

Historic Musselburgh

E Patricia **Dennison**

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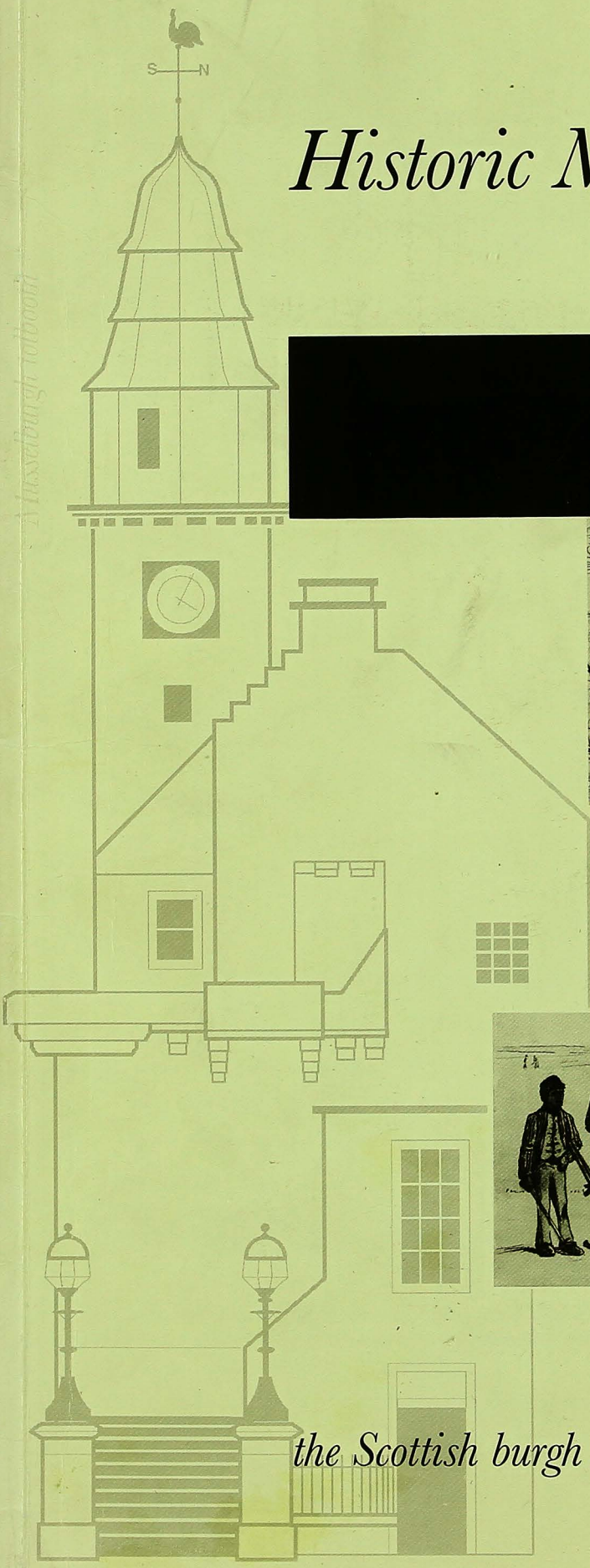
A detail from the Battle of Pinkie, 1547



Golf at Musselburgh Links

the Scottish burgh survey

Musselburgh Tolbooth



the Scottish burgh survey

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cover notes

Battle of Pinkie A detail from the plan of the battle, which took place in September 1547. Musselburgh is shown as a tiny settlement, dominated by the Church of St Michael at Inveresk and situated some distance from the Esk Bridge.

Golf on Musselburgh Links An early representation of the game of golf, from an album of drawings by A Elliott, 1877. Musselburgh was associated with the early development of the sport in Scotland.

The Pinkie Pillars One of four fine obelisks, first erected when Pinkie House was extended by Alexander Seton in the early seventeenth century, which have been reset into early nineteenth-century gate piers.


Historic Musselburgh

the archaeological implications of development

E Patricia **Dennison**

Russel **Coleman**

the Scottish burgh survey

HISTORIC  SCOTLAND

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Department of Scottish History
University of Edinburgh


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contents	iv	figures		
	v	abbreviations		
	vi	acknowledgements		
	vii	foreword		
	1	how to use this survey		
	3	Musselburgh: its site and setting	geography	5
			geology	5
			soils, climate and land use	7
			physical setting and the topography of the burgh	9
	11	archaeological and historical background	the prehistoric period	11
			the later prehistoric and Roman period	13
			the early medieval period	16
			the medieval and modern periods	19
	49	area by area assessment	introduction	49
			area 1	49
			<i>High Street/Newbigging/Inveresk Road/Church Lane/Brunton's Works/Inveresk Mills/River Esk</i>	
			area 2	57
			<i>Newbigging/High Street/Linkfield Road/Pinkie St Peter's Primary School/Pinkie Road</i>	
			area 3	62
			<i>High Street (north frontage)/River Esk/Musselburgh Links</i>	
			area 4	68
			<i>River Esk (west bank)/West Holmes Gardens/Market Street/Edinburgh Road/Fisherrow Harbour/Fisherrow Links</i>	
			area 5	76
			<i>Pinkie Road (south side)/Inveresk Road (south side)/Inveresk village</i>	
			the archaeological potential of Musselburgh a summary	82
	84	historic buildings and their archaeological potential		
	93	suggested avenues for further work	historical research objectives	93
			archaeological objectives for the future	93
	97	street names		
	101	glossary		
	105	bibliography		
	109	general index		

1	Location of Musselburgh	4
2	Aerial photograph of Musselburgh, 1982	6
3	The physical setting of Musselburgh	8
4	The later prehistoric and Roman landscape of the Esk Valley	12
5	Roman finds from Inveresk	15
6	The River Esk and Musselburgh from the air	17
7	The Old Bridge in the early twentieth century	18
8	The tolbooth, 1900–30	20
9	John Adair's map of Midlothian, 1682	21
10	James Hay's 'New Plan of Musselburgh and its Environs', 1824	22–3
11	Battle of Pinkie, 1547	25
12	John Slezer's view of Musselburgh, from his <i>Theatrum Scotiae</i> , 1718	28
13	The inside cover of the Town Council minutes, 1679	30
14	The market cross, c 1950s	31
15	A line drawing of Pinkie House	34
16	Fishwives and Fisherrow fish market in the early twentieth century	38
17	A Musselburgh street scene in the late nineteenth century	39
18	John Laurie's plan of Edinburgh, 1766	40
19	High Street from the east, 1827	41
20	The study of Gilbert Stuart, Eskside West, 1996	42
21	Area location map	48
22	Area 1	51
23	Area 2	59
24	Area 3	63
25	Area 4	69
26	Area 5	77
27	No 7 High Street, the French ambassador's house	87
28	Fisher houses in the late nineteenth century	89
29	The archaeological potential of Musselburgh colour-coded	foldout at back

abbreviations	APS	<i>The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland</i> , edd T Thomson & C Innes (Edinburgh, 1814–75).	v
	bp	before present	
	CSP Scot	<i>Calendar of State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary Queen of Scots</i> , 13 vols, edd J Bain <i>et al</i> (Edinburgh, 1898–1969).	
	DES	<i>Discovery and Excavation in Scotland</i> .	
	Dunf Reg	<i>Registrum de Dunfermlyn</i> , ed C Innes (Bannatyne Club, 1842).	
	Edin Recs	<i>Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1604–26</i> , ed M Wood (Edinburgh, 1931).	
	Hamilton Papers	<i>The Hamilton Papers</i> , ed J Bain (Edinburgh, 1890–92).	
	Groome, Gazetteer	Groome, F H (ed), <i>The Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland</i> , 6 vols (Edinburgh, 1886).	
	Laing Chrs	<i>Calendar of the Laing Charters, 854–1837</i> , ed J Anderson (Edinburgh, 1899).	
	NSA	<i>The New Statistical Account of Scotland</i> (Edinburgh, 1845).	
	OSA	<i>The Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791–1799</i> , ed Sir John Sinclair. New Edition, edd I R Grant & D J Withrington (Wakefield, 1973).	
	Paterson, History	Paterson, J, <i>History of the Regality of Musselburgh</i> (Musselburgh, 1861).	
	Pryde, Burghs	Pryde, G S (ed), <i>The Burghs of Scotland: A Critical List</i> (Oxford, 1965).	
	PSAS	<i>Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland</i> .	
	RCAHMS	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.	
	Q	Quintus.	
	RCRB	<i>The Records of the Convention of Royal Burghs of Scotland</i> , 7 vols, ed J D Marwick (Edinburgh, 1866–1918).	
	RMS	<i>The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland</i> , 11 vols, edd J M Thomson <i>et al</i> (Edinburgh, 1882–1914).	
	RPC	<i>The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland</i> , edd J H Burton <i>et al</i> (Edinburgh, 1877–).	
	RRS	<i>Regesta Regum Scottorum 1153–1406</i> , edd G W S Barrow <i>et al</i> (Edinburgh, 1960–).	
	RSS	<i>Register of the Privy Seal of Scotland</i> , edd M Livingstone <i>et al</i> (Edinburgh, 1908).	
	SHS	Scottish History Society.	
	SRO	Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh.	
	STS	Scottish Texts Society.	
	SUAT	Scottish Urban Archaeological Trust.	
	TA	<i>Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland</i> , edd T Dickson <i>et al</i> (Edinburgh, 1877–).	
	Wilkie, Musselburgh	Wilkie, J, <i>Historic Musselburgh</i> (Edinburgh, 1919).	

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Musselburgh was a burgh

When Edinburgh was name

And Musselburgh'll be a burgh

When Edinburgh is gane

Musselburgh's inhabitants have long recognised the great antiquity of the town which is celebrated in this old rhyme. Indeed, the name 'Musselburgh' is met as early as 1020 (in the 'ecclesia [church] de Muskillburgh') and some form of township was certainly in existence by the late eleventh century. More than 800 years earlier, the Romans had built one of their most important forts in Scotland at Inveresk and a flourishing civilian settlement had grown up beside it. And it was probably beside the old Roman bridge over the Esk, which was only replaced in the Middle Ages, that the early medieval burgh began to develop. By the late twelfth century, Musselburgh was important enough to host major political events, such as William I's great council. This new survey explores the town's fascinating history from its origins up to the nineteenth century: from a small burgh dependent on Dunfermline Abbey, to a town that hosted Scottish and foreign troops, that struggled to maintain its harbours, bridges and mills, its fishing, quarries and salt pans, that was home to one of Scotland's most revered hermits, and whose traditions and pastimes have survived in the affections of the townspeople today.

Historic Musselburgh 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.

Historic Musselburgh was prepared for Historic Scotland 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. Dr Alan MacDonald of the Department of Scottish History acted as Research Assistant; and assistance was also received from Mr Robin Macpherson, Ms Ruth Grant, Mr Jim McCormack and Mr Dean Jacobs, all postgraduates in the Department of Scottish History. The project is supervised by the Head of the Department, Professor Michael Lynch, and managed for Historic Scotland by Ms Olwyn Owen, Inspector of Ancient Monuments.

The research on historic Musselburgh was carried out between April and May 1995. 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 **East Lothian Council** and Historic Scotland. Further copies may be obtained from **Scottish Cultural Press**, Unit 14, Leith Walk Business Centre, 130 Leith Walk, Edinburgh EH6 5DT.

Historic Scotland
July 1996

the Scottish burgh survey



- 1 **Use the colour-coded map on the foldout at the back of this book figure 29** and/or the **general index** to locate a particular site (normally the site of a development proposal).
- 2 If the site is in a **blue area**, any development proposal is unlikely to affect significant archaeological remains. No action is needed.
- 3 **Green areas** 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.
- 4 **Red areas** are Scheduled Ancient Monuments or properties in the care of the Secretary of State for Scotland, and are protected by law. Consult Historic Scotland.
- 5 Use the map on p 48 **figure 21** to determine into which area of the burgh the site falls (Area 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5), and turn to the relevant area in the **area by area assessment** for a fuller account (pp 49–81).
- 6 Use the **general index** and, if appropriate, the listing of **street names** (pp 97–100) 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 29**.

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 Secretary of State (Scheduled Monument Consent) in addition to any planning permission required. These provisions are administered on behalf of the Secretary of State 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 Secretary of State 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 as early as possible.*

The **green areas** 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 archaeologist 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 Musselburgh, the historic core of the town has been divided into five arbitrary areas, Areas 1 to 5, which are shown on the plan on p 48 **figure 21**. The second step for the user, then, is to consult this plan and to determine into which area a specific query falls.

step 3

All five areas are assessed individually in the **area by area assessment** (pp 49–81). 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 implied 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. 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 have been identified; these are listed at pp 93–5. They will be of particular interest to urban historians and archaeologists, and to those responsible for management of the archaeological resource in historic Musselburgh.

referencing

The **notes** to the background chapters 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 historic 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 any 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.

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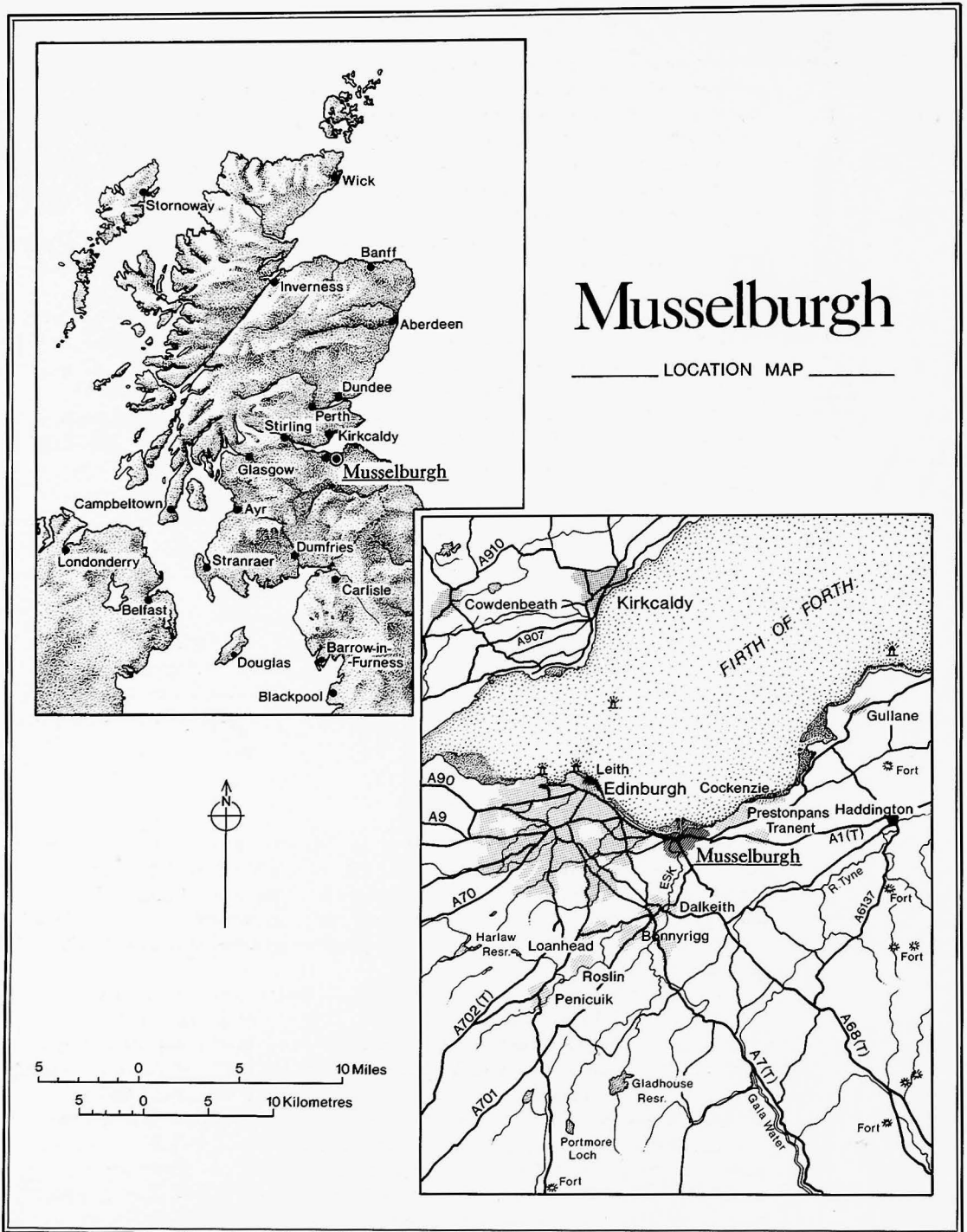


figure 1
Location of
Musselburgh
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Musselburgh is situated on the south coast of the Firth of Forth, approximately midway between Leith to the west and Port Seton to the east **figure 1**. Edinburgh lies some 10 km to the west. South of Musselburgh, the River Esk rises gradually in the higher ground of the Pentland, Muirfoot and Lammermuir Hills. Musselburgh is in East Lothian, a broad tract of rolling, fertile countryside. Its early growth was probably based on the long mussel beds found along the coast and its important strategic location as a bridging point over the Esk since the Roman period.¹

Today, Musselburgh lies on the eastern fringes of a densely populated area of Scotland. The number of medieval burghs in close proximity to Musselburgh, however, indicates that this was also true of the medieval period, though to a lesser extent. Roslin and Dalkeith to the south, Haddington to the east and Edinburgh and Leith to the west, all lie within a radius of 15 km of Musselburgh. Even closer, but later in date, the sixteenth-century baronial burghs of Cockenzie, Prestonpans and Tranent cluster within 7 km of Musselburgh's eastern boundary.

This medieval burgh has developed along a series of raised beaches cut by the River Esk as it empties into the Forth **figure 2 & 3**. Modern-day Musselburgh is essentially an amalgamation of the once separate settlements of Fisherrow, Newbigging and Inveresk, although all still retain their own identity. Fisherrow, for example, developed around its harbour as an independent fishing community, whilst the village of Inveresk attracted the residences of more wealthy sections of the community. Musselburgh, by contrast, exploited the water power of the Esk and became an important manufacturing and trading centre. The arrival of the railway brought a rapid housing expansion and the town developed a strong employment base around net, wire and paper manufacturing.²

There has been a steady increase in the population of Musselburgh in recent years, with a 13.5 per cent increase from 16,431 in 1981 to 18,649 in 1991.³ Prior to 1st April 1996, Musselburgh lay within the East Lothian District of Lothian Region: following local government re-organisation, the town now lies in the area served by the new East Lothian Council.

geology

South-east Scotland has a long and complex geological history, and is endowed with a wide variety of rocks and physical features. Tectonic movements along two major dislocations of the earth's crust, the Southern Uplands Fault and the Highland Boundary Fault, have created three principal structural and physiographic divisions—the Highlands, the Midland Valley and the Southern Uplands.⁴ Musselburgh lies in the central division, the Midland Valley.

The Midland Valley has, in effect, dropped down between two great faults, the Highland Boundary Fault to the north, from Stonehaven to the Firth of Clyde at Helensburgh, and the Southern Upland Fault to the south, from Dunbar through New Cumnock to Glen App. Here, Old Red Sandstone and Carboniferous rocks are preserved within a trough c 80 km wide, resulting in a broad lowland tract of better farming and industrial development. Old Red Sandstone in the north passes eastwards beneath the rich soils of Strathmore, and is separated by the hard igneous and volcanic rocks of the Sidlaw and Ochil Hills and Campsie Fells from the industrial south. Here fairly intensive farming surrounds and serves the four-fifths of the population of Scotland which, since the nineteenth century, has concentrated around the coal-bearing rocks and oil-shales and their attendant heavy industry. Within this undulating lowland landscape, there are sharp irregularities of igneous rock, forming conspicuous landmarks: for example, North Berwick Law and Traprain Law, near Haddington in East Lothian, the dolerite hills of Fife, the Castle Rock of Stirling and volcanics of the Bathgate Hills and Arthur's Seat.⁵

Sedimentary rocks, such as Old Red Sandstone, are predominantly softer than igneous rocks, so they tend not to form prominent features of the landscape. During the



figure 2
Aerial photograph of
Musselburgh
1982
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Carboniferous period (285–350 million years ago), when most of the rocks underlying Edinburgh and most of central Scotland were formed, the Old Red Sandstone mountains (formed during the Devonian period, 350–400 million years ago) were worn down to plains with shallow lagoons and seas. This period was also characterised by rapidly changing environments, some long-lived and some short-lived, which resulted in the deposition of alternating layers of rock and other material. For example, luxuriant forest growth, developed during humid, equatorial conditions, ultimately formed the thick coal seams known as the Limestone Coal Formation and the Coal Measures. Tropical seas encouraged limestones with corals, shells and other fossil remains in the Lower Limestone Formation. Lagoons with organic-rich mud also developed, giving rise to the oil-shales of West Lothian.⁶ These seams of coal, ironstones, limestones and oil-shales formed the basis of the rapid industrialisation of the Midland Valley during the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth centuries, and were extensively exploited.⁷

At the close of the Carboniferous period the record of geological strata ends, and no further sediments were preserved in the Edinburgh area.⁸ From 250 million until two million years ago the area was mainly dry land, the mountains eroded by weathering and by large rivers which flowed into seas occupying the present North Sea and south-east England.⁹

During the last two million years, northern Britain has been repeatedly buried under an ice-cap hundreds of metres thick, the latest of which melted as recently as 15,000 years ago. During each successive ice age in Scotland, ice built up in the Highlands and Southern Uplands and merged in the Midland Valley before flowing from west to east across the country. The tremendous weight and power of the ice-caps eroded the softer sedimentary rock, leaving harder, mainly volcanic rock as hills. Glacial till, commonly known as boulder clay, a mixture of tough clay, ground-down mudstone and siltstone, together with the remains of boulders, sandstones and limestones, was also deposited by the ice.¹⁰

Warmer spells between the ice ages, the most recent of which began 15,000 years ago—making the present day an interglacial period—allowed the ice to melt and the ice-cap to recede. This also produced vast amounts of melt-water which cut new valleys and gorges, and transported glacial debris. The coarser materials, for example, were deposited as mounds and terraces of sand and gravels, as in the Esk valley. The lighter materials, such as silts and clays, were carried on to be deposited in lochs and in the sea.¹¹

The landscape around Musselburgh is primarily a product of the post-glacial period (Holocene, essentially an interglacial), characterised by a series of raised beaches. In the north of Britain, and elsewhere, the loss of the great weight of the ice sheets caused the land to rise, a phenomenon known as 'isostatic uplift', and as the water, locked up in the ice for so long, was released, world-wide ocean levels also began to rise. There then followed a complex interplay between the local rising of land, which varied from place to place in Scotland, and the rising world ocean level, as the ice sheets melted elsewhere after those of Scotland. Later, as the ocean level rose faster than the local land, beach gravels were laid down, sometimes resting on an ancient rock-cut platform of late-glacial or interglacial age. There were several long standstills between the rising and falling land and ocean levels. The most significant took place about 5,000 years ago, producing a flat beach at about 10 m above sea-level with an old sea-cliff behind; this can be seen today all along the coast from South Queensferry to Musselburgh.¹² Finally, the land emerged and many of these beaches, such as those at Musselburgh, now lie well above the reach of the sea.

During the 1960s and 1970s a reappraisal of raised beaches took place: in particular of the so-called '25 foot' raised beach, which represents one of the most significant landform changes to occur between 10,000 and 5,000 bp in Scotland. This has laid the foundations for a series of research projects.¹³

The raised beach landscape at Musselburgh is important in that it almost certainly influenced the lay-out and development of the medieval burgh and the siting of the earlier Roman fort and civilian settlement (*vicus*). In more recent times, this landscape has attracted the attention of golfers, and it is here, at Musselburgh, that what is claimed to be one of the oldest golf courses in the world is situated. Similar conditions of raised beaches and sand dunes along the East Lothian coastline have seen many other courses built and golfing societies established, such as Gullane and Muirfield.

soils, climate and land use

The soils around Musselburgh are developed on raised beach sand and gravel deposits derived mainly from Carboniferous rocks but with some Old Red Sandstone materials.¹⁴ The deposits are predominantly sands and gravels, but with some bands of fine sand or silt. Marine shells are found in some areas. The land ranges in altitude from 15 to 40 m on the Lothian coast, and average rainfall ranges from 600 mm to 900 mm per annum. The climate is warm and moderately dry. The raised beach landforms provide very gently

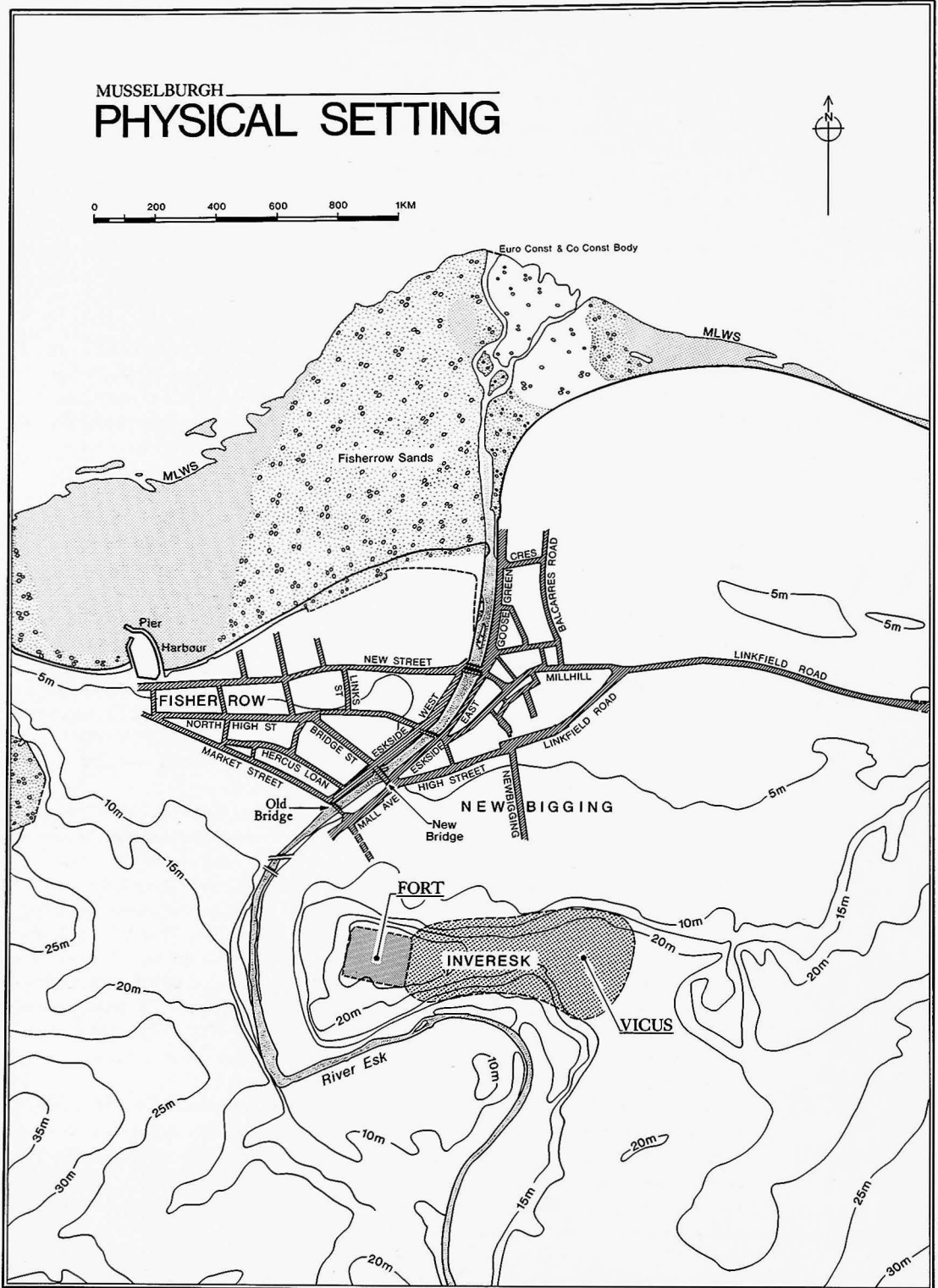


figure 3
The physical setting
of Musselburgh

sloping land, well suited to most forms of arable agriculture. The soils are naturally free-draining, have friable, often deep, sandy loam topsoils, and pass down into friable sandy loam and loamy sand subsoils. The ground is easily cultivated and provides good quality arable land.¹⁵ Fertility has been increased during a long history of good husbandry and the land in this area is amongst the most valuable in the country for the production of food.¹⁶

physical setting and the topography of the burgh **figure 3**

The relationship between local topography and the morphology of the medieval burgh is important for this study. Firstly, it highlights the impact of the physical environment on first settlement, and the constraints it imposed on the subsequent development of the burgh; and secondly, it may help to pinpoint the original nucleus of the early settlement.

The burgh has developed below the lower of a series of post-glacial raised beaches **figure 3**, which is situated at approximately 5 m OD (Ordnance Datum). There is, however, one important exception—the earliest known bridge over the Esk, built possibly on the remains of the original Roman bridge. This lies above the 5 m contour line and casts some doubt on whether the present-day High Street, with attendant tolbooth and market cross, is indeed the original nucleus of settlement. With the earliest church of Musselburgh (first mentioned in AD 1020) sited up on the hill at Inveresk, and built over the remains of the Roman fort, it is possible that the original nucleus of settlement clustered around the bridge, not the present-day High Street, before expanding northwards and ultimately shifting focus altogether. Topographically, this is entirely plausible as the ground lower down the slope, towards the shore, may still have been marshy and prone to flooding in the early medieval period. Over time, as the settlement expanded, the incentive to develop as near as possible to the river bank, with all the implications for trade and commerce, may have outweighed other, more practical considerations (*see p 18*).

Hay's 1824 map of Musselburgh figure 10 shows the burgh 'within the ports' (*see pp 22–3*) as comprising three main streets: High Street, extending eastwards from the New Bridge and widening considerably from the tolbooth; Mill Hill to the north, set on a south–west to north–east alignment; and Newbigging, extending southwards from the High Street towards Inveresk. Hay's map shows burgage plots extending some 900 feet (*c* 274 m) back from the High Street frontage, southwards. As the raised beach lies only a short distance behind the High Street frontage, the land here rises significantly from *c* 4 m OD to between 8 m and 9 m OD over the length of these plots. This suggests that medieval settlement may be concentrated in a narrow strip along the High Street frontage, hard up against the edge of the raised beach. The long plots depicted on Hay's map may, therefore, be much later in date. Mill Hill is likely to be a later development and Newbigging was a completely separate settlement.

On the opposite, west bank of the River Esk, Fisherrow (now North High Street) skirts along the top edge of the raised beach in a north-westerly direction towards the harbour. This is in contrast to the settlement on the east bank of the river, where it was confined to the level below the raised beach. Bridge Street connects Fisherrow with the New Bridge, and Marketgate (now Market Street) continues from the Old Bridge towards the western end of Fisherrow at the harbour. Beyond the properties that extend northwards towards the coast from Fisherrow are the broad tracts of the Fisherrow Links, now occupied by playing fields and partly developed (New Street). The nature of early settlement at Fisherrow is unclear but is likely to have clustered around the harbour. Later settlement probably developed along what must have been an old trackway to Musselburgh, which became Fisherrow, later renamed North High Street.

notes

- 1 'Musselburgh and Inveresk Statement', *East Lothian Local Plan, 1994 Draft* (East Lothian District Council, Haddington, 1994), 155.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 155.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 155.
- 4 C J Brown & B M Shipley, *Soil Survey of Scotland: South East Scotland. Soil and Land Capability for Agriculture*. (The Macaulay Institute for Soil Research, Aberdeen, 1982), 2. The three major land divisions (Highlands, Midland Valley and Southern Uplands) follow J B Sissons, *The Geomorphology of the British Isles: Scotland* (London, 1976).
- 5 E Edmonds, *The Geological Map: an Anatomy of a Landscape* (HMSO, London, 1983), 18.
- 6 D McAdam, *Edinburgh: A Landscape Fashioned by Geology* (British Geological Survey for Scottish Natural Heritage, Battleby, 1993), 10.
- 7 I B Cameron & D Stephenson, *The Midland Valley of Scotland* (British Regional Geology, 3rd ed, London, 1985), 6.
- 8 McAdam, Edinburgh, 11.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 12.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 16.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 12.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 13.

An introduction to the prehistory and Roman period of the area is included here to give a context for the earlier sites and finds from Musselburgh and to provide a broader framework within which to study the origins of the medieval burgh. Many prehistoric and Roman finds and sites are known from in and around the burgh, amongst which the Roman fort at Inveresk is especially important. This introduction therefore contains an extended account of the Inveresk fort, together with an historical outline so that Roman occupation here can be viewed within the overall picture of Roman Scotland.

prehistory

The settlement of Scotland took place around 7,000 BC against a background of complex climatic fluctuations and rising and falling ocean levels. This was the Mesolithic period (literally meaning the Middle Stone Age), when much of Scotland was covered in dense woodland which supported a rich variety of game, particularly red deer. The few settlements of this age known in Scotland tend to cluster along the coastline and river banks. These communities exploited the sea for fish and shellfish, followed the herds of woodland game through the seasons and supplemented their diet with wild plants and berries. Unfortunately, their semi-nomadic existence has left little trace in the landscape, but shell middens and flint tools are common finds along former riverbanks and coastlines. No confirmed Mesolithic material has yet been recovered from the vicinity of Musselburgh.

Around 3,500 BC, people began to live a more settled existence in response to changes in the environment, including more favourable soil conditions, and to ideas introduced from continental Europe. Large areas of woodland were cleared, partly by burning and partly by cutting down trees with stone axes, livestock was kept and the land was farmed for crops. A stone axe found south-east of Musselburgh (at national grid reference NT 380 712) is an example of the sort of tools used in clearing the land, while a stone macehead from Woodside Gardens, Musselburgh (NT 352 729), may have been for ceremonial use. Again, few traces of the settlements of these Neolithic (New Stone Age) peoples survive, but the landscape bears testament to their presence in the form of ritual enclosures (or henges) and burial mounds. Ritual is strongly evident in the lives of these early farming groups in their treatment of the dead, who were buried in monumental tombs. These communal stone-built cairns or barrows constructed of wood and turf sometimes contained large numbers of burials. The types of burial monument vary considerably from region to region, no doubt reflecting local traditions and perhaps the origins of the societies which used them.¹ The tombs probably became a focus for ritual where elaborate ceremonies took place, perhaps in celebration of ancestors. By about 2,500 BC, the tradition of monumental tombs was in decline and new types of monuments were being erected, such as stone circles which incorporated an awareness of the rising and setting of the sun and moon in their design.²

A new emphasis on single grave burials emerged around the same time. Personal possessions were often placed in the grave, perhaps for use by the deceased in the afterlife, by relatives or others taking part in the funeral ceremony. A number of Bronze Age burials, both cremations contained within urns and inhumations, have been found in and around Musselburgh. In both traditions, the body or urn was often placed within a small stone-lined cist beneath a stone cairn, though some cremation urns were placed in pits. Very often the cairn has since been robbed away, leaving only the cist intact. Some of these were single, isolated burials, but some were part of larger cemeteries, as at Kirk Park, Musselburgh (NT 342 723), where an unknown number of short cist inhumations and at least nineteen cinerary urns were found. The occurrence of inhumation burials alongside the later tradition of cremation burials suggests that this was a long-established cemetery. Of five stone cists found at Belfield, Fisherrow (NT 337 725), one contained grave goods of a stone hammer and two flints. At Magdalen Bridge (NT 326 732), the discovery of a bronze razor from one of up to eleven stone cists was a particularly notable find.

Despite the abundance of evidence for funerary monuments and rich burials in the Neolithic and Bronze Age, knowledge of the subsistence base which supported these

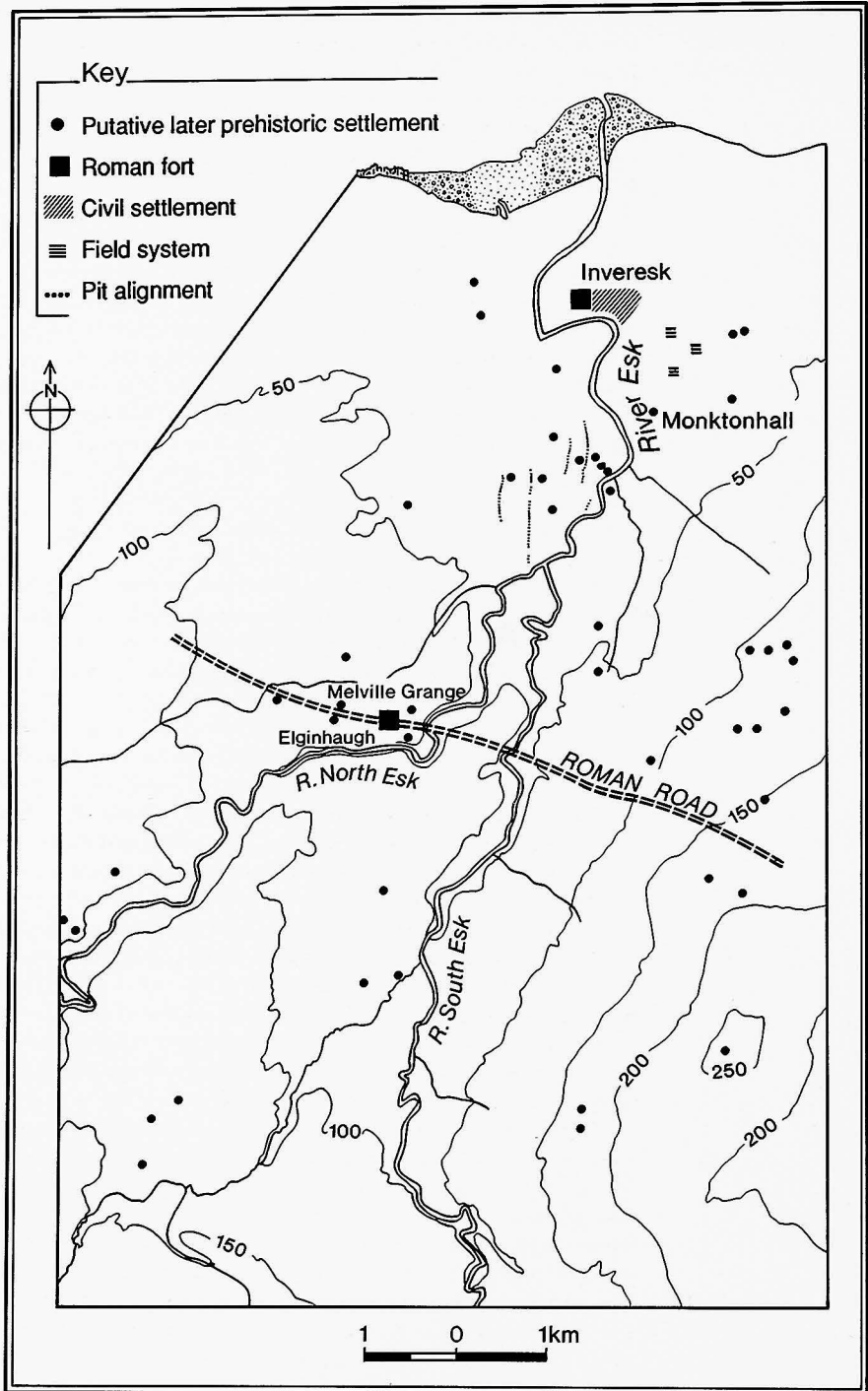


figure 4

The later prehistoric and Roman landscape of the Esk Valley

societies and the settlements in which they lived is rather poor.³ By the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age, however, settlements begin to dominate the archaeological landscape. These include numerous fortified settlements, ranging from large hillforts to enclosed villages and isolated single family dwellings. The end of the Bronze Age, around 600 BC, was a time of considerable change. Iron tools and, increasingly, weapons begin to appear in the archaeological record. Although less defensive types of settlements also existed in the Iron Age, society seems generally to have been more competitive, with the emergence of tribal groups perhaps competing for territory and natural resources.⁴

The archaeological landscape of the Esk Valley and the area around Musselburgh and Inveresk is particularly rich in Iron Age settlement remains, mostly identified by aerial photography; these include pit alignments (possible prehistoric landscape divisions), ring-ditches (the truncated remains of circular houses and other buildings), rectangular enclosures and field systems **figure 4**. Examples of all these features have been identified at East Field, Inveresk, for instance (around NT 344 700–345 707). The question of how many of these settlements were contemporary with the Roman fort at Inveresk is an important avenue for further research, as is the nature of the relationship between natives and Romans.

the later prehistoric and Roman period

It was this Iron Age society which the Romans encountered in the first century AD. According to Ptolemy, the classical geographer, whose map of the Roman world was compiled around AD 140, Lothian was within the tribal domain of the Votadini, whose capital was probably at Traprain Law, an impressive hillfort near East Linton (NT 581 746).

The Roman conquest of Britain commenced with the invasion of the Emperor Claudius in AD 43. In the first century AD Roman armies campaigned in Scotland, reaching north-east Scotland on land and also circumnavigating the island. One of the forts constructed to establish their control lay at Elginhaugh by Dalkeith. Roman forces were withdrawn from most of Scotland in AD 87/88 and finally withdrew to the Tyne–Solway isthmus *c* AD 105, where Hadrian's Wall was to be built in the AD 120s.

As the northern frontier of the empire Hadrian's Wall was short-lived, for in AD 138 Hadrian's successor, Antoninus Pius, ordered his army to advance into central Scotland and begin construction of a second great barrier, the Antonine Wall. Construction of the Wall appears to have commenced after a victory in AD 142 (recorded in a coin issue late in that year), and building probably continued into the AD 150s. It is possible that Antoninus' motives for building the wall were similar to those behind Claudius' invasion of Britain in AD 43—the need for a military victory to bolster the reputation of a new emperor—but it is likely that there was also a certain degree of military necessity involved.

The Wall stretched for some 60 km between Bo'ness on the Forth and Old Kilpatrick on the Clyde, with forts roughly every two miles and fortlets at every mile. New forts were also established south of the Wall, many on or close by sites of abandoned forts. Some forts were also established north of the Wall, up to the Tay. Trouble on the northern frontier in the mid to late 150s may have led to the abandonment of some forts, and perhaps the whole system, but many were refurbished or rebuilt within a relatively short time.⁵ This re-occupation proved to be temporary, as most of the forts in Scotland were again abandoned, sometime in the decade AD 160 to 170, and the army withdrew to the line of Hadrian's Wall, which was now once again the northern frontier of Roman Britain. Some forts in Dumfriesshire and up to the Tweed were retained as outposts, but by about AD 180 even these were abandoned, with the exception of Netherby, Bewcastle, High Rochester and Risingham.

There was one final episode in the history of Roman Scotland. For a variety of reasons (of which a 'little local difficulty in Britain' was only one, and possibly spurious) the Emperor Septimius Severus, together with his sons Caracalla and Geta, arrived in Britain to mount a major campaign in the north, specifically against two tribes—the Maeatae,

whose territory seems to have been Stirlingshire and Strathmore, and the Caledonians who were based further north.⁶ Probably accompanied by a fleet, Severus and his army advanced beyond Hadrian's Wall in AD 208, through eastern Scotland and up the east coast. Despite his taking the title *Britannicus*, 'conqueror of Britain', Severus' celebrations were short-lived. A major rebellion by the native tribes was suppressed the following year. Severus himself died in Britain in AD 211. Construction work on a new fortress at Carpow, on the Tay near Newburgh, began c AD 212, suggesting that the Romans intended to stay, but Severus' successor, Caracalla, returned to Rome and abandoned the Scottish conquests.⁷ Hadrian's Wall was again reinstated as the northern frontier of Britain, with the four outpost forts retained. Thereafter, the native tribes were quiet for several generations but, by the late third century AD, the Picts—probably a new power grouping amongst the tribes—and others were putting increasing pressure on the northern frontier. Hadrian's Wall appears to have been garrisoned until the early years of the fifth century AD, before Britain was finally abandoned by Rome.

The Roman fort and settlement at Inveresk functioned as an important element of the Roman campaigns. It was situated on high ground overlooking the site where Musselburgh now stands, above a bend in the River Esk **figure 3**. Today, nothing of the fort itself is visible on the ground, but a hypocausted room, first discovered in 1783, can be seen in the garden of Inveresk House, to the east of St Michael's Kirk.⁸ This was one of a suite of rooms in a bath-house, heated to varying temperatures, with hot air passed under floors raised on stacks of bricks or pillars. Because of the obvious fire risk, the bath-house was usually located at the perimeter of the fort, or outside in an annex; in this case, the bath-house is some distance from the fort, and may have been built for civilian use (*see below*). A second hypocausted building was found closer to the fort c 1827. Most of the Roman fort is now covered by the kirkyard, and Roman finds turn up on a regular basis during grave-digging **figure 5**.

Within the overall Roman military system of Scotland, Inveresk may have functioned as a port or harbour, at the mouth of the Esk, and perhaps a stores base, the first candidate for such a role north of the Tweed.⁹ It also stood at the head of a twin northward route, Dere Street, the main road north from Newstead (near Melrose), and another from Biggar and Carlops.¹⁰ Its strategic position, both by land and sea, makes it a candidate, along with Cramond, for the main harbour supplying the Antonine Wall. The recorded presence of the Imperial Procurator at Inveresk, together with the extensive civilian settlement attached to the fort, may substantiate this claim.¹¹ The discovery of a possible Roman timber granary at Musselburgh in 1995 lends support to such a proposition.

The fort was first investigated by Sir Ian Richmond who, in 1946–7, established the line of the ramparts on the north, west and south sides, enclosing an area of around 6 acres (2.5 ha), with the fort's main entrance facing west. The east rampart lay under the graveyard of St Michael's Kirk. An external ditch surrounded the fort; this single ditch is unusual as Roman forts normally had two ditches, and it is likely that there was a second ditch at Inveresk which has not survived, or has not yet been located. A roadway (*intervallum*) ran just inside the rampart. Buildings located within the fort included a granary and some stone buildings which Richmond interpreted as barracks and stabling, leading him to believe that the fort was garrisoned by a cavalry regiment—an *ala quingenaria*—of 500 men.¹² These excavations, the first of several phases of archaeological work, identified the fort as belonging to the Antonine period (AD 142–163), with two clearly defined phases of occupation. The second phase comprised the demolition of a granary and the construction of a new internal road system within the fort.

A second programme of archaeological work commenced with the investigations of Dr W S Hanson at the western end of the fort in 1981. This confirmed that the fort had been occupied twice in the Antonine period, but it disproved one of Richmond's observations that preservation was poor or non-existent in this part of the fort. Although it was found to be poor in the southern half, preservation was markedly better, albeit variable, in the northern half.¹³ Here, two phases of *intervallum* were found, along with stone-packed post-

**figure 5**

Roman finds from
Inveresk
above a selection of
pottery vessels
left the lower half
of a Roman altar
bearing two
inscriptions, found
within the Roman fort



holes which may represent the foundations of either barrack, stable or store buildings.¹⁴ Further work, carried out between 1990 and 1993, revealed more of the internal roadways, again with two phases of construction and traces of what appeared to be the foundations of the western gateway superstructure.¹⁵

The fort at Inveresk occupies a very rare position among Roman sites in Scotland because, in close proximity to the east of the fort and beneath the present village of Inveresk, it is known that there was a civilian settlement or *vicus*. Here, the merchants and traders who accompanied the army into Scotland settled and set up business. The degree of preservation and the sheer volume of finds that have turned up from all around the Inveresk area over the centuries (first recorded in 1565)¹⁶ have presented archaeologists with a unique opportunity to examine what must have been a flourishing civilian settlement.

The existence of this civilian settlement was confirmed by Maxwell in 1971¹⁷ and was followed by further excavations in 1976–7 by Thomas.¹⁸ Three phases of activity in the Roman period were identified. The earliest phase, characterised by a V-profiled ditch, may represent a pre-Roman settlement, for which no dating evidence was available. The next phase, dating to the second century AD, was represented by two timber buildings, one containing a stone furnace. These were succeeded by substantial timber buildings and a stone building, set in a regular grid separated by cobbled lanes and roads, aligned on a main road pointing to the east gate of the fort, all indicating a settlement on a grand scale.¹⁹ The finds were mostly domestic, although a stone-built furnace and industrial debris indicate other activities. Other evidence suggests that there may have been a potter's workshop at Inveresk. Trial excavations by the Centre for Field Archaeology of the University of Edinburgh in 1995 produced evidence for a possible Roman timber granary outside the known area of the civil settlement to the north of the ridge and possibly sitting on an earlier shore-line.²⁰

There is also some evidence to suggest that there may have been cemeteries of the Roman period at Inveresk. Possible Roman burials (accompanied by Roman pottery) were found to the east of the civil settlement in 1892, and five burials of Romano-British date, containing the remains of one individual together with pottery and animal bones, were recovered from a site north of the fort in 1985.²¹

The presence of at least three temporary camps south of Inveresk testifies to the frequent use of this route by Roman armies in transit.

In the fields around the *vicus*, aerial photography and recent trial excavations²² have revealed traces of field systems contemporary with the Roman fort and *vicus*. Further research and fieldwork in areas like this will lead to a better understanding of trade and exchange networks and local food production, as well as a greater appreciation of the day-to-day relationship of the Romans with the native population.

One of the most notable of many finds was the discovery during grave-digging of a stone altar fragment in 1976 **figure 5**.²³ It bore two separate inscriptions, one superimposed on the other, and records the name Q Lucius Sabinianus, the Procurator of the province of Britannia, the supreme financial administrator of the province. This raises important questions, not only about the reasons for his presence in Scotland, but also about the status of the fort and *vicus* at Inveresk.²⁴

the early medieval period

Documentary sources clearly indicate that settlement in the Musselburgh area continued, or re-established itself, in the Middle Ages. The Registrum of Dunfermline Abbey contains a charter dated 1070 x 1093, in which Malcolm III (1058–93) granted 'Inveresk' and the shire of 'Muselburge' to the monastery.²⁵ Although it has been claimed by some that this charter was 'spurious', there is adequate evidence that it was accepted as genuine in the twelfth century.²⁶ In 1134, the pope confirmed to the abbey this grant of Malcolm III and also a further grant by David I (1124–53);²⁷ and in 1154 x 1159 there was further confirmation of the gifts to Dunfermline Abbey, which included 'Infrech minorem', by Malcolm and Margaret, and 'Infrech maiorem' (Musselburgh) with its mill and fishings, granted by David I, and the 'ecclesiam de Infrech', which had been noted in 1020 as 'ecclesia de Muskilburgh'.²⁸

Relatively little archaeological work has been carried out within the historic core of Musselburgh and few medieval finds have been reported. It is clear from documentary sources, however, that by the latter decades of the eleventh century at least some form of township was in existence: by the reign of David I 'Infrech maiorem' had a mill, fishing rights and a church. In all probability, however, settlement around this area had been well established for some time. In the seventh century it was referred to as 'Eskmouth', although a place-name does not necessarily indicate settlement.²⁹ The 'ecclesia de Muskilburgh' of 1020 would, however, suggest at least a few worshippers in the vicinity; and there is a tradition of a sanctuary cross close to the church.³⁰

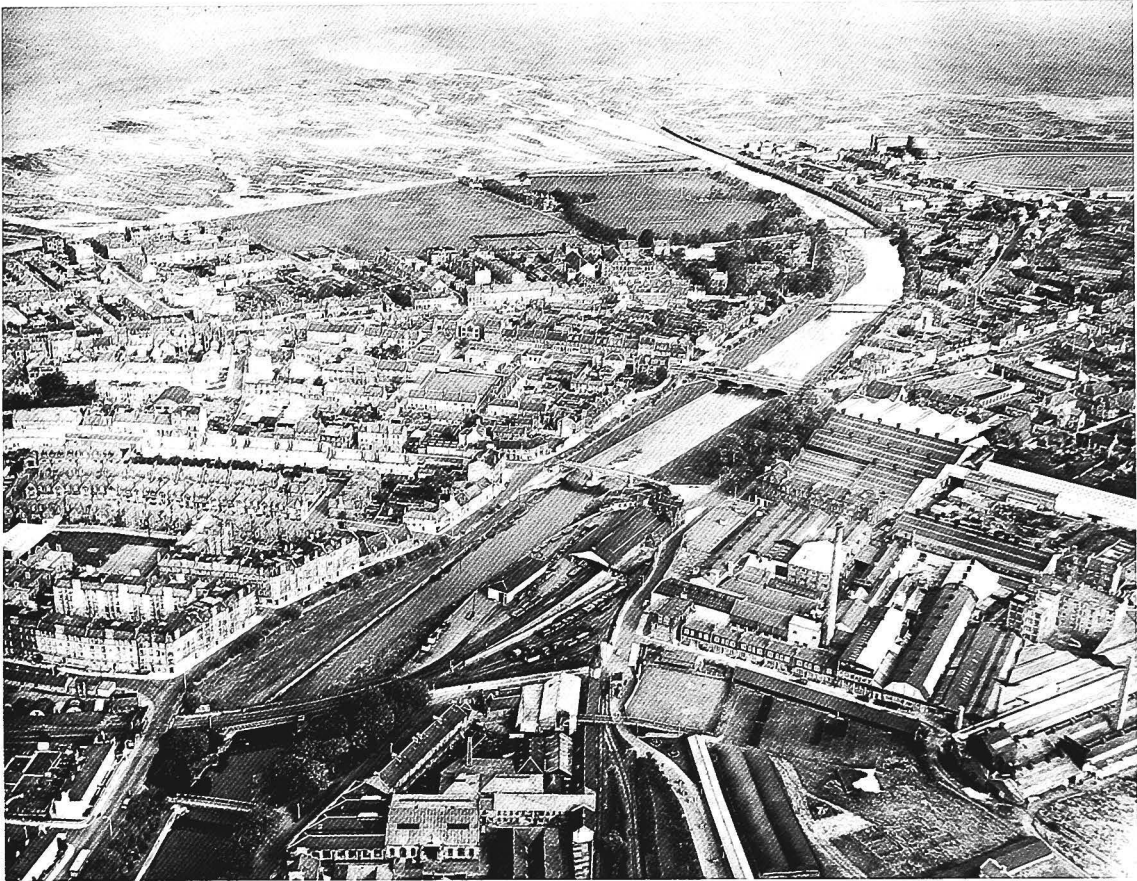
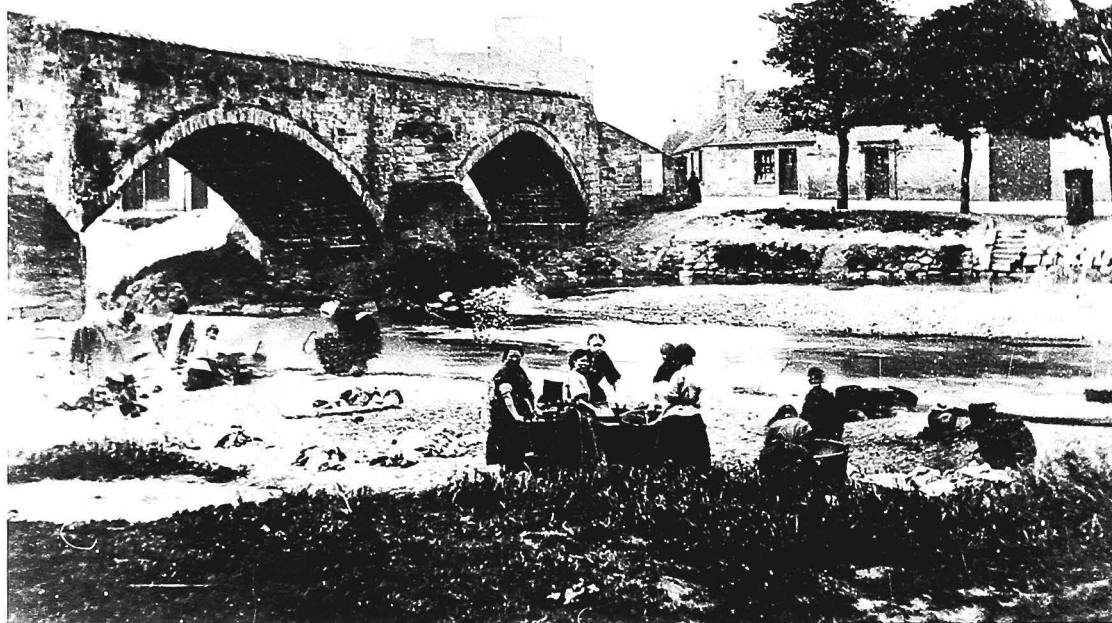


figure 6
The River Esk and
Musselburgh
from the air

Although the place-name ‘Inveresk’ was more commonly used than that of ‘Musselburgh’ in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, by about 1166 it was being more generally superseded by ‘Musselburgh’: the *Regesta Regum Scottorum* includes a confirmation by William I (1163–1214) of the property and privileges of Dunfermline Abbey, including those at ‘Inveresk’, which had written above it, in the same hand, ‘Muskilburg’;³¹ by 1165 x 1173 there is mention of a ‘mansura’ (dwelling) in ‘Muxelburg’;³² and a papal bull of 1184, included in *Registrum de Dunfermlyn*, refers to the ‘burgus et portus de Muskilburgum’, that is, the burgh and port of Musselburgh.³³

Precisely when Musselburgh became a burgh is unclear; but this papal bull of 1184 suggests that the township had already been elevated to burghal status, particularly as the document continues to refer to the ‘liberties’ of Musselburgh. It is also significant that a confirmation by William I of the privileges and property of Newbattle Abbey, to the south, as early as 1165 x 1173 refers to a lodging in Musselburgh, the ‘mansura’ noted above, gifted by the abbot of Dunfermline, thus implying that the town was of some note.³⁴ In 1203, a bull of Pope Innocent III, confirming various possessions of the abbey of Newbattle, refers to a ‘toft’ in Musselburgh; a toft, or burgage plot, was a piece of measured land in a burgh on which a burgher would build his dwelling-house (some relict burgage plots are visible from the air **figure 6**). Clearly, Musselburgh was already divided into burgage plots which, along with the granting of a toft to Newbattle, would suggest that the town had been elevated into a burgh prior to this date. In all probability, this had happened before the convening of the great council of 1189 x 1199 in Musselburgh, and perhaps as early as 1165 x 1173, when the lodging of Newbattle Abbey is mentioned.

One local tradition has it that it was this elevation to burghal status that promoted the name ‘Musselburgh’.³⁵ Yet it is relatively certain that the town was not a burgh in 1020, when this nomenclature is first met. An alternative theory is that the name is taken from the extensive mussel beds that lined the shore beside the burgh, which is somewhat supported by the arms of Musselburgh—three mussel shells and three anchors. That the burgh considered itself of some antiquity is indicated in the rhyme, already old by the nineteenth century:

**figure 7**

The Old Bridge
in the early twentieth
century

© Crown Copyright:
RCAHMS

*Musselburgh was a burgh
When Edinburgh was nane
And Musselburgh'll be a burgh
When Edinburgh is gane.³⁶*

What is equally not proven is where precisely this early burgh was sited. The name 'Inveresk' might suggest that the township grew up on the hill at the site of the erstwhile Roman camp, beside the church (*see pp 76–81*). It is more probable, however, that settlement clustered further downhill nearer to the Forth and, probably, at the site of the old Roman bridge, which was replaced in the Middle Ages **figure 7**. The medieval bridge was probably of only two arches, as drawn on plans of the battle of Pinkie **figure 11**. The third, easterly, arch is not aligned with the other two, which suggests addition at a later date. The council minutes, extant in the seventeenth century, specifically refer to the 'mid-bow' of the bridge, which gives at least a clue to the timing of construction.³⁷ A bridge crossing was a natural place for settlement, on a routeway—in this case a major routeway to the fortified castle and settlement at Edinburgh. It is quite probable that resting places and hostelries were set up on both sides of the bridge. Such a site offered, also, a readily available source of fresh water from the Esk and immediate access to the Forth for fishing—the sea in the early Middle Ages being much closer to the town than at present (*see p 7–9*).

There is a tradition that the sea came as far up as the site of the supposed chapel of Loretto.³⁸ Indeed, it is related that when in 1856 a well was being sunk in the grounds of Loretto School the remains of an old oak ship were discovered.³⁹ If correct, this would suggest that high water mark was once at least half a mile further south than at present. There was certainly reference to the 'reflux' of the sea in 1612.⁴⁰ It is probable that the town's harbour, which is known to have existed since at least the twelfth century, was at the mouth of the Esk, before silting became a major problem and the river became easily fordable.⁴¹ This would also reinforce the view that the early site of the town would be beside the Esk; and, as in other ports, a harbour frontage or quay must have been sited on the Esk, with an associated High Street.⁴²

It is known that a mill was sited on the Esk from the reign of David I at the latest (*see p 16*). This was probably the shire or sheriff mill, sited beside the wood and haugh of the same name, upstream from the bridge. The Esk was an important asset from early times,

as may be noted in a charter of 1284 x 1300, when Simon Sturi, a burgess of Musselburgh, was confirmed in possession of one acre of land by the water of Esk. This was called 'le slucysland', which suggests a harnessing of the Esk water before the end of the thirteenth century.⁴³

The relative importance of the town is indicated by a number of events. As early as 1189 x 1199, according to *Regesta Regum Scottorum*, an assize was held at Musselburgh.⁴⁴ This was most probably the same occasion as that when William I convened a great council at Musselburgh. A tax was raised, thus ensuring the 10,000 merks needed to buy off the interests of Richard II of England and assert the independence of Scotland, 'the first time that anything like a national tax had been voted in Scotland'.⁴⁵ It was to Musselburgh, again, that William I summoned a general council, in either 1201 or 1205, at which all nobles were to swear fealty to his young son, Alexander.⁴⁶ In 1242, David Bernham, bishop of St Andrews, also chose Musselburgh for the convening of a synod.⁴⁷ To host such events, in particular a great council, accommodation for the royal or episcopal party, its retainers, nobles, clergymen and advisers would be required. The fact that Musselburgh was considered of sufficient stature to host major convocations of the political community is an indication not only of a town of relative size, but also of one that could offer a sufficient degree of comfort and amenities.

Burghs were privileged bodies, with constitutional and trading rights. How extensive these were in Musselburgh in the twelfth century is unclear, but the fact that its port was specifically referred to by this time would suggest a measure of sea-borne commercial activity. The burgh superior was the abbot of Dunfermline, and it is to be expected that in the early years of its existence the burgh was closely monitored by the abbot and his representatives. But by 1359, for example, when Richard de Cragbarry was a baillie in Musselburgh, it is possible that the superior was already allowing a fair measure of independence in the routine running of the burgh.⁴⁸

Burghs brought in revenues to the superior from rentals for land, port dues, use of fishings and mills, burgh court fines and, in particular, from tolls or customs dues for the use of the burghal market. The rights of the burgesses and merchants of Musselburgh to buy and sell and hold markets was confirmed by David II (1329–71) c 1355, along with the similar liberties of the other abbatial burghs of Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and Queensferry.⁴⁹ This ensured for the burghs and their superior revenues from the markets, apart from the great customs on wool, hides and fells, which were reserved for the king. These great customs had, in fact, been granted to the abbey of Dunfermline by Robert I (1306–29) and were to be, once more, confirmed by James II (1437–60) in 1450/1.⁵⁰ In 1466 Musselburgh entered into an agreement with the abbot to hold its privileges in feu-ferme. This meant that the burgh contracted to pay an annual fee of four merks instead of a number of lesser dues, and is an indication that before this date the burgesses were competent to deal with their own fiscal affairs.

the medieval and modern periods

A precise view of the topography of the burgh in the Middle Ages is difficult to gain. The town records were reputedly destroyed after the battle of Pinkie in 1547, but a more probable scenario is that they were lost earlier, when the tolbooth, where the town records would have been kept, was destroyed by fire on the instruction of the Earl of Hertford in an English raid in 1544.⁵¹ These would have offered invaluable clues. A tradition of the site of the house where Regent Randolph, earl of Moray, died in 1332 may, however, be telling. Destroyed only in 1809, it stood, reputedly, at the east end of the town, perhaps within the grounds of the present Pinkie House. If correct, there is here an indication that, already by the fourteenth century, the town had expanded from its presumed site at the old Esk bridge to approximately the limits of the late medieval burgh, which extended to the site of the east port, near the present position of the gate piers at each side of the east end of Musselburgh High Street.⁵² Certainly, the site of the tolbooth is firm indication of linear expansion eastwards from the river and of the urban nucleus centred on the



figure 8

The tolbooth,
1900–30

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tolbooth and market area. This had occurred by at least the first half of the sixteenth century and probably earlier, as the town clock, traditionally housed in the tolbooth, dates from the fifteenth century (*see below*). The tolbooth was the most important secular building in the town. It was here that the burgh council met, the town weights (for use at the burgh weighing machine or tron) were kept, and offenders against the peace were incarcerated. Although largely destroyed in 1544 (*see p 86*), some of the tolbooth survived, rentals being due to be paid there in 1563.⁵³ It was to have been extended in 1573, had not construction work been sabotaged.⁵⁴ In the early 1590s it underwent major rebuilding, partially utilising stones from the destroyed Loretto chapel (*see p 24*) **figure 8**.⁵⁵

Whether the tolbooth stood facing on to a large open market place, as it does today, is not clear **figure 19**. Until the 1760s, a ‘mid-row’ stood in the middle of this open space, the main thoroughfare passing to the south of Mid Row on land now assimilated into the Pinkie estate. When the Mid Row was first constructed is undocumented, although it is probably indicative of later development of what in the early medieval period would have been an open market space, once pressure for land in the central core of the town reached a premium. Records do not quantify the importance of Musselburgh’s medieval market. In 1363, however, David II confirmed to the abbot of Dunfermline and his four burghs of Musselburgh, Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and Queensferry that in these burghs ‘in regard to any goods whatsoever, coming from any place whatsoever, and within all the limits, confines and boundaries of the whole regality, they may justly exercise their trades, as well regarding wool, hides, and skins as regarding other merchandise whatsoever, without impediment’.⁵⁶ What is not precisely stated here was whether the regality of Dunfermline was divided up into four specific trading monopolies. It is known that this was the case north of the Forth, where Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline had distinct zones.⁵⁷ The chances are that this was also true of the regality south of the Forth. This grant gave Musselburgh a potential economic control of a wide area, by monopolising the sale and purchase of staple goods—wool, skins and hides—and by the expedient of forcing all within its hinterland to use the Musselburgh market.

Also of prime importance to the burgh was its harbour **figure 2**. Again, there are no firm indications of the extent of overseas trade; but the gift of the clock in the tolbooth steeple to the people of Musselburgh by the ‘Dutch States’ in 1496 would suggest close links.⁵⁸ Whether the harbour was sited where the Romans had discovered a natural berthing point at Fisherrow or whether it still stood at the mouth of the Esk is unclear (*see p 18*). It was considered of sufficient importance that, according to the *Treasurer’s Accounts*, a messenger was sent in 1533 giving instructions that bulwarks were to be erected here, as in Leith, Preston, North Berwick, Dunbar and Dumbarton.⁵⁹ Eleven years later, the strategic

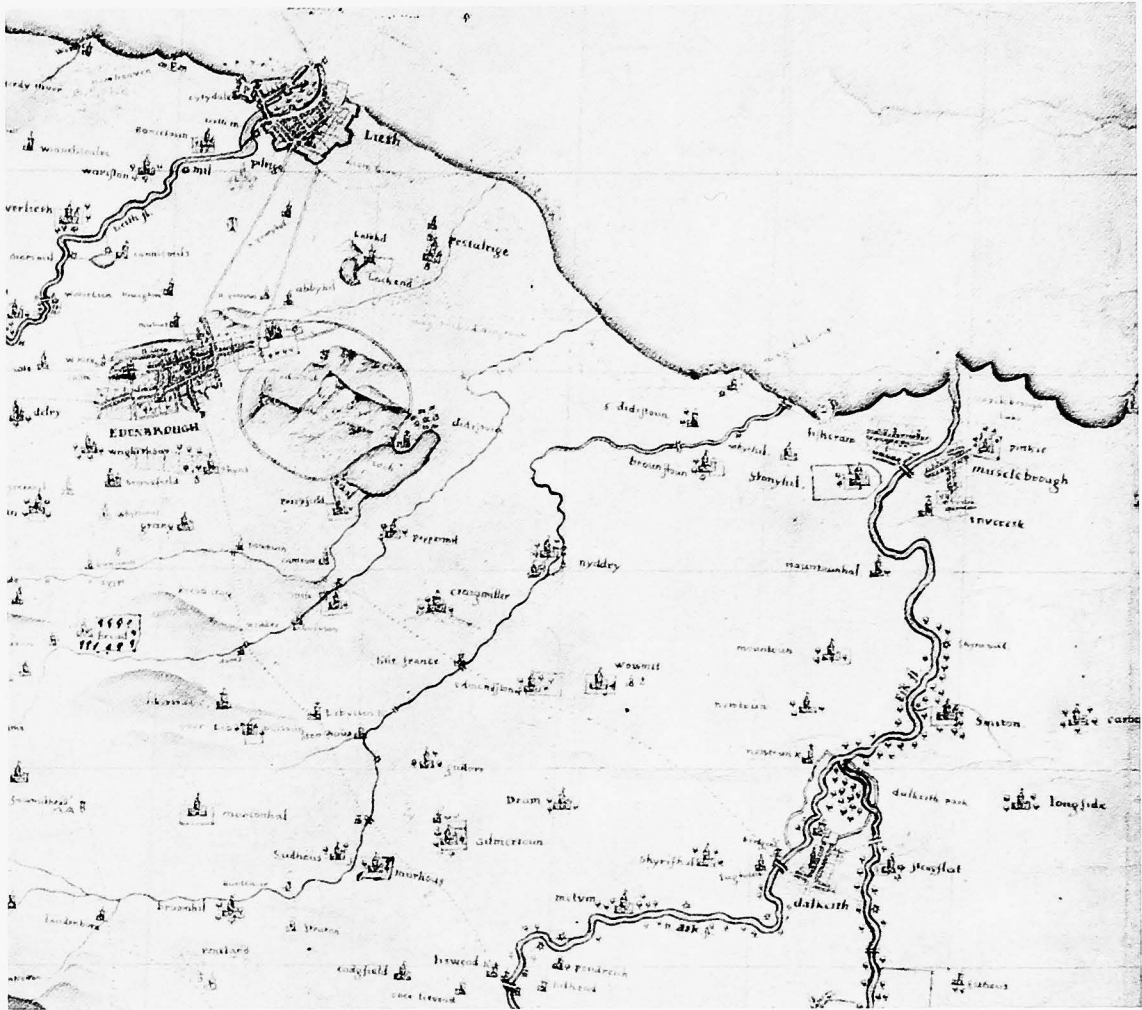


figure 9
John Adair's
map of Midlothian
1682

relevance of the harbour was noted by the English, when such was the concentration of Scottish forces on Leith that it could not be used as a 'resort of shippes'; but there was a 'place beneath Ligte called Mustelburgh' where a safe landing and access to Edinburgh was possible.⁶⁰

The natural harbour was an asset that the locals continued to turn to advantage as a fishing haven. Their catch was of sufficient importance that in 1523, when Governor Albany was camped near Eyemouth with an army, including French troops, prior to a campaign against England, instructions were given that the fishers of Musselburgh, along with those from Gullane, North Berwick and Dunbar, should make a daily trip with supplies.⁶¹

The Esk was also harnessed and there were certainly two mills by the end of the thirteenth century;⁶² and this number had probably increased by 1543 when the abbey was still collecting the multures.⁶³ By 1567, the 'new' mill, later called the Sea Mill, stood at the foot of Kerr's Wynd.⁶⁴ The West Mills in 1583 consisted of a new corn mill built at the north end of the old mill, so that, with the Sea Mill and the Shire Mill, four mills belonged to Musselburgh **figure 10**.⁶⁵ To this day, the River Esk can bring a strong force of water power—indeed, heavy rains that fall in Penicuik take only one hour to reach Musselburgh.⁶⁶

To the east of the burgh, in an area called the 'Claypuyl', was another useful natural asset: a stretch of communal waste land used as the town hen-run. Close by was the burgh common, sometimes called 'Cabbage Hall'.⁶⁷ A precise siting of this common green and an area called Claypuyl (Claypule) would prove significant, for it is known that the chapel of Loretto was close beside these two topographical features. It has been traditionally said that the chapel stood to the north of the main highway to the east of Musselburgh and

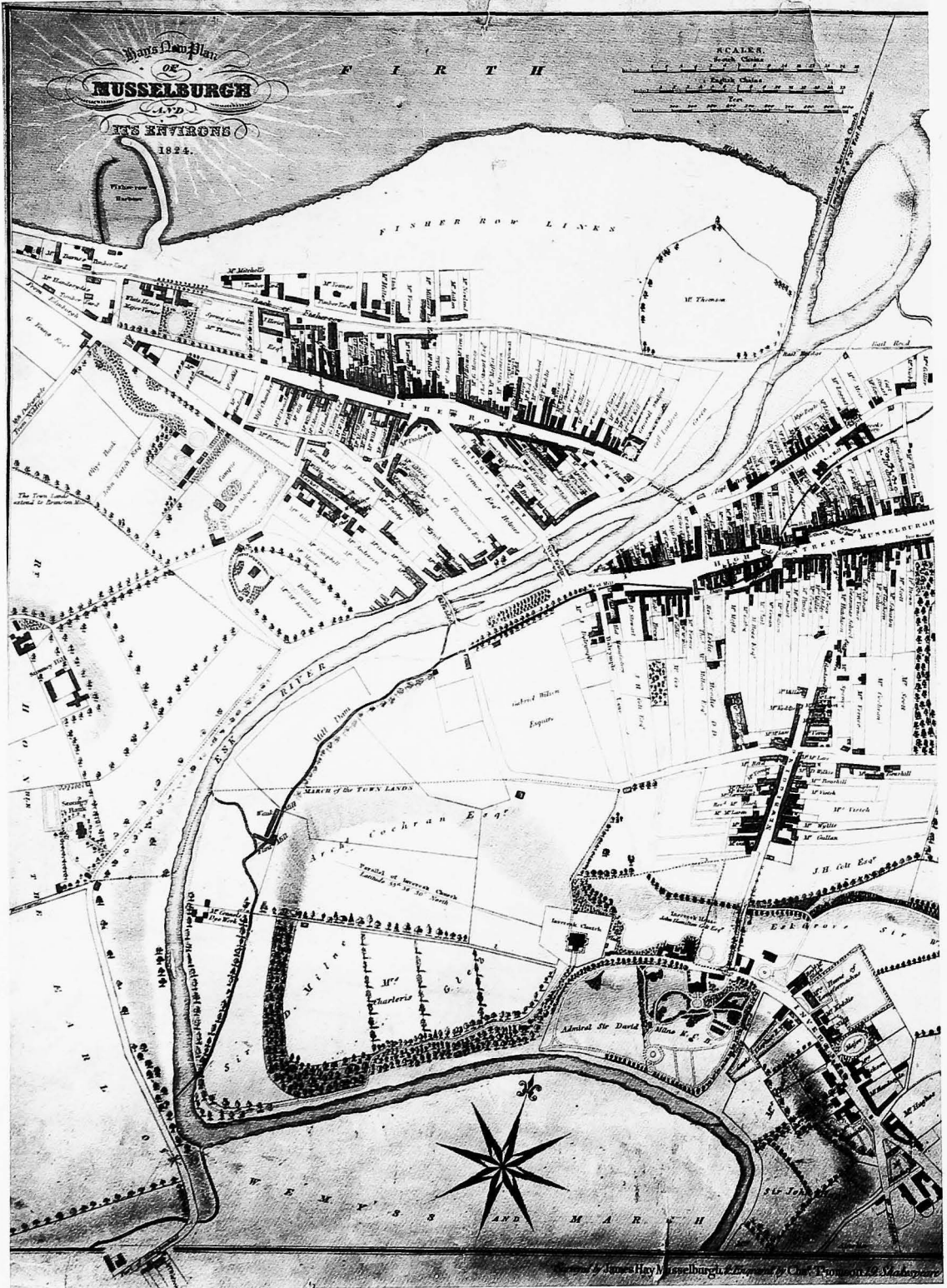
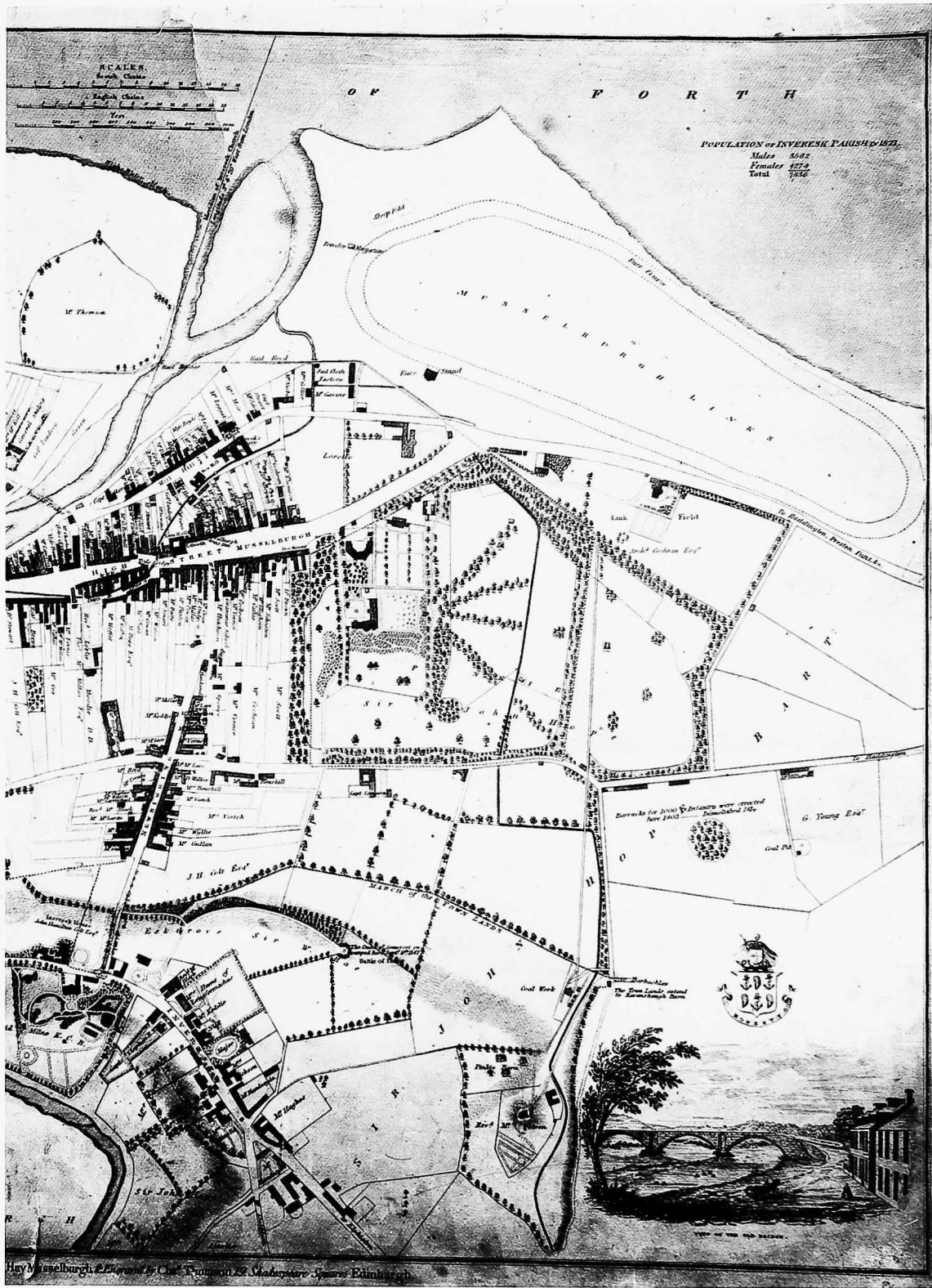


figure 10
James Hay's New
Plan of Musselburgh
and its Environs
1824



H. & W. Mitchell, Edinburgh, & Geo. Pearson & Co. Manchester, & James Edinburgh

that the remnants now stand in the grounds of Loretto School (*see* p 91). In support of this location is cited the finding of human skulls in 1831.⁶⁸

In 1534, the bailies, burgesses and community of Musselburgh gave to one Thomas Douchtye, a hermit of the order of hermit brothers of St Paul,⁶⁹ a piece of waste land currently being used as the burgh hen-run, within the liberty of the burgh and at the end of it, beside the Claypuyll, between the king's highway and the common green. On this he was to be allowed to build a chapel dedicated to St Mary of Loretto, a little dwelling house and a garden.⁷⁰ This is an exact description of the site; and the position of the chapel is determined by whether the common green was to the north or south of the main thoroughfare.

The geographical and geological features of this area in the Middle Ages would predispose the location of a 'green' to be to the south of the road. The north side was largely reclaimed or sandy land; but the record precisely refers to the green as 'viridarium', thus stressing growth of plants and greenness. There was certainly a 'Harcas Green' to the south of the 'King's Highway' in 1569, but whether this is a reference to the common green is unclear.⁷¹ It has been argued that the chapel was on stony ground, but this claim is based on a mis-translation of the Latin of the original documentation.⁷² It is interesting, however, that a reference in 1569 to a piece of waste ground in Notary Bennet's protocol book, dating from 1560–85, defines this ground as being at the salt pans [to the east of the burgh], with a tenement to the west, the common passage to the said salt pans to the east, the king's highway to the north and the burgh common to the south.⁷³ This precise topographical description strongly suggests that the chapel of Loretto was to the south of the main thoroughfare. Evidence from the Penitentiary Records in the Vatican Archive confirms this.⁷⁴ The land given to the hermit is specifically sited with the king's highways to the north and the south. This means that the chapel was south of the main road moving eastwards out of Musselburgh and north of the common loaning that ran eastwards behind the properties on the southern frontage of the High Street. It would seem that the local tradition of the chapel to the north of the main road, in the grounds of Loretto School, is suspect.

The hermit may well have been a local man, which would explain the readiness with which the townspeople granted him land. The hermitage rapidly gained popularity, having seven chaplains attached to it in 1536, when it was visited by James V (1513–42), in a barefoot pilgrimage from Stirling prior to his voyage to France for his first marriage.⁷⁵ The land, however, reverted to the town in 1569 and the chapel was demolished in 1590.⁷⁶

It is known that there were other pre-Reformation chapels in Musselburgh. One of the most ancient was the hospital dedicated to St Mary Magdalen to the west of Fisherrow. It was described in 1386 as caring for the poor and lepers.⁷⁷ Such a siting, outwith settlement, would have been a natural place for a leper hospital. It continued in existence throughout the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries,⁷⁸ although by 1428 it was described merely as a hospital for the poor.⁷⁹ It was still standing in 1561, a payment being made to 'the lipper men at the madgelenes [sic] beyond Mussilburgh', which would suggest it continued as a leper hospital;⁸⁰ and it was still standing in 1681. An almshouse reputedly stood at the west end of Market Street, Fisherrow, and a chapel dedicated to St James was situated in the Mid Row, although there is little further detail of either of these.⁸¹

Musselburgh and its environs were to be the unwitting hosts to the battle of Pinkie in September 1547. Battle plans drawn at the time provide a rare insight into contemporary perceptions of the town. Musselburgh is seen as a tiny settlement, dominated by the Church of St Michael at Inveresk and some distance from the Esk Bridge **figure 11**. Fisherrow does not feature, although the Scots camp to the south of the settlement is clearly delineated. A contemporary drawing of the battlefield of Carberry Hill in 1567, however, portrays Fisherrow clearly; and, perhaps significantly, shows settlement on the east side of the Esk, both south and north of the bridge.⁸² Interestingly, Blaeu's map of 1654 also fails to indicate settlement at Fisherrow, although the place-name appears. An

THE ENGLISH VICTORY AGAINST THE SCHOTTES BY
MUSKELBROGHE. 1547.

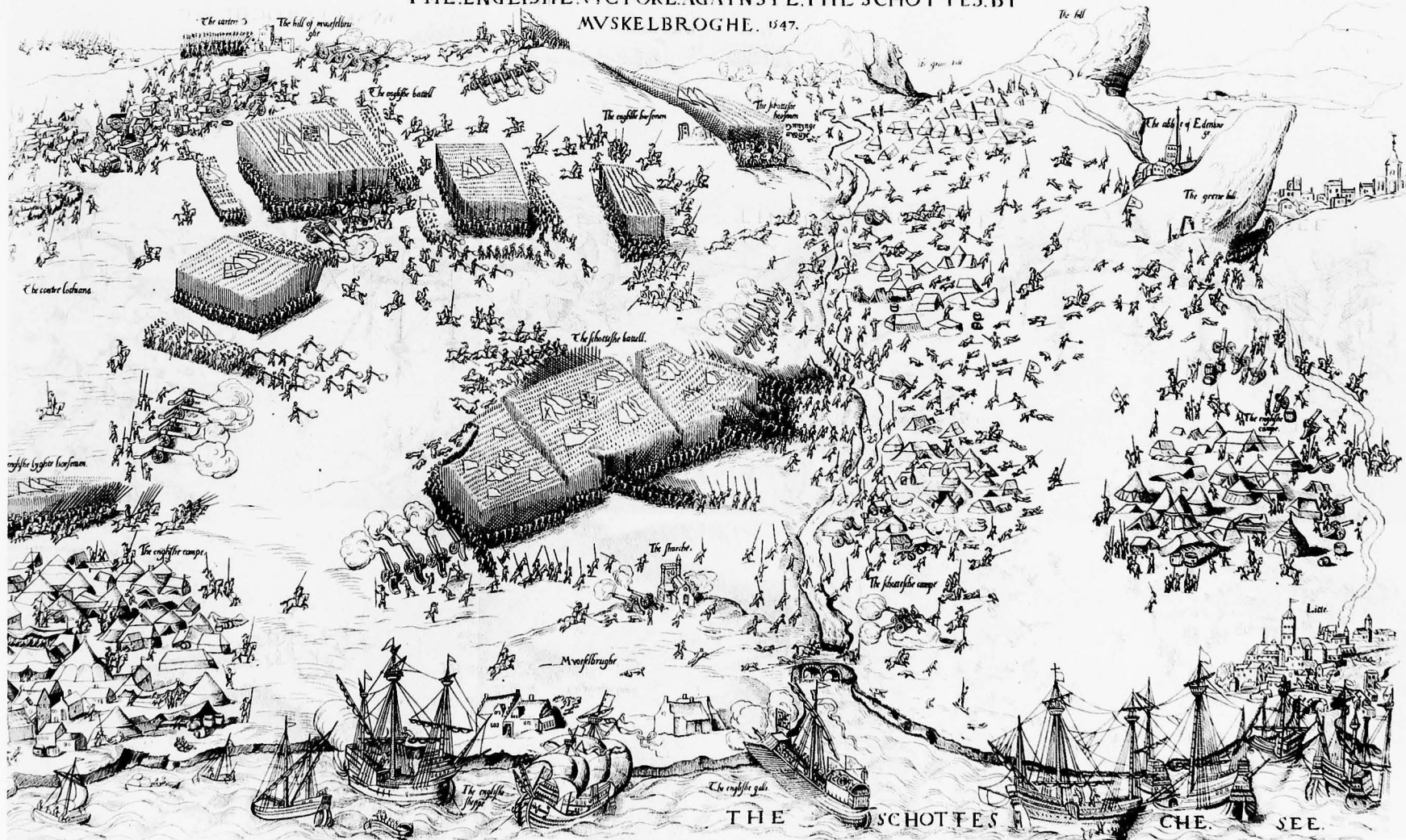


figure 11

Plan of the battle of Pinkie

1547

engraving, based on these plans, reputedly of the sixteenth century (although the paper suggests a later date) reinforces this view: a somewhat insignificant clustered settlement at Musselburgh and nothing on the Fisherrow site.⁸³

It is perhaps understandable that contemporary descriptions of the Pinkie campaign did not give topographical details of the town.⁸⁴ William Patten, in his account of *The Expedition into Scotlande*, dismissed Falside Tower, which stands to the south-east of Musselburgh, as 'a sory castell and half a skore houses of a lyke woorthiness by yt'.⁸⁵ Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie in his chronicle of the events at Pinkie Cleugh talks of both Musselburgh and Fisherrow, but gives no detail of the townscape.⁸⁶ The contemporary written accounts are telling. The control of Musselburgh Bridge by guns from English ships is clear indication of the retreat of the sea over the last four hundred years. The Esk was once considerably more navigable than at present, although at very high tides the water level at the bridge can rise by 15 cm (6 in) to this day.⁸⁷ Clearly of utmost importance to those involved was the strategic bridge over the Esk. This was further indicated a year later in 1548, when the English agent, Henry Johns, reported to the Earl of Somerset that it was the intention of the French forces to demolish the bridge and dig great trenches, in order to curtail English movement.⁸⁸ The bridge survived the razing of Musselburgh that year by Lord Grey, who had led the cavalry at the battle of Pinkie.⁸⁹

One important aspect of preparation for battle is highlighted in the writings of the time: the making of wills. A nobleman, David Barclay, for example, is recorded as completing his testament at Musselburgh crofts at eleven in the morning;⁹⁰ Mr Thomas Sluchman made his will at eight in the morning on 10 September on the land of Monkton Hall, beside the water of Northesk;⁹¹ a John Franche of Thowhill made his testament and inventory of goods 'at Mussilburgh at the camp aganis ye English army'. It is known that he was one of the Scots to perish at Pinkie.⁹² Also to die was William Mergery, whose widow and children were to find themselves evicted, perhaps from lack of funds, by Ninian Sempill, son of William Lord Sempill, as a result.⁹³

The protocol book of Notary Bennet (1560–85) gives a fuller picture of the town as well as a glimpse of the extent of repair work and reconstruction that had been effected since the battle of Pinkie. The main street of Musselburgh was well developed, with burgage plots and gardens on both sides of the thoroughfare.⁹⁴ Reference to a 'waste' tenement on the south frontage, near to a passage called 'Toftfurde', may be a relic of damage sustained at Pinkie or merely natural dereliction through neglect or failure to build on the plot.⁹⁵ Passing to the south of the properties on the main street, almost as a back lane, was the 'common loan'.⁹⁶ This could be approached by a number of vennels or passage-ways, such as Dam Brae or Newbigging Loaning.⁹⁷ It is clear that Newbigging was becoming by this time an integrated, but distinct, small settlement, sometimes called a 'ville' or 'villa'.⁹⁸ Another thoroughfare, the 'Transitium Aqueductum', may have been close by or identical with Dam Brae.⁹⁹ It is perhaps a comment on the quality of housing in the area near Dam Brae that important Edinburgh lawyers, such as Thomas Marjoribanks and James MacCartney, held property here.¹⁰⁰ To the east of the settlement stood the chapel of Loretto (until its destruction at the Reformation), the saltpans and their approach route and the common green. To the west lay the bridge over the Esk, a town mill close by the bridge and its related dam and aqueducts, and, to its west, an area of land called the 'sands', pertaining to the chapel of Loretto.¹⁰¹

The small settlement at Fisherrow appears to have consisted of one main street, with tenements built up on both sides. To the north was the common green, 'Lye Grene'.¹⁰² There must have been some settlement on Market Street, or Marketgait, if an almshouse did in fact stand there (see p 24). Although a distinct settlement, it was clearly considered to be part of the liberties of Musselburgh and receives constant mention in Bennet's protocol book.

The most important resident of the burgh was the abbot of Dunfermline. Although the abbots must have maintained lodgings in their burgh from the twelfth century, it is not known where these were. In the sixteenth century, however, a tower house was constructed for their use at the east end of the town. This still stands as the central portion

of Pinkie House **figure 15** (see pp 86–7). It can be inferred, also, that the town had sufficient dwellings of substance to house the considerable force of Confederate Lords, which included twelve earls, fourteen lords and five commendators (including the commendator of Dunfermline) in June 1567: Musselburgh was used as a base by the rebel nobles who confronted the young Queen Mary at Carberry.¹⁰³

The influence of the abbots of Dunfermline was to cease with the Reformation; and the burgh was, as a result, to experience a period of constitutional uncertainty. In 1562, it was erected into a burgh of regality for the new commendator of Dunfermline.¹⁰⁴ Its importance is reflected in the fact that a series of well-connected political figures succeeded each other as superior of the burgh over the next forty years. In 1574, James VI (1567–1625) confirmed a charter of Robert Pitcairn, royal secretary and commendator of Dunfermline Abbey, creating the regent, the Earl of Morton (who also held the lordship of Dalkeith), and his heirs male, hereditary justiciars and bailies of the regality of Dunfermline and granting them tenure of the burgh of Musselburgh and barony of Musselburghshire.¹⁰⁵ In July 1587, six years after Morton's death, James VI issued a royal charter granting to his influential secretary, John Maitland of Thirlestane, the lordship and barony of Musselburghshire on the day before Maitland was created chancellor of the realm: it included Musselburgh, Newbigging, Fisherrow, Claypule, Musselburgh mill and the sheriffmill, the West Pans and the lands of Pinkie.¹⁰⁶

This latter gift provoked contention. The lordship of Dunfermline was given as a marriage gift by James VI to his wife, Anne of Denmark, in 1589. She maintained that the lordship of Musselburgh, being part of the lordship of Dunfermline, was also hers of right and requested that Maitland resign it, which he refused to do. A year after Maitland's death in 1595, Alexander Seton, third son of the influential fifth Lord Seton, lord president and one of the 'Octavians', was appointed hereditary bailie of the lordship of Musselburgh and he subsequently attained the title of Earl of Dunfermline. His son, the second earl, entered into a contract in 1630 with the magistrates of Musselburgh, enhancing the rights of the burgh court in criminal cases.¹⁰⁷ This agreement was ratified by Charles I (1625–49) two years later and further confirmed that the bailies, council and community of Musselburgh had the right to two markets, on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and to two fairs; they were to control all infeftments and resignations of land within the burgh's liberties; burgesses might be created and admitted to the burghal community; tolls might be raised at both Musselburgh Bridge and the Magdalen Bridge, to assist their upkeep; and, moreover, the burgh was given the authority to elect its two bailies, treasurer and lesser officials.¹⁰⁸

Musselburgh was, in effect, now a free burgh of regality, with all the privileges of a royal burgh, other than the right to send a representative to parliament. Attempts had been made previously to attain this status; but they had been strongly opposed by Edinburgh, which did not favour any increase in Musselburgh's rights for fear it impinged on Edinburgh's standing. As early as 1583, Edinburgh had objected to any of its inhabitants attending markets other than its own, and Musselburgh was specifically named as a potential rival.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, in 1610 it was recorded in Edinburgh's Council Minute Book that 'Understanding that the toun of Mussilburgh hes obtenit ane signatour past for erecting thame in ane frie burgh quhilk will be verrey prejudiciall to this burgh, thairfore thay haif fund guid and ordanett James Nisbet, merchant, to pas to Ingland to the King with lettres ... to his Majestie and to my lord Dunbar, Chancellare, and sic other freynds as is neidfull ... for staying of the said erectioun'.¹¹⁰ Nisbet's mission was successful. It was, however, conceded the following year that Musselburgh should be allowed to fish and sell catch anywhere off the coast of Scotland without interference from royal burghs.¹¹¹

In the meantime, the Maitlands of Thirlestane, now Earls of Lauderdale, had not given up their claims to superiority of the burgh; and, in 1642, entered into a contract with the town magistrates. Seven years later, John, earl of Lauderdale, succeeded his father and in 1670 he confirmed all the burgh's ancient rights and privileges. This was ratified in 1671 by Charles II. Musselburgh thus entered into a seemingly mutually beneficial relationship



Prospectus Oræ maritimæ LOTHIANÆ a Prædio de Stony hill. The Coast of LOTHIAN from Stony hill.

with the Lauderdale family until 1709, when the lordship of Musselburgh was purchased from the Earl of Lauderdale by the Duchess of Monmouth and Buccleuch.¹¹²

Much of the community's resources, both in terms of cash and manpower, were spent on maintenance of the built fabric of the town. The harbour at Fisherrow seems to have needed constant attention. It is probable that the harbour on the Esk had gradually been abandoned in the Middle Ages, due to silting; and the burgh had subsequently developed the harbour at Fisherrow, perhaps at a traditional fishermen's landing-place, which is known to have been in existence by at least 1592,¹¹³ and had twelve skippers by 1626.¹¹⁴ Its condition was, however, sufficiently dilapidated that in 1617 Edinburgh granted £200 towards its repair;¹¹⁵ and the following year the burgh of Stirling donated £40.¹¹⁶ In 1682, when, according to Adair's map **figure 9**, there was one pier with a westerly curve, damage to the harbour works, in particular the west side, was such that the council drew up a list of men from all parts of the burgh to effect repairs. The conscripts were fined ten shillings for each day's absence from work.¹¹⁷ Three years later, a decision was taken to sell the old timber from the western harbour works to the highest bidder; and to assist shipping, beacons were to be placed within and without the harbour entrance.¹¹⁸ The timber still remained unsold the following year but, interestingly, the council passed a further measure: the use of coal lanterns around the burgh was banned, apparently as this had been interfering with the guidance of the harbour beacons.¹¹⁹ It seems that by 1682 an older timber pier had been replaced and that the existing one was timber with stone filling: the council minutes of this year say that it was 'to be repaired with balks of timber where the same are wanting and to be filled up with stones to the balks according to use and wont'.¹²⁰

The harbour seems not to have been suitable for ships of large draught. In 1650, for example, Oliver Cromwell used Musselburgh as a base for operations in the Lothians; but, significantly, Dunbar was chosen as the victualling port.¹²¹ Thomas Tucker, visiting in 1655, referred to it as 'an open harbour ... for small boats or vessels'. It was also, in his view, a suitable port for customs dodging and smuggling, 'a very opportune place for carryeing out and bringing in of goods, unto or from any shippe that shal be lyeing in the roade if not looked after'.¹²² The council records confirm that the harbour was, by the seventeenth century, used largely for coastal trade, handling commodities such as coal and fish.¹²³ Indeed, when in 1700 a stent was to be placed on all foreign imports and exports throughout the country, Musselburgh maintained that it had 'nae forraign trade'.¹²⁴ Dues levied at the harbour, for its use, however, were of sufficient value that they were worth setting to public roup (or auction) in 1697, along with the customs levied at the Magdalen harbour, further west;¹²⁵ and by 1705 it was admitting to a certain level of foreign trade, agreeing to offer to relieve the royal burghs (who traditionally claimed to have the sole right to overseas trade) of two shillings in the tax roll.¹²⁶ This suggests that the harbours were in regular, profitable use. As early as 1573, in fact, Musselburgh, along with Preston, had entered into a commitment not to export salt until the domestic market had been supplied at eight shillings a boll. This export in all probability continued;¹²⁷ a number of ships are listed as coming to Musselburgh harbour in the summer of 1635, many of them carrying wood from Norway.¹²⁸

Neither of these harbours was ideally situated for central Musselburgh. It was doubtless this factor, along with the constant need to upgrade the Fisherrow harbour and maintain the customs house at the Magdalen harbour,¹²⁹ that prompted the town council to consider building a new harbour in the early years of the eighteenth century. To this end, parliament was petitioned in 1704 to allow the council to levy two pence on every pint of ale and beer brewed in the burgh to offset expenses on the harbour building.¹³⁰ Three years later there had been little progress.¹³¹ Although a new harbour was established at the mouth of the Esk, the Fisherrow harbour being used as a quarry and boat owners being required to transport stone from it to the new site,¹³² it was abandoned due to excessive silting; and Fisherrow harbour was once more put to use.¹³³

Maintenance of the town's all-important bridges was also a constant drain on finances. The Magdalen Bridge, sometimes called the Maitland Bridge,¹³⁴ to the west of the town,



figure 13
The inside cover
of the Town Council
minutes
1679

was thought to be in danger of collapse in 1576 and benefited from a legacy of 100 merks for its repair.¹³⁵ It appears to have been furnished with doors that could be locked, presumably to monitor access.¹³⁶ Both the Magdalen Bridge and the 'meikle bridge' over the Esk were in constant need of maintenance; the privy council in 1597 acknowledged the problem by giving permission for a toll to be levied on those crossing the bridges—two pence per cart and one pence per horse.¹³⁷ This right was renewed on a regular basis until 1661,¹³⁸ when the bailies and council of Musselburgh petitioned parliament that the toll should be doubled in order more adequately to meet the necessary expenses.¹³⁹ The Esk Bridge in particular was subject to the scouring effect of spate waters. Not only were



figure 14

The market cross
c 1950s

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buttresses added, according to the earliest extant town minutes **figure 13**,¹⁴⁰ but channels for free flow of the river had to be kept clear.¹⁴¹ The west port to the town also stood on the bridge.¹⁴² This, being the main entrance to the town from the west, functioned as a collection point for tolls of those attending Musselburgh market and as night-time security when it was locked at curfew. The townspeople were called out in June 1688 for emergency measures to the central span, those with carts being instructed to bring three loads of stone. A list of conscripted workers was drawn up and fines imposed of thirty shillings on every cart and ten shillings on every man that failed to appear.¹⁴³ In spite of such emergency measures, a vast spate partially collapsed the Bridgend, or west, side of the bridge in 1691. Immediate repair was essential, so the council decreed that all those with carts were to bring six loads of stones; those without carts were to pay twenty shillings; and the poor were forced to labour for two days on the bridge.¹⁴⁴ The town also maintained a bridge at the eastern boundary of the parish.¹⁴⁵

Other public property, such as the town mills (even though set out to tack), the manse, wells (such as the Vicar's Well in Dam Brae)¹⁴⁶ and the tolbooth also required constant maintenance. The sea mill, or nether mill, for example, required a new stone, purchased in Colinton, in 1680;¹⁴⁷ the following year two new wheels and restoration work on its south gable were necessary;¹⁴⁸ and the dams associated with the mills had to be maintained.¹⁴⁹ The council records list regular, ongoing repairs, for example, in the years after 1696: the town steeple needed repair,¹⁵⁰ and further work in 1700;¹⁵¹ in the following year, the roof of the tolbooth, the chapel, the market cross **figure 14** and the east port all required attention;¹⁵² in 1700 the 'dead' bell, rung to announce the death of a town-dweller, was broken,¹⁵³ although this problem was to be solved in future by obliging the bellman to pay for the repair.¹⁵⁴ By the same period, repairs were also needed to the buildings associated with the parish church. Local carts were called into use for transporting stones, lime and sand to the manse in the burgh in 1681,¹⁵⁵ the old, pre-Reformation vicarage which stood nearby being now replaced;¹⁵⁶ two years later the town council decided that a further 600 merks were needed to be spent on the manse and this was to be raised by stenting the townspeople.¹⁵⁷

The pressures of the Reformation period manifested themselves in different ways. In 1682, a Quaker weaver, Thomas Dunlop, who had settled in Musselburgh thirteen weeks before, was cast out of his home by the town magistrates, with no trial, and forced, with his family, to live rough in the open. His appeal for justice to the privy council failed, on the ground that he, as a Quaker, should have procured a certificate from the minister of his previous parish prior to settling in Musselburgh; and, in any event, it was deemed that he was a disorderly person who attended Quaker meetings, and in future the council would disband such conventicles.¹⁵⁸ In November 1689, during the confusing period which followed the flight of James VII and II (1679–88), there seems to have been sharp tension in the burgh between episcopalian and presbyterian factions. With so much invested in the fabric of the parish church and manse, it is not surprising to find that the council felt obliged to take an interest: it agreed to cover a third of the costs (the rest being paid by the landward parts of the parish, that is, the areas of the parish outwith the burgh boundaries) towards a petition 'anent the preserving of the manse from being taken away to the presbyterians use'.¹⁵⁹ In spite of this objection to presbyterianism, the council immediately proclaimed that bonfires and other festivities should be held in the town to celebrate the birthday of King William (1688–1702).¹⁶⁰ By 1704, as well as the parish church, now presbyterian 'by the law established', the town also had a 'meeting house' or episcopalian chapel, which was mentioned in council minutes. There is, by contrast, very little evidence of the parish church of St Michael at Inveresk, or of its appearance, other than that in 1547 it was cruciform, as would be expected, with two aisles, and a further two were added later.¹⁶¹ By 1768, a burger seceding house had been built and a relief church was founded in 1783.¹⁶²

One of the primary functions of the bailies and council was to maintain the peace of the town. Their remit covered all aspects of town life, other than some offences that merited capital punishment. The town had a hangman,¹⁶³ whose role was probably identical to the 'executioner' who received £10 in 1655–6;¹⁶⁴ and in 1683 a Jo Trotter was given £1 12s for 'sixteen fathoms of rope to hang the scaffold to the steeple'.¹⁶⁵ It is recorded, for example, that in February 1717 Anna Crawford did 'perpetrate the horrid crime of murder on a child she had born on Saturday last, twixt four or five of the morning, to Alexander Bruse, flesher in Musselburgh' and that 'her Grace the Duchess of Buccleuch has power to determine in such capital crimes'.¹⁶⁶ Eleven years later, Maggie Dickson was found guilty of child murder and hanged in the Grassmarket in Edinburgh. She recovered on a cart as her body was being transported back to Musselburgh for burial and lived to tell the tale in her ale-house.¹⁶⁷ Minor offences were dealt with by placement in the stocks outside the tolbooth. Here, recalcitrants could be on public display for the ridicule of their neighbours.¹⁶⁸ There was also a cutty, or repentance stool. John Donaldson, a salter in West Pans, had been placed there one Sunday morning as a punishment for fornication. In spite of this, he breached the town rules, again, by that very afternoon going swimming in the sea at the time of divine service.¹⁶⁹ More serious matters resulted in banishment from the town or warding in the tolbooth. In 1628, the council appears to have been somewhat over-zealous. One Margaret Jo was placed in the tolbooth in irons, accused of practising witchcraft. She appealed against her treatment to the privy council, stating that she had been warded for eleven or twelve weeks and trial had been refused. A week later, in spite of reprimand of the town council from the privy council, she was still in irons, and informed that she was to be placed on trial without notice or the opportunity to see the written charges against her. The privy council decreed that the town council had acted unreasonably and insisted that she be released from irons, independent assessors were to be called to see that the trial was fair, her advocate was to see the charges before the start of the trial, and she was to be allowed to receive visitors, so long as the minister and one of the bailies were present.¹⁷⁰ It seems, also, that sometimes witches were warded in their own houses or other private dwellings. In 1678, two shillings was given by the council for cleaning the house where a woman was 'kept up for a witch'.¹⁷¹

The successive political crises which marked seventeenth-century Scotland from the 1630s onwards repeatedly highlighted the town's strategic position and brought added

anxieties for the magistrates, for whom the safety of the burgh was always a prime concern. In June 1638, the links between Musselburgh and Leith were the meeting ground chosen by thousands of Covenanters to greet Charles I's commissioner, the Marquis of Hamilton.¹⁷² In July and August 1650, during the cat-and-mouse manoeuvres which ended with his decisive victory at the battle of Dunbar, Cromwell and his troops occupied Musselburgh. The Links and Stoneyhill were lined with the tents of the troops, the foot on the Links and cavalry at Inveresk, horses were stabled in St Michael's Church, officers occupied houses in Newbigging and Cromwell himself took up residence in Inveresk House. A counter-attack by General David Leslie temporarily relieved Musselburgh of its unwelcome guests, but left the parish wasted.¹⁷³ In 1679, during the armed revolt which ended with the Covenanters' defeat at Bothwell Brig, the council appointed a nightly guard for the town, consisting of thirty-eight men from Musselburgh and thirty-two from Fisherrow.¹⁷⁴ In 1702, the threat was nearer home, and of less national import. An 'invasion' of thieves and housebreakers necessitated a nightly watch of twelve men from each side of the river.¹⁷⁵

The health of the burgh received a good deal of attention. In 1624, for example, plague was rife in Holland and other parts of the continent. It was the duty of the bailies to ensure that neither goods nor passengers were landed at the harbour before inspection indicated that they were clean and not carrying infection.¹⁷⁶ Food quality was also monitored. In 1680, for example, the council appointed two fleshers, or butchers, to scrutinise their colleagues to ascertain who was supplying rancid meat to the town, so that the bailies could bring the culprits to justice.¹⁷⁷ The council also maintained an assize of bread to regulate both its price and its quality.¹⁷⁸ Livestock had to be controlled. In 1706, it was noted in council that the free-roaming pigs were entering private yards and churning up the ground there, as well as on the burgh common. All owners were instructed to confine them with 'rings of iron in their noses', under pain of a forty shilling fine.¹⁷⁹

A further remit of the council was running the town schools, although the sheriff and the Earl of Lauderdale had a say in the appointment of the schoolmasters.¹⁸⁰ There were a number of schools in the town, but it is sometimes hard to distinguish them in the record and it is particularly difficult to discover their locations. A music school had existed in the sixteenth century, doubtless a successor to a pre-Reformation school, when it was granted 300 merks by James VI.¹⁸¹ By the end of the seventeenth century, Musselburgh had at least four schools. There was a Latin school and a 'Scottishe school', sometimes apparently called the 'English' school.¹⁸² The Scottish school admitted Archibald Duncan as master in 1685 'for teaching both lades and lasses to read and wryt'.¹⁸³ In 1678, the town gave £20 towards the salary of the English school's master.¹⁸⁴ This was probably not a large school, as in 1700 the council allocated to it, as accommodation, one of the flesh market booths.¹⁸⁵ The Latin school received a new master, Walter Dennistoune, from Burntisland in 1686.¹⁸⁶ Clearly the town rated the importance of this school as greater than the Scottish school, as the contribution to the salary of the master in 1678 was £60.¹⁸⁷ Five years later he transferred to the grammar school in the town.¹⁸⁸ Appointment to the position of schoolmaster in the grammar school was considered of such importance that two regents from Edinburgh University were involved in the choice in 1707.¹⁸⁹ The choice of master of the English school may have been of less import. In 1720, a petition claimed that the school was ruined, with no pupils. A new teacher was appointed in an attempt to remedy the situation. He was a tanner by trade.¹⁹⁰ Some of the cause of the decline of the Scots school, or English school, had been attributed to the number of women's schools. The council retaliated in 1711 by forbidding all women from keeping schools, except for teaching girls to work lace, make stockings and sew.¹⁹¹ The grammar school had been in existence since at least 1581/2¹⁹² and may have had the services of more than one master, as one George Adie was appointed a month after Walter Dennistoune, with a salary of £200 per year.¹⁹³ The previous master, George Barclay, had also received a salary of £200,¹⁹⁴ but in 1655–6 the salary cited was £120,¹⁹⁵ and in 1706, one schoolmaster (unspecified) was paid 200 merks (£133 6s 8d).¹⁹⁶ One of the masters, of

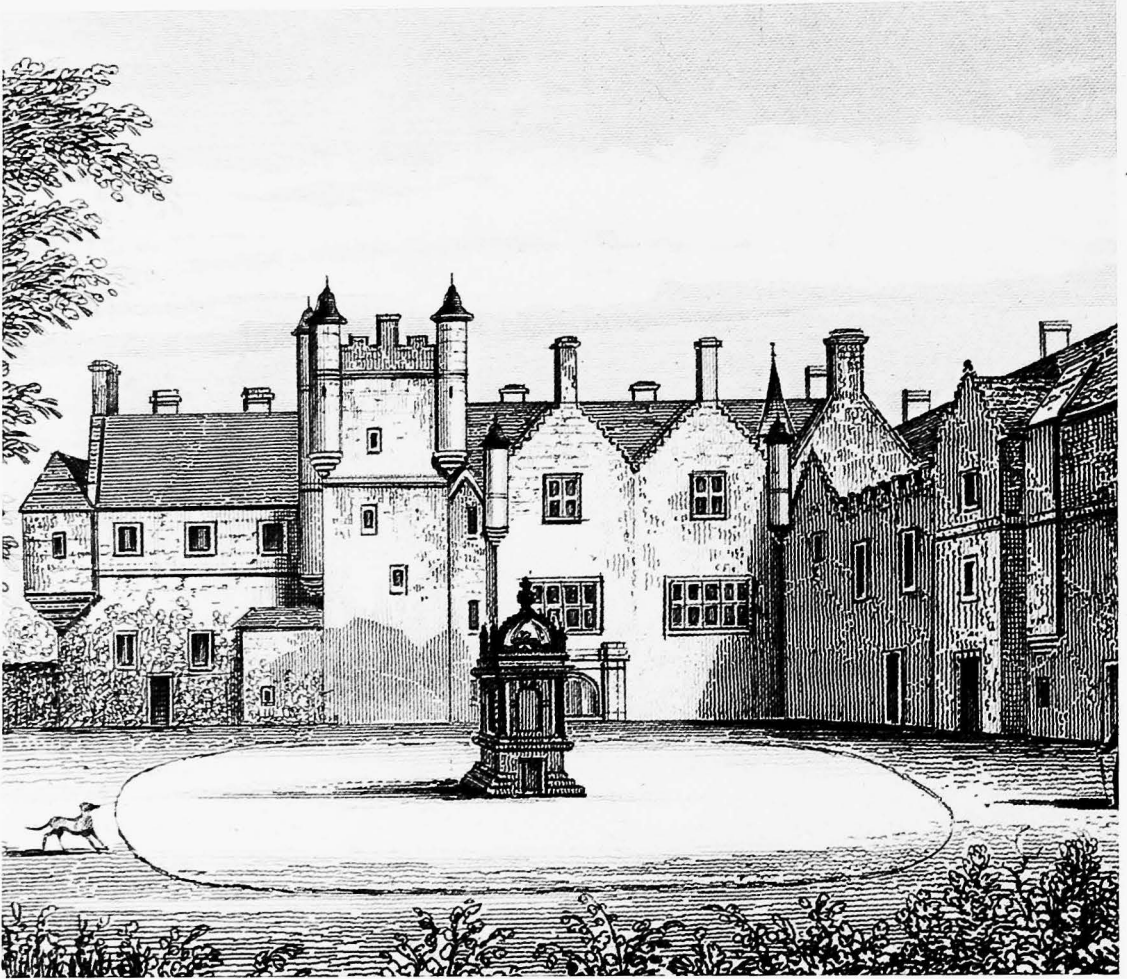


figure 15

A line drawing of
Pinkie House

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an unspecified school, but not the Latin school,¹⁹⁷ also had the services of a school doctor to assist him.¹⁹⁸ Interestingly, on the death of this master, his widow was paid a fee of £40 'for keeping the school together from Martimes to Candlemes'.¹⁹⁹ There was also a school for the Fisherrow children;²⁰⁰ and the master here received £20 from the town in 1678.²⁰¹

Other than the fact that the Scottish school could be housed in a small booth, there is no indication of the building designs of the schools. There is, moreover, little evidence of house styles in the records. A new house, built at the west end of Magdalen Chapel in 1681, interestingly followed a traditional medieval form of roofing—it was thatched with turfs dug from the town's common lands.²⁰²

The Hearth Tax census of 1691, however, gives some clues to house size and the relative density of population in Musselburgh. In the town of Musselburgh itself there were 182 households with only single hearths, thirty-three with two, twelve with three, eight with four, eight with five, six with six and only two with seven—a total of 251 households. It is perhaps noteworthy that the two bailies lived here, in prestigious six-hearthed houses. Fisherrow, with 256 households, marginally more than Musselburgh proper, over the piece had smaller dwellings—199 single hearths, forty-one two-hearthed houses, nine with three hearths, three with four hearths, one with five, one with six and two with seven. Close by, the little suburb of Bridgend, at the west end of the Esk Bridge, contained fifty-nine households. Forty-three of these were single hearthed, eleven were double, three had three hearths, one had four and one had five. Newbigging was a developing suburb, with seventy-eight households, one of which was the manse. Sixty-four of the properties were single hearthed, seven had two hearths, three had three, two had four and one had five. By far the most prestigious building was, clearly, the manse—with ten hearths. It was, however, greatly overshadowed by Pinkie House, to the east of the town. With its ancillary buildings, it housed no less than thirty-seven hearths **figure 15**.²⁰³

Given the relative sizes of the four distinct areas of Musselburgh, it is interesting to note the internal struggle for power and the outcome. Debate as to precisely who should elect the bailies and council came to a head in the early years of the eighteenth century. Fisherrow, which felt that its rights were being usurped by Musselburgh, consulted advocates in Edinburgh as to its position. The council of Musselburgh thought 'fitt to be on their guard' against such moves and took advice from Sheriff Calderwood of Edinburgh. A year later, in 1703, the matter was resolved. The council was to consist of eighteen members, ten of whom were to come from Musselburgh 'within the ports', six from Fisherrow, Bridgend and Marketgate, and two from Newbigging, Millhill and West Pans. Rulings were also laid down as to how the bailies and treasurer were to be elected and by whom, where the council should meet—the tolbooth of Musselburgh—and how long magistrates should serve. The senior bailie was always to be from Musselburgh 'within the ports'. Significantly, in spite of the furore over their respective rights, it had also to be laid down that once a burgher was chosen as a bailie, treasurer or councillor, if he refused to accept he would be fined £40 and lose his freedom of the burgh. Office holding was clearly not as desirable to some sections of the community as it was for members of the 1703 council.²⁰⁴

Most of the ordinary people in the town would have been too involved in making their own livelihood to have any time for municipal office. There was an incorporation, or guild, of wrights in the town by 1674, when they listed eighteen of their regulations.²⁰⁵ An incorporation of baxters had been established by at least 1686;²⁰⁶ the shoemakers, incorporated by 1666, joined with the tanners and curriers in 1687; and there was a number of brewers.²⁰⁷ An incorporation of weavers was formed in 1702 and of gardeners in 1744.²⁰⁸ The masons of the town were of sufficient influence that their objection to the incoming of stranger masons and unfreemen working in the town was sustained.²⁰⁹ The fleshers, or butchers, of the town, who were also incorporated, were a regular irritant to the authorities. In 1691, an entry in the town council minute book indicates that the fleshers had been selling meat on the open market and not at the official flesh booths. Four days later this was repeated, but two further complaints were raised. They were keeping so many sheep and cattle on the common land that others were suffering through over-stocking; and when bringing the flesh to market, the meat was without skin or hides, which was against the law, as whole carcasses were an indication of origin and condition. In future, the laws on fair trading were to be obeyed and fleshers were to keep no more stock on the common grazings than any ordinary burgher.²¹⁰ Clearly, agricultural pursuits were of importance to the townspeople. Indeed, poll tax returns suggest that in the latter part of the seventeenth century 19.4 per cent of the 1,800 pollable population was employed in agriculture; this figure may have been higher as many burghers who pursued other trades doubtless still cultivated the backlands of their burgh plots for produce.²¹¹

Fishing remained an important source of income, supplying not only the immediate neighbourhood, but Edinburgh also.²¹² The town fishings, which included the Esk, were set to tack. The tacksman complained in 1709 that he had caught no fish over the previous two years.²¹³ A further, not unexpected incorporation in the town was that of the seamen.²¹⁴ Clearly, a number of the townspeople were employed in panning at the West Pans²¹⁵ or Magdalen Pans and in the town's stone and coal quarries.²¹⁶ By the second half of the sixteenth century Musselburgh, along with Prestonpans, already had the heaviest concentration of the salt industry in Scotland, with thirty-one pans.²¹⁷ A smaller number probably found employment at Pinkie House, such as a gardener, who in 1682 applied successfully to the town council for permission to build a cellar at the back of his house to store alcohol.²¹⁸

There is little evidence of a broad base of manufacturing, other than that which was largely restricted to textiles and leather working. Other handicrafts were mostly for domestic use, apart from a 'tirleis maker' who produced iron gratings for the windows and doors of the vaults of Edinburgh Castle in 1626, and the development of wheel making in the following decade.²¹⁹ Employment in the leather industry accounted for 16.1 per cent of pollable males in the 1690s.²²⁰ Leather working came a close second to the textile trade,

which employed 16.6 per cent of Musselburgh tradesmen, with a further 26.2 per cent specifically producing clothing. The significance of textile employment may be even greater, as the poll tax, from which these figures were gained, took no account of female and child labour.²²¹ By the end of the seventeenth century, a broadcloth factory had been set up,²²² producing amongst other textiles a coarse woollen checked cloth called Musselburgh stuffs, which sold at between two and a half and five pence per yard and was largely exported to America for 'gowns to female servants'.²²³ In 1703, John Drummond of Newton, Patrick Home, Writer to the Signet, and Robert Hunter, merchant in Edinburgh, appealed successfully to parliament on behalf of themselves and of the other proprietors of the factory that since it had been manufacturing broadcloth for a number of years and employing 'a great many poor people' it should be declared a manufactory and receive all the privileges and benefits from which other manufactories benefited.²²⁴ To benefit the textile trade, the council on numerous occasions in the early eighteenth century considered erecting a walk or fulling mill. By 1722, when it was built, a decline in the market for worsted manufacture had already set in.²²⁵ There was also a lint mill, built sometime before 1754.²²⁶ Brewing also appears to have thrived. In 1697 there were twenty-six brewers, malt-makers and sellers of malt.²²⁷

Musselburgh's occupational structure by the seventeenth century was very much influenced by the town's regional connections and, in particular, its relationship with Edinburgh. Closeness to the capital is the probable explanation for the lack of professional occupations, other than schoolmasters and ministers. It has already been noted that Musselburgh turned to Edinburgh for legal advice (*see* p 35). There was little need to have local lawyers. The high preponderance of textile workers may also be a reflection of links with the capital. Cloth may in all probability have been woven in Musselburgh and then sent to Edinburgh for dyeing and tailoring.²²⁸ Dalkeith had an unusually high number of fleshers and it may, as Musselburgh with cloth, have been providing the capital with meat, since by the 1690s slaughtering of animals was not allowed within Edinburgh. There was, conversely, in Dalkeith an unusually low number of leather workers. This by-product of meat was perhaps being sent elsewhere within the regional network for processing. The strong possibility is that it was to Musselburgh, with its high proportion of leather workers (*see* p 35).²²⁹

There were two further consequences of this closeness to the capital. Musselburgh seems to have consistently been overburdened with royal troops billeted on it. There were growing complaints against this in the 1680s.²³⁰ Musselburgh, also, did not attract a high proportion of wealthier members of society, although it is clear that certain Edinburgh merchants and lawyers continued to invest in Musselburgh property.²³¹ Only 6.3 per cent of the recorded male population had over 500 merks of stock, contrasting with 18.1 per cent in Edinburgh, 16.6 per cent in Aberdeen, 14 per cent in Perth and 11.3 per cent in Glasgow; it compared unfavourably even with Leith, where the figure was 7.5 per cent.²³² Poverty was to become an insidious problem. In 1699, after a series of bad harvests, a voluntary collection for the poor, who were in a 'starving condition', was taken throughout the burgh.²³³ By 1724, the ranks of the poor of the parish has increased further; and by the following year there were complaints that their numbers were swelled by strangers who took work from the locals. Begging was rife on the streets and the town council was forced to impose a three-year residency rule to qualify for relief.²³⁴ In 1749, the town took the relatively unusual step of building a poor house in an attempt to cope with the problem.²³⁵ Many of the poor in times of dearth turned to the local mussel bank. It was said that 'even at this day it affords a great relief to the poorer inhabitants in times of scarcity'.²³⁶

The accessible Edinburgh market encouraged the growing of vegetables in Musselburgh, which were then carried in creels on the backs of women to Edinburgh for sale, as was salt from the Musselburgh pans.²³⁷ They returned with washing to be done or goods for sale at the Musselburgh market; the former probably boosted the sales of the several soap-boilers and starch-makers in the district.²³⁸ An observer in 1792 opined that 'this employment of women, which has certainly prevailed ever since Edinburgh became a

considerable city, when joined to that of the fishwives in Fisherrow, has occasioned a reversal of the state of the sexes in this parish, and has formed a character and manners in the female sex, which seems peculiar to them, at least in this country'.²³⁹ Another equally uncomplimentary contemporary assessment was that:

*nastiness seems here to be delighted in ... The women, as if they trust to sex as merely for recommendation, have dirty cloths tied round their shoulders, and peep out of pieces of boarded windows just big enough for their heads ... Their butter is loathsome both to eye and taste, which they turn into oil when they use it. The sailors are far cleaner cooks than the women. In short, the unpleasantness of their food makes one in danger of a surfeit, while their dirty beds cause one to apprehend the music called the Scots fiddle.*²⁴⁰

Most of these women were wives of weavers, shoemakers or sievemakers, and since their occupation was indoors the husbands took on the responsibility of child-minding. The fishwives were the daughters and wives of fishermen 'who generally marry their own cast' and were 'foul mouthed', albeit very honest and moral.²⁴¹ The 'reversal in the state of the sexes' exhibited itself further: the fishwives regularly played golf and held an annual football match, when the married women challenged the unmarried fishwives. Invariably, the former won.²⁴²

There is evidence of other traditions and pastimes in Musselburgh. The first mention of Riding the Marches occurs in the town council minutes in 1682, but if minutes from an earlier period had survived it is likely that they would have shown the Riding to have been older in its origins. The minutes of 1711 reinforce this as it was resolved that the marches be ridden 'with all the usual marks of antiquity and respect and grandor'.²⁴³ Another tradition was well established by 1678—the shooting competition on the Links.²⁴⁴ On that occasion, the Royal Company of Archers competed for the Silver Arrow of Musselburgh. The Links were also the home of golf. The game had been played there since the sixteenth century, and was to be interrupted only by Cromwell's encampment in 1650 and, later, in 1803 by a military camp established during the Napoleonic Wars.²⁴⁵ Another favourite Musselburgh pastime was horse racing. In 1711, the winner received the prize of a saddle,²⁴⁶ as had been the practice the previous century.²⁴⁷ To ensure that this was a race not dominated by the wealthy, who could provide themselves with swift stock, a maximum value was placed on all horses entering the race. In 1680 this was specified as £50.²⁴⁸

While the way of living in Musselburgh was affected by Edinburgh society, Musselburgh attitudes were, likewise, moulded by the network of local towns around it. Although opposition by Musselburgh in 1764 to a turnpike road system between itself and Dalkeith was fought out by its agent at parliament in London, the main concern was cost.²⁴⁹ Already, in 1750, when a turnpike system had been mooted, the council had alerted one of the bailies and the treasurer to attend all discussion meetings to ensure that nothing was decided to the prejudice of Musselburgh.²⁵⁰

There were much clearer signs that co-operation between the neighbouring burghs was more the norm, even to the point of opposition to Edinburgh's centralising policy. In 1715, when Musselburgh took a decision to change the date of its St Loretto fair, it had this fact announced at both Dalkeith and Haddington,²⁵¹ as appears to have been the practice in the previous century.²⁵² Thirteen years later, the Musselburgh council changed its court day from a Thursday to a Tuesday, as many of the inhabitants were at Dalkeith market on a Thursday.²⁵³ The following year, Edinburgh decided to hold a new weekly corn market. The surrounding burghs clearly felt that their livelihood was threatened. The immediate effect on Dalkeith, it was believed, was that its corn market would be undermined. This, in turn, would be disastrous for both Musselburgh with its grain mills, fed partially by Dalkeith, and also for local heritors with mills on the Water of Esk. They, therefore, gave 'support to Dalkeith and the Duchess [of Buccleuch, burgh superior] and to other neighbours for preserving and maintaining [their] own rights and privileges in support of a weekly mercat at Dalkeith'.²⁵⁴

Musselburgh did continue, also, to have at least a minimal level of trade overseas. A committee of the Convention of Royal Burghs, in 1730, noted that traders in Musselburgh, along with those from Aberdour and Limekilns in Fife, were carrying on 'considerable' trade, but not paying due taxation. In spite of Musselburgh's objection that



figure 16
Fishwives and
Fisherrow fish market
in the early twentieth
century

there was 'none trades in this place', and documentary evidence from the town's charter chest,²⁵⁵ the suspicion was well-founded and the following year Musselburgh agreed to pay one pence sterling to the tax roll to enable it to trade overseas for the next five years.²⁵⁶ Daniel Defoe, however, visiting in the early eighteenth century, claimed that 'They call this a sea-port town; but as their river, sometimes full enough of water, is not navigable; for, at low water, people ride over the mouth of it on the sands, and even walk over it; so they do not meddle much with trading by sea.'²⁵⁷

The domestic market and a modest level of industry, concentrated in textiles and leather working, were the mainstays of the Musselburgh economy. It was said in 1792 that, in spite of the availability of coal, water, cheap housing 'and a multitude of idle children', no considerable manufactures had been established, apart from the broadcloth factory at the turn of the century. This was attributed to the fact that most people in Musselburgh were employed as 'carriers of provisions to Edinburgh'. It was noted, however, that the manufacture of thicksets, waistcoats and handkerchiefs, as well as a pottery, had recently been introduced; salt panning continued; there was some soap boiling and starch-making (perhaps to boost the laundry side of the women's employment); there were seven incorporations of trades, as well as an incorporation of sailors.²⁵⁸ The employment pattern appears to have changed little over the previous hundred years, although by 1791 the population had increased—in Musselburgh and West Pans, 1,640; in Newbigging, 490; in Fisherrow, Marketgate and Bridgend, 1,799; and in outlying areas, including Magdalen pans, eighty-six.²⁵⁹ Amongst the incorporated trades, there were seventy wrights and smiths, thirty tailors, ninety-six shoemakers, forty-four bakers, sixteen gardeners, 140 weavers and fifty fleshers. In the unincorporated trades were to be found forty masons, ten grocers, forty-nine fishermen, ninety fishwives, fifty saltwives, four wine merchants, two milliners, ten mantua makers, six hairdressers, two perfumers and sixty-three carters who had no land and made their income by carrying goods such as coal. Interestingly, in spite of the numbers employed as fishers, there were only seven boats. The women, however, often sold not only the Musselburgh catch but also that from Fife boats **figure 16**.²⁶⁰ There was, by this time, a greater smattering of a professional representation. Four surgeons, 'all well educated in their profession', now practised in the burgh, although in 'extraordinary' cases 'doctors graduate' (physicians as opposed to surgeons) were called from Edinburgh. There was, moreover, now one lawyer, the town clerk.²⁶¹

The increase in population was reflected in the townscape **figure 18**. Newbigging was a growing suburb and development in the Millhill area can be seen clearly on eighteenth-century maps. A council minute of 1702 notes that Fisherrow, Bridgend and Marketgait

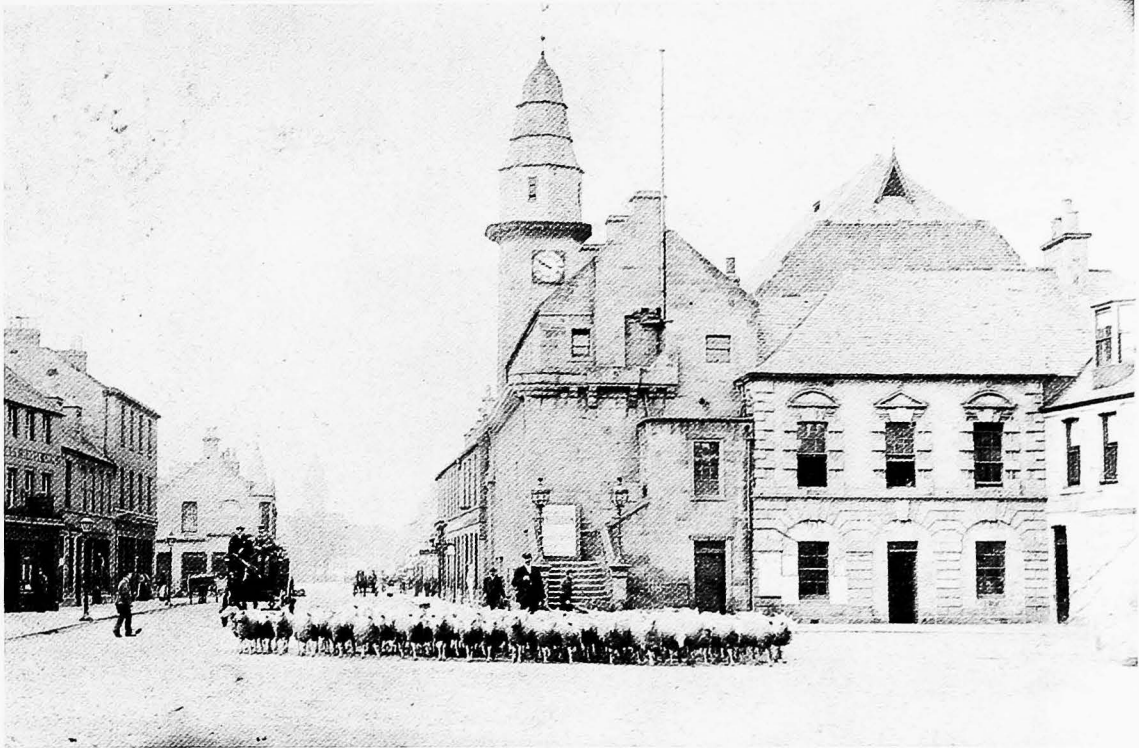


figure 17

A Musselburgh street scene in the late nineteenth century

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(Marketgate or Market Street), were still considered as distinct places and that there was then an empty space between Fisherrow and Marketgait.²⁶² There was still waste ground north of Bridgend into the nineteenth century.²⁶³ Fire remained a constant hazard; the council bought twenty-four leather buckets in 1753 to assist in fire-fighting. Six years later, it was decreed that no new houses were to have thatched roofs.²⁶⁴

It is clear that routine maintenance of the urban fabric remained a major preoccupation of the town authorities throughout the eighteenth century. Regulations ordering that dunghills and rubbish be removed from the thoroughfares and that the butchers should not slaughter animals on the streets were routine and regularly repeated.²⁶⁵ The sea mill needed regular upkeep, having to be thatched with turf rather than straw, which had been 'eaten and destroyed' by rats in 1709. The flesh stocks and meal market were in a bad state of repair in 1713.²⁶⁶ The Magdalen Bridge had to be maintained.²⁶⁷ The harbour in Fisherrow continued to need constant attention and was partially rebuilt in 1743, although even after this date repair work was continuous;²⁶⁸ a second pier was constructed at some point, according to cartographic evidence. The tolbooth was regularly maintained,²⁶⁹ having, for example, its grey slates replaced with blue in 1758,²⁷⁰ and new council chambers added in 1762. Stenting, loan of carts and labour were still enforced for maintenance of the bridges and associated walling.²⁷¹ Thoroughfares were kept clear of water by ditching and walling,²⁷² and the mill dam needed upkeep such as walling.²⁷³ New stones had to be bought for the town mills.²⁷⁴ Roadways had to be causeyed and mended.²⁷⁵ And some wells, such as that in Dam Brae, known as 'Vicar's Well', were kept clean.²⁷⁶

As well as maintenance work, the town also undertook new building works. In 1714, a decision was taken to erect a new walk mill,²⁷⁷ for which the council had to borrow 1,000 merks.²⁷⁸ Land was bought in 1724 for a new fleshmarket and corn market near to the tolbooth;²⁷⁹ a new school and fleshmarket were built in Fisherrow,²⁸⁰ and a new 'English' school was also erected.²⁸¹ A new bleachfield was laid out beside the lint mill in 1762.²⁸² A series of new building works and improvements were underway in the 1770s. In 1774, the market cross was moved nearer the tolbooth and it was decided to erect a new pump well on the site of the recently demolished Mid Row,²⁸³ which survived until at least 1761, when there is a reference to it in the council minutes.²⁸⁴ A wooden bridge was erected over the Esk in 1777.²⁸⁵ A marble plate inscription was placed above the entrance to the prison in 1773 and two years later it was agreed to renovate the tolbooth so that those imprisoned for

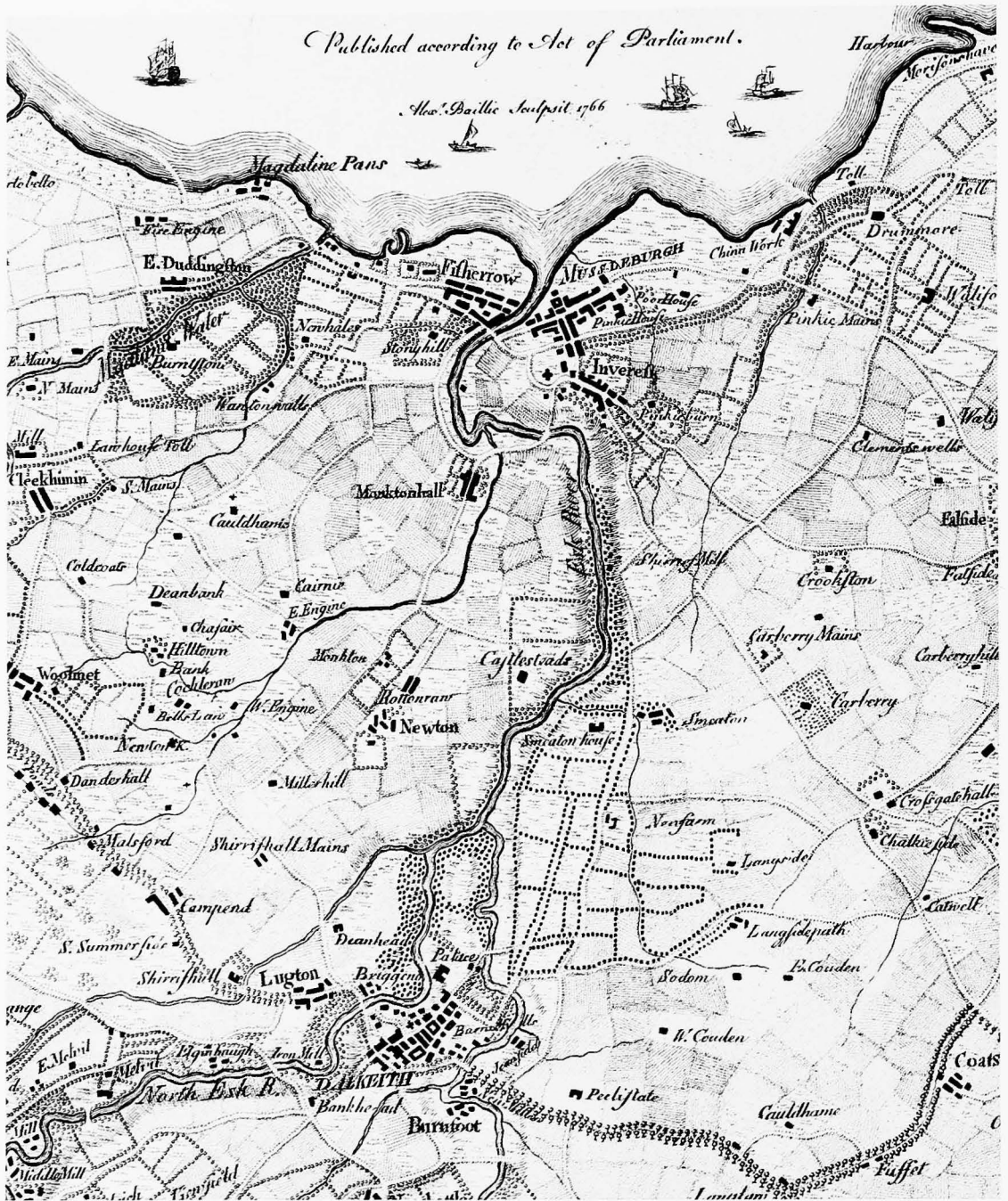


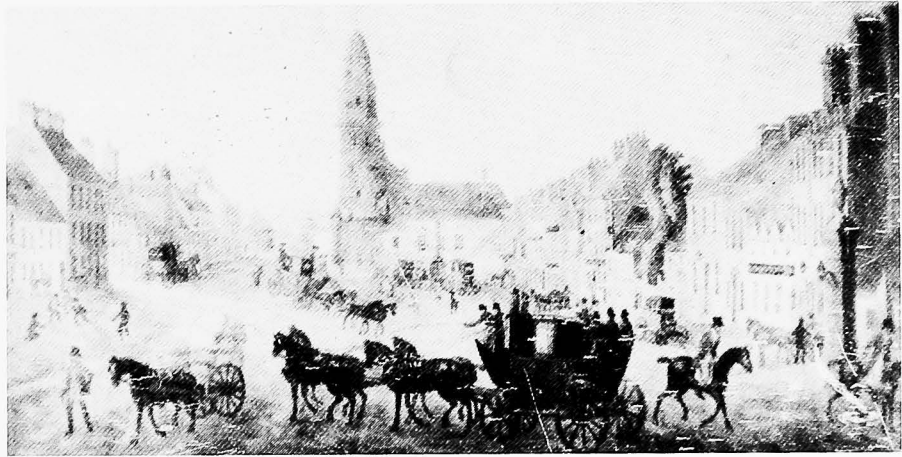
figure 18

John Laurie's plan
of Edinburgh
1766

debt might have 'comfortable accommodation'.²⁸⁶ Conditions had, perhaps, been somewhat primitive in the past, there being a reference in 1746 to 'straw' for the prisoners.²⁸⁷ Not all inmates of the tolbooth prison appreciated such improvements, as in 1783 the council was forced to agree to raise the roof of the fleshmarket, because of 'excrement that is dropped on its roof by the inhabitants of the tolbooth'.²⁸⁸ And in 1787 the council was, yet again, employing a surveyor and considering building a new harbour.²⁸⁹

Such building works came at no small cost to the town. Stenting and forced labour could not cover such expenses. Although the town did borrow money (see p 39), probably one of the main aims in feuing out the town's common lands in the eighteenth century was to raise capital.²⁹⁰ In 1738, land in the mid-common was sold off, although in the same year the offer of Sir James Dalrymple to purchase the common muir at Fisherrow for a guinea an acre was rejected.²⁹¹ By 1743, he was, however, in possession of common lands on the west

figure 19
High Street
from the east
1827



of the Esk, as was George Chambers, Writer to the Signet.²⁹² In 1760, a decision was taken that all the town's common land, other than the Links, should be feued off to the highest bidder.²⁹³ Land was feued out beside the Fisherrow harbour for salt pans, timber yards and coal yards in the following decade.²⁹⁴ This was a policy that was continued throughout the century; land to the east of the harbour, for example, was feued to Leith merchants in 1766 for pursuit of their timber and iron trade.²⁹⁵ One of the more innovative land uses as a result of this policy was the building of an impressive aqueduct from the Esk to the Pinkie coal mines by John Adam, architect of Edinburgh. As it passed under Inveresk Hill, it was at a depth of about 31 m (100 ft).²⁹⁶

Closeness to the capital would, yet again in the eighteenth as in previous centuries, pull Musselburgh into national politics. Guards were appointed and money levied in the town to offset potential costs, should the 1715 Jacobite Rising have repercussions in Musselburgh. Because it was feared that there were too few guns in the town, the bailie and town clerk were despatched to Edinburgh to procure sixty more.²⁹⁷ In the event, all was quiet. This was not the case in the '45 Rising, when the town had a greater role to play.²⁹⁸ It was instructed by 'ane order from His Majesty's Advocate' to take measures against the Jacobites. As a result, an embargo was placed on all boats in the harbour and bay, and a watch set on them, although there was little likelihood of their being put to illegal use, as they were drawn up above high water mark and their rudders, oars and sails removed. 'Vagrant persons that cannot give a sufficient account of themselves' were apprehended and all townspeople set in rota to keep watch in the schoolhouse at Fisherrow.²⁹⁹ Prince Charles Edward Stewart was not so easily deterred and, after his capture of Edinburgh, took up residence at Pinkie House on two occasions.³⁰⁰ In September 1745, the long painted gallery was put to service as a casualty station for Jacobite troops injured after the battle of Prestonpans.³⁰¹ It is clear that there was a level of support for the Jacobite cause. In 1746, a number of councillors declined to take the oath of loyalty. They subsequently demitted office, to be replaced by others more sympathetic to the Hanoverians.³⁰² This last Jacobite rising was also the burgh's last experience of actual warfare in the town; in 1746, the parish church was burnt down by the Duke of Cumberland's troops as they marched south after Culloden.³⁰³

By the turn of the eighteenth century, a visitor to the town commented that Musselburgh and Fisherrow contained 'many handsome houses, and several elegant villas are seen in the vicinity' **figure 19**.³⁰⁴ A few of these are still standing, evidence of the quality of building in the town (*see* pp 86–8). The most impressive was still Pinkie House, which had undergone major extension and renovation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (*see* p 86).

The character of Musselburgh, however, was almost imperceptibly changing. Industry, in the shape of wire works, paper works, pottery and a net factory³⁰⁵ were to replace some of the more traditional occupations. A riot on Musselburgh Links in 1823, which ended in the death of one and the injury of many, may have been largely fuelled by salters and colliers disgruntled at their poverty.³⁰⁶ Overall, however, the nineteenth century was to bring increased prosperity, which was reflected in the townscape. The town was to become the resort of literati. It had had a collection for a town library as early as 1727, but whether this



figure 20
The study
of Gilbert Stuart,
Eskside West
1996
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came to fruition is uncertain.³⁰⁷ Visitors to the manse, while occupied by Dr ‘Jupiter’ Carlyle, had already, in the eighteenth century, included David Hume, Adam Smith and Tobias Smollett.³⁰⁸ Gilbert Stuart, one of the founders of the first *Edinburgh Review*, hosted conversations in his study, a gazebo at Eskside West **figure 20** (see p 89). Walter Scott resided in the High Street, where he wrote *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (see pp 87–8). The town was the birthplace and residence of Dr Moir, poet, author and physician (1798–1851), to whose memory there is a statue; and Musselburgh became noted for its schools, attended by the sons of the first families in Scotland.³⁰⁹ Improved roads and the advent of the railway would tip the balance of Musselburgh’s close relationship with Edinburgh and, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the town was, to some extent, to adopt the function of a dormitory satellite to the capital and a retreat home for many, resulting in a vast housing expansion. The quality housing already evidenced at the end of the eighteenth century was to grow in the nineteenth and become the homes of judges, generals, admirals and authors (see pp 88–90). Notable among these new buildings were prestigious clubhouses which flanked Musselburgh’s famous golf course.

The Musselburgh that emerged would seem, at first glance, to have little in common with the small burgh dependent on Dunfermline Abbey, or with the town that hosted Scottish and foreign troops, that struggled to maintain its harbours and mills, its fishing, quarries and salt pans, and was home to one of Scotland’s most revered hermits. Here and there, however, amongst modern development, many clues to Musselburgh’s historic past are still visible (see pp 85–91). Significantly, too, many of the town’s old traditions and pastimes have survived in the affections of the townspeople.

- 1 T Darvill, *Prehistoric Britain* (London, 1987), 63–4.
- 2 *Ibid*, 75.
- 3 *Ibid*, 103.
- 4 *Ibid*, 133.
- 5 L Keppie, *Scotland's Roman Remains* (Edinburgh, 1986), 16: for contrasting views on the Antonine occupation see G B Bailey, 'The provision of fort-annexes on the Antonine Wall', *PSAS*, cxxiv (1994), 299–314 and N Hodgson, 'Were there two Antonine occupations of Scotland?', *Britannia*, xxvi (1995), 29–49.
- 6 Keppie, *Scotland's Roman Remains*, 16.
- 7 *Ibid*, 18.
- 8 G D Thomas, 'The re-excavation of the Inveresk hypocaust', *PSAS*, cxviii (1988), 177.
- 9 I A Richmond, 'A Roman fort at Inveresk, Midlothian', *PSAS*, cx (1978–80), 298.
- 10 *Ibid*, 298.
- 11 W S Hanson & G Maxwell, *Rome's North-West Frontier: The Antonine Wall* (Edinburgh, 1983), 190–91.
- 12 Richmond, 'A Roman fort at Inveresk', 296.
- 13 W S Hanson, 'Inveresk Roman fort: trial trenching', *PSAS*, cxiv (1984), 258–9.
- 14 *Ibid*, 257.
- 15 *DES* (1993), 55–6.
- 16 G D Thomas, 'Excavations at the Roman civil settlement at Inveresk, 1976–77', *PSAS*, cxviii (1988), 140–4.
- 17 G Maxwell, *DES* (1971), 29–30.
- 18 Thomas, 'Excavations at Inveresk, 1976–77', 139–176.
- 19 *Ibid*, 139.
- 20 *DES* (1995), 49.
- 21 D B Gallagher & A Clarke, 'Burials of possible Romano-British date from Inveresk, East Lothian', *PSAS*, cxviii (1993), 315–18.
- 22 *DES* (1990), 29–30.
- 23 G Maxwell, 'Two inscribed Roman stones and architectural fragments from Scotland', *PSAS*, cxiii (1983), 385; see *CSP Scot*, ii, no 168.
- 24 *Ibid*, 379.
- 25 *Dunf Reg*, 417.
- 26 *ESC*, no 10.
- 27 Pryde, *Burghs*, 44.
- 28 *RRS*, i, no 118; Paterson, *History*, 21.
- 29 Paterson, *History*, 21.
- 30 Wilkie, *Musselburgh*, 27–8.
- 31 *RRS*, ii, 140.
- 32 *RRS*, ii, 161–2.
- 33 *Dunf Reg*, no 239.
- 34 *RRS*, ii, no 61.
- 35 *Ibid*, ii, no. 61.
- 36 Paterson, *History*, 20. The claim may, however, be a pun on the term *brogh*, meaning a mussel bed.
- 37 *Ibid*, 80.
- 38 W C Maughan, *Picturesque Musselburgh and its Golf Links* (Musselburgh, 1906), 4.
- 39 W H Langhorne, *Reminiscences Connected Chiefly With Inveresk and Musselburgh* (Edinburgh, 1893), 120–1.
- 40 *RPC*, ix, 361–2.
- 41 SRO, B52/3/1, for example.
- 42 A Graham, 'Archaeological notes on some harbours in eastern Scotland', *PSAS*, ci (1968–69), 255.
- 43 *Dunf Reg*, no. 233.
- 44 *RRS*, i, no 54.
- 45 *RRS*, ii, no 15.
- 46 W F Skene, *The Historians of Scotland*, vol iv, *John of Fordun's Chronicle of the Scottish Nation* (Edinburgh, 1872), 270; A O Anderson (ed), *Early Sources of Scottish History, AD 500 to 1286* (London, 1922), 365.
- 47 D E R Watt *et al* (edd), *Scotichronicon*, by Walter Bower (Aberdeen, 1990), v, 177.
- 48 *Dunf Reg*, no 388.
- 49 *Ibid*, no 390.
- 50 *RMS*, ii, no 429.
- 51 Earl of Hertford reporting to Henry VIII, May 1544, *Hamilton Papers*, ii, 379.
- 52 There is a local tradition that it was the town's support of Moray at his death that initiated the adoption of the town motto. Moray's successor as regent, Donald, earl of Mar, reputedly said of the townspeople that they were 'a set of honest

- fellows'. Hence the town motto
Honestas. Wilkie, *Musselburgh*, 35.
- 53 *RMS*, iv, no 1475.
- 54 *RPC*, ii, 232–3.
- 55 *OSA*, ii, 282–3.
- 56 *Dunf Reg*, no 390.
- 57 E P D Torrie, 'The guild in
fifteenth-century Dunfermline',
in M Lynch, M Spearman & G
Stell (edd), *The Scottish Medieval
Town* (Edinburgh, 1988), 250.
- 58 G Stell, 'The earliest tolbooths: a
preliminary account', *PSAS*, cxi
(1981), 452.
- 59 *TA*, vi, 129.
- 60 *Hamilton Papers*, ii, 342.
- 61 *TA*, v, 231.
- 62 *Dunf Reg*, no 231.
- 63 *Laing Chrs*, no 476.
- 64 Paterson, *History*, 43.
- 65 *Ibid*, 44.
- 66 Pers comm, Mr John Munro,
engineer.
- 67 Vatican Archives, Rome, MSS
*Archivum Sacrae Penitentiariae
Apostolicae*, vol lxxxvii, 228, 6
Ides of June, 1st year of the
pontificate of Paul III (8 May
1535). We are indebted to Ms
Janet Foggie for drawing our
attention to this source, and to
Professor J Robertson for
assistance in establishing the
precise location specified in the
document.
- 68 Wilkie, *Musselburgh*, 43.
- 69 *A Diurnal of Remarkable Occurrents that
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(Bannatyne Club, 1833), 17;
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- 70 MSS *Archivum Sacrae Penitentiariae
Apostolicae*, vol lxxxvii, 228.
- 71 SRO, B52/1/16, Protocol Book of
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1585, f 49v.
- 72 MS Register of the Great Seal, SRO,
C2/25, no 165. Cf Paterson,
History, 95.
- 73 SRO, B52/1/16, fo 50v.
- 74 MSS *Archivum Sacrae Penitentiariae
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- 75 *RSS*, ii, 2175; D McRoberts,
'Hermits in medieval Scotland',
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Paterson, *History*, 96.
- 76 *RMS*, iv, no 1909.
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1976), 187. See also *Calendar of
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Avignon, 1378–94*, ed C Burns
(SHS, 1976), 118.
- 78 *Calendar of Papal Letters to Scotland of
Benedict XIII of Avignon, 1394–
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114, 133; *Calendar of Scottish
Supplications to Rome, 1418–22*,
edd E R Lindsay & A I Cameron
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- 79 *Calendar of Scottish Supplications to
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(Edinburgh, 1956), 201–2.
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- 81 *NSA*, i, 270; Paterson, *History*, 94.
- 82 Contemporary battle plans by
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Expedition Into Scotlande of the most
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Duke of Soomerset* (London, 1548);
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Gore-Brown, *Lord Bothwell*
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- 83 D H Caldwell, 'The battle of
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Scotland and War, AD 79–1918
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Chronicles of Scotland* (STS, 1899–
1911); *Henry VIII. Letters and
Papers*, vol xxi, pts i and ii.
- 85 Wilkie, *Musselburgh*, 47–8.
- 86 *Ibid*, 61.
- 87 Pers comm, Mr John Munro,
engineer.
- 88 *Hamilton Papers*, ii, 618.
- 89 Paterson, *History*, 109.
- 90 SRO, NP 1/2A, MS Protocol Book
of Thomas Kene, fo 123r.
- 91 SRO, NP 1/169, MS Protocol Book
of David Ballingall, fo 23r.

- 92 SRO, Register of Testaments, CC 9/7/1, fo 5v.
- 93 SRO, CS 7/3/2, Register of Acts and Decrees, fo 277r.
- 94 SRO, B52/1/16, MS Protocol Book of Notary Bennet, June 1560–June 1585, fos 20r, 49v, 50r, 51r, 52r, for example.
- 95 *Ibid*, fo 10r.
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- 98 *Ibid*, fos 50v, 54v.
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- 111 *RCRB*, ii, 316.
- 112 Paterson, *History*, 25, 29.
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- 114 *RPC* (2nd series), i, 222–3.
- 115 *Edin Recs 1604–1626*, 169.
- 116 *Extracts from the Records of the Royal Burgh of Stirling, AD 1519–1666* (Glasgow, Stirlingshire and Sons of the Rock Society, 1887), 151.
- 117 SRO, B52/3/1, MS Musselburgh Council Minute Book, 75, 76.
- 118 *Ibid*, 96.
- 119 *Ibid*, 110.
- 120 SRO, B52/3/1, 27 April 1682, cited in Graham, 'Harbours'.
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- 122 P Hume Brown (ed), *Early Travellers in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1891), 166.
- 123 *RPC*, xiii, 555.
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- 127 *RPC*, ii, 296.
- 128 Paterson, *History*, 146–7.
- 129 SRO, B52/3/1, 179.
- 130 *Ibid*, 216.
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- 132 Graham, 'Harbours', 242.
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- 134 SRO, B52/3/1, 18.
- 135 *RPC*, ii, 497–8.
- 136 SRO, B52/3/1, 96; SRO, loose documents, uncatalogued, 'Discharges for 1682–83', by Jo Baine, refers to a £3 fee to the woman who kept the key.
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- 141 *Ibid*, 80.
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- 143 *Ibid*, 2.
- 144 *Ibid*, 102.
- 145 Paterson, *History*, 81.
- 146 Wilkie, *Musselburgh*, 85.
- 147 SRO, B52/3/1, 8.
- 148 *Ibid*, 15.
- 149 *Ibid*, 58.
- 150 *Ibid*, 136.
- 151 *Ibid*, 165.
- 152 *Ibid*, 175.
- 153 *Ibid*, 162.
- 154 The bellman received a fee of 5s for every funeral, private or not, and 2s for a child. Paterson, *History*, 56.
- 155 *Ibid*, 18.
- 156 Wilkie, *Musselburgh*, 84.
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- 159 SRO, B52/3/1, 89, 4 Nov 1689.
- 160 *Ibid*.
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- 162 *Ibid*, 108.
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- 165 SRO, loose document, uncatalogued, Book of Disbursements, Michaelmas 1683–4, by Alexander Smart, Burgh Treasurer.

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 167 *Ibid*, 162–3.
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 178 Paterson, *History*, 32.
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 185 *Ibid*, 172.
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 232 Whyte, 'Occupational structure', 235.
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- 274 *Ibid*, 25 June 1715.
- 275 *Ibid*, 25 Feb 1729.
- 276 NSA, i, 283.
- 277 SRO, B52/3/3, 30 Dec 1714.
- 278 *Ibid*, 4 July 1720.
- 279 *Ibid*, 31 March 1724.
- 280 *Ibid*, 22 Sept 1762.
- 281 *Ibid*, 16 Nov 1771.
- 282 *Ibid*, 16 Feb 1762.
- 283 *Ibid*, 17 Sept 1774.
- 284 Paterson, *History*, 84.
- 285 SRO, B52/3/3, 4 April 1777.
- 286 *Ibid*, 16 June 1773; [nd] Feb 1775.
- 287 Paterson, *History*, 86.
- 288 SRO, B52/3/3, 5 Feb 1783.
- 289 *Ibid*, 17 Feb 1787.
- 290 SRO, TD9/22/2, Bundles 1 and 2
list leases, tacks and roup.
- 291 SRO, B52/3/3, 27 Feb 1738; 28
March 1738.
- 292 *Ibid*, 20 Feb 1743; 7 Oct 1742.
- 293 Paterson, *History*, 143.
- 294 SRO, B52/3/3, 10 Nov 1765, for
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- 295 *Ibid*, 10 Nov 1766.
- 296 Paterson, *History*, 153.
- 297 SRO, B52/3/3, 13 Sept 1715.
- 298 Wilkie, *Musselburgh*, 91.
- 299 *Ibid*, 91–2.
- 300 A Fraser, *Royal Occasions in
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- 301 Lambie, *Walk*, 7.
- 302 Paterson, *History*, 126.
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- 306 Whatley, *Salt Industry*, 125.
- 307 Paterson, *History*, 120.
- 308 Wilkie, *Musselburgh*, 103.
- 309 *Ibid*, 103.

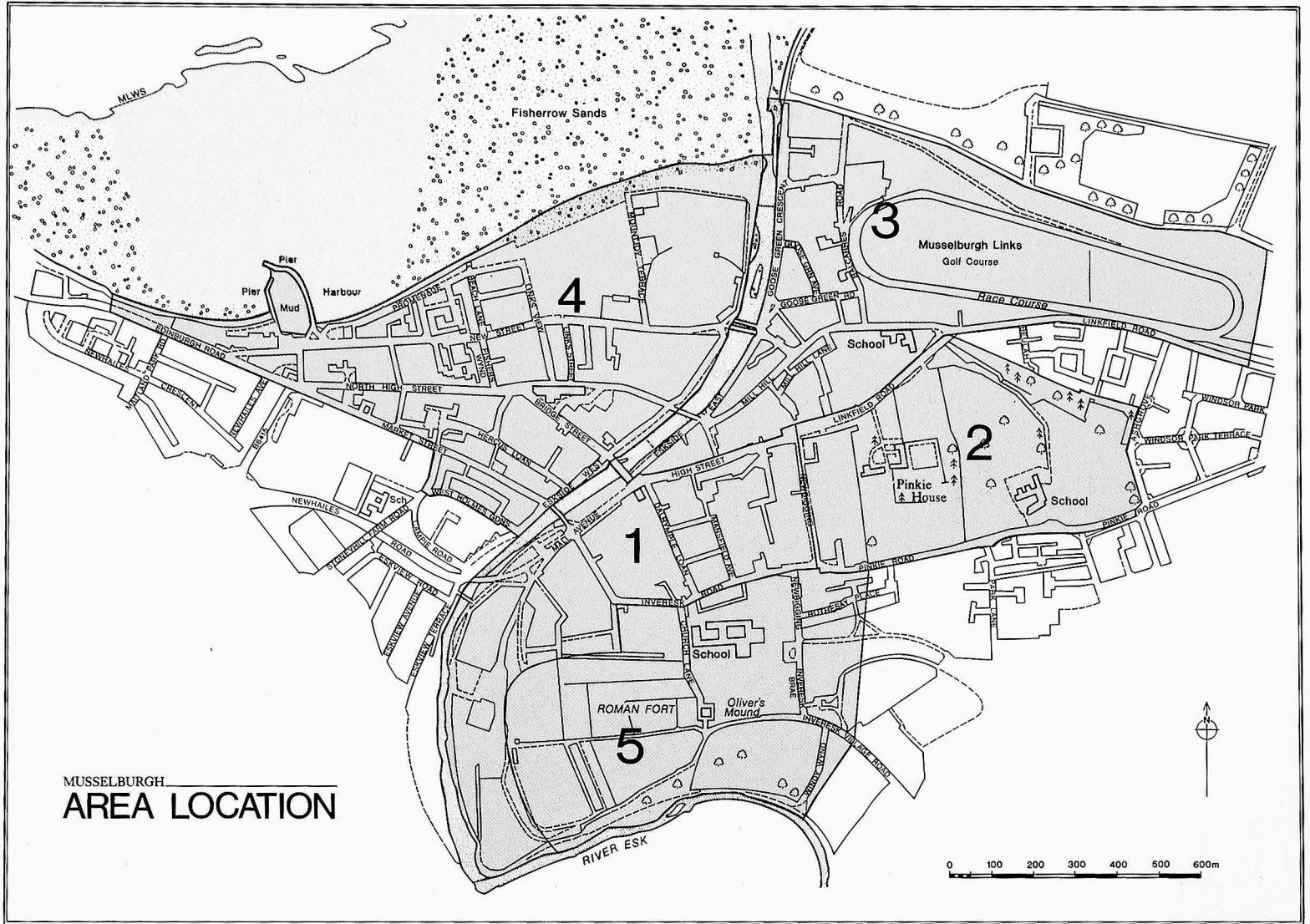


figure 21
Area location map

The medieval core of Musselburgh has been divided up into five discrete areas for the purposes of this study **figure 21**.

The coast provides an easily recognisable boundary both to the development of the medieval burgh and to the study area, but includes large areas of recently reclaimed land. Musselburgh proper lies within Areas 1, 2 and 3, with the River Esk forming the western boundary. The boundaries of Area 4 have been designed to contain the separate settlement of Fisherrow, and Area 5 is essentially Inveresk. No study of Musselburgh could ignore Inveresk because, apart from the Roman fort and *vicus*, Musselburgh's parish church stood here. The archaeological potential of Inveresk has not been discussed, however, as this would form an in-depth study in itself. The eastern and northern boundaries of the study area have been extended beyond the limits of the burgh, to incorporate the grounds of Pinkie House, Loretto Chapel and Musselburgh Links golf course.

Newbigging has been included in both Areas 1 and 2, and, in consequence, the relevant historical information has been repeated. For ease of reference, areas within areas, ie groups of properties which are bounded on all sides by major streets, have been defined as 'blocks' in the text.

area 1

High Street (south frontage)/Newbigging/Inveresk Road/Church Lane/Brunton's Works/Inveresk Mills/River Esk (west bank) figure 22

description

This area **figure 22** is bounded by the High Street to the north, and includes the street itself, up to but not including the frontage on the north side. The eastern boundary is the middle of Newbigging, continuing westwards along the south side of Inveresk Road and then southwards along Church Lane. It then skirts around the rear of Brunton's Works and along the foot of the hill on which St Michael's Kirk stands, to the bend in the River Esk. The western boundary is formed by the west bank of the river, and the Old Bridge is included in this area.

Area 1 encompasses two widely contrasting landscapes. The eastern half comprises developed street frontages and residential housing; the western half is dominated by an industrial landscape of engineering works and mills once powered by water drawn from the Esk.

The eastern half of this area, the block defined by the High Street, Newbigging, Inveresk Road and Dalrymple Loan, is predominantly modern—mostly post-war—residential housing. There has been more recent development, for example at the corner of Inveresk Road and Newbigging, and a new primary school behind the High Street frontage, in what was the grounds of a church manse. The south frontage of the High Street (*nos 140–164*) has also seen some redevelopment, with extensions to the rear and a large car park. *Nos 172–180 High Street* are currently vacant and due for redevelopment. An archaeological assessment **A** was carried out on this site in 1993 but no archaeology had survived, due to modern disturbance and landscaping.

The western end of the High Street (south frontage) has suffered considerably from alteration and modernisation, together with some redevelopment. The market cross **B** lies just inside the boundary of Area 1, in the north-east corner. Here, to the east of the tolbooth **C**, the High Street widens considerably, with parking along the north side.

To the rear of the High Street, on Kilwinning Street (north side, *no 17*), there is another derelict property, with overgrown gardens to the east and west. Gardens often provide a good clue to the potential survival of archaeological deposits, as they may represent land that has escaped development over the centuries. In some cases, where the original property boundaries have survived, they are essentially fossilised medieval burgage plots.

One of the few areas of gardens that can be seen in this block close to the High Street frontage, where the layout may date back to the medieval period, is behind the Newbigging frontage (west side, nos 5–13). Here, **D**, small gardens can be seen, extending east to west. Originally, these would have formed one long plot, extending back from the High Street frontage, but as Newbigging was developed, these long plots were parcelled up and the alignment altered. Interestingly, terracing can also be seen behind the frontages here, with the tenements cut into the back of a slope on which the gardens lie.

Gardens can be seen elsewhere in this block, but at the southern end and at some distance from the High Street. Again, the alignment has altered and nearly all are laid out east to west, but respect the earlier north to south property boundaries. Many of these boundaries can still be seen, long stone walls that extend virtually from the High Street to Inveresk Road, a distance of some 300 m. On the north side of Inveresk Road, a new housing development has been built on the site of Reid's Pottery **E**, an early nineteenth-century pottery works. An archaeological watching brief was carried out here during development, revealing a sequence of three kilns.

To the west of Dalrymple Loan is an area of industrial works and mills, spread out along the eastern bank of the Esk. Some are still in use, others vacant, and a few have been converted into modern offices. The northernmost of the three, Brunton's Wire and Wire Rope Works **F**, on Mall Avenue, is currently vacant. An archaeological assessment carried out here in 1993 identified medieval garden soils.

Opposite Brunton's Works, along the east bank of the Esk, is an area of car parking. South of Brunton's Works are the Inveresk Paper and Net Mills. One, the former J & W Stuart Net Mill **G**, has been converted into modern offices, with the firm relocating to smaller premises nearby. Another has been converted into a new job centre.

At the very south end of Area 1 is the Sluice Gate and Weir **H**. This controlled the supply of water drawn from the Esk into the mill lade, which flowed through the mills, and then on into the town, before rejoining the Esk near the mouth of the river I.

Three bridges lie within Area 1. The Old Bridge **J** dates to around the mid-sixteenth century and may have been built on the line of an earlier Roman bridge. Further south, the large road bridge was originally the town's railway bridge before the railway and station were removed. Adjacent to this is the Mill Bridge **K**, an elegant steel footbridge, constructed for the net and paper mill workers.

historical background

Within the Roman military system of Scotland, Musselburgh may have functioned as a port or harbour, at the mouth of the Esk, and perhaps a stores base, the first north of the Tweed. It also stood at the head of a twin northward route: Dere Street, the main road north from Newstead (near Melrose) and the other from Biggar and Carlops. Its strategic position, both by land and sea, makes it a candidate, along with Cramond, for the main harbour supplying the Antonine Wall. The recorded presence of the imperial procurator at Inveresk, together with the extensive civilian settlement attached to the fort, may substantiate this claim (*see* pp 14–16). It is possible that further settlement clustered downhill nearer to the Forth and, probably, at the site of the old Roman bridge **J**, which may have had early harbour works close by.

archaeological potential and future development

The Draft Local Plan of Musselburgh highlights two sites as ripe for development, 172–180 High Street **A** and Brunton's Wire and Wire Rope Works **F**. Both have been assessed archaeologically in the last two years, in advance of development. A need to address the problem of parking and congestion around the tolbooth and market cross has also been highlighted, which may lead to environmental improvements within this large public place.

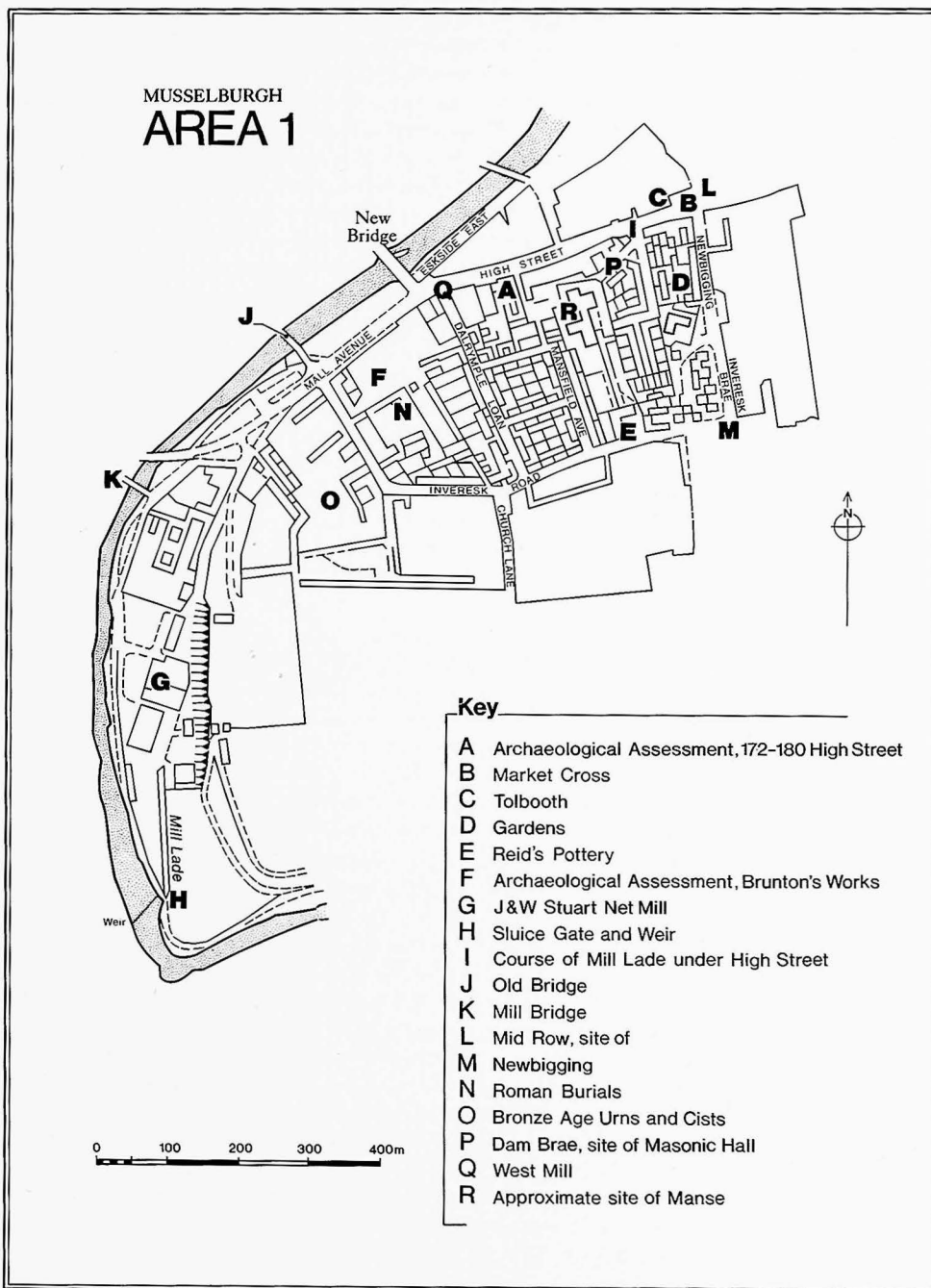


figure 22
Area 1

Documentary sources clearly demonstrate that settlement in the Musselburgh area continued, or re-established itself, in the Middle Ages (*see* p 16) and that by the late eleventh century there was at least some form of township in existence. In a papal bull of 1184, included in *Registrum de Dunfermlyn*, there is reference to the 'burgus et portus de Muskilburgum', that is, the burgh and port of Musselburgh, revealing its new status.

What is not proven is where precisely this early burgh was sited. Very probably the first medieval settlement clustered around the old bridge. A bridge crossing was a natural place for settlement, on a routeway, in this case a major routeway to the fortified castle and settlement at Edinburgh. It is quite probable that resting places and hostleries were set up on both sides of the bridge. Such a site offered, also, a readily available source of fresh water in the Esk, and immediate access to the Forth for fishing, the sea in the early Middle Ages being much closer to the town than at present (*see* p 18). It is probable that the town's harbour, which is known to have existed since at least the twelfth century, was at the mouth of the Esk, before silting became a major problem and the river became easily fordable. This would also reinforce the view that the early site of the town would be beside the Esk; and, as in other ports, a harbour frontage or quay must have been sited on the river, with an associated High Street.

The medieval bridge was probably of only two arches, as may be seen on battle plans of Pinkie in 1547 **figure 11**. The third, easterly, arch is not aligned with the other two, which suggests addition at a later date. Musselburgh council minutes, extant in the seventeenth century, specifically refer to the 'mid-bow' of the bridge, which gives at least a

history

archaeology

The archaeological work undertaken within this area so far has demonstrated that there is considerable potential for the survival of archaeological deposits. Although the quality of the remains has been variable, the archaeological potential of Area 1 is unusual in that it applies as much to the prehistory of the burgh as to its Roman, medieval and later periods.

Despite the poor preservation on the High Street at 172–180 High Street **A**, the main street frontages remain an archaeological priority. Here, earlier buildings and structures may be preserved beneath and within the current standing buildings. The High Street is also important as a number of features are known to have stood within the street itself. At the eastern end of the High Street stood Mid Row **L**, with an adjacent chapel, both demolished in the eighteenth century. The foundations of these buildings may survive below the present street surface, as may the original site of the market cross **B**. Newbigging **M** was initially a separate settlement from Musselburgh, and by the early nineteenth century at least, there was a sizeable community at the crossroads of Pinkie Road and Newbigging. This particular area has seen considerable development in recent years and it is unlikely that any trace of the early settlement would survive here. For example, Newbigging itself has been re-routed along what was Felton Green, a narrow street behind Newbigging, with the result that much of the original settlement now lies under blocks of flats.

The burgage plots **figure 6** that extended behind the properties on the frontage may also be preserved. Recent archaeological work in these areas suggest that these plots were confined to a narrow strip behind the frontage. Small pockets of archaeology, such as rubbish pits, may survive here.

In the western part of Area 1, there is potential for both prehistoric remains and features associated with the medieval burgh. Archaeological work in Brunton's Works **F** revealed medieval garden soils which contained fragments or sherds of pottery variously dated to periods between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. These are the earliest datable medieval remains found so far in the burgh, from an area some distance from the main focus of settlement. Although this may be evidence of land cultivated on the margins of the burgh, it is possible that the earliest medieval settlement clustered around the Old Bridge **J**, and this may be evidence of that initial settlement. The focus may then have shifted eastwards, possibly due to the silting up of the river around the bridge. Increased

clue to the timing of construction. The Old Bridge, sometimes called the Roman Bridge, was of strategic importance not only during battle campaigns, such as Pinkie (*see* pp 24–6), but also as part of the main thoroughfare between Edinburgh to the west and south to England. The ‘meikle bridge’, as it was often called, was in constant need of maintenance; and to assist this the privy council, in 1597, gave permission for a toll to be levied on those crossing the bridges—two pence per cart and one pence per horse. This right was renewed on a regular basis until 1661, when the bailies and council of Musselburgh petitioned parliament that the toll should be doubled in order to meet necessary expenses. The bridge was subject to the scouring effect of spate waters. Not only were buttresses added, according to the earliest extant town minutes, but channels for free flow of the river had to be kept clear.

The west port to the town stood on the bridge. This, being the main entrance to the town from the west, functioned as a collection point for tolls of those attending Musselburgh market and as night-time security when it was locked at curfew, and had also to be maintained. The townspeople were called out in June 1688 for emergency measures to the central span, those with carts being instructed to bring three loads of stone. A list of conscripted workers was drawn up and fines imposed of thirty shillings on every cart and ten shillings on every man that failed to appear. In spite of such emergency measures, a vast spate partially collapsed the Bridgend (west) side of the bridge in 1691. With immediate repair essential, the council decreed that all those with carts were to bring six loads of stones; those without carts were to pay twenty shillings; and the poor had to spend

history

archaeology

trade and commerce may have required a more developed riverside, forcing the settlement to move away from the river and spread out in an easterly direction.

The earliest mill is also known to have stood in this area, perhaps upstream from the Old Bridge. Although it is not known on which bank of the Esk it stood, a tradition of mills sited on the east bank suggests it could fall within Area 1.

The recent discovery of Roman burials **N**, together with Bronze Age cists and cinerary urns **O** found in the nineteenth century, are a reminder of the attractiveness of this area for settlement throughout prehistory. The potential therefore for prehistoric finds, both within and outwith the burgh, must also be considered.

previous archaeological work and chance finds

The following entries have largely been extracted and summarised from the Royal Commission’s database (RCAHMS, National Monuments Record of Scotland). The Commission’s record card numbering system has also been included (in brackets) for further reference.

Kirk Park, Musselburgh NT 342 723 O

Bronze Age cists

‘Stone coffins’ were found here in 1891, in the same field as the cinerary urns (NT 342 723). These were Bronze Age short cists, covered with a large stone slab, and contained skeletons (NMRS NT 37 SW 6).

Kirk Park, Musselburgh NT 342 723 O

Bronze Age cinerary urns

At least nineteen cinerary urns, part of a Bronze Age burial ground, were found in this field during the digging of a sand pit. Most were found in 1893, though one urn was recorded as being found here in 1887. The inverted urns, containing calcined bones, were not within stone cists but were sometimes within stone settings. Finds, which included a flint flake and green staining from oxidised bronze objects, were also recorded (NMRS NT

two days labour on the bridge. Eighteenth-century records make it clear that the bridge continued to demand constant maintenance.

Settlement spread eastwards during the Middle Ages. The site of the tolbooth **C** is firm indication of linear expansion from the river and of the urban nucleus centred on the tolbooth and market area. This had occurred by at least the first half of the sixteenth century and probably earlier, as the town clock, traditionally housed in the tolbooth, dates from the fifteenth century (*see* p 20). Whether the tolbooth stood facing on to a large open market place, as it does today, is not clear **figure 19**. Until the 1760s, a 'mid-row' stood in the middle of this open space, the main thoroughfare passing to the south of Mid Row on land now assimilated into the Pinkie estate. When the Mid Row was first constructed is undocumented, although it is perhaps indicative of a late-medieval land use of a once open market space, when pressure for land in the central core of the town reached a premium.

Close by the tolbooth stood other important features of a market town—the tron or weigh-beam and the market cross **B**, **figure 14**. There was a cross from medieval times, but there are no details of its structure. In 1700, it was in need of repair and, sometime around the middle of the eighteenth century, it was replaced by the cross now standing. Its original, precise position is uncertain, as in 1774 it was moved nearer to the tolbooth.

The protocol book of Notary Bennet (1560–85) gives a fairly clear picture of the town. The section of the main street of Musselburgh within Area 1 was well developed, with

history

archaeology 37 SW 7).

Brunton's Wireworks NT 342 724 N

Roman burials

Well preserved human and animal bones were found by workmen excavating a trench for machinery. Second-century sherds of black burnished ware, samian and mortaria were included in the spoil. A hasty examination of the trench suggested the existence of at least five possible graves, spaced *c* 1.5 m apart. Bone, pottery and oyster shell could be observed in the fills of the U-shaped graves (*DES* (1985), 28).

172–180 High Street NT 343 726 A

urban archaeological assessment

Prior to extensive redevelopment of a 2500 sq m site, located within the historic core of the medieval burgh, four trial trenches were hand excavated, one close to the frontage, one across an adjoining vennel and two to the rear of the site. The area was found to be extensively disturbed as a result of twentieth-century construction and demolition. Debris and modern deposits were found across the site. Natural coarse orange sand was encountered *c* 0.8 m below ground surface. No archaeological deposits, features or artefacts were discovered (*DES* (1994), 46).

Brunton's Wireworks NT 342 724 F

urban archaeological assessment

An integrated programme of archaeological survey and excavation was completed in January 1993 on the site of a proposed food market development. The results of this short but intensive exercise demonstrated that the present wireworks factory buildings were erected on a green field site, which in turn sealed medieval deposits. Artefactual evidence suggests a hiatus between the fifteenth or sixteenth century and the nineteenth century.

The excavated medieval deposits appear to be agriculturally derived, covering a period from the thirteenth to fifteenth century, and may relate to backlands associated with the river frontage occupation (*DES* (1993), 56).

burgage plots and gardens on both sides of the thoroughfare. Reference to a 'waste' tenement on the south frontage, near to a passage called 'Toffurde', may be a relic of damage sustained at Pinkie or merely natural dereliction through neglect or failure to build on the plot. Passing to the south of the properties on the main street, almost as a back lane, was the 'common loan'. This could be approached by a number of vennels or passage-ways, such as Newbigging Loaning, now called merely Newbigging **D**. It is clear that Newbigging was becoming by this time an integrated, but distinct, small settlement, sometimes called a 'ville' or 'villa'. Close by was the 'Transitium Aqueductum', which may have been close by or identical with Dam Brae **P**. It is perhaps a comment on the quality of housing in the area near Dam Brae that important Edinburgh lawyers, such as Thomas Marjoribanks and James MacCartney, held property here. Dam Brae was so named as it was sited beside the dam or mill lade that ran from the Esk to the south, running the West Mill that stood to the west end of High Street **Q**. In July and August 1650, Cromwell and his troops occupied Musselburgh and it was in Newbigging that his officers took up residence, which again suggests more than adequate housing.

Beside Dam Brae was an old well—Vicar's Well—so called as it stood near to the manse **R**. Local carts were called into use for transporting stones, lime and sand to the manse in 1681, the old vicarage that stood nearby being demolished. The council decided that a further 600 merks were needed to be spent on the manse and this was to be raised by stenting the townspeople. It is perhaps not surprising that after such investment into the

history

archaeology

Old Bridge, Musselburgh NT 341 725 J

bridge and (possible) gatehouse figure 7

The bridge, comprising three arches, with cutwaters, may have been built by Jane, Lady Seton, who died in 1558, but may incorporate an earlier structure known to have been standing in 1547. Repairs to the bridge are frequently mentioned in the town council records of the seventeenth century. Repairs to one of the buttresses in 1809 revealed the masonry to be resting on older stone foundations, in turn supported by oaken beams. An archaeological watching brief, carried out during engineering works on the bridge, revealed that all the old road surfaces have been removed and replaced with modern concrete (NMRS NT 37 SW 5.00).

The *New Statistical Account* of 1845 suggested there was a fortified gateway on the bridge. The town council records of 1687 refer to 'Bridgend doores' (NMRS NT 37 SW 5.01).

Dam Brae, Musselburgh NT 345 726 P

Masonic Hall (site of)

This building was erected in 1612, and was the former meeting place of the Musselburgh Kilwinning Lodge of Freemasons. It was sold about 1849. The area is now occupied by modern housing (NMRS NT 37 SW 56).

High Street, Musselburgh NT 346 727 L

chapel

A chapel, dedicated to St James, stood at the west end of Mid Row, near the tolbooth (NMRS NT 37 SW 49). It appears to have been demolished before about 1765 (*OSA*, 283).

High Street, Musselburgh NT 346 727 B

market cross figure 14

From a square pedestal, three steps rise to a Tuscan shaft of the late eighteenth century, supporting a lion and the burgh arms (NMRS NT 37 SW 164).

fabric of the manse, the council should decide in 1689 that they were prepared to cover a third of the costs (the rest being paid by the landward parts of the parish) towards a petition 'anent the preserving of the manse from being taken away to the presbyterians use'. The Hearth Tax census of 1691 gives some clues to house size and the relative density of population in Musselburgh. Newbigging is seen to be a developing suburb, with seventy-eight properties, one of which was the manse. Sixty-four of the properties were single hearthed, seven had two hearths, three had three, two had four and one had five. By far the most prestigious building was, clearly, the manse—with ten. By 1791 there was a population of 490 in Newbigging.

The eighteenth century was to see numerous efforts to upgrade the townscape by the council. New schools were built, although their precise sites are not known; in 1714, a decision was taken to erect a new walk mill, towards the south end of the mill lade **figure 10**, although this was not built immediately, for the council had to borrow 1,000 merks (*see* pp 00-0). Land was bought in 1724 for a new flesh market and corn market near to the tolbooth. In 1774, it was decided to erect a new pump well on the site of the Mid Row, which had been demolished some time between 1761 and then.

By the nineteenth century, the character of Musselburgh was changing. Industry, in the shape of wire works **F**, potteries **E** and a net factory **G**, were to replace some of the more traditional occupations. They brought about significant changes to the townscape in Area 1.

history

archaeology

Reid's Pottery, Inveresk NT 345 724 E

pottery works

A watching brief and a small excavation took place at this Musselburgh pottery site during redevelopment for housing. A factory was established in this position *c* 1807 by William Reid and closed in the 1920s, by which time it had changed hands several times. The pottery buildings were subsequently demolished. The base of a bottle-type kiln with ten stokeholes was uncovered during initial clearance of the site. Judging by stamped bricks in its structure, it was probably built around the turn of the century. Limited excavation on this kiln base showed at least two previous kilns to have occupied approximately the same position (*DES* (1989), 52).

area 2

Newbigging/High Street (north frontage)/Linkfield Road/Pinkie St Peter's Primary School/Pinkie Road figure 23

description

The western boundary of this area **figure 23** is defined by Newbigging, and the southern boundary by Pinkie Road. The north side of the High Street forms the northern boundary while, to the east, the boundary follows the edge of the grounds of Pinkie House and Pinkie St Peter's Primary School.

Only the western edge of Area 2 is essentially within the burgh; the rest is outwith the east port **A**, situated at the end of the High Street. Just inside the east port, there is currently a large housing development in progress, which stretches from the High Street back to Pinkie Road, on the site of the former Scottish Power depot **B**. The corner of Newbigging and High Street has also seen recent development, in the form of shops with flats above.

The Loretto Primary School **C** is set back slightly from the Newbigging frontage, with a small playing field to the south. A row of small gardens lies behind the Newbigging frontage at the south end.

The remaining part of Area 2 comprises the grounds and playing fields of Pinkie House **D** and Pinkie St Peter's Primary School **E**. A number of isolated features lie within these grounds, including a well **F**, dovecot **G** and icehouse **H**. There are also historic walled gardens **I** to the east of Pinkie House and a stable block to the north **J** (for a detailed discussion of Pinkie House, *see* pp 86–7). The site of the house of Thomas Randolph, earl of Moray, regent in the minority of David II, is also reputed to lie in this area and perhaps within these grounds.

historical background

By tradition, the site of the house where Regent Randolph, earl of Moray died in 1332 stood at the east end of the town, perhaps within the grounds of the present Pinkie House **D**. If correct, there is here an indication that already, by the fourteenth century, the town had expanded from its presumed site at the old Esk bridge (**J** in Area 1, *see* figures 7 & 22) to approximately the limits of the late medieval burgh, the site of the east port, near the present position of the gate piers at each side of the east end of Musselburgh High Street **A**.

Until the 1760s the Mid Row **K** stood in the middle of the High Street, the main thoroughfare passing to the south of Mid Row on land now assimilated into the Pinkie estate. When the Mid Row was first constructed is undocumented, although it is probably indicative of a late-medieval land use of a once open market space, when pressure for land in the central core of the town reached a premium.

The most important resident of the burgh in the Middle Ages was the abbot of Dunfermline. Although the abbots must have maintained lodgings in their burgh from the twelfth century, it is not known where these were. In the sixteenth century, however, there was constructed, for their use, a tower house at the east end of the town. This still stands as the central portion of Pinkie House (*see* pp 86–7 and **figure 15**). Greatly enlarged in the

archaeological potential and future development

The potential for this area is limited. An archaeological assessment of the development at the Scottish Power depot **B** identified no surviving archaeological deposits. No opportunity arose to examine the street frontage, and the absence of archaeological deposits across the development area suggests medieval settlement was confined to a narrow strip behind the street frontage. Despite the poor preservation of archaeology behind the street frontage, the High Street frontage itself remains an archaeological priority. Here, earlier buildings

seventeenth century, it overshadowed the rest of the town. With its ancillary buildings, it housed thirty-seven hearths **figure 15**. After his capture of Edinburgh in the '45, Prince Charles Edward Stewart was resident at Pinkie House on two occasions. In September 1745, the long painted gallery was put to service as a casualty station for Jacobite troops injured after the battle of Prestonpans. It is clear from the documentary sources that there was a level of support for the Jacobite cause. In 1746 a number of councillors declined to take the oath of loyalty. They subsequently demitted office, to be replaced by others more sympathetic to the Hanoverians.

By about 1800, Musselburgh and Fisherrow contained 'many handsome houses, and several elegant villas are seen in the vicinity' **figure 19**. A few of these are still standing, evidence of the quality of building in this part of the town (*see* pp 86–9). The most impressive was Pinkie House, with its seventeenth-century well **F**, walled garden **I**, dovecot **G** and nineteenth-century stable block **J**; but a number of houses of quality still stand on the south side of the High Street in Area 2 (*see* p 88).

To the east of the burgh lay the West Pans. By the second half of the sixteenth century, Musselburgh, along with Prestonpans, had the heaviest concentration of the salt industry in Scotland, with thirty-one pans, some at West Pans and others further west at the Magdalen Pans. Near to the West Pans were the town's stone and coal quarries. In an area called the 'Claypuy' was a stretch of communal waste land used as the town hen-run; and close by was the burgh common, sometimes called 'Cabbage Hall'.

Near to these topographical features was Loretto Chapel. Traditionally, it has been said that the chapel stood to the north of the main highway to the east of Musselburgh and that the remnants now stand in the grounds of Loretto School (*see* p 91). In 1535, the bailies, burgesses and community of Musselburgh gave to one Thomas Douchtye, a hermit of the order of hermit brothers of St Paul, a piece of waste land currently being used as the burgh hen-run, within the liberty of the burgh and at the end of it, beside the Claypuy, between the king's highway and the common green. On this he was to be allowed to build a chapel dedicated to St Mary of Loretto, a little dwelling house and a garden. This is an exact description of the site; and the position of the chapel is determined by whether the common green was to the north or south of the main thoroughfare.

The geographical and geological features of this area in the Middle Ages would predispose the location of a 'green' to be to the south of the road. The north side was largely reclaimed or sandy land; but the record precisely refers to the green as 'viridarium', thus stressing growth of plants and greenness. There was certainly a 'Harcas Green' to the south of the 'King's Highway' in 1569, but whether this is a reference to the common green is unclear. Documentary evidence now appears to indicate that the chapel was to the south of the main road moving eastwards out of Musselburgh and to the north of the common loaning that ran eastwards behind the properties on the southern frontage of the High Street. It would seem that the local tradition of the chapel to the north of the main road, in the grounds of Loretto School, is suspect (for further discussion, *see* p 24). The hermitage rapidly gained popularity, being visited by James V in 1536, in a barefoot pilgrimage from Stirling prior to sailing to France for his first marriage. The land, however, reverted to the town in 1569 and the chapel was demolished in 1590.

There was reputedly another chapel in Area 2, the chapel dedicated to St James situated in the Mid Row, although there is little further detail as to its precise location; and it may, indeed, have been sited in Area 1, **figure 22.L**.

history

archaeology

and structures may be preserved beneath and within the current standing buildings.

The High Street itself has potential as contained within it was the Mid Row **K**, a row of cottages demolished in the eighteenth century. A chapel also stood at one end. The foundations of these buildings may still be preserved beneath the present street surface. Evidence of any alterations in street width or alignment might also survive beneath the present surface.

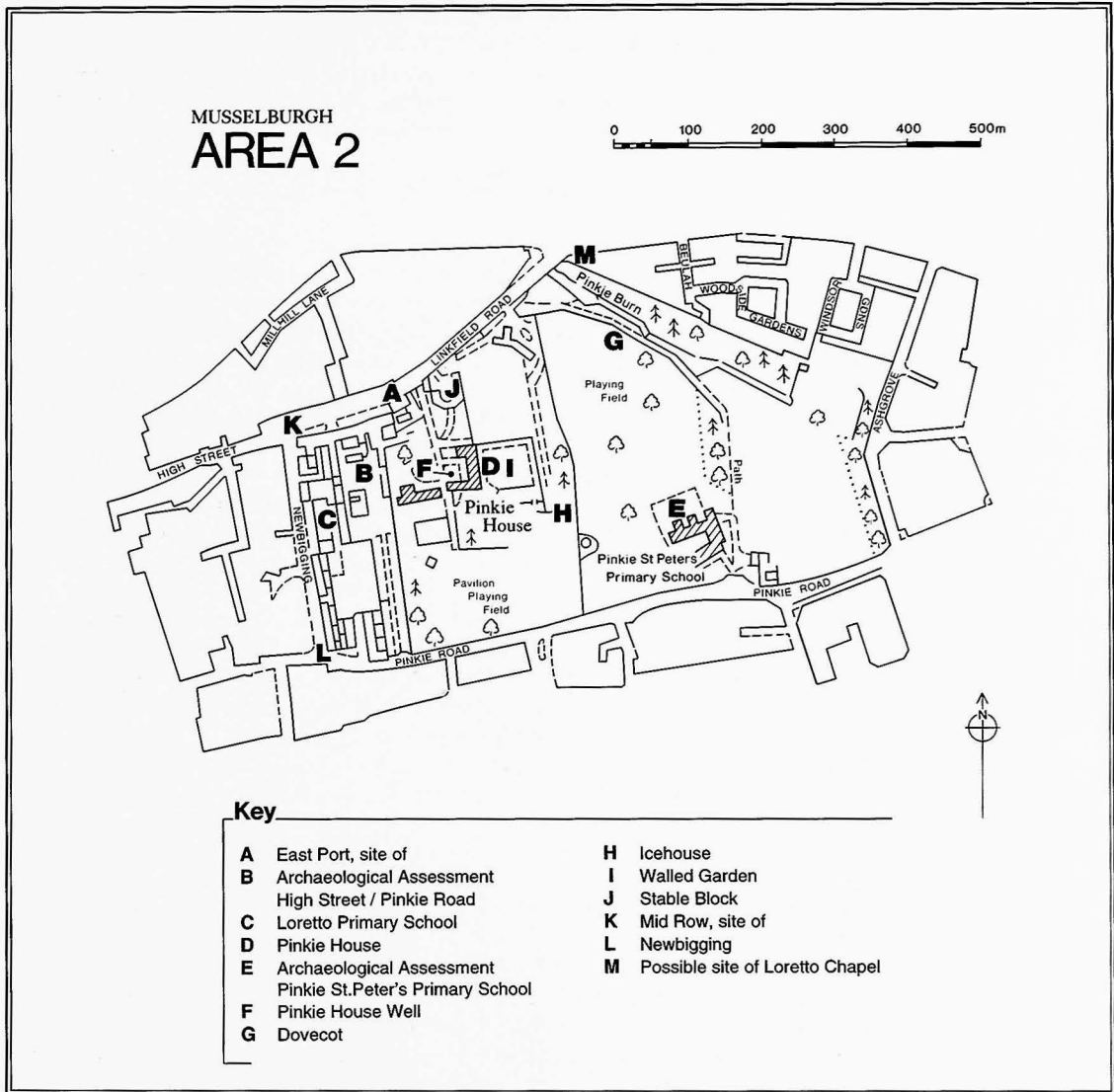


figure 23
Area 2

The protocol book of Notary Bennet (1560–85) gives a fairly clear picture of this part of the town. The section of the main street of Musselburgh within Area 2 was well developed, with burgage plots and gardens on both sides of the thoroughfare. Reference to a ‘waste’ tenement on the south frontage, near to a passage called ‘Toftfurde’, may be a relic of damage sustained in 1547 at Pinkie or merely natural dereliction through neglect or failure to build on the plot. Passing to the south of the properties on the main street, almost as a back lane, was the ‘common loan’. This could be approached by a number of

history

archaeology

Newbigging **L** was initially a separate settlement from Musselburgh and, by the early nineteenth century at least, there was a sizeable community at the crossroads of Pinkie Road and Newbigging (see pp 00–0). This particular area has seen considerable development in recent years and it is unlikely that any trace of the early settlement would survive here. Newbigging itself, for example, has been re-routed along what was Felton Green, a narrow street behind Newbigging and, as a result, much of the original

history

vennels or passage-ways, such as Newbigging Loaning, now called merely Newbigging **L**. It is clear that Newbigging was becoming by this time an integrated, but distinct, small settlement, sometimes called a 'ville' or 'villa'. In July and August 1650, Cromwell and his troops occupied Musselburgh and it was in Newbigging that his officers took up residence, which suggests quality housing here. The Hearth Tax census of 1691 gives some clues to

archaeology

settlement now lies under blocks of flats.

The potential for surviving archaeological remains within the grounds of Pinkie House **D** and Pinkie St Peter's Primary School **E** is difficult to gauge, but any landscaping or ground disturbance in this area should be monitored. Other than upstanding features, such as the dovecot and icehouse, any archaeology here is likely to be concentrated within and below the standing building of Pinkie House itself. For a detailed discussion of the standing building, *see* pp 86–7.

Finally, the exact location of the sixteenth-century Loretto Chapel, traditionally thought to lie on the north side of Linkfield Road, is uncertain, but evidence may point to its lying further south **M**. A rather dilapidated outbuilding within the garden of 14/15 Linkfield Road, the former Loretto Boarding House, has two complete carved windows in the fabric of the structure. One appears to be *in situ*, which has led to the suggestion that this may be the site of the Loretto Chapel.

previous archaeological work and chance finds

The following entries have largely been extracted and summarised from the Royal Commission's database (RCAHMS, National Monuments Record of Scotland). The Commission's record card numbering system has also been included (in brackets) for further reference.

St Peter's Primary School NT 351 728 E

urban archaeological assessment

A hole, 1 m in diameter, caused by sudden subsidence, was reported to the rear of St Peter's School playing fields. The hole appeared close to the site of the Loretto Chapel and was thought to relate to a possible archaeological feature. Upon investigation, no archaeological remains were discovered. The hole appeared to have been caused by redundant mine workings (*DES* (1993), 56).

High Street/Pinkie Road NT 350 725 B

urban archaeological assessment

Observation of test trenches for site investigation located natural sand *c* 0.4 m below

house size and the relative density of population in Musselburgh a century after Bennet compiled his protocol book. Newbigging is seen to be a developing suburb, with seventy-eight properties. Sixty-four of the properties were single-hearthed, seven had two hearths, three had three, two had four and one had five.

history

archaeology

modern ground level at the southern end of the site. At the closest point to the High Street, natural sand was located *c* 1.8 m below ground level. No medieval deposits were identified in any of the trenches (*DES* (1994), 46).

Pinkie House, Musselburgh NT 349 728 D

house and tower house figure 15

Pinkie House was built by Alexander Seton, earl of Dunfermline, in 1613. In it, he incorporated a sixteenth-century L-shaped house which may well include the nucleus of a still earlier fortalice, which now forms the north end of the main block. The main block contains three storeys, with the square tower being five storeys high. The additions on the west side of the main block date to *c* 1700 (NMRS 37 SW 4.00).

Pinkie House, Musselburgh NT 349 727 F

well figure 15

The draw-well in the courtyard of Pinkie House was built *c* 1610. An ornate structure, it is profusely decorated with heraldic devices and inscriptions. A stair leads down to the water (NMRS NT 37 SW 4.1).

Pinkie House, Musselburgh NT 351 729 G

dovecot

This fine dovecot comprises a rectangular, two-chambered building with a total of 1,087 nests. Each chamber has an entrance in the front wall, with a panel above showing a monogram of Alexander Seton, who built Pinkie House, and his third wife, Margaret Hay, whom he married in 1607 (NMRS NT 37 SE 39).

Pinkie House, Musselburgh NT 350 726 H

icehouse

An icehouse, now partly demolished, stands in the grounds of Pinkie House (NMRS NT 37 SE 84).

area 3*High Street (north frontage) / River Esk (west bank) / Musselburgh Links* **figure 24**

description

The southern boundary of this area **figure 24** is defined by the north frontage of the High Street and the southern edge of Linkfield Road, and the northern boundary by the edge of the Ash Disposal Area, which is reclaimed land. The west bank of the River Esk provides an easily recognisable western limit to the study area. The eastern boundary is more arbitrary, following the Musselburgh Links Golf Course and Race Course.

The north frontage of the High Street is included in this area, and contained within it are some of the finest examples of the one hundred or so listed buildings in Musselburgh. At the point where the High Street widens stand the tolbooth and the Town Hall **A**, and to the east a delightful group of houses which includes the French ambassador's residence **B** (*see also p 87*). The western end of the High Street is quite dissimilar, with alterations and modernisation largely unchecked.

The few open areas in the block defined by the High Street and Millhill are curiously in front of the buildings, not to the rear. Musselburgh Burgh Primary School **C**, Millhill Church **D** and The Parsonage **E** are all set back from the High Street with open grassy areas on the frontage. Access from the High Street through to Millhill is provided by Shorthope Street and Kerr's Wynd. Millhill probably developed from a back lane behind the High Street properties before it became a street in its own right; it was certainly in existence in the early eighteenth century. Today, it is a quiet residential cobbled street with a variety of house styles, ranging from gable-end cottages to terraced villas. At the western end of Millhill is the footbridge **F** over the Esk, sited more or less on the same spot as the centuries-old ford. To the south is the New Bridge **G**, built in 1806.

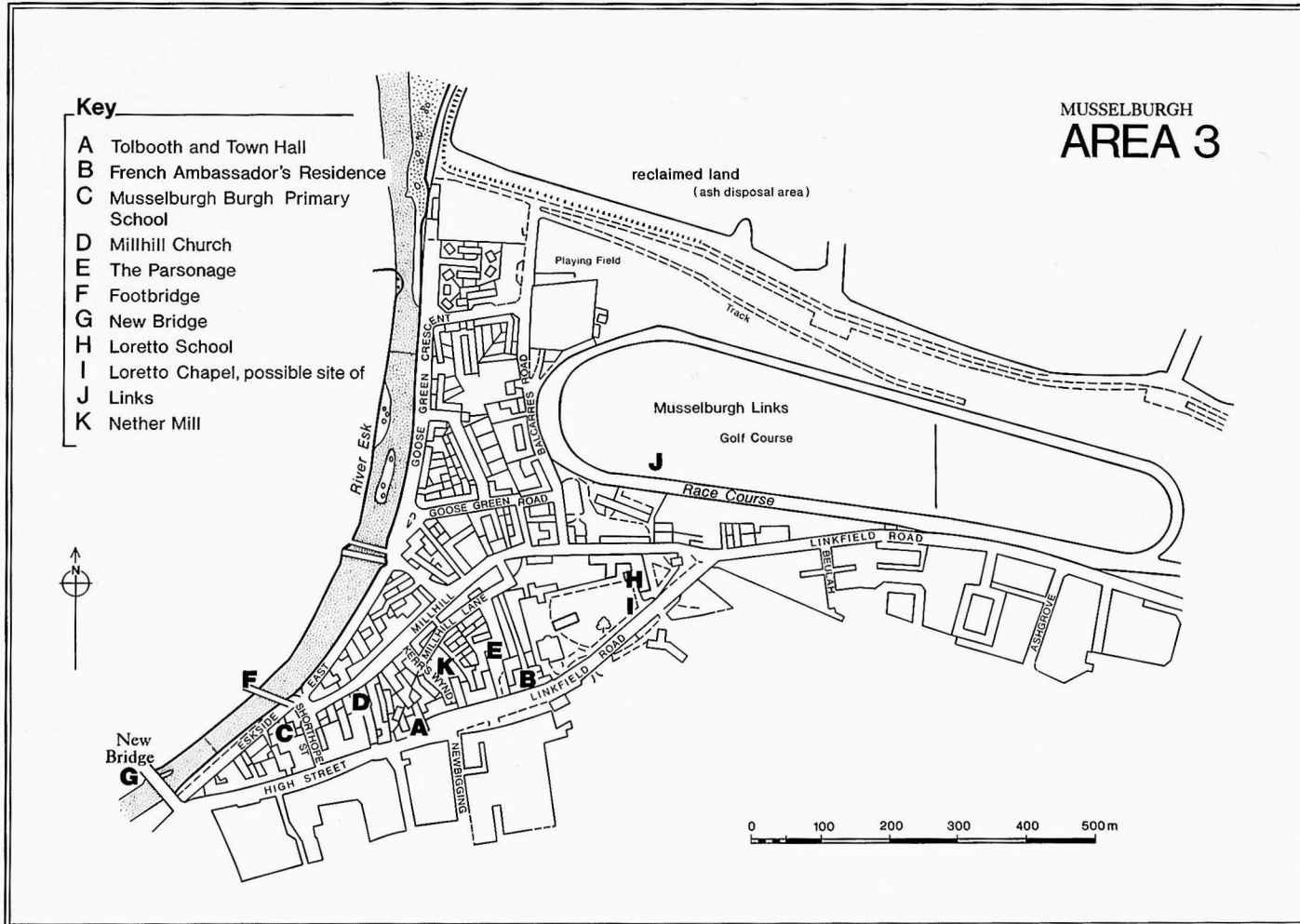
historical background

Standing on the south boundary of Area 3 is the tolbooth **A**. The site of the tolbooth is firm indication of linear expansion eastwards from the river, where it is thought the first urban settlement clustered, as well as of the later urban nucleus centred on the tolbooth and market area. This had occurred by at least the first half of the sixteenth century and probably earlier, as the town clock, traditionally housed in the tolbooth, dates from the fifteenth century (*see p 20*). The tolbooth was the most important secular building in the town. It was here that the burgh council met; the town weights, for use at the burgh weighing machine or tron, were kept; and offenders against the peace were incarcerated. Although largely destroyed in 1544 (*see p 86*), some of the tolbooth survived, rentals being paid there in 1563. It was to have been extended in 1573, had not construction work been sabotaged. It underwent major rebuilding in the early 1590s, partially utilising stones from the destroyed Loretto Chapel (*see p 86*) **figure 8**.

archaeological potential and future development

No archaeological work has been carried out within Area 3, and no stray finds have been reported from the historic core of the burgh. Despite this, the High Street frontage remains an archaeological priority. Here, earlier buildings and structures may be preserved beneath and within the current standing buildings. The eastern end of the High Street has almost completely escaped any modern development, in marked contrast to the western end, which indicates considerable potential for surviving archaeology, both below and within the standing buildings. For a more detailed discussion of the archaeological potential of individual standing buildings, *see pp 85–91*.

Cartographic evidence **figure 10** suggests that Millhill marked the limit of the burgage plots that extended back from the High Street frontage. As elsewhere in the burgh, these



MUSSELBURGH
AREA 3

- Key**
- A Tolbooth and Town Hall
 - B French Ambassador's Residence
 - C Musselburgh Burgh Primary School
 - D Millhill Church
 - E The Parsonage
 - F Footbridge
 - G New Bridge
 - H Loretto School
 - I Loretto Chapel, possible site of
 - J Links
 - K Nether Mill

figure 24
Area 3

Whether the tolbooth stood facing on to a large open market place, as it does today, is not clear **figure 19**. Until the 1760s, a ‘mid-row’ stood in the middle of this open space (*see* p 20 & 39). Records do not quantify the importance of Musselburgh’s medieval market. In 1363, however, David II confirmed to the abbot of Dunfermline and his four burghs of Musselburgh, Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and South Queensferry that in these burghs ‘in regard to any goods whatsoever, coming from any place whatsoever, and within all the limits, confines and boundaries of the whole regality, they may justly exercise their trades, as well regarding wool, hides, and skins as regarding other merchandise whatsoever, without impediment’. What is not precisely stated here was whether the regality of Dunfermline was divided up into four specific trading monopolies. It is known that this was the case north of the Forth, where Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline had distinct zones. It is likely that this was also true of the regality south of the Forth. This grant gave Musselburgh a potential for economic control of a wide area, by monopolising the sale and purchase of staple goods - wool, skin and hides - and by the expedient of forcing all within its hinterland to use the Musselburgh market, focused on its tolbooth and nearby market cross.

The council records indicate that maintenance of the tolbooth was a priority for the authorities and list ongoing repairs - from 1696 to 1700, the town steeple needed repeated repair work, and in 1701 the roof of the tolbooth also needed maintenance. The tolbooth’s grey slates were replaced with blue in 1758 and the new council chambers were added in 1762.

One of the primary functions of the bailies and council was to maintain the peace of the town from the tolbooth. Their remit covered all aspects of town life, other than some offences that merited capital punishment. The town had a hangman, whose role was probably identical to the ‘executioner’ who received £10 in 1655–6; and in 1683 one Jo Trotter was given £1 12s for ‘sixteen fathoms of rope to hang the scaffold to the steeple’. Minor offences were dealt with by placement in the stocks outside the tolbooth. Here, recalcitrants could be on public display for the ridicule of their neighbours. There was also a catty, or repentance stool. More serious matters resulted in banishment from the town or warding in the tolbooth. A marble plate inscription was placed above the entrance to the prison in 1773 and two years later it was agreed to renovate the tolbooth so that those imprisoned for debt might have ‘comfortable accommodation’. Conditions had, perhaps, been somewhat primitive in the past, there being a reference in 1746 to ‘straw’ for the

history

archaeology

plots have gradually been developed, and little trace survives of their original layout. The archaeological potential here is probably limited as a result, but small pockets of archaeology may survive in places.

The potential for surviving archaeological remains within the grounds of Loretto School **H** is difficult to gauge, but any landscaping or ground disturbance in this area should be monitored. The most archaeologically sensitive area is likely to be concentrated around the entrance to the school, where the possible remains of the Loretto chapel lie **I**. Although a possible alternative site for this chapel exists to the south, perhaps in Linkfield Road (*see* Area 2), there is considerable evidence for the Loretto School site. The upstanding mound, ‘Loretto Chapel’, has been altered over the years and the surviving chamber is undoubtedly part of a much later icehouse. The discovery, however, of human remains both in the last century and in this century is hard to ignore. If this was the site of the Loretto Chapel, then a hermit’s cell may be situated nearby.

previous archaeological work and chance finds

The following entries have largely been extracted and summarised from the Royal Commission’s database (RCAHMS, National Monuments Record of Scotland). The Commission’s record card numbering system has also been included (in brackets) for further reference.

prisoners. Not all inmates of the tolbooth prison appreciated such improvements, as in 1783 the council was forced to agree to raise the roof of the fleshmarket, because of 'excrement that is dropped on its roof by the inhabitants of the tolbooth'.

It is uncertain how much overseas trade Musselburgh engaged in during the Middle Ages, but the gift of the clock in the tolbooth steeple to the people of Musselburgh by the 'Dutch States' in 1496 would suggest close links. It is quite possible that medieval harbour works were sited on the Esk. Early references exist to the 'port of Musselburgh' and this may have been on the east side of the river. Silting was to be a constant problem, however, and this early port may have been abandoned for the Fisherrow and Magdalen harbours (*see* p 18 & pp 20–1). Neither of these harbours was ideally situated for central Musselburgh, however. This, along with the constant need to upgrade the Fisherrow harbour and maintain the customs house at the Magdalen harbour, prompted the town council to consider building a new harbour in the early years of the eighteenth century. Parliament was petitioned in 1704 to allow the council to levy two pence on every pint of ale and beer brewed in the burgh to offset expenses on the harbour building. Three years later, there had been little progress. Although a new harbour was established at the mouth of the Esk, the Fisherrow harbour being used as a quarry and boat owners being required to transport stone from it to the new site, it was abandoned due to excessive silting, and Fisherrow harbour was once more put to use.

There is a tradition that the sea once came up as far as the site of the supposed chapel of Loretto. Indeed, it is related that when in 1856 a well was being sunk in the grounds of Loretto School **H** the remains of an old oak ship were discovered. If correct, this would suggest that high water mark was once at least half a mile further south than at present; and that the whole Links area is reclaimed land **J**. The Links were put to several uses. They were the meeting ground for the Marquis of Hamilton, as the representative of Charles I, and thousands of Covenanters in 1638. In July and August 1650, when Cromwell and his troops occupied Musselburgh, the Links and Stoneyhill were lined with the tents of his troops, with the infantry on the Links. Later, in 1803, a military camp was established there during the Napoleonic Wars.

The traditional use of the Links, however, was for recreational purposes. From at least the seventeenth century, an annual shooting competition was held on the Links. In 1671, the Royal Company of Archers competed for the Silver Arrow of Musselburgh. The Links were also the home of golf. This game had reputedly been played there since the sixteenth

history

archaeology

Woodside Gardens, Musselburgh NT 352 729

stone macehead

Half of a stone macehead was found here in 1955 (NMRS NT 37 SE 44).

High Street, Musselburgh NT 346 727 A

tolbooth and town house figure 8

The tolbooth, a long, narrow, three-storey block, was built *c* 1590 and altered in 1773 and again in 1875–6. The square tower at the west end may be the survival of an earlier tolbooth, destroyed by the Earl of Hertford in 1544. The adjoining Town House was built in 1762 (NMRS NT 37 SW 3: *Hamilton Papers*, II, 379; *OSA*, ii, 282–3; Paterson, *History*, 85–6; *RMS*, iv, no 1475; *RPC*, ii, 232–3, 481, 487; *SRO*, B52/3/1, 81, 175, B52/3/3, 25 May 1762, 16 June 1773, Feb 1775, 15 Feb 1787).

Kerr's Wynd, Musselburgh NT 346 728

dovecot

A small dovecot is situated behind the tolbooth in Musselburgh. It has been re-roofed in recent years and has been in use as a store. A window has been built into the north wall (NMRS NT 37 SW 53).

century. Another favourite Musselburgh pastime was horse racing. In 1711, the winner received the prize of a saddle, as had been the practice in the previous century. To ensure that this was a race not dominated by the wealthy, who could provide themselves with swift stock, a maximum value was placed on all horses entering the race. It was specified in 1680 as £50.

It is known that to the east of settlement stood the salt pans, West Pans (so called as they were sited west of Prestonpans), as did the town's stone and coal quarries and the common green, sometimes called 'Cabbage Hall'. Already by the second half of the sixteenth century, Musselburgh, along with Prestonpans, had the heaviest concentration of the salt industry in Scotland, with thirty-one pans. Near to the common green stood the Loretto Chapel.

Traditionally, it has been said that the chapel stood to the north of the main highway to the east of Musselburgh and that the remnants now stand in the grounds of Loretto School I (see p 24). In support of this location is sometimes cited the finding of human skulls in 1831.

In 1535, the bailies, burgesses and community of Musselburgh gave to one Thomas Douchtye, a hermit of the order of hermit brothers of St Paul, a piece of waste land currently being used as the burgh hen-run, within the liberty of the burgh and at the end of it, beside the Claypuyl, between the king's highway and the common green. On this he was to be permitted to build a chapel dedicated to St Mary of Loretto, a little dwelling house and a garden. This is an exact description of the site; and the position of the chapel is determined by whether the common green was to the north or south of the main thoroughfare.

The geographical and geological features of this area in the Middle Ages would predispose the location of a 'green' to be to the south of the road. The north side was largely reclaimed or sandy land; but the record precisely refers to the green as 'viridarium', thus stressing growth of plants and greenness. There was certainly a 'Harcas Green' to the south of the 'King's Highway' in 1569, but whether this is a reference to the common green is unclear. It has been argued that the chapel was on stony ground, but this claim is based on a mis-translation of the Latin of the original document. It is interesting, however, that a reference in 1569 to a piece of waste ground in Notary Bennet's protocol book, dating from 1560–85, defines this ground as being at the salt pans

history

archaeology

Millhill, Musselburgh NT 347 729

brewery; tannery (possible)

This building has been identified as a brewery or possibly a tannery (NMRS NT 37 SW 192).

Loretto, Musselburgh NT 349 729 I

chapel; hermitage; icehouse; cairn (possible); human remains; gold cross

The Chapel of Loretto, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and the adjacent hermit's cell, are mentioned in documentary sources from 1533. The furnishings for the chapel were supplied by James V in 1534. The chapel was destroyed in Hertford's expedition of 1544, but was repaired. It was, however, ruinous again by 1590, and the stones were used to build the tolbooth in Musselburgh.

At the entrance to Loretto School is an artificial, tree-covered mound, some 75 m in circumference at its base. A straight, brick-lined passage at the north-east runs into and under the mound. Over the carved stone entrance is the pediment of a dormer window, dated 1647, which is said to have come from Pinkie House. This site has long been thought to be the site of the Chapel of Our Lady of Loretto, but all the structural details

[to the east of the burgh], with a tenement to the west, the common passage to the said salt pans to the east, the king's highway to the north and the burgh common to the south. This precise topographical description strongly suggests that the chapel of Loretto was to the south of the main thoroughfare. Evidence from the Penitentiary Records in the Vatican Archives confirms this. The land given to the hermit is specifically sited with the king's highways to the north and the south. This means that the chapel was south of the main road moving eastwards out of Musselburgh and north of the common loaning that ran eastwards behind the properties on the southern frontage of the High Street. It would seem that the local tradition of the chapel to the north of the main road, in the grounds of Loretto School, is suspect.

The protocol book of Notary Bennet (1560–85) gives, also, an overview of the town. The main street of Musselburgh was well developed, with burgage plots and gardens on both sides of the thoroughfare. It appears that Millhill originally formed a back lane to the burgage plots that fronted onto the High Street; but cartographic evidence shows considerable development in the Millhill area by the eighteenth century. Indeed, it is known that Kerr's Wynd was in existence by 1567, when the 'new' mill, later called the sea mill or nether mill, stood at the foot of it K.

This mill, along with the other town mills, required maintenance. In 1680, for example, it required a new stone, purchased in Colinton. The following year two new wheels and restoration work on its south gable were necessary; and the dams associated with the mills had to be kept in good working order. In 1709 it had to be thatched with turf rather than straw, which had been 'eatten and destroyed' by rats.

A visitor to the town in the late eighteenth century commented that Musselburgh and Fisherrow contained 'many handsome houses, and several elegant villas are seen in the vicinity' **figure 19**. A few of these are still standing, evidence of the quality of building in the town (*see pp 88–90*). The east end of the High Street retains much of its attractive frontage (**B** and **E**, for example; *see p 88 for further discussion*).

The quality housing already evidenced at the end of the eighteenth century was to grow in the nineteenth and become the homes of judges, generals, admirals and authors. Notable amongst these new buildings were prestigious clubhouses which flanked Musselburgh's famous golf course.

history

archaeology

suggest it was in fact an icehouse. In 1831, however, human remains were found under the mound, and again a few years later, together with a gold cross. When an air-raid shelter was being dug into the back of the mound in 1939, more human remains were found. Whether these are connected with a burial ground associated with the chapel remains unclear (NMRS 37 SW 2: Wilkie, *Historic Musselburgh*, 43; MSS *Archivum Sacrae Penitentiariae Apostolicae*, vol lxxxvii, 228; SRO, B52/1/16, fo 50v).

Loretto, Musselburgh NT 349 729

well

The hermitage and chapel were associated with Our Lady of Loretto Well, which before the Reformation was one of the most famous wells in Scotland, with a range of miraculous cures which attracted many pilgrims (NMRS 37 SW 2.1).

Loretto School, Musselburgh NT 347 729

dovecot

This dovecot has been converted into a Memorial Clock Tower, and is scarcely recognisable as a dovecot (NMRS NT 37 SW 55).

area 4

River Esk (west bank)/West Holmes Gardens/Market Street/Edinburgh Road/Fisherrow Harbour/Fisherrow Links **figure 25**

description

This area **figure 25** encompasses the separate settlement of Fisherrow. The coastline defines the northern boundary of this area, with the west bank of the Esk as the eastern boundary. The southern and western boundaries are more arbitrary, with Market Street/Edinburgh Road defining the southern limit of the study area up to, and extending beyond, the harbour.

Fisherrow has seen considerable redevelopment in recent years, particularly in the form of sheltered and residential housing. As a result, few burgage plots survive and little of the character of the medieval or early modern settlement can be seen.

The harbour area **A** is largely open parking space, but has attracted new development in the form of 'The Quayside' **B**, a leisure complex, together with some retail outlets and a petrol-filling station. The busiest part of Fisherrow is some distance from the harbour, to the east of Lochend Road North and South, and between the two is mostly modern housing. The main thoroughfare in Fisherrow is North High Street, which stretches from the harbour at the west to the Esk at the east. The old tenement buildings begin to the east of Lochend Road North and South, perhaps reflecting the western limit of the early settlement at Fisherrow. A number of vennels lead off from North High Street to New Street, including Fishers Wynd, which appears to have been widened considerably.

The townscape around the corner of North High Street and Bridge Street has altered dramatically in recent years, the largest single development being the Brunton Theatre **C**. To the east of the theatre is a new health clinic with associated car parking, bordered by modern housing. The south frontage of Bridge Street is a curious mixture of banks and churches and a new library, but relatively little housing or shops.

To the south of North High Street and Bridge Street, the burgage plots that would have extended back from the street frontage have again been infilled with modern housing. Even Market Street, on the route from the Old Bridge to Fisherrow harbour since Roman times, has little of its old character visible.

historical background

It is possible that the Romans had used a natural berthing spot at the present site of Fisherrow harbour **A**. Whether the medieval harbour of Musselburgh was sited here, or on the Esk, is unclear. If it was in existence, it is unlikely that Fisherrow harbour was entirely abandoned in the Middle Ages. Given that the Esk was susceptible to silting, it was probably the Fisherrow harbour that was considered of sufficient importance that, according to the *Treasurer's Accounts*, a messenger was sent in 1533 giving instructions that bulwarks were to be erected there, as in Leith, Preston, North Berwick, Dunbar and

archaeological potential and future development

To date, no opportunity for archaeological work has arisen in Fisherrow. The main problem concerning the archaeological potential of Fisherrow is lack of knowledge as to the extent of early settlement. From cartographic and documentary sources **figure 10**, it would seem that the core of settlement lay not around the harbour but some distance away from it, clustered along North High Street (or Fisherrow, as it was called) from Lochend Road North and South at the west to the River Esk. Bridge Street and New Street are later additions. There are few references to Market Street, but an almshouse and chapel are known to have stood here.

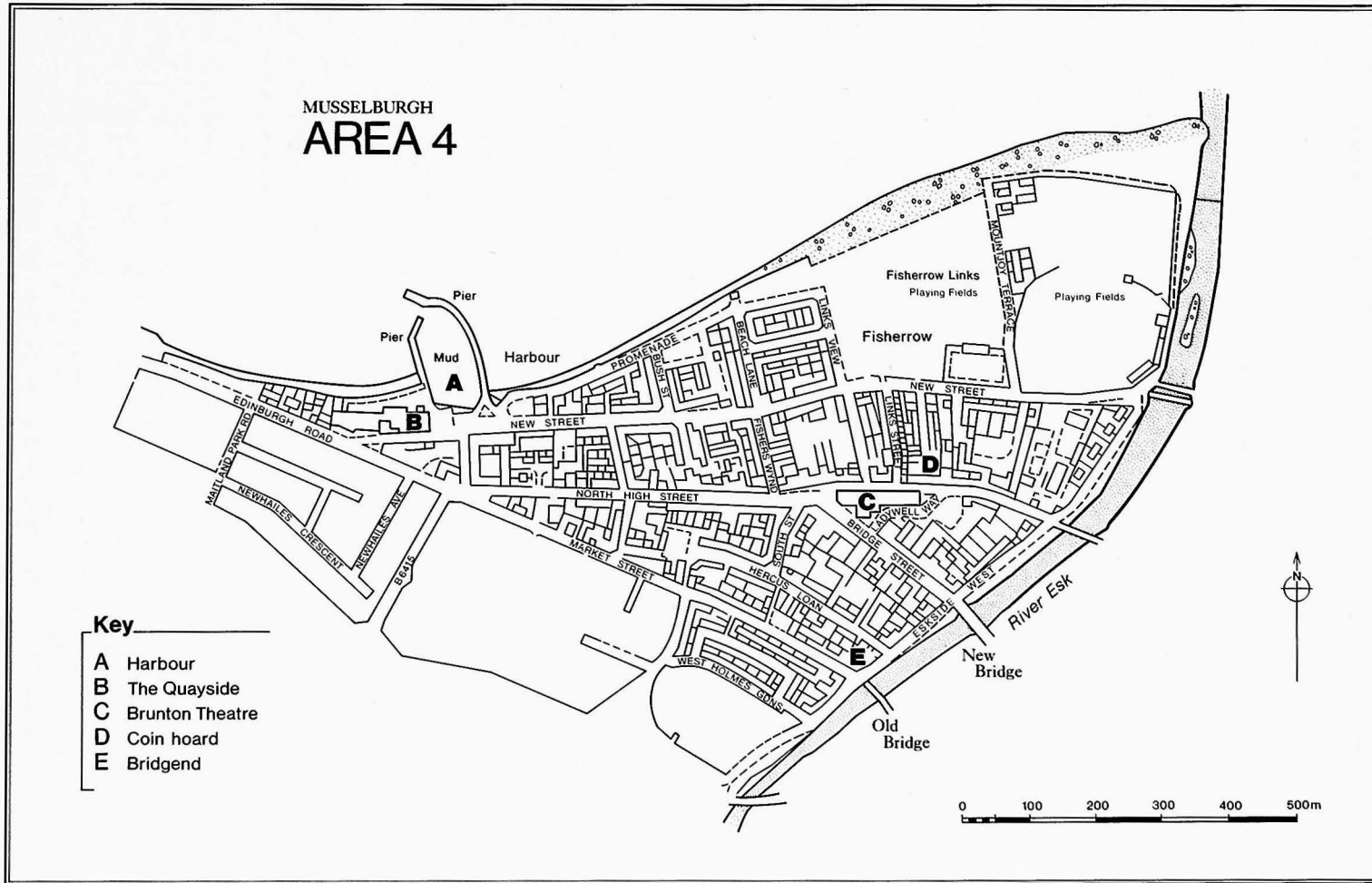


figure 25
Area 4

Dumbarton. Eleven years later, the strategic relevance of the harbour was noted by the English, that a 'place beneath Lidge called Mustelburgh' existed, where a safe landing and access to Edinburgh was possible.

The natural harbour was an asset that the locals continued to turn to advantage as a fishing haven. Their catch was of sufficient importance that in 1523, when Governor Albany was camped near Eyemouth with an army which included 13,000 French troops, for a campaign against England, instructions were given that the fishers of Musselburgh, along with those from Gullane, North Berwick and Dunbar, should make a daily trip with supplies.

Fisherrow harbour, as opposed to 'Musselburgh harbour', is specifically referred to in 1592; it had twelve skippers by 1626. Its condition, however, was sufficiently dilapidated that in 1617 Edinburgh granted £200 towards its repair; and the following year the burgh of Stirling donated a further £40. In 1682, when, according to Adair's map **figure 9**, there was one pier with a westerly curve, damage to the harbour works, in particular the west side, was such that the council drew up a list of men from all parts of the burgh to begin repairs. The conscripts were fined ten shillings for each day's absence from work. Three years later, a decision was taken to sell the old timber from the western harbour works to the highest bidder; and, to assist shipping, beacons were to be placed within and without the harbour entrance. The timber remained unsold the following year, but, interestingly, the council passed a further measure: the use of coal lanterns around the burgh was banned, apparently as this had been interfering with the guidance of the harbour beacons. It seems that by 1682 an older timber pier had been replaced and that the existing one was timber with stone filling: the council minutes of this year say that it was 'to be repaired with balks of timber where the same ar wanting and to be filled up with stones to the balks according to use and wont'.

The harbour seems not to have been suitable for ships of large draught. In 1650, for example, Oliver Cromwell used Musselburgh as a base for operations in Lothian. Significantly, Dunbar was chosen as the victualling port. Thomas Tucker, visiting in 1655, referred to Musselburgh as 'an open harbour ... for small boats or vessels'. It was also, in his view, a suitable port for customs dodging and smuggling, 'a very opportune place for carryeing out and bringing in of goods, unto or from any shippe that shal be lyeing in the roade if not looked after'. The council records confirm that the harbour was, by the seventeenth century, used largely for coastal trade, handling commodities such as coal and fish. In 1700, when a stent was to be placed on all foreign imports and exports throughout the country, Musselburgh maintained that it had 'nae forraign trade'. Dues levied at the harbour, however, were of sufficient value that they were worth setting to public roup (or auction) in 1697, along with the customs levied at the Magdalen harbour, further west. By

history

archaeology

Despite the lack of archaeological research to date, the North High Street frontage remains an archaeological priority. Here, archaeology may be preserved below the current standing buildings. It is unlikely that much is preserved behind the frontages, given the scale of development in recent years, but small pockets of archaeology may survive. The potential for the other main streets, Market Street and Bridge Street, is limited.

One of the oldest known sites in the Fisherrow area was the leper hospital of St Magdalen. Its precise location is still unknown, but medieval leper hospitals are known normally to lie out of town, though on main routes. The logical place for St Magdalen's would be to the west of the harbour, on the coast road to Edinburgh.

Only one stray find has been made within Area 4, that of a coin hoard **D**, probably deposited in the mid seventeenth century. It was found, in a metal pot dug into the natural sand, to the north of North High Street. What this says about the settlement at Fisherrow is unclear. It was either deposited in someone's back garden in times of trouble or was buried in what had been open, waste ground. If the latter was true, then the extent of the settlement at Fisherrow was small even in the mid seventeenth century.

1705, it admitted to a certain level of foreign trade, agreeing to offer to relieve the royal burghs (who traditionally claimed to have the sole right to overseas trade) of two shillings in the tax roll. As early as 1573, in fact, Musselburgh, along with Preston, had entered into a commitment not to export salt until the domestic market had been supplied at eight shillings a boll. This export in all probability continued: a number of ships are listed as coming to Musselburgh harbour in the summer of 1635, many of them carrying wood from Norway.

Neither Fisherrow nor Magdalen harbour was ideally situated for central Musselburgh. It was probably this factor, along with the constant need to upgrade the Fisherrow harbour and maintain the customs house at the Magdalen harbour, that prompted the town council to consider building a new harbour in the early years of the eighteenth century. To this end, parliament was petitioned in 1704 to permit the council to levy two pence on every pint of ale and beer brewed in the burgh to offset expenses on the harbour building. Three years later, there had been little progress. Although a new harbour was established at the mouth of the Esk, the Fisherrow harbour being used as a quarry and boat owners being required to transport stone from it to the new site, it was abandoned due to excessive silting, and Fisherrow harbour was once more put to use.

The harbour continued to have at least a minimal level of overseas trade. Daniel Defoe, visiting in the early eighteenth century, claimed that: 'They call this a sea-port town; but as their river, sometimes full enough of water, is not navigable; for, at low water, people ride over the mouth of it on the sands, and even walk over it; so they do not meddle much with trading by sea'. Yet a committee of the Convention of Royal Burghs, in 1730, noted that traders in Musselburgh, along with those from Aberdour and Limekilns, were carrying on 'considerable' trade, but not paying due taxation. In spite of Musselburgh's objection that 'none trades in this place' and documentary evidence from the town's charter chest, the suspicion was well founded and, in the following year, Musselburgh agreed to pay one pence sterling to the tax roll to permit it to trade overseas for the next five years.

During the eighteenth century, the harbour continued to need constant attention and was partially rebuilt in 1743, although even after this date repair work was continuous: a second pier was constructed at some point, according to cartographic evidence. And in 1787, the council was, yet again, employing a surveyor and considering building a new harbour. A new school and fleshmarket were also built for Fisherrow.

It was inevitable that a small settlement would develop near to the harbour. Over the centuries it would expand, as long as the harbour continued to function and fishing remained a possible livelihood. By the late sixteenth century, according to Notary Bennet's protocol book, Fisherrow appears to have consisted of one main street, with tenements

history

archaeology

The harbour **A** at Fisherrow may have been in existence since Roman times. Unfortunately the constant alterations and upgrading that were required at Fisherrow have meant little trace is likely to survive of earlier phases and structures.

previous archaeological work and chance finds

The following entries have largely been extracted and summarised from the Royal Commission's database (RCAHMS, National Monuments Record of Scotland). The Commission's record card numbering system has also been included (in brackets) for further reference.

Belfield, Fisherrow NT 337 725

cists; Food Vessel; flints

Five stone cists were found during building works at Belfield, in 1896. The largest contained a contracted male skeleton accompanied by a bow-shaped Food Vessel, the

built up on both sides. To the north was the common green, 'Lye Grene'. There must have been some settlement on Market Street, or Marketgait, however, as an almshouse is reputed to have stood there (*see* p 24). Although a distinct settlement, it was clearly considered to be part of the liberties of Musselburgh and receives constant mention in Bennet's protocol book.

The Hearth Tax census of 1691 gives some clues to house size and the relative density of population in Musselburgh. In the town of Musselburgh itself, there were 182 houses with only single hearths, thirty-three with two, twelve with three, eight with four, eight with five, six with six and only two with seven, a total of 251 buildings. It is perhaps noteworthy that the two bailies lived there, not in Fisherrow, in prestigious six-hearthed houses. Fisherrow had marginally more houses than Musselburgh proper, with 256 households, but they were, on the whole, smaller dwellings—199 single hearths, forty-one two-hearthed houses, nine with three hearths, three with four hearths, one with five, one with six and two with seven. Close by, the little suburb of Bridgend E, at the west end of the Esk Bridge, contained fifty-nine households. Forty-three of these were single-hearthed, eleven were double, three had three hearths, one had four and one had five. By 1791, there was a population of 1,799 in Fisherrow, Marketgate and Bridgend, compared with 1,640 in Musselburgh and Westpans, and 490 in Newbigging.

A council minute of 1702 notes that Fisherrow, Bridgend and Marketgait were still considered as distinct places, with an empty space between Fisherrow and Marketgait. There was still waste ground north of Bridgend into the nineteenth century. All the evidence suggests that the communities, although at times working together, considered themselves apart.

Given the relative sizes of the four distinct areas of Musselburgh, it is interesting to note the internal struggle for power and the outcome. Debate as to precisely who should elect the bailies and council reached a head in the early years of the eighteenth century. Fisherrow felt that its rights were being threatened by Musselburgh. When it consulted advocates in Edinburgh as to its position, the council of the burgh thought 'fitt to be on their guard' against such moves and took advice from Sheriff Calderwood of Edinburgh. A year later, in 1703, the matter was resolved. The council was to consist of eighteen members, ten of whom were to come from Musselburgh 'within the ports', six from Fisherrow, Bridgend and Marketgate, and two from Newbigging, Millhill and Westpans. Rulings were also laid down as to how the bailies and treasurer were to be elected and by whom, where the council should meet—the tolbooth of Musselburgh—and how long magistrates should serve. The senior bailie was always to be from Musselburgh 'within the ports'. Significantly, in spite of the furore over their respective rights, it had also to be laid down that once a burgess was chosen as a bailie, treasurer or councillor, if he refused to accept he would be fined £40 and lose his freedom of the burgh. Office holding was clearly not as desirable to some sections of the community as it was for the 1703 council.

history

archaeology

smallest a child's skeleton. Another contained only parts of a skeleton, a fourth, calcined bones, and the fifth, a hammer of smooth stone and two flints (NMRS NT 37 SW 42).

St Mary Magdalen's Hospital, Musselburgh NT 34 72

leper hospital

St Mary Magdalen's Hospital is recorded as ruinous as early as 1386, and evidently cared for the poor and lepers. It was still in existence in 1561, when a payment to the hospital is recorded (NMRS NT 37 SW 48). (*See* pp 00–0, for further information.)

Market Street, Musselburgh NT 335 727

chapel

A chapel of unknown date, dedication now unknown, stood somewhere at the west of the Marketgait (now Market Street) (NMRS NT 37 SW 176).

Fisherrow did, however, take its share of public responsibility. The Covenanted revolt of 1679 provoked the council to appoint a nightly guard for the town, consisting of thirty-eight men from Musselburgh and thirty-two from Fisherrow. In 1702, the threat was nearer home, and of less national import. An 'invasion' of thieves and housebreakers necessitated a nightly watch of twelve men from each side of the river.

The health of the burgh received a level of attention. Plague, for example, was rife in Holland and other parts of the continent in 1624. It was the duty of the bailies to ensure that neither goods nor passengers were landed at the harbour before inspection indicated that they were clean and not carrying infection. Fisherrow harbour was again kept under close scrutiny in 1745, during the Jacobite uprising. An embargo was placed on all craft in the harbour and bay, and a watch kept. So that they could be of no assistance to the enemy, all boats were pulled up above high water mark and their rudders, oars and sails were removed. All vagrants who could not give account for their movements were apprehended and a constant rota watch was kept in Fisherrow's schoolhouse.

Fishing remained an important source of income, supplying not only the immediate neighbourhood, but also Edinburgh. The accessible Edinburgh market also encouraged the growing of vegetables in Musselburgh, which were then carried on the backs of women in creels to Edinburgh for sale, as was salt from the pans. They returned with washing to be done or goods for sale at the Musselburgh market. This doubtless boosted the sales of the several soap-boilers and starch-makers in the district. An observer in 1792 opined that 'this employment of women, which has certainly prevailed ever since Edinburgh became a considerable city, when joined to that of the fishwives in Fisherrow, has occasioned a reversal of the state of the sexes in this parish, and has formed a character and manners in the female sex, which seems peculiar to them, at least in this country'. Another equally uncomplimentary contemporary assessment was that: *nastiness seems here to be delighted in ... The women, as if they trust to sex as merely for recommendation, have dirty cloths tied round their shoulders, and peep out of pieces of boarded windows just big enough for their heads ... Their butter is loathsome both to eye and taste, which they turn into oil when they use it. The sailors are far cleaner cooks than the women. In short, the unpleasantness of their food makes one in danger of a surfeit, while their dirty beds cause one to apprehend the music called the Scots fiddle.*

Many of these women were wives of weavers, shoemakers or sievemakers and, since their occupation was indoors, the husbands took on the responsibility of child-minding. The fishwives were the daughters and wives of fishermen, 'who generally marry their own cast' and were 'foul mouthed', albeit very honest and moral. The 'reversal in the state of the sexes' had other outlets: the fishwives played golf and had an annual football match when the married women challenged the unmarried fishwives; invariably the former won.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Fisherrow appears to have changed little over the previous hundred years, although the population had increased. In Fisherrow, Marketgait and Bridgend there were 1,799 inhabitants, compared to Musselburgh and Westpans with

history

archaeology

*Market Street, Musselburgh NT 33 72**almshouse*

An almshouse once stood in Market Gate (now Market Street), before its conversion to a residential house (NMRS NT 37 SW 177). It may have been associated with the chapel.

*North High Street, Musselburgh NT 342 729 D**seventeenth-century coin hoard*

A mechanical excavator, clearing a site on the north side of North High Street in 1951, struck and broke a metal pot, containing a hoard of silver coins, buried in the natural sand. A total of 318 coins, of Scottish, English and Continental origin and dating from between 1553 to 1646, were recovered (NMRS NT 37 SW 1).

1,640, Newbigging with 490 and, in outlying areas including Magdalen Pans, eighty-six. In the unincorporated trades were to be found forty-nine fishermen and ninety fishwives. Interestingly, in spite of the numbers employed as fishers, there were only seven boats. The women, however, often sold not only the Musselburgh catch but also that from Fife boats **figure 16**.

To the west of Fisherrow stood the old hospital dedicated to St Mary Magdalen. It was described in 1386 as caring for the poor and lepers. Such a siting, outwith the settlement, would have been a natural place for a leper hospital. It continued in existence throughout the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, although by 1428 it was described merely as a hospital for the poor. It was still standing in 1561, a payment being made to 'the lipper men at the madgelenes [sic] beyond Mussilburgh', which would suggest it continued as a leper hospital. It was in existence until at least 1681. A new house, built at the west end of Magdalen Chapel in that year, interestingly followed a traditional medieval form of roofing—it was thatched with turves dug from the town's common lands.

The Magdalen Bridge, sometimes called the Maitland Bridge, stood nearby. Thought to be in danger of collapse in 1576, it benefited from a legacy of 100 merks for its repair. It appears to have been furnished with doors that could be locked, presumably to monitor access. The Magdalen Bridge and the 'meikle bridge' over the Esk were in constant need of maintenance; in 1597, the privy council gave permission for a toll to be levied on those crossing the bridges—two pence per cart and one pence per horse. This right was renewed on a regular basis until 1661, when the bailies and council of Musselburgh petitioned parliament that the toll should be doubled in order more adequately to meet the necessary expenses.

history

archaeology

Fisherrow Manse, Musselburgh NT 343 728

dovecot

An eighteenth-century dovecot stands in the garden of the manse. The remains consist of the north-west wall, which is incorporated into a boundary wall, and the south-west wall, which now forms part of an outbuilding. The original entrance is still apparent (NMRS NT 37 SW 54).

Close by were the Magdalen Pans. These and the West Pans further east (so named as they were sited to the west of Prestonpans), meant that by the second half of the sixteenth century Musselburgh, along with Prestonpans, had the heaviest concentration of the salt industry in Scotland, with thirty-one pans.

Building works to both Fisherrow and Musselburgh proper came at no small cost to the town. Stenting and forced labour could not cover such expenses. The town also borrowed money (*see* p 39), but probably one of the main aims in feuing out the town's common lands in the eighteenth century was to raise capital. Although the offer of Sir James Dalrymple in 1738 to purchase the common muir at Fisherrow for a guinea an acre was rejected, by 1743 he was in possession of common lands on the west of the Esk, as was George Chambers, Writer to the Signet. In 1760, a decision was taken that all the town's common land, other than the Links, should be feued off to the highest bidder. Land was feued out beside the Fisherrow harbour for salt pans, timber yards and coal yards in the following decade. This was a policy that was continued throughout the rest of the century, land to the east of the harbour, for example, being feued to Leith merchants in 1766 for pursuit of their timber and iron trade.

By the turn of the century, a visitor to the town commented that Musselburgh and Fisherrow contained 'many handsome houses, and several elegant villas are seen in the vicinity' **figure 19**. A few of these are still standing, evidence of the quality of building in some areas of the town (*see* pp 88–90). The nineteenth century was to bring increased prosperity, which was reflected in the townscape. Musselburgh was to become the resort of literati. Gilbert Stuart, one of the founders of the first *Edinburgh Review*, hosted conversations in his summer house/study at Eskside West, which is still standing **figure 20** (*see* p 89). The attractive housing here, on the west bank of the Esk, as elsewhere in pockets of Fisherrow, retains little in common with the homes of the hard-worked fishermen and women of Fisherrow **figure 28**.

history

archaeology

Ladywell Way, Musselburgh NT 341 728

well

Trenching for services under the pavement area to the east of Brunton Hall close to the site of the former Ladywell brewery uncovered a well with an internal diameter of 1.1 m and covered by a large rectangular capstone. It does not appear on the first or any subsequent Ordnance Survey maps of the area (*DES* (1988), 17)l.

area 5*Pinkie Road (south side)/Inveresk Road (south side)/Inveresk Village figure 26*

description

Essentially the western end of the village of Inveresk, this area lies some distance outside the burgh **figure 26**. The study area has been extended to include this as it contains the Roman fort **A** and vicus **B** as well as the site of the early church dedicated to St Michael **C**. Gun emplacements were also constructed on the hill at Inveresk during the battle of Pinkie **D**. Although the archaeological potential of this area has not been discussed, since it does not form part of this survey of the historic burgh of Musselburgh, in considering any proposals for ground disturbance anywhere within this area, it must be assumed that the archaeological potential is *exceptionally high*. This is clear from the list of previous archaeological work and chance finds (below). The following is a summary of recent archaeological work carried out here, including many stray finds that have been discovered in the area.

historical background

For a detailed account of the excavations and the background history of the Roman fort and civilian settlement, *see* pp 14–16.

Although this area is outwith the scope of this study, Musselburgh had close links with Inveresk because it was here that Musselburgh's parish church was sited. The first extant mention of the church in documentary sources dates from 1020, when it was called 'ecclesia de Muskilburgh'. When the church, along with other benefactions, was gifted to Dunfermline Abbey by David I, it was referred to as 'ecclesia de Infrech'. There is, moreover, a tradition that a sanctuary cross stood close by the church. Other than this, there is little known of this early church, dedicated to St Michael. Its siting, outside urban settlement, is not necessarily unusual, many parish churches pre-dating urban growth.

It is known that in 1547 the parish church was cruciform, as would be expected, with two aisles. A further two were added later. It was 30 m long and only 6 m wide within the walls. A local tradition is that it was partially built with stone and bricks from the Roman settlement. It contributed 70 merks, the highest of the churches in Midlothian, to the 'taxatio', after being placed under the bishopric of St Andrews in 1176. By the eighteenth century, it was 'in a ruinous state'. It was replaced in 1805.

previous archaeological work and chance finds

The following entries have largely been extracted and summarised from the Royal Commission's database (RCAHMS, National Monuments Record of Scotland). The Commission's record card numbering system has also been included (in brackets) for further reference.

St Michael's churchyard, Inveresk NT 343 720

flint flake

A flint flake was found in St Michael's churchyard (NMRS NT 37 SW 166).

Inveresk NT 34 71

pottery

'Round-based, string-marked pottery vessels' were found in a sand-pit at Inveresk, possibly in the late nineteenth century or early twentieth century (NMRS NT 37 SW 43).



figure 26
Area 5

archaeology

Inveresk NT 342 720 A

Roman fort

The Roman fort, much of which lies within the grounds of St Michael's Kirk, dates to the Antonine period (c AD 142–163) and had two distinct phases of occupation. It has been the subject of considerable archaeological interest in recent years. The fort was first investigated in 1946–7, when the line of the ramparts on the north, west and south sides was established; further excavation was undertaken in 1981 and between 1990 and 1993, this time at the western end of the fort. The ramparts enclosed an area of c 6 acres (2.5 ha), with the fort's main entrance facing west. The east rampart lay under the graveyard of St Michael's Kirk. An external ditch surrounded the fort; Roman forts normally had two ditches, and it is likely that there was a second ditch at Inveresk which either has not survived or remains to be discovered. Buildings located within the fort included a granary and stone buildings; the latter were interpreted as barracks and stabling, suggesting that the fort was garrisoned by a cavalry regiment. All these remains defined the first phase of occupation. The second phase was defined by the demolition of a granary and the construction of a new internal road system within the camp. Discoveries at the western

end of the fort included stone-packed post-holes which may represent the foundations of barrack, stable or store buildings, more internal roadways and traces of the foundations of what appeared to be the western gateway superstructure. Evidence for the possibly deliberate destruction/demolition of the fort was presented by a large pit which had been cut through both roads, and filled with Roman masonry. Elsewhere, several smaller pits were found scattered across the site; these were probably rubbish pits contemporary with the Roman occupation of the site, rather than evidence of abandonment (NMRS NT 37 SW 8: I A Richmond, 'A Roman fort at Inveresk, Midlothian', *PSAS*, cx (1978–80), 286–304; W S Hanson, 'Inveresk Roman fort; trial trenching', *PSAS*, cxiv (1984), 251–260; *DES* (1993), 55–6).

Inveresk NT 342 721

Roman altar figure 5

The lower half of a Roman altar and two carved stones were discovered during grave-digging in the west kirkyard of St Michael's Inveresk. The find spot lies within the *praetentura* of the Roman cavalry-fort located by Sir Ian Richmond. The altar is in good condition, although broken. It bears two inscriptions, one cut on top of the other. The Procurator mentioned in the first inscription is the person who dedicated the altar to Apollo Grannus which was found at Inveresk in 1565. The other stones recovered from the grave were fragments of small pillars of pentagonal cross-section, one bearing a simple capital (*DES* (1977), 22).

Inveresk NT 345 720 B

Roman civilian settlement

Following the discovery in 1970 of a number of items of Roman material just below modern turf-level, in a paddock lying due south of St Michael's Kirk and 190 m east of the Antonine fort, a short excavation was undertaken in 1971 to find out if these objects were associated with surviving Roman structures; a hypocausted building and a length of conduit were uncovered nearby in 1827. The excavation identified occupation consistent with the Antonine period, with a sequence of superimposed road surfaces leading to the east gate of the fort and flanked by wattle and daub buildings, later replaced in stone. Immediately to the south of the street lay a stone building in a reasonably good state of preservation; at one point, where the foundations had subsided into an earlier rubbish pit, eight courses of walling survived *in situ*. Pottery found in the pit included a large part of a stamped samian bowl (*DES* (1971), 29–30).

Further excavation of part of the site was undertaken in 1976–7, in advance of construction work. Again, all the material recovered dated to the Antonine period (AD 142–163), indicating activity corresponding to both episodes of the Antonine occupation of Scotland. The first phase of activity at the site, characterised by a V-profiled ditch, may represent a pre-Roman settlement, for which no dating evidence was available. Evidence for the next phase (equivalent to the first period of Antonine occupation) included the foundation trenches of a timber building surrounding a stone-built furnace, as well as a second timber structure which had been burnt to the ground. In the subsequent phase (equivalent to the second period of Antonine occupation), the settlement was rebuilt on a much grander scale and laid out on a regular grid pattern, with substantial timber buildings and one built of stone, all separated by cobbled roads. The finds suggest that the site was mainly domestic in function, although some form of industrial activity is clearly indicated by the furnace and various pieces of industrial debris (G D Thomas, 'Excavations at the Roman civil settlement at Inveresk', *PSAS*, cxviii (1988), 139–176).

The remains of a Roman bath-house, consisting of a stretch of walling, furnace foundations and a small portion of a hypocaust, are visible in the garden of Inveresk House (NT 346 721); they are probably part of the remains first discovered c 1783. Excavations here in 1987 revealed more of the walling on the south side of the building. A

archaeology

large number of tiles were found during the work (NMRS NT 37 SW 13: G D Thomas, 'The re-excavation of the Inveresk hypocaust', *PSAS*, cxviii (1988), 177–180).

Lime concrete floors have reportedly been found in the grounds of Eskgrove House in the early nineteenth century, in what is now an area of lawn (NT 346 721; NMRS NT 37 SW 11).

A small excavation, carried out in 1990 in the grounds of Eskgrove (NT 347 721), uncovered a square-sectioned ditch containing a rich collection of finds, including butchered animal bone (both wild and domesticated), pottery sherds and tile fragments. A wall built of stone blocks on a small foundation buttress was also found; the foundations were covered by rubble, capped with a broken-up *opus signinum* floor layer. Built on to this was a wall of thin, square, apparently Roman, bricks (*DES* (1990), 30).

A further excavation was undertaken in 1993 (NT 348 721), in advance of construction of a house and garage 100 m north-east of Eskgrove House in the field north-west of Lewisvale Public Park. A number of features were found, of which the main one was a linear ditch which ran unbroken through the trench from ENE to WSW—it may represent a length of the putative Roman enclosure. Other features included two large pits, a scatter of smaller pits, and two shallow linear gullies; no function could be suggested for any of these. No artefacts were recovered (*DES* (1993), 56).

In 1994, excavation was carried out in advance of the proposed construction of a house at Eskgrove (NT 348 721). The trench was located *c* 70 m east of the 1993 excavations. A number of features cut into the natural sub-soil were recorded. Three lengths of segmented ditch were located running from east to west diagonally across the trench for a distance of *c* 24 m. Only a short section of the western ditch could be examined before it ran beyond the southern limit of the trench. All of the central ditch section was revealed, and it contained sherds of both medieval and possibly Roman pottery. At its eastern end this ditch truncated a narrow slot. The eastern ditch segment measured *c* 8 m long, 1.2 m wide and 0.5–0.6 m deep. It continued eastwards beyond the limit of the excavation. Sixteen pits were also located, the majority of which were concentrated in the western end of the excavated area. One pit contained sherds of Roman samian and grey wares, along with some large stones, one of which was dressed, while another pit contained several sherds of later prehistoric pottery (*DES* (1994), 45–6).

Inveresk, Monktonhall NT 348 709 to NT 348 712

Roman temporary camps

Traces of at least three Roman temporary camps have been revealed by aerial photography in this area. The largest (NT 348 712) has been partially excavated, uncovering parts of the west and south sides of its ditch. The camp was *c* 20 ha in extent, and its ditch had a sharp V-shaped profile of 2–3 m wide and 1 m deep. The excavation did not uncover any sign of the smaller temporary camp previously revealed on aerial photographs of fields to the north; its western and southern sides may have re-used part of the circuit of the larger camp. The ditch of a third camp has been revealed laid out at right angles to the south-west side of the 20 ha camp, of which it is in all probability the south-east side. The position of an entrance can be seen. From the measurement of this ditch, it appears that this camp may also have had an area of *c* 20 ha (NMRS NT 37 SW 33 and 183: J K St Joseph, 'Air reconnaissance in Britain, 1965–68', *Journal of Roman Studies*, 59 (1969), 104–28; W S Hanson, 'Monktonhall (Inveresk p), inhumations, Roman temporary camp, ring groove houses, enclosure, linear ditches', *DES* (1985), 30–1; G S Maxwell & D R Wilson, 'Air reconnaissance in Roman Britain 1977–84', *Britannia*, 18 (1987), 1–48).

Inveresk NT 350 720

triple-ditched feature

The remains of a rampart and three ditches were revealed by aerial photography and

subsequently located by trial trenching in 1963–6. The outermost and middle ditches, separated by a 5.8 m berm, were both *c* 3.5 m wide and *c* 2 m deep. The inner ditch was *c* 2.1 m wide and *c* 1.75 m deep, and separated from the middle ditch by a berm of *c* 4.9 m. A causeway across the ditches was also identified. Pottery recovered was dated to the Antonine period (NMRS NT 37 SW 1). The two outermost ditches of the triple-ditched feature were also examined in 1989. These revealed V-shaped profiles, the ‘middle’ ditch having a well-defined ‘ankle-breaker’. The ditches appear to have lain open for some time.

Inveresk NT 350 718

field system

An excavation was carried out in 1989 in advance of a proposed housing development at Crookston Road, Inveresk, on part of an extensive field system, revealed by aerial photography to be occupying a ridge to the east and south-east of the Roman fort. The excavated remains equated closely with the cropmark evidence and seem likely to represent the remains of old boundary ditches. A few sherds of samian and black burnished ware were found (*DES* (1990), 29–30).

Inveresk cemetery, Eskgrove NT 347 721

Roman burials (possible); pottery

‘Ancient graves’ and Roman pottery were found here in 1892 (NMRS NT 37 SW 14).

Inveresk NT 343 724

Romano-British burials

Five burials of Romano-British date; the remains of one individual, pottery and animal bones were recovered in 1985 (D B Gallagher & A Clarke, ‘Burials of possible Romano-British date from Inveresk, East Lothian’, *PSAS*, cxxiii (1993), 315–18).

Inveresk area

Roman artefacts

A number of Roman artefacts have been discovered as stray finds, including coins (NMRS NT 37 SW 19, 35 and 37), pottery (NMRS NT 37 SW 9, 19, 36, 37 and 43), a snaffle bit and a square-headed nail (NMRS NT 37 SW 36), an iron chain (NMRS NT 37 SW 37) and a quern (NMRS NT 37 SW 37).

Inveresk Parish Church, Inveresk NT 344 721 C

church; graveyard

Inveresk church, which was dedicated to St Michael and All Angels, was granted to Dunfermline Abbey by David I *c* 1128. The present church was opened for worship in 1806, on the site of its predecessor, which had become ruinous and inadequate. The earliest grave-stone is of seventeenth-century date (NMRS NT 37 SW 17). A decorated bone prayer-ring was found in the churchyard in the late nineteenth century (NMRS NT 37 SW 16).

Inveresk House, Inveresk NT 346 721

house

The house comprises two ranges, both altered. The east range dates to the seventeenth century, and the west range was added in the mid eighteenth century (NMRS NT 37 SW 167)p.

archaeology

*Eskgrove, Inveresk NT 347 721**dovecot*

This now roofless dovecot dates to the eighteenth century and comprises three string courses. The pigeons entered by ten openings in the once-slatted roof (NMRS NT 37 SW 50).

*Inveresk Gate, Inveresk NT 346 719**dovecot*

This eighteenth-century dovecot is generally decayed but comprises two chambers, with 1,163 stone nests (NMRS NT 37 SW 51).

*Oliver's Mound, Inveresk NT 345 721 D**mound; icehouse*

Said to have been constructed by Cromwell, this oblong earthen mound is in fact earlier, though not Roman as antiquarians had suggested. It was probably built by Somerset as a gun emplacement in 1547, and may well have been re-used by Cromwell in 1650. There were formerly two banks, each with a mound at each end. By the late nineteenth century, the bank to the east of the church has been levelled, leaving only the mound, while to the north-west of the church only the bank remained. An icehouse was later built into the feature at the eastern end (NMRS NT 37 SW 10).

*Inveresk House, Inveresk NT 346 721**subterranean structure*

An underground passage was found during roadworks, to the east of the house. The skeleton of a man and a quantity of gunpowder were found in the passage. The passage is c 1 m wide and 1.2 m high, and lies about 2.5 m below ground level. Although referred to as the 'Roman aqueduct', it is considered to be contemporary with the construction of the house in the seventeenth century. The entrance to it is now blocked up (NMRS NT 37 SW 12).

*Newbigging, Musselburgh NT 346 723**well*

Clearance on the site for a sports complex to the east of Musselburgh Grammar School revealed a stone-built well with associated stand-pipe. It is probably the draw well marked on the 1854 Ordnance Survey map of the area (DES (1988), 17).

*Lewisvale Public Park, Musselburgh NT 3499 7216**encampment; memorial*

A square stone pillar marks the spot where the Duke of Somerset encamped with his army in 1547, during his expedition to Scotland (NMRS NT 37 SW 15).

the archaeological potential of Musselburgh a summary **figure 29**

On present evidence, it appears that the overall potential for the survival of archaeological deposits within the medieval core of Musselburgh may be limited. Nevertheless, routine monitoring and excavations in many other Scottish towns—especially Perth and Aberdeen but also in some smaller towns—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 and in the backlands in the historic section of Musselburgh 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—such as the ports and wells—of which little or no archaeological evidence at all has yet been found.

To date, there have been few opportunities for archaeological investigation in Musselburgh. Of necessity, therefore, this assessment of the archaeological potential has been made with relatively little evidence from archaeological work in the town. The conclusions and recommendations expressed here should 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 sub-surface investigations.

It is important to stress that the survey was limited to the core of *historic* (medieval) Musselburgh. There is a recognised potential for the discovery of prehistoric and Roman archaeological remains, both within and outwith the confines of the historic burgh. This archaeological potential within Area 5, the site of Inveresk Roman fort and vicus, is *not* considered or shown on **figure 26** since it lies outwith the core of the historic burgh, but is nonetheless *exceptionally high*. This must always be borne in mind when considering any proposals for ground disturbance within this area.

Finally, the potential for archaeological features and deposits to be preserved both beneath the floors and within the structures of historic standing buildings in Musselburgh (*see pp 85–91*) must not be forgotten. This is particularly true of the historic standing buildings at the east end of the town (Area 3). The archaeological potential of Musselburgh's historic standing buildings is *not* shown on **figures 22–6**, but the potential of individual buildings is considered in the next chapter, **historic buildings**.

area 1

This is an area of great contrasts, and contains within its boundaries possibly the earliest medieval settlement at Musselburgh, around the Old Bridge. Despite the limited evidence for the nature of the settlement here, this area is of prime importance for our understanding of Musselburgh's origins and how it developed.

Area 1 can be viewed as two distinct historic landscapes, both equally important to the history of the burgh. The eastern half, beyond Dalrymple Loan, comprises the townscape that became the medieval core of the burgh. Here, medieval street frontages and backlands may be preserved beneath standing buildings and below modern ground level. The potential for the survival of archaeological remains is likely to be highest along the High Street frontage and in a narrow strip behind the frontage. The High Street itself is also of importance as the Mid Row and the original site of the market cross may still be preserved below modern ground level.

Recent development, particularly new housing schemes, will have had a significant impact on the archaeological resource in the backlands, but small pockets of archaeology may survive and every effort must be made to record or preserve what remains of it. Although much later in date and essentially outwith the historic core of the burgh, apart from the section near the Old Bridge, the south-western half of Area 1 should be seen as an

important industrial landscape and, as such, is an integral part of Musselburgh's history. It should be viewed as of considerable interest to industrial archaeologists, both as a site with standing buildings and as one with below-ground remains. This should be taken into account if further development or environmental improvements are envisaged in this area.

area 2

Area 2 comprises the extreme eastern end of the burgh, and incorporates the grounds of Pinkie House and Pinkie St Peter's Primary School. The archaeological potential for this area is largely concentrated on the short length of High Street frontage east of Newbigging, a narrow strip behind the street frontage and the street itself, where the Mid Row and the east port would have stood. Recent archaeological work suggests that little survives here, although small pockets of archaeology will be preserved throughout the backlands.

The potential for surviving archaeological remains within the grounds of Pinkie House and Pinkie St Peter's Primary School is difficult to gauge, but any landscaping or ground disturbance in this area should be monitored. Other than upstanding features, such as the doocot and ice-house, further archaeology here is likely to be concentrated within and below the standing building of Pinkie House itself.

area 3

To date, no opportunity has arisen for archaeological work on the north side of the High Street. The potential for this area is probably concentrated along the High Street frontage, perhaps the only street frontage where earlier archaeological levels are likely to be preserved beneath later buildings. The eastern end of the High Street in particular, where the best preserved standing buildings are concentrated, may reflect the oldest part of the High Street, and therefore has the highest potential for the survival of archaeological deposits.

The area behind the frontage has seen some development in recent years, as elsewhere in the burgh, but small pockets of archaeology may survive.

The exact site of the Loretto Chapel, either within the grounds of the school or elsewhere, remains uncertain, therefore any landscaping or ground disturbance in this area should be monitored.

area 4

The extent of the settlement at Fisherrow is uncertain and, to date, no opportunity for archaeological work has arisen. In common with the rest of the burgh, there has been a great deal of small-scale redevelopment here, for residential and sheltered housing and also more commercially-oriented development around the harbour. As with the High Street, on the other side of the Esk, archaeological potential is likely to be concentrated along narrow strips on the North High Street frontages. Evidence may remain of the almshouse and chapel on Market Street, but its precise location is unknown.

area 5

This area is essentially the western end of the village of Inveresk and lies outwith the historic (medieval) core of the burgh. It has been discussed in relation to the early church, and the Roman fort and *vicus* (see pp 14–17). Much of this area (coloured red on **figure 29**), together with parts of the surrounding countryside, already requires the prior written consent of the Secretary of State (Scheduled Monument Consent), in addition to any necessary planning permission, before any development or other ground disturbance can take place. Even in unscheduled parts of Inveresk, the archaeological potential can be assumed to be *exceptionally high*. Any episodes of proposed ground disturbance within Area 5 are highly likely to require an archaeological intervention.

historic buildings

pp 85-91

M

Musselburgh's history goes back thousands of years. It has had the misfortune to have been part of a battleground on numerous occasions and, inevitably, this has accentuated a natural pattern of rebuilding and continuous upgrading. As a result, much of the earlier built environment has been removed. There are, however, still standing a number of significant buildings that testify to Musselburgh's historic past.

Archaeologically, standing buildings are important to the history of the burgh for a number of reasons. Within the building, structural detail is often obscured by later alterations and modernisation, and beneath the modern floor level, sequences of earlier floors can also survive. Both can say so much about the building and about the owners. In some cases, archaeology, which predates the construction of the building, is preserved beneath the building. This is vitally important for our understanding of the development of the burgh.

The 'Roman' *Bridge* (also known as the Old Bridge) **figures 7 & 22.J** is, in fact, medieval, possibly late medieval, but was probably erected on the site of an earlier Roman bridge that is known to have existed in this area. It was on the main route from the Roman camp at Inveresk to Cramond and, beyond, to the Antonine Wall. The medieval bridge continued to function as an important section of the main thoroughfare not only from east to west, but also as part of the primary route southwards. An earlier medieval bridge here may have been replaced in the early sixteenth century. What is clear from the records is that the bridge underwent constant renovation and repair, local people being stented to cover costs or drummed into forced labour (*see* p 31 & p 39). In 1296, the Scottish army passed over the bridge from Portobello to the battle of Dunbar; the retreating English crossed after their defeat at Bannockburn in 1314; it played a strategic role in the battle of Pinkie in 1547 (*see* p 26); and it was a familiar landmark to Stewart kings, as well as to Mary of Guise, Mary Queen of Scots and the troops of the Young Pretender, Charles Edward Stewart. The bridge held an important significance for the people of Musselburgh, as it was on it that the town's west port, or gate, was sited, which delineated the limit of the town proper (*see* pp 29–30). It is very probable that the first urban settlement at Musselburgh clustered around the bridge (*see* p 18). On the west side of the bridge there grew up the settlements of Bridgend and Fisherrow, both with close links to Musselburgh and within the burgh's liberties, but somewhat removed, both physically and psychologically (*see* p 26 & p 34). It is now somewhat altered from its medieval state: its easternmost arch, noticeably out of alignment with the other two, may have been added in 1597; and the bridge has steps at either end of its three spans, now used only by foot passengers.

The regular alterations and repairs to the bridge over the centuries have taken their toll. The potential for earlier phases of the bridge to be preserved within the more modern fabric was clearly demonstrated in 1809, when repair work to one of the buttresses revealed the masonry to be resting on older masonry, which, in turn, was supported by oaken beams. The oaken beams may well have been Roman. A recent archaeological watching brief, carried out during engineering works on the bridge, revealed that all the old road surfaces had been removed and replaced with modern concrete. This, unfortunately, means that the west port or gate to the burgh, which stood on the bridge itself, probably no longer survives.

Whether or not the original nucleus of the town was beside the bridge, settlement soon stretched eastwards to the site of the true focal point of the medieval town: the *market cross* **figures 14 & 22.B**. This particular cross dates back only to the middle decades of the eighteenth century, but is symbolic of the primary function of a burgh—as a market. The earlier cross, or crosses, may not have stood in precisely this spot, as it is known that the market cross was moved in 1774, after the demolition of Mid Row (*see* p 39), but it is likely to have been close by, as it would have stood near to the other important structure of urban life—the tolbooth.

Recent excavations in both Elgin and Dunfermline have shown that earlier buildings and structures are often preserved, sealed below the modern street surface. The stone foundations of both the Mid Row and the earlier market cross may still survive below the High Street, and could be exposed in the event of development, for example during environmental improvements.

The *tolbooth figures 8 & 22.C* is one of the oldest surviving in Scotland. It was here that tolls, or market dues, were collected, the burgh council and court met and miscreants were imprisoned. Being the most important municipal building, it stood in a central position in the townscape. It features in the records as not only a symbol of civic pride, but also a constant drain on the finances of the town (see pp 39–40). The main three-storey portion of the tolbooth dates, probably, to c 1590, when major alterations were effected, possibly using some of the stones from the demolished Loretto chapel. The tower is of earlier origin, having apparently survived the burning by the Earl of Hertford in 1544. It was in this earlier steeple that the town clock was lodged, a present in 1496 to the people of Musselburgh from ‘the Dutch states’, a telling comment on the town’s trading contacts, as is the roof style of the tolbooth. The clock and its workings, now removed from their original position, may still be viewed in the first floor entrance hall. The open parapet walk may have served as a perambulatory for prisoners. The tolbooth continued to function as a prison into the twentieth century. Attached to the tolbooth is an elegant two-storeyed council chamber wing or town hall. This was added in 1762 and the marble plaque erected in 1773 (see p 39) may be viewed inside the first floor entrance porch.

Being one of the oldest standing buildings in the burgh, it is highly likely that archaeological remains are preserved both beneath and within the tolbooth. These may survive as a sequence of floor levels associated with earlier phases of the tolbooth, or as deposits which predate the construction of the building itself.

To the east of the tolbooth stand the *Pinkie Pillars*, erected in 1770. These originally stood closer together, marking the eastern limit of the town, as the port on the bridge did at the western end. Topping the pillars are urns bearing the burgh arms, the symbol of civic pride. Some of the lower course stones indicate a previous use as they show the diagonal broaching of Roman masons.

Nearby stands *Pinkie House figures 15 & 23.D*. Although now functioning as part of the policies of a school, it is a strong and attractive reminder of Musselburgh’s past and its close links with Dunfermline Abbey, as one of its abbatial burghs (see pp 16–17 & pp 26–7). The oldest part of the house is the central tower which was constructed in the sixteenth, or possibly fifteenth, century as a residence for the abbots of Dunfermline. The siting of the house probably reflected a desire on the part of the abbot to be close to his burgh, with the convenience it offered, but sufficiently removed as to be undisturbed by the populace. The tower house was acquired by Alexander Seton in 1597. He became the first Earl of Dunfermline in 1605 and married Margaret Hay of Yester in 1607. The grand extension undertaken by him c 1613 reflects this marriage: throughout the house the initials AS.ED and AS.MH can be seen. At the south end of the range he added a bay window, a novel import from England, and a tangible reminder of the impact of the recent union of the crowns. It was to this house that Charles I came as a child before his departure south in 1604. The second floor of the new range was taken up with a seventy-eight foot (24 m) long gallery, with an elaborately painted ceiling. It is quite possible that the walls were likewise painted originally and that windows on the west side gave extra light, although these are now lost through subsequent extensions in the nineteenth century by William Burn. After the battle of Prestonpans in 1745, this gallery was to serve as a casualty station for the wounded troops of Prince Charles Edward Stewart. Apart from this painted ceiling, Pinkie has some of the finest seventeenth-century ceilings in Scotland and was considered by contemporaries as one of the most desirable mansion houses in Scotland. The estate passed to the Hays in 1694, on the death of the fourth and last earl. The initials IH on the arched doorway to the eastern garden, a seventeenth-century walled garden, the work also of Seton and still intact, remind the onlooker that this doorway was added by John Hay, the second marquess of Tweeddale, amongst other improvements. In 1778, Pinkie was sold to the Hopes of Craighall, and ultimately, in 1951, it was purchased by Loretto School.

In front of the main entrance to Pinkie House is a *well figures 15 & 23.F*. Also the work of Seton, it is designed in the finest Scots Renaissance manner. Nearby, four obelisks of the time of Seton, reset into early nineteenth-century *gate piers*, reflect the quality of these early seventeenth-century improvements.



figure 27

No 7 High Street,
the French
ambassador's house
© Crown Copyright:
RCAHMS

Close by Pinkie House is another remnant of the past, the *Pinkie dovecot* **figure 23.G**. Of double-chambered lectern style, it dates from *c* 1607, when the marriage of Alexander Seton and Margaret Hay took place. This is commemorated, yet again, by the intertwined initials AS and MH.

On the north side of the High Street, across from Pinkie House, is *no 7 High Street* **figures 23.B & 27**. This, too, dates from the early seventeenth century, when it was reputed to be the residence for a French ambassador. A more modest dwelling than Pinkie, it is, however, an attractive house. The four dormer finials represent the emblems of Scotland, France, England and Ireland.

Nearby, at *no 23 High Street*, a dwelling at the rear of the frontage reveals some remnants of its late seventeenth-century construction. Originally single-storeyed, it was typical of many of the more modest houses lining the High Street. It was probably heightened early in its existence, and later adapted to function as maltings or a barn. Only its eastern frontage survives in anything like its original state. To its east stands *The Parsonage*, an attractive but relatively modest house, set back from the street. This was the home of Sir

Walter Scott and where he wrote *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

No 1/3 High Street is a fine dwelling house of *c* 1760. Three storeys high, with dormers in the roof, it has a Tuscan-pillared porch and was clearly one of the more prestigious tenements in the town. *No 13 High Street* dates from about 1790. A less prestigious house than *no 1/3*, it is perhaps more typical. It is partially constructed with old Roman stones, as can be seen from the masons' marks.

A number of properties on the High Street stand as testimony to the growing prosperity of Musselburgh in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. *Nos 31 & 33 High Street*, now a dental surgery, was built in the late eighteenth century as a tenement block fronting the focal point of the burgh—the market square. *Nos 35, 37, 39, 47, 51, 53, 55, 57 High Street* on the north side on the street and *Nos 2, 4, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 70, 72, 74, 76–90, 128, 130 & 136 High Street* on the south, all formed part of a major development along the market street frontages in the early nineteenth century. *The Musselburgh Arms* is the oldest surviving inn in Musselburgh. Still retaining much of its late eighteenth-century character, it served not only as a hostelry for travellers, but also in the nineteenth century as the dining premises for the Royal Bodyguard after the traditional annual archery competition for the Musselburgh Silver Arrow.

Street frontages have, in the light of recent excavations, been the most rewarding in terms of the preservation of archaeological deposits, despite the problem of cellarage. Although there has been no opportunity to examine any of the street frontages in Musselburgh, evidence of medieval structures in the form of post-holes and floor surfaces may be expected, sealed beneath the eighteenth or nineteenth century standing buildings. The concentration of such well-preserved buildings along this stretch of the High Street reflects the growing prosperity of Musselburgh. Any opportunities for archaeological excavation here may test whether this is also the oldest part of the burgh, or whether the focus of settlement had indeed shifted from the area around the Old Bridge.

Recent excavations in Perth, Dunfermline and Arbroath have also shown that the width and alignment of the *main streets in the burgh* have changed over the centuries. Earlier cobbled street surfaces and contemporary buildings may be preserved up to three or four metres behind the line of the modern street frontage.

Within the present grounds of Pinkie House stands *Pinkie House stable block figure 23.J*. Built *c* 1800 by John Paterson, it has canted wings facing its courtyard. Such an elaborate block is one of many standing pieces of evidence of the growing prosperity of Musselburgh at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (*see below*).

Loretto House figure 24.H, which stands at the east end of the High Street, set back on the north side, was built in the mid eighteenth century. Part of its facade reveals the quality building of a house of not inconsiderable standing. It was leased in 1827 to found Loretto School, Musselburgh by now having a fine reputation as a town where the sons of a number of Scotland's most important families were sent to be educated (*see p 42*). The addition of a three-storey flat-roofed block now disfigures the mansion house.

A little to the north of High Street, near the Esk, at the west end of Millhill stands *The Red House*. Built possibly as early as 1734, this impressive sandstone three-storey mansion was built as the town house of the Edmonstone family, the rural policies of Edmonstone being south of Stoneyhill, to the west of the town. It retains much of its original character, in spite of alterations to accommodate its function as an industrial school in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and is a reminder that Musselburgh, even in the earlier eighteenth century, attracted a modest number of elite families to settle.

Millhill, as a street, retains an attractive character, reminiscent of its past, with cobbled roadway and a number of houses reflecting their origins in the eighteenth century. *No 69 Millhill* is one such example. A terraced house of two storeys height, it has been somewhat disfigured by large doors and re-glazing, but is still evocative of its more attractive past. *Nos 54, 71, 73, 77 & 95 Millhill*, for example, were all built in the eighteenth century and, although also having been subject to a greater or lesser degree of 'modernisation', attest to the growing prosperity of the burgh. *Trafalgar Lodge*, on the right hand side of the street,



figure 28
Fisher houses
in the late nineteenth
century

was built in 1812 by a naval captain who served under Admiral Nelson. An impressive structure, at present undergoing repair, it nevertheless attests to the growing stature of Musselburgh and Millhill in the early nineteenth century.

Across the River Esk, at Eskside West, again there is evidence of the burgeoning status of the town. As in Millhill, there are a number of substantial early nineteenth-century dwelling houses; but, more significantly for present purposes, standing buildings from the eighteenth century give an insight into historic Musselburgh. One noted structure stands in the grounds of Eskside House, which was built *c* 1810 by the paymaster of the Black Watch: the *octagonal pavilion, No 8 Eskside West* **figure 20**, is a remnant from a previous dwelling. Dated 1776, it retains its slated roof with urn finial, chimney in the form of an urn and its original staircase. As this was the study of Gilbert Stuart, one of the originators of the first *Edinburgh Review*, many of the Edinburgh literati came here for conversation (*see* p 42). It is another reminder of the close ties of Musselburgh and Edinburgh.

Other houses on Eskside West still stand in relatively unaltered condition. *No 28 Eskside West*, although now harled and with a blocked window and attached to a more modern terrace, is an example of more modest dwellings of the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as a cottage with door margins, a slate roof and single mid stack. Other dwellings along this side of the Esk reveal the graciousness that was marked in some desirable areas of the town by the first half of the nineteenth century. *Nos 5 & 6 Eskside West* are particularly attractive single-storey, semi-detached cottages with attics. Built around 1840, they are of coursed rubble with ridge slated roof and skewed gables with pointed finials. With their doors in the re-entrant angles, they have retained much of their original charm. Indeed, taken as a group, *Nos 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 57 & 58 Eskside West* give a strong visual impact, particularly if viewed from the east side of the Esk, of life for the middle class of Musselburgh society in the early nineteenth century.

There is little left as a reminder of old Fisherrow. The harbour still stands, now a haven for pleasure sailing boats rather than a little fishing port. It reveals little, other than its site, of its historic and sometimes chequered past (*see* p 29 & p 39), being largely rebuilt after 1806. The west pier was not constructed until *c* 1850. Of the old fishing cottages, nothing remains **figure 28**. One property in New Street, *No 92 New Street*, however, is in style reminiscent of the fisher houses, with their outside staircases. At least one property on North High Street, the old Fisherrow, dates from the late eighteenth century. *No 88 North High Street* is a low two-storey building with attics above and a good Victorian shop

frontage on the ground level. The front of the ridge roof is slated, while the rear is pantiled with two slated piended dormers. The rear is partially obscured by other buildings, but the remains of an access stairway to an upper entrance are still visible. *No 167 North High Street* has been somewhat altered from its original state, having been re-glazed on the ground floor to accommodate a shop window frontage. A low, two-storeyed property, with a central door and passage to the backlands at the right hand side, it appears of mid eighteenth-century construction, although some elements suggest an earlier origin.

A later eighteenth-century villa at the west end of New Street, *no 97 New Street*, is an example of prestigious building in the developing area near the harbour. The insertion of a large central box dormer, an extension to the east elevation and two tiers of central box dormers at the rear disfigure what was once an attractive mansion house. Other properties along old Fisherrow are predominantly early nineteenth-century or later. *Nos 102, 104, 106, 110, 112, 150 & 152 North High Street* are all reminiscent of the sudden building boom in this area in the early nineteenth century.

Scattered around the settlement area on the west side of the Esk are little pockets of standing buildings that also reflect the growing prosperity of the town. *Nos 3 & 5 Campie Lane*, for example, are late eighteenth-century houses, both low two-storey, rubble built with raised window margins. On the corner of Bush Terrace and New Street at *No 2 Bush Terrace* is an interesting building. It is a diminutive early or mid nineteenth-century lodge. With slate roof and zinc ridges, it is roughcast with raised window and door margins.

Nos 43 & 45 Bridge Street, an early nineteenth-century terraced house of two storeys with attics, is probably typical of much of the building that resulted in this area after the construction of the new bridge and thoroughfare. The house next door, *no 47 Bridge Street*, is a larger, three-storey end terrace house. With its first-floor sill string course and corncicing, architraved windows and its door flanked by windows, with timber and glass vestibule screen with four pilasters, cornice and side light, it is representative of slightly more substantial building works along the new thoroughfare. Other such examples may be seen along the length of Bridge Street, interspersed with modern development and renovations.

Redevelopment can also be witnessed in Newbigging, *nos 96, 98 & 109 Newbigging*, for example, being of early nineteenth-century origin. The town was, also, by the early nineteenth century, expanding eastwards, *nos 11, 14, 15, 17, 18 & 19 Linkfield Road* forming a group of impressive villas of *c* 1830.

Musselburgh's ability to develop was dependent on its industry, much of which, in its turn, was dependent on the vital source of power, the River Esk. On the west bank of the Esk, upstream from the old bridge, is the remnant of the *net mill figure 22.G*. The four-storey mill, with its fine classical facade, has recently been renovated as office premises, but it was in its heyday, the mid nineteenth century, one of the most important and innovative net makers in the country, employing over 600 people. Further upstream may still be seen the *sluice gate figure 22.H*, the vital controller of water supply to the mill lade, which flowed through the industrial complex of paper and net mills before re-entering the Esk near its mouth. The supply is now piped underground, but the sluice remains, a reminder of the importance of the Esk, the sluice, the mill dam and the mill lade from medieval times (*see pp 18–19*).

The sheer size of some of the mills along the Esk means that large areas of land are sealed below the floor levels of the standing buildings. Recent excavations, together with stray finds over the last two centuries, have proved that this area is particularly rich in archaeology, ranging from Bronze Age cists burials and Roman burials to medieval garden soils.

A further reminder of the past, while not precisely 'standing buildings', are the famous *golf course* and *race course figure 24.J*. These have altered vastly over the centuries, but the Links of Musselburgh have witnessed golf matches and horse races for centuries and are an integral part of the town's character and history (*see p 27*).

Musselburgh has lost the visual evidence of its other close link, that with the church. It was founded as an abbatial burgh (*see p 17*), but there is little left to testify to its close ties

with the abbots of Dunfermline. All its chapels are now destroyed and the parish church of St Michael is a nineteenth-century structure. There does remain a mound, purportedly the remnants of *Loretto Chapel* **figure 24.1**, now in the grounds of Loretto School. There is much to suggest, however, that this tradition is suspect and that evidence of its site should be sought further south (*see* p 24).

suggested avenues for further work

pp 93-5

M

It is unlikely that documentary evidence survives to prove the existence of wharfage and a harbour front on the Esk and of first urban settlement near to the Old Bridge. Further archival research in this field, however, would merit some attention. This, together with archaeological evidence, would begin to clarify *the early townscape of Musselburgh*.

archaeological objectives for the future

Preparation of the Musselburgh 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 29**). 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 of Musselburgh and, especially, on its function in the Roman sphere of influence.
- 3 The degree and nature of cellarage, along the High Street and North High Street frontages for example, was not systematically examined during the preparation of this report. More accurate information from this source would be most useful to managers and curators of the archaeological resource in assessing the archaeological potential of these and other main street frontages in the burgh.
- 4 Engineers' bore-holes 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' bore-holes in and around the core of the historic burgh could be gradually collected and collated. Bore-hole 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 and curators of the archaeological resource.
- 5 Opportunities should continue to be taken to increase public awareness of the potential archaeological interest of Musselburgh, both generally and within and beneath historic standing buildings. This survey represents an important first step in this direction.
- 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' bore-holes and systematic survey of cellarage on the main street frontages. In

The site of the *chapel of Loretto* has, of necessity because of the time factor, been left open to question in this survey. Documentary evidence, now coming to light for the first time, suggests that the traditional siting of the chapel is suspect. This is an important aspect of Musselburgh's past and it requires further in-depth archival research.

The *Kilwinning Masonic Lodge*, which stood on Dam Brae, was built in 1612. It has the reputation of being the earliest masonic building in Scotland. As such, it merits a study not merely of its structure but also as an institution, possibly with important records extant.

The *relationship of Edinburgh with its smaller satellite towns during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*—Musselburgh, Dalkeith and Haddington—is interesting. The evidence assessed to date suggests a close networking of these smaller settlements for protection against total

history

archaeology

particular, the colour-coded map **figure 29** should be revised and re-issued at regular intervals.

priorities for future fieldwork

So little archaeological work has so far been undertaken in Musselburgh that the priorities for future archaeological fieldwork are fairly rudimentary. The following priorities, however, should be borne in mind when assessing the possible archaeological impact of any development proposals, and during the preparation of future project designs:

- 1 Ascertain whether the earliest settlement developed around the Old Bridge, and if so determine a date for the shift in focus to the present-day High Street.
- 2 Compare and contrast the two settlements at Musselburgh and Fisherrow.
- 3 Define the limits of the medieval burgh and the character and date of any burgh boundaries.
- 4 Identify any sequence of planning in the layout and expansion of the burgh, and determine any variation in street alignment and width.
- 5 Locate important features of the medieval townscape—the ports for example—of which no archaeological evidence has yet been found.

domination by Edinburgh. The livelihood—whether economic, political or social—of Musselburgh, however, was very much determined by its closeness to the capital. Documentary sources in the Scottish Record Office (SRO) could be assessed in greater depth to bring a closer understanding of this relationship with Edinburgh and the networking system of the nearby satellite towns.

While researching for the present survey, further documentary source material came to light in Haddington. This has now been transferred from Haddington tolbooth to the SRO. We are grateful to SRO, and to Mr Peter Vasey in particular, for facilitating access to this uncatalogued material. Some of the findings in this archive have been included in *Historic Musselburgh*, but no assessment of Musselburgh could be complete without a full cognisance of the contents of this *newly discovered source material*.

history

archaeology	6	Ascertain whether the Loretto Chapel stood to the north or south of Linkfield Road.
	7	Identify the exact locations of the chapels and almshouses within the burgh, as well as the leper hospital to the west.
	8	Determine whether any riverside structures, such as quays and wharves, ever existed along the Esk.
	9	Test the hypothesis that medieval settlement along the south side of High Street, for example, was confined to a narrow strip and that the properties shown on early nineteenth-century maps extending from the High Street up to Inveresk Road and Pinkie Road are a later development.
<i>areas for further archaeological research</i>		
	1	A reconstruction of the layout and physical setting of the medieval burgh is essential. This would be particularly useful when assessing the impact of future development and in presenting the current state of knowledge.
	2	Further research into the nature of contemporary sea levels would lead to a better understanding of the development of the burgh and the potential for a harbour on the Esk. This would also be of use in assessing the role and function of the Roman fort at Inveresk within the overall military system.

street names

pp 97-100

M

As the name indicates, this was a back lane, on the edge of the Fisherrow links, behind the properties that fronted onto Fisherrow (renamed North High Street). By the early nineteenth century, the north side of the lane was already being developed. Back of Fisher Row was renamed New Street.

This street, as the name indicates, connected Musselburgh with Fisherrow (now North High Street), via the New Bridge (built in 1806).

This street connects Inveresk Road with the west end of the High Street. Primrose House, a private girls' school which dates to the late 1700s, was located here. The school was governed by Miss Primrose, and it was here that Mary Somerville of Burntisland, the founder of the first women's college in Oxford—Somerville College—studied.

This narrow wynd leads from North High Street (originally named Fisherrow) to New Street (renamed from Back of Fisher Row).

Unlike Eskside West, where houses fronted onto the river, Eskside East was more of a back lane behind the properties on the High Street and Millhill.

Fronting onto the west bank of the Esk, this street contains a fine Georgian terrace between the footbridge and the New Bridge. At the junction of Eskside West and North High Street (formerly Fisherrow), are the Loretto Nippers' School, 'Eskbank', built by General Stirling of the Black Watch in about 1819, and Eskside House, with its distinctive octagonal pavilion **figure 20**, built about 1810 by a former paymaster of the Black Watch and used as a study by Gilbert Stuart, one of the founders of *The Edinburgh Review*.

This was the main thoroughfare of Fisherrow, extending from the harbour at the west end towards Musselburgh. It was renamed North High Street.

Widened considerably in recent years, this was originally a narrow vennel leading from Fisherrow (now North High Street), northwards to Back of Fisher Row (now New Street).

This was originally named Hyslop's Wynd, and connects North High Street (originally named Fisherrow), via South Street, with Eskside West. It also runs behind the properties fronting onto

North High Street, before connecting up with Market Street further west.

High Street

Area 1 & 2

The High Street was the main thoroughfare of Musselburgh, and located within it were the most important features of the medieval town—the tolbooth, market cross and ports. The tolbooth, one of the oldest surviving in Scotland, dates from the late sixteenth century, with later alterations, and the present market cross to the mid 1700s. The Pinkie Pillars, at opposite sides of the High Street, mark what was the east port into the town. The west port stood on the Old Bridge. A row of houses, Mid Row, once stood in the middle of the High Street, near the tolbooth and market place, with a chapel dedicated to St James at the west end. These houses were demolished in the eighteenth century and partly explain the exceptional width of the street today.

Hyslop's Wynd

Area 4

This has since been renamed Hercus Loan, a back lane that connected Fisherrow (now North High Street), via South Street, with what is now Eskside West. It also ran behind the properties that fronted onto Fisherrow, before connecting up with Market Gate (now Market Street) further west.

Inveresk Road

Area 1

This was originally a back lane behind the properties that extended south from the High Street frontage, a distance of some 300 m. To the east of Newbigging, this lane became Pinkie Road. It may be the original 'common loaning' that existed in the sixteenth century.

Kerr's Wynd

Area 3

An archway and pend in the tenement building immediately adjacent to the Musselburgh Arms, the oldest surviving inn in the burgh, leads through to Kerr's Wynd. Many old stones can be seen in the fabric of the pend, re-used from the Roman fort at Inveresk. This wynd appears to have been known as Mill Wynd in the early nineteenth century at least. It leads from the High Street through to Millhill and Millhill Lane.

Linkfield Road

Area 2

Linkfield Road is essentially an extension of the High Street eastwards. It was also the main route along the coast to Prestonpans, and to Haddington. A row of houses on Linkfield Road were built by the Musselburgh Heritage Company with the intention of creating a seaside resort like Portobello.

The Mall

Area 1

The Mall, or Mall Avenue, is the area along the east bank of the river, extending southwards from the west end of the High Street. Although there is some residential housing here, it is now mainly fronted by large industrial works, involved in net and wire making. In the nineteenth century, the many mills that were concentrated along here fed off the mill lade, an artificial source of water and power that emptied into the Esk, near the coast.

- Market Gate;
Marketgait *Area 4*
This was renamed Market Street, and ran from the Old Bridge towards Fisherrow harbour, where it joined up with Fisherrow (now North High Street). A chapel, dedication unknown, stood somewhere nearby, and an almshouse also stood somewhere in Market Street, before its conversion to a residential house.
- Market Street *Area 4*
Formerly Market Gate or Marketgait, this street runs from the Old Bridge towards Fisherrow harbour, where it meets with North High Street. A chapel and an almshouse stood somewhere in the vicinity of Market Street.
- Mid Row *Area 1*
The wide space at the east end of the High Street has the appearance of a market place but in fact was the site of the Mid Row, a row of cottages which were demolished in the eighteenth century. A chapel stood at one end.
- Millhill *Area 3*
Millhill is an attractive old residential street, with a cobbled roadway and a variety of house styles from early eighteenth-century gable-end cottages to gracious Georgian terraced villas. It derived its name from the sea mill, powered by the mill lade, at the eastern end of the street.
- Millhill Lane *Area 3*
Millhill Lane runs between the back of the properties that front onto the High Street, and Millhill, more or less on the line of the mill lade on its way to the coast.
- Mill Wynd *Area 3*
This wynd appears to have been renamed Kerr's Wynd some time after the early nineteenth century. It leads from the High Street through to Millhill and Millhill Lane.
- Newbigging *Areas 1, 2 & 3*
Newbigging, like Fisherrow, was a separate settlement from Musselburgh, but has since been swallowed up by the burgh. A small settlement developed along a road, Newbigging, linking Inveresk and Musselburgh, and at the crossroads of Inveresk Road and Pinkie Road.
- New Bridge *Area 1*
Prior to this bridge, the crossings over the Esk were the Old Bridge further upstream, and the ford (where the footbridge is now). A further, wooden bridge was constructed in the eighteenth century (*see* pp 00–0). The New Bridge was designed by John Rennie, famous for a number of London bridges. It was built in 1806, and widened in 1925.
- New Street *Area 4*
This was originally known as Back of Fisher Row, and was no more than a lane on the edge of the links, behind the properties fronting on to Fisherrow (now North High Street). It was

beginning to be developed by the early nineteenth century, if not before. It was here that many of the fishing community lived.

North High Street

Area 4

Originally known as Fisherrow, it was renamed North High Street. This was the main thoroughfare of Fisherrow, extending from the harbour at the west end towards Musselburgh.

Old Bridge

Area 1

Often referred to as the Roman bridge, it is in fact medieval, but built probably on or near where a Roman bridge first spanned the Esk. In 1296, a bridge here carried the Scottish army on its march to the battle of Dunbar, and in 1314 the retreating English army after its defeat at Bannockburn. Originally the bridge had only two arches, connecting Market Street with The Mall in a straight line. The third arch was added about 1597, and is 'kinked' to line up with the kirk at Inveresk. The west part of the town was located on the bridge itself and the approaches were ramped, not stepped as they are today.

Pinkie Road

Area 2

This was originally a back lane behind the properties that extended south from the High Street frontage, a distance of some 300 m. To the west of Newbigging, this lane became Inveresk Road. It may be the same pathway as the sixteenth-century 'common loaning'.

South Street

Area 4

South Street is a narrow street which runs south from North High Street (originally Fisherrow), before joining up with Hercus Loan (previously named Hyslop's Wynd).

almshouse

House for the support and lodging of the poor; sometimes a hospital.

amphora

A large Roman ceramic container, mainly used for transportation of liquid and foodstuffs.

artefacts

Objects made by human workmanship.

as

A type of Roman coin.

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.

black burnished ware

A distinctive type of Roman pottery, commonly used as cooking pots.

booths

Small open-fronted stalls, sometimes free-standing but often appended to the front of houses lining the street, where merchants and craftsmen sold their goods.

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* backland). In time, with pressure for space, the plots were often subdivided—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.

calcined bone

Burnt bone.

cinerary urns

A form of burial dating to the Bronze Age, whereby the cremated remains were placed in urns.

cists

Stone-lined graves.

close

see vennel

coarse ware

A category of Roman pottery which includes imported amphorae and mortaria, but also wares made in Britain.

common good

Revenues from the burgh courts, the fishings, multures, market tolls, rentals, *etc.*

cordiners	Leather workers.
craft	Trade.
documentary sources	Written evidence, primary sources being the original documents.
façade	Finished face of a building.
feu-ferme	Payment of burghal dues to the burgh superior by a pre-agreed annual sum.
finial	Topmost part of a pinnacle.
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.
grey ware	A type of Roman pottery.
guild	Organisation or fraternity for mutual support, whether economic, religious or social.
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.
hypocaust	A system of underfloor heating in Roman bathhouses, where the floor was raised on pillars of brick or tile and hot air passed below.
<i>in situ</i>	An archaeological term describing layers of soil or features undisturbed by later activity.
indwellers	Unprivileged, non-burgess dwellers in a town.
infektment	(Old Scots Law) investment with heritable property.
inhumation	An uncremated burial.
<i>intervallum</i>	Open space around the perimeter of a Roman fort, immediately inside the rampart.
isostatic uplift	Where the land mass rises after the ice-cap melts.
merk	13s 4d, two-thirds of £ Scots.
midden	Rubbish heaps consisting of mainly food debris and other waste products, often found in the backlands of medieval properties.
<i>mortarium</i>	A large Roman bowl used in the preparation of food.

natural	The level of subsoil or bedrock undisturbed by human activity.
<i>opus signinum</i>	A type of Roman floor, comprising cement and crushed red tile.
pend	A narrow covered close or walkway between buildings.
pit alignment	Rows of closely spaced pits which may have been prehistoric land boundaries. The nature of these boundaries is not known.
<i>praetentura</i>	The internal area at the front of a Roman fort.
prehistory	Period of human history before the advent of writing.
procurator	In Roman times, the supreme financial administrator of the province.
repletion	<i>see</i> burgage plot
rig	<i>see</i> burgage plot
samian ware	A distinctive type of Roman pottery, used as tableware. Samian ware has a glossy red surface and most vessels were stamped by the potter.
scarping	Removal of earth, often to provide level ground prior to building.
sherd	Fragment of pottery.
snaffle bit	Part of horse gear. A snaffle bit is a mouth-piece, usually comprising two links, with a ring at each end.
tectonic movements	Displacements in the earth's crust.
<i>terra sigillata</i>	Samian pottery is often referred to as <i>terra sigillata</i> . <i>see</i> samian ware.
toft	<i>see</i> 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.
<i>via praetoria</i>	One of the main internal roads within a Roman fort, which led from the front gate to the headquarters building.
<i>via sagularis</i>	One of a number of internal roads within a Roman fort.

vicus A settlement outside the gates of a Roman fort with shops and taverns lining the main road. Here, merchants and traders who travelled with the army into Scotland set up business.

wattle and daub Materials used in the construction of buildings since prehistory. Thin branches (wattles) are woven together and covered with mud or clay (daub).

£ £ Scots.

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- a**
- Aberdour 37, 71
 - Adair, John,
 - map of 1682 21 **figure 9**, 70
 - Adam, John, architect 41
 - Adie, George,
 - schoolmaster 33
 - admirals 42, 67
 - advocates 35, 72
 - aerial photographs 6 **figure 2**, 13, 16, 79
 - ala quingenaria* 14
 - Albany, governor 21, 70
 - ale 29, 65
 - almshouse 24, 26, 72, 68, 73,
 - 83, 97, 99, 101
 - altar 16, 78
 - America 36
 - amphora* 101
 - Anne of Denmark,
 - queen of Scots 27
 - Antonine Wall 13, 14, 50, 85
 - Antoninus Pius 13
 - aqueduct 26, 41, 55, 81
 - Arbroath 88
 - archaeological deposits 49, 52, 54, 57, 82, 83,
 - 88
 - arms of Musselburgh 17
 - artefacts 54, 79, 80, 101
 - Arthur's Seat 5
 - assize of bread 33
 - assizes 19
 - authors 42, 67
 - axes 11
- b**
- Back of Fisher Row 97, 99
 - backlands 35, 54, 82, 83, 90,
 - 101, 102
 - backlands *see also* burgage plots
 - 24, 27, 30, 32, 33, 34,
 - 35, 37, 53, 58, 64,
 - 66, 72, 73, 75, 101
 - baillies 24, 27, 30, 32, 33, 34,
 - 35, 37, 53, 58, 64,
 - 66, 72, 73, 74,
 - 101
 - bakers *see* baxters
 - Bannockburn 85, 100
 - Barclay, George,
 - schoolmaster 33
 - barracks 14, 77
 - bath-house 14, 78
 - Bathgate Hills 5
 - baxters, incorporation of 35, 37
 - beacons 29, 70
 - beer 29, 65, 71
 - begging 36
 - Belfield 11, 71
 - bellman 31
 - Bennet, notary 24, 26, 54, 59, 61,
 - 66, 67
 - Bernham, David,
 - bishop of St Andrews 19
 - Biggar 14, 50
 - black burnished ware 54, 80
 - bleachfield 39
 - Bo'ness 13
 - boats 29, 38, 41, 70, 73,
 - 74, 89
 - bone 16, 53, 54, 72, 79,
 - 80, 101
 - booths 33, 35, 101
 - boundaries *see* burgage plots
 - brewers, breweries,
 - brewing 35, 36, 66
 - bridges 29, 30, 39, 50, 53,
 - 74, 85, 99, *see also*
 - Esk Bridge
 - Bridge Street 68, 70, 90, 97
 - no* 43 90
 - no* 45 90
 - no* 47 90
 - Bridgend 31, 34, 35, 38, 39,
 - 53, 55, 72, 73, 85
 - broadcloth factory 36, 38
 - Bronze Age 11, 13, 53, 90, 101
 - bronze objects 53
 - Brunton Theatre 68
 - Brunton's Wire &
 - Wire Rope works 41, 50, 54
 - bulwarks 20, 68
 - burgage plots,
 - boundaries, rigs, tofts 9, 17, 26, 49, 52, 55,
 - 59, 62, 67, 68
 - burgesses 9, 24, 27, 35, 58, 66
 - burgh arms 55, 86, 88, 98
 - burgh council 20, 37, 52, 62, 86,
 - 103
 - burgh court 19, 27, 101
 - burgh superior 19, 37, 102
 - Burgher Seceding House 32
 - burghs of regality 27
 - burial ground *see* kirkyard
 - burials
 - prehistoric 11, 53, 90
 - Roman 16, 53, 54, 80, 90
 - Burn, William 86
 - Burntisland 33, 97
 - Bush Terrace
 - no* 2 90

butchers *see* fleshers
 buttresses 31, 53, 55, 85

c

'Cabbage Hall' 21, 58, 66
 cairns 11
 calcined bone 53, 72
 Caledonians 14
 Campie Lane
 no 3 90
 no 5 90
 Caracalla, son of
 Septimius Severus 13, 14
 Carberry 24, 27
 carboniferous rocks 5, 7
 Carlops 14, 50
 Carlyle, Dr Alexander 42
 Carpow 14
 carters 38
 cattle 35
 causeys 39
 cemeteries, prehistoric
 and Roman *see* burials
 cemetery *see* kirkyard
 Chambers, George, W S 41
 chapel of Loretto 18, 21, 24, 26, 65, 67,
 66, 94
 Chapel of St James 24, 55, 58
 chapels 24, 91, 97
 Charles I, king of Scots 33, 65
 Charles II, king of Scots 27
 Charles Edward Stewart 41, 58, 85, 86
 charter chest 38, 71
 child minding 38
 Church Lane 49
 churchyard *see* kirkyard
 cinerary urns 11, 53
 cist burials 11, 53
 Claudius, emperor 13
 'Claypuyl' 21, 24, 58, 66
 Clyde, Firth of 5
 coal 5, 6, 29, 35, 38, 41,
 58, 66, 70, 75
 lanterns 29, 70
 quarries 35, 58, 66
 yards 41, 75
 coarse ware 101
 cobbled street surfaces 88
 Cockenzie 5
 coin hoards 73
 coins 73, 80
 Colinton 31, 67
 colliers 41
 commendator of
 Dunfermline 27

common good 101
 common grazings 35
 common green 21, 24, 26, 58, 66, 72
 common land 34, 35, 40, 41, 74, 75
 common loaning 24, 58, 67, 98, 100
 Convention of Royal
 Burghs 37, 71
 cordiners 102
 corn market 37, 39, 56
 council 5, 17, 18, 19, 20, 27,
 29, 30, 31, 32, 33,
 35, 36, 37, 38, 39
 councillors 41, 58
 court days 38
 craft 32, 35, 73, 101, 102
 Cramond 14, 50, 85
 creels 36, 73
 Cromwell, Oliver 29, 33, 38, 55, 60, 65
 Culloden, battle of 41
 Cumberland, Duke of 41
 curfew 31, 53
 curriers 35
 customs house 29, 65, 71

d

Dalkeith 5, 13, 27, 36, 37, 94
 Dalrymple Loan 49, 50, 82, 97
 Dam Brae 26, 31, 39, 55, 94
 dams 31, 67
 David I, king of Scots 16, 18
 David II, king of Scots 19, 20, 64
 'dead' bell 31
 deer 11
 Defoe, Daniel 38
 demolition debris 54
 Dennistoun, Walter,
 schoolmaster 33
 Dere Street 14, 50
 ditch 13, 14, 16, 39, 77,
 78, 79, 80, 101
 ditching 39
 documentary sources 16, 52, 58, 66, 68,
 76, 95
 Donald, earl of Mar 43: note 52
 doocot *see* dovecot
 Douchtye, Thomas,
 hermit 24, 58
 Douglas, James,
 earl of Morton, regent 27
 Douglas Wynd 97
 dovecot 57, 60, 61, 65, 67, 83
 Draft Local Plan 50
 Drummond, John,
 of Newton 36
 Dunbar 5, 20, 21, 27, 29, 33,
 68, 70, 85, 100

- Dunbar, battle of 33
 Dumbarton 20, 70
 Duncan, Archibald, schoolmaster 33
 Dunfermline
 abbots 17, 19, 20, 26, 27, 57, 64
 commendators 27
 Dunfermline Abbey 16, 17, 27, 42, 76, 80, 86
 Dunfermline, Earl of 27
 Dunfermline, regality of 20, 27, 64
 dunghills 39
 'Dutch states' 20, 65, 86
 dyeing 36
- e**
 early medieval 5, 9, 16, 20
 east port 19, 31, 57, 83, 98
 East Linton 13
 Edinburgh 5, 6, 7, 16, 18, 21, 26, 27, 29, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 41
 Edinburgh Castle 35, 52
Edinburgh Review 42, 75, 89, 97
 Edinburgh Road 5, 68
 Edinburgh University 33
 Edmonstone family 88
 Elgin 13, 85
 'English School' 33, 39
 Episcopalian chapel 32
 Esk Bridge 9, 18 **figure 7**, 19, 24, 26, 29, 30-1, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55
 Eskmouth 16
 Esk, River 5, 7, 8, 17-18 **figures 6 & 7**, 19, 24, 26, 29, 30-1, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55
 Eskside East 97
 Eskside House 89, 97
 Eskside West 42, 89
 nos 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 57, 58 89
 Eskside West *no* 8 42 **figure 20**, 89
 Esk Valley 12 **figure 4**, 13
 executioner 32, 64
 exports 29, 70
 Eyemouth 21, 70
- f**
 facade 102
 fairs 19, 27
 fells 5, 19
 Felton Green 52, 59
 female and child labour 36
 feu-ferme 19, 102
 feuing 40, 75
 field systems 13, 16
 fines 19, 20, 24, 31, 53, 62, 64, 66, 68, 82, 86
 finial 87, 89, 102
 fires 32
 fish 5, 9, 11, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27, 29, 33, 34, 35, 37
 fisher houses 89 **figure 28**
 fishermen 29, 37, 38, 73, 74, 75
 Fisherrow 5, 9, 20, 24, 26, 27, 29, 33, 34, 35, 38 **figure 16**, 39, 41, 65, 68-9 **figure 26**, 89
 Fisherrow Manse 74
 Fishers Wynd 68, 97
 fishing 5, 16, 18, 19, 21, 35, 42, 52, 70, 71, 73, 89, 100, 101
 fishwives 37, 38 **figure 16**, 73-4
 flesh booths 35
 fleshers 33, 35, 36, 38
 flint tools 11
 floor surfaces 88
 football 37, 73
 fords 36
 fornication 32
 forts 13, 14, 56, 77
 Forth Clyde line 13
 Forth, Firth of 5, 18, 52
 fortlets 13
 foundations 7, 15, 52, 55, 58, 78, 79, 85
 French ambassador's residence *see* High Street, *no* 7
 French troops 21, 70
 frontages 49, 50, 52, 70, 82, 83, 88, 97
 fulling mill 36
 funeral 11
 furnaces 16
- g**
 gap sites 102
 gardens 5, 11, 26, 49, 50, 55, 57, 59, 65, 67, 68
 gardeners 35, 38
 gate piers *see* Pinkie Pillars

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------|
| general council | 19 | | |
| generals | 42, 67 | | |
| geography | 4 figure 1 | | |
| geology | 5-7 | | |
| Geta, son of | | | |
| Septimius Severus | 13 | | |
| glacial till | 7 | | |
| Glen App | 5 | | |
| gold | 66, 67 | | |
| golf | 7, 37, 42, 49, 62, 65, 67, 73, 90 | | |
| golf course | 7, 42, 49, 62, 67, 90 | | |
| grammar school | 33, 81 | | |
| granary | 14, 16, 77 | | |
| Grassmarket | 32 | | |
| grave-stones | 80 | | |
| graves | 54, 80, 101 | | |
| graveyard | <i>see</i> kirkyard | | |
| great customs | 19 | | |
| Grey, Lord | 26 | | |
| grey ware | 79, 102 | | |
| grocers | 38 | | |
| guild | 35, 102 | | |
| Gullane | 7, 21, 70 | | |
| gun emplacements | 76 | | |
| guns | 26, 41 | | |
| h | | | |
| Haddington | 5, 37, 94, 95, 98 | | |
| Hadrian's Wall | 13-14 | | |
| hairdressers | 38 | | |
| Hamilton, marquis of | 32, 65 | | |
| hangman | <i>see</i> executioner | | |
| harbour | 5, 9, 14, 18, 20, 21, 29, 33, 39, 40, 41, 42, 50, 52, 65, 68 | | |
| harbour frontage | 18, 52 | | |
| 'Harcas Green' | 24, 58, 66 | | |
| Hay of Yester, Margaret | 61 | | |
| Hay, James, map of 1824 | 22-3 figure 10 | | |
| Hay, John, | | | |
| second marquess of Tweeddale | 86 | | |
| Hearth Tax | 34, 56, 60, 72 | | |
| hearths | 34, 56, 58, 61, 72 | | |
| Helensburgh | 5 | | |
| henges | 11 | | |
| Hercus Loan | 97, 98, 100 | | |
| hermits | 42 | | |
| Hertford, Earl of | 19 | | |
| hides | 19, 20, 35, 64 | | |
| high-water mark | 18, 65 | | |
| High Street | 8 figure 3 , 9, 18, 19, 24, 41 figure 19 , 42, 49, 50, 55, 57, | | 60-1, 62, 64 |
| | | | 88 |
| | | <i>nos</i> 1/3 | |
| | | <i>nos</i> 2, 4, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 70, 72, 74, 76-90, 128, 130, 136 | 88 |
| | | <i>no</i> 7 | 62, 87 figure 28 |
| | | <i>nos</i> 13 | 50, 88 |
| | | <i>no</i> 23 | 87 |
| | | <i>nos</i> 31, 33 | 88 |
| | | <i>nos</i> 35, 37, 39, 47, 51, 53, 55, 57 | 88 |
| | | <i>nos</i> 172-180 | 49, 52, 54 |
| Highland Boundary Fault | 5 | | |
| hillforts | 13 | | |
| hinterland | 20, 64, 102 | | |
| hoard | 70, 73, 102 | | |
| Holland | 33, 73 | | |
| Home, Patrick, W S | 36 | | |
| Hopes of Craighall | 86 | | |
| horse racing | 37, 66 | | |
| hospitals | 70 | | |
| Hume, David | 42 | | |
| Hunter, Robert, merchant | 36 | | |
| hypocaust | 14, 78, 79, 102 | | |
| Hyslop's Wynd | 98 | | |
| i | | | |
| Ice age | 7 | | |
| icehouses | 57, 60, 61, 66 | | |
| imports | 29, 70 | | |
| <i>in situ</i> | 60, 78, 102 | | |
| indwellers | 102 | | |
| infetment | 27, 102 | | |
| inhumation | 11, 79, 102 | | |
| <i>intervallum</i> | 14, 102 | | |
| Inveresk | 5, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24, 32, 33, 41, 49, 50, 56, 76-81, 83 | | |
| Inveresk Hill | 41 | | |
| Inveresk House | 14, 33, 78, 80, 81 | | |
| Inveresk Mills | 5, 49 | | |
| Inveresk Road | 5, 49, 50, 76, 97, 98, 99, 100 | | |
| Ireland | 87 | | |
| Iron Age | 13 | | |
| ironstone | 6 | | |
| isostatic uplift | 7 | | |
| j | | | |
| Jacobite Rising of 1715 | 41 | | |
| Jacobite Rising of 1745 | 41 | | |
| James II, king of Scots | 19 | | |
| James V, king of Scots | 24, 58, 66 | | |

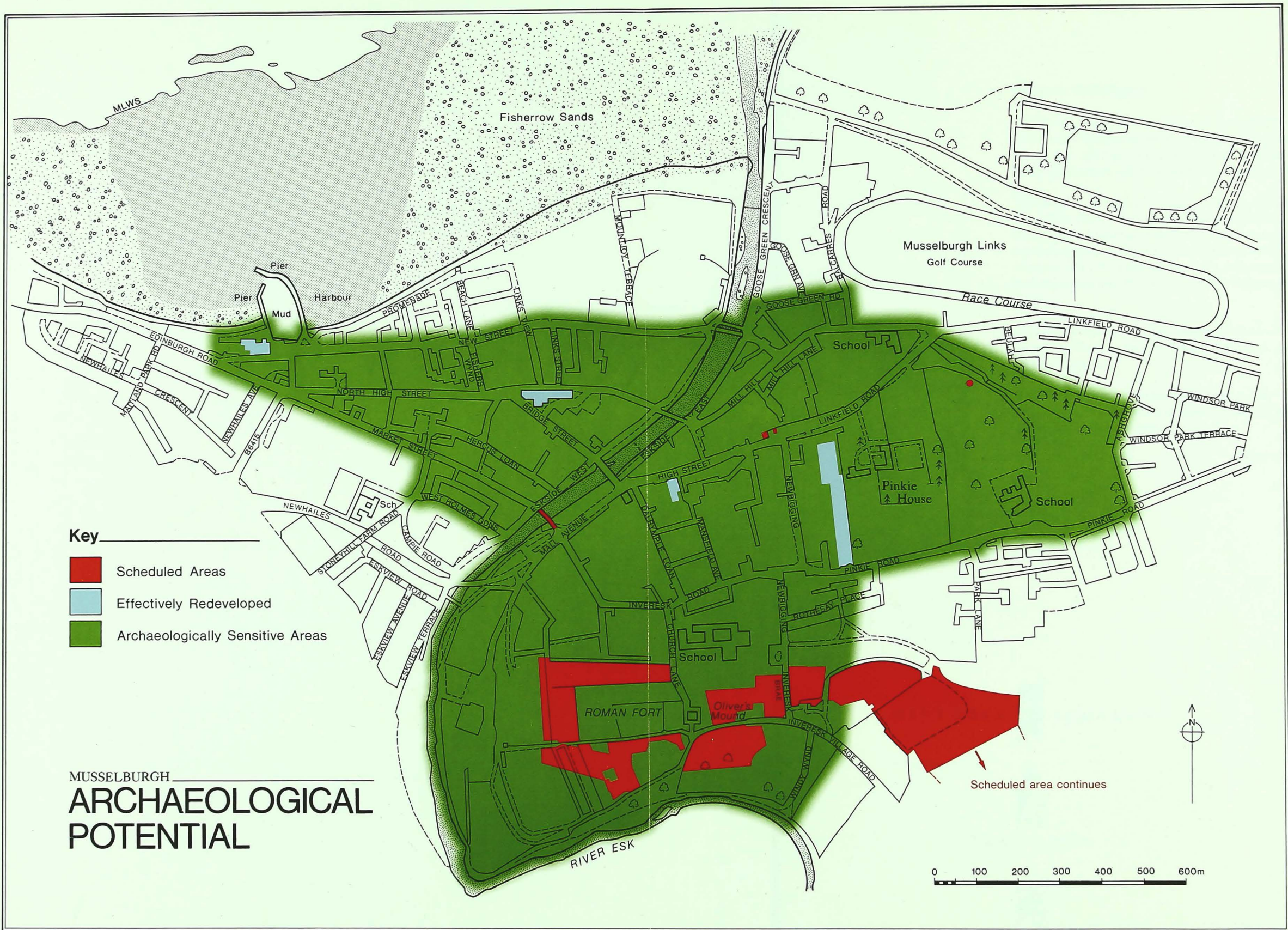
- James VI, king of Scots 27, 33
 Johns, Henry 26
 judges 42, 67
- k**
- Kerr's Wynd 21, 62, 65, 67
 kilns 37, 50, 56, 71
 Kilwinning Lodge 55
 Kilwinning Street 49
 king's highway 24, 58, 66
 Kirk Park 11, 53
 Kirkcaldy 19, 20, 64
 kirkyard, burial ground,
 cemetery, churchyard,
 graveyard 14, 66-7, 76, 77, 80,
 see also burials
- l**
- lace 33
 Ladywell Way 75
 Lammermuir hills 5
 Latin School 33, 34
 Lauderdale *see* Maitland
 Laurie, John,
 plan of 1766 40 **figure 18**
 lawyers 26, 36, 55
Lay of the Last Minstrel 42, 88
 leather industry 35, 36, 37
 Leith 5, 20, 21, 33, 36, 41,
 68, 75
 leper hospital 24, 74, 70, 72, 97
 Leslie, General David 33
 library 41, 68
 lime 6, 7, 31, 37, 55, 71,
 73, 79
 Limekilns 37, 71
 limestone 6, 7
 Linkfield Road 5, 57, 60, 62, 64, 90,
 97, 98
 nos 11, 14, 15, 17,
 18, 19 90
 Links, the 33, 38, 41, 49, 62, 65
 lint mill 36, 39
 listed buildings 62
 literati 41, 75, 89
 Lochend Road North 68
 Lochend Road South 68
 Loretto Chapel 20, 49, 58, 60, 62, 66,
 64, 83, 86, 91, 97
 Loretto House 88
 Loretto School 18, 24, 58, 64, 65, 66,
 67, 86, 88, 91
 'Lye Grene' 26, 72
- m**
- MacCartney, James 26, 55
 macehead 11, 65
 Maeatae 13
 Magdalen Bridge 11, 27, 29, 30, 39, 74
 Magdalen Chapel 34, 74
 Magdalen harbour 29, 65, 70, 71
 Magdalen Pans 35, 38, 58, 74, 75
 Maitland Bridge 29, 74
 Maitland, John,
 of Thirlestane 27
 Maitlands of Thirlestane,
 earls of Lauderdale 27, 29, 33
 Malcolm III, king of Scots 16
 Mall, the 98
 Mall Avenue 50, 98
 malt makers 36
 manse 31, 32, 34, 42, 49, 55,
 56, 74
 mantua makers 38
 Margaret, queen of Scots 16
 Marjoribanks, Thomas 26, 55
 market 5, 9, 19, 20, 24, 26,
 27, 29, 31, 32, 33,
 35, 36, 37, 38, 39
 market cross 9, 31 **figure 14**, 37,
 39, 85
 market dues 19, 86
 Market Gate, Marketgait 9, 35, 37, 39
 market place 20, 54, 64, 98, 99
 Market Street 9, 24, 26, 39, 68, 72,
 68, 70, 72, 73, 83,
 88, 98, 99, 100
 Mary, queen of Scots 27
 Mary of Guise,
 queen of Scots 27
 masons 35, 38, 55, 86, 88
 meal market 39
 meat 33, 35, 36
 medieval garden soils 50, 52, 90
 'meikle bridge' *see* Esk Bridge
 merchants 15, 19, 36, 38, 41, 75,
 101, 104
 merk 19, 30, 31, 33, 36, 39,
 55, 56, 74, 76, 102
 Mid Row 20, 24, 39, 52, 54, 55,
 56, 57, 58, 82, 83,
 85, 98, 99
 mid-common 40
 midden 11, 101, 102
 Midland Valley 5, 6, 7
 Mill Bridge 50
 mill dams 31, 39
 Millhill 35, 38, 62, 66, 67, 72,
 88, 89, 97, 98, 99

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <i>nos</i> 54, 71, 73, 77, 95 | 88 | | |
| <i>no</i> 69 | 88 | | |
| Millhill Lane | 98, 99 | | |
| milliners | 38 | | |
| mill lade | 50, 55, 56, 90, 98, 99 | | |
| mills | 5, 19, 21, 31, 37, 39,
42, 49, 50, 53, 67,
90, 98 | | |
| Mill Wynd | 98, 99 | | |
| ministers | 36 | | |
| modern deposits | 54 | | |
| Moir, Dr | 42 | | |
| Monktonhall | 26, 79 | | |
| Monmouth and
Buccleuch,
duchess of | 29 | | |
| Moorfoot hills | 5 | | |
| <i>mortaria</i> | 54, 101 | | |
| Morton, Earl of | <i>see</i> Douglas | | |
| motto, of town | 43: note 52 | | |
| Muirfield | 7 | | |
| multures | 21, 101 | | |
| murder | 32 | | |
| music school | 33 | | |
| mussel beds | 5, 17, 36 | | |
| Musselburgh, lordship of | 27 | | |
| Musselburgh Arms | 88, 98 | | |
| Musselburgh Bridge | 26, 27 | | |
| Musselburgh crofts | 26 | | |
| Musselburgh stuffs | 36 | | |
| Musselburghshire | 27 | | |
| n | | | |
| Napoleonic Wars | 37, 65 | | |
| natural sand | 54, 61, 70, 73, 79 | | |
| Nelson, Admiral | 89 | | |
| Neolithic period | 11 | | |
| net factory | 41, 56 | | |
| net mill | 50, 90 | | |
| nether mill | 31, 67 | | |
| New Bridge | 9, 62, 90, 97, 99 | | |
| New Cumnock | 5 | | |
| New Street | | | |
| <i>no</i> 92 | 89 | | |
| <i>no</i> 97 | 90 | | |
| Newbattle Abbey | 17 | | |
| Newbigging | 5, 9, 26, 27, 33, 34,
35, 38, 49, 50, 52,
55, 56, 57, 60, 61
90 | | |
| <i>nos</i> 96, 98, 109 | | | |
| Newbigging Loaning | 26, 55, 60 | | |
| Newburgh | 14 | | |
| Newstead | 14, 50 | | |
| North Berwick | 5, 20, 21, 68, 70 | | |
| North Berwick Law | 5 | | |
| | | North High Street | |
| | | <i>no</i> 9, 68, 70, 73,
83, 89, 90, 97,
98, 99, 100 | 90 |
| | | <i>no</i> 88 | 89 |
| | | <i>no</i> 167 | 90 |
| | | <i>nos</i> 102, 104, 106,
110, 112, 150,
152 | 90 |
| | | Northesk, Water of | 26 |
| | | Norway | 29, 71 |
| | | notaries | 24, 26, 54, 59 |
| | | o | |
| | | oil-shale | 5, 6 |
| | | Old Red Sandstone | 5, 6, 7 |
| | | Old Bridge | <i>see</i> Esk Bridge |
| | | Old Kilpatrick | 13 |
| | | Oliver's Mound | 81 |
| | | <i>opus signinum</i> | 79, 103 |
| | | oyster shell | 54 |
| | | p | |
| | | painted gallery | 41, 58 |
| | | parish church | 31, 32, 41, 49, 76,
80, 91 |
| | | parliament | 27, 29, 30, 36, 37,
53, 65, 71, 74 |
| | | Parsonage, the | 62, 87 |
| | | Patten, William | 26 |
| | | pend | 5, 19, 32, 42, 53, 90,
98, 101, 102, 103 |
| | | Penicuik | 21 |
| | | Penitentiary Records | 24, 67 |
| | | Pentland Hills | 5 |
| | | perfumers | 38 |
| | | Perth | 36, 82, 88 |
| | | physical setting | 8 figure 3 , 9, 11 |
| | | Picts | 14 |
| | | piers | 19, 57, 86 |
| | | pilgrims | 67 |
| | | Pinkie, battle of | 18, 19, 24, 25 figure
11 , 26, 52, 53, 59 |
| | | Pinkie coal mines | 41, 60 |
| | | Pinkie House | 19, 27, 34 figure 15 ,
35, 41, 49, 57, 58,
60, 61, 66, 86 |
| | | Pinkie Road | 5, 52, 57, 59, 60, 76,
97, 98, 99, 100 |
| | | Pinkie Pillars | 19, 86, 98 |
| | | Pinkie St Peter's
Primary School | 57, 60 |
| | | pit alignments | 13 |
| | | Pitcairn, Robert,
commendator of
Dunfermline | 27 |

- Pitcottie,
 Robert Lindsay of 26
- plague 33, 73
- poll tax 35, 36
- poor 13, 14, 24, 31, 36, 52,
 53, 57, 74, 72, 101
- poor house 36
- population 5, 16, 34, 35, 36, 38,
 56, 61, 72, 73
- port 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15,
 16, 17, 18, 19, 20,
 21, 24, 26, 27
- port dues 19
- Port Seton 5
- Portobello 85, 98
- post-holes 14–15, 78, 88
- potter's workshop 16
- pottery 16, 38, 41, 50, 52, 54,
 56, 76, 78, 79, 80,
 101, 102, 103
- poverty 36, 41
- praetentura* 78, 103
- prayer-ring 80
- prehistory 5, 11, 52, 53, 97, 103,
 104
- presbyterians 32, 56
- Preston 5, 20, 29, 35, 41, 58,
 66, 68, 71, 75, 86,
 98
- Prestonpans 5, 35, 41, 58, 66, 75,
 86, 98
- Prestonpans, battle of 41
- prison 39, 40, 64, 65, 86
- procurator 14, 16, 50, 78, 103
- professionals 36, 38
- property boundaries 49, 50
- prosperity 41, 75, 88, 90
- protocol books 24, 59, 61
- Ptolemy 13
- pump wells 39, 56
- q**
- Q Lucius Sabinianus,
 procurator of the
 province of Britannia 16
- Quakers 32
- quarries *see* coal quarries,
 stone quarries
- quay 18, 52, 68, 97
- Quayside, The 69
- Queensferry 7, 19, 20, 64
- r**
- race course 62, 90
- railway 5, 42, 50
- railway bridge 50
- raised beaches 5, 7, 9
- ramparts 14, 77
- Randolph, Thomas,
 earl of Moray 19, 57
- reclaimed land 49, 62, 65
- rectangular enclosures 13
- Red House, the 88
- Reformation 24, 26, 27, 31, 32, 33,
 67
- Regesta Regum
 Scottorum* 17, 19
- regional network 36
- Registrum de Dunfermlyn* 17, 52
- Reid's Pottery 50, 56
- Relief Church 32
- rentals 19, 20, 62, 101
- repentance stool 32, 64
- repletion 101, 103
- Richard de Cragbarry,
 bailie 19
- Richard II,
 king of England 19
- Riding the Marches 37
- rigs *see* burgage plots
- ring-ditches 13
- riots 41
- river frontage 54
- roads 16, 42, 52, 59, 78, 99,
 103
- Robert I 19
- Roman artefacts 15 **figure 5**
- Roman bath-house 14, 78
- Roman bridge *see* Esk Bridge
- Roman temporary camps 16, 18, 79, 85
- Roman civilian settlement 9, 15–16, 78
- Roman fort 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16,
 49, 76, 77, 78, 80,
 82, 83, 97, 98, 102
- Roman occupation 11, 13–16, 78
- Rome 14
- roofing 34, 74
- Roslin 5
- royal burghs 27, 29, 37, 71
- Royal Company
 of Archers 37, 65
- rubbish pits 52, 78
- s**
- sailors 37, 38, 73
- St James, chapel of 24, 55, 65
- St Michael's Kirk 14, 24, 32, 33, 49, 76,
 91
- St Mary Magdalen,
 hospital of 24

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|
| St Paul, Order of Hermit | | slucysland, le | 19 |
| Brothers of | 24, 58 | Smith, Adam | 42 |
| salt | 24, 26, 29, 32, 35, 36,
38, 41, 42, 58, 66,
67, 71, 73, 75 | smiths | 38 |
| salt wives | 37 | Smollett, Tobias | 42 |
| salters | 32, 41 | smuggling | 29, 70 |
| salt pans | 24, 26, 35, 37, 41, 58,
66, 67 | snaffle bit | 80, 103 |
| samian ware | 103 | soap-boilers | 36, 73 |
| sanctuary cross | 16, 76 | soils | 5, 7, 9, 50, 52, 90 |
| sand | 5, 6, 7, 9, 24, 26, 31,
33, 38, 53, 54, 55,
58, 60, 61, 65 | South Street | 97, 98, 100 |
| scaffold | 32, 64 | Southern Uplands | |
| scarping | 103 | Fault | 5 |
| school doctor | 34 | stable block | 57, 58, 88 |
| schoolhouse | 41, 73 | stabling | 14, 77 |
| schoolmasters | 33, 36 | staple goods | 20, 64 |
| schools | 33, 34, 42, 56, <i>see also</i>
grammar school | starch-makers | 36, 73 |
| Scott, Walter | 42 | steeple | 20, 31, 32, 64, 65, 86 |
| 'Scottishe School' | 33 | Stirling | 5, 14, 24, 29, 70, 97 |
| seamen, incorporation of | 35, 37 | stockings | 33 |
| Sea Mill | 21, 31, 39, 67, 99 | stocks | 32, 39, 64 |
| Sempill, Ninian, | | stone circles | 11 |
| son of William Lord | | stone quarries | 29, 35, 42, 58, 66 |
| Sempill | 26 | Stonehaven | 5 |
| Septimus Severus, | | Stoneyhill | 33, 65, 88 |
| emperor | 13-14 | Strathmore | 5, 14 |
| Seton, Alexander | 61 | straw | 39, 40, 64, 67 |
| Seton, Alexander, first | | street frontages | <i>see</i> frontages |
| earl of Dunfermline | 27 | street scene | 39 figure 17 |
| Seton, Jane, Lady | 55 | Stuart, Gilbert | 42 |
| sheep | 35 | study of Gilbert Stuart | 42 figure 20 |
| shell middens | 11 | subsidence | 60 |
| shellfish | 11 | surgeons | 38 |
| sherds | 52, 54, 79, 80 | swimming | 32 |
| ships | 26, 29, 70, 71 | | |
| shire mill, sheriff mill | 18, 21, 27 | t | |
| shoemakers | 35, 37, 38, 73 | tailoring | 36 |
| shooting competition | 37, 65 | tailors | 38 |
| shops | <i>see</i> booths | tanners | 35 |
| Shorthope Street | 62 | tannery | 66 |
| sievmakers | 37, 73 | tax | 19, 29, 34, 35, 36, 37,
38, 56, 60, 71, 72,
76 |
| silting | 18, 29, 52, 65, 68, 71 | Tay | 13, 14, 27, 38 |
| silver | 37, 65, 73, 88 | tectonic movements | 5 |
| Silver Arrow of | | <i>terra sigillata</i> | 103 |
| Musselburgh | 37, 65 | terracing | 50 |
| skeletons | 53 | testament | 11, 26 |
| skins | 20, 64 | textile workers | 36 |
| skippers | 29, 70 | textiles | 35, 36, 38 |
| slates | 39, 64 | thatched roofs | 39 |
| Slezer, John | 28 figure 12 | thieves | 33, 73 |
| sluice gates | 50, 90 | tiles | 35, 36, 38, 79 |
| | | timber | 14, 16, 29, 41, 70, 75,
78, 90 |
| | | timber and iron trade | 41, 75 |
| | | timber yards | 41, 75 |

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 'tirleis maker' | 35 | u | |
| 'Toftfurde' | 26, 55, 59 | urban nucleus | 19, 54, 62, 103 |
| tofts | <i>see</i> burgage plots | urns | 11, 35, 53, 86, 101 |
| tolbooth | 9, 19, 20 figure 8 ,
31, 32, 35, 39, 40,
49, 54, 62, 64, 65,
86 | v | |
| tolls | 19, 27, 31, 53, 86,
101, 103 | vagrants | 41, 73 |
| tombs | 11 | Vatican Archive | 24, 67 |
| tools | 11, 13 | vegetables | 36, 73 |
| town clerk | 38, 41 | vennels | 26, 55, 60, 68 |
| town council | 5, 29, 31, 32, 35, 36,
37, 55, 65, 71 | <i>via praetoria</i> | 103 |
| minutes | 18, 29, 30 figure
13 , 31, 32, 39,
52, 64, 70 | <i>via sagularis</i> | 104 |
| Town Hall | 62, 86 | Vicar's Well | 31, 39, 55 |
| townhouse | 65, 103 | <i>vicus</i> | 7, 15, 16, 49, 76, 82,
83, 104 |
| townscape | 26, 38, 41, 56, 68, 75,
82, 86, 93, 97 | Votadini | 13 |
| trade, overseas | 20 | w | |
| traders | <i>see</i> merchants | walled gardens | 58 |
| Trafalgar Lodge | 88 | walling | 39, 78 |
| Tranent | 5 | washing | 36, 73 |
| 'Transitium Aqueductum' | 26, 55 | watch, of town | 33, 41, 73 |
| Traprain Law | 5, 13 | wattle and daub | 78, 104 |
| treasurer | 20, 27, 35, 37, 68, 72 | weavers | 35, 37, 38, 73 |
| <i>Treasurer's Accounts</i> | 20 | weights, of town | 20, 62 |
| trenches | 26, 54, 60, 61, 78 | weirs | 50 |
| tron | 5, 11, 20, 21, 24, 27,
36, 54, 62, 67, 86,
89, 103 | wells | 18, 31, 39, 67, 82,
101 |
| troops | 21, 33, 36, 41, 42, 55,
58, 60, 65, 70, 85,
86 | west port | 31, 53, 85, 98, 100 |
| Tucker, Thomas | 29 | West Holmes Gardens | 5, 68 |
| turf | 11, 34, 39, 67, 78 | West Mills | 21, 55 |
| turnpike road system | 37 | West Pans | 27, 32, 35, 38, 58, 66,
75 |
| tweed | 13, 14, 50, 86 | wheel making | 35 |
| | | William I, king of Scots | 17, 19 |
| | | wills | 26 |
| | | wine merchants | 38 |
| | | wire works | 41, 56 |
| | | witchcraft | 32 |
| | | witches | 32 |
| | | women's schools | 33 |
| | | wooden bridge | 39, 99 |
| | | Woodside Gardens | 11, 65 |
| | | wool | 19, 20, 36, 64 |
| | | wrights | 35, 38 |



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figure 29
 The archaeological
 potential of Musselburgh

Historic Musselburgh

Musselburgh was a burgh when Edinburgh was nane ... says the old rhyme and, indeed, Musselburgh is one of Scotland's oldest towns. Its name is met as early as 1020 and some form of township was certainly in existence by the late eleventh century. It was probably beside the old Roman bridge over the Esk that the medieval burgh began to develop.

Historic Musselburgh is a fascinating study of the town's history and archaeology from its origins up to the nineteenth century—from a small burgh dependent on Dunfermline Abbey, to a town that hosted Scottish and foreign troops, that struggled to maintain its harbours, bridges and mills, its fishing, quarries and salt pans, that was home to one of Scotland's most revered hermits, and whose traditions and pastimes have survived in the affections of the townspeople today.

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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