

**Notes on the
Parish and Church
of
CRANSHAWS**



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The origins of the parish and kirk of Cranshaws are not known, but Robert de Strivelin, vicar of Cranshaws, swore fealty to Edward I at Berwick in 1296. In the reign of David I in the thirteenth century, David de Bernham, Archbishop of St. Andrews, erected many parishes and consecrated many parish churches. There are some of these 13th century foundations contiguous to Cranshaws. It is a reasonable assumption that the parish of Cranshaws is of similar date and origin.

John of Ellem, in 1476, was a defender in an action by Sir John Swinton of that ilk, relating to the erroneous delivery of writings in an inquest and brief in favour of Alexander, Duke of Albany, of a chapel upon the land of Cranshaws. About 1516, Catherine Lauder, wife of Sir John Swinton, in her will of October, 1515, directed that her body was to be buried before the altar of St. Ninian in the Parish Church of Cranshaws.

Thus, from the end of the thirteenth century, there is evidence of a parish, a vicarage and a dedication to St. Ninian. This altar to St. Ninian, may very well indicate a more ancient beginning of Christian worship at Cranshaws, since there is without four miles, Kilpallet, associated with Palladius, the fifth century disciple of St. Ninian. Indeed, there are several place-names in the Lammermuirs which would seem to indicate that from the sixth, and certainly in the seventh century, Celtic missionaries were in the countryside and established cells.

The ruins of a very old church are still visible in the old graveyard at Cranshaws. These ruins are of massive thickness and are composed of whinstone rubble bound with Mortar. The size of this church would seem to have been about twenty feet by twelve feet, but there may have been an addition at some time as there are traces of some sort of foundation outside the dry-stane dyke that now encloses the graveyard. About one hundred years ago, human bones of great size were disinterred from the east end of this old church. With them were two enormous swords. The swords went to the smiddy at Longformacus and eventually disappeared. This find gives credence to the legend associated with the Twinlaw Cairns in the Parish of Longformacus. The ancient church on this site ceased to be used for worship in 1739 when a new church was built about a mile to the east. At Cranshaws Peel there is a stone which purports to mark the site of the ancient burial ground of the Swintons of that ilk. If this is a true identification, then it is fair to assume that there was within the bailiwick of the Peel a chapel and consecrated ground, and this within three hundred yards of the other. The Swintons are an ancient family, but when in possession of the Barony of Cranshaws were not of such wealth or consequence that they would have both a domestic chaplain and a chapel.

There is in the present church of Cranshaws a stone in the north wall with the Royal Arms of Scotland. This tablet was removed from the old church when it ceased to be used. The story of this stone is that about 1595 James VI rode over from Yester and went to worship at Cranshaws. The minister did not offer the customary prayer for the King. James was displeased and instructed that the royal arms be erected over against the pulpit to remind the minister to pray for the king. Whatever the truth of this story, the fact is that when the stone was restored and tintured in heraldic colours in 1962, both the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate and the Lord Lyon confirmed that the Royal Arms displayed in Cranshaws Church are of a date earlier than 1473.

The parish church of 1739 was a plain rectangular building. It must have been of poor construction, for it was in constant need of repair. In 1832, the minister wrote "that the stables of many gentlemen were in better repair than Cranshaws Kirk". However, in 1898, Andrew Smith of Whitcheater and Cranshaws undertook to re-build the church. He employed George Fortune, Architect, Duns, to prepare plans. Mr. Fortune was a man of advanced ideas and employed materials and designs that were ahead of his time. The old walls were used as

foundations and on them was constructed in whinstone with freestone in pink or liver, the present church. The ridges and corbels were made of cast aggregate faced with cement tintured to match the pink freestone. This early experiment has stood well, but the rigours of the winters in this altitude are now beginning to peel the cement facings from the cast aggregate. The flat roof on the vestry is the only extant one of Mr. Fortune's designs. These flat roofs have been replaced by traditional ridged roofs, but not through faulty design, but because of the use of materials not so advanced as the design required.

The roof is clad in Westmorland flags and the east and west gables have pleasing stone crosses of ornate design, and on the skew putts are heraldic devices from the armorial achievements of the families which have had possession of the barony of Cranshaws. At the south-west corner, there is a four-sided sundial borne by an amusing sculpture of Time. The sundial has been broken to fit its present situation. It is correctly orientated and since a gnomon was fitted in 1962 it is possible to read the time — sun permitting! There is visible on the sundial the text in part: "Mr. J. C. 1731 lab" John Campbell was minister 1706-1759, and the sundial records his twenty-fifth anniversary as minister of Cranshaws. It was during his ministry that a new church and manse were built.

On the east wall of the chancel or apse, there is a series of stone masks. These range through the grotesque and humorous to the purely fanciful. The north wall has the entrance to the "laird's loft". This has an unusual door in that it is built in the semi-round. All the furnishings on the doors, both inside and outside the church, are hand wrought iron.

Two colours predominate in the interior of the church — Black for the wood and white for the walls. The roof is barrel vaulted and is constructed of Siberian deal and oak trusses. Pews and wainscoting are also in deal, but pulpit and chairs are of oak, except the chairs in the loft which are of elm. All this is darkened to black, but on the roof trusses there are bosses of gilt and the leading edges of the roof panels in the apse are picked out in blue, while those in the loft are in red. There are three medallions in the roof — the dove, St. Andrew and the Paschal Lamb. Under the pediments which carry the trusses are stone sculptures of human faces. These faces are in pairs and they represent types, classes or orders of people. Thus there are a lord and his lady, minister and his wife, and so on.

On the pulpit is a wrought iron bracket for the baptismal bowl. Such brackets were common in the churches in the eighteenth century, when the common practice was that the minister did not leave the pulpit during divine worship. Other wrought iron fittings are modern, but express in their design, by incorporating shepherds' crooks, the pastoral nature of the parish. Silver plates on pew ends record the fact that these were the gift of members of the congregation. Note should also be made of the gates at the entrance to the churchyard. The gates are the work of the same blacksmith and again, with crooks, emphasise the rural nature of the parish. A granite tablet set into the wall records the long connection of the Darling family with this church.

There is an old saying, "This is like Cranshaws Kirk — mair dogs than folk". This recalls the days when the shepherds came to church with their dogs. This custom was still in fashion as late as 1888. Mrs. F. White, Silver City, Montana, wrote to me in 1949, after my induction, recalling the fact that her maiden surname of Crichton and my first name were the same and that was because of a family connection. Mrs. White went on to recall her girlhood at Millknowe, and of coming to church in a cart and of the frequent fights among the shepherds' dogs during the service.

COMMUNION PLATE

The Kirk Session have still possession of two early 18th century pewter cups and a flagon. There are also several patterns of similar age. Two silver plate cups were given to the Session in 1858 by a Mr. MacKinlay, shooting tenant at Crichness, "because of the tender ties that bound him to Cranshaws". After the union of Cranshaws with Abbey St. Bathans these cups ceased to be used and in 1960, the Kirk Session offered them to the Home Board and they are now in use in the Church Extension Charge of Easterhouse, Edinburgh. Two silver pattens were gifted to the Session in 1955 to record the long connection of the Caverhill family, tenants at Crichness 1803-1932, with the congregation.

THE KIRK SESSION

The Kirk Session records are extant from 1829. They are often extremely brief, but record the care of the poor and the spiritual and moral oversight of the parish. This supervision was on the whole carried out humanely and mercifully. When the church throughout the country was greatly exercised about the introduction of music in place of the traditional precentor, Cranshaws was in its small way involved and in 1893 the two elders resigned in protest over the use of an American organ.

By 1911, the changing fashions of people had made the Fast Days before Communion into holidays of no religious significance, so that the Kirk Session from that time abandoned the former custom of the fast days before communion.

THE MINISTERS

The earliest name before the Reformation is that of Robert of Stirling, 1296. Thereafter, in witness of charters or other papers, the names of a few incumbents appear. After the Reformation, there is an unbroken list of ministers to the present day. Since 1657 to the present day there have been twenty-two ministers. All of whom gave in peace and quiet devoted care to their congregations. It is said that Mr. Campbell gave succour to fellow Highlanders in the manse during the 1715 and 1745 Jacobite Risings.

Mr. Drummond was the subject of the following incident: The Rev. Dr. Webster's Ministers' Widows' Pension Scheme of 1765 was so great a success that ministers' widows were in receipt of pensions of £40 a year. Mr. Drummond was in receipt of a stipend of £50. He was courting the farmer's daughter at Fellcleugh. He proposed to her one evening and the girl went to tell her father of the minister's offer. To the minister's chagrin, he heard the father advise the daughter — "Tak' him, Jenny. He's as near as guid Dead as Living!"

THE MANSE

The first manse was beside the old church. It was probably a small two-room cottage with a thatched roof. In 1711, a new manse was built on a new site about a mile east of the old one. This also was a small one-storey construction with only two rooms. Over the years it required much repair and was extended in size on one level and then was further extended to a second storey. Since then there has been no further structural alteration, but, of course, water and electric power have been introduced.

THE PARISH

In outline the parish is roughly the shape of the island continent of Australia and is comprised of about 7,000 acres of hill and marginal land, given over to sheep and cattle raising, with a four-year rotation of oats, hay and roots for stock-feeding. Almost the whole parish is in the hands of the proprietor of Cranshaws,

who has developed an extensive scheme of tree-planting to ensure shelter and timber for the needs of the estate.

ANCIENT MONUMENTS

There is a clearly visible site of an ancient fort to the west of the How-bog, and there are other similar sites in the immediate vicinity of neighbouring parishes.

The Peel Tower or "castle" at Cranshaws is in excellent repair and was used as a dwelling until about eight years ago. There is good authority for claiming that Cranshaws was the inspiration for the site of Sir Walter Scott's "Bride of Lammermoor". The Raven's Craig on the west bank of the Whiteadder is also claimed to have been the original in the same novel.

THE BROWNIE OF CRANSHAWS

The farmer at Cranshaws was fortunate to receive help from a kindly Brownie. Work left unfinished at the end of the day was done by the Brownie. Familiarity breeds contempt, and the farmer, used to the unseen assistant who kept the farm work so up to date, was foolish enough to criticise the brownie's mowing of the corn. Enraged by this slight on his work, the brownie threw all the corn into the Whiteadder and departed never to return. This is commemorated in the rhyme:

"It's no weel mowed — It's no weel mowed!
Then it'll ne'er be mowed by me again.
I'll scatter it ower the Raven Stane
And they'll have some wark ere it's mowed again."

THE PROPRIETORS OF CRANSHAWS

The Sinton of that ilk were the old owners of Cranshaws, which was erected into a barony. The traditional site for the baron court was at Boontree. This is derived as from bourtree, but since it is given before 1700 as Bowing Tree, it obviously derives from the meeting of the baron court. Here the tenants "bowed" to the feudal superior; received his justice and may even have "bowed" to him from the gallows tree. There may also have been a practice ground for the archers, though there is no record of a wapenschaw ever being held.

The lands of Cranshaws passed to the Hepburns, Lord wardens of the Eastern Marches, hence earls of March, etc. Francis, Earl of Bothwell, third husband of Mary Queen of Scots, forfeited his lands to the Crown. Cranshaws, being among the forfeited lands, passed to the earls of Morton and eventually were purchased by David Denham, W.S., Edinburgh, in 1702. His son, James, sold Cranshaws to James Watson of Saughton in 1739. On Watson's death in 1842, the estate passed to his mother and from her to Lord Aberdour, eldest son of the Earl of Morton, from whom it was purchased by Andrew Smith, Esq., Weedings Hall, Stirlingshire. In 1914, Mrs. I. F. Landale or Smith succeeded her husband and on her death in 1943 by her nephew, S. E. A. Landale, O.B.E., D.Sc., Esq., of Cranshaws and Whitchester. The matriculated arms of Andrew Smith are a sword and pen crossed and the motto "marte et ingenio".

The name Cranshaws is derived from crane — the old Scots for a heron, and shaws — a wood. There is no heronry nowadays, indeed the heron is only a rare visitor to Cranshaws in the last few years.

Bothwell in the neighbouring parish of Spott, is said to derive from Francis, Earl of Bothwell. There may be an older derivation — from the Gaelic "botha" the hut or dwelling beside the spring.

LAIRD AND MINISTER

At the beginning of the 18th century there was a long drawn-out dispute between the laird and his son, as laird, and the minister. This had its origin in the change of ownership of Cranshaws and the onus on the laird as principal heritor to provide church, manse and glebe, and stipend in the form of tiends. The church and manse were not subjects of the dispute, but the glebe and tiends were. It was said that the Scots loved "a guid ganging plea" (law suit). From 1702-1709 the laird made appeal after appeal on technicalities of a Decreet of Locality and Modification fixing the tiends of the parish. He lost in the end, but one wonders if the minister had to wait all those years for his stipend.

In the matter of the glebe, it was a case of giving to the minister a similar amount of ground of equal productivity as the old glebe beside the old manse. The laird took possession of the old glebe, but did not give a clear conveyance of the new glebe lands, nor would he undertake to make proper marches or boundaries. At one point, in 1720, the minister had the laird "cried" at the Mercat Cross in Edinburgh to prevent him from selling or wadsetting the glebe lands at Cranshaws. Eventually, the laird swore an oath of Fidelity in the Sheriff Court at Duns, at the instance of the Presbytery, confirming the extent of the glebe and binding his heirs and assignees whomsoever in all time coming, to keep up the march dykes and fences. One of these earth dykes is still visible on the east of the glebe.

THE CARE OF THE POOR

This was a charge on the Kirk Session and the offerings were used to give help to those in need. The heritors were also assessed in law annually for this purpose.

James Watson of Saughton by his Will left £1,000 for the poor of the parish. The clerk to the heritor's court, who was also Watson's factor, sent a banker's draft to the minister for £9 — the amount of assessment for the poor. The minister refused to accept this on the basis that heritor's assessment should be separate from the Watson Bequest.

A long wrangle then ensued and there was a process in law in the Court of Session. Administration of the Watson Bequest was given to the Parish Council and so in course of time to the County Council. By 1960, social legislation had so defined in law, the poor that it became necessary to promote a "cy-press" scheme to widen the scope of the Watson Bequest. Under this scheme, which was approved by the Court of Session, the poor, the church, manse and hall may on occasion receive assistance.

PARISH OF ELLEM

This tiny parish has its small claim to fame in that it was in the church that James IV held his Council of War before marching his army to meet the English at Flodden. The Douglas being reduced their claim to lead the right wing withdrew their support and this was a contributory factor in the Scots' defeat at Flodden. Only some slight traces of this church now remain. The parish was united to Longformacus in 1776 and disjoined from that parish and added to Cranshaws in 1891.

The minister at Ellem had the right to graze sheep on Ellemford moor or a cash payment in lieu. This payment still forms a part of the endowment of the Longformacus stipend.

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS

Until well into the 19th century, rural parishes were served in most ways by resident craftsmen and tradesmen who found their livelihood in the parish. The

cornmill was an important place and the foundations on the west bank of the Whiteadder and the name of the Millhaugh are the only witnesses of this necessary trade. There is no record of a cloth mill, but this may be due to the fact in this sparsely populated land, the 'wabster' who lived in the parish of Spott was near enough to serve the people of Cranshaws. Blacksmith and wright were two trades that often went together. The smithy at Cranshaws is still in use, though the blacksmith nowadays finds most of his employment far from home. It was at this smithy in 1848 that Bertram perfected the method of fitting iron tyres to wheels.

Boontree was the site of the joiner's shop and it was here in 1853 that collection ladles for the church were made for the cost of eight and sixpence. The maker's name was Swan and he traded in cattle to supplement his income. His sons carried on this dealing and so the foundations of the renowned auction firm of Swan was laid.

The carrier was important not only for his work but for the news that he relayed from farm to farm. Playhaugh, now in ruins, was the carrier's house. There was a crudely carved stone in the north gable of a ram's head and the date 1771, but this has disappeared.

There were, of course, the packmen, who made their regular journeys, but these were not permanent residents.

SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLMASTERS

No evidence is available of the establishing of a school, but there may well have been a school by the manse at the old site. Instruction may well have been given by the minister, as there is a reference that would seem to indicate that some such arrangement had been made.

There is some indication that a "dame school" was in operation at Playhaugh at one time. The present schoolhouse is of early 18th century construction and there has been a school on that site for a very long time. Schoolmasters were paid at a very low rate and made up their income by appointment as clerk to the Kirk Session. Like the minister, part of the income was from glebe lands. At Cranshaws it was the custom for the minister to have "grass", that is, a field in which to graze a cow and a pony and to make hay for the winter. Another prerequisite was the cutting of turf and the minister, at any rate, was to be allowed into the Howbog without let or hindrance to cut and cart turf. This peat is of poor quality and from an early date, coal was brought in from Duns or Haddington.

The schoolmasters have no claim to fame or notoriety, though there was a curious affair about seventy years ago. The dominie was the minister's father-in-law. He was disciplined by the Kirk Session, but being session clerk, he carefully cut out the minutes that referred to himself and then placed on record a long diatribe about his son-in-law. He was schoolmaster for over fifty years and had the uncomfortable custom, at least as far as his pupils were concerned, of visiting their homes in the evenings and recommending that the pupils could all be the better of a thrashing.

SPORTS AND PASTIMES

The most important social event was the kirk, held in the barn or hayloft at the expense of the farmer, to mark the safe gathering of the harvest. Fiddles were used to provide the music. These were played in the old style and not in the Italian fashion under the chin. Wintry weather gave opportunity to get out the channel stanes. A few of these are still to be seen as garden ornaments. No doubt they gave a more exciting game than the modern uniform curling stones.

In the summer evenings, quoits were a popular and energetic pastime, but for a more restful evening, the trout of the Whiteadder and its tributaries gave

pleasure and sport. The fishing club is one of the oldest in the country. The highlight for excitement and thrills was to go to the mouth of the Dye, and in the many pools that were there before a modern drainage dried them out, and with punt or raft and armed with a leister and flare, take salmon when they were making upstream.

These old days and ways came to an end and with changing patterns in the social life of the country, but especially because of the upheaval of the wars of 1914 and 1939. So many who went in those grim times never returned, and the years of depression caused many to seek a living elsewhere. Today, only the old and the very young are content to live in the peace of the upland valleys.

LAMMERMOOR PASTORAL SOCIETY

Formed in 1871. An annual Show of sheep except 1914-18, 1939-45. Held at the end of September each year. The Industrial Show of baking and handicrafts shows the work and pastimes of the dark winter evenings. It succeeded a Ploughing and Stock Improvement Club founded about 1840.
