

**Robert Ballingall (1791-1860): A Tribute to His Life and Times**  
**By His Distant Second Cousin, Michael T. Tracy**

He was the eldest surviving son of Niel Ballingall (1750-1843) Factor of Balbirnie and had been in charge of the farm at Auchmuty then leased by his father.<sup>1</sup> Later he would become a tenant farmer, firstly of Treaton and then of Kingsdale, both in Kennoway Parish, Fife.<sup>2</sup> In 1815 he married Christina Rennie and they had eight children who were all born in Kennoway Parish. Robert, during this time, took a great interest in the wider field of agriculture. After the death of his wife in 1842 at Kingsdale, Robert left the profession of farming and was appointed Factor firstly in Berkshire for a short period of time and then in Penrith. With the illness of his brother, James (1798-1856) he relocated back to Fife to assist him in his duties as Factor to John Anstruther Thomson of Charleton. After his brother's death in 1856, he succeeded him as Factor at Charleton and resided at Rosebank for the rest of his life. This then is the narrative of the life and times of Robert Ballingall.

**Early years**

Robert Ballingall was born on Monday, 12 December 1791 at Sweetbank, Markinch Parish, Fife.<sup>3</sup> He was the third child of Niel Ballingall, Factor of Balbirnie, and Isabella Russell. Robert was baptized on Thursday, 15 December 1791 at Markinch Parish Church.<sup>4</sup>

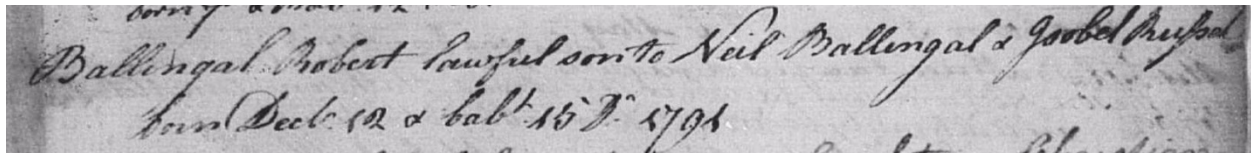


Fig.1. Baptismal Record of Robert Ballingall, 15 December 1791, Markinch Parish Records, Crown Copyright



Fig.2. Markinch Parish Church, Markinch, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of Michael T. Tracy © 2010 Michael T. Tracy

<sup>1</sup> Ballingall, Rev. James. *The Ballingalls of Sweetbank, Markinch*. Typescript, undated

<sup>2</sup> Ballingall, Rev. James. *The Ballingalls of Sweetbank, Markinch*. Typescript, undated

<sup>3</sup> Baptismal Record of Robert Ballingall, 15 December 1791, Markinch Parish Records, Old Parish Records 447/0020 0042

<sup>4</sup> Baptismal Record of Robert Ballingall, 15 December 1791, Markinch Parish Records, Old Parish Records 447/0020 0042

He grew up and was raised at Sweetbank. The residence was located 3/8 of a mile west by south of the village of Markinch.<sup>5</sup> The property is described in the Ordnance Survey Name Books of 1853-55 as “a dwelling house with garden attached, occupied by Mr. [William] Ballingall, Factor for the Estates of Balbirnie and Balgonie, the property of Mr. Balfour, Balbirnie House.”<sup>6</sup>



*Fig.3. Sweetbank House, Markinch, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of the Markinch Heritage Group*

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<sup>5</sup> Ordnance Survey Name Books, *Fife and Kinrossshire Ordnance Survey Name Books, 1853-1855, Volume 92, OS1/13/92/31*

<sup>6</sup> Ordnance Survey Name Books, *Fife and Kinrossshire Ordnance Survey Name Books, 1853-1855, Volume 92, OS1/13/92/31*

**Tenant Farmer of Auchmuty**

The farm of Auchmuty was located 1 1/8 miles southwest of Markinch.<sup>7</sup> The property was described in the Ordnance Survey Name Books of 1853-55 as “a large farmhouse with extensive outbuildings the property of the Earl of Rothes.”<sup>8</sup>

How Mr. A. Markinch Parish		No. 21.			
List of Names to be corrected if necessary	Orthography, as recommended to be used in the new Plans	Other modes of Spelling the same Name	Authority for these other modes of Spelling when known	Situation	Descriptive Remarks, or other General Observations which may be considered of Interest
Coal	Coal	Coal Do Do Do Coall Coal etc	Property, Plan of strangers chapel of St. Andrew Mr. Nichols Mr. Ballingal Mr. Gray, Banchory New Stat. etc. Mr. G. G. Campbell	1 1/8 Miles W. of Markinch	A good stone house with outbuildings garden etc attached.
Coal Mains	Coal Mains	Coal Mains Do Do Do	Mr. Ballingal Mr. Nichols Mr. Gray Mr. Gray	1/2 Miles W. of Markinch	A few cottages in a small town with garden attached, occupied by laborers
Auchmuty	Auchmuty	Auchmuty Do Do Do	Property, Plan at Kiln House Mr. Ballingal Mr. Nichols strangers chapel of St. Andrew	1 1/8 Miles W. of Markinch	A large stone house with extensive outbuildings the property of the Earl of Rothes

Fig.4. Ordnance Survey Name Book for Auchmuty, Markinch Parish, Fife (Last Entry), Photograph Courtesy of ScotlandsPlaces.gov.uk

<sup>7</sup> Ordnance Survey Name Books, Fife and Kinrossshire Ordnance Survey Name Books, 1853-1855, Volume 92, OS1/13/92/4

<sup>8</sup> Ordnance Survey Name Books, Fife and Kinrossshire Ordnance Survey Name Books, 1853-1855, Volume 92, OS1/13/92/4



Fig.5. Ordnance Survey Map, 1856, showing Auchmuty, Markinch Parish, Photograph Courtesy of the National Library of Scotland

His father, the Factor of Balbirnie put him in charge of the farm.<sup>9</sup>

### Marriage and Family life

Robert Ballingall married Christina Rennie on Sunday, 11 June 1815 at Kennoway Parish.<sup>10</sup> At the time of his marriage, Robert was a tenant farmer at Treaton in Kennoway Parish.<sup>11</sup>

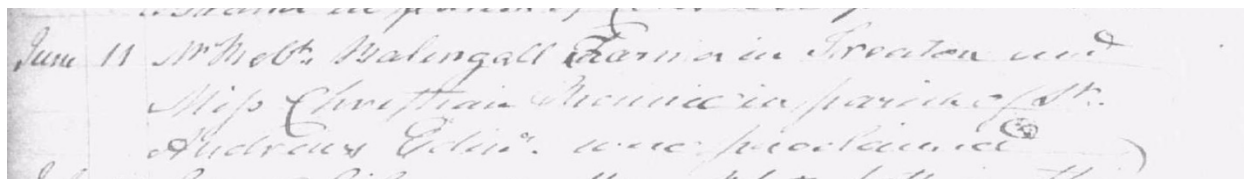


Fig.6. Marriage Record of Robert Ballingall, 11 June 1815, Kennoway Parish Records, Crown Copyright

The couple had eight children who were all born in Kennoway Parish. They were:

Niel born on Monday, 29 July 1816<sup>12</sup> and died on Friday, 17 October 1817;<sup>13</sup>

James born on Thursday, 6 August 1818;<sup>14</sup>

Isabella born on Tuesday, 4 December 1821;<sup>15</sup>

Eliza born on Sunday, 20 July 1823;<sup>16</sup>

Robert born on Tuesday, 20 February 1827<sup>17</sup> and died on Friday, 31 March 1876;<sup>18</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ballingall, Rev. James. *The Ballingalls of Sweetbank, Markinch*. Typescript, undated

<sup>10</sup> Marriage Record of Robert Ballingall, 11 June 1815, Kennoway Parish Records, Old Parish Records 434/0030 0222

<sup>11</sup> Marriage Record of Robert Ballingall, 11 June 1815, Kennoway Parish Records, Old Parish Records 434/0030 0222

<sup>12</sup> Baptismal Record of Niel Ballingall, 22 August 1816, Kennoway Parish Records, Old Parish Records 434/0030 0154

<sup>13</sup> Death Record of Niel Ballingall, 17 October 1817, Markinch Parish Records, Old Parish Records 447/0040 0108

<sup>14</sup> Baptismal Record of James Ballingall, 24 August 1818, Kennoway Parish Records, Old Parish Records 434/0030 0157

<sup>15</sup> Baptismal Record of Isabella Ballingall, 4 December 1821, Kennoway Parish Records, Old Parish Records 434/0040 0009

<sup>16</sup> Baptismal Record of Eliza Ballingall, 5 August 1823, Kennoway Parish Records, Old Parish Records 434/0040 0010

<sup>17</sup> Baptismal Record of Robert Ballingall, 20 February 1827, Kennoway Parish Records, Old Parish Records 434/0040 0016

<sup>18</sup> Death Record of Robert Ballingall, 31 March 1876, Kilarrow Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 536/00 0014

Amelia born on Wednesday, 21 January 1829<sup>19</sup> and died in 1906;<sup>20</sup>  
 Charlotte born on Tuesday, 8 February 1831<sup>21</sup> and died in 1851;<sup>22</sup>  
 James Smith Ronaldson born on Sunday, 30 June 1833<sup>23</sup> and died on Sunday, 4 November 1894.<sup>24</sup>

**Factor of Treaton and Kingsdale, Kennoway**

Shortly before his marriage in 1842, Ballingall was a tenant farmer of Treaton, Kennoway Parish. Treaton is 1 ½ miles west of Kennoway.<sup>25</sup> The property is described as being “a large excellent farm with [a] good dwelling house, gardens, shrubbery and steading situate on a considerable elevation commanding [an] extensive view of the Firth of Forth and the counties of Berwick and Edinburgh.”<sup>26</sup>

List of Names to be corrected if necessary	Orthography, as recommended to be used in the new Plans	Other modes of Spelling the same Name	Authority for these other modes of Spelling when known	Situation	Descriptive Remarks, or other General Observations which may be considered of Interest
Treaton	Treaton	Treaton	Treaton Fife County W. Crampell Schindler's map	1 1/2 Miles W. of Kennoway	A large excellent farm with good dwelling house, gardens, shrubbery, situate on a considerable elevation, commanding extensive views of the Firth of Forth and the counties of Berwick, Edinburgh.

Fig.7. Ordnance Survey Name Book for Treaton, Kennoway Parish, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of ScotlandsPlaces.gov.uk

It is unclear as to exactly when he became a tenant farmer of Kingsdale, Kennoway Parish but it was certainly before 1842. Kingsdale is 3/8 of a mile southwest of Kennoway and is described as being “an excellent dwelling house or small mansion with flower and kitchen gardens, shrubbery and ornamental ground etc., recently occupied by the Earl of Leven and is the property of the Trustees for Miss Balfour.”<sup>27</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Baptismal Record of Amelia Ballingall, 21 January 1829, Kennoway Parish Records, Old Parish Records 434/0040 0032  
<sup>20</sup> Death Record of Amelia Anderson, 1906, Scoonie Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 456/0000 0062  
<sup>21</sup> Baptismal Record of Charlotte Ballingall, 8 February 1831, Kennoway Parish Records, Old Parish Records 434/0040 0026  
<sup>22</sup> Death Record of Charlotte Ballingall, 1851, England and Wales Death Registration Index, 1837-2007, database, Family Search, 2016  
<sup>23</sup> Baptismal Record of James Smith Ronaldson Ballingall, 30 June 1833, Kennoway Parish Records, Old Parish Records 434/0040 0029  
<sup>24</sup> Death Record of James Ballingall, 4 November 1894, Bowore Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 536/00 0031  
<sup>25</sup> Ordnance Survey Name Books, *Fife and Kinrossshire Ordnance Survey Name Books, 1853-1855, Volume 93*, OS1/13/93/7  
<sup>26</sup> Ordnance Survey Name Books, *Fife and Kinrossshire Ordnance Survey Name Books, 1853-1855, Volume 93*, OS1/13/93/7  
<sup>27</sup> Ordnance Survey Name Books, *Fife and Kinrossshire Ordnance Survey Name Books, 1853-1855, Volume 93*, OS1/13/93/24

34 *Kinnoway* No. 21. *Parish* *Fife* 10,0

List of Names to be corrected if necessary	Orthography, as recommended to be used in the new Plans	Other modes of Spelling the same Name	Authority for these other modes of Spelling when known	Situation	Descriptive Remarks, or other General Observations which may be considered of Interest
<i>Kingsdale</i>	<i>Kingsdale</i>	<i>Kingsdale</i>	<i>J. W. King</i>	<i>1/2 mile S.W. of</i>	<i>An excellent dwelling house or small business with flower kitchen gardens, shrubbery, ornamented ground &amp;c. recently occupied by the Earl of Leven &amp; the present is the property of the Trustees for West Ballfour</i>
		<i>Do</i>	<i>Estate Map</i>	<i>Kinnoway</i>	
		<i>Do</i>	<i>W. Taylor</i>		
		<i>Do</i>	<i>Earl of Leven</i>		
<i>Kingsmill</i>	<i>Kingsmill</i>	<i>Kingsmill</i>	<i>Earl of Leven</i>	<i>1/2 mile S.W. of</i>	<i>A small flow &amp; small mill of 3 pairs of stones driven by an overshot water wheel. Situated abt. 30 chains S.W. of Kinnoway village</i>
		<i>Do</i>	<i>W. Taylor</i>	<i>S. of Kinnoway</i>	
		<i>Do</i>	<i>W. Kemmer</i>		
		<i>Do</i>	<i>Estate Map</i>		
<i>Kinnoway Burn</i>	<i>Kinnoway Burn</i>	<i>Kinnoway Burn</i>	<i>David Phillips</i>	<i>1/2 mile S. of</i>	<i>A few straggling houses near the confluence of two small streams on Burn 30 chains S.W. of Kinnoway village &amp; at the foot of the Maiden Castle</i>
		<i>Do</i>	<i>Robt. Cameron</i>	<i>Kinnoway</i>	
		<i>Do</i>	<i>W. Addison</i>		
		<i>Do</i>	<i>W. Taylor</i>		

Fig.8. Ordnance Survey Name Book for Kingsdale, Kennoway Parish, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of ScotlandsPlaces.gov.uk

### Death of Christina Ballingall

Christina Ballingall died in July of 1842 at Kingsdale at the age of 42. The cause of her death remains unknown at this time. She was buried in the Kennoway Churchyard on Wednesday, 13 July 1842.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Burial Record of Christina Ballingall, 13 July 1842, Kennoway Parish Records, Old Parish Records 434/0040 0290

1842				
Jan 9	Robt. Colvilles child	-	-	£ 0 1 0
"	24 Andrew Cook	-	-	0 2 6
Feb 20	Robt. Maddows child	-	-	0 1 0
March 4	M <sup>r</sup> . Hogg Star	-	-	0 2 6
"	5 W <sup>m</sup> . Bethune Star (no mort. ch)	-	-	- - -
"	13 Jas. Balfour an old man	Head	0	2 6
"	14 Dav. Davidson's wife (Paup)	-	-	- - -
"	" Jas. Donaldson's child	-	-	0 1 0
"	18 Jas. Binnel Treator	-	-	0 2 6
"	" M <sup>r</sup> . Miller Burns side	-	-	0 2 6
Apr 24	Widow Duncan Star (Paup)	-	-	- - -
"	" Jas. Collins child	-	-	0 1 0
"	27 Helen Cairns Babcarvie	-	-	0 2 6
May 2	Jas. Morris an old man	Head	0	2 6
"	4 George Blyth Miller	-	-	0 2 6
"	8 W <sup>m</sup> . Robertson	-	-	0 2 6
"	14 Th <sup>o</sup> . Cockburn's ch. drowned in Burn	1	0	0
"	18 George Blyth's child (fol)	-	-	- - -
June 13	Laurence Reid (Baynton)	-	-	0 2 6
"	16 Widow Halley's ch. (Paup)	-	-	- - -
July 6	Andrew Thomson Star	-	-	0 2 6
"	" John Muckie	-	-	0 2 6
"	16 Isabel Couper Denhead	-	-	0 2 6
"	23 Jas. Millie Junior	-	-	0 2 6
"	" John Webster's boy Star	-	-	0 1 0
"	13 M <sup>r</sup> . Ballingal to Newton	-	-	0 2 6
				£ 2 3 6

Fig.9. Burial Record of Christina Ballingall, 13 July 1842 (Last Entry), Kennoway Parish Records, Crown Copyright

### A Factor

Seven years after the death of his wife, Robert, left farming and took to the family profession of Factorship and was for a short time a Factor in Berwickshire in the Scottish Borders region.<sup>29</sup> He did

<sup>29</sup> Ballingall, Rev. James. *The Ballingalls of Sweetbank, Markinch*. Typescript, undated

not renew his lease for the farm of Kingsdale and an advertisement was placed in *The Scotsman Newspaper* on Wednesday, 17 January 1849 seeking a new tenant.<sup>30</sup> By 1851 Ballingall was listed as residing in Penrith, Cumberland, England.<sup>31</sup> According to the 1851 Census for Penrith, he was listed as being 55 [sic] years of age and working as a Land Agent with the following children: Amelia age 20; Charlotte age 18 and James age 16.<sup>32</sup>

### Returns to Fife

With the illness of his brother, James Ballingall (1798-1856), Robert decided to leave Penrith and relocate back to Fife to assist him in his duties as Factor to John Anstruther Thomson of Charleton and resided with him at Rosebank, Newburn Parish. After his brother's death in 1856, he succeeded him as Factor. Rosebank is about 1 ¼ miles west from Colinsburgh and is described as "a neat dwelling house, with offices, garden, and a few acres of land attached, the property of Capt. Thomson of Charleton and occupied by Mr. Ballingall his factor."<sup>33</sup>

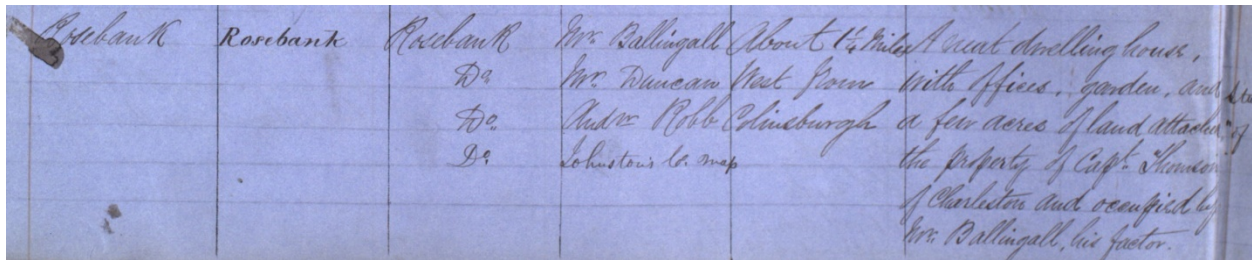


Fig.10. Ordnance Survey Name Book for Rosebank, Newburn Parish, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of ScotlandsPlaces.gov.uk

In a letter written from Rosebank on Monday, 16 March 1857 to W. Ireland, Esq., of United College at St. Andrews, Ballingall wrote: "D [ear] Sir, Inclosed I send you an order on Com 13<sup>th</sup> [bank order] [for] 25 pounds, 5 shillings and 6 pence in pay[ment] of kind and due to the United College by J.A. Thomson, Esq., of Charlton for which please return me your receipt. I am Sir yours truly, Robert Ballingale."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *The Scotsman Newspaper*, 17 January 1849, p. 1

<sup>31</sup> 1851 England Census for Penrith, Cumberland, England; Page 10

<sup>32</sup> 1851 England Census for Penrith, Cumberland, England; Page 10

<sup>33</sup> Ordnance Survey Name Books, *Fife and Kinrossshire Ordnance Survey Name Books, 1853-1855, Volume 79, OS1/13/79/6*

<sup>34</sup> Letter of Robert Ballingall, 16 March 1857, University of St. Andrews Special Collections, Call Number UYUC560/1857/15



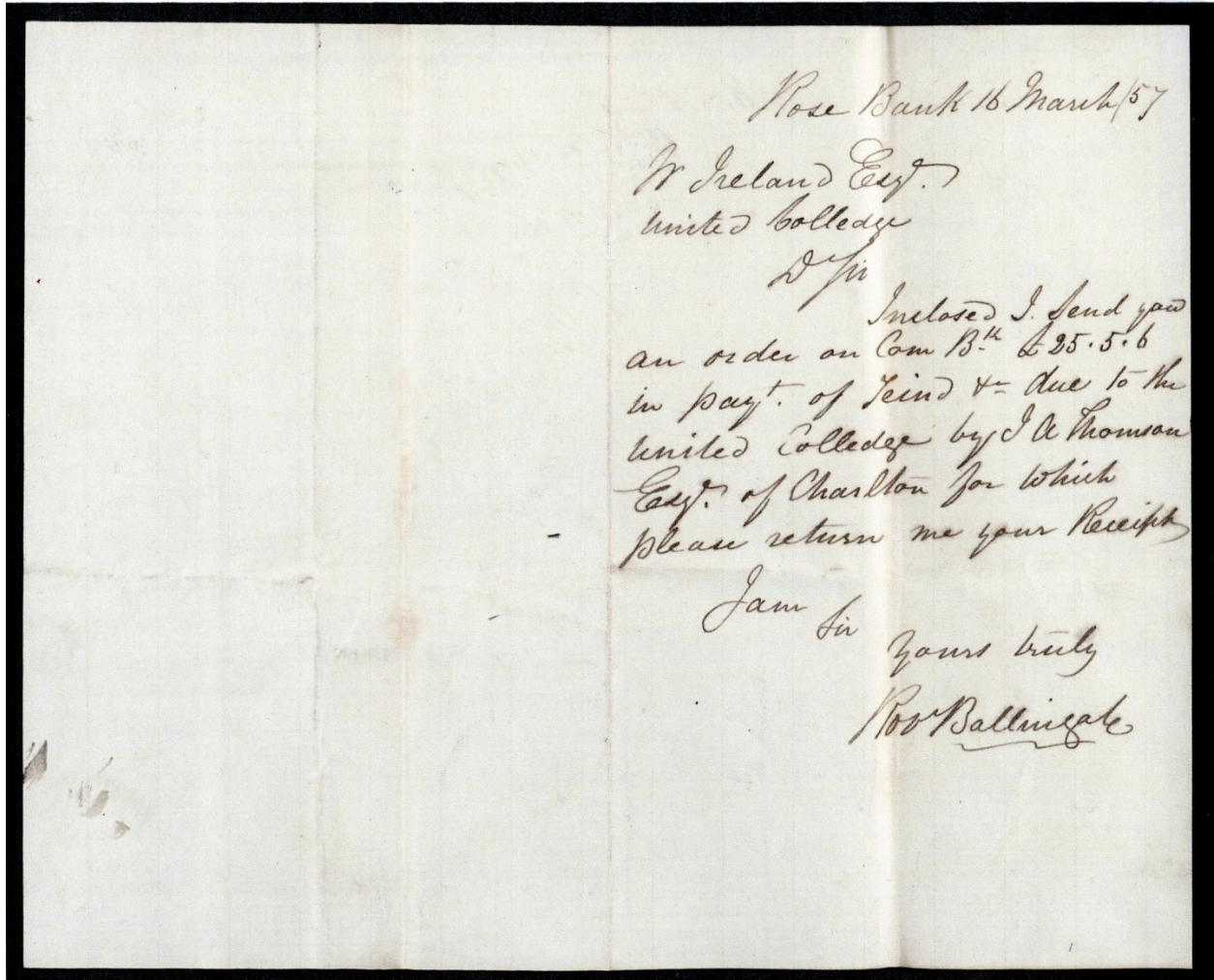


Fig.11. Letter of Robert Ballingall to W. Ireland, 16 March 1857, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections, Call Number UYUC560/1857/15, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections

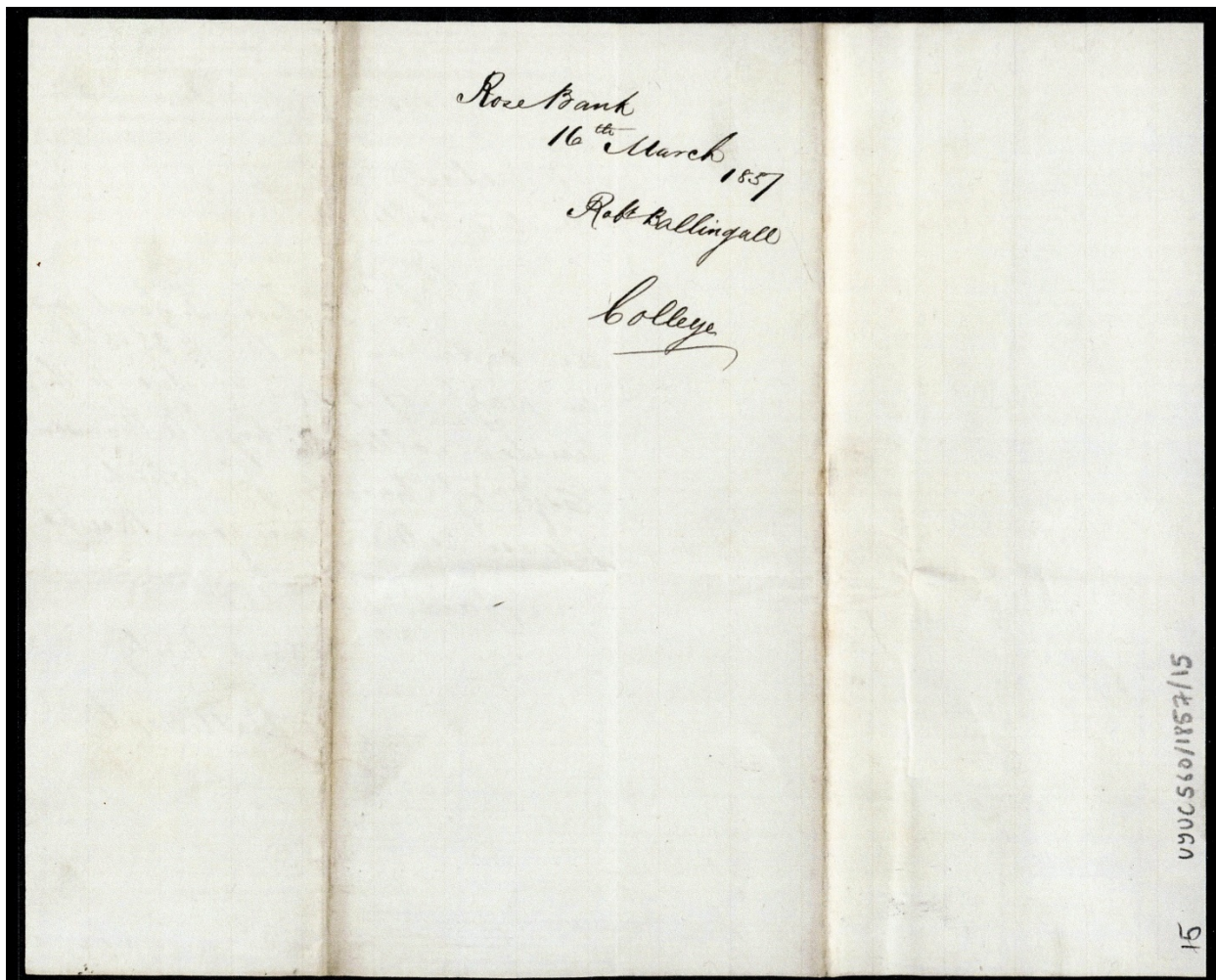


Fig.12. Front of the Letter of Robert Ballingall to W. Ireland, 16 March 1857, Photograph Courtesy of the University of St. Andrews Special Collections, Call Number UYUC560/1857/15, Special Permission for the Use of This Photograph Granted by the Head of Special Collections



*Fig.13. Rosebank, Newburn Parish, Fife, Photograph Courtesy of Mrs. Arlene Little, Fife Family History Society*

Ballingall was also a member of the Cupar Corn Exchange since he became Factor.<sup>35</sup> By the late 1850s, a large trade was being done at Cupar in the selling, grinding and processing of wheat, barley and other grains and the Cupar Corn Exchange was formed in 1860 and provided a meeting place for the areas farmers and other interested parties.

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<sup>35</sup> *Fife Herald Newspaper*, 14 April 1859, p. 1

## Death of Robert Ballingall

For the last year of his life, Robert Ballingall was suffering from rectal cancer.<sup>36</sup> He died on Thursday, 7 June 1860 at Rosebank at the age of 68.<sup>37</sup>

Ballingall, Robert	1860	U. 68	Neil Ballingall Factor (Deceased)	Carcinoma Recti 18 Months	Churchyard Kennoway As certified by John Anderson Factor etc.	Robert Ballingall Son Factor etc.	1860 June 9 <sup>th</sup> St. Dunsmuir Newburn
Factor at Charleton (Widower)	12 <sup>th</sup> 01 <sup>st</sup> P.M.		Isabella Ballingall Maiden name Russell (Deceased)	As certified by George Lunn Physician, who was deceased June 7 <sup>th</sup>	John Anderson Factor etc.	Robert Ballingall Son Factor etc.	George H. Robertson Asst. Registrar

Fig.14. Death Record of Robert Ballingall, 7 June 1860, Newburn Parish Records, Crown Copyright

His obituary notice read: "At Rosebank near Colinsburgh, on the 7<sup>th</sup> inst., Mr. Robert Ballingall, factor, Charleton."<sup>38</sup> Robert Ballingall was buried in the Newburn Churchyard next to his wife in Newburn Parish, Fife. An inventory was conducted on his estate on Friday, 13 July 1860.<sup>39</sup>

Robert Ballingall began his career as a tenant farmer firstly at Auchmuty then Treaton and Kingsdale and took a wider interest in agriculture. In 1815, he married Christina Rennie and they had eight children who were all born in Kennoway Parish. With the death of his wife twenty-seven years later, Ballingall took up the family profession of Factorship at Berkshire and then in Penrith, Cumberland, England. Later in 1856, he succeeded his brother as Factor to John Anstruther Thomson of Charleton residing at Rosebank in Kennoway Parish. Robert Ballingall is warmly commemorated here in grateful esteem and recognition by his distant second cousin, Michael T. Tracy. This work is dedicated to the Memory of Robert Ballingall.

*Memoratus in aeternum* (Forever Remembered)

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<sup>36</sup> Death Record of Robert Ballingall, 7 June 1860, Newburn Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 451/0000 0003

<sup>37</sup> Death Record of Robert Ballingall, 7 June 1860, Newburn Parish Records, Statutory Deaths 451/0000 0003

<sup>38</sup> *Dunfermline Press Newspaper*, 14 June 1860, p. 4

<sup>39</sup> Inventory of Robert Ballingall, 13 July 1860, Cupar Sheriff Court (SC20/50/31)