



Moreover, the Reference Services Assistant, Access Department of the National Library of Scotland, has advised that “like yourself, [I] could not locate any journal resources.”<sup>5</sup> However, when it comes to an understanding of the actual creation of the book, we do know that the “aristocracy played a leading part, financing a series of privately printed family histories written by Sir William Fraser (1816–98) over 40 Victorian years” which may help to explain why works such as *The Sutherland Book* have tended to remain largely within the libraries of aristocratic families and those of the collectors of rare books.<sup>6</sup> Sir James Balfour Paul, Lord Lyon King of Arms (in that role 1890 – 1926) was the author of the nine-volume encyclopaedia of the aristocracy of Scotland, *The Scots Peerage* (1904). He dedicated his encyclopaedia “To the Memory of Sir William Fraser, K.C.B. whose labours and munificence have made it possible” by leaving a legacy which funded *The Scots Peerage*, but complained that Fraser “seems afraid of wounding the susceptibilities of his noble employers by narrating any but smooth and pleasant things about the family”. He also complained that the volumes were too heavy for comfortable reading.<sup>7</sup> This last comment is easily borne out by considering the three volumes of *The Sutherland Book*: Volume I consists of 604 pages; Volume II of 430 pages; and Volume III of 431 pages, making a total count of 1,465 pages, or almost three reams of printer paper to convert the electronic files into a physical item. Covers and bindings would add to the weight.

#### THE VOLUMES AND THEIR CONTENTS

Notwithstanding the reservations and limitations expressed by Sir James Balfour Paul and more recently by Mark Sutherland-Fisher, the work does contain a large amount of primary source historical information and it is an investigation of much of this material which forms the thrust of this article. It is clear that Sir William Fraser intended that his work should become a source of reference, for at the end of Volume III he included both an Index of Persons (taking ninety-six pages) and an Index of Places (a further thirty-nine pages). Each volume contains a number of illustrations, and each contains a number of “woodcut signatures”, while Volumes I and III also contain a number of woodcut seals. Volume I concerns itself with Memoirs; Volume II with correspondence; and Volume III with Charters, some in Latin and others in English and some written in both Latin and English.<sup>8</sup> Volume II starts with a useful Abstract of the correspondence, while Volume III starts with abstracts of all the charters, again providing a useful summary for those of us whose study of Latin finished at a very junior level in high school, more than sixty years ago.

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<sup>5</sup> Email of 10 January 2023 from Gemma Kelly to the author. Note “the Library’s enquiry policy, namely that the Library will help conduct ‘research that requires no more than one hour of staff time per individual enquiry’. This means that I did not find any journal articles relating to your enquiry within the hour of work time allocated. It may be possible that there are articles, but that I didn’t find them. It is always my hope that I have provided the enquirer with enough resources to find what they need, even if I have not.” (Email of 2 February 2023). The full text of this very helpful advice is at Attachment A.

<sup>6</sup> David Moody, *Scottish Family History* (London: Batsford, 1988).

<sup>7</sup> Quoted by David Moody, see above. *The Scots Peerage: Founded on Wood’s ed. of Sir Robert Douglas’s Peerage of Scotland; containing an historical and genealogical account of the nobility of that kingdom*. At: [https://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/scots\\_peerage.htm](https://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/scots_peerage.htm).

<sup>8</sup> Charter #52 includes “... sequitur in wlgari:” followed by a paragraph in English before the Latin continues. *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. III, p. 50. Almost certainly in manuscript this would have been written as “uulgari” – i.e., “vulgari” and provides another example of how our English language developed the “double u” – “w” – letter.







arms of the Earls and Dukes of Sutherland. When Elizabeth Sutherland became the 10<sup>th</sup> Countess of Sutherland on the death in 1514 of her brother, her husband Adam Gordon became the Earl of Sutherland, and joined his family's arms to the Sutherland arms. Normally one would expect the husband's arms to appear in quarters 1 and 4, and the arms of the heiress wife's father to appear in quarters 2 and 3. But in this instance, as they relate to the title of the Earldom of Sutherland, the more important Sutherland arms appear in quarters 1 and 4. The Gordon arms are relegated to quarters 2 and 3. See Attachment B.

The record of Elizabeth as Countess runs to some sixteen pages of narrative. It includes the re-emergence of Alexander's claim to the Earldom and his possession of Dunrobin (twice) from where he was ejected. It details conflict with Alexander, and conflict involving the Earl of Caithness, also involving the Mackay's. Elizabeth resigned the Earldom on 9 November 1527 in favour of her eldest son, another Alexander, who however predeceased her. From this point on, the history or Memoirs becomes increasingly detailed and extensive, and it would be prudent to advance to the main theme of this article, viz that *The Sutherland Book* may be an overlooked resource. Before doing so, however, another digression is warranted to allow consideration of Sir Robert Gordon of Gordonstoun, Tutor of John the thirteenth Earl, and compiler of the Sutherland history which Fraser consulted and errors in which he highlighted.

Sir Robert was the fourth, but second surviving son, of Alexander, the eleventh Earl of Sutherland. He has been described as "one of the most fascinating yet elusive Scottish courtiers of the reigns of James VI and Charles I."<sup>22</sup> The Gordon family is described as having *seized* (emphasis added) the title in 1514 (i.e., from the marriage of Adam and the accession of Elizabeth). Robert is described as "inordinately proud of his pedigree ... [being] ... dedicated unswervingly to the defence of his kinsmen's grip on the Sutherland Earldom (a tenaciousness enhanced by the knowledge that some still remembered them as scheming usurpers)". However, this does appear to be a perhaps wilful take on the legitimacy of the succession from Elizabeth and her descendants.<sup>23</sup> Robert was knighted by King James VI/I in 1609. While studying in France, Robert, together with his younger brother Alexander, had "spent time at the celebrated Protestant academy at Saumur on the Loire, where the many Scottish connections around this time included Robert Boyd (professor of divinity, later Principal of Glasgow University), John Cameron (professor of theology and subsequently Principal) and Mark Duncan (professor of logic)."<sup>24</sup> By 1641 Robert was still in the service of King Charles I, but because of the ongoing conflicts between the King and Parliament, retired from the court to estates in Morayshire and had joined the Covenanters by 1642. As Tutor to his nephew, the young John, thirteenth Earl, Sir Robert compiled his 'Letter of advice' to his nephew, outlining his version of the genealogy of the Sutherland Earls (of which Fraser is often dismissive), and included this admonition to ensure that the record would be kept carefully: "Ther is a historie of your descent and genealogie wrytten in Englishe by one that loveth and favours you and your house. ... It is ane ornament to yow and your famelie to hawe your actions so truelie and lairglie descrywed."<sup>25</sup> It is without doubt in my mind that Sir Robert's strong Presbyterian faith and adherence to the beliefs of the Covenanters would have influenced his nephew, who came to be known as the Covenanting Earl.

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<sup>22</sup> Allan, 'Ane Ornament to Yow and Your Famelie', p. 25.

<sup>23</sup> Allan, 'Ane Ornament to Yow and Your Famelie', p. 25.

<sup>24</sup> Allan, 'Ane Ornament to Yow and Your Famelie', p. 26.

<sup>25</sup> Allan, 'Ane Ornament to Yow and Your Famelie', p. 37, citing Fraser, *The Sutherland Book*, pp. 365-356. The "historie" is included in Vol. II of *The Sutherland Book*, pp. 337 – 368.





Correspondence with Elizabeth I of England shows that John, the tenth Earl had sought permission to live in England under the protection of Elizabeth but that she was being cautious and diplomatic in how she responded to his request, while Mary Queen of Scots complained to Elizabeth that John had been made a prisoner at Berwick. We see that Mary wrote in both French and English, and styled herself as both Queen of Scotland, and Dowager of France.



In 1594 and 1595, warrants from King James VI show that Lady Jane Gordon, Countess of Sutherland had been “inter communing” with the Earl of Huntly but had been forgiven by James and allowed to leave the burgh of Edinburgh and the “Cannongaite” and go wherever she chose.



Two years later, a licence issued in the King’s name allowed John, the twelfth Earl to take a party of men abroad and go to France, Flanders and anywhere else they chose., providing further proof, if any were needed, that while Sutherland may have been in a distant and remote part of the kingdom, it was far from remote from activity in Europe. Robert and Alexander Gordon, brothers of John were also allowed to travel abroad by a licence issued in 1602. By 1611, in at least some Scottish matters, James was still styling himself “James the Sixth [sic]” when he issued a licence to John the twelfth Earl (his “right traist cosine”) to travel abroad again for three years to recover his health, as long as he behaved himself as a dutiful and obedient subject of the King.<sup>28</sup> By 1622, James was still styling himself as James VI when he provided proof of his interest in matters concerning the abbey of Glenluce and the bishopric of Galloway. He promised Sir Robert Gordon, “knight, gentleman of our priwie chalmer, etc.” the sum of £2000 sterling for the abbey. By noting that the court was on that day at Henchinbrook the letter gives us confirmation that the court was always styled as being where the King happened to be, rather than having — as it does now — a fixed location.<sup>29</sup>

Ten years later, King Charles provided a further £2000 sterling to Sir Robert Gordon, who was apparently still a gentleman of the privie chamber in ordinarie. Like his father and grandmother, Charles never gained the calligraphic flourish of Elizabeth.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. II, p. 12.

<sup>29</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. II, p. 14.

<sup>30</sup> Nor has his successor in that name and position, Charles III.







must be seen as one element which helps, at least partly, to balance out the simplistic “Highlands vs Government” view of the risings. Taking the perspective of correspondence to the Earls, rather than from them, we are afforded the benefit of contemporary views of the Sutherlands, unclouded by their (i.e., the Earls of Sutherland) own views of their actions. This perspective helps to enhance our understanding of the complexity of the inter-relationships between some of the parties engaged in the conflicts and provides a clear example of how material in an often-overlooked volume can enhance our understanding of a pivotal event in Scottish history.

A letter of 13 February 1715/16 to John, fifteenth Earl of Sutherland from John, first Duke of Roxburgh congratulated him on his “glorious and successful campaign”, noting that he had done his King, his country, himself, and his family “great honour ... [T]he wicked designs of the enemies of our religion and happy constitution have been baffled.”<sup>38</sup> Further correspondence dealt with the aftermath of the action against the Pretender. Writing to the Earl less than two weeks later, Lieutenant-General Cadogan, commander of the Government armies, appraised the Earl of the current military situation, noting that he had “sent a small detachment ... to the Breys [sic] of Mar.” He concluded the letter by entreating the Earl for advice on what would be the best methods to bring the rebellion to a speedy and definite end. This is clear evidence of how the Earl’s allegiances lay with the Government of King George, and proof of the Government's faith in his abilities.

Letters in *The Sutherland Book* dated during the final Jacobite uprising in 1745-46 provide a great amount of detail about the conduct of the military campaign against the rebels and the part played by William, the sixteenth Earl. Matters covered included the requisition of all available boats for the use of government forces at the Meikle ferry; the supply of arms for the defence of Dunrobin castle and a reported failure to supply these; actions against the rebels; the taking of Dunrobin by forces under the Earl of Cromarty and removal from it of all arms in the castle as well as the horses except for the grey of Lady Sutherland; an attempt to force Lady Sutherland to disclose the whereabouts of her husband; and the capture by government forces of Simon, Lord Lovatt.<sup>39</sup> Under a warrant issued by William, sixteenth Earl, enquiries were made about the arms and effects of George, the third Earl of Cromarty, and while a number of persons interviewed refused to swear, others deposed that they could not write, and the results of the investigations failed to deliver any significant cache of arms. In what might be described as a cynical attitude, Alexander Brodie of Brodie, Lyon King of Arms, enjoined the Earl of Sutherland to restrain from any revenge on the house or family of Lady Cromarty noting that if the estate were to be forfeited (to the crown), the forfeiture would be more valuable if the house were not plundered. In a letter of 30 June 1746, Lord Chancellor Hardwicke informed William, the sixteenth Earl, that he was required to attend the House of Lords on Monday, 28 July 1746 for the trial on an indictment for high treason of the Earls of Kilmarnock and Cromarty, and Lord Balmerino. While the general facts of the Jacobite uprising are well known, details in this collection of correspondence allows a deeper appreciation of the actions of individuals: it puts, as it were, further flesh on the bones of history.

The extensive collection of family and domestic letters included in Vol. II date from 1568 to 1850. These letters continue to put flesh on the bones of history, allowing a modern reader to appreciate the very personal matters dealt with by the family. This excerpt from a letter dated 23 February 1615 from John the twelfth Earl to his brother, Sir Robert Gordon of Gordonstown [sic] allows a glimpse into the feelings of a father contributing to a family history: “ye desyir to knaw of my younest docteris name. It was Marie. My Lady Mar was hir

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<sup>38</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. II, pp. 61-62.

<sup>39</sup> The Countess was an aunt of Lord Elcho, commander of the Jacobite cavalry at Culloden and this connection may have saved her grey from being taken.

godmother. Sche died twentie dayis since.”<sup>40</sup> We can also see that perhaps the Earl was trying for something like the flourishing signature so brilliantly perfected by Elizabeth I.



Women wrote letters as well as men on a wide range of matters. Jane, Countess of Sutherland wrote on 24 September 1616 to Sir Robert Gordon, her son, recommending the appointment of a bishop of Caithness.<sup>41</sup> Two months later, she wrote again to her son that it was impossible to send more linen cloth at “this tyme of year.” Correspondence flowed back and forth, sometimes in long letters, sometimes in short notes, covering a wide range of matters of possible interest to historians. In advising the second Duke of Argyll that he intended to retire from public life, John, the fifteenth Earl, noted that the trade of a soldier was not justly paid and this had impaired his fortune.<sup>42</sup>

A letter of 25 January 1750 from Katharine, Lady Strathnaver, to William, sixteenth Earl of Sutherland at Chelsea in London speaks across the generations: “My dearest son – I ...am extremely sorry to find you are so averce from living at home. ... a man of your rank need not want the best of compnie, and the management of your affairs would be an amusement full as entertaining as any you at present enjoy. ... Your daughter ... is brought to bed of a boy. His nam is called after you.”<sup>43</sup> Ten months later, the Earl was writing to his mother from Montauban in the south of France about his ill health (“My head turns round mee”) but signing his letter formally “I am, honoured dear, your ladyship’s most dutiful and obedient son, Sutherland.”<sup>44</sup> Three weeks later, Lady Strathnaver had to respond to condolences on the death of her son and become involved in matters pertaining to the affairs of her grandson, the next Earl; within days she stated that it would be impossible for her to manage his affairs.

Just as the Jacobite risings are prominent in popular minds, so too are the Highland clearances. So it might be appropriate to include in this sampling of correspondence a letter from Elizabeth, Marchioness of Stafford (and Countess of Sutherland in her own right) proposing on 3 March 1820, on behalf of Lord Stafford, remedies to relieve the increasing discontent in the country.<sup>45</sup> The remedies were said to include a property tax which would reach the landed as well as the funded proprietors while abolishing less effective but troublesome and obnoxious taxes which were expensive to collect. The letter finishes “[h]e would have written to you himself [i.e. to Lord Farnborough], had not writing much at a time been fatiguing to him”.

The final letter included is that of 15 October 1850 from Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe to the second Duke of Sutherland concerning “the signatures of Scottish ladies of rank after marriage”.<sup>46</sup> “As sure as the devil looks o’er Lincoln ... the letter your Grace enclosed to me

<sup>40</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. II, p. 116.

<sup>41</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. II, p. 123.

<sup>42</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. II, p. 200.

<sup>43</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. II, p. 274.

<sup>44</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. II, p. 277.

<sup>45</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. II, p. 331.

<sup>46</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. II, p. 335.

is from the 1<sup>st</sup> Marchioness of Huntly. ... I don't know at what time the Scottish ladies began to retain, in writing, their maiden names after marriage."<sup>47</sup> A modern reader might be excused for thinking that the family's attention had fallen to the trivial from serious and significant matters of state and the welfare of Sutherland.

### VOLUME III: CHARTERS

As well as the indices of persons and places already mentioned (taking up 135 pages), this volume contains the texts of 143 charters; sasines; notes of agreement; petitions, notes of extracts of charters; letters of renunciation, presentation, gifts, and so on; and a wide range of other legal documents. The earliest document is a Charter by Hugh Freskyn granting lands, dated c. 1211, followed by a Charter by King William I ("the Lion") confirming that grant. The final two documents included are a Warrant by King George I noting that John, the sixteenth Earl, being lineally descended from King Robert the Bruce and having served the King well in the Jacobite rising of 1715, could add the "double tressure circonfleurdelizé" followed by an Extract the following year from the Lyon Court Books noting the addition of the double tressure.<sup>48</sup>

The illustrations in this volume provide an opportunity to track the changes in styles of palaeography. Two samples are shown below, with a suggestion of the style of writing or "hand" used in each.<sup>49</sup>

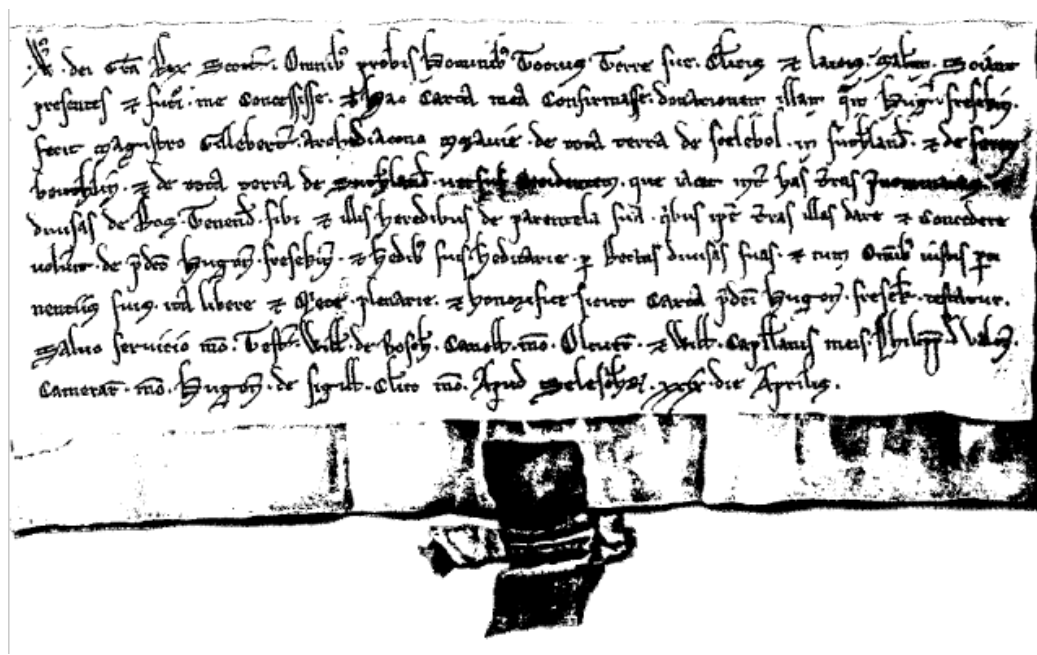


Figure 1. Charter by King William I "the Lion," 29 April 1212.<sup>50</sup> Probably written in a rounded court hand (note the prominent curl attached to each ascender and descender).

<sup>47</sup> For the mention of the devil at Lincoln Minster see Grey Hubert Skipwith, 'Lincoln Minster, Lincoln College Oxford, and the Devil', *Folklore* 10, no. 3 (September 1899), pp. 357 – 360.

<sup>48</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. III, pp. 220-223. Modern scholarship has shown that the royal connection with King David Bruce through Princess Margaret Bruce was a lie and the award of the double tressure was in error.

<sup>49</sup> For a guide to the style of scripts used, I am indebted to Grant G. Simpson, *Scottish Handwriting 1150-1650, an introduction to the reading of documents* (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press Ltd, 1998).

<sup>50</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. III, facing p. 2.

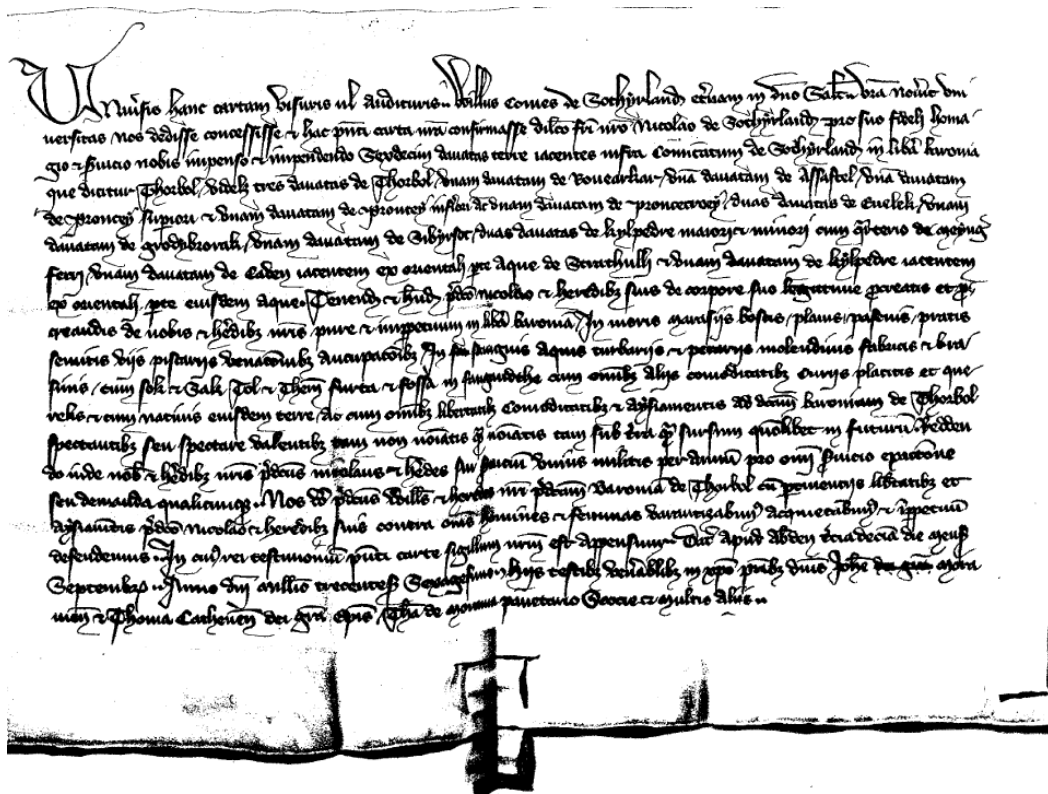


Figure 2. Charter by William, fifth Earl of Sutherland to Nicholas Sutherland, his brother, 13 September 1360.<sup>51</sup> Possibly a hybrid between formal text and informal cursive (a version of the “bastard hand”).

Included in the collection is the Notarial Instrument whereby John, the ninth Earl and against whom a Brieve of Idiocy had been issued, acknowledged that his sister Elizabeth would be his heir “failing lawful heirs of his own body”.<sup>52</sup> Various follow-up documents were dealt with at the market cross and the tolbooth in Inverness, and these serve as a reminder that Inverness was the administrative centre in the north, rather than Dornoch which is the present county town for Sutherland. We might note also from documents such as #64 in the collection, a Charter by Elizabeth, Countess of Sutherland “and heritable lady of the earldom of Sutherland”, that although Elizabeth was the holder of the earldom, she still acted “with consent and assent” of her husband who held only the courtesy title of Earl.<sup>53</sup> More than a decade later, on 9 November 1527, Elizabeth, Countess, and Adam, Earl, of Sutherland executed a contract to resign the Earldom of Sutherland in favour of their son Alexander who thereby became the tenth Earl of Sutherland.<sup>54</sup> The Charter by James V confirming Alexander as the Earl of Sutherland dated 1 December 1527 concludes the arrangement.<sup>55</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Sometimes the easiest way to hide something is to hide it in plain sight. Certainly a fine form of camouflage for a useful source of information on the past might be to have it seen in the

<sup>51</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. III, facing p. 18.

<sup>52</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. III, pp 52-3.

<sup>53</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. III, p. 67.

<sup>54</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. III, p. 78.

<sup>55</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. III, p. 83.

twenty-first century as a rather partial history of an aristocratic family written in the high Victorian era with all the attendant prejudices we might bring to our reading of it. Indeed, that is exactly how *The Sutherland Book* can be taken. As a work privately funded by the family which is the focus of the Book its limitations and biases are both obvious and understandable. However, it can be argued that it is more than that and such a view could lead to a reappraisal of how we view similarly sponsored works.

It might be thought that Fraser's organisation of his material could have been better handled. While his Volume I is mainly a series of histories of the heads of the family, those histories could have been more self-contained had each included correspondence which appears in Volume II and where relevant charters from Volume III. A reader wishing to gain as complete an understanding of the life and times of a particular person has to search — albeit using the indexes in Volume III — across all three volumes. Nevertheless, the details in the Volumes allow an over-view of aspects of the history of the Highlands and other parts of Scotland over several centuries.

Activity by Norwegian Earls in “Sudrland” is reported and the narrative includes activity by the Earls of Sutherland in significant episodes of Scotland's history such as the Declaration of Arbroath and the Wars of Scottish Independence, notwithstanding the homage which had been paid by William the second Earl to Edward I of England. The need for a papal dispensation for the marriage of William the fifth Earl reminds us how closely the Papacy sought to control the lives of people in the fourteenth century and later. The succession of Elizabeth as Countess of Sutherland in her own right in 1514, particularly when one considers the line of succession of the Dukes of Sutherland created in the United Kingdom, provides a window onto the sometimes independent role of women in Scottish history. With the involvement of John, the thirteenth Earl in the signing of the National Covenant and in the “bishops wars”, it is clear that although Sutherland was geographically far from much of the kingdom, the family remained involved in national politics and events including the various Jacobite risings.

Correspondence — royal; state and official; and family and domestic — in Volume II helps to bring some substance to the histories in Volume I. Letters written to the Earl of Sutherland during the Jacobite rising of 1745-46 reveal the very real difficulties of maintaining communication and control of forces during a rapidly changing military event; but it is to letters included in Volume I that we are obliged for an account of the courage of the Countess of Sutherland when faced with personal danger during the occupation of Dunrobin.<sup>56</sup> The personal correspondence in Volume II also allows a glimpse into family events — births, deaths — which confront all families and not just the Sutherland family.

Fraser noted in Volume I some of the events surrounding the presence and condition of the charters and other official and business documents included in Volume III. We must also wonder about the extent of selection, editing and commentary indulged in by Sir James. Any reading of history is by necessity the captive of the available sources and in this case our reading is through a double lens: initially that of survival of documents and then through the selection by Fraser. However those documents which are included serve to present a sample of the important papers which regulated significant matters of property over some 500 years of activity in the north of Scotland. They make a useful resource for anyone interested in that activity.

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<sup>56</sup> *The Sutherland Book*, Vol. I, pp. 419-420. We see here also that the occupation of Dunrobin occurred during a dark and stormy night which allowed the Earl to escape capture by the rebels.

*APPENDIX A: EMAIL ADVICE FROM THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND, JANUARY 10 2023*

Thank you for your enquiry to The National Library of Scotland.

I have searched the Library's eResources, such as Ebook Central, EUP journals online, Humanities International Complete and SAGE Journals for critical analysis of "The Sutherland Book" by William Fraser but like yourself could not locate any journal resources. ...

Through the entry for William Fraser in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography I found the volume *Sir William Fraser : the man and his work* by Gordon Donaldson (Edinburgh : Edina Press, 1985) [NLS Shelfmark N3.205.4768L]. I scanned the chapter 'The Family Histories' but did not find specific mention of The Sutherland Book. The chapter does mention errors and reviews of Fraser which may be interesting to you;

'Like other authors, Fraser occasionally had the mortifying experience of discovering some flaw after the twelfth hour, and after the first copies of *Buccleuch* had been despatched he gave the Duke an assurance that a 'trifling error in the pedigree' would be corrected in copies not yet issued...Fraser took the time to issue some remarks about accuracy: "It shows how much care is required to attain absolute accuracy in such works. From the nature of them, they can never be wholly free from a certain amount of error. But I am thankful that I have been wonderfully lucky, with so many chances of error, to keep them within a minimum" (MSS held in the Record Office, H.M. General Register House in the categories Gifts and Deposits (GD) - GD 224/197/6/24' (Donaldson, *Sir William Fraser : the man and his work*, p. 37)

A later section will show that Fraser's work did not go without criticism, but there was no disputing that the volumes were treasured. A review in *The Edinburgh Review*, July 1879, ran: "Few are the copies in existence, and favoured are the lovers of rare books who can boast of this addition to their libraries, for no care and no expense has been spared in the production of these ducal volumes [*Buccleuch*], in which, as has been said, "a rivulet of text meanders through a meadow of margin"' (Donaldson, *Sir William Fraser: the man and his work*, p. 41)

I am unable to look through this whole volume, but it does look quite a useful resource if you haven't consulted it already. For other libraries which hold it, you may find [Worldcat](#) and [Lib Hub Discover](#) useful. I've also not been able to consult [The Edinburgh Review](#) yet, but can do so, if you are interested in contemporary reviews.

The [Scottish History Society publications](#) is a valuable online resource and contains over 180 digitised volumes of original source material. The [Papers from the collection of Sir William Fraser, Scottish History Society, 3rd ser., 5 \(1924\)](#) may prove a useful resource. On the [Internet Archive](#) you can find digitised versions of Balfour Paul's *The Scots Peerage*. In this [article](#) by David Moody on [The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History \(2 ed.\)](#), Edited by: David Hey (Oxford University Press: 2008) it states;

The aristocracy played a leading part, financing a series of privately printed family histories written by Sir William Fraser (1816–98) over 40 Victorian years. James Balfour Paul, author of the nine-volume encyclopaedia of the aristocracy *The Scots Peerage* (1904), complained that Fraser 'seems afraid of wounding the susceptibilities of his noble employers by narrating any but smooth and pleasant things about the family'. He also complained that the volumes were too heavy for comfortable reading.

From searching [Newspaper eResources](#) and the [British Newspaper Archive](#) I found an issue of the *Dundee Advertiser* on Monday 01 June 1896 has an article on William Fraser (first column).



From the [Scotsman Digital Archive](#) there is an article from 11 Feb 1924 relating to the Sir William Fraser Collections and an eulogy from 15th March 1898. Although not specific to The Sutherland Book, I have attached these PDFs for your interest.

I hope this has been helpful.

All the best, **Gemma Kelly**

**Reference Services Assistant | Access Department**

**National Library of Scotland**

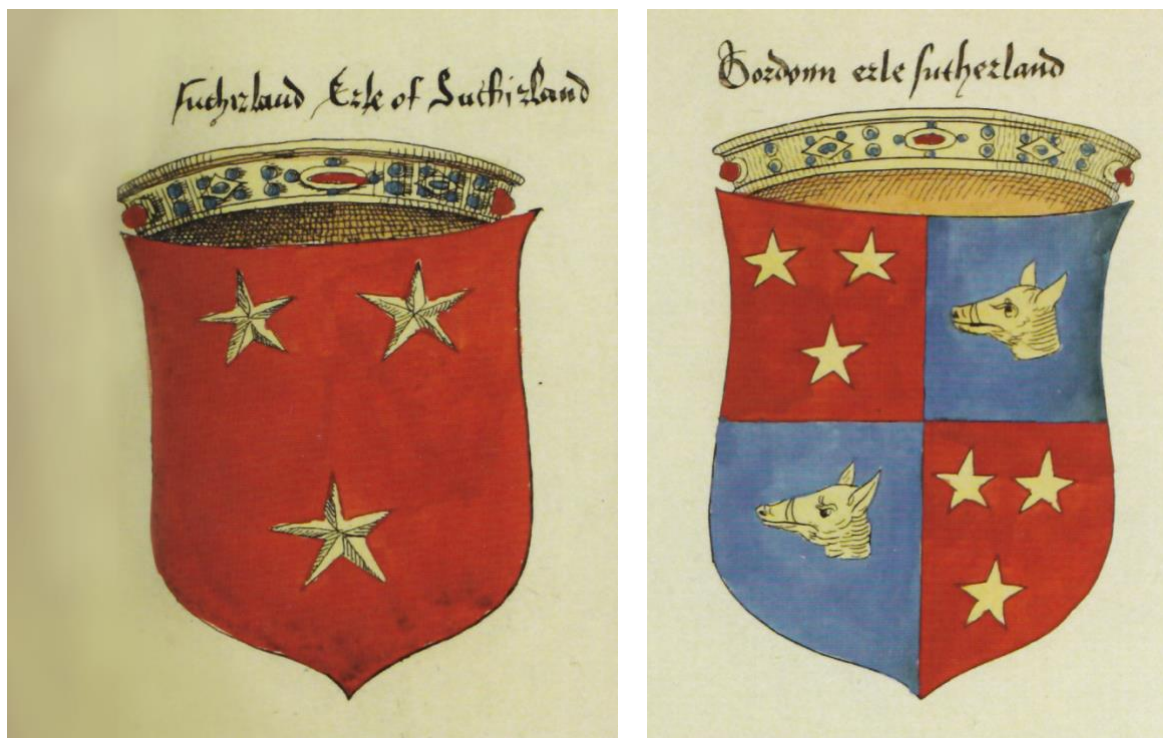
**George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EW**

**Tel: 0131 623 3820**

**Website: [www.nls.uk](http://www.nls.uk)**

#### *APPENDIX B: SUTHERLAND ARMS*

The original Sutherland coat of arms, the arms of “Sutherland of old”, are illustrated in Figure B1 (left). The arms are blazoned Suthirland Erle of Suthirland: Gules three Mulletts Or [tr. On a red shield three gold stars]. The 8th Earl of Sutherland had only two (legitimate) children. His only legitimate son and heir John succeeded to the Earldom as the 9th Earl in 1501, but died childless in 1514. The title then devolved upon his sister Elizabeth, who became the 10th Countess of Sutherland. Elizabeth Sutherland (d. 1535) married in 1500 Adam Gordon (d. 1538). In right of his wife Adam Gordon took the courtesy title of Earl of Sutherland in 1514. The arms in Figure B2 are those of Gordoun erle Sutherland: Quarterly 1st and 4th Gules three Mulletts Or (for Sutherland), 2nd and 3rd Azure a Boar's Head Or (for Gordon) [tr. On a quartered shield: upper left and lower right, on a red background three gold stars; upper right and lower left, on a blue background a gold boar’s head]. These were thus the arms of Adam Gordon, Earl of Sutherland, from 1514 until his death in 1538.



Figures B1 and B2. Two 16<sup>th</sup> century Sutherland coats of arms, from the 1532 armorial of Sir David Lyndesay of the Mount, Lord Lyon King of Arms. Left: the arms of “Sutherland of old”. Right: the arms of Gordon Earl Sutherland, husband of Elizabeth Sutherland.

By convention the husband's arms usually appear in quarters 1 and 4, and the arms of the heiress wife's father appear in quarters 2 and 3. In this instance, however, as Elizabeth's arms are those of the Earldom of Sutherland (which takes precedence over the Gordon arms), the higher-ranking Sutherland arms appear in quarters 1 and 4 and the Gordon arms in quarters 2 and 3. Adam Gordon was the second son of George Gordon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Huntly; because he did not inherit the Huntly title the Sutherland title took precedence in his arms.

As discussed, in Sir David Lyndesay's 1532 armorial Adam Gordon's arms are shown as Sutherland quartering Gordon. Later armorials show these arms in the conventional format as Gordon quartering Sutherland. It is interesting that these later depictions use the ancient Gordon arms of *Azure three Boar's Heads Or*. It is possible that Adam Gordon differenced his arms from those of his elder brother, who became the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Huntly, by removing two of the three boar's heads to leave the single boar's head depicted in the Lyndesay armorial illustration (Figure B2). In a further variation John Ryland's MS of 1600 shows the arms of Gordon Earl of Sutherland as *Azure three Boar's Heads and a Crescent Or* [tr. On a blue shield three gold boar's heads and a gold crescent]. The crescent included in this blazon was not a *brisure mark* [indication of differentiation] for a second son, but a *charge of differencing* [element to distinguish the arms] of a different branch of the family; in this case the branch which happens to be that of the second son.

The majority of later armorials (21 in fact) show the arms used by Adam Gordon Earl of Sutherland as a modification of his father the Earl of Huntly's arms, illustrated in Figure B3 below.

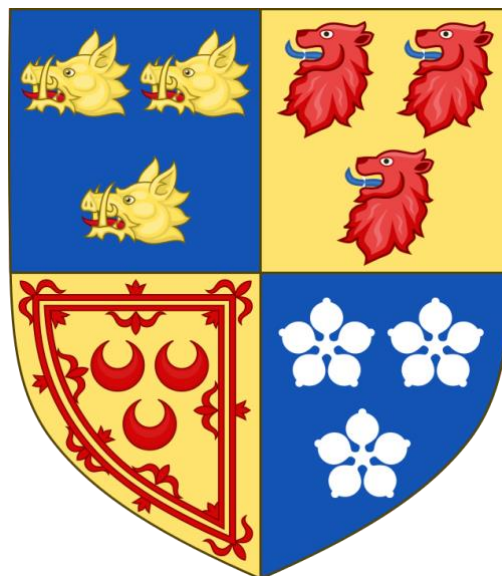


Figure B3. Coat of arms of the Marquess of Huntly<sup>57</sup>

The modification to the Huntly arms used by Gordon Earl of Sutherland is the addition of an Escutcheon of Pretence [tr. A small shield in the centre] showing the arms of his wife, the heraldic heiress Elizabeth Sutherland (Gules three Mulletts Or). These arms are heraldically correct to reflect the period within Adam Gordon's marriage to Elizabeth Sutherland from her inheritance of the title in 1514 to her death in 1535.

<sup>57</sup> [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marquess\\_of\\_Huntly\\_arms.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marquess_of_Huntly_arms.svg)

I have seen the re-ordering of arms for political reasons elsewhere: a good example is that of Richard Neville (the "Kingmaker"), who inherited the Earldom of Warwick in right of his wife. While he should, by convention, have shown his Neville arms in the first quarter, he first showed the arms of the Earldom of Warwick, then showed the arms of the Earldom of Salisbury (inherited via his mother), and then only in the 3rd quarter his paternal arms.

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#### *PRESENT ARMS OF SUTHERLAND*

The 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Sutherland was childless; on his death in 1963, the line of the eldest son of the first Duke failed. He was succeeded in the Earldom of Sutherland and lordship of Strathnaver, which could be inherited by females, by his niece Elizabeth. Elizabeth also inherited some of her uncle's wealth, but the Dukedom and other titles could only be passed on to male heirs, and they were inherited by his third cousin once removed, John Sutherland Egerton, 5th Earl of Ellesmere, who became the 6th Duke of Sutherland as well. He was a great-great-grandson of the first Earl of Ellesmere, third son of the first Duke of Sutherland. He also died childless and was succeeded by his first cousin once removed, Francis Ronald Egerton, the seventh and present Duke, a grandson of the Hon. Francis William George Egerton, second son of the third Earl of Ellesmere. The present Earl of Sutherland, Alistair, is the son of Elizabeth, 24<sup>th</sup> Countess of Sutherland, and following the death in September 2022 of his heir apparent, the Earldom is expected to pass eventually to Lady Rachel Elizabeth Sutherland, Mistress of Sutherland. So, although the arms of the Duke of Sutherland are now those based on the arms of Egerton, the Earldom of Sutherland arms, where the Earldom descent can be passed through the female line as well as the male, continue to show the *Gules three Mullets Or* of the Sutherlands of old.



Arms of the present Duke of Sutherland



Arms of the present Earl of Sutherland

Figures B4 and B5. Arms of the present Earl and Duke of Sutherland.