

ALEXANDER SILVER OF NETHERLEY .

Was born around 1709 /10 on the small croft of Balnagubs in the parish of Fetteresso

Kincardineshire , to John Silver 1685 – 1721 and Agnes ?? 1686 -1721 ??..”check cause of death both 1721 “

As a young man Alexander followed in the footsteps of many young Scots men who travelled to the Caribbean Islands in the hope of making their fortune..

During his stay he married Rebecca Parsons on the 14th of February 1740 in St Michael”s Church Barbados . I cannot as yet find any issue from this marriage , nor confirmation as to when Mrs Silver passed away. Alexander worked with the East India Company as a Tea trader and over a period of time had acquired an independent fortune . He returned on his own to Scotland in the year 1751 ..

Around the time that Balnagubs and the 1300 acre Estate of Netherley was up for sale . Accordingly in 1752 he purchased Balnagubs “ the place of his birth “ and Netherley Estate .

Returning from a warm climate , and one of the most fertile soils in the world , we can only assume that the attraction of returning to his birth place , created a desire to improve the poor standards of farming in Kincardineshire , would have been seen by Alexander , as a formidable challenge .

We should remember that during the 18th Century farming in this area was extremely hard , the country side strewn with boulders , no proper drainage ,infertile soil etc etc .

Mr. Silver became a member of the Gordon's Mill farming club (1758 -- 1764) who introduced new methods of soil cultivation, grain production , cattle breeding , and tree planting , and innovated a process of tending and maintaining the land which included , removing the large stones , and using them for building Dykes , trenching , draining , lime application ,dividing and enclosing the fields .Over a period of 25 years Mr Silver brought 150 acres of his land into cultivation .

Bearing in mind the low fertility of the Land , Improvers spent much time considering ways of increasing the fertility of the land .. Turfs and peat were burnt in order to increase the supply of Ash which would be spread on the arable land , (Bruntland Road)

A Mr John Auldjo , who joined the club in 1761 had spent several years previously improving his land

Portlethen and Ferryhill Aberdeen . He was the owner of a brick works and used the burnt clay with the bodies of Dog fish and moss to make manure. This was mixed together and when well rotted it was applied to the land . “ at that time he may not have been aware of the high level of protein , minerals in the fish “ More later about Mr . Auldjo as Baron of Portlethen ..

Another member Mr Middleton of Kings College was keenly interested in the Tullian system of husbandry , and hoped by its adoption to bring some of his poor land into condition for growing wheat

Throughout this time Alexander built Netherley House and on the 22nd of October 1768 at Dyce church he married Anna Burnet and between 1770 and 1774 George 9th March 1770 , Ann April 1771 , Adam January 1772 , and Christian 1774 were born to the happy couple ..

Alexander Silver died at Netherley House on the 30th December 1791 , his widow Mrs. Anne Silver passed away on the 15th September 1812 in Aberdeen ..

Alexander Silver and a number of his Family are interred in Fetteresso Church Cemetery .,