Historic Dumbarton

E Patricia **Dennison**

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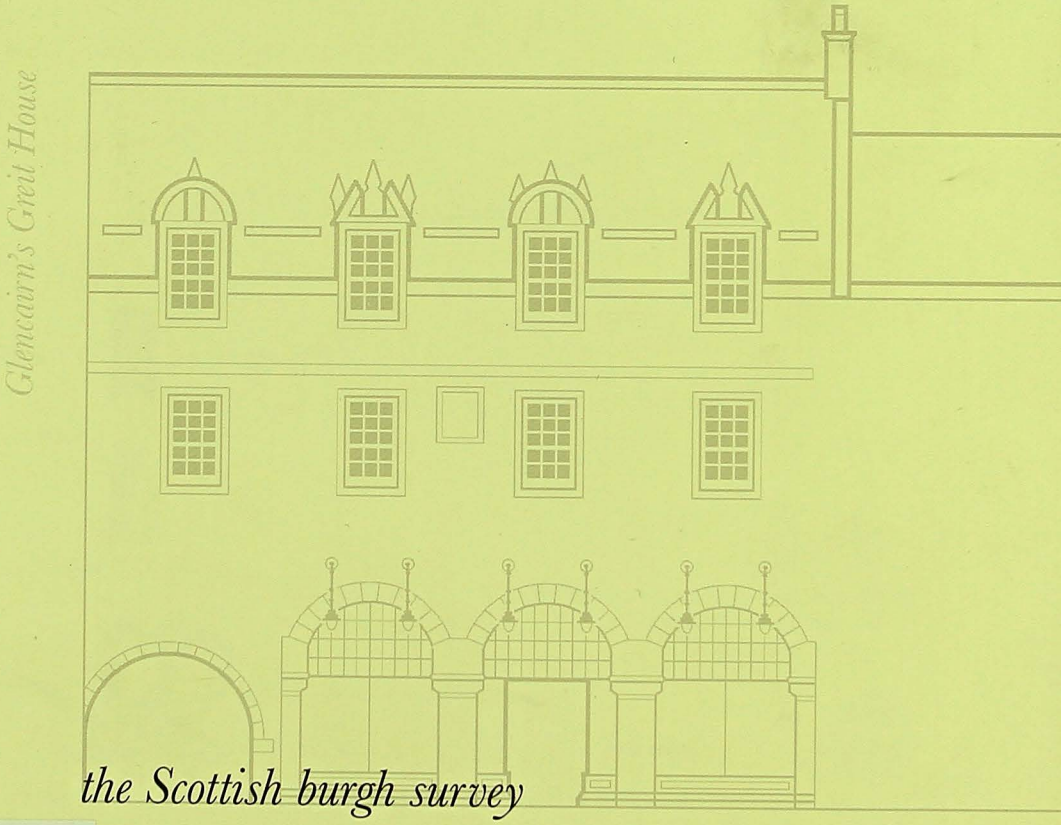

the Scottish burgh survey

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cover note

A detail of I Clarke's *The Town of Dumbarton*, 1824, showing the glassworks.

Historic Dumbarton

the archaeological implications of development

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the Scottish burgh survey

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contents

figures

APS	*The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, edd T Thomson & C Innes (Edinburgh, 1814–75).
CDS	*Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, ed J Bain *et al* (Edinburgh, 1839–1986).
CSP Scot	*Calendar of the State Papers relating to Scotland*, 13 vols, edd J Bain *et al* (Edinburgh, 1878–1969).
DBA	Dumbarton Burgh Archives.
DES	*Discovery and Excavation in Scotland.*
ER	*The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, 23 vols, edd J Stuart *et al* (Edinburgh, 1878–1908).
Fasti	*Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae*, edd H Scott *et al*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh 1915–81).
Gazetteer	*Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland: a Survey of Scottish Topography*, ed F H Groome (Edinburgh, 1886).
Glas Chrs	*Charters and other Documents relating to the City of Glasgow* (SBRS, 1894–1906).
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
HS	Historic Scotland.
NMRS	National Monuments Record of Scotland.
NMS	National Museums of Scotland.
NSA	*The New Statistical Account of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1845).
OSA	*The Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791–1799*, ed J Sinclair. New Edition, edd I R Grant & D J Withrington (Wakefield, 1973).
PSAS	*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.*
RCAHMS	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.
RCRBS	*Records of the Convention of Royal Burghs of Scotland*, 7 vols, ed J D Marwick (Edinburgh, 1866–1918).
RIAS	Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland.
RMS	*The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland*, 11 vols, edd J M Thomson *et al* (Edinburgh, 1882–1914).
RPC	*The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, edd J H Burton *et al* (Edinburgh, 1877–).
RRS	*Regesta Regum Scottorum 1153–1406*, edd G W S Barrow *et al* (Edinburgh, 1960–).
RSS	*Register of the Privy Seal of Scotland (Registrum Secreti Sigilli Regum Scotorum)*, edd M Livingstone *et al* (Edinburgh, 1908).
SBRS	Scottish Burgh Records Society.
SBS	Scottish Burgh Survey.
SHS	Scottish History Society.
SRO	Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh.
SUAT	Scottish Urban Archaeological Trust.
TA	*Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, 13 vols, edd T Dickson *et al* (Edinburgh, 1877–).

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We would like to acknowledge the staff of **Dumbarton Library**, in particular Mr Graham Hopner and Mr Arthur Jones. Their assistance, on our visits to Dumbarton Burgh Archives, was invaluable and we are grateful for the time they spent with our researchers. We are also indebted to them for their comments on our draft text.

The Centre would also like to thank Mr Hugh McBrien, **West of Scotland Archaeology Service**, and Mr Anthony Lancaster of **West Dunbartonshire Council, Planning Department**. Colleagues at Edinburgh University have given support and advice. In particular, we would like to mention the **Centre for Field Archaeology**, and Mr Michael Davidson and Dr John Bannerman of the **Department of Scottish History**.

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The name 'Dumbarton' derives from *Dun Breatann*, meaning the 'fortress of the Britons', and refers to the ancient stronghold of the kings of Strathclyde on Clyde Rock, in use from probably at least the fifth century AD. The medieval burgh was established about a kilometre from the Rock, by King Alexander II (1214–49) in 1222. The new burgh was conveniently sited for the development of a port, and Dumbarton soon took advantage of overseas trade. The Clyde Rock remained an important royal stronghold in medieval times, which meant that the history of the adjacent town often became intertwined with events on the national stage. It was from Dumbarton, for example, that James IV (1488–1513) sailed in his expeditions to pacify the western mainlands and islands of his kingdom in 1495; and the young Mary Queen of Scots (1542–67) spent five months there in 1548 until she sailed to France. At the local level, the history of Dumbarton is linked with that of the Stewart earls of Lennox. From the time of its formal establishment, the royal burgh of Dumbarton asserted its rights to control shipping and trade in the Clyde; but, with the construction of Port Glasgow in the mid seventeenth century, Dumbarton suffered economic decline and all its foreign trade had ceased by the end of the century. There were still only 1,480 people recorded in the parish in 1755, but the establishment of the Dumbarton Glassworks Company in 1777, and other industries, led to an increase in population by the turn of the century. Nineteenth-century Dumbarton was an industrial town, with the shipbuilding firm of William Denny and Brothers at its heart; while the twentieth century has seen many changes in the townscape with the erection of shopping malls, blocks of flats and a new planned centre.

Historic Dumbarton is one of a series of reports on the historic burghs of Scotland—known collectively as the *Scottish Burgh Survey*—all of which have been commissioned by **Historic Scotland** and its predecessors. The main aim of the survey is to identify those areas of the present and historic burgh which are of archaeological interest and therefore require sensitive treatment in the event of any proposed development or other ground disturbance. It is designed primarily as a manual for the use of local authorities and archaeological curators. However, as an essential prerequisite to this assessment of the archaeological implications of development, it also describes and illustrates the geography and topography of the town, its known archaeology and history, its historic standing buildings and the origins of its street names—all of which will be of interest to the wider public, be they inhabitant, visitor or student.

This survey was prepared within the **Centre for Scottish Urban History**, under the supervision of its Director, Dr E Patricia Dennison. The Centre is part of the Department of Scottish History, University of Edinburgh. Dr Dennison and Mr Russel Coleman, of the **Scottish Urban Archaeological Trust**, are co-authors of the report. Mr Kevin Hicks, of the **Centre for Field Archaeology**, University of Edinburgh, is cartographer and illustrator. Mr Robin Macpherson of the Department of Scottish History acted as Research Assistant to the project and co-authored the section on historic buildings and their archaeological potential. The research team comprised Susan Gillanders, Dean Jacobs, Jim McCormack and Todd Trapnell, all postgraduates in the Department of Scottish History. The project is supervised by the Head of the Department of Scottish History, Professor Michael Lynch, and managed for Historic Scotland by Ms Olwyn Owen, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, who is also general editor of the series.

The research on historic Dumbarton was carried out in the summer of 1996. This survey was entirely funded by Historic Scotland with help from the Centre for Scottish Urban History. The report has been published with financial assistance from **West Dunbartonshire Council**. Further copies may be obtained from **Tuckwell Press**, The Mill House, Phantassie, East Linton EH40 3DG.

It should be noted that the spellings of 'Dumbarton' and 'Dunbartonshire' have changed on numerous occasions in the past. In consequence, 'Dunbartonshire' is the spelling used for the twentieth century, and 'Dumbartonshire' when referring to it in an earlier period.

Historic Scotland
September 1999

the Scottish burgh survey

D

summary

1 Use the **colour-coded map** on the foldout at the back of this book **figure 26** and/or the **general index** to locate a particular site (normally the site of a development proposal).

2 **Green areas** (light and dark green) are designated as potentially archaeologically sensitive. If the site is in a green area, it is possible that a proposal involving ground disturbance may encounter archaeological remains. Seek appropriate archaeological advice as early as possible.

3 **Red areas** are Scheduled Ancient Monuments or properties in the care of the Scottish Ministers, and are protected by law. Consult Historic Scotland.

4 If the site is in a **blue area**, any development proposal is unlikely to affect significant archaeological remains. No action is needed.

5 Use the map on p 44 **figure 20** to determine into which area of the burgh the site falls (Area 1, 2 or 3), and turn to the relevant area in the **area by area assessment** for a fuller account (pp 45–80).

6 Use the **general index** and, if appropriate, the listing of **street names** (p 89–90) for rapid access to information specific to a site, street or named feature of the town.

step 1

As a working manual, the first point of reference is the colour-coded map on the foldout at the back of the book **figure 26**.

The **red areas** are **protected by law**. Under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 all development proposals which affect them require the prior written consent of the Scottish Ministers (Scheduled Monument Consent) in addition to any planning permission required. These provisions are administered on behalf of the Scottish Ministers by Historic Scotland. *All applications for planning permission which affect either the site or setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (red area) must be referred to Historic Scotland*, acting for the Scottish Ministers in terms of Section 15(j)(v) of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Scotland) Order 1992 and Section 5(e) of its Amendment (No. 2) Order 1994. *All enquiries regarding prospective development proposals in or adjacent to red areas should be referred to Historic Scotland for advice at as early a stage as possible.*

The **green areas** (light and dark green) are **potentially archaeologically sensitive** and may retain significant sub-surface archaeological information. *Consultation should take place with the local authority planning department where any development proposal or enquiry involving ground disturbance is being considered*, including car parks, road schemes, environmental improvements, landscaping and drainage schemes, as well as the usual range of development and re-development proposals in built-up areas. There is no necessity for consultation where ground disturbance is not in prospect, such as applications for change of use of a building. There may, however, be a requirement to obtain *planning permission* or, in the case of a listed building, *listed building consent* or, if demolition works are proposed within a conservation area, *conservation area consent*. In such instances, early consultation with the staff of the local authority planning department will always be helpful.

If in doubt whether consultation is necessary, please refer to the local authority archaeological service and the local authority planning department. It is important to note that sub-surface disturbance within historic standing buildings may also affect archaeological remains, and that some standing buildings may retain archaeological features within their structures. Please seek advice as required.

The **blue areas** denote those parts of the historic burgh which may be archaeologically sterile and where archaeological consultation is probably not necessary. In practice, there is rarely a hard dividing line between the green and the blue areas. If in any doubt, check the account of the relevant area in the area by area assessment (*see* step 2), and seek archaeological advice as appropriate.

step 2

In this new series of burgh surveys, each survey has been organised locationally, in order to assist speedy consultation on any proposed development site. In the case of Dumbarton, the historic town has been divided into three arbitrary areas, Areas 1, 2 and 3, which are shown on the plan on p 44 **figure 20**. The second step for the user, then, is to consult this plan and to determine into which area a specific enquiry falls.

step 3

Each area is assessed individually in the **area by area assessment** (pp 45–80). The commentary for each area is prefaced with a detailed plan of that area. Archaeological, historical, geographical and geological factors of particular relevance to the area are all discussed and an assessment of the archaeological potential is made. For ease of reference, even if a dividing line between areas is shown as the middle of a street, discussion of the area includes any elements within the street up to the opposite frontage. The importance of an integrated approach to the historical and archaeological information is implicit in the design of this report: the history and archaeology are presented together on each page rather than consecutively.

This integrated, area-based approach has involved some repetition of information in the area by area assessment, in order that users are not required to cross-reference more than necessary when dealing with a specific enquiry. For instance, the question of the burgh's water supply is discussed in both Areas 1 and 2. Although such repetition would not be normal in a work of interest to the general public, it was felt that it would be permissible here in order to facilitate the work of primary users: local authority planners and other curators of the archaeological resource.

historic standing buildings

historic buildings reinforces the above sections by providing basic historical and architectural information about the historic standing buildings of the town; where relevant, it also provides the area location and an assessment of the archaeological potential of specific buildings. *It should always be borne in mind that historic standing buildings may also contain archaeological remains, both beneath their floors and within their structures.* Some of these buildings may be listed and consequently subject to listed building control. Where listed buildings contain, or may contain, architecturally or archaeologically significant building fabric, the planning authority is obliged to make efforts to ensure that this is preserved and not adversely affected by proposed building works.

objectives for future fieldwork and research

Any report of this nature cannot be definitive. During its preparation, a series of archaeological and historical objectives for future fieldwork and research has been identified; these are listed at pp 85–7. They will be of particular interest to urban historians and archaeologists, and to those responsible for management of the archaeological resource in historic Dumbarton.

referencing

The notes to the chapters **Dumbarton: its site and setting** and the **archaeological and historical background** detail all the documentary and archaeological sources used (*see also* the list of **abbreviations**). The **area by area assessments** are not footnoted separately but references are provided for the previous archaeological work and chance finds listed at the end of each area assessment. The report contains a comprehensive **general index** as well as a listing of **street names** giving basic historical information and, where relevant, area location. A **bibliography** and a **glossary** of technical terms have also been included.

The data accumulated during preparation of this survey and draft copies of the completed work, as well as all unpublished reports of any small-scale excavations and watching briefs, are housed in the **National Monuments Record**, John Sinclair House, 16 Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh EH8 9NX, telephone *0131* 662 1456, facsimile *0131* 662 1477/1499.

full reference to this report

Dennison, E P and Coleman, R 1998 *Historic Dumbarton: the archaeological implications of development*, published by Historic Scotland in association with Scottish Cultural Press, Edinburgh. (Scottish Burgh Survey 1999.)

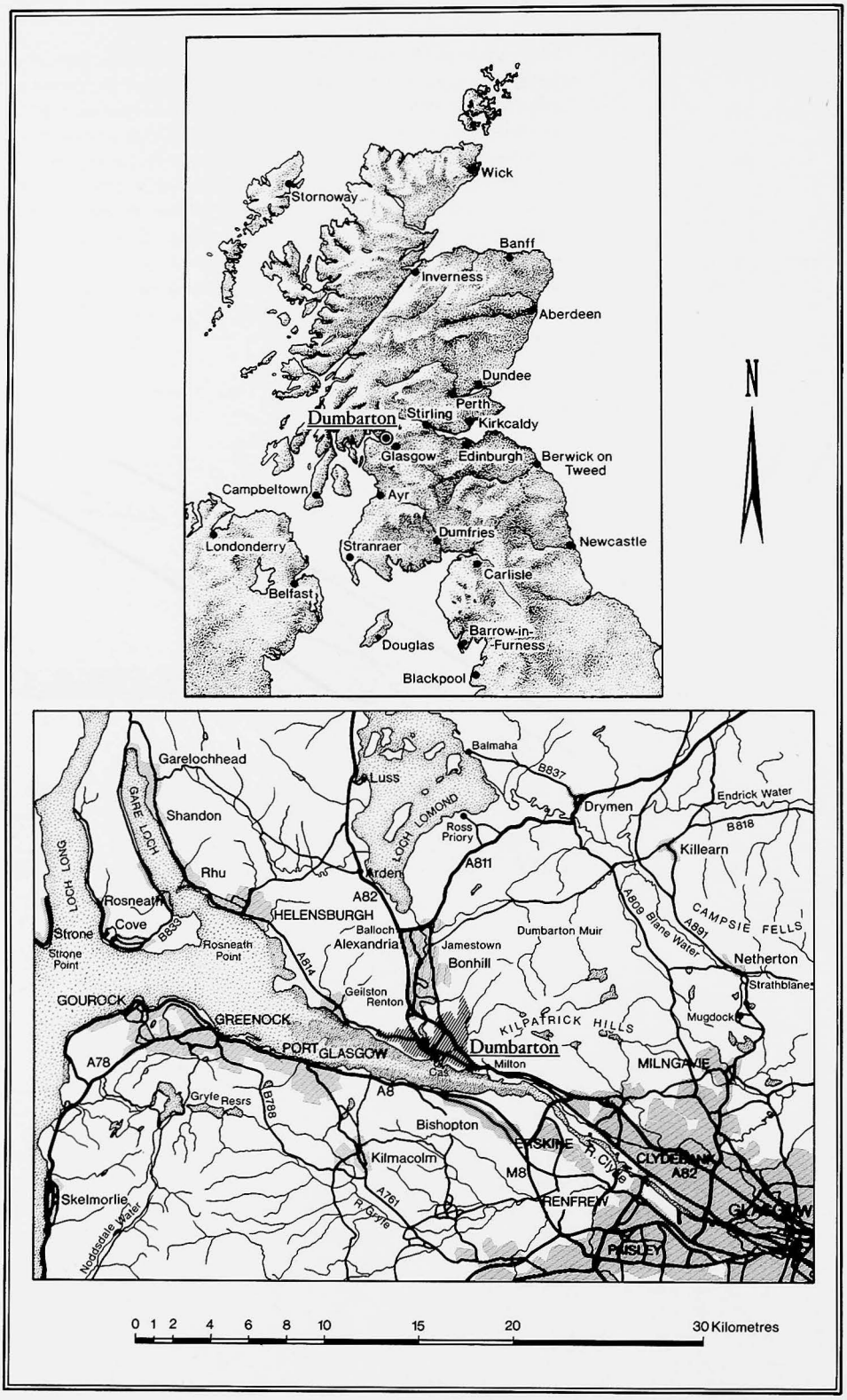

figure 1
Location of Dumbarton

Dumbarton: its site and setting

The royal burgh of Dumbarton is situated on the north shore of the Firth of Clyde, approximately 1 km inland, and on the east bank of the River Leven **figure 1**. The medieval town, which received its burghal status from Alexander II (1214–1249) in 1222, is contained within a sweeping curve of the Leven, the crescentic High Street reflecting the course of the river. At the confluence of the Leven and the Firth stands Dumbarton Rock, a twin-peaked mass of volcanic basalt, the flatness of the surrounding alluvial plain serving only to exaggerate its formidable presence **figure 2**. This was the place chosen by the Britons of Strathclyde as their principal stronghold and political centre, and was known to them as *Alcluith* (Clyde Rock) and to the Irish annalists as *Dun Breatann* (Fort of the Britons) **figure 3**. Documentary references to the site, which may place occupation here as early as the fifth century AD, record frequent attacks on the site, culminating in a four month siege in AD 870 by two kings of the Norsemen. A royal castle in the medieval period, itself subject to numerous sieges throughout the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Dumbarton Rock subsequently became an artillery fortification guarding the approaches to Glasgow.

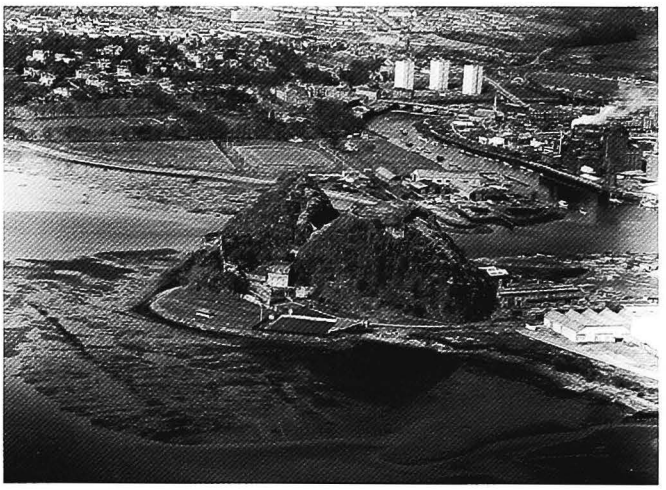

figure 2
An aerial view of the physical setting of Dumbarton 1985

figure 3
Reconstruction drawing of the Vikings beseiging *Alcluith*, the fortress of the Britons on Dumbarton Rock

Although Dumbarton's medieval and more recent past owed much to the natural fortress-like quality of the rock, it was the town's strategic position, with access to the islands and coastline of the Firth and the seas beyond, and the route north into the heart of Scotland *via* the Vale of Leven, that ensured its prosperity.

Other than some aspects of the street pattern, little remains of medieval Dumbarton. One remnant, however, is the collegiate chapel of St Mary. Founded in 1453, it had a brief life and did not survive the Reformation. The College Bow, a single archway which stands next to the Municipal Buildings, is all that survives, although not on its original site. A medieval grave slab, built into the fabric of the vestry wall of the parish church, is another reminder of Dumbarton's more ancient past **figure 8**.

There were few burghs in this part of west central Scotland, but contemporary with medieval Dumbarton, and within a 30 km radius, were the burghs of Glasgow (founded 1175x78), Renfrew (1124x47) and Rutherglen (1124x53) to the south-east, Kirkintilloch (1211x1214) to the east and Rothesay (1401) to the south-west. Other than Kirkintilloch, all the other burghs in Dunbartonshire are of seventeenth-century date or later (Helensburgh, Kilpatrick, Luss and Portkill).

Dumbarton was essentially the market town for the north Clyde in the medieval and post-medieval periods, but new industries developed in the eighteenth century, stimulated by the deepening of the Clyde, and, later, the opening of the Forth and Clyde Canal at nearby Bowling. Dumbarton was Scotland's largest producer of glass, the distinctive coned-shaped kilns a dominant landmark until they were demolished in 1850, and, along the upper reaches of the Leven, bleaching and printing works were established. Shipbuilding, however, emerged as the town's principal industry in the 1830s and, despite Glasgow's and Greenock's superior harbours, ships built in Dumbarton, such as the 'Cutty Sark', became world-renowned. Improvements on the Leven benefited the yards and encouraged a range of support industries, such as foundries, engine and boiler works, rope and sailmakers. The middle of this century saw the demise of shipbuilding and the emergence of whisky distilling and, briefly, aircraft manufacturing. Today, whisky distilling, blending and bottling continue to dominate the local economy and townscape, with bonded warehouses occupying acres of prime riverside land, stretching from Ballantine's Distillery at the east end of High Street eastwards to Dumbuck, a distance of some 3 km.

administration

Dumbarton lay within the former county of Dunbartonshire; the mis-spelling of Dumbarton (from *Dun Breatann*) appears to have been a gradual process which began in the medieval period.[1] Dunbartonshire was bordered by Argyllshire to the west, Perthshire to the north, Stirlingshire to the east and Lanarkshire to the south-east. The River Clyde and the upper reaches of the Firth of Clyde divided Dunbartonshire from Renfrewshire. Predating Dunbartonshire was the ancient region of Lennox, the name possibly a corruption of Levenaux or Levenach, 'the field of Leven'. The earldom of Lennox was created by William I (1165–1214) in or around 1175. This huge swathe of land comprised the whole of Dunbartonshire, a large part of Stirlingshire and parts of Perthshire and Renfrewshire. In the local government reorganisation of 1975, the west end of Dunbartonshire became Dumbarton District within Strathclyde Region. The present West Dunbartonshire Council was created in 1996.

geology

A plateau of Carboniferous lava (often called the Clyde Plateau Lavas) extends north-eastwards across the Clyde into Dunbartonshire and Stirlingshire.[2] Here, the Campsie Fells (578 m) and the Kilpatrick Hills (401 m), separated by Strathblane, overlook Dumbarton and Clydeside. In addition to their steep basalt escarpment, the Campsie Fells are noted for a series of prominent conical hills, all carved from volcanic vents. The best

known is Dumbarton Rock, which rises 74 m above the surrounding mudflats of the Clyde estuary. A narrow cleft separates the two peaks of the Rock. The western peak, known as the White Tower Crag, is approximately 10 m higher than the eastern peak, known as the Beak. The base of the rock is around a mile in circumference.

The Clyde itself cuts through the hard basaltic rim of the Renfrew Heights and the Kilpatrick Hills and, at Dumbuck, for example, these rocks appear as shallow reefs in the river. The geology of the area has provided raw materials for building and agriculture. Red sandstone has been quarried on the moors above Dumbarton, while white sandstone abounds at nearby Dalreoch, and limestone at Murroch Glen, to the north-east of the town.[3]

geography

The narrowing of the Clyde at Dumbarton Rock partly explains the site's strategic importance. Not until the eighteenth century, when an artificial channel was cut through a rock barrier 2 km upstream of Dumbarton Rock at Dumbuck, could any sea-going vessel reach the heart of Glasgow, although at high tide, and with a shallow draught, it was possible for smaller vessels. Out-ports such as Greenock and Port Glasgow had been deliberately created to counter this problem.[4] Downstream of the Rock, the Clyde widens into an estuary. From here, the deep sea-lochs that cut into the Highlands (Loch Long and Loch Fyne, for example) offered good lines of communications, arable land and abundant supplies of fish and shell-fish.

The River Leven was equally important to Dumbarton. The 8 km valley, stretching from Loch Lomond to the Clyde, provided access to arable lands between the Campsie Fells and Kilpatrick Hills and the Southern Highlands. From Loch Lomond, rivers flowing eastwards into the upper Forth basin led to the very heart of Scotland and to the North Sea.

The soils around Dumbarton are generally shallow but fertile, and dairying is the main type of farming.[5] In some areas, there is rich alluvium but, in others, clay and gravel are present. The climate is mild by the Clyde and along the Vale of Leven, but within a short distance the weather on the moorlands of the Kilpatrick Hills can be severe.

topography

The topography of Dumbarton is very different today from when the burgh was founded **figure 4** & **21**. The medieval town was contained within a sweeping S-shaped bend in the River Leven, a fast flowing but meandering river prone to flooding (*see* pp 00–0). To the north and east of the town, the principal thoroughfares, High Street, Kirk Vennel (now Church Street) and Cross Vennel (now College Street, of which only a small remnant remains) terminated at the edge of a wide area of marshland (Broad Meadow) formed by the persistent flooding and re-alignment of the Leven, but settlement did not extend this far, apart from a few isolated houses. To the south-east of the town, Mill Burn (once called Knowle Burn) skirted past the southern end of High Street before emptying into the Leven nearer the Rock. During high tides, the town must have appeared as an island within the River Leven.

Medieval settlement along High Street most likely extended from the old parish church at the junction of High Street and Kirk Vennel, in a westerly curving direction to at least the bridge over the Leven at present day Bridge Street (the existing structure was built in 1765) **figure 4** & **21**. On the south side of the High Street, the burgage plots extended down to the river's edge, with smaller vennels providing access from High Street. Wood's plan of 1818 **figure 18** suggests that these plots increased in length as High Street progressed westwards (36 m at the east end to 64 m at the bridge). To the north of High Street, the plots have a radial plan, wider at the street frontage, narrowing to the rear to accommodate the marked bend in the alignment of the street. Although the development of both Cross Vennel and Kirk Vennel as street frontages has masked the original pattern

figure 4
Dumbarton from the air, showing the High Street to the left
1989

of the burgage plots, they appear to have averaged *c* 66 m in length, but with the occasional plot at the western end of High Street measuring up to *c* 83 m.

One of the most notable features of the medieval townscape, the market place, appears to have been centred around the junction of High Street and Cross Vennel, and here were situated the tolbooth, market cross and tron. The medieval parish church stood where the present Riverside Parish Church stands today (built in 1811) at the eastern end of High Street. A medieval chapel, dedicated to St Mary, later the collegiate church of St Mary (*see* pp 00–0), and hospital were established outwith the limits of the medieval town where the railway station now stands. The parish church of Cardross stood on the west bank of the River Leven, its ivy-covered ruins still visible today **figure 10**.

By the later eighteenth century, the area to the north of the bridge, on the east bank of the river, was developed for industry, the glass and chemical works being established there in 1777. In 1858, Broad Meadow was drained and embanked after the construction of the Bowling to Balloch railway line. By the time of the first detailed plan of the town, dating from 1777 **figure 11**, the street frontage of Cross Vennel was fully developed, as were parts of Kirk Vennel.

notes

1 E Taylor, 'The burgh and parish of Dumbarton', in M S Dillce & A A Templeton (edd), *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1959), 210–11.
2 J Whittrow, *The Geology and Scenery of Britain* (London, 1992), 276.
3 *Gazetteer*, ii, 387.
4 Whittrow, *Geology*, 278.
5 Taylor, 'Burgh and parish', 221–2.

archaeological and historical background

Today, there is little to see in Dumbarton to remind us of its historic past. Archaeological excavations within the medieval burgh (*see* pp 50–8 & 61–9) and on Dark Age, or early historic Dumbarton Rock (*see* pp 76–7) have, however, shed some light on the medieval town and the pre-burghal origins of the area. The few prehistoric finds that have been documented from in and around the burgh also offer glimpses into the more distant past. A full gazetteer of archaeological sites in the former Dumbarton District is published in the RCAHMS Sites and Monuments Series (1978), updated in the RCAHMS computerised National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS).[1] The Royal Commission's *Exploring Scotland's Heritage: The Clyde Estuary and Central Region* also provides information on sites and monuments of interest in all periods.[2]

prehistory

The earliest settlement of Scotland occurred around 7,500 BC, when much of Scotland was covered in dense woodland which supported a rich variety of game, particularly red deer. The few Mesolithic (literally meaning Middle Stone Age) settlements known in Scotland tend to be found along the coast line and river banks. These communities were 'hunter-gatherers', who ate fish and shellfish, followed herds of woodland game through the seasons, and supplemented their diet with wild plants and berries. Their semi-nomadic existence has left few archaeological traces, although shell middens and flint tools are common finds along former river and coast lines.

There is little evidence for early prehistoric periods around the Dumbarton area and along the lower Clyde in general, probably because the dense concentration of housing and industry which occupies this narrow strip of land has masked all traces of it.[3] However, a few flint scatters, which indicate the camp sites of Mesolithic hunter-gatherers, have recently been reported a short distance to the west of Dumbarton, on a former raised beach.[4]

A number of prehistoric stone tools, probably of Neolithic date (*c* 4000–2500 BC), have been found in the Dumbarton area, including one from the town itself. A perforated axe-hammer was found on the shore between the town and Cardross;[5] a stone adze was discovered while digging in a back garden in the Bellsmyre district of Dumbarton,[6] although top soil had been brought in from elsewhere; and, finally, basalt and slate tools were found in a raised beach at the junction of the Clyde and Leven.[7] Some exceptional cup-and-ring markings (enigmatic prehistoric carvings in stone) were found at Greenland, Auchentorlie, just beyond Milton; these have been removed to the NMS for safekeeping, having been under threat from stone quarrying.[8]

Inter-tidal archaeology has revealed the presence of the surviving foundations of a later prehistoric structure, now found on the mudflats near Dumbarton, about 50 m from the present high watermark at Dumbuck. The substantial structural remains were first scientifically investigated in 1900, and have recently been re-surveyed and samples taken for radiocarbon dating. The survey revealed a circular wooden platform surrounded by twenty-two wooden piles, and the remains of a central circular feature, described in 1900 as a 'stone-walled cavity...with wattle or basket-work'. The radiocarbon dates suggest that the structure was built around the end of the first century BC; and the wattle-lined pit has been compared with similar structures found in crannogs in both Scotland and Ireland.[9]

In the Iron Age, Dumbarton appears to have lain within the tribal domain of the *Damnonii*, according to Ptolemy, the classical geographer, whose map of the Roman world was compiled around AD 140. After the northern campaigns of Agricola, the Governor of Roman Britain, in around AD 80 the area lay within Roman control, which stretched to the Highland Line (approximately Stonehaven to Dumbarton). The Highland Line of Roman forts was, however, abandoned soon after AD 86. The frontier was consolidated in the AD 120s with the construction of Hadrian's Wall across the Tyne–Solway gap. After the campaigns of the Emperor Antoninus Pius (AD 138–61), southern Scotland was reoccupied and the second of the great Roman frontiers, the Antonine Wall, was built. Construction appears to have commenced after a victory in AD 142, and in the words of

the biographer of Antoninus Pius, 'this time of turf'.[10] The wall stretched for some 60 km between Old Kilpatrick on the Clyde and Bo'ness on the Forth, with forts roughly every two miles and fortlets every mile. The only fort known on the left flank of the Antonine Wall is Whitemoss, Bishopton, approximately 2 km as the crow flies from Old Kilpatrick. Situated on the south bank of the Clyde, it overlooked the ford at Dumbuck, with an excellent view of Dumbarton Rock and the Vale of Leven. It has also been postulated that a harbour served the western end of the Antonine Wall, either at Old Kilpatrick or Dumbarton, although the evidence is as yet inconclusive.[11] The first Antonine occupation of southern Scotland ended in the AD 150s, possibly with a major revolt; the wall was reoccupied, but for a brief period only. By the AD 160s the wall had been abandoned, and the Roman presence in west-central Scotland effectively ended.

the early historic period

In the centuries after the withdrawal of the Romans (after the death of Severus in AD 211, and the subsequent military withdrawal, there was no further conquest in Scotland), four distinct territorial groupings or kingdoms appear in the historical and archaeological record.[12] The mainland and islands north of the Forth and Clyde estuaries were mainly inhabited by the Picts, an amalgamation of indigenous Iron Age tribes. Strathclyde was home to the Britons, whose capital lay on the north side of the Clyde at Dumbarton Rock, while on their north-western border, in Argyll, were the Scots. The Scots came from Ireland in the fifth century AD and by the following century had established the kingdom of Dalriada. By the late seventh century AD, the Anglian kings of Northumbria were in control of much of south-east Scotland.

Dumbarton derives from *Dun Breatann*, 'fortress of the Britons', the name given to Clyde Rock by the neighbouring Gaelic-speaking people of Dalriada. To the subjects of the kings of Strathclyde, whose stronghold was centred on the Rock, it was known variously as *Alcluith*, *Alt Clut* or *Ailcluaithe*. The earliest reference to the site dates to the seventh century and relates that, in AD 450, St Patrick wrote to the soldiers of Ceretic (or Coroticus) of Alcluith, king of Strathclyde, reprimanding them for a piratical raid on some of his Irish converts.[13] A number of other references, such as Adomnan's *Life of Columba* (written towards the end of the seventh century, but referring to the late sixth century) and the *Annals of Ulster*, mention kings reigning on Clyde Rock.[14]

The single most important early reference to the site is from Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (written in AD 731) in which he writes 'there stands to this day the strongly fortified British city of *Alcluith*'.[15] He also refers to the site elsewhere as *urbs Alcluith*, and explains that *Alcluith* 'in their language means the Rock of *Cluith* [Clyde], as it stands near a river of that name'.[16] These brief references make it clear that, by 731, Clyde Rock was a defended place of great political importance. Surrounded as it was by the powerful kingdoms of the Northumbrians to the south, the Picts to the east and the Scots of Dalraida to the north, it is not surprising that there are references to the Rock being attacked. An allied force of Picts and Northumbrians is reported to have besieged and successfully taken the Rock in 756, only to have been wiped out themselves days later; although this reference, from one Symeon of Durham, is thought to be dubious.[17]

The final blow to the stronghold probably came in AD 870 **figure 3**. The *Annals of Ulster* record that two kings of the Norsemen, Olaf the White of Dublin and Ivar Beinlaus ('cripple or one-legged'), led a combined attack on the Rock for four months.[18] Cutting off the water supply, they 'wasted the people who were in it by hunger and thirst'. The following year, it took 200 longships to carry the booty and slaves, including British, English and Pictish captives, back to Dublin.[19] There is a final reference of AD 872 in the Annals of Ulster to Artgal, king of the Britons of Strathclyde, being killed at the instigation of Constantine I, king of Scots (862–877).[20] The subsequent fate of the kingdom of Strathclyde is shrouded in mystery, as it disappears from the records; one possibility is that nearby Govan became the principal royal centre, with the Strathclyde kings clients of the Scottish kings.[21]

What remains of this ancient fort? There are no visible traces, but archaeological excavations in 1974–75 have provided a unique insight.[22] The western of the two peaks, the White Tower Crag, would have been too pointed for anything other than a look-out post. The eastern summit, however, known as the Beak, appeared to offer a level summit some 30 m x 20 m in area, as well as a series of lower terraces suitable for settlement. The cleft between the two summits provided an access route up to the highest points; and this may have been the site of the well captured by the Norsemen in AD 870. At the foot of the Rock, beside both the Clyde and Leven, are extensive flats, which may have functioned as beaching areas for ships.[23]

Prior to the excavations, it was thought that the site was a nuclear fort, that is, a fortification with a high central citadel, surrounded by a series of enclosures at lower levels, similar to Dunadd, a stronghold of the Scots of Dalriada. The excavations proved otherwise. There were no enclosure walls as the vertical cliffs and river had provided much of the necessary defences. The interior of the fort may have been subdivided. The weakest point on the Rock, the landward side, where it overlooks the narrow isthmus that connects with the mainland, was found to have been protected by a rampart of earth, rubble and timber. The rampart had been destroyed by fire, possibly during the siege of AD 870. Two finds associated with it, a Viking pommel bar of a sword and a lead weight, may substantiate this interpretation. Radiocarbon dates from charcoal recovered from the rampart have provided a series of dates which range from the sixth to the ninth centuries, and tie in with the early documentary references to the site.

The finds retrieved from the excavations are also of great interest. Fragments of sixth-century amphorae, imported from the east Mediterranean, and fragments of glass vessels of Germanic manufacture, are of especial importance, indicating that the site was involved in trade as far afield as the Rhineland and the Mediterranean.

Finally, there is a possibility that the Rock may not have been completely abandoned between AD 870 and the building of the first medieval castle (*see* pp 11–12).[24] Fragments of two recumbent cross-slabs of tenth-century date were discovered on the lower slopes of the Rock some years ago during digging behind the Governor's House, and are currently on display in the exhibition there. They may have been associated with St Patrick's chapel, traditionally thought to have been sited in the area, perhaps on the Rock itself; alternatively, they could have been brought in as building material from elsewhere. Their presence indicates ecclesiastical activity in the tenth century in the area. Govan is only some eleven miles upstream from Dumbarton Rock and was home to a school of stonecarving in the tenth and eleventh centuries, producing a rich variety of sculpture.

By the tenth century, the political centre may have shifted further south, possibly to Penrith, in the Lake District. Despite a king of Scots falling in AD 971 in battle against the Britons, by 1018, Malcolm II (1005–34) was able to set his grandson, Duncan, on the throne of Strathclyde until he succeeded his grandfather as King of Scots, in 1034 (1034–40). At this point, if not before, Strathclyde was finally integrated into the Scottish kingdom, and Dumbarton ceased to be the centre of independent political power.

the middle ages

In 1222, King Alexander II established the burgh of Dumbarton about a kilometre from the castle on Clyde Rock **figure 2.** The castle was in the hands of Aluin, the Celtic earl of Levenach or Lennox; but from 1238, it was a royal fortress.[25] Although the allotted setting for the new burgh was not ideal geographically, because it was liable to flooding, it offered a convenient place for the development of a port, close by the castle. There were also over-riding political reasons for this choice. It was a suitable location, at the western extremity of secure royal control, to found a new burgh that would be dependent on the king, a burgh which, in the words of the 1609 charter (*see* p 24), would encourage the people of the Highland region 'by having converse and making merchandise in the burgh to become more civil and obedient to the law'. The chronicler, Jean Froissart, writing in the fourteenth century, described Dumbarton as 'standing in the marshes [sic] [marches?]

against the wild Scots', an interesting comment on both its geographical and political situation.[26] To persuade settlers to his new burgh, Alexander II permitted five years of 'kirseth', a period of time during which no burghal dues were liable. An indication of the likely attraction of a new burgh to settlers can be seen in the length of time allocated for this non-payment of burghal dues. The normal kirseth period was a year and a day: clearly, Dumbarton, with five years, and even more so Dingwall, in the north, with a kirseth of ten years, were seen to be less attractive than other twelfth- and early thirteenth-century burghs, situated in the more stable heartland of the country. How many came to settle this new burgh is uncertain, as is their provenance. Some may have come from far afield: one of the earliest known burgesses, William Fleming, was probably of Flemish origin,[27] as were many burgesses in other newly founded burghs. By 1289, the burgh dues, or fermes, amounted to £16, which indicate that the town was small, but well established by this time.[28]

It is unclear whether there was settlement on the site of the town before the foundation of the burgh. Certainly, a castle would have needed the services and supplies of a nearby population but, in all probability, any early settlement would originally have clustered on, or very near to the secure castle rock. Throughout the middle ages, the Rock was surrounded by water at high tides, so early settlement was probably on the Rock itself or immediately at its base, above high watermark. There are specific references to the 'sands' on the north side of the castle, which imply unsuitability for building.[29] By deduction, it seems likely that the new burgh of Dumbarton was on a green field site. And it was as 'Dumbarton' that the new settlement was referred to in its charter of erection. The subjects of the kings of Strathclyde had known the Rock as *Alcluith* (*see* p 10); but to the neighbouring Gaelic-speaking people of Dalriada it was *Dun Breatann*, the hill or fort of the Britons (*see* p 10).[30]

In all probability, when the burgh was founded, a main street was formally laid out, with burgage plots running, in herring-bone pattern, back from the street frontage. It is relatively safe to assume that this main street followed approximately the line of the present and medieval High Street and it may be guessed that the plots, or tofts, to the south of the High Street would have been the most popular, giving access as they did to the River Leven for water supply, fishing and berthing boats **figure 4**. It was probably here that the monks of Newbattle held their toft, a gift from the crown.[31] Access to this water supply was important, as there were no wells in the town in the middle ages, the nearest being on the west side of the Leven at Cardross (*see* p 16 & 118). Rain, however, would have been collected in water butts.

There was much more involved in burghal status than the right to a burgage plot. To be a burgess implied a number of privileges, as well as obligations. The most important obligations were obedience to the law of the town and maintenance of its defence. Failure to co-operate could result in harsh retribution at the burgh court and even banishment from the town. On the other hand, only burgesses, as full members of burghal society, had the right to attend the head courts of the town, normally held three times a year, at which major decisions were made. Once the community of burgesses gained a level of independence in their choice of burghal officers, it was only this small privileged group who would participate, the majority of the townspeople being merely indwellers, with no formal rights. A *prepositus* is mentioned in 1329[32] and two *prepositi* by the following year,[33] who functioned as principal officers of the town. The records, however, do not make it clear whether these were royal or burghal appointments. Dumbarton sent representatives to the General Council in 1357, when, along with other burghs, they liaised in the raising of the ransom of David II (1329–71);[34] and the burgh was represented in parliament from 1471.[35]

One of the most important liberties granted at the foundation of a burgh was economic privilege. In its burgh charter,[36] granted by the crown, Dumbarton was given all the liberties enjoyed by the king's burgesses of Edinburgh, the right to hold a weekly market on a Wednesday and freedom from payment of toll, a due imposed at markets, throughout the country. A year later, a further concession was bestowed: parts of the land

of Morvaich (Murroch), roughly equivalent to the extent of the present parish of Dumbarton, were given for the common good. And, in 1226, the burgesses of Dumbarton were granted the right to hold an annual fair, of eight days' duration on the Feast of the Nativity of St John the Baptist (24 June);[37] and further concessions followed in 1230.[38] The burgh was also given an extensive rural hinterland, over which it would have the monopoly of trade: all the inhabitants of the Lennox, as far east as Garscube (now part of Glasgow) and as far west as the head of Loch Fyne were to be permitted to trade only with burgesses of Dumbarton. The Dumbarton burgesses were also entitled to levy tolls and customs on the Clyde between the head of Loch Long and the Water of Kelvin.[39] By 1379, these petty customs brought the town an income of forty shillings.[40] To reinforce these mercantile privileges and supervise the town's trading rights and monopolies, Dumbarton was permitted, by 1222, to have a guild merchant, one of the earliest in Scotland.[41] It was the guild's responsibility not only to oversee overseas trade but also to monitor trading practices in the market. Quality and quantity of ale and meat was maintained, the town weights were checked and the market was supervised. The two most disliked malpractices were forestalling, the purchase of goods before they reached market, and regrate, the purchase in bulk and hoarding of goods to sell at an advantageous price. Fines for forestalling amounted to £9 0s 12d in 1435, which implies a diligent guild, as well as a number of transgressors.[42] Early records indicate that Dumbarton's market was also bringing in income for the use of the town weighbeam.[43] The burgesses were, moreover, remitted the payment of the assizes of herring and ale by the crown in 1368, which meant that the profit from these sources remained with the town.[44] The right to the collection of the petty customs and the market tolls was given, by King Robert I (1306–29), to one family. It is interesting to note that a woman, Mariota, inherited this right in 1516, even though it was unusual for a woman to hold any position of authority within the town government.[45]

The earliest Exchequer Rolls show that Dumbarton soon took advantage of overseas trade and that there was an important traffic in herring from its port.[46] Piracy was always a danger, however, and it was for this reason that, in 1498, the 'Mary' of Dumbarton, a bark of fifty tons burden, with a crew of forty, was given, by Henry VII of England (1485–1509), a safe conduct to trade with Bristol and West Chester as often as it wished.[47] Piracy was not one sided. In 1511, the Duchess of Burgundy registered a complaint on behalf of herself and merchants from Antwerp against Andrew Barton, a well-known privateer, for goods that he had absconded with from Brittany in his ship 'The Bark', built at Dumbarton.[48] The town, however, had more friendly trading links as well, regularly importing such commodities as wine, often for royal consumption.[49]

Such important economic concessions, bestowed by the crown, were fiercely guarded. In particular, disputes arose early with the burgh further up the Clyde, Glasgow **figure 5**. Although Glasgow had had burghal status from 1175x78, it was a burgh dependent on a bishop. It also had a potential problem, in that until the end of the thirteenth century, it was impossible for ships to travel further up the Clyde than Dumbarton.[50] As a royal burgh, Dumbarton considered its rights to be of greater importance. The Dumbarton burgesses, therefore, attempted to prevent Glasgow trading on the Clyde, either to or past Dumbarton, or via Dumbarton with the West Highlands, unless a payment of 'can', or impost, was made for the privilege.[51] This became an issue of such magnitude that peace was threatened in the region; and, in 1242, Alexander II settled the matter, for a time, with a charter granting Glasgow merchants exemption from payment of can in the Lennox and Argyll.[52] The same issue, however, would be raised again, in the reigns of Alexander III (1249–86)[53] and of Robert I, when Dumbarton was warned of its predatory behaviour.[54] Difficulties continued to smoulder throughout the medieval period.[55] In 1469, for example, the bishop of Glasgow, Andrew Muirhead, with the provost and bailies of the town, gained an injunction from the Lords Auditors in their favour against the provost and bailies of Dumbarton, who had impeded their purchases of wine from a French ship in the Clyde.[56] Similar disputes arose with Renfrew, also a royal burgh, over customs dues and fishing rights; and these were not settled until the fifteenth

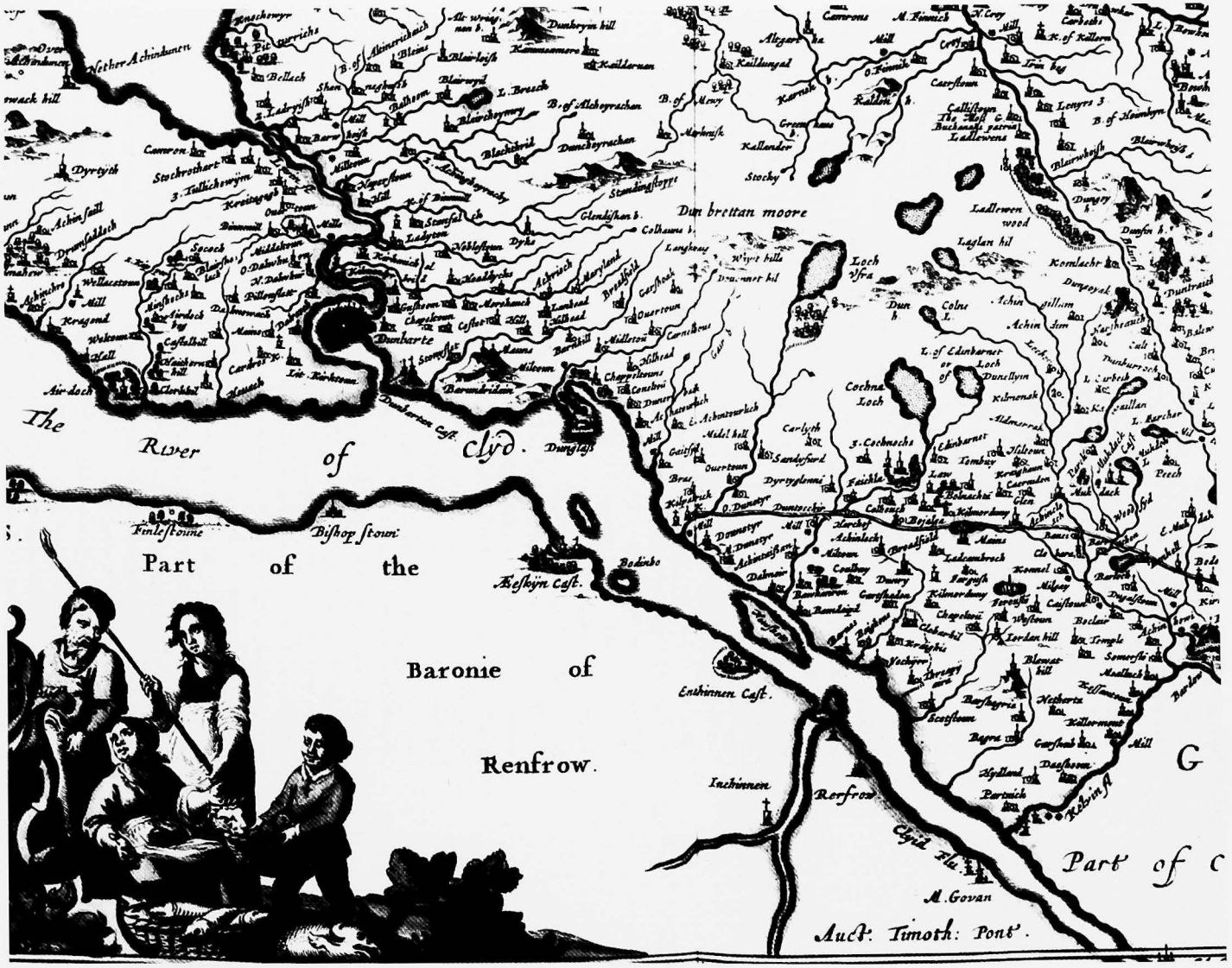

figure 5
J Blaeu's map, *The Province of Lennox called the Shyre of Dun-Britton*, 1654, showing the River Clyde

century,[57] only to be resurrected in the seventeenth.[58] Difficulties over fishing rights continued into the sixteenth century.[59] Ayr also clashed, unsuccessfully, with Dumbarton,[60] which kept a constant close watch on its economic privileges. In 1576, for example, the burgesses of Ayr admitted that they had wronged the burghs of Dumbarton and Glasgow, by infringing on their liberties with the ship 'Elizabeth of Ayr'.[61] There were, however, occasional attempts at co-operation between the west coast burghs. Dumbarton, Glasgow and Renfrew entered into an agreement in 1556 to remove the most prominent sandbanks in the Clyde, along with the ford at Dumbuck;[62] but tension over trading rights was to continue to be a constant feature of their relations (*see* pp 24–5).[63]

It is safe to assume that within only a few decades of the burgh's foundation a number of craftsmen, as well as merchants, would have found employment in the town, for example carpenters and ale and food producers who provided the necessities of life.[64] Many of the local people were probably employed at the castle. Regular services of washer women and gardeners, for example, would have been needed. A number of building craftsmen would also have been required for the constant renovations and repair work to the castle. For example, 13,000 roofing slates were brought from Bute for the repair of the castle in 1445; the chapel of St Patrick in the castle underwent major renovation in 1456; and in 1464 a hall and cellars were built in the nether bailey of the castle.[65] One craft that came and went in the reign of Robert III (1390–1406) was that of minting money. That this was extensive must be doubted: extant coins minted in Dumbarton are rare and of one kind—the light front-faced groat.[66] By the sixteenth century, the town was populated with merchants, smiths, cordiners, tailors,[67] saddlers, wrights and other craftsmen involved in shipbuilding.[68] In 1505, there were also two Portugese wrights in Dumbarton.[69]

The records reveal little about the daily lives of these townspeople. It is safe to assume that the majority of the population lived in relatively primitive, single-storeyed housing with thatched roofs, throughout the middle ages; and that life was simple and work was hard. The *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland* give a brief insight into one local custom, in 1547, when reference is made to 'minstrels' and 'Robin Hood'.[70] The cult of Robin Hood was followed in a number of Scottish towns; this was an occasion when the people enjoyed amusements and relaxation under the 'rule' of Robin Hood. These festivities had much in common with May games and the 'rule' of the Abbot of Unreason, which some towns celebrated, and must have been a welcome relief in an otherwise hard working life.

Although there is little in the records to give firm clues to the size of the town, the impression is that it grew minimally in the middle ages. The north side of the High Street was not heavily developed. Tenements lined the north side of the street, probably with gap sites which had never been developed. But it seems that, other than the collegiate church and its associated buildings, which stood to the north of the High Street (*see* p17) **figure 6**, there was no development behind these tenements, as the 'gardens of the burgh' were situated to the north.[71] Some housing may also have been sited randomly, outwith the formal street pattern: there is reference, for example, in 1480, to the house of John Fleming being 'on the common of Dumbarton', that was on the Broad Meadow.[72]

One of the important features of any market town was the public weighbeam, or tron. This would have been erected immediately on receipt of the right to hold markets. It probably functioned in a balance fashion, which is implied by the purchase of new ropes for it in 1444.[73] By 1516 the town had a clock which was probably placed in the tolbooth. On 14 April of that year, the schoolmaster complained that his expenses on the clock, for purchase of such things as cords and oil, had not been reimbursed by the town council.[74] There are no further details of the tolbooth, which in towns was the principal municipal building, functioning as a collection point for tolls, a place to house the burgh's official weights and as burgh council room and town jail. It is safe to assume that the market cross stood close to the tolbooth and tron.

There is, likewise, no indication that Dumbarton had a town wall. Scottish towns were not usually surrounded with strong walls, but with insubstantial palisading and ditching.

figure 6
College Bow, the only remnant of the collegiate church, from a rough sketch by David MacLeod, *c* 1840

Such barricading would not have been necessary on the south side of the High Street, where there was an element of protection to be gained from the River Leven; and at high tide the area north of the chapel dedicated to St Mary, later a collegiate church (*see* p 17), was often flooded, which also gave a measure of protection. It is possible that there were two gates, or ports, monitoring entrance to the town in the middle ages. By the seventeenth century, one was sited at the bridge crossing the Knowle Burn, to the south-east of the town,[75] and the other may have been at the collegiate church (*see* p 17). Both sites would have controlled the two main pedestrian routes into the town; a third important entry point was at the ferry crossing entering Dumbarton from Cardross, on the left bank of the Leven. Ports, as the tolbooth, were also collection points for tolls, and they acted as psychological rather than physical barriers to the outside world at times of curfew at night and during outbreaks of plague (*see* p 17 & 31).

Political events (*see* pp 18–22) illuminate the strategic importance of Dumbarton on the west coast and the significance of its harbour and shipbuilding from the late fifteenth century (*see* p 20). What the records do not show is the nature of Dumbarton's harbour at this time. The harbour works were probably of simple wooden structure, as in other Scottish ports. In 1533, bulwarks were to be erected in Dumbarton, Irvine, Wigtown, Whithorn and Kirkcudbright and in certain east coast ports;[76] these were evidently breakwaters which protected the anchorage.[77] When these were effected is unclear; but certainly by the end of the sixteenth century, the bulwarks were in a state of disrepair,[78] possibly as a result of the town's role during the civil war.[79] There was a mill, with its necessary lades, beside the town by at least 1272.[80]

The parish church, known to have existed from at least the fourteenth century, dedicated to St Mary[81] or St Patrick,[82] stood in all probability on the site of the present parish church, near the banks of the Leven. According to a 1747 picture **figure 7**, the early church was replaced in the fourteenth or fifteenth century by a building with a broad tower furnished with a short spire. (The north transept, which was the burial site of the lairds of Kirkmichael, was enlarged in the seventeenth century.) By the Reformation, the parish church housed six altars, each with their own chaplains: the Rood Altar[83] (extant from 1383, at latest),[84] the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary[85] (in existence by at least 1373)[86] which stood to the south side,[87] St Peter's Altar (in existence from at least 1485)[88], St James' Altar, St Ninian's Altar (at least from 1512)[89] and St Sebastian's (from at least 1496).[90] In 1501, there is also a reference to a chaplainry for the soul of King Robert I, his successors and predecessors, but whether this was attached to one of the existing chaplainries is unclear.[91] The total revenues of the Rood Altar amounted to £22 by the Reformation,[92] some of which came from an endowment of rental from two roods of

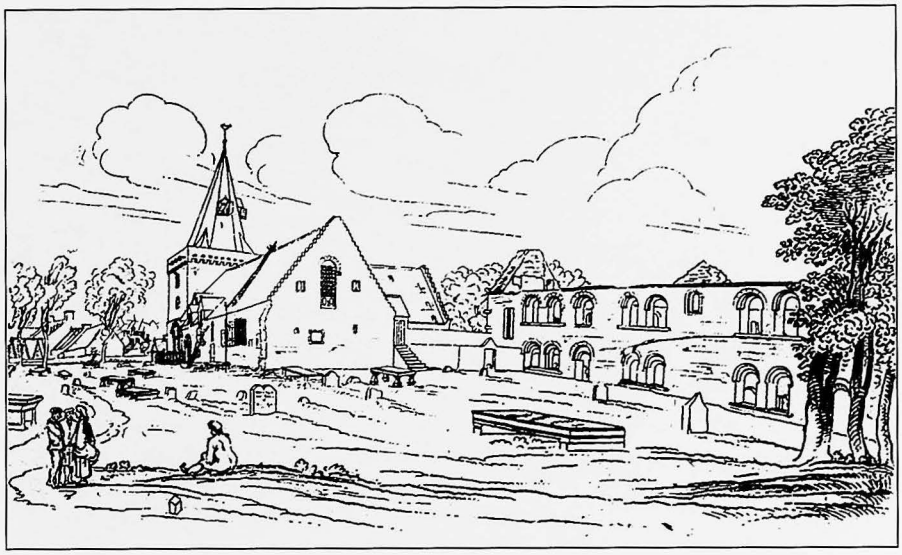

figure 7
A 1747 view of the parish church, with the partly finished Buchanan Hospital beside it, by Paul Sandby

land in the Townend, to the north of the town. To the present day this piece of land is called Roodsland *see also* **figure 8**. One of the duties of the chaplain of this altar was to keep a song school for boys training to sing in the church choir. Without doubt, this school was very close to the parish church. It is known that there was also a grammar school in the town from at least 1486; the master was the chaplain of St Peter's Altar.[93]

In 1516, the schoolmaster complained that he was in difficult financial straits as the income from the chaplainry of St Peter was insufficient and that he was making little profit out of the school because of 'pestilence' or plague.[94] It is certainly true that the town had been hit by plague the previous year, when the custumars, or collectors of the burgh's customs taxes, were excused payments to the crown.[95] Although there is little evidence in the records, Dumbarton was probably vulnerable to plague, being an important sea port. It is known, for example, that Thomas Stewart, earl of Angus, who was imprisoned in Dumbarton Castle on suspicion of complicity in the murder of Katherine Mortimer, the mistress of David II, died there of plague in 1362.[96] Two letters, in the keeping of Dumbarton Burgh Archives, are an indication of the vigilance maintained against the plague. In 1583, King James VI (1567–1625) issued a signet letter to the bailies of the town, detailing measures against pestilence; and fourteen years later the provost, bailies and council of Glasgow also enumerated the measures being taken against plague in Edinburgh, Leith, the Merse and Teviotdale.[97]

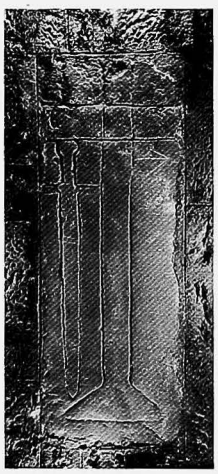

figure 8
A medieval tombstone in the present Dumbarton parish church

A chapel dedicated to St Mary, Blessed Virgin, was in existence by at least 1329.[98] It and its attached properties were gifted, in 1453, to Isabella, countess of Lennox and duchess of Albany, widow of James Stewart, earl of Lennox (*see* p 15), by the bailies, council and burgesses of Dumbarton, to found the collegiate church of St Mary.[99] This was a semi-monastic establishment, with a provost at its head, supported by six prebendaries or priests.[100] The provost's house stood close to the collegiate church and local tradition suggests that the manses of the prebendaries stood along the line of Collegepark Street. There seems also to have been a hospital attached.[101] The countess endowed the college church well;[102] and, at the Reformation, the revenues amounted to £233 6s 8d.[103] Interestingly, a priest of the collegiate church was given a rental of ten shillings for the use of his yard to build a ship, in 1507. This strongly suggests that not only was there shipbuilding on-going on the bank of the Leven to the south of the High Street, near to the harbour, but also to the north of the town, between the collegiate church and the river, where a shipyard may have existed in the early sixteenth century and an engine works was later sited.[104] Such a siting is also a reminder that medieval Dumbarton was situated within a loop of the River Leven, surrounded at high tide by water on all sides, other than to the east **figure 9**.

There is one reference to King James IV (1488–1513), who was often in the town (*see* p 20) and noted for his charity to the priests of both the collegiate and parish churches, giving alms of fourteen shillings to the 'Black Friars in Dumbarton' in 1505.[105] Although this suggests that there were Dominicans in or very near to the town, there is no further

figure 9
Detail from J Blaeu's map, *The Province of Lennox called the Shyre of Dun-Britton*, 1654, showing Dumbarton

information and they may have been merely visiting the town, perhaps from Glasgow.

A chapel dedicated to St Patrick stood in the castle,[106] on the south side of the Rock, from at least 1271,[107] and possibly much earlier (*see* p 11 & 16). Its revenues amounted to £6 13s 4d at the Reformation.[108] This chapel was for the benefit of the occupants of the castle and the townspeople of Dumbarton would have had no access. There was, however, another church within the present boundaries of Dumbarton, the parish church of Cardross **figure 10**. This served the separate parish of Cardross, on the west bank of the Leven. A much smaller parish church than that of Dumbarton, its ruins may still be seen in Levengrove Park. Somewhere near the town was a further chapel, dedicated to St Mary. Its precise site is not clear. This could be one and the same as the collegiate chapel or, alternatively, as Blaeu's seventeenth-century map indicates, it may have been located at Chapeltown, a little to the east of the town **figure 9**.[109]

Situated beside one of the most important royal strongholds, it was inevitable that Dumbarton was often pulled into national political events. During the competition for the crown, after the death of the young Princess Margaret, Maid of Norway, Dumbarton Castle was handed over to King Edward I of England (1272–1307), who then bestowed it upon John Balliol when the adjudication over the crown went in his favour. Between 1296 and 1309, however, it was held by the English, with Sir John de Menteith installed as governor of the castle, town and sheriffdom in 1304.[110] It was he who took William Wallace captive in Glasgow in 1305, and it is possible, therefore, that Wallace was held as a prisoner in Dumbarton Castle for a week or so before being despatched to London and execution. Eight years later, however, the castle was firmly in the hands of King Robert I, and he is known to have been in residence there.[111] In his declining years, Robert I stayed close to Dumbarton, at Cardross. The town probably had close contacts with him, providing both a work force and routine food supplies. It is known, for example, that salmon was sent from Dumbarton to the king a few days before his death. The royal manor-house contained a hall and a chapel and had a thatched roof, plastered walls and glazed windows. Its site has traditionally been taken to be at Castlehill to the north-west of the town,[112] but contemporary records suggest that this tradition is incorrect. It is likely that it stood much nearer the river, as the king's great ship was pulled out of the river into

figure 10
The ruins of Cardross parish church 1996

the burn which ran beside the house, and from there it was easy to tranport the gear and tackle to the house.[113]

It was to Dumbarton that the young King David II and his consort were brought for safety after the Scottish defeat at Halidon Hill in 1333. One of only five castles holding out for the king, its secluded position in the land communications of Scotland brought increased security.[114] And it was from this near impregnable fortress, held by Sir Malcolm Fleming in the Bruce interest,[115] that, the following spring, they sailed for France.[116] The king was again at Dumbarton, in 1345x46, 1353, 1357[117] and 1360.[118] The reign of his successor, Robert II (1371–90), saw further visits to the town and to the castle. The year after his accession he was at Dumbarton;[119] and again in 1374,[120] 1383[121] and 1384.[122]

The castle and its neighbouring town were to witness a number of both sieges and royal visits over the next two centuries. In 1392, for example, Robert III was at Dumbarton.[123] He was back six years later, when the Dukes of Albany and Rothesay were based in Dumbarton for their expedition to the Isles. The usefulness of Dumbarton as a base, however, must have been greatly affected by the fact that the castle was held unofficially by Walter Danielstoun, who had seized control the previous year, apparently with considerable local support. The holding of such an important royal fortress in defiance of the crown was probably a significant comment on the reign of Robert III. For at least three months in 1398, from August until October, the king was at Dumbarton with a huge army, in an attempt to oust Danielstoun. In the event he was unsuccessful, but the effect on the town was immense. Iron, wood and foodstuffs were requisitioned for the campaign in the Isles and the siege. The bailies of Dumbarton rendered no accounts in the three years from 1397 to 1399 and in 1400 submitted only a reduced burghal ferme because of the almost constant state of warfare, '*guerre de uno anno trium annorum*'.[124]

In 1425, James Stewart, son of the late Regent Albany and grandson of the eighth and last Celtic earl of Lennox, assaulted and burned the town and murdered the king's uncle, Sir John Stewart, who was holding the castle with thirty-two men.[125] The Earl of Lennox, with several supporters, was executed for his troubles, leaving his wife, Isabella, a widow in retirement; she was later to found the collegiate church in Dumbarton (*see* p 17). Five of Lennox's accomplices were dismembered and quartered[126] and the body of one, Adam Ged, was placed in Dumbarton's market place as a deterrent to future rebels.[127] Ten years later, a small French fleet arrived at the castle, with a mission to secure the marriage of James I's (1406–37) daughter, Margaret, to Louis, son of King Charles VII of France (1422–61), and it was from Dumbarton that the eleven-year old princess sailed to what was to be a miserable marriage.[128] There is some evidence that Dumbarton was set on fire in 1437; but whether this was the castle, town, or both, is unclear.[129] It is known that James II (1437–60) was in Dumbarton in 1450.[130] Dumbarton was besieged by the fleet of Edward IV of England (1461–83) in 1481, but was successfully defended by Sir Andrew Wood, later of Largo.[131]

The history of Dumbarton became inextricably linked with that of the Stewart earls of Lennox. Traditionally, the keepers of the castle were the sheriffs of Dumbarton. In 1488, however, King James III (1460–88), with the town showing itself unsure for the crown, exempted the burgesses of Dumbarton from muster under the sheriff, although they were to be ready to defend themselves, by holding a *wappinschaw* (weapon showing), as was the custom in other burghs.[132] John, the first Stewart earl of Lennox, took up arms against James IV from the safety of Dumbarton Rock, with the result that the castle was twice besieged in 1489,[133] firstly, and unsuccessfully, by Colin, first earl of Argyll. This failure came only after the burning of the greater part of the town after a sally by the garrison.[134] The second assault was led by the young king, who forced the four sons of Lennox to capitulate.

The town saw better fortune for a period after this. It was developed as a shipbuilding and outfitting base for James IV's new navy.[135] He bought a ship from the laird of Laucht for £130 and had it repaired at Dumbarton,[136] for example, as well as having numbers of others built anew.[137] It was from Dumbarton that the king sailed in his expeditions to pacify the western mainland and islands of his kingdom. He was, for example, at Dumbarton on 5 May 1495, ready for his journey to the Isles[138] and after the escape, in 1501, of Donald Dubh, the grandson of the last Lord of the Isles, it was at Dumbarton that a naval expedition was fitted out to effect his recapture.[139] In April 1504, the royal army assembled at Dumbarton, from where artillery and other equipment, including 'gun stanes' or stone bullets, were despatched for the siege of Carneburg, off the west coast of Mull.[140] The records suggest that the king was a regular visitor to Dumbarton, either as a resident in the castle or as the guest of local noblemen; and he was a frequent sight in the town, where he received the services of local people, such as the wrights, ferrymen and food provisioners; accepted gifts of apples and strawberries; played at cards; hunted in the woods; listened to the town piper; and attended 'evin-sang'.[141]

The death of James IV at the Battle of Flodden in 1513 brought much activity to Dumbarton and its castle. Held by John, fifth Lord Erskine, for the queen mother, the castle was surprised by John, the third earl of Lennox, after he burrowed under the gate at the north entry, one stormy January night in 1514. It was here that John Stewart, duke of Albany, cousin of the dead king, landed the following year, to take up his duties as Governor of Scotland. After the arrest of Lennox in 1516, a French garrison was established. The duke's numerous journeys to and from France over the next eight years found Dumbarton a convenient port of entry and exit. His arrival in 1523 could not but have had an impact on the town. According to one contemporary, the Prioress of Coldstream, he arrived with troops for an invasion of England, amounting to eighty-seven ships, 600 horses, 4,000 foot soldiers, 500 men-at-arms and 1,000 arquebusiers armed with sixteen cannon and 1,000 small guns.[142] He made his final departure from Scotland in May the following year, leaving from Dumbarton;[143] and the French garrison was removed. This inevitably brought a struggle from rival factions for control of the castle, until James V (1513–42) finally secured it.

In the years from 1531–40, Dumbarton once more became the base for several royal expeditions to the west.[144] Along with Wigtown, Kirkcudbright, Ayr, Irvine, Renfrew and Glasgow, Dumbarton was instructed, for example in 1530, to have ready ships and boats for the crossing to suppress the rebels in the Isles.[145] A measure of the relative importance and wealth of Dumbarton may be seen in January 1533, when a number of towns were required to supply troops. The four large burghs on the east coast—Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen and Perth—were to provide seventy-five, thirty-six, twenty-eight and twenty-two men respectively. Dumbarton's requisition was a mere two and a half men (at a cost of £7 10s per month), compared with Ayr at seven men, Glasgow at six, Irvine at four and Renfrew and Rutherglen with three and two respectively.[146] This is a pattern to some extent confirmed thirty years later, when burgh charges were imposed for an embassy to Denmark. Dumbarton was assessed at a mere £15 11s 6d compared with, for example, Edinburgh's £466 13s 0d, Glasgow's £37 16s 2d, Irvine's £25 17 0d and Renfrew's £18 17s 10d.[147] The tax roll of the royal burghs in 1535 is also telling. 5.56% of the total

taxation was raised from the Upper Clyde burghs. Of these, Glasgow paid 2.01%, Dumbarton 0.84%, Renfrew 1.19%, Rutherglen 0.68% and Lanark 0.84%. Of the Lower Clyde burghs, Ayr paid 2.36% and Irvine 1.35%. Dumbarton was thus the fifth equal of these seven Clyde burghs, a position maintained in the 1550, 1556, 1563 and 1579 tax rolls.[148]

The minority of the infant Mary, Queen of Scots (1542–67), which saw the 'Rough Wooing' by England bring a series of raids, attempted invasions and efforts to create a pale in southern Scotland, inevitably involved Dumbarton, as one of the key royal castles in the realm. Matthew, the fourth earl of Lennox, was already trying to organise a rival, pro-English party to wrest control from the regent, James, first earl of Arran, duke of Châtelherault. Lennox met the French envoys who brought supplies and money to Dumbarton in October 1543. By the spring of 1544, Lennox was in England, plotting the fall of the castle as part of a wider strategy by Henry VIII to destabilise the realm through a seaborne expedition up the west coast; but the venture failed and Lennox was forced to retreat.[149] The castle was eventually secured by Regent Arran.[150]

Such traumatic events must have had a profound effect on the township close by, although there were sometimes compensations: 'ane pure woman that had her kye slane at the assege', for example, was granted £3 6s. And it is clear that not all burgesses of Dumbarton necessarily supported the pro-French party of the regent. In 1555, for example, a land, tenement, backland, foreland, yard and pertinents of a burgage plot on the south side of the 'Hiegait' (High Street) were gifted to one Robert Leche. They had become the property of the queen as a result of the actions of the erstwhile owner and burgess, Gilbert Masoun. His 'treasonable passing to the realm of England and there remaining by the space of eight years in time of war and peace without licence'[151] meant the forfeiture of his property. The importance of the retention of Dumbarton by the government forces was highlighted in the events that preceded and followed the Battle of Pinkie in 1547. It was to Dumbarton that the French sent supplies of weapons and reinforcements of troops,[152] and it was also here that the spoils from a Portugese ship (the ally of England) were deposited.[153] In 1547 and 1549, the governors for the young queen were at Dumbarton, where charters were issued in her name.[154] The castle was repaired and the defences strengthened and, in February 1548, the young queen arrived to spend five months at Dumbarton; it was deemed to be a safe place after the disaster of the Battle of Pinkie the previous year. The ready access to France from Dumbarton's harbour must also have been an influential factor; and it was from here that she sailed to the security of France in July 1548 and, ultimately, to marriage with the young dauphin.

The queen returned as a widow to Scotland thirteen years later. Her next visit to Dumbarton was not until 1563, when she stayed merely to dine on 15 July, while progressing through the Lennox and Argyll.[155] In May 1568, after her disastrous defeat at the battle of Langside, she was probably aiming for the safety of Dumbarton Castle, held by her supporters,[156] with the possibility of flight to France, when the forces of the regent, James Stewart, earl of Moray, barred the way and she turned south.[157] After her enforced flight to England, the castle and the nearby town were still to remain central pivots in Scottish politics.

The castle was held by the queen's party for the first three years of the civil war which followed. John, fifth Lord Fleming, governor of the castle and a staunch queen's man, took further measures to ensure his position. In September 1568, with the help of Archibald, fifth earl of Argyll, he hired between eighty and a hundred hagbutters and had them fortify Dumbarton church. It was said at the time that the whole town was 'as a fortress'.[158] In the same month, the town witnessed the collection of the signatures of seven earls, twelve lords, eight bishops and nine commendators for a document ('The Dumbarton Bond') pledging their support to the exiled queen.[159] By 1569, however, pressure was increasing on the Marian garrison and proclamations were made at the town's market cross in an attempt to rally support for its relief by the king's party. The men of Glasgow, Ayr and Irvine were also instructed to convene at Dumbarton, and in August of the same year, legislation was passed imposing a levy which would support the

maintenance of a permanent siege of the castle 'alsweil be sey as land'.[160] Correspondence from the regent to the burgesses of Dumbarton in December 1569 and January 1570 suggests that the town had expended considerable sums of money in the support of the regent's men, by the supply of meat, drink and other necessities in the previous year.[161]

The town was to suffer further. As at Edinburgh, the townspeople found themselves caught between a royal castle held on behalf of the absent Queen and besieged by a force of king's men, with damage inflicted on the town by both sides. Lord Fleming demolished much of both the parish church and college church, although the latter had already been largely 'cassin doun be ye congregatioun in ye fiftie nyne zeir', during the Reformation crisis,[162] as well as the parish church of Cardross, along with the houses of many burgesses who supported the king **figure 10**. The stones and material were transported to the castle where he intended improving the fortifications and building stables for the horses of the awaited French troops.[163] In November 1570, it was the turn of Lord Fleming to attempt to woo the townspeople: 'to all in the town of Dumbartane ... he offered friendship if they [would] avow the queen for their sovereign and leave the obedience of the king's authority'.[164] A daring escalade up the east side of the Rock on the night of 1 April 1571, under the leadership of Captain Thomas Crawford of Jordanhill, however, brought about the surprise and flight of the defending garrison. The fall of Dumbarton Castle had a serious impact on the fortunes of the queen's party,[165] but it also brought repercussions to the town. The deposed and imprisoned Mary, in a Christmas Day letter to her cousin, Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603), probably referring to the end of the siege of the castle, spoke of 'the burning of Dombertren'.[166] The town had probably seen enough of politics and warfare. In October 1571, its inhabitants were granted a licence, on the payment of £50 by the town, to 'remaine and byd at hame fra the raid and army ordaint to convene and meet the Lord Regent at Dumfries'.[167]

the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

The reign of James VI saw fewer royal visits to Dumbarton. The newly created dukes of Lennox, the first being Esmé Stewart who was granted the governorship of the castle,[168] also had little interest in their Scottish inheritance and, with the end of the 'Auld Alliance', the town lost some of its earlier importance as the gateway to France. As late as 1602, Dumbarton was still viewed as an ideal base from which to launch a large scale invasion into Scotland with Spanish troops.[169] The town, however, continued to play its role as rallying point for punitive expeditions against rebellious Islanders and Highlanders.[170] James VI, on five occasions—the first in 1596—summoned levies to Dumbarton with the intention of reducing rebels in the Highlands and Isles.[171] In 1608, Dumbarton was required to provide some of the food supplies for an expedition against the Isles, but not all men in the town were enlisted in the expedition.[172] Although James VI intended to lead the earlier expeditions personally, he was never required to. The objective of pacifying the chiefs was normally achieved before the relevant expedition was due to set out.[173]

The order gained in his Scottish kingdom by James VI before he left for England in 1603, prompted him to boast, in 1607, that he could rule Scotland merely by the pen. All was not total calm, however, in the Lennox region. A number of clan and family feuds erupted into outright war at this time and Dumbarton became involved. Its Lammas Fair in 1590, for example, was the setting for the expression of violent dislike between the Buchanans and the MacAulays, when MacAulay of Duirland was killed, even though, according to the MacAulays, they 'wer in quiet and sobir maner doing their lesum effearis and busynes'.[174] But perhaps the most virulent feud in the Lennox was between the Colquhouns of Luss and the MacGregors from the east side of Loch Lomond. In 1603, this resulted in open conflict at Glenfruin, with the loss of two MacGregors and 140 from the Colquhoun side. Amongst these latter were two Dumbarton burgesses; one was a bailie, Tobias Smollett, and the other, David Fallisdaill, also lost two sons. Two local lairds, Walter Colquhoun of Barnhill and Peter Napier of Kilmahew, also perished. The

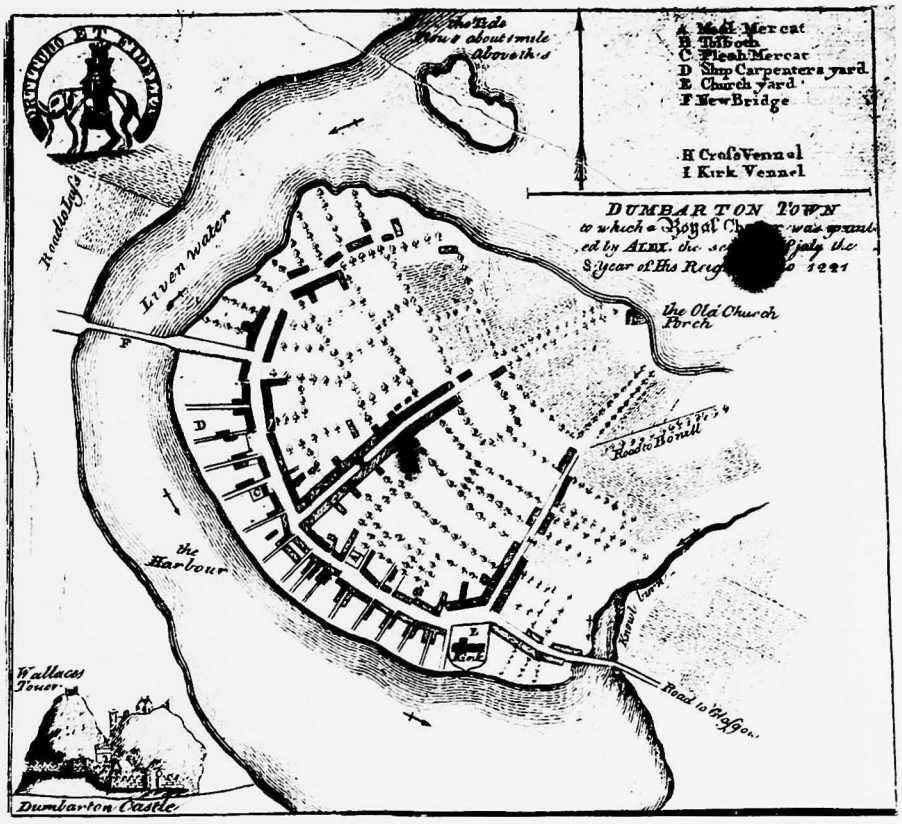

figure 11
Extract from Charles Ross's map, *The Shire of Dumbarton* 1777

MacGregors were to suffer greatly for this victory: twenty-five were hanged at Edinburgh and the clan remained outlawed. The loyalties of Dumbarton were clear. In February 1604, on the instructions of the bailies and council, some of whom probably fought at Glenfruin, the tolbooth of Dumbarton was adorned with the heads of the chief of the MacGregors and one of his men.[175] There was, however, great fear of reprisal and in April of that year the town council decided to divide the town into eight sections, each with an armed watch, and no strangers were to be received into the town without the express permission of the bailies, such was the supposed danger of the clan burning the town.[176] The fugitive clansmen were ruthlessly ferreted out over the next few years and the Clan Gregor had severe enactments placed against them throughout the remainder of James VI's reign.[177]

Dumbarton probably had greater worries at this time than involvement in Lennox feuds. The River Leven is tidal to approximately two miles above the town **figure 11**. A high spring tide, allied to spate conditions from melting snow from the Highland hills, invariably meant floods. The north part of the town was particularly vulnerable. Clearly, the reference to the use of lands of the collegiate church for shipbuilding (*see* p 17) indicated that, in the middle ages, the river at times passed to the north of the church. The potential problem had been contained by Robert Maxwell of Pollok, the provost of the collegiate church from 1523 to 1541, and Bishop of Orkney from 1526. He had constructed a dyke to contain the water and had a channel deepened to control the flow. This became known as the Bishop's cast or water-gang. The Reformation, however, brought some destruction to the collegiate church, which was abandoned (*see* p 22). Quite probably the water-gang fell into disrepair; and sometime around 1580 the river burst its banks, flooding the north of the town. Much of the Broad Meadow was to lie under water and was known as the 'Drowned Lands', unreclaimed until the nineteenth century. Even by the 1580s, this area of the town was not heavily populated; but some housing was certainly lost, the road to Bonhill disappeared and Townend became separated from the rest of Dumbarton.[178] Tobias Smollett, a pupil at Dumbarton Grammar School in the 1730s, would recall feeling cobble or paving stones under the water as he paddled the old pathway from the collegiate church to Townend.[179]

Necessary as were measures to protect the town from inundation, it did not have the wherewithal to fund such projects. Numerous appeals were made to the Convention of Royal Burghs,[180] the Privy Council and to the king in England. Some success was achieved in the form of imposts, or taxes, which were granted for the support of the work in 1600, as sixty acres had already been lost and it was believed that the burgh was 'lyke to be environed on all pairtis and overflowne with the...watteris'.[181] These imposts were renewed in 1607,[182] after an appeal to the king that the 'Leavin and rage of the sea [were at] the very yaird ends of the toun, and [had] carryed away some of [the] houssis, and [was] lykle to undo [their] haill toun'.[183] In spite of other financial support, funds proved inadequate: in 1608, a tax of 20,000 merks was levied on the kingdom by the Scottish parliament in aid of Dumbarton; while this was being raised, the Privy Council was instructed by the king to pay an additional grant of 12,000 merks, and Dumbarton was excused involvement in yet another proposed expedition to the Western Isles. In the event, the funds were slow in forthcoming, even though royal reminders were sent to the Privy Council in 1611 and 1612. Further requests for financial assistance from the crown were repeated in 1628.[184]

Some improvements were achieved. The advice of a number of specialists was taken, including that of John Napier of Merchiston, the inventor of logarithms. In 1608, according to his instructions, the Bishop's water-gang was reconstructed, with the assistance of all in the burgh. What else was achieved in the years from 1608 until 1615 is unclear, but the bulwarks were found to be inadequate in 1628, when all able-bodied people in the town were ordered out with shovels and spades, those on the east side of the market cross at low water one day, those on the west at low water on the next. Men were paid a daily wage of five shillings and women at the rate of four shillings. It was at this point that the imposts were repeated; the town council appealed to be 'helpit yearlie', by renewal of the imposts, as the costs over three years had been more than could be raised in seven years. In 1634, there was a further crisis and, yet again, the bulwarks were repaired; but this was to remain a prevailing problem until 1859.[185]

During this time, the town had received further support from the crown. In 1609, James VI confirmed all Dumbarton's previous charters and redefined its trading privileges.[186] Dumbarton had continued throughout the 1580s, 1590s and into the seventeenth century to assert its rights to control shipping and trade in the Clyde, for example, attacking Renfrew boats and imprisoning their crews in the tolbooth in 1590 and attempting in 1585 to control the fishing rights of Ayr, Irvine and Renfrew.[187] The new charter probably greatly irritated Glasgow. Glasgow, however, received a charter, in 1611, elevating it to the status of a royal burgh and, significantly, giving it the right to load and unload vessels on the Clyde between the Cloch and Glasgow Bridge. This did not, however, end Dumbarton's persistent claims that it had the right to impose customs and other dues on other burghs using the Clyde.[188] This ploy was assisted by the fortuitous fact of geography that ships, as opposed to boats, could still not pass further up the Clyde than Dumbarton. In 1623, for example, a Dutch vessel did business with Glasgow merchants; it was boarded by about thirty Dumbarton men, the master was apprehended and he was incarcerated in the tolbooth of Dumbarton. Charles I (1625–49) issued a further charter to Glasgow in 1636, confirming its economic privileges and, in effect, granting total freedom of trade on the Clyde. Dumbarton refused to accept this, appealing to James, fourth duke of Lennox, the Privy Council and the Convention of Royal Burghs, and it continued to enter all Glasgow ships in its own Register.

Disputes continued, with occasional attempts to accommodate each other: in 1646, for example, an agreement was reached over the import of tobacco.[189] In 1658, Glasgow instructed that all its burgesses should enter their vessels and cargo in the Glasgow town clerk's chamber and not in Dumbarton's. The response of Dumbarton was to send their bailies, backed with armed men, to arrest the ships not entered at Dumbarton. The net result was a fine of £500 on Dumbarton by the Privy Council and almost £1,800 costs[190] The town made another unwise decision at this point. In 1658, it turned down the chance of becoming Glasgow's outport, by refusing permission for Glasgow town council to

purchase land and build an extensive harbour, on the grounds that 'the influx of mariners would tend to raise the price of butter and eggs to the inhabitants'. The result was the construction of Port Glasgow and Dumbarton lost the chance of becoming a major seaport.[191] The town attempted a further tactic: after the Restoration of 1660, it claimed that it had lost its rights due to the injustice of 'the late usurped authorities of the English council of state', but with no success.[192]

There were soon signs that Dumbarton was suffering economically; in 1680 blame was ascribed to 'several new ports and harboures erected upon the river of Clyde'.[193] It was not until 1700 that an agreement was finally reached with Glasgow when, for a payment of £250 sterling to Dumbarton, the burgesses of each burgh were clear of each other's port. But even here there was a small loophole: some Glasgow merchants rented or bought property in Dumbarton, to save paying Glasgow dues; and it was not until 1858 that Dumbarton abandoned this last vestige of privilege for £5,000.[194]

The town's exports were small compared with those of Glasgow and did not always make up a full complement for a ship load. In 1628, for example, a ship was partly loaded at the port with herring and then sailed to Ireland for the rest of its cargo—cloth, butter, cheese 'and such like'—before continuing its journey to France.[195] The Register of Ship Entries at Dumbarton from 1595 to 1658 gives a good insight into the commodities in which Dumbarton traded. Salt was the most often listed cargo, and it was to be measured only with Dumbarton's measures. Most of the salt came from the salines on the south-west coast of Brittany. Other imports included wine from Bordeaux and La Rochelle and, occasionally, from Spain; timber in the form of deals, masts, spars and joists from the Baltic or Norway and barrel staves and hoops, mainly from Ireland; and other items, such as oats, meal, flax, iron, tar, pins, ribbons, spices and, after 1642, tobacco.[196] What the Register also pinpoints is that Dumbarton was no match for Glasgow in the field of overseas trade.

Inland trade was concentrated largely on Dumbarton's three main fairs, granted in 1639:[197] at Patrickmas (March 17), Midsummer (June 24) and Lammas (August 1). The town benefited from its position on the north side of the Clyde, close to the Highlands. The main commodities dealt in were salmon and herring, coarse cloth and flax, meal, and skins, such as fox, otter, sheep and lamb.[198] Hides were also an important element of internal trade, sometimes brought into the town on the hoof. The fairs and horse, cattle and other livestock markets were held at the Townhead, between Skay Bank and the ferry boat landing.[199] When Dumbarton realised, in 1680, that it was losing out in foreign trade to new ports on the Clyde, it placed a petition before the Privy Council for a warrant to raise voluntary contributions towards building a bridge over the Leven. It was felt that such a facility would encourage Dumbarton's trade in cattle, as there was a high risk of animals drowning, particularly in times of storm and high tides.[200] Three years later, however, difficulties in collecting funds had become obvious[201] and the project, in the event, was abandoned until the eighteenth century (*see* p 33).[202]

By 1681, the town was said to be 'under much decay both as to [its] former traffic and number of substantious and qualified inhabitants',[203] a view confirmed in 1692, when, according to the commissioners appointed by the Convention of Royal Burghs, Dumbarton's inland trade consisted merely of small goods retailed from Glasgow and other burghs; it possessed only one small bark of twenty-four tons (which was used by Glasgow merchants), three little herring boats and no ships; and it had no foreign trade at all.[204]

The state of the town in comparison with its neighbours may be noted by the level of support it was to give to central government. In 1645, for example, Dumbarton was to pay for twelve soldiers, in comparison with Glasgow's 110, Ayr's forty-one, Irvine's twenty-three, Renfrew's ten and Rutherglen's five.[205] Three years later, Dumbarton was taxed at £162, whereas Glasgow paid £1,530, Ayr £342, Irvine £252, Renfrew £90 and Rutherglen £45,[206] a pattern that was repeated the following year and in 1670, 1690 and 1695.[207]

In 1643, according to a stent roll drawn up for the purpose of taxation, there were 148 holders of houses and lands in the burgh and fifty-six stallangers, or stall-holders, without

burgess privileges. These figures suggest a population of little more than 800, even if it is assumed that all the stallangers were resident and had families in the town, which was not necessarily the case.[208] The population may, indeed, have been nearer to between 600 and 700. These figures were confirmed eight years later, when 156 householders were listed. This may also suggest that some of the stallangers were not inhabitants of the town.[209] In 1691, there were only 282 hearths in the town. Given that the town houses of local lairds (*see* p 28) would have multiple hearths, that some properties might have two or three hearths, and that the hearths of smithies were also included in this number, this suggests no more than 200 houses in the town, which would imply a population of under 1,000 even by the end of the seventeenth century.[210] Compared with Glasgow, with some 7,600 population in 1610 and at least 14,700 in the 1660s, Dumbarton was tiny.[211]

Dumbarton was still, clearly, a very small town in the seventeenth century and, in spite of its forays into trading overseas, it remained essentially rural. The town herd took the cattle of the townspeople out to the common every day, leaving before 5 am and returning at sunset. The town was surrounded by numerous farms. Overbog and Netherbog were divided into long rigs, many of which were cultivated by the townspeople. Much of the town's land was feued out to private individuals, but when not let out, the land was maintained by the townspeople. In 1636, for example, 'the westmost muir of the Ovirbog' was cultivated by seven men and seven women, who got sea-wrack from Newark for fertiliser.[212] The Broad Meadow, where not flooded, continued to function as grazing land, as did the town's green, to the south-east of the burgh.[213] The town, however, was home to a number of craftsmen, such as maltmen, slaters, tailors and masons; the hammermen guild received its charter of incorporation in 1656; and, by 1635, the weavers trade was sufficiently established that it had a deacon of the craft, John Weir.[214] The town also had a resident doctor by 1637.[215]

Thomas Tucker, an English commissioner, described Dumbarton in 1656 as 'a small and very poor burgh'.[216] There were, however, signs of improvement to the townscape. High Street was still the main thoroughfare, with Kirk Vennel (later Church Street) and Cross Vennel (College Street) leading northwards on the alignments of the present Church Street and College Street, which has recently disappeared with redevelopment. Other small vennels and wynds led off the main street, such as Little Common Vennel, Penmouth Vennel and Smith's Vennel, some giving access to the river front. The impression is that the south side of the High Street was still the more favoured.[217] The market cross, which stood in the High Street, was rebuilt in 1628, the old one being 'ruynous' and the roadway around it, which was broken, was repaired. The bridge across the Knowle Burn, to the south-east of the town and on the all-important route to both Glasgow and the castle, had been damaged by storm and was also repaired at this time. The gate on it, ten years later, was also repaired when it was 'in danger of falling down'.[218] To reach Cardoss, on the west bank of the Leven, the townspeople still had to take the ferry.

It seems that there was no separate grammar school building in the 1620s, the students being taught in a vaulted room in the tower of the parish church.[219] In 1633, forty Latin grammars were purchased, which probably gives a good indication of the number of students.[220] The records suggest that there may have been another school in the town for elementary learning: Issobell Abirnethie was given £9 6s 8d in 1627 and 1628, for example, 'for her help in keiping the schoole for lairning the young bairnes to reid'.[221] She was succeeded by Margaret Hume and Marie Sempill, which also implies the existence of some sort of elementary school.[222] A hospital for the poor of the town had been promised by Sir John Buchanan. Building had commenced by 1630 but it appears to have been abandoned, probably because of Buchanan's failure to place as much as promised in the fund.[223] The 1747 view, by Paul Sandby, of the parish church shows the partially finished Buchanan Hospital beside it **figure 7**.

The town's burial ground was also close by, in the churchyard.[224] This was not always well maintained; in 1686, for example, the provost complained to the kirk session that his family burial place was being vandalised by children.[225] Twelve years later, animals were

roaming the kirkyard, which was deemed to be 'unbecoming and scandalous'.[226] In 1617, the Archbishop of St Andrews, commendator of Kilwinning Abbey, had resigned the parish church, the patronage, vicarage and manse into the hands of James VI, who, the following year, conveyed them to the provost, bailies, council and community of Dumbarton, so, from this date, the town took on responsibility for the fabric of the church and manse.[227] The steeple of the church was seemingly constantly under repair. And in 1632 funds were donated to help the minister 'big his manse', which might imply a totally new building or merely extensive repairs,[228] the minister, William Blair having bequeathed a house and manse to the parish in 1620[229] and a manse being known to exist in 1617. During this century a number of internal alterations were made to the parish church; in particular, lofts were inserted for the use of the crafts of the town. The hammermen also inserted a window and their coat of arms above their loft. The kirk session permitted the window, but not the coat of arms, which the hammermen were ordered to remove.[230]

The tolbooth, the most important secular building, was one of the most well maintained structures in the town. It is known to have had a bell, which the town officer rang at 5 am and 10 pm to alert the townspeople to the start of the working day and the curfew at night; and the town clock was probably at the tolbooth.[231] Reglazing was effected in 1627;[232] slating and pointing of the roof is recorded in 1628;[233] but, in 1635, the tolbooth was re-roofed and an adjoining property purchased, as it was considered too small;[234] and between 1642 to 1645 it was demolished and totally rebuilt at a cost of £3,335, £1,000 of which was contributed by the Convention of Royal Burghs **figure 12**.[235] This new tolbooth is known to have had a vaulted cellar, as one Robert Ferrier, according to the Common Good Accounts for 1646–47, was paid for making a gutter for rainwater in front of the tolbooth, 'when it was lickly to fil the voult under the tolboothe whair the townes tobacco lay'.[236] In spite of the fact that it was known that the tolbooth was 'a most sufficient prison in walls, gates, doores and windowes and sufficiently attended by jayleours and uther servants', a prisoner managed to escape in 1671 by breaking into the loft and then cutting his way through the sarking and slates.[237] The stocks stood close by the tolbooth and needed maintenance,[238] as did the gallows, which were built anew, in 1604, on the town's common land, at Croftingrie.[239] The town also had to upkeep another important building—the weighhouse or custom house, which was probably sited very near to the tolbooth.[240]

Other building works undertaken at the time the tolbooth was rebuilt suggest that the town was recovering, to some extent, from its financial difficulties at the time of the inundation. In 1642, a quay was built on the River Leven and, six years later, a flesh market was erected. The town mill was rebuilt after being burned down in 1658. There are also numerous references to the paving of streets and the small vennels that ran back from the main thoroughfares.[241]

As well as maintaining the fabric of their own town, the townspeople were expected to help with the upkeep of the castle. In 1627, for example, it was said to be in a ruinous condition and the town was encouraged by the Privy Council to assist in its maintenance.[242] *The Accounts of the Masters of Works for Building and Repairing Royal Palaces and Castles* indicated that extensive work was effected on the castle between 1616 and 1649.[243] The most important alteration was the erection of the Wallace Tower from 1617 to 1619. Its site had been occupied by an earlier tower of the same name, which had been standing as late as 1571. As no mention of it is made in the accounts, it had probably fallen down, although its lowest vaulted chamber may have remained (*see* pp 80–1). The castle fell into disrepair in the years that followed and, in 1627, it was found that 'the walls in the cheefe and most important pairts thairof wer ruinous and decayed, the houssis wanting doores, locks or bolts, and nather wind nor water tight, the ordinance unmounted and little or no provisioun of victualls and munitioun...within the same'. Further attention was given in 1628 but, thereafter, the castle was neglected, although some minor repairs were effected, including the building or rebuilding of a brewhouse and other offices, the reslating of the south side of the hall and an attempt to fortify it in 1639–40. In 1641, parliament decided that, in future, the walls should not be repaired. Three years later, orders were given that

figure 12
The old tolbooth of Dumbarton and the Mackenzie House *c* 1893

the houses and walls should be demolished, but this was not effected. It continued to decline, prisoners being transferred to Edinburgh in 1645, since there were no rooms, irons or men to guard them. In 1647, Provost Sempill (*see* p 29) wrote that 'the houses are verie ruynous, and a grit part of the bak wall neirest the sey is fallin out'. The decline continued and by 1690, in spite of repairs between 1673 and 1693,[244] walls were reported to be falling down.[245]

Most of the townspeople would still have lived in simple, single-storied houses with thatched roofs. Many would have been built predominantly of wood, although stone houses were on the increase. One suitable quarry for stone was the collegiate church. As early as 1628, the town council gave permission for the use of its stones for the repair of the Kirk Vennel; and even in the 1970s its stones might still be witnessed, re-used, in old property in the town.[246] Fire was a constant hazard, with a high proportion of wooden housing in the town. In June 1626, 'in the grit drouth', the town drummer marched through the streets warning of the danger of fire. Leather buckets, for carrying water to fires, were kept in the tolbooth. These had to be replaced on a number of occasions, having been chewed by rats. A number of lairds had town houses in the burgh. The properties of such as MacFarlane of Arrochar, Colquhoun of Luss, Darleith of Darleith and the Earl of Glencairn[247] would have been considerably grander and probably stood in the most favoured part of the town, near the market cross. Glencairn's house **figure 13**, built in 1623, still stands in the High Street. A four-storied prestigious building and a good example of Scottish domestic architecture of this period, it is probably a true reflection of the quality homes in seventeenth-century Dumbarton.

One well known local family was the Sempills of Stoneyflat. In the 1590s, John Sempill was an active merchant and owner of a ship called the 'Lyon of the North'. With Thomas Fallisdaill, he was overseer of the water work to contain the Leven (*see* p 24). They alternated as provost for many years. The provostship was a new office for Dumbarton, the chief magistrates being, as recently as 1610, the two bailies, who functioned very much in the role of the medieval *prepositus*. It was probably in 1612, after the ratification of Dumbarton's 1609 charter by parliament, that the new office was set in place.[248] Sempill is perhaps best remembered for his part in defying the crown after the signing of the National Covenant in 1638. In October of that year, the town purchased muskets and powder from Edinburgh, and the following March a council of war was held in the town, with John Sempill at its head. On the last Sunday of the month, the governor of the royal

figure 13
Glencairn's Greit House, built in 1623. *From a postcard of unknown date*

castle, Sir William Stewart, was attending the parish church when, on the instructions of Sempill, he was arrested and forced to hand over the keys to the castle and divulge the password. Sempill then held the castle for a month. In 1640, the town's sympathies were clear when Archibald, eighth earl of Argyll, was provided with two fully equipped horsemen and a grey horse, which cost £90 in all.[249] The following year, supplies for the army were provided, including seventeen pairs of shoes for the soldiers of the town.[250] Sempill was officially Covenanting Keeper of the Castle from 1644 to 1648, holding out against royal authority. His expenses in this role, some £14,000, were never reimbursed[251] and he died in debt.[252] In 1652, the castle was taken over by the Cromwellian troops and put in the care of Major-General Lambert.

The town had shown itself to be opposed to the episcopal establishment earlier than this. In 1624, Mr Richard Dickson was banished from Dumbarton to Ireland for preaching in private houses. These preachings, it was said, attracted 'ane grite concurse of auditouris', who, it was feared, would become 'more obstinate in their disobedience to the orderis of the church whereunto they [were] of themselves evill effected'.[253] The Restoration of Charles II (1651–85) in 1660 also brought the restoration of bishops to the Scottish church. David Elphinstone, the minister of Dumbarton, was, in 1673, one of the many ejected from their charges for non-conformity; and there is firm evidence that many townspeople attended the forbidden house and field conventicles, even though the town had given a bond that they would not participate.[254] In 1674, Dumbarton Presbytery was complaining that 'conventicles do abound' and requesting military aid 'to seek out and apprehend the preachers'. The town council, as patrons of the church, showed some co-operation with episcopacy: in 1678, they wrote to the Privy Council, seeking authority to

deal with 'diverse and many persons within the burgh' who had been 'disorderlie by frequently attending field conventicles'. A number of local lairds were fined for holding conventicles in their own homes. John Napier of Kilmahew, William Semple of Dalmoak and John Yuill of Darleith were amongst their numbers, the last receiving a fine of £1,000 sterling, which he refused to pay and, in consequence, found himself imprisoned in Dumbarton Castle with other Covenanters.[255] A week after the visit of James, duke of York in 1681 to Dumbarton, when he and many of his entourage were made burgesses and guild brothers of the town, the provost, bailies and councillors took the Test Oath.[256] This had been imposed on all who held office in central or local government, as well as MPs, ministers and teachers, with the intention of excluding both Roman Catholics and Covenanters. Whether the Dumbarton officials swore willingly or otherwise is unclear.

The Common Good Accounts from 1614 to 1660, along with other contemporary sources, give interesting insights into life in Dumbarton in the seventeenth century. Burghs were administered from their common good funds at this time. The fund received its income from rentals of burgh lands and properties, mills, fishings, customs and tolls, burgh court fines, burgess entry fees, any profits on the purchase of ships' cargoes, loans to the town and interest on loans from the town. One of the most common entries in the Accounts is payments for hospitality, either for the council while on official business or for entertainment of visiting dignitaries. Wine was most usually the favoured drink, but whisky was offered to the Aberdeen commissioner in 1636. Thirteen years later, tobacco and pipes were provided for the ministers and gentlemen who had examined three witches, imprisoned in the tolbooth. James VI visited the town in 1617. A gallon of ale and thirteen quarts of wine were bought to drink his health. Women appear to have been the main providers of wine. In the year 1617–18, dues on wine raised £55 for the common good and all of this was paid by nine women tapsters.[257] Other pastimes included horse racing. A silver bell used on these occasions was repaired in 1615, but it was put away into the town's common kist for safe-keeping in 1636, 'seeing the horss raissis is ceissit this lang tyme'.[258] The perambulating of the marches of Dumbarton muir was also a significant day in the year of the townspeople. While serving was an official duty, to check against any encroachment into their territories, it also became an occasion for festivities.

There was, however, a harder side to life in the burgh. Transgressors against the peace of the community were publicly punished and humiliated. The stocks were the usual method of dealing with theft and the culprit, held fast by his legs, was open to verbal ridicule and unsavoury missiles, such as rotten fruit and eggs. An alternative punishment was to be nailed by the ear to the tron.[259] Whipping through the streets was another form of public display of wrongdoing. One Alastair MacAlpine suffered this fate for stealing herring, as did Catherine Smith, 'for getting a bairn with a souldeour'. One of the harshest punishments was banishment from the town, as this meant the loss of all privileges. This was the fate of Margaret Hamilton, for example, who was expelled for lying: she had sought financial assistance to buy a mourning sheet for her dead child, when, in reality, there was no death.[260] An increasingly common 'crime' in the seventeenth century was witchcraft.[261] In 1597, King James himself exhorted the bailies of Dumbarton to seek out any suspected of witchcraft.[262] The usual fate, after trial, was strangling followed by burning. A number of witches suffered this fate in the town, but only one warlock, in 1656.[263] Cripples who came to the town received short shrift, as they might become a burden. In 1631, for example, a Dumbarton man, Andrew Glen, received twelve shillings for 'carrying ane crippill aff the toun on his hors and kar'; and, in 1658, six shillings was given to a 'cripple man to put him aff the toun being a laimed souldior'.[264]

There is also much evidence of kindness and compassion. The burgh records contain numerous references to money being given to the needy, whether townspeople or outsiders. 'Ane distresset woman that came from the northe' received twenty-four shillings; a 'poore schipbrokin man who cam frae the Hielands' was given thirty shillings; and £2 was donated to a 'distressit gentilman robit with the Turkis'. Poor relief was normally the

preserve of the church authorities. In 1620, £48 8s was distributed to numerous orphans and twenty-three adults, amongst them, James Duncan, a leper.[265] The town authorities also displayed great care whenever plague threatened. For example, in 1604, it placed watchmen at the bridge and the college church to prevent strangers bringing disease into the town.[266] Two years later, watchmen were again nominated. They were placed at the town gates, which were at the bridge over the Knowle Burn and probably the college church. These were to be the only entrances into the town. Those arriving by boat had to dock at the castle and come to the town on foot by the bridge, bearing testimonials that they were free of plague.[267] When Dumbarton was hit with the outbreak of plague, or typhus, that raged in Scotland in 1644–5, 'cleingers' or cleaners were hired from Paisley to fumigate the house of a deceased woman and the body was handled as little as possible, being dragged with ropes to the grave[268] It is also known that at this time there was a 'watche hous' at the bridge, presumably to prevent the entry of anyone carrying infection.[269] When famine hit Scotland, in the 'ill years' of the 1690s, the town suffered from dearth of food; but still it took measures, in 1698, to give charity and alleviate the 'very indigent and low conditions' of the poorer members of society.[270]

the eighteenth century

Dumbarton was to see many changes in the eighteenth century, although it remained somewhat remote from central politics. In 1707, it was grouped with Glasgow, Renfrew and Rutherglen for a representative member in the union parliament, which was a measure of its size and political significance.[271] Two events which might have involved the town were the Jacobite rebellions. There seem, however, to have been few supporters in Dumbarton for the 1715 rising, particularly when the MacGregors, under Gregor MacGregor of Glenlyle, nephew of Rob Roy, and his men seemed liable to make a raid on Dumbarton, in what became called the 'Loch Lomond Expedition'. The alarm was raised by the ringing of the church bells at Bonhill and two warning shots were fired from the cannon in Dumbarton Castle, with the result that the MacGregors retired to Innchmurrin on Loch Lomond, without affecting the town. A month later, in October, 120 loyalist volunteers were stationed in Dumbarton. On 11 October, seven naval boats arrived at the town, where they were joined by three boats from Dumbarton. The ten vessels were dragged up the Leven, while the sailors and volunteers went on foot to Loch Lomond, the men from Dumbarton being under the command of their two bailies. There was, however, no sign of the MacGregors. After the proclamation for the Pretender at Drymen on 9 December by Rob Roy, Dumbarton men were backed by a hundred sailors in their search for the elusive rebel leader, but, again, the MacGregors disappeared. The town had less involvement in the 'Forty-Five, even holding a special meeting to establish how to avoid paying a levy imposed by Prince Charles Edward Stewart on a number of towns. The town council, moreover, sent a message of congratulation to the king on the occasion of his son's 'signal victory over the rebels' at Culloden.[272]

The impression is of a small town still preoccupied with internal matters. In 1753, when a decision was made to bring the new fair 'to some repute' by the institution of a horse race on the sands of the burgh on 1 May, £5 sterling was set aside for a piece of plate for a prize; notification of this important event was put in the Glasgow papers.[273] The rural nature of the burgh was also still in evidence. A 'great tenement' stood to the east of the tolbooth, its close and yard; and on this 'great tenement', the name of which suggests an availability of space in the market centre of Dumbarton, a stable had been newly built, between 1753 and 1764.[274] In spite of this rural nature, it was claimed in 1790, that the parish could not supply a tenth of its necessary provisions. Corn, meal and butter were imported from Ireland and cheese came from Ayrshire. Coal was also scarce and had to be brought from Glasgow or Knightswood.[275] The high price of fuel was felt to be one of the chief disadvantages of the town.[276]

There were significant changes to the townscape in this century. Dumbarton received its first regular supply of water from St Serf's well, sited beside the medieval parish church

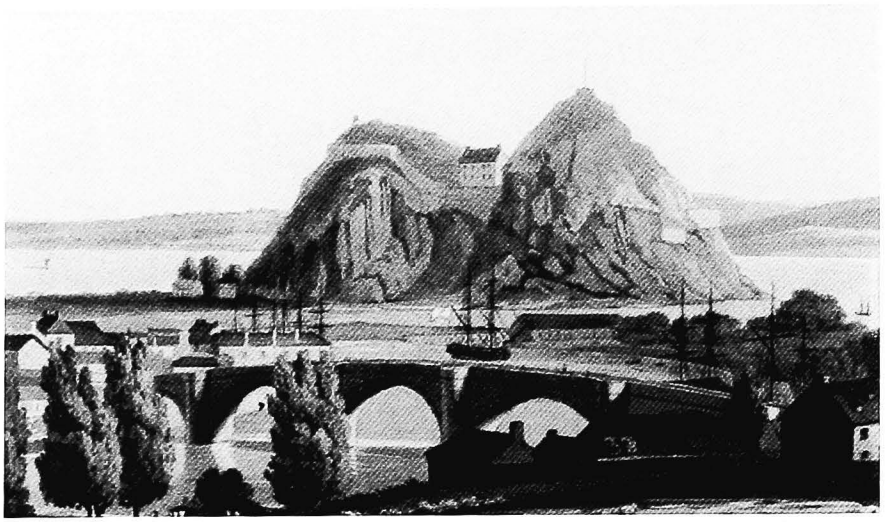

figure 14
The 1765 bridge, an extract from I Clark's *The Town of Dunbarton* 1824

figure 15
Levengrove House *c* 1870s

of Cardross. A pipe was laid on the bed of the river in 1715 (some say 1717)[277] and conveyed across to Dumbarton, where it fed two wells. The water was pumped up by the local people, at either of these two wells, one of which was beside the parish church, the other near to the flesh market, beside the High Street.[278] This remained the water supply for a century. Unfortunately, the westerly public well and the slaughter house were sited side by side causing pollution.[279] In 1790, it was claimed that 'fevers prevail very much. Many die of consumptions and the natural smallpox is very mortal. The spreading and mortality of these diseases are to be attributed to ill-aired and crowded low houses, and to an over anxiety for constant prayers over the diseased'.[280]

A little further upstream from the water pipe was the point at which the ferry between Dumbarton and the west bank of the Leven crossed. It landed on the Dumbarton side at the Boat Vennel, later called Brewery Lane. In 1744, however, the town heard, much to its consternation, that the projected road between Dumbarton and Inveraray was to cross the Leven at a bridge to be built at Bonhill. An appeal was sent to Archibald, third duke of Argyll, who had at one time been provost of Dumbarton, and would be succeeded in that office by his two sons, indicating that if the proposed bridge went ahead, Dumbarton would be 'drained of inhabitants'. Moreover, they argued, not only would their town benefit from a bridge at Dumbarton, but so also would the people of Cardross and, perhaps more significantly, those of Rosneath, where the duke had a castle, to which he

figure 16
The Elephant Inn
c 1930, demolished
in the late 1930s

had to float his coach on a raft over the River Leven. The Bonhill bridge did not materialise, but that of Dumbarton did, being built in 1765 by John Brown of Dumbarton, near to the old fording point **figure 14**. As an immediate consequence, a new thoroughfare was built in the town to give access to the bridge.[281]

This opened up a new suburb called West Bridgend, although for some considerable time it was felt to be more part of Cardross than Dumbarton. Although there were croftlands to the west of the bridge, for example Arthur's Croft, sometimes called Bridgeland,[282] much of the new property here was substantial housing, such as Springbank, Rosebank, Bellfield and Levengrove **figure 15**. It was in this last that Robert Burns stayed on his visit to the town in 1787, when he was made a freeman of the burgh.[283] The normal venue for entertaining newly appointed burgesses was the town's inn, which stood near the market cross. Also built by John Brown, a few years before the bridge, it was known as the Elephant Inn from 1833, and was to stand until the 1930s, when it was demolished **figure 16**. In 1794, after disagreement over the new minister of Cardross, a Relief Church was built in West Bridgend. This attracted Seceders from the other side of the water[284] who had no meeting place in the town.[285]

The guildry had responsibility for supervising the maintenance of the fabric of the town. In 1719, for example, it was reported that a tenement on the east side of the vennel leading from the High Street to the quay and harbour was ruinous, the roof had fallen in and the side wall was liable to collapse. As this was a public hazard, the vennel being in

constant use, the guild ordered the demolition of the wall.[286] 'Lining' matters were also the remit of the guild and encroachments into the property of others and onto public thoroughfares was monitored. Hugh McCallum, a brewer, for example, was found guilty in 1777 of blocking an access vennel to the Leven from the High Street and encroaching on the High Street itself.[287]

The High Street was not properly causeyed, or paved, until 1758.[288] In this year, the council decided that 'all proprietors of tenements fronting the High Street shall, on their charge and cost, lead and carry stones and sand for causewaying opposite their own houses to the centre of the main street', and the council would meet the costs of the workmen.[289] Improvements were also made to the main routeways surrounding the town, although there was only one turnpike road, on which tolls were paid, introduced in 1765, and this was the route to Glasgow.[290] A further major innovation to Dumbarton's streets was planned in October 1781, when the town council took the enlightened decision to set up twelve street lamps.[291]

Many of the houses that lined these streets were still small, thatched dwellings, although intermingled with the old housing was a variety of new, larger buildings, some gable end to the thoroughfare, others fronting the road. The tolbooth was still one of the most prestigious structures in the town. It is known to have had an outside staircase, and at the top of these were the toun's jougs, where culprits were held fast, on public display.[292] A more serious punishment was hanging and, in 1754, the town council deemed that, the old one being rotten, a new gibbet should be made and set up.[293] To the east of the tolbooth was the meal market.[294]

In 1773, the castle was visited by James Boswell and Dr Samuel Johnson. Some important building had been effected on the Castle Rock by this time. Reconstruction of the castle's southern defences was undertaken by General Wade in 1735. The King George's Battery, a design of John Romer, replaced the medieval ramparts and the Governor's House was erected in place of the erstwhile great gatehouse **figure 17**.[295] A comment of Richard Pococke, when he visited the town in 1747, was telling: 'the town of Dumbarton is on a flat peninsula formed by the winding of the Leven',[296] a reminder of Dumbarton's on-going problem—the containing of the River Leven. In the early part of 1719, the embankments on the Broad Meadow were seriously damaged by storm and floods, and stones had to be brought from the Jamestown quarry to repair them.[297] Three years later, the kirk session had concerns over the kirkyard. It was felt that the trees on the south side of the yard were liable to collapse, as they had been undermined by the river. A dyke that had once stood at the southern edge of the kirkyard, affording some protection from the incursions of water, had already completely disappeared.[298]

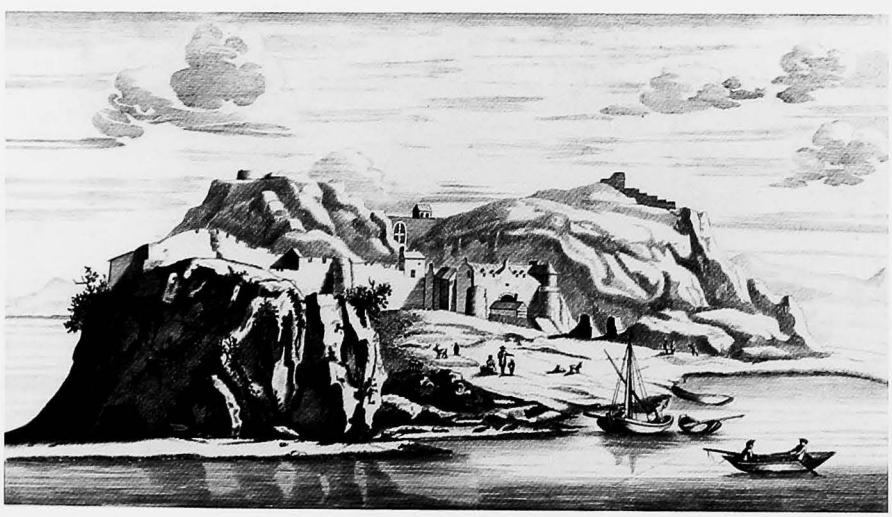

figure 17
John Slezer's view of the castle, showing the medieval gatehouse, the fourteenth-century portcullis arch, the sixteenth-century guardhouse and the Spur Battery, *c* 1690

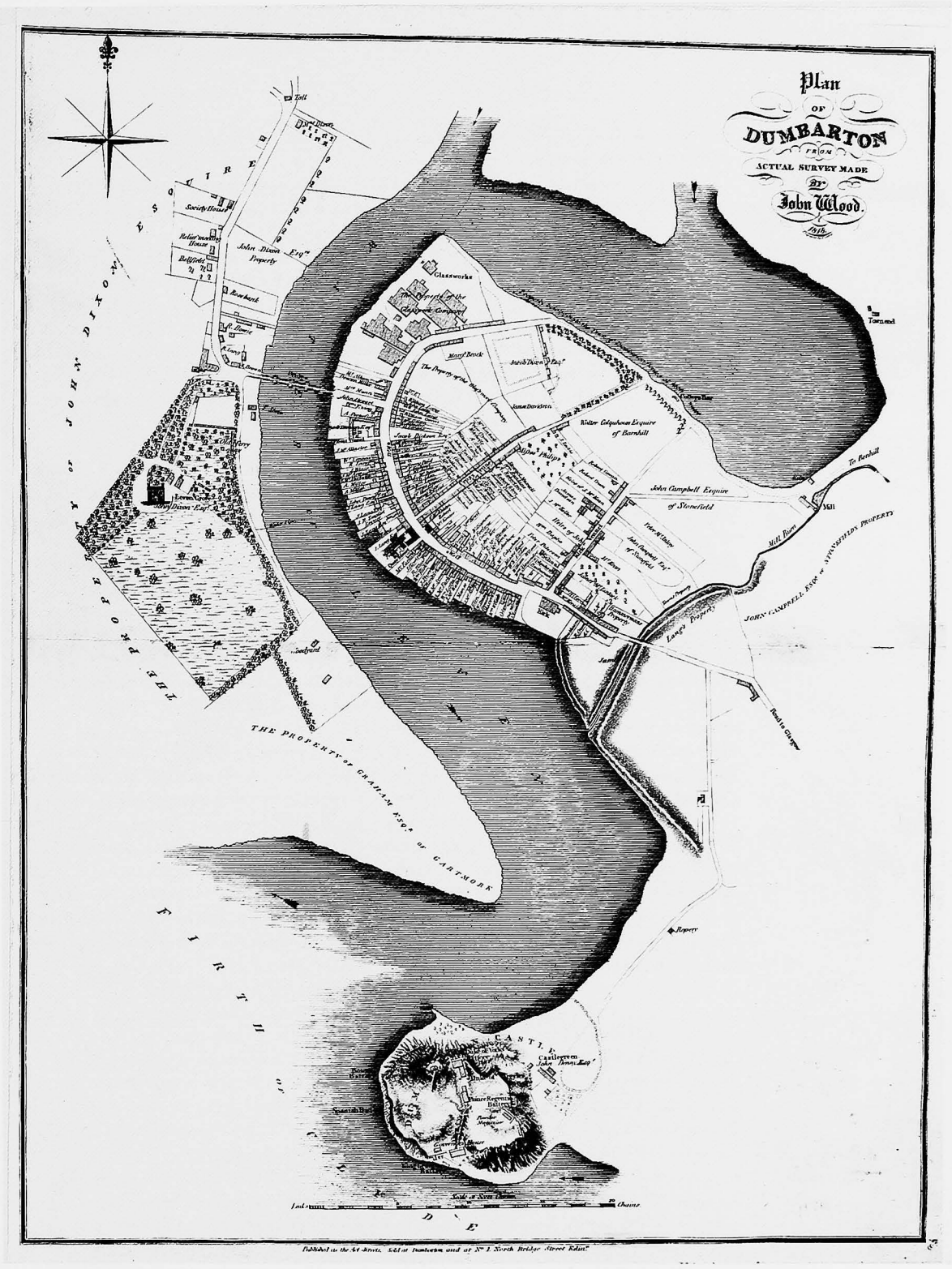

figure 18
John Wood's *Plan of Dumbarton* 1818

The upkeep of the parish church was the responsibility of the kirk session. There had been a number of alterations to the interior by the eighteenth century. On the south side was the pulpit, and opposite was the gallery for the magistrates and council; at the east end were the galleries of the guild brethren and the 'castle loft' for the soldiers and officers of the garrison.[299] Above the guild's and the soldiers' loft, a small gallery nearly reached the roof. This provided seating for the single women of the town and became known as

the 'Hens' Bauk'.[300] At the west end were the lofts of the trades and beneath were seats for the grammar school children.[301]

The grammar school continued to meet in the vaulted room in the steeple of the parish church. Sometime after 1699, the schoolmaster, Mr David McAlpine, requested a loft in the school, claiming that the numbers of children attending were increasing,[302] although, in 1701, the kirk session was complaining about the drop in the number of scholars.[303] In 1761, the schoolmaster applied to the council for a 'proper place' for the coming winter, instead of the cold, vaulted room. Premises were rented in a building in the High Street, known as 'Walker's Close'. The grammar school remained here until 1789, when the pupils went to a purpose-built, two-storied school near the south end of Kirk Vennel **figure 18**.[304] During John Love's term of office as schoolmaster, from 1721 to 1735, each Latin scholar paid 14s 4d quarterly and each English scholar 8s.[305] It was claimed, in 1790, that school fees were so low 'that almost every person has an opportunity of following any branch of learning'. The town had a public library from 1797.[306]

The kirk session still monitored the morals of the town: the soldiers in the castle featured regularly in cases of fornication and fathering of children to local women.[307] One woman, Margaret Wilson, was accused of using wormwood, feather fue and saven tree herbs 'for the destruction of the child in her womb'. She admitted taking such potions 'but positively denied that she knew herself to be with child'. She was not believed and the presbytery, to whom she was referred, decided that she should stand in the kirk, as a public disgrace, for a number of days.[308] It was argued, in 1790, that 'many of the people are expensive, especially in the article of whisky'.[309] A more potent drug available at this time was arsenic. Apothecaries, surgeons and drugists were required, in 1754, to take a receipt from anyone purchasing arsenic or other poisonous drugs; they were also forbidden from selling to anyone unknown to them since there had been a number of 'fatal instances in different parts of the kingdom'.[310] The session also kept a keen watch for spay wives, even sending for one Margaret Campbell from Glasgow for having been in Dumbarton, where she had been consulted. It was put to her that she was either a cheat or had a compact with the devil. Her defence was that she had had second sight since birth and she saw no harm in helping people.[311] The kirk session had its kindlier side and it gave poor relief where needed. One Anna Ore, for example, was said to be in great distress in 1714 'by reason of the king's evill running in her hand' and could not work. She was given a monthly pension of a shilling sterling.[312] It was not merely townspeople who received charity; a collection was arranged, for example, for the support of Highland students of divinity.[313]

By 1755, there were still only 1,480 people recorded in the entire parish.[314] By 1790 there were 1,850 in the town above six years of age. This increase was attributed to the growth in industry. There were, for example, a number of 'handy-craftsmen, freemen of the burgh', besides the masters of the tailor, hammerman, shoemaker, weaver and cooper trades, as well as casual labourers.[315] One resident had his tanning yards in the rear of his tenement, on the south side of the High Street, which, being beside the river, would have afforded him a convenient supply of water for his trade.[316] There were a number of other tan yards, providing a ready market for the cattle killed in the vicinity. A foundry had also been established, the principal business being the boring of cannon for the Clyde Ironworks.[317] The Townend part of Dumbarton appears to have been populated by maltmen and brewers, with kilns and barns on their tenements; and part of the common lands were feued out here and built upon in the first part of the eighteenth century.[318] There was also a kiln in Townhead.[319] One William Wallace, a stampmaster, who confirmed quantities of cloth, lived in Dumbarton in 1742, near to the bleachfields,[320] the first of which had been established at Dalquhurn in 1715. In addition to the local Valegleven people, it also employed Dumbarton residents.[321] Printfields, which were erected in 1768, also stood at Levenfield, Alexandria.

By far the most important new industry arrived in 1777. The town saw the beginning of glasswork manufacture, the Dumbarton Glassworks Company being set up by James

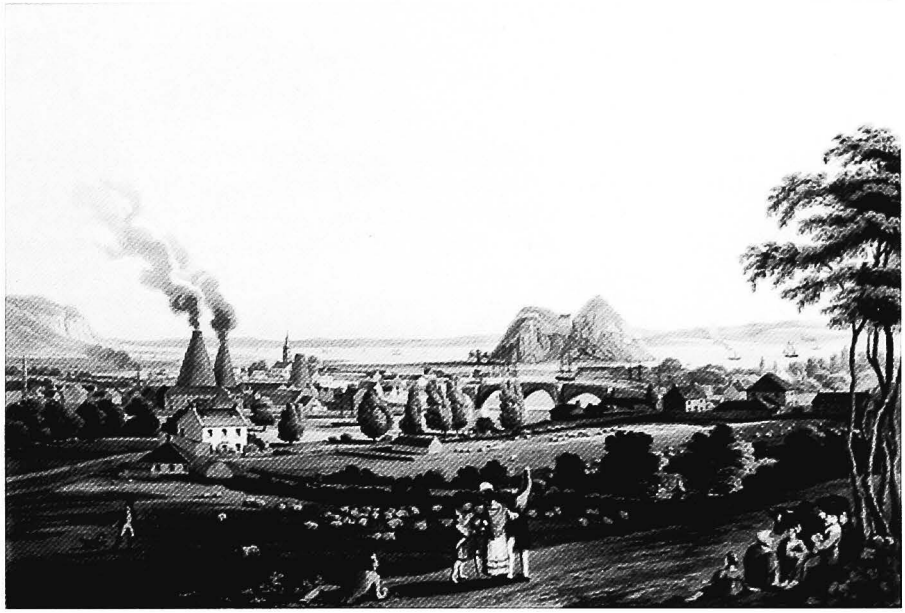

figure 19
I Clark's *The Town of Dumbarton*, 1824, showing the glassworks

Dunlop as a speculative venture **figure 19**. In 1793, Dumbarton Glassworks Company purchased Glasgow Glassworks Company and, later in the decade, added Greenock Glassworks Company and Dumbarton Brewery Company, making this a formidable industrial concern,[322] with warehouses as far afield as Liverpool, Hull and London.[323] By the end of the century, the three tall cones of the glassworks kilns dominated the skyline of the town. They were to be the harbinger of radical change to the townscape of Dumbarton.

post-script

Nineteenth-century Dumbarton was an industrial town. It had little in common with the small burgh that, from the early thirteenth century until the middle of the eighteenth century, had survived in the loop of the Leven. Modern industry, it could be claimed, had the shipbuilding firm of William Denny & Brothers as its nucleus. This enterprise was started in 1844, although William Denny senior had been the manager for Archibald McLachlan and had succeeded to his business in 1818. The shipbuilding focused on the Woodyard, but in 1867 it moved to the other bank of the Leven. One of the most famous products of the Dumbarton shipyards was the tea-clipper 'Cutty Sark', begun in 1869. Other new industries, particularly whisky distilling, began to jostle for space. All transformed the townscape. Docks, engine factories, workshops for allied trades, whisky warehouses and offices began to occupy acres of riverside land.

Just as the Artizan settlement clustered around the glassworks, so the other new industries required homes for their workforces. The tenements of Glasgow Road and Knoxland were built; and Dennystown, beside West Bridgend, would become an entirely new suburb; all were for shipyard workers. With this expansion, old, well-known areas in and around the town would be removed. Old tenements, such as the 'Holy Land' (so called because, although decrepit, it would not burn down, even though it had often been on fire) which still retained the crow-stepped gables so typical of quality early seventeenth-century buildings, would be demolished. The green, between the burgh and the castle, disappeared underneath development; the medieval parish church was demolished in 1810; and the tolbooth followed in 1832. These would be replaced with seemingly grander public buildings.

Other improvements included, in 1860, a much needed gravitation water supply, brought to Dumbarton from the hills behind the town. Savings banks, new churches, the Dumbarton Equitable Co-operative Society and other commercial outlets would transform the town. The most radical change would come with the arrival of the railway. In the 1850s, the reclaiming of land by the railway company for the Bowling to Balloch

Line, would mean the draining and embanking of the Broad Meadow, with a £1,000 compensation to the town. This readier access, allied with the opening of the Forth–Clyde canal, meant that life was to be revolutionised in Dumbarton.

Even greater change came in the twentieth century, with modern shopping malls, blocks of flats and a new planned town centre. Entire areas were be demolished: the Artizan, Denny's Engine works, Risk Street, College Street, Collegepark Street and much of Dennystown. Individual properties also disappeared, such as the 1732 residence of the Mackenzies of Caldarvan and the Elephant Inn. The site of the medieval settlement is now essentially a new town, with little to remind the passer-by of Dumbarton's historic past as an early historic fortress, a royal burgh, the 'gateway to France', the residence of kings and queens, the home of Scotland's greatest glassworks and a prime shipbuilding centre.

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309 *OSA*, ix, 44.
310 SRO, SC65/1/1, Sheriff Court Diet Book, 1746–1756, 8 November 1754.
311 SRO, CH2/97/3, 31 October 1714.
312 SRO, CH2/97/3, 27 March 1714.
313 SRO, CH2/97/5, 10 October 1756.
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315 *OSA*, ix, 40–41.
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area by area assessment

pp 45–108

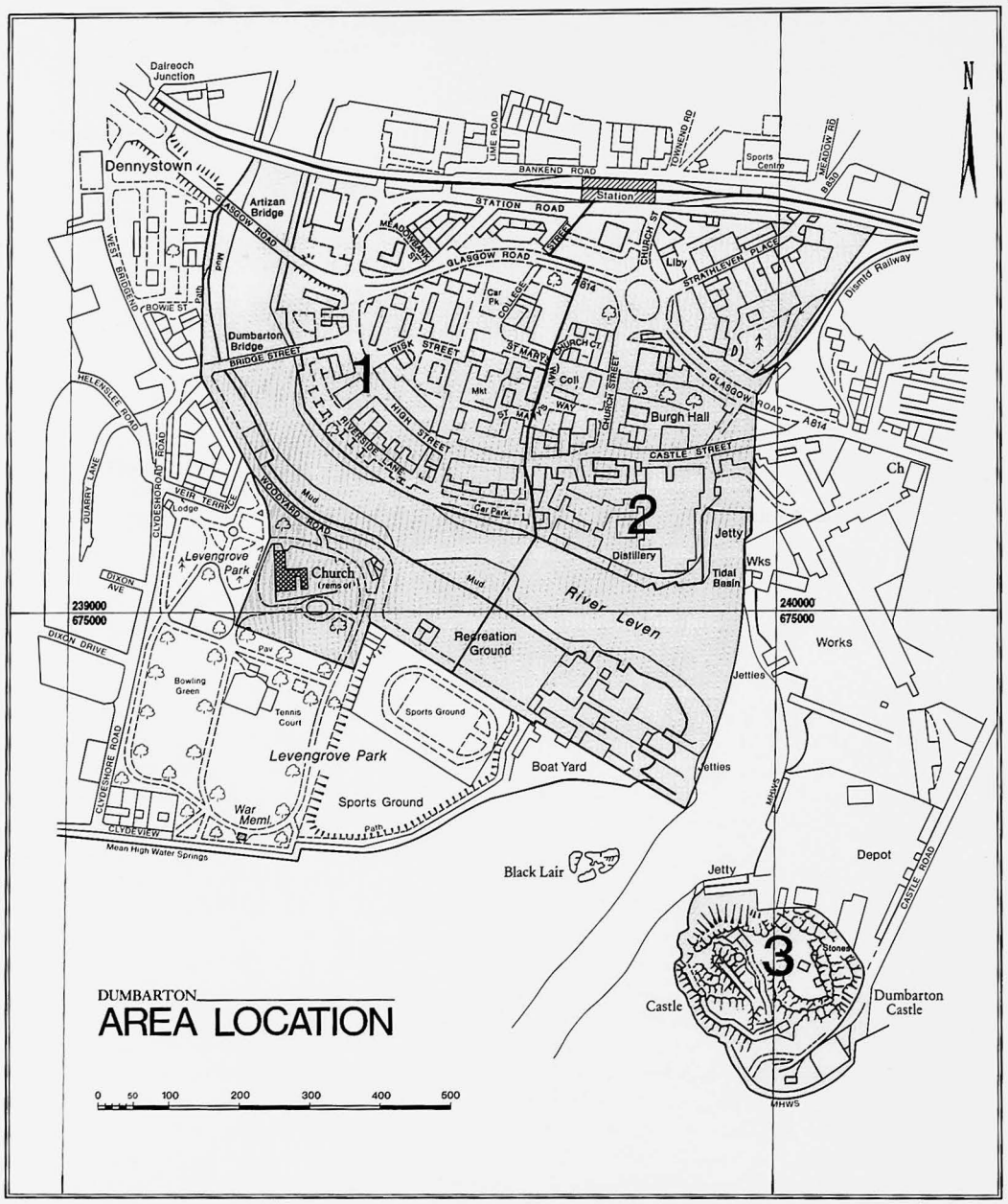

figure 20
Area location map

area by area assessment

For the purposes of this survey, Dumbarton has been divided into three areas **figure 20**. The historic (medieval) core of the burgh is contained within Areas 1 and 2. Area 1 **figure 21** contains the western half of the medieval burgh, and a narrow strip along the west bank of the River Leven which includes Cardross old parish church. Area 2 **figure 23** contains the eastern half of the medieval burgh. Dumbarton Rock, which lies a short distance to the south-east of the medieval burgh, forms Area 3 **figure 24**.

As the burgh lay within a sweeping curve in the River Leven, natural features have largely determined the development and extent of the burgh, and, therefore, the boundaries of this survey. The northern boundary is the railway line, beyond which lay marshy ground (flooded at high tide), until the land was drained in the 1850s. The eastern boundary is the Knowle Burn, now largely culverted. The southern and western boundaries are more artificial, extending beyond the limits of the medieval burgh to include outlying features on the south bank of the River Leven.

area 1

Railway line/River Leven (west bank)/Levengrove Park/Cardross old parish church/ Woodyard Road/River Leven/Riverside Lane due northwards to College Street **figure 21**

description

The townscape of the northern half of this area, largely outwith the medieval burgh, has been greatly altered in recent years, and much of the architecture is modern. The embanked railway line **A** forms the northern boundary of the area. The Glasgow Road (A814) and Artizan Bridge were opened in 1974, allowing traffic to by-pass High Street and the town centre. An enlarged junction where High Street intersects Glasgow Road provides the approach to the bridge. North of Glasgow Road and to the west of High Street is the Dumbarton Health Centre **B**. East of High Street and north of Glasgow Road stand blocks of red brick tenement flats, with pockets surviving of the older sandstone tenements **C**, for example on the west side of Meadowbank Street. Between Artizan Bridge and Dumbarton Bridge, west of High Street, are modern offices with associated car parking. A walkway along the riverside incorporates part of the old cobble-surfaced quayside **D** that once served the glassworks **figure 19** in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. East of High Street, between Risk Street and Glasgow Road, are modern blocks of flats.

South of Dumbarton Bridge and Risk Street lay the medieval town, although little survives other than part of the town plan itself. High Street is typically lined with shops and banks. Between High Street and the river, the former burgage plots are still largely preserved, extending down towards the river until they are cut by Riverside Lane **figure 4**. Mostly these have been set aside as office and business parking lots, but, increasingly, development has spread back from the frontage towards the river. A tree-lined walkway and parking spaces line the riverside itself, with boats, pleasure craft and the occasional fishing boat moored all the way along the river. There are few notable buildings on High Street, but one is Glencairn's Greit House **E figure 13**, the oldest dwelling in the town, dating to 1623. It originally faced up Cross Vennel, later called College Street **F**, which has since been cleared to make way for the adjacent shopping mall. The opening, however, can still be seen, screened by a row of telephone kiosks and a brick wall.

On the east side of High Street, a shopping mall **G**, comprising mostly low, single-storey units has obscured much of the medieval town plan. Blocks of residential housing surround an open courtyard and play area. Between Risk Street and Glasgow Road is the Dumbarton Bowling Club **H**, stretches of re-used old stone walling enclosing the clubhouse and greens. A nearby underpass provides access for pedestrians to cross Glasgow Road.

On the west bank of the Leven, a series of car parks line the riverside. Some have been landscaped or terraced, others appear to have merely re-used the platform of demolished buildings. Woodyard Road connects the bridge with the boatbuilding yards. Within

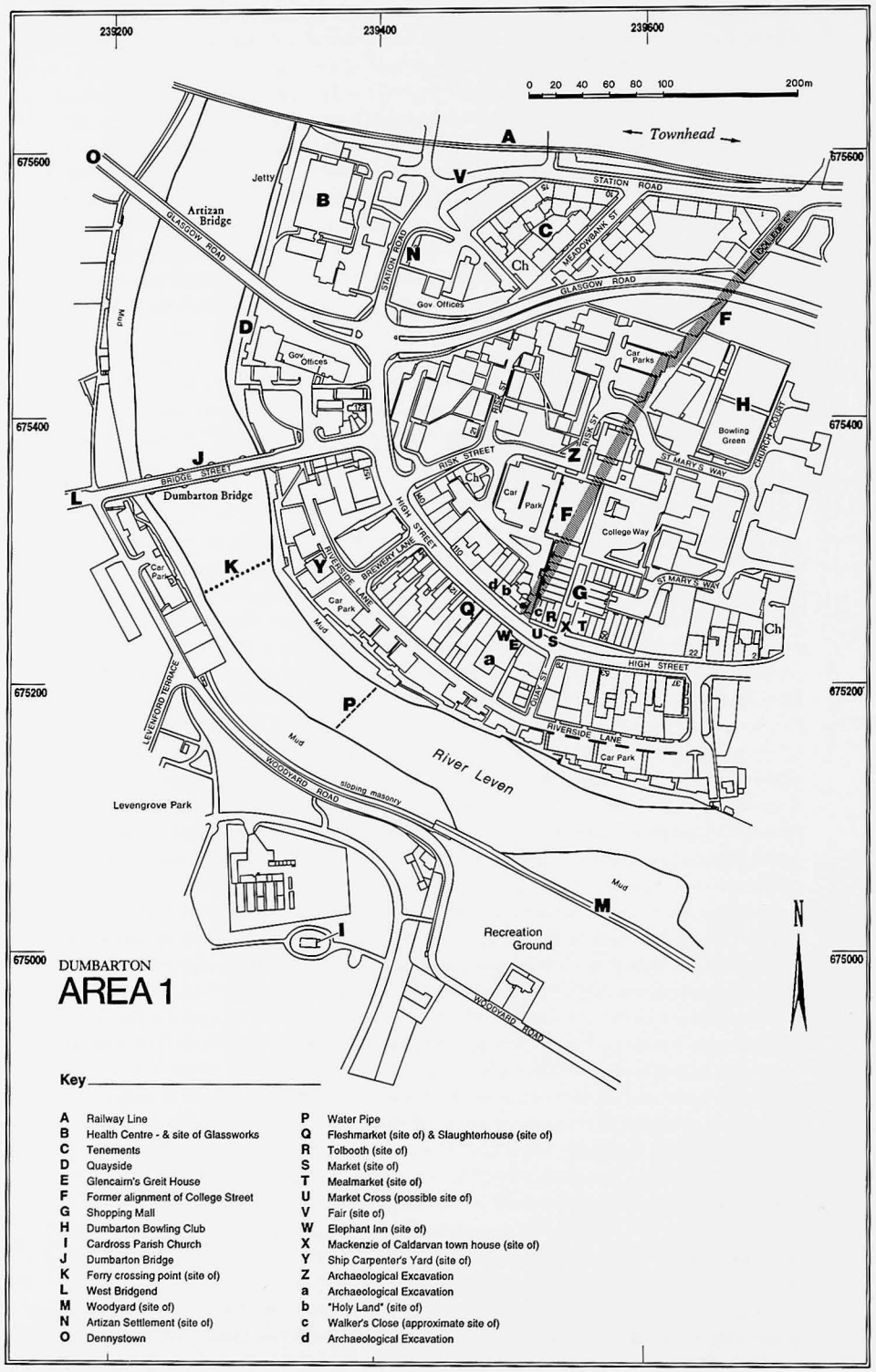

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figure 21
Area 1

Levengrove Park lie the ruins of Cardross parish church **I figure 10**. Surrounded by an iron railing fence, the church stands on a small knoll within the parklands.

the street pattern

It is very likely that when the new burgh of Dumbarton was founded in 1222, it was on a green field site (*see* p 12). A main street was probably formally laid out, with burgage plots running in herring-bone pattern back from the street frontage. This main street probably followed very much the line of the present and medieval High Street; and it may be guessed that the plots, or tofts, to the south of the High Street would have been the most popular, giving access as they did to the River Leven for water supply, fishing and berthing boats **figure 4**. To persuade settlers to his new burgh, Alexander II permitted five years of 'kirseth', a period of time during which no burghal dues were liable. The normal kirseth period was a year and a day: clearly, Dumbarton, with five years, was seen to be less attractive than other twelfth- and early thirteenth- century burghs, situated in the more stable heartland of the country. How many came to settle this new burgh is uncertain, as is their provenance.

The north side of the High Street was not heavily developed, even into the seventeenth century. Tenements certainly lined the north side of the street, probably with gap sites which had never been built on. But it seems that, other than the collegiate church and its associated buildings, which stood to the north of the High Street (*see below*, p 65, **area 2**), there was no development behind these tenements, as the 'gardens of the burgh' were situated to the north. There were probably no more than 200 houses in the town, which would imply a population of under 1,000 even by the end of the seventeenth century. High Street was still the main thoroughfare, with Cross Vennel (College Street) **F** leading northwards on the alignment of the recently disappeared College Street. Other small vennels and wynds led off the main street, some giving access to the river front.

archaeological potential

Area 1 contains the largest part of the medieval town, and as such is the most archaeologically sensitive to new development of the three areas under study. This area contains the longest section of the main medieval thoroughfare, High Street, and one of the two secondary streets that ran north from High Street, Cross Vennel (later College Street). Most notably, Area 1 also contains the market place **S**, with attendant market cross, tolbooth and tron, arguably the most important features of the medieval townscape. Other features of interest in this area include possible harbour works, the ford, and Cardross parish church **I**. The flesh market **Q**, ship carpenters' yard **Y** and the glassworks **B**, all of early modern date, were also located within Area 1, as well as Glencairn's Greit House **E figure 13**, the oldest standing building in the town.

The street frontages and associated backlands of High Street offer the most archaeological potential, with deposits likely to survive in a band along either side of High Street. The southern (river) side of High Street, from Riverside Lane as far north as Dumbarton Bridge, has experienced much less development than the northern side of High Street, and the boundaries of the former burgage plots may have been fossilised in the present property boundaries here. This side of High Street also appears to have been more prestigious, as it offered access to the river. As such, it would have been more intensively developed and a greater depth of archaeological deposits may have accumulated here. In recent years, however, a number of small developments have taken place, with rearward extensions to shops and public houses established over the former medieval burgage plots, immediately behind the street frontage. Approximately half of these former plots have been developed; the other half are currently in use as car parking lots. Riverside Lane has also been established over the southern end of the plots, with designated parking, grassed areas and a riverside walk blurring the junction between the river and the plots.

In 1680, the town placed a petition before the Privy Council for a warrant to raise voluntary contributions towards building a bridge over the Leven. It was felt that such a facility would encourage Dumbarton's trade in cattle, as there was a high risk of animals drowning, particularly in times of storm and high tides. Three years later, however, difficulties in collecting funds forced the project to be abandoned. In 1744, an appeal was sent to Archibald, third duke of Argyll, at one time provost of Dumbarton, indicating that, not only would their town benefit from a bridge at Dumbarton, but so also would the people of Cardross and, perhaps more significantly, the people of Rosneath, where the duke had a castle, to which he had to float his coach on a raft over the River Leven. Dumbarton bridge **J** *&* **figure 14** was finally built in 1765, by John Brown of Dumbarton, upstream of the old ferry crossing point **K**. As an immediate consequence, a new thoroughfare was built in the town to give access to the bridge—Bridge Street **figure 4**. This opened up a new suburb, West Bridgend **L**, although for some considerable time it was felt to be more part of Cardross than Dumbarton.

The High Street was not properly causeyed, or paved, until 1758. In this year, the council decided that 'all proprietors of tenements fronting the High Street shall, on their charge and cost, lead and carry stones and sand for causewaying opposite their own houses to the centre of the main street', and the council would meet the costs of the workmen. A further major innovation to Dumbarton's streets was planned in October 1781, when the town council took the enlightened decision to set up twelve street lamps.

By 1755, there were still only 1,480 people recorded in the entire parish. By the 1790s, there were 1,850 in the town above six years of age. The increase was attributed to the growth in industry (*see* pp 53–4, *below*). This would have an inevitable impact on the townscape. The nineteenth century was to see Dumbarton further transformed **figure 18**.

history

Modern industry, it could be claimed, had the shipbuilding firm of William Denny &

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On the north side of High Street, the picture is very different. Here, the property boundaries have been lost, and much of the area is now the location for a shopping mall and blocks of low-rise flats. The archaeological potential of this area is perhaps lower than that of the river side of High Street, given both the scale of recent development and the fact that medieval development here is known to have been less intense. It should be borne in mind, however, that the shopping mall units are single storey and their foundations, therefore, may be shallow enough to have preserved archaeological deposits below the present floor levels.

Beyond Glasgow Road, there is little of archaeological interest, although the lands associated with the collegiate church and the earlier chapel may have extended into the north-western corner of this area. *See* **area 2**, p 65.

standing buildings with archaeological potential

Buildings situated in the core of the medieval burgh were almost certainly constructed on the site of, or directly over, earlier buildings, a sequence possibly going back to the medieval period and continuing up to the present day. Although there have been few opportunities to examine any of the street frontages in Dumbarton archaeologically, evidence of earlier, possibly medieval, structures may be expected, sealed beneath eighteenth- or nineteenth-century standing buildings along the High Street and the vennels leading off it.

In other Scottish towns, archaeological excavations have revealed that street frontages are promising for the preservation of archaeological deposits, in spite of the fact that cellarage may also have destroyed evidence. Recent excavations in Perth, Dunfermline and Arbroath have also shown that the width and alignment of the main streets changed over the centuries. Earlier cobbled street surfaces and contemporary buildings may therefore be preserved up to three or four metres behind the line of the modern street frontage. This was certainly the case at 80–86 High Street, Perth, where the medieval

Brothers as its nucleus; but other new industries, particularly whisky distilling, began to jostle for space. All transformed the townscape. Docks, engine factories, workshops for allied trades, whisky warehouses and offices began to occupy acres of riverside land. Just as the Artizan settlement **N** clustered around the glassworks, so the new industries required homes for their workforce. The tenements of Glasgow Road and Knoxland were built (*see* p 37); and Dennystown **O**, beside West Bridgend, would become an entirely new suburb; all for shipyard workers.

In the twentieth century, major redevelopment, particularly in the town centre, would see the removal of many of the old streets, buildings and backlands, leaving the street pattern of medieval Dumbarton traceable only in the alignments of High Street and Church Street.

water supply

One of the most important innovations for Dumbarton was its first regular supply of water, taken from St Serf's well, sited beside the medieval parish church of Cardross. Before this, as there were no wells in the town in the middle ages, it seems likely that water was collected only in rain butts. A pipe **P** was laid on the bed of the river in 1715 (some say 1717), and conveyed across to Dumbarton where it fed two wells. The water was pumped up by the local people, at either of these two wells, one of which was beside the parish church (*see* pp 65–6, **area 2**), the other near to the flesh market and slaughter house **Q**, beside the High Street. This remained the water supply for a century. Unfortunately, the westerly public well and the slaughter house were sited side by side, causing pollution. In 1860, a much needed gravitation water supply was brought to Dumbarton from the hills behind the town.

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street lay some four metres back from the present High Street. At the Abbot House, in Dunfermline, recent excavations uncovered a whole section of the medieval street itself, inside and sealed below the floor of the standing building. Up to six phases of street surfaces were revealed, each separated by thick dumps of midden, containing broken pottery, leather and oyster shells. Here, archaeology clearly demonstrated how dramatically street frontages can shift over time, and the potential for archaeological deposits to be buried below later buildings.

There are many reasons why street frontages shift. The stalls or booths that once lined the medieval market place encroached out onto the street in an effort to lure potential buyers. Similarly, the stairs that provided access to the upper floors of a tenement were often tacked onto the front of the building and, over time, the building line moved forward. Fine examples of this process can be seen in St Andrews at 19–21 North Street and 13–15 South Castle Street, where some properties have moved forward to enclose the stair-towers (often referred to as forestairs) within their fabric, while others have not, leaving the stair-tower standing forward of the main building line. The property at 95 High Street demonstrates this in fact, as it stands some two metres further forward into High Street than the adjacent Glencairn's Greit House. The archaeological potential of Glencairn's House itself and the remains of another important standing building, Cardross parish church, are discussed below, at pp 81–4.

tolbooth **R**

The tolbooth **figure 12** is thought to have stood near the junction of Cross Vennel and High Street, but whether any traces of it might survive can only be surmised. There were several phases of construction to this building, and little is known about the medieval or late medieval structures. The tolbooth, demolished in the mid seventeenth century, had been extended some years earlier and re-roofed before it was replaced. The later tolbooth, which was demolished in 1832, had a vaulted cellar and an outside staircase. It is possible

the tolbooth

The tolbooth **R** was the principal municipal building, functioning as a collection point for tolls or market dues, a place to house the burgh's official weights and as a burgh council room and town jail **figure 12**. How early the first tolbooth was in Dumbarton is unclear. The town had a clock by 1516, which was probably placed in the tolbooth; but there are no further details of an early tolbooth. Being the most important town building, it was here in February 1604, on the instructions of the bailies and council, that the heads of the chief of the MacGregors and one of his men were displayed after the battle at Glenfruin.

In the seventeenth century, the tolbooth, housing the burgh court house and jail, was one of the most well maintained structures in the town. It had a bell, which the town officer rang at 5 am and 10 pm to alert the townspeople to the start of the working day and the curfew at night. Reglazing was effected in 1627; slating and pointing of the roof is recorded in 1628; in 1635, the tolbooth, which was considered too small, was re-roofed and an adjoining property purchased. Between 1642 and 1645 it was demolished and totally rebuilt at a cost of £3,335, £1,000 of which was contributed by the Convention of Royal Burghs. This new tolbooth is known to have had a vaulted cellar, as one Robert Ferrier, according to the Common Good Accounts for 1646–7, was paid for making a gutter for rainwater in front of the tolbooth, 'when it was lickly to fil the voult under the tolboothe whair the townes tobacco lay'. In spite of the fact that the tolbooth was 'a most sufficient prison in walls, gates, doores and windowes and sufficiently attended by jayleours and uther servants', a prisoner managed to escape in 1671, by breaking into the loft and then cutting his way through the sarking and slates. For a while prisoners were kept in the charter room of the tolbooth, as this was reckoned to be more secure than the

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that traces of this or earlier phases of the building might survive, encased beneath or within the fabric of the present buildings in this area.

market place and streets **S**

The High Street itself was the centre of activity of the medieval and later burgh. This factor should not be forgotten when considering, for example, environmental improvements and the insertion of new services. Evidence of medieval street levels may be preserved, either as metalled surfaces or as accumulated midden deposits (as was the case at Abbot House, Dunfermline). The remains of other important features of the medieval townscape may also be sealed beneath the present road surface, for example, the bases or plinths for the market cross **U** and the tron, of which no archaeological evidence has yet been found, but which stood outside the tolbooth.

Similarly, the smaller streets and wynds should also be monitored routinely. There have been recent additions and changes to the town plan, notably in the creation of Riverside Lane, the re-alignment of Risk Street and the clearance of College Street (formerly Cross Vennel). At the corner of Risk Street and College Street **Z**, excavation in 1972 revealed a series of rubbish pits, with occupation dating back to the fifteenth century. Rubbish pits are a common feature of medieval towns and a good indicator of medieval burgage plots, but these pits are too far north to have lain within the High Street burgage plots. They must, therefore, have lain within the plots associated with Cross Vennel, which suggests that Cross Vennel may date to the later medieval period, in which case it might have been a later addition to the town plan. A trackway leading from High Street northwards may have been in existence from earlier times. The remains of Cross Vennel itself (and an earlier trackway?), with buildings on the frontage and associated backlands stretching to east and west, may be preserved below the mall complex.

jail room; yet there were also numerous escapes from the tolbooth in the eighteenth century. By this time, the tolbooth had an outside staircase, giving access to the upper floors. The jougs, metal rings to hold a culprit tight for public display and humiliation, were attached at the top of these stairs. The tolbooth was demolished in 1832.

the market and fairs

Dumbarton may never have had a large open market place, as is seen in some medieval towns. Rather, the market **S** clustered outside the tolbooth, with the market cross as a focal point. By the seventeenth century, there is a little evidence of market specialisation; the records mention a flesh market being erected in 1648. There was later to be a meal market **T**, to the east of the tolbooth. Horse, cattle and other livestock markets were also held.

The market cross **U** probably stood close to the tolbooth and tron. It was the heart of the town's trade and was also used as the official place for making public proclamations. The cross was rebuilt in 1628, the old one being 'ruynous', and the roadway around it, which was broken, was repaired.

Another important feature of any market town was the public weighbeam, or tron. This would have been erected immediately on Dumbarton's receipt of the right to hold markets, in the early thirteenth century. New ropes were purchased for it in 1444, implying that it functioned in a balance fashion. The tron had a further purpose—as a place of punishment. Culprits might be nailed by the ear to the tron. The stocks, which stood in the market place, were the usual method of dealing with theft; the miscreant, held fast by his legs, was open to verbal ridicule and unsavoury missiles, such as rotten

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burgage plots

Behind the frontages of High Street and Cross Vennel were the backlands of the burgage plots. Over time, these were gradually built upon as pressure for space within the town increased (a process known as repletion). Evidence of medieval burgage plots, however, often survives buried beneath modern buildings, car parks and private gardens. Burgage plots can be an invaluable source of information for the urban historian and archaeologist, because their deposits often document the activities and conditions of everyday life in a medieval town. For this reason, any developments in the burgage plots should be archaeologically monitored as a matter of routine.

Excavations in other medieval towns, such as Perth, Aberdeen and St Andrews, have revealed middens, rubbish pits, cess pits and vegetable plots to be common features of medieval backlands, alongside craft workshops and kilns. A series of three excavations at Canal Street, in Perth, for example, showed that the boundaries of the plots shifted regularly, and revealed a fascinating sequence of changing plot boundaries and properties being amalgamated and subdivided throughout the medieval period. The end of the burgage plots was sometimes marked by small walls, wooden fences or ditches; beyond that, there may have been a back lane. At Dumbarton, the river itself may have marked the end of these plots on the south side. Alternatively, formal harbour works, such as quays and wharves, may have necessitated a trackway or path along the river side.

There have been only two opportunities to examine burgage plots in Dumbarton archaeologically. The redevelopment of 101–103 High Street in 1972 **a** offered the chance to investigate a plot that stretched from High Street towards the river. The site appeared to have been levelled relatively recently, and in places the ground had been raised to provide a more level platform on which to build. The soils brought in, however, contained an assemblage of medieval pottery dating from *c* 1250 to 1350. This assemblage, although telling little about this particular site, provides an insight into medieval Dumbarton's trading links. Largely thirteenth century in date, it comprised a

fruit and eggs. The fact that the records begin to speak of a weighhouse or custom house suggests that the tron was eventually placed inside a building, which was probably sited very near to the tolbooth.

Dumbarton was granted the right to hold a fair in the thirteenth century, to be held on St Patrick's Day. By the seventeenth century, inland trade was concentrated largely on Dumbarton's three main fairs, ratified in 1639: at Patrickmas (March 17), Midsummer (June 24) and Lammas (August 1); and the town benefited from its position on the north side of the Clyde, close to the Highlands. The main commodities dealt in were salmon and herring, coarse cloth and flax, meal, and skins, such as fox, otter, sheep and lamb. Hides were also an important element of internal trade, sometimes brought into the town on the hoof.

The fairs, horse and cattle and other livestock markets were held at the Townhead, between Skay (Sky) Bank and the ferry boat landing **V**. In 1753, a decision was made to bring a new fair 'to some repute' by the institution of a horse race on the sands of the burgh on 1 May. £5 sterling was set aside for a piece of plate for a prize, and the event was advertised in the Glasgow papers.

town fortifications

There is no indication that Dumbarton had a town wall. Usually Scottish towns were not surrounded with strong walls; instead, insubstantial palisading and ditching was often used, broken with small gates to give access to the town's crofts and common lands. Such a barricading would not have been necessary on the south side of the High Street, where there was an element of protection to be gained from the River Leven **figure 4**. Whether

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range of local and imported wares, including vessels from Audlem, Cheshire and, more exotically, from Saintonge, in south-west France. The Saintonge ware is thought to be associated with the French wine trade centred around Gascony.

On the opposite side of High Street **d**, a second excavation was carried out in 1997, the first in the burgh for almost twenty-five years. This site, at 94–102 High Street **figure 22**, offered the opportunity to examine two adjacent burgage plots. No plot boundaries were identified, but medieval buildings, built both of timber and stone, were uncovered within the plots, set back some 15–20 m from the street frontage. The pottery from this excavation compares well with that from 101–103 High Street, with Saintonge ware well represented in an assemblage which also includes pottery from Germany and Spain. In addition, sherds of Donyatt ware (Somerset) and Italian tin-glazed Polychrome ware were also recovered, the first examples ever to have been found in Scotland.

crafts and industry

Of the many crafts and industries in Dumbarton supplying goods and services to the castle, most activities would leave little structural evidence in the archaeological resource. The best sources for these activities come from the contents of rubbish pits and middens where, in the right conditions, organic materials such as leather, wood and textiles, both waste and finished products, can survive. Rubbish pits and middens are commonly found in the backlands of burgage plots (rubbish pits were identified at the College Street/Risk Street site **Z**, for example) and are often our sole source of evidence for crafts such as weaving (loom weights), shoemaking (leather off-cuts), coopering (wood shavings) and bone working (horn cores and antler off-cuts).

Other industrial processes, however, such as malting and tanning, both known to have been in existence in Dumbarton, stand a better chance of survival as they require tanks or vats and kilns, all of which were sunk below ground level and later backfilled, rather than demolished. A malting operation, comprising a watertight, clay-lined vat for germinating the barley and a kiln for drying, was found in the backlands of Canal Street in Perth, and

there was some form of protection to the north of the burgage plots on the north side of the High Street is unclear.

industrial sites

From the outset, Dumbarton craftsmen and food and ale producers must have found a ready market in the occupants of the castle. The townspeople were also regularly called upon to help maintain the castle and, in consequence, were probably adept at building. For a short while, during the reign of Robert III, there was a mint at Dumbarton, probably housed in the castle. One of the most important early industries came to the town when Dumbarton was developed as a shipbuilding and outfitting base for James IV's new navy in the late fifteenth century. The skills of varied craftsmen, such as joiners and wrights, would have been in great demand. Most of this activity would have been concentrated on the banks of the Leven, to the south of the High Street; but there is also evidence of shipbuilding to the north of the town (*see* p 66, **area 2**).

The town became home to a number of craftsmen, such as maltmen, slaters, tailors and masons; its hammermen guild received its charter of incorporation in 1656; and, by 1635, the weavers trade was sufficiently established that it had a deacon of the craft, John Weir. The town also had a resident doctor by 1637. There were a number of 'handy-craftsmen, freemen of the burgh', besides the masters of the tailor, hammerman, shoemaker, weaver and cooper trades, as well as casual labourers. One resident, for example, had his tanning yards in the rear of his tenement, on the south side of the High Street, beside the river, which would have afforded him a ready supply of water for his trade. The precise location of these tanning yards is unclear. There were a number of

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a tanning works has more recently been discovered adjacent to the castle at St Andrews. Such remains may also exist in Dumbarton.

The larger of the stone buildings found during the excavation at 94–102 High Street, which was set at right angles to High Street, contained a complex sequence of clay floors scorched by numerous small hearths. Whether these fires were domestic or semi-industrial in function is unclear, but enough slag, charcoal and furnace fragments were recovered to suggest that they were indeed the latter. It is possible that this building was in use as a workshop, perhaps with accommodation above, either supplying goods or services to the castle, or perhaps even to James IV's fleet stationed at Dumbarton in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

harbour works

The nature and location of Dumbarton's medieval harbour, and of the shipyards for James IV's navy, remain uncertain. Simple timber structures, such as wharves and jetties, are unlikely to have survived the more recent riverside improvements along Riverside Lane, but the bases of supporting wooden posts may be preserved in the mud and silt of the river bed.

shipyards and glassworks

Unfortunately nothing survives of the two sites that would be of most interest to industrial archaeologists—the original Denny shipyard **M** and the Dumbarton glassworks **B**. The former had been on the site known as the Woodyard on the Cardross side of the River Leven, before it moved to the opposite bank in 1867, where it stretched from Castle Street to the Rock. There is nothing to be seen of the original yard, although its ground plan may be discernible beneath the present playing fields. Similarly, the triple-coned glassworks **B** were demolished in 1850, and it is unlikely that anything survives of this once formidable structure **figure 19**. Numerous broken glass bottles and vessels were found

other tan yards, providing a ready outlet for the skins of cattle killed in the vicinity. A foundry had also been established by the eighteenth century, the principal business being the boring of cannon for the Clyde Ironworks.

By far the most important new industry arrived in 1777, with the beginning of glasswork manufacture. The Dumbarton Glassworks Company was set up by James Dunlop as a speculative venture **B**; and, in 1793, it purchased Glasgow Glassworks Company and, later in the decade, added Greenock Glassworks Company and Dumbarton Brewery Company, making this a formidable industrial concern, with warehouses as far afield as Liverpool, Hull and London. When the century came to an end, the three tall cones of the glassworks kilns dominated the skyline of the town **figure 19**.

The nineteenth century was to see Dumbarton transformed. Modern industry, it could be claimed, had the shipbuilding firm of William Denny & Brothers as its nucleus. This enterprise was started in 1844, although William Denny senior had been the manager for Archibald McLachlan and had succeeded to his business in 1818. The ship building focused on the Woodyard **M**; but, in 1867, it moved to the other bank of the Leven. One of the most famous products of the Dumbarton shipyards was the tea-clipper 'Cutty Sark', begun in 1869. Other new industries, particularly whisky distilling, began to jostle for space. Docks, engine factories, workshops for allied trades, whisky warehouses and offices began to occupy acres of riverside land.

the harbour

One of the main purposes of Alexander II, in establishing a burgh at Dumbarton, was to provide a handy port for the royal castle on Castle Rock. The medieval harbour works were probably of simple wooden structure, as in other Scottish ports. The harbour was to gain great significance when it was developed as a shipbuilding and outfitting base for James IV's new navy, in the late fifteenth century. Throughout the medieval period, this harbour was to be the main departure point for royalty to the Western Isles and Highlands and, with the revival of the 'Auld Alliance', Dumbarton became the gateway to France.

history

In 1533, bulwarks were to be erected in Dumbarton, Irvine, Wigtown, Whithorn and Kirkcudbright and in certain east coast ports. These were evidently breakwaters which

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archaeology

during the excavation at 94–102 High Street, much of it re-used as coarse building materials, suggesting that there was a surplus of glass available in the town after the factory had closed down. The site of the glassworks was next occupied by engineering works, which were in turn cleared in the 1960s. A health centre now stands on the site.

gazetteer

historic buildings

Cardross parish church NS *3935 7500* **I figure 10**
This early medieval church served the parish of Cardross on the west side of the Leven. The remains comprise a nave measuring 11.8 m by 6.1 m, and the north and south walls of the chancel. In 1570, much of the church was demolished and the stones were removed to the castle.

Glencairn's Greit House NS *3950 7522* **E figure 13**
This, the oldest building in the town, was built in 1623 and known as 'The Earl of Glencairn's Greit House'. It formerly faced up College Street, which has since been cleared to make way for a shopping centre; while the eastern part of the building spans a cobbled pend (Quay Pend), which leads down to the river. This typical seventeenth-century town building has fine, early examples of dormer windows, although large windows were inserted at ground floor level when the building was in use as a gas showroom. It now houses the West Dunbartonshire Social Work Department.

protected the anchorage. When these were effected is unclear, but, by the late sixteenth century, the town bulwarks were in a state of disrepair.

In 1642, a quay was built on the River Leven, which would suggest that there was a fair level of trade in and out of Dumbarton's port. In 1692, however, according to the commissioners appointed by the Convention of Royal Burghs, Dumbarton's inland trade consisted merely of small goods retailed from Glasgow and other burghs, the town possessed only one small bark of twenty-four tons (which was used by Glasgow merchants), three little herring boats and no ships, and it had no foreign trade at all.

ferry crossing

Until the eighteenth century when a bridge was built (*see* p 33) **figure 14**, the only method of crossing the Leven was either by fording, at very low tide, or by the ferry **K**, which passed between Dumbarton and the west bank of the Leven at Cardross. It landed on the Dumbarton side at the Boat Vennel, later called Brewery Lane.

religious establishments

The parish church of Cardross **I** stood on the west bank of the Leven, and served the separate parish of Cardross. A much smaller parish church than that of Dumbarton (*see* pp 65–6, **area 2**), its ruins may still be seen in Levengrove Park. In 1570, Lord Fleming, who was holding the castle for the party supporting Mary Queen of Scots, demolished much of the parish church and collegiate church (*see* pp 65–6, **area 2**), as well as the parish church of Cardross, along with the houses of many burgesses who supported King James VI. The stones and other building materials were then transferred to the castle. In 1794, after disagreement over the new minister of Cardross, a Relief Church was built in West Bridgend. This attracted Seceders, who had no meeting place in the town, from the other side of the water.

A medieval chapel dedicated to St Mary, later a collegiate church, stood in Area 2. It is possible that some of its associated buildings may have extended to Area 1. *See* **area 2**, pp 66–7.

history

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archaeology

Dumbarton bridge NS *3925 7535* **J**
Constructed by John Brown of Dumbarton, the bridge was erected in 1765. It was widened in 1884 and reconstructed in 1934. The core of the bridge comprises five dressed stone arches.

archaeological excavations

101–103 High Street NS *3948 7524* **a**
An excavation was undertaken here in 1972 (note: the National Grid reference published in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland 1973* is incorrect). A long, narrow trench, measuring 30 m x 2 m, was opened up at right angles to the High Street frontage. No evidence for buildings or structures was recovered, but the site had been levelled relatively recently with imported soils. The infilled material contained a large assemblage of medieval pottery dating from *c* 1250–1350, including vessels from Yorkshire, Cheshire and south-west France.

Risk Street/College Street NS *395 754* **Z**
An excavation was carried out at the corner of Risk Street and College Street in 1972, although the exact address is uncertain. A series of rubbish pits was uncovered; the earliest activity on site was dated to no earlier than the fifteenth century. This would suggest that Cross Vennel, or at least the northern end of it, is late medieval in date, the town slowly expanding northwards from High Street.

housing

Most medieval housing was simple, low-lying, thatched dwellings; and this remained the norm until into the seventeenth century. Fire was, in consequence, a constant hazard. In June 1626, for example, 'in the grit drouth', the town drummer marched through the streets warning of the danger of fire. Leather buckets, for carrying water to fires, were kept in the tolbooth; these had to be replaced on a number of occasions, having been chewed by rats. By this time, a number of lairds had town houses in the burgh, which were of considerably grander design than the homes of the common townspeople. The properties of such as MacFarlane of Arrochar, Colquhoun of Luss, Darleith of Darleith and the earl of Glencairn probably stood in the most favoured part of the town—near the market cross. Glencairn's house, built in 1623, still stands in the High Street, and and is a good example of Scottish domestic architecture of this period; this prestigious building is probably a true reflection of the quality homes in seventeenth-century Dumbarton **E figure 13**. Another group of early seventeenth-century houses stood on the High Street, to the west of College Street. The most easterly, the 'Holy Land' **b** was demolished only in 1884. It was so named as it had never burned down, in spite of repeatedly catching fire. Dilapidated by the nineteenth century, it still retained interesting original features, such as its crow-stepped gables.

With the development of West Bridgend (*see* p 33), many new properties were developed. Levenford House and its Lodge, built for William Denny in 1853, are two of the town's finest examples of early Victorian baronial architecture. Other houses, such as

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archaeology

94–102 High Street NS 394 752 **a figure 22**

The archaeological evaluation carried out at 94–102 High Street in July 1997 was the first in the town since the excavations at 101–103 High Street and College Street/Risk Street in the early 1970s. The site lies on the north side of High Street, close to the medieval market place, and occupies two of the original medieval burgage plots. An initial evaluation identified deep and well stratified archaeological deposits, up to 1 m deep in places, of medieval and post-medieval date, sealed beneath Victorian levels both within the standing building and in the area of a recently demolished building. Further excavation was designed around the engineers' formation levels, thus allowing much of the archaeological deposits to be preserved *in situ*; excavation work was largely confined to an area between 10 m and 30 m back from the street frontage.

The footings of a late medieval stone building were discovered, at right angles to the High Street frontage, and possibly replacing an earlier building on much the same alignment. This building was complete with a sequence of clay floor surfaces, and there was some evidence for an internal room division. Numerous fires or hearths, one with a long history of use, had scorched and discoloured the clay floors. Although the contents of these fires had been cleared out, the recovery of quantities of slag, charcoal and fragments of clay furnace lining suggests that these hearths are likely to have been semi-industrial, rather than domestic in function.

To the rear, or north, of this building, numerous small pits had been cut through a deep deposit (*c* 0.6 m) of medieval cultivation soil. In the adjacent burgage plot to the west, the footings of a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century stair tower, and an east to west aligned clay bonded wall survived beneath the recently demolished eighteenth- or nineteenth-century building, which had a stone-built cess tank and drainage system. The circular, clay-bonded stair tower, which must have provided access to a building to the south of the excavation area, had been built directly on top of an extensive raft of clay and stone dumped to counteract marked slumping. Below the rubble, and left *in situ*, was what appeared to be the remains of a demolished and levelled (and presumably timber) late medieval structure. It survived as extensive floor surfaces over which lay spreads of charcoal and burnt clay, suggesting either that this structure burnt down, or that it, too, functioned as a semi-industrial workshop.

Springbank, Rosebank, Bellfield and Levengrove **figure 15**, were equally substantial. It was in this last that Robert Burns stayed on his visit to the town in 1787, when he was made a freeman of the burgh. The normal venue for entertaining newly appointed burgesses was the town's inn **W**, which stood near the market cross. Also built by John Brown, a few years before the bridge, it was known as the Elephant Inn from 1833 and was to stand until the 1930s, when it was demolished **figure 16**.

The Artizan settlement **N** clustered around Dumbarton's important glassworks **B figure 19**, from the later eighteenth century. Similarly, the upsurge of industry in the nineteenth century meant a demand for homes for the growing workforce. The tenements of Glasgow Road and Knoxland were built (*see* p 37); and Dennystown, beside West Bridgend **L**, would become an entirely new suburb; all for shipyard workers.

In the twentieth century, major redevelopment, particularly in the town centre, would see the removal of many of the old houses. Entire areas would be demolished: the Artizan, Risk Street, College Street, Collegepark Street and much of Dennystown; and individual properties would also disappear, such as the 1732 residence of the Mackenzies of Caldarvan **X** and the Elephant Inn **W**.

schools

history

Dumbarton's historic schools normally lay outside this area (*see* p 67). Walkers Close **c**, however, was for a short while, in the eighteenth century, the home of the grammar school, until the latter was transferred to Kirk Street.

archaeology

figure 22
Excavations in 1997 at *nos* 94–102 High Street, showing the foundations of a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century stair tower and clay bonded wall

A varied assemblage of pottery was also recovered, which included examples of Donyatt ware (from Somerset) and Italian tin-glazed polychrome, thought to be the first examples of these types ever found in Scotland. Saintonge ware, from south-west France, Valencian Lustre ware from Spain, and Rhenish stone wares from Germany were also recovered. Other finds included a rare example of a medieval mill stone and a possible witch stone—a perforated triangular stone that would have been displayed above a doorway to ward off witches.

A full publication on the results of all excavations in Dumbarton is in preparation by SUAT.

future development

The most recent Local Plan is now considerably out of date (1983) and a district-wide plan is under way. A Town Centre Working Group has also been set up to consider a range of issues regarding the town centre.

area 2

Railway line/Knowle Burn/River Leven tidal basin/Woodyard Road/River Leven/Riverside Lane due northwards to College Street **figure 23**

description

This area can be divided simply into three blocks: the first, south of High Street/Castle Street; a central block between High Street/Castle Street and Glasgow Road; and a northern block between Glasgow Road and the railway line **A**.

The southern block is dominated by Ballantine's Distillery **B**, a massive complex of red brick buildings, seven storeys high **figure 4**. Built in the late 1930s, it was once the biggest distillery in Europe. A row of offices also lines the cobbled Castle Street, with the old railway lines that once transported the whisky out of the site still visible heading northwards. Surrounded and completely overwhelmed by the distillery, is the Riverside Parish Church **C**, the cemetery of which appears to extend out into High Street. The former offices of Hiram Walker, 3 High Street **D**, last used as the procurator fiscal's office, are now boarded up and quite run down.

Church Street, formerly Kirk Vennel, divides the central block in two. To the west of Church Street are modern offices, housing and associated car parking. The short section of High Street in this block contains St Augustine's Episcopal Church **E** and shops.

The east side of Church Street is of a quite different character, with large public buildings. Burgh Hall **F**, which has seen a variety of uses, now stands empty and dilapidated, a victim of fires in both the late nineteenth century and, more recently, in 1972. Further up Church Street stands the Sheriff Court House **G**, the extensive grounds of which contain the last visible remains of the Napoleonic prison house **H**, demolished in 1973 in advance of the Glasgow Road.

North of Glasgow Road, smart Victorian villas fan out towards the railway line. On Strathleven Road is the public library **I** and St Patrick's Church **J**. In the north-western corner of this block stands one of the few remnants of medieval Dumbarton. The College Bow **K** & **figure 6**, once part of the Collegiate Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary **L**, was moved from its original site when the railway station was constructed in the nineteenth century. Initially re-sited in Kirk Vennel (Church Street), it was moved to its present spot in 1907 and now stands adjacent to the Municipal Buildings **M**.

archaeological potential

Area 2 lies at the eastern edge of the medieval burgh, but contains part of the main medieval thoroughfare (High Street) and one of only two secondary streets (Kirk Vennel); the site of the original parish church (which lies beneath the present structure **C**); the site of an early chapel; the collegiate church **L**; the site of a mill **P**; and the site of a bridge **O**.

In general, this area has seen considerable development, a process which largely began in the nineteenth century. The railway, Denny's shipyard, Hiram Walker's distillery and, more recently, new housing and the Glasgow Road by-pass will have had a significant impact on any archaeological deposits here.

Other than a short section on the north side of High Street, where some surviving property boundaries may have fossilised former medieval burgage plots, there is little to remind us of the medieval origins of this area. Nevertheless, the archaeological potential is likely to be concentrated south of Glasgow Road, the most sensitive area probably being a narrow band on either side of High Street, from the Riverside Parish Church **C** westwards. Much of the development along the west side of Church Street is very modern and it is unlikely that archaeological deposits will have survived here. The east side of Church Street has perhaps greater potential, given that the buildings date mostly from the nineteenth century and there are large undeveloped areas behind the street frontages. This area, however, was on the periphery of the medieval burgh, and Church Street itself may have been a late medieval addition to the town plan (*see* p 80).

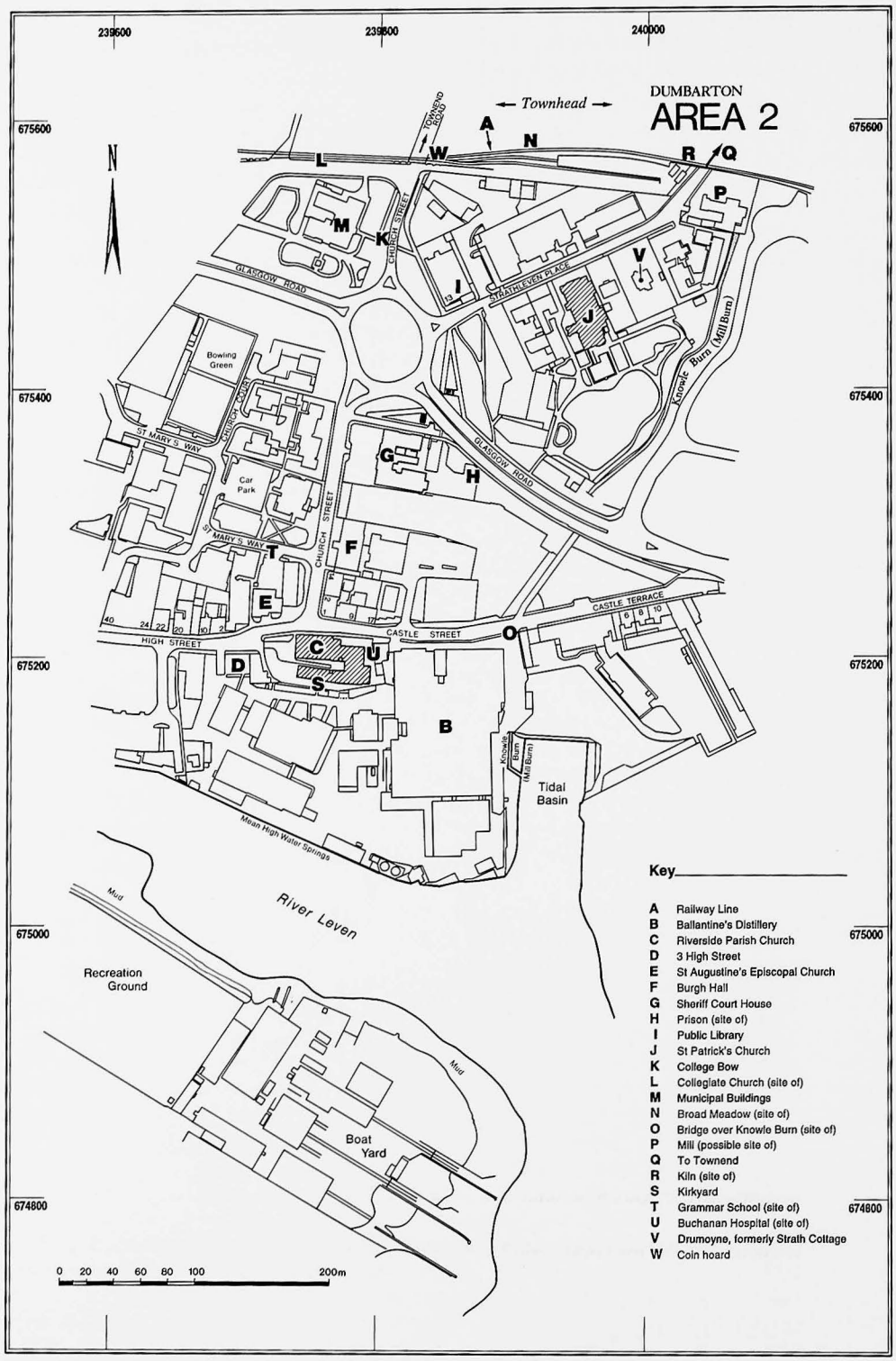

figure 23
Area 2

the street pattern

It is very likely that when the new burgh of Dumbarton was founded in 1222, it was on a green field site. A main street was probably formally laid out, with burgage plots running, in herring-bone pattern, back from the street frontage. It is relatively safe to assume that this main street followed very much the line of the present and medieval High Street; and it may be guessed that the plots, or tofts, to the south of the High Street would have been the most popular, giving access as they did to the River Leven for water supply, fishing and berthing boats. To persuade settlers to his new burgh, the king permitted five years of 'kirseth', a period of time during which no burghal dues were liable. The normal kirseth period was a year and a day; clearly, Dumbarton, with five years, was seen to be less attractive than other twelfth- and early thirteenth- century burghs, situated in the more stable heartland of the country. How many came to settle this new burgh is uncertain, as is their provenance.

The north side of the High Street was not heavily developed, even into the seventeenth century. Tenements, certainly, lined the north side of the street, probably with gap sites which had never been built on. But it seems that, other than the collegiate church **L** and its associated buildings, which stood to the north of the High Street (*see below*, p 66), there was no development behind these tenements, as the 'gardens of the burgh' were situated to the north. There were probably no more than 200 houses in the town, which would imply a population of under 1,000, even by the end of the seventeenth century. High Street was still the main thoroughfare, with Kirk Vennel (Church Street) leading northwards off it. Other small vennels and wynds led off the main street, some giving access to the river front.

The High Street was not properly causeyed, or paved, until 1758. In this year, the council decided that 'all proprietors of tenements fronting the High Street shall, on their charge and cost, lead and carry stones and sand for causewaying opposite their own houses to the centre of the main street', and the council would meet the costs of the workmen. A further major innovation to Dumbarton's streets was planned in October 1781, when the town council decided to set up twelve street lamps.

By the 1790s, there were 1,850 in the town above six years of age. This would have an inevitable impact on the townscape. The increase was attributed to the growth in industry and, in particular to glasswork manufacture (*see* p 54). The nineteenth century was to see

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There were also isolated features which lay outwith the core of medieval settlement, notably the collegiate church **L** and a mill **P**. Whatever survived of the collegiate church and its associated buildings until the nineteenth century was probably destroyed by the railway line, but outlying buildings and features may be preserved in open areas, for example, in the grounds of the Municipal Buildings **M** or within the church precincts.

street frontages

A short section of High Street, the main medieval thoroughfare, lies within Area 2, extending to just east of the parish church; this is perhaps the most archaeologically sensitive part of Area 2. Buildings situated in the core of the medieval burgh were almost certainly constructed on the site of, or directly over, earlier buildings, a sequence possibly going back to the medieval period and continuing up to the present day. Although there has been no opportunity as yet for archaeologists to examine any of the street frontages in Dumbarton, evidence of earlier, possibly medieval, structures may be expected sealed beneath eighteenth- or nineteenth-century standing buildings along High Street.

In other Scottish towns, archaeological excavations have revealed that street frontages are promising for the preservation of archaeological deposits, in spite of the fact that cellarage may also have destroyed evidence. Recent excavations in Perth, Dunfermline and Arbroath have also shown that the width and alignment of the main streets in the

Dumbarton's further transformation. Modern industry had the shipbuilding firm of William Denny & Brothers as its nucleus (*see* pp 64–5, *below*). Other new industries, particularly whisky distilling **B**, began to jostle for space. All transformed the townscape. Docks, engine factories, workshops for allied trades, whisky warehouses and offices began to occupy acres of riverside land. These new industries required homes for their workforce. The tenements of Glasgow Road and Knoxland were built; and Dennystown, beside West Bridgend (*see* p 37), would become an entirely new suburb. All were for shipyard workers. With this expansion, old well known areas in and around the town would be removed. The green, for example, between the burgh and the castle, disappeared below development.

One radical change came with the arrival of the railway **A**. In the 1850s, the reclaiming of land by the railway company, for the Bowling to Balloch Line, meant the draining and embanking of the Broad Meadow **N**, with a £1,000 compensation to the town. This readier access, allied with the opening of the Forth–Clyde Canal, meant that life was to be revolutionised in Dumbarton.

Even greater change came in the twentieth century, with modern shopping malls, blocks of flats and a new planned town centre. Entire areas were demolished. This major redevelopment, particularly in the town centre, saw the removal of many of the old streets, buildings and backlands, leaving the street pattern of medieval Dumbarton traceable only in the alignments of High Street and Church Street.

water supply

Access to the water supply of the River Leven was very important, as there were no wells in the town in the middle ages, the nearest being on the west side of the Leven at Cardross. One of the most important innovations for Dumbarton was its first regular supply of water—from St Serf's well, sited beside the medieval parish church of Cardross. A pipe was laid on the bed of the river, in 1715 (some say 1717) and conveyed across to Dumbarton (*see* p 49 **area 1**), where it fed two wells. The water was pumped up by the local people, at both wells, one of which was beside the parish church **C**, and the other near to the flesh market and slaughter house, beside the High Street (*see* pp 49). This remained the water supply for a century. In 1860, a much needed gravitation water supply was brought to Dumbarton from the hills behind the town.

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burghs have changed over the centuries. Earlier cobbled street surfaces and contemporary buildings may therefore be preserved up to three or four metres behind the line of the modern street frontage. This was certainly the case at 80–86 High Street, Perth, where the medieval street lay some four metres back from the present High Street. At the Abbot House, in Dunfermline, recent excavations uncovered a whole section of the medieval street itself, inside and sealed below the floor of the standing building. Up to six phases of street surfaces were revealed, each separated by thick dumps of midden, containing broken pottery, leather and oyster shells. Here, archaeology clearly demonstrated how dramatically street frontages can shift over time, and the potential for archaeological deposits to be buried below later buildings.

For discussion of the archaeological implications of standing buildings in Dumbarton *see* pp 81–4.

burgage plots

Behind the High Street frontages were the backlands of the burgage plots. Over time, these were gradually built over as pressure for space within the town increased (a process known as repletion). Evidence of medieval burgage plots, however, often survives buried beneath modern buildings, car parks and private gardens. Burgage plots can be an

municipal buildings

Following the demolition of the tolbooth in 1832 (*see* Area 1), its principal functions were assumed by a number of new municipal buildings: the Courthouse **G**, which had been designed to be the County Buildings and was completed in 1826; the prison **H**, which stood until replaced by a dual carriageway in 1973; and the Burgh Hall **F**.

town fortifications

There is no indication that Dumbarton had a town wall. Usually Scottish towns were not surrounded with strong walls, but with insubstantial palisading and ditching, often broken with small gates, to give access to the town's crofts and common lands. Such a barricading would not have been necessary on the south side of the High Street, where there was an element of protection to be gained from the River Leven and, at high tide, the area north of the chapel dedicated to St Mary, later a collegiate church **L** (*see* p 17), was often flooded, which also gave a measure of protection. Whether there was some form of protection to the north of the burgage plots on the north side of the High Street is unclear.

It is possible that there were two gates, or ports, monitoring entrance to the town in the middle ages. By the seventeenth century, one was sited at the bridge crossing the Knowle Burn, to the south-east of the town **O**, and the other may have been at the collegiate church **L**. Both of these sites would control the two main pedestrian routes into the town, although a third important entry point was at the ferry crossing entering Dumbarton from Cardross, on the left bank of the Leven (*see* p 55). Ports were also collection points for tolls and psychological rather than physical barriers to the outside world, at times of curfew at night and during outbreaks of plague.

The town authorities displayed great care whenever plague was nearby, for example, in 1604, placing watchmen at the bridge **O** and the college church **L** to prevent strangers bringing it into the town. Two years later, watchmen were, once more, nominated and stationed at the town's gates. These were to be the only entrances into the town. Those arriving by boat had to dock at the castle and come to the town on foot by the bridge, bearing testimonials that they were free of plague. When Dumbarton was hit with the outbreak of plague, or typhus, that raged in Scotland from 1644, 'cleingers' or cleaners were hired from Paisley to fumigate the house of a deceased woman and the body was

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invaluable source of information for the urban historian and archaeologist, because their deposits often document the activities and conditions of everyday life in a medieval town. Excavations in other medieval towns in Scotland, such as Perth, Aberdeen and St Andrews, have revealed middens, rubbish pits, cess pits and vegetable plots as common features of medieval backlands, alongside craft workshops and kilns. For this reason, any developments in the burgage plots should be archaeologically monitored as a matter of routine.

Good examples of burgage plots can be seen on the riverside of High Street in Area 1 (*see* pp 51–2), but few survive in Area 2. Some short sections of plots can be seen in Area 2 behind the properties on the north side of High Street, but the rest have been cleared for car parking.

the site of the early parish church and hospital

Occupying the same site as the medieval parish church, the Riverside Parish Church **C** may have preserved traces of at least two earlier phases. A mid eighteenth-century picture records a church here, which appears to contain architectural elements of fourteenth- or fifteenth-century date **figure 8**. In the seventeenth century, the church is known to have been enlarged giving a T-shaped plan. This structure was replaced by the 1811 church. The parish church is well documented from the fourteenth century onwards (*see* p 17), but

handled as little as possible, being dragged with ropes to the grave. It is known, also, that at this time, there was a 'watche hous' at the bridge **O**, presumably to prevent the entry of anyone carrying infection.

industrial sites

From the outset, Dumbarton craftsmen and food and ale producers must have found a ready market in the occupants of the castle. The townspeople were also regularly called upon to help maintain the castle and, in consequence, the local people were probably adept in building. For a short while, in the reign of Robert III, there was a mint in the town. One of the most important early industries in the town came when Dumbarton was developed as a shipbuilding and outfitting base for James IV's new navy in the late fifteenth century. The skills of varied craftsmen, such as joiners and wrights, would have been in great demand. Most of this activity would have been concentrated on the banks of the Leven, to the south of the High Street. There may, however, be evidence of shipbuilding to the north of the town (*see* p 17). There was a mill **P**, with its necessary lades, beside the town by at least 1272. It was burned down in 1658 and rebuilt.

The town became home to a number of craftsmen, such as tailors, maltmen, slaters, and masons; the hammermen guild received its charter of incorporation in 1656; and by 1635 the weavers trade was sufficiently established that it had a deacon of the craft, John Weir. The town also had a resident doctor by 1637. Over a period of time, there were a number of 'handy-craftsmen, freemen of the burgh', besides the masters of the tailor, hammerman, shoemaker, weaver and cooper trades, as well as casual labourers. One resident, for example, had his tanning yards in the rear of his tenement, on the south side of the High Street, which, being beside the river, would have afforded him a ready supply of water for his trade. Precisely where these tanning yards were, is unclear. There were a number of other tan yards, providing a ready outlet for the cattle killed in the vicinity. A foundry had also been established by the eighteenth century, the principal business being the boring of cannon for the Clyde Ironworks.

The increase in population by the end of the eighteenth century was attributed to the growth in industry. The Townend **Q** part of Dumbarton appears to have been populated by maltmen and brewers, with kilns and barns on their tenements; and part of the common lands were feued out here and built upon in the first part of the eighteenth century. There was also a kiln **R** in Townhead.

The nineteenth century was to see Dumbarton transformed. The shipbuilding focused on the Woodyard; but in 1867 moved to the other bank of the Leven. One of the most

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famous products of the Dumbarton shipyards was the tea-clipper 'Cutty Sark', begun in

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it is also possible that an earlier structure existed. Traces of any or all of these earlier phases may be preserved beneath the present floor levels of the existing church; in particular, more ancient walls may have been reused as foundations for successive structures. Indeed, traces of earlier structures were noted during construction of the 1811 church. New developments would not be expected here, but any ground disturbance in the form of environmental improvements or for the insertion or maintenance of services should be archaeologically monitored as a matter of routine.

The grounds or precinct of the church also extended down to the River Leven, where a stone wall was built, possibly to prevent flooding. Much of what was the precinct is now under the distillery complex **B**, and it is doubtful whether any archaeological deposits could have survived.

Adjacent to the church, on the east side, was a hospital **U**, also visible on the 1747 painting **figure 8**. Built in 1636, but never completed, it was demolished in 1758. The small building which currently fronts onto High Street, between the church and the main block of the distillery, may preserve traces of the post-medieval hospital.

1869. Other new industries, particularly whisky distilling **B**, began to jostle for space. Docks, engine factories, workshops for allied trades, whisky warehouses and offices soon occupied acres of riverside land.

religious establishments

The parish church **C**, known to have existed from at least the fourteenth century, dedicated to St Mary or St Patrick, stood in all probability on the site of the present parish church, near the banks of the Leven. According to a 1747 picture (*see* p 26) **figure 7,** the early church was replaced in the fourteenth or fifteenth century by a building with a broad tower furnished with a short spire. (The north transept, which was the burial site of the lairds of Kirkmichael, was enlarged in the seventeenth century.) By the Reformation, the parish church housed six altars, each with their own chaplains: the Rood Altar, the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary (in existence by at least 1373), which stood to the south side, St Peter's Altar (in existence from at least 1485), St James' Altar, St Ninian's Altar (at least from 1512) and St Sebastian's (from at least 1496). In 1501, there is also a reference to a chaplainry for the soul of King Robert Bruce, his successors and predecessors, but whether this was attached to one of the existing chaplainries is unclear. The total revenues of the Rood Altar amounted to £22 by the Reformation, some of which came from an endowment of rental from two roods of land in the Townend, to the north of the town **Q**. To this day, this piece of land is called Roodsland.

In 1568, Lord Fleming, who was holding Dumbarton Castle for the exiled Queen Mary, fortified the parish church with between eighty and a hundred hagbutters. Two years later, he demolished much of the parish church, along with the collegiate church **L** (*see* p 22) and the parish church of Cardross (*see* **area 1**), and the houses of many burgesses who supported King James VI. The stones and other building materials were transferred to the castle, where it was the intention to improve the fortifications and build stables for the horses of the expected French troops.

In 1617, the Archbishop of St Andrews, commendator of Kilwinning Abbey, resigned the parish church, the patronage, vicarage and manse into the hands of James VI, who, in the following year, conveyed them to the provost, bailies, council and community of Dumbarton. From this date, the town took on responsibility for the fabric of the church and manse. The steeple of the church was seemingly constantly under repair. In 1632, funds were given to help the minister 'big his manse', which might imply a totally new building or merely extensive repairs, as it is known that the minister, William Blair, bequeathed a house and manse to the parish in 1620, and that a manse existed in 1617.

history

During this century, a number of internal alterations were made to the parish church; in

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archaeology

St Mary's chapel and collegiate church

The building of the railway probably finally destroyed any traces of the chapel of St Mary, and the later collegiate church **L**, that had survived the Reformation and subsequent quarrying by the townspeople (*see* p 28). Their lands, however, and possibly buildings sited within them (the provost's house, the houses of the prebends and a hospital, for example), may extend into both Areas 1 and 2, and as such would have escaped the damage caused by the construction of the railway.

mill

The burn that ran along the eastern edge of the town, known as the Mill or Knowle Burn, probably powered a mill as early as the thirteenth century. Exactly where this stood is uncertain. A mill known to have been standing in the early nineteenth century **P figure 18** may mark the spot. A kiln was also sited nearby **R**.

particular, lofts were inserted for the use of the crafts of the town. The hammermen also inserted a window and their coat of arms above their loft. The session permitted the window, but not the coat of arms, which the hammermen were ordered to remove. The town's burial ground **S** was close by, in the churchyard. This, too, had to be maintained in a decent state. The provost, for example, in 1686, complained to the kirk session that his family burial place was being vandalised by children. Twelve years later, animals were roaming the kirkyard, which was deemed to be 'unbecoming and scandalous'. The dykes of the kirkyard also proved problematic, ultimately collapsing into the Leven because of undermining by the river.

The parish church remained the main upkeep for the kirk session. There had been a number of alterations to the interior by the eighteenth century. On the south side was the pulpit, and opposite was the gallery for the magistrates and council; at the east end were the galleries of the guild brethren and the 'castle loft' for the soldiers and officers of garrison. Above was the guild's and the soldiers' loft, a small gallery that nearly reached the roof. This also provided seating for the single women of the town and became known as the 'Hens' Bauk'. At the west were the lofts of the trades and beneath were seats for the grammar school children. The church was demolished in 1810 and replaced by the present building.

There was a chapel dedicated to St Mary, Blessed Virgin, in the town by at least 1329. In 1453, it was gifted, with its attached properties, to Isabella, countess of Lennox and duchess of Albany, widow of James Stewart, earl of Lennox (*see* p 17), by the bailies, council and burgesses of Dumbarton, to found the collegiate church of St Mary **L**. This was a semi-monastic establishment, with a provost at its head, supported by six prebendaries or priests. The provost's house stood close to the collegiate church and local tradition suggests that the manses of the prebendaries stood along the line of Collegepark Street. There seems also to have been a hospital attached. The countess endowed the college church well; and, at the Reformation, the revenues amounted to £233 6s 8d. Interestingly, a priest of the collegiate church was given a rental of ten shillings for the use of his yard to build a ship, in 1507. This strongly suggests that not only was there shipbuilding on-going on the bank of the Leven to the south of the High Street, near to the harbour, but also to the north of the town, between the collegiate church and the river, where a shipyard was later sited. Such a siting is also a reminder that medieval Dumbarton was situated within a loop of the River Leven, surrounded by water on all sides at high tide, other than to the east. It was maintained that the collegiate church was largely 'cassin doun be ye congregatioun' at the time of the Reformation. It was, however, totally demolished in 1570, by Lord Fleming, along with the parish church **C** and Cardross parish church (*see* p 22).

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Little is known of medieval mills in Scotland, as few have been excavated. Two that have been were found on very different sites. The remains of a flour mill were found three metres below the present ground surface at the Saracen Head Inn in Glasgow; while another example was found during the excavation of a Bronze Age henge monument at Balfarg, Fife. In the former, a timber-lined channel drew water from the old Poldrait Burn to power a vertical mill wheel, an impression of which survived in the stream bed. One of the paddles and a stone socket for the axle were also found in the stream. The mill itself was timber-built with a porched loading bay for carts.

Where there are mills there are also weirs, leats (lades) and mill races. A weir was required to divert water from a river or stream to a channel, or leat. A 'tail race' returned the water that had been through the mill to the river, to prevent 'back-water' impeding the mill-wheel. The tail race of a mill was found at Balfarg. The possibility that archaeological remains of a mill or mills might survive in Dumbarton should be borne in mind in the event of ground disturbance in this area.

The collegiate church then became a convenient quarry for stone. As early as 1628, the town council gave permission for the use of the church's stones for the repair of the Kirk Vennel; and, even into the 1970s, its stones could still be witnessed, re-used, in old property in the town. All that remains now is the College Bow **K**, which was removed from its original site to make way for the nineteenth-century railway station.

schools

In the middle ages, there was a song school, which was for training boys to sing in the church choir; it probably stood close to the parish church. There was also a grammar school in the town from at least 1486; the master was the chaplain of St Peter's Altar. In 1516, the schoolmaster complained that he was in difficult financial straits as the income from the chaplainry of St Peter was insufficient and that he was making little profit out of the school because of 'pestilence' or plague. The grammar school met in a vaulted room in the steeple of the parish church **C**. In 1633, forty Latin grammars were purchased, which probably gives a good indication of the number of students. The records suggest that there may have been another school in the town for elementary learning: Issobell Abirnethie was given £9 6s 8d in 1627 and 1628, for example, 'for her help in keiping the schoole for lairning the young bairnes to reid'. She was succeeded by Margaret Hume and Marie Sempill.

Some time after 1699, the schoolmaster, Mr David McAlpine requested a loft in the grammar school, claiming that the numbers of children attending were increasing. On the other hand, in 1701, the kirk session was complaining about the drop in the number of scholars. In 1761, the schoolmaster applied to the council for a 'proper place' for the coming winter, instead of the cold, vaulted room. Premises were rented in a building in the High Street, known as 'Walker's Close' (*see* **area 1**). The grammar school remained here until 1789, when the pupils went to a purpose-built, two-storied school near the south end of Kirk Vennel **T** & **figure 18**. It was claimed, in 1790, that school fees were so low, 'so that almost every person has an opportunity of following any branch of learning'.

hospitals

In the middle ages, a hospital was attached to the collegiate church **L** (*see* p 17).

A hospital for the poor of the town was promised by Sir John Buchanan. Building commenced by 1630, but it appears to have been abandoned, probably because of Buchanan's failure to place as much as promised in the fund. The 1747 view of the parish church **figure 7**, by Paul Sandby, shows the partially finished Buchanan Hospital **U** beside it.

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crafts and industry

Of the many crafts and industries in Dumbarton supplying goods and services to the castle, most would leave little structural evidence in the archaeological record. The best source of evidence for these activities comes, in fact, from the contents of rubbish pits and middens where, in the right conditions, organic materials such as leather, wood and textiles, both the waste and finished products, can survive. Rubbish pits and middens are commonly found in the backlands of burgage plots (rubbish pits were identified at the College Street/Risk Street site for example, *see* pp 56–8) and are often our sole source of evidence for crafts such as weaving (loom weights), shoemaking (leather off-cuts), coopering (wood shavings) and bone working (horn cores and antler off-cuts).

Some industrial processes, however, such as malting and tanning, both known from Dumbarton, stand a better chance of survival in the archaeological record, as they require tanks or vats and kilns, all of which were sunk below ground level; and they were later backfilled rather than demolished. A malting operation comprising a watertight, clay-lined

housing

Most medieval housing was simple, low-lying, thatched dwellings and this remained the norm into the seventeenth century. Fire was, in consequence, a constant hazard. In June 1626, for example, 'in the grit drouth', the town drummer marched through the streets warning of the danger of fire. By this time, a number of lairds had town houses in the burgh, which were of considerably grander design than the homes of the common townspeople. The properties of such as MacFarlane of Arrochar, Colquhoun of Luss, Darleith of Darleith and the Earl of Glencairn were sited in the town.

Prior to the nineteenth-century industrial boom, Dumbarton remained intimately aware of its agricultural connections. The outlying dwellings of the town were built in the eighteenth century to house agricultural workers and their families and gradually became encompassed within a rapidly expanding town. The upsurge of industry in the nineteenth century meant an increased demand for new homes for the growing workforce and their managers. The tenements of Glasgow Road and Knoxland were built, and Dennystown, beside West Bridgend (*see* p 37), became an entirely new suburb. All these were for shipyard workers. Houses, such as Drumoyne in Strathleven Place **V**, were constructed on prime development land and were occupied by the more affluent members of the increasingly thriving community.

In the twentieth century, major redevelopment, particularly in the town centre, saw the removal of many of the old houses.

the water work

The River Leven is tidal to approximately over two kilometres above the town. A high spring tide, allied to spate conditions from melting snow from the Highland hills, invariably meant floods. The north part of the town was particularly vulnerable. Clearly, the reference to the use of lands of the collegiate church **L** for shipbuilding (*see* p 17) indicated that, in the middle ages, the river at times passed to the north of the church. The potential problem had been contained by Robert Maxwell of Pollok, the provost of the collegiate church from 1523 to 1541 and Bishop of Orkney from 1526. He had constructed a dyke to contain the water and a channel had been deepened to control the flow. This became known as the Bishop's cast or water-gang. The Reformation, however, brought some destruction to the collegiate church and it was abandoned (*see* p 22). The water-gang probably fell into disrepair; and sometime around 1580 the river burst its banks, flooding the north of the town. Much of the Broad Meadow **N** was to lie under water, known as the 'Drowned Lands', unreclaimed until the nineteenth century. Even by the 1580s, this area of the town was not heavily populated but some housing was certainly

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vat for germinating the barley and a kiln for drying was found in the backlands of Canal Street in Perth, and a tanning works has more recently been discovered adjacent to the castle at St Andrews. There is the possibility that similar evidence may lie concealed in Dumbarton.

harbour works

The nature and location of Dumbarton's medieval harbour, and of the shipyards for James IV's navy, remain uncertain. Simple timber structures, such as wharves and jetties, are unlikely to have survived the more recent riverside improvements along Riverside Lane, but the bases of supporting wooden posts may be preserved in the mud and silt of the river bed.

lost; the road to Bonhill disappeared and Townend **Q** became separated from the rest of Dumbarton. Tobias Smollett, a pupil at Dumbarton Grammar School in the 1730s, would recall feeling cobble or paving stones under the water as he paddled the old pathway from the collegiate church to Townend.

Necessary as were measures to protect the town from inundation, there were not the funds for such projects. Numerous appeals were made to the Convention of Royal Burghs, to the Privy Council and to the king. Some success was achieved in the form of imposts, or taxes, which were granted for the support of the work in 1600, as sixty acres had already been lost and it was believed that the burgh was 'lyke to be environed on all pairtis and overflowne with the...watteris'. These imposts were renewed in 1607, after an appeal to the king that the 'Leavin and rage of the sea [were at] the very yaird ends of the toun, and [had] carryed away some of [the] houssis, and [was] lykle to undo [their] haill toun' but, in spite of other financial support, funds proved inadequate. In 1608, a tax of 20,000 merks was levied on the kingdom by the Scottish parliament in aid of Dumbarton; while this was being raised the Privy Council was instructed, by the crown, to pay an additional grant of 12,000 merks; and Dumbarton was excused involvement in yet another proposed expedition to the Western Isles. In the event, the funds were slow in arriving, even though royal reminders were sent to the Privy Council in 1611 and 1612. Again, in 1628, the town was forced to appeal to the crown for financial support.

Some improvements, however, were achieved. The advice of a number of specialists was taken, including that of Napier of Merchiston, the inventor of logarithms. In 1608, according to his instructions, the Bishop's water-gang was reconstructed, with the assistance of all in the burgh. What else precisely was achieved in the years from 1608 until 1615 is unclear, but the bulwarks were found to be inadequate in 1628, when all able-bodied people in the town were ordered out with shovels and spades, those on the east side of the market cross at low water one day, those on the west at low water on the next. Men were paid a daily wage of five shillings and women at the rate of four shillings. It was at this point that the imposts were renewed and the town council appealed to be 'helpit yearlie', by renewal of the imposts, as the costs over three years had been more than could be raised in seven years.

The problem was not permanently solved. There was a further crisis in 1634 and, yet again, the bulwarks were repaired, but the problem prevailed until 1859. In the early part of 1719, for example, the embankments on the Broad Meadow were seriously damaged by storm and floods and stones had to be brought from the Jamestown quarry to repair them. Three years later, the kirk session had concerns over the kirkyard. It was felt that the trees on the south side of the yard were liable to collapse, as they had been undermined by the river. A dyke that had once stood at the southern edge of the kirkyard, affording some protection from the incursions of water, had already completely disappeared.

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gazetteer

Coin hoard NS 3975 7559 **W**

During construction of the railway station in 1896, a large hoard of coins was found in a mound of sand. There is much confusion as to what happened to these coins, many of which were never seen again. Nineteenth-century accounts report that the coins were either of Edward I and were minted at Canterbury, or were of early medieval Scottish origin. Subsequent investigation has suggested that the coins were more probably of the reign of Edward III. Talbot (1980).

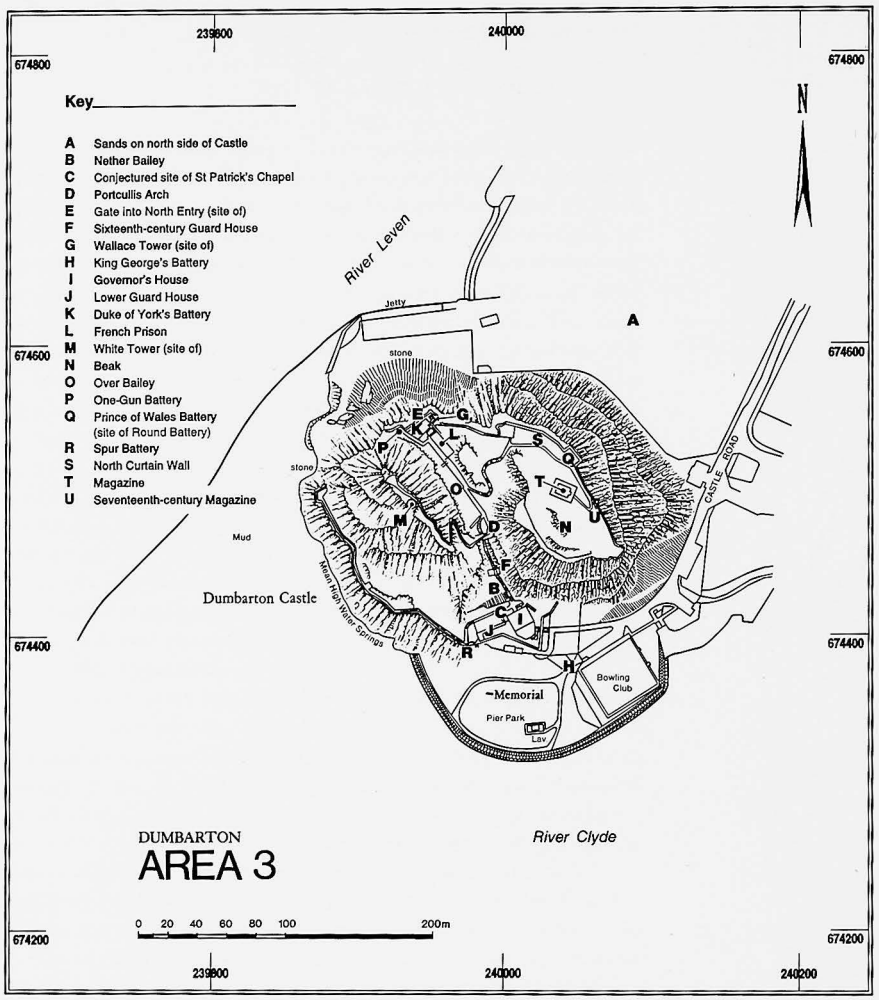

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figure 24
Area 3

area 3

Dumbarton Rock **figure 24**

historical background **figures 17 & 25**

The subjects of the kings of Strathclyde knew the rock as *Alcluith* (*see* p 10); but to the neighbouring Gaelic-speaking people of Dalriada it was *Dun Breatann*, the hill or fort of the Britons. Any settlement at Dumbarton in the Dark Ages probably clustered at the base of the Rock, above the high watermark, or on the rock itself. This settlement had little or no connection with the later, medieval burgh, which was probably built on a green field site (*see* p 12). For the history of the Rock during the early historic period *see* pp 10–11.

In 1222, King Alexander II established the burgh of Dumbarton about a kilometre from the castle on Dumbarton Rock. The castle was in the hands of Aluin, the Celtic earl of Levenach or Lennox, but, from 1238, it was a royal fortress. The allotted site for the new burgh offered a convenient place for the development of a port, close by the castle. The chronicler, Jean Froissart, writing in the fourteenth century, described Dumbarton as 'standing in the marshes [*sic*] [marches?] against the wild Scots', an interesting comment on the castle's setting. Throughout the middle ages, the castle rock was surrounded by water at high tides, so early settlement was probably on the rock itself or immediately at its base, above the high watermark. There are specific references to the 'sands' on the north side of the castle **A**, which immediately implies unsuitability for building.

It may safely be assumed that, within a few decades of the foundation of the burgh, a number of craftsmen, for example carpenters, as well as merchants and ale and food producers, would have found employment in the town. Many of the local people were probably also employed at the castle. Regular services of washer women and gardeners,

archaeological potential

Occupation of Dumbarton Rock may have been continuous from at least the fifth century AD through to the present day, with four main phases of construction: the early historic stronghold/political centre/harbour; the medieval royal castle; the seventeenth-century castle; and, finally, the Georgian fortress and state prison. Unfortunately, little survives even of the medieval castle, and much of what is visible today is of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century fortifications. Almost continuous use of the Rock over 1,500 years has meant that the most suitable areas for occupation have been built over, time and time again. Fortifications, by their very nature, are massively constructed, with deep foundations, and would probably destroy all traces of earlier activity. Nevertheless, the excavations of 1974–5 and the discovery of two cross-slabs clearly demonstrate the archaeological potential of this site.

early historic fortress

No traces of the fortress are visible today, but archaeological excavations in 1974–75 have provided a unique insight into the nature of the early historic fort (*see* pp 10–11). Survey suggested that the western of the two peaks, the White Tower **M**, would have been too pointed for anything other than a look-out post **figure 3**. The eastern summit, the Beak **N**, however, appeared to offer a level summit some 30 m x 20 m in area, as well as a series of lower terraces suitable for settlement. The cleft between the two summits provided an access route up to the highest points, and may have been the site of the well captured by the Norsemen in 870. At the foot of the Rock, beside both the Clyde and Leven, are extensive flats which may have functioned as beaching areas for ships.

Prior to excavation, it was thought that the Rock was a nuclear fort—a fortification with a high central citadel surrounded by a series of enclosures at lower levels—and similar to Dunadd, a contemporary stronghold of the Scots of Dalriada. The excavation

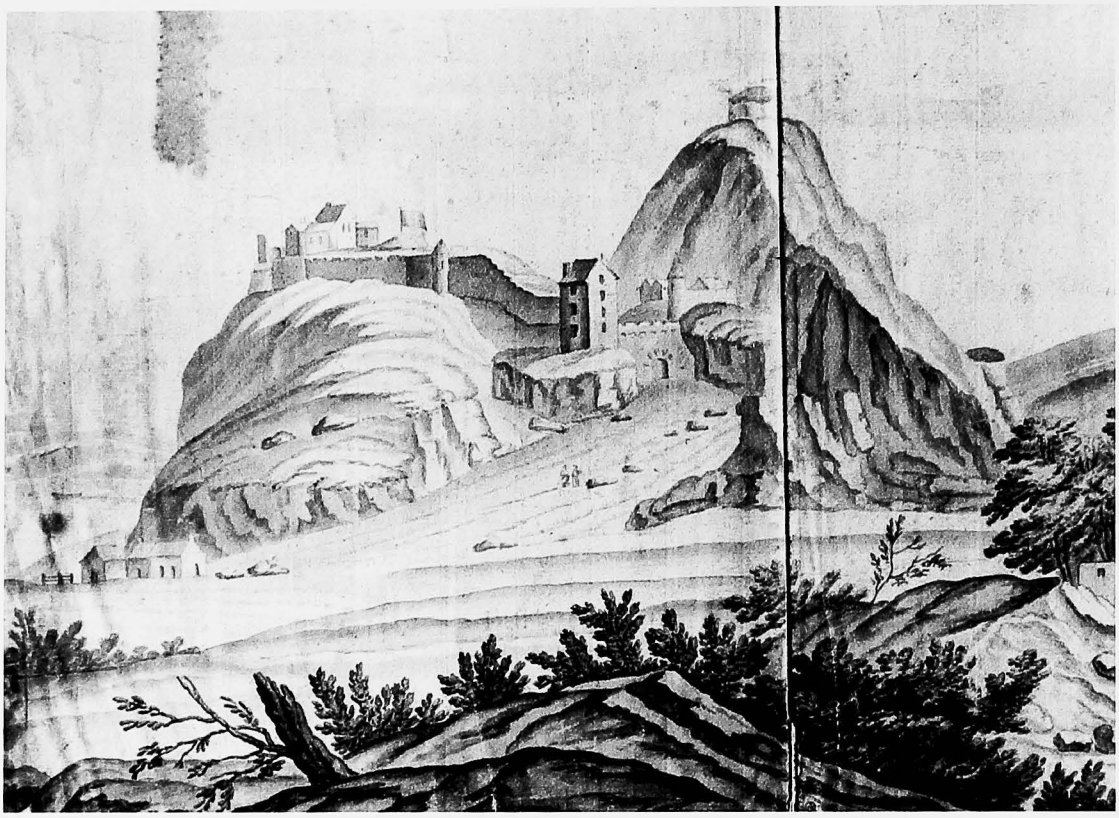

figure 25
John Slezer's view of the castle from the north-west *c* 1690

history

for example, would have been needed. A number of building craftsmen would also have been required for the continual renovations and repair work to the castle. In fewer than twenty years, for example, 13,000 roofing slates were brought from Bute for the repair of the castle in 1445; the chapel of St Patrick in the castle underwent major renovation in 1456; and, in 1464, a hall and cellars were built in the nether bailey of the castle **B**. The chapel stood in the castle, on the south side of the rock, from at least 1271 **C**. Its revenues amounted to £6 13s 4d at the Reformation. The only structure from this period which is still standing is a fourteenth-century portcullis arch **D**.

archaeology

proved otherwise. There were no enclosure walls, as the vertical cliffs and river had provided much of the necessary defences, although the interior of the fort may have still been sub-divided. The weakest point on the Rock, the landward side where it overlooks the narrow isthmus that connects with the mainland, was, however, found to have been protected by a rampart of earth, rubble and timber. The rampart had been destroyed by fire, possibly during the siege of 870. Two finds associated with it, a Viking pommel bar of a sword and a lead weight, may substantiate this interpretation. Radiocarbon dates from charcoal recovered from the rampart have provided a series of dates which range from the sixth to the ninth centuries.

No buildings were discovered during the excavations, but only a small sample area was examined. The most likely areas for settlement are the summit and southern slope of the Beak **N**, the flattish cleft between the two summits, and the lower terrace where the Governor's House stands **I**.

The finds retrieved from the excavations are also of great interest. Of special note are fragments of *amphorae*, imported from the east Mediterranean and datable to the sixth century, and fragments of glass vessels of Germanic manufacture, which indicate that the site was an early medieval harbour and a centre for trade with contacts as far afield as the Rhineland and the Mediterranean. It is unclear what the tidal regime was during this period and how much of this area lay underwater or was regularly flooded. It is likely, however, that the mud flats bordering both the Clyde and Leven were used for beaching ships and boats, rather than for any formal harbour works.

Being an important royal stronghold, it was inevitable that Dumbarton Castle was pulled into national political events. During the competition for the crown, after the death of the young Princess Margaret, Maid of Norway, Dumbarton Castle was handed over to King Edward I of England, who then bestowed it upon John Balliol when the adjudication over the crown went in his favour. Between 1296 and 1309, it was held by the English, with Sir John de Menteith installed as governor of the castle, town and sheriffdom in 1304. It was he who took William Wallace captive in Glasgow in 1305; and it is possible, therefore, that Wallace was held as a prisoner in Dumbarton Castle for a week or so before being despatched to London and execution. Eight years later, however, the castle was firmly in the hands of King Robert I, and he is known to have been in residence there. David II and his consort were brought for safety to the castle after the Scottish defeat at Halidon Hill in 1333. One of only five castles holding out for the king, its secluded position in the land communications of Scotland brought increased security. And it was from this impregnable fortress, held by Sir Malcolm Fleming in the Bruce interest, that, the following spring, they sailed for France. The king was again at Dumbarton, in 1345x46, 1353, 1357 and 1360. The reign of his successor, Robert II, saw further visits to the town and to the castle. In 1372, the year after his accession, the king was at Dumbarton; and again in 1374, 1383, and 1384.

The castle and its neighbouring town were to witness a number of both sieges and royal visits over the next two centuries. In 1392, for example, Robert III was at Dumbarton. He was back six years later, when the Dukes of Albany and Rothesay were based in Dumbarton for their expedition to the Isles. The usefulness of Dumbarton as a base, however, must have been greatly affected by the fact that the castle was held unofficially by Walter Danielstoun, who had seized control the previous year, apparently with considerable local support. The holding of the kingdom's principal royal fortress in defiance of the crown was probably a significant comment on the reign of Robert III. For at least three months, from August till October 1398, the king was at Dumbarton with a huge army, in an attempt to oust Danielstoun. In the event, he was unsuccessful.

In 1425, James Stewart, son of the late Regent Albany and grandson of the eighth and last Celtic earl of Lennox, assaulted and burned the town and murdered the king's uncle, Sir John Stewart, who was holding the castle with thirty-two men. The Earl of Lennox, with several supporters, was executed for his troubles. Five of Lennox's accomplices were

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Finally, there is a possibility that the Rock may not have been completely abandoned between 870 and the building of the first medieval castle. Fragments of two recumbent cross-slabs of tenth-century date were discovered some years ago during digging behind the Governor's House **I** on the lower slopes of the Rock, and are currently on display in the Governor's House. They may have been associated with St Patrick's Chapel **C**, traditionally thought to have been sited in the area, perhaps on the Rock itself; or they could have been brought in as building material from elsewhere.

medieval royal castle

Little survives of the medieval castle. During the medieval period, the area between the two summits, extending onto the Beak, and the lower terrace within which the Governor's House **I** and King George's Battery **H** now stand, appear to have been where the main buildings were sited. The lower terrace was known as the Nether Bailey **B**, and the upper area as the Over Bailey **O**. Two barriers built across the narrow cleft in the rock divided these enclosures. The lower of the two, the Guard House **F**, is, in its present form, sixteenth-century in date, while the upper barrier, the Portcullis Arch **D**, is probably of fourteenth-century origin. The latter defended the passage, but also afforded an easier ascent to the White Tower **M**, a watch-tower since destroyed, which stood on the western summit. The Nether Bailey **B** was also protected by a large tower, known as the 'Hall', situated where the Governor's House stands today **I**.

dismembered and quartered and one, Adam Ged, was placed in Dumbarton's market place as an deterrent to future rebels. Ten years later, it was a small French fleet that arrived at the castle, with a mission to secure the marriage of James I's daughter, Margaret, to Louis, son of King Charles VII of France. And it was from Dumbarton that the eleven-year old princess sailed to what was to be a miserable marriage. There is some evidence that Dumbarton was set on fire in 1437; but whether this was the castle, town, or both, is unclear. It is known that James II was in Dumbarton in 1450. Dumbarton was besieged by the fleet of Edward IV of England in 1481, but was successfully defended by Sir Andrew Wood, later of Largo.

The history of Dumbarton Castle became inextricably linked with that of the Stewart earls of Lennox. Traditionally, the keepers of the castle were the sheriffs of Dumbarton. In 1488, however, King James III, with the town showing itself unsure for the crown, exempted the burgesses of Dumbarton from muster under the sheriff; they were, however, to be ready to defend themselves, by holding a *wappinschaw* (weapon showing), as was the custom in other burghs. John, the first Stewart earl of Lennox, took up arms against James IV from the safety of Dumbarton Rock, with the result that the castle was twice besieged in 1489. The first, unsuccessful, attempt was made by the Earl of Argyll. This failure came only after the burning of the greater part of the town following a sally by the garrison. The second assault was led by the young king, James IV, who forced the four sons of Lennox to capitulate.

It was from Dumbarton that King James IV sailed in his expeditions to pacify the western mainland and islands of his kingdom: he was, for example, at Dumbarton on 5 May 1495, ready for his journey to the Isles; and after the escape, in 1501, of Donald Dubh, the grandson of the last Lord of the Isles, forfeited in 1493, it was at Dumbarton that a naval expedition was fitted out to effect his recapture. The records suggest that the king was a regular visitor to Dumbarton, either as a resident in the castle or as the guest of local noblemen.

The king's death at Flodden in 1513 brought much activity to Dumbarton and its castle. Held by Lord Erskine for the queen mother, the castle was surprised by John, the third Earl of Lennox, after burrowing under the gate at the north entry **E**, one stormy January night in 1514. It was at Dumbarton that John Stewart, duke of Albany and cousin of the dead king, landed the following year to take up his duties as Governor of Scotland; and, after the arrest of Lennox, that a French garrison was established in 1516.

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The North Entry **E** to the castle (reconstructed *c* 1795) into the Over Bailey **O**, was also protected by a tall tower house known as Wallace Tower **G** in 1510. Many of these features, Wallace Tower **G**, the North Entry **E**, the White Tower **M** and a range of buildings on the Beak, are visible on John Slezer's *c* 1690 view of the castle from the north-west **figure 25**.

There are references to other buildings within the medieval castle such as the 'Windy Hall', the 'Red Tower' and St Patrick's Chapel, but their location is unknown. The present curtain wall around the castle is of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century date, but probably follows the line of the earlier medieval defences.

seventeenth-century castle

From the sixteenth century through to the eighteenth century, the castle was modernised in response to the development of artillery and siegecraft. Gun batteries, including the One-Gun Battery **P** installed to strengthen the North Entry **E**, and the Round Battery, where the Prince of Wales Battery now stands **Q**, were erected. To improve the defences at the entry to the Nether Bailey **B**, a forework was built or reconstructed in 1629, with a turret in the angle of the walls **H**. By the later seventeenth century, the defences were again in need of repair and, as part of further improvements, the Spur Battery **R** was installed. Slezer's view of *c* 1690 **figure 17**, this time from the south-west, is again useful as

The duke's numerous journeys to and from France over the next eight years found Dumbarton a convenient port of entry and exit. His arrival in 1523 could not but have had an impact on the castle and town. According to one eyewitness, he arrived with troops for an invasion of England, amounting to eighty-seven ships, 600 horses, 4,000 foot soldiers, 500 men-at-arms and 1,000 arquebusiers armed with sixteen cannon and 1,000 small guns. He made his final departure from Scotland in May of the following year, leaving from Dumbarton, and the French garrison was removed. This inevitably brought a struggle from rival factions for control of the castle, until James V finally secured it. Dumbarton became once more, in the years from 1530–40, the base for several royal expeditions to the west.

The reign of Mary Queen of Scots was to see the close involvement of Dumbarton in national politics. Matthew, the fourth earl of Lennox, held Dumbarton. He soon left the side of Regent Arran and the French party, transferring his support to the English interest. This he demonstrated by the interception of a large French subsidy of supplies and money brought to Dumbarton in 1543. He also attempted, in the following year, to surrender the castle into English hands through negotiations with Henry VIII; but the garrison refused to co-operate and Lennox was forced to retire in English ships. Regent Arran succeeded in capturing the castle.

The importance of the retention of Dumbarton by the government forces was highlighted in the events that preceded and followed the Battle of Pinkie. It was to Dumbarton that the French sent supplies of weapons and reinforcements of troops; and it was also there that the spoils from a Portuguese ship (the ally of England) were deposited. In 1547 and 1549, the governors for the young queen were at Dumbarton, where charters were issued in her name. The castle was repaired and the defences strengthened and, in February 1548, the young queen arrived to spend five months at Dumbarton, which was deemed to be a safe place after the disaster of the Battle of Pinkie in the previous year. The ready access to France from Dumbarton's harbour must also have been an influential factor; and it was from here that she sailed to the security of France and, ultimately, to marriage with the young dauphin.

The queen returned as a widow to Scotland thirteen years later. Her next visit to Dumbarton was not until 1563, when she stayed merely to dine on 15 July, while progressing through the Lennox and Argyll. She was probably aiming for the safety of Dumbarton Castle, held by her supporters, with the possibility of flight to France, after

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it shows the Portcullis Arch **D**, the sixteenth-century Guard House **F**, the medieval gatehouse **I**, the forework **H** and the Spur Battery **R**. Many of these features were subsequently demolished in the 1730s.

Georgian fortress and state prison

By 1738, urgent repairs were again required, this time to the north curtain wall **S**. Shortly after, the western batteries were rebuilt, the south defences were replaced with King George's Battery **H**, and the Governor's House was constructed on the site of the former medieval gatehouse **I** to the Nether Bailey **B**. In 1748, the Magazine **T** was built on the summit of the Beak **N**, replacing the late seventeenth-century magazine which lay slightly further south, against the curtain wall **U**. In advance of the construction of the barrel-vaulted magazine **T**, the buildings which had covered the Beak **N** were cleared away. The North Entry **E** was blocked up *c* 1795 and abandoned as a point of entry. A barrack-block which had already replaced the Wallace Tower **G** was itself demolished and the Duke of York's Battery constructed **K**. The only building extant from this period is the French Prison **L**, which housed prisoners during the Napoleonic Wars.

More recently, anti-aircraft batteries were set up in World War II, but no traces of these survive today.

her disastrous defeat at Langside on 13 May 1568, but Regent Moray's forces barred the way and she turned south.

The castle held out for the queen's party in the civil war that followed. John, fifth Lord Fleming, the governor of the castle for the exiled Queen Mary, took further measures to ensure his position. The town was to suffer. Lord Fleming demolished much of the parish church and college church, the latter having been largely 'cassin doun be ye congregatioun in ye fiftie nyne zeir', as well as the parish church of Cardross, along with the houses of many burgesses who supported the king. The stones and material were then transferred to the castle where he intended to improve the fortifications and build stables for the horses of the awaited French troops. At some point during the sixteenth century, a new guardhouse was erected but exactly when is unclear **F**. A daring escalade up the east side of the rock on the night of 1 April 1571, under the leadership of Captain Thomas Crawford of Jordanhill, however, was the prelude to the surprise and flight of the defending garrison, and the loss of Dumbarton Castle to the king's party.

The reign of James VI saw fewer royal visits to Dumbarton. The newly created dukes of Lennox (the first was Esmé Stewart who was granted the governorship of the castle) also had little interest in their Scottish inheritance and, with the end of the Auld Alliance, the town lost some of its earlier importance as the gateway to France. As late as 1602, however, Dumbarton was still viewed as an ideal base from which to launch a wider invasion into Scotland with Spanish troops. The town also continued to play its role as the rallying point for punitive expeditions against rebellious Islanders and Highlanders. On five occasions, James VI summoned levies to Dumbarton with the intention of reducing rebels in the Highlands and Isles. In 1608, Dumbarton was required to provide some of the food supplies for a further expedition against the Isles, but not all men in the town were enlisted in the expedition. Although James VI intended to lead the earlier expeditions personally, he was never required to. The objective of pacifying the chiefs was normally achieved before the relevant expedition was due to set out.

As well as maintaining the fabric of their own town, the townspeople were expected to help with the upkeep of the castle. In 1627, for example, it was said to be in a ruinous condition and the town was encouraged by the Privy Council to assist in its maintenance. *The Accounts of the Masters of Works for Building and Repairing Royal Palaces and Castles* indicate that extensive work was effected on the castle between 1616 and 1649. The most important alteration was the erection of the Wallace Tower from 1617 to 1619 **G**. Its site had been occupied by an earlier tower of the same name, which had been standing as late as 1571. As no mention of it is made in the accounts, it had probably fallen down, although its lowest vaulted chamber may have remained (*see* pp 80–1). The castle fell into disrepair after that and in 1627 it was found that 'the walls in the cheefe and most important pairts thairof wer ruinous and decayed, the houssis wanting doores, locks or bolts, and nather wind nor water tight, the ordinance unmounted and little or no provisioun of victualls and munitioun...within the same'. Further attention was given in 1628 but, thereafter, the castle was neglected, although some minor repairs were effected, including the building or rebuilding of a brewhouse and other offices, the reslating of the south side of the hall and an attempt to fortify it in 1639 to 1640. In 1641, parliament decided that, in future, the walls should not be repaired. Three years later, orders were given that the houses and walls should be demolished, but this was not effected. It

gazetteer

fragments of two cross-slabs NS 400 744

Sometime before 1958, fragments of two cross-slabs, with interlace decoration, and dated to the tenth century, were found during excavation of one of the garden terraces behind the Governor's House (MacIvor 1993, 5).

continued to decline; in 1645 prisoners were transferred to Edinburgh, since there were no rooms, irons or men to guard them. In 1647, Provost Sempill wrote that 'the houses are verie ruynous, and a grit part of the bak wall neirest the sey is fallin out'. The decline continued and by 1690, in spite of repairs between 1673 and 1693, walls were reported to be falling down.

Provost John Sempill, one of the Sempills of Stoneyflat, is perhaps best remembered for his part in defying the crown after the signing of the National Covenant in 1638. In October of that year, the town purchased muskets and powder from Edinburgh and the following March a council of war was held in the town, with John Sempill at its head. On the last Sunday of the month, the governor of the royal castle, Sir William Stewart, was attending the parish church when, on the instructions of Sempill, he was arrested and forced to hand over the keys to the castle and divulge the pass-word. Sempill held the castle for a month. The town's sympathies were clear in 1640, when it provided Archibald, eighth earl of Argyll, with two fully equipped horsemen and a grey horse, which cost £90 in all. The following year, supplies for the army were provided, including seventeen pairs of shoes for the soldiers of the town. Sempill was officially Covenanting keeper of the castle from 1644 to 1648, holding out against royal authority. His expenses in this role, some £14,000, were never reimbursed and he died in debt. In 1652, the castle was taken over by the Cromwellian troops and put in the care of Major-General Lambert **figures 17 & 25**.

The castle was to take little part in the Jacobite rebellions. When the MacGregors, under Gregor MacGregor of Glenlyle, nephew of Rob Roy, and his men seemed liable to make a raid on Dumbarton, in what became called the 'Loch Lomond Expedition', the alarm was raised by the ringing of the church bells at Bonhill and two warning shots were fired from the cannon in Dumbarton Castle. The result was that the MacGregors retired to Innchmurrin on Loch Lomond, without threatening either the castle or town. A month later, in October, 120 loyalist volunteers were stationed in Dumbarton. On 11 October, seven naval boats arrived at the town, where they were joined by three boats from Dumbarton. The ten vessels were dragged up the Leven, while the sailors and volunteers went on foot to Loch Lomond, the men from Dumbarton being under the command of their two bailies. There was, however, no sign of the MacGregors. After the proclamation for the Pretender at Drymen on 9 December by Rob Roy, Dumbarton men were backed by a hundred sailors in their search for the elusive rebel leader but, again, the MacGregors disappeared. The castle had even less involvement in the 'Forty-Five.

In the eighteenth century, there were a number of famous visitors to the castle. In 1773, for example, it was visited by James Boswell and Dr Samuel Johnson. Some important building had been effected on the Castle Rock by this time. Reconstruction of the castle's southern defences were undertaken by General Wade in 1735. The King George's Battery **H**, a design of John Romer, replaced the medieval ramparts and the Governor's House **I** was erected in place of the erstwhile great gatehouse. A new lower guardhouse was also constructed **J**. The presence of the garrison is easily recognisable in the kirk session records. The soldiers in the castle featured regularly in cases of fornication and fathering of children to local women.

By 1795, the old north entry was finally abandoned, the barrack block that had replaced the Wallace Tower was removed, and the Duke of York's Battery was constructed **K**. A number of internal alterations were undertaken during the wars with France. The

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excavations in 1974–75 NS 400 744

As part of a long-term programme of research on historically-documented fortifications, excavations were carried out in 1974–75 at Dumbarton Castle by Professor L Alcock and E Alcock. These excavations disproved the hypothesis that a nuclear fort, similar to that of Dunadd, could be identified on the rock; however, a timber-and-rubble defense of Early Historic date was revealed, and several finds of special interest recovered (such as the northernmost examples of imported Mediterranean amphorae of the sixth century AD) (Alcock and Alcock 1990, 95–149).

only building now standing from this period is the French Prison **L**. No trace remains of the windmill commented upon by Dorothy Wordsworth on her visit in 1803.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the castle was no longer fulfilling the role for which it was designed. Indeed, it was becoming very much a tourist attraction,

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receiving, for example, a visit from Queen Victoria in 1847.

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future development

Dumbarton Rock is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, protected on behalf of the Secretary of State for Scotland by Historic Scotland. Any proposed development in or adjacent to this nationally important monument would require Scheduled Monument Consent.

the archaeological potential of Dumbarton a summary **figure 26**

an overview

On present evidence, there is potential for the survival of archaeological deposits within the medieval core of Dumbarton, but the extent to which deposits survive is difficult to predict. Nevertheless, routine monitoring and excavations in many other Scottish towns, especially Perth and Aberdeen, but also in some smaller burghs, have demonstrated that medieval and later archaeological remains often survive beneath the modern town. The site of any proposed ground disturbance or development along the main street frontages in the historic core of Dumbarton must, therefore, be accorded a high archaeological priority, and arrangements made for the site to be assessed, monitored and, if necessary, excavated in advance of the development scheme. Similarly, any proposed ground disturbance of the surviving streets and wynds themselves (for instance, for essential repairs, access to services, or environmental improvements) should also be monitored routinely, because the remains of important features of the medieval townscape may be sealed beneath them; no archaeological evidence has yet been found for the original site of the market cross, tolbooth, tron, ports and wells.

To date, little archaeological work has been undertaken within Dumbarton. The conclusions and recommendations expressed here should therefore be regarded as provisional; this survey will require periodic review in the light of results from any future campaigns of archaeological fieldwork (assessment, monitoring and excavation), and from other types of sub-surface investigation.

It is important to stress that the survey was limited to the core of historic (medieval) Dumbarton. There is a recognised, although unquantifiable, potential for the discovery of prehistoric and early historic archaeological remains, both within and outwith the confines of the historic burgh but this is not illustrated in **figure 26**.

Finally, the potential for archaeological features and deposits to be preserved both beneath the floors and within the structures of historic standing buildings in Dumbarton (*see* pp 81–4) must not be overlooked. The archaeological potential of Dumbarton's standing buildings is *not* shown on **figure 26**, but the potential of individual buildings is considered in the next section.

Turning to the specific areas of Dumbarton (as identified in this survey), previous archaeological work, documentary and cartographic evidence have demonstrated the archaeological potential of both Areas 1 and 2, the core of the medieval town. It should be borne in mind, however, that the limits of the medieval burgh remain uncertain. Area 3, Dumbarton Rock, is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and any proposal for intrusive works here would require consent from Historic Scotland.

figure 26 distinguishes between areas of known potential (shaded green) and unknown potential (shaded lighter green). *All green areas should be treated as potentially archaeologically sensitive. Areas designated red are Scheduled Ancient Monuments* and are protected by law. Effectively redeveloped areas (shaded blue) are probably archaeologically sterile.

area 1

This area comprises the western half of the medieval town. The street frontages and associated backlands offer the most archaeological potential, with deposits likely to be concentrated in a band on either side of High Street. The west side of High Street, between Riverside Lane and Dumbarton Bridge, appears to offer the most archaeological potential. This area, however, has experienced a number of small developments in the backlands in recent years, without any archaeological monitoring. As the burgage plots here represent some of the last visible remains of the medieval town plan, this area should be accorded the highest priority.

On the east side of High Street, there has been considerable, large-scale development in recent years and the medieval town plan has largely been lost. On closer examination,

however, the shopping mall, although extensive in area, comprises fairly low, two-storey units. The foundations of these buildings may be shallow and it is possible that some medieval levels survive beneath them. There are also open areas, walkways and a children's playground within the complex, within which may also be preserved archaeological deposits.

Conversely, the blocks of flats north and west of Risk Street are likely to have destroyed archaeological levels. As this area lay on the periphery of the medieval town, it should be regarded as effectively redeveloped. For the area lying to the north of Dumbarton Bridge and Glasgow Road, the archaeological potential is unknown. This area again lay outwith the core of the medieval town. The eighteenth-century glassworks were sited to the north of Dumbarton Bridge and would be of interest to industrial archaeologists, if the nineteenth-century engineering works have not destroyed any surviving remains.

Little is known of the medieval chapel of St Mary and the later collegiate church, and it is possible that their lands, and buildings sited within them, extended into Area 1.

South of the River Leven, the archaeological potential is confined to the area around Cardross parish church. There may also be potential for industrial archaeology on the site of the Woodyard, and traces of a designed landscape associated with Levengrove may be preserved within the present parklands.

area 2

The archaeological potential of this area is confined to a band on either side of High Street and Church Street. South of High Street there has been considerable disturbance. Dumbarton Distillery has undoubtedly destroyed most archaeological deposits, but pockets of archaeological remains may survive in between the main buildings. The south frontage of High Street (from the parish church to 19 High Street), the east side of Riverside Lane and the north side of High Street are particularly sensitive to development as these areas lie within the core of the medieval burgh, and close to the first parish church.

Church Street may have been a late medieval addition to the town plan, and was certainly never fully developed as a street frontage. Settlement here, however, may have extended as far as the present Glasgow Road.

Beyond Glasgow Road, the archaeological potential is unknown. This area lay outwith the medieval town but there were isolated features here. The building of the railway probably destroyed any traces of the chapel of St Mary and the later collegiate church, but their lands, and possibly buildings sited within them, may extend into the north-western corner of this area. The burn that ran along the eastern edge of the town, known as the Mill or Knowle Burn, probably powered a mill as early as the thirteenth century. Exactly where this stood is uncertain. A mill that existed in the early nineteenth century may have marked the spot **figure 18**. A kiln was sited nearby. Immediately east of the distillery was a bridge over the same burn, at the entrance to the town.

area 3

Dumbarton Rock is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is protected by law. Any ground disturbance which would affect the site or setting of this nationally important monument would require Scheduled Monument Consent. Excavations in the 1970s have clearly demonstrated the archaeological potential of the Rock, which was the site of an early historic fortress, a medieval castle, a seventeenth-century castle, and a Georgian fortress and prison. The visible remains are largely of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century date, but evidence for earlier periods will be preserved below the present ground surface, and perhaps within and beneath the fabric of standing buildings on the Rock.

The urban core of Dumbarton bears little resemblance to the burgh of years past. Commercial development in the 1960s and the subsequent remodelling of the road network in the 1970s have left few traces of the medieval or early modern town layout and buildings. There are, however, a few exceptions; one of the most valuable being *Glencairn's Greit House, 95 High Street* **figure 13** *&* **21.E.** Dated 1623 on its western dormerhead, it may, in fact, incorporate earlier fabric at basement level. It almost certainly stands on the site of earlier town dwellings. Built as a three-storeyed town house for the Earls of Glencairn (and later occupied by the Dukes of Argyll), it now houses the West Dunbartonshire Social Work Department. The residential apartments were previously reached by stone steps to first floor level; and a round-arched pend, at the east end of the building, led to the backlands of the tenement. The front of the building was altered in 1924–5, but manges to retain, in the upper storeys, many of the architectural features associated with seventeenth-century Scottish architecture. Crow-stepped gables (now only at the west end), extensive decorative stonework, a central plaque recess, pedimented dormerheads and spike finials still stand testament to the status of the owners and skill of the builders.

Buildings which have more than one phase of construction, such as Glencairn's Greit House, may also preserve earlier structural features within the fabric itself, hidden or obscured by later additions. On the ground floor, for example, these may be represented by floor surfaces, fireplaces and other features associated with the very earliest phases of occupation (in this case, at least, the seventeenth century) sealed beneath the modern floor levels. Throughout the house, more structural elements, such as blocked-up doorways, windows and cupboards, may also survive behind modern plasterboard. The earliest building on this prime street frontage would probably have been of timber, wattle and daub, perhaps with a thatched roof. At the front of properties like these, there would have been small, temporary stalls, or booths, erected on market days, selling locally made produce as well as providing services such as repairs to shoes, clothes and tools. Evidence for timber buildings, some as early in date as the twelfth century, and with stalls attached, has been found during excavations in Perth, Aberdeen and Inverness.

There are only two structures in Dumbarton older than Glencairn House. The first, *Dumbarton Castle* **figure 24**, reflects the town's traditional role—as a military stronghold. The castle stands apart from the centre of the town, on two volcanic peaks, at the mouth of the River Leven **figure 2**. Dumbarton Rock, it has been claimed, is the oldest known, continuously recorded, stronghold in Great Britain with occupation from at least AD 460. The oldest structure now standing on the rock, the *portcullis arch*, dates from the fourteenth century **figure 17**. A sixteenth-century *guardhouse* **figure 17** and the slightly later *Wallace Tower* **figure 25** (rebuilt in 1617 on a medieval site and covered, in the late eighteenth century, by the *Duke of York's Battery*), represent periods of building work considerably earlier than the majority of structures still standing on the rock. The *Governor's House*, *Lower Guardhouse* and *King George's Battery* **figure 17** date from 1735 and were designed by Captain John Romer, military engineer for Scotland. Other buildings were added during the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although no trace now remains of the windmill commented upon by Dorothy Wordsworth on her visit in 1803.

Unfortunately, little survives even of the medieval castle, and much of what is visible today is of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century fortifications. Almost continuous use of the Rock over 1,500 years has meant that the most suitable areas for occupation have been built over time and time again. Fortifications, by their very nature, are massively constructed, with deep foundations, and would probably destroy all traces of earlier activity. Nevertheless, the excavations of 1974–5 and the discovery of two cross-slabs clearly demonstrate the archaeological potential of this site. The castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is in the care of Historic Scotland.

The town's other medieval structure, the *College Bow* **figure 6** *&* **23.K** dates from the 1450s and is the only remnant of the former collegiate church of Dumbarton, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. This church, founded by Isabel, countess of Lennox, stood on the site presently occupied by Dumbarton Central Railway Station. The College Bow is a solitary

pointed arch, on supporting columns, which would have formed part of the original church structure—probably its tower. Since the time of the collegiate church's ruination, the arch has occupied a number of sites. In 1850, when the railway was built, the College Bow was moved to form a gateway to the Burgh Academy, further down College Street (the old Cross Vennel of the town). In 1907, the arch was again moved, this time to its present site outside the new municipal buildings.

Outwith the original burgh boundaries, across the River Leven, in the parish of Cardross, are two sites of significance to medieval Dumbarton. The first, that of King Robert Bruce's *hunting lodge*, is currently witnessing considerable interest in both its site and its groundplan. The traditional view is that the lodge, which incorporated a hall and a chapel, was sited at Castlehill. Contemporary records, however, suggest that the actual site may have been closer to the River Leven, as Bruce was able to draw his great ship out of the river beside the house. The second medieval site, *Cardross parish church* **figure 10** & **21.I**, set within Levengrove Park, remained in use until 1644 as the church for the separate settlement of Cardross. Much smaller than Dumbarton's parish church, little is known of this structure, which still survives, albeit in a ruinous state. A small, simple building, the remains comprise a nave, measuring 11.8 m by 6.1 m, and the north and south walls of the chancel. The south wall still remains to full height and was re-used in the nineteenth century for a funerary memorial. The remaining walls stand under a metre tall and are neglected and overgrown. In 1570, much of the church was demolished and the stones taken to the castle. It seems unlikely that the church was originally much more extensive than the present ground plan suggests. The site is fenced off, but gaps in the fence mean vandalism is possible, and a number of mature trees growing in and around the ruins will undoubtedly cause further damage to the site over time. Excavation could retrieve dating evidence, a more exact ground plan and, perhaps, a structural history for this church, which is first mentioned as early as 1226.

Originally, Cardross was approached from Dumbarton only by ferry. In 1765, the town architect, John Brown, designed and built *Dumbarton Bridge* **figure 14** & **21.J**. Widened and repaired on a number of occasions since then, it retains its basic five arch design with rounded cutwaters and full height buttresses.

The *Riverside Parish Church* **figure 23.C** stands at the east end of the curving High Street, on the site of the medieval parish church, and dates from 1811. Designed by Glasgow architect John Brash, it is a smaller version of his initial plan, the original proving too ornamental and expensive. The church has a simple rectangular plan with a two-stage tower over its west gable. A medieval stone within the church **figure 8** and a worn sundial on its south wall may represent older structures incorporated within the current building.

The present building may have preserved traces of at least two earlier phases of the church. A mid eighteenth-century picture **figure 7** records a church here, which appears to contain architectural elements of a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century date; and there may have been at least one earlier church on this site. In the seventeenth century, the church is known to have been enlarged, giving a T-shaped plan. It was this structure that was replaced by the 1811 church. Traces of all these earlier churches may be preserved beneath the present floor levels of the existing church and, in particular, more ancient walls may have been re-used as foundations for successive structures. Indeed, traces of earlier structures were noted during construction of the 1811 church. Development would not be expected here, but any ground disturbance in the form of environmental improvements or the insertion or maintenance of services should be archaeologically monitored.

Adjacent to the church, on the east side, was a hospital with chapel, also visible on the 1747 painting **figure 7**. Partially built in the early 1630s, it was demolished in 1758. The small building which currently fronts on to High Street, between the church and the main block of the distillery, and the more recent church hall immediately adjacent to the church on the south side, may preserve traces of the post-medieval hospital beneath present floor levels.

The municipal buildings of the town are all of comparatively recent construction. The tolbooth, which stood on the High Street near the market cross, was superseded by a new *Courthouse* **figure 23.G** and gaol complex **figure 23.H** on Church Street (constructed as the County Buildings, 1824–6). The gaol was demolished in 1973, during road reconstruction, although a few stones—most notably the Dumbarton burgh arms—remain built into a boundary wall. The Courthouse is strongly classical, with a pedimented porch and ionic pilasters and later additions, such as the balustraded wings (by William Spence, 1865), do not detract from the overall impression. The *Burgh Hall* **figure 23.F**, built as the new town academy and also on Church Street, dates from 1865 and is by Melvin and Leiper. A large, imposing, Gothic building, it has had several uses, although it is now in a poor state of repair. A *stone, previously incorporated in Mackenzie House*, High Street **figure 21.X**, as a pedimented dormer, is now built into the east wall of the town library. Dating from 1732, it has a Latin inscription and is decorated with a crown and a mason's hammer.

A few other domestic buildings reveal Dumbarton's historic past, such as *20 & 22 Cardross Road.* Dating from the late eighteenth century, they were originally built as farm cottages. Single-storeyed and initially of U-plan design, only the two parallel arms remain habitable. *Drumoyne, Strathleven Place*, formerly Strath Cottage **figure 23.V**, is a grander town villa, dating from 1853, with gabled wall-head dormers and a ball-finialed balustrade leading to a recessed door. Also dating from 1853 and, perhaps, the best remaining demonstration of the affluence of nineteenth-century Dumbarton is *Levenford House.* Built across the River Leven, in West Bridgend **figure 21.L**, for ship-builder William Denny, it is a fine example of a Scottish baronial mansion. At the south-east angle, a three-storied tower, with cap-house, corbelled parapet, spouts and gunports (merely decorative, not functional), and, with angle turrets, crow-step gables, mullioned windows and pedimented dormerheads, represents the height of Victorian good taste. Set within extensive grounds, and surrounded by a crenellated boundary wall (with the gateway to Helenslee Road having dummy gun ports), it is almost matched by *Levenford House Lodge*, which was also built around 1853 by architect J T Rochead. In similar Scottish baronial style, it is set onto a steep slope and has many of the features of Levenford House, such as crow-stepped gables and dummy gun ports.

Commercial buildings within the town are all of nineteenth- and twentieth-century design. Some, such as *127–135 High Street*, exhibit early Victorian features, but even these are tempered by modern shop front additions. Buildings situated in the core of the medieval burgh, such as those that presently front on to High Street and Church Street, were almost certainly constructed on the site of, or directly over, earlier buildings, a sequence possibly going back to the medieval period and continuing to the present day. Although there has been no opportunity for archaeologists to examine any of the street frontages in Dumbarton, evidence of earlier, possibly medieval, structures may be expected sealed beneath eighteenth- or nineteenth-century standing buildings along High Street and those streets and vennels leading off it.

In other Scottish towns, archaeological excavations have revealed that street frontages are promising for the preservation of archaeological deposits, in spite of the fact that cellarage may also have destroyed evidence. Recent excavations in Perth, Dunfermline and Arbroath have also shown that the width and alignment of the main streets in the burghs have changed over the centuries. Earlier cobbled street surfaces and contemporary buildings may, therefore, be preserved up to three or four metres behind the line of the modern street frontage. This was certainly the case at 80–86 High Street, Perth, where the medieval street lay some four metres further back from the present High Street. At the Abbot House, in Dunfermline, recent excavations uncovered a whole section of the medieval street itself, inside and sealed below the floor of the standing building. Up to six phases of street surfaces were revealed, each separated by thick dumps of midden, containing broken pottery, leather, animal bone and oyster shells. Here, archaeology clearly demonstrated how dramatically street frontages can shift over time, and the potential for archaeological deposits to be buried below later buildings, which may also be the case in Dumbarton.

The buildings behind the properties fronting onto High Street are also of archaeological interest, as they have been constructed over what had been the backlands of the medieval burgage plots. Evidence of burgage plots survives buried beneath modern buildings and car parks. Burgage plots are an extremely valuable source of information to the urban historian and archaeologist, as they often document the activities and conditions of everyday life in a medieval town; any episodes of ground disturbance or development in the backlands should therefore be archaeologically monitored as a matter of routine. Excavations in other medieval towns in Scotland, such as Perth, Aberdeen and St Andrews, have revealed middens, rubbish pits, cesspits and vegetable plots as common features of medieval backlands, alongside craft workshops and industrial structures such as kilns. A series of three excavations at Canal Street, in Perth, for example, showed that the boundaries of these plots appear to have been shifted regularly, revealing a fascinating sequence of changing plot boundaries and properties being amalgamated and sub-divided throughout the medieval period. A similar process probably also took place in Dumbarton.

historical research objectives

Dumbarton is fortunate not only in the length of its known history, but also in the abundance of its surviving documentary sources. A number of historians have availed themselves of this rich resource (*see* **bibliography**, pp 93–6), and this survey has drawn on their work. Further research into these important archives has been made for the purposes of this survey, as will also be noted in the bibliography, but time precluded extensive and thorough assessments of all potential avenues.

Any further study into Dumbarton's historic past would benefit from a closer analysis of the very full resource in Dumbarton Burgh Archives. Dumbarton had both close links and disputes with a number of burghs both on the Clyde and near to the Clyde estuary. The records of these burghs have been used to some extent, most particularly in printed versions; but a more thorough assessment of the role of historic Dumbarton should draw on the evidence in the burgh records of these neighbours, to give a clearer picture of the role, both political and economic, of Dumbarton in the local network. The 'Register of Ship Entries at Dumbarton, 1595–1658', for example, might reinforce these findings.

archaeological objectives for the future

Preparation of the Dumbarton burgh survey has highlighted a number of directions for future archaeological work. These can be broadly divided into management objectives, priorities for future fieldwork, and other areas which merit further research. Any such list cannot be exhaustive, but it should cover the main areas of concern in the foreseeable future.

management objectives

1 Wherever possible, it is important to monitor the impact of any development (in its broadest sense) on the potential archaeological resource (the **green areas** on **figure 26**). This will require the routine provision of site-specific, desk-based assessments, through to watching briefs, trial excavations and, where necessary, controlled excavation, post-excavation analysis and publication. Over time, the cumulative results will 'calibrate' this assessment of the archaeological potential of the burgh, providing evidence about the burgh's origins, and its physical, economic and social development through the centuries.

2 Developments should similarly be monitored to shed more light on the prehistory and early (pre-burghal) history of the Dumbarton area.

3 The degree and nature of cellarage along the main streets, notably High Street, were not systematically examined during the preparation of this report. More accurate information would be most useful to managers/curators of the archaeological resource in assessing the archaeological potential of these and other main street frontages in the burgh.

4 Engineers' boreholes offer a convenient glimpse of the depth and nature of sub-surface deposits, man-made or not, ancient and modern. It would be useful if the results obtained from engineers' boreholes in and around the core of the historic burgh could be gradually collected and collated. Borehole results, especially those in the hands of private contractors, have proved difficult to access, and it might be worth considering mechanisms by which such information could more easily (and preferably routinely) be made available to managers/curators of the archaeological resource.

The eight large volumes, gathered together by James Dennistoun of Colgrain and Dennistoun, on deposit in the National Library, have been described as 'a perfect mine of information on all subjects relating to the history of Dumbartonshire' by the historian, Joseph Irving. The papers are extensive, but not fully ordered; and have been used in depth by Irving in his works (*see* **bibliography**, p 95). It was decided, with some regret, after an overview of the source, that, for the purposes of this survey, the research of Irving would have to suffice. Any further assessment of Dumbarton's past would very probably benefit from a study of this source material. The family papers of those who had close contacts with the town would also merit consideration. The Lennox papers and those of the Colquhouns of Luss, for example, might throw a little light and, perhaps, a new slant on Dumbarton.

It was not possible to cover all of Dumbarton's historic past. The town changed radically in the nineteenth century, with the coming of industrialisation, most particularly in the form of shipbuilding. This radical early modern change to the townscape merits a study in itself. There is a wealth of primary documentation available. As well as

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5 Opportunities should continue to be taken to increase public awareness of the potential archaeological interest of Dumbarton, both generally and within and beneath historic standing buildings.

6 Periodic review and updating of this survey would be desirable to take account of the results of any future archaeological work, and of the comprehensive collection and collation of other types of sub-surface investigations, such as engineers' boreholes, and the systematic survey of cellarage on the main street frontages. In particular, the colour-coded map **figure 26** should be revised and re-issued at regular intervals.

priorities for future fieldwork

Little archaeological work has been undertaken within the medieval core of the town. The priorities for future archaeological fieldwork within the burgh are, therefore, fairly rudimentary. However, the following priorities should be borne in mind during preparations of future project designs.

1 Recover any evidence for pre-burghal activity, given that Dumbarton Rock was an important early historic political centre and early medieval harbour.

2 Define the limits of the medieval burgh and the character and date of any burgh boundaries.

3 Identify any sequence of planning in the layout and expansion of the burgh, infill within the burgage plots, and determine any variation in street alignment and width. Archaeological excavation has suggested that the northern end, at least, of Cross Vennel (later College Street) was not occupied until the fifteenth century. Kirk Vennel (Church Street), similarly, may have been a later addition to the town plan.

4 Locate important features of the medieval townscape (for example, the earliest tolbooth, market cross and tron), of which no archaeological evidence has yet been found.

5 Assess the nature and use of the burgage plots in the burgh.

nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century newspapers, there are letters, shipbuilding records and town plans deposited in the local archives, the National Library of Scotland and in the Scottish Record Office.

Dumbarton spent many centuries battling with the force of the River Leven, a fight that was not won until well into the nineteenth century, with the draining of the Broad Meadow. Considerable effort, however, was made to contain the river in the sixteenth century (*see* p 23) and in the early seventeenth century (*see* p 24). Further research into the techniques employed at this time might prove very fruitful and give an insight into similar efforts made by other towns in their attempts to control natural forces.

The site of the manor house of King Robert I at Cardross is currently disputed. Although not in the historic core of Dumbarton, the townspeople had close links with the royal household at the manor house. Documentary evidence suggests that the traditionally accepted siting may be incorrect, and that the dwelling was, in fact, much nearer to the banks of the Leven than Castlehill. It will probably be determined by archaeological research; but further consideration of documentary sources may assist excavation.

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6 Identify the site of the earliest parish church, thought to lie close to or under the present parish church, and the adjacent hospital. There have been at least three phases of church building here; some evidence may lie beneath the floor of the present parish church.

7 Recover any evidence for the medieval harbour and any associated wharfs and quays. There may have been a back lane between the end of the burgage plots that extended back from High Street and any riverside works.

8 Continued collection and analysis of the pottery and other artefacts recovered through archaeological excavations will provide an insight into Dumbarton's trading links, and those of western Scotland.

9 Locate the boundaries of the collegiate church's lands and the associated buildings, including a hospital, ranged within it. The remains of the church itself were removed in advance of the railway, but an earlier chapel is also known to have lain nearby, on which lands the collegiate church was built.

10 Recover any evidence for medieval and post-medieval industry, especially the glassworks and shipbuilding.

11 Survey and record the last remaining examples of shipbuilding yards.

areas for further archaeological research

1 A reconstruction of the layout, extent and physical setting of the burgh would be useful for our understanding of the development of Dumbarton. This would be particularly important when assessing the impact of future development and in presenting the current state of knowledge.

2 A study of historic tidal regimes may determine whether early historic Dumbarton Rock was regularly cut off from the mainland and whether there could ever have been a contemporary settlement at Dumbarton itself.

street names

pp 89–90

Brewery Lane

Area 1
This, one of the numerous vennels that ran from High Street to the river, was originally named Boat Vennel. From here, a ferry service operated across the River Leven until the adjacent bridge was erected in 1765.

Bridge Street

Area 1
This street connects High Street with Dumbarton Bridge. The bridge itself was built in 1765 **figure 14.** It was subsequently widened in 1884 and reconstructed in 1934. The suburbs of Bridgend and Dennystown lay on the Cardross side of the Leven.

Castle Street

Area 2
Castle Street, still cobbled in places, is essentially the eastern extension of High Street, and was the old road which led from the town to the castle situated on Dumbarton Rock, and then onwards towards Glasgow. It survives today but has been blocked off at the east end, with traffic to and from Glasgow now diverted around the northern side of the town via the by-pass opened in 1974.

Church Street

Area 2
Church Street, originally named Kirk Vennel (from the French *venelle*, meaning alley), was one of the three main thoroughfares of the medieval town. The medieval kirk actually stood, as does the parish church today, on the south side of High Street, but faced up Kirk Vennel. At the north end of Kirk Vennel, the road forked, with one branch leading to Broad Meadow, the other to Bonhill.

College Street

Area 1
College Street was originally known as Cross Vennel. Its name suggests that the market cross stood at the junction of High Street and this vennel. Although one of the three main thoroughfares of the medieval town, by the late eighteenth century at least, Cross Vennel was built up only approximately to where the Bingo Hall stands today, from which point a track led to Broad Meadow. On the edge of Broad Meadow stood St Mary's Collegiate Church. Established in 1453, on the lands of an earlier chapel, it fell into disuse after the Reformation. All that remained for many years was a single arch known locally as College Bow **figure 6**, and from which College Street got its name. The arch was itself removed in 1850 to make way for the railway. College Street has also been swept away in recent years for a shopping mall and by-pass system, but part of its alignment can still be seen 'fossilised' in the present town plan.

Glasgow Road

Areas 1 & 2
Glasgow Road (A814) was opened in 1973, along with Artizan Bridge, taking traffic away from High Street and the town centre. An eighteen-cell prison was built in 1824, after the Napoleonic Wars (1793–1815), and closed in 1883. The prison was demolished in advance of the new roadway.

High Street

Areas 1 & 2

High Street was the main thoroughfare of the medieval town, extending from the parish church at the eastern end, to where Dumbarton Bridge stands today. The street was first causewayed in 1758, and lamps were erected in 1781.

Quay Pend

Area 1

A pend is a covered vennel, where the building on the street frontage spans the vennel itself. In the case of Quay Pend, the building is Glencairn's Greit House **figure 13**, the oldest dwelling in the town, dating to 1623. The vennel allowed access from High Street down to the riverside quay.

Quay Street

Areas 1

One of many vennels and pends which led off from High Street, Quay Street may have been the most important, and must have been the main access to the quays along the River Leven from the market place.

Risk Street

Area 1

This street was named after a former provost of the town.

Riverside Lane

Areas 1 & 2

Riverside Lane was originally a narrow vennel leading from High Street to the river. In recent years, this was widened and extended, with a road driven from a point near the Dumbarton Distillery almost to Dumbarton Bridge.

St Mary's Way

Area 2

St Mary's Way, a modern addition to the town plan, is named after the Collegiate Church of St Mary, founded in 1453 by Isabella, countess of Lennox, duchess of Albany. The church, which stood at the edge of Broad Meadow, was established on the lands of an earlier chapel, of at least fourteenth-century date, which was also dedicated to St Mary.

Station Road

Areas 1 & 2

Station Road runs along the southern edge of Broad Meadow, parallel with the railway line. The railway was opened in 1850, and Broad Meadow embanked in 1858.

Strathleven Place

Area 2

Strathleven Place (the B830) was established over the former track to Bonhill which branched off from Kirk Vennel. Situated on the ouskirts of the Victorian town, some of the more prestigious housing was attracted here.

Woodyard Road

Areas 1 & 2

A woodyard is depicted on the Cardross side of the Leven on Wood's plan of 1818, and subsequently gave its name to William Denny & Sons shipyard (Wood Yard), where the 'Cutty Sark', amongst other ships, was built. Denny & Sons moved across to the Leven Shipyard below Dumbarton Rock in 1857.

adze	A cutting tool.
alluvial	Sands and silts deposited by rivers.
artefacts	Objects made by human workmanship.
backlands	The area to the rear of the burgage plot behind the dwelling house on the frontage. Originally intended for growing produce and keeping animals; site of wells and midden heaps. Eventually housed working premises of craftsmen and poorer members of burgh society.
bailies	Burgh officers who performed routine administration.
baxters	Bakers.
boundaries	*see* burgage plot
burgage plot	A division of land, often of regular size, having been measured out by liners, allocated to a burgess. Once built on, it contained the burgage house on the frontage (*see* frontage) and a backland (*see* backlands). In time, with pressure for space, the plots were often subdivided, a process known as repletion. Plots were bounded by ditches, wattle fences or stone walls.
burgess	Person who enjoys the privileges and responsibilities of the freedom of the burgh.
Carboniferous	A geological period.
close	A narrow access, often to a backland (*see* backlands).
cordiners	Leather workers.
craft	Trade.
crannog	A timber-framed structure built on artificial foundations in water, or occasionally on a natural island.
cross-slab	Sculptured stone bearing a cross in relief.
documentary sources	Written evidence, primary sources being the original documents.
façade	Finished face of a building.
forework	Extra line of defence.
frontage	Front part of burgage plot nearest the street, on which the dwelling was usually built.
gap sites	Burgage plots not built up or 'biggit'; in a modern context, undeveloped space between two buildings.
guild	Organisation or fraternity for mutual support, whether economic, religious or social.
hagbutter	Soldier armed with a harquebus (musket).

hinterland	Rural area around a burgh, to which the burgh looked for economic and agricultural support; hinterland likewise dependent on burgh market.
hoard	A collection of material deposited in the ground, often buried for safe-keeping but never recovered.
indwellers	Unprivileged, non-burgess dwellers in a town.
infilled	Open area that has later been developed.
in situ	An archaeological term describing layers of soil or features undisturbed by later activity.
'lining' matters, 'lining' issues	The fixing and maintaining of property boundaries. Usually the remit of the guildry.
midden	Rubbish heaps consisting of mainly food debris and other waste products, often found in the backlands of medieval properties.
natural	A term used by archaeologists to describe the sub-soil.
pommel	End of a hilt.
prehistory	Period of human history before the advent of writing.
radiocarbon	Technique used in archaeology to date organic materials.
repletion	*see* burgage plot
rig	*see* burgage plot
sherd	Fragment of pottery.
spindle whorl	A weight used in spinning.
tapster	Ale seller.
terracing	Cutting into a slope to level the ground surface.
toft	*see* burgage plot
tolbooth	The most important secular building; meeting place of burgh council; collection post for market tolls; often housed town gaol.
tolls	Payments for use of burgh market.
townhouse	Principal modern civic building.
tron	Public weigh-beam.
urban nucleus	Original site(s) from which town developed.
vennel	Alley; narrow lane.
£	£ Scots.

Dumbarton Burgh Archives
Ms 1/1/0
Ms 1/3/1 Cartulary
Ms 1/3/2
Ms 1/3/6
Ms 1/3/8
Ms 1/3/23
Ms 1/3/24
Ms 1/3/25
Ms 1/3/58
Ms 1/3/67
Ms 1/3/68
Ms 1/3/69
Ms 1/3/72
Ms 1/3/76
Ms 1/3/85
Ms 1/3/86
Ms 1/7/1 Court Book, 1681–1721
Ms 1/8/1 Dumbarton Guildry Incorporation Minute Book, 1685–1766
Ms 1/8/2 Dumbarton Guildry Book
Ms 1/10/5/2
Ms 1/10/5/3
Ms 1/10/5/4
Ms 1/10/6/1–119
Ms 1/10/7/2
Ms 1/10/19/1
Ms 1/10/40/1
Ms 1/10/40/3

Scottish Record Office
B16/1/7 Protocol Book of John Bontine, 1653–58
B16/1/8 Protocol Book of Walter Watson
B16/2/2 Dumbarton Burgh Sasines, 1696–1717
B16/2/3 Dumbarton Records, 1717–1735
B16/2/5 Dumbarton Burgh Register of Sasines, 1753–1764
CH2/97/1 Dumbarton Kirk Session Records
CH2/97/2 Dumbarton Kirk Session Records
CH2/97/3 Dumbarton Records
CH2/97/4 Dumbarton Kirk Session Records
CH2/97/5 Dumbarton Records
E69/7/1 Dumbartonshire Hearth Tax
E21/7
GD 18/54/35
GD 124/1/424 & /411
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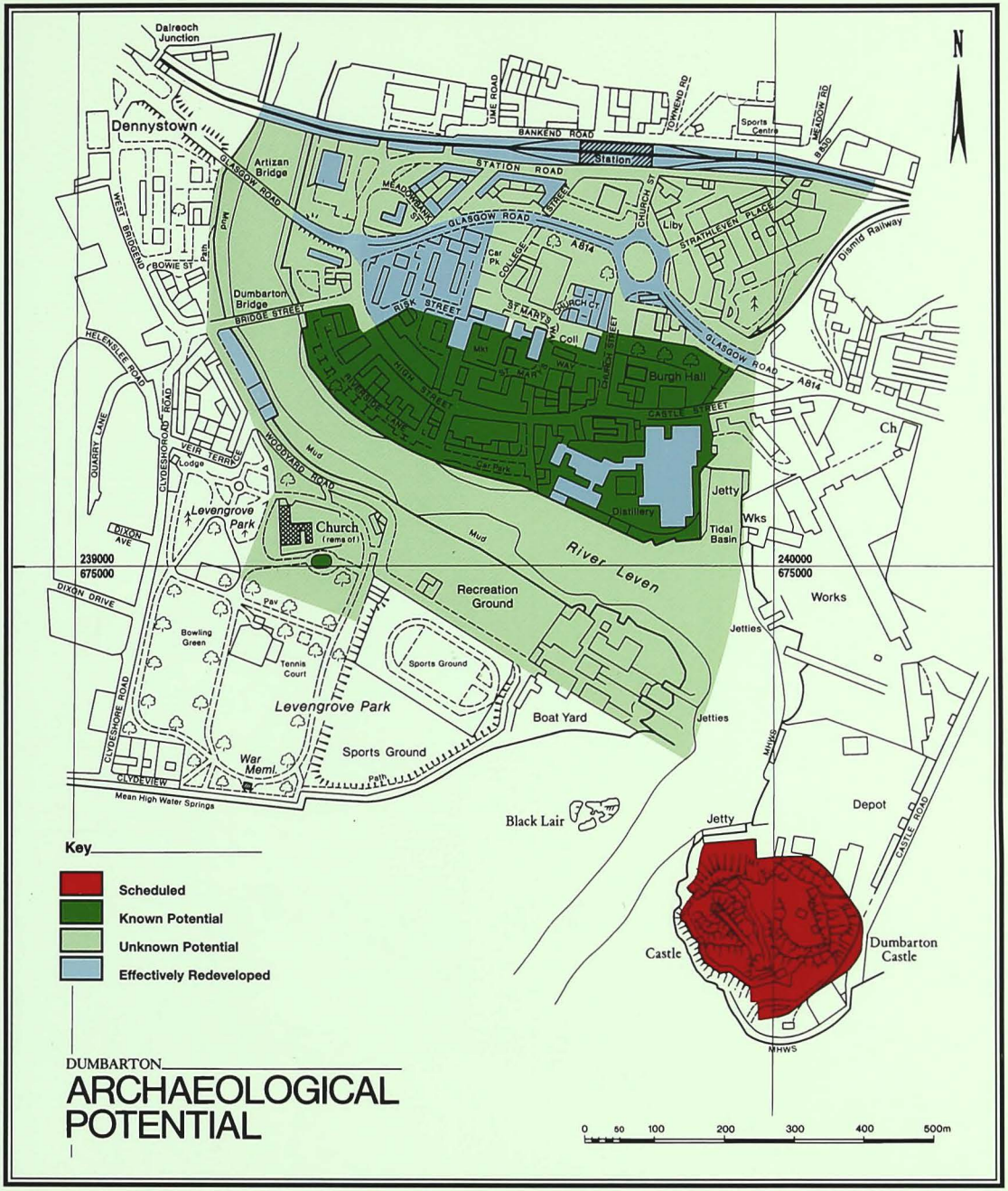

figure 25
The archaeological potential of Dumbarton

Historic Dumbarton

Historic Dumbarton is a fascinating study of the town's history and archaeology from its origins to the present day. The name 'Dumbarton' means 'fortress of the Britons' and refers to the ancient stronghold on Clyde Rock, in use from at least the fifth century AD. King Alexander II established the royal burgh in 1222. This volume traces the history of Dumbarton from small burgh to prosperous medieval market town and, later, thriving industrial centre.

This book is part of the **Scottish burgh survey**—a series designed to identify which areas of Scotland's historic burghs are of archaeological interest.

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