

FIELD NAME: DOON YEARD, DOONYARD AND THE MOTTE

FIELD NAME CLASSIFICATION: HISTORICAL FEATURE

We are fortunate that a few old maps have survived to show how field-names evolve in the area with an early example 'Survey of Boarland of Borgue 1780' showing with the field marked as Doon Year. The 'Plan of the farm of Boreland in the parish of Borgue 1819' shows the same field has been subdivided and renamed East Doonyard and West Doonyard. By the 1850s the two fields were reunited and are now known as The Motte after the distinctive earthwork of a medieval fort known as Boreland Mote.

Doon is very common in Galloway place-names and is derived from Gaelic *dùn* the meaning of which is normally given as 'a fort'. It may have been used by Gaelic speakers to refer to the neighbouring hillfort and appears to have been picked up and used by Scots speakers to refer to the motte. Scots *yard*, like English 'yard', is from Old English *ġeard*, and referred primarily to a piece of land around or adjacent to a house, but its use widened, partly falling together with *yird* 'earth', to apply to larger pieces of enclosed ground, not necessarily close to the farmhouse.



An artist's impression of a motte under attack. (Solway Heritage)

