

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

MARYCULTER

The order of the Poor Knights of Christ was founded in the 12th century by nine French Knights and existed to keep the roads free from marauders as pilgrims made their way from all parts of Europe to Jerusalem , the spiritual centre of the world .. King Baudouin of Jerusalem gave the knights a wing in his palace which was reputedly built on the site of Solomons Temple ,and from this the Order took its name .

The order grew in size and sons of European noblemen flocked to join .The new knights took an oath of Poverty , chastity , and obedience . They were all highly trained in all aspects of warfare , wore white surcoats with a distinctive splayed red cross .The knights combined religious mysticism with a reputation as ferocious fighters who would fight to the death and became known as the Warrior Monks , or Knights Templar .

In 1139 Pope Innocent 11 issued a bull stating that the Templars were responsible to HIM .Gifts of land and money was showered upon them “ostensibly to protect the pilgrims etc. “ and the order soon

developed into an International banking empire headed by a Grand Master .

An example :: Money could be deposited in London

And withdrawn in Jerusalem on presentation of a chit

Or secret gestures .

The Order was now incredibly wealthy dealing in commerce in a huge scale .. King Henry 111 pawned the English Crown Jewels with the Temple of London in order to raise funds for more Wars ..

The Holy Land fell to the Saracens in 1291 at the battle for Acre , and the headquarters of the Templars moved to Cyprus .

AS time went by ""it is said "" that the Templars became arrogant and dissolute , rumours began to spread that they spat upon the cross and held all manners of obscene rituals .

In 1306 King Philip1V took refuge in a Paris Temple and was stunned by its opulence , and became extremely concerned when he heard the Templars intended to form an Independent kingdom in the south of France . During 1307 all Templars in France

were arrested and Pope Clement V EX
COMMUNICATED ALL Templars for Heresy and
ordered their arrest throughout every kingdom in
Christendom

In 1312 the Order ,(Except in Scotland) was officially
dissolved by the Pope , the Templars were most cruelly
put to death culminating in 1314 when Jaques de Moly
(Grand Master of the Order of Poor Knights of Christ
and the Temple) was roasted to death over a slow fire
on the Ile de Seine Paris ..

It is generally accepted that the Knights Templar and
Knights Hospitallers were introduced to Scotland in
1128 by King David 1 who retained around him the
most noble brethren of the distinguished military order
of the Temple of Jerusalem ..

During the year 1187 King William the Lion granted
part of Culter (gaelic Cuil-ter) 8,500 acres to the
Templars South of the river Dee , thus splitting
Peterculter and Maryculter .

Between the years 1221 and 1236 Walter de Beyseth

“Bisset “ founded a preceptory for the Knights Templar on the South Side of the Dee , a chapel was built and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary .The fragmentary ruins of the Chapel of St Mary lie within the Old Parish kirkyard near Maryculter House Hotel The chapel comprised a single chamber approx.. 23 metres by 7 metres was a simple and dignified Gothic structure typical of 13th Century churches built in this area. An examination of the remaining stone suggests it would have been similar to the Chapel of St. Mary of the Storms near Stonehaven .

There are no visible remains of the preceptory buildings but it is believed that the vaulted basement of the Preceptors lodging may have been incorporated into the 17th century “Ha “ house , now part of Maryculter House Hotel .

When the Hospitallers finally abandoned Maryculter in 1548 there were only six knights and a chaplain remaining in residence .

The north bank of the Dee was in the ownership of the Durward family who were the Hereditary Door -- Wards to the Kings of Scotland

A church was built on the Durward lands on the north bank of the river Dee and was dedicated to St Peter .

In 1312 the Templar properties passed to the Knight Hospitallers whose ownership terminated with the Scottish reformation of 1560 , the Order was dissolved ,their lands passing to the Crown of Mary Queen of Scots , BUT , in 1535 the Hospitallers had taken advantage of an Act of Parliament which permitted them to Foe their lands to three Local men of Substance ..

Menzies of Blairs .

Irvine of Maryculter .

Collison of Auchlunies ..

The Ghost of Maryculter ..

A local legend in Maryculter , tells of a Knights Templar named Godfrey Wedderburn who went on a Crusade to the Holy land . He was so eager to fight the enemy that he challenged a Saracen to a single battle before the battle began . In the duel he received a serious wound and was left for dead on the battlefield .

When Godfrey regained consciousness he made his way to a nearby Well , there he was discovered by a girl who was the daughter of the Saracen leader with whom he had fought “cor blimey what a coincidence “

The two fell in love and the Saracen lady un be known to her family nursed the Knight back to health .As a sign of love she gave him a golden ring , but staying true to his vows of chastity Godfrey could not marry her .He had to return to the Knights Templar and was eventually stationed at Maryculter .

The Saracen girl of her own accord followed Godfrey to Scotland . Preparing to declare her love for the Christian Knight she entered the preceptory in Maryculter , only to be thrown out by the Master of the Templar house .. On observing this treatment Godfrey became outraged and attacked his Commander knocking him to the floor . The rebellious knight was arrested and condemned to death

The day of Wedderburns execution came , for his disobedience he was slain with his own dagger . At that Moment his Saracen sweetheart appeared out of nowhere and threw herself down on Godfrey”s lifeless body . Tearful , she took the golden ring off the Knights

finger and offered it to the Master . Perplexed , he put the ring on and was immediately struck down by a bolt of blue fire . The maiden seized Godfrey”s dagger and killed herself ,Wedderburns body was buried inside the Templar chapel .. A white ghost with raven hair can sometimes be seen hovering above his grave “shame “

The Bannockburn connection ??????????????????

My school days began in 1940 , and later on, Scottish history became one of my favourite subjects , with the battle of Bannockburn fascinating me .

The Bruce”s Army were outnumbered 3—1 and fighting Against the greatest war machine in Medieval Europe . I can remember the teacher saying “ that what terrified the English Army “ was another Scottish Army coming over the horizon which was in reality a large group of Camp followers .

Archie Mc Kerracher in his book “ Bruce”s secret Weapon concludes

It will be remembered that by mid day on the 24th of June 1314 the 6,000 Scots were utterly exhausted after fighting non stop for 6 hours , however very few

English had been killed and only a small percentage of their 20,000 strong army had actually come in contact with the Scots . The steady pressure of the Scots chiltroms simply pushed the English armoured Knights backwards penning the rest of its army behind them between the tidal Pelstream burn and Bannock Burn .Then came the renowned appearance of the camp followers , which caused the English to panic ..Approx 1,000 men of the Scots Army had reached the escarpment at St Ninians leading down to the carse .Mr Mc Kerracher suggests that what broke Edwards Army was the sight of the men who led them , perhaps no more than 50 to 60 in number , men who wore their hair close cropped , and beards long , who wore chain mail , and over it a white smock emblazoned with a splayed Red cross . They would have been instantly recognisable to the front rank of the English as the battle hardened , highly trained Knights Templar or Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon who had been condemned to Hell by the Pope and excommunicated in every country in Christendom -----

Except Scotland .

If only my generation had been told this version of the battle of Bannockburn ..

P.S.

My late wife and I raised our family at Wedderhill Netherley / Blairs . Our home being on the most likely route the Templars would have taken from Cammachmore past Wedderhill , through the Kirkton of Maryculter and out beside Templars Park .

My girls would say on a moonlight night they could hear the clip clop of the Templars horses as they rode home after a famous battle . (Well there was never much on the Telly)