

The Foster-Forbes Family Connections compiled by Jean Douglas-Wood March 2014

Whilst looking at Sir James William Guy Mackenzie's (Bt. b. 6th Oct. 1946, known as "Guy") family tree I have always been curious about his maternal grandmother's extraordinary name Anna Orrok Stronach Sheila Foster Forbes. From a genealogist's point of view names like this are good news as they provide plenty of leads when tracking down the details of the family tree. This name an ideal example.

I have not been able to discover the place or date of birth of Sheila Foster Forbes on any of the standard BMD indexes which makes me wonder whether she may have been born in India since her family's military connections to that country are quite strong.

According to *the Peerage.com* Sheila was the daughter of **Lt. Col. John Foster Forbes of Rothiemay** and she died 12th March 1949. Her first husband was Captain James William Guy Innes on 28th Aug 1906. The children from this marriage were:

1. [Sir Ronald Gordon Berowald Innes of Balvenie 16th Bart. b. 24th Jul 1907 . d. 26th May 1988](#)
2. **Lt. Col. William Alexander Disney Innes b. 19th Apr 1910**
3. [Elizabeth Katherine Mary Innes \(Guy's mother\) b. 22nd Aug 1918 d. 23rd Mar 2002](#)
4. **Commander Thomas Guy Innes b. 27th Jun 1922 d. 21st Mar 1958**

Sheila married secondly George Gordon 2nd Marquess of Aberdeen and Tamair on 21st Dec 1940 with no issue from this marriage.

"Rothiemay or "Rath-may" means the fortress in the meadow, the name suggesting a defensive site - at least from Norman times. No record of these early fortifications exists except for a first mention of Rothiemay in history from 1264, during the reign of Alexander III, when the lands were taken over by the crown.

Part of the castle remembered today, probably dated from the 15th century. This oldest part was L-shaped with walls up to 2.4m. thick, stone vaulted at first floor level, accommodating a baronial "Solar" and "Great Hall" over kitchen and servants rooms. Extensive rebuilding work in the Scottish classical style was carried out in 1788 by the 2nd Earl of Fife to make a modern mansion house, and in 1901 Col. Forbes added the tall porch tower in the Scottish baronial style. The castle was completely demolished in 1964.'



"Rothiemay Castle was once the home of the Gordon's of Rothiemay. At the turn of the 1900's the Castle was owned by the Forbes Family until they sold it to a Dutchman in the 1950s. The castle was soon ran into disrepair during the time of his ownership and in 1961 Mrs Traquare (the former Daughter of Forbes) purchased it Back. On the advice of her surveyor the Castle was demolished by dynamite in 1963, but sometime later Mrs Traquare found that the survey showed inaccuracies and the Castle should not have been demolished. A house built by Mrs Traquare now stands on the site and incorporates some of the features salvaged from the Castles destruction, as does the Village Hall, with some figureheads, built into the wall and the Church of Scotland Building with a doorway and Arch in the south wall."

"An armorial panel at Rothiemay was built into the archway of the west lodge, gatehouse to the castle, after the purchase by Lt Col John Foster Forbes in 1890. His arms are 'impaled ' by those of Mary Livesey Wardle whom he married in 1873." <http://www.rothi.co.uk/>

Lt Col John Foster Forbes was born in 1835, according to The Times Obituary extract below, and died in 1914. One source on the Forbe's clan as whole mentions that *'his ghost has been seen a number of times'*. Whether this refers to the castle before it was demolished it doesn't say. More ghosts for Guy's family! (recall the Green Lady of Tulloch?!)

(The Times Obituaries 1914.... typos and all as it has copied badly from the original newspaper I suspect. Some I have corrected, others are beyond me):

"COLONEL JOHN FOSTER FORBES. The death occurred on Tuesday of Lieutenant Colonel John Foster Forbes Of Rothiemay at his residence Rothiemay Castle, Banffshire. Born in 1835 Colonel Forbes was the son of Colonel John Forbes of the Bombay Army and grandson of the late Mr. Forbes of (Illeg) Kincardinshire and married in 1871 Mary Livesey (Wardle) only daughter of Mr. Thomas Wardle of The Beach, Cheshire. He was educated at the Military Academy, Edinburgh and formerly commanded the 36th Indian Cavalry, Jacobs Horse (??) He was a magistrate and deputy lieutenant for the County of Banff. Serving through the Indian Mutiny Lt. Colonel Forbes was twice wounded and twice mentioned in dispatches. The in in India in his recommendation wrote Lieutenant Forbes. for assisting in bringing in a r of the 86th Regiment from under the wall of the Jhansi on the 3rd April. ISM (Imperial Service Medal) for great gallantry at the storming of Chan iari on the 11th March 1858 when he was one of the first to enter the breach. He likewise behaved with great gallantry in the vILe of urraria (???) on the 23rd November 1857 on winch occasion he was severely wounded by sword cuts on both arms notwithstanding this he, in spite of remonstrance, accompanied the regiment in it's attack on the village on the following day. Colonel Forbes leaves a widow, two daughters and four sons two of whom are serving in the Navy and two in the Army. His eldest son Major Ian Forbes of the Royal Scots Fusiliers is now lying in hospital In the country suffering from the effects of a wound received in action."

The following may make the above clearer:

Extract from the Edinburgh Academy Register.

*FORBES, John Foster, 1847-9. Cl. 1, 2.
b. 11 Dec. 1835 ; s. of Col. John Forbes, Bom. Army, Wemyss Place, Of Rothiemay and Balloch ; J.P. and D.L. Banffshire ; Lt.-Col. Bom. S.C. ; Ensign, 1854; Lt. 1857; Capt. 1866 ; Maj. 1874; Hon. Lt.-Col. (ret.), 1878; was present at suppression of the Mutiny at Aurungabad in June 1857 and subsequent relief of Mhow ; at siege and capture of fort of Dhar ; in actions in front of Mundesore; battle and subsequent capture of Gurraria (wounded) ; at siege and storm of fortresses of Chandaree (wounded) and Jhansi , battle of the Betwa; action at Koonah; different actions on banks of Jumna, from 15 to 23 May 1858, ending in capture of Calpee ; action of Morar, actions at or near Kotah-ke-Serai, and capture of Gwalior; served in operations against Maun Sing in the Padrone jungles (medal with clasp); recommended for V. C. ; Brig. Maj. Scinde F.F. 1860-9; Ass. Polit. Supt. U. Scinde frontier, 1870-1 ; late comdg. 36th Cav. I.A. (Jacob's Horse), 1870-8, m. 1873 Mary Livesey, dau. Of the late Thomas Wardle of the Beach, Cheshire. Address Rothiemay Castle, Banffshire.*

So now we have a great-grandmother for Guy in the form of Mary Livesey Wardle. Sheila's mother. Her parents, Sir Thomas Wardle and his wife Elizabeth, were silk dyers of some note from Cheshire.



Guy's Great-Great Grandparents Sir Thomas and Lady Elizabeth Wardle.



For a very interesting and informative history of the above please click on this link:

<http://www.wardleheritage.org.uk/>

According to the Times Obituary above, Sheila Forbes had one sister and 4 brothers. I have no BMD evidence for the names below, but I am fairly certain that these are her siblings mainly due to the use of the middle name Stronach (more on that later.)

1. Sister name unknown.
2. Alistair Stronach Foster Forbes b. 30th Aug 1874 d. 7th Feb 1877 (age 3)
3. Lt.Col. Ian Rose Innes Foster Forbes DSO. JP DL b.1875 Rothiemay who married Lady Helen Emily Craven (see below)
4. William Stronach Foster Forbes b. July 1879 d. 1949. married Helen Margaret Daisy Strutt 22nd April 1911 in Belper, Derbyshire..



Lady Helen
Emily
Forbes
(nee
Craven)
22nd Jun
1920.
Guy's aunt
by
marriage.
(National
Portrait
Gallery)

The photograph on the right is from the webpage below, which is worth a read:

http://www.mybrightonandhove.org.uk/page_id_7448.aspx

Helpfully, the names of the sitters are included:

Family Group Rothiemay 1922.

Top left to right: Capt R. D Forbes R.N. Comdr William Forbes OBE (1919 for valuable services)

Lt Col. Ian Forbes ??? JP DL

Lady Aberdeen

J Foster Forbes (the Brighton eccentric)

Col Ronald Forbes DNO husband of [Rosita Forbes](#), follow this link <http://www.axiospress.com/bookstore/from-the-sahara-to-samarkand/>

Mrs S Cherry(??)



FAMILY GROUP ROTHIE MAY 1922
Capt R. D. Forbes R.N. Comdr Wm Forbes OBE Lt Col Ian Forbes JP DL
Lady Aberdeen J Foster Forbes Col Ronald Forbes DNO Mrs S Cherry

The following is an obituary to the son of Commander William Stronach Foster Forbes, Guy's great uncle and probable brother to Sheila. What is interesting about it is that it highlights that the Forbes of Rothiemay were descended from the Forbes of Newe. I cannot prove this and I am suspicious of it frankly.

Lieutenant-Colonel William Forbes of Rothiemay, DSO. dies aged 96 (link)

Lieutenant-Colonel William John Herbert Forbes of Rothiemay, DSO (1945), 3rd of Rothiemay, of Dunira, by Comrie, Perthshire, late the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, Representor of the House of Forbes of Rothiemay, died at Amesbury Abbey, 26 April, 2009, aged 96. He was b 25 Sept, 1912, son of Cdr William Stronach Forbes, OBE, RN (d 1949), by his wife Helen, scion of the LG family of Strutt of Belper, dau of George Herbert Strutt.

He was a descendant of John Forbes, of Newe (and he was descended from Sir Wm Forbes, of Kynaldy and Pitsligo 1419-46, whose brother Sir Alexander Forbes was cr 1st Lord Forbes - a peerage now extinct).

He married 9 Jul 1941, Diana Burrell de Ker Knox, only child of William Barr Knox, of Ryefield House, Daldry, Ayrshire, by whom he had issue:- (1) Iain William Stronach Forbes, b 1 May, 1942, deceased before 1989 (2) Maj. Anthony David Knox Forbes, Yr of Rothiemay, b 20 March, 1944, d. 9 Sept 2003; married Ryden_, and left issue, a son Iain and a dau, Anneli (3) David Lachlan Forbes, b 20 Oct, 1950 (1) Flavia Margaret Forbes, b 17 Jul 1954

Sheila's paternal grandparents were **Col. John Forbes of the Bombay Army and Eliza Orrok the youngest daughter of John Orrok Esq. Captain in His Majesty's 33rd Regiment of Foot** (Duke of Wellington's own). The couple were married on the 8th June, Marylebone Church in 1825.

I cannot trace the parents of Col John Forbes but from here it is interesting to follow Guy's family connections via his 3x great grandmother **Eliza Orrok born in India in 1807 (died in 1891), third daughter to Captain John Orrok b.c.1779 Banffshire d. 1838 and Elizabeth (Betsy) Reid (his cousin) b. 1782 d. 1810.**

Below is the Wikipedia article regarding John Orrok, Guy's 3x great grandfather. (Taken from here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Orrok)

John Orrok (c1 779 - 1838) was a junior British army officer in the late 18th century and early 19th century. The letters he wrote home to Scotland between 1801 and 1816 from England, India and Belgium have been published and provide a detailed picture of his life and preoccupations and the society in which he moved.

Born into Scottish gentry, John Orrok obtained a commission into the British army while in his early or mid-teens and served in India and Ceylon in the 1790s. On returning to Britain he married his cousin, Betsy Reid, in 1800 and in 1803 they left their baby daughter with Betsy's parents and both sailed to India. John joined first the 65th and then the 33rd Regiment which was led at the time by Arthur Wellesley, later the Duke of Wellington. Although John Orrok reached the rank of Captain, he saw very little military action. The couple had three children while in India and after Betsy's death in 1810 John brought them back to England, where he first served as a recruiting officer but then left the army and worked as a bookseller in London. His last known letters came from Brussels in 1816 and less is known of his later life. He moved to Jamaica around 1836 with a second wife, Eliza, and six young children and was employed as the manager of the Jamaica Steam Navigation Company. He and Eliza both died in Jamaica in February 1838.

John Orrok's letters show him to have been a devoted family man, and in addition to insights into his military life, there are detailed descriptions of the family's domestic and financial concerns. The published letters include three from John's father William Orrok who was a Lieutenant-Colonel with the East India Company army and led a section of Wellington's army at the battle of Assaye in September 1803; unfortunately he had failed to follow instructions and his forces sustained very heavy losses. In India John and Betsy Orrok were very friendly with their cousin, Mrs Freese, the wife of an EIC artillery officer who is believed

to have been the mistress of Wellington while he was in the area.

John's letters were saved by his eldest daughter, Anna, and found in her attic in [Banff](#) after her death in 1888.

Below is the preamble to the book "*The Letters of Captain John Orrok*" edited by Alison McBrayne and available on Amazon. You can also read a portion of it, and see pictures of John and his wife Betsy, if you type in a search to Google books where you can read it online.

I thoroughly recommend getting hold of a copy of the book as it contains the family trees of the Orroks and Reids as well so I shall not repeat that information here.

"Captain John Orrok's frank and engaging letters give a graphic account of the life of a young Scottish army officer serving with Wellington's army in India in the early nineteenth century. They tell of the ups and downs of his developing career in the 33rd Regiment, his deep love for his wife Betsy and their growing family, and his yearning for the fireside back home in Banff.

The Letters of Captain John Orrok follows John to Hyderabad and Seringapatam, as the army keeps a watchful eye on the Maratha insurgents, as well as introducing John's many notable connections - his father William, a senior officer in the East India Company army, who played a brave but inglorious part in Wellington's great victory at Assaye; his cousin-in-law Arthur Gore, whose distinguished military career is celebrated by a memorial in St. Paul's Cathedral; and another cousin, Isabella Freese, romantically linked with Wellington himself. (she had a son by him, also named Arthur Wellesley, and he was sent to England and brought up in the Wellesley household. What Mrs Wellesley thought of this one can only guess!)

Betsy dies in childbirth and John returns desolate to London to build a new life and bring up his young children. After a spell as a recruiting officer, he settles in Baker Street, becomes a bookseller and enters Regency society, before his final letters, which show him looking for a less expensive life in Brussels on the eve of Waterloo.

Discovered in an attic long after his death, the letters open a window on the world in which John lived, revealing his innermost thoughts on everything from great historical events to the price of acorns. Alison McBrayne's illuminating introduction sets John and his letters in their social and military context, and follows his later life through a long affair to remarriage, and his eventual death in Jamaica."

Returning to Sheila Forbes' name, I believe that she was named Anna Orrok Stronach after her great-aunt Anna, the eldest sister of her grandmother, Eliza Forbes (nee Orrok). Anna was born in 1802 in Banffshire and died in 1888. She was brought up in the Reid household at Colleonard, Banffshire, while John Orrok and her mother Betsy (Reid) travelled to India

Anna married Lt William Stronach of the Royal Engineers at Colleonard and it is my guess that the name Stronach was thereafter incorporated into the family (eg Sheila's brother William Stronach Foster Forbes) because he was well thought of in the family. The name was important and had significance to the family.

Where Sheila and Foster came from I have not been able to ascertain.

Below is a rather fascinating account of Guy's 3x great grandmother Betsy Reid. The author, James Imlach, is one of her many cousins.

An extract from the History of Banff and Familiar Account of its Inhabitants and Belongings by James Imlach 1868

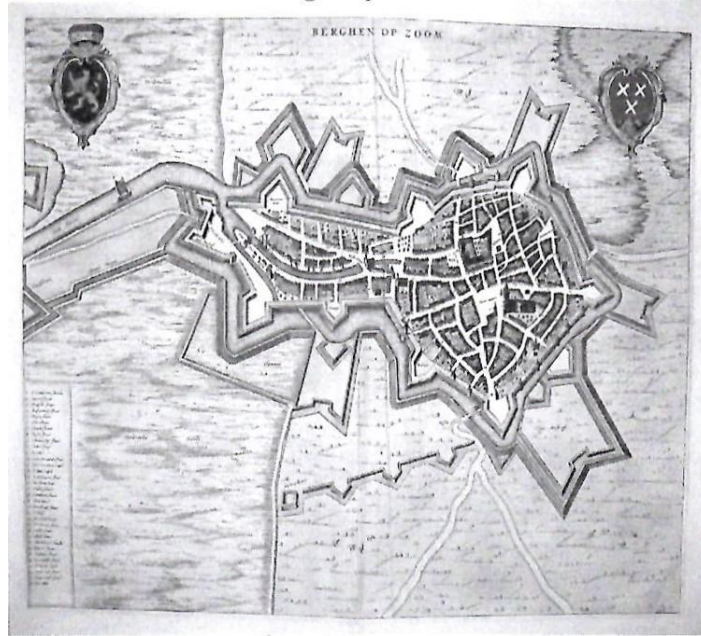
'THE REIDS OF BACHLAW AND COLLEONARD.

This stone was erected by Thomas Reid, Bachlaw, in memory of his wife, Jean Grant, who departed this life 20th January 1782, aged 52 years; and of their daughter, Dorothea Reid, who departed this life July 5, 1794, aged 31. here, also, are interred the remains of William Reid of Bachlaw (Guy's 3x great grandfather through Betsy Reid, wife of Captain John Orrok and who was also John's uncle through marriage to his aunt Anne), only son of the above-named Thomas Reid, who died at Colleonard the 30th march 1842, aged 84. Also, of Anne Orrok, (sister of Colonel William Orrok, John's father, who served under General Arthur Wellesley, later to become Duke of Wellington, at Assaye during the Mharatta uprisings), his spouse, who died at Colleonard the 15th February 1828, aged 64.

[Mr William Reid had a large family of sons and daughters (see The letters of Captain John Orrok edited by Alison McBrayne) all educated in Banff. William, (born 1786 died 1817) the eldest, (son) obtained a cadetship, and rose in the East India Company's service to the rank of Captain, and was a distinguished soldier in the Bengal Army in the beginning of this century (1800's), when there was hot work and hard fighting going. His character was that of a brave officer, and no sparer of his own person when duty called; on such an occasion, overcome by wounds and fatigue, he fell a martyr to his country's glory.

[Thomas, (born 1791, died circa 1881) the second son, at an early age, (15!) got an Ensigncy (with his brother in law John's help and also the help of John's father William Orrok according to his letters of the time) in the Duke of Wellington's Regiment, the 33rd, at the time commanded by his uncle Colonel Orrok, and employed in India. Our young soldier joined the corps while in the field, under Lord Lake, and was engaged in many a hard contested fight, including the Battle of Assaye. In 1809, the Regiment was ordered to join the army sailing from the shores of India for the reduction of the valuable islands of France and Bourbon, and he had a full share of the hard fight in taking these strongholds. The Regiment was ordered home to recruit, and very soon went on foreign service. Previous to the Battle of Waterloo, the 33d made part of a force sent against one of the strongest fortifications in Holland, Bergen-op-Zoom, where they succeeded in crossing the outer ditch, scaling the rampart, and entering the fort; but not being properly supported, and the place defended by overpowering numbers, they were obliged to retrace their steps, and fearful was the struggle in getting pell-mell across the broad and deep ditch, which proved the grave of many brave fellows. (see map below) Reid, being an expert swimmer, escaped, and lived to participate in the glorious fight of Waterloo; had the good fortune to see the real commander of the 33d (the Duke's own) protected within its serried squares, when the French Cuirassiers essayed their deadly charges against our infantry. At the close of battle of the 18th, after a hard fought day, Reid was hit by a ball in the leg, and obliged to be carried to the rear for surgical assistance. He, however, lived to fight another day, came home on leave of absence, and found the use of his wounded leg. The Regiment was afterwards ordered to Jamaica, where, alas! its ranks were cruelly and ingloriously thinned by the merciless yellow fever, and he just escaped with his life. He had attained the rank of Major, and was on the eve of promotion to Lieut.- Colonel, when his health gave way and obliged him to quit the service. He was the last man of the Regiment, of those who had been his comrades when he joined; the rest were all under the sod.

Bergen Op Zoom



[James, the third son, (born 1794- died 1891) , an officer in the 78th Highlanders, had a full share of service about the close of the long war, (??) and on the return of the regiment from America it was sent to Flanders in the Army of Reserve, and was hastening to join the main force at Brussels when accounts reached them of the success at Waterloo, when they were sent a different route to assist the victorious army. After the war, Lieut. Reid retired on half-pay, and turned his sword into a ploughshare. Marrying an amiable lady (Mary Anderson), and finding his family increasing, he emigrated to Canada, and purchased the property of Laggan, twenty miles from Montreal, already in cultivation, and has continued to flourish in that locality, in additions to his clan, and in worldly prosperity. He is at present Colonel- Commandant of one of the splendid Regiments of Militia at Montreal, recently raised for the defence of their country against these American raiders.

[The other two brothers. John and Wemyss Skardon Reid, went to South America as commercial men. Wemyss, in carrying one of his own ships with a cargo to the Island of Otaheite, had been shipwrecked, or the vessel foundered, as he was never heard of again. John remained to push his way in the country about Valparaiso.]'

A rather interesting branch of Guy's family I think. Having read Captain John Orrok's letters myself, I have gained a first hand insight into what life was like for someone employed in the Army of the early 19th century and have been enlightened about many issues to do with the running of The Empire, The East India Company and some of the frankly 'dodgy dealings' associated with both. For example, I was reading last night that huge numbers of officers, in various garrisons all over India, were earning extra money by essentially running a form of protection racket involving the local tradesmen. They were also at one time obtaining a sizeable financial allowance for the transport of tents (on the backs of oxen), but were regularly pocketing the allowance, apportioned by His Maj's Govt, when they had no need to pay for transporting of tents to go on manoeuvres in the field. In fact, it was reported by one contemporary 'whistle blower' that some garrisons were deliberately not going on manoeuvres in order to pocket the allowance. According to John, the 'whistle blower' was not a popular chap after that!

Regards to Mackenzies all. Jean