

Mount Heredom

Discovered!



Shaun McDowell Linton

Abstract: Preface, introduction plus chapters one, five and six from the authors book THE MASTER TEMPLATE, printed by Lulu.com. Chapter one introduces the reader to the initial discovery of Mount Heredom via the author's intimate knowledge of its location charters and old maps. The legends of Mount Heredom as given by Freemasonry are cited and its geometry explored. Chapter five discusses two charters which the author links to the site of Benslie Wood. The author believes this is the site of the long lost mythical Mount of Heredom revered by Freemasonry. Chapter six further explores this link using the early constitutions of Freemasonry and the Grail poem Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.

Mount Heredom

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Adapted from the book

THE MASTER TEMPLATE

The discovery of Mount Heredom and the Holy Grail

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PREFACE

Literature about Knights Templar, Freemasonry and King Arthur of the Round Table continues to fascinate. As a family of keen amateur historians living in Ayrshire, intrigued by a reference to Mount Heredom nearby, I chanced upon a startling discovery on an old map. It was as if I had found the loose end of a trail through a fabulous labyrinth. After more than 15 years of intensive research, despite the obscurity of written history and the covert nature of the subjects, it produces an enthralling theory - a story that begs telling! David I of Scotland was the compatriot of Kings, Princes and Templars. In his lifetime, the cryptic tales of the Grail Knights began to emerge. The concept of honor was being born. Into his realm, he brought Flemish and Norman knights, his comrades-at-arms. To these he gave high titles and lands.

Their descendants continued to appear through the ages with regenerative potency, through the troubled times of the War of Independence when Wallace's sacrifice led to Robert the Bruce ignominiously begun reign. Bruce rose from the nadir of defeat at the same time as the wealthy military Knights Templar sought sanctuary from Phillip of France's persecution. The lineage of David's Knights appears prominently in Freemasonry, with its recognizable Templar precepts. At the heart of it all, is the discovery of the site, the mythical Mount Heredom. Not to Rome but to Kilwinning in what may have been the "New Jerusalem" and the ultimate sanctuary for the Knights Templar. Hidden within it is something rare and precious. I have put together documentation that astounds in its irresistible conclusion. Names, places and events slot together with interrelating ease like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. This book however reveals only a small portion of my discoveries, and due to the nature of the subject matter is a work in progress. Who knows what discoveries await the archaeologists, should they ever decide to uncover this holy and ancient mound. On the other hand, will politics and religion get in the way of what may be the most fantastic discovery in decades? Time will tell but how long will we have to wait before the secret is uncovered?

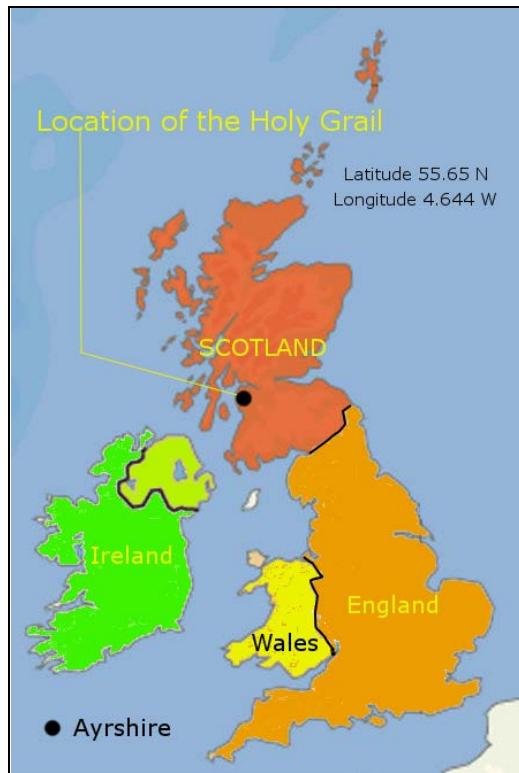
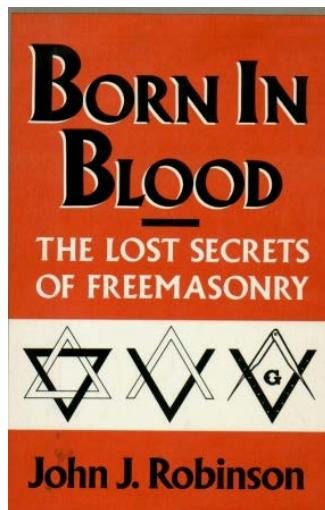


Figure 1 Scotland, land of the Grail

INTRODUCTION



First Steps to the Grail

One summer while visiting my parents, my mother presented me with a book. The cover jacket of this book was displayed in red and on the front was imprinted the familiar Masonic set square and compass. The title in bold black lettering was '*Born in Blood, the lost secrets of*

Freemasonry'. Taking it from her hands, I said smilingly "this looks interesting". She knew I was keen on history and thought it would be the perfect gift for my forth-coming birthday. Showing my admiration and respect for her and the gift I had just received, I quickly flicked through the pages when suddenly my fingers stopped. Something within the book had caught my attention; a word within the pages seemed to vibrate in front of me. It was Kilwinning, the place of my birth. Intrigued, I carried on reading. On that page, the author John Robinson [1] was describing certain curiosities of freemasonry. However, it was the reference to something concerning Kilwinning, which had truly caught my attention

A term unique to Scottish Masonry is Mount Heredom, a mythical mountain said to be near the town of Kilwinning, home of the "Mother Lodge" of Freemasonry in Scotland. No plausible explanation of Heredom has been forth coming.

Immediately surprised by this revelation, I shouted over to my father who was sitting in his favorite chair, "What's this about a Mount Heredom near Kilwinning?". He looked at me perplexed. I could see the wheels working in his head as he lifted up a finger to scratch it, "I've never heard of that name but there is a Montgreenan" and stretching over to his book cabinet he pulled out his dossier of maps. "Ah, here we are" his finger pointing to Montgreenan. I looked at the map, nothing very exciting here I thought, but then my attention was drawn to a church sitting at the boundary of another very famous estate nearby, that of Eglinton Estate [2]. This proved intriguing because this estate was a favorite haunting ground as a child and has always held a sense of mystery and magic for me. Its recorded history stretches back more than 900 years to the time of King Malcolm Canmore III. From the moment I opened Robinson's book, I found myself on of a long journey, one that would eventually lead me to the discovery of what the Holy Grail is and to where it has been hidden. Its hiding place may have also been the secret sanctuary for the Knights Templar when they were cast out by the Catholic Church some seven centuries ago. The Knights Templar is an enigma to historians and countless books have been written about them. Often quoted by historians and researchers as *guardians of the Holy Grail* and other sacred treasures but their hiding place has always been a mystery. In the following pages I encourage you the reader, to follow my footsteps to what I believe was the very sanctuary of the Templars and the secret place of Holy objects brought from Jerusalem and placed under their care. The subject of Christianity, Freemasonry and the Knights Templar along with the fractured histories of Ayrshire will then begin to make better sense to historians. However this is my story and not history, the ultimate proof will come when proper archeology research is done at the site I truly believe to be the resting place of the Holy Grail. Such a revelation will no doubt attract worldwide interest and has be done on the purist of intentions, no not for glory, fame or riches for I shun them all but for truth if such a thing exists. Spending 15 years of my humble life in seeking the answers to the Grail was never my intention and like Percival the fool, I did not ask the question when I stood at the 'site' and received the energies from within it. The question of course is "For whom does the Grail serve?" The answer took 12 years in coming and was so simple yet tottering on the absurd, the answer in its simplicity was "Humanity". Once I had finally answer that question, a key was revealed to me soon after and one which finally unlocked the door to the mysteries surrounding my research. This key presented itself in the form of a revelation when I visited France in the summer of 2009 (June 20th). It was scribbled on the walls of a tower by a Knights Templar!

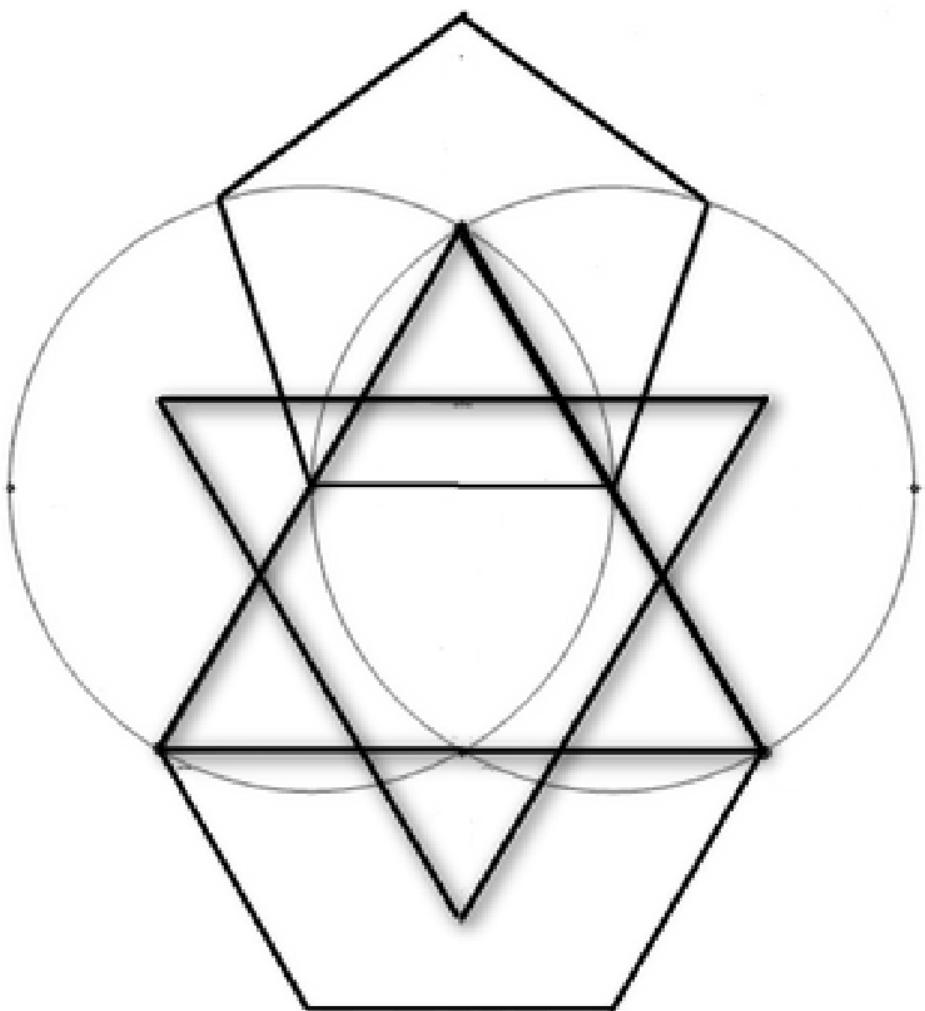


Figure 2 the Holy Grail geometry

Along this long road I eventually discovered the geometry (fig 2) to be used in conjunction with the Holy Grail. For those who understand its mystical qualities it can quite literally move mountains with its power. Yet this knowledge was part of the esoteric geometry formerly revealed only by the initiated masters of ancient wisdom and withheld from public knowledge. This knowledge is at least 5,000 years old and is to be found in many places, hidden, yet in plain view.



Figure 3 Celtic churches around Kilwinning

The land of the Holy Grail is in Cunningham and its center point is Kilwinning (latitude 55.654° North: Longitude 4.698° West). Below is a list of the important towns and Celtic church's which surround it. All of these towns lie in the ancient district of Cunningham with the exceptions of Dundonald, Barassie and Troon which belong to the district of Kyle. Further south of Kyle is the district of Carrick. These three areas, Cunningham, Kyle and Carrick form the famous county of Ayrshire renowned the World over for its beautiful vistas and famous heroes, philosophers, writers, poets and inventors. Names like Robert Bruce, William Wallace, Robert Burns and Dunlop to name but a few. Perhaps there is something special within this land that affects the human psyche to create such unique individuals. Is it the presence of the Holy Grail and other sacred objects that has such an effect or is it the unique geometric position this area holds? Or perhaps both, after all the legends of the Grail tell of the Land and the Grail operating in harmony, a function necessary to heal the wasted lands and the people within it. Only time will tell.

The Towns

Beith, Dunlop, Stewarton, Dundonald, Troon, Barassie, Irvine, Stevenson, Saltcoats and Ardrossan

The Celtic Church's

West Kilbride, Kilrusken, Kilbirnie, Kilmaurs, Kilmarnock and Kilwinning

THE DISCOVERY OF MOUNT HEREDOM

My knowledge of the lands of Ayrshire took me almost on top of the site but it would take years of research to prove it. My first breakthrough came on St Andrews day, 1994. Alerted by the solitary position of the church at the edge of Eglinton Estate I began researching its histories. Known as Fergushill church [3], it was built by masons from the Mother Lodge, Kilwinning [4] to serve the small local communities of Montgreenan, Dura and Benslie. The doors of this church opened on Sunday, the 3rd of November 1879 and its patron was the Earl of Eglinton [5]. Today, the church is now closed [6]; it held its last service in May 2009. The church lay outside both the estates of Montgreenan and Eglinton (although it lay closer to Eglinton) and within the parish boundary of Kilwinning. This was nothing out of the ordinary and would seem to be normal practice but was this church a marker for an older site? After several months of trying to establish exactly what Mount Heredom was, I nearly gave up. Little wonder Dan Brown gives it a cursory mention in his book *The Lost Symbol* [7]. From the little I could collate on the subject, the more I realized that Heredom must have been a very important site but to whom? All sorts of groups were being associated with it, the Culdees [8], the Freemasons and even the Knights Templar. Some have claimed it to be in Mull, in Iona and even Mount Schiehallion [9] in the north east of Scotland.



Figure 4 Fergushill Church

I decided to look at some old maps of the area and this required a visit to my local reference library, the Carnegie in Ayr. On arriving there, I requested every available map of the area and after many hours of meticulously scanning these maps at the location where the church now stood, finally something caught my attention. The map in question was General Roy's *Military map of Scotland*

[10] produced around 1750. The Duke of Cumberland [11], worried about further uprisings from the clans supporting the Jacobite cause (the 1745-6 uprisings) [12], had commissioned this map as he needed an accurate account of the routes and forts within Scotland. William Roy [13], a young man from Carluke (Lanarkshire) proved to be an extraordinary cartographer, and took up this task. His work was so accurate that it became the forerunner for the present Ordnance Survey, the UK's national mapping agency [14]. Unfortunately, it did not help the clans of the north, which suffered greatly by the hands of the Duke and his soldiers. The use of this map in destroying the clans of the north further endorsed his nickname the 'Butcher of Culloden'. Looking at the area where the church would be located (in the future), I noticed a strange marking on the map. At first glance it appeared to be a map maker's stamp, since the map in question was only a hand drawn copy at a scale of one third of the original; the original being kept at the British Museum, in London. However, the more I looked at it, the more I questioned the idea. Here in front of my eyes was an all too familiar shape next to the area where the church had been built. Engrailed across the landscape was what looked like a giant Celtic cross (fig 5).

Roy's Military Map

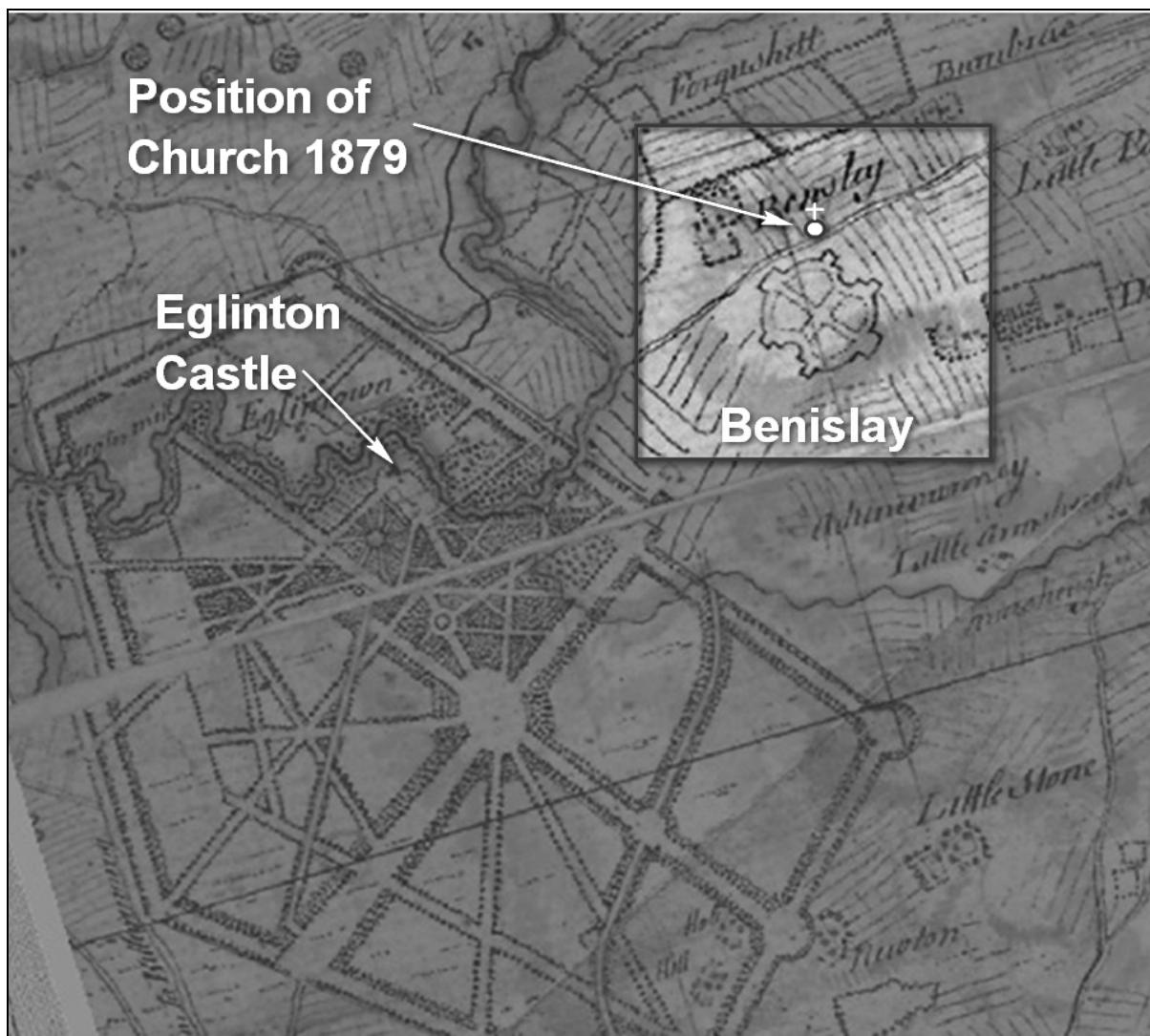


Figure 5 Eglinton Estate circa 1750

The shape discovered was massive. One could clearly make out four entrances to what seemed a double circular wall. From each entrance point, a pathway diverged to the centre forming a

cross. A quick measurement of its diameter showed it to be over 300 meters. What was this strange shape? Was it depicting a structure of some sort, or was it perhaps simply a walled garden? There were too many questions at this point but at least I had discovered something, something out of the ordinary and in *exactly* the area in question.



Figure 6 Celtic cross



Figure 7 Close up of the shape

The 1850 Map

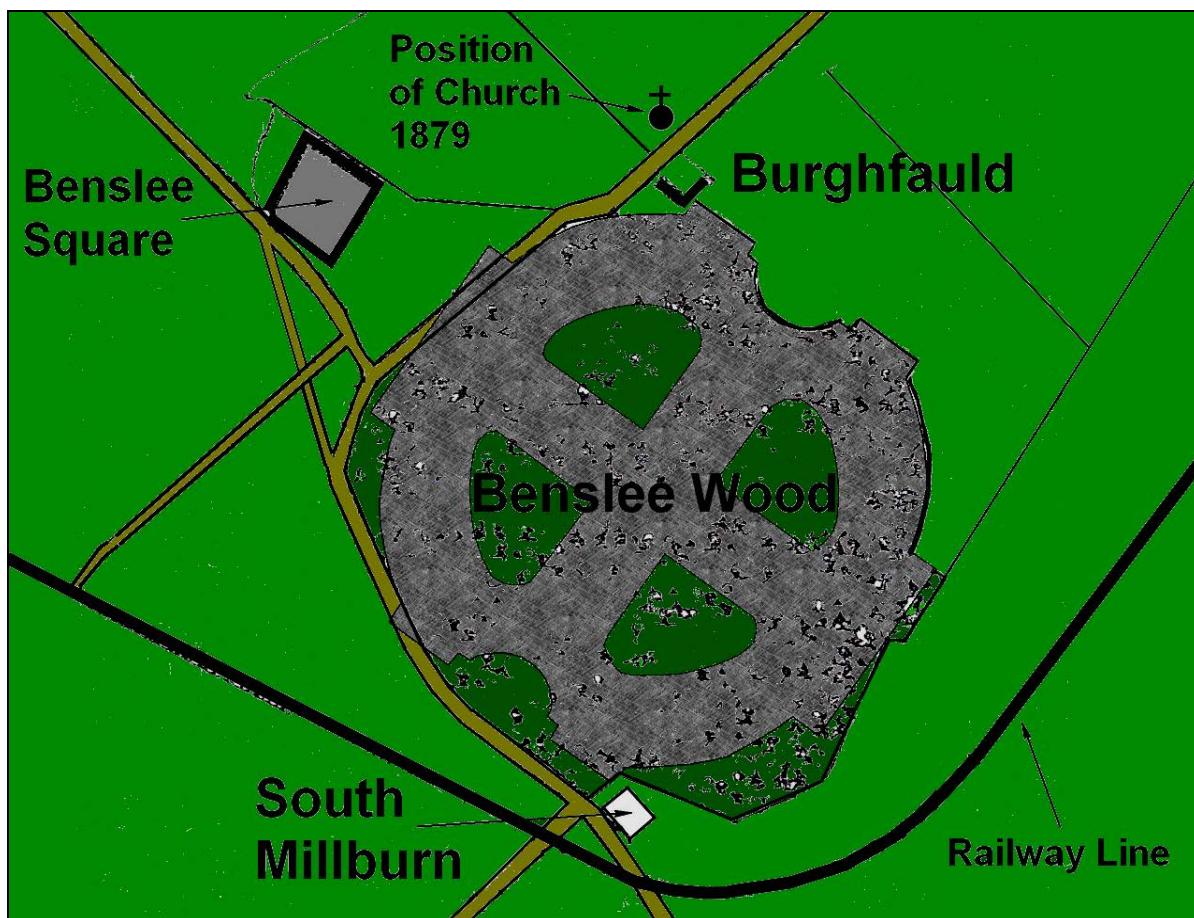


Figure 8 Benslee Wood circa 1850 with overlay of the 'shape'

(Benislay-1205; Benslay-1750; Benslee-1850; Benslie-present day)

Ecstatic, I quickly sifted through the pile of maps lying on the table. Eventually I found what I was looking for, the 1850 O.S. map. The first of a series of accurate maps produced by the British Ordnance Survey, and due mainly to the pioneering work of Major General William Roy. On this map the area in question was now covered with a wood called Benslee (modern: Benslie) but the general outline could clearly be seen, particularly so in the northeast quadrant. At that moment, I had confirmed that it was not a mapmaker's stamp after all but a 'structure' now covered with trees. Did this outline depict a stone built structure or just simply a landscaped garden? What had Roy seen on the ground to allow him to survey the area in such detail? Was this the remains of some old fortification? A though crossed my mind, could this be the site of the long lost mythical Mount Heredom? It seemed too easy. A mere mention of a mount near Kilwinning in a book and a simple search through maps of the area lead me to this strange shape but finding this shape was one thing, proving it was another. I needed more 'concrete' evidence. So for the next three years I carried on researching. I looked at all the available histories of Kilwinning, and I must say it was not the easiest of tasks. Little wonder then that many historians and writers with far more resources and better access to important documents have all but gave up on Kilwinning and settled for an 'easier' option. Something more substantial like Rosslyn Chapel for example. However, my research was about to become really interesting. In December of 1997, I was visited by a man calling himself Gerry and who had heard of my research through an article I wrote concerning the 'stone of Destiny' (published by the Sun Newspaper, Nov 1996).

He asked if I would take him to the site of Benslie Wood and I agreed, as it had occurred to me that I had yet to make a visit to this site I believed to be Mount Heredom. After a 15 minute drive we arrived at Benslie Wood and parked the car outside the 'Millburn', a pleasant establishment serving food and drinks for the wayward traveler. On finding no discernable entrance to the wood we climbed over the wire fence which surrounded it. I could see the broad outline of the site fairly easily but since this was a wooded area, I needed a higher perspective and so instinctively we headed inwards seeking the highest point. As it turned out the highest point was at the center.



Figure 9 Aerial photograph 1946 cleared on its trees

On reaching our vantage point I scoured the area looking for any traces of walls, anything that would indicate a structure. Then out of the blue, Gerry quite unexpectedly started reciting the 'Lord's Prayer'. Each to his own was my first thought and I carried on with my survey of the area. It was a dry but cold day and only 11 days until it was Christmas yet my feet felt strangely warm. At first I assumed it was because of all the walking I had done tramping through the wood trying to get a mental image of the site but something wasn't quite right, the heat I felt in my feet starting rising upwards throughout my whole body, almost as if I was immersed in hot water. This was no ordinary effect and I immediately swung round to where Gerry who was standing a few meters away, the expression on his face told it all, he too had experienced the same effect. Was this effect triggered by the 'Lord's Prayer' or was it simply an ancient known phenomenon of Earth energies interacting with the Sun. This site was proving to be more interesting than first though and was compelling me to believe that I had in fact found the long lost Mount Heredom of legend; I just couldn't see it for the trees. On returning home I reviewed my notes that I had taken during the visit to the site.

The centre proved to be the highest point at 46 meters above sea level whilst the periphery was 25 meters above sea level. The external outline was, for most parts clearly visible consisting of a low broad bank of soil with some traces of loose stone and rock. The northeast corner was well preserved (I used this area to get the overall dimension and size of the site). My impression of the site was mixed, was it originally a walled structure with possibly a central tower or perhaps the outer periphery was a ditched system which had been dug to produce the ‘Celtic Cross’ shape containing a central feature, a chapel perhaps? My thoughts were leaning to the later. Something of great import is buried here but what? I knew at this point that it would require the attention of professional archaeology to give me the answers I was seeking. However I did note that, at the time when Roy produced this map, a map which revealed the site in glowing detail, the Stewart line had failed to regain its position as Kings of Britain with the recent uprising of 1745-6 and the Earl of Eglinton, along with others, had prior to this event had been in France [15]. The Earl was in Paris for the funeral of Chevalier Ramsay (from Ayr, 20km south of Kilwinning).

Ramsey was a tutor to Bonnie Prince Charlie and is believed to be primary responsible for the development of the ‘high’ degrees of Freemasonry, which later evolved into the 33 degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite [16], the higher or historical degrees of Freemasonry as they are sometimes called. The Earl may have been alarmed that the site, now revealed on a map, ordered it to be covered up, if indeed it was a walled structure. The excess stonework perhaps reused for purposes within the estate itself. Curiously, the site lay just outside the boundary line of the Eglinton estate and therefore did not fit in with the concept of a walled garden as the estate had ample area for such a function elsewhere and indeed often such ‘gardens’ are located close to the main house. Why built a ‘garden’ a mile from the Castle when the needs of Eglinton were already fulfilled by several thousand acres of some of the most beautiful scenery in Ayrshire. Looking at a slightly later map of the area [17] the Armstrong map produced in 1775, the area was now marked as a circle of trees with a single tree in its center.

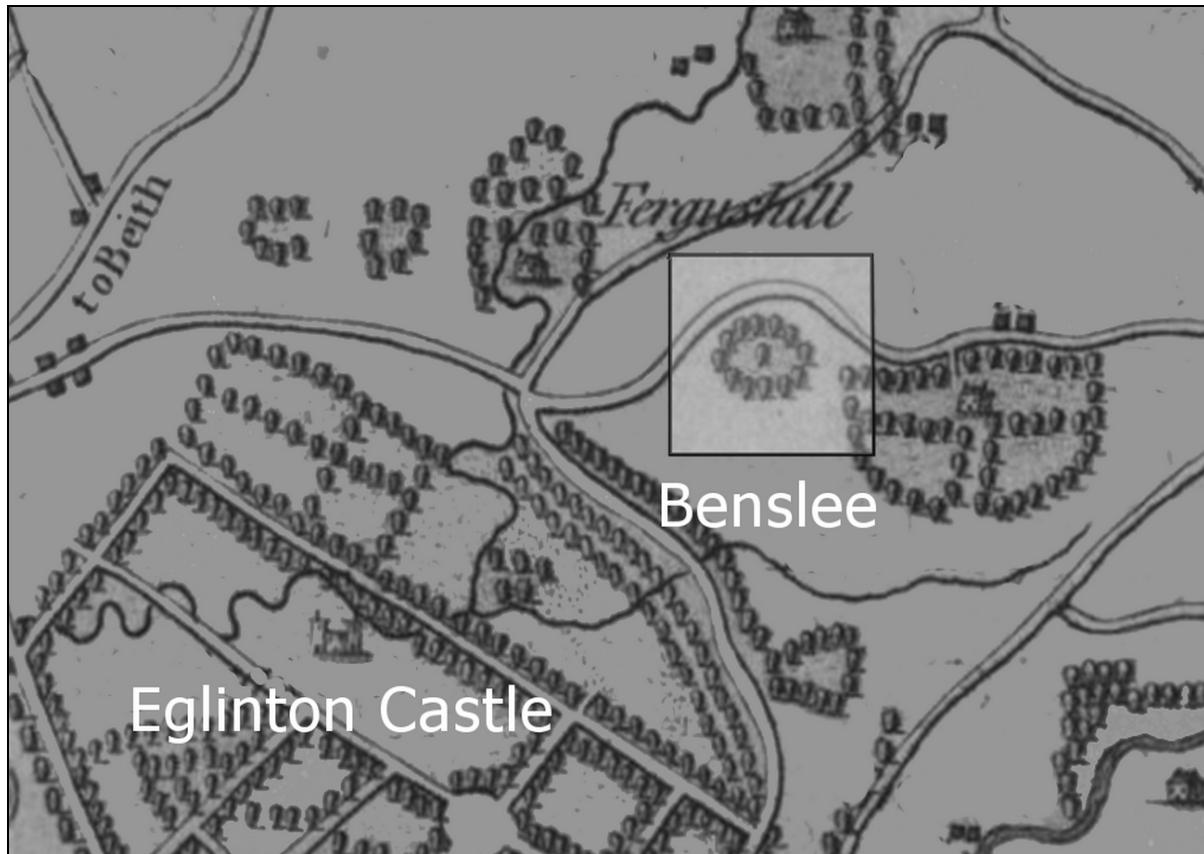


Figure 10 Armstrong 1775

Did this indicate the area was now becoming a wood and thus effectively camouflaging the site from would be treasure seekers who may have learnt of the existence of Mount Heredom of Kilwinning through the higher degrees? After all, some of these degrees were already in circulation for more than a decade prior to the mapping of this site by Roy. Further analysis of the maps and my measurements revealed that the site had been set out based on the principles of ancient geometry involving areas of circles and squares along with hidden geometric shapes, a bit over the top for a mere pleasure garden. Indeed my investigation into the layout of the site was starting to look more like treatise on classical geometry. Interestingly, Fergushill church was built due north of the sites center (approximately 227m from the center) on an old triangulation point as seen on the original 1850 OS map. This may have been part of Roy's original triangulation point used in his survey of this area, however it may have already existed in Roy's time and he simply reused. Alas we shall never know who set it up originally, Roy or the earlier designers of the site. The building of the church over this point has eradicated all chances of archeology ever finding out the 'age' of the marker and thus providing valuable evidence for dating the 'structure' at Benslie Wood.



Figure 11 Ruins of Eglinton Castle, built c1796

Finding a strange shape on an old map is one thing but proving it to be Mount Heredom is another thing all together. My first visit to the site encouraged me to intensify my research and so I decided to review everything I had uncovered regarding Freemasonry and the higher degrees concerning Mount Heredom. Freemasonry it would seem is a vast subject and one could fill a large library with the sheer volume of books on this subject alone. Thanks to Google's new digital library program many can now be read online. The following is a collection of snippets from various sources used in order to give the reader a general idea of what is on record concerning Mount Heredom.

Heredom and its Legends

- ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FREEMASONRY [18]

Called the High Degrees of the Continental Rites, there is nothing more puzzling than the etymology of this word. We have the Royal Order of Heredom, given as the ne plus ultra, meaning nothing farther or nothing beyond, of Freemasonry in Scotland, and in almost all the Rites the Rose Croix of Heredom, but the true meaning of the word is apparently unknown. Ragon, (Orthodoxies Maçonnique, page 91), asserts that it has a political signification, and that it was invented between the years 1740 and 1745, by the adherents of Charles Edward the Pretender, at the Court of Saint Germain. Which was the residence, during that period, of the unfortunate prince, and that in their letters to England, dated from Heredom, they mean to denote Saint Germain. He supposes it to be from the Medieval Latin word hoeredum, signifying a heritage. That it alludes to the Castle of Saint Germain, the only heritage left to the dethroned sovereign. Ragon's favorite notion was that the Hautes Grades or High Degrees, were originally instituted for the purpose of aiding the house of Stuart in its restoration to the throne, a theory not now generally accepted, at least without modification, this etymology must be taken with some grains of allowance.

*The suggestion is, however, an ingenious one. In some of the old manuscripts, the word Heroden is the name of a mountain in Scotland; and we sometimes find in the French Cahiers the title of Rose Croiz de Heroden. There is not a very great difference in the French pronunciation of Heredom and Heroden, and one might be a corruption of the other. Brother Mackey says he was once inclined to this theory; but even if it were the correct one we should gain nothing, for the same difficulty would recur in tracing the root and meaning of Heroden. The most plausible derivation is one given in 1858, by a writer in the London Freemasons Magazine. He thinks it should be Heredom, and traces it to the two Greek words, *hieros*, meaning holy, and *domos*, meaning house. It would thus refer to Freemasonry as symbolically the Holy House or Temple. In this way, the title of Rose Croiz of Heredom would signify the Rosy Cross of the Holy House of Freemasonry. This derivation is generally recognized the true one.*

- THE TEMPLAR ORDERS in FREEMASONRY [19]

There is further, as we have observed, no evidence of any Rite or Degree of Masonic Chivalry prior to 1737, to which date is referred the discourse of Ramsay. That this was the original impetus, which led to their production, regarded as beyond dispute, and it was the case especially with Masonic Templar revivals. Their thesis was his thesis varied. For example, according to the Rite of the Strict Observance the proscribed Order carried by its Marshal, Pierre d'Aumont, who escaped with a few other Knights to the Isles of Scotland, disguised as Operative Masons. They remained there and under the same veil, the Templars continued to exist in secret from generation to generation under the shadow of the mythical Mount Heredom of Kilwinning. To whatever date the old dreams ascribe it, when Emblematic Freemasonry emerged it was- ex hypothesis-a product of the union between Knights Templar and ancient Scottish Masonry.

- JOURNAL of the WESTERN MYSTERY TRADITION [20]

The following arose from a reading of the Grade Structure of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, in 33 degrees. This Rite arose in France, as the herald of what is "Ecossisme", a current imperfectly recognized in the Lodges and Orders within the jurisdiction of the UGLE (United Grand Lodge of England). The first profane mention of 'Ecossisme' in Masonry is in 1742, where a certain Abbé Pérau writes: "There is a vague rumor among Free-Masons concerning a certain Order they called 'The Scottish' (Ecossois), above, as they pretend, the ordinary Free-Masons, and who have their secrets apart".

The learned researcher Jouaust said that "they give importance to Heredom, where the First Lodge of Masonry was held", without seeming to know that the Hebrew word 'Harodim' means the supervisors who directed the workers during the construction of Solomon's Temple. Other writers link the reconstruction of this Temple with that of Jacques de Molay, or indeed with that of the House of Stewart. René Guénon saw Ecossisme as the reaction to the Orange tendencies of UGLE Masonry. Other writers link Ecossisme to the story of the Abbey of Kilwinning, the King Robert the Bruce and his Order of the Thistle, and the supposed survival of Templars in Scotland. Prince Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender, is also supposed to be an Initiator of this Rite, placing it in the perspective of the long chain linking Rosicrucian's at Toulouse, the Strict Observance in Germany, and the emergence of the Asiatic Brethren in Central Europe during the years leading up to the French Revolution.

- THE SECRET TRADITION [21]

The average Mason knows nothing of the living Secret Tradition which is concealed within the pattern of Freemasonry, and the path which leads to the gateway of Initiation where shines the Star above the portal of that glorious Temple, eternal in the heavens. The few who may discover "the key to the secret vault" described as "brethren of the free spirit". Brethren who somehow are aware of the hidden treasure and who seek with an open mind, who understand that the mystical Mount of Heredom is not a mountain on the face of the earth but "the hill of the Lord," the secret place of the Holy Grail. That which is said to be lost is not actually lost, only been forgotten. It can be 'found' at any time, and actually is, found by those who seek with vision, concealed "under veils close to the hands of all." The Masonic ritual as it exists today simply states the fact, in symbolical form, that there is something of great value to be 'found'. Even though this statement apparently has no practical application to life for the average Mason, nevertheless for the few it shines like a great light, guiding them along that ancient path which leads to the Temple not made with hands.

- SECRET SOCIETIES & SUBVERSIVE MOVEMENTS [22]

Moreover, according to a Masonic tradition, an alliance definitely took place between the Templars and the Masonic guilds at this period. During the proceedings taken against the Order of the Temple in France Pierre d'Aumont and seven other Knights escaped to Scotland in the guise of working masons and landed in the Island of Mull. On St. John's Day, 1307, they held their first chapter. Robert Bruce then took them under his protection, and seven years later, they fought under his standard at Bannockburn against Edward II, who had suppressed their Order in England. After this battle, which took place on St. John the Baptist's Day in summer (June 24), Robert Bruce is said to have instituted the Royal Order of H.R.M. (Heredom) and Knights of the R.S.Y.C.S. (Rosy Cross).

These two degrees now constitute the Royal Order of Scotland, and it seems not impossible that in reality brought to Scotland by the Templars. Thus, according to one of the early writers on Freemasonry, the degree of the Rose-Croix originated with the Templars in Palestine as early as 1188. Whilst the Eastern origin of the word Heredom, supposed to derive from a mythical mountain on an island south of the Hebrides where the Culdees practiced their rites, is indicated by another eighteenth-century writer, who traces it to a Jewish source. In this same year, 1314 Robert Bruce is said to have united the Templars and the Royal Order of H.R.M. with the guilds of working masons, who had also fought in his army, at the famous Lodge of Kilwinning, founded in 1286, which now added to its name that of Heredom and became the chief seat of the Order.

- HISTORIE de la MONARCHIE PRUSSIENNE [23]

This Order instituted by Godefroi de Bouillon, in Palestine in 1330, after the decadence of the Christian armies, and only communicated to the French Masons sometime after and to a very small*

number, as a reward for the obliging services they rendered to several of our English and Scottish Knights, from whom true Masonry taken. Their Metropolitan Lodge is situated on the Mountain of Heredom where the first Lodge was held in Europe and which exists in its entire splendor. The General Council is there held and it is the seal of the Sovereign Grand Master in office. This mountain situated between the West and North of Scotland at sixty miles from Edinburgh. (Authors note: Our site Benslie Wood is exactly 60 miles from the site of the Mary Lodge No 1 and the Grand lodge of Scotland in Edinburgh).

* Godfrey of Bouillon (c.1060 – 18 July 1100). After the capture of Jerusalem in 1099, Godfrey became the first ruler of the crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, although he did not use the title ‘king’.

- HIGHWAYS AND BI-WAYS OF FREEMASONRY [24]

In the Royal Order of Scotland, there are two degrees: 1. Brother of H.R.D.M. (HEREDOM) 2. Knight of the R.S.Y.C.S. (ROSY CROSS)

The former conferred in a chapter of H.R.D.M. upon those who have been Master Masons of good standing for not less than five years. Brothers of H.R.D.M are ‘promoted’ to the Knighthood of the R.S.Y.C.S. in a Grand Lodge or Council. Bro. Murray Lyon remarks that” the ritual of this rite embraces what may be termed a spiritualization of the supposed symbols and ceremonies of the Christian architects and builders of primitive times, and so closely associates the sword with the trowel as to lead to the Second Degree being denominated an Order of Masonic Knighthood”. The Traditional History of the Order, which must not, be mistaken for actual history, represents the First Degree as dating from the time of King David I. of Scotland. And the Second Degree as instituted by King Robert the Bruce on the battlefield of Bannockburn, 24th June 1314, to commemorate the valor of a band of Knights Templar who had rendered him signal aid in that great victory. These Templars were refugee survivors, who had sought safety in Scotland after the downfall of the Order of the Temple and the murder in Paris of the Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, March that year. King Robert the Bruce revived the older degree and incorporated the two degrees under the title of the Royal Order of Scotland. Thus the year 1314 is the "Year of the Restoration" and the "Anno Ordinals" is obtained by subtracting 1314 from the date A.D. King Robert established the Chief Seat of the Order at Kilwinning, reserving the office of Grand Master to himself and his successors on the Throne of Scotland.

- GLIMPSES of MASONIC HISTORY [25]

The Scottish adherents of King James II, followed him into exile after the landing of the Prince of Orange in 1688, brought to the English Court at S. Germain (which had been placed at the disposal of the King by Louis XIV) those ancient rites of Heredom and Kilwinning, intermingled with the Templar tradition, to which we have already referred. When King James II fled from England he took refuge at the Jesuit Abbey of Clermont, which had attached to it a College of Clermont in Paris, founded by Guillaume du Prat, Bishop of Clermont, in 1550. There, most unexpectedly, the King found a Masonic center, working rites handed down in France from a remote past. An intermingling of two traditions thus took place, and it was at this period - many years before the revival in 1717 - that certain of the ceremonies, which are to-day, included in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite were first put together.* Catholic Encyclopedia (1913), Vol. xiv, p. 88*

It would appear from these snippets of information that Mount Heredom was an important place, and which according to Freemasonry was very involved with the Order known as the Knights Templar [26]. The Pope had suppressed this Order of Christian Knights in 1308 and had its Grand Master burned at the stake in 1314 [27]. The Knights Templar was a powerful and secretive group of warrior monks during the middle Ages. Their secrecy has given birth to endless legends, one of which is that they guarded the Holy Grail. 700 years after their suppression the Roman Catholic Church [28] quite unexpectedly, announced that the Knights Templar were innocent of all charges held against them.

Geometry of Heredom

From my measurement's and analysis of the geometry of the 'site' at Benslie wood I expected it to reveal an area of 20 acres as stated in an old charter I had discovered describing the site, a charter which happened to reveal its outline. However, the area proved to be somewhat larger than anticipated, in fact it worked out to be 22 acres in size. Did the scribe who wrote the charter make an error or was the number 22 too obvious for an intelligent reader to fail but notice the significance of this sacred number, one of those magic numbers of geometry, that of π ; the ratio between a circles circumference and its diameter $22/7$? At this point, I was not interested in numbers, only in decoding the geometry of the site. My analysis revealed a design based on the ancient problem of squaring the circle and of area, as you will see in the following diagrams. There was however some further surprises in store. Within this geometry, I found a Star of David and an octagon. These shapes exist in many of the designs of ancient temples and religious icons.

A good example of the octagon shape is the 'Dome of the Rock' in Jerusalem. The Knights Templar also built their temples in this shape. Aside from this, the central tower of the Eglinton Castle [29] built in 1796 had this shape and the castle itself is laid out to the cardinal points (fig 12). The significance of the hidden geometrical figures shows that this site was no simple whim of some Lord, carving out a 'garden' for his own purpose as some would believe but was intelligently designed.

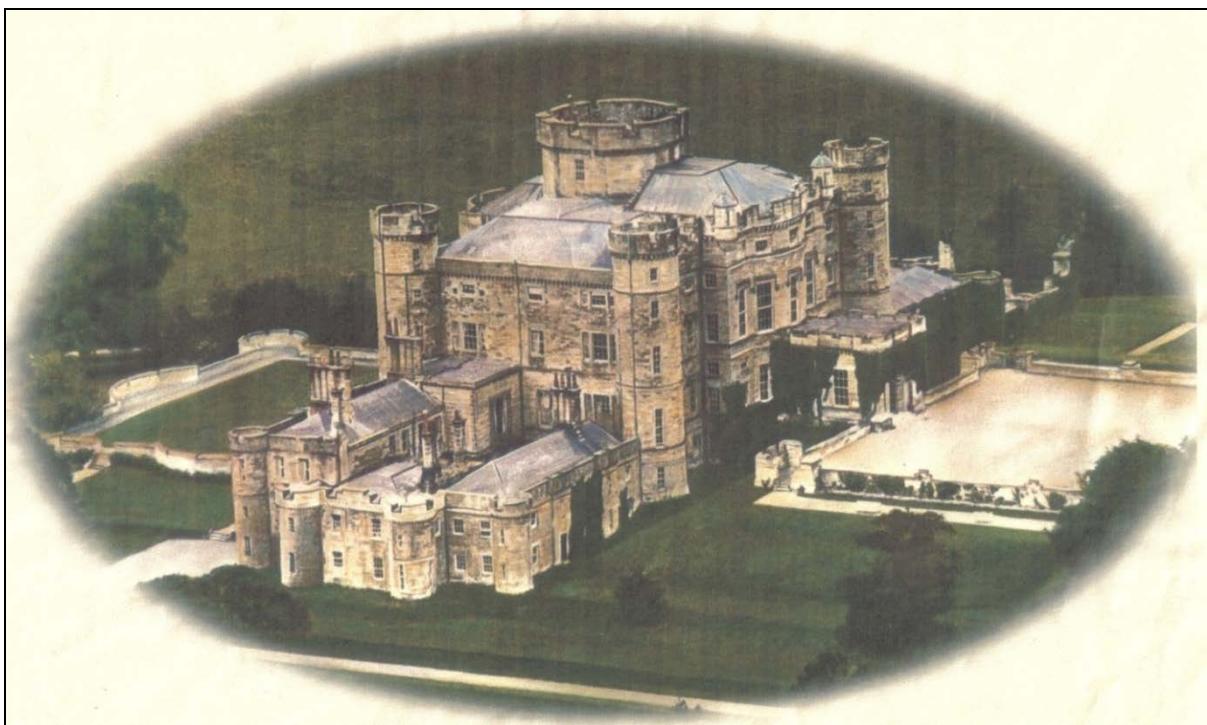


Figure 12 Eglinton Castle late 1800's

The shape of the 'structure' appears to have been designed using six circles. Five of these circles produce a geometric progression of circles bound by squares of alternating equivalent areas and perimeters to these circles. The remaining circle (No. 6) which sits between circles No.1 and No.2 determines the size of the Star of David bound within it. Circle No.3 is not at first inherent in the design but was inserted to fill the gap to produce the series of alternating circles and squares (figs 13-15). The radius of circle 3 is 144 meters. Using the three basic shapes in figure 13 (1. Circle within a square. 2. Perimeter of the square=the circumference of the circle. 3. Area of square=area of circle) and along with the side lengths of a hexagon and octagon we can recreate the shape of the site.

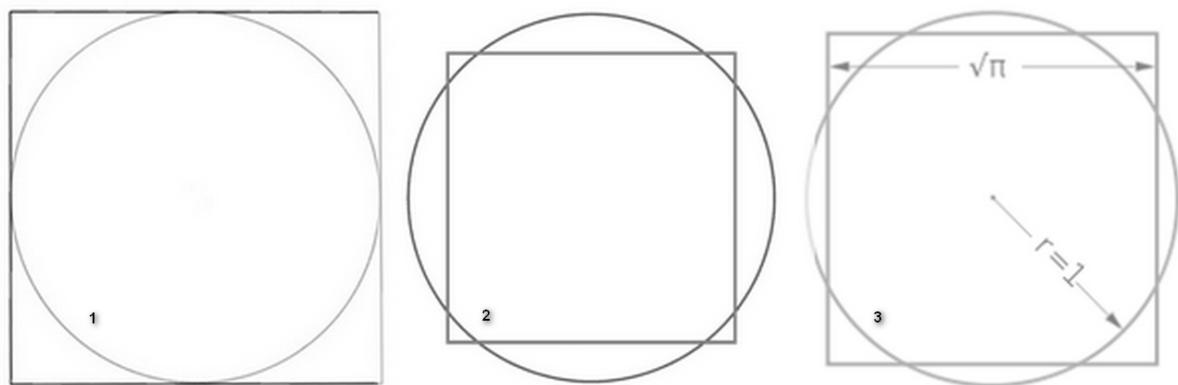


Figure 13 Circles and Squares

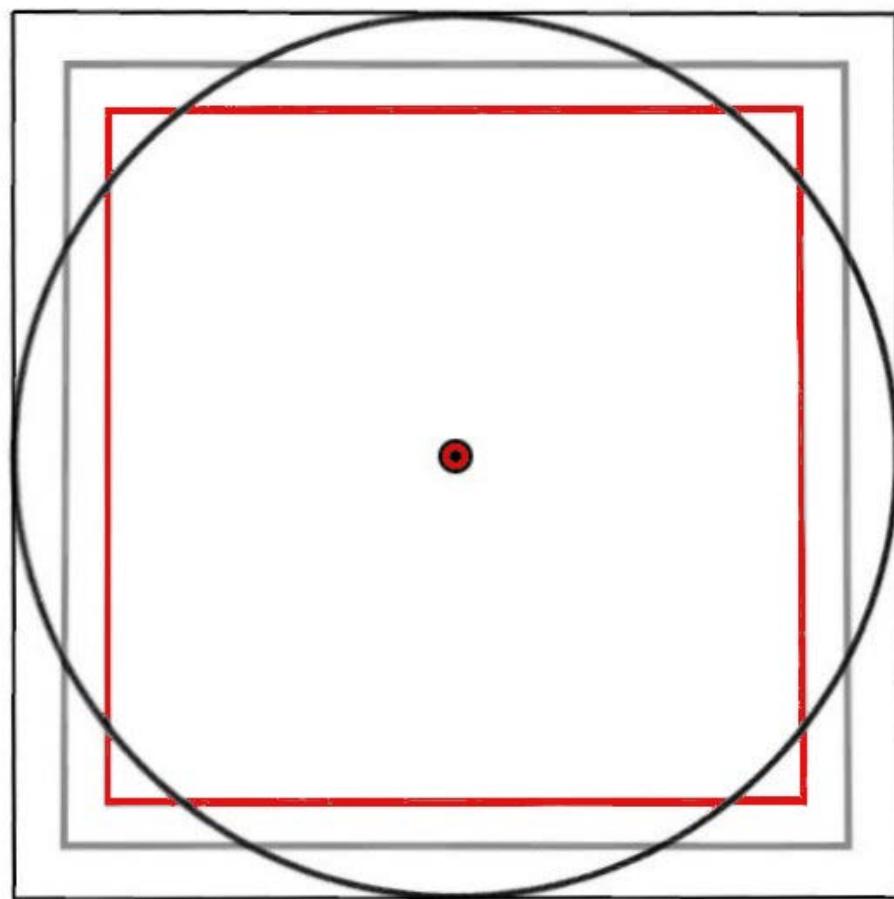


Figure 14 The three basic shapes added together

The three basic shapes when added together (fig 14) produce the geometric progression of figure 15.

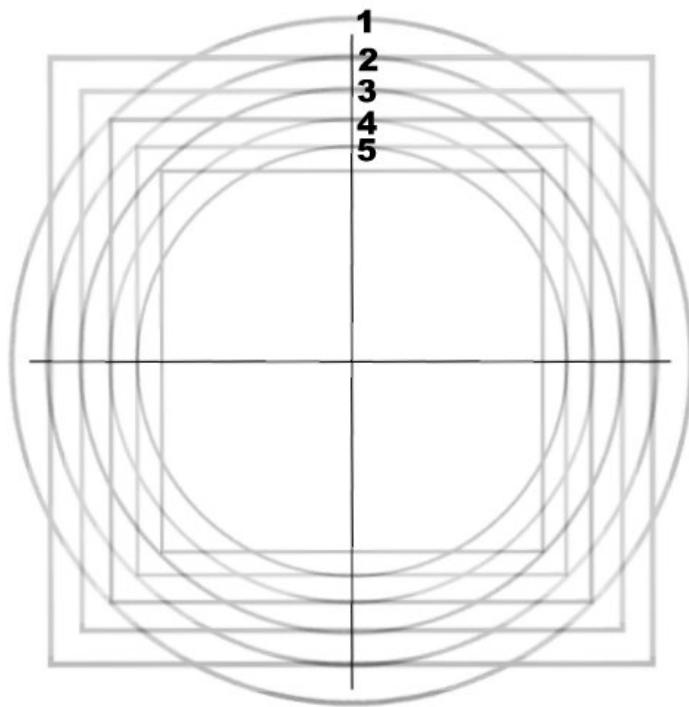


Figure 15 The geometric progression of circles.

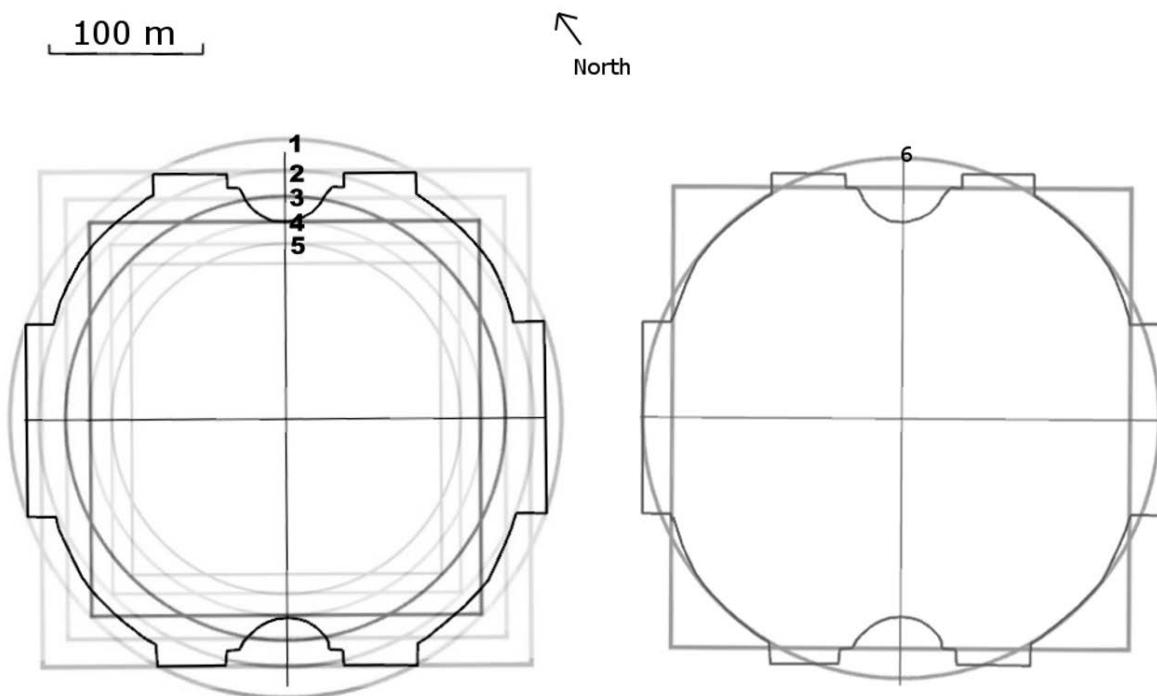


Figure 16 Geometry of the site

The outline of the shape is superimposed on the progression of circles as shown in figures 15, 16

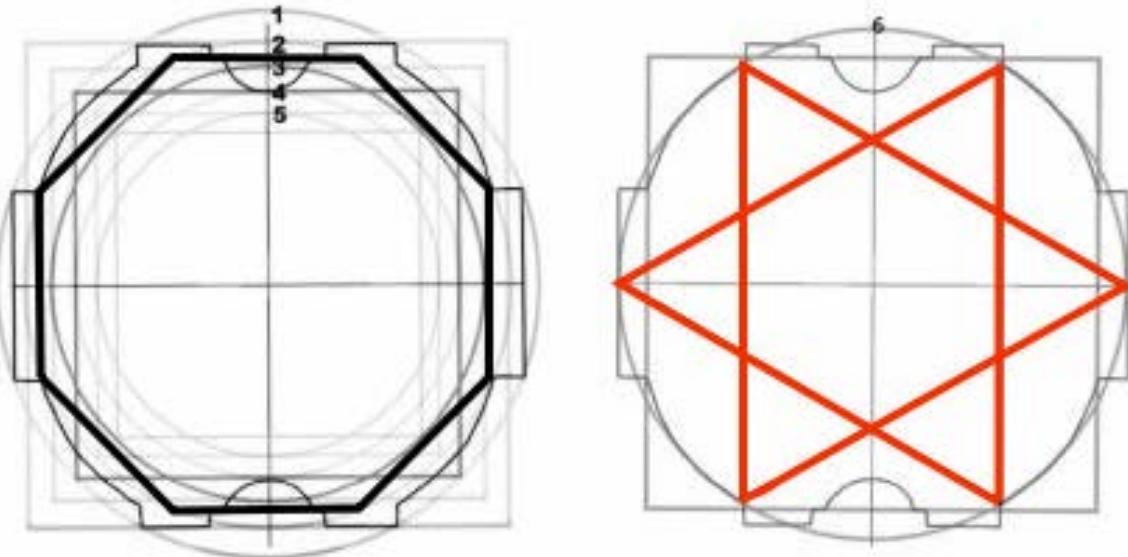


Figure 17 Octagon, circle 2: Star of David, circle, circle 6

In figure 17 (left side), an octagon is revealed contained within circle 2. The side lengths of the octagon are derived from the ends running vertically in the diagram and on the right-hand side, a Star of David is revealed contained within circle 6 which is nestled between circles 1 and 2 derived from the ends running horizontally.

Radius and Area of Circles

- Circle 1 radius= 183.35 meters; area 26.10 Acres (Outer ring)
- Circle 6 radius=168.35 meters; area 22.00 Acres (Hexagon)
- Circle 2 radius=162.49 meters; area 20.50 Acres (Octagon)
- Circle 3 radius=144.00 meters; area 16.10 Acres (Hidden)
- Circle 4 radius=127.62 meters; area 12.64 Acres (Inner ring)
- Circle 5 radius=113.10 meters; area 9.93 Acres (Inner most)

The ground plan at Benslie Wood (fig 18) also revealed hidden crosses within its design. Could these crosses be the source of ‘the Rosy Cross’ of Heredom in Legend? Or as Masonic historian Albert Mackey would say, the Rosy Cross of the Holy House of Freemasonry. [30]

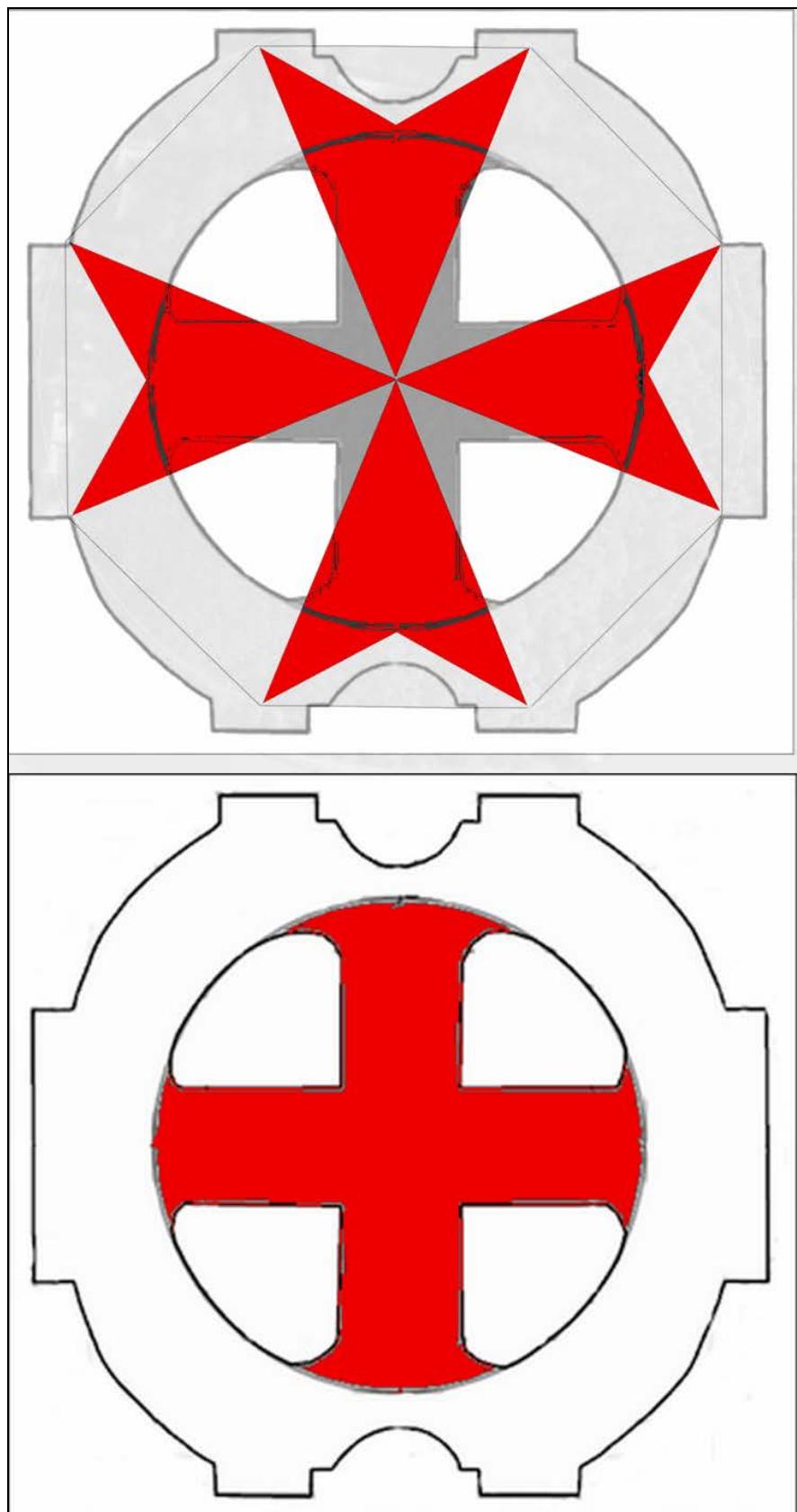


Figure 18 Crosses within the geometry

THE CHARTERS

After extensive searching through reference books and charters, I finally found the evidence I needed to help prove that the site Benslie Wood was indeed Mount Heredom. It came in the form of two charters, one dated 1205 [31] and the other around 1315. The first charter was the most important because it had a firm date attached to it and it actually gave the size and shape of the site. The second relates to King Robert the Bruce. To make the reading of the first charter more understandable, I have broken it down into four sections

Translation of the 1205 Charter

Section one. The reason for giving the charter

In the year of Grace one thousand two hundred and five, on Monday in the vigil of saint Matthew the apostle, in the town of Irvine. This is the communing made between the burgesses and whole community of the foresaid town on the one part, and Brice of Eglunstone son of the late Hugh lord of Eglunstone on the other part. To wit, that the burgesses and whole community of the foresaid town, with the unanimous consent and assent of the same, have unanimously granted given and to feuferme let to the said Brice of Eglunstone, those whole twenty acres of land in the tenement of Eglunstone. Which Ralph son and heir of the late Hugh lord of Eglunstone gave granted and forever disposer to the burgesses and community foresaid, for a certain final concord previously made between them, by these meiths and divisions.

Section two. Defining the area of land

Beginning, to wit: At the Burghfauld at the upper end of the foresaid twenty acres towards the north, and so descending towards the east by a certain dike as far as Glyblanysburn, and so descending towards the south by Glyblanysburn foresaid, to the marches of Moorsend, bounding with the land of Ralph lord of Eglunstone. And so ascending towards the west by Moorasydes to the common Rebucca of Hyppriddynge, and so ascending towards the north by the marches of Hyppriddynge foresaid to a certain thorn-dike which is called Hawthorne, which dike is the march between the said twenty acres of the land of Benislay; and so across towards the east by the common Rebucca lying between the foresaid twenty acres of the land of Benislay, to a certain cairn of stones, and so ascending across from the said cairn of stones by the said common Rebucca towards the east to the foresaid dike, which is called the Burghfauld dike.

Section three. Privileges and rights

To be Holden and had to the foresaid Brice his heirs and his assignees, [of] the burgesses and community foresaid, in feuferme, by the marches above said, with all their right pertinents, easements, and free customs, of right belonging, and in time to come of right to belong, to the foresaid twenty acres of land, within their meiths aforesaid. Paying yearly therefore of the said Brice, his heirs or his assignees, in the parish church of Irvine, at the feast of St. James the apostle, in summer to the burgesses and community foresaid, ten shillings of sterling in name of feuferme, freely and quietly, well and in peace, fully, honourably, from all other burden exaction servile work and secular demand. The said Brice in this present writ obliges him and his heirs and assignees, and as well his land of Benislay with the pertinents as the said twenty acres of land foresaid. With their pertinents, and all their other goods movable and immovable where so ever found, to be without any contradiction,

lawfully distained, and shall be to whomsoever of the burgesses and community aforesaid, freely and wholly in satisfaction of their said feuferme, in all respects, no one offering any objection. It is moreover, understood, that neither the said Brice nor his heirs nor his assignees, after the death of their predecessors, shall in any wise double the said feuferme. And if it shall happen the said Brice his heirs or his assignees, or their men inhabiting the said twenty acres of land, in the court of the said burgesses and community to do wrong in any case arising, their fine shall be taken as may be just. But the said burgesses and community aforesaid shall warrant acquit and forever defend against all men and women these said twenty acres of land with all their right pertinents, with their foresaid marches Contained as is before said, to the foresaid Brice his heirs and assignees.

Section four. Witnessing and signing the deal

For the greater security hereof in all the premises, the said Brice, for his own part, has found to the burgesses and community aforesaid, Ralph lord of Eglunstone, his brother, principal surety and debtor for himself and his heirs. In witness of which, all and sundry, the premises to the one-part of this present chirographic writing. To remain with the said Brice, his heirs and assignees, the common seal of the burgesses and community foresaid. And is appended and to the other part of the foresaid writing, to remain with the said burgesses and community the seals of the foresaid Brice and Ralph are appended : Witnesses, Sir Godfred of Rosse, Sir Robert Boyd, Sir Brice of Blair, knights; Fergus of Rosse, Arthur of Rosse, brothers, William Kerr, Alexander of Blair, and many others.

Explanation of the Charter

Section one;

Brice of Eglinton meets with the Burgesses of Irvine to discuss the land of Benislay which Ralph, the brother of Brice who for one reason or another had gave to the said burgesses. At this meeting, the burgesses agree to rent (feuferme) the land back to Brice.

Section two;

This is the most interesting part of this charter, it defines the actual boundaries and area of the land of Benislay. This was common practice when drawing up charters in order to prevent future disputes over land territory. Starting from Burghfauld (called Benslee Fauld-1850 O.S. map) and following the directions given directly in section two, we can clearly see the shape in question (fig 19).

Section three;

This section deals with the legalities of the charter, typical of the medieval period. One part did stand out, ‘ And if it shall happen’, the agreement proceeds, ‘ the said Brice, his heirs or assignees, or *their men inhabiting* the said twenty acres of land, in the court of the said burgesses and community to do wrong in any case arising, their fine shall be taken as may be just’. The Burghfauld farm lay outside the site, and was already serving the Burgh, so who were these men inhabiting this land, certainly not the farmers of this area?

Section four;

The charter ends with the ‘sealing’ of the deal. This was done by using the common seal of the burgesses. Brice and Ralph his brother secured the agreement with their own seals and this act is then witnessed by Sir Godfred de Rosse, Sir Robert Boyd, Sir Brice de Blair and others. Deeds, as a rule, were sealed and not signed and the addition of a seal from an abbey or town gave it further security.

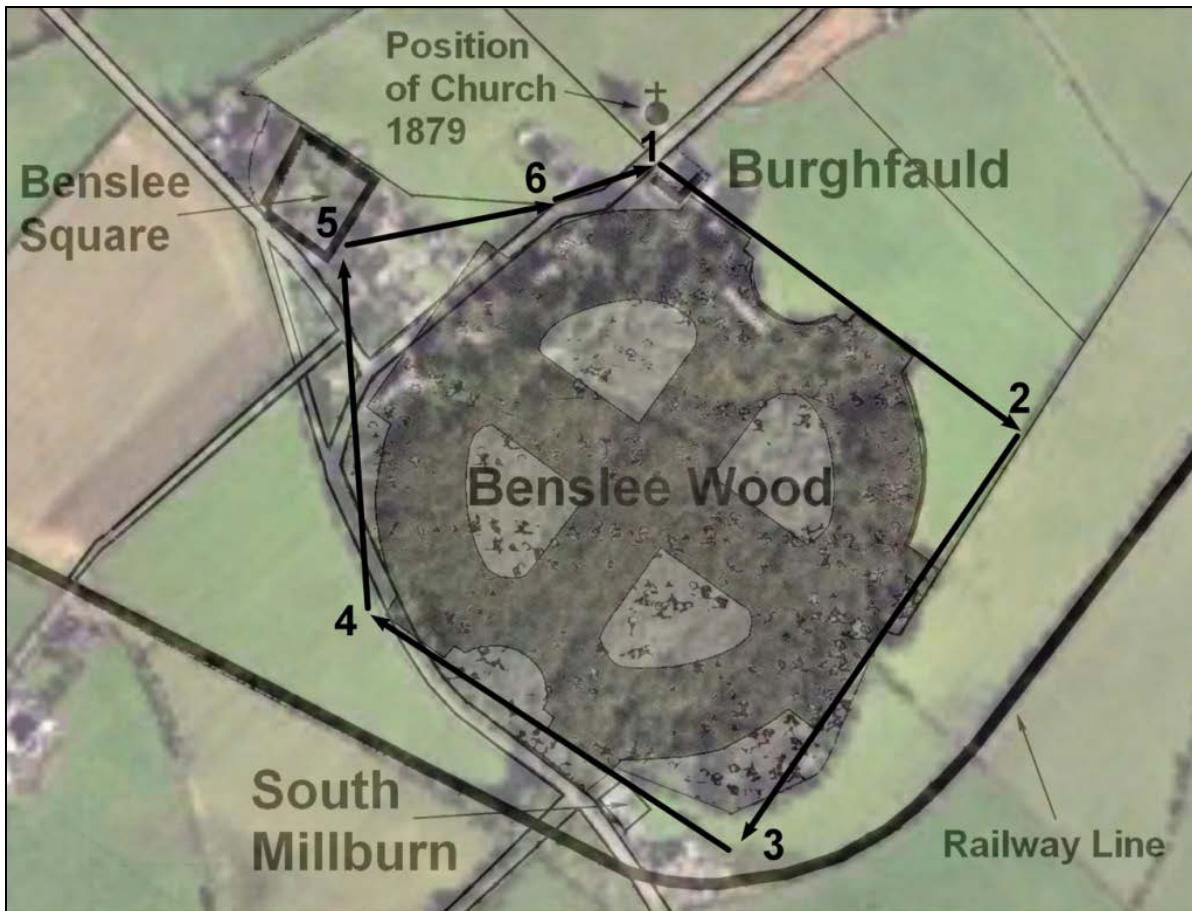


Figure 19 Directions outline Benslie Wood

1. Beginning, to wit, at the Burghfauld (now called Benslie Fauld) at the upper end of the foresaid twenty acres towards the north and so descending towards the east by a certain dike as far as Glyblanysburn (now Millburn).
2. And so descending towards the south by Glyblanysburn foresaid, to the marches of Moorsend, bounding with the land of Ralph lord of Eglunstone (Eglinton).
3. And so ascending towards the west by Moorasydes to the common Rebucca of Hyppridynges.
4. And so ascending towards the north by the marches of Hyppridynges foresaid to a certain thorn-dike, which is called Hawthorne.
5. And so across towards the east by the common Rebucca lying between the foresaid twenty acres of the land of Benislay, to a certain cairn of stones. (Cairns-piles of stones, markers, burial places)
6. And so ascending across from the said cairn of stones by the said common Rebucca towards the east to the foresaid dike, which is called the Burghfauld dike. Hence back to (1).

Several unusual words appear in this charter. For example, Glyblanysburn is derived from Glyb-lands-burn.

Glebe, Gleib, Glyb(e), n. . [ME.] , *gleba* med. Latin (Latin *glēba*, a clod of earth).]

1. The portion of land assigned to a parish minister in addition to his stipend.

GLEBE, *gleba.*] Church land; most commonly taken for the land belonging to a parish church, besides the tithes.

Every church of common right is entitled to house and glebe. And the assigning of these at the first was of such absolute necessity, that without them no church could be regularly consecrated. *Gibs.* 661.

Source: THE LAW DICTIONARY, Sir Thomas Edlyne Tomlins, printed London (1835), Vol. 1

This now shows this area was Church land and thus in all probability belonged to the newly built Abbey of Kilwinning which in turn had inherited it from the earlier (Culdees) church of Saint Finnian. The term Hyppriddygnes is a compound of two words Hypp and priddygnes from the Anglo-Danish.

Hyppe earth, hill, hoe ridge

Priddygnes [OE.] **briðing* or **briding*, the word *riding* is descended from it.

briding →third →[O Norse] *briðjungr*, meaning a third part (especially of a county and Ayrshire was indeed divided into three parts –Cunningham in the north, Kyle in the middle and Carrick in the south).

A prime example of ridings is the three ancient districts of Yorkshire which has been divided for administrative purposes. The word riding was originally written as thrithing or thriding. Ridings are essentially a Scandinavian institution. In Iceland the third part of a ‘thing’ corresponds roughly to an English county was called *briðjungr* (thrithjungar); in Norway, the thrithjungar seems to have been an ecclesiastical division. According to the 12th-century compilation “laws of Edward the Confessor,” the riding was the third part of a county (provincial); causes were brought which could not be determined in the wapentake, and if a case could not be determined in the riding it was brought to the court of the shire. Riding courts continued to be held after the Norman Conquest. A charter by Henry I granted to the Church of St Peter’s at York mentions wapentacmot, tridingmot and shiresmot, (mot or moot being a place of meeting by the elders of the community to settle local business, to give proclamations and to conduct court cases usually around a small mound) and exemptions from suit to the thriding or riding may be noticed frequently in the charters of the Norman kings. However, the jurisdiction and functions of these courts have not been ascertained. It seems probable from the silence of the records that they had already fallen into disuse early in the 13th century.

Source "<http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Ridings>"

Thus from the above definition of the terms written in this charter, it would appear this area of Benislay was being used by the local burgesses of Irvine to conduct their business affairs on the site of an ancient Moot Hill. It seems not impossible that Brice struck a deal with the Burgesses in order to facilitate a new administrative centre based on the Normal model and one which the burgesses could operate in. Such centres required a physical building wherein charters and important documents could be drawn up and stored for reference as per Norman customs of administration. This agreement is the earliest on record of the Eglinton family known to exist and yet I have found no records which define the family name of Hugh, Bryce and Ralph, only that they lived at the place called Eglinton, a strange affair indeed for such a prominent family. It is almost as if the linage has been written out or even covered up. Why is it then, that historians and antiquarians alike have missed these vital clues in such an old document, a document so important to the histories of Irvine and its surrounding areas? Clues which define a ‘structure’ of 20 acres in size and ‘occupied’ by the men of Brice and his brother Ralph, lord of Eglinton. A structure, which I hope to prove to the reader, is the mythical Mount of Heredom so loved and revered in Freemasonry

The Bruce Charter

I came across another charter [32] concerning the histories of Kilwinning and for a long time, it made no sense. There were no seals or date appended to it but someone had lightly pencilled in the date, circa 1315. King Robert the Brue had requested the charter for the monks of Kilwinning Abbey. Because of the Wars against England, the abbey and its lands had suffered extensively and the monks were reduced to poverty, and so Bruce granted them the lands of Hallande and gave it to their care in peace and forever. This land belonged to the Balliol's of Kilmarnock and its feuferme of twenty shillings nullified. No historian has yet found a record of this name in any of the existing records or land Registers of Scotland. *Abstract:*

Charter by King Robert the Bruce: in favour of the Abbot and monks of Kilwinning, the lands of Hallande, near the burgh of Irvine. To hold to them and their successors in free, pure, and perpetual peace; the King also remitting in their favour twenty shillings which they were accustomed to pay yearly to the heirs of Baliol of Kilmarnock for the land.

Kilmarnock was under the jurisdiction of Cunningham and Baliol inherited these lands through the line of Richard de Morville. His daughter Helena married Rolland of Galloway who inherited his father-in-law's title 'Constable of Scotland'. From this union a son was born called Alan. After the death of Rolland (1200), Alan became the Constable and married several times. However on his death (1234), all of his lands including Galloway were divided between his three daughters and their husbands. It was one of Alan's daughters, Dervorguilla, who inherited Cunningham. She had married John de Balliol, the 5th feudal baron of Barnard Castle and founder of Balliol College of Oxford. Their son also called John was to become a King of Scotland for a short period (1292-96). His principal rival was Robert the Bruce (crowned 1306) which may explain why he is remitting the twenty shillings in favour of the monks of Kilwinning for the land. By the beginning of the 14th century, de Baliol held this land, so we may conclude that they had been forfeited. The monks were accustomed to pay this yearly. Was this charter describing the same land of Benislay?

After all, the land in question, Hallande lay near the burgh of Irvine and Benislay is right on the edge of the Burgh boundary. What then does this name mean? It made no sense until much later when I came across a similar name in two different poems, the first was the early charges of Freemasonry and the second was the famous Grail poem '*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*', both of which were penned around the late 14th century. Typical with reading old charters, the characters within the documents often defaced or obscured due to poor management of their safekeeping. Water, fire and mould are the most common causes. So how do we make sense of this word? Simple, add a letter m at the end and you have Hallandem. The word Hallandem, when spoken phonetically equates to Halidom. Remember, there was no formal grammar for the English or Lowland tongue in the 1300's, so when a scribe or monk composed a charter, they wrote down what they heard to the best of their abilities. This word Halidom derives from the following; HALI Germanic: hailaga- 'holy, bringing health', Old English haila- 'holy', 'healthy', Dutch helig- 'holy'. DOM Latin: domus- 'house, a building'. This would then equate to 'Holy House'. Nesta Webster in her book *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* (p 112) reports;

'It is thus at Heredom of Kilwinning, the Holy House of Masonry, Mother Kilwinning, as still known to Freemasons—that a speculative element of a fresh kind may have found its way into the lodge'.

Thus Hallandem (Halidom) can be taken to mean 'Holy House'; surely this reveals Benslie Wood as the site of the Holy House of Freemasonry, the Mount Heredom of legend in the higher degrees.

GOD AND THE HALIDOM

We now look at the two poems which contains within them, the word Halidom to see if there are any connections with the site of Benslie Wood. The first poem involves Freemasonry and the second is a Grail poem.

The Old Charges of Freemasonry

The oldest version of Masonic regulations is the *Halliwell Manuscript* or *Regius poem* [33] and this is currently dated to 1390. It's the only manuscript of Masonic Charges composed in verse. Written in Middle English with typical gothic lettering and most probably done by a monk as few could read and write. Monks were the main source of scribes during this period and the Tironensian were both monks and masons, something to bear in mind. Indeed the Tironensian Order is the only Order that has the strongest claim and possible reason for such a document to have been commissioned in the first instance, as they were invariable the teachers of the Craft training men to be both monks and masons. Perhaps one day historians will uncover evidence that this document was originally written by a Tironensian monk (from a Scottish house?). These Charges [34] acted as the medieval equivalent of a 'Code of Practice' defining the way men operated at the work site. At the end of these charges is an oath by which the mason was 'bound' by...

These charges that we have rehearsed, and all others that belong to Masonry, ye shall keep, so help you God and Halidom, and by this Book to your power. Amen.

Later versions

These Charges that you have Received you shall well and truly keepe, not disclosing the Secrecy of our lodge to man, woman, nor child, stick nor stone, thing moveable nor immoveable, so God you helpe and his holy Doome. Amen.

By 1700, Freemasonry had now within its flock a growing number of 'non-operative' masons. It was time for a new set of Constitutions. James Anderson a minister in the Church of Scotland, who moved to London around 1707, accepted this task of rewriting the 'history' of Freemasonry. He was soon to become the Grand Warden for the Grand Lodge of London and Westminster, a lodge recently created in 1717. In September 1721, this Grand Lodge commissioned him to write a new history of the Freemasons, and published it in 1723 under the title *The Constitution of Free-Masons* [35]. How much of it was used by Scottish lodges is debatable. In addition, we must remind the reader that it is at Kilwinning the first lodge of Freemasonry was established.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

The other poem considered was *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Written in the late 14th century, and contemporary with the period of the Halliwell Manuscript but unlike the latter, it is composed of the 'alliterative' form of verse. This poem is about a romantic adventure set around a character called Sir Gawain, a knight of the legendary 'Round Table of King Arthur'. The author of this poem is uncertain but is now recognised as was one of the greatest writers of the medieval period. All that is known about this writer comes from a single manuscript, containing four poems: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, Patience, and Purity*. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is the classic of English literature. I will not go into the plot, as it is readily available on the internet. However a Scot called George Neilson [36], claimed to have found the person responsible for these poems. He got his first clue from the chronicle of Andrew Wynton.

Wynton identified the poems with a person called Hucheon. In 1902, Neilson published a book based on his research and titled *Huchown of the Awle Ryale* and is recommended reading. Andrew Wynton [37] a Scottish chronicler was born about the middle 14th century during the reign of David II, king of Scotland (b.1309-d.1370). Wynton was a canon regular of St. Andrew, and Prior of the monastery of St. Serf, Lochleven, in Kinross (1395-1413). At the request of Sir John Wemyss, Wynton wrote a history of Scotland, entitled *Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland* (the Original Chronicles of Scotland).

Wynton's comment on Hucheon (ref: Cotton Manuscript book V. II, 4308-4318)

Hucheon,
þat cunnande was in litterateur.
He made a gret Gest of Arthure
and þe Awntyrs of Gawane,
Þe Pistil also of Suet Susane.
He was curyousse in his stille,
Fayr of facunde and subtle
and ay to pleyssance hade delyte,
Mad in metyr meit his dyte
Litil or noucht neuir þe lesse
Wauerande Far þe suytfastnes.

Hucheon,
That was cunning in literature.
He made a great history of Arthur.
And the adventure of Gawain,
The epistle, also of sweet Susan.
He was curious of style,
Fair of fecund and subtle.
And always a pleasure and delight,
Made in meter that met his dyte
Little or nothing never the less,

Going back to George Neilson, he had studied law at Glasgow University, and was a member of several boards of important libraries, he was also an antiquarian and collector of old manuscripts, presided over the Glasgow Archaeological Society, and was vice-president of the Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow. All of these positions had given him access to valuable documents to track down this mysterious Hucheon. As it turned out this Hucheon was none other than Sir Hugh of Eglinton, who lived near the area of our site at Benslie Wood. However, historians know little about the life of Sir Hugh. He was the 'Gude Sir Hew of Eglyntoun' as mentioned in William Dunbar's *Lament for the Makeris* (c 1460 –1520).

Sir Hugh of Eglinton

Hugh was born around 1320 and died circa 1377. Only one Sir Hew of Eglinton occurs in documents of the fourteenth century and thus directly links this Sir Hugh as the poet referred to by Wynton and Dunbar. 'Huchown of the Awle Ryale' is interpreted to mean 'Huchown of the Royal Palace' or Old Royal. The following chapter is from the book *An Alliterative Romance* translated from Guido De Colonna [38].

Sir Hugh of Eglintoun from his connection by marriage with the royal family of Scotland, the substantial crown grants, which he received, and the public services he rendered, was precisely the man whom we should expect named "of the Awle Ryale". He possessed of the ability, experience, and means to write, or cause to have written, such a work as the Troy Book. "When we ascertain, that Sir Hugh Eglintoun was connected with the Scottish court, in the successive reigns of David II and Robert II, we seem to have obtained some additional evidence. He belonged to the distinguished family of Eglintoun of Eglintoun. And as it appears probable that he was 'knighted' when as a young man in the year 1342, we may perhaps, then places his birth about the year 1320. During the summer of 1342, King David II led an army into Northumberland. In the course of this expedition, he liberally distributed the honour of knighthood but as a monarch who possessed no share of his father's talents commanded the army. Some of the newly created knights, who endeavoured to approve their chivalry, having fallen into an ambush set by Robert Ogle, five of their number, Stewart, Eglintoun, Boyd, Craigie, and Fullarton were taken prisoners.*

***The Christian name of Eglintoun is not indeed mentioned; but from the time and the occasion it appears sufficiently probable that this individual was the good Sir Hugh. We find him described as Justiciary of Lothian in the year 1361; and in 1367, he was one of the commissioners for negotiating a treaty with England. He married Egidia the half-sister of Robert II. She was the widow of Sir James Lindsay of Crawford, who died about the year 1357. Sir Hugh Eglintoun is supposed to have died soon after the year 1376. His daughter Elizabeth, who inherited his numerous and extensive estates, became the wife of John Montgomery of Eglisham, ancestor of the noble family of Eglintoun".*

* Authors note: these five Knights came from Ayrshire.

** Yet again the Eglinton family name is missing

Sir Hew of Eglinton was not only a favourite in the Royal Court of Scotland but also in England, for he was given safe passage to visit King Edward III in London on numerous occasions and especially the years 1358 and 1359 when Edward held his great Round Table functions of Arthurian and Grail themes. Perhaps Hugh had penned this poem specifically for such an occasion. Indeed one can imagine Hugh as an elite member of King Edward's high *Order of the Garter*, since at the end of this poem the author had written down its Motto: **HONY SOYT QUI MAL PENCE**
Now look at the verse, which speaks of Halidom and compare it with that given in the Old Charges. The following is from verse 85 of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Therefore, good Sir Gawain, now go another way,
Now let the man alone, for the love of God, sir!
Come to some other country, and there may Christ keep you!
I shall haste me home again, and on my honour I promise,
That I will swear by God and all His gracious saints,
So help me God and the Halidom, and other oaths a plenty,
That I will safe keep your secret, and say not a word that ever
You fain were to flee for any foe that I knew of.
'Gramercy!' said Gawain, and regretfully answered:
'Well, man, I wish thee, who wishes my good, and keep
Safe my secret, I am certain thou would.
However heedfully thou hid it, if I here departed fain in
Fear now to flee, in the fashion thou speak,
I should a Knight Coward be, I could not be excused.
Nay, I will fare to the Chapel, whatever chance may befall.
I will have such words with that wild man as my wish is
To say, come fair or come foul, as fate will allot me there.
He may be a fearsome knave to tame and club may bear
But His servants true to save the Lord can well prepare.

Now compare it to 'the Old Charges'
These charges that we have rehearsed, and all others that belong
to Masonry, ye shall keep, **so help you God and Halidom**, and
by this Book to your power Amen

Judging by his character and the titles he held, Sir Hugh of Eglinton was no fool. Connected with the courts of Scotland and England and which it would seem were enjoying a revival of Grail and Arthurian themes not seen since the days of the troubadour and grail romancers of the late 12th century. What then have we learnt about the Halidom mentioned in the two poems?

- We can safely say they both poems belong to the same period, the later quarter of the 14th century.
- Both poems refer to a 'Halidom', a place where one swears an oath of secrecy.

- One poem deals specifically with the early constitutions of Freemasonry, where Kilwinning is universally recognized as the First or Mother Lodge.
- The other dwells on a Grail theme written by a man who lived close to both Kilwinning and Benslie wood.

Summing up we have the early constitutions of Freemasonry, Kilwinning, and the Mother Lodge of Freemasonry, Eglinton, the Halidom, oaths of secrecy, and a Grail theme. What more can one say? Hugh lived just 2.3 kilometres from Kilwinning Abbey and 1.5 kilometres from Benslie Wood, surely then, he was in the best position to know its history and secrets.



Figure 20 Eglinton Estate

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