

Inverarity Mill – Historical Research

Historic documents:

The first mention of a mill at Inverarity appears in a document of ratification of David Fotheringham and his son in 1669 (Records of the Parliaments of Scotland 1669/10/77). This includes “the corn mill of Inverarity, mill lands, multures, sequels and sucken thereof”. The first time a miller is mentioned in historical documents is Thomas Morton in 1800 (Old Parish Records for Inverarity) on the occasion of the birth and baptism of a daughter. Other earlier names in the Old Parish Records (OPRs) mention the Mill of Inverarity, but do not specify if these are the miller or other types of worker or if the reference is to the farm rather than the mill. The last mention of a miller at this mill is George Lister in 1833 (OPR for Inverarity).

Enid Gaudie quotes one of her husband’s relatives, William Gaudy, in her book (The Scottish Country Miller, 1700-1900. John Donald Publishers 1981, reprinted 1999). He was miller at Lunan in the early 19th century and kept a journal, which gives insights into country milling. One of his entries is entitled “Account of swine at Inverarity Mill” and relates to the price of pigs sold by the miller in 1834. Mrs Gaudie told us that his handwriting was not easy to read and that this information might be for Inverquarity mill rather than Inverarity. However, this date is coincident with some of the information above and reveals one of the extra sources of income available to millers, who were able to accumulate grain to feed pigs.

A full list of events and documents pertinent to Inverarity mill is to be found in the associated file Inverarity Mill Timeline

Historic maps:

Timothy Pont’s Map of Lower Angus and Perthshire East of the Tay (1583-96 No. 26) marks “Mil of Inher arity”, though it is difficult to relate its position to present day landmarks and specifically to the Kerbet.



William Roy's 1747-55 Military Survey of Scotland depicts a small settlement called Mill of Invernetty close to the West! bank of the Kerbet.



William Roy, Military Survey of Scotland, 1747-55. © British Library (licensor SCRAN www.scran.ac.uk)

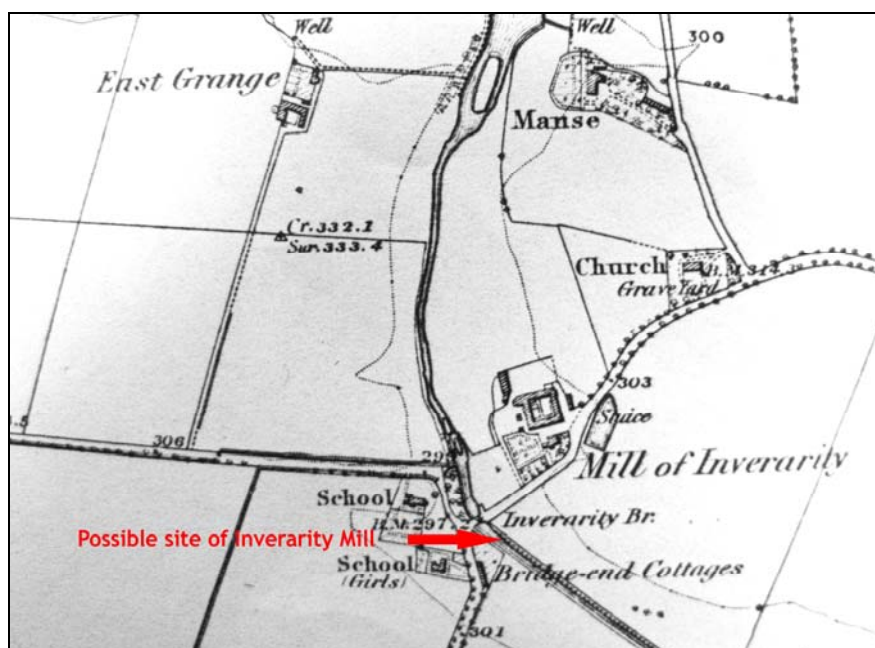
John Ainslie's 'Map of the County of Forfar or Shire of Angus' (1794 and 1801) does not mark Inverarity Mill or its watercourses, but all the other mills in Inverarity Parish are present.

John Thomson's 1832 map of Southern Angus ('Northern Part of Angus Shire, Southern Part') shows an un-named water mill immediately S (upstream) of Inverarity Bridge. The mill is shown without a lade, suggesting that it may have fed directly off the Kerbet.



John Thomson, Northern Part of Angus Shire, Southern Part (1832). © National Library of Scotland www.nls.uk/maps

The First Edition of the Ordnance Survey 6-inch map (Forfarshire sheet xlv, surveyed 1860, published 1865) shows the Mill of Inverarity, but the name applies to a large farm steading on the E bank of the Kerbet, just NE of Inverarity Bridge. There is no mill, but a large pond and sluice are shown to the E of the farm steading. The associated Object Name Book describes it as "a farmhouse with suitable offices and farm attached, occupied by Mr David McLaren and property of Captain Fotheringham. There was a Corn Mill, which stood near to this place at one time from which it has derived its name." The pond and sluice may relate to the old corn mill, or they may have fed water-powered machinery in the farm steading. The steading was demolished in 1972, so it has not been possible to investigate this further. The pond has now been filled in and forms part of an arable field.



First Edition of the Ordnance Survey 6-inch map (Forfarshire sheet xlv, surveyed 1860, published 1865). From original held at Forfar Library

Aerial photography:

None of the aerial photographs examined give any clue to the actual site of the mill or the related water courses.

Field reconnaissance:

John Thomson's 1832 map of Angus ('Northern Part of Angus Shire, Southern Part'), places the mill beside, or possibly over, the Kerbet Water, immediately S (upstream) of the old Inverarity Bridge, but no trace of it has been found at this location. However, on the left bank of the Kerbet, upstream from the bridge, there is a track which does not seem to serve any purpose, as it is not part of the adjacent field and gives no access to this. It might have been created for maintenance of the river banks, or led to a dam or sluice higher up stream. There are no obvious building remains in this area.

Local tales:

Mr John Syme, who farmed the Mill of Inverarity, related a tale which had been handed down locally. The miller had to close off the river flow, in order to pool up enough water for a day's milling. Unfortunately this caused the water to rise up the lawns of Fotheringham house upstream and the laird forbade his tenant to do so. When the miller did not comply, he was evicted and the mill pulled down. This tale is undated, but would fit some of the foregoing observations.