before his marriage, and thus met her future husband. Malcolm Sinclair entertained the shipwrecked sailors of the 'El Gran Grifon,' one of the flagships of the

Spanish Armada, which was wrecked on the Fair Isle in 1588, before they were transported abroad. He must have spoken about this often to his family and George Sinclair may have been old enough to have remembered his father's unexpected and unusual guests.

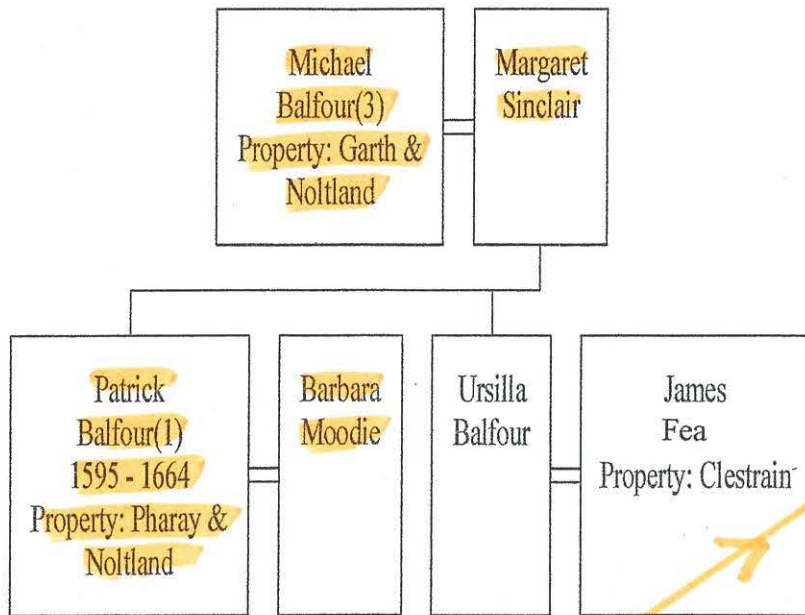
Feet Washed in Wine

On 8th June 1627, Michael Balfour(3) of Garth was sworn in as a commissioner to

love of the lady whose feet had been washed in it!

Michael Balfour(3) invited most of the Orkney gentry to his daughter's wedding. The feasting began in Noltland Castle on Martinmas day. 1632. Unfortunately however, the winter storms came and for three months it was impossible for any boat to leave or approach the island. One by one, the cattle and sheep had to be sacrificed to feed the storm-bound guests,

Descendants of Michael Balfour(3)



until almost the whole flock was eaten. One can picture the relief when at last the rough seas calmed sufficiently to allow the boats to depart and the Balfour family were left in peace once more. Tradition tells us this prolonged wedding feast caused Michael some financial difficulties and he was forced to sell some land.

Patrick Balfour(1) was already married at the time of his sister Ursilla's wedding. For a spouse

report on Westray. In 1635 he is described 'of Noltland'. Michael(3) and Margaret had two children, Patrick(1) of Pharay and Ursilla. Ursilla married James Fea, younger (and later 3rd) of Clestrain. Her marriage contract is dated 17th June 1632. According to the custom of the time, on the evening of the contract being signed Ursilla Balfour's feet were washed in a tub of wine. Later it was discovered that the servants had drunk the lot. Not for the love of the liquor, they said, but for the

he chose Barbara Moodie, a daughter of Francis Moodie of Breckness and his first wife, Margaret Stewart of Graemsay. He was resident in Noltland Castle at the time his sister's marriage contract was signed. It is possible that Patrick(1) and Barbara entertained the Marquis of Montrose when he was in Orkney trying to recruit troops for his army. Certainly they were staunch royalists and in 1650 they gave refuge to some of Montrose's officers after his final defeat at Carbisdale. The local



Covenanting Leaders under Captain John Pollock attacked the castle and captured it without much difficulty. The fugitives were made prisoners and the castle was reputedly set on fire. In December 1659 Patrick(1) was a witness at the baptism of his brother-in-law, Francis Moodie's eldest son, Patrick.

In 1664 Patrick(1) died, leaving four sons and two daughters. His children were:-

(1) George Balfour(1) of Pharay was the last Balfour to live in Noltland Castle. In 1654 he married Marjorie Baikie of Tankerness and after her death in 1678, he married Mary McKenzie, second daughter of Murdoch, Bishop of Orkney.

Descendants of Patrick Balfour(1)

- 1 Patrick Balfour(1) 1595 - 1664
+Barbara Moodie
- 2 Michael Balfour(4)
+?
- 2 George Balfour(1) - 1706
+Mary McKenzie
- *2nd Wife of George Balfour(1):
+Marjorie Baikie - 1678
- 2 John Balfour(1) - 1664
+Janet Alexander
- 2 Robert Balfour(1)
- 2 Barbara Balfour - 1665
+Nicol Moncrieff
- 2 Janet Balfour
+James Kinnaid

(2) Patrick Balfour and Barbara Moodie's second son was John(1) of Garth who married Janet Alexander but died the same year as his father without leaving any family.

(3) Robert of Clouster was described as younger in Westray in 1665.

(4) Michael Balfour(4) lived in Banks, Rousay

(5) Barbara was the eldest daughter. She married Nicol Moncrieff but was dead by 1665.

(6) Janet Balfour married James Kinnaid of Burwick in August 1657.

A French Ship & George Balfour(1)

A strange vessel, believed to be French, came ashore in Westray on 1st June 1691. Four days later George Balfour(1) of Pharay along with George Traill of Holland, Papa Westray, and their servants, sailed the ship to Kirkwall. She was still lying there three weeks later while the Counsel of Scotland decided whether she was a prize or not. It would be interesting to know what the final decision was.

George(1) had eight children, and when he died in 1706 his 2nd son, William(1), succeeded him.

His 3rd son John(2) was the first Balfour of Trenabie, and left the Trenabie estates to his nephew John Balfour, who married Elizabeth Traill of Tirlot. He was the ancestor of the Balfours of Balfour Castle in Shapinsay.

Michael Balfour(4), the fourth son of Patrick(1), lived in Rousay and was a merchant. Little is known about him or his wife. Perhaps someone reading this may be able to supply the missing details. He appears on record on 5th August, 1710 when he grants a bond of relief to a cautioner for his dead brother, George of Pharay. Michael(4) had four children:-

- (1) Patrick(2),
- (2) Robina who married William Irvine.
- (3) Rebecca who married Alexander Marwick.
- (4) Unknown

Descendants of Michael Balfour(4)

- 1 Michael Balfour(4)
+?
- 2 Patrick Balfour(2) 1647 -
+Marie Monteith
- 2 Robina Balfour
+William Irvine
- 2 Rebecca Balfour
+Alexander Marwick
- 2 ? Balfour

THE CHART 'BALFOUR FAMILY TREE'
OMITS MICHAEL AND GOES FROM
PATRICK (1) TO PATRICK (2)

Issue 39 December 2000

Westray Roots



Two other children were born to George(2) and Barbara before 1737. They were David(1) who married Marjory Smith and Catherine who married John Seatter. They both had large families but their descendants have not been traced beyond 1800.

⁽²⁾
George(1)'s remaining children were:-

- Jane (born 1737)
- William(2) (born 1740)
- George(3) (born 1742)
- Thomas(1) (born 1744)
- Ann (born 1746)
- John(3) (born 1749)
- Murdoch(1) (born 1752)

TO PAGE
11

Apart from John(3) they all married and had family but only Thomas(1) and Murdoch(1)'s descendants have been traced to the 20th century in Westray.

Descendants of Murdoch Balfour(1)

- 1 Murdoch Balfour(1) 1752 -
+Jean Hewison
- 2 James Balfour(2) 1782 -
+Jean Rendall
- 2 Jean Balfour 1785 - 1841
+Balfour Hewison
- 2 Barbara Balfour 1788 -
+John Logie
- 2 Katherine Balfour

Strangely enough, it was the youngest son, Murdoch(1), who succeeded to Chalmersquoy. He married Jean Hewison who was said to have been a descendant of a shipwrecked Spanish sailor from the "El Gran Grifon" of 1588. Murdoch's sister Ann also married a Hewison called William. The Balfours of the late 18th and 19th centuries were always called the "Dons" owing to the tradition of their Spanish blood. They were said to have black hair and unusually short necks.

Murdoch(1) and Jean Balfour's only son was James(2), (born in 1782). Jean the eldest daughter (1785-1641) married Balfour Hewison who may have been a son of her aunt Ann.

- They had four children:-
- Thomas (born 1811)
 - Jean (born 1813)
 - Ann (born 1814)
 - Murdoch (born in 1820)

Murdoch(1)'s second daughter, Barbara Balfour, born August 1788, married John Logie, a tailor. Their daughter Jean (born 1825) married John Meil and was grandmother of Mrs. Jean Bews of Quoybirse, Westray, Mrs. Mary Drever, West Langskaill, Skelwick, and the late Mrs. Davina R. Scott of Links. Jean's brother Balfour Logie (born 1829), married Barbara, daughter of Sir James Tait. They lived in London and Shetland and had three daughters, Barbara, Rose and Camy. Balfour Logie is said to have been ruined financially by his titled father-in-law.

The third daughter of Murdoch of Chalmersquoy was born in 1791. Her name was Katherine and she seems to have died unmarried.

From letters in the Watt collection we see that the laird of Chalmersquoy in 1770 was in the habit of accepting smuggled brandy. Brugh and Tirlot seem to have been similarly engaged while Mr. Balfour of Trenabie was kept in ignorance, it being too well known where his sympathies lay. Orkney at this period was notorious for its smuggling, almost all the lairds being engaged in varying degrees in the trade.

James Balfour(2) of Chalmersquoy (born 1782) married Jean Rendall and had three of a family.

Descendants of James Balfour(2)

- 1 James Balfour(2) 1782 -
+Jean Rendall
- 2 Murdoch Balfour(2)
- 2 Ann Balfour 1812 -
+William Reid
- 2 David Balfour(2) 1816 -
+Barbara Reid 1832 - 1912

Their daughter Ann (born 1812) married a Mr. William Reid and had issue: William Reid (born 1840), James Reid (born 1842) and Jean Reid (born 1845). The eldest son Murdoch(2) seems to have died unmarried. (See Roger Hollyman's notes)

David Balfour(2) of Chalmersquoy

Descendants of David Balfour(2)

1	David Balfour(2)	1816 -
	+Barbara Reid	1832 - 1912
..... 2	James Balfour(3)	1858 - 1900
..... 2	Hannah Balfour	1859 - 1910
..... 2	David Balfour(3)	1860 -
..... 2	John Balfour(4)	1860 -
..... 2	Thomas Balfour(3)	1870 - 1922
..... 2	Murdoch Balfour(3)	1872 - 1917
..... 2	Annie Jean Balfour	1875 - 1934
..... 2	William Balfour(7)	1877 -
..... 2	Barbara Elizabeth Balfour	1881 - 1959

The youngest son David (2), (born 1816), was his father's heir. His wife Barbara Reid may have been a sister of William Reid, senior. She died aged 80 on 21st June, 1912. Little is known of David(2), not even when he died as his name is not on the family tombstone in Pierowall Churchyard. It may have been he who renovated Chalmersquoy to its present form. (Editor's note:- Chalmer-squoy has been renovated several times since David Scott wrote this article)

These were the children of David Balfour(2) and Barbara Reid:-

(1) Rev. James(3), M.A. (born 1st February, 1858), died in U.S.A. 18th April, 1900;

(2) Hannah (born 3rd May, 1859), lived at home most of her life and died on 24th April, 1910,

(3) David(3), (born in 1860s), emigrated and at one time was Registrar of Jamaica. He left one daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Hicks, a grandson Kenneth and granddaughter Mrs. Elizabeth Dodd.

(4) John(4), (also born 1860s), went to America or Canada and left family;

(5) Thomas(3), who died aged 52 years on 4th, April, 1922;

(6) Murdoch(3), (born 1872), died at Chalmersquoy on 24th October, 1917, aged 45;

(7) Annie Jean, (born 1875), was considered a beauty. She left Orkney on one occasion to be bridesmaid at someone's wedding. There she unfortunately contracted measles that left her a semi-invalid for the rest of her life. She died aged 59 on 30th November, 1934;

(8) William(6), who also emigrated to Canada or U.S.A. He may have left family.

(9) Barbara Elizabeth, (born 1881), trained as a schoolteacher. She was a devout member of the Baptist Church, and was very proud of her family history. She taught for a time in Pierowall School. She succeeded to the farm of Chalmersquoy and lived there until shortly before her death in the Kirkwall County Home on 15th February, 1959. Despite her delicate constitution she lived to the advanced age of 78 years. Miss Balfour willed that her farm and goods be sold after her death and the money divided between her nieces and nephew in America and Jamaica. She was the last Balfour in Westray

Returning to Thomas Balfour(1), (born 1744), son of George Balfour(2) of Chalmersquoy and brother of Murdoch(1).

Descendants of Thomas Balfour(1)

TO
PAGE
12 →

1	Thomas Balfour(1)	1744 -
	+Elizabeth Sinclair	1754 -
..... 2	Isobel Balfour	1771 -
..... 2	George Balfour(2)(4)	1774 -
	+Isabella Sinclair	
..... 2	Barbara Balfour	1777 -
..... 2	Margaret Balfour	1780 -
..... 2	Ann Balfour	1786 -
	+John Cosser	
..... 2	William Balfour(3)	1790 - 1870
	+Mary Seator	
.....	*2nd Wife of William Balfour(3):	
.....	+Hannah Sinclair	1805 - 1894





He was designated "of Uttersquoy" but that name is no longer in existence in Westray. His wife was Elizabeth Sinclair (born 1754) a daughter of William Sinclair and Ann Moncrieff of Houton, his wife, and a direct descendant of the first George Sinclair of Rapness. Their daughter Isobel was born in 1771, son George(2) in 1774, Barbara in 1777, Margaret in 1780 and Ann in 1786. Ann married a man called John Cosser rather late in life and seems to have left no family in Westray. The youngest son was William(2), born in 1790. This William(2) was a schoolmaster in Westray. He married twice. By his first wife, Mary Seator, he had a daughter Elizabeth born in 1821 and a son Thomas(2), born 1825. The latter seems to have died young. His second wife was Hannah Sinclair who owned the house called Greeno at Ha'breck, Pierowall. It was here he died of old age on 25th February, 1870. His widow survived him for nearly 24 years, dying in 1894 aged 89.

Elizabeth Balfour did needlework for a living. On 12th March, 1846, she married John Allan a master mason, the minister being the Rev. George Reid. Witnesses at the wedding were James Stewart, the Laird of Brugh, and Mr. Nichol, Officer of Fishery. No doubt it was John Allan himself who built their home, the big white house end-on to the sea at Broughton. There they lived, had their children and died. The eldest daughter, Mary Seator Allan, married Henry Reid of Langskaill, emigrated, and left a family in America; Jean (born in 1849), married Thomas Tullock of Tifter and had a son; Thomas (born in 1852) was a seaman who was drowned when his ship the "Julia" was lost off Auskerry in February 1885, he never married; the next son, William, worked in a Westray shop and he died of T.B., aged 23, in 1878. Elizabeth Balfour Allan (born in August 1857) married James Scott, harbour master, as his first

wife and was mother of the late James Scott of Links and the late Thomas A. Scott of 8 Gill Pier. Elizabeth died in April 1906. John Allan married a girl called Betty Bain from Twiness and emigrated with his sister to U.S.A. He had sons, Thomas and Robert. The youngest daughter Georgina was an invalid. She died unmarried at her sister Elizabeth's house in 1905. John Allan's wife, Elizabeth Balfour, died in 1876. Her husband followed her two years later. They were both over 50

George Balfour(4)

Now, once again, we must take a step back, to George Balfour(4), born 1774, oldest son of Thomas of Uttersquoy. Isabella Sinclair, his wife, may have been a sister of his brother William's second wife, Hannah. His daughter Elizabeth married David Hewison, a sailor, who died off Cape Horn in August 1857 aged 39. Elizabeth herself died in 1868 aged 49. They had three sons, James who died aged 24, David who survived to 1912, and Thomas who died aged 29 in Australia. None of them seem to have been married.

Elizabeth's brother George(6), born 1815 was the first Balfour of Berriedale. His wife Janet Scott came from Sanday. It is said two other Scott girls from Sanday also married in Westray about this time. George(4) and Janet had the following family:

George(7), born 1842, died 1889; Barbara, born 1844; Sinclair(1), born 1846; James(1), born 1847, died aged 22 in 1869; William(4), born 1855, died 1937; and Janet, born 1857.

SHOULD BE 1939

Gill Pier

It was George(4) or one of his sons who was responsible for the erection of Gill Pier. His son, William's wife, was a native of Rothesay. He had three sons, Fred, who went to India and fell victim of sunstroke; Francis, a solicitor in Edinburgh, and William. William senior, gave up Berriedale and left Westray. His second wife was English. William's sister, Barbara, married a Manson man and they were the parents of two sons, George who married

an Elizabeth Reid and died young; and Peter who married Agnes Logie.

Descendants of George Balfour(4)

1	George Balfour(4)	1774 -
	+Isabella Sinclair	
..... 2	William S Balfour(4)	
.....	+Margaret Rendall	
.....	3	George Balfour(5)
.....		+Mary King
.....	4	Edward Balfour(1) 1881 - 1966
.....		+Jemima Fraser
.....	5	John George
.....		Balfour(5), 1920 -
.....		+Hazel Hourston
.....	3	Betsy Balfour 1848 -
.....		+James Bews 1849 -
.....		1815 - 1895
..... 2	George Balfour(6)	
.....	+Janet Scott	
.....	3	George Balfour(7) 1842 - 1889
.....	3	Barbara Balfour 1844 -
.....		+? Manson
.....	4	George Manson
.....		+Elizabeth Reid
.....	4	Peter Manson
.....		+Agnes Logie
.....	3	Sinclair Balfour(1) 1846 -
.....	3	James Balfour(1) 1847 - 1869
.....	3	William Balfour(6) 1855 - 1937
.....		+?
.....	4	Fred Balfour 1939
.....	4	Francis Balfour - IAN +
.....	4	William Balfour(5) WILLIAM
.....	3	Janet Balfour 1857 -
..... 2	Elizabeth Balfour	1819 - 1868
.....	+David Hewison	1818 - 1857
.....	3	James Hewison
.....	3	David Hewison - 1912
.....	3	Thomas Hewison

Today the surname Balfour is extinct in Westray after continuing for close on four hundred years. Nevertheless a good number of people can still claim at least a drop of Balfour blood.