



A History of Cornhill House and its Occupants

Introduction

To understand Cornhill House and its occupants it is necessary to recognise the geographical and historical context in which it sits. Cornhill on Tweed is an English border village that sat on the front line of a war zone that lasted at least 600 years. Although warfare was not continuous it was frequent, and its impact has influenced the people and the architecture. The area to the north of the Tweed is known as the Merse of the Tweed. The most likely definition comes from the old English word *mearc* which means border and is the source of Mercia and the River Mersey and gave rise to the term March to describe the Welsh Marches and indeed the Marches on both sides of the Anglo-Scottish border. It is the border character of the property that has influenced both the house and its occupants.

The East March of the border between England and Scotland was the scene of conflict between the two nations from the Battle of Carham in 1018, which first established that the land to the north of the Tweed was a part of Scotland rather than the northernmost part of the ancient kingdom of Northumbria. Although this was not finally agreed until 1157 when Malcolm IV agreed with Henry II to give up claims to Northumberland and Cumbria the border changed little from Carham onwards¹. Major Anglo Scottish conflicts marked the period up to the union of the crowns in 1603 on the death of Elizabeth I and the accession of James VI/I. Even beyond this especially turbulent period, the great upheavals in British history continued to have an influence on the border. The Civil War and the Jacobite risings of 1715 and 1745 had a direct impact on the area and its inhabitants.

The border of the East March follows the line of the River Tweed from just west of Berwick upon Tweed to the Reddan Burn which joins the Tweed between the English village of Carham and the Scottish village of Sprouston from where it strikes south past the Cheviots. Berwick itself has spent time on both sides of the border, having changed hands between the English and Scots many times.

This stretch of the border was defended by three great military strongholds, the castles of Berwick, Norham and Wark all of which at different times were the subject of siege, bombardment, and capture. Berwick was the greater of three being a fortified town as well as a castle. During the reign of David I (1124-1153) it was the pre-eminent port of Scotland and the site of a royal mint. An important trading port, it was always an attractive prize for both nations.

The area is marked with the sites of battles fought between the two nations, many of which were pivotal to the balance of power. The Battle of Carham (c. 1018) fought between Uthred the Earl of Northumberland and Malcolm II, the king of Scotland and his ally Owen the Bald the King of Strathclyde was the earliest documented², but others such as the Battle of Halidon Hill, just north of Berwick, where Edward III defeated Sir Archibald Douglas in 1333, and the Battle of Flodden in 1513 which resulted in the death of James IV of Scotland, the last British king to die in battle, show how the politics of the two nations were continued by other means on the battlefields of the East March.

As well as the major set piece battles, the area has been the canvas on which many other minor incursions have taken place from diversionary raids by Franco-Scottish forces in the Hundred Years War to the nightly cross border forays of the Border Reivers centred on cattle rustling and other

¹ Pease, Howard, *The lord wardens of the marches of England and Scotland : being a brief history of the marches, the laws of march, and the marchmen, together with some account of the ancient feud between England and Scotland*, Oxford, 1863

² McGuigan, Neal and Woolf, Alex (Eds), *The Battle of Carham, A Thousand Years On*, John Donald, 2018

forms of theft and pillage, some, such as the period of the Rough Wooing of Henry VIII and his son Edward VI, were sanctioned as an extension of national policy.

The inhabitants of the country south of the Lammermuir Hills, north of the Cheviots and East of the Tweed watershed have much in common culturally, economically, and genetically and whose common interests should have led to them living harmoniously. Yet the political machinations of those in power in London and Edinburgh have led to the area being defined by its border.

Cornhill House sits on this border and has been the home of four families of the landed gentry of Northumberland who have been entwined in many of the conflicts and historical events that have made their mark both locally and nationally. In order they were the Greys, the Swinhoes, the Fosters and finally the Collingwoods. All four families not only owned Cornhill House but also other land and properties throughout North Northumberland and there are instances of intermarriage between the families. The ownership of the house has been influenced not only by this but also the broad sweep of national historic events. This is an attempt to tell the story of both the house and those that lived in it.

Origins

The area of Norham and the Islandshires, including Cornhill were part of the Bishopric of Durham. Even after the creation of a County of Northumberland out of the ancient kingdom of Northumbria, the area remained an exclave of Durham until 1844 at which point it was incorporated into Northumberland. The Durham ownership dates to 634 when King Oswald of Northumbria brought St Aidan from Ireland to spread Christianity in his newly recovered kingdom³. Oswald had been brought up in exile on Iona and wanted his kingdom to become Christian. He established a monastery on Lindisfarne and to support the monastery it was granted the lands that eventually became the Norham and Islandshires. Most grants of land from king to church were in perpetuity and when, following the arrival of Viking invaders, the control of the land moved from Lindisfarne to Durham, along with the bones of St Cuthbert, the area remained in the control of the Bishopric. Norham Castle was built by Ranulf Flambard, Bishop of Durham in 1121 to protect the bishopric's property from Scottish Incursions.



Figure 1 Seal of William de Cornale

Cornhill does not appear in the Domesday Book as the north of England was a rebellious part of William I's kingdom at the time of its composition. Much of the land in the north was described as waste. Following William's Harrying of the North in 1069-70 there followed a period under William, William Rufus and Henry I where most of the land in Northumberland was transferred from its previous Anglo-Saxon owners to Anglo-Norman supporters of the new regime. This was largely complete by Henry I's death in 1135.

The earliest references to Cornhill date from 1239 when a William de Cornale is mentioned in the *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham*⁴. In 1306 a Henricus de Cornale is mentioned in the Durham Tithe Rolls.

Little is known about who they were but given their Norman names it is likely that they were

³ Adams, Max, *The King of the North: The Life and Times of Oswald of Northumbria*, Head of Zeus, 2020

⁴ Raine, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham*, Volume 3, p.496, Newcastle, 1850

beneficiaries of this forcible transfer of land. Land would be granted in return for a promise of military service with the number of Knight's Fees being determined by the income from the land.

In 1296 Edward I invaded Scotland after the repudiation of his suzerainty over Scotland by John Balliol⁵. Edward moved his army from Norham Castle and crossed the river at Coldstream before camping at the priory. The road from Norham to the Coldstream fords runs past the north elevation of Cornhill House so it is likely that his army passed this way. From Coldstream Edward attacked the then Scottish town of Berwick followed by the slaughter of most of the inhabitants. On his 1301 campaign in Scotland Edward I, also made use of the Coldstream fords on his advance West from Berwick.⁶

Split Loyalties - The Grey Family

In 1328 the Cornale family had forfeited Cornhill, and the land was split into two parts with the Heron family holding two thirds, the remaining part came into the possession of the powerful Grey family⁷. It is possible that the Cornale family had possession of the land in return for providing military service, a process known as enfeoffment. If the freeholder died without an heir, the land could escheat or revert to the lord. The transfer of the land from the Cornale family to the Grey family may have been because of this process and in return for the military service provided to the bishop and king. Sir Thomas Grey had three sons John, Sir Thomas Grey and Sir Robert Grey of Cornhill. Robert was the first Grey connected to Cornhill, was also a soldier, and had also owned properties in Hydegate, Berwick. Like many border families the Greys owned property on both sides of the border including a mill in Lauder. On the outbreak of hostilities in 1296 the family had to choose which side to support. Thomas and Robert chose Edward I and the English, but John chose the Scots. John's Scottish allegiance led to the family temporarily being dispossessed of Heaton Castle. However, this was subsequently restored to his brother Sir Thomas.

Thomas Grey of Heaton Castle (1266-before1344) and Robert served under Edward I and Edward II in the Scottish Wars of Independence. Thomas had led the suicidal charge at the Battle of Bannockburn that was a significant factor in the English defeat. He became the constable of Norham Castle in 1319 and almost certainly fought at the Battle of Halidon Hill in 1333 following which he was made constable of Berwick. Thomas' son, also a Thomas, inherited Heaton Castle and like his father had an illustrious career as a soldier as well as being author of the influential history *Scalacronica*. Robert was sheriff of Lanark and constable of Rutherglen Castle until its recapture by Edward Bruce, brother of Robert.

Following the English defeat at Bannockburn Northumberland was left largely undefended and Robert Bruce took advantage of this to carry out numerous raids extracting as much plunder as possible to reward his followers. Cornhill was part of the Parish of Norham and the Bishopric had a Bursar and Proctor appointed to receive rents from which the vicar of Norham and the chaplain at Cornhill would be remunerated with the balance being sent to Durham. Up till the financial year 1313/14 the proctor had been used to an annual income of between £400 to £420. By 1318/19 this had reduced to £9⁸. This dramatic collapse in income could only be because tenants had nothing to sell as it had all been looted or that they had simply abandoned the land. Following a truce in 1323

⁵ Morris, Marc: *A Great and Terrible King: Edward I and the Forging of Britain*, Windmill, 2009

⁶ Sadler, John: *Border Fury; England and Scotland at War 1296-1568*; p 82; Pearson Longman, 2005

⁷ Grey, Sir Thomas (Trans. Sir Herbert Maxwell), *Scalacronica: The Reigns of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III*, Glasgow, 1907

⁸ Lomas Richard, *County of Conflict: Northumberland from Conquest to Civil War*, p41; Tuckwell Press, East Linton, 1996.

incomes started to recover. During this period life for the residents of Cornhill would have been very tough.



Figure 2 The Battle of Halidon Hill 1333

The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham state that, on his death in 1334 Sir Robert Grey Senior ' was in possession of 60 acres of arable land, a manor (also described as a messuage which is a dwelling house with outbuildings), a half of the water corn mill, a half of the fishery, a maltings and a brewery as tenant in chief to the Bishop of Durham, Robert Hatfield⁹. A tenant in chief holds land in return for military service. Robert Grey Junior inherited the property but died four years after his father in 1338 in the service of Edward III. He died without a son, so his daughter Maria aged 2 was his heiress. As Maria was under 21 the Bishopric took control of the land. Maria, who was subsequently married to William Swinhoe, also died before she attained her majority, so the land remained in the hands of the bishop until Maria's son Robert Swinhoe in turn achieved his majority, following which the lands were restored to him in 1382.

⁹ Raine, James and Surtees, Robert, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham, Volume 3* p.498

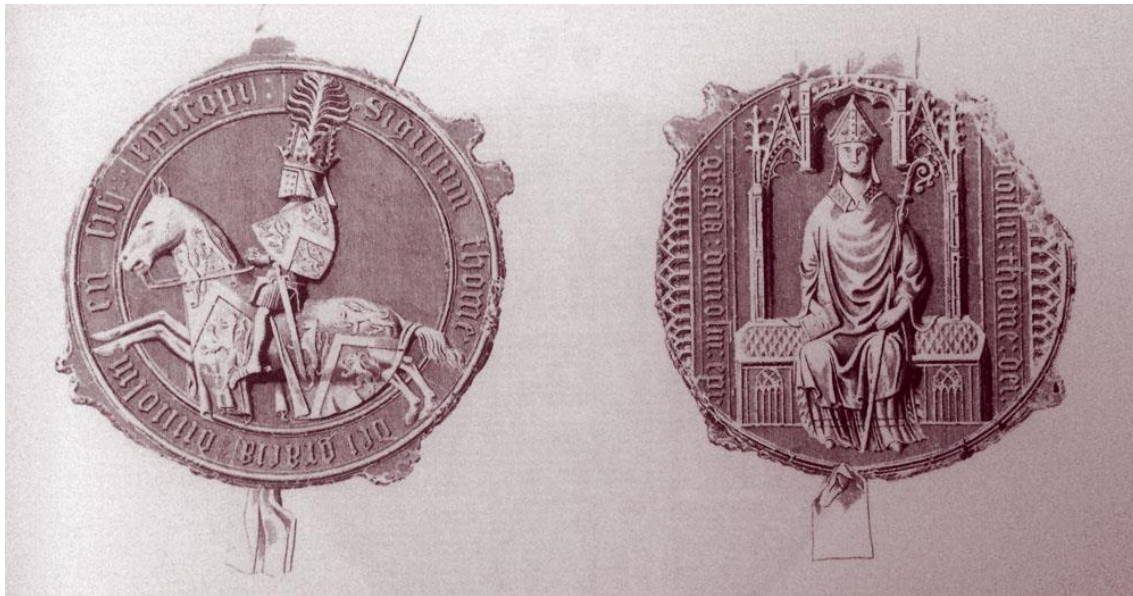


Figure 3 The Prince Bishops of Durham

Cornhill House and Cornhill Castle

The existing Cornhill House has been dated from the late sixteenth century and is a grade 2* listed building¹⁰. This is partly because of its architecture but also because it is rare to find a domestic building in this area that pre-dates the union of the crowns in 1603. Most earlier structures that survive are defensive in nature, the domestic buildings would probably have been destroyed in the many conflicts that washed over the countryside. Most domestic buildings before the seventeenth century were timber framed and thatched allowing them to be rebuilt easily following the almost inevitable conflagration. The buildings that did survive were either tower houses built of stone, sometimes next to a timber-built hall, or bastle houses which were a stone built, fortified farmhouse that allowed a family and their livestock to retreat into a structure with few windows and a single ground floor door.

In 1338 there was a manor house with outbuildings in Cornhill on Tweed. In 1382 this, along with the land, mill, fishery, and brewery, passed formally into the hands of the Swinhoe family. It is not certain that this early manor house was in the same location as the current Cornhill House but given that mill and fishery are close by and that the house is on the main route to the known fords over the Tweed; also, that the current house was certainly in the possession of the Swinhoe family in the early part of the 17th century it seems a reasonable assumption that this was the site of the earlier house.

How does Cornhill House relate to Cornhill Castle?

On Robert Swinhoe achieving his majority and coming into formal possession in 1382 he had little time to enjoy it. This was the period of the Hundred Years War and England had been in continual conflict with France. France's ally was Scotland and in 1385 Richard II knowing that the previous year a French army had landed in Scotland to divert attention away from hostilities in France, decided to launch an invasion. There was a French force of around 2500 men under the command of Jean de Vienne which included the knight Jean de Carrougues who would posthumously achieve fame as the main character in Ridley Scott's film *The Last Duel*. Richard's rather disorganised force pushed into

¹⁰ Historic England, *National Heritage List for England*: List No. 1153748, 2020

Scotland as far as Edinburgh, but the Franco-Scottish army fell back and refused to give battle. The English forces, short on food and supplies, balked at pursuing them into the Highlands and eventually decided to return to England having torched most of Edinburgh¹¹.



Figure 4 Jean de Vienne

Free from the attentions of the English army Jean de Vienne along with his Scottish allies the Earls of Douglas, March and Fife launched a counter invasion initially into the Northwest of England but having been repulsed by Harry Hotspur at Carlisle turned their attentions to the East March. Bypassing Roxburgh Castle, which was then in English hands, the army turned its attention to Wark Castle which was in a state of disrepair and after two days of hand-to-hand fighting and heavy losses on both sides the castle was taken. The English garrison were put to the sword, and the castle's wooden buildings razed. At the same time Cornhill Castle 2.5 miles to the east was destroyed¹².

The site of Cornhill Castle is at the top of a steep escarpment overlooking the River Tweed half a mile north of Cornhill House. It is a scheduled monument in the Historic England listing and is described as 'The remains of a medieval tower house and barmkin, set within a small, naturally defended promontory demarcated on the south side by a prominent ditched feature'¹³. The site is overgrown and there is no evidence of any structures above ground level. No archaeological investigation has been carried out. The Gatehouse Gazeteer says that Cornhill Castle has been described as a timber castle of the motte and bailey type, which may indicate that the original construction was of Norman origin and the work of the de Cornalle family.

The evidence for its existence is based on the ditch and field adjacent to the site being called Castle Stone Nich (or Nick), and an observation by an antiquarian Hutchinson, stated in the listing as 'a tower near the bridge opposite Linnel House'. However, the actual text says 'The castle of Cornhill, I presume, was the fort or tower, near Cornhill Bridge, and opposite Lennel House.' It does not say that he observed a tower, rather that he knew that a tower or castle had existed and presumed that the castle site was the location of both.¹⁴ The listing assumes that two references to towers in the ownership of the Swinhoes in 1415 and 1542 refer to the castle site. However, an alternative view is given by Dodds in *Bastions and Belligerents: Medieval Strongholds in Northumberland* who contends that the castle was not rebuilt after the 1385 destruction and that the later references refer to the site of Cornhill House. WW Tomlinson in his 1888 *Comprehensive Guide to Northumberland* says of Cornell Tower that 'Its site is believed to be occupied by the ancient hall of the Collingwood family – a picturesque building in the Elizabethan style, standing upon a fine terraced lawn, at the end of the village street.'¹⁵

¹¹ Sumption, J, *The Hundred Years War: Divided Houses, Vol. III*, Faber and Faber, 2009

¹² Dodds, John F. *Bastions and Belligerents: Medieval Strongholds in Northumberland*, Keepdate Publishing, 1999

¹³ Historic England, *National Heritage List for England: List No. 1006508*, 2020

¹⁴ Hutchinson W, *A View of Northumberland with an excursion to the Abbey of Mailross*, Vol 2, Newcastle, 1776

¹⁵ Tomlinson, WW, *Comprehensive Guide to Northumberland*, London, 1888

It is known that both Wark and Cornhill Castles were destroyed in the Franco-Scottish raid of 1385. Given the slash and burn nature of these raids it seems highly unlikely that the manor house described in 1338 located directly between the two castles would have survived the attentions of the invaders and would most likely have been destroyed at the same time. So, faced with the destruction where was the house and tower rebuilt? The listing says the castle site, Dodds and Tomlinson say the Cornhill House site.

It is known that the tower was built by William Swinhoe the grandson of Robert and that the current house was in the same family at the end of the 16th century. If this is the case, why would the tower have been built remotely from the manor house? According to the *History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham* Robert Swinhoe only inherited 60 acres of arable land. If, as is likely, this was contiguous with the Cornhill House site, 60 acres would not stretch to cover the site of Cornhill Castle an area 4 times as large would be required. It seems more probable that the Cornhill Castle site was on the land held by the Heron family. It is unlikely that the Swinhoes would have built their tower on another family's land.

The other two major castle sites at Norham and Wark guard strategic ford crossings of the River Tweed. However, the Cornhill Castle site is on a steep bank overlooking the river with a very steep path down to the river's edge. There may have been a crossing point adjacent to the castle but following its destruction a new improved ford opened half a mile upstream. Dodds contends that the castle was never rebuilt.

The Cornhill House site is a much better defensive position with excellent visibility in all directions and on the route to three known crossing points; one over the Duddo Burn heading towards Wark Castle, one next to the house crossing the Tweed to the Lees and on to Coldstream and the third, leading to a crossing point where the Coldstream Bridge was subsequently built, this may have been a ferry crossing. The latter two are shown on a military map of 1747 that predates the bridge. It is likely that following the destruction of the castle the tower was built in a better location on the Cornhill House site.



Figure 5 Military Map 1747

On balance it seems that Dodds' view fits the facts better than the official listing but without further archaeological work on both sites it will be difficult to prove conclusively one way or the other. However, there are some potential further clues from the fabric of the house that may support the Dodds' argument. At this stage it is assumed that Dodds was correct, and that the Cornhill House site

was the location of the Cornhill Tower and that events to be described relate to the house and its known occupants.

The Swinhoes and the Emergence of Cornhill House



Figure 6 Swinhoe Coat of Arms

The Swinhoe family (Family Tree - Appendix A) were part of the landed gentry of the East March with ties to both the Bishop of Durham and the Earls of Northumberland, the Percy family¹⁶. They readily intermarried with other families in their social class and therefore held land in number of locations throughout the area. The father of Robert was titled William Swinhoe of Goswick.

In 1415 a survey of the castles and fortalices of Northumberland was undertaken for Henry V in advance of his embarking on the expedition to France that led to the victory at Agincourt¹⁷. This was so he would know who would defend the border of Scotland in his absence. The Turris de Cornhill was listed as being in the possession of Willimi Swinhoe. William Swinhoe was the grandson of Robert Swinhoe who first inherited the estate, and he is recorded as marrying Fortune the daughter of Bertram Bradford of Burton; Burton being another village in the Islandshires district. The Swinhoes are also listed as the owners of the Turris de Scremerston, probably built in 1402 as a pele tower.

At that time there was no standing national army. Landholders had obligations to provide military service to their feudal superiors. The Swinhoes probably owed these obligations to both the Percy family and the Bishopric of Durham and through them to the monarch. Consequently, they would be expected to maintain a fighting force, in proportion to their landholdings, that could be called upon for defensive or offensive operations, the defence of the border from Scottish incursions being the most pressing concern.

William Swinhoe had a son called Rauphe who in turn had a son also called William who inherited the estates in 1477. William married Elizabeth, daughter of Henry Collingwood of Etal. This was not to be the last marriage between families with an interest in Cornhill House. In 1487 William was paid a retainer fee of between £2 and 50 marks by Henry VII, via Sir William Tyler, the captain of the town and castle of Berwick, to maintain a garrison force for the defence of the border¹⁸. This would have been under the overall control of the Berwick garrison rather than the Warden of the East March.

¹⁶ Meikle, Maureen Manuel, *Lairds and Gentlemen: A study of the landed families of the Eastern Anglo Scottish Borders*, Edinburgh, 1988

¹⁷ *The GateHouse Gazeteer, Northumberland Castles and Fortalices in 1415*

¹⁸ Etty, Claire, *Tudor Revolution? Royal Control of the Anglo-Scottish*



Figure 7 The Battle of Flodden 1513

In 1496 a second survey decided that the Tower of Cornhill was worth repairing. This could have been a survey following a brief Scottish invasion by James IV in support of the claim of Perkin Warbeck to the throne of Henry VII. Warbeck claimed to be the youngest son of Edward IV and the rightful heir. The Scots crossed the Tweed at Coldstream and penetrated 4 miles into England. They are reported to have destroyed 3 or 4 little towers and attempted to demolish Heaton Castle¹⁹. Could one of these have been the Cornhill House Tower? The invasion only lasted 6 days as the hoped-for support from Northumberland failed to emerge and an English army approached from Newcastle.

After the accession of Henry VIII to the throne, the Swinhoes remained in the service of king for the defence of the border, but it is not known what part, if any, they personally played in the Battle of Flodden in 1513. The ford crossings from Coldstream to Cornhill were the main invasion route of James IV on his way to capture Wark Castle and subsequently Norham Castle before reaching the battlefield 3 miles southeast of Cornhill²⁰. As the first defensive position after the Coldstream crossing, it is likely that the Cornhill Tower was assaulted as part of the invasion but as James' army was in the region of 30,000 strong it is unlikely that the small Cornhill garrison would have put up an effective resistance. Dodds contends that James 'knocked it about a bit'²¹. The Coldstream Ford crossed the Tweed to the East of the confluence of the River Leit at Tweed Green. The fords were again used by the remnants of his defeated army on their retreat home. James IV was the last British king to be killed in battle.

Border, 1483-1530, p62, Durham, 2005

¹⁹ Bain, Joseph, ed., *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland, 1357-1509*, vol. 4 (Edinburgh, 1888), pp. 418-9 no. 35

²⁰ Goodwin, George, *Fatal Rivalry, Flodden 1513: Henry VIII, James IV and the battle for Renaissance Britain*. P163 Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2013

²¹ Dodds, John F, *Bastions and Belligerents*, p34, Keepdate Publishing, Newcastle

In 1522 William's son Gilbert was paid by Henry VIII to retain 10 archers for the defence of the border²². This may not have deterred the Scots who burnt Ford, Branxton, and Cornhill in 1524²³. Perhaps therefore, this was increased to 20 horsemen after 1528. During the Tudor period the only professional native soldiers in the pay of England were those in Calais and the those of the garrisons of North Northumberland. The Swinhoes were part of an elite military culture that differed from the rest of English society. Gilbert was described as 'a sharpe trew gentilman and keepith a good house' The payment worth 20 marks a year made necessary because of the exposed position of the estate²⁴. Would whatever manor house attached to the tower, that existed in Cornhill at the time have survived the Scottish incursion? It seems unlikely, and it may be after this event that the first construction of the current Cornhill House took place.



Figure 8 The Pilgrimage of Grace 1536

Despite being paid by the Crown for the defence of the border the Swinhoes were loyal to their immediate feudal superiors the Percys when they became part of the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536²⁵. The Pilgrimage of Grace was a spontaneous mass protest of the conservative, and generally Catholic, elements in the North of England angry with the religious upheavals instigated by Henry VIII and his chief minister Thomas Cromwell. Sir Thomas Percy (c. 1504 – 2 June 1537) the younger brother of the then Earl of Northumberland,

was a participant in the 1537 Bigod's rebellion, the second phase of the pilgrimage. After its failure he was arrested and along with many of the other participants, was hung drawn and quartered on Tyburn in 1537. Henry was presumably satisfied with the extent of his retribution as the Swinhoes escaped unscathed. It may be inferred that the Swinhoes at that time were also Catholics, and this is supported by their later involvement in other religious rebellions.

By 1541 the Swinhoes were certainly back in favour with the king and a further survey of border defences on behalf of Henry found that

The tower of Cornell standing upon the banks of the said ryver of Twede in yt be twelve husdandlandes wel plenished and a tower newe embattled cov'ed & put in good reparacon by one Gylbert Swynnowe gentilema' the owener & inherytur of the said tower & towne of Cornell who entendth also as his powers may serve to buylde a barmekyn about the said

²²British History Online, *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 3, 1519-23, Letter from Thomas Lord Dacre to Wolsey, 24 January 1522*

²³ Tait, Jon, *Dick the Devil's Bairns: Breaking the Border Mafia*, p20.Tredition, 2013

²⁴ Ellis, Steven G. *Civilising Northumberland: Representations of Englishness in the Tudor State*, Journal of Historical Sociology, 2002

²⁵ Meikle, Maureen Manuel, *Lairds and Gentlemen: A study of the landed families of the Eastern Anglo Scottish Borders*, p. 410, Edinburgh, 1988

tower and doth prepare stufte for the same and the said barmekyn from yt be ons well fynyshed wylbe a greate succor defence & relefe in tymes of warre aswell for thinhabitants of the said towne of Cornell as for other neybourns nere adioyning thereunto²⁶

12 husbandlands is approximately 384 acres. This survey was 15 years after the Scottish raid of 1524 so a new, or refurbished tower on the Cornhill House site may have been the result of the earlier destruction of a manor house but in a stronger more defensible format. The addition of a barmkin wall would have added even greater defensibility and would have provided shelter for the village inhabitants in the event of cross border raids. It is possible that the central core of the current Cornhill House, which has been tentatively dated as late 16th century was part of this rebuilding with a tower being either integral to the house at the west end or, the central core being a hall attached to a tower at the east end.

The Rough Wooing

The 1541 survey was in advance of the outbreak of war between England and Scotland which lasted from December 1543 to March 1551 and followed the break with Rome. On 2 November 1542 the Duke of Norfolk, Lieutenant-General North of the Trent, and Captain -General in the campaign against the Scots, was recommending Gilbert Swinhoe to the Earl of Hertford, who led the invasion of Scotland, to spy on the Scots in advance of hostilities.

*'As it is most necessary for his Lordship to have good knowledge by espial, desires him to entreat gently "John Carre, and Gilbert Swynowe," and also his own espial, ("whom the Captain of Norham brought to him,") and by these three men he shall know as much as can be Begs him also to handle well "Lawry Bele, and Clement Mustyan of Berwick," who are very sure men to get knowledge.'*²⁷



Figure 9 Typical border forces in the 16th Century

²⁶ Bates, Cadwallader John, *The Border Holds of Northumberland*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1891.

²⁷ *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House: Volume 1, 1306-1571*

England decided to attack Scotland, partly to destroy the Auld Alliance and prevent Scotland being used as a springboard for future invasion by France, partly to weaken Scotland, and partly to force Scotland to agree to a marriage alliance between Mary, Queen of Scots (born 8 December 1542), and the English heir apparent Edward (born 12 October 1537), son of King Henry VIII. The conflict has been called the Rough Wooing and the Swinhoes were intimately involved in its prosecution.

William Eure was the 1st Baron Eure and in 1543 was Commander of the North and Warden of the East March. During the prosecution of the Rough Wooing, he was sending regular reports on his forces' activities in cross border raids. The Swinhoes, Gilbert, his son William, and the Cornhill garrison under their command are mentioned frequently. Some extracts from the reports illustrate this²⁸.

On 8th August, 1544 - Men of the East Marches burnt Newbyging. The garrison of Warke took up Hew Dridge and Burnhouses in Lamermore and ran a foray to Mylnerige. The garrison of Cornell ran a foray to Rawburne, and thence to Mersington, and there got and burnt the tower. The garrison of Norham took up Otterburn.

On 25 August, 1544 - John Carres garrison of Warke, and Cornhill took up steads called Kettle Shells and Haryell in Lamermore. Sir Brian Layton and Lancelot Carlton ran a foray up Lamermore edge to Laugh ton

On the 5th September, 1544 - by the captains of the garrisons at the command of the lord warden, &c., Sir Brian Laiton captain of Norham, Thos. Gower, Geo. Sowlby, Lucas Metcalf, Marmaduke Cholmeley, Lancelot Carleton, Gilbert Swynho, and others, in two divisions, to Littleden and Rotherforth and to Dawcove; were attacked out of Ettrick forest by the lairds of Buccleuch and Cesforth, Dand Carr of Littleden and Cowdenknowes. On the 22nd October by the garrison of Cornell. On the 18th December by Will. Swynnho to Snawdon and Thirleston, in Lamermore.

On 4 November, 1544 - The garrison of Cornell, Thos. Forster's company, &c., took up Gordon in the Marse. The garrison of Warke ran a foray to Earl Bothwell's town of Fernington. A stead called Jeffyle in Lamermore was taken up and one called Prestley burnt and a town called Pretency in the Marse taken up. The said Warke garrison also took up Forgo and Susterlands. Sir George Bowes won Brome Tower, belonging to Patrick Hume, and slew 14 men therein, burnt and cast it down, &c

On 6 December, 1544 - Single burnt by Robin Foster. 10 Dec, Laungsikes and Ryckleton grange burnt by Riddesdale men and Sir Ralph Euer's retinue. 19 Dec, Marsington in the Marshe spoiled by John Carr and John Swynho.

On 17th December 1544 - Wm. Swynho of Cornall, my brother, the garrison of Warke and Cornall, Robert Dicson of Browtherig, 20 of the Dicsons and other men with him, and Daind Carr of Gaetshawe and 30 [of . . . ppuston and with them, rode to the head of Ca[wthe]rdale, to a town called Glengelt, "and brunt it on the daielight and ran a foreye all the contre about, belonginge to th'erle Bodwell and lord Burlik (?), and g[at together] xxxxx sheep . . . hed of nowt, xxx nagges and some prisoners, and myckle insight gere. And as they camme by Ca[wt]her a bastard sonne of John . . wnis (Hume's ?), of Blecweter and a noodre [of] the persons of [Caw]ther and John Pringill of [the] Murrus and [hi]s son and a brodre of the lard of Thornedickes camme in and shot arrowes amonges our men, and strake a man

²⁸ British History Online, *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 19 August-December 1544*, 1-5

throwghe the arme and hurt a horse. And then our men made a chase on them and toke the lard of Thornedickes brothre in the chase and stroke to the yerthe John Pringle of the Murrus, wiche was rescued againe by the feowe (?) men of Cawther."

On the 26th January 1545 - Will. Swynnho laid an ambush at Hune castle. On the 29th May John Foster's garrison of Fenton, John Selby of Twysell, Jas. Selby of Tylmouth, and Will. Swynnho of Cornell, into Lynton Lowgh and Bowbent, slew Dand Yonger of Felthershawes. On the 20th November Will. Swynnho to Linton.

In the spring and summer of 1545, Gilbert Swinhoe was sending letters and reports direct to the Court. Records show that on.

4 April 1545 - letters arrived here from the Warden of the Middle Marches and Gilbert Swynho of Cornehil, that he may declare their effect to the King.

11 June 1545 - letters received by Hertford from the Wardens of the West and Middle Marches, with one to the latter from Gilbert Swynho, all containing intelligence out of Scotland.

In 1546 the Swinhoes were again involved in cross border raids²⁹.

15th April, 1546 - Gilbert Swynnho of Cornell laid 2 "bushements" and took 4 prisoners, one a son of Sandy Pringle's. One Robinson of Swynnho's garrison slew Geo. Carr.

The killing of George Carr may have come back to haunt the Swinhoe family at a later date.

In 1547 Henry VIII died and was succeeded by his son Edward VI. The English decided to enforce their will and engineer the marriage of Mary Queen of Scots to Edward with even greater vigour. An invasion force moved up the East Coast of Scotland and inflicted one of the greatest English defeats of a Scottish army at the Battle of Pinkie Cleuch on the banks of the River Esk. As at Halidon Hill and Flodden a significant proportion of the Scottish ruling class was wiped out. However, despite the resounding defeat the Scottish government refused to come to terms and the infant Queen Mary was smuggled to France where she was betrothed to the Dauphin.



Figure 10 The Battle of Pinkie Cleugh. 1547. Another Scottish Defeat

²⁹ British History Online, *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 21 January – August 1546 1544, 11-15*

Following the battle, the English occupied many of the castles and forts in the South of Scotland but they were a drain on the English exchequer and were under resourced, so they found it difficult to maintain control of the area and could not prevent the arrival of a significant French force in support of the Auld Alliance. This would have a direct effect on the Swinhoes and Cornhill House.

Andre de Montalembert, Seigneur d'Essé, a French nobleman and favourite at the French Court, was sent to Scotland with a force of 6000 men to support the Regent Arran after the defeat at Pinkie Cleuch. At first, he tried to capture the English held fort at Haddington but was unsuccessful. He later had greater success in taking the fort on Inchkeith in the Firth of Forth before turning his attention to the Borders. He launched attacks from a base in Jedburgh and in one of these Cornhill House described as a house 'built after the old fashion, strong and every way tenable... abundantly provided with good waters, wood and the like conveniences: stored with large quantities of salted salmon, and other such eatables'³⁰. It was taken and looted of provisions including the store of salted salmon. D'Essé spent approximately 6 months in Scotland before returning to France in triumph with 7 English banners.



Figure 11 Andre de Montalbert, Seigneur d'Esse

Mary and Elizabeth

By 1551 the Rough Wooing was over and in 1553 Edward VI died leaving behind a succession crisis which was eventually to lead to Henry VIII's eldest daughter Mary being crowned queen. In 1554 she

³⁰ Anon, *History of the Campagnes*, p.97

married Philip II of Spain and was simultaneously Queen of England and Queen Consort of Hapsburg Spain.

During Mary's reign Ralph Swinhoe and William Swinhoe, the sons of Gilbert, held posts as part of the garrison of Berwick, continuing the military tradition of the Swinhoe family. Out of a garrison of 1000 horsemen Ralph and William had command of 100 horsemen each. Robert Collingwood commanded another 100. Because of the Mary's marriage the relationship with Spain changed and it was possible for Spanish military men to find employment in England and during this period a Spanish mercenary named Guevara took up residence in Berwick and became a captain in the garrison. The Guevara family were later to intermarry with the Swinhoes and John Guevara (probably a son of the original immigrant) rose to be Deputy Warden of the East March.

Mary was childless and Elizabeth was her heir, a fact disputed by many Catholics. Mary, Queen of Scots was the only legitimate descendant of Henry VII and married to the dauphin of France. In the latter part of Mary I's reign the succession to the throne caused deep suspicion in Anglo- Scots relations and William Swinhoe was involved in monitoring the activities of the Scots north of the border. In September 1557 he sends a letter to the Earl of Shrewsbury setting out intelligence on Scots activity

Right honourable, my most humble and bounden duty remembered. This may be to signify unto your lordship that there came yesterday to Hooome [Hume Castle] 30 score of cannon shot carried on horseback in creels, and also there came before 8 puncheons of wine, as they say, it was a parcel of the queen's own provisions and that she will come forward in person herself. As I can yet learn they intend to besiege Wark, and the captain thereof is this day entered into Scotland to his taker. The whole power doth muster upon Fawlawe Moor [between Jedburgh and Yetholm] on Saturday next, and, as I am informed, sets forward on Sunday, and will be a greater power than ever I saw of Scotland together at one time. I trust to get more perfect knowledge before they set forwards of their proceedings and if they hold gayt, if your lordship will give me licence, I trust to find the means to send one Englishman that shall lie in their camp and see the manner of their doings, their power, their order of marching and so far as he can learn their intent. And thus I commit your lordship to the tuition of the Holy Ghost. From Cornhill this present Wednesday at 8 of the clock at night this [] of September, 1557. Your Lordships most humble to command, William Swinhoe.³¹

Mary became ill in May 1558 possibly from ovarian cancer and died in November. However, before this war had broken out between England and Scotland. England's relationship with Spain had further worsened relationships with Scotland whose ally France was embroiled in conflict with Spain on the continent. In addition, the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots' potential claim on the English throne as a descendant of Henry VII and potential rival to the protestant Princess Elizabeth further raised tensions. The war featured no large-scale engagements and consisted mainly of cross border raids one of which was an attack on Cornhill that resulted in the death of William Swinhoe. The attack was recorded in a report sent back to the English court.

"On Dec. 22 William a Swenoa was slain in Cornhill where he lay with his garrison. All his garrison with seventeen of Capt. Wood's soldiers and many townsmen taken prisoners, lost their horses and all that ever they had. This was on the Thursday in the morning at sun-rising. The Scots and French came over Tweed at Cornhill, three ensigns of footmen [approx. 1000 men], and 700 horsemen. The captain did fortify his stone house, caused the door to be rammed up, and put himself with his garrison, townsmen and others, to the number of seven

³¹ Lambeth Palace Library, Talbot Papers Volume D, Letter from William Swinhoe to Francis Talbot 5th Earl of Shrewsbury

score, many horses and much cattle, into the "barmkinge." The French and Scots gave the approach, happen to kill the captain with a shot, in the end made one breach not past six feet broad; and so, the captain slain, the "barmekin" was won, all within it taken prisoners without resistance, like beasts; they never sought stroke for it after the captain was slain. It is pity to relieve them. If they had kept it one hour, they had had relief. The Lord Euers sent 300 footmen from Berwick, Sir Henry Percy from Norham 200 horsemen and 400 footmen, and 300 footmen from Wark and 100 horsemen besides the company. They came shortly."³²

From this report it is apparent that the barmkin enclosure must have been of a reasonable size to have accommodated over 140 people and all their horses and cattle. The site of Cornhill Castle is too small to have housed such a number and gives greater credence to Cornhill House being the site of the Tower of Cornhill where an extensive barmkin could have been constructed.

Catherine Kent's Heritage Statement of 2019 describes the official assessments of Cornhill House.

It has been argued that this attack demonstrated the impracticality of relying on the gentry, their towers and barmkins as a means of national defence. In 1561 the property was described as 'One towre, or pile, with a barnekin about the same... in indifferent [i.e. fairly] good reparacions'.³³

The Swinhoes now became embroiled in other national events. William's younger brother Ralph along with another brother James joined the Northern Earls' Rebellion against Elizabeth in 1569. This was an attempt by the largely Catholic Northern Earls to depose the protestant Elizabeth and replace her with Mary Queen of Scots. This, even though the previous year Ralph had been in prison in Durham charged with murder, of whom is not recorded³⁴.

The rebellion was led by Charles Neville, 6th Earl of Westmorland, and Thomas Percy, 7th Earl of Northumberland. They occupied Durham and marched south but on hearing of a large force coming to meet them retreated north and dispersed with many fleeing into Scotland. James Swinhoe acted as a messenger between the Countess of Northumberland and Thomas Percy in hiding. Northumberland was eventually captured and handed over to Elizabeth who promptly had him beheaded. Ralph had been given shelter in nearby Hume Castle and was eventually captured in Scotland by Alexander Home of North Berwick in possession of animals and goods from Home's estates in Trottingshaw in the Lammermuirs³⁵. Both Ralph and James were named in the subsequent Act of Attainder but escaped execution. They were pardoned and once again became loyal servants of the crown.

³² British History Online, *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth, Volume 1 1558-1559, Letter from Francis Cheslyden to Sir John Thynne*, Dec 28 1558

³³ Kent, Catherine, *Cornhill House: Heritage Statement and Archaeological Assessment*, 2019

³⁴ Wilson Barbara, *The Changes of the Reformation Period in Durham and Northumberland* p. 516, Durham 1939

³⁵ Meikle, Maureen Manuel, *Lairds and Gentlemen: A study of the landed families of the Eastern Anglo Scottish Borders*, Edinburgh, p.425-426, 1988

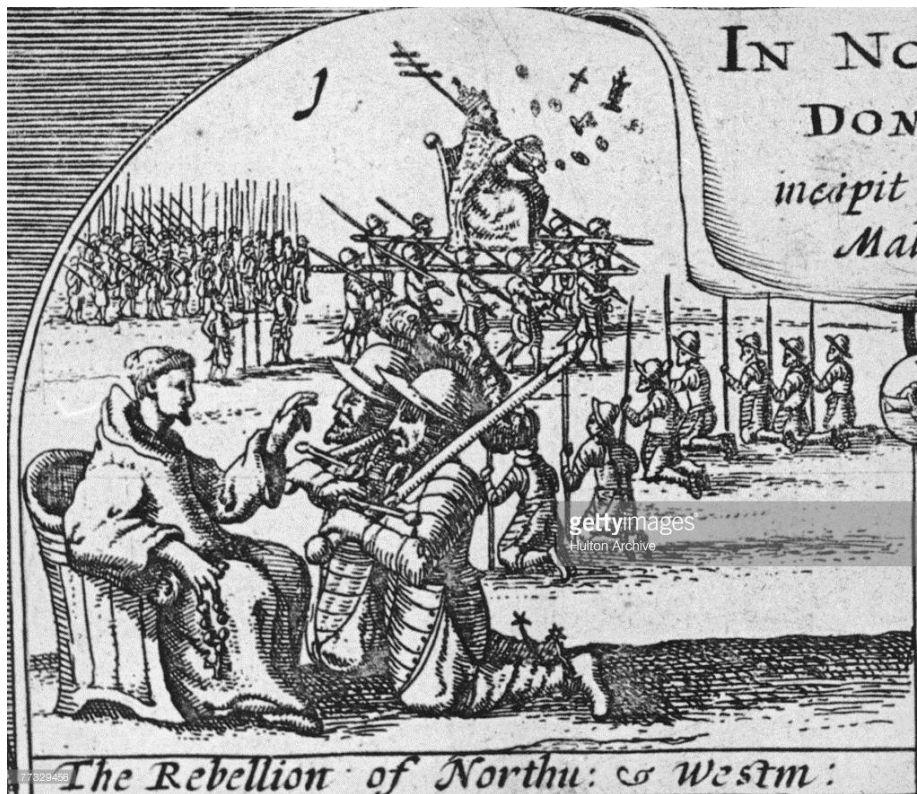


Figure 12 The Northern Earls Rebellion 1569

By 1584 William's son Thomas is recorded as the owner of Cornhill Tower in a report by the Border Commissioners.

Cornell Towre belonging to Thomas Swynney gentleman, standing nere to Tweed upon the border of Scotland about amyle west and by south of Heton aforesaid decayed by Warres of late tyme, by whom to be repaired we cannot learne otherwise then as aforesaid. This towre or fortresse we also do thinck a veryefit and convenient place for the consideracions as aforesaid if it were repaired the charges of which reparacions as before it hath bene we esteeme to a hundreth pound³⁶

The central core of the current house is dated from the late 16th century and this report suggests that in 1584 there was a tower on the site. It is possible that the tower was either integral to the current house structure or at the east end of the house with the house itself being a hall on two floors. The latter explanation is favoured by Catherine Kent in her Heritage Statement.

The same year as the Border Commissioners' report a muster of the Horse of the East March took place, and it recorded the representation from Cornhill. There were 20 named horsemen the same obligation as that in 1522.

Cornelle.—Rowland Sesbey, Thomas Swinnowe, Oswald Hoodspeth, John Michelson, Nycholas Chandler, Nycholas Taylor, Jarrett Hoodspeth, George Nycholson, James Hoodspeth, George Hoodspeth, Robert Clarke, James Read, Olyver Scott, George Archbould,

³⁶ Dacre, Christopher, *Report of the Commissioners on the Border 1584*, List Transcribed by Bates, Available on Gatehouse

*Ousould Nychelson, John Heslope, Olyver Louke, Gilbert Chandler, Gawene Chandler, William Badkyne.*³⁷

In 1596 Thomas Swinhoe declined to contribute towards the repair of the Holy Island church and is listed as a catholic refuser³⁸. From this entry and the involvement of the Swinhoes in earlier Catholic led rebellions against Henry VIII and Elizabeth I it can be reasonably inferred that they were a Catholic family throughout this period. At the time there was considerable support for the Catholic faith in the north of North Northumberland. In 1594 James VI of Scotland had written to the Treasurer of Berwick requesting the apprehension of James Douglas and Thomas Cransoun, agents of the Earl of Bothwell and accused of conspiring with the Scottish catholic earls. They had been spotted frequenting 'openly in Werk, Twysell, Cornhill, and Brakanhill.'³⁹There is a concealed cavity behind the wall of one of the first-floor bedrooms in the 16th century core of Cornhill House that can only be accessed from the attic. Could this have been a priest hole?

This is the last record of the Swinhoes during the reign of Elizabeth I who died in 1603 and was succeeded by James VI of Scotland who became James I of England and unified the two crowns. This act removed the primary cause of Anglo-Scottish conflict and meant that building along the border was no longer required to have a defensive quality. This would have a significant impact on the development of Cornhill House. However, it would not mean that the Swinhoes would henceforth lead a peaceful existence as national events would once again impact the lives of the family.

The English Civil War

Thomas Swinhoe had been succeeded by his son James who married Mary Orde, the Ordes being another landed gentry family in North Durham, and they in turn gave birth to a son who was named Gilbert. By 1638 Gilbert was listed as a colonel and field commander when presented before the Court of High Commission for failing to execute orders from that court⁴⁰. The Court of High Commission was the supreme ecclesiastical court in England and had ordered Col Swinhoe to detain a Richard Oude (Orde?) but had let him go. He was the Earl of Northumberland's bailiff for Chatton even though he was a freeholder himself. He was married to Dorothy Guevara the daughter of Sir Henry Guevara and great-granddaughter of Sir John Guevara, the Deputy Warden of the East March. Gilbert's son James was a captain in Sir Robert Clavering's Regiment of Foot. He may have been stationed in Berwick in 1640.

³⁷ Till Valley Archaeological Society Archive, *Extract from Calendar of Border Papers – Muster of Horse on the East Marches*, 1584

³⁸ Meikle, Maureen Manuel, *Lairds and Gentlemen: A study of the landed families of the Eastern Anglo Scottish Borders*, Edinburgh, 1988

³⁹ National Archives, *Letter from James VI to Treasurer of Berwick*, 3 November 1594

⁴⁰ Newman, Peter Robert, *The Royalist Army of Northern England 1642-45*, The Acts of the High Commission Court Diocese of Durham



Figure 13 The Covenanter Army 1640

At this time Charles was in conflict with large parts of Scotland over his attempts to impose unified religious practices. Many Scots were presbyterian adherents to the Church of Scotland and considered Charles' proposed reforms to be Catholic in nature. This led to the creation of the National Covenant which vowed to resist the changes. In 1640 a Covenanter army advanced to the border and camped at Duns⁴¹. The English forces were concentrated in Berwick, but the Covenanters bypassed them by crossing the Tweed to the west. The direct route from Duns to the road south through Northumberland involves crossing the Tweed at Coldstream. At this time there was no bridge so the route would have been via the Tweed fords that were overlooked by Cornhill House. Not for the first time the house may have witnessed an invading army crossing the border in one direction or the other.

Sir Robert Claving in Berwick did not have intelligence on the exact location of the Covenanters but had ordered James Swinhoe's company and that of Captain Musechamp to 'advance to Newcastle at all speed' presumably to support the English army that was then in Hexham⁴². The Covenanter army had headed south with the aim of capturing Newcastle which at the time supplied the coal to fuel London. It crossed the Tyne at Newburn and defeated an ill-disciplined and under trained English army in a short battle. It then took Newcastle the following day. It is not recorded if James was part of the English army at the battle, but it is a reasonable assumption. The Scots were allowed to remain in control of Northumberland and Durham for a year after Newburn until finally retuning north of the border in August 1641 following the Treaty of London.

What Gilbert and James' situation was in this interregnum is unknown but in 1642 Gilbert was High Sheriff of Northumberland when Charles raised his standard at Nottingham to start the English Civil

⁴¹ Gerrike, Bradley T., *Civil Wars in Britain*, United States Military Academy, West Point, 1988

⁴² *Ibid.*

War. Gilbert raised the *posse comitatus* in support of the King⁴³. This would have been a force of the landed gentry of the county along with their followers whose purpose was to maintain the peace and protect property. Gilbert was also made a Commissioner of Array to the Commission of Oyer and Terminer. Under this commission from the King, Gilbert would have had authority to muster and array the inhabitants of Northumberland and to see them in a condition for war, or to put soldiers of the county in a condition for military service. The Commission of Oyer and Terminer was essentially a court set up to enquire into treason, felonies, and misdemeanours.



Figure 14 Charles Raises his standard at Nottingham to start the English Civil War

Unfortunately for Gilbert and James they were on the losing side of the war and following the defeat of Royalist forces at Marston Moor in 1644 by a Parliamentary army supported by the Scots, Parliament took control of the North of England. Gilbert was arrested but released on bond and excluded from employment by Parliament. He took this opportunity to raise a group of 'moss troupers' and 'Tynedale thieves' which waged a guerrilla war against the Scots covenanter forces in Northumberland and tried to reach James Graham, the 1st Marquess of Montrose who was leading the largely Catholic highland clans in support of the King against the Presbyterian supporters of the Covenant. In 1646 he was arrested again, and this time transported by sea from Berwick to the Tower of London where he was to die⁴⁴.

In 1647 Gilbert's wife Dorothy was accused of being a witch. This was a period of intense interest in witchcraft and many women were falsely accused, tried, and frequently executed as a result. It is

⁴³ Newman, Peter Robert, *The Royalist Army of Northern England 1642-45*, The Acts of the High Commission Court Diocese of Durham

⁴⁴ Newman, Peter Robert, *The Royalist Army of Northern England 1642-45*, The Acts of the High Commission Court Diocese of Durham

possible that being now a widow, of foreign ancestry and probably a Catholic made her the potential target for an accusation or that this was tied into some inheritance issue following Gilbert's death. However, it appears that she survived this accusation as she was still alive in 1652.

James Swinhoe was to serve in the Royalist army throughout both the First and Second Civil Wars. Starting as a captain he rose to be a lieutenant colonel and, on the death of Sir Robert Clavering took control of the foot regiment as colonel. James had a lieutenant colonel serving under him called Thomas Orde who may have been a cousin as James' grandmother was an Orde.⁴⁵

In 1643 James took part in the Battle of Adwalton Moor which was an early success for the King and his Captain General, William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Newcastle. Cavendish had himself financed much of the King's war effort and it is likely that Sir Robert Clavering's Regiment was a subset of his forces. Following this in 1644 he was involved in several actions in the North including the Loss of Morpeth, the Taking of Dumfries, the Siege of Morpeth, the Taking of South Shields and the Skirmish at Sunderland. After taking control of the regiment, he was part of the defending forces at the 7-month Siege of Carlisle which ended with surrender in July 1645⁴⁶.



Figure 15 *The Battle of Adwalton Moor 1643*

In the interbellum period between the First and Second Civil Wars it had been agreed that Berwick and Carlisle were not to be occupied by either side but in 1648 the Second Civil War broke out and Colonel James Swinhoe was one of the cavalier officers under the Governor Charles Branding who occupied Berwick. This was short-lived, and after 3 months it was in the hands of Scottish forces. The Second Civil War was also short-lived, and Charles I was put on trial and eventually executed on 13 January 1649. Following this, Parliament started to fine those who had been on the Royalist side.

Following the defeat of the King, James Swinhoe appears to have gone into temporary exile in Barbados. It may be that the Swinhoe family had some land holdings on the island. A 1638 record of inhabitants of Barbados owning more than 10 acres of land includes a James Swinhoe. However, by

⁴⁵ British Civil War Project Online, Wiki

⁴⁶ Newman, Peter Robert, *The Royalist Army of Northern England 1642-45*, The Acts of the High Commission Court Diocese of Durham, p. 298

1651 James had returned to England to face the fines imposed by Parliament. This is set out in detail in the records.

James Swinhoe compounds for his delinquency in assisting the forces raised against Parliament, in the first and last engagement. He has been beyond the seas for 6 months past. Particulars of his estate: For life, with various remainders, the manor of Barrington, Y. V. B. W (Yearly Value Before the War) 120 pounds, after expiry of a lease for 5 years; a tenement or messuage with several tenements and land called Cornhill, parish of Norham, Y. V. B. W. 10 pounds; a messuage or tenement and lands called Crookehouses, parish of Kirknewton, Y. V. B. W. 30 pounds; a tenement and lands in Chatton, Y. V. B. W. 10 pounds; a tenement and lands in Kirknewton, Y. V. B. W. 2 pounds; several cottages in Holy Island MD, Y. V. B. W. 1 pound, all in fee. Craves allowance of the following seems charged upon Berrington by deed dated June 22nd, 1637: 600 pounds to the Earl of Suffolk, with 12 years interest; 200 pounds to Thosmas Welford, Esq., with 7 years interest; 100 pounds to William Bradley with 7 years interest; 100 pounds to William Turney, gent, with 8 years interest; 100 pounds to Mark Bradley with 7 years interest; also one pound per annum for ever to the Castle of Norham, out of Cornehill; also his mother's third, 31 pounds per annum, out of all the lands except Berrington, 1649 Aug 9, fine 393 Pounds, 13 shillings and 4 pennies. 1651, July 22nd- Compounder complains that, although he has paid his fine and had his discharge, he is threatened with re-sequestration by the (Court?) Commission unless he brings in his composition money to Mr. Ledgard of Newcastle, treasurer for compositions there. Order that he be no further molested.⁴⁷

At current values this was a fine in the region of £250,000 plus interest. At some point shortly after this, Cornhill House passes into the ownership of the Forster family. It is possible that to pay the fine James Swinhoe took the decision to sell some of his property. By 1660 Thomas Forster is listed as being 'of Cornhill'. James continued to live in the county and probably resided in one of the family's other properties. He was killed in a duel which achieved some notoriety, and it is worth repeating the report⁴⁸.

Of the hostile meetings, none would create a greater sensation than that which took place in 1672 between Mr. James Swinhoe, of Chatton, and Mr. Andrew Carr. The deposition of Richard Henderson gives a vivid description of the fatal rencontre. A large party, including Mr. James Swinhoe, his brother Gilbert, and Mr. Carr, were drinking at a tavern at Chillingham when a dispute occurred between the two last-named gentlemen, Gilbert Swinhoe in the end giving Carr a blow with his fist. Further hostilities were prevented for the time by the intervention of friends. After they had separated for the night, however, Carr sent a written challenge by his friend, Ensign Home, but to which of the brothers it was addressed is not known. Henderson was staying in the same inn with the Carrs, and when they went out at sunrise the next morning he followed them. On reaching a garden at the rear of a tavern, kept by one Anthony Dunston, he saw James Swinhoe and Carr fighting with swords. Wishing to prevent bloodshed, he interfered, and prevailed on Carr to enter the inn with him. Here they sat drinking for the space of an hour, at the end of which time Carr left. Some time afterwards, hearing a woman cry out that two men were fighting in the same garden, he went thither and found the same men fighting, and saw Carr give Swinhoe his death wound.

⁴⁷ *Records of the Committee for Compounding etc. with Delinquent Royalists in Durham and Northumberland during the Civil War etc. 1643-1660.* Online resource

⁴⁸ Bath, Joanna, *Violence and Violent Crime in the North East, c. 1650-1720.* Newcastle upon Tyne, 2001

It may be a coincidence, but James Swinhoe's opponent and killer was a Carr and on 15 April 1546, the Swinhoes had laid an ambush during the Rough Wooing, during which a George Carr was killed. Could this have been the final settlement of a blood feud lasting 126 years or was it warring neighbours as by that time the Heron part of Cornhill, after they had lost their seat at Ford Castle, had passed to the Carrs, so the Carrs and Swinhoes had been neighbours.

A Hundred Years of Forsters

John Forster of Cornhill (1619-1679) is the first of the Forster family (Family Tree – Appendix B) to live at Cornhill House. He was the youngest son of Sir Mathew Forster of Etherstone, and it is possible that Cornhill House was bought as a residence for him as a junior member of the family. From 1579 to 1715 the Forsters had also owned the church and the former canon's house in Carham. Sir Matthew Forster was the son of Sir Thomas Forster VI of Adderstone, who despite being born illegitimate became his father's heir, was knighted and appointed Sheriff of Northumberland by Elizabeth I.



Figure 16 Forster Coat of Arms



Figure 17 Forster Coat of Arms revealed on chimney breast when plaster removed in reception room

The Forsters were an important family in North Northumberland. Previous generations had fought at Agincourt and Flodden and had been rewarded with titles and land by Henry V and VIII. Sir John Forster of Bamburgh (1518-1603) was made the Constable of Bamburgh Castle and was the Warden of the Middle March and Deputy Warden of the East March. He amassed

sufficient resources to buy all the Bamburgh Catholic church lands from Henry VIII on the dissolution of the monasteries. He took part in the Siege of Berwick in 1560 and escorted Mary Queen of Scots over the border into England to view the new walled fortifications of Berwick. He helped suppress the Northern Earls Rebellion against Elizabeth I in 1569. A rebellion that the Swinhoes had supported.

The Forsters were a protestant family and supported most of the anti-Catholic movements in this period. John Forster of Cornhill was a strong supporter of Scottish Presbyterianism and was criticised for encouraging his tenants to listen to Scottish preachers and their 'long prayers'.⁴⁹

On the 29 January 1660 John Forster took part in the Bockenfield Muster near Felton in Northumberland⁵⁰. There were 129 gentlemen volunteers amongst them 6 Greys, 3 Swinhoes, including James Swinhoe, 13 Forsters and 7 Collingwoods. It is likely that the muster was to raise the county's defensive forces at a time of considerable political uncertainty. This was the period at the end of the Protectorate where England appeared to be drifting into anarchy. The Muster took place shortly after General Monck marched his regiment from where they had been camped at Coldstream over the border on 2 January 1660, towards London in support of the restoration of Charles II⁵¹. It is likely that again Cornhill House would witness an army passing by its North façade. Monck was instrumental in bringing about the restoration of Charles II. After Monck's death in 1670 his regiment was renamed The Coldstream Regiment of Footguards in honour of the starting point of the march South, and was to become The Coldstream Guards, the oldest continuously serving regiment in the British Army.

In 1666 he was taxed on seven fireplaces and in 1672 he was the High Sheriff of Northumberland.⁵²

John Forster and Mary had 4 children: Thomas of Cornhill, Catherine, Elizabeth and Margaret.⁵³ Elizabeth married Henry Collingwood of Westerheugh and Branxton. Henry Collingwood lived until he was 103. They were married for 70 years.

John Forster of Cornhill was the younger brother of Thomas Forster VII of Etherstone whose great grandchildren were General Sir Thomas Forster X, Dorothy Forster and John Forster of Adderstone, who married Elizabeth Orde and whose initials are above the dining room fireplace in Cornhill House. General Sir Thomas Forster was the MP for Northumberland and in 1715 supported the rising in support of the Stuart claim to the thrones of England and Scotland of James, the son of the deposed James II. Despite having no military experience, he was appointed general of the English Stuart army. Forster surrendered his forces to the Hanoverian army after what was arguably the last battle to be fought on English soil at Preston. Forster was taken to Newgate Prison and was sentenced to be hung drawn and quartered but with the aid of his sister Dorothy, who bribed the guards, he managed to escape to France where he was to die in exile. The Forsters forfeited their properties in Carham as a result.

Thomas Forster married Elizabeth Reed and had one daughter, also Elizabeth. In 1685 he was a Common Councilman and Justice of the Peace in Berwick and in 1690 contributed towards a grant to

⁴⁹ Raine, 1852

⁵⁰ *Felton Stories*, online resource

⁵¹ Paget, Julian (Ed), *The Coldstream Guards 1650-2000 History*, Barnsley, 2000

⁵² 1631 'Thomas Carr, of Fourd, Esq, for 3 parts of the towne of Cornehill, viij li. Gilbert Swinhoe, for 3d part, iiii li. ; TNA, ER179, Northumberland Hearth Tax Returns, 1666; 1670 – 1, 'Cornehill township, with the milne, John Forster, Esq and Wm Armourer, owners - £72.0.0. Raine 1852 appendix 156, 159.

⁵³ Forster, Gerry, *The Forsters of Adderstone and Bamburgh*, Gold Coast, Australia, 2003

William and Mary to allow them to pursue the war against France. In 1703 he was High Sheriff of Northumberland like his father. He died in 1725 aged 66⁵⁴.



Figure 18 Marriage stone of John Forster and Elizabeth Orde

The marriage stone over the fireplace in the dining room of Cornhill House has the initials I(J)F and EO. Catherine Kent attributed this to the marriage of John Forster of Cornhill. However, John married Mary Orde not Isabella. A likely explanation is that following the death of Thomas Forster of Cornhill in 1725 the house passed to John Forster of Adderstone who, was the great grandnephew of John Forster of Cornhill, the brother of General Sir Thomas Forster, and probably the Forster son most in need of accommodation at that time.

John Forster of Adderstone married Isabella Orde in 1739 and this seems to fit the archaeological evidence. John and Isabella had one son Thomas Forster IX of Adderstone in 1743 and a daughter Isabella, in 1745. John Forster died in 1745 and in 1763 Thomas also died aged 19 and without children. Isabella Forster who was 25 at the time of Thomas' death went on to remarry Robert Fenwick and had a further 10 children. She is featured in a painting by Thomas Bardwell housed in the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle, depicting her marriage to Robert Fenwick, along with her sister Ann and in front of Norham Castle which was owned by her father William Orde of Sandybank⁵⁵.

⁵⁴ Forster, Gerry, *The Forsters of Adderstone and Bamburgh*, Gold Coast, Australia, 2003

⁵⁵ Art Fund, online resource



Figure 19 Portrait of Captain Robert Fenwick and his wife Isabella Orde on their marriage and her sister Ann

Following John Forster's death, the house passed to Thomas Forster of Cornhill's sister Elizabeth's family. Elizabeth had married Henry Collingwood of Westerheugh and their son John Collingwood is the first Collingwood occupant of the house.

The Development of Cornhill House 1550-1750

Because of the land ownership, the assumption adopted in this history is that the tower referred to in the surveys of 1541 and 1548 as belonging to the Swinhoe family, was located on the site of Cornhill House. If this was the case, then what would the house have looked like at the beginning of the 17th century?

It is likely that the central core of the house was a stone hall which had probably replaced an earlier timber version destroyed in one of the Franco-Scottish raids of earlier years.



Figure 20 Outline of large fireplace that would have been the focal point of the 16th century hall

A defensible tower could have been located at the east end of the core block or alternatively where the northwest wing now stands. There is a 1200mm thick stone wall on the north gable of the northeast wing that is much thicker than the other walls in the house. This is possibly a remnant of the tower.

The walls on the two north gables showed signs of there being an earlier configuration of buildings along this line with the stone below 1000mm being of a different character to that above. The removal of the render in the north courtyard revealed a substantial timber lintel over what would have been a large opening into the corridor. The size of the opening is too large for the width of the corridor so could indicate that there was a single storey link, perhaps between the corridor and the tower in this location. The 17th century northeast wing collides with the windows of the two-storey corridor indicating that the corridor was possibly constructed earlier to create links between the tower and the hall after it was subdivided into smaller rooms. It seems likely that the house was orientated to the hollow way running across the north side of the house, this being the main road down to the Tweed fords.



Figure 21 Location of former opening into corridor

There is no definite evidence of the location of the barmkin wall although the older stonework at the lowest levels of the north elevations is certainly of an earlier date and may be a remnant. Several precedents have been suggested for how the house might have been configured but one that has been overlooked is that of Smailholm Tower, 5 miles west of Kelso. This has most of the components that seem to have been present at Cornhill House; a tower, a separate hall, a barmkin wall and even a single storey link between the hall and the tower.

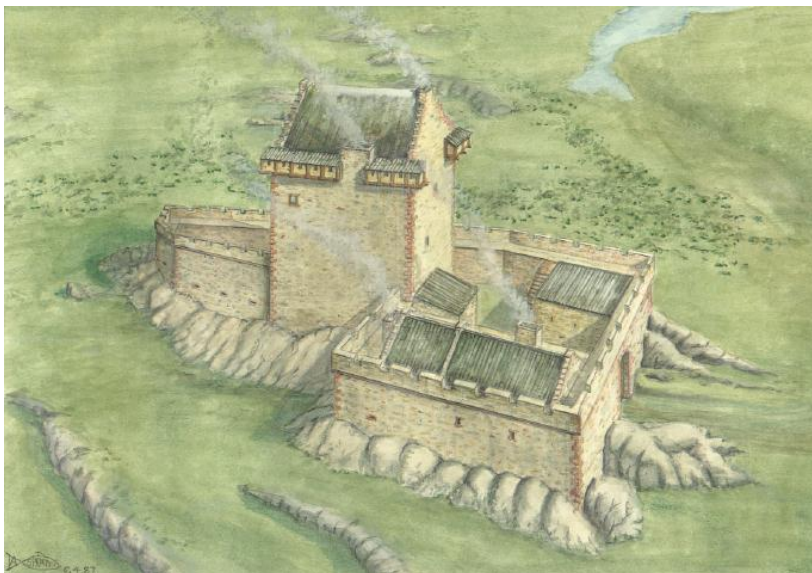
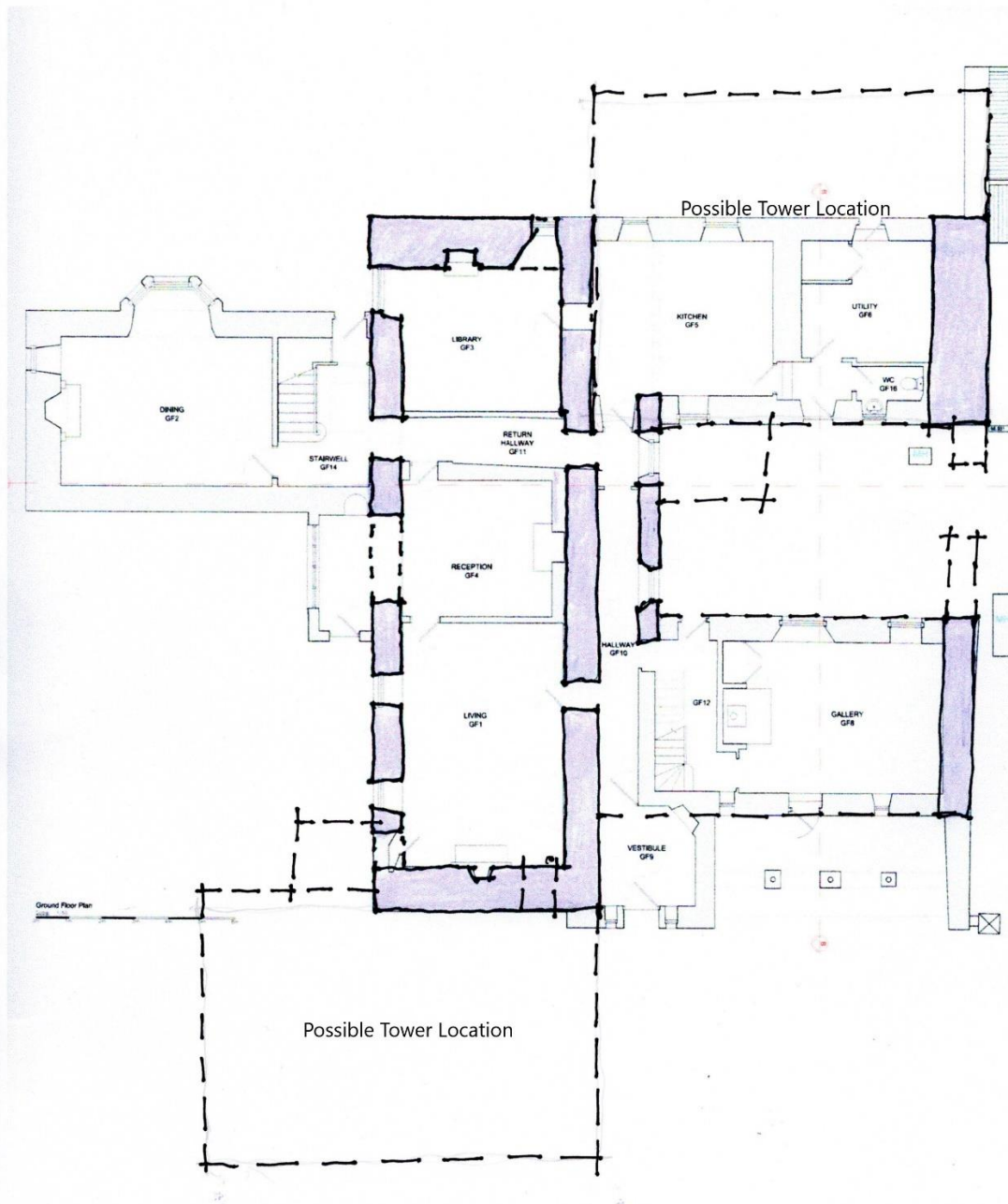


Figure 22 Smailholm Tower, a possible comparison

Smailholm was the residence of the Pringle family and was built during the same period as the Cornhill Tower and for the same purpose, the defence of the family from cross border raids.

Although on the other side of the border it seems likely that construction would follow similar patterns. Could this be the most appropriate comparison for Cornhill House?



16th Century Fabric and Potential Earlier Structures Shown Dotted

Following the union of the crowns in 1603 the requirement for a defensible house reduced significantly and through the 17th century Cornhill House was turned into the dwelling of a country gentleman. It is not certain if this process was started by the Swinhoes before the 1650s or whether this was a result of the Forsters taking over the house in the 1660's. However, an earlier pattern of windows was visible on the southwest wing and the central core. These were smaller windows than the later 18th century versions and seem to be of Jacobean proportions. If they are Jacobean, this would suggest that the wing was built by the Swinhoes rather than the Forsters. This wing has the Forster initials above the fireplace on the ground floor, but this is likely to have been inserted later,

particularly if it refers to the marriage of John Forster of Adderstone and Elizabeth (Isabella) Orde in 1739. The tower could still have existed at that point but by the time the northwest and northeast wings were constructed, it had probably been demolished along with the barmkin wall. Indeed, these could have been the source of the stone for the construction of these wings. There were quoin stones revealed on the northeast corner of the northwest wing with angled cuts that had come from some previous construction.



Figure 23 Earlier window pattern visible in the stonework

The north gable of northeast wing has subsumed an earlier gable wall from a previous building. Its outline was visible when the render was removed, and it is clay built unlike the 17th century walls above and to the south. This earlier building is over the cellar and there are clear signs that the floor levels were lower on this side of the house than at present.



Figure 24 Clay built gable visible on ground floor of northeast wing

The cellar is stone vaulted and runs under the entirety of the Northeast wing. It is possible that this is a very early part of the house as the wing above has undergone at least three rebuilds or alterations. There are brick and stone compartments built on two walls to house various types of stores and a bath like structure that may have been for the storage of ice or for salted salmon.



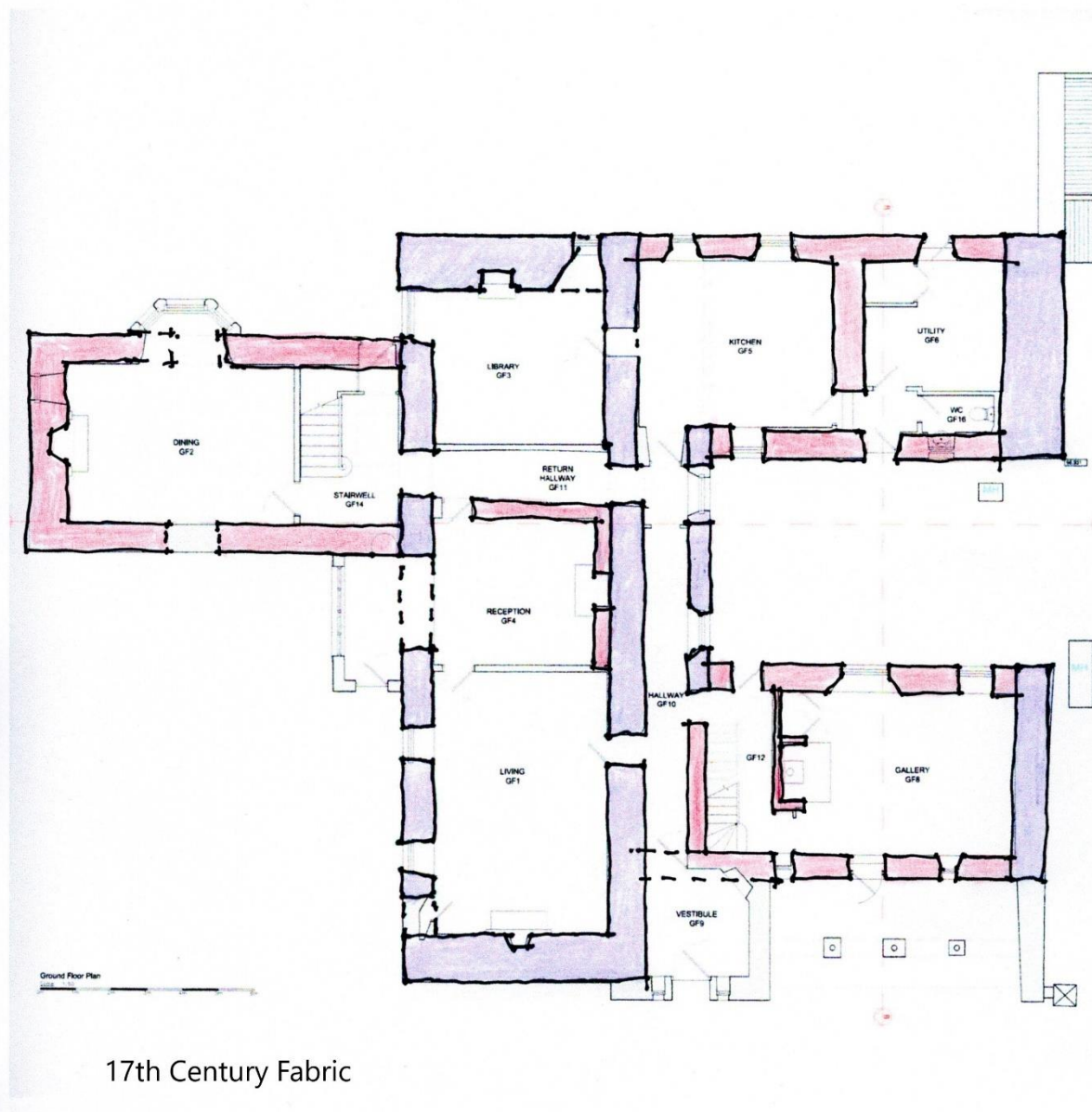
Figure 25 The cellar under the Northeast wing

Could the cellar have housed the salmon stolen by the Seigneur de Esse in his cross border raid of 1547?



Figure 26 The Forster Crest above older fireplace

The thickening of the internal wall in the morning room can be assumed to be a 17th century intervention by the Forster's as the Forster family crest was revealed on a lintel stone above what was a much larger fireplace than at present.



By the middle of the 18th century the house would probably have consisted of the original late 16th early 17th century core and three wings built at various times in the 17th century with some internal alterations.

The Collingwood Family

The Collingwood family (Family Tree – Appendix C) were another member of the landed gentry of North Northumberland and possessed properties across the region. The branch of the family that took possession of Cornhill House descends from Henry Collingwood of Westerheugh who had married the sister of Thomas Forster of Cornhill. Their 70-year marriage resulted in 7 children the eldest of which was his heir John Collingwood born in 1693. The first 3 generations of Collingwoods linked to Cornhill House were all listed as being of Lilburn Tower and Cornhill however, it appears that John's son Henry was the first to own the Lilburn Estates. We can assume that they inherited the Cornhill House after the 1745 death of John Forster when the house passed to the Collingwoods.



Figure 27 The Collingwood Family Crest over the Victorian Stables. *Ferar Unus et Idem* (I will remain unchanged)

In 1749 Henry Collingwood and Francis Blake of Twizel, the other major Cornhill landowner, agreed to divide and share the common fields and the freestone and slates from Brownrigg Quarry. The income from the land and the access to the quarry material allowed both landowners to carry out major building works in the following years.⁵⁶

In 1751 the Collingwoods were given £50 by the trustees of Bishop Crewe to rebuild the chapel in Cornhill. This predates the current Church of St Helen, which was built in 1840, although substantial parts of the 1751 chapel were incorporated in the rebuild⁵⁷. Nathaniel Crewe was the 3rd Baron Crewe and was married to Dorothy Forster, sister of Thomas Forster IX of Adderstone.



Figure 28 Map of Cornhill and surrounding area showing land ownership 1769

⁵⁶ Kent, Catherine. *Twizel Castle: The Creation and Re-Creation of a Northumbrian Gentry House*. Unpublished MA dissertation, University of York, 2010.

⁵⁷ Huthcinson, William, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham, Volume 3*

In 1766 Henry Collingwood was High Sheriff of Northumberland and in 1781 he was involved in a committee set up to protect the River Tweed and prevent abuses, which probably meant poaching.⁵⁸ He was also involved in the committee framing the terms of a new act in 1830 on “The more effectual Preservation and Increase of the Breed of Salmon”

In 1793 Henry inherited Lilburn Tower and its estates from his uncle.

Henry was a cousin of Vice Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood who in 1805 was Nelson’s second in command at the Battle of Trafalgar aboard HMS Royal Sovereign. The Royal Sovereign was the first ship to engage the French and Spanish ships. On the death of Nelson, Collingwood became commander in chief and saw through the conclusion and aftermath of the battle⁵⁹. Collingwood and Nelson’s careers were intertwined throughout their service.

Henry Collingwood was probably responsible for the construction of The Collingwood Arms in the early 1800s which would have been built to exploit the increased traffic crossing the border by way of the new Coldstream Bridge built in 1766⁶⁰. It is also likely that the creation of the new road to the bridge prompted the Collingwoods to change the layout of this part of the village. Up until this time the main street of the village had extended along the line of the current drive, this being the route to the Tweed fords. Early maps show buildings on the north side of the drive. With the arrival of the bridge road, the boundary of the house was moved to the road edge and the lodge, and the gate posts were built creating a formal entrance to the grounds. The iron railings surmounting the walls adjacent to the gate posts were manufactured by the Lion Foundry in Kirkintilloch which was not founded till 1880. This suggests that the modelling of the entrance is late rather than early 19th century.



Figure 29 Entrance railings manufactured by the Lion Foundry, Kirkintilloch

Henry Collingwood married three times and had eight children. He had a son with each of his first two wives both of whom were named Henry and both of whom died early. He had another son in

⁵⁸ Balfour, Caroline *The Early Days of the River Tweed Commissioners*

⁵⁹ Griffin, Andrew, *Cuthbert Collingwood; The Northumbrian who saved the Nation*, Hexham, 2004

⁶⁰ Lyon, Jim, *Bridging The Tweed*, 2019

1802 by his third wife this time called Henry John William Collingwood who was to survive and become his heir.

On the death of his father Henry John William inherited both the Lilburn and Cornhill Estates and in 1828 he started the construction of the current Lilburn Tower house using the architect John Dobson who was also responsible for Newcastle railway station⁶¹. The house was eventually finished in 1842 two years after the death of HJW. At this point Lilburn Tower was sold to Edward John Collingwood, a kinsman and nephew of Vice Admiral Collingwood. There is a family story that Lilburn was sold to cover a debt for which HJW Collingwood was a guarantor, although not his debt or that of John Collingwood. HJW Collingwood had been High Sheriff of Northumberland in 1832.

Sometime before 1830 the Collingwood portion of Cornhill and that formerly owned by the Carrs and now the Blakes, were reunited under Collingwood ownership.

HJW Collingwood's son John (1826-96) therefore inherited just the Cornhill estates. John had outlived his elder brother Henry who had died before his father.

In 1844 North Durham, which consisted of the districts of Northhamshire and Islandshire ceased to be part of the County Palatine of Durham because of the Counties (Detached Parts) Act and joined the County of Northumberland.



Figure 30 The Collingwood Arms

The Collingwood Arms remained in the ownership of the family throughout the 19th century. In 1885 the Rural Sanitary Authority instructed John Collingwood that the well in stable yard of Cornhill Hotel was not sanitary and a safe water supply needed to be created. In 1896 John Collingwood is listed as the owner of the English New Water Fishery.

⁶¹ Mackenzie, Eneas (1825). *An Historical, Topographical and Descriptive View of the County of Northumberland*, Vol. II, pp. 14–15. Newcastle upon Tyne: Mackenzie and Dent

John Collingwood was succeeded by his son John Carnaby Collingwood (1870-1952) in 1896. JC Collingwood attended St Mary Hall in Oxford⁶² which is now part of Oriel College and by the time of the death of his father was a lieutenant in the Northumberland Artillery. He became a Justice of the Peace and in 1910 was identified as the owner of the Collingwood Arms⁶³. During the Great War he served as a captain in the Northumberland R.G.A. Militia⁶⁴. This was a branch of the Royal Regiment of Artillery that oversaw coastal artillery batteries. The Northumberland RGA Militia was responsible for the guns protecting Berwick.

In 1920 JC Collingwood donated the land at the entrance to Cornhill House to create the Cornhill War Memorial that now stands there. It is thought that he also funded the memorial⁶⁵.

In 1905 JC Collingwood's son John Henry Francis Collingwood was born. He was to be the last Collingwood to live at Cornhill House.



Figure 31 Cornhill War Memorial

Cornhill House in the 18th and 19th Centuries

By the end of the 17th century the main components of the current Cornhill House were in place; the central core and the three wings to the southwest, northeast and northwest. There was no sign of the earlier tower and the barmkin had probably disappeared as well. The house had a series of smaller Jacobean and earlier windows. A 17th century feature that has remained intact is a fireplace in the attic of the core range which has a carved lintel.

⁶² *Oxford Men and their Colleges*, P125

⁶³ *Land Valuation Book*, 1910

⁶⁴ Litchfield, Norman E H, 1992. *The Territorial Artillery 1908–1988*, The Sherwood Press, Nottingham

⁶⁵ National Heritage List for England, Entry No 1436771



Figure 32 17th Century fireplace with carved lintel in attic

Probably at the time that the house came into the possession of the Collingwoods in the 18th century it underwent a transformation into a Georgian country house. Rather than a rebuild, use was made of the existing 16th and 17th century fabric and a new window pattern was imposed with the earlier windows blocked up or replaced.



Figure 33 Georgian Windows inserted into 16th Century fabric

The windows on the south elevation are the oldest as they have thicker 40mm glazing bars that were typical of the early to mid-Georgian period, when the available glass was more fragile and required greater support. Later Georgian and Victorian windows, of which there are number on the house, make use of narrower 20– 30mm glazing bars. The windows to the stairwell are of the same style and are likely to be part of the first area of refurbishment. This included the creation of the living room and the small adjacent reception room by the insertion of a timber and brick partition wall. The small reception room is square and the living room a well-proportioned rectangle.



Figure 34 Living Room with restored 18th Century Panelling and 19th Century Lincrusta ceiling.

The living room has panelling, doors with pulvinated friezes and cornices and shutters that are original and intact, although the fireplace is a later intervention. The modillion cornice is also original though the moulded ceiling is a Victorian addition and is Lincrusta not plaster.

The main stair is from the earlier remodelling but the panelling to the dining room has more refined, though less exuberant joinery than the living room and was probably carried out later in the 18th century. Again, the fireplace is a later modern intervention.



Figure 35 Later 18th Century panelling restored in the Dining Room

The subdivision of the first-floor rooms above the living room was probably contemporary with the rooms below. All the windows on the south elevation and to the stairwell have good quality original shutters. The cross passage on the first floor has heavily moulded archivolt, imposts, and keystones and these probably date from the earliest remodelling.

There are two possibilities for the location of the kitchen. The ground floor of the Northeast wing has a large stone fireplace that is big enough for cooking and is directly above the cellar where food and drink would have been stored. There was also a hatch in the wall above the fireplace that allowed local cleaning of soot to prevent it dropping into food. An alternative location was suggested when a second large fireplace was revealed when the plaster in the utility room was stripped back for damp proofing work. This also had the same type of hatch.



Figure 36 Possible location for the kitchen in the Northeast wing

The northeast and northwest wings had been linked by single storey infills in the north courtyard. These probably contained wash houses and other ancillary accommodation as well as creating routes that would allow servants to be kept separate from the family.

After the death of HJW Collingwood in 1840 and the sale of Lilburn Tower to another branch of the family, Cornhill House became a sole residence and in the mid to late-19th century, there was a further remodelling of the house that included the extension of the northeast wing at first floor. This created a nursery wing opening onto a balcony with a cast iron balustrade and decorative columns underneath. Cast iron building components were a mid-19th century innovation. The nursery wing was probably built to accommodate John Collingwood's children Mary Jane (b.1868) John Carnaby (b. 1870) and Henry Thomas (b.1872). The extension also created a new entrance, entrance hall and a bathroom above to serve the main bedroom.

Decoratively the Lincrusta ceiling was installed in the living room and Anaglypta paper applied under the dado rails in the corridors. Both these patent materials were invented in 1877. During the 2019 refurbishment three Leclanche cells, which were early batteries that probably powered a doorbell, were discovered behind the panelling in the hallway. These were invented in 1866. Those commissioning the Victorian refurbishment were trying to showcase the latest materials and technology available at the time.



Figure 37 Leclanche cells discovered behind panelling in entrance hall. Probably powered a doorbell

Not long after the death of John Collingwood in 1896, the Victorian stables were built to the southeast of the main house. These were a high-quality addition built in stone and brick that included a tack room and groom's office and utilised cast iron posts and fittings within the stable. Previously the stables had been housed in the 17th or 18th century outbuildings adjacent to the house. However, two thirds of this building had been converted into a billiard room with a single storey link to a door in the dining room (now the living room). The original format of the earlier stables, with a ground floor stable and a hay loft above, is still present in the other third of the building.

During the 2018-21 restoration the attic floors were replaced because of extensive woodworm. Under the floors were discovered several shoes, mainly children's'. It is likely that these were placed there to ward off evil spirits and witches, a superstition that lasted into the 19th century



Figure 38 One of a number of shoes found under the attic floor

The Gardens and Grounds

At what point the barmkin was demolished and the substantial garden wall was constructed is unknown, but it might be reasonable to assume that the stone from the tower and/or barmkin were used in its construction. The wall is perhaps Georgian in origin and at a later point has been reinforced by the construction of substantial stone buttresses on the north side. The OS map of 1860 shows the wall in place with the small garden sheds constructed on the outer sides. There are fruit trees growing at the top of the slope in front of the west elevation. The current four large lime trees adjacent to the east elevation of the house are shown as mature trees suggesting that these could be between 170 and 200 years old. Also shown are a bowling green in the paddock to the southeast of the house and a road leading from the village to a ford over the Duddo Burn.



Figure 39 1860 OS Map

The lower part of the wall on the south side of the carriage turn is much older than the upper part and was extended firstly to allow the construction of single storey lean to stables on the south side and subsequently altered when the 1897 stables were constructed. The wall was rendered at that point.

The 1896 OS map shows a building on the south side of the wall adjacent to the house. This would have been a glasshouse which was heated by a boiler located in the sheds on the north side of the wall. On both the 1860 and 1896 maps there is a pattern of paths shown in the garden indicating that it was split up for different horticultural functions.

The 20th Century

John Henry Francis Collingwood became the last Collingwood to live at Cornhill House on the death of his father in 1952. He had been commissioned into the Queens Bay's in 1925 and was part of the Special Operations executive during the Second World War. In 1948 he had started a love affair with Nan(cy) Huddleston (nee Davis), a cousin of his wife, also called Nancy (nee Moss). This was to last 25 years and had a significant effect on the fate of Cornhill House.⁶⁶

Nan was the wife of Australian born Teddy Hudleston who was a senior officer in the RAF during and after the War rising to Air Chief-Marshal (four star). Although he was aware of Nan's affair with Johnny Collingwood, they were to remain married, mainly to prevent any negative effects on Teddy's career. Teddy had also embarked on an affair with his wife's sister Pip, although this did not lead to a divorce. Johnny was to divorce his wife in 1954 with Nan cited as the other woman. Following the divorce Johnny and Nan continued their relationship until Johnny's death in 1975. Throughout this time Nan and her extended family paid frequent visits to stay with Johnny at Cornhill House.

On his death Johnny Collingwood left the Cornhill Estate in trust to Nan Hudleston However, she was not interested in the property and decided to divest herself of the responsibility. The fishing rights were sold off. The farms were sold and ultimately the house itself was disposed of to Mairi Packshaw. The lodge at the end of the drive was then sold on.

There was a riding stable run from the house at some point in the 1970's which utilised the Victorian stables and the earlier lean-to stables. At that time there were other hay sheds and buildings in the vicinity of the stables.

In 1953 Teddy and Nan Hudleston had taken charge of a five-year-old nephew, Eric Grounds, the son of one of Nancy's sisters. Eric had been born in the United States the son of an American wartime sailor and his Australian mother. From that point on Eric was looked after by both the Hudlestons and Johnny Collingwood and lived from 1955-77 in Cornhill House.

In 1986 Eric and his wife Joanna bought Cornhill House from Mairi Packshaw and lived there for 20 years bringing up their family. Eric was to become the latest in a long Cornhill House line when he became High Sheriff of Northumberland in 2006. He had a career in the army where he made the acquaintance of a fellow officer Mark Phillips and subsequently performed the role of best man when Phillips married Princess Anne in 1973. Eric is a professional fund raiser for charities and author.

⁶⁶ Grounds, Eric, *The Quiet Australian: The Story of Teddy Hudleston, the RAF's Troubleshooter for 20 Years*, 2015

Eric along with Johnny Collingwood before him and John Carnaby Collingwood before him were all chairman of the Norham and Islandshire / Berwick Magistrates Bench.

A tennis court was installed at the bottom of the walled garden in 1997

The 21st Century Restoration

In 2006 Cornhill House was sold to Richard Palmer and his wife Lady Margaret Lilford. Lady Lilford died in 2014 and the house was bought in 2018 by architects David and Jacqueline Heslop. The house had suffered many years of neglect and has been undergoing a programme of restoration and improvement which continues to this date.

Richard Palmer had defaulted on a mortgage on the property, and it had been repossessed by the bank so was sold as seen for cash. Consequently, there was very little information available on the history and condition of the house. Fortunately, David and Jacqui were experienced architects with knowledge of the problems likely to be encountered with an historic house. From the outset the aim was to restore the historic fabric of the building and return it to being a viable family home.

Having decided on their preferred layout the first step was to obtain Listed Building Consent for the repairs and alterations. Although the house was Grade 2* listed there were no records of it other than the brief listing in the National Heritage List. A Heritage Assessment was required to accompany the application, and this was carried out by Catherine Kent of Robin Kent Ltd in January 2019. The assessment hinted at a rich historical story to the house that preceded the Collingwood ownership of the middle 18th century and was the spark that inspired this study.

The application mainly covered the restoration strategy and some internal alterations and was passed without any significant conditions other than a requirement to produce comprehensive survey drawings, a standing building record and some limited external archaeological investigation.

The principal problem was that the house was very damp, and it was decided that the prime cause of this was that, at some point, the house had been re-rendered with a sand cement render. Although this material is fairly impervious it is also brittle, and cracks had formed allowing water to penetrate into the underlying stonework. Once behind the render the moisture could not escape, and the internal surfaces became damp. A chemically injected damp proof course had been installed but this method is unlikely to be successful with very thick random rubble walls.



Figure 40 Typical damp problems to the ground floor

The strategy developed encompassed the removal of all the sand cement render and any damaged plaster on the internal walls. The damp affected walls were then vertically tanked with a proprietary membrane. The stonework walls were left uncovered for about 12 months to allow them to dry out during which time repairs were carried out to the stonework.



Figure 41 Extreme damp conditions in the ground floor

The gables exhibited many vertical cracks mainly related to flue positions but also some poorly inserted windows. Cracks were stitched together with horizontal stainless-steel rods and decayed stonework replaced.



Figure 42 Vertical cracks discovered in the gable walls were stitched with ss rods

Once dried out the building was rendered with a lime render and then painted with a silicate-based paint. This specification allows a certain amount of moisture penetration, but the walls can breathe allowing them to dry out quickly.



Figure 43 The house re-rendered and painted

Internally the only alterations to the layout were the replacement of a door between the kitchen and the library with a door from the library to the corridor and the combining of the two small bedrooms in the first-floor nursery wing to create a studio opening out onto the Victorian balcony. However,

the kitchen, utility room and all bathrooms and toilets were replaced. All the electrical and mechanical services were renewed, and fire and security systems installed.



Figure 44 New kitchen

The house retains a significant amount of original Georgian and Victorian joinery. This has been fully restored and where elements were missing these have been reinstated. The two panelled rooms had had been stripped back to expose the timber however it was determined that the rooms were originally painted, and they have therefore been repainted using a traditional linseed oil paint. This allows for some flexibility in the finish and the timber to breathe.



Figure 45 Restored panelling in the dining room

The Victorian ironwork and balcony on the east elevation was in advanced state of decay due to water penetration through the deck.



Figure 46 Existing condition of the Victorian ironwork



Figure 47 The restored balcony

Careful attention was paid to the external spaces around the house in particular courtyards and terraces to ensure that relationship between the house and the ground was harmonious. This included the terrace under the balcony and the north courtyard.



Figure 48 The north courtyard before restoration



Figure 49 The north courtyard repaved and restored.

The landscaping of the gardens will be an ongoing project, but the early creation of the north vegetable garden was particularly pleasing. The outbuildings were in an advanced state of collapse, so the rear walls were rebuilt, and a new roof structure built then reroofed with the recovered slates. The area of grass was returned and raised planting beds, a greenhouse and fruit cage installed.



Figure 50 The vegetable garden



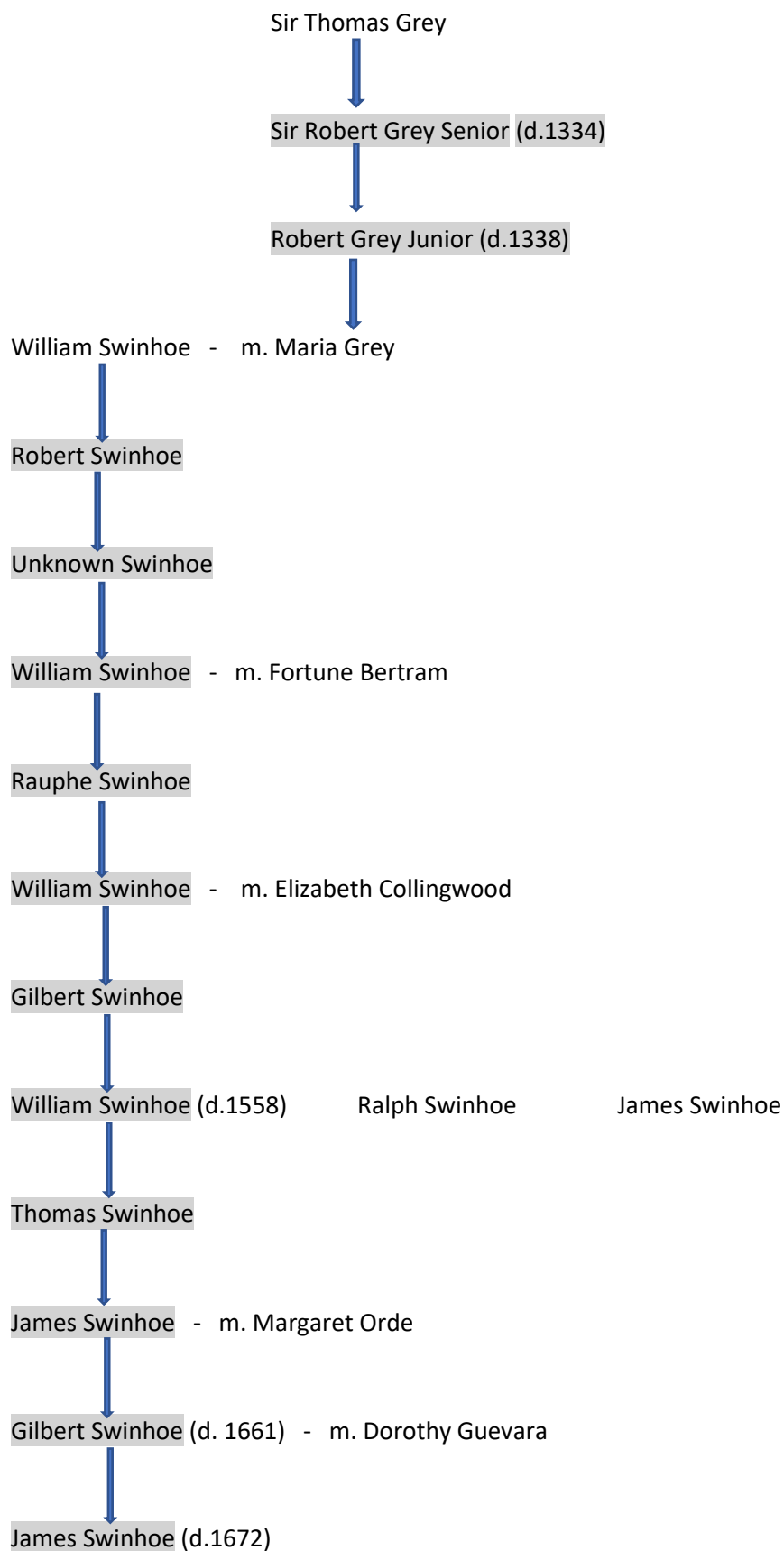
Figure 51 The restored east elevation



Figure 52 The restored west elevation

Appendix A - Grey and Swinhoe Family Tree

Occupant of Cornhill House or Manor



Appendix B – Forster Family Tree

Occupant of Cornhill House

Sir Matthew Forster of Etherstone

John Forster of Cornhill (1619-1679)

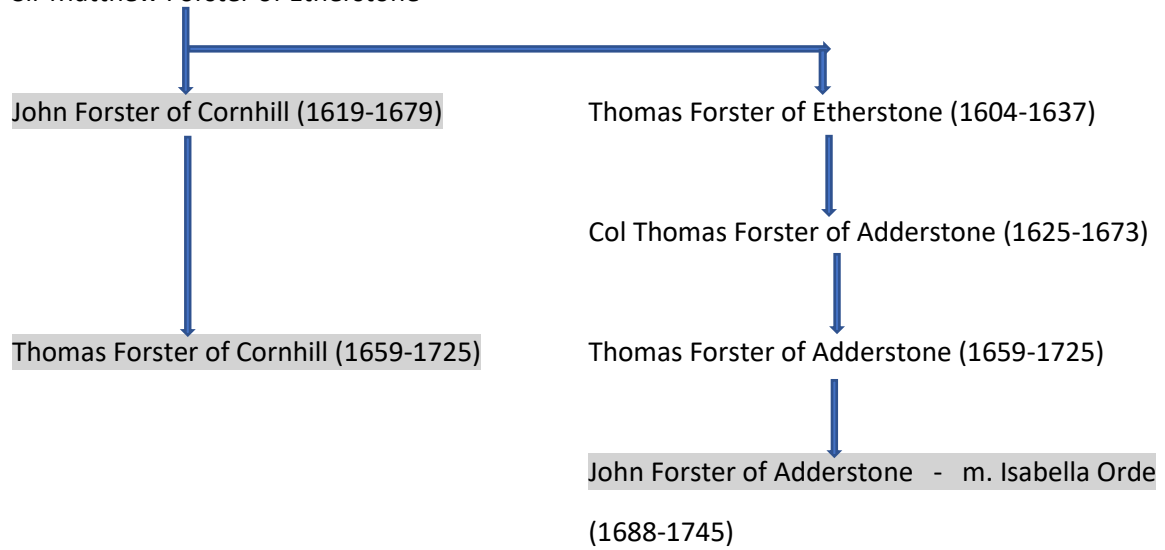
Thomas Forster of Cornhill (1659-1725)

Thomas Forster of Etherstone (1604-1637)

Col Thomas Forster of Adderstone (1625-1673)

Thomas Forster of Adderstone (1659-1725)

John Forster of Adderstone - m. Isabella Orde
(1688-1745)



Appendix C – Collingwood Family Tree

Occupant of Cornhill House

Henry Collingwood of Westerheugh (1653-1756) - m. Elizabeth Forster

John Collingwood (1693 -)

Henry Collingwood (1757-1827) - m. Mary Ann Watson (1780-1852)

Henry John Collingwood (1802- 1840) - m. Frances Emily Carnaby Haggerston (1805-1870)

John Collingwood (1826-1896) - m. Jane Lumsden (1832-1909)

John Carnaby Collingwood (1870-1953) - m. Katherine Winifred Swanston (1878-1951)

John Henry Francis Collingwood (1905-1975) - m. Nancy Moss (1905--)

Appendix D – High Sheriffs of Northumberland Resident at Cornhill House

Gilbert Swinhoe – 1642

John Forster – 1672

Henry Collingwood – 1766

Henry JW Collingwood – 1832

Eric Grounds - 2006

Appendix E – A Cornhill House Timeline

1239	William de Cornale listed in the Durham Tithe Rolls
1296	Edward I invades Scotland passing by Cornhill House site
1306	Henricus de Cornale listed in the Durham Tithe Rolls
1328	Cornhill land comes into possession of Robert Grey (Senior)
1334	Robert Grey (Junior) inherits Cornhill land. First record of a manor house in Cornhill as well as a mill, brewery, maltings and fishery
1338	Robert Grey (Junior) dies leaving estate to daughter Maria aged 2 so land held by Bishop of Durham. Maria later marries William Swinhoe but dies before achieving majority
1382	Land restored to Maria's son Robert Swinhoe on him achieving his majority
1385	Wark and Cornhill Castles raised by Franco Scottish army under Jean de Vienne. Likely that any buildings on Cornhill estate would have been destroyed
1415	Survey of Castles and Fortalices of Northumberland lists Cornhill Tower in the possession William Swinhoe, grandson of Robert
1477	William Swinhoe, grandson of the earlier William inherits estate
1487	William Swinhoe paid to maintain garrison by Henry VII
1496	Likely that Cornhill Tower was damaged by short-lived Scots invasion in support of false pretender Perkin Warbeck. A survey of border defences later that year lists Cornhill Tower as worth repairing
1513	Scottish forces under James VI would have passed by the site on their way to and from the Battle of Flodden
1522	Gilbert Swinhoe, son of William paid to maintain 10 archers in defence of border
1524	Scots burn Cornhill, Branxton, and Ford
1528	Gilbert Swinhoe paid to maintain garrison of 20 horsemen
1536	Swinhoes take part in Pilgrimage of Grace in support of the Percy family but escape execution after failure
1541	Survey of defences of the border lists Cornhill Tower and Gilbert Swinhoe about to build a barmkin wall
1543	Start of Rough Wooing campaign against Scotland. Swinhoes involved till at least 1547
1549	Cornhill House attacked and looted by Franco Scottish army commanded by Andre de Montalembert, Seigneur de Esse
1554	Ralph and William Swinhoe, sons of Gilbert hold posts in Berwick garrison
1557	William Swinhoe involved in sending intelligence to English Court
1558	Cornhill House attacked by Franco Scottish army resulting in the death of William Swinhoe
1561	Border survey lists tower and barmkin in fairly good condition
1569	Ralph and James Swinhoe younger brothers of William involved in Northern Earls rebellion against Elizabeth I. Swinhoes escape execution again
1571	James Swinhoe is sending intelligence to English Court
1584	Thomas Swinhoe, son of William listed as owner of Cornhill Tower in Border Commissioners report. Core of current Cornhill House was in existence at this point so probably a hall attached to the tower.
1596	Thomas Swinhoe is listed as a Catholic recusant

1638	Gilbert Swinhoe, grandson of Thomas is listed as a colonel and field commander in the pay of the Earl of Northumberland
1640	Gilbert's son James listed as a captain in Sir Robert Clavering's Regiment of Foot. Covenanter Army crosses border passing the house on its way to Battle of Newburn
1642	Gilbert Swinhoe is High Sheriff of Northumberland and raises posse comitatus in support of Charles I at outbreak of Civil War
1644	Gilbert arrested but released on bond however raises guerrilla force to fight Scots covenanters
1643	James takes part in Battle of Adwalton Moor
1646	Gilbert arrested again and dies in Tower of London
1651	James is fined by parliament for his part in the Civil War and shortly after this Cornhill House passes to the Forster family
1660	John Forster listed as 'of Cornhill'. General Monck's 'Coldstream Guards' pass by Cornhill House on their way South to support the restoration of Charles II
1600 - 1685	It is likely that during this period the tower and barmkin wall were demolished and perhaps used to construct the 3 wings
1685	Thomas Forster, son of John is Common Councilman and Justice of the peace in Berwick
1690	Thomas Forster is High Sheriff of Northumberland
1745	Cornhill House passes to Thomas Forster's sister Elizabeth who had married Henry Collinwood of Westerheugh and is occupied by their son John Collingwood
1749	Henry Collingwood, son of John, divides the common land and quarry with Francis Blake
1749-1793	It is likely that in this period the 16th and 17 th century fabric and interior were turned into a Georgian country house
1751	Collingwoods given £50 by the Bishoprick to rebuild the Church of St Helen
1766	Henry Collinwood is High Sheriff of Northumberland
1793	Henry Collingwood inherits Lilburn Estates
1828	Henry Collingwood dies and is succeeded by his son Henry John William Collingwood
1832	HJW Collingwood is High Sheriff of Northumberland
1840	HJW dies and is succeeded by his son John but Lilburn estates are sold to cover a debt, so John only inherits Cornhill
1844	North Durham becomes part of the County of Northumberland
1860-1896	Victorian alterations to the house including the new entrance, nursery wing, interior decorative work, and stables
1920	John Collingwood donates land for War Memorial at entrance to Cornhill House
1952	John Henry Francis Collingwood inherits Cornhill Estate from his father
1975	JHF Collingwood dies and leaves estate to his lover Nancy Hudleston who sells it in parts leaving only the house and 12 acres
1986	House is bought by Eric and Jo Grounds from Mairi Packshaw. Eric was a nephew of Nancy Hudleston
2006	Eric Grounds is High Sheriff of Northumberland
2006	House is bought by Richard Palmer and his wife Lady Margaret Lilford
2014	House is bought by David and Jacqueline Heslop