

THE ORDERS OF THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR and the KNIGHTS HOSPITALLERS of ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM – *Lands and properties in Haddington from early times*

History

In 1128 the co-founder and first Grand Master of The Knights Templar arrived in Scotland at the invitation of King David I (1124-1153). He was Hugues de Payens (or *Hugo de Paganis*) and the understanding is that during that visit, David granted the Templars the lands of Balantrodoch on the South Esk, where they established their principal Scottish Preceptory. Nearby Temple takes its name from that establishment.

It's acknowledged that less is known about the Templars in Scotland than elsewhere in the British Isles, but we do have some clues re Templar and Knights Hospitaller connections with Haddington.

- (i) In his '*Lament for David*', Aelred of Rievaulx, Seneschal/Steward to king David I between 1124-1134 states:
"David committed himself to the counsel of religious men of all kinds, surrounding himself with the very fine brothers of the illustrious knighthood of the Temple of Jerusalem making them guardians of his morals by day and night".
- (ii) Another clue which could relate to Templars in early Haddington, is reference by William the Lion in a charter c.1178 to '*the house of Pagan or Paganis*', lying next to the king's garden and the early churchyard of SS. Marie and Martin in Sidegate (the site of the present St. Mary's Parish Church). Paganis died in 1136, but a house dedicated to him could still have been in place 40 years later and its close proximity to David's royal palace heightens this possibility.

King Malcolm IV (1153-1165) is said to have granted a toft in every royal burgh to both the Hospitallers and the Templars; and at Luffness in 1215, King Alexander II confirmed to the Knights Templar in Scotland:



Seal of King Alexander II.

"All rights, liberties and customs granted to them by King David I, Malcolm IV and William I as attested by their authentic writings: namely that all men of the Templars are to have the King's firm peace with the King's men in buying and selling their merchandise everywhere, free of cain, toll and passage duty, and all other rights and customs; no one is to do them any injury or allow it to be done; wherever they come to judgement, their case it to be heard first to receive their right, and there-after to do their duty; no one is to send any man of the Templars to the judgment pit." 'The Templars are to have in Scotland all liberties and customs that they have in other lands.' "Regesta Regum Scottorum I – The Acts of Malcolm IV" - 1153-1165) by G.W.S. Barrow June 2019 p.282 – Edin. University Press.

When the Order of the Knights Templar was dissolved by Pope Clement V c.1308/9 it is understood that much of their land and property was transferred to the Order of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem. There is no record of the actual transfer of the Scottish lands but in the 15th and 16th centuries all the 'known possessions' of the Templars in Scotland are found in the hands of the Preceptor of Torphichen as local Chief of the Knights of St. John. In 1535 the Hospitallers took advantage of an Act of Parliament which permitted them to feu their lands to local men of substance. In those hands they remained until the Reformation at which time the last Preceptor, Sir James Sandilands, resigned all the property of the Hospitallers in Scotland into the hands of Queen Mary and (in consideration of his payment of 10,000 crowns) had a regrat of them as a hereditary barony of Torphichen.

Haddington's earliest town records no longer survive, but from the mid-1400s, Burgh Records and local Charters speak of Templar lands in and around Haddington, some of which are shown below. However, when the Order of the Knights Templar was dissolved much of their land and property was transferred to the Order of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem and it is those lands which relate to what appears to have been the Hospitallers' town house at the junction of High Street and Hardgate, close to the *Custom Stone*. Templar lands are shown on that site from the early 1400s until the early 1800s when the building referred to was demolished, and we are fortunate to have an eye-witness account of its location and what it looked like from the pen of James Richardson, a Procurator Fiscal in the town in the 19th century in - "[Recollections of a Haddington Octogenarian 1793-1815](#)" pp.16-17. Richardson was born in the building in 1793 and he died aged 93 in 1886 in nearby Church Street. His description of the Templar building is as follows:

The Knights Templar building

"The next religious building in my recollection was the 'monastery' of the Knights Templars, which is not now in existence. It was a large, square building of three storeys, the under one being all vaulted as was usual of old. It stood at the junction of the High Street with Hardgate Street, where there was an acute corner which was taken away when the building was pulled down in order to widen the turn between the two streets. This building is now entirely obliterated.

My father occupied parts of the building, and I was born in it. The stair to the upper flats was a very fine one. It was not a turnpike stair, but one of different flights; and the railing was of massive oak, corresponding to its original grandeur. It had a Knights Templars small cross on the roof; and the building is still called a temple tenement, for it is extra-burghal and holds not of the Magistrates and Council, as representing the Sovereign, but of the owner of the temple lands of Scotland, who alone can grant charters by progress to the heirs of the owners and to whom a feu-duty is paid. So much is the property held as anti-burghal that the charters require to be recorded, not in the burgh records but in the general Record of Sasines at Edinburgh. There are other temple tenements in the town and neighbourhood."

John Martine in "[Reminiscences of the Royal Burgh of Haddington & Old East Lothian Agriculturists](#)" 1883, p.46, provides a similar description when discussing old buildings in Hardgate:

"Robert Hay, a most respectable old man, owned and occupied the corner house, which was an old 'Temple' tenement. It was a curious old building with many vaults in it. In the wall of the east end was a large stone with the words "Gloria Dei" cut on it. No doubt a relic of the Knights Templar of St. John".

In "[The Knights Templar in Britain](#)" p.149, Dr Evelyn Lord describes the 'Templars in Scottish Burghs':

"As well as land in the countryside both the Templars and the Hospitallers had at least one tenement in each of the Scottish burghs, granted to them by Alexander II. All of those tenements allegedly bore a cross showing that it belonged to one of the military orders" "The location of the tenements can be traced through the 18th century Charter Book of the Earl of Haddington."

Lord described the Templars' property in Edinburgh as "at the head of Cowgate, bounded on the east by Stinking Close and the High Street and Grassmarket on the West. This property included 4 cellars and the right to draw water from the well in the close. They also had a dwellinghouse on the Fore Stairs with a booth (shop) underneath a house (open hall), a hall chamber and a high loft." A similar layout might be expected in Haddington referred in the Charter Book as in 'Mealls Street' - perhaps a reference when the Mealmarket was located in Hardgate in 1543.

Note 1: As town records show a Templar [or Hospitaller] building on this site from 1467, and St John's Port and St. John's Street (now Sidegate) were noted in the records in 1545, it's clear that the building referred to by Richardson, or at least an earlier incarnation of it, had been on that site for over 300 years by the time it was demolished in the early 1800s. It also appears that by 1467 the building was no longer in use by the Hospitallers.

Note 2: Although we have the description of a single Templar building in the 18th century, the likelihood is that the much earlier original building (pre-1400s) would have had stabling and servant accommodation, perhaps around a self-contained courtyard to satisfy the Hospitallers' well-known guarded lifestyle. It is of interest that two modern 'Templar' or *Masonic* buildings are located nearby, at Kilpair Street and behind the Pheasant hotel in Market Street.

There is firm charter evidence of Templar lands in East Lothian from early times, including a substantial acreage at Spott, and, according to John Martine, the Templars held 800 acres of rich farmland at Drem. A charter dated 1458 granted former Templar lands to William Cockburn of Newhall, described as all the templelands, namely 14 acres with tofts and crofts in the town of Gullane in the barony of Dirleton, and the templelands in Sanderisdene, containing 11 acres with a *manerium* built thereon, with common pasture. Other substantial acreages of templeland on the outskirts of Haddington are shown in the records. However, those are incidental to the Templar building in Hardgate which is the purpose of this study.

The list below shows the **Templars' lands and properties on the west side of Hardgate, Haddington, opposite Fisherrow /the Fishmarket**. The Fishmarket was moved to the Tolbooth in **1543** and *replaced (at the Freir Wall)* by the Saltmarket and Mealmarket.

Templar transactions in Haddington

1467 Dec 16	<i>Resignation</i> by Robert Atkinsone, burges of Haddington, in hands of Sir William Knollis, Preceptor of his temple lands in the Fyscheraw. NRS GD1/39	
1467 Dec 16	<i>Resignation</i> (as above) and <i>Sasine</i> thereof to Patrick of Ogill, burges of Haddington	
1467/68 Jan 7	<i>Sasine</i> of Patric Ogyl and his wife of said tenement	
1467/68 Jan 7	<i>Renunciation</i> by David Wricht of annual rent of 7 merks from said tenement, and <i>Sasine</i> of Patrick Ogyl therein	
1479 Apr 5	<i>Sasine</i> of Patrick Ogill and spouse in the (Fisherrow) tenement on warrant from the Preceptor dated 5 th April 1479.	
1488 Oct 31	<i>Resignation</i> by Patrick Ogill of a tenement on the <i>south</i> side of the burgh of Haddington (John Kello - West and George Leirmonth - East), and <i>Sasine</i> hereof to John Getgud burges of Haddington.	
1488 Oct 31	<i>Resignation</i> by John Getgud of half of his tenement and <i>Sasine</i> thereof to himself and spouse	
1500 Aug 6	<i>Charter</i> by William, Lord St. John to John Getgude of a temple tenement on West side of the Fyscher-mercat	
1509 May 18	<i>Charter</i> by George Dundas, Preceptor of Torphichen , to John Getgude, younger and spouse, of a temple tenement in the Fisherrow (<i>in vico piscium</i>) resigned by John G. elder, his father.	
1510 Oct 7	<i>Sasine</i> of John Getgud, younger, and spouse in temple tenement on West side of street of the Fishmarket on precept by George Lord St John , dated 30 Sep. 1510.	
1532 26 Dec	<i>Instrument of Sasine</i> proceeding on a precept of Walter Lindsay, Lord of St. John, preceptor of Torphichen, etc., directed to Thomas Ewine, his templar-bailie in the constabulary of Haddington for infesting Henry Congiltoun of that ilk in an oxgang (c.15 acres) of Templarland in the territory of Haddington on the <i>north</i> side of the town, having the lands of John Ayton on the east, and the lands of the friars-minor and the lands of PeddarCraig on the east.	Edin.Uni. Lib. Special Collections/ <i>The Laing Collection/Sec.V. Laing Charters</i>
1535 Apr 21	<i>Sasine</i> of John Getgud as heir to his father in a temple tenement in Haddington (John Hynde on South and John Wilson on North) on precept of Walter, Lord St. John	
1542 May 17	<i>Charter</i> by Walter, Lord St. John to John Getgud and spouse of temple tenement in Haddington (John Hynd on South and John Wilson on North)	
1542 May 23	<i>Sasine thereupon</i> (tenement said to be near the Greyfriars' port). Note this rare mention of the location of the Friars' Port.	*
1563/4 *	James Sandilands (Lord St. John) resigned all the property of the Hospitallers in Scotland into the hands of Queen Mary and (in consideration of his payment of 10,000 crowns) had a regrant of them as a hereditary barony of Torphichen.	

NOTE: 1543 Oct 11 - The Provost and baileys ordered the fishmarket to be moved to the eastern end of the Tolbooth, with the Saltmarket and Mealmarket moved to the Freir wall – this has relevance in relation to understanding what was happening along the Freirs wall from around this date.		
1565 May 24	<i>Precept</i> by James, Lord St. John , for infefting Patrick Getgude as heir to his brother german John G., in a temple tenement (John Hynd on South and John Wilson on North)	
1565 Jul 16	<i>Sasine</i> of Patrick Getgud thereupon	
1576 Sep 27	<i>Sasine</i> given by Patrick Getgud, burges of Haddington to Elizabeth Wilson his spouse of his temple tenement on the East side of the Burgh (John Wilson on North and waste land called Hyndisland on South)	
1580 Apr 16	<i>Resignation</i> by John Wilson, son and heir of deceased Martin Wilson, burges of Haddington, of an annual rent of 38s from a waste tenement on the West side of the old fishmarket and <i>Sasine</i> thereof to Alexander Symson, burges of Haddington.	
1582-3 Mar 9	<i>Resignation</i> by same, of his waste tenement on the East side of the Market Cross and <i>Sasine</i> thereof to Alexander Symson, burges and town clerk of Haddington.	
1588 Sep 6	<i>Charter</i> by William Purves, burges of Haddington and his spouse and son to John Young <i>alias</i> Howden, dwelling in Howden, of an annual rent of 12 merks from a temple tenement on the West(?) side of the Burgh of Haddington (John Wilson on North and Alexander Symson on South)	
1588 Sep 6	<i>Resignation</i> by Purves in hands of Sir James Sandilands , of Calder, his superior, for the purpose of granting above Charter. [Note: All the remaining Hospitallers lands were given to Sandilands by 1560 - check actual date]	
1598 May 24	<i>Charter</i> by Sir James Sandilands of Calder to William Purves, burges of Haddington and Elizabeth Hewat his spouse, and George and William their sons, of a temple tenement lying between the temple tenement of John Wilson on the North, the <i>burgage</i> tenement of the deceased John Hynd (now Alexander Symson) on the South and the highway on the East.	
1598 Jun 5	<i>Sasine</i> thereupon (stating that the tenement was conquest from deceased Patrick Getgude).	
1600 Dec 22	<i>Charter</i> by William Purves, indweller in Nungate, with consent of William Purves, burges of Haddington, his father, and Elizabeth Hewat, his mother, selling to Alexander Symson, burges of Haddington, his tenement at the East end of Haddington between the tenement of said Alexander on the South, temple tenement of John Wilson on the North, tenement of deceased John Douglas, baker on the West, and the Market Place on the East, paying 12d yearly to the Lord of Torphichen.	
1601 Jan 1	<i>Precept</i> by William Purves, younger, indweller in Canongate, empowering William Purves his father and Elizabeth Hewatt, his mother, to resign the tenement above described in favour of Alexander Symson.	
1601 Jan 2	<i>Resignation</i> and <i>Sasine</i> in terms of above <i>Precept</i>	
<i>The above records area taken from ELAFNS Transactions Vol. IV pp.75-84</i>		

*The above records relate to the property
shown in the 1853 OS Name Book for Haddington
see below:*

No. 136. 107

List of Names collected by *W. G. Baker*

Field Book		Received Name	Object	Description	Township or Parish	Authority for Spelling	
No.	Page					Name	Address
		<i>Stasia</i>	<i>High Street</i>	<i>The site of house which formerly stood at the south end of Highgate street, it formerly belonged to the Knights Templars before it was taken down about 14 years ago it was surrounded by an iron wall nothing can be found about it but it is not built or other information or what the stone</i>	<i>Haddington</i>	<i>Thomas Lee</i> <i>Andrew B. B. B.</i> <i>Lump of L. B. B.</i>	<i>Haddington</i> <i>Highgate</i>
		<i>Custom Stone</i>	<i>Junction of Street</i>	<i>This room applies to the junction of High Street & Highgate street Church Street and Highgate Street when a large or all the goods that come into the town that it is formerly a large stone building which was built by it was around a good many years ago to make way for improvements</i>		<i>do</i> <i>do</i>	<i>do</i> <i>do</i>

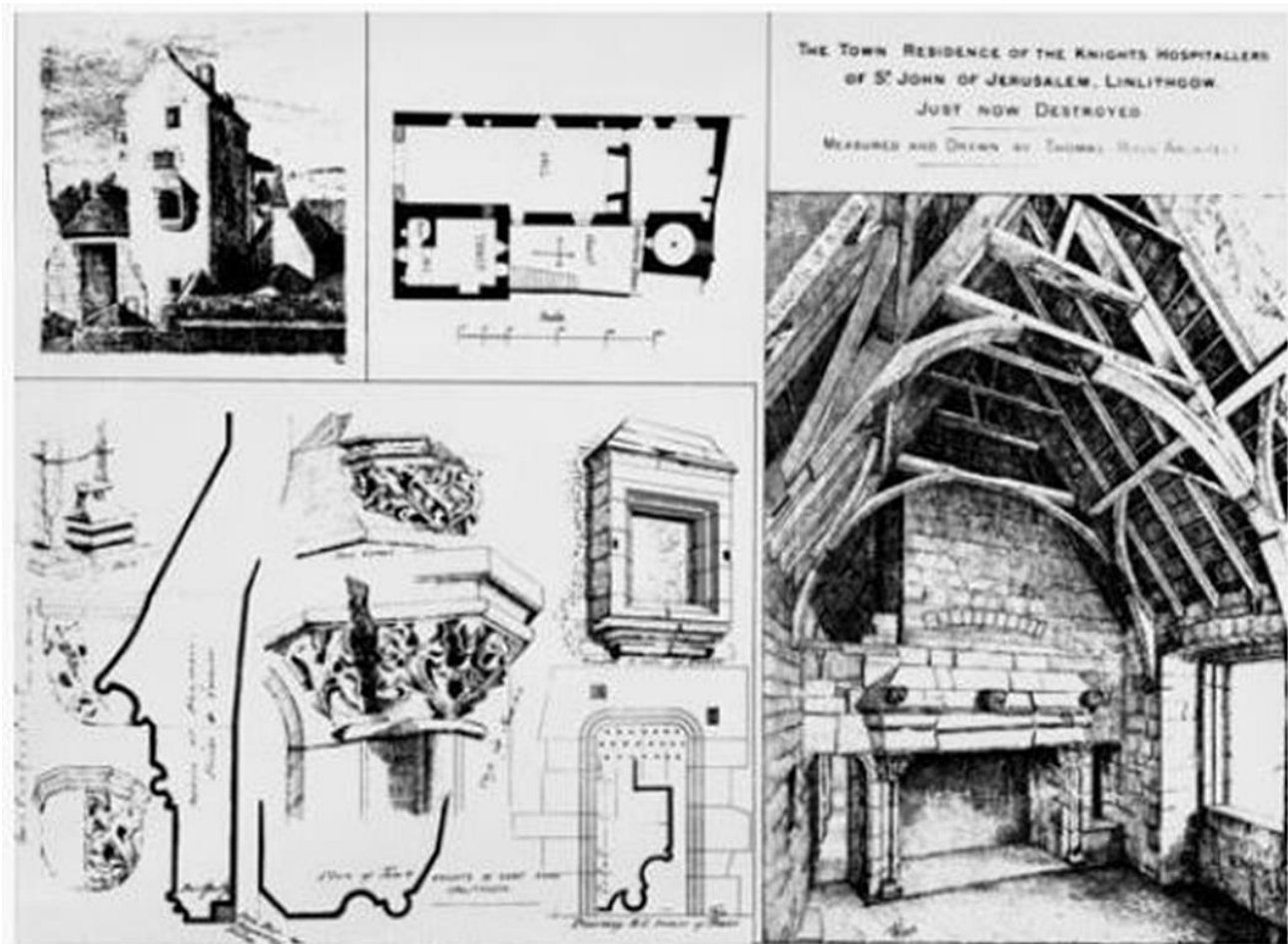
T. M. B.

1853 OS Name Book for Haddington

The Knights Hospitallers' house in Linlithgow is shown below as an example of what we might have found in Hardgate in earlier times.



Canmore images showing the town house of the Knights Hospitaller of St. John of Jerusalem at Linlithgow, sometimes referred to as 'the Mint'. The water colour is by Thomas Ross 1879.



The above Canmore image shows the outline plan and interior detail

Canmore text: The Mint, early 16th century (demolished)

Unusually elaborate town house of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem consisting of a street frontage and two courts behind a long and superbly elaborate hall and the tall tower to the south-east with an oriel window. The hall had a splendid open timber roof and an elaborately carved fireplace.

Taken from "West Lothian: An Illustrated Architectural Guide", by Stuart Eydmann, Richard Jaques and Charles McKean, 2008. Published by the Rutland Press <http://www.rias.org.uk>

Archaeology Notes

NT07NW 12 0019 7713

(NT 0019 7713) Templars' Tenements (NR)

OS 25" map (1856).

NMRS REFERENCE

Demolished 1886 - S side of High Street near St Michael's Church.

(Undated) information in NMRS.

Three buildings on the S side of The Cross, which formerly belonged to the Knights Templars. Lord Torphichen still retains the superiority of them.

Name Book 1856.

The so-called 'Mint' or town-house of the Knights Hospitallers in Linlithgow was built in the late 15th or early 16th century (after the Knights Templar had been suppressed). It was demolished in the late 19th century. Its lay-out (see plans and illustrations) incorporated a two-storeyed hall wing extending along one side of an inner courtyard; adjoining the SE end of the hall block there was a self-contained, five storeyed tower-house. Little is now known of the purposes served by the other apartments, especially in the block fronting the street, where there may have been booths (or shops) and additional chambers.

Macgibbon and Ross (1887) note that the street front was largely rebuilt and modernised (measured drawings in NMRS).

G Stell 1977.

Site occupied by modern buildings.

Visited by OS (BS), 29 March 1974.

[Further Details](#)

Publication Account (2000)

The town house of the Knights Hospitaller of St John of Jerusalem was built in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century and was demolished in 1885 (see area 3). Whether remnants of this building could have survived the nineteenth century development for which it was pulled down is uncertain. It is possible that some deeply-cut foundations may have survived or that masonry was re-used in later building works. In fact, a fragment of the late medieval building is thought to have been incorporated into the building at the corner of St Michael's Wynd.

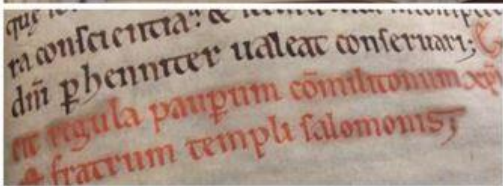
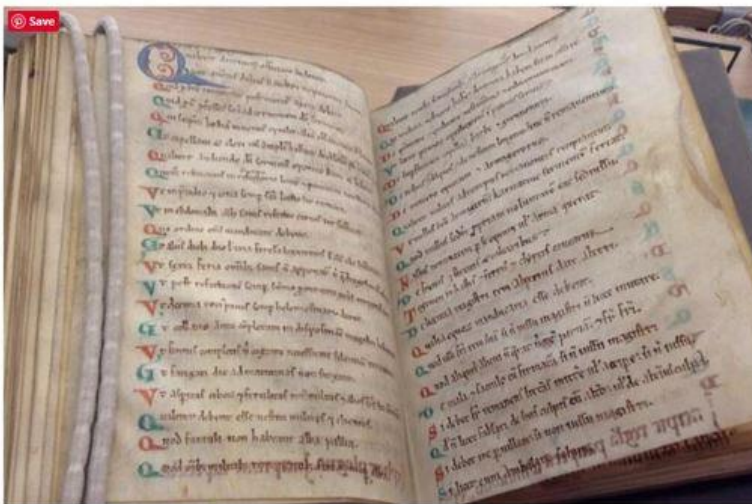
Information from 'Historic Linlithgow: The Archaeological Implications of Development' (2000).

[Further Details](#)

Further Reading:

Latin Rule of the Knights Templar

History of the Knights Templar in Scotland - A unique Medieval 12th Century Scottish Version of the Knights Templar Latin Rule. Its title is called, 'Regula Pauperum Commilitonum Christi Templique Salomonici.' It was written by Johannes Michaelensis, a resident of Albanensis, Alba (Scotland). (Copyrights - National Library of Scotland).



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