

Stud Series: Foundation Scottish Herds

No. 1

The Grange Galloway Herd

By James Biggar, Chapelton, Castle-Douglas

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The actual origin of the herd, like that of the breed, is somewhat obscure. It was probably founded at Grange by my great-grandfather Thomas Biggar, before he took Chapelton, where the herd had its home for many years.

In the first volume of the Herd Book there appears the entry of "Clara of Dalbeattie", born in April, 1862, and bred by Thomas Biggar. She won first prize at the Highland 1869 and the Highland Society's Gold Medal at the Shows of 1870 and '71. The same volume records the entry of "Lalla Rookh", born in May 1869. This heifer, bred and shown by Thomas Biggar, won first prize at Dumfries Highland in 1870. In 1871, she was first at Perth Highland and also at Dalbeattie. The following year she won first prize in the Open Class for Polled heifers of any breed at Smithfield.



There are several other entries of Bulls and Heifers in the first volume, and Galloways bred at either Grange or Chapelton have appeared in every subsequent volume. From the early days, representatives from the herd were shown from time to time at both local and national shows where they appear to have won a fair share of prizes.

One of the most successful was "Crusader". He was by "Black Prince" out of a granddaughter of "Clara of Dalbeattie". He was withdrawn after winning fourth prize at Castle-Douglas Bull Show in 1884. Later the same year he carried off the Male Championship at the Centennial Show of the Highland Society at Edinburgh., being one of the few yearling bulls ever to win this honour. The following year he again won his class at Aberdeen Highland. One of his sons, "Crusader King", was also used in the herd and was winning at Shows in 1888 and 1889.

Soon afterwards another bull was bred in the herd. This was "Campfollower" by "Chinaman", who was a full brother to "Maggie of Tarbreoch", the Gold Medal Winner at the Jubilee Royal Show at Windsor in 1889. "Campfollower" was out of a cow of the Caprice family and he seems to have bred exceptionally well for Mr Cunningham of Tarbreoch where he sired the dam of the foundation cow of our "Lizzie" family and a bull called "Pathfinder 3rd". This bull was used in Mr Graham's herd at Castle Milk, and it was from the latter herd that my grandfather bought "Lady Soney 3rd of Castle Milk" in calf to him. This turned out to be a lucky purchase, for the calf she was carrying was

“Excelsior”, and the following year she produced “Free Lance”. Through these two bulls this cow has an important influence, not only on the herd, but on the whole breed. “Excelsior” was undoubtedly the greatest breeding sire that had been used in the herd up to that time. He won first prize at the Highland Show on three occasions and was the sire of Mr Gourlay’s famous bull “Keystone”.



The first animal entered in the Galloway Herd Book from the Grange Herd (Vol. 1)

“Free Lance” was sold to Cally and from that herd my father bought “Maggie 12th” with a promising bull calf at foot by him. This calf was “Hallmark”, and I can remember Hugh Fraser telling the company at a Bull Sale “Cup Filling” that he was the best bull stirk (Ed. between one and two years old) he could remember at Castle-Douglas, where he won first prize and was sold to Colonel Kennedy for the Blawquhairn Herd for 57gns. He was followed in that herd by “Lear” (used jointly by Barlae and Blawquhaim) whose sire “Javelin” was by “Excelsior” (all three having been bred at Chapelton). Many experienced breeders considered that “Hallmark” and “Lear” were the best combination of bulls ever used in a Galloway herd and the females in the Blawquhain herd, subsequent to their use, were said to be quite outstanding. Amongst them was a cow called “Goneril”. She was by “Lear” out of a cow by “Hallmarek”, and came to Grange when I was quite a small boy. She was the foundation cow of our “Charity” family and I can remember her quite well. She was the first cow in the herd that I learned to recognize – and this because she had a particular dislike for small boys when she had a calf at foot. Father managed to get “Goneril” from Colonel Kennedy because she was yeld (Ed. Barren) and, along with some others, was destined for the butcher. Apparently, the bull and not the cows had been at fault as she bred regularly for a few years after coming to Grange.

It is interesting to follow how this cow was mated with a view to concentrating the blood of “Hallmark” and “Lear” to create the “Charity” family which has done so well for us in the last thirty years.

One of “Hallmark’s” best sons had been bought back from Colonel Kennedy. This was “Sweepstakes” and he left his mark in the herd as a great breeder of females. He was born in 1907 and one of his daughters was at Grange and still breeding in 1929. Another of them “Lizzie 5th” was mated to “Kenneth of Killearn” and produced “Ambassador”, considered by my father to be the best bull he ever bred. He was shown at Castle-Douglas in February 1921, where he won the Championship and was withdrawn for use in the herd. Unfortunately, he died of pneumonia at three years old, but not before he had left a grand lot of heifers, one of which was “Grange Charity 2nd” out of “Goneril” and it is from her that all the present-day “Charities” are descended. She was also the dam of bulls which won three first prizes at Highland Society Shows.

To bring in another infusion of the blood which was doing so well, my father bought "Barmark Eclipse" by "Mormon of Dalwyn", who was a grandson of "Hallmark". The dam of "Eclipse" was a daughter of "Goneril" so that the blood of "Hallmark" and "Lear" flowed strong in his veins. He was mated with "Charity 2nd" and produced "Keynote", a prize winner at the Highland, who was used in the herd and bred very well. "Eclipse" won the Highland at Kelso in 1926 and his son "Hussar" (out of "Lizzie 4th") won at Allon in 1928. "Hussar" was mated to "Charity 2nd" by whom she had "Joker" which won the Highland for Chapel of Logan. "Charity 2nd" was then put to "Hussar's" son "Kingfisher" and had another bull calf "Marquis" which won the Highland both as a yearling and a two-year-old. The old cow was not finished yet and one of her last calves was "Talisman", the top priced bull of his year in Castle-Douglas, and successfully used in the Falbae herd.



The late Walter Biggar of Grange, a former Vice-president of the Society and father of the present owner of the Grange Herd.

The "Charities" now comprise more than half the herd and have, of recent years, produced some of our best cattle, including the 1957 Highland and Royal Champion "Grange Charity 56th".



Grange Goldfinder" (25675) – Reserve Champion Castle-Douglas, 1952, and sold to His Grace the Duke of Norfolk E.M., K.G., G.C.V.O. for 1,050 gns. Sire, "Grange Dividend" out of a "Lizzie" cow; Dam, "Grange Charity 38th

The oldest family at present in the herd are the "Lizzies". They are descended from a heifer out of a "Campfollower" cow bought at a Tarbreoch sale about 1900 and traced to the same foundation as the "Lady Stanley" family which, up to that time, had been one of the best breeding families at Chapelton. For many years the "Lizzies" were the mainstay of the herd and formed a large proportion of a Draft Sale held in 1922, from which Mr Kennedy-Moffat purchased the foundation cow of

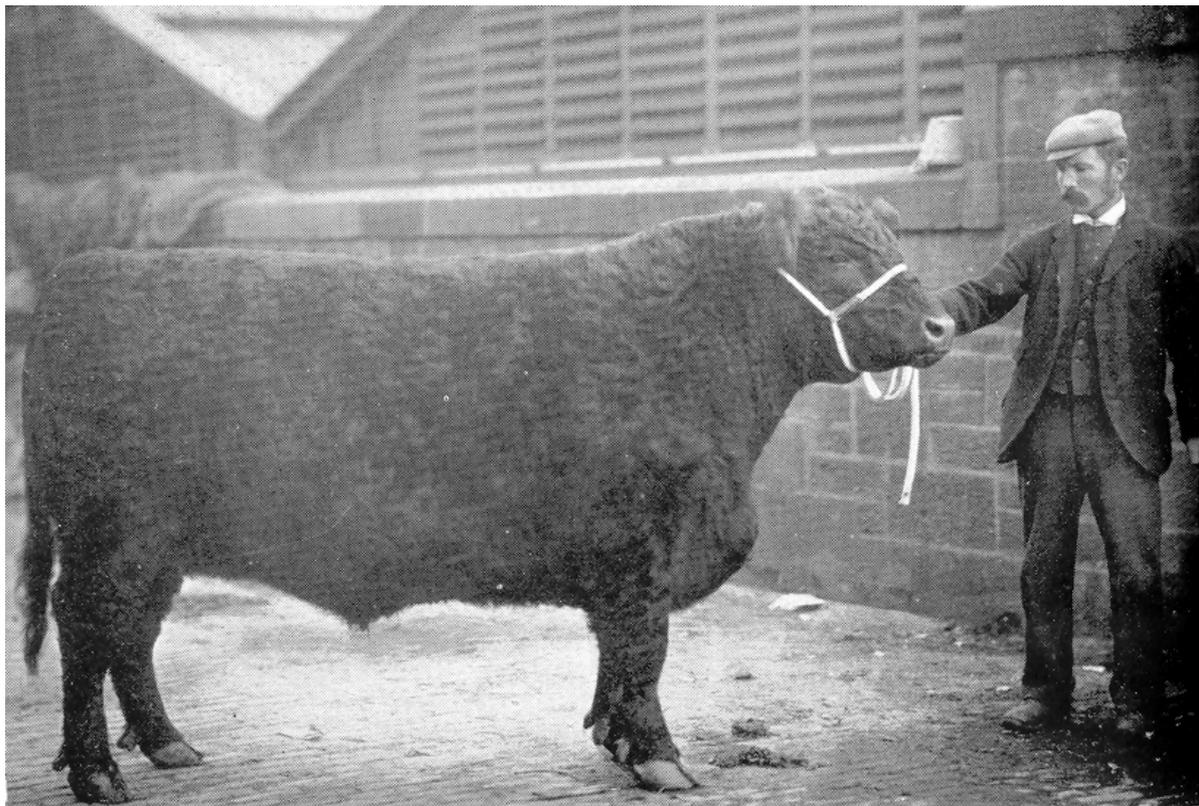
his famous “Lorna of Lochurr” family. The “Lizzies” of Logan and Whitehill also came from this sale. It took a long time to build up the family from only two which were left in the herd after that event and again after the herd had been drastically reduced at the beginning of the last War when we had an outbreak of abortion and nearly lost the family altogether. I am glad to say that the herd has been free of this malady now for twenty years and the family are building up again and produced the reserve champion at Dundee Highland on 1957.

The “Lizzie” family have produced many famous stock bulls, including “Sapphire”, used at Tarbreoch, “Jester”, which bred so well at Millholm and “Ambassador” and “Dividend”, both used in our own herd, the latter finishing his days at Lochmore.

The herd won the Championship at Castle-Douglas Bull Show in 1919-20 and 1921 with “Young Rascal”, “Ambassador” and “Beau Brocade”, the last two being from the “Lizzie” family. “Hero” (a “Charity”) won in 1953 and we have been reserve on numerous occasions including 1960. “Young Rascal” made 210gns, which was a breed record for some time. We held the record again for a short time when “Commander” made 580 gns in 1948. We have since sold bulls at 1,050 and 1,600 gns, and I can also remember a year when our average was under 20 gns.

Of recent years we have used bulls bred at Gateside, Barlae, Plascow, Knocknarling and Craigmuaie. We have some good cows by all of the first three and it appears that a bunch of particularly good heifers are going into the herd by “Benbrack of Knocknarling” and “Giles of Craigmuaie” is leaving his mark. The real good or ill that they do will be more apparent in ten years time.

No less than six Breed Cups have been won at Smithfield and “Meg Merilee” missed the Supreme Honour by one place. The Steer “Substance” weighed 18 ½ cwts (Ed. 990kgs) at two years and ten months and he was Breed Champion at London, his carcass weighing 1,272 lbs (Ed. 577kgs).



Galloway Steer “Substance” with herdsman Jimmy Murray. Breed Champion – Smithfield 1899; Breed Champion – Scottish National 1899; Reserve for Steer Championship – Scottish National 1899. 18 /14 cwts (Ed. About 930kgs) at 2 years 10 months

A lot of these cattle were fed by that veteran Jimmy Murray. Jimmy had left Grange for a farm of his own when I first remember him. He was followed by Alec Charteris who, although he had lost both his hands in an accident as a boy, would go off to Smithfield with cattle by himself. There, on one occasion, he was presented to King Edward VII. These men, like their contemporaries to-day, were staunch and loyal and dedicated to the breed. The herd has indeed been fortunate in those who have attended it.

As this article is meant to be historic, events of recent years can wait till they can be seen in true perspective. Sufficient to say that I am proud to hold in trust a herd which has been handed down for four generations.