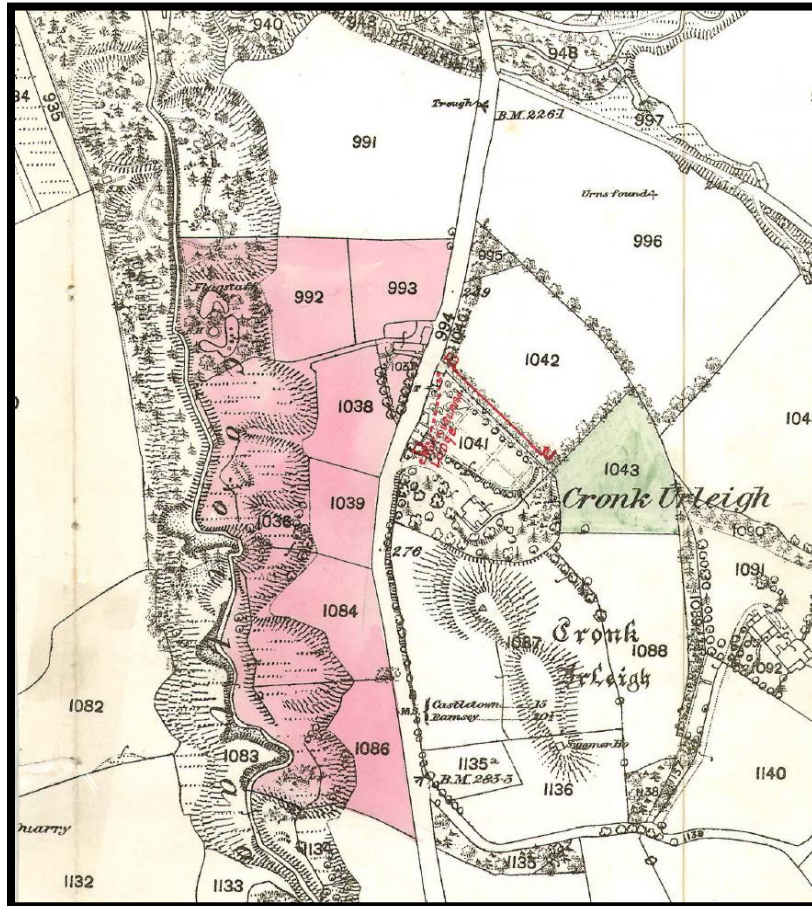


Mylrea of Cronk Urleigh



Source: Department for Enterprise, Isle of Man government

Cronk Urleigh is in the parish of Michael which is on the western side of the Isle of Man, and said to have been an early Tynwald site. It was the home of a Mylrea family from about 1850, and perhaps even longer because they arrived in the parish several decades earlier. The pink section of the map above shows the original 9 acres that were held by the Mylreas until the 1890s, when their estate was expanded to take in an additional 12 acres on the other side of the road, shown on the map within the arc of trees that cuts through the letter 'r' in the large print, *Cronk Urleigh*.

This short-lived Mylrea clan boasted three successive generations of men named John:

John Mylrea 1791-1865 (1)
John Mylrea 1818-1887 (2)
John Mylrea 1849-1905 (3)

Rather than her brother John (3), Mary Ann, the youngest in the family of John Mylrea (2), played the central role in the ongoing viability of the family's estate. Over time, she engaged in many property transactions, some the result of her father's will, some because of her husband's activities, and all with the purpose of safeguarding the Mylrea assets. This family would have been economically comfortable. A tragedy befell them in the third generation when John (3) was severely incapacitated in an accident. He never enjoyed an independent life after that event and thus, never took up the mantle of steward of *Cronk Urleigh* when his father died.

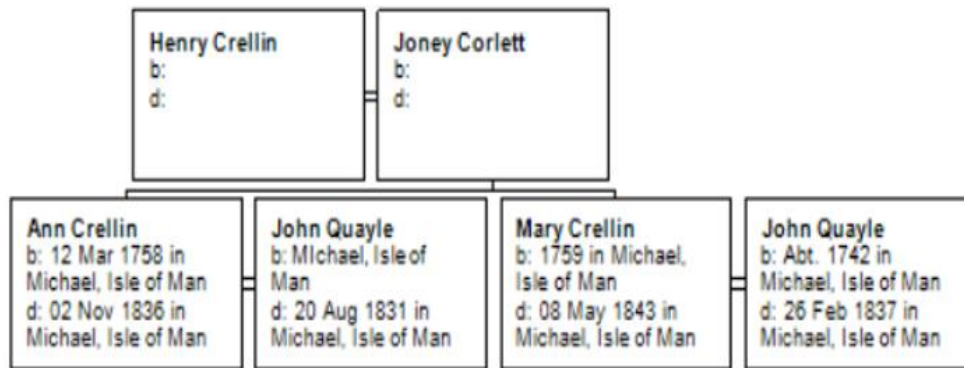
It was John (2) who acquired the original tenancy of 8 acres of *Cronk Urleigh* land. He was the son of John Mylrea (1), an individual born in Ballaugh in 1791 to parents Daniel Mylrea and Mary Hughes. Daniel Mylrea was the second son in the *Ballacooiley* clan and was, by tradition, obliged to make his own way in the world. His son, John (1) was similarly obliged. It's not clear what Daniel Mylrea did for a living (perhaps a shoemaker) but he died in Jurby immediately to the north of Ballaugh so there's every chance that he found work in that parish.

The irony of the *Cronk Urleigh* Mylreas is that they grew in prosperity during the 1800s while their *Ballacooiley* relatives were overseeing the disintegration of their centuries-old estate. The demise of *Cronk Urleigh* in the 1930s was more the result of the lack of a male heir (or more specifically the lack of interest on the part of the surviving male heir) while the demise of *Ballacooiley* was entirely due to unmanageable debt levels.

JOHN MYLREA (1)

When he was 23 years old, John (1) married in Michael. His wife was Isabella Quayle, and the year was 1814.

Isabella's family had been Michael residents for generations. Like the Mylreas in Ballaugh, the Quayles were a multi-familied clan, probably not all closely related but invariably headed (as the Mylreas were) by an individual named John, Thomas or William. John Mylrea (1) marrying a Quayle would eventually present a challenge to the modern-day Mylrea family historian because two Crellin sisters married two (apparently unrelated) Quayle men, both named John, in Michael in the 1780s.



Both of these Quayle families also lived in an area known as *Ballaltheih*, which made the task of distinguishing their members even more difficult. However, the two were destined to intersect and in so doing, they affected the fortunes of the descendants of John (1). Isabella, the wife of John Mylrea (1), was the daughter of John and Ann (Crellin) and in 1846, their son John (2) married the granddaughter of John and Mary (Crellin).

John (1) was employed as a farm worker in Michael and that's probably how he met and married Isabella. The couple had a son and three daughters over the ensuing decade. In one of several coincidences in this story, their youngest daughter Mary, born in 1825, married William, the youngest brother of Thomas Mylrea, the corn miller of *Glen Wyllin* in Michael. William's family originated in Douglas and although their surnames are the same, William's clan had absolutely no connection with John's, nor with the broader Mylrea clan of Ballaugh.

No evidence exists to show that John (1) ever held land prior to or during his marriage to Isabella, or that her parents settled land on them. When Isabella's parents died in the 1830s, her brother, John Quayle jnr, inherited the family's tenancies in the treens of ~~Shaltagh~~ and ~~Ballanymade/Bargarrow~~, her youngest sister Jane (Christian) received the family home, and Isabella and her other sisters received monetary legacies.

The 1841 census shows John (1) and Isabella in the Ballacarnane area with their youngest daughter, Mary. Their daughter Elizabeth had died a couple of years before and their other two children, Ann (aged 22) and John jnr (aged 20) **(2)**, were living in Douglas with their aunt, Jane Christian and her family. John (2) was listed as a joiner on the census record. Also in the house at the time was Ann Boyde, the niece of Jane Christian and the aunt of John (2) and Ann Mylrea.

In the 1851 census, patriarch John (1) was still a farm worker and still living in Ballacarnane but now with only their daughter Ann at home (presumably they had not relocated within the area). Isabella was visiting their daughter Mary and her husband in Andreas, perhaps because of the arrival of her first grandchild William that year.

By 1861, John (1) was 70 years of age and now living with his daughter Mary and her family in Andreas. Isabella had died several years previously. John (1) died in 1865 in Andreas.

Mary Mylrea

She was the younger daughter of John (1) and Isabella and born in Michael in 1825. After her marriage to William Mylrea in 1850, she provided a home for her aging parents in Andreas. The family of her brother John (2) remained in Michael, the *Cronk Urleigh* clan died out in 1970 with the death of John's bachelor grandson John Richard Stanley Cowley, while Mary's family of 10 children included three who explored the world – John to Australia, Margaret to the USA, and William Frederick (Wilfred) to South Africa. Mary's son John had two unmarried daughters, which spelled the end of that line, but daughter Margaret and son Wilfred have descendants who thrive to this day

JOHN MYLREA (2)

John Mylrea (2) started out as a joiner in Douglas. At the age of 28, he married a widow, Margaret Barrie als Brew, and they had their first child in Douglas, a daughter named Emma in 1846, before returning to Michael in the late 1840s. Margaret already had two daughters from her first marriage - Margaret Jane (b1837) and Elizabeth (b1835). Margaret Jane remained in Douglas with her grandmother Margaret Brew als Quayle (the oldest daughter of John Quayle and Mary Crellin), and her Brew aunts and uncles in Hanover St, while Elizabeth went with her mother to Michael.

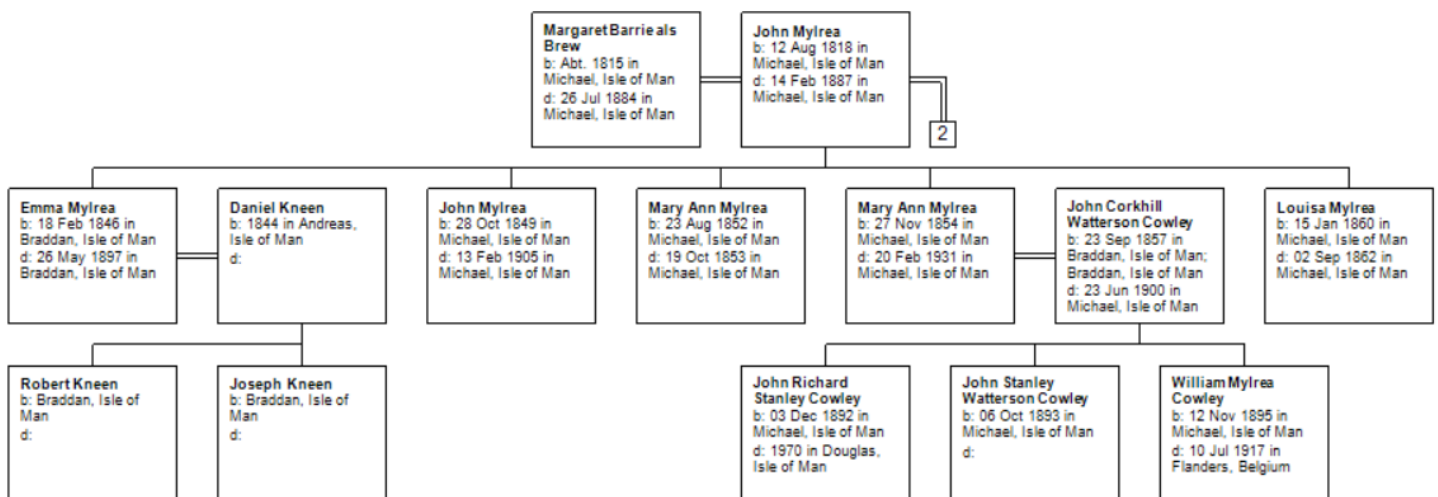
In the 1851 census, John (2) reported that he was a farmer of 8 acres on *Cronk Urleigh* in the quarterland of **Clyeen** in the treen of **Cammeil**¹. Sometime before he purchased the tenancy at auction, Thomas had rented the land from its owner, William Corlett. The purchase price was £350, and there is no evidence to show how John was in a position to pay such a price – no prior mortgage, no prior ownership of anything. Also in the 1851 census (perhaps living with them but recorded as a separate household by the collector) was John's mother's cousin, 60 year old Elizabeth Quayle (youngest daughter of John Quayle and Mary Crellin). She would, in the future, have an economic influence on the Mylrea family

In the 1861 census, John (2) didn't mention being a farmer, describing himself instead by his former profession of joiner, although still living at *Cronk Urleigh*. They had added a son named John (3) to the family and now also recorded in their household was the elderly Elizabeth Quayle, who was not only John's mother's cousin but also his wife's aunt – the families of the two Crellin sisters had intersected through their daughters, Isabella (mother = Ann) and Elizabeth (mother = Mary).

¹ Mona's Herald, June 11, 1851; Corlett to Mylrea – Sale NOV 1857 (2/3d rent)

John (2) and Margaret had five children, two of whom did not reach adulthood. Of the three who did:

- Emma, born in Douglas, worked as a domestic servant in Ramsey and Douglas, married a widower Daniel Kneen who had two children in Douglas in her late 30s and received £5 in her father's will. Remarkably in 1861 she was a servant in the home of her half-sister Margaret Jane Cleator (als Barrie) in Ramsey!
- John (3) embarked on a career as a joiner as his father had done. However, in his late 20s he met with a serious accident, the consequences of which affected not only his life but the lives of those around him
- Mary Ann married in her late 30s, had three sons, was widowed after just 10 years, and cared for her damaged brother after their parents had died.



Elizabeth Quayle was still living with the family in 1871, and in 1875, she made a gift of land to John (3)². It was a one-acre meadow close to *Cronk Urleigh*. Also, when Elizabeth died in 1877, she nominated Emma Mylrea as her executrix. As a consequence, Emma received £100 in 1892 by assigning a mortgage originally provided by Elizabeth to a Thomas Cavendish of Jurby³. She should also have been in receipt of the interest payments over those intervening 15 years. One could guess that the Mylrea family had given their spinster relative a home for over 30 years, after her mother died in 1843, and that Elizabeth had recognized that kindness through her bequests.

The skills of John (2) as a joiner must have enhanced the family's economic situation, unlike most farmers and farm workers who eked their living entirely from the land. As well as his purchase of *Cronk Urleigh* in 1857, he borrowed £100 in 1863 and repaid it within five years⁴.

² Quayle to Mylrea – Settlement OCT 1875 (11½d rent)

³ Kneen to Nessy Corlett – Assignment [Ref June 1892 #15 BAL]

⁴ Mylrea from Cowley – Mortgage [Ref Feb 1863 #25 MIC]

- 1881 - he was living with his parents and described as an imbecile aged 31. As a result of the accident, the Manchester Joiners' Benefit Club⁶ paid him a pension of 6/- per week for life

When their father died in 1887, care of John (3) fell to his younger sister, Mary Ann. John (2) implicitly left the protection of her severely damaged brother to her via his will when she was made the main (really the only) legatee. In the 1891 and 1901 census collections, John (3) resided with his sister at *Cronk Urleigh*.

John (3) was taken to Ballamona Asylum in 1893 by his brother in law where he remained for about 18 months. The entries on his medical record⁷ described the behaviour of a severely disabled but entirely non-violent individual. The cause of his "illness" was listed on the record as *Disappointment: Sunstroke*, the form of his disease as *dementia* and his bodily condition as *curvature of the spine, constant twitching*. None are particularly useful in understanding how a young man went from being fully functional to almost entirely non-functional.

Apart from his short stay in the asylum, John (3) lived most of his life at *Cronk Urleigh*. He died in 1905 aged 50 years.

MARY ANN MYLREA

Born in 1854, the younger daughter of John Mylrea (2) and Margaret Barrie als Brew, Mary Ann was probably the "brains of the operation". She was 33 years of age when her father died, and 30 when her mother died. She faced challenges (rarely of her doing) throughout her long life, and while she might have been the primary legatee to her father's 1887 will⁸ – an heiress - her road was strewn with stones:

- She was left with almost complete responsibility for the care of her severely damaged brother for nearly 20 years, from 1887 until his death in 1905
- At the age of 37, she married a man who might have had a Walter Mitty or a Svengali personality
- She endured the loss of a baby soon after his birth, and the death of her younger son in the prime of his life
- She was obliged to manage the financial consequences of her husband's not unsubstantial (and highly questionable) property transactions, as well as the complexities inherent in her father's will
- She experienced the premature and unexpected death of her husband after just 10 years of marriage at a time when their two surviving children were under the age of 10 years
- In 1900, only months after the death of her husband, she was sued by the administrator of the will of her husband's aunt, Catherine Quiggin (with whom he was staying prior to his marriage

⁶ Mona's Herald Feb 19, 1902. A MICHEAL LUNATIC'S ESTATE & MAINTENANCE - AN EXPENSIVE CLUB MEMBER

⁷ Ballamona Case Book, Public Records Office, Douglas, Isle of Man

⁸ LV May 1888 - Michael lands transferred to Mary Ann. The oddity of the transfer of possessions to Mary Ann is that the LV records do not show a comparable transfer of the Douglas houses

to Mary Ann) in relation to funds apparently given to Mrs Quiggin by his great aunt (Mrs Corkill). The story is far too convoluted to be detailed in this narrative⁹ but Mary Ann was dragged into Court to defend the actions of her late husband who had, at one stage, been the executor of Mrs Corkill's will

- In 1900, a few months after the death of her husband, she was appointed the administratrix of the will of her Manx father-in-law¹⁰ who had died in the United States
- On several occasions, she was obliged to go to Court to sue for outstanding rent from her tenants

Mary Ann gave birth to three boys in quick succession, of whom by 1920 only the first born, John Richard Stanley Cowley aged 27, was alive. The second child (John Stanley Watterson Cowley) was unaccounted for after his baptism and the youngest, William Mylrea Cowley, died at Flanders during WW1.



The War Memorial Tablet, of Sicilian marble, fixed on the north wall of the nave, on which are inscribed fourteen names of parishioners who fell in the Great War, is a good specimen of designing work by Mr Archibald Knox, of Douglas, and carried out by Messrs Royston & Sons, the carved oak bracket being the work of - Mr J. D. L. Kelly. These were erected in 1922 as the Parish -Memorial to the Fallen.

Source: Manx Notebook

⁹ Peel City Guardian, October 20, 1900

¹⁰ The Isle of Man Times and General Advertiser Dec 1, 1900

It would be a disservice to Mary Ann not to recognize her remarkable resilience and business acumen. Her first recorded business transaction was to loan John Corlett, a farmer in Michael, the sum of £200 in 1890. At the time, her father had been dead for 3 years and she had only recently become the steward of *Cronk Urleigh*, a spinster aged 36 years who was also the principal carer of her disabled older brother.

Mary Ann rose above personal disorder and embarked on a seemingly endless stream of property transactions, mostly in Douglas, over the ensuing forty years. Her goal must surely have been to consolidate holdings (and perhaps to avoid disagreements) which were, at the time of her father's death, cluttered with partial entitlements. This patchwork quilt of property ownership was the result of her mother being the second wife of John (2) and exacerbated by the man she married in 1891. To achieve such a lofty goal, she was on occasion obliged to borrow funds which as a widow in the late 1800s-early 1900s would not have been common or easy.

Mary Ann died in 1931, intestate, having preserved the original *Cronk Urleigh* acquisition and overseeing the doubling of its size in the late 1800s. Her husband died in 1900, her profoundly disabled brother died in 1905 and by then, her sole surviving relative was her oldest son, John Richard Stanley Cowley.

➤ *Elizabeth Corlett als Barrie*

The younger step daughter of John Mylrea (2) remained ever present in Mary Ann's life and not always in a positive way. Elizabeth Barrie was a nine year old child when she joined the *Cronk Urleigh* household and she was 17 years of age when Mary Ann was born. With her mother's marriage to John (2), she was separated from her older sister, Margaret Jane, who remained in Douglas with their maternal grandmother. More of Elizabeth's sad back story is that her infant brother died only weeks after he was born in 1839 and her father committed suicide in 1841¹¹. Thus, there have been reasons for her relationship with her Mylrea half siblings not being always amicable, although Mary Ann was about nine years old herself when Elizabeth married and moved away.

Elizabeth might also have been wary of dealings that involved her inheritance which she was obliged to share with her half-siblings. For example, in 1848, her guardians assigned the mortgage which had previously been given to the Primitive Methodist Church to her sister's husband, John James Cleator, and termed the assignment a settlement¹². Whatever the rationale behind the assignment, the action effectively removed Elizabeth from the income derived under the terms of the mortgage. However, the assignment was challenged

¹¹ Manx Advertiser, 25th June 1842

¹² The 1848 date is improbable and most likely a notary's error when the date should have been 1858

by Elizabeth's husband in 1874, and Cleator's executor made a settlement of £75 to the Corletts to settle the matter.

Elizabeth married Edward Taubman Corlett in 1863 and they had five children before he died suddenly, and intestate, in 1874. It must have been a difficult year for Elizabeth. There was the challenge about the assigned mortgage, the sale of her share of one of the two dwellings left by her father, Robert Barrie, and then the unexpected death of her 33 year old husband

John Mylrea, her step father, was appointed administrator of Corlett's assets. This administration led to the sale not only of Corlett's stock in trade, but also of numerous items of household furniture which would suggest that Elizabeth and her very small children were left impecunious. Perhaps the event was made almost beyond intolerable because she might have seen her step father as being responsible for the loss of her possessions.

It would not be difficult to believe that there was a degree of animosity from Elizabeth towards the Mylrea family, but she was obliged to maintain her connection with them because of her entitlements that flowed from her mother. She was enmeshed with her half siblings in a complex web as a result of her being (a) one of her father's heirs at law, (b) her sister's heiress at law, and (c) one of her mother's heirs at law when she died in 1884. While *Cronk Urleigh* was not involved, the four houses mentioned in the will of John (2) most certainly were.

Perhaps to "tidy things up" or perhaps in need of funds, Edward Taubman Corlett (and Elizabeth) sold half of the **Bigwell Street** dwelling to John Mylrea (2) for £60 in 1874, barely months before Corlett died. Selling a half share meant that Elizabeth was giving up both her and her sister's entitlements in the dwelling. Thirty years later, Elizabeth again sold a half share in the second dwelling purchased by Robert Barrie - **Wellington Square** - to Mary Ann - for £75. Elizabeth was also obliged to be aware of any Court applications relating to her half brother John (3), in particular the sale of the other two Douglas properties – **Barrack Street** and **James Street** – since she was one of his heirs.

In 1888, Elizabeth opposed a Court application by Mary Ann to become the guardian of John (3). John (2) had been his guardian until his death the year before. Elizabeth was described in the *Manx Sun* newspaper as the heiress-at-law of John (3) although she would have been one of several at that time, and it is difficult to imagine why anyone would object to his sister becoming his guardian. More so when the cost of maintaining John (3) in food and clothing had not been specified at the time, and a Court hearing in 1902 revealed that it cost more for Mary Ann to care for John than his assets provided¹³.

¹³ Mary Ann Cowley als Mylrea to John Mylrea, Bond (Douglas) DEC 1902

At the time of the 1888 hearing, Elizabeth was a widow in her 50s, and residing in Ramsey, which might explain why the judge observed that it would be better to get an independent party – and went on to suggest that some person living nearer the residence of the lunatic should be appointed in place of Mr Mylrea, their father. Elizabeth’s justification for objecting presumably derived from her mother’s entitlement to the Mylrea assets, and the fact that John (3) was her mother’s heir at law. Even though her mother had predeceased John Mylrea (2), Cronk *Urleigh* and certain assets had been acquired by John during their marriage so Elizabeth (and her sister who died in 1872) was presumably entitled to some of her mother’s half of the proceeds of those assets.

➤ *John Corkill Watterson Cowley*

Mary Ann married JCW Cowley when she was 37 years old, and an heiress. Cowley had been recorded in the 1891 Census in April as a student, aged 30 years (although he was actually 34 years of age) residing with an aunt on ~~Shalragh~~ *Shalragh*. In May 1891, he was listed as a student at the Theological School at Bishop’s Court in Michael¹⁴.

Cowley married Mary Ann Mylrea in October that same year and whether marriage put paid to his ambitions to become a man of the cloth is not known. He had earlier been an alumni of Corpus Christi college at Cambridge University in 1880, but had never actually attended the school, much less matriculated. On his Student Application to the college, he stated that he was hoping to do honours in theology¹⁵ (but never arrived to undertake his studies) and a decade later, on the marriage record for him and Mary Ann, he stated he was a theology student – he must have been studying at the Theological School at the time. However, the only evidence of his religious “education/training/aspiration” was when he was addressed as the Rev John Corkill Watterson Cowley in a Court hearing involving one of the houses that his wife Mary Ann had inherited from her father¹⁶.

Cowley was something of a mystery man. Although he was born in Douglas, he grew up in Michigan in the United States to which his parents had migrated soon after his birth. His father John had been a farmer in Braddan and became a stone mason in the United States. JCW Cowley was probably an American citizen.

¹⁴ The Isle of Man Times, May 13, 1891

¹⁵ Record of Admission, Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge

¹⁶ Isle of Man Times & General Advertiser, June 25, 1898



John Cowley & Hester Waterson with daughter Hester b1854
(source: Extractor1 post on ancestry.com)

JCW Cowley was not recorded in either the USA or England/Isle of Man 1881 census collections. Perhaps he was the individual who travelled back and forth between England and America - in 1882, a John C Cowley was a passenger on the *Brittanic*, and in 1886, on the *Gallia*, both times out of Liverpool to New York. On the manifests however, this passenger stated that he was a labourer. Although the correct age, it might not even have been the same individual, let alone the future groom of Mary Ann Mylrea.

Without more qualitative information, it is impossible to say whether Cowley was a fortune hunter, a clever investor, a frivolous speculator, a feckless husband and father, a selfish and unstable character or an individual who carried more than one of these qualities and who took advantage of his wife's wealth and circumstances. There were several manifest oddities about Cowley:

- he maintained the fiction of being born in 1859 when in fact he'd been born in 1857
- he gave his address in one property contract (1894) as Stephen Terrace in Douglas yet only months previously, he said he was living in Bucks Road. Moreover, he was at the time married to Mary Ann Mylrea and their home was *Cronk Urleigh* in Michael

- he styled himself as a farmer in one contract but only months previously, he said he was a gentleman. In other contracts, he stated that he was teacher although at the time of his marriage, he was a theology student (all these occupations in the space of a decade)
- he instructed an agent to sell off all the stock and farming implements at *Cronk Urleigh* in 1893, offering his reason as “he was declining farming”¹⁷. Given that he and Mary Ann had been married less than two years, to be selling off the Mylrea family’s stock and equipment was mystifying
- less than six months after his plans to sell off stock and implements from *Cronk Urleigh*, he committed his brother in law John (3) to Ballamona asylum
- he purchased three properties in his own name in the space of two years, while he was married to Mary Ann, and then had to involve her in mortgaging two of them. How he could afford to undertake these acquisitions is unknown, given that his stated occupations were not known as high income pursuits
- his religious inclinations never amounted to anything, despite his earlier plans for Corpus Christi and his later enrolment in the Manx Theological School.

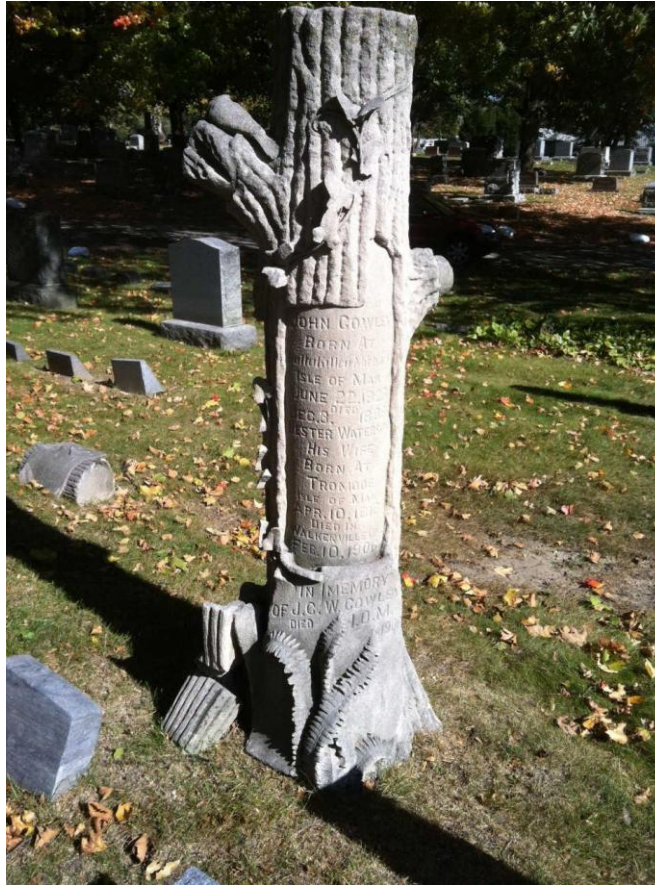
The evidence is scant as to what Cowley brought to the marriage other than his novelty value as an American and his “education” which, in itself, might not have been illustrious. One wonders whether it is significant that after the deaths of both her father and her husband, Mary Ann went to the Setting Quest immediately to formalize the transfer of the Michael lands into her name, while on the matter of her marriage to Cowley, she did not register the transfer into joint ownership with the Setting Quest for nearly a decade¹⁸.

The couple was only married for 10 years before the untimely death of JCW Cowley. He died of an aortic aneurysm¹⁹.

¹⁷ Isle of Man Times, May 13, 1893

¹⁸ LV April 1900

¹⁹ Death Certificate of John Corkill Watterson Cowley – Isle of Man Government



John Cowley born
at Ballakilley
Michael Isle of
Man June 22 1829
Died 9/12/1899
Hester Watterson
his wife born
Tremode Isle of
Man April 10 1826
Died in
Walkerville
February 10 1906

In memory of JCW
Cowley died IOM
1900

PROPERTY DEALINGS

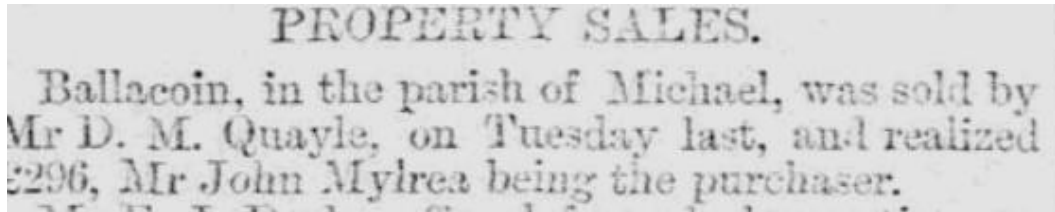
The most surprising element of this family's story is the uncommonly large number of property transactions they undertook. Over many decades, the Mylreas + Mary Ann's husband engaged in about 40 property transactions, the majority after the death of John Mylrea (2)²⁰. The family always lived at *Cronk Urleigh* in Michael, but John (2) listed *inter alia* four dwellings in Douglas in his will, and the complexity of many of the transactions came about because he married a widow with children who were already entitled to the assets of Robert Barrie, their deceased husband and father.

The Cronk Urleigh Estate

- 1857 – John (2) purchased a tenancy of 8 acres in the treen of ~~Cammell~~ with a 2/3d rent, and known as *Cronk Urleigh*
- 1873 – A newspaper report has John Mylrea purchasing land in Ballacoin from DM Quayle (auctioneers) in Michael for £296. The vendor was a John Quayle but there is no surviving

²⁰ See Attachment 1 for a listing of the known transactions

record for this transaction nor an entry in LV nor any mention of the lands in John's will. The name John Mylrea is not unique and it is very likely that the purchaser was John Mylrea of Ballacooiley, the cousin of John (2)



- 1875 – John (3) received a tenancy of 1 acre in ~~Shaltagh~~ with a 11½ d rent from his great aunt²¹
- 1877 – John (2) purchased a tenancy of 1 acre in ~~Shaltagh~~ with a 11½ d rent²²

The *Cronk Urleigh* tenancies belonging to John (2) passed to Mary Ann in 1887 and on her death in 1931 to her only surviving son.

Andreas

John Mylrea (2) loaned of £80 to Elizabeth Cleator in 1879²³ and after he died, it was Mary Ann's task to tidy up that particular piece of business. The security given for the loan was land in Andreas which was subsequently settled on Elizabeth Cleator's daughter, Ann Kerruish, in about 1884. Evidently Ann was not in a position to repay the loan and Mary Ann must have called in the debt rather than assigning it to another party. As a result, she found herself in 1891, the proprietor of over five acres of quarterland and intack in the parish of Andreas²⁴. Twenty years later, she sold the holding, having first enjoyed the rent from a tenant farmer²⁵.

Douglas

Robert Barrie's assets probably had a value of about £500 which, in 1840s, was a significant sum. Involved were two dwellings, in **Wellington Square** and in **Big Well Street** which he bought in the space of one week in 1840, as well as at least one mortgage for £280 that was given out in 1843 by the daughters' guardians²⁶. The Chancery Court in 1843 heard that his daughters were minors who had "*certain real and personal property*" to which they were entitled on the death of their father²⁷. Two of their mother's Quayle

²¹ Quayle to Mylrea OCT 1875 #7 MIC

²² LV May 1888

²³ Mylrea to Cleator NOV 1879 #34 MIC

²⁴ Mylrea from Kerruish Purchase SEPT 1891 #17 AND

²⁵ Mylrea to Corlett Mortgage NOV 1891 #18 AND

²⁶ Mar 1849 #96 ONC; Mar 1849 #86 ONC; Feb 1874 #76 ONC

²⁷ 1843 Chancery Court Petitions: #41

uncles were appointed as guardians. Presumably their mother was entitled to one half share and the two daughters a fourth share of each of Barrie's assets. However, on the sale of these dwellings decades later, the respective entitlements became far more complex because Margaret also had three surviving children with John Mylrea (2).

Of the four dwellings mentioned in the will of John (2), three with their valuations were listed in Brown's Directory (1894) as belonging to Mary Ann:

- 27 Barrack St dwelling house, Mary Mylrea, £8 0 0
- 17 Wellington Sq dwelling house, Mary Ann Mylrea, £8 16 0
- 30 Big Well St dwelling house, Mary Ann Mylrea, £11 4 0

None of the dwellings exists today, victims of the modernization of Douglas town centre in the 1920s and 1930s.

12 JAMES ST

When and how this property came into John's possession is unknown but the Douglas Town Commissioners resumed the premises (and many others in surrounding streets) through the Act of Tynwald Douglas Town Improvement Act 1889. As a result, owners were obliged to give up their properties at a pre-agreed value. The 1894 edition of Brown's Directory showed that No 12 was the most valuable of the four dwellings mentioned in John's 1887 will, at £13 12s 0d. Mary Ann, John (3) and Elizabeth sold their shares to the Commissioners earlier in 1894. No formal record of brother John's sale exists although there was no need for the Court's permission to sell his share because the resumption was enforced under an Act of Tynwald.

Collectively, documents show the transactions involving 12 James Street:

- 1894 Mary Ann Cowley als Mylrea sells a slightly larger share £84/3/6
- 1902 John Mylrea (3) receives £34/17/- for his one eighth share²⁸
- 1894 Elizabeth Corlett als Barrie sells a one fourth share £69/15/-
- 1895 James Bell sells one third share £70 (est)²⁹

A newspaper report about the sale of the James Street property might leave the reader with the impression that Elizabeth Corlett was the sole proprietor in the family.

²⁸ Chancery Court petition 17A DEC 1902

²⁹ Bell sold three premises (including James Street) to the Douglas Town Commissioners for a sum of £214/14/-

Mr Kneen drew attention to case No. 143 on the plan, 12, James'-street—owners, Elizabeth Corlett, Thomas Corlett, and Wm. Henry Corjeag, guardians of William Bell, and said it was settled at £279.

However, in fact, Elizabeth was probably the only proprietor who had objected to the original valuation because her half siblings were also entitled to a share. In total, they held two thirds of the dwelling while the Bells held the other third. Arbitrators in Court on 6th September 1893 agreed to the value of the property as £279³⁰.

Collectively, what was paid to the four shareholders amounted approximately to the agreed £279. However, puzzlingly the compensation John (3) received was considerably less than what Mary Ann received; Mary Ann's share was 7/24, Elizabeth's was 6/24 yet John's (3) 3/24 (a total of 2/3 of the dwelling).

In addition, In 1875, John (2) had purchased one sixth of No 9 James Street for £20³¹. The McArdles owned several houses in James Street at the time, and this 6th share belonged to one of the McArdle children. There is no documentation that suggests either that No 9 became No 12 (unlikely) or that John had acquired No 12 separately.

27 BARRACK ST

This property was the second property in John's will to be disposed of, and that too had a legal imperative. Like 12 James Street, it has no discernable link to him – no sign that he ever purchased it, or that he had inherited it - although the latter seems the more likely explanation, and his wife the most logical source. Its sale was almost inevitable, the dwelling deemed derelict by the Chancery Court in 1893.

³⁰ Mona's Herald, September 6th, 1893

³¹ Jelly to Mylrea Sale JAN 1875 # 40

DANGEROUS PREMISES.

The Corporation brought an action against the Rev. John Corkill Watterson Cowley, praying for an order to have him put the house 27, Barrack-street into a safe condition.—Mr Gelling: Do you admit?—Defendant: I am unable to. Mr M. Carine examined the property, and says that there is only one arch over a window bad, and there is no danger from that, as there is a yard behind. I have only an interest in half of the house.—Albert T. Prescott, Borough Surveyor, deposed: I have examined the premises several times. It is in a very dangerous condition. There are four windows in the back. The wall projects for about six inches in some parts, and the arches of the windows are also very loose. If the arches gave way, the whole wall, or most of it, would fall. It is dangerous to the neighbouring houses.—Cross-examined: The back is about 15 feet from the next house, and if the wall fell it would go through that house. The wall is cracked. The house has been closed up, as it is not fit for human habitation. It would take about four days to knock it down, and about a month to re-build.—Defendant was ordered to knock the house down, or remove the danger, within one month.

32

It probably suited Mary Ann and Elizabeth to dispose of the property, but the Courts had to be involved to approve the disposal of the entitlement of John (3). The respective shares were detailed in the sale document as³³:

- Mary Ann (one quarter)
- John (one quarter)
- Elizabeth (one half = her quarter share + her deceased sister's quarter share)

The half share enjoyed by Elizabeth is a strong indication that this dwelling came to the marriage via her mother, Margaret, who most likely had inherited the property from her mother, Margaret Brew als Quayle. No document exists to confirm the suggestion, however.

Jonathan White Johnson was the purchaser. Mary Ann purchased the dwelling back from Johnson, and then sold it to Thomas Kewley, the latter transactions happening on the same day. Perhaps her intention all along was to simplify the ownership then sell the dwelling.

Most of the dwellings in Barrack Street housed multiple tenants. For instance, in 1928, a Mr Kneen paid 3/- per week to rent a room while George Black paid 3/6 for two rooms³⁴. In

³² Isle of Man & General Advertiser Jun2 25, 1898

³³ Emma had died in 1897, leaving no issue so her entitlement must have died with her

³⁴ Manx Star, April 18th, 1928

1921, a single family occupied No 27, a sign that the derelict building had been resuscitated at least briefly as the Swindlehurst family resided there.

Barrack street dwellings were resumed in the late 1920s in order to create a new street to the railway station.



Source: Manx Note Book

An interesting footnote to this property is that in the 1861 census, a Margaret Brew with her three children were recorded at that address³⁵. Her husband, Edward Brew, was not an immediate relation of Margaret, the wife of John (2), and the family soon moved off to England, the widowed Edward eventually going to live in Maine, USA. It seems likely, however, that there was a family connection of some kind.

17 WELLINGTON SQUARE

This property was one of two purchased originally by Robert Barrie in 1840. Elizabeth Corlett als Barrie sold her entitlement to her half sister Mary Ann in 1905 for £75 almost 60 years after her father's death. Mary Ann had already acquired her brother's one fourth share in 1902 which meant that, with Elizabeth's sale, Mary Ann held the premises entirely. A few days later, Mary Ann mortgaged it to Daniel Cannan and paid it off by 1911.

³⁵ William, Margaret and Elizabeth

As with Barrack Street, the Wellington Square dwelling housed several family groups. In 1911, four families were resident in Mary Ann's property; in 1901 there were three, but comprising 16 individuals.

Four years before she died, Mary Ann sold this property for £150. She was over 70 years of age and still managing the family's affairs.

Wellington Square no longer exists. It lies beneath the Chester Street Car Park.

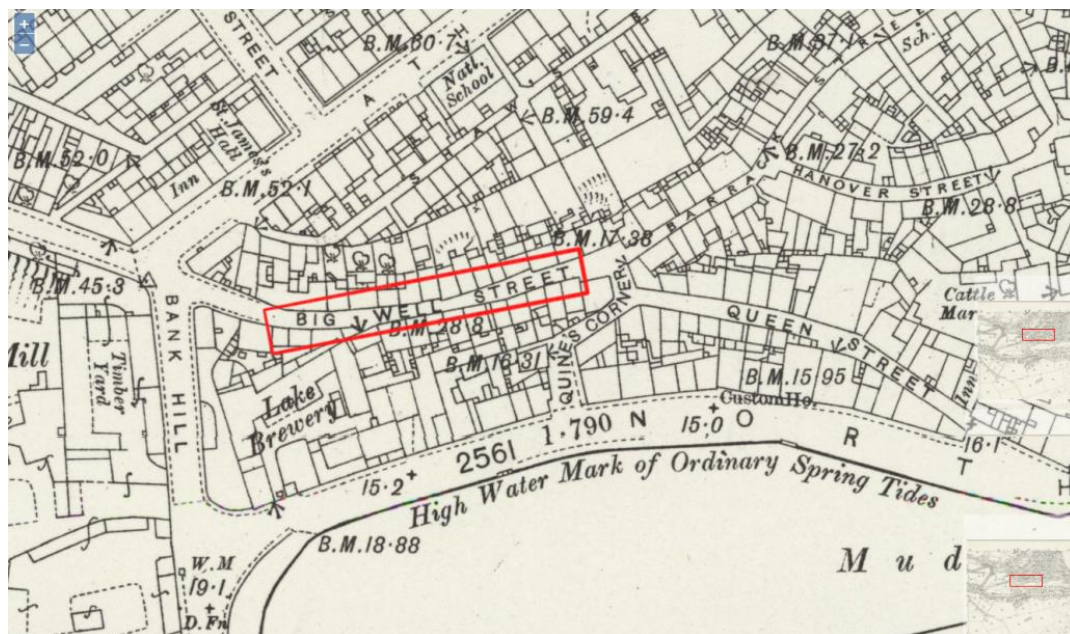
30 BIG WELL ST

This property was the other one purchased by Robert Barrie in 1840. In 1874, John (2) purchased a half share of the **Big Well Street** dwelling from Elizabeth Corlett als Barrie, his step daughter. Combining the half he purchased with his wife's half meant that ownership of 30 Big Well Street was totally under the control of John (2) and his wife. A Chancery Court application in 1902 heard that Mary Ann was the owner of 75% and her brother John (3) held the other 25%³⁶.

The houses in the street were usually divided and rented to three or four families. As in Barrack Street and Wellington Square, large families might have been able to afford two or three rooms if the older children were working, widows might have had to live in one room with their children, all eating and sleeping in a room that only measured a few square yards³⁷. In the case of No 30, in the 1891 census, two families occupied the property.

³⁶ Mary Ann Cowley als Mylrea, Memorial SEPT 1902

³⁷ <http://isleofmanwells.com/big-well-street-douglas-isle-of-man-well-13/>



Source: <http://isleofmanwells.com/big-well-street-douglas-isle-of-man-well-13/>

This and several other dwellings in Big Well Street were resumed by the Douglas Town Commissioners and demolished in 1929 to make way for flats to be built and the street was subsequently renamed Lord Street. Unfortunately, no documentation remains to show when Mary Ann sold the property and how much she was paid for it. The dwelling was not listed in the 1921 census, so the property was either vacant or had already been demolished.



Source: Isle of Man National Heritage Museum & Archives

JCW Cowley ventures

- Mary Ann's husband acquired properties in his own name after they were married, and in the process laid out a considerable sum of well over £1,000 in the space of about three years. Where his funds came from has never been uncovered.
- Perhaps coincidentally, JCW carried out each purchase soon after Mary Ann had received funds from the sales of the Douglas dwellings, although Mary Ann's return on each occasion was no match for the amount expended by Cowley
- 1894 - Cowley purchased a dwelling on **Park Road** in Douglas for £322/-/-³⁸, which in his 1900 will, he left to his wife for life and then it was to pass to his younger son William Mylrea Cowley. The young man died during WW1 and the dwelling became the property of his brother, John Richard Stanley Cowley. It was sold in 1923 for £600.
- 1895 - Cowley purchased a dwelling at 23 **Circular Road** in Douglas for £566/-/- which he and Mary Ann mortgaged then sold, all in the space of seven months and at a negligible profit
- 1896 – Cowley purchased the tenancy of 12 acres of land adjacent to the Mylrea's original **Cronk Urleigh** estate for £650³⁹, and immediately took a mortgage of £250 which Mary Ann paid off in 1913, long after his death⁴⁰. In his will, he left it to his wife for life, then to pass to their oldest son

Consolidation

On two separate occasions, once in 1900 and again in 1902, Mary Ann sold a property, only to repurchase it almost immediately. The first case involved the Barrack Street dwelling, the second is elaborated below.

In 1902, Mary Ann went to the Courts to argue that because the cost of her brother's care and maintenance outstripped his income, his assets should be sold. The Court agreed and those assets were duly advertised.

³⁸ Ref 1895/01/#43 Onchan

³⁹ Ref 1896/03/#3 Michael

⁴⁰ LV April 1901 (3/9d, ¼d rents), April 1903

LOT 5.—AN UNDIVIDED ONE-HALF SHARE

Of a useful Meadow in MICHAEL, adjoining the estate of Ballacarnane, and now occupied by Miss Cowley. It contains $1\frac{3}{4}$ acres and throws a heavy crop of Meadow Hay, and provides abundant pasturage. A valuable adjunct to adjoining estates.

41

LOT 1.—No. 30, BIGWELL STREET.

An undivided one-fourth share of a Dwelling-House and Premises, situate close to the Railway Station, Timber Yards, Factory, Gasworks, and general working centre of Douglas, comprising:—

(a) A convenient small Dwelling-House containing six rooms and yard in the rear, and having a frontage to Bigwell Street of 2 feet.

(b) An open Yard with entrance to Shaw's Brow, to which it has a frontage of 32 feet, eligible as a site for stable or storage purposes, and conveniently situate for that purpose; the area of the yard is 110 square yards, and of the whole property 212 square yards. There is a five stall Stable on the yard. It is in the occupation of Mr John Kneen, at a rental of £16.

42

LOT 4.—AN UNDIVIDED FOURTH SHARE.

Of a Dwelling-House, No. 17, WELLINGTON SQUARE, containing Basement Kitchen and Back Kitchen, two Rooms and Yard on ground floor, and four Bedrooms above. Let to Mr Patterson at £16 10s. per annum. The whole is subject to a ground rent of £1 per annum.

43

In a three-way transaction, the entitlements of John (3) were first advertised and luckily, all purchased by the same individual, Joseph Sharp. The very next day, Mary Ann purchased these three properties from Sharp. The consequence was that Mary Ann now had greater control over the Wellington Square and Big Well Street dwellings, and also over the

⁴¹ Mona's Herald, Wednesday 21st May 1902

⁴² Mona's Herald, Wednesday 21st May 1902

⁴³ Mona's Herald, Wednesday 21st May 1902

meadow in ~~Shaltagh~~ that had been settled on him by his great aunt in 1875. The *Cronk Urleigh* estate now had over 22 acres to its name and Mary Ann's administrative life became a little more straightforward.

By the time Mary Ann died in 1931, *Cronk Urleigh* had been expanded under her leadership. She had acquired the entitlements of both her brother and her half sister over time to become the sole proprietor of the two properties in Douglas that had not, as yet, come under the microscope of the Douglas Town Commissioners. She also managed to sell the Park Road property, originally purchased by JCW Cowley in 1894⁴⁴.



Cronk Urleigh Lodge



Marker for the Lodge

JOHN RICHARD STANLEY COWLEY

He was born in 1892 to Mary Ann Mylrea and John Corkill Watterson Cowley, a year after his parents married. He was always the heir to the *Cronk Urleigh* estate and became the heir at law of his younger brother William Mylrea Cowley who died without issue during WW1.

The records show that JRS Cowley lived at *Cronk Urleigh* and remained a bachelor. In the 1921 census, he was recorded as Stanley Cowley.

After his mother died, Cowley jnr sold off the family's lands. The Douglas houses were no longer in Cowley possession – only the farmland in Michael remained:

- In 1934, he sold what had been the original 8 acres of the family holding in ~~Cammell~~ for £400. His grandfather had paid £350 in 1857

⁴⁴ Cowley & Cowley to Richards Sale JUNE 1923

- That same year, for £22, he sold the small holding in ~~Shaltagh~~, half of which his grandfather had purchased for £50 and the other half of which his uncle (John (3) had been given by Elizabeth Quayle
- In 1837, he sold the 12 acre holding in ~~Cammell~~ that his father had purchased in 1896. He received £800, compared to the earlier £650 price although there was also a small additional cost because there had been a mortgage on the property which took Mary Ann about seven years to clear.

The records are scant as to what JRS Cowley did after he left *Cronk Urleigh* with about £1,500 from the proceeds of its sale:

→ He is almost certainly the individual arriving in Melbourne in 1938 on the *Orcades*. This individual gave Isle of Man contact details as W.H. Chapman Ltd, 63 Athol St in Douglas. The business was Agricultural and Auctioneers, Estate, Insurance & Commission Agents. They also provided a travel agency. This passenger declared that he was intending to make Australia his permanent home

Exact **2** | Similar **1**

☒

Name:	Mr J R S Cowley	Matching Initial
Gender:	Male	Exact
Departure Age:	45	
Birth Date:	1893	Exact
Departure Date:	29 Jan. 1938	
Departure Port:	England	
Ship Name:	Orcades	
Shipping Line:	Orient Line	
Destination Port:	Melbourne, Australia	
Master:	F R O'sullivan	

- He died aged 77 at the Mannin Infirmary in Douglas, which was a nursing home. He suffered from Parkinson's disease
- He was buried in Douglas in May 1970
- His will was interesting on several counts – (1) he could not sign his name with anything other than a X, despite the fact that his father was a schoolteacher, and his mother demonstrated a fluid cursive writing style – so perhaps the consequences of advanced Parkinson's; and (2) he left what little he had (less than £2,000) to a woman named Gladys Ivy Willoughby. Her maiden name was Waterson so she might have been a distant relative of his paternal grandmother, Hester Cowley als Watterson. Hester was one of 19 children so the chances of detecting the connection between Gladys and JRS are remote.

Gladys Ivy was living with her sister Daisy (Boardman) at 10 Derby Square, the address for Gladys in the will of JRS Cowley. She had been a bus conductress⁴⁵ who married Richard Maurice Willoughby and had a daughter in 1950⁴⁶. She is still alive and has no insight into how JRS Cowley and her mother were connected.

⁴⁵ IOM Examiner 23/6/1944

⁴⁶ IOM Examiner 5/3/1950

ATTACHMENT 1

DOCUMENTS USED IN THE RESEARCH INTO THIS MYLREA CLAN IN MICHAEL

(most but not all have been transcribed and are on the website www.mylrea.com.au)

With heartfelt thanks to the Manx National Heritage Archives & Library – and Sarah Christian in particular - and the Department of Enterprise Public Records office for supplying images of these documents

1840	Eleanora Weatherall to Robert Barrie	Sold a house in Douglas [Deed not registered until 1849] Big Well St	Barrie was the husband of Margaret Brew who married John Mylrea (2) after the death of Barrie
1840	John Kelly to Robert Barrie	Sold a house in Douglas [Deed not registered until 1849] Wellington Sq	Barrie was the husband of Margaret Brew who married John Mylrea (2) after the death of Barrie
1843	Chancery Court	Robert Barrie dead	Guardians for daughters Margaret Jane & Elizabeth – Thomas & John Quayle, their mother's brothers/uncles
1857	William Corlett to John Mylrea (2)	Sold 9 acres known as Cronk Urleigh	John Mylrea (2) might have been living on the lands before he purchased them
1863	Jane Cowley to John Mylrea (2)	Mortgage of £100	The debt was repaid within 6 years but the purpose of the mortgage was never clear
1865	Will of John Mylrea (1)	He left £10 to John (2) and £30 to his daughter, Mary	Son in law William Mylrea was his executor
1874	The Corletts to John Mylrea (2)	Sold half of 35 Bigwell Street	The dwelling was inherited by the wife and two daughters of Robert Barrie who died in 1841. Elizabeth Corlett als Barrie was one of his daughters. Her sister had died in 1872 without issue. Best guess is that it was the collective share belonging to both daughters
1875 JAN	James Jelly to John Mylrea (2)	Sold 1/6 th share in 9 James Street	
1875 AUG	Elizabeth Quayle to John Mylrea (3)	Settled about 1 acre of Shelragh quarterland	Elizabeth Quayle was the great aunt of John Mylrea (3). She had inherited the land from her mother Mary Quayle
1877 DEC	Cretney to John Mylrea (2)	Purchased about 1 acre of Shelragh quarterland for £50	Cretney was the husband of Elizabeth Quayle's niece, Ann
1879	John Mylrea (2) to Elizabeth Cleator	A mortgage of £80	Cleator offered lands in Andreas. Mary Ann recalled the debt in 1891, acting as her father's executor, and sold the lands 20 years later

1887 FEB	Will of John Mylrea (2)	Left everything to his daughter, Mary Ann	<i>Cronk Urleigh</i> lands + 4 dwellings in Douglas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 Big Well St • 17 Wellington Sq • 27 Barrack St • 12 James Street
1888	Mary Ann applied to the Courts to be the trustee of her brother John Mylrea (3)	John Mylrea (3) was severely damaged in 1876, and deemed a lunatic or imbecile after that	Decisions about his wellbeing and his assets were subject to Court approval
1890 JAN	Mary Ann loaned John Corlett	£200 Secured against lands in Michael	
1891 SEPT	Mary Ann “purchased” lands in Andreas	From Ann Kerruish <i>Ballakinnag</i>	John Mylrea extended a loan to Elizabeth Cleator in 1879. She died in 1884 but in 1880 had settled the lands on Ann Kerruish. Mary Ann took the lands back, acting as her father’s executor and presumably because the debt was unpaid
1892 JAN	Emma Kneen als Mylrea assigned mortgage	To Nussy Corlett	Emma was the executor of the will of Elizabeth Quayle, and this mortgage had been partially paid off since its contract in 18
1894 AUG	Douglas Town Commissioners resumed 12 James Street (and surrounding dwellings) for a road widening project	Mary Ann’s share was 7/24 OR £84/3/-	John (3) was paid £34/17/6 for his quarter share, which was half of what Elizabeth received but the entitlements seemed unequal anyway
1894 APR		Elizabeth’s was 6/24 OR £69/15/-	
1894 DEC	Lockman to Mary Ann’s husband John Corkill Watterson Cowley	#1 Park Road dwelling £322	Still in his possession when he died; left to son William Mylrea Cowley
1895 MAY	Mary Ann received mortgage money from Corlett (1890)	£200	
1895 MAY	Lockman to Mary Ann’s husband JCW Cowley	#23 Circular Road £566	
1895 JUNE	Mary Ann mortgage with Harris	#23 Circular Road £200	
1896 JAN	Cowleys sell to Cowley	#23 Circular Road £600	
1896 FEB	Chadwick sold to JCW Cowley +	12 acres <i>Cronk Urleigh</i> £650	Purchased in his own right, and left to Mary Ann for life; then to son John Richard Stanley Cowley
1896 MAR	Mary Ann mortgage with Harris	<i>Cronk Urleigh (abve)</i> £250	Paid off in 1913
1899 AUG	Mary Ann sought approval to sell Barrack St		
1900 FEB	Cowley & Corlett sell to JJ White	27 Barrack Street dwelling	Mary Ann = ¼ share Elizabeth = 2 x ¼ share John Mylrea (3) = ¼ share

			This property might have come from Margaret Brew als Barrie.
1900 APR	JJ White sells to Cowleys	27 Barrack St dwelling	
1900 APR	Cowleys sell to Kewley	27 Barrack St dwelling	
1900 JUNE	Will of John Corkill Watterson Cowley	<i>Cronk Urleigh</i> lands Park Road dwelling	
1902 FEB	Mary Ann applied to the Courts to sell the assets of John Mylrea (3)	Sheltagh land settled in 1875 by great aunt ¼ Wellington Square ¼ Big Well St	John also had an account containing £34/17/- from the resumption of James Street, and the proceeds of the sale of Barrack Street
1902 MAY	Mary Ann sold to Joseph Sharp	By authority of the Court, the assets of John Mylrea (3)	Sheltagh land settled in 1875 by great aunt ¼ Wellington Square ¼ Big Well St
1902 AUG	Mary Ann purchased from Joseph Sharp	The assets of John (3) that had been sold	Mary Ann repurchased the assets of John (3) in her own name the next day Mary Ann now had all Mylrea lands + ½ Wellington Square & ½ Bigwell St
1902 SEPT	Mary Ann's agreements are Memorialized		
1902 DEC	Mary Ann agrees to a Bond with the Chancery Court		
1905 JULY	Mary Ann purchased from Elizabeth Corlett	Mortgaged Her half share of Wellington Square for £75	Mary Ann now had 100% ownership of Wellington Square
1905 JULY	Mary Ann from Daniel Cannan	17 Wellington Square	
1911 NOV	Mary Ann sold to John James Corlett & Thomas William Corlett	£67/10/- Andreas lands (Ballakinnag)	These lands were taken by Mary Ann in 1891 in lieu of repayment of a 1879 mortgage given by John Mylrea for which the lands were offered as security
1923 JUNE	Cowleys (mother and son) sold to Ernest Richards	1 Park Road	
1927 MAR	Mary Ann sold to Mary Louisa Christian	17 Wellington Square	
1934 NOV	JRS Cowley sold to Kate Evelyn Timings	the original <i>Cronk Urleigh</i> tenancy (8 acres)	
1935 JAN	JRS Cowley sold to John Quirk Cannell	Sheltagh meadow (2 acres)	Comprising the acre settled on John (3) by his aunt, and purchased by Mary Ann, and the acre purchased by John (2) and left to Mary Ann
1937 JULY	JRS Cowley sold to William Hornby	The second <i>Cronk Urleigh</i> acquisition (12 acres)	

1970	JRS Will	What little he had was left to Gladys Ivy Willoughby.	She might have been a distant relative with a maiden name Waterson
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