

## BUILDINGS AT RISK

# The development of Baillie Scott's free-flowing style

*Peter Kelly of the Isle of Man Victorian Society takes a look at buildings across the island designed by one of the leaders of the Arts and Crafts movement, Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, that aren't currently Registered, despite their worldwide importance.*

**O**f all the architects who have ever practised in the Isle of Man, there is only one name that the general public associate with the island and that is of Baillie Scott.

He is internationally regarded as one of the leaders of the Arts and Crafts movement, although his early house designs were based on historic styles.

Oakleigh, The Red House and Ivydene were of Tudor style, having a mixture of half-timbering and tile-hanging.

'View Park' (later The Majestic Hotel) on the other hand was a mixture of Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture.

It was of course here in the Isle of Man that he had the cradle of his career and his style quickly evolved into the free-flowing Arts and Crafts by way of Holly Bank and Myrtle Bank, Leaffield and Braeside, Falcon Cliff Terrace and then the iconic Village Hall in Onchan.

In 1972 James D Kornwolf published his 588 page book 'M H Baillie Scott and the Arts and Crafts Movement' which illustrated Baillie Scott designed buildings across the world, as well as giving a biography of the great man. It has been regarded ever since as 'The Baillie Scott Bible'.

When Marlene Hendy was appointed building conservation officer with the planning department, she set herself the task of registering every Baillie Scott designed building on the island, given their worldwide importance.

She took Kornwolf's book as her guide and in January 1996 eight buildings were added to the list, Castletown police station had been registered in February 1984, Leaffield and Braeside, along with the village hall in Onchan, were registered in September 1989.

The Majestic Hotel was registered in September 1998 and deregistered a couple of weeks later.

Included in the 1996 batch was the Cemetery Office at Braddan which had come to light quite some time after the publication of Kornwolf's book thanks to the Isle of Man Victorian Society which has since located five other Bail-



Baillie Scott's first house(s) designed and built in the world

lie Scott-designed buildings on the island.

These currently go without the protection of registration and must therefore be regarded as being 'buildings at risk'.

### HIS FIRST HOUSE

Baillie Scott described the first house he designed as 'a terrible affair', but this was years later in an interview with John Betjeman of the 'Architectural Review'.

By the time of the interview, his work had matured and it was only natural that he would have little regard for his first work, but now, like Mr Rolls' first car, it is extremely important.

It was designed when he was still in the employment of Frederick Saunderson and was on the newly laid-out Port St Mary estate.

Brothers Edwin and Henry

## Registered Baillie Scott buildings

### These buildings are registered:

- Cemetery Office, Braddan
- Police Station, Castletown
- Ivydene, Little Switzerland, Douglas
- Myrtle Bank, Little Switzerland, Douglas
- Holly Bank, Little Switzerland, Douglas

- The Red House, Victoria Road, Douglas
- Oakleigh, Glencrutchery Road, Douglas
- (Four houses) Falcon Cliff Terrace, Douglas
- Leaffield, King Edward Road, Onchan
- Braeside, King Edward Road, Onchan
- Village Hall, Royal Avenue, Onchan

Qualtrough purchased three plots on the estate in May 1890 and Scott's plans were laid before Port St Mary Commissioners on February 16, 1891.

They were for a pair of matching semi-detached houses with ground floor walls of local limestone and the first floor half-timbered with roughcast walls.

The roof was on many planes (unlike Scott's later houses) and was covered in Welsh slate.

The two houses, Windy Rig and Perwick Villa, were ready for occupation in December 1892. They go unrecognised for their world importance as his first design.

### NORTH LODGE, CRONKBOURNE, BRADDAN

Cronkbourne House was occupied by William Fine Moore.

The house had a 'makeover' by Ewan Christian, architect of London, in the mid 1850s.

The main entrance drive was by way of the bridge alongside the Port-e-Chee Mill and then past a lodge of 1830s vintage.

R F Douglas did building work and repairs at Cronkbourne and when W F Moore said he wanted a lodge on the north drive Scott was introduced.

He came up with a design of stone walls with bands of Ballanard brick and real half-timbering on the first floor elevations.

The timberwork was in oak, but left in the natural state and carved.

On the bargeboard he had AD1892 carved, which would be the date when the dwelling was being completed.

### GROUDLE HOTEL

In 1892, Scott designed Ivydene at Little Switzerland for R M Broadbent who, the following year, developed Groudle Glen in advance of the electric railway reaching there in September 1893.

Scott designed the hotel for him on a very narrow strip of land and built on a slope.

Again, it was partly built of stone, but the first floor was timber-framed and jettied out beyond the ground floor.

The walls were white-painted render, the roof of red Rosemary tiles, flat-roofed dormers, carved corner cor-



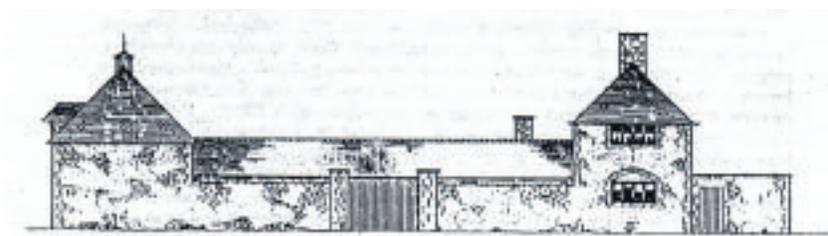
North Lodge, Cronkbourne which lead to Scott's commission to design Braddan Cemetery Office



House for a doctor – the ultra-hygienic house of 1895



Groudie Hotel, designed for R.M. Broadbent in 1893



Scott's original drawing for Bishop's Demesne Farm, Ballaugh

bels, first floor windows suspended from the eaves – all the hallmarks of Baillie Scott. The building was altered in the 1930s and 50s.

**BISHOP'S DEMESNE FARM**

On May 23, 1893, Scott was appointed by the church authorities to design a replacement farm complex in the hills above Bishopscourt.

It comprised a four-horse stable, a double cart shed, barn, 20-stall cowhouse, pigery, root house, boiler house, granary, threshing mill and four-bedroomed house.

Scott's time studying at Cirencester came into play with it being laid out as a model farm.

The contractors were McAdam and Moore of Douglas, but they became bankrupt before it was finished.

The complex still stands,

but alterations have taken place over the years.

**ULTRA-HYGIENIC HOUSE**

Following Scott's death in 1945, his former partner recalled that Scott had produced plans for a doctor who had purchased land 'from the company', which meant via Frederick Saunderson.

The doctor asked Scott to 'lick into shape' plans based on his own ideas of an ultra-hygienic house.

The doctor was 48-year-old William Jotham of Kidderminster and the plot he purchased was on a headland within the Port St Mary Estate overlooking both Gansey and Perwick.

It was unusual for the time (1895) for not only did it lack any external decoration such as dripstones, string courses and cornices, but it was flat-

roofed – a building style before its time.

Dr Jotham named it after the local name for the area, 'Shag Rock'.

Years later, the name was changed to Strathallan Castle and the single storey outlet had a conservatory built on top and a sunroom built on one side.

Now it lies vacant and plans have been approved to demolish this unique Baillie Scott building and replace it with a modern house.

Four months after the departure of the Conservation Officer, we now have a full-time Registered Buildings Officer in place.

We extend our good wishes and look forward to working with him in ensuring Baillie Scott's buildings on the island are there to be appreciated by generations to come.

**Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott**

Each publication on Baillie Scott quotes the same information about his father being of Scottish nobility, of Baillie Scott being destined to manage the family sheep farms in Australia and changing career from agriculture to architecture after attending a performance of Gilbert and Sullivan in London. None of this is true despite being repeated time and time again.

Scott was born on October 23, 1865, at Beard's Hill, St Peter's, near Ramsgate, Kent. He was the second eldest of ten children born to Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott and his wife Martha, nee Waters. His grandfather was a merchant in Edinburgh, but his father followed a different line. He spent a year staying with an aunt in Canada then worked his passage home before sailing to Australia as a crewman.

He sailed in coastal waters of Australia for several years before entering into a partnership renting 26,000 acres running 2,800 head of cattle.

In 1853 he sold out for £12,350, but used £4,500 of this to set up a second partnership in a slightly smaller cattle ranch. He returned to Britain in the early 1860s, leaving a manager in Australia.

He decided to educate his three sons for 'Colonial life' and Baillie Scott was sent to the College of Agriculture in Cirencester with the express intention of managing the cattle ranch in Australia.

Scott graduated in agriculture with honours in drawing and science in December 1885, but he didn't head to Australia. Early in 1884, his father's lease of the land in Australia was due for renewal and he decided to give up the ranch and sell all the stock. There was nothing for Baillie Scott in Australia and so he became

articled to Major Charles Dav-



Baillie Scott shortly after he arrived in the island from a glass negative held by the author

vis, the city architect for Bath.

He served his articles from 1886 to 1889 when three changes took place in his life: he married Florence Kate Nash; he came to the Isle of Man and stayed; and in November their daughter was born. The tale that he was so seasick on the voyage here thus putting him off returning was just part of Scott's sense of humour.

Arriving here, he saw the great opportunities for an architect in a land where the ever-increasing tourist trade resulted in the need for new houses, shops, places of entertainment and the like, all requiring an architect.

He went to work for Frederick Saunderson, a civil engineer, who was involved in the layout of several new estates in Douglas, Ramsey and Port St Mary and subsequently in On-

chan. He also enrolled in part-time classes at the Douglas School of Art. In May 1891, he sat a series of examinations in drawing, shading, perspective drawing and architecture. His good results resulted in him automatically gaining the Art Teacher's Certificate.

From the time of their arrival on the island, Mr and Mrs Baillie Scott resided at 35 Alexander Terrace, Douglas (now 61 Woodbourne Road).

The landlord was R F Douglas, the builder who was subsequently to help Baillie Scott get established once he set up in practice by himself. Baillie Scott left the island during 1901, not for the sake of the children's education as he claimed, but for the simple reason that the crash of Dumbell's Bank in 1900 seriously affected the future of the building trade on the island.