

# Transactions

OF THE

## BANFFSHIRE FIELD CLUB.



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THURSDAY, November 18, 1886.

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MEETING AT BANFF.

THE monthly meeting of the Club was held on Thursday evening—Rev. James Davidson, president, in the chair.

After routine business,

The Rev. WILLIAM TEMPLE, St Margaret's, Forgue, read a paper on

FRENDRAUGHT.

After quoting Dr Arthur Johnston's line, 'Tristis et infelix et semper inhospita Turris,' Mr Temple proceeded to notice at length the successive members of the knightly house of Ferendrach or Frendraught of Frendraught. The earliest mention of Frendraught is about 1203, when Michael de Ferendrach appears as witness to a charter by William de Lyon. Successive notices occur in 1257 and 1286. On 17th July 1296 Duncan de Ferendrach and Eve, wife of Malcolm de Ferendrach, swore fealty and did homage to King Edward I. Duncan was in high favour with Edward, and was knighted by him, and was appointed one of the Council of thirteen by whom, along with a Viceroy, he proposed governing Scotland. Sir Duncan married Marjory, daughter of Gilbert de Glencarnie, a property in the neighbourhood of Castle Grant, and obtained from his father-in-law the eastern davate of Abernethy on Spey. According to Dr Stuart, Sir Duncan left an only daughter, Margaret, who married James Fraser, believed to have been brother of Sir Alexander Fraser, Chamberlain of Scotland, and the youngest son of Sir Andrew Fraser, the Sheriff of Stirling, in 1293. He fell at the battle of Hamildon hill. He was succeeded by his son Sir James Fraser, an impression of whose seal remains attached to the Act of Succession to the throne, March 1371 at the coronation of Robert III. He was succeeded by his son, another James Fraser, who is styled James Fraser Dominus de Frendraught. The lands next passed to a lady, Matilda Fraser; it is uncertain whether she was daughter or sister of Thomas, Lord of Frendraught. She married Alexander Dunbar, second son of John de Dunbar, Earl of Moray, and was succeeded by her son, James Dunbar of Frendraught, who succeeded his cousin, Thomas, as third Earl of Moray. He was twice married, and his daughter, Lady Janet, by his second wife, was married to

Sir James Crichton, Lord Chamberlain of Scotland, who got the lands of Frendraught with his wife.

*The Crichtons.*

Mr Temple gave at length an account of the tenure of the Crichtons in much the same terms as his chapter in his popular brochure on the families of Forgue, published in 1881. He has made some important additions, the paper he was reading being designed as a portion of the large work on which he is engaged on the district of Formartine.

*The Burning of Frendraught.*

Mr Temple gave a full narrative of this incident, the theme of popular ballads, and subject of much judicial and historic inquiry. To the very clear narrative he gave in his already published work, Mr Temple added an interesting account of the fatal quarrel and fight between Crichton of Frendraught and Gordon of Rothiemay, which preceded the burning of the tower. This account is from a MS. of considerable authority now in the possession of Mr C. Elphinstone Dalrymple of Kinellar Lodge. The quarrel arose about some marches on the Deveron. The statement is as follows:—

‘William Gordon of Rothiemay, finding Frendraught’s party too strong for him, he was reasonably adverse to go out to encounter them; but his lady insinuated, if he did not go, it would be a reflection on his honour. This, if it were true, was but bad counsel, and inadvisedly offered. Rothiemay upon this goes out with only ten of his menial servants mounted on horse, and engages Frendraught and Banff, and being overpowered with numbers, his horse is killed under him and falls on the ground with his rider. In the fall Rothiemay’s helmet went off, and ere he recovered himself he received his death wounds in the head, notwithstanding of which he gets hold of a firelock, and with one shot he killed one Adam Gordon of Frendraught’s party, and wounded some others, fighting courageously till he got another horse, which he mounted and made an honourable retreat, and comes home with his servants to the House of Rothiemay, and seeing his lady, tells her he had faced Frendraught, and called for a drink to his servants, who had behaved themselves as became them, and desired his piper to play, and with his servants he danced round about the hall, and having lost much blood, and finding himself faint, he desired his lady to make his bed, and told her he would never rise again in life’—which was the case. He died soon after.

James, the fourth and last Viscount Frendraught, had a very extensive estate. It contained a large portion of Forgue, with Conveth or Inverkeithney, and Aberchirder. An Act passed November 17, 1641, for the purpose of confirming the Frendraught family in their various possessions, enumerates the following possessions:—‘All and hail the lands and baronies of

Frendraught; the burgh and barony of Forgue, lyand in the Sherriffdom of Aberdeen; the lands and barony of Mellairs and Forgendinny, in Perthshire; the lands and town of Polquhynsie and Conzie; the Temple lands of Frendraught, and the office of heritable baillie thereof; the lands and barony of Kinnairdie, with the hail particular towers thereof; also, the lands and barony of Nedderdail, with the hail particular town and lands of ye samen; all and hail ye lands of Pittendreich; all and hail the land scheaves of ye foresaid lands lyand within the parish of Aberchirder and Sherriffdom of Banff; also the lands and barony of Fiddes, comprehenden ye particular town and lands lyand within the Sherriffdom; all and hail the town and lands of Turtories, the lands of Ardfour, with the mylne—mylne lands and sequels of ye samen; also, the lands of Auchinachie, &c., with the pertinents lyand within the Sherriffdom of Banff; also, they possessed the vicarages and advowsons of Forg and Conveth or Inverkeithney, to all of which parishes they presented communion plate"—the only memorials left them in the district where they were for so long lord's paramount.'

*The Morisons.*

After the burning of Frendraught, the Crichtons were long harassed by the Gordons, and their property dissipated. Within fifty years, scarcely a remnant of it was left. In 1647, a disposition was made of nearly all the lands above mentioned. They were purchased by the Rev. George Gregorie, Drumoak, ancestor of the learned and famous family of that name. The price was 59,560 merks. On 21st July 1677, David Gregorie, son of the Rev. George Gregorie disposed a large portion of these estates, including 'all and hail the Mains of Frendraught, the tower and fortalice of Frendraught, &c., &c., to George Morison of Bognie.' This George Morison disposed them, on 5th November 1678, in favour of Christian Urquhart, widow of James 2nd Viscount Frendraught, and married her the same year. The male line of the Crichtons came to an end in the person of Lewis, who succeeded 1686. He took part with the Stuarts, and was attainted in 1690. The widow of the 2nd Viscount was liferenter of the greater portion of the dominical lands; and after the attainder of the last Viscount, she came into possession of them. She and her husband, George Morison, lived in great state at Bognie House.

Besides two daughters, they had one son, Theodore, who succeeded to Bognie and Frendraught in 1699. Theodore married a daughter of Sir Charles Maitland of Pittrichie. They had two sons. The eldest, Alexander, succeeded to Bognie and Frendraught. George, the younger, was laird of Haddo, in Inverkeithny, and married Miss Abercromby, daughter of General James Abercromby of Glassaugh. They had one daughter, Mary Morison of Haddo. After Mr George Morison's death,

his widow married Robert Duff of Loggie, Vice-Admiral of the Red. Admiral Duff had been previously married, and by his first wife (Lady Helen Duff, daughter of the first Earl of Fife), he had a son, Colonel Duff of Fetteresso, who married the said Mary Morison of Haddo, and had issue Robert Duff of Fetteresso, Arthur Duff of Glassaugh (who took the name of Abercromby), Adam Duff of Woodcote, and Thomas A. Duff, who succeeded his mother in Haddo.

Alex. Morison, the fourth of Bognie and third of Frendraught, married Catherine, daughter of John Duff of Culbin. He had four sons, the eldest, Theodore, who succeeded. The second, John Morison of Auchintoul, Cobairdy, Drumblair, &c., succeeded his brother Theodore in the estates of Bognie, Frendraught, and Mountblairy. The third son, George, died unmarried. The fourth son was James of Strawberry Vale, Finchley, celebrated as the Hygeist. Theodore (the eldest of these four sons) died unmarried in 1834. He was, as just mentioned, succeeded by his immediate younger brother, John, who died in 1835. John had married Miss Fraser of Strichen, and he was succeeded by his only son, Alexander, whom many living in the North will well remember. Mr Alexander Morison, who was a member of the English bar, and was long vice-lieutenant of the county of Banff, married Jessie, daughter of Garden Duff of Hatton. Dying in 1874 and leaving no issue, the succession opened up to his cousin, Alexander Morison, son of Mr James Morison of Strawberry Vale, above mentioned. This gentleman died in 1879, when he was succeeded by his brother, John Morison, whose death on the 9th inst. and his succession by his son, Major Morison, of the Royal Scots, was chronicled in last *Journal*. We have given a mere outline of Mr Temple's narrative.

#### *Portraits at Frendraught.*

In the House of Frendraught there are several portraits of interest. There are portraits of George Morison of Bognie, who in 1678 purchased the lands of Frendraught; also one of his wife, Christian, Viscountess Frendraught; also a portrait of their son, Theodore Morison.

There are three, however, of considerable interest—two said to be by Jameson the Scottish Vandyke—portraits of Sir James Crichton of Frendraught and his wife, the Lady Elizabeth Gordon, so cruelly suspected of burning Frendraught in 1630. The other is a portrait of the Admirable Crichton as he was generally called. He was a relation of the Frendraught family, though in what degree cannot now be easily traced. He was one, not the least memorable of the band of literary knights errants, in the 16th century, who made Scotland celebrated throughout the world. His knowledge of languages and sciences was truly wonderful, so that he received the name of the 'Admirable Crichton.' His father was

Robert Crichton of Ellich, a property which was made over to him and his son James out of the wreck of the Bishopric of Dunkeld, by the celebrated Bishop Crichton, of Dunkeld, who in a controversy with one of his vicars said, 'that he never knew anything of the scriptures of the Old and New Testament in the original tongues; but thank God, he had got on very well without them!'

Robert Crichton of Ellich, his father, was Lord Advocate of Scotland during parts of the reigns of Queen Mary and her son, James VI. His son James was born 19th August 1560. In 1570, he went to the University of St Andrews, where, on the 26th March 1574, he took the degree of M.A. In 1577, he went to France, where he is said to have distinguished himself by his skill alike in literature and arms. He is said to have gone to Italy in 1580, arriving at Venice before the close of that year. On the third of July 1582, he is said to have met his death at the hands of his own pupil, under circumstances of romantic interest, in Mantua.

There are several portraits of the Admirable Crichton, and at a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries, held in Edinburgh some years ago, these were exhibited, and the conclusion come to by the meeting was that of the various portraits, after careful examination, the best judges have pronounced in favour of that of Fren-draught.

#### *House of Fren-draught.*

There is no record of at what period the house of Fren-draught was modernised. The old tower has disappeared, and the only remains of the ancient erection are some buildings at the south-east wing and the lower apartments of the house. Several trees are of great size and age in the policies, some of which had been planted by the Crichtons.

#### *Fren-draught Well.*

The deep draw well of the ballad stood at the close in the back. According to a writer in the *Banffshire Journal*, this well was cleaned out in 1811 or in 1812, and keys were found. Were these the keys with which the 'vengeful dame' locked the doors on her guests in the ill-fated tower? A pump has now been placed in the well.

#### *The Moothill.*

At the east-end of the house of Fren-draught is a small tumulus, not unlike a barrow of prehistoric times. No explanation of it can be given, but it is not unlikely that it may be the Moothill, the place of the assembly of the vassals, where cases of importance were tried by the chief, and justice administered, such as it was in these days of blood and rapine. A similar mound existed near Ellon, called the Moothill or Earlishill, where the Earls of Buchan were invested in the earldom, and where they held courts four times a year.

*Raich Hill.*

According to a chronicler of the last century, on this hill stood the gibbet, half-a-mile north from Fren-draught on which many suffered; and a little below the Bridge of Forgue are to be seen the graves of a gang of gipsies who suffered death by drowning. According to tradition, another gibbet stood on the hill of Comisty. The chronicler alluded to adds, 'The Lords of Fren-draught were severe justiciaries within their own regality.' If so, there may have been need of two!

*Archæological Remains.*

Near the farm of Wardend there are the remains of a stone circle; also another on the farm of the Raich, both in fair preservation. One upright stone and a large Cromlech remain on the farm of Westerton. Likely there had at one time been other stones, but they had doubtless been utilised in building, and have long since disappeared. A rocking stone called the 'Bowand Stane' at one time existed near the farm of Westerton, but its rocking has long since ceased, having been smashed and done for.

There is a Roman Road mentioned by Colonel Shand as leading by Fren-draught to the Marnoch ford. This is probably the one that leads from Fren-draught to Forgue by the west side of the Raich Hill.

In the View of the Diocese a chappel near Bognie is mentioned, but there are no remains save 'Umbra nominis' in the name of Chappel Park. On the farm of Woodside, about a mile west of Fren-draught, on a rising ground, there is seemingly the remains of a Forse. It is semi-circular in form, and according to the information of the tenant of the farm, a similar one about thirty years ago existed on the rising ground on the opposite side of the valley. They were both probably used in defending the raids upon Fren-draught, which were frequently made from Bainshole.

*Pennyburn.*

This at the beginning of last century was a small separate estate occupied by James Spence. On it there are the remains of a mansion house of very substantial masonry. It seems never to have been finished. According to one tradition it was built by George Morison. The Viscount Fren-draught, notwithstanding the sale of the lands, still retained some interest in Fren-draught, and it was not till the death of the last Viscount that the Morisons got full possession of the mansion-house. The last Viscount dying while the house of Pennyburn was building—after his death it was not required, and a stop was thus put to the building of it. This is a tradition, and a probable explanation of the building never having been finished.

*Bognie House.*

The part of it now remaining is used as a farm house. It was built by the first Morison of Bognie. It is

surrounded by some fine old beeches. Two or three old Scotch firs near the turnpike are of great beauty. It has near it a fine old garden, which, according to a well grounded tradition, was laid out and stocked with fruit trees, under the advice of Linnæus, the famous naturalist. The garden at Haddo was laid out, it is said, also under similar auspices.

#### *Conzie.*

A little to the west of Bognie House stood Castle Conzie, the materials of which had doubtless been used in building Bognie House and that of Pennyburn; but there are not left so much as the indications of the site. 'Seges ubi troja fuit.'

A family, however, of considerable importance, for nearly 200 years flourished here—the Dunbars of Conzie.

#### *The Communion Cups of Forgue.*

There are three chalices and two patens belonging to the Parish Church of Forgue, presented in 1633 by the Crichton family.

On both the large chalices is the inscription:—'Giftit to God and to his Church be James Creichtoun of Fren-draught. To the Kirk of Forgue, 1633.'

The basin or paten, which measures 13 inches in diameter, is of beaten silver, having the Crichton Arms engraved on a boss in the centre, with the following inscription round the edge:—'Giftit. To. God. and. his. Church. of. Forgue. by James, Viscount of Fren-draught.'

There are the letters J.R. on the chalices—the initials of an Edinburgh silversmith of the day—while the letter G is that of the tradesman by whom the plate was assayed. The marks on the basin indicate that it is of foreign work. The form of the chalices is not unlike a champagne glass—a form common enough at the period, but which did not continue long in use. They are, however, not only interesting as specimens of the ecclesiastical taste of the day, but more so from their probable connection with a striking incident in the history of their donor. According to Dr Stuart, the offering of the chalices was a thank offering. There is no doubt the tragedy of the fire prompted him to the acts and the sufferings which he endured; while the elevation of his son to the Peerage may have led the son to follow his father's example when he presented the silver basin. Sir James Crichton, at the same time, made a like gift to the neighbouring parishes of Inverkeithney and Aberchirder.

#### *The Burgh of Forgue.*

In a deed of sasine, of date 1612—one of the two deeds of the Fren-draught property preserved from the burning in 1630—there is the erection de novo of the Burgh of Forgue. 'De novo, ereximus feemus, constituimus et creavimus, burgum de Forg,' with the entire houses, buildings, gardens, tofts, crofts, pendicles, and all things belong-



ing into a free burgh of barony, in all time coming to be called the burgh of Forgue. The said James Crichton jun de Fren draught, and his heirs, male and assignees, had the power of creating free burgesses ('Liberos burgenses'), bakers, braziers, linen weavers, sellers of fish, and all other artificers required within a free burgh; also Bailies, and all officers for the government of the same burgh; also for erecting a cross (crucem foralem), a town-house (curiam), also of holding within the said burgh two annual markets, viz.—On the week before Palm Sunday, and to last for the space of five days; a second one beginning on the penultimo day of the month of September, the festival of St Michael the Archangel, and to last also for the space of other five days, for the buying and selling in the said burgh of all kinds of merchandise.

To have the power of levying customs, and to have all other liberties as are in a free burgh of barony of the Kingdom of Scotland.

This burgh of barony was said to be situated near to the Parish Church of Forgue; but it seems soon to have fallen into abeyance, although it is still mentioned in all subsequent charters and infestments.

The times were turbulent, and the Crichton family very soon had to part with the greater portion of their estates, so that the burgh of Forgue barely emerged into existence. It is to be hoped, however that a burgh of Forgue may still flourish. If a railway were to pass through the beautiful valley of Forgue, what changes and improvements might not be seen!

#### *Drumdollo.*

This property is situated in the S.W. part of the parish of Forgue. Of the House of Drumdollo, there are no remains—one solitary tree marks 'where a garden had been'—and an old thorn hedge remains in the neighbourhood. It is still rather inaccessible, much as it had been in the days of old.

It was for many years owned by a family of Leslie, an illegitimate branch of the House of Balquhain. From Leslie's 'History of the Leslies,' we find that Sir Andrew Leslie, the third baron of Balquhain, was a very turbulent man, and of very loose morals. He had a numerous progeny of natural children, from whom many Leslies are descended, such as The Leslies of Buchanstone, Andrew Leslie of Cortishy, James Leslie in Avon, David Leslie in Meikledurno, George Leslie in Drumdollo, Andrew Lesly in Pitscurry, and many others, all descended of natural sons of Sir Andrew Leslie.

Andrew Lesly of Pitscurry, one of these natural sons, carried off the daughter of Thomas Bisset of Balhagarty, commonly called the Fair Maid of Kemnay, she being at the same time betrothed to Sir John Forbes of Druminnor, ancestor of Lord Forbes. Forbes attacked the castle of Balquhain and burned it. On this,

Leslie retired to the top of Benachie to an old fortress nearly 2000 feet high. Having repaired this old fortress, he remained till he had made peace with the Earl of Mar.

1613. James Leslie was served heir to Walter Leslie of Drumdollo, his father, in a third part of a davate of Comaleggie, in the parish of Drumblade.

1673. James Leslie was served heir to Walter Leslie of Drumdollo, patris. This Walter Leslie was doubtless a son of the above-named James of 1613.

1692. We find Lachan Leslie of Drumdollo; in that year he is served heir of Walteri Leslie de Tullich, patris.

1696. The same Lachlan Lesly is polled £9 6s; Elizabeth Lesly, his wife, and John Lesly, his son, 12s.

1772. James Leslie of Drumdollo is served heir to his father, John Lesly (the John probably above taxed), who died 20th March 1771, heir special in Drumdollo, with its crofts called Denend, Condie's Croft, &c.

Soon after the above date, the estates were acquired by Alexander Morison of Bognie, and now form part of the Bognie and Fren draught estates; but are life-rented, in virtue of the settlement of Alexander Morison of Bognie and Mountblairy, by Major Duff, son of the late Mr Duff of Haddo.

On the motion of Mr Ramsay, a cordial vote of thanks was passed to Mr Temple for his admirable paper.