

The Cowleys of Ardwhallan - Isle of Man

The Cowley Story [i.e.] of our immediate family - appeared in the

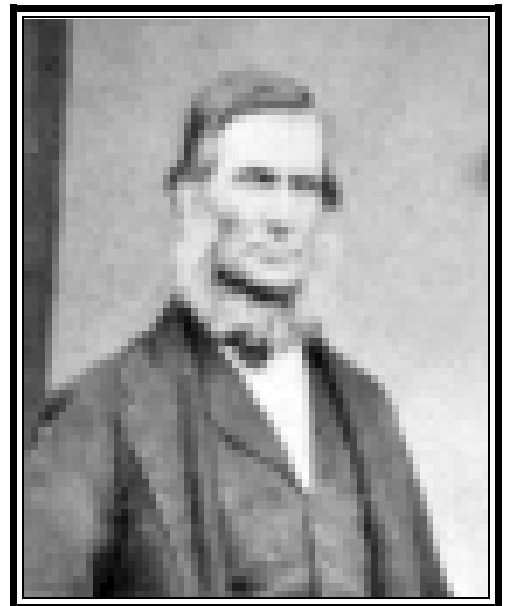
Isle of Man Family History Society Journal Vol 10 No 2 May 1988 - Foreword - by - Robert Cowley

I am able to share this heritage, thanks to marvellous research carried out by my Father's sister, Barbara and her daughter Dawn Hartney, my much loved cousin. Together, they researched for about 15 years our wonderful family history and she had considerable success with our Manx/Ardwhallan ancestry, going back to 1698 with the birth of [Thomas Cowley \(Circa 1698-1786\)](#) married [Alice Brew \(C.1700-1781\)](#). Family names keep reoccurring and their son Patrick Cowley of Coldin was born in 1721, [he was my Dad Thomas' great, great, great, grandfather. I did further research and it appears we now trace to 1578, but we are

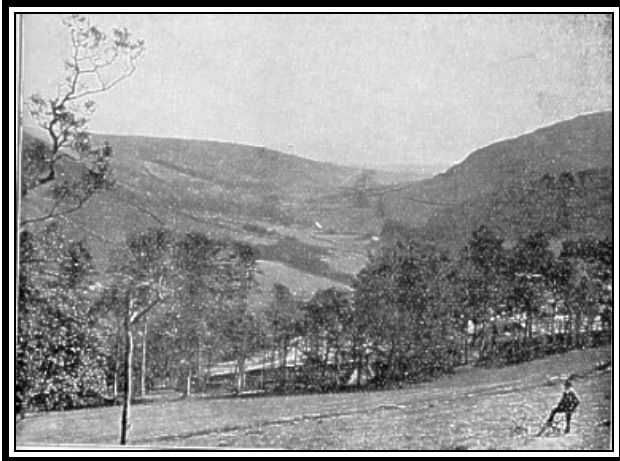
still verifying this new information, so while Patrick's parents are as yet unknown to us, hopefully new research will reveal who they were. So for now from the 17th Century we have Thomas Cowley and Alice Brew above. Our farming side began with the birth of Patrick Cowley of Coldin my *Great, Great, Great Great Grand Father* - Patrick [born 1698] brought Ardwhallan into the family in 1732. His son William Cowley married Jane Teare and acquired more land in 1829, divided later, between sons Thomas and Daniel. My Father Thomas, gave me an indelible love for Isle of Man, he made me want to learn and know more about my roots, given we grew up on a small farm in Victoria, Australia. Patrick son of William married Margaret Brew on 9th December, 1747 at Kirk Braddan. [Braddan is the largest parish and in Thwaites Directory 1863 - and the COWLEY's are listed in the top 10 largest landowners].

They had two children, William born 1757 and Margaret whose birth date is not known yet. Patrick was obviously wealthy; as according to land records between 1759 and 1797 he was able to purchase four different tracts including the one called [Baldalbrew as shown in the Liber Assed of 1796](#). It is possible that Patrick's wife Margaret may have owned this land, as it is she who willed the land to their children, William and Margaret. It is also possible that Margaret may have been married before as we have been unable to link her grandson Thomas Radcliffe, to our family; but he was also a benefactor in her will.

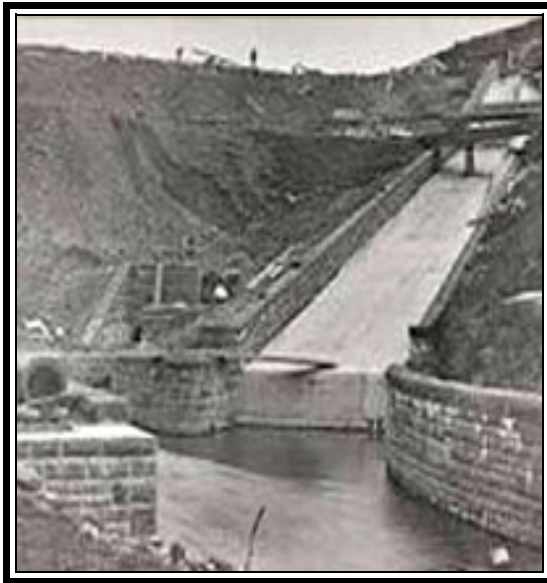
Her son William, who married Jane Teare of Jurby; 8 June 1799 brought more land into Ardwhallan and the Cowley family in 1832. They had five children and [pictured right] is eldest son Thomas, my Great Great Grandfather, who married Barbara



Thomas - Robert's Great Great Grandfather

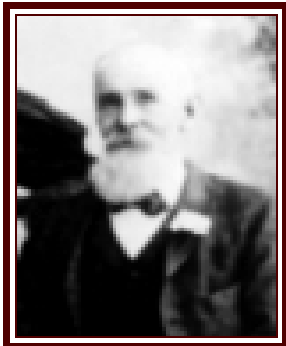


Circa 1900 - Ardwhallan before Dam showing surveyor [bottom right] studying the area to be flooded



Reservoir Construction began in 1904

Colquitt of Malew on the 24th November, 1827 and they had six children, plus one from Barbara's previous marriage to William Cowle. Pictures show our property [Ardwhallan](#) before and during construction. Ardwhallan was several thousand acres and the last will and testament of William, is a mine of information. Thomas was left the bulk of the land, William sold some of the land to his youngest son Daniel and made Daniel executor of his estate. This caused friction between the two brothers and they went to court over it. The 1841 Census shows five houses on Ardwhallan, by the 1851 Census Thomas and his family had No. 47, Daniel and his family, No. 50.



Thomas Jnr My Great Grandfather

Pictured left is Thomas eldest son of Thomas and Barbara, (*My Great Great Grandparents*). Thomas is my great grandfather who emigrated to Australia by ship in 1854. Thomas left home when he was twenty, heading for the gold fields of Victoria. He travelled to Liverpool, where he embarked on the SS Constance - [pictured right] under the command of Captain William Christian. The Constance left Liverpool on 30th August, 1854 with young Thomas 20 years old onboard, arriving in Melbourne on the 13th December, 1854. There were 311 passengers on board, including one stowaway. One baby was born at sea and one baby died. Thanks to my father's sister, we have recovered eight letters from Barbara to her son Thomas over a *17 year period*. These letters first introduced us to our family on Man

and poignantly explain our Manx Heritage. - [they follow in conclusion.]

Thomas Cowley, [1834-1904] started our Manx Australian line and after emigrating in 1854, he married Louisa Wells-Cowley - Daughter of Frederick Wells of London born 1848 and who passed away in 1928. Thomas Cowley the Son of William Cowley and father of Thomas my great grandfather, lived 1802-1874 and Barbara Colquitt Cowley - daughter of Stanley Colquitt 1799-1881. Of the eight letters over the seventeen years, the first letter from my great great grandmother Barbara, to Thomas her son in Australia, was written in 1856, the last in February, 1872. The letters are poignant and interesting for their expose of daily life on the Isle of Man during the second half of the 19th Century.

Many relatives, neighbours and friends are mentioned and the rather stoic attitude of the rural people comes through. For the Cowley family in Australia however, (*which Dawn noted*) the most moving and poignant parts of the letters come from the slow realisation and obvious heartbreak, which Thomas and Barbara felt, when their son did not come home as expected, choosing to stay in Australia. This was particularly so with Thomas senior, My Great Great Grand Father, as Thomas Junior was the eldest boy and My Great Great Grand father had hoped that young Thomas would go to Australia, make a fortune or nothing in the gold fields and then return home to continue running Ardwhallan Farm.



The SS Constance - Thomas sailed to Melbourne on her



Ardwhallan under water Part of the Reservoir Today



Ardwhallan Farm today, part of Outward Bound

Sadly as we see in the letters, Great Grand Dad Thomas did not return home, breaking the heart and spirit of his Mother and Father. Most of Thomas' time was spent in and around the goldmining areas Ballarat, Castlemaine, etc and it was here where at age 37, he met and married Louisa Wells.



My Grandfather William Stanley Cowley

They had nine children, first William Stanley Cowley (*pictured to the left*) my dearly loved grandfather and my father's father Thomas who would become the next in line. A great aunt was given the family name, Barbara Colquitt, and this name continued through to my Aunt Barbara, sister of my Father. With the family name comes a **necklace of solid gold and mother of pearl**, the gold coming from the gold mines at Kalgoorlie in Western Australia. Correspondence which cousin Dawn located between Thomas and Louisa, suggests they had some difficult times and Thomas passed away in 1904, 6 years before my Father was born, (1910). My Father and his sister Barbara remembered well Louisa, their grandmother, her dignity, kind-heartedness and strength of character. Although related only by marriage; it comes through in Barbara Cowley's letters from the Isle of Man to her son in Australia at conclusion of this document. Thomas and Louisa are buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery, with their eight year old daughter Grace, who died of blood-poisoning.



Age 60 - retired from professional flying after 40 years in the air Senior Captain - Trans Atlantic Operations



Nearing 80 - 2020. Still flying, Not ready to hang up my Wings yet



Father Thomas & Mother Alma 50th anniversary



First airline job; QANTAS - Electra L188C - 'Pacific Enterprise'



Trans Australia Airlines 'TAA' - the first DC4

My Father Thomas and Mother Alma [pictured top right]. Dad and I had a close and special relationship, a bond to a large degree forged by my Father serving in the Royal Australian Air Force 'RAAF'. This led by age 5 to an early love affair with aviation. In 1962 I commenced ground studies at Royal Victorian Aero Club 'RVAC' [the creme de la creme] of flying academies. I began training on RAAF surplus De Havilland Chipmunk Aircraft, earning my wings in 1963 before joining Qantas in 1964. Dad was with TAA and now me with Qantas. I remember well the times after school I crawled through TAA aircraft of the time like the DC 4 pictured thanks to Dad's position and his influence with the engineering personnel. With terrorism now, sadly it could not happen today. Since those early halcyon days, I have flown four [4] continents of the world and the Arctic circle.



Rolls Royce of Business Jets in landing profile



Garret powered Lockheed L-1329 on Low pass

I Hold Command Ratings on Two (2) and Four (4) engine Jet Aircraft. My greatest joy in aviation was obtaining clearance from *RAF Base Ronaldsway, on the Isle of Man*, to land the Lockheed on the RAF base. The RAF then gave me clearance to depart on a 500 feet missing man pass over Ardwhallan farm and Baldwin Dam, in honour of my Father Thomas [ex RAAF]. Proud moments were having my parents onboard an aircraft when I was the Captain and later my own children.

It was Barbara My Father's Sister and her Daughter Dawn Hartney, who did the research on the Cowley's of Ardwhallan. My Father and His Sister shared many happy memories, after visits with relatives on the Isle of Man. I know both my Aunt and cousin Dawn, would like to thank all our family members and others on the Isle of Man, for making their visits so wonderful and memorable and would also like to thank others who helped them in their research, in particular the Isle of Man Historical Society Staff who over the years have contributed greatly to the project. They would also like to thank old friends and long-time correspondents Tom Cowell Snr. and Tom Cowell Jnr. of Ervy Veen, Baldwin. Although not members of the Historical Society, they have contributed articles to the Journal. My Father's passing as the eldest child in his family, was recorded in the Isle of Man - Historical Society Journal - 1990 Volume 12 Number 3 - In this edition they recorded;

" **Thomas** - *who was loved by everyone who met him, passed away November 22 1989 - being the direct descendant of* - 'The Cowley's of Ardwhallan'.



With Baron Wright - and Lord Ravensburn at Knights of Malta Investiture - The Southport School

The author pictured left age 60 at an Order of St John Investiture, held at 'The Southport School Queensland, where son Mark attended before we left permanently for overseas. Southport School was spiritual home to the local Order of St John. The order of St John began as the remnant of the 'Knights Hospitaller - Order of St John' of Jerusalem 1048 AD. In the 1800s, descendants of knights who provided hospital care to wounded knights who fought at the various crusades, received patronage from Queen Victoria to start the St John Ambulance Service. Many people don't realise, Dad topped out in the St John Ambulance First Aid Course and was a volunteer, long before any of his children were born. I became inspired by Dad's interest in medicine and joined as a member of the Order in 1994. After seeing the desperate plight of Romanian orphans, whose parents had been murdered by Dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, I donated US\$ 100,000 to the New York priory to help fund orphanages in Romania.



Baroness de Haynau visiting my home in 2006 seated with Lord Ravensburn and Sir Paul Breen



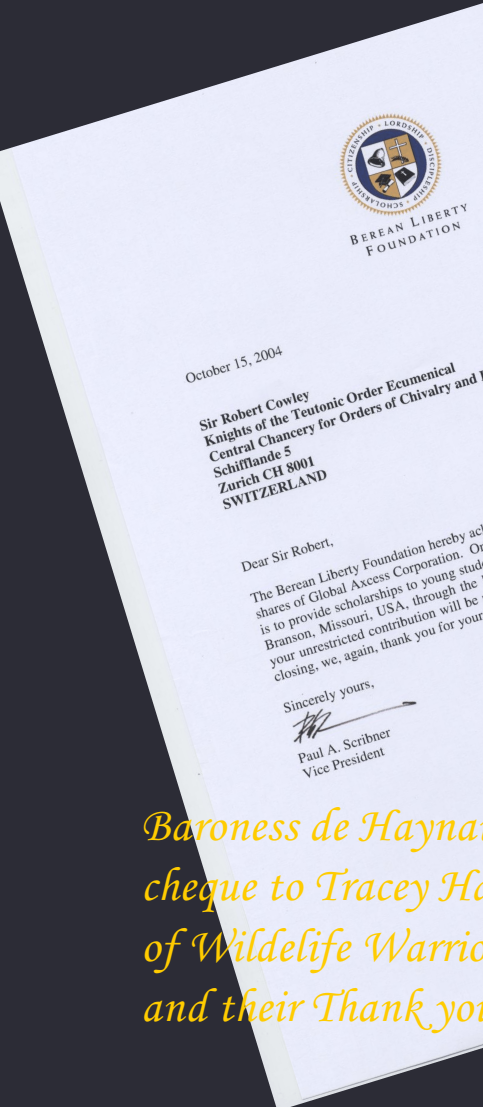
With Baroness de Haynau 2003 Russian Nobility Ball raising money for orphans



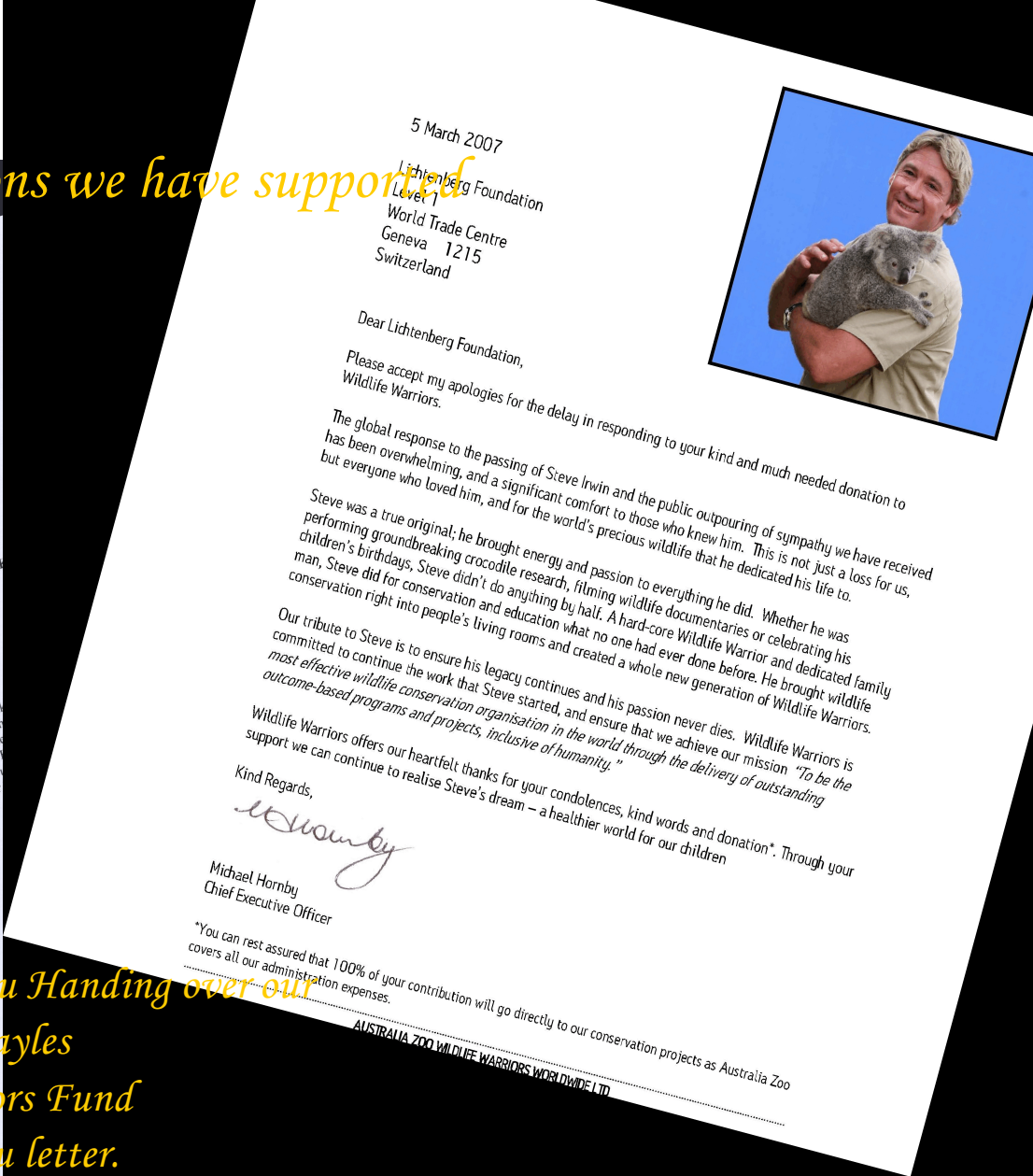
At the Russian Nobility Ball New York in St John Order

I have devoted much of my time to charity work. In the middle photograph and at right, the Russian Nobility Ball in 2003 with Baroness Maya de Haynau. Then in 2006, she came to Australia on a formal visit. We donated thousands on this visit to the St John Ambulance service, Gold Coast University Hospital, Surf Lifesaving Australia, Hear and Say Foundation and Steve Irwin's Australia Zoo. Maya and I worked tirelessly for years to raise money for orphans. We attended the Russian Nobility Association Ball yearly and also the yearly ball held by the Hungarian Piarist Association working for orphans.

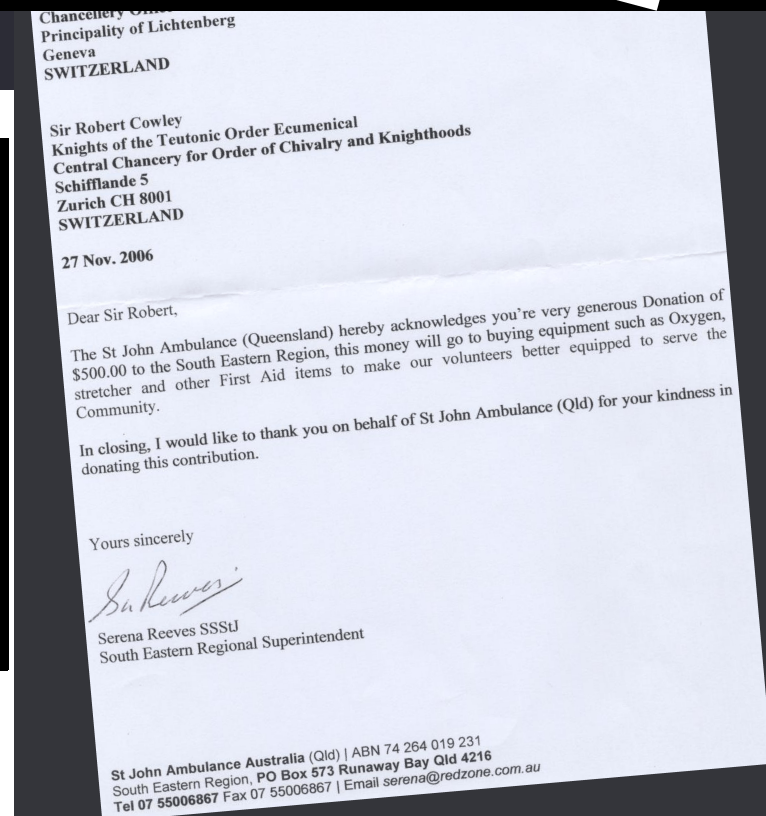
Some Organisations we have supported



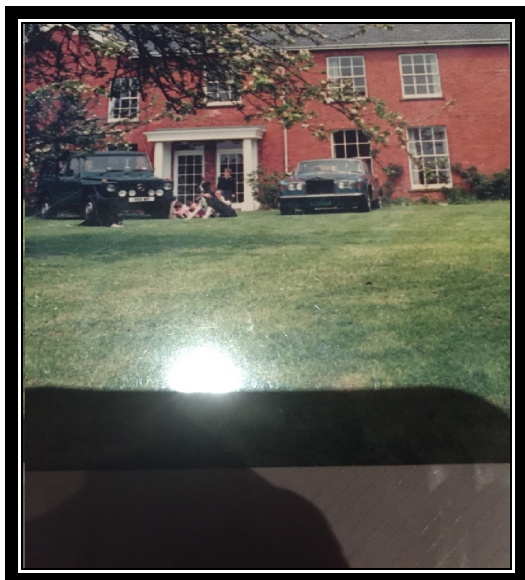
Baroness de Haynau Handing over our cheque to Tracey Hayles of Wildlife Warriors Fund and their Thank you letter.



Baroness de Haynau with author where we handed a cheque to Tracey Hayles at Wildlife Warriors Animal Hospital at Australia Zoo.



All families have rough times, we have had our share. I thank God that he always remained with me and never left nor stopped loving me. Because of Him I was able to never stop loving. - I want my family to know the precious thoughts you give me as I look back on wonderful times - truly we were blessed. In the closing years of my life, it is important you all know - how much I love you - 'how much I have always loved you'. To all of you, the only ones who made it all possible - to my beautiful family - Thank You for the Memories.



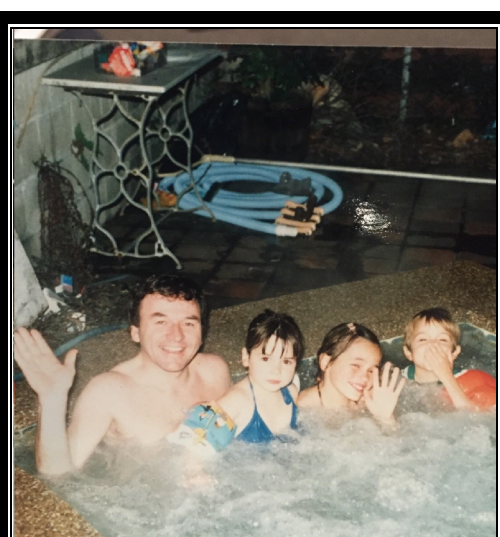
On lawn - Thurlby House with Great Danes



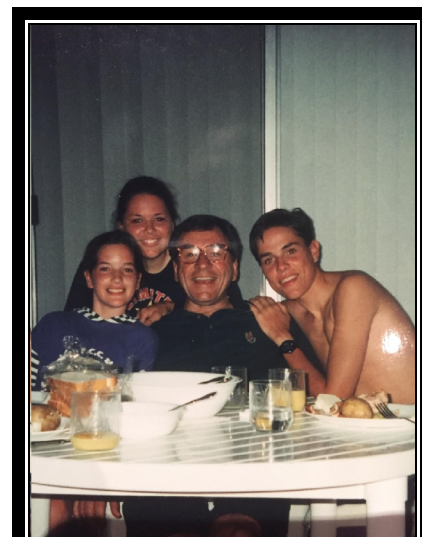
Thurlby House from above 4.5 acres & Stables



Full crew - steaming to Paris



4/6ths of the team at Lambton



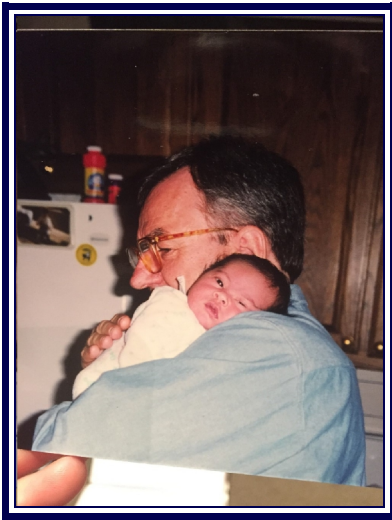
Leisha, Danielle, Mark and Me



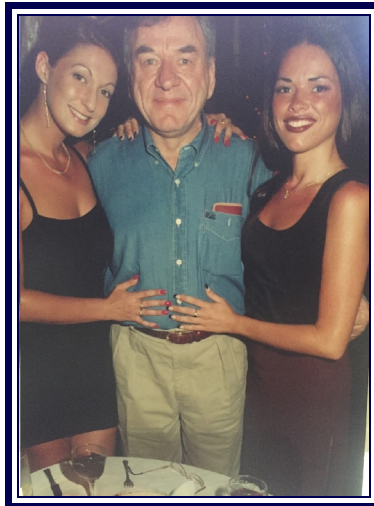
Arriving in our Aero Commander 685 for Vacation at Ft Lauderdale



Like her Father - Daughter Natalie - on Flight Deck



1998, precious Moments with my Grand Daughter Leah - Tulsa OK



Danielle and Daphne another night



With Danielle and Daphne [gone too soon] my surrogate daughter at Gambaros for my Birthday



Danielle and I at my Belgrave Sq Club in London, keeping our blood pressure in check to ensure family survival



At Club on another night, with Danielle and her Singer friend Sam

The foregoing is written from the perspective of Robert Cowley and his parents, so my children have some idea of their proud heritage and roots to Ardwhallan Isle of Man as the 'Cowleys of Ardwhallan'. I hope you will let me take you all there one day for a reunion with your Cowley cousins on the island. I am planning a family lineage tree, for all in the family to have. I have a copy but it is so old and has been blown up and the definition is not of sufficient clarity. When I do it, I will send copies to all

As a post script, my parents Thomas and Alma Cowley had three sons Barrie, John and myself and I married Jacqueline and we had Natalie, Mark, Danielle and Leisha.

In conclusion let me share copies of the 8 letters we retrieved in our research

THE EIGHT [8] LETTERS - THE COWLEYS OF ARDWHALLAN

The following letters conclude the story of the Cowleys of Ardwhallan and give a vivid insight into life in the Baldwin Valley in the late 19th century. You can feel the poignancy build between the first and the last letter recovered as Barbara resigns herself to the fact that Thomas is not coming home. I have left each letter as is [including grammatical or spelling errors].

Now follows the first letter from Barbara Cowley, Isle of Man, to her son Thomas Cowley in Victoria, Australia, written October 12th, 1856 Ardwhallan, Baldwin.

First Letter

Dear Son,

We received your kind letter last night and you cannot think how glad we were to receive it as we have been so long expecting it. We are glad to hear that your health is well as we are all pretty well at present except Kitty, she has broken a blood vessel last June and she is very poorly ever since. We cannot get any thing to do her good. John Brook was home all the spring, he was very often seeing us, he was for going back to Geelong in May and we wrote a long letter and gave it to him but he is in England yet.

He said he sent the letter but we don't know so we will give you all the news we can of the times, We had four weeks of very fine weather at the beginning of the harvest, it then got very wet and the harvest was not done. It is raining almost every day, we have all the corn at home safe and we have put Golden in little stacks up, to save it from the wet.

There is a deal of crops in a bad state through the island, the Summer has been very wet and the people have not got the turf all home yet because the weather has been very wet. The crop is pretty good if it has been got in safe.

The potatoes are very bad this year. We have sold old Bob to a man in Douglas for £3, he parted very bad. The colt looks very well, she will stand about sixteen hands high, We had a very nice foal this year end they all look well. The bees have not done much this year but we had a little more honey than we had last year. Your sisters and brother-in-law are all well and send their love to you, all are so glad to hear from you that you cannot think it.

William Gallow has gone to Mr Moore as the clerk in the lime kilns. We have no school here now in St Lukes, Mr. Gill has gone to the new chapel in Laxey, he is married to ? Hewellen. The parsons name we have now is Mr. Davis, he is an Englishman. The people in Baldwin I think are just as you left them, there has been a great number of strangers in the island this year and made things very brisk. We have had a man from Scotland lodged with us all the summer, he was cutting trees in Injebreck.

They have cut two hundred pounds worth of wood and he is away now getting his wife as he is coming to be agent to Mr Spittall. The servant lads were very brisk, at the 13 and 14 pounds for good lads. Isaac Cannell is not with Mr Corkhill this year, he is leaving him from November, he is going home as Jane is married to Billy Bet and lives in Douglas.

Dear brother-in-law I didn't expect a letter this morning when I came in from the coole this morning, I am glad to hear your well and I would be glad to see you home again.. There is a large barn built for Tommy Corkhill where the old one was, but no sign of a wife for him, he sends his love to you.

Old Kate is still alive but failing very much. Johnny Graine is dead and Catherine Corkhill is dead. Parson Gills' brother Evan, he went to bathe at Scarlett and no one can tell how it happened, he was drowned, it was a great shock to them .Janey is growing big, Bobby is as big as Johnny. Your cousins in Liverpool are well, Elenor is still in the same place and Willy has gone to sea again. John Freer the old thing is at home again and follows a pair of horses. He looks just as he use to do, there are one of his sisters married yet but his old sweetheart ? Hampton was married the day his mother died, to William Taggart of Gibdale.

Dear son when you write tell us if you have seen any lads that you know, if you hear anything of Hudson's lads tell us, They don't write a letter to her. It was James Kelly's sister that is dead, Margaret Tyson your cousin died at Manchester and old Mrs Clague of the Naish is dead. We had an anniversary here 3 weeks ago, but a very small collection, provided some shillings, it was too late in the season.

There is a Scotsman living in Mr Spittalls place at the village where John Glucas was and the new parson is lodged with him. John Cowley, Grey-veen has a smiddy by Macklures house and old Albram and the wife live in the little house where William Gallow lived. Mrs Greer of Arduwhallan was going to Douglas in the gig and Joe Grellin was coming from the village with Mrs Fayle of Balligs horse and she ran the shaft of the gig through the hip of Mrs Fayles 'mare and wounded her bad, they are at common law
[Good use of language by my Great Great Grandmother]

Dear son when you write let us know what you have done with your chests, if you don't look after your clothes they will be all wasted. Dear son write oftener and give us all the news you can. Robert Corkhill says he has written to you several times and has received no answer, and Willy is at the Ballarat diggings. We never heard of you by anyone, but Mrs Lewin sent word to us that Mr Lewin had seen you, her family is all well. So no more at present from your affectionate father and mother, Thomas and Barbary Cowley, write soon and we will. - **Written by either Robert Craine or Thomas Greer**

Second Letter

from Barbara Cowley to her son Thomas Cowley in Australia sometime during the year 1861. The first four pages are missing.

..... James and he speaks of coming home. The Kermodes get letter from the Cannans, there is two of their girls married, one to a gentleman. We received the gold you sent with Thomas Lewin but waited long for the letter you were to send, but it has come at last. Thomas is very well and his wife has a baby and is quite smart again. His latter says that you were thinking of going to the place called Snow River but we think you have gone far enough to return.

It is coming on seven years since you left our shores and many is the changes that is here since then, and all this time the Lord has spared us ye to live and we hope to see you safe home again. You will be delighted with our little front Garden all full of flowers, we have a new top on the house and a new top on the barn last summer and it is not a little expensive, but we have good shelter and that was wanted badly. Dear son we hope that you will write to us as soon as you get this letter and let us know all the particulars about your coming home.

Poor Robert Glucas lost his sight, and the loss of the Royal Charter was a great shock, many numbers of the passengers were found upon these shores. William ? is dead about two years. We are going to write to America next week so no more at present, from your Father and Mother, T. and B. Cowley.

Third letter from Barbara Cowley; Isle of Man to her son Thomas Cowley in

Australia, written in December, 1861 - Ardwhallan December 10th, 1861

Dear Son,

I have taken up my pen to write these few lines to you hoping to find you in good health, as we are not very well at present. Yet I thank God we are not laid on a bed of sickness. Your father and I are both failing fast. We received your letter and also about your sickness but was very much disappointed in yourself not coming but if you don't come soon you will never see me. We have nobody to do anything but Stanley and little Jenny, she is growing a fine girl. Kitty got married all unknown to any of us to John Quine at the village which grieved us very much, they live at the village. Stanley is very good to us and the Lord will bless him for his kindness to his parents. Your brother John works at the sawmills and gets his meals at home, he earns a pound a week. Robert is with Thomas Greer still and gets a little wage by the week. The work has been very brisk. Your sisters and the families are all well, they have increased a good deal since you left us. Billy Gallow has buried four and now they have twins three weeks old, this is twelve children for them now, they have a good place and all look well. There is so many strange things here now and I think if you came home it would suprise you very much.

Your cousins in Kirk Michaels are all married but one, that is Margaret. John has not written them this long time to them as your aunt and uncle Dan have lost Margaret with the short illness of twenty four hours, she suffered very much in that time. She was a very fine girl. Jane is married and lives in Douglas. I had a letter from your aunt Betty that is Katherine's mother about twelve months ago. It was the first time I had heard from her since you left us. She tells me that there is another son of hers in Australia and his family lives there and has been there and back. She lives with Robert in ? She is very poorly and she inquired very much about you but I told her nothing but we wanted you home very much dear son

Last page missing

Fourth letter from Barbara Cowley, Isle of Man to her son Thomas Cowley in Australia, written in June 11th, 1865 at Cleybane

Dear Son,

I have taken the time of writing to you again, we have had no letter from you since April 23rd, 1864. We answered it telling you all the news we could at that time. Since then we have spent a long lookout but neither yourself nor a letter. We got the newspaper and thought much of it.

Thank you we are all well at present hoping this will find you the same, but not in our old home for as soon as your father thought you would come home, he took the Cleybane from James Kelly thinking you would be home to help him and Stanley. What a disappointment it was to them, they were near agreed upon it when you told us you were coming home before, but when you did not come he dropped it again and Janey moved there working and he let it partly to get Janey away, he was very troublesome to them and father. That we would be better if you came home, we will do very well I think.

We have twenty head of cattle and four horses. The dry one is in Golden, the down land is set to your two brothers, they both work on their land. The mountains are all to be sold and a great deal is sold and the common hay has been reaped off them and roads made in all directions. If the Lord will guide you home safe what a strange sight it will be for you to see and nobody there that was there when you went away. Bill Gleg lives on the mountain and Bill Craine lives in Douglas. Mr Greer, Mrs Fell, ? John Cowley, William Cowley your cousin, Robert Gleg, I cannot tell you all that is dead. Thomas Moss and Kitty are dead, you will hardly know anyone there now. My dear son you don't know what trouble we have felt on your account but if you come and help us now when we are growing feeble, old and grey the Lord will not forget thee.

It was very hard on us to trust and very dear to pay for doing it but we have a trusting will and every convenience is here. I met Mrs ? and she told me you had not got our letter, we are very sorry to hear that but you might write a note again. I would with James but we thought you could be near home by that time. You must think that we have been very much disappointed in you not coming. I have had your bed made for you and hope we will see you soon. Dear son write as soon as you get this and tell us the time the ship arrives and all the particulars that we may come to meet you. We all long for the time.

Robert Crane has his son working with him and Thomas Greer has his two sons working with his. All your brothers and sisters send their love to you, no more at present from your Dear father and mother Thomas and Barbara Cowley

Fifth letter from Barbara Cowley, Isle of Man to her son Thomas Cowley in Australia, **October, 1870 - October 18th, 1870** at Cleybane

Dear Son,

I have taken up my pen once more to write a few lines to you hoping they will find you in good health as they find us very indifferent at present. old age and infirmity have overtaken us. We received your few lines of September, 1869 and was very glad to get them, but on I had written a few days before we had thought you would have answered the letter, but no answer yet. The letters are coming plenty to all around us but none for us. I will leave it to your self to think what your father thinks about you.

You must know that you are not doing right, you ought to write to us whatever you are doing. I can't think how you can be so unkind, even if you have nothing to give you can't say I can't write. It is very strange the letters don't come back when you don't get thorn, you are sixteen years gone from us now. I have every letter you ever sent but they are few. You have seen many a strange sight since that and we could tell you many but when you don't write and don't get our letters we don't like to may much. I have many things I would like to tell you but writing so little makes me forget them. I told you in the last letter about the mountain fence, the money it would cost. It hen cost about £50 and your father thought you might help him, he helped you and you ought not to forget him.

But we must bear it all, it won't be very long. You have spoken of coming home so many times we would never have left our own home only for that, thinking you would be home to help us. But all our hopes are in vain. This day there are six letters at Stanley's from Douglas, mostly all from Australia and none for his father from his son, But if you don't write soon it will not be well.

Your brothers and sisters are all pretty well at the present and they all send kind love to you, so no more at present from your kind father and mother Thomas and Barbara Cowley

Sixth letter from Barbara Cowley, Isle of Man to her son Thomas Cowley in Australia, May, 1871 - May 15th, 1871 Cleybane;

My Dear Son,

I have once more the pleasure of writing a few lines to you hoping they will find you well as they have found us at the present time, thank God for all his mercy to us. We received your letter dated January 28th and were overjoyed with it, as we had given up all hope of hearing from you. We have spent a very bad winter and spring, we have just got ? . Your father was three weeks confined to his bed and he thought he would never rise again I myself had something like scurvy in my legs and was weeks that I could not walk. How your father longed to hear from you when he was sick. He would say to me how unkind he is, I had to comfort him and say it will be all well yet. But thank God he is very stout again. The place doesn't pay very well at all and we have a nasty landlord. I don't know almost how to begin to tell you about your home but I must. Your sister Janey has eight children, Robert Crane has always been saying he would like to go to America and he has gone there. He let the house and land to Bill Cowan the blacksmith. He built two little houses just at the road going up to the old ? and Janey lives in one of them. He went last June and his son Robert Stanley and Margaret went six weeks and have got there safe. Janey is going herself in the [summer] she has six to take if she takes my girl.

Robert Stanley has grown a very nice young man and Margaret as big as Jane. Robert Crane likes the place well and he says he hasn't lost a days work since he went, you will be surprised to get account of them but I hope it is all for the best. There is a great many people going and gone there.

Thomas Greer is well and his family and he has nine children the two boys work with your brother Robert and their father. Robert is married to Thomas Greers youngest sister and they live where Matgle used to live. Thomas Greer built two houses at Foxdale and he lives in one of them and your brother John lives in our old place, he has the meadow and the little field and he works for Mr Spittall. Old Mr. Spittall is dead.

Your sister Kitty lives in Ballatra, she has six children, William Callow is still in L? he has a very good place and they have twelve children, five dead. Stanley Callow is a clerk in Manchester, Thomas is at the Rocky Mountains he is a ? And John is in the office with his father. Stanley your brother is still with us, he has three children. You may think our comfort can't be much. Your uncle Ned and his wife are both dead and your cousins Sisley, Gatty, Ellen and William and Stanley, there is none left but Jane and John Edward, and Jane is for coming to the Island. Sisley has buried her husband, and two sons, Peter and the two girls are all that is left.

Peter is in America but does not like it and is coming home. You wished to hear something from home, I can't tell you the quarter I would like but if I will be spared to write again I will tell you more. Let us know a little more the next time.

So no more at present, your dear father and mother, Thomas and Barbara Cowley.

Seventh Letter from Barbara Cowley, Isle of Man to her son Thomas Cowley in Australia, **December, 1871. December 14th, 1871 Cleybane;**

Dear Son,

I have the pleasure of writing to you once more to let you know that we are all in pretty good health at present, thanks be to God for all his mercy to us. We received your kind letter dated 18th September and was so glad to know that you are well. You wish to know the age of us, your father is sixty nine past and I am seventy three, you were thirty seven the twenty fourth of last June. The Lord has been good to us in sparing us so long. Your sister and her family went in October and had a very good passage.

She left Liverpool on the Thursday and she was in her own house in Cleveland that day fortnight. She has taken my Janey from me, she was all my comfort now, I broke my heart for them, but they send very good letters, plenty of work and good wages. There are a good many Manx people in Cleveland, there are two of the Blecunish's boys there and Peter Tyson and his wife, also your sister thinks she will get her father and mother there yet but that would be a great wonder. I hope it is all for the best. I think there are hundreds gone from the island of late. Your cousin Jane was in the island in summer and Ellen's husband is married to her. Edward, Cutty's husband and his two children were with her, Crutty died very suddenly. He wants a Manx wife and intends coming to the island to get one. Ellen left two boys and a girl. Catty had eight, only two living and all Siseys are dead but one sick is alive yet.

I was speaking to Thomas Clague the other day and he said he wrote many times and got no answer, but tell his brother if you see him to direct the letters to Thomas Clague, Balaevank. The mother is very poorly, she is very old. My pen is so bad I cannot write. Dear son you must excuse me my hand shakes very bad. Your father too is very bad on his feet but his health is very good at present.

Your brothers and your sisters are all well at present and send their kind love to you hoping they will see you soon, though we are sure never likely to see you, we give up all hopes of that. If we don't meet here then may we meet in heaven where parting is no more. It is a great trial to part with ones children never to see them again which I never will.

The Cool is no piece for me now and I long so much my dear son if you could send a little money home it would be such brag. The Cranes get so much money home and makes such brug about it. But if you can't it can't be helped. I saw James Chevestan on Saturday, he looks well.

Write soon and if the Lord spares me I will write a long letter the next time. So no more at present, from your dear father and mother. Thomas and Barbara Cowley.

8th Letter from Barbara Cowley to her son Thomas Cowley,
49 Cleybane February 18th 1872

Dear Son,

I have once more taken the pleasure of writing to you for which I feel very thankful. We are all pretty well at present thank God for it, hoping these few lines will find you in good health. I should have written to you the last mail but the very time I was going to write I was sent for to Ballapadeg. Their daughter Alisea fell dead on the floor, it was a great shock. The father is dead two years and the mother a whole cripple but they have done very well. I hope you get this you can't think how much we have grieved that you did not get the letter. We wrote you the time we received the newspapers and very proud of them. Your brother Robert has gone back to work with Thomas Greer and John lodges with John Quine at the village, they have given up the land as they could not mind the farm and their trade and old Brew is ? it this year and he wants a lease of it, but your father will not give it up until you come home. I don't know almost what to do. The letter before the last had so much more, we are sorry you did not get it but there is not the pipes in the glen that was in when you went away.

William Will and wife, old man Thomas, old Kate, Mrs Fell, old pal Bob Clegg, I cannot think of them all, there is not one family in but Will Cannell and wife. I told you in the letter that your brother Robert was married to Thomas Greer's youngest sister. I was seeing them and your sister Margaret yesterday, they are all well, they call you home, they all know we want you very much, we are both old and not for hard work. Janey and myself was doing very hard and was very comfortable. We had Mr. Caley lodging with us most of the summer for his health but he died at Christmas, he died worth twenty pounds.

We have had lodgers at times this year and if we had the house all furnished we would get lodgers enough, we have done pretty well this year.

Fresh meat is seven pence to nine pence a pound, butter sixteen and seventeen pence a pound, oats seventeen shillings a cowl, barley a guinea, wheat from twenty three to twenty five. We had very good wheat on the flat. Dear son you don't think how we long for you to come home, I and your father and your sisters talked much yesterday. While Stanley kept Gleybane we were alright. He has got a wife and things have altered and one that has nothing ? Your father is very much out of the way with it, they think we should look to you now, when you tell us you will come home and don't tell me about it, but he will not part with the land until you come home. You have told us so many times you are coming but if you don't come now you never will see us.

May the Lord send you safe. try if you can hear anything on John Colvan.

Last page missing.

The poignancy of Barbara's letters, her pleas to son Thomas to write home or come back. He was the eldest and was to inherit the land, everything as it was then. Instead it went to his younger brother and his descendants [our cousins]. The fact we might have been wealthy by inheriting such a huge amount of the Isle of Man extending even to Douglas before the Dam construction, is not the issue. *What troubled my spirit, is the poignancy of the hurt leaking like water in Barbara's letters; the pain she suffered by the rejection of her son Thomas, [my Great Grand Father] as he ignored her pleas to write back, while both she and her husband deteriorated and died, her letters a window for our family to see through today and feel pain.*

I have often wondered why my Great Grand Father did this and many times as I have read the letters, I have cried inside for his Mother Barbara and Father Thomas, for sadly, death came like a thief in the night, before any of them could or would ever see each other again.

What a story Ardwhallan farm, Kirk Braddan and the Cowley's of Ardwhallan is. It is one I am so proud of, especially with the public recognition of my Father Thomas [your Grand Father] in the **Isle of Man Historical Society Journal** upon his death. As covered previously, they were aware of his death and named him - '**Direct Descendant of the Cowleys of Ardwhallan.**

This is poignant for me as I well remember the son of a woman I knew, telling his mother, that the facts I related when asked about Ardwhallan was B/S. Sad, but as **Lord Churchill** said;

**‘The Truth is Incontrovertible, Malice may Attack it,
Ignorance may Deride it, but in the End - There it Is’.**

Headstones for the Cowley Family at Old Kirk Braddon Churchyard

Large middle headstone- in memory of Jane Cowley alias Teare wife of William Cowley Ardwhallan in this Parish who died the 15th day of August 1830 aged 61 years. Also of the above named William Cowley who died the 24th Sept. 1831 aged 75 years. Large right-hand headstone

In affectionate remembrance of - Thomas Cowley of Ardwhallan - [Dad's Great Grandfather and my Great Great Grandfather and below Barbara my Great Great Grandmother] of this parish who died Dec 16th 1874 Also Stanley Colquitt son of Stanley and Harriet Cowley and grandson of the above, who died April 17th 1878 aged 8 months. *Also Barbara wife of the above Thomas who died July 9th 1881 in her 82nd year.* John Francis son of Stanley and Harriet Cowley who died January 7th 1885 aged 2 days.

Old Kirk at Braddon was on the Cowley Estate at Ardwhallan and here lies our history on the Isle of Man. Of all the traditional Manx names, Cowley is the 10th most common on the island and we were in the top five [5] largest landholders on the Isle of Man as recorded in Thwaites Directory of 1863.

My Father Thomas, grandfather to my children and my siblings children had his passing as the next in line, recorded in the **Isle of Man - Historical Society Journal - 1990 Volume 12 Number 3 -**

In this edition they recorded;

Thomas - who was loved by everyone who met him, passed away;

November 22 1989 - being the direct descendant of - 'The Cowley's of Ardwhallan'.



Most of the Cowleys of Ardwhallan are buried here, at our historic Church - Kirk Braddon