

Craigentarrrie: Historical Discussion

By SRP Pentland Hills, October 2010¹

The history of Craigentarrrie is probably fairly typical of many of the small upland steadings in the Pentland Hills area. Originally part of a much larger estate focussed on Killeith there was probably settlement from about 1673 but the location of the farmstead appears to have shifted and the position of the original site cannot be accurately located. The first house on the present site was probably built about 1787-8 or possibly later, following division and enclosure of the Craigentarrrie lands into clearly defined arable and pasture areas. Boundary walls overlie cultivation rig but some of these rigs also appear to respect a small lime kiln so cultivation may have continued after enclosure. Two additions were added to the original building, one to the east in a similar style built prior to 1853 and another, on the west side, probably built in two phases and extended between 1853 and 1897. This formed a large barn or cart shed with a wide west facing gable entrance and a small internal subdivision perhaps for an external WC. The period 1880-1881 was probably one of refurbishment of both main house and barn and it remained a working farm until at least 1900. The 20th century brought further house expansion in the form of a kitchen extension and internal toilet facilities but by this date Craigentarrrie was no longer being used as a farm and the barn was probably ruinous.

The earliest written reference to the lands of Craigentarrrie is in a document dated 23 Feb 1618, in which Robert Crawford in Ernecraig (Old Glencorse) and Alexander Aitkeine in Kirktoone of Sanct Kathereins hoip, surrendered their rights in the land of Craigentarrrie to Master John Finlaysoune of Killeith (NAS GD41/119). Killeith was a large area of arable land S of Currie Kirk, occupied today by the farms of Kinleith and the two names are probably the same.

There is a gap in the records until 17 February 1673, when John Scott of Malleny granted a tack for nine years of the 'lands and roume of Craigentarrrie' to Mr. James Dalmahoy (probably an uncle or cousin). On this occasion (NAS GD41/120) the boundaries were carefully recorded, revealing that Craigentarrrie lands marched with those of Whiteside of Killeith, a lost farm whose name is now only recorded in the plantation belts. Because this tenancy mentions "buildings" it is very likely that there were multiple dwellings at Craigentarrrie at this date although they are not shown on any map. In 1710 'all and hail the roum and lands of Craigentarrrie together with his lands of Killeath commonly called the south roum' were granted to the Keddie family in a series of tacks of nine, fourteen and nineteen years (GD41/121-125). In 1737 the Keddies retained Craigentarrrie (and there

¹ Scotland's Rural Past (www.scotlandsruralpast.org.uk)

is a specific mention of its grass GD41/123) but moved to Kilfairnie (or Caldham) an extensive farm E of Killeith but still on the S side of the Water of Leith and Craigentarrie remained with the family until the 1780s when the tenancy records come to an end.

The earliest map-based reference to Craigentarrie is William Roy's Military Survey of Scotland, 1747-55, where it is shown as a small settlement, lying just to the W of the Clochmead Road between Glencorse and Harlaw. Although the estate records suggest that Craigentarrie was farmed from before 1681, Roy does not show cultivation in the lands around the farmstead, despite showing extensive cultivation in the neighbouring farms of Bavelaw and Kirkton. It continues to be depicted as a small settlement on all of the printed county maps of the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (including Armstrong, 1773; Knox, 1812; Kirkwood, 1817; Greenwood, 1828; Anderson, 1834).

In 1787 an accounting of enclosure was made for Craigentarrie and a year later, in 1788 John Ramage and his brother in law were given a nineteen year tenancy of the farm, which was now a single enclosed settlement not associated with any other tenancy (GD41/333).

This tack restricted the amount of land that could be ploughed in a year "The Tenant is not to plough in any one year more than what is folded without the approbation of the proprietor". The inclusion of this condition might suggest the soil was very poor quality and was intended to ensure that at least half of the land was being rested, and presumably manured by the livestock, at any one time.

The venture does not initially appear to have been successful for estate accounts reveal that the new tenants fell into serious rent arrears almost immediately: John Ramage paid off the last half of the Craigentarrie 1789 crop in February 1790 but in March 1791 was owing £87 19s – a debt that was still in arrears on 3 December 1791. He was not the only tenant struggling to pay rent in these years so this could reflect a period of poor weather and bad harvests which would particularly affect an upland moor farm. It was not an auspicious start to his tenancy although subsequently the farm must have proved more successful

The enclosure of the farm in 1787 appears to have come at the end of a long process of subdivision of the muirs of Killeith and Balerno, which began in 1737 (GD41/123) when the first mention occurs in a tenancy agreement of the landowner's intention to divide the commonities of Killeith and Balerno ' <the tenant to> Acquiesce and Agree to a Division of the common Muirs of Killieth and Balerno and to Accept of ?which Quantity thereof after the Divisions as shall be Equivalent and

Adequate in Value to the ?purposes and priviledges belonging present or of Old to the said Two Rooms’.

Commonities, or land where grazing and other rights such as peat and turf cutting were shared in common between several communities, originally occupied most of the N and much of the NW face of the Pentland Hills. With only landscape features and years of usage to indicate the divisions between common and owned land this led to frequent disputes and an argument involving Bavelaw and Pentland Moor grazing rights is recorded back in 1280 (NAS RH5/231). Such disputes were still continuing in 1709 when the division of Pentland Hills Commonity (NAS GD 89/1/860) took place and were resolved only by testimonies given by the oldest inhabitants or those who could “tell” the boundaries. Commonity divisions following the Scottish Act for the Division of the Commonities in 1695 are summarised in the ‘Directory of Former Scottish Commonities’, Ian H Adams, Scottish Record Society series (available in the National Library Scotland SRS NS2 1971) and (as can be seen from Craigentarrie tenancy) required tenants to surrender any rights they may have held in return for gaining several additional acres of new land to farm ‘With powers to the said William Keddie and forsaid to plough, Labour and manure the said Halfe so to be ascertained and given to them by the Arbiters forsaid’ (GD41/125).

The division of Killeith Muir (including Threipmuir) was finalised in 1768 and encouraged the Bavelaw and Malleny landowners to completely remodel their estates. Farms such as Acrehead and Middle Third of Bavelaw disappeared while new steadings such as Redford and small farms such as Threipmuir were created on previously uncultivated moorland. On both these farms the landowner equipped the holding with a new house and in 1773 Threipmuir was offered to the tenants of the Middle Third of Bavelaw at a low initial rent to encourage their new venture. Improved crop rotation, techniques of liming, manuring and resting the soil along with the inventions of new machinery such as the threshing machine and lighter more efficient ploughs also aided these ventures, which in many cases proved very successful. Craigentarrie, however, although on the Malleny estate and despite its additional acreage, does not seem to have immediately changed its status, perhaps because its grassland was too valuable or maybe because its plough soils were too difficult. Its final enclosure into a mixed grazing and arable farm did not happen until 19 years after the Killeith muir division, presumably when a tenancy finished.

Between 1841 and 1871 Craigentarrie’s lands appear to have been turned over to sheep. The OS namebook (1853) describes the house ‘attached to a Sheep farm’ and shepherds Thomas Cairns and William Dagleish, are living at Craigentarrie in the census returns for these years. There are,

however, no tenancy records covering this period so it is not known whether Craigentarrie was still operating as a single farm or had been divided between other farmers.

Old Craigentarrie

The First Edition OS map (1852-54) shows the present Craigentarrie set in the NW corner of a large garden enclosure, with three large arable fields to the S and a large tract of unimproved ground to the N but the Object Name Book Lists compiled for the First Edition OS maps (1853) report that there was an older farm building also called Craigentarrie in a different location and the map shows the dotted outline of a rectangular enclosure some 300m to the SE.

Craigentarrie has several entries in the OS Namebook (1853) and the first describes it as “The site of the old farm house of Craigenterrie not the slightest vestige is now visible, nor do the oldest residents of the locality remember to have seen the house in a habitable state”. However another entry, and the one used in the official/final version describes Craigentarrie as “a small farm house one storey high, thatched and in bad repair, having a sheep farm attached. Property of Scott Esq.” *<situated>* “about 25 chains (about 500m) SE of Craigentarrie”. This confusion suggests that the entry for old Craigentarrie was rejected because nothing visible could be seen. However its position may not have been removed from the original map plan and the two sites became conflated in the final entry.

Fieldwalking has identified a low square enclosure bank at approx NT 19561 64697, but no traces were found of any house foundations. The Second Edition OS map (1895) shows an unnamed enclosure at NT 1986 6448 600m (30 chains) SE of the present Craigentarrie – equivalent to the Namebook entry. However early 18th century maps show a settlement named Dens Cleugh in this area, accurately surveyed on an 1825 map by James Jardine “Plan of the Proposed Aqueduct from Listonshiells, Bavelaw & Black Springs to Edinburgh and Leith”. The site of Old Craigentarrie therefore remains a mystery. Its ruins were still remembered locally in 1853 but had apparently been uninhabitable for many years prior to that if the oldest residents could not recall it being lived in.

Valuation records in the NAS reveal that by 1876 the present Craigentarrie was being farmed in two separate units: George Robertson, farming at Threipmuir, was given a 19 year lease in 1876 for part of Craigentarrie and James Brown was given a 19 year lease in 1880 for the other part along

with (interestingly) Easter Kinleith Farm (pers comm. John Scott of Currie Local History Group from a sale document prepared for the Malleny Estate February 1882).

The house is recorded as unoccupied in the 1881 census but since valuation records clearly show the land was still being farmed this phase of non-occupancy may in fact indicate a period of renovation work perhaps related to a sale in 1882 with many of the refurbishments evident in the surviving buildings dating to this phase. Certainly by the 1891 census, George Robertson, farmer, is now in residence and in 1900 a Mr Robertson of Craigentarrie was recorded as Chairman of the Balerno Burns Club in a publication 'Our District: The Historical Background to Currie and Ratho Parishes' by John Tweedie and Cyril Jones (Currie District Council: 1975, p49-50). By the 1901 census he had left Craigentarrie and shepherd William Blackadder had taken up residence with his wife and seven children.

The Currie District Council publication also records that the Co-operative Society delivered groceries and paraffin to the farm once a week. No date is given but although the service had ceased, the driver was said to be still alive aged 100, so presumably it relates to a period in the early 20th Century.

By the late 1970s the Currie District Council book (*ibid*) states that Craigentarrie had become simply "a weekend retreat", although the alterations made to the house suggest that it was being used more as a community centre than as a family holiday home. The kitchen extension probably relates to this phase of use and some of the 20th century refurbishments are likely to have included shower and toilet facilities. Unit 2A was probably a dormitory while Unit 1 was probably a communal sitting and dining room.

Documents consulted in the National Archives of Scotland (GD41 Papers of the Dick-Lauder family of Fountainhall)

GD41/119; Renunciation by Robert Crawford in Ernecraig and Alexander Aitkeine in Kirktoone of Sanct Kathereins hoip, to Master John Finlaysoune, now of Killeith, of their right, by Tack, to lands of Craigentarrie, 23 Feb 1618

GD41/120; Tack by John Scot of Maleny to Mr. James Dalmahoy, second son of Sir Alexander Dalmahoy of that Ilk, of lands and roume of Craigentarrie, for 9 years, 17 Feb 1673

GD41/121; Tack by Thomas Scott of Malleny to John Keddie, present tenant in Craigentarrie, of the room and lands of Craigentarrie, together with the lands of Killieth commonly called the south roum, for 14 years, 29 May 1710

GD41/122; Tack by Thomas Scott of Maleney to William Keddie, present tenant in Cragintarie, of the room and lands of Cragintarie, for 19 years, 11 Jan 1725

GD41/123; Tack by John Scott of Malleny to William Keddie, tenant in Craigintarie, of the 2 rooms and lands of Craigintarie and Kilfairnie, for 19 years, 09 Dec 1737

GD41/124; Tack by John Scott of Malleny to William Keddie, tenant in Craigentarrie, of the room and lands of Craigentarrie, for 19 years, 12 Nov 1743

GD41/125; Tack by John Scott of Malleny to William Keddie, tenant in Craigintarry, of the room and lands of Craigintarry, for 19 years. 16 May 1761; with minute of Tack, 24 Apr 1761

GD41/126: Note of Tolerance, dated 19 June 1635 and registered B. of C. & S. 19 March 1645, by John, Lord Cranston, to Sir Patrick Hamilton of Little preston, Kt., whereby said Sir Patrick is allowed to take lime from lands of Over Cransten called Cranstendaw

GD41/333: Estate papers of Malleny including rental of Craigintarry, Articles for roup of wood on the estate and a scheme for collecting the road money in Currie parish, 1787-1791

GD41/348: Estate papers of Malleny, 1790-1792

GD41/339: Malleny estate rental, 1711

GD41/340: Malleny estate rental, 1711-25

GD41/341: Extract) Factory by Ann Nicolson, relict of John Scott of Mallenie, and others, creditors of Thomas Scott of Mallenie, to William Seton, W.S., for intromission with rent of lands of Mallenie, 1712

GD41/342: Account of intromissions of Mr. Alexander Pitcarn with rents of the estate of Malleny, 1714-19

GD41/343: Three accounts of payments by tenants of Thomas Scott of Malleny for the years 1715, 1716

GD41/344: Discharges for payments of rents on the estate of Malleny, 1719-26

GD41/345: Discharges for payments of rents on the estate of Malleny, 1720-23

GD41/346: Discharges for payments of rents on the estate of Malleny, 1786-89

GD41/347: Notes of rents on the estate of Malleny, 1787

GD41/348: Notes of rents on the estate of Malleny, 1790-91