

Article on The 15th C. Auchinlecks of Pennyland in Ayrshire by David Affleck

In June 2021, I finally published a book based on twenty years research. The title, *A Saga of the Early Auchinlecks and Afflecks, A Hidden History revealed* is a deliberate choice. While it has not been possible to find when the knighthood and Barony of Auchinleck in Ayrshire was first granted to the family of that name, understanding of the events after the main family lost their estates of Auchinleck in Ayrshire and Glenbervie in Kincardineshire on the authority of James IV on the 29th September, 1492 has now been unravelled. One source was *The Douglas Book*, the four-volume account by Sir William Fraser published in 1885. He discloses he had access to original charters held by the Douglas family. Like many later historians, he struggled to correctly identify some key people. One of these was an Andrew Auchinleck, a Notary living in Inverness in 1510 and later a Sheriff in Edinburgh in 1529. His identity is validated in a Charter relating to the grant of the estate of Pennyland in Ayrshire to an Andrew Auchinleck by his father, William, and to the later sale of this ancestral home in August 1511. His grandfather Adam is also mentioned in the charter and was probably Canon of Glasgow in 1440 and 1449. When Andrew died in 1582, he was living at Petdreichie on the Glenbervie estate, then owned by the Douglas of Angus family after it was seized by the 5th Earl in 1492, But where was Pennyland?

The Auchinleck estate at Auchinleck in Ayrshire.

On the 12th September, 2021, I took the opportunity to visit the Landmark Trust property at Auchinleck House which was offering an Open Day. I had visited it over twenty years ago while in the area and had spoken with a member of staff but had been unable to see the interior as it was let to tenants as holiday accommodation. It became clear that the main focus for the Trust was the Boswell family connection with the building, having been erected between 1755 and 1760 by Alexander Boswell, the 8th Laird of Auchinleck. He had been made a Judge of the Court of Session in 1754 and had taken the non-hereditary title, Lord Auchinleck. As the Saga reveals, the former Baronial estate had been granted by James IV to Thomas Boswell of Balmuto in Fife in 1505 whose wife was a member of the original Baronial family. The publication on Auchinleck House by the Landmark Trust suggested the Boswell family had

held the estate since the 14th C. The Saga reveals its 15th C. ownership and the background to the loss of the estate by the Baronial family who had been dispossessed by James IV. Its current historical link is explained because of the significance of James Boswell, (1740-1795), son of Lord Auchinleck who became an eminent writer and whose life is still by celebrated by the Boswell Society. Only the Lugar river on the North of the estate provides a link with its 14th C. history and the old Auchinleck castle ruins once on the riverbank to the west are no more. Pennyland was not on that estate and not affected by the intervention of James IV.

Dumfries House is located on a site to the south of Auchinleck house that has achieved a rebirth under the ownership of The Princes Foundation and the personal interest of HRH The Duke of Rothesay, the Scottish title of the Prince of Wales. The grounds are open every day of the year without charge except for the Queen Elizabeth Walled Garden and entry to the main house with its renowned collection of furniture and artwork. Since my last visit to the house about seven years ago, the vision of Prince Charles to regenerate the area with particular interest in opportunities for young people to acquire and develop skills can be seen in the new landscape.

It has now been possible to locate two maps held by the National Library of Scotland. Pennyland appears on the first edition 25" map published in 1858 (Ayrshire, XXXV.6), which is available on the NLS website: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/74951201>. The map shows Pennyland house approached from the east/west Barony Road via an Avenues of trees between refs 396 and 397 as well as other landmark features such as Pennyland Wood and Pennyland Mount. The second map, has a Pennyland named on the OS 1:2500 map for this area published in 1961 and available on the N.L.S. website: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/130201350>. It is at the end of The Avenue, on the left-hand side of the sheet. I believe this is the route I took from Barony Road (B7036) on my visit of 12th September to access Dumfries House Visitor centre. However, the current estate map on the Dumfries House web site does not include reference to the house and other references to Pennyland as shown on the map for 1961. I have written to the Dumfries House Trustees for more information.

While there were other descendants of the early Auchinlecks after the baronial family died out, this line descended from Andrew, the notary and his five sons

was significant in the 16th C as shown in the Saga. Descendants of the children of Andrew Auchinleck's second marriage are believed to include the heirs of the Rev James Auchinleck, (1646-1685) who married a Margaret Keith and from that marriage, Field Marshall Sir Claude Auchinleck, (1884-1981), has been identified as descended from that union. Nothing has been found to suggest the history of Pennyland has been assessed but there is one aspect that this topic may deserve further investigation. At the time of the death of Andrew, we know that he was farming on part of the land at Glenbervie and that two of his sons were involved in the management of estate land. Their grandmother, the wife of Sir George Douglas of Pittendreich owned that estate which was adjacent to Kinloss Abbey where Abbot Robert Reid brought Giovanni Ferrerio, a scholar of European standing along with a French orchardist to train monks in the development of apple culture around 1530. That was over thirty years after the Auchinleck notaries had migrated north and we are left with the question, what were their lives like on Pennyland estate in the 15th Century?

Promotion of the Saga and its availability for purchase can now be found on the web site <http://dkaffleck.co.uk>

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26th October 2021