

Part of Historic Environment Scotland



# CANMORE

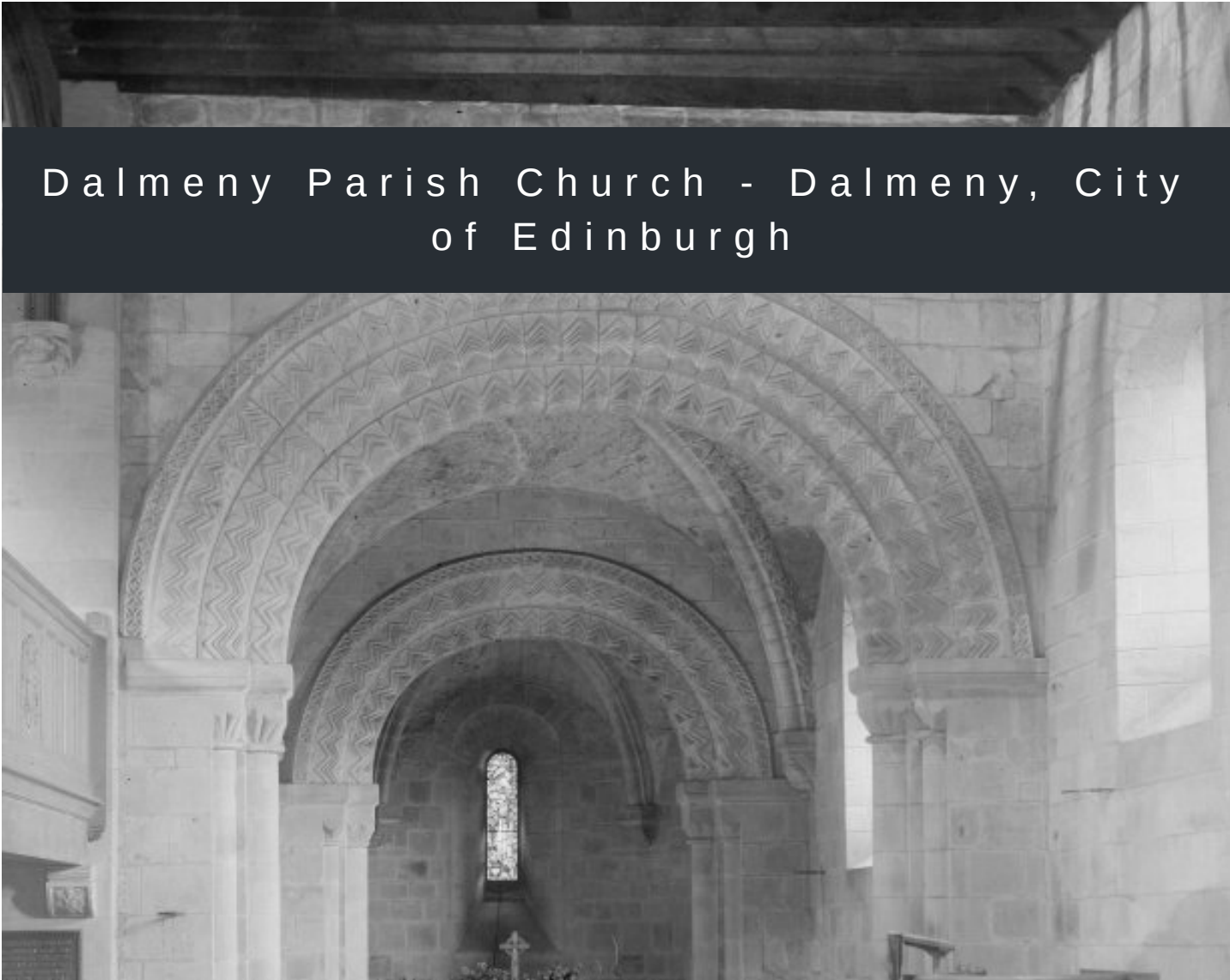
NATIONAL RECORD OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT



## Archaeology InSites



◀ [Return to Archaeology InSites](#)



Dalmeny Parish Church - Dalmeny, City of Edinburgh



## A long and faithful servant

*Small and beautifully proportioned, the church sits atop a small hill, in common with many other examples of the period. Though it is regarded as the most complete Romanesque church in Scotland, time has taken its toll for better and worse: an aisle was added to the south side in 1671; the western tower is a reconstruction of 1937; and the rich ornamentation typical of the style has suffered from the elements. The surrounding village of Dalmeny retains elements of its medieval layout but was extensively remodelled in the 18th century as part of a series of Improvements on the Dalmeny Estate that included the creation of the designed landscape at Dalmeny Park by the 3rd and 4th Earls of Rosebery. In the 19th century an area to the south of the church was mined for shale and an oil works was established, leaving a distinctive red shale bing that has been successfully landscaped. These old agricultural and industrial landscapes were bisected, first by the railway and the Forth Bridge in 1888, then the motorway network and the Forth Road Bridge in 1964, and now by the Queensferry Crossing. Through each of these periods of change, the parish church has remained as a central node for the community.*



## Church

*The first church was dedicated to Saint Cuthbert and probably built by one of the wealthy lords of Dalmeny in the 12th century. Like any medieval church it has seen some changes but escaped the worst of the destruction during the Reformation. The tower (reconstructed), nave, chancel and apse are accessed through fine Norman arches. Simple but ornate, the chevrons and rib vaulting are striking when the light shines through, while corbels bearing grotesque heads support the arches. The south door is a splendid affair with rich carving topped by a blind arcade, but the builders did have to face some limitations: the narrow windows are relatively few in number, possibly reflecting the costs of glass making in Scotland at the time. The external walls of the chancel and apse bear some 46 corbels decorated with grotesque heads, mostly with human features, but interspersed with animal heads, and it is originally thought that the nave was similarly designed. Additions are limited to the Rosebery Aisle, built for the Earl of Rosebery of Dalmeny Estate, and the tower added during a restoration. Squat and sturdy in proportion but in keeping with the overall scheme, it stands on the footings of its medieval predecessor.*

*Outside the church in the graveyard there are some fine 17th and 18th century gravestones and, next to the south door, a massive stone coffin carved from a single block of stone and decorated with a winged beast, Christ and the Apostles. Perhaps this was the coffin of the church's builder?*

*This church is well worth a visit whether you love Romanesque architecture or just like historic buildings, and is often a quiet and peaceful place for reflection. Despite its rich and illustrious history, it has another claim to glory: it is where my wife Lynn and I got married!*

Allan Kilpatrick - Data and Recording Projects Officer



<https://canmore.org.uk/site/50567/dalmeny-main-street-dalmeny-parish-church>





## #ArchInSites

Please be aware that this site may be on private land. For more information regarding access please consult the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#)



[Accessibility Policy](#)  
[Buying Images](#)  
[Cookie Policy](#)  
[Legals](#)  
[Glossary](#)  
[Contact](#)

MyCanmore  
Sitemap  
User Guide



SUPPORTING  
year of young people  
bliadhna na h-òigridh  
2018



HISTORIC  
ENVIRONMENT  
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD  
EACHDRAIDHEIL  
ALBA

© Historic Environment Scotland. Scottish Charity No. SC045925