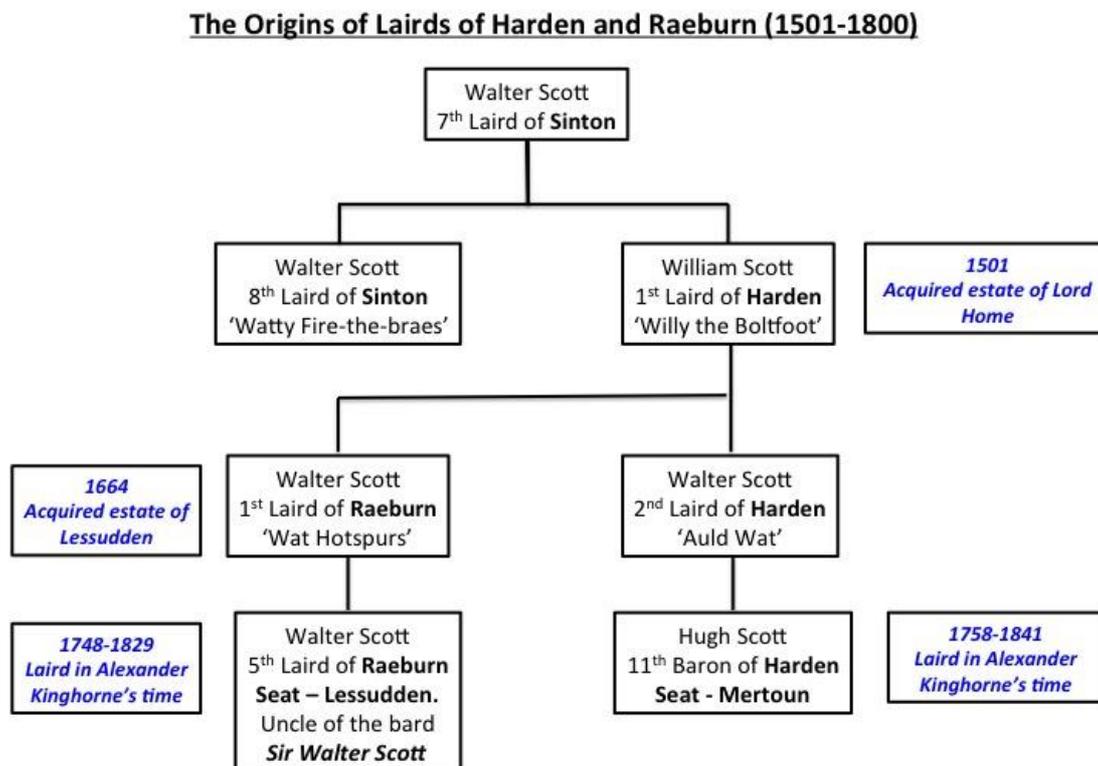


Appendix 5

The Origins of the Scotts of Harden and Raeburn (1501-1800)



The first laird of Harden was William Scott of Harden, who acquired the estate of this name from Alexander Lord Home in about 1501. Almost everything known about this family derives from the research and epic poetry of the bard Sir Walter Scott, making it difficult to distinguish fact from romanticism; this is particularly so of William Scott's grandson Walter (~1563-1629), the infamous Border Reiver, known as 'Auld Wat of Harden'. This freebooter and livestock thief was made famous in many of the bard's adventurous tales but, perhaps most notoriously, in the story of his daring raid of 1596 with his kinsman, Walter Scott of Buccleuch. Together, they crossed the border to Carlisle Castle to rescue, from Lord Scrope of Bolton, the moss-trooper and fellow Reiver William Armstrong – known as 'Kinmont Willie'.¹ 'Auld Wat' survived his dangerous exploits and married Mary, daughter of John Scott, again immortalised as the 'Flower of Yarrow' due to her great beauty, and they had 10 children before she died.²

In 1598 'Auld Wat' married for a second time Margaret Edgar of Waddelin, widow of William Spottiswoode of that ilk; their daughter married first David Pringle of Galashiels and secondly Sir William MakDougall of Makerstoun. The descendants of the latter marriage included Sir Henry Hay Macdougall, important as a patron of Alexander Kinghorne, and father-in-law of Sir Thomas Brisbane, 6th Governor of New South Wales (See Chapter 14, Sir Henry Hay Macdougall).

Lord Polwarth whose seat is Harden House near Hawick, represents the Scotts of Harden today, but in Alexander Kinghorne's time, their seat was the Mertoun Estate in Berwickshire.³

Auld Wat's uncle, another Walter Scott (1620-1688) – often called 'Wat Warspurs or Hotspurs' – the third son of the first William Scott of Harden, was the first Scott of Raeburn. He took on this name from a Dumfriesshire estate that he farmed for some years. In 1664, he acquired the estate of Lessudden, just outside the village of St Boswells, which was to remain his family's seat for just over 3 centuries. Lessudden Estate is not to be confused with the same name used, until the middle of the 19th century, to describe the northern part of the town of St Boswells.⁴ In Alexander Kinghorne's time, the residents at Lessudden were Walter Scott (1748-1829), 5th Laird of Raeburn, and his wife Jean, daughter of Robert Scott of Sandyknowe – the bard Sir Walter Scott's grandfather. The 5th Laird of Raeburn and his wife were, therefore, the bard's aunt and uncle. Their son, William, the bard's cousin 'Willie' (1773-1855),⁵ became the 6th Laird of Raeburn. In 1807, Willie purchased the small estate of Maxpoffle (sometimes called "Maxpopple"), adjoining Kippilaw, from James Newbigging for £2,300. He became a close friend of Alexander Kinghorne. Lessudden and Maxpoffle sat on the south bank of the River Tweed opposite the Mertoun Estate on its north side, then the home of the Scotts of Harden; together, these estates gave the Scotts of Harden and Raeburn vast and adjacent lands around St Boswells.⁶

Sir Walter Scott, best described the beautiful locality of these estates, redolent with antiquity as follows...

Mertoun, the principal seat of the Harden family, with its noble groves; nearly in front of it, across the Tweed, Lessudden, the comparatively small but still venerable and stately abode of the Lairds of Raeburn; and the hoary Abbey of Dryburgh, surrounded with yew-trees as ancient as itself, seem to be almost below the feet of the spectator. Opposite him rise the purple peaks of Eildon, the traditional scene of Thomas the

Rhymer's interview with the Queen of Faerie; behind are the blasted peel which the seer of Erceldoun himself inhabited, 'the Broom of the Cowdenknowes', the pastoral valley of the Leader, and the bleak wilderness of Lammermoor. To the eastward the desolate grandeur of Hume Castle breaks the horizon, as the eye travels towards the range of the Cheviot. A few miles westward, Melrose, 'like some tall rock with lichens grey', appears clasped amidst the windings of the Tweed; and the distant presents the serrated mountains of the Gala, the Etterick, and the Yarrow, all famous in song. Such were the objects that had painted the earliest image on the eye of the last and greatest of the Border Minstrels.⁷

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- ¹ Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, Vol II *The Ballad of Kinmont Willie*, Stanzas xliii to xlvi.
- ² Scott, Walter, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Canto Fourth, Stanza IX, in: Scott, *The Poetical Works*, 22-23.
- ³ Lever, *Lessudden House*, 14-40.
- ⁴ Peake, *Change at St. Boswell's*, 13.
- ⁵ William Scott of Raeburn (1773-1855), son of Walter Scott of Raeburn, the occupant of the Lessudden Estate, St Boswells. Independent of the male relationship between the Raeburns and the illustrious Sir Walter Scott, there was a nearer tie of affinity through the Haliburtons, which made him and the late laird of Raeburn, long called Maxpoffle (William Scott), first cousins.
- ⁶ Lever, *Lessudden House*, 14-40, 69-70.
- ⁷ Lockhart, *Memoirs of Sir Walter Scott*, 61.