

# KINGHORN PARISH

## CIVIL HISTORY

The town of Kinghorn was of such importance as early as David I., that that monarch conferred upon it the privileges of a royal burgh. This grant was confirmed by Alexander III. It was long distinguished by a royal residence ; Glamis Castle or Tower, which stood upon the rising ground that overlooks the town. While royalty had its residence here, it is natural to suppose that it attracted many distinguished individuals to live at Kinghorn ; and hence we find, in the charters granted by William the Lion (1171), the names of William de Mortimer, Galfred de Malleville and others " ap. Kinghorn ;" as witnesses to the deeds, along with the Bishop of Dunkeld and the Chancellor of Scotland. This ancient residence passed from the Kings of Scotland, in the reign of Robert II., into the hands of Sir John Lyon, as a dowery to his wife, Janet Stuart, daughter of Queen Ada Mure and of that monarch, who disposed the property to that knight " cum domino do Kinghorn in liberum maritagium." The successors of that knight enjoyed first from James VI. the title of Earl of Kinghorn, 10th July 1606 ; but, it is said, that, from an awkward abbreviation of Kinghorn, which the people were too ready to discover and apply, the better sounding title of Strathmore, where much of his property lay, was bestowed on the family by Charles II.

The historical events connected with this parish are brief, but important. In the reign of Duncan I., whose fate is well known to every reader of the immortal Shakspeare, Canutus, King of Norway, sent a large fleet commanded by his brother, with 9000 men, who landed at Kinghorn. and plundered the adjacent country, till they were attacked and defeated with great slaughter by Macbeth, Thane of Fife. But the event of greatest importance to Scotland, connected with this parish, was the death of Alexander III. The greatness of that monarch's character the importance of his life to Scotland at that period the suddenness of his death and the long and cruel wars in which Scotland was engaged with England, as well as the internal distractions of the kingdom, which his death occasioned, must ever render the spot where he met his death an object of deepest interest, and excite in the mind a host of bitter reflections. About a mile to the west of Kinghorn, the road from Inverkeithing at that time wound along a high cliff which rises abruptly, and almost perpendicularly from the level sand below to the height of about 150 feet. About forty feet up the side of this precipitous bank, there abuts a rock in the form of a wedge, now almost wholly covered with ivy, which marks the spot where the King was found. It received him in his sheer descent over the cliff above, where he was thrown from his horse, and prevented him from falling to the level shore below. This is the King's wud end, not wood end, as it has been sometimes erroneously called. Tradition is not the only testimony for the identity of this melancholy spot. A cross was soon after the event erected upon it to Point out the place where the King was found. " Out upon time," for it has long since defaced this interesting object ; but it is to be hoped that it will be replaced by a monument becoming the event, and worthy of the taste and wealth of the present excellent proprietor of the property. \*

\*Mrs. O.T.Bruce of Falkland. Her uncle, Professor Bruce, the former proprietor, is said to have long purposed to erect a monument on the King's wud end; and no point could be more befitting a colossal statue than the rock from which the King fell.

MODERN BUILDINGS: -Few places have undergone such a transformation during the last thirty years as Kinghorn. Its streets were then almost impassable, they are now levelled and well paved. Its public buildings were mean, they are now good. The former town house was an ancient ecclesiastical building, the present town house and jail is of Gothic architecture, which cost the burgh L. 2500. Notwithstanding, however, its beauty, strength, and cost, its jail can only now be used as a lock-up house, and it does not prevent the inhabitants of the burgh from being assessed for the erection of prisons in other parts of the county. The schoolhouse was formerly a plain unpretending building ; the schoolhouse now, and the grounds adjoining would do honour to the metropolis. The spinning-mill adjoining the town house has undergone of late great improvements, and has been much enlarged. This improvement has taken place since it came into the possession of the present public spirited proprietors, the Messrs Swan of Kirkcaldy. Its extensive front, and well kept shrubbery, make it a great ornament to the place. The church is the only public building, which remains in much the same state as it has done since 1774, when it was rebuilt.

#### POPULATION

<b>The population in 1755 was</b>	<b>2389</b>
<b>1793</b>	<b>1768</b>
<b>1801</b>	<b>2308</b>
<b>1811</b>	<b>2204</b>
<b>1821</b>	<b>2443</b>
<b>1831</b>	<b>2579</b>
<b>1841</b>	<b>2934</b>

<b>At the last census there were</b>	<b>1302 males-1632 females.</b>
<b>Inhabited houses,</b>	<b>409</b>
<b>Uninhabited do.,</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>building,</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Number of families,</b>	<b>675-about 4 1/3 to each family.</b>
<b>In the town of Kinghorn,</b>	<b>1555</b>
<b>Landward and agricultural,</b>	<b>811</b>
<b>Village of West Bridge or Invertiel,</b>	<b>568</b>

There are no resident heritors in this parish. Out of 675 families in the parish, about 610 belong to the labouring classes, leaving only 65, consisting of farmers, shopkeepers, and proprietors of

houses, who cannot be classed among those who depend solely on their manual labour for subsistence.

The chief cause for the increase of the population since 1821 is the extension of the flax spinning mills, which has brought a considerable number of strangers to the place for employment. Females are chiefly employed in spinning, which accounts for the greater proportion of females above males in this place.

There are three or four fatuous persons in this parish, but none insane. There is one deaf and dumb.

**MANUFACTURES:-** The only manufacture carried on in Kinghorn is the spinning of flax. The raw material is imported, and it undergoes here all the processes from the dressing of the flax, up to the final preparation of the yarn and thread, for the loom and other purposes.

There is an extensive bleaching field at Nether Tyne, about one and a half mile to the eastward, belonging to the proprietors of St Leonard's mill, which enables them to prepare the thread and yarn in a purely white state for the market. These gentlemen employ daily at their mill 200 females, 54 males, flax-dressers, 21 mechanics, or machine-makers, and 12 males who superintend and have other duties in the mill. About 70 are employed in the bleaching of yarn. There are two other mills in Kinghorn, at both of which are employed about 130 females, and 50 males, including 36 flax-dressers. There are thus connected with the spinning mills, 330 females; 137 males ; 70 of both sexes in the bleaching department; total, 537.

Girls above fourteen years of age, who are spinners, earn from 4s. to 6s. per week. Mechanics have from 12s. to L. 1 per week.

Flax-dressers are paid by the hundred-weight of dressed flax ; they get a fair price for their work, and can make a good livelihood fully employed.

## PAROCHIAL ECONOMY

There is no town in the parish except the burgh of Kinghorn. The population, as has been already stated, is 1555. Its trade has been diversified and fluctuating. While basking under the smiles of royalty, it had an ample business in supplying, the necessary articles for the Court, and gentry, with their retainers. But when Glamis Castle began to decay, and the old nobility and gentry died out, or, ceased to live upon their properties in the parish, a great change came over the affairs of Kinghorn. Still it possessed a constant and advantageous traffic from the proximity of Pettycur, which was the principal ferry between Fife and Mid-Lothian. In the absence of steamers and stage-coaches, the town was usually crowded with passengers, waiting for fair weather to allow the boats to set sail. The whole town on these occasions was wont to be an inn; every house that could well accommodate strangers was in requisition ; and the demand for

saddle-horses was so great, that, in the recollection of some old men, not less than sixty belonged to Kinghorn. All this passed naturally away by the introduction of steamers on the ferry, and the establishment of stage-coaches, with all their expedition of conveyance and accuracy of hours. This deficiency of bustle and traffic in the town has been more than compensated by the erection of the spinningmills, upon which the inhabitants now principally depend for employment and subsistence.

From the period when the privileges of a royal burgh were conferred upon Kinghorn by David I., it had been managed by a town-council and magistrates, up to Michaelmas 1841, when, upon the day on which, by the set of the burgh, or terms of its charter, the magistrates ought to have been chosen, a quorum could not be mustered, and in consequence of this it was disfranchised. Certain parties applied to the Court of Session for managers, and the court appointed three respectable gentlemen, resident in Kinghorn, to preside over its affairs, without being invested, however, with judicial authority. The absence of this authority has been felt to be no great evil. The residence of one of the county police has been found quite sufficient to check any disorderly conduct, and to maintain a surveillance over the public-houses and spirit-shops within the burgh. And the change in the management has had this material advantage, that the feelings of partisanship and partiality which naturally gathered around a system of some hundred years' growth, and which became every day less agreeable to the wants and wishes of the community, have now, and we trust for ever, passed away.

**MEANS OF COMMUNICATION:** - The long establishment of a postoffice in the burgh, the constant and regular communication to Edinburgh by means of the Ferry, and the daily coaches which pass through the town on their route to and from the metropolis, present the greatest facilities for intercourse with all parts of the kingdom.

In whatever article of supply Kinghorn may be deficient for its inhabitants, there is an abundance to be found in Kirkcaldy. only three miles distant, which opens a most extensive market for both home and foreign productions.

**ECCLESIASTICAL STATE:** - The church and burial-ground are close upon the sea shore, near to the old harbour. The situation is very inconvenient, even for the townspeople ; the street that leads down to it from the main or high street is long narrow, and steep. It is, besides, very frequently wet and dirty. For the inhabitants of the landward parish the site is as bad as could be chosen. It is nearly seventy years since the church was rebuilt.

The walls are still tolerably good, but the seats are old and rickety, and from the church-yard standing above the level of the floor, (in some places nearly five feet,) the pavement and walls are damp, and the atmosphere is often close and heavy. This latter evil has been greatly removed by the erection of two stoves. It can accommodate about 700. One-half of the sittings are appropriated to the landward parishioners, and the other half to the town's people. There have been very few seat rents drawn by the burgh, and none by the landward heritors. A number of old

seats under the sailors' gallery (this aisle is of a more ancient date than the rest of the church) were for a long period set apart for the school children, and have been latterly occupied by the scholars enjoying the benefit of Mr Philp's charity.

The manse is hard by the church, and is in good repair, having been built in 1817.

There is a quoad sacra church built on the eastern boundary of this parish, in the village of Invertiel, or Westbridge. It is seated for 800. A portion of this parish, containing a population of 760, and a part of the adjoining parish of Abbotshall, were allocated by the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy to this new church. The minister is paid from the seat rents, and the collections made at the church doors.

A Burgher Dissenting chapel has existed in the town for upwards of sixty years. The minister is paid on the voluntary principle, and of course his stipend varies.

There are also a few Anabaptists, who meet together for worship.

There are about 700 communicants in the parish belonging to the Established Church of Scotland. About 500 of these belong to the parish church, and the remaining 200 attend at Invertiel new church, and at Auchtertool and Abbotshall churches, these being more contiguous to some portions of the landward parish than the church at Kinghorn.

There are 165 communicants in the parish belonging to the Burgher meeting-house, and nearly 100 more in communion with other Dissenting congregations in Kirkcaldy and Burntisland.

The attendance on the ordinances of religion at the parish church is full and regular.

A Female Bible and Missionary Society collects annually at an average, L.6, 10s. And the collections at the parish church, with parochial contributions for religious and charitable purposes, average L. 20 per annum. Since December, (four months ago), there have been L. 16 collected for coals to the poor ; for the four schemes of the church, L.10, 16s., besides L.6 from an individual for church extension, to aid the supplementary fund. This was in addition to L.14 formerly given for the same object.

**EDUCATION:** - The burgh and parochial school of Kinghorn is an object which attracts attention, on account of its equipments and accommodation as a seminary for youth. It is a handsome building at the west end of Kinghorn, standing within an enclosure tastefully laid out with shrubs and plants. There is also a bowling-green, besides the play ground, with gymnastic poles for the children.

In addition to the large room allotted to the parochial teacher, there are two smaller ones, well fitted up, one for an infant school, and the other for drawing classes. This apartment is frequently used by the parochial teacher for monitors' classes. In the centre of the building, there is a museum well furnished with good specimens of mineralogy, geology, zoology, conchology, and

anatomy. There are also a few good casts from the busts of eminent men, such as Sir Isaac Newton, Franklin, Watt, Sir W. Scott, and others ; and several stucco casts from the frieze of the Parthenon, taken from the Elgin marbles in the British Museum. The school is taught on the most approved principles. The attendance of pupils averages about 120. A wide range of instruction is afforded them. Besides the usual branches of English and grammar, writing, arithmetic, and book-keeping, mathematics, pure and practical, French, Latin, and Greek, the children are taught the uses of the various specimens which the museum presents to their youthful inquiry, and thus they receive an initiatory knowledge of geology, mineralogy, etc.

The salary is L25. The school fees for each scholar average 18s. per annum, and amount to L.100 annually. The teacher has neither house nor garden, the arrangement made for the retirement of the former teacher having considerably crippled the means of the burgh for providing suitable accommodation for his successor.

There is another school in the town, attended on an average by 50 children, who are taught the elementary branches of reading, writing, and arithmetic. It is not endowed, and the teacher has no remuneration except the school fees.

There is also a female and infant school ; the average number attending both is about 80. A sewing-school for the girls is now in full operation.

There is an efficient school in the village of Invertiel, where the usual elementary branches are taught, and also practical mathematics. It is attended by 70. A school-house is provided for the teacher, but no salary beyond his school fees. The children in the northern parts of the parish are obliged, on account of the distance from Kinghorn, to attend the schools in Auchtertool.

Sabbath school teaching has long been vigorously carried on here for instructing the youth in the principles of religion, and training them to its practice. The parochial teacher has one under his charge, attended by 125;\* and the minister has had an adult class for several years, which he has lately taught on the Thursday evenings, attended on an average by 50. This class is exclusively for females, and those especially who are employed in the mills.

The Dissenting minister, the Rev. James Hardie, has also been most industrious in this department. He has long had a Sabbath evening class, which has been well attended.

\* This school is partly endowed by the late Mr Philp, who left to the districts in which his other charity schools are established, L.10 to each for the instruction of a Sabbath evening school, besides a similar sum for house-rent.

**LIBRARY:** - There is a library kept in the museum by the parochial teacher, and another subscription one in the town. The minister obtained, a few years ago, a good selection of books

from the Tract Society in London, which have been well read by the young people attending his class, and others who chose to enjoy the privilege.

**CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS:** - The late Robert Philp, Esq. of Edenshead, left his property for the endowment of schools ; one-eighth part of which was appropriated for the instruction and clothing of 50 children in Kinghorn, and the residue of the fund to be given to the children in such proportions as the managers of the charity shall direct, " the better to enable the children on leaving the school to begin the world." The children enjoying the charity attend the parochial school, and are taught all the branches which the other children receive in the course of instruction.

**POOR AND PAROCHIAL FUNDS:-** The average number of poor who receive regular alimnt from the parochial funds, for the last seven years, is 39, and the weekly sum granted to each varies from 8d to 2s. 6d. There are occasional poor besides these, who receive half-yearly distributions at the winter and summer sacraments. The average amount for their relief is L. 121, 19s. The church door collections have averaged, for the last ten years, L.30. Voluntary contributions, supplied by the heritors, have averaged L.70 per annum, and the interest on L.550 at four per cent., left to the kirk-session for the poor by the late Rev. James Henry, including L.100 left by the Rev. Mr Shanks of Castlerigg for the same object, after deducting stamp-receipt, amounts to L.21, 19s. making in all the above sum of L.121, 19s. annually.

There is no disposition on the part of the poor to abstain from seeking parochial relief. There is an opinion gaining ground, that the heritors of the parish are obliged to supply the wants of the poor, which is affecting considerably both the church door collections, and the independent feeling which at one time had such a strong hold of our Scottisli peasantry.

**PRISONS:** - There is a strong and secure prison in the townhouse, but there is not a prisoner in it, and it will not be of much use now, except for a lock-up-house, as the prison for punishment for this district is in Kirkcaldy.

**FAIRS:-** There is a fair marked in the Almanack for Kinghorn, but there has not of late been a sweet stall erected on the street, on the day on which it is said to be held.

**ALE-HOUSES:** - There is one good inn at Pettycur, and there are in the burgh nine spirit-shops and ale-houses.

January 1843 ( Rev Fergus Jardine )