

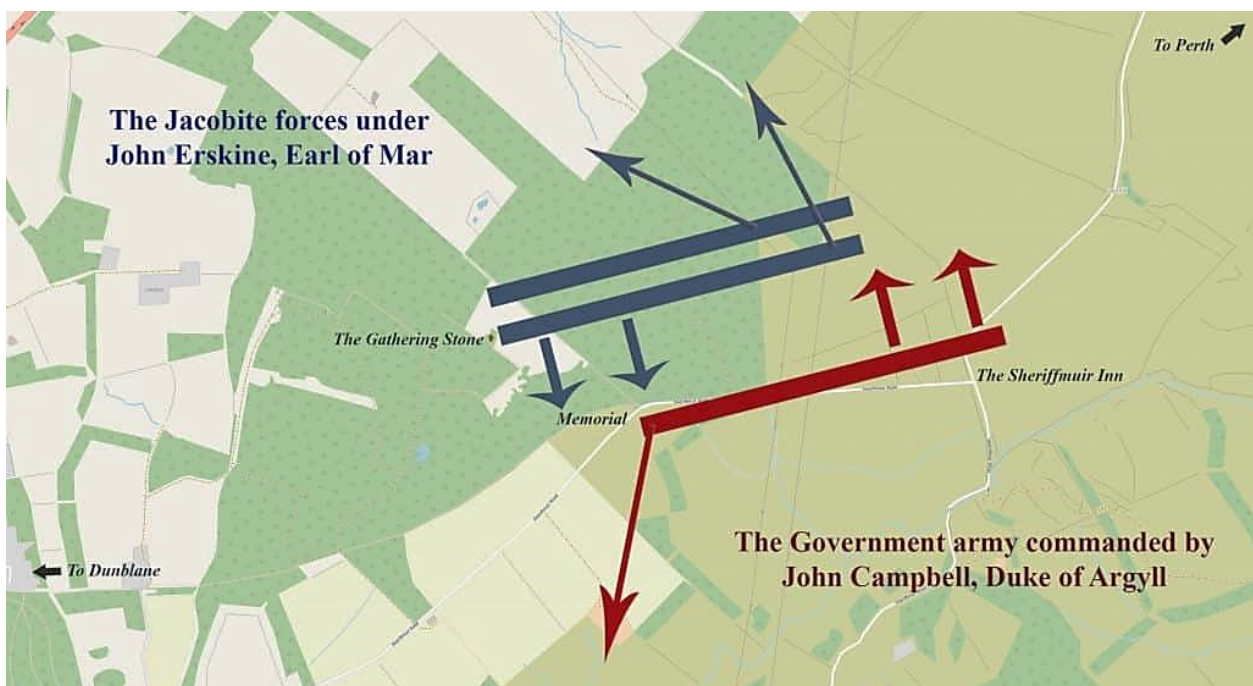
#### 4. River Devon

The source of the River Devon is on the north-eastern slopes of Blairdenon Hill which rises to a height of 631m at the south-eastern end of the Ochil Range. A few little streams come together at Grid Point NN 869 021 in Perth and Kinross County, above the 570m contour to form the river. It flows just east of north, then north east, as it descends a steep-sided valley picking up water from tributaries, Finglen Burn, Glenmacduff Burn, and Greenhorn Burn all on its right bank. The photograph, taken by a Mr. Smith 12 years-ago,



looks downstream from a location 1½km from the source; here the river has already dropped by 140m through tree-less rough moorland; pleasant on a sunny summer day but desolate in winter. (I have found no photograph from further upstream.) The river flows for 54km from its source to its mouth on the Firth of Forth, but remarkably these points are less than 9km apart, as the crow flies, such is the zig-zag course of the river, which is shown in Table D1. The River Devon is a river of Perthshire and Clackmannanshire, though it did once pass into what is now Fife, but that was many millennia ago.

Before setting off in earnest to follow the River Devon downstream, it is worth pausing to consider briefly the important Battle of Sheriffmuir, which took place on the other (western) slopes of Blairdenon Hill on 13<sup>th</sup> November 1715. The terrain must have been like that in the photograph above, though with some patchy woodland, and the schematic taken from a blog 'scottishhistory.org', with north to the right, shows the alignment of the forces during the battle, as far as it is known. The combatants were a Hanoverian government army of 3000 led by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Argyll, and a rebel Jacobite army of c10000 raised and led by



the 23<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Mar. The former had moved from Stirling to block the passage of the latter into the undefended lowlands of Scotland. The government force was disposed to the south-west, and each commander took charge of his own right wing but the lie of the land and misty conditions meant that neither was fully aware of what was happening on his opposite flank. Both commanders won their own battles, Mar more emphatically, and this should have opened his way south, but Argyll reacted quickly and took up a new blocking position nearer Dunblane. Mar with his large numerical superiority, if anything increased by the initial encounters, would surely have prevailed if he had attacked determinedly again, but he only made a half-hearted effort which was easily repulsed. This proved to be the turning point of the Rebellion, with the Jacobite army pulling back from an inhospitable position as darkness fell.

The battle is usually described as indecisive, and as regards what happened on the ground, that was true, with positions broadly held, and numbers of casualties (several hundred) on each side comparable, if greater for the government army. Strategically it proved decisive, as Argyll was soon reinforced and pushed northwards against the disheartened Jacobites whose army disintegrated over the winter. The battle was a disastrous missed opportunity for the Jacobites who lost the best chance they were ever to have of threatening Hanoverian rule. The Earl of Mar has been justifiably criticised for his conduct of the battle, and ridiculed for his changes of allegiance which gave him the nickname, 'Bobbin' Johnnie', but he was a highly capable organiser, as indicated by the size of the army he assembled, and other facets of his career. As for Argyll, he received little credit at the time for effectively halting the rebellion, and was soon manoeuvred out of his command by his enemies at Court, though he remained a potent political force for almost 3 decades thereafter. Military historians, while acknowledging personal courage on the battlefield, have accorded him little merit as a general, perhaps because he was a critic of the revered Duke of Marlborough.

On 19<sup>th</sup> century maps, the River Devon is shown proceeding unchecked and descending swiftly until it leaves the Ochil Hills. Since then, growing populations and industrial developments have required more water, and it was realised somewhat belatedly, by the late-19<sup>th</sup> century, that purity was all-important, if diseases like typhoid and cholera were to be avoided. Consequently, conurbations like that containing Dunfermline, Rosyth and West Fife, looked towards the headwaters of nearby rivers, with a view to either piping water from springs, or damming streams to create reservoirs. One resulting scheme, actually one of the later ones, is shown in the RCAHMS photograph; Lower Glendevon Reservoir is in the foreground and Upper Glendevon Reservoir is in the background,



further up the valley. The first development on the River Devon catchment had been the opening of Glensherup Reservoir in 1880 on a right bank tributary of the same name which joined the River Devon in the

village of Glendevon. That reservoir has a surface area of 12.3ha, (equivalent to 17½ football pitches). Glenquey Reservoir on another right bank tributary, further downstream, followed in 1909; it has a surface area of 15.4ha. During the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, German prisoners were put to work building a reservoir, further upstream in the river valley itself. This, the Lower Glendevon Reservoir opened in 1924, retained by a dam of height 31m, and with a surface area of 44.5ha. The next development was the opening in 1955 of the larger Upper Glendevon Reservoir retained by a dam 45m high, and with a surface area of 71ha. Finally in 1978, Castlehill Reservoir was opened at the downstream end of the glen, with a surface area of 38.2ha. Where it leaves this reservoir, the River Devon has covered 17km from its source and dropped 350m. Together, the reservoirs have a capacity of 2794 million gallons, and some electricity is also generated by water leaving the Upper Glendevon Reservoir.

Past the lower reservoir, the river valley is joined from the north by Glen Eagles, though the famous hotel and golf courses are some way off, at the other end of that valley; from here downstream, the A823 tracks the river. The river swings round to flow eastwards, and a couple of kilometres further on, reaches Glendevon Castle, above the left bank. White harled, the building looks quite striking from a distance, as suggested by the photograph,



but it is apparently abandoned and on an at-risk register. It is a Z-plan tower house, dated by some to the 15<sup>th</sup> century as a hunting lodge of the Douglasses, but by others to the early-17<sup>th</sup> century as a conventional tower house; judging by the windows in view it has been altered a lot more recently than that. The castle is an outlier of the hamlet of Glendevon, and a short distance downstream, where the Glenquey Burn joins the river, the 19<sup>th</sup> century maps show a wool spinning mill, the first mill encountered on this journey. The River Devon swings sharply south here to enter the Castlehill Reservoir, from which it emerges flowing south-east, and for a short distance separates the county of Perth and Kinross on the left bank from Clackmannanshire, on the right bank.

Downstream on the left bank is the hamlet which housed the parish church of Fossoway until 1729, when a new church was built at Tullibole, a few kilometres to the east. The old church of St. Brigit, (the name itself suggests an ancient foundation) is reduced to a few heaps of stones just about defining a building with a single chamber in a graveyard; records imply that it may have been built in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. On the right bank is the village of Yetts of Muckhart, with its partner Pool of Muckhart a little further south; the name 'Muckhart' is said to derive from a Gaelic term for pigs, so it is fair to assume that keeping these animals was an important activity in the distant past. A few buildings survive from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, like the coaching inn at Pool of Muckhart, but in general the neat and tidy houses in the linear villages set along the A91, date from at least a century later with some modern additions. To the west of the villages in the foothills of the Ochil range is the Cowden Estate where Archbishop Lamberton of St. Andrews, a staunch supporter of King Robert the Bruce, built a fortified house in 1320. Later, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a castle was built, but it was demolished in 1950 after a fire.

The river, shown flowing away from the camera at this point, is about to do something fairly remarkable, so it is appropriate to take stock. It has travelled 22½km and is now a little south of due east of its starting point; it has dropped 420m, through moorland and across reservoirs, and if not yet a lowland stream it has certainly left the higher hills of the Ochil range behind. The mean water flow rate is 28400 gallons per minute, close to 3 road tanker-loads per minute. At this point the river almost reverses its direction of travel not for a short space, but for almost the whole of its



remaining course, as it flows a little south of west to the Firth of Forth. The change is abrupt; beside the village of Crook of Devon, water flows east then south, then west as if round a square of side less than 300m, and then heads off on its new course. In one sense, the near-reversal is easily explained as due to the presence of an easier path to the west, but as we shall see, that path exists only because the river cut a deep gorge. In fact, geographers think that the ancient River Devon did continue eastwards, presumably by way of the Gairney Water and its tributaries and so into the River Leven, but that the landscape changed at the end of the last Ice Age, 11000 years ago. The path to the east was blocked off by a moraine left by a receding ice sheet, and the river found a substitute path to the west. Before then, what is now the west-flowing stretch of the River Devon must have been a much shorter stream fed only from the southern slopes of the Ochil Range. I must confess to some uncertainty as to the sequence of events responsible for the change, but I shall leave any questions to the experts and move on.

The name, Crook of Devon has replaced Fossoway in relatively modern times, and the fine 18<sup>th</sup> century bridge over the river bears the earlier name. Crook of Devon is now a pleasant village, in Perth and Kinross, with a mix of mainly 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century houses, but it has a dark secret. In 1662, 10 women and 1 man were judicially murdered as members of a witch's coven after the apology for a trial that was normal then in such cases. As far as I can see, there is no memorial where the 'executions' took place, though apparently there is a commemorative maze at Tullibole Castle which I passed by near the start of my journey down the River Leven. I think it foolish to judge actions in the past by the morality and standards of today, but I am taken aback when I think of such a large number of victims being drawn from a community of a few hundred, as Crook of Devon or rather Fossoway must have been then. The event serves as a rude reminder that witches were being 'discovered' and executed in Scotland into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, almost overlapping the Scottish Enlightenment.

There were mills here, supplied from a lade which can still be seen following the loop of the river, to its west, and Alastair Robertson found the water wheel shown in the photograph, up a passageway, though it is not operational. The water mill ground corn and produced flour in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. At this time, there was also a Wauk Mill (to soften and bulk up cloth), fed from the same lade and remembered now by a street name. It seems possible that a paper mill, shown on later maps, occupied at least some of the same buildings.



A short distance downstream, the river enters the gorge normally referred to as Rumbling Bridge, in acknowledgement of the noise made by the water as it shoots down a narrow rocky channel below the bridge of that name. What can be seen as a series of cataracts, begins a few hundred metres upstream from there, with a waterfall, called the Devils Mill, noisy enough to sound like grinding machinery, and given its name because supposedly only the devil would work seven-days-a-week, without resting on the Sabbath. The bridge itself is shown in the middle photograph, taken from one of a series of platforms leading down to the floor of the gorge, 37m below the A823. It was built in two stages; first the lower bridge, in 1713, made of coursed rubble blocks and with a near semi-circular arch. The span is 6.6m, and the width 3.3m; the track-way is 27m above the River Devon rushing through the gorge. It is highly unlikely that this bridge would have been built without parapets or rails, as the crossing would have seemed perilous, but they will have been removed when the upper bridge, also with a single near semi-circular arch, was built in 1816 to remove a pronounced dip in the road. Some trouble was obviously taken to prettify the masonry, and certainly to decorate the single flush arch rings. The river continues in a narrow channel between the precipitous walls of the 30m-deep gorge. Access to the river banks is very difficult here, so I have not myself been able to view and photograph Cauldron Linn which is a waterfall of total height 12m, taken in two steps. Instead, I have used the lowest photograph on the page which was taken by a Mr. Starkey, 5 years ago. Those who have



viewed the waterfall make much of the noise and spray which is generated. There are many much higher in the country, but the combination of a significant drop with the flow rate of a substantial river is by no means common; as far as I can tell from the absence of colouration the river was flowing normally rather than being in spate when the photograph was taken.

From here on, the gorge gradually widens into a steep sided valley, with cultivated fields appearing intermittently on the banks. A kilometre downstream on the right bank, Muckhart Mill is at the confluence of the Hole Burn with the river. A corn and flour mill is said by some to have been here for 600 years, and there seems to be documentary evidence for its existence in c1560. A date-stone on one of the group of buildings assigns it to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The mill does not operate now, though it was apparently restored to working order for a spell during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the overshot waterwheel is still plainly visible in the photograph alongside; the buildings in view have been converted into private houses.



Another few hundred metres and the county boundary between Perth and Kinross, and Clackmannanshire, which has followed the river from just west of Crook of Devon, leaves the river, which remains in Clackmannanshire for the remainder of its course. It continues to flow in a broad strath between the western outliers of the Cleish Hills to the south, and the dominating Ochil Hills to the north. The most prominent hills in view are the King's Seat, and to its west, the highest of the Ochil range, Ben Cleuch, at 721m classified as a Graham (2000 – 2500 feet). Dollar is the most easterly of a series of hill-foot villages/towns on the right bank of the river, with a population of c3000. It is dominated by the school, Dollar Academy in the village centre, along with its playing fields; a particular feature is the classical colonnaded main building designed by the famous architect, William Playfair. The private school was founded in 1818 and now educates 1250 pupils, boys and girls, a small proportion of whom are boarders. My own school played rugby and cricket against Dollar Academy, and I can recall bus trips from Edinburgh in the late 1950s, though I am afraid I have no memory of any of the matches, which may mean that we lost. A small right bank tributary of the River Devon, the Dollar Burn flows beside the main street, rendering the village quite picturesque, and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century it powered a weaving mill there. In the same period there was a bleachfield and a saw mill near the confluence of the burn with the river. Further upstream, the burn passes through Dollar Glen, a noted beauty spot, where it splits into the Burn of Sorrow to the west, and the Burn of Care, both of which rise deep in the Ochil Hills. Between them, looming over the village in a manner appropriate to its earlier name, Castle Gloom, is the ruin now known as Castle Campbell.

The castle most likely dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but there is doubt as to whether the tower was restored, or rebuilt then, so it may be older. At all events, the then Earl of Argyll obtained documentation to change the name to Castle Campbell in 1489, when it became the main lowland residence of the earls. During the following century they built the other buildings seen in the view from the west; the hall block to the right (south), the connecting east range, and other smaller buildings, now reduced to little more than foundations. The 8<sup>th</sup> Earl, later the 1<sup>st</sup> Marquis, was prominent in Scottish events associated with the



Civil War and its aftermath, but he failed to steer a safe course, and the castle was burnt in 1654, before he was executed in 1661, while his erratic son, the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl, suffered the same fate two decades later, after a failed revolt against King James 7<sup>th</sup> (and 2<sup>nd</sup>). The family returned to favour after the Revolution of 1688, and the then-Earl was advanced to a Dukedom, but Inveraray Castle became the preferred residence and Castle Campbell was not repaired. The ruin was transferred to the state in 1948, and the tower has been re-roofed; it has dimensions, 13 X 9m with walls 2.2m thick, and had a conventional lay-out with a vaulted basement and a hall above, topped by 2 floors of private rooms above that. The hall block had cellars below and private rooms in addition to the hall at ground level.

Downstream, the River Devon meanders for 4½km before reaching the next hill-foot village, Tillicoultry, probably better described as a small town with its population of 5000+. It has a completely different feel to Dollar, with many rows of terraced houses, but no real focal point. Yet, its geography is similar to its eastern neighbour in that it grew up in an area bounded by the River Devon and the Tillicoultry Burn which descends from the Ochil Hills to a confluence. Though it now looks like a place which hardly existed two centuries ago, it is older, a burgh since 1634, and there are records going back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. A cloth known as Tillicoultry serge, combining wool and linen, was made in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, and cloth mills were opened, over the next century and a half, along the burn. On 19<sup>th</sup> century maps, I have found Craigfoot Carding and Spinning Mill furthest north, Clock Mill weaving plaids and other heavy textiles then Ladywell Dye Works, Middleton Woollen Mill, Burnside Woollen Mill, Barnpark Spinning Mill, and Oak Park Spinning Mill; they are listed, (upstream to downstream), in Table D1, with the others on the river and its tributaries. In addition, cloth mills opened later on the left bank of the River Devon and on the right bank, at Devonside. The town expanded to accommodate the mill-workers, and in the same 19<sup>th</sup> century period, many coal mines were opened nearby. Tillicoultry remained a small centre of industry until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as some mills like Clock Mill simply continued doing what they had always done, while Sterling Mill at Devonside was reinvented as a paper mill in 1921. However, by the end of the century, no mill was operating though some of the buildings like Clock Mill still stand, albeit adapted as housing, and the Sterling Mill site now houses a very large retail outlet. Coal mining has also ceased in the area, so the town has inevitably become something of a dormitory town.

The river continues to meander and near the left bank of a southwards loop is the ruin of Sauchie Tower. It was built by Sir James Shaw in the 1430s, on the site of a century-old predecessor, and held without alarms by that family until 1752 when it passed to the Cathcart family. However, at around that time it was gutted by fire and was not repaired nor has it since been occupied, though in recent years there have been proposals for its full restoration. Now owned by a local trust it has been re-roofed, but the air of dereliction is obvious in the photograph taken from the north. The tower is quite large as such buildings go with dimensions, 11.6 X 10.4m; the hall is at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor level with storage and servant's quarters below and the laird's bedroom above. A turret caps the spiral staircase in the wall, and there are bartizans at each top corner. There was a barmkin, (a walled courtyard) containing at least one range of domestic buildings. The settlement around the tower, Old Sauchie, has vanished, and Sauchie, about a kilometre to the south, is part of Alloa.



The River Devon flows just to the north of Alloa, the administrative centre of Clackmannanshire, though it has never played much part in the life of the town. Alloa is easily traced back in documents to the 1<sup>st</sup> Scottish War of Independence around 1300, when it was granted to the Erskine, Earls of Mar. At that time, and afterwards, it owed its establishment and growth in large part to its location on the north bank of the Firth of Forth, at the lowest fording point, and to its status as seat of an earldom. It became a burgh in 1497, but like many Scottish towns it took off in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as a result of industrialisation. The trigger was coal mining when many pits were opened nearby, and this fed into improvements in the docks which shipped 50000 tonnes of coal per year towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The port was placed in a strong position to handle much of Glasgow's trade with Europe, throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century especially, but continuing up to the 1970s, when Alloa ceased to compete successfully with downstream, deep-water ports like Grangemouth and Leith. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, mills powered by the enhanced flow in the Brothie Burn, (a topic discussed when the Black Devon Water is followed as a lesser stream) included Keillarsbrae woollen mill, Gaberston corn mill, Springfield woollen mill, Alloa corn mill, Kilncraigs woollen mill, and Harbour saw mill. Glass-making and brewing were town specialities, with 10 breweries open at one time but only one remains operational, while a large distillery closed in 1983, killed by the consolidation in the industry which saw the demise of sites that did not produce an iconic brand. Even the large barrel cooperage moved out of the town, in 2011, though only a short distance to the west, so it still employs townsfolk.

With industry came rail links, and the first of them was horse drawn but along tracks in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to bring coal from local pits to the dock at Alloa. In 1852 a line opened between Stirling and Dunfermline giving Alloa its first connection to national networks. Then, in 1871 the full length of the Devon Valley Line was

opened between Alloa and Kinross, with stations at the hill-foot villages already mentioned. Trains carrying passengers ran on this line until 1964 but all traffic ceased with the closure of the last coal mine in the area in 1971; three years earlier the Stirling to Dunfermline line had also been closed. So Alloa was cut off, but in 2008, a line was rebuilt to reconnect the town with Stirling, and trains once again run through to Glasgow. In many ways, this seems the best thing to have happened for the town in recent years, because otherwise my brief account is a litany of the closures of enterprises. Of course, retail has taken up some of the employment slack, but a town of 20000 inhabitants really needs some substantial businesses; they have not so far appeared, so there is a danger that a place which still seems to have 'a bustle about it' will go into decline.

There is no historic precinct in Alloa though there are some remnants of an old church in Kirkgate, mainly the tower. From c1400, there was a chapel in the town, which was then part of the parish of Tullibody, (a later port of call). In 1680, a parish church was built, probably incorporating part of the chapel, but the congregation moved to the present St. Mungo's Parish Church in 1816, and the previous church was largely demolished. Otherwise, a few old houses survive, albeit modernised. Much the oldest building in the town is Alloa Tower. The lower parts of the tower were built for Sir David Erskine, then Chancellor of Scotland, in the 1360s, while the upper storeys were added in the 1490s. The Erskines, who received the Earldom of Mar in the 1560s, resided here more or less continuously until recent times.



Intermissions were caused by their falling out of favour with governments, most seriously when John, 23<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Mar, and 1<sup>st</sup> Jacobite Duke of Mar, a past Secretary of State for Scotland, was attainted in 1716 for his leadership role during the recently-crushed Rebellion, but the family recovered the property in 1739. The 4-storey tower is at least as large as any other such building in Scotland, with dimensions 19.3 X 12.2m, and walls 3m thick, but the modern windows visible in the view of the front, from the south-east, are an indication that inside, little remains that is medieval. In fact, most of that fabric was swept away by the 23<sup>rd</sup> Earl in the pursuit of greater comfort. At the top of the building, there are bartizans on all 4 corners and also above the entrance in the south-east face. A mansion was built alongside in the 17<sup>th</sup> century but it has been removed, and there are no traces of any other ancillary buildings. The tower is now a property of the National Trust for Scotland and has been open to the public for about 20 years.

Due north of Alloa, beside the right bank of the River Devon, is the next hill-foot village, Alva, which is c3½km downstream of Tillicoultry. Alva is an old settlement which was founded alongside another right bank tributary of the River Devon, rushing down from the Ochil Hills; a church here is recorded in 1260, but the village remained small until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. During that century, it prospered as a silver-mining centre, after the

precious metal was found just to the north in Alva Glen. In the 1790s the first woollen mill was opened beside the Alva Burn, and by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century there were 13 woollen mills in the village, mostly powered by the burn, namely, from the north, Upper Strude Mill, Lower Strude Mill, Boll Mill, Island Mill, Braehead Mill, Bridge Mill, Cobblecrook Mill Ochilvale Mill, Burnbrae Mill, Springburn Mill, Greenfield Mill, and Meadow Mill; later developments were Glentana Mill and Dalmore Mill. Coal mining which began across the River Devon in the 19<sup>th</sup> century also provided



employment for the villagers. All changed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the coal mine and all the mills have closed, though some of their buildings remain, not least the magnificent Upper Strude Mill, probably dating from c1820, and now converted into flats. It is shown above on its prominent site at the northern edge of the town. The village, or small town, has a population of c5000, and though many must commute, there is still some industry, including a recently-founded brewery. It is a pleasant place with much vernacular housing, and a fine setting, but in common with its neighbours would benefit from finding a 21<sup>st</sup> century role, other than serving as a dormitory.

The River Devon continues westwards, still meandering, and being augmented by streams coming into its right bank from the Ochil Hills, arriving at the last of the hill-foot villages, Menstrie, 4km from Alva. It is sited similarly to its companion villages, a little north of the River Devon, above the flood plain, beside a tributary, the Menstrie Burn coming off the hills. As with them, though to a smaller extent, it expanded during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, on the back of textile mills, Elmbank Mill, and Forthvale Mill, and nearby coal mines in the Clackmannanshire Coalfield, and suffered when they closed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Glenochil Distillery ceased production of whisky in the 1930s, after 200+ years, but fortunately some of the ancillary processes involving yeast carried on, and the site continues to house bonding warehouses. The village now has a population of c2000, and new housing seems to dominate, although there is one striking old building. Menstrie Castle is a fortified house near the centre of the village. It was built in c1560 by the Alexander family who acquired the title, Earl of Stirling, burnt by the Marquis of Montrose in 1645, but rebuilt afterwards.

The castle was bought by the Abercrombie family in 1719, and the once-famous general, Sir Ralph was born there in October 1734, not long before the family moved to Tullibody House. He came to soldiering relatively late as he was trained as a lawyer, attending Edinburgh and Leipzig Universities, before deciding on a military career, first seeing action during the 7-Years War under the overall command of King Frederick (the Great) of Prussia. His career progressed, in spite of his refusal, as a committed Whig, to fight in the American War of Independence, and a period on half-pay in the 1780s when he was elected a Member of Parliament; when the French Revolutionary War broke out in 1792, he was on the brink of high command. It is fair to say that the campaigns he was involved with, in Holland and the West Indies were not particularly successful, but in spite of that, his reputation grew, and he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General and Knighted. In 1800 he

was appointed commander of an expeditionary force sent to Egypt to deal with the army left there by Napoleon, who had returned to France to secure election as 1<sup>st</sup> Consul. Abercrombie won the hard-fought Battle of Alexandria in March 1801, arguably the first clear-cut victory by British soldiers against a French army, eight years into the war, but sustained a wound from which he died a week later. His 2<sup>nd</sup> in command, General Hely-Hutchinson took over and captured Cairo and Alexandria, at which point the 22000-strong French army surrendered to be conveyed back to France in British ships; an unfortunate precedent for the Convention of Cintra in Portugal, 8 years later, which almost wrecked the Duke of Wellington's career. Abercrombie, whose widow was awarded a barony in honour of his victory, was not a great general, but he was a very good one, whose exploits faded from view in the dazzling light of Wellington's later successes.

Unoccupied for long periods, though retained by the Abercrombie family until 1924, the building decayed, but in 1963 restoration by the county council began. The castle was originally L-shaped, with a main west block of 3 storeys, but later the south wing was extended, another (north) wing was added to form a U-plan, and a curtain wall was erected to the east, thus enclosing quite a large courtyard. Only the west block and south wing of the original house now remain. The gables are crow-stepped and an angle-turret with gun-loops crowns the south-west corner. The photograph is taken from the south-west, so the main block is to the left.



Reference was made at the start of this article to the curious nature of the course of the River Devon, (shown in Table D1., at the end of this account) which is 54km long and yet ends only 9km from its start point. As a further indication of this, the headwaters of short tributaries like the Menstrie and Alva Burns, which join the river well downstream, are only a few hundred metres from the source of the River Devon, on south-eastern slopes of Blairdenon Hill. There is one last twist to the tale, because just downstream of Menstrie, the river again changes its direction of flow abruptly, from west to just east of south as it negotiates its final 2km before joining the Firth of Forth.

After passing under the modern bridge carrying the A907, the river arrives at Tullibody Old Bridge which is thought to have been built in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century by the agency of a Royal courtier, Robert Spittal, and is shown, viewed from the north in the photograph. In 1560, the eastern of two river arches was destroyed by French soldiers during the skirmishing which followed the Treaty of Leith, which settled that Scotland would be a Protestant country. 'Temporary' repairs were made, using wooden beams taken from the roof of nearby Tullibody old



church, but it was not until 1697 that the eastern arch was rebuilt properly. The bridge built of roughly-squared, coursed rubble, now comprises two river arches, and three flood arches (probably added in the 17<sup>th</sup> century) and is of total length, 135m, while the width varies from 3.5m to 6.1m. The river arches are pointed (Gothic), above quite high imposts, i.e., stilted, and of span 5.4m. That to the west, (to the right in the photograph) is thought to be original, and certainly has the features to be expected of a late medieval Scottish bridge, i.e., the Gothic arch shape, the three arch rings in three orders, and the four chamfered ribs on its underside. Obviously some effort was made to reproduce those features when the eastern arch was rebuilt, hence the pointed arch shape and chamfered ribs, but for some reason the restorers provided only a single flush arch ring. The result is an obvious and rather unattractive mismatch; a pity given the antiquity of the bridge.

Tullibody, bounded on the north and west by the final stretch of the River Devon, is almost contiguous with Alloa to its south-east. Legend suggests that it was the site of a church as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and the scene of a 9<sup>th</sup> century battle in which King Kenneth McAlpine defeated Pictish adversaries. The old church supplies more tangible evidence of antiquity as a document of 1170 grants it to the canons of nearby Cambuskenneth Abbey, and its history can be traced thereafter as a result of various disputes. The loss of its roof, in 1560, has already been



mentioned, and with the parish centre shifted to Alloa, it probably had to wait more than a century to be re-roofed, when adopted as a burial aisle by the Abercrombie family. It came back in to use as a church when the parishes of Alloa and Tullibody were separated, but was finally un-roofed in 1916 after a replacement had been built. The walls visible in the photograph are thought to date from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, though the bell-cote was an 18<sup>th</sup> century addition. In more recent times Tullibody has had a similar history to its neighbours, sharing in a 19<sup>th</sup> century expansion principally as a result of the extensive coal mining in the area, and of course it has suffered from the ending of that industry. It has a population of c8000, and serves mainly as a dormitory town for Stirling, a few kilometres to the west. The last settlement on the River Devon is Cambus, more or less absorbed by Tullibody. Here in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, on the left bank of the river there was a corn & flour mill, and a distillery, founded in 1806, while there was a saw mill on the right bank. All have disappeared, but there are now a large number of bonded warehouses on the right bank.

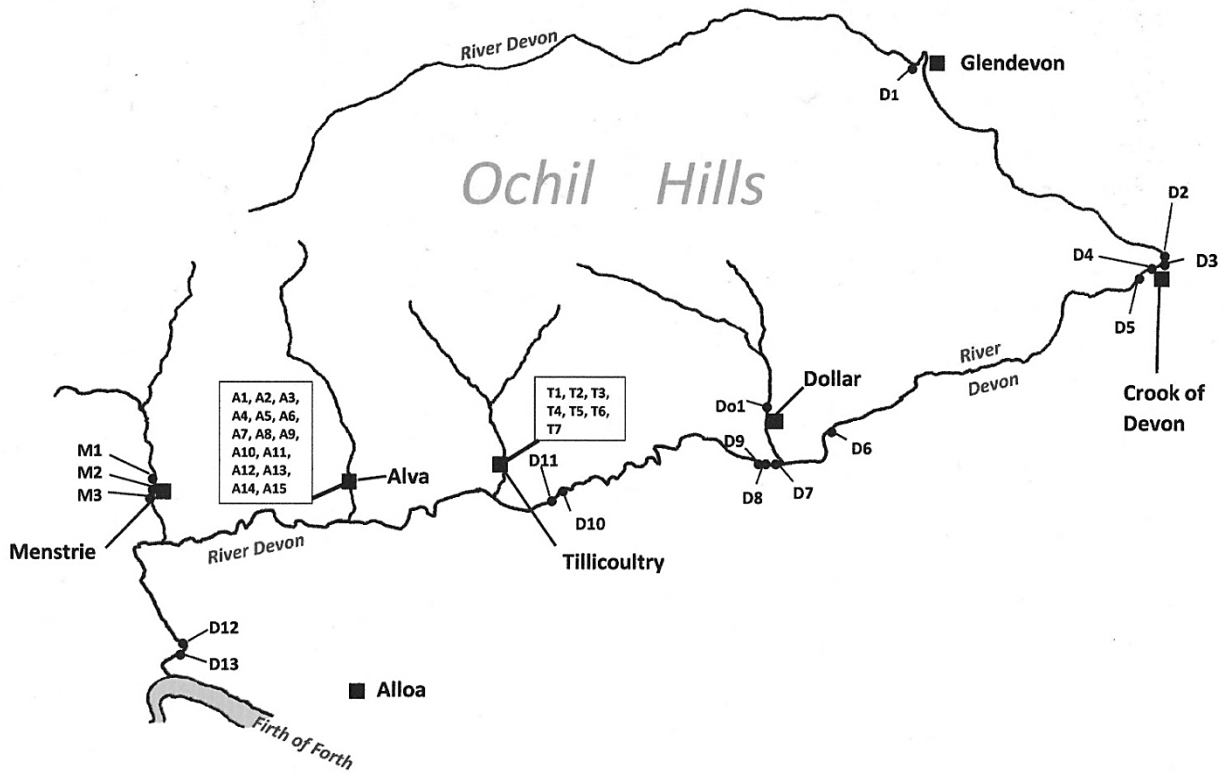
Although the River Devon has no large tributaries, it has many smaller ones and drains a considerable part of the Ochil Range; the mean flow rate is measured near Menstrie as 62800 gallons per minute, and given that a number of tributaries join downstream, it would perhaps be reasonable to push the total up to 70000 gallons per minute at the mouth, (say 7 tanker loads per minute). The last kilometre or so is tidal, and Mr. Starkey's fine photograph shows the River Devon there, with the Ochil Hills in the background.



The main purpose of Table D1, which follows, is to show the locations and types of water mills in the River Devon catchment in early modern times. There were a total of 38 watermills on the River Devon and its tributaries in the period between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; 13 on the river itself and 25 on its tributaries. The numbers don't quite add up because of a change in function on one watermill. Of the 38, there were 3 corn mills, 3 saw mills and 2 paper mills, but no less than 31 textile mills, including all those on the tributaries. All the textile mills were concerned with wool in some form. The pattern is very different from other rivers we have looked at, not so much because of the large number of wool mills, but because there were so few corn mills, even though there was a large population, and specialist industries like brewing which used the product of corn mills. Of course, there were other nearby streams with watermills, but the balance remains surprising.

Apart from its convolutions, described earlier and shown in Table D1, the River Devon can be singled out for the variety of its scenery; the high moorland near its source, the gorge in its middle stretch, and the wide strath in the lower stretch, where it is joined by a succession of fast flowing tributaries coming off the Ochil range. The river is dominated by these hills everywhere along its course, whether amongst them in its upper reaches, or immediately to their south thereafter.

**Table 1. Mills on the River Devon and its Tributaries**



**River Devon**

Mill	Type	Mill	Type
D1	Burnfoot wool	D8	Dollar bleachfield
D2	Crook of Devon corn	D9	Dollar bleachfield
D3	Crook of Devon walk	D10	Devonside cloth
D4	Crook of Devon paper	D11	Devonside cloth, wool, later paper
D5	Crook of Devon saw	D12	Cambus corn
D6	Muckhart Mill corn	D13	Cambus saw
D7	Dollar saw		

**Tributaries**

**Dollar Burn**

Mill	Type
Do1	Dollar Wool

**Tillicoultry Burn**

Mill	Type
T1	Craigfoot Mill spinning
T2	Clock Mill Plaids, heavy textiles
T3	Ladywell dyeing
T4	Middleton wool
T5	Burnside wool
T6	Barnpark spinning
T7	Oak Park spinning

**Menstrie Burn**

Mill	Type
M1	Elmbank, wool
M2	Forthvale wool

**Alva Burn**

Mill	Type
A1	Upper Strude wool
A2	Lower Strude, wool
A3	Boll wool
A4	Island wool
A5	Glentana wool
A6	Braehead wool
A7	Bridge wool
A8	Dalmore wool
A9	Cobblecrook wool
A10	Ochilvale wool
A11	Brookfield wool
A12	Burnbrae wool
A13	Springburn wool
A14	Greenfield wool
A15	Meadow wool