

FLISK PARISH

CIVIL HISTORY

This parish cannot boast of any historical events of importance, or of any occurrences worthy of note.

EMINENT CHARACTER:- The greater part, if not the whole of the parish, became the property of the Noble house of Rothes, in the reign of Robert the Bruce, by the marriage of Sir Andrew de Lesley with Mary, one of the three daughters and co-heiresses of Sir Alexander Abernethy of Abernethy; and the Castle of Ballinbreich was, for several centuries, their principal residence.

In 1320, Sir Andrew signed the letter to the Pope, asserting the independency of Scotland. His descendant, Norman Lesley, son of George Earl of Rothes, was the principal actor in the murder of Cardinal Beaten, on the 29th May 1546. The following year, he surrendered the Castle of St Andrews to the French, and went into the service of their king. He gained great reputation in an engagement between that monarch and the Emperor, near Cambray, in 1554. He enjoyed his honour but a short time, for, being wounded, he died fifteen days afterwards.

Andrew, fourth Earl of Rothes, was buried within the old church. The grave is about the centre of the present burying-ground. John, sixth Earl of Rothes, was promoted in 1667 to the office of High Chancellor; and was created Duke of Rothes, Marquis of Ballenbreich, etc. in 1680. He died the following year: and his body was conveyed, first from St Giles's Edinburgh (whither it had been privately carried) to Holyrood House, and afterwards to Leslie in Fife, (where his Grace had built a mansion,) with the greatest conceivable funereal pomp.

Sir James Balfour, Rector of this parish in 1561, was appointed Lord President of the Court of Session, the Court then consisting of churchmen as well as laymen : he is unhappily stigmatized by Robertson as the most corrupt man of his age.

The Rev. John Wemyss, who was admitted to the parish in 1590, became Principal of St Leonard's College, St Andrews, in 1592.

The Rev. John Fleming, D. D. author of the " Philosophy of Zoology," and of the " History of British Animals," and now Professor of Natural Philosophy in King's College, Aberdeen, held this incumbency from 1811 to 1832.

PAROCHIAL REGISTERS: -The register of baptisms and marriages, combining also the accounts of disbursements, and the minutes of session, commence 6th May 1697 ; and that of deaths and burials 1st March 1775. They seem in general to have been kept with care and regularity; the only marked omission being in that of the session minutes from 1799 to 1822. It

appears from these records, that the session, till at least nearly the middle of last century, often held meetings for prayer: and administered discipline by private or public rebukes for profaneness, desecration of the Sabbath, drunkenness, quarrelling, and intemperate or opprobrious language, as well as for violations of the seventh commandment.

The following extracts are also worthy of insertion, as shewing, inter alia, the interest taken by the church, both in the welfare of individuals and in public objects. The sums are given in old Scotch money, 1701, May 18. This day read from the pulpit, the Acts of Assembly and Parliament ac., against profaneness, and the Act of Assembly anent family worship by elders and deacons. 1702, January 4, Given for Gullet bridge, there having been a general collection appointed for that effect, L. 1. 1702 January 4, (and at many other dates,) given to the presbytery bursar. L. 4, 10s. 1703, March 2, given for repairing St Leonard's College, (St Andrews,) L. 1, 16s. 1704, September 24, given for the redeeming a man from slavery in Algeirs, L. 2. 1729, July 4, for building a church and to be a fund for a minister's stipend in the north of Scotland: the place is Enzie (presbytery of Fordyce,) L. 5. 1729, December 6, for Enstar (Austruther) harbor, L. 2. 1730, December 5, Given to David Fermer's daughter to buy a Bible, L. 1, 4s. 1750 November 18, There was collected this day, in obedience to the Assembly's order, for building a church at Breslaw, in the parish of Silesia, L 10, 3s 10d

POPULATION

The population at different periods has been as follows

In 1755, according to Dr Webster	318
1792, stated in last Statistical Account	331
1801, according to the census	300
1811	318
1821	301
1831	286
1836, private register	245
1837, do. do.	256

From this table, it appears that the population has diminished.

The principal cause seems to have been, that neither proprietors nor tenants, some time ago, were sufficiently careful to repair or rebuild the cottages. Several have, in consequence, been pulled down, in different parts of the parish. The evil of so small a cottage population, on so great an extent of cultivated land, is now severely felt. And the wish at present is, on the part of the farmers at least, to have the number of cottages increased.

The yearly average of births for the last seven years is	10 4/7
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deaths	1 2/7
marriages	1 6/7

The vast disproportion between the numbers of births and deaths must be owing to the fact, that the relative number of farm-servants (who, of course, are chosen in the healthy and vigorous period of life) is great.

The average number of persons under 15 years of age	100
betwixt 15 and 30	65
30 and 50	60
50 and 70	30
upwards of 70	3
The number of proprietors of land of the yearly value of L. 50 and upwards	3
Number of unmarried men, bachelors, and widowers, upwards of 50 years of age	5
women upwards of 45	11
Number of families	55
Average number of resident children in each family	2
Number of inhabited houses	55

Number of fatuous 2; and of blind 1. The last was occasioned by the small-pox.

The language spoken is the English.

The migratory habits of much of our agricultural population are by no means favourable to their moral and religious character, and prevent a permanent character from attaching to a parish like this, where so many belong to this class. With this qualification, it may be said that the people are respectable, cleanly in their habits, and enjoy in a reasonable degree the comforts and advantages of society.

The ordinary food of the peasants is oatmeal and potatoes, broth and bacon, the cottars keeping one or two pigs in the year. Wheaten bread is also used.

INDUSTRY.

The number of males employed in agriculture is 59, including 7 farmers, 7 cottars, and 45 farm-servants. The number employed in manufactures is 12, all weavers, except 2, employed in making potato-flour. There are 2 smiths, 1 mason, 1 forester, 7 daylabourers, and 1 or 2 who

often employ themselves in fishing. The men connected with the salmon stations, during the fishing season, do not in general belong to the parish.

Male servants, above 20 years old, 26

under 20, 19

Female servants, 18

Total, 63

RATE OF WAGES:- Farm-servants, in bothies, receive L. 10; 8 cwt. (6 $\frac{1}{2}$ bolls Scotch,) oatmeal; 4 pints (1 pint Scotch) milk, and Potatoes for supper, for one-half of the year. Those married have L. 8, house, garden of 300 square yards; milk and meal as above ; and three cart load of potatoes or three lippies bounds, i. e. about 300 square yards. The foreman has the same, except L. 12 instead of L. 8, and a " cow-keep," instead of an allowance of milk. Day-labourers have 1s. 6d. without victuals, but 2d. less in winter, and 2d. more in summer. Women receive 8d. without victuals. Reapers receive L. 1, 10s. with victuals, for the harvest ; binders have 10s. more. The harvest-home being now discontinued, each receives 1s. in lieu at the end of the harvest. Threaving, which, however, is not much practised, is at the rate of 3d. for twentyfour sheaves of oats or barley; and 4d. for twenty-eight of wheat.

The price of an iron plough is L. 3, 12s. ; of a harrow, L. 1, 6s. ; of a double horse cart, L. 12 ; of a set of horse shoes, 3s. 4d. A mason receives 2s. 6d. a-day; or for a dry dike, 8s. ; a cottage, L. 1, 10s. ; and a two-story house L.2 the rood; and for hewing freestone 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. the foot. An ordinary weaver makes 7s. or 8s. a-week; and a woman wins 7d. a-day by winding the bobbins.

FISHERIES :- There are five or six stations for salmon-fishing. At some, the sweep-net is used, at others (chiefly the lower) the tutnet, with three or four men to a boat. Stake-nets would be more favourable for fishing, but are for the present interdicted.

The salmon are not caught in abundance, but are of excellent quality. The best seasons are in July and August, when, the rains being over, and the snow melted, the quantity of water in the river is diminished, and the boats get nearer the middle of the stream, and within the run of the fish. If there is much water in the river in the spawning season, the spawn is deposited too high on the banks; and if there follows a dry February, much of it is destroyed. The salmon fry, smoults as they are called, pass this from the beginning of March about three inches long, and are caught on

their return, two or three months afterwards, as grilse, six inches or upwards in length, four, five, or six pounds in weight.*

The seals are sometimes so audacious and cunning as to tumble over the net, seize a salmon, and make off with it.

There are two spirling stations, Flisk-point and Kincase, with two or three nets at each. The net used is trumpet-shaped, and eight yards long. Its mouth is fixed to poles placed in the current, and across the stream ; and the fish are caught in the ebbing tide. They are sold from 1s. to 2s. 6d. the hundred, and being taken to Perth are despatched by the coaches, for the Edinburgh and Glasgow markets. A few are sent to Dundee. They spawn in April and May, when the fishing is discontinued, but they are good in November and some months afterwards, particularly in January and February.

* The following has been communicated on apparently good authority. A smoult was caught on its descent some miles up the river. A ring was inserted, and the little animal restored to the water. The same fish, identified by the ring, was again caught two months afterwards on its ascent, and weighed no less than 8 lbs.

MANUFACTURES:- A potato-flour manufactory has lately been erected on the farm of East Flisk. Two men and three women are employed in it. Their time of labour is the same with that of other servants on the farm ; and their occupation seems by no means prejudicial to health. The potatoes are grated down by a rough revolving cylinder kept in motion by a steam engine of two horse power. The machine is the fruit of Mr Morton's own mechanical ingenuity.

PAROCHIAL ECONOMY

MARKET TOWN: - The nearest market-towns are Newburgh, Cupar-Fife, and Dundee, distant from the church, six, eight, and (including the passage across the Tay,) ten miles respectively. All these, especially Cupar, are frequented by the farmer, for the sale of agricultural produce.

There is not a village in the parish. The nearest approximation to one, is the farm-town of Glenduckie, consisting of the farm house and twelve cottages, seven of which are occupied by the farm-servants.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION: - The parish is deficient in proper and convenient means of communication. The nearest post-offices are in Newburgh and Cupar. The same must be said regarding public conveyances. There is no turnpike, but the statute labour road between

Woodhaven and Newburgh, runs through the length of the parish, distant about a quarter of a mile from the river. The nearest piers are at Balmerino and Newburgh. The steamers between Dundee and Perth pass and re-pass daily for a great part of the year, but there are no proper and regular means of getting on board.

ECCLESIASTICAL STATE : - The church is beautifully situated on the banks of the Tay, one mile from the eastern, three from the western, and between four and five from the south-western extremity of the parish. Glenduckie, containing, small as it is, about one-fifth of the population, lies four miles from the church ; and Dunbog church being close at hand, the inhabitants generally attend divine service there.

The church was built in 1790, and is in good repair, affording accommodation for 153 sitters. It was seated by the heritors, and portioned off to the farmers; and the seats are given by them to their servants and cottars. The sittings at the communion table are left unallocated.

The manse was built in 1811.

The number of families connected with the Established Church is 51, comprehending 247 individuals; and four families, comprehending nine individuals, attend Dissenting and Seceding places of worship. The average number of communicants in the Established Church is 120.

List of the Ministers of the Parish from 1561.-Those from 1561 to 1700, are given from a recently published " Catalogue of the Ministers in the Synod of Fife, from the Reformation in 1560 to the year 1700 ;" the rest are from the Presbytery Records.

Mr (Sir) James Balfour, " persoune of Flisk," 1561. Mr Robert Paterson, 1567. He had also the charge of the Kirks of Dunbog and Creich, where readers officiated. Mr Peter Watson, 1586. Mr John Wemyss, admitted September 1590, became Principal of St Leonard's College in 1562. Mr John Makgill, 1613, conformed to Presbytery 1638; died 22d March 1659. Mr William Myles, admitted May 3d 1660 ; conformed to Episcopacy 1662, died 1694. Vacant from 1694 to 1697. Mr William Thompson, admitted May 6, 1697; died in April 1752. Mr William Gourlay, March 6, 1753, died 16th October 1780. Mr William Gourlay, ordained to Flisk, 20th September 1781, died 2d March 1810. Mr John Fleming, D. D. removed from Bressay, 18th April 1811, translated to Clackmannan in October 1832. Mr George Marshall, translated from Bressay 7th June 1833.

There are no Societies; but there have been occasional collections in the church for religious and charitable objects. These have been liberal : but no average can with fairness yet be given, as it is only within these few years, they have been at all regular.

EDUCATION: - There is but one school, the parochial--situated a mile to the west of the church, and more nearly in the centre of the population than is the latter. The branches taught are, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, grammar, and Latin. Reading, 2s. per quarter; reading and writing, 2s. 6d. ; reading, writing, and arithmetic, 3s.; Latin, 5s. The teacher enjoys the legal amount of accommodation. The salary is the maximum, L. 84, 4s. 4d., and the average amount of school fees, L. 12.

All can read and write who are of age to do so, attention by parents to the education of their children being general.

POOR AND PAROCHIAL FUNDS: - The number of paupers nearly averages 4, receiving from L. 1 to L. 2, 1 0s. each per annum ; or, instead of money, meal, varying from 2 to 4 pecks a month. Average collections for the last ten years L. 6, 12s. ; average for proclamation for ditto, 4s. ; interest on money L. 3, 8s., total, L. 1 0, 4s. Within this period there has been but one legacy for behoof of the poor, L. 10. The deficit in the funds has hitherto been met by drawing upon the principal in the bank, and by donations from the heritors.

FAIRS ETC: - There are no fairs, inns, or alehouses in the parish.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Since the former Statistical Account was drawn up in 1792, the population of the parish has decreased from 331 to 256. The number of farms is also less, the parish being almost entirely partitioned at present into seven large farms, from 190 to 490 imperial acres each. Bothies have been partially introduced. The extent of cultivated ground is greater by fully more than one-half of what it was in 1792, having increased from 1387 to 2120 imperial acres. Sheep are not now regularly kept; at a former period, they were. The breed was small. Fed on the natural pasture during the day, they were enclosed in " tathe-folds" during the night. These folds, changed, every few days, for the sake of manuring the ground, were built by the shepherd. The fence was a turf dike, which was thrown down when the ploughing season came.

The plough, attended by a driver, as well as managed by a ploughman, was drawn, in winter, by four cattle and two horses; and in the end of spring, when they went twice to the field in the day, by two cattle and two horses. The oldest cattle were sold to the grazier after the barley-seed was sown, and, being seven or eight years old, were of a good size. The plough itself was a rude instrument nine or ten feet long, all made of wood except the culter, sock, and " reeshoe." The wood was supplied by the farmer. The iron was worth about 6s. The carpenter and smith were not paid for each job, but received so much corn in the year for doing the work on the farm. The ploughman was generally a married man, and had one or one and a half Scotch acres, about One and a quarter.or one and three quarters imperial acres. On the produce of this, he kept his cow, which he had to purchase for himself, during the winter. In summer, it grazed along with the farmer's own cattle. The goadmen, who were young, and also the horse herd, who was generally older, lived in their master's house.

About seventy years ago, the crops raised were not so varied as now, and the system of agriculture was different; oats, barley, and pease were what were generally sown. There was no cultivated grass, and no turnip or Potato. Turnip was first introduced by Mr Barclay on Pittachop farm, about fifty-eight years ago. By 1792 (as appears from the former Account) a considerable quantity of wheat was grown, about 190 acres; but now, it has increased to 290 acres. A field of 15 acres contained barley and oats, for twenty-two years in succession.

At the middle of last century, or even later, the rental does not seem to have been from one-tenth to one-sixth of what it is now; and even forty years ago, probably, not much above one-fourth. This, however, is to some extent only apparent, as the nominal value of many other things has undergone a corresponding relative change. Part of the rent was paid in grain and meal. A house, now the farm-house of Fliskmill, was formerly the giral for the Ballinbreich estate. The meal would sometimes accumulate to 600 cwt. before it was sold.

The first two-story farm house was built only sixty-one years ago (in 1776.) All the accommodation the farmer had before, was his " but" and his " ben."

The chief improvements of which the parish seems susceptible, are increased draining and enclosing ; the erection of a greater number of cottages ; planting the uncultivated lands ; and the erection of a pier for the shipment of grain and the easier landing of lime and coal, etc. and for rendering the Perth and Dundee steamers available for the convenience of the inhabitants.

July 1837. Revised October 1838. (Rev George Marshall)