

In the spring of 1999, we had callers at the door from Canada, a Mr Ellem and his daughters. They were on holiday and were making enquiries into their family tree. We had a long chat during which she made reference to Ellems mentioned in the Berwickshire Naturalist Club literature under Butterdean.

The daughter told us she had been to the Records Office in Edinburgh, where she had seen some ancient documents relating to the Ellems in this area, but they were not allowed to touch them, they could only be handled by the Record Office staff. The Records Office were going to try to copy them for the Ellems and send them on to Canada and any news will be passed to us, and in turn to you all.

Then in September, a car outside our house, seemed to be having trouble getting turned. We often have people thinking our road will take them to Abbey St. Bathans. What a surprise I got when they said they were only looking around the area as their forefathers came from around here. I asked what his name was? Gregory Ellem from Australia was the reply. I asked them in for coffee and told them all about the incident in the spring with the Ellems from Canada. They, Gregory, his wife, Dilly and son, Mathew were great people and so friendly it was a pleasure to know them. They told us some of their family history and were not at all ashamed of how the family came to be in Australia, more of which you will hear later. I gave them the photocopies of the articles I had dug out of the B.N.C. literature, asking them to send them back once they had had a chance to copy them, they were returned in three days! About a week after that I was somewhat surprised to receive a letter and photos from Gregory's father, Mr Lewis Ellem who is 84 years of age, a copy of his letter and some of the details from the B.N.C. articles are attached.

Australia.

Dear Mr & Mrs Richardson,

I am writing to thank you for being so kind and helpful to my son, daughter-in-law and grandson on their recent visit to your area. You may recall them as Gregory, Dill and Matthew. They were delighted to receive all the great help you gave them and my wife and I were thrilled that they were so well received over there.

Thank you, too, for the notes on the Ellem family - at Butterdean. For our Bicentenary I published a 316 page history of the family and had a reunion at which 1800 were present so mine came a fair way from the original convict Richard Ellem. He settled on Mangroveck a tributary of the Hawkesbury and after serving seven years for stealing a plough share (value then three pence) he raised a family of 8 boys and 2 girls on 82 acres. He was my great great grand father. (I shall be 84 this December).

I shall include a few snaps with notes on the back which may give you some idea of our lifestyle and our area.

The Ellem information you so kindly supplied was used last week by my other son who as a lecturer in history at Melbourne's La Trobe University. He had to conduct a seminar of family history so you can be pleased your work has been doubly useful. Should you find anything else we'd love to have it.

Once again many thanks and may the coming years be very kind to you.  
Yours sincerely,  
Lewis Ellem.

Australia.

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I am writing to thank you for being so kind and helpful to my son, daughter-in-law and grandson on their recent visit to your area. You may recall them as Gregory, Dill and Matthew. They were delighted to receive all the great help you gave them and my wife and I were thrilled that they were so well received over there.

Thank you, too, for the notes on the Ellen family - at Butterdean. For our Bicentenary I published a 316 page history of the family and had a reunion at which 1800 were present so we've come a fair way from the original convict Richard Ellen. He settled on Mangrove Creek a tributary of the Hawkesbury and after serving seven years for stealing a plough share (value then threepence) he raised a family of 8 boys and 2 girls on 82 acres. He was my great great grand father. (I shall be 84 this December).

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~~the~~ The family has always been mostly farmers in the early days but now embrace practically every occupation. However one thing has remained constant and that is a fanatical

We next find John de Ellem, who is on the Jury at an Inquisition held on 22nd April 1343, as to the lands of Foulden, forfeited by William de Ramsay.<sup>7</sup>

That the lands of the Ellems of Ellem or other Ellem lands were forfeited prior to this period is proved by the fact that David II. gives a grant to William Wardlaw of certain lands in the Crossgate of Coldingham forfeited by Raulf Eklis, and one plough land in Blenherne forfeited by Henry Ellem.<sup>8</sup> The Charter relating to this is granted at Edinburgh, 23rd March, in the 33rd year of David II. (1359).<sup>9</sup>

While the lands of Ellem pass out of the hands of the family of that name about this period, and are found in the possession of the Erskines in the reign of Robert III.,<sup>10</sup> yet the family are still in the neighbourhood, and Henry Ellem is followed by a Richard Ellem, who is a witness to a Charter of David II. in favour of the Earl of Dunbar in 1364.<sup>11</sup> That this Richard Ellem or his successor was of Butterdean may be inferred from the Records of a perambulation by William Drax, prior of Coldingham, and Adam Foreman, of date 13th November 1430, when Richard of Ellem, George of Ellem, and Alexander of Ellem appear as witnesses.<sup>12</sup> There is, however, a perambulation between the lands of Brokholes and Butterdean, on 14th January 1431, between the Priory and Convent of Coldingham and George de Helham, which affords a variation of the name and an indication that George Ellem might be in possession of the lands at that date.<sup>13</sup> Richard of Ellem was probably the father of George of Ellem, for George Ellem of Butterdean is involved in a dispute as to the pasturage of the

<sup>7</sup> Inquisitions Post Mortem, 17 Edward III., No. 8; Cal. Doc. Scot., Vol. 3, p. 257, No. 1409.

<sup>8</sup> Robertson's Index, p. 44, No. 48.

<sup>9</sup> Great Seal Reg., Vol. 1., p. 27, No. 41; Robertson's Index, p. 73, No. 41.

<sup>10</sup> Robertson's Index, p. 147, No. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Robertson's Index, p. 82, No. 169; Great Seal Reg., Vol. 1., p. 55, No. 169.

<sup>12</sup> Appendix to Raine's North Durham, Coldingham Charters, No. 638.

<sup>13</sup> Do. do. No. 639.

bandland in Cockburnspath, which the said Alexander Ellem has resigned.<sup>14</sup>

On 1st March 1543 Robert Logan of Restalrig, son of Margaret Ellem and Robert Logan of Restalrig, get a Crown Charter of the lands of Mount Lothian in the County of Edinburgh.<sup>15</sup>

On 3rd February 1555-6 Alexander Ellem, natural son of Alexander Ellem of Butterdean, obtains letters of legitimation.<sup>16</sup>

On 12th February 1571 David Ellem, son of the Laird of Butterdean, signs a Bond of Obligation with others to rise against the King's enemies, and particularly against Sir Thomas Ker, sometime of Fairnyhurst, who with certain accomplices, thieves, and broken men of the Borders were about to invade and pursue the Burgh of Jedburgh.<sup>17</sup>

On 15th December 1587 a Charter of Confirmation is granted of a Disposition by Peter Ellem of Butterdean, in favour of his son, John Ellem, and Janet Sinclair his spouse, of the lands of Butterdean, West Borthwick, and others.<sup>18</sup> This John Ellem evidently died shortly afterwards, leaving an heir in pupillarity, for on 16th December 1591-2 David Ellem in Butterdean, Tutor of John Ellem of Butterdean, gives caution for himself and John Ellem for warding the Marches.<sup>19</sup>

On 16th December 1592 there is a Crown Charter of Confirmation granted in favour of John Ellem of Butterdean, "Nepote" (grandson) of Peter Ellem of Butterdean, of "Ladyhouse" and other tenements in Coldingham.<sup>20</sup>

On 17th May 1597 John Ellem is served heir to his father, William Ellem, in £10, payable from the lands of Slichhouses.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Great Seal Reg., Vol. III., p. 562.

<sup>15</sup> Do. Vol. III., p. 694.

<sup>16</sup> Do. Vol. 4, p. 230.

<sup>17</sup> Privy Council Records, Vol. II., p. 117.

<sup>18</sup> Great Seal Reg., Vol. 5, p. 488.

<sup>19</sup> Privy Council Records, Vol. 4, p. 812.

<sup>20</sup> Great Seal Reg., Vol. 5, p. 762.

<sup>21</sup> Berwickshire Rotours, No. 14.

### The Ellems of Butterdean.

The lands of the Ellems, originally part of the Parish of Oldhamstock, consisted mainly moorland with some good land on the banks of the River Eye.

In early times they were owned by the Nunnery at Abbey St. Bathans. The earliest known owners were Ellems, it might be inferred that the lands were conferred at an early period upon some branch of the Ellems of Ellem, with Henry of Ellem being mentioned in the "Ragman Rolls". The coat of arms in 1251 had a crane or pelican, hence the association of the crane with Cranshaws.

- 1320-1321 Adam de Ellom is granted relief from the Chancellors Dues and receives the Kings Peace through the Earl of Atholl.
- Oct. 1335 The sum of 20 shillings due from Butterdean to the Castle Ward of Dunbar were unpaid because the lands were lying waste.
- 1336 Duties were again unpaid for the same reason in the accounts of the Sheriffs of Berwick, Roxburgh & Edinburgh.
- 22.4.1343 John de Ellem sits on an Inquisition as to the lands of Foulden being forfeit by William de Ramsay.
- 23.3.1359 King David II gives grant to William Wardlaw of one plough land in Blenherne, forfeit by Henry Ellem.
- 1360 The lands of Ellem pass out of the hands of that family.
- 1364 Still in the neighbourhood, Richard Ellem or his successor is a witness to the charter of King David II in favour of the Earl of Dunbar.
- 14.1.1431 Perambulation between the land of Brokholes and Butterdean, between the Priory & Convent of Coldingham and George de Hellham, indicate the George Ellem to be in possession of these lands at that time.
- 8.2.1457 John of Ellem is served heir to George Ellem in certain lands in Coldingham and West Reston.
- 1457 John Ellem gets sasine in his favour of the lands of Butterdean.
- 4.10.1479 John Ellem of Butterdean, James Ellem & Gavin Home of Manderston charged with treason, having held Dunbar Castle against King James III.
- 1490 The lands of John Ellem are forfeited for his act of treason (see 1479) and were now conferred on his son, George Ellem. His daughter Elizabeth Ellem is said to have married Christopher Cockburn of Choicelee, youngest son of Sir Alexander Cockburn, Baron of Langton.
- 15.2.1502 Alexander Ellem of Butterdean and his wife, Helen Home get a crown Charter of confirmation in joint liferent of the lands of Wester Borthwick.
- 1529 George Ellem gets sasine of the lands of Bassendean.
- 25.9.1541 Crown Charter is granted to Peter Ellem son & heir of Alexander Ellem of Butterdean and his heirs of the lands of Butterdean, Wester Borthwick, 2 husband lands in Mordington and ½ husband lands in Cockburnspath, which the said Alexander Ellem had resigned.
- 12.2.1571 David Ellem, son of the Laird of Butterdean signs a Bond of Obligation with others to rise against the King's enemies, particularly against Sir Thomas Ker of Fairmyhurst, who with certain accomplices, thieves and broken men of the borders, were about to invade and pursue the Burgh of Jedburgh.
- 26.10.1606 George Ellem, sometimes in Butterdean and William Ellem, his brother, are declared fugitives at Jedburgh. The family must have been engaged in some rebellion at this time, the joining of the Crowns of Scotland and England.
- 1615 The lands fell into other hands (Robert Cockburn)
- 1618 William Ellem was on Chimside Common, where plots of land were used either to keep cattle, sheep, plough, make hay or dig peat. The plots were called "cottars", there were six cottars to be had, each cottar is a Toft and six acres.

If you wish to read more in depth about the Ellem family, the Berwickshire Naturalists Club Book, Vol. 19, plus other vols. are available at Duns Public Library.