

Transactions
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JAMES WILLIAMS, F.S.A.Scot.,
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EDITORIAL

Contributions are invited on the Natural History, Geology, Antiquities and Archaeology including Industrial Archaeology, of South-West Scotland or the Solway Basin, and preference is always given to original work on local subjects. Intending contributors should, in the first instance, apply to the Editors for 'Instructions to Contributors', giving the nature and approximate size of their paper. Each contributor has seen a proof of his or her paper and neither the Editors nor the Society hold themselves responsible for the accuracy of scientific, historical or personal information in it. A copy of the current Rules, dated 13th October 1995, appeared in volume 69.

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Limited grants may be available for excavations or other research. Applications should be made prior to 28th February in each year to the Hon. Secretary. Researchers are also reminded of the Mouswald Trust founded by our late President Dr R.C. Reid, which provides grants for work on certain periods. Enquiries and applications for grants to that Trust should be made to Primrose and Gordon, Solicitors, 92 Irish Street, Dumfries DG1 2PF. The Society may also be able to assist with applications for funding from other sources.

The Council is indebted to Bórd Gas Éireann (UK) for a substantial grant towards the publication costs of the Ross Bay and Kerricks Farm reports.

The illustration on the front cover is of the Wamphray cross-slab from the article The Early Church in Dumfriesshire by W.G. Collingwood, in volume XII, Series III (1926) of these *Transactions*. It is discussed afresh by Prof. Richard Bailey in Whithorn Lecture No. 4 (1996).

THE ROOK IN DUMFRIESSHIRE A 2004 PROFILE

by John Young¹

Rooks have nested in Dumfriesshire since time immemorial and their numbers have been surveyed since at least 1908. During the decade (1993-2003) they decreased dramatically by 30% and by a further 5% between 2003 and 2004. The climate and topography are congenial and, in spite of a huge increase in commercial forestry concentrating on conifer production, the County remains well stocked with a variety of tree species. There is thus no scarcity of suitable woodland in which Rooks could nest.

Natural predation is insignificant, but large scale 'traditional' shooting of recently-fledged birds and the trapping of adults continues and is widespread within the County. This is postulated as a major cause of the population decline, a reduction in rookery size and the redistribution of birds to more favoured sites, in spite of evidence that the present day diet of the Rook has a totally negligible effect on both game bird management and current agricultural practices. Indeed Rooks may largely benefit the latter.

Since 1931 the area of rough grass has declined by 40%. Other dramatic changes in agriculture have seen a significant decrease in root crops, in the case of turnips, for example, by 94%. Overall grain production has also declined by 40% and of that 58% is now autumn-sown. Almost all grain crops are treated with herbicides, a large proportion with fungicides and a variable area, depending on perceived crop risk, with insecticides.

These changes have favoured grass productivity, now forming 44.4% of the total agricultural land in Dumfriesshire. If rough grazing were included a staggering 90% of the Counties farmland is currently 'grass.' Such management has also demanded increased drainage, mowing for silage and, more importantly, intensive applications of inorganic fertilisers, which is detrimental to Rooks and many other bird species largely dependent on invertebrate prey.

A general scarcity of uncontaminated invertebrate prey, increasingly unavailable in 'high' grass and during drought and frost conditions, is postulated as the third most significant factor controlling both the recruitment and mortality of adult and juveniles leading to fragmentation of this declining population. The scarcity of invertebrates has also resulted in a decline of a wide range of other farmland bird species that are similarly dependent on insects or other invertebrates.

With an increasingly unstable 'role of tradition' within the Rook nesting zones, significant beneficial changes in agricultural practices should result in increased recruitment, while redistribution and stability would be encouraged. The most important and achievable improvement would be an immediate cessation of annual culling.

Introduction

The Rook, *Corvus frugilegus* has a transAsian and Palaeartic distribution in boreal, temperate and steppe climatic zones, over wintering in temperate regions where the soil does not freeze over for long periods. Unlike the Raven, *Corvus corax* and Carrion Crow,

¹ Full copies of this report have been lodged at Dumfries Archive Centre and the Ewart, Kirkconnel, Lochthorn, Sanquhar and Thornhill libraries.

Corvus corone, the Rook has no direct relatives or ecological substitutes. Widely distributed in Scotland, except in the mountainous terrain of much of the North and West Highlands and many of the islands, Rooks are now almost entirely dependent on, and associated with, farming and there are few agricultural areas in mainland Scotland where the rook is not a familiar species. They require trees in which to nest, often in the midst of human habitation. They avoid large close-canopy woodlands and commercial coniferous forestry.

The inventory of nesting Rooks in Dumfriesshire was pioneered by the late Sir Hugh S. Gladstone in 1908 and repeated in 1921, then by others in 1963, 1973, 1975, 1993 and 2003, (Griffin, Skilling, Smith and Young-2004) representing one of the most complete sets of count data pertaining to Rook nest numbers in Scotland and probably within the U.K.

From 1963 to 1993, the number of Rook nests in Dumfriesshire increased by some 50%, to 25,489 in 1993. This was a continuation of a trend recorded in 1973 and 1975. Previous surveys from 1908, 1921 and 1963 had suggested a relatively stable population. The most recent census (2003) indicated a total of some 17,853 nests, a highly significant decrease of 30%. A significant sample of half of the Counties' Parishes in 2004 indicated a further annual decline of some 5%.

In the 1975 National Survey there were 21,870 rook nests in 280 rookeries in Dumfriesshire, an average rookery size of 78 nests. With 7.9 nests per km², Dumfriesshire had the highest nest density in south-west Scotland and the fourth in Scotland. Such densities are exceeded only in the agriculturally rich areas of Aberdeen, Banff and West Lothian, with an average there of 9.2 km² (± 1.3 km²). By 1975 a highly significant 8.6% of all Scotland's Rooks nested within the County of Dumfries.

Nesting

Rooks are sociable birds, nesting together in colonies (rookeries) with their spatial distribution and density dependent on feeding areas adjacent to the nesting places. In 2003 no rooks were found nesting above 300 metres (1000 feet). Geographically, the distribution of rookeries is less regular than the breeding zones of the Carrion Crow or Jackdaw, *Corvus monedula* and show a close correlation with the valley woodlands of the Cairn, Nith, Annan and White Esk. (Griffin *et al* 2003.)

In Dumfriesshire nest building begins in earnest at the beginning of March. Individual nests can be repaired or new ones completed within 48 hours and within the rookery nest construction reaches a peak by mid to late April. After that date the emerging foliage makes observation from the ground difficult and nest census work via terrestrial observations becomes increasingly difficult. An attempt to count nests by aerial survey, with photography² from an altitude of 100 metres, similarly did not prove to be reliable beyond April.

Nests are normally located in the topmost branches of tall trees, although exceptionally in 1993 several were found at a height of 1.5 metres (5 feet) on a steeply sloping hill site, near Johnstone. They are large untidy inverted conical shaped constructions, of sticks and

2 Personal observation.

large twigs. They are often rebuilt on the surviving remains of the previous season and are completed by being lined mainly with grasses, hair, roots, straw, sheep's wool, mosses, grain stalks, feathers and leaves. Paper and shredded polythene, have also been recorded. The finer materials are usually mixed with mud to form a small cup in which the eggs are laid.

Rooks generally require tall trees for nesting either on the edge of forest or woodland, they clearly prefer woodland in clumps or in linear form and tend to avoid large closed canopy forest sites. Nest building within towns and villages is not infrequent as demonstrated by the single pair, which located in 1921 on the vane which surmounts the spire of St. John's Church in Dumfries, some 39 metres (128 feet) above ground.

More recently, a new rookery was established at The Old Folk's Home, within the small Burgh of Sanquhar, which demonstrates that these may only occur when they are adjacent to agricultural land. There seems little doubt from this example that the conservation of tall trees outwith the woodland sphere has increased the number of potentially suitable breeding sites.

Electricity pylons are occasionally chosen as nest sites and one such nest was located near Gretna, Dumfriesshire, in 2003³. Ground nesting has been recorded elsewhere but is extremely rare.

Given mild and dry conditions, low-level sexual activity is often noted between September and February, when Rooks traditionally return to the rookery site and carry out nest repairs. Such preliminary activity remains inhibited by the short daylight hours. However, during this period, pair bonding, including mutual feeding, territorial aggression and attempted copulation are frequently recorded, normally without formal proof of unseasonable breeding. There are many records of young birds being found in nests during late autumn/early winter, some of these given by Yarrell as long ago as 1845, but records of successful reproduction (viable young) in winter are extremely rare.

On 11th November 1940, R T Smith was shown 3 nests by Mr A Clark, a local game-keeper, each containing well-grown young, in an obviously denuded oak tree, near Jardine Hall, Lockerbie, from which some fledged successfully.

*Sooth'd by the genial warmth, the cawing Rook
Anticipates the spring, selects her mate,
Haunts her tall nests, and with sedulous care
Repairs her wicker eyrie, tempest torn"*

Gilbert White. 1789. *The Natural Antiquities of Selborne*.

Some rooks pair for several consecutive seasons, perhaps for life, and use the same nest for several years. Outwith the nesting period rooks feed in pairs, visit the rookery in pairs, roost in pairs and fly to and from these various places in pairs (Coombs 1978). Copulation is almost always on the nest (Yeates 1934), stimulated by increased spring daylight. Egg laying varies from year to year and specific egg laying dates appear related to mean air temperatures (Owen.1959).

Throughout Dumfriesshire, the first eggs are laid between the 9th –23rd March, later for first time breeders,⁴ but very cold weather can cause a delay of as much as 2-3 weeks (Marshall & Coombs 1957). Conversely, exceptionally mild conditions can hasten nesting activity, as witnessed in 2003 (Derek Skilling & John Young. *pers.obs.*). Eggs have an average size of 40 x 28.3 mm and have a pale blue/green ground colour, densely marked with shades of ash grey and brown.⁵ Clutches range from 2-6 eggs, with an average, from a small (37) sample of data in 1961 and 2003 from Upper Nithsdale of 4.7 eggs. Incubation lasts for 16-18 days and the young are fledged some 30-36 days later; only one brood is reared per year.

Nesting usually within the canopy of tall trees, Rooks have no natural ground predators and in Dumfriesshire only Goshawks, *Accipiter gentiles*, Buzzard, *Buteo buteo*, Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus* (*pers.ob*) and Grey Squirrel, *Sciurus carolinensis*⁶ currently pose a natural but insignificant threat. Young rooks are taken by Red Kites, *Milvus milvus* in Wales (Walters Davies and Davies, 1973) and remains have been found in the nests of Tawny Owl, *Stix aluco*. Cannibalism has been recorded (Caldwell, 1949) and hawking for Rooks with both Goshawk and Peregrine Falcon remains a popular pastime for falconers, given the rook's propensity for spectacular aerial manoeuvres.

The numbers of juveniles are at their peak post fledging but, if during June through to August soil temperatures increase and combine with warm winds to produce arid conditions, the vital invertebrate food sources become unobtainable, due to invertebrates migrating downward within the soil structure to seek moisture. They are then beyond the excavating depth of the Rooks bill (35-40mm).

During the spring, summer and autumn of 2003, which proved to be the most continuous warm and dry period ever recorded in Scotland, invertebrates living on grassland and within the soils became extremely scarce, some of the annelids (earthworms) were found living at the unprecedented depth of 0.8 metres (32 inches).

During dry periods many Rooks die annually from starvation. From detailed studies elsewhere in Scotland the proportion of juveniles in flocks appear to decline from about 25% in late June to 5% in December. In December 2003, juveniles in Dumfriesshire only accounted for 3.7% of the flocks decreasing further to 2.8% by January 2004.

These natural fatalities, if augmented by control measures, such as deliberate continuous 'noise' disturbance during egg laying, shooting, trapping or poisoning, together with conventional mortality during the winter months of both adults and juveniles, may result in a scenario where, in some years, insufficient birds will survive to compensate for the losses, initiating an overall population decline and probable dispersal to more favoured areas.

4 Personal observation

5 Royal Scottish Museum

6 J C Brown, *pers. comm*

Diet

It is the year-round diet of the rook that has in the past resulted in a measure of notoriety and the desire by agriculturists and game managers to control the birds' numbers (and ornithologists to census their populations), as complex environmental changes are initiated.

Since records have been maintained there have been claims of the destructive nature of the Rook diet, with counter comment reflecting on the advantages of large flocks of birds that undoubtedly destroy significant numbers of invertebrates and insects agreed as harmful to agriculture. The principal rationale of this profile is an attempt to resolve this inherent conflict.

In the southern districts of Scotland including Dumfriesshire, several rookeries have been established '*since time immemorial*'. The earliest mention of the Rook in Scotland is contained in an Act of James I, in 1424, which deals with the '*bigging of ruikes in trees*'. If anyone allowed rooks to build in their trees, the King could hew the trees down and exact a fine of five shillings. Similarly, specific to Scotland, James II passed a second Act in 1457, ordering the extermination of '*Ruks and Crawys and other fowls of reif*.' A clap net was specifically specified '*to be kept in use in every Parish*' often with the use of a live or tame tethered rook or crow '*knowing of the cunning nature of this bird - will apprehend danger where it is to be feeding*.'

The carrion crow and jackdaw were also outlawed and a similar Act followed in England in 1533 to '*check the excessive numbers of these birds*'. Throughout the country the inhabitants of each Parish were left to carry out the doom pronounced against the whole family of crows and a penalty of '*ten shillings was to be extracted from all recusant Parishes*'. In most cases the Church apparently supplied the actual '*Craw Nets*' and employed a bird catcher.

Within Dumfriesshire, at Ellioc in the Parish of Sanquhar, the rookery is said to have been in existence in 1640 and Poet Robert Burns, writing to Mrs Dunlop from Ellisland, Dumfries in December 1788 said: '*I had better been a rook or a magpie all at once, and then I would not have been plagued with any ideas superior to breaking of clods and picking up grubs*'.

Dumfriesshire - Physical Features

Woodlands - Historical

Dr Singer in 1812 refers in his agricultural survey of Dumfriesshire, to the pre-existent forests of the county and surmises that '*probably not much more than one acre in a hundred is occupied by trees*'. Gladstone in 1910, describing the physical features of Dumfriesshire gave the area of woodland as 18,078 acres. Discussing Nithsdale, Annandale and Eskdale he further commented '*Considerable tracts of a rich loamy character lie along the rivers and on the more level portions. This area is comparatively well wooded. The rich holm, lands of recent alluvial formation extend into the recesses of the hills. At the head of these valley- tracks there are often deep ravines full of rapids and waterfalls such as Crichton Linn, Wamphray Linn, Penton Linn, and many others*'.

Although these rocky winding glens have been perhaps (at least for the most part) planted by man, yet they are practically natural woodlands incapable of agricultural exploitation.'

Referring to plantations in 1805, Singer noted that *'there are likewise large and thriving plantations of various kinds of fir, also of ash, etc. which being all carefully enclosed, and great numbers of them were sold yearly for stakes used in the salmon fisheries upon the Solway Firth'*.

Scott-Elliot, writing a hundred years later, considered that *'Originally the county probably consisted of deciduous forest, broken along the river-sides by stretches of marshy soil or peat-moss. I believe this forest probably continued from nearly sea-level to about 800 feet, from which level to that of the present hagsgs there may have been, either after a belt of conifers or throughout, rough grass and heather. The succession found in most parts of the world of deciduous forest, conifers, and heather or moss may be traced therefore without much difficulty. Arable land now replaces the deciduous forest, which still persists along the rivers and burns up to 2,200 feet'*.

Discussing moorlands, Gladstone (1910) commented *'According to Dr. Lewis's recent researches, they were once for the most part occupied by a magnificent forest of Scots Pine, with trunks eighteen inches to two feet in diameter.'*

Dumfriesshire Woodlands – Contemporary

The most recent figures from aerial survey data, updated to March 1995 give a total woodland cover in Dumfriesshire of 70,132 (ha) of which a highly significant 46,424 (ha) or (66%) are either privately owned or managed outwith the Forestry Commission, who own the remaining 23,707 (ha) or (34%). Given a total Dumfriesshire area of 283,155 (ha), including inland water, forestry thus now covers approximately a quarter of the available land surface.

Woodland composition or type, of 'high' forest demonstrates a not unexpected domination by conifers with a total of 56,242 (ha) or 90%, compared with broadleaved woodland of only 6,021 (ha) (9.6 %). A mixed combination is most frequently sought after by nesting Rooks. Within the coniferous woodlands, Sitka and Norway spruce, Corsican pine and Douglas fir are apparently of limited value, while Scots pine together with hybrid larches are prominently used. Of the broadleaved species, oak and beech are apparently preferred.

In the previous (1993) survey 99.4 % of the trees, which contained the 25,489 nests, were classified into groups or species. Approximately 37.2 % were located in a mixed coniferous / deciduous canopy.

1993	Pine spp.	Beech	Oak	Larch	Sycamore	Spruce spp.	Fir spp.	Birch	Lime	Ash
Nests	4,407	2,660	594	444	349	223	183	171	159	163
%	47.2	8.4	6.4	4.7	3.7	2.4	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.7

Table 1 Tree species used by nesting Rooks in 1993

Completely deciduous tree groups accommodated some 22.7% with unspecified conifers only holding (2.9%). Tree types were not recorded for 0.6% of nests. Given the difficulty of tree identification in very early spring, less emphasis was placed on this aspect in the 2003 survey.

Table 2 lists the high forest in Dumfriesshire by area 63,778 (ha) and by species, with conifer providing 56,242 (ha) (88.1%) and broadleaved trees covering 6,021 (ha) or 10.7% of the total high canopy. Of the conifer species already indicated (1993 survey) as valuable to nesting rooks, Pine and Larch species total 3,836 (ha) or 11.7% of the high conifers, which elevates the value of high conifers for rooks, with an added measure of concern if the current apparent timber conversion rates continue unabated.

Privately owned high broadleaved forest (6,021 ha) is obviously a more permanent habitat and likely to assume an even more vital role in the future provision of rookeries.

	Oak	Beech	Sycamore	Ash	Birch	Poplar	Sweet Chestnut	Elm	Other Broadleaves	Mixed Broadleaves
(ha)	478	490	416	126	1,077	5	0	53	357	3,019
(%)	8	8	7	2	18	0	0	1	6	50

Table 2 High broad-leaved forest species in Dumfriesshire (ha)

Birch spp. at 1,077 (ha) is classified as high forest but in Dumfriesshire holds only 1.8% of rook nests, due to the trees structure, wide individual spacing and with a less continuous canopy.

Rooks habitually nest within the crown of high trees, rarely against the trunk but usually on the horizontal branches and often in close groups. Tree species selected for nesting are more often a reflection of what is available adjacent to a feeding zone rather than a very specific choice.

Tree height, percentage canopy cover and branch spread are vital ecological factors in tree and nest site selection, but all of these, especially the latter, proved so variable depending on surroundings and local variation as to be of real statistical use. Data on wooded areas may confuse the question of suitability and availability of potential rookery sites, when only 'high' forest is deemed ecologically acceptable.

The projected forestry landscape and species composition of the high forest during the next half-century, is already determined by the agreed planting regime in progress throughout the County. Distribution of the woodland types planned for the future will obviously be a major factor in determining, (in conjunction with the other precise ecological requirements especially food sources) the density and distribution of many species, including the Rook, that require to live in or around high woodland for a significant period of their annual biological cycle.

Although outwith the scope of this review, it is worthy of note that although much of the coniferous woodland appears unsuitable for the provision of rook nesting sites, close canopy conifer plantations can be extremely important biologically and contribute significantly to the range of safe, dry, roosting areas for non-breeding birds during the summer months and for a significant proportion of the Rook population during winter.

Topography and Climate

The landscape topography can be simply characterised by being basically level in the southern parts, the 150m (500 foot) contour not being reached till Drumlanrig, in mid-Nithsdale. Thereafter undulating, with only a few small areas in the north of the County, which could be described as rugged. The predominance of cattle and sheep, together with dairy and mixed farming has resulted in a landscape largely composed of improved or semi-improved grassland for pasture, hay or silage. There are extensive coniferous plantations on the higher ground and a mosaic of smaller woodlands, more often associated with the valley systems of the three major river systems the Nith, Annan and Esk

Much of the County forms part of the Southern Uplands and the relatively high average rainfall is due to the higher ground of the Uplands lying in the path of prevailing south-westerly winds, emanating off the Atlantic and extended into the Irish Sea and subsequently the Solway Firth. Given also the higher than (Scottish) average temperatures, the climate could well be described as having an oceanic influence and generally being mild and genial.

'The weather of a district is undoubtedly part of its natural history' Gilbert White -1789

Temperature

Average global surface temperature has increased between 0.3°C. and 0.6°C. since the late 19th century and the trends throughout Scotland show a similar rise. The mean temperature in the 1990s was 8.4°C. a rise of 1°C from the 1860s mean of 7.4°C. Temperatures in Scotland are predicted to increase between 2°C. and 3°C. by 2100, with relatively more warming in winter than summer and over land rather than over coastal areas.

It is entirely possible that higher temperatures will regularly create longer periods of drought leading to dry soil conditions and higher Rook mortality in summer. Similarly, during winter, freezing temperatures can lock up moisture as snow or ice - creating a virtual drought. Normally temperatures are expected to fall with altitude at an average rate of about 0.7°C. per 100 metres for the maximum and 0.5°C. per 100 metres for the minimum.

Rainfall

There is a misconception that Scotland as a whole suffers from a very high rainfall. On average, some 6,000 km² experiences less than 800mm (30 inches). Much of the North and East, which supports the highest densities of nesting Rooks, has less than 250mm (10 inches) over the 4 summer months.

In the West of Scotland, there is marked seasonal variations within the average monthly rainfall, total rain for the 5 months, February - June, being usually 55%- 60% of that expected during September - January which is not helpful to Rooks.

In addition, low lying narrow zones of land as in Dumfriesshire, are relatively dry, often escaping heavy prolonged showers and prolonged snow cover, which occurs more frequently over higher ground. The latest isohyetal intervals indicate that up to an altitude of 150 metres (the Thornhill/Drumlanrig area) the average over 30 years is of 800mm (31 inches) very similar to north-east Scotland and West Lothian and only rising to between 1200-1600 mm (47-63 inches) in the upper catchments areas.

The two main stations in Dumfriesshire have recorded an annual average of (a) Dumfries at 49 metres altitude, 1,023mm (40.2 inches) and (b) Eskdalemuir at 242 metres altitude, 1,456mm (57.3 inches).

Evapotranspiration is relatively low and soil moisture deficits are not regarded as significant within the County.

Soils

In general, the Dumfriesshire soils are predominately of brown forest soils, with some humus-iron podzols in the north-east and non-calcareous gleys/peaty gleys in the eastern third. All symptomatic of undulating lowlands with gentle slopes and a moderately warm and dry climate. The only significant soil pollution is by PCB's some samples of which, in Eskdalemuir, are among the highest levels recorded in Scotland and are probably associated with localised sheep dipping techniques. The possible effects of the so-called 'acid rain' phenomenon are unknown. Similarly, the use of Ivormexin, a chemical bolus to deworm farm stock, which undoubtedly did not allow invertebrates to survive within the faeces was withdrawn and not widely used after 2000.

Agriculture in Dumfriesshire - Historical

Perhaps significantly, the local Dumfriesshire name for the Rook, used at least since the 17th Century was 'corn craw.' During that era Rooks were acknowledged to attack newly sown and drying grain, turnips and potatoes. Pasture was of 'naitur gerss' self regenerating grazing. Sown in the spring of each year, infield crops of oats, barley and wheat were often delayed in ripening. Susceptible to disease and wind blow, they were eventually sheared by hand sickle, tied into sheaves, and built into stooks to dry and ripen in the field. Eventually being led to the corn yard to further win in stacks often as the first snows of winter were falling, before being thrashed by hand flail, sheaf by sheaf. The crop was thus extremely vulnerable to significant loss by climatic exposure and over-handling, as well as prolonged attack by many species of mammals and birds.

Produce was of a low yield, mainly for local consumption, such was the dependence on the crop, often fluctuating close to total failure, that small children were deployed to scare birds from the harvest field.

Shooting was specifically organised to control and scare the numbers of red grouse, *Lagopus lagopus*, black grouse, *Tetrao tetrix*, grey partridge, *Perdix perdix*, wood pigeons, *Columbus palumbus*, house sparrows, *Passer domesticus* and especially the rook, that were the more obvious predators on the grain stooks.

Arable cropping was so narrowly based on grain and legumes that ‘a bad season, and it was hunger, a really bad season and it led to famine’ as was amply illustrated by the ‘meal riots’ of 1748 to 1800 in the town of Dumfries, leading Grierson to comment ‘*many a poor person in this place has not had a grain of meal in their house for several days*’.

Consequently, Rooks have been linked to agriculture since time immemorial; nonetheless they have also demonstrated a catholic range of food items. Often to be found feeding on higher moorlands, among the Solway tide wrack, foraging in the newly harvested silage and grain fields, occasionally in rubbish tips and regularly along roadsides on insect carrion and gathering salt, they now utilise the urban scene in parks, golf courses, town streets, even raiding refuse bins⁷ and on field and farm dung heaps.

Further south in the UK ‘*rooks know to destroy apple and pear orchards and can destroy a whole crop*’ (Abbey G.1919.) The only non-terrestrial prey recorded are defoliating caterpillars and occasionally moth spp. Gladstone (1910), noted that in recurrent plagues of the Antler moth, *Charoegas graminis* which devastated the upland pastures of Eskdalemuir, how ‘*great incursions of Rooks dealt faithfully with these.*’

Rooks and Game

There is no doubt that Rooks will also take the eggs and nestlings of ground nesting birds, especially those on the woodland floor beneath the rookery canopy. As one might expect, such predation, when it occurs among game species, is particularly noted. In the older literature both grey partridge and pheasant, *Phasianus colchicus* have been recorded as victims. In a fascinating note A. J. Stuart-Wortley (1895), commented: -

‘As to Rooks, they will undoubtedly at times consume pheasant and partridge eggs to a large extent. Two years ago, during the great drought (spring and summer 1893) they destroyed thousands of, especially partridge eggs --- as though they were in search of food with moisture in it or were short of some supply, probably of insect nourishment, which would be more plentiful in a wetter season.

Serious as these spasmodic inroads are on the part of the rooks, they do not seem to trespass regularly, I think one should hesitate before destroying a rookery, one of the most interesting and picturesque features of the country, and one, which holds an undoubted place in the balance of nature. Hen pheasants will in most seasons bring out their broods safely right under the trees of the rookery, and they no doubt thrive on the morsels of food dropped by their black neighbours while feeding their young.’

Tegetmeir, (1904) an acknowledged authority on the pheasant, also commented: -

‘The question as to the influence of the rook in pheasant coverts is one of those respecting which there is much to be said on both sides. The rook is so often regarded as a valuable ally to the agriculturist, by destroying an enormous number of grubs, wire worms &., that its case claims attentive consideration.’

⁷ Personal observation

He proceeds to quote several sources to the effect that rooks are not regular predators of eggs but may well resort to such when other food sources fail, particularly due to drought, for example, Lord Clonbrock *'It would therefore appear that not only do rooks destroy eggs, but that they take to it in a sudden and unaccountable manner'*.

Harman of Co Sligo - *'A few years ago, in a dry spring, with a north-east wind for many weeks, when the rooks could not bore for their accustomed food, about one hundred and fifty pheasant's eggs --- i.e. the shells were found under the rookery.'*

Rooks will also, on occasion, attack and take animal food in the form of insects, small birds and mammals including carrion. These formerly included the chicks of game birds, especially grey partridge for a short period as the young rooks disperse from the rookery and the juveniles spend a lot of time foraging on the woodland floor.⁸

The committee appointed to enquire into the causes of the vole plague in Southern Scotland (1891-1893) reported on the excellent service rendered by Rooks, *'which tore out the nests and destroyed thousands of young voles' Microtus agretis*. Gladstone believed that in the years 1830-35, the rook was at its most numerous and that after this, a period of persecution ensued and about 1860 they were at their lowest numerical strength.

He was also of the opinion that about 1870 the Rooks began to change their feeding habits: - *'Previous to that time they attacked the farmers' growing and harvested crops at the same time they were destroying untold quantities of grubs and noxious insects. But about this period, eggs of all kinds, young birds, small rodents, young rabbits, chickens and ducklings were devoured as greedily as ever the Carrion Crow did the same thing.'*

Throughout Dumfriesshire, the Borders and in Cumbria, during the period from 1900 to the 1980's, no matter the evidence, it was considered to be an integral part of the game-keeper's annual tasks to - *'thin out the rookery.'* This was usually accomplished by shooting the juvenile rooks, when they were still on the branches, with either a .22 rifle or 410 shot-guns. Elsewhere the use of crossbows has been recorded. The annual 'rook shoot' was formerly so popular and widespread that they were often planned as a social occasion, to the extent that the well-known gunsmith firm of Holland and Holland designed and marketed a 'Rook Rifle' specifically for the task in 1910.⁹

During the 18th century, Rook pie was widely eaten in Dumfriesshire and Northern England and the habit was resumed during both World Wars, with the birds sold openly at butchers and market. The dish was formed from the breasts of young newly fledged birds, usually with an addition of onion and rabbit pieces, the whole covered with a pastry crust.

Similarly, during the 1930s 'Rook Pie' together with 'Sheep's heid broth' were both regularly on the menu at the renowned St Enoch's Hotel, Glasgow, on a Wednesday, which was market day when the farmers traditionally came to town, George Leggate (chef). Generally they were regarded as the *'poor man's commons and traditionally were consumed by the village peasantry.'*

8 The late Sir Arthur B. Duncan, *pers. comm.*

9 Allan Allison, *pers. comm.*

Other than in Dumfriesshire,¹⁰ and some ethnic communities in north-east Scotland¹¹ there is no recent evidence to suggest that this tradition continues to be widely practised.

Other rook food items on record include small fish, mice, shrews, mollusca (snails and slugs), millipedes, noctuid caterpillars, beetles and spiders. The most prudent investigation which involved analysis of 1,306 stomach contents (Collinge 1938) concluded that the diet then was made up of vegetable matter 59% (cereals 35.1%; potatoes and other roots 13.4%), animal food 41 % (32% insects and 44 % worms). Fruit, acorns, walnuts, peas, berries and seeds were also recorded. During an isolated occasion in Hants 1919, some 500 rooks destroyed a whole orchard crop of apple and pears. (Abbey G. *in litt.*)

Game Birds

During the past decade the intense historical debates on predation of game bird eggs and chicks have become largely irrelevant. Game managers are no longer dependent on the 'open field' system of rearing day old chicks but turn out to covert ever increasing numbers of approximately six-week-old 'poult's'. Pheasants, Grey Partridges and increasingly, during the last decade, Red-legged Partridges, *Alectoris rufa*, are at six weeks of age sufficiently mobile and robust to be completely safe from attack by Rooks.

One estate in Dumfriesshire, for example, rears some 12,000 pheasants annually, which is dwarfed by the not atypical release elsewhere of some 40,000, 'rufa' (hybrid) partridges. Given such numbers Rook predation is obviously insignificant.

The release of 'rufa' partridges is often regarded as an alternative quarry species to both the Grey Partridge and Red Grouse. The former has all but disappeared from its agricultural habitats due to current practices, mainly the early and continual cutting of silage, allied to the use of insecticides and pesticides associated with extensive arable farming. These methods have compromised, not only once common, diverse ecosystems but have almost totally depleted the insect populations on which partridge chicks, among others, initially depend.

Red and Black Grouse formerly enjoyed a more widespread distribution in Dumfriesshire, with the principal habitat requirement (heather moorland) at one time growing to sea level on, for example, the Lochar Moss. Their numbers too, have been decimated, principally due to over-grazing, draining and coniferous tree planting, all of which directly contributed to a massive direct loss of the heath land and marginal habitats.

In short, from a game manager's, perspective and given the many enigmatical hazards of 'showing game' to be shot in season, there is no longer a sensible, practical requirement to control Rook numbers. Clearly the population is regulated by agricultural policies, allied to environmental factors, principally temperature, precipitation and the availability of suitable nest sites, together with the availability of a continuous and uncontaminated invertebrate food source.

¹⁰ Ken Bruce *pers.comm.*

¹¹ Personal observation

One of the most intensive studies of the Rook in Scotland concluded that '*Although destruction of most of the young birds of the year will greatly reduce the number of juveniles in a local population in the early summer, this is made up by the autumn recruitment, and no lasting reduction takes place. Obviously this can only happen if the young birds over the wide range from which the recruitment may take place are not themselves part of a heavily shot population, but the fact that the population of any one rookery is replenished with young birds from a wide area does mean that rook shooting is an expensive and useless method of trying to control their numbers (Dunnet and Patterson 1968)*'.

Yet the practice of shooting newly fledged Rooks remains an annual and widespread event in Dumfriesshire, with some individuals readily admitting to shooting up to 1,000 young birds during the 2002 and 2003 seasons, crow traps containing adults were also found adjacent to rookeries in the spring of 2004, during a period when dependant young had hatched. (Derek Skilling, & John Young, *pers.obs*).

Agricultural Factors

Agricultural developments and strategy remain dynamic and two main factors affect the Rook debate.

The optimum Rook habitat is clearly that containing a mixture of tillage crops (cereals, roots and vegetables) and grass, temporary or permanent but excluding rough grazing. Changes in the availability of ley grassland have been shown to affect the numbers, as Rooks feed exclusively on invertebrates on short grassland throughout the summer.

Thus Dumfriesshire, given its relatively mild climate, high rainfall and sunshine records, is admirably suited to dairy and beef production. Such a regime requires significant grassland grazing, which in turn is obviously beneficial to Rooks. Turnips and Swedes for stock feeding, which were formerly targeted by rooks, are no longer a major crop, similarly, potatoes, also a declining crop, are now the subject of new drilling techniques, which put the growing tubers beyond the rooks' burrowing reach.

Significantly, the grain crop has also changed dramatically during the past few decades; more varieties are being produced, sown at different times of year, thus reducing potential attack. More importantly, seeds are sown mechanically, more accurately and at a uniform depth unattractive to the Rook.

The only recent crop damage by the Rook reported privately to the author within the County (2003) was exposure of sprouting maize roots while the birds were excavating for invertebrates. No specific complaints by agriculturists re Rook damage have been received by the Department of Agriculture for over a decade.

Within the last three decades in Dumfriesshire the grass area mown to produce silage has significantly increased to replace hay production and Rooks increasingly forage for invertebrates in these newly cut zones. Given the climate and geographical location of the county, it is often the case that, unlike other areas further north in Scotland, grass growth often allows three such crops from each field, potentially providing Rooks with optimum 'short grass' conditions for some four-five months from that management alone.

Rooks obtain the bulk of their animal food from grassland and about 50% of feeding time in all months is spent on such habitat. The common earthworms, *Lumbricidae* constitute the main prey item of the Rook throughout the spring and summer (March-August) with leatherjackets next. These are obtained from the top 5cm of soil by probing, an action more used by Rooks than by other crows. Other animal food is obtained by pecking from the surface and by jumping into the air to catch flying insects which have been disturbed and beetles, flies, ants and spiders. (Lockie, 1956; Holyoak, 1968; Freare, Dunnet and Patterson, 1974).

The widespread podsol soils, are rich with organic matter and are augmented with aluminium and iron. Given that the soil moisture balance is maintained, together with a reasonably short sward, they will provide Rooks with a sustained food source. Obviously there are variables associated with the pattern of abundance and the availability of suitable grasslands together with the combination of soil characteristics and rainfall at each location.

Gimona (1998) concludes that the combination of availability of grassland translates into potential availability of food resources for the Rook in the form of soil invertebrates while other factors such as pH, and the increased application of pesticides, some of which are toxic to earthworms, may influence the density of prey at the local level. This suggests that, in Scotland and Dumfriesshire, in particular, at the district level the association between the mixture of grass and cereals, which was believed to influence the breeding density, only mirrors the amount of grassland available. Contrary to what was previously found, cereals are less important in explaining the demographic fragmentation of the Rook breeding population.

Griffin *et al* (2003) also concluded that nest numbers correlated most strongly with the area of grazed and mown grass leys of five years and older. Younger leys and grazed grass also showed a correlation but to a lesser extent.

Indeed, the decline in the quality of grassland as a habitat for soil invertebrates, rather than in winter cereal stubble, might well have been associated with the past population declines in the Rook. The spatial distribution and size of rookeries can thus be expected to be determined by both the distribution of foraging habitat and intercolony competition as well as the role of tradition

In the 70 years between 1931 and 2001 grazing classified as 'rough' in Dumfriesshire decreased from 160,069 (ha) to 96,113 (ha) an improvement mainly to cultivation of 63,956 (ha) or 39.9 % of the previous rough grazing and thus continues to represent 46% of the land under some form of agriculture, theoretically to the advantage of Rooks and other species principally dependent on grassland habitat.

The main source of complaint regarding Rook damage to crops, certainly from the 1930s till the 1980s related to turnips and swedes for stock feeding and to ware potatoes, augmented by seed potatoes from 1971 onwards.

Rooks were rarely accused of removing the seed or tubers but, in the process of excavating for invertebrates, especially the Turnip Sawfly, *Athalia rosa* the larvae of *Agriotes lineatus* (wireworm) and the nematode heterodera (eelworm), that were in turn disturbing

the root systems of these plants turnip roots were left exposed to wither and potato tubers 'greened', resulting in stunted growth. Turnips were especially vulnerable to attack following hoeing and being singled out. Often the resultant damage was greatly augmented by Wood Pigeons, *Columbus palumbus*, Rabbit, *Oryctolagus cuniculus* and Brown Hare, *Lepus europeus*, as was the rare occurrence of attack on mature turnip following frost damage.

All of these crops have decreased dramatically, in the case of turnip from 5,503 (ha) in 1931 to an all time low of 317 (ha) in 2001 a decrease of 5,186 (ha) or 94 %. Similarly, ware potatoes have decreased from 1,106 (ha) in 1931 to 99.8 (ha) in 2001 (9%) and seed potatoes, only recorded since 1971, decreased from 528 (ha) to 100 (ha) by 2001 (18.9%).

Given such a decrease in planting areas, improved drilling techniques, together with enhanced applications of pesticides, Rook damage to all of these crops is currently negligible.

Overall, the total crops grown in Dumfriesshire during the period 1931-2001, to include set aside; bare fallow and other minor crops, summarised by (ha) and decade, demonstrate an annual decline of a mean of 1,645 (ha) from a peak of 29,447 (ha) in 1941 to 10,715 in 2001.

Other crops grown in Dumfriesshire between 1931-2001 to augment stock feeding have fluctuated in preference. None of these were known or reported to be subject to attack from Rooks and included by (ha): -

	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Fodder Beet	-	-	-	-	-	-	45	61
Kale & Cabbage	30	474	509	747	240	164	110	68
Rape	244	787	806	477	475	511	221	69
Others	101	959	767	349	140	248	92	694
Total (ha)	375	2220	2082	1573	855	923	468	892

Table 3 Other Crops

	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Total Crops	20,105	29,447	24,732	191,710	16,261	16,119	11,214	10,715

Table 4 Total Dumfriesshire Crops 1931-2001

Total cereal production within the county was similarly subject to rapid and massive increase within the two decades, during and post World War 2. Overall, cereals have declined markedly from a 1941 peak of 20,043 (ha) to a modest 8,129 (ha) in 2001 (-60%). Particularly notable was the 1940s increase in winter oats, which has subsequently declined to an inconsequential 83 (ha) and the significant change to winter barley in the 1970s, with an equally dramatic exit by 2001.

Rooks traditionally attacked oats, (see above) especially when laid or lodged and remaining in field stooks. That crop is now scarce. Similarly, winter barley, which ripened earlier and was susceptible to attack from crane fly, *Tipulidae* (leather jacket) attracted Rooks, which as well as devouring the insects attacked the green heads. Later they were also often attracted to fields of Spring barley that contained short stalked areas, for example, on stony or sandy hillocks or damp areas where grain became 'sour'.

Once attracted to a food source, feeding could be persistent. Scaring methods usually proved futile and more mature stalks would be broken as birds 'glided in' with open 'set' wings. Rook damage to stems, compared to the massive predation wrought by Wood Pigeons and Pheasants, is not now significant.

On a few grain sites adjacent to lochs and rivers, predation by Mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos* and more recently feral Greylag Geese, *Anser anser* and Canada Geese, *Branta canadensis* may prove marginal as they 'walk' into fields when in full wing moult.¹²

All of these, pale into insignificance in areas where there are large uncontrolled populations of rabbit.

Given the overall decrease in grain grown within Dumfriesshire, together with vastly improved sowing, crop care and combine harvesting, Rooks no longer threaten a well-managed crop.

Clearly, as root and grain crops oscillated and generally decreased, more marginal land and rough grazing was improved, in a relentless aspiration to evolve a landscape dominated by grassland.

Grass

Omitting 96,113 (ha) of rough grazing which is unsuitable to Rooks, grass for mowing and or grazing, now represents 92,832 (ha) or 44.4 % of the total agricultural land in Dumfriesshire. Including the rough grass, a staggering 189,045 (ha) or 90.4 % of the Counties 'farmland' is now 'green'.

Grass for mowing is now usually cut for silage, once the crop grows to over 10-12 cm (4-5 inches) it too becomes unsuitable for rooks. They can neither move through nor penetrate the sward, they do return to utilise the crop area immediately it is cut and until the process is repeated.

Theoretically, in Dumfriesshire, given a surplus of trees for nesting and roosting in, together with a huge area dominated by grasses at varying stages, augmented by some foraging within crops, such a combination should be approaching a form of Rook utopia.

Such a grass-orientated scenario is certainly excellent for other grazing species including Rabbits, Brown Hare, *Lepus capensis* Roe Deer, *Caprioles caprioles* Wood Pigeon

¹² Personal observation.

and the various goose species, both resident and migratory. These species are all increasing markedly, to the extent that many farmers regard them to be in pest proportions. It is certain that the main factor involved in supporting their dynamic population thrusts is quite simply the year round availability of green herbage.

Contrary to those species which graze within the county the whole of the Rook population and several other notable breeding bird species, including the Oystercatcher, *Haematopus ostralegus*, Lapwing, *Vanellus vanellus*, Common Snipe, *Capella gallinago*, and Woodcock, *Scolopax rusticola*, are all subject to serious population declines. These species are entirely dependant on moist conditions and uncontaminated soil invertebrates throughout the breeding season and are undoubtedly being restricted by extremely low densities of invertebrates within the mass of the existing grass or grain bearing soil structures.

Concentration on improved grass production has also seriously impacted and caused a dramatic loss of insects. Grey Partridge populations in Dumfriesshire, for example, fell by a staggering 82% between 1970 and 1988 and further towards a virtual total collapse by 2003. When augmented by predation from Fox, *Vulpes vulpes*, and a loss of safe nesting cover and seed sources, of which the turnip field was a significant provider.

Many other traditional farmland species, represented by the Skylark, *Alauda arvensis*, Song Thrush, *Turdus philomelos*, Linnet, *Carduelis canabina*, Corn Bunting, *Emberiza citrinella* and even the House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus* for example, similarly find the regime detrimental.

Augmented at times by over zealous drainage, hedge removal and soil impaction from the use of heavier vehicles, these together with the intensive application of pesticides, insecticides and herbicides, have contributed to one view that Dumfriesshire is now, alas, more akin to a proverbial 'green desert.'

Rook Movements

Autumnal immigration into Britain to winter, principally from Scandinavia is annual. Rooks ringed in Germany and Leningrad Russia have been recovered mainly in Yorkshire and the south-east. Formerly, some authorities have suggested movements to and from Ireland. Ringing recoveries do not yet support the latter. Theoretically any of these movements could potentially result in the doubling of numbers of rooks in some areas in winter as they share the winter roosts with residents (Burns 1957) but there is no evidence to suggest that these migrants visit or remain in Dumfriesshire to augment the breeding populations.

Limited ringing data indicates that native Scottish birds seldom travel more than 100 km, although the young may disperse further during their first winter. In Dumfriesshire, during June and July, non-breeding and presumably also breeding adults who have failed move from the rookery to exploit uncontested feeding zones and to occupy separate communal roosting sites.

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PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF THE MACROPHYTE FLORA
OF LOCH SKEEN, DUMFRIESSHIRE.

by Andrew Dalton¹

Loch Skeen (or Skene, NT 171 165) is a moraine dammed loch lying in a NNW/SSE direction in an upland corrie basin. It lies within Grey Mare's Tail SSSI, owned by the National Trust for Scotland. A description of the site is given by Mackinlay (2003). The loch is approximately 1160 metres long by 325 metres wide at its widest, with an average breadth of about 250 metres. It is reputed to reach a depth of 25 metres. The loch is approximately 27.75 hectares in area and has a catchment of about 152.5 hectares. The loch is at an altitude of just below 520 metres.

The maps in Preston and Croft (1997) show the aquatic species of macrophytes to be found in square 3161, which includes Loch Skeen, Gameshope Loch and the south-east corner of Fruid Reservoir. The species include Callitriche spp., Carex rostrata, Equisetum fluviatile, Isoetes lacustris, Potamogeton polygonifolius, Ranunculus flammula and Subularia aquatica, amongst others.

The hinterland of Loch Skeen is grazed by Scottish blackface sheep and feral goats. The loch is used for recreation, mainly by walkers but also by shore fishermen, though in the past a boat was available.

Survey

The survey method adopted was the method used by the former Nature Conservancy Council and by Scottish Natural Heritage in their 'Survey of Scottish Lochs' (Palmer, 1992). Briefly, the surveyor walks/wades around the loch shore recording all species present and their DAFOR rating and maps the main stands of vegetation onto a copy of the 1:10000 OS map. Target notes are written to give a record of the vegetation and substrates present and any other incidental information. A double-headed rake grapnel is thrown occasionally, and as appropriate, to try to determine what vegetation is growing in the deeper water. The loch was surveyed over two days on the 5th and 7th July 2000.

Results

Most of the shoreline consists of stones (5-30 cm diameter) with boulders (> 30 cm diameter) though some small bays, mainly along the southern shore, have a silt/organic mud substratum. An area of gravel (4-50 mm diameter), extending for about 35 metres, exists along the northern shore. Small areas of gravel exist elsewhere around the loch shore.

¹ Andrew Dalton, 15 Victoria Parade, Morecambe, Lancashire LA4 5NX.

The plants recorded from Loch Skeen are listed below together with their DAFOR ratings (F = frequent, LA = locally abundant, LF = locally frequent, 0 = occasional, R = rare):

- a). Submerged and floating species. *Callitriche* spp. 0, *Callitriche hamulata* R, *Charophyte* spp. 0-LF, *Fontinalis antipyretica* 0-LF, *Isoetes lacustris* 0, *Littorella uniflora* F-LA, *Myriophyllum alterniflorum* 0, *Potamogeton polygonifolius* R, *Potamogeton* x *sparganiifolius* 0-LF and *Subularia aquatica* 0.
- b). Emergent and edge species. *Caltha palustris* F, *Cardamine pratensis* 0, *Carex nigra* 0, *Carex rostrata* 0-LF, *Equisetum fluviatile* 0-LF, *Eriophorum angustifolium* 0, *Filipendula ulmaria* R, *Juncus effusus* 0, *Littorella uniflora* R, *Lysimachia nemorum* 0, *Montia fontana* R, *Phegopteris connectilis* R, *Ranunculus flammula* F, *Salix* sp. R, *Sorbus aucuparia* saplings R and *Viola palustris* F.

The following species were found on some of the islands in Loch Skeen: *Alchemilla* sp., *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Betula* sp., *Calluna vulgaris*, *Caltha palustris*, *Cardamine pratensis*, *Carex nigra*, *Climacium dendroides*, *Calliargon cuspidatum*, *Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Dryopteris dilatata*, *Festuca ovina*, *Filipendula ulmaria*, *Galium saxatile*, *Hypnum cupressiforme*, *Juncus effusus*, *Luzula sylvatica*, *Ranunculus acris*, *Ranunculus flammula*, *Ranunculus repens*, *Rhinanthus minor*, *Rumex acetosa*, *Sorbus aucuparia* saplings, *Vaccinium myrtillus* and *Viola palustris*.

Discussion

Loch Skeen keyed out to be a type 3 loch based on its macrophytic flora (Palmer, 1992). Type 3 lochs are oligotrophic, and include large lochs in the Trossachs, Loch Lomond, Wastwater, Buttermere and Coniston.

All the species noted above from Preston and Croft (1997) were found together with *Fontinalis antipyretica* and unidentified *charophyte* species.

The most interesting find was *Potamogeton* x *sparganiifolius* along the western shore and in a concentrated mass between a small island (NT 1674 1680) and the northern shore. It occurred in water of about 0.6 metre or greater in depth just outside the area of *Myriophyllum alterniflorum*. It should be noted that the loch shelves away steeply in parts, for instance, to more than one metre deep within two metres of the shore in places along the western shore. *Potamogeton* x *sparganiifolius* is a hybrid between *Potamogeton gramineus* and *Potamogeton natans* (Preston, 1995, from which the following information is taken). It is a widespread but uncommon hybrid, most frequent in Scotland and Ireland and very rare in England and Wales. It is a variable plant, predominantly of streams and rivers but also occurring in lakes. It is not recorded in the 'Wild Plants of Dumfriesshire' (Martin, 1985) and would appear to be a new record for this species in the vice-county.

The continued presence of *Subularia aquatica* in Loch Skeen was confirmed. It is a plant characteristic of oligotrophic lochs. It was found along the southern and western shores and at one site on the eastern shore, though washed up specimens were also found on this side. It occurred growing amongst *Littorella* in the shallower, stony substrate areas.

The western shore is the leeward shore. *Subularia aquatica* was once considered to be nationally scarce (i.e. occurring only in sixteen to one hundred ten kilometre squares) but Preston and Croft (1997) have recorded it from 171 10 km squares in Great Britain and consider it to be often overlooked due to the fact that it is inconspicuous.

Isoetes lacustris was not recorded very often and I believe this was due to the nature of the littoral, which shelved away very quickly in places and was thus mainly inaccessible to me. *Isoetes* often occurs outside the *Littorella* zone, which in Loch Skeen occurred on the stony substratum to the edge, and perhaps beyond where the loch shore commenced to increase rapidly in depth.

Lobelia dortmanna was not found in the loch, though it is a plant often found in oligotrophic lochs. However, Martin (1985) does not record the plant from the vice-county and Preston and Croft (1997) record only one, pre-1950, record for south-east Scotland.

The main stands of emergent vegetation, consisting of *Carex rostrata* (Rodwell, 1995. NVC community S9) and *Equisetum fluviatile* (NVC community S10b), occurred in the sheltered bays of the southern and south-western shores. Here, the depth of silt could reach more than 1.8 metres. There was only one bay on the eastern side (NT 1718 1664), southerly facing, where *Equisetum fluviatile* (NVC community S10a) occurred to any extent and this was on a mainly gravelly bottom.

It would have been interesting to have surveyed the two islands not accessible from the mainland, to compare their vegetation to the islands I was able to wade out to, which were thus easily accessible to grazing vertebrates. Both the inaccessible islands had trees, the one off the southern shore having a birch and a willow. On the islands I was able to reach the only trees present were rowan saplings. Rowan saplings, along with one willow, were also recorded rarely along the mainland shoreline. A patch of *Phegopteris connectilis* occurred on the west bank, just up from the outlet. Scott-Elliott (1896) also recorded this species from Loch Skeen.

Conclusions

This initial survey of Loch Skeen indicates it is a type 3 loch with a littoral substrate of mainly stones with some boulders.

A pondweed, *Potamogeton x sparganiiifolius* was found, which is a new record for the vice-county. The continued presence of *Subularia aquatica* was confirmed. Both of these, particularly the former, are of conservation interest.

It is suggested that further work on the loch should include some, or preferably all, of the following. A bathymetric survey should be done, together with a temperature, dissolved oxygen and Secchi disc profile of the loch in summer and winter. The collection of chemical and flow data on the streams running into the loch and of the loch itself, over a period of time, would also be useful.

It would be interesting if the sub-littoral of the loch could be surveyed, either by boat transects and/or scuba diving to determine the macrophytes and sediments to be found in

the deeper water and their distribution. A visit to the inaccessible islands would be useful to record the plants present, which are not susceptible to grazing, and compare the data to the islands I was able to wade out to. It would also be interesting to see if the common gull colony, on the island in the south-eastern corner of the loch had any local or more general influence on the microbiological and nutrient quality of the water.

Visitor pressure on the loch and its hinterland should be monitored to determine the effects, if any, it has on the habitats associated with the loch, including the blanket bog to the east of the loch.

Acknowledgements

Dr. C. D. Preston of the Biological Records Centre identified *Potamogeton x sparganii-folius*. Dr. C. Miles informed me that *Subularia aquatica* had been reported in the loch in 1998. The survey work was undertaken whilst I worked as a volunteer warden for the National Trust for Scotland at their Grey Mare's Tail Nature Reserve.

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IN A QUIET WATERED LAND
 The Cree Valley: Neolithic Chambered Cairns and Early Farmers
 by Diana Coles

This paper will examine the peopling of the Cree valley in the early-mid Neolithic as expressed in the monuments that they constructed. It will endeavour to explore the chambered tombs, their location within and relationship to the landscape and geography of the region. The contention argued herein is that within the south-western peninsula of Scotland, the earlier nomadic Mesolithic hunting and gathering economy was replaced by a sedentary Neolithic culture based on a mixed economy of cereal farming and animal husbandry and not, as has been suggested, by a wholly nomadic and pastoral culture. Two variants of the chambered cairn are recognised in the Galloway region; the Clyde cairns, which occur elsewhere in southern Scotland and the Bargrennan type which, are a totally local variant. Examples of both are found in the Cree valley, including the type-site for the Bargrennan tombs. A close examination of both the architectural details of these monuments and of their location within the landscape will be used to advance the argument for a sedentary Neolithic population within the south-west peninsula, practising mixed farming.

The Cree runs from the Galloway hills in the north, south into Wigtown Bay on the Solway Firth. It is centrally located within the Galloway peninsula and has good survival, both of rock art and of burial cairns. The Cree has been, throughout recorded history, the border between the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright and the County of Wigtownshire.

The distribution map of the known chambered cairns of the Cree river system demonstrates how they are sited with regard to the waterways. These river valleys were crucial for Neolithic exploitation of the region. Access routes would have been laterally along the coast or from river mouth to the upper parts of the river.

From the Neolithic period onwards it is apparent that the area also became a crossroads for travel and trade between neighbouring regions and as such an area of importance. Ireland is a short sea crossing away, the Lake District lies on the far side of the Solway Firth, the Isle of Man is to the south and the islands of Arran and Bute in the Clyde estuary with Argyll beyond to the north. These connections are evidenced by the range and the nature of the Neolithic material artefacts found as well as the monuments themselves. Both the Bargrennan and the Clyde chambered cairns share common features with monuments elsewhere in the British Isles. In particular there are similarities between the facades of Cairnholy 1 and the court tombs found in the north-east of Ireland as well as the Clyde monuments around Strathclyde and sites on the Isle of Man.

The presence of Cumbrian polished stone axes along the coast of the region indicates that some sort of exchange of material goods was taking place. A fragment of jadeite axe found in Cairnholy 1 is thought to originate in Piedmont in the Alps. Of the 28 or so jadeite axes found in Scotland, four were found on the south-west peninsula, two at Luce Bay, one at Cairnholy 1 and a fourth on the Mains of Southwick in Kirkcudbright. (Murray 1994) Piggott and Powell considered that these objects may have entered Britain from Ireland (Piggott and Powell 1949) and it would not be unreasonable to posit either Luce Bay or Wigtown Bay as the point of entry.

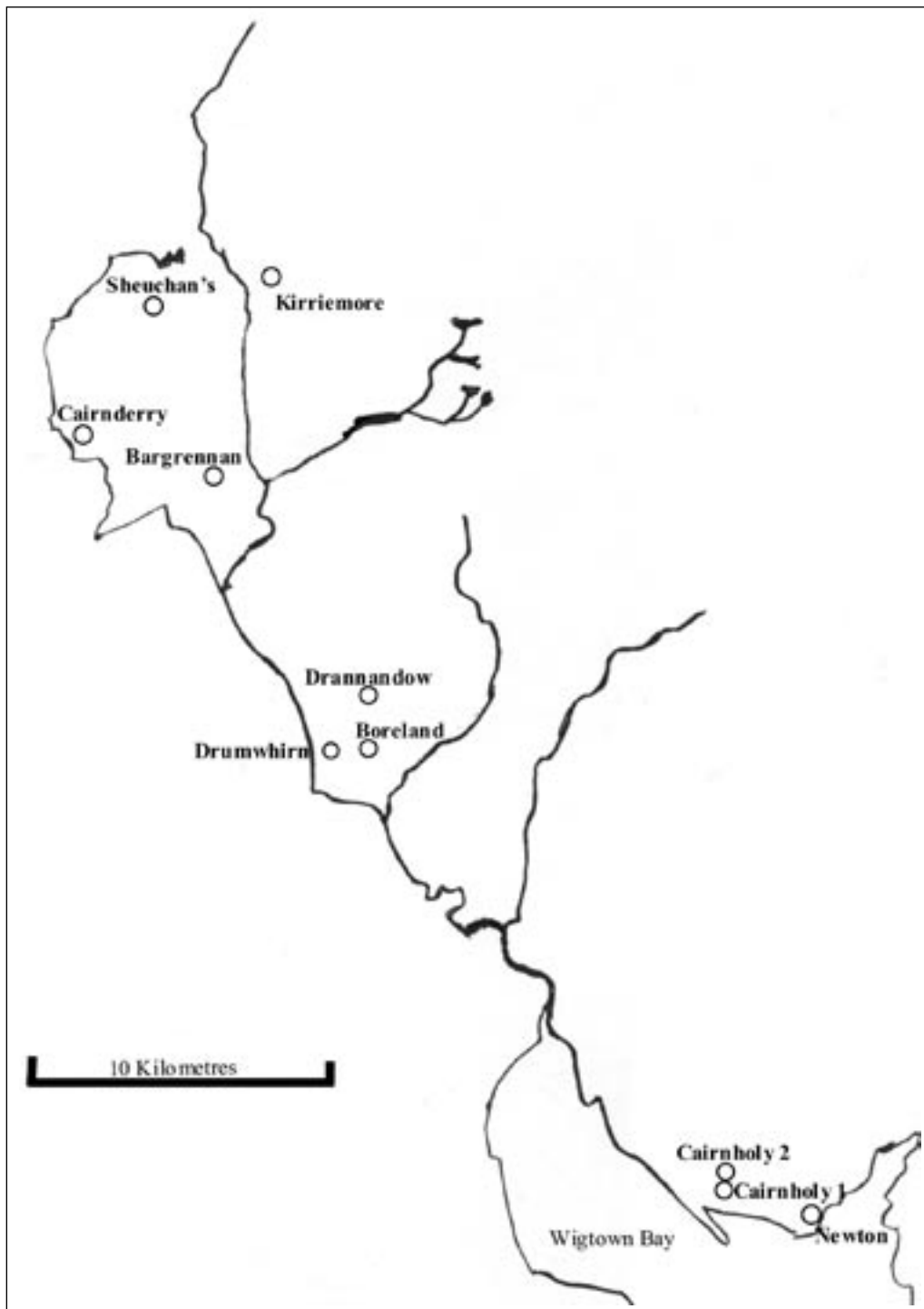


Fig 1 Distribution map.

For the past two centuries at least, much of the land within Dumfries and Galloway has been used for raising beef cattle and sheep. There has been very little intensive agrarian farming within the region. This is an area of low population with few large towns and very little urban sprawl. As a result of this, there is a very high survival of prehistoric material, which makes the study of the monuments within their landscape a possibility.

However, there is a lack of environmental evidence available within the area. Because of the acidic nature of the soils, preservation of organic material is very poor in Dumfries and Galloway overall. Unburnt bone, antler and wood very rarely survive except occasionally as a deposit in peat.

The Neolithic economy in the south-west peninsula

The early Neolithic in Great Britain is a subject receiving much attention and some disagreement among scholars. That this was a period of major social and economic change throughout Europe is manifest but the nature and mechanism of the change is the subject of much debate. Whittle has argued against the idea that the Neolithic lifestyle was sedentary in its nature, arguing for 'residential fluidity'. (Whittle 1997 p19) Julian Thomas has, furthermore, rejected the idea that a mixed farming package was an integral part of the Neolithic and has stated that 'the Neolithic communities in Britain practised a variety of different economic regimes ranging from hunting and gathering to herding and horticulture.' (Thomas 1999 p222) Edwards and Ralston, on the other hand, hold a view of a population living in light timber houses, residing in one area with some seasonal, population movement for fishing or grazing, using hoe or spade to cultivate extensively and productively with the continued use of wild resources for manure, oil and so on while managing herds of cattle, sheep or goats and pigs and practising a degree of transhumance (Edwards and Ralston 1997).

Within south-western Scotland both the nature of the landscape and soil, together with the minimal cereal pollens identified, have led to arguments that, particularly in this region, mobile pastoralists rather than settled agrarian farmers typified the early Neolithic. On sites where flotation has taken place, the recovery of grain has often been of very small amounts.

The excavation of a domestic Neolithic site at Beckton Farm, Lockerbie, some 50 miles east of the Cree valley revealed several structures with a clay based floor layer and collapsed daub walls with stake and postholes (Pollard 1997). Early Neolithic pottery and impressed wares were found on the site and a range of C14 dates obtained that indicated a long period of occupation, from between 450 years and 1350 years (Pollard 1997). Very small samples of naked 6 row barley (*Hordeum vulgare var nudum*) were discovered together with fragments of hazel nut shells (*Corylus avellana*). From this Gregory has argued that wild foods were of equal, if not greater significance than cultivated foods. (Gregory 2000 p7)

However, it must be questioned whether the presence of large quantities of tree pollen, together with hazelnut shells and fruit stones necessarily indicates the retention of elements of the hunter/gatherer lifestyle. The presence of woodland may be seen as the exploitation

of a crop as much as the harvesting of cereal crops, with the sole difference that the crop took many years to reach maturity. Given the evidence of widespread coppicing in Britain during the Neolithic, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Neolithic farmers were capable of managing fruit and nut bearing trees in the same manner, especially when, as hazel trees would, they provided other useful products. Legge has also argued that, while all hazelnuts need to be shelled in order to be consumed, and have extremely good preservation qualities, each charred cereal grain represents a minor domestic disaster (Legge 1989).

The presence of pastoral weeds may be interpreted to indicate mixed farming rather than pure pastoralism. Cereal pollen does not generally travel beyond two metres from its source and the absence of cereal pollens from the record therefore only shows that cereal farming was not carried on in that immediate location. Furthermore, the presence of cereal grains presents incontrovertible evidence that some level of cereal farming was present within the region at least to some extent from the earlier years of the 4th millennium BC. Pollard has suggested that 4 post-er structures discovered at Beckton Farm may be the remains of granaries. (Pollard 1997). A Neolithic pit at Carzield, Dumfries has also produced both charred emmer and barley (Maynard 1993). The lack of cereal grains from the study area may well be due to the absence of flotation on many excavated sites.

This part of Scotland has a large number of small cairn fields, one of them in close proximity to Bargrennan, which have been the subject of research by Yates. He regards the presence of these Bronze Age clearance cairns, the majority of which hold no internment, as a further indication of the suitability of the land for arable farming during the prehistoric period since farmers do not clear pastureland (Yates 1984). He conjectured that they would have been the result of field clearance taking place some considerable time after the initial wood clearance and concludes, 'field clearance itself must therefore be taken to indicate a degree of permanence, suggesting that the areas of many groups of small cairns may well have a long history of exploitation before a single cairn was constructed' (Yates 1984 p227).

Certainly areas that are now moorland and used only for rough grazing, have clearly been in agrarian use in the past as testified by the existence of rig and furrow plainly visible on the moorland around New Luce, very close to The Caves of Kilhern, and probably related to the long abandoned settlement with its rectangular buildings and sheiling huts close by. That such agricultural useage was continuous is indicated by Clerk, who, writing in the 18th century, noted of the farming methods that 'their culture of grains seems a little odd for their bear sets as they call them are never changed. That ground which I saw carrying bear has produced nothing else in the memory of man' (Clerk 1721). Henshall has remarked how several of the Bargrennan cairns, Cairnderry and Kirriemore among them, are located close to 'small patches of improved pasture' (Henshall 1972 p6).

The assumption has been made that the higher altitude of the Bargrennan cairns indicates that the communities who built them were necessarily pastoralists rather than arable farmers. It should be noted that cereal-type pollens were found in peat dated to 2,735 ± 85 BC (UB 833) at altitudes of 450m at Slieve Croob in County Down (Kirk 1974). Also cereals were found to be present at other upland sites in Ireland, notably Beaghmara and Ballyanagilly, (cited Smith 1979).

The soil of the upland region of the Cree beneath the peat is orange-yellow and very sandy in consistency. Where vegetation has added a humic content to it, it forms a light brown soil that would be easily worked. Prior to the formation of the upland peat it would, with a lighter tree cover, have been far easier to bring into arable cultivation than the more heavily wooded clay soils of the lowland regions.

If the soil and climate of the south-west peninsula permitted the cultivation of cereal crops during the Bronze Age and the 18th century, this must then have been even more of a viable option during the Neolithic period when climatic conditions were at an optimum. There seems little need, then, to suppose that agriculture was not an option for the early farmers of this region, even in the more upland areas.

Wigtown Bay and The Valley of the Cree

In prehistoric times the Cree, as other rivers, would have acted both as a facilitator of and a barrier to travel. Travel up the course of the river, presumably with the aid of some water borne form of transport such as the dug out canoe made from a split oak trunk that was found in peat at Catherinefield Farm, Dumfries (Jardine & Masters 1976), would have been much easier than laborious overland travel through marshland and undergrowth. However, for those travelling by foot, the river would have created a considerable obstacle. It was not merely the watercourse itself, fierce though the waters might have been for much of the year. The tracts of boggy ground on either bank, which would have existed along the lower reaches of the river in its flood plain prior to modern drainage, would have made the ground impassable. It seems likely that those travelling up and down the river by boat would only have been able to make landfall at particular points along the river's course, either where rocky spits protruded into the marshier ground or where side channels facilitated access to the higher land. It is noticeable that, within the river valley, below the moorland slopes on which the tombs are situated, easy points of landfall can still be identified.

Much of the estuarine coastline remains mudflats, more extensively on the west bank where these give way to the low rolling landscape of the Machars. The land rises more steeply on the eastern side where hills slope upward from the coast to higher areas of moorland and rough grazing.

One small cluster of monuments is on the coastal strip where rock art abounds. The ruined Standing Stones of Newton, so damaged that no estimation of its original ground plan is now possible, is situated on low cliffs close to the sea edge.

The two chambered cairns of Cairnholy lie on the low hills to the east of the Cree in view of Wigtown Bay. Cairnholy 1 lies on gently sloping pastureland at the head of the Kirkdale Burn valley. Cairnholy 2 is further up the hill on a natural outcrop. Like Cairnholy 1, it looks out across the Kirkdale Burn valley and although Wigtown Bay is visible from the monument, the outlook from the chambers is inland across the wide stretch of Cambret Moor.

Newton Stewart on the west bank of the Cree and the old town of Minnigaff on the east are located at the point where salt marsh gives way to farmland. North of here, where the

Cree runs through a wide valley of good agricultural land, is located the next cluster of monuments. Much of the valley supports extensive pine and deciduous woodland. On the upper slopes the land is patched with areas of rough grazing. The valley slopes higher and more steeply to the east. Some 3 km upstream from Minnigaff and 2 km east of the river itself is Boreland 'chambered' cairn, located on gently sloping ground towards the bottom of the south slope of a low ridge. To the west it overlooks the Cree valley and from the forecourt it is possible to see the Cree estuary. In plan, Boreland is a classic example of a trapezoidal horned cairn with crescentic forecourt of Clyde type, yet, despite extensive stone robbing behind the façade, there is no obvious sign of a megalithic chamber. It is possible that this cairn may be covering a timber structure similar to Lochhill but only excavation could show this.

1 km south of Boreland and close to the Cree lies the cairn of Drumwhirn. Because of the damage to this cairn and the lack of any excavation of the site, it is impossible to go beyond a purely speculative guess as to its typology. However, its location within the lowland area and its proximity to Boreland suggest that it may be similar.

2.5 km north of Boreland is the chambered long cairn of Drannadow. This is located on a small knoll on the northern slope of a shallow bowl surrounded by low hills on three sides on what is now pastureland. The River Cree lies to the west, just out of sight, although the valley is in view. The cairn is false crested from below. It lies just above and to the north of Nappers Cottage, now ruined but originally a shepherd's cottage. This locality became the focus for later Bronze Age activity including a stone circle, standing stones and cairns, many of which are early clearance cairns.

About 10 km inland from Newton Stewart the land begins to rise more steeply up into the Galloway hills, the watershed for the river system. A number of tributaries feed the Cree including the Water of Minnoch and the Water of Trool. Flowing into the Cree from the north-east, they form a greater body of water at this point. The Cree itself flows down from the north-west. Around these tributaries there is a small cluster of Neolithic round cairns all situated within a few kilometres of each other on land that was, prior to recent afforestation, rough grazing land.

These are all round cairns of Bargrennan type which includes the type site, White Cairn and all are typically sited on small knolls on the sides of slopes with an outlook towards either the Cree or the Minnoch.

Rock Art

Both the Machars and the lower slopes of the eastern hills are a most prolific area for rock art, which is typically found on flat outcrops of bedrock within the fields bordering the coast. Originally thought to be Bronze Age, this rock art can now be demonstrated to date back to the Neolithic (Bradley 1997).

Cairnholy 1, with its close proximity to the coast, shows the clearest evidence for the presence of associated rock art of all the Cree valley cairns. Within this monument, a small lozenge shaped stone had been set on end in the inner chamber bearing a cup and ring

mark design and another cup and ring mark was found on a stone that had been part of the tomb's structure. The excavators believed the lozenge shaped stone to be associated with the sherds of food vessel pottery from the soil in front of it. An examination of the stratigraphy makes it apparent that this is open to question. The section through the chamber seems to indicate that the soil, in which the food vessel sherds were discovered, was laid up against the cup-and-ring marked stone, indicating that they are stratigraphically later. Certainly, the erection of a kind of stone 'plinth' on which one point of the lozenge-shaped carved stone rested, would seem to show that the stone was meant to be free standing, above the floor of the chamber. Furthermore, with the blocking in place, the only method of placing the food vessel and the cup and ring marked stone would have been from above. While deposition of a cinerary vessel could be easily accomplished, the precise placement of a stone of some size and weight on a well-constructed plinth would be far more difficult. It seems very possible, therefore, that the cup and ring mark stone was placed in situ at a time when the back chamber was fully accessible.

At Bargrennan the excavators noted 'various scratches, some forming rectilinear designs that may be ancient' (Piggott and Powell 1949 p148). These have now disappeared beneath modern graffiti. It may be worth noting that in 1999, the placement of an interpretation board exposed a possible stone slab which had 'four chip marks evident on the top face of this large stone, defining a rough 30cm square' (Toolis 1999)). Rectilinear designs, while uncommon, are not unknown in rock art of mainland Britain. At Knock, on the Machars overlooking Luce Bay, one of the decorated rocks bears a design of a cup with multiple ring marks and a square pattern.

The only other example of deliberate rock carving associated with this group of chambered cairns is a very large and crudely pecked cavity seen on an outcrop just beyond the edge of the cairn at Bargrennan in the 2004 excavations.

Beyond the area of study, at Dalladies, Kincardineshire, a cairn covering a timber mortuary structure, Piggott discovered another cup-marked stone (Piggott 1972), while at Ardmarnock, Argyll, also a Clyde cairn, cup and ring marks are evident on either side of the septal slab (Henshall 1972).

Fairly common within the chambers are natural marks that, at first glance, look very similar to pecked cupmarks. Most of the rocks that have been the recipients of rock art in Galloway are greywacke. This is a mudstone that is often marked by hemispherical hollows over its surface, very similar to cupmarks in their superficial appearance. Some of these are the result of weathering. Others were formed before the mud hardened into stone and are termed 'prod marks'. The mudstones were originally laid down at the bottom of the ocean. In places where the ocean floor sloped markedly there would at times be slips of this material, 'turbidity currents.' Quantities of stones and mud would be flung up into the surrounding water and, in falling back, would produce these small rounded hollows in the mud (British Geological Survey 1996). It is not unusual to find them incorporated into the designs of rock carvings (Beckinsall and Laurie 1998) and many of the tombs have one or more orthostats which show these marks. It seems probable that many of these markings existed prior to the monument's construction and are not the result of subsequent weathering. Furthermore several cairn stones bearing such marks were seen at recent excavations at Cairnderry and Bargrennan by Cummings and Fowler 2002 to 2004.

It seems possible indeed that the existence of these markings on the local stone may initially have influenced the development of rock art within the area. Bradley has suggested that 'people may have believed that such features were the remains of older carvings or that these may have been aspects of the rock whose power had to be renewed' (Bradley 1997 p153). An investigation as to whether it would be possible to test the hypothesis that these naturally marked rocks were of particular interest to the monument builders however seems impossible due to the difficulties in establishing the probabilities for stones marked in this way being used intentionally rather than merely fortuitously. It is tempting to think that their marking was the reason for their selection and placement but, in the face of such fragmentary evidence and the absence of a sound tool for statistical analysis, this cannot be more than conjecture.

Dating Evidence.

Whilst elsewhere in southern Scotland several Clyde cairns have undergone modern investigation, within the area of study only a handful have been excavated and these prior to the advent of radiocarbon dating and stratigraphic advances. In 1948 Piggott and Powell excavated at both the Cairnholy sites and at the White Cairn, Bargrennan. This work provided the basis for the subsequent discussion of the Cree valley monuments. It is hoped that ongoing work at Bargrennan will provide some construction dates for these monuments but at present dating frameworks have to be constructed primarily using associated finds with all the problems that this entails. Until very recently, even using pottery as anything other than a very crude dating tool was difficult since virtually no dates existed for the local variants. A number of C14 dates are, however, now being obtained from regional sites which help to create a local chronology but despite these developments in the field, the relatively small quantity of dateable pottery available at present means that local typologies remain unresolved and a matter of debate.

The earliest dates so far published for the Neolithic in the south-west peninsula come from the Long Cairn at Lochhill, Kirkcudbright (Masters 1973a). This comprised a wooden and stone mortuary structure that was burned and then covered by a long mound. The date obtained from the charcoal was 4250 – 3600 calBC. A facade was then constructed with a forecourt. In the last phase this forecourt was blocked (Masters 1973a). A similar sequence of phases was also found at Slewcairn, also in Kirkcudbright (Masters 1973b, 1974, 1975). Pottery from this site provides a valuable comparison for the other, undated sites.

Similarities in the sequence of construction can also be seen with tombs widely distributed across the British Isles such as Dalladies, Kincardineshire (Piggott 1971, 1972) and Haddenham, Cambs. (Kinnes 1992). In many of the Wessex earthen long barrows, rectangular timber mortuary enclosures have been found beneath them. The indications from the C14 dates obtained are that Neolithic practices within Scotland were as early as, if not earlier than, those to the south, giving strength to the argument that influences spread from Ireland through Scotland down to the south rather than travelling up from the south. Furthermore, similar developments were taking place throughout the British Isles during the Neolithic period, which argues, for a broad homogeneity of culture with wide local variations on a common theme. However, because the dates obtained at Lochhill related

to the earliest phase of the monument, the timber construction, it does not help to pinpoint with any precision the timescale of the development of the stone monuments.

At Cairnholy 1, the forecourt had been deliberately blocked and sherds of Beaker and early Neolithic pottery were found among the blocking stones, together with a handful of seashells. Within the chamber sherds of other vessels were found. These included residual sherds of pottery within a gap in the floor, pottery decorated with a variety of impressions, and more Beaker sherds. The earliest form of pottery found on the site is known as Western Neolithic, described in some later descriptions of the tomb and its finds as Neolithic A (Henshall 1972). This was a form of carinated, undecorated, lugged pottery with a curving bottom. In northern Britain this type was commonly referred to as Grimston ware and is known to have spanned a long period in the early Neolithic. The early Neolithic bowl from the material of the forecourt blocking has strong affinities with pots found at Lyles Hill, Ireland (Piggott and Powell 1949). Another pot of this type was found 30 miles to the west, at Luce Sands, within easy reach of the Irish coast and a natural point for the ingress of goods and/or peoples from Ireland (Piggott and Powell 1949). Beckton Farm has yielded dates of 3650-3100BC (AA12588) from a context containing a hearth associated with similar pottery. Also in the east, the pit at Carzield containing early Neolithic pot, Arran pitchstone bladelets and fragments of a Langdale Group VI polished stone axe, also contained charcoal which gave C14 dates of 3966-3649BC, 3961-3503BC and 3418-3383BC (Maynard 1993).

The impressed ware, both that with the whipped cord decoration and that with the bird bone impression, referred to by Piggott and Powell as Peterborough ware but now regarded as a separate group of Scottish impressed wares (Gibson 1986), is from the middle-late Neolithic. These sherds would have come from deep, probably flat-bottomed vessels. The Beaker pottery is from the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age period. This kind of pottery, apparently made for both funerary and domestic use, was of finer quality than the earlier pottery, both thinner and harder, and was decorated with incised or impressed decoration made with a variety of tools. In this instance the decoration has been 'combed' onto the surface of the pot.

The pottery evidence for dating the Bargrennan cairns is slender. A few fragments of early Neolithic pottery were found underneath the cairn at Cairnderry. However, while they indicate an early Neolithic presence on the site, they do not indicate the date of the cairn's construction (Fowler *pers comm.*). All other pottery discovered on the site was from Bronze Age contexts. At Bargrennan, much of the pottery previously thought to be late Neolithic in origin (Henshall 1972), came from a pit within the passageway which recent excavation has demonstrated to be a later insertion, not primary use of the cairn (Fowler *pers comm.*).

C14 dates have been obtained from Clyde cairns beyond the area under consideration and these may be considered cautiously in relation to the Clyde cairns of the Cree valley. Monamore, Isle of Arran yielded two radiocarbon dates from charcoal beneath the paving within the chamber. The lower levels were dated to 3160 \pm 110BC while the date for the upper layer was 2240 \pm 110BC (MacKie 1963). The chambered cairn at Port Charlotte, Islay (NR 2482 5761) also part of the Clyde group, was excavated in 1976. In one of the

chambers oak charcoal, which was associated with human bones gave dates of 2590BC \pm 70 (HAR-2084) and 2760 \pm 70 (HAR-2406) Interestingly, an occupation layer from beneath the cairn gave dates of 3070BC \pm 90 (HAR-3487), 2990BC \pm 70 (HAR-3486) and 2710BC \pm 90 (HAR-2386). These dates provide an early Neolithic *terminus post quem* for the construction of the chambers (Pierpont and Harrington 1978).

The typology of the monuments

The cairns considered to be of the Clyde type are all found in the lower reaches of the Cree and its estuary. There are seven of these, if one includes the heavily ruined Stones of Newton and the cairn of Drumwhirn. They are located on relatively low level ground, on the coast or within the main river valleys. Clyde cairns are typified as being usually trapezoidal. The wider end often has a setting of orthostats, forming a crescentic forecourt outside a compartmentalised chamber. The compartments are separated from each other by a sill or septal slab. The examples at Cairnholy 1 and 2 are extremely high, effectively cutting off the inner chamber from the outer one. Clyde cairns are regarded as having typological affinities both with the court tombs of Northern Ireland and with the Cotswold Severn group of Southern Britain. The crescentic forecourt present in many of the Clyde tombs is similar to the semi-circular courts found in much of Northern Ireland. Most of them have two chambers separated by a pair of jambs and a sill stone and corbelled roofs. The cairns are generally revetted by peristaliths. Dates for these suggest that their earliest use was from about 3900 to 3400 BC. Cotswold Severn cairns fall into three basic types on the basis of the arrangements of their chambers and these three types have been confirmed, by C14 dating to be roughly contemporary, dating from c3500 BC (Darvill 1982).



Fig 2 Clyde type

to the small chamber. Sometimes the passage and chamber merge without any marked distinction.

The assumption has generally been made that the Bargrennan type monuments, occurring on higher ground further inland, represent a later development by people who followed a different economy than the users of the more coastal and lowland Clyde tombs. Piggott and Powell considered that the construction of the Bargrennan monument, the nature of the ritual practices and the typology of the pottery were all so markedly

The four cairns considered to be of Bargrennan type are all to the north on the upper reaches of the Cree's tributaries. Bargrennan tombs are all situated within the west of Galloway and south Ayrshire and are normally found on moorland, between c100 – 300m OD. Usually the cairns are round and do not have crescentic forecourts. Instead the tomb has a long entrance passage leading

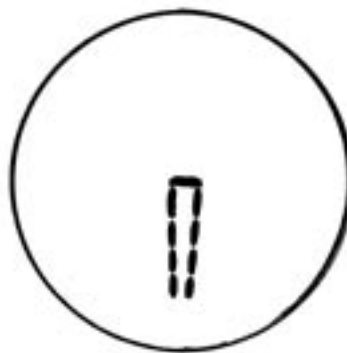


Fig 3 Bargrennan type

different from what they had discovered at Cairnholy 1 that 'it must be considered as the monument of an alien group of people, sharing little save the basic fact of collective burial in a stone-built vault with their neighbours in the Cree and Luce valleys' (Piggott and Powell 1949). Murray suggested that they might have been built considerably later than the Clyde cairns by pastoralists colonising the poorer lands away from the coast whose different mortuary practices were one way in which they defined their separate cultural identity (Murray 1992). Burl on the other hand regards the Bargrennan tombs as the earlier of the two types (Burl 2000 p.251).

One problem, however, with looking at these mortuary monuments as two separate classes is that in some instances the similarities between them are far more apparent than the differences. The examples that were excavated by Piggott and Powell show clearly defined examples of each type. Furthermore, Bargrennan as the type-site shows the greatest difference from the typical Clyde type cairn. However, these differences between monument types blur considerably when looking at the two classes of monument as a whole.

There is certainly a strong tendency for the Clyde cairns to have trapezoidal cairns, septal slabs and crescentic facades while the Bargrennan types have round cairns and passages. There is such an overlap of architectural features, however, that the only absolutely defining differences are that Clyde cairns often have facades or portalled entrances while Bargrennans never do and Bargrennans mostly have passages while Clyde cairns never do.

However, the question arises as to what exactly can be defined as an entrance passage. In some Bargrennan cairns these do not continue up to the edge of the cairn. They stop short of it by some considerable distance and cannot have been used as a means of ingress into the chamber. In most cases they are not architecturally demarcated from the main body of the chamber. If their dimensions are compared with those of the antechambers of Clyde cairns it will be seen that the difference is not in all instances greatly marked. Both the passage at Bargrennan and the outer chambers at Drannadow are long and narrow.

Furthermore at some Clyde cairns a 'sillstone' separates the chamber of the tomb from the antechamber. In other words they have a septal slab between chamber and antechamber. However, this is also the case at Cave Cairn (Bargrennan) and the Caves of Kilhern (Bargrennan) to the west. The Caves of Kilhern (Bargrennan) and Mid Gleniron 1 and 2 (Clyde-type) lie within 2 miles of each other in the upper part of the Luce valley, west of the Cree. Both have long cairns covering them, both have multiple chambers, three at Mid Gleniron 1 and two at Mid Gleniron 2 and four, possibly five chambers are visible at Kilhern, one of which still retains its capstone. The main difference between the two monuments is the presence of a crescentic façade at the ends of the cairns at Mid-Gleniron. The septal slabs present in many of the Clyde cairns are absent from the chambers at Mid Gleniron.

Facades delimiting forecourts are supposedly one of the defining characteristics of Clyde cairns. At Cairnholy 1 an arc of three upright stones on either side of the tall portal stones formed the forecourt with drystone walling between them. Its excavators noted its 'curious mixture of symmetry and asymmetry' but made no further observation (Piggott and Powell 1949 p112). Darvill has pointed out the pairing of these stones where a flat

topped stone is opposed by or paired with a pointed topped stone (Darvill 2002). This 'male-female' pairing is also observable at, among numerous examples, King Orry's grave on the Isle of Man, at Waylands Smithy and in the Avebury Avenue.

At Cairnholy 1 excavation revealed that, along the edge of the revetment there had been a scattering of quartz lumps on the old ground surface (Piggott and Powell 1949). The association of quartz with Neolithic ritual sites is established from a number of sites all over the British Isles. They have been found at Newgrange, Co Meath, Ireland (O'Kelly 1992) and at Cashtal yn Ard, Isle of Man (Fleurre and Neely 1936). Recent excavations of a Neolithic site at Billown, Isle of Man, have revealed quantities of white quartz in association with a series of Neolithic features (Evans 1996).

The monuments of both categories generally appear to have been constructed in such a way that once the cairn was in place it effectively sealed the chamber. At both Cairnholy 1 and 2 a row of large stones had been placed across the front of the entrance. The cairn had then been extended into the courtyard totally sealing off the entrance. A large stone had been placed across the entrance to the chamber and a stone hole beneath the blocking suggested that this had been its previous location (Piggott & Powell 1949). The majority of the Cotswold-Severn cairns had their forecourts blocked in a similar manner, while the extra revetment often seals off side chambers where these exist (Darvill 1982).

At Drannadow, where the five chambers are disproportionately long and narrow, it appears that all of them finish well short of the edge of the cairn edge. Piggott and Powell noticed the same phenomenon at Bargrennan and discussed the possibility of access via stepping to the chamber entrance. The degree of damage to the cairn itself made it impossible for them to judge what the exact arrangement had been. However, examination of less damaged cairns seems to indicate strongly that, in fact, once the cairn material was in place, access was no longer possible.

At King's Cairn, Kirriemore for example, much of the cairn material is still in place. The chamber is large. The capstone itself is 2m square and between 0.5 and 0.3 m thick and still retains a covering of cairn material. The sideslabs and backslab are at least 1.5m high; the accumulation of cairn material within the chamber makes it impossible to give an exact measurement. There are several hollows in it where people presumably have sought to uncover the chamber. It seems likely that an attempt to enter the chamber by removing the drystone walling from between the capstone and the backslab was thwarted, leaving a gap big enough to see through but not enough to allow entrance. The front of the chamber was then located and a thinner capstone, perhaps belonging to the passage, smashed and a part of the cairn hollowed out to facilitate access. If the passage continued along the axis of the chamber, then it should still lie beneath the cairn material. Henshall reported in 1972 that two lintels of the passage could be seen, '7 ft to the SE' (Henshall 1972, p453), but these are no longer visible. At no point on the cairn can any trace be seen of the outer end of the passage.

At Sheuchan's cairn the picture is similar. Here the chamber has been more damaged with what is most likely the capstone or part of it fallen into the chamber. The backslab is not visible, either broken off or removed or buried under cairn material. Henshall considered that the chamber was entered by a passage, located in a depression in the cairn

material that has been destroyed (Henshall 1972). It is, however, also possible that there was no passage as there is no evidence for an outer end.

Henshall has considered three possible explanations for the ending of the passages within the cairn edge. She considers access through the cairn the least likely, and suggests more probably that either the original cairn edge was recessed creating an entrance area that was blocked at a later stage, or alternatively that the original cairns were smaller and were enlarged at a later stage (Henshall 1972 p12).

This was the arrangement at Mid Gleniron where excavation revealed that these Clyde cairns were of multi-phase construction and originally had consisted of two rectangular, two-segmented chambers within small circular cairns. At Mid Gleniron 1 a later small lateral chamber had been constructed between the two and the whole enclosed within a trapezoidal long cairn (Corcoran 1969). The crescentic façade had been added to the monument at the time of the cairn building. This was clearly apparent from the modifications that had been made to the structure with a short length of dry stone walling constructed to link the façade to the chamber. At the point that the cairn was constructed, only this chamber would have been accessible. Deliberate blocking had, at some stage, sealed off this chamber too. The neighbouring Bargrennan type cairn, the Caves of Kilhern has not been excavated so it is not possible to say whether construction here was similarly multi-phased.

Scott considered that the Clyde tombs developed from a simple unsegmented chamber. This was added to by building on the additional antechamber and constructing the crescentic façade. The enclosure of the whole monument in the cairn would have followed the enlargement of the tomb. This building sequence has been proposed for both Cairnholy 1 and Cairnholy 2 (Scott 1966).

Edwards' description of the base of the cairn at Drannadow is suggestive. He reported that 'In front of each chamber and between the chambers, except in the centre of the cairn, the stones lying on the subsoil were placed so regularly that ... I thought there was a pavement and attempted to follow it up but without success' (Edwards 1923 p63). The clear suggestion from this is that each chamber originally may have been free standing. Furthermore, at Slewcairn, an area of paving was also found in line with the mortuary enclosure that was incorporated into the later cairn (Masters 1974, 1975).

It seems that the different phases of the monuments were characterised by different ways of using them. There appears to have been an early phase when bone, pottery and lithics were deposited within the chamber itself. The forecourt area, where such existed, was also used for the deposition of lithic material and pottery. The forecourt at Cairnholy 1 showed evidence for a series of at least six fires. Pottery from the courtyard may have been deposited there or may have resulted from sweeping out the chamber.

Recent work by Cummings and Fowler at Cairnderry and Bargrennan has found very little within the chambers which have been extensively robbed out – a few pieces of flint and one pitchstone flake at Cairnderry. However, they have found evidence of considerable Bronze Age activity at both sites. At Bargrennan this involved burial insertions into the body of the cairn itself. It is still possible that further investigation would reveal earlier use of the entrance to the passageways of Bargrennan cairns, paralleling the use of the fore-

court areas in Cairnholy 1 and Mid Gleniron. The possible rock art outside the entrance to the White Cairn of Bargrennan may hint at this. The blocking phase at Cairnholy 1 appears to be associated with the emergence of Beaker artefacts. The period of use of the Scottish tombs would seem to be very much in line with the southern parts of Britain, since the same period of closure is estimated for West Kennet and other barrows where sufficient evidence to assume an approximate date is available.

From this analysis it can be argued that the picture is not of two distinct classes of monuments, but is considerably more blurred and confused. There is a considerable mixture of features, and when tombs lie close to each other they tend to share the greatest number of characteristics. The assumption that two distinct classes of tomb exist is strongly influenced by the assumption that the land was colonised primarily in a west to east fashion. This ignores the fact that the main corridors of movement at the time would have been by water. Thus, although coastal movement could have occurred easily from west to east, or vice versa, in the inland areas, local movement would have been along the waterways, north to south. If we are looking for affinities between communities of people, we will be more likely to find them represented within a group of monuments that lie on the same river network. Furthermore, by studying changes within that same river network it may be possible to infer changes that occurred chronologically as those same people expanded their territory.

Those sites closest to the coast show the closest affinity to tombs elsewhere in the British Isles the ideas, as they spread up the river valley, becoming adapted and acquiring local variations.

Within the Cree valley the estuarine cairns of Cairnholy 1 and 2 conform most closely to the Clyde typology. It is arguable that these coastal cairns were, throughout the long period during which the chambered cairns remained in use, most open to influences from the west (the 'classic' Clyde cairns) and the south (the Cotswold Severn cairns). The presence of Langdale axes throughout the area demonstrate that contact existed with the area beyond the Solway Firth. The presence of Arran pitchstone shows that there was well established interaction with the heartlands of the Clyde cairn style. There may even have been some direct contact with Ireland. These influences are seen most clearly in the development of portals and, at Cairnholy 1, in the impressive façades which bears the closest resemblance to those found in Ireland and to the Manx cairns. The development of passages in the cairns further inland may show a more northern influence.

The next group of cairns – Boreland, Drannadow and Drumwhirn, although the first two are classified as Clyde cairns, show considerable variations, both from each other and from the Cairnholy cairns. Boreland appears at a first glance to be a Clyde cairn very similar in construction to Cairnholy 1. With closer examination, significant differences appear. The arrangement of the façade is markedly different. The stones in the position to be the portal stones are quite small. Beyond them on either side are two much more massive blocks. This, while retaining the pairing of 'male' and 'female' stones is in marked contrast to the usual arrangement where the most impressive stones form the portal, grading down in size at either side. A close parallel for this design of façade is to be found in the Manx tomb, Castel-Yn-Ard which bears a strong visual resemblance to Boreland.

The right hand large façade stone has toppled forwards about 45°, possibly because the visible part of the base is narrower than the upper part of the stone – up to half its thickness. The angle of the stone suggests that the buried part of the stone is no greater than about 45cms in depth. If the portal stones are buried to the same depth, it can be observed that there are no surviving side slabs to a chamber immediately behind the portals, an area currently filled by loose cairn material. The cairn appears to have been despoiled by the removal of cairn stones from behind the façade. This spoilation should have revealed the chamber if it existed. It is possible that a chamber was revealed and then removed. However, there would be no reason for treasure hunters to remove the large chamber stones and this is not something that is observable in other despoiled cairns where it is these large stones that are generally still in place. Furthermore, it would have been extremely difficult to remove chamber stones while leaving the façade stones in their present position.

Although this cannot be proved absolutely without excavation, it seems highly probable that there never was a chamber present directly behind the façade. This would suggest that, if it exists, it is further back in the tomb and that the façade is in fact a false front. Alternatively it could be that Boreland is an empty cairn or possibly covering a timber mortuary structure as at Lochhill and Slewcairn, its stone façade a later embellishment within a local tradition? Excavation alone can answer such questions.

Neither Drumwhirn nor Drannadow have any evidence for a stone façade having existed, nor do either unlike Boreland have the remains of a peristalith.

The Bargrennan group shows similar variations. The multi-chambered Cairnderry with its three chambers seems to have more in common with Drannadow than with Bargrennan White Cairn which is located within very close proximity, although, unlike Drannadow it does have the remains of a partial peristalith. While it is possible to make a case for reclassifying Drannadow as a Bargrennan cairn, such is the overlap in features that there is an equally good argument for reclassifying Cairnderry as a Clyde type. Indeed within the heart of the Clyde cairn area, on the Isle of Arran is Dunan Mor, a Clyde group round cairn, with a virtually identical ground plan to Cairnderry with three radial chambers, none of which reach the edge of the cairn. It also lacks a façade and the only recognisable difference between the two is the presence of septal slabs within the chambers at Dunan Mor.

Rather than appearing as two distinct classes of monument, separated chronologically and geographically, close examination suggests that there exists a wide range of local variations on a theme. Furthermore, where archaeological examination has taken place, it strongly suggests that their form was evolving over a period of time rather than being fixed from the time of the monument's inception. From very similar beginnings, local traditions together with influences from beyond the immediate area would have led to slight differences in the building of the local monument, differences that would have been compounded by the passage of time.

The long term and highly localised nature of cairn development within the area argues strongly for a society composed of groups of sedentary agriculturalists. Nomadic pastoralists would have occupied territories of a size that would have included, for instance, all of the cairns within the area around Boreland, or the headwaters of the Cree. The dating evidence, though inconclusive, seems to indicate that use of the monuments was prolonged

and that, even if they were not absolutely contemporary in their period of construction, there would have been considerable overlap in usage between them. It seems highly improbable that a single group of people would have produced and used so disparate a group of monuments. A far more reasonable explanation is that these are local manifestations of a common theme showing in their construction a mixture of received wisdom and native genius.

The Location of the tombs within the landscape

It has been suggested that the siting of the Neolithic monuments has been primarily driven by a need for them to be within sight of the Irish Sea and the lands that border it, or within sight of those mountains within Galloway, most notably the Merrick, which themselves have a clear sea view (Cummings 2002). However, close examination of the siting of the monuments suggests that, while this theory generally fits the facts, it does not appear to be the primary reason for their siting.

Both Cairnholy 1 and Cairnholy 2 are on the side of an elevated slope with views of the sea towards the Isle of Man. However, neither of them appears to have been designed as though the sea was of any significance with regard to the way in which they are placed within their landscapes. Cairnholy 1 looks out towards the upper slopes of the far side of the little valley- a view that has nothing of apparent significance within it. Similarly Cairnholy 2 looks across the valley inland towards the hills that surround Cambret moor.

At Drannadow, the cairn is located within a wide, shallow, fairly featureless bowl. The similarity in location of Kirriemore and Drannadow has been noted earlier. These two cairns have a markedly similar aspect situated with unremarkable views on the northern slopes of a valley. Were clear views of major mountains an imperative for the cairn builders, Kirriemore, situated only 3 miles as the crow flies from the summit of the Merrick would surely have been located more appropriately. Indeed at Drannadow the cairn appears to have been deliberately placed to avoid all views of the hills whilst the nearby Bronze Age standing stones, the Thieves, and the stone circle command panoramic views of the Galloway hills to the north and east.

It can however be argued that all the cairns are located above an area of land that shows suitability for human habitation and agriculture. The frequent presence of isolated buildings close to the cairns indicates that the area must contain good water and a reasonable degree of shelter (Henshall 1972 p6). It can be argued that the monuments are set on the edges of what would have been the cultivated land with the grazing land above them.

With those that have been completely surrounded by forestry it is more difficult to gain a clear understanding of their aspect but it appears that many are located on rises that would have ensured that, approached from below, they would have been false crested. Only Sheuchans Cairn is near the actual top of a rise but is still false crested from below.

Proximity to the Cree or its tributaries is another constant. All of the tombs, if not actually in sight of the water, have a view across the river valley with the exception of those on the coast. At Drannadow, indeed, the only visible natural feature of note that can be seen from the cairn is the Cree valley.

Unlike the rock art in the area which appears to have been sited with particular regard for its outlook, examination of the location of the tombs leads to the conclusion that it was their appearance within the landscape that was equally, if not more, important than the aspect that they commanded. It is by approaching them from below that the greatest sense of their imposing size would have been gained. They may have been intended to be approached from the sea or river or from the settlement which, it may be suggested, would have been located below on land suitable for agriculture with good water. This use of the lie of the land to maximise the effect of the monument on those approaching it is widespread through Britain. At Coldrum, Kent, for instance, the monument has been built to take advantage of a small rise in order to achieve a looming effect when approached from below. Adam's Grave crowns one of the Ridgeway hills 'like a watchful hound' (Burl 1979 p101).

Besides the need to exercise great care in ensuring that coincidental visual relationships arising from the nature of the landscape are not misread as meaningful cosmological indicators, it is also necessary to beware of failing to take account of landscape change. Features that no longer exist may have, at the time of monument construction been prominent in the landscape and have strongly influenced site location. Trees that have long since decayed, boulders and rock formations that have been cleared away, streams and spring sources that have been diverted, may all have been influential but cannot now be seen.

The Cree forms not only the boundary between the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright and Wigtonshire but it also provides the boundary for the old parish of Minnigaff on the west. The Dee forms part of the parish boundary to the east, while the Merrick lies to the north.

The three coastal tombs all lie to the eastern side of the Cree estuary, The Stones of Newton within the parish of Anwoth and Cairnholy 1 and 2 in Kirkmabreck. They lie within the same coastal region bounded by Wigton Bay and the estuary of the next major river to the east, Fleet Bay. This is an area similarly bounded by major natural features. All the remaining cairns lie within the parish of Minnigaff, on the east bank of the Cree.

It can be argued that, so far from demonstrating the existence of two separate communities, the distribution of the Clyde and Bargrennan cairns underlines the unity of the local groups within the Cree river system. To strengthen the argument that the Cree is an ancient boundary, it is worth noting that immediately to the west of the river there are no monuments of this period despite the fact that land that could have been put to similar usage lies on that side of the river.

The group of people who occupied the Cree valley can be seen as a sub-group of the occupants of south-west Scotland as a whole, and, within that sub-group, separate extended family units who built and used each of the monuments. Ideas were shared with the monument builders to the west and south and these ideas spread from group to group up the valley, changing a little in the process and forming a new and purely localised style. Disparity in these styles increases with distance.

As stated above, the three groups of cairns cluster into three small areas within the coastal region, the middle river and the upper reaches of the Cree. Apart from the two

Cairnholy cairns, each of the others overlooks a separate valley system and is separated from neighbouring cairns by fairly major burns. Although a guess might be hazarded at the area of occupation that each of them served, the exercise is ultimately futile because of the small number of cairns in the three groups and the unknown numbers of cairns that have been destroyed.

Conclusion

In view of the limitations of the evidence available, it is not possible to arrive at any hard and fast conclusions about social, economic or ritual organisation within the area. It is possible to make some attempts at analysis based on the current state of knowledge and to use such evidence as is available to come to some tentative conclusions about early farming and land organisation. Hopefully future work will do much to elucidate the situation.

Evidence for the Mesolithic in south-west Scotland disappears from the archaeological record at around the beginning of the 4th millennium BC and evidence for the transition from the Mesolithic to the Neolithic is scant. However, it is clear that a transition does occur, resulting in a very much larger population, engaged in using the landscape in a very different way and in constructing permanent monuments of a type unknown during the Mesolithic period. The radio-carbon dates from Lochhill in the east and Monamore to the north-west indicate a date for the beginnings of the chambered tombs of this area that falls within the first half of the 4th millennium BC. Although dates are not available for the study area, there is no reason to suppose that they differ markedly.

The area lay very much at the crossroads of a number of land and sea routes. This is clearly shown by the movement of artefacts such as stone axes and ideas as witnessed in similarities in the typologies of tombs. It is also evident from the changes in typologies that similar movements of people and ideas occurred at a more local level within the Cree valley.

Arguments in the past over typologies have concentrated on broad phase interpretation of the final phase of the monument. In recent years there has been a growing acknowledgement of multi-phase development of the tombs, spanning a long period, as evidenced by the pottery recovered.

On the limited evidence available from the Cree valley, although it is not possible to assign specific developments a chronology, it can be stated with a high degree of confidence that the monuments were in use for many hundreds of years.

It has been demonstrated that the cairns appear to be located above potentially arable land in the vicinity of possible landing places from the Cree and its tributaries. The hypothesis is therefore put forward that the siting of the tombs provides a small window into understanding the peopling of the Cree valley.

The area to the east of the Cree appears to have formed a territory within which small communities operated independently but with frequent exchanges between each other. Trade and exchange over a wide area was carried on directly by the groups who occupied the coastal areas but ideas and artefacts were passed on up the valley.

Whilst the absence of pollen evidence for cereal crops has led some to argue for a nomadic, pastoral economy, it can be shown that this is just as likely to be due to lack of sufficient data. Cereal production can be demonstrated within the region at Beckton Farm and evidence from Ireland shows that altitude would not have been a bar.

It cannot be proved conclusively that mixed farming was being practised in the Cree valley without further work to obtain C14 and environmental data. However, the close vicinity of the monuments to each other and the differences between them argue for small land parcels of occupation delineated by the local burns. These areas would not have been large enough to have supported an exclusively herding and nomadic lifestyle. They would have needed to make use of the arable land available to them, as well as areas of pasturage to make these land parcels viable. In the coastal areas there was more potentially arable land but in any case, they required only sufficient to grow enough grain for their own small communities, probably barley and emmer. It is likely that they managed the woodlands that still covered much of the valley slopes and provided many essentials. They constructed and used funerary monuments that lay just above the immediate settlement area.

The conclusions herein are tentative and much remains to be resolved. Environmental and dating evidence is desperately required if we are to gain a fuller picture of the Neolithic people who built the monuments.

It is possible that this could be obtained from a domestic site near a cairn, although none such have been identified to date. Another option might be the total excavation of part of a cairn to reveal the sealed land surface of the time. Whatever future work is done needs to make full use of the technologies that are available to ensure both maximum retrieval of evidence and the fullest possible interpretation of it.

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BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENT AT ROSS BAY, KIRKCUDBRIGHT
by Damien Ronan and Joanna Higgins
with contributions from P Makey, Catherine McGill, Dr Allan Hall and Jane Cowgill

In January 2002, during the archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping for the construction corridor of a 1.2km gas pipeline at Ross Bay, near Kirkcudbright, Dumfries and Galloway, previously unknown archaeological remains were recorded at three locations along the pipeline route. These sites are referred to as Areas A, B and C.

Area A was located in a hollow near the top of Muter Hill at approximately 60m OD. The archaeological features encountered comprised two sub-rectangular pits and four postholes. One pit contained a large amount of charcoal and charred grain, and some small fragments of burnt bone and slag. The grain has been carbon dated to the late Bronze Age at between 1020 and 880 cal. BC. Similar finds were recovered from one of the postholes and from the other pit. The remains were suggestive of either occupation or small-scale rural industry. However the distribution of features did not clearly suggest the form any structure(s) may have taken.

Areas B and C were located on raised beach deposits on the northern side of Ross Bay at around 13m OD and had been subject to later agricultural truncation. Archaeological features at Area B consisted of two irregular spreads of flagstone paving, the largest covering an area of approximately 2m by 4m, four heavily truncated postholes located immediately to the west of the flagstones and two shallow pits to the east. The features implied a structure or structures were present but no definite pattern could be identified. The proximity of this site to Area C could suggest an association but no direct stratigraphic link could be made and no dateable stratified finds were recovered.

The principal feature identified in Area C was a structural ring gully, which represented the remains of a 10m-diameter roundhouse. Each excavated segment contained a substantial arrangement of packing stones suggestive of timber plank walling. In addition, a total of ten postholes were located inside the ring gully. Eight of these postholes formed an inner ring, presumably for supporting a roof. The two remaining postholes appeared to have been related to the south-east facing entrance, where two short parallel linear slots, perpendicular to the gully, formed a porch. No additional internal features were recorded. Four postholes were recorded immediately south-east of the entrance to the roundhouse. These postholes appeared to respect the entrance but were too few in number to indicate a definite pattern. Coarse hand-made pottery was recovered from the fill of one of the porch slots and a number of charcoal samples were taken from both the fill of the gully and from some of the postholes. Two of these were carbon dated and both gave Middle Bronze Age dates of between 1530 and 1250 cal. BC.

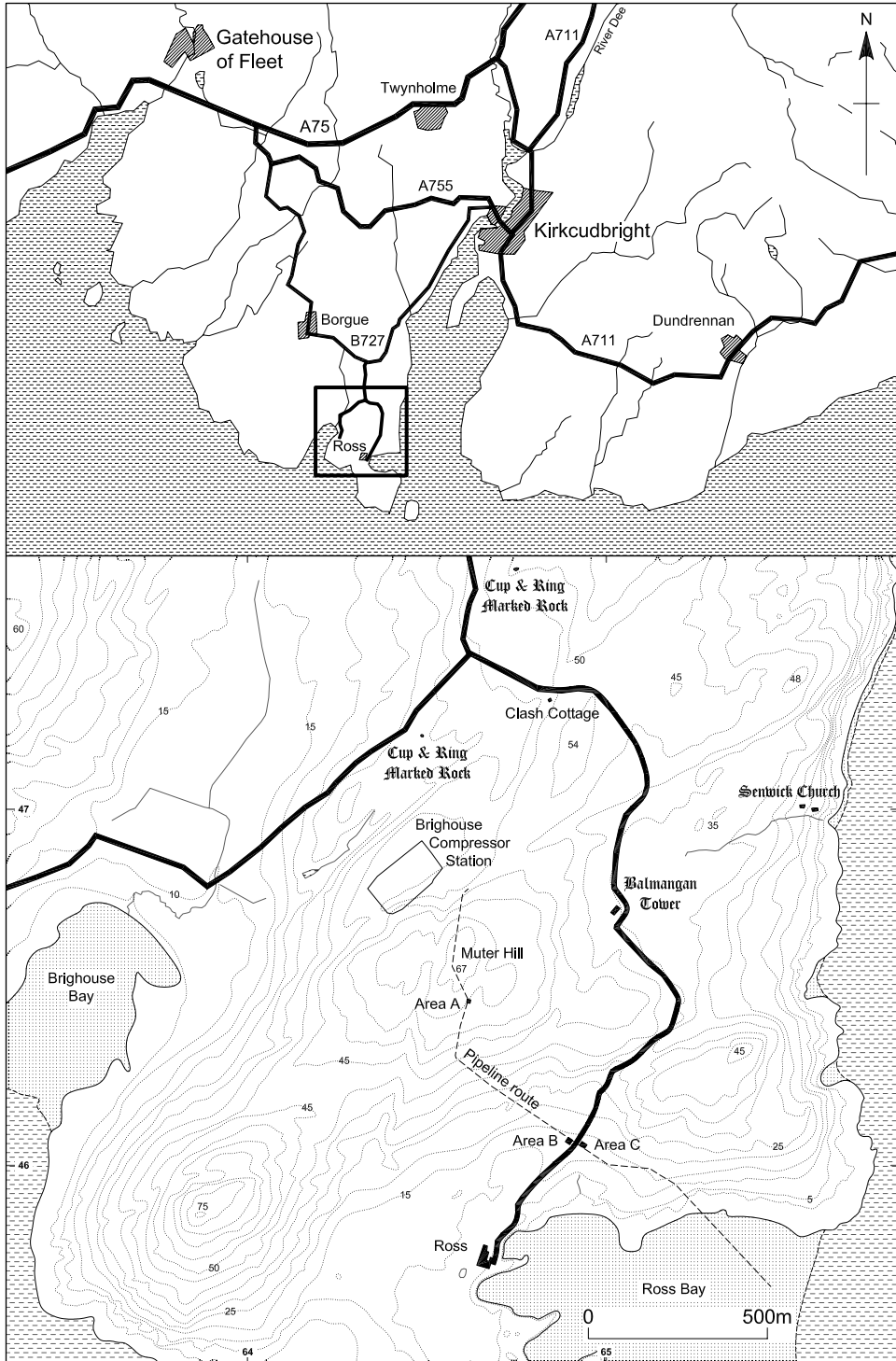


Fig 1 Site Location Plan

Introduction

During January and February 2002 a watching brief and excavation was undertaken on the construction corridor for a gas pipeline at Ross Bay, near Kirkcudbright, Dumfries and Galloway (NX 650 450). The excavations and report preparation were undertaken by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) for Land & Marine Project Engineering Ltd on behalf of Bord Gais. The full results of the monitoring work were presented in an unpublished Data Structure Report (NAA 2002).

The construction corridor related to the Scotland to Ireland Second Gas Interconnector Pipeline Scottish landfall at Ross Bay, the route of which ran from Ross Bay, across pasture fields to the existing Brighthouse Compressor Station, a distance of some 1.2km. The corridor included a contractor's site compound, and in its entirety comprised an area of some 5ha.

The monitoring work identified three previously unknown discrete areas of archaeological remains, referred to as Areas A, B and C, all probably dating to the Bronze Age. The principle features identified were a roundhouse at Area C, pits containing charred grain at Area A and possible structural remains at Area B.

Location, Topography and Geology

The sites are located on the coast of south-west Scotland some 6km south-west of Kirkcudbright, Dumfries and Galloway. Area A is situated on the southern side of Muter Hill (NX 64612 45463) at around 59m OD, some 350m south-east of the Brighthouse Compressor Station (Figure 1). Areas B and C lay on raised beach deposits at 13m OD immediately to either side of the road between Balmangan and Ross (NX 64895 45071 and NX 64931 45064 respectively).

The underlying geology of the area comprises the Wenlock and Llandoverly series of Silurian mudstones, which are overlain by pockets of boulder clay. All of the fields in which the sites are located were under pasture. Ross Bay itself is a 400m wide east to west oriented bay fairly typical of the area, with a rocky shoreline leading down to a graduated pebble beach running into sand with pockets of underlying clay. At low mean tide some 900m of gently sloping beach is exposed.

Archaeological Background

An Environmental Statement on the Scotland to Ireland Subsea Pipeline – Scottish Landfall was prepared by Bord Gais (2001). This included the results of a desk-based assessment of the known and potential archaeology along the proposed pipeline route. Mesolithic flint scatters are known to be fairly common on raised beach deposits around the coastline of Galloway, though none were recorded in the immediate vicinity. Most of the known archaeology in the locality tends to fall into two broad periods – prehistoric and post-medieval. The prehistoric sites comprise rock art, burnt mounds and a Bronze Age cremation burial. Two cup and ring marked rocks are identified some 800m and 1200m to

the north of Area A. Four sites revealing evidence of burnt mounds or fire pits had been found during work on the earlier section of the Scottish Land Pipeline (Maynard 1993), the nearest at Clash Cottages some 800m to the north with the others approximately 700m to the north-west. The cremation burial was found near the site of the Brighthouse Compressor Station (Maynard 1994). The post-medieval sites comprise two structures and an area of upstanding ridge and furrow cultivation. The structures are a tower house at Balmangan some 500m to the north-east of Area A and the remains of Senwick Church and manse some 1100m to the north-east. The area of ridge and furrow was identified during a walk-over of the proposed pipeline route by an archaeologist for RSK Environment Ltd. Area C is located beneath the ridge and furrow.

Methodology

The pipeline easement was on average some 25m wide, approximately 18m of this width was stripped of topsoil with the remaining area being used to house the topsoil bund. Half of the stripped corridor was excavated with a 360° tracked excavator using a toothless bucket, the remaining topsoil was then pushed into the bund by a bulldozer.

Despite the obvious limitations of this methodology three areas of archaeological interest were identified in the stripped area. These areas were hand cleaned as far as was practicable and all identified features planned at a scale of 1:20 with sections being drawn at 1:10. Photographs were taken in black and white negative and colour slide, both in 35mm format. At Area C the ring gully was divided up into 1m-long segments with each alternate segment being excavated.

The weather conditions were good when all of these discoveries were made, however the prevailing conditions for the later excavations were very poor.

Excavation Results

Area A

The pit and posthole group at Area A were encountered beneath a deposit of dark brown sandy silt topsoil (1) 0.3m to 0.45m in depth. The features comprised two sub-rectangular pits (4 and 12) and four postholes (5, 8, 14 and 18) (Figure 2). Pit 4 measured 1.3m by 0.85m, with a maximum depth of 0.25m, though the southern end was slightly shallower as it had been cut into bedrock. The pit was filled by a single mixed deposit of dark reddish brown sandy silt (3) with occasional small to moderate angular and rounded stones, abundant charred grain, fragments of charcoal and occasional burnt clay and heat fractured rock fragments. The charred grain was distributed throughout the fill, but was particularly concentrated in the central area of the base of the pit. Two samples of this charred grain were submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned determinations in the 2σ between 1020 and 820 cal. BC (AA-54312 (GU-10800)) for one sample and 1000 and 790 cal. BC (AA-54313 (GU-10801)) for the other. Some small fragments of burnt bone were also recovered. Pit 12 was located approximately one metre to the east of pit 4, and was truncated at its northern end by modern disturbance. The surviving dimensions of pit 12

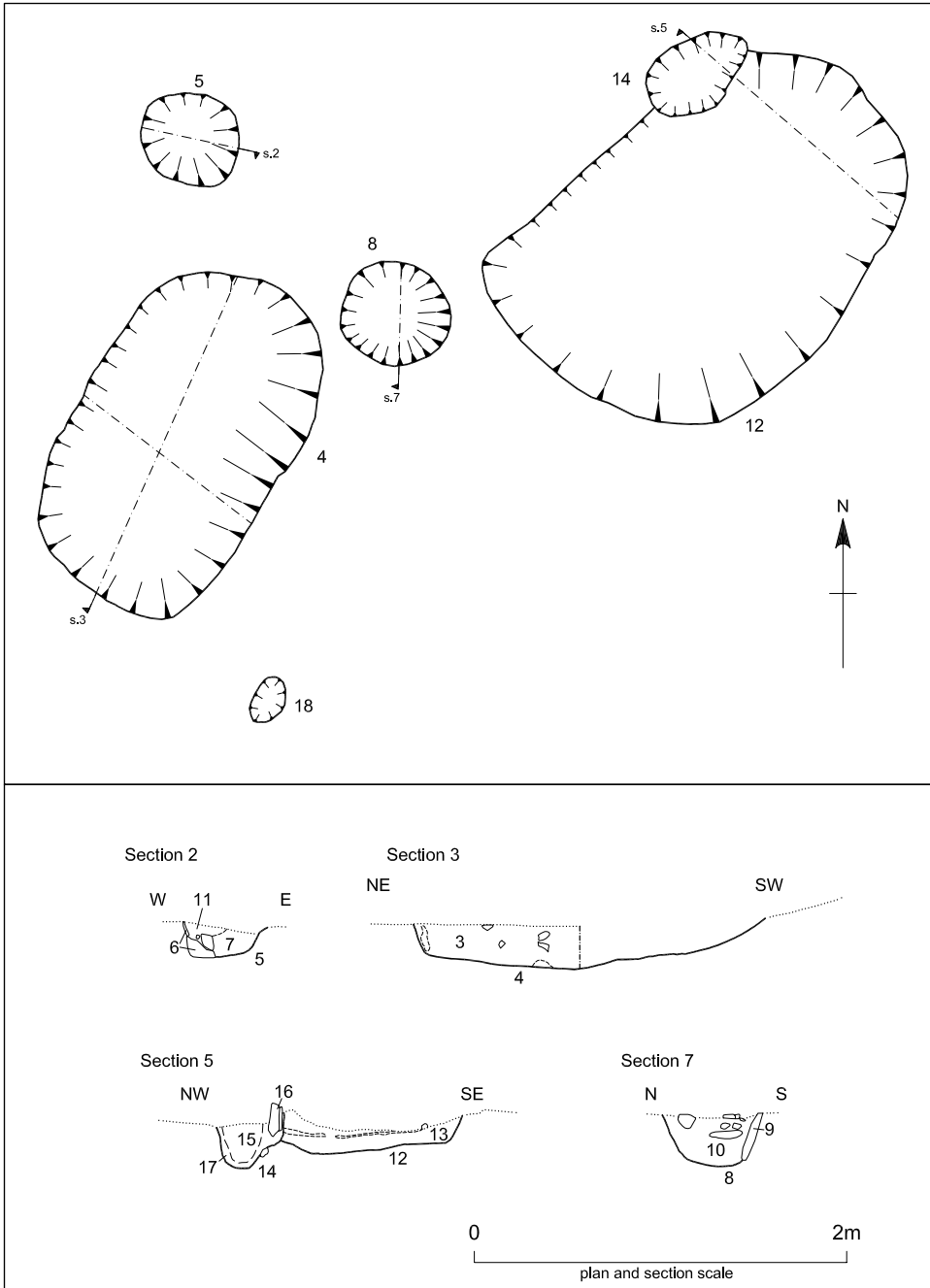


Figure 2 Plan and sections of features of Area A

were 2.3m in length (minimum), 1.5m in width, and a maximum depth of 0.26m. The pit fill (13) comprised mid-yellowish brown silty sand with frequent small sub-angular stone inclusions and frequent fragments of charcoal. Fragments of burnt bone were also recovered from fill 13.

Situated immediately to the north of pit 4 were two circular postholes (5 and 8). Posthole 5 was 0.52m in diameter, 0.24m deep, and contained a number of medium to large flat, water-worn packing stones (6) ranging from 0.11m to 0.4m in length. The fill of the posthole (7) comprised firm, dark yellowish brown clayey silt with frequent small rounded stone inclusions, and frequent fragments of charcoal. Burnt grain, fragments of burnt bone and several pieces of slag were also recovered from this context. Posthole 8 was 0.54m in diameter, 0.25m deep and also contained a number of packing stones (9) enclosing a central fill (10) which comprised a friable dark brown sandy silt with occasional small angular stone inclusions and frequent charcoal flecks.

Posthole 14 was cut into the northern end of the fill of pit 12, suggesting at least two phases of activity in Area A. The posthole cut was 0.6m in diameter and 0.25m deep, and contained a number of packing stones (16) within a mid yellowish brown silty sand matrix (17). A central post-pipe was observed, represented by a dark yellowish brown silt fill with frequent charcoal flecks (15). A fourth posthole (18) was represented by a shallow sub-circular feature cut into bedrock immediately to the south of pit 4, which was 0.2m in diameter and 0.07m deep. The fill (19) consisted of dark brown charcoal-rich sandy silt.

Area B

Archaeological features in Area B consisted of two irregular spreads of flagstones, and four heavily truncated sub-circular pits or postholes located immediately to the north and east of the flagstones (Figure 3). The largest and most substantial spread of flagstones (103) extended over an area measuring 4.1m by 1.8m, forming a slightly curved sub-rectangular platform approximately 0.2m thick. It comprised a number of roughly hewn flat stone flags, the dimensions of which ranged from 0.65m by 0.45m by 0.2m to 0.1m by 0.1m by 0.05m. The flagstones lay directly on the natural gravel within a shallow irregular depression (110). A smaller spread of flagstones (102), which extended over an area of 1.18m by 1.38m and to a maximum depth of 0.04m, was situated immediately to the south-east and also lay within a shallow irregular depression (116).

To the north of the main flagstone spread, two postholes (106 and 114) of approximately 0.45m in diameter survived to a depth of 0.2m. Both contained a dark yellowish brown silty sand fill (107 and 115) with occasional charcoal inclusions and frequent small to medium angular stones, some of which may have served as packing stones.

Some 4m to the west of the main flagstone spread was a severely truncated posthole (104) with maximum surviving dimensions of 0.8m in diameter and 0.1m in depth. Approximately 2m to the south of that, pit or posthole 108 survived as a wide shallow cut with maximum dimensions of 0.7m in diameter and 0.09m in depth. Both features were filled by a dark yellowish brown silty sand with occasional small angular stone inclusions (105 and 109).

No stratified finds were recovered from Area B.

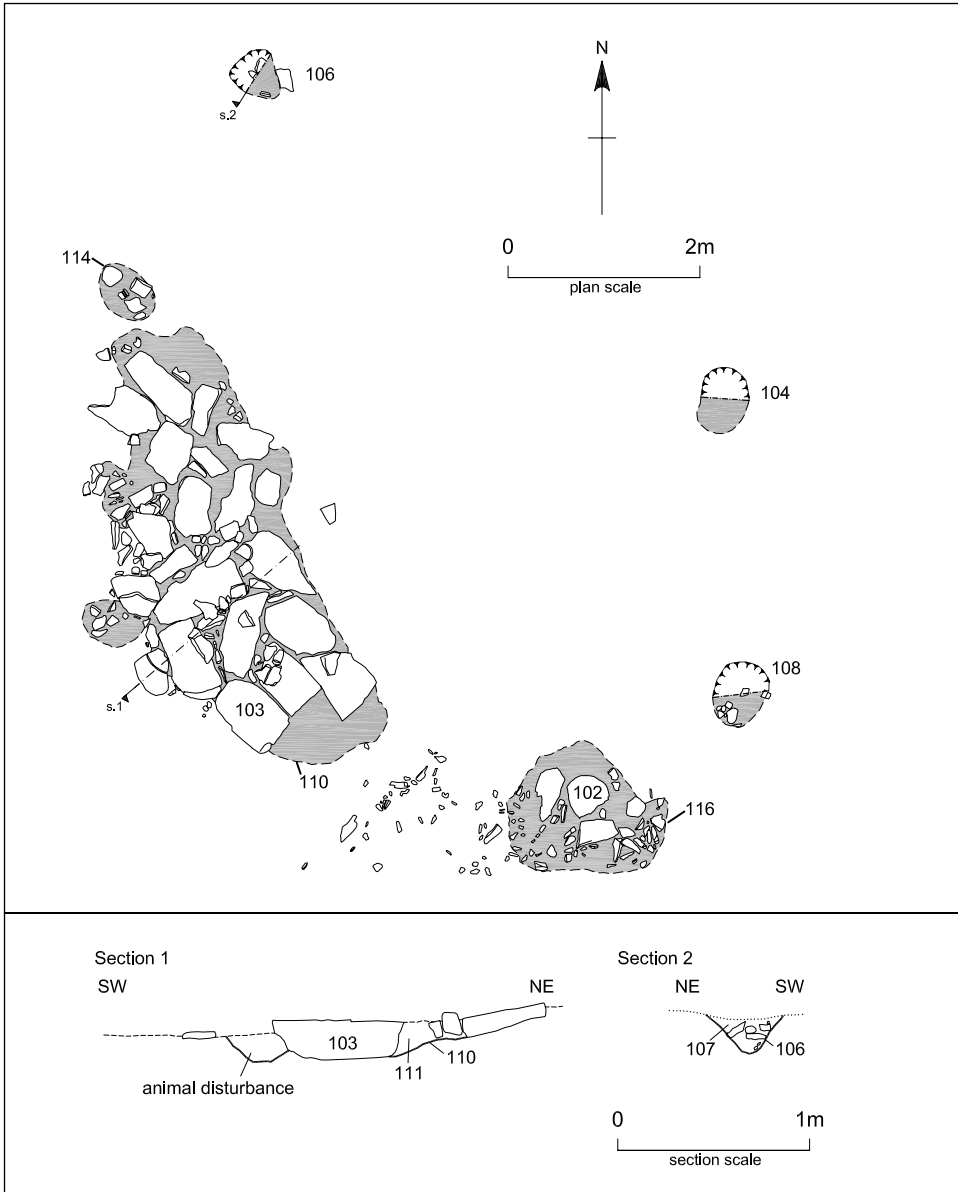


Fig 3 Plan and sections of features at Area B

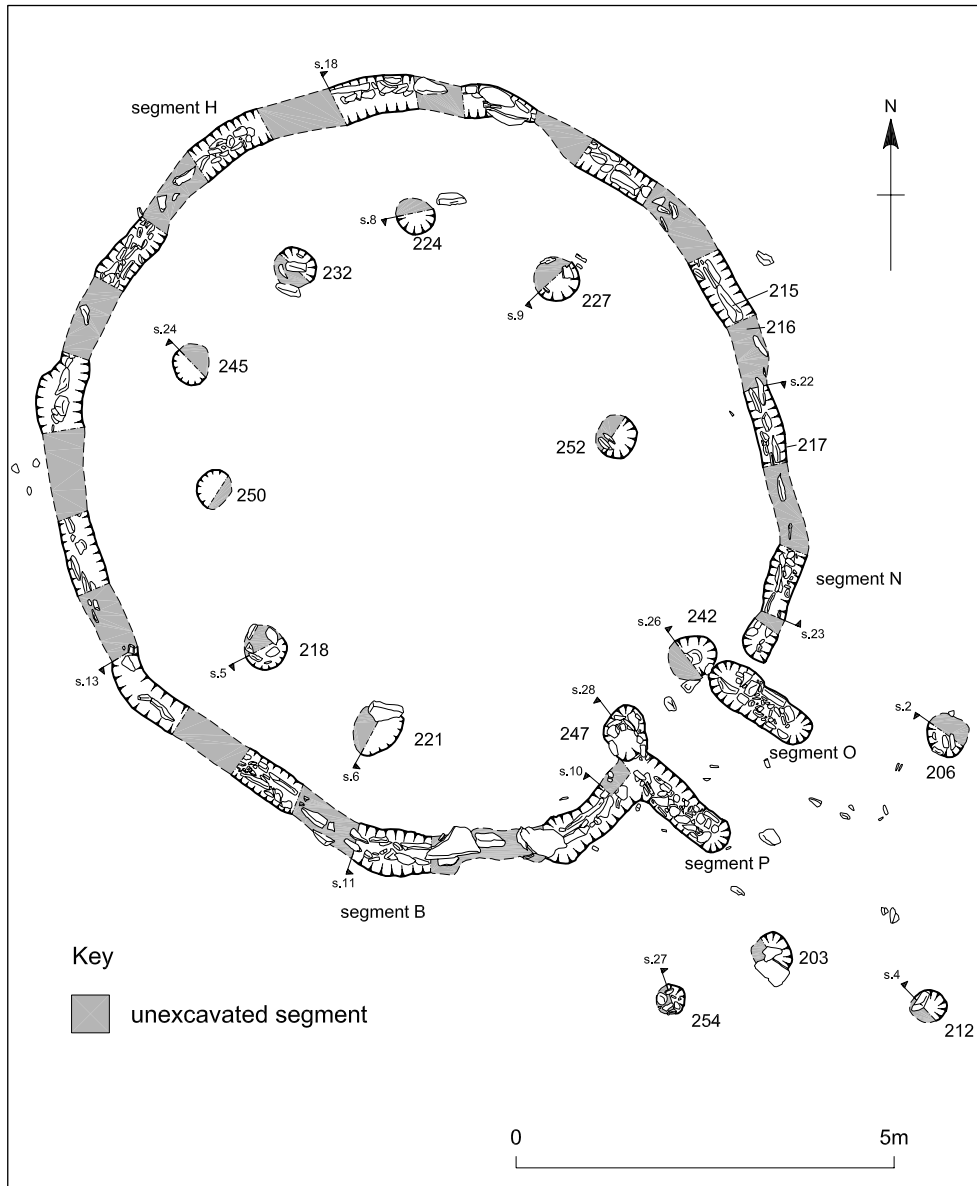


Fig 4 Plan of roundhouse at Area C

Area C

The roundhouse and associated postholes at Area C lay beneath an area of ridge and furrow cultivation. This relict plough soil (200) comprised a dark brown sandy silt of approximately 0.45m in depth. Beneath this soil lay a number of irregular spreads of dark yellowish brown sandy silt (202) of up to 0.05m in depth, with frequent inclusions of small rounded and angular stones, occasional fragments of red sandstone and occasional charcoal fragments. This deposit was confined to the eastern area of the site, and appeared to represent an earlier relict buried plough soil, which overlay the underlying natural. Bedrock was visible towards the western extent of the site.

The principal feature identified in this area was a slightly irregular ring gully (217) which measured 9.4m internally and a maximum of 10.4m externally, and represented the remains of a roundhouse (Figures 4 and 5). The gully was divided up into 1m segments with alternate segments being excavated (segments A–N). The cut of the gully measured a maximum of 0.49m wide and 0.36m deep, and had a steep-sided ‘U’-shaped profile with a flat or slightly concave base (Figure 6). A substantial arrangement of packing stones (215) was set in the base of the gully. The packing stones included both rounded water-worn pebbles and boulders, and angular weathered-out bedrock slabs, all locally available. The larger slabs were up to 0.77m in length. The primary fill (216) consisted of a friable mid grey-brown sandy silt with abundant rounded and angular small stone inclusions, and occasional concentrations of charcoal fragments and flecks. Two of these charcoal samples were submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned determinations in the 2σ range between 1530 and 1290 cal. BC (AA-54314 (GU-10802)) for one sample and 1520 and 1250 cal. BC (AA-54315 (GU-10803)) for the other. Although individual post pipes or



Fig 5 Excavated roundhouse at Area C

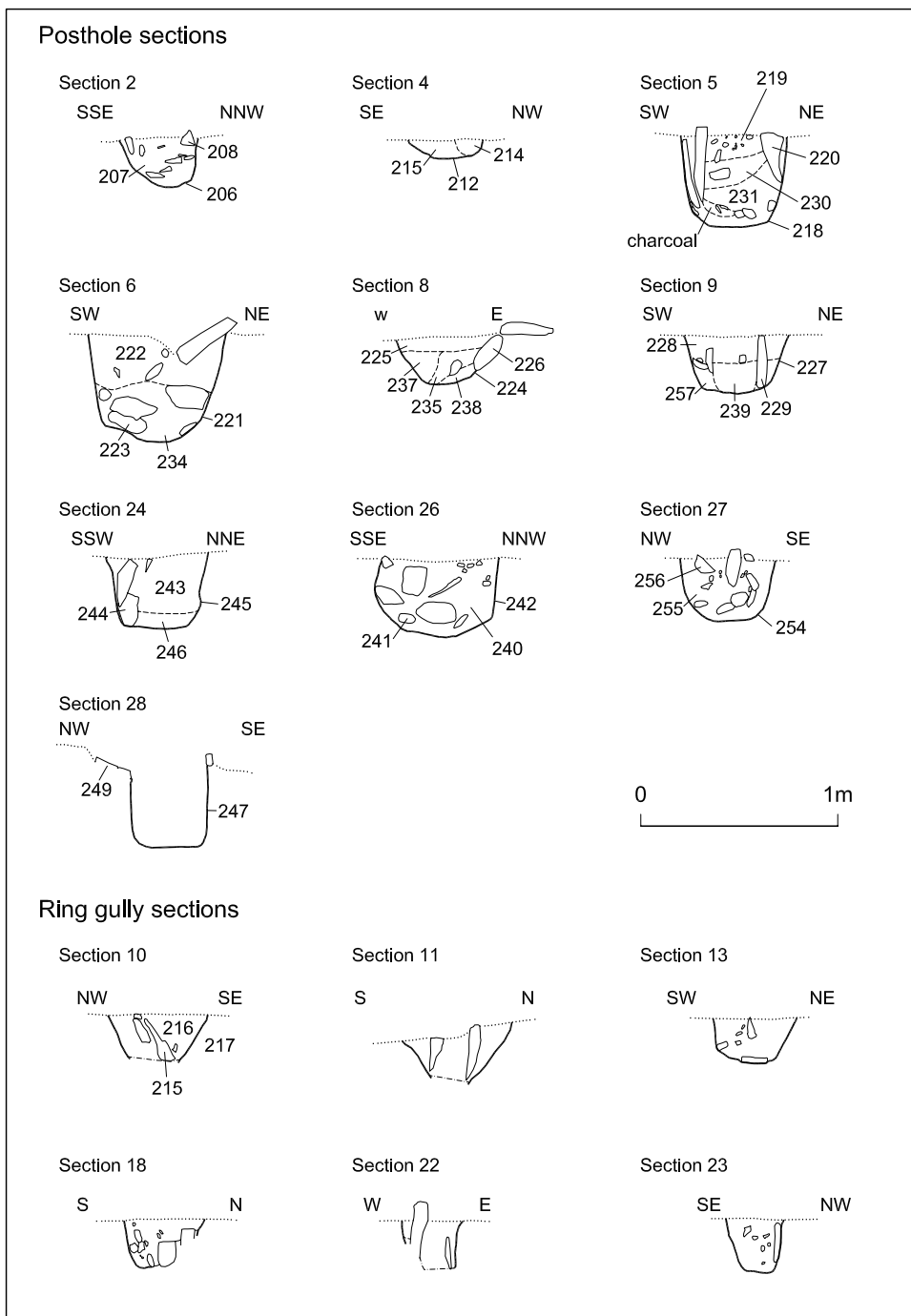


Fig 6 Area C sections

timber impressions were not observed within the fill, the gaps between the packing stones suggested a number of locations of timber planking. This was particularly noticeable in the eastern portion of the gully where the features had survived to a greater depth. The western area appeared to have suffered a greater degree of truncation and disturbance, due to later ploughing activity. As a result of this truncation no *in situ* floor deposits were found.

Defining the south-east facing entrance to the roundhouse were two parallel sub-rectangular cuts (segments O and P) perpendicular to the gully and aligned from south-east to north-west. Both features measured approximately 1.7m long by 0.5m wide and effectively formed a porch. The cut of segment P was continuous with that of the ring gully, whereas segment O formed a discrete feature. Each cut contained an arrangement of packing stones. Several fragments of coarse hand-made pottery of prehistoric date were recovered from the fill of segment P (216).

A total of ten circular or sub-circular postholes were located within the ring gully. Two of these postholes (242 and 247) were located immediately adjacent to the entrance and appear to have been related to the porch structure. Posthole 242 was sub-circular in plan, and measured a maximum of 0.8m in diameter and 0.4m in depth. The cut contained a substantial arrangement of packing stones (241), which enclosed a mid-grey brown sandy silt fill (240) containing frequent fragments of burnt shale. Posthole 247 was of similar size (0.5m in diameter and 0.5m deep), also contained packing stones (258) and was filled by dark yellowish brown silty sand with frequent charcoal inclusions (248).

Eight of the internal postholes (221, 218, 250, 245, 232, 224, 227 and 252) formed an inner ring within the ring gully and were positioned at approximately 1.5m to 2.0m intervals. All eight postholes were circular in plan and 'U'-shaped in profile with slightly concave or flat bases. All ranged from 0.44m to 0.57m in diameter with the exception of 221, which measured 0.7m in diameter. Two of the postholes (218 and 221) were more substantial, measuring 0.49m and 0.55m in depth respectively. Both contained an arrangement of packing stones (220 and 223), and the secondary fill of both postholes comprised a charcoal-rich dark brownish-black sandy silt (231 and 234), probably representing the location of a timber post.

The remaining six postholes were truncated and appeared less substantial, although three (224, 227 and 245) measured between 0.26m and 0.35m in depth, contained some packing material and also contained a charcoal rich secondary fill (235, 239 and 243). Postholes 232 and 252 contained few packing stones and each was filled by a single deposit of mid yellowish brown sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecks (236 and 253). Posthole 250 was extremely truncated, surviving only to a depth of 0.08m, and contained a dark yellowish-brown silty sand fill (251). The dimensions of the two deepest postholes suggest they provided the footings for timber posts of significant size which supported the roof structure. Most of the remaining postholes had been truncated by ploughing activity and to some extent by machining during topsoil stripping. The similarity in diameter to postholes 221 and 218 suggest they were of a similar structural function but as bedrock was much closer to the surface towards the north-west of the site they either could not be dug much deeper or more of the overlying soil has been truncated.

Four external sub-circular postholes (203, 206, 212 and 254) were recorded outside the entrance to the roundhouse. These postholes appeared to respect the entrance but did not exhibit any definite pattern or function. Postholes 203, 206 and 254 were of similar diameter (between 0.5m and 0.6m), and ranged in depth from 0.11m to 0.35m. All contained packing stones (205, 208 and 256), and were filled by similar deposits of yellow brown silty sand (204, 207 and 255). Posthole 212 was rather less substantial, measuring 0.4m in diameter and 0.1m in depth, and filled by a dark yellowish brown silty sand (213) with occasional small stone inclusions.

No finds were recovered from any of the internal or external postholes in Area C.

Artefactual Record

Flint by P. Makey

Summary

The archaeological monitoring of Areas A, B and C, produced a total of 16 (39.5g) pieces of struck flint. Fourteen pieces came from Area C; Areas A and B each produced only one piece. Four pieces show evidence of use. The diagnostic pieces suggest a later Mesolithic date.

State

The flints from topsoil in Area C are clearly residual. The remaining material is in a moderate state.

Thirteen of the pieces are patinated a dense to moderate white colour. The precise course of the patination cannot be discerned. Post depositional damage is present on eleven of the pieces. Some of this damage possibly relates to ploughing.

Reduction Sequence Technology and Raw Material

Fifteen of the pieces have been manufactured on a flint that is commonly found in prehistoric assemblages from the west coast of Scotland. It is probable therefore, that a local source existed. The remaining piece is a flake (Record 11) that comes from the topsoil in Area C. This piece appears to have been obtained from the beach or raised beach deposits. Small sub-fist sized pebbles appear to have been selected for use. Nine or ten of the pieces come from secondary stages of lithic reduction. The remaining pieces are all from tertiary stages. Knapping is reasonably fine with slight evidence of platform preparation. The flint appears to have been knapped via the application of hard hammer technique and knapping appears to be at least partially geared to bladelet production.

Traits

Four of the pieces have been used. The used pieces comprise, both of the scrapers from Area C, the flake from Area A, pit 12, and the bladelet from Area B, topsoil. The end scraper (Record 14) from Area C topsoil has received a fairly heavy degree of edge use. The unclassifiable example (Record 15) from the buried plough soil has been moderately used. The scraper wear is consistent with use

on a moderately hard substrate such as meat on the bone or wood. Slight grinding wear is present on the bladelet (Record 2): this looks as though the piece has received slight use on stone. Very slight, possible traces of burning are present on only the flake (Record 1) from, Area A, pit 12.

Chronology

Diagnostic pieces are few, however the overall dimensions and general flaking characteristics of the majority of the flint are consistent with material of later Mesolithic date. The end scraper (Record 14) is of a form common in later Mesolithic and Beaker assemblages.

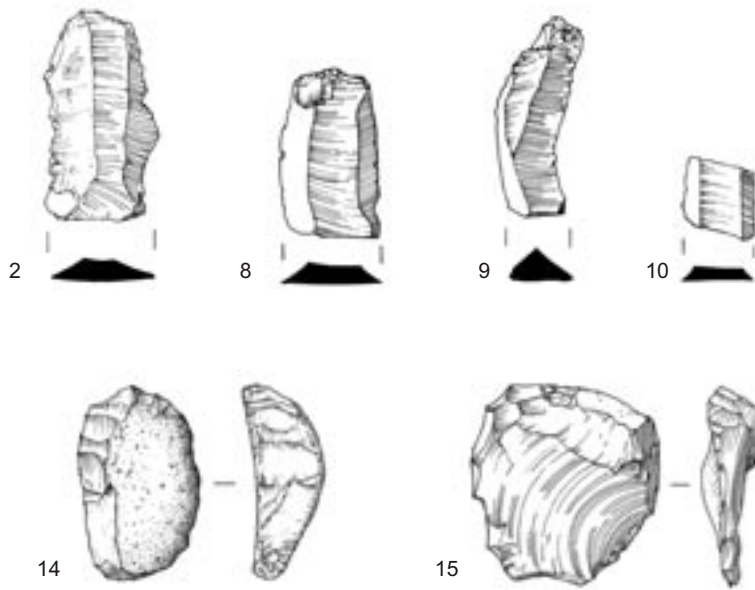


Fig 7 Illustrated flint

Catalogue of illustrated flint (Figure 7)

<i>Record No.</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Sub type</i>
2	100	B	Bladelet	Double crested
8	200	C	Flake	Double crested
9	200	C	Bladelet	Double crested
10	200	C	Flake	Double crested
14	200	C	Scraper	End (short)
15	202	C	Scraper	Unclassifiable

Pottery by Catherine McGill

Summary

A total of nine worn body sherds, deriving from a minimum of two handmade vessels, were recovered from Area C. Only four of the sherds potentially came from their primary context of deposition (porch slot 216). These were less worn than the remainder of the assemblage, which was found in the topsoil (200). As no forms could be identified, none of the sherds was chronologically diagnostic, but the fabrics and dimensions are consistent with a prehistoric date. Five fragments of formless fired clay were also recovered, one in Area A (pit 4) and the remainder in Area C. These may be worn fragments of pot or other clay objects, daub or unformed clay, which has been fired incidentally.

Methodology

The pottery assemblage from Ross Bay was analysed using the pottery recording system recommended by the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG 1997).

Results

The sherds were handmade, although the specific method of construction was not identifiable. All of the sherds, with the exception of a single one from the topsoil, were constructed of a hard, gritty fabric (fabric 1), consisting of clay with *c.*30% poorly-sorted angular basic dark igneous inclusions, measuring 1–8mm. This had been unevenly fired in an uncontrolled atmosphere.

The remaining sherd was formed from an evenly fired, hard, fine sandy fabric (fabric 2) with a fine fracture and no visible inclusions. This type of fabric is uncommon prior to the first few centuries AD, as has been argued elsewhere (see McGill 2002a; 2002b). This has no significance in terms of dating activity on the site as the sherd was found in the topsoil and was very worn.

In addition, five fragments of formless fired clay, one in Area A (pit 4) and the remainder in Area C, were recovered. These may be worn fragments of pot or other clay objects, daub or unformed clay, which has been fired incidentally.

Catalogue (by context)

Area A

003 1 fragment of fired clay, pale orange throughout. Weight 7g, maximum extent 23mm, 11mm thick. Daub/worn pot/formless fired clay. Heavily worn.

Area C

200 Fabric 1, 4 body sherds, weight 18g, maximum extent 40mm, 10mm to >13mm thick. Buff exterior, mid grey to black core and interior. No apparent surface treatment, decoration or residue. MNI 1. Heavily worn.

200 1 fragment of fired clay, pale grey to orange. Weight 2g, maximum extent 17mm, 8mm thick. Daub/worn pot/formless fired clay. Heavily worn.

200 Fabric 2, 1 body sherd, weight 2g, maximum extent 19mm, 8mm thick. No visible surface treatment, decoration or residue. Heavily worn.

216 Fabric 1, 4 body sherds, weight 95g, maximum extent 55mm, 12mm thick. Pale orange exterior, dark grey core, buff interior. No apparent surface treatment or decoration. Slight internal sooting on 2 sherds. Moderately worn.

230 2 fragments of fired clay, 1 pale grey to orange, 1 dark grey/brown. unevenly fired. Weight 9g, maximum extent 24mm, maximum 10mm thick. The larger fragment has 1 flat side, and was probably broken off from a larger lump post-firing. Moderately worn.

Environmental Remains by Dr. Allan Hall

Summary

Ancient charred plant remains were recovered from all of the samples. These mostly comprised small numbers of cereal grains and charcoal. However the charred grain assemblage recovered from the fill of pit 4 (Area A) was of considerable size.

The only invertebrate remains recovered were probably modern.

Only tiny amounts of hand-collected bone were recovered from three contexts in Area A. All of the fragments were burnt and very poorly preserved; none were identifiable.

Introduction

Plant remains were examined from 'washovers' for five samples. All the washovers contained at least traces of what may be assumed to be ancient charred remains, though there were also some uncharred specimens – weed seeds and conifer needles – which are likely to be recent intrusions or contaminants. One sample, from Context 3 (fill of pit 4), yielded a huge washover of about 3.25 litres of more or less pure charred cereal grain with some chaff and a little charcoal from the processing of 30kg (approx. 15–20 litres.). Given the paucity of evidence for prehistoric economy in this part of Scotland this sample was thought worthy of further examination; a radiocarbon date on some of the grain was also pursued.

The Plant Remains from Context 3, Area A

Two subsamples of a few cm were taken at random from the large washover; the first provided material for initial identifications and for measurements (using a microscope eyepiece graticule), the second material for a quantification of taxa and plant parts. A third sample, of grain, was submitted for dating by radiocarbon assay (see below).

The abundant grains and fairly frequent chaff fragments were mostly very well preserved and consisted primarily of wheat, amongst which, from the spikelet forks and glume-bases present, was a predominance of emmer, *Triticum dicoccon*. On the basis of glume base widths, there were certainly some narrow enough to be likely to be einkorn (*T. monococcum* L.), with the bulk being in the usual range for emmer and a few large enough to be spelt (*T. spelta* L.). No material was identified with certainty as einkorn or spelt on morphological grounds, however (the assistance in identification of Dr Glynis Jones, University of Sheffield, is gratefully acknowledged here). The wheat grains showed a considerable diversity of size and shape but, again, all seemed likely to be emmer.

Also present in the subsamples examined were small numbers of barley (*Hordeum*) grains, some of them hulled, but almost no barley chaff. Some of the wheat grains were rather shrivelled, with longitudinal ridges/wrinkles, though there was no evidence of germination as represented by the emerging coleoptile (shoot) often also observed in grains showing shrivelling. Vanishingly few charred weed seeds were seen; this and the relative sparseness of chaff (cf. Table 1) mean that the assemblage as a whole was extremely well-cleaned. A little charcoal, including oak, *Quercus* (to 20mm in maximum dimension) was also noted.

Taxon	Parts	No. specimens in subsample	% (cereals only, excluding grain fragments)
Cereals			
<i>Triticum</i> sp. (presumably all emmer)	whole or broken grains	172	83.5
<i>Triticum dicoccon</i> Schrank (emmer)	glume bases	15	7.3
	spikelet forks	4	1.9
	rachis internodes	+	
<i>Hordeum</i> sp.	whole or broken grains	11	5.3
	rachis internodes (at least one from a 6-row form)	+	
Cerealia indet.	fragments not assignable to <i>Triticum</i> or <i>Hordeum</i>	147	
Weed taxa			
<i>Chenopodium album</i> L. (fat hen)	seed	+	
<i>Atriplex</i> sp(p). (orache)	seed	+	
<i>Lapsana communis</i> L. (nipplewort)	achene	+	
Other remains			
<i>Quercus</i> sp. (oak)	charcoal		+ (to 20 mm)

Table 1. Charred plant remains from context 3, Sample 301, from a small subsample of a few cm. '+' indicates items not recorded in the subsample used for quantification but noted during examination of other material from the sample. There were never more than 1 or 2 specimens

Context 7, Sample 701 (washover about 200cm, including modern roots, from 9kg)		
<i>Triticum</i> sp.	grains	++
<i>Hordeum</i> sp.	grains	+
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> L. (ash)	charcoal	+ (to 25 mm)
<i>Quercus</i> sp. (oak)	charcoal	+ (to 15 mm)
Context 13, Sample 1301 (washover of about 100cm, including modern roots, from 17kg)		
<i>Triticum</i> sp.	grains	+
<i>Hordeum</i> sp.	grains	+
<i>Rumex</i> sp.	nutlet	+
<i>Alnus/Corylus</i> (alder/hazel)	charcoal	+ (to 10 mm)
Context 216, Sample 21601 (washover of a few cm, mainly modern roots, from 38kg)		
<i>Avena</i> sp. (oat)	grain	+ (1 specimen)
indet.	charcoal	+ (to 10 mm)
Context 230, Sample 23001 (washover of about 50cm from 3kg)		
<i>Triticum</i> sp.	grains	+
<i>Hordeum</i> sp.	grains	+
indet.	charcoal	+ (to 5 mm)
Context 236, Sample 23601 (washover of about 50 cm from 3kg)		
<i>Ranunculus</i> Section <i>Ranunculus</i>	<i>uncharred</i> achene	+ (a single very decayed fragment)
<i>Rubus</i> sp. (blackberry, raspberry)	<i>uncharred</i> seed	+ (a single very decayed fragment)
indet.	charcoal	+ (to 10 mm)

Table 2. Charred plant remains in other samples from Ross Bay. Material is recorded on a three-point scale of abundance from '+' – one or a few specimens, to '+++' abundant remains.

Dating

Two separate samples of grain submitted for dating returned radiocarbon ages of 2780±45 BP (1020-820 cal BC, 95.4% probability: GU-10800) and 2710±55 BP (1000-790 cal BC, GU-10801), i.e. later Bronze Age.

Area	Lab No.	Context	Material	Age BP	Cal date (1 σ)	Cal date (2 σ)
A	AA-54312 (GU-10800)	3 (sub-sample 301 of pit fill)	Charred grain	2780 \pm 45	1000BC (48.4%) 890BC 880BC (19.8%) 830BC	1020BC (95.4%) 820BC
A	AA-54313 (GU-10801)	3 AB (pit fill)	Charred grain	2710 \pm 55	905BC (68.2%) 810BC	1000BC (95.4%) 790BC
C	AA-54314 (GU-10802)	216 AC (fill of ring gully)	Charcoal	3165 \pm 55	1520BC (68.2%) 1390BC	1600BC (1.2%) 1560BC 1530BC (94.2%) 1290BC
C	AA-54315 (GU-10803)	216 AE (fill of ring gully)	Charcoal	3115 \pm 50	1440BC (68.2%) 1310BC	1520BC (95.4%) 1250BC

Table 3. Summary of radiocarbon dates

Discussion

The record for prehistoric plant remains from crops of any kind, not least cereals, from this part of the British Isles is very sparse, *vide* Archaeobotanical Computer Database (*ABCD*, cf. Tomlinson and Hall 1996), in which the only data recorded for this Scottish region are for wood or charcoal. Perhaps the geographically nearest site to Ross Bay with evidence of charred plant remains is at Upperleuch, near Lockerbie (Terry 1993) – published since the main phase of compilation of the *ABCD* – where Clapham recorded grain of emmer/spelt (as well as some barley and oats) from an Iron Age settlement. Here, chaff was lacking and the material was clearly much less well preserved, as well as present in a much lower concentration (Clapham reports 156 grains identified as emmer plus a further 120 unidentifiable cereal grains from a full 20 litre sample, representing the whole fill of a pit!). A find of emmer at this period is certainly not unexpected.

The taphonomic history of the grain and chaff is also of interest. Presumably the deposit filling pit 4 comprised rubbish containing the already burnt remains, but the reason for the charring of the cereals – unless originally concerned with some kind of ritual activity – can surely only be related to an accidental fire which destroyed the crop, since the grain showed little sign of damage other than perhaps some shrivelling. It had certainly neither become infested with grain pests nor started to germinate. It was also remarkably clean, weeds being almost absent.

Slag by Jane Cowgill

Summary

Slag was only recovered from Areas A and C. The five pieces of slag recovered from Area A are either very vitrified hearth lining or an earlier, partially formed variant of Iron Age Grey. The remaining eight pieces of slag from Area C were from the buried plough soil and likely to be post-medieval in date.

Introduction

Slag was only recovered from Areas A and C. Archaeological features encountered in Area A comprised two sub-rectangular pits and four postholes. Pit 4 contained a large amount of charcoal and burnt grain, and some small fragments of burnt bone while fragments of burnt bone and slag were recovered from posthole 5 (fill 7). The principle feature identified in Area C was the remains of a 10m-diameter roundhouse, which had been truncated by ridge and furrow cultivation of probable post-medieval date. This plough soil overlaid an earlier plough soil and it is from this layer that the slag was recovered.

Recording Methodology

A total of 71g (thirteen pieces) of slag and associated materials were submitted for recording. The slag was identified solely on morphological grounds by visual examination, sometimes with the aid of a x10 binocular microscope. It was recorded on *pro forma* recording sheets and this information was entered directly into the catalogues below.

Area A

Catalogue

Context 1 (topsoil over pit 12); 1 piece of ?Iron Age Grey; weight: 10g; comments: wider range of colours than usually encountered with this fairly consistent type of slag (including pale yellowish greens), very bubbly, some hearth lining inclusions – very vitrified hearth lining?

Context 7 (fill of posthole 5); Slag; 4 pieces weighing 28g; comments: very large fuel ash slag? Purple-ish – mid grey in colour, partially flowed, very vitrified hearth lining or similar to part formed Iron Age Grey?

Discussion

Iron Age Grey slags are usually very consistent in form and colour having a white to a light grey coloured surface with a mid grey, very vesicular, core. They are also only found on Mid-Late Iron Age sites. These pieces are more variable in colour and generally smaller than more usual examples of this type of slag and hearth lining is very noticeable in the piece from the topsoil, an uncommon (almost rare) feature with Iron Age Grey slags. They have, however, evidently been partially molten and some flows are present on the pieces from fill 7. The structure is fairly glassy and grainy but not to the extent that would be expected. These pieces may therefore be either very vitrified hearth lining or similar to a partially formed Iron Age Grey (this may in fact be the same thing, as we do not yet understand how Iron Age Greys formed, but the temperatures required to produce them (above 1200°C) may not have been fully achieved). Considering the date of the site it is possible that this slag is a forerunner of the Iron Age Grey slags that are so commonly found on later sites.

Two unusually large pieces of fuel ash slag, that in many ways are similar to the material described above were recently recorded from an Iron Age pit at the site of Harston, Cambridgeshire (Cowgill 2002). Iron Age Grey slags were present on this site and again it was suggested that these may be low fired examples of this slag. Fuel ash slags are usually very small.

Area C

All the slag from this site is likely to be post-medieval in date and may well be from coal fired agricultural machinery.

Radiocarbon Dating

The carbon dating for the site was undertaken by the Scottish Universities Research and Reactor Centre (SURRC) and the University of Arizona AMS Facility.

Four samples were submitted for radiocarbon analysis. Two of these samples were charred grain from the fill of pit 4 at Area A, the other two samples were charcoal recovered from the fill (216) of the ring gully at Area C. Both sets of sample types were analysed by Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS). A summary of the results can be seen in Table 3.

Discussion and Conclusion

The unstratified Mesolithic flints recovered from the raised beach deposits at Area C are indicative of the exploitation of easily accessible shoreline resources during the Mesolithic period in Galloway. They are relatively common in this context in Galloway and can be found in most topographically similar areas. They are rarely associated with permanent occupation and more likely represent temporary seasonal exploitation.

A series of aerial photographs, taken in 2000 and covering the pipeline route, show that the fields overlying all three areas have been subjected to later steam ploughing and improvement. This later disturbance and truncation in part helps to explain why the excavated and recorded features at Areas A and B are not easily interpreted and also why there are relatively few visible earthwork sites in the vicinity.

In terms of form the features at Area C are relatively self-explanatory. However, without the carbon date of around 1400 BC the structure could not have been convincingly dated to either the Bronze or Iron Age. The porch form and irregularity of the internal posts are akin to the Iron Age roundhouse style seen at West Brandon (Jobey 1962) and to a lesser extent the Iron Age roundhouse excavated at Hayknowes Farm near Annan (Gregory 2001). However the Middle Bronze Age roundhouse from Glanfeinion (Britnell *et al.* 1997) has a similar, if shorter planked porch structure, though in this instance an external drip gully was present and no obvious indication of a wall could be seen. The few sherds of pottery that were recovered from the Area C porch construction slot were non-diagnostic, but firmly put the roundhouse into the prehistoric period.

The south-eastern orientation of the entrance falls into Brück's most common alignment for Bronze Age roundhouses in the south of England, but this alignment is by no means diagnostic, as different structures on the same site can have different alignments: Huts 1

and 2 at Long Knowe had entrances facing east and south-east respectively (Mercer 1981), Platform 2 at Green Knowe had an entrance orienting south-south-east, while Platform 5 oriented to the south (Jobey 1980). Whilst these do all fall into the general south-east quadrant of a circle, examples such as Platform 5 at Lintshie Gutter appear to orient east-north-east (Terry 1995). The popularity of a south-eastern oriented entrance continues through to the Iron Age further reducing any diagnostic potential and is possibly therefore just a preferred orientation based on local climate, topography and practicality.

The lack of any obvious hearth in the structure may relate to the original function of the building (cf. Guilbert 1981, 106) or may, as is more likely, relate to truncation by the later ploughing on the site. This would equally explain the lack of any surviving internal floor surfaces.

The excavated features gave the appearance of being single phase and only two of the internal postholes, 227 and 224, showed any signs of a post pipe, with 218 appearing to have been burnt *in situ*. Nearly all of the postholes that had distinguishable layers within their fills had been sealed by a later deposit. This again falls into a pattern highlighted by Brück (1999), with the site appearing to have been demolished and the posts removed after one occupational use.

Given the apparent single phase of the roundhouse and the middle Bronze Age carbon date it seems unlikely that the sherds of Iron Age pottery recovered from the plough soil above the structure indicate a long period of continuous use. More likely is the continued sporadic occupation of the immediate area in the following centuries, arguably culminating in the present day structures of Ross some 300m to the south-west.

With the exception of the current road between Balmangan and Ross, which falls between Areas B and C, the pipeline corridor and area around the roundhouse was either stripped or sample stripped and no indication of an enclosure bank or ditch was observed. When viewed with the carbon date of the roundhouse, this puts the site loosely into the early to middle Bronze Age unenclosed platform settlement category described by Jobey (1983). These settlements are described as having between one and six houses and usually being accompanied by some form of field clearance. Clearance cairns are quite common in the area and a number were seen beneath whin bushes in the immediate vicinity. However, the dating of these is problematical as some of them are still being used.

The stone flagstones recorded at Area B did not appear to be heavily disturbed and formed a reasonable paved surface, though of all the fields crossed by the pipeline this one had undergone the most improvement and potentially therefore suffered the most truncation. Allowing for this potential limitation the paving and pits at Area B still appeared structural in nature though they lacked any clear, defining characteristics as to the form a structure may have taken.

The main area of paving (103) covered a south-east to north-west oriented hollow (110) which could suggest that it was the surfacing of an in-filled worn path, similar to the hollow way entrance of Platform 5 at Lintshie Gutter (Terry 1995) and conforming to the most common orientation of middle Bronze Age dwelling entrances identified in Brück's study (1999). However similar zones of paving have been recorded at the Long Knowe

roundhouses at Eskdale (Mercer, 1981), which were dated to the Iron Age and in later rectangular and sub-rectangular structures at Whithorn (Hill 1997) spanning the 6th to the 13th centuries AD, effectively making paving of this nature undateable.

It is tempting to associate this feature group with the roundhouse at Area C, some 30m to the east. However, no dating evidence was found at Area B and no linking stratigraphy survived. If the features at Area B did represent a roundhouse, even allowing for some truncation, it would have to have been one of a different construction style, without the timber slot and major postholes.

The features at Area A comprise postholes and pits containing charred grain, burnt bone and clay, heat-cracked stone and slag dating to the later Bronze Age. The inter-cutting nature of features, suggests that the site was in use for more than one episode of activity. The presence of the postholes suggests a structure but the size and form was not evident from the recorded features. The nature of the finds shows that burning had been taking place nearby but no evidence of *in situ* burning was seen. The fragments of burnt bone could not be identified as human and were not abundant enough to be a cremation burial, which suggests that the pits were purely rubbish pits. However, the variety of finds does not aid interpretation and could suggest either an occupational, industrial or ritual origin.

Spatially the nearest excavated features of a similar period were pits associated with burnt mounds found on the South West Scotland Pipeline some 750m away (Maynard 1993). As no associated burnt mounds were found at Area A it is unlikely that this was their function.

A pit of similar dimensions to pit 4, also containing burnt grain, was excavated within the middle Bronze Age roundhouse at Glanfeinion, Powys (Britnell *et al.* 1997). This is a more likely parallel and suggests a purely domestic function for the group, with the slag being accounted for by possible nearby industrial activity.

The aerial photographs of the pipeline corridor (MTOR_LINE2_P2) show some possible circular features to the north-west of Area A, on the top of Muter Hill, which could be an area of associated settlement. However, the photograph also shows cattle trampling in the field, which suggests that some of the circles may have been caused by feeder rings.

When viewed as a whole, the available dates for the sites suggest that they are not contemporary. But what they do show is a continued exploitation and occupation of this part of Galloway from the Mesolithic period onwards, with a slight bias towards the Bronze Age.

This discovery of a middle Bronze Age roundhouse, and the other features, lends weight to the generally accepted theory that lowland distribution patterns of occupation sites are artificially skewed as a result of disturbance and masking by later activity. One of the major causes of this is particularly apparent on the aerial photographs of the pipeline, which show that large areas of what would once have been marginal or inaccessible land were able to be cultivated using steam ploughing. The work of Maynard (1993) has shown that sites such as burnt mounds are much more widespread than was previously thought, and that the location of flattened, ploughed out mounds can still be recorded through fieldwalking exercises. However, given the paucity of surviving artefacts, sites similar to

Areas A, B and C would prove more difficult to identify by the same method. Therefore, it is unlikely in an area of such low rural development as Dumfries and Galloway that many more such fortuitous discoveries will be made.

Archive

The artefacts from the site have been deposited at the Stewartry Museum in Kirkcudbright. The site archive has been deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland (Accession No. 2005/1). Copies of the excavation reports have been lodged with the Dumfries and Galloway Regional Council Sites and Monuments Record.

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EXCAVATION OF A BRONZE AGE BARROW AT KERRICKS FARM NEAR DUNCOW

by Jim Parry, with contributions from
John Carrott, Trevor Cowie, Jacqueline McKinley, P Makey and Sarah Wilkinson

Summary

Between April and July 2002 an archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks for the construction corridor of the Scotland to Ireland Second Gas Interconnector Project land pipeline between Beattock and Cluden in Dumfries and Galloway. During topsoil stripping across a floodplain to the east of the River Nith, the partial remains of a barrow were identified. The barrow comprised a ring ditch with an external diameter of some 8m and an internal diameter of nearly 4m almost complete. The ditch showing two phases of activity surrounded two central cremation pits, one containing the remains of a scattered cremation and the other an almost complete 'bucket urn' with its contents intact. Both sets of cremations consisted of two individuals (in both cases probably an adult female and an infant or juvenile) and have been radiocarbon dated to the mid to late Bronze Age, between 1430 and 850 cal. BC. The barrow is probably associated with a wider group of linear features observed as cropmarks to the east of the pipeline corridor.

Introduction

An archaeological watching brief and excavation was undertaken during groundworks associated with the topsoil stripping of a construction corridor and cutting of a pipe trench for the Scotland to Ireland Second Gas Interconnector Project land pipeline between Beattock and Cluden in Dumfries and Galloway. The work was undertaken over a 16 week period between April and July 2002 by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) for Penspen Ltd on behalf of Bord Gais Eireann (hereinafter BGE (UK) Ltd).

The watching brief was implemented as a result of recommendations made in the Environmental Statement for the pipeline (BGE (UK) 2001) and undertaken in accordance with a Methods Statement produced for the watching brief (NAA 2002a). The full results of this watching brief were presented in an unpublished Data Structure Report (NAA 2002b). This report details the results obtained from the further analysis of both the written archive and the artefactual record from the Kerricks Farm barrow (formerly referred to as Site B) in accordance with recommendations made in the Data Structure Report, set within its wider landscape context.

Location, Topography and Geology

The pipeline route commenced at the Beattock compressor station, some 6km south of Moffat and terminated at a valve connection near Cluden, some 5km to the north-west of Dumfries, a total length of some 30km. The site was located some 5.4km to the north of Dumfries and lies at the foot of an undulating area of glacially moulded hills and glacial

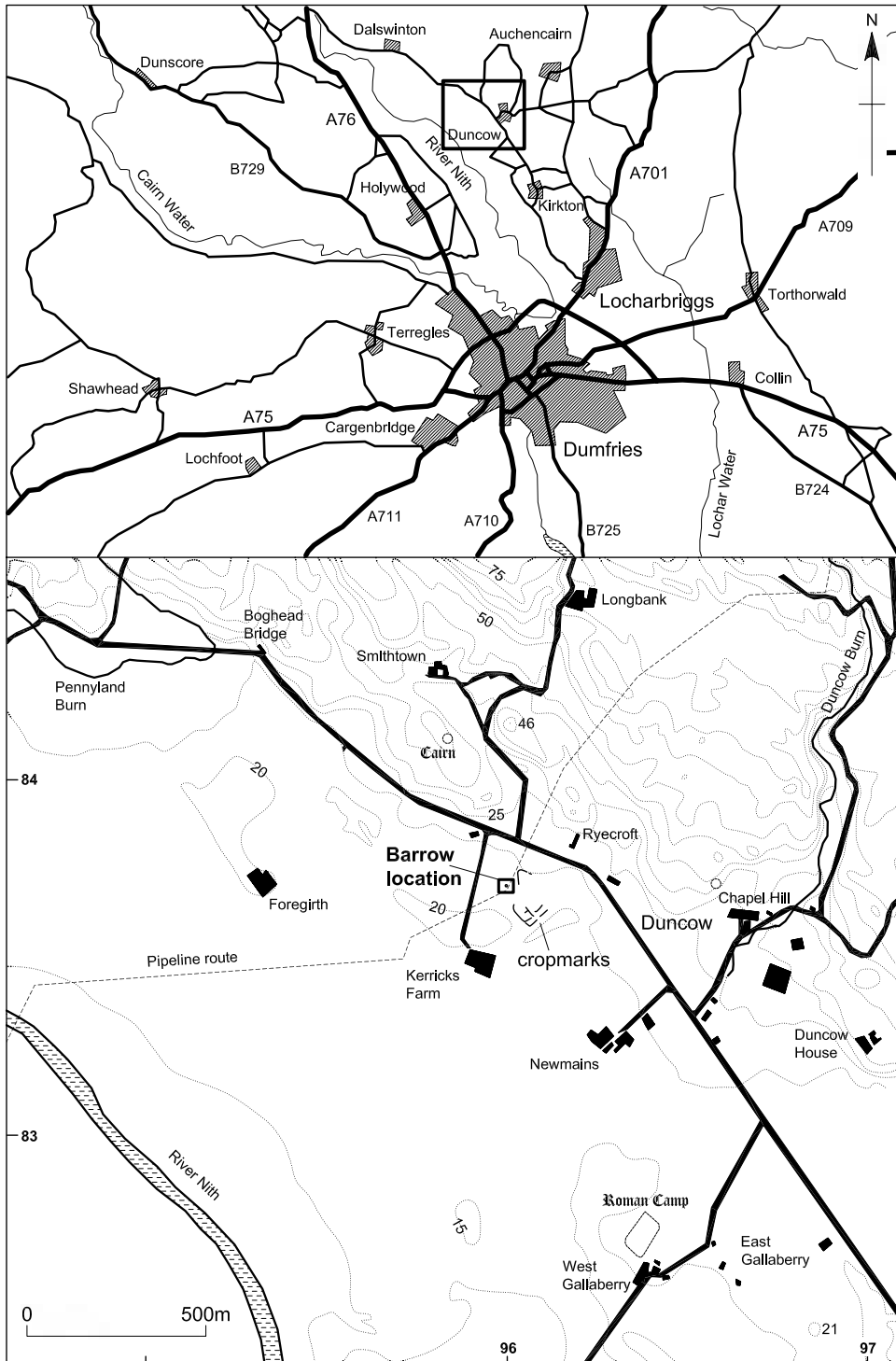


Figure 1 Kerricks Farm Barrow: site location showing nearby cropmarks

outwash gravels to the north of Duncow, on the upper reaches of the floodplain in the valley of the River Nith at a height of some 10m OD (NX 9600 8374). The barrow was located in a field to the north of Kerricks Farm, some 150m south-west of the road running between Locharbriggs and Auldgirth (Figure 1).

The underlying geology of the area comprises Lower Permian sedimentary deposits, which are overlain by alluvial gravels with a high sand content. The field in which the site was located was under pasture. The typical soil profile comprised water-born silt (1702) overlying river gravels, ranging in depth between 0.4m up to 1.5m near the banks of the River Nith, with topsoil overlying this to an average depth of 0.3m.

Archaeological Background

An Environmental Statement on the Scotland to Ireland Second Gas Interconnector Project Scottish land pipeline between Beattock and Brighthouse was prepared by BGE (2001). This included the results of a desk-based assessment of the known and potential archaeology along a 400m wide corridor of the proposed pipeline route. A further assessment of the pipeline route included an aerial photographic study, which identified a number of additional crop mark sites (CFA 2001). The survey highlighted the range of archaeological remains within the study corridor including medieval and later rural settlements, field systems and industrial remains. One of the sites identified as part of the aerial photographic study related to the location of the barrow site, comprising a series of linear and curvilinear cropmarks (a probable field system) of unknown date (NX98SE17) just to the east of the pipeline corridor and a circular anomaly mirroring the exact location of the recorded barrow (Figure 1). Within a 0.5km radius of the site several prehistoric settlement sites and two Roman camps are also recorded.



Figure 2 Kerricks Farm Barrow: view looking south-west along the pipeline route overlooking the barrow site (marked) and Kerricks Farm.

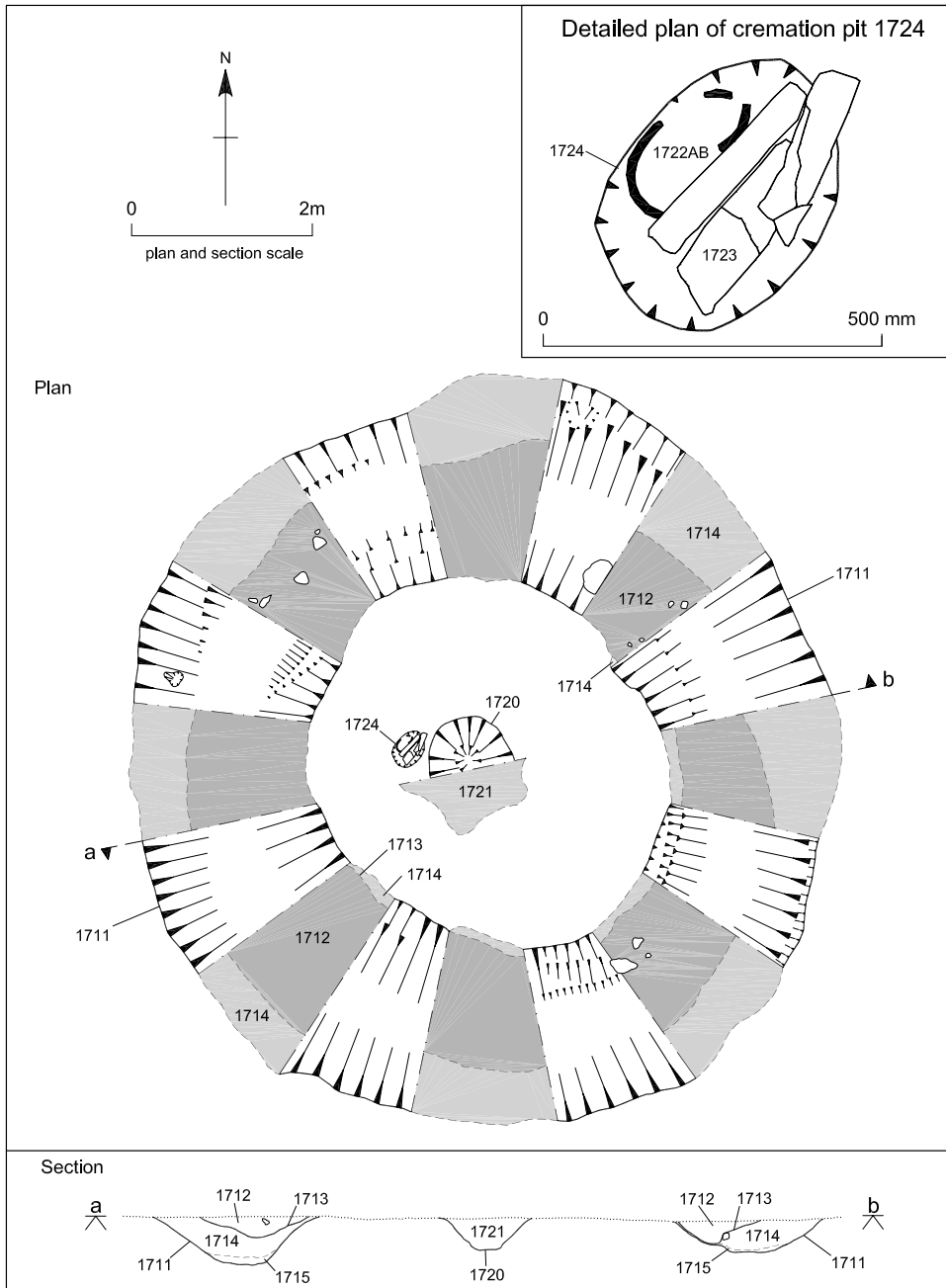


Figure 3 Kerricks Farm Barrow: plan and section with inset of cremation pit 1724

Methodology

The pipeline easement was on average some 36m wide. Approximately 28m of this width was stripped of topsoil with the remaining area being used to house the topsoil bund. Half of the stripped corridor was excavated with a 360° tracked excavator using a toothless bucket, the remaining topsoil being pushed into the bund by a bulldozer. Where potential archaeological features or deposits were identified during the initial topsoil strip, then the full width of the corridor was stripped with a 360° tracked excavator with a toothless ditching bucket.

Upon identification of the barrow, a 20m² area encircling the site was fenced off to protect it from passing plant. The barrow ditch was excavated in alternate sample segments, measuring approximately 1m wide and spaced 1m apart, radiating from a central point. All remaining features were fully excavated. The 'bucket urn' was lifted as a block so as to prevent any further deterioration and allow for the maximum retention of both the urn and its contents. The cremated contents of the urn were subsequently excavated under laboratory conditions.

Excavation Results

The remains of the barrow were located along the centre line of the corridor to the north-west of Kerricks Farm (Figures 2 to 4). The site comprised a ring ditch (1711) surrounding two central pits (1720 and 1724), the former containing the remains of a scattered cremation (1721 AB) and the latter an intact cremation urn with its contents *in situ* (1722 AB). The barrow had an external diameter of some 8m and an internal diameter of nearly 4m.

The ring ditch (1711) comprised a 2m wide by 0.5m deep U-shaped ditch with a slightly flattened base, cutting the river terrace gravels (1711). It was filled by two deposits; the primary deposit (1715) comprised silty sand with occasional charcoal fragments and measured up to 0.18m thick. A sample of this charcoal was submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned determinations in the 2 σ range between 2140 and 1880 cal. BC (AA-54310 (GU-10798)). The secondary deposit (1714) comprised silty loam with occasional sub-rounded cobble inclusions and charcoal flecking, measuring up to 0.4m thick. The angle and arrangement of stones in this deposit (tipping from the outer edge of the cut to the inside) indicates that infilling occurred primarily from the outer edge of the ring ditch. This secondary deposit had been disturbed by a re-cut of the barrow ditch (1713), which measured up to 1m wide by 0.24m deep. This re-cut lay against the interior of the primary ring ditch cut, and was filled by a single deposit of sandy silt which also contained charcoal and several medium to large (0.2m to 0.4m diameter) sub-rounded cobbles (1712). A single fragment of whetstone was also recovered from this fill. The angle and arrangement of cobbles in this deposit (tipping from the inner edge of the cut to the outside) indicates that infilling primarily occurred from within the area enclosed by the ring ditch. A sample of the charcoal recovered from the re-cut ditch was also submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned determinations in the 2 σ range between 210 cal. BC and AD 10 (AA-54311 (GU-10799)).



Figure 4 Kerricks Farm Barrow: view south-west across the excavated barrow showing the ring ditch, cremation pits and outlying tree root boles (scale: 1m by 1m)

Within the centre of the area enclosed by the ring ditch, two pits were recorded. The central (and largest) pit (1720) was 'U'-shaped in profile with steeper cut sides towards its base. It measured 1m in diameter by 0.32m deep and was filled with stoney silt (1721), which contained the remains of a scattered cremation (1721 AB). Analysis of the cremated remains identified two individuals, one an adult (possibly female), the other an infant. A sample of this cremated bone was submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned determinations in the 2σ range between 1400 and 850 cal. BC (AA-54308 (GU-10796)). A single tertiary flint flake of broadly prehistoric date was also recovered from this deposit. The second smaller pit (1724) lay immediately north-west of pit 1720 and was oval in plan (Figure 5). It had vertical sides and a flat base measuring 0.4m wide by 0.3m deep, within which a 'bucket urn' of Bronze Age date was recorded (Figures 6 and 7) containing cremated human remains (1722 AB). Analysis of the remains identified two individuals, one an adult (possibly female), the other a juvenile (6 to 8 years old). A sample of this cremated bone was also submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned determinations in the 2σ range between 1430 and 1020 cal. BC (AA-54309 (GU-10797)). The urn was broadly conical with a flat base and had an arrangement of perforations just below the rim (possibly for an 'organic lid' to have been tied down onto it). It had been placed upright in the pit and had been compressed from one side by three flat stones (1723). These stones may have originally formed upright supports for a capping stone. Sealing both pits was a thin deposit of silt containing numerous fragments of cremated bone (1709). This appears to be a result of modern ploughing disturbing fill 1721. The presence of two individuals mirrors the number identified from cremation 1721 AB.



Figure 5 Kerricks Farm Barrow: view of cremation pit 1724 with the cremation urn *in situ* (scale: 10cm and 60cm)

Five irregularly shaped pits (1706, 1725–1728) were also recorded outwith the barrow ditch (see Figure 4). Due to their irregular shape and the undulating nature of their bases, they are seen as being natural in origin, most likely tree boles. All of the above features were sealed by a deposit of silty subsoil (1702) 0.2m thick and topsoil (1716) 0.3m thick.

Artefactual Record

The ‘bucket urn’ and cremated human remains formed the bulk of the finds assemblage recovered from the barrow. Radiocarbon dating of charcoal from the fills of the ring ditch and the cremated remains aided in establishing a *terminus post quem* for the periods of activity on the site.

Flint by P. Makey

The single flint flake weighing 1.1g was recovered from the fill of the central cremation pit of the barrow (1721). The flake possesses a hinged termination and has a very slight natural (inherent) surface gloss. The flake has been struck by a hard hammer. Very slight edge damage is present. The flint is medium grained and light olive grey in colour. The source for the raw material is most probably the local Devensian, fluvioglacial gravel. A

single flake such as this cannot be dated since similar pieces occur to some extent in all prehistoric assemblages. All that can be said is that the flake is prehistoric.

Pottery by Trevor Cowie

Description

The urn had undergone very considerable deformation in the ground, where it had been flattened into an irregular oval shape, c. 220mm by 140mm at the mouth. Approximately half the pot had 'sprung' outwards, and as a result a number of severe cracks had developed while a number of fragments had become detached and forced into the interior of the pot. However, despite the degree of compression, the pot has remained remarkably intact.



Figure 6 Kerricks Farm Barrow: the bucket urn (1722) with perforations visible just below the rim (scale: 15cm)

The urn is a simple bucket-shaped vessel (Figures 6 and 7). Owing to the degree of distortion of the vessel, it was not possible during conservation to re-align the portions of the vessel which had 'sprung', but the original dimensions can be reconstructed with some confidence. The height has clearly always been uneven, varying from 180mm to 200mm. The rim would have been in the region of 180mm, probably slightly oval rather than circular. The base is almost circular and has a diameter of 140–5mm.

The rim is upright, approximately 10mm thick and more or less flattened, rather than rounded in form. On the exterior, the lip of the rim is rounded off; the mouth has a more abrupt edge on the interior. Around much of its circumference, the rim is slightly thickened where excess clay has been folded over and pressed against the interior with little attempt to bond or work the clay into the surface; in the few areas the clay has been worked in with more care, this feature is less obvious but the general impression is of rather slovenly manufacture.

On the exterior, mostly between 15 and 20mm below the lip, but in one case as little as 10mm, there is a single row of individual perforations spaced between *c.* 25 and 50mm apart at irregular intervals. There appear to have been 16 perforations altogether, but the original number is not absolutely certain. The individual holes are only 4–5mm across and have been made from the exterior prior to firing of the pot. The profile of the vessel shows a shallow broad indentation at this point but this is probably the result of handling of the clay and inward pressure during the process of puncturing the wall.

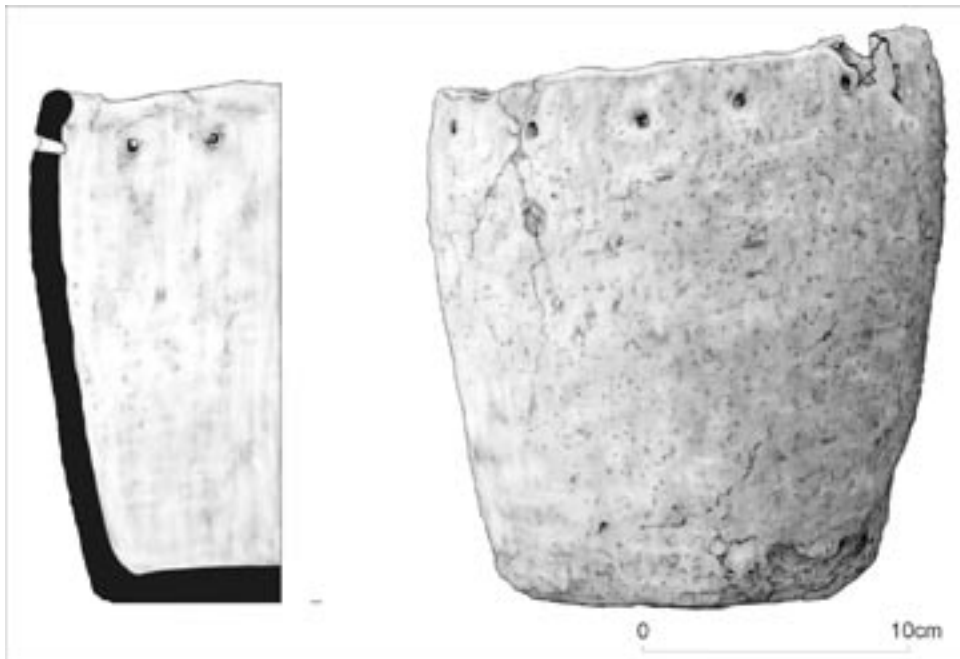


Figure 7 Kerricks Farm Barrow: the bucket urn (1722 AB)

The pot is mostly a relatively uniform earthy brown colour, with a dark grey internal surface. It has a coarse heavily gritted fabric, with stone inclusions up to 6 by 8mm across, and a pimply surface where the grits have been smoothed over. The walls of the pot vary in thickness from 12–14 mm, reducing to c. 10mm towards the rim. The vessel has probably been built up in four sections.

Discussion

The pot immediately invites comparison with simple bucket-shaped urns, the third most common of the Bronze Age cinerary urn types in the area of south-west Scotland surveyed by Morrison (1968, 83–5). However as Alison Sheridan has recently emphasised, the ‘bucket urn’ is the least satisfactory of the Scottish urn types, having been used as a catch-all for coarse undecorated bucket shaped urns of various sizes and profiles whose plainness and simplicity of form possibly mask a diversity of traditions (2003, 208). Certainly, Morrison’s category encompasses diverse pots, varying in size and proportions, and also includes some examples of vessels with decoration. It would therefore be unwise to assume that the term necessarily reflects a coherent Bronze Age ceramic and funerary tradition even at the regional level – although it may be noted that many ‘bucket urns’ do share the characteristic of having been buried upright rather than in the inverted position typical of other types of cinerary urn.

An unusual feature of the Kerricks Farm urn is the horizontal row of perforations a short distance below the rim. Two or possibly three of the vessels from south-west Scotland recorded by Morrison have comparable perforations and one of these pots, from Garrochar near Creetown in Kirkcudbrightshire (1968, no. 81) provides the closest regional parallel for the urn from Kerricks Farm. It is a similarly squat vessel, just over 180mm in height and plain apart from a row of perforations running below the rim. The pot contained the cremated bones of an adult, and stood upright on a stone below which was a layer of hazel charcoal (Reid 1944). The other ‘bucket urn’ recorded by Morrison as having a row of perforations below the rim comes from the urn cemetery discovered at Largs, Ayrshire, but it is a considerably taller vessel. It was found in a cist with six other ‘bucket urns’ of varying shapes and sizes (Munro 1910; Morrison 1968, no. 5). The purpose of the perforations on these vessels is uncertain, but attachment of an organic cover is a possibility – a suggestion that is perhaps reinforced by the evidence for the use of capstones, lids or clay plugs with urns (eg see Mann 1906 for the use of clay plugs at Ardeer; Allen *et al.* 1987, 211 for examples of ‘bucket urns’ with pottery lids). In a follow-up note on the Garrochar vessel, Robert Stevenson (1946) drew attention to two pots with similar perforations from sites in Wales, namely a barrow at Llanarth, Cardiganshire (Savory 1980, 153 no. 162 & fig 72) and the cave known as Culver Hole at Llangennith, Gower, Glamorganshire (*ibid.*, 160, no. 506 & fig 12). Writing in the 1940s, Stevenson trailed the possibility of connections between coastal communities but examples of simple plain or bucket shaped pots with a row of perforations below the rim are now recognised as being a feature of assemblages widespread both in space and time (Burgess 1980, 141) and it would be unwise to draw far-reaching conclusions when dealing with what may be simply a functional trait.

The number of radiocarbon-dated urn burials from Scotland is steadily increasing as a result of the National Museums of Scotland *Dating Cremated Bones Project* (Sheridan 2002, 2003 and forthcoming). In this context, the radiocarbon date for the urn burial at Kerricks provides a useful addition to the relatively small number of dates associated with 'bucket urns'. Allowing for the caveat that we are dealing with a catch-all category, pottery that has been grouped under the umbrella term 'bucket urn' would appear to have been in use as early as the first half of the 2nd millennium in some parts of Scotland and as late as c. 800 BC elsewhere in Scotland (Sheridan 2003, 211). At least in south-west Scotland, a combination of radiocarbon dating and typology suggest that the bucket form may have developed from simple cordoned urns (*ibid*, 209).

Only the most relevant dated finds from south-west Scotland need be mentioned here (for discussion in the wider context of Scottish Bronze Age cinerary urns the reader is referred to Sheridan 2003). Following Sheridan, the dates have been cited together with their calibrated ranges at both 1σ and 2σ values. They include an urn from Knockdoon, in Torrs Warren, Luce Sands with an associated date (GrA-24848) of 3300 ± 35 BP, with highest probability values of 1620–1520 BC at 1σ , 1690–1490 BC at 2σ (Sheridan, forthcoming). Cremated bone from a 'bucket urn' of tall narrow form from Luce Sands, Wigtownshire (Davidson 1952, urn no. 2; Sheridan 2003, 209, 221) produced a date placing it around the middle of the second millennium BC (GrA-18304: 3210 ± 60 BP, 1530–1400 BC at 1σ , 1630–1310 BC at 2σ). As Sheridan has noted, this vessel can be compared in turn to 'bucket urns' from cemeteries such as Largs and Ardeer in Ayrshire (*ibid*, 209). The date of the Kerricks Farm urn, obtained from cremated bone (AA-54309 (GU-10797), 3020 ± 75 BP) is somewhat later at 1390–1120 BC at the 1σ range, 1430–1020 BC at 2σ . The date for the unurned burial at Kerricks Farm (context 1721AB: AA-54308 (GU-10796) 2900 ± 80 BP) is also relevant here, with highest values of 1260–940 BC within the 1σ range and 1400–850 BC at 2σ . Both are in line with the evidence for the continuity of cremation burial, at times inurned, through into the later centuries of the second millennium.

In summary, the form, date and context of the Kerricks urned burial fit well with the currently available evidence from south west Scotland which suggests the emergence by the mid-second millennium of a tradition of cremation burial associated with simple bucket-shaped urns and, thereafter, its persistence for much of the second half of the second millennium BC.

Stone by Sarah Wilkinson

A complete rectangular, slightly tapering hone of brownish grey fine-grained micaceous sandstone was recovered from the fill of the re-cut ring ditch (1712). The hone measures 87mm by 22mm (maximum). All four faces exhibit degrees of polishing and wear from use. The hone is not diagnostic but its recovery from the fill of a Bronze Age barrow can be seen as broadly indicative of its period of origin.

Cremated Remains by Jacqueline McKinley

Introduction

Cremated bone from three Middle to Late Bronze Age contexts associated with a ring ditch was subject to analysis. Two contexts (1709 and 1721) represented the fills of a pit (1720) positioned centrally within the confines of the ring ditch. The bone from the third context, the remains of an urned burial (1722) made in a grave cut (1724) adjacent to 1720, was received *in situ* within the vessel and excavated by the writer.

Methods

The remains of the urned burial (1722) were excavated in a series of seven quadranted spits of 20mm depth, commencing 40–60mm below the level of the surviving rim at which point bone and disturbed pot sherds were encountered. The sub-contexts created by the quadranted spits were maintained throughout analysis to allow the distribution of skeletal elements within the burial to be distinguished.

Osteological analysis followed the writer's standard procedure for the examination of cremated bone (McKinley 1994a, 5–21; 2000a). The minimum number of individuals within each context was calculated from the most commonly occurring skeletal element, and the assessed age and sex of individuals. Age was assessed from the stage of skeletal and tooth development (Beek 1983; McMinn and Hutchings 1985), and the general degree of age-related changes to the bone (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994). Sex was ascertained from the sexually dimorphic traits of the skeleton (*ibid.*).

Results

A summary of the results is presented in Table 1. Full details of identifications are held in the archive.

Context	Cut	Deposit Type	Weight	Age/Sex	Pathology	Pyre Goods
1709	1720	disturbed fill of 1721	130.2g	1) adult c. 30–45yr. ?2) infant skull		immature animal
1721	1720	fill of cremation pit	440.8g	1) adult ?female c. 30–50 yr. ?2) infant skull	exostoses – greater trochanter; mv – wormian bone	immature animal
1722	1724	urned burial	603.3g	1) adult ??female c. 30–40 yr. 2) juvenile c. 6-8 yr.		

Table 1: Summary of cremated bone analysis results

KEY mv – morphological variation

Condition and Disturbance

The large central cut 1720 survived to a depth of 0.30m, the upper 0.05m of which (1709) was disturbed by ploughing, the remaining 0.25m (1721) being intact. Almost 30% of the bone from the feature was recovered from the upper 0.05m and it is possible that some bone may have been lost due to the disturbance. The urned burial 1722 was largely intact, though the vessel had been pushed-in on two sides and a few rim sherds had dropped inside; since the sherds rested directly on top of bone, the damage must have occurred before much soil had infiltrated the vessel. The urn had not been used to full capacity and no bone is likely to have been lost, but the disturbance may have had some affect on the size of the surviving bone fragments. The bone all appears in good condition and trabecular bone is well represented.

Demographic Data

The remains of four individuals were identified from amongst the cremated bone (Table 1) including two adults, both probably female, one juvenile and a young infant. Both individuals within the urned burial were well represented, though as a whole the burial contained more adult than juvenile bone. The infant remains in deposit 1709/1721 were represented by only a few small fragments of skull vault.

Pathology

There was little evidence for pathological lesions, with minor changes being observed in the adult remains from 1721. Exostoses are bony growths that may develop at tendon and ligament insertions on the bone. It is not always possible to be conclusive with respect to the aetiology of particular lesions that may include age-related wear-and-tear, traumatic stress, or specific disorders (Rogers *et al.* 1987). Wormian bones are classed as morphological variations or a non-metric trait possibly of genetic origin though parturition trauma has also been postulated as a possible cause.

Pyre Technology and Cremation Ritual

The bone was predominantly white in colour, indicative of full oxidation (Holden *et al.* 1995a and b). One or two fragments from both deposits were slightly blue (endocranial vault) or grey (trabecular bone), but the variations were so minor no specific problems in pyre technology are suggested (McKinley 1994a, 72–81; 2000a).

The weight of bone from each deposit is slightly below the average recovered from Bronze Age burials, and substantially below the consistently high range of weights observed in many primary barrow burials (902–2747g, average 1525.7g; McKinley 1997). Context 1722 contains the remains of two individuals but the total weight represents a maximum of *c.* 60% of that expected from an adult (McKinley 1993).

The maximum recorded bone fragment was 68mm from burial 1722, with a similar maximum of 62mm from deposit 1709/1721. The majority of bone fragments from 1722

was recovered from the 10mm sieve fraction (*c.* 68%), with lower proportions of 41% and 52% from the less well protected (*i.e.* unurned) deposit 1709/1721. There are a number of factors that may affect the size of cremated bone fragments, the majority of which are exclusive of any deliberate human action other than that of cremation itself (McKinley 1994b). There is no evidence to suggest deliberate fragmentation of bone prior to burial.

The deposits included some identifiable elements from all areas of the skeleton and there is no indication of selection of specific elements for burial. Tooth roots, phalanges and other small bones are poorly represented amongst the remains from 1709/1721, with slightly more but still relatively few from burial 1722. This may be reflective of the mode of recovery of the bone from the pyre site for burial, with hand collection of individual fragments from the pyre resulting in a bias towards mostly larger fragments.

Pyre goods, in the form of small quantities (*c.* 0.7g) of cremated immature animal bone, were recovered from 1709/1721 (Table 1). A survey of Bronze Age burials has shown that *c.* 16% contain small quantities of animal bone (McKinley 1997). Blue/green staining was noted to several bones – the visceral surface of an adult rib shaft and a fragment of immature humerus shaft from burial 1722 – which may be indicative of the close proximity of copper alloy to the bone during cremation.

Almost 80% of the bone from burial 1722 lay in the lower 80mm of the urn, which survived to 140mm in height. The disposition of the bone within the burial suggests that the vessel was tipped-over to one side as the bone was inserted, concentrating the bone in one half of the vessel, particularly in the upper levels. Bone from both the adult and the juvenile were found distributed and mixed throughout the deposit, which suggests that they were not only buried but also cremated together. Skeletal elements from both individuals are similarly distributed throughout the vessel fill indicating no particular order of deposition. Joints between various fragments of skull were observed between bones from spits 6 and 7.

On average, *c.* 5% of Bronze Age cremation burials contain the remains of two individuals, predominantly an adult with an immature individual (dual cremation and burial; McKinley 1997). Higher frequencies of dual burials have been recorded from individual cemeteries such as the 14% from Simon's Ground, Dorset (Hazzeldine 1982). The burial – and probable cremation – of two individuals together suggests a close link between them, reflecting either a family relationship or one of close friends/comrades (McKinley 2000b, 116–117).

The nature of the deposit in the central feature 1720 is open to debate. The total 571g of bone from this relatively substantial feature (1.10 × 0.90m, 0.30m deep) was dispersed throughout the fill, which included occasional fragments of fine fraction fuel ash. Formal 'burial' generally takes one of several forms; a contained deposit either in a ceramic vessel, or an organic one the physical remains of which are lost but leave the bone in a concentration; or a spread of material across the base of a grave cut. The act of 'burial' is separate from the backfilling of the grave, which represents a subsequent act. The apparent formation process of deposit 1709/1722 does not correspond with a formal burial. The presence of some fuel ash may indicate that it represents not a burial but a formal deposit of pyre debris (McKinley 1997, 137–9); such a deposit may include substantial quanti-

ties of cremated bone. It was observed above, however, that in analysis 30% of the bone was found to have been in the upper 0.05m of the fill which is a higher percentage that would be expected in a homogenous mix, and perhaps the bone was not as dispersed as it first appeared. It is also possible that the concentration of bone representing the remains of the burial in this feature central to the ring ditch was actually removed by ploughing; as observed above, the quantity of bone recovered is well below the average for many similarly placed burials.

Biological Remains by John Carrott

Nine bulk sediment samples recovered from the excavations of the barrow at Kerricks Farm were submitted for an assessment of their bioarchaeological potential. Six of the samples were associated with the Bronze Age barrow and three of these with cremations from within the barrow's centre.

Burnt bone fragments recovered during processing were returned to the excavator to be forwarded to the human bone specialist.

No ancient invertebrate remains were recovered from the samples and ancient plant remains were restricted to small quantities of charcoal of no interpretative value.

Radiocarbon Dating

Four samples were submitted for radiocarbon analysis to the Scottish Universities Research and Reactor Centre (SURRC) via the Arizona University AMS Facility. Two of these samples were charcoal recovered from the fills of a ring ditch, the other two cremated bone recovered from an urn and a pit within the area enclosed by the ring ditch. Both sets of sample types were analysed by Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS), the analysis of the cremated bone using a relatively new technique, which measures the carbonate fraction in recrystallized bone mineral (bio-apatite). The results can be seen in Table 2.

Lab No.	Context	Material	Age BP	Cal date (1 σ)	Cal date (2 σ)
AA-54308 (GU-10796)	1721 AB (pit)	Cremated bone	2900 \pm 80	1260 (2.4%) 1240 BC 1220 (64.2%) 970 BC 960 (1.5%) 940 BC	1400 (95.4%) 850 BC
AA-54309 (GU-10797)	1722 AB (urn)	Cremated bone	3020 \pm 75	1390 (68.2%) 1120 BC	1430 (95.4%) 1020 BC
AA-54310 (GU-10798)	1715 AB (Primary fill of ring gully)	Charcoal	3635 \pm 40	2120 (5.4%) 2100 BC 2040 (62.8%) 1920 BC	2140 (95.4%) 1880 BC
AA-54311 (GU-10799)	1712 AD (fill of re-cut ring gully)	Charcoal	2100 \pm 40	170 (68.2%) 50 BC	350 (3.1%) 320 BC 210 BC (92.3%) 10 AD

Table 2: Summary of the radiocarbon dates

Discussion and Conclusion

The ring ditch and cremations form the partial remains of an earthen round barrow, which was first observed as a circular cropmark from aerial photographs (CFA 2001). These funerary monuments are seen as typical of the Bronze Age, largely confined to lowland areas in the eastern portion of Dumfries and Galloway (Gregory 2002) such as at West Logan in Kirkcudbrightshire (Page 1989) and Burnhill, Annandale (RCAHMS 1997). Though not unique in the region, the excavation of the cremations, urn and the ring ditch have revealed an interesting range of data.

Excavation of the ring ditch revealed two phases of activity. The first phase comprised the initial construction of the barrow, the dated charcoal recovered from its primary fill indicating an early second millennium date (2140–1880 cal. BC) for its initial period of use. The infilling of this ditch from the outside suggests that the fill may have originated from a raised earthen bank running around the circumference of the ditch. The second phase is represented by the re-cut around the inside of the ring ditch. This indicates a period where the barrow is re-emphasised as a monument in the landscape after a period of relative abandonment. The nature of the fill of the re-cut ring ditch (i.e. the relatively large quantity of river cobbles) and that it appears to have tipped in from the centre of the barrow, indicates that the earthen mound originally comprised a quantity of silty gravel and large river cobbles, most likely imported from the nearby River Nith. The radiocarbon date acquired from charcoal recovered from this fill (210 cal. BC–10 AD) reflects a date subsequent to which the barrow was probably abandoned as a monument.

The cremations were of two types, urned and un-urned, and both comprised two individuals (an adult in both cases with either a child or a juvenile). The dual burials suggest family or close social bonds between the two individuals in each cremation and possibly both sets of cremations with each other as they lay within the same monument. Though not untypical (Balloch Hill, Argyll & Bute: Peltenburg 1982), dual cremations only form *c.* 5% to 14% of currently studied Bronze Age cremations in Britain. The presence of cremated animal remains recorded in the cremation pit is also relatively unusual, only being recorded in 16% of Bronze Age cremations (McKinley 1997). These percentages may also reflect the bias inherent in the archaeological record as only relatively recently recovered Bronze Age cremations have been subjected to such detailed analysis.

Reviewing the dates obtained from the cremated bone and comparing it to that of the charcoal from the two phases of ring ditch provides a date range for the construction and abandonment of the barrow. The early 2nd millennium BC date obtained from charcoal in the primary fill of the ring ditch may be a result of the 'old wood' effect or charcoal redeposited from an earlier feature. The real age of the barrows construction is more likely dated closer to that of the cremation burials. The two sets of cremations have a date range that overlaps indicating that they could either be contemporary or may represent two phases of burial (the scattered cremation in the central pit being the later of the two) with somewhere between a two and eight generation gap (a period of some 160 years). The mid-2nd century BC date (Iron Age) acquired from the fill of the re-cut ring ditch represents the period after which the barrow was no longer maintained but also indicates that prior to this date the barrow had been re-emphasised as a monument in the landscape.

It may have received further cremations or inhumations cut into the mound, which have since been dispersed when the barrow mound was eventually destroyed, which most likely occurred through farming activity. The radiocarbon dating of the cremated bone not only presents us with a Middle to Late Bronze Age date in which to place the burials, but also allows the dating of the 'bucket urn', of which few have been accurately dated especially in relation to earthen round barrows (Sheridan forthcoming).

The 'bucket urn' comes from a wide stylistic grouping, the name being used as a generic term for coarse, undecorated bucket-shaped urns of various sizes and profiles. However two close typological parallels can be drawn, one with a similar sized vessel with perforations below the rim from Garrochar, near Creetown and one of six 'bucket urns' recovered from a site at Largs in Ayrshire, which also had a row of perforations just below its rim (Morrison 1968). Other factors relating to the urn match those of other 'bucket urn' burials, the urn was placed upright (instead of inverted as seen in many of the Collared Urn burials) and fits into the broad time frame in which 'bucket urns' would appear to have been used (between the 19th and 8th century BC)

The radiocarbon dates acquired from the excavation supplements what few dates exist for round earthen barrows in the region, a barrow at Wylie's Wood being the only other barrow that appears to have produced any dateable artefacts which indicate an Early Bronze Age date (Morrison 1968). They also add to the corpus of data on cremated bone in Scotland, which is being assembled as part of the National Museums of Scotland (NMS) *Dating Cremated Remains Project* (Sheridan 2003).

Within the wider landscape, the barrow is probably associated with a series of linear cropmarks observed some 70m west of the barrow. The nature of these cropmarks is unclear though they may represent enclosure ditches, indicating the proximity of a settlement. The presence of numerous stone cairns within a 0.5km radius of the barrow along the marginal upland areas as well as further, possibly prehistoric, cropmarks enhances our view of the wider prehistoric landscape in which the barrow stood. It appears that a Bronze Age burial tradition was being practiced no later than the latter half of the 2nd century BC, with related settlement probably spread along the marginal zone of the floodplain and uplands, perfectly placed for exploiting the resources each environment provided. The multiple burials indicate the barrow was probably the product of a single family or community, which occupied this area for several generations, the two phases of barrow ditch reflecting the longevity of the community and the emphasis on their place within the landscape.

Archive

The artefacts from the site have been deposited at the Dumfries Museum, The Observatory, Rotchell Road, Dumfries, as per the recommendations of the Advisory Panel on Treasure Trove and the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer. The site archive has been deposited at the National Monuments Record of Scotland in Edinburgh (Accession No. 2005/2). Copies of the excavation reports have been lodged with the Dumfries and Galloway Regional Council Sites and Monuments Record.

Acknowledgements

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BRITTONIC PLACE-NAMES from SOUTH-WEST SCOTLAND

Part 6: Cummertrees, Beltrees, Trevercarcou
by Andrew Breeze, University of Navarre, Pamplona

Cummertrees near Annan and Beltrees near Paisley have names of debated origin. Yet both seem linked to swift streams called Tres, with namesakes in Cornwall, Hampshire, and elsewhere in Scotland. The obscure name of Trevercarcou (Earlstoun, near New Galloway) seems likewise to mean 'homestead of the torrents'.

This note on *Cummertrees*, *Beltrees*, and *Trevercarcou* follows an e-mail query from Professor Coates of the University of Sussex, after a discussion by members of the Scottish Place-Names Society. If it advances knowledge, it will be thanks to these people, as it would not have been written otherwise. Their initiative deserves full praise and encouragement, as a rapid and effective means of breaking new ground on Dumfries and Galloway toponyms and history.

The hamlet of Cummertrees (NY 1466), three miles west of Annan, is recorded between about 1204 and 1207 as *Cumbertres* (Barrow 1971, 418). The first element has (rightly) been understood as 'confluence, watersmeet', being the Cumbric equivalent of Welsh *cymr*, as at Cymr Abbey near Dolgellau in Gwynedd, or Cymmer near Pontypridd in Glamorgan (with another Cymmer farther west, near Maesteg). The Breton cognate appears with the city of Quimper, in south-west Brittany (*Geiriadur* 1950-2002, 759). These Brittonic forms have a Gaelic equivalent in *comar*, as at Cumbernauld 'confluence of streams' near Glasgow (Nicolaisen 1970, 80).

It is the second element *-tres* that has been problematic. Yet it is surely Cumbric **tres*, cognate with Welsh *tres* 'battle, raid, attack; uproar, tumult, commotion, agitation' (well attested in early Welsh poetry) and perhaps also Middle Irish *tress* 'battle' (*Geiriadur* 1950-2002, 3587). This apparently explains the name of the river Test in Hampshire (Coates and Breeze 2000, 77-8). A cognate may also survive in Breton *tresmae* 'confusion, disorder' and *tresmaei* 'to confuse, muddle' (Favereau 1993, 753). Although Cummertrees is on a coastal plain, so that the streams by it are not normally swift, they drain a surprisingly large area and might be formidable when in spate. So it seems reasonable to take the name as a Cumbric one meaning 'confluence of turbulent water'.

Cummertrees also helps with Beltrees (NS 3758), a valley-side hamlet facing Lochwinnoch, seven miles west-south-west of Paisley. This seems a Gaelic-Cumbric hybrid. The first part can be taken as Gaelic *baile* 'homestead', reduced to *Bel* in unstressed position in English (not Gaelic), as at Belhelvie 'Sealbhach's stead', Aberdeenshire, or Belmaduthy 'MacDuff's stead' in Ross (Watson 1926, 137). The second part would be Cumbric *tres* and refer to the short stream dropping from Beltrees to the valley floor. So the sense would be 'torrent homestead'.

As such Cummertrees and Beltrees have equivalents in the rest of Scotland. Near Pitlochry is *Treasaid* or Tressait (NN 8160), where a burn drops steeply to Loch Tummel; east of Peebles is Glentress (NT 2839), with another burn rushing down to the Tweed; in Sutherland, north of Dornoch, is *Treasaididh* or Tressady (NC 6904), where a moorland

stream joins the river Fleet (Watson 1926, 444). The first and last of these are Gaelic, but Glentress is Cumbric. They may have an Irish parallel. Although *Treschoill* (south of Cork) could mean ‘battle wood’, where a battle was fought, its first element could be a hydronym meaning ‘torrent’ (Hogan 1910, 645).

There are Cornish parallels as well. Trelights (SW 9979) is a hilltop village between Padstow and Tintagel, about a mile from the sea. It is recorded as *Trefflectos* in 1302 and *Treleghtres* in 1425, and has a namesake in Trelash (SX 1890), a hamlet between Tintagel and Launceston, attested in 1355 as *Trefleghtres*. The first element of both is *tre* ‘farm’, the second *legh* ‘flat stone, slab’. The problem is the third. Dr Padel takes it as perhaps *rys* ‘ford’, though pointing out this does not explain the *t* of early forms, or make much topographical sense, since both places are at the sources of rivers (Padel 1988, 167). Making neither phonological nor geographical sense, Dr Padel’s explanation may be discarded. *Tres* will be the old name of the streams that Trelights and Trelash are at the head of. Both streams fall two hundred feet within a mile, so ‘tumult, agitation’ describes them well. Trelights and Trelash will both mean ‘farm by a slab of a tumultuous stream’. They were homesteads near the flat rock where these streams emerged above ground.

After Cummertrees and Beltrees, the obsolete Galloway name *Trevercarcou*. This was once hesitantly identified as Carco (NS 7813), north of Sanquhar (Watson 1926, 359). But Professor Barrow thinks it was Earlstoun (NX 6184), four miles north of New Galloway (Brooke 1984, 41-54). Philology suggests he is right, as we shall see. The first and second elements are the Cumbric cognates of Welsh *tref* ‘farm, homestead’ and *yr* ‘(of) the’. The problem is whether the last corresponds to a plural of Welsh *carreg* ‘rock’ or *carrog* ‘torrent’. The question can hardly be answered on linguistic grounds, as these words are so closely linked that the second has been derived from the first, perhaps because mountain streams are filled with rocks (Vendryes 1987, 42-3); though Welsh scholars offer another etymology noted below. Better, then, to look for *carrog* on the map. Here we find an Afon Carrog (SH 4657) near Caernaerfon; another (SN 5772) south of Aberystwyth; and a third amongst rugged hills east of Machynlleth (SN 8097). There is also a village of Carrog (SJ 1143) where a stream enters the river Dee six miles west of Llangollen. These places in Wales help us with Galloway. It is unlikely that *Trevercarcou* means ‘homestead of the rocks’, since there are no crags at Earlstoun. ‘Homestead of the torrents’ makes far better sense, since Earlstoun is by the confluence of Water of Ken and Polharrow Burn, both powerful streams.

As regards linguistics, the following may be said. *Trevercarcou* provides unique evidence on the plural of *carrog*. The word derives from a British feminine *a*-stem **karraka*, derived by Welsh scholars from an Indo-European root **kers-* ‘flow, run’ also seen in Latin *curro* ‘I run’ and, ultimately, English *car*. As an *a*-stem noun, **karraka* would have had a plural in *-as* (like the Latin accusative plural *mensas* ‘tables’). But *-arcou* ‘torrents’ shows a new plural ending *-ou* (equivalent to Modern Welsh *-au*) borrowed from *u*-stem nouns. In this it resembles many Welsh nouns, such as *mamau* ‘mothers’ (Morris-Jones 1913, 198-9). It also shows syncopation, with original **Trevercarrocou* (hard to say, especially for non-Cumbrians) giving *Trevercarcou*.

As regards meaning, *Trevercarcou* ‘homestead of the torrents’ would be almost syn-

onymous with Tranent (earlier *Treuernent*) ‘homestead of the streams’ in East Lothian (Nicolaisen, Gelling, Richards 1970, 181). In form it resembles other Cumbric place-names. Trailflat (NY 0485), seven miles northeast of Dumfries, is attested in early records as *Traverflet*, apparently meaning ‘homestead of the mire’, which makes sense, as it is by the Water of Ae’s flood-plain (Breeze 2000, 56-7). *Treuerlene*, mentioned in a document of David I, was long a puzzle, but was explained in 1959 as ‘homestead of the lake’ (cf. Welsh *llyn* ‘lake’) and identified as Duddingston, below Arthur’s Seat and above the shallow placid waters of Duddingston Loch (Barrow 1980, 40).

If the above explanations of *Cummertrees*, *Beltrees*, and *Trevercarcou* are valid, they have three implications. They bring us a little closer to the men and women of ancient Strathclyde, who until about the year 1100 spoke Cumbric, a language closely resembling Welsh (Jackson 1955, 77-88). The last explanation also confirms Barrow’s identification of *Trevercarcou* with Earlstoun (made without knowledge of Welsh *carrog* ‘torrent’), showing the value of place-name study in locating the sites of ancient churches, courts, tombs, battlefields, and even buried royal treasure (as on the banks of the river Went near Doncaster, where the pagan king Penda lost the battle of the *Uinued* on 15 November 655, together with the immense booty he had extorted from the Northumbrians at Stirling). Finally, the casual electronic means which have resulted in this paper implies many more Celtic toponyms await proper explanation if philologists, archaeologists, and historians can work together; particularly for Dumfries and Galloway.

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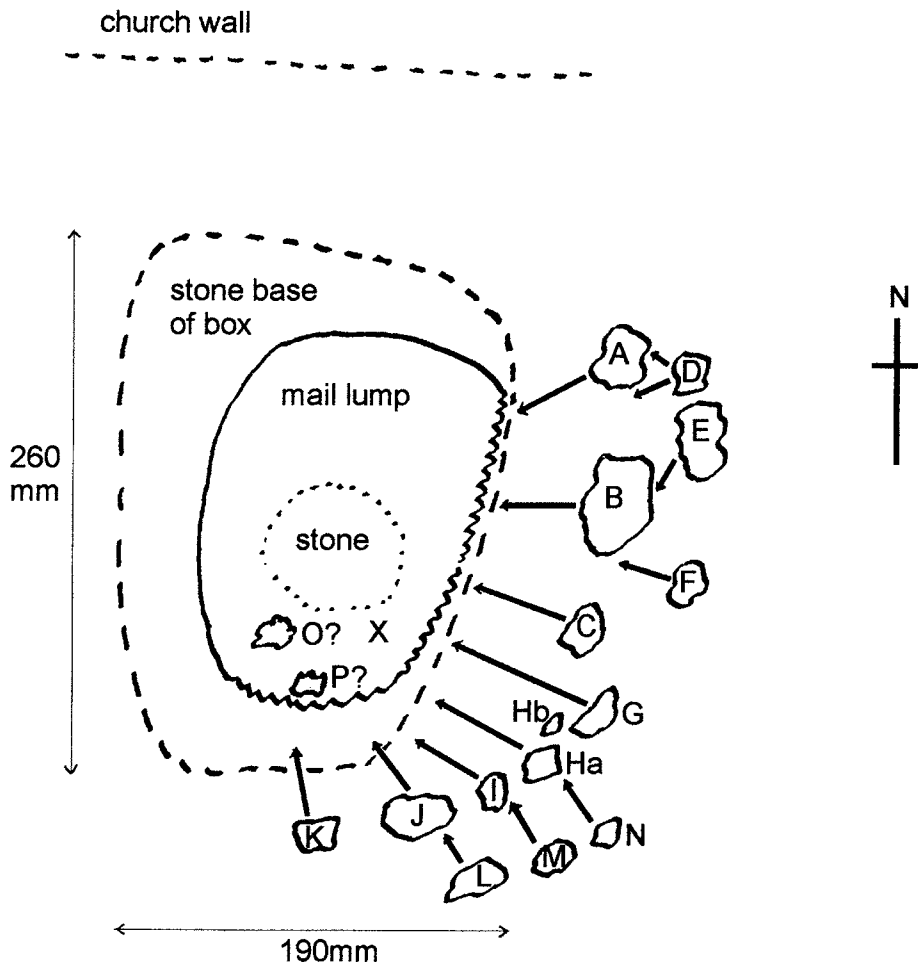
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A MAIL GARMENT FROM THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH AT BARHOBBLE
by David H Caldwell, W F Cormack & Thea Gabra-Sanders

In 1988 the first named of the authors took delivery of some unpromising lumps of earth and rust from the late Bill Cormack who had recovered them in his excavations at Barhobble, published in volume LXX of these *Transactions*. Bill had correctly identified this material as a significant find of medieval armour. He was concerned that his discovery should be properly treated and analysed, and any Treasure Trove implications fully dealt with. My modest contribution to Bill's endeavours consists of little more than telling him about the mail from Wyre and arranging for Thea Gabra-Sanders, a distinguished expert on archaeological textiles, to work on the Barhobble material. With characteristic energy and enthusiasm Bill did the rest, fortunately documenting his efforts in a series of letters and



Figure 1 Mail *in situ*



X = approximate position of textile impressions 1-7

Figure 2 Sketch showing disintegration of mail lump.

happy meetings over lunch in Edinburgh. This report is put together using Bill's material and an unpublished report by Thea Gabra-Sanders. Regrettably, Thea is not in a position to revise or edit her contribution.

An account of the discovery of the mail is given in Thea Gabra-Sanders' published report (Cormack 1995, 96) on the textile impressions associated with it (of which more below). When originally found it consisted of a heavily oxidised lump, about 178mm in diameter with a maximum thickness of 38mm, partly concreted on to a stone that formed the base of a rough V-shaped stone setting or box in the floor near the NW corner of the church (Figure 1). This stone has been retained with the mail, and measures 190mm by 260mm. Drying, both before discovery and after being removed, resulted in the lump fragmenting into about twenty pieces. The stone-setting with the mail *in situ* is represented on the plan of the church in the main excavation report and the excavator provides the further information that the mail 'had been covered with clay, but it was not clear whether this clay was the original floor or washed-out clay from the standing wall or the tumble.' (Cormack 1995, 18, and fig 7). Bill's caution was evidently due to his appreciation that the clay floor had been much disturbed by the digging of graves. Not unreasonably, however, he took the view that the mail was deposited in his period 3, either in phase 1 (c1125-c1185) when the building functioned as a church, or in phase 2 (13th century) when it had been reduced in size and refurbished as a chapel (Cormack 1995, 52).

Description of the mail

Figure 2 is a sketch, based on one drawn by Bill Cormack, showing how the mail lump has disintegrated. Each piece mentioned in this report is identified. Pieces L, M, N, O and P have been washed. L, M and N may join each other and came from the underside of G to J. Some miscellaneous fragments, either unlocated or found in wet sieving of soil have been designated as Q. The measurements are in millimetres, with the thickness listed last. The identifications of textile impressions, wood, grass and basket depends on the work of Thea Gabra-Sanders, using a scanning electron microscope.

- A: contains a band of copper links. 37 x 49 x 8. Fig. 3.
- B: a large clump of iron mail with grass (?) or basket (?), 43 x 36 x 44. It appears to consist of a rolled up layer of mail.
- B1: piece of iron mail with group of copper rivets, 30 x 24 x 20.
- C: piece of iron mail with copper links along one edge, 40 x 28 x 10.
- D: piece of iron mail with group of at least six interlinked copper links, 38 x 33 x 20.
- E: piece containing two layers of iron mail and textile (?), 47 x 60 x 31.
- F: piece containing one layer of mail with thickened or turned-over straight edge, 46 x 32 x 8.
- G: piece of iron mail with textiles (?), 32 x 39 x 20.
- Ha: piece of iron mail, 27 x 27 x 8.
- Hb: piece of iron mail, 25 x 13 x 8.
- I: piece of iron mail, 22 x 28 x 8.

- J: piece of iron mail, including some copper links and wood (?), 54 x 62 x 29.
 K: piece of iron mail with some fragments of wood (?), 25 x 32 x 8.
 L: piece of iron mail with copper links along one edge, and both sides covered with wood (?), 51 x 42 x 8.
 M: a clump of compressed iron mail with a piece of textile, 5mm by 8mm – tabby weave: system 1, spun yarn (?), about 15 threads/cm; system 2, spun yarn (?) about 15 threads/cm. The back is covered with basket or wood. 38 x 33 x 8.
 N: piece of iron mail with at least one copper link on one edge, and covered with basket or wood on one side. 22 x 20 x 8.
 O: piece of iron mail with two pieces of textile: A: 5mm by 5mm – tabby weave: systems 1 and 2, Z-spun yarn, 14 threads/cm. B: textile – tabby weave: system 1, Z spun yarn, 13 threads/cm; system 2, Z-spun yarn, 10 threads/cm. Overall size, 22 x 25 x 11.
 P: piece of iron mail, 17 x 17 x 8.
 Q: various detached links and a very small fragment with a trace of textile.

Textile impressions were also observed in concretion on the stone base of the box that contained the mail:

1. textile – tabby weave: system 1, Z-spun yarn, 16 threads/cm; system 2, ?-spun yarn, 15 threads/cm.
2. textile – tabby weave: system 1, ?-spun yarn, 15 threads/cm; system 2, ?-spun yarn, ? threads/cm.
3. textile – tabby weave: system 1, Z-spun yarn, 16 threads/cm; system 2, Z-spun yarn, 15 threads/cm.
4. textile – tabby weave: very faint impression.
5. textile – the odd fibre present, very faint impression.
6. textile – tabby weave: system 1, ?-spun yarn, 15 threads/cm; system 2, ?-spun yarn, 15 threads/cm.
7. fragment with a link, textile (?) underneath.

The iron mail was so poorly preserved that almost all the metal had corroded away, leaving only rust concretion with a semblance of links. In some pieces this was only really clear in x-rays. It is therefore impossible to comment on how the links are arranged or even whether, as should be expected with medieval European mail, they are riveted closed. They must have been about 8mm in diameter. Some copper links incorporated with the iron ones had retained their form and they were clearly riveted shut and 8mm in size.

A detached copper alloy link was submitted to Paul Wilthew of the Conservation and Analytical Science Department of the National Museums of Scotland for XRF analysis. It was shown to be rich in copper with fairly high levels of lead and tin and some zinc and traces of silver and antimony. This indicates that it is not a straightforward bronze or brass but a mixed alloy – what might be called nowadays ‘gunmetal’. Wilthew also examined some broken links from piece L. They are of a non-ferrous metal that had a white appearance. These were shown to be rich in tin and lead with minor amounts of copper and zinc and traces of silver and antimony. Wilthew concluded that they are heavily corroded

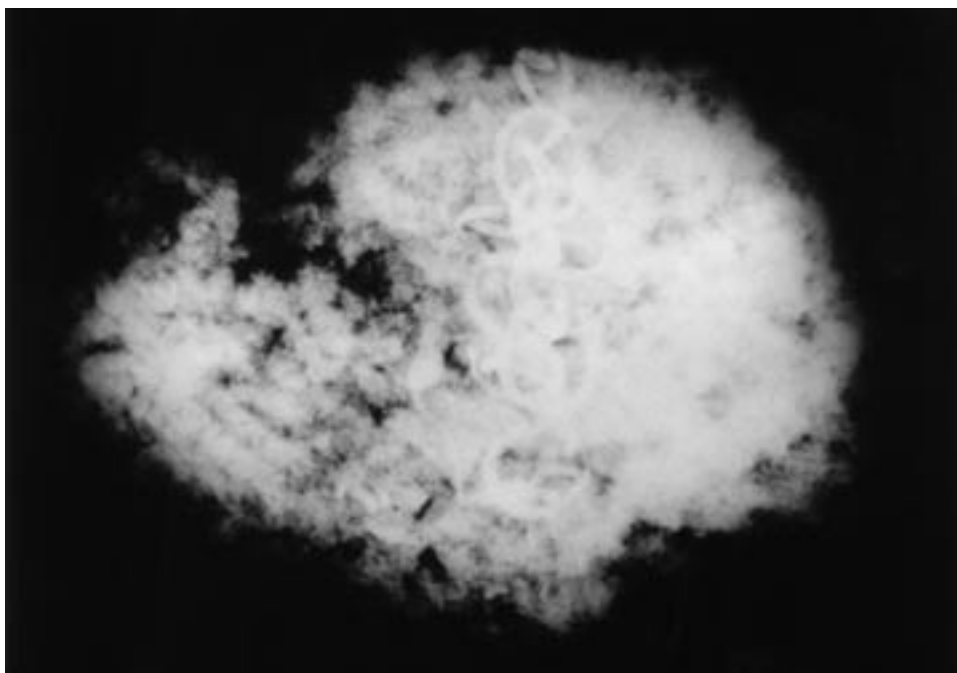


Figure 3 X-ray photograph of mail.

copper alloy, probably a copper-zinc-tin-lead alloy. He believed that it would be unlikely that the lead content would have been very high as such an alloy would have had poor mechanical properties. The actual process by which this copper alloy has corroded to leave a very tin and lead rich surface is not clear.

It is difficult to tell whether this mail from Barhobble represents a complete garment, and if so, what type of garment. The traces of textile detected by Thea Gabra-Sanders probably represent a lining in the mail. The fragments of wood may be the remains of a wooden container, perhaps, on the basis of other observations by Thea Gabra-Sanders, packed with dried grass to stop the mail from moving around. As deposited, the form taken by much of the mail was of a single layer lying flat on the base of its container. The copper alloy rings probably all represent a decorative fringe. This does not add up to an easily identifiable garment. If complete, size might suggest a gauntlet or a coif (a close-fitting hood). The former would, however, seem ruled out by the presence of so many copper alloy links and by the fact so much of it seems to consist of a single layer of mail.

Few other bits of mail from Scotland survive, and those mostly the merest fragments or single links, often in no better condition than the Barhobble piece. On realising that a find of mail from the Island of Wyre in Orkney was the only other substantial find worth comparing with his own discovery, Bill Cormack devoted much effort to elucidating its history. The piece itself is in better condition than the Barhobble find, but still so badly corroded that there is no hope of ever teasing an actual garment from the lumps of corro-

sion, most of which are now in the National Museums of Scotland, with a lesser piece in Tankerness House Museum in Kirkwall. The pieces altogether might form a mass of about 0.3m by 0.3m. It has to be stressed that this is only a very approximate indication since the pieces have not been brought together in recent memory. It appears, however, that the Wyre mail represents a more substantial garment than that from Barhobble. Conservation work on the pieces in Edinburgh led to the extraction of ten triangular decorative tassels or dags each consisting of ten 'brass' rings. The piece in Kirkwall appears to include fastenings, in particular a buckle.

There was some doubt as to the circumstances of the discovery of the Wyre mail, in particular whether it came from Cubbie Roo's Castle or the nearby chapel. By careful detective work Bill Cormack was able to show that it was actually found below the floor of the chapel during clearance work in 1933. A manuscript account of his findings can be found in the National Monuments Record of Scotland and Tankerness House Museum.

The chapel and castle on Wyre are both thought to date to the mid twelfth century and to be the work of a Norse nobleman, Kolbein Hruga. The chapel continued in use beyond the Reformation and its burial ground has remained in use for burials until the present day. There is thus no useful *terminus ante quem* for the deposit of the mail. Nor can it be shown whether the mail was associated with a burial in the chapel. Medieval warriors, however, were not buried in their armour, except in exceptional circumstances, for instance when the body was in too bad a state to be washed and put in a shroud.

Two findings of mail in medieval churches in parts of the country that were settled by the Norse struck Bill Cormack as possibly more than a coincidence. He therefore sought advice from Scandinavian scholars on discoveries of armour in churches in Scandinavia and elicited a response from Lars Redin of the Statens Historiska Museum in Stockholm that there were two cases on the Island of Gotland. One consists of some fragments of a fifteenth-century gauntlet from below the choir of the church of Anga. The other consists of two links of mail from the church of Hangvar. This clearly does not add up to a pattern or tradition of burial of armour in churches in the Scandinavian world. In the main excavation report (Cormack 1995, 53) it was suggested that the Barhobble mail might be a relic of the Crusades or else a memento of a penance, but there is no supporting evidence to back up the burial of such items in churches.

Reference

Cormack, WF 1995 'Barhobble, Mochrum – Excavation of a Forgotten Church Site in Galloway', *TDGNHAS* 70.

DERVORGUILLA OF GALLOWAY

by Marjorie Drexler¹

The youngest daughter of Alan, last of the lords of Galloway, may be best known for something she probably did not build: the bridge across the River Nith in Dumfries which bears her name, Dervorguilla. It is hardly surprising that the people of Dumfries credited her with giving them their bridge, given all she really did accomplish: she had founded nearby Sweetheart Abbey, supported several churches and at least two friaries; borne at least eight children, one of whom became King of Scots; secured the financial future of a college in Oxford, and won the respect of her contemporaries. Nevertheless, of those who still recognise her name, many still think only of that bridge.

Dervorguilla, or, more properly, Dervorguilla of Galloway, lady of Balliol, had no illusions about the sources of the power she used to accomplish so much. In the seal she used during the last decade of her life, she had herself portrayed, tall and slender, surrounded by four coats of arms: in her right hand, exactly where it should be, was the shield of her husband of thirty-five years, John Balliol; in her left was the lion rampant of her father, Alan of Galloway. Hanging on trees on either side of her were those of the earls of Chester and Huntingdon. Much the same pattern was repeated on the reverse: her own coat of arms, Galloway impaled on Balliol, takes up most of the centre, while tiny representations of Chester and Huntingdon hang above it. On one side she is styled *Dervorgille de Ball[iolo]*, *fili' Alani de Galewad*, and on the other, *Dervorgille de Galewad'*, *Dne de Balliolo*, reminding everyone of the two most important men in her life. The message was clear: this was a woman who was related to important people, and expected to be recognised. She had entered the records anonymously in 1233 as the daughter whom Alan, lord of Galloway, married to John Balliol². Almost half a century later, her tomb at the abbey she had founded would be marked with a Latin verse praising her wisdom and good works³ and notices in later Scottish chronicles would list her accomplishments, a singular, and well deserved, honour for a woman.

It would be easy to dwell on all the information about Dervorguilla which has been lost: there is no knowing exactly when or where she was born, where she was raised, what language she first spoke, how tall she was, what she looked like, or what she really thought of Henry III, the English king who treated her family so well and so badly. On the other hand, the records do allow certain general deductions to be made. She must have been very strong physically as she bore at least eight children, and still survived into her seventies; she was spiritually and mentally strong as well, for, upon being widowed, she maintained active control over most of her own land instead of retiring to a convent or at least settling down to the life of a docile dowager, as her sons might have wished. She had an eye for the main chance, and could, right to the end, be ruthless when protecting her own.

1 1874 Route 74, Cornwall, Vermont 05753, United States of America

2 *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. J. Stevenson (Bannatyne Club, 1835).

3 *Chronicon de Lanercost* [*Lanercost*], ed. J. Stevenson (Maitland Club, 1839) 133.

*In Devorgilla moritur sensata Sibilla
Cum Marthaque pia contemplativa Maria.
Da Devorgillae requie, Rex summe, potiri
Quam tegit iste lapis cor pariterque viri.*

Dervorguilla was a daughter of Alan of Galloway and his second wife, Margaret, eldest daughter of David, Earl of Huntingdon. This marriage connected Alan with the Scottish royal family and many of the primary actors in almost every major event in turbulent thirteenth-century Britain. Alan already had three children; he and Margaret had three more who survived them. Dervorguilla had two elder half-sisters: Helen, daughter of Alan's first wife, Rose de Lacy of Pontefract, and an anonymous girl who had died by June 1212 while being held hostage in England by Robert fitz Roger.⁴ Dervorguilla's full sister, Christina, was older than she. There were also two boys in the family, both named Thomas⁵, one legitimate and one not, named for Alan's brother, the earl of Athol, who returned the favour by naming his illegitimate son Alan. The only one of these five to survive Dervorguilla was her illegitimate brother, still alive in 1296, so he may have been the youngest of them all.

Alan and Margaret had married sometime in 1209. Their first daughter was Christina, who, years later, claimed *aesneicia*, the rights of the eldest heir, when she and her sisters were amongst those fighting for their inheritances after the death of John the Scot, son of David, Earl of Huntingdon⁶. Thomas seems to have been born next, since, decades later, John Balliol's petition presented to Edward I in the Great Cause described the descent of the right to the Scottish crown through Margaret to her son, Thomas, who had died without children, thence to Christina his elder sister (*sorori antenatae*)⁷ before it passed next to Dervorguilla; therefore, she was probably the youngest of Margaret's three. The earliest probable date for her birth is 1212, so she would have been no more than sixteen when her mother died, c. 1228.

Dervorguilla's girlhood was not necessarily spent entirely, or even mostly, in Galloway. It would have been normal for her parents to leave their children behind while they progressed from one of their possessions scattered around England and Scotland to the next; her father also had claims to land in Ireland. With the exception of Ireland, Dervorguilla could have stayed in any of these estates for long periods, or with her grandparents or other relations. Given the importance of the occasion, someone probably brought her to England in June 1219 to attend her grandfather's funeral at Sawtry Abbey, just north of Huntingdon. During these years, she would have been trained to run huge households and the estates that supported them, and, perhaps, learned Latin, as there is evidence she may have understood that language.⁸

1233 marks Dervorguilla's marriage and her entry into the records. Both of Dervorguilla's sisters married men of the highest rank: sometime before September 1233

4 *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, ed. J. Bain (Edinburgh, 1881) i 101, no.574.

5 *CDS*, ii, no.169.

6 R. Stewart-Brown, 'The End of the Norman Earldom of Chester', *English Historical Review*, xxxv (1920) 40.

7 *Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae et Cuiusque Generis Acta Publica [Foedera]*, ed. T. Rymer (London, 1704) ii, 578.

8 Dervorguilla is supposed to have given a volume containing five treatises by St. Jerome and one by Hugh of St. Victor to Sweetheart abbey; this volume is now in the Bodleian and is known as Ms. Fairfax V and as Ms. Dugdale V. If it represents a personal choice for a gift by Dervorguilla, then it is just possible that it was from her own library, in which case, it is just conceivable that she could read Latin.

Helen had married Roger de Quincy, a man almost twice her age, who would become earl of Winchester upon the death of his mother in 1235; their son Robert had been born by 1239. Christina wed William de Forz, heir of the titular count of Aumale whose family had lost their Continental holdings in 1203, but who still held lands across the north of England. This second wedding is thought to have taken place before Alan's death c. 2 February 1234⁹, though it is not certain that it took place before Dervorguilla's 1233 wedding to John Balliol, lord of Barnard Castle in the palatinate of Durham, and of Bywell in Northumbria. Balliol was an important baron whose family was based in the north of England; he also held Hitchin in Hertfordshire and ancestral lands near Bailleul-en-Vimeu in Picardy: Dompierre-sur-Authie, Helincourt, and Hornoy. He did not, however, have a claim to an earldom, not even one now devoid of most of its land. Given Alan's penchant for choosing sons-in-law whose titles and expectations reflected well on his own station, his choice of Balliol seems odd at first. However, it may be that Alan did not regard this nephew of Ingram Balliol, his neighbour and a member of his following,¹⁰ as second rate, especially if that nephew came with property and connections in two kingdoms.

The Balliols had been one of the two important families to remain loyal to King John of England when the other northerners rose as a bloc to oppose him.¹¹ The family had migrated from Picardy in the eleventh century, remaining in touch with their relations on the Continent through the decades and retaining their share of the ancestral lands.¹² John Balliol's choice of Dervorguilla was, in one way, even more remarkable than Alan's choice of her. The Balliols in England had looked back to Picardy for their brides, as John's father had done when he had chosen Cecilia de Fontaines; John could not have turned further away from family tradition when he agreed to marry Dervorguilla. On the other hand, at this time, Dervorguilla's uncle, John the Scot, was still Alexander II's heir apparent and presumptive, and her value as an heir of both Alan and Margaret would have been readily apparent to her contemporaries; they would not have been surprised when someone, perhaps John's uncle Ingram, had put her forward as a candidate to his determined young nephew.

At the time of their wedding, John was about twenty-five and had been in possession of his lands for about five years since the death of his father in 1228. His income of L500-800 per year¹³ was proving insufficient, and he had been distrained in 1232 for the last L20 of his relief. Whatever he might have felt about his new bride's nationality, her dowry, small as it was compared to what she would eventually inherit, must have been as welcome as her connections which would lift him closer to the upper echelons of society in Scotland and England.

Her paternal inheritance came sooner than expected. According to the Lanercost chronicler, around 2 February 1234, Alan died and was buried at Dundrennan Abbey, without

9 R. Oram, *The Lordship of Galloway* [Lordship] (Edinburgh, 2000) 147.

10 K. Stringer, lecture, 20 September 1992, Guelph, Ontario.

11 J.C. Holt, *The Northerners: A Study of the Reign of King John* (Oxford, 1992) 16.

12 G. Stell, "The Balliol Family and the Great Cause of 1291-2" ["Balliol Family"] in K. Stringer (ed.), *Essays on the Nobility of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1985) 154-5.

13 G. Stell

having sorted out his succession. His death precipitated a contest not just among rival claimants for his property, but between supporters of rival systems of inheritance: the traditional, which gave equal rights to all acknowledged sons, and primogeniture, which did not. Into this mixture must be added those who wished to maintain Galloway's independence from Scotland and those who preferred greater Scottish control.

Alan's third marriage, this time to Rose (Rohais or Roesya), daughter of Hugh de Lacy, Earl of Ulster, with whom he had been fighting over land in Ireland, had produced no children, and Thomas, his son by Margaret, seems to have predeceased him for there is no mention of him in the surviving discussions of the succession in Galloway. This left the other Thomas and his three surviving half-sisters as heirs. Under the traditional system, Thomas would have been able to succeed his father in Galloway, but Alan had been fully aware that, under primogeniture, he would not be allowed to pass on any of his other lands to this son. He was probably also aware that the Scottish king would use any chance to extend his power into the southwest, and was not above turning sisters against a brother if it were to the crown's advantage. One of Alan's motives in arranging Thomas' marriage in 1225 or 1226¹⁴ to the daughter of the king of Mann may have been to provide his son with a secure inheritance, safe from any claims Dervorguilla and her sisters could make.

Uncertainty reigned following Alan's death while the various powers studied their options. Those within Galloway may not have been all that sure about what they wanted, but they knew what they did not want: partition of the land among the three coheireses. Thomas does not seem to have made a strong move on his own. Perhaps he was too young; he could still have been in his early teens, new to politics and the warfare that his staking his claim to the lordship was bound to spark. And he had to face the qualified support of veterans like Hugh de Lacy who were also willing to back Alan's nephew Patrick, Earl of Athol, or another male from the family, if the king of Scotland would not allow inheritance by an illegitimate son.

Meanwhile, Dervorguilla and her sisters had not inherited their father's determination to maintain, as much as possible, the independence of Galloway, and had appealed to Alexander II for help. The Scottish king recognised this opportunity to divide and, if not conquer, at least impose some royal control on this most independent of the territories he claimed as his. He sent his forces against Thomas in the summer of 1235¹⁵. None of Alan's sons-in-law seems to have played a significant part in the military operations to make good their wives' claims; they only re-enter the narrative at the end of these savage campaigns, once Thomas' forces had been defeated and their brother-in-law was being held in Edinburgh Castle. At about that time, Thomas was handed over to his brother-in-law, John Balliol. No explanation turns up in records to explain why the Balliols ended up with Thomas in their custody. Had the earls refused to take him? If this Thomas was the youngest of Alan's surviving children, did the family consider it appropriate that the

14 K. Stringer, "Periphery and Core in Thirteenth Century Scotland: Alan son of Roland, Lord of Galloway and Constable of Scotland" in A. Grant and K. Stringer, (eds.) *Medieval Scotland: Crown, Lordship and Community* (Edinburgh, 1993) 96.

15 W. Bower, *Scotichronicon*, D.E.R. Watt (ed.) (Aberdeen: 1990) v, 151.

youngest of his half-sisters keep an eye on him? Had they been particularly close when children? Years later, a great-niece would claim Dervorguilla had received more than her fair share of Alan's lordship of Galloway¹⁶. If this was true, had Alexander II granted her extra land to help support Thomas? The Lanercost chronicler insisted that Thomas was locked up until his decrepitude in the inner part of the Balliols' fortress, Barnard Castle, but as he also believed that Dervorguilla was the eldest of Thomas' sisters, there is no reason to trust him completely on this subject. He certainly exaggerated. If Dervorguilla and her family did have custody of her half-brother for decades, the conditions must have been fairly reasonable. Thomas' wife had been allowed to join him at some point, for one of the undated letters found in Edinburgh Castle from a John Balliol, either Dervorguilla's husband or her youngest son, concerned returning Thomas of Galloway, his wife and his son to the king of Scotland.¹⁷ Almost a half-century after his capture, in December 1285, he was still fit enough to travel with Henry III's messengers to Norham where, at John Balliol's request, they were to ask Alexander III about Thomas' possible release¹⁸.

Whether fond of him or not, there is no sign that Dervorguilla herself was ever eager to see her half-brother set free, and there is no evidence that she made any move to have him released after she was widowed in 1268 and could take more active control of her own affairs. None of her sons, until John, is known to have interceded on their uncle's behalf, nor is there any sign that John had her backing when he finally pushed for Thomas' freedom. Perhaps she understood that Thomas could be a threat to her own position in Galloway, as Edward I suspected over half a century later when he used the old man in his campaign against John Balliol the younger, now king of Scots.¹⁹ Sibling loyalty never did prove stronger in Dervorguilla than her devotion to defending her own rights.

Alan's lands in Scotland and England were divided among his three daughters. There is no mention of their trying to follow up his claims to Irish lands. As mentioned above, Dervorguilla and John may have driven a hard bargain and received the largest share within Galloway. Their *caput* there may originally have been at Arsbol or Burned Island in Glen Ken; thanks to the vagaries of charter survival, she is also closely associated with Buittle by the Urr. She and her husband were probably responsible for the alterations made there in the mid-thirteenth century.

This passion for getting her share served Dervorguilla well quite soon, in June 1237 when her uncle, John the Scot, Earl of Huntingdon and Chester, died. Given the sudden-

16 Oram, *Lordship*, 148; Stell, "Balliol Family", 156; K. J. Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon 1152-1219* (Edinburgh 1985) 188. R.C.Reid, in the introduction to *Wigtownshire Charters*, stated that Dervorguilla's youngest son, John, made a settlement after his mother's death with the cousins who had made this claim. It may have been that they had truth on their side, or they may just have seen a chance to abuse a kind-hearted man who needed as many allies as he could get. It is interesting to note that there is no record of their having brought a case against Dervorguilla herself.

17 *The Acts of the Parliament of Scotland [APS]*, T. Thomson and C. Innes (eds.), (Record Commission, 1864) i, 115

18 *Lanercost*, 116.

19 *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland [CDS]*, J. Bain (ed.) (Edinburgh, 1881-8) v, no. 162; *Rotuli Scotiae in Turri Londinensi ... asservati [Rot. Scot]*, D. MacPherson et al (eds.) (Record Commission, 1814) I, 22.

ness of his death, Dervorguilla may not have been able to attend his funeral, but she was present in person to claim her inheritance the following August,²⁰ and was active, with her husband, in the legal wrangling which attended Henry III's eventual break up of the earldom of Chester and the distribution of John's other holdings.

John the Scot's property had been left to the four women who were his nearest relations. In theory, settlement should have been simple enough, but then, so should John's succession to Ranulph, Earl of Chester, in 1232; that settlement seems to have been pre-arranged, and the resultant law suits only stopped with John's death.²¹ English practice treated female coheirs of land held *in capite* as equals; in fact, they were viewed legally as one heir, and one could not make a claim without the others, except regarding the right of the holder of *aesneicia* (the rights of the eldest) to the capital messuage.²² Each held her inheritance *in capite*, owing homage only to the king, as described the year before in a royal letter to the justiciar of Ireland now known as *Statutum Hibernie de coheredibus*.²³ In this instance, if it was decided that John's estate was to be divided *per stirpes*, one third of John's property would go to his sister Ada, wife of Henry of Hastings, another third to his sister Isabella, wife of Robert Bruce, and the final third to Christina and Dervorguilla, to share as the heirs of Margaret, the eldest of John's sisters; the property could also have been divided *per capita*, and each heir would receive a quarter share, a plan which would have benefited only Dervorguilla.

The four women were not left alone to sort this all out amongst themselves. Alexander II also laid claim to the earldom of Chester.²⁴ Richard, earl of Cornwall let it be known he wanted to be given it, and Eleanor, Henry's practical wife, made it clear she did not wish Richard to get his way.²⁵ The relations who had spent the last few years fighting with John the Scot over Ranulph of Chester's legacy demanded consideration of their claims to lands John's coheirs considered rightfully theirs. Earl John's widow, Helen, daughter of Llewellyn, wanted to receive her dower lands very quickly,²⁶ a request some of the other heirs were not eager to support;²⁷ within a few months, she rejoined Dervorguilla's extended family by marrying Robert de Quincy, brother-in-law of Dervorguilla's half-sister Helen. In the end, Henry III made up his mind that he wanted to take possession of the entire earldom himself. William de Forz senior, Christina's father-in-law, was given custody of all the land held *in capite* outside of Chester while everybody started negotiating and arguing in earnest.²⁸

20 CDS, i, no.1353.

21 R. Eales, "Henry III and the End of the Norman Earldom of Chester," ["Henry III and Chester"] in P.R. Cross and S. D. Lloyd (eds.), *Thirteenth Century England: Proceedings of the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference* (Suffolk, 1986) 108.

22 R. Stewart-Brown, "The End of the Norman Earldom of Chester" ["The End"], *English Historical Review*, xxxv (1920) 41.

23 *Ibid.*, 40.

24 R. Eales, "Henry III and Chester", 109.

25 *Ibid.*, 109.

26 CDS, i, no.1374.

27 *Ibid.*, no. 1587.

28 Stewart-Brown, "The End", 37.

Christina's husband, William de Forz junior, claimed the title of earl since his wife held right of *aesnechia* as the elder daughter of the eldest sister.²⁹ Only notes of the case exist, but it seems that the original question was whether the other coparceners should hold their lands of him and he of the king, or whether they should all hold, equally, of the king. No one, not even Henry, denied de Forz' right to the title of earl; the real trouble began when he made the unprecedented claim that the earldom of Chester was indivisible because it was a palatinate.³⁰ If he could uphold this claim, his wife, Christina, would receive all the lands which went with the title, substantially reducing the inheritances of her coheirs who would have to content themselves with subdividing John's other extensive possessions. Of course, everybody went to court.

Dervorguilla and her husband joined the suit against her sister; they claimed, not surprisingly, that the earldom was indeed partible and that Dervorguilla should get the same share as Christina because they were both daughters of Margaret, John the Scot's eldest sister. Meanwhile, King Henry had come up with the idea of exchanging parcels of his own land for parts of the earldom in order to bring it under crown control, thereby out-manoeuvring de Forz. Perhaps in response to de Forz' stance and the fear that the court might find against them, or, perhaps, to curry favour with Henry, Dervorguilla and John were quick to take up the king's offer, something none of the other heirs had done before the opening of their case before a court so large it was almost the size of a parliament.³¹ The Balliols received property to hold temporarily, they thought, until Henry could find enough land to make an equal exchange for her share of Chester.³² The residents of these manors also believed Dervorguilla and John had only a passing hold on their lands, and had to be ordered repeatedly to obey Balliol. Henry never did put together an equal exchange, nor did he add any properties to what he had already handed over.

In October 1241, the court at Westminster finally decided that, because of Christina's position in the family, de Forz did indeed have the right to the title of earl and should receive the *capitale messuagium*, probably Chester castle.³³ It also found that he had not proved his case and that his claim regarding the impartibility of the earldom was contrary to custom, so Henry III could get his wish, and Chester could be divided among the four women. While the court had been deliberating, Dervorguilla's aunts, Ada and Isabel, and their husbands had also arranged exchanges with the king for their shares, leaving only Christina and de Forz to negotiate with Henry. The title of earl was more or less worthless without the lands to support the obligations that went along with it, so de Forz agreed to an exchange and made a formal quitclaim in 1242. This ritual took place before a large crowd, but the witness list does not include the names of any of the coheirs or their husbands. Henry gave his newly won earldom to his wife, then they passed it on to their son, Edward.

29 Ibid., 40; R. Eales, "Henry III and Chester", 110.

30 Stewart-Brown, "The End," 40-41.

31 Ibid., 40.

32 CDS, i, no.1353; *Close Rolls of the reign of Henry III [CR]* (H.M.S.O., 1902-), vol.1234-1237, 563.

33 R. Eales, "Henry III and Chester", 110.



Map showing places associated with Dervorguilla: Those underlines indicate land holdings.

Dervorguilla had received the manors of Thorksey in Lincolnshire and Lothingland in Suffolk with the farm of the town of Yarmouth to hold until the king should give her fair exchange.³⁴ Six years after John the Scot's death, on June 15, 1243, John Balliol argued in person before the archbishop of York and the king's council that he should not be made to pay a share of the late earl's debts since Dervorguilla still had not received her full inheritance in a permanent exchange.³⁵ Although they never did make any progress against the king, she and John did well from the division of the rest of her uncle's lands, adding estates in Huntingdon, Leicestershire, Northampton, Bedfordshire, and Lincolnshire to their holdings,³⁶ and they had persuaded the king to promise that, if any of the coheirs died without children, Dervorguilla would get more land. Within a few years, the Balliols would make sure this promise was fulfilled.

Meanwhile, murder brought Dervorguilla more land in Scotland when her cousin, Patrick, earl of Athol, was killed in Haddington after a tournament in 1242. While the Balliols and de Quincys received lands in Athol and Galloway, the earldom itself went to Dervorguilla's aunt, Ada, whose husband, Walter Bisset, was the prime candidate for murderer. Another of Dervorguilla's cousins, Alan 'son of the earl', would go to Ireland in 1243 to wreak his own vengeance for his half-brother Patrick's murder. There is no concrete evidence as to which side the Balliols supported during this controversy, but years later, Alan turns up in debt to John Balliol's executors for L100. If this were the result of an earlier loan, their willingness to lend Alan money and not press for quick repayment may indicate they did not entirely disapprove of his actions.³⁷ What's more, about a decade after the murder, Henry III, 'at the instance of Margaret, Queen of Scotland'³⁸, pardoned Alan for the havoc he had wrought in Ireland. This was in early January, about a year after John Balliol had taken, at least part-time, a job as one of Henry's representatives in the Scottish court, and it is not impossible that he and Dervorguilla had used their influence with the child queen to win a favour for their relation.

Three or four years after Patrick's murder, Dervorguilla's sister, Christina, died,³⁹ as did her aunt Helen, the widow of John the Scot⁴⁰ and Clemence de Fourgeres, widow of Ranulph, Earl of Chester.⁴¹ Her half-sister Helena may have survived almost a decade longer, dying sometime in 1253 or 1254.⁴² There is no way to know how Dervorguilla felt about either of her sisters. They may never have had any time for each other; it is, perhaps, significant that she did not choose to name any of her daughters in their honour, not even the youngest whose name came instead from outside the family. Dervorguilla and Christina's battles over property in general, and Chester in particular, could have strained

34 CR 1234-1237, 563; CDS, i, 1353.

35 CDS, i, nos. 1482, 1616.

36 CR 1242-1247, 184.

37 H.E. Salter, *The Oxford Deeds of Balliol College* (Oxford, 1913) 329.

38 CDS, i, no 1865.

39 Ibid., i, no. 1970; *Mathei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora* [Paris], H. R. Luard (ed.) (Rolls Series, 1872-83) IV, 563.

40 F.M.Powicke, C. Johnson, and WJ Herte (eds.) *Handbook of British Chronology* (London, 1939) 49.

41 R. Eales, "Henry III and Chester", 104.

42 CDS, i, nos. 1940, 1970.

the relations between even the closest of siblings. Dervorguilla may well have felt that Christina had done her best to steal her rightful inheritance, while Christina could easily have felt betrayed by her sister's eagerness to do that deal with Henry.

Whatever grief she may have felt, the deaths of these women brought Dervorguilla more windfalls. Thanks to Henry's promise to make sure she would get more land if any of her Chester coheirs died childless, and, no doubt, a certain amount of hard bargaining, Dervorguilla took possession of several more manors, most notably Fotheringay with its castle, which she held of the Scottish king for 'one ...sparrowhawk' *per annum*.⁴³

All this left Dervorguilla and, of course, her husband, quite wealthy, amongst the richest residents of Scotland or England. They would use all the wealth, power and social position such possessions brought, for they had already started a family that grew quickly. Dervorguilla eventually bore eight children, four sons and four daughters who survived long enough to be remembered in the records.

The years of birth of three of her sons can be, very roughly, approximated from their inquisitions *post mortem*. Her eldest, Hugh, named for either John's father or his brother, or both, was born between 1238-1240. Roughly half a century later, Robert Bruce the Competitor would claim that Alexander II had designated him, Bruce, his heir. If he was telling the truth, and if Alexander had followed to the law of primogeniture when he made his choice, his declaration may be evidence that Hugh was not born until sometime after Alexander's marriage to Marie de Coucy in 1239, as that is the event which, according to Bruce, had prompted the Scottish king to name an heir. Bruce's claim notwithstanding, until the future Alexander III was born, Hugh was Alexander II's nearest male relative. The Balliols do not seem ever to have lost sight of their sons' closeness to the Scottish throne. When Hugh was older, the center of his red Balliol shield featured the Galloway lion rampant in silver with its crown of gold, reminding everyone of his position in Scotland, even if his mother did keep a firm grip on all her land there. Dervorguilla's second son was Alan, according to her son John's recitation of his claim to the throne years later during the Great Cause;⁴⁴ Alan was, no doubt, named for her father. He died before his elder brother, as the inquisitions following Hugh's death make no mention of him, and instead name Dervorguilla's third son, Alexander, as heir. Alexander may have been born between 1240-1248; as the name Alexander was not used in either immediate family, perhaps he was named for the Scottish king. She probably had her youngest son, John, between 1248-1250.

The years of birth of her daughters are even less exact. If John and Dervorguilla followed the same pattern when naming their first two daughters as they did with their elder sons, then Cecilia, named for her paternal grandmother, should have been the eldest daughter, and, perhaps, the eldest of all the children. Her father granted land to her and her husband, John de Burgh, in 1253;⁴⁵ if this marks the year of her marriage, and if she

43 Ibid., i, no. 1340; *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem [CIPM]* (H.M.S.O., 1904-) ii, 467.

44 Rymer, *Foedera*, ii, 579.

45 Balliol granted them one-third of the manor of Tygden according to *CR*, 22/10/53.

was not much younger than sixteen at that time, then she was probably born sometime between 1233 and 1237. Margaret, named for her maternal grandmother, may have been their second daughter; if so, she was born, probably, sometime in the 1240s. Dervorguilla had two aunts named Ada, and John had a sister by that name, so it is hardly surprising that they chose it for their third daughter. This girl was married either on Whitsunday, 1266, or sometime in early 1272 after her husband had turned 21;⁴⁶ as their daughter Christian was 16 at the time of her own wedding in 1282,⁴⁷ scandal could only have been avoided if the earlier date is correct. If Ada was about sixteen when she was married, then she was born c. 1250, perhaps just before or after her brother John. The last girl appears in the records, confusingly, as Eleanor, Margaret, Marjorie, and Mary.⁴⁸ If her name really was Eleanor, she may have been named to compliment Henry's queen since that name does not feature in either family tree; if her elder sister had died while this last child was still small, the younger girl may have been named, or nicknamed, Margaret to keep the name alive. Eleanor was married between 1279-1283, and so, unless her mother postponed her marriage, this child was born long after her brothers and sisters, probably sometime between 1263 and 1268, or early 1269, if she was her father's posthumous child.

If any of this conjecture is correct, a possible order for these births is Cecilia, Hugh, Alan, Alexander, Ada, John, and Eleanor, with Margaret fitting into the list somewhere between Cecilia and Ada. Equally conjectural are their places of birth. Tradition has it that the youngest son, John, was born in Picardy. His father, John, was given a safe-conduct for travel to France in November 1236, February 1249, may have been in France again in 1253, was sent there as an ambassador in March or May 1259, and was at Bailleul-en-Vimeu in March 1267.⁴⁹ These were all non-military excursions which Dervorguilla could also have made; similarly, she may well have joined John at the Scottish court sometime from 1251 to 1255 when he was one of Henry III's representatives there. Or perhaps she was with John when he was sent to Flanders in 1260 and was delayed there that spring.⁵⁰ So, several of the children may have been born in France, Scotland, or Flanders; of course, they could just have easily have been born at Buittle or Burned Island in Galloway, or at Barnard Castle, or Hitchin, or Fotheringay. Barnard Castle was a primary residence and extensive improvements were made there through the middle of the century; perhaps this was the place where the children were raised, whether their parents were nearby or not.

As long as her husband was alive, Dervorguilla did not receive any safe-conducts of her own, so it is impossible to know just where she spent most of the 35 years between 1233 and 1268; like many women of her station, she probably travelled with her husband from one estate to another, to the royal courts in England and Scotland, and to that of

46 J.B. Paul (ed.), *The Scots Peerage* (Edinburgh: 1907) iv, 143; *CDS*, I, no. 2626.

47 *CDS*, iii, 5.

48 R. de Belleval, *Nobiliaire de Ponthieu et de Vimeu* (Paris, 1876) 90; Stell, *Balliol Family*, 153.

49 *CR* 1234-7; *CR* 1247-58,37; J.P. Maitland, "The Early Homes of the Balliols", *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society [TDGAS]*, 3rd series, xviii (1931-1933) 237; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office [CPR]* (London, 1891-) Henry III 1258-66, 18, 24-5; M.H. Dodds, *A History of Northumbria [Northumbria]* (London, 1926) vi, 48.

50 *CR* 1259-1261, 280-1.

the countess Jeanne in Picardy. The fact that her name turns up frequently in the records linked to her husband's is due to the fact that the claims they were making depended on her inheritance; it is not evidence that she played an active public role. As her husband became increasingly involved in government along with service in the army, Dervorguilla was probably left for various lengths of time overseeing the management of their estates, as was common for a woman of her station, but with the added complication that these responsibilities were spread across three kingdoms.

It is now necessary to concentrate on John Balliol's career, if only because it affected how Dervorguilla spent so much of her life after he had died. An early sign of the new, even somewhat exalted, position in which John Balliol found himself after his marriage is his presence on the list of witnesses to the peace treaty made by Alexander II and Henry III in 1237. However, his wealth and position alone could not earn him the respect of his peers and superiors, and cannot explain his later appointments to positions of trust, often requiring skill as a negotiator, by the English king.

Before he married, Balliol had served with the army in France, and he continued to serve in England and on the Continent. His family's steadfast loyalty during the rebellion against King John would have appealed to the latter's son, Henry. Hugh Balliol, John's father, had held out for the king, even though that meant the temporary loss of Barnard Castle, when all but one of the other leading northerners had joined the opposition. John Balliol had been too young at the time to do much beyond what he was told, but in 1242 he may have been one of those who remained with Henry during his disastrous campaign in Gascony. In the spring of 1244 the king referred to John as one who 'never left our faith and service';⁵¹ this could, of course, refer to almost anything, including Balliol's role during the fight over taxes during the winter of 1244, or it could be empty flattery, or just wishful thinking. But if John had remained with the English king after Henry's own brother, Richard of Cornwall, had left, and if he had run up the huge debts common to those who stayed on in Gascony, appreciation of this loyalty might explain why, in 1243, Henry gave him a small gift of game, and extra time to repay the debt of L500 Angevin inherited from his father.⁵² This is not to imply that Dervorguilla had married a model citizen; before their marriage, Balliol was already involved in the dispute with the bishops of Durham which might have been behind the foundation of Balliol College. Still, he had shown that he was someone upon whom Henry could rely, and Henry valued loyalty, whenever his greed did not get in the way. This, along with Balliol's growing wealth and his wife's connections, could have caused the English king to look at him in an altogether different light; potentially, he was no longer just another reliable fighter.

It is impossible to tell whether it was his loyalty to the king, his skill as a negotiator, or his wealth which earned Balliol a place as one of the two lay barons on the committee of twelve appointed early in 1244 to look into the needs of their perennially impecunious king;⁵³ it could be that, like so many of his contemporaries, he favoured reform while remaining loyal to Henry. The committee tried to accommodate everybody, demanding

51 *CR* 1242-44, 239.

52 *CDS*, 1615.

53 *Paris*, iv, 362.

that the king appoint a justiciar and chancellor while agreeing to give him the money he had requested.⁵⁴ True to form, Henry spent this very quickly, but looked for the promised ministers very slowly, and the suggested reforms were never put into effect. Whatever Balliol's role in all this, he must have pleased the king for in 1248 he was appointed sheriff of Cumbria and keeper of Carlisle castle; he and his brother were the first in their family to be so honoured.⁵⁵

The Balliols' most active period in the Scottish court began soon after this when, just after Christmas 1251, John accompanied Henry's daughter Margaret from York to her new home after her magnificent wedding to Alexander III. He and Robert de Ros of Wark and Sanquhar were to be the English king's representatives; it was, at best, a part-time job as far as Balliol was concerned, with Ros taking the more active role in Scottish government. It seems that, despite this appointment, Henry still expected Balliol to serve him elsewhere. He was still sheriff of Cumbria and keeper of Carlisle. Early January 1252 found Balliol once again active in English politics, this time recommending that Simon de Montfort be recompensed for his losses accumulated while governing Gascony on behalf of Henry.⁵⁶ The next year Balliol himself, but not his co-representative Ros, was called to serve during another disastrous campaign in Gascony; he probably sailed with Henry on 6 August 1253.⁵⁷ Balliol can be found trying to help Henry make amends with de Montfort in October⁵⁸ and was still in France in December.⁵⁹ Once again, Balliol seems to have been nothing if not loyal to Henry, a fact soon to be ignored completely by the English king.

Even while he was in Scotland, Balliol was not necessarily with Alexander and his queen, for he had to attend to his own business. Unlike their brother in law, Roger de Quincy, the Balliols did not do anything to precipitate a rebellion, but that does not mean they did not take an active interest in their property. It was around this time that the renovations were carried out at Buittle. Perhaps John oversaw similar works in Dervorguilla's other lands around the kingdom where the records have not survived.

All this activity did not leave Balliol much time to attend to his duties in a Scottish court firmly controlled by the Comyns. Although Dervorguilla would eventually join her family to theirs through marriage, the Balliols and Comyns were not necessarily always allies. Just two years before, in 1249, upon learning of the death of Alexander II, it had taken Walter Comyn, earl of Menteith, just 16 days to contact Robert Bruce 'the Competitor';⁶⁰ there is no evidence of his having contacted the Balliols, even though Hugh, then 9 – 11 years old, was Alexander III's nearest male relation according to the rules of primogeniture. A few years later, after John Balliol's assignment to Scotland, he tried to oppose the Comyns when he intervened in the election of the bishop of Whithorn, claiming he was

54 *Ibid.*, 372.

55 *CPR* 1247-58, 13; Stell, *Balliol Family*, 158.

56 *CPR* 1247-58, 124.

57 *Ibid.*, 231.

58 *Ibid.*, 244.

59 *Ibid.*, 258.

60 D.E.R. Watt, "The Minority of Alexander III of Scotland," ["The Minority"], *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, xxi, 5th series (1971) 8.

patron of the diocese and was defending the rights of the Gallovidians; he even looked to the archbishop of York for support.⁶¹ The Comyns' candidate won. Still, John Balliol had some influence, if only with the child queen who, in January 1252, interceded with her father to win that pardon for Dervorguilla's cousin, Alan 'son of the earl'.⁶²

Ros and Balliol's roles in the court were never clear; even now historians cannot agree on whether to refer to them as regents or representatives. There was one clearly stated expectation, not in an official record but in Matthew of Paris' gossipy *Chronica Majora*: Henry wanted the relationship between his young daughter and her new husband kept platonic, yet it was his representatives' very success in fulfilling this stipulation which eventually got them into trouble with the English king. Henry was displeased when, in 1253, his request that Margaret be allowed to come for a visit was rejected by the Scots,⁶³ but he was distracted fairly quickly by another debacle in Gascony. By the next summer, he had remembered his displeasure, and for this, or some other reason, commanded Ros and Balliol to withdraw from the Scottish court, then sent Simon de Montfort to Scotland in September.⁶⁴ Nothing came of any of this, and neither of the representatives actually resigned. John Balliol even received a gift of oak from the king the next January.⁶⁵

That gift is the last thing known to have gone well for Balliol in 1255, thanks to his own fit of bad temper, a long-suffering bishop and a whining teenage queen with a dotting father. Sometime that winter or spring, if Matthew of Paris is to be believed, Queen Margaret began to complain about her treatment to her father who, in response, sent a physician, Reginald of Bath, up to Scotland to see how she was; Reginald found Margaret sad and pale, then promptly died himself, poisoned, according to the rumours which flew south.⁶⁶ This caused Henry to send still more agents north before coming himself, taking over Robert Ros' castle of Wark on 8 August.⁶⁷ As it turned out, all Margaret's ailments appear to have been easily cured once the young people were allowed, as Walter Bower delicately put it, to enter the marriage bed,⁶⁸ so the question remains why any father, even one as besotted as Henry III, would turn on Ros and Balliol with a 'viciousness wholly out of proportion with a parental blind spot.'⁶⁹ While using this incident as an excuse to turn the government of Scotland inside out, Henry was also bent on destroying these two men, and especially Robert Ros. Had he thought his agents would be in charge of the Scottish court⁷⁰ even when he assigned them tasks elsewhere? Was he taken aback when he discovered the power the Comyns had amassed over the decades and chose to blame his representatives? Did he think Balliol should have taken more control since his sons were

61 A.A.M. Duncan, *Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom [Scotland]* (Edinburgh: 1975) 564.

62 *CDS*, i, no. 1865.

63 Duncan, *Scotland*, 563.

64 *CR* 1253-54, 266; J.R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort [Montfort]* (Cambridge, 1997) 139.

65 *CR* 1254-56, 26.

66 *Paris*, v, 501-2.

67 M. Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century: 1216-1307* (Oxford, 1992) 590.

68 W. Bower, *Chron. Bower* (Watt), v, 317.

69 Watt, "The Minority", 11.

70 A. Young, "The Political Role of Walter Comyn, Earl of Menteith, during the Minority of Alexander III of Scotland," in K. Stringer (ed.), *Essays on the Nobility of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1985) 154-5.

next in line for the throne? Was all this a side effect of his annual bout of tertian fever?⁷¹ More than likely, Matthew of Paris came closest to the truth when, during an aside in his discussion of the fate of Robert Ros, he blamed it on a grudge: ‘Oh marvelous king, for whom great services disappear like morning clouds, but offences are treasured through all time.’⁷²

In the case of Robert Ros, the offences had come as much from his family as from himself. His grandfather had been a gaming partner of John Lackland until he deserted the king to join the rebels just before Runnymede; Robert’s elder brother had been an active partisan for Prince Louis until his capture in the final battle at Lincoln.⁷³ In 1242, when the elder Ros could no longer afford to stay with Henry in Gascony, the king had denounced him and those like him as traitors, and confiscated their lands, though only temporarily.⁷⁴ This time, it was the younger Ros’ turn to be accused of treason, and in a fit of rage, Henry added that he would thresh his corn and sell it. ‘Do so, and I’ll send your threshers back without their heads,’ Ros replied, an answer not designed to soothe the soul of a savage king.⁷⁵

Ros offered to prove his innocence ‘with his body’ rather than trust the judgment of his enemies,⁷⁶ but to no avail. Henry did indeed take all his lands and added a 100,000 mark fine⁷⁷ which he must have known could never be paid. Matthew of Paris was probably echoing popular sentiment when he mourned the merciless destruction of this, the most eminent of northern nobles, but Ros had not given up the fight. He ended up by going to court, despite his lack of faith in the system. In May 1256, he got his castle at Wark back, pending the court decision that finally came on 5 November 1259 exonerating him completely; his fine was remitted and he was declared wholly innocent. Not surprisingly, Ros became a supporter of Simon de Montfort and his reforms.⁷⁸

Matthew of Paris’ accusation that Henry quickly forgot services rendered certainly applies to his attack on John Balliol, but this time the royal vindictiveness cannot be explained by Henry’s prejudice against northerners, for the lords of Barnard Castle had always been loyal. Plainly, Balliol himself had displeased the king by his actions, or lack thereof, in Scotland. He must have been unaware of just how serious the king’s concerns were during the early part of the summer of 1255, or he would not have chosen that very time to come to blows with Henry’s friend and former servant, Walter Kirkham, Bishop of Durham.

Relations between the Balliols and the bishops of Durham, who resented the very crea-

71 F.M. Powicke, *King Henry and the Lord Edward: The Community of Realm in the Thirteenth Century* [King Henry] (Oxford, 1947) ii, 411.

72 *Paris*, v, 569.

73 G.H. White (ed.), *The Complete Peerage* [Peerage] (London, 1949) xi, 90, 93.

74 *Paris*, iv, 228-30.

75 Powicke, *King Henry* i, 342.

76 *Ibid.*, v, 569.

77 White, *Peerage*, xi, 120.

78 I.J. Sanders (ed.), *Documents of the Baronial Movement of Reform and Rebellion, selected by R.E. Treharne* [Documents] (Oxford, 1973) 285; Maddicott, *Montfort*, 336.

tion of the honour of Bywell as an invasion of their jurisdiction, had probably never been very good. John Balliol inherited a feud with the bishops of Durham which dated back to the reign of Richard I when Bishop Hugh de le Puisset agreed to buy, for his lifetime, the earldom of Northumbria; he took possession, but may never actually have paid for the earldom. Included in the deal was the wapentake of Sadberge, a detached portion of Northumbria where the crown held demesne lands, including five of the Balliols' fees in chief.⁷⁹ From the start, the Balliols were not eager to do homage to the bishops for their lands in Sadberge, and the bishops never gave up insisting they ought to do so.

Then, around 1190, John Balliol's great-grandfather, Bernard, pledged Newton and Newhouses to the bishop as security for a 150 mark loan. At some point, the bishop took possession of Barnard Castle, too; this he returned to Barnard's successor despite the debt's having grown to 400m.⁸⁰ Puisset was never famous for his generosity, even to his own church, and when he was moved to make a donation, he was inclined to grant away lands where 'his claims to ownership were at best ambiguous.'⁸¹ Such was the case with his deathbed gift of the Balliols' manor of Newton to St. Cuthbert and Durham priory; there were no Balliols among the witnesses to this granting away of the lands they still hoped to redeem.⁸²

The argument taken up by John Balliol centred on ownership of Newton and its church, and his apparent contention that he did not owe homage to the bishop but to the king. He and bishop Richard came to an agreement of sorts in 1231 acknowledging Balliol's rights in Newton and promising to return the ancient charters relating to that manor, if and when John did homage to the bishop,⁸³ something he never did get around to doing. If the bishop was the one responsible for so much of this document having been written in the conditional, perhaps he had already had enough experience with the Balliols not to trust the young heir too much. Three years later, the king twice commanded John to do homage, once in the spring and again in the winter;⁸⁴ instead, John chose to make trouble, for in July 1235, he had to be forgiven a 20 mark fine for his transgressions against the bishop.⁸⁵ The command to do homage was repeated once more in 1241⁸⁶ but this was, clearly, not the end of the argument.

Sometime during the late spring or early summer 1255, just about the time Henry III was organising his furious descent upon Scotland, John Balliol's men took and held the church of Long Newton by force; Bishop Kirkham excommunicated them and, after 40 days, had them taken prisoner. But John's brothers Eustace and Jocelin were lurking in a

79 D.Popcock and R. Norris, *A History of County Durham*, (Chichester, 1990) 30; G.V. Scammell, *Hugh de Puisset, Bishop of Durham [Puisset]* (Cambridge, 1956) 65, 187.

80 *Ibid.*, 208.

81 *Ibid.*, 209.

82 *Ibid.*, 258.

83 University of Durham, The Chapter Library, Hunter Ms, IV, pt. 2, 189a; this text is the same as that of their Mickelton and Spearman Ms, I A, f.6.

84 *CDS*, i, no.1209; *CR* 1232-47, 86.

85 Dodds, *Northumbria*, vi, 42.

86 *CR* 1232-47, 261.

nearby wood with Henry fitz Ranulph and many others, and these men ‘basely insulted’ the bishop ‘with swords and other weapons’, and took four of his men as prisoners to Barnard Castle.⁸⁷ On August 13, Henry ordered John, Eustace, and the constable of Barnard Castle to release the prisoners and make amends to the bishop.⁸⁸ By August 22, the king had heard enough about this attack and the situation in Scotland to order Balliol to deliver both the sheriffdom of Cumbria and Carlisle castle to Robert Bruce.⁸⁹ Faced with trouble of this magnitude on two fronts, Balliol was forced to back down; it took about two years for him to settle with the king and probably just about as long to placate the bishop.

Exactly how he managed to make peace with Bishop Kirkham, and with the prior of Tynemouth with whom he also had a dispute,⁹⁰ is unrecorded except, perhaps, in the *Lanercost Chronicle*. According to an account found only there, at some time during his tenure, Kirkham had acted so wisely that in 1260 he was able to force an unnamed, but very prominent, nobleman to repent and allow himself to be beaten at the church door in Durham.⁹¹ The anonymous penitent has been identified as John Balliol since the only detail the chronicler does give fits him exactly: he supported scholars at Oxford, and the tradition persists at the university that Balliol’s weekly donations were traditionally acts of penance begun c.1260.⁹² Given the amount of trouble he was in, Balliol may well have submitted himself to whatever the bishop demanded. And, despite his distaste for the bishops of Durham, Balliol was, at the very least, a conventionally pious man: he had established a hospital in Barnard Castle, and had made a pilgrimage to Pontigny in 1249,⁹³ a visit timed, perhaps, to coincide with the transfer of the relics of Edmund Rich that year.

Still, the question remains, why did the Lanercost chronicler avoid naming his man? He was not shy about naming other names. Did he doubt his own story? Why did no other chronicler pick it up, not even Matthew of Paris who was so interested in the fallout from Henry’s actions against Ros and Balliol? It has been suggested that the beating was really just a bit of malice invented by a political enemy around the time of the Barons’ Wars⁹⁴ when political songs made improbable claims. Or, it may have been the invention of someone who just could not believe that any nobleman would part with so much money voluntarily.

And part with it he did, generously providing a group of boys and young men with a liberal allowance while they studied in Oxford, alms which Dervorguilla chose to continue after she was widowed. There is no record of when exactly scholars took up residence in the rented building that became known as Balliol Hall, but they were definitely part of Oxford life in 1266.⁹⁵ Traditionally, Balliol did this at the behest of the bishop; if that

87 CR 1254-56, 217.

88 CDS, i, no.1989.

89 CPR 1247-58, 422.

90 Paris, v, 528.

91 Stevenson, *Lanercost*, 69.

92 J.Jones, *Balliol College* (Oxford, 1988) 2; J. Prest, *Balliol Studies* (London, 1982) 4.

93 CPR 1247-58, 37.

94 The Bodleian Library, J.H. Burn, “A Defence of John Balliol and the History of his Family” (typescript, 1974) 52-68.

is the case, why did the bishop choose this particular penance? Supporting a scholar had long been considered a good deed by the church, but were Balliol's sins really so great he deserved to support a whole house-full for the rest of his life? Or was this an instance of the bishop visiting the sins of the fathers upon John? Did he imagine it was something Balliol would least like to support in light of his conservative support for the king? And why not support scholars in Cambridge which was nearer so much more of Balliol's property? Did the bishop wish to make the whole process as difficult and distasteful as possible? Or did Balliol choose Oxford himself, drawn there by its associations with the recently canonized Edmund Rich?

In the end, even this generous gesture by Balliol was not enough to truly please the bishops of Durham who clung to their grievance at least until the end of the century.⁹⁶

While negotiating with the bishop, Balliol had a still more powerful man to placate. Matthew of Paris understood his king well enough to see that, in Balliol's predicament, Henry recognised a chance to make money. Henry's income was always overwhelmed by his expenses, and to make matters worse, in the spring of 1254, Henry had decided to take up Pope Innocent V's offer of Sicily; even the money intended for a crusade was not sufficient for that enterprise. As Paris bluntly put it, Balliol had an abundance of money which the king coveted, so John, cautiously, bought peace.⁹⁷ By August 1257, Henry had 'received John Balliol into his grace and remitted to him his rancour' occasioned by his abuse of the king and queen of Scotland.⁹⁸ The records report that Balliol had paid £500 by March 1258,⁹⁹ but there is no knowing for what that sum had been given, or how much it took to buy his way back into Henry's good graces. Like Henry of Bath, another royal servant whom the king had attacked in much the same way in 1251, once Balliol had handed over enough money, he was allowed to return to royal service and was treated as if nothing had happened¹⁰⁰ As Earl Richard is supposed to have remarked to his brother in reference to Henry's earlier treatment of Bath: given the way he, Henry, treated his servants, it was a wonder anyone cared to serve him.

Still, that is exactly what John Balliol chose to do throughout the Barons' Wars, and, unlike all too many of his peers, there is no evidence that he ever changed sides. Within a year of his settlement with Henry, he had sworn, probably without much enthusiasm, to support the Provisions of Oxford and had been made one of the Lord Edward's counsellors, another appointment fraught with ill-defined duties, though it does seem clear that these four men were meant to rearrange the prince's household now that the Lusignans had fled the kingdom.¹⁰¹ Balliol did not take up this post, perhaps because he did not hide the sympathy which would eventually result in the marriage of his eldest son, Hugh,

95 D.L. Evans (ed.), *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls [CLR]* (London, 1961) v, 219-20.

96 W.H. Bliss, *Calendar of the Entries in the Papal Registers* (London, 1893) I, 573.

97 *Paris*, v, 507.

98 *CPR* 1247-58, 575.

99 *Ibid.*, 620.

100 Powicke, *King Henry*, i, 335; *Paris*, v, 213.

101 Sanders, *Documents*, 283, 95.

to William de Valence's daughter, Agnes, or perhaps he wished to avoid being caught between the king and one of his children again. Besides, very soon afterwards, Henry gave him other assignments: he was sent to Scotland in 1258 and on an embassy to France with Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, Richard de Clare, earl of Gloucester and Hereford, Peter of Savoy, John Mansel, and Robert Walerand in 1259. As Montfort's reform movement loomed more threateningly, Henry was so sure of Balliol's loyalty that he assured those who cared about his, the king's, 'state and pleasure' that they could trust this servant implicitly.¹⁰² Given the potentially disastrous events of the previous decade, it must have seemed an ironic twist to the Balliols when, in February 1261, John found himself amongst those assigned to bring Queen Margaret, now pregnant, to England.¹⁰³

Given his innate conservatism, it is unlikely that John Balliol was particularly sorry the reform movement lost momentum while its leader was out of the country, no matter how infuriating he must have found Henry. Montfort returned to England in the spring of 1263, and early that summer, royalists like the Balliols were attacked all over the kingdom. Henry's response to this crisis was both swift and inadequate,¹⁰⁴ and, as Montfort quickly strengthened his grip on the government, the Balliols lost position and possessions, if only temporarily. By July, the barons had ordered Balliol to hand over the sheriffdom of Nottingham to William Bardolf; by August, he had lost possession of all his lands in England and was being invited down to Westminster to answer charges concerning his possible excesses contrary to the Provisions.¹⁰⁵ Montfort considered all those who had not upheld their oaths to the Provisions to be perjurers and apostates and, given how closely John Balliol had associated himself with the king, probably consigned him to this group.

Dervorguilla and John's eldest son, Hugh, was about 23-25 years old by this time, and like so many young men, may have been a bit more sympathetic to the reformers than his elders. Either for this reason, or because his father wished to avoid making an appearance before the Barons' justices, it was Hugh who answered the summons to Westminster to answer the charges against his family that August,¹⁰⁶ and did so with remarkable success. He swore to uphold the Provisions, and on September 3, the order went out to restore all his lands and holdings to John Balliol.

On Christmas Eve 1263, in an effort to resist Montfort, Henry appointed various royalists, including John Balliol, as military wardens in the shires north of the Humber and Mersey.¹⁰⁷ A letter sent to Henry that year by Robert Neville described John Balliol, Robert Bruce, John Comyn, and Henry Percy as only lukewarm in their efforts to keep the peace.¹⁰⁸ This letter, probably, more clearly reflects Neville's fury at his comrades' refusal to make the defence of Pontefract their first priority, as he wished, than it does any lack of

102 *CPR* 1258-66, 121.

103 *Ibid.*, 90.

104 Maddicott, *Montfort*, 227.

105 *CPR* 1258-66, 274.

106 *Ibid.*, 274; *CR* 1264-68, 258.

107 F.M.Powicke, *King Henry and the Lord Edward: The Community of the Realm in the Thirteenth Century* [*King Henry*] (Oxford, 1947) 453.

108 Rymer, *Foedera*, i, 772.

effort on the part of the king's wardens when defending their own neighbourhoods.

Early the next year, Balliol was one of those who swore to uphold the decisions of Louis IX when the king of France agreed to arbitrate between his brother-in-law, Henry, and his friend, Simon,¹⁰⁹ and he was probably delighted with the result, as Louis quashed the Provisions and left Henry free to rule as he wished again. Sadly, Henry did no better than he had before, and by May found the two factions transformed into armies ready for battle at Lewes. Balliol had the king's permission to leave;¹¹⁰ he did not do so, and ended up being taken prisoner.¹¹¹ His sons Hugh and Alexander may have been with him, but they were not listed among those captured.

John Balliol had either escaped or been ransomed by early summer, for on 3 July, the first of a series of safe-conducts was issued calling for him and other northern royalists to come to London. This invitation was repeated in August, October, December and January, reinforced by reminders of the service they owed the king, especially when the kingdom was threatened by foreign invasion. In response, these men complained they could not come south thanks to the threats posed by John de Eyville and his cohorts, so it was arranged that the bishop of Durham, of all people, along with the prior of Durham, and the abbot of St. Mary's in York should act as their escorts.¹¹² None of the royalists seems to have accepted this offer and a stalemate ensued.

This stalling did not afford their possessions much protection. By January 5, 1265, Simon de Montfort had taken control of the ferm of Yarmouth which Dervorguilla had received in exchange for part of her share of the earldom of Chester;¹¹³ Montfort had already assumed control of that entire earldom, a move which must have rubbed salt in the old wounds, considering John and Dervorguilla had never really been satisfied with Henry III's settlement. Even more galling, the barons decreed they would feel more secure if John Balliol would provide tangible proof of his loyalty, so, sometime before March 15, John Balliol, 'of his own free will' handed over his home, Barnard Castle, to Hugh le Despenser, 'for the observance of the peace between the king and the barons'.¹¹⁴ Although John and Dervorguilla still had an array of homes which could accommodate their family comfortably in Scotland, England and Picardy, the confiscation of the castle named for the founder of the Balliol family's fortunes in England was a blow calculated to hurt. If it was also intended to ensure John's good behaviour, it did not work.

Dervorguilla was in the unfortunate position of being related by blood and marriage to many combatants caught up in this conflict, including, if only very distantly, Simon de Montfort himself. Some, like her nephew, the royalist Alan de la Zuche, and her cousin, the ardent Montfortian, Henry de Hastings¹¹⁵, were loyal to their chosen party throughout. Others, like John de Burgh, husband of her eldest daughter Cecilia, were not so steadfast.

109 Sanders (ed.), *Documents*, 280.

110 *CPR* 1258-66, 318.

111 Duncan, *Scotland*, 577.

112 *CR* 1261-64, 399, 400, 343.

113 *CPR* 1258-66, 399.

114 *Ibid.*, 414; Powicke, *King Henry*, 448.

115 Prestwich, Michael, *English Politics in the Thirteenth Century* (London: 1990) 34.

De Burgh, the Barons' keeper of Norfolk, probably deserted their cause just before the battle of Evesham,¹¹⁶ perhaps as a result of years of pressure from his wife's family. There were Balliols in both armies that August, and not just to guarantee that someone was sure to be on the winning side. Guy Balliol, the son of John's brother or uncle Henry, was de Montfort's standard-bearer, and according to the *Chronicle of Melrose*, he stayed with the earl to the end.

The Balliols seem to have taken advantage of the royalist victory at Evesham to reclaim the properties, like Yarmouth, appropriated by Simon de Montfort or his supporters. Hugh de Spenser's death may have made it easier for them to reclaim Barnard Castle later that summer, not that John Balliol got to stay there all that long. Peace was declared on September 16, but anyone active in public affairs at the time, like Balliol, would have been hard pressed to find any. Sometime before October 6, he was appointed one of the keepers of London¹¹⁷ another thankless task to be done for Henry, as the keepers were expected to restore the king's peace to that recalcitrant city. By December, Balliol had returned to his role as royal messenger; he was to explain the king's plans for the siege of Kenilworth to the forces gathered at Northampton since Henry was too ill to make the trip himself.¹¹⁸ Just a couple of months later, he was amongst those put on alert to help Henry of Almain in Yorkshire, Nottingham and Derby.¹¹⁹

It was probably this assignment which led to the May 15, 1266 surprise attack by Balliol, Henry of Almain and earl Warenne on Balwin Wake, John d'Eyville, and Henry of Hastings at Chesterfield, one of Wake's manors in Derby; all the royalists escaped, with Hastings finding his way to Kenilworth.¹²⁰ This raid probably allowed Balliol to mix business with a certain amount of grim pleasure for Wake, yet another of Dervorguilla's relations, had looted her manor of Fotheringay sometime during the turmoil of the last few years; later, it was Wake who would promise to pay compensation for the havoc he and his men had wreaked, and Alan son of the earl, Dervorguilla's cousin, acted as one of his sureties.¹²¹

Back in September 1265, when he had declared peace, Henry had chosen to add to the difficulties and suffering years of war had already inflicted on the kingdom by disinheriting the Montfortians and beginning to distribute their property, thereby causing endless dislocation and distress, even though he had also made some provision for the welfare of the wives and widows of his opponents; typical of the problems created by this policy, some of the lands which had belonged to Joan, wife of Dervorguilla's cousin, Henry of Hastings, were now granted to Dervorguilla's husband. After almost a year of confusion, dislocation and resentment, in August 1266, Cardinal Ottobuono Fieschi, the papal legate, forced the king to hold a parliament where a committee of six was charged with devising a system to sort out who really owned what, and allow the Disinherited to resettle peaceably.

116 Maddicott, *Montfort*, 337.

117 *CPR* 1258-66, 461.

118 *Ibid.*, 520.

119 *Ibid.*, 656.

120 Powicke, *King Henry*, 523.

121 *The Fourth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (London, 1874) Part I, 444.

The original six, the bishops of Bath and Exeter, the bishop-elect of Worcester, Alan de la Zuche, Robert de Walerand and Roger de Somery, lord of Dudley, were instructed to select six more men 'who should be the least in suspicion and who have the most knowledge and weight' to help them with their work; they chose Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford, Philip Basset, Warin of Bassingbourne, Richard, Bishop of St. Davids, and John Balliol.¹²² They worked with legate Ottobuono and Henry of Almain at Coventry and produced the Dictum of Kenilworth on October 31, one day before their deadline. Their settlement allowed the Montfortians or their heirs to redeem their lands, usually by paying heavy fines, and was thus a step toward reconciliation, though some of these cases took years to settle. Balliol himself stood to lose from the system he had helped to devise, since he, and at least one of his sons, had received confiscated land.¹²³

This committee was not expected to enforce its own recommendations. In January 1267, the king and Henry of Almain chose another twelve to undertake that task; in this group was John Balliol's brother Eustace, lord of Kirkclinton in Cumbria.

Balliol had come to such prominence in the fighting that by May 1266 his name was second only to that of Henry of Almain in the witness list to one of the king's mandates, and was just behind that of the bishop of Wells in a list from the next June.¹²⁴ The king showed his gratitude for Balliol's support in more tangible ways as well. John received various payments including a June 22 loan granted for the support of the scholars he maintained in Oxford.¹²⁵ Given that Oxford had been almost unanimous in its support for Montfort, it is curious that Balliol still took care to maintain his scholars' allowance and that the king agreed to help him. John knew his royal benefactor all too well, and so the record of another gift, this time promising 300m in compensation for his losses, included a 'promise that the king will in no wise revoke this grant',¹²⁶ a successful ploy, for Balliol received his money in less than six weeks.

The consequences of her husband's political decisions clearly had an impact on Dervorguilla; for a start, she lost, at least temporarily, some of the property she had gathered with such energy, and her grandfather's home at Fotheringay had been heavily damaged. Where did she, and her children, spend the war? Her sons were all old enough to serve in some capacity, but she still had her younger daughters to supervise, and may well have been pregnant with her last child. It is highly unlikely that she would have been willing to remain, effectively a hostage, at Barnard Castle once it was handed over to the Despensers for safekeeping. It may have seemed wisest to leave England altogether, and it is tempting to imagine her heading north with her youngest children to the relative peace of Galloway; compared with the chaos reigning in England, Alexander III's campaign against Man, launched from her homeland, may have seemed a welcome relief. If she did,

122 Sanders (ed.), *Documents*, 319; Powicke, *King Henry*, 532-3.

123 *CPR* 1266-72, 255.

124 *CPR* 1258-66, 664, 595; *Calendar of Charter Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office* (London: 1903) ii, 309.

125 *CDS*, I, no. 2401; Evans, *CLR*, v, 219-20.

126 *CPR* 1258-66, 599.

in fact, go to Buittle, where did she send her half-brother Thomas? Was he left to the care of the Despensers? If so, why didn't they set him free to make trouble for the Balliols in Galloway? A record in a roll from around this time reports that the Scottish court was concerned with Thomas; could he have been sent to Alexander III for safekeeping during the Barons' Wars?¹²⁷

The relative peace after Evesham meant the family could return to their home in Barnard Castle and to concerns which had had to be set aside during the war. Around the time of the raid on Baldwin Wake and his companions in the spring on 1266, Dervorguilla and her husband celebrated the marriage of their third daughter, Ada, which had been arranged in 1261 when her future husband, William Lindsay, was sixteen. He was the son and heir of Walter Lindsay of Lamberton, who held much of what is now the Lake District where both John Balliol and his brother Eustace had estates, along with lands in the Merse and Lancashire. Ada and William's daughter, Christian, was born soon after; this girl later married Ingelram de Guignes, Sire de Coucy, a relation of the wife of Alexander II.

The Balliols had probably arranged the marriage of their first daughter, Cecily, over a decade earlier, in October 1253, if her father had granted her the manor of Tygden, which Dervorguilla had inherited from Christina,¹²⁸ at the time of Cecily's marriage to John de Burgh, holder of Portslade in Sussex.¹²⁹ Cecilia and John had three daughters. Dervorguilla, the only grand-daughter to receive this name, may have been their eldest; she married Sir Robert fitz Walter who had supported the reforming barons but had made his peace with the king in May 1266.¹³⁰ Another daughter, Hawise, married Sir Robert Grelley (or Gresley), the young man whose marriage had been granted to John Balliol by Henry III to fulfill a promise to provide one of his children with an heir worth £500-1000 per annum. The youngest, Marjory, became a Gilbertine nun at Chicksands, a priory founded 1154 by Rohese Beauchamp near the Balliols' town of Hitchin, and may later have moved to a convent at Sempringham.¹³¹

Dervorguilla and John's mysterious second daughter, Margaret, appears only in a passing reference in *Scalacronica* which implies that she, like her sister Ada, may also have married a Cumbrian nobleman, one of the two Thomases of Moulton, lord of Gilsland and Burgh on Sands. This family was somehow related to the Balliols by marriage, for the younger of these Thomases, perhaps Margaret's son, was found to be the nearest heir of Helewye de Levington, widow of John's brother, Eustace.¹³²

When choosing a bride for his eldest son, John Balliol continued to look to England, where the family's loyalty to the king was well rewarded with prestigious matches. Hugh married Agnes de Valence, widow of Maurice Fitzgerald and daughter of William de

127 APS, i, 114.

128 *Placita de Quo Warranto Temporibus Edwardi I ...* (Records Commission: 1818), 545.

129 W. Farrer and C.T. Clay (eds.), *Early Yorkshire Charters [EYC]* (Wakefield, 1952) viii, 35.

130 C. Moor, *The Knights of Edward I [Knights]* (Leeds, 1929) ii, 63.

131 *Ibid.*, ii, 145.

132 CDS, nos. 2664, 2665

Valence, one of Henry III's half-brothers; this union brought the Balliols closer to the inner circle at court. The date of Hugh's marriage is not known, but, as his wife Agnes was still married to her first husband in the summer of 1266,¹³³ it is likely this match was a reward for the Balliols' loyalty during the Barons' Wars. Dervorguilla and John are known to have given Hugh her manor of Driffield sometime before 1268, an indication the marriage had taken place by then, for this grant may have been intended to help him support a wife like Agnes in the style to which she was accustomed.

John and Dervorguilla's third son, Alexander, married Eleanor de Genoure, daughter of Peter de Geneville and a cousin, of sorts, of Lord Edward.¹³⁴ This match was arranged after John Balliol's death by Eleanor of Provence herself,¹³⁵ perhaps with the help and guidance of Dervorguilla sometime in 1269 or 1270.¹³⁶ The queen thought highly enough of her namesake to grant her, and her heirs, the castle and vill at Mitford with Felton and Molesden along with a dowry of L200 at the time of her marriage.¹³⁷ The king had already given Alexander Thackwaite, near Cockermouth, a manor he had confiscated from Thomas, son of Alan of Multon; ironically, this Thomas, lord of Gilsland and Burgh-on-Sands, may have been Alexander's brother-in-law, the husband of his sister, Margaret. Alexander's wife may not have had the status equal to that of a niece of the king, but then, Alexander was only a third son, and besides, there was no nay-saying the queen.

Years after her husband's death, Dervorguilla and her youngest son, John, maintained this policy of uniting themselves with relations of the English royal family. In February 1281, John married Isabel, second daughter of John de Warenne, earl of Surrey, a 'most devoted ally' of William de Valence and a mainstay of Edward;¹³⁸ her mother was Alesia de Lusignan, half-sister of Henry III and aunt of Hugh Balliol's widow, Agnes. By the time of his wedding, John, now lord of Balliol and his mother's sole heir, had sufficient expectations and status to win another niece of the king as his bride, although he did not actually have possession of all that much at the time; his mother and his brothers' widows were all long-lived.

The youngest of Dervorguilla's children, Eleanor, was not married to John Comyn 'the Black', lord of Badenoch and Tynedale, and justiciar of Galloway, until sometime between 1279 and 1283, and probably nearer the end of that period. Alexander III had lost his younger son, David, in 1281, and this may have been the catalyst that finally led Dervorguilla to break with her family's custom of finding spouses for their children in England. She would have been well aware of the closeness of her only surviving son,

133 Moor, *Knights*, ii, 37.

134 B. Scott, *The Norman Balliols in England* (London, 1914) 276; *CDS*, ii, nos.141,161.

135 J.C. Hodgson, *A History of Northumbria* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1902) 89.

136 A. Hamilton Thompson, *Northumbrian Pleas from De Banco Rolls [de Banco Rolls]*(Durham, 1950) 66.

137 Farrer and Clay, *EYC*, 60; *Feet of Fines: Northumbria and Durham* (Newcastle -upon-Tyne Records Commission, 1931) 5.

138 H. Ridgeway, 'The Lord Edward and the Provisions of Oxford (1258): A Study in Faction' in P.R. Cross and S. D. Lloyd (eds.), *Thirteenth Century England: Proceedings of the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference* (Suffolk, 1986) 97; Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century*, 138.

John, to the Scottish throne, third behind only Alexander III and his daughter, Margaret, provided everyone ignored Robert Bruce the Competitor's argument that his claim should take precedence because he was the eldest male amongst the cousins. Having lost at least four of her own children by this time, she would have harboured few illusions about the security of the Canmore line, so she chose to look for a spouse for Eleanor north of the border, shrewdly turning to the most powerful family in Scotland in order to win support for her son should the king die childless. As it turned out, she calculated correctly; the Comyns did back her son, and it was the child of this marriage, named for his father and both his grandfathers, who was murdered by Robert Bruce in Greyfriars Kirk in Dumfries.

Evesham may have brought something akin to peace in England, but Dervorguilla and her family did not settle into a quiet life. John Balliol was occupied with royal service, both as a soldier and a negotiator. Furthermore, all was not well in Galloway; famine had moved Alexander III to send cattle there, and Balliol used his influence to get permission for the abbot of Dundrennan's agents to come to England to trade for food.¹³⁹

Gratitude for the safe deliverance of her husband and sons may have moved Dervorguilla to establish a house of Dominicans in Wigtown c.1267;¹⁴⁰ this foundation was dedicated to the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Dervorguilla's family had been patrons of many religious centres in Scotland as well as England for years, but this is the first time they were associated with the relatively new order of St. Dominic. Perhaps she was influenced by the Scottish royal family's preference for these teachers which had led to their settling in several towns around the kingdom, and establishing two schools which were the closest Scotland came to having universities before the Wars of Independence. Andrew of Wyntoun reported in his chronicle that she had founded two houses of friars, this one in Wigtown with a second, this time Franciscan, in Dundee. Sadly, it is often unwise to depend on Wyntoun for strict accuracy, and, as the Dundee charter used by the friars to back up this claim was a forgery, it appears that the prior of St. Serf's was, once again, mistaken.¹⁴¹ Tradition, based once again on shaky evidence, has also ascribed to her the foundation of the Franciscans in Dumfries, thus making her the primary benefactress of the church in which her grandson, John Comyn, would one day be murdered. Dervorguilla's religious zeal and desire to strengthen her neighbours' faith must have been very powerful indeed for her to overcome whatever aversion to these friars she had probably developed during the Barons' Wars when their order had favoured Simon de Montfort's reforms so strongly.

In March 1267, John Balliol and, perhaps, his family, were in Picardy where his skill as a negotiator had been put to use by the countess, Jeanne de Castile, to settle a private war between two local nobles; he and the countess arranged a marriage alliance between the

139 *CPR* 1266-72, 8.

140 I.B. Cowan and D.E. Easson, *Medieval Religious Houses: Scotland* [*Medieval Religious Houses*] (London, 1976) 110, 121.

141 *Ibid.*, 125.

families which seems to have resulted in peace.¹⁴² He did not linger, for June found him arranging to travel to Scotland, perhaps to look after Dervorguilla's interests following the death of their brother-in-law, Roger de Quincy; this, along with Henry III's business, could also be what sent him north the next February.¹⁴³

As he had been granted safe-conduct until the following November, John Balliol and Dervorguilla may well have been in Scotland when he died sometime in the early autumn. The exact date of his death was not recorded; on September 15, he had been granted land formerly belonging to Henry of Hastings,¹⁴⁴ an indication that either he was still alive at that time, or that he had died too far away for word of his passing to have reached the royal bureaucracy in England. They had received this news by October 24, when Dervorguilla was described by an anonymous clerk as a widow.¹⁴⁵ Nor is there any record of where he was buried. Andrew of Wyntoun has passed along the story of Dervorguilla's having his heart embalmed and put in an ivory casket which travelled with her for the rest of her life.¹⁴⁶ Even if she did not actually have meals served to it or call it her sweet silent companion, as Wyntoun claimed, the essence of the tale may well be true. It was not all that unusual for the dear departed to be treated in this way. In 1271, after his murder at Viterbo, the heart of Richard of Cornwall's son, Henry of Almain, was put in a gilt urn and kept near Edward the Confessor's shrine.¹⁴⁷ Not so very long after Balliol's death, Eleanor of Castile, by then queen of England, had her son Alphonso's heart embalmed so that it could be buried with her,¹⁴⁸ and according to Wyntoun, Dervorguilla expected John's heart to share her grave.

With the death of her husband, Dervorguilla began to appear in the records more often on her own, and the good will at court inspired by her husband and sons' loyal service, and perhaps even by the memory of her own father, Alan, and father-in-law, Hugh, is immediately apparent. Henry quickly proved himself willing to help her: 'wishing to do a special grace to' Dervorguilla, he ordered his escheater south of the Trent to deliver to her all the lands of her own heritage which John had held.¹⁴⁹ However, it was not only what the king did which showed his special favour toward Dervorguilla, but what he did not do: this notoriously grasping monarch did not insist she remarry. Despite, or perhaps because of, her advanced age, Dervorguilla was a very valuable prize in the marriage market, and Henry stood to profit greatly when it came time to choose her second husband; a widow with lands spreading from Scotland to Picardy, and with cash in hand, must have had suitors to spare. Instead, he allowed Dervorguilla to remain a widow. If she paid him off, there is no record of it. Did sentiment conquer greed? Henry could be generous. Would he have allowed Dervorguilla to refuse a second husband because she was the widow of

142 Dodds, *Northumbria*, vi, 48.

143 *CPR* 1266-72, 78,198.

144 *Ibid.*, 257.

145 *CDS*, I, no. 2051.

146 Andrew of Wyntoun, *The Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland* [*Cronykyl*], D. Laing (ed.) (Edinburgh, 1872) ii, 322.

147 N. Denholm-Young, *Richard of Cornwall* (New York, 1947) 151.

148 J.C. Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth Century England* (London, 1998)

149 *CDS*, i, no. 2051.

an exceptionally loyal servant who was, in turn, the heir of one of the few northerners who had stood by his father half a century ago? And what about Alexander III? What kept him from insisting she accept a match of his own making? She had sided with the Scottish central government decades earlier in order to win her third of Galloway; she could hardly claim now that the Scottish king could have no say in her future, and there is no record of special service to Alexander or his family to explain her extraordinary good fortune. Curiously, years later, after her grand-daughter Hawise de Burgo was widowed, she was also not forced to remarry, even though she held lands all over the kingdom.¹⁵⁰ Did she make her own deal with Edward I, helped by her grandmother?

Women of her station often entered a convent after being widowed; for her part, Dervorguilla chose to be a patron of the church, not its servant. She had at least one child still dependent on her. Eleanor would certainly still be her mother's responsibility, even if in someone else's care, Margaret was probably not yet married, and John was still not settled. Any of them might have been her reason, or excuse, not to take up the religious life.

Dervorguilla may have wished to avoid a second marriage out of loyalty to John, or because she enjoyed her independence and having control of her vast possessions: her own inheritance plus her widow's third of the Balliol property. Perhaps, like so many widows, it was a combination of these two motives. She may have enjoyed the extra responsibilities and duties brought by having sole care of all this property, for, while there were local agents to care for these fields, manor houses, castles, mills and fishponds from day to day, all those caretakers needed constant watching themselves. No doubt Dervorguilla had been doing much of this throughout most of her marriage, and she may now have relished not having to answer to anybody about her decisions; she would not have been the first or last widow to do so.

Much has been made of the wealth Dervorguilla and her husband had accumulated by the time of his death, enough that, despite having eight children for whom they needed to provide, they had been able to buy off an angry king and still ended up as creditors, even to the monks in Durham whose bishop had given them so much trouble.¹⁵¹ Even those loans made within the family about which we know were kept on a formal footing. John and Dervorguilla may have been willing to help out her cousin, Alan son of the earl, but it was a business deal and there is no evidence that she tried to get her fellow executors to forgive the debt after John's death; indeed, there is also no record that she stepped in even on her sons' behalf when they were called to court to answer for what they had not repaid their father's estate. None of the Balliols' loans amount to much compared to those made by Richard of Cornwall, who is supposed to have gone so far as to have lent without interest,¹⁵² but they are still impressive. Even more remarkable, Dervorguilla and John seem to have chosen to live within their means, unlike so many of their contemporaries to whom the very idea was incomprehensible. This is not to say that they were debt-free, but unlike

150 Moor, *Knights*, ii, 145.

151 Durham University Library, No. 5, the College, Dean and Chapter Muniments (Durham Treasury Miscellaneous Charters), [DTMC] no.4463. The monks owed John Balliol's creditors L1000.

152 Denholm-Young, *Richard of Cornwall*, 154.

most of their peers, they had extra cash.

Dervorguilla was one of her husband's executors, a nod, perhaps, to her business acumen, or, at the very least, to the skill she had shown running their properties and overseeing those who cared for their far-flung holdings while John had been preoccupied with the king's business. Others known to have worked with her as executors were her husband's nephews, Sir Hugh de Eure and his brother, Stephen, rector of Mitford, and Mr. Thomas of Hunsingouere. It took years to settle the estate while the executors tried to collect debts as small as 10 marks from Richard of Caxton and as large as that L1000 due from the prior and convent of Durham.¹⁵³

It was often difficult for widows to get possession of their third, but Dervorguilla always had been quick to go after what she believed was hers, and this time, she seems to have had the English king on her side if anyone put up a fight. There is no knowing for certain all the manors assigned to her, though Hitchin, held *in capite* for 1½ knights, and Kempston certainly were, and she kept Fotheringay. She and John had already given Driffield to Hugh; they may well have given him other property, and made similar provisions for their second surviving son, Alexander, for both these young men had married prominent women who would expect to be kept in a certain style.

Extensive as her holdings were, she was not shy about adding to them. In 1285, Dervorguilla was sited as the holder of Driffield, the same manor she and John had given to Hugh sometime before 1268; when Hugh had predeceased her, she had repossessed it, apparently just as ready to defend her rights against her daughters-in-law as she had been against her sisters. Dervorguilla was in and out of court because of land disputes throughout her life.

With all this wealth and influence to draw on, Dervorguilla set about accommodating herself to her new position and establishing new routines. Barnard Castle was now the *caput* of Hugh and Agnes; did Thomas of Galloway travel with his sister to her dower lands and other manors? Did these peregrinations take her to France as well as to manors inherited around Scotland and England? One of her daughters-in-law is known to have received part of her widow's portion in Picardy; had Dervorguilla also taken part of her share there? Immediately following her husband's death, Dervorguilla, as executor and beneficiary, would have been preoccupied carrying out the provisions of his will and preserving as much of the family's wealth as possible during the transfer of their property to the heir. Traditionally, she is supposed to have been particularly fond of her manor of Fotheringay; perhaps she used her power as executor to insist that Baldwin Wake made good his promise, if he had not already made reparations for the damage he had done there.

No longer based at Barnard Castle, Dervorguilla kept the title 'Lady of Balliol' and she would still have been able to count on John's servants and advisers. The evidence is far too scanty to say anything conclusive about either the men who served the Balliol family in general or Dervorguilla in particular, though some patterns, and prominent individuals,

153 DTMC, nos. 3585, 4463.

do emerge from the few extant sources.

Not surprisingly, her sons seem to have drawn their helpers from the men who had served their father, judging by the few Balliol documents which have survived from Barnard Castle. Henry Spring served her husband and his first two successors. He was an executor for both John and Hugh, a position which must have been particularly challenging when the interests of the two came into conflict, and he witnessed charters issued first by John, and, later, by Alexander. Various Egglestons and Stokesfields, Balliol tenants, worked with the family, father and sons, as did the Lises, Lancasters, Normanvilles, and John de Croft. Though not recorded in association with their father, Sir Hugh Gubum (Gubyum, Gubyun) witnessed documents for Alexander and his younger brother, John.

The man upon whom almost everyone in the family depended at one time or another was Hugh de Eure or Ivor, son of John Balliol's sister, Ada, and her husband, John, son of Robert of Warkworth and Clavinging. Ada had been given the whole manor of Stokesley by her father; her son, Hugh, whose surname Eure was drawn from a French placename on the lower Seine, ended up with the whole of this barony, along with Kirkley near Pentland and Kettins near Coupar Angus.¹⁵⁴ His uncle John and cousin Hugh trusted him enough to make him one of their executors, and, despite the fact he had to sue his cousin Alexander for debts to Hugh's estate, he witnessed a document for that young man as well.¹⁵⁵ Later, he would work with Dervorguilla.

That none of these names associated with her husband's family, except those of his nephew and the Normanvilles, turn up in the few extant documents issued by Dervorguilla is, perhaps, more a reflection of her dower settlement which drew her away from their sphere than of her distrust or dislike of any of these men. If evidence existed from the lands of her own heritage in England which she and her husband had ruled together, it might be possible to draw conclusions about continuity or new brooms. Based on the records found so far, it seems she drew on Balliol tenants when she needed them, some more than once.

By and large, when putting together her curia, or, more properly, curias, she seems, sensibly enough, to have depended on locals who understood the situation best. Under such circumstances, counting the number of times an individual witnessed a charter to discover who was most important to her would be a mistake. For example, Robert Avenel, rector of Stamfordham near Corbridge, witnessed at least three of her charters granting land in his parish to the scholars of Balliol Hall. His presence on these lists does not necessarily make him one of her close associates, even during the 1280s when she was paying the most attention to her project in Oxford; he was valuable to her and to her son, John, when confirming his mother's charter, for his knowledge of his parish. Similarly, when in Galloway, she called upon locals for assistance, though only three are known to have been so honoured by her more than once: Michael son of Durand (or Durant), probably

154 *A History of the Yorkshire North Riding : The Victoria History of the Counties of England* (London, 1968)

155 Hamilton Thompson, *de Banco Rolls*, 43, 82; Durham, Public Record Office, UD/BC 119, no.4.

her tenant in Kirkpatrick Durham, Sir Walter de Twynholm, a parish near Kirkcudbright, and Bertram of Cardoness, all of whom had witnessed her foundation of Sweetheart Abbey before doing the same for a quitclaim made to her by Robert de Campania. Bertram also travelled to Haddington to witness Alexander III's 1277 confirmation of the grant of land in Largs she had made to Glasgow cathedral.¹⁵⁶ Perhaps they were active in her service for years, or perhaps they were simply well informed locals who could explain the background to these grants should a jury ever have to be called together.

On the other hand, absence from her charters does not necessarily mean absence from her service. She made Thomas Randolph of Nithsdale and Mr. Thomas de Hunsingouere two of her executors¹⁵⁷, an honour she would hardly have bestowed upon people she did not know or trust, but the only instance of Randolph being associated with her as a witness was on the king's confirmation of her grant to Glasgow cathedral in 1277. However, like Hunsingouere, he had already served as one of her husband's executors, and as Dervorguilla was both executor and beneficiary, they must have worked together regularly for years. Three other men, Mr. William de Pothou, Walter de Fotheringay, and Peter de Yar, a cleric, also chosen as executors by Dervorguilla, do not appear as her associates anywhere else, whereas a fourth, Thomas de la More, a tenant from Hitchin, also acted as an attorney for her near the end of her life. In Galloway, John de Gevelstone witnessed only one charter for her, but years later, was one of John Balliol's nominees during the Great Cause; similarly Cane MacGillolane and Roland son of Cane each turn up once in Balliol family documents, then later held out for the family during the Wars of Independence.¹⁵⁸ Were these trusted, long-term associates, or men who were at the right place at the right time?

Three men do turn up in documents related to more than one geographical area and project: Sir Robert de Meneville (Moyneville), Sir John de Swyneburne, and Gilbert de Umfraville, Earl of Angus. Meneville, whose family may have started serving the Balliols while they were all still in France, as Moyenneville is not far from Bailleul-en-Vimeu, was a Balliol tenant in Rideley, Northumbria.¹⁵⁹ He acted as a witness for Alexander Balliol at Barnard Castle before working with Dervorguilla when she was getting land for her scholars in Oxford, and also witnessed Robert de Campania's quitclaim to Borgue in Galloway. Swyneburne, another Balliol tenant, witnessed the same two charters for Dervorguilla, as well as her son John's confirmation of her grants to the Oxford scholars; he may also have been her attorney when she ended up in court with the Warden (*custodem*) of Baliol Hall in 1286¹⁶⁰. Umfraville was a relation by marriage. He had witnessed a charter for her husband sometime before coming into his earldom in 1267, and was a nominee for

156 *Registrum Episcopatus Glasguensis* (Bannatyne Club, 1843) i, 192-3; Grant G. Simpson, *Regesta Regum Scottorum: Handlist of the Acts of Alexander III, the Guardians and John, 1249-96* (Edinburgh, 1960) no. 109.

157 CDS, ii, 535.

158 R. Oram, *The Lordship of Galloway* (Edinburgh, 2000) 208.

159 *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem* (London, 1904) i, 252.

160 J. Stevenson, *Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1870) 20.

her son John during the Great Cause; between these two events, he witnessed her grant to Balliol Hall and Alexander III's confirmation of the Glasgow cathedral grant. It may have been just luck that the surviving documents show these three helping with projects in more than one place, or it may be a sign that they are amongst those Dervorguilla relied on most heavily.

Occasional glimpses into the ranks of the men who served Dervorguilla and her family on a daily, or at least, regular, basis, turn up in the records. The Tylleloys were with the family for years, no doubt starting in Picardy. Hugh Tylleloy, described as John Balliol's knight, was traveling with him in 1230; Ingram Tylleley was named in a suit with John in 1260; and Peter de Tyllolly was the knight of John's brother, Eustace, in 1264-5.¹⁶¹ Adam de Pinkeny was one of Dervorguilla and John's attorneys, acted as an executor for John, and may have been their chaplain;¹⁶² later, Stephen son of Stephen, Dervorguilla's chaplain, journeyed to Galloway on her business.¹⁶³ Roger of Fotheringay was also sent to Galloway, this time to keep an eye on the luggage she was sending up there. Richard of Foxton was one of her seneschals, probably at Hitchin, Barnard Castle, or Fotheringay, as there are Foxtons near each of those towns held by Dervorguilla or her sons.

The inquisitions *post mortem* into John Balliol's holdings, which had begun in November 1268, had finished their work by St Stephen's Day, 26 December 1268, when Hugh, described as a knight, did homage to the king for all he held *in capite*, saving what would be given to Dervorguilla as her heritage and dower.¹⁶⁴ His good service to Henry and Edward, perhaps during the Baron's Wars, earned him a break on payment of his relief.¹⁶⁵ At this same time, Hugh was given permission to leave the kingdom for an unspecified destination, accompanied by his uncle Eustace Balliol.¹⁶⁶ They may have been caught up in the crusading fever like so many of their contemporaries, including the Lord Edward and his wife, Eleanor, but Hugh does not appear on any of the extant lists of crusaders, so he may just have needed to go to France to settle his affairs there. Whatever his intentions, something interfered, and Hugh and Eustace still had not left the kingdom by the end of the following June.¹⁶⁷ Eventually Eustace and Hugh's younger brother, Alexander, did manage to get away. In the spring of 1270, they were listed among the crusaders who were expected to be out of the country for four years.¹⁶⁸ They joined John de Vescy, whose family had been such bitter opponents during the wars but who was now a close associate of Eleanor of Castile. This trio joined Lord Edward's crusade,¹⁶⁹ Hugh, it seems, had to stay behind to take care of his family's business.

161 *CDS*, i, no.1099; *CR* 1259-61, 281; *CDS*, i, no. 2375.

162 *Ibid.*, no.1914.

163 *CPR* 1272-78, 281.

164 *CDS*, i, no. 2515.

165 *CDS*, i, no. 2532

166 *CDS*, i, no. 2516.

167 *Ibid.*, i, no. 2538.

168 *CPR* 1266-72, 426.

169 *CDS*, i, no. 2640.

There is almost no further mention of Hugh Balliol in the records until it is reported that he had died sometime before 10 April, 1271. Dervorguilla's third son, Alexander, was found to be his heir. Her fourth son, John, was probably practicing a bit of poetic licence in his argument during the Great Cause when he claimed his right to the Scottish throne had descended from his brother Hugh to his brother Alan, and thence to Alexander, implying that Alan was still alive and could inherit in 1271. Unless Hugh and Alan died together in some accident, and the jurors at Hugh's inquisitions *post mortem* neglected to mention that, technically, Alan had been Hugh's heir, Dervorguilla must already have lost her second son. Alan is never named in the records, and Dervorguilla did not include his name when commemorating her other children, so it seems likely Alan had probably died years before as a very young child; still, John and his legal advisers, wishing to be thorough, included him in their account. As Hugh had died without children, the Balliol properties, less Agnes' widow's portion, fell directly to Alexander.

Alexander was still away on crusade with the Lord Edward in the Holy Land, only leaving the campaigning to take up his inheritance.¹⁷⁰ He was back in the kingdom by February 1272 when his service, either during the Barons' Wars, or more recently, while crusading, moved Edward to intercede with his father in the hope that the king 'would be gracious to' Alexander. Henry had been busily disposing of the windfall which the profits from the Balliol lands had brought into his hands; nevertheless, in the middle of March, he pardoned Alexander all his relief,¹⁷¹ and granted him all the proceeds which he, the king, had not already given away. This did not result in Alexander inheriting a debt-free estate; Hugh's relief remained unpaid, and by 1278, Edward, now king, moved to have Alexander distrained for failing to hand over the last L300.¹⁷²

Dervorguilla's response to the loss of her eldest son may well have been to head for Galloway, for during the month after Hugh's death, she sent Roger of Fotheringay north with her goods. She had already begun planning her newest project, the foundation of a new abbey overlooking the Nith, near the eastern edge of the lordship of Galloway and her lands near Buittle. In 1270, the Cistercian's General Chapter sent the abbots of Furness and Rievaulx in the north of England to inspect the site she had offered.¹⁷³ They must have approved, for in the spring of 1273, Dervorguilla granted the Cistercians two large parcels of land. It is likely that she concentrated on the building of her abbey during the years after Hugh's death, and, as usual, there are more questions than answers about the whole process. Had she and John first come up with the idea of a new abbey together as an expression of thankfulness at their family's safe deliverance from the dangers of the Barons' Wars? As noted above, John was, at the very least, conventionally pious and ready to go on pilgrimage or donate to the church. He had supported the hospital in Barnard Castle dedicated to St. John the Baptist¹⁷⁴ and he may have made donations to the church

170 CPR 1266-72, 22.

171 CDS, i, no. 2644.

172 CDS, ii, no. 118.

173 Cowan and Easson, *Medieval Religious Houses*, 78.

174 T. D. Hardy (ed.), *Registrum Palatinum Dunelmense: The Register of Richard de Kellawe, Lord Palatinate and Bishop of Durham* (London: 1874) 801.

at Bellifontaine, almost visible from Bailleul-en-Vimeu.¹⁷⁵ Together, he and his wife may have been responsible for the building of the nave of the parish church at Buittle which dates from around this time.¹⁷⁶

Or did Dervorguilla only think of founding an abbey after she was a widow and found herself, suddenly, with so much wealth and property at her disposal? She had been brought up in a family with a long tradition of establishing and making donations to monasteries, so the idea of building one in a time of great sorrow must have seemed natural enough to her. The chantry outside the church at Fotheringay, supplied with a priest to celebrate mass Monday, Wednesday and Friday for the souls of John Balliol and his ancestors, was probably built by her.¹⁷⁷ Perhaps, having established this, she decided on a larger foundation, this time not just for the good of her husband and his family.

Dervorguilla controlled property throughout Scotland and England, and, probably, Picardy. Did she choose to place her foundation in Galloway for sentimental reasons, or did she do so because she had large tracts of land there which she could give away uncontested if she wished?

Her choice of the Cistercians seems straightforward enough, given the favour they found in the court of Edward I, and her own family's long-standing association with them in Galloway; after all, her grandfather, Roland, is known to have established the Cistercians at Glenluce, and her father was buried in their house at Dundrennan. But why did she choose to support monks and not nuns? Eight Cistercian nunneries had been founded in Scotland between 1140 and 1240,¹⁷⁸ none of them in Galloway, where the lone nunnery established during that century was a Benedictine foundation at Lincluden, just up river from the lands upon which she was proposing to build. Dervorguilla was the patroness of the nuns who had moved from Eltisley to Hitchingbrook, and maintained an active interest in their affairs. An ancestress on her mother's side, Judith, wife of Waltheof, had founded a Benedictine nunnery at Elstow near Kempston, one of the manors Dervorguilla now held. Why did she not choose to establish Cistercian women in Galloway?

Her abbey had come to be known as Dulce Cor, or Sweetheart, by 1360 but it is not absolutely certain by just what name it was known from the start. David II's inspection reproduces Dervorguilla's original grant; in his introduction, he calls it Dulce Cor, but, unfortunately, the name used in Dervorguilla's time is all but invisible.¹⁷⁹

Andrew of Wyntoun would later claim Dervorguilla had chosen the name Sweetheart herself, as a reference to her husband's embalmed heart, but, for all her renown in Scotland

175 G. Stell, "The Balliol Family and the Great Cause of 1291-2" in K. J. Stringer, *Essays on the Nobility of Medieval Scotland* (Edinburgh:1985) 158

176 G. Stell, *Exploring Scotland's Heritage: Dumfries and Galloway* (Edinburgh: 1986) 146.

177 M.F.Moore, *The Lands of the Scottish Kings in England* (London: 1915) 95.

178 E. Ewan and M.M.Meikle (eds.), *Women in Scotland c. 1100- c. 1750* (East Linton, 1999) 3.

179 Edinburgh University Library, The Laing Charters, Box 65, no. 2531; printed in Latin in *Regesta Regum Scottorum*: David II, no.235, and in English in *Calendar of the Laing Charters AD 854-1837 Belonging to the University of Edinburgh*, J. Anderson (ed.), (Edinburgh, 1899).

as a devoted wife, Dervorguilla did not introduce herself at the start of the abbey's charter as lady of Balliol, as she would do in other documents; there was no point reminding everybody that she had been married to an outsider and had been willing to set aside Galloway's independence to win her inheritance with the help of the Scottish crown all those years ago. Instead, she introduced herself as the daughter of the late Alan: far better to refer back to her father as her source of authority. Nor did John's name turn up in the top half of the list of souls meant to benefit from her donation. Looking at the names which come before his, it seems plain that at least one of her motives, no doubt secondary to religious zeal and a heartfelt concern for the souls of her nearest and dearest, was the desire to remind everybody north of the border of the wealth and connections, in particular, their nearness to the Scottish crown, of her two surviving sons, Alexander and John. Ironically, it was her own survival, and her determination to keep her Scottish lands under her own control, which kept these two from taking a more active role in Scottish affairs, thereby becoming better known in Scotland. As it was, they remained in England preoccupied with Balliol business.

In fact, neither of these men, nor any other member of her extended family like her de Quincy nieces who held land in Galloway, seem to have taken an active interest in her project, for none of their names appear on the witness list. John, like so many younger sons, may have been pursuing a career in the church, as there is evidence that he went to school in Durham. Alexander may have been too busy with whatever personal business was taking him from the kingdom later that April.¹⁸⁰ Besides, he had two widows for whom he had to provide from the Balliol estates, a circumstance which left him with less than half the land his father had held. He may well have taken a dim view of his mother's granting away permanently over thirty square miles of land he hoped to take possession of himself someday.

Like all Cistercian monasteries, Sweetheart was dedicated to the honour of God and the Blessed Virgin Mary, and given for the good of the souls of various relations. The first of these beneficiaries was not her husband but all the kings of Scotland, followed by a prayer for the health of the present king, Alexander III, his ancestors and descendents. Despite the decades spent largely in England, and children and grandchildren still resident there, she did not include references to the recently deceased King Henry, or his brother, Richard of Cornwall, as convention may have demanded, so her prayers for the Scottish royal family may actually be an indication of how much she cared for them and not just a reminder of her connection to them. Next, lest anyone forget her close relationship with the Lord Alexander, she listed her mother's relations, the earls of Huntingdon: Henry, David, and John. Then she moved on to her father's family: Fergus of Galloway, his son Uchtred, her grandfather Roland and grandmother Elene (Helen de Moreville), her father and mother along with all their ancestors and descendents. Only once all these kinfolk have been commemorated does John Balliol, 'my lord and late husband' enter, along with Hugh, 'his son and mine' and 'my daughter' Cecilia. Perhaps coincidentally, whatever ceremony accompanied the foundation of Sweetheart took place on the fourth nones of April (2 April), the month in which Hugh probably had died two years earlier; there is no record

180 *CPR* 1272-81, 47.

of when Dervorguilla had lost Cecilia, and no mention in this charter of her second son, Alan. Unlike on her seal, the earls of Chester do not figure here, except for John the Scot, her mother's brother; perhaps the Chester connection was just too distant, or foreign, to merit inclusion, no matter how profitable she had found it. Finally, she hoped this donation would benefit her soul and those of all other Christians.

As already mentioned, a striking aspect of the witness list is the absence of any of her relations, nor were any of these people mentioned by name in the body of the charter. Of course, her sons and their cousins may not have had as intimate a knowledge of the lands being described as those local lords spiritual and temporal who did append their names. Still, given her age, it would surely have been reassuring to all concerned to have proof that her heir, his brother and other members of the family favoured her project, and would, therefore, not be inclined to undo what Dervorguilla was beginning.

The list is headed, not surprisingly, by the bishop of Whithorn, followed by the heads of six of Galloway's monasteries, two, or possibly three, of them Cistercian, and all of them associated with her family in some way. Admittedly, it is difficult to find a religious house in Galloway whose foundation was not attributed to one of Dervorguilla's ancestors. Having a mysterious character like Fergus, the founder of the dynasty, in the family tree made this easier; he was credited with establishing four. Five knights and four other local witnesses followed their religious leaders.

Dervorguilla must have spared no expense. Building proceeded apace for two years, and, work on the preliminary, usually temporary, buildings, was far enough along by 1274 that the Cistercian General Chapter instructed the abbots of Holmcultrane and Glenluce to inspect the new abbey 'which, it is said, Dervorguilla has founded'.¹⁸¹ The cynicism of that 'it is said' was immediately contradicted by their further instructions that, provided the abbots were satisfied with what they found at Kinlochdeloch, they were to incorporate the buildings into the order and introduce a convent there as a daughter house of Dundrennan.

The abbots should have been pleased. The church, built of local red sandstone,¹⁸² and its attendant buildings to the south, were all set within thirty acres surrounded by a granite wall. Little survives, but it is possible to trace the outlines and suggest the probable positions of most of the usual buildings. Dervorguilla must have been responsible for her abbey's buildings following the Bernardine plan favoured by the order in the early twelfth century, at least in general outline, at a time when even Clairvaux had set it aside.¹⁸³ Still, she did not insist the builders stick strictly to the rules, and so there are tracery windows in the church choir and transepts, a part rose window in the southern transept, and high quality carving throughout, much of which seems to have followed Glasgow Cathedral's style, and also reflected the experimentation going on at the time in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire.¹⁸⁴ The fasculated piers suggest influence from northeastern France, perhaps via

181 Cowan and Easson, *Medieval Religious Houses*, 78.

182 J.S.Richardson, *Sweetheart Abbey*, J.Hume (ed.) (HMSO, 1986) 11.

183 D.Robinson (ed.), *The Cistercian Abbeys of Britain: Far from the Concourse of Man* (London, 2002) 50, 59.

184 *Ibid.*, 59; R. Fawcett, 'Ecclesiastical Architecture in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century' N. Reid (ed.), *Scotland in the Reign of Alexander III 1249-1286* (Edinburgh, 1990) 169.

Yorkshire, and the style of decoration of the west bay windows was first found in France.¹⁸⁵ Surely Dervorguilla herself, patroness of Glasgow cathedral, long-time resident in England and visitor to France, had a hand in these deviations from traditional Cistercian austerity.

Dervorguilla made further donations to Sweetheart: books. A beautiful Bible appeared amongst the abbey's earliest possessions, traditionally as a donation from the foundress.¹⁸⁶ Three of the original four volumes survive; the missing volume, containing many of the prophets, would have been the third in the original sequence. The style of the decoration indicates that these volumes were probably produced by two or more artists in northeast France, perhaps in Amiens, the cathedral city nearest Bailleul-en-Vimeu.¹⁸⁷

Plainly, the monks valued their beautiful Bible highly; the first volume ends with a curse upon anyone so profane as to steal it. Most pages are touched with colour, and have capitals decorated with tails sweeping up and down the margins in a French style that would become formalized by the end of the century.¹⁸⁸ At the start of most books and their prologues are miniature paintings, accented with gold, and, often, including fanciful details. Sometimes the fanciful takes over completely, as when the intertwined monsters float above the start of the prologue to Joshua. The creature on the right holds the Balliol arms in his mouth.¹⁸⁹ The shield must have been striking when new, with bright red and silver, but the silver has long since corroded.

Joshua, Moses' successor as leader of the Israelites, led his people across the Jordan and conquered the promised land, helped, in part, by advantages which would make any soldier jealous: the Ark of the Covenant's special powers, trumpet blasts and shouts powerful enough to level the walls of Jericho, and the cooperation of the sun which stood still when needed. During these wars, he was the perfect lieutenant, for 'he left nothing undone that the Lord commanded to Moses'.¹⁹⁰ However, Joshua was also a statesman; it was he who was responsible for dividing the land among the twelve tribes of Israel. These two accomplishments taken together probably explain Dervorguilla's choice of this book for a display of her husband's arms instead of the opening pages of Genesis. In his wife's eyes, John Balliol had also been more than just a warrior, not least, perhaps, when he had worked on the Dictum of Kenilworth. In making this choice, Dervorguilla seems to have taken the artist by surprise. He had probably already started to paint the jousting centaur who rode above the opening of the first book, and ended up filling in that knight's shield with a simple and popular device, a chevron, used then by numerous families.¹⁹¹ Curiously, she did not choose to have the Galloway lion inserted here; her family's arms appear

185 *Ibid.*, 168; Robinson, *The Cistercian Abbeys*, 59.

186 Princeton University Library, Garrett Mss., no. 27, [PU, Garrett 27]; *Angels, Nobles and Unicorns: Art and Patronage in Medieval Scotland* (Edinburgh: 1982) 33.

187 R. Fawcett (ed.), 'Medieval Art and Architecture in the Dioceses of Glasgow' in J. Higgitt, *Manuscripts and Libraries in the Dioceses of Glasgow Before the Reformation*, The British Archeological Association Conference XXIII, 1998, 107; D. Skemmer, Curator of Manuscripts, Princeton University, 3 May 2002.

188 A.E.Bye, "Illumination from the Atelier of Jean Pucell", *Art in America*, iv (1916) 103.

189 PU, Garrett 27, f.326r.

190 Joshua 11:15.

191 Timothy H.S. Duke, Chester Herald, email, 20 May 2002.

nowhere in the three volumes, an odd omission considering their ultimate destination and Dervorguilla's proud identification of herself as the 'daughter of Alan'.

Another book said to have been donated to the abbey by its founder is now lodged in the Bodleian Library¹⁹² It contains texts believed by Dervorguilla and her beneficiaries to have been compiled by St. Jerome, the teacher who fled from Rome for Bethlehem and there translated the Vulgate, and by Hugh of St. Victor, a scholastic who not only did not despise secular learning, but even went so far as to recommend, 'Learn everything and nothing you see will be useless.' Was this a volume Dervorguilla acquired because she had been told it would be particularly important for an abbey's library to possess, or was it one she sacrificed from her own collection? If it was from her own library, it is evidence that hers was a faith informed by curiosity. Two of the chapters by St. Jerome were filled with practical information, useful to anyone trying to set the Bible's stories in context: *de locis* describes places in the Old and New Testaments, and *de interpretationibus Hebraicorum nominum* translates Biblical names into Latin. No flights of mystical fancy here. The volume's provenance again raises the possibility that Dervorguilla could read, or at least understand, Latin. Had her parents, looking forward to her living, as they did, in a world which included contact with foreign courts, insisted that she learn the language in which most Scots correspondence with France and England was written?

There is, once again, no evidence to answer this question with any certainty, or to show how active Dervorguilla was in the day-to-day decision-making during the building of Sweetheart or of the chapels at Glasgow or Fotheringay, or, for that matter, how involved she was during these same years as executrix of her husband's estate. Sometimes she had no choice but to take an active role, as, for instance, in 1274, when a royal official insisted that she, as principal executrix, and her steward, Richard of Foxton, were both bound to the marshal for the debts John Balliol incurred while he was sheriff of Nottingham and Cumbria and the keeper of the king's mills in Nottingham.¹⁹³ Most of the time she let Henry Spring or Hugh de Eure appear in court, but in 1278 officialdom demanded she explain how she came to hold Hitchin as part of Edward I's *quo warranto* investigation. Unfortunately, that 16 May she was unable to say by what warrant her husband's family had gained possession of the manor before giving it to her as part of her settlement.¹⁹⁴ Whether through the magic of royal favour or the force of her own argument and personality, the investigating officials left her in possession to enjoy her various privileges, including her market every Tuesday.

The next October, Dervorguilla cancelled her own plans to travel and sent her chaplain to Galloway in her stead, no doubt detained in England by whatever illness or accident led to the death of her son Alexander sometime before 13 November. Thomas de Normanville, a tenant, was ordered to hold Alexander's land for the king; he soon passed them along

192 Bodleian Library, Fairfax Mss. no. 5; N.R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books* (London: 1964) 184.

193 CDS, ii, no. 13.

194 Huyshe, *Hitchin*, 191.

to one of Alexander's cousins, Robert de Eure, for safekeeping.¹⁹⁵ It had been seven years since Edward, now king, had interceded with King Henry to ease Alexander's acquisition of his property; this time he interested himself in the proceedings only long enough to warn the sheriff of Northumbria to give his cousin, Alexander's widow, Eleanor, all the land she had received at the time of her marriage from the dowager queen, Eleanor of Provence.¹⁹⁶

As the king granted the widowed Eleanor Kempston in Bedfordshire, and she also claimed one third of the rents from Bywell,¹⁹⁷ it was to a greatly reduced inheritance that Dervorguilla's youngest, John, succeeded. The lord of Barnard Castle now had three widows to support: his mother and his sisters-in-law, Agnes and Eleanor. If he provided for them as the law demanded, he kept control of just less than one third of the Balliol properties his father had held in 1268; Dervorguilla, with a full third, held more than the new Lord of Balliol. Unfortunately for John, all these women were exceptionally hardy, draining income from Balliol properties for years, even after both the younger women remarried. John may have had glorious prospects, but his actual holdings at the time of his taking up the lordship were less than inspiring.

His new life was quite different from whatever his previous training had led him to expect. By his own account, as usually translated, John had stayed in the schools there a long time: *se in scholis Dunelmensis dicius perstitisse*¹⁹⁸ However, *dicius* could also mean 'too long', which helps explain why there is no sign of him joining the scholars supported by his family at Oxford. The only school in Durham at that time was the one for novices, so it seems this youngest son had been set, perhaps reluctantly, on the path to a career in the church, and, by the age of 28-30, should have been well on his way. No record has yet been found of him as a monk or cleric, but then, there were not many references to him, period, before he became lord of Barnard Castle; he did not act as a witness for his brothers or mother, and his cousin Stephen got the church at Mitford over which the Balliols had some control.

John may have spent about a year with Edward I sometime after his brother Alexander's death. Thomas Wykes believed John was in the king's custody before his marriage, though he never explained why.¹⁹⁹ There is just as good a chance that John's attendance upon Edward was voluntary. His family had been friendly the king and his father for much of the last half-century and more, and there is no reason to suspect that John's relations with Edward were any different. A young man raised in a royalist household filled with stories of Edward's exploits during the Baron's War may well have viewed this king as a daring

195 H.C.Maxwell Lyte, *Calendar of Fine Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office* (London: 1911) i, 102, 111

196 *CDS*, ii, no. 136.

197 *Ibid.*, ii, no. 161; Thompson, *de Banco Rolls*, 47.

198 J.Raine (ed.), *Historia Dunelmensis Scriptores Tres: Gaufridus de Coldingham, Robertus de Greystanes et Willelmus de Chamber* (Edinburgh: 1839) 74.

199 H.R.Luard (ed.), *Annales Monastici: Chronicon Vulgo Dictum Chronicon Thomae Wykes AD 1066 – 1289* (London, 1869) 284.

hero. Later, when naming his sons, his heirs and the only surviving Balliol grandchildren in the male line, John ignored the traditional family names and instead honoured Edward and his father, Henry, something he probably would not have chosen to do if he felt himself abused by his king.

As mentioned above, in February 1281, John married a cousin of the king, Isabel, daughter of ‘that violent man’, the ‘mainstay of Edward’, John de Warenne, earl of Surrey.²⁰⁰ Like his brothers, after his marriage John can be found arguing with the bishops of Durham, and travelling abroad, presumably to the family properties in Picardy as he has yet to turn up in the ranks of the crusaders or royal agents.²⁰¹

Meanwhile, Dervorguilla had been attending to her own business. She travelled to Galloway in 1280, and either she stayed in Scotland most of a year, or she returned early in 1281, for in late March that year she was visited at Dryburgh by William de Saham. He had been sent by Edward I to discover just what properties Dervorguilla had transferred to her remaining son, perhaps in response to his brilliant marriage; after all, at this time Isabella’s cousin Agnes held almost as much Balliol land as the Lord of Balliol himself. Dervorguilla told Edward’s agent that she had given her son several manors, including much of what she had received from Henry III in return for her share of Chester, and, characteristically, had protected herself by ensuring that, under certain circumstances, the property would revert to her.²⁰² She also informed Saham that she did not remember the tenor of her grant entirely; it is just possible that age had been taking its toll, but it is more credible that annoyance with busy-body royal agents had led her to fib, as it is most unlikely Dervorguilla ever lost track of a single acre.

Dervorguilla can be found doing business in Scotland again the following year in June and August, and it is not hard to imagine her wanting to stay in Scotland for the wedding of Alexander III’s elder son in November. The king’s younger son, David, had died the year before, putting her own surviving son that much closer to the throne. She was staying in Buittle in the late summer, for it was from there that she addressed a letter to Brother Hugh of Hartlepool, a Franciscan of Oxford, and to William de Menyl who had earned his masters degree at that university. Something, perhaps a controversy among the academics in Oxford, had prompted her, fourteen years after her husband’s death, to turn her attention to the scholars John had started supporting all those years before. Dervorguilla had continued this allowance without which Balliol Hall would have been forced to disband, because, she said, she believed it increased the honour of God and helped the church militant.²⁰³ She had already given the house a ‘*portatorium*’ or ‘*portiforium*’, probably a lidded box now called the *ciborium* in which the host is brought to the altar during the eucharist.²⁰⁴

200 Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century*, 138.

201 Durham, University Library, No. 5, the College, Ushaw Ms. 25, p.92, which is the same as their ms. DCM 4.3. Sac. No. 34, and is also found in Dodds, *Northumberland*, vi, 115; *CPR* 1281-92, 72, 116, 315.

202 *CDS*, ii, no.189.

203 F. de Paravicini, *The Early History of Balliol College* (London, 1891) 73.

204 Salter, *Oxford Deeds*, 279. This gift has also been identified as a breviary in R.A.B.Mynors, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Balliol College, Oxford* (Oxford, 1963) xi.

Her letter, known now as the Statutes of Balliol, explained in no uncertain terms some of what their benefactress expected of her academic dependents. It is usually said that the Statutes confirmed practices already in place, such as the weekly debates, or the system for choosing a principal, and it is clear she did not start from scratch, if only because there was much upon which Dervorguilla did not touch at all, for instance, how the young men were chosen for admission or how long any individual could remain a resident in their house. Neither John nor Dervorguilla ever mandated what their scholars were to study, yet, sometime during these early years the expectation that they would read the liberal arts became entrenched.²⁰⁵ Dervorguilla did not, however, thoughtlessly endorse something presented to her whole, since it is unlikely that she would have felt the need to 'have confirmed ... (the Statutes) ... with the fortification of our seal' if that document contained nothing innovative or controversial; perhaps there was a controversy within the college, and the scholars did not wish to obey the dictates of the procurators or others in charge of the Hall, so Brother Hugh and Menyl went to the woman with control over the purse to get her support. At that time, most students lived in such loosely organised groups that when, eight years previously, Walter de Merton had imposed statutes upon his nephews and their companions in what is now known as Merton College, his action was seen as something of a revolution.²⁰⁶ Thus, it could be that just the imposition of written rules was controversial enough to require the power of her seal.

Unlike most subsequent founders of colleges at Oxford or Cambridge, Dervorguilla was not inclined to mimic Merton's statutes and did not reorganise her Balliol Hall along their lines. She maintained the hierarchy already in place, and took it for granted that her scholars knew perfectly well whom she meant when she directed them to obey 'our procurators'; in choosing to have their scholars ruled by these financial officers, John and Dervorguilla had chosen to follow a pattern more familiar in Paris than in Oxford.²⁰⁷

Before anything else, including going to classes and obeying the rules of the University, the Lady of Balliol instructed scholars to attend church every Sunday and on all the principal feast days, and, later in the document, added that they were to hold three special masses a year for the souls of John Balliol, his ancestors and hers, and for all the faithful dead. The residents of Balliol Hall were to do this in the nearby parish church of St. Mary, where Dervorguilla restored the north aisle as an oratory to St. Catherine, a highly appropriate dedication as this educated Alexandrian martyr was a patron of scholars.²⁰⁸ They were also to pray before each of the two meals she provided daily, not just to ask the Lord's blessing on themselves, but for the souls of John Balliol, her own ancestors and those of her husband, and of her dead children, as well as for her health and well-being and that of her living children and friends. Clearly, this devout woman intended to get the greatest possible benefit for herself and her family for her money.

205 *Fourth Report of the Royal Commission*, 442.

206 H. Rashdall, *The Universities* (Oxford, 1987) iii, 196.

207 Slater, *Oxford Deeds*, 277; Rashdall, *The Universities*, 181.

208 Jones, *Balliol College*, 7.

She claimed she was writing out of maternal affection, and at least once, she sounds very maternal indeed. Like the members of Merton, her scholars were expected to speak Latin to each other. Walter Merton, lately regent of England, had not felt any need to describe the consequences should anyone disobey this or any other of his rules, so accustomed would he have been to obedience from all those who surrounded him, but Dervorguilla, the mother of eight probably knew teenagers rather better, and declared in her Statutes that the second or third time someone's conversation slipped into the vernacular, he was to be separated from the common table, forced to eat on his own, and served last.

She seemed especially concerned that the poorer scholars should not suffer unduly at the hands of their richer companions. Should the house overrun the allowance any given week, the poor scholars were not expected to contribute more than a penny to make up the difference. She forbade any abuse, physical or otherwise (*'verbo aut signo aliquo'*) of the poor by the rich; if anyone broke this last rule, he was to be expelled from her house with no hope of returning. Dervorguilla even suggested that the scholars emulate her generosity by supporting a poor scholar themselves, but she did not insist on this, leaving the decision instead to the discretion of the procurators. These men, not the scholars or their principal, had control over all the house's money, a system which gave her rules about the protection of poor scholars a better chance of being enforced as independent financial officers had nothing to gain by not doing so.

One last commandment reveals Dervorguilla as a patron who had seen her gifts diverted from her original purpose, and who was determined not to let this happen again if she could help it: she informed the scholars that they were not to pawn or otherwise lose possession of that *portatorium* (or *portaforium*) which she had donated in her husband's memory.

Dervorguilla was not so enamored of the practices she described in the Statutes, or any of the Hall's other customs that she was unwilling to accommodate change. Another letter, written during Easter week, 1284, slightly less than two years after her Statutes, has also survived. Dated from Fotheringay, it is addressed to R(ichard) de Slikeburne, described by her as 'a venerable man of religion and her father in Christ, the most beloved',²⁰⁹ so tradition has dubbed him her confessor, even though there is no other evidence for this. She explained to Slikeburne that she had obtained permission from his Franciscan superior to put him in charge of the allowance. She asked 'as courteously as we can'²¹⁰ that he make lasting arrangements for the support of the scholars. He was to do whatever he deemed best for the Hall, and she promised to uphold 'whatever you should decide to arrange, do, change, or take care of concerning the business of the said scholars.' Such was her respect for this man that she was willing to set aside the provisions of the Statutes if that was what he thought best.

Dervorguilla gave Slikeburne permission 'to take or give seisin to houses, land or anything being bought or exchanged as part of the work of the scholars.'²¹¹ During the next

209 Salter, *Oxford Deeds*, 279-80.

210 *Ibid.*, 280.

211 *Ibid.*, 280.

few years, Dervorguilla and her husband's other executors were beginning to grant endowments to the college, and they respected Slikeburne's opinions enough to modify at least one of their decisions to suit him.²¹²

The buying or exchanging was, no doubt, a reference to the properties Dervorguilla's agents were gathering in Oxford and Northumbria for the benefit of her college. John Balliol had intended to put his scholars on a surer financial footing with an endowment of land, and he had left money for this in his will.²¹³ His eldest son, Hugh, was presumably acting on his father's wishes when he bought land from Sir Robert Walerand in Stamfordham, about six miles from the Balliols' manor of Bywell in Northumbria.²¹⁴ The charter is undated, but the transaction must have taken place between John Balliol's death in 1268, or more likely, 1269, when Hugh would have had time to think about something more than taking possession of his inheritance, and Hugh's own death early in 1271. Hugh may have died so soon after the purchase that he never had a chance to endow the scholars. Of course, it could be pure coincidence that Dervorguilla chose to grant this piece of land to her Hall. Hugh never did hand it over to anybody, so he may have been buying it for himself, which would explain the presence of only one of his father's executors, cousin Hugh de Euer, in the witness list.

If Hugh truly had planned to give away the Stamfordham property, his heir, Alexander, did not carry out his wishes, even though he had plenty of time. It was not until 1283, several years after Alexander's own death, that Dervorguilla somehow got possession of the Stamfordham property and a parcel in nearby Heugh from, presumably, her son John, and granted them to God, the Blessed Virgin, St. Catherine and all the saints, Walter de Fodringeye, and the students 'called the scholars of Balliol'. In one copy of this grant, the leading witness was Hugh de Eure;²¹⁵ in another, that place of honour was taken by Gilbert de Umfraville, Earl of Angus, with Hugh coming further down the list, as he would again when his cousin John confirmed still another grant by Dervorguilla, giving these lands along with property in Oxford to the scholars.²¹⁶ Eure had held the land for a while, and promised to pay the scholars the money he had collected from it.²¹⁷ In 1287, he witnessed the Hall's renting out the Stamfordham property.²¹⁸ Clearly this executor cared deeply about either that piece of land or about the Hall.

The permanent Oxford home Dervorguilla also gave the scholars was made of up three parcels along Horsemonger Street (now Broad Street) near the accommodations they had been renting from the University. It had taken time and effort to obtain, and much of this work was done by one John Ew, a resident of Oxford who owned one of the lots on Horsemonger.²¹⁹ Dervorguilla may have hoped for an early conclusion. In May 1284,

212 *Ibid.*, 284.

213 Dodds, *Northumberland*, xii, 309.

214 Balliol College Archive E.4.1.

215 Balliol College Archive E.4.3.

216 Salter, *Oxford Deeds*, 11.

217 Dodds, *Northumberland*, xii, 309.

218 *Ibid.*, 309, n.3.

219 Salter, *Oxford Deeds*, 6.

while residing at Fotheringay, she appointed two Oxford men, William de Menyl, one of the addressees of the Statutes, and John of Castle Barnard, to be her attorneys at the transfer of the tenements, and in June, her plan received the blessing of Oliver Sutton, the bishop of Lincoln, in whose diocese the Balliol Hall lay.²²⁰ Arrangements did not move all that quickly, but Ew eventually obtained three tenements and these, in turn, were granted to Dervorguilla for a nominal rent, including one clove at Christmas.²²¹ In the first week of January 1285, an inquisition was held by the good men of the hundred outside the north gate of Oxford which approved her proposed donation.²²² It took Edward I until the following October to conclude he would 'do a special favour to Dervorguilla' by allowing her to grant away this messuage to the master and scholars studying at the House of Balliol.²²³ Presumably, soon after this, the Lady of Balliol did just that, and the principal and scholars had a new home.²²⁴

There is some doubt about just how pleased they were with the terms under which they received these gifts. The next summer, Dervorguilla found herself appointing attorneys for a discussion with the principal Walter of Foderingeye, who felt she should guarantee the security of her grants in Northumbria and Oxford.²²⁵ Had the Balliols' delay in granting the land Hugh had bought made the scholars nervous? Did they fear Dervorguilla would change her mind? Or, as she was now probably 68-74 years old, did they fear her heir might undo the grant? After all, in 1284, when Dervorguilla had been planning endowments for the scholars, her daughter-in-law had had to obtain a respite for the younger John Balliol from his debts to the king.²²⁶ A rumor of straitened circumstances may have been enough to frighten the scholars.

Soon, Dervorguilla and her fellow executors granted various outstanding debts to her husband's estate to the Hall.²²⁷ By doing this, Dervorguilla gave her scholars a permanent home and the beginnings of an independent income. In her will, Dervorguilla left them enough money to build an oratory of their own, which they convinced the bishop of Lincoln they needed because of their busy academic schedules.²²⁸ She also bequeathed them a debt owed to her.²²⁹ Given such generosity, Andrew of Wyntoun was not so mistaken when, ignoring John's good intentions completely, he wrote of Dervorguilla:

*And in the Unyversyte
Off Oxenfurde scho gert be
A Collage fowndyt. This lady
Dyd all thir dedis devoutly.*²³⁰

220 *Ibid.*, 8, 280-1.

221 *Fourth Report of the Royal Commission*, 446.

222 *CDS*, ii, no. 265

223 *Ibid.*, ii, no. 276.

224 Salter, *Oxford Deeds*, 9-10.

225 *Ibid.*, 283.

226 H.C. Maxwell Lyte, *Calendar of Chancery Warrants preserved in the Public Record Office* (London, 1927) i, 22.

227 Salter, *Oxford Deeds*, 281-285.

228 Paravincini, *Balliol College*, 129.

229 *Fourth Report of the Royal Commission*, 444.

230 Wyntoun, *Cronykil*, ii, 323.

Events in Scotland and on her scattered estates would have prevented Dervorguilla's focusing all her attention on her scholars even had this been what she wanted. Early on, her attention would have been diverted for a while by the wedding of her granddaughter, Christian Lindsay, Ada's only child, to a cousin of the Scottish king, Ingelram (or Enguerrand) de Guines who would someday become the count of Guines in the Pas de Calais and the Sire de Coucy.²³¹ This young man had first come to Scotland in 1275; he married Christian sometime before May 28, 1283, thereby gaining extensive lands and a strong tie to one of the families closest to his cousin's throne.

The spring of 1285 must have been a difficult time for her. In April of that year there was an investigation into charges that she had abused her tenants in Drifffield; the conclusions to which the investigators came have not survived. Late the same month, her cousin, Alan son of the earl died. April also saw the funeral at Bywell of her daughter-in-law, Agnes, Alexander's widow, an event rendered particularly memorable by the outbreak of a fire in the west end of the village which burned everything, including the churches of St. Peter and St. Andrew, then sent sparks flying over the river.²³²

That September, Dervorguilla went to Scotland,²³³ possibly to attend the wedding of Alexander III to Yolanda, daughter of the count of Dreux. Alexander's daughter, Margaret, had died in childbirth in the spring of 1283, and his elder son, Alexander, had died childless the next year, leaving the king only a toddler in Norway as an heir. The emotions of his collateral relations who gathered in Jedburgh in late October or early November would have been a contradictory mix as they discreetly jockeyed for position around his throne.

A papal bulla belonging to Pope Honorius IV has been found near the gate of Buittle castle,²³⁴ evidence that one of her projects had brought her into contact with the papal see by 1285 and 1287, the years of Honorius' reign. There's no knowing to what document the bulla was attached. It could have dealt with the chapel for her students in Oxford, some plan for Sweetheart, the parish church at Buittle, or some project in Picardy about which no other evidence has yet been found.

She must also have become concerned with, or about, the discussions regarding the status of her half-brother, Thomas, by the Scottish king's council in March 1286. There are at least three undated entries in the Act of Parliament which mention previous business involving Thomas, one of which, the record of a letter, implies that a John Balliol, senior or junior, had wanted to give him back to the king of Scotland.²³⁵ Was this a reference to the period he had been held by Alexander II immediately after his rebellion, or had he had other royal gaolers during the last half-century or so? The Lanercost chronicler believed that this time Dervorguilla's son wanted his uncle released from whatever prison he was in, and that, as the council met, Thomas was on his way to the border with Edward I who, for some reason, had taken an interest in his case.²³⁶ Why did the lord of Balliol choose

231 Duncan, *Scotland*, 586-7; J. Balfour Paul (ed.), *The Scots Peerage* (Edinburgh, 1907) iii, 5.

232 CPR 1281-92, 158; Hodgson, *Northumberland*, 89; Stevenson, *Lanercost*, 119.

233 CPR 1281-92, 148.

234 A. Penman, *Botel Bailey Excavation: A History of the site during the medieval era* (1996-2000) 4.

235 APS, i, 115.

236 Stevenson, *Lanercost*, 116.

this time to ask the Scottish king to free his uncle? Had it become embarrassing keeping an elderly man under lock and key? Had it taken John eight years to overcome his mother's opposition? If it was something he wanted done so badly, why did he not just free Thomas himself later, once he became king of Scots? And, what had become of Thomas' wife and son? Were they both dead?

Alexander III died almost immediately after this council meeting, and Thomas' case was probably forgotten while everyone with any power dealt with more pressing issues. Thomas stayed in England, and, about a decade later, Edward would bring him north again, this time to use him to undermine John Balliol's hold on his kingdom, and especially on Galloway.²³⁷

Either Robert Bruce 'the Competitor' was a very quick thinker, or he had spent many odd moments before Alexander's death musing over what to do should his family ever have the chance to gain the Scottish throne, for he acted with surprising speed when Alexander III died 19 March. Within weeks, Bruce flexed his muscles in Galloway, a warning to the family he saw as the most immediate threat. His forces attacked the royal castles at Dumfries and Wigtown, burned the church in Wigtown, and took over, at least temporarily, his cousin Dervorguilla's castle at Buittle. There they forced one Patrick McCuffrock to make some sort of proclamation demanding, perhaps, the departure of all foreigners.²³⁸ It is possible that Dervorguilla was in Scotland at the time, for the next September she announced her intention of staying there for another year.²³⁹ It does not seem likely she was at Buittle, since she would, no doubt, have made quite a fuss, some of which would have found its way into some record somewhere. John Comyn, the sheriff of Wigtown, makes no mention in his terse report of any retribution against the Bruces by either Dervorguilla or her son, though his 'etc' does leave open that possibility.²⁴⁰ Her response to her cousin, a man who could have been found often in the company of her late husband serving Henry III during the Barons' Wars, declaring that she and her children were, unlike his own family, foreigners, can only be imagined. Later in the month, a parliament, including John Balliol, swore fealty to the Maid of Norway, Alexander III's grand-daughter, then chose three Balliol men and three Bruce men as *custodes*, or guardians of the realm, to rule in her stead and impose peace.

Dervorguilla's personal affairs hardly became more peaceful as she grew older. She was probably most interested in developments in Scotland, but other problems also took up her time. She had to pay for having hanged a confessed murderer whom Edward I had pardoned.²⁴¹ Then she took up a thirty-nine-year-old fight with the abbot of Ramsey over a fishery on the water of Alington. They had first gone to court against Abbot Ranulph in 1249; by 1263, despite all that demanded their attention on eve of the Barons' War, both

237 *Rot. Scot.*, i, 22; *CDS*, v. no.162.

238 F. Palgrave, *Documents and Records Illustrating the History of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1937) i, 42-3; Oram, *The Lordship of Galloway*, 159.

239 *CPR* 1281-92, 251.

240 J. Stuart and G. Burnett, *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1878) i, 39.

241 Huyshe, *The Royal Manor*, 189-90.

sides felt so strongly that they were willing to have the issue decided by combat. In 1266, little more than a fortnight before the publication of the Dictum of Kenilworth upon which he was working, her husband had dismissed his attorneys because he wished to plead this case personally.²⁴² Finally, in 1286, Dervorguilla insisted in court that she had received her share of the fishery from her uncle, John the Scot, but Edward I thought differently, and the abbot, John of Sawtrey, was given the fishery.²⁴³ This setback did not daunt her, and she continued to send attorneys into court until almost the very end of her life.

Dervorguilla died sometime during the last week or so of January 1290. The escheator was ordered to take possession of Driffield on 4 February 1290, the same date that two inquisitions were held to look into her holdings.²⁴⁴ The Lanercost Chronicler was unsure just which year Dervorguilla had died in, but believed she died at Barnard Castle on 21 January;²⁴⁵ the office of the dead was read for her at Balliol College on 26 January with mass in her memory the next day, and the inquisition *post mortem* into her property in Kempston, Bedfordshire, gives the Sabbath following the conversion of St. Paul, or 28 January, as the date. This inquisition has been used as proof that she died in the village of Kempston because it introduces itself as *Extenta terrarum et tenementorum quae fuerunt dominae Dervorgullae de Balliolo, defunctae, in villa de Kempstone*.²⁴⁶ If the editor's commas are removed, this could be translated as "died in the village of Kempston"; however, with or without commas, it more than likely means that the jury was interested in the lands of the late Dervorguilla in Kempston. There is no record to show, unequivocally, when or where she died. She is supposed to have been buried at her abbey in Galloway where remnants of a later sculpture of a slim woman holding a heart on her breast have survived on what is said to be her tomb.

Dervorguilla was between 73 and 81 years old when she died. She had been a widow for 22 years, almost two-thirds as long as she had been married. She had survived multiple childbirths, wars, and an English king with an unpredictable temper. She founded a monastery, and set a college on sound financial footing, all the while protecting her property from all comers. It is unlikely she was the sensible sibyl of her obituary in the *Lanercost Chronicle*, but Andrew of Wyntoun's far less extravagant homage does seem apt:

*A better lady than scho wes nane
In all the yle of Mare Bretane.*²⁴⁷

242 CDS, nos. 1759, 2330, 2406.

243 A.R. and E.B. De Windt, *Royal Justice and the Medieval English Countryside* (Toronto, 1981) 227.

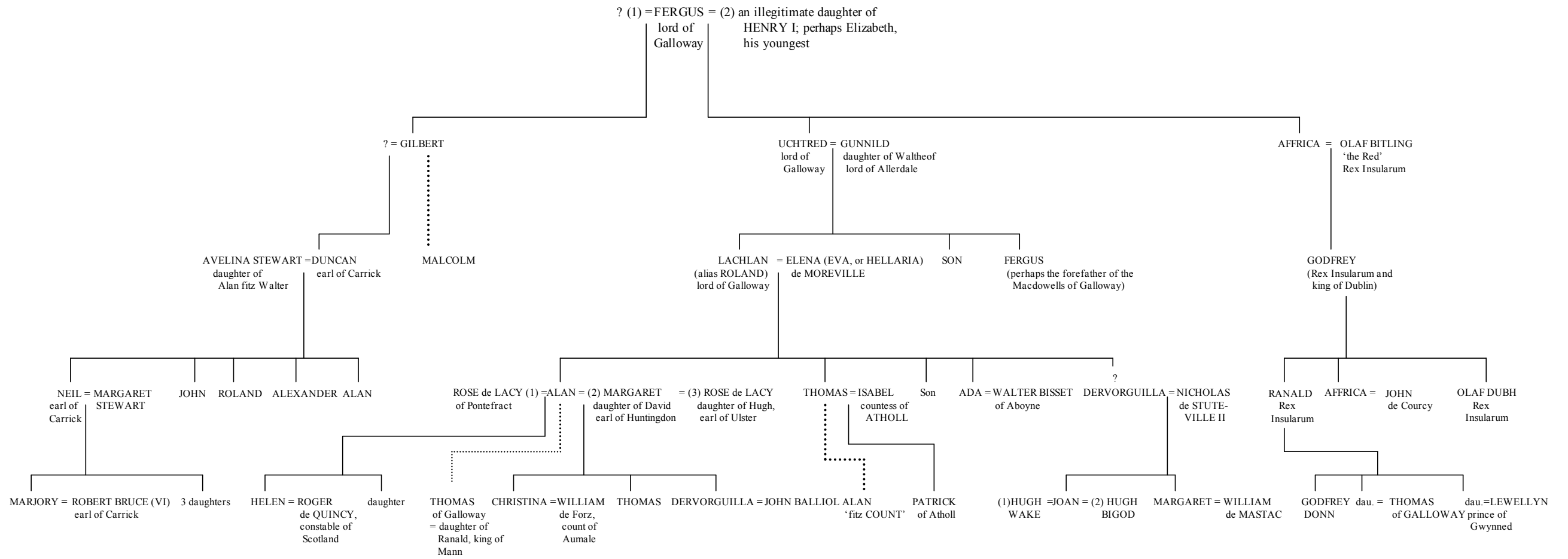
244 Maxwell Lyte, *Fine Rolls*, 270; *CIPM*, ii, 467.

245 *Lanercost*, 133,134. Her death is recorded under both 1289 and 1290.

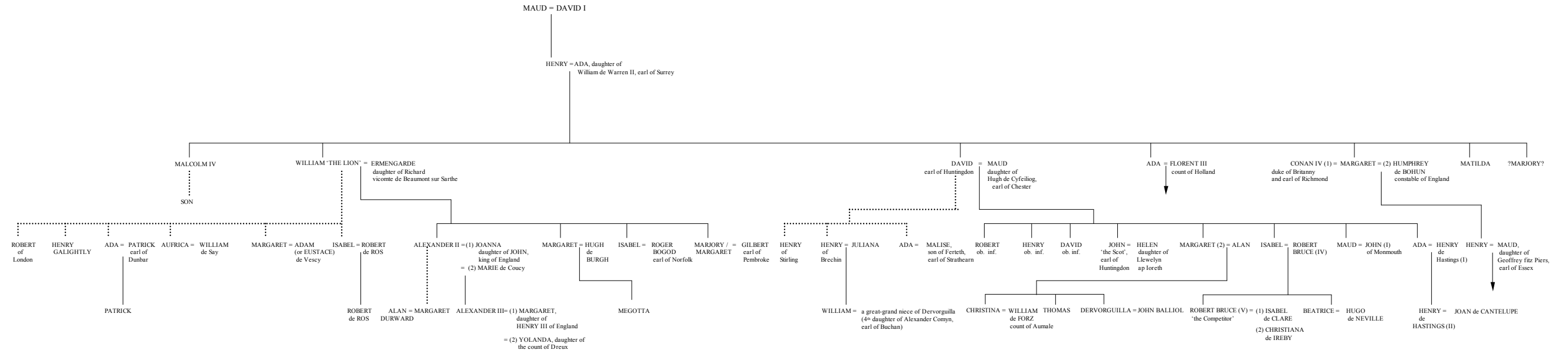
246 Palgrave, *Documents*, i, 123.

247 Wyntoun, *Cronykil*, ii, 323.

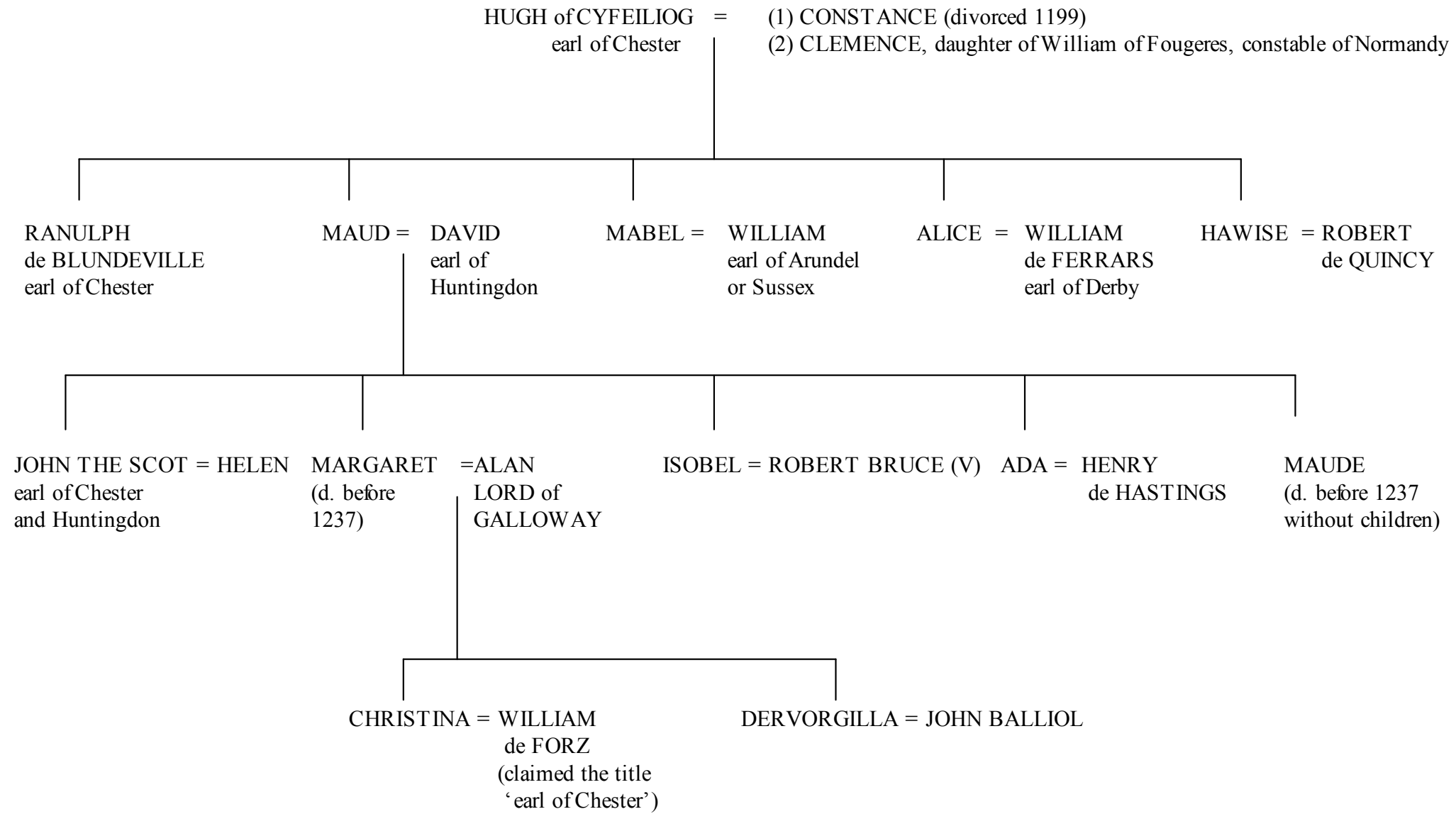
DESCENDANTS OF FERGUS OF GALLOWAY



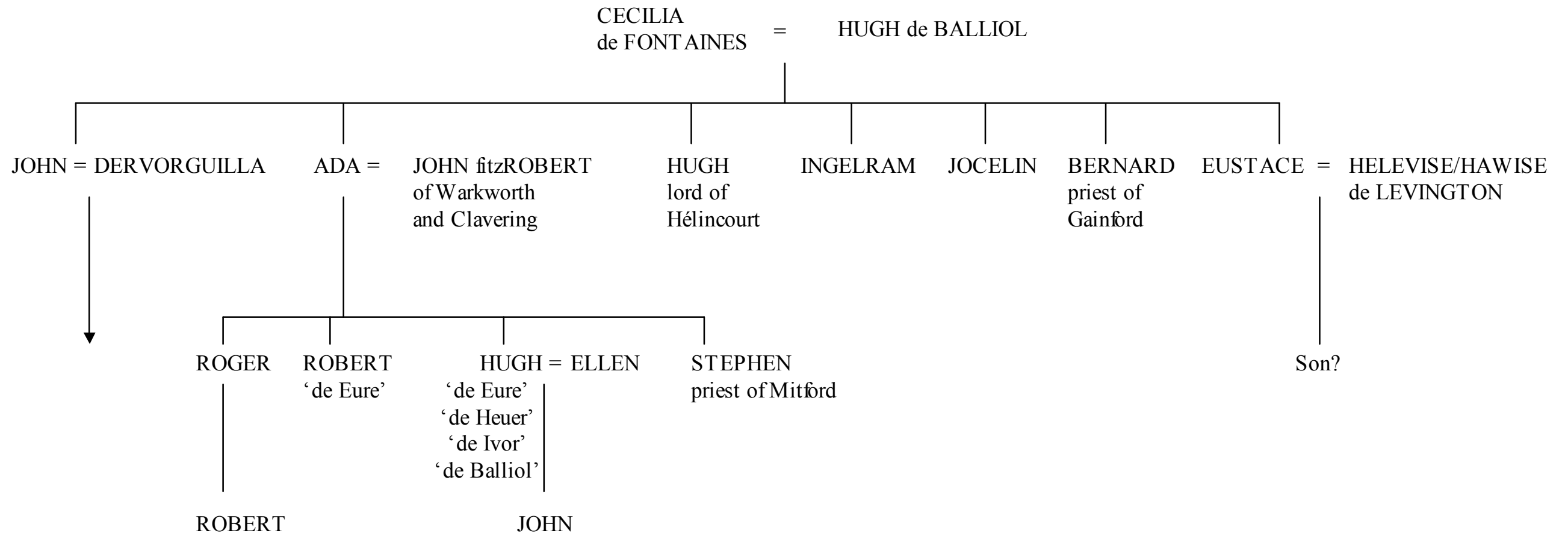
DERVORGILLA'S MOTHER'S FAMILY



THE HEIRS TO THE EARLDOM OF CHESTER

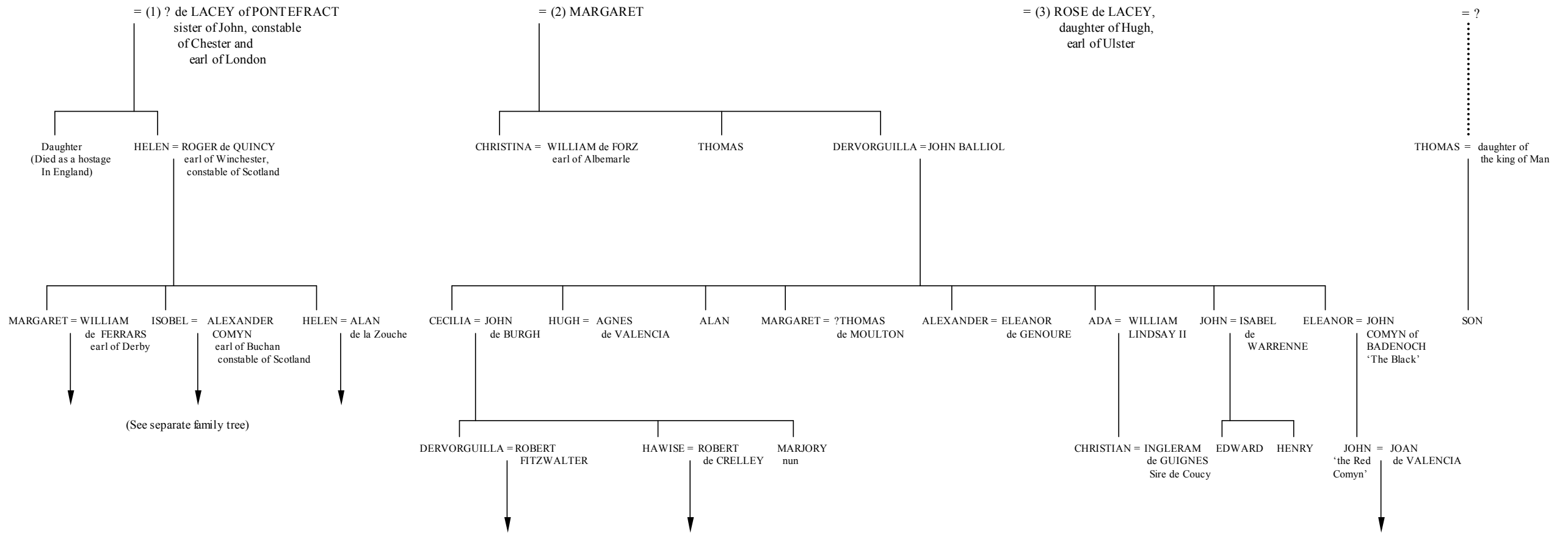


DERVORGUILLA'S RELATIONS BY MARRIAGE

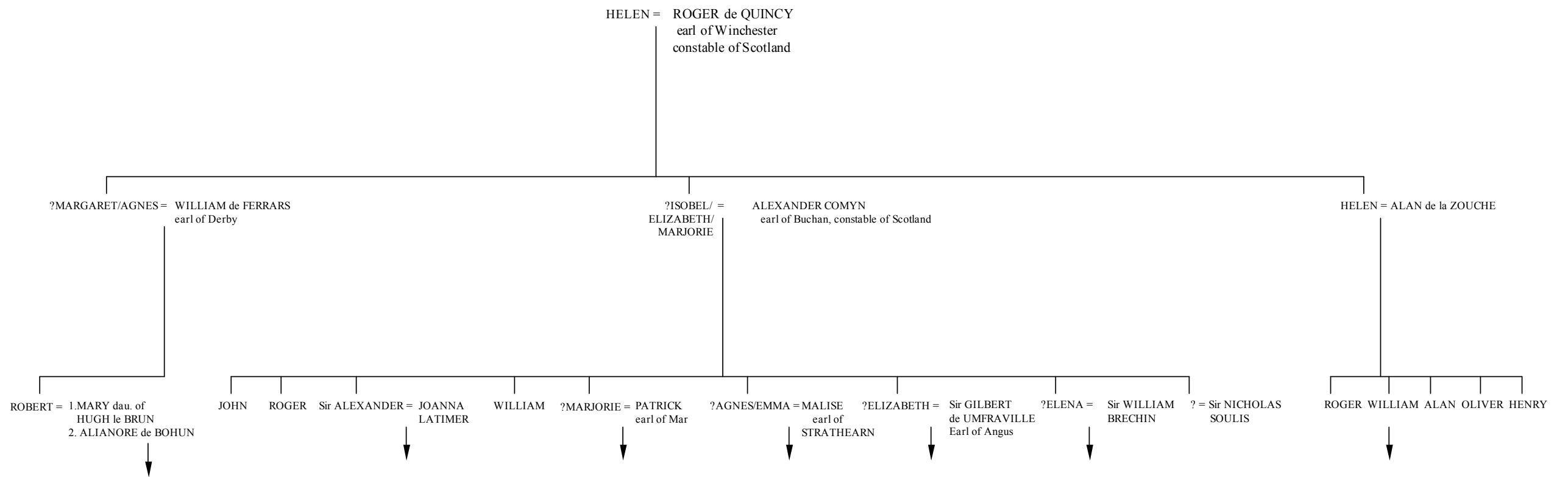


DERVORGUILLA & HER SIBLINGS

ALAN of GALLOWAY



DERVORGUILLA'S SISTER HELEN'S FAMILY



THE WILLIAM MCDOWALL SELBY COLLECTION

by Dr Jane Murray

In 1946 a Miss Helen Selby brought into the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland a collection of artefacts gathered largely from local sources by her father, William McDowall Selby, and grandfather, Robert Bird Selby, who served successively as medical practitioners in the village of Port William in Wigtownshire from 1878 to 1932. Dr R B K Stevenson, Keeper of the Museum, examined the artefacts before returning them to Miss Selby, and he annotated the Catalogue which her father had compiled, adding comments and emendations. A copy of this document remained in the Museum, and has occasionally been referred to by researchers (eg Coles 1965, 91; 1969, 86). A mention by Fraser Hunter (1994,66) of a 'polished flint celt from Dowalton Loch' caught the interest of the present writer. In 1999, with help from Trevor Cowie, Assistant Keeper of Archaeology at the Museum of Scotland, the whereabouts of the collection was traced to Helen Selby's nephew, John Selby, living in Dorset. John Selby most generously agreed to donate the collection to Stranraer Museum, and transported it back to Scotland.

The majority of provenanced artefacts derive from farms in Mochrum parish where the doctors practised, and where Dr William Selby is remembered as having sometimes waived his fees in return for donations. The collection is a typical Wigtownshire mixture of polished and perforated stone tools, flint artefacts, and a quantity of utilised stones – hammerstones, polishers, whetstones – of uncertain date. There is a fine group of polished stone axeheads, and a large number of spindlewhorls. Some items come from further afield, from locations in Scotland, England, and elsewhere, a few from South America. A Notebook compiled by the two doctors, kept with the collection, contains a Catalogue of the artefacts with sketches and some information on findspots and donors. The Notebook also contains a variety of other entries, including a miscellany of notes and newspaper cuttings, transcriptions, local sayings, and verses, and provided the impetus to explore the lives of the doctors further, looking at their role in the rural community and the nature of their interest in antiquities. A useful source book has been *Mochrum....a Parish History 1794-1994*, a compendium work, which contains a mine of information on Mochrum parish, its people, and its institutions. The present paper consists of an account of the lives of the Selby doctors and their antiquarian interests, and of the contents of the Notebook, together with a summary description of the artefacts. A full Catalogue is lodged in Stranraer Museum together with the collection itself.

The Selby Family

Robert Bird Selby was born in 1836 in Berwick on Tweed. His father, Robert Selby, was factor to the Earl of Minto's estates in the Borders, but was in his late sixties at the time of his son's birth, and retired shortly to Portobello, near Edinburgh, where the boy was brought up. Robert Bird's mother, Wilhelmina Irving, did not marry his father until 1844, when Robert Selby's first wife, and mother of his first family, died. Robert Bird Selby studied medicine at Edinburgh University from 1857 to 1861, was licensed by the Royal College of Surgeons (LRCS) in 1860, and registered as MD in February 1862. In 1868,

aged 32, he was appointed first Medical Officer of Health in the parish of Kirkcowan, Wigtownshire, a newly instituted post, which he combined with private practice. Before the end of the year Dr Selby married Margaret, aged 23, elder sister in the large family of a Kirkcowan seed merchant, William McDowall, and his wife, Grace Hutchison. *The Galloway Advertiser and Free Press* commented on the interest that the wedding aroused in the village, adding that since his arrival Dr Selby had 'endeared himself to the hearts of all'. For the next ten years the Selbys lived at Ivy Cottage, in the main street of Kirkcowan, near to Margaret's relatives, and part of a close village community. For example, *The Galloway Gazette* [4 Jan 1873] reported that on New Year's Day 1873 Margaret's brother, William, organised competitive sports in the street, a welcome diversion for 'the working classes' after a season of bad weather. Margaret's first baby, born in August 1869, died within a month, but five more children were born to the Selbys in Kirkcowan, one of whom only lived a year. The eldest surviving child was christened Harriet Maxwell, after her great grandmother, Wilhelmina Irving's mother, and the three boys were named William McDowall, Robert, and Alexander Hutchison, using names from each of the other grandparents. In 1878 the Selby family moved to Port William, a small seaport village in the neighbouring parish of Mochrum. Three more babies were born here, the last, in 1882, only surviving for two weeks. Harriet and her five younger brothers, were brought up in Fairview Cottage, on the seafront at the north end of the village, where Dr Selby held his surgeries and dispensary.



Fig 1 Dr Robert Bird Selby and his gig. (Courtesy Dr Gavin Brown, Port William).

The eldest son, William McDowall Selby, born in January 1873, attended Miss Lewis' private 'dame school' in a cottage beside Fairview until the age of ten. He spent 3½ years at Port William village school, and then moved to George Watson's College in Edinburgh, and in 1889, aged sixteen, he began a medical course at Edinburgh University. He was so young a student that he had to delay his registration as MB, CM (Hons) until he reached twenty one. He was joined at the university by his brother, Robert, two years his junior, who is recorded in the *Galloway Gazette* in 1895 as obtaining first class Honours as a third year student in Practical Anatomy and in Physiology. In April 1895, Harriet, aged twenty three, married Andrew McDowall, second son of Robert McDowall of Auchengallie farm, near Mochrum village, apparently no relation of Margaret McDowall. The couple moved to Bradford, where Andrew followed an uncle into the drapery business.

In February 1896 Dr Selby's wife, Margaret, aged 50, died, an event commemorated by an entry in Dr Selby's Notebook which reads:

'Nov^r 19. 1895

I have been most upright to him.

Born 25th January 1845. Married 8th Dec^r 1868

Died 27th February 1896.'

This note seems to be in one hand, written as a tribute by the doctor to his wife, with the final line added after her death.

Dr William McDowall Selby, who had been employed first as House Physician at Edinburgh Sick Children's Hospital, and then as House Surgeon at Leith Hospital, joined his father in practice in Port William in 1897. The following year he married Catherine Purves Logan Robertson of Whitsome Manse, Berwickshire. Meanwhile his brother, Robert, graduated in 1897, and in 1898 joined the newly founded Royal Army Medical Corps, going out in that year to South Africa. In the same year Walter Mitchell, the youngest of the Selby brothers, went up to Edinburgh University to read medicine, but he never completed his course, dying of appendicitis in 1902. His death is recorded in Mochrum churchyard on the same tombstone as that of his parents.

Robert's career in the Boer War is summarised in the *Galloway Gazette* on May 17th 1900 where an item notes the expected imminent arrival in Southampton of Lieut Selby, invalided home after about 18 months in the army. Lieut Selby was said to have been 'present at the Battle of Glencoe, and afterwards took part in the famous march of General York from Dundee to Ladysmith. He subsequently went through the famous siege, but unfortunately, after the relief of the town by General Buller he fell victim to enteric fever. On his recovery, he was ordered home by the Medical Board.' The period of Robert's service in South Africa was clearly an anxious time for his family. The major landowner in Mochrum parish, Sir Herbert Maxwell of Monreith, had already lost his eldest son, William, in southern Africa in 1897 when the young man became lost and died of exhaustion when travelling alone while recovering from fever contracted when serving in the Matabele War. Shortly after his brother's death, Aymer, the only surviving Maxwell son, joined the Grenadier Guards, and was promptly sent out to South Africa. He was wounded in battle, succumbed to fever and, like Robert Selby, was invalided home. The course of the Boer War was closely followed in the Selby household, a handwritten diary of events

being entered in the Notebook, together with newspaper cuttings covering the same period. Robert continued to serve in the RAMC, and, in 1909, as Captain Selby, married Prudence Anne Goggin from County Clare in Ireland at St Oswald's Parish Church, Chester. He died the following year in India, aged 35, then Major Selby. The Catalogue of the Selby Collection ends with a list of souvenirs brought back by Robert from South Africa and India, including parts of artillery shells from Ladysmith and Kaffir spears, items no longer in the collection. Between the pages of the Notebook, however, there is a sketch of a Zulu in his hut in Natal, perhaps by Robert, and a faded photograph of a man in uniform, probably Robert.

In 1901, Dr Robert Bird Selby retired from his post as Medical Officer of Health, and the parish council appointed his son William to succeed him. Fairview Cottage was once again filled with children, two boys and a girl being born to Catherine and William between 1898 and 1902, besides a third son, who did not survive. Dr Selby senior, moved into the adjacent Seabank Cottage, where he died in 1908, aged 71. In the 30 years that he had spent in Port William he had been a respected local figure, an elder in the parish kirk, and a Justice of the Peace.

Dr William McDowall Selby and his wife were also active in Port William life. Like his father, William was a church elder and in 1909 was appointed a Justice of the Peace. He was a golfer, and a bowls player. He is particularly remembered as having bought the first car in the village in 1907, later registered as OS 3, possibly the only car built by the



Fig 2 Dr William McDowall Selby and his Murchies motor. (Courtesy Dr Gavin Brown, Port William).

bicycle manufacturers, Murchie's of Newton Stewart. Dr Selby is said to have referred to the car as his 'two cylinder wee thing'. A lad of 13, Cameron Kennedy, left school to act as Dr Selby's driver, and Dr Selby later encouraged the Kennedy family to let Cameron attend college to obtain qualifications as a motor engineer. In the early 1920s Kennedy, together with James Donnan, set up the Port William Motor Garage Company, selling and servicing cars.

In 1913, Dr Selby, as honorary surgeon to the Mochrum Boy Scouts, newly founded by Captain Aymer Maxwell, formally inspected the troop at its first camp at Kirkmaiden Golf Course. On declaration of war Captain Maxwell left for France, where he immediately fell victim to a sniper's bullet. Dr Selby went to France for a short time in 1915 as Surgeon to the Monmouth and Glamorgan Auxiliary Block. Thereafter the Selbys earn frequent mention in the *Galloway Gazette*. In 1916 Dr Selby was raising funds for the Red Cross and acting as their first aid examiner. In 1917 he stood in as locum in Glenluce parish. Meanwhile Catherine, his wife, hosted meetings of the Church of Scotland Women's Guild, sat on the War pensions committee, acted as quartermaster for Mochrum Voluntary Detachment in 1918, and was deputy convener of Mochrum Red Cross Work Party in 1919. In 1921 Dr Selby became Chairman of the Mochrum Scouts Association, and sat on the Wigtownshire Insurance Committee, while his wife was representative for the United Services Fund and collected for the Ladies Auxiliary Association.

William's elder sister, Harriet, with her husband Andrew McDowall and their seven children, had returned to the parish in 1909 to farm at Changue, a property just north of Port William purchased by Andrew some years earlier. Three of Harriet's children, Margaret, Andrew and Jean, were to join the medical profession, as did both the Selby sons, Robert Donald (known as Roy) and John Alexander Robertson (called Jake or Jack). The boys followed family tradition, attending George Watson's College in Edinburgh before studying medicine at Edinburgh University. Robert registered as MB, ChB in 1922, his studies having been interrupted by a year of war service, and became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh in 1925. His brother, John, registered as MB, ChB in 1925. Six months acting as locum to his father persuaded him that he did not wish to become a GP, and neither of the Selby sons chose to take over their father's practice. Port William was now a quieter place, the population of the parish in 1931 only 1478, almost halved from its mid-19th century peak. Robert joined a GP practice in the Wirral, in Cheshire, while John specialised in Public Health and later in Venereal Diseases, becoming resident doctor in Hong Kong in 1930. John spent the war in an internment camp in Hong Kong, while his sons attended George Watson's College. Dr William Selby retired from the Port William practice in 1932, and died in September 1933, aged 60. Helen Stenhouse Selby, or Nell, the youngest of his family, remained in Port William, where she is remembered as a characterful woman, an active supporter of various charities and of the parish kirk. She kept her father's archaeological collection carefully arranged in a cabinet, showing it to interested visitors. On her death in 1975 it was bequeathed to John's eldest son, her nephew, Major John Robertson Selby.

Archaeology in Wigtownshire and the Selbys' antiquarian interests

When Robert Bird Selby took up his post in Wigtownshire in 1868 he probably alighted at Kirkcowan station by train, the line from Dumfries having opened in 1862. In 1870 the Glasgow to Stranraer line was also opened. Victorian Scotland was being transformed by technology, part of a scientific revolution represented also in the person of Dr Selby himself, a university graduate, a surgeon, and a registered medical practitioner. Scottish medical education was well regarded throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, and when the Public Health Act of 1848 required local authorities in England to appoint Medical Officers of Health, Scottish graduates filled a third of the posts created (White 1988, 80). Nonetheless it was not until the Universities (Scotland) Act of 1858 reorganised the basis of the medical degree that a course in Public Health was first taught as such in Edinburgh. Robert Bird Selby was one of the first to qualify under the new system.

By the mid-nineteenth century scientifically educated, medical men were spread across Scotland, men open to new ideas, who understood the power of education. A notable example was Dr Grierson, practising at Thornhill, Dumfriesshire, from 1842, who founded the 'Thornhill Institute' where talks were given on a variety of subjects. In 1852 he set up in the village a library and museum for the education of young people, displaying geological and botanical specimens and a collection of mostly local antiquities (Truckell 1966). In 1862, Dr Grierson, together with Dr Gilchrist of the Crichton Institute and several other members of the medical profession, founded the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society. Archaeology was becoming established as a serious scientific subject, the classification of artefacts being accepted as a methodological tool shared with disciplines, such as botany, zoology, or palaeontology. Doctors were to the forefront in exploring this branch of the study of mankind.

Further, archaeology enjoyed particular status in Mochrum, where the principal landowners, the Maxwells, were known for their antiquarian interests. When, in 1862, Sir William Maxwell drained a large loch at Dowalton on the Monreith estate, several crannogs were discovered and excavated, attracting widespread attention. The remarkable finds included objects of wood and leather surviving in the saturated conditions, besides a range of metalwork, from iron tools to bronze ornaments, and two spectacular Roman saucepans [Stuart 1866]. Interest in the artefactual potential of crannogs was aroused both nationally and locally. The Free Church minister in neighbouring Glenluce, the Rev George Wilson, began a search for crannogs in Wigtownshire, publishing a descriptive list of a number of probable sites [Wilson 1872], and became an active antiquarian collector.

Herbert Maxwell, who was just 17 at the time of the Dowalton discoveries, was also to develop great enthusiasm for archaeology. In 1881, as a Member of Parliament, he was involved in promoting legislation to protect ancient monuments, and he collected artefacts, organised excavations, and wrote about archaeological subjects. Later he became President of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and from 1908 to 1934 was Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. Maxwell's interest was influential locally, and farmers and others brought him objects that they had found, knowing that they would receive a warm welcome.

Among such contributors was Dr Selby. An undated entry in his Notebook lists items presented to Sir H E Maxwell:-

‘Stone axe
 Stone Celt
 Stone Maul with groove round it
 Stone Sinker with hole in it – Ancient (from old Mrs Macreadie)
 Stone sinker with hole in it – Modern }
 Stone sinker with hole begun – Modern } from Kirkcowan
 Spindles whorls 3 or 4
 Two Stone Burnishers - red quartz
 Stone Whetstone broken
 Upper & Lower Quern stones
 Three bronze Celts
 Boleadoras del Avestruz’

Some of these gifts were acknowledged by Sir Herbert in an article on ‘The Ancient Weapons, Instruments, Utensils and Ornaments of Wigtonshire’ published in 1885 in the *Collections of the Ayrshire and Galloway Archaeological Association* (vol v). Two of the perforated sinkers were illustrated (p33, fig 23), and Maxwell drew attention to the difference between the oblique sides of the hole of a sinker from Balcraig, and those in the Kirkcowan specimen ‘in which they are nearly vertical, having been wrought with a small metal jumper’. This latter piece, Maxwell wrote, was ‘until lately in actual use as a net sinker in the River Bladnoch, and was given to me by Dr Selby as an interesting instance of the contemporary use of stone where metal is easily obtainable’. The two red quartz burnishers were compared in size and material with specimens listed by Rev George Wilson in Volume I of the *Collections* (1878), and with whetstones from Co Antrim. Maxwell also described a Carved Stone Ball which, he commented, had been picked up by one of his tenants, Mr McMaster of Blairbuie farm (now spelt Blairbuy) when walking with Dr Selby across a ploughed field on Stelloch farm to take rubbings of some cup-and-ring marked rocks. An Appendix listed prehistoric stone artefacts from Wigtonshire, including three gifts from Dr Selby, a perforated axehead from Airiehassen, Kirkinner, an imperforate hammer from Kirkcowan, and a perforated hammer from Balcraig, finds which probably included the stone axe and celt listed in the Notebook. Dr Selby subscribed to the Ayrshire and Wigtonshire Archaeological Association, and would have read this article.

In 1889 Sir Herbert presented his collection of prehistoric artefacts, including the items mentioned above, to the Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh. His donations are listed in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries* (vol 23 1888-9, 143-152), but with no mention of their origins. In an article in the same volume describing the collection (pp200-232), Maxwell mentions some of the donors, but not Dr Selby. One of the illustrated items (*op cit* p221, fig 35) was a finely made miniature bronze axehead from Stelloch (NMS: DE 51), only 5 cm long. This may have been one of the three ‘bronze celts’ gifted by Dr Selby, since a model of this axe is listed in the Selby Catalogue, although no longer in the collection. The transfer of objects to Edinburgh, and the lack of acknowledgement, may have contributed to the doctor’s decision thereafter to retain artefacts himself. In September 1892 he acquired a fine, polished flint axehead from Dowalton Loch, an unusual item for

the district, and on October 1st 1892 he began his Catalogue with a description of this axehead, followed by items acquired the previous year.

It must be noted that in 1892 Dr Selby's eldest son, William, was nineteen, and three years into a medical degree course at Edinburgh University. Although the Notebook Catalogue is entitled 'Index of Stones in possession of Dr Selby', it is possible that it was William, who certainly became a keen collector of prehistoric artefacts, who encouraged his father to catalogue his finds. Perhaps it was William, as a student in Edinburgh, who purchased from an antique dealer in Edinburgh three bronze axeheads, added to the Catalogue in 1894.

Dr Selby senior was, however, undoubtedly himself much interested in antiquities, and one of many collectors of prehistoric artefacts in Wigtownshire. Dr Selby's predecessor in Port William, Dr Douglas, later practising in Whithorn, accumulated a number of pieces, subsequently acquired by Ludovic McLellan Mann, and bequeathed to the Kelvingrove Museum. The Rev George Wilson of Glenluce was regularly collecting in Luce Sands, sending his finds to the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh, and creating great interest, attracting collectors from outside the area to the Sands. There is no record of contact between Wilson and Dr Selby, and there are no objects from Glenluce in the Selby Collection, perhaps regarded locally as Wilson's personal 'territory'. Wilson was Secretary to the Wigtownshire branch of the Ayrshire and Wigtonshire Archaeological Association, established by a group of aristocratic landowners, primarily to fund excavation and publication. Dr Selby began subscribing to the Association in 1884, and volumes of the *Collections* were still in the possession of the Selby family in the 1990s, together with a copy of Sir John Evans' *Ancient Stone Implements* of 1897 and Volume I of Daniel Wilson's *The Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* of 1851. These works would have served as a useful reference collection, helping in the compilation of the Catalogue. Both father and son clearly made considerable efforts to acquire background information on antiquities, and artefacts were carefully catalogued, with measurements, descriptions, comments and information on provenance. There was, unfortunately, no local antiquarian society meeting in Wigtownshire to provide a forum for discussion. Advice on classification of finds was sought on more than one occasion from Dr Joseph Anderson, Keeper of the Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh. In 1908 William Selby lent a particularly fine polished stone axehead and flint spearhead to Sir Herbert Maxwell for display at a Society of Antiquaries of Scotland meeting in Edinburgh.

The Selbys also visited local archaeological sites, making records in their Notebook, as detailed below. In the early 1880s Dr Robert Selby was taking rubbings of cup-marked stones together with Hugh McMaster of Blairbuy who had a great interest in the antiquities on his farm. Two cists were discovered on Blairbuy in April 1890 and February 1891, and Dr Selby describes how he and Mr H McMaster dug out and sieved the soil from the second cist, and dried the fragments of a cinerary urn which it contained on the farmhouse stove, before donating the urn to the National Museum of Antiquities. The measurements of the stones comprising each cist were carefully recorded (see Appendix 2). This is the only record of Selby involvement in excavation, although a bead in the Selby Collection is said to have been found in a cairn on the farm of Corwall, in Mochrum parish, but with no information on the circumstances of discovery.

Visits were also paid to antiquities further afield. The Notebook gives a brief itinerary of a journey through southern Scotland and northern England undertaken between July 27th and August 8th in 1896, although it is not clear whether the traveller was Dr William Selby or his newly widowed father. Hawick, Denholm, Carlisle, the Roman Wall, Bradford, Fountains Abbey, Ripon, Peal Park, Bolton Abbey, Bramley and Kirkstall Abbey were all visited. Robert Bird Selby's father had lived near Hawick as factor to the Earl of Minto, and the Notebook contains a newspaper cutting about Minto Castle and a photograph of Hawick Moat, or motte, is pasted in. At some point one of the doctors must have visited Tom Scott of Bowden, near Selkirk, a well known collector of artefacts from the Tweed valley, as the collection includes several undated acquisitions from Scott. A visit was probably paid to Chesters, on Hadrian's Wall, where a museum and excavation display had been established in 1896, as there are Samian sherds from this site in the collection, two of which are marked 'March 6 1900'. Pottery sherds and other artefacts from the Roman fort at Newstead are in the collection, probably deriving from a visit to the site, where excavation began in 1905 (Curle 1911). A postcard depicting the altar to Jupiter found in the well in September 1905 was sent to Dr Robert Selby in that year by someone with the initials 'A.H.W.'. Another postcard between the pages of the Notebook is one of a series produced at the time of the excavations, this example depicting a Roman chariot race below the Eildon Hills (see Ballin Smith and Banks (eds) 2002, pl 30).

William Selby was also interested in local history and folklore, particularly, perhaps, in his later years, when he is recorded as exchanging information on local customs with Sir Herbert Maxwell (pers. comm. Jack Hunter, Stranraer). Such interests are reflected in some of the entries in the Notebook.

The Selby Notebook

The small (7"x 4½"), hard-covered Notebook kept by the two Selby doctors has some 186 faint ruled pages. Entries are hand written, with newspaper cuttings pasted in, and there are some loose items, such as letters and cards, tucked between its pages. The first forty pages consist of notes, lists and drawings, mostly on archaeological subjects, and a few more personal matters. The Catalogue then begins, 41 items, including some of the finest pieces in the collection, being entered between 1892 and 1895. There follows a diary and newspaper cuttings relating to the progress of the Boer War, and entries on a few other topics before the Catalogue resumes, now clearly compiled by William Selby. The entries made between 1906 and 1916 bring the Catalogue total to 210 items. Notes of a personal nature or concerning local antiquarian matters fill the final 20 pages of the Notebook. Entries were clearly not made in chronological order, and it is not always clear which items were written by Robert Bird Selby, and which by his son. Early entries and the first half of the Catalogue are in a beautiful copperplate handwriting, but this cannot be differentiated from later entries by William, sometimes rather less carefully written.

The archaeological information in the Notebook is mostly taken from published sources, largely, it seems, as a means of building up a background of information. The opening section has drawings of Galloway carved stones copied from John Stuart's *Sculptured Stones of Scotland* of 1856. These include the Pictish symbols from Anwoth,

a cup-and-ring mark from nearby High Auchinlary, and various Early Christian stones from Wigtownshire. There follows a list of Pictish symbols, some local Gaelic place names with their meanings, an account of the Deil's Dyke, taken from Joseph Train's description published in the 1840s (Mackenzie 1841 Vol I, appendix, p2-5, Note B; NSA vol iv 1845, 232-4), a list of enclosure sites near Port William probably derived from the Ordnance Survey map, notes on anthropology chiefly regarding skull shape, sketch plans of a Roman fort and of Glenluce Abbey, and transcriptions of pithy epitaphs from tombstones in Whithorn churchyard, besides other notes and newspaper cuttings concerning antiquities. A sketch of a battle-axe from Kidsdale dated May 1890 probably represents a piece now in the Whithorn Museum, donated by Mr Nicholson of Kidsdale. Another entry, giving valuable new information, records the discovery of two slab-built cists on Blairbuy farm in 1890 and 1891, and full details are given in Appendix 2 below. Excavation of these cists may have stimulated a series of notes on Bronze Age burials and their characteristic grave goods.

There are interesting entries regarding a set of sites in the moors around the River Tarff in upland Kirkcowan and Old Luce parishes. Dr Selby senior must have visited this area in 1872, as a transcription of the tombstone of the Covenanter, Alexander Linn, on Craigmoddie Fell, near Derry, has this date appended. A group of entries on preceding pages, however, apparently relate to a later expedition as they include a description and drawing of the Standing Stones of Laggangairn quoting from an article by Rev George Wilson of Glenluce in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries* for 1873 (vol x, p56-61) regarding records of other stones that once stood on the site. The drawing differs from that in Wilson's article, and was probably done from life. There is also a description of the Wells of the Rees at nearby Kilgallioch, on the south side of Craigairie Fell, with a drawing of one of the stone capped wells showing it in good order. This probably postdates the repair of the wells carried on the orders of the Marquis of Bute in 1889 (Cormack and Muir Watt 2000). There is also an account of enclosures at Kilgallioch and Killfairy, mentioning 'old foundations and corn kilns close to the present house of Kilgallioch'. Another note states: 'Barnies Corner Moss – Contains two plainly defined Crannoges'. The name may refer to an area marked 'Barneconahie' on the Ordnance Survey map at NX 258 751, on the edge of boggy ground beside the Pulganny Burn, to the north of the track from Derry to Kilgallioch, not mentioned by Wilson [1872] in his account of Wigtownshire crannogs.

One sentence reads: 'on top of Craigearie is the Giants Cave paved and with a conduit leading from it'. This probably refers to a cairn at NX 2324 7439 (NMR: NX27SW 9) on the north side Craigairie Fell, marked on 19th century Ordnance Survey maps, although not in the Gothic script used to denote an antiquity. It was recorded in *Discovery and Excavation Scotland* (1977, 39) by L Masters and M Yates as a round cairn, and has been listed as a possible chambered cairn of the Bargrennan Group (Murray 1992, p39 fig 3.3; p48). A visit by the present writer in 1990 found the orthostatic chamber or cist much damaged and infilled with stones. The structure must have been more open when Dr Selby observed 'paving', and his comment on a 'conduit,' or passage, strengthens the case for this being a passage grave of Bargrennan type.

The opening section also includes two satirical poems dated January 1892 concerning an incident arising from a complaint by Lady Maxwell about the high notes sung by

one member of the choir in Mochrum parish church, evidently resulting in a withdrawal of services by the choir! The first poem is a lament for the disappearance of the 'sweet singers', but the second, it must be admitted, consists of somewhat crude personal remarks about the ladies. These verses are printed below as Appendix 1.

Among the more personal information in the final pages of the Notebook is a family tree detailing the offspring of Robert Bird Selby's elder half-brother, Ephraim. An extract from *'The Student'*, an Edinburgh University publication, dated January 1899, pokes fun at a play written by Sir Thomas Grainger Stewart, the Royal Physician and a well known lecturer at the Medical School, advising medical students that 'an apt quotation, might, with Stewartian ordering of affairs, stand him in good stead in class or professional examinations'. There are several verses. One, entitled 'Self Examination', dated 1874, is a solemn piece listing the questions that should be asked of oneself each evening to ascertain whether 'I a Christian might be styled'. A poem by John Gibson Lockhart, 'When youthful faith has fled', is rather less confident in its religious sentiments, looking forward to the possibility of reuniting with loved ones beyond the grave, but expressing some doubt as to the reality of this afterlife. Another poem, entitled 'Rhyming Rules', gives conventions for playing whist, while a fourth is the well known verse 'Monday's child is fair of face'. There are also the following short verses:

The rule of the road is a paradox quite
As in riding or driving along
If you keep to the left you are sure to go right
If you keep to the right you go wrong.

and:

God and the Doctor we alike adore
But only when in danger, not before
The danger o'er, both are alike requited
God is forgotten and the Doctor slighted.

There are a few local records, such as a list of the parishes in the Presbytery of Wigtown, and another of the ministers of Mochrum parish from 1567 to 1907. William took an interest in vernacular speech, noting in 1913 some amusing phraseology, such as the overblown terminology of the Clerk to the Schoolboard, formerly Inspector of Poor in the Parish:- 'The promiscuous application of opprobrious epithets do not constitute a valid argument'. He records the malapropism of the man who lamented the death of a friend who died of one of the 'knapsacks' (an abscess). William Selby seems to have had a somewhat wry sense of humour.

The Collection

Not all of the items listed in the Catalogue in the Selby Notebook are still in the Collection. Those that are present have been recatalogued for Stranraer Museum under group headings as used in the following resumé. References to individual items use the Selby Catalogue numbering, as SC 1, SC 2..., SC 1 to SC 41 referring to items catalogued before 1895, presumably collected by Dr Robert Bird Selby, while later numbers denote items entered

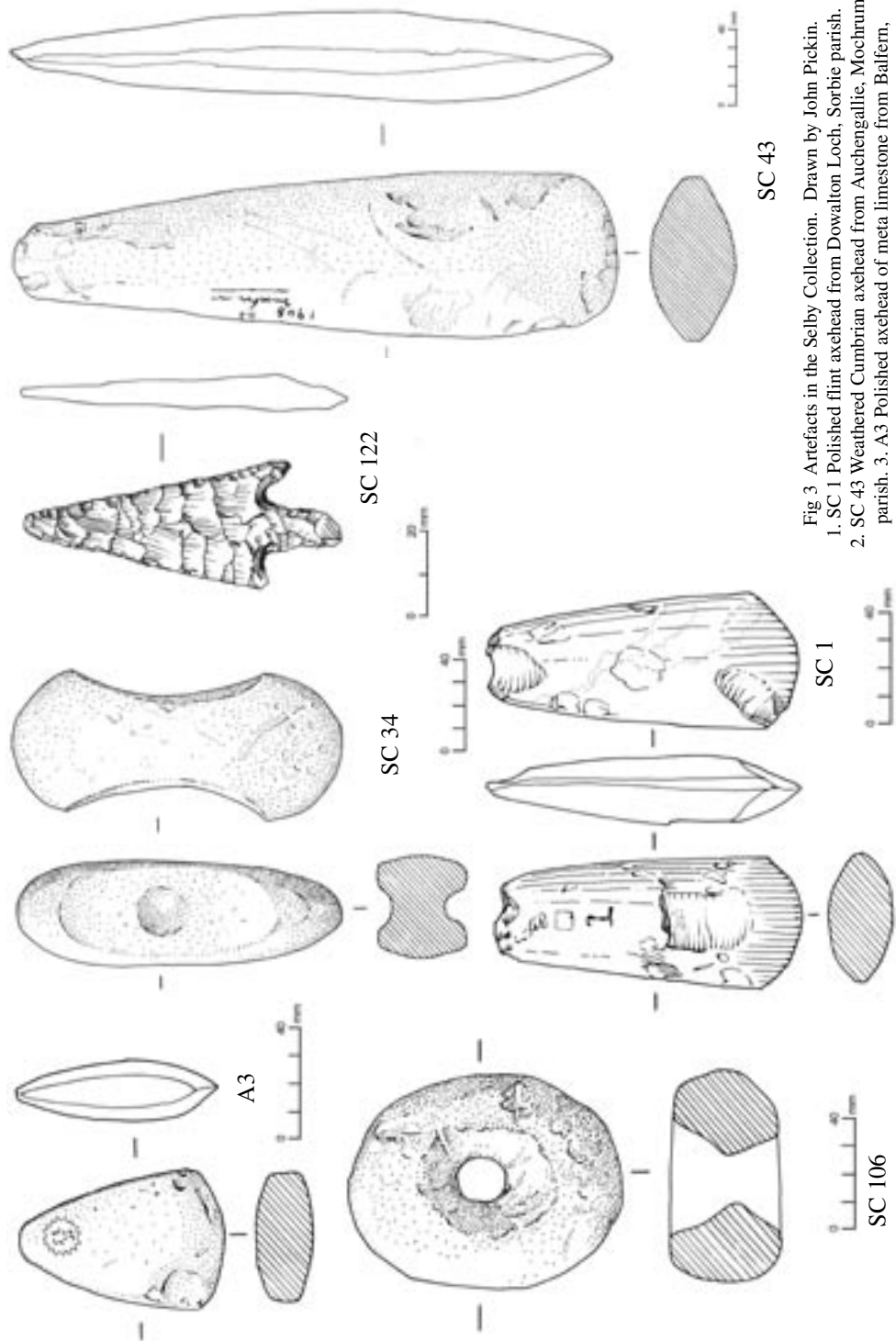


Fig 3 Artefacts in the Selby Collection. Drawn by John Pickin.
 1. SC 1 Polished flint axehead from Dowalton Loch, Sorbie parish.
 2. SC 43 Weathered Cumbrian axehead from Auchengallie, Mochrum parish. 3. A3 Polished axehead of meta limestone from Balfem, Kirkinner parish. 4. SC 106 Possible macehead of red sandstone, Wigtownshire. 5. SC 34 Unfinished battle-axe from Moormains, Mochrum parish. 6. SC 122 Spearhead of grey flint from peat moss at Balneil, Mochrum parish.

by Dr William McDowall Selby. For uncatalogued artefacts numbers have been interpolated. RBKS 1 - RBKS 6 refer to six items noted by R B K Stevenson, while A1, A2 etc. apply to 36 artefacts in the collection which lack any documentation.

Most of the collection comes from sources closely local to Port William, where William Selby is said to have asked local ploughmen to look out for unusual stones. Occasional mention of circumstances of recovery include items being picked up during agricultural operations, while others had been preserved as curiosities, some being put to practical use around farm steadings. There may have been a superstitious element here, for example, regarding a macehead 'found in use as a block to a horse's chain in Kiltersan farm Stable'. William Selby acquired a number of flints from Blairbuy farm, near Monreith, both Drs Selby being on close terms with the McMaster family, farming here. Some spectacular finds from this farm, including a snake bracelet of bronze, a bronze statuette of Mercury, a spear, and bronze axes, were given to the landlord, Sir Herbert Maxwell of Monreith, before 1888, but there are no locally found bronzes in the Selby collection. A few items come from the Whithorn area and other parts of Wigtownshire. There are also some 'collectors' pieces' from further afield, perhaps gifted to the Selbys, or obtained through exchange.

Stone and Flint axeheads: The cream of the collection consists of 14 stone axeheads, including one of flint, all but two recorded as having been found in Galloway. The slightly damaged flint axehead from Dowalton Loch (SC 1) (fig 3.1), 110mm in length, is of somewhat stained, mottled, grey-brown flint, polished all over. It is an unusual find for the district. Flint axeheads are rare in Scotland, the majority coming from eastern counties, with a Borders distribution reaching only as far west as Eskdale. Only one flint axe is recorded from the Stewartry, a polished example from Torrs, near Kirkcudbright, now in the Stewartry Museum (Acc No 1405), which is almost certainly from an east coast source [cf Sheridan 1992]. A number of flint axeheads have been found in west Wigtownshire, but most of these have an unpolished, flaked surface, characteristic of Irish flint axeheads, and are likely to have originated in Ireland. The polished Dowalton find, on the other hand, probably came from eastern Britain, and is a true exotic in the area.

SC 2, a finely polished axehead of dark, basaltic stone (or welded tuff), with handsome greenish streaking, is said to have been given to Robert Selby in 1891 by a Miss Maclaren, and to have come from either Stirlingshire or Haddingtonshire. SC 42, of granitic stone, acquired in 1906 from a Dr I A Robertson's collection, is noted as probably not being from Wigtownshire. SC 44, of Cumbrian stone, was given to William Selby by a local molecatcher who found it while working in the Stewartry. The remaining ten axeheads are all from Wigtownshire, eight of these deriving from named farms. One of these, from Auchengallie (SC 43), was turned up during turnip thinning, while a crudely made axehead from Balcraig Moor (SC 45) was picked up on plough by William Selby himself. Some fine axeheads come from near Whithorn and from Kirkinner parish, presumably recognised as being of interest to a collector such as Dr Selby. One, from Skaith, near Newton Stewart (SC 36), had been found in a drain, but was later used to prop up a sash window, and subsequently left lying in a rockery.

Four of the 11 Galloway axeheads are of a fine-grained stone likely to be a Cumbrian tuff of Group VI or related type (Ritchie and Scott 1989). This is not the 'overpowering

majority' observed by Williams (1970, 111) to be characteristic of the Galloway distribution, a fact which probably reflects the truly local nature of the collection. Axes which are presented to museums tend to be fine specimens, thought worthy of display, while the Selby collection, possibly more representative, includes axeheads of local, often unsuitable stone. Three of the probable Group VI axeheads (SC 36, SC 43, and SC 44) are large, fine examples, 213mm, 320mm and 244mm in length, although somewhat weathered. The largest, from Auchengallie farm (SC 43) (fig 3.2), was displayed at a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1908 (*Proc Soc Antiq Soc* 43 1908-9, 23). The fourth, from Arbrack (RBKS 2), has also been a substantial axe, and retains a high polish, although it is much damaged. There are a large number of axeheads from Arbrack in other collections, mostly of Cumbrian tuff. The location of the farm near the Isle of Whithorn would be most convenient for import of axes from across the Solway. The Selby Collection includes an axehead of slightly speckled, black porphyry, also from Arbrack (RBKS 3) which geological examination has shown not to be of Antrim porcellanite (inf: Alison Sheridan).

A small neat axehead (SC 3) from Prestrie, also near Whithorn, is of a grainy milletstone, quite unsuitable for use, perhaps, rather, an amulet. Another small example from Balfern, Kirkinner (A3) (fig 3.3), is of a beautiful, well-polished meta limestone, resembling marble. There are two severely eroded specimens, one of granofels found by William Selby on Balcraig Moor (SC 45), the other a Wigtownshire axehead of metamorphic rock (SC 196). Two others, also probably of local stone, have holes bored into them. One of these (SC 86), an unlocated Wigtownshire find, is a plump axe of greywacke with hollows sharply cut into either side, not closely aligned, perhaps by a metal tool. The second (SC 37), a thin siltstone axehead from Kildarroch, Kirkinner, is perforated through, possibly with the intention of converting it into a macehead.

Maceheads, Battle-axes and Axehammers: There are two probable maceheads in the collection, SC 26 from Kiltersan, Kirkcowan, and SC 106 from Wigtownshire (fig 3.4). Both are 105mm in length, and of extremely simple, ovoid form. The first, of heavy granitic stone, pecked into shape, is worn at the perforation from recent use in tethering a horse; the other is of red sandstone, with a very widely splayed perforation, but with the slightly dish profile characteristic of a macehead. Five further cobbles in the collection have perforations or pit marks, but lack this dish effect, and have not been classified as maceheads but included under 'Perforated and Pitted Stones' (see below). Roe, listing the *Battle-axes, mace-heads, and axe-hammers of south-west Scotland* (1967), records only four maceheads from Wigtownshire, two of which, from the south Machars, surviving as broken halves, are very similar to the Selby pair.

One unfinished battle-axe from Moormains (SC 34) (fig 3.5), has an incompletely bored perforation, suggesting local manufacture. Only four battle-axes from the Machars are listed by Roe, and SC 34 differs from these in having the crescentic ends of Roe's Type A.

Large, heavy axehammers are a relatively common find in SW Scotland, and the two plain Selby examples (SC 35, Culgarnie; SC 79, Wigtownshire), the former 290mm in length, are characteristic of the genre. Both had found later uses. William Selby suggested that SC 79 had possibly been used both as a pivot for a gate and as a cloth smoother.

Utilised stones: 27 artefacts, excluding regular whetstones, have been grouped under this general heading, the largest category in the collection. They include stones that have been used as hammers, anvils, smoothers or polishers. Only seven of the objects have been attributed to particular farms, the remainder mostly being listed simply as coming from Wigtownshire.

Three of the stones stand out as representing some specialised function. SC 88, provenanced only as being from Wigtownshire, is an end-bevelled, elongated pebble, 132mm in length, worn on opposing faces on one end in the fashion characteristic of mesolithic tools, known as limpet scoops. RBKS 5, from Mochrum, is an elongated pebble, 103mm in length, much worn at one end by a mechanical, circular motion, perhaps having been used as a pivot. The unprovenanced A30 is a cone shaped piece of haematite, 57mm in height, highly polished on all eight flat faces, particularly on the base.

Of the remaining 24 utilised stones, over half can be described as being ball or drum shaped, the former sometimes slightly flattened. These interesting pieces are generally regularly formed, usually of granite, quartzite, or other durable stone. The balls are mostly c70mm in diameter, although one is 90mm across, while the drums are commonly a little smaller, with one 100mm across. The flat surfaces of the drums are mostly smoothed, as if from use as polishers, and some have smoothed facets on their sides. Most of these show evidence of use as hammerstones or anvils, several having a small, neatly pecked area in the centre of one flat surface. Similar pecked areas occur on the flattened facets found on a few of the ball shaped objects. This utilisation distinguishes the balls from the similarly sized, but purely ornamental, Carved Stone Balls of north-east Scotland (Marshall 1977). The very coarse grained granite of many of the Wigtownshire balls shows that there can never have been any intention to polish or carve them, but the choice of stone and the regularity of form does suggest a more than utilitarian purpose.

The remaining utilised stones are less formalised, many apparently being natural cobbles or pebbles used as hammerstones or polishers. Four flattish, circular or near circular pebbles have pecked areas in the centre of both surfaces, similar to those on the ball and drum shaped artefacts, having evidently been used as anvils. These utilised stones cannot be assigned to particular periods of use or to narrowly defined functions, although similar objects are known from prehistoric contexts.

A few items in the collection show so little sign of modification that they have been listed separately as Natural Stones.

Whetstones: There are four square or rectangular sectioned whetstones in the collection, three of these being perforated by a neatly made hole near one end. They range from 71mm to 122mm in length.

Perforated and Pitted Stones: There are 19 stones in this very variable group. Several, as the Selby Catalogue states, have probably been net sinkers. One flat slab (SC 30) seems to have been a roof slate. A perforated, tongue shaped stone from Wigtown, worn on one end (SC 29), is probably a loom weight.

Two perforated cobbles of red sandstone and three pitted stones could be suggested to be simple maceheads, but they do not have the slight dishing that characterises maceheads.

One of these, SC 84, a flattish, roughly oval pebble, 78mm in length, with hollows pecked into each face, is made of an attractive speckled stone such as was frequently chosen for macehead manufacture. There are several similar cobbles with central, circular hollows in the Whithorn Museum collection, while others were presented to the Society of Antiquaries by the Rev George Wilson of Glenluce (1880, 127-8, figs 33, 34) and by Sir Herbert Maxwell (1889, 211). The form may represent a local peculiarity.

Stone Ball: One unprovenanced, well finished, slightly flattened ball, at 31mm x 28mm much smaller than the Carved Stone Balls of NE Scotland, shows no sign of use, distinguishing it from the 'utilised stones'. A distribution of similar small balls in SE Scotland, found on Iron Age sites, has been mapped by Cool (1982, 96, fig 3). Cool dismisses the idea that these carefully made objects could have been sling stones, and suggests a use as game pieces.

Flints: There are over 50 objects of flint in the collection, not including some foreign pieces. The number of items from outside Wigtownshire perhaps reflects William's participation in contemporary fashions of flint collection and exchange of specimens between collectors (none of the flints were catalogued by Robert Selby). There is a handsome slug knife from Sawdon, Yorkshire (A4), a small retouched flake, said to be probably from Shetland (SC 138), and a large, chunky flake from Caesar's Camp, Aldershot (SC 119), perhaps brought back by William's brother, Robert. A number of pieces come from the Borders, most of these having been obtained from Tom Scott, the well known Selkirk collector active in the latter years of the 19th century. These include characteristic Tweedside mesolithic tools, mostly from Craigsfordmains and Earlston, such as microliths and retouched blades, besides one arrowhead tip (cf Mulholland 1970).

The finest of the Wigtownshire flint pieces (SC 122) is a pressure flaked barbed and tanged spearhead of grey flint, 80mm in length, said to have been found in peat moss at Drumneil, just north of Mochrum village in 1895 (fig 3.6). This spearhead was exhibited, together with the axehead from Auchengallie, at the Society of Antiquaries in 1908 (*Proc Soc Antiq Soc* 43 1908-9, 23). Such large flint artefacts are rare in Scotland, and are probably of imported flint. A spearhead of almost identical dimensions, with rather more elongated barbs, was, however, found on the shore of Machermore (or Whitefield) Loch and presented to the National Museum by George Wilson (1878, 30).

Thirteen flint items come from Blairbuy farm. Besides several flakes and blades, there is a plano-convex knife (SC 136), 64mm in length, of mottled grey flint, likely to be of imported material, and a finely retouched scraper of grey flint, 48mm in length (SC 131), both dated 1914. There are also two microliths from Blairbuy, one curved (A9), one obliquely blunted (SC 147). The farm, on the western flank of the Fell of Barhullion, has a considerable arable component, raising the potential for surface collection of lithics. The cluster of flint finds reflect the interest of the McMaster family at Blairbuy, friendly with the two doctors.

Four well made artefacts come from Chapel Heron, near Whithorn. There is a small, pressure flaked knife (SC 207), two neatly retouched scrapers, and an edge retouched flake (SC 203-5). There is also a knife (RBKS 1) from Barsalloch, just south of Port William, and a neat disc scraper (SC 206) from Caldons Hill, in Stoneykirk parish, in the Rhins.

Unprovenanced finds include two barbed and tanged arrowheads, the base of a triangular arrowhead, two scrapers, one made on a large, tabular flint flake, 74mm in length, one microlith, half a dozen retouched flakes, and a number of other flakes, blades and flint chunks. Most of these pieces were probably found locally, being of grey or creamy brown flint likely to be beach pebble material.

Bronze axeheads: Three metal axeheads are all said to have been bought in 1894 from an antique dealer called Duff who had a business at 14 Queensferry Street in Edinburgh. The three could have been chosen as a set of types, consisting of a flat copper axehead and a flanged and a socketed axehead of bronze. The flat and socketed axeheads are likely to have been made in Ireland, but the flanged axe is a replica, one of a series, probably made in the 1880s, for sale to collectors (inf: Trevor Cowie).

Beads: There are two beads in the collection. SC 27 is a doughnut shaped bead of brownish glass, 17mm in diameter, said to have been found in a cairn on Corwall farm, in the north of the parish. M'Kerlie (1878, Vol II, 262) refers to a cist containing pieces of bone having been found 'recently' in a cairn on the hill at Corwall, but makes no mention of a bead. While two cairns and a number of clearance cairns are known on Corwall, there are no records of excavation, and the site concerned cannot be identified. Glass beads are well known in Viking contexts in Scotland, and are found in burial mounds, for example on the Isle of Man. An amber bead is reported to have been found in the 18th century with a silver arm-ring of Viking type in a cist in a cairn at Blackerne in Kirkcudbrightshire (see discussion in Graham-Campbell 2001, 13-16).

The other bead (A19) is unprovenanced. It is a polished disc bead of streaky, pinky-brown serpentine stone, 14mm in diameter.

Roman material: One of the doctors evidently visited the Roman site of Chesters, on Hadrian's Wall, as an oyster shell and several pieces of Samian ware from the site are in the collection, two of the latter dated to March 6 1900. From Newstead there are also sherds of Samian pottery, besides a piece of *mortaria*, and two iron nails, presumably souvenirs given to visitors to the excavation.

Spindlewhorls: There are 31 spindlewhorls in the collection, three others listed in the Selby Catalogue, including one from India, being missing. Three of the surviving whorls have no provenance, 26 being described simply as 'from Wigtownshire', one (SC 61) coming from Craigdhu, in Glasserton parish, while SC 20, a well polished plain disc of dark basalt, was 'Got from an old woman in Port William who thought it to be a charm and called it an 'adder stone'. In his Notebook Dr Selby recorded the local tradition as follows: 'At a certain day of the year a lot of adders collected together and vomited up the dust they had gathered during the course and baked into the shape of the whorl – round and flat. The white adder, there was always one present and only one as Captain of the others – directed all the proceedings, and after the mass was made, he formed the hole by going through it himself.'

One of the whorls (SC 23) is made of pottery, but the others are mostly of local sandstone or greywacke. A neat, well polished specimen (SC 63), the smallest of the set at 26mm by 9mm thick, is of a mottled, pinkish stone resembling the kaolinite which has

been sourced by Williams and Cormack (1995) as coming from near Drummore in the Wigtownshire Rhins, and which was used in the manufacture of mediaeval spindlewhorls, for example at Whithorn. The composition of the Selby whorl differs, however, from the source identified (inf: Dr Suzanne Miller, geologist in the Royal Museum of Scotland).

Two thirds of the whorls measure 36mm or more in diameter. The 72 whorls found in excavation at Whithorn are predominantly smaller in size, a diameter suggested to be related to the fineness of the thread being spun (Nicholson in Hill 1997). The Selby whorls are probably a more workaday set. Less than half the set carry decoration, often quite poorly executed. Ten of the decorated whorls are illustrated in figs 4 and 5. Fig 4 shows several characteristically flat discs with incised circles, radial lines and dots, those on SC 50 forming a cross shaped pattern. On fig 5 SC 62 is a similar disc shaped whorl, but the remaining three are more unusual. SC 15 is the shape of a curling stone, quite similar to the smaller SC 16, which carries a zig-zag pattern on its upper surface, while SC 65 is bun-shaped. All three carry encircling lines on their sides, and all are coated with a black waxy patina. The three seem likely to be contemporary.

Plough Pebbles: There are eight pebbles of white quartzite or similar material in the collection, all from Bowden in Roxburghshire, the home of the collector, Tom Scott, who is named as donor of six of the pebbles. They range from 20mm to 31mm in diameter, and all have one facet heavily worn to a smooth surface from use as plough pebbles protecting the sole of a wooden plough. Closely comparable pebbles were found at Whithorn from contexts demonstrating a long chronology of mediaeval use (Hill and Kucharski 1990). Such items are a common find in the Borders.

Foreign Artefacts: Half a dozen small flint arrowheads, neatly mounted on card, obtained from Mr Duncan Wright in 1910, come from the Argentine Republic. The Wright family lived at Alticry, at the north end of Mochrum parish. Two waisted stone axeheads attributed to Sirionos Indians in Bolivia are dated to 1927 and 1928. A similar axehead, with the same attribution, was exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland by Miss Wright of Alticry, Port William in May 1925 (*Proc Soc Antiq Scot* 59 1924-5, 232-3, *illus*).

There is also a handsome scraper of black flint from Sweden, broken in two and rejoined, given to Dr Selby by Tom Scott of Bowden.

Replicas: Seven items of flint, dated 1913, come from Portrush in Northern Ireland where artefacts were made for sale to tourists. There are six flint arrowheads or spearheads up to 85mm in length, and a rough-out axehead. As mentioned above, one of the bronze axeheads bought in Edinburgh is also modern, in this case perhaps not recognised by the purchaser as being a fake.

Miscellaneous items: The collection includes two iron flint strikers, probably of 19th century date, two cannonballs, a variety of probably natural pebbles, and other odd objects. A small box initialled WMcDS and dated 1894 contains what are probably samples from William Selby's medical studies, two sets of auditory ossicles from foetuses, one from an adult.

Missing items: A few of the items catalogued in the Notebook are no longer in the Collection. These include some large grooved stones, a few flints and spindlewhorls, a

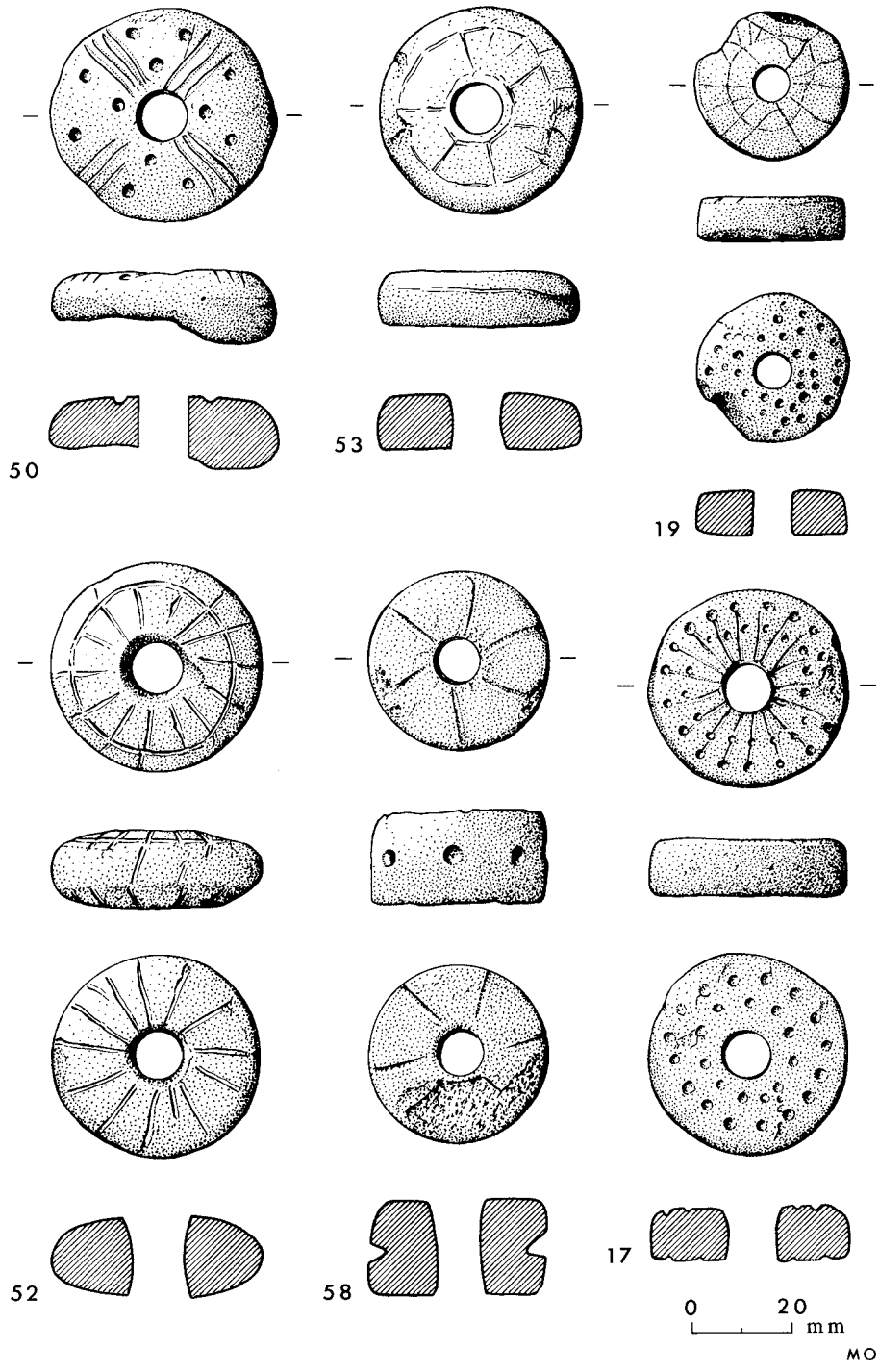


Fig 4 Six spindlewhorls of sandstone from Wigtownshire, all decorated with incised lines, some with dots. SC 17, 19, 50, 52, 53, and 58. Drawn by Marion O'Neil.

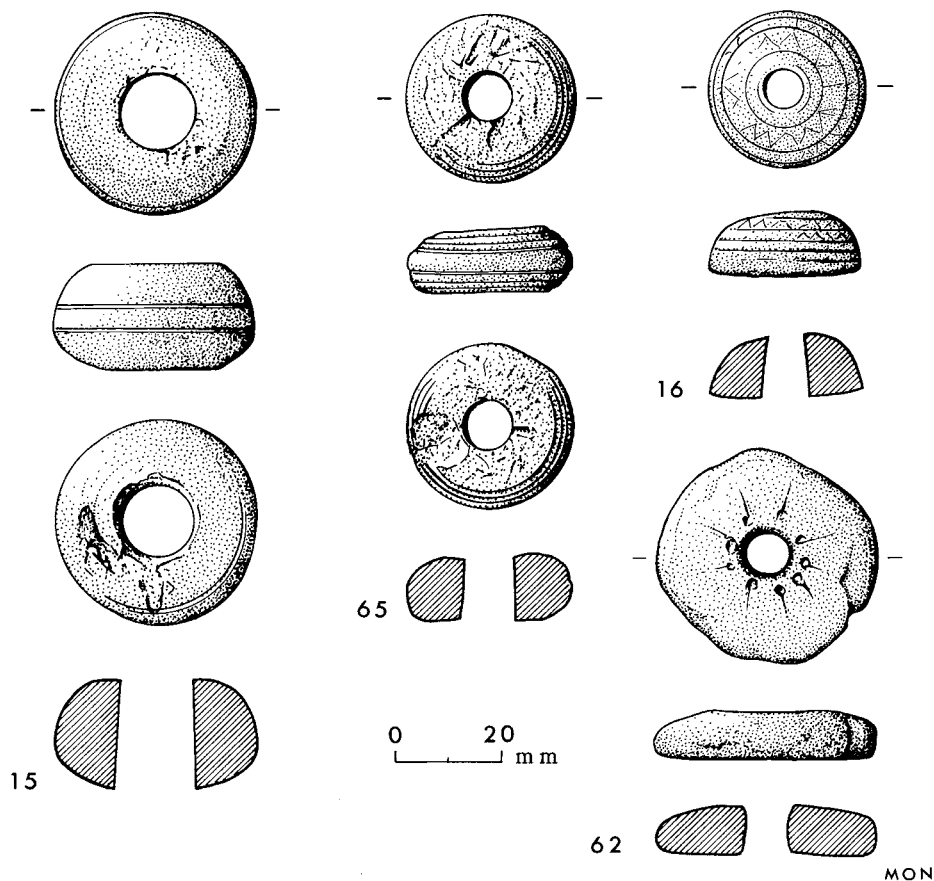


Fig 5 Four decorated spindlewhorls from Wigtownshire. SC 15, 16, 62 and 65. Drawn by Marion O'Neil.

number of modern historical objects, such as a blunderbuss, and a great many curios from abroad, many of which derive from Dr Robert Selby's military postings. A number of Communion tokens, listed separately by William Selby, and known to have been kept by Helen Selby, are no longer present.

Acknowledgements

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Assistance in compilation of the Catalogue has come from Trevor Cowie, Alison Sheridan and Suzanne Miller of the National Museums of Scotland, John Pickin of Stranraer Museum, James Williams, and the late Bill Cormack. I should also like to thank John Pickin and Marion O'Neil for the illustrations of the artefacts.

Appendix 1 From Dr Selby's Notebook (January 1892)

Song – Mochrum Choir

Tune – Coborin [?] Far Far Away

Where is now our Mochrum Choir?

Far Far Away

Terging on in Spiteful ire

Fled are they

They say Miss Parker struck high Doh

Made Lady Maxwell nervous so

She wrote parson Allan¹ O! Oh!!!

And did say

Strike high Doh

Strike high Doh

And Parson Allan he took up

Took up his pen

To write precentor just a line

A line tae ken

If when Miss Parker strikes high Doh

She'd just a little lower blow

And not make Maxwell nervous so oh

So nervous so

So nervous so

So nervous so

And Parker took his tale of woe

To Gavin John

Who said their little game I'll put

My foot upon

In heaven fair all equal are

And high and low are on a par

I'll teach them all who worship here

Must equal be

Must equal be

Must equal be

Oh come back to Parker

The night it gets darker

And Basso profundo

Left singing alone

Oh bring back our Sally

Our Lily Our Aggie

Their voices are weak

But sweet singers I own

Oh little we thought

When we spoke against organs

You'd turn up your heels and

Run off in a fright

Oh come back to Parker

The night it gets darker

And sing the old hundred

With power and with might

1. The Rev Allan was minister of Mochrum parish from 1869 to 1900, as an appointee of the Maxwells. His high church practices were not popular in the parish, and at first some parishioners boycotted his services. See *Mochrum....a Parish History 1794-1994*, 68-70, (1994).

Mochrum Choir

Come brother Nish² & tune your lyre
 To sing the glories of the choir
 The choir alas which has departed
 And left us almost [?broken-hearted]

Come sing the beauties of their faces
 Now don't forget their gaudy laces
 The hats they wear as regimentals
 And last not least their fathers' rentals

Tell how Miss E could well afford
 To go to Dental Surgeon Ord
 And get a set of braw new grinders
 Full fit to masticate the blinders

Tell how another of the clan
 Went to the Rhins to hunt a man
 Tell how the young man took to bed
 And would not stir till she had fled.

Tell how the younger fry go out
 To Ball tea party dance & rout
 Where they coquet with Dick & Tom
 Or ride off home with Bob or John.

Tell how they gather up the news
 And how it from their stomach spues
 Clothed in a garment so uncouth
 That few would recognise as truth.

Tell that for making dolls the're famed
 And even in *Life & Work*³ are named
 And that they beg from rich and poor
 That they may make the heathen pure

Tell how they treated Gavin John
 Even treated him with bitter scorn
 Because good man he could not bear
 To worship God with compressed air

Tell all these things & many more
 Of which in memory you have store
 And when you're finished come to me
 And I'll supply the Eau de Vie
 January 1892

Toby in the Gallery⁴

2. Robert Nish seems to have been a local Port William 'bard'. His verses on Mochrum Kirk are printed in *Mochrum....a Parish History 1794-1994*, 131-2.
3. *Life and Work*, the Church of Scotland's monthly magazine, published news from the parishes. In 1891 the three eldest Selby brothers were regularly listed as being successful entrants in the 'Bible Class' competition.
4. Toby in the Gallery probably refers to a columnist of the day who wrote Parliamentary sketches under this *nom de plume* [Maxwell 1932, 207].

Appendix 2 Blairbuy cists

The Selby Notebook records two separate discoveries of cists on the farm of Blairbuy, near Monreith. The descriptions, mostly consisting of measurements, are set out below, with the fuller original account of the second find quoted verbatim.

Cist 1

This cist was found in April 1890 'in field side of road over shoulder of Fell', presumably the Fell of Barhullion. The find spot would be at about NGR NX 36 42. The capstone measured 3ft 3in by 1ft 8in by 6in thick [1.0m x 0.51m x 0.15m], a portion having been broken off in removal. The cist was orientated north-south, and the overlying soil was shallowest on the east, where it was 8in [0.20m] deep, presumably in falling ground. Soil lay 19in [0.48m] deep over the north end of the cist, 15in [0.38m] over the south end, and 14in [0.36m] over the west side. The side stones measured 3ft 6½in [1.08m] long at the top and 2ft 9in [0.86m] at the bottom, their height varying from 24in to 14in [0.61m-0.36m]. The end stones were 1ft 8in [0.51m] broad at the top, the north stone being 1ft 9in [0.53m] broad at the bottom, the south stone 1ft 4in [0.41m]. There were four 'corner stones', 20in to 23in [0.51m-0.58m] long and 6in to 8in [0.15m-0.20m] in maximum breadth.

Cist 2

This cist was found on Blairbuy farm on 7th February 1891. It measured 3ft 9in [1.14m] east to west by 1ft 8in [0.51m] north to south at the middle, with the end stones being 1ft 3in [0.38m] broad. The north side was made up of three stones and one corner stone, the south side of two stones and one corner stone. The cist was 2ft 3in [0.69m] deep. A note reads: 'Urn found in it very much injured by water – after fragments dried on stove'.

The account continues as follows:-

'In digging out a rabbit on the top of a gravelly knowe Patrick McMaster came upon a stone cist, the sides of which seemed complete but the covering stone had been removed & the cavity filled with soil. On Saturday the 7th Feby – 91 Mr H McMaster & I proceeded to remove the soil in the cist & at the depth of 2 feet 3 inches in the N.E. corner was found an urn lying on its side the bottom to the East – the mouth to the N – across the long diameter of the grave. The urn was formed of very coarse clay & in the inside was of a reddish colour & contained many small white pebbles. It was much injured partly in removing the earth from above it & partly from the urn being so sodden with moisture. All the fragments were carefully gathered together – taken into Blairbuy farmhouse & dried at the fire so as if possible to preserve them. The whole of the earth in the cist was passed through a sieve & the floor of the cist was explored till we were satisfied that we were in the original gravel of the hillock – one piece of flint was picked up - part of a nodule – nothing else was found.'

The Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, under 'Collections from Sepulchral Deposits', records the remains of an urn and a flint piece from 'Blair Buy' being deposited by Dr R B Selby in 1890 [although the excavation date recorded in the Notebook is February 7th 1891]. No details are given of the circumstances of recovery.

EQ 517 Rudely made urn, like a cinerary urn in colour and texture, decorated spo-

radically on the body with whipped-cord “maggot” impressions with similar impressions transversely round the top of the flattened rim, and obliquely just outside it.

EQ 518 Half of a small brown flint pebble with one concave edge showing signs of use.

A Morrison [1968, 112], cataloguing *Cinerary urns and pygmy vessels in south-west Scotland*, classes the urn as bucket-shaped, with a slight constriction under the rim. He adds: ‘Although whole, the urn is very much twisted out of shape’.

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RESEARCH ON THE LIVES OF HELEN WALKER
AND HER SISTER ISOBELL WALKER

by Stanley J Morton¹

These two working people lived by Cluden Water in Dumfriesshire in the first half of the 18th Century.

Cluden Water divides Dumfriesshire and the Parish of Holywood on its north bank from Kirkcudbrightshire and the Parish of Irongray on its South bank. The small village of West Cluden (which we will call Cluden) lies on the south bank and is thus in the parish of Irongray. The village of East or Nether Cluden lies on the north bank.

In Cluden lived two sisters of humble origin. Helen Walker was born about 1711. Her younger sister Isobell was born about 1718. Their Father William Walker, a farm worker, died a few years after Isobell was born. Helen was a strong character and developed at an early age a strong Christian faith. After her father's death Helen, despite her tender years, took on the burden of looking after her mother and sister.

In 1736 a Statute of 1690 brought tragedy to their lives. That Statute decreed, 'If a woman conceals her pregnancy during the whole period thereof, and does not call for assistance at the birth, and if the child be found dead or missing, she shall be held guilty of murder'.

In 1736 Isobell became pregnant. She told no one of her condition and bore a child without calling for assistance. We do not know why she behaved in this way. Perhaps it was from fear of the stigma which, in those times, such a birth brought down on the mother. Perhaps she stood in awe of her sister's strong religious beliefs.

The Court documents tell of the sufferings that Isobell endured between 1736 and 1738.

Shortly after 28th October 1736 Isobell, daughter of deceased William Walker of Cluden in the Parish of Irongray was indicted as guilty of child murder and imprisoned in the Tolbooth at Dumfries. At her first trial on 2nd May 1737, at the Dumfries Circuit Court, her Advocate James Fergusson of Craigdarroch, raised the point that there was only one Judge, Lord Strichen, whereas an Act of 1672 required that there be two Judges. Lord Strichen accordingly remitted the indictment to be tried at Edinburgh on 21st June 1737. By 21st May 1737 Isobell had been moved to the Edinburgh Tolbooth. In the event, there was no trial at Edinburgh on 21st June 1737. She remained in the Edinburgh Tolbooth. On 6th April 1738, Isobell was transferred back to the prison at Dumfries. Thus from shortly after 28th October 1736 until her substantive trial at the Dumfries Circuit Court in 1st May 1738 and thereafter until her remission in July 1738 she languished in various prisons.

Before we pass on to the details of the birth in 1736 and the trial in 1738, it can be mentioned that on 13th June 1737 Isobell petitioned to be banished from the country instead of standing trial and on 1st May 1738 she petitioned to be transported beyond the seas never to return. Neither Petition was granted.

1 9 Braehead Park, Edinburgh EH4 6AX

Helen did not give evidence at her sister's trial. Helen was not referred to in any of the Court documents. We assume that Helen was living at Cluden or thereabouts but we have no documentary evidence. It is widely believed and may well be that Isobell's advocate asked Helen whether she could say that her sister had mentioned her pregnancy and explained to Helen the likelihood that such a statement would ensure that her sister would not be executed. But Isobell had mentioned nothing and Helen refused to bear false witness. Isobell's advocate might not have wanted Helen even to be present at the trial in case the court started asking Helen questions. We cannot tell.

The birth probably took place on 24th October 1736. Before that date there were local rumors that Isobell was with child. At the trial on 1st May 1738 one witness, John Stott of Cluden, said that in August 1736 he had said to several of his neighbours that he would bet a golden guinea that Isobell was with child. Isobell displayed a reckless courage and a disregard of the truth when she threatened to call John Stott before the Church Session for scandal, denying that she was pregnant, where upon there was no more talk of the matter by anyone for some time. This may well have contributed to the viciousness which, as we shall see, developed against Isobell later when she did give birth to a child.

At this stage it should be mentioned that at Cluden and onwards downstream, Cluden Water is bounded on its south bank by a series of high rock cliffs below which are dark sinister pools whereas the opposite north bank is low lying and has pebbly beaches.

Another witness at the trial on 1st May 1738 was Jean Alexander, about 22 years old, daughter of James Alexander of Cluden. Jean said that on Sunday 24th October 1736 she went to Isobell's mother's house in Cluden where she found Isobell and her mother; soon after she arrived Isobell went into the other end of the house which was separated by a thin wattle wall. While in the house Jean heard a person, whom she knew to be Isobell, moaning in the other end of the house. She said she had no suspicion of Isobell being with child or of her being about to be delivered otherwise she would have called for assistance.

At the 1738 trial a witness, William Johnston, aged about 42, a mill owner of Nether Cluden, stated that during the week following 24th October 1736 he saw a naked dead male child on a pebble beach on the north, Holywood, side of Cluden Water. He did not touch the body but called neighbours including William Croket and Mary Haining, both of Nether Cluden. They took up the body which seemed to have been washed onto the pebble beach by the stream which had been in flood. Mary Haining gave evidence at the 1738 trial that she loosened a napkin tied tightly round the child's neck and, as the body was found in the parish of Holywood, it was taken to the Church there. William Croket of Nether Cluden, aged about 70 also gave evidence supporting William Johnston.

We now come to Thursday 28th October 1736. Isobell must have remembered that day with bitterness for the rest of her life, for on that day officialdom exercised its rights and some women of Cluden exacted their revenge on Isobell for having tried to trick them. Officialdom was Elspeth Ferguson of Wigston, aged about 60, midwife, widow of William Welch, who had been desired by one of the Church Elders to visit Isobell as a person suspected of having born a child. At the 1738 trial Elspeth said that she went to visit Isobell and after proper inspection found her to be in such condition as a woman lately brought to bed and particularly that she milked her breast and found that she had fair milk such as

women have that are brought to bed of a child to the full time. At the same time she saw a dead child upon Isobell's knee which child had been brought from Holywood, Isobell had said that the child was not her child as her child was premature still born and she had thrown it into Cluden Water.

It is noticeable that Elspeth's evidence was careful not to mention the violent activities on the same day reported by another witness, Emelia Walker. These violent activities of dubious legality probably took place earlier in the day before the midwife Elspeth appeared on the scene.

In reading the Court records of the witness statements at the trial, one gets the feeling of the time. One senses that in those days there was a respect for the truth which we do not always find in 2005. The witness statements fit together. The people were not fools but they were largely illiterate. Of the eight witnesses called, only the three men and one woman were able to sign their names and of the three men only one, William Johnson the mill owner, signed in a confident style of one well used to writing. It was respect for truth and the suspicion that Isobell had beguiled them that led the viciousness displayed by the evidence of Emelia Walker.

Emelia Walker aged about 43, wife of Samuel Walker of Cluden, was a virtuous natural witch-hunting type. She gave evidence that a considerable time before October 1736 she and others in Cluden had suspected that Isobell was with child but Isobell had denied it. Emelia told her neighbours that they could not let Isobell go on beguiling them. She asked her neighbours to tell her when Isobell was at her, Isobell's, mother's house so that they could all go there. Accordingly, on Thursday 28th October 1736, they all went to Isobell and told her that she should allow Emelia and the other women present to inspect her so that they might justify her innocence. Isobell said she would not allow them to inspect her that day but would on another day, whereupon Emelia grabbed her and after a good deal of struggling with others coming to Emelia's assistance, they drew her breasts and found she had as full breasts of milk as any woman who had born a child. Our enterprising Emelia then went to Holywood Church, which was about a mile away, and brought the dead child to Isobell in her mother's house. Isobell denied that it was her child but finally said that she had brought forth a premature female child no bigger than her two fists together and had thrown it into Cluden Water.

Another witness, Jean Johnson of Cluden, about 66 years old, widow of James Walker, went with the midwife Elspeth Ferguson to Isobell's house as she sometimes assisted at childbirths although not a midwife. Her evidence supported Elspeth's evidence but added that there was 'such confusion in the room'; no doubt the result of the earlier assaults of Emelia and her vigilantes. Jean confirmed hearing Isobell say that the dead child on her knee was not her child as the premature child she had born was no bigger than her two fists together and that she had thrown it into the Cluden Water.

Isobell did not give evidence at her trial but consistent evidence as to statements made by Isobell was given by the trial witnesses.

Consistent statements by the witnesses who saw the child's body by Cluden Water referred to a napkin with a blue stripe tied tightly round the child's neck. Such a napkin was thought to have belonged to Isobell but even Emelia Walker admitted that she was

not certain about that. No reference was made to strangulation but that must have been in people's minds.

Isobell was illiterate. She would not have had any idea of the Statute of 1690 and the significance of its words. She made the mistake of prevaricating, at first saying she had not had a child and then saying that she had had a premature child which she had thrown into the water. That story was not supported by the fact of her having milk. But in the end her prevarications could make no difference to the outcome under the 1690 Statute. She had concealed her pregnancy. She had not called for help at the birth. If she was the mother of the child found in Cluden Water, her child was found dead. If she was the mother of a premature child, the child was missing. She was doomed from the start.

In the afternoon of 1st May 1738 the 15-man jury selected from their number John Carruthers of Donbigh to be their Chancellor (the Spokesman) and John Irvine of Whitehill to be their Clerk. They unanimously found it proven that Isobell came within the exact words of the 1690 Statute quoted above. David Bane, Dempster pronounced Doom. Isobell was sentenced to be taken on 14th June 1738 from the prison of Dumfries to the ordinary place of Execution and there between the hours of three and four o'clock in the afternoon to be hanged by the neck upon a gibbet until she be dead.

On 12th June 1738 a Respite was obtained postponing Isobell's execution until 15th August 1738. This Respite was probably obtained at the instigation of Isobell's Advocate James Fergusson of Craigdarroch. Its purpose was to give time for an attempt to be made to obtain from the Crown under the Great Seal, a Remission of the death sentence. The Respite stated that the death sentence 'be respited for two months from the time appointed for her execution; and that a State of her case be laid before his Majesty whereupon his Majesty will declare his further pleasure'.

It is interesting to see that, following on Isobell's case, the very next case in the Dumfries Circuit Court of May 1738 was another indictment for child murder brought against Mary Douglas of Auchenaicht in the parish of Penpont which is some 10 miles north of the parish of Irongray. Mary did not put the court to the trouble of prosecuting her but petitioned the court to transport her out of the United Kingdom. The court ordered that Mary be taken back to the Dumfries Tolbooth until such time as she could be transported to one or other of his Majesty's plantations in America. As we have already seen, Isobell's petition for transportation was rejected. We do not know whether Mary survived the experience of transportation and the plantations. Perhaps, in the end, Isobell fared better than Mary.

We leave now the evidence of the Court documents. We come to the dramatic story of Isobell's elder sister Helen Walker who was about 27 years old in 1738.

Helen's strength of religious belief which forbid her to bear false witness at her sister's trial was now to prove her sister's salvation

Although we have a copy of the Remission itself, which Helen eventually obtained, extensive searches both at Edinburgh and at the Kew Record Office have not found the Petition by which Helen obtained the Remission. Thus we have no official documents recording the details of the heroic means by which Helen saved her sister's life. We have the comments of Mrs Helen Goldie (née Lawson) of Dumfries who met Helen Walker in

1790 and whose husband, Thomas Goldie of Craigmuir, was Commissary of Dumfries. We also have an article on Helen Walker which appeared in "Sketches from Nature" written in 1830 by John McDiarmid who published a newspaper in Dumfries. Helen never spoke of her achievements except to say that it was through the Almighty's strength that she was able to meet the Duke of Argyll in 1738. From Helen's point of view, the less said the better, both about her sister's pregnancy and about her own achievement. That achievement showed no virtue on her part. For Helen it displayed God's mercy in enabling her to save her sister's life.

Immediately after Isobell's trial Helen must have spoken to Isobell's advocate James Fergusson of Craigdarroch who was local gentry, Craigdarroch being by Moniaive some twelve miles up-stream from Cluden. It is highly probable that James Fergusson drafted the petition to the Crown for the Remission of Isobell's death sentence. James Fergusson would have then known that any worthy Scot seeking such a petition could best achieve success by approaching, in London, John Campbell 2nd Duke of Argyll and Duke of Greenwich. The Duke was born in 1678 and died in 1743. He had fought in Marlborough's wars in the Low Countries. He had led troops against the Jacobites at Sheriffmuir in 1715 and had defended Edinburgh against penalties after the Porteous Riots. He was in favour with the Crown.

Shortly before his death the Duke received from Prince Charles Edward Stewart in France, a letter seeking his support in what became the uprising of 1745. In view of his efforts in 1715, it was a surprising letter to send to his Grace. The Duke promptly handed the letter to the British Government.

John Campbell was a strong supporter of Scottish interests and an obvious person for any Scot needing help to approach. His biography published in 1745 by Robert Campbell states (perhaps with an enthusiasm born of relationship), 'His Grace's Temper was naturally compassionate to all Mankind, but to the poor man in distress his heart was open, and when he met the Men of Merit in Want, his bounty had no Bounds'. There then followed an example of such bounty but there was no reference to Helen's petition. The biography made it clear that if John Campbell did not consider that the applicant deserved help, he would bluntly tell the applicant that there was no purpose in taking the matter further. It is reasonable to assume that Helen Walker, who made a most favourable impression on Mrs Goldie of Dumfries and on many of Helen's other acquaintances, would have made a favourable impression on John Campbell.

Armed with her petition, Helen set out to walk to London. How else could a poor person get there? We don't know the route she took but road maps of 1675 and of 1797 show that the shortest route, particularly in summer time, would have been via Carlisle, Penrith, Kendal, Lancaster, Preston, Wigan, Warrington, Brereton, Newcastle, Stone, Sandon, Rugeley, Litchfield, Coleshill, Coventry, Dunchurch, Daventry, Towcester, Stoney Stratford, Dunstable, St.Albans, Barnet and London. Perhaps she was offered an occasional lift in a wagon or coach.

The journey took Helen two weeks.

In London Helen found the Duke's house and waited until the Duke appeared. We can never know what she said to the Duke. Despite her humble status, she had a distinc-

tive style in her way of speaking. We can imagine her saying that she had walked from Dumfries to present her Petition seeking a pardon for her dear but misguided sister and begging his Grace to help her. The very fact of her heroic journey on foot must have made an immediate impression on the Duke. With his help the Crown granted Remission from execution under the Great Seal on 12th July 1738. No doubt the Duke gave money to Helen so that her return journey to Dumfries would be accomplished with greater speed and comfort than her outward journey. The Remission was probably taken to Dumfries by a more speedy method of official transport.

The Remission is in Latin. It states that it is granted 'upon condition that Isobell Walker, within the space of 40 days after she is liberated in virtue of the Remission shall transport herself from the dominions of Great Britain and Ireland never to return without License from the Crown'. No such license was ever granted. If she failed to observe the conditions the death sentence would be re-instated. As Isobell was illiterate and the Remission was, in any case, in Latin she could only obey it to the extent to which it was explained to her. Was she told the exact wording of the Remission? We understand that, in the event, she married the man Waugh who had wronged her and went to live at Whitehaven, Cumberland, for the rest of her life. Was she told the exact wording but assured that it would be sufficient and long as she left Scotland? In these circumstances she could have been forgiven for asking for that assurance in writing from someone in authority!

Isobell is said to have sent to Helen each year, a large cheese. There is a report that a relation of Mrs Goldie who happened to be traveling in the North of England, on coming to a small inn, was shown into the parlour by a female servant who, after cautiously shutting the door, said, 'Sir, I'm Nelly Walker's sister'. Thus she showed her own pride in being the sister of someone well known and well admired.

There is no doubt that amongst ordinary folk of Dumfriesshire and Kircudbrightshire, the fame of Helen Walker was well known but Helen could never be persuaded to talk about the matter. For her the situation had been one of shame out of which she had been able to extricate her sister and herself through God's gift and mercy.

For a picture of Helen Walker's life, it is only from the sources already mentioned, Mrs Goldie and Mr McDiarmid, that we can obtain some idea of her appearance, character and life.

Walker was a surname particularly found in the Cluden area, but it is believed that Helen's parents were incomers to the area and not directly related to the Walkers of Cluden. Attempts to trace any records of the marriage and the deaths of Helen's parents and of the births and deaths of Helen and her sister have failed, as have attempts to trace the marriage of Isobell Walker and Waugh in Scotland or in Cumberland. Likewise no references to the birth of any children of Isobell and Waugh have been traced.

Helen was of small stature. Her eyes were dark and remarkably lively and intelligent. She had a clear complexion and was rather well favoured in her youth.

She never married; but on one occasion, when the subject of matrimony was raised, she reluctantly confessed that she had once loved a youth by whom she believed she was loved in return. However, at one fair time when the youth rode by on horseback, she asked him

to give her a lift. He replied, 'That I will Helen, if you can ride a inch behind the tail'. Perhaps he meant no more than that it was not practicable for him to give her a lift, but the levity of his remark deeply offended Helen who immediately concluded that the youth had no real respect or affection for her. She cast him out of her life. She never loved again.

This was an early indication that, whilst she commendably set a high standard for herself, she was incapable of committing herself to someone, outside of her family, of lesser integrity than herself. In later years she may have wondered whether she had made a mistake, for she once told Elizabeth Grierson who, when herself a young lassie knew Helen well, that she should not do as she, Helen, had done but should "winnow the corn when the wind blew in the barn door". By that colourful expression Helen meant that Elizabeth should not hold her head too high, by rejecting the offer of a husband when it came her way.

But if Helen had not behaved as she had done, she would not have been the Helen Walker of strong character. She would have failed to follow the path in life which destiny had mapped out for her to follow.

Helen's conversational powers were of a high order, considering her humble situation in life. Her language was most correct, ornate and pointed; her deportment sedate and dignified in the extreme. Although many neighbours regarded her as conceited or proud, they held her in respect and acknowledged her regular attendance to religious duties. It was well known that her bible was a source of regular reading. It was noticed that even in the course of her household duties she would glance at a single verse in her bible and then appeared to ponder the subject deeply.

Thunderstorms did not appall her. It was well known that in a thunderstorm she would go to the door of her cottage with her knitting and bible and say to anyone who asked why she did so, instead of staying behind her closed door, 'I am not afraid of thunder. The Almighty, if such is His divine pleasure, can smite in the city as well as in the field'.

It has already been mentioned that after her father's death she had no hesitation of taking on the responsibility of looking after her younger sister and mother. It must have been a hard life. After harvest time and when other outdoor labour could not be procured she supported herself and her family by footing stockings, a work which had the same relation to the hosier's craft as the cobbler had to the shoemaker. She also reared and sold chickens.

It must not be thought that Helen's life was an endless round of solemn duties. She had a good sense of humour as will be shown below. She was unvaryingly invited to share the celebrations and good things of rural life such as the mart when a fattened cow or ox was killed and salted for winter use or when a melder (a grinding of corn) was brought from the mill. At christenings she often acted as the leading gossip (a sponsor at a baptism).

We have already mentioned Mrs Goldie of Dumfries who met Helen in 1790, the year before Helen's death. Mrs Goldie had taken summer lodgings near the old Abbey of Lincluden. She had heard that a person came from Cluden to a spot not very far distant from Mrs Goldie's summer lodgings, to sell chickens. Thus, Mrs Goldie, in search of chickens, met Helen Walker who seemed to be between 70 and 80 years old. She was

almost covered with a tartan plaid and her cap had over it a black silk hood tied under her chin. It is not surprising that Helen, who over 50 years before had so impressed the 2nd Duke of Argyll, equally impressed Mrs Goldie.

Mrs Goldie asked Helen how she maintained herself. She said that in winter she footed stockings and in summer she whiles reared a few chickens. Let us continue in Mrs Goldie's own words:-

“I said I could venture to guess from her face she had never been married. She laughed heartily at this and said, ‘I maun hae the queerest face that ever was seen, that ye could guess that. Now, do tell me, madam, how ye cam to think sae?’ I told her it was from her cheerful disengaged countenance. She said ‘Mem, have ye na far mair reason to be happy than me, wi a gude husband and a fine family o’ bairns, and plenty o’ everything? For me, I’m the puirest o’ a’ puir bodies, and can hardly contrive to keep mysell alive in a’ the wee bits o’ ways I hae tell’t ye’ After some more conversation, during which I was more and more pleased with the old woman’s sensible conversation, and naivety of her remarks, she rose to go away. When I asked her name her countenance suddenly clouded, and she said gravely, rather colouring, ‘My name is Helen Walker; but your husband kens weel about me’.

In the evening, Mrs Goldie heard from her husband the tale of the two sisters. Mr Goldie said that there were perhaps few more remarkable people than Helen Walker. She had been left an orphan with the charge of a sister considerable younger than herself and who was educated and maintained by her exertions. Attached to her by so many ties, therefore, it will not be easy to conceive her feelings when she found that this only sister must be tried by the laws of her country for child murder, and upon being called as principal witness against her. The counsel for the prisoner told Helen that if she could declare that her sister had made any preparations, however slight, or had given her any intimation on the subject, that such a statement would save her sister’s life, as she was the principal witness against her. Helen said, ‘It is impossible for me to swear to a falsehood; and, whatever may be the consequence, I will give my oath according to my conscience’. Recent research has shown that Helen was not called as a witness.

What became of the two prisons, the Edinburgh’s Old Tolbooth and the Dumfries Tolbooth, which played such doleful parts in Isobell Walker’s life?

With the help of images supplied by the Edinburgh Room of the Central Library of that city we can picture of the Old Tolbooth and can read in Robert Chalmer’s *Traditions of Edinburgh*, published in 1824, how ‘at length, in 1817, the fabric was wholly swept away, in consequence of the erection of a better jail on Calton Hill. The gateway, with the door and padlock, was transferred to Abbotsford and, with strange taste on the part of the proprietor, built into a conspicuous part of that mansion’.

Those parts transferred were in fact the doorway that lead from the second floor of the Tolbooth directly onto the raised platform upon which public executions were carried out. The reconstruction at Abbotsford replicates, in a way, its original position and sinister purpose. Thanks to Helen Walker’s valiant efforts neither that nor any other similar doorway became one through which Isobell had to walk.

The Dumfries Tolbooth, built in 1720, was not demolished until about 1930, by which time it had long since ceased to be a prison and was used for various civil and commercial activities. Images of the original building shortly before demolition are available within the reference collections of the Ewart Library and in a variety of publications. The Old Tolbooth was replaced by a typical 1934 red sandstone building in the commercial Art Deco style of ‘Burton the Tailors’: it is said that underneath the Burton building there are still the remains of some parts of the original Tolbooth.

Helen Walker lies buried in Irongray churchyard beside Cluden Water, only a mile and a half from Cluden where she lived.

If people go to Irongray Churchyard they may be surprised to find that one of the common people lies under a fine pedestal memorial stone surrounded by iron railings, as handsome as any other memorial at Irongray. Sir Walter Scott paid for Helen Walker’s memorial out of respect for the person who was the real life prototype of his fictional character Jeannie Deans in his novel *The Heart of Midlothian*.

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FIFTEENTH-CENTURY TOWN DEFENCES AT ANNAN?

A REBUTTAL¹by Ronan Toolis²

The results of an archaeological evaluation of Annan burgh ditch presented in Volume 76 of the Transactions tentatively suggested that the late 16th century appeared the most likely date for the origin of the burgh ditch revealed at Butts Street, Annan. The case for this date has recently provoked criticism in this journal and an argument for a fifteenth century date has been developed. This criticism does not bear up to examination and the case remains that until new archaeological, documentary or cartographic evidence is presented, a late 16th century date remains the most credible date for the origin of the burgh ditch of Annan.

Based on the archaeological investigations at Butts Street, Annan, a case was tentatively made for a late 16th century origin of the Annan burgh ditch (Toolis & Cavanagh 2002, 151-154), a case that has provoked some criticism in this journal (Wallace 2004, 141-142).

One of the severest criticisms is that, based on the pottery recovered from the evaluation at Butt Street, an earlier 15th century origin for Annan burgh ditch is more plausible than a late 16th century date (Wallace 2004, 141). Wallace's argument rests on the recovery of Gritty Ware dating to the 12th-15th centuries from the lower fills of the ditch. He dismisses the significance of the Reduced Greyware from the same contexts, which dates from between the 15th and 18th centuries because, if the ditch was 16th century, there 'ought' to be more in the way of Reduced Greywares and poor undateable groups of medieval pottery (Wallace 2004, 141).

It is difficult to accept Wallace's argument, however, when it displays a startling lack of understanding for archaeological stratigraphy. The 12-15th century Gritty Ware pottery, which Wallace's argument rests on, is irrelevant for dating purposes because Reduced Greyware of the 15th-18th centuries was found in the same primary ditch fill. The stratigraphic deposition of the pottery dictates that, in the absence of material suitable for radiocarbon dating, the closest we can date the primary ditch deposits depends upon the latest type of pottery found within it (Barker 1993, 224). It is therefore the Reduced Greyware that provides the *terminus post quem* for the primary ditch fill of the earliest ditch revealed at Butts Street. All the other earlier types of pottery, such as the Gritty Ware and the Red Ware, must be viewed as being deposited on or after that time. Since the Reduced Greyware can only be dated to *between* the 15th and 18th centuries, the date for the ditch can only fall within this period.

A 15th century date is, of course, as consistent with this evidence as a 16th century date. However, the *archaeological* evidence does not support a distinction for either date. Wallace's comment, that there 'ought' to be more Reduced Greyware if the ditch originated from the 16th century date (2004, 141) simply highlights the fact that we must deal with evidence rather than speculation. If Wallace is sceptical that pottery might find its way into the ditch centuries after its date of manufacture, one can only draw his attention to the deposition of 11th-12th century Red Ware within the fill of one of the later recut ditches that truncated the primary ditch revealed in Trench 15 (Toolis & Cavanagh 2002, 146). Even Wallace's argument for a 15th century origin for the burgh ditch implicitly accepts that it may have taken two or three centuries for the Red Ware to find its way here.

1 This reply by the author of the original paper concludes the debate in these Transactions (Eds)

2 AOC Archaeology Group, Edgefield Road Industrial Estate, Loanhead, Midlothian EH20 9SY

Perhaps it should be stated that as the evaluation revealed that the archaeological deposits had been truncated by later activity on the Butts Street site (Toolis & Cavanagh 2002, 156), there were no associated archaeological features that might indicate exactly how the land west of the ditch was used and therefore what processes might have led to the pattern of artefact deposition as recorded. It is of course regrettable that the archaeological dating evidence from Butts Street has to rely on merely a small assemblage of pottery collected from what was, by the intrinsic nature of archaeological evaluations, a limited investigation. However, contrary to AOC Archaeology Group recommendations, planning conditions were not imposed to enforce the further excavation of the ditch, which might then have recovered more secure dating evidence.

Wallace's second point of concern is over the interpretation and perceived lack of discussion of the wall revealed in Trench 16 (2004, 141). His criticism, that a date later than the 16th century for this wall was not discussed, is incorrect. That it is unlikely that the wall is earlier than the late 16th century was precisely the point made in the discussion (Toolis & Cavanagh 2002, 153). This point was made to indicate that a date from the late 16th century *onwards*, very much including a post-16th century date, was likely. Contrary to Wallace's interpretation the wall does not fall right in the middle of the ditch but appears rather to cut through the edge of at least one ditch on its east side and probably another on its west side (Toolis & Cavanagh 2002, Figure 5c). That a wall is found here following the course of the earlier ditch implies that the wall may have fulfilled the same function as the earlier ditches, i.e. defining the town yard heads *and* as late as the mid-18th century when it was included in a plan of Annan (Tait 1759), which was another point discussed (Toolis & Cavanagh 2002, 153). As far as Wallace's concern that the relationship to the pipe trench is nowhere discussed (2004, 141), given that the wall appears to precede 1759 when it was mapped by Tait, it is difficult to see how it could be related in any meaningful way to the modern pipe trench.

Yet another criticism Wallace makes is that evidence from Dumfries was largely ignored (2004, 141). On the contrary, attention was drawn to the strengthening of the burgh defences around Dumfries in 1577 (Toolis & Cavanagh 2002, 152), which clearly relate to the same concerns of Dumfries burghers in 1575 and 1578 that Wallace refers to (2004, 141). Wallace is perhaps right to reserve judgement from accepting a late 16th century date for the creation of Dumfries' defences, but if he were to be eventually convinced that all documentary evidence had been surveyed, would this be conclusive anyway, or merely a result of either no documentary evidence surviving or perhaps being written in the first place? Given the absence of documentary records to the contrary, it could be equally argued that the documentary evidence from Dumfries that Wallace brings attention to merely lends further weight to a late 16th century date for the creation of burgh defences in Dumfriesshire. This would appear to follow the trend evident elsewhere in Scotland that urban defences first appear in the 16th century, as recognised by Wallace himself (2003, 13, 14 & 17).

Wallace's parting criticism is that the argument for a late 16th century defence relies too much on pictorial evidence (2004, 141). Wallace argues that simply because no ditch is represented in the 1547 and 1566 plans of Annan does not mean that there was no ditch prior to these dates. In support of this point Wallace relates that while the English map of 1547 shows no defences around Dumfries, documentary evidence indicates defences in 1575 and 1578 (2004, 141). However, apart from the fact that precisely this point was acknowledged by the authors (Toolis & Cavanagh 2002, 151), it is not the 1547 map that the subsequent argument is based upon but rather the 1566 plans, which are much more detailed (Toolis & Cavanagh 2002, Figures 6 & 7). As Wallace acknowledges, key to the argument that there may not have been a burgh ditch around Annan in 1566 is that just such a ditch is depicted around Kirkcudbright at the same time. It is difficult to accept Wallace's interpretation of the depicted defences around Kirkcudbright as a wall, when it is clearly a causeway that defines the entry across the defences into Kirkcudbright and therefore it must be a ditch that the causeway crosses (Toolis & Cavanagh 2002, Figure 7). Nevertheless, whether wall or ditch, the defences of Kirkcudbright clearly merited inclusion in the plan of 1566. That the same hand chose not to depict

defences around Annan, surely begs the question of whether there were any defences around Annan to depict? While it is possible that they may have not been deemed sufficiently important to record, if this was the case, why then depict the defences around Kirkcudbright but not Annan in what was an exercise in military intelligence? Mapping local defences would surely constitute precisely the specific strategic purpose that Wallace suggests was the reason for these 16th century plans. Furthermore, Wallace's point that though the 1547 map of Dumfries depicted no ditch around the town, documentary evidence referred to them in 1575 and 1578, surely indicates no more than that the ditches may have originated in the intervening period. It might also be repeated that such a late date would follow the pattern evident across Scotland where burgh walls at Peebles, Haddington and Dundee were not built until the late 16th century (Wallace 2003, 16).

Wallace, however, overestimates the importance of the pictorial evidence to the argument for a late 16th century date for the burgh ditch revealed at Butt Street. Far more crucial is the documentary evidence, referring to the strengthening of the burgh defences of Annan in 1573, 1579 and 1591 (Thomson 1995, 91-92 & 104-105; Fraser 1873, 486). This forms the clearest evidence for the cutting and recutting of a burgh ditch around Annan in the late 16th century.

While Wallace is right to conclude that more work is needed to resolve the dates and nature of the defences at Annan, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright (2004, 141), at no point did the authors declare that anything more than a tentative suggestion could be made for a late 16th century date for the origin of burgh ditch as revealed at Butt Street. The evidence is by no means conclusive but the assertions remain. The *primary* ditch fill can only be dated to the period between the 15th and 18th centuries, based upon the latest pottery found within it. There is documentary evidence for the cutting of a ditch in the late 16th century, which at the very least is consistent with pictorial representations of Annan around the middle of the 16th century. One must therefore conclude that the bulk of the evidence as it appears now, slight as it is, indicates a late 16th century date for the creation of the Annan burgh ditch. Until further evidence, whether archaeological or documentary, is found, this seems a much more plausible origin than the 15th century date proposed by Wallace.

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THE RAPID AND CONTINUED DECLINE OF THE ROOK IN DUMFRIESSHIRE -
RESULTS OF THE 2005 CENSUS

L R Griffin, D Skilling, R T Smith and J G Young

Summary

A survey of the entire county of Dumfriesshire in 1993 recorded a total of 25,489 rook nests. A repeat of the census in 2003 found only 17,853 nests, a decrease of 30%. This decline prompted a survey of a large part of the county in 2004, which confirmed the 2003 findings and showed that within one year the number of nests had fallen by a further 6%. This decline has again been seen in another partial census of the county in 2005, when a further 5% reduction in nest numbers has been revealed.

Introduction

A series of rookery surveys in Dumfriesshire were begun in 1908 with a repeat survey in 1921 and 1963 when another whole-county census was completed. These had indicated a relatively stable rook *Corvus frugilegus* population. Further censuses in 1973, 1975 and 1993 showed a steady increase in numbers amounting to 50% between 1963 and 1993. It was only in 2003 that nest numbers were found to have declined by 30%, bringing them back to the levels recorded in 1963.

These findings prompted a partial census in 2004 when 29 (67%) of Dumfriesshire's 43 parishes were surveyed. This confirmed the decline recorded a year earlier and showed a further decline amounting to approximately 6%.

In the 2005 census, these 29 parishes plus an additional four (i.e. 77% of the county's parishes), were completely surveyed again. The results show a reduction in nest numbers amounting to a further 5%. A full description of the 2003 census and forerunners is given in 'The Rookeries of Dumfriesshire 2003'¹.

Census Methods and Accuracy

Observers were provided with maps, lists of previously known rookeries and guidelines, which were similar to those used in all censuses since 1963. All parishes were searched for old and new rookeries. Most observations were made from 7th to 20th April, a period previously shown to be optimal for rook nest counts.

As in all surveys since 1963, rather than use an arbitrary distance between groups of nests as evidence of a discrete colony. Observers were invited to use their own judgment as to whether sub-sites were offshoots of nearby rookeries.

While some degree of inaccuracy is inherent in a study of this magnitude, we consider that similar levels of accuracy have been attained in all surveys since and including 1963 and that the data are therefore valid for comparisons of change.

1 The Rookeries of Dumfriesshire 2003 – including comparisons with the surveys of 1908, 1921, 1963, 1973, 1975, 1993 and 2004. LR Griffin, D Skilling, RT Smith & J G Young, *TDGNHAS* IIIrd. Series Vol. LXXVII (2004).

Site Fidelity

The dispersal and mobility of rooks seen in previous surveys has continued. Of the 283 rookeries recorded in 2003, a total of 41 had become extinct by 2005 in the 33 parishes surveyed that year. .

In the year between 2004 and 2005, 20 rookeries became unoccupied. Considering that the total number of rookeries has remained stable at between 281 and 283 from 2003 to 2005, it would seem that some elements of the population are relatively mobile. In many cases these were small colonies where nest numbers had previously been in decline. With nest numbers having declined substantially, the average rookery size is now less than 40 nests (Table 1).

Ordnance Survey Grid References

Throughout this long series of censuses there have been problems in identifying the exact location of previously recorded rookeries. This was due, for example, to place-names changing or being lost over the years. In the 2003 survey observers for the first time provided OS grid references for each site, mainly by interpolation from 1:50,000 maps. The result was a much improved means of relocating the rookeries. As a further refinement, the use of a Global Positioning System (GPS) has been extended in 2005. The results, not printed here, are recorded on the main database and are denoted by an asterisk next to the grid references.

Parish and ID N ^o	2003		2004		2005		Actual nest change		Percentage change	
	Sites	Nests	Sites	Nests	Sites	Nests	2003 -04	2004 -05	2003 -04	2004 -05
Annan 41	10	465	10	400	10	357	-65	-43	-14	-11
Applegarth 22	8	353	11	240	11	256	-113	16	-32	7
Caerlaverock 31	10	371	11	317	12	289	-54	-28	-15	-9
Closeburn 10	11	546	13	649	12	562	103	-87	19	-13
Cummertrees 33	9	719	8	617	8	572	-102	-45	-14	-7
Dalton 29	9	220	8	306	6	248	86	-58	39	-19
Dryfesdale 27	20	469	16	391	15	358	-78	-33	-17	-8
Dumfries 18	10	548	9	712	11	707	164	-5	30	-1
Dunscore 7	5	459	6	397	6	265	-62	-132	-14	-33
Durisdeer 3	8	751	8	672	8	543	-79	-129	-11	-19
Glencairn 6	10	711	8	608	8	558	-103	-50	-14	-8
Gretna 43	10	212	10	262	11	265	50	3	24	1
Hoddam 34	12	432	19	664	24	637	232	-27	54	-4
Hutton & Corrie 23	15	534	13	436	13	405	-98	-31	-18	-7
Johnstone 14	13	463	12	699	14	696	236	-3	51	0
Kirkconnel 1	6	656	6	392	6	558	-264	166	-40	42
Kirkmahoe 16	7	231	6	245	6	206	14	-39	6	-16
Kirkpatrick-Fleming 40	15	425	17	320	19	317	-105	-3	-25	-1
Lochmaben 21	14	397	15	363	14	363	-34	0	-9	0
Moffat 12	7	434	7	442	8	453	8	11	2	2

Morton 9	8	405	8	406	7	400	1	-6	0	-1
Mouswald 30	7	362	7	370	8	342	8	-28	2	-8
Ruthwell 32	4	164	4	186	4	213	22	27	<i>13</i>	<i>15</i>
Sanquhar 2	10	585	12	407	12	509	-178	102	-30	25
St Mungo 28	10	561	8	414	8	376	-147	-38	-26	-9
Tinwald 19	12	296	11	312	8	245	16	-67	5	-21
Tundergarth 26	14	348	13	282	8	246	-66	-36	-19	-13
Tynron 5	4	190	2	88	3	103	-102	15	-54	<i>17</i>
Westerkirk 25	5	140	3	103	3	69	-37	-34	-26	-33
Extra parishes								2003-05	2003-05	
Dornock 42	4	232	na	na	5	194		-38		-16
Holywood 17	11	548	na	na	13	562		14		3
Keir 8	3	238	na	na	3	194		-44		-18
Torthorwald 20	4	185	na	na	4	262		77		<i>42</i>
Totals	283	12447	281	11700	283	11118				
With extra parishes	305	13650			308	12330				
Mean colony size		44		42		39				
Total nest changes				-747		-582				
Percentage change				-6%		-5%				
With extra parishes						-1320				
Percentage change						-10%				
Parishes; loss:gain									17:9	16:5

Table 1. Yearly changes in the number of rookery sites and nests per parish from 2003-2005. The percentage change in nest numbers from 2003 to 2004 and from 2004 to 2005 is deemed significant when it is 5% or greater. Declines are shown in bold font, gains are in italic font. The four extra parishes covered during the 2005 census but not 2004, are shown in grey.

Changes in the Rook population from 1993 to 2005

In 1993 there were 20,178 nests recorded in 271 rookeries for the sub-sample of 33 parishes surveyed in 2005. This was the time of the highest historical population size recorded for Dumfriesshire, and the dramatic decline from this 'peak' year to 2003 has been reported in a recent previous paper¹. For the same sub-sample of parishes in 2003 the number of nests had fallen to 13,650 in 305 rookeries, a decrease in nest numbers of 32% from 1993. In spring 2005, for the same set of parishes, the number of nests was 12,330 in 308 rookeries, representing a decrease of 10% over two years, an average of about 5% per year (see Table 1).

This decline is of great concern. Firstly, because the rate of decline of 5% per year identified in the 2004 and 2005 surveys when considering the sub-sample of parishes as a whole, is higher than

the average calculated rate of just over 3% per year during the 10 years prior to 2003 i.e. the rate has accelerated. Secondly, even if the peak in nest numbers recorded in 1993 was not indeed the peak and numbers continued to rise for some years after or levelled off for a period, the rate of decline now identified appears to be much swifter than originally thought from the results of 2003. Of course this suggests that the decline started sometime during the period after 1993. However, a third option could feasibly be that declines began at any time after 1976, see Figure 1 in previous paper¹, with the rate of decline having varied, i.e. there was a 'peak' in the population between census periods.

All three options should be viewed with equal alarm. If we apply the 5% rate of yearly decline recorded for the sub-sample of parishes to the nest total recorded for all parishes in 2003 (17,853 nests), then we might expect there to be 16,112 nests in the whole of Dumfriesshire in 2005. In 1921, a less complete survey by H.S. Gladstone¹ recorded the lowest historical nest total for Dumfriesshire of 15,746. Knowing the logistical limitations of Gladstone's survey it seems likely that the current population of breeding rooks is at an all time low for the county.

In terms of the changes in nest numbers recorded in each survey (a significant change is deemed to be plus or minus 5% or greater; Table 1), a similar number of parishes lost nests from 2004 to 2005 as did from 2003 to 2004, totalling 16 and 17 respectively. The number of parishes with significant nest gains was lower in 2005 than 2004, totalling 5 and 9 respectively. Of the 17 parishes that lost nests in 2004, 11 (65%) continued to have lost a significant number of nests by 2005.

Of the nine parishes showing an increase in 2004, only one continued to have gained nests by 2005. Again, as occurred between 1993 and 2003 (see Figure 2 in previous paper¹), the declines at the parish level appear to be highly clumped when considering significant changes over both the recent surveys with or without consideration for those showing decline in at least one of the years (Fig.1).

Changes do not appear to be scattered at random across the county; parishes that share a border tend to show similar population changes. There is no gradient of change apparent across the county from either east to west or north to south.

According to the Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2000 Habitat Classification (LBAP, Solway Heritage 2000), there are approximately 90,000 hectares of improved grassland/tilled land in Dumfriesshire. If the 17,853 nests recorded in 2003 declined by 5% in 2004 and again by 5% in 2005, then as calculated above there would have been 16,112 nests across the whole of Dumfriesshire in 2005. This equates to at least 32,224 adult rooks.

There will tend to be a proportion of first-year non-breeding rooks associated with any colony, with 10-15%, depending on the year, reported for colonies in the Ythan Valley². Using an average of this range (i.e. 12.5%), one might expect an additional 4,028 non-breeding rooks within Dumfriesshire. Therefore a current population close to 36,252 rooks may currently be supported by the foraging opportunities afforded by 90,000 hectares of improved agricultural land, which equates to 0.4 rooks per hectare or one rook per 2.5 hectares. Of course this is an over-simplification as rooks will not necessarily be distributed evenly across the county, and will also utilise the foraging opportunities provided by habitats such as landfill sites, semi-natural grasslands, heaths and woodlands, i.e. they will actually be operating at lower densities.

Considering the efficiency of modern farming techniques, it would seem unlikely that a species operating at such low foraging densities could have any noticeable economic impact, negative or positive, and its continued persecution at many rookeries at a time of rapid population decline would seem wholly unjustified.

2 Ecological studies of the Rook (*Corvus frugilegus* L.) in north-east Scotland. G M Dunnet, R A Fordham & I J Patterson, *J. Appl. Ecol.*, Vol. 6 (1969).

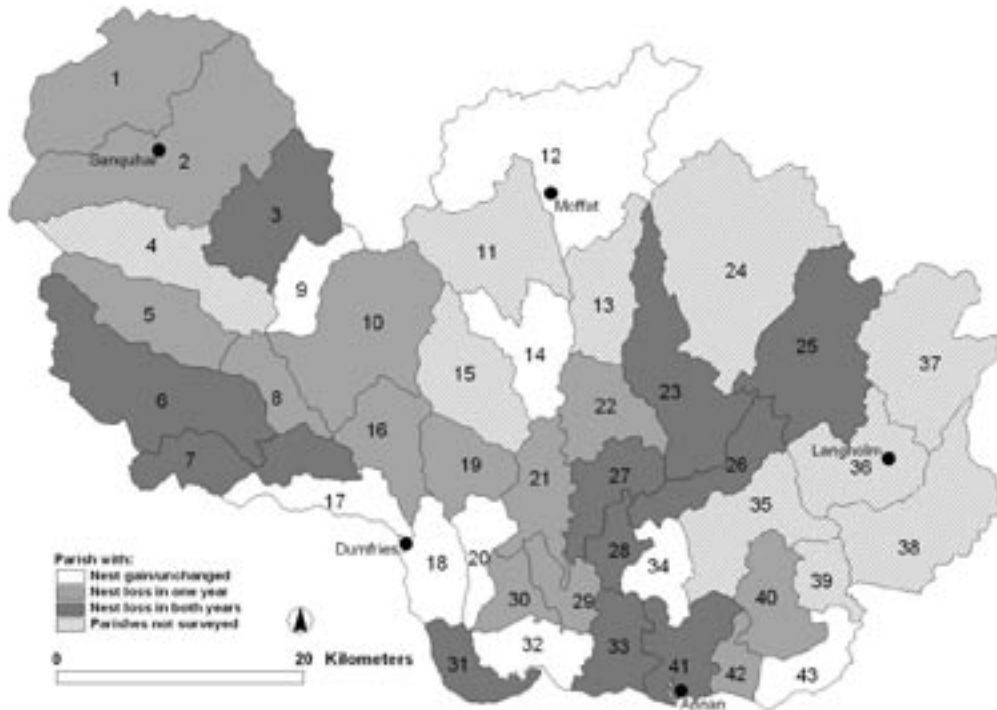


Figure 1. Changes in the number of nests per parish from 2003 to 2005. Parishes with significant (5% or more) nest losses in both years are shown in dark grey, and those with significant losses in one or other of the repeat surveys are shown in light grey. Unshaded parishes are those that have remained stable over these years or have shown significant increases in one or both years (see Table 1). Hatching denotes parishes not surveyed.

Acknowledgements

The 2005 rookery census involved a great deal of time, effort and travel on the part of those observers who gave their support, and the organisers wish to record their gratitude to all who took part. Quite simply, the census would not have been completed without them.

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Thanks also to Mark Pollitt of the Dumfries and Galloway Environmental Resources Centre (DGERC), for help with the provision of new parish maps incorporating field boundary features from OS 1:25,000 maps alongside the parish outlines and road network of 1:50,000 digital maps.

We are also grateful to those farmers and landowners that provided access to the rookery sites.

1st October 2004

Mrs E Toolis:

Presidential Address – Sumeria to Scotland, The Roots of Scottish Gardens

Gardening began in the Fertile Crescent with Sumeria, the first civilisation. Their gardens had sophisticated watering systems with new, imported plants and animals. Contemporaneous Egypt planted small gardens, walled against the annual Flood and rectangular for ease of irrigation. The Persians later developed the Fourfold garden, brought to a peak by the Arabs in Granada's Alhambra. Roman Peristyle gardens were colonnaded within a villa, but their country houses were set amid landscape gardens. Medieval gardens were enclosed within monasteries and castles, but the Renaissance turned outwards to face the landscape, stressing shape and proportion.

Scottish gardening history has close links to France, our first gardens being laid down in medieval monasteries by French monks. Their expertise, and that of French Royal gardeners, was preserved and developed by lay gardeners to copy Continental gardens, 18th century gardeners were well regarded by prominent English Houses.

15th October 2004

Dr Jane Murray:

Antiquarian Collectors in Wigtownshire – scientific pioneers or acquisitive hoarders?

Displays of prehistoric artefacts in the museums of Scotland include much material from Wigtownshire, mostly collected during the latter decades of the 19th century. George Wilson, Free Church minister in Glenluce, discovered the potential for artefact recovery in the sand dunes at the head of Luce Bay, and led the way in a local enthusiasm for collection. The activity was seen as being scientifically valuable, assisting in enquiry into primitive societies, and as being educationally useful. The most important stimulus, however, may have been romantic, deriving from the excitement generated by direct contact with the distant past.

5th November 2004

Alastair Penman, Stewartry Archaeological Trust:

The New Barns Project: from the Neolithic to the Medieval

The archaeology of the estate at Newbarns, Colvend, is a unique and mysterious monumental record dating back to the Neolithic era, with multi-settlement evidence of occupation through the Bronze and Iron Ages, the Roman era and into the medieval period in Galloway. Here are sited the remains of two chambered cairns set in what was once a large freshwater loch.

Today, all that is still visible are the flattened platforms of the two granite cairns. The South site, the first to be investigated three years ago, bearing the remains of two Neolithic chambered tombs, a Bronze Age one and Iron Age crannog evidence while the North site, after two years of excavation, has yielded evidence of a further Neolithic burial and another Bronze Age one. The latter is in process of excavation and has been dated by the finding of a barbed and tanged arrowhead of c2200-1800 BC. Excavation is on-going on both sites into 2005.

19th November 2004

Gordon Riddle, National Trust for Scotland:

The Natural History of Culzean Castle and Country Park

Originally a bare tract of crofts and a few trees, dominated by a Tower House, the environment at Culzean changed with the building of the mansion house by Robert Adam and the development of the gardens by the 12th Earl of Ailsa. As these improvements took their effect the wildlife population changed and the flora flourished in the warm air of the Gulf Stream. Predators still abound and wild life flourishes in spite of the number of visitors who enjoy the amenities. Large colonies of different species of bat are also to be seen.

3rd December 2004

Cormack Lecture

Dr Richard Oram, Stirling University

Warrior, State Builder and... Failure? The Career of Fergus of Galloway

A great deal of myth has built up around Fergus of Galloway as there is little in the way of definite information about him. However, by looking backwards and forwards in time various sources give information by inference. From this information, possible conclusions are that Fergus had certainly been a warrior, if not a very good one, so perhaps that is where his failure lay. He had founded a dynasty but it was extinct in the male line within three generations. What he did create was a lasting entity.

21st January 2005

Kevin Duffy, RSPB Scotland:

The Red Kite Release Project

Red Kites were extinct in Scotland by the late 19th century. The first young birds, from Germany and the Chilterns, were released from cages on a private estate forestry site in Galloway in 2001. Further releases were made in 2002 of birds from nests in the Black Isle and the Chilterns and in 2003 the first breeding occurred. The present size of the Galloway red kite population is now of national importance. A red kite trail with information boards and viewing points and a feeding station has been established.

4th February 2005

John Howard:

John Hutton MD and the Dumfries Presbytery Library

A study of the Library bequeathed to the Presbytery of Dumfries in 1712 by John Hutton MD MP, to which later gifts and purchases were added. Hutton, a native of Caerlaverock, studied in Edinburgh and Padua and became court physician to King William III and Queen Mary. 1500 of the original 2,300 volumes survive in the Library of New College, University of Edinburgh, comprising titles on medicine, history, classics, literature and theology. Its use as a lending library from 1732 to 1826 was also studied. Some biographical notes were added on the ministers and other subscribers who used the Library, and a brief account of Dr Hutton's later career as MP and agent at the Court of Sophia, Electress of Hanover.

18th February 2005

Dr. David Steel:

'Following the Artists' Footsteps' Project

The project involves the generation of a computer database of Dumfries and Galloway artists throughout time to increase the awareness of art and artists in south-west Scotland and thereby help with the cultural, tourist and artistic regeneration of the area. Images from the 18th century travellers and antiquaries to 19th, 20th and 21st century artists are included in the database and cover a wide range of themes, subjects and places.

4th March 2005

Members' Night

Iain Cochrane-Dyett: The Old Coach Road from Dumfries to Edinburgh

The Dumfriesshire part of the route of the old coach road through Tinwald, Lochmaben, Beattock and Moffat to the county boundary was described in considerable detail.

Martin Brann: Excavations at Old Caerlaverock Castle

A concise summary of the excavations at the Old Caerlaverock Castle was given. The talk coincided with the Society's publication of the monograph '*Excavations at Old Caerlaverock Castle 1998-99*'.

18th March 2005

Doug Fairbairn:

The Devil's Porridge Exhibition

The factory constructed in Gretna to produce cordite (the Devil's porridge) needed for the manufacture of munitions for World War I was part of a much larger site extending from Longtown to Dornock. Explosive experts were recruited from throughout the British Empire while other workers were recruited from both sides of the border and Ireland, including a large workforce of young women employed to produce the cordite. To accommodate the many thousands of workers temporary accommodation and the new townships of Gretna and Easttriggs were built in the style of English Council houses.

26th March

Dr. Lorna Phillip, University of Aberdeen:

The Planned Villages of Dumfries and Galloway, 1730 to 1850: location, form and function

A planned village was defined as a settlement that was founded or substantially rebuilt in the 18th and early to mid 19th centuries with the support or approval of the landowner. 81 such villages had now been identified in the region – 41 in Dumfriesshire, 25 in the Stewartry and 15 in Wigtownshire. The villages were related to a variety of functions, for example, manufacturing industries, quarrying, mining, harbours and ports, centres of trade and commerce, land improvement and fishing.

Publications funded by the Ann Hill Research Bequest

The History and Archaeology of Kirkpatrick Fleming Parish

- No.1 Ann Hill and her Family. A Memorial, by D. Adamson (1986)
- No.2* Kirkpatrick Fleming Poorhouse, by D.Adamson (1986)
- No.3* Kirkpatrick Fleming Miscellany
Mossknow Game Register 1875
Diary of J. Gordon Graham 1854
edited by D. Adamson and I.S. MacDonald (1987)
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