

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR IN SCOTLAND

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The presence of Members of the Order in Scotland from 1128 appears to have been to recruit Scots for their service, and if we are to judge by the positioning of the Templar houses, then the country must have provided a rich haul of fighting men. It is suspected that, following the purge on the continent, the knights who came to Scotland assisted Robert the Bruce during the wars of independence. It is clear that, prior to 1307, the forces of the Scottish King suffered a series of defeats at the hands of his enemies. He had been thrashed decisively by the MacDougalls in the west of Scotland, and went into hiding. Despite this, after a short time he returned to do battle again with the MacDougalls, and inflicted on them so sound a defeat that he never feared them again, and being a generous victor, he found that they themselves formed reliable troops under his command. After 1307 the times saw a great reversal in the King's fortunes as the tide of battle turned in his favour. Also, during these years he held a Parliament at Ardchattan, said to be the last such gathering where the proceedings were conducted entirely in Gallic. Could the King have arrived at some accommodation with the Knights of the Temple at this Parliament?

In 1309, at the Pope's insistence, an Inquisition was held at Holyrood, to which the Templars were summoned to appear to answer the charges of heresy and disloyalty brought against them. In the event, only two of the Templar knights appeared, the rest having scattered rather than face the Inquisitors. The two who appeared were Sir Walter de Clifton and Sir William de Middleton. Whatever might have been the result of the action, there is no record of punishments being awarded. The knights who disappeared are reputed by some authorities to have joined the Rebel bands of Robert the Bruce, though many historians refuse to accept this. According to the 'Manuel de l'Ordre du Temple' (Paris, 1823), King Robert the Bruce formed a new order for these knights, its ceremonies being based on those of the Templars. The reference does not give a name to the new body, but there can be little doubt that in this story we find the origins of the Royal Order of Scotland, a Masonic body. The Manuel uses these words:- 'Après la mort de Jacques de Molay, des Templiers Ecossoise etant devenus apostats, a l'instigation du Roi Robert Bruce, se rangerent

sous les bannieres d'un nouvel Ordre institue par ce Prince, et dans lesquelles receptions furent basses sur celles de l'Ordre du Temple.'

1314 brought Robert the Bruce's great victory at Bannockburn, and the mysterious Gillies' Army. According to Bishop John Barbour of Aberdeen, who in 1375 wrote his long epic poem on Robert the Bruce, the Scottish Army was winning the day against greatly superior numbers, when the yeomen, swains and camp-followers of the Scottish army resolved to assist the main force. Barbour says they were 15000 strong, and that they fashioned banners from sheets and long poles before advancing to the field of battle. He states that the English were so unnerved by the sight of this host that they fled the scene. Suspicious points in this version of events are:

1. 15000 appears a most unlikely figure for the baggage train
2. Why should the baggage train join the army on this one occasion?
3. The English forces were experienced in war, and would have known exactly the position of the Scots baggage train, which would have caused them no problems by advancing,
4. The 'banners' would have conveyed no information, and would have had no effect on the English morale.

It is much more likely that what struck fear into the hard-pressed English was the sight of the red cross banners of a Templar force of knights and foot soldiers. Such a force could have come from the north, via Fintry, to join the Scottish army. The Templars were feared as possibly the world's most competent fighting force, and the sight of such a body would have been truly terrifying to a force already faring badly.

This latter view of the event tends to be confirmed by the action of the successor to Jacques de Molay, Grand Master Larmenius, who, in 1324, excommunicated the Scottish Templars because they had disbanded rather than face the Inquisition, and, more importantly, they had 'bathed their swords in bloody Bannockburn.' The document of ex-communication ended as follows: 'Ego denique fratrum Supremi Conventus Decretoe supremo mihi commissa auctoritate, Scotos Templarios ordinis desertores, anathemate percussos, illosque et fratres sancti Johannis Hyerosolymae, dominorium militae spoliatores (quibus apud Deum misericordia) extra girum Templi, nunc et in futurum, volo, dico, jubeo.'

It is difficult to deduce why Larmenius waited so long after the battle before taking action, but at some date Robert the Bruce had held a Parliament at Ardchattan (the last Scottish Parliament where the proceedings were conducted in Gaelic) and it is possible that one item of business referred to a contract between Bruce and the Templars. A few years earlier, Bruce had been defeated by the MacDougalls, yet here he was holding a Parliament in what had been one of their strongholds, having inflicted on them such a defeat as to have destroyed their power permanently. If these speculations are correct, it gives added strength to the argument that without the assistance of the Templars, Bruce might well have lost his cause, in which case the whole history of Scotland would have been vastly different.

Very few of the Knights Templar are named in Scottish Historical records. Two have already been mentioned in connection with the Inquisition - Sir Walter de Clifton and Sir William de Middleton. At an earlier date two knights of the Order appeared on the Ragman Roll - Sir Brian de Jay and Frere Johanne de Sautre. The entries read:- 'Brianus, Preceptor Militiae Templi' and de Sautre is described as 'Mestre de la Chivalerie del Temple in Ecosse'. Sir Brian de Jay was renowned as a doughty warrior, but whilst assisting the English against Wallace at Falkirk, he was killed by the Scottish hero, who struck him with one blow of the broadsword. Johanne de Sautre was obviously from the great mediaeval hospital at Sutra (on the A68, near Fala). This project was run by the Cistercian Order, the land having been gifted to the Order by the St. Clairs and others.

Possessions held by the Order in Scotland included Ballantradoch in Midlothian, Aggerstone in Stirlingshire, various lands in Glasgow, Mary Culter and Aboyne on Deeside, Inchinnan in Renfrewshire, Kirkliston in Midlothian and St. Germans in East Lothian. Whilst these places can be described as the principal Templar houses in Scotland, there is evidence that they held small tracts of land throughout the kingdom. For example, as recently as the 19th century, a woman of Kinghorn, Fife, having got herself seriously into debt, gained entry into a Templar tenement in Kinghorn, there claiming sanctuary from her creditors. It is perhaps more than coincidence that during the 18th century a similar right of sanctuary was extended to all debtors who, avoiding their creditors, were able to enter the outbuildings of the Palace of Holyrood which stood between the palace and the foot

of the Royal Mile. William Tytler, the balloonist, chemist and writer was one of the well known figures to take advantage of this.

This particular study of the Knights Templar in Scotland came about by accident. In 1997 the Past Masters of the Masonic Lodge of Glasgow Kilwinning, No.4 on the Roll of Grand Lodge, invited me to study the history of their Lodge with a view to assessing the part it played in the development of the city during the 265 years of the Lodge's existence (which anniversary it attained in April, 2000). From the Lodge records, allied to those of the Merchants' House, the Society of Procurators and the books of sundry authors, it soon became apparent that members of the Lodge had not only been concerned in every aspect of the city's development, they had taken leading parts. The results of the investigation affecting Freemasonry itself has been partially published in the pamphlets entitled 'News from the sign of the Globe'. These notes are in addition to those pamphlets, dealing with the Templars and matters affecting them. These latter must include the relationships, overt and covert, between the Templars and the Freemasons. The Various mediaeval chivalric Orders each erected its own churches and offensive or defensive fortified buildings. The outstanding difference between the Templars and the other Orders lay in the fact that the Templars employed their own masons. In the North of Scotland the St. Clairs played a significant part in the erection of monastic buildings and churches, their name being well known among the masons and highly respected. William St. Clair, builder of Roslin Chapel, is said to have been appointed Head of all Scottish Masons by his King, but there are no records to prove this. The rules governing modern day freemasons were laid down in 1717 by James Anderson, Aberdonian by birth, but an English Freemason, in his Book of Constitutions. The volume purported to give a general history of Freemasonry and it set out the general roles covering the Craft and the Lodge.

It was not until 1804 that Scotland first produced its own version of the formation of Freemasonry and the rules governing the Freemasons. Publication of Alexander Laurie's 'Freemasonry' in 1804 marks the first conscious step towards modern St. John's Masonry in Scotland and the similar, though with marked differences, system adopted in England. Perhaps this title, 'St John's Masonry' is worthy of examination.

It is interesting to note that neither Bro. Alexander Lawrie, Grand Secretary in 1804, nor Brother David Murray Lyon, Grand Secretary at the end of the 19th. Century, set down on paper their thoughts as to the connection between Freemasonry and either St. John the Baptist or St. John the Evangelist, yet one or both of these Saints was mentioned in Masonic rituals. Today the Saints are mentioned in few Lodges, most of these being in the west of Scotland, though the two Saints' Days are invariably the dates of Installation. We still hear that Freemasonry is dedicated to the Holy Saints John, one reason given for this being that St. John was the patron saint of the Operative Masons. St. John the Evangelist was also the patron of the Templars (the poor Knights of St. John and the Temple of Jerusalem). It could be argued that the Masonic attachment to St. John was passed to the Craft by the Templars. It has been said that the Templars employed their own masons, in which case it would be no surprise that they had passed on that attachment to their followers.

Since the formation of the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1736 there has been a succession of stories and theories connecting the birth of Masonic philosophy with the demise of the Templar Order, and of Templarism. Official Masonic histories of the 18th and 19th centuries based their ideas of the origins of masonry on the "historic" account given in Anderson's Constitutions (1717). This account is a highly imaginative piece of writing, but only during the 20th century were there Masonic historians who were prepared to suggest other versions. Before 1736 many Scottish Freemasons were aware that other systems of masonry existed in Europe. Indeed, some of the degrees of those systems were being worked by Scottish Lodges from very early days, so that one of the reasons for the formation of a Grand Lodge in Edinburgh might well have been to bring some form of regularity, or constancy into the rituals of the Lodges. It cannot be denied that, as soon as it felt sufficiently strong, the Grand Lodge engaged on a campaign to prevent the daughter Lodges from working these extraneous degrees. The struggle lasted until the 1890's when the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter (of the east of Scotland) united with that of the Grand Council of Rites (in the west) to form the current S.G.R.A.C. of Scotland which exists today. The Grand Lodge today rules the degrees and ceremonies of St. John's Masonry (i.e., the first three degrees, the Mark and the ceremony of Installed Master). Each of the other Further Orders recognised by the Grand Lodge has its own governing body. To push home the Grand Lodge's opinion of these further Orders it is

a rule that at each Installation Ceremony the Aims and Relationships of the Craft shall be read aloud. These include the phrase that 'The Grand Lodge of Scotland does not recognise or admit the existence of any superior Masonic authority, however styled'.

The popular theory today of the origins of the Masonic Lodges, is that they came from the old Incorporations of Trades. Two Lodges immediately coming to mind are the Lodge of Edinburgh, Mary's Chapel and the Lodge of Glasgow St. John, No.3 bis. The Lodges of Operative Masons came from these Incorporations, and it has been accepted generally that, in general, this theory was correct. However, in 1996, at the request of members of the Glasgow Kilwinning Lodge, No.4, I accepted an invitation to examine the history of the Lodge with a view to assessing the Lodge's effect on the development of the city of Glasgow. As the Lodge was formed in 1735, it was felt that the first part of the project should deal with the period 1735 to 1775, and the results have been published by the Lodge under the title 'News from the Sign of the Globe'. The results were astonishing for it became apparent that in every aspect of the city's growth and development, the members of the Lodge were not only involved, but played leading parts. By far the overwhelming number of members during the years under review were of the merchant class, and reference to the records of the Merchants' House of Glasgow showed that the mercantile members of the Lodge were also well established, and active, in the Merchants' House. The Glasgow tobacco merchants, designated the "Tobacco Lords" were members of the Lodge almost to a man. Their successful takeover of the Tobacco trade from England was due to a number of factors, one of which was the new ethos they brought to the trade. They built warehouses, in the tobacco states of America, in which they stored goods to be traded for tobacco. As they purchased tobacco, this also was stored in the warehouses until ready for shipping to Europe. Thus, from the time it was purchased and taken into storage, the Scottish traders were responsible for the material. When dealing with the English, the growers had to be content with receiving payment when the tobacco was landed in England. Small wonder that the Glasgow merchants fared so well. The merchants were responsible for setting up a number of Banks with their headquarters in Glasgow, and we find that in the past the Templars used the same method for trading 'their Banking operations were established in Lombardy, their trading bringing great wealth to the Order. Professor T. Devine, in his excellent book on the Tobacco Lords, states that they used some of their profits for the purchase of

estates, the possession of land being the first rung on the ladder into 'society'. Having access to the minutes of the Lodge, I was able to draw up a list of members and their estates. These lands could, in some cases, have been inherited. A list of the members and their estates is given as an Appendix at the end of this paper. Further examination showed that nearly all these estates had belonged to the Templar Order in earlier years. Reference to the early minutes of the Merchants' House showed the 18th century merchants to be descended from merchants of earlier days, and reference to the Diocesan Registers of Glasgow showed that the same families had held power and wealth since the early 15th century. The earliest entries in the Minute Books of the Merchants' House included a set of Biblical rules to govern all dealings.

Little can be found of the Templars after 1317, the Order having seemingly melted away in Scotland. There never were many Knights in the country, but there must have been large numbers of their followers. Is it possible that the more senior, or erudite of their followers could have blended into the populace and become merchants?

We have stated that most of today's Masonic Lodges are considered to have been developed from the old Lodges of Operative Stonemasons, but there are specific exceptions to this general theory, Lodge Glasgow Kilwinning, No.4, being one of the more noticeable, most of its membership from its founding in 1735 until 1775 being drawn from the Glasgow Merchants' House. At the Foundation Meeting of 1st April, 1735, the Chair was taken by John Anderson, subsequent events showing that, at least until 1935, the members of the Lodge thought that Anderson was Master of the Canongate Kilwinning Lodge in Edinburgh. This Lodge, formed in 1677 from Operative Masons, was Chartered in that year by the Mother Lodge of Kilwinning in Ayrshire. In fact, he was the Master of Lodge Kilwinning Scots Arms, a purely Speculative body, which was formed in Edinburgh in 1729, and Anderson himself was a Merchant in the Capital. It had always puzzled me that the Glasgow Kilwinning Lodge, absorbing into its own name that of the Ancient Mother Lodge, had selected to chair its Foundation meeting the Master of a Speculative Edinburgh Lodge. If they had been chaired by Patrick Montgomerie, Master of Kilwinning, they would have been inferring some degree of allegiance to the Mother Lodge. If they had selected the Master of Canongate Kilwinning, they would, in view of the relationship between that Lodge and the Mother Lodge, have been able to fend off any accusations of disloyalty

to Kilwinning, had they been made. Why, then, did they select a Speculative Mason from Edinburgh? It appeared to me that this choice was no accident, and that these Freemasons were making a statement concerning their origins - that they were from the Merchant Class and had no connection with the artisans. Nevertheless, they demonstrated their feelings towards the Operative Lodges by exercising great benevolence towards indigent members of the latter. This acceptance of responsibility was accepted from the earliest days of the Lodge.

This fierce pride in their origins was displayed also when the Grand Lodge decided to number the Scottish Lodges according to seniority. Many errors were perpetrated, and although there are now few arguments on the subject, even today many Lodges can be said to have been numbered incorrectly. However, Glasgow Kilwinning fought long and hard for the number 4, to which she was not remotely entitled, though she was successful eventually. The figure 4 is also part of the logo of the Merchants' House which reinforces the theory that the Lodge was determined to demonstrate its origins. (Note. The figure 4 was used by Scottish Merchants as a mark of ownership from the 13th century, and its use was adopted in several European countries.)

The independent attitudes of the Glasgow merchants, their business methods, the close relationship between business and religious faith, together with their unique attitude towards Freemasonry all lend colour to the theory that among the merchant class Templar methods and traditions held important places.

It is impossible to maintain any line of thought on the possible connections between the Templars and Freemasonry without taking into consideration Roslin Chapel, erected during the fourth decade of the 15th century by William St. Clair of a Templar family. This ornate, yet beautiful chapel, situated close by the castle at the head of Roslin Glen, south of Edinburgh. This chapel is a mass of intricate carvings said to shield many mysteries, and is a practical exposition of Euclidian geometry. There are numerous stories of buried treasures - the Holy Grail, the Ark of the Covenant, religious scrolls from the Holy Land, all these have, at one time or another, been said to have been buried there, together with quantities of gold, silver, etc. If we are to believe the first written description of the chapel, by Father Hay, circa 1447, the depth below ground reached by the foundations is equal to the external height of its

soaring arches. Theories abound that the hidden secrets of the Templars, and of the masons, are hidden in the intricacies of the carvings.

The principal Templar Preceptory in Scotland was at Ballantradoch (Arniston) in Midlothian, which was also the first land to be granted to the Order (by King David I) who appointed the Templars as 'Guardians of the Royal Morals'. David was a religious man whose personal ambitions to join the Crusades (possibly with Hugh de Payen) had to be subjugated to the needs of his kingdom, and it may have been that, by showing favour to the Templars, he was making some recompense in exchange for his inability to go to war in the Holy Land. Other Preceptories and Templar Houses followed (many have been named earlier in this article), but authorities agree that, at any one time, there were few Templar Knights in Scotland. Why, then, did they require lands and houses? To answer this question it is necessary to look towards Europe, and towards France in particular. Since the early 8th century, when Scottish troops were recorded as serving in the army of the Emperor Charlemagne, the Highland warriors had built up a considerable reputation as fighting men. There is today a general inclination to dismiss the importance of the Auld Alliance by viewing it as a convenient accommodation between two countries which had a common enemy - England. Such an attitude, however, ignores 700 years of history of Scottish soldiers fighting in the continental armies. At least one Scottish historian writing in the press, ascribed the beginning of the Auld Alliance to circa 1429, when Sir John Stewart of Darnley and Sir Hugh Kennedy of Ardstynchar were assisting Jeanne d'Arc at the siege of Orleans, and in the battles which preceded that event. It is important to remember that Sir John Stewart of Darnley was of the Blood Royal, being very closely related to the King of Scots. Moreover, his estates lay around Inchinnan in Renfrewshire, the centre of a Templar area. It is certainly possible that his involvement in French affairs had its roots in Templarism.

The site of the Templar Priory at Inchinnan now lies within the boundary fence of Glasgow Airport at Abbotsinch, but the few graves of Knights that existed there were moved some time ago into the close proximity of the new Church in the village itself. There are indications of Templar buildings in the surrounding areas such as Houston, Johnston and Kilmacolm. A small Templar (?) Church existed at Barrochan between Houston and the Clyde, but there are few traces of it left, though

the churchyard of Killellan Kirk has a Templar gravestone reputed to have come from Barrochan.

In 1905, Rev. Robert McClelland, Minister of Inchinnan, wrote a book 'The Church and Parish of Inchinnan', in which he states that Inchinnan was the province of St. Conval, first Archbishop of Glasgow, who established Christianity in the parish between 593 and 606 A.D. He says the lands of Inchinnan formed one of the numerous grants which the Stewarts obtained from the King of Scotland before their own line became royal. King David I conferred the lands of Inchinnan on Walter Stewart in 1158. Walter was the High Steward Of Scotland and in 1158 Malcolm IV confirmed by Charter the rank and lands conferred on Walter by David I. During the reign of Robert I, Walter gave some valuable parts of the property to Sir Walter Hamilton, ancestor of the Dukes of Hamilton but early in the 14th century the remaining lands were bestowed on the Stewarts of Darnley. In 1361 Sir John Stewart of Darnley resigned certain lands, including Inchinnar to Robert, the High Steward, who became Robert III. In 1511 James IV granted Inchinnan to Lord Darnley and eventually it came into the possession of Esme Stewart, Lord d'Aubigny, son of that Sir John who had fought so valiantly for Jeanne d'Arc.

Rev. McClelland says that the banner of the Templars was called 'Beauseant' and carried the motto 'Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed tuo nomini da gloriis', 'Not unto us, O' Lord, not unto us, but to thy name be the glory'. He says also that the destroyers of the Order were probably also the destroyers of its records. Certainly in Scotland their most enduring records are in the names of the places they held.