

Looking for Nuns: A Prosopographical study of Scottish Nuns in the later Middle Ages*

KIMM CURRAN, B.A.

John Cunningham remarked that medieval Scottish convents were shrouded in mystery but had power in “molding the piety of the time [yet were] ... too secret in their operation to be traced.”¹ It must be this secrecy that has kept scholars away from the subject of Scottish convents as to date, no one has undertaken a complete study to assist in an appreciation of female monastic establishments and the women who lived in them. There are many reasons why this may be the case. First, many monastic historians in general consider female monastic houses to be unimportant or uninteresting in the overall history of a particular order or the movement as a whole. Secondly, excuses have been made that female houses were too poor, had scanty resources, and were “too different” from their male counterparts to render them important enough to study. Faced with these comments from historians it is no wonder that no study of female monasticism in Scotland has been attempted.

What this paper intends to give is a perspective on how female monasticism has been studied in the past, how it has changed and evolved and how it may be possible to study female monasticism in Scotland based on new methods or approaches. Finally, by using these new methods, I hope to show that we can learn something about the convents of Scotland, especially those women who became nuns and the importance these convents may have had in their community.

* My research on nuns in Scotland would not have been possible without the assistance and continued support of Norman Shead (Glasgow), Dr Elizabeth Ewan (Guelph), Dr David Brown and Dr Marilyn Dunn (Glasgow). Any findings here are preliminary and further work may modify ideas and information expressed here.

¹ J. Cunningham, *The Church History of Scotland: From its Commencement of the Christian era to the Present Day* (Edinburgh, 1859), 145.

There is a wide range of scholarship on medieval religious women. For this paper I intend to use examples from England, for a number of studies have been made on female monasticism and are widely accessible. Lina Eckenstein's work *Women Under Monasticism* in 1896 and Eileen Power's studies of *Medieval English Nunneries* in 1922, as well as many others, were until recently the main texts to consult when looking at female religious for England.² Power's work depicted England's poor convents riddled with sexual scandal and vanity. She also highlighted the administration, daily life and the kinds of women who became nuns, mainly the elite or noble born. This idea that all nuns were elite-born has been a theme echoed throughout the study of female monasticism and only recently has been challenged by scholars. Eckenstein looked at female saints and mystics, including female literacy in English convents. She also outlined the foundation of convents from Anglo-Saxon England and during the reforming period of the twelfth century. Her work mainly focused on female sanctity and did not really address any of the issues concerned with the convents themselves.

Over the last twenty-five years, however, a new wave of scholarship has emerged: especially Janet Burton's study of Yorkshire nunneries in the central middle ages, Sharon Elkins' examination of religious women of the twelfth century, and Sally Thompson's study on female religious after the Norman conquest, to name just a few.³ Each of these studies highlighted a particular area that had not been studied in depth. Burton's work focused on the little-known Yorkshire nunneries and she was able to comment on their founders and relationships the convents had with those founders and subsequent patrons. Thompson's work was more extensive and highlighted the foundation of nunneries across England, their links with other houses,

² L. Eckenstein, *Women Under Monasticism: Chapters on Saint Lore and Convent Life between AD 500-1500* (Cambridge, 1896); E. Power, *Medieval English Nunneries, c. 1275-1535* (Cambridge, 1922).

³ J. Burton, *Yorkshire Nunneries in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (York, 1979); S. Elkins, *Holy Women of Twelfth Century England* (Chapel Hill, 1988); S. Thompson, *Women Religious: The Founding of English Nunneries after the Norman Conquest* (Oxford, 1991).

and the difficulties faced by religious women after the Norman Conquest. Elkins looked at the growth of female monasticism with the coming of the reformed orders in the twelfth century and more importantly provided a regional study of women's monastic life. However, these works mainly focused on the central middle ages and very few scholars have looked at the later period after 1300 until the Dissolution of the monasteries.

More recently, however, Marilyn Oliva completed her study of nuns in the diocese of Norwich in the period after 1350 until the Dissolution of 1530.⁴ She approached her subject from a social and family historian's point of view, using prosopography to gain most of her insight into conventual life. She was able to comment on the daily life and administration of the convents as well as how these convents functioned within the context of their local communities. More importantly, however, she was able to identify the nuns, by name, and their social rank.

Katharine Macdonald in her thesis on Yorkshire nuns was able to do much the same.⁵ She identified a number of nuns and was able to show their links to secular society. She noted that small, poor Yorkshire convents could be studied by looking at inmates and family and local connections rather than dismissing them simply because very little was known about their daily life. Oliva and Macdonald were able to disprove Power's original idea that houses of nuns were only made up of the elite, so changing the way we look at the social makeup of English convents. They were also able to provide insight into conventual life for the later Middle Ages in England.

Roberta Gilchrist has attempted to study female monasticism using a completely different approach.⁶ She has looked at material remains, monastic layouts of buildings and precincts of convents to determine if we can learn anything about the daily life, finances, or perhaps if nunneries were founded

⁴ M. Oliva, *The Convent and Community in Late Medieval England: Female Monasteries in the Diocese of Norwich, 1350-1530* (Woodbridge, 1998).

⁵ A.C. MacDonald, "Women and the Monastic Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire", Unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Oxford, 1997).

⁶ R. Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Religious Women* (London, 1993). See also R. Gilchrist and M. Oliva, *Religious Women in East Anglia* (East Anglia, 1993).

for different purposes than those for men based on the size and layout of the convent. She has found that, although work has been done on the archaeological remains of convents, nothing has been done to show the importance of convents in the landscape, or evaluated monastic space or more importantly put female monasteries in the same category as male ones.

What has been highlighted above is just a very small sample of the literature available on the subject of female religious life. Some would argue that still not enough has been done on the subject for England and that historians are still discouraged from finding convents interesting enough to enable a more detailed analysis.⁷ Overall, however, the study of female religious south of the border has still been refreshing, and provides a way for scholars to think about how they study monasticism and female religious. Showing links with the laity, patrons and families as well as the administration, daily life and the study of monastic space has helped us understand the role of female religious in their medieval communities.

However, in Scotland the same cannot be said for the study of female monasticism. We have no general overview of female monasticism covering the whole of the middle ages and very little by means of case studies. This may be because monasticism has traditionally been studied by means of looking at the daily life, administration, rules of a particular house or order and reform. Male monasteries and orders have been studied at greater length in regard to these themes and as female religious have been seen as “unsuccessful” in the world of monasticism, they have not really been considered.

In Scotland, for example, Mark Dilworth has been the most prolific of monastic scholars and has worked on Fearn Abbey,⁸ the Border abbeys in

⁷ Oliva, *Convent and Community*, 3.

⁸ M. Dilworth, “Fearn Abbey as a Monastic Institution”, *Innes Review* [hereafter *IR*], 51 no. 1 (2000), 40-54.

the sixteenth century,⁹ Coldingham,¹⁰ Iona,¹¹ and Whithorn,¹² just to name a few. He has also looked at monks, their superiors and constitutional status.¹³ Other case studies undertaken by scholars relate to the Perth Charterhouse,¹⁴ Paisley,¹⁵ St Andrews¹⁶ among many others.¹⁷ This list grows even larger if we include male monasteries in England. The most popular works are the general surveys or gazetteers done of monastic houses in England and Wales by David Knowles, Aubrey Gwynn and R.N. Hadcock for Ireland and Ian Cowan and David Easson for Scotland.¹⁸

⁹ M. Dilworth, "Border Abbeys in the Sixteenth Century", *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* [hereafter *RSCHS*], xxi (1983), 233-247.

¹⁰ M. Dilworth, "Coldingham Priory and the Reformation", *IR*, 23 (1972), 115-137.

¹¹ M. Dilworth, "Iona Abbey and the Reformation", *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, xxi, pt. 1 (1971), 77-109.

¹² M. Dilworth, *Whithorn Priory in the Late Middle Ages* (Whithorn, 1994).

¹³ M. Dilworth, *Scottish Monasteries in the Late Middle Ages* (Edinburgh, 1995), vii.

¹⁴ W.N.M. Beckett, "The Perth Charterhouse before 1500", *Analecta Carusiana*, 128 (1988), 1-74; M.B. Vershuur, "The Perth Charterhouse in the Sixteenth Century", *IR*, 39 (1988), 1-11.

¹⁵ J. Durkan, "Paisley Abbey in the Sixteenth Century", *IR*, 27 (1976), 110-26; J.C. Lees, *The Abbey of Paisley* (Paisley, 1878); J. Malden, *The Abbey and Monastery of Paisley* (Renfrew, 1993).

¹⁶ *The Medieval Church of St Andrews*, ed. D. McRoberts (Glasgow, 1976).

¹⁷ I.B. Cowan, "Ayrshire Abbeys: Crossraguel and Kilwinning", *Collections of the Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society* [CAAS], xiv, no 7 (1986), 265-95; W. Douglas, "Culross Abbey and its Charters", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* [hereafter *PSAS*] 60 (1927), 67-94; D. Henry, "Glenluce Abbey", *Archeological and Historical Collections relating to Ayrshire and Galloway*, v (1885), 125-88; W.L. Ker, *Kilwinning Abbey* (Ardrossan, n.d.); S.R. Macphail, *The Religious House of Pluscardyn* (Edinburgh, 1881); J.M. Webster, *Dunfermline Abbey* (Dunfermline, 1948). This list is not exhaustive but merely a sample of what can be found for case studies on Scottish monasteries.

¹⁸ I.B. Cowan & D. E. Easson, *Medieval Religious Houses: Scotland* [hereafter *MRHS*] (London, 1976); D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (Cambridge, 1940); D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England* (Cambridge, 1948-59); A. Gwynn & R.N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: Ireland* (Harlow, 1970).

For the medieval church in Scotland we have works on universities, hospitals, libraries and schools by John Durkan, the administration of the late medieval church by Ian Cowan as well as a wealth of information in Donald Watt's *Fasti* and list of university graduates and also Margaret Sanderson's work on monastic lands and feuing.¹⁹ In fact a great deal of work has been done on the history of the Scottish church with studies concerning parishes, clergy and clerical officials, on universities and libraries, saints and pilgrimages, on burghs and regalities, on farming and taxation before and after the Reformation, and on churches and architecture.²⁰ In 1995, Mark Dilworth remarked that a "fresh assessment of monasteries ... was needed in light of new available information" and the only text specifically concerning a general study of monasteries in Scotland, was then created.²¹ However, houses of nuns were not included in his study.²²

While we may have a wealth of information at our fingertips on a variety of different subjects surrounding the medieval church and monasticism, we still do not have a complete text that deals with monasticism as a whole, which includes female houses for the entire medieval period. If we want to learn something about the religious life of medieval nuns, we are left wanting. We only have two articles from the 1940s outlining the foundation of these establishments and some other relative information; we only have two case studies, one for Haddington and the other for North

¹⁹ M. Sanderson, *Scottish Rural Society in the Sixteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1982); M. Sanderson, "The Feuars of Kirklands", *Scottish Historical Review*, vol. lii, 2, no. 154 (October 1973), 117-136; M. Sanderson, "Kirkmen and their Tenants in the Era of the Reformation", *Scottish Church History Society*, vol. 18 (1974), 26-42.

²⁰ Dilworth, *Scottish Monasteries*, viii. See bibliography in *Scottish Monasteries* for a good listing of articles and books by these authors.

²¹ *Ibid.*, viii.

²² It should be noted here that Coulton did not include houses of nuns in his study. G.G. Coulton, *Scottish Abbeys and Social Life* (Cambridge, 1933).

Berwick.²³ More recently in 1995, Andrew Macdonald outlined the founders and patrons of Scottish convents but nothing new was discovered or presented in his essay that could not be found elsewhere.²⁴ Macdonald suggested that in order to understand these female houses we should try newer approaches, such as the study of monastic space and prosopography but did not explain why he did not use these ideas in his own work.

The fifteen convents of medieval Scotland are ignored in all studies of monasticism and the most quoted reason is that these houses were too small, poor and too different to render them important to the study of Scottish monasticism. Unfortunately, none of the case studies about specific convents tells us much about the communities of female religious, the families linked to the convents or their contribution to the study of Scottish monasticism. An outsider to Scottish history would think that Scotland had no convents in the medieval period – and this misconception has been highlighted in the historical literature and therefore passed down to a younger generation.

What I would like to suggest is that we take a new approach to the study of female religious life and possibly monasticism as a whole for Scotland. Marilyn Oliva and Katherine Macdonald used prosopography, or the study of individuals and family connections, in their study of English nuns. The calculations of number of nuns, or monks for that matter, in a diocese or in a particular house and investigations of their families and social backgrounds can tell us a great deal about both individual religious and also the monasteries they populated.²⁵ For example, R. B. Dobson, who has looked at the cathedral chapters of Durham and York, was able to

²³ G. Donaldson, “The Cistercian Nunnery of St Mary Haddington”, *Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists’ Society* [hereafter *TELAS*], 4 (1956), 1-24; D.B. Swan, “The Monastery of North Berwick”, *TELAS*, 1 pt. 2 (1926-7), 55-69; D.E. Easson, “The Nunneries of Galloway”, *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 3rd series,²³ (1940-44), 190-199; D.E. Easson, “The Nunneries of Medieval Scotland”, *Transactions of the Scottish Ecclesiological Society*, 13 pt. 2, (1940-1), 22-38.

²⁴ R.A. Macdonald, “The Foundation of Nunneries by Native Elites in Twelfth and Early Thirteenth-Century Scotland”, in *Women in Scotland, c. 1100-1750*, edd. E. Ewan and M. Meikle (Edinburgh, 1999), 3-15.

²⁵ Oliva, *Convent and Community*, 37.

construct the personal profiles of the monks and canons who populated these two houses.²⁶ It included the family backgrounds, social status and the average amount of time these men lived as monks and canons throughout the medieval period. Joan Greatrex did a similar study on the Benedictine monks of Ely, Norwich and Worcester.²⁷ And Barbara Harvey has found various household officials' accounts to reveal ages of profession and mortality rates for the monks at Westminster Abbey.²⁸

These kinds of studies carried out for medieval English monks and canons and some religious women have not been applied to their counterparts in Scotland. Historians have begun the process in collecting the names of Scottish graduates, heads of religious houses and office holders in the medieval Scottish church.²⁹ What has not been done with these valuable collections is a construction of personal profiles of these religious men, indications of geographical or family background, social status or the average time these men were in their profession.

For the study of female religious in Scotland, we only have a list of the heads of houses. To date a list of both nuns and monks for the whole of Scotland has not been constructed for the medieval period and this may be due to the nature of surviving resources. In England, for example, Dissolution registers and documents, wills and testaments as well as a wealth of other documentation surrounding religious help scholars learn more about religious life in England. This is not to say that because we do not have

²⁶ R.B. Dobson, "Recent Prosopographical Research in Late Medieval English History: University Graduates, Durham Monks, and York Canons" in *Medieval Lives and the Historian: Studies in Medieval Prosopography*, edd. N. Bulst and Jean-Phillip Genet (Michigan, 1986), 181-200.

²⁷ J. Greatrex, "Some Statistics of Religious Motivation" in *Religious Motivation: Biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian*, ed. D. Baker, *Studies in Church History*, 15 (Oxford, 1978), 179-86.

²⁸ B. Harvey, *Living and Dying in England, 1100-1540: The Monastic Experience* (Oxford, 1993).

²⁹ See *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae Medii Aevi ad Annum 1638*, edd. D.E.R. Watt and A.L. Murray (Edinburgh, 2003); *The Heads of Religious Houses in Scotland from Twelfth to Sixteenth Centuries* [hereafter *HRHS*], edd. D.E.R. Watt and N. Shead (Edinburgh, 2001); *A Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Graduates to ad 1410*, ed. D.E.R. Watt (Oxford, 1977).

these rich resources we cannot attempt to find these elusive monks or nuns. For religious women we have other obstacles; we have no admission, profession or obituary list nor any contemporary sources surviving for female houses.³⁰ Without records like these we are hard pressed to find out certain facts about nuns, like mortality and recruitment rates for convents, the general size of a convent throughout the period or anything about their daily life. However, there are other ways to find nuns and the rest of this presentation will concentrate on these nuns, their family, local and social connections where these can be traced.

First of all, we can recognize those women because they continued to be identified by their family surnames after becoming nuns and their names may be recognized from a variety of sources. By looking at the documents associated with convents it is clear that these women were from the areas or lands surrounding the convents or from villages and towns connected to the convent in some way. For the later medieval period most women who lived in a convent were either related to someone living on the monastic estate, from a family that lived locally, usually within a 15-mile radius of the convent, or related to a benefactor or patron.

After an examination of a number of sources a database of all known religious women in Scotland has been constructed.³¹ The total numbers of nuns found in Scotland from *c.* 1200 to the secularization of monastic houses, or thereafter, is roughly 200.³² This database includes those women who may be identified either fully with surname and attachment to a particular convent, as well as those who can only be identified by their first name, or just as a “nun” or “prioress” of the place. This database also includes those women who were still associated with the convents after the Reformation Parliament in 1560 and may still have enjoyed conventual life or received a pension. A further twenty-five nuns are problematic in identifying them completely;³³ some had similar names to other nuns or appeared at two different periods, making it difficult to ascertain whether or not they were

³⁰ There is the exception to this with the incomplete cartulary of Coldstream.

³¹ See below, Lists 1-3.

³² This number is variable considering the “problem nuns” in database below in List 3.

³³ See List 3.

one or two different women. However, on looking closely at the documentation, seventeen nuns of the twenty-five may be considered as different, making the total number of nuns for Scotland approximately 217. Many of the names of the nuns are to be found in sixteenth-century documents rather than in earlier centuries. This makes it difficult to learn anything about monastic life, family influences or recruitment for the entire medieval period. However, by comparing the nuns we do have for all periods, one thing stands out: family and locale were the most important factors in determining recruitment for convents in Scotland.

Mark Dilworth commented that the recruitment and numbers of monks varied from region to region, from large monasteries to small ones and from one house to another and there is no evidence to suggest that recruitment or numbers were down in this period.³⁴ From his assumptions it would seem that the same would be true for nuns. Many monks, and nuns for that matter, were not recorded in monastic documents nor were they found signing charters and so the conclusion to be made is that there were many more members of monastic communities than had their names recorded.³⁵ The number of women found in Scottish convents in the sixteenth century may suggest that female religious establishments were prosperous due to their relationship to powerful local families, their economic viability and social connections within and outwith their monastic communities.

By looking at the nuns found in documents associated with Scottish convents it is clear that these women were from the surrounding local communities or from particular families. Establishing this factor is helped because the nuns' names were recorded, including their surnames. Scottish surnames are an easy way to distinguish those who were from one's kin from those who were not; families bonded together in kin-groups under a surname making a "surname" synonymous with kindred.³⁶ The surname itself was an important part of the sense of kinship and unity in late medieval Scotland but Gordon Donaldson has warned against such "casual

³⁴ Dilworth, *Scottish Monasticism*, 50.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 50.

³⁶ J. Wormald, *Court, Kirk and Community: Scotland 1470-1625* (Edinburgh, 1981), 30.

assumptions or guesses about kinship based solely on surnames".³⁷ Even so, a surname can be used in the later middle ages to reveal a great deal about family, kinship ties, place names and more importantly for this study, the identity of medieval religious women and their families.

The total number of surnames so far found in Scottish convents is 120,³⁸ there were also seventeen nuns whose surnames have not been discovered or were not recorded.³⁹ Identification is determined by examining grants and gifts made to the convents in the later medieval period, as well as documents that refer to conventual lands such as feu charters or tacks and the analysis of the witness lists, grantors or grantees. In most cases names of the prioress and the nuns present for the deed were appended to the document as well as the names of local families or landholders in the area who may have been present as well. The surnames found in these documents often link nuns to their locality and in particular to families in the area or region. We also find that many of the surnames of these women were linked to a particular place, names associated with the convent or lands around the convent, and hereditary family names, while others come from occupations or trades, and some are undetermined at this point.

Place-name surnames make up almost half of the total of surnames of nuns found in medieval Scotland and of these place-name surnames, many are derived from places in Scotland, and more importantly near the convents themselves. One of the earliest names of nuns at Coldstream was Joanna Stichill, a nun at the convent in 1425/6. She was probably from the village of the same name located eight miles south-west of the convent in the parish of the same name. In a grant by Lady Margaret, widow of Sir John Swinton, for the lease of land to William of Wedderburn for four years, Joanna Stichill is recorded as present. The deed was enacted near the convent of Coldstream in the presence of Mariota Blackburn, prioress and herself.⁴⁰ The Swintons

³⁷ D. Moody, *Scottish Family History* (London, 1988), 86; see also G. Donaldson, *Surnames and Ancestry in Scotland* (1981).

³⁸ See List 2.

³⁹ See List 1.

⁴⁰ *The Swintons of that Ilk and their Cadets* [hereafter *Swintons*], ed. A.C. Swinton (Edinburgh, 1883), xxv-xxvi, no. xix.

were also linked to the convent in the thirteenth century when Alexander Swinton granted the nuns the land of Todrig.⁴¹

Some place-name surnames can be problematic, especially if there was more than one place in Scotland with the same name. For example, Janet Blair was a nun at Aberdour in 1496 and had a surname linked to places that can be found in Forfar, Fife and Perthshire. It was likely that she may have been associated with the Blairs in Fife, possibly those from Carnock parish. Sir William Blair was steward of Fife in 1295⁴² and Alexander Blair, a knight, witnessed two charters to the priory of St Andrews *c.* 1241.⁴³ Another nun, Marion Bog from the convent of Manuel in 1552, is hard to trace for her name may be associated with a place near a bog, such as bog hill or bog side.⁴⁴

Family surnames were often hereditary and many of them have different origins; they later became fixed and linked to a particular place in Scotland, for example, the Lindsay family who resided near Crawford. Place-name surnames are the oldest and most common and became fixed at a relatively early stage and became linked with particular families, for example, the Rutherfords of Rutherford. These can be problematic if the family moved from a different place; for example, the Hume family were associated with the land and barony of Hume (Home) in Berwickshire but by the later medieval period we may find Humes in East and West Lothian and other

⁴¹ *Chartulary of the Cistercian Priory of Coldstream* [hereafter *Cold. Cart.*] (Grampian Club, 1879), no. 25. This charter is datable to 1256 x 18 July 1274, possibly 1266. These lands are not to be confused with the other town of Todrig lying 8.5 miles to the west of the convent associated with Kelso abbey and probably named Steigrig in the middle ages. See *The Books of Assumption of the Thirds of Benefices* [hereafter *Books of Assumption*] ed. J. Kirk (Oxford, 1995), 223.

⁴² *Registrum de Dunfermelyn*, 102.

⁴³ *Liber Cartarum Prioratus Sancti Andree in Scotia* [hereafter *St A. Lib.*], 263, 278.

⁴⁴ National Archives of Scotland [hereafter NAS], GD 215/1870, 19-25, Beveridge Papers, Manuel Nunnery and Burgh Records. She was witness to a lease by the prioress of Manuel for Henry Forrest and Katherine Livingstone for the rights of the burgh mill and little mill. For the origins of “bog” see G.F. Black, *The Surnames of Scotland: Their Origin, Meaning and History* [hereafter Black, *Surnames*] (New York, 1946), 85-6.

part of Scotland, like the Humes of Polwarth at North Berwick, Argaty and Lundie. Most place-name and family surnames, however, were hereditary and by the later middle ages in Scotland were linked to localities or particular towns or villages. The Hepburns, for example, became associated with the land and castle of Hailes in East Lothian and five female members of this family can be found in the convent of Haddington from 1476 onwards. Place-name surnames and family surnames therefore may become one and the same. Occupational or trades surnames usually come from those families in particular trades and an examination of different sources can usually determine if a particular surname was present in the burgh, town or monastic estate.⁴⁵ But many of these names also became fixed as family names in this period and therefore are not necessarily linked to a particular trade or occupation and so other means for determining whether or not the family pursued a particular trade must be applied. However, although surname analysis can be problematic, it has proved the best way to begin looking for familial and social connections of late medieval Scottish nuns.

Occupational surnames such as Wright, Smith, Flager or Fletcher make up a small portion of the total but they can also be hard to trace simply because they were common occupations in the middle ages. Several families with the same surname might all live in the same place or near one another without necessarily having any direct relation at all. This can prove difficult when trying to look for specific families associated with convents. However, it is not too fanciful to assume that a smith or millwright might send their daughters to a convent, especially if they had some special relationship with the convent. For example, there was a Katrina Smith found at the convent of Elcho in 1532;⁴⁶ Elizabeth Flager or Fletcher at the convent of Sciennes also in the 1560s⁴⁷ and three nuns, Janet, Agnes and Isabella Wright at the convent of Aberdour in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Black, *Surnames*, introduction.

⁴⁶ NAS, GD 12/108,109, Swinton Charters ; see also *Swintons*, cxiii, no. lxxi.

⁴⁷ NAS, GD 50/85, John Macgregor Collection ; J. Foggie, "The Dominicans in Scotland, 1450-1560", Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, (Edinburgh, 1997), 240.

⁴⁸ W. Moir Bryce, *The Scottish Grey Friars*, (Edinburgh, 1909), i, 392-4; NAS, GD 150/206, 248, Morton Papers.

The origins of other surnames such as Darling, Fleming, French, Young and Younger can be even more difficult to determine. Some names such as French and Fleming appeared in the twelfth century. The Flemings were prominent in Lanarkshire and probably came to Scotland with David I but this name was also found throughout the Borders and a Katherine Fleming was a nun at the convent of Coldstream in 1537.⁴⁹ The surname French appeared in the thirteenth century in Roxburghshire and in Fife;⁵⁰ we find Katrina French at the convent of Coldstream from 1537-63.⁵¹ Darling and Younger were names derived from Old English, meaning young noble or younger of the family and the name Darling showed up in Roxburghshire in the fourteenth century⁵² and frequently appeared in the Lauder commissariat record in the sixteenth century; Helen Darling was a nun at North Berwick from 1544-1573.⁵³ The name Younger appeared in Fife in the fourteenth century⁵⁴ and Marjory Younger was a sister at the Franciscan convent of Aberdour in 1496. The origin of other surnames can be even more difficult to find but the names do appear common in particular areas, much like family names. For example, Elizabeth Lamb was prioress at Abbey St Bathans from 1546-1558⁵⁵ and she was more than likely a member of the Lamb family who were prominent in the Borders at the time.

From the total number of women found in Scottish convents, using their surnames, three things can be discovered. First, women in the convents generally came from the surrounding community, and again most within a fifteen-mile radius of their convent. The town of [Eccles-]Newton, for example, was only four miles west of the convent of Coldstream and

⁴⁹ *Cold. Cart.*, 84, 87.

⁵⁰ Black, *Surnames*, 279-80.

⁵¹ *Cold. Cart.*, 84, 87; *Accounts of the Collections of the Thirds of Benefices 1561-1572* [hereafter *Thirds of Benefices*] (Scottish History Society, 1949), 281.

⁵² Black, *Surnames*, 200-201.

⁵³ *Carte Monialium de Northberwic* [hereafter *N.B. Chrs.*] (Bannatyne Club, 1847), no. 11, App. 2, no. 24; NAS, GD 158/270, Humes of Marchmount; *Thirds of Benefices*, 154; *Books of Assumption*, 148.

⁵⁴ Black, *Surnames*, 829.

⁵⁵ *HRHS*, 192.

Margaret Newton was listed as a prioress of the place in 1466.⁵⁶ Secondly, family members continued to send their women to the convent especially if one of their relatives lived there or if there was a history of a female member at the convent. Janet Leslie was niece to the prioress of Elcho, Euphemia Leslie, and can be found at the convent during the same time of her aunt from 1539-40. Janet, who later changed her name to Euffam or Euphemia,⁵⁷ was daughter to Robert Leslie who was procurator for the convent in the affairs surrounding the succession to her aunt's office of prioress.⁵⁸ Thirdly, nuns in the convents were from families that may be connected to whatever family was head of house, which may not be entirely surprising and may be found in the following examples. George, 4th Lord Hume, was married to Margaret Haliburton of Dirleton and we find Humes as head of house and two Haliburton nuns, Janet and Margaret, at North Berwick in the sixteenth century.

What is problematic for this study is that in many cases, even when we can fully identify a nun, very little information is forthcoming, making it almost impossible to establish a firm family link. We know that Elizabeth Pait received a nun's pension from Elcho and was listed in Euphemia Leslie's will but no family relations can be traced to the convent or to any other nun at the time.⁵⁹ Sometimes no surnames were recorded, as in the records with the names of the thirteenth-century prioresses;⁶⁰ some surnames are impossible to trace to any family or place in the whole of Scotland. For example, Joan Drosse who was a nun at the convent of Aberdour in 1486,⁶¹ Beatrice Hodesak who was a nun at the convent of Coldstream in 1310 and

⁵⁶ W. Fraser, *Memorials of the Earls of Haddington* [hereafter Fraser, *Haddington*] (Edinburgh, 1889) ii, no. 308.

⁵⁷ *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, edd. T. Thompson & C. Innes (Edinburgh, 1814-75), ii, 423 stated she was a nun at Elcho and in 1554 changed her name to Euphemia; see also W. Fraser, *Memorials of the Family of Wemyss* [hereafter Fraser, *Wemyss*] (Edinburgh, 1888), ii, 209.

⁵⁸ J. Findlay, *Men of Law in Pre-reformation Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2000), 126.

⁵⁹ NAS, CC8/8/2, Register of Testaments, Commissariat of Edinburgh.

⁶⁰ See List 1.

⁶¹ NAS, GD 150/206, Morton Papers.

fled to Darnchester in fear of the raiding armies;⁶² and Emma Bell, in 1419, who also fled her convent of Eccles due to wartime circumstances.⁶³ Very few references prove a direct relationship of the nun with lay society or her family and only by looking at contemporary sources of the area can we find people with the same surname living nearby. In 1421 Alan White, chaplain of Inchcolm, made a donation to the priory of Haddington and Kristina and Isabella White were listed as nuns there in the latter part of the sixteenth century.⁶⁴ It is not impossible to assume that if a nun held a surname of a family well known in the district of her nunnery, she was more likely than not to be a member of that family.⁶⁵ Also, it is not fanciful to assume that she might be connected to another member of the convent in some way through kinship and family links.

For the remainder of this study I hope to provide a small sample of the nuns that can be found in the convents of late medieval Scotland. It is impossible to discuss every nun and every convent within the present contribution, so a selection of nuns from a few houses is offered. Each section is divided by convent, Coldstream, North Berwick, Haddington, Sciennes and Elcho, making it easier to observe associations between local families, prioresses and other nuns, as well as between the nuns themselves. The examples offered do not include the heads of houses – that would need another essay – but focus rather on those women who were not so well known and who have been ignored hitherto.⁶⁶

⁶² *Cold. Cart.*, 77n.

⁶³ *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland*, ed. J. Bain (Edinburgh, 1881-8), iv, 786, p. 159.

⁶⁴ National Repository of Archives of Scotland [NRAS], 0832/79, nos. 2-4, Lauderdale Muniments; 0832/ 80 Bundle 1 part 1; *Liber Conventus S. Katherine Senensis Prope Edinburgum* [hereafter *Scien. Lib.*] (Abbotsford Club, 1841), 70.

⁶⁵ Macdonald, “Women in Monastic Life”, 51. She has found that this was the case for over 90% of the nuns in Yorkshire for the later middle ages where very little information was present to establish family links at all.

⁶⁶ K. Perkins, “Death, Removal and Resignation: The Succession to the Office of Prioress in Late Medieval Scotland” in *Twisted Sisters: Women, Crime and Deviance in Scotland since 1400*, edd. Y. Brown and R. Ferguson (East Linton, 2002), 32-53.

Coldstream

In 1537, Christian Todrig was a nun at Coldstream. The village of Todrig is located approximately four miles west of the convent and Alexander Swinton gave the lands surrounding Todrig to the convent.⁶⁷ In 1570 the lands of Todrig still belonged to the convent and the rent was listed as £8 annually.⁶⁸ The name Todrig can be found in various entries in both the *Selkirk Burgh Court Book 1503-45* and the *Selkirk Protocol Book 1511-1547*. For example, Robert Todrig was burghess of Selkirk in 1532;⁶⁹ his son, David Todrig, was witness to a dispute regarding the tenement of Robert Chepman and witness to several deeds in the burgh;⁷⁰ and one Anne Todrig was summoned to court to pay her neighbour fees that were owed to him in March 1535/6.⁷¹

Mariota and Isobella Rutherford were both nuns in 1537 with Christian or Christina and present at the convent's election of the new prioress, Janet Hoppringle. The village of Rutherford lies 6.5 miles south-west of Kelso and approximately fifteen miles south-west of the convent. The Rutherford family was once a powerful Border family and in Roxburghshire held the baronies of Rutherford, Scraesburgh, Grubbit, Edgerston and shared half of the barony of Hownam with the Humes in the later middle ages.⁷² The Rutherfords also held considerable control of the town of Jedburgh throughout the sixteenth century; Adam (1541-5), Nicol of Hundalee (1559-65) and Richard (1569-81) were all burghesses and some were provosts of the burgh.⁷³ There was also a connection to the head of the house of Coldstream, the Hoppringles, with the Rutherfords by marriage. In 1529, John Rutherford of Hunthill and Christina Hoppringle desired to be married

⁶⁷ See above n. 40.

⁶⁸ *Books of Assumption*, 186.

⁶⁹ *Selkirk Protocol Books 1511-1547* [hereafter *Selkirk Prot. Bk.*], edd. T. Maley and W. Elliot (Stair Society, 1993), 98.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 34-36.

⁷¹ *The Burgh Court Book of Selkirk 1503-45* [hereafter *Selk. Ct. Bk.*], edd. J. Imrie and others (SRS, 1960-), 163.

⁷² M. Meikle, *A British Frontier? Lairds and Gentlemen in the Eastern Borders, 1540-1603* (East Linton, 2004), 58.

⁷³ *Selkirk Prot. Bk.*, see index.

but were forbidden because they were cousins; they were able to procure a dispensation and were married in the chapel of Galashiels.⁷⁴ Incidentally, the family of the Hoppringles, Rutherfords and Kers were allies and Mark Ker became commendator of Coldstream in 1588 on the death of Elizabeth Hoppringle.⁷⁵

Elena Riddel was also a nun from 1537 to 1563. Riddel was the old town now known as Lilliesleaf, which is six miles south of St Boswells in Roxburghshire. The chief landowners in the area were Riddels who obtained lands of Lilliesleaf in the twelfth century⁷⁶ and Riddel is approximately 12 miles from the convent. About 1250, Roger Nurys, burgess of Berwick gave to the convent land in the Crossgate in Berwick for 6 pennies (6d) yearly and a witness to the charter was Robert de Riddel.⁷⁷ In the sixteenth century, George Riddel, lord of the place, was son and heir to John Riddel and Elizabeth Ker,⁷⁸ and is listed as granting sasine of the lands of Purveshill.⁷⁹ Mark Ker, possibly related to Elizabeth, later became commendator of the convent of Coldstream from 1588 to 1615.⁸⁰

In 1545, Walter Riddel, son and heir to John Riddel, in conjunct fee for his wife Mariota (Hop)pringle, was granted lands near Roxburgh.⁸¹ Because of this particular connection by marriage to the (Hop)pringles, it was likely that the Riddels had a close association with the convent as well, for a female member of the family was a nun in the sixteenth century. Like Isabella and Mariota Rutherford, families in the Borders became linked by marriage and therefore established similar connections with the convents.

Another nun, Joneta Kinghorn was present at the same convent in the sixteenth century. In the *Books of Assumption* for the priory of Eccles,

⁷⁴ *Selkirk Prot. Bk.*, 72-3.

⁷⁵ *HRHS*, 42-43.

⁷⁶ *Early Scottish Charters prior to 1153*, ed. A.C. Lawrie (Glasgow, 1905), 179-80.

⁷⁷ *Cold. Cart.*, no. 49.

⁷⁸ *Selkirk Prot. Bk.*, 127.

⁷⁹ In Eccles parish.

⁸⁰ *HRHS*, 42.

⁸¹ *Registrum Magnii Sigilii Regum Scotorum* [hereafter *RMS*], ed. J. M. Thompson and others (Edinburgh, 1882-1914), iii, no. 3190.

George Kinghorn in Darnchester⁸² had 5s land for 5s mail yearly.⁸³ The nuns of Coldstream received a number of benefactions from the family of Darnchester. They were granted by Walter, son of Thomas of Darnchester 12 acres of land called Huyishaugh in Darnchester and 12 acres in old Hirsell in the thirteenth century.⁸⁴ Walter and Thomas, his sons, confirmed the grants made by their father in later charters. In the Coldstream cartulary there are several charters for lands near Darnchester given to the nuns of Coldstream.⁸⁵ Richard, the son of the cook of Darnchester, gave to the nuns a toft with a rood of land next to it for the annual rent of one pound of cumin, or three half pennies.⁸⁶ In 1464, Margaret Kingorne, one of the nuns at the convent, along with another nun, Marion of Kirkettle, delivered letters of quitclaim narrating a controversy between the convent and David Marescall or Marshall.⁸⁷ Witness to this quitclaim was Alexander of Hirsell and there were also charters confirming sixty to one hundred acres of Hirsell as well as the church of Hirsell to the convent in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with Adam, parson of Hirsell as witness.⁸⁸ It is not unlikely that the two Kinghorne nuns were related in some way.

North Berwick

At the Cistercian priory of North Berwick, Alison and Elspeth and possibly Isabella Panton were all members of the convent of North Berwick from 1539 to 1573. This place-name surname may be linked to landowners in the Lothian region during the middle ages and in 1430, John Panton appears on a list recounting the “service” made before “a noble squire” James of

⁸² George Hume of Wedderburn also had tenants in Darnchester and in the 1570s he owed the commendator of Coldstream, Mark Ker, £14 for his teinds in Darnchester. Meikle, *British Frontier*, 130-150. The Hume (Home) family from c. 1548 had control over the convent of Eccles either as having female heads of house or as commendators. See *HRHS*, 74-5.

⁸³ *Books of Assumption*, 184.

⁸⁴ *Cold. Cart.*, nos. 21, 22.

⁸⁵ *Cold. Cart.*, nos. 31-34.

⁸⁶ *Cold. Cart.*, no. 31.

⁸⁷ Fraser, *Haddington*, ii, no. 306.

⁸⁸ *Cold. Cart.*, nos. 7, 10.

Lauder, bailie of the lands of Dalmeny, under Philip Mowbrey, lord of Dalmeny regarding certain lands pertaining to John Dundas.⁸⁹ The link between the convent and the Pantons may have begun in 1457 when a charter of resignation by Archibald Haliburton, lord of Dirleton was granted to Thomas Panton, dwelling near the monastery of North Berwick, assigning to him three parts of the teind commonly called Rouchlawfauld.⁹⁰ On 13 August 1487, an instrument drawn up by a notary explained that Christina Archer, Margaret Archer and Helen Archer resigned these lands⁹¹ for “reasons of poverty and dearth of victuals”. For the relief of their poverty they had asked Archibald Haliburton, their superior, if they could sell the lands to a “worthy man Thomas Pantoun” who was dwelling with the prioress.⁹² In February 1500 Thomas Panton with Marion his spouse, and William and John his sons, granted his croft in the territory of Dirleton to his youngest son Thomas as well as his croft on the south side of the burgh which he had leased from the prioress of North Berwick.⁹³

Elsbeth, Isabella and Alison all appeared with their hands at the pen led by a notary in a charter in March 1539⁹⁴ but only Alison was present in 1544; both Alison and Elpeth appeared again in 1548.⁹⁵ Alison appeared with her signature on a document in 1556⁹⁶ and she was the last remaining

⁸⁹ Fraser, *Haddington*, ii, 229-30, no. 290.

⁹⁰ NAS, GD 6/1, Biel Muniments.

⁹¹ Christina and Helen were spouses to Andrew Haliburton and William Haliburton.

⁹² It is unlikely that Thomas was actually living with the prioress as the previous writ states that he was dwelling near the monastery; see NAS, GD 6/2, 13, Biel Muniments.

⁹³ NAS, GD 6/13, Biel Muniments. He granted half his croft to his youngest son Thomas Puntoun with two rigs on the north side going down towards the Ferrygait and made him his assignee after death of his father and Marion his mother; and he granted his croft on the south side of the burgh between Wellys land on the east and Kayis Wynd on the west which he had in tack of the prioress of North Berwick if he or Marion should decease before the expiry of the lease.

⁹⁴ *Carte Monialium de Northberwic* [hereafter *N.B. Chrs.*], (Bannatyne Club, 1847), App. 1, no 2.

⁹⁵ *NB Chrs.*, App. 1, nos. 11, 24.

⁹⁶ NAS, GD 158/270, Humes of Marchmount.

Panton nun in 1573 when she received a nun's portion of £20.⁹⁷ Two other nuns that may be linked to the Pantons were Janet and Margaret Haliburton. Both of these women (possibly sisters) were at the convent at the same time as the Pantons and appeared in the documents of 1539 and 1544⁹⁸ but did not occur any later than this. These two nuns may also be linked to the Humes of Polwarth through Patrick Hume of Polwarth's marriage to Helen Shaw of Sauchie who married Archibald Haliburton in first instance.

Other links between the nuns and the outside world are readily found. For example, Margaret Sinclair, a nun at North Berwick from c. 1539, appeared in the same documents as another nun, Janet Crichton;⁹⁹ she also received a nun's portion of £20 in 1573.¹⁰⁰ One Margaret Sinclair of Hermanston was the first wife to Patrick Hume of Polwarth¹⁰¹ and in 1523, Alison Hume, prioress, granted a lease or tack to Alexander Hume of Polwarth (son of Patrick) of the parsonage of the church of Logy for nineteen years and witness to this was the chaplain of the house, George Sinclair.¹⁰² On 10 December George was listed as the vicar in the record of profession and obedience for the prioress, Isabella Hume.¹⁰³ George Sinclair of Hiefield held lands near the convent in 1548 and this may well be the same George.¹⁰⁴ In 1556, John Sinclair witnessed a discharge by the prioress to John Beaton of the teindsheaves of Balcarross and was listed as a servant of the prioress along with William Herveson and Alexander Gibson.¹⁰⁵

Mariota and Margaret Wood were also nuns at the convent in the sixteenth century and lands were given to Alexander Wood in tack by the

⁹⁷ *Thirds of Benefices*, 148.

⁹⁸ *N.B. Chrs.*, App. 1, nos. 2,11, App. 2, no. 24.

⁹⁹ *N.B. Chrs.*, App. 1, no. 11; App. 2, no. 24; NAS, GD 158/270, Humes of Marchmount.

¹⁰⁰ *Thirds of Benefices*, 154; *Books of Assumptions*, 148.

¹⁰¹ M. M. Meikle, "Lairds and Gentlemen: a study of the landed families of the Eastern Anglo-Scottish Borders, c. 1540-1603", Unpublished PhD Thesis (Edinburgh, 1989), 577.

¹⁰² NAS, GD 158/239, Humes of Marchmount.

¹⁰³ *N.B. Chrs.*, no. 36.

¹⁰⁴ *N.B. Chrs.*, App. 1, no. 18.

¹⁰⁵ NAS, GD 158/273, Humes of Marchmount.

prioress in the sixteenth century. Alexander was son to Alexander Wood of Largo and brother to Andrew Wood; he was the last vicar of North Berwick before 1560 and vicar of Largo and Kilconquhar at the time of the Reformation.¹⁰⁶ As early as 1547 he appeared on the witness list to a discharge by the prioress to Alexander Hume, her brother, of £1000 for “furnishing our place in time of need”.¹⁰⁷ In 1554, as vicar of Largo, he was witness to another discharge by the prioress, Margaret Hume, to Patrick Hume of Polwarth of money due for the teindsheaves of Gilstone for the crop in 1554.¹⁰⁸ In 1556, Jonet Wood, daughter of the same Alexander Wood, vicar of North Berwick, gave up all claims to the property and possession of ten teindsheaves of Kilconquhar to the prioress of North Berwick that Janet had possessed.¹⁰⁹ On 10 March 1559, Alexander Carrick owed the same Alexander Wood, vicar of Largo, money for the marriage of his daughter Alison Wood.¹¹⁰ Alexander was also granted the lands of the grange in Fife in feu by the prioress in 1560¹¹¹ and in 1567 he was given twelve acres of land with all pastures to feed his flock.¹¹² In the early thirteenth century, the convent of North Berwick was granted the rights to the parish church of Kilconquhar by Duncan earl of Fife.¹¹³ There was an earlier link between the Carricks and the nuns of North Berwick as Adam of Kilconquhar came from a cadet branch of the Carrick family and held lands in Fife; Elena Carrick was prioress of the place in the fourteenth century.¹¹⁴

In 1546 Bernard Bailie appeared as the parson of Lammington in the witness list of an instrument narrating that Margaret Hume, prioress of North Berwick, granted a discharge to Alexander Hume, her brother, of

¹⁰⁶ Swan, “North Berwick”, 64.

¹⁰⁷ NAS, GD 158/252, Humes of Marchmount.

¹⁰⁸ NAS, GD 158/269, Humes of Marchmount.

¹⁰⁹ NAS, GD 110/15, Hamilton-Darymple of North Berwick; *Books of Assumption*, 146.

¹¹⁰ *N.B. Chrs.*, App. 2, nos. 38-39.

¹¹¹ *N.B. Chrs.*, App. 2, no. 44.

¹¹² NAS, GD110/6, Hamilton-Darymple of North Berwick.

¹¹³ *N.B. Chrs.*, nos. 19-20.

¹¹⁴ *HRHS*, 164.

“intromissions” with rents and profits of the convent.¹¹⁵ Marion Hume, daughter of Patrick Hume of Polwarth and Helen Shaw of Sauchie, married Sir William Baillie of Lamington and a Marion Baillie was listed as a member of the convent from c. 1544 and received her nun’s portion of £20 in 1563.¹¹⁶ On 28 October 1560, the prioress appointed John Baillie as her “cessioner” and assignee to 100 “bolls of ferme bere awayng [owing] to the said prioress by Robert Lauder of the Bas not being in the handis of farmouraris in Northberwyk”;¹¹⁷ and in 1562 an instrument of sasine narrated that the prioress had given to John Baillie 80 acres of land of the priory.¹¹⁸ John Baillie was witness to a feu charter granting Andrew Hume, son of Gavin Hume, the lands of Lamysyde and Ecclescross, extending to twenty six arable acres of land near North Berwick.¹¹⁹ In 1561/2 a sasine narrated that the prioress had granted to John Baillie eighty acres of land of the priory but by 1581 they were renounced by another John Baillie of St John’s kirk in favour of Alexander Hume.¹²⁰ Margaret Hume, daughter to Patrick Hume of Polwarth (grandson to the above) and Elizabeth Hepburn of Waughton both married John Baillie of St John’s kirk and it is likely that Alexander Hume was Margaret Hume’s brother. It may be surmised that Margaret Baillie was related to either Bernard or John Baillie in view of the close connection between the convent and the Baillies.¹²¹ It is possible, however, that the Hume connection was the link between the Baillies and North Berwick.

Haddington

On 5 December 1531, Patrick and John Hepburn resigned an acre in the

¹¹⁵ NAS, GD158/250, Humes of Marchmount.

¹¹⁶ *N.B. Chrs.*, App. 1, no. 11; App. 2, no. 24; *Thirds of Benefices*, 154.

¹¹⁷ *N.B. Chrs.*, App. 2, no. 42. It is possible that John Baillie became a servant or bailie of the convent at this time, though no documents state this directly.

¹¹⁸ NAS, GD 110/1, 11, Hamilton-Darymple of North Berwick.

¹¹⁹ *RMS*, iv, no. 1598. See also NAS, GD110/3, part 2, Hamilton-Darymple of North Berwick; NAS, GD 1/110/2, Misc. Collections.

¹²⁰ NAS, GD110/1, Hamilton-Darymple of North Berwick.

¹²¹ NAS, GD 158/250, Humes of Marchmount.

Nungate to Alexander Karrington, bailie of the prioress of Haddington.¹²² In January 1532, Andrew Karrington was listed again as bailie to the prioress of Haddington and in 1545 Isabella Alexander, widow of Andrew Karrington in the Nungate of Haddington, gave to her sons George, Andrew and Thomas, chaplains, a tack of the grain mills lying in the Nungate with two acres of land that had been granted by the prioress of Haddington for nineteen years dated 1538.¹²³ A Katherine Karrington appeared as a nun at Haddington from c. 1550 to 1563 and had appended her signature to documents with the help of the notary pertaining to the monastery. One was for a lease of land to James Cockburn in the 1550s and a feu charter to the same Cockburn in 1560.¹²⁴ She continued to be listed in documents pertaining to the alienation of the priory from 1559 and her last entry was in 1563.¹²⁵ The name Karrington comes from the lands in East Lothian and there were several listed in the rental of the convent in 1573; William Karrington for his “oxingang of land”, 28s 4d; Bessie Karrington in the Fish Market for the annual of her house, 8s 9d; Thomas Karrington’s land, 4s and John’s land, 5s; Patrick Karrington for Geleis house, 13s 4d.¹²⁶ It is easy to assume if there were a number of Karringtons in Haddington and living on the monastic estate that a female member of their family would be in the convent.

Another nun who appeared in the same documents pertaining to James Cockburn of Scraling was Marion Cockburn. The prioress gave to James the land and mains of Bagbie for a lease of nineteen years.¹²⁷ Marion Cockburn had signed her name with help from a notary to this lease as well as many others pertaining to James Cockburn over the next ten years. Marion Cockburn also appeared in the same documents regarding the land of the priory from 1559 but does not appear in the later documents from 1561-3.¹²⁸ Another link of the Cockburns to Haddington might be shown in a bond of manrent that survives from 1511 of William Cockburn of Scraling and his

¹²² NAS, B30/1/2/fo. 27, Protocol Books, Haddington.

¹²³ NAS, GD 1/39/Sec 4/No 7, Misc. Charters.

¹²⁴ NRAS, 0832/79 Bundle 1, Part 4, nos. 2-4, 8, Lauderdale Muniments.

¹²⁵ NRAS, 0832/ 80 Bundle 1 Part 1, Lauderdale Muniments.

¹²⁶ *Books of Assumption*, 180.

¹²⁷ NRAS, 0832/ 79, Bundle 1 Part 4, no. 3, Lauderdale Muniments.

¹²⁸ NRAS, 0832/80 Bundle 1, Part 1, Lauderdale Muniments.

kin and friends for 5 years to John, lord Hay of Yester.¹²⁹ The lords of Yester are linked to the nunnery in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and were their “protectorate” if anyone should happen to encroach on the rights that the Hays of Yester had granted them.¹³⁰ There was also another bond of manrent between William Cockburn and Hepburn of Hailes in 1487 for life; the Hepburns had female members at the convent from this point onwards.¹³¹ In the *Books of Assumption* pertaining to the rental of the convent there was Laurence Cockburn for the feu mailes of land; John Cockburn, maltman; and Harry Cockburn in the West Gate.¹³² In 1546 James Cockburn of Langtoun admitted that he had “offendit to Dame Elizabeth Hepburn and her convent by taking corn, cattle and goods from the lands of Bagbie and others”.¹³³

Sciennes

The convent of Sciennes differs slightly from the others mentioned above; it was urban and located in Edinburgh. It was one of three mendicant houses founded for women during the period 1450-1560. The task of identifying nuns for this house does not differ from that for the other convents discussed; many of the nuns at Sciennes were possibly linked to families prominent in the burgh or connected to the convent or its prioresses and are found in documents relating to land transactions. While many of the family links are not absolutely conclusive, there were several nuns where a direct connection to a particular family can be made.

¹²⁹ J. Wormald, *Lords and Men in Scotland: Bonds of Manrent, 1442-1603* [new edition] (Edinburgh, 2003), App. A, no. 4.

¹³⁰ *Calendar of Writs preserved at Yester House 1166-1503*, edd. C.C.H. Harvey and J. Macleod (SRS, 1930), nos. 20, 500; *RMS*, ii, no. 610. The Hays of Yester had encroached upon the rights of the nuns to use the roadways from Nunhope to Yester and back to the convent. They re-established this right to use the roadways and offered protection to the nuns if anyone should not adhere to the writ.

¹³¹ Wormald, *Lords and Men*, App. A, no. 1.

¹³² *Books of Assumption*, 180.

¹³³ *Acts of the Lords of Council in Public Affairs 1501-1554: Selections from the Acta Dominorum Concilii*, ed. R.K. Hannay (Edinburgh, 1932), 545.

A link between the Hepburn of Hailes, earls of Bothwell, and the convent of Sciennes can readily be established. Patrick Hepburn, first earl of Bothwell, married Janet Douglas;¹³⁴ their daughter was Janet Hepburn who married George, third lord Seton sometime before 1508. After her husband was killed at the battle of Flodden in 1513, she lived for many years at the convent, whose foundation in 1517 is sometimes attributed to her, and she contributed to the expense of the building.

Sometime before 1508, Alexander Hepburn of Whitesome, brother to Adam Hepburn of Hailes, married Jonet Napier, daughter of Sir Alexander Napier of Merchiston.¹³⁵ Margaret, Agnes, Elizabeth, Katherine, and another Elizabeth Napier were all present at Sciennes during the sixteenth century. In the *Books of Assumption* for the convent “lands pertaining to the sisters of the Napiers in sindrie places” were worth £10 annually. The Napiers of Merchiston granted this property to the priory, probably upon entry of one of the women above. The Napiers were also prominent as burgesses of Edinburgh, dealing in wool in the fifteenth century and listed as burgesses throughout the sixteenth century and at various intervals in the seventeenth century.¹³⁶

On 31 August 1528, William Lauder, bailie of Edinburgh, passed to a tenement of the late John Napier on the south side of the High Street and there Mr Robert Galbraith, procurator for Margaret Preston, widow of John Napier and a sister of St Katherine’s, conveyed the land to William Adamson, burgess and Jonet Napier, his spouse. The bailie, “cognosced and entered John Charteris attorney and in name of devout orators”, Elizabeth Napier, Margaret Napier, Agnes Napier and Katrina Napier, sisters of St Katherine’s, daughters and heirs to John Napier, “in and to their parts and portions”.¹³⁷ On 31 August 1528, William Adamson, with consent of Jonet Napier, his spouse gave an annual rent of £10, out of a foreland and tenement

¹³⁴ She was daughter of James Douglas, earl of Morton who was married to Princess Joan, daughter of King James I.

¹³⁵ *The Scots Peerage*, ed. Sir J. Balfour Paul (Edinburgh, 1904-14), ii, 144.

¹³⁶ *Roll of Edinburgh Burgesses and Guild-Brethren 1406-1700* [hereafter *Edin. Burg.*], ed. C.B.B. Watson (SRS, 1929), 375-6.

of William Adamson¹³⁸ in favour of Katherine Seton, prioress, and the sisters of the priory of Sciennes.

There were another three nuns who could be linked directly to families outside the convent, namely Elizabeth Auchinleck, lady of Glenbervie, Agnes Sandilandis, and Margaret Livingstone. Elizabeth Auchinleck, lady of Glenbervie was the widow of Sir William Douglas of Braidwood, who fell on the field of Flodden in 1513. She was in ward of Archibald Douglas, earl of Angus, and married his son, William Douglas by 10 December 1501.¹³⁹ She was the daughter of James Auchinleck and Giles Ross and she claimed the land of Glenbervie, Barres and Kemnay as heir to Elspeth Melville, her grandmother, and Giles Melville sister to Elspeth on 26 November 1512.¹⁴⁰

On 5 November 1520, before her profession in the chapel of St John [*sic*], she procured a contract with Gavin Douglas, bishop of Dunkeld, her brother-in-law, which narrated that her son would get the barony of Glenbervie subject to the annual payment of £20 to the nunnery of Sciennes and £80 annually to be paid to her.¹⁴¹ In this contract she stated that neither she herself nor her heirs would vex or trouble the convent in any way and that if Archibald did, he would have to pay the prioress £40.¹⁴² In January 1531 she was designated as a sister of the house of Sciennes and in February 1540 she subscribed with her own hand that she was prioress of the place, though by August 1540 she was no longer listed as prioress with the succession of Katherine Seton.¹⁴³

There was another case where lands or fees were granted to the prioress of Sciennes either upon entry of the nun or once the nun was established at

¹³⁷ *The Protocol Book of John Foular 1528-1534* [hereafter Durkan, *Prot. Bk. Foular*], ed. J. Durkan (SRS, 1985), 13, no. 41.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 14, no. 45.

¹³⁹ W. Fraser, *The Douglas Book* (Edinburgh, 1859), iii, no. 181.

¹⁴⁰ Fraser, *Douglas*, iii, no. 182.

¹⁴¹ Fraser, *Douglas*, iii, no. 185; See also, Fraser, *Douglas*, ii, no. 115.

¹⁴² Fraser, *Douglas*, iii, no. 185.

¹⁴³ NAS, GD 25/1/381, Alisa Muniments; see also M. Sanderson, *A Kindly Place? Living in Sixteenth Century Scotland* (East Linton, 2002), 146-7.

the place. Agnes Sandilandis was a nun at the convent of Sciennes in 1520. The lands of Sandilandis were held of the Douglasses in the early part of the fourteenth century. James Sandilandis was a vassal of William, first earl of Douglas, who obtained a grant of lands in Peebles-shire in 1336 and in 1348 held the lands of Sandilandis and Redmyre of William, lord of Douglas. James married Eleanor, sister to William, and received the barony of Calder, near Edinburgh. On 20 October 1520, James Sandilandis (heir to another James Sandilandis), knight, had his bailies infest Josina, prioress of Sciennes in an annual feu duty of 2 merks Scots from the lands of Over Williamston and another annual feu duty of 2 merks Scots from the lands of Braidshaw in the barony of Calder. He and his wife, Mariota Forrester, granted these annual feu duties to the prioress for the life of their daughter, Agnes who was an unprofessed sister of the house of Sciennes.¹⁴⁴ From what information we have on nuns in Scotland, this is the first instance where we have direct correlation between a grant given to a convent in connection with entrance of a female member of the family. This was highly unusual considering that entrance fees or grants were not given to a convent in the name of the nun lest it were considered simony.¹⁴⁵ However, the wording of the document may suggest that the family granted the annual feu duties to the convent not upon the entry of their daughter but rather after Agnes had already spent some time there.

Elcho

The last examples come from the Cistercian priory of Elcho in Perthshire. Christine Wemyss was a nun at Elcho in 1532 and probably came from Wemyss, a parish on the south coast of Fife. She signed her name with the help of a notary for a tack made by the prioress, Euphemia Leslie, to John Swinton for the lease of the lands of Standardlandis on 8 July 1532.¹⁴⁶ She appeared again on 31 July 1532 as a witness to the quitclaim by the prioress to John Swinton for all "his sums of money ... well content and paid",

¹⁴⁴ NAS, GD 119/180, Torphichen Writs.

¹⁴⁵ See J. Lynch, *Simonical Entry into Religious Life, 1000-1260: A Social, Economical and Legal Study* (Ohio, 1976).

¹⁴⁶ *Swintons*, cxv.

where her signature appears on the document led by a notary.¹⁴⁷ But by 1539 when the prioress instigated a precept of sasine for the same lands for John Swinton, Christine was not present; nor does she appear in any other documents regarding the convent where the signatures of nuns are recorded for the sixteenth century.¹⁴⁸ The baron of Elcho was Sir John Wemyss and he was their heritable bailie. In 1547, after invasion and devastation by the English, he helped repair the nunnery by lending them twenty bolls of barley and money to help rebuild their church and other buildings. He also lent them £66 to help them redeem the lease of the lands of Cottis from John Swinton and he also leased lands by the convent along with twenty-four loads of coal each year. In 1558 the nuns acknowledged their debt to John Wemyss for his help in “rebuilding and embellishing their house of God”, and feued more lands to him within the lordship of Elcho.¹⁴⁹ The nunnery, however, did not fully recover from this particular destruction and John Wemyss continued to look after the convent affairs until his death in 1572.¹⁵⁰

Elizabeth Rollock occurred as the subprioress of Elcho on 16 February 1525 and in October 1526 and was later listed as a nun at Elcho from 1532 to 1540; her surname can be found mainly in Perthshire and Fife. One of the most prominent Rollocks in the area was Robert Rollock, a native of Perth, who was a notary public in Perth and whose protocol book survives from 1534 to 1552. He also served as sheriff clerk of Perthshire and was last chaplain of the Confraternity of Trinity Altar in the parish church of Perth.¹⁵¹ It cannot be determined whether or not Elizabeth was related to Robert but it is likely that she was a member of the Rollock family of Perthshire. She appeared as a nun at the convent along with Christine Wemyss at Elcho in 1532 when her signature occurs on the document for the tack granted to John Swinton; she appeared again in a precept of 31 July 1532 to the same John Swinton. On 12 September 1539 she occurs on a witness list for another precept of sasine by the prioress to John Swinton

¹⁴⁷ NAS, GD 12/109, Swinton Charters.

¹⁴⁸ NAS, GD 12/115, Swinton Charters; NAS, GD 204/713, Rothes Cartulary.

¹⁴⁹ Fraser, *Wemyss*, ii, nos. 119-214.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 120.

¹⁵¹ *RMS*, iv, no. 1524.

infesting him and his heirs with the lands of Standardlandis, with her signature led by a notary.¹⁵² She also acted as witness in 1541 to the feu charter granted by the prioress to Norman Leslie leasing him the lands of Kinnard.¹⁵³ Like Christine, she must have died by 1570 as she was not mentioned in Euphemia Leslie's will detailing the nuns' pensions owed to the remaining nuns.¹⁵⁴

These examples provide only a small picture of the women we find in late medieval Scottish convents. We may never know if these women were directly related to families in the localities surrounding the convents but it is probably safe to assume that they had a connection in some way. The evidence seems to suggest that there were certain types of relationship between the nuns and the families of the same surname who appear in the same documents. The present contribution offers a fresh way of exploring female monasticism in Scotland and of appreciating the importance for nunneries of family, social and local connections. The fifteen nunneries in Scotland may still be shrouded in some mystery but hopefully this study has begun to dispel some of the secrecy surrounding them.

Glasgow

¹⁵² NAS, GD 12/115, Swinton Charters.

¹⁵³ NAS, GD 204/713, Rothes Cartulary.

¹⁵⁴ NAS, CC8/8/2, Register of Testaments, Commissariat of Edinburgh.

APPENDIX

Religious Women in Scottish Convents, c. 1200 to 1600 Listed by Name, Dates and Convent

* = prioress sp = subprioress

LIST 1: UNKNOWN SURNAMES

- Ada* • Abbey St Bathans • 28 August 1296
Alice I* • Haddington • 29 July 1291
Alice II* • Manuel • 28 August 1296
Alicia^{sp} • North Berwick • ca 1296
Beatrice* • North Berwick • 12 August 1375
Christina* • Manuel • 28 July 1291
Eleanor* • Lincluden • 28 August 1296
Elizabeth I* • Eccles • x 1500
Elizabeth II* • Haddington • 12 July 1492
Elizabeth III* • Manuel • 10 July 1492
Froelina* • Berwick-Upon-Tweed • 15 April 1221
Isabella* • Elcho • 13 March 1445
Jonet I* • Eccles • 23 November 1411
Margaret* • Elcho • 5 December 1470
Marion* • Manuel • 9 March 1503
Mary* • Coldstream • mid-13th century
Miracle Nun • Haddington • 7 September 1358

LIST 2: IDENTIFIABLE BY SURNAME AND CONVENT

- Aberlady, Elizabeth de* • Elcho • 29/30 April 1405
Arroch, Agnes* • Elcho • 25 Jan 1282
Auchinleck (Effleck), Elizabeth* • Sciennes • 31 January 1521 (nun); 18 April 1538 (prioress); 6 February 1540
Ballantyne (Bellenden), Christina* • Sciennes • 1532-1565
Ballie, Marion • North Berwick • 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548; 1562

Barclay, Isobell • Elcho • 8 July 1532, 31 July 1532, 12 September 1539; 19 January 1540
 Barry (Barny), Margaret • Elcho • 8 July 1532; 31 July 1532
 Bell, Emma • Eccles • 19 October 1419
 Bernham, Agnes* • Berwick-Upon-Tweed • 25 June 1291- 28 August 1296
 Beyton (Beaton), Katherine • Haddington • 25 May 1559; 10 October 1560; 6 March 1560; 27 October 1561; 6 December 1563; 30 December 1564
 Bissette, Janet • Aberdour • 2 April 1486
 Blackadder, Beatrice • Sciennes • 15 February 1555/6; 2 July 1564
 Blackburn, Mariota* • Coldstream • 10 October 1419-15 January 1426
 Blair, Janet • Aberdour • 2 April 1486
 Blair, Jonet • Dundee • 8 March 1501-2; 31 March 1502
 Bog, Marion • Manuel • 26 August 1552
 Boston (Bostein), Katrina • Eccles • 10 June 1555
 Bowie (Boway), Margaret • North Berwick • 24 March 1555
 Broadfield (Bronfeyld), Janet • Haddington • 6 March 1560; 5 December 1563; 3 December 1564
 Brown (Broun), Agnes* • Abbey St Bathans & Berwick-Upon Tweed • prior to 1420 (nun at Abbey St Bathans); January 1420 - 31 July 1429
 Brown (Brome), Janet • Haddington • 10 October 1560
 Brown (Broun), Joneta • Coldstream • 23 February 1537/8
 Brown (Broun), Margaret • Coldstream • 1563
 Cant, Isabella • Sciennes • 15 February 1555/6
 Cant, Margaret* • Eccles • 27 March 1501
 Carrick, Elena* • North Berwick • 20 September 1379 - 25 February 1407
 Carrington (Karrington), Katherine • Haddington • 10 October 1560; 27 October 1561; 6 December 1563; 3 December 1564
 Chirside, Margaret • Abbey St Bathans • 4 February 1554; 8 March 1557
 Cockburn, Eve* • Haddington • 28 August 1296
 Cockburn, Mariot* • North Berwick • 30 June 1566 - 7 August 1568
 Cockburn, Marion I • Manuel • 26 August 1552 • GD 215/1870, p. 25, 41, NAS Beveridge Papers, Manuel Nunnery and Burgh Mills.
 Cockburn, Marion II • Haddington • 15--? ; 25 May 1559
 Cornwall, Christine • Aberdour • 18 August 1560

Craw, Janet (Auchincraw) • Abbey St Bathans • 4 February 1554; 8 March 1557
 Crawford, Marion • Sciennes • 15 February 1555
 Crawford, Margaret I • North Berwick • 3 March 1539; 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548; 25 March 1555/6; 1562; 12 April 1578; 18 December 1573
 Crichton, Janet • North Berwick • 3 March 1539; 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548; 25 March 1555/6; 1562; 18 December 1573
 Crombie (Crummy), Margaret • Aberdour • 18 August 1560
 Crumley, Isabella • Haddington • 20 October 1567
 Cumnock, Joanee de* • Abbey St Bathans • c. 1412
 Darling, Helen (Ellen) • North Berwick • 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548; 25 March 1555/6; 1562; 18 December 1573
 Diksby (poss. Dickson), Elisabeth • Eccles • 10 June 1555
 Diksby (poss. Dickson), Katrina • Eccles • 10 June 1555
 Dominici, Christina* • Iona • 1422x
 Donaldson, Anna • Iona • 1484
 Donaldson, Margaret • North Berwick • 9 January 1548; 12 August 1544; 16th c. n.d.; 24 March 1555/6; 12 April 1578; 12 January 1587/8; 1562; 18 December 1573; 9 July 1580
 Donaldson, (Donyeliston), Joan de* • Manuel • 20 September 1379
 Douglas, Elsbeth • Haddington • 15--?; 10 October 1560; 4 March 1560; 6 March 1560; 30 December 1564; 27 October 1561; 6 December 1563; 5 October 1567; 20 October 1567
 Douglas, Jane • Sciennes • 15 February 1555/6; 15 February 1562
 Douglas, Jean • North Berwick • 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548
 Douglas, Marion de* • Haddington • c. 1437 - 12 May 1463
 Douglas, Marjory (Marion) • Eccles • 10 June 1555
 Drosse, Joan • Aberdour • 15 October 1486
 Drummond, Katherine • North Berwick • 1562; 18 December 1578
 Dunbar, Elizabeth I* • Perth, St Leonards • 23 November 1411 - 24 April 1438
 Dunbar, Elspeth • North Berwick • 3 March 1539; 24 March 1555/6
 Dunbar, Margaret • Sciennes • 15 February 1555; 15 February 1562; c. July 1567
 Farar, Katherine • Haddington • 15--?; 10 October 1560; 6 March 1560
 Fawside, Margaret* • Haddington • 4 July 1495
 Fleming, Katherine • Coldstream • 23 February 1537/8

Fletcher (Flager), Elizabeth • Sciennes • 1560; 2 July 1564

Forman, Elizabeth* • North Berwick • prior to 1473 (nun); 28 June 1473 - 10 December 1477

Forman, Janet * • Eccles • prior to 1500 (nun); 9 December 1500 - 27 February 1501

Fotheringham (Fochtyngame), Clara • Aberdour • 2 April 1496

Fraser, Ada de* • Eccles • 28 August 1296

French, Katherina • Coldstream • 23 February 1537/8, 1563

Gladstone, Agnes • North Berwick • 3 March 1539; 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548; 24 March 1555/6; 1562

Graden, Katrina • Eccles • 10 June 1555

Graham, Annabelle* • Eccles • 29 January 1444

Haistie, Isobell • Eccles • 10 June 1555

Haliburton, Jane • Sciennes • 1560; 5 February 1562

Haliburton, Janet • North Berwick • 12 August 1544

Haliburton, Margaret • North Berwick • 3 March 1539; 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548

Hamilton, Marion* • Eccles • 18 April 1548 - 16 December 1570 x 26 March 1575

Harris (Heris), Elizabeth • Sciennes • 1555/6; 2 July 1564

Henderson, Josina* • Sciennes • 17 April 1517 - 20 January 1521

Henryson, Frances • Aberdour • 15 October 1486

Hepburn, Lady Jane • Sciennes • c. 1541; d. 8 July 1558

Hepburn, Jonet* • Haddington • 1495-1517

Hepburn, Elizabeth* • Haddington • 2 October 1517 - 30 December 1564

Hepburn, Isabella* • Haddington • 1550-1619 (1566-1603 x 1619) [10 October 1560; 5 March 1560; 25 May 1559; 27 October 1561 appears as a nun; as prioress 17 March 1566 - 21 August 1578; married Andrew Schethem of Skelpie c. 18 January 1598; last occ. 15 March 1619.

Hepburn, Joanna • Haddington • 23 February 1476

Hepburn, Margaret • Sciennes • 1560; 2 July 1564

Hodesak, Beatrice • Coldstream • ca 1310

Hog, Annabelle • Eccles • 10 June 1555

Hoppringle, Elizabeth I* • Manuel • c. 1515-6; 1523-1528; 28 June 1532 - 24 June 1543; 26 August 1552 (occ. as “auld” prioress, p. 25)

Hoppringle, Elizabeth II* • Coldstream • 13 February 1537/8 (nun); 1563 (nun); 1566-1583 x 1588 (prioress)

Hoppringle, Isabella* • Coldstream • 10 June 1505 - 26 January 1538

Hoppringle, Joneta* • Coldstream • 13 February 1538 - 10 April 1560

Hoppringle, Margaret* • Coldstream • 5 June 1475 - 10 June 1505 (prioress); 27 February 1510 (nun)

Hume (Home), Alison* • North Berwick • prior to 1473 (nun); 28 June 1473 - 4 January 1525

Hume (Hoin), Elizabeth I* • Eccles • prior to 1501 (nun); 23 March 1501 (prioress)

Hume (Home), Elizabeth II* • Eccles • 18 April 1548 - 22 February 1550

Hume, Elizabeth III* • Abbey St Bathans • 8 March 1566 - 23 July 1617

Hume (Home), Isabella* • Eccles & North Berwick • prior to 1525 (nun at Eccles); 4 May 1525 - 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548 (occ. as former prioress)

Hume (Home), Isobella* • Eccles • 21 August 1566

Hume, Jean • Haddington • 18 December 1573

Hume, Marion I • North Berwick • 3 March 1539 (nun); 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548; 24 March 1555; 1562

Hume, Marion II ^{sp} • North Berwick • 3 March 1539 (nun); 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548 (occ. as subprioress)

Hunter, Janet • Eccles • 6 March 1529 - 1 May 1531 x 19 June 1548

Kerr, Mariot* • Abbey St Bathans • c. 1412 - 5 February 1433

Kilmaro, Stephanie (Thephanie) de* • Perth, St Leonard's • 28 August 1296

Kinghorn (Kingorne), Joneta • Coldstream • 23 February 1537; 1563

Kinghorn (Kingorne), Marjory • Coldstream • 6 August 1464

Kirkettle (Cargill/Carketil), Katherine • Sciennes • 1525/8

Kirkettle (Kirkiteil) , Marion • Coldstream • 6 August 1464

Lamb, Elizabeth* • Abbey St Bathans • 22 June 1546 - 16 June 1565

Leslie, Euphemia* • Elcho • prior to 1526 (nun) 26 March 1526 - 1559 x 20 December 1570

Leslie, Euffam (Janet) • Elcho • 12 September 1539 (occ. as Euffam); 19 January 1540 (occ. as Euffam); 1542 occurs as "Euffam once named Jonet"; September 1544; 20 December 1570

Leys, Matilda de* • North Berwick • September 1379 (occ. as nun) x 1401 - 13 October 1434

Lindsay, Alice de • Haddington • 9 April 1389 - 1400; 23 June 1408 (d. by 23 June 1408)

Lindores (Lundorf), Catherine • Elcho • 12 September 1539; 19 January 1540

Lindores, Elizabeth de* • Manuel • 13 February 1447/8

Livingstone, Elizabeth • Manuel • 26 August 1552

Livingstone, Jane* • Manuel • 24 June 1543 - 27 November 1570

Livingstone (Leventen), Katherine • North Berwick • 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548/9; 24 March 1555/6; 1562

Livingstone, Margaret I* • Manuel • 31 May 1566

Livinstone, Margaret II • Sciennes • 15 November 1533

Logane, Margaret • Coldstream • 1563

MacDowell (Makdowell), Christina* • Eccles • c. 1527 - 17 March 1531

MacLean, Agnes (Anna)* • Iona • January 1509 - d. 1543

MacLean, Marion (Mary)* • Iona • 16 July 1548 - 3 February 1574

Maul, Agnes de* • Haddington • prior to 1437 (nun); c. 1437 – 11 December 1443

Maxwell, Agnes • Sciennes • 1555/6

Moncrieff, Christine • Elcho • 8 July 1532; 31 July 1532; 12 September 1539; 19 January 1540

Napier (Naper), Agnes • Sciennes • 13 August 1528; 15 February 1555; 15 February 1562

Napier (Naper), Clarissa • Eccles • 10 June 1555

Napier (Naper), Elizabeth I • Sciennes • 13 August 1528; 1520; 15 February 1555; 1556

Napier (Naper), Elizabeth II ^{sp} • Sciennes • 15 February 1555 (occ. as subprioress along with E. Napier I); 1555/6

Napier (Naper), Euphame • Haddington • 15--? ; 25 May 1559; 27 October 1561

Napier, Margaret* • Sciennes • 1528 (nun) 15 February 1555; 4 January 1551/1 (as prioress); 1555/6

Nesbit, Katherine • Sciennes • 13 August 1528; 15 February 1555; ca 1567

Newtoun, Margaret de • Eccles • 2 January 1466/7

Oliphant, Margaret • Dundee • 8 March 1501 - 2; 31 March 1502

Otterburn, Kristen • Haddington • 15--?; 25 May 1559; 5 October 1567; 20 December 1567

Pait, Elizabeth • Elcho • 20 December 1570

Palmcr, Gladys (Gclis) • Eccles • 10 June 1555

Panton (Pantone), Alison • North Berwick • 3 March 1539; 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548; 24 March 1555/6; 1562; 18 December 1573

Panton (Pontone), Elspeth • North Berwick • 3 March 1539; 9 January 1548

Preston, Margaret • Sciennes • 13 August 1528

Ramsay, Agnes • North Berwick • 3 March 1539; 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548; 24 March 1555/6; 1562

Ramsay, Joanne de* • Berwick-upon-Tweed • 1390s ?

Ramsay, Mariota* • North Berwick • 4 October 1463 - 27 July 1473

Redpath, Christine • Elcho • 8 July 1532; 13 July 1532; 12 September 1539; 19 January 1540

Riddle (Riddal), Elena • Coldstream • 23 February 1537; 1563

Rollock, Elizabeth • Elcho • 8 July 1532; 31 July 1532; 12 September 1539; 19 January 1540

Rutherford, Isabella ^(sp) • Coldstream • 13 February 1537/8

Rutherford, Mariota • Coldstream • 13 February 1537/8

Sandilandis, Agnes • Sciennes • 20 October 1520

Schaw, Joneta • Coldstream • 13 February 1537; 1563

Schaw, Helen • North Berwick • 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548; 24 March 1555/6; 1562; 18 December 1573

Sch[]wod, Elspeth • Eccles • 10 June 1555

Siburn, Margaret de • Haddington • 6 December 1563

Sinclair, Margaret • North Berwick • 3 March 1539; 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548; 24 March 1555/6; 1562; 18 December 1573

Sleych, Agnes* • Abbey St Bathans • 3 February 1524

Smith, Katherine (Smyth) • Elcho • 8 July 1532; 31 July 1532

Somerled, Beatrice de* • Iona • x 1207

Sprouston, Sibyl de* • Manuel • 25 January 1394

Stevenson, Katrina • Coldstream • 13 February 1537/8

Stewart, Margaret [Princess] • Haddington & Elcho • b. c. 1460; c. 1464-1469 at Haddington for education, titled Princess; 1490 at Elcho (as nun and titled aunt to the King); d. 1503

Stichill, Joanna • Coldstream • 15 January 1425/6

Struther, Janet • Eccles • 10 June 1555

Swinton, Elizabeth* • Elcho • 26 March 1526 - 16 July 1529

Swinton, Margaret of Kimmerghame* • Elcho • 21 June 1503 - 28 July 1511 x c. 1526 (occ. as nun in July 1532)

Todrig, Christina • Coldstream • 13 February 1537/8

- Towers (Towris), Margaret • Elcho • 8 July 1532; 31 July 1532; 12 September 1539; 19 January 1540
- Turnbull, Elene (Trumbull) • North Berwick • 3 March 1539; 12 August 1544
- Turnbull, Elizabeth I (Trumbill) • North Berwick • 9 January 1548
- Turnbull, Elizabeth II (Trumbull) • Aberdour • 18 August 1560
- Turnbull, Isabelle • Eccles • 10 June 1555
- Wardlaw, Joanna de* • Haddington • October 1403 (occ. nun); 23 June 1408 (prioress)
- Wedale, Agnes de* • Manuel • 26 November 1442
- Wedderburne, Isobell • Elcho • 8 July 1532; 31 July 1532; 12 September 1539; 19 January 1540
- Wemyss, Christine • Elcho • 8 July 1532; 31 July 1532
- Wishart, Isabell* • Dundee • 16 May 1566
- Wright, Agnes* • Aberdour • 18 August 1560
- Wright, Isabella (Wycht)* • Aberdour • 15 October 1486; 2 April 1496 (as nun) ; 23 June 1487 - 8 July 1489 (prioress)
- Wright, Joan (Wycht) • Aberdour • 15 October 1486; 2 April 1496
- Young, Margaret • Abbey St Bathans • 4 February 1554/5; 8 March 1557/8
- Younger, Marjory • Aberdour • 2 April 1496

LIST 3: PROBLEM NUNS

- Jonet I • Haddington • 26 August 1421 • Possible error for Beatrice see *HRHS*, 91.
- Jonet II • Manuel • 29 March 1541 • Possibly Livingstone in 1543 see *HRHS*, 142.
- Hume (Home), Margaret I • North Berwick • 3 March 1539; 12 August 1544 (nun)
- Hume, Margaret II* • North Berwick • 5 May 1543 - 30 March 1562; 20 April 1562 (occ. as former prioress)
- Hume, Margaret III* • North Berwick • 7 August 1568 - 25 August 1597 • In *Thirds of Benefices*, 154 (1563), there are two Margaret Humes listed; one as Margaret Hume of Wedderburn and the other just as Margaret Hume. It is possible that Margaret I is either Margaret II or III since a Margaret Hume appears with Margaret Donaldson in 1544 (see above) and in 1597. There were, however, at least two Margaret Humes at North Berwick.
- Johnstone, Margaret • Sciennes • 1560; 2 July 1564
- Johnstone, Marion • Sciennes • 5 January 1516/17 • Despite the gap in dates, it is possible that these are the same nun. Cf. Katherine Seton (below).

- Ramsay, Alison (Elspe) • Haddington & Manuel • 1546 (nun at Manuel) 15--?; 10 October 1560; 4 March 1560; 6 December 1563; 30 December 1564; 20 October 1567
- Ramsay, Isabella • Haddington • 25 May 1559 • Alison in 1559 sued the prioress of Haddington for entry to the convent as a professed nun and the entry in Acts of Council (Public Affairs), p. 595 notes that her name was Alison (alilas Elspett) who was residing at Manuel until such time as she was admitted to Haddington. Alison appeared in the same documents as Isobell Roriny (see below) in 1559 and 1567; she also occurred together with Isabella Ramsay at the same time but different documents.
- Dury, Isobel (Elizabeth) • Haddington • 15--?, 10 October 1560; 6 March 1560; 6 December 1563
- Ridway (Roriny/Riduy/Rowmay), Isobell • Haddington • 6 December 1563; 20 October 1567; 10 November 1567 • Isobell Dury appears at same time as Alison Ramsay, I. Ramsay and I. Dury but only once; in 1563 I. Dury and I. Riduy appear seperately so they are not the same nun. It is more likely that Isobell Riduy is Isabella Ramsay.
- Panton, Isobell (Puntoun) • North Berwick • 3 March 1539
- Renton (Rayntoun), Isabella • North Berwick • 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548; 24 March 1555/6; 1563; 18 December 1573; 12 April 1578; 9 July 1580; 12 January 1587/8; 15 July 1587 • It is possible that Isabella Panton or Pantoun is Renton but Panton appears more likely as there are two other Panton sisters at North Berwick at the same time.
- Seton (Seaton) , Katherine I* • Sciennes • 15 December 1525-31; August 1528; 17 August 1540; "1542"
- Seton, Katherine II • Sciennes • 15 February 1555/6 (occ. as a nun) • Katherine I is listed at the convent of Sciennes for 42 years, according to Scots Peerage, and would have entered the convent c. 1518 at the age of 36, three years after the death of her father, George, lord Seton at Flodden in 1513. This would place her in the convent in 1560. Foggie, however, distinguishes between the two as different nuns.
- Stewart, Helen • Elcho • 20 December 1570
- Stewart, Eleanora • Elcho • 12 September 1539; 19 January 1540 • It is possible that this is the same nun as she appears with Euphemia Leslie in 1539-40 and is listed as one of the nuns owed a pension in Euphemia's will.
- Swinton, Christina • Elcho • 12 September 1529
- Swinton, Eufam • Elcho • 12 September 1539; 19 January 1540 • Eufam occurs in charter in NAS, GD Swinton charters but Christina appears in transcription of the same document in Swintons; an error on the editors' part.
- Towers (Towris), Jean • North Berwick • 3 March 1539; 12 August 1544; 9 January 1548

Towers (Towris), Janet • North Berwick • 24 March 1555/6 • These do not appear together in any documents but occur at some stage with Margaret Sinclair, Helen Darling, and Alison Panton. Therefore it is likely that these are the same nun.

White, Isobell (Wumyt) • Haddington • 30 December 1564

White (Quhit) , Kirsten • Haddington • 15--?; 10 October 1560; 6 March 1560; 30 December 1564; 25 May 1559; 27 October 1561; 6 December 1563; 5 October 1567; 20 October 1567; 10 November 1567; 20 October 1567 • Isobell occurs only in the document relating to Bagbie listed above. However, in all other documents referring to Bagbie and Haddington, Kristen is listed. Both names occur in one reference pertaining to Bagbie. It is likely therefore that these were two different nuns as they appear together in 1564.

Wood (Vyd) , Margaret • North Berwick • 12 August 1544

Wood (Wode), Marion • North Berwick • 1562, 18 December 1573 • It is likely that this is the same nun as she appears with other nuns from 1544, 1562, 1577.