7 Formartine: Bourtie, Ellon, Oldmeldrum, Tarves

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The Formartine, like the Garioch is primarily an agricultural area with large farms on some of the best land of Aberdeenshire. The small towns and villages struggle to compete with Aberdeen, but it is clear that some of the new wealth coming into Aberdeen has spilled into this area with new housing, roads, and small scale specialist business. Behind this economic veneer we have found a great deal of Davidson history.

Alexander Davidson, a prominent advocate in Aberdeen purchased the Cairnbrogie estate sometime between 1620 and 1640. Cairnbrogie was an estate located just the east of Oldmeldrum. This Davidson family was prominent in Aberdeenshire and City affairs over several generations as landowners and advocates.

Alexander Davidson, the Advocate, was the son of Thomas Davidson, a burgess of Aberdeen. He was characterized by Spalding as … "ane good honest man of the Kingis".

The Davidson family sold the property sometime in the first half of 18th century.

Cairnbrogie today:
This property is unlikely to be the same as that occupied by the Davidson family. It is known that there was a much earlier house located close by which has long since disappeared.

17th century Davidson gravestone inside the St Nicholas West Kirk, Aberdeen.
The monumental inscription commemorates the deaths of Alexander Davidson of Cairnbrogie and his son called Alexander Davidson of Newton.

The family was one of the first Davidson families to have their arms registered at the Lyon Court in Edinburgh, sometime between 1672 and 1685. We only have the description "Azure on a fess between three pheons Or, a buck couchant Gules, attired Sable".

Later generations of this family lived at Newton House, near Culsalmond [see Section 6].

The Davidson families of Tarves include a group of related farming families who were prominent and successful farmers over many generations at farms such as North Seat, West Auchedly, Scotstown, Moss Side, Little Meldrum, Happyhillock, and at Cairnbrogie

Davidson Graves at Tarves

Tarves Church

Davidson Memorial Stained glass window inside Tarves Church.

Members of these families were also prominent in other fields. **Dr Samuel Davidson MD 1812–1895** was the doctor at **Meikle Wartle** for many years, and likewise his cousin **Rev. Dr John Davidson** was the schoolmaster at **Ellon**. As with many other families, emigration also played a large part in the story and the inscriptions at Tarves reflect this.

The family graves are grouped together in the kirkyard at Tarves. Most of the inscriptions are still readable, providing an extraordinary insight into the families' history over many generations.

Samuel Davidson 1863–1951
JP, Farmer of North Seat Farm, Auchedly

Tarves Heritage Centre:
The best local museum in Aberdeenshire, run by volunteers one of whom is Jonathan Davidson of the CDA.

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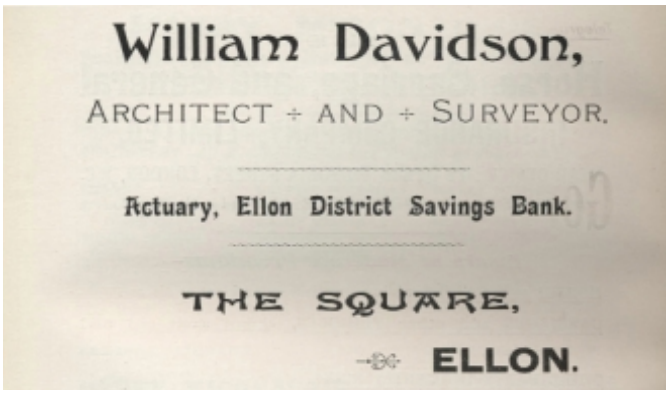
William Davidson

William Davidson of Ellon was a multi talented Davidson. The advertisement in the 1901 publication *"The Book of Ellon"* refers to William Davidson as an "Architect and Surveyor" and also as the "Actuary, Ellon District Savings Bank".



Victoria Hall, Ellon. Opened 22nd June 1897. Still being used by many groups in Ellon today. Designed by William Davidson.

Andrew Davidson, 1831–1902, was born at Kirkhill, to the north west of Aberdeen, into a farming family. He was educated in Aberdeen at the grammar school, and won a bursary to the University from where he graduated in 1849. Initially he was a school master at Ellon, where he taught European languages.

He taught himself Hebrew and subsequently entered New College Edinburgh in 1856, where he later became Professor of Hebrew. He travelled and worked in Germany and also in Syria to study Arabic. Andrew Davidson settled in Edinburgh and spent his long career becoming one of the most admired Hebrew scholars of his time. He lectured and published prolifically.

Andrew B. Davidson

The Font in St Mary's Church, Ellon.
Dedicated to the memory of Andrew Bruce Davidson.

Revd. William Leslie Davidson, 1848–1933, was one of the sons of Dr Samuel Davidson MD of Meikle Wartle. He was minister at **Bourtie from 1873–1896**.
He subsequently spent another 31 years as Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of Aberdeen where he was known as "Bourtie" Davidson to his students.

He loved his parish and its history, and endeared himself to his parishioners. The Manse had a farm but he himself had no talent for farming. He did however keep detailed botanical records now held by Aberdeen University.

Revd William L. Davidson

Bourtie Kirk

Bourtie Kirk is a Category A listed historic building, 200 years old, on the site of a much older church.

The portrait of "Bourtie" Davidson can be found inside the Kirk.

There are several Davidson graves in this graveyard.

Charles Davidson

Charles Davidson, one of the founder members of the **Clan Davidson Association**, has researched his ancestors from the North East for many years. His family can be traced back to an Alexander Davidson from Daviot, a small village just to the north of Inverurie.

Charles' arms incorporate Davidson charges, the stag and the pheons, as well as those of the Gordons, the boar's head, from his maternal grandmother's family. The use of the "Scarff", the Northern Diver, in the crest derive from the fact that his father's family were from seafaring stock, and that Charles' own wartime service was with the Fleet Air Arm. Charles worked for many years as a Factor throughout the islands of the Northern and Western seaboards of Scotland.

He grew up speaking the medieval Scots of the North East so has reused the oft repeated family motto "Gang wir ain Gait".

Arms of Charles Davidson

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