

AND THEN THERE WERE FOUR

Since finding references to them, the Heggie Provosts of Kirkcaldy have, been of interest to me, despite the fact that they are not related to me. They have provided many hours of, firstly, speculation, then serious research and finally, with the help of Martin Round of New Zealand and additional information from Kathy Baker in the USA, a jigsaw near completion.

There have been several references to them. Beautifully painted boards in Kirkcaldy Town House display their names; a microfiche of extracts from local newspaper, which is a little confusing. But, it is the statement by Lachlan Macbean in his Extract from Burgh Records that sets the tone.

George Heggie - 1755, re-elected 1780

James Heggie - 1765, re-elected 1786

A close look at the correct source quickly shows that this cannot be correct.

Because of their wealth and thus their greater ability to achieve positions of prominence, merchants, generally speaking, have more references made about them than most people. Legal letters, deeds, wills and testaments have all contributed towards a solution to this puzzle.

The exact roots of these Heggies who prospered in Kirkcaldy throughout the 18th Century are difficult to trace. Strangely, the story begins in Kinglassie Parish, where a small group of Heggies lived at the end Of the 17th Century. There, James Heggie, a merchant, had sons, George and James.

They, too, were highly successful merchants. George Heggie, for example, a Baillie from the 1720s prospered in Kirkcaldy. They might well have had financial dealings with the Philips another local merchant family. It was this last connection which first suggested an avenue of research. Alison Heggie, the daughter of James, merchant in Kinglassie, married William Philp, a merchant in Kirkcaldy. This lent credence to the premise that it was the family of this James Heggie which was so successful. However, James died at a relatively young age, leaving his brother, George responsibility for his young family. It is this family which provided three of the four Provosts under discussion.

Recent research shows that James was twice married, firstly to Christian Anderson, then ten years later, to Isabel Anderson. The names of the children, through this arrangement fall neatly into the traditional Scottish pattern.

On the last day of 1712 James Heggie married Christian Anderson. Their children were;
James, 1714; Alexander, 1716; Margaret, 1719 (James now recorded as merchant)

At this point there is a break in the list of James' children, because Christian had died. There are not many children recorded for a seven year marriage, which might suggest that she tended to be sickly. Another marriage, to Isabell Anderson, is recorded in December 1722. Again to a James and, as stated above, to the same one. Their children were;
David, 1723; Isobell, 1725; Alison, 1727; George, 1730; David, 1734.

The first David presumably dying between 1730 and 1734 - there seems to be a family need to repeat the name, and indeed the name David Anderson is recorded as a grandfather of the children (Note also, that there is no overlap and that no child is named James after his own father in group 2, helping to confirm that this is the same James.

James died in 1737 and his family presumably settled in Kirkcaldy with their Uncle George who had married Rachel Meldrum, in Kinglassie in 1716. The eldest, also James may have gone into business on his own behalf or worked with his uncle.

There was a succession of Jameses and Georges throughout subsequent generations. Identifications are further hampered by the use of epithets, in particular, merchant; Baillie; tanner; of Pitlessie, often referring to the same man at different stages of his life. It does take close scrutiny to tell one from another. Bearing in mind that these records were made for contemporary use, by people who knew who was being referred to, this is understandable. Who would have imagined, then, that someone, more than two hundred years later, would want to work out who was who? But it is known that George, the uncle owned the properties in Pitlessie from an early date, so we know that the families of Pitlessie were also the families of merchants, in Kirkcaldy.

It is to the Old Parochial Records of Kirkcaldy that we must now turn in order to trace the next generation's progress. From these, we find a couple of interesting entries.

In 1736, Bailly George witnessed a baptism.

?12.1742 George and James, merchants, (uncle and nephew) witness to the baptism of the son of Rev. Marshall.

In 1743, James married Janet Gilmour, the niece of Mrs. Heggie (ie Rachel Meldrum)

The family of James and Janet Gilmour was;

Agnes, 1744; James, 1746; George, 1748; Alexander, 1749; Christian Rachel (witnesses Provost George and George, tanner), **1756; James** (witness Provost George), **1759.**

Another important marriage, more or less contemporary with James', is that of George Heggie (James' younger half-

brother) and Janet Wilson. This family comprised;

Janet, 1754; Isobel, 1755; Rachel, 1758; Betty, 1759; Isobel, 1761; Margaret, 1762; James, 1764; Rachel (witnesses Provosts George and James), **1766; Isobel, 1769; Alicia** (witnesses Provost James and his son Alexander), 1771. This last entry provided an excellent clue to pinpointing one of the Provosts James. The husband of Janet Gilmour and father of Alexander.

This fact is further established by entries in the Lair Registers of Kirkcaldy, transcribed by Andrew J. Campbell. Here are recorded several facts of note.

1	3/5/1775	James Heigey, Provost
2	22/1/1779	Alexander, son of Provost James Heigey
3	23/4/1783	Mrs. Heigey (listed also as Janet Gilmour/Gilmore under her maiden name), spouse of Provost
4	1/2/1791	James Higy, Provost

Entries 1 and 4 sufficiently prove the existence of two Provosts James.

There is more.

5	1/5/1773	George Heigy, Provost
6	2/3/1814	George, of Pitlessie, merchant, Kirkcaldy

It will be noted from entries 1 and 5 that James and George were actually dead during the time of their supposed second tenure as Provost. Surely someone must have noticed.

Though it is not too difficult to identify who the second Provost George must be. Furnishing proof was a bit harder. The final clue comes from the will of George Heggie of Pitlessie, who died in 1814. As stated above, of Pitlessie has been an additional problem in identifying Kirkcaldy Heggies. This seems particularly so with George of Pitlessie mentioned, chronologically as, George the tanner (possibly also the shoemaker), George the Provost and finally, George of Pitlessie. His will confirms him as husband of Janet Wilson and uncle of James of Pitlessie who died 1791 (see entry 4, above). He inherited property in Pitlessie and St Brycedale, on which he had already built a manor house. Another commonly mentioned piece of history places them as father and son. George must have become heir apparent some time earlier as the elder brothers of his nephew had died at a fairly young age. This was also the fate of his own son also named James.

From the O.P.R.s, two further entries are conclusive. Firstly the death of George's daughter, Janet, in 1778, when he was described as tanner and secondly the marriage of Thomas Mudie to his daughter Elizabeth (Betty), in 1783, when he was described as Provost. It will be remembered, too though, that the baptism of Rachel, daughter of George and Janet, was witnessed by Provosts George and James. Thus as previously shown, there had been an earlier Provost George, the Husband of Rachel Meldrum. Why then, when he was buried, was he not named - like others before him despite not being Provost at time of their death - Provost George Heggie? He died in 1814, a full 30 years after being Provost and even members of his family may have forgotten or considered his current designation, of Pitlessie, to be a better identifier.

We know from the recordings in the Lair Books that these people are buried in Kirkcaldy Parish Church graveyard, yet, where are the gravestones. Only one Heggie stone is extant. That of David Heggie, son of George Heggie, sailor. David was also a tanner and his wife, Janet Carmichael, may have come from a shoemaking family. Many were named Carmichael. There is little evidence that he was even remotely as wealthy as George Heggie of Pitlessie, for example. He, like the other George, died in 1814.

From his will, it is possible, however, to get the gist of his land holding, even if not down to the last detail. The territory covered was equal to if not greater than the surrounding landowners, save the Oswalds of Dunnikeir. There are streets named after the Whytes, the Ferguses, there is even Wemyssfield. In contrast, the name St. Brycedale has become associated with the church of that name, and despite modern building surrounding it, St. Brycedale house will always be remembered as the Hunter Home/Hospital by locals because its last owner left it to the Town. Where is Heggie Place or Heggie Avenue. Heggie's Wynd off Links Street is named after a much later, Abbotshall dyer who owned much of the property, there.

Most of the details of the above history can be found in the main body of the site. In addition, proofs were found in the following;

- The will of Rachel Meldrum
- The will of James Heggie of Pitlessie
- The will of George Heggie of Pitlessie
- The will of Rachel Heggie
- The will of David Heggie, bookseller
- Personal correspondence of family members, mainly to legal offices

CHRONOLOGY

c 1680/85	Birth of James, Merchant in Kinglassie
1687	Birth of George, son of James, in Kinglassie
1712	Marriage of James to Christian Anderson
1714	Birth of James, son of James, Merchant in Kinglassie
1716	Marriage of George to Rachel Meldrum
1720-21	George Heggie on Council, part of protest
1722	Marriage of James to Isobell Anderson
1727-29	George Treasurer
1730	Birth of George, son of James, Merchant in Kinglassie
1733-34	Baillie George in disagreement re Deans of Craft
1737	Death of James, Merchant in Kinglassie
1748	Birth of George, son of James & Janet Gilmour
1749	Death of Rachel dau. Of James, merchant in Kinglassie. (Will - Sister Alison declared nearest sister, german, also suggesting that Isobell, 1725 had died. Half-brother James named cautioner. Her eldest full brother was only 18/19 at the time. The other, David, even younger.
1749	Birth of Alexander, son of James & Janet Gilmour
1750	A George entered as Shoemaker
1751	James merchant and baillie in Kirkcaldy (Rachel's will)
1751-87	George on Council more or less continually (microfiche)
1755-57	George Provost
1759	Birth of James, son of James & Janet Gilmour
1764	Birth of James, son of George & Janet Wilson
1765-67	James (snr) Provost (microfiche)
1765-69	James Provost (Lachlan McBean)
1767	Death of Rachel Meldrum. (Will confirms - wife of Provost and aunt of Janet Gilmour)
1773	Death of Provost George (80+)
1775	Death of James, son of James, Merchant in Kinglassie (61)
1780-82	George Provost
Pre 1782	Death of George, son of James & Janet Gilmour (30?)
1782	Death of Alexander, son of James & Janet Gilmour (33)
1786-89	James Provost
1791	Death of Provost James, son of James & Janet Gilmour (of Pitlessie) (32)
1802	Death of James, son of George & Janet Wilson (38)
1814	Death of George, (of Pitlessie from 1791) son of James, Merchant in Kinglassie (84)
1832	Death of William, grandson of George and Janet Wilson (37)
1842	Death of George, grandson of George and Janet Wilson (50)