

## Larkhall

Larkhall lies on the edge of the scenic Clyde Valley between the River Clyde and the Avon Water. Larkhall's name is thought to have grown from the Gaelic "Laverockha" meaning "lark on the hill." The area was known as Machanshire and later Dalserf, in the early 14th century and Larkhall wasn't in common usage until the 1900's.

In the past the main industry in Larkhall was weaving, during the 17th and 18th centuries, the old part of the town features original weavers' cottages. There are several small villages surrounding Larkhall, including Netherburn, Ashgill and Dalserf. The Old Parish Church in Dalserf was erected in 1655 and was renovated in the 1970s. Netherburn is a lively and close knit community near to Larkhall and down the Avon Gorge from Larkhall is Millheugh.

Millheugh was once a popular site for fruit growing, especially crops such as apples, pears and plums. The area also boasts its own ghost, the Black Lady who is said to haunt the Applebank Inn. The black lady of Larkhall was the servant of Captain McNeil, then owner of Broomhill House. She was brought to Larkhall by Captain McNeil after one of his many seafaring voyages. She was happy with her new life but her ignorance of Scottish customs made her a social outcast. The Captain forbade her to leave Broomhill House during the day.

Soon she was not seen at night either and the Captain claimed she had disappeared, but locals were suspicious. She soon returned, as her ghostly form appeared in the windows of Broomhill House and then later in Morgan Glen. It is not known if she ever got her revenge on the Captain but he did die prematurely.

When Broomhill House fell into disrepair the five hundredweight door lintel was moved to The Applebank Public House by five men. The next day it was found lying across the road from the public house.

In the 1960s a team from the *Tonight* programme visited Larkhall as they tried to perform the first televised exorcism. The cameras were frozen over in fine weather and after filming finished the director was killed in a road crash on his way to another location. He was found with a fence post impaled in his heart.

Despite his parents living in the Carluke area for all of their lives, it appears that Francis moved to Larkhall when his mother Maria Reilly married for the second time to Daniel Brady. At the time of his wedding to Frances Rynn, he was living in Drygate Street and one can assume the move was due to Maria's wedding as this took place in St Mary's church, Larkhall.



Soon afterwards there was a move to Raploch Road adjacent to the church.



Edward O'Hara outside St Mary's Church Larkhall  
directly opposite the Raploch Road house.