

Research Notes on the Pringles of Stichill

by James Bruce Pringle (brother of Sir Murray Pringle of Stichill, 10th Bt).

March 2006: Robert Pringle in Baitingbush for 25 years (second son of Pringle of Craigleith, who lost his estate in 1597) made his fortune by 'uplifting the fines and casualties' levied by the Jedburgh and Dumfries courts. He must have been paid a good percentage of the fines collected. So much did he make that he was able to purchase the free barony of Stichill (1628) from John Gordon of Lochinvar and the Greenknowe estate and tower (before 1649) from the Marquis of Huntly.

Craigleith was uplifted by the crown and given to James Pringle of Smailholm and became part of the new Barony of Galashiels. James Pringle agreed to return part of the estate (Newhall) to Robert's elder brother a few years later for a fee; and handed the Knowes (part of the estate) to Pringle of Whytbank. About 75 years later, Newhall passed to Pringle of Stichill and he used the family's ownership of this land to support his application or claim to a baronetcy in 1682/83. Two hundred years of land ownership was required to acquire a baronetcy.

Craigleith therefore was in the hands of William Pringle in Cessford, Whittoun, Caverton, Hutt, etc. since at least 1482/83, which makes him and his descendants the oldest cadets of the Pringles of Smailholm.

I am certain that William of Craigleith and Alexander of Trinlyknowe were the second and third eldest surviving sons of David of Pilmuir, Ranger of the Tweed Ward of Ettrick Forest. This view is supported by the proximity of their lands, later disputes, destination of conviscated lands, return of conviscated lands, manrent bonds, legal papers and by Alexander Pringle of Whytbank in his 1840 manuscript.

David of Pilmuir was first mentioned in 1440 and was probably the son of Alexander Pringle, the Douglas squire last mentioned in 1459; James of Smailholm succeeded his father in 1466 as ranger, although his father lived until 1480; William was first mentioned as constable of Cessford castle in 1467, on a preceeding occasion Ker of Cessford used David Pringle's seal and it was no doubt due to David Pringle that William became constable of Cessford castle; William and Alexander were witnesses together to a notarial instrument in 1468. Alexander Pringle rendered his brother James' Tweed Ward accounts on several occasions, as his deputy (not his son). Is it likely that James Pringle, who had some influence in the Tweed Ward would support land being let to William of Cessford in preference to his 'brothers' Adam of St John's Chapel or Thomas of Wrangholm.

The Smailholm family tree in Smailholm tower is incorrect. It omits the Pringles of Craigleith and places the Pringles of Trinlyknowe in a different generation

October 2012: I was persuaded in 2000 to the view that we were probably descended from Smailholm and I 'corrected', that is to say I removed Stichill's second crest and motto from Burkes Peerage. I have since revised my views

and returned to my original understanding due in part to the family's Bonds of Manrent and their application e.g. the feud between Stewart v Pringle and the close involvement that the Newhall/Stichill family had with Hoppringill of that Ilk between 1581 and 1737, during which time Newhall/Stichill were treated as the senior cadet by that Ilk.

October 2013: In view of my recent research and following my discussion with Hugh Peskett a genealogist of repute who has proved a number of claims in the Court of the Lord Lyon, e.g. the Earldom of Annandale and the Lordship of Borthwick, amongst others.

Previously I was inclined to go along with the view put forward by the author Alexander Pringle that Murray's ancestor William constable of Cessford Castle was a son of David 2nd of Smailholm. In 2000 I wrote to Burkes to remove the crest and motto of that Ilk and to show that William was a son of David of Smailholm. Burkes duly amended the Pringle of Stichill entry. I now realise that I was incorrect. Pringle of Stichill used the double crest and motto for generations up to at least the mid-1920s when my grandmother remarried following my grandfather's death in 1919.

There are good reasons to believe that William constable of Cessford Castle was the younger brother of Adam later designated of that Ilk. William had two younger brothers Alexander of Trinlyknowe and David in Tynnes (who previously held leases to Torwoodlee); both were also considered by Alexander the author to be sons of Smailholm. In fact, William could be the grandson and son of any of the three pairs: Adam and Archibald; George (squire and master ranger until 1460) and Thomas (who resigned lands in Philiphaugh in 1461); or Alexander (squire) and Robert of Wrangholm. There are good reasons not to exclude the last two pairs. However, there is more evidence pointing towards Archibald and Adam.

Archibald married Elizabeth Hoppringill daughter of Robert first of Smailholm and sister to David second of Smailholm. The four brothers would be the product of this union between that Ilk and Smailholm. David was not the father of William but his uncle. Archibald was not referred to as of that Ilk during his lifetime nor after his death. Adam 'recovered' Hoppringill in 1480 seemingly following the deaths of George, Alexander, Thomas, Robert, Archibald and David. It suggests to me that some sort of 'arrangement' was made due to the disgrace of George former Douglas squire and master ranger of the Tweed ward and his son Thomas for their continued support for the former Earl of Douglas. The King granted Thomas' Philiphaugh lands to John Murray. David of Smailholm and David of Tynnes both married Murrays. The Murrays and the Smailholm Pringles were also involved in business partnerships with each other.

Robert second son of George Pringle of Craigleith was born in 1581. His grandfather Alexander had forfeited Williamhope in 1565 and his father George forfeited Craigleith in 1597 both for non-payment of fines levied following attacks on their neighbours. In July 1605 Robert's elder brother George obtained a feu charter of the lands of Newhall (half of the former lands

of Craigleith) to implement a contract between Sir James Pringle and George, younger, whereby the said James binds himself to set in feu to the said George three years after the decease of his father on payment to him of 3000 merks plus an annual duty of 41 merks. Sir James gave the Knowes to Pringle of Whytbank. I suspect the 3000 merks came from George's younger brother Robert. In 1667 Robert of Newhall disposed the lands of Newhall to Robert of Stichill. In 1673 Robert Pringle of Stichill pays the feu duty of Newhall directly to the Crown.

In 1629 Robert (first of Stichill and second son of Craigleith) whilst still residing in Baitingbush on the Esk introduced his guests (travellers to Scotland) to the 'head of the Pringles' Sir James Pringle of Galashiels and stated that he, Robert, 'though several generations from the main stem, was a Hoppringill of that Ilk'. In this statement which is quite independent of documents dated 200 hundred years earlier (1432-3), I believe he is saying that he was a descendant of Archibald not George nor Alexander nor Robert. In which case, he could only have been the immediate younger brother of Adam of that Ilk.

Adam, William, Alexander and David are recorded in documents relating to Teviotdale and Ettrick Forest – no other Pringles had interests in both camps at that time (1465-1509) and in relation to Ker of Cessford, Lord Home and others. All held property in Ettrick Forest. William held property in Muirhouse and Lauder. Both Adam and William held land in Caverton. Later both families held a quarter each of Fans. On the death of Gilbert, Burnhouse, Torsonce and other lands passed into the hands of Stichill.

I believe that John Hoppringill of that Ilk planned his succession by getting Gilbert second son of Stichill to marry his heiress Margaret to re-unify that Ilk. It was John Hoppringill of that Ilk's intention that Gilbert and Margaret would continue the line. In fact, I believe John's actions if not his words nominated Gilbert to be head of the name. Besides Gilbert, by right of his wife and by nomination became head of the name on the death of his father-in-law John Hoppringill of that Ilk on 21st December 1737. In turn Gilbert nominated his successor and heir – his elder brother Sir Robert Pringle 3rd Bt. of Stichill – as head of the name.

December 2013: My long term quest to identify '*the father of William, constable of Cessford Castle*' has been solved to my satisfaction at least. Over forty years I considered and have now eliminated David, second of Smailholm; George, Douglas squire; Alexander, Douglas squire; Robert of Wrangholm; and Thomas who resigned his share of Philiphaugh in 1461. The evidence points to Archibald the father of Adam. In 1480, the Lords confirmed his son Adam in the lands of Hoppringill as against Mariote Hoppringill, heiress of William Hoppringill of that Ilk (who had successfully defeated Robert's claim) but seemingly following the death of Archibald his father in 1479 and David of Smailholm who died before May 1480. Adam, royal guardsman, was elder brother to William of Craigleith and constable of Cessford Castle, Alexander of Trinlyknowe and David in Tynnes. The two older brothers held lands between the Gala and the Leader and in Teviotdale.

The younger three held lands in Ettrick Forest and all four were active in Roxburghshire between 1465 and 1509. All were associated with the important families in their localities. Their father, Archibald, married Elizabeth Hoppringill, daughter of Robert Douglas squire and first of Smailholm. David second of Smailholm was their maternal uncle. This close relationship confused genealogists and the three younger brothers were erroneously thought to be of Smailholm; as were George, Alexander and Robert. In fact everyone except Adam. As a result family historians have significantly increased the status of Smailholm at the expense of Hoppringill of that Ilk and their later cadets.