

DALMELLINGTON

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DALMELLINGTON, EAST AYRSHIRE
OUTLINE CHRONOLOGY

DALMELLINGTON CAA

Narrative chronology

Location and topography



Figure*1 - *Coila Provincia*, Blaeu's Atlas Novus, 1654

Dalmellington lies at a height of 183 metres (600 feet) above sea level some 24 kilometres (15 miles) south-east of Ayr.

It is situated on the east side of the valley of the river Doon on one of its tributaries, the Muck (also Muick) Water (Fig*1). At this point the Doon Valley broadens, creating an area of flat terrain between the hills that runs ca.5 km S-N and 1.6 km W-E at its broadest. Within this small area, Bogton Loch lies c.1.5 km to the south-east of the town and Berbeth/Craigengillan around 2 km south of that. The head of Loch Doon itself is just under 1.5 km due south of Craigengillan House, linked by the gorge of the Ness Glen.

The settlement is located at the junction of two significant routeways: the road from Galloway that runs northwards to Ayr (A713) and the route eastwards which connects with New Cumnock and the valley of the River Nith (B741).

Originally, the former bifurcated just south-east of the town: the northern route followed the line of the Muck past the site of Dame Helen's Castle and the Motte; the southern joined with the road from Berbeth/Craigengillan and entered the town from the south-west and became Townhead. The two reunited again just north-east of the medieval church to form the High Street. This crossed the Muck Water and turned up modern High Main Street which was the western end of the routeway from New Cumnock. The old road to Ayr ran west from this from a junction just north-west of the present parish church, following the higher ground along the eastern side of the valley.

Prehistoric and Roman

The Doon Valley has a number of archaeological sites and finds that indicate that it was settled from a very early period. One of the earliest of these dates from the Neolithic period and was found within the curtilage of the modern town of Dalmellington itself:

A ground stone axe found by T Lafferty in the garden of 1 Castle Road, Dalmellington (NS 4830 0573) was donated to the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland (NMAS) by him in 1981-2. NMAS 1982

[\(http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/42579/details/dalmellington/\)](http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/42579/details/dalmellington/)

Later developments, especially from the 18th/19th century period of agricultural improvement onwards, have removed much of the evidence from the prehistoric period. However, earlier written histories recorded observations about some of the sites that have been lost, in particular for a number of Neolithic/Bronze Age burial cairns in the area:

Cairns or Tumuli

A note attached to Hettrick's poems says:- "There must have been event of considerable importance on the old road leading from Dalmellington to Carsphairn are there are no fewer than five tumuli between these two places. The two nearest to Dalmellington were moved within these few years (1823) to form stone dykes, and on the sites of each, human bones were found. The names of four of these are Cairn Bublick, Cairn Annock, Cairn Avel, and Cairn Daltulluchan. The name of the fifth seems to be forgot."

Mr Houston says:- "There have been three considerable cairns or heaps of loose stones in the parish, all above the village. One of these immense heaps about half-a-mile to the ESE on the top of a little hill, measured about 115 yards in circumference. The materials of it were a few years ago (1837) applied by the present occupant of the land to the more useful purpose of building dykes. There were found under it several graves covered with flat stones, and containing dry human bones. Sometime before, about a mile from it, in a valley was applied to the same purpose, under it were also found graves and bones. Some remains of a third, called the White Cairn of Carnannock, have been left in the middle of the moor, about half-a-mile from the head of the parish, and as far to the SW of the Galloway road.

(Hendrie, 1889, 18-19)

The two local lochs would have provided valuable resources and also have been attractive places for settlers from the earliest periods of occupation. Evidence that the islands and environs of Loch Doon were being utilised at the beginning of the first millennium C.E. was provided in 1826:

In 1826, many important discoveries were made near Castle Island – the former site of Loch Doon Castle. Robert Burness in his Common Place Book (1873) writes: 'Some years ago, opposite to the grand entrance of Loch Doon Castle, there was found, at the bottom of the loch, seven ancient boats or canoes, hewn out of solid oak, and 24ft feet long by 4ft broad, in one of which were a battle-axe and war club, both apparently of great antiquity'. Carbon dating has traced these finds to the 1st century AD. Some of the relics can be seen at the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow.

<http://www.spenergywholesale.com/userfiles/file/LochDoonComplete2011.pdf>

It has been posited that Elizabeth Isle in Bogton Loch was also occupied around this time:

A small island named Elizabeth Isle, which is situated close to the NE shore of Bogton Loch, has the appearance of a crannog when viewed from the drive to Craigengillan. It was entirely surrounded by water, and heavily overgrown, so no attempt was made to visit it.

[\(http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/42557/details/elizabeth+isle+bogton+loch/\)](http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/42557/details/elizabeth+isle+bogton+loch/)

Crannogs in general have been dated to late-Iron Age and early-medieval periods and have been found throughout Ayrshire:

Often inaccessible and overgrown, these are difficult structures to envisage today, often appearing as little more than a stony island, occasionally with the traces of waterlogged timberwork visible around their margins, but in Ayrshire a remarkable series of investigations were carried out in the late C19 – Ashgrove Loch, Lochlee, Lochspouts, Kilbirnie Loch and Buiston. Often little more than dredging operations, these produced a rich harvest of Roman and early medieval artefacts...
(Close & Riches, 2012, 14)

Evidence for possible Roman occupation during the 1st to 3rd centuries C.E. is absent from the archaeological record. Most discussion for this period has centred around the possibility that the legions built a road that ran S-N through the Doon Valley and through Dalmellington:

...according to the statement of Chalmers in his “Caledonia,” the Roman road which went through Nithsdale, and came by Tynron through Glencairn, in which parish there was a station, called in recent times the Castlehill, or Camphill. It passed on “through the lands of Altry, in Dalry parish, to the farm of Holm, in Carsphairn, whence it proceeded along the ridge of Polwhat to the NW extremity of the same parish, and entered, Ayrshire, which it penetrated by Dalmellington, to the Firth of Clyde.” We can still trace an old road coming over the Muckle Eriff wood down to the wood above Mossdale, on the present road to Loch Doon. The latter road it crosses almost at right angles, and then holds up over the hill pretty close to the old road which there goes over “the Rig” to Bellsbank; only, as they advanced, the engineers of those days held a little to the right and came down the NE slope of what is now the town’s hill, behind the present Castle Croft Cottage, close by the end of Meadowbank, to the Townhead. It passed through the ground where the town now stands, evidently down High Street, across the river, somewhere about the Steponds, and up “the Path.” We find it again towards Craigmark – the road to Burnhead is practically its track – then it held across to Kilmein. One branch of it comes out at Little Mill, another is found towards Smithstonbridge, on the road to Ayr. This latter went onto Ayr, where the Romans are thought to have had a station. Mr Houston states “That the last remains of it in this parish, on the farm of Burnhead, were raised in 1830 to repair some dykes which had formerly been built of the whinstone of which the road was formed. It had been from ten to eleven feet broad, composed of a row of large stones on either side and filled up with smaller between.” Some authorities think this was only one of the old causewayed roads such as were ordered to be made in the reign of Queen Anne, and hold it as a mere tradition that there ever was such a thing as a Roman road on the east side of the Doon. No Roman remains are known to have been found on the tack of this road, or elsewhere in the parish.
(Hendrie, 1889, 11-12)

Taken as a body of evidence, it appears clear that Dalmellington and the surrounding landscape in the Doon Valley has been occupied from at least four to five thousand years ago. A proper archaeological survey of the area would probably yield further evidence for the prehistoric period and illuminate further what is clearly a very important archaeological and historical landscape.

Medieval

There is almost no evidence relating to the early medieval period in Dalmellington and the Doon Valley. The first feature of note that can be dated with some accuracy is the Motte (also Mote or Moat) that is located on the southern bank of the Muck Water on the higher ground to the east of the historic settlement:

Timber towers were constructed either on existing rock outcrops or man-made mounds and all set within a bailey. A few of these mounds survive: one at the eastern end of Dalmellington built by Thomas Colville, who had received the territory from the 1st Earl of Carrick to guard against incursions from Galloway.
(Close & Riches, 37)

Thomas de Colville was the second generation of an Anglo-Norman family and, as such, representative of the socio-political changes that were taking place in Scotland during the 1100s.

By the 11th century, what later became the historic county of Ayrshire was actually three separate districts. In the north, Cunninghame and Kyle are believed to have been part of the kingdom of Strathclyde, while in the south Carrick was part of the Lordship of Galloway. The border between Cunninghame and Kyle was the natural boundary of the River Irvine, while to the south the River Doon separated Kyle from Carrick.

In the second quarter of the 12th century, David I began to introduce the Norman form of feudalization into the area. Strathclyde was subsumed into the kingdom of Alba and many Anglo-Normans were given land previously held by local lords: Cunninghame was given to Hugh de Moreville; the northern part of Kyle to Walter Fitz Alan (Kyle Stewart); the southern part was retained as crown land (Kyle Regis).

Carrick was awarded c.1185 to Donnchad (or Duncan) mac Gille Brigte, 1st Earl of Carrick, a local lord whose cousin Lochlann (or Roland) had been granted control of the Lordship of Galloway. Lochlann married Helena, the grand-daughter of Hugh de Moreville, and, consequently, sometime around 1196, he inherited the de Moreville lands of Cunninghame, making him the most powerful man in the south-west.

Donnchad died in 1250 and was succeeded by his son (or possibly grandson) Niall, the 2nd Earl of Carrick. He died six years later and his only surviving child was Marjory who became the Countess of Carrick. In 1271, she married Robert de Brus, the 6th Lord of Annandale, whose first born son became Earl of Carrick following his mother's death in 1292, and then King Robert I of Scotland in 1306.

It was into this evolving political landscape that the de Colville family were introduced in the second half of the 12th century. The original ancestor of the Colvilles, Gilbert de Colavilla (also de Colville or Colvyle), had accompanied William the Conqueror when he came over to England and, as a result, he and his descendants were given various landholdings.

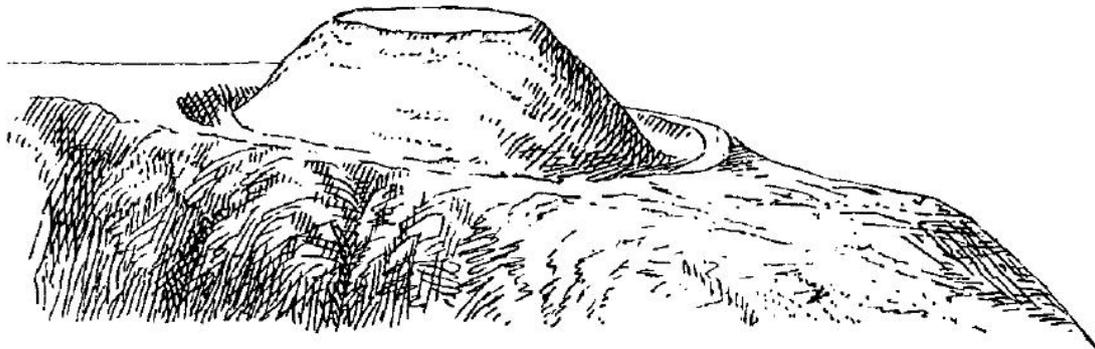
The first historical record for the family in Scotland dates from the mid-12th century when Philip de Colville was witness to a general confirmation by King Malcolm IV (grandson and successor of David I) of all donations made by his predecessors to the monastery of Dunfermline before 1159 (Anderson, 1863). He was one of the hostages for the release of King William the Lion from captivity in England in 1174. This closeness to the Scottish Crown led to him being given land in various parts of the country, including Ayrshire.

His son, Thomas de Colville, witnessed several charters of King William between 1189 and 1199 but, in 1210, he was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle under suspicion of being complicit in a conspiracy against the king. He was released six months later and remained close to William until his death in 1214. Thomas himself died in 1219 and was succeeded by his son, William de Colville, who settled at Morham and was proprietor of the barony of Kinnaird in Stirlingshire.

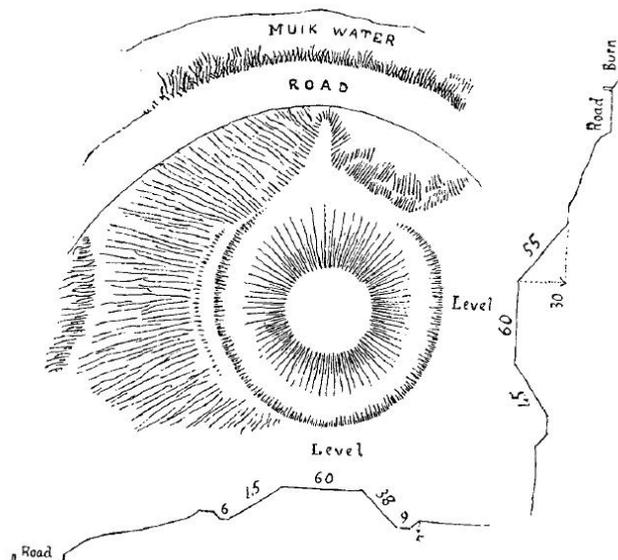
Very little is known about the de Colville's relationship with their possessions in and around the Doon Valley. Thomas de Colville owned the lands of Carsphairn which he leased to Melrose Abbey, a Cistercian house, sometime around 1190. It seems that it was too remote for them as they let the land go in exchange for grazing rights in the Lammermuirs. Colville then granted the Carsphairn lands to another Cistercian house, Vaudey Abbey in Lincolnshire. He also granted to them a large grange or hill-farm at Dalmellington but, by 1223, the Lincolnshire monks were forced to transfer this estate to Melrose as it was "*useless and dangerous*" to them because of attacks by the native population (<http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/42578/details/dalmellington/>).

However, the primary role for which the de Colvilles were given the land in the Doon Valley was to impose political and military control over it on behalf of his feudal superior, the 1st Earl of Carrick. The most obvious and long-lasting output from this was the construction of the motte:

*Dalmellington Motte towers over the east end of the village in a striking manner, at the west end of a plateau, called the Castle Crofts, which is considerably higher than the village. The road to Carsphairn, and the Muik Water are in a narrow pass at the foot of the mote on its north side. The mound is nearly circular, 60 feet in diameter on the level top, and slopes steeply to a trench, which cuts it off from the Castle Crofts plateau on the east and south, and from the slope to the village westward. Northward, perhaps from erosion, there is no room for a trench, but a narrow terrace, overlooking the descent to the burn, completes the circuit. The trench slopes towards the north, so that the greatest height of the mound, about 30 feet, is towards this terrace, and the top of the mote may be 60 to 70 feet above the village and burn. The trench is 6 to 9 feet wide at the bottom, and has an outer flat-topped low rampart on the west side. About forty years ago the mote was "restored," but I find on inquiry that nothing more was done than a necessary filling up of gaps formed by the rain. (Christison, 1893,382-384; Figs*2-*4)*



Figure*2 - *Dalmellington Motte*, Christison, 1893, 383



Figure*3 - *Dalmellington Motte*, Christison, 1893, 383



Figure*4 - *The Moat, Dalmellington*, n.d.(Stenlake Collection)

Nothing is known about the construction or the life of the motte, including exactly when it was built and when it went out of use. However, it is assumed that there originally was a wooden tower on the top, but whether there was ever an actual bailey alongside it is not clear: many similar motte structures in Scotland apparently never had any adjacent enclosure so it would not have been unusual if the structure at Dalmellington was similarly simply a tower atop a wholly or partially artificial mound.

Whether this tower was occupied by the de Colvilles at any point is also unknown but, as their principal properties and interests appear to have been based elsewhere in Scotland, it seems unlikely. The role of occupying the tower and controlling the area may have been passed to a vassal of the family. The motte was made a Scheduled Ancient Monument in 1970.

The other great fortification in the area is, of course, Doon Castle (a.k.a. Balloch Castle; Figs*5-*8):

During the C13, with the western seaboard under Scottish control, the feudal system imposed by the crown began to make its mark. The connections between the holders of lordships with landownership in England provided a fruitful understanding of Norman defensive buildings which, combined with home-grown initiatives, brought about a variety of new castle types. Loch Doon Castle was constructed in the later C13 on an island site as part of the defence against raids from Galloway. It comprises uniquely an eleven-sided strong curtain wall, its form dictated by the topography, enclosing the site in a manner adopted along the western seaboard at Mingary and Castle Tioram. The ashlar masonry, despite being moved and re-erected when Loch Doon became a reservoir, is particularly sophisticated, rising progressively towards the entrance, the facework exhibiting a technical mannerism in the checked or rebated joint. A feature of these high-walled enclosures is their formidable strength and lack of openings; here the entrance arrangement of a main gateway with clear evidence of its defensive nature and a small postern gate are the only breaches.
(Close & Riches, 2012, 37-38)

As with Dalmellinton motte, very little is known about Doon Castle but it is believed that it was probably constructed sometime after 1272 under the aegis of Robert de Brus acting *jure uxoris* as Earl of Carrick. As stated above, its shape followed that of the island it was built upon, resulting in a formidable fortress that was both high-walled and surrounded by deep water, hence immune to the

power of contemporary siege engines. For all of that, however, the castle was subject to successful military actions on a number of occasions before it was finally abandoned in the 1500s:

The castle was in the hands of the Earls of Carrick in the 13th century. During the Scottish Wars of Independence it was held by the governor Sir Gilbert de Carrick (chief of Clan Kennedy) who surrendered it to the English. It was soon recovered by the forces of King Robert I of Scotland. The castle fell later to the English and was recaptured in 1314. The castle was besieged in 1335. During the 15th century, the castle was in the hands of the Kennedy family. The castle was taken from them by William Douglas, 8th Earl of Douglas after a siege in 1446. Having been given back to the Kennedy family, the castle was again taken from them by William Crauford of Lefnoris in 1511. The castle was destroyed in the 16th century by King James V of Scotland as part of a general policy of reducing the power of the barons of Galloway.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balloch_Castle_\(Loch_Doon\)\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balloch_Castle_(Loch_Doon)))

Following plans to redevelop Loch Doon for a hydro-power scheme in the 1930s, the castle was removed from its island location to the west bank in 1935 and 1936. Despite this, Loch Doon Castle was listed as Category A (of national importance) in 1989:

Loch Doon Castle originally stood on a rocky island in the loch, immediately offshore from its present location. During low water this island is visible, and part of the castle still remains there. The bulk of the castle was taken down, stone by stone, and re-erected on its present spot in 1935. The reason was the construction of a hydroelectric scheme, which would raise the water-level. It was important to save the castle's stone curtain wall – it is a fine and unusual example of an enclosure castle of the late 1200s. The curtain wall had eleven sides and was built of the highest quality. The wall had two entrances, like most castles. One was a simple but impressive pointed-arched main entrance, complete with door and portcullis (the iron portcullis is said to still lie out in the loch). The other was a postern, or back gate. Vestiges of the original internal buildings can still be seen on the inside face of the curtain wall. These include a fine fireplace heating the great hall and an arched aumbry (cupboard). At a later date, probably in the early 1500s, the Kennedys built a tower house inside the curtain wall, the foundations of which were also brought across from the island.

http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/propertyresults/propertydetail.htm?PropID=PL_201



Figure*5 - Loch Doon, Galloway, n.d. (Stenlake Collection)



Figure*6 - *Loch Doon Castle*, n.d. (Stenlake Collection)



Figure*7 - *Loch Doon Castle*, n.d. (Stenlake Collection)



Figure*8 - Interior Balloch Castle, Loch Doon, Dalmellington, n.d. (Stenlake Collection)

As well as the motte and Loch Doon Castle, there are three other fortifications in the vicinity of Dalmellington that date from the medieval period:

- Dame Helen's Castle
- Laight Castle
- Keir's Castle

As with the motte, very little is known about any of these castles, although there is a colourful local history attached to them:

It was a tradition forty years ago that there were three sisters inhabiting three castle within sight of one another, Dalmellington, Laicht and Keirs, but we have no means of knowing anything about who they were and where they lived.

(Hendrie, 1889, 16)

Laight (also Laicht) and Keir's castles were situated near to the modern settlement of Waterside, on opposite sides of the river and the valley. Both are now almost completely ruinous, but appear to have been small tower-houses.

Laight is on the north side of the Doon Valley and stood on a steep-sided spur above the Dunaskin Burn in Dunaskin Glen. We have no date information about it but excavations have uncovered medieval pottery from the site. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and listed Category C:

The castle of Laicht...has also been razed to the ground, the greater part of the ruins having been carried away by the proprietor to build enclosures, about the year 1770. The correspondent of

Chalmers...says, "the workmen had much difficulty in demolishing it;" the walls were thick, and the stones thoroughly cemented. The site, however, and a portion of the foundation, are still plainly distinguishable. It must have been a place of great strength before the invention of gunpowder. It occupied the inner angle of a deep chasm, called Glenaskin. Thoroughly protected on three sides by the glen, a deep fosse in front rendered it inaccessible. ... The body of the building is apparently square, and the front semicircular. Owing to its limited site, however, the building could not be very extensive, though, no doubt, advantage would be taken of every inch of ground - hence its irregularity of form. The cistern for supplying the castle with water was discovered some years ago by the late Mr. Walker, while excavating part of the remaining ruins. It occupied a portion of the north bank, a little lower down than the castle. It was pretty entire, built of stone, and of very considerable dimensions. (Paterson, 1863, 375-376)

Keir's Castle is on south side of Doon Valley, just over 2 km south-west of Laight (Fig*9). Similar to Laight Castle, it is situated beside the Keirs Burn in the Keirs Glen. Again, there is no date evidence and the remains do not have any statutory protection.



Figure*9 - Keirs Castle, post-marked 1909 (Stenlake Collection)

The site called Dame Helen's Castle is located on the south side of the Muck Water some 700 mt SSE of the motte and separated from it by the land called the *Castle Crofts*:

The site of an old building level with the ground and covered over with grass is pointed out by the villagers as that of a castle built and occupied by 'Dame Helen'. It stands on a small round knoll about 40ft above the bed of the Muck Water and is surrounded by the remains of a dry ditch, about 8ft wide by 8ft deep. ...

The mound, which is composed principally of living rock, is as described. The impressive rock-cut ditch on the SE side isolates the mound from the rest of the ridge. Gradual erosion of the NE side

continues, but there is no further evidence of masonry.

(<http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/42574/details/dalmellington+dame+helen+s+castle/>)

As at Laight and Keir's, this is believed to be a small tower-house constructed on a raised platform. Again we have no dating evidence and it is not clear what the chronological and other relationships are between Dame Helen's Castle and the motte, i.e. was the former built as a permanent building to replace a more temporary wooden structure on the latter? Further research is also required to try to work out a chronology that would illuminate or explain any relationships between Dame Helen's, Laight and Keir's castles.

One possible clue is provided by Paterson (1863, 373) who records that:

In 1373, Sir Duncan Wallace of Sundrum had a charter of the baronies of "Sundrum and Dalmelyngtoun - thus showing that the lands so called had existed previously as a distinct possession. Sir Duncan was succeeded in these properties by his nephew, Alan de Cathkert - an ancestor of the Hon. Col. M'Adam Cathcart of Craigengillan.

Research at Sundrum Castle has indicated that the earliest fabric there probably dates from the late-1300s, which would correlate with a post-1373 construction phase by Sir Duncan Wallace, and raises the possibility that he may have constructed a castle at Dalmellington around the same time.

Paterson also cites a document from 1589 which he posits refers to the right to rebuild upon what, "we should think, to Dame Helen's Castle":

Sepr. 26, 1589 - The qlk day, &c, comperit personalie John Cathcart, sone natural to ane nobill Lord, Alane Cathcart. And notwt.standing of ye feu chartir and infestment maid and gevin be the said lord to the said Johne of ane xld. land of his landis of Castelmk., &c, wt.in the baronie of Dalmellingtoun, &c Neufryeles the said Johne, for him and his airis, volinterlie grantit and confessit, That gif it sal happin the said lord or his airis, in any tyme heireftir to big yr castell of Dalmellingtoun ye place quhair the auld castell yrof now standis, wt.in the saidis lands of Castelmk., That the said Johne and his airis salbe content and aggrie yrwt., and sail mak na impediment to the said lord nor his airis in the bigging yrof, Bot be thir pntis. consentis yrto," &c.

(Paterson, 1863, 373)

Again, further research might prove rewarding on the relationship between the Cathcarts and Dalmellington in the 16th century:

It has been said that at one time the Cathcarts possessed the greater portion of the land in the district. That they held property in the place where the town now stands is proved by the old name Cathcartson applied to a certain part of it.

(Hendrie, 1889, 15)

It does appear that one of the reasons that the upstanding structures of Dame Helen's Castle have disappeared so completely is that they were used as a quarry for the building of at least one of the buildings in the town:

One of the oldest houses in the village, from having been built of the materials of the castle, is called the Castle House ; and one of its door lintels bore, thirty years ago, the date 1003.

(NSA, 1845, 315)

This date is undoubtedly incorrect as it would make the castle the oldest in the country by quite a distance:

This would carry the building back fifty-four years before the accession of Malcolm Canmore, when no castles are supposed to have existed. There must be some mistake, we should think, on the part of

the writer in the Statistical Account. When in Dalmellington, the Castle House was pointed out to us, and on the lintel of one of the doors, an antique looking stone, we could trace the figures, though greatly defaced, "1115" - thus bringing the date of the castle down more than a century.
(Paterson, 1863, 372)

Again, however, a date of 1115 seems to be far too early and it appears that only archaeological investigation could possibly resolve the dating issues surrounding the castles of Dalmellington and the Doon Valley.

The problems of dating and analysing medieval sites in the area are not confined to the collection of local fortifications. On the higher ground to the east of the village there is a linear earthwork known locally as Pickan's Dyke:

On the muir called the Common of Dalmellington, which surrounds it on three sides, extending backwards up the rising ground, an interesting remain exists, popularly called Pickan's (or the Pict's) Dyke. About five hundred yards of it can be distinctly traced from the village on the eastward to the ridge of the hill. It appears to have consisted of a wall and ditch; the breadth of both averaging from 21 to 24 feet. The wall, composed probably of a mixture of stone and earth, is still, in some places, two or three feet high, and the ditch correspondingly low. This barrier seems to have taken a south-westerly direction from Dalmellington, entering Galloway by the bend of Alcreoch hill, on the opposite side of the Doon. Eastward it runs into Dumfriesshire, terminating, it has been surmised, in the Solway.

(Paterson, 1863, 370-371)

Paterson's statement that Pickan's Dyke stretched as far as the Solway has been tested in recent research which found that, while not of those epic dimensions, it measured approximately 765 mt in length. In its current state it comprises of an earth and stone bank up to 4 mt across and between 0.2-0.8 mt in height and a ditch on the south side of the bank up to 2.5 mt wide and 0.4 mt deep.

There is as yet no definitive explanation of the purpose of this substantial landscape feature, although it is almost certain that dates from the medieval period and, as such, is an important signifier of the extent that the landscape was used and manipulated during that time and also an indicator that other element of the modern landscape might date from this time too:

The two main suggestions for the purpose of the monument are as a medieval land boundary (Graham & Feachem 1956) or as part of a park pale which enclosed a deer park in the medieval period (McBrien 2012). Both are possible interpretations; however if the Dyke were part of a park pale, evidence for posts or poles, or for a hedge or for stones running along the top of the bank would be expected. Unfortunately no such evidence was uncovered during the trial excavations, though given the limited sample excavated it may be possible that the trenches missed such evidence which may otherwise be present elsewhere on the monument. Given the size and morphology of the earthwork it is likely to be medieval in date. The proximity of Dalmellington Motte and Dame Helen's Castle, both medieval structures, would suggest that the Dyke was probably associated with one of these, though this remains an untested supposition.

(Gordon et al, 2012, 8)

The last significant medieval site in Dalmellington that requires discussion is the churchyard where the original medieval parish church once stood. The earliest surviving session records date from the post-Reformation period in 1641 so, again, almost nothing is known about the old church, including when it was founded or what it looked like:

The Old Church...stood in the middle of the Old Churchyard. It seems to have been of no architectural pretension...

(Hendrie, 1889, 24)

The pattern of parishes in Scotland was established in the 12th and 13th centuries, so it seems reasonable to assume that the first church in Dalmellington dates from that period. Again, it is not clear whether it was the motte or the church which was built first, or whether both were erected because there already was a community at Dalmellington. One potentially fruitful area of research in relation to the old church is that it was located on one of the few cross-country routes that pilgrims could take on their way south to Whithorn and so there may be related documentary evidence which could illuminate if Dalmellington church had a role to play in what was a major part of medieval life.

In 1501, when James IV refounded and enlarged the Chapel Royal of Stirling he annexed the church of Dalmellington and its revenues to it to pay for one of the prebends. In addition, a vicarage was established for serving the cure of the church of Dalmellington. As such, the patronage of the parish of Dalmellington belonged to the King, who was patron of the Prebend of Dalmellington while the church was connected to the Chapel Royal of Stirling (Hendrie, 1889, 19).

The old parish church was in use until the new church was opened in 1766 on Church Hill, after which it was used as a school for a while before being demolished some time in the 1830s. The site was reutilised in the 1860s for the Greek Revival mausoleum of the McAdams of Craigengillan (Fig*10). The old churchyard also contains a number of fine post-Reformation grave markers which, along with the mausoleum, require conservation and protection (Fig*11).



Fig*10 - The Craigengillan Mausoleum, Old Churchyard, Dalmellington, 2014



Fig*11 - Post-Reformation grave markers, Old Churchyard, Dalmellington, 2014

Dalmellington



Figure*12 - *Cunningham*, Robert Gordon, 1636-52

The lack of solid documentary and archaeological evidence for the Doon Valley in the medieval and post-medieval periods extends to the village of Dalmellington itself. The earliest map that we have

that recorded the area in any detail is Robert Gordon's plan that he drew up in the mid-1600s (Fig*12). This shows *Dalmellintoun C.* (presumably Dame Helen's Castle) to the south of *Dalmellintoun K.* (the parish kirk), but nothing to indicate the presence or extent of any settlement there.

However, the map of Kyle in Blaeu's *Atlas Novus* of 1654 (Fig*13), largely based on the cartography of Timothy Pont (who died sometime around 1611-1614), includes a *Clachan* on the Muck Water to the west of *Dalmellintoun K.*, in all probability the village of Dalmellington.



Figure*13 - *Coila Provincia*, Timothy Pont, Blaeu's *Atlas Novus*, 1654

The first documentary evidence for the settlement dates from 1607 when a charter was issued for the foundation of the burgh of Castlemerk of Dalmellington:

We mention this burgh under the head of Dalmellington, although it is called in the charter "the Castelmerk of Dalmellington and the free burgh of barony to be called the Castelmerk," because we have failed to identify any place as the Castelmerk of Dalmellington other than the Castle of Dalmellington itself. The burgh was erected by charter of James VI., March 4, 1607, in favour of Allan, fourth Lord Cathcart, but we find no indication that it ever possessed any municipal government.

(John, Marquess of Bute, Stevenson & Lonsdale, 1903, 159)

Only four years after this, in 1611, the lands of Berbeth to the south-west of Dalmellington were acquired by the McAdam family. They changed the name of the estate to Craigenkillan, the name of their former homestead on the River Ken near Dalry. They also changed their name from MacGregor to McAdam, i.e. 'the Sons of Adam'. Although for the first century or so they had little input into village life in Dalmellington, they were to become major figures in the district during the 18th and 19th centuries, by which time the family were one of the biggest landholders in Ayrshire.

The first appearance of Dalmellington in national history dates to 1678 when, during the religious conflicts of the time, it is reported that an army of around nine hundred Highlanders were billeted in the parish, “a number which, judging from the earliest census we possess, was more than the whole population of the parish” (Paterson, 1863, 368).

The village must have been growing at a slow but steady pace during the 17th and early 18th centuries, possibly benefitting from trade improving following the issue of the burghal charter and the expansion in the textile sector which meant the number of handloom weavers required was also growing throughout Ayrshire and many other parts of the country.

Almost no research has been carried out into the built fabric and individual buildings which make up the modern townscape of Dalmellington, with the result that most interpretation has been based on typology and historic architectural analyses. The only structure that has been posited as containing fabric of 17th origin is the Cross Keys Inn (15 High Street, recently demolished; Fig*14):

The old Cross Keys Inn is a neglected block with a projecting gabled forewing, possibly of 17th century origin.
(Close, 1992, 161)

It was located at the very heart of the historic townscape, beside the crossroads where the High Street and Townhead joined up. It was also located adjacent to the old churchyard on a plot of land which shared its boundary wall and, as such, was potentially of significant age and heritage. It remained an inn until 1896 when it was purchased by the St Thomas Kilwinning, Dalmellington Lodge No.433, who carried out a significant number of improvements to the old property before it was officially opened on 21st October 1899. The Lodge moved to new premises in 1965 and the building was used by a number of businesses before becoming derelict and eventually being demolished sometime before 2012.



Figure*14 - Former Cross Keys Inn, John Hume, 1981

The first map to show the village in any detail is General William Roy's Military Survey of Scotland that was produced between 1747 and 1755 (Fig*15). At this time it appears that most of the houses were located on the south side of the Muck Water with only a few to the north lining both sides of High Main Street. There is also a line of smaller buildings to the east of this which could represent the line of The Path and/or possibly early mill buildings.

South of the Muck, the townscape seems largely to consist of the High Street and Townhead, both of which lead south and east out of the town to join up after Dame Helen's Castle to form the main road south. The lands to the north and east of the town are shown hatched with the patterns of rig farming, emphasising the agricultural nature of the local economy.



Figure*15 - Military Survey of Scotland, Roy, 1747-55

The detail of the map is not so precise that wholly reliable conclusions can be drawn regarding individual historic buildings, but one possible item of interest is the enclosure shown to the west of the bridge over the Muck. This shows a house located on the south bank of the water and with a dotted rectangular boundary around it that could represent a fence, a hedge, or a line of trees. This enclosure occupies almost all of the south bank of the Muck at this point, running from the centre of the village to beyond the point where the burn turns westwards as it exits the settlement just past the modern McLymont's Bridge.

The building shown in this enclosure is fairly substantial and obviously had some status as it was located within its own large, defined plot of land. Comparisons with later and current maps appear to indicate that it was located approximately where the line of cottages that form 8-11 Cathcartson (Category C) are situated (Fig*16). Today, these have a "Pretty datestone with a scrolly floral border" (Close & Riches, 2012, 271) that is inscribed with the initials "A MC" and the date "1744". This feature has been interpreted to mean that the cottages themselves were built in 1744, but the evidence from Roy's map indicates that there is possibly another interpretation, i.e. that the datestone

belonged to an earlier, more prestigious building and has been re-used when the cottages were built sometime later (pre-1857 as they are shown on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey). The issue of re-used datestones has been discussed above in relation to Dame Helen's Castle and Castle House and this is possibly another example.



Figure*16 - 8-11 Cathcartson, John Hume, 1981

By the time Roy's work had been completed in 1755, the population of Dalmellington Parish was still only 739 and the local economy was still predominantly agricultural. The village would have served as the central market place for the parish hinterland but, as can be seen from Roy's map, it remained the small settlement that had grown around the medieval nuclei of the church, the roads, and the crossing point of the Muck Water.

Improvements were beginning to be effected, however, and, as discussed above, in 1766 a new parish church was built on Church Hill (Category B; Fig*17). Built by James Armour (Reid, 2002, xi), it does not, however, appear to have been entirely successful:

A new church was built in a different part of the town in 1766; but from the dampness of the foundation, and the smallness of the accommodation, it was never comfortable.
(Paterson, 1863, 369)

It was replaced by a much larger church in 1846 (see below) and then converted for other uses:

As the church in the old churchyard was in 1766 converted into a school, and did duty as such till about 1818, so the "old kirk" built on the Kilnknowefold, in 1766, was in 1888, after it had been converted into dwelling houses for 40 years, gifted by Col. The Hon. Augustus M. Cathcart, of Brockloch, to the Mimister and Kirk-session as Trustees for the use and behoof of the parishioners. By them, with the aid of a committee, subscriptions were raised and the work of converting the old fabric into a Hall to be used for Sunday School, Church, and Public purposes has been successfully carried out.

(Hendrie, 1889, 24)

It was reconstructed in 1938 by Alexander Mair, who inserted the tall, square-headed openings (Close & Riches, 2012, 271).



Figure*17 - Cathcart Hall, Church Hill, 2014



Figure*18 - Craigengillan, Thomas Annan, mid-1800s

It was around this time that the McAdams of Craigengillan began to make a greater impact upon the town and parish:

James McAdam was followed by his son John in 1757 and this John McAdam of Craigengillan was the great engineer and innovator of the family and along with his kinsman John Louden, McAdam became a road engineer and inventor of Tar-Mac. John McAdam, the road engineer, became a popular figure in Dalmellington, providing much needed employment and he was a generous benefactor who did much for the good of the Doon Valley. He further expanded his estate when he acquired the Lands of Auchenroy, Nether and High Laight also Camlurg and the Land of Lochmaharle in the Parish of New Cumnock.

(http://www.craigengillan.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=27)

In 1765, McAdam re-designed the original house at Berbeth/Craigengillan (Category A) and added the first extension (Fig*18):

The earliest part is at the N end of the main range and this appears to be the laird's house remodelled in the 1770s by John McAdam... Its roof is slightly taller than the rest and has all the hallmarks of having been thatched.

(Close & Riches, 2012, 230)

He also improved the physical relationship between the estate and the village by building a substantial stone bridge over the River Doon near to the house and created a new private approach road as a more direct way to Dalmellington. Possibly his greatest single gift to the locale, however, was to build the new road from Dalmellington to New Cumnock in 1773.



Figure*19 - A New Map of Ayrshire, Armstrong, 1775

This is clearly shown in Armstrong's New Map of Ayrshire from 1775 (Fig*19). It also shows Camlarg House and its policies to the north-east of the village (Fig*20), a small but old estate that belonged to the Crauford family and which appears in documents in the early-1500s:

The mansion-house of which lies a short distance north of Dalmellington. It embraced the lands of Laicht. The Craufurds of Camlarg were cadets of the Kerse family. The first of them was Duncan Craufurd of Camlarg, third son of David Craufurd of Kerse, who was alive in 1505. Robertson, proceeding upon Lord Auchinleck's Notes respecting the Craufurds in Ayrshire, supposes that Duncan left no heir male, and that his daughter Margaret married John Craufurd of Drongan. There is at all event a charter of the four merk land of Camlarg and Pennyvenzies-wester, and Mill, of Dalmellington, on his own resignation, to John Craufurd of Drongan and Margaret Craufurd, dated 5th March 1539.
(Paterson, 1869, 378)



Figure*20 - Camlarg House, n.d. (Stenlake Collection)

The Craufurds sold the estate to Sir David Cunninghame of Milncraig in the early-1700s, who in turn sold it to William Logan, son of James Logan of Castle Cumnock, in 1741. He married Agnes McAdam, daughter of the Laird of Craigengillan, and sold Over and Nether Laichts and Burnhead to John McAdam in 1758, followed by Camlarg itself in 1780.

Paterson (1863, 383) states that:

Camlarg seems to have been the only property of any extent in the parish of Dalmellington held apart from the Cathcart family in former times, and latterly the McAdams of Craigengillan.

As such, the estate of Camlarg was a significant element of the historical landscape of the Doon Valley until at least the late-18th century and is deserving of further research. It was also the site of one of the earliest coal extraction sites in the Doon Valley:

Coal has also been wrought since last century. The Camlarg Coal Mine must, when Mr McMyne wrote in 1792, have been in operation for a considerable period. He says:-
“Near the village of Dalmellington is the cheapest and best coal that is to be found in the West of Scotland.”

Mr Houston, in 1837, says- “The coal pits have been many, especially in low situations, where, till lately, the coal was worked at less than three fathoms from the surface. The pits at present in operation are two – one, the Camlarg Pit, about a mile from the village, is nearly 20 fathoms deep. (Hendrie, 1889, 26-27)

During World War I, Camlarg House was requisitioned to serve as the Royal Flying Corps Headquarters for the Aerial Gunnery School at Loch Doon. Developments at Pennyvenie Colliery No.2 undermined the house and it was demolished in the 1950s.

By 1792, in contrast to many other areas of the country as a whole, the population of parish had fallen to only 681. The reason behind this appears to have been the enclosing of farms and other agricultural improvements which diminished the amount of farm labourers required. Mr McMyne, the local minister who wrote the Old Statistical Account of 1793 noted that:

The population, in the country part of the parish has considerably diminished owing to the monopolizing of farms, or conjoining a number of possessions into one; but it has been increased in proportion in the village of Dalmellington which contains about 500 inhabitants. Seven fairs are held in it each year; and it has 5 or 6 public houses kept by people of good character. Near the village are two large commons, let at a reasonable rate to the inhabitants, for feeding their cattle upon. Each common may feed 25 or 30 cows. There is plenty of coal, freestone, and good water all around; so that upon all these accounts Dalmellington is particularly well situated for a woollen manufactory, especially as it is in the neighbourhood of numerous and fine flocks of sheep. Accordingly a few public spirited men propose immediately to establish both a woollen and a cotton manufactory here...
(Old Statistical Account, 1793, 73)

From this it can be seen that the general movement of people from the countryside to the towns was also taking place in Dalmellington as urban living was becoming the norm and the facilities required were increasing. By 1801, the population of the parish had recovered to 787, and it was to continue to rise slowly but steadily from that point onwards.



Figure*21 - The Railway Inn, n.d. (Stenlake Collection)

It was around this time that the Craigen Gillan Inn was built on the High Street beside the bridge over the Muck. It was later renamed as the Railway Inn and now operates as the Dalmellington Inn and has been one of the key buildings in the local townscape for the past two hundred years (Category C; Figs*21 and *22).



Figure*22 - Dalmellington Inn, John Hume, 1981



Figure*23 - *Sketch Plan Of the present and also the proposed new line of road from Dalmellington to where the two lines Join in Nether Berbeth moor Afterwards leading to the head of the water of Girvan. 31st January 1803. By Bryce Macquiston.*



Figure*24 - Detail from *Sketch Plan Of the present and also the proposed new line of road from Dalmellington to where the two lines Join in Nether Berbeth moor Afterwards leading to the head of the water of Girvan. 31st January 1803. By Bryce Macquiston.*

In 1803 , plans were produced for a new road to by-pass Dalmellington to the south (Figs*23 and *24):

In terms of this map, the Dalmellington bypass attributed to Quintin McAdam is the continuation of, the “New road leading by Carsphairn to Kirkcudbright” to meet, the “Road from Ayr to Dalmellington”, without entering the village. This is the line of the A713 today. It is fortunate that we have been left a contemporary description of both the old entry to Dalmellington from the southeast, and of the new road, in Richard Hodgkinson’s account of his travels in Scotland in 1800.

Hodgkinson was astonished that, considering that Dalmellington comprised so very few houses, they should be “so inconveniently jumbled together ... upon the side of a Hill of steep descent” by the burn known unpoetically as the Water of Muck. Entering “the town” from the southeast at the “upper end”, the traveller came upon a sharp turn “into a street which admits of only one carriage at a time”, although further down there was a “spacious opening before the principal Inn”. It was not paved and consisted of “a rough gravel which is very much torn up by the rapid descent of the rains down so steep a pitch”.

(<http://www.ayrshirehistory.org.uk/Shorts/DalmellBypass.html>)

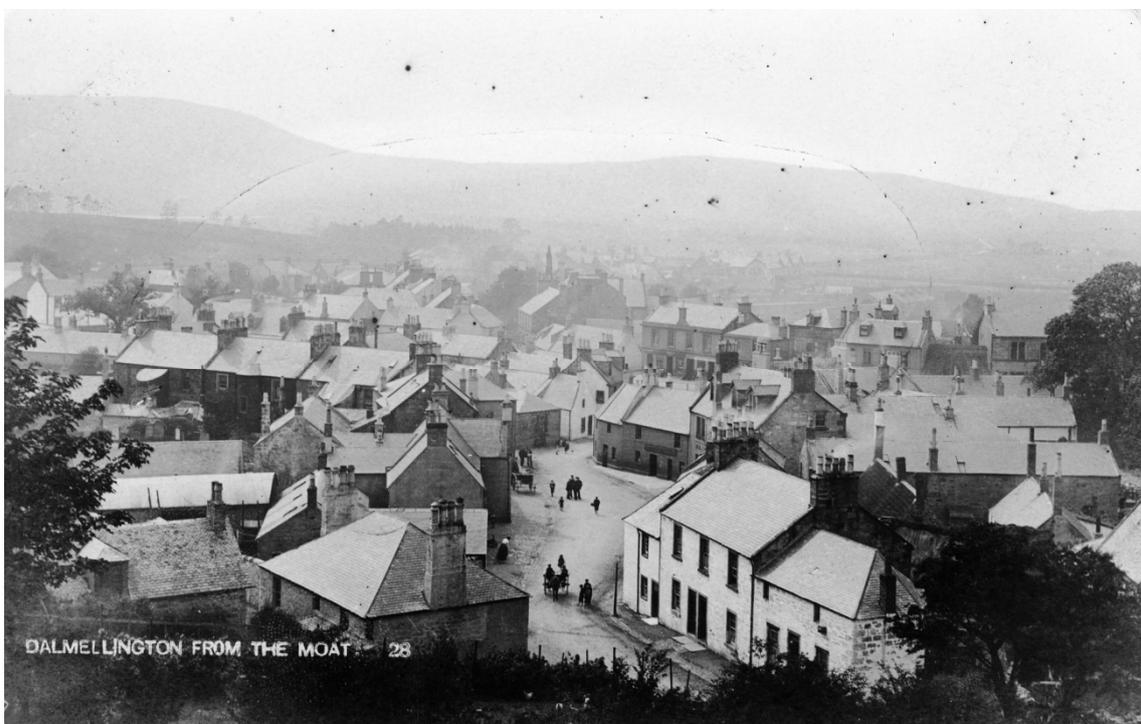
The narrow street referred to by Hodgkinson would have been the High Street, and the sharp turn into it from Townhead, although it is not clear whether the “*principal Inn*” he refers to is the Cross Keys, the Craigengillan, or the Black Bull. In the OSA, the Rev. McMyne notes that there were “*5 or 6 public houses kept by people of good character*”, but the lack of independent dating evidence makes the analysis of the individual buildings in the High Street and Townhead very problematical.

With the exception of its southern end, all of the historic buildings in Townhead have been demolished (Fig*25). High Street, however, still retains a number of structures that can be seen on

the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey of 1857, and probably date from some time before that was produced (Figs*26 and *27).



Figure*25 - Townhead (a.k.a. Gas Brae), n.d. (Stenlake Collection)



Figure*26 - *Dalmellington from the Moat*, n.d. (Stenlake Collection)



Figure*27 - High Street looking east, n.d. (Stenlake Collection)



Figure*28 - South side of High Street showing (from l to r) the Cross Keys Inn, Dr Jamieson's House and Ye Old Castle House, John Hume, 1981

On the south side, as already discussed, the complex of buildings that included the Cross Keys Inn that stood on the corner with Townhead has been demolished. The block of three houses that still stand between the old Cross Keys site and New Street contains two buildings of local historic interest, although neither are listed (Fig*28):

- 15 High Street
This was the house of Dr Alexander Jamieson who, “*shares the poetical laurels of Dalmellington with Robert Hettrick, the blacksmith poet*” (Reid, 2002, 93). Born in 1789, the house has a bust of him on its roof.
- 5 High Street
Very little is known about Ye Old Castle House except that it operated as a public house during the late-19th and early-20th centuries. Its age is unknown but it seems unlikely that it was the very old *Castle House* referred to in the NSA of 1837 as having been built using materials from Dame Helen’s Castle and having the disputed datestone. It is in poor condition and is currently on the Buildings at Risk Register.
(http://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/search/keyword/dalmellington/event_id/914445/building_name/ye-olde-house-former-5-high-street-dalmellington)

To the west of Ye Olde Castle House is 1 New Street, another house on the BARR, and beside that is 1 High Street, the Doon Tavern (Category B; Figs*29 and *30). Again, the date of construction is not known but the building appears to date from the early-1800s, although the Historic Scotland listing states that there is an “*older projecting wing to rear*”, raising the question as to the group as a whole. It was the first branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland in Dalmellington, but it is not clear whether it was built for this purpose or an older structure was adapted to serve. The main door on the High Street has a fretted doorhead with scrolled brackets which probably dates from its use as a bank. The current Royal Bank in 27 Main Street was opened in 1875 so it is probably from that date that the change of use to a tavern occurred.



Figure*29 - The western end of the High Street, n.d. (Stenlake Collection)



Figure*30 - Doon Tavern, John Hume, 1981



Figure*31 - North side of High Street showing the Black Bull Inn and Midton House, n.d. (Stenlake Collection)

The north side of the High Street also contains two buildings of local historic interest (Fig*31):

- 30-32 High Street

Midton House is listed Category C and is a rarity locally due to its construction of Straiton granite using block and sneck masonry. It also has a prominent mason's mark on the wall beside the front door.

- 16-18 High Street

The date of the construction of the Black Bull Inn (now the Loch Doon) is again not known. It is not listed and has been extensively refurbished in recent years:

...the mid-C19 Black Bull Hotel has been stripped back to its random rubble walls so that the shouldered red sandstone window and door-frames of 1894-5 by Allan Stevenson stand well proud.

(Close & Riches, 2012, 272-3)

There is the same problems with dating the upstanding structures on the north side of the Muck. The 1803 plans produced for the bypass seem to indicate that both the Low Main Street and the High Main Street were well developed by that time, but how accurate this is as a record of the time is not clear.



Figure*32 - Main Street, Dalmellington, post-marked 1913 (Stenlake Collection)



Figure*33 - 4-5 Main Street, 2014

On the west side of the modern Square there are two buildings that have been dated architecturally to the mid-1800s (Fig*32):

- 4-5 Main Street
Listed as Category C (Fig*33)
- 5-13 Main Street (recorded as Nos.7-11 in Close & Riches, 2012, 272; Fig*34)
Not listed.



Figure*34 - 5-13 Main Street, 2014



Figure*35 - Bridgend, Dalmellington, post-marked 1910 (Stenlake Collection)



Figure*36 - Main Street, Dalmellington, post-marked 1903 (Stenlake Collection)

The design and construction of these buildings do indicate that they date from the mid-1800s, and as such they appear to be examples of secondary occupations of their particular building plots. The streetscape of Dalmellington of the early-1800s and before would have been defined by single storey cottages such as those in Cathcartson and others such as the row which used to stand at the north side of High Main Street (Fig*35 [when they were thatched] and Fig*36 [when they were slated later]). These would have been replaced by better houses as building standards improved and people's expectations rose. In important commercial areas like the centre of the village the replacement buildings would have been shops, banks, etc., such as the two examples in Main Street discussed above.

By 1831, the population of the parish had risen to 1,056 (the village accounting for 708), and six years later it had reached 1,126. By 1841, however, it had dropped again to 1,099, indicating an apparent levelling-off in numbers in the immediate pre-industrial period.

The manufacturing sector in the village at that time was described in the New Statistical Account of 1837:

Manufactures

The chief manufactures of the village are wool spinning, and the weaving of plaiding, tartan, and carpets. There are two small woollen mills together employing about 30 hands. The yarn spun in the largest was wont to be disposed of wholly to the Kilmarnock carpet manufacturers, but four years ago the proprietor of the mill added to it also a carpet manufactory, where he has now eight looms constantly at work. The yarn spun in the other mill is also manufactured, on the spot, into blankets, plaids, packing-cloth, &c. There are about 40 weavers besides in the village, the greater number of whom are occupied with tartans; a few weave cotton cloth...

The coal pits have been many, especially in low situations, where, till lately, the coal was worked at less than three fathoms from the surface. The pits at present in operation are two – one, the Camlarg Pit, about a mile from the village, is nearly 20 fathoms deep. ... the other pit is about five miles distant, at the foot of the parish, and is worked by a steam-engine.

(NSA, 1837, 318)

Another example of one of the larger, modern houses being built at this time dates from 1838 when Sean Boile House was erected on Church Hill (Category C; Fig*37). As at Cathcartson and Ye Old Castle House, it too incorporates an earlier datestone, in this case a marriage lintel of 1632.

Figures*37 and *38 also illuminates the progression of house styles and sizes in 19th century Dalmellington: at the bottom of Church Hill there are rows of the traditional one-storey cottages that were the norm for most people until the early-1800s; directly downhill and abutting Sean Boile House is a slated two-storey house of higher status, but still with markedly small windows; and, finally, the grand scale of Sean Boile House, with aspirations more in keeping with a large urban streetscape such as Ayr or Glasgow.

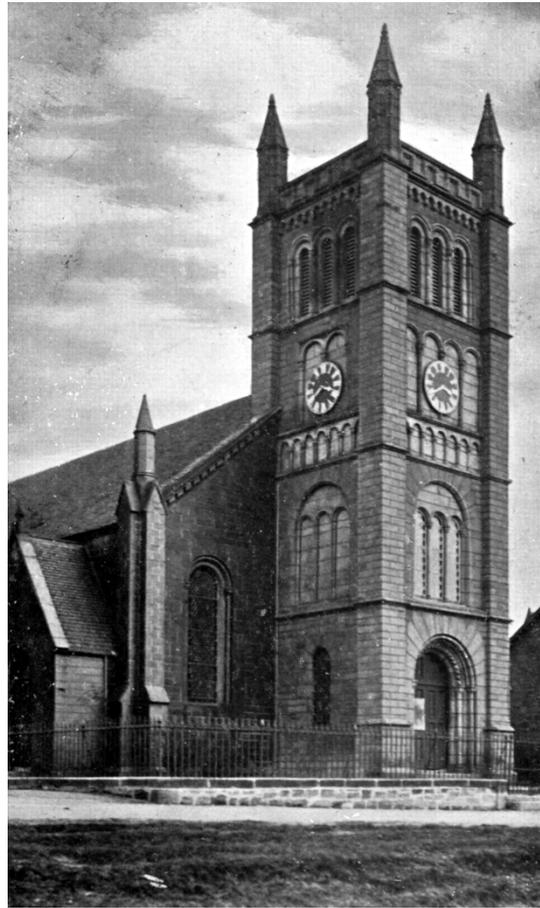


Figure*37 - Church Hill, Dalmellington, post-marked 1906 (Stenlake Collection)



Figure*38 - Church Hill, Dalmellington, post-marked 1910 (Stenlake Collection)

In 1846, the third parish church was opened at Knowehead (Category B; Fig*). Designed by Patrick Wilson of Edinburgh and built by McCandlish of New Galloway (Reid, 2002, xi), it was designed to seat 640 and was paid for by Mrs Cathcart of Craigengillan.



Figure*39 - Parish Church, Dalmellington, n.d. (Stenlake Collection)

The entry for Dalmellington in that year's Topographical Dictionary of Scotland described a typical small Scottish market town of the period:

The village, which was a burgh of barony, is pleasantly situated in the vale, sheltered in the rear by hills of various elevation. There are, a library supported by subscription, which has a collection of 800 volumes, and a reading-room, which has also a library of more than 600 volumes, bequeathed to it some years since by a shopkeeper of the village. A penny-post has been established here; and there are some inns for the reception of the numerous visitors whom the interesting scenery of the neighbourhood attracts to the spot, and of the shooting and fishing parties who resort hither during the season. The woollen manufacture is carried on to a tolerable extent. Two mills, employing a moderate number of hands, are in operation, in spinning woollen-yarn, which is here manufactured into plaiding, tartans, carpets, blankets, and packing-cloths. Several of the inhabitants are also employed in weaving cotton-cloth; and there was formerly an extensive bleachfield, which, since the substitution of cottons, and the increased importation of Irish linens, has been discontinued, and in lieu of which a thread-mill has been substituted on the premises. Fairs are held on Easter Eve, the first Friday after Whitsunday, and Hallow E'en (O. S.), chiefly for wool and for hiring servants.

1846, however, was also the year when Dalmellington Iron Company opened their ironworks at Dunaskin/Waterside. It was the beginning of a local industrial revolution which was to result in the sinking of a total of 43 mines around Waterside and Dalmellington and the creation of a number of new villages to house all the new workers who came to the Doon Valley to find employment.

Two years later, in 1848, the Ayrshire & Galloway Railway began construction of a railway line to connect Dalmellington to the port at Ayr. The first consignment of pig iron transported to Ayr on the railway left the ironworks in 1856 and the new station opened to passengers in the August of that year (Fig*40). High speed travel from and to Dalmellington was now possible for the first time, both for passengers and freight, but especially for coal and iron which now became the dominant sector of the local economy in the Doon Valley.



Figure*40 - Dalmellington Station, post-marked 1907 (Stenlake Collection)



Figure*41 - United Free Church of Scotland, Low Main Street, Dalmellington, n.d. (Stenlake Collection)

Following the Disruption of 1843, a Free Church was opened on Low Main Street in 1851 (Fig*41). Sitting 400, it was designed by the Glasgow architect/civil engineer David Millar and is the only work know to be by him. Post-1926, following the reunification of the Free Church and the Church of Scotland, it was renamed as Lamloch Church. After it was closed as an active church it was converted to act as a Scout Hall.



Fig*42 - Ordnance Survey, 1st Edition, Ayrshire, Sheet XLVI, 1857

The 1st Edition of the Ordnance Survey for Dalmellington was surveyed in 1857 (Fig*42). It clearly shows that the village essentially retained its medieval and post-medieval form: the four main streets of Townhead, High Street, High Main Street and Low Main Street, and the central 'square' and bridge over the Muck Water. There have been additions like the railway station and the new churches, but change has been marginal rather than radical.



Figure*43 - Detail from 1st Edition OS, 1857, showing the mill lade



Figure*44 - Dalmellington corn mill, post-marked 1910 (Stenlake Collection)

One feature which can be clearly seen for the first time is the ‘Miller’s Lade’, which is shown running from a weir in the Muck beside Dame Helen’s Castle, and along the north bank for around 0.75 km until it reaches the Corn Mill, and then turning sharply downhill to power a Spinning Mill before exiting back into the river(Figs*43 and *44).



Figure*45 - Dalmellington House, 2014

The influx of workers into the district led to the opening of the Roman Catholic Chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary in Low Main Street in 1860. Around the same time, Dalmellington House was built just along the street from it, opposite the Free Church manse (Fig*45):

Dalmellington's surgery, and its grandest house, standing slightly back from the narrow and congested street behind gates and railings. It has rusticated raised quoins, grey margins against the white-painted stone, and a handsome, if over-large, porch supported on two pairs of square columns. (Close, 1992, 161)

The development of Low Main Street in the 1860s also saw the Eglinton Hotel opened (Fig*46):

The hotel is in Low Main Street, formerly Main Street, and was erected in the early 1860s opposite Dalmellington Station. It appears in Slater's Directory for 1867 as the 'Railway Hotel', in the charge of Gilbert Carmichael; in the 1861 census he appears as a spirit dealer in Main Street. By 1871 it had been renamed the 'Eglinton Hotel' ... By 1891 ...and the street had undergone its change of name to 'Low Main Street'.

(<http://www.ayrshirehistory.org.uk/Shorts/mccubbin.htm>)

Recent renovation works uncovered a late-19th century painted inscription above the front door which reads "*T MCCUBBIN LICENSED TO LET POST HORSES*" (Close & Riches, 2012, 272).



Figure*46 - Eglinton Hotel, c.1930 (Stenlake Collection)

The rapid increase in the population of the parish due to the ever-expanding operations of the Dalmellington Iron Company can be seen in the 1861 census when 4,194 were recorded as being resident in the parish. Ten years later that figure had risen by almost fifty per cent to 6,165, but while the town was continuing to grow this mostly reflected the increasing numbers living in the mining villages that were springing up throughout the Doon Valley.

The pressures this was putting on social facilities like education resulted in a new school being built in 1874 at the very edge of the town on the Ayr Road (Fig*47):

The land on which Dalmellington Primary School and schoolhouse is built was originally part of the estate of the Honourable Charlotte Macadam Cathcart of Craigengillan. In 1873 she gifted the

ground to the people of Dalmellington for the purpose of building a school. The schoolhouse, which lies immediately to the south of the school is a neat and well composed building.

<http://data.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pls/htmldb/f?p=2200:15:0:::BUILDING:48145>



Fig*47 - Dalmellington School (Reid, 2002, 87)

It was replaced by a modern building in 1978 (Doon Academy) and was demolished sometime after 2011. However, the former schoolhouse is still extant (Category C; Fig*48)



Figure*48 - Dalmellington Schoolhouse, Ayr Road, 2014

The focus on new development in the wets of the town continued in 1875 when the new branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland was opened beside the Free Church in Low Main Street (architects Peddie & Kinnear; Fig*49).



Figure*49 - Royal Bank of Scotland, 27 Low Main Street, 2014

The following year, 1876, the new Police Station was opened in Ayr Road beside the schoolhouse (Fig*50). It was designed by the Ayrshire architect John Murdoch (1825-1907) who produced designs for police stations across the county, including Troon, Maybole, Largs, Ardrossan, Newmilns, Galston, Stevenston and Prestwick.



Figure*50 - Police Station, 14 Ayr Road, 2014

The Dalmellington Industrial Co-operative Society Limited was established in 1879 and opened their first shop in High Main Street:

The Co-operative played a significant role in the architectural and economic history of Dalmellington. ... The Dalmellington Industrial Co-operative Society Limited was established in 1879. Like many co-operative societies, the Society had a number of shops serving different purposes from shoes to groceries. These shops were located on High Main Street and Church Hill. The business grew successfully resulting in the steady expansion over the decades of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.
(Lennie, 2012, 22)

Eventually, High Main Street was dominated by shops belonging to Dalmellington Co-operative Society: by the post-war period there were four shops there including a bakery, butcher, drapery and boot and shoe shop (Fig*51). There was also a large shop on the corner with Church Hill which was opened in 1883 but had to be expanded in 1896 as it was too small (Fig*52). They became one of the largest employers in the area with 71 workers in 1950 and 1,455 members (Reid, 2002, xiii). The shops in High Main Street remained in Co-operative use until the 1970s but today only the Church Hill premises remains a Co-operative store.



Figure*51 - Dalmellington Co-operative Society, High Main Street, n.d. (Reid, 2002, 63)



Figure*52 - Dalmellington Co-operative Society, Church Hill, 201

By 1881 the population of the parish had reached 6,384 and the village had now adopted many of the aspects of a serious commercial urban centre. In 1882, a gravitational water system was inaugurated and the Gazetteer of Scotland noted that it had,

...a post office, with money order, savings' bank, and telegraph department, a branch of the Royal Bank, 4 insurance agencies, 2 hotels, gas-works, a reading-room and library, and a public school, erected in 1875 at a cost of £3000...

In his history of 1893, George Hendrie summed up the changes that had happened in his village in the previous decades:

The railway came in 1856 and since then of course a great impetus has been given to the development of building. We have quite a number of houses and offices that have been changed from their old use to another, having been superseded by more modern buildings. We have the Old Manse, the Old Kirk, the Old Kiln, the Old School, the Old Hospital recently taken down, which was formerly an old mill, the old bank, both the old bank buildings in High Main Street, which were superseded by the offices in Low Main Street, the old Cross Keys where the coach stopped; old Laird's house or "the big house" as it is called in High Street, and said to have been built by Campbell of the Glencoe massacre who retired here, afterwards the house of some of the Schaws of Grimmet or Keirs, whose coat of arms it bears above the door; the old Post Office, the old Gas Work, the old Castle house, the old Doctor's house, the old woollen mill at the Bridgend, the old Churchyard, the old Glebe, and so on. The village in fact grew out of its shell and became a small town.
(Hendrie, 1889, 34)

Having said all, when the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey was carried out in 1894 again there appeared to be little difference to the layout of the town (Fig*53). The biggest change is the growth of the railway terminus but, apart from that, all the improvements seem to have been made within the pattern of the old medieval settlement.



Figure*53 - 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey, Ayrshire Sheet XLVI.SE, 1894

One definite progression was the continued development of Low Main Street where a number of villas had been erected at its western end, giving this part of Dalmellington a distinctly suburban feel that was quite different from the rest of the town (Fig*54).



Figure*54 - Low Main Street from Ayr Road, n.d. (Stenlake Collection)

This form of middle class villa was also being built up beside the parish church in Knowehead/Windy Row where the replacement of the older forms of housing with bigger, better, more modern buildings continued into the 20th century, e.g. the small row of thatched cottages beside the Cathcart Hall were either improved (thatch replaced with slate) or demolished completely and a new, two-storey house built in their place (Figs*55 and *56).



Figure*55 - Windy Row, Dalmellington, post-marked 1913 (Stenlake Collection)



Figure*56 - Knowe Head, Dalmellington, 1940 (Stenlake Collection)

On the west bank of the Muck Water, Burnside was also developing as plots were built up (Fig*57):



Figure*57 - Burnside, Dalmellington, George Washington Wilson, 1887

In 1910, the first major modern extension to Dalmellington began with the creation of the Broomknowe rows built on land on the north-west of the town (Fig*58). They were built to house miners at the nearby pits and they took the same form as all the other miners' rows that had been erected throughout the Doon Valley since the founding of the ironworks at Waterside in 1846, e.g. long lines of single-storey cottages with very basic amenities.



Figure*58 - 33-40 Broomknowe, John Hume, 1981

At the other end of the economic spectrum, detached villas continued to be erected in the south-west of the town on Low Main Street and Ayr Road:

The best of its late C19 and early C20 villas and cottages is Glenauchie (No.10), of c.1910 with Arts and Crafts details in the canted bay to the left, and the finely detailed porch dying into imposts. (Close & Riches, 2012, 272; Fig*59)



Figure*59 - Glenauchie, 10 Ayr Road, 2014

With the outbreak of World War I, the War Office decided to create a school of aerial gunnery based at Loch Doon:

The gunnery ranges were located in the nearby hills, and comprised rail mounted targets which zigzagged up and down the hillsides, followed by the trainee gunners, also on tracks, in carriages with guns mounted to reproduce their installations in aircraft.

(<http://www.secretscotland.org.uk/index.php/Secrets/LochDoonAerialGunnerySchool>)

An airfield covering c.88 acres was constructed at Bogton on the western edge of the village and remained operational airfield till the end of the war:

The Bogton Airfield where the Royal Flying Corps were based had two centrally heated hangars, workshops, stores and 18 brick-built barrack blocks to accommodate 500 men. At Loch Doon itself, progress was no less impressive. Buildings erected included a sewage plant to meet the needs of a population of 1,500, and a 400 seat cinema, complete with tip-up seats and a box office. (Reid, 2002, xviii)

Construction work began in September 1916 and was carried out by a huge workforce of over 3,000 men (1,500 McAlpine workers, the 1,200 prisoners of war and 500 troops), all of whom were billeted nearby. The project was never a success, however, and it was abandoned in January 1918.

One of the many disparate elements of the grand plan was the construction of a dam and hydroelectric scheme on Loch Doon. The first dam and sluice gates at Loch Doon had actually been built by John McAdam of Craigenkillan as far back as 1785-87 to control the flow of water from the loch and to prevent flooding on the low-lying plain between Dalmellington and Patna (Reid, 2001, 22; Fig*60).

The WWI hydro scheme was quite a modest affair (Fig*61) in comparison with what was planned in the 1930s when a 299 mt long concrete dam was created to create the largest storage reservoir for the Galloway Hydro (Fig*62). This resulted in the loch's water level rising by almost 10 mt, expanding its size, changing its shape, and forcing the removal of the old castle from its island and onto higher ground on the shore.



Figure*60 - First dam and sluice gates, Loch Doon, constructed c.1787 (Reid, 2001, 22)



Figure*61 - World War I Hydro scheme, Loch Doon, constructed c.1916 (Reid, 2001, 22)



Figure*62 - Doon Valley Hydro scheme, Loch Doon, constructed c.1934-37 (Reid, 2001, 22)

Another unforeseen output from the WWI Aerial Gunnery School scheme was the need to build a new bridge over the Muck Water in The Square. The existing bridge was simply not robust enough to carry all of the heavy military and construction traffic and so it was decided to build a new, metal bridge beside the old one in 1915 (Fig*63).



Figure*63 - New Bridge, Dalmellington, post-marked 1916 (Stenlake Collection)

Following the end of the war, it was decided to create a memorial to commemorate the fallen from the village. In 1922 a stone obelisk was erected on a raised site beside the Bellsbank Road: designed by

J.S. Glass of London, a native of Dalmellington it originally had a bronze panel by J.L. Emms, but this was replaced during recent conservation works.

The continued demand for local coal led to the beginning of the construction of a new village at Burnton by the Dalmellington Iron Company in 1924-26. Over the next fourteen years the population of the older mining village at Craigmark were transferred there and the old rows were demolished.

In Broomknowe, Park Crescent was laid out during the 1930s and, within the village, Bellsbank Crescent was built in 1929. The biggest change, however, was again the result of works at Loch Doon. Heavy construction traffic resulted in the decision being made in 1935 to remove both of the bridges and to cover the Muck Water over completely, creating The Square (Fig*64).



Figure*64 - The Square, Dalmellington, n.d. (Reid, 2001, 16)



Figure*65 - The Doon Cinema, High Main Street, n.d.

20th century architecture was brought in to the village in 1935 when the Doon Cinema was opened on High Main Street (Fig*65) and the Merrick Café and Hall were constructed in The Square not long afterwards (Fig*64). The cinema was demolished in the 1970s and the Merrick Hall closed down in the 1960s, but the latter is still extant.

The effects of the Great Depression were felt locally when the Dalmellington Ironworks Company went bankrupt in 1931. However, William Baird and Company took control of the assets under the newly formed Baird & Dalmellington and developed the Waterside site into a large-scale brickworks which continued until 1976. The site was also used by the National Coal Board as an administration centre and a coal washing plant, but all industrial activity ceased in 1988.



Figure*66 - Ordnance Survey, Ayrshire Sheet XLVI.SE, 1938



Fig*67 - Castle Croft, Dalmellington, n.d. (Stenlake Collection)

The Ordnance Survey of 1938 (Fig*66) shows how Dalmellington had grown outwith its medieval bounds with the addition of the new housing estates in the 20th century. The largest of these by far was at Broomknowe, but there was also a significant development at the old Castle Croft, situated between the motte and Dame Helen's Castle (Fig*67).

The outbreak of WWII in 1939 saw Dalmellington again become closely involved with the war effort:

In 1940 the government requisitioned all the halls in the village. The halls were the scout hall, band hall and the old picture house. The Eglinton Hall was used as kitchen and dining hall for the army. The soldiers slept in the various halls and the NCOs etc. stayed at Bellsbank House and at Camlarg House. The soldiers trained among the high hills around Dalmellington. The Bogton Loch was used for amphibious training.

(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/76/a1158176.shtml>)

The return of peace in 1945 also saw the return of investment in the local housing stock for incoming miners with the construction of Bellsbank beginning in 1948. By 1950, there were around 3,000 mineworkers in the Doon Valley and the industry was the principal sector of the local economy. Within thirty years, however, the mines closed one by one: Chalmerston in 1959; Houldsworth in 1965; Beoch in 1968; Minnivey in 1975.

Expansion continued in the 1950s though with Dalton Avenue being built and St Barbara's RC Church opening in 1961 (since demolished). The closure of the railway station in 1964 to passengers was another blow to the local economy and in 1979 the closure of Pennyvenie Pit meant the end of deep mining in the area.

It was not, however, to be the end of coal mining in the Doon Valley. In 1987, the Chalmerston open cast mine was opened north-east of Dalmellington:

This began production in 1987 with the first coal extracted in June of that year. ... In June 2002 a total of 92 men were employed on this site and currently some 16,000 tons of coal every week. (Reid, 2002, xv).

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