

## DRYFESDALE CHURCH - EARLY HISTORY

Although **Hoddam**, near Ecclefechan, became a place of religious importance as a result of the activities of St Mungo or Kentigern in the 6th and 7th centuries, we know nothing of Dryfesdale Church at this time. Kentigern is said to have met the ruler of Strathclyde at Hoddam around AD 573, and in the 8th century an Anglian Monastery was established there. For some time Hoddam may also have served as the centre of a bishopric, but by the 12th century it appears to have declined to the status of a parish church, while much of the monastic land passed to the Bruces.

Dryfesdale Church may have existed in the time of St Cuthbert in the late 7th century but there are no records to confirm this possibility. The first definite historical reference in **AD 1116**, when Dryfesdale, Hoddam and St Mungo parishes were placed under the control of the Bishop of Glasgow. Dryfesdale is recorded as a Mensal church of Glasgow, providing revenues to the bishop. This church was built on a site near Sandbed. Other church sites included a daughter chapel of Dryfesdale at Halldykes, and the chapels at St Michael's, Beckton and the Quaas, the latter two being established by the Templars. No traces of these chapels remain. The burial ground at Halldykes was ploughed up in 1825, while an attempt by archaeologists to trace the site of Beckton Chapel prior to the building of the M74 (M6) motorway ended in failure. The font from the Quaas Chapel served as a market cross for Lockerbie, but it was lost later. William Johnstone, who was Minister of Dryfesdale between 1592 and 1595, was an early graduate of the then new University of Edinburgh. He came to Dryfesdale unwillingly because of the feud between the Maxwells and the Johnstones, and was murdered in Lockerbie in 1595. Meanwhile the Dryfe was threatening the church site near Sandbed, and in 1617 the Bishop of Glasgow ordered that the river course should be changed to protect the church. A dispute followed and James Johnstone of Kirkton was killed. William Johnstone of Lockerbie and various others were charged with his murder. By 1670 the church was so threatened that in 1671 a new church was built near Dryfe Bridge, but this in turn was threatened by the river in 1756 and a second new church was built on the present site in 1757.

So Thomas the Rhymer's prophecy came to pass:

“Let spades and shuils dae what they may Dryfe will have Dry'sdales Kirk away”.

Dryfesdale has no record of Covenanter Martyrs nor of witch burnings.

## **THE NAME - "LOCKERBIE"**

Various theories have been put forward to explain the name "Lockerbie" but the most likely is that the local lands were held by the Lockhart family for some time. Malcolm Locard, may have been the landholder around 1150. Lockerbie may therefore be the town or settlement of Locard or Lockhart.

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