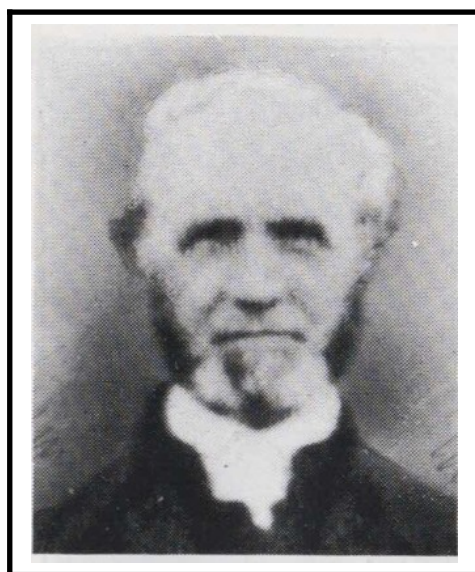


Rev Abraham Hillhouse McCausland (1815-1893) – the first Rector of Groomsport



Abraham Hillhouse McCausland was born on 21st July 1815 at Beech Hill, Londonderry. His parents were Marcus McCausland (1785-1872) of East Wall, Londonderry and Elizabeth (née Skipton) (1786-1836) whose family lived at Beech Hill. He was named after his grandfather, Abraham Hillhouse McCausland (1742-1820), a ship owner, who lived at Culmore House, near Culmore Point, Londonderry, a descendant of Robert McCausland of Fruit Hill, Drenagh, (Roe Park), Limavady. Abraham H. McCausland, the eldest of the 10 children of Marcus and Elizabeth, was a candidate for Holy Orders when he left Londonderry.

The Bishop of Down and Connor, Richard Mant, held an ordination in Holywood Parish Church in December 1838, when Mr. Abraham Hillhouse McCausland, with letters of dimissory from the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe, was admitted as a Deacon in the Church of Ireland.ⁱ

In 1844 Rev. A. H. McCausland was appointed Curate of St. Bestius' Church of Ireland, Killeter, Co. Tyrone, in Termonamongan Parish.ⁱⁱ Bishop William Alexander of Derry and his wife had connections with St. Bestius and in 2021 a new stained-glass window, "All Things Bright & Beautiful" was installed in the church in memory of the bishop's wife – Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895).

Rev. A H. McCausland married Barbara Martha Payne, the second daughter of Rear Admiral Charles Payne, on 3rd July 1850 at Wyke Regis, near Weymouth, Dorset. The bride's uncle, Rev. Francis ffolllott, officiated. Rev. ffolllott was rector at Wishaw, Warwickshire.

In 1853 the Rev. A. H. McCausland was appointed the first Rector of the newly created Parish of Groomsport.

The children of Rev. A. H. McCausland and his wife, Barbara:

Abraham and Barbara McCausland may have had 9 children, including a daughter who was stillborn in 1865. The following headstone in Bangor Abbey graveyard shows that four of their other children died young.



McCausland headstone D31 Bangor Abbey Graveyard

(Slightly chipped and in a low-stone enclosure. Stained and difficult to read.)

Sacred to the memory

of Marcus ffolliott aged 8 months who departed this life March the 12th A.D. 1854, and of Barbara Eliza aged 2 years, who departed this life May the 28th A.D. 1854, beloved children of the Revd. A. H. McCausland & Barbara his wife. Also Frederick John ffolliott, died Augt 29th 1863 aged 2 months. Also Marcus died Sep. 2nd 1863 aged 3 years.

Records have been found of three children of the marriage who reached adulthood.

Charles Menzies McCausland was born in Groomsport on 21st February 1855. He was a Tea Planter in Templestowe, Watawala, Ceylon, when he married Emily Frances Nelson on 6th December 1898 in St. Paul's Church, Kandy. Emily F. Nelson, born on 22/3/1870, was the second daughter of Admiral the Hon. Maurice Horatio Nelson of Gosport, Hants., and his wife Emily Burrard, daughter of Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Burrard, Bart. Charles M. McCausland died in Ceylon on 20th November 1899, less than one year after his marriage. He is buried in Christ Church graveyard, Warleigh, Kandy District. His wife, Emily, returned to England shortly after his death and died on 21/7/1961.

George Henry McCausland was born in Groomsport on 1st December 1857. He married Mabel Agnes Senior on 31st July 1889 at St. Martin's Church, Salisbury, Wiltshire. George was Foreign Correspondent for the Commercial Union Assurance Co. Ltd.. George died on 26th December 1920 in Carshalton, Surrey. Mabel died there in 1953.

Herbert Abraham McCausland was born in Groomsport on 22nd June 1869. Herbert McCausland was an Electrical Engineer in Ceylon retiring in 1897. He was living in St. Margaret's, Udapussellawa, Ceylon, a Tea Plantation, when he travelled to England to marry Evelyn Mary Hooke on 8th June 1905 at St. Stephen's Church, Ealing. Herbert returned to Ceylon with Evelyn, and in 1912 he retired for a second time and moved to Christchurch, Hampshire.ⁱⁱⁱ Herbert died in 1923 and Evelyn died in 1945.

Rev. A. H. McCausland's wife, Barbara died aged 57 on 23rd October 1877 in Weymouth, at the home of her mother. She was buried in All Saint's Church, Wyke Regis, Dorset.

Rector of Groomsport 1853-1880

During his time in Groomsport, Rev. A.H. McCausland was a Diocesan Secretary of the 'Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews' in Down, Connor and Dromore Diocesan Auxiliary^{iv}.

When the Belfast and Groomsport Branch of the RNLI was established in 1857, he was appointed Honorary Secretary, a post he held until he left the village.^v The first chair of the branch was Lord Dufferin, and the treasurer was Robert Perceval-Maxwell.

In 1865 John Waring Maxwell built The Lodge, directly opposite the Parish Church and it served as the Rectory until Rev. McCausland left Groomsport in 1880.

Rector of Wishaw, Warwickshire (1880-1893)

Rev. A. H. McCausland, was appointed Rector of Wishaw, Warwickshire on 1st April 1880. His late wife's uncle, Rev. Francis ffolliott, had been Rector of that parish until his death in 1887, aged 77.

Rev. A. H. McCausland married Caroline Julia Bowman East, in St John's, Weymouth on 23rd November 1881. She was the youngest daughter of Rev. J. East. The Rev. Connolly McCausland, the Vicar of Oakengates, Shropshire, Rev. A. H. McCausland's brother, officiated.

Rev. Abraham Hillhouse McCausland died on 15th April 1893 at Wishaw Rectory, aged 78. He was buried at St. Chad's Parish Church, Wishaw.

His second wife, Caroline J. B. McCausland, died on 30th January 1928 in Clevedon, Somerset, aged 86.

Hilary Maginnis
Secretary, Family History in North Down and Ards
March 2025

The image of Rev A H McCausland was published in "*Groomspout Parish Church 1842-1992: A story of faith and hope through 150 years*".

Footnotes

- i Freeman's Journal 20 Dec 1838
- ii The Statesman
- iii 1921 Census of England
- iv Downpatrick Recorder Dec 1856
- v Downpatrick Recorder 05 Dec 1857