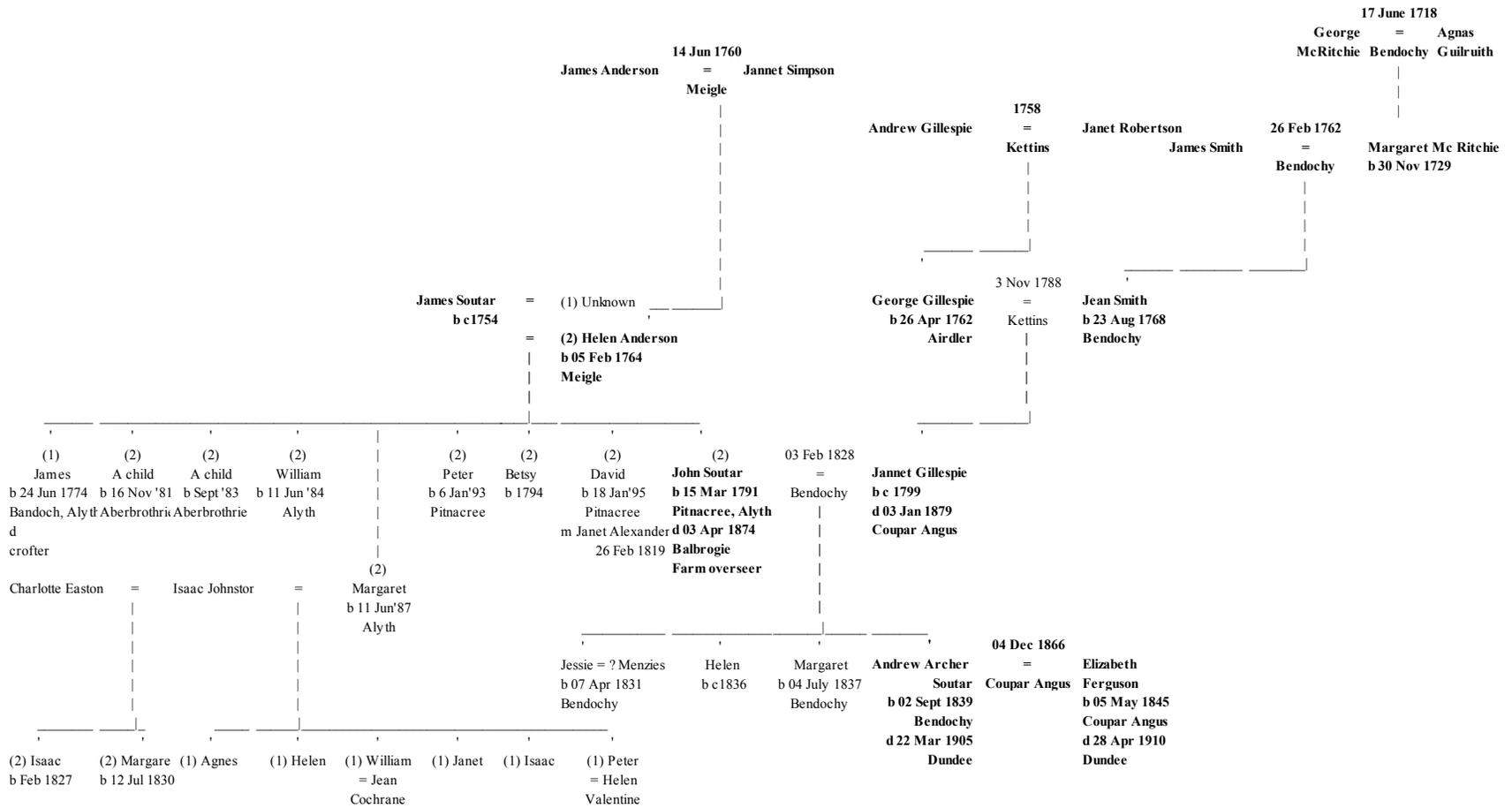


John Soutar and Janet Gillespie



John Soutar Jannet Gillespie

John and Jannet were married on 03 Feb 1828 in Bendochy parish. Both, according to the entry in the O.P.R., lived in the parish. John, who was approaching his thirty-seventh birthday, was the son of James Soutar and Helen Anderson. Jannet, whose date of birth is not known, must have been about twenty-nine. Her parents were George Gillespie and Jean Smith.



Bendochy Church 1999. This church building dates from c 1760.
A church had existed on the site for centuries.

John worked all his life on the land. In early documents, when living at Coupar Grange, he is described as an agricultural labourer and in later ones when he is at Balbrogie he is variously a farm overseer, a grieve, or on his death certificate, a crofter.

Working on the land, John must have often attended the Coupar Angus cattle market and the horse fair, both of which were annual events. There was a local saying “The horse fair syne (then) summer”. During the horse fair, which was held on the third Thursday of March, a local baker made gingerbread horses to mark the event. This tradition continued after the horse fair, even into the 1950’s when gingerbread horses were being sent all over Scotland. The tradition died out sometime in the late 1950’s. In the early 1990’s, however, the cutters that had been used to shape the gingerbread horses were found in the baker’s shop and, for a time in March, the horses were once again produced for sale.

As well as the annual markets, Coupar had a weekly market held on a Thursday. It was a post town and letters were delivered daily. The Defiance, “one of the best conducted coaches in the country passes daily betwixt Edinburgh and Aberdeen” and coaches ran four times a day on the railway to Dundee. Despite (or perhaps because of) all these advantages, the population was decreasing in the 1830’s and 40’s mainly as a result of emigration to towns.

By the time of the 1841 census, Jannet and John’s family was complete. They were living at Coupar Grange, a farmtown North East of Coupar Angus (and on the opposite side of the Isla), consisting of 13 households with a total of 65 inhabitants.

1841 Dist. 332				Alyth	Bk.1	p11.
Name		marital age condition	occupation	Born in county?		
Coupar Grange						
Soutar	John	m 44	Ag. Lab.	y		
Soutar	Janet	m 41		y		
Soutar	Janet	10		y		
Soutar	Helen	5		y		
Soutar	Margaret	4		y		
Soutar	Andrew	1		y		

The Statistical Account of 1843 tells us something of the conditions in which farm servants lived. “Farm - servants are engaged for twelve months; and the average wages of a ploughman, qualified to work a pair of horses, are about £12 in money, 35lb. of oatmeal per week, and three chopins (old measure) of milk per day. Good day-labourers receive on average, 10s.per week during the period when they can work ten hours per day. After that period, the hours of work are counted, and the rate of wages is slightly raised”. (A chopin was about a litre or 1.76 pints).



Looking North West from Coupar over the Isla 1999.
Early 19th century fields would have been much smaller.

By 1851, the family has moved to Balbrogie, a farmtown to the East of Coupar Angus. This “town” is described in the Statistical Account as having a population of about 70 although the census shows that it had only 8 households with 57 inhabitants:

1851 Dist 279 Coupar Angus Bk.1 p10.

Balbrogie

Soutar	John	h m 50	Ag. lab.	Perth, Alyth
Soutar	Janet	w m 48	wife	Perth, Bendochy
Soutar	Hellen	d u 15	scholar	Perth, Bendochy
Soutar	Margaret	d u 13	scholar	Perth, Bendochy
Soutar	Andrew	s u 11	scholar	Perth, Bendochy

The headings for the columns in the census are: Name, Relationship to head of house (h = head, w = wife, s = son, d = daughter etc.), male/female, age, trade or profession and Place of birth. The 1891 census has the additional column "Employed?" Which is marked with a cross if the person is employed.

The eldest daughter, Janet is no longer in the family home. In both these preceding censuses, the ages of the parents are incorrect. While in the later ones they are correct. It would be interesting to know why. By 1861 Balbrogie has 12 households and 58 inhabitants. The family are still at Balbrogie and we are told that they had three rooms with windows.

1861 Dist 279 Coupar Angus bk2 p9.

Balbrogie

Soutar	John	h m 70	ploughman	Perth, Alyth
Soutar	Janet	w m 62		Perth, Alyth
Soutar	Margaret	d u 23		Perth, Bendochy

The ploughman was in many ways the aristocrat of the farm steading yet the work was far from easy. Malcom Gray in 'Farm workers in north east Scotland' (1984), says

"The ploughing itself usually started at six or seven a.m. and continued without interruption for five hours; then followed a meal break of two hours in which the ploughman and his team would return to the steading, and finally a further four or five hours in the fields. The working day was, however, much longer ... The ploughman might well have to thresh his horses' feed for the day, starting at four a.m. or even earlier; then as well as the tasks of yoking and unyoking and the trek to and from the fields, there was evening work in the stables grooming and suppering the horses".

The 1871 census shows a similar entry although there is a mistake in John's birthplace, which is recorded as Forfar, Alyth instead of Perth, Alyth. By the age of eighty it is unlikely John would have been able for the work described above and his occupation as "grieve" may have reflected this.

1871 Dist 279 Coupar Angus

Balbrogie

Soutar	John	h m 80	Grieve 45 acres all arable	Forfar, Alyth
Soutar	Janet	w m 72	wife of do.	Perth, Bendochy
Soutar	Margaret	d u 31	housemaid	Perth, Bendochy

This house had three rooms with windows.

John died at Balbrogie in April 1874 when he would have been aged 84. Janet then moved to Coupar Angus, (the house at Balbrogie presumably being a tied one) and she died there in January 1879.

A gravestone was erected to the couple in Coupar Angus churchyard, the inscription being:

Sacred to the memory of John Soutar who died at Balbrogie 03 Apr 1874 aged 83 years and his wife Janet Gillespie who died at Coupar Angus 03 Jan 1879. This stone is erected by the family as a tribute of affection to the memory of a much loved and revered father and mother. William Dalrymple husband of Margaret Soutar d 27 Feb 1929. Margaret Soutar daughter of the above John Soutar and wife of the above William Dalrymple died 8 Jan 1933 aged 94 years.

Inscriptions on stones at adjacent plots are possibly connected and read:

1871 Erected by Isabella Murray in memory of her beloved husband Peter Soutar coal merchant Coupar Angus who died suddenly at Perth 2 May 1870 aged 78 years also in memory of Isabella Murray Soutar who died at Dundee on the 28 day of December 1878 aged 75 years also James A Soutar second son of the above who dies suddenly at Perth on the 11 April 1890 aged 58 years also Jane G Soutar second daughter of the above Peter Soutar and Isabella Murray who died at Coupar Angus on 30 December 1922 aged 85 years. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

In loving memory of Vera McDonald died 11 June 1946 loving wife of Thomas Soutar died 18 June 1993 also their daughter Margaret died February 1942

When looking for other information, the following two entries were found in the Dundee Advertiser. The first must have had an impact on John and his family. The second is included for interest:

23.8.1861 Waygoing sale of livestock, implements of husbandry and other effects on the farm of Balbrogie near Coupar Angus.

On same date the paper advertises:

Dundee Fair

Dundee and Newtyle Railway 28th Aug 1861.

Special train to

Newtyle and intermediate stations also to Ardler,

Coupar Angus and Blairgowrie at 6.45 a.m.

Return fare 3rd 2 shill, 1st 4 shill.

Note:

Between Coupar Angus and Balbeggie is Soutarland – a piece of land gifted by the Abbey of Coupar Angus to artificers to provide shoes to the monks.

O.P.R. Perth, Alyth. 1791

John Soutar lawful son to James Soutar in Pitnacree and Helen Anderson his spouse, born 7th and bapt. 15th March

No record of the birth of Janet Gillespie has been found in O.P.R.'s although the census records indicate that she was born c1799

O.P.R. Perth, Bendochy 1828

03 Feb 1828. John Soutar and Jannet Gillespie, both this parish were regularly proclaimed in order to marriage.

Death Coupar Angus 279/ /16

John Soutar ploughman married to Janet Gillespie	1874 03 Apr 10h a.m. Balbrogie Perthshire	M 83	James Soutar crofter deceased Helen Soutar M.S. Anderson deceased	old age and debility	Andrew A Soutar son. grocer Coupar Angus
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Death Coupar Angus 279/ /1

Janet Gillespie Wid. of John Soutar farm servant	1879 03 Jan	F 78	George Gillespie crofter deceased Jessie Gillespie M.S. Smith deceased	Paralysis not cert.	Andrew A Soutar Son, George St. Coupar Angus
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