

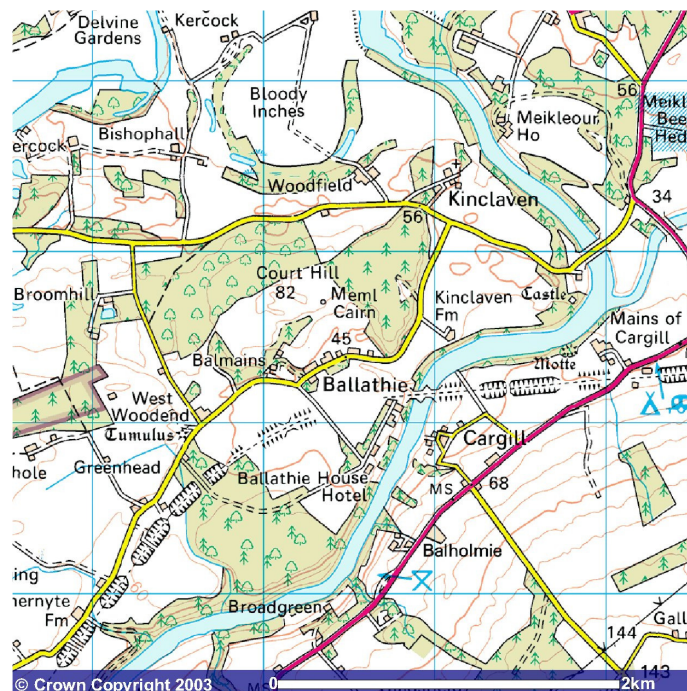
History of Ballathie House and Estate

Ballathie House is not only one of the finest hotels in Scotland, but is also one of the most historical. The city of Perth was a major trading centre with the River Tay making it a significant location for settlement and industry. Names such as Pontius Pilate, Robert the Bruce, William Wallace, Bonnie Prince Charlie, Mary Queen of Scots, Macbeth, Rob Roy MacGregor and Queen Victoria are all closely linked with the surrounding area.

East Perthshire has a long history and Ballathie has been a significant landmark for generations. The Romans came this way in the 1st Century and had the fortification at Kinclaven where the River Isla joins the River Tay.

In 83AD it is likely that the inhabitants of Kinclaven watched the progress of the Battle of Mons Grampius from the heights of Court Hill, on the high ground at the north of the Ballathie Estate at Bishopshall and Kercock. The Haugh of Kercock forms part of what is known as "The Bloody Inches", where the great battle was fought between the Caledonians and the Danes.

Kinclaven Castle was built in 1235 by Alexander II. In 1297 William Wallace ambushed an English force moving from Perth and trapped them inside the castle where they were killed and the castle burned. The booty from the castle was taken to nearby woodland where Wallace and his men hid. Kinclaven Castle is now ruined but still visible in the undergrowth.



The Drummond family (Earls of Perth) owned the Ballathie lands in the 17th Century and later sold to the forebears of General Richardson Robertson of Tullybelton. He

undertook the building of the current house (the stones still bear his initials) but unfortunately died in 1883, 3 years before it was completed. He is said to haunt the Chapel in the house, which is now room 11! His nephew, Colonel Edmund Robert F. Richardson, succeeded him and was instrumental in raising funds to build Kinclaven Bridge over the River Tay in 1903-5. The bridge is located close to the Meikleour Beech Hedge which was planted in 1745 and still stands as the tallest beech hedge in the world. In a memorial to his wife, Jessica May, the Colonel erected the Chapel in the wood, off the front drive near the Gatelodge. The remains can still be seen today.



Ballathie House c1905



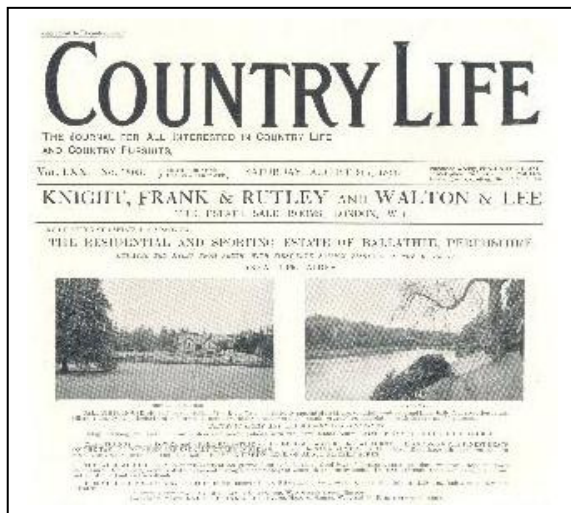
In 1910 Ballathie was bought by Sir Stewart Coates from Paisley in a competition with an American millionaire. The fishing was known as the best Autumn fishing in Scotland and provided a great attraction. The house was enlarged by alterations to the servants quarters and a new entrance porch. Central heating and electric lighting were also installed. An army hut was erected for use as a dance hall after WW1 and dances were held for staff and locals. A 9 hole golf course was laid out by the famous golfer, Ben Sawers but sadly this was ploughed up as part of the campaign to provide more food in WW2. Cyril Tolley and Rodger Weatherhead used to visit Ballathie to play the course. A walk along the river was cut for Lady Coates, with seats erected at intervals so that she could rest along the way.

When the British North Eastern Railway line came (mainline route between Glasgow and Aberdeen), Ballathie had its own railway halt.



The railway bridge from Kinclaven to Cargill

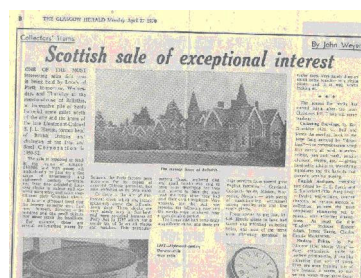
The remains of the private Episcopalian Chapel can be seen by the old railway line, tucked in behind the overgrowth. It was during this period that Ballathie was a renowned sporting estate and many notable personages and royalty were entertained. The Grand Duke Michael of Russia and his wife stayed on different occasions. Sir John Wolfe Barry, designer of Tower Bridge in London, stayed at the house at Balmain, as did his great friend the Bishop of London. The Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) stayed there as did the Duke of Westminster but after just one night, did not find it grand enough!



Original article from 'Country Life' dated Saturday, August 8th 1931. "The residential and sporting estate of Ballathie, Perthshire" for sale. 1,466 Acres including Ballathie House, the Home Farm, 6 farms, fishing, woodland, tennis courts, golf course, garage, stabling, gardens. For sale by auction by Messrs Knight, Frank & Rutley, 20 Hanover Square W1.

In 1936 the estate was sold to Colonel Stephen Hardie, member of a well-known Chartered Accountants firm in Glasgow and founder member of the British Oxygen Company (formed to raise the ships of the German fleet scuttled at Scapa Flow after WW1). He undertook extensive internal alterations to Ballathie House such as the internal telephone system, which can still be seen today.

Colonel Hardie died in 1969 and the house was purchased by the Maxwell Family from the west coast of Scotland. In 1972 the house was converted to a hotel. The conversion was sympathetic to the original house and Ballathie still retains the grandeur of an elegant country house.



Article from 'The Glasgow Herald' Monday, April 27th 1970 listing the sale of furniture and collectables following Colonel Hardie's death. The sale was estimated to raise in the region of £30,000-£40,000.

The estate was sold off separately to Mr J Milligan in 1998. The hotel was then purchased by Mr Milligan in 2005, reuniting the estate and the hotel. The estate is still used for farming and sports.

Recently the hotel has undertaken a comprehensive refurbishment programme befitting a building of such grand style. This has further enhanced Ballathie's appeal and now enjoys a deserved reputation as an outstanding Country House Hotel of unique character and rare distinction.

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