

# AUCHTERTOOL PARISH

Population in 1801, -396

1811, -501

1821, -536

1831, -527

The only apparent probable cause of the increase of population, is the progress of agricultural improvement. By that and the increased attention to the improvement of roads, a much greater number of labourers is necessary for the latter, and many more, both of males and females, are in demand for the former now, than in former times, whose labour is remunerated with ample wages ; and though the price of their labour does occasionally rise and fall somewhat, yet it is much more steady and uniform than that of the labour of operatives in manufactures. The demand for country labour too, scarcely ever varies, if it does not increase. But the same cannot be said of the labour of operatives in manufacturing towns. Formerly too, females were but little employed in agricultural work; but, with the progress of improvement, the demand for their labour has increased so much that every farmer prefers for his cottager, the man who has daughters that will work in his field, for which they are liberally paid. Their labour consists in hoeing potatoes, in hoeing and hand-weeding turnips, and other drilled crops. In harvest they are employed in reaping, and of course receive reaper's wages. Nor are they without employment in winter. They are frequently employed at thrashing-mills, and in pulling and preparing turnips for cattle. It is obvious that, in this state of things, there is a tendency to induce the labouring classes of both sexes to resort to country villages and cottar-houses for residence, where employment is always to be had. The rate of wages, compared with the price of grain, is always high, and less fluctuating than in trade and manufactures; accordingly the number of village and cottar-houses has been increasing, and latterly with great rapidity.

Number of Persons residing in two villages, 404

in the country, 128

The yearly average of marriages for the last 7 years, 6

of births, - 11

No register of deaths

the average number of persons under 15 years of age, 176

between 15 and 30, 136

30 and 50, 124

50 and 70, 69

upwards of 70, 27

Proprietors of land of the yearly value of L. 50 and upwards, 2

Number of bachelors upwards of 50 years of age, 7

of widowers 8

of widows, 12

of unmarried women upwards of 45 years of age, 24

of families, 125

Average number of children in each family, 31/2

of families chiefly employed in agriculture, 27

in trade, manufacture, and handicraft, 32

Number of inhabited houses, 116

of houses uninhabited, 6

No insane or fatuous.

One blind, (the disease not natural, but contracted.) None deaf or dumb.

CHARACTER etc. OF THE PEOPLE-The people are without any thing peculiar in their manners or customs, and enjoy, in a reasonable degree, the comforts suitable to their respective places in society, and are moral and religious, regular in their attendance on divine service, and in their observance of the ordinances of the gospel During the last three years, there were 4 illegitimate births in the parish.

QUARRIES-There are several whinstone quarries opened in the parish, for metal to the turnpike and other roads ; also a freestone quarry, used sometimes for building village and other cottar

houses. The stone is of inferior quality, and is never wrought for sale. There is a limestone quarry on Lord Moray's ground; also one on Captain Erskine Wemyss's property, which the tenants are permitted to work for farm purposes exclusively; none is wrought for sale.

**MANUFACTURES**-The only thing in the parish that may be considered as allied to manufactures, is an extensive brewery in the village of Auchtertool, which has been long in good repute for its ales, porter, and table-beer. It supplies private families, inns, and alehouses in various places, but the greater part of its ales are usually shipped at Kirkaldy for London.

**VILLAGES**-There are two villages in the parish, Auchtertool and Newbigging the former containing a population of 329, the latter of 75.

**MEANS OF COMMUNICATION**-There is no post-office in the parish, nor does any post-office runner pass within five miles of its boundaries,-an inconvenience very much felt. However, there are other means of communication which the parish enjoys. The turnpike road between Kirkaldy and Dunfermline runs rather more than three miles through the parish, and through the most populous part of it-the two villages. About six years ago, a coach commenced running between Kirkaldy and Glasgow on that road leaving Kirkaldy at half an hour past six o'clock in the summer, at seven in winter, and returning in the afternoon about six o'clock.

**ECCLESIASTICAL STATE**;- The situation of the church, with reference to the boundaries of the parish, is central, but inconvenient for the greater part of the population. The villages, which contain by far the greater part of it, are a mile distant from the church. In 1833, it was thoroughly repaired, and much improved. Its interior is finished in a plain, but neat style. It affords accommodation for 280 sitters, and the sittings are all free.

The manse was built in 1812 in the cottage style, and of Gothic architecture. It is substantially built, handsomely finished, and affords sufficient accommodation. The plan was furnished by Mr Gillespie Graham, architect.

The number of families attending the Established Church, 92; number of families attending the chapels of dissenters and seceders 23. The younger branches of two of these families attend the Established Church. Divine service at the Established Church is generally well attended. The average number of communicants there is 185. The average amount of church collections yearly for religious and charitable purposes, L. 12, 14s.

EDUCATION:-There are 3 schools in the parish ;-the parochial school, a private school, and an infant school. The branches of instruction taught in the parochial school are, reading, English, writing, and arithmetic. Greek and Latin are very rarely required. The branches taught in the private school, are the same as in the parochial school. In the infant school, are taught reading English, writing, arithmetic, needle-work, and knitting. The salary of the parochial schoolmaster is L. 29, 18s. 10d. The teacher of the private school receives a gratuity of L. 15 per annum from Miss Boswell of Balmuto, at whose expense he is furnished with a schoolroom also. The infant school is taught by a female, and admits girls only between two and six years old. The teacher receives from Miss Boswell of Balmuto L. 20 per annum, together with a dwelling-house, small garden, and schoolroom. The parochial schoolmaster has the legal accommodations, dwelling house, school-room, and garden.

The rates of school fees are, per quarter, reading English, 2s. reading English and writing, 2s. 6d.; arithmetic and writing, 3s. Latin, 5s. The cost of books, stationery, etc. is commonly nearly equal to the fee.

There are no young persons in the parish betwixt six and fifteen years of age who cannot read; and none upwards of fifteen years of age who can neither read nor write. The people in general duly appreciate the benefits of education, and parents in particular feel deep interest in the education of their children. This appears in the average amount of children attending the three schools in the parish, 150.

POOR AND PAROCHIAL FUNDS.- There has never been an instance of public begging in the parish. The poor derive their aid from the parish fund. Four years'ago the number receiving parochial aid was 6. Since that date, it has never been less, and now it amounts to 9. To most of the number the monthly allowance also is increased. There is usually some difference in the several allowances, but their average at present is 3s. per month to each pauper. Six of the nine enjoy, together with their money allowance, free apartments in houses belonging to the kirk-session for behoof of the poor, with a small portion of garden ground attached to each. Two old persons who have no money allowances enjoy the same privilege. The paupers, and also a few poor householders, receive annually in winter, at the cost of the parish funds, as many coals as two farmer's horses can draw in a cart, which the farmers very cheerfully drive gratis. The value of each cartful, at the present high rate of coals (driving included) may be stated at 9s. 6d. or 10s.

INNS AND ALEHOUSES:- There are no inns, but six alehouses in the village of Auchtertool, certainly unfavourable to the morals of the people.

November 1836 ( Rev David Guild )