



TRANSACTIONS
OF THE
EAST LOTHIAN
ANTIQUARIAN AND FIELD
NATURALISTS' SOCIETY

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*Cover illustration: Sideshowes, Haddington Hiring Fair c 1905. St Mary's Parish Church in background.
East Lothian Council Library Service.*

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Since retirement from a career in social work, DAVID AFFLECK has been using his former professional skills in assessing families and communities in a longer historical context. History, which he had to drop from his curriculum at secondary school, has become one of his new horizons. Present research includes assessing the early history of the Auchinleck name in Scotland.

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MARTIN A. FORREST has a number of art history publications to his credit and was the first to draw attention to the Traquair murals. He is a former vice-chair of the Scottish Society for Art History and as well as being an artist runs the Martin Forrest gallery in Haddington.

FRASER HUNTER is the Iron Age & Roman Curator in the Department of Archaeology at the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh.

JEAN LINDSAY was born in Derby. Her publications include *The Canals of Scotland* (1968), *A History of the North Wales Slate Industry* (1974), *The Scottish Poor Law: its operation in the North-East from 1745 to 1845* (1975), *The Trent and Mersey Canal* (1979) and *The Great Strike: a History of the Penrhyn Quarry Dispute of 1900 to 1903* (1987). She now lives in Musselburgh.

JEAN SHIRLAW lived with her husband at Gladsmuir Manse 1955-84 and now stays in Edinburgh.

DAVID SYDESERFF was brought up in Tranent and has returned to East Lothian after wanderings in Edinburgh and elsewhere. He has researched widely in the history of land and property ownership in Tranent

PROFESSOR ROSALIND MITCHISON

11 April 1919 - 20 September 2002

Rosalind (Rowy) and Murdoch Mitchison came to East Lothian when a group of five families bought Ormiston Hall and built homes there between 1970-75.

Rowy became editor of East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists Society's Transactions in 1977 and from then until 1991 she ensured that the publication was of a high standard. During that time it was well received in academic circles, as it still is, and it contained a balance of articles written by academics and local enthusiasts.

The council of the society was enriched by her presence. Her suggestions for speakers and her contributions on other matters were always helpful.

In 1991 she succeeded Sir David Ogilvy Bt. as president of the society. She carried out the office with enthusiasm and enlivened meeting with her ready wit. She contributed to the society in various ways not least in making academic contributions. In 2000 she decided to retire. Her health was failing and in particular she found night driving difficult. The council of the society accepted this decision with great regret.

I was honoured that she suggested that I should succeed her. She had been one of my tutors long before at Edinburgh University. I had enjoyed working with her in the society. I had enjoyed her humorous but wise advice, her suggestions and her generous sharing of useful historical facts.

One of her early publications was *Agricultural Sir John, a life of Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, 1754-1835*. It is a work of thorough scholarship. Sinclair's descendant Robin Sinclair said the author wrote it in a lively style. This was important because the subject was not lively. Sir Walter Scott dismissed Sir John as Sir John Jackass, or the Cavaliero Jackasso, a great bore.

The book was timely. It was written to commemorate the bi-centenary of his birth, and by Rowy, at the suggestion of Sir Lewis Namier. There was a new awareness of the importance of Scottish social history. Rowy was to play a key role in this development. Her real passion was to become an interest in the lives of ordinary people and of women in particular. When she was asked in 1987 to give a



lecture in Dunbar Local History Week, it was not the drawing room she sought but the servant wench in the provost's kitchen.

The book highlights Sinclair's great achievement, the completion of *The First or Old Statistical Account of Scotland*. By his determination and energy the parish ministers were induced to compile reports of their parishes at what was a time of great economic and social change [c 1790]. The agricultural revolution was almost complete and the industrial one was well underway.

The exercise was repeated in the middle years of the nineteenth century and again after the Second World War. The publication of this work coincided with the publication of Rowy's book.

Students of history who were working at the time the *Third Account* was being published were increasingly studying social history. They recognised the first and second Accounts as invaluable source material. Whatever his shortcomings, they were prepared to rise up and bless Sir John Sinclair and welcomed this biography.

Towards the end of the twentieth century East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society became increasingly aware that the volume on East Lothian, edited by Dr Catherine Snodgrass, which was one of the three prototype volumes, published in 1953, was out of date as an account of the county.

They took the important decision to set up The Fourth Statistical Account for East Lothian Society and apply for lottery funding to do a *Fourth Statistical Account of East Lothian*.

Rowy was firmly behind this project and joined the committee, giving it at the early stages invaluable support. She was happy to commend the project and maintained interest in its progress until illness overtook her.

Her other achievements and publications have been ably recorded elsewhere. Due recognition of her contribution to the study of Scottish history came with the award of two honorary degrees by St Andrew's University and the Open University and by her election as a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1994.

We, fellow members of East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists Society, were glad to have benefited from her scholarship and shared with her the love of the built and natural landscape of East Lothian.

Stephen Bunyan

THE HILL AT THE EMPIRE'S EDGE: RECENT WORK ON TRAPRAIN LAW

by IAN ARMIT, ANDREW DUNWELL & FRASER HUNTER

INTRODUCTION

Traprain Law is one of Scotland's largest and best-known hillforts. Indeed thanks to the 'Traprain Treasure', a substantial hoard of late Roman silverware found during excavations in 1919 (Curle 1923), it is also one of Scotland's best known archaeological monuments, both nationally and internationally. Adding to its long-running fascination for archaeologists is its geographical position, between the Roman frontiers of Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall, and thus variously inside and outside of the Roman Empire as its northern boundary fluctuated over the first few centuries AD. Thus the site is of prime importance in any attempt to understand both the impact of the Roman presence on native Iron Age communities in southern Scotland, and wider processes of cultural contact on the fringes of the Roman Empire.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The hillfort sits atop a volcanic plug overlooking East Lothian's fertile and undulating coastal plain (Fig 1). Despite a long-running and highly destructive quarrying operation (responsible for the substantial 'bite' missing from the north-east sector of the hill) it remains a striking presence in the modern landscape. Unsurprisingly, as a dominant landscape feature in the region, the site has revealed traces of at least sporadic activity from an early date (Jobey 1976). Mesolithic flint tools may represent no more than 'background noise', but finds of Neolithic polished stone axes from several locations hint at occupation of that period. Material of a ritual and funerary nature, including a series of rock carvings, suggests some special status for the hill during the Early and Middle Bronze Age. However, the major archaeologically attested episodes of occupation date to the Later Bronze Age and Roman Iron Age, while a possible hiatus during the pre-Roman Iron Age has been the subject of considerable debate (e.g. Hill 1987; Close-Brooks 1987a).

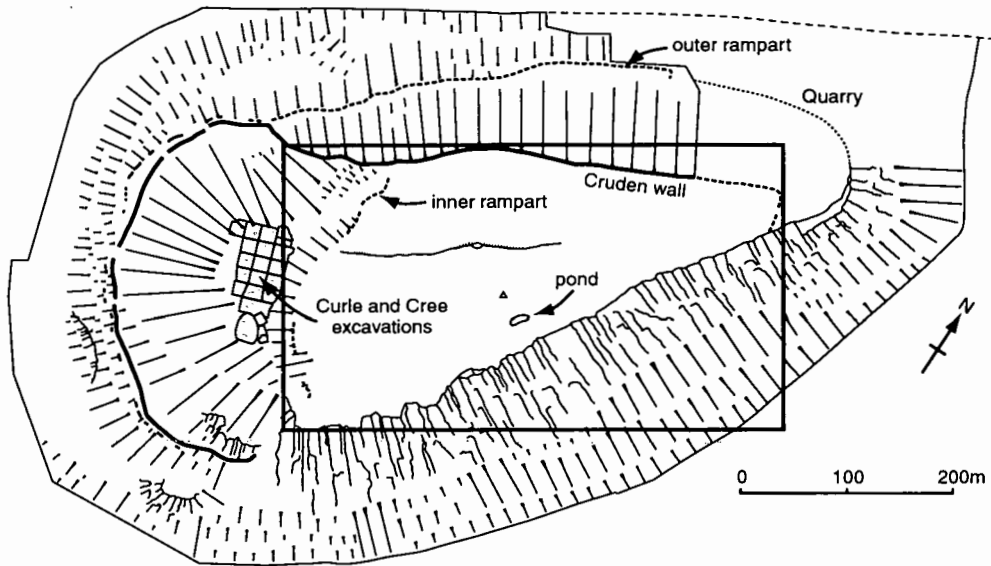
THE HILL AT THE EMPIRE'S EDGE



Fig. 1: Traprain Law from the north.

The excavated evidence for these later periods derives principally from the western shelf of the hill (Fig 2), which was almost entirely excavated by Alexander Curle and James Cree between 1914-15 and 1919-23 (see Jobey 1976; Armit 2001). It rapidly became clear from their excavations that the inhabitants of Traprain Law enjoyed a special status during the Roman period. The substantial quantities and wide range of Roman material, dating from the first to the fifth centuries AD, remain unmatched on any other native site in Scotland. Indeed, they indicate the presence of a community whose close and sustained contacts with the Roman world suggest a high level of 'Romanisation' which was not reflected to any significant degree in contemporary sites of lesser status (for a recent analysis see Hunter 2001). Thus was born the idea that Traprain Law represented the fortified capital of the Votadini, the people recorded by Ptolemy (writing in the second century AD) as occupying south-east Scotland, who have tended to be interpreted as a Romanophile 'buffer' state on Rome's northern flank (e.g. Gillam 1961, 77).

THE HILL AT THE EMPIRE'S EDGE



rock outcrop

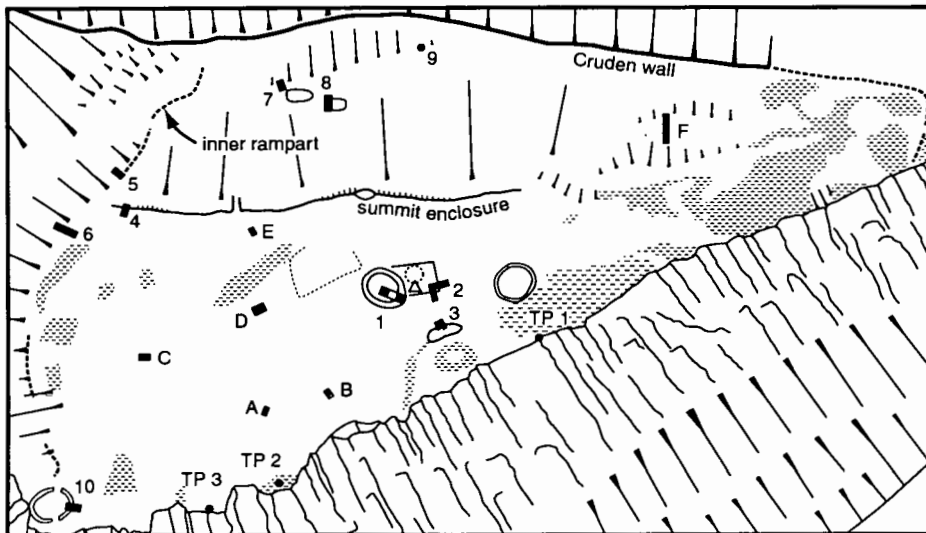


Fig. 2: Traprain Law, indicating the major areas investigated by Curle and Cree and the approximate locations of trenches excavated as part of the present project.

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The apparent abandonment of the site by the middle of the fifth century, not long after the deposition of the Treasure, seemed to reflect the failure of this 'puppet regime' once its patron had disappeared from the scene.

THE TRAPRAIN LAW SUMMIT PROJECT

As well as being one of Scotland's premier archaeological monuments, Traprain Law is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is a popular local amenity used by walkers and climbers. The density of use has, over recent years, raised a series of management issues, including erosion, vandalism and fire risk. The Traprain Law Summit Project arose principally as a mechanism by which the nature and extent of the archaeological remains across the most vulnerable part of the site (essentially the area within the inner rampart; Fig 2) could be assessed, and the nature and degree of the various threats evaluated. The project has been developed as a joint venture between the National Museums of Scotland, Queen's University, Belfast, the University of Edinburgh, and CFA Archaeology Ltd, with one of its principal products being a Condition Report intended as a resource for the site's owners, East Lothian Council, and the Traprain Law Management Advisory Committee which comprises representatives from a range of organisations and local groups.

Fieldwork was undertaken over three brief seasons from 1999 to 2001, and comprised a re-survey and condition assessment of the summit area, and targeted, small-scale excavation in a range of locations (Fig 2). These limited excavations were intended both to evaluate the series of discrete structures previously recorded on the hill (Feachem 1956), principally rampart lines, platforms and small enclosures, and to assess the degree to which archaeological remains survived within the extensive 'blank' areas of the summit. This latter aim was particularly important as the early excavations on the hill, while extraordinarily productive by the standards of the Scottish Iron Age, were highly localised and need not have indicated dense settlement across the entire hilltop.

LATE BRONZE AGE, IRON AGE AND ROMAN-PERIOD OCCUPATION

The results of the fieldwork, including the relevant management issues, have been detailed elsewhere (Armit, Dunwell and Hunter 1999, 2000) and will be published in full shortly. However, the excavations were also intended to shed light on some of the key debates surrounding the interpretation of Traprain Law, particularly its status from the Later Bronze Age to the late Roman period.

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Settlement density

The spread of trenches across the summit, including many set out explicitly to test 'blank' areas, was intended to assess the general nature and density of archaeological deposits on the site. The answer was unambiguous: every trench produced evidence of human activity, and where examined in detail the remains were stratified and complex. In Trench D, for example (Fig 2), despite the absence of any surface traces, the remains of a building were identified containing cannel-coal working debris and third-fourth century Roman pottery. The building rubble included fragments of what appeared to be crudely faced stone, one of several such instances on the site. Whilst not unique in a native Scottish Iron Age context (cf. Harding and Gilmour 2000, 56) the use of dressed stone seems likely to be indicative of a Roman Iron Age date, suggesting perhaps some echo of Roman architectural techniques. No attempt was made to remove the *in situ* building remains, so it is quite possible that further stratified deposits survive below those identified.

Similarly in Trench C, which was equally unprepossessing in surface appearance, a probable stone-walled roundhouse with a paved and kerbed hearth was found to underlie a cobbled surface or yard. As in Trench D, far more complexity may survive below those deposits exposed. Trenches A, E and F (Fig 2) also yielded evidence of structural features, although these were less easily interpreted within the constraints of the areas investigated. Indeed it has become clear that while the sheer volume of deposits excavated by Curle and Cree on the western shelf may reflect particularly favourable conditions of preservation in that area, occupation of the hilltop was extensive and complex stratified deposits can be expected in virtually any part of the summit area where soil cover has developed.

A Roman-period 'boomtown'?

The traditional view sees Traprain Law as a native centre which thrived under Rome, perhaps even the 'capital of a client kingdom' (Gillam 1961, 77). This view has not, however, gone unchallenged. Indeed, on the basis of the Roman coin assemblage and the 'magpie collection' of Roman metalwork, which he sees as reminiscent of material from temple sites, Hill (1987) has argued that Traprain Law was a specifically religious site with only a very limited, specialist population.

The absence of distinctive pre-Roman Iron Age material has long been seen as problematic (e.g. Jobey 1976, 194-5), particularly given the richness of the

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Fig. 3: The slab-fronted terrace in Trench 7.

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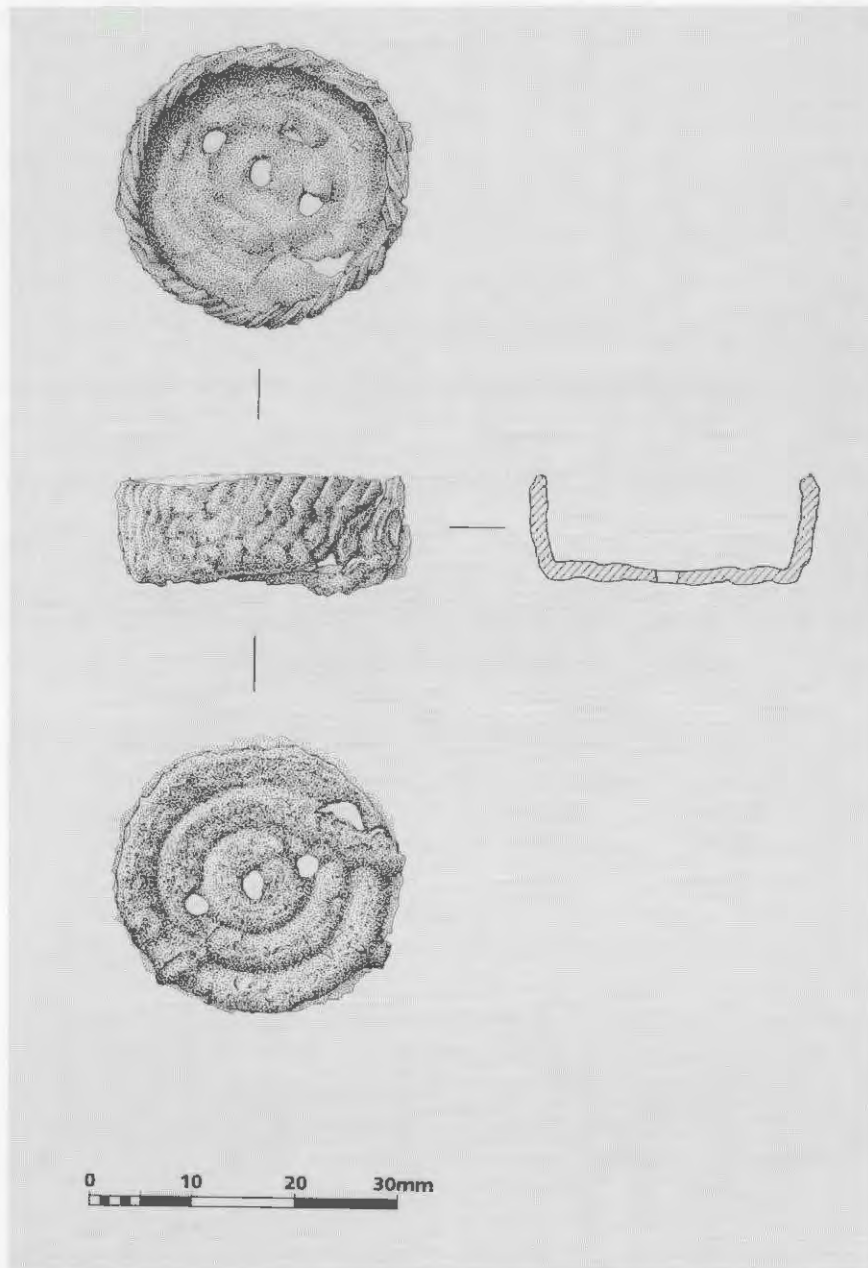


Fig. 4: An iron object from the terrace in Trench 7: possibly a Roman seal-box.

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Fig. 5: The 'summit enclosure' from the north.

Later Bronze Age and Roman periods. There are a few projecting ring-headed pins of debatable chronology, and some stone balls which may possibly date to the fourth or third centuries BC, but there is no securely dated artefactual material between the sixth century BC and the first century AD. This need not mean, however, that Traprain was abandoned during the pre-Roman Iron Age: it need reflect no more than the intense difficulties in dating Early and Middle Iron Age sites in Scotland on artefactual grounds.

Results from the present project have tended to reinforce the more traditional view of Traprain's status in the Roman Iron Age. Trench 5 (Fig 2), for example, focussed on a steeply sloping area where the much-denuded inner rampart has suffered severely from rabbit damage. It became clear that the original earth and stone rampart was already in a ruinous condition before the formation in its lee of a deep accumulation of floor deposits, representing multiple super-imposed buildings. These deposits eventually extended over the degraded remains of the rampart itself. The uppermost of these floors contained a substantial hearth associated with a large, modified fragment of second century AD Samian pottery.

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Roman pottery was also associated with the lower deposits. Thus, not only does it appear that the inner rampart had ceased to be maintained some time before the *floruit* of Roman-period occupation, but it is clear that space was at such a premium that even inconvenient, steeply sloping corners such as this were crammed with buildings. This supports Close-Brooks' (1987a) observations on the dense packing of Roman-period structures implied by Bèrsu's 1947 excavations on the line of the original outer rampart (Close-Brooks 1987b).

In fact one of the main features of the excavations as a whole has been the extent to which Roman period occupation is distributed across the summit. Indeed there have been very few features which are *demonstrably* pre-Roman, although this is in part due to both the archaeological visibility of Roman material, and the fact that *in situ* occupation deposits have generally not been removed, thus exaggerating the relative visibility of the latest phases of use. Where earlier deposits were examined they proved to be late Bronze Age, supporting the idea of a pre-Roman Iron Age settlement hiatus on the summit as well as the western plateau.

Spatial transformations

Identifying the density of Roman Iron Age occupation, however, does not in itself advance our understanding of the impact of the Roman presence in southern Scotland. What is crucial is the nature and character of the site during the Roman period, and here the project has provided tantalising results.

In Trench 7 (Fig 2), for example, an alignment of large, vertically-set slabs, running parallel to the rear of the inner rampart, formed an imposing façade to a terrace set into the north-facing side of the hill (Fig 3). Against the rear of this façade was a series of deposits containing fragments of crudely faced stone and Roman artefacts including a glass melon bead. The most enigmatic of these finds was an iron object which strongly resembles a Roman seal-box (Fig 4): problematically, however, no parallels have yet been found for an iron version of this artefact type, so the identification remains uncertain. If confirmed, however, the presence of this object suggests at least some degree of literacy among the population of Traprain. In any case, the combination of Roman artefacts and masonry debris suggests that this formal terrace was occupied by a Roman-period building of some significance. This observation has clear implications for a number of other apparently artificial or enhanced, stone-fronted terraces observable from surface traces on the north slopes of the hill. Indeed there is a recurrent impression that space was being divided and demarcated on the hilltop during the Roman Iron

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Age. Formally-defined terraces were being created on the north slopes, and on some of these it would appear that high status buildings were being constructed. Over the ruins of the pre-Roman ramparts were cramped clusters of buildings, perhaps (though not necessarily) of lesser status.

However it seems the site was undefended at this date, at least until the building of the 'Cruden Wall' at the very end of the Roman period. Previous work showed the outer ramparts were denuded by the Roman Iron Age, while our excavations on the inner rampart in Trenches 5 and 6 indicated this too had fallen into disrepair. Higher up the hill, Trench 4 (Fig 2) investigated the poorly understood feature known as the summit enclosure. Previous accounts (e.g. Jobey 1976) have suggested that this denuded linear feature may represent the earliest (and smallest) enclosure of the hill, possibly a palisade. The remains on the ground are no more than discontinuous scarps and rickles of stone. Excavation, however, revealed the remains of a terraced bank with a well-built outer face incorporating crudely faced stonework (Fig 5). Associated radiocarbon dates suggest it may be Late Bronze Age.

CONCLUSION

Traprain remains a site with more questions than answers, but the recent work, while small-scale, has been remarkably informative. The evidence from the summit supports the idea that there were two main phases of occupation. We can envisage a thriving Late Bronze Age site, followed by a period when the hill was largely unoccupied. It then became a densely-settled 'boom town' around the time of the Roman occupation. The sheer density of settlement is remarkable, with every available space being used. This is perhaps the most tantalising result of the work: it is clear that complex, highly informative remains survive over most of the hill, and only by tackling some of these can we start to disentangle the details of Traprain's story.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Traprain Law Summit Project is funded by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, the Russell Trust, the Society of Antiquaries of London, the National Museums of Scotland, and the University of Edinburgh Munro Lectureship Trust. Permission to excavate was granted by East Lothian Council, Historic Scotland, and Scottish Natural Heritage. The authors would like to thank the following individuals for their help at various stages of the project: Derek Alexander, Mike Church, Simon Gilmour, Andrew Heald, Melanie Johnson, Catherine McGill and Tim Neighbour, as well as numerous others who assisted during fieldwork.

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THE FORRESTS OF HADDINGTON AND THE REFORMATION

By Martin A. Forrest

During the course of genealogical research into the Forrest family, two historically interesting characters emerged who originated in Haddington. Between them they provide something of a microcosm of life at the time of the Scottish Reformation and their lives illustrate the contrasting fortunes of those on both sides of the religious divide in those days. Their names do not appear in any of the general histories of Scottish history and yet both were considerably involved in and had an effect on the events of the time.

The Forrest family history was traced from both family papers and official records directly back to James Forrest of Comiston, who is mentioned in a sasine in 1715. This is normally about as far back in time as one can reasonably hope to achieve from existing records. However, an article in a previous volume of these *Transactions* referred to a number of papers dating from 1508 and deposited in the Scottish Record Office which concerned a Forrest family in Haddington.¹ These papers had been discovered in a charter chest at the mill on Whittinghame Drive, Haddington when it was acquired by Montgomerie and Company Limited in 1897. This mill is first mentioned in a deed of conveyance dated 1153-1178 between Countess Ada of Northumberland and Alexander de St Martin.² In turn, Alexander de St Martin donated the mill as well as some holdings in the Nungate area to the Cistercian Nunnery of St Mary in 1178. The mill has been known as Gimmersmills for at least five centuries and is now occupied by Pure Malt Products. The Forrest family owned the mill between 1557 and 1795 and previously held a lease on the buildings. A connection between this Haddington Forrest family to the one under research was supported through information in a book about owners and tenants of the Grange in Edinburgh written by J. Stewart Smith. Smith writes:

James Forrest became a Writer to the Signet and in 1779 he married his cousin Catherine, only daughter and heiress to James Forrest of Comiston who

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was descended from Alexander Forrest, Provost of the Collegiate Church of St Mary's in the Fields near Edinburgh in 1613.³

Subsequently, more generations have been added to the family tree although there remains a tantalising gap.

A number of records from the Gimmersmills charter chest were reprinted in a modernised form in the article but the originals threw up one or two surprises. For instance, the name of the family was originally Forehouse, perhaps pronounced *Forris* in the same way as forehead is often pronounced *forrid*. The name is given in various phonetic spellings and was not standardised to Forrest until the latter half of the sixteenth century.⁴ The name's earlier pronunciation may be indicated in the family seal that has survived on two Forrest documents. It represents a saltire couped between four roses. It is not unlikely a pun is intended with *four-rose*. The importance of the earlier version of the surname is simply that it appears to be unique to East Lothian and therefore the Haddington Forrests were probably unrelated to Forrest families elsewhere in the country. There are records of these East Lothian Forrests going back to virtually the beginning of existing written records in 1438 in Gullane, Dirleton and West Fenton.⁵

It is also clear from the documents that the Forrests made a large contribution to civic affairs in Haddington in the way of producing three provosts, three treasurers, two bailies, one sheriff and countless burgesses. (A member of the family also became lord provost of Edinburgh.) However, probably the most important fact was that two of the family had played important roles in national affairs at the time of the Reformation.

One of the earliest of the Gimmersmills records names Alexander Forrest in a tack charter dated between 1552 and 1557.⁶ However, an earlier record concerns his father, David's founding of the altar of the Virgin Mary and the Three Kings of Cologne at St Mary's Church, Haddington some time before 1522.⁷ The Forrest family's connections with St Mary's were evidently strong at this time. The family burying place was immediately behind where the post-reformation pulpit was eventually sited, between the two middle piers on the south side of the nave. It has been asserted that all members of the family were interred at this spot. Unfortunately, all signs of Forrest burials were obliterated during the 1812 renovations to the church. It has also been recorded that the Forrests were known as choristers at St Mary's Church.⁸ A charter dated between 1540 and 1546 which was granted by

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William, Bishop of Libaria and Vicar General of Cardinal Beaton, gave collegiate status to a college of priests-choristers at this parish church.⁹

David Forrest was evidently a wealthy man. He owned a large number of properties in Haddington and, indeed, used the rents from some of these properties for the upkeep of the altar and presumably to pay the chaplain. There is some evidence that David was involved in the wool trade and also brewing. There are later accounts of the Forrests in Haddington being involved in weapon making and carting, but however the wealth was acquired, there is no doubt that by this time a large proportion of income simply came from rentals of properties the family owned.

David was married twice and had at least four sons, all of whom made their mark. William, the eldest, is recorded in the Exchequer Rolls as being treasurer of Haddington and it was he who inherited his father's properties. He had a son called John who will figure a little later in this account. William was a burges of Haddington and owned properties in Market Place and Smiddy Row as well as owning Tentercroft to the north of the town.¹⁰ This should not be confused with the present-day Tenterfield House as the house is described as being to the west of the road to Harperdean, presumably on what is now called Aberlady Road. The second son, George, is mentioned in 1543 as a sheriff of Edinburgh in the Constabulary of Haddington.¹¹ He was also a bailie of Haddington and the wine cunnar for the town. This latter post may be an indicator that the family was involved in the wine trade at this early date as they were later in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Like his brother David, he was a Protestant sympathiser and during the siege of Haddington in 1548 he is mentioned in a letter from James Wylford to the Duke of Somerset.

I forgot in former letters to commend two Scotsmen burgesses of this town, who have served very honestly during the siege, and have suffered great losses, whereof if it pleased your grace to consider, and give them some entertainment in this town, it should be charitable. One of them is George Forresse, is brother to Davy Forresse, the other John Rickenton is his cousin german.¹²

The Davy Forrest mentioned in this letter and the remaining son of David, Alexander are the two main characters in this study. Davy or David is first mentioned in official records as a Haddington council official in 1532 and burgh treasurer in 1537.¹³ By 1543 John Knox describes David as a man of judgement at the royal

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court who had helped promote the Earl of Arran as governor and regent of Scotland and, as one of his counsellors, had warned him against surrounding himself with his so-called friends and relatives.¹⁴

The background to his appointment at the Court was the death of James V the previous year and the beginning of the reign of Mary Queen of Scots who was only a week old when she succeeded to the throne. The great question of the time was, of course, whether the sympathisers of France and Catholicism or those who allied themselves to England and Protestantism would get the upper hand. Under Henry VIII, England had undergone a Protestant Reformation and David Forrest as a reformer was obviously more inclined to English influence. The Earl of Arran seemed to be receptive to Protestant ideas at this time. When, therefore, Henry VIII proposed that his son, Edward, a boy five years old, should marry the infant Queen Mary, Arran, with the encouragement of his counsellors, was happy that the marriage should be arranged.

In the year of 1543, when Knox mentions David Forrest, Arran persuaded the Scottish parliament to a treaty of marriage that decreed Mary would marry Edward when she was eleven years old. However, Scotland was still a Catholic country and there were two people of the highest importance that were determined that it should remain that way and not become an ally of England. One of these was Mary of Lorraine and Guise, the Queen's mother and the other was Cardinal Beaton, Archbishop of St Andrews, who wielded enormous power and, at this time, had the people on his side. Beaton's immense influence on the Scottish parliament was such that the marriage treaty was revoked and severe laws were passed against those opposed to the Catholic Church. Thus started what was called 'the Rough Wooing'. Invasion after invasion by the English army resulted in a terrible time of destruction of life and property for the Lowland Scots.

At the close of 1543 however, there returned to Scotland George Wishart, the Protestant reformer, who had earlier taken refuge abroad. With him was always a friend acting as a bodyguard armed with a two-handed sword and when he came to preach at Haddington, one of his audience was such a great admirer of the reformer that he offered his services as sword bearer. That man was John Knox. David Forrest gave Wishart shelter at his Haddington home and the reformer preached to disappointingly small congregations at St Mary's Church.¹⁵ Wishart then travelled to Ormiston where he was arrested and brought before Cardinal Beaton, who was spending the night at Elphinstone. A little more than a month

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later he was burned at the stake in front of Cardinal Beaton's palace with the Cardinal looking on.

Events such as this were slowly turning the Scottish public against the present church and state and Mary of Guise and Cardinal Beaton, probably sensing this change in mood, determined to rid the government and royal court of those unsympathetic to the Catholic cause. Accordingly, David Forrest, David Lindsay of the Mount, Henry Balnaves, Sir William Kirkcaldy of the Grange, Thomas Bellenden, David Bothwell, Michael Durham and David Borthwick were all driven from the court with the threat of being hanged. This was the start of a to-ing and fro-ing from the court in Edinburgh to his hometown in Haddington and indeed from Scotland to England for David Forrest.¹⁶

Three months after the death of Wishart, a band of men broke into the castle of St Andrews that Cardinal Beaton used as his palace. When the inhabitants of St Andrews woke the next morning it was to see the body of the Beaton hanging from the castle walls. The murderers took refuge in the castle and about 120 sympathisers joined them. Two of those who barricaded themselves into the castle were John Knox and David Forrest. With a French fleet bombarding the castle from the sea and the army of Arran, who had by now totally capitulated to Mary of Guise's wishes, attacking from the land, the castle was taken after a few months. Knox, like other commoners, was made a galley slave but what is most curious, David Forrest seems to have escaped punishment.

This is, perhaps, where David's brother, Alexander enters the story. Alexander had embarked upon a career in the church and matriculated at St Salvator's College, St Andrews in the session 1531-2. He took his BA there in 1533 and his MA in 1534.¹⁷ Then started a meteoric rise in career and fortune. He was appointed rector of Cranshaws from 1547-52, vicar of Dummany (probably Dalmeny) in 1547, provost of Fowlis Easter from 1549-50, provost of St Mary in the Fields (now better known as Kirk o' Fields) from 1552-61, parson of Logie Montrose from 1553-74, vicar of Livingstone from 1554-63, proto-notary of the Diocese of Haddington and on the death of Beaton he became secretary to the new Archbishop of St Andrews, John Hamilton.¹⁸ His father also granted him chaplaincy of the altar of the three kings of Cologne.¹⁹

Did Alexander Forrest, who obviously wielded some power within the church, use his influence to make sure his brother David escaped punishment?

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There are many questions that arise about the relationship of the brothers during this period of tension and war, intelligence and counter intelligence.

In 1547, Henry VIII had died and Somerset as Protector of England had invaded Scotland to try to force the Scots to break with France and ally themselves with England. For her own safety Mary Queen of Scots was sent to France. After gaining an overwhelming victory at the Battle of Pinkie at Musselburgh, the English force seized a number of strongholds including the town of Haddington. A combined Scottish and French force soon held Haddington under siege.

If David Forrest had escaped the events in St Andrews he was again in trouble with the authorities. In 1548, the Earl of Bothwell complained to the Earl of Arran that he, 'wes haldane agane his wyll', and implicated David Forrest and James Cockburn of Langton in the plot.²⁰ Credence can be attached to the accusation when it is considered that it was Bothwell who had earlier arrested and delivered Wishart to Cardinal Beaton. But it is David Forrest's activities during the siege of Haddington that are most intriguing. Contemporary documents show that he was deeply involved in intelligence to and from English statesman such as the Duke of Somerset, Sir Ralph Sadler and Sir William Cecil at this time.²¹ Knox later referred to David Forrest as 'ane who has long professed the trueth and upon whom many in that time depended,' and although it is known that he was, by now, a lay preacher, it may be his involvement in this intelligence to which Knox was referring.²² By 27 June 1548 the English army was ready to invade Scotland with the purpose of relieving their troops held in siege at Haddington by the Scots and French armies. As a measure of the importance placed upon David Forrest, he was one of the few to be given information about the planned invasion.²³

By this time the Scottish people were slowly beginning to turn against the French influence and towards a Protestant Reformation and not just because of the destructive invasions by the English. Mary of Guise and her French army represented the Catholic Church and the corruption of the Church was, by now, common knowledge. During this period more than a third of the wealth of the country was in the hands of the clergy. Much wealth had been acquired through the process of escheat; that is the lapsing of property to the Church through the owner dying intestate or, more often, land and property being confiscated for the reason of the owner being perceived as having broken the law. The Church represented such a powerful body that many families connected with the clergy acquired land either as freehold or liferent. The Forrests already owned much

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property in Haddington but through Alexander's influence their holdings were to increase dramatically.

Alexander was already a wealthy man through his various stipends when, in 1547, he was gifted two tenements in Hardgate in Haddington simply because the heir of the deceased owner resided in England without the permission of the Earl of Arran during the time of war.²⁴ He also held a nineteen year tack of Gimmersmills from the Cistercian nunnery in Haddington. Undoubtedly through Alexander's influence, his nephew John gained much property by escheat. Alexander himself also held assignation over two thirds of the crops of the archbishopric of St Andrews as well as the teind victuals of the lands of Hailes, Traprain, half of Houston and Gourlaybank. A tenth of the produce of these rich East Lothian farming lands alone would have represented considerable prosperity.

In 1552, Alexander was appointed provost of St Mary's in the Fields, now better known as Kirk o' Fields, and he was presented with the College, the Kirk and steeple and the properties attached to the church.²⁵ This particular gift was, perhaps, not as generous as it may seem as most of the buildings associated with Kirk o' Fields were in a ruinous condition. Nevertheless, Alexander, with his customary influential skills in land deals granted a feu charter to the regent of Scotland, the Earl of Arran of the hospital attached to the kirk, 'considering that ther houses, especially ther hospital annexed and incorporated with ther College was burnt down and destroyed by ther auld enemies of England, so that nothing of ther said hospital was left, but they are altogether waste and destroyed, wherethrough the divine worship is not a little decreased in the college because they were unable to build the said hospital'.²⁶ This act, of course, put him in immediate favour with Arran and it is clear from records he became a sort of factotum for the governor, negotiating purchases for him including, 'deliverit to Maister Alexander Forus, to be giffyn for fedderis to my lord governoures grace, viz., xxx stanis gret fedderris..., sex stane craig fedderris..., tuenty stanis downis'.²⁷ This purchase, which was from the Bass Rock, shows Arran to have, at least, slept very comfortably!

Meanwhile, David Forrest had been appointed General of the Mint in 1554, notwithstanding the disfavour in which he was now held in court circles. It is tempting to suggest that this appointment was due to the persuasion of his brother Alexander who, like himself a few years previously, may by now have had some influence on the views of Arran.

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As previously stated, some time between 1552 and 1557, a lease was negotiated between Alexander and the Cistercian nunnery in Haddington as follows:

Tack by Dame Elizabeth Hepburne, Prioress of the Abbey and nuns of Hadingtoun with the consent of the convent in favour of Alexander Forrest, Parson of Logymontrose of their corn mill called Gymmois Myln at the Nungate, 2 acres of arable land with croft hauchis and 10 acres and 1 rood of arable land within the bounds of Nungate for the space of 19 years...²⁸

By 21 July 1557, a Charter was produced at the abbey giving full ownership of the mill and surrounding land in the Nungate to Alexander's nephew, John. Clearly this was an example of sixteenth century *sleaze* and the apparent haste in which John Forrest took sasine without obtaining any sanction did not pass unnoticed. An enquiry was ordered by John Hamilton, the Archbishop of St Andrews, into the propriety of the transfer of the mill from the convent to John Forrest. The only problem was that this enquiry precept was signed by a Friar Petrus on behalf of Alexander Forrest, secretary! It is, therefore, not surprising that after the commissioners met in St Giles Cathedral and listened to evidence given by the convent and John Forrest, they decreed that the transfer of the mill was in the best interests of all those concerned.²⁹

In 1555, John Knox had returned to Scotland and he delivered his first genuine Protestant sermon when he preached secretly at one James Syme's house, 'whareunto repared the Laird of Dun, David Forress and some certane personages of the toun'. David Forrest, along with Knox, Robert Lockhart, John Willock and William Maitland of Lethington, was a guest at John Erskine, the Laird of Dun's supper party where the debate was whether worshipping idols and celebrating mass was justified in terms of the scriptures.³⁰ Knox describes the beginnings of reformed worship in or around the year 1558.³¹ At this time there were few reformed ministers and preaching was mainly carried out by laymen amongst whom David Forrest was prominent.

David Forrest was present when the image of St Giles was dashed to the ground by the Edinburgh mob and Knox rather gloatingly related, 'the heartes of the brethrein were wonderouslie inflamed'. However, Forrest was seemingly opposed to the violence for, as Knox said, 'Thare war some temperisaris (amonges whome David Forress called the General was one) who fearing the chance to be done as it fell, laboured to stay the brethrein'.³² It is perhaps ironic that it fell to

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David's brother, Alexander to present a proclamation to the Provost, Bailies and Council of Edinburgh on behalf of the Queen, deploring the actions of the mob in taking down and destroying sacred images and also composing anti-Catholic ballads and rhymes.³³

In 1559, accusations of mismanagement in his affairs at the Mint were levelled at David Forrest and he was removed from office by decree.³⁴ However, this was obviously a trumped up charge because of his Protestant sympathies. At this time he departed for England with William Maitland of Lethington and Henry Balnaves. They travelled as emissaries for the Lords of the Congregation to request assistance for the Reformation that was faltering under repeated onslaughts by Mary of Guise and her mainly French army. Their mission was wholly successful. Queen Elizabeth concluded a formal treaty by which she engaged to send an army into Scotland to assist in expelling the French force. The French were compelled to surrender and under an agreement called the Treaty of Leith it was agreed all French soldiers should be required to leave Scotland. Mary of Guise had died while these negotiations took place and a council was formed to run the country until Mary Queen of Scots returned from France.

In 1560, David Forrest was re-installed at the Court where he was required to look after the French Ambassador at Holyrood.³⁵ Knox is recorded as staying at David Forrest's Edinburgh home at this time.³⁶ By 1561, Mary had returned and it was suggested to her that either Henry Balnaves or David Forrest should be appointed Scottish ambassador to England, although as Thomas Randolph, the English ambassador remarked, 'I knowe not what credyt those men cane have to serve her in that rowme; I knowe she loveth nether of them bothe'.³⁷ A year later David Forrest was again suggested as ambassador to England, this time along with the well-known scholar and historian, George Buchanan.³⁸ Not surprisingly, the disfavour in which he was held by Mary was still as strong and he failed to get appointed. However, he was restored to the post of General of the Mint and Auditor of the Exchequer in 1562, an office he held until 1572.

On the 20 December 1560, David Forrest had been nominated to sit at the first General Assembly as, 'thought apt and able to minister', and in 1562 he was specially requested by the assembly, 'to tak on the ministerie'. Later that year after his negative answer he, 'was charged by the whole Assemblie, as he would avoid disobedience to their voices, without farther delay, to adresse himself to enter into the ministerie, where he salbe appointed, seeing it was knowen sufficientlie

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that he was able for that function'.³⁹ Although he again did not comply with this injunction, he continued as a member of the Assembly and helped write the creed of the new Church in the First Book of Discipline, the Confession of Faith and the Book of Common Order.

And so the Reformation was won and the two brothers, who within the events of the period, played their separate and very different parts, settled down to a more quiet life than they had ever known. David died in 1584. He had one son, also called David and four daughters called Janet, Marion, Margaret and Euphame. These daughters seemed to be in rather straitened circumstances when they were named in connection with a mortgaged piece of ground in the Giffordgate, Haddington, once owned by their Uncle Alexander.⁴⁰

There is no record of Alexander ever recanting his Catholic faith. Before he died in 1574, he had two sons called James and William. Being a Catholic cleric, Alexander was, of course, not married and James' birth is recorded as being legitimised in Edinburgh on 10 November 1553 although the mother's name is not mentioned. James is described as being proprietor of the yard and houses, 'called the Vicar's manse lyand bewast the Kirk'.⁴¹ This was almost certainly his father's house in Haddington.

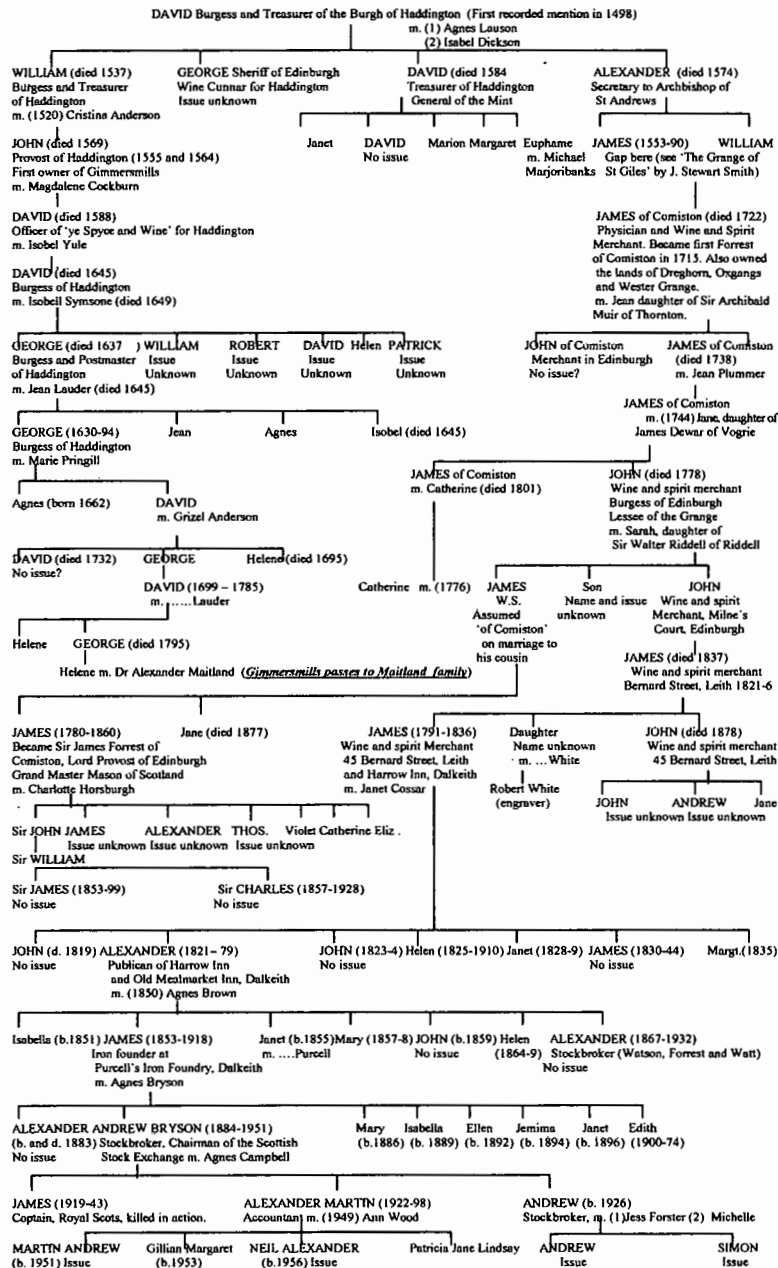
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Family Tree of the Forrests of Haddington



THE OWNERS AND SUPERIORS OF THE LANDS OF ELVINGSTON

By JEAN SHIRLAW

There is an early reference to Patrick Graham, an attorney to James Douglas, Earl of Morton, having a sasine to Lands of Elvingston circa 1475 (1).

Subsequently, in 1506, Christian Seyton (relict of Hew Douglas), along with their son and heir, held 40 acres of Elvingston from John Douglas of Bodieles (lawful son of John, Earl of Morton). These lands lay between Alexander Graham's on the east and Patrick Graham's on the west (2).

Another family to appear on the scene around this time was the Heriots of Trabroun. Their title refers to the Heriots' lands near Lauder, in Berwickshire, granted by Archibald, Earl of Douglas in 1423 to John Heriot, son of James Heriot of Niddry Marshall. This family later obtained substantial lands in East Lothian (3).

James Heriot of Trabroun obtained land in Longniddry in 1531 and 1535; also the middle 1/3 of Audneston, in the Barony of Tranent in 1542. But it was in 1543- 1544 that he was granted Elvinstoun, Laverocklaw and Merryhaltoun (4) (all in the lordship and regality of Dalkeith). He married Janet Cockburn of Ormiston. It was he who built the mansion house at Elvingston. James Heriot of Trabroun was described as a 'domestic servitour to the Regent's Grace' (Regent Morton was his superior who ruled Scotland 1572-1577). James 'was daily and continually employit in our Sovereign Lord and his dearest Regent's service and was exempt from compearing before Justicies, Sheriffs, Baillies all his days and life' (5). He died in 1580.

Elizabeth, his daughter, married Thomas Hamilton of Priestfield who later became 1st earl of Haddington. Their son, Thomas Hamilton, eventually inherited the lands of Elvingston. His uncle James Heriot, had sold his lands in 1611 under

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reversion and as neither James Heriot nor his son, Robert, (died 1620) had redeemed them, the lands of Trabroun in Berwickshire and Elvingston passed to Thomas Hamilton.

His son, John Hamilton, inherited the lands, and in turn sold them in 1634 to Patrick Inglis, (6) son of Cornelius Inglis, an Edinburgh merchant. However, by 1654 Patrick was in financial difficulties and part of the lands of Elvingston was disposed to his brothers, Cornelius, and John Inglis of Nether Cramond and to others.

In 1666, the lands came into the possession of Dr Burnett of Cramond (7) who sold them in 1671 to Dr Henry Henryson of St Lawrence near Haddington for £40,000 merks (8). The lands of Elvingston were divided into:

1. The Mains of Elvingston of approximately 33 acres (Scots), including the mansion house.
2. Long Ola Roun of approximately 92 acres
3. Howmuir Roun of approximately 94 acres.

Dr Henryson who married Elizabeth Drummond, daughter of William Drummond of Hawthornden (the historian and poet) transferred the lands to his wife in 1673. She was known as 'Lady Elvingston'. When she died in 1680 the lands were conveyed to her daughter Elizabeth Henryson and her husband Sir John Clerk of Penicuik.

In the Memoirs of Baron John Clerk (1676 - 1753), he wrote of Dr Henryson as follows:

My Grandfather, the Doctor, was a philosophic man, but a man of good learning and of very great piety, for he used always to pray to his patients as well as prescribe medicine for them. I have seen many translations of the Psalms by him in Latin verse and some are still by me. Baron John Clerk inherited the lands of Elvingston when his mother Elizabeth died in 1701. Her son described her as 'a person of singular virtue and religion' but died in the 25th year of her life after she had borne my father seven children. As the lands were lying at a distance from the place I lived I sold them about 1710 and bought The Cammo Estate in Edinburgh.

Baron Clerk played an influential part in the life of Scotland - he was one of the commissioners for the Union of Scotland and England in 1706-07. Later he

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became one of the barons of the Scottish Court of the Exchequer. Hence the reference to Baron Exchequer.

The Clerks of Penicuik have portraits of two of the owners of Elvingston viz.

Elizabeth Henryson, the first wife of Sir John Clerk (1st Baronet). She was painted by John Scougal and another portrait was painted by De Wit.

Sir John Medina c1700 painted her son Sir John Clerk (2nd Baronet). He describes the painting thus: 'There is a book in my hand, the picture good but never thought very like.'

The next owner of Elvingston was William Law (9), professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University. On his death in 1743, his son, William, inherited the property. Noted in the sasine, on its transference to him, is a mention of an old limestone quarry on the estate, belonging to Mr Cornelius Inglis (c 1711).

William Law became an advocate in 1737 and was sheriff of Haddington for nearly 55 years. He was also a keen agriculturist, improving and enclosing the lands. It was probably at this time that he renamed a part of the land 'Trabroun', a name which did not appear in the early titles, but which has been retained to the present. There was a reference in 1801 to a brewery at Trabroun where the brewers were Patrick and John Mitchell (10).

When William Law retired to Edinburgh in 1804 the county of Haddington presented him with an illuminated address with their thanks for his 55 years of service. It became known at that time that Sir Henry Raeburn had painted 'a very good likeness of Mr Law.' Permission was obtained from his son, James Law to allow Raeburn to make a copy of his father's painting. As 'a further mark of respect' it was to be hung in the sheriff court room in Haddington (11). It now hangs in the Town House Haddington; while the original is in the Kunsthistorisches Museum.

James Law, an Edinburgh surgeon, inherited Elvingston on his father's death in 1806. When James died, the trustees of the estate sold the lands in 1836 for £20,000 to Robert Ainslie of Redcoal Mains, the eldest son of William Ainslie, a Leith merchant (12). Robert married Mary Ainslie, daughter of James Ainslie (also a Leith merchant). In 1823, with the consent of William Ainslie and of Mary Ainslie and her father, Robert had bought Redcoal Mains or (Redcoll). He added Lendridge to his property in 1828 (13).

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It was during his ownership that the estate of Elvingston was greatly enlarged: Hopefield was added in 1839; Egypt field in 1840; Laverocklaw in 1848; Woodside in 1868; Liberty Hall in 1872 and Brickfield in 1888.

The old mansion house built by James Heriot in the 16th century was demolished and a new Elvingston house was started in 1837. The architect was a Mr Tait of Edinburgh, and the masonry work was in charge of George Chirnside of Bogliehill. Some of the stones came from the quarry at Jerusalem, but more were ordered from the Grange Quarry near Burntisland and shipped over to George Chirnside. Mr Tait also ordered stones from Humble quarry for the stairs and for the pavement. The estimated cost of the work was about £2,000. (14)

This enlarged estate of Elvingston was in the care of the Ainslie family for more than 100 years. Margaret Scott Ainslie, Robert's daughter, managed the estate and lived in Elvingston House, where she died in 1935, aged 103 years! The estate, which had been entailed, passed on to Archibald Millar Ainslie, the nearest surviving male heir. (15) He sold it in 1944 to David Lowe and Sons Ltd Musselburgh. (16).

The company chairman, David Lowe and his family lived in Elvingston house, while his brother Arthur and his family lived in Redcoll. In 1962 the ownership of the estate was transferred to the brothers, David and Arthur Lowe, and became known as Elvingston Estates Ltd, the chairman being Sir David Lowe, who had recently been knighted.

In the estate office there was an Ordnance Survey map of the estate with each field named. Two fields, curiously, had been named the Ministers Orchard (14.75 acres) and The Minister's (10.75 acres), for which a possible explanation is as follows: In 1806, the Rev. George Hamilton, minister of Gladsmuir church applied to the Teind Court for an augmentation of his stipend. He also wrote to Mr William Law, one of the heritors, asking to lease 'a few acres of land to supply the scantiness of the Glebe to enable him to employ a man, a pair of horses to more advantage'. He was presumably granted a field at that time and the name was retained as the minister's field (17).

Sir David Lowe was well known in Scotland as an agriculturist, being awarded a C.B.E. in 1950, and knighted in 1962. For almost forty years he was an elder in Gladsmuir parish church. He was a founder member of the Lamp of Lothian which benefited from his valuable advice and expert knowledge.

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Sir David was not only a highly respected member of the community in East Lothian, but was well known nationally. He served on many boards, such as the British Society for Promotion of Vegetable Research; and was president of the National Farmers Union of Scotland (1948 - 49), president of Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce (1958 - 60) and (1962 - 1963) governor of the East of Scotland College of Agriculture, and chairman of Livingston Development Corporation (New Town) 1962 - 65. He was Deputy Lieutenant of East Lothian 1975. In 1966 he was awarded Hon. DSc (Edinburgh); in 1961 F.R.S.Ed., and, in 1970 F.R.Ag. So.

Along the wall of the garden, St Mary's Way, in Haddington are the names of those whose lives are celebrated through the restoration of St Mary's Church and the rekindling of the Lamp of Lothian. One of those names is Sir David Lowe C.B.E., D.L.V.M.H., D.Sc, F.R.S.E., F.R.Ag.S. (12th May 1899 - 3rd November 1980)

In *Who's Who*, his recreation is recorded as "plant breeding". One of these many activities was the breeding of beautiful varieties of daffodils.

During this era Elvingston house, outbuildings and the 18th century doocot were all restored. The doocot has 764 nesting boxes. After Sir David's death in 1980 his family installed a memorial window in Gladsmuir parish church.

In 1981, The lands of Elvingston, along with the lands added by Robert Ainslie, were sold off in lots, thus ending the story of an estate and its owners which can be traced back five centuries. By 1989, most of the land had been sold, except the last 30 acres, along with the mansion house of Elvingston and outbuildings etc. These were bought by Dr David and his wife Janice Simpson(18).

They had many plans for the property including considerable restoration work. By 1997 'the much anticipated Elvingston Science Centre was now up and running with several tenants in residence'. The Simpson Research Ltd has now moved into Elvingston Science Centre, a building in 10 acres of ground, housing nine companies involved in electronics and the manufacture of software. In the garden of Elvingston House is a fountain (commissioned by the Simpsons) created by an Ukrainian Sculptor Valentin Znoba. It is named 'Janice de la Mer'. The sculpture is approximately 10' long by 5' high. The centre of the fountain is encased in Caithness stone discovered on the Elvingston estate. Approximately, 2,000

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roses, mostly old fragrant varieties, encircle the sculpture, enveloping the fountain in a sea of fragrance and colour.

‘The model is Janice Simpson. You will note that her face is turned westward, ever searching for a glimpse of her homeland in the United States. Being a romantic at heart, her favourite view of the fountain is by moonlight with moonbeams illuminating this magnificent work of art’.

SUPERIORITY OF THE LANDS OF ELVINGSTON

A superior was defined as ‘a person who made a grant of land to another who was to “hold of” him as a vassal in return for a perpetual payment of feu duty.’ Since 1974 provisions were made for redemption of feu duties, but finally in 2000 the Scottish Parliament abolished this title superior.

The lands of Elvingston became part of the parish of Gladsmuir when it was formed in 1692. Previously Elvingston had been part of the parish of Haddington.

The superiors of the lands of Elvingston have for centuries been associated with the Barony and Regality of Dalkeith. In the *Scots Peerage* (19), it states that William De Grahame was assumed to have acquired the Manor of Dalkeith from David I circa 1150, though evidence is lacking. One of his sons Peter de Grahame, Lord of Dalkeith, ancestor of the Grahames of Elvingston was described in the title as part of the Barony of Dalkeith between 1190 and 1238. During this period he granted certain lands of Elvingston to the house of Holy Trinity of Soltre (20). These were described as ‘3 ploughgates one of which belonged to Michaelis, another to Walter Sevi and the third to Essek (widow).’

The hospital of Soltre on Soutra was the site of the ancient hospital and church of Soltre dedicated to the Holy Trinity, existing not only for religious services but also for maintaining indigent and infirm persons in the surrounding district. It was also available for receiving pilgrims and other travellers for a limited period.

King Malcolm IV was said to have founded the hospital of Soltre in c 1164. Various benefactors, including Peter De Grahame, are recorded in the series of charters printed by the Bannatyne Club.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century the lands of Elvingston passed for a short time to Peter Luband, as there is a reference in a early charter ‘to all the

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lands and tenements of Elwynstone, with pertinents which were Peter Luband, Knight'. The date is not known but he was, along with fifteen soldiers, at the Pele of Linlithgow with Sir Wm. Felton, the Keeper in 1302/3 (21).

Peter Luband (Pers De Luband) was probably a knight of Gascony, having been given the title from Edward I of England who held lands in Gascony. When Edward I overran Scotland the estates of the Scottish noblemen who opposed Baliol (after he had acknowledged Edward as monarch) were forfeited. These lands were given to knights who supported the King. Hence the lands of Elvingston were acquired by Peter Luband.

He was indeed one of Edward's favoured knights. A 'mettled palfrey' was brought by William de Seton from Westminster on 19 December 1312 as a gift from King Edward to Lady Nicola, wife of Pers de Luband in the days of his prosperity when he was styled "Dominus de Cokburn". He was governor of Edinburgh Castle when it was besieged in 1313 by Randolph (who put him in the dungeons). Luband was 'surmised to be guilty of treason and thought to have an English heart'. Randolph had him hanged, drawn and quartered. (22)

During Robert I's reign c.1315 'the lands of Elwystone which were Peters Luband's' were granted to Alexander Senescalli or Stewart (23). Subsequently, in David II's reign the lands of Elyst(on) were confirmed to John Graham, son and heir of John Graham of Dalkeith in 1330 (24). He, in 1341/2 resigned the lands along with the Barony of Dalkeith to Sir Wm. Douglas (25). He, in turn, conveyed the Barony of Dalkeith and the Lands of Elvingston to his nephew Sir James Douglas, styled Lord Dalkeith (26).

James Douglas, 4th Lord Dalkeith c1456 was raised to the peerage as 1st Earl of Morton. This family retained the superiority for almost two centuries when William 6th Earl of Morton in 1642 sold the Barony of Dalkeith, including the lands of Elvingston to the Scotts of Buccleuch (27). The superiority of the lands of Elvingston remained in this family until the abolition of the title superior.

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THE FEEING MARKET OR HIRING FAIR IN EAST LOTHIAN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By JEAN LINDSAY

Hiring fairs in Scotland have been the subject of much interest in recent years.¹ The aim of this article is to show more of what might be called the inside story by airing the views of those who attended the fairs or observed them over the years of the nineteenth century. The hiring fair, more than any other topic, generated a controversy that ran and ran in the columns of the *Haddingtonshire Courier*, with contributions from the farm servants, who almost unanimously defended the system, and the parish ministers who, on the whole, opposed it. The editors, bravely, usually came to the defence of the farm workers. Agricultural societies and parliamentary commissions investigated the problems caused by the open hiring of workers, and the conditions faced by the farming community in the Lowlands. Issues such as wages, housing, attempts to form unions or 'protective associations' and education were all related to the hiring fairs, and this article is concerned with these matters, as well as with the actual happenings at the fairs held in Dunbar and Haddington.²

East Lothian stretches from the Firth of Forth in the north to the Lammermuir Hills in the south. The soil, being mainly fertile, was ideal for arable farming and the rotation of crops, which the sixth Earl of Haddington (1680-1735) was said to have been the first landlord to organise with the introduction of clover and rye grasses on his estate at Tynninghame.³ The farms were larger than the average Scottish farm and agricultural improvements were encouraged, fuelled by fears that population growth would outrun the means of subsistence.⁴ One of the essential changes, which affected labour relations and brought about the hiring fairs, was the enclosure movement. This was carried out in East and Midlothian in the 1720s, the practice spreading throughout the Lowlands.⁵

Enclosures have been blamed for deserted villages, landless labourers, migration of workers and rural poverty. They have also been seen as bringing

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increased employment, better conditions and a golden age which ended with the onset of international competition in the 1870s. Most observers, however, had to concede that in the short term there was some dislocation of an old way of life. In East Lothian the old cottages were mostly demolished and the cottar class swept away, although the term 'cottar' was retained and used occasionally for a female worker who had a cottage. Enclosure took away the cottar's few acres of land after the majority of the heritors or landowners in a parish had consented to the process, and the right to graze a cow on the wasteland or commonities disappeared. The cottar had produced his own food with a little surplus, and he had provided seasonal labour for the farmer. His way of life was harsh but he had some control over his work, as Robert Burns' poem *The Cotter's Saturday Night* seems to show:

The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the muir, his course does hameward bend.

The old easy-going relationship between the landlord, farmer, tenant, sub-tenant and cottar changed with a new order based on market forces. The enclosures ended the infield-outfield system, which Sir John Sinclair, the agricultural analyst, complained of in the 1820s: 'The ridges could not be made straight, nor could either draining or inclosing be attempted . . . Neither turnips nor sown grasses were cultivated, nor was it possible to introduce an improved rotation of crops.'⁶

The first statistical account, published in 1792, stated that the old system of run-rig or intermingled strips had almost disappeared in East Lothian and fields were enclosed. The old Scots heavy plough was replaced from the 1760s by the smaller two-horse plough of James Small's invention.⁷ The invention of the threshing machine was claimed by more than one inventor, but Andrew Meikle's model was manufactured by 1789 and was worked by horses. Patrick Bell's reaping machine of 1828 was superseded in the 1850s by two American machines, McCormick and Hussey, which speeded up the process.⁸ The farmer economised on labour where mechanisation had taken place, but he needed full-time workers for the intensively worked fields, and the feeing market or hiring fair provided continuity of labour. Houses were provided for the married ploughman or hind and the unmarried men were usually boarded on the farm. Arable farming required a great deal of seasonal labour at haymaking and harvest: the extra demand was

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met by the additional work of women, the bondagers. Before compulsory schooling children were often sent out to work on the farms. Itinerant workers, usually women and girls, came from Ireland or the Highlands and were housed in temporary bothies. On the whole, there were few bothies for the full-time farm servants in East Lothian.

The new farmhouses had two storeys and tiled roofs with chimneys in most rooms, but the new cottages still had clay floors with no ceilings and into these draughty dwellings the ploughmen had to bring their own fire-grates when they 'flitted' or moved from farm to farm. Some had only a single apartment which was condemned more for its encouragement of 'illicit connection' than for its dangers to health.⁹ Specialist jobs, such as the saddler, joiner, wright and smith, became important, and skills including hedging, ditching and drainage work were needed on the farms. Lime-kilns were built to provide the lime which neutralised the acid

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and enabled the soil to grow turnips, clover and rye-grass. Yield was increased along with a rise in rent and wages.

The rise began during the Napoleon War, but in the years after the battle of Waterloo wages fell and food prices remained high. There was a shortage of employment for day-labourers, although ploughmen were still in demand.¹⁰ Wages were at their lowest in the winters of 1817-1818 and of 1823-1824 but after those years wages rose gradually.¹¹ In times of hardship, such as the 'Hungry Forties' and the 'Great Depression' after 1875, the landless labourer could migrate to seek work in another county, find work on the railways or emigrate to Canada, America or Australia. The hiring fair gave farm servants some bargaining power and allowed the farmers an opportunity to select their labour force which in East Lothian involved the whole family, as the ploughman had to provide female workers (usually his wife or daughters) as bondagers or out-workers. The bondage system was supposed to have ended in the 1870s but the practice could still be found until the end of the nineteenth century.



Farmers and hinds – a mutual search

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By the mid-nineteenth century a new building programme had started in East Lothian: the farmhouses became more spacious, and the steading expanded with the need to house machinery. Two-storey cottages of a more substantial kind were built and the era of prosperous high farming began. Most of the workers were on long hire and the hiring-terms were May (Whitsun) and November (Martinmas). Married men were given annual contracts and single men contracts of six months. The annual fairs in Dunbar and Haddington were held in February on fixed days with an interval of two days between them. Contracts were verbal agreements and were sealed by a token payment, the 'arles,' which was usually about 1s. By the 1840s concerns were being expressed about this method of engaging farm servants and although the system did not die out in East Lothian until the 1930s, the hiring fair aroused heated debates in the local press. In 1849 the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, which had been founded in the 1780s, made a report in its *Transactions* on hiring markets after collecting evidence on the 'probable effects of the proposed substitutes'. The report of the committee which had G. Makgill as its chairman, confirmed the objections to the system, but concluded that it was not 'necessarily and universally injurious.' The farmers had a large number of candidates to choose from but no indication of their characters, and the farm workers had a 'sort of security against any combination on the part of the employers.' The two sides were brought together, this being the 'simplest way of adjusting fluctuations in the price of labour.'

The report accepted that the allegations of 'intemperance and improvidence' displayed at the fairs were generally accurate, but 'vicious indulgence' on the part of the labourers occurred elsewhere and suppression of the market would not check this. The real cause for concern was the indifference displayed by the employer to the moral character of the labourer: 'mere animal strength' was the main consideration. The farmer often delegated recruitment to the grieve or overseer, who did not wish to waste his own holiday on making enquiries. The fairs were said to encourage 'migratory and unsettled habits' and the 'constant changing by servants of all ages' removed the bond of common interest between master and men. The farmer's only obligation became the payment of wages, and the servant did his work in a 'careless and slovenly way'. The remedy was to establish registers which would gradually supersede the need for holding markets for hiring. The committee recognised that this would not be easy, and blamed the deterioration in the characters of farm workers on the farmers who did not pay enough attention to the labourers' working conditions, particularly in some districts where their dwellings were 'insufficient in size, convenience, drainage and ventilation.' The

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example of the 'ill-regulated manufacturing population' in the vicinity of the farms, and the 'vague popular misapprehension as to the design and effect of the new Poor Law,' discouraged the farm workers from making provision for the future. Weekly or monthly payments, it was felt, would encourage more savings than did the payment of half-yearly wages.

The report stated that the fairs encouraged 'reckless excess,' but attempts to abolish them were unpopular, since the labourers suspected a 'covert scheme for depriving them of their customary seasons of liberty which they considered, with justice, to be too few.' Mr List, the superintendent of Edinburgh county police, said that the fairs provided no pastimes to 'allure' the young men from the public houses. He recommended that if the markets were abolished, some public games or gymnastic competitions should be held at least twice a year in every county. He believed that the labouring class could be considerably reformed by 'occasional relaxation' in the shape of 'innocent rural games,' perhaps associated with ploughing competitions and district agricultural shows. The committee, however, knew it had no mandate to carry out these suggestions.

The press became a popular medium for all interested parties to air their views. In the *Haddingtonshire Courier* (hereafter referred to as the *H.C.*) the opponents of the fairs outnumbered the supporters, but both sides gave convincing arguments. On 25 November 1859 an editorial set out the concerns of those who claimed to be 'truly interested in the welfare of the agricultural poor.' The main concern was the breakdown of the master-servant relationship caused by the frequent changing of places and the resulting neglect of the 'morals and religion' of the servants with frequent occurrence of 'Sabbath-breaking' and 'Sabbath-breaking drunkenness.' The behaviour of the young women at the fairs came in for criticism, especially when they accompanied the men to the public-houses and walked home in couples.

The editorial on 10 February 1860 on Haddington hiring fair gave a clear picture of the social scene: 'There was, as usual, a very large number of people from all parts of the country.' The demand for workers, and especially those of a 'superior class' was 'pretty brisk.' Wages were unchanged and once business was over, 'amusement became the order of the day.' Stands were set up in Market Street and in the afternoon the public-houses were 'well patronised,' but the day passed without any 'serious disturbance of the peace,' although an itinerant gambler was charged at the Burgh Court with playing 'games of hazard' on the streets on the day of the fair and was sent to prison for six days.

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A thinning crowd

The Highland and Agricultural Society discussed hiring fairs again at its monthly meeting held in February 1860. The *H.C.* of 2 March 1860 admitted that the subject was one of importance and great difficulty, and one which divided the members. Mr Wilson of Eddington Mains argued that the markets were the only way of engaging servants, and that 'any evils' could be 'easily remedied.' R. Scot Skirving of Campton took the opposite view, believing hiring markets in his county of East Lothian to be a 'great nuisance' which could be 'swept away,' with the labourers' 'most cheerful consent to their abolition.' Scot Skirving said that the question was not just about hiring markets but about providing a 'fit house to live in from the owner of the soil,' allowing labourers to keep a cow, and getting rid of 'that most degrading and most mischievous system, the bondager system.' Changes, he claimed, would soon end the hiring markets; but Mr Harvey of Whittingehame Mains considered the hiring markets could not be changed without the farm servants suspecting 'some oppression.' Mr Douglas of Athelstaneford said that in the Haddington district they had tried to alter the day of holding the hiring market, and the farm servants regarded this as a 'combination on the part of the farmers to take from them their just rights.' At the markets 'good men got a choice of masters'

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and the abuses of the system could be remedied by increased education. In his summing up the chairman, David Milne Home, said that enquiry into references before engaging servants would put an end to the hiring market system. His conclusion was that many of the farm servants went to the markets not for re-engagement but to see their friends and enjoy a holiday.

The editorial of 8 February 1861 described the day of the fair when the High Street and Market Street in Haddington were thronged with 'rustics,' most of whom were enjoying a holiday. There was a good deal of hiring at wages which were not uniform, as some farmers paid a money wage, others paid some money and some grain, and yet others varied the proportion in which money and grain were paid. Despite what the superintendent of the Edinburgh county police said, there were some amusements at the fair: besides the band of the County Militia which paraded the town hoping to drum up recruits, there were gingerbread stands, 'pop guns' and the 'itinerant jeweller' who sold fake gold jewellery. By seven o'clock the town had resumed its 'usually quiet appearance,' aided by a 'pretty smart shower of rain.' Dunbar's hiring fair was also reported. It was held the Tuesday before Haddington's Friday fair. Some farmers, it was said, were offering money in lieu of payments in kind.

Dr Guthrie, the 'Rev Doctor' gave his views at a meeting in Biggar which was reported in the *H.C.* of 15 February 1861. He complained about the lack of attention paid to good character in the hiring fair system. He wanted to abolish the fairs in favour of a register office similar to that used in Edinburgh for the hiring of domestic servants, where character references were required. He wanted every servant to have a holiday and liberty but not 'licence.' His words were greeted by cheers.

A favourable report on the Haddington fair was given in an editorial of 14 February 1862, when it was said that the greater part of the farm labourers had come for a holiday. The country girls, well-dressed, respectable-looking young women, were with their 'country swains,' and the hiring was finished at the comparatively early hour of three o'clock, when the town 'lapsed into its usual quietude.' Nothing in the nature of a breach of the peace occurred. Where a farmer had inferior cottages on his land, he had to advance the wages of his hinds 'some twenty shillings,' so the farmer had a 'pecuniary interest' in having good cottages, and the ploughmen were 'beginning to appreciate the benefits of a really good, comfortable dwelling-house, and to insist on having them.'

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The correspondence columns of the *H.C.* frequently contained letters from landowners, farmers, ministers, farm workers and others, many preferring to write under a pseudonym. On 6 November 1863 'Rusticus' wrote in favour of improving the 'modes of buying and selling of labour' with register offices as 'auxiliaries' to hiring markets. The obstacle was the reluctance of the ploughman to write letters saying they were 'open to an engagement,' but the writer believed it would be a 'great calamity' if hinds were deprived of hiring markets.

R. Scot Skirving, in his letter to the *H.C.*, 5 February 1864, was again hostile to the hiring fair. He could see no attraction in a 'large mob of labourers standing for hours in the middle of the street, apparently doing nothing save obstructing the thoroughfare . . . the stolid monotony of the thing broken only by an occasional blast of rain or sleet.' His concern was that 'this state of matters' was 'most painful and degrading to all parties concerned'. Scot Skirving blamed the farmers, who had originated a movement which they wanted to perpetuate. He proposed instead a system whereby a single advertisement would be placed in the *H.C.* for jobs, and a register office of farmers needing labourers would be established. Mr Armstrong of the Haddington Post Office had already opened an experimental office for that purpose. This would, Scot Skirving believed, bring about the end of the 'degrading and demoralising hiring markets.'

The editorial of 19 February 1864 agreed with Scot Skirving's sentiments but pointed out that the 'rustic mind' was 'extremely difficult to move.' It was essential that the hiring fairs should be abolished to save the 'very foundations of morality' among the rural population, but schemes like the Haddington register for farm servants needed the co-operation of both farmers and farm servants, and this was unlikely to be achieved.

The editorial of 26 January 1866 reported that nothing had been accomplished in changing 'the objectionable features' of the hiring day. There was still no provision for refreshment except in the public-houses, with the result that the 'younger lads' became drunk and presented 'an appearance the reverse of pleasant.' The editor suggested that an arrangement to give the 'country lads,' at moderate cost per head, a meal after the hiring was over, would avoid 'much of the noisy drunkenness.' The following week Robert Wallace (1823-1891), the proprietor of the Haddington Temperance Hotel and Refreshment Rooms on Market Street, announced that he could accommodate 100 people at a time. The food he provided was bread, beef, soup, tea, coffee, and lemonade, 'all of the best quality' and his prices were from 2½d upwards.

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It was the farm workers themselves, usually the ploughmen, regarded as the élite of the workers, who defended the hiring fair. 'A ploughman' writing in the *H.C.* on 15 February 1867, questioned whether it was in the ploughmen's interest to have it abolished though he claimed that, if the farmers paid them fairly for their labour, few of them would 'ever seek to be in a hiring market.' On 2 March 1877 another ploughman used the evidence of the New Testament to prove that the hiring fair was not 'socially wrong' because Christ did not denounce the 'public hiring market' existing in his own times. A correspondent from Tranent, writing on 16 March 1877, challenged the 'Parish Minister' who in the previous week had said that the hiring market was a 'great source of intemperance,' because he had seen some men going home 'the worse of drink.' The writer argued that the culprits might not have been 'truly Scotch ploughmen,' in any case it was not the hiring market which made drunkards but 'evil in ourselves.' To stop the hiring market as a cure for drinking would achieve nothing and it would be 'an injustice to the Scotch ploughmen.' The writer signed himself 'One who left Haddington at three o'clock.'

'An editorial of 1 June 1877 noted that a high rate of illegitimacy in Kirkcudbright and neighbouring counties was being attributed to the hiring fairs. While not commending the fairs, the editor disputed the connection on the grounds that East Lothian's illegitimacy rate was not high; he believed that 'the defective nature of the accommodation provided for the peasant population' was a more likely cause. The quarterly report of the Chief Constable, presented in the *H.C.* on 15 February 1878, confounded the critics of the fair who complained of the excessive drinking that occurred there. He said that the hiring fair in Haddington 'passed off very quietly; little drunkenness was seen, and no pocket-picking took place. Twelve officers and constables were on duty that day in the burgh, and good order was maintained.' The Provost added that considering the 'multitude of people' who were in the town this was 'exceedingly gratifying both to the Council and the public.' He said that at the Police Court the following Monday 'not one of the ordinary agricultural population had been charged with any offence, the few offenders before the Court in connection with the hiring day belonging to the vagrant tribes who flocked to all such markets'.

Another favourable account of Haddington hiring fair was given on 14 February 1879. The editor reported that the thaw had made the streets very dirty, and the 'perpetual tread of hundreds of people along Market and Court Streets' had turned these thoroughfares into 'seas of mud and puddles.' Despite the

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Old acquaintance groups

conditions the appearance of the country folk was 'in the highest degree respectable.' The public-houses had a 'large share of custom,' but the 'provisions made by Robert Wallace of the Temperance Hotel and other purveyors of ordinary refreshments in the burgh met with abundant patronage.'

A letter of 14 January 1877 from an 'East Lothian Ploughman' defended the conduct of farm servants at the hiring fair: there was not a class which conducted itself better, and few farm servants were ever convicted. Their wages of £24 a year did not leave much for drink. The problem of excessive drinking at the hiring fairs was a difficult one to solve, even if it was only a minority who caused trouble. The Temperance Hotel in Haddington had been established as early as 1857, and on 28 January 1887 the proprietor, Robert Wallace, reminded readers of his location – 61 Market Street, 'next door to the Post Office' – and announced his wares: 'Tea and Coffee all day. Soup and Broth from 11.30 a.m. till all sold. Hundreds of Plates of Meat. Real East Lothian Fed Beef. No American or Tinned Meat. Pies, Lemonade, Ginger Ale.' In the same edition 'Henderson's Lorne Temperance Hotel' advertised 'hot pies' for Dunbar hiring fair. An advertisement, of the same date, informed the public that 'several ladies in the county, assisted by a committee in Haddington, had hired the Assembly Rooms for the use of the public on Hiring Friday, 4 February', and the rooms would be 'open free from 8 a.m. Refreshments

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would be for sale in the adjoining room and another room would be kept for women only to sit and rest.' All the rooms would be 'comfortably warmed and seated.' The response to this information from a correspondent, 'Louden Tam,' who wrote to the *H.C.* on the opening day, can hardly have been what the ladies expected:

I suppose it never entered the heads of our county ladies to inquire as to how the hinds themselves would look upon this new innovation of theirs. I have taken the trouble to inquire and shall give you a few of their notions on the subject. One says, The ladies surely think that we are terribly given to drink to require so much of their care and attention; another says, They surely think we are awfully silly not to know what to eat, and what to drink, nor where to be hired without their interference. A Radical sees it a Tory move for the next election. He says, we all voted wrong last time, and they want to get acquainted with us now so as to keep us right next time . . . Another says, What's the good of a fair if there is to be no fun; why, they want to take all spirit out of the fair, and all spirit out of the men as well. Another says, I see it all now, they want to abolish the hiring fair altogether and do us out of the day, for if they abolish the fair because we take drink they will abolish all holidays for the same reason. The whole may be summed up in the old sailor's opinion of sailors' homes:

Going up? No, for I never could stand
Those patronage places where a man's not a man;
Where you have ladies to sing and ladies to pray;
A lady brings coffee, another brings "tay";
They'll serve you your soup with a ladylike air,
But your every word must be proper and square;
You must mind your good manners; they are ladies who wait,
And a chap like a Bobby is a-watching the gate,
There is no liberty therein,
They call it a home, I call it a prison –
Let a man go wherever he chooses,
And pick for himself the house that he uses.

Despite this declaration of independence, the *H.C.* reported, the following week, that the annual hiring market had brought, by rail and road, crowds of men and women to the burgh and the 'country folks, the great majority of them of youthful years, behaved themselves in the most orderly manner' with little 'over-indulgence in intoxicants.' It was felt that the arrangements made by the ladies

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had helped, and 'upwards of 1150 rations, in the shape of soup, sandwiches, pies, and bread and cheese, were disposed of in the course of the day.' Two years later, on 8 February 1889, the Assembly Rooms were again available for refreshments; the ladies giving 'their personal attendance to the wants of the country people, who, for their part, were loud in their expressions of satisfaction and gratitude at the attention shown to them.' The editor praised the behaviour of 'one and all;' the young people did not behave in a 'boisterous or reprehensible character, and the duties of the police were accordingly by no means onerous.' Seven years later, on 14 February, the 'Ladies' Committee' was continuing to provide food and accommodation at the hiring fair at Haddington, and the ladies had the satisfaction of knowing that their efforts were 'fully appreciated.'

On 12 May 1892 the *H.C.* reported a County Council meeting at Haddington, which considered a document from a Commission of the General Assembly. The Commission had been enquiring into the condition of the working classes, with a view to considering what steps the Church might take to improve the situation. Sir Alex Kinloch explained that the report 'unsparingly' condemned hiring fairs, but the Council knew that agricultural labourers valued them because they provided a 'general holiday over a wide district of country.' In East Lothian labourers were fond of changing their places without leaving the district, and it was easy to see why the fairs were regarded as occasions which brought them together. He argued that before they could abolish the hiring market they would have to provide a general holiday as a substitute. He proposed setting up a committee to consider the matter and this was agreed to. In the discussion which followed, however, James Hope said he would be sorry to see the Council do anything to interfere with the hiring markets. He had 'attended these markets for 48 years, and he never thought that he did himself any harm in engaging men there' or that the men did themselves any harm in coming there to be engaged. He did not object to a general holiday apart from the hiring markets altogether. The convener, the Earl of Wemyss, said that the Council could not take the initiative on this matter, and the General Assembly while objecting to hiring fairs had not suggested any substitute. He added that there were doubtless some features connected to the fairs which they could not approve, but in East Lothian, mainly through 'Miss Balfour and other ladies, the young girls who attended those fairs were saved the necessity of entering a public-house in order to get refreshment.'¹²

Among the attractions of the hiring fairs were the fun-fair atmosphere they produced and the entertainments which they provided. Those of Haddington were

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described on 10 February 1860: 'Business over, amusement became the order of the day. A row of stands in Market Street attracted groups of purchasers and onlookers; and the wit and eloquence of a vendor of small wares, who sold the same by Dutch auction, appeared to be fully appreciated by admiring crowds of buyers.' In addition the public-houses were 'of course well patronised.'

The fair at Dunbar often suffered from its proximity to Haddington, but on 5 February 1875 the *H.C.* said that as it was held first, it was very well attended. The amusements offered were the usual stands and stalls in the High Street, and the main attraction was a 'wonderful round the world on horse-back for a penny worked by a small steam-engine which occasionally attempted to whistle and which with all its blow, required the efforts of the engine-driver to help it round.' The editor commented on the continuing popularity of the hiring fair in its editorial of 8 February 1878. He said that the large turnout at the recent Haddington fair showed that despite the efforts of social reformers to advocate a substitute, or 'well-meaning philanthropists' to decry the 'open market,' it was still the favourite mode by which the ploughmen of the county preferred to enter into service engagements. The attractions included 'itinerant performers' and goods stalls, ballad singers who sang to 'enraptured ears in the most delicious doggerel,' Highland ballet which performed on the causeway, a 'flaming photograph booth,' strength-testing machines at a penny a try, jewellery at 'fabulously low figures,' while 'no end of gingerbread and confectionery temptations assailed the eyes and palates of the more juvenile crowd.' The editor praised the crowd's good behaviour and said nearly 2,000 customers resorted to the Temperance Hotel for 'edibles without the accompaniment of anything stronger than tea or coffee.'

The attractions of Haddington fair the following year were of the 'usual cosmopolitan and itinerant character – ballad singers, pipers, fiddlers, toy, sweetie and gingerbread stands . . . and the usual photographic salon.' The public-houses had a 'large share of custom,' as did Robert Wallace's Temperance Hotel; and there were 'few instances of inebriety,' mostly confined to 'exuberant youths.' On 10 February 1888 the Dunbar fair had the 'great eastern merry-go-round' providing the chief attraction and carrying off the 'cream of the odd coppers,' supplemented by the shooting saloons. The behaviour of the ploughmen was 'everything that could be desired.'

The amusements were an essential attraction but, as the editor commented on 14 February 1896, the chat with friends or 'frien'ly crack' was most prized by

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the younger generation. The crowd at the Haddington fair, was praised for its 'exceedingly decorous' behaviour, and the appearance of the town would have convinced 'a sceptic' that there was much to be said for 'these . . . now old-fashioned gatherings.'

On 10 February 1899 the less attractive side of the Haddington fair was acknowledged when the editor described the stalls, hobby-horses, phonographs and rifle-booths, but also the 'wandering fraternity of tricksters,' and a 'dancing bear in charge of a suave Austrian' which was 'quite a little attraction by itself as it elegantly waltzed about.' Once the lights were lit, the 'more or less outrageous instruments for manufacturing din were in blast,' but the scene was said to be 'exceedingly picturesque; and very typical of the old-time feeing market.'

There was no shortage of critics of the hiring fairs. R. Scot Skirving, as already noted, deployed their degrading nature, and a letter from a ploughman's wife (published on 4 February 1887) echoed his sentiments, asking how anyone could stand and look at the farm servants at 'these public markets.' She claimed they looked more like 'a lot of work-horses' than men. She wanted 'to stop these slave markets, and let them be a thing of the past,' and she said that the register should be used for farm workers as for domestic servants. She wanted to restore dignity to the ploughmen, as 'from the peer to the peasant' all depended on the plough.

Some farmers objected to the fairs because of the loss of working days – not only the day or days lost going to look for a situation at the fair, but also the flitting day, both for the man leaving and the new man arriving. 'A farmer of half a century' had these views published in the *H.C.* on 2 March 1877. He objected particularly to the fact that a ploughman could go to the fair whether he wanted a situation or not, and if refused permission would give up his place. The writer thought that all farmers who disapproved of the hiring fairs should 'resolutely refuse;' it was only the 'roving, idle-inclined' who didn't want places that went needlessly. He believed in a registry for farm servants, with employers making 'strict inquiry' of their former employers as to character. If farm servants wanted a holiday, it would be granted at a 'convenient season,' and they would probably get 'a horse and cart to take their family with them.'

Another farmer writing a letter to the *H.C.* on 16 March 1877 admitted that as long as the ploughmen wanted the public hiring to continue, it was 'vain for

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Sideshows

either ministers or masters' to discuss the subject, the evils attending the system would continue, and the farm servant would remain in a 'wrong social position.' In the same edition an anonymous parish minister of the county defended the right of ministers to speak out about the hiring fairs or any other social matters. His letter was prompted by one from another anonymous minister which appeared on 9 February 1877. This claimed that the hiring fairs were an 'unmixed evil' with immorality and drunkenness prevailing. These comments roused what he called, in a letter of 2 March, a 'hornet's nest' about his ears; but he hoped that some good might come of his criticisms.

The *H.C.*, on 20 June 1879, printed one of the prize essays on the abuses of hiring fairs and how to remedy them. The prizes had been offered by the *Kirkcudbright Advertiser* and the winner of the essay printed was Elizabeth Ramage, one of the 'softer sex' as the editor called her. She had never been hired at a fair, but believed that they exposed everyone, especially women, to the 'grossest vulgarity and profane language.' They encouraged drinking because the farmers took the workers into the public-houses and then –after making a contract – sent

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them into the street 'with a shilling in their pockets to tempt them to more drink.' She compared the hiring market, as others had done, to a cattle market or a slave market, where nothing could be seen but 'a crowd of human beings jostling each other about.' At night the workers were 'exposed to a crush at a railway station, or to a long, weary walk, amid wind and rain.' Masters and mistresses could also suffer from the crowd and masters could be insulted by 'rude answers' from their previous employees and quarrels and fights often broke out between friends. The fairs attracted a 'class of low pickpockets.' Elizabeth Ramage's remedy was a register to be kept in a village centre, perhaps in a smithy, or for female servants, a dressmaker's shop. If farmers ceased to go to fairs to look for servants, she claimed, servants would stop attending fairs.

Criticisms of the hiring fairs were not confined to East Lothian. The Biggar fair was said to be no more distinguished by 'disturbances and immoralities' than the fairs in other districts, but the 'rustics' on holiday were 'apt to be a little hilarious and uproarious.' The fair was condemned as a 'degrading spectacle' savouring of the 'marts of slavery,' with physical strength given a higher value than moral character.¹³

Wages for farm servants, at the time of the *New Statistical Account of Scotland* published in 1845, were paid mostly in kind for the ploughmen; women were paid for the summer and winter terms, and labourers by the day. The Rev John Jaffray of the parish of Dunbar said the annual wages of a hind were 66 bushels of oats, 18 bushels of barley, 8 bushels of beans, 4 bolls (a boll equalled 6 bushels) or 48 cwt of coals, £2 sterling, a cow's grass and winter keep, 1500 yards of 'land along a drill for potatoes, 1 bushel of wheat for stacking and sowing, one month's meat in harvest, with a house and garden,' for which the hind had to provide a shearer for twenty days. The wages of a female servant were £3 for 'the winter term and £3 10s the summer'; a 'worker' received 10d per day, summer and winter, a labourer 9s per week. The rotation of crops was, 1. turnips, 2. wheat, with clover and rye-grass seeds, 3. grass, 4. oats, 5. beans, 6. wheat. This was called the 'Dunbar system.'¹⁴ The Rev Robert Lorrimer and the Rev John Cook, ministers in the parish of Haddington reported that farm servants in their parish were mostly married men whose wages were paid in kind: '9 quarters of oats, (1 quarter = 8 bushels) 2¼ quarters of barley, and 1 quarter of pease or beans; a cow kept for them during the year; 750 yards of good well-manured land to crop with potatoes, and a pound or guinea in lieu of about 540 yards of ground which was formerly allowed on which to raise flax . . . ' The cottage rent was usually paid by

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the cottager's wife who gave 20 days reaping at harvest, or paid the wages of a reaper, which could average between £1 and £1 10s, for which sum, he had his house and garden. Women and children received from 6d to 10d per day. It is difficult to compare the two rates precisely but it would appear that they were roughly similar.¹⁵

On 14 February 1862, it was calculated that the wages were the same as the previous year for 'able-bodied ploughmen,' at from £30 to £35 per annum. What were called 'halfling lads' or youths were paid much less. In addition to this monetary wage the 'perquisites' had to be added. 'Rusticus,' writing on 23 October 1863, challenged the claim made in a 'recent' number of the *Transactions of the Highland Society* that for married ploughmen wages had risen during the last 25 years from £25 to £35 a year. He said many hinds had to pay an increased wage of £13 to the bondager and 'provide her board, lodging, and washing for 52 weeks.' He said that the gross total paid for the hind's own wages for 52 weeks ending 23 May 1863 ranged from £45 to £51 plus 'perquisites of house and garden, free coals carted and the liberty to feed a pig.' He complained that the rate of wages for 52 weeks on different farms in the same parish or adjoining varied greatly, and he gave examples of £17, £20 and £23. He therefore challenged the assertion that the rate was £35 per annum at the 'present time.' Farmers, he maintained, were giving the hinds only £1 or £2 more in money and six bushels of barley more than they gave eight years before.

The year 1864 was noted for the low prices of agricultural products, and in East Lothian the hinds and farmers had suffered equally. The editor of the *Scottish Farmer*, quoted in the *H.C.* on 24 June 1864, said that hinds were putting their children to work at an earlier age because the low rate of return for the goods in kind, in this instance potatoes, had hit their income as well as the farmers' income. It was argued that hinds would benefit from money payments, especially in seasons when prices were low. Hinds were very conscious of their low wages and low status, and many believed they should establish a hinds' protection society such as existed in Midlothian, where they were asking for higher wages. As an East Lothian hind put it on 29 December 1865, they were an 'honest, hard-working, respectable-looking class of men,' but they were 'degraded by all other tradesmen.'

Bothy ballads were not a particular feature of East Lothian as there were comparatively few bothies, but occasionally farm servants would produce topical folksongs which were published in the *H.C.* On 2 February 1866, as wages were

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being keenly debated a correspondent 'made a song on the hiring' to the tune of 'Susannah, don't you cry.'

I'm on my way to Haddington,
On the cold street to stand,
To see if I some farmer find
For me to hire offhand,
But although my heid is turning grey,
My heart beats braver still;
For I'm fine resolved to have a rise
Against the farmer's will.

O brothers all, I pray draw near,
And listen unto me;
Stand to your rights and try your best,
Before that you do fee.

In the same edition 'a farmer' of Haddington wrote a letter enclosing a copy of his hinds' wages, which he calculated as: money, £11; cow £6; 2 quarters barley at 34s- 11d; 1 boll beans £1- 1s- 6d; 3¼ loads meal at 39s, £6- 6s- 9d; potatoes, 1000 yards £3; harvest meat, £1; 'driving coals,' i.e. free cartage, £1; house, garden and piggery, £4, making a total of £36- 18s- 1d, or 14s- 2½d per week. He claimed this was a fair wage for work which was not hard, and the hind had the advantage of having a house always near his work. He said that the hinds were paid when ill and that he paid labourers 14s- 0d a week on occasion. This calculation was taken up by the editor of the *H.C.*, who pointed out that the skilled and experienced ploughman was being paid only 2½d a week more than the unskilled labourer.

The *H.C.*, at the same date, reported a meeting of farm servants belonging to the Tranent district, which discussed the 'propriety of joining in the movement being made in East Lothian to increase the remuneration of farm servants.' The Mechanics' Hall in Tranent was packed for the meeting with about 200 miners, tradesmen, farm servants and labourers. William Gordon, a carter from Elphinstone, was the chairman. He read out the rules of the Scottish Farm Servants' Association which had been formed in Midlothian. They included a minimum weekly wage of 15s, plus free house and 'free meat in harvest' and a retirement pension for aged and infirm workers. The wages paid by three different farmers in East Lothian were 12s- 2¼d per week, 12s-2d per week and 12s- 5½d per week an average of

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12s- 3¼d per week. The chairman said, ironically, this was a 'hearty wage' for 'a poor man to maintain himself and a family of six.' At Inveresk poorhouse the cost was 2s- 5½d each and 'their clothes found for them.' There was much enthusiasm shown at the meeting, and ideas put forward included one by William Skirving for a co-operative association among the farm servants, with the men contributing to the cost of co-operative farms. David Leslie of Seton West Mains said they should all support the old men when they could no longer work, and he urged them to unite:

Come all ye brave ploughmen, stand all true,
Put on the breast-knot noo –
Put on the ribbons of the royal true blue,
And join us all to the union noo.

This was followed by great cheering and before the meeting was adjourned, it was decided to form an association of East Lothian to improve the status of the farm servants. As the meeting had been overcrowded an adjourned meeting, reported on 16 February 1866, was confined to farm servants and a deputation from the Midlothian association was present, saying that the aim was 16s a week, a free house and coals driven free. The chairman, William Gordon, said the men should unite in 'self-defence' and not grovel to the masters. William Skirving approved the suggestion for all those who wanted places at the hiring fair to wear badges so that the farmers could quickly identify them. At the conclusion of the meeting the chairman said that over 70 members had joined the association. William Gordon was elected president, with William Skirving as vice-president.

The East Lothian Agricultural Club met about the same time, and the meeting held in the George Hotel Haddington was reported on 9 February 1866. There was a discussion on wages and the lack of uniformity. Mr Hope of Fentonbarns confirmed what the ploughmen complained about, namely that where meal, potato ground and money were given there was a rise of £1 to £2, but where individuals had cows, there was no rise.

The Royal Commission on the employment of children, young persons and women in agriculture reported in 1870. Giving evidence in 1867, the Rev J. H. Tait spoke of Aberlady, his parish, saying he had come across a few cases of the 'degrading influence of the moral tone of female field work' as regular fieldwork prevented the women receiving training in how to carry out domestic duties. There were two bothies in his parish which were occupied by Highland and Irish girls

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and he had heard of no evil resulting from the existence of the bothies. A farmer, James Skirling, said that on his farm the daughters of his ploughmen worked on the farm from about 14 to 18 years of age, when they left to work as domestic servants. Mr Culley claimed he had never bound his labourers to keep bondagers; he had a female bothy occupied by girls from Skye. He said all the cottages had gardens, and farm servants generally kept a cow. In Athelstaneford, a few boys were employed from March to November every year. There were many bothies where Highland women were accommodated for about six months of the year. In Dirleton, George Hope said that most farms had bothies in which five or six Highland women were housed, and these women were generally well-behaved. Samuel Sherriff said that the bothies were 'most respectable abodes;' the Highland girls who occupied them were of 'a superior caste,' and few had children. They came in large numbers to replace the Lowland girls who preferred to go out to domestic service. He called bondage labour the 'vilest custom' whereby farmers forced their married ploughmen to keep a single woman whom the ploughmen hired by the year.¹⁶

There was a large turnout at the hiring fair in Haddington, reported on 8 February 1878, and from the 'happy demeanour and excellent outfit of the crowd' the editor deduced that the 'pinch of bad agricultural seasons had not as yet told on the material welfare of the rural working classes.' The hinds were said to be reluctant to 'engage freely' and to show a desire for a 'greater proportion of cash being included in their contracts.' The wages were much the same as the previous year, being from 16s to 17s weekly 'of money, with four bolls of potatoes.' A letter from 'Fair Play,' printed on 3 January 1879, discussed a reduction in wages which the farmers were proposing to make. The writer said that wages 'at the present time' were 'scarcely 18s a week with free house and garden.' The writer claimed it was unfair for them to receive a reduction since in good times they had never had high wages, wages should stay as they were.

On 8 February 1884 the *H.C.* said there was still no diminution in numbers at the hiring fair, despite the rain which fell continuously causing more frequent visits to the nearest tavern. Men, it was said, quickly made their bargains, probably because many farmers were turning their arable land into pasture and consequently needed fewer men. The farmers were not reducing wages, but they stood out against the wish of the hinds for a 'purely money rate.' Women workers were 'in great demand,' and preference was given to hinds who could 'bring such along with them.' The wages given by one of the 'leading farmers' in the area were:

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'money £22 to £26; 65 stones oatmeal, paid monthly; three bolls barley and one boll beans; 1000 yards of potato drill, manured, the hind doing the planting and working; 28 days' meat at harvest, or allowed 5d per day for breakfast and supper in place of porridge, and one pound bread and bottle of beer for dinner; free house and garden with coals driven from the station.' For 'cottars,' the wages were 1s-4d per day, December and January excepted when 1s-2d per day was given; 18 days' meat at harvest and the same allowances for breakfast and supper as for the men and wages for three weeks; 300 yards of potato drill; coals carted free and a free house.

The wages given in Haddington hiring fair on 11 February 1887 were said to be almost unchanged, but any change was 'in the downward direction.' Hinds who stayed put received the same wages, but new hinds could be hired at a 'small reduction,' the reduction being from 1s to 6d a week. The average wage of a 'capable ploughman,' including money and 'gains' together, was about 15s a week with a free house. Where there were no payments in kind, as in the eastern part of the county, 16s to 17s a week with a free house was given. Female workers were 'readily hired' at from 7s-6d to 8s a week with the usual allowances. It was said that 'not a few of those present' were unable to find employers. By 8 February 1889 the numbers attending Haddington hiring fair were smaller; but they still blocked the main thoroughfare from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. There was no change in the system of hiring, nor any expressed wish for alteration, with no perceptible sign of hinds holding out for increased wages. There was 'nothing in the shape of organisation,' and no sign of masters trying to get hinds at a cheaper rate. Money wages were said to be 15s plus 5 bolls of potatoes, coals transported free, meat in harvest, with house and garden, which was calculated as equivalent to 18s-6d or 19s a week. The editor said that the farm servant was 'fully in as comfortable position as the majority of working men in towns.' Women workers were scarce, and at the close of the market 'numbers, both of masters and men, were unsuited.'

The lack of interest in collective bargaining among the East Lothian ploughmen was reflected in the comparatively small number (60) who attended a meeting of ploughmen held in the Corn Exchange, Haddington, reported on 21 June 1889. William Pow of Muirhouse, the chairman, referred to their apathy and inactivity, and said that the ploughmen were called an abused class, being 'uncultivated and ignorant' and also 'covetous,' the latter description having been bestowed on them by the 'Rev. minister of Stenton' who had written to the *H.C.* telling them that 'Be not covetous,' was the tenth commandment. Pow said the

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farm servants were told to be content with what they had, while the farmers were bettering themselves. He claimed that the solution was for them to join the association. As he said, 'The association was formed in a sense, but only in name.' Mr Hope of Luffness said that 'wages had been taken down twelve years ago,' although farmers claimed otherwise. Pow gave instances by which farm servants' wages had been lowered and their gains had been paid in inferior goods. He suggested that there should be an entry fee of 1s for a member of the association and that they should have a managing committee in every parish. A motion to form an association was carried and over 30 men paid the subscription (2d weekly) and the entry-money, fixed at 2s- 6d. On 20 March 1891 the *H.C.* advertised that members living in the Tranent district were to pay their subscriptions to the East Lothian Agricultural Union 'at the shop of Mr Black, stationer, on Saturday 21st inst. between the hours of 7 and 8 o'clock in the evening'.

The efforts of the East Lothian ploughmen to use an association to improve conditions of work had little effect on the downward turn of wages at the end of the nineteenth century. Many of the farm servants believed the hiring fairs acted as a form of collective bargaining where the prevailing wage-level was set although there was little uniformity.¹⁷ At the hiring fair at Haddington, reported on 13 February 1891, the average weekly payment to ploughmen was said to range from 14s to 16s, with '1000 yards of potatoes.' Women workers were said to be 'as usual, scarce,' and those who wanted a change had no difficulty in finding a new employer.

The Royal Commission of 1893, in its evidence on the Lothians, given by R. Hunter Pringle, the Assistant Commissioner, reported that there was a 'love of change' among agricultural labourers, citing a man who worked for Mr Fletcher of East Saltoun and whose cottage was 'cosy . . . even elegant.' He was getting 21s per week, but he threw up his place to go to Dunbar hiring market where he failed to find a place. At Haddington he turned down two jobs at a lower rate and returned home out of a place, saying, 'He didna ken why he had given up his place for he had no fault either to Mr Fletcher or the steward.' The average length of service was said to be 6 years 10 months for men and 6 years 8 months for women. The custom of importing female labourers from Skye and other islands off the west coast had almost died out. Farmers and their stewards attended the hiring fairs, and the stewards sought out the labourers as they had a fair idea of the character of the men. The bargain was cemented by the giving and receiving of arles, which might be 1s, 2s, 2s- 6d or 5s. Middle-aged women, or widows with daughters

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Walk up, good luck, a merrie show!

accustomed to farm-work, were often engaged for six months or a year. They would have a free house and were called women cottars. The hiring market of Dunbar took place on the first Tuesday in February, that of Haddington on the first Friday in February, and those who failed to engage at one place attended the other market. Both farmers and men were opposed to short engagements, and were in favour of yearly contracts. The hiring market was a place where country people enjoyed themselves and it was no more to be dreaded than any social gathering. One suggestion for improvement was a reduction in the interval between the hiring market and the terms from twelve to fifteen to three or four weeks. He also suggested that the labourers should bring written references with them and that the employer should give a clear account of wages and duties required. R. Hunter Pringle said there was a model bothy in Saltoun with a garden. It was occupied by four married men who worked on the estate. They did their own cooking but employed a charwoman at 2s a week. Changes, he said, had been made to labourers' cottages between 1855 and 1870. Old cottages had been pulled down and larger cottages built.

R. Hunter Pringle said no strikes or lockouts had occurred among the farm servants of East Lothian, where relations between farmers and men were good.

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Farm prices were 'deplorably low,' but rents per acre had been reduced, and farm servants received lower wages. He claimed that the bondage system had been abolished, lingering until 1875. Diet had improved, he said, and beef, mutton, or fried bacon was eaten at supper; and dinner could include herrings or eggs, oatcakes and coffee or tea. There was also porridge or tea with bread, cheese, butter and jam. Clothing for men was a 'strong tweed coat, vest, buckskin or cord trousers.' Silk hats were not uncommon. On Sunday, the girls were 'finely dressed in fashionable style.' The wives knitted stockings or sewed and did their own washing or took in washing. Illegitimacy was frowned upon and the rate for East Lothian was 8.5 per cent in 1871 and 6.4 per cent for 1892. Education was free, but R. Hunter Pringle said that reading was despised.¹⁸

It is evident that even in the period of agricultural depression in East Lothian, wage rates in real terms were rising and that the prices of basic commodities were falling, and the standard of living of farm servants was improving. The rise in average wages, in money terms, as quoted by the *H.C.*, was very small, e.g. 15s per week in 1866, 17s in 1878, and down in 1891 to 14s to 16s. Payments in kind were being eroded so additional money wages were not always a rise, but in East Lothian hinds were still receiving potatoes, a free house, free transport of coal and harvest meals, although the oats, barley and beans, given in 1884, had disappeared by 1891, largely by the wishes of the hinds who preferred money wages. This was in their interests, as they could buy food at the lower prices, and with cheaper transport by rail they could more easily reach the towns and buy mass-produced goods. As R. Hunter Pringle said, railway journeys had become 'commonplace.'¹⁹ He saw no substitute for the hiring fair, and believed the continuity of labour and the stable wage rate had a great deal to do with the relative prosperity enjoyed.

The strength of the farm servants was displayed when there were attempts to change the date of the hiring fairs and move them nearer the beginning of the terms. On 14 February 1896 the *H.C.* reported that the meeting for the purpose of discussing the date was a 'complete failure' as neither farmers nor farm servants turned up. The editor said there was a widespread feeling among the men against changing the 'old day,' and 'if the men themselves do not see the advisability of changing the day the farmers need not care two straws about the matter.' The wages at the fair of 10 February 1899 in Haddington were given as, ploughmen 15s- 6d per week with three bolls of potatoes; 'foremen ploughmen,' 16s; grieves (stewards) 18s to 19s. It was possible for farm workers to find employment through the 'Situations Vacant' of the *H.C.* On 11 February 1887, ploughmen were needed

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on six separate farms, usually 'with workers' or 'with woman worker'. Farm servants were invited to apply for grieves, ploughmen etc to Haddingtonshire Registry in the High Street of Haddington, but the notion of the registry did not catch on until after World War I. Most men, it seemed, preferred the solidarity of the hiring fair, although job opportunities were regularly advertised. Hours of work were not the main point at issue in the nineteenth century as they were in industry, but in the twentieth century what were seen as unnecessarily long hours and low pay drove away the younger men to find better conditions in industry.²⁰

The hiring fair continued into the twentieth century, but after World War I the Farmers' Union and the Scottish Farm Servants' Union were much in evidence, and on 13 March 1931 the *H.C.* reported that a register was being prepared by the Farm Servants' Union. Hiring was carried out in the Corn Exchange, as it had been for 'several years', and the 'glory that was Market Street' on hiring Friday had disappeared; there were no shows. In 1932, as reported on 11 March, hiring took place in the Corn Exchange but very few engagements were effected. Wages had reached 32s for ploughmen and 22s for women. The engagements were made through registers. 'Except for a stall in front of the Corn Exchange, there was little evidence that yesterday was the hiring day.' Scenes such as those commemorated in 'A Country Hiring, a Dramatic Rhyme' (1905) had passed into history.²¹

Farm servants had clung to a system which gave them a rare holiday and a chance to meet old friends as well as to enjoy the merriment of the fair. It gave them a chance to come out of isolation and exchange views about wages and conditions of work, lessening opportunities for exploitation. Some critics abhorred the temptations of 'dissipation and extravagance' presented by men standing in the open market-place to be hired. Others like the editor of the *H.C.* writing on 10 February 1871, objected to the temptations thrown by the fair in the path of the farm labourer. The acquisition of 'vagrant, unsettled habits' entailed much waste and expense and 'militated in the long run against his own comfort and respectability as a working man.' As Joseph F. Duncan, General Secretary of the Farm Servants' Union argued in 1919, the children's schooling was often disrupted and the constant removals led some families to move away entirely from farm work.²² Hiring fairs were doomed to extinction in a more sophisticated age of declining agriculture, but there seems little doubt that they were eagerly anticipated by many as a colourful diversion in a life of monotonous drudgery.

THE FEEING MARKET OR HIRING FAIR IN EAST LOTHIAN

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3. George Buchan-Hepburn of Smeaton, *General View of the Agriculture and Rural Economy of East Lothian* (Edinburgh, 1794) 52.
4. Paul Mantoux, *The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1964), 347-348.
5. Gavin Sprott, *Farming*, (Edinburgh, 1995) 18.
6. Sir John Sinclair, *Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1825), 229, 231-233.
7. The old Scots plough finally disappeared about 1820. See Alexander Fenton, 'The Light and Improved Scots Plough and Farms,' Caoimhin O Danachair, ed, *Folk and Farms*, (Dublin, 1976), 40.
8. Gavin Sprott, 44.
9. *New Statistical Account of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1845) (hereafter referred to as *N.S.A.*) II, 129.
10. See Alexander Somerville, *The Autobiography of a Working Man* (London, 1967), Chapters 1 and 6.
11. T. M. Devine, 'The Demand for Agricultural Labour in East Lothian after the Napoleonic Wars,' *Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists*, 53.
12. Miss Balfour of Whittingehame organised the Ladies Committee. She was Alice Balfour, the sister of A. J. Balfour. See Paul Harris, *Life in a Scottish Country House* (Haddington, 1989).
13. William Hunter, *Biggar and the House of Fleming*, (Edinburgh, 1867), 352.
14. *N.S.A.* II, 82.
15. *N.S.A.* II, 10-11.
16. *Fourth Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture: Appendix, Part II: Evidence from the Assistant Commissioner*, Parliamentary Papers, XIII (1870), 109-112.
17. Ian Carter, 'Unions and Myths: Farm Servants' Unions in Aberdeenshire, 1870-1900,' T. M. Devine, ed, *Farm Servants and Labour in Lowland Scotland 1770-1914*, 223.
18. *Royal Commission on Labour. The Agricultural Labourer, III, Scotland*, Parliamentary Papers, 1893-4, XXXVI (hereafter referred to as *R.C. on Labour, 1893*) 98-100, 111-112, 115-121.
19. *R.C. on Labour, 1893*, 117.
20. Haddington Local History Centre has a copy of a letter from Stirling and Burnet Solicitors of Haddington, dated 25 November 1943, which states that the National Farmers' Union and the Farm Servants' Union met in 1926 and agreed that the hiring should take place in the Corn Exchange, Haddington, on Thursday 4 March 1926. A copy of a letter from W. Elliot, dated 14 November 1943, said that from 1927 the date of hiring was changed to the second Thursday of March.
21. James Lumsden (Samuel Mucklebackit), *Edinburgh and Country Croonings*, (Edinburgh, 1905), 225-230.
22. Joseph F. Duncan, 'Scottish Farm Labour' *The Scottish Journal of Agriculture*, II, 1919, 503.

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JAMES BALFOUR OF WHITTINGHAM AND BALGONIE

By David Affleck

James Balfour became laird of the estate of Whittingham¹ in 1817. Described in his obituary in *The Scotsman* of 30 April 1845 as 'one of the wealthiest commoners' he was born in Fife in 1773, the second son of John Balfour of Balbirnie. Conolly(1866) notes that at the beginning of the eighteenth century, there were thirteen heritors in Fife with the name of Balfour, a greater number than any other surname. The origin of the name is said to be linked to the river Ore and in a notebook within the family archives, we are told that it is certain that the old Balfours of that Ilk were descended from a William of Strathor. This note book on the family genealogy hand-written by A. J. Balfour and dated 1925 advises that James was a descendant of a William Balfour, whose son George bought Balbirnie in 1664. The estate had previously belonged to the Balbirnies.

Raymond, in his biography of A. J. Balfour (1920), tells us that Whittingham was bought with new gold from India by John Balfour of Balbirnie and this link with India is referred to in A. J. Balfour's note book:

As to how my grandfather made his money of which he acquired such a quantity, nobody seems to be certain but I believe this is how he began. He went out in the civil service, but being very fond of horses, a propensity not inherited by the main line of his descendents, he accepted the gift of an Arab from some Indian potentate for which, this being of course against the rules of the service, he was dismissed. He then set himself up in India, and being a shrewd minded man, he had got enough for himself to enable him to accept a Government contract for the food of the troops in an unexpected war. I believe he forced the Government to apply to him by foreseeing the event of buying up everything in the country. The war however did not come off so that he made an enormous profit. But even this does not account for all that he made, probably using this as capital, he went on with it, until he returned home satisfied with all that he had gained.

It was common in the late eighteenth century for a second son to join the East India Company as a clerk. Sir Walter Scott wrote as late as 1822: 'Our younger

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children are as naturally exported to India as our black cattle were sent to England', a theme he had first set out in a letter of 1809 when he described the Board of Control as 'the key of the corn chest' adding, 'though England furnishes a demand for our quadrupeds, we are forced to send our bipeds as far as Bengal.'

Entry into the East Indies Company had been regarded as a quick road to wealth in the mid-eighteenth century but this practice had become subject to Parliamentary scrutiny in the action against Clive and Hastings. Clive had started as a clerk with the company at Madras at the age of 18 in 1743, Warren Hastings had started even earlier in 1732. Clive met an early death by suicide in 1774. Thus

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a pamphleteer wrote in 1772 'The East Indies were not of late years considered a quick road to wealth' (Holzman 1920).

Balfour had close connections with the East India Company that we need to examine. The family notebook records that William of Strathor had a brother, Michael, who is claimed to be the ancestor of the Balfours of Trenanby in Orkney. In his book, the Balfours of Orkney, Fereday (1990) tells us that a John Balfour, 3rd Laird of Trenanby, having made his fortune in Madras where he started as a writer or clerk in 1772, returned to Britain in 1790 and became M.P. for Orkney and Shetland in that year.

Further insight into this world is to be found in the detailed account by Fereday of how John Balfour of Trenanby made his money in Madras. It includes his employment with the East India Company as a writer, the opportunities he had for private trade, his development as a Madras merchant banker and his ability to earn commission from supplying grain to the army and stores to the navy. Holzman (1920) notes that 'Bribes, euphemistically called "presents" were rigourously indispensable accompaniments in any business approach to India officialdom'.

John Balfour returned to Britain as a 'Nabob'. The name 'Nabob' was applied to successful returning company servants and they were characterised as follows in a magazine account of 1771: 'Land hunger was perhaps the most general characteristic of the retired Nabob. A Parliamentary seat and a landed estate were declared to be the twin apples of the Nabob's eye'. Burke's description in a Parliamentary debate of 1783 referred to Nabobs as follows: 'They marry into your family, they enter into your Senate, they ease your estates by loans; they cherish and protect your relations which lie heavy on your patronage.'

It is now difficult to assess what the family links were at that time between John Balfour of Trenady and the Balbirnie Balfours. John Balfour's earlier experience in Madras and his successful return must have been familiar to James but there are two indications of a distance in relationships:

1. the note book refers to the difference of view as to which branch had precedence.
2. there is an absence of any reference to the Balbirnie branch in the index of Fereday's detailed study of the Orkney family papers and letters between 1747-99.

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Another family link involved William and Robert Ramsay, two uncles of James who were merchants in London in the late 1700s and were clearly investing in East Indian trade. William was employed with the Madras Board of Revenue until he died in London in 1793. Tracing the details of this family network has proved complex because of references to other individuals with the Balfour name and the adoption of the name Ramsay by Robert Balfour, grandfather of James. He married Anne Ramsay, heiress of Whitehill near Carrington in Midlothian and then took the name Robert Balfour Ramsay. Of their twelve children, some retained the name Balfour, including the father of James.

The Patronage of the Dundas Dynasty

It is impossible to examine the links between Scotland and India in this period without assessing the involvement of Henry Dundas and his patronage. In March 1809, a Select Committee of the House of Commons reported its detailed inquiry into corrupt practices in regard to the appointment and nomination of writers in the service of the East India Company and uncovered examples of up to £3500 being paid for the post of a writer. The Committee noted a statement from the Rt. Hon Henry Dundas on 26 February 1800 that he feels it a duty that he owes both to himself and the Court (of the Company) to omit no means in his power for ascertaining whether any person whom he has obliged through the favour of the Court, has presumed to abuse his kindness in so sordid and unwarrantable a manner.

There is evidence of his patronage (but not corruption) in the following letters in the Melville Archives:

1. There is an envelope with a missing letter from John Balfour. The note on it indicates it contained a letter of 5 March 1798 to Lord Melville asking that his son James, a writer on the Madras establishment now under Mr Jackson, Collector of Revenue at Ramnad in the Tinnevely country be recommended to Lord Clive.

2. Another letter from James' father, John Balfour, written from Whitehill in Midlothian and dated 14 January 1800 says:

In March 1795, you did me the honour to present my son with a membership of a years standing on the Madras establishment and he went out soon after. Since that time, James Balfour has served as an assistant to Mr Powney and afterwards to Mr Jackson, Collector of the Revenue at Ramnad in the Polygar Country and met with approbation of both these gentlemen in the discharge of the duty of his office of which they gave a favourable report in the return made

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by them to the Board of Revenue on their leaving India. James now acts as first assistant to Mr Lushington . . . The Goodness and Favor (sic) I have always experienced from you and the obliging you did me the honour to say when I mentioned the young man to you at Melville Castle induces me to take the liberty of stating his situation and to entreat that you will recommend him in India in such a way as you may seem proper. . . .

The letter is noted, 'Recommended to Lord Clive in March 98 again August 1800.'

Period to 1800

East India Company records now in the British Library are extensive and while some are indexed, there are gaps for the period relevant to this review. A printed list of Madras civil servants published in 1839 refers to James' appointment as a writer in the company on 10 September 1793. There is a microfilmed copy of his written application in the form of a petition. 'Your petitioner has been educated in writing and accounts. Because he cannot produce a register of his baptism, he is required to swear on oath 'he is between 17 and 22.' His application is supported by a certificate dated 23 March 1795 by a William Swansone that 'he went through a Course of Merchants Accompts and book-keeping under my care'.

Paul Harris (1989) records that James was dismissed in 1800, returned to England for a couple of years and then went back with a contract to provision the Royal Navy in Indian waters. Harris had access to the account given in A. J. Balfour's notebook but the use of the term 'dismissed' does not fit with Balfour's return to service with the Company in 1802. The answer is more complex. There is an entry in the minute book of the Court of Directors in 1801 referring to Memorials from James Balfour in which he asked to be restored to the service. There are similar Memorials from Walter Jackson enclosing a paper justifying his conduct and requesting to be granted copies of all the documents upon which the charges against him have been grounded. A further entry for July 1801 refers to 'fairly serious charges against him' (Mr Jackson.) It may still be possible to trace the detailed accusations against Walter Jackson but as he did not resign the service until 18 March 1812, the 'serious charges' did not lead to his dismissal. A request from James to return to his rank on the Madras establishment is recorded for 15 April 1802, which fits with the service list entry showing his return to India on 25 November 1802. Other archive material for the period 1800 to 1808 and believed to refer to this James Balfour is available in a series of letters in the archives of the Telfer-Smollitt family of Bonhill, but access to these letters has not been granted.

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A letter of 11 September 1807 from James' father to the Hon. R Dundas makes it clear that James had risen in the East India Company hierarchy from writer² to junior merchant:

My son James Balfour on the Madras Establishment, Jnr. Merchant succeeded the Honble Basill Cochrane in the office of Victualling the Navy and it would be of very great use to him to be properly recommended to Admiral Drury who is now appointed to a Naval Command in India.

Managing Family Finances

There are a number of letters which show that throughout his time in India, James was looking after investments on behalf of the wider family in addition to his duties for the company. A letter from his father of 13 August 1799 refers to 'the misfortune that has happened to you but bless God that you escaped unhurt'; and goes on to say how satisfied he was to learn of how highly regarded he was in the discharge of his duties, adding 'steady perseverance in these cannot fail of securing you the patronage and esteem of the Gentlemen you serve under.' The letter goes on to refer to his late brother William's estate, of which £1000 was sent to Mr Day to advance to him and 'to further your plans, that the whole sum of £10000 should be given you for a certain time without any interest.'

The main subject of the letters for the period 1808/10 relates to another estate, that of Major George Ramsay of Whitehill. In June 1808, James writes to his father:

If the General has no particular occasion for his money at home, I mean to propose to him to allow me the use of his funds now in my possession at that rate of interest payable annually by a Bill on the Navy Board. I now make that same offer to you....I hope the Executors of my uncle Robert's funds will not object to the money remaining in my hands for three or four years at 5%. I have told Wardlaw (an executor of George Ramsay of Whitehill) that unless he consents to this, I have no desire to keep the money a day longer.... Had I paid less attention to the interest of my esteemed uncle Major Ramsay and attended more to the wishes of Mr Robert, it is probable I should have been a man of large fortune but I should despise wealth in such conditions and would rather stay in India all my life than enrich myself at the sacrifice of those principles which I consider the characteristics of a man of honour and integrity.

The use of money from the estate and under his management is the subject

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of some dispute especially with regard to the firm Hart and Colt. In the same letter of June 1808, he writes:

I defy any person to understand the various debits and credits. The confusion is a great measure owing to the variety of interests which are blended together, the difficulty of now separating them and the great inattention that appears to have been paid to the arrangement of the accounts... I will send home to the General, correspondence that has passed between the hands of Colt and Co and me regarding the sum of £17751.17.9d received by Mr Colt out of the funds of the estate and applied by him to his own purposes.

In February 1809, in a letter to his uncle, Sir Gerald Balfour, he refers to an attempt by Mr Hart to defraud the estate of property and advises: 'I have long suspected Mr Hart' while on 22 December that year he writes: 'I am entitled to commission of 5% on the funds realised by me but I have made no charge and if you do not consider my services deserving of this remuneration, I should certainly decline accepting it.'

The next day, he writes to his father that he has sent an account to the executors in which interest is credited on the sums advanced to him from the funds of the estate in the year 1798/99, adding 'the executors of Mr R Balfour have charged 12% interest. I never heard of anything so monstrous in my life. I am most surprised that the General and Wardlaw should have attempted to obtain your sanction to something that is in itself illegal.' He continues:

I ought not to have given up any part of the Navy contract. If I had known as much as I now do, I certainly should not have given Mr Hart a share of the contract but my only motive in admitting him to the concern was expressly [sic] for the purpose of reducing the debt due to the estate. I have already mentioned that the Executors are entirely indebted to me for any shilling they may receive from this country, and having made so great a sacrifice for the advantage of the estate, I certainly think I ought to have had the use of the funds free of interest during my stay in this part of the world. I still have the means of making me some return for the loss I have sustained by allowing me to charge the usual commission of 5% upon the balance of my account but I hardly expect that this will be granted although I am justly entitled to it.

A detailed copy of the accounts shows that the funds to be distributed in December 1809 to John Balfour (his father), General Balfour (James Balfour who

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succeeded to Whitehill when his brother George died) and Robert Wardlaw as executors of George Ramsay of Whitehill amounted to 93343 pagodas (later revised in October 1810 to £44,549). There is an item that suggests £1 is worth 2.5 pagodas. The extracts illustrate the complexity of the use of the estate of Major Ramsay of Whitehill and also refer to the separate estate of Robert Balfour (who died in 1807.) They indicate that he could have made his fortune from the use of these funds but would not explain in full how he made the £300,000 fortune in the course of a very few years as reported by Raymond (1920). However there is an interesting footnote to the detailed accounts which is now hard to interpret but which adds to the mystery:

In addition to the above balance, I have received the sum of Pagodas 2,8721 and an obligation for Pagodas 39425 being as a deposit for an unsettled account of a nature that cannot appear on paper and can only be personally explained, for the securing of these funds.

It is not clear whether his offer to the General and his father to manage funds on their behalf from the disbursement of the estate was followed up, but in October 1810, he recommends that his father buy Kirkforthar estate and sell some of his struggling farms 'if you prefer for ready money.'³

Company affairs, 1807 to 1812

Three significant events have been identified. Firstly, there are papers that refer to Balfour being a juryman in a trial of Reday Row following which Sir George Barlow, the Governor of Madras from December 1807 had been charged 'with banishing the civil servants who were jurymen to distant stations.' Secondly, in January 1809, there was a major issue with General Macdowall, Commander in Chief of Fort St George (at Madras) and the hierarchy of the East India Company. The issue was one of power and authority between the commander in chief and the governor and acted as the trigger for considerable unrest within the army. A letter of 13 May 1809 refers to 'the violent and intemperate acts of the late Commander in Chief' while another letter from Lord Minto, the Governor General, to Sir Gerald Barlow, claims 'the whole tenor of General Macdowall's conduct to have been of the highest degree disrespectful and injurious to the dignity and authority of the Governor.' The matter was subsequently reviewed by a Select Committee of the House of Commons but by that time General Macdowall had died after his ship, the *Lady Jane Dundas* had disappeared in a major storm in 1809 on the journey home along with four others of the Fleet. James Balfour's link with this is significant. A letter to his father of 10 June 1808 advises:

General Macdowall returns to England for certain in October next — he is

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quite disgusted at the attempt that has been made to degrade the situation of Commander in Chief and I am glad he has come to the determination of resigning it rather than keep the Command of the Army without having a seat on the Council.

In a letter of 24 February 1809 to General Balfour in London, James advises that he has sent home copies of all the correspondence that took place relative to the removal of General Macdowall, adding: 'I shall be glad to know the feelings of the King's Army at home on this occasion — Parties here run very high but I make it a rule to say nothing and am on good terms with everybody.'

In a letter to his father, we are told that 'with Admiral Drury (who expects to succeed Sir Edmond Pellow in the command) I am on the best of terms, and I shall take care to give them no opportunity to find fault with me'. However, he adds that if Admiral Drury is not appointed, 'I rely on you to procure for me the strongest recommendation to the protection of any Admiral that may come out Commander in Chief in the Station.'

In January 1809, the Company records note that a piece of plate for Gen Macdowall was voted by 'some European gentlemen of Madras' and lists James Balfour along with two other civilians and five officers. February 1810 sees him write to his father that 'the officers of the Company are still much dissatisfied at the treatment they have met with and nothing will reconcile them to Sir George Barlow' but a more generous opinion is to be found in an earlier letter of 12 October to his father:

You will be glad to hear that Peace and tranquillity is again restored and I believe that all the Company's Officers are very sensible of the impropriety of their proceedings which indeed nothing can justify. Lord Minto is still here and means to remain at Madras till after the Monsoon. He has had a difficult task to perform but has acted with great moderation and amity and Sir George Barlow is certainly entitled to the thanks of his country for his steadiness and firmness in such a trying occasion.

Earlier that month he advises his father that he had opened the will of General Macdowall which he had been left as executor (adding that £8000 of the little property had been invested in pearls which were not insured.). In October 1810, he tells his father that Sir Edward Pellow has made a favourable report to the Victualling Board in praise of Contract Supplies and that Admiral Drury has done

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the same in this country: 'I have no apprehension that anything will occur to disturb it so long as I have any wish to hold it. Sir Edward writes me the kindest letters that can be perused and has on all occasions shown himself a most sincere and attached friend.'

The third area of activity relates to a Walter Balfour, Custom Manager at Fort St George, who was suspended in 1808 (along with the whole of the native establishment at Madras), having been unable to account for bills bearing his signature and not brought to the Company's account.⁴ In 1810, the Court of Directors found that no personal corruption had been proven and removed his suspension in order that he might benefit from a long subscription to the Civil Fund. In January 1809, James Balfour had agreed to act as security of payment of 20408 star pagodas.

All of this correspondence is against a background of war with the French navy, which requires him to send more than one copy of letters by different ships. In February 1810 he advises his father 'we are all highly employed in fitting out a secret expedition which will sail from here at the end of March.'

These three areas of activity are useful in understanding the background of the period between 1807 to 1812 and have a later link with his involvement in political intrigue in the East Neuk of Fife. Their main significance however is in relation to study of material in the archives of the Victualling office of the navy in the Public Record Office at Kew. In one of the many Parliamentary Papers of the time with their extensive detail on financial expenditure, there is a report for 1810 (page 355) with the following statement:

Bills paid for Naval Services in the East Indies.

1807	£90,889		
1808	£219,109		
1809	£137, 705		
1810	£3,936,750	(Transport/hire & provisions)	£2,760,000

Detailed accounts for the period between 1 October 1809 and 31 December 1810 show a total contract sum of £213,924 for the firm Messrs. Balfour and Baker, Contractors in the East Indies, covering the supply of provisions including water, liquor and salt at Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Prince of Wales Island.

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Payments are shown to have been approved by Admiral Drury although there was an issue about disputed expenditure of £6528 relating to charges for freight, damage to barrels affected by the monsoon weather and the need to enforce tighter controls, with a commissioner Puget appointed to investigate these areas. A separate series of records for the period is to be found in legal opinion papers relating to action by the Exchequer between 1813 and 1816 against Mr Basil Cochrane. They contain references to the firm Balfour and Baker of which the following four are examples relevant to this research.

- a letter of 26th March 1806 from Edward Pellow to the Hon. Basil Cochrane who is proceeding to England for the restoration of his health notes 'my concurrence to appoint Messrs James Balfour, Joseph Baker and William Hart to be your agents for managing the contract in which you are engaged for the Victualling of His Majesty's squadron in these seas.'

- a comment that the whole of folio 2 to folio 4 (in the supporting papers) shows that Mr Cochrane and Mr Balfour and Baker were acting in concert and conspiring against the Crown.

- refers to a letter of 8 October 1810 from Balfour and Baker in which it is to be observed they purposely misquote the terms of the letter of 21 November 1809 and give the sentence a meaning totally different from the one conveyed to them in the Board's letter of 21 November 1809 but a meaning favourable to their own wishes and interests.

- that they bound themselves to reduce prices with the late Admiral Drury on 1 October 1810.

The essence of the charges were

- that Basil Cochrane had added 1% to the agreed rate of 5% 'guided by the practice in India' noting that his predecessor the Hon. John Cochrane had not charged commission at all on either purchases or repayments. This practice had not been raised with the Victualling Board until May 1809.

- that Balfour and Baker were only authorised to charge 5% commission on the purchase they made and that they had introduced a charge of 5% upon the water, and live cattle purchased by the Purser of His Majesty's ships and other articles 'which neither yourselves nor your Predecessor Mr Cochrane had been accustomed to make any such charge.'

- that the Commissioners abroad have no power to pass any accounts. They are authorised to inspect them and also approve of them so far as their opinion goes but no further. The final passing of the account rests exclusively with the Victualling Board.

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● Balfour and Baker were then advised by letter on 21 November 1809 that the Board had given authority to Commissioner Dundas and Com. Inman at Madras to employ other persons as agents 'unless you comply with our determination'. There is then a reference to a letter of 6 October 1810 in reply that they acquiesced.

A subsequent note advises that 'a large reduction being made in the new contract beginning 1/7/1812 from 20 to 25 % (amounting to £20000 to £30000 per annum) but Mr Balfour has been allowed to charge 5% as stated in the Board's minute of 14/6/1814 in consideration of the disadvantages under which his existing contract was carried on (and extensive reduction of contract prices.) The general rule now is to allow commission of 2%.

James Balfour as Laird

James had seemingly never much enjoyed India. In June 1808, he told his father 'I am as happy and comfortable as I ever expect to be in this country which you know I detest and nothing will induce me to remain a day longer in it than necessity compels me.' In February 1810, we learn 'I now look forward with great anxiety to the period of my return to England which I still intend should not exceed the time I first mentioned. . . . I shall be glad when I bid adieu to this place.' This adieu came in 1812 when he returned to London, leaving a fellow Scot managing the business at a salary of £6000 per year (Raymond, 1920, p4). We will later note a reference to further funds being sent home as late as 1823. The Dodwell & Miles register lists him as 'at home' in 1812 and 'out of service' in 1815.

Balfour married Eleanor, a daughter of Lord Lauderdale in 1815 and two years later he bought the estate of Whittingham (now Whittingehame) in 1817 for the sum of £127,355.⁵

The detail of his purchase of the estate is meticulous with at least twenty letters setting out issues with his factor, Douglas Ainslie of Duns. Further land purchases were to follow at Papple in 1817 and Balgonie (Fife) in 1823. The estate at Strathconan was not bought until 1841 according to the Register of Sasines. In 1818, a leading architect, Robert Smirke was appointed to build a mansion house that would be 'larger and more impressive than the family home in Balbirnie' (which had been rebuilt in 1815 by John Balfour, his brother, who succeeded to that estate in 1813.) Landscaping and gardens were laid out by a member of the

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noted Gilpen family⁶ in a style complementary to the new house with three magnificent drives clearly designed to impress. Paul Harris (1989) describes the interior as 'finished to a standard in keeping with the opulence of the exterior' and suggests that James Balfour 'readily adopted the lifestyle of the country gentleman.'

The project was not without its problems. Firstly, there was the issue of the location and completion of the house and the need to get possession of the farm from a Mr Jamieson. A letter of 22 July 1817 advises that 'in order to secure the spot on which I propose to place my house, I asked him to give me possession of it now' adding later, 'I shall be sorry if he is obliged to give up the farm'. July and August 1819 finds the family on holiday in Paris (which had become the fashionable thing to do after the defeat of Napoleon.) He had previously written from London in June saying that 'the old road must be kept open till all my buildings are finished and I have still the Stables as well as the Farm Offices to complete.' On 25 July, he advises that his return is delayed because of Lady Eleanor's indisposition which is 'a great disappointment to me as there are many matters requiring my personal superintendence.' He goes on to give instructions on the action to be taken over the evergreens affected by drought, on the disposal of the hay and the planting of the vines.

Secondly, there had been a problem with the income from the rent of the land. On 21 July 1817, Ainslie had written to tell him that 'the Whittingham rents are a bad concern.' In a letter of 16 December 1817 from Ainslie, Balfour is advised that he had written to the tenants proposing to collect the rent due at Candlemas (2 February 1818) on Wednesday 4 February 1818: 'They will think this is an early date but I wish by this early collection to see who we can trust and who we cannot.'

In his book on Whittingehame House, Paul Harris (1989) describes the old village of Whittingham as effectively annexed and removed by James Balfour. He noted that it consisted of a mill, a school, a public house, brewery, three shops, five smiths, four masons, six wrights, eight shoemakers, four weavers and four tailors. In an appendix to his first report in the Old Statistical Account of 1791, the Rev. John Ewan, the parish minister, gives the parish population as 654 and gives the breakdown of tradesman quoted by Harris as relating to the parish as a whole with Whittingham, the only village, having 141 inhabitants. He refers to the census of 1755 and explains that a reduction of 59 in the population by 1790 occurred

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because 'most of the cot houses are now pulled down.' In his account of 1929, the Rev. Marshall Lang suggests that James Balfour, 'perceiving the decrepit nature of the cottages, as also a large number of cottagers, resolved to annex the site of the village to his estate, and by planting trees and shrubs to make the wilderness bloom as the rose.'⁷ Lang is sure that he dealt kindly with the dispossessed villagers, taking some into his employment on the estate, and providing for others no longer able to work. In a later article of 1938, he suggests that the estate was 'transfigured' and that the old village was removed to a new and smaller village a mile away. The location of the old village is clearly marked on an estate map for 1819 but interestingly, this site differs from other accounts including that of the present Earl. Lang's 1929 account comments:

So far as we can gather, the village stretched westward in a semi-circle for about half a mile from near the present factor's house, Redcliffe by name, to the manse cottage, which is the only surviving house with the exception of the older part of the manse. It occupied a high and salubrious site, the main road from Gifford to Dunbar being its main street. It consisted of roughly-built cottages, thatch-roofed, with free spaces between them, each with its allotment of ground.

Detailed investigation on the 'annexation and removal' including site investigation will be reported separately.⁸ Within the national context, land prices were affected by the sudden fall in corn prices after the war with France. Trevelyan (1922) refers to landlords who had the expectation of perpetual high prices now being in difficulty while farmers became bankrupt and village paupers. While there is evidence of sequestration action being taken against some of the 1817 tenants for arrears of rent, it is also relevant to note that allowances were given to tenants 'in consequence of the pressure of the times'.

In the summer of 1822, Balfour wrote to Ainslie on the issue of legal action and sequestration which this time involved tenants of the estate at Papple. A letter from an Alex Wright of Prendergust near Ayton on behalf of James Wright of Papple of 27 October is of interest as it comes at a time of rents being reduced by 20% because of poor grain prices and turnips not being successful. A planned meeting in November on the proposed sequestration against James Wright is deferred because 'a melancholy accident has taken place'. It is likely that this relates to the death of his eldest son, John, who was burned in a bedroom fire caused by a candle held by his mother.⁹ On 27 November, he writes: 'Although I am a little able for business, I shall feel it a duty I owe to myself as well as to my family not to allow any misfortune however severe to interfere with the management

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of my affairs I think no time ought to be lost concluding an arrangement with Mr Wright.’³

On 30 June 1823, in a letter to Ainslie, he says that he has recently received a large remittance from India which is payable in November and that ‘I shall have no objections to invest it in land.’ The letter continues with a heading “Private” to refer to 3000 acres of land between the Tweed and the Till which is likely to go at a bargain. This comes at a time when there is an issue with a Mr Aitchieson of Newmains seeking a reduction of rent with the response that ‘we must not allow him to get into arrears.’ Yet in the same letter we find a reference to ill health when he indicates that he ‘is very much better, still an invalid and must take care of myself for some time to come.’ A detailed will and testament in his own writing is dated 12 March 1827. He leaves the estate of Balgonie in Fife plus £80,000 to his second son, £15,000 plus £500 annuity to his wife with a further £250 annuity to help her with the upkeep of the house and he expresses the hope that she will carry out the projected improvements at Whittingham. James, his eldest son, is to be residuary legatee while each of the other children gets £15,000 each. He would live for another eighteen years.

James Balfour as Politician

In the archives of the Telfer-Smollett family of Bonhill, there is a letter of 1821 concerning James Balfour’s involvement in the purchase of a vote in Dunbartonshire which was at the disposal of Mr Dundas. It was not to be sold by private bargain but only by public roup with an upset price of £1000 and an estimated value of £14,000. However, it was in the East Neuk of Fife that he took the first major step in a political career defeating Sir William Rae in 1826 to become M.P. for the Anstruther Burghs.

The East Neuk campaign that Balfour aligned himself to had commenced earlier in the summer of 1818 when there had been an attempt to frustrate the Councils of Anstruther and Pittenweem meeting to appoint a delegate with powers to vote for the candidate approved by the Anstruther family. These attempts had not been successful but in 1826, after considerable legal dispute and while an appeal to the House of Lords was still to be heard, the anti-patronage group on Pittenweem Council appointed a delegate to vote in favour of James Balfour against Sir William Rae, the Lord Advocate and nominee of the Anstruther, Dundas and Durham of Largo family network.

James Balfour was again successful in the 1830 election but intrigue was still evident. Conolly’s biography in *Fifiana* (1869) describes how Mr Balfour’s

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agent prevailed upon a neighbouring laird to invite the Councillors of Anstruther-Easter, who were supporters of Mr Balfour, to dinner on the day before the election. They found themselves locked in and unable to leave until the next day, when they were taken under escort by the agent to the town hall to choose the delegate. Papers on the disenfranchisement of the Burgh of Kilrenny held in the Anstruther family archives indicate that the house used in this intrigue was that of Mr Johnston of Rennyhill and that Mr Johnston accompanied them to vote for Mr. Balfour.¹⁰

The question of what led James Balfour to stand for Parliament as member for the Anstruther Burghs has been a puzzle with his background as an East Lothian laird and son-in-law to Lord Lauderdale. East Neuk politics of the time were a matter of considerable intrigue and someone must have financed the costs of the litigation action between some Pittenweem councillors that extended over the years from 1823 to 1827. Indeed, he was an enigma to me long before I started this Whittingham study and the answer now appears to lie in the East India Company archives where Alexander Anstruther, son of Sir Robert Anstruther of Balcaskie is identified as the East India Company's Advocate General in Madras at the time of the issues involving General Macdowall, Walter Balfour and the trial of Reday Row, and was thus involved in all three areas affecting James and his interests. Although he died at Mauritius on his voyage home in 1819, the local politics of the time were closely linked to the desire of the Anstruther network to maintain their family link with the constituency through the election of the Lord Advocate, Sir William Rae, until another son was of age and eligible to stand for Parliament.

By April 1831, Parliament had been dissolved and a new election was called. A significant decision was then taken to seek election as a Conservative member in Haddingtonshire where he was returned in May 1831, defeating Sir David Baird of the Whig party. He was re-elected in December 1832 by 39 votes.

From a national perspective, this was a time of campaign for Parliamentary reform. M.Ps were still elected by delegates from the five East Fife Burghs and each Burgh Council determined how the delegate should vote. Smout (1969, p 204) refers to 'middle class reformers seeking [from the mid 1820s] a constitution for burghs and in Parliament' while Macaulay in 1829 hoped that 'every decent farmer and shopkeeper' would have the right to vote (Cromwell 1973). In contrast, Balfour's father in law, Lord Lauderdale, has been described as 'an extreme Tory marshalling the Scottish peers against the Reform Bill.' (Brash, 1968).

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We can only speculate on the decision not to stand for the Anstruther Burghs in 1831. As we have seen, the 1830 election involved extreme measures. Study of the archives of the Anstruther of Balcaskie archives shows that this intrigue was as prevalent in the 1832 election.¹¹ In addition, at least one Council (Pittenweem) had submitted a long address to the King against the rejection in 1831 by the House of Lords to approve the first Reform Bill and which we have noted involved his father-in-law in a significant way. The present Lord Balfour also advises that his wife did not like the ferry crossing and preferred to stay in East Lothian. Family pressures therefore probably favoured the change of constituency. He would continue as M.P for Haddingtonshire until the election of 1834 which must have involved the patronage of his father-in-law yet strangely, the only reference to him in the Lauderdale data base at Register House relates to the marriage contract of January 1815. There is an interesting account given by Blanche Dugdale in her autobiography of 1940 of her first memory of the dining room with a portrait of her great grandfather (known to her as 'The Nabob') at one end and a portrait of her father-in-law, Lord Lauderdale, resplendent in the robes of the Order of the Thistle and hung on the opposite wall. Presumably this reflected the choice of her grandfather, James Maitland Balfour and the two important men in his life but it raises the question of which one was facing the head of the table!

The involvement of the Balfours and the tactics of the Conservative members in the elections between 1831 and 1852 are detailed by Brash (1968) in relation to the control of the Haddington Burghs seat (which covered Dunbar, Haddington, North Berwick, Lauder and Jedburgh) and review of the county seat is not dealt with in that study. In a separate publication, Brash reviews records that disclose that in 1834, it was noted that 'James Balfour was still the Member but in the event of retiring from bad health, measures to be taken to fix on a candidate. Sir David Baird, the Whig candidate is very popular.' (Brash 1974). It is interesting that the next member of the Balfour family to attend Parliament would be James Maitland Balfour, the grandson of the Earl of Lauderdale, who won the 1841 election for the Haddington Burghs by nine votes at the age of twenty-one.

The latter years of the life of James are almost a blank page as far as historical papers are concerned. Holzman (1920) refers to resentment in the eighteenth century towards nabobs and new money. A 1792 pamphleteer describes the nabob's return home 'to brood over his wealth without enjoyment.' Perhaps this was the case with James Balfour. There is one reference to him as an Extraordinary Director of the Royal Bank of Scotland for 1839-1844 while the only reference to him in the

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1891 Dictionary of National Biography is in relation to him being the grandfather of A.J.Balfour who became Prime Minister. James died on 19 April 1845. He and his wife Eleanor are reported by Lang to lie buried in the vault he had built on the north side of the parish church but there is no visible memorial to them and the key to the door is missing. In contrast, most of the other later family members lie in the older churchyard located near the Tower. In my contact with the present Lord Balfour, one of his early questions was 'where was he buried?' The creator of the new Whittingham estate in 1817 now has an anonymity in death with the best memorial being the surrounding landscape on which he built his house.

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RHP 2518, Extract of Estate Map.

Notes

1. The spelling of Whittingham or Whittinghame was changed to Whittingehame in 1897 with the addition of a second "e".
2. The normal progression was Writer, Factor, Junior Merchant, Senior Merchant
3. Kirkforthar is now the home of the present head of the Balfour of Balbirmie line. Balbirmie House is now a hotel.
4. Walter Balfour, a writer in the Company from 1777, was a brother of General Nisbet Balfour, MP for Arundel in 1797 and a descendant of the Balfour of Fernie line.
5. Correspondence in 1817 is headed Saltoun Hall, or Rockcliffe, or Gorton House near Whitehill, Midlothian
6. Gilpin was a friend of Smirke but in a 1995 thesis submitted to the University of York, Dr S. Pienga suggests that he did not begin his landscaping career until after 1820. The lay-out is in accord with his later writing.
7. The quote is probably Isaiah 35 verse 1.
8. For more information on this aspect, see the article in Issue 52 of the Scottish Local History Journal.
9. Other children to die in infancy as recorded in the Kirk Session minutes were Eleanor, his eldest daughter, who died in 26th Dec 1828 aged ten, and Charlotte Julian, who died in July 1832.
10. The Anstruther seat was won by Andrew Johnston of Rennyhill and held until 1837 when he was succeeded by Edward Ellice, the new owner of Balgonie and brother in law to Robert Balfour of Balbirmie.
11. Details of this research will be published by the author in relation to Pittenweem and its social history from 1800-1855.

TRANENT TOWER AND SPENCE'S LAND

by David Sydeserff

This paper is concerned with the land on the north of the junction of Church Street and Sanderson's Wynd, Tranent as far north as, and including Tranent Tower, and comprising the dwelling houses no 61, 63, 65, 67, and 69 (with empty shop adjacent), and the garden ground behind, plus the houses 75 and 77 Church Street, which last two were recently created on an area of waste ground on the north side of an access road to the tower.

After the division of the runrig lands of the Eastfields of Tranent in July 1776, an area of about 3.5 acres, immediately to the east of Spence's Land was allocated to its proprietor, in compensation for acres and riggs of land in the Eastfields. This allocation was located on either side of a 'bye road' created about the same time.¹ This road, otherwise today called the 'backsides', is a public footpath. From the mid nineteenth century if not before, the site included a market garden under the tenancy of the Dickson family,² and became private housing in the mid 1990s, named 'Sanderson's Wynd' and 'Sanderson's Grove' - the latter being on the site of a freestone quarry in the mid nineteenth century³ and a coal pit some fifty years earlier.⁴

The Tower of Tranent has only been on record as part of Spence's Land since 1872, and described as an 'old tower or keep'.⁵ No earlier records mention the tower, nor is there any record of it having been acquired by the then proprietor. It was estimated to date from the late sixteenth century⁶ and was made a listed monument in 1953.⁷ It became the property of East Lothian District Council in 1977.⁸

What is on record is the existence of a 'house called the brewhouse, with malt kiln, malt barn, well and steepstone', at least from 1630⁹ up till the late nineteenth century.⁵ These records also make reference to an orchard on Spence's Land.

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The name comes from a family Spence, proprietors of these lands. They certainly lived in Tranent from the late sixteenth century.¹⁰ though this writer has not tried to find their earliest record as proprietors. A Helen Spence was certainly proprietrix in December 1627.¹¹ They were succeeded by the family Vallance (or Vallance) by the early eighteenth century,¹² though perhaps via a family Kilgour (or Gilgour),¹³ precise details of which are still to be researched in full - sasine records from 1660 to 1740 are not indexed. The Vallances were succeeded by the Stirlings, a family of manufacturers who lived in Kirkintilloch.⁵ They owned the lands from the late nineteenth century until 1930, when they sold to the tenant, Andrew Keter Dickson, market gardener.¹⁴ His descendants sold the lands by the end of the twentieth century, though various parts of Spence's Land had been disposed of throughout earlier years.

Notably, no mention is made of Tranent Tower in the First or Second Statistical Accounts, in Peter McNeill's *Tranent and its Surroundings* (1883) or in John Martine's *Reminiscences of the County of Haddingtonshire*.

Dated at Seton 27 March 1654 is a charter of confirmation by George, Lord Seton, Earl of Winton, as superior of the lands below described, in favour of Elizabeth Spence, only lawful 'brother's daughter' and heiress to the deceased Mr William Spence, schoolmaster in Prestonpans, who had died last vested in:

All and haill that part and portion of the Tenandry of land called "Spens Land", sometime pertaining to deceased Helen Spence, and her subtenants, and by deceased Elizabeth Hepburn, her mother, liferenter of one part and portion thereof; and thereafter pertaining to James Spence, merchant, burgess of Edinburgh, brother to said Helen; as lately occupied and possessed by said deceased Mr William Spence and his spouse, deceased Margaret Balfour, and their tenants; with houses, biggings, yards, orchard, brewhouse, malt kiln, malt barn, well and steepstone, and all other parts, pendicles and pertinents, lying on the east side of the town of Tranent, in the parish of Tranent, for the yearly payment to the said superior of 14s Scots, by equal portions at two terms in the year, Whitsunday and Martinmas, in the name of feuferme. Instrument of sasine done same day, with John Henderson, baillie in Tranent, being baillie.¹⁵

The Helen Spence mentioned here had definitely been the proprietor in December 1627, when she is described as sister and heiress to the deceased Alexander Spence, portioner in Tranent, and spouse to Hector Fender.¹¹ In July

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1630, the James Spence mentioned above succeeded to the property⁹ and in April 1637, Mr William Spence, schoolmaster, Prestonpans, and his spouse, Margaret Balfour, were recognised by the Earl of Winton as proprietors.¹⁶ It seems that the Elizabeth Spence of the charter was the daughter of James Spence.¹⁷ It is curious however, for she had two brothers James and William, whom one would have expected to take precedence in succession.

The Tower has been estimated to date from the late sixteenth century.⁶ However there is no mention of it in the above records. If it was a sixteenth century building and belonged to these lands, then it was the Spence's home and would surely have been described as such (i.e. as a dwelling place, manor house or some such). There are three possible explanations:

- 1) that it was not then built
- 2) it did not belong to these lands
- 3) it was not considered significant enough to be noted, though given its size and contemporary status, this seems unlikely.

In 1717, Jean Kilgour, wife of Robert Vallange, a dyer in Tranent, was served as heir to her father, Adam Kilgour, teacher and portioner, Tranent, to part of Spence's Land and to acres of land near Tranent.¹³ A few years later, in July 1720, she made provision for her and Robert's children out of these lands, the relevant part, Spence's Land, being then described as having been conquest from the heirs of James Spence, merchant, burghess of Edinburgh, specifically his daughter Elizabeth Spence.^{12, 17}

This suggests that the Kilgours had acquired Spence's Land, but confirmation is still to be found. The pre 1660 sasine indexes have a cross-reference between Kilgour and Spence, but not for Spence's Land. It relates to what was probably land close by, a tenement acquired by Archibald Gilgour [sic] from Alexander Spence, apparently in 1613, to which his son, Archibald Gilgour, succeeded in 1647. It was described as:

A tenement and close, with garden, parts and pertinents, lying on the east side of the town of Tranent, bounded on the south by tenement sometime pertaining to deceased Alexander Henryson, on the north and east by tenement, garden and arable land called the Crofts, occupied by George Nicolson, and on the west by the road of the said town on Tranent [i.e. what was later Church Street].¹⁸

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Tranent Tower and market garden, c. 1970s from East Lothian Council Library Service.

Jean's father was Adam Kilgour, and an Adam Kilgour, servitor to the Earl of Winton, was witness in the 1654 charter and sasine, along with his brother Archibald.¹⁵ A George 'Gilgour', servitor to Mr William Spence, schoolmaster, Prestonpans, was a witness to the latter's charter of 1637.¹⁶

Although Jean Kilgour had made provision for her children out of these lands in July 1720, the sasine was not done until 15 December 1740.¹² She was said to have died in March 1721¹⁹ and her son Patrick Vallange, then a dyer in Prestonpans, was served as her lawful heir in 1734. Patrick Vallange had a charter in his favour to the lands dated Edinburgh 18 March 1735, with the sasine on 8 May of the same year; he was by then a dyer in Tranent.¹⁷

By this time there were other lands included in these charters, namely one and a half acres of arable land in the croft called Balgreen, on the west of Tranent, and five and a half riggs of arable land in the field called Pilmuir in the Eastfields,

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which extended to one acre, three roods, thirteen falls.^{12, 17, 20} In July 1776 the runrig lands of Tranent were divided into 'big fields' among the various owners, and these small pieces of land were swept away, to be replaced by 3.97 Scots acres of land (about 3.5 imperial acres) immediately east of Spence's land, north of Sanderson's Wynd and with a 'bye road' dividing it into two parts.¹

Patrick had married Isobel Keddie in Edinburgh in April 1725, though the marriage seems to have been queried by Tranent kirk session, who had it confirmed on 26 August later that year.²² A February 1770 charter names his wife as Janet Kirkie.²⁰ This charter was by Patrick, in his spouse's favour, in liferent, and to his only son William Vallange, described as 'portioner, Tranent'. The instrument of sasine followed 20 years later, on 11 September 1790, with John Glen, innkeeper in Tranent, the baillie.²⁰

There is information about the Vallange family in McNeill's *Tranent and its Surroundings*, 1883:

The burying-place of the Vallances [sic] was formerly enclosed with a strong iron railing of about six feet in height, but on the churchyard being remodelled some years ago, it, with the consent of the relatives, was swept away. Some time ago a new centrepiece was inserted in the grand old monument, on which are skilfully carved two crescents and a thistle, with a scroll beneath containing the following. This monument seems to have been erected in 1623 [see below]

Being on the south wall of the churchyard, viz:-

Robt Vallange prop b 1630

His son Pat. Vallange

His son Wm Cumbd Vallange

Born 1746 Died 23 April 1827

His wife Mary Home of Manderston

Born 1751 Died 17 June 1829

William Vallange Esq M.D.

33 Regt. Who Served in the Mediterranean During the French War & Subsequently Resided in Portobello Where he Died in February 1872, aged 87 years

Erected by their Son Dr Wm Vallange 33 Regt.

The reference to the stone being erected in 1623 is no doubt an error, probably for 1833, being erected by Dr William Vallange after the death of his mother in 1829 and before his own and subsequent additions to the stone.

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Mary Home's liferent was secured with a charter dated at Portobello on 3 September 1825 in favour of her son Dr William Vallange, then described as a physician in Portobello, and it was declared that if he should die without heir, then the lands be succeeded by his sister, Mary Rigg Vallange. The lands comprised Spence's Land as previously described, plus the 3.97 Scots acres allocated to the Vallanges in the division of the runrig lands.²¹

William Vallange M.D. was succeeded by his son, also William, who was granted the lands with a charter of 25 September 1860, in which he was described as presently residing with Charles Stirling, a manufacturer of Kirkintilloch.²³ He seemed to have adopted the Stirling name, for he is named as William Stirling Vallange in 1864, when he acquired a piece of land elsewhere in Tranent. At that time he was residing with 'William Vallange, M.D., Portobello'.²⁴

According to the tombstone in Tranent churchyard, Dr William Vallange died at Portobello in February 1872, and there is no mention of his son. However, a deposition of the lands was made on 28 February 1872 by 'William Stirling Vallange, residing at Kirkintilloch, sometime William Vallange' in favour of the foresaid Charles Stirling and his wife and sons. But by the time of registration the following year, William Stirling Vallange was deceased.⁵

The Stirlings were now proprietors and held the lands until October 1930 when they were sold by Charles' widow and grand-daughters to Andrew Keter Dickson, market gardener, Sanderson's Wynd. The lands were at that time described as follows:

I) 3.555 (imperial) acres of ground, bounded on south or south east by Sanderson's Wynd, on west or south west by footpath from said wynd to the north end of Church Street;

II) areas of garden ground bounded on east or north east by above-said footpath, on south or south east by said wynd, with the old tower of Tranent, stables &c on said areas;

III) area of ground, with houses, shop &c nos 69, 75, 77, 83, 85 Church Street, and other buildings thereon, bounded on east and partly on north and south by said (II) above, on west by Church Street.¹⁴

By now all the other houses on these lands had been sold off. Nos 75, 77, 83 and 85 lay on the north side of an access road to the tower and fell into disuse; and

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in their place the present nos 75 and 77 (St Andrews Cottage) were built in the mid 1990s.²⁵

The Dickson family had been tenants here, as market gardeners of the fields, since at least the mid nineteenth century.² The small shop adjacent to no 69 Church Street was worked by the family as a grocer/confectioner until the late 1960s; the shop still stands but has not been used since that time. Andrew Dickson and his executors sold No 69 and some adjacent lands in 1983/1986;²⁶ and the former market gardens were sold to Manor Homes of Edinburgh in June 1990.²⁷ Manor Homes built the private housing of today's Sanderson's Wynd and Sanderson's Grove. The Dicksons are no longer here.

As for Tranent Tower, it was disposed to East Lothian District Council 18 August 1977, being described as:

an area of ground, with old tower of Tranent, to east of Church Street and to north of Sanderson's Wynd, Tranent, part of subjects (II) as described in October 1930, with right of access over ground leading from Church Street, and with minerals; reserving right of access to garage, shed &c to the east of said subjects.⁸

Years earlier, in January 1953, Tranent Tower had been recognised as a monument by the Ministry of Works under the Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act of 1913, being described as:

That monument known as Tranent Tower contained within a rectangular area of ground measuring 35 feet on each of its north by west and south by east sides, and 25 feet on each of its east by north and west by south sides, southwestmost corner of said area being situated 80 feet east north east of Church Street, Tranent, at its nearest point, 200 feet north of junction of east side of Church Street with north west side of Sanderson's Wynd, being part of portion of Tenantry of land called Spence's Land, parish of Tranent.⁷

The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments, East Lothian reported as follows in 1924:

...ruin of a tower, which today [1924] is utilised as a stable and hay loft. On plan it is L shaped, the shorter limb being formed by a square tower which projects southward from the south west angle of the main block and houses a wheel stair. The overall dimensions are 24 feet 10 inches from north to south, by

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36.5 feet from east to west. The building is of rubble and has been harled. It is three storeys in height and the basement only is vaulted; the roof is covered by pantiles and the gables are crowstepped. The windows which are unusually small have chamfered jambs and lintels. On each floor are two intercommunicating chambers, from the western of which the stair enters. The stair ascends from ground to the third floor, above which level the tower contains a dovecot with stone nests. The west room on the first floor has a large built up fireplace in the gable with aumbry recess adjoining and a stone sink with slop drain in the south wall. The tower may date from the late 16th century.

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THE DUNBAR LIFEBOAT

By David Anderson

Introduction

Britain's lifeboat service grew out of mounting concern about increasing numbers of shipwrecks in the second half of the eighteenth century. The industrial revolution meant that there were increasing numbers of vessels sailing around the coasts. They were always at the mercy of storms, which resulted in an attrition rate calculated at around 4% per annum. The first recorded lifeboat was on station at Formby on the Mersey in the 1770s. Shortly thereafter, on the other side of the country, the loss of the Newcastle collier *Adventure* in full sight of the shore near South Shields led to the establishment of the first boat specifically designed for lifesaving. This was Henry Greathead's *Original*, which was built in 1789 and served into the 1840s. The *Original*, and its later sister vessel *Northumberland*, stationed at North Shields, led to many further orders for Greathead boats. One was bought by the county of East Lothian and stationed at Dunbar.

The *Dunbar Lifeboat*, like the genesis of *Original*, was prompted by public concern after a dramatic wreck. The occasion was the loss during September 1807 of a vessel at Thorntonloch when a survivor died shortly after being brought to land, in full view of a great number of spectators. The provision of the boat was orchestrated by George Miller of Dunbar, and the story can be followed in some detail from notices in both the local press and works by Miller and his son James.

SECTION 1: GREATHEAD AND MILLER: TWO ORIGINAL CHARACTERS

And now the life-boat beat the chaffing surf¹

George Miller (figure 1) was born on 14 June 1771, the son of a general merchant in Dunbar.² He grew up on the High Street but he nurtured a secret, youthful desire to be a sailor. He was drawn by reading the adventures of Robinson

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George Miller of Dunbar, bookseller, printer and promoter of the Dunbar Lifeboat

Crusoe and the Voyages of Captain Cook at school, in addition to absorbing the tales of Dunbar's many seafarers. His interest was stimulated by the appearance off the town of John Paul Jones in September 1779 and Captain Fall, another American privateer, in 1781. To some extent his desire would be contrary to his own experience, as in his youth the coast around Dunbar was the scene of continual

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shipwreck and loss of life.³ Looking back in his autobiography, he wrote: 'these numerous mournful scenes of shipwreck, it may be reasonably supposed, had their effect in weaning me ... from my early propensity to the sea.'⁴ However, they in fact had the opposite effect as he immediately followed the foregoing with 'they seem rather to have increased, than diminished, the interest I seem always to have taken, in the welfare and comfort of that highly useful and meritorious class of men, to whom, I seem to have been so warmly attached.' As an example, he cited a childhood attempt to devise a means of saving life from a grounded ship. He put together his schoolboy knowledge of projectiles (learnt in classical geometry lessons), his knowledge of harpoon guns (having explored Dunbar's fleet of Greenland whalers; five large vessels of the Greenland and Merse Whaling Company sailed from the port) and the nature of the wrecks experienced near Dunbar (many being lodged on reefs close to shore). The result was a plan for an apparatus that would fire a line to a vessel. The line could then be used to assemble equipment for drawing the crew to shore. This plan prefigured remarkably the Manby Apparatus subsequently adopted as standard in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. In a letter to Miller, Captain Manby protested that 'he could produce evidence, that the throwing a rope was attempted by him previous to the year 1783', which suggests that Miller had hit a nerve with his correspondence.⁵

Miller had to put aside his childhood dreams when he decided to become a bookseller and stationer. The family business already dealt in books in a small way and they felt development in this area might bring profit. His father arranged for him to apprentice to another Dunbar tradesman, Alexander Smart. Smart was Dunbar's only bookseller and bookbinder and, although his business was small, Miller was able to quickly acquire the rudiments of his trade. However, before the end of Miller's apprenticeship (begun on 20 September 1785), Smart relocated to Edinburgh after being unable to sustain himself in the limited market afforded by eighteenth century East Lothian. Miller followed him there during January 1788, eventually deciding to break his indenture and return to Dunbar. When he did, he took with him some stock and tools with which to carry out his trade. His next step was significant for the future as, on 6 April 1789, Miller arranged a period of 'work experience' with a bookseller in South Shields. (Interestingly, Smart was already serving there in the same firm as a journeyman printer.) Although Miller was in South Shields for only a few days he picked up the rudiments of printing, the foundation of his later business at Dunbar and Haddington, and he would have been aware of the latest events there, which were then the preoccupations of the day.

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South Shields was at that period the epicentre of lifeboat innovation. Local developments were stimulated by the wreck of the *Adventure* of Newcastle on the Herd Sands from the 14th March 1789, over an extended period. This catastrophe happened within sight of the port and thousands of hapless spectators. The protracted and public nature of the loss prompted a group of local businessmen, with the support of Newcastle's Trinity House, to offer a prize for the design and construction of a boat able to 'traverse inshore surf in safety.'⁶ The subsequent course of events have been the subject of sometimes heated controversy ever since, with competing claims in support of several inventors. Adrian Ostler of Tyne and Wear Museum Service has provided a chronological assessment of the claims of innovators of the period and an in-depth survey of the results of the competition in *Mr Greathead's Lifeboats*. The result for South Shields was the construction sometime during the autumn of 1789 of the first lifeboat by Henry Greathead, a local boatbuilder. Retrospectively, perhaps after the commissioning of the second boat the *Northumberland* in 1798, Greathead's first boat became known as the *Original*. The *Original* first ventured to a rescue in January 1790. This was successfully carried off and in the succeeding seven years the vessel brought substantial numbers ashore. Each successful rescue was widely publicised (particularly by Greathead) both locally and nationally.

The simple co-incidence of George Miller, with his childhood dreams and schemes lately put aside, being in South Shields and Newcastle at the exact time the local Institution (the body formed to administer the competition and subsequently the boat) were garnering publicity and generating interest is probably all that is necessary to explain subsequent events in Dunbar eighteen years on.

Henry Greathead continued his involvement with lifeboats, as both *Original* and *Northumberland* performed above expectations over the years. He used their success to establish a business supplying lifeboats to ports, stations and committees around the coast of the United Kingdom, delivering his last to the Government in 1810. Around 50 Greathead boats are known to have been built.⁷ The design incorporated a number of innovations. It was offered in two specifications, which had either ten or eight oars served doubled banked; some later boats are recorded as having twelve oars, but this may include the double steering position. The crews were completed with bow and stern sweep-steersmen and a coxswain. The oars were held on rope tholes and so the boats could thus be rowed in either direction, the oars easily slipping round without the necessity to ship them. The hulls were protected with a wide belt of cork extending from near the bow to near the stern,

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just under the thwart on the outside. However, they had no flotation tanks and relied instead on the stability and resistance to upsetting afforded by their design: during the working period of the class it became apparent that once upset, they might stay upset.

The Original class were generally white painted and had a varnished bottom, the first to give them a distinctive appearance and the latter simply to enhance their appeal to prospective customers. They had a distinctive high prow and stern giving them a look contemporaneously compared to an 'orange segment' or the 'moon in first quarter'. The dimensions of the *Original* were 28' by 9' 4", but later examples tended to be longer and beamier (30' by 10' 6" for the 10 oared version) or shorter (27' by 10' for the eight). The capacity of the larger size was around 25 passengers. In terms of supporting organizations during service, excepting Government and port authority boats the Tyneside pattern of volunteer service appears to have become the norm, often supported by a group of publicly minded benefactors. Despite the success of the class Greathead himself was declared bankrupt in 1810 and slipped from view. It is not even known with certainty when he died. Many of his boats lived on: the remarkable *Zetland* of Redcar (figure 2), built in 1802, served until 1880 and is still preserved today.⁸



The Zetland, a Greathead pattern lifeboat

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George Miller appears to have had little success in operating the family shop in partnership with his elder brother when he returned to Dunbar later in 1789. So, on 20 October 1791 he set up in business to his own account in premises at 56 High Street (still the premises of a bookseller and stationer today), directly opposite his brother's shop.⁹ Despite the effort of building a business, he found time to apply himself to his earlier ideas for saving life. And this time he had skills through which he appealed for wider support. In January 1793, he and a few concerned colleagues proposed the establishment of an East Lothian 'Humane Society'.¹⁰ They publicised the idea through their business and social contacts, backing up this appeal with letters to Edinburgh based journals, magazines and the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (a quasi-governmental body with formerly a high profile in East Lothian). They proposed that the Humane Society purchase two sets of equipment. First proposed was a mortar and line for rescuing sailors from stranded but inaccessible vessels and secondly a lifeboat and carriage for venturing beyond the range of the first apparatus. However, satisfactory financial support was unforthcoming and the idea was allowed to lapse. It was perhaps an idea before its time - after all, there was only one purpose-built lifeboat operating in the United Kingdom (above) at that date. It must have been a bitter disappointment for Miller. In later life, after the adoption of Manby Apparatus locally, he wrote: 'the greatest regret with me is, that, if my intentions had not been so completely thwarted, at a period so early, as the beginning of 1793, in a way so little creditable to the feelings, considering the wide field there was, for the use of such an apparatus, ON THIS SIDE OF THE TWEED [author's capitals] - and, as it has now turned out, by its subsequent adoption, so little creditable to the Society'.¹¹ For the next few years he concentrated his mind on his business, purchasing a press from Berwick in 1795 on which he produced successfully improving *Cheap Tracts* to replace disreputable wares peddled by itinerant chapmen in rural areas. He would find, however, that his knowledge, experience and leadership would be required again.

SECTION 2: GENESIS OF THE DUNBAR LIFEBOAT

*just to look gratefully in the face of his deliverers, and then expire*¹²

On Sunday 6 September 1807 a number of vessels were driven onto the coast around Dunbar during a storm that blew in from the north-east. One vessel was lying on rocks beside the coast of Thorntonloch, just to the east of Dunbar.¹² Over the course of several hours Sir James Hall of Dunglass led rescue attempts

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by local fishermen, succeeding in bringing five of the crew safely to land. However, the sixth and last crewman, a young man, died shortly after he was brought ashore. George Miller was a witness and, feeling he had to do something to prevent future recurrences, he wrote 'that my zeal was no way abated' and promptly revived his ideas to procure a lifeboat; this time with the aid of his 'powerful auxiliary, the printing press'. In the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* it was almost certainly he who anonymously floated an idea: 'the writer of this article is possessed of very slender means of doing a public good himself; but he cannot avoid expressing surprise, that no gentlemen of influence in the county to which he belongs, has, before now, set about the business of having one or more LIFE BOATS equipped in it, which, he is confident, could easily be accomplished by subscription'.¹³ The precedent was there as Leith had already purchased a lifeboat from Henry Greathead and was in the process of raising money for a carriage and boathouse. Having started the process, Miller joined with David Laing, a shipbuilder, and William Brown, a bank agent, to form a committee to promote the idea.

The committee prepared a publicity campaign and solicited subscriptions from the county and further afield through their contacts. Miller printed and circulated a number of documents. First *An appeal setting forth the necessity for a lifeboat on the Dunbar Coast*; 1,200 were printed.¹⁴ Then one asking for subscribers to produce their promised funds, a third concerning the lifeboat house, and a fourth comprising instructions for management of a lifeboat, which repeated information supplied by Henry Greathead (none of these documents appear to have survived). However, at least one copy of the final subscription list, published after the conclusion of the campaign, has survived; it once belonged to Mr John Martine of Haddington who contributed half a guinea.¹⁵ The list shows that of £371 19s 1d promised the sum of £366 14s 1d had been realised within a year of the project being launched. Inspection of the list shows that support was received from across the community and also that the committee's network extended as far as London: one of the contributors was John Broadwood, piano-maker in London (but formerly of Oldhamstocks near Dunbar). In total, 362 individuals and organisations gave subscriptions. The largest individual subscription was ten guineas (£10 10s) but many gave only a shilling, or according to their means. The usual sum was a guinea or half-guinea. Individuals named include most of the nobility and gentry of East Lothian, many professionals and residents from the county's burghs, farmers, military personnel stationed locally and Dunbar's maritime community. The Society of Sailors of Dunbar provided one of the largest group contributions: ten guineas; others came from the local Freemasons Lodge and Royal Artillery drivers.

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The sum raised was sufficient to move the project forward. The lifeboat itself cost £150 2s and was freighted by sea for a further £5 on the *Success*, a coastal trader owned by Captain John Findlay of Dunbar.¹⁶ A carriage, ropes and harness appear to have been sourced locally at a cost of £91 7s 10d from Robert Purves, a Dunbar blockmaker.¹⁷ The boathouse was built by David Simpson, a Dunbar contractor, at a cost of £102 1s 3d. Other minor expenditure falls under three heads - administration, a trial of the boat, and the provision of 'an apparatus for restoring suspended animation'. This last was probably purchased at the instigation of Miller himself: he had proposed it earlier (1793, above) and he later concerned himself with publicising advances in this field by publishing accounts of methods and apparatus.¹⁸ The apparatus was thus one of three strands he pursued as being fit equipment for coastal lifesaving. The trial of *Dunbar Lifeboat* cost a guinea for twelve men: this may be the only evidence that the vessel shipped 10 oars and was thus of the larger class of boats built by Greathead.¹⁹ However it may be read, the payment established a precedent for compensation for crews of the lifeboat. Finally, five shillings were shared amongst the men who restored the boat to the boathouse - the forerunners of generations of beachmen who served the town's later Royal National Lifeboat Institution vessels.²⁰ Both these last two costs meant that there would be a continuing burden on the administration of *Dunbar Lifeboat*. Fortunately, there remained a sum just short of £11 to provide the basis of a contingency reserve.

The organising committee arranged for the 'future care and disposal' of the lifeboat and its ancillary apparatus once everything was in place. During November 1808, they lodged all the effects purchased over the past year and the remaining funds with an invited executive board of directors.¹⁵ As was usual for public and private bodies of the time and place, the board comprised a mixture of local gentry, professionals and businessmen from the area. There were nine directors in the first instance. At their head was the earl of Haddington, a senior local resident nobleman; he was joined by Sir James Hall of Dunglass, who had a proven interest in safety on the coast and had taken part in a number of rescue attempts near his estates;²¹ and a third member was Admiral Dean of Huntington, who was probably invited to join to add authority and professional expertise. The middle order of the board was provided by three gentlemen of independent means: James Wilkie of Gilchriston, Robert Hay of Spott, and John Manners, second husband of the then dowager duchess of Roxburghe, of the coastal estate of Broxmouth to the east of Dunbar. The final three were all from Dunbar: Dr. William Wightman, a respected local surgeon; the Reverend Dr. Carfrae, the senior minister of Dunbar Parish

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Church; and finally Christopher Middlemass, a Dunbar merchant and politician who was probably the most dominant character in the town at that period. All had individually contributed to the purchase of the boat. However, it was probably the last named director who was expected to play the role of 'launching secretary' or chief administrator of the local service. By 1823, the directors were six: Haddington, Hall, Wilkie, Hay, Manners and Christopher Middlemass.²²

Middlemass began his working life as a clerk in Dunbar's great eighteenth century trading partnership, Fall, Melville and Company. When that concern was sequestered and their interests broken up in the early 1790s he appears to have set up in business for himself. A local story suggests he was backed by, or acted for, the earl of Lauderdale who had purchased much of the Falls' land and property in Dunbar. Middlemass built up a considerable overseas trade (carried in his own ships) and made significant investments and property purchases in and around Dunbar.²³ He had begun a political career while still employed by Fall, Melville and Company and he became successively treasurer of Dunbar Town Council in November 1789, a bailie (magistrate) in 1791 and provost in 1794.²⁴ He held the latter office a total of eight periods - a remarkable record of 26 years. He served as provost until 1847 but at the election of the following year he demitted to serve as an ordinary councillor, his last traced service. His dominance over this sixty-year period was such that he had interests in almost every event or body operating in Dunbar during that time. For example, he was a freemason and member of numerous other societies. He was often referred to as 'the Major' after he raised and led Dunbar's volunteer riflemen at that rank in the 1790s. In official documents he is generally described as 'Christopher Middlemass, Esquire, of Underedge', from the property he purchased and made his home. A Mrs Miller recalled 'the Major was considered a man that never was known to give a bad answer to any one'.²⁵ In the context of the Lifeboat Board, Miller, Laing and Brown probably intended that from his record Middlemass would take the leading role. At first, he appears to have been reasonably enthusiastic, contributing a portion of land at Woodbush (outside the eastern burgh boundary and adjacent to a boat-building yard and slipway) on which to erect the lifeboat house.²⁶ At the end of the story he appears to have taken responsibility to wind up the affairs of the Board. In between, although he appears to have reaped some of the plaudits for the lifeboat's services, little appears to have been done to secure a source of revenue with which to maintain its operation.

With everything in place, the stage was set for the lifeboat to prove itself on

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active service. The first opportunity came on the very day after the boat had been declared fit and ready.

SECTION 3: THE SERVICES OF *DUNBAR LIFEBOAT* AND AFTER

*The life-boat thunders on the trembling wain:
Heaven's delegate! to snatch the mariner
From death's wide-yawning gulph.*²⁷

No record of the *Dunbar Lifeboat's* service history has survived and no entire account appears ever to have been compiled when its service was still within living memory. The Millers did note some significant events, which form a basis for a search for detail but it is by no means clear if they recorded all. One part of James Miller's poem *The Wreck of the John and Agnes*²⁷ runs 'How oft, Dunbar!! Thy sons have seen him, in the darkest hour/ Of danger, snatch the victim from the wave', thus suggesting multiple rescues and posing a question without providing any answer. However, within the records of the burgh of Dunbar deposited at the National Archives for Scotland, there is a hand-written account listing vessels lost off Dunbar between 1810 and 1822, a period contiguous with the service of *Dunbar Lifeboat*.²⁸ This document therefore provides a second means of searching specific periods for further mention of the vessel. There are 28 wrecks recorded, of which 21 occurred in the winter months October - February; of the remainder five have no given month. The cumulative value of the wrecks was recorded as £108,494, which included sums ranging from £30,000 each for two Royal Navy frigates to £670 for the *Elspeth and Betsy*, a coastal trader. The number of lives that were put at risk in these events can be calculated at around 650, by assuming around 230 for each frigate, 80 for the naval cutter *Ravispure* and an average of five for each of the 25 merchant vessels. The total can then be broken down into an annual average of well over 50 or around ten lives in danger every month over the crisis winter period (without including the danger to which local fishermen were exposed). These figures alone seem to justify George Miller's concern and initiative in securing *Dunbar Lifeboat*.

In the early nineteenth century there were few publications that provided local news in the south of Scotland. However, the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* and the *Scotsman* both carried some material from outside Edinburgh. This varied from short notices, shipping movements or reports and extracts from *Lloyd's List*, augmented by published private correspondence. Using the dates on the above

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list, an exhaustive search was made of the former journal. Most of the wrecks pass without any record and, if noticed, there is seldom any indication that the lifeboat was called out. For example the brig *John*, James Rennie, master, appears on the list in December 1810. The same vessel appears several times in the *Courant*, engaged in importing wine from Spain and seeking cargoes for export;²⁹ it is evident that her stranding was not terminal. (She is further described as being of 140 tons, a useful figure that helps to place the scale of monetary values appended in the list of wrecks described above.) Similarly, the sloop *Comora* (read *Commerce*) noted as wrecked during February 1819 is noticed in the *Courant*: the crew self-landed in the ship's boat.³⁰ The *Henry*, wrecked with a cargo of flax in November 1820, was the occasion of one crewman drowning (trapped below) and three being saved by the fortuitous presence of a nearby fishing boat. In this instance there was no need for the lifeboat.³¹ However, the Countess of Lauderdale led a public collection that raised £25 which was distributed three ways to reward the fishermen, to provide something for the crewman's widow and to share among the survivors. It is possibly worth noting at this point that impromptu and *ad-hoc* rescues have always been a feature of services at Dunbar. By the nineteenth century a formal subscription or informal 'whip round' usually resulted, depending on the degree of danger to which rescuers were perceived to have been exposed.

Returning to the question of *Dunbar Lifeboat* services no evidence of any beyond those mentioned by the Millers has been found. It may be that they did in fact record all. These were:

- i) standing by HM Sloop *Cygnets*, 15-16 October 1808
- ii) the wreck of HMS *Pallas*, 18-19 December 1810
- iii) the wreck of the *John and Agnes*, 9 - 10 November 1816
- iv) attending HMS *Signet*, 15 October 1818
- iv) attending the wreck of the *Lady Ann Murray*, 4 November 1821.

The first service was adequately noticed; the second was so significant that it entered official record; the third was the subject of one of James Miller's narrative poems, as noted above; and the last was the occasion of protests when the vessel was found to be unserviceable.

Service one. The *Cygnets*, 15-16 October 1808

Dunbar Lifeboat's service began on the morning of 15 October 1808, the first day after the boat and its equipment had been declared in a state of readiness and scarcely a year after the project had been put in motion. The account of the

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service is contained in George Miller's printed *List of Subscriptions* published after 9 November 1808 and the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* of several dates after 17 October 1808.^{15,32}

News arrived in Dunbar of a Royal Navy vessel in danger of being driven onto a lee shore - under the cliffs of the Berwickshire coast a few miles south and east of the town. The lifeboat, carriage and crew were immediately dispatched, the carriage being pulled by a team of horses. In the event, the lifeboat was not required. Although the crew of the *Cygnnet* had cut away her masts, lightened ship and were pumping constantly, naval pride perhaps gave the Captain the resolve to wait out the storm in his vessel. However, by the accounting of the RNLI the expedition satisfies criteria for it to be recorded as a service of 'standing by', that is, being ready to render aid if called upon to do so or if necessary to do so. Additionally, it would have served as an authentic exercise for a boat and crew that had had only one formal trial. The certificate issued by the sloop's captain, Edward Dix, suggests, even though not required, *Dunbar Lifeboat* endured a remarkable trial: 'This is to certify the Directors of the Dunbar Life-boat, that every assistance was rendered to His Majesty's Sloop *Cygnnet*, on the 16th of October, by the Crew in her under the direction of Mr. David Laing, whose own exertions were very great; also, that every benefit would have been received from her if the wind had remained on the Shore. - Her appearance over the Rocks on the preceding Evening gave great hopes to all on board, who had been so long in expectation of being dashed to pieces.'

Given under my hand, on board H. M. Sloop CYGNET, in Leith Roads, this 26th day of October 1808.

EDWD DIX, CAPT.¹⁵

Dix records the boat appearing 'in the evening' but Miller's printed *List of Subscriptions*, published during early November 1808, notes that 'on that morning She was put into a state of actual Service.'¹⁵ Miller further elaborates: 'the distance by land the Boat had to go, was great, and consequently trying in her first journey, and had it not been for the kind assistance of several of the Tennantry &c. on the road, who volunteered their horses, it might have been difficult to have got her to Lumsden-shore with the supply obtained at Dunbar.' The distance to be covered overland was around ten miles, most of which would be accomplished on the Great North Road. The most severe problem arose once the lifeboat had been drawn to a position close to the endangered sloop. At that point there was no natural harbour or easy approach to the shore, the coastline being fringed by steep cliffs. The extra horsepower was apparently utilised to lower the entire lifeboat

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down the cliff: 'they were eye witnesses of such exertions to save them, as the lowering of a Boat of such dimensions over a precipice upwards of Four Hundred Feet high.' Although damage was incurred during this operation, the boat was apparently fully serviceable and ready to intervene if necessary. Meanwhile news of the *Cygnets*' dangerous position had reached the local naval commander, whose flagship was stationed in Leith Roads. From Leith were dispatched both the *Leith Lifeboat* (by road) and two naval vessels. The former reached the streets of Dunbar, before being informed it was not required; the latter pair performed the actual salvaging of the dismantled and drifting *Cygnets*, by passing a tow and hauling the vessel out of danger, ultimately back to Leith.³³ There is one further circumstance that ought to be noted about this service. Whereas the Leith crew had secured indemnity from the press-gang, that of Dunbar had, of necessity, no such protection. Their enthusiasm is therefore all the more remarkable as the unscrupulous means whereby the Navy secured manpower were known to all.

Service two. The *Pallas*, 18-19 December 1810

On 18 December 1810, two Royal Navy frigates were making for the Firth of Forth, which was their home station. Notices in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* are sufficient to reconstruct subsequent events, augmented by the *London Times* and George and James Miller's accounts.^{34,35,36} Both frigates had been cruising in the North Sea, off Norway and Denmark. Both had had successes, having snapped up a number of Danish privateers and small merchantmen running supplies of naval stores from Scandinavia to France. On the 18th the frigates were sailing similar courses for home, although they were proceeding independently. HMS *Pallas*, a 32 gun ship, was a few miles to the west of HMS *La Nympe*, a slightly larger 36 gun frigate.³⁷ The *Pallas* was practically new, having been built at Portsmouth during 1804.^{38a} The *Nympe* was French built. It was taken as a prize in 1780 and had had a long and successful career on the establishment of the Royal Navy: French built frigates had a reputation of being better made and better at sailing than British equivalents.^{38b} Both vessels had experienced crews, although it is likely that a number of men and junior officers (part of the regular watches) were absent from both as they served as prize crews in the vessels captured during the preceding weeks. The command of the *Pallas* had recently changed: in October she is reported in the hands of Captain Stoddart³⁹ but when she was wrecked the captain was named Monke.³⁴ The night was very dark, with lots of low-lying cloud and a heavy north-easterly wind blowing. Both captains had the intention to run before the wind until they caught the light on the Isle of May and then to turn to starboard to enter the Firth. Both (or their pilots) made the same error, mistaking

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the fire of Oxwell Mains lime-kiln for the May light. The May they took for the Bell Rock light, which in turn was either out or obscured: it had only been in service for a short while.⁴⁰ In consequence, both vessels kept to the east of the nearby, misidentified light and attempted to press on to the south. They both ran full pelt into the coast.

The town of Dunbar was alerted to the disaster by the appearance of 'blue lights', a recognised distress signal, and rockets bursting a few miles to the eastward. They were first observed at about half past ten and they prompted the dispatch of soldiers from the Dunbar garrison to assess the situation. More or less simultaneously many townsfolk and people from the countryside made their way along the coast to the wrecks. The tenants of Sir James Hall (one of the Lifeboat directors) found the crew of *La Nympe* mostly ashore already. They had been able to cross their fallen masts to safety. When dawn broke, their vessel was found to be lodged snugly (and irretrievably) under Skateraw lime-kilns (which had been out). No lives had been lost and Sir James was able to organise the supply of food and shelter for the crew. Of the *Pallas*, however, little could be seen: from the 'pitchy blackness'³⁶ of the night. It was impossible to render the crew any assistance, or even to ascertain their situation. Instead fires were built on the shore to light the scene. By the light of these fires a few crewmen attempted to swim to the shore and some were drowned. At dawn the full extent of the disaster quickly became apparent.

The *Pallas* was lying on a reef of rocks off the Vault Shore. The ship, which was later estimated to have been sailing at a rate of ten knots before it grounded, had ripped off its entire coppered bottom on the reef. The bottom and keel were seen drifting at some distance. The remaining part of the hull was reasonably securely lodged, but would be at the mercy of the tide and waves especially if the weather continued to deteriorate. The watchers could see men clinging to the hull and surviving superstructure. A large quantity of debris had already been washed up and as much was identified as having come from within the ship (casks, stores, etc.) it was clear the situation was critical. Command on the land seems to have been taken by Captain Maitland RN (son of the earl of Lauderdale), Mr John Manners (a Lifeboat Director, whose residence was scarcely 400 yards from the coast at the wreck) and Christopher Middlemass (Provost and Lifeboat Director). James Miller takes up the story in his *History of Dunbar*: 'As soon as it was practicable, the life-boat was launched, under the direction of Mr Laing, and succeeded in landing two cargoes, to the number of from forty to fifty men, and in

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a way that called forth the greatest encomiums from the spectators. On taking in her third cargo, considerable confusion ensued, partly from the number of people crowding into her, by which she was overloaded, and from the difficulty in getting on board the captain, who had fallen down in a state of complete exhaustion. On observing this accident, Mr Laing, unfortunately quitting the important post of steersman, rushed to his assistance, when the boat, broaching to, upset; and being by this accident thrown into water too shallow for her recovering, in consequence of her projecting stems getting entangled among the rocks, from which the tide had considerably ebbed, it was utterly impossible she could regain her right position. Mr Laing himself made a narrow escape; he caught hold of a rope from the frigate, but a drowning man seizing it at the same instant, got his legs over Mr Laing's shoulders, and completely immersed him in the waves, from which with difficulty he extricated himself, and got on board the frigate'.⁴¹

During the confusion one member of the lifeboat crew was drowned. Benjamin Wilson was a mariner and cooper.⁴² He left a widow and a young family.

From the time of the disaster to the lifeboat the course of further rescue attempts is not recorded locally. The establishment of a 32 gun frigate was 234 men.³⁸ Even allowing for the habitual undermanning of naval vessels at the time and the absence of prize crews there ought to have been around 180-200 men aboard the *Pallas* when it was wrecked. James Miller says 'two cargoes, to the number of from forty to fifty men' were taken off in the lifeboat. This could be meant to read as a total of 80 to 100 survivors, or, it may be taken at face value. His father George, writing in 1814, is clearer: 'two cargoes, say to the number of forty or fifty persons'.⁴³ An unknown proportion of the crew is known to have self-rescued by swimming ashore, after the initiative of a Portuguese rating; an estimate of 50 or so might not be far off the mark. Nonetheless, there must have been at least 100 men left on the *Pallas*. The prostration of the captain and the condition of the first lieutenant, after noted, means that junior officers were managing the crew at the third approach of the lifeboat. So those left on board - enough to overload the lifeboat - appear to have rushed their rescuers in a breakdown of discipline. After the lifeboat upset, its crew and the survivors of the *Pallas* were still in a precarious position, stranded offshore, with the lifeboat disabled and no ship's boats available. The only account of the next stage appears in the *London Times* early in 1811. An officer involved at the scene provided his account of the tragedy. After the lifeboat upset, Laing and his crew and the survivors of the *Pallas* were in fact saved by bringing into play Miller's second strategy for saving lives

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(mentioned in his ideas of January 1793). Somehow, a line was passed to the wreck and the line was used to secure a cable between the wreck and the shore. This was used to pass a small boat backwards and forwards until all had been retrieved – a slow, dangerous, but ultimately successful procedure.

The drama continued to play out. The Duchess of Roxburghe and proprietors of houses nearby gave shelter to the survivors. Drs Johnson and Turnbull of Dunbar tended to the most desperate cases, in particular the *Pallas*'s first lieutenant and two crewmen whose recovery was for some time in doubt. Within a day or two both crews, and the dead of the *Pallas*, ten in number, were transferred to Edinburgh. The living went onwards to Portsmouth for February 1811, when courts martial of the senior officers were anticipated (a standard procedure when vessels were lost). On 31 January 1811 it was reported that Admiral Otway, commander at Leith, had extended the thanks of the Lords of the Admiralty to the community of Dunbar and had distributed £500 in rewards.⁴⁴ David Laing received £50. Benjamin Wilson's widow received £25 and an annual pension of the same amount. However, Christopher Middlemass was presented with a silver salver worth £100. It was inscribed: 'Presented by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to Christopher Middlemass, Esq., Provost of Dunbar, in acknowledgement of his humane and zealous exertions to save the crew of his Majesty's late ship *Pallas*, when wrecked near Dunbar, on the night of the 18th December, 1810'.⁴⁵ Further thanks were extended to Thomas and Philip Sleigh, 'the noble family at Broxmouth' and Lord Lauderdale's family. Meanwhile, the two wrecks were auctioned off as they lay. The *Pallas* was so far gone that she was sold in lots, but *La Nymphe* was purchased entire by a shipbuilder from Sunderland. From her remains was constructed a (smaller) ship with sufficient salvage left over to load a brig. The enterprising builder sold the recovered copper from *La Nymphe*'s bottom back to the Admiralty for more than he had paid for the wreck! Both Captains George Paris Monke of the *Pallas* and Edward Sneyd Clay of *La Nymphe* and their senior officers were subjected to courts martial.⁴⁶ Both captains were exonerated; both sailing masters and the local pilots appear to have taken the blame.³⁸

Dunbar was left to take stock of the events of the rescue, in particular the upsetting of the lifeboat - an unprecedented event. Several years later George Miller was to write that 'an unreasonable and unjustifiable prejudice seems to have been excited against the boat, as if it were to be expected that she could either perform impossibilities or work miracles.'³⁵ To allay the prejudice, he published a factual account of the upsetting with a commentary provided by Henry Greathead and

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other independent witness statements. Included was David Laing's account, which spoke of the lifeboat in the highest terms until the third trip. Then, he said, she was dangerously overloaded and delayed by the efforts being made to remove Captain Monke of the *Pallas*. Laing himself felt it necessary to board the wreck at this point and after he left the steering oar the boat broached to and then upset. Here it is made clear that it did not recover, but remained upside down. Henry Greathead wrote 'as never an instance of a lifeboat upsetting before, (he speaks) from experiments.' His trials had revealed that, unless hindered, the boat ought to have righted. He theorised that in circumstances where the boat upset and did not recover, it was likely that debris, shallow reefs or a combination of those held the boat inverted by means of her high stems. The independent witness writing for Miller notes that the boat was overloaded and had drifted broadside to the sea (contrary to Greathead's operating instructions), where a wave overturned it. He adds that another stimulus, the flux of water swirling round the wreck, had helped to generate this situation, and that the flux 'carried the boat above these rocks and by them the stems were held fast, till the tide left the boat dry.' In light of subsequent events it would appear that suspicions were sufficiently allayed by Miller's analysis for further crews to be mustered and the lifeboat itself remained serviceable.

Service three. The *John and Agnes*, 9-10 November 1816

On the night of 9 November 1816 the *John and Agnes*, a coastal trading craft, was on passage from Newcastle to Leith. In consequence of heavy weather she was in danger of being swept onto rocks to the west of Dunbar. The master decided to make for Belhaven Bay, with the intention of beaching his ship. But instead of coming onto the beach, the *John and Agnes* grounded on an offshore sandbank. There, at the mercy of the storm, her situation was perilous. There were at least eight people on board (the accounts are unclear): four passengers, including three from one family, and master, mate and at least two crewmen. One of the passengers, David Bell, opted to swim for help. He made land safely and ran to Dunbar. When the town was alerted, the lifeboat was readied and hauled to Tyne Sands where the vessel was resting, arriving four hours after Bell had set out. Accompanying them, Bell was able to pull another survivor (the other male passenger) from the surf. When *Dunbar Lifeboat*, still under the command of David Laing, reached the wreck, only one living soul was found, and saved. The rest of the crew and passengers had gradually succumbed to the weather. Bell's brother and sister were washed from the deck; they were believed to be in each other's arms when last seen. Another crewman was dead, lashed to the mast. No record of the fate of the master has survived.

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Despite the loss of life, this rescue is very much of the pattern of later RNLI lifeboat services at Dunbar.⁴⁷ The call-out time was good, given that Bell had to land and reach Dunbar over two miles away. A crew, the lifeboat, horses, and harness had to be mustered in the middle of the night and the boat had to pass across fields and the beach to reach a launch position. The analysis above presents the best interpretation of numbers aboard the *John and Agnes*, because contemporary accounts are contradictory. Three dead were certainly found and buried locally: Patrick Fachichs (*sic*), a sailor, and the siblings George Bell, a sailor, and Helen Bell, both of Leith.^{48a} James Miller's poetic account of the rescue includes the line 'one by one the solitary remnants of the crew came leaping in'²⁷ but his *History of Dunbar* concludes 'the solitary remnant of this little crew was saved by the lifeboat.'^{48b} The *Courant* is vague on numbers, but seems to give a total of six deaths.⁴⁹

Services four and five. The *Signet*, 15 October 1818, and the *Lady Ann Murray*, 4 November 1821

The *Courant* recorded that during a storm on Sunday 4 November 1821 an (as yet) unidentified sloop was driven ashore at Skateraw and a man and boy were drowned.⁵⁰ No other notice appears, but James Miller provides a name. He complains: 'the *Dunbar Lifeboat* . . . had been allowed to lie by in such a state of disrepair'⁵¹ and notes further that by the time 'the *Lady Ann Murray* of Gatehouse-of-fleet came on shore . . . her services were no longer available.' Reference to the list of wrecks in the National Archive (above) shows the *Courant* entry must refer to the *Lady Ann Murray*. The disrepair of the lifeboat was believed to have occurred during an abortive service to the *Signet*, 15 October 1818. Whilst being hauled across Lumsden Shore the hull was stove in by rocks.²¹ Rendered unserviceable, it appears none of the directors felt it was their responsibility to repair the craft. No accounts survive, but it is likely that there were no funds available. As all the rewards from the *Pallas* had been distributed to individuals, the lifeboat itself clearly lost out. James Miller noted that the events of the *John and Agnes* were in fact 'the last office of the kind she was doomed to perform.'⁵² The *Signet* was saved by towing; some of the crew of the *Lady Ann Murray* appear to have perished. With this last service the *Dunbar Lifeboat* fell into disuse and was sold by auction on 15 October 1829.

The crew of *Dunbar Lifeboat*

The men who crewed *Dunbar Lifeboat* are mostly unknown. Only the names of two are recorded – the coxswain David Laing, and a crewman, Benjamin Wilson

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who died during the operation to save the crew of HMS *Pallas*. It is possible, however, to suggest a few other likely candidates.

The crews were drawn from volunteers from amongst Dunbar's maritime community. In 1820 there were 32 merchant craft registered to the port of Dunbar, engaged in foreign and coastal trade.¹⁶ This number suggests a pool of around 150-200 mariners resident in the town. Numbers of vessels and hence crew were similar in 1841, some of whom would always be in port: on the night of the June 1841 census there were around 40 men described as seamen and mariners resident.⁵³ In addition, there was a healthy fishing community (50 recorded in 1841) supported by good numbers of men employed in ancillary trades, for example, coopers (23), ships carpenters (4), blockmakers (1), and ropemakers (6). Three further groups ought also to be considered: Royal Navy pensioners, the men of the Preventative Waterguard (trained boatmen commanded by a seconded naval officer) and the Coastguard. From amongst these groups the crews should be sought.

Taking one of these groups, amongst the sailors and mariners recorded in 1841 the following were Dunbar born and of the appropriate age to have been active in the 1810s and 1820s: James Sanson (aged 60), James Ballantyne (85), Thomas Gillespie (70), James Lorimer (56), James Robertson (50), Robert Darg (65), Thomas Runciman (49), William Fairlie (50), James Turnbull (50), William Brunton (60), David Wood (50), Andrew Gray (60), and Alexander Richardson (50). Similarly, amongst the fishermen were Walter Runciman (50), George Main (70), William Marr (49), James Brunton (80), John Donaldson (53), John Gullan (49), Alexander Smith (60), James Herkes (60), and William Young (60). Although nothing categorical can be said about these particular individuals' participation in the career of *Dunbar Lifeboat*, many of their descendants appear in the crew lists of the later RNLI lifeboats of Dunbar Station. An outside chance of confirmation of one or two names may come from a search of obituaries in the *Haddingtonshire Courier*, which began in 1859: public service, even that of those from a 'lowly' station, is often recorded. Perhaps family lore may provide the names of others.

Events in subsequent years

After the effective demise of *Dunbar Lifeboat*, events on the coast around Dunbar continued to demonstrate the need for a rescue service in some form. For example, in one four year spell nine local fishermen lost their lives: during 1824 James Comb died at Tyne Water, presumably while collecting bait; during 1826 Robert Aitchison and John Moodie died when their creel boat upset at the Vault

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(where the *Pallas* came ashore) and in February 1827 a young (unnamed) man of the Marr family and three others were lost when their boat upset; on the same day a father and son, James and William Robertson suffered the same fate.⁵⁴ At this time the lifeboat was still available, although unserviceable.

Life saving efforts continued, although many occasions must have passed without notice. Chief Officer Randall Stapp of the Dunbar Coastguard received the Royal Humane Society's Silver Medal for Gallantry during a rescue in 1827.^{47b} Lieutenant Sydenham Wylde RN, commanding Dunbar Coastguard, led a doomed rescue on 20th August 1845.⁵⁵ A fishing boat had overturned outside the entrance to Dunbar's Old Harbour. One of the crew succeeded in making for a protruding rock (still marked with an iron pole). Nobody on land could get a rope to him, despite many attempts, so Wylde called for volunteers to man a commandeered boat. His chief boatman, William Lucas, and four fishermen, Peter Darg, David Darg, William Miller and William Clements stepped forward. On the brink of success, their boat was upset by a wave. All drowned. On this occasion, there had been an alternative service available: the question arises as to why the Rocket Brigade had not been able to pass a line. For shortly after *Dunbar Lifeboat* was finally auctioned off on 15 October 1829 and the local Lifeboat Institution was wound up, two sets of Manby Apparatus had been stationed at Dunbar.⁵⁶ George Miller's prophetic ideas had finally become mainstream. The apparatus was used with success on 6 December 1847 when a single storm deposited five large vessels on the coast around Dunbar.⁵⁷ Coastguards and volunteers of the Rocket Brigade were fully stretched but were successful in those cases where their methods and equipment were appropriate. If a lifeboat had still been available some of the lives that were lost because no effective shore rescue could be mounted might have been preserved.

The Rocket Brigades

The principle of throwing a line over a stranded ship by means of which apparatus to remove a crew could be transmitted was understood as early as the necessity of stationing lifeboats around the coast. As noted above, George Miller theorized about this procedure and an artillery officer, Captain George Manby, began experiments in the late eighteenth century.⁵⁸ The first rescue using his apparatus was supervised by Manby himself at Great Yarmouth (his then residence) on 18 February 1808. By 1823 around 240 lives had been saved by the method, which involved firing a line from a mortar and successively passing heavier hawsers

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between wreck and shore until a boat or later a breeches buoy could be hauled between (the method used at the *Pallas* after the lifeboat upset). The newly formed Coastguard began to be equipped with Manby Apparatus at the end of the 1820s. Dunbar received both a large 24 pound mortar and a smaller 6 pound one around 1830, a few months after the lifeboat was sold.⁵⁹ Some successes of this equipment are noted in James Miller's *History of Dunbar, second edition*, which was published in 1859.⁵⁷ Rocket Brigades using similar apparatus were established eventually at several points along the East Lothian coast and served well into the twentieth century.

The advent of the RNLI

Still the casualties mounted around Dunbar. The *Northumberland Report* of 1851, produced to reform and re-establish the failing Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck, noted that there had been 19 wrecks near the town since 1832.⁵⁶ Nationally, one outcome of the report was a restimulated organisation, renamed the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). The Institution had been founded by Sir William Hillary of Man on a wave of enthusiasm in 1824, but had become nearly moribund after little more than twenty years.⁶⁰ There were disputes about funding, about salvage, about the correct or proper types of lifeboats, and about the status of local organizations relative to the parent body. Under the reforming leadership of the Duke of Northumberland it regained momentum and began to grow. Many of the surviving independent stations were incorporated amicably into the national body and more boats began to be made available to equip new stations. The funding crisis was allayed as the organisation regained a high profile, and this enabled continued growth. Support, training and regular inspections were instituted to improve the professionalism of local committees and lifeboat crews. One strand of the old institution was retained: that lifeboats were or could be an integral part of a community and as such the day to day running of lifeboat stations and launch decisions should be in local hands.

During 1864 a committee was formed in Dunbar to petition the RNLI for a boat.⁴⁷ Their case was proven quickly and a new lifeboat house, the old one being long forgotten, was built beside the Victoria Harbour to house the boat. A boat was commissioned using £300 donated by Lady Cunningham-Fairlie⁶¹ and during April 1865 the *Wallace* arrived at Dunbar by rail and was ceremonially paraded through the town to be launched in the harbour.⁶² RNLI craft have served the port from that day to this. The service of the station has been twice documented.⁴⁷

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Conclusion

since these far off days many changes have taken place^{47b}

With hindsight, the fate of Dunbar Lifeboat is not unexpected or even exceptional. Pioneering lifeboat stations were often created in a surge of enthusiasm. However, for a station to survive, it would seem that at least three conditions needed to be met. There had to be a good supply of expert seamen used to local conditions, such as was generally found only at the larger ports, for example, Shields, the Mersey, or Great Yarmouth. Additionally, a strong, working organisation had to exist to support the service; this was also most often found at larger ports where there was either a pilots' organisation or a port authority. Further, unless measures were put in place to secure continuing revenue, funds were quickly eaten up through rewards and repairs; one solution was an impost or tax applied to all vessels using a port, as at Sunderland.⁶³

Many of the smaller stations founded in the early years of the nineteenth century did not meet the conditions outlined above and did not survive to see the formation of the national institution in 1824. In Scotland, for example, the Greathead boats at Aberdeen and Ayr were out of service by 1820 and around 1819, respectively.⁷ In St Andrews, the *Cork Lifeboat*, a Greathead boat purchased by subscription in 1802, performed its only effective service on 10 January 1803.⁶⁴ By 1823, it had fallen into disrepair: its house was neglected, a wall had fallen down exposing the boat to the elements, children had stolen cork from the hull and equipment had vanished. Some said that this condition had been allowed to arise 'through envy, jealousy and secret ill-will'.⁶⁵ However, it is as likely that there was an insufficient supply of able seamen to maintain the boat. Only a few years before the lifeboat arrived, St Andrews had to induce fishermen and their families to settle there.

Even the formation of the Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck did little to ameliorate the waste of effort to which small communities put themselves. In this period (after 1824) the boat stationed at Leith/Newhaven went out of service.⁷ Thankfully, the *Northumberland Report* of 1851, referred to above, proved to be a turning point.⁵⁶ In succeeding years *Lifeboat, the Journal of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution* published regular instructions on how to conduct a station and maintain a service, many of which arose from information gathered for the report.⁶⁰ Standards for committees, training and

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equipment were laid down and practical steps were taken to ensure that they were followed. Bounties and rewards were instituted. The report also carried a detailed statistical analysis of existing stations. Appended to the entry for Dunbar was the comment: 'Saved, in December 1810, 45 men, in two cargoes, from HMS Pallas, lost on rocks to eastward of Vault Point. In making third trip upset, and drowned nearly all. Sold. Since 1832 19 vessels have been wrecked on this station.'⁵⁹

The upsetting of *Dunbar Lifeboat* at the *Pallas* in 1810 had already passed into mythology: the story, in going down the coast by word of mouth, had grown. 'Drowned nearly all' was accepted as the truth; the more recent and certainly more catastrophic upset of the South Shields Lifeboat on 4 December 1849 was more accurately documented. The same chart compares the performances of the Scottish stations to that date: Buddonness on the Tay (established 1830⁶⁴) had saved 27, Montrose (Scotland's first, 1801) had saved 30, and Aberdeen (1802) had saved 43. Thus *Dunbar Lifeboat*, which had saved more than 45 lives during its short career, had clearly served a useful purpose. Further, when the *Northumberland Report* was compiled, existing lifeboat stations had been augmented by several sets of Manby Apparatus and these were beginning to make their mark. Dunbar's was recorded as having saved ten lives. Up to that point Dunbar was one of only nine stations so equipped in the whole of Scotland (with two from a total of 15 mortars).

In conclusion, although Dunbar was amply endowed with practical seamen with good local knowledge, *Dunbar Lifeboat* was let down by the failure of the two other significant factors: organisation and finance. If the Directors had taken a more pro-active role (in repairs and fund-raising) or if the rewards accrued had been applied to the service rather than to individuals, perhaps the station could have ensured a succession of lifeboats to provide continuity of service, as was managed at St Andrews when the new *Volunteer Lifeboat* replaced *Cork Lifeboat* in 1824.⁶⁴

Dunbar Lifeboat's unfortunate reputation, remarked upon by George Miller, which was gained when it upset beside the *Pallas* in 1810, was perhaps of more concern amongst the general community than amongst the men who manned her. They did, after all, attempt to take the boat out on at least three more occasions. Even David Laing, who had narrowly escaped drowning in the upset, was prepared to lead his men out again. No such defeatist talk was heard 67 years later when the RNLI craft *Wallace* upset (on exercise in strong seas) with loss of life.⁴⁷ The crew reformed, the service continued and weathered the immediate aftermath. When the RNLI proposed removing *Wallace* in 1886, the community voted en-masse for its retention and provided the funds required themselves: the procession and

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demonstration organised to publicise the need for funds was one of the first lifeboat days held in Britain. The event is still held every summer, now 115 years on, as much a celebration of achievement and continuity as the main fund-raising event of the station. Although a large proportion of the current crews (two dozen strong) work away from the sea they continue to demonstrate the same commitment shown by the mariners and fishermen who ventured to rescue the crew of the *Pallas*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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24. See, for example, entries in the Council Minutes, 1791-1848, Burgh of Dunbar, National Archives of Scotland, B18.
25. Reminiscence of Mrs Miller, *Haddingtonshire Courier*, Haddington, 2 August 1895.
26. Reminiscence of Mr Robert Melville, *Haddingtonshire Courier*, Haddington, 15 November 1918.
27. James Miller, The Wreck of the John and Agnes, *Scots Magazine*, April 1817; and also included in James Miller, *The Luckless Drave and other Poems*, Haddington, 1820.
28. *Vessels locally wrecked off Dunbar between 1810-1822*, Burgh of Dunbar, National Archives of Scotland, B18/42/10.
29. *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 5 January 1811, 5 December 1812, 23 May 1816.
30. *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 27 February 1819.
31. *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 25 November 1820, 30 November 1820.
32. *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 17 October 1808, and subsequent issues.
33. James Miller, *The History of Dunbar*, Dunbar, 1830, p248.
34. *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, notices from October 1810 to February 1811.
35. George Miller, *The Cheap Magazine*, Haddington, volume 2, 1814, p522.
36. James Miller, *The History of Dunbar*, Dunbar, 1830, from p248.
37. <http://www.home.gci.net/~stall/shiplst1.htm>, and references therein.
- 38a. <http://www.cronab.demon.co.uk/PQ.htm>.
- 38b. <http://www.cronab.demon.co.uk/NO.htm>.
39. Admiralty Office Letter, *London Gazette*, No16414, October 1810.

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40. *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 7 September 1807.
41. James Miller, *The History of Dunbar*, Dunbar, 1830, from p249.
42. Benjamin Wilson, mariner, Dunbar, who in the 42nd year of his age lost his life when coming in the lifeboat for the third time to save the crew of HM ship Pallas which was wrecked on the Vault Shore on 19th December 1810; memorial inscription, Dunbar Churchyard. 19 December 1810; Benjamin Wilson, Dunbar, first big mort cloth, 8s 10 1/2d; Register of Burials, Parish of Dunbar, GRO, 706/6.
43. George Miller, *The Cheap Magazine*, Haddington, volume 2, 1814, p523.
44. *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, reports during February 1811.
45. James Miller, *The History of Dunbar*, Dunbar, 1859, second edition, p280.
46. The courts martial are alluded to in references 38a and b. In reference to *La Nympe*: Captain Clay and his officers were cleared of blame ... with the exception of Mr G Scott, the master, and C Gascoigne, the pilot, who were judged to be incautious in asserting that the flame from a lime kiln was the light on May Island.
- 47a. Anonymous, *Dunbar Lifeboat Station*, RNLi, Edinburgh, 1970.
- 47b. Ivor B McPhillips, *Dunbar Lifeboat Station History*, RNLi, Dunbar, 1997.
- 48a. 10 November 1816, Patrick Fachichs, a sailor, second big mort cloth, 7/-; George Bell, a sailor, first big mort cloth, 8s 10 1/2d; 4 December 1816, Helen Bell, Leith, drowned, first big mort cloth, 8s 10 1/2d; Register of burials, Parish of Dunbar, GRO 706/6.
- 48b. James Miller, *The History of Dunbar*, Dunbar, 1859, second edition, p280.
49. *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 14 November 1816 and 28 November 1816.
50. *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 8 November 1821.
51. James Miller, *The History of Dunbar*, Dunbar, 1830, p252.
52. James Miller, *The History of Dunbar*, Dunbar, 1830, p241.
53. *First Decennial Census*, June 1841, Parish of Dunbar, various enumeration books, GRO, 706.
54. Entries from 6 July 1824 to 21 February 1827, Register of Burials, Parish of Dunbar, GRO, 706/8.
55. a. *Sacred to the memory of Lieut. Sydenham Wylde RN, William Lucas, chief boatman, Peter Darg, David Darg, William Miller, William Clements, seamen who lost their lives 20th August 1845 bravely and devotedly but alas unsuccessfully endeavouring to rescue a wrecked fisherman from a rock at the entrance to the harbour. This tablet erected by the community of Dunbar and vicinity.* b. *Erected by Sarah Lucas for William Lucas RN Chief Boatman of the Coast Guard Service who lost his life 20 August 1845 at Dunbar Harbour trying to save a wrecked fisherman in a violent storm.* Memorial inscriptions, Dunbar Churchyard.
56. *Report of the Committee Appointed to Examine Lifeboat Models*, London, 1851, p72.
57. James Miller, *The History of Dunbar*, Dunbar, 1859, second edition, p289.
58. GHR Gould, *Early 19th Century Life Saving Apparatus*; <http://salsa.iinet.au/~dodd/gail/publications/treng.../Essay.htm>.
59. James Miller, *The History of Dunbar*, Dunbar, 1830, p252.
60. Compiled from accounts in the *Journal of the National Shipwreck Institution* and *Lifeboat, the Journal of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution*, London, from 1852.
61. *Lifeboat, the Journal of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution*, London, volume 5, 1864, p514.
62. Well recorded in the *Haddingtonshire Courier*, Haddington, issues in April and May 1864.
63. Jeff Morris, *The Story of the Sunderland Lifeboats (1800-2000)*.
64. Andrew Jeffrey, *Standing into Danger*, Dundee Branch RNLi, 1996.
65. George Bruce, *Reminiscences of St Andrews Bay*, Dundee, 1884.

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