



THE SCOTTISH GENEALOGIST

JUNE 2019

**The Herd Laddie
James Steele, Forger
Sailings to Rotterdam
Agnes Heriot**

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH GENEALOGY SOCIETY

Vol. LXVI No. 2

The Scottish Genealogy Society

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This edition of *The Scottish Genealogist* was edited by Caroline Gerard, with the valued assistance of Chic Bower at Printing Services Scotland and of all our regular and occasional contributors.

Front Cover:

The Society's Coat of Arms

Back Cover:

George Buchanan

Frans Pourbus the elder (1545 - 1581)

University of Aberdeen

Portrait by D.W. Stevenson, 1879

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Sales Secretary

After many years of dedicated service Rhona Stevenson has stepped down from the position of Sales Secretary. Anyone who would be interested in becoming Sales Secretary should contact the Library. There would be plenty of support and guidance given to any interested person. It's both an essential and an interesting part of our operations.

Treasurer required

So far, John Ellis is proving to be irreplaceable! Due to his ill-health, the Society needs a new Hon.Treasurer to keep and maintain our accounts. Members with financial experience are encouraged to consider this role. The Society is run entirely on a voluntary basis and co-operation and help from our Council will be given at all times.

Dorothy Tweedie has generously volunteered to perform this office, but on a temporary basis only.

Please contact chairman@scotsgenealogy.com

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Society is an academic and consultative body whose constitutional objects are to promote research into Scottish family history and to undertake the collection, exchange and publication of information and material relating to Scottish genealogy. Copies of our Constitution are available to members upon request. We assist members with modest enquiries, but do not carry out professional research. Private researchers are available, and we can also provide an ASGRA list upon request.

Meetings

Monthly meetings of the Society are held September to April in the Augustine United Church, 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, at 7.30pm around the 15th of the month, unless otherwise stated.

Membership

Single UK membership £20; Family, Overseas and Institutional membership £25.

The Society is recognised by the Inland Revenue as a charity. Members who pay UK income tax are thus encouraged to pay subscriptions under the Gift Aid Scheme so that the Society may recover the tax paid on these sums. Details of arrangements for the scheme can be obtained from the UK Membership Secretary.

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The Scottish Genealogist

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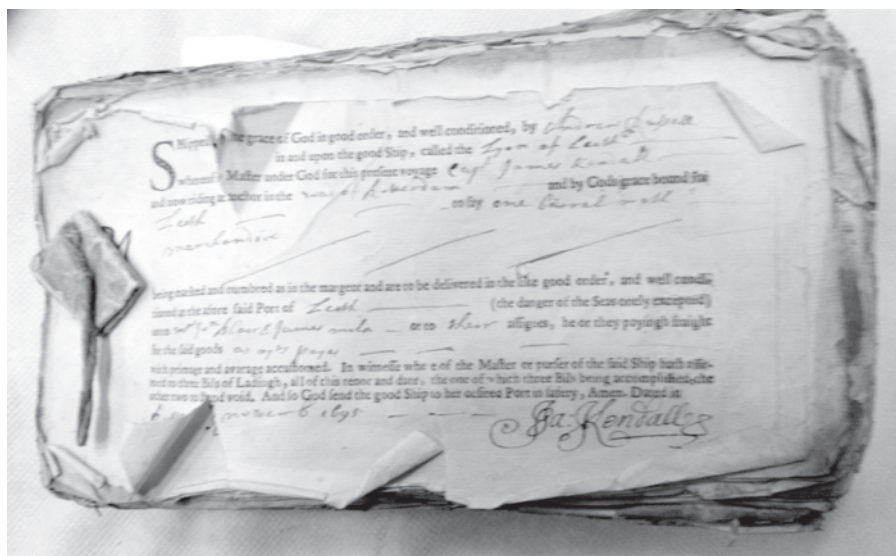
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Firth of Forth 1675 to 1695

Bruce B Bishop FSA Scot, ASGRA

In the National Records of Scotland there is a small box of bound dockets which detail the activities of Andrew Russell, merchant in Rotterdam, and some of his contemporaries, in their mercantile trade between Rotterdam and nearby ports and the ports along the Firth of Forth, including Leith, Borrowstounness, Kirkcaldy and Queensferry. Although about 90% of his trade was to the Firth of Forth ports, occasional voyages are also identified to Findhorn (Forres), Dondy (Dundee), Stockholm, Waterford, Dublin, Inverness, Perth, Newcastle, Garmouth (Elgin), Ayr, Irvine, Glasgow.

This study is restricted to the trade with the Firth of Forth, but the full database of voyages can be found in the SGS Library.



The shipping dockets contain details of the date of the voyage, the agent or ship-owner arranging the voyage, the ship's master, sometimes the name of the vessel, ports of departure and planned destination, and some details of the cargo.

Often the cargoes were very mixed and could vary from the shipment of one small package right up to a heavy load of pantiles.

In 1675 we find vessels such as the *Gift of God of Leith* under Henry Donaldson, *Susanna of Leith* under Robert Dunbar and the *Amitie of Leith* captained by Edward Burd. Other vessels included the *Margaret of Leith* (David Weems).

In 1678 the sailing season seems again seems to have run from early February until mid-December. In February the *Hope of Grangepans* under Thomas Smith sailed from Rotterdam to Borrowstounness, and in October and November the *Charles of Leith* was making similar journeys. *Solomon's Justice* under Alexander Smart was carrying small packages from Rotterdam to Leith, and on 23rd April James Douglas delivered 6100 pantyles to Leith. Patrick Sym, master of the *Margaret of Leith*, delivered various barrels and boxes, and on the 21st July he landed 5000 tiles at Leith.

The following year the voyages were more random, and mostly carrying small cargoes. Thomas Tod in the *Mary of Musselburgh* was sailing to Leith, whilst George Tod in the *Thomas* was sailing between Rotterdam and Perth. The *Hope Well of Irvyne* under James Fullarton was making longer voyages, to Irvine on the west coast, the *Chares of Alloway* was sailing to Elgin (probably Garmouth or Findhorn), and Thomas Gourlay was sailing between Rotterdam and Queensferry.

1680 saw a sailing season from January to October, but most of the cargoes again were small, and there seem to have been fewer new vessels and masters operating the route. There were still a few longer voyages, to Irvine and to Perth, but the Forth ports were always the principal destinations.

The *Sophia of Leith* under John Mackie, *Blessing of Leith* skippered by William Martyne and Henrie Frazer's *William of Leith* feature regularly in the voyages recorded in 1681. In addition to the usual general merchandise and boxes, hogsheads of linseed oil feature among the cargoes and there were shipments of iron from Rotterdam to Ayr. Other vessels sailed to the ports of Garmouth for Elgin, Findhorne for Forres, also to Perth, Borrowstounness, Queensferry, Kirkcaldy and Dublin.

John Mackie's *Sophia of Leith* continued to be busy during 1682, but in general the cargoes continued to be consignments of small boxes and items classified as 'general merchandise'. The one exception to this was the *George*, under William Bell, which carried 972 white marble stones and 745 clear stones to Leith. The sailing season in 1683 was a little shorter than previously, from mid-March to mid-October. Light cargoes were carried by several vessels from Rotterdam to Garmouth, Leith, Waterford Perth and Borrowstounness. In addition to Andrew Russell we now find vessels owned or operated by Alexander Lees, probably an Irish owner with the *Hope of Waterford* skippered by John Keanen and the *William of Leith* skippered by Henrie Frazer but for a time operated on behalf of the Dutchman Daniell de Neufueller.

1684 was a busy year from mid-March to the end of October. Prominent were the *Hope of Waterford*, the *Return of Bristol* and the *William of Bridgewater*, both sailing from Rotterdam to Waterford and Dublin, John Gardner's *Orange Tree of Prestonpans* trading between Holland and Perth. Several cargoes included iron bars and iron wyre, along with some French wine on Andrew Bisset's *Dame of Queensferrie*.

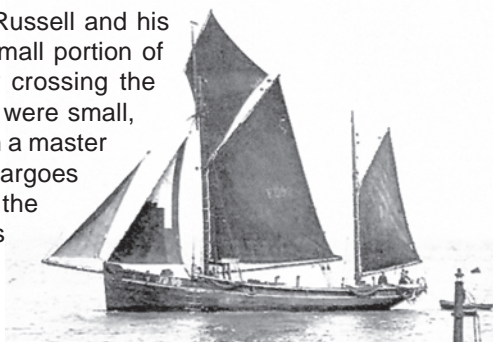
Fewer voyages are documented during 1685, but for a few months a new agent, William Livingston, appears on the scene with vessels operating between Borrowstounness, Dundee and Rotterdam. There were also sailings to Inverness, Dublin and Findhorn. In addition to the usual cargoes we find 2 boxes of Scots Linnen and 2 bags containing eleven hundred dollars.

1686 sees even fewer recorded voyages, which may represent a decrease in Andrew Russell's business activities as an agent and shipowner. There were no recorded voyages to Leith, but with the Irish ports predominating. The predominant ship in 1687 was the *Beattie of Bruntisland* skippered by John Rutherford, but the cargoes were very light, and only two voyages are recorded the following year and none at all in 1689.

There was a considerable resurgence in activity during 1690 with a variety of vessels sailing from Rotterdam to Leith, Borrowstounness, Queensferry and Dundee, but the cargoes were light. These included spirits and provisions, cargoes of soap, and also of linseed oil. The records also identify a couple of voyages from Amsterdam to Stockholm by the *Royssendeman* skippered by Hellbrandt Cornelliss, carrying mixed cargoes. The half-dozen or so voyages during 1691 included the *Lyon of Leith* carrying various small boxes, and various Bo'ness vessels including the *Concord of Borrowstounness* and the *Helen of Borrowstounness*. By 1692 Borrowstounness seems to have become the destination of choice, with fewer voyages to Leith. The *Lyon of Leith* and the *William of Leith* were, however, still crossing the North Sea with their cargoes of small boxes.

The number of documented voyages were becoming less by 1693, but the *Lyon of Leith* and the *Helen of Borrowstounness* continued to carry cargoes for Andrew Russell between Rotterdam and Leith or Borrowstounness. These cargoes were very mixed, ranging from one small bag to a cargo of 200 small trees. The four recorded voyages in 1694 all took place during the month of July, and again the *Lyon of Leith* was prominent among the ships, now captained by James Kendale. The following year the *Lyon of Leith* was skippered by Robert Nurratt for a final two documented crossings, after which the records in this collection cease.

Obviously the records of Andrew Russell and his associates can only represent a small portion of the hundreds of vessels regularly crossing the North Sea at this time. The ships were small, mainly around 90 to 150 tones, with a master and a crew of three or four. The cargoes were often very light, depending on the needs of businesses and individuals in Scotland and in Holland to get their goods transported quickly.



Sir Robert Hepburn (died 1683), Advocate, and the Hepburns of Keith Marischal

David Affleck

In 1944 the Scottish Record Society published the list of members of the Faculty of Advocates in Scotland, 1532-1943, edited by Sir Frances Grant, Lord Lyon. It included an entry for a Sir Robert Hepburn which referred to him as Robert Hepburn of Prentonan, that his father was Adam Hepburn of Bonhard and his wife was a Libra Spence and that he was enrolled in admitted as an Advocate in 1630. On the 7th January 1899 a Rev. Alexander Thomson Grant, Rector of the Scottish Episcopal Church at Leven at that time, finished a detailed investigation on the identity of a Robert Keith admitted as an Advocate in 1630.¹ His stated aim was to establish his parentage. He left no explanation in his papers for undertaking this major research. His detailed notes and conclusion were deposited in the National Records of Scotland (Ref RH15/205/6)² and include his assessment of two other Robert Hepburns, one being Sheriff Clerk of Berwickshire and the other being the third son of Patrick Hepburn of Smeaton. He was then ruled out as there was an entry in the Protocol book of Edinburgh Council that he died in 1646 and his older brother Frances was served heir. The identity of Robert Hepburn, Advocate, has continued to be linked by some family researchers to the Hepburns of Smeaton line without any apparent knowledge of the research and finding provided by the Rev. Grant. It is also still believed in Australia that the Hepburns of Keith were descended from the Hepburns of Smeaton. It is part of their folklore.

The Rev. Grant eventually concentrated on Robert Hepburn, Advocate, using as his main source the entry for 8th December 1630 in the Book of Sederunt for Lords of Council and Session, Vol V, folio 37. Another entry in folio 49 added that he was son to Adam Hepburn of Bonhard. The entry in the publication of membership of the Faculty of Advocates in Scotland edited by Sir Frances Grant, Lord Lyon, refers to him as Robert Hepburn of Prentonan. A search of Scottish place-names reveals that there is a place with a similar name in the Parish of Fogo in Berwickshire. There is also a Sasine for 29th September 1632 for the Shire of Berwick and a charter of 3rd. December 1633 referring to Mr Robert Hepburn and the consent of Libra Spence his spouse and an entry for the birth of a daughter Beatrice in the Edinburgh Register for 20th April 1633. A Sasine by James Earl of Home of 29th June 1645 refers to a Mr. Robert Hepburn Sheriff Clerk of Berwick. It is the published extract of Roll of Advocates that links Robert, son of Adam, to the estate of Prentonan and Libra Spence, probably as a result of the editor's desire to include genealogy notes. By the time the Scottish Record Society published their book on the Faculty of Advocates, the Rev. Grant had died.

Keith Marischal is an estate near Humber in East Lothian. There was a separate

branch of Hepburns at Humble in the 17thC descended from the Hepburns of Smeaton. The need to know more about the lineage of this Sir Robert Hepburn became highlighted as part of the exhibition on *The Last of the Hepburns of Smeaton* at the John Gray Centre in Haddington which is due to last for eighteen months to December 2019. Was he descended from the Smeaton line?³

The Ownership of Keith Marischal in the 17th Century

A publication by an Australian, Ross Hepburn, available on a CD with the title *The Hepburn Chronicle*, has a number of accounts based on the belief that Sir Robert Hepburn of Keith, a descendant of the Hepburns of Smeaton who died in 1683, had bought the estate of Keith Marischal from the Keith family, that he had died unmarried and that he had left the estate to his cousin Jean Ireland of Millburn. Her grandson, Robert Congalton, had then inherited the estate provided he adopted the name of Hepburn, becoming Robert Congalton Hepburn of Keith Marischal. But there are also other accounts that suggest the estate of Keith Marischal and the adjacent lands of Peaston had been acquired by Lady Margaret Hamilton, the widow of John Hope of Hopetoun, in 1696. Keith Marischal was recently sold with the story that it had belonged to the Hopes of Hopetoun from that year.

To understand the history of this site, a closer look at the events in the 17th Century has now been undertaken. There is agreement by most researchers that in December 1642 the estate of Keith Marischal was sold to a Robert Hepburn by the Keith family, Earl Marischals of Scotland, for 66000 merks (£43000) with a Deed of Reversion which allowed the lands to be redeemed by the Earl Marischal for the price paid. This was to be suspended for nine years but the Keith family rescinded that option before then. But who was the Robert Hepburn who purchased the estate as described?

The assiduous Rev. Grant pressed on with his detailed analyses. One of his research areas was the charters relating to the lands of Scone Priory. He noted that an Adam Hepburn of Bonhard was descended from Patrick Hepburn, Bishop of Moray, and had been legitimated on the 4th October 1545, and that an Adam Hepburn, Younger, eldest son of Adam of Bonhard, had been a party to a Contract of Wadset in 1597. Having identified Robert the Advocate's father, he was able to locate a Deed of Renunciation registered in 1632 that disclosed the second marriage of a Christian Chalmers to Adam Hepburn of Bonhard. This information meant he now knew the parents of Robert Hepburn, Advocate. The researcher then noted that in 1661, Robert Hepburn was made a Knight and that he held a number of public offices such as Commissioner for Supply for Haddingtonshire. A Robert Hepburn Advocate was described as husband to an Isobel Foulis in May 1638, and he was able to show that Robert Hepburn, Advocate, had been a witness of the baptisms of four children of George Foulis and his wife Janet Bannatyne, as well as witness to the baptism of the second daughter of Sir John Foulis and Margaret Primrose. Australian sources have claimed that he was

unmarried but there is a testament confirmed on 19th February 1655 for an Isabell Foulis, spouse to Robert Hepburn of Keith Marischal. She had died a month earlier and there were no children. He then married a Jean Cockburn of Ormiston, daughter of Sir George Cockburn, on 5th June 1665, and again there were no children. After looking for other records relating to this Robert and comparing handwriting and signatures which he submitted for a second opinion, the Rev Grant wrote:

The result of the examination of these papers is that the moral certainty of the identity of Sir Robert Hepburn Advocate, is very greatly strengthened. It is evident that while still a young man he had become eminent and very well off. I conjecture that he was not desirous of advertising or emphasising his descent from the Bishop of Moray; - in no single document out of many scores examined have I found him designated other than an Advocate and after he reached man's state he is never designated son of Adam of Bonhard except in the Roll of Advocate. These facts added together are quite sufficient to warrant me in assuming that his parentage is established.

Sir Robert died in June 1683. His widow, Dame Jean Cockburn, sought help from her family and the Earl of Findlater to gain access to his charter box in the belief that for several years before his death, Sir Robert had settled his estate on his (grand) nephew, a Robert Congalton. Her claim was heard by the Privy Council on 27th July 1683 but the record shows that access was denied on legal grounds.⁴ Robert the grandnephew consequently succeeded to the estate of Keith. There were eight conditions which included:

- The life rent to him and to his widow were reserved;
- Power to alter the disposition was reserved;
- Power reserved to sell or burden his lands;
- His successor to pay his debts and realise credits and to adhere to the Protestant faith under forfeiture;
- To assume the name and arms of Hepburn of Keith under pain of forfeiture.

There is a separate reference to a condition that on his death, his heir was to marry a Jean Cockburn or to lose the estate. The heir objected, lost and had to pay her compensation.⁵

There was an intention to pay 6000 merks a year to his widow out of the 14000 merks anticipated value but the estate had substantial debts. The lands of Peaston had already been granted to the Earl of Hopetoun as security for debts, but there was land at Blackness near Hopetoun which the Hopes were trying to buy from him and which had a disposition of guarantee to the Hopes while they raised the sum of £7495 Scots. It was subsequently sold to the Hopes. Forty years later, an attempt was made by a James Rickard Hepburn to annul the sale

effected by his father as heir to Sir Robert, on the ground that the holders of Keith being disabled by Sir Robert's settlement by burdening the estate could not sell any part of it. The case went against him.

The identity of Sir Robert Hepburn and his ownership of Keith Marischal was now certain although the addition to the entry in the Roll of Advocates by Sir Frances Grant remains. But what about the succession and the question of Hepburn ownership?

Robert Congalton Hepburn

Robert Congalton, a member of the significant Congalton of Congalton family, complied with the requirement to assume the name of Hepburn, acquired ownership of Keith Marischal, borrowed money with the estate as surety and married a lady of his choice, an Anne Murray. In the National Library of Scotland there is a manuscript account of Dr. Sinclair of Herdmanston being commissioned with others in October 1715 by the Marquis of Tweeddale to "bind Robert Hepburn of Keith to keep the peace or bring him to Haddington and to seize horses and Arms in and around Keith".⁶

This is an excerpt of the report submitted on the incident.

Hepburn of Keith with his two brothers, two sons and three servants came out of the Inner Gate, well mounted on horseback and well accoutred and shot and wounded a servant. A fire-fight ensued in which the seventeen-year old son of Robert was killed.

(The report also refers to the Gate of the Outer Court which does not feature in the current house because of later improvements).

It was submitted by a William McPhail, schoolmaster at Nether Keith, because of "the Scandalous and Malicious Misrepresentation of the action at Keith being industriously spread abroad to defame Dr. Sinclair of Herdmanston." He had a commission from the Earl of Tweeddale along with two other Deputy Lord Lieutenants to bind Robert Hepburn to the Peace and, if he refused, to bring him to Haddington.

After the incident at Keith, Robert Congalton Hepburn was captured at the Battle of Preston in 1715. He is listed as a prisoner and described as Robert Hepburn, son to Keith, along with an Alexander Congalton (merchant) and a Frances Congalton (surgeon) and Sir William Congalton of that ilk. He was then imprisoned in Newgate in London from where he managed to escape to the continent. He later returned home and resumed family life against the background of Court action for failure to repay loans. In 1713 he had borrowed two thousand merks from an Alexander Wilson, brewer and Burgess of Edinburgh, which led to a petition for repayment in 1717.⁷ Lord Milton, a Fletcher of neighbouring Saltoun, was a member of the newly-appointed Commission of Forfeited Estates and would have been aware of the option to leave the Hepburns to resolve their financial affairs rather than the problem being past to the Commission. Robert

Congalton Hepburn died in January 1730. His eldest son James would play a key part in the later Jacobite rebellion of 1745. The house remained in Hepburn ownership until about 1790 when the house and part of the estate was eventually acquired by the Hopes of Hopetoun.⁸

Appendix

There are no objects linked to the Hepburns of Keith on display in the current exhibition but to some members of the Hepburn network in Australia there is a Hepburn of Smeaton connection as this comment on a sabre sword said to belong to a Capt. Robert William Hepburn (1782-1866) illustrates. He had made his home in Australia in 1828.

*The sabre sword contains as one of its 6 decorations the Hepburn motto "Keep Tryst" above a bridled horse tethered under a Yew tree. This exactly matches the Hepburn of Smeaton Arms as represented by Nisbet in 1816. This is more than mere speculation and clearly supports the connection from the Hepburn's of Waughton to Smeaton, Alderston and Keith.*⁹

In addition, it is recorded that there are two entries in Captain Robert Hepburn's Psalter.

A reference to the marriage of Robert Hepburn to Jean Cockburne in Humble on 5 June 1655.

They had at least two sons. Robert of Keith and the Rev William of Fowlis Wester.

Their genealogy debate clearly continues. Perhaps the clue is that there were two Keiths in the Parish of Humble, Keith Marischal and Upper Keith, with links to the Hepburns of Humble and through them to the Hepburns of Smeaton.

Notes

¹ The Rev. Alexander Thomson Grant is described as an Antiquarian in a Preface to the Annals of Penicuik. See www.electricscotland.com/history/penicuik/index.htm

² The records lodged include all the detailed sources and references used by the Rev. Grant.

³ The last of the Hepburns of Smeaton Hepburn. The exhibition, curated by David Affleck, will continue until December 2019.

⁴ Register of the Privy council. 1681-1684 p 521c27/7/1683

⁵ NAS RH15 /205/5/5/1 and reported in Fountainhall, 17 and 29th January 1688

⁶ NLS. MS.487, f. 75).

⁷ NAS. E605/32

⁸ Fletcher of Saltoun acquired part of the land at that time.

⁹ Hepburn, Ross G., The Hepburn Chronicle. (Compact Disk) Melbourne 2009.

September talk

To whet the appetite for his forthcoming book on this topic, Richard Torrance will enlighten us about the Incorporation of Candlemakers of Edinburgh.

James Steele, Forger

A joiner to trade, he lost the sight of his right eye fighting in France in the First World War.

In 1917 he returned to Edinburgh and shared a house with his sister at 13 Caledonian Road. They were joined by Robert Ramsey, a long time friend and fellow tradesman.

Steele and Ramsey had studied engineering and had plans to develop a process of electroplating, which would be used to renovate old machinery, and they set up a workshop in Murieston Crescent Lane, just off Dalry Road, Edinburgh.

A lack of orders and a dwindling amount of cash soon forced the pair to turn their machinery to a more profitable use, the manufacture of counterfeit coins.

When they were arrested in 1930 the full extent of their operation became apparent, starting in 1923 they had been forging half-crown pieces (12½ p). To get them into circulation Steele gave them to a young boy to purchase postal orders from a sub post office in Leith and deliver them to Steele who was waiting nearby.

The postmistress eventually became suspicious and asked the bank to check the coins. Incredibly the bank assured her they were genuine, but this did not persuade her, so she reported the matter to the police, who sent the coins to the Royal Mint where their true nature was revealed.

On the 16th January 1930 Steele was arrested by two detectives who followed the boy from Elm Row post office to Union Place where Steele was waiting. During further enquiries Ramsey was arrested, and during a search of Steele's home and workshop, the police recovered a haul of 1,350 counterfeit half-crowns (at 8 to the pound), a notebook containing detailed instructions on the process of making counterfeit coins and a vast array of equipment. The police admitted that there was an unknown number of coins in circulation.

At their trial an expert from the Royal Mint refused to go into details of the method they used as it was similar to the Mint's method of making genuine coins. He was quoted as saying, "These two men have immense ability and there is no record of a case where such high skill has been shown in the manufacture of counterfeit coins".

The trial judge Lord Alness praised the postmistress for her dogged persistence and he awarded her the unprecedented sum of ten guineas for "meritorious conduct". In addition she was awarded £50 from the Treasury. Ramsey and Steele were sentenced to three years penal servitude.

Ramsey died in 1955 and nothing more was heard of Steele until 1964.

Because their coins were so good Steele and Ramsey were used as an example to young policemen in the art of counterfeiting during their training. A young recruit, at West End police station, was called to a complaint of noisy neighbours in Caledonian Road. He could not believe it was the same James Steele he had heard about only the week before at the police training school but decided to call on Steele out of curiosity. There he found Steele, now 80 years old, surrounded by all the equipment needed to manufacture coins, and was apparently manufacturing 50 florins (10p) a week to subsidise his old age pension. He bought the metal strips for production

from ICI in the docks for 10 shillings (50p) a strip and he could get 20 coins out of each strip.

At his trial Nicholas Fairbairn Q.C. defended him. A report from the Mint said that his methods were the same as in 1930 but that his techniques had improved, his coins were near perfect and beyond detection, there being only two ridges short on the milled edge. Nicholas Fairbairn produced evidence that none of the coins made by the Royal Mint had a definite number of ridges as they were done by hand. Steele told police the number of coins he had made, and the Mint made a correspondingly fewer amount the following year. When asked by the Judge why he was making florins instead of half-crowns he replied that he "did not have the strength to operate the machine to make half-crowns". The Judge took into account his age and sentenced him to two years in jail. His sight in his remaining eye became worse and he was released before he completed his sentence.

On his release an offer of an all-expenses-paid holiday in America was made by a group of American Italian businessmen from New York, but Steele declined the offer. He was often seen nursing a ½ pint of beer and a whisky in Nisbet's Bar on Dalry Road. He died in Edinburgh in 1968.

During an interview after his arrest he solved a mystery which had baffled Royal Mint officials since 1917. On his release from the army it had been his intention to make sovereigns and had started production when, to his disgust, sovereigns were ceased to be made, so in a fit of pique, rather than destroy the dies, he sent them anonymously to the Mint where they remained a mystery for almost 50 years.

Contributed by John Stevenson

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The Herd Laddie

Christopher Reekie



James Wyllie,
The Herd Laddie

In Scoonie Cemetery at Leven, Fife, a headstone recently restored in the old section may catch the eye of the visitor. Cleaned and re-erected, it is the memorial to James Wyllie, the Herd Laddie, who was, as the inscription proclaims, world champion at the game of draughts for forty years.

The visitor may notice that his surname is spelled Wylie, with a single l, a curious error that occurred when the headstone was first set up after his death in 1899. James always signed Wyllie, with a double l, and this spelling is borne out by his birth and death certificates and all the booklets of his matches that he published. The sculptor's mistake, which is repeated with James' daughter Helen in the same inscription, can be attributed to the fact that there

are both Wyllie and Wylie branches in this old Scots family, and the sculptor put the alternative spelling. Genealogists will know that numerous surnames lend themselves to different spellings, and are written down, regardless of what the individual owners use.

In any case, there is no doubt whose grave it is. Wyllie died in Glasgow and his remains were carried by train to Leven, where he had lived for many years, and he was buried in his family plot at his request.

He is remembered to this day as the most charismatic figure in the history of draughts, for which he combined the roles of pioneer, missionary, teacher, and publicist. He played in public from his youth until his death at 80, devoting his life to this board game, and showing as much enthusiasm in his twilight years as when he was young.

Always eager for combat and undismayed if defeated, he sought out opponents wherever he could.



Wyllie memorial.
Photo by J.W. Thomson

Thousands upon thousands of games were played. He won the vast majority, drew some, and lost few. In encounters with equals, he played 55 matches, of which he won 39, lost 12, and drew four. His travels took him to a host of places in the British Isles. He made two extended tours of North America between 1873 and 1885 and journeyed in Australia and New Zealand 1887-91.

His style was brilliant and original. He explored the labyrinth of draughts and devised moves with which he led adversaries to their doom. He was the inventor of devastating coups. Far from selfishly hiding new moves he had discovered, he set an example by publishing his play.

A physical description by John Hedley in *The Draught Board* in 1869 said that he was under middle size, powerfully built, full-featured, and with a ruddy complexion, brown hair, and light blue eyes. Another writer said in a magazine in 1909 that Wyllie was a thick-set figure with a craggy face, bent shoulders, and a keen and piercing eye. He attributed much of his success to his habit of walking daily in the open air, eating simple meals, and being abstemious with alcohol.

His aspect bordered on the austere and he was reticent and guarded in speech, unless in conversation on his favourite theme, draughts. Then he became voluble and communicative, and a pleasing smile betokened a kind and genial nature. Nevertheless, the *Glasgow Weekly Herald* said that he often talked politics and would finish by “condemning the extraordinary waste of public money by our legislators”. He was firm in his opinions, an attitude that reflected his approach to life.

Careful with money, he charged sixpence a game, regardless of his opponent. None evaded his insistence on payment. When he toured Australia, he raised his charge to a shilling a game. Should anyone fail to pay at once, he would say in a hard voice: “Whaur’s yer shullin’?”

What was long undecided was the exact date of Wyllie’s birth. Draughts literature at the end of the 19th century left researchers to choose between two dates, 6 July 1820 and 6 July 1818. Both emerged in newspaper reports in the last decade of his life. When he died, his obituaries differed over the date. His death certificate says “81 years”, suggesting 1818. A further complication was that, earlier in his long career, *The Illustrated London News* in October 1843 said he was born on 8 July 1822. It is probable that Wyllie himself did not know when he “first saw the light”.

The standard account of his life says he was born at Piershill Cavalry Barracks, Edinburgh, the son of a trooper in the Royal Scots Greys who had fought at Waterloo and was later a sergeant major. When his father was discharged from the Army in 1826, he returned with his wife and family to Kilmarnock, their native place. Wyllie’s death certificate names his parents as Hugh Wyllie, handloom weaver, and Jane Baird. I found a record that Hugh Wyllie, soldier, married

Jean Baird at Kilmarnock on 10 June 1811. An inquiry to the Army in Scotland brought information that a Corporal Hugh Wyllie (spelled with one l) was on the muster roll of the Royal Scots Greys (known officially as the 2nd Dragoons) at Waterloo.

Uncertainty over Wyllie's birthday persisted in draughts books through the 20th century. Despite a prolonged search of old parish registers at New Register House in Edinburgh, I found no trace of his birth. I decided to research Hugh Wyllie's military career and learned that the records of the British Army were in the National Archives at Kew, London.

With the help of an independent researcher, Mr R. W. O'Hara, I traced Hugh's service from 1815 to 1826 (documents WO 12/522 to WO 12/525). An entry for the 2nd Dragoons was found in the Army Register Book of births, baptisms, and marriages. A certified copy issued by the General Register Office for England (SA 065972) states that a child, James, was born on 8 July 1818 at Piershill and baptised on 12 July 1818. His parents were Hugh and Jean Wyllie and the rank of his father was sergeant.

This established Wyllie's true birthday, which I discovered, as described, and published in 2007. A second significant finding was uncovered, that Hugh Wyllie, by then a sergeant major, died on service in Ireland in December 1826. It contradicts the traditional account that he retired from the Army. It now seems probable that James' widowed mother returned to Kilmarnock and his boyhood was difficult, producing the confusion over his age.



Wyllie ready to play

Wyllie's skill in draughts grew from his early years, aided by his powerful memory and much practice. In the early 1830s he was able to give the best players in his locality odds of a man and defeat them easily. He was apprenticed in Kilmarnock as a carpet weaver, but abandoned the business for the nomadic life of a packman. With a stock of hardware he traversed the countryside, dispensing his wares, and playing draughts against his customers.

His nickname arose because a Biggar cattle farmer, Mr Porteous, discovered his prowess and introduced him to the Edinburgh "cracks" as "my herd laddie". Wyllie routed all opponents he faced in the capital, which led to the locals arranging a match in the city between him and Andrew Anderson, a stocking

weaver at Carluke, who had been recognised as the champion of Scotland since the 1820s.

The contest took place in a tavern in the Fleshmarket Close on 25 March, 1839, and resulted with Anderson the winner by eight games to six. Two later matches were also won by Anderson. But the young firebrand refused to be shaken off. In their fourth match at Carluke in 1844, Wyllie was the victor for the first time. Their fifth and final match took place in Edinburgh in 1847 for the championship of Scotland and is seen in draughts history as its first world championship. After 16 days, Anderson was the winner by 9 games to 6 with 31 games drawn. When he retired from match play soon after, the mantle of champion was inherited by Wyllie.

At Dunfermline in 1851, he married Helen Hendry, and the couple settled at Leven, where all of their nine children were born. No aspirant to Wyllie's title appeared until Robert Martins, a Cornishman who had been demolishing all before him in England, marched north to confront the Scots.

In the annals of draughts, the names of Wyllie and Martins are joined inseparably. They contested seven matches in a rivalry over 40 years. Martins won the first encounter in 1859 in a hotel in Edinburgh's Leith Street Terrace, where the St James Centre stood later. Wyllie regained the championship in 1864 at a match in the Trades Hall in Glasgow and had the upper hand in all their subsequent meetings.

Martins settled in Scotland after marrying a local lass at Douglas, Lanarkshire, and both he and Wyllie toured frequently. The difference between them, an observer said, was that while Martins could polish off local opposition with equal ease, Wyllie's understanding of human nature enabled him to leave a favourable impression in any village and soon be invited back.

By 1873, the Herd Laddie was world famous and he spent three years touring the United States and Canada, with marked success. His triumphant progress had a sting in the tail. In 1876, as he prepared to sail home from New York, he played a match of 50 games for the world championship against Robert Yates, an 18-year-old prodigy. Scores were level when the 50th game arrived. Yates won it after recovering from a losing position, and had wrested the crown from the renowned Scot.

Wyllie did not seem to be discouraged, despite the surprise caused in Scotland. Negotiations for a return match were afoot in 1878 when Yates relinquished the title to begin studies in medicine. It reverted to Wyllie by common consent, and with characteristic tenacity, he ignored advancing years. In 1881 he was in the United States again for a second visit, lasting four years. In 1882 he retained the world championship in a drawn match against another American star, Charles F. Barker, of Boston. Then he toured Scotland and England again, before sailing from London in 1887 for four years in Australia and New Zealand, where Scots

emigrants received him warmly and provided strong competition. He remained world champion until 1894, when he undertook a marathon match in Glasgow against James Ferrie, the best of a new crop of Scots players. Scheduled for 94 games to test every available opening, it concluded after 88 with Ferrie ahead by 13 wins to Wyllie's six, with 69 games drawn.



Wyllie (left) and Martins in *The Last Battle* in 1897

Despite the setback, Wyllie was as keen as ever. Soon after, he played in an international match against England in London, and helped Scotland defeat her neighbour. In 1897. 38 years after their first meeting, he faced Robert Martins for the final time. This match, known as “The Last Battle”, was supported by public subscriptions for the veterans and took place in Glasgow and Manchester. Wyllie won by 10 games to four, with 38 games drawn.

In 1899, another international against England was to be staged in Glasgow. Wyllie was chosen for the Scotland team, then had to withdraw through illness. The morning after the Scots had won again, sad news came that the Herd Laddie had passed on.

Obituaries in the press paid tribute to his remarkable achievements in making the game of draughts known internationally. *The West Lothian Courier* said that seldom had the death of a person in the humbler ranks of society caused such widespread and genuine regret. *The People's Friend* said that Wyllie had possessed fame of a sort, yet was not known to *Who's Who* (that handy asylum

of celebrities). However, every draughts player of the slightest eminence knew of him, and votaries of this fascinating game formed no inconsiderable class.

A fact that goes unmentioned in accounts of this country's social history is that Scotland was once the leading draughts-playing nation in the world and that she dominated the game for over a century, from the 1820s to the 1930s. Progress in its science was brought about by Scots players, authors, and analysts, an achievement that was followed intently by enthusiasts in England and America. Five Scots became world champion in draughts: Andrew Anderson, James Wyllie, and James Ferrie, already mentioned, then Richard Jordan and Robert Stewart. James Lees, of Dalmellington, wrote *Lees' Guide to the game of draughts*, a book first published in 1893 which has been an invaluable tutor to generations of players. Lees said that draughts, although apparently simple, was so profound that no player could say: "I have nothing more to learn." He hit the nail on the head. Draughts is widely seen as a pastime suitable for children and old men, but serious players know it is deep and difficult. It requires a delicate touch and under its plain surface is intricate and full of unexpected beauties. Today, despite the appeal of technological pursuits, it continues to entrance, and its followers play in organised clubs and tournaments in Britain, Europe, and the United States, where it is called checkers.

The enduring fame of the Herd Laddie brought an American checker player, Joe McDaniel, of Tulsa, Oklahoma, to Scotland in October, 2017. He made a point of visiting Wyllie's grave during his sight-seeing tour and was horrified to find that the headstone was broken and lying flat on the ground. He informed the Scottish Draughts Association and expressed the hope they would put the stone up again. The task was accepted readily. Enquiries to the cemetery authorities at Kirkcaldy Crematorium found there was no barrier to the SDA going ahead. Although Wyllie had a large family, no living descendants are known. Others interred there are his wife, daughter, and son-in-law. An index of lair holders gave the plot in the name of James Wyllie, so ownership had remained unchanged.

The restoration was carried out by Leven stonemasons, John Y. Thomson. It has ensured that the memory of the remarkable career and achievements of a pioneering Scot will live on.

Acknowledgements

Permission for above details granted by the National Records of Scotland and the National Archives at Kew, London.

Assistance given by the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh Central Library, the Mitchell Library, the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, and Scotsman Publications is acknowledged.

"For the record"

For the May/June issue of "History Scotland" Dr Tristram Clarke has written an interesting article about early women registrars.

Agnes Heriot, Mother of George Buchanan

Ray Harriot

According to his biography, George Buchanan was born in the parish of Killearn in Stirlingshire in 1506, the son of Thomas Buchanan of Drummikill and his wife Agnes Heriot.¹ He described the family situation after his father's death as being "almost reduced to the extremity of Want".

Agnes Heriot, George Buchanan's mother, is said by all his biographers, but on slight authority, to have been a daughter of Heriot of Trabroun, East Lothian, and related to George Heriot who is well-known as the founder of Heriot's Hospital in Edinburgh.

There is apparently a lot of confusion. This is evident in referring to Ballingall's two books on the Heriots. In 1878 G. W. Ballingall refers to Agnes Heriot as the sister of James Heriot, son and apparent heir of Andrew Heriot of Trabroun, who predeceased him.² However, in 1894 he says that Agnes Heriot was probably a sister of Andrew Heriot, Laird of Trabroun, who died in 1531.³ It appears neither is correct.

George Buchanan proceeds to praise his mother for raising five boys and three girls to manhood and womanhood under the direst of circumstances. Her husband Thomas Buchanan died when George was a young boy and the family was basically bankrupt. Agnes Heriot was clearly a shrewd, capable woman, who overcame much to raise her family.

After the death of her husband, Agnes Heriot left the Moss, and in 1513 she took a lease of a farm in Menteith making all her boys (including George, not yet eight years old) joint tenants.⁴ Raising five sons and three daughters was no easy task. The family was in dire need for money and received financial support for son George's education at the University of Paris from his maternal uncle James Heriot. Evidently, James must have recognized George's talent at a very young age. Since James was referred to in George Buchanan's writings as his maternal uncle it would make him his mother's brother.

George Buchanan thrived in Paris. It was there that he began to develop his



George Buchanan's memorial in Greyfriars Kirkyard, Edinburgh
Portrait bust by D.W. Stevenson, 1871.

poetic talents. But, alas, within two years, his uncle died, and the funding stopped.⁵ George Buchanan was forced to return to Scotland to pursue his education. He attended the University of St. Andrews and became a distinguished scholar, poet, and historian. This account would indicate that George Buchanan's uncle was James Heriot, Canon of Ross and Justicar of Lothian, who died in 1522. Moreover, the executors of James Heriot's will were John Heriot, most likely his father, and Thomas Buchanan, George Buchanan's brother.

Research shows that Agnes Heriot is indeed of the Heriots of Trabroun, but is more likely the daughter of George Heriot, one of the sons of Simon Heriot, the Second Laird of Trabroun. Ballingall provides little information regarding Simon Heriot in his various books, completely omitting the fact that he had several children besides James Heriot, the heir and next Laird. Simon Heriot also had sons David, William, Robert, George, and Patrick.⁶

George Heriot and his brother William Heriot were witnesses in 1471 to the action by their father Simon Heriot that attempted to transfer Trabroun back into the hands of the King. Shortly thereafter Trabroun was resigned instead to their older brother James who became the next Laird.⁷

In 1477 George Heriot was also one of several witnesses to the signing of a deed for the Cathedral of Ross. Rosslyn had long been established as the family home of the Sinclair family which was responsible for the building of the Cathedral; so, there was evidently a strong connection between the families and this most likely had something to do with the Sinclairs choosing James Heriot to be chaplain of Rosslyn Chapel.

George Heriot had at least three children. The eldest son would be John Heriot who was married to either a Sinclair or a Livingston. This connection was made by examining his son Robert Heriot who married Helen Swinton. Robert is said to be a cousin of Henry Sinclair, son of Oliver Sinclair and his wife Isobell Livingston, and his father's name was John.⁸ This would suggest that his father was married either to a Sinclair or to a Livingston. Robert Heriot is identified as being Mr. Robert Heriot of Lymphy (near Currie), otherwise of Trabroun.

Henry Sinclair was born in the year 1508 and was the youngest son of Sir Oliver Sinclair of Rosslyn and his second wife Isabella Livingston (the first wife being Margaret Borthwick). His elder brother was the well-known Oliver Sinclair, who was appointed by King James V to be the supreme commander of the army as he prepared for the invasion of England — and occasioned its disastrous route at Solway Moss. His grandfather was William Sinclair, Earl of Orkney and Chancellor of Scotland, who, by his mother, Egidia Douglas, was descended from the royal family of Scotland. These circumstances were much in his favor, for it was no trivial recommendation in the time of feudal pride to be able to claim an alliance with the blood of Douglas and the house of Stuart. It appears that the Sinclairs used these connections to the benefit of themselves and related families such as the Heriots.

Robert Heriot and Helen Swinton were very prominent and successful at marrying their three daughters into very prominent families:⁹

- Helen Heriot married Sir Thomas Craig
- Agnes Heriot married Sir James Foulis
- Jean or Joanne Heriot married John Laurie (Lawrie), bailie of Edinburgh

Ballingall indicated that Helen Heriot who married Sir Thomas Craig was the daughter of James Heriot, Laird of Trabroun – his second daughter named Helen.¹⁰ This is incorrect.

The identification of Robert Heriot also shows a strong connection to the family of George Heriot, the goldsmith and jeweler to King James VI. He and his wife, along with George Heriot the elder (father of the goldsmith) are referred to regarding the baptisms of the Bannatyne children.¹¹ His connections to the Bannatynes, Sinclairs, and the Heriot goldsmiths are noteworthy. Though Robert does not appear to have been a resident of Edinburgh, he had connections there, as in 1550 he was made a burghess “gratis” by the town council, granting him privileged status without some of the voting rights. In 1553 he was appointed Sheriff of Roxburgh and Peblis, positions which probably required political connections.¹²

After Robert Heriot’s death his wife Helen Swinton married Edward Henryson, a prominent advocate and classical scholar, and lived in Glasgow in a tenement left to her daughters.¹³

There is a monument in the Greyfriars Kirkyard erected by their son Sir Thomas Henryson, Knight, in 1636 that reads in part:

And to the memory of Mr. Edward Henryson, Doctor of Civil and Canon Law, his most loving father, senator, and one of the judges of the consistory of Edinburgh; and dame Helen Swinton, his dearest mother; and of three most beloved uterine sisters — Dame Agnes and her most worthy husband, Sir James Foulis, Baron of Colintoun; Dame Helen, and her most renowned husband, Mr. Thomas Craig of Riccartoun, most famous lawyer; of Sir Lodovick Craig of Riccartoun, Knight, a most honorable senator; Jean and of her husband, John Lawrie, bailie of Edinburgh; of one sister germane, Elizabeth Henryson, and her notable husband, John Nicolson of Dryden, most eloquent advocate, and the judge of the said consistorie.¹⁴

So, the question is: at what point did members of the Heriot family migrate from Trabroun, near Lauder, to Glasgow? First, most likely not all Heriots accompanied John Heriot, the first Laird of Trabroun, to his new estate when he received the charter in 1423. James Heriot had as late as 1426, three years after this charter, been appointed bailie of the King and to pay the fermes (rents) of the lands of Nether Liberton.¹⁵ It is very likely that some family members stayed with him; Trabroun was not a huge estate.

We know for sure that the Heriot presence in Glasgow occurred prior to the year 1504 and lasted for several hundred years. There is no doubt that the early Heriot inhabitants were associated with the Heriots of Trabroun and were well-connected to both the ecclesiastical rulers of Glasgow and the Crown — and used these connections to great benefit. The Heriots appear to have had connections to the Blackadders of Tulliallen and to Henry Sinclair, both of whom held several high-level church positions in Glasgow at this time and were trusted confidants of the King.

Thus, it appears they most likely they went around 1484 when Robert Blackadder was appointed Bishop of Glasgow. Blackadder was frequently in Rome after 1471 serving as a liaison between the Pope and the King. He was involved in seeking a bride for King James, arranging the marriage treaty with England in 1502, and consummating the marriage between James IV and Margaret, daughter of Henry VII of England in 1503.¹⁶

James of Heryot, father of the First Laird of Trabroun, was granted the position of bailie of the lands of Tulyaloun (Tulliallan) in the Regality of Strathearn by Archibald, Earl of Douglas, in 1414, so may have known Robert's parents.¹⁷ In addition, Sir Robert Heriot, who was appointed the Canon of Glasgow in 1500 and Canon of Askirk in 1503, was often referred to as a "nephew" of Archbishop Robert Blackadder, so there might have been a family connection.¹⁸

Robert Blackadder was a liberal prelate and expended vast sums on the church and altarages. Then in 1491 the Bishop of Glasgow was granted the right to operate a public scale for weighing produce. It was called the Tron and it gave its name to the Trongate. In 1492 Glasgow was erected into an archbishopric and Robert Blackadder was appointed as the first Archbishop.¹⁹

In 1495 Mr. Robert Blackadder, Archbishop of Glasgow, and John Heriot are witnesses to a transaction involving the transfer of land by Patrick Blackadder in exchange for the right of him and his successors to be deputy in said bailiary and to hold courts and draw profits therefrom.²⁰

In 1504 James IV granted "special respite" and protection to the men, kin, tenants, factors, and servants of Robert (Blackadder), Archbishop of Glasgow, for their participation in the murder of Thomas Rutherford at Jedburgh. Among the many parties mentioned as having been respited with protection are Robert's brother Adam Blackadder as well as John Heriot and Patrick Heriot and George, his brother. It also appears that David Heriot, Laird of Trabroun, a brother of Patrick and George, participated in this affair, but was declared a rebel and did not receive respite. This again demonstrates the closeness of the two families and confirms a presence in Glasgow by at least 1504.²¹

Archbishop Robert Blackadder had the authority for appointing people to ecclesiastical positions within the Diocese of Glasgow, for granting deeds to church lands within Glasgow, and for appointing the Bailies that oversaw them. The Heriots took advantage of all of these.

Since much of the land in Glasgow was ecclesiastical it was controlled by the bishop or archbishop who doled it out to rentallers (renters). A rental right could be obtained:

- By original grant from the Bishop
- By succession
- By purchase of the “kindness” of the rentaller
- By marrying the daughter of a rentaller

While most of the Rentallers in Glasgow were of humble rank, several churchmen of note, and persons of noble and gentlemanly blood accepted holdings. One of the churchmen was Henry Sinclair, Dean of Glasgow, a scion of the family of Rosslyn. Among the rentallers of noble rank were also found successive generations of the family of Heriot (Cardarroch), Elphinstone (Blythswood and Gorbals), Forester of West Niddrie and Corstorphine, and others. Henry Sinclair was a cousin of Mr. Robert Heriot of Lymphoy (otherwise of Trabroun) whose extended family resided in these tenements in Glasgow. The Heriots also had associations with the Foresters of Corstorphine.²²

When Archbishop Blackadder made his ill-fated pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1508, he was accompanied by John Heriot, Robert’s father. Along the way they stopped in Orleans, France, to visit John’s brother James Heriot. Archbishop Blackadder died in Venice and referred to John Heriot in his will.²³

Mr. James Heriot of the Church of St. Michael in Dumfries is listed in 1507 among the “Procurators of the Scottish nation and Students of Law” at the University of Orleans in Paris. Another of the students is Robert Blackadder, rector of the Metropolitan Church of Glasgow. They are apparently visited that year by Archbishop Robert Blackadder and John Heriot on their way to a pilgrimage in Jerusalem.²⁴

It appears that before acquiring the position of Canon of Ross sometime prior to 1520, James Heriot was associated with the Diocese of Glasgow and Henry Sinclair. This makes sense as his father George Heriot is observed in Glasgow as early as 1504 and his brother John is located there about the same time. It is also likely that Henry Sinclair, being part of the Sinclairs of Rosslyn, had something to do with his appointment.

And of course, John’s third child would be Agnes Heriot, who married Thomas Buchanan, as she was a sister of James Heriot, Canon of Ross. It would also explain the naming of a son George (after her father) and Patrick (after her uncle).

I often wondered why, if Agnes Heriot was a daughter of the Laird of Trabroun, she turned to an uncle who was a clergyman for financial support. One must remember that this was pre-Reformation Scotland and during this time it was the clergy that held the riches and not some lowly landowner. These Heriots had their ties to the Sinclairs and Blackadders who had their connections to the

Royal family. This enabled them to get lucrative appointments. Meanwhile, back in Trabroun the Laird did what he could to survive.

Another indication that George Buchanan was connected to these Heriots is the fact that when in 1569 Mr. George Buchanan, pensioner, discharged a debt from Gilbert, Earl of Cassillis, the witnesses were Mr. Thomas Buchanan, most likely his brother, and Matthew Heriot, Burgess of Glasgow.²⁵ Matthew appears somehow connected to these Glasgow Heriots.

In his autobiography George Buchanan lavished considerable praise on his mother for raising him and his siblings during austere times. I believe we can now put her in her rightful place in the family. She was definitely “of the Heriot family of Trabroun”... just not where Ballingall... and everyone else who has cited his work... has placed her.

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2nd Lieutenant Robert John Fleming, Royal Flying Corps

Patrick W. Anderson, FSA Scot

A friend of mine, Griselda Fyfe, was examining the registers of Edinburgh schools and saw in the Edinburgh Institution Register the name of ROBERT JOHN FLEMING, who, the register said, was a casualty of the Great War. I began some research and found that 2nd Lieutenant Robert John Fleming, Royal Flying Corps, was killed on 29th January 1918 and buried in the Edinburgh Dean or Western Cemetery. A check of the index of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website showed him listed but with no age or next of kin shown. I found also that 2nd Lieutenant Fleming was not listed on the Scottish National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle. I undertook full research of this young airman to have his name added to the Rolls.

Robert John Fleming was born on 4th June 1898, at 12 Minto Street, Edinburgh, the son of William Fleming, Preserve Manufacturer, and his wife Agnes Shillinglaw.

The Edinburgh Institution & Melville College Roll of Honour records that Robert was a pupil at both schools during the years 1904 to 1909. His elder brother Victor and younger brother Gerald attended the Edinburgh Institution before they moved abroad to work in Mexico later on.

The 1911 Census for Edinburgh, St James District, records William Fleming, 58 years, Preserve Manufacturer, and his wife Agnes Fleming, residing at 14 East Claremont Street with three sons and one daughter. plus a servant Robert John Fleming is recorded as being only 12 years of age and a scholar.

On leaving school it would appear that Robert was apprenticed to a firm of Civil Engineers. On 28th February 1915, aged just 16 years of age he enlisted in Edinburgh in the 1/6th Battalion, The Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment) as Private and Service Number 3120. This Battalion was formed on 4th August 1914 in Edinburgh as part of the Lothian Brigade, Coast Defences, Scottish Division, and after supplying drafts to 4th and 8th Battalions was at Selkirk and then Peebles before returning to Edinburgh during August 1915. This Battalion was formed as a Territorial Force Battalion and not a Regular Battalion or Service Battalion. After training in the UK the Battalion embarked at Devonport on 5th September 1915 for Alexandria. They arrived there 10 days later. Robert served as part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, but less than a month later he was admitted to No 5 Stationary Hospital at Cairo suffering from Otitis, which is inflammation of the ear, but soon he was discharged as fit for duty on 23rd October of that year. The Battalion served with the Western Frontier Force until 8th May 1916 when it departed from Alexandria for Marseilles, landing there on 16th May 1916.

The Royal Scots 1914 - 1919 by Major John Ewing, MC, includes this paragraph:

This garrison duty ended on the 3rd May and next day the Battalion was conveyed to Alexandria, from which city it marched to a camp at Sidi Bishr, and a few days later, on the 8th, it embarked on the "Saxonia" for France. Those who served with the 6th Royal Scots from September 1915 till May 1916 will always retain a kindly memory of Egypt with its pyramids, mosques, its palm trees, and the unparagoned Nile. Many of the Battalion regarded the palm trees as the most typical and the most welcome sight of the country, for they were what travellers looked for in the desert; where they stood out clearly on the horizon against the hard blue sky men could feel assured that a well lay somewhere near.

Later Major Ewing adds:

The 6th Battalion on reaching Marseilles on the 8th May (1916) was put into quarantine for a month owing to a suspected case of typhus. Its losses had not been heavy, but it was patent that Edinburgh could not make good wastage of both the 5th and the 6th, so on the 15th June the two Battalions were combined under Major McLagan as the 5th/6th Royal Scots.

When he arrived in the Theatre of War, France and Flanders. it was established that Private 3120 Robert John Fleming was underage for field service overseas, so was posted to 20 Base Depot at Etaples near Calais. During November of that year he was sent home, but after two weeks he joined the 2/4th Battalion (Ross Highland) Battalion, Territorial Force, Seaforth Highlanders, that had been formed at Dingwall during September 1914 and served at Fort George, Blair Atholl and Pitlochry until moved to Norwich. On 18th November 1916 he was posted to Cromer in billets whereupon he applied for a Commission into the Royal Flying Corps. He was posted on 5th July 1917 to No. 2 Cadet Wing, Royal Flying Corps at Winchester and was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant on 11th October 1917.

The Supplement to the *London Gazette*, 17th October 1917, records:

The under mentioned Cadets to be Temporary 2nd Lieutenants on Probation
11th October 1917:

Robert John FLEMING

It would appear that Lt Fleming was then based at Croydon Airfield with 40 Training Squadron, Royal Flying Corps, training to be a pilot. On 29th January 1918 he took off from the airfield at Croydon to fly to Joyce Green Aerodrome, Dartford, flying Sopwith Camel No B6322, on his last flight before he would become a qualified pilot. His school obituary related:

Whilst 200 feet above the runway there he was seen to spin into the ground for no apparent reason. He had to be cut out of his aircraft, and he was later found to have a compound fracture on the skull and other serious injuries. An Inquest at Dartford returned a verdict of Accidental Death, and

it was suspected that the sight of another aircraft which had crashed just an hour before at Dartford had un-nerved him at the last minute . His Commanding Officer wrote: "He was a most cheerful and fearless officer and very promising pilot.

The Scotsman newspaper for Thursday, 31st January 1918 announced:

Deaths

FLEMING - At Croydon, on the 29th inst. (the result of aeroplane accident). Robert John, Sec Lieut. Royal Flying Corps, in his 20th year, second son of William Fleming, 20 Claremont Street.

The Scotsman of Saturday, 2nd February 1918 announced that the funeral would be private.

The Royal Flying Corps Casualty Card for Fleming, 2nd Lieutenant R. J. General List; 2/4 Seaforth Hdrs, R.F.C. 40 T.S. Squadron. Records: Viz: (This Report is in green ink.):

Date report received – 31.1.1918 – Aero 40 Croydon,

Date of Casualty: 29 .1.1918 - received by telephone.

Where Occurred: Home:

Type of Machine: Sopwith Camel No B6332:

Nature of cause of Accident: Stalled when Landing

Result of Accident: Killed

Remarks: (Written in blue ink)

Court of Inquiry – The Court viewed and examined the wreckage and considered the evidence, are of the opinion that the accident was due to the following causes: The action was not due to negligence and that the pilot Lt. Fleming alone was responsible

That due to flat turn to the right the machine went into a right hand opening nosedive into the ground from a height of about 150 feet causing death to Lt Fleming and Sop. (Camel) – a Wreck.

Next of Kin recorded as W. Fleming, father. East Claremont Street, Edinburgh.

The Imperial War Graves Commission - Grave Registration Report Form for Edinburgh -Western /Dean Cemetery:

Royal Flying Corps: FLEMING: 2nd Lt. R.J. 29th January 1918

Plot – VII, grave 417; Marble (type of Monument): Private (type of Grave).

The Death Certificate registered in the Sub Division of Dartford in the County of Kent, No. 93 refers to Robert John Fleming, male, aged 19 years, 2nd Lieutenant Royal Flying Corps, 40th Training Squadron, Croydon. Death occurred on 29th January 1918, Joyce Green, Dartford. Cause of death recorded as being: Compound fracture of the skull through falling with his aeroplane to the ground whilst attempting to land. By misadventure, Suddenly. Certificate received from H. B. Sewell, Coroner for the County of Kent. Inquest held 1st February 1918. Registered on 4th February 1918 by the Registrar at Dartford.

The Medal Card for Robert John Fleming was located and this recorded:
Royal Scots, Private 3120; Seaforth Hdrs, Private 203695; Royal Flying Corps
2nd Lieutenant .

Commissioned in RFC on 10 Oct 1918

Star & Medals issued to Robert Fleming:

Medals awarded: Victory & British War Medal and 15 Star

Theatre of War first served in 2 b (Gallipoli & Aegean Islands).

Date of entry theatre: 5th September 1915.

Address: W Fleming Esq. (father) 20 E Claremont Street, Edinburgh.

The Victory and British War Medals Roll was dated 13th December 1920, the
1915 Star roll was dated 31st January 1921. Both rolls record him serving with
the Royal Scots. This medal roll shows that he was discharged to a Commission
in the RFC on 10.10.1917.

The Gravestone in Dean Cemetery in Edinburgh records:

In loving memory of Robert John Fleming, 2nd Lieutenant Royal Air Force, second
son of William and Agnes Fleming, born at Edinburgh 4th June 1898, killed in
aeroplane accident at Dartford 29th January 1918.

The form relating to Soldiers Effects was found and it recorded that 2nd Lieut
R. J. Fleming, RFC, killed 29th January 1918 had £9.17/5d plus War Gratuity of
£15.

A War Memorial was traced in Edinburgh thus:

To the Glory of God and in Honoured Memory of the Edinburgh Institution who
fell in the Great War 1914-1918

"Their name Liveth for Evermore."

One of the names on the memorial plaque is that of Robert John Fleming.

This memorial to casualties from the Edinburgh Institution and Melville College
was unveiled by John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir) on 24th February 1922.

A file was compiled and submitted to the Trustees of the Scottish National War
Memorial, Edinburgh Castle. Notification was received from Lt Colonel Roger
J. Binks, Keeper of the Rolls and Secretary to the Trustees, that the name of 2nd
Lieutenant Robert John Fleming, Royal Flying Corps, had been accepted and
that the Roll would be amended to include this young casualty .

The Roll will include the following details:

Royal Flying Corps:

Fleming, Robert John, T/ 2nd Lieutenant, birth - Edinburgh, death 29th January
1918 - War 1914-1918, Theatre: UK, killed in flying accident ,

Other details: 40 Tr. Sqn, Croydon, formerly Royal Scots and Seaforth
Highlanders.

I am so pleased to hear that the Trustees accepted the information I supplied to
them so that this young soldier and airman can be remembered for his service in
War.

Points to Note:

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (formerly Imperial War Graves Commission) records :

Fleming, Robert John, 2nd Lieutenant, death 29th January 1918

Royal Flying Corps,

Grave Ref: 7. 417 Edinburgh Dean / Western Cemetery.

1911 Census return

14 East Claremont Street, Edinburgh :

Parents: William Fleming , Preserve manufacturer and Agnes Fleming

Children: Victor W. Fleming (14), Robert J. Fleming (12), Gerald H Fleming (10), Agnes D. Fleming (6)

One servant who spoke both Gaelic and English.

The Royal Scots 1914-1919 by Major John Ewing, MC: Volume 1, pages 241 to 242 and page 259.

Page 259 records "The 6th Battalion on reaching Marseilles on the 8th May was put into quarantine for a month owing to a suspected case of typhus." But the publication *British Regiments 1914-1918* by Brigadier E A James, OBE. TD, records on page 42 that the 1/6th Royal Scots "8th to 16th May 1916 Alexandria to Marseilles, 15th June 1916 amalgamated with 1/5th Battalion."

I presume the Battalion moved to France over the period of days above-mentioned but maybe Pte Fleming and his company moved in the early part of May.

Airmen died in the Great War 1914-1918 by Chris Hobson records on page 346:

Training Squadrons: Known as Reserve Aeroplane Squadrons from August 1914 to 13th January 1916 and Reserve Squadrons from 13th January 1916 to 31st May 1917 when redesigned as Training Squadrons.

The Wikipedia website records that James Thomas Byford McCudden, VC, DSO & Bar, MC & Bar and MM & Bar was an instructor on several occasions at RFC Joyce Green at Dartford during March 1917 and November 1917 etc

British Military Aircraft Serials – 1912- 1966 by Bruce Robertson records on page 48:

Serial Numbers: B6201-6420: 250 manufactured

Aircraft Type Sopwith I F 1 Camel: Sopwith built mainly with 130 hp Clerget engines.

Medals awarded: Medals returned for Disposal and a date of 28th January 1921, with new medals issued in 1923 with his full name. It seems his father may have had new medals issued!

The headstone in Dean Cemetery records the details of 2nd Lt R. J. Fleming's father's death at Edinburgh in 1923, his mother's death at Exeter in 1950, and that his only sister, Agnes Darling Wilson, died at Edinburgh in 1999 in her 95th year, her husband predeceasing her in 1969.

The website *Scottish War Memorials Project*, part of the Scottish Military Research

Group, records the Institution and Melville College War Memorial with photographs and further information, plus reports from the 1955 Daniel Stewart's College Centenary history :

In 1922, the cenotaph which stands in front of the school was raised. It was designed by William Carruthers Laidlaw, a former pupil of the school, in the form of a simple obelisk of dressed freestone, thirty feet high, on a pedestal which is placed on an elevated platform. On three sides are decorative bronze panels with elaborate symbolism recording the names of the dead. The Memorial was unveiled by John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir) on the 24th February 1922.

In 2002 extensive repair and restoration work was carried out on the memorial. This included the addition of two bronze plaques commemorating the First World War dead of the Edinburgh Institution and the Second World War dead of Melville College. The names of casualties from the Edinburgh Institution and Melville College are recorded on a bronze plaque on permanent display in the school's Library.

Acknowledgements:

The late Griselda H. M. Fyfe, Edinburgh.

Derek Robertson, Arbroath.

Gordon Leith, Curator, Archive & Library, RAF Museum Hendon.

Lt Colonel Roger J. Binks, Keeper of the Rolls and Secretary to the Trustees of the Scottish National War Memorial, Edinburgh Castle.

Sources:

Edinburgh Institution & Melville College Roll of Honour.

Dean (Edgehill) Cemetery & Parish Church Inscriptions, Edinburgh.

Edinburgh Post Office & Street Directory.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission. (Website).

Scottish National War Memorial. (Website).

Scotland's People: Birth & Census. (Website).

Imperial War Graves Commission: Graves Registration Report Form: Edinburgh Western (Dean) Cemetery.

The Royal Scots 1914-1919 by Major John Ewing, MC (1925).Volume 1.

British Regiments 1914-1918 by Brig, E A James OBE., TD. Royal Scots & Seaforth Hdrs .

Ancestry (website). Medal Rolls & Soldiers effects etc.

10656 Supplement to the *London Gazette* 17th October 1917: 2nd Lt RJ Fleming RFC.

Airmen Died in the Great War 1914-1918 compiled by Chris Hobson. (1995).

British Military Aircraft Serials 1912-1966 by Bruce Robertson (1966).

RFC Casualty Card held at RAF Museum, Hendon.

A Record of the Battles & Engagements of the British Armies in France & Flanders, 1914-1918 by Captain E A James.

The Scotsman Death Notices 31st January 1918 & 2nd February 1918 re 2nd Lt R J Fleming, RFC.

De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour 1914-1918 page 102.

The War Graves of the British Empire. Scotland (1931) .

Officers Died in the Great War (CD Rom)

The Long Long Trail (website) re medal roll theatre of war codes.

Scottish War Memorials Project (website).

Wikipedia (website) re Dartford Joyce Green aerodrome.

Death Certificate entry: 1918 Death Dartford Kent.

Their Name Liveth: The Book of the Scottish National War Memorial by Ian Hay.

Cross & Cockade WW1 Aviation Historical Society: Summer 2018 Volume 49/2. Page 49.155 re 2nd Lt R J Fleming RFC.

Scotland and the Flemish People

Edited by Alexander Fleming and Roger Mason

ISBN: 978 1 910900 27 7; John Donald/ Birlinn Ltd; £20

"The Flemish people have punched well above their weight in Scottish history."

This volume, by several contributors, is the result of the research project referred to in previous issues of the Journal. This aspect of our heritage has been underplayed for too long. You might be forgiven for believing that it would be of interest only to those of known or possible Flemish descent, but in fact it's fascinating reading for all of us, with an easy and flowing narrative.

Early chapters of the book focus on Flemish history, its economy, conditions, etc, interesting in themselves, but which explain also why the area became such an important trading hub. Naturally the export of wool to the Continent was important: Scottish monasteries, it seems, instigated larger sheep-farming concerns in some parts to promote this trade and to boost our economy. In exchange we imported some luxury goods and artworks, such as the Tournai marble for Bishop Kennedy's memorial in St Salvator's Chapel, St Andrews, the delicate and beautiful chandelier in St John's Church, Perth, and the Trinity Altarpiece, now in the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh. It's pointed out that unfortunately some fabrics and metalwork have not survived to display their fine workmanship, partly through wear and fragility and partly because metal was often melted down and recycled. Other imports were engineering and architectural skills, such as the pantiles and crow-stepped gables, characteristic of the east coast.

With the goods came merchants, their families, servants and many skilled artisans and craftsmen, who settled down and assimilated into Scottish society, bringing, of course, their many cultural and linguistic influences to add to our national experience. Sports and games comprised one such theme: curling, caitchpule and (without wishing to start any "discussions"!) golf. Along with all that came new or extra vocabulary for weights and measures, coinage and maritime terminology, now all so integrated that we no longer notice.

Not neglected is immigration to other parts of the UK, including, perhaps surprisingly, Pembrokeshire in south-west Wales.

While the book concentrates largely on the economic and cultural influx, it wouldn't be complete without a mention of the Fleming family and the parts it has played in Scottish history, from the Wars of independence, to the life of Mary, Queen of Scots, to James Graham, Marquis of Montrose during the Civil War, to the 1715 Jacobite Uprising and beyond.

The level of immigration may have been higher than we've previously understood. As is made clear, this came about without conflict, conquest or violence, but rather because of economic and cultural reasons, with benefits for all involved. Thus the Flemish influence and the more leisurely influx gently added another aspect to our multi-faceted heritage.

The book includes also some very attractive illustrations of artefacts, paintings and pages from Books of Hours.

Caroline Gerard

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- 21 October "Spanish 'Flu and Infectious Diseases in Edinburgh" by Louise Williams, Archivist LHS Lothian
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