

## **Dalston Historical Settlement Description**

Although it has a fragmentary early history from Palaeolithic times, the earliest parts of Dalston still visible date from medieval times, particularly the layout of The Square and the construction of its Parish Church. St Michael's is built across the wide northern end of this space, while the eastern side of The Square gradually curves until it almost meets the western side. A narrow gap at the southern end opens onto the space where three paths divide, one to Townhead, one to the Green and a third to the White Bridge and Buckabank. It is at this point that you become aware of the River Caldew and that it is responsible for the alignment of the eastern side of the Square, as it once flowed close to the back of these properties.

The main physical element that links the village of Dalston to its separate parts is the River Caldew. Running due south from the village centre is the road and an area of Common Land known as The Green, from which the road takes its name. A variety of vernacular and modern buildings line the western side of the road.

At the southern end of the village the Caldew turns at right angles at Hawksdale Bridge where the ground starts to rise sharply. It is at this point where it has had to cut through the sandstone scarp. Here the river has fairly steep sides and it is at this point that advantage has been taken of the head of water created by the landscape. A sluice diverts water through Buckabank into a mill-race which follows the Caldew almost all the way back to St Michael's. Along this mill-race developed Dalston's Mills, a substantial industrial heritage that still has a presence both economically and architecturally. The earlier rural hamlet of Buckabank still survives up on the scarp at the crossroads to Durdar and Raughton Head.

South of Hawksdale Bridge is Hawksdale, consisting of a scatter of houses and cottages along the roadside. The tree covered ridge provides a significant physical boundary to the village.

The essential characteristics are the medieval village core, the long road on the western margin of The Green, the "industrial" suburb of Buckabank and the heavily wooded area around Hawksdale, out of which comes the River Caldew which in its course binds all of these elements together.

### **Location and Topography**

Dalston lies 4 miles to the south of Carlisle on the west bank of the River Caldew. The Caldew rises in the Caldbeck Fells and runs northwards across what was Inglewood Forest. By the time it reaches Rose Castle and Hawksdale Hall the river lies within an undulating landscape of fields, woodland, scattered farms and hamlets. Approaching Bridge End the river is forced by the harder underlying rocks to turn first west and then north before the softer strata allow the river to cut, once again.

Within the river the native sandstone is clearly visible and on top of this is laid the river gravel and shingle that is evident across much of the valley, indicating the former river bed as it has shifted over time. Further complicating the picture are the glacial deposits, mostly boulder clay, and the finer alluvial deposits. All of which have left a rich and varied landscape which contains some of the better farmland in the County.

The area that is being examined has a southern boundary where the land rises from the river up to

Hawksdale and an eastern boundary formed by the scarp slope from Buckabank northwards. The western edge of the area is less clearly defined, although there is a wooded ridge that runs northwards from the Old Brewery towards the village where it is most evident as the edge of the Showfield. At this point the higher level ground is where the new housing has been constructed at Madam Banks and Townhead.

The area between Townhead Road and Barras Lane is level and open, consisting of allotments and private land near the village and farmland further out. Beyond Barras Lane and the Carlisle Road lies the other large area of modern housing, built in the triangle formed by these two roads and the railway line.

### **Historical Development**

The River Caldew has always played a fundamental part in Dalston's prosperity. The Romans established a corn mill on the River and the woollen industry boomed in the fifteenth century. In 1666 a bay at Lakeheughs diverted water from the Caldew into a mill-race. Water from this mill-race, or dam as it was known locally, could be directed into the Forge Pond (where The Forge houses now stand) to power Bishop's Corn Mill or to water wheels and trip hammers further downstream. Another bay was built across the Caldew below the churchyard and this directed water to Low Green and Low Mill.

The first cotton mill was built in 1782 at Mill Eilers and by 1830 there were four cotton mills, two corn mills and a forge. The forge made tools for agricultural use and was on two sites: one at The Pond and the other at Walk Mill where finishing also took place. There was a dye works at the New Rookery, near Walk Mill, together with a row of cottages. Much of Mill Eilers burnt down in 1901, with the four story Mill being reduced to two stories, which remains today. The sixteen-foot wheel remained until 1970.

### **Character Analysis**

#### *Carlisle Road and Station Road/Barras Lane*

The area north of the village between the railway line and Sowerby Wood is characterized by open countryside and contributes strongly to the village's rural character. This area also contains a scheduled listed monument known as Bishop's Dyke that runs in a southwestern direction from Dalston Hall to Barras Brow. The area from the railway bridge southwards is dominated on the east by Nestles and the Caldew School. Both of which have an enormous impact on the character of the Caldew Valley at this point. The variety of 20th century housing on the western side, although pleasant enough has little architectural merit. Heading west along Station Road the Oil depot dominates the left hand side and the railway sidings the right, the overall impression is negative with ad hoc industrial development with poor road frontage. Further along towards the entrance to the industrial estate and copse of trees provides vital screening of the estate that reduces its visual impact from the east looking west.

#### *The Square*

This area includes those sections of Station Road and Carlisle Road. The first building of any

architectural or historic merit is the former National School, built in 1864 of local sandstone, which has significant charm and character. At the corner of Station Road, next to the shop, there is a block of sandstone outbuildings which are in very poor condition. These vernacular structures have considerable townscape value, particularly the sandstone flag roof, and should be retained and repaired.

St Michael's Church, is the oldest building with parts dating to the 13th century, partly rebuilt in 1749. It is listed Grade II\*. Adjacent is the Church House, and the Church Farmhouse. Both are late eighteenth century, with dressed red sandstone and a graduated green slate roof. Across the road from the Church sits the 3 story Georgian Manor House next to which are two former, clay dabbin cottages with cruck frames (25 and 26 The Square) possibly dating from the fifteenth century. Most of the other properties date from the eighteenth century. Gardens behind the East Side sloped down to the River Caldeu prior to it changing its course in the eighteenth century.

There were at one time six pubs in The Square - the Indian King, the African Queen and the Crown and Mitre on the west side; the Blue Bell, and the Temperance Hotel on the east side; and The Swan on the south side. Dalston also had three breweries: one at Green Head, another Wilson's opposite Caldeu School and a third in Indian King Yard. The latter was also used as a dance hall before the Victory Hall was built in 1922.

The current uses found in The Square are a mixture of residential and commercial, with many of the buildings converted to retail and office premises from residential and farm buildings. The Square is relatively uncluttered with street furniture and signage and most shop fronts are of traditional style with no aggressive signage. The overall style of building is mainly two story, Georgian properties, with sash windows and dressed stone surrounds. Smooth rendered buildings are also common, with no dominant colour. Narrow cobbled lanes from The Square leading to the rear of buildings are still present between buildings, but are a dying feature. The Square was originally cobbled, but it now has tarmac overlay. The Square has perhaps as many buildings on its frontage as it does behind them, accessibly by wide arches or narrow lanes.

Materials are distinct, primarily local sandstones for walls and roofs and ridging, together with Cumbrian slate, such as Buttermere slate roofs, cobbles from the river gravels or Boulder Clay are also used. When split, the dark gabbro cobbles produce an attractive effect.

A disappointment is the number and variety of street lights, particularly around The Bluebell. Some of the commercial properties have increased the size of the plate glass windows. These now look too modern and are not in keeping with the area.

The unregulated and ill-disciplined car-parking in The Square detracts from the quality and character of the area. In addition, the treatment of the surfaces, particularly by the Highway Authority and the utility companies, has left little that is traditional or vernacular.

### *Townhead Road*

The southern exit from The Square opens out into an open space where Townhead Road, The Green and the road to the White Bridge meet. There are other subsidiary smaller roads leading to the car park, the New Co-Op, the Building Society and the housing behind Low Fauld, as well as sections of road linking all of the above. Where these are separated by areas of grass and trees the character is attractive, however where the spaces are dominated by metalled surfaces and car parking the character is less appealing.

### *The Green*

This area forms the southern part of the current conservation area. It consists of two elements. The first is the housing which lines the western side of the road and the second which consists of the open Green, together with woodland and scrub that lies to the east of the road up to the bank of the River Caldw.

Most of the buildings on The Green are residential and many of them are excellent examples of the local vernacular building style, with sandstone walls and Cumbrian slate roofs. There are some buildings that had specific uses such as the Methodist Church and the Victory Hall. One of these is the former school, the site for which was set aside in the Enclosure Award of 1807 (following the Enclosure Act of 1803) and which was subsequently built in 1815. The quality of this area is also improved by the substantial amount of sandstone walling on the property boundaries.

Behind the housing are the Showfield and the Recreation Field. Beyond these to the west is a steep bank which forms a significant topographical feature. This bank extends southwards into the adjacent character areas, as far as Deepdale and then changes direction, eastwards to mark the ridge above Bridge End at Hawksdale.

The eastern side of The Green is well treed but most of the space is open countryside. An area that was formerly Waste and Common has more woodland and scrub at its southern end where the river comes very close to the roadside. It is used for recreational purposes and gives direct access to the River and beyond. The Green itself is protected by a perpetual restriction against building. Along the edge of the road some effort has been made to protect the grass verge with concrete blocks that allow grass to grow through them. Although not entirely successful they are still an improvement on those scars where untreated verges are used for parking.

### *Green Head*

This area consists of sporadic development along the roadside with Dalston Bridge and The Old Brewery the main focus. The buildings at the Old Brewery are quite impressive and were formerly one of Dalston's main breweries. Adjacent are the attractive Whitesmiths Cottages built in 1825. There is some relatively modern housing close to the road. Dalston Bridge is a significant piece of engineering which is still in use and provides a valuable link across the Caldw.

### *Bridge End and The Forge*

Hawksdale Bridge is a busy link for traffic coming from Buckabank and the east of Carlisle, into Dalston and on to areas to the south and west. Apart from the bridge there are also a number of attractive groups of buildings to the south of the river, including Deepdale, the Bridge End Inn and around Caldew Bank. There is some new housing, mostly at the back of Caldew Bank, and it is either relatively neutral in its impact or it is hidden from the road. The main negative feature is the Garage together with the open parking area in front of the Inn.

On the opposite side of the bridge is Ellerslea, behind which is the principal sluice that diverts water from the Caldew that used to power Dalston's 18th and 19th century mills. The Forge Mill Pond is now filled in and occupied by new housing. At one time at the northern end of the pond was Jacob Cowen's smelter and forge with a trip hammer that made edged tools. The forge's finishing mill was a short distance away at Walk Mill, now a private house. The Company had a national reputation and was in business from 1756 to 1918. The Forge Mill no longer exists but nearby is the Bishop's Mill, a corn mill that was in use up until the 1950's, it was later Graham's Joiners and has recently been converted into residential accommodation. Just to the west of this Mill is the site that was set aside for a workhouse under the Enclosure Award. Eventually built in 1827 the Forge Green Workhouse later became the Parish Council Offices.

The appearance of the Garage and the open parking in front of the Bridge End Inn are the two negative elements of this part of the village. Solutions to ameliorate their impact may be difficult to find. Although Hawksdale Bridge has two-way traffic going over it, the bridge is only wide enough for one lane.

### *Hawksdale*

This part of the village sits on top of the bank above Bridge End. It consists of a group of residential buildings centered around The Oaks. As described above this is where the north-south ridge that lies to the west of the Caldew turns sharply through 90 degrees. The road to Rose Castle rises up this bank and joins the two small settlements together. There are a number of significant buildings that have architectural or historic interest. There are also several modern houses. The area's chief significance is its attractive woodland setting.

### *Buckabank*

Buckabank contains some of the most substantial remains of Dalston's industrial past. It is separated from the village by the River Caldew and it was on the west bank of the Caldew that the boundary was drawn. During the 18th and 19th centuries Dalston had a thriving industrial suburb at Buckabank. Corn milling had probably been making use of the water power here since medieval times. In 1782 a cotton spinning mill was erected and this was followed by a bleach works and a dye works, the latter being near the New Rookery. Other cotton mills were established and mention has already been made of the Forge Mill and Walk Mill. A significant number of these buildings survive and most are linked by the mill-race which in itself is a further significant industrial monument. The mill-race runs northwards, parallel with the Caldew until it returns back to the river at a point almost opposite Church Farm, which is just of The Square.

Some of the Mill buildings survive despite fire and other depredations and at the Old Rookery some of the workers housing survives. The open landscape and trees play an important part in the charm and character of this area close to the river. Further east the land rises to mimic the other side of the valley, and open fields, hedges and trees in the valley bottom are overlooked by a steep, scarp slope. Up on the top of the slope are the slightly isolated cottages and farmhouses, constructed of local materials and at the Durdar and Raughton crossroads, on the bank itself, there are several modern properties.