2. HOWIE FAMILY of Kilwinning (1717–1818)

by Alan Craig

The story so far:

The **Galt** family originated in the North Ayrshire parishes of Kilwinning, Kilmaurs, Dreghorn, Irvine, Dalry and Beith, with the earliest records going back to 1683. This branch of the family included the paternal lines of *Cunningham*, *Love*, *Walker*, *Anderson* and *Murchland*. With the birth of *Gabriel [3] Galt* in 1793, the scene was set for the Galt family to merger with the **Howie** family. This chapter is the second of six that tell the story of the Galt line: (1) **Galt** of Ayrshire; (2) **Howie** and **Jack** of Ayrshire; (3) **Littlejohn** and **Steedman** of Perthshire and Kinross; (4) **Barr** and **Morrison** of Renfrewshire & Islay; (5) **McColl** and **McLean** of Mull; and (6) **Galt-Barr** of Glasgow and Brisbane.

N.B. — When named, all of *Robyn's* direct ancestors are *highlighted in purple*. All **blue** text [inside brackets] represents additional information or corrections, and did not form part of the original documents. Copies of the original birth, death, marriage and census records are held by me and stored in the Cloud, and can be made available to interested parties. When reproducing the baptismal and marriage entries below, I have kept the original archaic spellings and text, and also laid them out to reflect how they appear in the parish records.

William [1] Jack & Marion Reid

5G-Grandparents

Marion Reid was born in Irvine, a small parish wedged between the larger parishes of Kilwinning and Dreghorn. Typical of most parish entries of the time, her baptism was recorded with little fuss (see right).[1]

1723 SCOTLAND BAPTISMS: Irvine Parish, Ayrshire

Feb:
3d *Marion* daur to *William Reid* & *Martha Reid*

1717 SCOTLAND MARRIAGES: Kilwinning, Ayrshire

William Reid in Broomhill in ys paroch & *Martha Reid* Dautr. to *John Reid* in Waterside in the paroch of Dalry booked on Saturday July 27th, and after orderly proclamation married at Dalry on Friday August 23d.

From the outset, we had a conundrum — did the clerk record the mother's married name, or did the parents have the same surname (e.g. cousins)? Well, the answer was found in her parents' marriage,[2] which gave a little more detail (see left).

So, probably cousins. We have found no other records for the father *John Reid*, but we can add him to *Robyn's* 7g-grandfathers' list. What is useful from this record is the place names. 'Broomhill' is at the western end of Kilwinning Parish, while 'Waterside' is just 3 km (2 miles) north-east in Dalry Parish. Both of these were farms. We have only found one other child of this marriage: a daughter, *Martha*, who was born in September 1720 at Kilwinning.

William [2] Jack was born nearly two years after his future wife.[3] Again, 'High Smithstone' is in the far west of Kilwinning Parish, and only a few hundred yards south of Broomhill. We were able to find his parent's marriage (and possibly his father's birth):[4]

1725 SCOTLAND BAPTISMS: Irvine Parish, Ayrshire

January 1725:
William [2] son to *William [1] Jack* and *Margaret Barclay* in High Smithstoun Born on Sunday January 3d. and Baptised on Wednesday January 6th.

1723 SCOTLAND MARRIAGES: Kilwinning, Ayrshire

William [1] Jack in the parish of Ardrossan and *Margaret Barclay* in this parish Booked on Friday October 25th. and after orderly proclamation Married on Friday November 22d.

Ardrossan Parish is immediately west of Kilwinning, wedged between the Dalry and Stevenston parishes. We have been unable to find a baptism for *Margaret Barclay*, and the only possibility for *William [1] Jack* is a 1705 record from Dundonald Parish, which records a birth at Alton of Corsbie, which is 20 km (12 miles) around the

coast to the south. The father given was "Robert Jack", but we cannot validate this record. However, we were able to find baptisms for seven children to ***William [1] Jack*** and ***Margaret Barclay***, each in one of three farms in the Kilwinning Parish: ***William [2]*** (1725, at High Smithstone); *Jean* (1727, at High Smithstone); *Anne* (1730, at Whitehirst); *Margaret* (1733, at Whitehirst); *Peter* (1737, at Ashenyards); *James* (1738, at Ashenyards); *George* (1739, at Ashenyards).

Apart from ***William [2]***, we know only a little bit about two of his siblings. His sister *Jean* married an *Andrew Crawford* at Kilwinning in 1752, and his baby brother, *George*, married *Agnes Smith* at Stevenston in 1766. *George*, a carter, died at Stevenston at 1800, but his wife predeceased him by seven years. Finally, ***William [2]*** and ***Marion Reid*** tied the knot at Dalry in 1742: [5]

1742 SCOTLAND MARRIAGES: Dalry, Ayrshire

Aprile 1742
5) ***William [2] Jack*** & ***Marion Reid***
both in this parish gave up their
names for proclamation Aprile
the 7th & married Aprile 30th.

However, finding the children of ***William [2]*** and ***Marion*** has posed some difficulties. In the Dalry Parish, we can find nine children born to a "William Jack" between 1743 and 1759 — no mother is mentioned in any of these. On the basis of probability, you would still tend to think that at least some of these are for our line, given the place and dates fit comfortably. The problem is that some of these records are for children born only three months apart, meaning that they cannot have the same mother — it's obvious that there must have be two contemporaneous men called 'William Jack' (probably cousins) fathering children in the parish; distinguishing which child belonged to which is impossible. To make matters worse, there are two "Mary Jacks" in this cohort, and neither of them can be ours, because we find our ***Mary*** being born in Kilwinning Parish in 1852:

1752 SCOTLAND BAPTISMS: Parish of Kilwinning, Ayrshire [6]

Mary daughter to ***William [1] Jack*** and ***Marrian Reid*** in Auchenmade was born on Sabbath June 14th. & baptized on Wednesday June 17th.

'Auchenmade' is a farm in the northern corner of Kilwinning Parish, and that's all we know about this family until ***Mary Jack*** hitches herself to ***John Howie***, a man nearly six years younger than herself, sometime around 1778. However, there is no record of this marriage, so let's now look at the earlier Howie lineage.

Howie & Cunninghame

John Howie was born at a farm called 'Damback', which is in Kilwinning right on the border with Dreghorn, and it was in this general area that he lived most of his life:

1758 SCOTLAND BAPTISMS: Parish of Kilwinning, Ayrshire [7]

Mr. Alexander Fergusson Minister
John Son to ***James Howie*** & ***Elis: Cunninghame*** in Damback was born on Wednesday Aprile 19th. & baptized on Saturday Aprile 22d. / Thomas Young Bellman Sponsor

We also have ***John's*** parents' marriage in the same parish:

1755 SCOTLAND MARRIAGES: Parish of Kilwinning, Ayrshire [8]

James Howie & ***Elisabeth Cuninghame*** both in this parish gave in their Names on Saturday Aprile 12th. & were married on Thursday May 1st.

We have never found a verifiable baptism for ***James***, but ***Elizabeth's*** birth was recorded in 1727: [9]

1727 SCOTLAND BAPTISMS: Kilwinning Parish, Ayrshire

Elizabeth Daughter to ***David Cuninghame*** and
Mary Hepburn Maines of Montgreenan Born on
Sabbath August 6th. and Baptised on the Communion Munday August 14th.

The 'Mains of Montgreenan' is yet another farm in the east of Kilwinning Parish, and like many of those already mentioned in this story, can still be found on modern maps nearly 300 years later! I am always amazed at how resilient many place names in Scotland have been over the centuries. Nothing of ***Eliza-***

beth's parents has ever been found in the records, however, she had at least nine children between 1748 and 1769 — but … scandal! Two of these were born before she married (and marked "natural" in the baptismal records), and the third was conceived out of wedlock!

Well, a scandal like this was certain to have been brought to the attention of the Kirk Session, and luckily, the Kilwinning Kirk Minutes for the years 1738–1757 are still extant. So, it didn't take long to find *James* and *Elizabeth* in those minutes, and there were at least 17 individual entries for this couple. To summarise, there were four separate events for which they were dragged multiple times before the Session to be 'exhorted and rebuked' and made to confess to the congregation:

(i) for "being with child in fornication" in 1747, which lead to the birth of daughter *Margaret* in February 1748;
(ii) for simply being "guilty of fornication" in May 1749;
(iii) for "being with child in fornication" again, and for presenting a forged marriage certificate, in December 1752, leading to the birth of *Mary* in April 1753; and
(iv) another episode of "fornication before marriage", with confessions, leading them to finally get properly married in 1755 — just in time for the birth of their third daughter, *Janet* !

There are too many individual minutes to present here, but the two involving the "forgerie" make good reading:

> **1752 KIRK MINUTES: Kilwinning, 13th December; p.72**
>
> After Sermon, Session met & constituted. *Elizb. Cuninghame* being called compeared & produced a Testimonial of her Marriage wt. *Jas. Howie*, looked upon as a Forgerie & ordered to be kept. She was her self wt. Child to the said *Jas*. in Winnibrae, the Session appoint him to be cited gainst Sabbath next, & cite her apud Acta [after the fact] to attend said Dyet.
>
> **Sabbath, 24th December; p.72**
>
> Session met & constituted. *Jas. Howie* being called compeared, likewise *Elizb. Cuninghame*, and hereby told of her Accusation, owned Guilt with her & denies that he is married with her, or that he knows any thing about the Certificate of their Marriage produced by her. Upon which being interrogate where she was married, she says in Irvine, but cannot tell the Minister Name, or who were the Witnesses. This being a Trilapse to them both with one another, refer them to the Presbytery & cite them apud Acta to attend it on Tuesday come eight days & appoint their Clerk to read an extract of the Affair.

It was certainly a turbulent start to their years together but, after finally getting married, the only thing we know about them is the children born to them — here's the complete list: *Margaret* (1748, at Redburn); *Mary* (1753, at Kilwinning); *Janet* (1755, at Damback); *John* (1758, at Damback); *James* (1760, at Damback); *Jean* (1761, at Doura); *Robert* (1764, at Damback); *Elizabeth* (1766, at Doura); and *William* (1769, at Patterton). All of these farms were in an area of 5 km (3 miles) square directly west of the town of Kilwinning.

John Howie & Mary Jack

4G-Grandparents

Despite the **Howie** and **Jack** families having been well represented (even over-represented) in the parish records up to now, we have found no marriage entry for *John Howie* and *Mary Jack*. We can presume they married in 1788, and very likely in Irvine, because that's where their first three children were born. We know almost nothing more of this couple, but given that the majority of their offspring were to live into the era of 'statutory' records, we can provide a summary of their lives to finish this chapter:

William** (i) **Howie (1799) — was born in Irvine, but must have died before 1788, because there was a second *William* born that year. It is possible he survived till after his next brother, *James*, was born in 1785, as it is likely *James* would have inherited the name as a honour name for his maternal grandfather.

Elizabeth Howie (1780–) — was born 31st March and baptised at Irvine on April the 2nd, and that is all we know of her.

Jean Howie (1782–1864) — was born in Irvine, and married *John Muir* at Kilwinning in 1802. *John* was recorded as a coal-pit engine keeper, and this is the first we start to hear anything about the extensive coal fields in this district. Oddly, we have a note that *John* died on the "Glen Clune" at Shanghai, China in 1858, after 55 years of marriage. The widowed *Jean*, however, was a "pauper" when she died at Bridgend, Kilwinning, aged 82.

Marion Howie (1783) — came into this world at Benslie, just west of Kilwinning, on the 4th of November, and was baptised 5 days later, and this is all we know of her.

James Howie (1785–1843) — was also born in Benslie, and was a soldier in the 74th Ayrshire Highlanders (later merged with the famous HLI) when he married *Janet McAllister* at Irvine in 1816. I have a note that he died at 57 at Largs, further north on the Clyde estuary, in 1843; he was then a weaver. *Janet* lived on till 1868, and died at Irvine aged 71.

William** (ii) **Howie (1788) — was born in Kilwinning, the second with this name, and is another we know little about. However, an 1816 record from the Chelsea Pensioners Hospital in London has a 28-year-old Private *William Howie* from Kilwinning as a patient. This is very likely to be our *William*, and he had over 10 years service with the Second Regiment of Dragoons; he had previously been a mason. However, the most interesting thing from this hospital record is that had been wounded in the right arm at the Battle of Waterloo (18 June, 1815).

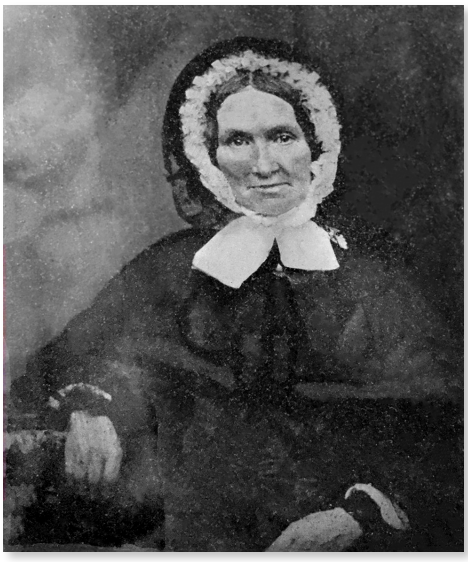
Mary Howie (1791–1885) — born in Irvine, she lived to the ripe old age of 94, but she was not to be the oldest of her siblings. She married *William McLay*, an Irishman, at Kilwinning in 1820. In 1851 he was a foreman at a coal and limestone mine at Campsie, Stirlingshire. *William* died at Lennoxtown in 1868, and *Mary* lived as a widow for another 17 years, dying of senile decay in 1885 (*see her picture below*).

Robert Howie (1793–1865) — was born and died in Irvine. He married *Jean Wallace* at Kilwinning in 1823, and for the 1851 and 1861 census, this couple lived with a small family at Quarry Lane in Irvine. *Jean* died of apoplexy in 1861, and *Robert* only lived another four years, dying exactly on the same day as his wife: 17 May.

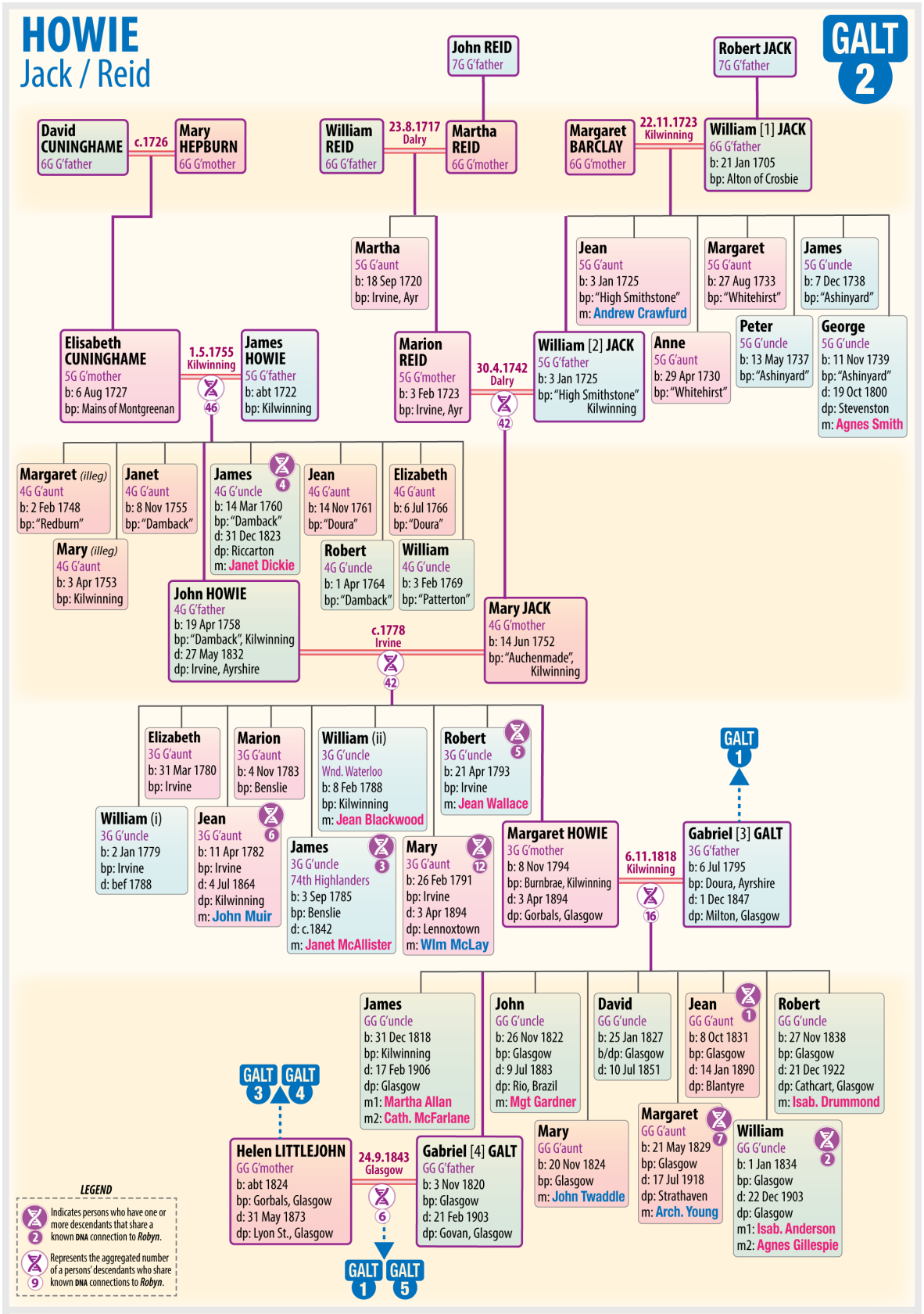
Margaret Howie (1794–1894) — is one of the oldest people we have in our entire family tree, and I consider her one of the major 'hubs' in the Galt family. She is *Robyn's* 3g-grandmother, and we will tell more of her life in Chapter 6. However, to summarise, she was born at Burnbrae (in that area west of Kilwinning), and married ***Gabriel [3] Galt***, a blacksmith, at Kilwinning in 1818. This couple had nine children, all but the first being born in Glasgow between 1820 and 1838. We have her recorded in six census records (1841–1891), and were lucky enough to obtain a photo of her (below) from a Galt family descendant in Brazil. She died at Langside Road, Gorbals, in April 1894 of senile decay, and was a magnificent 99 when she drew her last breath.

While the **Galt** and **Howie** families were flourishing in Ayrshire, other branches of the family were coalescing in Perthshire and Kinross, and their story can be found here: 3. Littlejohn-Steedman family.

Mary Howie *(1791–1885); married William McLay in 1820 at Kilwinning. Died aged 94.*



Margaret Howie *(1818–1894); Robyn's 3g-grandmother. She married* ***Gabriel [3] Galt*** *in 1818 at Kilwinning. Died aged 99.*



References

[1] Source: REID, Marion; 1723 Scotland O.P.R. Baptisms; 595/ 10 65; Irvine, Ayrshire.

[2] Source: REID, William & REID, Martha; 1717 Scotland O.P.R. Marriages; 599/ 10 399; Kilwinning, Ayrshire.

[3] Source: JACK, William [2]; 1725 Scotland O.P.R. Births; 599/ 10 279; Kilwinning, Ayrshire.

[4] Source: JACK, William [1] & BARCLAY, Margaret; 1723 Scotland O.P.R. Marriages; 599/ 10 418; Kilwinning, Ayrshire.

[5] Source: JACK, William [2] & REID, Marion; 1742 Scotland O.P.R. Marriages; 587/ 10 228; Dalry, Ayrshire.

[6] Source: JACK, Mary; 1752 Scotland O.P.R. Births; 599/ 20 114; Kilwinning, Ayrshire.

[7] Source: HOWIE, John; 1758 Scotland O.P.R. Births; 599/ 20 133; Kilwinning, Ayrshire.

[8] Source: HOWIE, James & CUNINGHAME, Elisabeth; 1755 Scotland O.P.R. Marriages; 599/ 30 46; Kilwinning, Ayrshire.

[9] Source: CUNINGHAME, Elisabeth; 1727 Scotland O.P.R. Births; 599/ 10 305; Kilwinning, Ayrshire.