Murdoch Mackenzie, the 1st of Fairburn, obtained a charter for his lands, dated 1st April 1542 and it was for Murdoch that Fairburn Tower was probably built. Murdoch lived at the Court of St James and was a Gentleman of the Bedchamber for James V.

The last Mackenzie of Fairburn was General Sir Alexander Mackenzie, G.C.H., who died without issue and having sold his estates on 17 October 1853, the title became extinct.

Ayrshire, Scotland

The Reverend Dr John Stirling of Craigie,
Moderator of the General Assembly 1833
21 April 1776 – 13 January 1846
Married 21 April 1862
Mary
26 August 1783 – 28 June 1862
daughter of Reverend William McQuhae DD of St Quivox and Mary Laurie

Can you identify these two portraits?
If you can, please get in contact with us
Mary and John’s children

James Stirling
12 February 1807 – 17 October 1823

Mary Laurie Stirling
25 March 1808 – 1 February 1867
married 25 May 1804
Thomas Ainsworth of The Floss, Cumberland

Isabella Stirling
1 September 1809 – 2 February 1826

Jane Erskine Stirling
8 February 1811 – 22 May 1892

Elizabeth Stirling
11 December 1812 – 28 September 1840
married 5 June 1838
William Erskine of the Bombay Medical Services

Lydia Ainsworth Stirling
11 November 1814 – 26 June 1829

William Stirling
12 August 1816 – February 1852
Merchant in Liverpool

Rose Sophia Stirling
27 August 1818

John Stirling
26 June 1820 – 19 August 1907
married 14 September 1852
Marian
4 October 1829 – 2 September 1907
daughter of John Hartley of Moresby
House Cumberland

Laura Margaret Stirling
5 September 1822 – 18 April 1846
Annabella Fullarton Stirling  
7 June 1824 – 30 April 1913  
married 1850  
Admiral John Fraser Campbell

James Stirling  
2 September 1827 – 11 March 1846

Cumberland, England

John Stirling received business training in a Scottish bank and then travelled to Cumbria to work with his brother-in-law, Thomas Ainsworth, in the Flax Industry in Cleator Moor, Cumberland.

In 1841 a local group of iron ore owners, including JS and Thomas Ainsworth, joined forces and built the Cleator Moor Iron Ore Works which, had closed by 1925. In 1858 JS starting borings on Todholes, near Cleator, and had almost given up prospecting when haematite was discovered. In 1862 he started boring in the Montreal royalty and discovered more haematite and opened the Montreal Mine, which also produced coal.

On 14 September 1852 he and his wife, Marian, went to live at Park House, Whitehaven; Marian had six children while living at Whitehaven:

Margaret Violet Stirling  
29 February 1856 – 20 February 1946  
married 7 April 1880  
Sir Hector Munro of Foulis, 11th Baronet

John Erskine Stirling  
6 August – 22 September 1857

William Stirling  
12 February 1859 – 10 November 1914  
married 7 August 1889  
Charlotte Eva  
9 January 1862 – 3 December 1935  
Second daughter of Aeneas Mackintosh of Daviot and Louisa Fanny Sybella Macleod
John Hartley Stirling
23 November 1860 – 22 October 1884 in San Francisco, USA

James Stirling
of Laurieston Hall, New Galloway
7 January 1862 – 22 March 1933
married 30 October 1895
Ann Mary, daughter of John Harris of Greysouthern, Cumbria

Marion Isabel Stirling
31 December 1863 – 25 January 1950
married 2 June 1890
Sir Wilfrid Emilius Laurie Maxwelton, 5th Baronet

In 1863 – 65 John Stirling and his family moved to Bridekirk,
Cockermouth and Marian had 4 more children
Alexander Stirling of Strathgarve
24 May 1865 – 22 February 1946
married 13 October 1896
Helen Katharine
3rd daughter of Crawford Hill, Sheriff Substitute for Ross & Cromarty

Mary Laurie Stirling
1 February 1867 – 1941
married 12 June 1895
Gilfrid William Hartley of Moresby, North Berwick (author of Wild Sport and some stories, Wild Sport with Gun and Rifle and Salmon Rod)

Arthur Patrick Stirling
31 March – 9 October 1869

Charles Stirling
10 November 1870 – September 1903, South Africa
married 8 January 1903
Marion Alston,
21 July 1871 – 13 February 1952
daughter of Charles Henry Alston, Iron founder, Glasgow

Ross-shire, Scotland

John Stirling had become a keen sportsman and started visiting Scotland in the 1860’s. From 1870 he rented Castle Leod, Strathpeffer. In 1876 he purchased four estates and amalgamated them into what is now Fairburn Estate. He had already purchased 17 Ennismore Gardens, London.
Fairburn House

In 1877 John Stirling commissioned the architect, Wardrop & Reid, to build him a mansion house and by 1880 Fairburn House had been completed and the family and their servants moved in.

The family on the steps of Fairburn House

Carriage at the Stables of Fairburn House
John Stirling used estate workmen to build a turbine house at the Orrin Falls and one further up river under the supervision of Mr Bagot from Glasgow and electric light was installed in 1898. He also commissioned the building of the Home Farm, a Stable Block, Kennels, a Gate Lodge at the south approach road to the Mansion House and a walled garden complete with glasshouses and a house for the gardener.

Around the house and within the policies John Stirling planted one of the finest collections of exotic Silver Firs, Spruces and Pines in the country, many of which remain today and include a number of ‘Champions’, – the biggest trees of their species in this country.

By 1883 John Stirling had also purchased the estate of Monar consisting of 21,000 acres.

In 1907 John Stirling died and Fairburn estate passed to his son, William, who had been living in Kinellan House, Strathpeffer, with his wife, Charlotte and their children.
Extracts from John Stirling’s Will

Mr John Stirling, of 17 Ennismore Gardens, London and of Fairburn, Muir of Ord, Ross Shire, one of the largest ironmasters in Cumberland and Northumberland, D.L., J.P. for Ross-shire, and J.P. for Cumberland, a well-Known exponent of the sport of curling, who Died, domiciled in Scotland, at Muir of Ord, on 19th August last, aged 88 years, son of the Rev Dr John Stirling of Craigie, Ayrshire, some time Moderator of the Church of Scotland, left a considerable estate in the United Kingdom.

The testator confirmed the gift of the Monar Estate in Ross-shire to his son William, of his Estate of Foulton, Ayrshire, to his son James, And of his Holm Hill estate at Dunblane to his son Alexander.

The bequests of his Will are as follows:

**Family Bequests:**

His London residence, 17 Ennismore Gardens and all his effects there, horses, carriages, and consumable stores, to his son William, he making provision for the testator's widow to reside there during her life.

He left financial bequests to his wife, his son James, Alexander, his daughters, Margaret Violet, wife of Sir Hector Munro, Bart.; Marion Isabel, wife of Wilfred Emilius Laurie; and Mary Laurie, wife of Gilfred William Hartley; and his son Charles and their Respective issue. Also his sister Annabella Fullerton Mackenzie, and his second cousin Florence Ainsworth; and each of his grandchildren, Sylvia Marion Laurie and Marion Louisa Stirling and to Mrs Maria Erskine. To his sister's-in-law, Margaret wife of Mr Henry Potts, and Anne, wife of Henry Hartley. To each of his god-children, Gilfred William Hartley, Archibald Wyberg, Philip Stanley, and Marion Hartley, and to Caroline Mary Louisa and William, children of his late Uncle, Dr McQuhae. A life annuity to his cousin McQuhae.

**Bequests to Employees:**

To his agent, William Gunn of Dingwall.
To his head keeper, John Burns; his farm manager Joseph Chalmers; his coach man, Joseph Jackson; his wife's maid, Margaret Esplin; and Mrs Gotthold, of Frankfort, Germany, formerly governess to his children.
To his mine manager, Robert Inkes; his mining engineer, William Black; his Butler, William Parker; his road maker at Fairburn, Duncan McKenzie; and his housekeeper at Montreal, Mrs Peats.

To his trustees for distribution at their discretion amongst his servants not mentioned above.

To his trustees similarly for distribution amongst his clerks and employees at his mines (not being miners) other than those mentioned above.

Life annuities to Sarah McKenzie and Farquhar McPheal, formerly in his employ at Monar, and to Mrs Stenning, widow of his gardener, James Stenning.

**Charitable Legacies**

To the Ross Memorial Hospital at Dingwall.

To the Whitehaven and West Cumberland Infirmary at Whitehaven.

To the Royal Albert Asylum at Lancaster.

To the Northern Counties Infirmary, Inverness.

To the Highland Orphanage, Inverness.

To the Liverpool Eye and Ear Hospital.

*We will be adding more information about the Stirling family, the estate and the people who lived and worked on the estate in the near future.*

*For enquiries, and if you have information relevant to the Stirling Family contact: Charlotte Hingston.*

*Email: charlotte@fairburn-estate.co.uk*