

St Clair – Sinclair de Driden – Dryden - Dreadon

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May 2011

*Completely rewritten in January 2018 with new information, corrections and explanations extracted from the book
"Dryden – the History and Mysteries of a family name", first published in 2013 but with a more extensive 3rd edition to be published in 2018*

This paper was originally written around one theory of descent for the Dryden family of Canons Ashby in England. The central question was always whether or not William Dryden of Walton the ancestor of the Drydens of Canons Ashby, was descended from the Sinclair of Dryden family in Scotland. Over the last six years, much new information has come from research into the Scottish and English archives that has clarified the structure of the Sinclair of Dryden family tree in Scotland and the structure of the early Dryden family in Cumberland. However, nothing new has been uncovered that proves absolutely that the two families are related - or conversely that they are unrelated families.

Because a number of the old records of the "Dryden" family name in Scotland have now been confirmed as referring to members of the Sinclair of Dryden family, the origin and descent of the Dryden name in Scotland can be proven beyond much doubt. Over 200 years later than the earliest Scottish records the occurrence of the Dryden name starts in the English borders, and then finds its way south. The inescapable conclusion is that the name spread from Scotland to England. Just exactly how remains a theory, but the circumstantial evidence connecting the Scottish and English Dryden families across the border is now voluminous.

To give more assurance about those earlier connections of the Dryden name to Roslin near Edinburgh, a little more history (with references to original sources) has been added. Further references and a bibliography are available in the parent book

Philip & Henry de Driden – the Scottish records of 1296 & 1329

Philip de Driden signed the Ragman Roll in 1296 in the county of Roxburghshire (del Counte de Rokesburgh). Joseph Stevenson in his "Documents illustrative of the History of Scotland" taken from "originals and authentic copies in London, Paris, Brussels, Lille and Ghent" has the name as "Philippus de Dryden. Then a document was signed at Berwick upon Tweed on 3 September 1296 asking the sheriff of Forfar (now Angus) to restore lands to Philip after he had sworn fealty to King Edward. That record is presented in the Bain's "Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland 1272-1307" and is spelt as "Philip de Dryden".

*Those records of Philip de Driden need to be scrutinised together with the record of Henry de Driden that appeared in the Annals of Dunfermline for the year 1329. "Idem computat in solutione facta **Henř de Driden** pro anima Regis, in partem recompensationis damporum que sustinuit ratione teodi sui centum solidorum de multuris molendinorum de Munros subtractis per Dominum David de Graham cs."*

That translates roughly as the Chamberlain crediting himself with payment to Henry de Driden for the Kings soul, in part recompense for the losses that Henry sustained by reason of his fee of 100 shillings from the multures of the Mills of Munros (Montrose), being subtracted by Sir David de Graham, a payment of 100s.

The mill of Munros where the disputed proceeds lay, was on the coast of Forfarshire. It can be found referred to in historical records as Munros or Monros and then the Gaelic word "Alt" probably became identified with the Scots-English "Old" and another form of the name became "Old Montrose".

According to the Scots Peerage Vol VI, Edinburgh, 1906, pp. 208-10: At Scone, on the 5 March 1325, Sir David, as 'Sir David de Graham pater,' received two charters from King Robert, viz. one of the lands of Old Montrose, in the shire of Forfar, in excambion for the lands of Cardross, near Dunbarton, and another of lands in Charlton and Kynnaber, near Montrose, in exchange for the lands of Sokach, in the earldom of Carrick..."

How Henry St Clair came to be in possession of the fees from the mill at Montrose might be explained by a later charter of King David II of 1356 confirming a grant of the great customs of the burgh of Monros (Montrose) to William St Clair as the heir of the deceased Henry St Clair, who died about 1335. See page 311 within "Registrum Sancte Marie de Neubotle" published by the Bannatyne Club in 1848.

This gives at least some of the reason for the dispute over the fees between the two men and provides evidence confirming the identities that have actually been suggested for hundreds of years. e.g. The 1844 Historical & Statistical account of Dunfermline by Peter Chalmers when discussing the Chamberlain Rolls of Robert Bruce writes: "Henry of Driden (Henr de Driden p.496, line 20 from the top) was, it is likely, a member of the ancient house of the Sinclairs of Roslin Castle, seven miles south from Edinburgh. Dryden is in the immediate vicinity, and was part of their large estate".

What becomes apparent is that Dryden House on the Sinclair of Roslin estates was a secondary residence used by the Sinclair family from the time of William Sinclair being granted Roslin by Henry de Roslin in 1280. Judging from the probable dates of birth of his family he had married Henry's daughter Amicia de Roslin some years prior to 1480 and may already have been residing at Roslin or Dryden.

William's son & heir Henry Sinclair then married Alicia de Fenton, daughter of William de Fenton and Cecelia Bisset. The Fentons were a notable family from Forfarshire which might help explain why Henry Sinclair of Roslin had been granted lands and interests in Forfarshire. And in the absence of any evidence of any other family using the name of Driden, and the fact that William Sinclair of Roslin was the first of the family to settle at Roslin, it also suggests that Philip de Driden and Henry de Driden (Henry Sinclair of Roslin) were both sons of William Sinclair & brothers.

Henry de Driden doctor of decreets & Robert de Driden chaplain to the king

There is a lot more information that can be given about the next group of "de Driden" family members in Scotland – Henry de Driden Abbot of Holyrood and Scottish representative at the Council of Basle in Europe, and Robert de Driden chaplain to king James II. A more complete investigation of those two and their relationship to Bishop Henry Wardlaw of St Andrews and Laurence de Driden of Stirling & Perth can be read in the 3rd edition of the book "Dryden, the History & Mysteries of a Family name", to be published in 2018. But in summary, they were an illegitimate family from an unmarried mother who was probably a sister of Henry Sinclair 1st Earl of Orkney, and raised at Dryden House. Henry de Driden was still active up to 1450 and his activities overlap those of the next family to possess and occupy Dryden House.

William Sinclair 1st of Dryden d.1468

Next to appear at Dryden was William Sinclair, third son of Henry Sinclair 1st Earl of Orkney who was granted the Dryden estates at Roslin in perpetuity by his brother Henry 2nd Earl of Orkney somewhere around 1415. William is named as the "party contractor" in a 1609 in a Court of Sessions case over the inheritance of Dryden. (Kerse, MS. Fol. 141). Then his 10 acres in Pentland held from Sinclair of Roslin can be traced as they descend in grants to his second son and eventual heir Edward Sinclair 2nd of Dryden in 1455 - National Archives of Scotland (NAS) GD18/424. Then to Edward's son Sir John Sinclair 3rd of Dryden in 1496, NAS GD18/429; and to Sir John's son and heir Edward Sinclair 4th of Dryden some lands in Lasswade are granted in 1536 – NAS GD18/454. That male line descent at Dryden is now well documented.

Laurence de Driden, master of Dryden d.1468

Laurence de Driden who appears many times in the Exchequer Rolls of Scotland was NOT the king's porter as sometimes suggested, but a "keeper" of accounts & auditor in the royal household who reported to the comptroller. In the customars' accounts from Dundee for the year 10 July 1449 to 12 July 1450, the entries name Robert Livingston the comptroller who was executed and also his replacement Alexander Napier:

"Et per solucionem factam **Alexandro Naper**, compotorum rotulatori, fatenti receptum super compotum, et ad usus et expensas domicilii, xxxii li. vj s. Et allocate eisdem per solucionem factam **Laurencio de Dridane, janitori domini regis**, in partem solucionis feodi sui, de mandato alias quondam **Roberti de Levingstoun**, tunc compotorum rotulatoris, ut patet per literas suas de receptor ostensas super compotum, de anno compoti xxxiiij s. iij d."

Being in the royal household explains why Laurence was granted a house in Stirling by the king in 1460 and perhaps why he finally became a burghess of Perth, both being places of royal residence preferred to Edinburgh in the contemporary reign of James II.

The evidence that Laurence de Driden was the oldest son and heir of William Sinclair 1st of Dryden is circumstantial but strong. Laurence de Driden's daughter Agnes, left a chart dated 9 November 1469 (NAS GD79/1/28) identifying an earlier date of death for Laurence, last seen receiving payment in the Exchequer Rolls of 1467.

"Agnes Dridane, daughter of the **deceased** Laurence Dridane, grants to the Predicant Friars of Perth eight shillings of annual rent out of a tenement in the castle-gavel " ... **for the souls of the said Laurence, of his father, mother, and of all the faithful dead.**"

Then a tack of 25 July 1468 NAS GD18/426 named Agnes Sinclair as the relict of William Sinclair 1st of Dryden, the two dates of death of William Sinclair of Dryden and Laurence de Driden can therefore be estimated as being at about the same time.

Finally there is a charter of 1483 granted by Thomas Joffrayson, son and heir of Agnes Dridane, **daughter and heir** of deceased Laurence Dridane, making over lands in Kirk Street Perth to Thomas Young, Burgess of Perth (NAS GD103/2/41), which establishes that Laurence Driden had no sons. Combine that with an instrument dated 11 February 1450 (NAS GD18/422) by William Sinclair of Dryden " ... in favour of Edward Synclar, his second son", and all the circumstances (including his name of de Driden as a territorial designation) are consistent with Laurence de Driden having been the oldest son and heir who died without sons and it was his next eldest brother Edward who succeeded at Dryden.

Edward Sinclair 2nd of Dryden d. after 1496

The sons of Edward Sinclair 2nd of Dryden are of the same generation as William Dryden of Walton in Cumberland, which has focused attention on one of his two sons named William Sinclair as the possible immigrant to England. However, the family structure allows for there to have been brothers of Edward who are also candidates to have been the father of a William "Dryden".

Laurence de Driden he had no sons and Thomas Driden the sub-abbot in Arbroath seems an unlikely father for a continuing Dryden line. However, that leaves Alexander who has left nothing known of his life (NAS GD18/424), and John Dryden the Scottish chaplain who swore fealty to England in 1481 (Patent Rolls dated 10 March 1481 at Westminster London). When all is considered, there appear to be several possibilities for a "Dryden" male descent in the Scottish borders, including unknown illegitimacies from the female line who could have taken the Dryden name.

The list of Edward's sons is based on the charter granted to Patrick Sinclair of Dryden naming his surviving brothers as legitimate heirs in 20 July 1513, quoted in Roland Saintclair's "The Saint-Clairs of the Isles". To those named there, can be added George and Robert (NAS GD 1/529/5 of 1482) and Henry (p. 15 "History of Clan Gregor" (1901) by A G M MacGregor).

Apart from William his second son, all of Edward Sinclair 2nd of Dryden's other known sons locations and dates of death are accounted for in historical documents: Sir John Sinclair 3rd of Dryden (d.1535), George Sinclair rector of Aberfoyle (alive 1527), Master William Sinclair of Banks (d.1513), Robert Sinclair (d. before 1513), Hector Sinclair of Seton Collegiate College (alive 1552) and Patrick Sinclair of Dryden (d,1545) – and probably Henry Sinclair of Ardoch (d. before 1513).

William Sinclair of Dryden is last recorded in the Exchequer Rolls as usher to the Queen's chamber in 1514, the year before Queen Margaret fled into English exile, but no identifiable record of his location or death after that date has yet been found in the Scottish records.

Edward's seal (NAS GD18/429) is found to be a maternal difference of a boar's head centred on the Sinclair of Roslin's engrailed cross. (see Page 21). Given the Sinclair of Roslin and Dryden's close associations with the Chisholm family, it is strongly suggested that Edward's mother Agnes was from that family, although she was perhaps his father William's second wife and not the mother of Laurence.

The identification that the difference added to the Sinclair shield was a maternal difference can be backed up by other examples from the wider Sinclair family: e.g. In David Lindsay's Armorial of 1542 the shield of "Sinclare of Roslyne" is given as "argent, on a cross engrailed sable a mullet or", a coat of arms held by Roslin until 1672. The explanation being that Oliver Sinclair of Roslin the third son of William Sinclair 3rd earl of Orkney had founded a new the cadet branch at Roslin. Oliver's mother was from the Sutherland family whose arms were "gules, three mullets or", with one of those "mulletts or" appearing on the new Sinclair of Roslin shield before it again reverted to the plain sable engrailed cross in 1672

Sir John Sinclair 3rd of Dryden d.1535

The identification of "Johannes Dridene" who witnessed the often quoted charter at Inchaffray Abbey in 1521 as Sir John Sinclair of Dryden is a very important discovery within the debate over the origin of the Dryden name. This charter is referred to in the Scottish History Society's 1908 publication "Bulls, Charters and other documents relating to the Abbey of Inchaffray". It is a lease concerning the "fruits" of Kilbride church granted to Robert Row in Dunblane and to his assignees who included his wife Margaret. She is then identified in a later charter of 1544 (in the same book) as Margaret Sinclair, relict of Robert Row of Callentoyes, with a son Robert Row and a daughter named as Elizabeth Cheisholm.

In 1491 Sir John Sinclair of Dryden had been granted many lands in Menteith (just west & north of Stirling) including Wester Row and Banks of Row. His aunt Margaret Sinclair of Dryden had married secondly Edmund Chisholm who remarried after her death to Janet Drummond and took up the Cromlix estates near to Dunblane in this very same region. Sir John's brother's William Sinclair of Banks, George Sinclair of Aberfoyle and Henry Sinclair of Ardoch also moved to this group of Sinclair of Dryden lands, William and Henry producing families who then intermarried with the Chisholms.

In all those circumstances this Margaret Sinclair must be from the Sinclair of Dryden family who were already intermarried with the Chisholms at this location, and Johannes Dridene can be none other than Sir John Sinclair of Dryden who as head of the family was signing with his territorial designation of "John Dryden" as he was permitted to do under Scottish law and custom. From all those details it seems Margaret was probably the daughter of William Sinclair of Banks of Row (d.1513) and a niece to Sir John Sinclair of Dryden.

Sir John Sinclair of Dryden's seal (NAS GD18/429) displayed a maternal difference of a lion rampant, and given the great deal of later intermarriage between the families, suggests that his mother was from the Crichton family. (see again page 21 for the illustration)

Origin & use of the Dryden name in early Scottish records

There is now enough evidence available from the Scottish archives and earlier publications to state with reasonable certainty that the only known origin of the Dryden family name in Scotland is Dryden on the Roslin estates of the Sinclair family. Most records between 1296 and 1521 can be traced back to that location or connected to the families that lived there. For those few records that cannot be associated with Dryden House in Midlothian, there is no other alternative origin backed by any documented historical evidence. It is logical therefore to consider whether the Dryden family records that start to occur in the Scottish borders from 1489 can also be traced back to the same Midlothian descent.

The Pardons of 1488/9 - could the 3 Drydanes be from the Sinclair of Dryden family

Much has been discussed about these three names of John, William and Archibald Drydane, but usually in some attempt to place one or more of them as the ancestors of the continuing Dryden family in the Scottish and English borders in the early 1500s. The prior step however, might be an attempt to link them back to the only known origin of the Dryden family name in Midlothian, and to the Sinclair of Dryden family resident there. For that analysis, the proper context of the pardon should first be examined.

From "The Seventh Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts".

18. "Letters patent of Remission by King James the Fourth, under the great seal, to **William Dowglas of Caveris**, William Dowglas of Denbray, George Dowglas, William Dowglas, Thomas Brown, Patrick Runsyman, Peter Don, **John Drydane, William Drydane, Archibald Drydane**, James Hardy, John Henryson, John Langlandis, Robert Buky, James Buky, Adam Dowglas, David Dowglas, Adam Dowglas, Thomas Patonsoun, James Langlandis of Wiltoun, John Cavihill, John Long in Denbray, William Dowglas in Hornishole, Patrick Camroun, and **Simon Glendunwyn, indwellers within the shire of Roxburgh**, of rancor of heart, **royal suit** and all action which he could have against them **for their treasonable appearance against him** in the field and battle near Strieuelin, on St Barnabas' day last by past, and **for all other crimes and actions done by them to the date hereof, treason against the King's person, murder and homicide committed on forethought felony, from the time of the King's coronation**, excepted; provided they so satisfied parties complaining, and who had suffered loss, that the King should have no just complaint thereanent: taking them under his firm peace and protection, to endure for their lifetimes, and discharging all persons from molesting them under pain of forfeit, or causing their death under pain of loss of life and limbs. Jedworth 10 February 1489."

"Strieuelin" translates into English as Stirling and this refers to the battle near Stirling now known as Sauchieburn on 11 June 1488 - when James III was killed and his son James IV then placed on the throne. There were many pardons later given to those who had legitimately sided with King James III at the battle.

A correction to be made from the earlier article of 2011 is that the phrase "royal suit" appears not to refer to individuals who were members of the royal suit as courtiers or within the royal household. When read in full context it refers to a legal action that might be taken against these individuals for treasonable activities before the time of the new king James IV's coronation. It is an essential part of the wording of the pardon.

The next phrase to consider is “indwellers of the shire of Roxburgh”, as the shortened version of the extract from the Royal Commission’s Report stated boldly that **John Drydane, William Drydane and Archibald Drydane** were “indwellers of Roxburgh”. However, that phrase should be read in the much wider context of the full pardon and of the events and agreements leading up to the battle of Sauchieburn. The 3 Drydanes were pardoned within a group of liegemen and supporters of William Douglas of Cavers, heritable sheriff of Roxburghshire, who together with his main liegeman James Rutherford, had reached an agreement with king James III in May 1488, some months before the battle of Sauchieburn.

Again published in the Seventh Report of the Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts:

“17. Charter by King James the Third, under the great seal, whereby on the narrative that, notwithstanding his well beloved **William Dowglas of Cavers**, in plain and public parliament had surrendered his regality of Caveris and of the tenants and tenantries thereof, and renounced all right and claim of right thereto, from him and his heirs, to remain with the King and his successors forever, nevertheless the King for certain causes now moving him, and for the services to be rendered to him in future by the said **William Douglas** and **James Rutherford of that ilk**, gives, and of new grants to the said William, heritably, all and whole the regality of Cavers and of the tenants and the tenantries, thereof, and all right, privilege, and freedom he had thereto before the resignation. To be held by him and his heirs of the King and his successors in feu and heritage forever.

For which grant and donation the said William has promised and faithfully bound himself to stay and remain with the King, and to take plain part with the King and faithful defence against all that live or die shall; and shall himself **go in proper person with his kindred, men, friends, and partakers, whom he can assemble or raise, ready for the King's service**, without fraud or guile.

If the said William fail in such service, the present charter to be of no force nor effect, because it is specially granted for such service to be rendered. **Also the aforesaid James Rutherford has faithfully promised, for the favour which he bears to the said William Douglas, in like manner to perform his service to the King** and abide with him.

Charging therefore, all Justiciars, sheriffs, and other officers and lieges not to take upon hand to give any hindrance or trouble to the said William or his heirs, in the premises, under all pains they might incur against the King's majesty.

Witnesses, William, Bishop of Aberdeen, chancellor; Andrew, bishop of Moray; John bishop of Lismore; David, Earl of Crawford; Lord Lindesay, great chamberlain; John, Earl of Athole, Lord of Baluan; William, Lord Abirnethy; William, Lord Graham; Alexander, Lord Forbes; William, Lord Borthwick; Mr Archibald Quhitlaw, secretary; Sir Alexander Scot, rector of Wigtoun, clerk of the Rolls and Register. Edinburgh, 24 May 1488.”

The question then arises: were the Sinclair of Dryden family supporters of James III leading up to the battle of Sauchieburn and did they have family connections to Roxburghshire and/or families who held land from Douglas of Cavers and/or Rutherford of that ilk? The answer is an emphatic yes to the first part of that question as the Sinclair of Dryden family had two of its members who were actually in the group of the king's favourites who famously feature in popular historical accounts of James III's unpopularity with his nobles.

- James Chisholm, the son of Margaret Sinclair of Dryden and Edmund Chisholm was a youth who had been made chaplain to the king and in 1487 made Bishop of Dunblane. Margaret Sinclair of Dryden was the sister of Edward Sinclair 2nd of Dryden and aunt to Sir John and William Sinclair of Dryden – meaning that James Chisholm was their first cousin.
- John Ramsay Lord Bothwell, was a step-son of Margaret Sinclair of Dryden (Genealogy of the House of Drummond 1681) from her previous marriage to John Ramsay of Corstoun, and probably illegitimate. Ramsay was a particular favourite of James III and was saved by the King on Lauderbridge ... "when Cocheran, Rogers and Homyll were hanged over the Bridge."

The Sinclair of Dryden family also had family connections to many of the prominent individuals who continued to support James III, something that can be evidenced by family ties both before and after Sauchieburn. Of the Lords that stood by James III, Robert Lord Crichton of Sanquhar was a Crichton cousin; James Stewart Earl of Buchan had a daughter Elizabeth who would later marry Patrick Sinclair of Dryden. Buchan also had a son James Stewart of Traquair who would marry Catherine Rutherford the ultimate heiress of James Rutherford of that Ilk who featured in the agreements just discussed.

The Sinclairs of Dryden were also closely related to the Rutherfords through the Crichtons and Erskines, Lord Erskine being one of James III's supporters killed at Sauchieburn. James Rutherford's wife was Margaret Erskine, whose nephew Alexander 3rd Lord Erskine had married Christian Crichton who was in turn a probable aunt to the Sinclair of Dryden brothers.

David Lindsay 2nd Lord of the Byres also fought by the side of James III at Sauchieburn. The Lindsays of the Byres held lands in Roxburghshire and they were also the superior lords to the family of Ramsay of Pitcruvie and Carnock, which included the Ramsay families of Corstoun and Bangour. Margaret Sinclair of Dryden had married John Ramsay of Corstoun as her first husband and Sir John Sinclair of Dryden's son and heir Edward Sinclair 4th of Dryden married Margaret Ramsay of Bangour, receiving lands in Bangour that retained Lindsay of the Byres as overlords.

Andrew Wood of Largo was Admiral of Scotland and with his ships closely supported James III at Sauchieburn. In 1491 there is a record of William Sinclair of Dryden acting as procurator for Andrew Wood's wife Helen Arnot when lands were resigned and regranted to Andrew Wood and his wife in Largo – NRAS3215/Largo Writs/Bundle 1/4.

Robert Maxwell 2nd lord Maxwell was another strong supporter of James III from the Scottish borders, and from a family with strong ties to Sinclair of Dryden. Lord Maxwell's mother-in-law was Jean Sinclair a sister to William Sinclair 1st of Dryden, and his son and heir John Maxwell had married Janet Crichton daughter of the Earl of Caithness. It was again Sir John Sinclair of Dryden who acted as the Maxwell family's attorney when John Maxwell 3rd Lord Maxwell resigned his position in favour of his son Robert Maxwell 4th Lord in 1513 some months prior to the battle of Flodden. That last Robert Maxwell later married Agnes Stewart, daughter of James Stewart Earl of Buchan and became a brother-in-law to Patrick Sinclair of Dryden after 1520.

Simon Glendonwyn, actually named in the 1489 Pardon together with the 3 Drydanes, was the heir to Glendonwyn, a sept of Douglas who owed allegiance to Douglas of Cavers. He was succeeded by his brother Bartholomew Glendonwyn, whose widow Margaret Gordon of Lochinvar married Patrick Sinclair of Dryden as his first wife before 1509. Margaret Glendonwyn the aunt of Simon & Bartholomew had previously married George Rutherford of Hunthill and was granted Scrasburg in Roxburghshire. Incidentally, since the Glendonwyn family had their main holdings of Glendonwyn and Parton in Dumfriesshire, this effectively destroys the argument that all those listed in the Douglas of Cavers pardon were necessarily "indwellers of Roxburgh". Some were obviously kin and liegemen from outside that county.

There is then, ample evidence of the Sinclair of Dryden connections to supporters of King James III at Sauchieburn, that would be consistent with three members of that family being the 3 Drydanes named within the 1489 pardon.

Further Sinclair of Dryden connections to James Rutherford of that Ilk

James Rutherford of that Ilk who appears with William Douglas of Cavers in the agreements to support James III, died in 1498, and his son and heir Philip Rutherford before him. That left the next Rutherford heir as James' grandson Richard who promptly died in 1500. To more conclusively suggest that the Sinclair of Dryden family had ties of land or kin to Roxburghshire, it should be noted that the jury for the retour of the Rutherford Lordship of 1503 had Sir John Sinclair of Dryden as a member.

A quick explanation of the function of retours is provided by Bruce Durie in his 1816 publication of "Retours of Services of Heirs". A retour was usually conducted by "...a jury of 15 local landholders or other 'upright and faithful men of the country', being summoned by a brieve served on the sheriff or other officer, to convene and hear pleas, to consider any documents provided and to decide who was the rightful heir. These would be **other local landholders**, who knew the place and the family, and **might well include neighbours and relatives.**"

The Rutherford lands were meant to follow the male line but in this case the jury overturned the prior charter of 1491 and gave possession to Richard Rutherford's sister Helen, followed ultimately by her sister Catherine Rutherford who had married James Stewart of Traquair, as previously described.

Then much later in 1551, Edward Sinclair 4th of Dryden sat on the retour of Alexander Lord Home as heir to his father George Lord Home within the Scottish borders. The retour of inquest was made before Mr John Sinclair and Mr John Preston sheriffs of Berwick, Roxburgh and Selkirk. Mr John Sinclair can be identified as John Sinclair of Herdmanston who was actually the step-son of Edward Sinclair of Dryden who had married John's mother Beatrice Renton of Billie in Berwickshire.

While the membership of these retours were often taken from a select group of families whose holdings extended far north of Edinburgh, there always seemed to be some local element in their selection. In the case of the Sinclair of Dryden family, they had many links to the borders through such families as Crichton of Cranston-Riddell, Crichton of Sanquhar, Renton of Billie, Sinclair of Herdmanston, Glendonwyn of Glendonwyn and Maxwell of Caerlaverock in Dumfriesshire.

These many links to the borders answers positively the question of whether the 3 Drydanes of the Douglas of Cavers pardon could have been from the Sinclair of Dryden family. But the subsequent question is whether the 3 "Drydane" individuals can be identified.

The oldest 2 sons of Edward Sinclair 4th of Dryden were John and William, the first of the three names. However, names do run in families and Edward Sinclair did have brothers such as Alexander whose history is unaccounted for in archived documents. Any number of speculative scenarios could be true. For example, Alexander or another unknown brother may have married & moved to Roxburghshire, producing a family of John, William and Archibald. Or the 3 Drydanes might have been cousins from different "Dryden" fathers; or Archibald might even be a mis-transcription of Alexander from the pardon (which probably had contractions of Christian names in the original document).

The most obvious answer is that John and William Drydane were John and William Sinclair of Dryden, since those names can at least be verified as having existed, together with the fact that John Sinclair of Drydane is known to have signed himself as Johannes Dridene in 1521. While there is no documented proof and this conclusion is still based on circumstantial evidence, it still should be remembered that there has been no other family "Dryden" family identified within Scotland at this time. The remaining dispute is about their exact relationship to Sinclair of Dryden.

William Sinclair of Dryden - his documented story

- Second son of Edward Sinclair 2nd of Dryden
- Usher (Ostarius) of outer door of Kings Chamber 1490 & again in 1503
- Tenant of the mill of Culwen Galloway in 1492
- for good services receives land & a house in Edinburgh from the King in 1500
- Usher of the Queens Chamber 1508-1514
- the last record of William in the royal accounts was as usher to the Queen's chamber in 1514

William's influential brothers

Sir John Sinclair of Dryden (the older brother of William Sinclair of Dryden) was high in the esteem of the Scottish Court from 1490. There are reports of him playing bowls with the King - and of him and his wife receiving New Year gifts from the King and Queen. He was known to have travelled to France, held court positions such as Master of Spicery & is famously portrayed in the poem of William Dunbar as "the Queen's knight".

Records of Sir John last until 1513 within the Exchequer Rolls, although from the time of the marriage of King James IV to Margaret Tudor in 1503, Sir John's younger half brother Patrick starts his rise to becoming the Court favourite.

From the early days of her reign, Patrick Sinclair (the youngest half brother of William Sinclair of Dryden) became the confidential envoy and courier for Margaret Tudor, the Queen of Scotland. Patrick was often granted safe passage within England by the Queen's brother Henry VIII - and enjoyed the confidence of that King of England. It is said that when they were in conference, Cardinal Wolsey was required to leave the King's chamber. He later became a favourite of the next king James V and helped him finally gain control of the throne in 1528.

Archival documents show many of the events that Patrick Sinclair was involved in and explain many of his family and political relationships. His story helps to shine some light on what has up till now been the hidden story of his brother William, the usher to the Queen's chamber. The movement of brother William Sinclair to the Queens household before 1508 seems to be a reflection of events that saw the Sinclair brothers being drawn more into the "English camp" during the period of turmoil in Scotland that climaxed in the battle of Flodden and the death of King James IV in 1513.

The death of James IV at Flodden 1513 - & the flight of the Scottish Queen to England in 1515

King James IV of Scotland's will stipulated that his Queen (Margaret Tudor), should become Regent to her young son James V, provided she remain unmarried. Despite suspicions about her English origins the Scottish nobles allowed her to be made Regent, but within a year she had secretly married Archibald Douglas 6th Earl of Angus. When that marriage was discovered, she was stripped of the Regency.

Angus withdrew to his estates in Forfarshire, while the new Regent John Stewart the Duke of Albany arriving from France, besieged the Queen at Stirling, and required her to give up custody of her 2 young sons, heirs to the throne. Queen Margaret was then moved from Stirling to Edinburgh, but on the ground that her childbearing was near, she was allowed to go to Linlithgow, her own residence.

A letter send by Thomas Dacre from Naworth castle on the borders in Cumberland to the English Privy Council dated 14 August 1515 reported that - "Lord Home was fast and sure upon the Queen of Scots party". That confirms Thomas Lord Dacre and the English were involved in a plot with sympathisers in Scotland to assist the departure of the Queen from Scotland.

Margaret wrote a reply sent by her trusted messenger Robyn Carr, outlining her situation and agreeing to the plan. She explained that her friends were kept prisoners and her revenues withheld. In order to reach Blackadder she would pretend to be sick with her pregnancy and would then go to Linlithgow with her husband and take to her bed there. On the first or second night she would come without any company except for her husband and **four or five servants**, and asked that Lord Home meet her two or three miles from town. She required for her convoy "40 hardy or well-striking fellows", she was in good health and strength though so near her confinement.

On 23rd September 1515 Queen Margaret escaped with her husband Angus and her few male servants. They were indeed given protection by Alexander Home the Scottish Lord of the Marches who was antagonistic toward the Regent Albany. He escorted the Queen east to her husband's castle of Tantallon on the coast of East Lothian, and then to Alexander Home's Castle further south at Blackadder. "Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII", Volume 2. edited by J. S. Brewer 2015.

Continuing the journey across the English border from Coldstream Berwickshire, the small entourage was expected and received by Thomas Lord Dacre, the English Warden of the Marches. Dacre's group escorting the Queen stopped at Harbottle Castle in Northumberland rather continuing on to his well prepared & comfortable Morpeth Castle further south. Harbottle is actually well off the direct route to Morpeth, meaning that the poor state of health of the Queen often given as the reason for the detour is not a logical explanation. More likely, Harbottle as a location just 10 miles from the Roxburghshire Border was more suitable for Thomas Dacre's meetings with the Scottish Lords who were antagonistic to Albany the regent of Scotland.

Thomas Dacre and Thomas Magnus wrote to Henry VIII confirming that the Queen of Scots came to Harbottle on the 8th of October and was delivered of a "fair lady" christened the next day. This Margaret Douglas would become the mother of Lord Darnley and the grandmother of James VI of Scotland, later King James I of England.

Lord Alexander Home, the rebellious Warden of the Scottish Marches afterwards continued to work with the English Warden of the Marches Thomas Dacre, to overthrow the Government of the new Scottish Regency of Albany.

The "English Party" among the Scottish Lords

During Queen Margaret's time at Harbottle Lord Dacre hosted a group of Scottish lords who were in rebellion against the Regent Albany. Together they signed a covenant agreeing to free the infant King and to restore Queen Margaret to power in Scotland. Included in the group were the Queen's husband Archibald Earl of Angus, James Hamilton Earl of Arran (a cousin to the King), Lord Alexander Home, William Carmichael and Dan Carr.

James Hamilton who was married to the sister of Lord Home before a final divorce in 1510 would later turn against the "English Party" of Angus, but continued to work against the Regent Albany. Alexander Home was at this time a brother-in-law of Patrick Sinclair of Dryden, they having married the widowed daughters of James Stewart Earl of Buchan after the battle of Flodden. After his execution in 1516, Lord Home's wife Agnes Stewart went on to marry Robert 4th Lord Maxwell.

Dan Carr was presumably Andrew "Dand" Ker of Cessford who was warden of the East and Middle Marches of Scotland in 1515, the son of Sir Robert Ker of Cessford and known to be sympathetic to the "English party". Andrew Ker of Cessford was also married to Agnes Crichton of Sanquhar, widow of George Sinclair heir of Roslin and a cousin to the Sinclair of Dryden brothers.

The risks that came with taking sides in Scottish power struggles were great. For example, Lord Alexander Home was reconciled with the Regent Albany by early 1516, but when visiting Edinburgh in September he was arrested and tried. He was executed on 8 October 1516 in Edinburgh and his head set up on the central Tolbooth building where it stayed for 4 years (Tolbooth was a traditional place for torture and executions overlooking Royal Mile in Edinburgh).

We can conclude that many of the Sinclair of Dryden brothers' acquaintances and relationships overlapped and that they were very well connected to the main "players" on both the Scottish & English sides of the Borders. Significantly, the relationships of Patrick & William Sinclair show them to be allied with the "English" party in Scotland. They supported the Queen & her new husband Archibald Douglas the 6th Earl of Angus – against the "French" party that supported the Regency of the Earl of Albany who was resident in France.

William Sinclair is shown to have been employed within the Royal households for the 23 years from 1490 - and perhaps longer. From 1508 to 1514 he was usher of the Queens chamber - obviously a long serving and trusted Courtier. William Sinclair of Dryden disappears from the records of the Scottish Court after 1514. Given William Sinclair's position at Court & his strong family connections to the "English party", he is likely to have been centrally involved - and may even have been one of the 4-5 "servants" who aided her escape and travelled with her to England.

The English – Thomas Lord Dacre's role and influence

Thomas Lord Dacre, 2nd Baron Dacre of Gillesland, Cumberland played an important role for the English in the battle of Flodden, after which he was awarded further lands around Lanercost in Cumberland. He was born in 1467 probably at Naworth Castle in Cumberland & buried in nearby Lanercost Priory in 1525. At the time of his death in 1525 the Dacres possessed large holdings across Cumberland, Yorkshire, Northumberland and Shropshire. He was Lord Warden of the Marches from 1509-25 and known as Thomas, Lord Dacre of the North.

King Henry VIII certainly relied on Dacre to run affairs in the "Marches" near the Scottish border - and Dacre had become a friend & confidant of Henry VIII. That is well evidenced with Thomas Dacre being made a Knight of the Garter in 1518, not long after the events around Margaret Tudor's flight from Scotland in 1515.

*Thomas Dacre was more than just the local Lord, he was very much involved in the political events between England and Scotland during this period. He was one of the English party that escorted Margaret Tudor to Scotland for her marriage to James IV in 1503, and would have watched Patrick Sinclair's display at jousting as part of those festivities. Again in 1503 **Thomas Dacre** and his lieutenant from Tynedale **Nicholas Ridley** of Willesmontwick witnessed an agreement for the Queen to be given title to the Lordship of Stirling and Stirling castle, accompanied by the signatures of **Sir John Sinclair of Dryden** and his cousin **John Ramsay** of Trarinyeane, Captain of Linlithgow. When King James IV visited Dumfries and the "Western Borders" in 1504 he met with Thomas Dacre again. The two played cards with Dacre winning 46s & 8d from the King.*

Dacre knew the Scottish King well enough to be the one to identify the King's stripped & looted body on the battlefield of Flodden in 1513 and in the years after Flodden he was centrally involved in supporting the Scottish alliances that formed around the "English" Queen Margaret Tudor and her husband Archibald Douglas, the Earl of Angus.

The English influence represented by Lord Dacre operated well into Scotland, as events around Queen Margaret's return to Scotland demonstrate.

After the Scottish Queen's arrival in England, her husband Angus did not travel south with her to London but returned to Scotland & had made peace with the Regent Albany. All of Angus' power, wealth and influence was in Scotland - and to abandon the country would mean possible forfeiture for treason. Queen Margaret remained in London from 3rd May 1516 until 15 May 1517. She then re-entered Scotland on 15 June 1517 via Berwick-on-Tweed and at the first Scottish location of Lamberton she met again with her husband the Earl of Angus. A treaty of reconciliation between the two had been agreed beforehand between the Scottish Regent (the Earl of Albany), Henry VIII and Cardinal Wolsey.

In 1517, Patrick Sinclair of Dryden still has a higher profile than his brother William, appearing this time as Sheriff of Roxburgh in the Scottish Borders and still active under Lord Robert Maxwell, Scottish Warden of the Marches from 1517, his soon to be brother-in-law.

There is continuing evidence of Lord Dacre's involvement in the Queen's financial affairs in Scotland, as seen in a letter he wrote to Cardinal Wolsey from Harbottle Castle near the Border in Northumberland on 5 March 1518. The archives summary of that letter reads - "*Evil treatment of the Queen of Scots: her safe conduct: her plate and jewels in pledge. Renunciation of all right to her property by Angus. Necessity of helping her.*"

However, the English under Henry VIII now moved their support more directly behind her estranged husband the Earl of Angus. The political reasoning was clear enough. After the Queen had realised the extent of her husband's infidelity & his spending of her money - she pushed for a divorce and turned to ally herself with the Regent Albany when he returned from France. Both the Earl of Angus & his uncle Gavin Douglas (an adviser to the Queen) then fled to the "Borders". It is known that Dacre was again involved in providing protection, as Gavin Douglas's death from the plague is recorded at the London house of Thomas Dacre on 19th September 1522.

Patrick Sinclair then became the Scottish Queen's private envoy to Henry VIII over a period of some years and it is well evidenced that Patrick and Thomas Dacre were acquainted.

"During all this scheming a Patrick Sinclair figured conspicuously in the State papers of Henry VIII. The references to him are quite voluminous. There are many letters written to, by and about him in the collection." - The Sinclairs of England - Nathan Augustus Cobb p.373

Dr Magnus the English Ambassador at the Scottish Court wrote to Cardinal Wolsey that Patrick Sinclair is one of the six nobles then wholly devoted as "*right good Englishmen*".

Margaret Tudor wrote numerous letters to her brother King Henry VIII of England, many of which have been preserved. For example, Queen Margaret's letter of about 1520 in favour of Patrick Sinclair of Dryden to Henry VIII of England, part of which runs...

"Wherefore I beseech your grace kindly to be his good prince for my sake, and that you shall give commandment to the Earl of Surrey and the Lord Dacres, that he may be received and well treated in your said realm, if he has need: and this you will do at my request".

These relationships also provide a potentially convincing reason why William Sinclair of Dryden may have been drafted into the service of Lord Dacre. The Sinclair brothers were among many things, educated courtiers and administrators. They were ideally suited and well-connected for carrying out the work of revenue collecting on behalf of the Queen, and the level of that task seems more suited to William, rather than Patrick the diplomat and envoy.

We now have good circumstantial reasons to suppose that William Sinclair (of Dryden) might have transferred to the service of Lord Dacre. But for William Sinclair to be arguably the same man as William Dryden we would need to see corresponding evidence of William Dryden's connection to Lord Dacre in Cumberland - which will be covered later from page 16 onwards.

The appearance of the Drydens in the borders after 1515

This is a new section inserted in an attempt to address some of the (welcome) criticism made of the original paper. In particular there has been an insistence by some commentators that the origin of the Dryden family must have been in Dryden in Teviotdale within the Scottish borders and by other commentators that the Drydens of Cumberland must have their origin in that English county as tenant farmers. An overview of the surviving records might assist with the debate as to whether there were multiple or single origins for the Dryden family - before this paper continues by looking into the origins of William Dryden of Walton, claimed by the Northamptonshire Visitation pedigree to be the ancestor of the Cumberland, Northamptonshire, Yorkshire and Cornwall Dryden families.

*The evidence has already been presented that the only **known** origin of the Dryden family name in Scotland has been from individuals using the territorial designation of “de Dryden” from the location of Dryden on the Roslin estates. From the sub-infeudation of those Dryden estates to William Sinclair 1st of Dryden in about 1415 and the descent of Dryden through his male heirs, the occurrence of the Dryden name in its various forms and designations can be reasonably tied back to his descendants.*

It has already been argued that the 3 Drydanes pardoned in 1489 after the battle of Sauchieburn must have been three of that William’s grandsons, but we were left unsure as to whether any of those three, or any brothers or cousins were residing in Roxburghshire by that time.

The next step is to look at all the “set” of the known records of the Drydens in the borders of England and Scotland between 1500 and 1545, to see if there is any pattern relating to location, family relationships and geographical spread.

In the Scottish borders there are records of a Thomas Dryden witnessing charters from Melrose Abbey from 1534 to 1536. There is no known place of residence for this Thomas Dryden and no indication of his age. The recipients of the grants under the charters however, do give some helpful information.

The first was a charter granting Selkirk lands of Melrose Abbey to the son of John Hall burgess of Selkirk in 1534. The second was as a witness to letters of baillery from the Abbey to Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch in 1535. The third and fourth charters were part of the same grant of Melrose Abbey lands to John Kirkpatrick of Alisland in Dumfriesshire. These charters therefore still give no hint as to the residence of this Thomas Dryden but all of the charters link him directly to families of interest in the Dryden story.

Next are the records from “The Burgh Court Book of Selkirk” that has “David Drydin of wester Selkirk” paying a burgh tax in July 1535, for the first time giving a probable residence of a Dryden individual in the Scottish Borders. The same book then gives a court case held over a number of sessions, that identifies a Thomas Dryden aged 20 in January 1536.

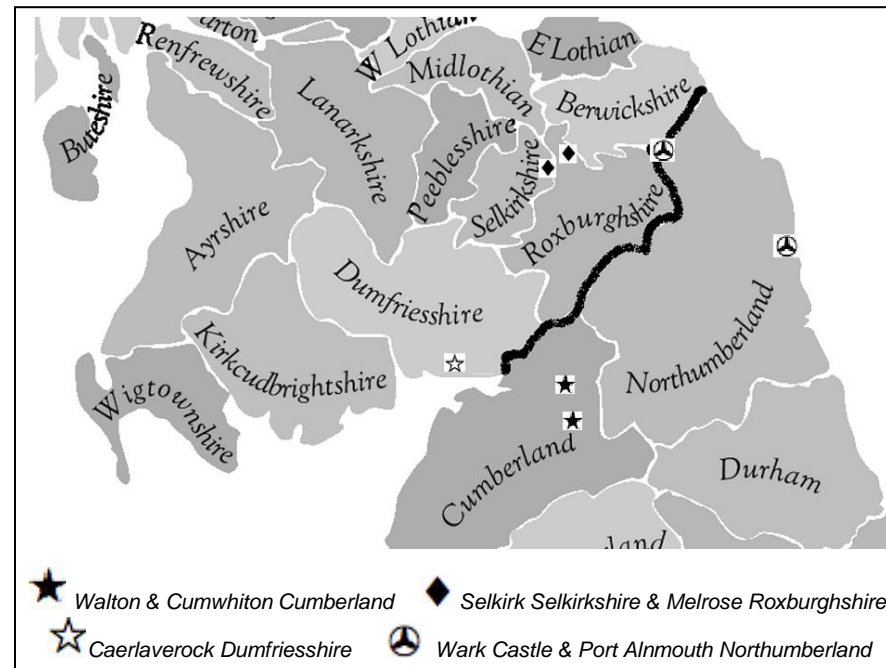
The Selkirk location of these two Drydens gives a hint that they are probably closely related to the Thomas Dryden who witnessed the Melrose Abbey charters, the first of which was granting lands in Selkirk town. But these three (or possibly two) individual Drydens prove to be the extent of known Dryden records in the Scottish borders in our allotted period of 1500-1545.

Next is Northumberland in the English Borders, where in 1529 there are two separate reports of a Thomas Dryden at Alnmouth, a port midway down the Northumberland coast. Thomas Drydon appeared as a creditor in a Norfolk Court case in 1529 where an “attornatus” a collector of fees, was pursuing a debt of £100 each from “John Carr of Bowmer Northumberland gentleman, Thomas Mason of Ailmouth Northumberland Chaplain, William Elder of Lesbory Northumberland yeoman, and Thomas Drydon of Ailmouth yeoman.”

As Alnmouth was a minor port for wool and hides, typically shipping to ports in Norfolk and Suffolk such as King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth or Ipswich prior to wool being shipped on to Calais, we can speculate reasonably that it was tax revenue for the shipping of goods that the attorney was pursuing on behalf of the crown. And while the £100 might have been the amount of a nominated surety, it was still substantial money.

The second appearance of Thomas Dryden at Alnmouth is the well known event of his house being robbed of goods worth 4 merks by a group of rebels under the outlaw William de Lisle.

The Border Counties of England and Scotland



In Northumberland the muster of 1538 then gives us four Dryden names. David Dryden was listed at Wark Castle under the captaincy of John Ker of Hetton with several other Kers named in the garrison. John Ker of Hetton is of interest on several counts – he was a cousin of John Ker of Boulmer the business partner of Thomas Dryden of Alnmouth and his son John Ker of Boulmer later married a daughter of John Ker of Hetton. The Ker of Hetton arms were “gules, three estoiles sable on a chevron argent”, sharing the reasonably uncommon estoiles with the later shield of Dryden of Canons Ashby.

The other Drydens in the 1538 muster were Andrew Driden of Willesmontwick, Richard Driden of Thorngraston and William at Butterlaw – all in the Tyne valley. William Dryden was in 1548 located at Prudhoe with some land holdings, but Willesmontwick and Thorngraston were both in the Haltwhistle Parish which actually borders Lanercost Parish in Cumberland – the distance between Lanercost Priory and Haltwhistle town being only 11 miles, with Walton a further 2 miles from Lanercost. The Riddleys of Willesmontwick among whom Andrew Driden was listed were closely associated with Thomas Dacre and joined him on raids into Scotland.

In Cumberland for this period there is only an extrapolation from the Dryden pedigree of Northamptonshire found in the 1564 Visitation of that county. The pedigree lists William Dryden of Walton in Cumberland, his son David of Staff Hill Cumberland and his grandsons John Dryden of Canons Ashby & Thomas Dryden of Cumwhitton in Cumberland, but no dates are given.

When all these records coming from four border counties are taken together what immediately stands out is a repetition of Christian names in three broad locations. Thomas Dryden at Melrose and David Dryden with a younger Thomas Dryden at Selkirk in Scotland are echoed by Thomas Dryden at Alnmouth and David Dryden at Wark castle in Northumberland; with those two locations matched by David Dryden and his son Thomas in Cumberland. The only names remaining are from the Tynedale group of Andrew, Richard and William Dryden who are clearly associated geographically with the adjoining Cumberland location of William Dryden at Walton.

The evidence of the 1538 names of Andrew, Richard and William NOT being another set of Thomas and David Christian names, is quite consistent with them having been younger sons of William Dryden of Walton. However, it should be stressed that the Dryden family might have arrived in England in successive migrations or even at the same time by a family of brothers or cousins and relationships can't be certain.

But what still needs to be resolved is whether the David Dryden of Selkirk, David Dryden of Wark Castle and David Dryden of "Staff Hill" were perhaps records of the same individual. (A question relevant later in this article). And whether Thomas Dryden who witnessed the Melrose charters was actually the same Thomas Dryden the coastal trader from port Alnmouth in Northumberland, bearing in mind that Melrose Abbey was one of the largest sheep-owners in all of Europe at the time and Alnmouth was a port across a very unsettled border, that shipped wool and hides down the English coast and on to Europe.

*Add into this mix the 1543 record of a Thomas Dryden **esquire** of 6th April 1543 in Betton Strange near Shrewsbury in Shropshire. The Shrewsbury document was about a property dispute with Thomas Dryden esquire being named as one of the arbiters to make a declaration on the ownership of a messuage and curtilage in Altemer near Shrewsbury. The immediate reason for Thomas Dryden's presence and his being named as an arbiter is explained by the document itself, as his listed fellow arbiters seem to be wool merchants. They are listed as "Thomas Dryden Esquire, Arthur Meckewirthe Gentleman, Adam Warying Merchant of the Staple in the Town of Calais and John Aylesbury of Salop".*

Adam Waring of Charlton Hall in Shrewsbury was from a prominent family of wool merchants, a number of whom were merchants of the staple in Calais. The Merchants of the Staple in Calais were a company of traders that held a monopoly of raw wool exports from England, in return for paying taxes. All English exported wool was consequently shipped to Calais. Even before this time Shrewsbury was a collection place for Welsh wool and already had an infrastructure in place for the on-selling of wool and its movement overland to English ports. Shrewsbury therefore attracted wool merchants from all over Europe.

Before attempting to draw a family structure from these sets of Dryden names in the borders it is important to stress that research is still to be done on the early tenancy records in Cumberland to ascertain when the Drydens actually arrived there – or to even find the proof that they were there before 1515 or even the 1488 battle of Sauchieburn.

For the moment there have been NO early records discovered of the Drydens in Stafffield Parish and the records at Cumwhitton so far go back only as far as the will of Thomas Dryden of Cumwhitton in 1571. That will names a Jaffray Dryden who presumably was a cousin and the ancestor of the continuing Dryden line at Walton. In other words, all the evidence to date points to the Dryden family radiating out from a single location of Walton and confirming that William Dryden of Walton was the ancestor of ALL the succeeding Dryden families in Cumberland and perhaps of the adjacent Tynedale in Northumberland as well.

Even Roger Dridon who married in Oswaldkirk Yorkshire in 1539 did so very near to Yorkshire lands held by Thomas Dacre obtained through his marriage to the heiress Elizabeth Greystock including the manor of Henderskelf now Castle Howard.

What can be concluded is that the early Dryden family records from the English borders between 1500 and 1545 show a repetition of Christian names indicating that they were either different records of the same mobile individuals who seemed to be merchants already; OR they were from closely related families who continued to share common Christian names. Either way, it seems inescapable that this group of Drydens from either side of the Scottish border had at the very least, a common ancestry.

William Dryden of Walton & Thomas Dacre of Lanercost

It is recorded in the Northamptonshire visitations that William Driden lived near Walton in Cumberland and that location is confirmed by the continued occupation of Dryden families in various locations in that Cumberland Parish. Walton is a distance of only 2 miles from Lanercost and the Castle of Naworth where the Dacre family was seated.

More evidence has come to light confirming that the Drydens did hold lands from the Dacre family in Cumberland, and it seems that accounted for most of the Dryden holdings. A list of wills and documents from Cumberland has now been obtained and transcribed, giving strong evidence that the Dryden family spread out from the two locations of Walton and Cumwhitton in Cumberland.

[Wills for Thomas Dryden of Cumwhitton 1571, Thomas Dryden of Cumwhitton 1618, David Dryden of Cumwhitton 1664, Thomas Dryden of Cumwhitton 1664 - and Christopher Dryden of Walton 1630, William Dryden of Dovecot Walton 1631, Jeffrey Dryden of Lees Hill Lanercost 1711, Nicholas Dryden of Courtholme Walton 1724 etc ..]

These wills centred on the two initial locations of Walton and Cumwhitton and assist in explaining other records published earlier elsewhere. For example, in the "Naworth Castle accounts of household" under a date of 1619 there is the entry of a first payment of a fine by "David Dryden" to Lord William Howard. A fine is a payment for the transfer or a renewal of a property holding, generally made where the rent is low or minimal.

David Dryden turns out to be a tenant on Howard lands at Cumwhitton rather than Lanercost or Walton, but it still gives hard evidence of the Drydens holding their lands originally from the Dacres - as Naworth Castle and the accompanying Gillesland estates moved from the Dacre family to the Howard family in 1560. David Dryden was in fact the great grandson of David Dryden of "Staff Hill" and part of the continuing Dryden family line at Cumwhitton until the 20th century. See his father's will of 1618 above – another Thomas Dryden of Cumwhitton.

A description from Bulmer's "History, Topography and Directory of East Cumberland" of 1884 gives describes the possession of Walton leading up to the probable lifetime of William Dryden and his sons.

"The Manor of Walton formed a portion of the Barony of Gilsland, and was given by Robert de Vallibus or Vaux, second baron, to the Abbey of Lanercost, which he had founded. It continued in the possession of the priory until the dissolution of that house; and in 1543, the manor of Walton, along with the other domains of the late abbey, was granted to Thomas Dacre, Esq., afterwards Sir Thomas Dacre, Knight, an illegitimate son of Thomas Lord Dacre of the North. It continued in the same family until 1789, ..."

The mention of David Dryden of Staff Hill in the Northamptonshire Visitation and Pedigree of 1564 presents a mystery as Staff Hill is normally identified with Staffield (earlier Staffol) but nowhere yet is there to be found evidence of any Dryden land holdings in the manor of Staffield. Both of David Dryden's sons John and Thomas were later found in possession of land and tenancies in the different manor of Cumwhitton some distance to the north of Staffield, the two being separated by other manors such as Armathwaite and Croglin. By 1603 David's grandson Thomas Dryden of Cumwhitton (son of Thomas) held at least two tenancies in Cumwhitton village totalling 25 acres with a house and yard facing the green and substantial grazing rights on the common.

David's grandson Erasmus (heir to John Dryden of Canons Ashby) was certainly still in possession of Cumwhitton land holdings that he granted to his cousin Thomas Dryden in 1592, described as: "...all that farm and tenement in the tenancy and occupation of Humprey Byrde, yeoman, situate in Cumwhitton and also "Ffyshgarth Holme" in the parish,... now, or lately in the tenancy of Anthony Skarowe, of Skarowe Hill,..."

Cumwhitton manor was in the barony of Gillesland held by Thomas Dacre and in the later Gilsland Estate Records of 1603 those two properties can be identified as 20 acres of Fishgarthholme tenanted by Robert Scarrow and probably the 21 acres named as half of Peteworth or Holmwrangle tenanted by William Bird. Fishgarthholme was next to the River Eden adjacent to the Scarrowhill tenancies and Petewarth was further south on the river adjacent to Hornsby village.

Of interest from the 1571 will of David's son Thomas Dryden was rent for mills at Scaleby and Gamelsby to be paid to Christopher Dacre of Lanercost, the son of the illegitimate Thomas Dacre of Lanercost who had been granted the Walton Manor, as above. Christopher Dacre also held the sub-manor of Hornsby within Cumwhitton Manor. Scaleby Manor was north of Cumwhitton and just west of Walton, while Gamelsby was west again of the city of Carlisle. Recall too that Walton manor after 1542 was also held by Christopher Dacre's father Sir Thomas Dacre of Lanercost.

Given that John Dryden of Canons Ashby had known tenancies held from the Dacres within Cumwhitton Manor that he had further tenanted, and his brother held other tenancies there, it is probable that David had been William Dryden's oldest son and had retained the superior title to all of the Dryden lands and tenancies in Walton and Cumwhitton. But because of some lands being re-tenanted by John Dryden of Canons Ashby, there will be no way of ascertaining the true extent of the Dryden family holdings in Cumberland, which now appear to have been substantial.

The evidence is now watertight regarding the Dryden family holding tenancies from the Dacre family in Cumberland, but there is also a suspicion emerging that the Drydens may have gravitated after 1542 toward the new illegitimate branch founded by Sir Thomas Dacre of Lanercost. That branch of the Dacres were more ardent protestants (as were the Drydens) compared to the Catholic stance of the main Dacre family line.

The Nicholson absence & other heretical theories

Some of the previous points now can be pulled together to make further observations about the date of the Dryden family's arrival in Cumberland and their relationship to the Dacre family. Previously the possibility was countenanced that David Dryden of "Staff Hill" in Cumberland might well have been the same man as David of Selkirk in 1535 and even David Dryden of Wark Castle in the Northumberland muster of 1538. The presence of David Dryden of Cumberland being at Wark Castle at that date presents no real problems. If he had been a liege man of William Lord Dacre at that time, he would have held tenancies in Cumberland that required military service and the Dacre family was heavily involved in English defence of the borders, even commanding the English military effort at times.

However, If David Dryden of Cumberland was also David Dryden in Selkirk in 1535 with his 20 year old 2nd son Thomas, it would throw out all the chronology supplied by the Northamptonshire Dryden pedigree that claims a Cumberland marriage to Isobel Nicholson of Staff Hill probably before 1520. It is here that can be raised an almost heretical theory but one that rests on more than a handful of unusual co-incidences.

There were Nicholson families to be found in Stafffield Manor, but so too were there Nicholsons in Cumwhitton and any number of other nearby Cumberland manors. It was a common Cumberland surname of the time, but the exact location of Staff Hill and its Nicholson family in Cumberland are yet to be identified. It is only the Northamptonshire Visitation that says they were in Cumberland and notable instances of fraudulent pedigrees in the English Visitations do exist. An English location for the Nicholson family and marriage just might be one of those fraudulent entries.

On the other hand, the circumstantial evidence to support a Nicholson marriage for David Dryden in Scotland is substantial. It might be dismissed as being proved wrong by the Visitation pedigree, but the possibility needs to be considered. For example, it seems possible for William Sinclair of Dryden to have relocated to England or even the Scottish borders in 1515 when the Queen of Scotland his employer fled across the border. Thomas Dacre met the Queen and her entourage and was in the business of supplying land to influential Scotsmen opposing the Regent. But at that date William Sinclair's oldest sons would have been of a marriageable age and may already have been settled in Scotland. That would leave William to resettle his younger children in the English borders and for himself to join Thomas Dacre's network of Scottish agents. And who knows - there may already have been others of the extended Dryden family already settled in the borders of either country?

Not only was there a Nicholson family of Aberdeen and Edinburgh already related to the Sinclair of Dryden family, but the head of the family was named William Nicholson, as was Isobel Nicholson's father in the Dryden pedigree. The Nicholsons in Scotland were a merchant family, as were the Drydens of Canons Ashby and Port Alnmouth in England, giving a credible explanation for the start of the Dryden family wealth through a Scottish merchant apprenticeship for the young John Dryden of Canons Ashby.

Sir John Sinclair of Dryden's family at Dryden itself, saw a marriage of his son Edward to Elizabeth Henryson and 2 of his grand-daughters to further Henryson husbands. Helen Sinclair of Dryden married Dr Edward Henryson and on her death in 1569 he remarried to Helen Swinton, producing a daughter Elizabeth Henryson. That Elizabeth married John Nicholson an Edinburgh attorney who completed the purchase of the Dryden estates in 1591. And yes, he was also a descendant of William Nicholson in Scotland. Improbable coincidences all round.

Not only were the Nicholson family merchants who were trading with the Low Countries, but the Henrysons who intermarried several times with the Sinclair of Dryden family in the mid 1500s were also burgesses & provosts of Edinburgh, as well as merchants trading with the Low Countries in Europe. In 1541 James Henryson was in Brussels as negotiator for Middelburg to Edinburgh trade and in 1555 Conservator for Scottish Privileges in the Low Countries, and in 1554-1560 he held trade negotiations with Hamburg and Denmark.

The heresy continued – with treason to boot

The possibility has just been explored that William Dryden's oldest sons David and Thomas may have been active in the Scottish borders; David up to about 1536 based in Selkirk, and Thomas working in the smuggling of Scottish goods (wool and hides?) from the great southern Scottish sheep owning Abbeys in Scotland through the English ports of Northumberland. But what would then cause David Dryden and his family to abruptly leave the Scottish borders and move to Cumberland to join the rest of the family in the English borders?

*It is speculation on top of heretical theory, but there **were** significant and related events of about this time, and William Dryden of Walton's death may have been another. If he was the same man as William Sinclair of Dryden he may well have lived into the 1530s as his older brother Sir John Sinclair of Dryden died at Dryden in 1535, and his youngest brother Patrick died in 1545.*

There was too, the start of the dissolution of the monasteries in England in 1536, an event that would start to privatise the wealth of the monasteries and open up chances to acquire vast wealth for those who bought assets cheaply and for the merchants who facilitated the looting.

Another significant event of this time that may have impacted on the Dryden family was the destruction of the Dacre communication network among the lairds within the Scottish borders. Up to this point William Dacre the son of Thomas Dacre had been very active on the border on behalf of the King, having been Captain of Norham Castle 1522-1523 and Warden of the West Marches, 1527-1534.

Then in 1534 William Lord Dacre, was sent to the Tower of London and faced charges of treasonously making deals with the Scotsmen Robert Charteris laird of Amisfield, Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch and Lord Robert Maxwell of Caerlaverock.

Remarkably, the Dryden family can be connected to all four of these individuals in various ways, suggesting that they too may have been part of the "Dacre network". The Dryden holdings from the Dacre family in Cumberland are already well known, but a room in Canons Ashby House displaying the arms of many related families also has the Dacre arms and crest prominently displayed. The Dacre arms appear to be elevated to the same status as those of Dryden, Cope and Raleigh, the other three Dryden ancestral families, a fact usually explained by the Nicholson family having acquired no arms in England before the time of the painting of the room before 1580.

Next to the Dacre arms in the top row of panels in this Canons Ashby room are the arms "argent a fess azure". Although there might have been heraldic charges upon the fess, now destroyed, those plain arms are those of Robert Charteris of Amisfield in Dumfriesshire Scotland, not far from the Scottish border. There is still doubt over the identification, but they appear to be the arms of the laird named in the Dacre treason case.

Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch, also a part of the Dacre network of border lords, was the same Walter Scott who had his letters of baillery from Melrose Abbey witnessed by Thomas Dryden in the next year of 1535. [A later document of 1574 also concerning baillery at Melrose Abbey for a later Walter Scott was witnessed by Ralph Dryden a merchant from Kelso Roxburghshire, gives firm evidence of a continuing family relationship.]

Sir Walter Scott was then accused in Scotland of assisting Lord Dacre and warded in Edinburgh on 19 April 1535 and released sometime before 13 May 1536 – a period during which Thomas Dryden was his witness at Melrose Abbey. Those Scottish events occurring at the same time as the breaking up of the Dacre network in the Scottish borders by the English. William Dacre was acquitted of the charges against him, although he suffering setbacks and a substantial fine.

If David Dryden of Selkirk in July 1535, David Dryden of the English border castle Wark in 1538 and David Dryden of Cumberland were all reports of the same man, it would constitute a record of his movement from Scotland to England accompanied - with a possible explanation for that move in the breaking-up of the "Dacre network". It would also confirm the Dryden family merchant activities on either side of the border.

The 4th individual in the treason case Robert Lord Maxwell, was also from Dumfriesshire, being the Scottish warden of the marches, prominent in the Scottish court and the brother-in-law of Patrick Sinclair of Dryden at this very time. Both Robert Maxwell and Patrick Sinclair of Dryden are mentioned in the National Dictionary of Biography in its entry on king James V of Scotland when describing the overthrow of the Douglas family by James V in 1528 (Angus being Archibald Douglas the 6th Earl of Angus, the Scottish Queen's second husband):

"On 2 Sept. a parliament, from which Angus and his friends were absent, forfeited the estates of the Douglasses, and revoked all gifts made during the domination of Angus." "Lord Maxwell, provost of Edinburgh, and Patrick Sinclair, a favourite of James, were sent on an embassy to England. Summonses were also issued to all the lieges to attend the king and proceed against Angus."

The Social Status of the Drydens in Cumberland

Leaving aside the speculations and theories of a Dryden migration from Scotland to Cumberland, there has long been speculation that the Drydens were tenant farmers in Cumberland for many previous generations and that their sudden wealth came from John Dryden's marriage to Elizabeth Cope and his consequent inheritance of the manor of Canons Ashby. It is a theory that has been around for a long time and has been taken to task by much more authoritative writers and historians.

As far back as the Baronetage of Arthur Collins dating from 1720 there have been attempts to dispose of a number of these dogged myths about John Dryden's origins, wealth and family. Collins thought the strange theory of John Dryden as a schoolmaster who married his student Elizabeth Cope improbable, as no school was recorded at Ashby-Canons and it was unlikely in his view "...that Sir John Cope would have married his daughter to a person in low circumstances".

Collins was clear also "...that the bulk of Sir John Cope's estate descended to Edward his grandson, who in the third year of Charles I (1607) died seized of the site of the monastery, and a large share of the monks possessions in Ashby, which he left to Erasmus his son and successor."

On the third point of John Dryden's financial situation, Collins wrote that the legacies in his will showed "...that Mr Dryden must have been a man of substance himself, independent of the fortune brought him by his lady." Collins then explained that "Sir John Cope had no estate in Adston, and yet Mr Dryden died seized of one hundred and twenty acres of arable land there, sixty acres of meadows, one hundred acres of pasture, ten acres of wood, and forty acres of heath, besides messuages, tofts, dovecots, gardens, and orchards, all which, we have seen, he left to one of his younger sons"

NB: From the 1584 will of John Dryden those Adston lands were first left to his wife, most probably having been assigned to her originally as a marriage settlement. On the death of Elizabeth Cope in the same year, they fell to John's son George Dryden of Adstone and on George's death in 1603 to the next surviving son Thomas Dryden of Cornwall (the family of this article's author). Thomas then mortgaged much of his land holdings back to his oldest brother Sir Erasmus Dryden of Canons Ashby, lands which were apparently soon lost to the Cornwall family.

Having confirmed that John Dryden was already a wealthy merchant when he arrived in Northamptonshire prior to 1550, it is also easy enough to utilize the information from the 1564 Northamptonshire Visitation to discover that the Dryden family in Cumberland had other links to the gentry. John Dryden's sister Isobel was presumably married before her brother and judging by his activities John did not himself marry at a young age. Isobel married Thomas Warwick of the Warwick family in Cumberland who had been gentry for many generations and displayed a coat of arms. A quick study of the Warwick family tree finds details that fit well with the Dryden Cumberland migration from Walton to Cumwhitton.

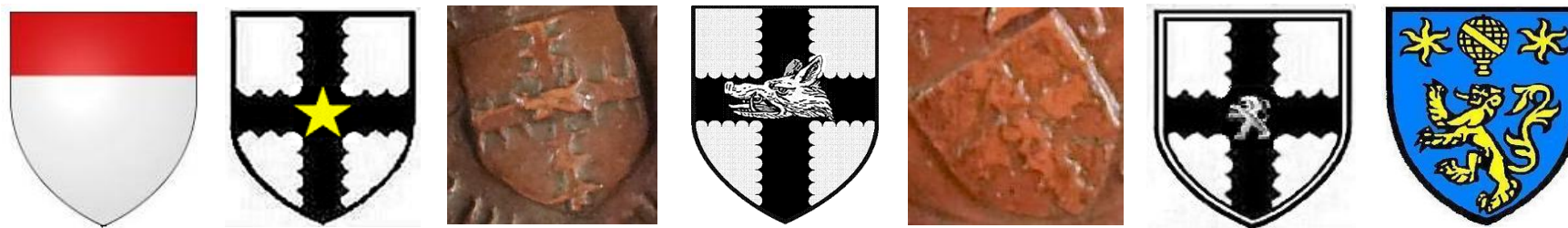
Thomas Warwick's mother would have been Anne Salkeld from Corby Castle which sits in Great Corby, the next village to Little Corby and very near to the hamlet of Warwick, itself just north of Cumwhitton. Anne Salkeld's mother Jane Vaux was the only child and heiress of Roland Vaux of Triermain in the Lanercost parish, the last of the male line of that family. The de Vaux family actually owned the barony of Gillesland before the Dacres and the two families were earlier intermarried.

Just from that brief glimpse of the wider Dryden family in Cumberland it is possible to discern social connections to the gentry and to the Dacre family itself, all from events that must have occurred before John Dryden married into the Cope family of Canons Ashby in 1550. To those events might be added the record of Thomas Dryden **esquire** among prominent wool merchants near Shrewsbury in 1543, predating John Dryden's marriage by 7 years. All this doesn't rule out that the Drydens were originally tenant farmers in Cumberland, but it does point to their apparent wealth, social status and merchant activities before 1550, back into the time of David Dryden and the previous generation of the Dryden family.

The origin of the Dryden of Canons Ashby Coat of Arms

One of the frequent criticisms of the theory that the Drydens were descendants of the Sinclair of Dryden family is that the Dryden coat of Arms in England bears no resemblance to the Sinclair arms in Scotland. It is a criticism made without knowledge of the actual arms of the Sinclair of Dryden family who were a cadet of Sinclair of Roslin, and of the Scottish heraldic custom of differencing arms for each individual in the family.

It can be established from seals of the Sinclair of Dryden family that individuals placed a maternal difference upon the Sinclair engrailed cross. There is also the suspicion of a border being used and different colours were known to be used for further differencing. There was also a common Scottish practice of new cadet lines from younger sons setting up their own coat of arms, often by combining charges from the shields of parents and even grandparents. The Dickson family is a good example where charges from the arms of Douglas and Keith were used to form a new Dickson shield. Other new shields such as that of Lord Sinclair chief of the family from Roslin, is listed in David Lindsay's armorial of 1542 as "argent, a chief gules", which differs entirely from the original Sinclair engrailed cross. Oliver Sinclair of Roslin a third son of William Sinclair 3rd Earl of Orkney added the maternal different of a "mullet or" (a gold star) from the Sutherland arms, a variation that became the Sinclair of Roslin arms until 1672.



- (1) Lindsay's Armorial of 1542 Lord Sinclair – "argent, a chief gules". (2) Lindsay's Armorial of 1542 Sinclair of Roslyne - "argent, on a cross engrailed sable a mullet or".
 (3 & 4 reconstruction) NAS GD18/429 of 1496 seal of Edward Sinclair 2nd of Dryden – "a boar's head centred on an engrailed cross". See page 4
 (5 & 6 reconstruction) NAS GD18/429 of 1496 seal of John Sinclair 3rd of Dryden – "a lion rampant centred on an engrailed cross with a border all around". See page 5
 (7) 1564 Visitation of Northamptonshire Dryden of Copes Ashbie "Azure a lion rampant and in chief an armillary sphere between two estoiles or"

Referring back to page 4 & 5 of this article the seal of Sir John Sinclair 3rd of Dryden has been found to display a lion rampant centred on the engrailed cross of the Roslin Sinclairs (presumed to be the lion rampant from the maternal Crichton family). The colours are unknown and may have been changed for individual sons of that generation, but it is a fair bet that William Sinclair of Dryden being of the same parentage, would have displayed a variation of the same shield. In other words, it is highly likely that William Sinclair of Dryden and John Dryden of Canons Ashby both displayed a lion rampant at the centre of their shield.

In following the Scottish custom of utilizing maternal differences, identifying the wife of William Sinclair of Dryden might just provide the heraldic clue to unraveling the origins of the Dryden coat of arms. If perhaps she was from the closely related Ker of Cessford family on the Scottish border and if David Dryden took charges from the shield of the Kers, it then becomes significant that their Northumberland liegemen the Kers of Hetton had replaced the usual mullets (stars) of the Kers in Roxburghshire with estoiles, the same charges to be found on the Dryden shield.

The connection to the Kers of Cessford is not an idle one, as in the 1538 muster of Northumberland David Dryden is listed among the garrison of Wark Castle captained by John Ker of Hetton, a declared liegeman of Ker of Cessford just across the border. Thomas Dryden of Alnmouth had another Ker cousin John Ker of Boulmer as a business partner and Thomas & Ralph Dryden settled with land and houses in Kelso town (1567 Kelso Abbey survey). Given also that Agnes Crichton the lady of Cessford at this time was also a Sinclair of Dryden cousin who first married George Sinclair the Roslin and then Andrew Ker of Cessford (killed 1526), the Dryden connections to the Kers are many and significant.

Nothing is certain about the origin of the Dryden arms of course, but it is erroneous to say that the Sinclair of Dryden arms and the Dryden arms had nothing in common. The lion rampant ubiquitous in Scotland, was at the centre of both.

The Canons Ashby House display of Arms and Emblems

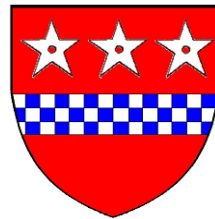
Mention has already been made of the arms of Dacre and Charteris at Canons Ashby House, uncovered by the National Trust and dated from the illustrated emblems and commemoration of family marriages to 1575—1580. In the Winter Parlour, now renamed as the Servants Hall, the decoration of the main panels include arms of many families related the Drydens and the Copes of Canons Ashby.

Then on door panels and window surrounds a small group of less well preserved and perhaps older arms have been found. Lindsay of the Byres in Scotland is the only coat of arms positively identified (illustrated next page), but that is an identification resisted in some quarters with unsuccessful attempts still on-going to find a local English family with the same arms. Then there is a coat of arms displaying three white flowers “three cinquefoils argent”, but on a shield that has lost its colour. Obviously darker than the white but unconfirmed as to whether it was red, blue, green, or yellow (black is unlikely over the remaining outline). There are other arms too, but mere shadows caused by different hues of paint.

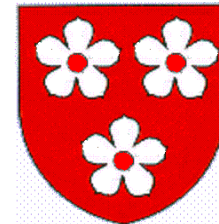
If the Dacre arms represented a superior land-holder in Cumberland, then perhaps that is the same explanation for the Lindsay of the Byres arms in Scotland? The Sinclair of Dryden family did hold the lands of Bangour in Fife from the Lindsay of the Byres as the superior lord, although the other explanation of being related by marriage might also hold, For example if William Sinclair of Dryden had indeed married into the Ker of Cessford family, his wife would have had ancestors from both the Lindsay of the Byres and Douglas of Cavers family and possibly held lands from both within Roxburghshire. In other words such a marriage might solve a multiplicity of questions about the Dryden activities within the Scottish borders from the Douglas of Cavers pardon of 1488 to the Kelso residences of the Roxburghshire Drydens in the 1560s.

The identification of the white cinquefoils as part of the Hamilton shield is still in dispute, because the shield's colour has been removed, and because the Hamilton family were Scottish and not English. However, for the moment the only identification for any of this set of arms **is** Scottish.

William Sinclair of Dryden's brother Patrick who was active in cross border affairs had one illegitimate son who married William's own step-grand-daughter Isobel Hamilton of Innerwick. William's only two grand-daughters Marion Hamilton and Isobel Hamilton then married respectively James Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh (the assassin of the regent James Stewart in 1570) and David Hamilton of Monkton Mains. Meaning that there would be plenty of "Dryden" family reasons for the display of the plain Hamilton arms from Scotland.



From Canons Ashby House: Lindsay of the Byres
"Gules, a fess chequy argent & azure, in chief 3 mullets pierced argent"



From Canons Ashby House: Unidentified, perhaps Hamilton (right)
"Gules, three cinquefoils argent"

The Masonic Symbols at Canons Ashby House

Yes, we might as well plunge in and mention the word *Masonic*, even though in a technical sense these symbols are merely consistent with Masonic symbols and not necessarily a remnant display from a Masonic lodge of before 1580 in England. It is indeed a slippery subject to make much comment on.

The style of this decoration tends to tie it to the other older "Scottish" panels just mentioned, having bold lines bordering the illustration that are similar and they are in the same room. To suggest that these illustrations might also have a Scottish provenance is actually in accord with history that does propose that English Masonic lodges found their way south from Scotland.

Was this an early Masonic lodge, used by the masons when constructing Canons Ashby House between 1550 and 1580? If so, was it merely an "operative" lodge for the masons themselves or had it already developed into a "speculative" masonic lodge open to all "freemen"?

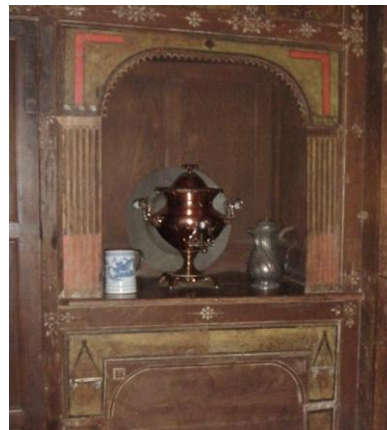
Since the date of 1580 is 137 years earlier than the foundation of the United Lodge of England, these many questions remain unanswerable for the moment. However, the elephant in the room is the contemporary 16th century situation in Scotland where the Sinclair of Roslin family had been accepted as patrons of the Masons. The evidence that connects the Sinclair family to the masons of Scotland is in the form of the "St Clair Charters", the first of which dates from about 1601 and still exists. Albert Gallatin Mackey in his book on *The History of Freemasonry* (1906) writes:

"The words of the first charter, literally translated from the Scottish dialect of the original, are as follows:

'We, Deacons, Masters, and Freemen of the Masons within the realm of Scotland, with express consent and assent of William Schaw, Master of Work to our Sovereign Lord, forasmuch as from age to age it has been observed among us that the Lords of Roslin have ever been patrons and protectors of us and our privileges, likewise our predecessors have obeyed and acknowledged them as patrons and protectors, while through

negligence and sloth the same has past out of use. . . . We, for ourselves and in the name of all our brethren and craftsmen, consent to the aforesaid agreement and consent that William St. Clair, now of Roslin, for himself and his heirs, shall purchase and obtain, at the hands of our Sovereign Lord, liberty, freedom, and jurisdiction upon us and our successors, in all times coming, as patrons and judges to us and all the professors of our craft within this realm, . . . so that hereafter we may acknowledge him and his heirs as our patron and judge under our Sovereign Lord, without appeal or declination from his judgment, and with power to the said William to depute one or more judges under him, and to use such ample and large jurisdiction upon us and our successors, in town and in'country, as it shall please our Sovereign Lord to grant to him and his heirs.' ”

As Mackey points out, it was the masons themselves who had the further tradition that one of the Scottish Kings prior to James VI (who ruled 1567-1625) had by letters patent granted the lords of Roslin the patronage and protection of the craft in Scotland. Note that these traditions don't claim that the St Clairs were grandmasters or that the masons themselves were anything other than “operative” masons working at their skilled trade. In a nutshell, the evidence of the Sinclairs of Roslin as patrons of the Masonic craft can't be traced with much certainty back before the year 1600, although the tradition does tie in with the great building program of William Sinclair 3rd Earl of Orkney who started the Roslin chapel in 1446, made additions to Roslin Castle and reputedly constructed Roslin town for his workmen. Stone masons aplenty at Roslin.



*The alcove in the Servants Hall at Canons Ashby House surrounded by symbols (enlarged, right) consistent with Masonic practice:
Setsquares, Compasses and the Pillars of the Temple*

These “Masonic” symbols from Canons Ashby are not at all conclusive in themselves but taken together with much other evidence of Scottish arms and Scottish connections in Cumberland, the likelihood of the Dryden family descent from Dryden in Midlothian Scotland receives a little controversial support. For the moment these symbols are for academics an intriguing co-incidence rather than firm evidence of a connection between the Sinclairs of Dryden and Dryden of Canons Ashby.

However, it is interesting to contemplate that Sir John Sinclair of Dryden together with his brothers, including William and Patrick were raised at Dryden House that looked southward directly towards the Roslin Chapel as it was being built on a hill less than a mile away.

Summary

All the historical evidence from Scotland now points towards the Dryden family name having its origin as a “personal territorial designation” in the form of “de Driden”, utilized by individuals who were of or from the family resident at Dryden House on the Sinclair estates of Roslin near Edinburgh. As family names came into use after about 1450, some individuals from this same residence had their names converted to plain “Dryden” after they had moved a distance from Dryden itself. Laurence de Driden is the best proof of that change from a “territorial designation” to a family name. Before 1450 his name was recorded in Scottish documents as “Laurence de Driden”, and after 1456 as Laurence “Dryden”. His only daughter Agnes then carried on her life as Agnes Dryden.

If indeed the Dryden name came from Dryden on the Roslin estates of the Sinclairs in Midlothian Scotland, and the Drydens of the Scottish and English borders were descended from that family, the options for the origins of the Dryden family in Cumberland narrow considerably. In that case William Dryden of Walton must have been a grandson of William Sinclair 1st of Dryden (c.1485-1468) but there is no certainty as to his father. William of Walton is also likely to have been the Dryden migrant to England, with the further possibility that he may have been granted lands in Cumberland that were then taken up by his younger family while he remained within the Scottish borders. However, it cannot be ruled out that there were multiple movements of various Dryden family individuals from Scotland to England before 1550.

In reality there is much speculation arising from circumstantial evidence but no firm story about the origins of the Cumberland Drydens. Research will still continue into the holdings of tenants in the manors of Walton and Cumwhitton in Cumberland in the hope of finding earlier records of the Drydens, as far back or even further than David Dryden who is named in the Northamptonshire Visitation pedigree of 1564.

Significantly, that same pedigree is the only source documenting the names of William Dryden of Walton and his son David Dryden in Cumberland. However, that family structure fits well with the later Dryden expansion from Walton, although it does leave the discovery of the Nicholson family’s location of “Staff Hill” in Cumberland as one of the many mysteries still to be resolved.

From the historical records of the Drydens in the borders, the Dryden family spread out from three counties; from Walton and Cumwhitton in Cumberland; from the adjoining Tynedale in Northumberland; and from Kelso further into Roxburghshire and to the ports of Berwick-on-Tweed and Fisherrow near Edinburgh in Scotland.

For those attempting to trace the Dryden origins by way of male line DNA descent, be careful in arriving at conclusions. From investigations to date, the smaller branch of Dryden of Canons Ashby including the descendants in Australia and New Zealand, no longer have the original male line DNA – documented as being replaced by at least 5 new male lines. The Drydens from Cumwhitton in Cumberland have a documented family tree from before 1550, but are also likely to show multiple male lines when more widely tested. For the Drydens from Tynedale who expanded out to the Northumberland coast and down to Durham and Yorkshire, it is reasonable to suspect there will be many new additional DNA male lines discovered. Scotland will also produce another group of DNA male lines from similar and various “non parental events”, adoption and illegitimacy. And unless there is a sudden match to another Scottish family of known early origins and documented descent, it may prove impossible to select which among all the various Dryden male DNA lines is the oldest and original. It may even have died out.

The information provided in this article is extracted from the book “Dryden – the History and Mysteries of a Family Name” by Brian Lawrence Dreadon first published in 2013, with a much revised, updated and expanded 3rd edition available during 2018.