

DALMORE

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Dalmore was the ancient name for most of the area that now comprises Mar Lodge Estate. The name comes from the Gaelic *Dail Mhor*, meaning the big haugh. This was the big haugh (a piece of level ground on the banks of a river) on which the present Mar Lodge now stands. The Dalmore Estate was granted to a natural son of Mackenzie of Kintail by James IV around the year 1500. The Mackenzies built the first 'big house' on the Haugh of Dalmore, which for many years was known as the House of Dalmore. In 1673 the small estate of Craggan which had belonged to Alaster Mackenzie of Blairnochter was added to Dalmore. The Mackenzies took part in the 1715 rebellion on the Jacobite side and according to previous writers on the subject had, like the Earl of Mar, their lands confiscated by the Government. It is clear however that this did not happen as the Mackenzies continued in possession of the Estate for many years thereafter. The Earl of Mar on the other hand did lose all his lands in Mar, but they were bought back by his family at a price well below their valuation and administered under trust by Lords Grange (the Earl's brother) and Lord Dun, on behalf of Thomas Erskine, the Earl of Mar's son. They therefore became the feudal superiors of Dalmore along with the rest of the Earldom at this time, but there were considerable debts to be paid which necessitated the sale of a large part of these possessions. Lord Braco (later the 1st Earl of Fife) bought the superiority of large parts of the Earldom of Mar including the Dalmore Estate from Lords Grange and Dun in 1735. He later bought the Dalmore Estate from the Mackenzies in 1739 and it then remained in his family until it was sold to the Panchaud brothers in 1961.

The boundary of the Estate including Craggan was as follows. Starting at the point where the Quoich meets the Dee the boundary followed the Dee westwards and then the Geldie to its confluence with the Bynack Burn. From there it followed the watershed between the Geldie and the Bynack to the top of An Sgarsoch. It then followed the present Estate or Aberdeenshire boundary round as far as the top of Ben Macdhui. It continued round the watershed of the Luibeg to the top of Derry Cairngorm. From this point the remainder of the boundary is uncertain, but it is likely that it continued along the high ground southwards to Carn Crom, descending to a ford across the Derry, probably in the vicinity of Derry Lodge. It then went over the hills to the east to join up with the Quoich at some point, and followed the Quoich down to its junction with the Dee.

In ancient times Dalmore and the whole Braemar area was reserved as a 'King's Forest' or 'Hunting Forest', and the only people who were allowed to live there were those who were required to assist with the hunting. John Taylor, a native of Gloucester, attended one such hunt in 1618 as a guest of

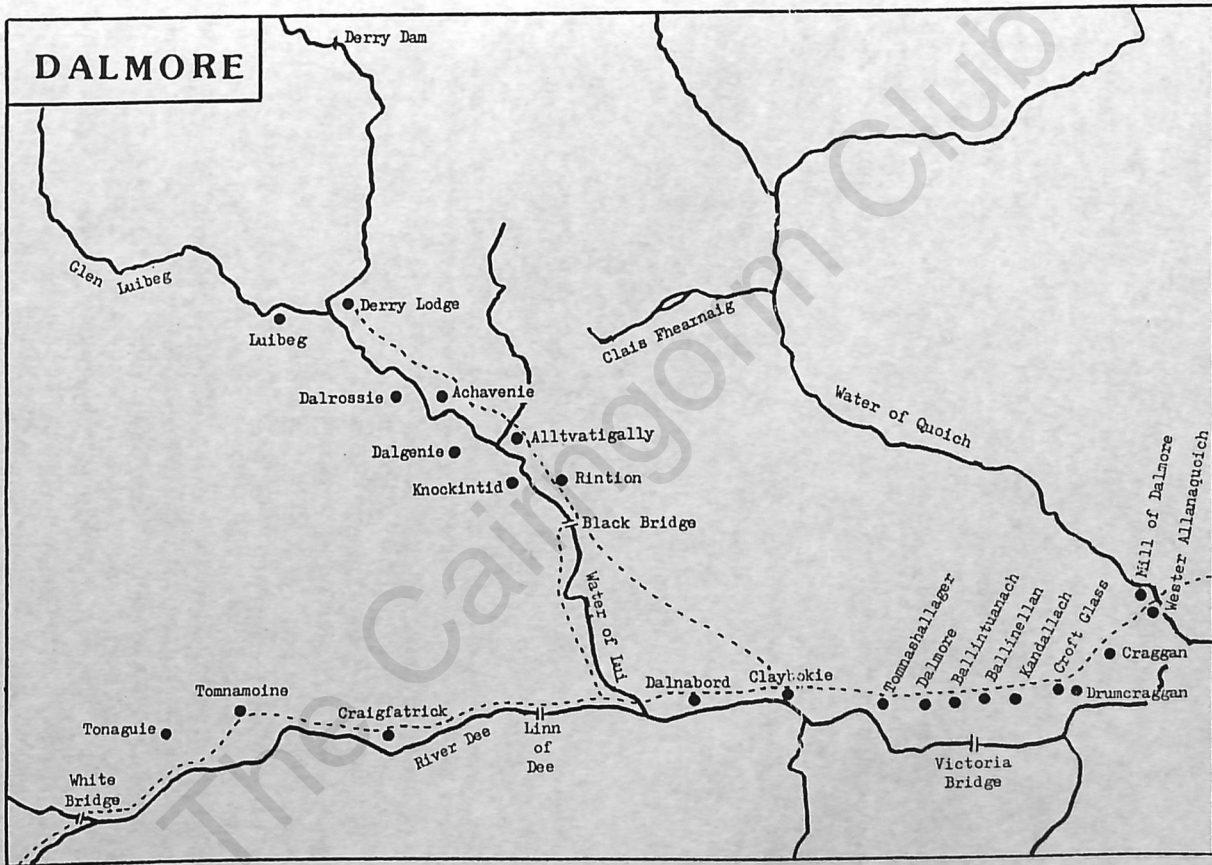
the Earl of Mar, which he described in his book 'Penniless Pilgrimage'. He estimated that about fourteen to fifteen hundred men were involved in the hunt. About five or six hundred of these known as the tinchel rose early in the morning, spread out over a wide area of the hills and drove the deer down to an appointed place in the valley, rather similar to the manner in which beaters drive grouse today. When a herd of about four hundred deer appeared, they were attacked with dogs, guns, arrows, dirks and daggers, and in the space of two hours four score fat deer were killed. He also described the stone cottages or luncarts in which they stayed during the hunt, many of which are mistaken for old shieling huts today.

A visitor to the area now could be excused for imagining that the main focus of settlement has always been confined to the south side of the Dee, but in the past this was far from the case. The north side was just as well populated as the south. The poll book of 1692 lists Kenneth Mackenzie of Dalmore with three servants and thirty-six tenants or subtenants. This compares with the Laird of Inverey who is listed with seven servants and thirty five tenants or subtenants on the Inverey Estate.

The most easterly settlement on the Dalmore estate was Wester or Little Allanaquoich. It was situated on the flat ground on the west side of the Quoich near the site of the present bridge. From 1739 onwards, when tenants lists first become available, there were usually three tenants here. Just upstream from the present bridge was the Mill of Dalmore, a meal mill. There is no room today for a mill on this site between the river and a steep bank, so we must conclude that at this time the river was slightly to the east of its present course. The tenants of Dalmore were thirled⁽¹⁾ to this mill but so also were the tenants of Corriemulzie, which by this time belonged to Farquharson of Inverey. Craggan, situated slightly further to the west, was a much larger settlement with eight tenants.

Further to the west opposite the mouth of the Corriemulzie burn was a small hamlet called Drumcraggan which usually had four tenants. They were not however tenants of Dalmore. Some time in the past the river had changed its course, leaving some of Inverey's ground on the north side of the river. The old course of the river, called the Sheanusk at this point, served as the boundary between the two estates. Some time later Inverey's tenants had built their houses on the north side of the Sheanusk (i.e. on Dalmore's ground), possibly on slightly higher ground to avoid flood risk. It is not clear whether they had permission from Mackenzie of Dalmore to do this or whether they paid any rent or services for the right. It may of course originally have happened when this ground belonged to Alaster Mackenzie of Blairnochter. In 1740 Lord Braco's ground officer started harassing the tenants by pulling down their houses and damaging their kailyards, an event which led to Farquharson of Inverey getting an interdict to stop this happening. This

¹ Thirl - to bind or oblige a person to give his services or custom to a particular person, in this case a miller.



argument continued for many years until it was finally solved in 1776 when Farquharson of Inverey exchanged the lands of Drumcraggan with the 2nd Earl of Fife for the multures ⁽²⁾ of Corriemulzie.

On the Haugh of Dalmore there were several other settlements apart from the big house and the Mains of Dalmore. Next to Drumcraggan there was Croft Glass with one tenant, Kandallach normally had one tenant, and Ballinellan two. Ballintuanach was seldom let out during the Earl of Fife's time and Tomshallager never was. Part of the Mains was let out for a time and had four tenants in 1744, three in 1746, one in 1750 and 1764.

Claybokie had two tenants in 1739 and 1743 but only one after that. Delnabord, which is the small area of flat ground opposite Muir had normally one tenant. Therefore for most of the 1700's, there were between 22 and 27 families living on the north side of the Dee between the Quoich and the Linn, not including any servants who may have been employed at the House of Dalmore.

Glen Lui was probably first settled in the late 1600's or early 1700's. In the Charter granted to Kenneth Mackenzie by the Earl of Mar in 1692 the farms in Glenlui are named as "shealing ⁽³⁾ grounds". In a later Charter granted to Donald Mackenzie of Dalmore by Lord's Grange and Dun in 1733, these farms are specifically mentioned as grounds where the tenants had formerly only the right of shealing, grazing and pasturage. The first settlements in Glen Lui were apparently set up without the approval of the feudal superior and would definitely have been in breach of the conditions laid out in the Charter of 1692. It would appear that Lord Grange felt that these encroachments would be hurtful to the forest. (By this he meant the woods not the deer forest). In any case, in 1727 James Farquharson of Balmoral, then factor for Lords Grange and Dun came to Glen Lui with a notary public and dispossessed the tenants in Achavenie, Alltvatigally, Rintion and Knockintid and laid them waste. Later in the same document it is said that these possessions remained waste for only three or four years.

One may perhaps assume from the above that prior to 1727 there had only been four holdings in the glen. After it was resettled there were probably as many as seven, all situated between the Black Bridge and Derry Lodge. Only four of these seem to have been in continuous occupation from 1739 onwards; Achavenie which was often split into Wester and Easter usually had two tenants but sometimes only one, while Rintion, Alltvatigally and Dalgenie each normally had one. Dalrossie only appears to have been tenanted until 1743 (In the 1747 rental list it is described as waste and does not reappear in any of the later lists), while there is no record of an individual tenant for Knockintid which was rented by the tenant of Dalgenie from 1764 onwards.

² Multure - a duty consisting of a proportion of the grain or meal payable to the proprietor or tenant of a mill on corn ground there.

³ Shealing - the usual spelling is now shieling, a remote summer pasture, usually with one or more shepherd's huts.

Two other holdings are mentioned in the rental lists, Croislich which appears to have had a tenant only from 1770 to 1776, and Tornaleal, which only appears once. In 1750 it was tenanted by William and John Caddell. These last two are not shown on the map as their locations have not been traced.

In Glendee (the name given to the area west of the Linn) there were two holdings, Tomnamoine and Craighatrick. Like Glenlui these holdings were first set up on former shieling lands some time in the late 1600's. Like Glenlui, the tenants were cleared out in 1727 and the holdings reoccupied some three or four years later. A new settlement further west at Tonaguie was set up at this time. Tomnamoine and Craighatrick normally had one tenant each. Tonagui had four between 1739 and 1743 and two from 1744 to 1750. From 1764 there was only one.

The tenants must have lived a very precarious existence. There was a great shortage of potentially arable land and given the number of tenants, they would have been lucky to have any more than four acres. On this they grew corn, bere and kail for their own subsistence. They also kept cattle and occasionally sheep. For about twelve weeks in summer the animals were taken to summer shielings further into the hills. They were able to pay their rent from the sale of their cattle. They lived in fire houses which were small buildings with low dry stone walls and thatched roofs. There were no chimneys and the smoke from the fire simply escaped through a hole deliberately left in the roof for this purpose. Their barns, byres and other office houses ⁽⁴⁾ were constructed in the same manner.

The process of clearing people out was a gradual one. The Mains of Dalmore and Ballinellan were cleared by 1770 and all the remaining holdings from Croft Glass westwards to Claybokie and all of Glen Lui in 1776. Drumcraggan was cleared within a year of the Earl acquiring the property. By 1792 all the remaining tenants in Craggan and Wester Alanaquoich had also been cleared.

It is not possible to give a single reason for these clearances. There is no doubt that the tenants were seen in many ways as a nuisance, probably as a result of population pressure. There are frequent complaints in the estate correspondence about abuses of woods, poaching, and tenants allowing their cattle to stray on to the reserved forest. Many of them were constantly in arrears with their rent. There is however no doubt that the clearance in Glenlui was to extend the deer forest, and that of Dalmore Haugh was an inevitable result of the development of the policies around Dalmore House. Once Craggan and Wester Allanaquoich had been cleared they were normally given out to rent as one holding along with the farm of Allanaquoich itself, to the factor of the estate.

When Lord Braco first bought the superiority of the Estate, one of the first things he did was to have a survey made of the pinewoods. This was

⁴ Office houses - associated buildings.

carried out in 1736. At the time these were very extensive and covered the whole of Glen Lui, with the exception of the farmed area, up to beyond the present Luibeg bridge and the entire side of the Dee valley all the way from the Quoich to beyond Craigfattrick. As Superior, the pine woods belonged to him and he was anxious to try and make money out of them. In the early days some of the standing timber was auctioned for others to exploit, but this does not seem to have been very successful. By 1760 two sawmills had been established, one at Delnabord which was situated on the north bank of the Dee about quarter of a mile below its junction with the Lui, and the other at Culter to which logs were floated down the Dee. There also was a third mill which had been in existence since 1695 on the neighbouring estate of Allanaquoich. The Earl was now in a good position to exploit the woods himself. The tenants of the estate were able to pick up casual work as floaters and earn some extra money. This must have involved wading about in the water freeing logs which had jammed and a cold, uncomfortable and sometimes dangerous job. In 1760 as many as eighteen were employed on any one day floating on the Lui, for which they were paid the princely sum of ten pence Scots (slightly less than one pence Sterling). Additionally, a bottle of whisky was supplied daily to share between about eight workers. At that time it was suggested in a report by Alex Stronach (the Earl of Fife's principal factor) that it seems to be very necessary to repair the old dam dyke in the Derry in order to float logs successfully down the Lui, a practice he says that was carried out successfully in Mackenzie of Dalmore's time.

The House of Dalmore which the Earl of Fife inherited from the Mackenzies was a simple rectangular structure of no great size. It was situated just to the east of the present building. Work was put in hand and two wings were added in front of the existing house to produce a courtyard of about 60 feet square. Then on the 18th January 1770 a serious fire all but destroyed the east wing and main part of the house. It was rebuilt in much the same way, except for the chimneys which had been in the middle of the roof, were now shifted to the gables. Later additions, of which there were many, included a third storey to the main part of the house and a circular tower in front of the main door. In 1775 the 2nd Earl of Fife built a gothic style monument on the Hill of Craggan. This became an obvious feature welcoming guests to the grounds of Mar Lodge, the main road into the area at that time being the one which follows the north side of the Dee from Invercauld.

A great deal of effort was made to protect the haugh from flood damage. All round the haugh large stone bulwarks were built which were afterwards covered with turf. Strangely there seemed to be difficulty in obtaining enough stones for this job, and on one occasion there was a row with Farquharson of Inverey as some of the workmen had been carrying stones over from his side using a boat at night. This is the reason why nothing remains of any of the old settlements which used to be on the haugh, because as soon as the people had been cleared, their houses were dismantled to provide stones for the

bulwarks. Once built these bulwarks needed constant repairs.

There is no evidence of any shooting being let on the estate in the early days. This seemed to be reserved for the enjoyment of the Earl and his family. He also carried out some farming on his own account. In this respect the most important aspect seems to have been a herd of cattle always referred to as the Mar Lodge cattle. These were kept at Mar Lodge during the summer and sent to Duff House or Rothiemay during the winter months. A garden was made, the main purpose of which was to supply the family with vegetables during their summer sojourn at the Lodge. Any surplus was auctioned at the beginning of October with most of the produce bought by local people. Butter and cheese were made and also sold nearby. The servants kept on at Mar Lodge were expected to earn their keep in the winter months by spinning lint (flax). There was even an experiment made in growing flax locally, which although apparently fairly successful, did not appear to catch on, and most of the lint would have been imported.

The Muckle Spate of 4th August 1829 caused considerable damage in the area. The wooden bridge which spanned the Linn of Dee was carried away despite being 30 feet above the normal water level. At Mar Lodge the haugh was covered with about 5 feet of water. Some structural damage was caused to the house and the whole ground floor became filled with a mixture of sand and mud. The garden was completely destroyed, the lawn very much sanded and the wooden bridge across the Dee was carried away. The water of Quoich burst at it's mouth out to the westward, forming a 60 acre lake which almost entirely destroyed the former farm of Craggan.

In the following year there is the first evidence of shootings being let out on the Estate. Mar Lodge shootings and fishings were let to Sir Harry Goodriche on a seven year lease for £1200 per annum. This turned out to be short lived as Sir Harry died on the 21st August 1833 and the let was taken over on a year to year basis by the Duke of Leeds for the same rental. It was for this reason that the 4th Earl of Fife developed Corriemulzie Cottage as New Mar Lodge for his own residence, and nothing to do with damage caused to what was now called Old Mar Lodge by the Muckle Spate as previous writers have suggested. The present bridge at the Linn of Dee was built by the Earl of Fife's Trustees and opened by Queen Victoria with elaborate ceremony on the 9th September 1857. It is the third bridge to occupy the site, the previous two having been wooden structures.

The various shooting lodges and keepers houses were built in the glens in the mid eighteen hundreds. However the Earl of Fife did have a shiel in Glendee about a mile beyond White Bridge in the early days. Mention is also made of Derry Shielling as early as 1798. It has not been possible so far to determine when Derry Lodge was extended to its present size. The first time it is mentioned under that name is in the 1861 census, but the name Derry Shielling continues in use in the estate papers for some years after that. Little use seems to have been made of it, and for most of its lifetime it remained

empty. There were times when it was occupied by a keeper, but there is no evidence that shooting tenants ever stayed there. Geldie Lodge was built in 1854 and extended in 1868. It was occupied for about 8 weeks during the shooting season, but its use was short lived and it was abandoned after about 1897.

In 1889 the sixth Earl of Fife married Princess Louise Victoria Dagmar of Wales, a grand-daughter of Queen Victoria and in 1900 was elevated to the Dukedom of Fife. From that time on the estate saw the arrival of many royal guests including the King himself to take part in shooting parties. For this purpose the Derry beat seemed to be the most popular, and this may explain the fact that the Derry road was kept at a higher standard than the other estate roads.

On Friday 14th June 1895 New Mar Lodge (at Corriemulzie) was almost completely destroyed by fire. Plans were quickly drawn up to build a replacement building. The architect was Mr A. Marshall Mackenzie of Aberdeen, but the design of the building was very much influenced by the ideas of HRH the Duchess of Fife. The foundation stone was laid by Queen Victoria on the 15th October 1895 on a site immediately to the west of Old Mar Lodge. Much of the material used in the construction was produced locally, the pink granite being quarried from the Duke of Fife's quarry in Braemar, and the timber from the estate's own woods. Once the whole complex was finished in 1898, Old Mar Lodge was demolished and stables erected on the site. A small hydro electric scheme was built at Corriemulzie to provide lighting for the new lodge. In 1905 the present bridge across the Dee at Mar Lodge was opened by King Edward VII. It is called Victoria bridge because it replaced the previous wooden structure which had been opened by Queen Victoria in 1848.

After the First World War the estate was again let out for shooting purposes, but this proved difficult and there were some years when a few of the beats were not let. The decline in the popularity of the sport led to a reduction in the number of keepers employed. Only essential maintenance was done and gradually the various shooting lodges fell into disrepair. During the Second World War most of the remaining woods were felled. On the death of the Duchess of Fife in 1959, the Mar Estate passed to Captain Alexander Ramsay, and the north side of the river was sold to the Panchaud brothers from Switzerland. But that's another story.

Most of the information on which this article is based, derives from the Duff House Papers which are held in the Special Collections Department of the University of Aberdeen Library.