Living in the past

Figure 01. Early morning milk round

This is where you will find information about all aspects of life and work in Dunfermline during the past millennium - home life, education, religion, the environment, trade, industries.... Anything, in fact, which affected the lives of the townspeople.

It has a wide remit and will be added to as new articles arrive. If you have anything to contribute - pictures, reminiscences, general information, please Contact us

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The Monks

There is one section of Dunfermline's medieval society whose life is more open to us than that of the townspeople – the monks of the Abbey. They belonged to the Benedictine order, whose way of life has changed very little down the centuries. The clothes (habits) of modern Benedictines are the same as those worn in Dunfermline all those centuries ago, and the daily routine of public worship, private prayer, study and work is also the same, although some monasteries have reduced the number of short services or 'offices' said during the day and night. Benedictines follow the Rule of St Benedict who founded the order in the sixth century. This is not a set of rules so much as a collection of exhortations and guidelines which aims to help the monks and nuns achieve as much holiness of life as they are able.

The habits worn by the monks have not altered down the years. Different orders of monks and nuns wear habits of different colours. Some wear white, grey or brown, but Benedictines wear black. Over a long black tunic with a leather belt and a separate hood, goes a sleeveless knee-length garment called a scapula. This was originally a work apron but long ago became a normal part of the habit. Somtimes a voluminous long cloak is also worn, called a cuculla. The monks of Dunfermline were allowed an extra item of clothing, a leather cap to keep their tonsured (shaven) heads warm in the Scottish winter

Figure 02. Habit, Scapula, Cuculla

The Benedictine day began with the office of Nocturne said in the church at 2.30am, after which the monks returned to bed until 5.30am when they began the day proper with Lauds. Prime was said at 7.00am after which they had breakfast and a time of work or meditation. Daily Mass was at 9.00am followed by work until 11.30am when Terce was said. After this came lunch, eaten in silence while one of the brothers read aloud a passage from the bible from the pulpitum, high in the wall at the southeast end of the refectory. After lunch the brothers rested for a while then worked until None at 3.00. There was more work after None until Vespers at 6.00pm followed by supper, after which came free time until 8.00pm. The final office of the day was Compline at 8.00pm, after which the monks went to bed. Benedictines are not a silent order, but the Rule advised that only necessary

conversation should take place during the day, except during the free time. Between Compline and Lauds, however, the monks observed the Great Silence, during which only absolutely vital conversation was allowed.

The work done by the monks varied according to their place in the community. The Abbot, assisted by the Prior, was the head and administrator of the community. Any monk who was an ordained priest might be chaplain of one of the numerous altars, where he would sing Mass each morning for the souls of the patrons of the altar. The almoner would distribute food and fuel to the poor and look after the ones who lived in the almshouses of St Catherine and St Leonard

The cellarer would oversee the purchase, gathering in and storage of food and drink and issue ingredients to the bakehouse, brewery and kitchen each day. He employed a merchant of the town to do the actual buying for him and much grain and meat would come in as tithes and rents from the farms belonging to the Abbey. The Infirmarian looked after any sick brothers in the infirmary. The Novice Master taught the postulants and novices who were not yet fully-professed monks and the Master of Music taught choir boys in the Song School and drilled the brothers in the plainsong which was used in the various offices. Brothers who had no particular responsibility would spend much time in the cloister where the light was good, copying manuscripts of the Bible or other holy books, or they might work in the Abbey garden.

Figure 03. Monks listening to Cuthbert of Durham and A monk writing a manuscript

The monks were not enclosed and were a familiar sight in the town, especially ones like the Almoner and Cellarer, whose work brought them into close contact with the people. The chaplains were also a familiar sight in the Burgh Court. Much of the income of the various altars was in the form of rents from properties in the town which were sometimes not paid, often because the property in question

had become ruinous. In order to re-posses the property and sell it to recoup the rent the chaplain had to appear at four successive Head Courts (January, April and November) at each of which the property was visited to make sure there was ‘nothing distrainable’ or able to be seized to pay the rent. .

The Church and Monastery

The nucleus of the Dunfermline community was three monks, brought from Canterbury by Queen Margaret, the wife of Malcolm Canmore, who used a small church which may have been built during her time. Her son, David I brought and Abbot and a further twelve monks from Canterbury and ordered the building of a new church on the site in 1128 (dedicated in 1150) and it is the Norman-style nave of David’s church which today forms the western part of the Abbey church

Figure 04. Durham Cathedral Nave Nave of the Old Abbey

The four pillars at the eastern end of this building are decorated in the same style as those in Durham Cathedral and it is thought that a master mason came from Durham to oversee the building of the church at Dunfermline. David’s church extended almost as far as the eastern end of the present kirk and the monks shared it with the townspeople, partitioning off the east end, to form a ‘choir’ for their own use. The parish church was known as the ‘wtyr’ or outer kirk and the decorated pillars probably mark the place where it joined the monks’ choir.

Queen Margaret was formally canonised in 1249, by which time work was well on the way on building a chapel for her remains at the eastern end of the church. In the following year her body was translated to the new shrine from its resting place by the site of altar in the little church she had built. The remains of the shrine can still be seen outside the east end of the Abbey kirk. The shrine was part of a major re-modelling of the monks' choir. North and south transepts (wings) were added, with a lantern tower at the crossing where they joined the body of the church, and a Lady Chapel was built. During the Medieval period seven Scottish monarchs were buried in the choir at Dunfermline, the most famous being Robert the Bruce in 1329. The monks’ choir was allowed to fall into ruin after the Reformation in 1560 but a new church was built on the site in 1818, when the Bruce’s tomb was rediscovered and can now be seen in the Abbey kirk.

As well as the High Altar, dedicated to the Holy Rood, there were by the sixteenth century fifteen other altars in the monks' choir. The altar of Our Lady stood in the 'lady aisle' (chapel) and the others would have been in their own side chapels, dedicated to St Andrew, St Benedict, St Cuthbert, St John, St Catherine, St Laurence (supported by rent from St Laurence Croft outside the nether gate of the Abbey), St Mary Magdalene, St Mary of Pity (Our Lady and the crucified Christ), St Michael, St Peter, St Stephen, St Ursula and Corpus Christie. These would all have been founded by pious men and women who made over the rents of property for their upkeep. The founders of all these altars are unknown, but the altar of St Catherine and St Margaret was founded by a sacristan of the Abbey, dene Robert Swinton. The date of the foundation is unknown but dene Robert was made a guild brother in 1498 and was still alive in 1520.

The other buildings of the Abbey complex – the cloisters, chapter house, dormitories, refectory etc would have been begun at the same time as the church, the monks presumably living in temporary buildings until they were finished. There is no record of when the original building was done but it is known that in 1329 the refectory was still being rebuilt, having been damaged when part of the Abbey was burnt by Edward I of England in 1304.

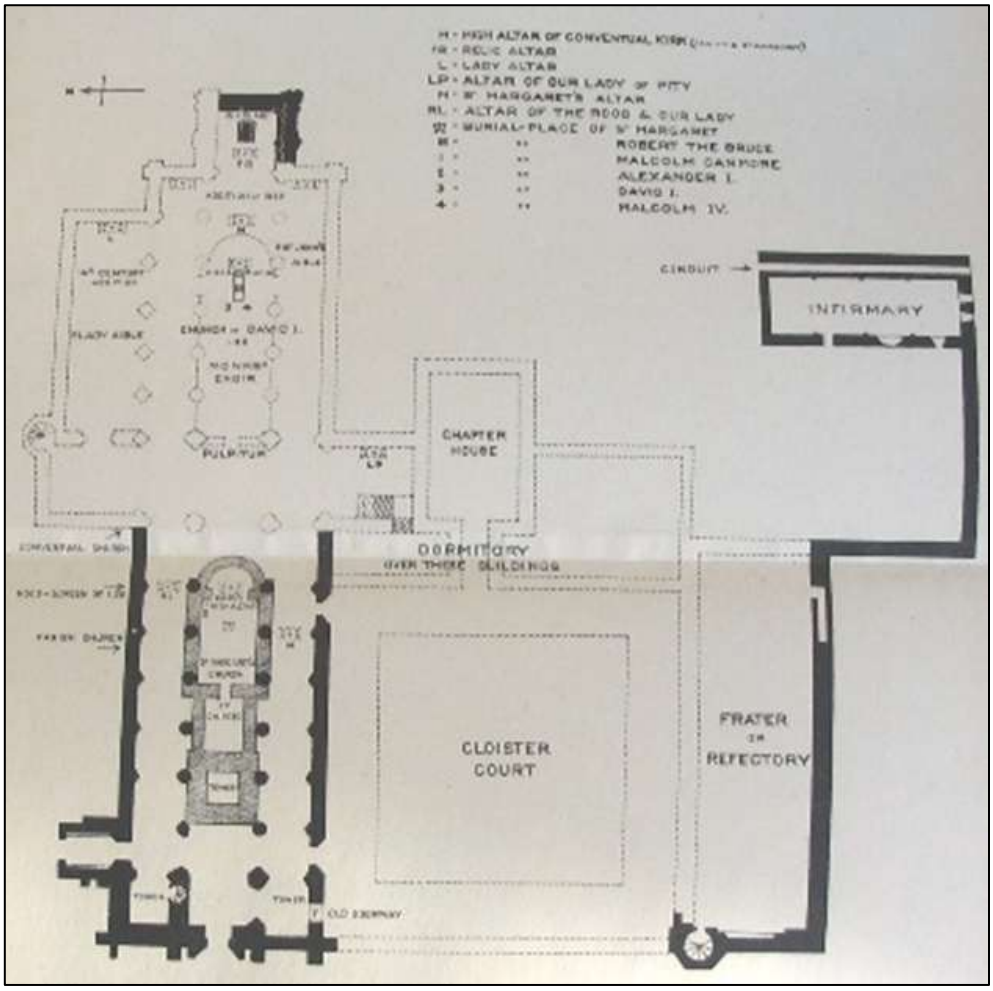

Figure 06. Confectural Plan of the early Abbey
The dark lines indicate the surviving walls

Post-Reformation

After the Reformation all monasteries and nunneries were taken over by the Crown and in England the monks and nuns were turned out, many being reduced to begging. In Scotland the inhabitants of religious houses were allowed to remain after 1560 if they wished, being granted house-room and a pension until they died. Some of the Dunfermline monks were local men who may have gone to live with relatives. The almoner retained his position as he was responsible for the upkeep of St Leonard's Hospital where twelve widows were maintained. At least 21 brothers remained in the Abbey and each was granted a pension of £51 per annum by Queen Mary with 20s a year for coal, to be paid to them by the Commendator out of the revenues of the Abbey. In addition, each man was allocated his own room and a garden. After each monk died his pension and property were allocated to royal servants. At least one monk married: Alexander Steven married Janet Sibbald on 26 January 1567 – with £51 a year and free housing the monks must have been seen as a 'good catch'. Many of the monks must have been young in 1560 as in 1584 ten of them still survived (Alexander Steven among them). Their royal grants were confirmed, 'many of them being old and in need'. The pension, however, had been reduced to £10pa.

The Parish Church

Standing in the bare stillness of the Norman nave today it requires a considerable effort of imagination to picture it as it was in Medieval times. For one thing it would have been very crowded with altars. Chapels were formed by placing screens or curtains in the aisles between the pillars and the outer walls and in each was an altar dedicated to a different saint. By 1520, besides the High Altar at the east end of the church, there were at least eight others. The altar of The Rood and Our Lady was near the High Altar. The altar of Our Lady, St Michael and St Catherine had been founded by Sir William Stewart of Rosyth. The other altars were dedicated to St Margaret, St Mary or Our Lady of Pity (founded by David Bothwell), St Nicholas (patron Henry Bothwell), St Ninian, St Salvator, and the Holy Blood (supported by, among other donations, the rent from the Holy Blood Acres).

Each altar would have had its complement of crucifix, candles and gold or silver communion vessels and possibly a perpetually-burning lamp. The front of the altar would have been covered with an embroidered or coloured cloth called a frontal and the top with a long white linen runner or a decorated cloth.

Figure 07. Medieval altar frontal

The town and the Guild Merchant were responsible for the upkeep of several of the altars, the Guild being especially concerned with the altar dedicated to the Holy Blood. In 1560, after the Reformation which forbade Roman Catholic worship in Scotland, one of the guild brothers handed over a box containing the accoutrements of an altar. There were two albs (long tunic) and three chasubles (long cloak), one of them of blue velvet, and a stole (long narrow strip of silk). These were vestments for the monk priest who celebrated Mass each morning for the souls of departed Guild members. For the altar itself there were a frontal of yellow velvet, two altar cloths, five altar towels and 1½ ells of spare linen and a crucifix of gilt brass. No candlesticks are mentioned so they had perhaps disappeared into private ownership.

Adding to the colour of the altar hangings and vestments were paintings on the walls and ceilings. One set survives on the ceiling at the eastern end of the northern aisle. Robert Henryson, the poet and schoolmaster at Dunfermline in the late fifteenth century, describes walking in 'an Abbey' (almost certainly Dunfermline) and reading texts painted on the walls. The paintings and texts would have been richly coloured and the statues of the saints, of which there would have been many in the building, would also have been painted and gilded like the roof bosses in this picture

Figure 08. 15th Century stone carvings

They are fifteenth century stone carvings from Norwich Cathedral which were whitewashed over at the Reformation. Cleaning in the nineteenth century revealed the original colours which were restored on many of the bosses

At times the nave would have been quietly bustling with life. Mass would have been celebrated daily at the High Altar and on a smaller scale at the chapel altars. Once the services were finished people from the town would have been coming and going to make their private devotions and petitions at the altars and the statues of the saints. Monks would have been tending the altars, filling lamps, putting away communion vessels, cleaning brass and silver. Debts were often repaid by putting the money down on an altar and people used the church as a meeting place for trade negotiations. Religion was central to the lives of the medieval and later townspeople and their church was a focus for many of their activities.

For further information about the Abbey and its churches see Royal Dunfermline ed Richard Fawcett, pub Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 2005 ISBN: 0 903903 342

For more pictures of the Abbey see the Images and Playing with the Past sections

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Medieval Home Life

Life in a Medieval Home

Figure 09. Cover of the earliest surviving Court Book of Dunfermline

This late fifteenth century domestic scene comes from the cover of the earliest surviving Court Book of Dunfermline, which was started in 1488. It is rather oddly sandwiched between pictures of the Adoration of the Magi and of the Virgin and Child seated between two female saints (one of which is St Catherine). Perhaps it was intended as an earthly contrast with the two heavenly scenes and it may depict Sloth – one of the seven deadly sins. Alternatively it may illustrate a story or fable that was well-known at the time. The housewife has fallen asleep while turning the spit and a very jaunty dog is about to eat the roasting meat. Whatever the significance of the picture may be, a wealth of detail is crammed into this small space which can help us to picture the home life of the fifteenth and sixteenth century inhabitants of Dunfermline.

The woman sits in a simply-constructed armchair. She wears a long gown with tight sleeves, a laced-up bodice and an ample collar. On her head is a fabric (probably linen) hood or head-dress. Propped against the wall beside her is her distaff, full of combed wool or flax ready to be spun, and next to the distaff is the spindle, half full of yarn. The construction of the handle end of the spit is very clear

with its three-legged support. The other end is smudged by rubbing of the book cover, but it is supported by another upright stand. The roast is a whole animal of some kind, probably a fowl, and the juices are dripping down into the pan set ready to catch them, with its basting ladle ready to hand. The fireplace is an open one with a free-standing grate and a toothed 'rax' from which pots could be suspended is hanging in the chimney.

Rather confusingly, at this time and for at least a couple of centuries thereafter, it was the actual grate which was called a 'chimney'. A chimney was known by the dialect word which is still in use – a 'lum'. The chimney was a very important piece of domestic equipment and people who could not afford to buy one had to hire one from a more fortunate neighbour who had one to spare. By this time there was very little available wood and coal was the preferred fuel for those who could afford it. A coal fire cannot be successfully made on a hearth stone, so the chimney was necessary to lift it up and provide a bottom draught. The poor still used peat which is not very effective as a roasting fire, even if they could have afforded the meat.

A basic chimney consisted simply of a grid or fire basket but a more sophisticated version would have a built-in fireback to protect the wall from the flames. (A Kirkcaldy butcher who was caught by his wife in his mistress's bedroom tried to hide behind the chimney.) A really upmarket chimney would have a spit support built into it.

The distaff and spindle would have played a very large part in the woman's life. Whenever she was not working at some other task she would be spinning. The early records of the Dunfermline Guild Merchant (starting in 1433) suggest that the production of textiles and leather were the basis of the trade of the town and that textiles became more important towards the end of the fifteenth century. Dyeing was an important trade, dyers being allowed Guild privileges on the payment of an annual fee. This indicates that woollen yarn and cloth was being produced in some quantity, as linen was never dyed, being unable to fix the natural dyes which were used at the time. However, flax was grown locally and lint (flax prepared for spinning) was imported wholesale from the Baltic, so the production of linen thread and cloth was also important. Women and their servants spun thread and yarn endlessly, much of which was then given to a weaver to be made into household textiles. Any surplus was sold to boost the family income

John Wilson and Marjorie Wellwood

On 25 October 1522 Marjorie Wellwood, widow of the merchant John Wilson, gave in an inventory to be registered in the Dunfermline Court Book. It listed the goods handed over to her by her brother-in-law, Alexander Wilson. It seems that John and Marjorie had no living children, so that Alexander was his brother's heir. By law Marjorie would be entitled to half her late husband's moveable goods together with whatever other goods he might have left her in his will. As no will has survived it is not clear whether this list is of her widow's half of the goods, a legacy or a combination of the two. The inventory lists enough furniture to furnish a room, and the equipment of Wilson's merchant booth.

Furniture press (cupboard) form long table langsaddle (a settle, which may fold out as a bed) great kist, comb, mirror silver spoon painted cloth cushion holy water vat candle holder straw skip

Bed and Bedding folding bed feather bed (mattress) vardour (bed hangings?) bolster, pillow, blankets pair of sheets, nightgown

John Wilson's Clothes best gown coat and jacket doublet pair of hose, hat, bonnet belt and knife best sark pair of spurs sword hood

Tableware salt vat goblet, plate, saucer trencher, dish counterfeit (dish?) ale cup basin and laver (ewer) The Cooking Fire chimney (grate) pot hanging chain spit pair of pot hangers pair of tongs, shovel iron fork pot, pan, small pan gus pan (large pot) kettle girdle chafing dish

Cooking Equipment baking board leaven tub sieve baking cloth mortar and pestle pair of pepper querns pair of stones for grinding mustard ladle, a hand axe charger (large flat dish) gardyn (large bottle) eilcruck (oil bottle?) tin quart (2pts) a tin pint tin chopin (1/2 pt) mutchkin (1/4 pt) salt meat barrel vessel cupboard food cupboard meal shrine (chest)

Linen tablecloth, towels vilecot (undergarment) breast kerchief napkin Spinning and Brewing pair of wool combs kamestock (frame on which the wool combs were fixed l) heckle, wool creel pair of wool shears spinning wheel masking vat (tub for soaking malt to make ale) brewing stool brewing tub

Business Equipment counter board (a board marked with a grid for calculating) shrine in the booth Danzig toll weigh balk pair of balances middle balk and balances full troy pound (weight) lead stone (weight) lead half stone lead quarter (stone) mare two years old saddle, bridle and stirrup leathers A schoving horn hose kame (horse comb?)

John Wilson had been a notable figure in Dunfermline, serving both as Bailie and as Dean of Guild on several occasions. He lived on the north side of the High St, somewhere about the middle of the block between Bruce St and Cross Wynd and it was in the fore-booth of this house that the handover was made to his widow. Alexander also gave Marjorie the cupboard (almery) in the booth in which John Wilson had kept merchandise, to use for her lifetime. It was common practice for a widow to carry on her late husband's business and Marjorie may have done so. The transaction was witnessed by David Black, monk and chaplain of the Abbey, Thomas Wellwood, James Stewart, Simon Carver, William Boswell 'with divers others'.

Marjorie Wellwood was a member of the influential Wellwood family and her late husband had left her enough furniture and goods to keep her in comfort for the rest of her life. There is no mention of merchant goods in the booth so maybe Marjorie already had custody of them or she may have intended to let out the booth with its equipment and possibly the horse, to another merchant. Her house would have now belonged to Alexander, as John's heir, but a prudent husband would have provided for his wife's possible widowhood by granting her a conjunctfeftment (joint ownership) of his property, which would mean that she had the right to the use of it (liferent) for as long as she lived As the furniture is only enough for one room, Marjorie would have let the rest of the rooms in her house to bring in an income. John Wilson had also owned a property in the New Row and if this had also been in conjunctfeftment with Marjorie she would have been able to collect the rents from this as well.

No merchant testaments survive from this early date, which might have given some indication of the contents of John Wilson's booth, but some from the later sixteenth century show that it would have

consisted largely of utilitarian bulk goods such as wool and imported flax, iron and large cooking pots. Food was sold at the bi-weekly markets, local cloth was bought from the weavers, ale and wine were bought from ale wives and taverners, clothes were made by tailors. Anyone requiring fripperies such as spices or fine fabrics would have to go to Edinburgh for them. In John Wilson's time the Merchant Guild book makes it clear that Dunfermline merchants were dealing mainly in ox hides and sheep skins. His wife's spinning activities were centred on wool which suggests that he dealt in that commodity, although he had links with Danzig, which was the centre for the importing of flax and iron, so these probably featured as well.

The inventory of goods handed over to Marjorie gives a very complete picture of her life. She had a bed and bedding. The nightgown was what we would call a dressing gown - people usually slept naked at this time. She would almost certainly have had a servant who probably slept on the langsaddle and possibly provided her own bedclothes as only one set is listed. The cooking fire equipment needs little explanation, except for the kettle, which was a large round-bottomed pot or cauldron which could be hung over the fire.

The spinning equipment is all for wool rather than for flax and Marjorie enjoyed the luxury of a spinning wheel. The brewing equipment was basic but adequate. The malt would be soaked in the masking vat (sometimes called a mash tub) which stood on the brewing stool and had a hole in the bottom with a plug to let out the liquor once the soaking was complete. The brewing tub was a shallow vessel which stood under the stool to catch the liquid, which would then be boiled in the kettle. Marjorie did not possess a large brewing cauldron, which suggests that she brewed only for her household and not for sale.

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The Seventeenth Century

Life and work

Figure 10. This illustration is a late nineteenth century drawing of an old house in the High St.

The date of the house is unknown but several others of similar layout survived in the town at that time, with a central passage leading to the yard at the rear. This layout is described in two seventeenth century property deeds by which the tailor John Drysdale made over rights in his property to two of his sons. Drysdale's house was on the south side of the Maygate, on the western side of what is now the Abbot House. To Thomas, his eldest son, he gave over the liferent of the eastern half of his tenement, containing an upper and lower room and a front chamber, all on the eastern side of the passage. On the western side of the passage he granted rights to his third son John, currently living in Poland, of the brewhouse and storeroom on the ground floor, with a stable at the front. A house on the northern side of the Maygate, which survived long enough to be drawn in the nineteenth century, was on a similar plan, with an arched central passage flanked by rooms on either side.

Deeds seldom described the properties in any detail but the ones which give a description reveal that a typical house seems to have consisted of four rooms on the ground floor with corresponding rooms above reached by a forestair and with a garret or attic above that. There might be a booth built on at the front and as in Drysdale's case there might be a brewhouse or a stable, either integral or separate. Some houses would have been of one storey only and there would have been a few, like

Abbot House, with three stories, needing a turnpike stair to reach them. Internal stairs were a thing of the future.

In fact the mixture would have been like that to be seen at Culross, which remains much as it was in the seventeenth century, with two big differences. The first is the neatness and good repair of the Culross houses. Property deeds reveal that a number of seventeenth century houses in most towns were in ruins – and Dunfermline was no exception, even before much of the town was destroyed by the fire of 1624. The other difference is that the smell of the place would have been overpowering. Sanitation was by primitive cesspits, food and stable waste was piled in the streets in middens, animals were slaughtered in the streets, which were never swilled down, and there were tanneries by the Tower Burn – on the windward side of the town.

Most people lived in a couple of rooms, the better-off occupying a single floor of a house. Household inventories for this period are very scarce but the furniture of Limekilns boatman David Murray was probably typical of the average household. David owned two tables, one larger and one small, two small cupboards, three chairs and four old chests. He had six sets of bedstead components, of which only one was in use, a small grate with cooking equipment, three pewter plates and a large bible.

The testaments of the deceased reveal a number of details of personal possessions and lifestyles. Women in particular often listed the clothes they bequeathed to their relatives. Isobel Turnbull, for instance, in 1617 left her clothes to her nieces, Isobel and Janet. There were two black gowns, a brown one and a grey one, a red petticoat, a pair of black cloaks, two velvet partlets (bodices) two bongraces (head dresses), a velvet belt and three plaids, besides her under-linen. She also left another niece her fixed chair in the kirk.

The contents of merchant booths were usually listed, lint (flax ready-prepared for spinning) and iron featuring heavily as in the case of Laurence Wilson who had traded in Poland and Prussia. He had 115 stone (1020k) of Danzig lint and 30 stone (240k) of Danzig iron, besides 7 ells of English cloth. He was owed money by 38 individuals, two thirds of them being women owing for lint, most of them for two stone at £3 6/8d a stone. Andrew Wright's goods were rather more varied. Besides lint and iron he sold lead, pots, hemp and timber, some of the latter being at Limekilns waiting to be brought to Dunfermline. He was obviously doing well as he had £566 13/4d in ready money.

James Reid (who had been provost and dean of guild) made and sold malt, and besides lint and iron sold brass, copper, pans, brass kettles, iron pots, soap, salt and dry hides, sheepskins and spindles of linen yarn. He was also worth the magnificent sum of £933 6/8d. He was obviously a middle man in the cloth trade, his few debts including £78 8/6d two dyers for 'litting' raw cloth. He had sold two Perth customers some ship's rigging and two local dyers some dyestuffs. Most of his customers were local but some were from further afield. A Culross girdle-maker bought iron from him and other customers came from Torryburn, Limekilns, Inverkeithing, Kirkcaldy and Dollar.

John Watson traded on a more modest scale. He had 8 stone of Danzig lint in his booth and £76 in ready money.

Testaments and deeds also underline what a very rural town Dunfermline was. Deeds make frequent mention of barns, mainly in the Netherton and to the north of the town, and testaments list the bolls of bere, oats, pease and beans which those barns contained or which stood in ricks in the barn

yards. Crops sown in the ground are also mentioned and the pathetic yields of the primitive farming methods laid bare. It was estimated that the yield would be only three or four times the volume of the seed corn. This may have been erring on the conservative side but it is unlikely to have been much higher.

Most burgesses owned some livestock – horses, cows (with their calves or 'followers'), sheep and pigs. William Pearson of East Port, who seems to have been a mealmaker, carefully listed the whereabouts of his ten sheep: seven were pasturing in Touch with Robert Wellwood, two were in Nether Beath with James Wellwood, and one ewe with her lamb inNether Fod with William Stanhouse.

The more fortunate owned land within the burgh boundary. The area now occupied by the Public Park, Dunfermline Station and the houses between the station and the Lyne Burn was all arable land. There was more arable to the north of the town to the east and west of Pilmuir St. The town owned extensive tracts of both arable and grazing land to the north east, which it let out on short leases to the townsfolk. Further afield, townspeople were tenants on the estates of Baldridge, Urquhart, Logie and the Beaths. The rents of the arable were computed in kind – so many bolls of grain per acre . They may have been paid in the cash equivalent, but given the number of folk who paid the interest on their mortgages in grain in the early years of the century, there may not have been very much cash to spare.

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Education

Figure 11. St Leonard's School.

The history of education in Dunfermline probably begins with the setting up of a school by the medieval monks of the Abbey at an unknown date. Its known history begins in 1468, with the founding of the Grammar School. This establishment and the Abbey Song School were the only schools in the burgh until after the Reformation of 1560, when the Kirk thought it important that as many people as possible should be able to read the Bible. Various teachers of reading and writing, both male and female, served the children of the burgh during the following centuries, sometimes so successfully that the Grammar School lost pupils and the Town Council had to curtail the numbers of other schools in the town.

By the nineteenth century the population had grown to such an extent that the establishment of several primary schools posed no threat to the Grammar School. Most of the existing primary schools were founded at that time. Towards the end of the century the expansion of secondary education led to the founding of the Lauder Techincal College and during the last century, other secondary schools were built. The process continues with the building of new schools to serve the Eastern Expansion at Duloch.

This section contains the histories of some of those schools.

The Grammar School
St Leonard's Primary School
The Carnegie Trust Craft School

Dunfermline Grammar School

The Early Years

In common with most other monastic establishments, from its early days Dunfermline Abbey probably ran a school for aspirants to the religious life and the sons of gentlemen, but in 1468 Richard de Bothwell, Abbot of Dunfermline Abbey, founded a Grammar School for the town, one of the early masters of the school being the poet Robert Henryson, who died in about1508.

Figure 12. A medieval schoolmaster and his pupils

The earliest classes may have been held in the Abbey or in the schoolmaster's chamber (in Henryson's case a room at the back of the tolbooth) but by the early sixteenth century a school had been built on the site where it stood for several subsequent centuries, on the northeast corner of Queen Ann St and Pilmuir St (the site of the present Post Office). By 1520 the school building had been established on this site long enough to for a field which lay next to it to have become known as 'School Croft' and the street to the east as 'School Wynd'. The syllabus of the school would have concentrated on the teaching of reading, writing and the learning of classical Latin and Greek literature, providing an education which would lead to employment in the Church or to further education in Law or the Classics.

Attendance at the Grammar School was not confined to the inhabitants of Dunfermline. On 3 March 1572 Henry Boswell son of William Boswell burgess of Burntisland, was granted under the King's Privy Seal the rents payable to the chaplainry of St James in the Regality of Dunfermline, to support him at Dunfermline Grammar School for seven years. The rents were worth 20 merks pa and were to be uplifted by his parents. The Master of the said Grammar School was ordered to receive Henry Boswell and at the end of the seven years, or if he did not continue to study, to notify the same so that the chaplainry could be granted to someone else

Figure 13. Medieval schoolboys

Seventeen years after Henry Boswell started attending the Grammar School the Boswell family was involved in a major local scandal. James Spittall, son of the laird of Leuchat, had been put to the school and boarded with Christian Boswell 'an honest woman of Dunfermline'. His father died while James was under fourteen years of age and in his will appointed three tutors or guardians for his son, one of whom was his cousin John Boswell of Balmuto. Once James reached the age of fourteen he could choose new guardians, or curators, who would administer his property until he came of age at twentyone. His curators could also arrange his marriage.

It was at this point, in September 1589, that his brother-in-law, Philip Mowbray, the son of James Mowbray of Pitliver, abducted James Spittall from Christian Boswell's house 'and carried him to such parts and places where the said Philip pleases, thinking to entice him to choose such persons as curators as the said Philip shall nominate and thereby to get the possession of the said James lands and rooms and to marry him before he shall have experience and discretion to govern his own affairs'. So stated John Boswell in his October petition to the Privy Council for their help in retrieving his cousin. HIs main fear seems to have been that Mowbray would marry James off to one of his own relations before Boswell could find him.

Boswell had already taken the case to a court, which had charged Philip Mowbray, under pain of being denouced rebel, to return James Spittall to Christian Boswell's house where he was to remain until he could chose his curators legally, by having his nearest relatives on both his mother's and his father's side summonsed to the court of the Lords of Council and Session to hear him make his choice. Mowbray had not obeyed the court and John Boswell now approached the Privy Council as the highest authority in the land. The Council denounced Mowbray as a rebel. Here the trail comes to an end and it is not known what the outcome was, but the story highlights the status of the Grammar School, which was suchthat wealthy men sent their sons to be educated at it.

Apart from Robert Henryson, the names of three other schoolmasters are known from the sixteenth century. Mr John Christison is mentioned as schoolmaster in 1568, 1570 and 1571. He was succeeded by Mr John Henryson (possibly a descendant of Robert Henryson) who soon came into conflict with the minister of the Abbey Kirk, David Ferguson. In 1567 it had been statute that all Scottish schools, universities and colleges must be Reformed 'and that none be permitted or admitted to have charge and cure thereof in time coming, nor to instruct the youth privately or openly, but such as shall be tried by the superintendants or visitors of the Kirk'. It seems that the minister suspected that Henryson was not wholeheartedly in agreement with the Reformed faith, and in 1573 he forbade him to teach in the school. Henryson presented his case to the Privy Council. He contended 'That if he had not been qualified for his work or of evil conversation or life, a complaint should have been made to the Abbot (ie the Commendator). But true it is that not only has the said John Henryson given confession of his faith and profession of the true Kirk, but also has behaved himself honestly in conversation and life, never teaching or otherwise moving anything to the slander of the evangel (Gospel)'.

Neither Ferguson nor the Archbishop of St Andrews, both of whom had been summonsed to compear before the Privy Council, answered the summons, and it appears that Henryson continued to teach. He was probably succeeded by Mr James Dalgleish, who was master by 1583 and in 1609 was made a burgess by right of his late father. He also became a member of the Dunfermline Guildry. He ceased teaching in 1610

The School Buildings

The Town Treasurer's accounts for the early years of the seventeenth century mention minor repairs to the roof and windows of the schoolhouse. An entry in the accounts of 1612 for a payment of £2 13/4d for timber and workmanship to the stair head of the school loft shows that the building had at least two stories, which suggests that it contained accommodation for the schoolmaster. A few years earlier a slater had been at work on the roof. The school had been built at a time when many of the houses in the town were thatched and a slated roof was a sign of a high-status building. By 1619 major work had been carried out at a cost of £120, for which the schoolmaster had to pay the town £11 per annum interest. In August of that year, the Council 'relented' the paying of the interest by the schoolmaster. It is not clear why it was imposed in the first place, unless the original damage to the school had been in some way the fault of the schoolmaster himself.

In 1624 this early school was burnt to the ground in the fire which destroyed much of Dunfermline, and a new schoolhouse was built the following year, which continued in use for the next two centuries. It was a small building, about 40 feet long by 25 feet broad (12m x8m 30cm). The upper floor was used as a schoolroom and the schoolmaster and his family lived on the ground floor.

Above the schoolroom door was a large stone inscribed with the town's arms and the words 'Fave Mihi Deus 1625' ie 'Favour me O my God'. The triangular stones above the upper windows were also inscribed. The western window:' Saepe Docete Et Castiga Ut Vivat Puer' ie 'Often teach and chastise, that the boy may live. The eastern window: 'X Disce Et Patere Sic Te Beabit Deus Tuus' ie 'Learn and suffer. Thus shall thy God bless thee'. The stone over the middle window was inscribed with a thistle. Two of these inscribed stones are now built into a wall behind the present Post Office. The inscriptions over the eastern and western windows suggest that the Dunfermline schoolmasters fully subscribed to the contemporary notion that learning had to be beaten into young minds.

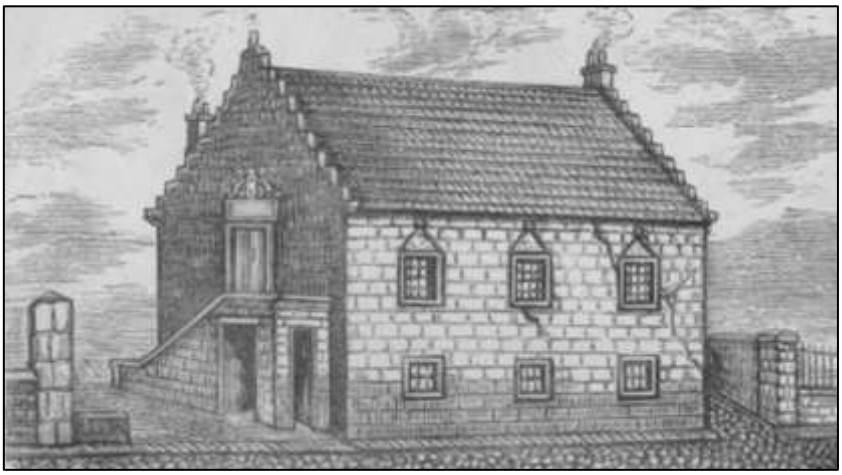


Figure 14. The 1625 Grammar School

In 1817 a new, larger building was erected to the west of the 1625 school, which was demolished. The inscribed stones from the old building were incorporated in the attic storey of the new building, the stone from the door having added to it 'Reconditum 1816, D Wilson praefecto'.In 1840 the new school was described thus: 'The New Burgh or Grammar School-House is a very neat oblong building, at the head of the town with the play-ground in front. It consists of two large school-rooms on the first (ground) floor and of an excellent dwelling-house for the Rector on the second (first floor). It has an ornamental circular tower rising a little above the roof, meant for an observatory'. The Rector's apartment was reached by a turnpike stair at the rear of the building and there was a playgound to the front.

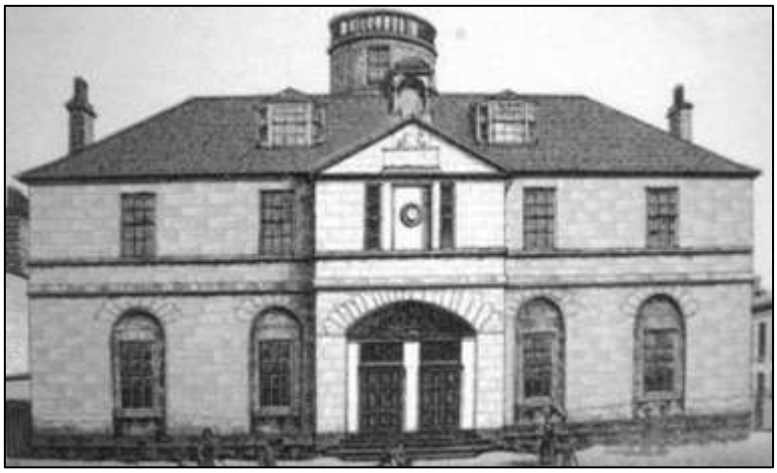


Figure 15. The 1817 Grammar School building

In 1886, after some four centuries on its old site, the Grammar School, having outgrown its premises, moved to a new building in Buchanan St, to the north of Priory Lane (behind the present bowling green), The present Post Office was built to the south of the old school and the school building is shown as a Mission Hall on the 1894 OS map. By 1901 the school had again grown, to the point where it was sharing the newly-opened Lauder Technical College building to the east of it. There was also a junior department at Wymet Court in the New Row. When these arrangements in their turn became inadequate, a new High School was built on its present site in St Leonard's Place, and the school moved there in 1939. The Wymet Court Junior school became Canmore Primary School in 1924.

Figure 16. The Dunfermline High School

Paying the Teachers

The parents of each scholar paid a quarterly fee to the schoolmaster, but this was not sufficient to maintain him and other funding had to be found. By the end of the sixteenth century a total of £400 had been mortified (gifted) to the school:

£200 by Alan Coutts, Chamberlain of the Abbey

£100 by by Wiliam Shaw, HM Master of Works

100 merks (£66 13/4d) by John Davidson, servant of the Commendator of the Abbey

50 merks ((£66 13/4d) by William Philp, a maltman in the Netherton

The money was lent out on interest, the usual annual rate being 8-10%, and the proceeds used to pay the schoolmaster. Another way to provide money in perpetuity for charitable purposes was to mortify one or more mortgages to the relevant institution. In 1601 the merchant Lawrence Wilson used this method of leaving money to the school, his will stated that :

'he of before being sometime extremely visited by God's hand with sickness and necessity, in the countries of Poland, Germany and other parts beyond the sea, called earnestly to the Lord for relief and then avowed if it pleased God to relieve him of his misery and give him health and ability of body to travail for his living, that he should bestow some portion of his goods, according to his ability, to the use of the poor. And the Lord having heard his prayer and not only granted his request

but also having mercifully preserved him out of sundry perils and dangers since. He therefore, acknowledging himself obliged of his foresaid promise and vow to the Lord his God, and willing to perform the same in some measure, after his ability to the use of the poor within the town of Dunfermline and to the maintaining and entertaining of the Grammar School there, where he was born and upbrought. According to his promise made to God thereanent, partly afore dedicated and mortified. Likewise he now, by virtue of this his latter will and legacy freely gives, dispones, dedicates and mortifies the sum of three hundred merks money of this realm of his own proper gear, to the utility and use of the poor folks within the town of Dunfermline, and one hundred merks money to the provision and entertaining of the Grammar School of Dunfermline and schoolmasters thereof present and to come.'

Laurence Wilson provided the money by making over to the town mortgages which he held on properties in the town. The 100 merks for the schoolmaster was a mortgage on a tenement on the north side of the High St, which paid interest of 9 merks per annum. The various legacies no doubt helped the master's finances, although this did depend on the interest being paid regularly (in 1611, for instance, the merchant Laurence Walker, the then owner of the High St tenement, had to be reminded by the Town Council to pay the 9 merks to the schoolmaster each year) but payment of the quarterly fees by parents was an important part of the master's income and in 1607 these were so far in arrears that he petitioned the Town Council to make the parents pay up. An order by the Council was ineffective and in the end one of the councillors was appointed to collect the fees, either in the tolbooth or by calling at the houses of defaulters.

In 1610 the school finances received a major boost when Queen Ann of Denmark, who had been given the Regality of Dunfermline by James VI as a wedding present, gave £2000 scots to the town to be lent out on 10%pa interest and most of the proceeds used to pay the masters of the Grammar School and the Song School, each of whom were to receive £100 per annum. As Lord of Dunfermline the Queen already had the right of presentation of the masters of the schools and by her charter gifting the money to the town she made over this right to the Heritable Bailie of the Lordship (at that time the Earl of Dunfermline) who was to be consulted about all appointments to the posts. This was still the case in the mid-nineteenth century, by which time the Heritable Bailie was the Marquis of Tweedale.

Until the foundation of banks at the end of the seventeenth century, the only way to raise interest on sums of money was to loan them out to individuals. In November 1610 the burgh treasurer (a baker called Patrick Turnbull) began lending out the Queen's gift:

George Lindsay of Keavil 500 merks
James Reid merchant 700 merks (and another 200 merks in January 1611)
Edward Thomson merchant 300 merks
John Strang burgess 300 merks
Patrick Murray of Perdieus 300 merks
Patrick Young maltman 500 merks
(a merk was 13/4d ie 2/3 of £1)

These loans were renewed each year. In some cases the money was paid back and lent to another borrower and in some cases the loan was continued for a further year. The Kirk Session also contributed £8 6/8d (£8 34p) per quarter to the pay of the schoolmaster. This arrangement

continued until 1834, when a new system of payment was instituted. The schoolmaster was assisted by a Doctor (later called the Usher) whose quarterly payment was made by the Kirk Session. The doctor also had a third of the fees paid by parents.

The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

The names of four masters of the Grammar School are known for the years 1610 to 1640. William Smith was appointed in 1610, James Sibbald is mentioned in 1619 and again in 1629. James Reddie is mentioned in 1632 and 1635 and by 1640 he had been succeeded by John Hodges. Mr Hodges and his family were victims of the plague which broke out in the town in 1645. On December 23 the Kirk Session paid £3 for the 'dead kists' of two of his children 'and order was made for the entertainment and furnishing to the said Mr John and his wife in all necessaries, they being now in the moor and she newly delivered of a child there, they being put there because they were under infection of the plague'. At the beginning of January the session paid 55s (£2 75p) for coal and other necessities supplied to the family in the muir, which had been used as a quarantine station for plague victims.

In May 1646 Mr Oswald Bigholme was admitted as master of the Grammar School. Four years later the Session granted him an extra payment because he had a large family, but this seems to have been insufficient for his needs because a successor was appointed who only lasted until 1653. He was succeeded by Thomas Walker, who was entered to the Guildry in 1655. Walker was master until 1661, although in 1656 he petitioned the Session for help because his school roll had declined. A major factor in the decline was the poverty of the local gentry, caused by the crippling taxations imposed on Scotland by the English Parliament, Scotland being under English occupation from 1650 until the restoration of the Monarchy in 1660. Gentlemen (and others) could no longer afford to send their sons to school. The other factor was the growth in the numbers of schools in the villages (many of them supported by the Session itself). Over the next few years the Session managed to find extra money for the schoolmaster by holding collections and mortifying other funds so that the interest could be paid to him.

Figure 17. Inscribed stones from the 1625 high school building.

In 1653 Robert Inglis was appointed school doctor, with a testimonial from Abercorn, but in 1659 scandal erupted when he was found drunk and in bed with Elspeth Matheson. Several witnesses also gave evidence that on 2 February Inglis had been drunk and swearing in company with some English soldiers in a tavern. The Session heard a number of witnesses on several occasions, all of whom confirmed the stories, and they had no option but to depose him. They gave him notice and ordered that he be publicly rebuked in the Kirk on the following Sunday, but the schoolmaster, Thomas Walker, got the public rebuke delayed until nearer the time of Inglis departure 'Showing that if he were publicly rebuked for the present it would be a mean to make him condemned and vilified in the school', although in a small town like Dunfermline it must have been impossible to keep the story from getting out. Inglis was rebuked on Sunday 5 June and presumably left shortly after. The following April Mr Patrick Milne was appointed in his place.

There was a high turnover of both masters and doctors in the seventeenth century. The relative paucity of the salaries had a lot to do with this situation, but the upheavals of the wars of 1638-50 and the subsequent English occupation no doubt played their part.

Applicants for the post of schoolmaster and doctor were subjected to a searching viva examination, one of which is recorded in the year 1705, when a Mr Kerr applied for the post of schoolmaster. He was examined in the presence of the Town Council by a panel consisting of Mr James Bayne, schoolmaster of Musselburgh, Mr John McDougal brother of the laird of Logan, and Charles Stewart. The examiners reported that the candidate had given no clear proof of his ability to convey a clear notion of the fundamentals of grammar to boys. They had also examined him in the most common passages of Terence, Juvenal, Cicero's Orations, Livy and the Odes of Horace and 'he was found considerably defective in the reading, construction and exposition &c and, in short, his Latin was not perfect'. Initially he was rejected but on appeal was allowed to teach on trial until the following Whitsunday (May/June). It seems that he failed that probationary period as well, because later that year a Mr James Graham, schoolmaster, was admitted to the Guildry. In 1748 an applicant for the post of doctor was more fortunate. He passed an examination in English, Latin and writing, conducted by a minister, a preacher, a beadle and a tobacconist..

After James Graham only six more schoolmasters have been identified in the eighteenth century, so it may be that terms of office had become longer. One who did not stay long, however, was Mr Glen who succeded Mr Brand in 1730. The appointment was the cause of a tussle between the Kirk Session and the Marquis of Tweedale, both of whom had a say in the appointment of the schoolmaster. The Marquis wanted to appoint the current Doctor, Mr John Hart, but the Session was oppose to this appointment 'because of the offence given byhis conduct and behaviour in 1725, when he used means to obtrude himself upon the affair of reader and precentor'. Mr Glen was the Session's choice and in the end he got the job.

Another which was short-lived was the tenure of Andrew Donaldson at sometime in the mid-century. Donaldson was an extremely eccentric man 'Clad in a long, loose coat, reaching to his ankles, without a hat, which he scornfully discarded, with flowing locks and a huge beard, and in his grasp a staff of enormous length'. He ate little and slept on the bare floor. 'He soon tired of his irksome task and forsook his post, remarking as did so that he was sure Job never was a schoolmaster, or we should not have heard so much of his patience'. Apart from his pupils, another class of person who tried his patience was the 'causeway preachers' who preached in the street with

a hat before them, into which passers-by threw money. On at least one occasion Donaldson ended up in the tolbooth jail for assaulting such a preacher. When he gave up his teaching post he moved to Edinburgh where he supported himself by manual labour. Death, however, returned him to Dunfermline and he was buried in the Abbey kirkyard, his gravestone bearing the inscription 'Here lies Andrew Donaldson, a good scholar and a sincere Christian, who died June 21 1793 aged 80'

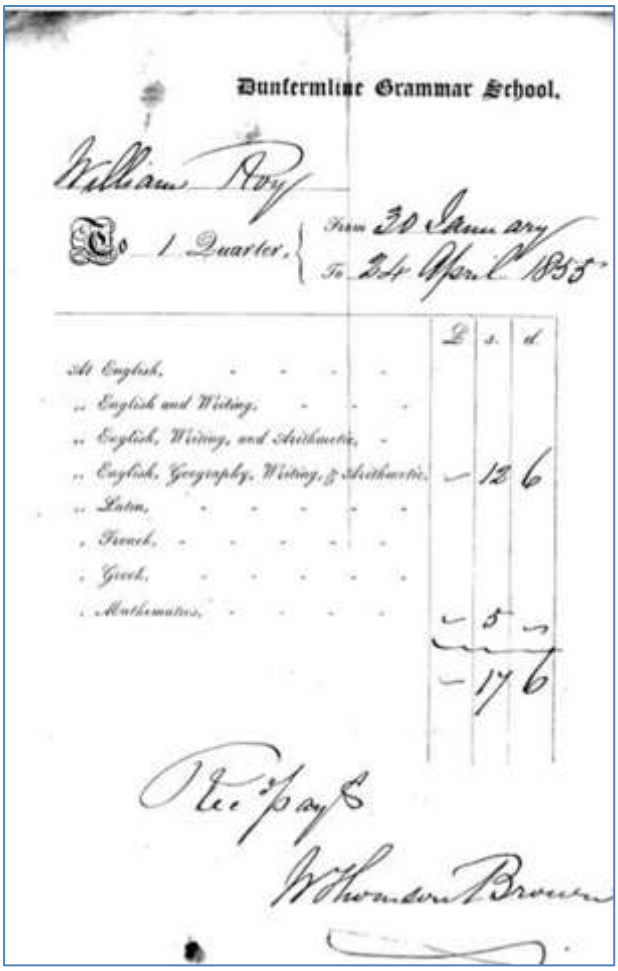
The Nineteenth Century

In contrast to the rapid turnover of schoolmasters in earlier times, the nineteenth century was dominated by two men. Archibald Haxton was master from 1810 until his death in 1850 and William Thomas Brown from 1851 to 1869. It was in Mr Haxton's time that the first new school was built in 1817, and he also oversaw, perhaps even initiated, the foundation of a 'Juvenile Library' in the school building in 1833. The Library was open from 6.00pm to 8.0pm on Wednesdays and 9.00am to 11.00am on Saturdays. Subscribers could pay 4s (20p) a year, 2/6d (12½p) a quarter or 8d per month for the right to take out two books at a time. Non-subscribers paid ½ d a book for any book under octavo size, which they could keep until the next opening time. If they kept the book for longer they were charged ½ d per day. For larger books the charge was 1d, with 1d a day fine for not returning it on time. The advertisement for the Library warned that 'Any book damaged or written on must be replaced by another copy equally good, or paid for at the published price'.

The next master, William Thomson Brown, came from Bo'ness, where he had been teaching, and was initially appointed as assistant to Archibald Haxton. While he was assistant master the school roll doubled in size. After Mr Haxton's death Mr Brown was unanimously appointed to his post by the Town Council. In 1851, the year of his appointment, the Town Council, with the approval of the Marquis of Tweedale in whose gift the post of schoolmaster still lay, decided to limit the appointment of the Rector of the High School to ten year periods. However, Mr Brown must have proved very satisfactory as he was obviously granted a further term when his first decade was finished. His sister also taught for a while in the Grammar School for a while and afterwards carried on a school in Canmore St for many years. Mr Brown returned to Bo'ness in 1869, being presented by his pupils with a Testimonial of their appreciation of his work, as a leaving gift.

Mr Brown was described by a contemporary as:'A very short and small man but with a full dominie soul. He walked with the strut of a martinet and the "clank" of a commander. He was one of the rather few men trained in George Heriot's Hospital who have turned out to be men of worth and talent. As a teacher he was highly esteemed and though his size suggested the unusual title of "Little Brown" he was really liked by his pupils. He could enter into, even take part in, some of their more intellectual pranks, and laugh as heartily as any at the dénouement'

He retired on two-thirds pay at sometime after his return to Bo'ness and in 1895 was living in Edinburgh. While he was teaching, the master's salary was still augmented by fees paid by parents. The fees varied according to the subjects studied. English, Latin, Greek, French and Mathematics were all available as separate subjects at 5s (25p) a quarter. Combinations paid for jointly were English, Geography, Writing and Arithmetic at 12/6d (62½p) a quarter, and English, Writing and Arithmetic at 10/6d (52½p). English and Writing was also available. The separate 5s subjects could be added to one of the basic curricula as and when required.



Dunfermline Grammar School.

William Roy

1 Quarter. From 30 January To 24th April 1855

	£	s.	d.
At English.			
" English and Writing.			
" English, Writing, and Arithmetic.			
" English, Geography, Writing, & Arithmetic.		12	6
" Latin.			
" French.			
" Greek.			
" Mathematics.		5	-
		17	6

Rec'd Pay't

W Thomson Brown

Figure 18. A reciept for Grammar School fees signed by William Brown

The end-of-year examination has been mentioned in the item about Mr Haxton and the institution still continued in 1904, when it was advertised in the local press:

The examination of the pupils attending the Grammar School will take place on Wednesday the tenth July next. The parents of the pupils and the friends of education are respectfully invited to attend.Arrangement – English reading, beginning with the junior class, from 10 to 12: English grammar, composition &c 12 to 1: Latin, Greek and French 1 to 2: geography, arithmetic and music 2 to 4.The next session will commence on Monday the twelfth of August, when classes for beginners in all the different branches will be formed.

The relative importance of the different subjects, indicated by their position in the day and the time allotted to them, is informative. English and Classics were obviously seen as having priority, with other subjects a rather poor second and no mention at all of History or any of the Sciences.

Figure 19. The 1886 High School building

The new school building which was opened in 1886 was paid for by voluntary contributions raised by Mr William Inglis 'a citizen who stood by the High School through good and ill report and served the cause of education with entire devotion so long as his strength permitted'. The founding of the new school re-opened a debate which had first erupted among the members of the School Board in 1877 and which concerned issues of selection and elitism which still arouse fierce passions today. A motion was adopted that: 'The Grammar School should be deemed a higher class public school; that no child be allowed to attend the school who was under the age of ten years, or who was unable to pass an examination in the existing fourth standard of the Scotch Education Code and that the whole of the annual grant of £100 payable by the town Council be applied towards the maintenance of the school'.

At a meeting held in advance of elections to the Board in 1879 three 'working men' representatives on the Board were supported in their objection that the school's monopoly of Town funds meant that the children of the well-to-do were being educated at the expense of rate-paying workers. Six other members, including Andrew Carnegie's uncle, George Lauder issued a manifesto 'rejoicing that the High School (note the change of name) had at last been placed on a permanent basis' and 'deploring the indications of a reactionary policy – the promoters of that policy not being friends either of the cause of education or economy'. Furthermore, 'unquestionably a higher-class education afforded the readiest passport to success in life'.

George Lauder was defeated at that election but was re-elected in 1882, when at a public meeting he again vigorously defended the use of Town funds to support the school, causing a near-riot in the hall. His suggestion that the fees be reduced to 7/6d a quarter was also opposed. Lauder was not a man to be defeated however, and in 1885, after the launch of William Inglis' scheme to raise money for a new school building, he returned to the fray with the suggestion that the Town's contribution from the rates be doubled and the fees reduced to the same level as those of the Elementary Schools. These suggestions were not taken up either and Lauder resigned from the Board. In his letter of resignation he complained that the curriculum was especially intended for boys who wished to go to University, when in his view it should be extended to all the modern requirements of an industrial education. He still maintained, however, that the school should be available only for advanced pupils, first from inhabitants of Dunfermline and then for those outwith the town.

Lauder may have been frustrated in his attempts to get the High School curriculum broadened, but this spurred him on to take matters into his own hands and approach his wealthy nephew Andrew Carnegie for funds to build a school which would offer a technical education. Carnegie donated a total of £10,000 and the new school was built just to the east of the new High School and opened by Carnegie in 1899. At his request it was named 'The Lauder Technical School' after his uncle. Almost immediately the High School began using the facilities in its neighbouring building, so George Lauder managed to achieve his aim before his death in 1900 at the age of eighty-seven

Figure 20. The Lauder Techincal School

St Leonard's Primary School

Figure 21. St Leonard's Primary School

In 2002 St Leonard's Primary School celebrated the centenary of the opening of its present building on the west side of Hospital Hill. On the opposite side of the road is the site of the medieval hospital or hospice dedicated to St Leonard, patron saint of midwives, pregnant women and prisoners (now built over by a supermarket).Saint Leonard was associated with several medieval hospitals throughout Scotland, notably one on the south side of Edinburgh. A chapel, hospital building and well stood on the Dunfermline site and after the dissolution of the Abbey in1560 the buildings were

used for secular purposes, including a maltings. The chapel was destroyed by Cromwellian troops after the Battle of Pitreavie in 1651 but the adjoining graveyard was used for burials until 1780. The remaining walls of the hospital fell down some years after the abandonment of the graveyard.

The history of St Leonard's school begins in 1851, when Erskine Beveridge, owner of the St Leonard's linen factory, provided a schoolroom in the factory for the children of his workers. This was probably one of the earliest crèche facilities to allow mothers to work in a mill. In 1858 the school had 200 pupils on its roll, taught by Mr James Dickie and Mrs Henderson. Mr Beveridge also provided a library and reading room for the workers and their families. Nine years later he commissioned Mr Hay, a local architect, to design a purpose-built school with a general classroom (55ftx28ft), a girls' classroom (28ftx18ft) and a juvenile classroom (18ftx17ft).

The First Building

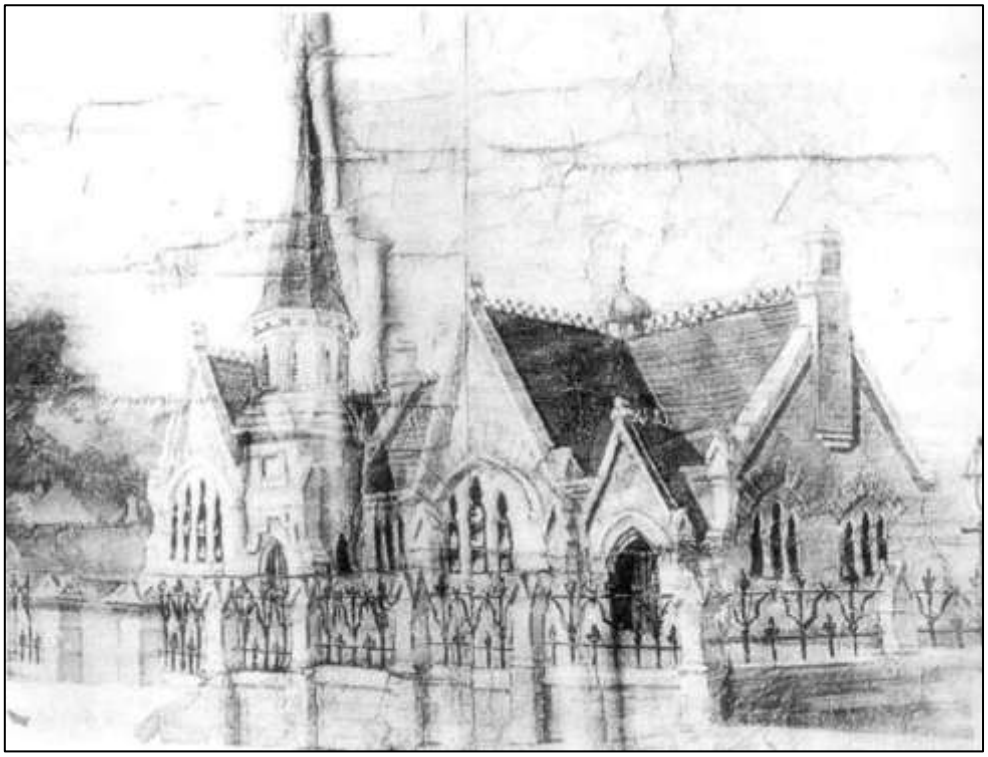


Figure 22. St Leonard's first builing

The school was built on the east side of Hospital Hill, where the supermarket now stands, There was an entrance porch which was surmounted by an octagonal bell turret, with a spire and gilt weather vane. A classroom measuring 41ft x 17½ ft was deemed in 1856 to be sufficient to hold 90 children, but frequently twice that number would be crammed in. The school staff comprised the headmaster (Mr Dickie), who had taught at the works school for nine years, two assistants and five pupil teachers (children from the top class who helped to teach the younger ones). The Education act of 1872 transferred control of all schools to locally-elected school boards, but St Leonard's School was not taken over until 1879, when the school board paid £1200 for the building and contents. The addition of a further classroom immediately after the takeover and an infant department in 1890 to Mr Beveridge's original school, brought the stated capacity to 353 seniors and 143 infants. Whilst the

seniors never exceeded that number, the junior department was constantly above its authorised capacity.

The cost of running the school in 1894 was £862 15/11d, the largest part of the expenditure being £736 for salaries. Income was from grants awarded by the Scotch (sic) Education Department, but a deficit of “175 1/5d was paid from the rates. A highly critical report by HM Inspector of Schools in 1898, whilst praising the quality of teaching, pointed out that the constant overcrowding of classrooms and the inadequate and objectionable state of the playground could not be ignored. It was also stated that the grant paid to the school would only be paid on the authorised capacity of 143 infants and not on the actual roll of around 183.

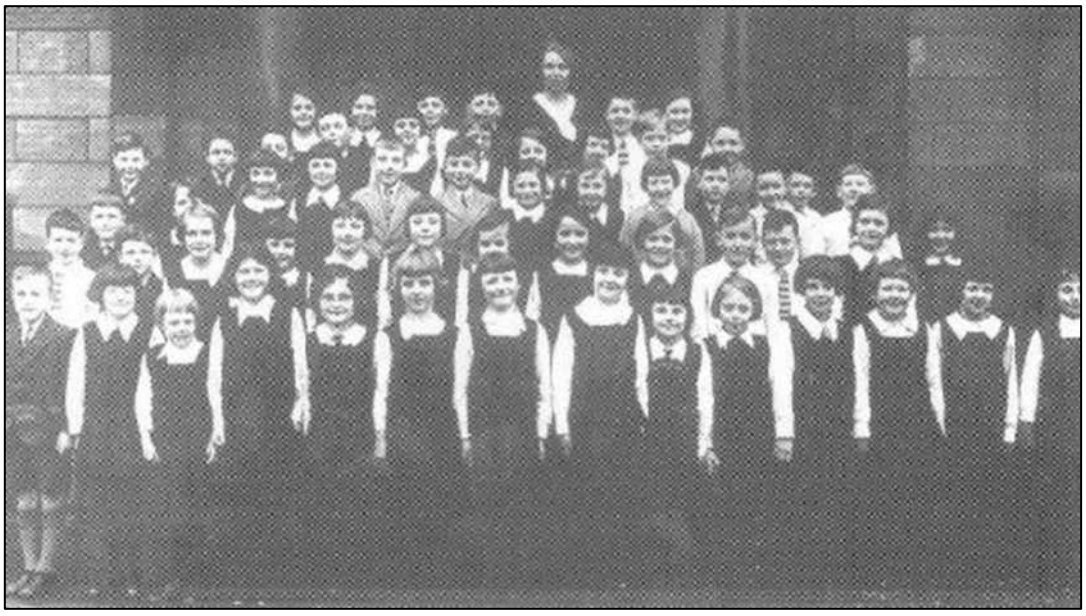


Figure 23. The Choir in the 1930s

This loss of revenue helped to concentrate the minds of the members of the Dunfermline School Board and they took the decision to build a separate school, to be used by the senior pupils. In May 1899 the architects H&D Barclay of Glasgow were appointed and an approach was made to the Earl of Elgin to feu 1¼ acres of ground on the west side of Hospital Hill (the site of the present school), at a rent of around £16 per acre per annum. The architects were instructed to prepare plans for a building to accommodate 700 pupils, and their plans for a single-storey building were approved some six months later, but only for a portion of the proposed building which would be suitable for 400 pupils

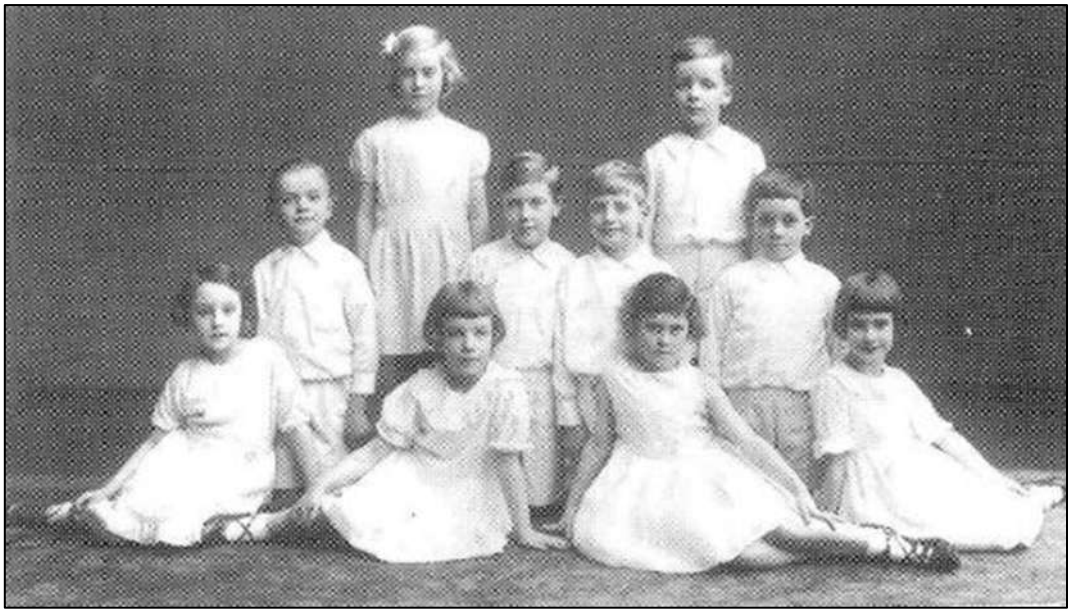


Figure 24. The Scottish Country Dance Team in the 1930s

The Present Building

Before tenders were accepted for the erection of the new school, further undisclosed modifications were proposed, in order to reduce costs. Together with the ancillary work and the employment of an inspector of work (Mr Swinton) at a rate of £1 10s per week, the total bill for the school came to £7,600. It is not stated whether this included furnishing the building. There are two entries in the board minutes regarding furniture for the building. Bennet Furnishing were paid £153 2/6d for sufficient desks and seating for six rooms. A tender for teachers' desks and presses at £50 1/4d and a sewing press at £5 5s was accepted only three days before the official opening of the school. This is called forward planning!

In order to finance this expense the Dunfermline School Board took out a loan of £7,600 with the Airdrie Savings Bank, to be paid in three instalments. The loan was repayable over 40 years by fixed annual sums of £190. with a break in favour of both parties at the end of 20 years. The official opening of St Leonard's Primary School took place on 9 January 1902. The chairman of the Dunfermline School Board, the Rev TE Miller of Gillespie's United Free Church, led the company in a dedicatory prayer and the Earl of Elgin performed the formal opening ceremony.

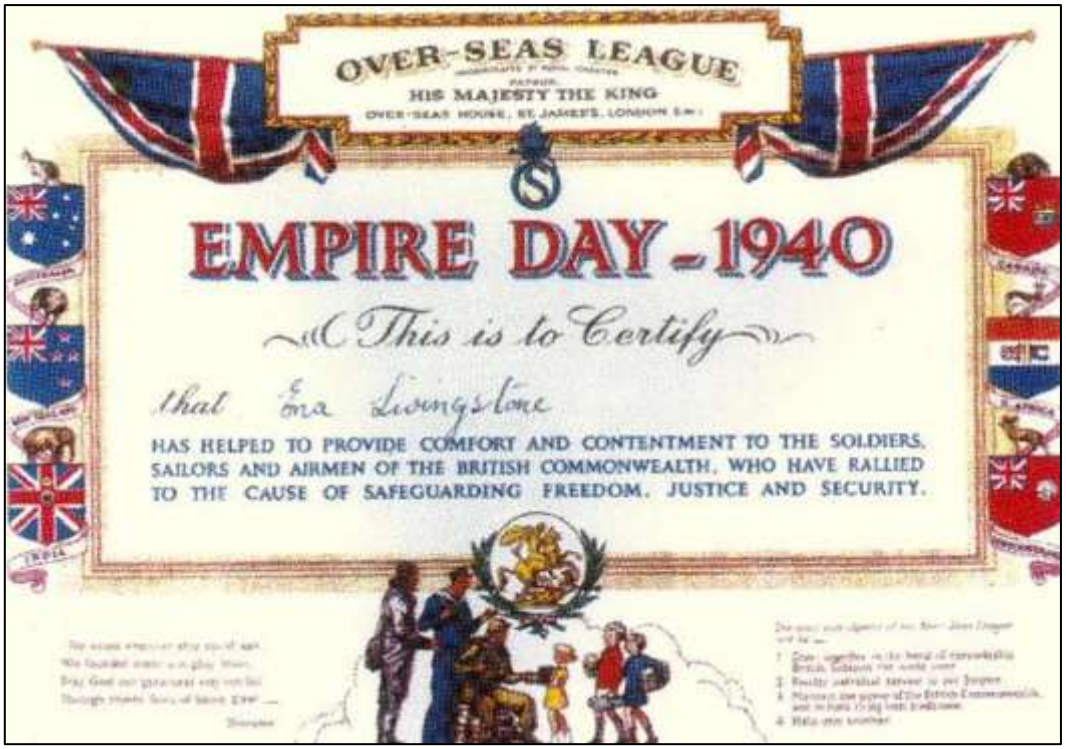


Figure 25. Certificate won by a pupil for knitting socks for servicemen

Both primary and infant schools now had sufficient capacity for the catchment area which they served, 420 primary and 496 infant. In fact they ran under-filled. In 1902 there were 279 and 195 infant pupils. The infant school was demolished in 1973 to make way for the supermarket which was built on the site. In that year the school roll was 223 and in 1989 172, of which 81 pupils lived outwith the catchment area, and 27 nursery pupils. The basic salary of a male assistant in 1902 was £100 and that of a female assistant was £60, both with a superannuation premium. Annual increments were usually £10 for the headmaster and £5 for the assistants. The list of additional skills of the staff included drawing, S&A physio, physiography, woodwork and physical drill. The headmistress had needlework and dress-cutting skills.

Figure 26. The Football Team c1940

The quality of drawing, singing and needlework in the school was admired by the inspectors in 1898. The only weak point mentioned was Intelligence in the Fourth Class. Comment was made that 'the highest class professed a play of Shakespeare and showed creditable but not particularly minute knowledge of the language and allusions. One remark shows that nothing has changed over the years. 'The general tone and discipline is effective but class movement should be more quietly conducted

The Centenary

The centenary in 2002 was marked by the planting of a Centenary Garden as a permanent legacy of the celebrations. Pupils from primary 4 upwards contributed ideas which were incorporated into the final design of the garden. There was also a display of photographs and other memorabilia collected from former pupils and families who had associations with the building. To add to these mementos of the past, the children produced project work with a centenary theme, ranging from toys and games to education and industry.

A commemorative booklet was compiled from some of these contributions, providing another permanent reminder of the occasion, and a competition was held among the children for the composition of a school song, the winning entry to be recorded on a CD. On 9 January, the anniversary date of the original opening of the building, a re-dedication service was held in St Leonard's Church, followed by a release of red and white balloons and a commemorative lunch

Figure 27. The Centenary Cake

The Dunfermline Carnegie TrustSchool of Craft and Design

Figure 28. Viewfield House

From 1920 until the mid 1970s Viewfield House was the home of a Craft School, run by the Carnegie Trust until 1964 and thereafter by the Dunfermline Arts and Crafts Guild with the support of Fife Council. The house was built in the late eighteenth century and stands on the south side of the car park on the east side of Viewfield Terrace (behind Holy Trinity Church). It was in private ownership until the early twentieth century and was commandeered by the Admiralty during WW1. The Trust bought it after the War and used it to house the Craft School, which by then had outgrown its existing premises.

The School was begun as an experiment in 1908, when practical classes were set up by the Trust at the Lauder Technical School in order to supplement its theoretical teaching. These proved so popular with students and amateurs alike that when the Tech needed their accommodation in the following year, the classes moved to the Trust's premises in Abbot House. There they went from strength to strength, attracting people who would have been intimidated by a large institution.

Figure 29. Abbot House

The first students were mainly men doing woodwork, which remained one of the most popular subjects throughout the School's history, with metalwork and house painting and decorating. They were taught by the Craftmaster, Andrew Samuel, and when their numbers doubled to 120 in 1910, Mr Samuel coped with the increase by using his best students as his assistants. In that year the first of many annual exhibitions was held at Abbot House, amazing viewers with the variety and quality of the work which had been achieved in just two years

By the end of 1911 sixty ladies were attending the School and Miss Mary Bearsly was appointed teacher of Needlework and Embroidery, taking both day and evening classes. The number of ladies also doubled in the following year, and Miss Helen Gorrie joined Miss Bearsly as her assistant. Miss Gorrie eventually became the principle teacher of needlework and remained at the School until her retirement in 1948.

Figure 30. 'Spring' by Helen Gorrie

The needlework class had by now outgrown the Abbot House accommodation and it was moved in 1912 to the newly-opened Carnegie Women's Institute in Pilmuir St (on the northern corner of the Kingsgate Centre access road).

Figure 31. Embroidery Class in the Women's Institute 1913

The outbreak of WW1 in 1914 caused a sharp drop in student numbers. Many men were, of course, called up or volunteered to serve in the armed forces. The number of women students also dropped and the needlework classes moved once again, this time to the Trust offices. At the end of the War in 1918 the numbers increased again, to the point where classes were being held in three locations. Woodwork and general crafts continued at Abbot House, needlework had moved to the Old Carnegie Baths (at the north-western corner of Pilmuir St and Carnegie Drive) and the house painting and decorating classes were held in St Margaret's Hall. This situation could not continue and it was at this point that the move was made to Viewfield House in 1920.

At Viewfield there were five full-time staff for day classes, the Craftmaster and his assistant and Helen Gorrie with two assistants. Three part-timers taught evening classes in wood work, house painting and decorating. The student fees were fifteen shillings (75p) per session of September to June, under-eighteens paying half fees. There was also an evening Embroidery Club for girls who worked during the daytime, the fee being three shillings and sixpence (15½ p) refundable if the girl achieved at least 75% attendance.

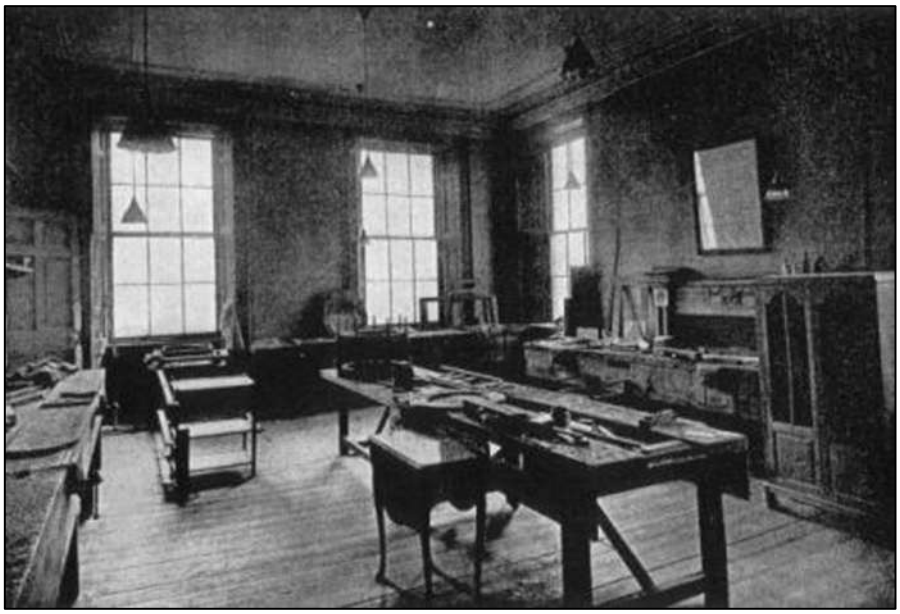


Figure 32. The Woodwork Room in Viewfield House

The Craft School prospectus for 1920 offered the following subjects:

Furniture making and wood carving
Metalwork, including jewellery and enamelling
House painting and decorating, including sign-writing, graining and gilding
Illustrating, Lithography and Etching
Quill writing and Manuscript Illuminating
Modelling in plaster and clay, Gesso work, Leather work

The Annual Exhibitions had been abandoned during WW1 but they resumed after the move to Viewfield, being held there for a few years. In 1926 the Exhibition was held in the Old Carnegie Baths, which had been converted to make it suitable to house art exhibitions. Two years later, in 1928, the Carnegie Trust obtained a 21-year lease of the building from the Town Council and made

further alterations to make the hall suitable for plays, concerts, whist drives and dances and changed its name to Pilmuir Hall. While these alterations were being made the Craft School Exhibition was held in the gymnasium of the New Carnegie Baths, but after they were completed the Exhibition was held in the Pilmuir Hall until the outbreak of WW2 in 1939, when ownership of the hall reverted to the Town Council.

Figure 33. Exhibition in Pilmuir Hall 1926

Figure 34. Exhibition in the Carnegie Baths Gymnasium 1928

The 1920s were the heyday of the Craft School. It was badly hit by the Depression of the 1930s, when many men had to leave the town to look for work and those that remained and their womenfolk had little money to spare for fees. Hardly had the country recovered from the Depression than it was plunged into war in 1939. Most of the Carnegie Trust properties were immediately commandeered by the armed forces. The Craft school was allowed to complete its 1939/40 session, after which Viewfield House was taken over by the WRNS.

The House was returned to the Trust when hostilities ceased in 1945, but it needed extensive alteration and complete redecoration, so the Craft School did not re-open until 1947. There was a great demand for places and the enrolment had to be closed when numbers reached 255, but the enthusiasm of the students was not matched by the availability of craft materials, which were very scarce indeed. Some leather was obtained in 1947 and government surplus wooden cases and instrument boxes were used to make small items of furniture. Embroidery materials were obtained somehow and there were classes in metalwork, lettering and illumination and graphic arts. In 1951 the Annual Exhibition was held in the Music Pavilion (Glen Pavilion) which was to be its home until the end of the life of the School. In the following year long lengths of new hardwood again became obtainable and in 1953 the Exhibition featured a complete bedroom suite of bed, wardrobe, dressing table and stool and bedside cabinet.

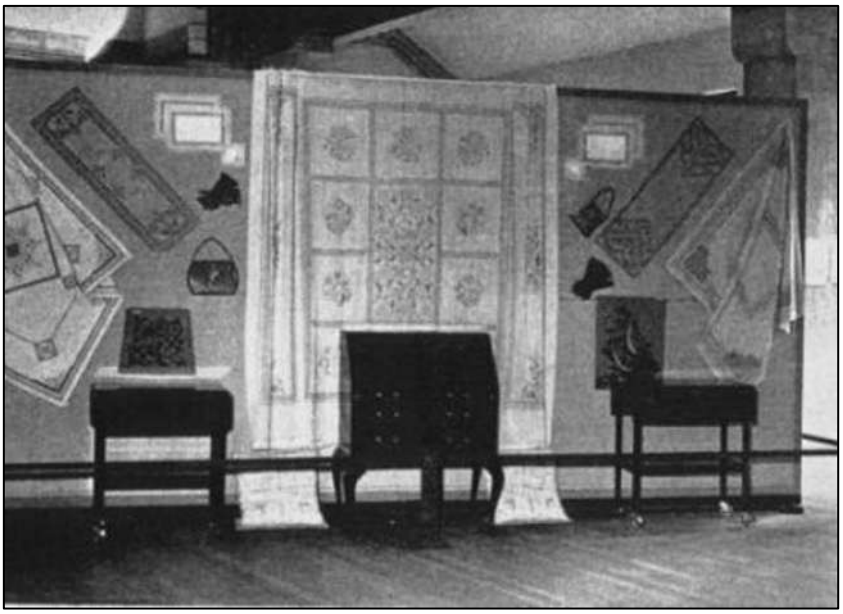


Figure 35. Exhibition in the Glen Pavilion 1953

Enrolment remained high throughout the 1950s, but the financial situation of the Carnegie Trust was not as good as it had been and it was gradually shedding some of its liabilities. In 1963, having failed to persuade Fife County Council to take it over, the Trust decided to close the Craft School. The students, however, had other ideas and a few of them set up the Dunfermline Arts and Crafts Guild to take over the running of Viewfield House. All students who enrolled would become members of the Guild, the teachers were paid by Fife Council and the Trust paid for heating, lighting and maintenance of the building. Classes continued to be held until 1980, when the School finally closed. Two years later the building was converted into flats.

See" Playing with the past" for patterns used in the Embroidery classes at the Craft School

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The Kirk

One aspect of the past which is frequently overlooked is the way in which their religion permeated the lives of ordinary people, but it cannot be ignored if any kind of realistic picture of their lives is to be envisaged. In medieval times the Dunfermline Guild and Burgh Court records bear witness to the importance the townspeople attached to the work and worship of the Abbey and after the Reformation of 1560 the Presbyterian church successfully diverted religious feeling into its own approved channels. This did not merely involve attendance at the Kirk on the Sabbath, important though it was, but letters, diaries, even ships' journals are peppered with references to the Almighty in both thanksgiving and penitence. God was seen as being very much concerned with everyday life as well as with what went on in the Kirk building.

In the absence of other explanations, sin was believed to bring down God's wrath in the form of epidemic disease and repeated bad harvests, so the eradication of sin was seen as being all-important. It was a strong sense of its responsibility for the godliness of the people which lay behind the Kirk's efforts to bring them into line with the Ten Commandments and with generally moral behaviour. Human behaviour was seen as having environmental consequences albeit based on belief rather than on science. An analogy for this mindset is with our own attitudes towards those who contribute to global warming and our government's attempts to limit the damage. It is not necessary for us to go along with the beliefs of the past, but it is very necessary to understand them if we are to understand why the Kirk did some of the things it did.

Figure 36. The Abbey from the northwest c1900

The Kirk is, of course, best known for its dealings with those guilty of sex outside marriage. Its censorious attitude is condemned by many people today, but it is worth remembering that part of the Kirk's concern was for the maintenance of the resulting children, most of the mothers being poor women. Fathers were pursued not only to carry out the necessary penance on the 'black stool' but also to make provision for their offspring and women could approach the Session to get this enforced. It is often said that the men got off more lightly than the women. This may have been the case in some places, but not in Dunfermline. A soldier who had gone off with his regiment, for

instance, would be tracked down through the chaplaincy network or by writing to his Colonel. Even the laird of Pittencrieff, who was also Provost of Edinburgh, had to do his three Sabbaths on the stool for getting one of his maidservants pregnant. In some cases the couple concerned, especially if they had subsequently married, even volunteered to 'satisfy the kirk' in the usual way (ie to sit their three Sabbaths on the stool) in order to quiet their consciences.

The other Kirk attitude which has attracted condemnation is its manner of dealing with suspected witches. Here again an effort of imagination is necessary in order to understand what was going on. Belief in the existence of the devil was perfectly sincere and to be in league with him was the ultimate sin and the potential cause of untold catastrophes to the community at large. The fear which lay behind the savage treatment of suspected witches was absolutely genuine, even though it seems quite irrational to us today. Although witchcraft is occasionally mentioned in the Dunfermline Kirk Session minutes the treatment of the women involved is not recorded in the minute detail which was common in other places, so it seems that this particular Session did not examine the women themselves.

However, fornication and witchcraft were by no means the only matters with which the Kirk was concerned. It upheld marriage in general by punishing adulterers and striving to reconcile warring couples. It dealt with family disputes, censuring children who behaved badly towards their parents and intervening to calm in-law unrest. General social evils also came within its remit and it was hard on slander and in dealing with inter-neighbour quarrels. Drunkenness, especially on the Sabbath, incurred penalties. First offenders usually just had to apologise to the Session and few of them made a second appearance, but it also dealt with a few confirmed alcoholics who were generally resistant to the kinds of sanctions which could be imposed by the Kirk. In an age when ale was the daily drink of all ages there seems to have been comparatively little excessive drinking but the Kirk saw it not just as a sin in itself but as the cause of other evils such as rape, fighting, quarrels and domestic violence.

The keeping of the Sabbath was important and the Dunfermline Session took seriously the Commandment that no work should be done on that day. It encouraged church attendance, sometimes instructing the Elders to do the rounds of the taverns and alehouses to round up backsliders, but it did not, as was done in other places, enforce the reading of the Bible and family prayers on the Sabbath afternoon nor penalise people who socialised in the streets at that time of day.

Another function of the Kirk Session was the support of the poor. A weekly collection was made at the Kirk door and money was handed out regularly to the 'ordinary poor', ie the ones on the Kirk list. One-off donations were given to the 'extraordinary poor' such as people who had lost everything in a fire or where a horse which was a man's only means of livelihood had died. Many refugees from the massacre of protestants in Ireland in 1641 were helped and the widows of men killed in the Covenanting and Civil wars were supported. From time to time wealthy people made bequests or 'mortifications' in their wills which swelled the contents of the 'poors box', as it was called, but this was usually lent out at about 10% interest and the proceeds used for charity – the equivalent of putting money in a savings account. The principal could be called in if some large expenditure arose.

Education was important to the Kirk, which wanted everyone to be able to read the Bible. The Session paid part of the salary of the Grammar School master and also supported schools in the local villages and subsidiary schools in Dunfermline itself.

The maintenance of the church building, especially the roof, was a constant headache, repairs being expensive and money always in short supply. Decisions to employ the cheapest wright or mason did not help in the long run and neither did the tendency to do nothing about a problem until it became absolutely necessary. Maintenance of seats in the kirk were not the responsibility of the Session but of the trades or individuals which owned them, but the allocation of seats and spaces for seats took up a fair proportion of their time. During the second half of the seventeenth century the population of the town was obviously growing as several new lofts were built in that time, sometimes one above the other, such was the pressure on space. Allocation of grave plots in the kirkyard was part of the Session's remit, although more frequently they were called upon to arbitrate about who owned a particular lair and they had to be informed when anyone sold his grave space to another.

The operation of the Kirk Sessions may not have been ideal, but in its own way it contained in embryo many of the social services we take for granted today – child support, marriage guidance, education, family and neighbour mediation and the support of the old, the sick and those incapable of supporting themselves. It is on these foundations that much of our Welfare State was built.

For further information about Kirk Sessions and their work see The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland by Margo Todd pub Yale University Press 2002. ISBN 0 300 09234 2. A daunting title but a very readable book.

Notes on 17th/18th century Dunfermline Kirk Session records

The Grammar School Country Schools Bad Behaviour Marriage & Families Slander

The Poor Fornication & Adultery The Sabbath Christmas Witchcraft Wartime

These are Word files. If you do not have Word on your computer, Click Here to download the Microtsoft Word Viewer

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The Linen Industry

Linen would have been woven in Dunfermline from the earliest days of its history, but the first tenuous concrete evidence for the craft is provided by a small find from the archeological dig carried out at the Abbot House in 1993. A jetton (coin) of a type manufactured in the Flemish town of Tournai throughout the fifteenth century was found in the area of the present garden behind the house. Tournai was once a linen-weaving town, producing a simple, diaper-patterned form of damask, known in Scotland as dornick. This fabric was certainly being produced in Dunfermline by the end of the sixteenth century, when a piece was produced by an apprentice as his entrée into the Weaver's Incorporation, and it is possible that the fifteenth century connection with Tournai marked the beginning of dornick weaving in the burgh.

Figure 37. A Tournai jetton

Figure 38. A Medieval lord at table & Modern reconstruction of medieval damask

Dornick was bought by the royal household throughout the sixteenth century for making table linen, the treasurer's accounts distinguishing between the imported fabric, used for the King's table, and Scots dornick, at about a tenth of the price and destined for the tables of the upper servants. Given the strong royal connection with Dunfermline and its nearness to Edinburgh, it is likely that Dunfermline weavers supplied the royal household with some at least of its Scots dornick.

Whether or not contact with Tournai introduced dornick weaving into Dunfermline in the fifteenth century, linen-weaving grew in importance throughout the next hundred years and by the early seventeenth century the Guild Merchant was complaining about the weavers illegally exporting their cloth to London. Flax was grown in some of the yards behind the houses and probably also in the fields, but locally-grown flax was not sufficient for demand and merchants looked to Danzig (Gdansk), the great exporter of Polish flax to Scotland, for supplies. This trade was well-established by the first quarter of the sixteenth century and among the goods left by the merchant John Wilson to his widow in 1522 was a 'Danzig toll'.

Figure 39. Map showing the position of Danzig

The records of the Dunfermline Guildry for 1546 suggest that by this time Dunfermline merchants were very familiar with Danzig. On 26 August William Nichol was preparing to sail on the next ship bound for the port, having been commissioned by James Ferguson to spend 19 Prussian merks there on goods for him, Ferguson paying the freight of the goods home and any other costs. The transaction was recorded in the guild court, with the proviso that if Nichol did not bring home any goods he was to repay Ferguson 10s scots per merk. John Hutton had left 19 Prussian merks behind in Danzig when he was last there and Nichol was ordered to bring them home as well.

The Guildry and other records make frequent mention of this trade until the 1620s, when it seems to have abruptly ceased, probably a casualty of the fire of 1624 which destroyed much of the town and badly affected the livelihoods of most of the inhabitants. Linen weaving, however, continued and flourished. Although the merchants of Dunfermline seem to have lost their direct trade with Danzig, a huge quantity of Polish flax was imported into the main ports around the Forth and was available wholesale for merchants to buy and re-sell. The finest linen came from the Netherlands, Scots linen being coarser and consequently much less expensive. The coarsest of all was 'harden', produced from the residue left after the finer fibres had been heckled out from the raw flax. Harden is what the poor used for their bed linen, tablecloths and underclothes.

Until the introduction of spinning machines in the late eighteenth century, the linen industry was supported by the constant labour of women, who spun yarn whenever they were not engaged in other tasks. In the early days this was done by distaff and spindle but the introduction of spinning wheels in the fifteenth century speeded up the process for the few who could afford one. Spinning

wheel ownership became more general throughout the sixteenth century and by the seventeenth, most homes owned one or more. Women bought flax from merchants by the Scots stone (about 7 kilos), usually between a half and three stones at a time. In many places one of the ways in which the kirk helped a poor women was to buy her a stone of flax to spin into thread. Women sold their spindles of thread to the weavers, who then had it wound onto the bobbins which fitted into their weaving shuttles. By the mid-eighteenth century the bobbining was being organised by middle-men like George Turnbull of Wester Gellet who employed a woman for a fortnight to bobbin the yarn stockpiled in his barn in 1749.

n 1718 damask weaving returned to Dunfermline but in a form far superior to the coarse 'dornick' of old. James Blake 'an ingenious weaver in Dunfermline' infiltrated the recently-set up damask establishment at Drumsheugh in Edinburgh. The secrets of damask weaving were jealously guarded by the proprietors but Blake is said to have feigned himself of weak intellect, and by telling queer stories to the workmen, he was allowed to come inside the factory to amuse them. This was Blake's opportunity; his keen eye and mechanical mind mastered all the details of the mystery of damask-weaving. After obtaining his object he regained his senses, came back to Dunfermline with the whole of the Drumsheugh weaving mechanism, in full working order, on his mind. He then drew plans for the construction of his loom, which he got made by a wright and a smith; this effected, it was erected in the lower north-west room of "the Pends," immediately above the archway, and there he commenced his damask-weaving during the summer of 1718.

From this piece of industrial espionage grew a thriving industry, damask being woven in the summer and 'ticks and checks' in the winter, until about 1750, when the trade went over solely to damask. In 1766 there were said to be 600 looms making 'figured linen', which had doubled to 1200 by 1792, when the local minister's contribution to the Statistical Account of Scotland stated that:

Astonishing improvements have been made within less than half a century in the art of weaving and in the manufacture of table-linen. By the introduction of machinery labour has been greatly abridged. Formerly, in weaving diaper (damask) two and sometimes three persons were requisite for one web. Now, by means of the fly-shuttle and what is called a frame for raising the figure, a single weaver can work a web 2¼ yards broad without the least assistance. Many of the tradesmen in this place discover considerable genius in drawing figures for the diaper and several of them have obtained premiums for their draughts. Table-cloths can be furnished of any desired length, breadth and fineness and noblemen and gentlemen may have their coats of arms and mottos wrought into any table-linen they choose to commission.

Until 1792 the thread for all this weaving activity was still provided by the women of the town and surrounding area, but in that year the process began to be mechanised, when the Kirkhill Spinning Company set up a water-powered spinning mill at Brucefield, the first in the area. The mill was so damaged by fire in 1825 that it went out of use, but by that time there were at least three other spinning mills in the town and five more were built in the next five years. The weaving was done solely by hand until the mid-nineteenth century, when the opening of the Glen Weaving Factory (on a site later destroyed by the building of the Glen bridge) in 1840 began a spate of building which saw ten damask weaving mills opened within the next thirty-six years. As the mills opened, hand-weaving declined, the ancient Dunfermline Weavers Incorporation being finally wound up in 1863, by which date there were three weaving mills in the town. In 1877 it was estimated that nearly 6,000

operatives were employed in the Dunfermline mills. The weaving of damask continued into the twentieth century but as the number of domestic servants to carry out the heavy laundering, starching and ironing of damask tablecloths and napkins declined, the damask trade shrank in sympathy and by the end of the 1930s most of the mills had closed or been converted to other uses.

Damask Weaving Mills

(The final date is that of the closure of the premises. Most of the mills surviving to a late date would have been converted to other use some years previously. A few of them became silk mills.)

The Glen Weaving Factory	1840 – 1896
The Pilmuir Damask Weaving Works	1849 – 2005
St Leonard's Damask Weaving Works	1851 – 1973
Abbey Gardens Damask Weaving Works	1860 – 1928
Bothwell Damask Weaving Works	1865 – 1932
Canmore Damask Weaving Works	1867 – 1970
Castleblair Damask Weaving Works	1868 – 1967
St Margaret's Damask Weaving Works	1870 – 1982
Albany Damask Weaving Works	1874 – 1974
Caledonia Damask Weaving Works	1874 – 1925
Victoria Damask Weaving Works	1876 – 2005

The first experiments in power-loom weaving were made, unsuccessfully, at Meldrum's Spinning Mill in 1835, but the first fully operational weaving mill was the Glen Weaving Factory of 1840 – 1896. It stood in the ravine of the Glen Burn on a site subsequently obliterated by the building of the Glen Bridge.

Nine years later the opening of the Pilmuir works initiated the development of a weaving complex in the Pilmuir St/Foundry St area. The original two-storey building still stands on the west side of Pilmuir St, with its northern frontage on Foundry St. The works was extended in 1852, 1857, 1893 and 1901. In 1947 the premises were acquired by Messrs Dunlop for the production of tyre fabric, which finally ceased in 2005. There are now (2007) plans to convert the listed frontage on Pilmuir St into a housing complex, with a shopping area along the south-facing frontage.

Figure 40. The Pilmuir Works

Figure 41. St Margaret's Works

On the north side of Foundry St, the St Margaret's works was opened in 1870. It too was extended in 1882, 1893, 1900 and 1914. After its closure in 1982 the1870-1893 buildings were demolished and a housing development built on the site. The 1901 – 1914 buildings are still in situ are still (2007) in situ and used as a clothing outlet.

The Castleblair factory, immediately to the north of the St Margaret's works, opened in1868 and in 1913, when linen production in Dunfermline was at its peak, was estimated to have 300-350 looms in operation. In 1925 a Swiss company bought the works for the production of silk, which continued until 1967. In the 1990s part of the factory was used for clothing production and the buildings are currently (2007) in multiple occupation.

Figure 42. Castleblair Works interior

Just to the north of the Pilmuir works and on the other side of Pilmuir St, the Victoria Works was the last weaving mill to be built in Dunfermline, in 1876. Linen production ceased there in 1926 but in 1928 the works re-opened as an embroidery establishment. For some time before its closure in 2005 it operated as an annexe to the Castleblair clothing manufactory.

Figure 43. The Victoria Works

A short distance to the south of the St Margaret's works and separated from it by the Clayacres works and a (now defunct) railway line, the Canmore works opened in 1867. It was closed for linen production in 1930 but re-opened two years later as a silk mill in the ownership of the Swiss firm of Winturther. After Winturther's closed in 1970 the building was divided into several units, one of which is now (2007) occupied by Thomson's World of Furniture.South again of the Canmore works

was the Caledonia Works, opened in 1874 and destroyed by fire in 1925. The present fire station was built on part of the site in the mid-1930s

Away from the centre of the weaving industry there were a few outliers, one of which was the Albany Damask works, opened in 1874, backing onto Albany St. The Albany works also went over to silk production, in 1936 and operated for the next nineteen years. In 1959 the buildings were bought by the British Wool Marketing Board but a large part of them was destroyed by fire in 1974. The site is now (2007) occupied by the CR Smith double-glazing firm.

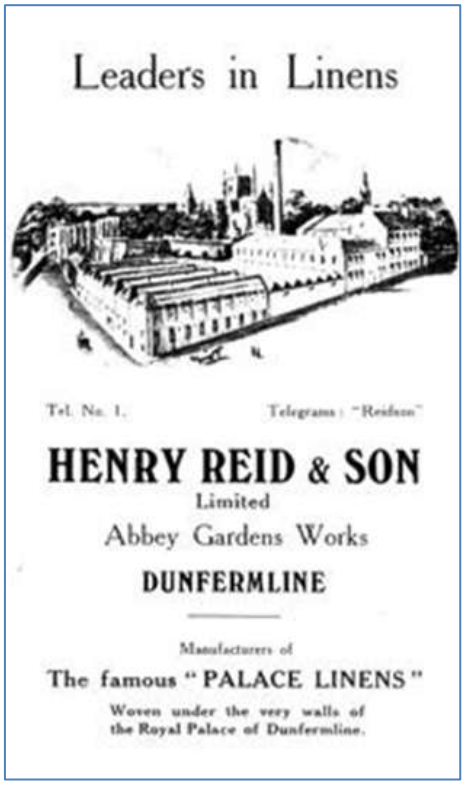

Figure 44. Henry Reid & Son advert.

The triple-terraced area on the west side of St Margaret St, now occupied by two car parks and a garden, was once the site of the Abbey Gardens Works. Henry Reid and son began linen production began there in 1860 but the 'Abbey Gardens Manufactory' is marked on the 1854 OS map so the buildings were of an earlier date. The factory closed in 1928 and the buildings were used for other purposes before being demolished in the 1930s, when the lower part of the site became a bus park.

Another weaving outlier was on the south side of the town, in Hospital Hill. The St Leonards Works was established there in 1851 and when it was extended in 1883 it became the largest weaving establishment in Dunfermline. The 1851 building was demolished in 1973 and ten years later the impressive office/warehouse building was converted into flats. The remaining buildings were finally demolished in 1990. (For more information see The Story of Erskine Beveridge and the St Leonard's Works by Hugh Walker.)

Figure 45. The Erskine Beveridge flats

Also on the south side of the town, the Bothwell Works lay on the eastern side of Elgin St, just south of the junction with Netherton Broad St. The factory opened in 1865 and closed in 1932, after which it was used for Government purposes until most of it was demolished in the 1950s. The former office building, Bothwell House, still stands.

Figure 46. Bothwell House

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Coal

History of Coal Mining Near Dunfermline

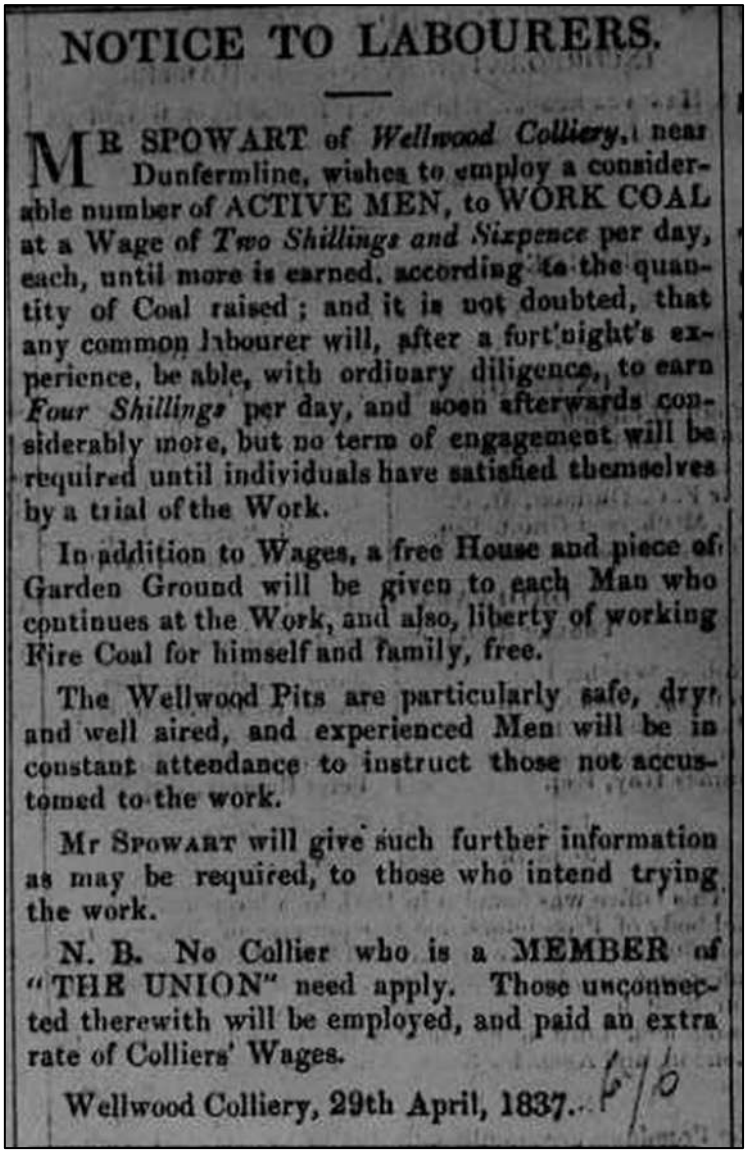
There are coal seams to the West, North and East of Dunfermline but, fortunately for the preservation of old buildings, there are no significant coal seams under the central part of Dunfermline itself. Although important coal seams such as the Dunfermline Splint are present in these areas, they are usually masked by a covering of boulder clay. At Wellwood this is up to 70 ft thick in places but at Berrylaw and West Baldridge it is only 15 ft thick and in Townhill the cover is only 3-9 ft and more sandy, so it would have been easier to penetrate there for early workings.

Despite the clay cover, the early miners would have been able to get an idea of the presence of coal seams from outcrops in the Broomhead and Baldridge burns. The strata in the Dunfermline area are much faulted but essentially they dip to the north. This means the lowest seams outcrop at the south edge of the coalfield and the marker stratum, below which commercial coal seams are not found, is the Kinniny Limestone seam assumed to outcrop in Pittencrieff Park.The lowest significant coal seam is the Sulphur, Stink or, more euphemistically, the Smithy Coal but as it was not usually worked it is not well mapped. However, its southerly edge may lie about Pittencrieff Street.

Figure 47. History of Coal Mining

In the series of charters distributing the Abbey lands following the Reformation there are few references to coal workings for the lands round Dunfermline, compared with those for the Abbey lands south of Musselburgh. Until the late sixteenth century the most attractive areas for coal working were near the coast to reduce the cost of transporting coal by packhorse to the small harbours on the Forth. In the case of Dunfermline it was more than 3 miles from the coal workings to Limekilns, so they were at a disadvantage compared with areas such as Torryburn and Culross. However, by this time the demand for coal was rising both at home and abroad. A shortage of miners developed and they were offered attractive terms to induce them to stay and others to join. But this was not enough and the landowners changed tack completely and passed punitive laws eg in1606 making Scottish miners and salters virtual serfs.

This increased mining activity quickly exhausted the pockets of coal that were easily worked and drained, which was a particular problem in coastal areas, going below sea level. Although Sir George Bruce overcame such problems in his workings near Culross by technical innovation and capital expenditure, others were unable to cope. This situation gave an opportunity to the owners of coal heughs in the coals to west and north of Dunfermline, as they could be drained by day-levels into gorges. This was not always achieved amicably and there were disputes between owners over the effects of mine drainage –as persists to this day with the Pitfirrane day level in Crossford.



NOTICE TO LABOURERS.

MR SPOWART of *Wellwood Colliery*, near Dunfermline, wishes to employ a considerable number of ACTIVE MEN, to WORK COAL at a Wage of *Two Shillings and Sixpence* per day, each, until more is earned, according to the quantity of Coal raised; and it is not doubted, that any common labourer will, after a fort'night's experience, be able, with ordinary diligence, to earn *Four Shillings* per day, and soon afterwards considerably more, but no term of engagement will be required until individuals have satisfied themselves by a trial of the Work.

In addition to Wages, a free House and piece of Garden Ground will be given to each Man who continues at the Work, and also, liberty of working Fire Coal for himself and family, free.

The Wellwood Pits are particularly safe, dry, and well aired, and experienced Men will be in constant attendance to instruct those not accustomed to the work.

Mr SPOWART will give such further information as may be required, to those who intend trying the work.

N. B. No Collier who is a MEMBER of "THE UNION" need apply. Those unconnected therewith will be employed, and paid an extra rate of Colliers' Wages.

Wellwood Colliery, 29th April, 1837.

Figure 48. High wages on offer - but to strike breakers!

That was not the only recurring problem. Robert Livingston, who was working Baldridge, complained to Dunfermline town council on "sixth April 1624 that' sundry neighbours and inhabitants of the burgh were stealing and carrying away coals from his coalheugh to his great prejudice'. However, the most relevant problem with coals from that coalfield in terms of the Burgh Survey, were probably about carrying coal through Dunfermline to Limekilns and the effect on the roads. In particular coal carts were prevented from using Collier Row and the High St and diverted via Queen Anne St to the New Row by the imposition of a customs duty of Six pennies Scots for each back load

(presumably panniers) and Ninepennies Scots for each cart of Coals. Doubtless this was also a reason for constructing the Coal Road to the west of Pittencrieff policies, thence by the south to Lady's Mill and the Limekilns Rd.

Turning to the Townhill coalfield, we have seen that the burgesses were granted rights over lands in Moncur and elsewhere, probably up to Kingseat. However, neither the original charter, nor the confirmation charter of 1588, gave explicit rights to work coal. This was remedied in 1670 by the Earls of Dunfermline and Tweeddale on condition that the annual profit would be divided between the town and said earls.Although Townhill, or earlier "Dunfermline Coaltown", coals were relatively shallow, they were situated at a greater distance from Dunfermline and the Forth, making them less attractive until connected by waggon-ways in the early ninteenth century. There were also shallow seams in the Halbeath area, south to about the Dunfermline to Crossgates road. These were probably worked on a small scale from early times, assisted by a series of day levels into the rising ground to the north. Although these lands were in the Regality of Dunfermline and were later owned by the Earl of Dunfermline and then the Earl of Tweeddale the coal workings had less impact on the Burgh of Dunfermline than those to the NW and North. In all these coalfields the degree of working was probably relatively small until the eighteenth century. As elsewhere, they probably took the form of adits or bell pits being wrought by say 6 colliers, often on a seasonal basis, and assisted by members of their families to draw the coals to the pit bottoms. Thence they would be carried by ladders to the surface by females or by horse gin if deeper. While such workings were fairly extensive, they usually just picked at a proportion of the coals originally in place.

The prevalence of so called 'monks workings' is doubtless exaggerated in the Dunfermline area whenever uncharted workings are encountered, as mining activity then was much less than in later periods. While there were coal seams, as we have seen, from Dewar St northward, there does not appear to be any recorded coal working from 1750 onwards in the area south of Baldridgeburn and east of William St. It was a different matter to the west of William St, earlier known as the Coal Road. Here the Pittencrieff Colliery was an important producer of coal around 1800 and especially valuable ironstone during the Napoleonic War. Doubtless the Elgin family made significant profits from these workings which justified the building and rebuilding of the Elgin waggon-way to Charlestown. Because of opencast working very little remains of these pits; though the Colton name survives- just - despite the attempts of developers to provide more fancy names.

North of the Dunfermline to Carnock road the Baldridge colliery was important well into the nineteenth century and was linked to the Elgin waggon-way/railway. Individual pit names included the Baldridge, the Tom, and the Victoria, though the largest was the Wallsend, claimed by Chalmers to have been the deepest in Scotland to that time. Although he thought it a most valuable pit, the Wallsend worked for a relatively short period and closed by 1880, though it was redeveloped around 1900 by John Nimmo & Son.

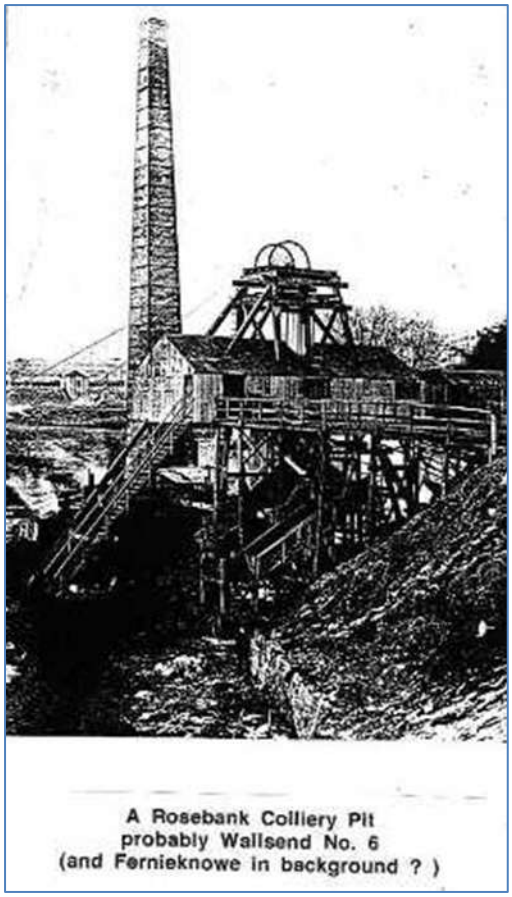


Figure 49. The Parkneuk Colliery, c19th

Until the mid nineteenth century these pits were dependent on the Elgin railway for their main markets. Then in the mid century the construction of the West of Fife Mineral railway, from Whitemyre to Townhill and Kelty, made it more economic to work the coals in the northern part of the Dunfermline coalfield. This extended northward to the major Lochhead fault (at Waste Disposal Centre) which upcast the seams to its north for subsequent erosion. By about 1880 the Baldridge coal field was largely exhausted but north of Dunfermline, Thomas Spowart & Co then worked the Arthur Pit, at Lochhead, as part of the Wellwood Colliery and Leadside Pit, commonly known as Wellwood continued beyond nationalisation, until the pithead was destroyed by fire in June 1950. This was the last colliery working in the immediate vicinity of Dunfermline.

Between the wars Spowarts redeveloped the Derby mine, just south of the fault and worked pockets of coal eastward towards Townhill. This gave concern to the mining consultants for Dunfermline Burgh, who noted in their annual survey reports how Spowarts were often nibbling into the coal reserves below the early Burgh muir. Though these coalfields were eventually regarded as exhausted, in recent years they have been successfully reworked by opencast at - from east to west - Cairncubie (ex Burgh), Colton (Derby) and now the former Wellwood and Arthur workings.

Immediately to the north of Dunfermline there were early coal workings in the Venturefair area, necessitating much expenditure on ground consolidation before Queen Anne School could be relocated and its previous Broomhead site redeveloped. The Syme waggonway serving pits in this area can still be traced crossing Canmore golf course, on its way from about the Town Loch to a depot in Knabbie St - on a site behind the present fire station. This principally supplied coal for domestic and industrial use in Dunfermline but there is evidence that some was carted to the Elgin railway. Most of the miners for these pits probably lived in Beveridgewell, Parkneuk and Wellwood (earlier Hawkiesfauld). These last would make their presence felt at least once in the year. Thus Anent Dunfermline recorded the Wellwood Colliers parade on July 29 1831 and again on August 31 1849; the former with about 300 men and boys marched into Dunfermline behind a brass band.

In economic terms for the Burgh, the Townhill coalfield was probably the most important. After the earls granted the right to work the Town muir (or hill) coals in 1670, the Burgesses kept the coal workings in their own hands. This gave the burghers the right to coal at a very low price, especially if they collected it from the pitheads. Inevitably this would also have involved the Council in owning bonded colliers in the years of serfdom. Though the Burgh did give ‘twenty shillins stirline money to

their colliers on their marriage". However, the coal workings were relatively unprofitable, especially as there was a major financial scandal involving the Chamberlain for many years. So it was decided to lease the mineral field to a colliery company in about 1840. Townhill output rose from under 7,000 tons a year until 1838 to 15,000 a year in 1844, then with the opening of the Crawford pit, output rose to 40,000 tons in 1858.Later with the opening of Muircockhall and Muirbeath collieries, also on the Burgh lands, Burgh lordships, akin to royalties, rose from £3119 in 1870 to £8,018 in 1880; though down to £4008 in 1890 they had recovered to £9,807 in 1900.

Figure 50. Pithead buildings today at Leadside, Wellwood, Dunfermline's last deep mine

These were relatively large sums for a Burgh such as Dunfermline and in some years represented more than the income from the domestic rates and might be one explanation for the municipal extravagance of the City Chambers (1876 –79). Although the Townhill coalfield did have the benefit of Dunfermline Splint coal and Five Feet (for naval steam raising) coal seams, the field was heavily faulted so that there were as many as 7 pits in the relatively small area mined by the Townhill colliery. It also suffered from water problems, after the Halbeath Queen Pit's pumps were stopped about 1870, because neighbouring colliery companies at Townhill, Muircockhall and Kingseat refused to pay a share of the pumping costs. Subsequently they were all to suffer heavy pumping costs and lost access to lower seams. Nevertheless, the Crawford pit struggled on until the 1930s and Muircockhall until the 1940s (when mining stopped partly so that its manpower could be transferred to the new Comrie Colliery and as a sop Muircockhall continued as a Mining Training Centre - until 1969.

Dunfermline Coal Mining in Perspective

Until about 1800 coal mining round the Forth was much more important than in the west of Scotland. However, with inefficient surface transport until then, coalfields near the coast such as Wemyss and Culross, or with early waggon-ways such as Tranent and Alloa, were favoured. Then the Carron Iron Works gave an impetus and, partly to gain from this, the waggon-way from Knockhouse to Limekilns, later Charlestown, was developed about 1776. Similar developments took place from

Halbeath to Inverkeithing and from Fordell to St Davids, enabling the coal outputs from the east of Dunfermline to be shipped, coastwise and for export.

Consequently by the time of the First Statistical Account of Scotland c1790, collieries round Dunfermline had increased their output to about 120,000 or almost 10% of Scotland's then output of probably about 1.3 million tons. When Chalmers wrote his contribution to the Second Statistical Account c1840, output had risen to about 210,000 tons but this had fallen as a percentage. Similarly although output by 1858 had risen to over 400,000 tons (16) it had again fallen as a percentage of the Scottish total; this was largely because of the rise of the Lanarkshire coalfield linked to iron making rather than shipping but nearer home the concealed Cowdenbeath coalfield was discovered about 1850 when drilling for ironstone and rapidly overtook Dunfermline's production.

Dunfermline's early dominance was reflected in its importance for mining unions in Fife and neighbouring counties. Thus when a meeting was held of representatives from most colliery districts in Fife in April 1856, to demand an 8 hour working day, it was held in the new Music Hall in Dunfermline. Likewise the mining union was later to have its union office in Dunfermline. Even after the 1926 strike, when there was much bitterness against the leadership of the old 'County' union, the two breakaway unions also had their offices in Dunfermline. The colliery owners' federation for Fife and surroundings also met in Dunfermline as did the liaison meetings with the union representatives, thus giving employment to officials and lawyers in Dunfermline. So Dunfermline remained as a commercial centre for the coalfields, long after it lost its mining importance.

Likewise the tramway system was extended beyond Cowdenbeath to bring the daughters and widows of miners into the linen mills of Dunfermline. In addition, in the good years for coal, the mining families from these areas were drawn into Dunfermline for shopping, thus sustaining a larger shopping centre than would have been justified by the immediate hinterland. This was particularly evident after World War 2, when mining wages were high and there was an influx of furniture emporia – in several cases to the premises now occupied by charity shops.

Figure 51. The last relic of the Elgin Mineral Railway. A stone sleeper with the chair intact.

For further information see A History of Coal Mining Round Dunfermline November 1997 (Printed ms in Dunfermline Carnegie Local History Library)

Fife Pits Website

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Breweries

The brewing of ale was a major activity in all towns in medieval and later times. Most of it was done domestically by women, both for family use and for sale, but there was also a certain amount of commercial brewing by men. All ale destined for sale was liable to be checked for quality and strength by official ale-tasters who were appointed yearly by the town council, which also set the price of a pint each year. The checks were intended to make sure the ale was not too strong, not because of its effect on the heads and morals of the populace but because strong ale used more of the finite supply of malt. A shortage of malt would not only restrict the supply of the universal drink of all the people but it would lead to price rises which could put the ale out of the reach of the poor. The authorities waged a continual battle against the sellers of strong ale, whose product was very popular with the public.

The malt from which the ale was made was produced by maltmen from a strain of barley called 'bere' or 'bear'. Maltmen might also be brewers but while there were many maltmen in the town there were only ever about half a dozen brewers. The same batch of malt could be used two or three times, each brewing producing a weaker ale (small ale). The residue of a first brewing, called draff, was sometimes bought in small quantities by the poorer home brewers who made small amounts of ale in a large cooking pot. The very poor did not even possess this basic necessity and bought their drink from the alewives. Household inventories of even the poorest always include a pint, half pint and quarter pint 'stoup' for measuring ale. (A Scots pint was double the English measure.)

Malting and brewing both consume a great deal of water, which was in short supply in central Dunfermline until the nineteenth century. When records begin in the early sixteenth century they reveal that there were several maltings in the Netherton, near the Lyne Burn. The other favoured site was on the north side of the town, near the Mill Dam and the lades which fed it.

By the second half of the eighteenth century at least five breweries had been established in the town itself, most of them near the Tower Burn. Robert and Thomas Scotland applied to the Town Council in 1756 for a lease of the enclosure behing the Tolbooth, to erect a brewery there. John Buntine (who was also a baker) applied for permission to run a pipe to his brewery in the Kirkgate from the mill lade which ran down Collier Row (Bruce St) and flowed past the Tron. William Anderson also operated in the Kirkgate, his premises lying on the south side of the Tolbooth. The Scotlands' brewery was short-lived, disappearing when the Old Tolbooth was swept away by the building of Bridge St in the second half of the eighteenth century.

In 1764 the brewers were asked by the Council to contribute to the proposed scheme to pipe water into the town, by paying a penny for every shilling they paid in excise for six years. The all agreed, except for two whose premises were probably in locations that would not benefit from the scheme. Henderson's Annals of Dunfermline records that there were said to be seven breweries in the town by 1788, but only five are shown on the 1854 OS map and another is only mentioned in the 1883 Almanac. The last two survivors closed in 1898.

For detailed information on the kind of small and medium-scale brewing which would have been done in Dunfermline before the nineteenth century, see Country House Brewing in England by Pamela Sambrook

Figure 52. The Rhodes - 400 Years of Brewing

The earliest record of brewing-related activities at The Rhodes is in the 1490s when John Duncan was making malt there. At that time the area where it stood was called the 'Mony Roddis', possibly because it was at the junction of several roads at the east end of the Netherton. By 1521 the town owned a malt kiln at the Mony Roddis which it let out for 8d (3 1/2p) a year. By 1607 the Mony Roddis brewery belonged to Thomas Walker, the complex containing a dwelling house, malt barn, brewhouse, kiln and coble (a tank for steeping the barley before it was sprouted and malted). Brewing continued throughout the seventeenth century, a new kiln being built in 1695.

Daniel Thomson, writing in 1909, states that The Rhodes Brewery was one of seven breweries formerly existing in the town, where 'Dunfermline's Nut Brown Ale' was brewed and there is no reason to suppose that brewing had not continued on the site throughout the eighteenth century. A late nineteenth century drawing (at the head of this article) shows the brewery as it looked at that time. Its demise had thus brought to an end at least four centuries of brewing on the site.

Abbey Gardens Brewery

This is shown on the 1854 OS map in St Margaret St, just south of the present Carnegie Library. It had closed by 1876, when St Margaret's Hall was built on the site.

Barm Brewery

Also shown on the 1854 map, between Wilson's Close and Fishmarket Close

Albany Brewery

This brewery had also been established before 1854. The owner, Andrew Greig, died in 1887 and his widow carried on the business until her death in 1898

The Dunfermline Brewery

Another business which probably came to an end in 1898. On both the 1854 and 1894 OS maps

it is located on the south side of the High St, at number 131, but it closed when the owner, James Brown, died in 1898. (The OS 1894 map would have been surveyed a few years previously, when the brewery was still in operation.) The two other breweries which operated in the nineteenth century have not been identified.

Figure 53. James Brown (centre) and his staff

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Water Supply

History of the Dunfermline Drinking Water Supply

Early Supplies:

In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and even prior to this, the water supply to the inhabitants of the burgh undoubtedly consisted of that obtained from wells in the gardens of the houses, local burns and springs and the Wallace Spa Well in the Glen. At this time the population was around 2,000 but by 1721 the increase in population and consequential greater demand on rather slender resources resulted in the Town Council for the first recorded time intervening and authorising a search being made for water in the East Port area by boring on 23 March but without success. Shortage of water was to be the intermittent problem facing the Town Council for the next 150 years as the population grew and the demand for water increased. On 6 September 1739 the Town Council apparently had an investigation made on the far side of Grants Bank and the Witch Loan for a supply of water, again without success.

St. Margaret's Well or Headwell supply

By 1755 the population had reached a figure of around 4,400 persons but it was not until 1763, during a particularly bad period of drought during which most of the local burns dried up, that the attention of the Council appears to have been given to the problem. Two sources of supply were considered:1) On 18June the Council ordered an inspection to be made of the Headwell or St. Margaret's Well approximately 1 mile north of the town and2) On the 6 August a proposal was made to take a supply from the Town Loch in pipes. This second source is interesting in that it formed part of the agreement made with Wm. Black (Clerk Black), Clerk of the Admiralty of Dunfermline, to form a proper fountain head, or heighten and repair the embankments at the Loch and bring the water therefore to the town in pipes. This agreement or contract was duly signed. (The other part of the agreement was for the formation of Guildhall Street). After a further wait of one year and yet another drought in 1764 the Council abandoned the Town Loch scheme and, at the instigation of the Council, the Guildry and the Trade Incorporations, Scheme No.1 was adopted to convey to the Town in lead pipes water from St. Margaret's Well which at this time was deemed fully capable of yielding an adequate supply. Nothing further was done in 1764 and by June 1765 residents petitioned the Council to be allowed to dig two wells on the North side of the street for their own use. This was agreed. It was not until the summer of 1765 that the St. Margaret's Well or Headwell scheme was completed and a piped supply of water was discharging into a reservoir built in Douglas Street on the East side, of dimensions 28' long, 17'9" wide and 4'6" deep, and containing 14,000 imperial gallons. This was August 1765 and to distribute this water the Council set up 6 public wells at the Tron (Town Clock), Rotten Row (Junction of Queen Anne Street and Bruce Street), Maygate, Horse Market at the foot of Reservoir Close (Junction of High Street and Douglas Street), Junction of New Row and East Port and Guildhall Street.

It will thus be seen that the first gravitational supply to the Town had a restricted distribution through these 6 wells and it was not until 1805 that the inhabitants were permitted to have private pipes for their own use. This Headwell or St. Margaret's Well Scheme can only be considered a failure for despite the expenditure of £1,745 13/11d on it the quantity of water during time of drought was insufficient, resulting in the Committee comprising the Town Council, Guildry and Incorporations resigning in 1774 and being succeeded by a Water Committee formed by the Town Council. Nothing appears to have materialised until 1785 when a proposal was made to bring water

from “Back of the Coalton”, this presumably being the Rumbling Well or Parkneuk area, but again without apparent success.

The Cairncubie Springs Supply

By 1791 the population was 5,192 and in 1797 was 5,484. In consequence of the repeated scarcity of water the Committee decided that they would have to go further afield than hitherto for a supply and no doubt after some deliberations decided to take a supply from the Springs at Cairncubie to augment St. Margaret’s Well. The Cairncubie Springs are situated about 1½ miles North East of the Town on the Town Moor and the water was conveyed partly in 3 inch diameter wooden pipes, partly in cast iron and partly in conduits built of stone to a cistern situated in the North side of Headwell Avenue, and thence connected to the Headwell lead pipe. In 1806 the Water Committee resolved to replace the old 2” diameter lead pipes between St. Margaret’s Well and the reservoir in Douglas Street with 4” diameter cast iron pipes and this was completed 2 February 1807. Complaints regarding the quality of water from Cairncubie and Headwell, which was not at this time reservoired at the source, led the Water Committee to the important decision of introducing filtration and Mr. Andrew Johnstone of Glasgow (later appointed Superintendent of the Water Works) was engaged to construct in 1810 two small filters near the Cairncubie Springs and one larger one about 70 yards North of the reservoir in Douglas Street, approximately in the area in front of Queen Anne Church. The latter filter is described as being 27’ long, 9’ wide and 9’ deep, having a thickness of 2’ of broken whinstone at the bottom, covered with 9” of course water gravel, then a middle portion of 4½’ of sea sand and finally on top another layer of course water gravel. The pipe from Headwell entered the bottom of the filter and the purified water from the top was conveyed direct to the reservoir. The population was now 6,490 persons and the discharge into the reservoir was approximately 21,600 gallons per day or 15 gallons per minute i.e. 3 1/3 gallons per head per day. This compares very unfavourably with the present day consumption of between 50 and 55 gallons per day for all purposes. In order to conserve and augment supplies a reservoir or pond was constructed in 1823 near Cairncubie Springs and south east of the houses in Townhill into which was led an open cast drain from the Townhill Plantation to the east and which carried all the surface water to the reservoir. This reservoir was the shape of a bee hive, each of the three sides being 400 feet in length and with a depth of 20 feet. The sides sloped inwards at an angle of 450 and they were made watertight by a lining of clay puddle. On the West side there was an embankment and sluice and the capacity was about 1,000,000 Imperial Gallons. At this time the population was about 8,000 and in 1826 there was a very bad drought with no rain for 3 months when, during this “hot summer” as it was called, all the burns dried up with temperatures of 1000 in the shade. Water carts sold water in the streets at 1d and 1/2d per “stoupfull”.

To further augment the supply a proposal was made by Mr. Ebenezer Birrell,a well-known surveyor in Dunfermline, on 12 October 1833 to bring water via a tunnel from Loch Fitty to the stone conduit at Headwell. His plan and section showed two routes 1) via Townhill Loch a distance of 3,344 yards with 29 shafts (366 fathoms accumulated depth) and 2) via Townhill village, being a straight line of 3,256 yards with 29 shafts (442 fathoms accumulated depth). Nothing further was heard of this proposal due to the prohibitive cost.

In 1840 the population was nearly 13,300 and again the deficiency problem was being met with and stated to be due inpart to the smallness of the pipes and encrustation caused by mineral matter carried by the water. In fact the 4” main now had a diameter of 1 1/2” and the Water Committee

accordingly gave instructions to replace this pipe between the reservoir in Douglas Street and Grants Bank Toll with an 8" diameter cast iron pipe. This improvement brought the discharge into the reservoir up to 23,000 gallons per day, being little better than the original discharge of 21,600 galls per day in 1810.

The Craigluscar Supply

As the years passed, with the increase in population and erection of new works, a frequent dearth of water was again experienced and in 1845 a private water company was mooted and eventually was formed in 1846 as the Dunfermline Water Company with share capital of £13,500 (subscribed). The company immediately engaged the services of Mr. Leslie, C.E., Edinburgh to advise and report on various suggested sources of supply and in October 1846 his report was received for consideration. Briefly, it dealt first with a suggestion to bore down to the coal measure in the area, but this was dismissed as the water was not of good quality and was liable to be cut off by coal workings.

The report went on to discuss and dismiss the Town Loch, Knockhill Springs and Dunduff Burn eventually recommending the Black Loch Water near Craigluscar Farm and the springs in the surrounding area including Glassiebarns. It appears that, on inspection, the Black Loch was discharging approximately 30 cubic feet of water per minute or 11,250 gallons per hour. It was pointed out that the site for a Compensation Reservoir was available and the supply to the Black Loch could be augmented from Anthon's Well, Roscobie Loch and the tributaries of the Dunduff Burn. Powers to develop this catchment area were given in "The Dunfermline Water Works Act 1847" and so came into being the East Pond or reservoir at Craigluscar.

The works commenced in 1846 and water was turned on to the Town on Wednesday 15 May 1850. The supply from Craigluscar was 300,000 gallons per day from a reservoir capacity of 21,000,000 gallons to a population now 13,800 persons or 22 gallons per head per day. This water was conducted to the Town via Hawkiesfauld (Wellwood) where a filter was constructed, being of considerable dimensions and built in two sections so that whilst one section was in operation the other could be cleaned or repaired. For some time thereafter the water discharged into the old Reservoir in Douglas Street but in 1851 this was abandoned and used as a Water Office and store for pipes.

With the opening of this supply the old sources of supply at Cairncubie and Headwell fell into disuse. In the autumn of 1854, however, there was a very severe drought of two months duration when the supply was very limited and indeed withheld from large industrial consumers, causing great inconvenience. Further shortages during the early 1860's led to a great dissatisfaction and eventually in August 1865 it was proposed that the Town Council should take over the Dunfermline Water Company's Undertaking. Terms of transfer were eventually agreed and completed on Whitsunday 1865 and the first Water Works Committee met in December 1865. Meanwhile Mr. Leslie, C.E., Edinburgh had been asked to report on possible additional sources of supply to augment the East Pond at Craigluscar and he recommended several schemes but favoured two special projects, the first being the construction of a new reservoir embankment on the Black Loch itself (costing approximately £1,500 excluding the price of land) and second, as an alternative the raising of the embankment of the Compensation reservoir at Craigluscar at an estimated cost of £2,000 (excluding the price of land).

Mr. Chisholm, the Superintendent of the Water Works had, however, some time previously proposed the construction of an additional reservoir to the west of, and adjacent to, the existing East Pond to hold 2,800,000 cubic feet of water at an estimated cost of £2,000 and this scheme was resuscitated at this time. The area envisaged was 4 acres plus the area of the existing clear water tanks at the East pond and as this would not have been sufficient to provide sufficient water storage to meet the deficiency he was requested to increase the area to that necessary to meet the requirements. Apparently there was some difficulty in obtaining the ground for Mr. Leslie's Black Loch project from Mr. R.Barclay the owner and with the ground being available for Mr. Chisholm's proposal, the details were sent to Mr. Leslie for his observations. His report pointed out that "Pits and Bores" on the site disclosed "a considerable depth of quick sand" and suggested the embankment be 750 feet West of the East Pond, the contents 6,700,000 cubic feet and acreage 11,814 (exclusive of the clear water basin) at an estimated cost of £3,660. This was approved. The ground was acquired from Mr. Durie, Craigluscar in August 1866 the actual acreage being 12,425 acres.

On 22 February 1867 the Water Committee accepted Mr. James Dobie (Tranent) as contractor for the works, his offer being £3,721 10/9d and on 4 March 1868 the reservoir was completed and a start made on storing water, this being completed in January 1869 and flowing at the rate of 200 cubic feet per minute. It had a capacity of 41,000,000 gallons giving a combined yield with the East pond of 350,000 gallons per day to a population of approximately 15.000 persons i.e. 23 gallons per head per day. It is interesting to note that it appears the carcases of cattle which had died on a nearby farm from Rinderpest were buried on the site of the new reservoir and at some considerable expense had to be exhumed and burnt.

Glensherrup Supply

During 1870 the shortages that had gradually been making themselves felt became acute during a severe drought. The Glassie Burn was tapped and piped to the reservoir but the situation continued to deteriorate. Water was transported in barrels from Urquhart Day Level and from the Baldridge Works Well but to no avail. Eventually the services of Mr. Leslie C.E. were engaged to seek a solution to the problem. He made two suggestions:

1) to pipe water from the Bluther Burn north of Craigluscar Hill
2) to pipe water from Loch Glow in the Cleish hills.

He favoured the second scheme as did the Town Council but a group of inhabitants objected to the scheme. In January 1871 Mr. George Lauder suggested bringing a supply from the River Devon but this received little support. Public opinion regarding the Loch Glow scheme was tested with a plebiscite on 23 and 24 February 1871. It was overwhelmingly rejected. Mr. Lauder continued to campaign for the Devon scheme but despite further shortages in 1871-74 his proposals were still not accepted. Shortages in 1875 made worse by the need to fill the new baths which had been presented by Andrew Carneigie and a petition supported by 2166 ratepayers persuaded the Council to recognise the merits of the Glendevon scheme and to engage Mr. Leslie to examine the proposals in detail. He proposed a reservoir built on the Glenquey Burn to provide a supply with a further reservoir on the Glensherup Burn as back up, both being tributaries of the River Devon.

Following opposition from some ratepayers to the Glen Devon scheme it was decided by the Council to seek an independent second opinion and accordingly Mr. Thomas Hawkesley, Water Engineer

from London, was invited to appraise the various schemes. He suggested using the Glensherup Burn as the primary supply and abandoning the Glenquey Burn. His advice was taken and the necessary act of parliament was drafted and "The Dunfermline Water Act 1876" received the Royal Assent on 24 July 1876. Negotiations then followed for tenders for the carrying out of the work and with other areas for the supplies. It had been agreed to supply Charlestown and Broomhall but negotiations with Burntisland broke down and were abandoned. Separate contracts were to be signed for

1) the pipe line
2) the pipe line track preparations
3) the reservoir
4) the valves and ironwork.

Pipe laying began on 16 April 1877 and work on the reservoir was started with a formal ceremony on 29 June 1877, the first sod being cut by Provost Mathieson. The pipe laying was completed in about a year and water flowed from Glensherup Burn to the city while work on the reservoir continued. Flood damage early in 1879 held up the reservoir construction and the work was set back two months. During 1880 there was a severe drought and the supply to the town was interrupted when a blockage occurred at the intake of the pipe.

The reservoir was completed in early December 1880 and the sluices were closed on 6 January 1871. Presumably the Craigluscar supply was sufficient during the winter while the new reservoir was filling. By 14 March 1881 the reservoir was full to overflowing. On 30 June an official ceremony, which later was referred to as the "Water Inspection", was performed to inaugurate the supply from Glensherup. The total cost had been almost £26,000. Such was the quality of water being received from Glensherup that the filter beds at Hawkiesfauld (Wellwood) were considered unnecessary

For more information about the water supply see *Dunfermline Past, Present and Future* by W.G. Stephen (1968)

Wells

Wells have advantage that water has probably been purified by filtration through ground. Shallow wells can be polluted by surface water – this can be reduced by lining walls of wells. Deep wells are preferred. Their water comes from below an impervious stratum which prevents surface water contamination (Shallow wells get water from water-bearing surface formation and is prone to contamination). Many private wells were shallow & dug in gardens. Great care had to be taken to avoid cross contamination from cesspools so were kept as far apart as possible.ConstructionIt is mpossible to dig a well less than 3'6"" diameter. Below this diameter wells need to be drilled.

"When Dunfermline Relied on Wells"

From the Dunfermline Press

Before 1759, supply from public and private wells. Public wells at Beveridge Well and Rumbling Well. Strachan Well famous for medicinal properties (actually a spring in rthe ravine behind Mill Street) Peacock Well – in the grounds of the old Queen Anne High School DP 29/10/66

Beveridge Well – Foot of Broomhead Drive. Uncovered by workmen 10' x 3' with 7' of water Plaque marks spot. Not one of the 6 public wells of 1765 – probably late eighteenth or early nineteenth

century. Shown on Ordnance Survey Town Plan of 1856. This part of the town beginning to fill up with factories and other works

"The Story of Two Wells"

from The Dunfermline Press

Priory Lane Well – A circular stone well, believed to date from medieval times. Discovered at west end of Priory Lane in garden of first house in lane. Mouth of the well 15" diameter. Well itself 3' to 5' at bottom (cone shaped), 12' deep with 9' of water. Now covered by cast-iron manhole cover.It was inside the old abbey walls so could have been built by the monks.

Wallace Spa Well - During clearing of the Glen revealed the well once much used by inhabitants of the town as a water supply. Sir William Wallace (whose mother's grave is in the abbey graveyard), once in the haste of flight stopped to take a drink at the well. Excavations revealed four steps leading down to the doorway and eight similar steps leading upwards and westwards from the well. Well measures about 3' from front to back. Total height inside apertus (opening) about 4½ ft. Originally had been a door timber found with hinge.

Dunfermline Press references :
An ancient well 7/4/23 p5
The Old Wells at Crossford 6/3/37 p7
Old Wells in Fife 29/5/43 p3
When Dunfermline Relied on Wells 3/6/50 p7
Well found at Hospital Hill 16/9/61
Story of 2 wells (see above) 24/4/64 p6
Original Beveridge Wells 29/10/66 p3 their use was discontinued.

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Notable People

Andrew Carnegie - Millionaire Philanthropist
Daniel Thomson - Weaver, Man of Letters, Historian, Reformer
Robert Gilfillan – Poet
Sir John Struthers - Medical Man and Professor of Anatomy
The Steelend Heroes - A Pit Rescue

Figure 54. Andrew Carnegie's Birthplace

Andrew Carnegie 1835 - 1919

Andrew Carnegie was born in a weaver's cottage in Moodie Street on the 25th November 1835. His father, William, was successful as a handloom weaver but he was unable to adapt to the competition of the steam powered loom and eventually, in 1848, the family sold up and moved to Pittsburgh in America. There Andrew got a job as a bobbin boy to help with the family finances. He then became a telegram boy before progressing to become a telegraphist. It was whilst working in the telegraph office that he became aware of the influence of the rapidly expanding railroad system and its need for iron and steel. When he began working for the Pennsylvania Railroad Thomas A. Scott, Divisional Superintendent of the Pennsylvania Railroad, encouraged him to make an investment by buying his first 10 shares, 'the goose that laid the golden eggs' as he described it on receiving his monthly dividend. From this small beginning, Andrew Carnegie went on to invest in iron, steel, coal and railroads, amassing a business empire that made him the richest man in the world when he sold his business interests and retired at the beginning of the twentieth century. He had begun his philanthropic works some years before his retiral but now put all of his energy into disposing of his wealth. His philosophy was 'To Die Rich Was To Die Disgraced'.

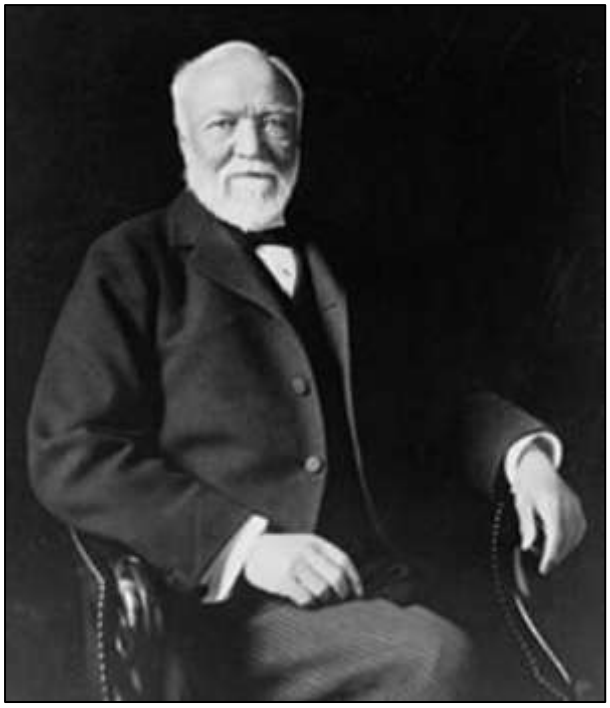


Figure 55. Andrew Carnegie

Despite living in America for most of his life, Andrew Carnegie never forgot his birthplace or his native land. He had spent many hours with his cousin Dod (George) Lauder at the knee of his uncle Lauder, learning the history of Scotland and Dunfermline's place in that history. He also listened to tales about Scotland's warriors, Bruce and Wallace, and their fight for freedom.

His first gift to Dunfermline was funding for swimming baths that were built on the corner of Pilmuir Street and Carnegie Street. This was followed by the building of a free library for Dunfermline in 1881, the first of over 2000 throughout the English speaking world, and when the swimming baths were unable to cope with demand, he paid for a new baths and gymnasium to be built. This has now become the Carnegie Centre. Many of the churches in Dunfermline had pipe organs that he paid for.

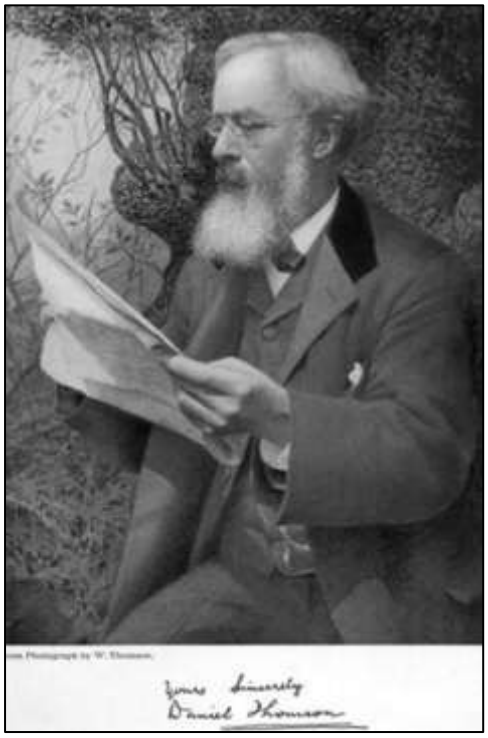
The gift that pleased Andrew Carnegie most was when he presented Pittencrieff Park to the people of Dunfermline in 1903. The policies of Pittencrieff, which were open to Dunfermline residents on a limited basis, had been declared out of bounds by their owner, to members of his mother's family, the Morrisons, due to their political activity as Chartists. It therefore gave Andrew Carnegie great pleasure when, in 1902, he received a telegram from his Scottish lawyer hailing him as Laird of Pittencrieff. He could now fulfill a long held wish to make the area accessible to all. The gift of Pittencrieff Park was accompanied by a substantial investment fund to provide interest that could be used for the running and maintenance of the Park by the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust that was set up to administer the funds and to carry out other works that would provide 'Sweetness and Light' for the 'Toiling Masses' of Dunfermline.

Over the past 100 years, the Trust has built Public Institutes, the College of Hygiene, a Concert Hall, a Music Institute, a Craft School, a Women's Centre, and a Health Clinic. Some of these have now closed and the operation of others has been transferred to the Local Authority or to the National Health Service. The Trust continues to meet its remit by funding art and music events and by awarding grants to clubs and organisations that require additional funding. For the combined Centenary of the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust and Pittencrieff Park, a new children's play area was created and was opened by Her Majesty the Queen. Another Royal Event occurred in 2008 when Andrew Carnegie House was opened by Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal. The building is adjacent to Pittencrieff Park and provides a combined headquarters building for the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust, the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland and the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust.
Read Andrew Carnegie's Autobiography on Google Books

Daniel Thomson 1833-1908

Daniel Thomson, weaver, man of letters, historian and reformer, was born in 1833 in the St Leonard's district of Dunfermline, the second of the four sons of James Thomson, weaver and shoemaker, and his wife Marion Mackay. Daniel's mother died when he was a small boy and, with his brothers, he was brought up by his father and grandmother in great poverty. At Brucefield House, Daniel and his younger brother James received some basic education from Janet and Christina Struthers, daughters of Alexander Struthers, proprietor of East Spinning Mill, Brucefield. Daniel, a bright boy, appreciated this act of kindness all his life.

When he was eleven, Daniel began an apprenticeship as a weaver but in the early 1850s, when hand-loom weaving was being usurped by the power loom, he had to seek other employment. A position in a drapery warehouse in Jamaica Street, Glasgow, followed, but the work was hard and poorly-paid and Thomson returned to Dunfermline in 1856 to work at Erskine Beveridge's power loom factory at St Leonards. When the failure of the Western Bank brought short time to the Dunfermline work force, Thomson occupied his spare hours in studying literature, mathematics, mechanics, shorthand and music, all of which would prove useful in later life.



In the mid-fifties Thomson joined Canmore Street Congregational Church where he trained two bands connected with the temperance movement, whose cause he supported. He hoped at one time to train for the ministry through the kirk but this did not materialize. Thomson's study of mechanics helped him to obtain a good position at Lockhart's Mill in Wemyss and during his time there (1862-70) he served on Kirkcaldy Parish Council. Thomson was staunchly Liberal in politics and in favour of political reform. In 1870, when The Reformer, a Liberal and temperance publication was launched in Edinburgh, Thomson became sub-editor and later editor, writing with skill about the social, moral and political reforms advocated by Independent Liberalism, the predominant political power in the capital. The Reformer ceased to exist in 1874, however, and Thomson returned to managerial positions in the linen industry in Kinross, Kirkcaldy and Montrose (Richards Ltd.) finally retuning to Dunfermline in 1878 as manager of the Abbey Gardens Works.

Figure 56. Daniel Thomson

During the early 1870s, an interest was emerging for Thomson that would change his life. While editing The Reformer, he had contributed an article on the Dunfermline Co-operative Society to the paper, and on his return to his home town, he began to play an active part in the Society, eventually quitting his employment to join the committee and become a propagandist. At the Carlisle Congress of 1887, Thomson presented a paper on `Co-operative and Competitive Trade and Dividends` which

brought him into prominence, and in September of that year the Dunfermline Society appointed him to the board of the Scottish Wholesale Co-operative Society (SWCS), a position he would hold until just before his death in 1908. Becoming a director of the SWCS opened up a new world for Thomson. He was often asked to undertake purchasing missions abroad and his destinations included Holland, France, Switzerland, Spain, Ceylon, Australia and the United States as far west as San Francisco. He wrote about his travels and right up to his death was writing an account of a recent visit to the Continent. Under the names `Freestone` or `Wanderer`, Thomson wrote a stream of articles for the Scottish Co-operator and for the local press. From January to June 1897 the Dunfermline Press serialised a `West of Fife story` by Thomson called `John Orrason: or the Adventures of a Social Castaway, ` much of which was based on events from his own past.

Thomson was gifted in many ways and, in addition to his musical ability, he was also a poet, writing `A Rover's Rhymes` and other verses, and enjoyed painting, a talent that he passed on to at least one of his children. Above all, Thomson became a respected historian of Dunfermline and its industries. In The Weavers Craft of 1903 (which is illustrated by his son, William, and dedicated to Andrew Carnegie) Thomson recounted the history of the weavers` incorporation of Dunfermline, set against the background of the changing town, while posthumously in 1909 came The Dunfermline Hammermen, also illustrated by William. Thomson died before he could fulfill his intention of publishing `Anent Dunfermline`, his extensive collection of items about the history of his `auld grey toun`, but it remains an invaluable source for local historians today.

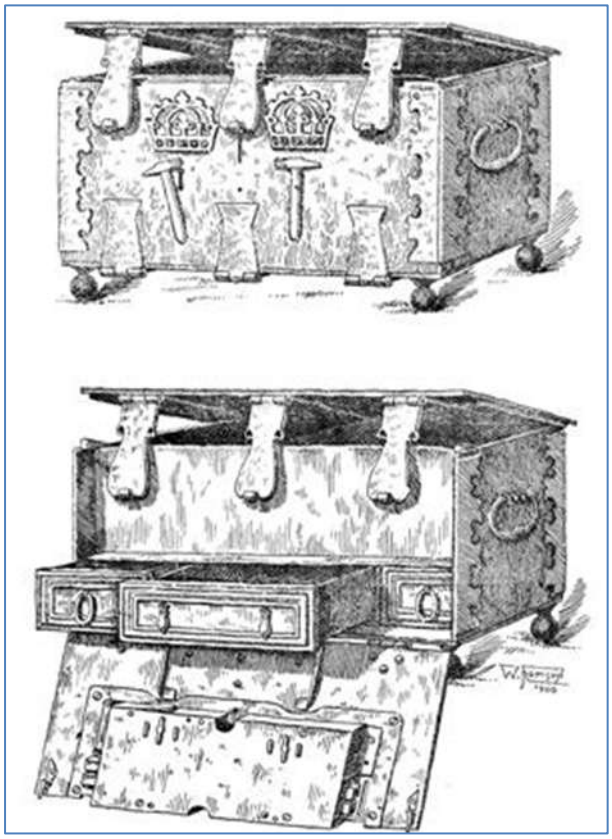


Figure 57. The Hammermen's Box, drawn by William Thomson

Daniel Thomson became an important member of Dunfermline society. For 40 years he had been acquainted with the Liberal Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and their last conversation took place in Dunfermline not long before Thomson died. An able and ready lecturer, Thomson often spoke at the Auld Weavers` Drive and at the Donald annual dinner for the poor. At the huge demonstration in the Public Park after the laying of the memorial stone of the Carnegie Free Library in July 1881, Daniel Thomson was chosen to present an illuminated address to Andrew Carnegie on behalf of the working classes.

Daniel Thomson was married twice. His first wife died young; his second, Janet Wishart of Wemyss, whom he married in 1865, outlived him by only a few days. He had three children from his second marriage, Daniel, a jeweler and clockmaker in Dunfermline; William, an artist, and a daughter, Christina. James, the son of his first marriage, was building up a promising career as a journalist when he died just before his 24th birthday in 1887. Daniel Thomson died at home in

Rolland Street on February 14 1808 aged 74. In a life full of interest the path had not always been easy, but it had led him a long way from `the little ragged boy` who first learned his letters at the big house at Brucefield.

Robert Gilfillan 1798-1850

Robert Gilfillan, poet and songwriter, was born in Dunfermline on 7 July 1798, the second of the three sons of master weaver, Robert Gilfillan, and his wife Marion Law, who also had a younger daughter. Among the weaving community there was considerable sympathy with the principles of the French Revolution and the Friends of the People and, despite the hard times brought about by the father's ill-health, the Gilfillan household was a lively one, full of political and religious debate. Even as a boy, Robert was noted for his ability to write verses to suit any occasion, and he was encouraged in this by his clever and capable mother, to whom he was devoted.

In 1811 the Gilfillans moved to Leith where Robert began a seven-year apprenticeship with a cooper. His apprenticeship completed, in 1818 he returned to Dunfermline to take charge of a grocery shop in the Kirkgate. The next few years in his native town were happy and verses flowed from his pen. For the Dunfermline Burns Club, of which he was probably a founder, he wrote a poem celebrating the birthday of his hero, which ends :

May the bright halo of friendship be ever
Around us, when this day ay welcome returns;
A day that in Scotland will pass away never
Without being hailed as the birthday of Burns.

In 1822 Gilfillan moved back to Leith were he stayed for the rest of his life, working as a warehouse clerk until 1837 when he was appointed a rate-collector. His mother and sister lived with him and he always read his work to them first. Though still unpublished, his verses were recited and sung all over Scotland, set to music by Dr. Grieg, Dr. J. Wilson, Peter McLeod, James Love and others. At last, in 1831 at the age of thirty-three, Gilfillan published his first small volume, Original Songs, which he dedicated to Allan Cunningham, who had succeeded Burns as Scotland's leading song-poet. In 1835, encouraged by its reception, he issued a second edition with the addition of fifty more poems. To mark this event, a dinner was held in Gilfillan's honour at the Royal Exchange in Edinburgh, and a silver cup was presented to him by `the admirers of native genius, in token of their high estimation of his poetic talents and private worth`.

In 1839, Gilfillan published a third edition of his original volume, this time adding sixty new poems or songs. He also contributed verses to several publications, notably the Edinburgh Journal, Blackwood's Magazine, and the Dublin University Magazine. Among the most popular of his verses were `Fare thee well for I must leave thee`, and `The exile's song`, which must have struck a chord with many an exiled Scot and begins :

Oh! why left I my hame?
Why did I cross the deep?
Oh! why left I the land?
Where my forefathers sleep?
I sing for Scotia`s shore,
And I gaze across the sea,

But I canna get a blink
O` my ain countrie.

Although he did well in Leith, Gilfillan never lost his affection for his birthplace as the following poem shows :

O Dunfermline toun is a bonnie, bonnie toun
An it tells o` auld Scotland's grandeur;
For within it langsyne `kings drank the bluid-red wine`,
While their queens `mang its bonnie braes did wander.

O Dunfermline toun, thou bonnie, bonnie toun,
Wi` green woods thy valleys lining;
An` the sun shines so gay on ilka turret grey,
As if for thee alone he was shining.

O Dunfermline toun, thou art still a bonnie toun,
And they braes are as bonnie as ever;
But the gowans pu`d nae mair by the princely bairns fair,
An` our gallant chiefs ha`e left thee a`thegither

Gilfillan never married but kept a home for his mother and sister until their deaths in 1844 and 1849, respectively. His own death came on 4 December 1850 as the result of a stroke. Robert Gilfillan was buried in South Leith churchyard, where a monument was erected by his admirers, and his grave was tended by his brother, Henry, who survived him by thirty years and did all he could to keep alive his verses and his memory.

Read more about Robert Gilfillan at www.electricscotland.com/history

Sir John Struthers 1823-1899

John Struthers, medical man and professor of anatomy, was born at Brucefield, Dunfermline, on 21 February 1823, to Alexander Struthers, a linen merchant and mill owner, and his wife Mary Reid, daughter of Deacon John Reid, a small-scale linen manufacturer. John Struthers was the second son and the third child in a family of six -three girls (Mary, Janet and Christina) and three boys (James, John and Alexander), all of whom entered the medical profession. The father, Alexander Struthers, was born at East Kilbride in 1867; Mary Reid was born in Dunfermline in 1793 and the couple married in 1818 when Alexander was 52 and Mary was 24. The age gap and other differences caused problems at first but the marriage lasted until 1853 when Alexander Struthers died in Dunfermline aged 82. Mary's death followed in 1859 in Leith and she is buried with her husband at Dunfermline Abbey.

Growing up in the 1820s and 1830s must have been idyllic for the young Struthers in their roomy, comfortable home at Brucefield House. Educated at home, the boys studied classics, mathematics

and modern languages with tutors, their sisters possibly joining them for some lessons. Away from the schoolroom, they seem to have had a free-and-easy time. There was boating on the dam in summer and skating in winter, ponies to ride, swimming in the Forth and long walks in the beautiful countryside with their friends the Birrells and the gifted young Patons. One can imagine them together, the Patons sketching perhaps while the Struthers boys collected the flora and fauna about them.

Figure 58. Sir John Struthers

Although privileged in many ways, the Struthers were not stand-offish. Janet and Christina taught young urchins (including the young Daniel Thomson) to read and write at Brucefield House, and when on leave from their studies in Edinburgh, the boys liked to discuss politics and religion with the keen-witted weavers in Bothwell Street. All three brothers chose medicine as a career. James Struthers (1821-1891) became a well-loved doctor in Leith, where his skill in languages helped him communicate with the foreign sailors in port. He played a major at Leith Hospital and became a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians with a particular interest in bacteriology. Alexander (1830-1855) – a promising young doctor - died of cholera during the Crimean War and is buried at Scutari.

John Struthers, the middle brother, became the most well-known of the three. He seems to have decided on medicine early in life and began his studies in 1841, aged 18. He had a brilliant undergraduate career in Edinburgh and won many prizes. In 1845 Struthers passed his final MD and also gained his Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons at Edinburgh. Between 1842 and 1863 he held a succession of posts at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary – dresser, surgical clerk, house physician, house surgeon and full surgeon – but his main interest was anatomy. He once described how he had been so absorbed in a dissection one afternoon in 1843 that, to his regret, he missed a great scene in Scottish history – the solemn procession of the Disruption, which ushered in the Free Church of Scotland.

In 1847, John Struthers was licensed by Edinburgh Royal College ofSurgeons to teach anatomy in Argyle Square and the courses that he and his brother James provided became recognized by all the official examining bodies in Scotland, England and Ireland. In 1849, John Struthers led a movement to move the medical school into new buildings at the Royal College of Surgeons premises in Nicholson Street. In 1857, Struthers married Christina Margaret Alexander, daughter of Dr James Alexander and his wife Margaret Finlay, who had settled in Wooler, Northumberland, but came from old Dunfermline families.

The chance of a lifetime for John Struthers came in 1863, when the Chair of Anatomy at Aberdeen University fell vacant. This was a prestigious Crown Chair and in applying for it Struthers obtained more than 250 letters from supporters, including Joseph Lister, James Paget and other leading medical men. Top politicians became involved, notably Lord Grey, the Home Secretary, and Lord Advocate Moncrieff. Struthers` approach to these leading figures was assisted by a cousin, the Rev. John Struthers, minister and antiquarian of Preston Pans, who had been tutor to the Earl of Wemyss and had useful connections. The determined and well-connected Mrs Struthers, too, was not averse to putting in a word for her husband in high places. Struthers was duly appointed to the Chair of Anatomy and, at the age of 40, moved to Aberdeen to begin a new life with his wife and four children (later to increase to seven).

Figure 59. A sheep skull prepared by Struthers for Aberdeen students

John Struthers did his greatest work in Aberdeen where he remained for 26 years. He reorganized the teaching of anatomy; transformed the medical school into a centre of excellence; set up one of the best anatomical museums in the Britain, and became a leading player in the reconstruction of the Aberdeen Infirmary. During these years, Struthers published some 70 papers and established a popular Saturday evening series of public lectures. When Struthers went to Aberdeen, Darwin's Origin of Species had only been published for four years and its central tenets of natural selection and adaptation for survival were only beginning to be accepted, but Struthers braved scientific and theological prejudice and taught and wrote Darwinism which he believed to be the truth.

As a member of the General Medical Council from 1883 to 1891, Professor Struthers took a great interest in clinical education. He spearheaded many improvements and with his brother James, he espoused the cause of medical education for women. In 1885, in recognition of his contribution to the cause of higher education, the University of Glasgow awarded Struthers the honorary degree

of LLD. On retiring from Aberdeen University in 1889, Struthers and his family returned to Edinburgh, where he joined his brother on the Board of Directors of Leith Hospital and became a manager of Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. He was a member and President of the Royal Physical Society and a manager of the Royal Dispensary. In 1892 he was made an honorary member of Royal Medical Society and in the same year his former pupils presented him with his portrait painted by Sir George Reid, President of the Scottish Royal Academy. From 1895-1897 he was President of the Royal College of Surgeons, and the final accolade to a distinguished career was a knighthood conferred by Queen Victoria in 1898.

After a protracted illness, Sir John Struthers died in Edinburgh in 1899, at the age of 76, and was laid to rest in the family grave at Warriston Cemetery, his wife following in 1907. All three of their sons – another Alexander, James and John – entered the medical profession. Two died in their thirties, but the youngest, John, lived to a ripe old age and followed the family tradition as a surgeon at Leith Hospital and the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and by becoming President of the Royal College of Surgeons. Sir John Struthers and his family made a considerable contribution to Scottish medicine and surgery.

The Steelend Heroes

On Wednesday May the fitth 1909 the miners from the small village of Steelend in Fife made their way to work at Lethans Pit Number One, located at an isolated spot to the north east of Knockhill near Outh. They were joined by a few workmates from Saline and Cowstrandburn. The morning was bright and clear without a cloud in the sky. They trudged over the pass between Saline Hill and Knockhill along an ancient footpath that had probably been used by an earlier generation of miners who had mined for iron ore in the same area. They possibly noticed a few hovering kestrels looking for their breakfasts of small voles that foraged on the lower slopes of the two hills or even spied a family of buzzards wheeling high above one of the hills. Being miners they all had, at the back of their minds, the knowledge that they performed a particularly dangerous job. They were not, however, aware of the dramatic events that would unfold deep underground a few hours hence.

Figure 60. 1895 OS Map showing the route from Steelend to Outh

Three men had been put to work driving a mine when they suddenly struck water. A large torrent burst in upon them and the pit immediately started to flood. About 45 men were working in the pit at this time. All managed to escape apart from one of the three men, Richard Bennett from Steelend. He was not familiar with the pit and, as the lamps had been extinguished, he lost his way. He found himself in a tunnel with a dead end and was trapped by the rising water.

John Clemenson, the colliery manager, arrived on the scene and immediately organized a rescue party consisting of himself and nine other men. Clemenson, being familiar with the old workings and disused passages, started to explore and at last located Bennett. Between himself and Bennett, however, there had been a fall of rock that completely blocked the passage for a distance of about 20 feet. To add to the rescue team's problems, in the passage leading from the blockage to the only available shaft there was a dip, and this had started to fill with water. Clemenson stationed three of his men at the dip to monitor the water level. Two men he sent back to the surface to operate the pumps. He then took the remaining four men to the point where the passage was blocked and set to work opening a tunnel through the rock fall. This work had to be carried out with great care and the roof of the small, two-foot square opening had to be supported to avoid further rock falls.

After about half an hour's work at the tunnel, one of the men, James White, who had a weak heart, was taken ill. Clemenson sent him back to the surface with another man, Patrick Kelly, to help him. The manager and two remaining men were now left to continue to dig the tunnel. They worked on for another 3½ hours, and Clemenson would frequently detail one of his two remaining men, William Taylor, junior, to return to the dip to check on the water level. Taylor eventually reported that the water had almost reached the roof of the passage. The manager then asked his other man, James Scott, if he wanted to escape to the surface while the way was still open. Scott replied to the effect that he could not leave Richard Bennett to die a cold, lonely death.

The three men carried on tunneling and, after another half hour, broke through to find Bennett alive but in a semi-conscious state. The three rescuers quickly assisted Bennett back to the dip but found that the water had reached the roof of the passage on one side, leaving barely two inches of clearance on the other. The manager sent one of his men through to warn the party on the other sid eto be ready to grab Bennett when he was in reach. Clemenson then guided Bennett, who was still only partially able to help himself, through the 15 feet of passage with their heads under water. The fourth man followed them out and they all regained the surface safely. The three men who had been place on guard at the dip of the tunnel had not been in as much danger as the men engaged in forming the escape tunnel. Nevertheless, they had played a vital part in the rescue. One of them at a time was on watch and it was necessary for him to stand in the water in order for the light in his cap to be visible through the opening. Towards the end of the rescue, they had stood nearly up to their necks in cold water.

On the twentyfourth of June of the same year, a ceremony took place in the temporary church and school building at Steelend. This ceremony was held so that the Trustees of the Carnegie Hero Fund could recognize the acts of heroism that had recently been performed at Lethans Colliery. Most of the Steelend residents were present together with the dignitaries of the area. These included Mr. Robert Leitch, the General Manager of the West Fife Coal Company, the Rev. J. A. Macara, the minister from Saline, and the Rev. James Carswell, who had charge of the mission station at Steelend. The Secretary of the Trust read out the official account of the rescue and awards to the

heroes were made as follows:- John Clemenson, manager, of Ravenscraig House, a medallion and £20; James Scott, 40 years of age, miner, 10, Valley Place, Saline, a medallion and £15; William Taylor, junior, 22 years of age, bottomer, 13, Castle Terrace, Steelend, a medallion and £10; Henry Baxter and George Fraser, both of Prestonfield, and Charles White, Causewayend, Saline, £5 each; James White, senior, 50 years old from Meadowend and Patrick Kelly, 48 years old, 11, Woodside Place, Steelend, received £3 each, as did, Fleming Easton, joiner, from Golden Grove, and William Taylor, senior, mechanic, of 13 Castle Terrace, Steelend.

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Entertainment

'The Penny Crush'

(from Reminiscences of Dunfermline by Alex Stewart - published in 1889)

'A few years ago (Penny Readings) were greatly in vogue in every city, town and village throughout Great Britain. When they were well-conducted they were conducive of good, affording a source of instruction to old and young. It should be known, however, that Dunfermline has the honour of being the first place to introduce these pleasant entertainments. About forty-six years ago (ie c1840) a series of Saturday evening entertainments were got up there. The originators of these most attractive and useful meetings, which are now universally known and appreciated throughout the entire kingdom, were Mr Robert Anderson, in conjunction with the late Mr Robert Hay, both of them well-known and respected townsmen of Dunfermline. They were held in the Maygate Mason's Lodge (next to the Abbot House) – admission one penny. They were under the auspices of the Dunfermline Temperance Society, which was instituted in 1830, and the crowds attracted were so great that those gatherings got the title of "The Penny Crush".

The entertainments, consisting of a short address, songs, recitations and readings by amateurs and untried young men principally, had a most beneficial tendency and were carried on with much spirit for a good while. On many occasions hundreds of people could not get into the hall for want of room. The mind's eye can yet conjure up some of the leading spirits who figured on the boards at these lively gatherings. Memory calls up one after another, after the lapse of between forty and fifty years. Alas, "life's fitful fever" is over with most of them; and of those who are left it may be said that they are scattered far and wide.

Amongst some of the more prominent of those who officiated were Alexander Younger, Robert Kilpatrick, Robert Walls with his "Donald and his Dog" and "Margaret and the Minister"; James Russell with his popular recitation of "The Auld Sark Sleeve"; and foremost among them all, and the leading spirit in this popular and most beneficial movement, was Robert Anderson, then in the full glow of youth and vigour. The recital of "Wallace's Address to his Army", "Mary, the Maid of the Inn", "Tell's Speech on Liberty", "Soda Water" &c, evoked rounds of applause.

Where are the crowds who then cheered him and others so vociferously? The most of them have passed the boundaries of time and have vanished "Like a ghost at cock-crowing". We have listened to famed elocutionists and accomplished public singers since then, but never have we seen surpassed the genuine enthusiasm and hearty, intelligent appreciation that were called forth at the Dunfermline 'Penny Crush' in the days of langsyne.'

Click below for the texts of three of the recitations mentioned above - two comic and one blood-curdling!

Margaret and the Minister The Auld Sark Sleeve Mary, the Maid of the Inn

For more recitations of the kind which might have been performed at 'The Penny Crush' see the Broadsides Section of the website of the National Library of Scotland

The above links are Word files. If you do not have Word on your computer, Click Here to download the Microtsoft Word Viewer

Theatre and Concerts

(from Reminiscences of Dunfermline by Alex Stewart - published in 1889)

'Theatrical amusements were by no means greatly patronised fifty years ago. Occasionally a small company of actors – Johnston the tragedian and others – would come to the town for a brief space. There was then a strong prejudice against theatres and theatricals, and as a rule good concerts were far better supported and appreciated. The bulk of the music sung and played in those days was, of course, Scottish. The Misses Smith, the Fraser Family, J. Harrison, John Wilson – the greatest of Scottish vocalists – and others, visited Dunfermline periodically and were always heartily welcomed and well patronised.

The foremost of our local vocalists was James Rankine; and for many years Messrs Air, Halliday and Shields took a prominent position in the town as glee singers, and wherever they appeared they acquitted themselves well and were popular. With regard to Mr Rankine, it may be said that the present generation in Dunfermline will, it is feared, have to wait a very long while before they can ever hear the songs and lyrics of Scotland sung and accompanied with such exquisite taste and masterly skill as they were when he was in his palmy days, and when he was in deed and in truth the "master of song".'

Lament on the death of John Wilson

John Wilson, concert programmes 1842-46 – Performances in Edinburgh

Help needed here

There have been many places of entertainment in Dunfermline in the past.. Any information about theatres, cinemas, dance halls, the Ice Rink, roller skating rinks or any other place of entertainment will be very gratefully recieved. Please Contact Us

For a start, here is a link to a great website which tells the story of the Kinema Ballroom and has information about some other places of entertainment in and around Dunfermline

http://www.kinemagigz.com/links.htm

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