

The Jardine family : Drapers in High Street, Gatehouse

Robert Tait Jardine.

Robert was from a family with many interests in the drapery trade.

1820 Robert Jardine was born in Girthon. This was Robert T Jardine's father.

Robert T's paternal grandfather, also Robert Jardine (born c. 1786 Kirkcudbright) was a joiner. He married Elizabeth Murray (born 1781, in Kirkmabreck). The couple had their first two children (Elizabeth in 1813 and James in 1816) in Kirkmabreck before moving to Gatehouse (Girthon) where Robert was born in 1820 followed by Mary in 1823.

1841 Kirkmabreck census : Robert and Elizabeth Jardine, with daughter Mary were at Kirkdale Bank. Their son Robert (Robert T's father) was not at home. *He may have been a merchant assistant in Charlotte Street, Edinburgh, where his name was given as Robert Jarden, aged 20 and born elsewhere in Scotland.*

1851 Dunstable, Bedfordshire census : brothers James and Robert Jardine were working as drapers, while sister Elizabeth was their housekeeper. Cousin Rebecca Tait was employed as a sewer. There were also three lodgers, all born in Scotland - two tea dealers and one assistant.

Although it does not say so, it is believed that the Jardine brothers were Scotch Traders. Tea dealing was also a trade carried on by the Scotch drapers as tea was light to carry and had a high value.

1854 Q4 : Robert Jardine Tait was born and registered in Luton, Bedfordshire. Birth indexes do not give parent's names but his parents were probably Rebecca Tait and Robert Jardine. *(This is confirmed on Robert T Jardine's marriage certificate in 1889).* This seems to be the only reference of the baby Robert having Tait as his surname. We have never found a marriage between Robert Jardine and Rebecca Tait and Rebecca always uses Tait as her surname, yet their son is known as Robert Tait Jardine or simply Robert Jardine.

1859 Luton : James Jardine (Robert's brother) married local girl Sarah Ann Kent.

1861 Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire census : Elizabeth Jardine was still a lodging house keeper, looking after her cousin Rebecca Tait (an unmarried bonnet maker), nephew Robert Tait Jardine (aged 6, born Luton), her brothers Robert and James Jardine (both travelling drapers) and James' wife Sarah Ann Jardine.

1861 (later) Robert Jardine, (father of Robert Tait Jardine) died, aged 40, in the Luton district. *Although the young men involved in Scotch drapery had to be very fit, they were also very susceptible to illness in the crowded conditions in the cities. Many drapers died young.*

1871 census : the Jardine household in Bedfordshire had gone in different directions.

James and Sarah A. Jardine had moved to Dunstable. James is listed as a tea dealer. They had 3 sons Robert Kent, Henry W. and James Colin. James is mentioned twice in the 1871 census - once at home in Dunstable, but also in the Blackburn census where he was lodging and working as a travelling draper.

Elizabeth Jardine may have moved to the Marylebone area of London, as a housekeeper for the Edgar family of drapers.

Rebecca Tait had returned home to Gatehouse and was living in Back Street (now Catherine Street) with her parents Joseph (painter) and Mary. 16 year old Robert Jardine, grandson of Joseph Tait, an assistant draper, born in England, was also in the household.

1881 Girthon census : Robert Jardine was still in Back Street, Gatehouse with his grandparents Joseph & Mary Tait, his mother Rebecca Tait (bonnet maker). Robert was 26, born England and was a draper.

1881 Dunstable census : James Jardine, tea dealer, with wife Sarah. They had 3 sons who were straw bottle envelope makers.

1888 Rebecca Tait died and is buried at Anwoth Old Kirkyard.

1889 2nd July, Robert Jardine (draper, aged 35), married Agnes Gordon, aged 26, at Laurelbank, Gatehouse. Robert's parents are given as Robert Jardine and Rebecca Tait, both deceased.

1891 Anwoth census : Robert and Agnes Jardine were living at one of the Alderlea / Elderslie houses. If the order of the houses in the census matches the actual houses, this would be the corner house, the last house in Fleet Street. Robert was 36, a draper born in Luton, Bedfordshire. Agnes was from Castle Douglas.

1901 Anwoth census : Robert and Agnes were in the same house. Robert was now a draper and clothier. They had 3 sons - Arthur Thomas (10), Robert Eustace (6) and Alexander Gordon (5).

1906 Robert and Agnes (known as Addie) built a new house next to Elderslie called Riverside.

(There seems to be some confusion between Alderlea and Elderslie. The houses are attached and sometimes the names seem to be interchangeable. The house at the corner of Fleet Street and Planetree Park is Alderlea. The adjoining house was until recently (2015) called Elderslie but is now Glenlea Cottage. The neighbouring detached house is Riverside.)

1911 Robert's business partner James Palmer had moved into Alderlea and was Robert's next door neighbour.

Robert & Agnes had 3 sons living at home - Robert E., Alex G. and John F.B. Jardine (8). Son Robert E (known as Eustace) was an apprentice draper.

Their oldest son, Arthur Thomas, was living in Manchester, in staff accommodation for the drapery and departmental firm of Affleck & Brown. Arthur was employed as a clerk. *(Note: Mr James Brown, one of the owners of the Affleck & Brown, had a Gatehouse connection as he owned Knockbex House at Borgue)*

1912 James Palmer passed ownership of the shop and workshop at 27 & 29 High Street to Robert Jardine of Riverside. James Palmer died in 1940, his widow Annie in 1942.

1914 -1918 War : Eustace Jardine enlisted in the 3rd Battalion Royal Scots in January 1916 and his brother Arthur enlisted in the same regiment in February of the same year. Cpl. Arthur Jardine was killed at the Battle of Arras on 12th April 1917. Private Robert E. Jardine was also killed at the Battle of Arras on 9th May 1917.

1924 Valuation Roll : Robert Jardine and James Palmer are both listed as retired, Robert living at Riverside, James at Alderlea. The company was now run by Robert's son John Fraser Broadfoot Jardine. (Alex Jardine , the other surviving son had moved to London. He was an engineer and died in 1960.)

1930 Addie Jardine died and is buried at Anwoth New cemetery. Robert Jardine died in 1937.

1935 John Jardine married Gracie Fergusson. John died in 1968 and is buried at Anwoth New Cemetery. Gracie died in 1990.

1969 the drapery shop at 27 & 29 High Street was sold by John's executors.

Today the shop has closed completely but still bears the sign **Robert Jardine** above the door.