

The Travels and Trials of Adam Logan, Dairyman

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By the time she married in 1930 at the age of 24, my granny, Anna Logan, had lived in more than 24 places. Not neighbouring places in the same parish, or different streets in the same town, but places all over Britain from Caithness in the very north of Scotland to Essex in south east England.

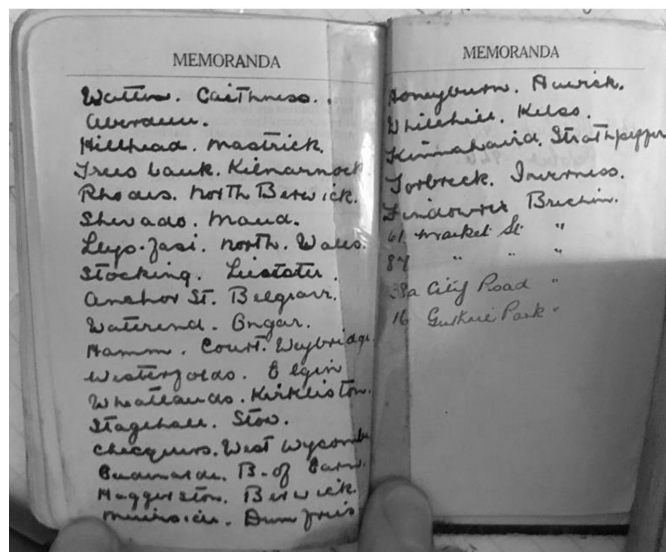


Anna, Madge and Georgie Logan c.1923

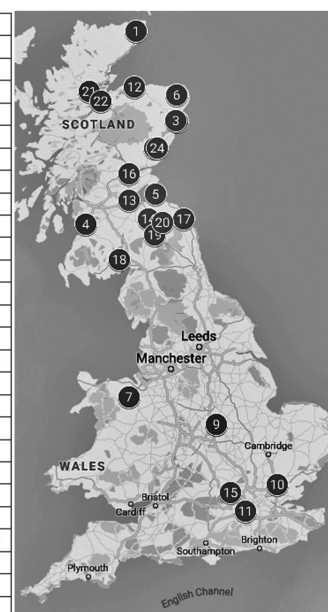
Source: Author

I first learned about the travelling life of Anna and her family from my mother, not long after she had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. We talked a lot about the past in those days; she seemed to gather comfort from re-examining the lives and challenges of her mother and grandmother before her. She talked often of her mother Anna and the two sisters closest to her, Marjorie and Georgina, fondly referred to as Auntie Madge and Auntie Georgie. The three were best friends, supporting each other through all the moves the family made. Their mother, my great-grandmother Annie Strachan, had died when they were young and their father, Adam Logan, frequently moved the family to places all over Scotland, England and Wales, finding work and temporary accommodation on farms. "I think Adam had a wanderlust. He used to come home and tell them, 'pack yer bags lassies, we're moving again.' They thought it was an adventure," my mother told me.

Around this time I found a birthday book¹ that had belonged to my granny. In it she had recorded lots of family birthdays and at the back was a list of place names—everywhere she remembered living. It was common for farm workers to move every six months,² but the range of these places was definitely unusual.



1	Watten, Caithness
2	Aberdeen
3	Hillhead, Mastrick
4	Trees bank, Kilmarnock
5	Rhodes, North Berwick
6	Shevado, Maud
7	LLys-fasi, North Wales
8	Stocking, Leicester
9	Anchor St, Belgrave
10	Waterend, Ongar
11	Hamm Court, Weybridge
12	Westerfolds, Elgin
13	Wheatlands, Kirkliston
14	Stagehall, Stow
15	Chequers, West Wycombe
16	Oudenarde, Bridge of Earn
17	Haggerston, Berwick
18	Muirside, Dumfries
19	Honeyburn, Hawick
20	Whitehill, Kelso
21	Kinnahaird, Strathpeffer
22	Torbreck, Inverness
23	Findowrie, Brechin
24	61 Market Street (Brechin)
25	87 Market Street
26	38a City Road
27	16 Guthrie Park



List of places in Anna Logan's birthday book. Transcription and locations marked on map of Great Britain.

Source: Author

My interest in this part of my family was further piqued by my mother's cryptic suggestions that Adam Logan was not approved of by his wife Annie's family. Oddly, she always referred to him as simply "Adam" and inferred fondly that he was rather a rogue, a kind of likeable black sheep. She didn't offer any specific evidence for the Strachan family disapproval, except to note that Adam was "a bit of a heathen." Her suspicions were confirmed in the 1923 will³ of John Strachan, brother of Annie, made several years after her death, which stated:

I bequeath a legacy of Fifty pounds to each of my nephews and nieces who shall survive me, children of my brothers and sisters with the exception of the children of Adam Logan, who was married to my sister Ann, who are not to benefit from my Estate.

I also found the will⁴ of Annie's eldest sister. Margaret Strachan was not quite as specific in her exclusion, but she left a legacy of £50 each to four of her nine nieces, with no mention of Annie and Adam's daughters.

And so the travels of Adam Logan and his status as family black sheep became a fascination. This is his story.

Two Farming Families

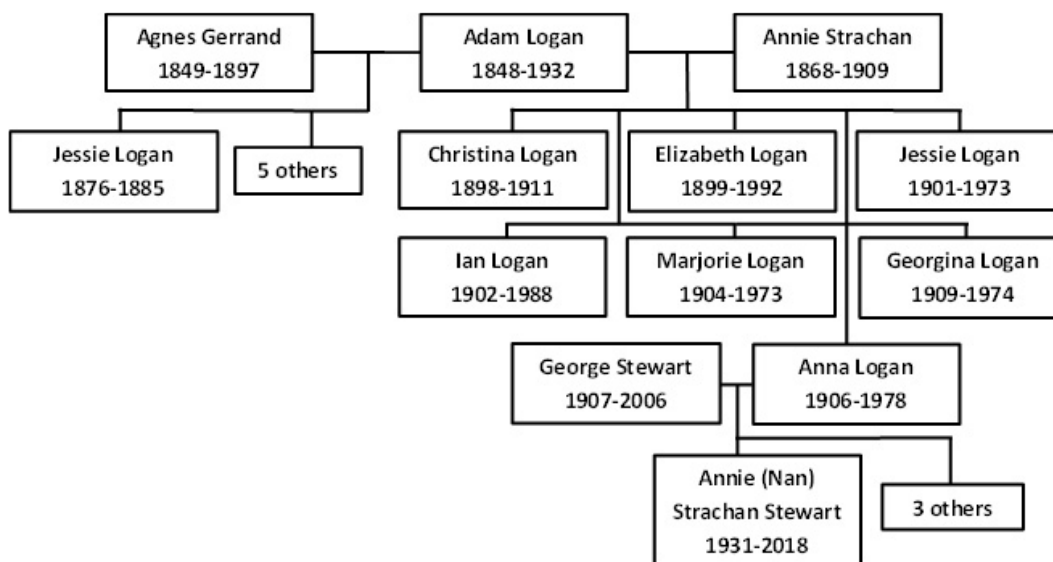


Annie Strachan and Adam Logan, probably on their wedding day, 1897. Source: Author.

In 1897 Adam married my great-grandmother Annie Kerr Strachan.⁵ He was 20 years her senior, a widower with six children. Annie was born in Fyvie, Aberdeenshire in 1868,⁶ the seventh of ten children of John Strachan and Christian Donald. The Strachans were tenant farmers at Cardenwell in Fyvie for four generations⁷ from 1786 until 1923. Several of John and Christian Strachan's children distinguished themselves in ways that were a little unusual for farming families of the time. The eldest, John, took over the tenancy of Cardenwell after the death of his father in 1892⁸ and farmed there until he retired in 1923.⁹ His obituary in 1929¹⁰ describes him as a member of a "distinguished family." Like many of the Strachans he was a deeply religious man, "a devoted elder of Fyvie U. F.¹¹ Church for almost thirty-five years." James¹² and Robert¹³ were both distinguished scholars who went on to become Free Church ministers and professors.

Elizabeth Strachan was one of the first four women to graduate from Aberdeen University in 1898.¹⁴ She and two other sisters, Margaret and Christina, became teachers.

The Logans were also a farming family, deeply rooted in Ayrshire. Adam Logan (b. 1848)¹⁵ was the ninth of ten children born to Andrew Logan and Margaret Campbell. His father was a tenant farmer at Farden William in Kirkmichael, Ayrshire from before 1841 until his death in 1889.¹⁶ At the time of Andrew Logan's death only three of his six sons were living—William (b. 1837), Adam and Robert (b. 1856). William was co-tenant of Farden William with his father in 1875,¹⁷ but by 1881 he had his own farm¹⁸ in nearby Straiton, Ayr. Youngest son Robert was co-tenant with his father by 1885¹⁹ and took over Farden William after Andrew died.²⁰ Adam had no association with Farden William after he married his first wife, Agnes Gerrand, in 1867.²¹ In 1871 he was farming ten acres at nearby High Mossend farm²², and by 1881²³ he was farming 30 acres and living in Anvil Cottage in Kirkmichael with Agnes and six children.



Adam Logan's Family Tree

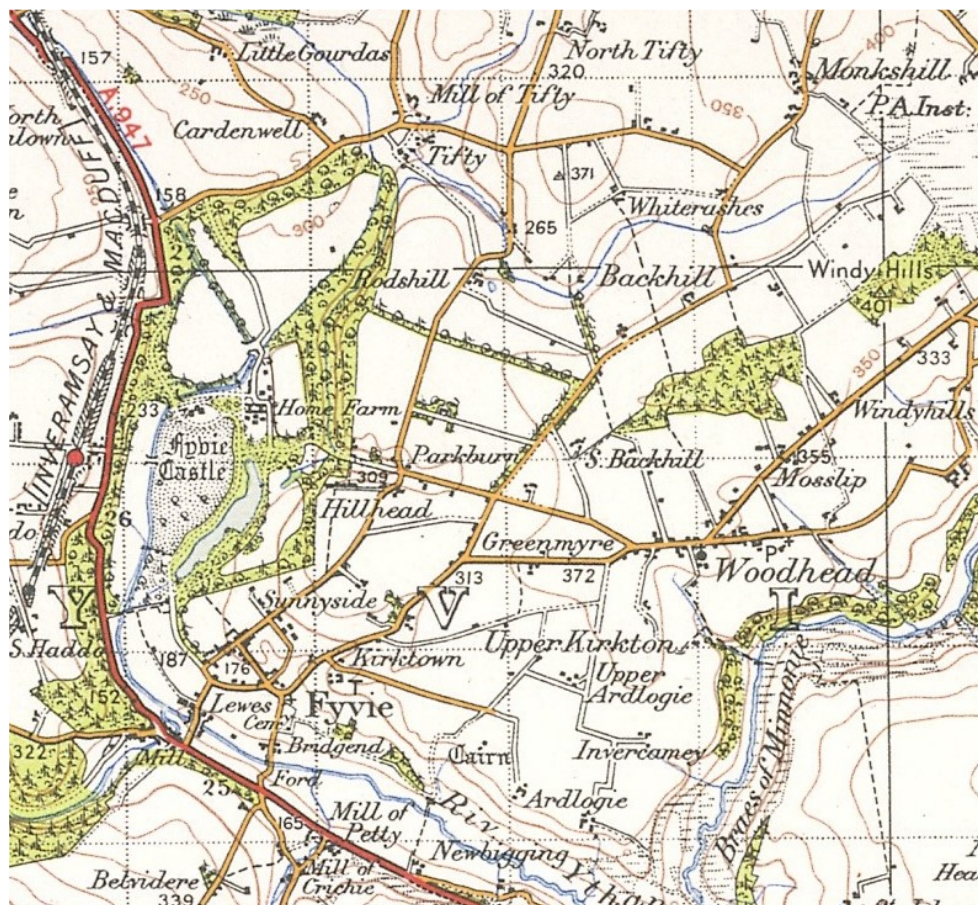
The Travels Begin

Adam's travelling life started sometime between 1881 and 1891, most likely due to the difficulties of making a living on small Ayrshire farms. I didn't find any mention of him in newspapers or valuation rolls in that decade; however, I thought that his daughter Jessie (b. 1876),²⁴ probably died sometime in that period. She didn't appear in any later census, and Adam later had another daughter named Jessie with Annie Strachan. The only possible death I found was in 1885 in the Gorbals. At first glance this seemed unlikely as the Gorbals was a densely populated suburb of Glasgow, notorious for overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions, a far cry from life on an Ayrshire farm. But the death certificate²⁵ was clear: Jessie Logan, daughter of Adam Logan and Agnes Gerrand, died aged eight, of measles and congestion of lungs, at 376 Crown Street, Gorbals. I did not find any family connection in the Gorbals, and concluded that Adam, like many other sons from farming families, had moved to the city to find a better paid job in the industries, factories or docks of Glasgow. In any case, he didn't last long there, and by 1891²⁶ he was in Stock, Essex, about 400 miles away, working at Crondon Hall farm as a dairy manager.

The migration of Scots farmers to Essex in the late 19th century was an oft-discussed topic in the newspapers of that time. The farmer at Crondon Hall was John Hodge, an Ayrshire man who had arrived in Essex in 1886. In an interview with the Essex Herald in 1888²⁷ he explained: "Times were so bad in Scotland—prices were low and rents high—that I came to see what I could do in Essex." By 1890 The Derby Daily Telegraph was reporting a "Scots Invasion of Essex"²⁸ noting that "they all come from Ayrshire, and are skilled dairy farmers, they will no doubt make their new holdings pay."

And so the beginning of Adam Logan's travelling life is explained. There were advertisements for farms to let and for experienced farm labourers in Scottish newspapers at the time. A nearby

railway station was often mentioned; by the 1880s the rail system was well-established and travel to most places across Britain was possible.²⁹ And Ayrshire farmers already in Essex were doubtless well connected with the farming community back home, so it's not difficult to imagine how Adam came by an opportunity to move his family and seek a better living. However, unlike many of the Ayrshire farmer who made the move then stayed in Essex, Adam was soon on the move again. In 1893 he was living at Chilton Farm in Hungerford, Berkshire, about 100 miles away,³⁰ and by 1896 he was back in Scotland, working as a farm overseer at Fyvie Castle Mains (Home Farm) in Aberdeenshire. In January 1897 his wife Agnes died.³¹ In November of that year he married Annie Strachan, who was living in nearby Parkburn Cottage. By early 1898 Adam and Annie had moved to Ardoch, Perthshire. Their daughter Christina was born there on 6 March that year,³² and a second daughter Elizabeth in March 1899.³³ I wondered if the Strachan disapproval may have begun with the marriage of pregnant Annie to a recently widowed man 20 years her senior, who must have seemed to be just passing through.



Map of Fyvie showing Cardenwell Farm, Home Farm and Parkburn. Ordnance Survey, One-inch "Popular" edition, Scotland, Sheet 40 – Inverurie & Ellon, Publication Date: 1929. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland. <https://maps.nls.uk/view/74400635>.

The Gloucestershire-Monmouth Years

By 1901, Adam, Annie and their two daughters were back in England, at Holms Farm, Lydney, Gloucestershire.³⁴ The family stayed at Holms Farm until sometime in 1903; children Jessie and Ian were born there in 1901³⁵ and 1902³⁶ respectively. By 1904 Adam was working at nearby Chase Farm in Tidenham near Chepstow. Daughter Marjorie was born in there in 1904.³⁷



Map of the Monmouth area showing places Adam Logan and his family lived from 1901–1906, including Chepstow, Tidenham and Lydney. Ordnance Survey Quarter Inch to the Mile Maps, 3rd edition, 1919-1930, Sheet 8 - Midlands (S.) Publication date: 1920. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland. <https://maps.nls.uk/view/74400635>.

1905 was a challenging year for Adam and his family. In May he was fined 5s for “offending against the Education Act,” most likely for not sending his children to school.³⁸ Anathema to the well-educated Strachans! In August Annie’s brother, Alexander, who had been living with them and working on the farm, died of sunstroke, aged 38.³⁹ There were several reports of his death in the Aberdeenshire newspapers,⁴⁰ noting that he was “a very well-known man in the Fyvie neighbourhood,” and extending “much sympathy...to his widowed mother, who still resides at Cardenwell.” The inventory of Alexander’s estate⁴¹ states that he was owed £80 by Adam Logan for his work at Chase Farm, but that Adam Logan was “insolvent.” In September a notice appeared in the Chepstow Weekly Advertiser advertising an auction at Chase Farm.⁴² Mr. Fred Jolliffe, “Trustee to the Estate of Mr. Adam Logan,” had instructed auctioneers to sell “the whole of the live and dead farming stock...together with a nearly-new collection of Agricultural Implements, Dairy Utensils and Household furniture.” All Adam’s worldly goods were being sold, probably without his consent. In October 1905 Adam sued Fred Jolliffe for 18s, a week’s wages, and for an additional 18s for being dismissed without notice.⁴³ He was awarded the week’s wages, but not the additional 18s, as Mr. Jolliffe argued that he had dismissed Adam Logan “on account of his conduct.” Adam must have left Chase Farm by late 1905. Anna Logan was born on 1 January 1906⁴⁴ at 2 Agincourt Street, Monmouth (about 12 miles from Chase Farm). I was not able to confirm precisely when they left the Monmouth area but it’s very likely that the series of unfortunate events of 1905 drove them north not long after Anna was born.

Anna’s List

The next stop for the family was Watten, Caithness, 600 miles away and the first place on Anna Logan’s list. Who or what enticed Adam to the top of Scotland remains a mystery, but more family lore from my mother assisted me with what happened next. In 1909 the Logans were in Watten and Annie was pregnant. She was not doing well and was sent to Logie Buchan in Aberdeenshire “for the good air,” likely to be looked after by someone they knew. Research yielded only a “perhaps”: George Strachan, the railway stationmaster in Logie Buchan, and his wife Mary may have been Annie’s carers. She gave birth to Georgina Mary on 2 June ⁴⁵ and died five days later of peritonitis.⁴⁶ Adam was now a widower for the second time, with seven young children, including a newborn baby.

In March 1911 tragedy struck again when Adam’s eldest daughter, Christina, died of pneumonia, aged 13.⁴⁷ My mother often talked about how difficult it was for Adam. “It was terrible when Chrissie died—she was like a mother to the younger kids. How did he cope—a man on his own with no woman?” she would say. The family was living in Aberdeen that year, but in the 1911 census⁴⁸ Georgina was not listed. I searched for her separately and found her aged two, a “boarder” living with a McKay family in Watten.⁴⁹ My mother had never mentioned this so I prodded her

again and showed her the census. She suddenly lit up and exclaimed, “Oh yes! That was before Georgie came back.” When the family left Watten for Aberdeen, Georgie was left behind with the McKays, rejoining the family again when she was about five. I am still looking for a connection.

The next few moves the family made took them through the World War 1 years. I expected to find that they moved around less; Adam was in his 60s and the recruitment of young men into the armed forces depleted the labour supply and may have made it easier for an older man to find work.⁵⁰ But a “home base” just never seemed to be part of the plan. Between 1914 and 1916 the family spent time in Kilmarnock, North Berwick⁵¹ and Maud⁵² in Scotland, then by late 1916 they had moved to North Wales and then to Leicester in 1917.⁵³ I was not able to definitely confirm every place on Anna Logan’s list, but I am confident that they did move to all the places on her list in the order that she wrote them. In 1918 Adam made a return to Essex and then moved to Weybridge in Surrey. By 1919 they were back in Scotland with stops in Elgin, Kirkliston, and Stow.⁵⁴ In 1920 the family were in West Wycombe, Buckinghamshire and Jessie Logan became the first of the family to find a “home base” of her own, marrying James Jack there.⁵⁵

In July of 1921, living at Haggerston, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Adam courted controversy again. He sued the farmer at Oudenarde, his previous employer, for £50,⁵⁶ claiming that he had been underpaid for his services. The farmer contended that Adam was unfit for the work undertaken, and that his daughter (Anna) was only 15 years of age and not a trained dairy woman. Adam likely had to contend with such problems often in his travels; ads for farm workers often specified either a single man, or a married man with a wife who could also work in the dairy. As a widower with young children, he may have had to tell some white lies about his situation to get work.



*Anna Logan in
May, 1924. Source:
Author.*

The family spent the years between 1921 and 1923 in the Scottish Borders, with spells in Dumfries, Hawick and Kelso. By 1924 they lived in Strathpeffer, confirmed by a photo, inscribed on the back in her own handwriting: “Miss Anna Logan, Kinnahaird, Strathpeffer, Ross-shire. Taken May 1924.”

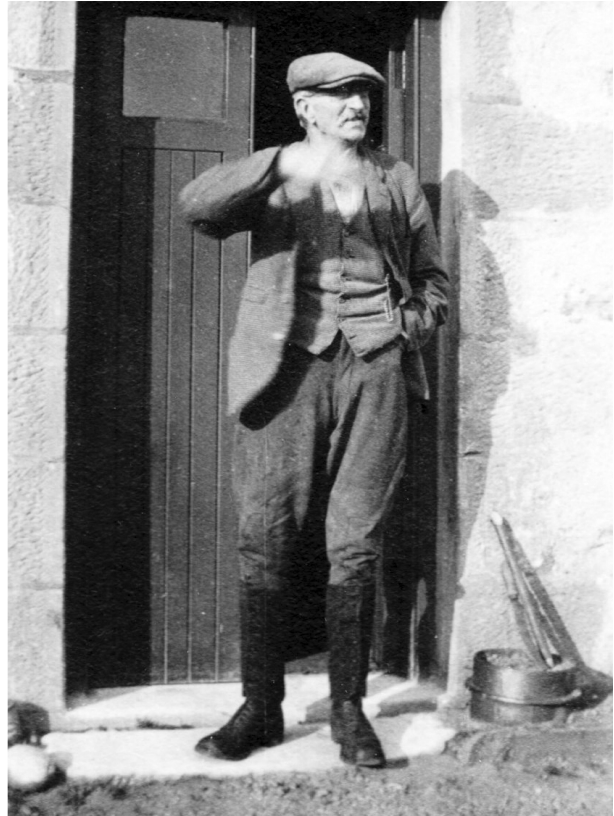
From Strathpeffer the family moved to Torbreck, Inverness. Ian and Elizabeth (Bessie) both married there in 1926⁵⁷ and 1932⁵⁸ respectively. Adam’s final move was sometime before 1930 with Madge, Georgie and Anna to Findowrie, near Brechin, Angus,⁵⁹ where all three daughters worked in the dairy. In 1930 Anna married George Stewart,⁶⁰ and settled in Brechin. The last four places on her list are addresses she lived at with George and their four children. Adam died at Findowrie, aged 83,⁶¹ living long enough to see the birth of Anna’s first child, my mother, in 1931. Adam is said to have told Anna that “she would make an auld man very happy if she could name her wee girl after her grandmother.”

And so my mother was named Annie Strachan Stewart, and bore the burden of those initials until she was old enough to change her first name to “Nan.”

Legacy of a Black Sheep

Several events in this story could explain the Strachan family disapproval of Adam, but I recently added a final crucial piece. After a bit more questioning about Georgie, a family source shared this: after Annie died, one of her brothers offered to take newborn Georgie and three-year-old Anna. Adam is reputed to have announced, “No child of mine will be singing in the street!”⁶² He then took off again to Watten with his family, where he left Georgie with the McKays. Aha...

I think of my great-grandfather as a strong and feisty man who had a difficult life. My grandmother Anna reportedly always talked of her father with the greatest respect. And indeed, despite the family disapproval, and through all the challenges, he always provided for his family. A favourite photo is of the Logan sisters, taken around 1930. They look happy and, as my mother would have said, “tidy,” in their Sunday best. And Adam’s legacy is Logan roots across Britain and elsewhere. Bessie settled in Inverness, Jessie in the Scottish Borders, Ian in St Albans and Anna in Brechin. Madge went to Canada and Georgie to Australia. Their stories are in my mother’s photo collection and will be told.



Adam Logan c. 1928. Source: Author.



The Logan Sisters c.1930. L to R: Madge, Bessie, Jessie, Anna and Georgie. Source: Author.

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