

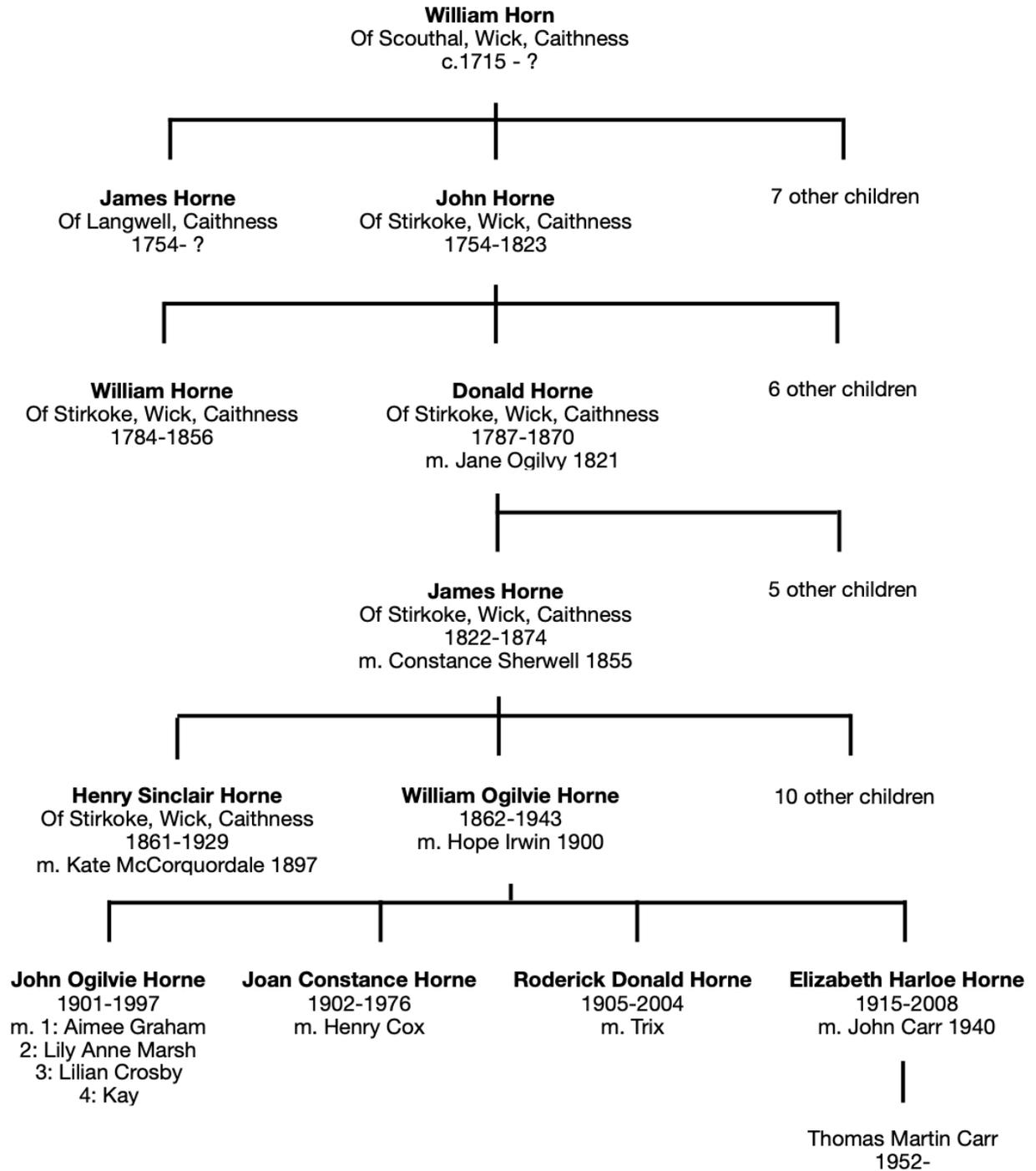
# **The Horne Family**

## From Caithness



**Tom Carr**

## Horne Family Tree (Extract)



## **Introduction**

The Horne family are one of the lines of my ancestors. While much of this history is known to various members of the family, nowhere is it written down concisely, and is in danger of disappearing. The purpose of this book is to gather it all together in one place for future generations if they are interested.

Sources are many and various, but I must acknowledge a significant debt to Nat Campbell who has done extensive research of his family in Australia. Much of his work is based on an unpublished book by Michael Moss about the Langwell estate. Nat is descended from Margaret Macfarlane (nee Horne), a grand daughter of William Horn of Scouthal with whom this story begins.

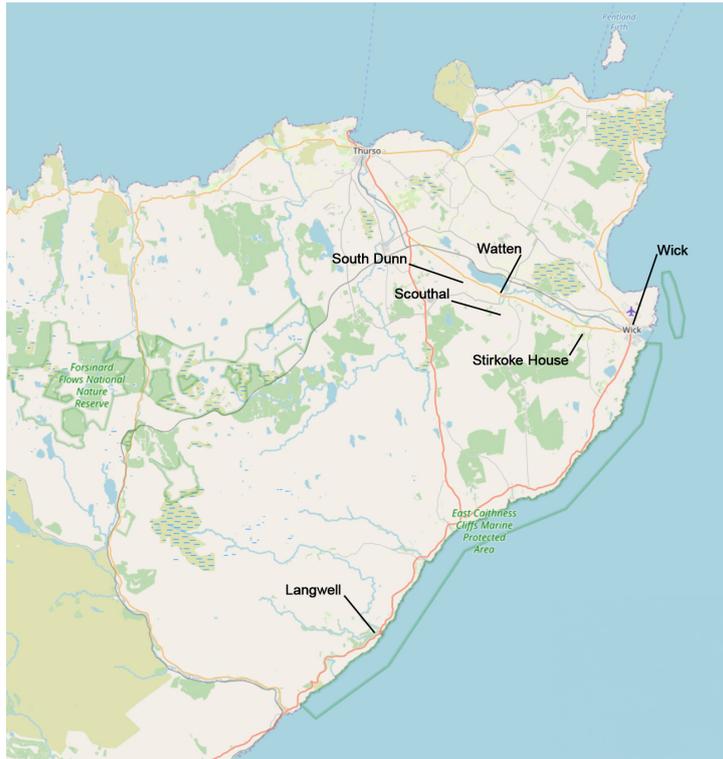
Caithness may seem a remote corner of the mainland of Britain, but to those who live there it is home, and the Hornes have made a significant contribution to national life, both in Scotland and in Britain generally. Sadly Stirkoke House, which has been so central to their story has been a ruin for many years, and no longer owned by any member of the family.

This book has been created as a webpage, and is available on line, and can be updated at any time. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information, this cannot be guaranteed, and if anyone has anything further to add or amend, please get in touch with me at the address below. Much of it was written in 2021, but the latest updates are noted below to help with dating any printed copies.

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Originally posted 2021  
Updated, including this introduction, October 2023  
Updated further, minor revisions, November 2023

## Map of Caithness



## Map of Scotland



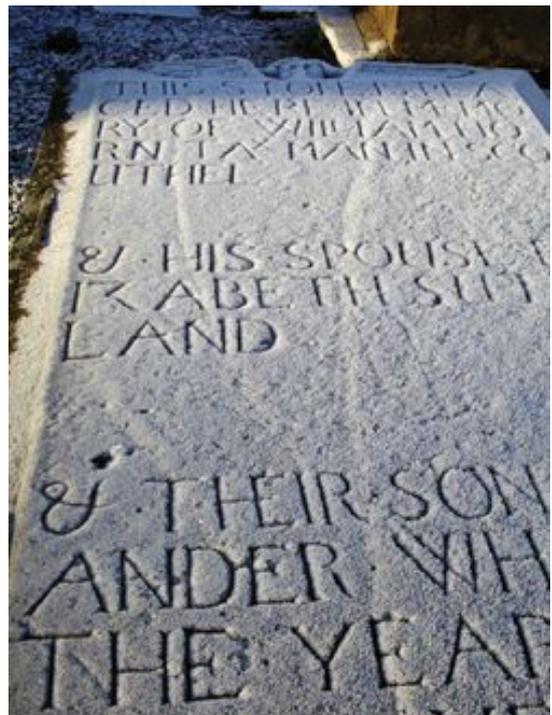
## **William Horn (b. about 1715)**

The earliest ancestor so far discovered, is William Horn (without an 'e'), living at South Dunn (1) and later Scouthal (2), both isolated houses in the vicinity of Watten, near Wick in Scotland. We don't know his dates of birth or death, but it is recorded that he married in 1736, to Elizabeth Sutherland. He was a blacksmith, but was also considered clever in business. It is still a bit surprising that his twin sons John and James, born in 1754, both became significant landowners. However, this may be explained by the tale that while ploughing near Scouthal William came across a hoard of gold, which financed his son James going into the legal profession, while John acquired the Stirkoke estate. This must have been a substantial find.

William had 9 children, including two sets of twins: Alexander (1737), Jannet (1738), Patrick (1745), Elizabeth (1749), George and Jean (1751), James and John (1754) and William (1756)

His gravestone in the churchyard at Halkirk, just a few miles away, describes him as a taxman. However, this is an alternative spelling of 'tacksman' which means a land owner of intermediate legal and social status, who paid a yearly rent or 'tack' to his landlord, often a relative. Frustratingly, no dates are given for his birth, death or age, but it is also the resting place for his wife, Elizabeth Sutherland, again with no dates. Also included on the stone is a son, Alexander, apparently with a date, but the date is not visible in the photo supplied on the website! (3)

Alexander married Helen Millert, and they had one daughter, Margaret (1771) who married George Sinclair, and later Francis Sinclair with whom she had 7 children.



William Horn's gravestone in Halkirk

We know no more of Jannet or Patrick, but Elizabeth married William Stewart in 1769 and they had 10 children. Again we know little of George, but his twin Jean married John Gunn in 1774, and they had 3 children. For James and John, see below, and finally William of whom we know nothing more.



Scouthal, September 2021 (Google Streetview)

An interesting fact to emerge is that Jannet was a Horn in 1738, while Patrick was a Horne in 1745. Why the 'e'? Your guess is as good as mine!

### **James Horne 1754 - ?**

James bought an estate called Langwell (4), south of Wick near the village of Berridale c1800. He bought it from Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, but at the time it seems it was an estate with a ruined castle. The earliest records show a 'farmhouse' built on the site of the present house for Mr Horn. This was improved on by the subsequent purchaser, the 5th Duke of Portland, who bought it in 1858. (5)

James did not marry, and had no children. He left the estate to his nephew, Donald, (more of whom later), who he was in business with in Edinburgh as a lawyer.

## **John Horne 1754 - 1823**

On a family tree of Hornes of Stirkoke, (6) probably originally handwritten in 1968, John Horne is noted as having “acquired” Stirkoke, but there is no mention of how, when or who from. It seems the previous owner was one of the Sinclair family.

Nat Campbell explains the following:

"He became tacksman of Clyth, and was later a magistrate (JP), and a deputy lieutenant of the county. He lived at Stirkoke, near Wick in Scotland.

He married 3rd Oct 1783 and had 7 children with Elizabeth Williamson of Banniskirk, Halkirk, Caithness.

Children include William (1785-?), Donald (1787-1870), James (1789-1816), Isabella (1792-?), Margaret (1795-1878), Elizabeth (1798-?) & John (1800-1841).

He was appointed a Major, and his son Donald a Lieutenant, in the Caithness volunteers and they raised the Stirkoke Company in 1799. According to Captain John Henderson, Stirkoke was the ‘most showy and commodious’ house in Caithness. With his multiplicity of landholdings, John Horne had his hands full, and decided to look for a tenant for West Watten. In 1805 it was advertised to let.

His son James joined the East India Company as a Private and died in Vizagapatam, Madras, India in October 1816.

In 1823, when John Horne died at the age of 69 (or 70), while staying with his son William at his Edinburgh home in Great King Street in the New Town, he was a wealthy man. Sir Benjamin Dunbar of Hempriggs owed him £42 but this was small beer. His son William held £1,132 for him in funds. He left his sons William and Donald £4,000 each and young John £3,000, to go towards ‘his education and outfit as an Artillery Cadet in the service of the Honourable East India Company’. He left his eldest daughter Isabella (Bella), now Macleay, an annuity of £50 a year, as well as the £1,000 provided in her marriage contract. William, as the eldest son, inherited the Stirkoke estate.

The document very carefully made sure that Margaret Horne’s husband, Allan Macfarlane, would not get the opportunity to squander any of John Horne’s money:

... to the children of Margaret Horne my second daughter the sum of two thousand pounds the interest of which is to be paid to her for her own personal use and upon her own proper receipt during her life exclusive of the jus mariti of her husband for whose debts and by whose acts and deeds the same shall not be affordable and the Capital to be divided among her Children at her death in such shares and divisions as she may appoint and failing of such appointment to be divided equally amongst them share and share alike it being understood that their respective shares of said principal sum shall not rest or be payable until they attain majority or are married if females ...

The executor of his estate was his eldest son, William Horne, Advocate, and Sheriff Deputy of the County of Haddington, and the document mentions also his second son, Donald Horne (Writer to the Signet), his only other surviving son John Horne (who is to become an Artillery Cadet in the service of the Honourable East India Company), his eldest daughter Isabella Horne (the wife of Kenneth Macleay Esq. of Newmore), his second daughter Margaret Horne and his youngest daughter Elizabeth Horne.

James, a son of John's son Donald Horne, went on to live at Stirkoke House. " (7)

It sounds from the above as if Allan Macfarlane was a somewhat suspect character, and, with his wife Margaret he emigrated to Australia. However, Nat goes on to tell us:

"On a November night in 1816, just after her 21st birthday, Margaret Horne climbed out of her bedroom window at Stirkoke and ran away to Wick to marry Allan Macfarlane, who worked as a fishery officer at Pultneytown. They had 12 children between 1818 and 1839.

Allan and Margaret along with their children emigrated to South Australia in 1839 on the ship "Superb". They took up 5 sections of land at Mount Barker about 2 miles from the town and named the property Glensloy. By 1841 they owned 200 sheep and grew crops of wheat, barley, oats and potatoes.

Allan became actively involved in district affairs and sat in the House of Assembly as representative for the Murray electorate and then the Mt Barker district.



Margaret (Horne) Macfarlane in 1872

In 1845 Allan and his sons leased 34 square miles of land on the eastern side of Lake Alexandrina as pasture for their 3,000 sheep. The property was named Wellington Lodge.

In 1858 Allan and Margaret returned to England for a visit. Allan died in 1864 in Kensington, South Australia and Margaret passed away 14 years later in 1878, age 82. " (8)

So despite his father-in-law's fears, he made good.

Another daughter, Isabella [Bella], married Kenneth Macleay of Newmore in 1811. Kenneth and his brother John had returned home from the West Indies in 1807 with substantial fortunes. Kenneth used his to purchase Newmore and Ballintrab at Rosskein in Cromarty from Charles Ross." (9)

Kenneth's fortune arose from an estate in British Guiana called Peter's Hall. (10) Originally it grew coffee, but later turned to sugar. In 1817, it held 244 slaves, though by 1832 this was reduced to 195. After the abolition of slavery in 1833, a total of £9,256 was paid in claims (11), of which Isabella gained her share of £1,926. She had 8 children: Barbara (1814), Kenneth (1817), Elizabeth (1819), William John (1820), John (1821), Alexander Donald (1822) and Isabella (1824).

John's other surviving son, John, joined the British East India Company as an artillery officer, and was posted to Madras, India. He died at Vizagapatam aged 40.

### **William Horne (1785-1856)**

Nat Cambell writes:

"When his uncle James Horne died in 1831 the properties of Scouthall and Wester Watten went to William, who had already inherited Stirkoke on his father's death in 1821.

For William Horne, who was a cattle dealer and grain merchant as well as an advocate, inheritance came too late. By the time of his uncle's death he was already in serious financial difficulties and his Stirkoke and Sibster estates, totalling over 8,000 acres, were almost immediately put on the market in January 1832. According to the advertisement their total rents amounted to £2,300. Despite repeated advertisements throughout the year they failed to sell, and he had to ask for help from his wife's very wealthy family, the Riddells. They allowed him to borrow £10,000 from his wife's marriage settlement and £3,000 each from her two sisters' settlements.

After years of difficulties, William was declared bankrupt in 1843 with debts of some £120,000 (almost £15.5 million in today's money - 2021). These included mortgages over his estates, including £10,000 from his own marriage contract, £10,000 borrowed from Miss Helen Gillon of Wallhouse's marriage contract, £3,000 each from his sisters-in-law, and £12,000 from the Scottish Union Assurance Company.

He was described not as a Sheriff Deputy, but as a cattle and grain dealer and a manufacturer and trader in gas, living in Edinburgh. Almost certainly what had caused him to fail was the collapse in agricultural prices.

Later in 1843 his whole estate of some 16,000 acres was put on the market. His legal agents were his brother's firm Horne & Ross. The properties included the estates of Stirkoke with its tower house, Sibster, Scouthell and West Watten, and Lynegar.

It was not until December 1852 that purchasers were in the offing, and the estates were not finally sold until February 1853 when Wester Watten was sold to George Sinclair's son J G Tollemache Sinclair the younger of Ulbster for £21,500.

Donald Horne snapped up the old family property of Stirkoke on behalf of his eldest son Major James Horne for £43,000, aiming to concentrate the family's agricultural interests in Caithness there, and commissioning a reconstruction of the tower house, probably by David Bryce.

William Horne was not finally discharged from bankruptcy until 1856. In 1841 he had been living in some style at No 56 Great King Street, Edinburgh, with his wife Elizabeth's two unmarried sisters, Agnes and Marianne Riddell, and four servants. By 1846 they had moved and in 1851 he was living in reduced circumstances in Portobello. He died of influenza at Dunbar in June, a broken man." (12)



Stirkoke from the air, c 2011. After a fire in 1998, only a shell remains, but a considerable number of trees remain in the grounds, which is unusual for an area of the country with few trees. A pipe tune called 'The Bonny Woods of Stirkoke' is supposed to be tongue-in-cheek, written by Willie Thompson, the gardener. (13) This view is from the east.



The house also from the east in 1991 before the fire. It can be seen to be in a pretty derelict condition, though it is now owned by Donald Sinclair who also owns the farm, which seems to be thriving.  
The long abandoned gardens are now just a wilderness.

A few more images including a plan of the two main floors, and the derelict interior, are available at: <https://canmore.org.uk/site/9248/stirkoke-house>  
A list of further off-line images that exist is also provided.

Stirkoke fairly recently. This image shows a similar view, and the gardens in even further dereliction.



**Donald Horne (1787-1870)**

Donald started out in business with his Uncle James in the Edinburgh based legal practice of Horne, Horne, and Lyell, later Horne & Ross. He was a Writer to the Signet, a qualified lawyer, and inherited the business on James' death, along with Langwell. He became very wealthy, had many high profile clients, and bought the estate of Stirkoke from his brother William when he had his financial difficulties.

He also had some political ambitions, and bought the house at Benrig near St Boswells in the Scottish Borders, in addition to his grand Edinburgh house at 10 Atholl Crescent. His office was at 39 Castle Street, Edinburgh, in the heart of the New Town that had previously been the Edinburgh residence of Sir Walter Scott.



Donald Horne

He married Jane Ogilvy of Chesters, near Ancrum in the Scottish Borders. They had 6 children: James (1822-1874), John (1824-1878), Hannah (1825-1894), Elizabeth (1826-1884), Thomas (1829-1884) and William (1831-?)



39 Castle Street, Edinburgh. Note the plaque over the bow window identifying it as Sir Walter Scott's residence.  
Google Streetview 2017

In 1857 he decided to retire from his farming activities, and sold Langwell to the Duke of Portland. The Duke did not find Donald Horne easy to deal with: 'everything was done at the last moment and telegrams had to pass between me and Mr Melville to be in time for the sale'. (14) His son James was already living at Stirkoke and managing the estate there. He died on the 23rd June 1870 at his home in Atholl Crescent.

He gave Stirkoke to his son James in 1853. His next son John became a cleric, and became the Canon of Cumbrae, where he is buried. Hannah married the Rev. Joseph Buckley and lived in Sopwith in Wiltshire. They had no children. Elizabeth married John Campbell of Possie, and they had no children either. She died at Torquay. Thomas was a WS like his father, and married Priscilla Moore. They had four children, the oldest of which, Thomas, continued the family tradition of becoming a WS. Lastly William emigrated to Auckland, New Zealand, where he is believed to have got married and had children.

### **James Horne (1822-1874)**

James was a Major in the Highland Light Infantry and Gordon Highlanders, and he married Constance Shewell in 1855 in Cheltenham. They lived at Stirkoke, and had 12 children, below:

Donald (1856-1872) died at the age of 16.

Edward CBE CMG (1857-1941) was a Colonel in the Seaforth Highlanders, and was the Governor of Caithness. He inherited Stirkoke from his father in 1874, but sold it to his brother Henry in 1919. He latterly lived at Thirster, near Wick. He had two children, Margaret 1883-1951, and James 1888-1902, who died in a fire at Eton College.

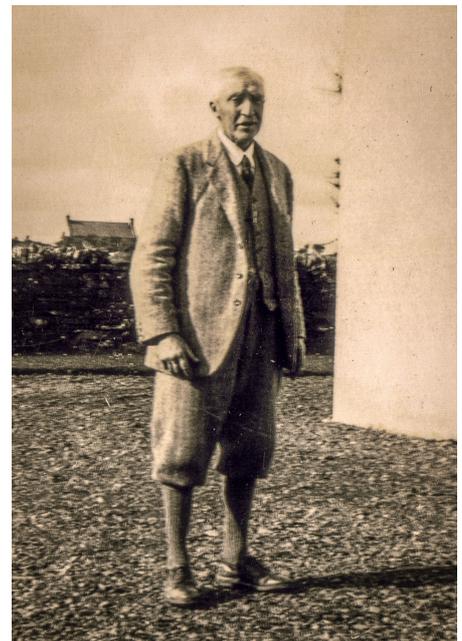
Alice 1858-1942 married Sir James Patten in 1884, but they had no children. He was a JP and Deputy Clerk Register and Keeper of Records for Scotland.

Henry 1861-1929 was next, more below.

Then followed William 1862-1943, again more below.

Edith 1864-1960 married the Rev. George Oakshott in 1897, and they lived at Yakely, in Hampshire. They had no children.

Of Maud 1865-1953 we have no further record.



Edward Horne at Thirster 1932

Jane 1868-193? married James Parke Rawlings of the Indian Punjab Police, and they did have children.

Constance 1869-1955 married John Henry Newman of Malabar Hill, Bombay, India in 1897. He later became Surgeon Colonel in the Indian Medical Service. They had no children.

James 1870-1894 has no further record.

Gertrude 1871-1872 died as a baby.

George 1872-192? married Ethel Chesterton and emigrated to Sunday's River, Eastern Cape, South Africa. They are reported to have had children.

### **Henry Sinclair Horne GCB, KCMG, 1861-1929**

1st Baron Horne of Stirkoke

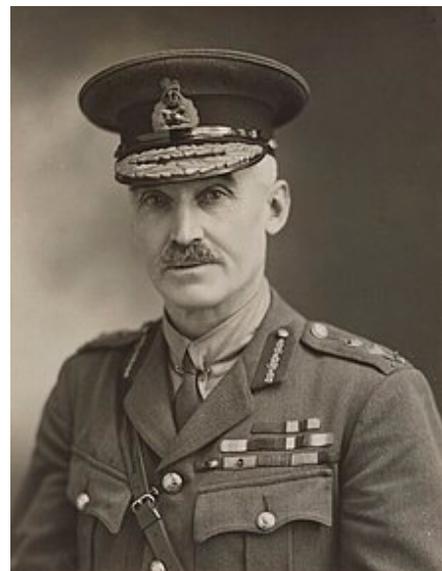
Henry achieved great prominence rising to be a General, being the Commander of the 1st British Army during World War 1, and was later created Baron Horne of Stirkoke in 1919.

He lived his early life at Stirkoke, but went to school at Harrow before going to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. His army career took him to various places, but a posting to Weedon in Northamptonshire started a lifelong connection with that county, especially as that was where he met his future wife, Kate McCorquedale. She was a widow, but shared his passion for hunting and fishing, as did their daughter Kate 1898-1956 in the fullness of time.

He married Kate (senior) in 1896, and they bought Priestwell House in East Haddon, Northamptonshire, and they shared their life between there and Stirkoke. (15)

His military career is well documented by his biographer, Don Farr, in his book 'The Silent General' (16) so I will not repeat it all here. He fought in the Boer war with a certain Colonel Douglas Haig, and rose to the higher ranks soon after that. He was always an artillery officer, but commanded a number of successful British actions, including the capture of Vimy Ridge, which played a significant part of the war on the western front.

In the post war years he spent actively involved in many events, and there is an interesting piece of Newsreel film showing him accepting the Freedom of Northampton. (17) While his principal residence was Priestwell House in East Haddington, he spent a considerable amount of time at Stirkoke. He died in 1929 whilst out shooting at Stirkoke, and is buried on the family plot in Wick cemetery.

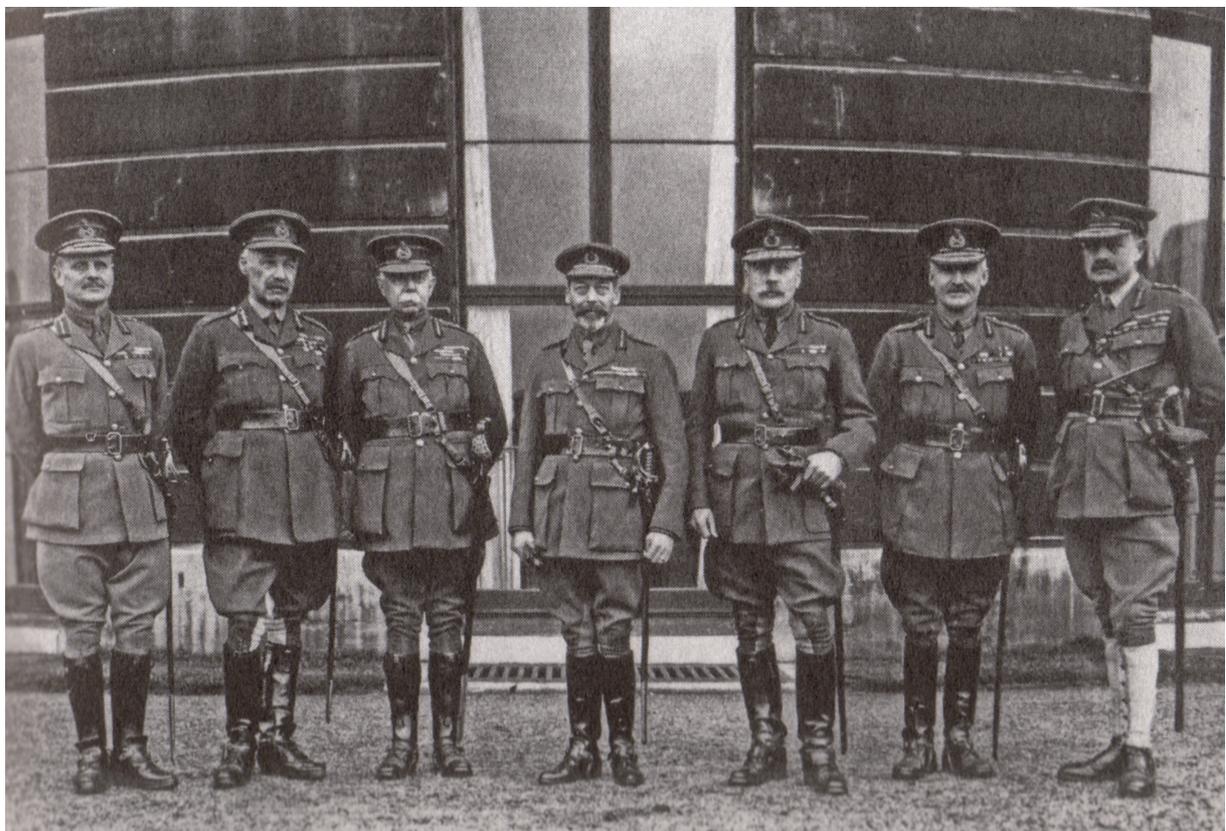


**Henry Sinclair Horne**

Having only a daughter, he was concerned that the baronetcy would die with him. He actively campaigned to allow the title to be inherited down the female line, but despite petitioning the King and the Prime Minister, this was not allowed, and consequently the title did end on his death.

His only daughter, Kate 1898 - 1956 was active in the hunt in East Haddon, and married Arthur Hewson MC RHA and had three daughters with him, but after that marriage failed she married Henry Hildreth.

Stirkoke was eventually sold in lots in 1965, no longer the property of the Horne family after nearly 200 years.



The King with his Generals at Buckingham Palace, 19 December 1918. Left to right:  
Birdwood, Rawlinson, Plumer, HM The King, Haig, Horne, Byng

The Imperial War Museum, London

## William Ogilvie Horne 1862-1943



William Ogilvie Horne

William, or Bill as he was known to friends and family, made the decision early on to enter the Indian Civil Service.

After going to Clifton College, he matriculated as an undergraduate at Trinity College, Oxford, on 16 October 1880 shortly before his 18th birthday. He passed the entrance exam for the ICS this same year, though he did not actually arrive in India until 7 December 1882 when he was just 20.

He was appointed Assistant Collector and Magistrate, and acting deputy Registrar in Madras (Chennai). ICS ranks had very complex names by then, and it is not clear how much of his daily work is actually reflected in the title of the post. Progression was slow at first - it was not until 1890 before he gained a significant step up to Head Assistant, then Special Assistant

at Ganjam in 1893, followed by Commissioner of Salt etc. and Revenue also in 1893. 1894 saw him move to Head Assistant at S. Kanara and in 1896 Sub Collector and Joint Magistrate. Two years later he became the Collector, District Magistrate and agent to the Governor at Vizgapatam, where his Great Uncle died 60 years before. In 1904 he became Inspector General of Police, Collector and Magistrate in 1908, and then a Member of the Board of Revenue in 1911. He was awarded the Companion of the Star of India in 1912, before retiring at the somewhat early age of 52 in 1914. (18)

His retirement was prompted by the advent of the 1st World War, and with two sons, he was not sure if he would ever see them again if he stayed in India. So he retired early, taking a reduced pension as a result, and thereafter he always found money a bit tight. Both sons were a bit young for joining up, being 13 and 9 at the outbreak of the war, but of course he was not to know how long the war would last, who would win, and whether he would be able to get back to Britain on leave while it was on.

In 1900, he married Hope Helena Catherine Call Irwin, daughter of the architect Henry Irwin (19)(20) who was once heard to say that he had "too many horses and too many daughters": it is not known how many horses he had, but he did have 8 daughters (and 5 sons) which many might agree is rather a lot, even by Victorian standards!



William Horne and Hope Irwin's Wedding, Ootacamund, Tamil Nadu, 1900. Henry Irwin is the mustachioed gentleman to the left of the bride.

On his return to Britain William and Hope bought a house in Birnam, near Dunkeld in Perthshire. They had 4 children, John (Jock), Joan, Roderick (Rory), and Elizabeth. Jock and Rory were both born in India, but Joan and Elizabeth were born at their grandmother's home in Mallow in Ireland. Elizabeth was the authors mother.

William wrote a book about his experiences in India. Called "Work and Sport in the Old ICS" and published in 1928, it gives an insight into his life there, and his thoughts (both positive and negative) of some of the characters he worked with. He was already aware of changes afoot, which he was not keen on, and hence the 'Old ICS' of the title, referring to the service pre World War 1. It is a nostalgic memoir of times past which will never return. (21)

William died in 1943 at the age of 81, and Hope died a year later at the age of 63, following complications during a surgical operation.

## References

1. OS Grid Ref: ND 19269 55696 Latitude: 58° 28' 55" N Longitude: 3° 23' 10" W
  2. OS Grid Ref: ND 23784 53016 Latitude: 58° 27' 31" N Longitude: 3° 18' 28" W
  3. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/220941725/william-horn> accessed 17.10.21
  4. OS Grid Ref: ND 11338 22757 Latitude: 58° 11' 4" N Longitude: 3° 30' 34" W
  5. <https://www.parksandgardens.org/places/langwell-lodge>, accessed: 17.10.21
  6. Hand drawn family tree "Horne of Stirkoke 1754-1968" Collection of Mrs P.Higman, Chippenham. Originally drawn by Eileen Cox, Dunkeld
  7. Nat Campbell, family history researcher, <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Horne-3017> accessed 21.10.21
  8. <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Horne-3003> accessed 21.10.21
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  18. The India Office List for 1925, Harrison & Sons London 1925
  19. <http://www.higman.de/Henry%20Irwin/henry-irwin.htm> accessed 23/10/21
  20. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_Irwin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Irwin) accessed 23/10/21
- The image of Henry Irwin in this entry is wrong - it is actually his brother Benjamin.
21. "Work and Sport in the Old ICS", Horne W O, William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh, 1928  
also available at: <https://archive.org/details/dli.csl.6254>

**See also:**

<http://www.caithness.org/atoz/photogallery/index.php?gallery=104>

<https://www.ancestry.co.uk>

Nat Campbell: [www.wikitree.com](http://www.wikitree.com)

<http://www.caithness.org/atoz/countryhouses/countryhouses1.htm>

<https://canmore.org.uk/site/9248/stirkoke-house>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_Horne,\\_1st\\_Baron\\_Horne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Horne,_1st_Baron_Horne)

The Hospitable Mansion of Langwell: Michael Moss with William Parente (2019)  
(unpublished)

Tom Carr 2021