

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1991

THE REGISTERED BUILDINGS (GENERAL) REGULATIONS 1991

To: Sir Clive Edwards
Milntown
Lezayre
Isle of Man

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that at a meeting held on the 19th December, 1996, the PLANNING COMMITTEE of the Department of Local Government and the Environment, in pursuance of its powers under the above Acts and Regulations REGISTERED That Estate and those lands and premises known as Milntown House, including the Old Mill, Mill Pond and Mill Race, together with the gardens and parkland, all being situate in the Parish of Lezayre as defined in red on the enclosed plan, in the PROTECTED BUILDINGS REGISTER by reason of architectural and historic interest.

THE EFFECT OF THIS REGISTRATION IS IMMEDIATE and prohibits the alteration or demolition of the structures or appearance of any part of the buildings except in compliance with an obligation imposed by or under any statutory provision or with the prior written consent of the Planning Committee.

Dated this 21st day of May, 1997.

By Order of the Committee



R M Quine
Secretary, Planning Committee.

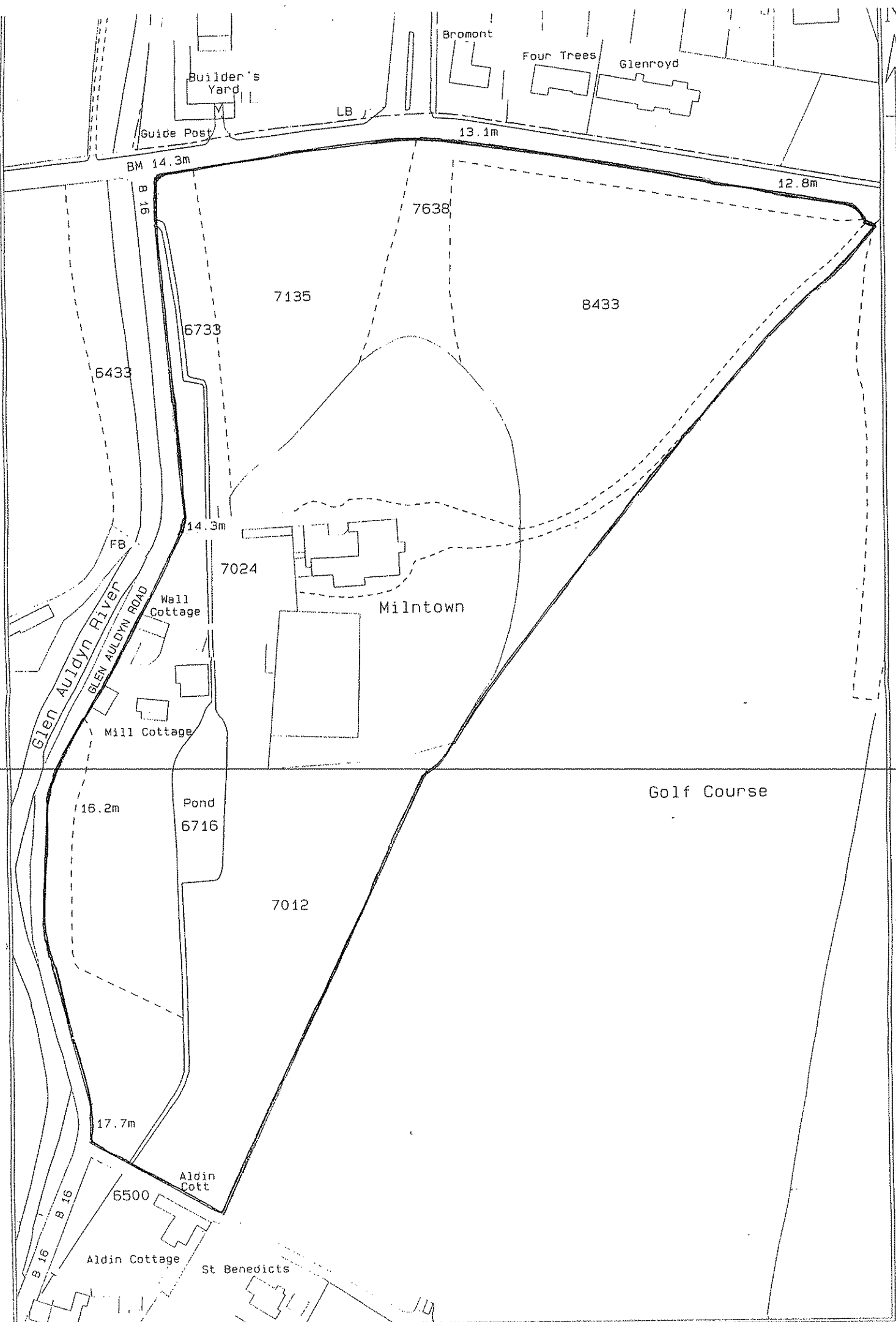
3rd Floor, Murray House,
Mount Havelock,
Douglas,
Isle of Man.

NOTE: Rights to request de-registration of the building are provided under the Regulations and in summary are that:

Application in writing for de-registration may be made by the owner or occupier of, and any other person having an interest in the buildings within a period of 28 days of service of this notice. Such application should be sent to the Secretary, Planning Committee, 3rd Floor, Murray House, Mount Havelock, Douglas.

In the event that de-registration is not requested by any party within the 28 day period described above, then de-registration may not be requested within a period of 3 years.

- c.c.
- 1) R.B. File 168
 - 2) Lezayre Commissioners, 1 Cooilbane Cottages, Sulby
 - 3) Manx National Heritage, Kingswood Grove, Douglas
 - 4) ADCO, Rose Cottage, Mount Rule, Braddan



Scale 1:1250

MILNTOWN, LEZAYRE.

The original name for Milntown was **Altadale** a word drawn from the Scandinavian, meaning "Swans' Glen". The North of the Island was one of the first areas to be settled by the Vikings and the division of the Island into Sheadings (Ship Districts) came into being with the Vikings. As **Mrs. Hicks Beach** mentions in her book **The Yesterdays Behind the Door** :

No reason can be produced to disprove that the site of the ultimate house, built by the Auldryn Stream, was that, or very near that, pitched on by the pagan progenitor **McKristin** or **McCrystyn** - Son of Christian.

Mrs, Hicks Beach goes on to tell us:

From John McCrystyn.... 1408 until the year 1693, eight McCrystyns in succession were, with two short gaps, Deemsters of the Northern half of the Island.

In his book on **Historic Homes of the Isle of Man**, **John Kitto** explains:

In 1408, when it was owned by Deemster **John Christian**, it was called **Altadale**, but in 1530 another Deemster **John Christian**, his grandson, enlarged the house and planted extensive gardens and parkland, and also improved existing machinery in the old mill, part of the property which had probably operated in a more primitive form long before the Scandinavian settlements.

Research into the family history of the Christians and Milntown was undertaken by Mrs. **William Bell Christian** and continued by her daughter **Rita**: this resulted in a mass of information.

In brief, there are four clear periods of Milntown family history:-

- 1) 1368 - 1568 **The estate descended from father to son through eight generations;**
- 2) 1568 - 1673 **The Christian family in bitter conflict with the Earls of Derby refusing to respect the rights of the Manx Nation;**
- 3) 1673 - 1828 **The family took up residence in Cumberland; and**
- 4) 1828 - 1922 **Return to Mann.**

It was at Milntown that **Illiam Dhone Christian** one of the most significant figures in Manx History, spent his boyhood and it was in the Library (with its fine panelling formed out of Bog Oak, said to be taken from Close Lake) where Illiam Dhone was tried. His brother (Deemster John), taking Illiam's son with him, hastened to England and returned with an order from the Privy Council, to deliver up the prisoner. They were either too late, or the order was ignored and Illiam Christian was executed on January 2nd, 1663 within sight of Ronaldsway Farm, then his home.

According to John Kitto (op cit):

In the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Milntown was used regularly as the meeting place for the Sheading Courts: and in 1776 the John Christian who was then head of the family erected a new battlemented facade.....

And the mahogany doors in the living room came from a wrecked Spanish ship - some say the vessel of the Spanish Armada wrecked on the Manx Coast.

John Christian of Unerigg, Cumbria returned to the Isle of Man and lived at the Fort Anne for eight years. In 1830, when he returned to Milntown, it was after one hundred and fifty years of the family's absence from the Estate and the house was judged to be in need of some overhauling.

Changes were made to the stone battlemented mansion; the tower was brought down to roof level as it was considered to be unsafe. New servants quarters were built; two upper rooms were combined to form a larger Hall with a second staircase and it seems likely that the former domestic quarters were remodelled to form reception rooms. All the Jacobean plaster ceilings and the leaded glass of the windows were done away with and new grates and chimney pieces were installed everywhere. The house was finally plastered and painted and for the first time took the form with which we are today familiar.

Externally, a new drive was made; the river bed was turned to make room for a new road to the farm and the kitchen garden was enclosed by a wall.

By 1898 the Phoenix Life Assurance Company had taken over the property, although the record shows that the Christian family were still in possession of the house: a lady member of the family operated a Girls' School and it is understood that the last male of the line died at Milntown in 1918.

In 1912, a large section of the parkland was sold off to certain persons from the town of Ramsey for the creation of a Golf Course. The house operated for many years as an Hotel, but then reverted to a private residence in which use it remains to this day, being in the sympathetic ownership of Sir Clive Edwards. The said

owner has gone to great pains to restore the Mill with its external wheel and has dredged the large Mill Pond which had silted up during long periods of disuse. Milntown house and garden have been lovingly restored to the glory of days gone by and the house and estate are a most worthy entry into the Protected Buildings Register.

On March 9th, 1945, a letter signed J.H.Cleator appeared in the Ramsey Courier:

A few days ago it was announced by the B.B.C. that the British Government had appointed experts on Town and Country Planning and Architecture whose main object would be the preservation of all historical and beautiful places. Our own Government ought to take the same course before it is too late.

The Milntown estate is both historical and beautiful. It is the ancestral home of the Christians and our national hero Illiam Dhone. The estate, even yet, ought to be purchased by the Government and preserved as a National park....

That Estate and those lands and premises known as Milntown House, including the Old Mill, Mill Pond and Mill Race, together with the gardens and parkland, all being situate in the Parish of Lezayre, merit entry into the Protected Buildings Register on the following grounds:-

1) **CLOSE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION:** with the Christian family and in particular Manx National Hero Illiam Dhone Christian, who was tried in the Library at Milntown and was subsequently executed by firing squad at Ronaldsway in 1663;

2) **AGE:** it is generally accepted that part of the Milntown Estate was one of the earliest sites settled by the Vikings. The house itself is based upon what is probably one of the oldest dwellings on the Island to have remained in continuous use throughout the recorded history of the property, which goes back to at least 1368.

3) **ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:** the survival of parts of the early Jacobean house is most evident in the Library with its magnificent bog oak timber panelling. It is also possible that the large flagstone floor in the main entrance hall, is a survival from the early house. In 1830, the house was subjected to a large programme of updating and remodelling: this took the style of the Gothic Revival. Internally there are some fine decorative plaster ceilings and period chimneypieces:externally we see characteristic use of battlements and drip mouldings over windows, and the whole of the exterior is finished in a heavily modelled lime stucco. The resulting composition is imposing whilst also exuding a certain comfortable elegance.

The restoration of the Mill and the sensitive management of the parkland setting also make a most important contribution to the value of this entry into the Protected Buildings Register.

SOURCES:

The Yesterdays Behind the Door - A Family Biography by Mrs. Hicks Beach.

First published 1956, Liverpool University Press.

Historic Homes of the Isle of Man - compiled by John Kitto.

Published by Executive Publications, Isle of Man. 1990.

Sir Clive Edwards, Bt. Milntown, Lezayre.

Report prepared by Marlene M.Hendy, Conservation Officer.