
Jean Macmath, Mistress Rutherford (1610–1675)

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‘Mistress Rutherford’ is the hitherto unidentified author of a short spiritual autobiography spanning the years 1620 to 1634, and first published in 2004.¹ In this paper we show that she was almost certainly Jean Macmath, the second wife of Samuel Rutherford. Using this, we give a fuller account of Jean Macmath’s life and background than has been possible before.

I. Mistress Rutherford and Jean Macmath

All that is known about Mistress Rutherford is stated in – or deducible from – her spiritual autobiography. This occupies 14,500 words and survives in a single copy among the Wodrow manuscripts with Robert Wodrow’s attribution, ‘Mistress Rutherford’.² From this it may be gathered, for example, that her maiden name was either Macmath or Lockhart; that she had one sister, probably younger; that her (first) husband lived in Ulster; and a few other gleanings which we mention below. One useful feature of the spiritual autobiography, which greatly assists the identification, is the attention it gives to chronology; and if, as we think, the account was written many years afterwards, she must have had a very accurate memory for these things.

The main reasons for identifying Mistress Rutherford with Samuel Rutherford’s second wife, Jean Macmath, are as follows.

¹ D.G. Mullan, ‘Mistress Rutherford’s conversion narrative’, in *Miscellany XIII* (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 2004), pp. 146-188. See also D.G. Mullan, ‘Mistress Rutherford’s narrative: a Scottish Puritan autobiography’, *Bunyan Studies*, Vol. 7 (1997), pp. 13-37.

² Edinburgh University Library, Laing MSS, La.III.263, Wodrow Octavo 33, no. 6.

1. Mistress Rutherford's maiden name may well have been Macmath. In her narrative she states that her mother's sister was married to the laird of Anniston. This was John Muir of Anniston, whose wife, Margaret Foulis was the daughter of the Edinburgh goldsmith and financier Thomas Foulis.³ Thomas Foulis's (first) wife was Jean Frances and they had two other daughters, Jean who was married to John Lockhart, and Agnes who was married to James Macmath. There is thus a good probability that Mistress Rutherford had the unusual maiden name of Macmath.

2. More than this, it is highly likely that Mistress Rutherford's maiden name was Jean Macmath. From her narrative, we gather that her mother died when she was four, her father when she was 'about nine', and her grandmother when she was twelve.⁴ Since Jean Frances died on 1st March 1623,⁵ Mistress Rutherford must have been born between 2nd March 1610 and 28th February 1611. Agnes Foulis (who, as we have just seen, was either her mother or her aunt) died in April 1615, when she was either four or five (going by the dates just deduced) and James Macmath in August 1620, when she was nine or ten.⁶ Thus both the dates fit, and it would be a remarkable coincidence if these were not her parents. It is natural, therefore, to proceed on the assumption that these were her parents and that she was born probably towards the end of 1610. Furthermore, their testaments show that James and Agnes Macmath had two daughters Jean and Agnes, and Jean was named first so presumably she was the elder. In her narrative, Mistress Rutherford mentions a sister who went to school after her, and thus was presumably younger.⁷ Thus it is highly probable that Mistress Rutherford's maiden name was Jean Macmath and that her younger sister was called Agnes.

3. In the seventeenth century, the Scottish name 'Mrs X' generally, if not universally, meant the wife or widow of Mr X and implied that Mr X was a university graduate, or minister, or person of some note. Thus from Robert Wodrow's designation of her, the presumption would be that Mistress Rutherford was married at some point to a man called Rutherford who was a minister or university graduate.

³ Mullan, 'Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative', pp. 146-7, 159.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 152-3.

⁵ Testament of Jeane Frances, 1623, NRS CC8/8/52 (Edinburgh Commissary Court).

⁶ Testaments of Agnes Fowlis, 1616, NRS CC9/7/11 and James McMath, 1621, NRS CC9/7/17 (both Glasgow Commissary Court).

⁷ Mullan, 'Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative', p. 155.

4. From her mid-teens onwards, Mistress Rutherford moved in similar evangelical Presbyterian circles to Samuel Rutherford, as the names mentioned in her narrative show: Bethia Aird, John Gillon,⁸ Charles Mowat,⁹ David Dickson, and the ministers in Ireland.

5. Mistress Rutherford's first husband apparently lived in Ulster, where they went after their marriage. In 1640, Samuel Rutherford married a woman named Jean Macmath who had previously been married to a man, Hugh Montgomery, who owned land in Ulster.¹⁰

6. The supposition that Mistress Rutherford and Jean Macmath are one and the same does not conflict with anything known about either of them. For example, Jean Macmath and her sister both left land at their death,¹¹ presumably inherited from spouses or blood relations, and this fits with the social status of Mistress Rutherford and her sister. Again, both Mistress Rutherford and Jean Macmath had close connections with the Chieslie family, as we shall see below. The only tension is over ages: we have seen that Mistress Rutherford was probably born about the end of 1610, and this date is possible for Jean Macmath, though a little early. Her seven children with Samuel Rutherford were born between 1641 and March 1656,¹² so a date of birth at the end of 1610 would imply that the final child was born when she was 45. This was old for the time, but given that this final child was born five years after her previous one, it is not entirely impossible.

7. In his index to his papers, the Church historian Robert Wodrow describes her simply as 'Mistress Rutherford', and to him there was one 'great Rutherford', just as 'Mrs Guthrie', 'Mrs Binning', and 'Mrs Livingstone' can be assumed to be the wives or widows of William or James Guthrie, Hugh Binning, and John Livingstone.

Combining all these reasons, we see that it is virtually certain that Mistress Rutherford and Jean Macmath are one and the same, and we now proceed on this assumption.

⁸ For John Gillon, see W.K. Tweedie (ed.), *Select Biographies* (2 vols., Wodrow Society, Edinburgh, 1845–47), Vol. 1, pp. 353, 369; D. Laing (ed.), *Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie* (3 vols., Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1841–42), Vol. 3, p. 61.

⁹ For Charles Mowat, see Tweedie, *Select Biographies*, Vol. 1, p. 346.

¹⁰ J.H. Stevenson and W.K. Dickson, *Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, A.D. 1652–1659* (Edinburgh, 1904), No. 164, pp. 81–82. This document is of considerable interest and we return to it in Section 6.

¹¹ T. Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford* (Edinburgh, 1828), pp. 191, 324.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 374.

II. Jean Macmath

1. Family background

Some of this information has already been given in the previous section, but we repeat it here for convenience.

Jean Macmath's mother Agnes Foulis belonged to the family of Foulis of Colinton. Agnes's grandfather Henry Foulis of Colinton (d. 1571) had at least four sons – James Foulis of Colinton (d. 1609), David, Robert, and Agnes's father Thomas (d. 1628) – and various daughters, one of whom, Margaret (d. 1609), was married to the important politician Sir Thomas Hamilton of Drumcarny (1563–1637), who was successively Lord Binning, the Earl of Melrose, and the Earl of Haddington. Some of their children were prominent in covenanting circles. Meanwhile, James had six sons, of whom George of Ravelston (d. 1635) was a leading goldsmith and Robert (d. 1631) an advocate.¹³

Agnes's father Thomas became an Edinburgh goldsmith, and in due course a royal financier.¹⁴ In 1598 he was bankrupted because of a royal refusal to pay debts but he recovered from this and developed his mining interests at Leadhills.¹⁵ Two of his partners in this were his nephews George and Robert, just mentioned, and in 1638 Robert's daughter Anne secured the mining inheritance after legal action and married her successful advocate, Sir James Hope of Hopetoun (1614–1661).

In addition to Agnes, Thomas Foulis had two sons: Thomas who died in 1612, and David of Glendorch (just north of Leadhills) who died in 1635;¹⁶ and two daughters: Jean who married James Lockhart, and Margaret who married John Mure or Muir (d. 1646) of Annieston in the parish of Symington near Biggar. John Mure was another of Thomas Foulis's mining partners. Thomas's wife was Jean Frances (d. 1623), of

¹³ See M.D. Young (ed.), *The Parliaments of Scotland: Burgh and Shire Commissioners* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1992), Vol. 1, p. 260. For Robert Foulis, see F.J. Grant (ed.), *The Faculty of Advocates in Scotland, 1532–1943* (Scottish Record Society, Edinburgh, 1944), p. 76.

¹⁴ For Thomas Foulis, see his entry by Julian Goodare in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

¹⁵ See J. Goodare, 'Thomas Foulis and the Scottish fiscal crisis of the 1590s', in M. Ormrod et al. (eds.), *Crises, Revolutions, and Self-Sustained Growth: Essays in European Fiscal History, 1130–1830* (Stamford, 1999), pp. 170–197.

¹⁶ 'David Foulis married Elizabeth Baillie in 1617, the contract of marriage between them being dated 31st January and 3rd March 1617, and recorded in the Books of Council and Session on 6th May 1622. After the death of David Foulis, Elizabeth Baillie married James Wood. She had issue by her first marriage, a daughter, who succeeded to the lands of Glendorch'. See James W. Baillie, *Lives of the Baillies* (Edinburgh, 1872), p. 35.

whose family background we know nothing, and after her death he married Rachel Porteous who survived him.

Jean Macmath's father James (d. 1620) had land in Schaw in the parish of Auchinleck but otherwise little is known of him at present. In his biography of Samuel Rutherford, Thomas Murray thought that there was 'reason to believe' that Jean's father was a merchant in Edinburgh.¹⁷ There was an extensive Macmath family in Edinburgh, and even a James Macmath who became a merchant burgess on 14th May 1596 by right of his wife Isobel Macmath (whose father William Macmath was a litster).¹⁸ James and Isobel had a number of children including a son Edward born in May 1608 and a daughter Helen born in July 1612, so they are a different couple from Mistress Rutherford's parents. Furthermore James Macmath, the Edinburgh burgess, was still alive in 1625.¹⁹ So far, we have not seen anything to connect Jean Macmath's father with Edinburgh, or with the Edinburgh branch of the Macmath family.

Thus Jean Macmath and her sister Agnes were from quite a wealthy background and had some important people in their wider family circle.

2. Early life

Jean Macmath, as we have mentioned, was born probably about the end of 1610. In the absence of any other evidence, we suppose that she was born in Auchinleck.²⁰ Her mother Agnes died in April 1615 when she was four and her father James in August 1620 when she was nine.²¹ After his death, Jean and her sister Agnes lived with her maternal grandfather, Thomas Foulis. Where his main residence was, we are not sure, but it was not, apparently, in Edinburgh. Jean's grandmother, Jean Frances was a godly woman who taught her to pray, but she died on 1st March 1623 when Jean was twelve;²² and,

¹⁷ Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 324. Murray thought that Jean was the sister of Janet Macmath who married William Dick in 1637. For this branch of the Macmath family, see Mrs J. Stewart Smith, *The Grange of St Giles* (Edinburgh, 1898), pp. 385-388.

¹⁸ M. Wood (ed.), *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1589-1603* (Edinburgh, 1927), p. 157.

¹⁹ James Macmath, the Edinburgh burgess, was a ship-owner, involved in brewing and weaving, and was Master of Trinity College Hospital for the poor; see J.J. Brown, 'The Social, Political, and Economic Influences of the Edinburgh Merchant Elite, 1600-1638' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1986), p. 492; M. Wood (ed.), *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1604-1626* (Edinburgh, 1931), pp. 149, 196.

²⁰ The minister of Auchinleck from 1617 to 1621 was George Walker, but the name of his predecessor in the parish is not recorded.

²¹ See the testaments of Agnes Foulis and James Macmath, cited earlier.

²² See the testament of Jean Frances, cited earlier.

looking back, Jean felt that she had not benefitted from her grandmother's company as she should have done.²³ For the next year, she was occupied 'guiding' her grandfather's house, until one of his sisters arrived to take over.

In 1624 she moved to Edinburgh and lived with an aunt, but then left the town to stay with another aunt because of the 'pestilence'.²⁴ On her return to Edinburgh she was troubled with atheistic thoughts. In 1625 she was sent to Bethia Aird's school in Edinburgh for three months. The main good that she got from this was that thenceforth she had Bethia for a spiritual counsellor.²⁵ Her spiritual autobiography for this period records her various temptations, one of which was a long-standing temptation to suicide, and another was a jealousy against her sister when she replaced her at Bethia Aird's school.²⁶

Returning to her grandfather's house, Jean found that his second wife, Rachel Porteous, had 'become very evil to her'.²⁷ She continued there until her grandfather's death in December 1628, when she and her sister went to stay with her aunt, Margaret Foulis, and her husband, John Mure, at Annieston Tower (or Castle) in the parish of Symington near Biggar.²⁸ Her aunt and uncle had at least one son, John Mure younger, but he was probably a young child at that stage. The minister of the parish was William Wallace who had been there since 1598. About Pasch (Easter) 1629, Jean took communion, which apparently extended over two Sabbaths. Her narrative does not mention any examination by a kirk session prior to communion.²⁹ The minister's text at the service was Rev. 3:15 but she got little good, for which she was inclined to blame herself.

²³ Mullan, 'Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative', p. 152.

²⁴ The 'pest' broke out on 28th November 1624; D. Calderwood, *History of the Kirk of Scotland* (8 vols., Wodrow Society, Edinburgh, 1842–49), Vol. 7, p. 627.

²⁵ Bethia's father William (d. 1606) was minister of St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh from 1586 to 1606. Her brother John (1584–1638) was minister of Newton from 1614 to 1618 and of Newbattle from 1618 to 1638. Bethia was probably born in the 1580s. She was married to Joseph Miller (d. 1643), and her testament was recorded on 16th September 1653; see F.J. Grant (ed.), *The Commissariat Record of Edinburgh: Register of Testaments, 1601–1700* (Edinburgh, 1898), p. 7. She was a correspondent of Samuel Rutherford's.

²⁶ Mullan, 'Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative', pp. 155–157.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 159. Annieston Tower was said to be ruinous in the 1880s, and we are not sure whether there is anything still to be seen. John Mure was a commissioner for the Symington kirk session to the 1639 General Assembly; see *Selections from the Registers of the Presbytery of Lanark, 1623–1709* (Abbotsford Club, Edinburgh, 1839), p. 17.

²⁹ Robert Blair was admitted to the Lord's table in 1604 at the age of twelve without prior examination; *Life of Robert Blair* (Wodrow Society, Edinburgh, 1848), pp. 6–7.

The minister of the neighbouring parish of Quothqan since 1617 was John Chieslie who had a considerable family which was to have various close links with Jean Macmath in later years. John Chieslie died in April 1635, and Jean's aunt Margaret Foulis must also have died in the early 1630s, because in January 1636, John Mure married Chieslie's widow Elizabeth Carmichael. Curiously, John Mure's son John later married Elizabeth's daughter Janet by John Chieslie, and thus father and son were married to mother and daughter. The eldest son of John Chieslie and Elizabeth Carmichael was Sir John Chieslie (d. 1677), a prominent Covenanter, who was one of the leading Protestors and was closely associated with Samuel Rutherford in the 1650s.³⁰ Meanwhile another son, William, became a Writer to the Signet and married Agnes, daughter of Jean Macmath and Samuel Rutherford, in 1664. A third son of John Chieslie and Elizabeth Carmichael was Walter Chieslie of Dalry. One of Walter's sons, Robert, became Provost of Edinburgh while another was the notorious John Chieslie of Dalry who assassinated the Lord President, Sir George Lockhart of Carnwath, in broad daylight on his way home from church in March 1689. The assassin's daughter Rachel Chieslie was the unfortunate Lady Grange who was imprisoned on St Kilda.

From Annieston, Jean Macmath returned to Edinburgh to stay with Robert Foulis, her mother's first cousin, whose daughter Anna was probably a few years younger than Jean. As we have mentioned, Robert died in February 1631 and Anna inherited the mining fortune and married Sir James Hope of Hopetoun in 1638. Robert must have lived near Granton Castle on the outskirts of Edinburgh to the north. Jean stayed there till Lammas (1st August) 1629, at which point she went to stay with other family members at Cockpen, returning to Edinburgh in November. Her conversion is difficult to place amidst her various spiritual troubles, but she seems to have attained to spiritual peace at a communion at the West Kirk (St Cuthbert's), Edinburgh, probably in July or August 1630 under the ministry of William Arthur.³¹

³⁰ For Sir John Chieslie, see A.G. Reid (ed.), *Diary of Andrew Hay of Craignethan, 1659–60* (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1901), pp. xxiii-xxiv; Young, *The Parliaments of Scotland: Burgh and Shire Commissioners*, Vol. 2, p. 120.

³¹ Mullan, 'Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative', pp. 170-171; W. Sime, *History of the Parish and Church of St Cuthbert, or the West Kirk of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1829), pp. 45, 55. A second minister, James Reid, was admitted to the West Kirk in September 1630 (and, like William Arthur and Mistress Rutherford, he opposed kneeling at communion) but Mistress Rutherford's account of the communion mentions only one minister.

3. First marriage to Hugh Montgomery

About the end of 1632, Jean had a proposal of marriage from an unspecified suitor with which she was not happy, but some months later a different proposal of marriage, this time from Hugh Montgomery of Ballyharry, Ards, in Ulster, which she accepted.³² The identity of Hugh Montgomery is not entirely clear.³³ In 1635 Robert Blair married, as his second wife, Katherine Montgomery, and it seems likely that Hugh was a brother of Katherine's. Katherine was described as 'daughter to Hugh Montgomerie, laird of Busbie, in the west, who after the sale of these lands, went to Ireland and there made purchase of the lands of Ballishary and others. This gentleman had many daughters.'³⁴ One of these daughters, Isobel, was already married to Robert Cunningham, minister of Holywood, and another, Margaret, to Robert Hamilton, minister of Killyleagh and then Ballantrae.

Busby or Busbie Castle was about two miles from Kilmarnock and had belonged to the Mowat family for generations, but was sold for debt sometime before the death of the final Mowat proprietor, Charles Mowat, in 1626.³⁵ One of Charles's sons, Matthew, became minister of Kilmarnock in 1641 and was a Protestor in the 1650s. The Charles Mowat in Edinburgh from whom Mistress Rutherford received spiritual help about 1631 was perhaps a cousin of Matthew's.³⁶

Hugh Montgomery, senior, probably purchased Busbie Castle in the early 1620s, and was still alive at the time of his daughter Katherine's marriage in May 1635.³⁷ In 1637, Samuel Rutherford wrote two letters to Lady Busbie in which he speaks of her 'visitation' and affliction.³⁸ She would

³² Ballyharry is now a district in the town of Newtonards. There are also several places called Ballyhenry.

³³ The name 'Hugh Montgomery' was common throughout the period, and in the 1650s there were at least seven significant men of that name; see D.B. Montgomery, *A Genealogical History of the Montgomerys and their Descendants* (Owensville, IN, 1903), p. 31.

³⁴ *Life of Robert Blair*, p. 136. Hugh was 'of the house of Eglinton' (hence a Montgomery) and his wife 'of the house of Glencairn' (hence presumably a Cunningham).

³⁵ J. Young, *Life of John Welsh* (Edinburgh, 1866), p. 102. James Paterson, *History of the County of Ayr* (2 vols., Ayr, 1847–52), Vol. 2, p. 218. The ruins of Busbie Castle were demolished as unsafe about 1950.

³⁶ Mullan, 'Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative', p. 175.

³⁷ *Life of Robert Blair*, p. 138.

³⁸ S. Rutherford, *Joshua Redivivus* (Rotterdam, 1664), Letters 59 and 194 (Letters 133 and 270 in the standard Bonar numbering).

appear to have been widowed by this time, and her son-in-law Robert Cunningham had died in March 1637. Extraordinarily, Cunningham was ‘summoned’ to the High Commission court in Dublin five weeks after his death and then fined for non-appearance, which caused great hardship to his widow and eight children.³⁹ This was probably the affliction to which Rutherford was referring.

The *Montgomery Manuscripts* mention a ‘Goodwife of Busby’ who ‘after the 85th year of her age, walked to a communion in Comerer [Comber]’. The editor thought that this ‘goodwife’ was the widow of Charles Mowat (d. 1626) above, but given the Ulster connection (and the fact that the author of the manuscript was illustrating the longevity of the Montgomery family), it is fairly certain that it was Samuel Rutherford’s correspondent, Lady Busbie.⁴⁰ Robert Blair had a daughter baptised in April 1654, so his wife Katherine Montgomery must have been born about 1610 at the latest.⁴¹ Thus her mother, Lady Busbie was born in the late 1560s at the earliest, so the Comber communion to which she walked at the age of 85 cannot have been much before 1650.

Jean Macmath and her first husband were married in 1633. On their way to Ireland after the wedding, they heard David Dickson preaching in Irvine,⁴² presumably staying at Busbie Castle, and then spent some time at Portpatrick. Here they probably stayed at Dunskey Castle, owned by Hugh Montgomery (c. 1560–1636), the first Viscount Montgomery, who is frequently but mistakenly identified as Jean’s husband.⁴³ Instead he was probably a cousin of her husband’s.

The following summer, Jean and her husband – who shared her religious views – attended many communions conducted by the Ulster Presbyterian ministers whose liberty had recently been restored to them. As we have just mentioned, two of the ministers, Cunningham of Holywood and Hamilton of Killyleagh, were probably married to her husband’s

³⁹ *Life of Robert Blair*, pp. 148-9.

⁴⁰ George Hill (ed.), *The Montgomery Manuscripts (1603–1706)* (Belfast, 1869), pp. 146-147. Ballyharry is four or five miles from Comber.

⁴¹ H. Scott (ed.), *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae* (8 vols., 2nd edn., Edinburgh, 1915–50), Vol. 8, p. 468.

⁴² Dickson was preaching on Job. Sermons of his on Job 10 (1635) and Job 36 (1638 and 1639) survive; see Mullan, ‘Mistress Rutherford’s conversion narrative’, p. 182; M. Vogan, ‘David Dickson: A Provisional Bibliography’, *Confessional Presbyterian*, Vol. 16 (2020), pp. 84-92.

⁴³ Mullan, ‘Mistress Rutherford’s conversion narrative’, p. 182. For Jean’s connection with Dunskey Castle, see Section 6 below.

sisters. This was a time of spiritual blessing and revival in Ulster,⁴⁴ but during the course of the summer her husband Hugh took ill and died, and she was ill herself, and then a posthumous baby boy was born and baptised, but also died.⁴⁵

5. Second marriage to Samuel Rutherford

Nothing is known of Jean for the next six years but on 24th March 1640 she married Samuel Rutherford, whose previous wife, Eupham Hamilton, had died in 1630.⁴⁶ The marriage took place in Edinburgh where Jean must have been residing.⁴⁷ Samuel Rutherford's letters were first published posthumously in 1664 under the title *Joshua Redivivus* and one of them was to Jean's younger sister Agnes in October 1640, commiserating with his new sister-in-law on the loss of a child.⁴⁸

With Samuel Rutherford, Jean had at least seven children: Catherine, born February 1641; John, born June 1642; Robert, born July 1643; Jean, born August 1645; Agnes, born May 1649; Samuel, born March 1651; and Margaret, born 18th March 1656.⁴⁹ The last of these, Margaret, was born when Jean was at least 45 which was most uncommon in those days. She was very ill and was thought to be dying: 'I got a letter from M.S.R. about his wyfes feared death. Lord prevent it if it be His will and hold up the heart of His servant who is weighted with calumnye.'⁵⁰

Samuel Rutherford was in England in March 1643, and again from November 1643 to November 1647 at the Westminster Assembly. Jean had joined him in London by March 1644, at which time she was 'under the physicians'.⁵¹ The Scots Commissioners stayed in Worcester

⁴⁴ See D.W.B. Somerset, 'Mistress Rutherford and Ulster in the summer of 1634', *Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal (SRSJ)*, Vol. 1 (2011), pp. 267-271.

⁴⁵ Mullan, 'Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative', pp. 184-188.

⁴⁶ Eupham had at least one child, Marie, born April 1626, but it seems that none of her children survived her death, Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 347.

⁴⁷ H. Paton (ed.), *Register of Marriages for the Parish of Edinburgh, 1595–1700* (Scottish Record Society, Edinburgh, 1905), p. 600. The contract of marriage had been proclaimed in St Andrews on 1st March 1640; see ScotlandsPeople website under 'Samwell Rutherford'.

⁴⁸ Letter 300 in the Bonar numbering.

⁴⁹ The list is taken from Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 374.

⁵⁰ J.D. Ogilvie (ed.), *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston, 1655–1660* (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1940), 11th March 1656, p. 27.

⁵¹ J. Coffey, *Politics, Religion, and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 50, 52, 53; A.A. Bonar (ed.), *Letters of Samuel Rutherford* (Edinburgh, 1891), p. 617.

House; and with them, presumably, were Robert MacWard and Sir John Chieslie who were amanuenses to Rutherford and Alexander Henderson respectively.⁵² Robert MacWard was aged around 20 at the time, and had probably studied under Rutherford at St Andrews. He was later a regent at St Andrews in April 1650.⁵³ It may well have been his time with Samuel Rutherford and his wife at Worcester House that led him to write later to their daughter Agnes:

Sometimes I have thought, if I should miss heaven, next to the face of an angry God, the most terrible and least sufferable sight imaginable would be the sight of your father and mother's face, sitting as assessors to the righteous judge, and applauding to my condemnation for not having learned at them to walk with God...O how many times have I been convinced by observing them, of the evil of unseriousness with God, and unsavouriness in discourse...They spoke and walked as those who had spoken with God, and had heard him speak, and so were constrained to watch carefully lest they did anything which in their address to him might wound their faith or weaken their confidence.⁵⁴

Jean Macmath must have returned to St Andrews in 1645 because it was there that their daughter Jean was baptised in August. With the exception of Agnes, all their children died young, but the details about this are elusive. In a letter written in 1645, but otherwise undated, Rutherford says: 'I had but two children, and both are dead since I came hither'.⁵⁵ Almost certainly, this was written before the birth of Jean in August, and implies that the three eldest were dead by then, with two of them having died since November 1643.⁵⁶ One of the daughters died in 1661, just a few weeks before Rutherford's own death on 29th March 1661, but whether this was Jean or Margaret is not stated.⁵⁷ The only child mentioned in his will, drawn up on 8th March 1661, was Agnes.

⁵² Chris Coldwell, 'Westminster Abbey Library and other theological sources of the Westminster Divines (1643–1652)', *SRSJH*, Vol. 10 (2020), pp. 27-50 (pp. 41-42); James Kirkton, *Secret and True History of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1817), p. 71n.

⁵³ *Diary of Mr John Lamont of Newton, 1649–1671* (Edinburgh, 1830), p. 16.

⁵⁴ Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 362.

⁵⁵ Bonar, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 621.

⁵⁶ Coffey thinks that all four children were dead by then, *Politics, Religion, and the British Revolutions*, p. 53. One of them died in January 1644, Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 324. Another child, who had presumably been ill, was well in January 1653; Bonar, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 672.

⁵⁷ *Diary of Mr John Lamont of Newton*, p. 133.

In summary, it would appear that during the twenty-one years of her marriage to Samuel Rutherford, Jean Macmath was fairly fully occupied with the care of children. Most of her married life with him was spent in St Andrews, presumably living in St Mary's College.

6. Dunskey Castle

One intriguing aspect of Jean Macmath's life is her brief connection with Dunskey Castle, near Portpatrick.⁵⁸ The background to this is uncertain and would merit further research. The principal evidence – perhaps the only surviving evidence – is a charter of 26th July 1653:

The Keepers grant to Johne Shaw of Grenocke and his heirs and assignees whomsoever (subject to the legal reversion), – the 2½ merk land of Killenterna, the 2½ merk land of Uchtum Mackeirne, the 3 merk land of Craigenbuy and merk land of Auchinbea of old extent, extending in all to a 10 merk land; the £10 land of Portrie, comprehending the lands and others underwritten, viz: 3 merk land of Marrok, with the castle, tower and fortalice of Dunskey situate thereupon; the corn-mill of Portrie, with the three mills and mill-lands, astricted multures and sucken thereof used and wont, viz.: the said 10 pound land of Portrie, the 5 pound land of Kinghilt, the 3 merk land of Duntoune, with the port called Portpatrick; the lands of Marrok and Duntoune, with several crofts of the said port; the 3 merk land of Enoch; the 2 merk land of Mekel Sigmanoch (Pigmanoch?); the 3 merk land of Craigoch; the town or burgh of Mongrumie and sea port of old called Port Patrick and now Port Mongrumie, with the whole anchorages, tolls, customs, and other privileges, &c., pertaining thereto, – with the castles, towers, fortalices, manor-places, &c., of the foresaid lands, all lying within the sheriffdom of Wigton; – the 3s. 4d. land of Boighall, with the 16s. land of Neitherhill of Beith; the 40s. land of Bigholme; the 54s. land of Over Boigsyde and Fulwoodhead; the 4 merk land of Marchalland, in the barony of Beith, bailiary of Cunninghame, regality of Killwinning, and sheriffdom of Ayr; – which lands pertained to Hew, now Viscount of Airds, his father, and were appraised from him on 1st August 1650, at the instance of Joane Montgrumie alias Mackmath, relict of the deceased Hew Montgrumie sometime of Balharie in the country of Doune, gentleman, and of Maister Samuell Ruthfuird, professor of divinity in the University of Saint Andrews, now her spouse, for his interest, for payment of £2,000 Scots, with £100 of sheriff-fee to Johne Hart, messenger; – which decree of appraising was assigned by the said Joane Mackmath with consent of

⁵⁸ For a somewhat related discussion, see M. Vogan, 'Did James Ussher visit Samuel Rutherford?', *Confessional Presbyterian*, Vol. 16 (2020), pp. 56-58.

the said Samuell Ruthfuird to Andrew Wardlaw, merchant burges of Edinburgh, by assignation dated 15th June 1653, and was assigned by the said Andrew Wardlaw to the said Johne Shaw by translation dated 22nd July 1653: With precept of sasine. P.R. vii. 82.⁵⁹

Apprising was an earlier form of diligence in Scots law (abolished in 1672) which allowed a creditor to obtain a security in a debtor's property. Thus the Viscount of Airds (the third Viscount Montgomery) must have owed money to Jean Macmath. How this was so is puzzling. The first Viscount Montgomery had died in 1636, and his son, the second Viscount Montgomery, in 1642. The second Viscount and his son, the third Viscount (d. 1663), were both Royalists, and the third Viscount commanded the Royalist army in Ulster which was defeated in October 1649. Fleeing into the south, he was captured by Cromwell about March 1651 and banished to Holland. His lands in Scotland and Ireland were confiscated about 1650.

The obvious connection between Jean Macmath and the third Viscount is that her first husband's father, the Laird of Busbie, had probably purchased land from the first Viscount, perhaps in the 1620s. Presumably her husband (d. 1634) had also had dealings with the first Viscount, and somehow in the course of years this debt had accumulated. Perhaps the confiscation of the third Viscount's lands in 1650 made that a good time to pursue the debt. Apprising, however, does not necessarily imply legal confrontation and may have been an amicable arrangement or device.

In 1559, the lands of Boghall, Netherhill of Beith, Bigholme, Over Bogside, and Fulwoodhead had pertained to the monastery of Kilwinning, and their subsequent fate is well covered in the *Laing Charters*, although it is not obvious how the charter above fits in.⁶⁰ Throughout the 1650s, the lands continue to be referred to as belonging to the third Viscount Montgomery,⁶¹ and in December 1661, he confirmed their transfer to John Shaw of Greenock 'to fulfil an imperfect disposition, dated at Athlone in Ireland, 26th March 1650'.⁶² John Shaw was presumably closely related to Elizabeth Shaw of Greenock (d. 1623), who was the first wife of the first Viscount Montgomery and the mother of the second Viscount.⁶³ The

⁵⁹ *Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, A.D. 1652–1659*, No. 164, pp. 81–82.

⁶⁰ See J. Anderson (ed.), *Calendar of the Laing Charters, A.D. 854–1837* (Edinburgh, 1899), no. 704, etc. For Marchalland, likewise, see no. 691, etc.

⁶¹ See *Laing Charters*, Nos. 2412 (4th June 1650), 2416 (3rd February 1651), 2450 (20th January 1654).

⁶² *Ibid.*, Nos. 2554, 2560.

⁶³ See *ibid.*, No. 1582.

second wife of Andrew Wardlaw (d. 1673) was Janet Shaw (married August 1648) which possibly accounts for his appearance in the 1653 charter.⁶⁴ The December 1661 charter was dated at London, and one of the witnesses was William Chieslie, writer in Edinburgh, who was soon to become Jean Macmath's son-in-law. Given his family connections with Jean Macmath, it seems likely that his presence was not coincidental but that he was representing her interests in some way.

Meanwhile, on 15th August 1648, James Blair, minister of Portpatrick, had sasine of the Dunskey property, and again on 14th November 1653, and it is not clear how this fits into the picture either.⁶⁵ A fuller investigation of the 1653 charter by someone with a good knowledge of Scottish law might yield further light on Jean Macmath and the background of her first husband.⁶⁶

7. Agnes Macmath and Archibald Porteous

Agnes Macmath was slightly younger than her sister Jean, so she was probably born about 1612. Her early life was very similar to Jean's but for some reason she spent longer at Bethia Aird's school in Edinburgh.⁶⁷ Her conversion seems to have occurred about 1632.⁶⁸ She must have been married by 1640 (when she lost a child, as we have mentioned), and probably considerably earlier. Thomas Murray says that at her death she left the lands of Cockburn to her niece Agnes Rutherford; while MacGibbon and Ross say that the lands were disposed to William Cheslie (Agnes Rutherford's husband) on 9th June 1671.⁶⁹ Agnes Macmath did not die until 1674, so the disposition of the lands must have preceded her death. According to MacGibbon and Ross, the lands were in the possession of

⁶⁴ *Register of Marriages for the Parish of Edinburgh, 1595–1700*, p. 715.

⁶⁵ P.H. M'Kerlie, *History of the Lands and Their Owners in Galloway* (5 vols., Edinburgh, 1870–79), Vol. 1, pp. 86, 87.

⁶⁶ A similar charter, which might also repay research, is that granting to Robert Blair and his wife Katherine Montgomery land appraised from David, Lord Cardross in September 1654; *Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, A.D. 1652–1659*, No. 362, pp. 162–163.

⁶⁷ Mullan, 'Mistress Rutherford's conversion narrative', p. 157.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁶⁹ Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 324; D. MacGibbon and T. Ross, *Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland from the Twelfth to Eighteenth Century* (5 vols., Edinburgh, 1887–92), Vol. 5, p. 252. There seem to be several errors in the MacGibbon and Ross statement: for example, 'the deceased Agnes Rutherford' should perhaps be Agnes Macmath, who was not in fact deceased at that stage. We are presuming also that 'Corrington' should be 'Covington'.

the family of Lindsay of Covington from 1468 to 1670, from which we can presumably deduce that Agnes Macmath's first husband belonged to that family. It is possible, indeed, that he was the 10th laird, John Lindsay, who died in 1646, but this would be a matter for separate investigation.

Agnes Macmath's second husband was Archibald Porteous. Curiously, there are three men of this name who come into the general picture and need to be distinguished. The first was born in Edinburgh in 1617 and was dead by 1662. He was minister of Oxnam from 1640 and was the author of a pamphlet, *The spiritual exercise of soul of Dame Mary Rutherford, Lady Hundaly, 1640*.⁷⁰ His wife Margaret Riddell survived him.⁷¹ The second was a surgeon in Biggar in 1659 who is often referred to in Andrew Hay of Craignethan's *Diary*. The third, also sometimes mentioned in the *Diary*, was the son of James Porteous, minister of Lasswade.⁷² He graduated at St Andrews in 1647, presumably studying Divinity under Rutherford thereafter, and was inducted to Covington (an adjacent parish to Symington) in December 1652.⁷³ Jean Macmath had land in Covington and may indeed have been a heritor in the parish.⁷⁴ It was this third Archibald Porteous who married Agnes Macmath, although he must have been about fifteen years her junior. We have not discovered the date of their marriage, but probably it was during the 1650s. There were no children, or at least no surviving children.

Archibald Porteous, like Samuel Rutherford and Andrew Hay of Craignethan, was a Protestor, as was his near neighbour Sir John Chieslie of Kerswell. Indeed the Presbytery of Biggar was heavily dominated by Protestors. In 1658, after a three-year struggle, they ejected the minister of Symington, George Phin, and replaced him with the Protestor John Rae (who was later a covenanting field-preacher and died on the Bass Rock).⁷⁵

⁷⁰ A. Porteous, *The spiritual exercise of soul, and blessed departure of Dame Mary Rutherford Lady Hundaly, and Mary M'Konnel, cousin to the said lady; which fell out in the year 1640; both died in London* (Edinburgh, c. 1745).

⁷¹ See Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 2, p. 135.

⁷² James Porteous is listed in Livingstone's 'Memorable Characteristics'; Tweedie, *Select Biographies*, Vol. 1, p. 314.

⁷³ See Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 1, p. 248. Archibald Porteous was deprived in May 1661. The *Fasti* mentions that he may have become indulged minister of Cumbrae in 1672, but regards this as doubtful. See Vol. 3, p. 190.

⁷⁴ Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 191.

⁷⁵ See, for example, W. Stephen (ed.), *Register of the Consultations of the Ministers of Edinburgh, 1652–1660* (2 vols., Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1921–1930), Vol. 1, pp. 271–3.

Archibald Porteous died in February 1673 and his widow Agnes Macmath in January 1674, and both were buried in Greyfriars, Edinburgh, with William Chieslie (below) paying for the burial.⁷⁶ Next to Porteous' name, the register of interments says, 'in the Canimrem', but it is not clear if this is a location or what. In 1679, Catherine Tod, the wife of William's wealthy brother Walter Chieslie of Dalry died, and Walter erected a large monument to her which remains to this day. Thereafter, Chieslies were buried in the 'Chieslie tomb', but whether this was the case with Archibald Porteous and Agnes Macmath, we do not know.

8. Agnes Rutherford and William Chieslie

Agnes Rutherford had been baptised on 20th May 1649 and was thus a couple of months short of her twelfth birthday when her father Samuel died in March 1661. The age of majority for girls was 12, so a tutor needed to be appointed for these two months. Rutherford's will reads as follows: 'I nominate and constitut my said beloved spouse tutrix testamentar to the said Agnes Rutherford during the year of her tutorie and in case of my said spouse her mariage or death before the expyryng of the said Agnes her tutorie, I nominate and constitute Mr George Rutherford, James Rutherford, Mr John Smythe of Nether Crawmond, Mr Robert Tod, Mr Robert Blair, minister of St Andrews, Mr Andrew Hay of [Craignethan], & Mr Archibald Porteous minister of [Covington], tutors testamentar to the said Agnes during her said tutorie.'⁷⁷

Of these, George and James were Samuel Rutherford's brothers, and Robert Tod remains unidentified for the present.⁷⁸ Andrew Hay of Craignethan was the author of the published *Diary*.⁷⁹ John Smythe was probably the advocate who was the son of Sir John Smith of Grotehill and King's Cramond (d. c. 1677), Provost of Edinburgh from 1643 to 1646.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ H. Paton (ed.), *Register of Interments in the Greyfriars Burying-Ground Edinburgh, 1658–1700* (Scottish Record Society, Edinburgh, 1902), pp. 118, 522.

⁷⁷ Testament of Mr Samuel Rutherford, 1661, NRS CC20/4/12 (St Andrews Commissary Court).

⁷⁸ There was a Robert Tod, for example, who was minister of Rothes, Moray, and another who was the son of Archibald Tod, Provost of Edinburgh, and the brother-in-law of Walter Chieslie.

⁷⁹ *Diary of Andrew Hay of Craignethan, 1659–60* (already cited). The introduction gives a very useful account of Andrew Hay's life and background.

⁸⁰ *The Faculty of Advocates in Scotland, 1532–1943*, p. 194; Young, *The Parliaments of Scotland: Burgh and Shire Commissioners*, Vol. 2, pp. 647–648.

In 1664, at the age of 14 or 15, Agnes was married. Her husband, William Chieslie, was the younger brother of Sir John Chieslie, and had been born in 1634. He was thus fifteen years older than his wife. He was a lawyer, and in 1657 was Depute Clerk of the Bills, and in 1659 the Keeper of the Register of Hornings.⁸¹ On 4th August 1662 became a Writer to the Signet.⁸² Like his elder brother John, he was of covenanting sympathies and is often mentioned in Andrew Hay of Craignethan's *Diary*. He had first married in October 1659, but the name of that wife has not been preserved.⁸³

Based on some letters to her from Robert MacWard, Thomas Murray supposed that the 'religious character' of Agnes 'was not altogether worthy of her descent'; and from other evidence he concluded that her husband 'seems not to have been a man of respectable character'.⁸⁴ We are not sure the date of MacWard's letters, but probably they were written to her in her early teens before she was married, and their exhortations and warnings cannot be taken as an indication of her spiritual state then, and still less in later life. In 1684, as we shall see, she suffered persecution for the Covenants, and this probably gives a more reliable guide to her religious character.

Her marriage to William Chieslie produced at least ten children: Samuel, baptised on 5th March 1665 (born when Agnes was aged 15), buried July 1666; Barbara, born March 1666;⁸⁵ a child, buried January 1667; Jean, born March 1668, died unmarried in 1736; a son, born in April 1670, buried February 1671; Agnes, born in June 1672, buried April 1684; a child, buried May 1674; Catherine, born March 1676; Chrystine, born May 1679; and George, born May 1683.⁸⁶

As we have mentioned above, in June 1671 Agnes Rutherford received the lands of Cockburn from her aunt Agnes Macmath, and her

⁸¹ John Nicoll, *Diary of Public Transactions and Other Occurrences, 1650–1667* (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1836), pp. 204, 222; *Diary of Andrew Hay of Craignethan, 1659–60*, p. 256.

⁸² *History of the Society of Writers to His Majesty's Signet* (Edinburgh, 1936), p. 108.

⁸³ *Diary of Andrew Hay of Craignethan, 1659–60*, p. 166.

⁸⁴ Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, pp. 327–8. For extracts from the letters, see pp. 361–362.

⁸⁵ Barbara died about 1740, and is described as 'Mrs'; see See F.J. Grant (ed.), *Commissariat Record of Edinburgh, 1701–1800* (Scottish Record Society, Edinburgh, 1899), p. 50.

⁸⁶ Information from ScotlandsPeople website searching on name 'Cheislie'. Another child, probably George, was buried in November 1691; *Register of Interments in the Greyfriars Burying-Ground Edinburgh, 1658–1700*, pp. 118–9.

husband was thereafter designated Chieslie of Cockburn. A dormer at the present Cockburn House bears the date 1672, and presumably Jean Macmath stayed in the house at some point. After her mother's death in 1675, Agnes also inherited her lands at Covington.⁸⁷ In 1678 the lands of Cockburn were disposed to James Lewis of Merchiston, but Chieslie was still a heritor of the parish, and in June 1679, he was charged to join the king's 'host' to oppose the Covenanters at the battle of Bothwell Bridge. Failing to do this, he, with many other lairds, became subject to criminal proceedings in February and March 1680.⁸⁸ The outcome of these we have not discovered, but probably he was fined heavily.⁸⁹

We have mentioned Thomas Murray's opinion on William Chieslie's character, which was based on a couple of events in the 1680s. Against this should be set the opinion of James D. Ogilvie: 'As a Writer to the Signet he had a somewhat chequered career, due largely to his covenanting principles.... His memory does not merit the obloquy cast on it by Dr Murray.'⁹⁰ On the face of it, one would have to side with Murray. In December 1682, Chieslie was supposedly party to a 'pretty witty cheat' in which a dying man, wishing to dispose his lands to other than his lawful heir, and being too sick to go himself, agreed for someone else, buttoned to the chin and with cap pulled down, to impersonate him before the notary. The case was 'not fully made out' against Chieslie but he was fined 3000 merks.⁹¹ The following February, he was unsuccessful in securing the payment of a £100 bond from his deceased brother Samuel's estate on the ground that 'he had already intromitted with more of Samuel's effects than would pay this sum'. Indeed, he had paid himself expenses that were 'most gross, exorbitant, and uninstructed'.⁹² It may well be, however, that there was some 'covenanting' explanation for both these cases. The law at the time was very much weighted against those with

⁸⁷ From a writ available online (NAS, GD86/750) it appears that it was not until December 1689 that she came into full possession of this land.

⁸⁸ Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall, *Historical Notices of Scottish Affairs* (2 vols., Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1848), Vol. 1, pp. 253-262. At this stage, apparently, Chieslie was no longer a Writer to the Signet.

⁸⁹ R. Wodrow, *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1721-22), Vol. 2, p. 114.

⁹⁰ *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston, 1655-1660*, p. 102n.

⁹¹ Fountainhall, *Historical Notices of Scottish Affairs*, Vol. 1, pp. 384, 392.

⁹² William Chiesley v. William Gordon and Dr Trotter, Scottish Court of Session, 24th February 1683 (online).

covenanting sympathies, and one has to be wary of taking legal evidence of the period at face value.⁹³

On 16th September 1684, there was ‘a strict and severe search through the town of Edinburgh for suspected persons, and sundry are apprehended, as all Mr William Cheisleye’s family, himself being from home; Robert Cheisley his nephew’, and others. Their fault was ‘not keeping the church’, which would show a degree of covenanting commitment.⁹⁴ The following month, William Chieslie was imprisoned for an unspecified reason, but it seems to have been something to do with the Covenanter James Nimmo.⁹⁵

On Sabbath 31st March 1689, Agnes and her husband had the distressing experience of his nephew John Chieslie (son of his brother Walter) assassinating Sir George Lockhart, President of the Court of Session, with his subsequent torture and hanging.

Agnes died in 1694, at the relatively early age of 45, and was buried in Greyfriars on 29th July in the Chieslie tomb.⁹⁶ As we have seen, she had at least two surviving children. Her husband William died on 13th January 1704 aged 70.

9. Death of Jean Macmath

After the death of her husband Samuel Rutherford in 1661, little is recorded of Jean Macmath. Presumably she moved back to Edinburgh from St Andrews, and she probably wrote her conversion narrative at this time.⁹⁷ She was in regular correspondence with Robert MacWard in Holland

⁹³ Wodrow, *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland*, Vol. 2, pp. 115-116. Writing in 1683, Fountainhall said: ‘We are brought to that pass we must depend and court the Chancellor, Treasurer, and a few other great men and their servants, else we shall have difficulty to get either justice or despatch in our actions, or to save ourselves from scaith, or being quarrelled on patched up, remote and innocent grounds’; Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall, *Historical Observes of Memorable Occurrents* (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1840), p. 87.

⁹⁴ Fountainhall, *Historical Notices of Scottish Affairs*, Vol. 2, p. 559. Robert Chieslie was warded in the Tolbooth, and released on 19th September having taken the oath of allegiance; *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, Vol. 9 (1916), pp. 154, 157. He became Provost of Edinburgh in 1694 and was knighted in 1695; see Young, *The Parliaments of Scotland: Burgh and Shire Commissioners*, Vol. 2, p. 120.

⁹⁵ Fountainhall, *Historical Notices of Scottish Affairs*, Vol. 2, p. 565; W.G. Scott-Moncrieff, *Narrative of Mr James Nimmo, 1654–1709* (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1889), p. 71.

⁹⁶ *Register of Interments in the Greyfriars Burying-Ground Edinburgh, 1658–1700*, p. 564.

⁹⁷ Mullan, ‘Mistress Rutherford’s conversion narrative’, p. 151; Mullan, ‘Mistress Rutherford’s narrative: a Scottish Puritan autobiography’, p. 18.

who says in a letter to Lady Kenmure, ‘Mrs Rutherford gives me often an account of the singular testimony which she meets with of your ladyship’s affection to her and her daughter.’⁹⁸ Probably she assisted MacWard in gathering Rutherford’s letters for the publication of *Joshua Redivivus* in 1664. In 1666, she visited Robert Blair on his deathbed, who said to her regarding his former ministerial colleague, Archbishop James Sharp of St Andrews, ‘I would not change my condition, though I be now lying on my bed of languishing and dying, with thine, O Sharp, for thy mitre and all thy riches and revenues, nay, though all that’s betwixt thee and me were red gold to the boot.’⁹⁹

In June 1674, more than a hundred women assembled in Parliament Close in Edinburgh to present a petition to the Privy Councillors as they were descending from their coaches, seeking liberty for the Presbyterian clergy to preach. About twenty of the women were subsequently banished from Edinburgh and Leith, amongst whom was a widow named ‘Mistress Elizabeth Rutherford’.¹⁰⁰ The other banished women included the widows of Robert Blair, John Livingstone, and John Nevay, and there can be little doubt that the name ‘Elizabeth’ has been mis-recorded and that the woman was in fact ‘Mistress Rutherford’, Jean Macmath.

Jean Macmath died in 1675 and was buried in Greyfriars cemetery, Edinburgh on 16th May. Presumably this was more convenient for the family than burying her with Samuel Rutherford in St Andrews, although most of her children must have been buried there as well.

She seems to have been a woman of exceptional piety, and Robert MacWard spoke of her in the highest terms. He described her religious experience as ‘beyond the experience of any I know’, and said of her marriage with Samuel Rutherford: ‘The thing in my observation that made that happy couple eminent beyond others in all holy conversation and godliness was that they were much taken up in studying the knowledge of God and of themselves; and as if every new degree of the knowledge of either they attained had been but a further discovery of their ignorance, so they carried.’¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 327.

⁹⁹ *Life of Robert Blair*, p. 493.

¹⁰⁰ A.J. McSeveney, ‘Non-conforming Presbyterian women in Restoration Scotland, 1660–79’ (Ph.D. thesis, University of Strathclyde, 2006), pp. 139-154, 224-5.

¹⁰¹ Murray, *Life of Samuel Rutherford*, p. 325.

III. Conclusion

Jean Macmath is interesting from various angles. Her conversion narrative is very early for a Scottish Christian, indeed one of the earliest. A number of considerations – one of them being the detached and dispassionate manner in which events are related – suggest that it was written after 1660, but it is describing experiences in the 1620s and early 1630s for which there is little comparable Scottish (or Ulster) material.¹⁰²

Her life is interesting, secondly, as illustrating the complex family relationships that developed in a society with a relatively small population and with high mortality and therefore multiple marriages. Because of her social class it is often possible to follow up the names that emerge in the exploration of her wider family.

Thirdly, it is interesting to view seventeenth-century Scotland from the female perspective, and to glimpse the sadness of burying so many children over so many years. At present, she may be the earliest known Scottish woman to have had a child at the age of 45. Scottish women had little legal standing, and yet she, her sister, and her daughter all ended up in the possession of lands through the failure of male heirs. The actual status of women was often rather different from their legal status.

Finally, her life is of interest, because of the light it sheds on Samuel Rutherford's background. Through his wife, he had closer connections than one might have supposed with several important people: for example, she had grown up with Anne Foulis, the wife of Sir James Hope of Hopetoun; the covenanting Earl of Cassilis was married to her mother's first cousin; and his daughter Lady Margaret Kennedy (friend of the Duke of Lauderdale and wife of Gilbert Burnet) was her second cousin.

¹⁰² One closely related item – with which, however, Mistress Rutherford's narrative has surprisingly little overlap – is *Memoirs of the Life of James Mitchell of Dykes, in the Parish of Ardrossan: containing his own spiritual exercises, and some of the spiritual exercises of his two sons, that died before him, and many singular instances of divine providence, towards himself and family* (Glasgow, 1759). This has material from 1624 through to the 1640s.