

## *The House of Benholm*

### *Introduction*

The lands of Benholm (Benne, Benhame, Benholme) were first granted to Hugo de Benne in 1145, the family of de Benne taking their name from this land. During the reign of King William the Lion, these lands were then granted to his son, Hugo, by a Charter dated the 20<sup>th</sup> of August, 1201, at Kincardine.

“William by the grace of God King of Scots to all good men of his whole land clerks and laymen greeting. Know men present and future that I have restored and granted and by this my charter confirmed to Hugo son of Hugo de Benne, Benne by its right marches and with all its just pertinents: To be held &c. Doing therefor to me and my heirs half’ a knight’s service, as the charter of the foresaid Hugo his father witnesses.”

The witnesses to this charter were, Reginald, bishop of Ross; William & Walter, chaplains of the King; Earl Duncan of Fife; Philip de Valoniis, chamberlain; Robert de Quincy; Alan son of Rolland the constable; William Comyn; John de Hasting; William de Hay; Ranulph de Soules; William de Vipont; Humphrey de Berkeley; David de Hay; Ivo de Vipont; Roger de la Kerneille; and Malcolm de Lascelles (*NAS*, GD4/2).

In the thirteenth century, the lands and barony then passed from the de Benne family to the Lundies, through the marriage of Christian de Benne, the daughter and heiress of Hugo de Benne, to Walter de Lundy (*NAS*, GD4).

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 1390, at Perth King Robert II of Scotland granted a Royal charter confirming a charter granted by Christian, daughter of Hugo de Benne, of parts of the lands of Benholme to Allan Lundy, who was noted as a kinsman of Thomas de Lundy.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of October, 1445, John Lundie of that Ilk was granted sasine of the barony of Benham; following on a Precept from Chancery. Sasine was given at the ‘Castell-wallis of Benham’ (*NAS*, GD4/3).

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1469, William Lundie, son and heir of Sir John Lundy of that Ilk (see that line) had a Royal charter of Benholm to him and

his spouse (*NAS*, GD160).

Around 1474, the ‘Mainlandis’ (Mains) of Benholm were wadset by the Lundies to the family of Bonnar of Rossie. There is a narrative dated the 13<sup>th</sup> of May, 1474, stating that Sir John Lundy of that Ilk, in obedience to the King’s decret, offered to William Bonar of Rossie a Charter and Precept of Sasine of 24 merklands of the Mains of Benham. It also stated that William Bonar wished to take time to satisfy himself as to the security of the title (*NAS*, GD4/33). Five days later there are letters of revision by William Bonar of Rossie, granting that Sir John of Lundy of that Ilk, or his heirs, might redeem the Maynelandis of Benham and the principal “chymis” thereof by payment of 500 merks Scots upon the altar of St. Michael in St. Andrews parish kirk, or half thereof by payment of half the money (*NAS*, GD4/34). It appears that Sir John wished to redeem these lands eight years later, but that James Bonar of Rossie, the heir of William Bonar of Rossie, was reluctant to keep his father’s agreement.

In 1482, Sir John paid to James Bonar of Rossie the 250 merks for the redemption of half of the Mains of Benholm. Sir John visited James Bonar at his house in St. Andrews on the 25<sup>th</sup> May, 1482, where there lay upon a counter the 250 merks of Scots money, and £38 which Sir John had sent to James Bonar. This £38 was to be used to make good any ‘bad’ money delivered with the 250 merks. The redemption process was to take place in the sight of two Bailies of St. Andrew’s and Sir John Lundy’s Chaplain. Sir John’s chaplain was also there in case the £38 proved insufficient (*NAS*, GD4/36).

It appears that James Bonar did not complete his side of the bargain, as on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 1484-5, James Bonar, whilst in Edinburgh at Russell’s Tavern, for the purposes of ‘playing and drinking,’ was confronted by Sir John Lundy, Sir John requiring James Bonar to resign half the lands of Bennum and the “chemys” thereof, as then redeemed from him, and conform to a Decreet of the Lords of Council (*NAS*, GD4/37). After this James Bonar must have resigned half of the lands back to Sir John as per the agreement. However, in November of that year, Sir John tried to redeem the second half of these lands, and again there seems to have been a problem on the part of James Bonar of Rossie. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of November, 1484, Sir John Lundy placed 250 merks on St. Michael’s altar in St. Andrews parish kirk, and offered this money to James Bonar for the redemption of the last half of the Mains of Benham. He apparently waited until sundown, but the money was

not taken. Sir John solemnly protested that he had done exact diligence anent the redemption, and ought to have free regress to the lands (NAS, GD4/39). On the 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1487, James Bonar of Rossie finally resigned the half of the lands of Mains of Benholm, into the hands of Sir John Lundy of that Ilk, Knight, Lord superior thereof (NAS, GD4/40).

## **ROBERT LUNDIE, 1<sup>ST</sup> OF BENHOLM**

Since the barony of Benholm had been obtained by the family of Lundie of that Ilk, through Walter de Lundy's marriage to Christian de Benne, it would appear that the Lairds of Lundie held the lands and Barony as part of their paternal estate. This all changed in 1491, when Sir John Lundy of that Ilk granted Benholm one of his younger son's, founding the House of Benholm.

Robert was a son of Sir John Lundy of that Ilk and Isabel Forrester; Isabel being Sir John's second spouse. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 1485-6 a charter was granted by King James III to Sir John Lundy of that Ilk, knight, and Isabel Forstare, his spouse, and the heirs male of their marriage, of the barony of Benholme and Mains thereof (on Sir John's resignation); also the land's of Tulloch, the Casteltoun, Carnenach, Mutehill and the Brewland (on the resignation of William Lundy and his spouse). (NAS GD/8. *Reg. Mag. Sig.* II 1631.). William Lundy was a half brother to Robert, and succeeded Sir John as Laird of Lundy. William Lundy, having originally being granted a Royal charter of the barony of Benholm to himself and his spouse, in 1469, had resigned the lands of Benham, Tullo, Casteltoun, Carnenow, Mithil and Brewland, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 1484-85, in favour of his father, Sir John, and Isabel, then his father's spouse, and the heirs of their marriage. Following the charter by King James III, a Charter was granted by John Lundy of that Ilk, and Isabel his spouse, to Robert Lundy, their son, of the lands and barony of Benhame, viz. the Manis, Casteltoune and Tulloch, with the mill. This was to be held of the King, reserving the granters' life rent. This charter was dated at Lundy, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 1491-92 (NAS, GD/10).

Around 1495, negotiations were underway for the marriage of Robert Lundie of Benholm to Elizabeth Erskine, a daughter of John Erskine of Dun. On contemplation of this marriage, Robert granted (on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July, 1495) a precept of sasine in favour of Elizabeth Erskine, of the lands of Tullowcht of Benhame (NAS, GD4/15). On the 21<sup>st</sup> June 1496,

dated a Stirling, a contract was produced whereby William Lundy, the fore mentioned brother of Robert Lundie of Benholm; Elizabeth Hepburn, the spouse of William Lundy; and, Thomas Lundy, son and heir of William, all resigned any claims to the Barony of Benholm. This was in exchange for 800 merks, (500 merks in instalments, and the lands of Fossoway as security for the remaining 300 merks) (*NAS*, GD4/17,18). The contract was fulfilled by the 12<sup>th</sup> of November of the following year (*NAS*, GD4/19). By 1498 Robert had married Elizabeth Erskine. On the 14<sup>th</sup> October of that year a Great Seal Charter by King James IV of Scotland granted the lands of Tullow of Benhame (Tully of Benholm) to Robert Lundy of Benhame and Elizabeth Erskine, his spouse, upon Elizabeth's resignation. (*Reg. Mag. Sig.* II. 2460; *NAS*, GD4/21).

Sometime before 1497, Robert Menzies of Enoch had promised to the King, to present to Robert Lundie of Benholm, the parsonage of Weyme, in the Diocese of Dunkeld. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of November, 1497, Robert Menzies offered to seal with his own seal a presentation of the this parsonage, at the instance of the King, and deliver this presentation to Robert. This offer was however provided that Robert fulfilled a yet unknown promise made to Robert Menzies. It is not known of Robert ever received this gift (*Protocol Book of J. Young*, 974)

Robert died around 1519. He had issue:-

**1** *Andrew Lundie of Benholm*, who succeeded his father in the Barony of Benholm

**2** *John Lundie*, brother-german to Andrew. He was given sasine by his brother Andrew of the shadow half of the lands of Tollow in the barony of Benholm on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 1525 (*NAS*, GD4/26). In 1533 he was appointed along with his brother Andrew, in the service of the crown, to accompany Sir Thomas Erskine of Brechin to foreign parts (*Acts Lords of Council in Civil Caus.* 420).

**3** *Marion Lundie*, married firstly Alexander Keith of Pittendrum, forth son of William Keith, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl Marischal by Elizabeth Gordon daughter of George 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Huntly (*Scots Peerage*, I, 284). They had one son:-

*i John Keith of Pittendrum.*

Alexander Keith died before 1515 as she married secondly Robert Arbuthnott of Banff, second son of Robert Arbuthnott by Marjorie

Scrymgeour, on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1515 (*Scots Peerage*, VI. 44).

4 **Margaret Lundie**, (*Reg. Mag. Sig.* IV. 549).

## **ANDREW LUNDIE, 2<sup>ND</sup> OF BENHOLM**

In 1523, whilst still in his minority, at the Kings dispensation, Andrew, as heir to his father, was given sasine of the lands of Inchmeddan, Tulloch of Benhome and Kyrktone of Benholme, with the mill thereof; which had been in nonentry for four years (*Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, XV. 605, 608; *NAS*, GD4/21). On the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 1524 he was given sasine of the ‘Manis of Benholme’, which had been in the King’s hands for five years by reason of ward (*Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, XV. 620; *NAS*, GD4/25). Soon after he was given a commission of Justiciary (*Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, XV. 653). On the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 1525-6 he granted a precept of sasine in favour of his brother-german John Lundie, of the shadow half lands of Tollow within the Barony of Benholm (*NAS*, GD4/26). In 1533, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March, Andrew, his brother John, with a number of others, including a Richard Lundy of whom no more is known than his name, were appointed by the King to accompany Sir Thomas Erskine of Brechin, in the service of “parties beyond sey for maters concerning us and the common weil of our realme” (*Acts Lords of Council in Civil Caus.* 420).

Andrew was married to Margaret Scrymgeour. They had a charter under the great seal dated 30<sup>th</sup> June 1542. According to documents at the National archives of Scotland, Andrew died at the battle of Pinkie (a.k.a Falside), on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 1547 (*NAS*, GD4/27; *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, XVIII. 434). He had issue:-

1 **William Lundie (alias Robert Lundie) 3<sup>rd</sup> of Benholm**, who succeeded, and whose details follow.

2 **John Lundie in Lumgair**. (See Lundie of Lungar)

3 **other sons x 6**

4 **Janet Lundie**, married by the 15<sup>th</sup> of July, 1545, James Bruce of Fingask. On this date he infeft her for life in his lands of Rait (*Fingask Papers, Perth Archives*). They had issue.

5 **Second daughter**

## **WILLIAM LUNDIE, 3<sup>RD</sup> OF BENHOLM**

William (alias Robert) succeeded to Benholm after the death of his father. There is a sasine to William as heir of his father Andrew dated the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July, 1548, of the Manis of Benholme, the lands of Inchmeddan, Tullo of Benholme, and Kirktown of Benholme, with mill thereof (*NAS*, GD4/27). On the 25<sup>th</sup> of June 1551, William Lundie of Benholm and his wife Helen Carnegie, daughter of Sir Robert Carnegie, 5<sup>th</sup> of Kinnaird, by Margaret Guthrie, received as spouses a Crown charter of the lands of Tullo and Inchmeddan in Kincardineshire upon William's resignation (*Scots Peerage*, VIII. 56). On the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 1551, William was given a gift from the Monarch of the nonenty of the lands of Lumgar, within the sheriffdom of Kincardine, which were in the King's hands following the death of Sir Thomas Erskine of Brechin (*Reg. Sec. Sig.* IV. 1419). William's brother and nephew are later to be found designed as 'of Lumgar.'

William died shortly after his marriage, before 1553. He left only one child, Elizabeth Lundie. It is not certain whether she was the daughter of Helen Carnegie or not, but as Helen's father was given the gift of ward of William's daughter by the King, it is most probable. Helen Carnegie remarried after the death of William, to William Turring of Foveran (*Crawford's Scots Peerage*, 447).

## **ELIZABETH LUNDIE, 4<sup>TH</sup>, AND LAST OF THAT NAME, OF BENHOLM.**

After the death of her father a gift of the ward and non-entry of the his lands was made by Queen Mary to Robert Carnegie of Kinnard, Robert being the father of William's widow Helen, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August, 1553 (*NAS*, GD4/29). Elizabeth must have been in minority at this time. A gift of her marriage was also made to Sir Robert. Seven years later, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 1559-60, Sir Robert had arranged the marriage between Elizabeth Lundie and Sir Robert Keith, the second son of William, Fourth Earl Marischal. An assignation was made of the ward of entry of all the lands of the late William Lundie of Benholm, and the marriage of his daughter and heir, Elizabeth, to the said Robert Keith. Failing Robert, this would pass to William Keith, again son of William, Fourth Earl Marischal, failing him, to George Keith, eldest son of Earl Marishcal, and failing him to any

other person the Earl or his heirs should name (*NAS*, GD4/30). The actual marriage contract predates this arrangement by four years, being dated the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, 1556. It would appear that at this point Elizabeth was still in minority as she did not obtain her fathers lands in her own right until 1565. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of May of this year she had sasine, following a precept of Clare Constat dated 11<sup>th</sup> April that year, of the Manis of Benholme, the lands of Inchmeddan, Tullo of Benholme, and Kirktown of Benholme, with mill thereof (*NAS*, GD4/31).

Robert Keith, husband of Elizabeth, was a man of power an influence, extending from his own person, and that of the Marischal family itself. He was born circa 1540, the second son of William Keith Fourth Earl Marischal, by Margaret, eldest daughter of William Keith, younger of Inverugie. By 1555, although only around 15, he was appointed Commendator of the Abbey of Deer, succeeding his uncle Robert Keith, brother to William Fourth Earl Marischal, to that post. After the abolition of Catholism in Scotland, Robert resigned all the lands belonging to the Abbey into the hands of King James VI. These were then granted back to Robert under a charter dated 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1587, erecting this property into a temporal Lordship, giving Robert the title of Lord Altrie.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of June, 1566, Elizabeth, with consent of Robert Keith and her curators, resigned the lands and Manis of Benholme, with the tower and fortalice thereof, Over and Nether Knox, Inchmadan, Tulloch of Benholme, Kyrktown of Benholme, with the mill, and the lands and barony of Benholme, into the hands of Queen Mary, in favour of her spouse and herself in conjunct fee (*NAS*, GD4/61). The next month, 2<sup>nd</sup> July, these lands were granted under a Charter of the Great Seal, by Henry and Mary, King and Queen of Scots, erecting the fore mentioned lands into one free Barony of Benholm, and granting it to Robert Keith and Elizabeth Lundy (*NAS*, GD4/65). In 1587, on the 28<sup>th</sup> June, the lands were again resigned to the Monarch, this time King James VI (*NAS*, GD4/69). Upon regranteeing the lands from to Robert and Elizabeth, 30<sup>th</sup> July of the same year, they had annexed the patronage of the kirk of Benholme, parsonage and vicarage, to the Barony of Benholm. (*Reg. Mag. Sig.* V. 1324; *NAS*, GD4/71). In that same year, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June, they were granted a charter by George, Earl Marischall, Lord Keith, of a third part of the lands of Arbirnie. There were given sasine the next day (*NAS*, GD70/25). Twenty years later both a John and James Lundie are found to be living in Arbirnie, with John later moving

to Montrose (*Reg. Privy Council*, Series I. VII. 594; IX. 128; X. 457, 470).

Both Robert Keith, Lord Altrie, and Elizabeth Lundie, Lady Beholm, died before the 8th June, 1597, as there is a Retour in favour of Isobel Keith, lady Dalgety; and Margaret Keith, lady Dun as heirs in general of Robert Lord of Altrie and Dame Isobel Lundye, lady of Benholme their father and mother, dated at Cowie, and recorded before the sheriff depute of Kincardine (*NAS*, GD4/89). The property, lands and Barony of Benholm thus passed into the family of Keith Marischal. Further details of this can be read under the 'House of Lungar,' and details of other probable desendants of this house can be read in section six 'in Benholm.' Robert and Elizabeth had issue:-

**1** *Elizabeth Keith*, married Alexander Hay of Dalgaty, on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1584.

**2** *Margaret Keith*, married first, before 28<sup>th</sup> August 1588, John Erskine, son and heir apparent of John Erskine of Logy and later Dun. By this marriage she had John Erskine who succeeded to Dun on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1603. Secondly she married Sir John Lindsay of Ballincho, third son of David Lindsay 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Crawford, on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1599.



## ***Benholm Castle***

Benholm Castle is located in the Parish of Benholm in Kincardineshire. Subsequent to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the ancient barony of Benholm was divided into the estates of Benholm, Brotherton, Nether Benholm and Knox. Benholm castle is an ancient building associated with the Lundie family since it's conception, until it's passing to the Keith Marischal family at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Up until recently the square Tower House of Benholm Castle was still standing. Sadly it would appear that recently whilst the owners of Benholm Castle were discussing with relevant authorities the restoration of the Tower, it collapsed. The tower at the time was complete to the parapets, but had a two large cracks down each side. Attached to the side of the tower was a derelict Georgian mansion. When the mansion was constructed, the ground around the tower had been lowered, thus causing some instability in the castle foundations, and the eventual cracking of the Tower. In order to prevent these cracks from further development, it was proposed to support the tower with a concrete raft, but this would have involved removing the more modern derelict house attached. This idea was not approved by the authorities as they wished to maintain both the castle and house attached. When discussions were taking place, half of the tower collapsed, destroying the mansion anyway.

### **Benholm castle in the statistical accounts of Scotland**

One can find an account of Benholm Castle in the 1790-99 and 1845 statistical accounts of Scotland. Both of these accounts give a good description of the tower and mansion when still intact.

“The only ancient building now remaining in the parish is the tower of Benholm. This at one time had been a place of considerable strength. It is a high and massive square building of sandstone, still in a state of complete preservation. It seems at one time to have stood on a peninsula, formed by one of the streams above-mentioned on the east and south sides, and be a deep trench or moat on the west. A passage was formed over this moat by the late proprietor, G. R. Scott, Esq., in opening a new approach to the mansion-house.”

*Rev. Mr. James Scott, Statistical accounts of Scotland, 1791-99*

“Among the few antiquities in this parish, may be mentioned a square tower, which was the ancient residence of the family of Benholm, and is still kept in repair, though not inhabited. From its peninsular situation, thickness of walls, and battlements on the roof; this building seems to have been originally intended for a place of strength; and before the use of artillery, was probably not ill calculated to resist the sudden attack of an enemy. When this strong hold was built is uncertain.”

*Rev. James Glen, Statistical accounts of Scotland, 1845*



*15. Benholm Castle*