



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

DUNGLASS COLLEGIATE CHURCH



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HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

DUNGLASS COLLEGIATE CHURCH

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I. SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

The site comprises the near complete remains of Dunglass Collegiate Church located 2 miles north-east of Oldhamstocks, just off the A1. It is reached by a winding drive through mature woodland, part of the designed landscape of Dunglass estate (main house demolished late 1950s). The church is cruciform on plan with a short stone tower. It is roofed though as most of the east gable is missing, access is always open, and windows are not glazed.

Dunglass Estate has for several years operated a weddings business, using the Church for ceremonies while providing accommodation and a marquee reception venue on the wider Estate. The site is unstaffed and visitor numbers are not known. Access would be difficult by public transport, so most visitors arrive by car.

1.2 Statement of Significance

The primary significance of Dunglass Collegiate church is as an excellent and relatively well-preserved example of typical late-medieval Scottish collegiate church architecture. In its wider context, and outwith the PIC boundary, it forms a component of a nationally important designed landscape.

Key aspects of interest include:

- Its good state of preservation and fine details including some particularly fine carved stonework, most notably the three-seat sedilia and priests' door in the chancel, and the mural tombs.
- Its 'hidden' past - Dunglass has an unexpected story to tell in relation to the medieval castle and settlement of Dunglass, and the substantial domestic ranges associated with the church - all now lost and little suspected in the current landscaped grounds. Consequently, the archaeological potential of the site and its surroundings is very high.
- The likelihood that its role was more complex than that of most Collegiate Churches. While it certainly functioned as a private chapel of the Home family, a survey of the sources suggests that Dunglass had a wider religious and political role contributing to peace and reconciliation after generations of Border warfare.
- The atmosphere of the place with its relatively secluded and picturesque location amid mature parkland planting which appeals to many visitors today.

- The Church is a key component within a renowned picturesque designed landscape, whose patron, Sir James Hall, was noted for his writings on Gothic architecture.

The above brief statement encapsulates the main significances of Dunglass Collegiate Church. A fuller assessment of a broader range of its heritage values is given below.

2. ASSESSMENT OF VALUES

2.1 Background

The following notes give a broad outline of the history and development of Dunglass Collegiate Church, more detailed information is given at Appendices 1 and 2.

2.1.1 Historical context

Dunglass Church was built by the Home family in the fifteenth century. It is first documented as a private chapel in 1423 and was elevated into a more prestigious 'collegiate' foundation in the 1440s.

Collegiate churches were a typical expression of aristocratic piety in the late medieval period in Scotland, whereby a powerful family maintained a college of priests in a special church to offer continual prayers for the family's salvation (and particularly for the souls of its deceased members). Such collegiate churches were often elaborate architecturally and comparatively richly furnished, depending on the patron family's means and status. Cruden¹ notes the fifteenth century as the peak building period with around 40 known to have been constructed across the country; 8 are in the care of Historic Environment Scotland.

Dunglass appears to be unconventional as it fulfilled a wider and more public role than most collegiate churches, which generally focussed on the salvation of one family. This aspect, and its relationship to the lost town of Dunglass and to the wider political and social context of Border's history, is discussed more fully in 2.3.

The Home family occupied nearby Dunglass Castle and the settlement of Dunglass, a thriving market-town (granted Burghal status in 1489), grew up around the church. The town of Dunglass is known from documents but has not survived. Its location must have been partly related to the line of main high road from Berwick to Edinburgh and Dunglass was a strategic crossing point of the Berwickshire/Lothian border. This role was lost with the re-alignment of this major routeway to follow a line nearer the coast (effectively today's A1).

¹ Cruden 1986, 183.

The current parkland setting thus gives little sense of how the immediate area around the church might have looked in its heyday. Documents indicate that in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century around the church there would have been the manses of the canons and their plantings of fruit trees, the little burgh with its cross and marketplace, and the castle with its tall tower on the edge of the ravine, due south of the church.

2.1.2 Origin and development of the church structure: 14th–15th centuries

Dunglass is on a cruciform plan, with sacristy jamb to the north-east, and is interpreted as being built in two main phases, because of the odd juxtaposition between the nave and transepts and the proportionally small central crossing beneath the tower. MacGibbon and Ross suggested that the chancel, sacristy and crossing were built in the first phase, and the nave and transepts were then added on a larger scale than originally intended,² but more recent surveys have favoured an alternative interpretation:

The nave, chancel and sacristy belong to the first build. This would give a rectangular building, the nave was slightly wider and taller than the chancel, with stone vaulted ceiling and stone slabbed roofs.

The transepts and tower belong to the second build. The tower and crossing contain much evidence of the difficulty the masons had in inserting the tower because of the different widths of nave, chancel and the new transepts. The existing tower is short, square and sits within the width of the nave; it once supported a timber spire, which was still extant in the late eighteenth century.

The date of construction is not entirely clear. Some sources suggest that the first phase occurred around the 1440s and the second phase followed around 1500, when there are references to ongoing building work at Dunglass. However, in the most recent study of the architecture Professor Richard Fawcett has suggested that the first phase might be the Chapel of St Mary of Dunglass mentioned in a document of 1423, with the transepts and crossing being added when the chapel was formally elevated to Collegiate status in 1444.³

2.1.3 Later developments

During the 16th century, however, Dunglass was badly affected by various military episodes including some damage sustained in the 1540s when the church itself was used as a gun position, and an English fort was constructed near the church. The earthworks of the fort, an important early example of Renaissance military architecture, remain visible in the woods to the south.

² MacGibbon and Ross 1897, 184–185.

³ Fawcett 2011, 223–225.

The post-reformation history saw the chapel maintained as a private mausoleum for the Earls of Home – and, at first, probably a clandestine base for Jesuits. The college was only formally suppressed on the sale of the estate to the stoutly Protestant General Ruthven in 1644, but the church has continued to serve as a family resting-place for subsequent lairds of Dunglass. The damage to the building was largely inflicted in a single incident when the church was converted to an outbuilding circa 1710.

The east end window was effectively destroyed to form a new entrance to a coach house in the chancel, with timber floors inserted below the vault to create a granary above it. The nave was used as a stable, the north transept became a hay-barn, and the tower became a dovecot. The tombstones around the church were destroyed so the graveyard could be used as a meadow. This period of desecration seems to have been ended by 1760, and in 1914, the Church came into state care.

Close inspection suggests that restoration work has been more extensive than it appears at first sight: heavy foliage had grown up round the exterior, and old photographs suggest that some of the masonry was so damaged by the effects of ivy that it required renewal: in particular, the southern side of the chancel's stone-flagged roof seems to have been almost completely replaced. There has also been some fairly major restoration in the interior, perhaps *prior* to the building being taken into care. A drawing of 1850 by the antiquarian artist James Drummond shows that the chancel and nave arches of the crossing had partially collapsed at that date, and that there was an area of fallen masonry at the western end of the chancel's south wall, including serious damage to the window there; the illustrations in MacGibbon and Ross's *Ecclesiastical Architecture* suggest that this had all been repaired by the 1890s.⁴

2.2 Evidential values

The primary evidential value of the site lies in its fabric and buried archaeology. This may contain information about other structures on the site and its evolution over time as well as human remains and artefacts.

The site has good archaeological potential, both within the church itself but perhaps more significantly outside the footprint of the church. Indeed, the wider site outwith the Property in Care boundary is likely to be archaeologically sensitive. Remains of the college's domestic accommodation may well survive (the documented manses lay to the north, though others may have been to the south, for the priests' door was there), as well as of the hospital and chapel referred to in the papal bull of 1480, to say nothing of the late medieval town of Dunglass which grew up

⁴ [Trove. Drawing of interior view of Dunglass Collegiate Church \(DP 039220 - digital copy of ELD 41/18\) \(trove.scot\)](#); MacGibbon and Ross 1897, 182-183.

nearby, and perhaps also subsurface traces of the castle on the brink of the gorge to the south.

The town may have disappeared due to repeated attacks by the English in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, although a seventeenth-century change in the route of the main highway to England may also have contributed. Church-related remains may well have been significantly damaged by the English (and possibly also Franco-Scottish) military entrenchments recorded as having been dug during the 1547–8 campaign. The latter too will not be without significant interest, as being among the earliest examples of *trace italienne* fortification in the British Isles. No documented archaeological work has taken place beyond some tidying-up work by the Ministry of Works after 1914.

2.3 Historical values

The main historical values of Dunglass Collegiate Church relate to its associations with the Home family and their allies and enemies. The role of Dunglass as an important settlement between Berwick and Edinburgh, and indeed as the first Scots settlement of consequence on that part of the Border; and potentially as a demonstration of the slightly unconventional role of this Church in Border politics, evidenced by its varied endowments.

Historically, the church served a spiritual function until the Reformation. During that time, it would have been the focus of religious life not only for the owners of Dunglass, their household and estate workers, but also for a wider spiritual community in the local area, including the people of the burgh of Dunglass, pilgrims and traders visiting in August, and the people of the Border parishes whose churches were annexed to its endowment.

2.3.1 Dunglass: church, castle and town

The siting of the castle, church and town are all linked to Dunglass's strategic importance and geography. There is a steep-sided river gorge immediately to the south, which acts as a significant natural barrier and boundary – it has formed the border between Lothian and Berwickshire since records began, and it also acts as a strategic checkpoint on the high road. It seems that the late-medieval highway crossed the ravine close to the castle, placing the burgh directly astride the main overland route between Scotland and England. As late as 1617, this was the route prepared for James VI's return visit to Scotland, and as he was travelling with a convoy of coaches, there must have been an easy ford or even a bridge. However, there was probably always an alternative route downstream near the coast, and in the early modern period the road shifted decisively to this

coastal crossing (the route now taken by the A1).⁵ This, as much as English incursions of the 1530s–40s, is likely to have contributed to Dunglass becoming the backwater that it appears today.

Documentary evidence reveals that a surprisingly complex settlement grew up around the church, of which practically no trace is now visible. Lord Home's castle stood due south of the church, with a tall tower on the brink of the ravine, and the 1444 foundation charter for the college stipulated that each of the prebendaries was to have a manse with a walled orchard, which they were obliged to keep in good repair. As they were supposed to be bound by a vow of chastity, they would be expelled if they were caught three times with a 'concubine'. According to the foundation charter of 1444, the manses of the provost and the two chaplains of the initial foundation stood in a north-south row on the north side of the church.⁶ There was also a hostel, first attested in 1469, combining the roles of old folks' home and homeless shelter for the area, which could also put-up pilgrims visiting the church.

Even more surprisingly, given that the church now stands in rural woodland, late medieval Dunglass was a town, referred to as such already in 1444.⁷ It was granted the status of a burgh in 1489, with a weekly market and an eight-daylong annual fair in August, timed to coincide with the yearly pilgrimage to the church. Though nothing of the burgh is now visible, it was the first target of an English invasion in 1532. It was large enough to provide quarters for an occupying company of 100 English cavalymen and their horses in the 1540s, suggesting a settlement of fairly respectable size among the small towns of late-medieval Scotland. For comparison, Hawick had approximately 70 households in 1545, and Falkland, founded as a royal burgh in 1458, was laid out with barely twenty-

⁵ Graham 1965, especially 325–327, 336–337. Graham believed that the ruinous bridge repaired in 1648 was the current Dunglass Old Bridge at the coastal crossing, though he conceded that this very clearly post-medieval structure could not be more than a few decades old at this date. The possibility of a bridge at Dunglass itself ought to be seriously considered. The English army's itinerary in 1547 apparently describes a crossing about a mile further *upstream*, with the road then leading northwards by Dunglass itself (Patten 1548, 85). Graham (1965, 324) accepts the traditional placement of this crossing on the Pease Burn further south (canonised by Grose 1789, 96–97), but the text unambiguously places Dunglass on 'the same valley, nearer the sea, a mile from the place of our passage.' This may have been a secondary crossing, as one at Dunglass itself would lie under the hostile guns of the castle.

⁶ Historic Manuscripts Commission No. 123, 124–125. As late as 1556, after the burgh had been pillaged at least twice and then occupied for two years by English soldiers, there is a reference to the manse and garden of one of the two prebendaries of Upsettlington, who were not part of the original foundation: HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of Colonel David Milne Home of Wedderburn Castle, N.B.*, (London 1902), no. 539, 239–240.

⁷ Historic Manuscripts Commission No. 123, 124–125. At that date, the town evidently lay to the north of the church, since the manse nearest the church (which had the other two to the north of it, and thus lay to the north of the church) is described as being 'in the south part of the town'.

five houses.⁸ As well as acting as a local market and providing for Lord Home's household and the clergy of the church, Dunglass was the first Scottish town on the high road north from Berwick-upon-Tweed, well-placed to participate in cross-border trade.

2.3.2 Endowments and bequests – evidence for a symbolic role in Border politics?

What sets Dunglass apart from most other late medieval collegiate churches is the public role it was given as a religious focus for local society. Whereas most collegiate churches were financed entirely by the founding family, a variety of individuals from King James II down to the laird of Upsettlington contributed generously to the endowment at Dunglass, and at least two of these bequests were designed as acts of repentance and reconciliation to end violent local feuds. Prayers were not restricted to the founder's family, and successive Popes (two of whom Sir Alexander may have known personally) lent their support to an annual pilgrimage to the chapel at the Feast of the Assumption on 15th August. The endowment also brought oversight over several nearby parishes in the western Borders, and a new market town was founded alongside the church, for which it would have performed a quasi-parochial function.

All these aspects of its role set Dunglass Collegiate Church apart from typical collegiate churches and appear to be connected with the wider purpose of restoring spirituality and peace in an area that had been badly ravaged by the wars with England.⁹ Dunglass can thus be added to a small group of important mid-fifteenth-century churches where the collegiate model was adapted to meet the unique religious needs of specific communities which did not fit easily into the conventional diocesan structure. A group which also included the 'high church' of St Giles in the nation's capital, and the university church of St Salvator in St Andrews.

⁸ Wilson 1850, 318–330, a confirmation charter with a complete enumeration of Hawick's various tenements; Thomson *et al* 1814–1984, Nos. 705728, a set of twenty-four royal charters confirming individual crofts, from which the entire plan of Falkland can be reconstructed.

⁹ This paragraph develops observations made by Armstrong 2010, 68–69 and 76–77. For reference to the varied individual bequests, see Appendix 1. Dobson 1996, 122, argues that for the Hume family, Dunglass was to some extent a replacement for the Benedictine monastery at Coldingham, previously the most important religious centre in the coastal plan between Edinburgh and Durham, where the religious community was practically suppressed for most of the fifteenth century due to a protracted dispute over control that was closely related to Anglo-Scottish political tensions. This concern about the decline of Coldingham (and the disruption to its cycle of prayers) cannot have been restricted to the Humes, and a further connection can be seen in the fact that at least one of the feuds symbolically settled in the Dunglass bequests was between factions vying for control of the monastery. Subsequently, the Benedictine community at Coldingham recovered in the sixteenth century – largely thanks to the Humes seeing off their rivals (Cowan and Easson 1976, 56).

2.4 Architectural and artistic values

The church is cruciform on plan, with a nave on the west, a central crossing tower flanked by transepts to north and south, and a chancel on the east, with a small sacristy projecting from its north side. The church, however, is not a one-period building, for the crossing tower and flanking transepts are additions.

The church is built of fine, coursed, pink-coloured sandstone. Externally, the heavy stone slabbed roof and stocky central tower catch the eye. The side windows of the chancel still retain their rectilinear tracery, then becoming fashionable in Scotland (as at **Melrose Abbey's** south transept (c.1385) and South Queensferry Carmelite Church (c.1440).

The original church was rectangular on plan (plus the sacristy) and comprised a nave and chancel, the former taller and slightly wider. Both were vaulted over in stone. The original chancel arch is that on the east side of the (later) crossing tower and is the only one of the four crossing arches with foliage caps and late Gothic mouldings.

The chancel has particularly fine carved stonework, most notably the three-seated sedilia near the east end of the south wall, with cusped and crocketed ogee canopies, pinnacles and corbels carved with angels depicted playing musical instruments. Consecration crosses are carved on the chancel walls and in the sacristy. The priests' door through the south wall of the chancel is decorated with a canopied niche above a helmet and canted shield once decorated with a coat of arms.

The sacristy houses another sculptural gem, a mural tomb with fine mouldings, and a female head carved on each jamb, one showing a lady dressed in mid-15th-century fashion; this may be the resting place of Lady Home, the founder's wife. It has also been suggested that it was an 'Easter Sepulchre', where the clergy and worshippers would hold a candle-lit vigil from Good Friday to Easter Sunday (the two functions are not incompatible).

At a later date, the crossing tower and transepts were added (James IV gave drink-silver to masons working there in 1506-7, and this may be significant). The works are unexceptional, even clumsy (note how awkwardly the crossing arches into the transepts sit). There are mural tombs in each transept; the one in the north transept has a heraldic shield pairing the lion of the Home family with the three parrots of the Pepdie family, the original lairds of Dunglass, commemorating the fourteenth-century marriage between the Pepdie heiress and Sir Thomas Home, the grandparents of the founder (other depictions show that the fifteenth-century Homes paired the two coats-of-arms, though normally by 'quartering' the shield rather than the 'impaled' pairing used here, which is strictly more appropriate for the original husband-and-wife). There would also have been an altar against the east wall of each transept. The altar in

the south transept is known to have been dedicated to St Cuthbert. There is evidence suggesting timber fittings within the church, most obviously the slots for horizontal posts in the east and west arches of the crossing. These would have supported wooden screens and may represent the symbolic dividing line between the choir and the congregation in the two successive phases of the church's architecture, with the barrier moving west when the transepts and crossing were added. For acoustic reasons, it is tempting to suggest there was a timber vault rather than a flat roof in the crossing.

Evidence of the church's subsequent conversion to stables and barn exists in the gaping hole through the east end, where the traceried window lighting the high altar had been, and the square holes in the walls and vault of the nave. The gaping hole unfortunately has the appearance of being the main entrance doorway into the church. The architecture of the church is impressive in its own right, but to get the full effect, we must remember that the interior would have been richly decorated, with stained glass in the windows and carved wooden fittings offsetting the stonework. The fragrant haze of incense would have been in the air, bells ringing in the tower, and priests and choirboys singing complex polyphonic hymns from illuminated music books, accompanied by an organ.

King James IV, who was close to the Home family, visited Dunglass with some regularity, and royal archives record him hearing mass in the chapel on several occasions between 1497 and 1513. A measure of the increasing lavishness of the liturgy during this period is provided by evidence for what the college wore. The 1444 charter stipulated that the priests and choirboys should wear black cloaks edged in fluffy white lambskin, worn over white tunics. By the 1540s, many of the vestments of the college were made from opulent imported fabrics like velvet and cloth-of-gold, and decorated with rich embroidery.

2.5 Landscape and aesthetic values

Dunglass Collegiate Church forms a part of a designed landscape which is noted in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes as being of national importance; this wider area is not part of the PIC. The designed landscape is primarily noted for its association with Sir James Hall and for its picturesque landscape components, but it also retains significant features from earlier landscape phases.¹⁰

Sir James Hall, the 4th Bart, (1761-1832) inherited the estate in 1776. He was a renowned scholar writing on various subjects including geology (he was a colleague of Hutton) and an 'Essay on the Origin, History and Principals of Gothic Architecture' which was published in 1813. Prior to this, at

¹⁰ For a full description see [Inventory entry GDL00154, Dunglass \(portal.historicenvironment.scot\)](https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/).

Dunglass he demonstrated his belief that gothic architecture followed natural forms. He constructed a timber frame around which he planted 16 willow trees in the shape of a Latin cross, and as they grew, bound their branches together to form 'gothic' arches.¹¹

Sir James was chiefly responsible for laying out the designed landscape at Dunglass. It was recognised as one of the most remarkable examples of the use of the principles of the picturesque movement¹² particularly for the close integration of a new asymmetric Gothic style house within the landscape. Sir James' landscape of course overlay an earlier designed landscape with several built features, for example, the gazebo and Sundial surviving from the late 17th and earlier 18th centuries. Again, these lie outwith the PIC boundary.

Today, the Collegiate Church is an attractive and romantic ruin. Its light-pink walls provide an attractive foil for the heavy stone-slabbed roofs and squat central tower. The interior is sombre and still.

The church is enchantingly set amid parkland, the stone structure presenting a nice contrast to the spread of green sward that surrounds it. Mature woodlands fringe the scene, and the other estate buildings (for example, the bridges, former stables, sundial, gate lodge and gate piers) provide additional touches of 'antiquity'.

2.6 Natural heritage values

The immediate area in Care has limited wildlife importance. There is the possibility of roosting bats which would be significant, but none have yet been identified (2015). The wider area and surroundings offer greater potential with some areas of mature plantings.

Most sources from the 18th century onward seem to think highly of the plant life at Dunglass, mentioning things like a group of Mediterranean umbrella pines. From a broad documentary/historical point-of-view the parkland setting does appear to be unusually old, it was mentioned as one of the few large areas of mature woodland in the eastern Borders in the eighteenth century, and although large parts of it were planted around 1700 (Pococke in 1760 states that the gorge was planted around 1720), some is older - presumably descended from the woods mentioned as early as 1549.

¹¹ The experiment is recorded in Gilpin 1834, 309.

¹² [Inventory of Garden and Designed Landscape, GDL00154, Dunglass \(portal.historicenvironment.scot\)](https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/).

2.7 Contemporary/use values

Despite being located close to the A1 trunk road, the church is sufficiently tucked away for most people passing by to be oblivious of its existence.

Although the church has long ceased to be a working church the ruin still reads as a religious building, despite the subsequent alterations undertaken to convert it into stables and barn. Its cool, dark interior, coupled with the serenity of its surroundings, undoubtedly continues to inspire spiritual thoughts in those who visit.

In 2015, Dunglass Estate subcontracted their successful weddings business to a third-party events company and HES worked with this company to ensure that terms and conditions of site use are understood and wedding events are appropriately managed. There appears to be a strong market for weddings at this site, with 25 bookings received for the period April – December 2016. The antiquity of the Church and the beauty of the setting are major draws for this local business, and an emotional tie to the place is likely for those married here and their guests. The Church is not used by the local community for other events or religious services, however, there has been some interest in filming and photography in the past.

3. MAJOR GAPS IN UNDERSTANDING

The history of Dunglass Collegiate Church is relatively well documented, but a number of uncertainties remain:

- Has the building chronology been correctly interpreted and dated?
- Are there any remains of ancillary buildings, such as the manses of the clergy, and the older chapel and *hospitium* referred to in 1480?
- Do any archaeological traces survive of the burgh and castle?
- What inspiration did Hall draw from the Church? What work was undertaken there in his tenure? Is it mentioned in his Essay?
- What, if anything, was the relationship between ‘willow cathedral’ and the Church? Where was Hall’s creation sited?

4. ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES

Other related local sites:

- Edrom Church,
- Foulden Tithe Barn,
- Hume Castle,

- Innerwick Parish Church,
- Oldhamstocks Parish Church.

Other collegiate churches extant in East Lothian and Berwickshire:

- Dunbar,
- Ladykirk,
- St. Mary's,
- Haddington,
- **Seton Collegiate Church.**

Other collegiate churches in state care:

- **Castle Semple,**
- **Innerpeffray,**
- **Lincluden,**
- **Maybole,**
- **St. Mary on the Rock, St. Andrews.**

5. KEYWORDS

Collegiate Church, nave, crossing, choir, sacristy, vault, tracery, monumental tomb, sedilla, Home, Hall.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: TIMELINE

- c. 1390 – Sir Thomas Home marries the heiress of the Papedy or Pepdie family, lairds of Dunglass (most notable for having three green parrots as their coat of arms, apparently based on the resemblance of their surname to medieval names for the bird, such as ‘papejay’ and ‘papingo’). There may already be a chapel at Dunglass before this date, though the visible fabric of the Collegiate Church is of a later date.
- 1406 – Sir Alexander Home of Dunglass becomes the 4th Earl of Douglas’s local agent in Berwickshire, thereby substantially raising his status. Sir Alexander’s residence was Dunglass Castle, on the edge of the ravine due south of the church.
- 1423 – Sir Alexander makes certain donations to the chapel of St. Mary of Dunglass and ‘the presbyters there serving God’.¹³
- 1444 – Sir Alexander Home of that Ilk elevates Dunglass chapel to the status of a collegiate church, initially staffed by a provost, two chaplains and four choirboys.¹⁴ The collegiate church has no parochial responsibilities but from the outset, it seems to be designed for a purpose beyond the typical collegiate role of a chantry chapel and mausoleum for the founding family’s use.
- 1450 – King James II confirms another bequest by Sir Alexander Home of a revenues from Chirnside, and an additional bequest by his local rival Sir Patrick Hepburn endowing a prebend at Oldhamstocks. Each grant is partially designed to symbolically resolve a violent feud. Sir Alexander had fought for control of Coldingham Priory with his kinsman David Home, while Sir Patrick had been involved in the assassination of two of Sir Alexander’s retainers. Prayers are to be said not only for the donors, but also for the wronged and the slain, and also for the murdered King James I, and for Bishop Kennedy of St Andrews who brokered the reconciliations.¹⁵ Sir Alexander joins the Earl of Douglas on a pilgrimage to Rome.
- 1451 – Pope Nicholas V (who Sir Alexander may have met on his visit to Rome) confirms the foundation of the collegiate church and adds the teinds of Oldhamstocks parish. King James II adds the estate of Strafontane or Trefontannis with its parish church. The Earl of

¹³ Historical Manuscripts Commission, No. 122, 123-124.

¹⁴ Historical Manuscripts Commission, No. 123, 124-126.

¹⁵ Historical Manuscripts Commission, Nos. 124-125, 126-127; Thomson *et al* 1814-1984, Nos. 387, 389; Armstrong 2010, 68-69 and 76-77.

Douglas adds the parish church of Hutton, with its hostel and one husbandland.¹⁶

- 1454 – Pope Nicholas V issues an ‘indulgence’ to encourage an annual pilgrimage to Dunglass at the Feast of the Assumption (15th August). The encouragement is reiterated by Pius II in 1459 and by Sixtus IV in 1480.
- 1459 – Pope Pius II (who had visited the area as a young diplomat) gives the vicarage of **Edrom Church** (Berwickshire) to Dunglass.
- 1460 – Alexander Benistoun, laird of Upsettlington, endows a prebend with revenues from Wester Upsettlington.¹⁷ In 1476, the parish of Upsettlington is merged with Hutton (already annexed in 1451) and its teinds are transferred directly to Dunglass.
- 1469 – An ‘indulgence’ encouraging pilgrimage to Dunglass mentions a ‘hospital’ near the church, designed to provide accommodation for pilgrims and others in need.¹⁸
- 1471 – Innerwick parish church is added to the *mensa* or common fund of the college.¹⁹
- 1480 – The hostel near the collegiate church is mentioned again in a papal bull of Pope Sixtus IV, now with a chapel of its own, dedicated to St. Mary and John the Baptist.²⁰
- 1481 – There are now nine prebends – Kello (the original 1423 gift by the Home family, assigned in 1444 to the provost), Chirnside (Home family) Oldhamstocks (Hepburn family), Hutton (Douglas family), Old Cambus (origin unknown), and two each from Strafontane (King James II) and Upsettlington (laird of Upsettlington) – plus, presumably, the four choirboys and two additional resident chaplains of the original foundation, who have separate endowments, and the common fund in addition to all of the above.²¹
- 1489 – The town of Dunglass is elevated to burgh status, with the right to hold a weekly market and a week-long annual fair at Assumptiontide (coinciding with the annual pilgrimage documented since 1454).²²

¹⁶ Historical Manuscripts Commission, Nos. 126–128, 127–128. Thomson *et al* 1814–1984, No. 520.

¹⁷ Historical Manuscripts Commission, No. 278, 167.

¹⁸ Cowan and Easson 1976, 175.

¹⁹ Cameron 1934, lxxiv, 166.

²⁰ Historical Manuscripts Commission, No. 318, 185; Cowan and Easson 1976, 175.

²¹ Cowan and Easson 1976, 219.

²² Thomson *et al* 1814–1984, No. 1864.

- 1497 – James IV attends mass in the chapel and will return with some regularity through his reign until 1513.²³
- 1503 – Patrick Home of Polwarth endows a chaplain at the altar of St Cuthbert in the south aisle at Dunglass, with a salary from the lands of Vicarshaugh.²⁴
- 1509 – The church holds lands and revenues from six counties, extending as far afield as Fife and Dumfriesshire. It is supplied with songbooks, stained glass windows, church bells, an organ and incense, maintained out of the common fund.
- 1510 – A charter gives Lord Home the patronage of all the prebends in Dunglass Collegiate Church. This may represent a change in the constitution of the church, as in 1515, when Lord Home is in exile, the heirs of one of the original donors have regained control of the relevant prebend.²⁵
- 1515 – During the power struggle between the Queen Dowager Margaret Tudor and the Regent Albany, Lord Home remains loyal to Queen Margaret, and retreats into England. As a result, a royal artillery garrison is placed in Dunglass Castle, and the Hepburn family regain control of the prebend of Oldhamstocks.²⁶ In October of this year, Dunglass is one of several places in south-east Scotland where gun salutes and bonfires are ordered to celebrate the French victory at Marignano.²⁷
- 1516 – The Regent Albany captures and executes Lord Home, though his brother is gradually rehabilitated, becoming the 4th Lord Home in 1522.
- 1532 – Dunglass is the first target of an English invasion, with the castle and the burgh both being sacked. The church is not mentioned as a target, and at this date, the English might have respected its sanctity as a religious building.
- 1544 – The English invade again, but are driven off by Scottish gun positions in the castle and the church

²³ Dickinson *et al.* 1877–1978, vol. ii., 353, vol. iii, 57, 65, vol. iv, 439. Other visits may not appear in surviving records. We also find references to the king playing cards, and buying a drink for some builders, Dickinson *et al.* 1877–1978, vol. ii., 308, vol. iv. 161.

²⁴ Historical Manuscripts Commission, No. 302, 177–178.

²⁵ Thomson *et al.* 1814–1984, No. 3406.

²⁶ Dickinson *et al.* 1877–1978, vol. iv, 32–33, 42; Historical Manuscripts Commission, No. 129, 127.

²⁷ Dickinson *et al.* 1877–1978, vol. iv, 47.

- 1547 – The English invade yet again, driving the garrison out of the castle and plundering their beer and geese before blowing up the tower. The town is apparently left unharmed on this occasion.²⁸
- 1548 – The strategic significance of Dunglass is further demonstrated in this year, when the English build an artillery fort on a promontory overlooking the church, one of the first *trace italienne* fortifications in the British Isles. The fort serves to guard the lines of communication for the main English fortress at Haddington. Located to the south-west of the church and castle, at the top of a steep slope above the river, it consists of a rectangular enceinte with four pointed bastions at its corners, each built to a different plan adapted to the particular terrain, surrounded by a deep ditch on the sides where it is not protected by natural slopes. The entrance is at the south-east corner, while a barracks or blockhouse appears to have been built along the eastern wall of the enceinte.²⁹ It is erroneously known in later times as the ‘French Camp’ (the French were helping the Scots at this date).
- 1549 – Sir Thomas Holcroft, an English commander overseeing the construction of the fort at Dunglass, writes two letters to the English regent, Lord Protector Somerset. In the first letter, on 25th September, he reports that the fort is becoming ‘a great strength’, suggesting a garrison of 200 infantry for the fort itself (half of whom should be cross trained as artillerymen after their arrival), and 100 light cavalry quartered in the burgh (who are already present). In the second letter, dated two days later, he takes a more pessimistic line, reporting that his workforce of 1,400 conscripts have been left naked and exhausted by continuous work building the fort and keeping watch in the nearby woods for Scottish attacks, and that since his previous letter, 400 of them had been taken sick and are lying in their ‘cabins’, too weak to move.³⁰
- 1550 – As the Scot and their French allies begin to lay siege to the English fort at Dunglass, news arrive of the Treaty of Boulogne, under the terms of which the English garrison is evacuated and the fort is returned to Scottish hands.³¹ The fort itself is rapidly dismantled, with the English apparently abandoning the defending guns to the Scots, but the church remains in ecclesiastical use.
- 1554 – Abraham Crichton, Provost of Dunglass, launches a court case to recover vestments of the Collegiate Church, totalling ten coloured capes for choral prayers, eight chasubles for priests saying the Mass,

²⁸ Patten 1548, 85–87, 89.

²⁹ A contemporary plan is reproduced in Hale 1983, fig. 67, between 82–83. Its accuracy is easily confirmed by comparison with aerial photography.

³⁰ Stevenson 1837, 42–52 esp. 44–46, 51.

³¹ Dickinson *et al.* 1877–1978, vol. ix, 396–398, 421–424.

and twenty-one white tunics, which had been lodged for safe-keeping with Lord Home and the garrison of Dunbar in 1547.³²

- 1560 -At the Protestant Reformation, the college comprises a provost and 12 prebendary canons (prebends of Barnside and Dewingham having been added to those mentioned in 1481 and 1503).³³ Some members of the community appear to embrace Protestantism – for example, the prebendary of Upsettlington becomes the ‘reader’ in the parish church there – but in contrast with monasteries, collegiate churches are not formally suppressed. In legal terms, the prebends become financial sinecures in the gift of the Home family, but in practice, the Catholic sympathies of Lord Home mean that the college retain some semblance of a religious community. Thomas Ogilvy, provost of Dunglass from 1586 to 1608, appears to be the Jesuit Fr. Alexander McQuhirrie. Prebends continue to be bestowed by the Earls of Home well into the seventeenth century, and the college is not formally suppressed until 1644.
- 1603 -James VI spends his last night on Scottish soil at Dunglass Castle prior to proceeding to England and his coronation as James I. The condition of the church at this date is not known, but it is likely to remain in good repair.
- 1616 – The post of provost is now assigned to the 1st Earl’s illegitimate son but is apparently used to fund his education.
- 1617 – James VI returns to Scotland for a state visit, spending his first night at Dunglass. He is greeted with a speech in Latin, and a series of ten poems in Latin and one in Greek.³⁴
- 1633 – Charles I returns to Scotland for his coronation. Like his father in 1617, he spends his first night north of the Border at Dunglass.³⁵
- 1636 -The English traveller Sir William Brereton, travelling north from Berwick, notes ‘the castle and town of Dunglass on left hand, which is pleasantly seated, and seemeth to be in good repair’, suggesting that there was still some semblance of the burgh at this date, although he evidently bypassed it on the alternative route now taken by the A1.³⁶
- 1640 – As the Civil War between the Roundhead and Cavalier factions breaks out, Dunglass Castle is used as a base by the Covenanters, the Scottish allies of the Roundheads. A gunpowder explosion kills the garrison commander, the Earl of Haddington, and some sixty or eighty other officers and soldiers. The cause is unclear,

³² Rankin 1981, 50–51.

³³ Cowan and Easson 1976, 219.

³⁴ Nichols 1828, 300–305, esp. p. 305 n.1.

³⁵ Haig 1824, vol. ii, 195, vol. iv, 380.

³⁶ Brown 1891, 134.

but many blame the Earl's English page-boy, Edward Paris, either because he had been bribed by the Cavaliers in Berwick, or because he was infuriated by his master's insistence that all Englishmen were cowards (it seems he also died in the explosion, so he may have been a convenient scapegoat).

- 1644 - The 2nd Earl of Home sells the Dunglass estate to Sir John Ruthven, a well-connected mercenary general looking for a country seat. The college is finally suppressed, and its lands are annexed to the lairdship.³⁷
- 1685 - John Hall acquires the Dunglass estate; he is an Edinburgh merchant purchasing the castle and lairdship to enhance his status and is subsequently further elevated as Sir John Hall of Dunglass, 1st baronet. There is some evidence to suggest that his ancestors were local tenants of the Homes. Hall was created a baronet of Nova Scotia, a settler colonisation scheme established by King James VI and I. Scottish landowners who encouraged settlers to emigrate to Nova Scotia were rewarded with land. It is not known what impact, if any, this had on the church.³⁸
- 1701 - An attempt is made to relocate the parish church at least temporarily from Oldhamstocks to Dunglass Collegiate Church. Sir James Hall, 2nd baronet, blocks the move.³⁹
- c.1710 - Sir James Hall, 2nd baronet, converts the church into an outbuilding, including a stable, coach-house, barn and dovecot. Almost all the significant damage to the building was done at this date.⁴⁰
- 1746 - According to an anonymous anti-Jacobite author, there is still a 'town' or 'village' at Dunglass at this date, albeit - like nearby Eyemouth - consisting only of primitive thatched cottages with holes in the roof for the smoke of their turf fires, and street filthy with the muck tipped out of chamber-pots.⁴¹ Given the lack of other references to the burgh after 1636, this may be a reference to a separate village shown c. 1750 on General Roy's *Military Survey* map, downstream on the Dunglass Burn beside the post-medieval road bridge and the route of the modern A1.

³⁷ The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707, 1644/6/319. Date accessed: 25 November 2015.

³⁸ For further information on the connection between Properties in Care and the British Empire download the full report from HES website: [Surveying and Analysing Connections between Properties in Care and the British Empire, c. 1600 - 1997](#)

³⁹ Rankin 1981, 52.

⁴⁰ Martine 1894, 218.

⁴¹ Anonymous 1747, 54.

- 1760 – Richard Pococke, Bishop of Meath, visits Dunglass and admires the church, which he describes as ‘a good building’.⁴²
- 1776 – Sir James Hall, 4th baronet inherits the estate and sets about improving the designed landscape. Various options are considered for the existing house which is in poor repair, and he consults Alexander Stevens and Alexander Naysmith over proposals and designs. The new house is not built until 1807.
- 1787 – Robert Burns visits Dunglass and describes it as ‘The most romantic sweet place I ever saw’.
- 1792 – At Dunglass, Hall has constructed an ash framework around which he plants 16 willow trees in the form of a Latin cross mini-cathedral to prove his theory that gothic architecture was inspired by nature observation of trees forming natural arches. An engraving of the result is used to illustrate his work ‘Essay on the Origins, History and Principles of Gothic Architecture’ (1813).
- 1807 – A new residence, Dunglass House, is built for Sir James Hall, the 4th baronet, around the heavily-modified keep of the old castle.⁴³
- 1914 –Dunglass Collegiate Church is entrusted into state care.
- 1947 – Dunglass House is gutted by fire and thereafter demolished. A new, far smaller, house is built on the site in 1961.

APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

There appears to have been no significant archaeological investigation at Dunglass Collegiate Church, but the potential of the site is likely to be high. The adjacent parkland was once the location of the manses of the clergy, which are likely to have been stone-built, plus the hostel for pilgrims and those in need (as the example at Brechin shows, these could be buildings of significant architectural accomplishment), and also the late-medieval burgh (one of the few medieval town sites in Scotland that has not remained in occupation). In 1710, there is also said to have been a graveyard, which would have its own archaeological potential. It is possible that medieval settlement layers have been disturbed by landscaping of the parkland, but the lack of obvious evidence for intensive human activity is promising.

To the south lies the location of the castle – though the much-rebuilt tower and its encumbering mansion were demolished in the 1950s, a source of the late nineteenth century refers to vaulted substructures that were then

⁴² Kemp 1887, 325.

⁴³ Martine 1894, 216-217.

already concealed beneath the surrounding lawns, and these may still be present.⁴⁴ There are also likely to have been seventeenth-century formal gardens here, from which the sundial alone now survives. Further south-west in the wood is the English fort of 1548 to 1550, one of the earliest *trace italienne* Renaissance fortifications in the British Isles, and probably the best-preserved of these due to the lack of subsequent activity on the site (the fort at nearby Eyemouth was built a few months earlier, but its defences were reworked by the French in the 1550s). The earthworks are in a good state of preservation, and interpretation is aided by a plan drawn up during construction, a printed copy of which is readily available.⁴⁵

Archaeological investigation in the area has generally focused on sites downstream on the Dunglass Burn, including a survey of the old bridges and roads adjacent to the modern A1, a small excavation on a pre-medieval promontory fort, and recent rescue archaeology on early medieval settlement layers revealed by coastal erosion.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Martine 1894, 216–217.

⁴⁵ Hale 1983, fig. 67, between 82–82. Its accuracy is easily confirmed by comparison with aerial photography.

⁴⁶ Graham 1965, 318–347; Morrison 2003, 114; Tipping 2007, 16–32, Tipping and Henderson 2008, 337–356.