

Notes on the Origins and Pedigree of the Clan Scott Chiefs v2

by and © Adrian C Grant, 20th August 2026

For a long time it has been a matter of some bemusement to me that the Clan Scott should inhabit the Borders region of Scotland (where there were virtually no Scots) – to the point of it seeming ironic. When I began to look into the matter for the first time just a few weeks ago, I found that a polite – and, as we shall see, somewhat convenient – veil seems to have been cast over the origins of the Chiefs of the Clan Scott, a convenience parallel to the very name Scott itself. But unfortunately that obscurantism has allowed false stories to run rampant. The misrepresentation of their origins has been going on for a very long time – as far as Sir George Mackenzie in 1680 that we can see – and so we should suppose a good deal further. We are afforded some access via the contradictions.

Whereas many clans make grandiose claims about their ancestors, the Clan Scott is particularly abstemious. This is all the more ironic as the heiress Ann Scott married James the Duke of Monmouth, one of Charles II's illegitimate sons whereupon it was Ann who was raised to be Duchess of Buccleuch whence the Dukes descend to the present day.

A. Selected Sources:

1. [The science of heraldry.....](#) by Sir George Mackenzie (1680) says

(p35) Or, on a bend azur, a Star betwixt two Crescents of the Field.

(p55) Argent, three Lyons heads erased Gules, langued azure.

(p74) The bearing, or charge of the Chiefs house should not be alter'd, as many Families in Scotland have done:..... and Scot of Balwylie bears different Arms from these of Balcleuch. But this was occasion'd by Cadets, their marrying Heretrixes, whose Arms they assum'd without using their own, seing they got no Patrimony from their Predecessors.

(p82) Sometimes the Husband did of old assume only the Wifes Arms who was an Heretrix, as Scot of Balcleuch.....

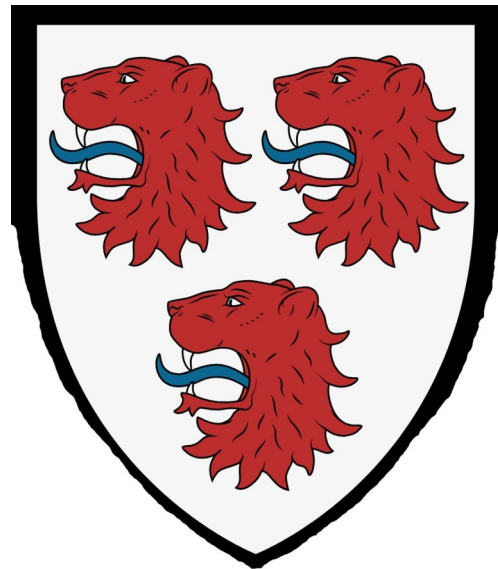
(p97) Sometimes it is relative to the Supporters: Thus the Supporters of Buccleugh, were two Ladies in rich and antique Apparel az. their [c]lokes over their shoulders, and the Word is, Amo, which was assumed by his Predecessors, when he got his first Estate by marrying the Heretrix of Murdistone.

So we have two different coats of arms and Mackenzie offers us a general explanation of how this come about, but note the equivocation about who made what changes.

[The coat of arms of the present duke, as for the last 350+ years has each quarter quartered and reflects the many prestigious families from which he is descended – not least King Charles II, of course. This can be seen on the Wikipedia page.]



(a) Or a bend.....



(b) Argent, three Lyons.....

source for (a): [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Scott_\(of_Buccleuch\)_arms](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Scott_(of_Buccleuch)_arms)

source for (b): https://wappenwiki.org/index.php/House_Scott_of_Balwearie

The simplicity of both these designs suggests that they are quite old. If the rules of cadency have been observed then the crescent implies a second son and the mullet a third son, suggesting that the person who matriculated arms (a) was the third son of a second son (or something like that) of a man who bore the arms “or a bend azure” undifferenced. This can be compared to the Bisset blazon (azure a bend argent) – but of course I am not suggesting any blood relationship between the two families.

[Wikimedia](#) has an excellent page based on the idea “Or a bend azure” but frustratingly none of the examples there are a pointer. [This duplication is not surprising where it is across different jurisdictions. The arms of the Chief of Grant, for example are the same as those of Ely Cathedral, for the serendipitous explanation of which see my book “[Scottish Clans...](#)”.] There could be mileage in the inverse tinctures (azure a bend or is that of the Scrope family and there was a Richard Scrob who was allowed to remain in Edward the Confessor’s court after 1052 when other Normans were expelled) but is all a good deal too tenuous.

We should also pay attention to other aspects of the achievement:

The Crest features a stag. I am inclined to the idea that this dates to no earlier than 1296 when the Scotts were appointed as the King’s foresters.

The Supporters are two bare breasted women for which the reason is obvious: the clan’s fortunes have rested on marrying well!

The Motto is “Amo” meaning “I love”. I am prepared to accept that this could be a reference to Sir Richard’s love for the heiress of Murthockstone – but actually it could apply equally to one of two highly advantageous marriages in previous generations.

Background: The first person to bear arms in Scotland was King Malcolm III who adopted the Lion Rampant on his 21st birthday in 1052 while still an exile from Scotland at the court of Edward the Confessor. [Again see my book “Scottish Clans....” Vol. 2 Book D Chapter 3.] This practice was soon adopted by the principle magnates over the course of Malcolm’s reign, but just how far down it percolated is another matter. Unless you were an Earl or Mormaer it is highly unlikely that you would have a coat of arms but not a surname. Coats of Arms became de rigueur at jousting tournaments only from 1135 onwards – and that on the continent.

So my working hypothesis is that the Scott coat of arms (a) was invented no later than when the surname was adopted, with the marks of cadency paying respect to the ancestral line even though what would have been the ancestral (undifferenced) arms may never actually have existed.

In support of this the sons of Gregory Grant (the 2nd chief) bore arms (dating to around 1200) where cadency had no part to play – and some of the blazons were unrelated to others. [In Scotland these matters were not formalised until 1239.] However as will be seen below, it is not impossible that a coat of arms (whether this one or the theoretical original undifferenced version) may have been adopted as early as around 1060.

Meanwhile the Arms attributed to Scott of Balwearie pay homage to the Earls of Fife (or a Lion Rampant gules). We can compare (i) this blazon’s relationship to that of the Earls of Fife with (ii) the arms of the Clan Donnachie in relation to the Mormaers of Atholl as discussed in my paper [Notes on the Origins and Pedigree of the Clan Donnachaidh / Robertson Chiefs](#). In this Scott case there are two alternative explanations (to be discussed in the reconstruction section below).

2. [Nisbet’s System of Heraldry](#) (1722, Vol. I p86) says:

Fig. 5. or, on a bend azure, a star betwixt two crescents of the first, by the surname of SCOT. As for its antiquity, amongst the witnesses in a charter of King David I. to the abbacy of Selkirk, there are Uchtred filius Scott, and Ranulphus Anglus, who may have been the first of the surname of Scott and Inglis. — see Sir James Dalrymple's Collections.

The eldest family of the name of Scott was that of Balwyrrie, as Sir George Mackenzie, in his Science of Heraldry, and MS. of Genealogies, tells us; and that one Walter Scott, a son of that family, married the only daughter and heiress of Murdiston of that Ilk, in the reign of Robert the Bruce; who, though he retained the surname of Scott, yet he laid aside his paternal arms, vix. argent, three lions' heads erased gules, and carried those of Murdiston, or, on a bend azure, a star betwixt two crescents of the first.

WALTER SCOTT, his grand or great-grandson, designed of Murdiston, excambed these lands, with Thomas Inglis of Manor, for other lands, as I mentioned before.

Well we can see that Mackenzie did not actually say that; likewise we shall see that the marriage to the ‘Murdiston’ heiress was NOT during the reign of Robert the Bruce. Nisbet has made assumptions based on his misreading of Mackenzie but more of that anon.

3. The Scottish Clan and Family Encyclopaedia (SCFE) says:

The Latin word “scotti” originally denoted the Irish Celts, and later the Gaels in general. However Black, in his *Surnames of Scotland*, notes that the earliest certain record of the name (in a charter around 1120), Uchtred ‘filius Scott’ bears a remarkably Saxon name, if the family were truly of Celtic origin. Henricus le Scotte witnessed a charter by David, Earl of Strathearn around 1195. A Master Isaac Scotus witnessed charters by the Bishop of St Andrews at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Four generations after Uchtred, Sir Richard Scott married the daughter and heiress of Murthockstone His son, Sir Michael, second laird of Buccleuch ... distinguished himself at the Battle of Halidon Hill in 1333 but he later fell at Durham in 1346..... He left two sons Robert, the third laird and John who founded the important cadet house of Synton....

The Scotti: While it is true that the Scotti originated in Ireland, Black is not correct when he says “The [Latin](#) word *Scotti* was originally used to describe the [Celts](#) of [Ireland](#).” As we shall see the Clan Scott has no direct connection to them. For who the Scotts were and how they got their name see my paper [The Origins of The Picts and The Scots A Comprehensive Outline Narrative](#).

“Celtic” origins: SCFE is correct to say “Uchtred ‘filius Scott’ bears a remarkably Saxon name, if the family were truly of Celtic origin.” As we shall see the Scotts were NOT of “Celtic Origin”, but it seems that at some stage they have gone to considerable effort to imply the claim. The name Uchtred is specifically Anglian – not Gaelic and not Brythonic. [It basically means “dawn counsel” which we might translate slightly tongue in cheek as “working breakfast”. Taking advice early in the day is wise indeed.]

Pedigree Lacunae: As we can see the reference to “Four generations” is not just incorrect, it is silly – someone somewhere cannot do elementary sums. Uchtred was an adult by 1120, so he was born before 1100. Sir Michael died at Durham in 1346 leaving two sons. So Sir Michael was probably born c 1300 and hence his father, Sir Richard sometime around 1270. Thus there is minimum gap of 170 years suggesting that each man declined to become a father until he was well over 40! For such a family at such a time this is far beyond credibility. So there are missing intervening generations.

4. The Duke of Buccleuch's [own website](#) says this:

The earliest written ancestral record of the present Scotts of Buccleuch refers to a Scott, living in Peeblesshire in 1116. Between the 12th and 14th centuries descendants of one, Richard Scott, were granted lands at the head of the Ettrick spreading thereafter along the Teviot and down into Eskdale and Liddesdale along the border with England.

This statement is admirably to the point, making no claims beyond that which can be demonstrated.

5. [Wikipedia](#) says this:

The Latin word *Scotti* was originally used to describe the Celts of Ireland.^[3] However the historian George Fraser Black notes in his *Surnames of Scotland* that the earliest certain record of the name was that of Uchtred 'Filius Scott', in a charter from around 1120.^[3]

As is reasonable, Wikipedia is derivative here – ie the material is taken from the existing sources.

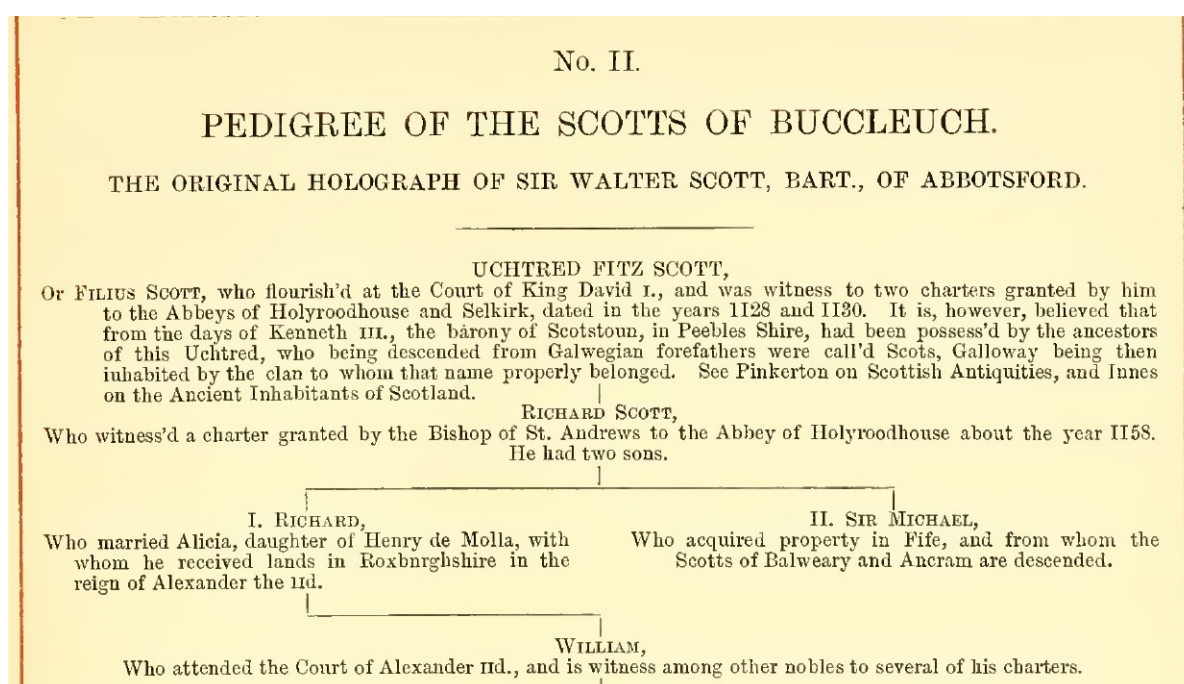
6. At MacTutor,

Tony Scott attempts a biography of Michael Scott the scholar, but he was ill served by Sir Walter Scott who, in his Lay of the Last Minstrel (p/234/5) conflated that Michael Scott with Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie (a chronological impossibility) – but more of that anon.

[Sadly it seems that Tony has some difficulty separating evidence and hunch and when this was pointed out to him he betrayed his own Anglo-Saxon roots!!]

7. William Fraser

(later Sir William) made his career out of writing histories for clan chiefs. The Dukes of Buccleuch were one of his clients and Volume I of his 2-volume work on them is on line courtesy of the National Library of Scotland at <https://deriv.nls.uk/dcn23/9670/96705987.23.pdf>



From page 561

I have had extensive dealings with his other works including those on the Grants and the Balfours, so a pattern is clearly emerging. There are deliberate “suppositions” which mask inconvenient facts. Nevertheless he was assiduous when citing sources which he does represent largely accurately (though he had a weak spot serially misrepresenting “forinsec” as “forensic”!) In Vol. I (from p561) he reproduces Sir Walter Scott’s version of the pedigree implying that he did not necessarily accept it. Sadly others have relied on this too much which is why it has percolated down to the present day. Readers are invited to consider these matters for themselves.

Origins of ‘Uchtred’: Contrary to claims made in Fraser (and so probably by Sir Walter) and as mentioned above, Uchtred is NOT a Galwegian name. The Galwegians were Viking with Gaelic influence (and if we go back to the Novantae of Ptolemy’s time they were Cruithin). The fact that there was an Uchtred of Galloway was due to intermarriage with the formerly royal Bernician line. [For a detailed discussion see my paper [Fergus of Galloway was Somerled's elder half-brother.](#)]

“Satchells”: Fraser also rehearses a fabulous (and fundamentally false) story of the supposedly Galwegian origins of the Scotts by Captain Walter Scott of Satchells in 1688. While he is entirely correct to dismiss the general thrust of the story, what I have found is that often there are useful nuggets to be extracted from them but it does take great care. In this case we do now (and only now from my paper about Fergus and Somerled) understand the Galwegian connection (which is a collateral one) and Fraser suggests that Bellenden (later Bellendean on the Ale Water between Buccleuch and Hawick, which no longer exists) was acquired by the Scotts in 1415. However there is a verse (p. xxvi) which is worth repeating:

John Scot then informed the King that he had with him a brother named Wat:—

"Ye are very well met, then, said the King

He shall be English and ye are Scot,

At Bellanden let him remain,

Fast by the Forrest side." 3

Despite the cover-up effort his does hint at an English origin for the Scotts.

8. The Peerage of Scotland (Vol. 2) says:

RICHARD LE SCOT of Rankilburn, and Murthockston, appears among the barons of Scotland who swore fealty to King Edward I. of England 1296. He is the first ancestor of this family of whom there is definite record, and is styled in the Homage Roll as 'of Murthoxton' or Murthockstoun, now Murdiestoun, in the county of Lanark, which he is traditionally said to have acquired by his marriage with the daughter and heir of Murthockstoun of that Ilk. But he had also lands in Selkirkshire, which were restored to him in September 1296. He is said to have died about 1320.

Sadly and frustratingly this record is based on the work of William Fraser (see above).

Section B. The POMS Database:

The Adoption of Surnames: Surnames are in essence a Norman French custom introduced into England with the accession of King William I. [There had been a handful of Normans at the court of Edward the Confessor, but they were generally held in bad odour.] My opinion is that the first surname *qua* surname in Scotland was that of William de Monte Alto, ancestor of the Moffats, Mowats and Johnstons etc. (for which see my “Scottish Clans....”). He was established in Annandale in 1095. But this practice was not copied in earnest until David I became regulus of the South of Scotland under King Alexander I (so from 1107). The Grants were early adopters of this custom: we can date this very specifically to 1174. Even the Stewarts did not join in until c1200.

Today we are at a distinct advantage over the likes of William Fraser both because of modern systematic scholarship and because of modern technology. Thus we can extend the numbers of people Fraser was aware of by interrogating the excellent “People of Mediaeval Scotland” database. It includes records for:

1. Herbert Scott (<https://poms.ac.uk/record/factoid/14455/>) POMS fl: 1128 × 1172

Some of his appearances are specifically in Scott territory (see below)

POMS says: Watt, *Graduates*, 484: Herbert was a master and served bishops of St Andrews, appearing 1144×59-1172×78, he also appears witnessing royal acts along with other clerks of St Andrews. He is probably not the same as Herbert the clerk who appears with Richard de Moreville, constable

2. John Scott: (<https://poms.ac.uk/record/person/850/>) POMS fl: 1152 × 1202

Some of his appearances are specifically in Scott territory (see below)

POMS says: Watt and Murray, *Fasti*, 123, 378, 393: John Scott was bishop of Dunkeld from 1 October 1182 × 18 June 1183 until his death in 1203. He died at Newbattle Abbey near Edinburgh in that year. John had been elected bishop of St Andrews in 1178 by the canons, though without consulting the king, who had elected his own nominee, Hugh (d.1188). John was consecrated, and had Hugh's appointment annulled by papal authority. Hugh and John contested the election until 1188, though John was translated to the see of Dunkeld in 1182×83.

References (*Chron. Bower*, iii, 373) that John was archdeacon of Lothian before his election to the see of St Andrews in 1178 is probably an error. Watt, *Graduates*, 485-88: John was nephew of Matthew, bishop of Aberdeen (1172-99), and of Robert, bishop of St Andrews (d.1159). His family held lands in Fife, though they may have been of English origin. John's nephews were known to be Robert, Simon and John Nepos. He was Master by 1178. He was consecrated as bishop of St Andrews, in June 1180, though the election was contested (see above). He was at the papal court in 1183, July 1186 and January 1187/8, finally returning to Scotland in February 1187/8 where he settled for the see of Dunkeld. He died in 1203 and was buried at Newbattle Abbey. He may be the same as John of St Andrews, those this may be his *_nepos_*, John. From ODNB: John was absent from Scotland during his childhood, but returned under Richard, bishop of St Andrews (1165-78), when his father or uncle, Odo, was steward to the bishop and to the priory of St Andrews. He was consecrated on 15 June 1180 at Holyrood Abbey. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/articleHL/50019> papal judge

3. Gilbert/Gilla Brigitte Scott (<https://poms.ac.uk/record/person/1316/>) POMS fl. 1172x1199

Gilla Brigitte is noted as the son of Ewen, so if he were 60 in 1199 then he would have been born c1140 and Ewen c 1115. On the other hand if he were only 22 in 1172 he would have been born c1150 and so his father c1125. The locations of his appearances are (a) in his home area and (b) in the Montrose area.

4. Isaac Scott (<https://poms.ac.uk/record/person/863/>) POMS fl: 1198x1213

Some of his appearances are specifically in Scott territory (see below)

POMS says: Watt, *Graduates*, 484: Isaac is from unknown origins though he first appears in association with Brechin (ANG). He is found usually in a St Andrews context, highlighting a north of the Forth connection. Towards the end of his life, he appears as Isaac Forteviot, which probably refers to his benefice of Forteviot (PER), which he held 1210×16, prob. 1210×14. He has a son, Nazar, who appears 1183×1203. Isaac was master by 1198 and is first found under the name of 'Brechin' when witnessing charters as a clerk of that bishop, datable 1189×98. He was probably in his *familia* until he begins appearing in a St Andrews context from 1196×February 1198 to 1210×25. He may have returned to Brechin, where he appears as a witness 1202×14, and twice appears in a Glasgow context. He is not found with certainty after 1213.

5. Robert Scott (<https://poms.ac.uk/record/person/3287/>) POMS fl. 1172X78

Robert could not have been born after 1150. The only factoid about him concerns land just South of St Andrews later called Allanhill

6. Walter Scott (<https://poms.ac.uk/record/person/5068/>) POMS died 1198

Walter lived in the Montrose area. If we were to suppose that he was 70 when he died then he would have been born c1128, but of course he could have been born 20+ years later,

7. Duncan Scott (<https://poms.ac.uk/record/person/4641/>) POMS fl 1200x1238

Duncan was given land by Earl Malcolm I of Fife but no date or specific time window is available. This man is going to prove key to our understanding of the whole family.

8. Caveat Lector: Henry “Scott” (<https://poms.ac.uk/record/person/1844/>)

It is an oft repeated “well known fact” (even rehearsed in SCFE) that ‘Henricus Le Scotte’ witnessed a charter given by David Earl of Strathearn in 1195. One fatal flaw in this claim is that in 1195 – and indeed all the time from 1171 – 1223, the Earl of Strathearn was called Gillebrigte.

POMS does recognise a ‘Henry Scott’ who witnessed charters by David Earl of **Huntingdon** in the period 1195x1214, one of them giving the church of Conington (now in Cambridgeshire) to the monks of Lindores Abbey in Fife (which David helped a lot). However if we examine the detail, the witness was “Henrico de Scocia” (elsewhere Henrico de Scott) – **NOT** “Henry le Scotte”. So, POMS notwithstanding, this is more likely to have been one of David’s two illegitimate sons, both called Henry – and better known as Henry of Brechin and Henry of Stirling. As Henry of Huntingdon was born in 1152 the sons may have been born in the 1170s (he did not marry until 1190) and so available to sign from c1195.

Discussion of these entries

In the case of the Scotts, as we can see the surname Scott was in use at least from 1150. On the other hand “Uchtred filius Scott” had clearly not adopted the custom by 1120. So my current working hypothesis is that yes indeed the Scotts were amongst the very earliest adopters in the person of Uchtred’s son, Richard who will have come of age around 1125 – broadly coinciding with King David I becoming King of Scotland in his own right.

Section C. Their lands:

For reasons to be set out below, I am inclined to accept the old family lore that their first lands were on the Rankil Burn (a tributary of the Ettrick Water) with their base at what was later renamed Buccleuch.

Despite citing SCFE, Wikipedia has things the wrong way round when the contributor says:

..... Sir Richard Scott married the heiress of Murthockstone and in doing so acquired her estates.[3] Sir Richard was appointed as the ranger of Ettrick Forest and this brought to him the additional lands of Rankilburn.[3] The new laird built his residence at Buccleuch and the estates were generally known by this name.[3]

This marriage took place around the year 1285 by which time the family had been in possession of Rankilburn for over 200 years. The acquisition of Muthockstone (now Murdostoun, just east of Wishaw and so some 50 miles from Buccleuch) serves us little beyond demonstrating the influence the family already had at such an early date, but it was also, of course, the beginning of the Scotts' expansion to the gigantic landholdings they were later to acquire. Notice also the entry in the Peerage of Scotland which says that they had their lands RESTORED to them in 1296 – and we have no idea of when or why they had been forfeit.

Meanwhile despite the oft rehearsed but otherwise baseless allegation that the Scotts originated in Fife, there is no basis for supposing other than that the first Scott in Fife was Duncan, given land by Earl Malcolm I who died in 1228. Sadly we do not know where this parcel of land was.

Section D: Building the narrative

So far we have collated the “facts” including the early reportage and subjected them to some elementary scrutiny. Now our task is to make sense of it all and construct a narrative consistent with these facts. I regret that the family tree I have constructed is too unwieldy to present as such – but I will try to offer extracts in relevant places.

1. Antecedents of Uchtred filius Scott

The Name Uchtred: Uchtred is a very rare name, so much so that the PASE database (which covers England) only includes three – and that includes alternative spellings. [But, for example, of necessity this does not include Uchtred of Galloway nor indeed Uchtred filius Scott in Scotland!] The first Uchtred on the PASE record is the Uchtred who was briefly (944 until his death in 947) [Bishop of Lindisfarne](#) (albeit based at Chester-le-Street). [When the Bishopric was moved again (in 995) it was merely to Durham, just 5 miles away.]

The next is the Earl of Bamburgh who was killed in 1016 by Thurbrand Hold at the behest of Canute. So it looks as if Bishop Uchtred may well have been the great grand uncle of Uchtred the Lord of Bamburgh.

When we consider “Uchtred filius Scott”, My first exploration was to test the idea that “Scott”'s father was Uchtred – and bingo.... there is an Uchtred who fits right in. He is Uchtred the son of Ligulf who married Ealdgyth one daughter of Ealdred II, Earl of Northumbria (who was killed in 1038 by the son of the Thurbrand mentioned above. [There was an ongoing blood feud which need not detain us.] Ligulf was born c1010x15 (we do not have any antecedents for him beyond the general claim that he was descended from the Earls on his mother's side) so we may suppose Uchtred to have been born c1035. Uchtred's brother, Morcar, became a monk at Jarrow and his sister Ragnald made a donation to Fountains Abbey in the 1130s (implying that while Uchtred was born when Ealdgyth was a teenager, Ragnald was born when Ealdgyth was in her mid to late 30s).

This is all very well, but what would have taken Uchtred away from Lumley Castle (at Chester-le-Street) to Scotland? My conclusion is that he was part of the army mustered in 1054 by Siward the then Earl of Northumbria (and Uchtred's uncle by marriage) to invade Scotland to assist Malcolm III regain the throne from Macbeth.

At this point I express my great gratitude to Steve Dodds of the [Chester-le-Street Heritage Group](#) who provided me with the recognised family tree of the Lumley Earls of Scarborough. The Chart can be seen on the [British-History site](#) (from page 162).

The top person on the pedigree is

“**Ligulf**, murdered by Gillebert, kinsman of Bishop Walcher before 1080 = Alghitha, daughter to Aldred, Earl of Northumberland”

The couple had two sons:

(a) **Uchtred**, witness to the charter of Waltheof, Earl of Northumberland before 1080

(b) **Morcar** whom Earl Waltheof presented to the Monks of Jarrow when he gave them Tynemouth which grant was confirmed by William I Bishop of Durham, 5 kal Maii 1085

So far so good, but in the next generation – ie the sons of Uchtred – we have:

(a) **William** son of Uchtred, assumed the local name, said to be Baron of the Bishopric temp, [Hugh Pudsey](#) (1154-98). Married Judith or Juetta, daughter and heir of....Hesilden of Hesilden (*Sagar*)

(b) **Mathew** de Lumley, second son to Uchtred, *according to Sagar's Baronage (see Great Lumley and Wodeshende)*.

So.... according to this chart a man born in 1035 sires a son and heir (probably around 1060) who is alive and well at least 100 (more likely 130) years later. Errr.... no. Much more likely that William was born well after 1100 when there would have been no good reason whatsoever to call him William! The sloppiness of this chart is further illustrated by the phrase “Waltheof, Earl of Northumberland before 1080”. Waltheof only became earl in 1072 and he was executed in 1076!

So clearly what we have here (with the necessary interpolated generations shown in red) is:

- **Uchtred** born c1035
- “**Ligulf**” **fitz Uchtred** born c1060 (named after Uchtred's father who was very much still alive)
- **William de Lumley** born c1080 (by around 1100 one in every seven boys in England was named William after the conqueror – so no surprise there)
- **Uchtred de Lumley** born c 1105 (we know he was called this because his son was “William son of Uchtred”)
- **William de Lumley** born c 1120 (“son of Uchtred” and Baron in the period 1154x98 after the death of his father which would have been expected by c1170) and his brother Matthew.

If William were born c1120 we might expect his brother Matthew c1125 and so Matthew's son Matthew c1150 and hence in a perfect position to make donations (as per the pedigree chart) in the period 1189-1209 when he would have been aged 64 – 84. I have shown “Ligulf” junior in quotation marks because we cannot be sure of his name. But he was born c1060, his father was not murdered until 1080 and in general the family shows an affiliation with traditional naming patterns.

Unfortunately we get no help with the coat of arms. The Lumley Earls of Scarborough eventually adopted those of Thweng, but initially when they married the [Thweng heiress](#) they split their arms. Thus it is clear – as indeed from elsewhere, that the Lumleys made a big feature of the Popinjay. This only came into English heraldry after the [7th Crusade](#) (1248-54) so sadly for us all previous records of arms seem to have been erased.

Implications for the proto-Scotts:

We can see that it was entirely reasonable for Ligulf senior (born c 1015) to have played a major part in the 1054 invasion of Scotland organised by his brother-in-law Earl Siward and there is no good reason for the 19-year old Uchtred, b 1035 not to have been fully involved. We know that Ligulf survived because he lived on playing a significant part in Northumbrian politics right up to his murder in 1080.

Ligulf was still a man in his prime, so there was nothing that Uchtred was needed for, and I think it significant that his wife is not named. So my guess is that Uchtred stayed on in Malcolm's court and was soon settled on an estate based round the Rankilburn – a substantial acreage but not particularly profitable – presumably by marrying a local girl. The estate is roughly half way between Hawick (on the A7) and the A708 which runs from Moffat to Selkirk.

Here Uchtred had his two sons. His first son he (probably) called Ligulf following the normal practice of honouring your father; the second son he called Scott honouring his new estate. Uchtred probably had it in mind from the start that Ligulf would inherit Lumley while Scott would stay on in Scotland.

[**The alternative claim:** There is an oft-touted alternative suggestion that an early – even ‘the’ earliest – land holding was the [Barony of Scotstoun](#) (with Kirkurd) on the A701 either side of Blyth Bridge. But I suspect that this is a false lead. There are Scotstons/towns/touns all over Scotland and they generally indicate places where Scots (rather than “Scotts”) settled after Kenneth mac Alpine had conquered Pictland in the 840s and further afield as “Scotland” expanded. The Scotts may well have occupied this particular Scotstoun at some period in their history but it is other places that they have counted themselves “of”. In this context it should be noted that Scotstoun is not in Kirkurd parish. There is a parallel with the Grants because at various times it has been claimed by those who did not know any better that it was “obvious” that places like Grantham and Grantley were places named after Grants, Ironically it was the inability of Norman incomers to pronounce the name Grantham that led to the name “Graham”/ “Graeme” now thought of as Scottish!]

I am sure that there was much journeying between the two estates – Rankilburn in Scotland and Lumley next to Chester-le-Street, but eventually Uchtred needed to settle back home and he took Ligulf with him. And here we can make sense of the verse in “Satchell” quoted above:

John Scot then informed the King that he had with him a brother named Wat:—
" Ye are very well met, then, said the King
He shall be English and ye are Scot,
At Bellanden let him remain,
Fast by the Forrest side." 3

There is no good reason to believe that any of the details here are true, but the idea that there were two brothers living by the forest side and one ended up English and the other Scottish does reflect what happened. Ligulf went south to establish his patrimony at Lumley. Young Ligulf will probably have returned to Lumley in order to find a suitable wife – so late 1070s.

Life for Ligulf senior took a turn for the more complicated in 1079 when a Scottish gang under Malcolm III invaded Northumberland to collect plunder and people for slavery. Walcher, Bishop of Durham who had also purchased the Earldom of Northumbria did not handle it well. Ultimately this resulted in Ligulf's murder in 1080. At this point Uchtred was about 45 and young Ligulf newly married.

Malcolm III's secondary Motive: The area round about had been the traditional territory of the Selgovae but had been under Bernician control for some centuries until 1018 (so within living memory) when the Battle of Carham led to the annexation of the land by Scotland. At this point what had been "Bernicia" was cut in half. So Uchtred's placement had another purpose. He had strong Bernician ruling class credentials, making him 'normal' for and respected by the locals and thus particularly suitable to secure the land for the Scottish crown.

Coat of Arms: Scott being his father's second son could well be the explanation for the use of the crescents on the Scotts' coat of arms.

So we can now see the proto-Scotts in generational table form with the male line in **bold**:

		Uchtred, Earl of Northumbria (c965 - †1016)
		Ealdred II, Earl of Northumbria (c990 – †1038)
(c1015 – †1038)	Ligulf	= Ealdgyth (c1020 - ??)
?Daughter of Rankilburn?	= Uchtred	(c1035 - ??1100)
	Scott	(c1058 - ??1120)
	Uchtred	filius Scott (c1080 - ??1150)

Afterword:

Doubtless there will be those who will say that I have just made all this up. And this is true. The reader can see that what I have suggested here is consistent with such facts as we have and I have suggested here a narrative which knits these facts together. It is entirely feasible. It is up to anyone else either to point out a fatal flaw or to suggest an alternative narrative which still incorporates all the facts at our disposal.

2. The first Scotts

1. "Richard" Scott, "Michael" Scott and Richard Scott: Considering the individuals entered in the POMS database, we have no choice but to presume that it was Uchtred's son (or sons) who adopted the surname Scott – and this happily coincides with Fraser who is careful to avoid committing himself to "family lore" which says that the first of these was "Richard Scott" who was a witness to a charter by the Bishop of St Andrews giving land to the Abbey of Holyrood House around the year 1158.

We should estimate the date for this Richard's birth at c1105, so Fraser's the date is feasible. But there are two problems:

(a) no such charter exists in the [Holy Rood Cartulary](#).

(b) the name Richard is problematic. It is essentially Norman and the earliest on record in the POMS database, a chaplain, dates to the time window 1134x1144.

Regarding the charter, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, but there remains also the matter of why such a Richard, a relatively minor noble from the depths of nowhere should turn up in St Andrews to get involved in this. Robert, the Bishop of St Andrews did indeed make [a gift to Holyrood](#) but there is no Richard or Scott as a witness.

Nevertheless, along with Michael, the name Richard is a recurrent one in early Scott lineages, so I propose to retain it, but within quotation marks to indicate that it is hypothesised. Likewise I hypothesise a “Michael” Scott as Richard’s heir in line born c1040. Amongst the reasons for this is that we do have a Richard Scott born c1065 who married a Margaret Syras.

“Richard” Scott	b.c. 1105
“Michael” Scott	b.c. 1130x40
Richard Scott	b.c. 1165

From the POMS database we now need to attach various individuals to this line.

Gilbert/Gilla Brigitte Scott: Although his floruit is given as 1172x1199, we need to start with him because, as we noted above, he is the son of Ewen. The only feasible way to fit him in is to suppose a birth for Ewen at c1110, making him a brother of “Richard”, with Gillebrigte himself being born c1135 making him an appropriate age for his floruit.

Master Herbert: “Herebertus” appears in two epochs: 1144x59 and 1172x78. From this last date we could imagine that he could have been born as early as 1110. He must have been an adult by 1159 – hence born before 1138 and if he had been an adult in 1144 he would have had to have been born before 1123. Thus we can see that he could have been a younger brother of “Richard” and it is also possible that he was “Richard”’s son. The name Herbert is as problematic as Richard. Even looking to a possible Anglo-Saxon variant still implies being plucked out of the air. So on balance I suspect that he was “Richard”’s brother and thus that Uchtred came under very strong Anglo-Norman influence, perhaps even via his marriage (though POMS has no evidence for such a connection to any Herbert at this early date either). Thus I conclude that Master Herbert must have been the younger brother of “Richard” and Ewen with a birth c1115.

Bishop John: John Scott was Bishop of Dunkeld from 1182x3 and died in the period 1203x6. This makes a likely birth date around 1140x5. As such it looks as if he should be a son of “Richard” and brother of “Michael”.

Fraser (p. xli) quotes Lord Hailes as claiming that this Bishop John was a native of Cheshire! I think Hailes has confused him with [John the Scot](#), Earl of Chester (and Huntingdon) the son of Henry Earl of Huntingdon and grandson of King David I

Walter Scott: POMS recognises two Walters, father and son, in the Montrose area – close to where we see the second of Gillebrif=te’s appearances. Looking at the generation table emerging, there are two suitable places for Walter senior both as a brother in the third generation here, born c1148 with his son, Walter junior born around 1170x5. So he might be a son of “Richard” b1108 or of Ewen b1110. My inclination is that the second option is the more likely.

Master Isaac: The problem with Isaac is that he had a son Nazar who was an adult by c1200, suggesting a birthdate for him before 1180 and hence for his father significantly before 1160. This really rules him out as a son of “Michael”, suggesting therefore that he was a younger brother of “Michael” and Bishop John.

Michael Scot: At this point we must include “Michael Scot” the scholar. The Wikipedia page linked to does a good job of dissociating him from the Scotts of Balwearie and of outlining his remarkable life. Thus in tabular form

Uchtred	(c1082-)		
“Richard”	(c1108-)	Ewen (c1110-)	Master Herbert (c1115-)
“Michael”	(c1140-)	Bishop John (c1142-)	Master Isaac (c1155-)
Richard	(c1165-)	Michael Scot (1175 – c1232)	

We noted above that “Henry le Scotte” did not actually exist as a member of the Scott family. Had he been real, he would probably have been another brother for Richard and Michael the scholar.

Afterwords:

1. Fraser mentions several other Scotts some of whom may link to this era, but who remain as yet unrecognised by the POMS database. They will need to be reconsidered to allow them to be fitted into the skeleton outlined here. There is no fundamental problem with there being more junior sons who then establish themselves elsewhere and have their own families.
2. I have no explanation for the occurrences of the names Richard, Herbert and Isaac. There is no one either in POMS or in PACE (Prosopography of Mediaeval England) who would fit the bill as someone to take these names from. However there were loads of clerics of one sort or another being brought into Scotland even by that time. So I am left supposing that these are the names of such clerics living locally and deemed worthy of emulation. In the case of ‘Isaac’ this may not even be the birth name of the cleric, but rather one he adopted on taking holy orders.

2. The next Generations

Now we run into a mess, because Fraser’s next generation after “Richard” is another Richard who married Alicia de Moll, gaining land in Roxburgh in the reign of Alexander II. If this Richard is who the Dukes of Buccleuch/Fraser says then we have “Richard” born c1108 and his son Richard, born around 1130 and not marrying after 1214, perhaps as late as 1249!!!! The main problem seems to be that they have not stuck to a rigidly feasible time scale, but in this case it is not so much a case of missing generations as mixed up generations. So I have rearranged them to fix this problem and this has involved adding in one missing one.

2(a): The Main line

Richard Scott (b.c1165) was married to Margaret Syras and here internet genealogists have been ahead of me – but only up to a point! “Syras” is an old spelling of Ceres – a village in Fife. But they did not work out who her father Duncan was. Now we can extrapolate to a remarkable answer. If we consult the [Place Names of Fife](#) for Ceres we find that the Lords of Ceres were mostly called Adam and Duncan. This is no coincidence. And here I find the second mistake of detail in my book on Fife. I had followed the crowd in noting Adam as a junior son of Duncan I Earl of Fife and hence placed his birthdate c1145. In fact he must have been illegitimate and born some ten years earlier. It is interesting to note that Adam’s wife was Orabilia a daughter of Ness of Leuchars one of several illegitimate sons of William the Noble, son of king Duncan II and later to be Earl of Moray. Adam naturally called his son (Margaret’s father) Duncan after his own father.

We then have:

William	born c1190	attended the court of Alexander II
Richard	born c1215	married Alicia, daughter of Henry de Molla
“Michael”	born c1240	
Sir Richard	born c1265	married the heiress of Murthockstone (one online genealogy page suggests her maiden name was Ingles/Ingles)
Sir Michael	born c1290	killed at the Battle of Durham (1346) leaving two sons
Robert and Michael.		

The name William was a departure here – and for the very good reason of trying to curry favour with King William the Lion! [This sort of thing has been very widespread practice.] As we saw, Fraser claims that a Richard married Alicia in the time of Alexander II (1214-49). Clearly the Richard hypothesised above would have been ready for marriage c 1235 and thus is almost certainly the Richard in the claim, which is why I have omitted the quotation marks. [I will resist specifying the lands of Molle – the sources are contradictory.]

One simple possible explanation as to why “Michael” does not appear in the records is that he may have died before his father.

At this point we are no longer in the “origins” and we are at the point where regular “history” becomes a good deal more reliable, so I have not explored this line any further.

2(b) The Subsidiary line:

Duncan Scott: Richard Scott’s father-in-law was called Duncan, so it should come as no surprise that he would call his second son Duncan. and now that we have seen above who his mother really was we should not be at all surprised that she would call in a favour from her close relative. I say that this Duncan was the Duncan, #7 in the POMS database extracts noted above, who received land from Malcolm I Earl of Fife.

My calculations have this Duncan Scott born about 1200 and so looking to his future from about 1215 and reaching adulthood shortly after 1220. Malcolm was Earl of Fife in the period 1204-1228 (this is in any case confirmed by POMS). Unfortunately we do not know where this original landholding was. But there was Scottscraig just outside Tayport and Scottstarvit just outside Cupar as just two examples of lands held at one time or another by this family.

Sir Michael Scott: Duncan’s son, Sir Michael Scott was the one who married the heiress of Balwearie. He would have been born c1225x30. He is famous for having been commissioned in 1290, with Sir David Lindsay as the ill-fated embassy to Norway to bring back Margaret, the “maid of Norway”.

Michael Scott: Sir Michael’s son, also Michael (born some time after 1250, died 1304) was the man whom Sir Walter Scott confused with Michael Scott the Scholar discussed above and so mischaracterised him as “the Wizard”. It makes for a ripping tale, but what a shambles has resulted! Trawling through the internet is a nightmare as so many sources get themselves into a fankle by swallowing the nonsense whole.

Henry Scott: Michael Scott of Balwearie had a son Henry, so born c 1275.

At this point we are no longer in the “origins” so I have not explored this line any further.

Afterword: More Antecedents. We should note that all these “next generations” of Scotts can claim descent, albeit through female and illegitimate lines both from King Duncan II and from his half brother King Malcolm III. Through Duncan II’s wife they can claim another line back to Maldred son of Crinan, to Uchtred the bold of Northumberland and to King Aethelred II the Unready.

3. Poverty in the Borders

Some of my readers will know by now that I regard irony to be one of the main governing principles of the universe. Uchtred the father of Scott may have received an estate of some size, but it was not well to do. It is hard to illustrate this in a paper such as this, but readers are invited to have a look at the map at

<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=14.4&lat=55.41498&lon=-3.04630&layers=227&b=OS1920s&o=7>

Buccleuch itself is to be seen near the centre with Bellendean, at the time a very welcome addition, also just off the road directly to the East. It is worth noting that Buccleuch Castle was taken down to make way for a modern farm and Bellendean no longer exists. Farms are extremely few and far between, so there was no scope for settling younger sons on the land and it comes as no surprise:

- * not only that a livelihood depended on stock farming of one sort or another
- * that deer were a serious pest in that they competed for such grazing as there was
- * that the people resorted to “Border Reiving” – expeditions to plunder whatever they could sometimes from each other but more often over the border into England.

Thus considering Mackenzie’s comments cited above, there was little or no scope for any inheritance for junior sons who therefore had to seek a future away from home. In this context we should not be surprised either by the very many junior sons who went to the church or by the initiative shown by Duncan Scott by building a future for himself and his family by seeking service under the Earls of Fife.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Sir Richard will have thought that all his Christmases had come at once when he landed the heiress of Murthockstone and it is not much more of a surprise that he needed the sweetener of the extra salary associated with being the King’s Forester in the area to be persuaded to take his Rankilburn estate seriously again.

The irony is, of course that for some centuries (indeed until within the last decade or so) the Duke of Buccleuch has been the owner of the most extensive estates in all the UK (albeit in value they pale almost to relative insignificance compared with those such as Grosvenor Cadogan, Bedford etc. who own substantial tracts of central London).

Arms of Scott of Balwearie: In this context, therefore, we should not be surprised that the arms of Scott of Balwearie bear no resemblance to those of Rankilburn/ Buccleuch. I mentioned above that there are three eminently workable explanations for these arms:

- (1) Duncan Scott may have felt so indebted to Malcolm that he demonstrated his gratitude and allegiance by echoing his liege lords own coat – but differenced in such a way as to demonstrate that he knew his place.
- (2) Given the relationship of the Arms of the original Mormaers of Atholl and those of the Clan Donnachie, we might reasonably suppose that Adam of Ceres will have had or three lions heads gules. So Duncan may have differenced these by substituting argent for or.

(3) We do not know where the family of Balwearie came from – (except that the name Margaret may imply a close relationship to the Ceres family) but it is quite possible that not Duncan but his son Sir Michael who adopted these arms in right of his wife when they married.

Heraldry in Scotland became formalised by Alexander II on his second marriage to Marie de Coucy in 1239, so it would have been feasible to show both coats (half on one side, half on the other), but it would come as little surprise for a younger son to retain some resentment at having been born but left having to find his own way.

So I do not have sufficient information to decide between these two explanations, but I am very confident that one of them is correct. Given the strong comparison with the Clan Donnachie arms, my guess would be that they are originally the arms of the family of Balwearie – but it is no more than a guess.

Poverty as an issue: In private correspondence, while he was still relatively coherent, Tony Scott laid great store on an anecdote recorded by Michael Scott the scholar which he interprets as being from Michael's own experience, even though it is not related in those terms. Michael offers a student a parable about a fatherless boy whose uncle had undertaken to see to his education abroad who then let him down after having "listened to lies" about him. See

<https://archive.org/details/michaelscot0000lynn/page/12/mode/2up>

The author, Lynn Thorndike, interprets this as personal to Michael Scott himself. Of course it is possible that Michael's father had died and that he had a sponsor in his uncle, John Scott, Bishop of Dunkeld. Richard Scott would have been running the estate and did have his own young family to consider. Nevertheless while I can imagine that Michael Scott the scholar had his own experience at the back of his mind – because whichever way it was I am sure his lifestyle as a student was very far from lavish – nevertheless I think that Thorndike is going a good deal too far. Michael Scot was drawing on his experience but he embroidered it.

For many landed families it was normal for third sons to go to the church. But in these early generations of Scotts that privation was extended to many a second son.

Conclusions

1. The Clan Scott is Scottish by choice rather than by ancestry
2. The Clan Scott is a *bona fide* clan, listed as such ("Scott of Ewesdale") in the 1587 Act of Parliament
3. Some of the errors in traditional histories have been made in an attempt to obscure their origins, others by a lack of attention to the timeframe.
4. The phrase "4 generations later" has been a major inhibitor to understanding.
5. Walter Scott the novelist did a huge disservice to the clan by conflating two separate Michael Scotts.
6. The Scotts of Balwearie are cadets of the Scotts of Buccleuch, not *vice versa*.

Bibliography (not otherwise linked to in the text).

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