

Castramont Road – Woodlyn



Woodlyn is at the corner of Castramont Road and Birtwhistle Street.

Birtwhistle Street houses were built in about 1785 when feus were issued for the construction of 8 properties on the North side and 9 to the South. Ultimately 11 houses were built on the south side of Birtwhistle Street.

When Woodlyn was built, in about 1877, it was only about two-thirds of its current length along Castramont Road - the leftmost bay window and upstairs window are clearly of a different style. We do not know when this extension was added.

It is likely that at least 2 of the houses on Birtwhistle Street were demolished in 1877 to allow space for Woodlyn. A further 6 properties were converted into stables, a coach-house and stores, with an access to the garden from Birtwhistle Street. In the late 1970s, these additional buildings were demolished when Woodlyn became an Abbeyfield home and its gardens became the site of a number of small housing units.

This photo was probably taken in the late 1970s during major reconstruction works.



◀ Chronology of Ownership & Occupancy ▶

1877

Disposition by Horatio Murray Stewart to Andrew McLean & Dr James Nichol Cox in which land and houses on the south side of Birtwhistle Street were purchased by the Gatehouse Improvement Society, a property company. This was managed by Andrew McLean, shoemaker and Dr James Nichol Cox. McLean and Cox both served on the Town Council at this time when many improvements were being made to the housing stock in Gatehouse.

This floorboard was exposed during renovations to the property in 2019. It clearly bears the inscription "1877" which would have been the year that it was laid, 142 years earlier.



1878-79 Girthon Valuation Roll :

Entry 1639 : House, garden & offices. (*no house name*). Proprietor was The Gatehouse Improvement Society of which Andrew McLean, shoemaker, Gatehouse, was manager. Tenant / occupier at Woodlynn was Dr James Nichol Cox. The same proprietor owned other property in Birtwhistle Street and Swan Street.

1879 : James Nichol Cox was elected provost of Gatehouse of Fleet. He remained in office until 1887.

1881 Girthon Census - Enumeration District 4 Page 1 Woodlynn

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Forename(s)</u>	<u>Rel.</u>	<u>Mar.</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Birthplace</u>
Cox	James Nichol	head	s	m	39	general practioner, licentiate Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh	Dumfries, Dornock
McIlwraith	Agnes Dalrymple	servant	s	f	36	housekeeper	Kbts, Minnigaff

Woodlynn had 9 rooms with windows.

1884-85 Girthon Valuation Roll :

Entry 1868 : House, offices & garden, Woodlynn. Proprietor was The Gatehouse Improvement Society per Andrew McLean, shoemaker, Gatehouse, Manager. Tenant / occupier was Dr James Nichol Cox.

1887 : James Nicholl Cox married Maggie Hall née MacDonald in Edinburgh. She was the widow of John Hall, chemist in Gatehouse who had a son Donald George Hall by her first marriage.

1888-89 Girthon Valuation Roll :

Entry 204 : House & offices, Woodlynn. Proprietor and occupier Dr James Nichol Cox. The Gatehouse Improvement Society still owned other property in Birtwhistle Street and Swan Street.

1891 Girthon Census - Enumeration District 4 Page 7 Woodlynn

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Forename(s)</u>	<u>Rel.</u>	<u>Mar.</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Birthplace</u>
Cox	James Nichol	head	m	m	49	registered general practitioner	Dumfries, Dornock
Cox	Margaret M	wife	m	f	41	{speaks Gaelic & English}	Inverness, N. Uist
Cox	Margaret M	dau.		f	6m		Kbts, Gatehouse
McKnight	Jennit	servant	s	f	26	nurse domestic	Renfrew, Inverkip
Sherman	Jannet	servant	s	f	19	cook domestic	Renfrew, Greenock

1895-96 Girthon Valuation Roll :

Entry 312 : House & offices, Woodlyn. Proprietor and occupier Dr James Nichol Cox. *N.B. note the spelling changes to a single 'n' in Woodlyn.*

1901 Girthon Census - Enumeration District 2 Page 16 [Woodlyn, Castramont Road](#)

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Forename(s)</u>	<u>Rel.</u>	<u>Mar.</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Birthplace</u>
Cox	J Nichol	head	m	m	59	surgeon	Dumfries, Dornock
Cox	Margaret M	wife	m	f	52		Inverness, South Uist
Cox	Margaret M	dau.		f	10	scholar	Kbts, Gatehouse
Cox	Janette B	dau.		f	7	scholar	Kbts, Gatehouse
Hall	Donald George	step-son	s	m	24	medical practitioner	Kbts, Gatehouse
Clark	Jane	servant	s	f	17	maid servant cook dom.	Kbts, Borgue
Thompson	Mary	servant	s	f	15	maid servant housemaid	Dumfries, Dunscore



Left:
Portrait of
James
Nichol Cox
by Murray
MacDonald.



Right:
James &
Margaret
Cox with
daughters
Margaret &
Janette.

1905-06 Girthon Valuation Roll : Entry 304 : House & offices, Woodlyn. Proprietor and occupier Dr James Nicol Cox. *N.B. note the spelling error in Nicol.*

1909 : Dr James Nichol Cox died of heart failure.

1910 : Woodlyn passed to Miss Margaret McDonald Cox & Miss Janette Budden Cox.

1911 Girthon Census - Enumeration District 2 Page 5 [Woodlyn, Castramont Road](#)

<u>Surname</u>	<u>Forename(s)</u>	<u>Rel.</u>	<u>Mar.</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Birthplace</u>
Cox	Margaret	head	w	f	62	private means	North Uist, Trumsgarry
Cox	Margaret McD	dau.	s	f	20		Kbts, Girthon
Hope	Agnes	servant	s	f	24		Kbts, Kirkcudbright

1911 : Property bought by Mary Stroyan, wife of John McCutcheon, farmer, Murrayton.
*Permission for the sale was needed by the curator of Miss Janette Cox as she was under age.
Mary Stroyan was John McCutcheon's second wife. His first wife Jane L. McKeand had died at
Murrayton in 1905.*

1916-17 Girthon Valuation Roll : Entry 328 : The house and offices at Woodlyn were owned by Mary McCutcheon, wife of John McCutcheon, farmer. The occupier was John McCutcheon.
Margaret Nicol Cox, widow, and her daughters Margaret McD and Janet B Cox, spinsters, jointly owned 6 properties in Birtwhistle Street and 7 in Swan Street. By this time they appear to be living in Hove, Sussex.

1921-22 Girthon Valuation Roll : Entry 328 : The house and offices at Woodlyn were owned by Mary McCutcheon, wife of John McCutcheon, farmer. The occupier was John McCutcheon.



Above: John & Mary McCutcheon



Right: Mary McCutcheon

1930-31 Girthon Valuation Roll : Entry 323 : The house and offices at Woodlyn were owned by Mary McCutcheon, wife of John McCutcheon, retired farmer. The occupiers were the proprietrix and John McCutcheon.

1932 : John McCutcheon died.

1933 : Mary Stroyan or McCutcheon sold Woodlyn to Sir Phillip James Macdonell, Chief Justice of Ceylon and his wife Dame Alexandrina Sutherland Campbell Drew.

Sir Phillip James Macdonell was born in 1873. He studied law at Oxford University and was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn, London. He worked in many countries overseas - Northern Rhodesia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Ceylon where he became the 25th Chief Justice of Ceylon. He died in Southport, Lancs in 1940 but is buried in Girthon cemetery.

1934-35 Girthon Valuation Roll : Entry 323 : The house and offices of Woodlyn, were owned by The Hon. Sir Phillip J. Macdonell, Chief Justice of Ceylon per Wm McConnel. Tenant was James Jones & Sons Ltd., Timber merchants, Larbert. Occupier was George Fraser, manager.

In the 1930s, the woods around Cally House were being cleared by a timber company, James Jones & Sons of Larbert, near Falkirk. **George Fraser** was their manager and he and his wife Janet lived at Woodlyn whilst the above works were carried out. After the company had completed their work, George chose to remain in Gatehouse running his own timber business. The Frasers lived at Woodend Cottage, Anwoth. In September 1940, George was killed by a large log falling from a truck at the Ardwall Sawmill, Clachan of Anwoth.

1939 : Sir Phillip James Macdonell sold Woodlyn to Thomas Hill Gibson of Barford, Warwickshire.

Thomas Hill Gibson was born in 1893 in Glasgow. He became a supporter of Home Rule for Scotland after fighting in World War I. He founded the National Party of Scotland in 1928. At Cathcart, Glasgow in 1932 he married **Wilhelmina Allison Campbell** (Elma), who was also a staunch Scottish Nationalist.

The couple moved to London where he was Secretary of the British Steel Foundation and Financial Director of British Iron and Steel Corporation. He was out of Scottish politics until after World War II when he rejoined the SNP.

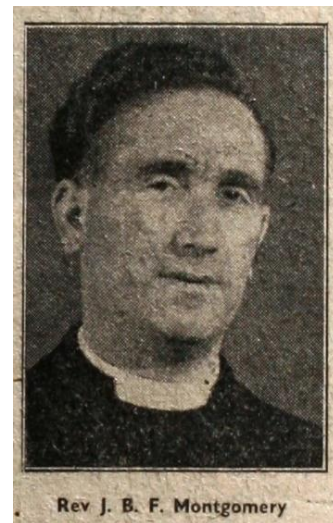
The couple had a son Ninian C. Gibson, born 1933, Bromley, London, who lived with them at Woodlyn. He attended Gatehouse School and is remembered as always wearing a kilt.

1940-41 Girthon Valuation Roll : Entry 339 : The house and offices at Woodlyn were owned and occupied by The Hon. Sir Philip J Macdonell, Chief Justice of Ceylon, per Wm McConnel, solicitor, Gatehouse.

1945 : Thomas Hill Gibson sold Woodlyn to the **Church of Scotland** to be used as Girthon Parish Manse. The following ministers of Girthon Parish lived at Woodlyn:
1945 to 1950 : Rev. Andrew J. Easton was minister at Girthon 1937 - 1950. He married Muriel C. MacDonald in 1943 at St Giles, Edinburgh. *Presumably he lived at Old Girthon Manse, outside Gatehouse, until 1945*
1950 to 1970 : Rev. John B.F. Montgomery with wife Elizabeth and children Wallace, Iain and Maud.
1971 to 1975 Rev. Jeffreys J.A. Carmichael and his wife Pat.



Mrs Muriel & Rev Andrew Easton



Rev J. B. F. Montgomery



Rev Jeffreys & Pat Carmichael

1950-51 Girthon Valuation Roll : Entry 239 : The house and offices of The Manse, were owned by the Church of Scotland General Trustees, and occupied by Rev. J B Montgomery.

1960-61 Girthon Valuation Roll : Entry 286 : The house and offices of The Manse, were owned by the Church of Scotland General Trustees, and occupied by Rev. J B Montgomery.

1965-66 Girthon Valuation Roll : Entry 222 : A house and offices in Castramont Road, were owned by the Church of Scotland General Trustees, and occupied by Rev. J B Montgomery.

1970-71 Girthon Valuation Roll : Entry 222 : A house and offices in Castramont Road, were owned by the Church of Scotland General Trustees, and the tenancy was c/o J J Veitch, Girthon Kirk. It was unoccupied.

1974-75 Girthon Valuation Roll :

Entry 222 : A house and offices in Castramont Road, were owned by the Church of Scotland General Trustees, and the inhabitant / occupier was Rev J J A Carmichael.

1977 :

Woodlyn sold by Church of Scotland to the Abbeyfield Stewartry Society to be used as a retirement home. *By this time, the houses on Birtwhistle Street that were owned by Abbeyfield were either derelict or demolished. Some had been used as garages or coach houses and/or storage. When these were finally demolished a warden's flat was added at the back of Woodlyn. In the garden a number of small housing units were built as well as a communal garden and a small car park.*

1978 :

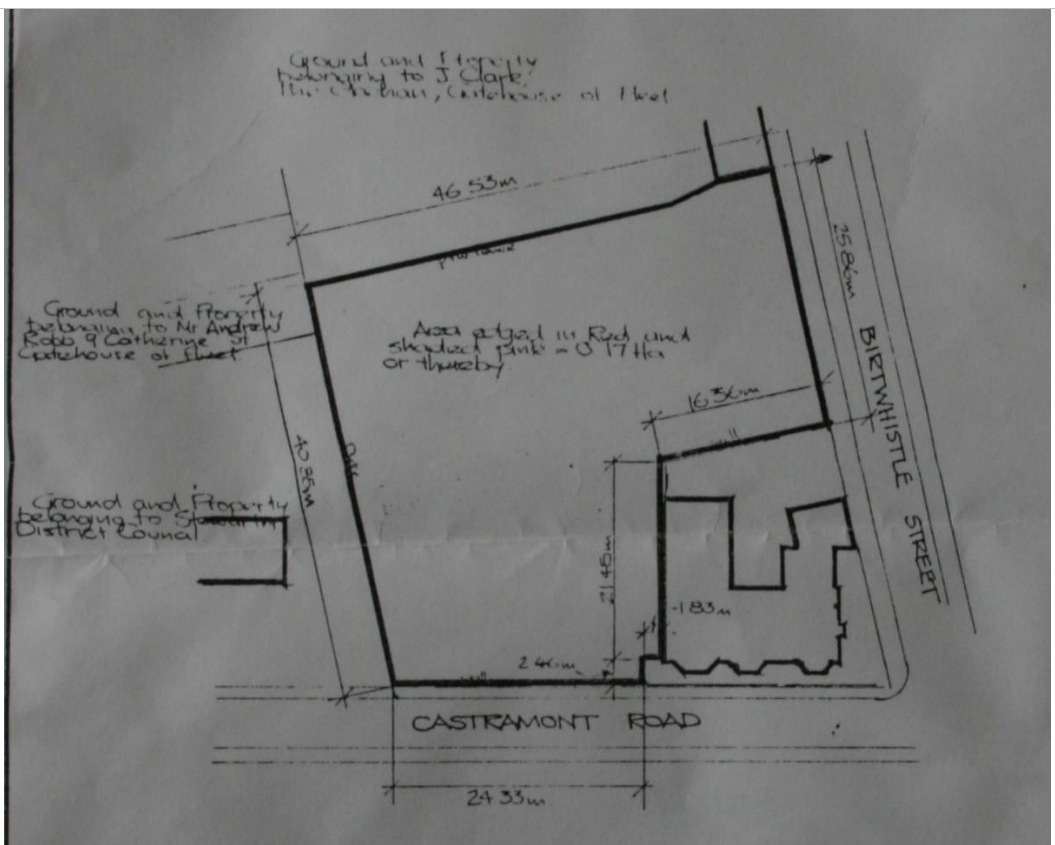
**Aerial View
of Woodlyn
& Grounds**

During
renovation
works



1985 :

**Plan of
Woodlyn
&
Grounds**



c.1996 :

Abbeyfield
Resident
Molly Ingles
90th birthday.

Names-
Jimmy Dent,
Dorothy Baron,
Molly Ingles,
Lilian Dent,
Ruby Murray Usher



2006 : Sold by the Abbeyfield Stewartry Society and became a private house again.

2019 : Sold to present owners.



Left : Nikki & Kev White with Pat Carmichael

Below : Woodlyn Guest House business card



Last Updated : 15 January 2020